

BOOK SEVEN

"Pigs is pigs."

ELLIS PARKER BUTLER; Title of story

63. FIFI DOES ITS DUTY: INTERVIEW

EDITOR'S NOTE: In the months since this book was completed, FIFI has become, increasingly, a household name, revered by many, reviled by some, but undeniably the most successful group to ever come out of Washington, much less Yakima. This month, FIFI has released a retrospective album, entitled "FIFI - Does Its Duty," which includes a veritable gold mine of FIFI classics, plus a recently taped interview with He's and Annette, in which they reminisce about their successes and failures, their elations and agonies, on their long, long road to the top. Following is a transcript of that historic interview.

INTERVIEWER: *Good evening. Tonight we have the honor to speak to one of the most influential, if not the most influential and literate groups of our time - FIFI. Here we have Annette Funyjello, vocals, and He's, on guitar. Before we start, I'd just like to say that you have been and are more important and influential to rock music than, say, the Beatles, Jimi Hendrix, and Pink Floyd combined. Even more influential than, oh . . . say . . . the Village People.*

ANNETTE: *Wow, thanks. That means a lot.*

HE'S: *Yeah, thanks.*

INTERVIEWER: *Let's start from the beginning. How did you get together, and what did you do at first?*

ANNETTE: *Well, we were just sittin' there trying to invent a new board game involving a live horse, a circuit tester, and a flamethrower, and this guy, John Burton, said, "Hey, let's start a band."*

HE'S: *Yeah. Then he said, "We could call it BLUDGEON, dude. We could have a mascot named Freddy, and the covers of our albums could show him brutally murdering someone with a mallet."*

ANNETTE: *We liked this idea. But John left before we even recorded anything, so we recorded "Thrash On You," "Kill Your Mama" and "Rip Your Face Off" without him.*

INTERVIEWER: *That was your critically acclaimed first album, "Thrash On You."*

HE'S: *Yeah, it's too bad they didn't like it.*

(PAUSE)

INTERVIEWER: *Let's listen to "Skippy's Outta Jail" from your third album, "Captain Kangaroo Stole My Car."*

(LISTEN TO SONG)

INTERVIEWER: *Where did Burton go?*

ANNETTE: *He went off and joined a band called Porpuse.*

HE'S: *Yeah, I'm really not sure what happened to them. They pretty much faded off the scene after their first single got a "twenty-three" rating on "American Bandstand."*

ANNETTE: *That's probably because they didn't have any drums. They used . . . buckets. And they hit them with screwdrivers.*

HE'S: *Yeah, it was pretty pathetic, actually.*

INTERVIEWER: *Back to FIFI - wasn't it about this time that the group changed its name?*

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ANNETTE: Yes. We wanted a name that would show that we were moving in a new direction - exploring new musical boundaries. A new name that was totally original - unlike anything before it.

HE'S: Yeah, so we changed our name to MOLDY CRUD - you know, with the two dots over the "O" and the "U?" It was during this time that we wrote our now-legendary song, "Books That Kill," about a sadistic librarian.

INTERVIEWER: Was that song ever nationally released?

ANNETTE: No, actually, it was never recorded. We had some real bad problems.

HE'S: Yeah - our drummer broke the washbasin he was using as a bass drum, and he got grounded, which really put a damper on our plans for a world tour.

ANNETTE: Finally, we kicked our drummer out, because we felt he was a bad influence - being so destructive as to break a washbasin.

INTERVIEWER: Let's listen to "A Day In The Life Of A Doe," from your fourth album, "Don't Eat Bricks."

(LISTEN TO SONG)

INTERVIEWER: After you kicked Burton out - wasn't it around that time that you broke up?

HE'S: What is this in my beer?

ANNETTE: Uggh.

INTERVIEWER: Excuse me - wasn't it around then that you broke up?

ANNETTE: Well, we had some real personal problems - it was just a very emotional time for us - we were struggling, but now we're back!

HE'S: (slaps Annette's hand loudly) Whooo! Rock 'N' Roll!

ANNETTE: Alright!

HE'S: (ahem) Yeah, actually, I just lost his phone number, and never got a chance to go over to his house.

INTERVIEWER: Let's listen to the song "At Least You Saw The Jacksons," from your second album, "I'm More Humble Than You Are."

(LISTEN TO SONG)

INTERVIEWER: Tell us about the latest name change in the group.

ANNETTE: Well, for about two days, we were JEFFERSON MOLDY CRUD, 'cause we figured if Jefferson Starship wasn't gonna use it, we would. But then, we decided that we wanted a name that would show people that we're the rudest, toughest, most ear-shattering, brain-impaling dealers of musical, metal death ever to ravage the record shelves!

HE'S: Yeah! So, of course, we chose the name FIFI.

INTERVIEWER: What about the rumors of heavy drug use in the group?

(PAUSE)

HE'S: Yeah, well, we might as well tell the truth. There were major drug problems in the group for a while.

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ANNETTE: Yes, back in our *BLUDGEON* period, our drummer, John Burton, had big personal problems due to his extensive drug use.

HE'S: Yeah, he used all the heavy drugs - Tylenol, massive doses of Actifed, Nighttime Cold Medicine. We first became aware of his problem when we asked him about the hundreds of tiny plastic measuring cups strewn around his apartment. His drug use was really affecting his lyric writing, and we eventually kicked him. Um, out of the group.

ANNETTE: The "Psychedelic Marmoset" album was all his doing.

INTERVIEWER: Now, let's listen to "Rebellious Cottage Cheese," from your sixth album, "Night Of The Living Masking Tape."

(LISTEN TO SONG)

INTERVIEWER: How is touring life affecting the group?

ANNETTE: Touring is great. We just finished a massive Yakima-wide tour to support our EP, "Live And Rabid," which was released about a year or two ago, I think, and the fans were great. We love our fans. Before our tour, we got literally hundreds of letters.

HE'S: Yeah, but we decided to tour anyway.

ANNETTE: Besides, I didn't want to sign up for MasterCard.

HE'S: Yeah, and I wasn't about to join the Marines . . . although they sure did have a good t-shirt offer . . .

ANNETTE: And nobody ever wins the Publisher's Clearing House Sweepstakes.

INTERVIEWER: What about your fans?

ANNETTE: Our fans are the best. Then there's our groupies - they're pretty wild.

HE'S: Yeah, one time both of them came to my house, rang my doorbell, and ran away! That's pretty wild, ain't it?

INTERVIEWER: What do you think of the rock scene as a whole?

ANNETTE: Well, as a whole, it depresses me. I don't like it. It seems to me that very few groups are putting the care and effort into their albums and live performances that I feel is necessary for the group to have some impact. Music is nothing without caring and emotion.

HE'S: Yeah, I've also noticed that very few groups spit blood anymore.

ANNETTE: Whatever happened to that? I mean, a good example is the cover art on many of today's popular albums. The groups that perform on those albums are not involved at all with what's on the cover of their own album. I think that's really sad. We looked around for a long time for an artist to do our cover art the way we wanted it done. Finally, we gave it up and did it ourselves.

HE'S: Yeah, so few artists will agree to work with crayons anymore.

INTERVIEWER: Let's listen to "African Disequilibrium," from your fifth album, "Everybody Should Love Each Other And Live In Peace And Harmony."

(LISTEN TO SONG)

INTERVIEWER: I noticed on your last album, "Begging With Dignity," that a number of "guest musicians" appeared.

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ANNETTE: Yes, well, it's just that we're not above having others play on our albums, especially if it will enhance the music. We feel that if we see a way to make our albums better, even if it involves using "guest musicians," and we don't follow through with it, we're really letting down our fans.

HE'S: Yeah, besides, we feel that, with the kind of group we are, it's important to have things like vocals, guitars, drums, and so on.

INTERVIEWER: Are you planning on touring to support the new album?

ANNETTE: No - the road is just too tough. Touring is very hard work, and I don't think we could do a major tour anywhere right now. On the other hand, a small tour really wouldn't be fair to our fans.

HE'S: Yeah, besides, all our equipment got stolen and I kinda forgot how to play guitar.

INTERVIEWER: Let's look at the video for your latest top-twenty megahit, "Semi-Revolutionary Colons."

(LISTEN TO SONG)

INTERVIEWER: Wow. I . . . I'm stunned.

ANNETTE: Thanks. That's what we were hoping to hear.

HE'S: Yeah, thanks.

INTERVIEWER: Now - the future for FIFI. We hear you have a sixteen-hour epic miniseries coming up on HBO. A miniseries that many critics have compared to "The Ten Commandments."

HE'S: Yeah, it's kind of a cross between "The Ten Commandments" and "Herbie Goes To Monte Carlo."

INTERVIEWER: Will we be seeing that in the near future?

ANNETTE and HE'S: (in unison) Yes.

(PAUSE)

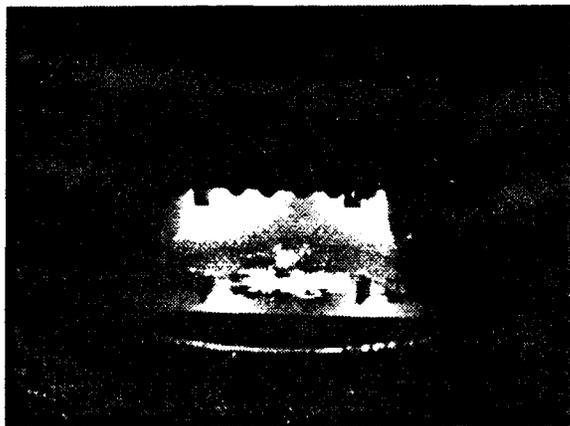
HE'S: Well . . . no.

ANNETTE: You see, we showed it to HBO. They were quite moved - some had to leave the room. There was an offer of \$50,000 up front, plus additional payments each time it was shown. Unfortunately, we couldn't reach an agreement, so the whole project was cancelled.

HE'S: Yeah, we were kinda lucky, 'cause I don't know where we'd come up with that kind of money.



ANNETTE AND ADORING FAN



ANOTHER PLACE WE ALMOST PLAYED, BUT DIDN'T

