

33 Percent Rockstar

Music, Heartbreak and the Pursuit of Rock Stardom

Liner Notes

Music was my first love. I was fifteen when I purchased my first CD with money from my first paycheck from my first part-time job, washing dishes at a buffet restaurant. I remember the anticipation I had riding home from Sam Goody in the backseat of my mom's Ford Taurus. The CD was the self-titled studio album released by Temple of the Dog, a supergroup featuring members of alt-rock giants Pearl Jam and Soundgarden.

I arrived home and ran to my bedroom, unwrapping the CD packaging with the excitement of a kid opening presents on Christmas morning. I listened to that album probably five times that night and twenty times over the next few days. I was in love.

I was also mesmerized. The vocals, the guitars, the drums created a sound that I had never heard from my parents' Kenny Rogers and Oak Ridge Boys records that I was subjected to growing up. At that moment, I knew I wanted to play guitar. I knew I *had* to play guitar.

There was just one problem: I had never held a guitar, let alone played one. The closest I had ever come to playing an instrument was shaking a handbell in my sixth-grade music class. My performance was mediocre at best, and it didn't extend beyond that classroom.

I also had zero musical talent and was extremely musically challenged. I didn't know the difference between a hi-hat and crash cymbal, or melody and tempo, or distortion tone and clean tone. Fuck, I didn't even know the difference between an electric guitar and bass guitar.

I was twenty when I purchased my first electric guitar, a white Fender Stratocaster. I never learned how to play that guitar, but I never gave up on music—or the dream. A few years later I bought an Ibanez bass guitar, but this time I stuck with it. After countless hours of practice and persistence, I finally became a musician. Eventually, I'd become a damn good one.

Music has been the catalyst for some of the best and worst moments of my life, and this is my personal account of those moments and my attempt to become a rockstar. I became discouraged at times. I became arrogant at times—and I also became an asshole at times. I wanted to quit playing music on multiple occasions. I never made much money, but it was never about the

money. For the majority of this story I lived paycheck to paycheck, paying rent a few days late and constantly worrying about my debit card being declined. There are no cliché stories here. No stories about drug-fueled orgies or driving a car into a swimming pool. And no stories about heroin overdoses or performing sexual acts with a groupie and a freshly caught red snapper.

This book is about the love of music and my life as a musician. It includes my triumphs and struggles, my ups and downs, and it details every significant event during my musical career: the good, the bad, and the ones I would rather forget.

I calculate that I've played over 500 shows in a period spanning almost two decades. Everything from my musical career fits into a storage box that contains CDs, old demo tapes, 8 mm videotapes, various-sized T-shirts, band posters, stickers, and faded pictures. I also have the music, and the memories.