



# KING DAVID

DAVID COVERDALE HAS LED A CHARMED LIFE, FRONTING TWO OF THE GREATEST ROCK BANDS OF ALL TIME IN DEEP PURPLE AND WHITESNAKE. THE SELF-STYLED 'NORTHERN BELLOW' TAKES *ROCK CANDY* ON A UNIQUELY PERSONAL JOURNEY BACK IN TIME, REVEALING THE STORIES BEHIND MEMORABLE PHOTOS THAT CAPTURED HIS ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER...

Photos: Mark Weiss; Getty Images/Graham Lowe/Redferns; Getty Images/Anwar Hussein/Hulton Archive



**PERFORMING LIVE WITH THE GOVERNMENT, CIRCA 1969**  
 "Get that f\*cking picture out of here!! Ha, ha, ha! I was in this local band called The Government and we got offered a three-month residency in Freeport in the Bahamas. I was about 17 at the time and had ridiculously long hair. They said, 'You can have the gig if the singer gets his hair cut.' And all the band members were looking at me going, 'Three months in the Bahamas!!' So I had the worst cut on the planet, even worse than how my father would cut it! We even did a photo shoot that I hated. Just awful!"



**POSING AFTER JOINING PURPLE, 23 SEPTEMBER 1973**  
 "That was taken at Clearwell Castle in the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire the day it was announced that I'd joined Deep Purple. I'd turned 22 the day before. I think it had already been announced that Glenn Hughes was in the band, but nobody knew who they were getting in as a lead singer. The management or record company brought a bus or two of journalists up from London. It was a big deal.  
 "I'd auditioned for the band that summer at a place called Scorpio Sound Studios in the basement of Euston Tower in London - the Capital Radio building at the time. I was really nervous, because I hadn't even made a record at that point.

I'd brought a bottle of Bell's Whisky down from Yorkshire as it was the best I could afford. But the friend who'd driven me down had stashed it for fear that I might get too pissed! But the Coverdale nose knows, of course, so I found the stuff immediately, and Jon Lord and Glenn Hughes assisted me in swigging it from the bottle. Jon sat and talked with me and really calmed me down. He became an amazing mentor and a dear, dear friend.  
 "I grew up with a Formica table in the kitchen, with a bottle of sauce on it and mix and match cutlery. Then the next thing you know I'm in Deep Purple going out for some incredibly posh dinner in Paris with 13 knives and forks on each side of the plate. I didn't know what to do until I saw some other people begin from the outside and start working their way in!  
 "Ritchie [Blackmore], Jon and I are all looking away from the camera here, but I don't know why. I spent an enormous amount of time with Ritchie, writing most of the stuff. Our relationship was pretty much him saying, 'I wouldn't do that if I were you.' But we worked well together, as the legacy testifies. I have to say, though, that everyone in this photo was important to the identity of Deep Purple; Ian Paice with his unique drumming, Glenn with his outstanding voice, and Jon with his incredibly confident left hand."



**A DRINK AND A SMOKE WITH GLENN HUGHES, 23 SEPTEMBER 1973**

"That's at Clearwell Castle as well, and Glenn and I are suitably rat-arsed. It's weird to think I was 22 when all this was happening. My son's just turned 22, and he's whip smart. But I meet a lot of 22 year olds now and think to myself, 'You were in Deep Purple at that age?' I was the baby of the band, so I had to mature up in terms of my abilities as a musician and a singer to be on the same level. But I always loved a challenge.

"Glenn was pretty protective of me at the time, actually. He was already fairly experienced after his days in Trapeze and had already enjoyed some success. I was in awe of him and the other guys in the band on a musical level. To be honest, though, I'd already worked with very good musicians, albeit in a local environment. But Purple was something else. They were extra-f\*cking-terrestrials! Still, they really encouraged and supported me to write original music. If you're with an inspirational, motivating, supportive team, then there aren't any boundaries. You just go for it, which was huge for me. Fortunately, I had the talent to move forward."

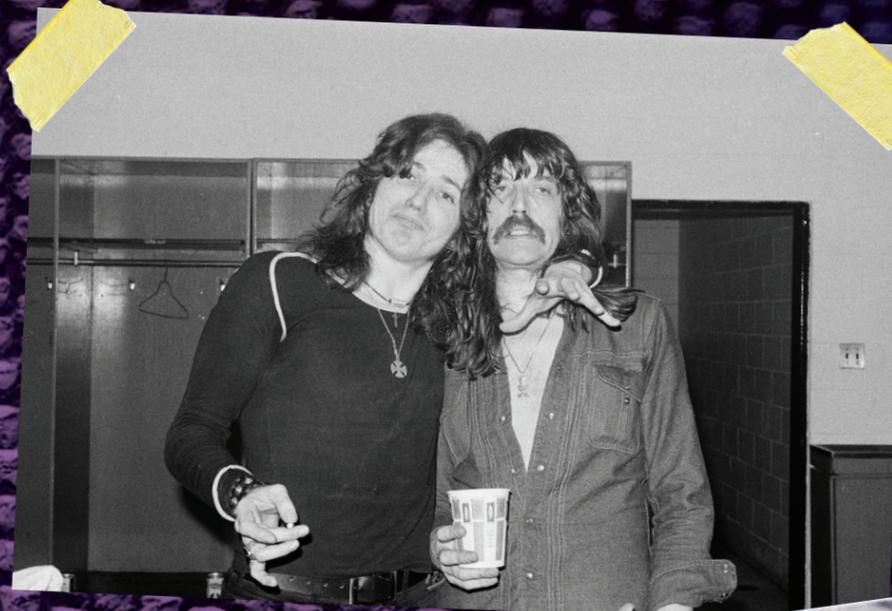
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**ON THE PURPLE STARSHIP, US TOUR 1974**

"My God, look at that TV set! We're on the Starship, which was an amazing Boeing 720, totally customised. The person on the left is a young lady called Jackie, who was my girlfriend at the time. She was a beautiful girl from Leeds and her plan had been to go to Spain to be a governess. She said to me, 'Before I head off, can I come and stay with you for a while?' And it ended up being, you know, longer than a while. We were together before Purple and it was a hell of a transition from the life we'd known together previously. Sadly, we didn't last long. It was obviously a life-changing experience for both of us to see the shenanigans that took place within the Deep Purple camp. I embraced it, but I

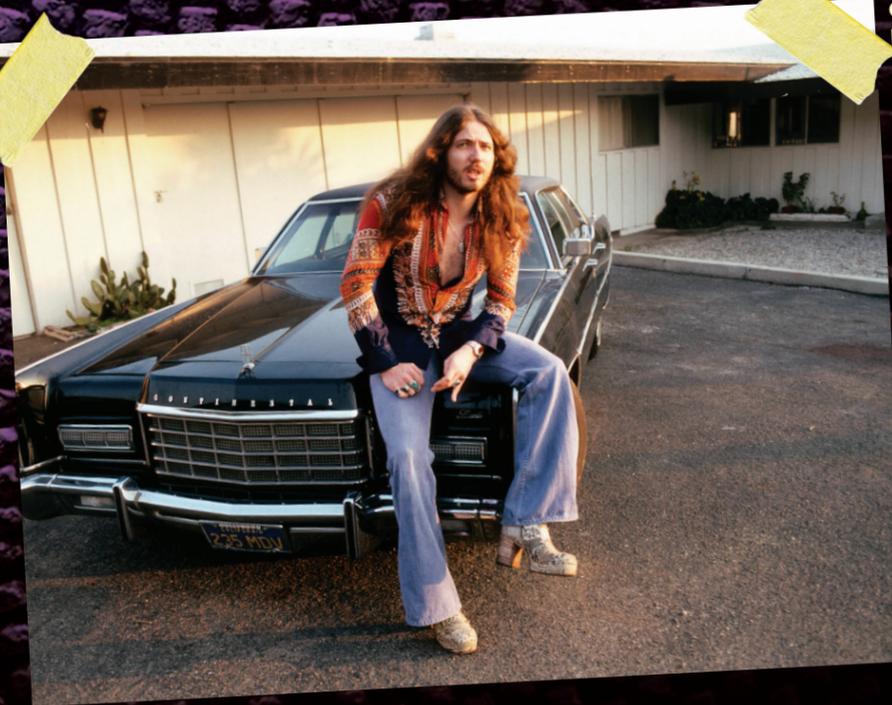
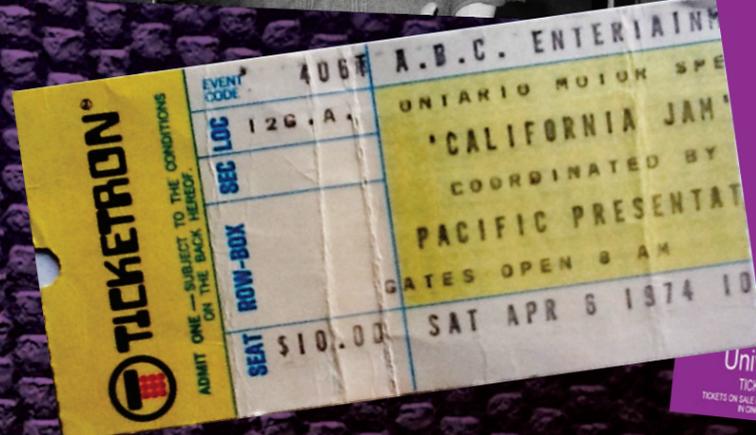


think it was more difficult for her to come to terms with. It was pretty wild. "Of course the man on the right is [Deep Purple producer] Martin Birch. We're estranged, sadly. Martin was one of the people I wanted to make amends with at the time of the tragic loss of Jon Lord back in 2012, but it wasn't to be. Besides Jon, my favourite auntie, Sylvia, and my wife's brother, Daniel, passed away in a very small window of time. I had an epiphany and went, 'What the f\*ck? Get on the phone and make amends, both privately and professionally, to people you may have wronged.' One of them was Ritchie Blackmore, of course, and I felt a hell of a lot better about making up with him, because he was an immense mentor to me. "Martin was amazing. There was no one else I was interested in working with at that time. But when I was with Geffen Records in the United States [in the '80s] they told me my records didn't sound right for American radio. And once I started to have success in America I could understand why they'd said that. Unfortunately that sound wasn't something that Martin and I could accomplish together - and he's now out of the business to the best of my knowledge."



**HANGING WITH JON LORD, NASSAU COLISEUM, NEW YORK, 17 MARCH 1974**

"Ha, ha! That's me and Jon looking somewhat the worse for wear! Hopefully it's just *after* a show rather than just *before* one! I think it must have been on a UK tour, judging by the state of the dressing room! No? It's New York, is it? OK. I see I've got a cigarette in my hand there, which often seemed to be the case at that time. I don't smoke anymore, that's for sure! Well, just Bob Marley's weed!"



**GIVING IT SOME '70S IN CALIFORNIA**

"This photo was taken outside a rental house I had near Malibu on the West Coast of California. I had a Fender Rhodes keyboard, a Fender Twin Reverb amp and a Fender Strat in the garage, and that was about it! The place was right next door to where Olivia Newton-John lived, actually. The car was just a rental too, because I couldn't drive at the time. In fact, I didn't learn to drive until I moved back to Los Angeles from the UK when I was 35. At this time I had a guy called Magnet, one of the Purple crew guys who doubled as security, and he would drive me around. So really, I'm just posing with the car. What I'm wearing is... *interesting*. Flares for days and white snakeskin boots! I don't really remember where any of that stuff came from."

Photos: Getty Images/Chris Walter/WireImage; Getty Images/Fin Costello/Redferns