

“A PEEK AT THE DIARY OF

Sir Elton John

What a few days it's been. First I sang Happy Birthday to my dear, dear friend Nelson Mandela – I like to think I'm one of the few people privileged enough to call him Madiba – at a party specially organised to provide white celebrities with a chance to be photographed cuddling him, wearing that patronisingly awestruck smile they all have. It says: “I love you, you adorable, apartheid-fighting teddy bear.”

The next night I welcomed the exact same crowd to my place for my annual White Tie & Tiaras ball. Lulu, Kelly Osbourne, Agyness Deyn, Richard Desmond, Liz Hurley, Bill Clinton – I met most of them 10 minutes ago, but we have something very special and magical in common: we're all members of the entertainment industry. You can't manufacture a connection like that.

Naturally, everyone could afford just to hand over the money if they gave that much of a toss about Aids research – as could the sponsors. But we like to give guests a preposterously lavish evening, because they're the kind of people who wouldn't turn up for anything less. They fork out small fortunes for new dresses and so on, the sponsors blow hundreds of thousands on creating what convention demands we call a “magical world”, and everyone wears immensely smug “My diamonds are by Chopard” grins in the newspapers and OK. Once we've subtracted all these costs, the leftovers go to my foundation. I call this care-o-nomics. **As seen by Marina Hyde**”

The Guardian

Weekend

5 July 2008