# Keith McNally admits fabricated Diane Sawyer romance amid ongoing James Corden feud



In an unexpected twist of celebrity tales, British restaurateur Keith McNally recently claimed to have had a “whirlwind love affair” with renowned journalist Diane Sawyer, igniting a firestorm of intrigue and scepticism. McNally, the owner of New York City's popular bistro Balthazar, shared the story via social media, recounting a chance encounter with Sawyer in London 53 years ago. His narrative described a romantic week spent together, vivid with details of a dinner in Sawyer's apartment and their first meeting at a theatre where both were captivated by a Tom Stoppard play.

However, the dramatic flair of McNally's post quickly unravelled when a representative for him confirmed that the entire account was fabricated. “The story is not true,” they stated, leaving fans and followers astonished and questioning the motive behind such a fantastical claim. In his original, whimsical reflection, McNally painted Sawyer as “stunningly attractive” and admitted his insecurities during their first interaction, providing a glimpse into an imaginative past that never was.

Timing around this anecdote is particularly intriguing as it falls in the shadow of McNally's recent feud with comedian James Corden. In October 2022, McNally made headlines when he publicly banned Corden from his restaurant, calling him the "most abusive customer" in Balthazar's 25-year history. Corden’s alleged rude behaviour towards restaurant staff, including complaints over food and demands for free drinks, had made him a target for McNally's ire, further thrusting the restaurateur into the spotlight. The ban was eventually lifted after Corden apologised, illustrating the complex interplay between celebrity and customer service in the high-stakes world of dining.

The Balthazar incident drew a wave of media attention, prompting discussions around the treatment of restaurant staff and the responsibilities of celebrity patrons. Notably, Corden acknowledged his missteps, admitting to making "rude" comments, reflecting on his prior experiences as a server. This brutal honesty appeared to provide a moment of reconciliation, culminating in the lifting of the ban, but not before McNally revealed the fragile balance of power that exists in the hospitality industry.

With Balthazar being a frequent haunt of A-list personalities, its reputation has been built on celebrity interactions that are often charged with the weight of public expectations. The restaurant has become a microcosm of cultural discussions around privilege, accountability, and the often overlooked lives of service workers, who bear the brunt of such encounters. McNally's past admissions of regret reflect a change in perspective; he has acknowledged the critical responsibility he holds in shaping a safe and respectful environment for both his staff and guests.

Now, with McNally’s fictitious tale spinning through the tabloids and his very real conflicts with Corden still simmering, the intersection of fame, memory, and the boundaries of storytelling continues to capture public fascination. The glamour of celebrity life often masks the deeper realities, sometimes leading to moments of farce, as in McNally's unwitting adventure into the realm of fiction.

The revelatory back and forth among Cook, Corden, and the implications of McNally's claims have resulted in a unique narrative of its own—one that underscores the complexities of modern celebrity culture, the ethics of public storytelling, and the significant human experiences often hidden behind the glitz of fame.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-14758923/diane-sawyer-romance-ny-restaurateur-feuded-james-corden-keith-mcnally.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-14758923/diane-sawyer-romance-ny-restaurateur-feuded-james-corden-keith-mcnally.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 2 – [[3]](https://www.vanityfair.com/style/2022/10/keith-mcnally-banned-james-corden-from-balthazar), [[4]](https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/story/2022-10-25/james-corden-balthazar-restaurant-new-york-late-late-show), [[5]](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/balthazar-james-corden-keith-mcnally-b2208001.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[6]](https://www.foxnews.com/entertainment/balthazar-owner-keith-mcnally-hits-back-james-corden-claimed-didnt-do-anything-wrong), [[7]](https://www.ew.com/celebrity/james-corden-unbanned-from-nyc-balthazar-apologizes/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[2]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-14758923/diane-sawyer-romance-ny-restaurateur-feuded-james-corden-keith-mcnally.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/story/2022-10-25/james-corden-balthazar-restaurant-new-york-late-late-show)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-14758923/diane-sawyer-romance-ny-restaurateur-feuded-james-corden-keith-mcnally.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-14758923/diane-sawyer-romance-ny-restaurateur-feuded-james-corden-keith-mcnally.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-14758923/diane-sawyer-romance-ny-restaurateur-feuded-james-corden-keith-mcnally.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-14758923/diane-sawyer-romance-ny-restaurateur-feuded-james-corden-keith-mcnally.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - British restaurateur Keith McNally claimed he had a 'whirlwind love affair' with television journalist Diane Sawyer, recounting their first meeting in London 53 years ago. He detailed their brief relationship and how they became lifelong friends. However, McNally's representative later confirmed to Page Six that the story was entirely fictitious. The alleged encounter would have occurred 14 years before Sawyer met her late husband, Mike Nichols. At that time, McNally was also single and had yet to marry. In October 2022, McNally made headlines after banning James Corden from his restaurant, Balthazar, due to alleged rude behaviour towards staff. Corden had reportedly berated staff over a hair in his food and demanded free drinks. He also allegedly reprimanded waiters over an omelette he was unhappy with. After Corden apologised, McNally lifted the ban. McNally later admitted that he felt 'really sorry' for Corden and reflected on the incident in his memoir. Sawyer was married to Mike Nichols from 1988 until his death in 2014. Balthazar, located in Manhattan's SoHo area, has been a popular celebrity hotspot, frequented by A-list names such as Anna Wintour, Zoey Deutch, Sienna Miller, Jared Leto, Mary-Kate Olsen, Tom Hiddleston, and Meryl Streep.
3. <https://www.vanityfair.com/style/2022/10/keith-mcnally-banned-james-corden-from-balthazar> - Restaurateur Keith McNally banned comedian James Corden from his New York City restaurant, Balthazar, accusing him of being the 'most abusive customer' in the establishment's 25-year history. McNally recounted two incidents: in June, Corden found a hair in his meal and demanded free drinks, threatening negative reviews; in October, he yelled at staff over an omelette served with fries instead of salad. Corden later called McNally to apologise, leading to the reversal of the ban. McNally expressed belief in second chances, stating, 'Anyone magnanimous enough to apologise to a deadbeat layabout like me (and my staff) doesn't deserve to be banned from anywhere.'
4. <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/story/2022-10-25/james-corden-balthazar-restaurant-new-york-late-late-show> - James Corden addressed the controversy surrounding his behaviour at Balthazar restaurant in New York, where he was accused of being 'ungracious' to a server. Corden admitted to making a rude comment and expressed regret, stating, 'I made a rude comment, and it was wrong. It was an unnecessary comment. It was ungracious to the server.' He acknowledged the difficulties of being a server, having worked shifts in restaurants for years, and expressed respect for those in the profession. The incident led to McNally banning Corden from the restaurant, but the ban was lifted after Corden apologised.
5. <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/balthazar-james-corden-keith-mcnally-b2208001.html> - Keith McNally, owner of Balthazar restaurant, responded to James Corden's dismissal of the controversy as 'silly' by questioning whether Corden was joking about his alleged behaviour. McNally stated, 'Whatever Corden meant, his implication was clear: he didn’t do it.' He also challenged Corden to apologise to the two servers he insulted, offering him free meals at Balthazar for the next ten years if he did. Corden had previously claimed he hadn't done anything wrong, leading to McNally's response.
6. <https://www.foxnews.com/entertainment/balthazar-owner-keith-mcnally-hits-back-james-corden-claimed-didnt-do-anything-wrong> - Keith McNally, owner of Balthazar restaurant, criticised James Corden after the comedian claimed he hadn't done anything wrong regarding the alleged incidents at the restaurant. McNally questioned whether Corden was joking about his behaviour, stating, 'Whatever Corden meant, his implication was clear: he didn’t do it.' He also challenged Corden to apologise to the two servers he insulted, offering him free meals at Balthazar for the next ten years if he did.
7. <https://www.ew.com/celebrity/james-corden-unbanned-from-nyc-balthazar-apologizes/> - James Corden was unbanned from Balthazar restaurant in New York City after apologising profusely to owner Keith McNally. McNally had previously accused Corden of being the 'most abusive customer' in the restaurant's 25-year history, leading to the ban. After Corden's apology, McNally reversed the decision, stating, 'All is forgiven.'