# BOOK SIX

*BY: HE'S ABOY and ANNETTE FUNYJELLO*

*He's's, Like, Famous Quotation, Dude:*

**"I do not like them,**
**Sam-I-am.**
**I do not like**
**green eggs and ham."**

*DR. SUESS; Green Eggs and Ham*

*Annette's Quotation:*

**"Misfortune unites men, when the same thing is harmful to both."**

*ARISTOTLE; Rhetoric I*

# 49. HAMMER OF THE GODS

Yeah, well, I did too.

It was about this time that Rolling Stone published an article about us. We were really excited about it and felt that this might be the kind of national exposure we had been waiting for. That is, we thought so until we saw the title of the article, "WHY DOESN'T FIFI GO AWAY?"

In the article, the writer referred to us as "sexually retarded adolescents intent upon churning out an endless number of idiotic, crotch-grabbing songs whose musical incompetence is only equalled by their total lack of anything approaching a new idea and their wholly unlistenable quality."

Not, like, a really bad review, but I thought I detected a sort of . . . negative slant to it.

To, like, get back at the reviewer, we placed a full page ad in Rolling Stone, an ad which, we felt, proved our coolness. The ad read:

I KNOW YOU ARE, BUT WHAT ARE WE,
YOU IMMATURE POOPHEADS?
If you doubt our coolness, watch for our upcoming tour,
which will rival those of The Who or even Led Zeppelin
for sheer hotel destruction and paternity suits!

Signed, **FIFI.**

We immediately embarked upon a ten-show, fourteen-month tour. After the third show, though, we realized that the actual concerts were taking a lot of our time away from getting drunk, chasing girls, and wrecking hotels, so we cancelled the rest of the concert dates, but stayed on tour, devoting all of our time to being real rock stars.

Yeah, well, the first thing we did was buy sledgehammers and hacksaws for everyone in the group. We had to sell our music equipment to do this, but who cares? We were creating legends, dude!

Annette bought one of those super high-powered chainsaws and actually *removed* our suite from the body of the hotel, then towed the room into a nearby parking lot, and set it, and the bellboy, on fire. I acquisitioned a cement truck, and drove it into the sauna of our hotel in L.A., while Paul and Annette held a motocross rally in the lobby. But the best part was the chicks. Those chicks, I tell you, they were running all over the place when we let them out of their incubator.

The girls were fun, too.

Why, I remember one time when we had two babes in our hotel room - Hoo, boy! I mean, they were only there for a minute to drop off some room service food we ordered, but we leered suggestively at them the whole time. Also, Paul said the word "booby" under his breath, and we all snickered.

I remember another time, we had some groupies in our room, and they asked us if we had anything to smoke, so we gave 'em some really good stuff. One of these babes took a good, long drag, and said,

"Man, what is this?"

"You mean, you don't know?" I said, "It's, like, you know, drugs . . . it's . . . um . . . "

"Pot," Annette added.

I said, "Yeah, boy, am I rocked, er . . . stoned. This is good . . . um . . . "

"Weed, He's. Mary Jane, you know?" Paul said slowly.

"Dude, you must be really out of it - my name's not Mary Jane, it's He's. Anyway, babe, like I was sayin' -"

"Don't call me 'babe!' And this isn't pot! It's just, like, paper rolled up with nothing inside! It looks like some pages from T.V. Guide rolled up!' C'mon, Rhonda, let's go!"

"Whoa, whoa, hold on there, honey cakes - don't you want to stay and watch some . . . 'movies' with us?" I suggested.

"Oh, well, I guess. Do you really have some good 'movies?' "

"The best," I replied, "Paul, put in the 'special' movie that we made . . . ourselves."

"Oooh, this sounds good!"

So we sat down and watched our 'private' movie. Paul, Annette and I were having a great time laughing, gesturing rudely at the screen, making off-color jokes, and throwing food around the room. It was a pretty perverted movie, but that's the kinda guys we are. It seemed like the girls couldn't handle it, though, because, after a couple of minutes, one of them said, "Why are we watching someone's home movies of a school play?"

"Dude! This is Annette and Paul and me in 'Harvey!' Don't you like it? Look at this part! It's great! See, no one can see Harvey except - Hey! Where are you guys going? Hey, come back!"

Yeah, those were the days.

Yeah, well, anyway, our tour was going pretty good when something strange happened that spoiled our mood. We were partyin' in Spades, Indiana, just for old time's sake. We partied a lot, but we made sure not to shoot the lids off any cans with a gun. I mean, we're not stupid.

Yeah, well, anyway, after a hard day of restaurant-smashing and waiter-harassment, we were walking down Main Street. Suddenly, we heard a dog barking. We looked up, and saw a pink poodle on a small balcony above, yipping like it was in great danger.

"My word - it's the very physical manifestation of FIFI! It must be trying to tell us something! Listen!" Annette implored.

"Yip! Yip! Yip! Yip! Your new album sucks! Yip! Yip! Yip!"

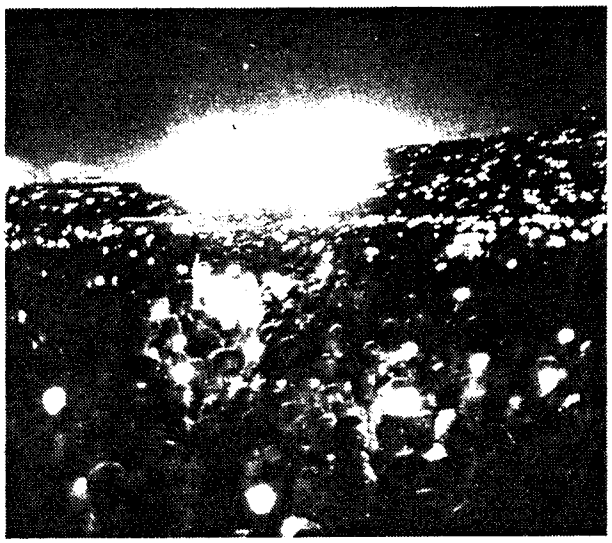
"What'd he say?"

"Yip! Yip! Yip! Yip! You are in great danger! Yip! Yip! You are my only hope! Yip! Yip! Trust the Force! Yip! Trust it! Yip! Yip! And stop playing 'Death Poodle' at your shows! Yip! It gives our movement a bad name! Yip! Yip! Yikes!"

Just then, a swarthy, mustachioed Algerian man with a wooden leg and a parrot on his shoulder walked out on to the balcony, picked up the poodle, laughed fiendishly, and, like, threw the poodle over the side. Before he went back inside, he turned toward us, and we saw his face clearly.

That memory, that face from the past, was to haunt us for days. And it was only later, after the nuclear explosion which killed Paul, that we would admit to ourselves whom we had seen.

**Jeff Lageson, The Anti-Jason.**



**FANS PAY FIFI TRIBUTE AT AN OPEN-AIR NIGHT CONCERT IN MUSKOGEE**

**ONE OF OUR FAITHFUL GROUPIES**

# 50. THE RETURN OF THE FOUR TRICYCLISTS OF THE APOCALYPSE

Yeah, well, about a month later, we were pretty much rolled up, er . . . "holed" up, in the studio. As usual, I was forced to, like, take charge of the recording process. Every faucet of the recording was under my strict control. I only let Annette perform minor functions that I thought he could handle, like . . . oh, just little things, like . . . well, I can, like, hardly remember, 'cause what he did was so minor, so unimportant, you know? He just did silly stuff that no one else wanted to do, like . . . oh, say, writing and arranging the actual, like, songs that we recorded. And also, he . . . if I remember right, he did the actual, um, singing of the particular songs we were doing. And sometimes, he produced. But that was it, man! I mean, he didn't even really need to show up. It was strictly my show, man. I was up there, on top of the world, dude, I mean . . . taking orders from nobody, doin' what I pleased and takin' my time, ya know? Kickin' butt and takin' names, man. That's just the way it was, dude. You just didn't mess with He's, boy. You just . . . didn't.

Yeah, well, I meant, "facet."

Anyway, we were sitting around one day - I was taking control, as usual, bossing the other guys around and stuff, when Annette came in.

"He's! Stop lallygaggin' and get me some coffee!"

This really ticked me off. You just don't push He's around, ya know? Anyway, so I looked Annette straight in the eye and gave him a really nasty look to show him just how mad I was, and just how much trouble he was in, and hit him with the cruellest, harshest verbal rebuttal I could come up with.

"I was not lallygagging, Annette! I was just . . . you know, just . . . goofin' around. Um, and one other thing, Annette -"

"WHAT?"

"Do you want cream in that coffee, or would you rather have non-dairy cream substitute?"

"Cream. Anyway, guys, I've got something to say - something that involves all of us. So listen up!" Annette declared. "I've been having some really weird dreams recently - mostly involving chain-link fencing, Greek mythology, green lawn furniture and Muenster cheese. But those aren't the important dreams. The really important dreams involve . . . " he drifted off.

"Chicks?" I ventured.

"Visions of life after death?" asked Paul.

"An explanation of life's mysteries and inconsistencies?" queried Michael, our engineer.

"A message from some higher inelligence, possibly extraterrestrials?" questioned Dan Carnahan, our sub-human roadie.

"Chicks in bikinis?" I guessed. "French chicks in bikinis? Twin French chicks in -"

"No, no, no. Nothing like that. My dreams are about . . . "

"What, what, Annette?"

"Will it change our lives?"

"Please tell us!"

"So it doesn't have anything to do with chicks?"

"No, no, no, He's. My dreams, my mystical, marvelous, sense-overloading, brain-filling dreams are about . . . "

"Yes? YES?"

"PORCUPINES. I dream of . . . porcupines. Constantly."

There was silence for a moment. Finally, Paul spoke.

"Um . . . I think I'm gonna go work on the . . . amp. The amp. It's not, um, working right, so . . . "

"Yeah, yeah . . . I'll, um, help you there, Paul. I think -"

"DAN. PAUL. GET BACK HERE," commanded Annette. "I know this sounds crazy, but I think it's really important. Do you guys remember when Jason -"

At the mention of this name, an awed hush fell over us. Well, not all of us. I managed to move out of the way quickly.

"- when Jason gave us spirit-animals? Paul, yours was the black-clad bringer of death, and enemy of all vegetation, the mighty slug. He's, yours was . . . say, what was your spirit animal, He's?"

"What? I never got no stupid spirit-animal! I musta been absent that day or somethin' . . . Hey! That's not fair! I want a spirit-animal, too!"

"Anyway, you guys, do you know what mine was?" Annette persisted. "A porcupine. 'Spiny-back-ed defender of those who . . . want another kind of person different from . . . the other sort of type of place . . . who shall . . . um . . . ' Anyway, it was the porcupine. Don't you see?"

"Well, it's kinda hard to hear you with this awed hush all over us. Man, could you help me get . . . ah, there we go. Now, what were you saying?"

"I was just saying, Paul, that Jason is trying to . . . to tell us something. Trying to signal us that . . . "

"He's going to bless us?"

"He's going to punish us?"

"He's gonna fix us up with some chicks?"

"No, no, no. He's trying to tell us that He's coming back. Pat, He Who Can Basically Be Considered For The Sake Of Argument To Be The Father Of The One Who We Called By The Earthly Name Of Jason would've been there, too, but He was busy fumigating the cesspool behind the Pietro's Pizza Corporate Offices. Remember, in the Book Of Toews, it says, 'When the moon of yesterday has entered the sixth phase of tomorrow's month of Sundays, and he who purchases and is undercharged, yet does not point it out and pay the full amount, when the sky becomes a sort of a purplish-blue-grayish type of color, when two men of stout stature wrangle over a piece of cloth stained with what appears to be some type of juice, and one man wins, when a cardboard box full of mud can be purchased for the price of a condiminium in Palm Springs, when all these things have come to pass, then, and only then, it just might be around the time when Jason, The Son Of Pat, might be about ready to head back to Earth, and lead His true apostles to the Promised Taco John's, where they will partake of the Salad Bar Of Eternal Life. O Yea, O Yea, Forsooth, Forsooth, Addis Ababa, Addis Ababa.' "

"What'd you say? I just got the last of that awed hush out of my ears, man. Ye-e-ech!"

"Look, let's go outside to talk about it," suggested Annette. "This awed hush is getting all over my shoes."

"Um . . . I'm gonna stay here and work on this dangerous electrical short-circuit in the amp, okay?" asked Paul timidly.

"Fine, fine."

"Great. Um . . . before you go, could you hand me that glass of water? I think if I kinda . . . wash off the wires and connections, it'll work better."

"Yeah, yeah, here you go. Anyway, as I was saying -"

"Oh, also, could you guys unplug the amp on your way -" Unfortunately, the door closed just then, and we couldn't hear the rest of Paul's sentence. As we began to murmur amongst ourselves on the front lawn, a bizarre sight paraded down the street in front of us.

"What in the -"

"Oh, no, it's -"

"I never thought I'd see <u>them</u> again!"

"Wow! Those are <u>radical</u> tricycles, dudes!"

"He's, don't you know who those guys <u>are</u>? Those are the Four Tricyclists Of The Apocalypse! Come on, let's catch up with them!"

As we started to run after them, I remembered. Of course! The dreaded Four Tricyclists Of The Apocalypse! The Personal Ministers Of War commissioned by Jason, Son Of Pat, to preach His message of obeisance to iceberg lettuce and eclair abstinence, who had later rebelled and vowed destruction and eternal torment of all Toewites.

We ran and ran, but we just couldn't catch up with them. Once, we got close enough to see the "hippo and kangaroo" tattoos on their cheeks, but, in the end, those tricycles were just <u>too</u> fast.

So, we walked back to the studio, sweating and panting, wondering just what in the Sam Hill was going on. As we rounded the last corner, and the studio came into hocus-pocus, er . . . "focus," we stopped dead in our tracks. Yeah, well, we weren't actually "dead," it's just an expression that we big-time authors like to use.

Yeah, well, the thing is, smoke was comin' out of the doors of the studio. A lot of smoke. Like, more smoke than you . . . usually see . . . coming out of a studio. More smoke than you could shake a stick at. Not that you'd <u>want</u> to shake a stick at smoke - it'd be pretty dumb, actually, since the smoke would just go, like, <u>around</u> the stick, and you'd look really stupid. Have you ever seen somebody shake a stick at smoke? It looks stupid. Trust me, I know.

Anyway, there was this smoke, and nobody that I could see was shaking a stick, or anything else, at it.

We ran inside and came across Paul, sprawled in front of the dismantled amp. Smoke was pouring from the amp, and Paul was lying in a puddle of water. Paul's hair was standing on end, and his face appeared to be covered with soot. It was obvious what had happened.

"C'mon, Paul," I urged, "this is no time to be taking a nap, dude. There were these guys outside, you shoulda seen 'em. Anyway, get up! Paul?" He didn't seem to hear me. I turned to Annette.

"Do you think he's dropping Nyquil again? He looks kinda . . . stoned or something," I mused.

"He's, you are an idiot. Paul has been electrocuted."

"Wouldn't he be all shiny and silver if -"

"Not electroplated, dimwit, electrocuted!"

"Oh . . . yeah. Well, anyway, it looks like he's pretty tired. Let's leave him alone. Now, about this spirit-animal thing. I don't see why -"

"He's, don't you know anything? We've got to get The Void to a hospital!"

"Well, we'd better hurry up. Don't hospitals close at five o'clock?"

"He's you . . . aaaugh! JUST GET PAUL IN THE CAR - I'LL LOCK UP THE STUDIO!"

Yeah, well, on the way to the hospital, I started thinking about what my spirit-animal would be - if I had one. By the time we reached the emergency room, I had come up with:

1. The Noble Wood Pika

2. The Graceful Albatross

and

3. The Beauteous Box Turtle

Plus, I thought up

4. The Vigilant Stain-Resistant Seat Cover, Saviour Of All Auto Upholstery

but it didn't sound quite right.

When we finally got Paul in to see the doctor, the news wasn't too good. It seems Paul went and fell into an irreversible coma. Anyway, we were told that Paul would probably live, as long as the doctor was allowed to perform the treatment as he saw fit.

"Yeah, well, what is this treatment, exactly?" I had been around doctors enough to know that half of them are quacks, just waiting to sucker you in to some ridiculous, phony, unethical non-medical procedure to make a fast buck off you before you die. I mean, I'm not stupid.

"Well, the treatment is a relatively . . . new type of procedure, and it involves hourly atomic bombardment of the genitals and the skull area, accompanied by some selective skull drilling, and gradual replacement of his blood with Nyquil Nighttime Cold Medicine. Okay? Of course, I'll expect you to pay the entire bill up front, CASH ONLY, and sign these medical release forms."

"Well . . . okay, sounds good. Is there a cafeteria in this hospital? I'm starved."

On our way back to the studio, I kept thinking of spirit-animals. Which one would be my own? The Marmot? The Sea Cucumber? The Muskrat? The Sunfish? Which would be the most appropriate? I decided to ask Annette.

"Annette, I'm trying to decide what animal to choose for my spirit-animal, and I've really been thinking about it seriously, and trying to figure out what Jason's wishes would be, you know, and I think that I've finally narrowed it down to the two that I feel most adequately define my spiritual essence. Will you help me decide?"

"I guess so. What are the two?"

"Well, I just can't decide between 'The Invincible Tapeworm' and 'The Steadfast Rhododendron.' What do you think? I mean, on the one hand -"

"Shut up, He's. Just . . . shut up."

**MICHAEL, OUR ENGINEER, PREPARES TO CAPTURE ON AUDIO TAPE ANOTHER MOMENT OF THAT BLOOD-CURDLING INTENSITY AND SOCIAL RELEVANCE THAT IS . . . FIFI**

# 51. DON'T EAT BRICKS

Yeah, well, so we went back to the studio and finished up the album, "Don't Eat Bricks." It included the following song, written by yours truly.

***WE'RE A BAND (INFESTED WITH THE RABIES OF TALENT)***

*We're FIFI*
*And we're gonna rock you*
*We might offend you*
*And possibly shock you*

*Give us your money*
*And come to our concerts*
*Buy all our albums*
*And buy all our T-shirts*

*CHORUS:*
*'Cause we're infested with the rabies of talent*
*Infected with the smallpox of greatness*
*We love our fans*

*Our music is trash*
*And we know it, too*
*What do we care?*
*It's good enough for you*

*Enter, ye metalheads*
*And bow at the temple*
*Kiss our feet*
*It's really quite simple*

*CHORUS*

*Give us your money*
*And come to our concerts*
*Buy all our albums*
*And buy all our T-shirts*

It also contained the following song written by Annette, based on fleeting memories of his parents.

***DON'T EAT BRICKS***

*CHORUS:*
*Stand up for what is right*
*Don't play dirty tricks*
*Don't get into fights*
*AND DON'T EAT BRICKS*

*When I was but a child*
*My Mom would say to me*
*"Don't pick your nose!"*
*And "Be who you want to be!"*

*She'd scream and pull my hair*
*"Don't cross your eyes - they'll stick!"*
*But I didn't think it was fair*
*She never let me eat bricks*

*CHORUS*

*She'd poke me in the eye*
*"Don't throw stones or sticks!*
*Eat all your eggplant casserole!*
*And DON'T EAT BRICKS!*

*"Don't talk back to me!*
*And don't mess with foreign chicks!*
*Don't put sharp objects in your ear!*
*And DON'T EAT BRICKS!"*

*CHORUS*

The songs I wrote were based on horrifying personal experiences. One day, I was eating an apple, and there was a - you're not going to believe this - a worm inside it! Ye-ech! The next morning, I was convinced that I heard my prune strudel growl menacingly. That afternoon, I wrote "Afraid Of Food" for Annette to sing.

***AFRAID OF FOOD***

*I'm afraid of beans*
*And I'm afraid of peas*
*I'm afraid of oranges*
*And so is He's*

*Afraid of Chicken Kiev*
*And Veal Parmesan*
*I pray for the day*
*Beef Boullion is long gone*

*Croutons are an evil plot*
*To soften our minds*
*Disease is transmitted*
*Through the stench of rotting orange rinds*

*GUITAR SOLO*

*The very sight of dry cereal*
*Makes me scream in fright*
*I dream of carnivorous Brussels sprouts*
*In the middle of the night*

*I'm afraid of lots of things*
*Like Chicken Cacciatore*
*Potato chips and pimento sauce*
*Really make me worry*

*Pork sausage and lean ground beef*
*Are trying to get above us*
*Coca Cola and coffee beans*
*Make you super-nervous*

It was also around this time that I realized that butter is always yellow. Why not Kelly Green or Dusty Rose? I called several dairy manufacturers, but all I got was the runaround. Strangely enough, all the people I talked to started talking about . . . nature walks, or something. They all suggested that I take their advice, and go for a long walk on some pier somewhere, but they didn't give me directions or anything on how to get there, so I never followed through on it. Anyway, based on my experiences, I penned the following song.

***BIGOTED BUTTER (PART XXVII OF "EVIL DAIRY PRODUCTS")***

*In a place beyond this mortal coil*
*Dwell Margarine who work the soil*
*'Neath baking sun and weighty chain*
*They cry as they melt, "When stops the pain?"*

*The Dairy Zealot Masters*
*While away their day*
*In opulent splendor*
*Carefree and gay, oh yeah*

*Bigoted Butter, baby now, yeah!*
*And Malicious Milk*
*Heap scorn upon Margarine, oh yeah!*
*And their ilk*

*"Margarine are less than human!"*
*The creed-bound Butter roar*
*"There's nothing on T.V. tonight, oh no, Mama*
*I say, let's start a war - Yeah!"*

*So, suddenly, the hammer fell*
*Persecution too horrible too tell*
*Scourging Mocha Mix and Margarine, oh!*
*Harboring powdered eggs was a sin*

*Fanatic partisan stormtroops, oh no!*
*Trained in the use of heatlamps, oh!*
*Wasted, melted Margarine, oh!*
*Made the dry land damp, uh!*

*Uh, then the margarine . . . did some stuff . . . yeah! All right!*
*That really made the, uh . . . that really made the . . .*
*Then the margarine did some stuff, yeah!*
*That really made the, uh . . . uh, well . . .*

*(MUSIC STOPS)*

***He's**: Wow . . . what <u>did</u> happen then?*

***Annette**: (clears throat) Um, well . . . uh, did you tell about the, um, uh, the, the . . . you know . . . the slavery and oppression of all . . . non-dairy products?*

***He's**: Mm, yeah, yeah, we covered that in verse four.*

***Annette**: Oh. Well, what about the, uh, the fanatic partisan stormtroopers -*

***He's**: Yeah, yeah, that was in verse five.*

***Annette**: Mm. Oh, well, what about the -*

***He's**: Yeah, we covered that, too.*

***Annette**: Oh. Well, what about the prophet Fleischmann . . . and . . .*

***He's**: No, I . . . I guess we didn't do that part yet.*

***Annette**: Well, let's . . . do it.*

***He's**: Okay.*

*(MUSIC BEGINS AGAIN)*

*The ordained prophet Fleischmann, oh, yeah!*
*Stood before Pontius Parmesan, oh!*
*But it didn't do any good, no - oh!*
*That's the end . . . of the song.*

I had been thinking about how happy I was with Kelly, and how much I despised the memory of Who's. In her memory, I wrote "Don't Wanna Hear Ya."

***DON'T WANNA HEAR YA***

*Don't wanna hear ya*
*Don't wanna hear ya no more*
*So stop your crying*
*And pick your face up off the floor*

*I loved you when I met you*
*Met you in a corner bar*
*You wrecked our home*
*And then you wrecked my car*

*Sick of your complaining*
*And what you put me through*
*Tired of all your lying*
*Why can't you be true?*

*So shut . . . shut your mouth*
*And let go of my leg*
*You look so stupid, baby*
*So stupid when you beg*

*Get out of my house*
*And get out of my life*
*I . . . I don't want you*
*Don't want you as my wife*

*Don't want to hear your footsteps*
*A-comin' through my door*
*I meant it when I said*
*That I thought you were a . . . whole*
*different person than you were when*
*I met you . . . I don't love you anymore*

In a strange twist of fate, the studio saxophonist we hired to play on "Don't Wanna Hear Ya" turned out to be John Burton's sister. She told us her brother's band, Porpuse, was doing pretty good, and should have a new album out soon.

I also wrote "A Day In The Life Of A Doe" as a sort of a protest against fur coat manufacturers and also as an indictment of the poor quality of programming on public television, although that message didn't come across as clear as I hoped it would. Here are the lyrics.

***A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A DOE***

*The air is clean*
*The water cool*
*A clearing by*
*A deep blue pool*

*A doe steps out*
*Of the trees*
*Onto the grass*
*By the reeds*

*Lilting music*
*Soon is heard*
*The singing of*
*The forest birds*

*The doe begins*
*To leap and prance*
*Caught up in*
*The forest dance*

*The doe's brown eyes*
*Soon turn red*
*The doe starts coughing*
*And then . . . drops dead*

Finally, we finished the album, and sent out for some Aunty Claire's Canned Candied Eclairs. When the delivery boy left, we all looked at each other.

"Didn't that guy look kinda like . . . Jeff Lageson?" I asked. "I mean, his hair was a different color . . . and style, he was much taller, and Jeff still has both of his legs, as far as I know, but, other than that, he looked just like him!"

"Jeff never had a moustache, though -"

"- And his eyes were blue, not brown -"

"- Jeff was skinnier -"

"- I don't think Jeff wore an eyepatch, did he?"

"- I'm not sure, but I'm positive Jeff had all his teeth!"

"Still," I stood firm, "I'm sure it was him . . . in disguise!"

"He's, maybe I'm being a little too picky, and it's really probably a minor point, but wasn't Jeff Lageson a . . . white person?"

"Yeah, well, that's just like you, Annette! You always have to pick apart everything I say! You're always tryin' to make me look stupid!"

"He's, I don't have to try to make you look stupid. You're alr -"

"Yeah, I know you don't have to, but you do anyway! Just quit pickin' on me! I believe, in my heart, that that one-legged, brown-eyed, half-blind, overweight black man with a moustache was Jeff Lageson - I'd stake my reputation as the world's greatest guitarist on it, dude!"

After I said this, everyone laughed, but I'm not really sure why. Anyway, we started eating the eclairs. After a couple minutes or so, I noticed that everyone but me was vomiting on the floor.

"What's the matter with you dudes? These eclairs are the best dang . . . OH MY GOD! Ble-e-e-e-e-e-eeach!"

Needless to say, I noticed just then that the eclairs were totally rotten, covered with yellow, green and grey mold. Besides that, strange bugs and worms were crawling around in the box. Thank goodness I only ate five or six.

Annette started sort of cleaning up the room, and throwing the trash away. Suddenly, he, like, explained . . . "exclaimed," I mean, "You guys - look what it says on the inside of the box!"
I peered closely at the container

"So what?" I commented. "It says 'Inspected by No. 18' on most boxes. And, anyway, I don't see what -"

"NO, NO, NO! Look at what it says here!"

I looked closer, and suddenly, my heart was filled with an icy terror.

"Great Day In The Morning, Annette! It's a . . . a UPC symbol! Gloriosky!"

"He's . . . I was talking about the cryptic, foreboding note here on the underside of the cover!"

". . . no artificial ingredients or -"

Annette grabbed my eyelids and pulled them down over my chin.

"You lame-brained boob! I'm talking about right here, where it says, 'Enjoy the eclairs, mongrels - we will meet again, sooner than you think! (I would cackle maniacally at this point, but that doesn't come across too well on paper.) Signed, Jeff Lageson (The Anti-Jason). P.S. I'd really like to . . . heh, heh . . . play a little game of soccer with you guys sometime!'

"Man, oh man," Annette sighed, "things are getting really strange!"

"You're telling me!" I agreed. "I mean, since when do Aunty Claire's Canned Candied Eclairs not have any artificial ingredients? No wonder they spoiled!"

"He's, did your parents have any children that lived? You're missing the point completely. First, my dreams about the porcupine, then we saw the Four Tricyclists Of The Apocalypse, and now this!"

"Yeah, well, it hasn't been a real great week, has it? Hey, what did he mean about wanting to play soccer with us? I don't get it."

"Oh, that was probably some kind of foreshadowing about something that's going to happen later on in the book. But, the point is, things are coming to a head! Something is going to happen, and soon! Something that will change our lives irrevocably!"

Suddenly, I realized the incredible implications of recent events and the importance of their effect on us. I just had one vital question.

"Annette? Do you think my acne will go away then? I've been trying and trying to -"

"Aaaaaugh! He's, you make my brain hurt! Turn on the TV, and shut your trap!"

I walked over and clicked on the TV - a K-Mart "Pioneer" model, with specially-designed tin-pie-plate antenna extender, and a custom vice-grip wrench channel-selector knob, for ease in operation. The other reason we had the wrench on there was that the knob that used to be on there fell off. I wiggled the pie plates and jiggled the "Craftsman" vice-grips wrench, but to no veil. Er, "avail." Finally, I turned on the dishwasher in the kitchen and revved up the electric mixer. That seemed to help, and the picture whizzed into focus.

"- perversions of all kinds!" was what we heard, so we all sat closer and listened.

"I'm telling you, brothers, these vile practitioners of lawlessness are everywhere among us, yes, that's right!"

Apparently, it was some kind of television evangelist. I like those guys, you know? They're someone you can always trust and look up to.

"Brothers and sisters, let me read to you from the Holy Scriptures, in the book of (ahem, cough-cough-cough) the Apostle, (hack-hack-cough) of Solomo- (achoo!) -velations, chapter (ahem, cough) and verses (mumble, ahem) through (cough). No need for you to look it up, brothers and sisters - I'll quote it for you.

"It sayeth, 'But, whoa, I say, whoa, to those who practiseth these acts of evildoers, you bet, for I may just rise up in the valley of Hin'-nom-rob-so-seth-be-huel, and strike down mine enemies and people who buggeth me with a very heavy, blunt instrument, such as a blackjack, or a meat tenderizer, even. And those who mayeth not trespass into the kingdom include adulterers, murderers, and wearers of mini-skirts, especially leather or denim ones; rebellious children, those having no natural affection for their elders, and abusers of mollusks, drunkards, brawlers, and writers of gothic romance novels under assumed names. These, yes, these and three more will not enter the kingdom, I surely say to you, all these, plus homosexuals, Klansmen, and WEREWOLVES will not, can not, should not ever inherit my kingdom, No way, No how, O Yea, O Yea, Forsooth, Forsooth, Addis Ababa, Addis Ababa.' "

"Oh, no!" cried Annette, pointing at the television screen and trembling. "Do you know who that is? It's . . . it's . . . it's . . . "

I boxed his ears, and he continued.

"It's . . . The Ayatollah Reverend Father Most Holy Richard Mente! The guy who ran us out of the United States years ago! The guy who founded the Church of the Mentat! Remember, He's? We had to go to Jamaica?"

"Oh, no! He's the dude that revealed that BLUDGEON was the same group who made the 'Psychedelic Marmoset' album, right?"

"Right!" Annette affirmed. The TV was starting to snow out, so I rummaged through the hall closet, pulled out our electric snow blower, and turned it on. That seemed to solve the problem, and we continued to watch.

"- some time ago, I revealed to the American public that the putrid, sa-ton-ic, musical (although I hesitate to use the word 'musical') group who called themselves BLUDGEON, was not only the same group who created the dis-gusting, anti-Christian, dee-mo-ny-ick 'Psychedelic Marmoset' album, but that the members of BLUDGEON were nothing but a coven of homosexual Klansmen and WEREWOLVES!!"

Annette gulped loudly. Sweat formed on Paul's brow.

"And what do you think I have to tell you now, brothers and sisters? I have just been informed that those e-vil, vile, doers of unmentionable acts (involving a horse, a circuit tester, and a flamethrower) have resurfaced in our country under a new name . . . the devil-inspired, hellish, demented and morally questionable name of . . . FIFI!!"

We all, like, looked at one another.

"And what does the Bible have to say about that, brothers, at Acts of (ahem, cough, cough, hack) -anticles to (hack, hack, a-tchoo!) the Ephesians, chapter (ahem, choke, choke, hack) and verse (h-h-h-h-e-e-e-e-c-c-c-h!!). Read along with me, won't you? It says to us, 'And in those end times of strife, confusion, and dwindling call-in contributions (A-H-H-H-H-E-E-EM!), brothers, there shall arise in the house of Bo'-az-ru-el-a-chim, son of Ra-moth-bu-shu'-el-re-hem-li-hech, son of . . . ' Brothers, skip down to verse (cough), would you? '. . . son of Ray'-mond, yes, there shall arise an evil one, an ugly, bad-smelling one (not just one, actually - we're speaking symbolically, after all), who shall call himself after a high-strung,

foreign dog. And his very clothing shall reek of chocolate frosting and cream filling. And this one should not be allowed to dwell within your gates, nor without your gates, nor have any sort of dealing with anyone's gates, anywhere. This one should not be allowed to dwell in the land, nor bear fruit, nor own land, nor purchase on credit, except with a sizable down payment. And the end of this one, this drooling cur, this repugnant mongrel, this . . . FIFI, shall come with the high-pitched "buzz" of various power tools, and the staccato "rat-a-tat" of automatic weapons fire -' "

There were ecstatic shouts of "A-MEN TO THAT!" and "THAT'S RIGHT, JEE-ZUSS!" from the studio audience.

"So we see, brothers, that this menace to our spirit, this . . . FIFI, must be stamped out in any way we can. I am a God-fearing man, and would never, could never condone or advocate physical violence or intimidation . . . except in this case. In this case, brothers, I think God's will would best be served by the brutal dismemberment of every member of FIFI. Not only does God want you to do this, brothers and sisters and little ones . . . I want you to do this - I am offering a one million dollar reward to the God-fearing person who . . . destroys FIFI!"

More zealous shrieks of "TAKE ME, LORD, TAKE ME!" and "TELL ME, JEE-ZUSS, TELL ME!" from the audience.

"Now, won't you all welcome to 'Mente From Heaven' a very special man . . . one of our top contributors , won't you please put your hands together for -"

We gaped, slack-jawed, at the TV.

"- Jeff Lageson! President of Aunty Claire's Canned, Candied Eclairs and Clandestine Cleaning of Clinical Clothing, Incorporated, Corpus Christi!"

The audience gave Jeff a standing ovation. We sat, dumbstruck. Jeff spoke.

"You know, Richard, I think the work you're doing here is so very, very wonderful, and such an inspiration to the young people of America. I also want to say that you're just absolutely right about that group . . . uggh! I can't even say their name . . . you know who I mean. Those hedonistic, sloth-molesting, lycanthropic, trash-peddling deviates, FIFI . . . uggh! It just makes me sick, Richard, and I want you to know that my company, in cooperation with the FBI, CIA, and numerous other Federal agencies will not rest until substantial bodily harm and property destruction has been done to each and every member of FIFI. And, if those members of FIFI are listening in right now, I'd like to challenge them to a . . . heh, heh . . . little, friendly game of soccer."

I burst out, "What is with the soccer deal? Why does he keep -"

"Ssshhhh!" Annette reproached me.

Reverend Mente spoke again.

"Jeff, will you please lead us in song today? Thank you. Now, then, brothers and sisters, won't you please turn in your hymnals to page (h-h-h-a-a-ack!), that would be song number (aaa-tchoo!), entitled 'The Lord God Hates Werewolves.' And won't you please join me in giving a warm, Mentat welcome to our musical guests this month, they're doing a great job, only their second time on the show, won't you please give a big, Christian round of applause, to -"

Our jaws, already drooping by our chests, fell in our laps.

"- John Burton and his band, Porpuse! Hit it, brothers!"

John Burton, arrayed in priestly robes of gold, clicked his drumsticks together four times, and the other members of Porpuse, along with their newly-added forty-voice choir ensemble, began the song. John, beating out the hypnotic rhythm on his new set of gold-plated buckets and washbasins, raised his eyes to heaven (and camera number three) and began to sing lustily.

"O the Lord God hates werewolves
Gays and Klansmen, too
And if you look in the Bible
You'll see just what He'll do

"He'll stab them and flay them
And poke out their eyes
He'll fry them and roast them
And serve them with fries

"O the Lord God hates werewolves -"

Annette looked at me squarely.

"He's, we're in deep trouble."

Outside, somewhere in the distant distance, a poodle yelped as a large, domestically-made car drove over its tail.

# 52. DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

Yeah, well, we decided that the best thing we could do was put the band's future to a democratic vote. There was me, Annette, Dan Carnahan (our sub-human roadie), Jenny (Annette's wife), Kelly (my wife), Paul (though we weren't really sure if he could vote, being in an irreversible coma and all), a vagrant we pulled in off the street (as a "control"), and Doug (the vagrant's wife).

So, altogether, that was, what . . . nine people? Er . . . wait . . . me, Annette, Dan, Jenny, Kelly, Paul, Doug, and his husband, Bob . . . that makes nine, right? Er . . . I mean . . . just a second.

Oh, I know - it was nine 'cause I had two votes. Yeah, that's right.

Yeah, well, anyway, we voted pretty much around anonymously . . . er, I mean, "unanimously" . . . I was thinkin' "anonymously" 'cause we didn't actually give our names while we were actually voting, so it was pretty much "anonymous," right? Although I suppose if you were, like, looking, you could see who was raising their hands for what, but that's sorta cheating, isn't it? I never cheat - I always close my eyes when we're voting, man. What do you think I am, some sort of lowlife scum gangster or something, trying to fix elections and stuff? You think I'm the type of creep who takes androids and stuff before I go on stage? Wait a minute. Er . . . I mean, "steroids." Well, you can just blow it out of . . . whatever you don't . . . normally . . . blow it out of, dude! Don't mess with He's, man! Not ever! I'll dress you up! Um, I meant . . . "mess" you up! Yeah.

Yeah, well, anyway, we were pretty much in total agreement. Out of the . . . what was it, eleven votes? There were five votes for, "let's go on tour," and five votes for "let's sell everything we own, get plastic surgery, change our names, and move to the Negeb Desert."

So, as you can see, we pretty much totally agreed, except I really couldn't see why one or two . . . or five . . . people didn't want to go on tour. I got pretty picked-off.

"Yeah, well, why don't you guys want to go on tour? It's our . . . Destiny! It's our . . . Fate! No one can rock harder than FIFI! We are the rock gods of our era! The record-buying public adores us! The people will worship us! The people will bow to us! The people will -"

"The people will gladly disembowel us and sell our livers to Pakistani sausage merchants!" objected Annette. "He's, the FBI and the CIA are after us for that Nyquil bust, the PTA and the PMRC and the PTL are after us for our 'offensive' album covers and 'pornographic' lyrics, the FDA and the USDA are looking for us because of 'Afraid of Food' and our 'Evil Dairy Products' series -"

"Not to mention PAWS, the ASPCA and PETA for supposed defamation of poodles!" expostulated Dan (our sub-human roadie).

"And the ACLU and the NAACP for 'Hitler Wasn't So Bad' -" added Kelly.

"- and the IRS for tax evasion!"

"- and the USPS for postal fraud with your stupid 'inspirational' tape!"

"- SADD, MADD and AA for our drunken, destructive tour binge!"

"- and let's not forget the NFL, NHL, NBA and WWF, the VFW -"

"- the FDIC, ASLIC, HBO -"

"- MASH -"

"- WKRP -"

"Where the H-E-C-K is the J-O-H-N?" demanded Doug.

By now, I was getting truly teethed . . . er, "peeved."

"I'm telling you, you guys are a bunch of whimpering C-R-I-B-A-Y-B-E-E-Z!" I snarled. "This tour could be our big chance! FIFI could become a household name!"

"I think it already is," Annette snickered. "We're not just hated by a few lousy rock critics - we're internationally reviled! Did you see the news this morning, He's? The President burned us in effigy on the White House lawn! Thousands of people - men, women, children, schoolteachers, high school guidance counselors, high school band teachers, Jews, pet lovers, chefs, underarm deodorant users, seamstresses from all over the world, nuns, for crying out loud, cheered him on! A group of monks in Sweden received a special papal dispensation to break their vows of silence just so they could chant, 'DOWN WITH FIFI! KILL THE MEMBERS OF FIFI, OR ELSE GOD WILL!' outside our record company's offices! He's, your ex-wife, Who's, appeared on '60 Minutes' to tell the world what a lunatic you are! The Ayatollah Richard Mente has put a million-dollar contract out on your head! Great day in the morning, He's - Leo Sayer came out of retirement to say he agrees with the Ayatollah Mente, and would tell the Ayatollah where you were if he knew! We are being hunted by half the country, He's! If we go out on tour, we will most surely die, and most probably be dismembered! There is no way that I am going on tour!"

"Yeah, well, so what are you trying to say, exactly?" I asked.

"Tell you what, He's, let's ask Paul what he thinks! If he says 'yes,' I'll go along with it."

"Annette, Paul is in an irreversible coma, and probably will be for a while. He can't possibly vote!" I countered.

"Look, He's, it's five for and five against - let's let Paul cast the deciding vote. Unless Paul says, 'Go on tour,' I'm packing my bags and shopping for a late-model, low-mileage camel!"

So it was that I began to, like, approach Paul's gurney.

"Yeah, well, what do you say, Paul?" I began hesitantly. "I know you're in an irreversible coma and all, but can't you get your act together for just a minute? Should we go on tour, or what?"

Nothing happened at first, and then, after nothing had been progressively happening more and more, the "nothing happening" stopped happening, and something actually started to happen. Paul's face contorted, and he started to sweat, his bed started shaking, he started rocking violently from side to side, a jet fighter plane flew twenty feet over our heads, the room began spinning, Paul was drooling, Doug popped a big bubble with his saliva, and I think Bob belched or something, and then, Paul's EKG monitor screen (we got a good deal on it from Aunty Claire's Critically Acclaimed Canned Candied Eclairs, EKG Machines, And Camel Contractors, Incorporated, Corpus Christi) flickered and shook, and the words

GO ON TOUR

appeared, to our amazement.

"Wow," said Kelly.

"That's incredible!" whispered Dan (our sub-human roadie).

"I've never seen anything like it!" murmured Jenny.

"Oh, the humanity!" cried Bob, wiping away tears.

"Can someone please show me the way to the T-O-I-L-E-T?" demanded Doug, hopping about on one foot.

# GO ON TOUR

read Paul's EKG monitor screen forcefully.

"Okay, I guess you know what you're doing," admitted Annette, with a sigh. "I'll go on tour, and so will everyone else."

"Yeah, well, you better, 'cause I am what it's all about, boys and girls! I am the MASTER OF DISASTER! I am the BIG CHEESE and the HEAD HONCHO! I am NUMERO UNO, and what I say, goes! I WAS BORN IN THE U.S.A., AND I AM THE BOSS! I am the BIG MAN! I am THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA! I AM THE WALRUS, KOO KOO KA CHOO! I AM THE - hey, where are guys going? Come back here, I'm talking to you! Hey!"

Only after everyone else left did Paul work up the strength to complete the message on his EKG monitor screen.

## GO ON TOUR, AND YOU WILL SURELY DIE LIKE THE PAGAN SCUM YOU ARE, HEATHENS! O YEA, O YEA, FORSOOTH, FORSOOTH, ADDIS ABABA, ADDIS ABABA!

I figured there was something wrong with Paul's EKG monitor, so I kicked it, real hard. After that, Paul kinda . . . jumped, and the monitor started to make this long, high-pitched "Be-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-p" sound, so I kicked it again, even harder, and it went back to normal. Then I sat down and started to really worry, bad.

Somewhere in the distance, a poodle yelped as a large bucket of battery acid got spilled on its paws.

Yeah, well, needless to say, I, like, started to worry even more, dude.

# 53. THE *WHO* ?

Yeah, well, so, anyway, we went on tour. But something kinda weird happened at our first show, so we cancelled the rest of the dates. Actually, "kinda weird" is not really the right term - "horrifically tragic" is better, but I was saving that phrase for later in the book, when Paul gets killed in the nuclear explosion, or possibly in the "soccer-game-to-the-death" sequence. I think it would fit those parts better. I mean, those things are truly "horrifically tragic." All that happens in this part is a few people get trampled to death.

So, we went on tour, and all of Annette's fears turned out to be rebounded. Er . . . "unfounded." Once they put our name up on that parquet . . . er . . . "marquee," I mean, of course, dude, uhm . . . where was I? Oh, yeah - once they put our name up on that Marquis DeSade . . . er . . . parakeet . . . Marrakesh . . . I mean, "billboard" - yeah, "billboard." Okay, now, I'm sorry, but I kinda gotta start over - where was I? Okay, once we moved to Marrakesh . . . I mean, bought the parakeet . . . wait a minute!

What was I mentioning there a second ago, there where we were talking about . . . what was it? Margarine . . . margarine . . . oh, yeah, Parkay margarine - yeah, we were all on a . . . diet . . . and the Marquis DeSade . . . I know Three Mile Island fits in here somewhere - oh, that's the part where Paul dies. Whoops! Didn't mean to give that away! Paul . . . doesn't really "die" per second. Er . . . "per se," I mean - what I really meant was that - what? Hey, hold <u>on</u> a minute! Annette, give me back that <u>book</u>, dude! C'mon! Hand it <u>over</u>, you sheepdip! Hey, I -

**FIFI'S PRIVATE LUXURY TOUR BOMBER**

**THE VOID, ANNETTE, JEFF HENDERSON, AND HE'S**

Hi, this is Annette taking control of the book for a while. To our faithful readers, I must apologize for He's . . . he had a sad life, what with his parents being run over by a rampaging milk truck and all. Plus, Paul being in an irreversible coma and Joey having been aboard the ill-fated Challenger has really affected him. He still hasn't really gotten over Who's leaving him for that harelipped bassoonist and everything.

Besides which, he's just basically a brainless slug.

I felt that I should break in here and tell you all what really happened, no matter how painful and embarrassing it is to me personally. Anyway, it's part of my therapy.

So what happened is, we scheduled a concert at the Yak-Dome in lush downtown Yakima, Washington, right next to the Bing Crosby Memorial Trailer Park and the World-Renowned Yakima Split Pea Festival headquarters.

We got together with the promoters and such to make the business arrangements and so on, when the guy whose job it was to put the name of the group on the billboard outside the Yak-Dome gates comes up to us and says, "Hey, what name should I put on the sign?"

He's turns around, breaking off his conversation with the t-shirt and souvenir manufacturers, and says, "Just put 'those hometown favorites -' "

"We're not from Yak -" I began.

"SHUT UP!" bellowed He's, as fire began shooting from under his eyelids. "Just put 'THE ROCK GODS OF THE 20TH CENTURY!' "

"He's, your clothes are splitting at the seams," I opined.

"SHUT UP!" roared He's, as smoke issued from his nostrils.

"The what?" queried the slightly deaf old man whose job it was to put the name of the group on the billboard outside the Yak-Dome gates, cocking his head quizzically.

He's's hair had begun to sprout to astounding lengths, also turning green, as he screamed, "SHUT UP! JUST PUT 'THOSE "MONSTERS OF ROCK," THOSE "KINGS OF THE ROAD," THOSE "SECRET AGENT MEN," THOSE "CELLULOID HEROES," THOSE -' "

I interrupted once more, "He's, we didn't write any of those songs, plus the billboard isn't big enough for all those - aauuuugh!"

At this point, He's performed a Vulcan nerve pinch on me, and I slumped to the floor. But, while I was immobile, I could still hear and see everything, which He's did not realize. That's how I know what happened next.

He's turned back to the t-shirt man, "NOW, WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT - ahem - what were you saying about the tour dates on the shirt?"

"Did you want me to print 'SOLD OUT' next to each of the dates?"

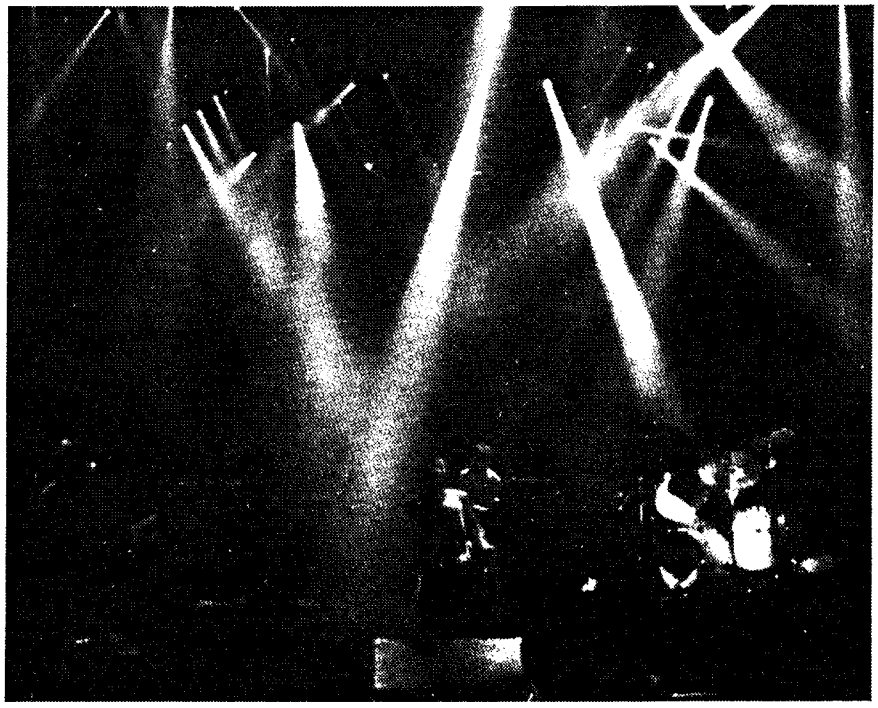
At this same instant, the guy whose job it was to put the name of the group on the billboard outside the Yak-Dome gates, still befuddled, asked He's, "The who?"

He's, thinking he was answering the t-shirt guy, said, "Yeah, well, yes, yes, that's exactly what we want. Excellent. Now get out of here - I hafta practice, dude! We go on in fifteen minutes."

The guy whose job it was to put the name of the group on the billboard outside the Yak-Dome gates muttered, "Well . . . okay," and shuffled out.

At this point, He's began ranting and raving about going to Marrakesh to buy a parakeet, and I passed out.

Now that we've got that straight, I guess I'll let He's continue where he left off.



**THE EYE-BOGGLING AND TRULY AWESOME LIGHT SHOW THAT WE WERE GOING TO PUT ON, BUT DIDN'T END UP BEING ABLE TO**

Yeah, well, okay, dude - I'm back. This is He's. I just gotta say that what Annette was telling you right there was completely Bolshevik. Everything went great that night - it was totally perfect and right - everything went exactly like it was supposed to, except for the part later on when six or seven people got trampled to death, which was . . . well, you know, not "horrifically tragic," I guess, but something pretty close to it.

So, there we were, sittin' backstage, with our tour chicks, havin' some fun, y'know? That's one of the best things about being hugely famous - the cute chicks! So, we're sittin' there, and Annette wakes up from . . . a, uhm . . . nap. Yeah, he takes a lot of . . . naps.

"Yeah, well, Annette - did you have a good 'nap,' dude?"

"He's, you ingrate! Don't ever give me a Vulcan nerve pinch again! And stop winking at me like that! What do you mean, 'sssh'? I can say whatever I want. I don't care if it does get into the book! The public should know the abuse I have suffered! I want - hey! Get away from me with croquet mallet! Hey! Ow! Don't - nnnngghh!"

Yeah, well, right about then, Annette decide to take another nap. Meanwhile, I put the chicks back into their incubator.

I could hear the crowd gathering in front of the stage, and chanting for us to come out. I couldn't really understand what they were saying - it was something like, "We want the dudes! We want the dudes!" Then they started yelling out for someone named "Ronny" or "Donny," and a friend of his, called "The Window Lizard," or something. Probably the opening group, I guess.

A couple of minutes later, we got our backstage delivery from Aunty Claire's Critically Acclaimed Canned Candied Eclairs and Clandestine Cleaning for Clinical Clothing, EKG Machines, and Carpentry Consultation, Incorporated, Conglomerate, Corpus Christi. I paid the delivery boy, while Annette struggled to wake up from another one of his probably drug-related "naps."

"Oooooooh my head!"

"Did you have a good 'nap,' Annette?" I asked sweetly, concerned, like, with his, you know, well-being, and all.

"Ooooooooow my head! What are you talking about, 'nap?' And why are you winking at me like that? Hey, is that a . . . monkey wrench you're holding?"

"Yeah, well, what monkey wrench? I don't see any monkey wrench. You must not be fully awake yet, dude - let me help you get the sleep out of your eyes -"

"NO, NO, NO - that's, uh, fine. I had a great . . . 'nap,' He's. I feel much (yawn) better. I just need to, uh . . . stretch a little, man . . . I'm fine, really."

"I thought so."

"Hey, He's? Did I just see Jeff Lageson in here delivering candy or something? I'd swear it was him."

"Annette, that guy whose job it was to deliver candy backstage at the Yak-Dome was NO WAY Jeff Lageson. For one thing, that guy was a girl."

"Jeff could've been wearing falsies."

"Yeah, well, no way, dude. That girl whose job it was to deliver candy backstage at the Yak-Dome was about two feet taller than Jeff."

"He could've been wearing platform shoes."

"That girl -"

"- The one whose job it was to deliver candy backstage at the Yak-Dome?"

"Yeah, well . . . yeah. Her. She only had one arm, she was obviously of South Nigerian descent, she was missing all her front teeth, her neck had been lengthened by wearing hoops around it her whole life, she was apparently blind, her nostrils were pierced, she had six fingers on her left hand - there is NO WAY that girl -"

"Which girl?"

"The one whose job it was to deliver candy backstage at the Yak-Dome - there is NO WAY that was Jeff Lageson, the Anti-Jason, dude. NO WAY."

"Well . . . whatever. I think you're being too picky - I'm sure it was Jeff. I mean, she <u>was</u> carrying a soccer ball. Anyway, it's time to go on. I can hear the audience chanting for us . . . what are they saying, He's?"

"Yeah, well, it's something like 'De-Forestation' or 'Why Amputation?' . . . I'm not sure - must be some sort of political lobbying group. Although, if that's true, I wonder why they're in the main auditorium - they should be in the -"

"Shut up, He's. Let's go on stage."

We took the stage amid chants of something like, "Magic Dust! Magic Dust! We want the <u>dudes</u>!"

That kinda upset me, 'cause we're not a drug group anymore, you know? I mean, we used to do all that rock star stuff - hammering Nyquil and sodas (a "Godzilla") 'til 9PM at night, taking Actifed and Comtrex even when we didn't have a runny nose - but we found that wasn't for us, you know? With all that antihistamine and codeine in our bloodstreams, we couldn't write the really great songs we wanted to. We just weren't able to realize our full potential as musicians, you know, dude?

Besides, we were afraid our moms would find out, and we'd get grounded or something.

Obviously, the crowd was completely igneous, 'cause they were still screaming out incoherent non-sequin, er . . . "non-sequiturs," like, "Won't Buy Tools Again," "You Better Get Wet," and (this one really confused me) "I Can See Your Tiles." I asked Annette if my tiles were showing, and he looked at me real weird and went over to his microphone stand.

Yeah, well, all the lights went out, and the audience went wild, screaming, "Dudes! Dudes! Dudes!" or "Ludes! Ludes! Ludes!" (we really weren't sure which) and then the glowing, smoking "Death-Poodle," the twenty-foot tall papier-mache-and-christmas-light monster we had built descended slowly from the rafters, suspended on some really strong twine we bought at the "Yak 'N' Gas" down the road.

Sort of an awed hush fell over the crowd, I guess, 'cause they all got real quiet all of a sudden, probably out of their deep respect for our music.

The announcer began to speak.

"LADEEEEZ AND GENTLE-MENN! WON'T YOU PLEEEEEZ GIVE A WARM 'YAK-WELCOME' TO THE ROCK GODS OF OUR ERA - THOSE HOMETOWN HEADBANGERS -"

I heard some people, like, gasp in astonishment at this point. I guess they were just so excited they couldn't help themselves.

"THOSE 'MONSTERS OF ROCK,' THOSE 'KINGS OF THE ROAD,' THOSE 'LONG COOL WOMEN IN A BLACK -' just let me skip to the end, here, folks . . . let's see - those 'men from glad' - no, no, no - those 'men from u.n.c.l.e.' - no, no, no . . . oh, yes, here we are - (ahem) - WON'T YOU PLEEEEZ PUT YOUR PAWS TOGETHER FOR . . . <u>FIFI</u>!"

Then the screaming started again . . . but <u>louder</u>, and Annette approached the microphone.

"Thank you, ladies and gentlemen - it's great to be back in our hometown! It's been . . . too long. We'd like to do a song for you right now from our 'Don't Eat -' . . . Hey! Come back! Where are you guys going? Come back in here!"

From behind Annette, Paul (in his iron lung) beeped worriedly. Or, you know - his EKG thing did. Beeped, I mean.

We all went over to Paul. I moved the bass guitar off his chest and face so he could actually, like, breathe, and we looked with curiosity at his EKG monitor screen.

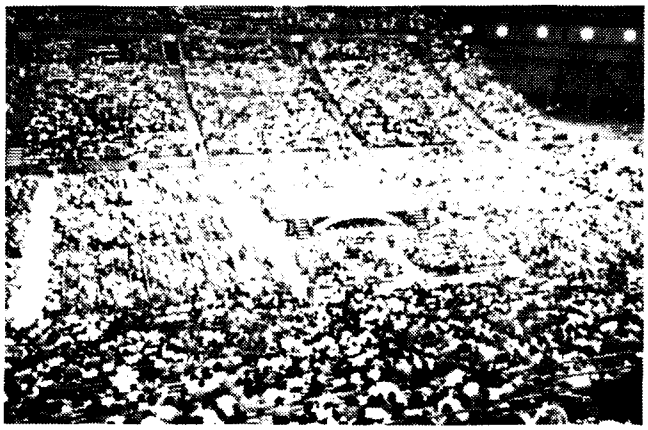
**WE SHOULD GO**

It read for a minute, then

**BEFORE THEY COME BACK**
**WITH THE TAR AND FEATHERS.**

I wasn't until much later on, in the Negeb Desert, that we heard about the six or seven people leaving the Split-Pea Festival headquarters that got trampled to death by the people fleeing from the Yak-Dome.

Yeah, well, I'm still not sure if my tiles were showing, or what. That would explain a lot of things.



**AN ARTIST'S CONCEPTION OF WHAT THE CROWD AT THE YAK-DOME WOULD HAVE LOOKED LIKE, IF THEY HAD ALL STAYED, RATHER THAN STAMPEDING OUT LIKE A HERD OF FRIGHTENED BUFFALO**