

# A ticket to the Windows 95 launch

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A limited number of seats at the Windows 95 launch were available to the product team, so there was a lottery to see who would get one of those tickets. The remainder of the team would be standing on bleachers hidden behind the stage, to be unveiled at the grand climax of the product launch festivities.

I happened to have been a winner in the ticket lottery, but the fact that there weren't enough seats for everybody created some degree of grousing among the have-nots. As a show of solidarity, I forewent the special VIP pass and ticket, instead taking my place in the crowd of red, blue, yellow, and green T-shirts waiting backstage and giving the pass and ticket to a colleague who really wanted to be in the tent.

While I waited in the staging room to be positioned for the grand finale, I was somewhat surprised to see my colleague in the room with me. She gave me back my unused VIP pass and ticket, saying, "It didn't feel right being out there in the tent. This is where I belong."

I probably have the only unused ticket to the Windows 95 launch.

While standing on the bleachers behind the screen, we could hear everything going on. When Jay Leno disappeared backstage to head off to his next scene, he emerged between the two sets of bleachers. We silently waved at him, but he was obviously focused on his job and didn't have time to schmooze with us.

It was very hard staying quiet for so long backstage. Our presence was supposed to be a surprise; any noise would give us away. There were moments where whispers got out of hand and people had to wave frantically (or—heavens—shush!) to restore quiet. I thought for certain one of our out-of-control moments had let the cat out of the bag, but from talking to people afterwards who were in the tent, I learned that nobody noticed a thing.

Our only instructions from the director were "Wave, clap, and cheer!", keeping up the energy until the last of the crowd had filed out. Everything beyond that was improvised. Somebody started up a cheer, with half of the bleachers shouting "Windows!" and the other half responding "95!" I'm sure there were other things we did to maintain the excitement, though

I can't remember any of it now. I just remember that after a while I got tired of smiling and clapping but kept it up because I was on the aisle next to all the attendees, and that's show business!

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