

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

## CLEARING THE ROAD FOR DANIEL CRAIG

By [RAY A. SMITH](#)

Shaken, not stirred. Driving, not driven.

While Daniel Craig enjoys being chauffeured to events as much as any other movie star, he said he loves to drive, when he can. He got quite the opportunity Tuesday night, when the New York Police Department closed streets off to traffic so Mr. Craig could drive the all-new Range Rover Sport through Midtown straight into Skylight at Moynihan Station.

[Enlarge Image](#)



Associated Press

Daniel Craig at an unveiling of the new Range Rover Sport

The Hollywood blockbuster-style entrance, filmed live and broadcast to a thrilled audience including celebrities such as Michael Strahan and Duran Duran's Simon Le Bon, was a prelude to the New York International Auto Show, which officially begins Friday and runs through April 7 at the Jacob Javits Center.

"It was a lot of fun," Mr. Craig—impeccably dressed in a gray suit by "Mr. Ford," as in Tom Ford ("That's all I ever do wear. He makes very good suits.")—said moments after, during an interview in a backstage trailer. "The only thing I was a little sad about is, because we were filming it, I had to keep to the speed limit. I would have liked to have put my foot down. I was really sorely tempted."

It was fitting that Mr. Craig was chosen to unveil the new Range Rover Sport. For starters, the actor is a big car fan.

"I don't have a Jay Leno collection, but I do have a few cars I kind of like to kind of mess around with. I tend to drive myself most of the time." He quickly added that there is nothing wrong with a life where one can have someone driving you around but "I love driving."

So did Mr. Craig "love" driving in pothole-laden New York City? "You don't get streets like that, I suppose not even at sort of like 3 in the morning. I don't think the streets are as empty as that anymore." He had done a drive-through the day before, in traffic. "Once the traffic was out of the way, suddenly there was this wide boulevard opened up to me." That likely made the need for speed even more hard to resist. "Next time I get a street closed off in New York, I'm not holding back."

Mr. Craig certainly didn't hold back when in discussions with Land Rover about being a spokesman. When its Range Rover brand approached him about two years ago, he turned the tables, telling Range Rover what it could do for him: donate a Land Rover Defender to the Kenya team of S.A.F.E., a charity organization of which Mr. Craig is a patron, and whose founder, Nick Reding, was seated across from the actor during the interview on Tuesday. "I suppose you can say it was very cheeky of me to ask," he said.

Yes, Mr. Craig, we would certainly say that. Mr. Craig said he told Range Rover "'I'd rather not advertise your cars for the time being,' but they were still incredibly generous."

When Range Rover came calling again, Mr. Craig agreed to participate in the "live reveal" of the new Range Rover Sport, and asked for something in return. "I said ok, I would like to push this a bit further now because I'd like another car" for S.A.F.E. "And in fact they've been even more generous than that," pledging money to the charity as well, an amount which Mr. Craig said he would double.

In Range Rover's eyes, Mr. Craig was worth it. "He personifies this vehicle," said Land Rover design director and chief creative officer Gerry McGovern. "He's very British." So were some of the hors d'oeuvres, which included miniature bangers and mash and fish and chips. "He talks in the car's dynamic," Mr. McGovern continued. "He's athletic, he's capable ...you couldn't have a car in more safe hands than these."

Bad drivers in New York, meanwhile, might also appreciate having Mr. Strahan driving alongside or behind them too. The former NFL player turned morning talk-show host (and big car fan) often drives (himself) around the city. Sometimes other drivers will recognize him on the road or at a stoplight. "That's why I can't yell at people if their driving's bad," he said.

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