

LEVANT

# Suzuki's nature: When he visited a small college recently, he asked for ... female bodyguards



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We all know David Suzuki is a saint. Especially now that he's 76, and refers to himself in the third person, as "an elder." Recently, Suzuki told his fellow CBC employee George Strombouloupoulos, "I feel though, at my age, no one can accuse me of wanting more fame or power or money."

That's what he says. But what does he do? Suzuki's visit to a small junior college in Montreal last October paints a different picture.

To give a one-hour talk, Suzuki billed them \$30,000 plus expenses. Add in his airline ticket, his \$841 hotel bill, a photographer and other costs, and the total hit for his visit was \$41,640. From a small, publicly funded school.

Suzuki also told Strombouloupoulos, "As I get older, my testosterone levels drop, and you know, I'm getting smarter because I'm not thinking about sex all the time."

That's a bit too much information, and there was some uneasy laughter when Suzuki said it. But again, his visit to John Abbott College was instructive. Suzuki had what rock stars call a "rider" — other conditions for having the great man visit.

Here is an exact quote from John Abbott College's Mary Milburn, in an e-mail obtained through access to information: "We have learned, via Dr. Suzuki's assistant, that although the Dr. does not like to have bodyguards per se, he does not mind having a couple of ladies (females) that would act as body guards in order that he may travel from one venue to another without being accosted too many times along the way.

"Why females you ask? Well, he is a male. No seriously, I believe it is his way of being discrete and less intimidating."

At least four other college staff received that e-mail. And none of them said, "that's wrong" or "that's sexist" or even "sorry, our students aren't props." They complied.

They selected ladies — female ladies, as the memo made clear. But Suzuki didn't just want to choose their gender. He wanted to make sure they were pretty.

Here is another memo, from the college's Jim Anderson: "Please be certain that the women are nicely dressed, we don't want them in evening gowns, but definitely NOT Police Tech uniforms."

Milburn wanted Anderson to get personally involved in the procurement of the female ladies, to visually inspect them first.

"Jim, have you selected the female students to escort Dr. Suzuki? Do you think I could set up a very brief meeting or see them at one of their classes?" But how would Suzuki's VIP day end? Another memo from Erich Schmedt to Milburn says students might just get a chance to bask in Suzuki's greatness up at his hotel room. Here's the exact wording:

"In terms of acknowledging their contribution after the tours are completed, we will need to gather them together at the end to either give them some brief time with Suzuki (which I will try to make happen, either by having him step out of the penthouse or enabling them to join the group in the sanctified air)."

Yeah. Come up to the hotel room and get some gratitude.

Why did John Abbott College agree to such a creepy request?

Why did they put so much time and effort into selecting girls, and having them dressed just right, and even insisting that the girls be seen by university administrators in advance?

What the hell were they thinking?

Do you think this is the first time Suzuki has made such requests — or just the first time they've been revealed?

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- He's a national treasure**
- He's a nut job**
- I don't care about him**

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