



HOW TO live like a CELEBRITY

Private planes, four star hotels and fanatical paparazzi were all in a days' work for Lindsey Holder. Photographers stalked her to see what was in her grocery bag. A driver shuttled her to appointments. And her time was split between recording studios and concert venues. No, Holder isn't a celebrity. But her bosses were.

Holder, a native of the Upstate, spent years as a celebrity assistant, working for a series of Grammy award winning pop stars. It wasn't a field she passionately pursued. Her sister's boyfriend at the time worked as an entertainment agent and pushed Holder to apply for a personal assistant job that came across his desk. She interviewed for the position mostly because she was a fan of the singer's music. Despite not having any experience in the entertainment industry, she landed the position. "I remember I was in TJ Maxx shopping on my lunch hour when I got that phone call. They said you got the job and you need to fly to Vegas tomorrow," says Holder, who at the time worked in the banking and brokerage business. Holder signed confidentiality agreements that restrict her from naming her celebrity bosses. Doing so could land her with hefty fines big enough to pay for a new car, but she offers hints like the fact that her first famous employer's career began as a member of the Mickey Mouse Club. Holder learned fast that being surrounded by the right people made a huge difference. "I really had to just dive in and absorb everything. I made mistakes along the way," she admits. "I just really made sure to form a network of great people around me." Quickly Holder realized that her life revolved around the schedule, priorities and demands of her famous boss. For years she couldn't get a massage or watch a movie without being interrupted by a frantic phone call. "I never saw a movie from start to finish," Holder says. "Even if you have a day

off they still call you.” And even though Holder wasn’t a celebrity, paparazzi hounded her like she was, hoping to get photos or information about her prominent boss. “I remember driving down the canyon [in Los Angeles] and I had two cars following me,” she says of the paparazzi. “I had to pull over. I rolled down my window and I said ‘she’s not with me!’ Sometimes you just want to go to Starbucks and get your latte and not have anyone follow you.”

But despite the negative side of working as a celebrity assistant, Holder admits the perks are pretty great. She’s got some of her former boss’s clothes in her closet that appeared on the cover of *US Weekly* and on the *Late Show with David Letterman*, a rolodex full of Hollywood insiders, and enough stories to make her a hit at dinner parties for decades. Plus she’s learned how to live like a celebrity even when you’re not one. Here are some of Holder’s top tips:

Head to nice restaurants for brunch or lunch. Holder says you’ll still be able to live a lavish lifestyle, without paying the high prices often found on the dinner menu.

Instead of letting those frequent flyer miles accumulate unused, cash them in for upgrades to first class. Holder says you’ll be able to stretch out while enjoying hot fudge sundaes in the sky.

Cutting back on expenses is OK; just don’t sacrifice a good cut and color. Holder believes it’s a great invest-

ment that will improve your overall look.

Take in a Broadway show when they come to town. Celebrities love culture, so to live more like one be sure to get tickets to the theater even if you can only afford the cheap seats.

Shop at upscale consignment stores. You’ll be able to score the same designer brands that pop stars wear, but at a fraction of the price.

Don’t wait in line. Holder says that’s something a celebrity would never do. Try slipping the bouncer or hostess a \$20 bill or use a connection to get the VIP treatment.

Years of living out of a suitcase, being surrounded by A-listers and catering to the needs of others helped Holder develop her blog, *The Savvy Assistant*, a place where she offers a variety of lifestyle tips to help professionals do everything from make great low-fat biscuits (since southern girls love biscuits!) to pick out the best undies for traveling (she swears by the Exofficio brand.) For those wanting to infuse more extravagance into the daily grind, Holder says anyone can live at least a little bit of the celebrity lifestyle—whether you’re in Hollywood or the Upstate.

By Alison Storm

Dress designed by Rachel Comfey, courtesy of Hampden clothing.