

# **ANEXO**

**Píntalo de rosa: Bob Dylan y Kurt Cobain en los medios de comunicación**

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## **Artículos Revista TIME**

### **Rock 'n' Roll: Going to Pot**

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ROCK 'N' ROLL

They'll stone ya when you're try'n to go home,

Then they'll stone ya when you're there all alone.

But I would not feel so all alone,

Ev'rybody must get stoned.

A caveman's lament? A paranoid's fantasy? Could be, but then the convoluted verses of *Rainy Day Women*, like most Bob Dylan songs, are open to a variety of interpretations. In any event, some radio stations have banned the record because, they say, the song is an obvious paean to the joys of smoking pot. In the shifting, multilevel jargon of teenagers, to "get stoned" does not mean to get drunk but to get high on drugs. But what cinched it for the radio men was the title: a "rainy-day woman," as any junkie knows, is a marijuana cigarette.

The controversy whipped up by *Rainy Day Women* in recent weeks has caused disk jockeys to comb through lyrics like cryptographers. What they have found is a spate of new songs dealing with all kinds of taboo topics, many of which, veiled in hip teen talk or garbled in the din of guitars, are being regularly aired over the radio. POP MUSIC'S 'MORAL CRISIS,' screamed the front-page headline in *Variety* recently; Dylan disciples countered by adopting a line from his new *Ballad of a Thin Man* as their nose-thumbing rallying cry: "Something is happening here, and you don't know what it is, do you, Mr. Jones?" What is happening is that the folk-rock movement, heady with the success of its big-message-with-a-big-beat songs (*TIME*, Sept. 17, 1965), has been prompted to try racier, more exciting themes. It is no longer down with the P.T.A. and conformism, but—wheel—onward with LSD and lechery.

In-Group Game. It is all in the name of kicks. "The adult world," says Marty Balin, 23, lead singer for San Francisco's most popular rock 'n' roll group, the Jefferson Airplane, "pays us all this money to play at their political benefits and society parties, and then we throw out this jargon and watch them be revoked. That's kicks." The Jefferson Air plane flies on weekends at a discotheque in Fillmore Auditorium, where projectors flash quivering,

amoeba-like patterns on the walls to induce the dancers "to take a 'trip' [an LSD experience] without drugs." One of the Airplane's "trip songs" is Running Around the World, an abstract number that, says Balin, celebrates the "fantastic experience of making love while under LSD."

But not all the rockers are as ready to explain their "hidden meanings." That would destroy the mystique. As a result, the pop-music audience has become divided into two camps: the Dirties, who read debauchery into the most innocuous lyrics (they see Frank Sinatra's Strangers in the Night, for example, as a song about a homosexual pickup), and the Cleans, who would argue that Ray Charles's Let's Go Get Stoned is a call to take part in a Mississippi freedom march. To the Dirties, such songs as Straight Shooter (junkie argot for someone who takes heroin intravenously) and You've Got Me High are, of course, fraught with double entendre. Scanning for hidden meanings, in fact, has become something of an in-group game for many teenagers. Take the ditty I Love You Drops. "It's probably pretty innocent," says a Washington rock 'n' roll fan, Anne Williams, 17. "But he could be getting high on nose drops. You can, you know."

Decapitated Dolls. For variety, high-schoolers can also contemplate the problem of suicide in A Most Peculiar Man or search for the supposed reference to an unwed mother in Little Girl or a whorehouse in Doll House. But the real snigger is in decoding the sexual innuendos. Sometimes it is easy: Lou Christie's Rhapsody in the Rain, for example, was banned by many radio stations because, as the program director for WLS in Chicago, Gene Taylor, explains, "There was no question about what the lyrics and the beat implied—sexual intercourse in a car, making love to the rhythm of the windshield wipers." A tougher test is the Rolling Stones' I Can't Get No Satisfaction, which has sold 4.5 million copies, with Lead Singer Mick Jagger wailing, "I'm tryin' to make some girl." Difficulty was, Tagger's diction is so slurred that many stations unwittingly played the record; others bleeped out the offending phrase. But, gloats Jagger, "They didn't understand the dirtiest line." That is the one where the girl pleads: "Baby, better come back later next week 'cause you see I'm on a losing streak." Says Jagger: "It's just life. That's what really happens to girls. Why shouldn't people write about it?" Why, indeed. Says one record promoter: "The kids with the clean songs are having a hard time coming up with hit songs."

Perhaps so, because the latest group to get into the act is the true but hitherto-never-blue Beatles. One of their recent releases, Norwegian Wood, has been interpreted by some as the tale of a man trying to seduce a lesbian. Another, Day Tripper, can be interpreted as the lament of a man who finds out that his girl is a prostitute ("She's a big teaser . . . she only played one-night stands"). If that doesn't shake up the Beatles' fans, then the cover of their latest album would. It is a photograph of the famous four wearing butchers' smocks and laden with chunks of raw meat and the bodies of decapitated dolls. The first reaction to the cover in the U.S. was so violent that Capitol Records pulled it off the market, explaining that it was a misguided attempt at "pop-art satire."

Scatological Satires. But when it comes to sheer shock value, no one can match the Fugs. The Fugs have no use for innuendo: they lay it right on the line. While such ditties as *Wet Dream over You* and *Group Grope* (which features two simulated orgasms) are obvious even to the grown-up squares, the Fugs' scatological satires have gained a steadily growing audience on the college campuses. Says Chief Fug Ed Sanders: "There are too many taboos in society, and we want to eliminate them. Being a Fug is better than being on a peace walk."

While the Fugs have unquestionably extended the trend to extremes, not everyone has gone to pot. *Kicks*, a song written by the husband-and-wife team of Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil, warns so effectively about the evils of drugs that the composers were given an award by Synanon, the self-help group for narcotics addicts.

**Link: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,835889-1,00.html>**

## ***Colorado: Death of a Flower Baby***

*Publicado el viernes 1 de diciembre de 1967*

"The devil is loose," mourned one young hippie, "and as long as he is loose, there will always be wrong things." Then a score of hippies in Denver murmured prayers for a "beautiful person" named Carol and a requiem for Carol's little Billy.

Billy was the darling of the denizens of the crash pad at Provo House, a tarnished brick relic of bygone opulence hard by Denver's Capitol Hill area. Provo House, named for a group of Dutch student rowdies by a Californian who calls himself "The Strider," proffered free mattresses and sometimes free food to hippie drifters, dropouts and runaways. The flower children lavished their love on Billy, making sure that the cheerful blond two-year-old always got a generous portion of their meager meals. Only when forced to take a bath would Billy blow his cool.

One morning last week, after Billy was taken by his mother to the bath, there were childish screams followed by sounds of glass shattering, then silence. Two building inspectors who happened to be in the house were told of Billy's aversion to bathing and left after rattling the bolted bathroom door.

An hour later, two hippies clambered to a porch outside the bathroom window and looked in. They saw Billy's body in the tub. His wrists had been slashed and a broken wine

bottle thrust deep into his chest. Billy's mother, Carol Metherd, 24, sat silent on the puddled floor, her hands, T shirt and slacks soaked with blood. The two horrified hippies smashed their way into the room. Carol later curled on the floor in a fetal position; her only sign of life was the rolling of her eyes.

Carol Metherd was a loner who lived apart from her husband. She studied horoscopes, Zen Buddhism and the maunderings of a ouija board and, it was said, turned on without drugs. "She was very spiritual," said a hippie named Mongol. But another recalled that Carol had talked of using "speed" (an amphetamine drug) to control her weight; a prolonged "high" with amphetamines is often followed by an even deeper letdown.

At week's end Carol was in a hospital while Denver's district attorney, James D. McKeivitt, awaited the outcome of chemical tests for drugs on samples of her blood. "This is just a tragic example of what is going on in that area," said McKeivitt, who has watched Denver's hippie population swell from almost nothing to an estimated 3,500 inside a few months after the Colorado legislature refused to make possession of hallucinogenic drugs such as LSD and speed a criminal offense.

***Link: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,712004,00.html>***



Portada del informe dedicado al movimiento Hippie el 7 de Julio de 1967

# ***The Hippies***

*Publicado el viernes 7 de julio de 1967*

## YOUTH

One sociologist calls them "the Freudian proletariat." Another observer sees them as "expatriates living on our shores but beyond our society." Historian Arnold Toynbee describes them as "a red warning light for the American way of life." For California's Bishop James Pike, they evoke the early Christians: "There is something about the temper and quality of these people, a gentleness, a quietness, an interest—something good." To their deeply worried parents throughout the country, they seem more like dangerously deluded dropouts, candidates for a very sound spanking and a cram course in civics—if only they would return home to receive either.

Whatever their meaning and wherever they may be headed, the hippies have emerged on the U.S. scene in about 18 months as a wholly new subculture, a bizarre permutation of the middle-class American ethos from which it evolved. Hippies preach altruism and mysticism, honesty, joy and nonviolence. They find an almost childish fascination in beads, blossoms and bells, blinding strobe lights and ear-shattering music, exotic clothing and erotic slogans. Their professed aim is nothing less than the subversion of Western society by "flower power" and force of example.

Although that sounds like a pipe-dream, it conveys the unreality that permeates hippiedom, a cult whose mystique derives essentially from the influence of hallucinogenic drugs. The hippies have popularized a new word, psychedelic, which the Random House

Dictionary of English Language defines as: "Of or noting a mental state of great calm, intensely pleasurable perception of the senses, esthetic entrancement and creative impetus; of or noting any of the group of drugs producing this effect." With those drugs has come the psychedelic philosophy, an impassioned belief in the self-revealing, mind-expanding powers of potent weeds and seeds and chemical compounds known to man since prehistory but wholly alien to the rationale of Western society. Unlike other accepted stimuli, from nicotine to liquor, the hallucinogens promise those who take the "trip" a magic-carpet escape from reality in which perceptions are heightened, senses distorted, and the imagination permanently bedazzled with visions of Ideological verity.

Hashish Trail. From this promise, possibly more exciting—and more dangerous—than any adventure offered by travel agents, was born the cult of hippiedom. Its disciples, who have little use for definitions, are mostly young and generally thoughtful Americans who are unable to reconcile themselves to the stated values and implicit contradictions of contemporary Western society, and have become internal emigres, seeking individual

liberation through means as various as drug use, total withdrawal from the economy and the quest for individual identity.

Only last year, many sociologists and psychiatrists dismissed the hippie hegira with a verbal flick of the wrist. The use of mind-changing drugs such as LSD, said National Institute of Mental Health Director Stanley Yolles in 1966, was a fad, "like goldfish swallowing." City officials blandly waited for the hippies to go away; indeed, a year ago they had established scarcely half a dozen inchoate colonies in the U.S.

Today, hippie enclaves are blooming in

every major U.S. city from Boston to Seattle, from Detroit to New Orleans; there is a 50-member cabal in, of all places, Austin, Texas. There are outposts in Paris and London, New Delhi and Katmandu, where American hippies trek the "hashish trail" to get cheap but potent hallucinogens and lessons in Buddhist love. Though hippies\*consider any sort of arithmetic a "down trip," or boring, their own estimate of their nationwide number runs to some 300,000. Disinterested officials generally reduce that figure, but even the most skeptical admit that there are countless thousands of part-time, or "plastic," hippies who may "drop out" only for a night or two each week. By all estimates, the cult is a growing phenomenon that has not yet reached its peak—and may not do so for years to come.

Flora & Fauna. During their school and job vacations, thousands of summer trippers will drop out for weeks on end, aggravating the problems of accommodation and hygiene that are already straining many an urban budget. Addressing the Mayors' Conference in Honolulu late last month, San Francisco's public-health director, Dr. Ellis D. ("LSD") Sox, said that the 10,000 hard-core hippies already in San Francisco are costing the city \$35,000 a month for treatment of drug abuse, warned that with a summer influx there was serious danger of epidemics in infectious hepatitis (from needles exchanged in shooting amphetamines), venereal disease (already up six times from the city's 1964 rate), and other illnesses ranging from typhus to malnutrition.

Despite such dire predictions, perhaps the most striking thing about the hippie phenomenon is the way it has touched the imagination of the "straight" society that gave it birth. Hippie slang has already entered common usage and spiced American humor. Department stores and boutiques have blossomed out in "psychedelic" colors and designs that resemble animated art nouveau. The bangle shops in any hippie neighborhood cater mostly to tourists, who on summer weekends often outnumber the local flora and fauna. Uptown discotheques feature hippie bands. From jukeboxes and transistors across the nation pulses the turned-on sound of acid-rock groups: the Jefferson Airplane, the Doors, Dow Jones and the Industrials, Moby Grape (there is also a combo called Time).

Last week the hippies were in full flower. In New York City, they brought their tambourines and guitars to the aid of dog owners protesting the leash laws in Greenwich



Village's Washington Square Park, chanting "What is dog spelled backward?" Other New York hippies raised \$2,100 for a bail fund to rescue "busted" (arrested) buddies. At California's Seal Beach, 2,500 devotees gathered for a sunny "love-in" that throbbed to the rhythm of trash-can drums and random flutes. In Dallas, 100 "flower children" gathered in Stone Place Mall, the public hippiedrome, to protest an ordinance that would prohibit gatherings there. A dozen hippies paraded barefoot through the White House, then promised to return for a July 4 "smoke-in" to lobby for legalized marijuana.

Elephant Bells. San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district—a throbbing three-eighths of a far-from-square-mile—is the vibrant epicenter of the hippie movement. Fog sweeps past the gingerbread houses of "The Hashbury," shrouding the shapes of hirsute, shoeless hippies huddled in doorways, smoking pot, "rapping" (achieving rapport with random talk), or banging beer cans in time to ubiquitous jukebox rhythms. The tinkle of Indian elephant bells echoes from passing "seekers"; along the Panhandle of Golden Gate Park, hollow-cheeked flower children queue up for a plateful of stew, dispensed from the busy buses of the Diggers, a band of hippie do-gooders. Last week the sidewalks and doorways were filling with new arrivals—hippies and would-be hippies with suitcases and sleeping bags, just off the bus and looking for a place to "crash" (sleep). Wise hippies wrap themselves in scrapes against the San Francisco chill, or else wear old Army or Navy foul-weather jackets and sturdy boots. One way to identify the new arrivals is by their mod clothes: carefully tailored corduroy pants, hip-snug military jackets, snap-brimmed hats like those worn by Australian soldiers (also known as Diggers).

Rubberneckers are now as much a part of The Hashbury scene as are hippies. At the Drogstore, where a bowl of minestrone or a hamburger costs 75¢, goggle-eyed straights in suit and tie sniff the air for the musky-sweet scent of marijuana; others flock to such hippie shops as the Print Mint and the Phoenix to buy pornographic or psychedelic posters.

The Hashbury's pads are something else. Most of them sport gaudily painted doors and rainbow window shades; in one window near the Drogstore is a gigantic copy of a canned-fruit ad that, in red, green and gold, proclaims "Del Monte Boobs." Within The Hashbury circulate more than 25 undercover narcotics agents, who arrest an average of 20 hippies a week, usually for possession of marijuana. Busted hippies in turn come back under orders to inform on their suppliers, but the drug sources are so varied and elusive that the "narco" squad has yet to pin down any major outlet.

Formidable & Forbidding. Difficult as it is to take precise bearings on the hippies, a few salient features stand out. They are predominantly white, middleclass, educated youths, ranging in age from 17 to 25 (though some as old as 50 can be spotted). Overendowed with all the qualities that make their generation so engaging, perplexing and infuriating, they are dropouts from a way of life that to them seems wholly oriented toward work, status and power. They scorn money—they call it "bread"—and property, and have found,

like countless other romantics from Rimbaud to George Orwell, that it is not easy to starve. Above all, as New York's Senator Robert Kennedy ("the best of a bad lot" to hippies) puts it: "They want to be recognized as individuals, but individuals play a smaller and smaller role in society. This is a formidable and forbidding arrangement."

To alter that arrangement, the hippies hope to generate an entirely new society, one rich in spiritual grace that will revive the old virtues of agape and reverence. They reveal, says University of Chicago Theologian Dr. Martin E. Marty, "the exhaustion of a tradition: Western, production-directed, problem-solving, goal-oriented and compulsive in its way of thinking." Marty refuses to put the hippies down as just another wave of "creative misfits," sees them rather as spiritually motivated crusaders striking at the values of straight society where it is most vulnerable: its lack of soul. In a sense, hippiedom is a transplanted Lost Horizon, a Shangri-La a go-go blending Asian resignation and American optimism in a world where no one grows old.

It is in the hope of settling that precious state, and defining his position in it, that the hippie uses drugs—first for kicks and then sometimes as a kind of sacrament. Anti-intellectual, distrustful of logic, and resentful of the American educational process, the hippie drops out —tentatively at first—in search of another, more satisfying world.

Follow the River. "The standard thing is to feel in the gut that middle-class values are all wrong," says a West Coast hippie. "Like the way America recognizes that Communism is all wrong." They feel "up tight" (tense and frightened) about many disparate things —from sex to the draft, college grades to thermonuclear war. Hallucinogenic drugs like marijuana and LSD, they believe, are the knives that cut those knots. Once unleashed, most hippies first become insatiable hedonists, smoking and eating whatever can turn them on in a hurry; making love, however and with whomever they can find (including "group grope") that "feels good and doesn't hurt anybody"; saturating the senses with color and music, light and motion until, like an overloaded circuit, the mind blows into the never-never land of selflessness. The middleclass ego, to the hippie, is the jacket that makes society straight, and must be destroyed before freedom can be achieved. One East Coast hippie recently held a "funeral" for his former self. "You must follow the river inside you to its source," he said, "and then out again."

In a recent study, three University of Southern California graduate students interviewed 18 randomly selected LSD users for a period of four months, found that the primary quality in common was a history of unhappy family life. All of the acidheads were loners and losers, with few friends and few accomplishments before they dropped out. They were definable in three main subspecies: the "groovers," graduates of the 16-to-19 mod-togged teeny-bopper school who take drugs mostly for libidinal kicks; the "mind trippers," 17 to 22, who wear flowers and unassuming dress, and turn to hallucinogens mainly for therapy; and the "cosmic conscious" hippies, introspective, mystical and "spaced" (out of

communication), whose drug use is primarily Eucharistic in nature, an attempt to "find God."

Land of Cockaigne. Whatever his status, the hippie is a confirmed believer in the benefits and benefices of his own way of life—even though he recognizes that if all the world were hip, he could not survive without a return to work and routine hang-ups. "Hippiedom is more than a choice of life style," says Chuck Hollander, 27, drug expert for the National Student Association.

"It's an apolitical systemicide." If there were a hippie code, it would include these flexible guidelines: >Do your own thing, wherever you have to do it and whenever you want. > Drop out. Leave society as you have known it. Leave it utterly. > Blow the mind of every straight person you can reach. Turn them on, if not to drugs, then to beauty, love, honesty, fun.

As a result, there are hippies of every stripe: city and suburban hippies, who can do their thing only in urban environments; beach hippies and mountain hippies, Indian hippies and neoPolynesian hippies, desert hippies and river hippies, musical and poetical and light and sound hippies, all doing their thing as they see it to be done, some alone and some in "tribes" of like-minded thing-doers.

A swelling sense of utopianism pervades the hippie philosophy. It has little in common with the authoritarian city-state envisioned in Plato's Republic, or Sir Thomas More's Utopia, which was a bustling agricultural collective where everyone worked six hours each day. Hippie millennialism is purely Arcadian: pastoral and primordial, emphasizing oneness with physical and psychic nature. The University of Toronto's Northrop Frye, a professor of English and a disciple of Communications Philosopher Marshall McLuhan, sees the hippies as inheritors of the "outlawed and furtive social ideal known as the 'Land of Cockaigne,' the fairyland where all desires can be instantly gratified."\*

No Wants. The hippie philosophy also borrows heavily from Henry David Thoreau,\* particularly in the West Coast rural communes, where denizens try to live the Waldenesque good life on the bare essentials—a diet of turnips and brown rice, fish and bean curd —thus refuting the consumerism of "complicating wants" essential to the U.S. economy. Historically, the hippies go all the way back to the days of Diogenes and the Cynics (curiously, no rock combo has yet taken the name), who were also bearded, dirty and unimpressed with conventional logic.

The hippies like to relate to such ancient figures as Hillel, the 1st century B.C. Jewish prophet of modesty and peace, and of course to Christ ("a groovy cat"). Buddha, they recall proudly, was a dropout from a royal family who later came back to the palace and turned on his father, the king, with nothing more than sincerity and a mendicant's bowl. St. Francis of Assisi, who left a rich Italian merchant family to live in poverty among the

birds and beasts, is another hero, along with Gandhi (for his patient nonviolence), Aldous Huxley (for his praise of hallucinogens in *Doors of Perception*), and J. R. R. Tolkien's *Hobbits* (with their quirky gentleness and hairy toes).

The key ethical element in the hippie movement is love—indiscriminate and all-embracing, fluid and changeable, directed at friend and foe alike. SUPERZAP THEM ALL WITH LOVE! proclaims a sign in Los Angeles' Sans Souci Temple, a hippie commune. Manhattan hippies whose skulls were zapped by police billies during a Memorial Day "bein" in New York's East Village are now trying to arrange a picnic for the cops' kids, as well as a Mantovani record concert for the officers them selves. Charges against the hippies were dismissed last week by Criminal Court Judge Herman Weinkrantz, who said: "This court will not deny the equal protection of the law to the unwashed, unshod, unkempt and uninhibited."

Black & White. The immediate progenitors of the hippies were the beats of the 1950s, but there has been a startling transformation in bohemia. Many of the same elements were present in the Beat Generation: scorn for...

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## ***THE CYNICAL IDEALISTS OF '68***

*Publicado el 7 de junio de 1968*

THE troubled and troublesome college Class of 1968 tends to have a sober, even tragic view of life. They were high school seniors in the year that John Kennedy, a politician who gained their trust and inspired their ambitions, was shot to death in Dallas. They were college seniors in the year that Martin Luther King, the Negro leader who tapped their idealism and drew them into social protest, was murdered in Memphis. Throughout all of their college careers, the war in Viet Nam has tormented their conscience, forced them to come to personal decisions relating self and society, country and humanity, life and death. With the lifting of most of the graduate-school deferments, the men of '68 face the war and those existential issues as an immediate, wrenching reality.

Such pressures, direct and indirect, have had a profound impact on the 630,000 seniors who will pick up diplomas this spring. While many—perhaps a majority—are the familiar

breed who spent their years at college in pursuit of an education or a profession without fretting too much over the meaning of either, even the quiet ones have been affected more than they show. Those who are in the really new mold sometimes show it by a defiance in dress: beards beneath the mortarboards, microskirts or faded Levis under the academic gowns. More often, and far more significantly, it emerges in a growing skepticism and concern about the accepted values and traditions of American society. Some of these graduates will become draft dodgers. Many smoke pot. Fewer than ever remain virginal. Yet it is also true that the cutting edge of this class includes the most conscience-stricken, moralistic and, perhaps, the most promising graduates in U.S. academic history.

Children's Crusade. Worldwide, this has been the year of student power. Taking to the streets to engage in bloody combat with police, students triggered a crisis for the Fifth Republic in France, contributed to the liberalization of Czechoslovakia, challenged the authoritarianism of Spain, and assailed the sluggish social institutions of West Germany. At home, the spontaneous "children's crusade" of college kids was largely responsible for making Senator Eugene McCarthy into a serious candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination.

The Class of '68 has also harassed military recruiters and Dow Chemical interviewers, picketed induction centers, held massive—and sometimes unruly—rallies to protest the war. It has eyed its own campuses critically and loudly cried out for a more relevant education. It has demonstrated in support of fired professors and striking janitors, thrown itself in front of campus bulldozers, demanded everything from black-culture courses to total freedom from parietal rules.

These disruptive power tactics have been led by a relatively small group of radicals who hate all authority. Yet many campus-wide protests have involved moderate and even conservative students with little or no use for the doctrinaire polemics of Students for a Democratic Society. Many students reluctant to march or picket have nevertheless been stirred to face the issues raised. The jolting, dramatic atmosphere created by defiant demonstrators, television cameras and, frequently, charging police have left only the most aloof students untouched. Bridging the Gap. For all its deep commitment to protest and activism, the Class of '68 nevertheless seems to be more restrained than the Class of '69, '70 or '71 is likely to be. At many campuses, the instigators of the most violent demonstrations were sophomores or juniors. The seniors still see more in U.S. life worth saving, and have a far greater willingness to accept its traditions. English Major Thomas McKenna of Notre Dame rather pretentiously defines the Class of '68 as "the in-between class. We are the last of the old radicals, those who are willing to revolt in the systematic American way. We could be the salvation of everyone if we can just bridge the gap, for we have a foot in each view of American life."

The American way of life, though, has to prove itself. Introspective and analytical, this year's graduate may buy it after all—but not without a good deal of criticism and suspicion. "People have always accepted our system without question," says Penn Senior Dennis Wilen in one of those crashing oversimplifications that ignore history. "My class will not stand for that." The questioning extends well beyond the Johnson Administration's rationale for the Viet Nam war to the inevitability of capitalism and the viability of present political systems. The graduates insist that there is a need to fight injustices at home, not to "shoot peasants in Viet Nam"—an argument, of course, that is not the exclusive insight of youth. Some students have thus concluded that going to prison as a protest against the draft is a sacrificial act by which one "votes" his own concept of duty to country. Last week more than 100 Woodrow Wilson Fellows from across the nation said that they would not fight. As Stanford Senior Hugh West sees it: "Jail is where patriotism and morality intersect."

Compassion v. Coercion. Beyond the war, the prevailing ethics of the Class of '68 place justice above the need for order, social welfare above creature comforts, compassion above coercion, people above institutions. In talking about these values, students sometimes act as if they had discovered justice and love. They also ignore the reality that undergraduates throughout history have always had ideals—some of which have been fulfilled by adult society. Condemnation of their elders occasionally comes too easily for the young today—witness the Berkeley coed who glibly condemns men who "sell their soul for higher salaries, then sink into suburbia, where the deepest thing they read is TV Guide."

One book that the Class of '68 does not read very much is the Bible; by and large, graduates dismiss institutional churches as irrelevant or unimportant. Nonetheless, Roman Catholic Philosopher Michael Novak of Stanford thinks that there may be "more religion among students who now act on their conscience than among those who sit in church every Sunday seeking to be blessed." The Protestant dean of chapel at Stanford, the Rev. B. Davie Napier, enthusiastically endorses this year's seniors, who, he says, "embrace an authentic, courageous morality that sees obscenity where it really is—in all schemes that thwart the realization of full humanity anywhere, from the campus to Saigon, or to hell and back."...

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## ***Basic Dylan***

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In person, Folk Singer-Poet Bob Dylan spoke for an age. Over the roaring roll of his guitar, he rasped out sarcastic, sardonic cries of anger, anxiety and alienation that made the young generation wince with the pleasure of recognition. In seclusion in Woodstock, N.Y., since a motorcycle spill in the summer of 1966, he became a legend. Folkniks trembled at rumors. Was he dead, dying, mindless, voiceless? To one of the few reporters who breached his fortress, Dylan laughingly replied: "They're all true." Meanwhile, Dylan in absentia loomed larger than Dylan in the flesh; last year four of his LP albums broke the million-dollar sales mark, something none had done previously.

Last week Columbia's production line spun out Dylan's first post-accident LP. He had shown up at Columbia's Nashville studios in December only after exacting a promise of top secrecy. And if the pressagents were quiet, the recording sessions were quieter still. Dylan, 26, has abandoned the electric guitar and big-noise backing that thundered out from his last few albums, and has returned to his earlier acoustic-guitar-plus-harmonica framework.

Moral & Misanthrope. The new songs are shapely and graceful, but their simplicity is deceptive. Several of them are suffused with religious feeling—a sorrowing series of meditations on the Christian ethic, outlined in a language that is close to simplistic. One, The Ballad of Frankie Lee and Judas Priest, is a parable on temptation: Judas lures Jesus into a bawdyhouse, where he dies. "The moral of this story, the moral of this song,/Is simply that one should never be where one does not belong." I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine, an easygoing paraphrase of Joe Hill, becomes a jeremiad on mankind's inhumanity:

/ dreamed I saw St. Augustine,

alive with fiery breath,

And I dreamed I was amongst the

ones that put him out to death.

Oh, I awoke in anger so alone

and terrified

I put my fingers against the glass and bowed my head and cried.

Other pieces work toward universality from even humbler beginnings. I Pity the Poor Immigrant, chanted to a tune that is as basic as one of the late Woody Guthrie's Dust Bowl ballads, is a melancholy portrait of a misanthropic, malcontented wanderer "who passionately hates his life and likewise fears his death." The album's title song, John Wesley Harding (who "was never known to make a foolish move") is an oldtime saga about a kind of Nietzschean super dream man.

Poetry & Prophecy. All this is a long way from the steamy atmosphere of the familiar Dylan outcry, and Dylan's own musical style has kept pace with his growing control over poetic expression. His melodic style has deepened; the bluesy Dear Landlord (in which Dylan accompanies himself on a tinny barroom piano) is a subtle, intense, spacious tune. Moreover, there are times when he abandons his customary foghorn speech-song in favor of something identifiable as singing. Whether Dylan's new album signals an actual return to public performance is fogged with conjecture. He still hides from reporters, and no plans have been announced for concerts beyond an appearance at Manhattan's Carnegie Hall next week at a memorial concert for Woody Guthrie. But whether he is in or out of sight, Dylan's power as a trendmaker and prophet for the college-age crowd is sure to grow with the appearance of John Wesley Harding.

**Link: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,837685-1,00.html>**

## ***Hippies and Violence***

*Publicado el viernes 12 de diciembre de 1969*

PART of the mystique and the attraction of the hippie movement has always been its invitation to freedom. It beckons young people out of the tense, structured workaday world to a life where each can do "his own thing." The movement has flowered and spread across the U.S. and to many parts of the world. It has drawn all sorts of people: the rebellious, the lonely, the poets, the disaffected, and worse. Some two years ago, says Dr. Lewis Yablonsky, a close student of the phenomenon, criminals and psychotics began infiltrating the scene. They were readily accepted, as anyone can be who is willing to let his hair grow and don a few beads; they found, just as do runaway teenagers, that it is a good world in which they can disappear from law and society. "Hippiedom became a magnet for severely emotionally disturbed people," Yablonsky says.



A few of them, like Manson, also found other advantages to being a hippie. The true gentle folk were relatively defenseless. Leaderless, they responded readily to strong leaders. But how could children who had dropped out for the sake of kindness and sharing, love and beauty, be enjoined to kill? Yablonsky thinks that the answer may lie in the fact that so many hippies are actually "lonely, alienated people." He says: "They have had so few love models that even when they act as if they love, they can be totally devoid of true compassion. That is the reason why they can kill so matter-of-factly."

Yablonsky believes that there has been far more violence among the hippies than most people realize. "There has always been a potential for murder," he says. "Many hippies are socially almost dead inside. Some require massive emotions to feel anything at all. They need bizarre, intensive acts to feel alive—sexual acts, acts of violence, nudity, every kind of Dionysian thrill."

Charles Manson unintentionally put some clues into his particular psychological makeup on a piece of paper last week, as he sat in court for arraignment on car-theft charges. The insights came in the form of doodles on a legal pad—disoriented scribbles that suggest to two experts a psyche torn asunder by powerful thrusts of aggression, guilt and hostility. According to Dr. Emanuel F. Hammer, a psychoanalyst who studied the doodles without knowing who drew them, they point to "an inner tension that is jam-packed with jarring elements. The drawings hit you like chaos on the part of the mind that drew them." He notes the phrase "Howmuchcanonegive," and says such stringing together of words "shows a lack of respect for the integrity of things" and people. The starlike figures, covered over or enclosed in circles, represent "guilt or attempts at control over aggression." The drawings of armless beings "are goonish and ludicrous, which may show a demeaning and devalued view of people."

Dr. Harry O. Teltscher, a psychologist and handwriting expert who knew the doodles were Manson's, finds cosmic implications in the sketches. "This whole drawing looks like part of the universe.

Ofttimes, paranoid-schizophrenics identify themselves with cosmic situations." In the squiggles, Teltscher also sees "a tremendous amount of repressed anger and hostility against all mankind." If Manson is guilty of commanding the Tate murders, as police suspect, then, "telling these girls to act out these killings was his way to express his anger."

***Link: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,840466-1,00.html>***

## ***Hallucinogens:Trips That Kill***

*Publicado el 13 de octubre 1967*

Somewhere, somehow, John H. ("Chip") White Jr., 17, heard that inhaling the fumes from an aerosol can of cocktail-glass chiller was a cheap and safe way to turn on. So Chip, the son of a New York advertising executive, began sniffing the stuff. Last week he bought a fresh supply at a hardware store and took it to his house in Greenwich, Conn. He suggested to his sister, Lucie, 11, that they both try it. It was 8 p.m. While their parents sat downstairs, Chip and Lucie went into a second-floor bedroom. When Lucie inhaled the gas, she immediately choked and lost consciousness. Panicked, Chip screamed for his parents, but it was too late. Said Dr. J. Colman Kelly, Greenwich medical examiner, "She died in about three minutes, asphyxiated."

Three weeks ago, Mike McCuan, a popular 18-year-old Medford, Ore., high school senior, took the same deadly trip. In each case, Freon-12, an odorless, colorless cryogenic gas, may have frozen the victim's larynx, cutting off oxygen to the lungs; in McCuan's death, it also caused massive accumulation of fluids in the lungs.

How widespread is the use of quick-freeze aerosol spray for freaking out? No one really knows—yet. Hippies and college students reportedly have turned to it as a legal turn-on (the labels on the cans read "harmless and non-toxic"). At Yale, a few students have been inhaling the gas since it was introduced last month by collegians returning from the West Coast. In Medford, at least 200 high school students were using it. Literally scared sick by the McCuan tragedy, scores of them fled to family doctors and hospitals, complaining of aches, stabbing chest pains and sleeplessness. Most of the symptoms seemed to be psychosomatic. But doctors warned that sniffers might suffer long-lasting effects, possibly brain-cell damage, from anoxia.

For most of the Medford teenagers, one death was more than enough warning. Still, discontinuance of the practice seems doubtful. An Oregon medical investigator said that stocks of the quick-freeze spray are bought up as quickly as they are put on shelves in Portland. Said one Medford 17-year-old, who has taken advantage of the scarcity to sell the gas at 250 a dose in the past, "I don't think it's all over here. Kids will think Mike McCuan made a mistake. He used it wrong. Tried to get too high. They'll be back using it soon. Even after Mike died, a kid stopped me in the hall and wanted to know if I'd sell him a few whiffs."

***Link: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,837401,00.html>***



*Portada de especial publicado el 26 de septiembre de 1969 dedicado a la juventud y el consumo de drogas*

## ***Pop Drugs: The High as a Way of Life***

*Publicado el viernes 26 de septiembre de 1969*

You raise up your head

And you ask, Is this where it is?

And somebody points to you

And says, It's his,

And you say, What's mine?

And somebody else says, Well, what is?,

And you say, Oh, my God,

Am I here all alone?

But something is happening

And you don't know what it is,

Do you, Mr. Jones?

—Bob Dylan, *Ballad of a Thin Man*

HE does not. The straight middle-class American breadwinner, secure and affluent beyond the dreams of his grandparents or most of his contemporaries elsewhere in the world, Mr. Jones of Dylan's mocking lyric, finds himself in a world more surreal than a moonscape. He looks behind, and realizes that his children are not following. At a frightening distance, in their own arcane pastures of the mind, the young strip and ululate and make love to the accompaniment of manic cacophonies. Even in the Joneses' own backyard, thrusting up between the roses and the hollyhocks, a sharp eye may spot a weed growing—the telltale spikes of *Cannabis saliva*. Otherwise known as Indian hemp, a hardy botanic cousin to the fig, the hop and the nettle, it provides the marijuana that is troubling and changing a culture.

It used to be that "better living through chemistry" was just another advertising slogan; now it is a sly joke to the young and a grievous worry to their parents. In their quest for sensory experience, an alarming number of kids are swallowing its message whole. Marijuana ("pot," "grass," "boo," "tea," "mary jane," "broccoli," "weed") is their favorite preparation; in lesser numbers, they are smoking hashish ("hash"), taking mescaline,

peyote, psilocybin, LSD ("acid"), using barbiturates and sedatives ("goofers," "downers," "red devils," "red birds," "pheenies," "green dragons," "yellow jackets," "tooies"), swallowing or injecting amphetamine stimulants ("crystal," "crank," "meth," "bennies," "dexies," "Christmas trees," "speed"). The prices of their mind excursions fluctuate almost daily with the black market where kids must make their purchases. Depending on location, a dose of LSD or enough Methedrine for one injection costs around \$3, while one Dexedrine pill can be bought for only 100. The marijuana contained in one "joint" or cigarette is worth around 750.

These are the pop drugs—the drugs widely taken by middle-class young people, most of whom are white. Their use is growing; marijuana smoking, in particular, is increasing. (Heroin use, by contrast, remains comparatively static.) "For the first time," says California Psychopharmacologist Dr. Leo Hollister, "pot is entrenched in our society, with untold millions using the drug. We have passed the point of no return."

There are vast differences in the effects of pop drugs. New research makes it clear that marijuana is "softer" and less perilous than the others, although for some people it does hold genuine psychological dangers. Pop drugs have provoked a defiance of the law unprecedented since Prohibition. The drug scene has stirred intense debate among scientists, doctors and politicians on how to deal with the problem. Drugs have become so painful an issue between parents and their children that when Mr. and Mrs. Jones discover that a child of theirs is turned-on or freaked-out, they may find themselves, dazed and uncomprehending, turning him over to the police. Pop drugs hardly portend anything as drastic as a new and debauched American spirit, as some alarmists believe. But drug use does reflect some little-recognized shifts in adult American values as well as the persistent unwillingness of youth to accept the straight world. The mounting research on drugs permits some new perspectives on their use and abuse; still, the pop-drug scene is, if anything, more than ever clouded by fear, dismay and mistrust.

#### Penalties and Harvests

The majority of users are experimenters, who take a drug several times and quit. Even if the users who are heavily dependent on these drugs (perhaps somewhat less than 2,000,000) are combined with addicts (about 100,000), the sum is smaller than the estimated national total of 6,000,000 alcoholics. Some experts even maintain that the "drug problem" has become the "drug-problem problem"—one more distorted priority diverting attention from real national needs.

The issues were aired last week as the Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency began hearings to consider new legislation on drugs. The Nixon Administration's bill would permit authorized policemen to break in unannounced on suspected violators so that they could not destroy potential evidence. This is the "no-knock" tactic that some lawmen say is most likely to be employed against drug users. The bill would also restore the tough

Federal penalties for simple possession of marijuana recently ruled invalid on technical grounds by the Supreme Court. The bill has drawn sharp opposition from experts who believe that marijuana is a considerably less dangerous drug than speed, LSD or heroin, and should be recognized as such. The bill contains only slim provisions for drug research and education and none at all for rehabilitation of addicts. Meanwhile the Administration launched "Operation Intercept" (see box, p. 70), described by officials as the largest search-and-seizure operation ever conducted by civil authorities in peacetime, in an attempt to stem the flow of drugs from Mexico.

Marijuana and other pop drugs come from many other sources, not the least the U.S. itself. U.S. Cannabis—if not as choice as the Mexican variety—grows wild throughout the Midwest. In Nebraska alone last week, an estimated 115,000 acres of it were nearly ready for harvesting—by any would-be pot-gatherers who could sneak by the police. Yet despite the plenitude of "Tennessee blue" and "Bethesda gold," rising demand for pot in the U.S. has recently been a major factor in producing a marijuana famine in many U.S. cities. Many authorities say that the dearth of pot is prompting users to take up harder drugs like amphetamines or even heroin.

A recent Administration task force "conservatively" estimated that at least 5,000,000 Americans have used marijuana at least once. Dr. Stanley Yolles, director of the National Institute of Mental Health, puts the total far higher: at least 12 million, and perhaps even 20 million. Pot is, of course, most widely used by the young. Yolles estimates that 25% to 40% of all students have at least tried it; on many college campuses, particularly on the East and West coasts and near large cities, the figure is 50%.

Last month's Woodstock music festival, where some 90% of the 400,000 participants openly smoked marijuana, brought the youthful drug culture to a new apogee. Its signature is everywhere. Rock musicians use drugs frequently and openly, and their compositions are riddled with references to drugs, from the Beatles' "I get high with a little help from my friends" to the Jefferson Airplane's White Rabbit ("Remember what the dormouse said: Feed your head"). The culture has its own in-group argot: "bummers" (bad trips) and "straights" (everyone else), "heat" (the police) and "narks" (narcotics agents), and being "spaced out" (in a drug daze).

A surprising number of straight students are turning on too. The children of U.S. Senators George McGovern and Alan Cranston have been arrested on marijuana charges, as have the sons of California Assemblyman Jesse Unruh and Actor Darren McGavin. One of Vice President Spiro Agnew's daughters was suspended from Washington's exclusive National Cathedral School for three days last spring after an investigation was held to determine if she had been smoking pot. University of Indiana Sociologist Alfred R. Lindesmith, who has spent nearly 35 years studying drug use, contends with a measure of grim humor: "If a kid goes to college these days and never develops an interest in marijuana, he's got a problem and you should worry. He may be a loner or not accepted by his peers."

The age of innocence is moving lower, into junior high schools and occasional grade schools, where youngsters seeking ersatz maturity even gulp codeine-laden cough medicine. (Glue sniffing is expected to decline as word gets out that the largest maker of model-airplane glue is adding sickening mustard fumes to its product's aroma.) Washington's District of Columbia Addiction Center has uncovered pot users as young as eight years old.

Growing numbers of adults are taking up the habit. Many veterans return from Viet Nam with a taste for grass; some military and civilian observers estimate that marijuana is smoked by as many as half the men below the rank of captain. Although many adults who "blow" pot are sadly overeager to stay young, many others are as unselfconscious as the banker in Minneapolis' rich suburb of Wayzata who regularly lights up a joint with his after-dinner brandy and the 30-year-old Manhattan commercial artist who says that "at the parties I go to, whether or not you smoke marijuana is no bigger a question than whether or not you'll take a piece of cheese."

#### The Vulnerable Years

As with any social habit, all kinds of people use drugs for all kinds of reasons. One obvious age-old drive is the simple impulse to feel good. Like the neolithic men who got high on fermented berries and the Assyrians who sucked opium lozenges, explains Dr. Sidney Cohen of NIMH, a noted drug researcher, today's drug takers "are bored, in pain, frustrated, unable to enjoy, or alienated, and some plant or substance carries with it the promise of oblivion, surcease, quietude, togetherness, or euphoria." Says one Chicago college student who smokes marijuana regularly: "You take it when friends get together or when you're going to see Yellow Submarine. It's not to solve problems, just to giggle."

The old idea of easy euphoria has been underscored as the variety and use of legitimate pills have proliferated. One-quarter to one-third of all the medical prescriptions now written in the U.S. is for a mood-altering pep pill or tranquilizer; newspaper, magazine and television ads hammer away at the theme that relief is just a swallow away for any condition, from nervous tension to drowsiness. As Sociologists William Simon and John H. Gagnon write: "Modern medicine has made drugs highly legitimate, something to be taken casually and not only during moments of acute and certified stress. Our children, far from being in revolt against an older generation, may in fact be acknowledging how influential a model that older generation was."

Not all those who take "chemical vacations," in Aldous Huxley's phrase, are simply in search of a high. Pop drugs are inextricably mixed with the youth culture and its distaste for a supertechnology that seems remote, false and uncaring. The two-martini lunch and the cocktail party have become potent symbols of frantic, achievement-oriented Western culture; for the young drug taker, the belligerent or sloppy drunk personifies the older generation's "hypocrisy" and lack of control. The darker side of pop drugs is the fact that

some users have serious emotional problems. Dr. Phyllis Kempner, a clinical psychologist who works with drug abusers of many kinds in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district, says that many of the kids who are most deeply into mind-changing chemicals "have been troubled long before taking drugs. They have taken drugs to help them cope with these difficulties." Particularly during the vulnerable years of adolescence, drugs can be a way of evading the painful process of growing up.

Parents often are nonplussed. "My mother asked me to tell her if I smoked marijuana," says one high school girl in suburban Smithtown, N.Y. "When I said yes, all she said was 'I knew it. I knew it.' Then she started crying." Parents have many good reasons for questioning youth's resort to drugs. They know that under present federal and most state laws possession of drugs is a felony, and conviction can bar a person from many occupations for life. Drugs challenge the whole structure of adult values. In addition, most Americans' knowledge of drugs has been clouded by a widely promulgated series of bromides. When the topic comes up, most parents envisage the dope pusher standing outside the high school or the Mafioso prowling the streets in sunglasses. Marijuana, most adults believe, identically affects everyone who uses it and inevitably leads to the slow death of heroin addiction. A joint today, they think, means a junkie tomorrow.

The Federal Bureau of Narcotics dispensed these ideas for more than two decades until it was merged into a new division of the Justice Department last year. Accumulating research had exploded such notions, but officials kept repeating them in an ineffectual effort to scare kids away from drugs. Actually, most young neophytes are surrounded not by pushers but by other kids who exert the normal adolescent pressure to conform...

***Link: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,844942-1,00.html>***



## ***Only Human Driftin' And Learnin'***

*by Sidney Fields*

*Artículo publicado en New York Mirror, el 9 de diciembre de 1963. Republicado en Craig McGregor (ed): Bob Dylan. A Retrospective.*

All things that once churned inside Bob Dylan when he was knocking about America are pouring from him now.

These past six years he's written over hundred songs, with rare perception, covering everything from nuclear fallout and integration to lover's lament or his own loneliness.

Some Like "Hard Rains Are Going To Fall" are in his current best-selling album, "The Free Wheelin' Bob Dylan". Others, like "Blowin' In The Wind" and "Don't Think Twice, It's All Right" are hits by Peter, Paul And Mary, and Bobby Darin.

Dylan is twenty-one, wears faded dungarees, uncut hair, an assumed hillbilly accent, and has been on and off resident in Greenwich Village (where else?) for over two years. Before that he was trying to cover every highroad and by way of the country.

"The itch to move, to see, and hear, was always there", he says. "But I didn't want to see the atomic bathrooms and electronic bedrooms and souped up can-openers; I wanted to watch and feel the people and the dust and ditches and the fields and fences."

His parents and a younger brother are still in Hibbing, Minnesota, where he first tried to leave when he was ten, with his guitar and harmonica. He got 900 miles away before police picked him up and sent him home by train.

"I got walloped, but not hard enough to make me stay", Dylan says, "I took off again at 12 and five times after that, getting caught and walloped each time. But when I was 18 I made it."

He touched about every state, trying to earn his keep by telling stories of what he saw, but eating more regularly when he trimmed hedges, mowed lawns, or any work he could get. His first New York job earned him \$2 for a one-night stand in a village coffee joint. When another folk singer made a record for Columbia he was asked to accompany her on the harmonica. Columbia signed him. He made his first album and was given a Town Hall debut.

The program notes about himself came from "My Life In A Stolen Minute" a long autobiographical poem. Part of it goes: "With my thumb out, my eyes asleep, my hat turned up an' my head turned on, I'se driftin' and an' learnin' new lessons."

His voice is small, but telling, and what he sings in his own penetrating way has all the bright rhythm of a poet aware of the world.

Since his Town Hall appearance he has appeared at colleges and folk festivals, coast-to-coast, and in London and Rome. He has been on the Ed Sullivan show; on stage at Carnegie Hall. He gives a second Carnegie Hall concert next October 27. Of late he has shown up on the same stage with Joan Baez in "impromptu-on-purpose."

After his first album, titled simply Bob Dylan, he concluded "That's not me. There was only a couple of my stories on it." He was happier with his second "I wrote all the stories except for one or two songs."

His songs always start as stories. When he was on the road he became a fine teller of other people's stories. But he quit that.

"Because Dickens and Dostoievski and Woody Guthrie were telling their stories much better than I ever could", Bob Dylan says, "I decided to stick to my own mind"

**Link:** <http://www.interferenza.com/bcs/interw/63-aug.htm>

### ***DYLAN MEETS THE PRESS - VILLAGE VOICE MARCH 3, 1965***

*Entrevistador: J. R. Godard*

*Publicado en Village Voice como "Dylan Meets The Press" el 25 de marzo de 1965.*

**The press:** Bobby, We know you changed your name. Come on now, what's your real name?

**Dylan:** Philip Ochs. I'm gonna change it back when I see it pays.

**The press:** Was Woody Guthrie your greatest influence?

**Dylan:** I don't know that I'd say that, but for a spell, the idea of him affected me quite much.

**The press:** How about Brecht? Read much of him?

**Dylan:** No. But I've read him.

**The press:** Rimbaud?

**Dylan:** I've read his tiny little book 'evil flowers' too.

**The press:** How about Hank Williams? Do you consider him an influence?

**Dylan:** Hey look, I consider Hank Williams, Captain Marvel, Marlon Brando, The Tennessee Stud, Clark Kent, Walter Cronkite and J. Carrol Neish all influences. Now what is it - please - what is it exactly you people want to know?

**The press:** Tell us about your movie.

**Dylan:** It's gonna be in black and white.

**The press:** Will it be in the Andy Warhol style?

**Dylan:** Who's Andy Warhol? Listen, my movie will be - I can say definitely - it will be in the style of the early Puerto Rican films.

**The press:** Who's writing it?

**Dylan:** Allen Ginsberg. I'm going to rewrite it.

**The press:** Who will you play in the film?

**Dylan:** The hero.

**The press:** Who is it that you're going to be?

**Dylan:** My mother.

**The press:** What about your friends The Beatles? Did you see them when you were there?

**Dylan:** John Lennon and I came down to the Village early one morning. They wouldn't let us in The Figaro or The Hip Bagel or The Feenjon. This time I'm going to England. This April. I'll see 'em if they're there.

**The press:** Bob, what about the situation of American poets? Kenneth Roxroth has estimated that since 1900 about thirty American poets have committed suicide.

**Dylan:** Thirty poets! What about American housewives, mailmen, street cleaners, miners? Jesus Christ, what's so special about thirty people that are called poets? I've known some very good people that have committed suicide. One didn't do nothing but work in a gas station all his life. Nobody referred to him as poet, but if you're gonna call people like Robert Frost a poet, then I got to say this gas station boy was a poet too.

**The press:** Bob, to sum up - don't you have any important philosophy for the world?

**Dylan:** Are you kidding? The world don't need me. Christ, I'm only five feet ten. The world could get along fine without me. Don'cha know, everybody dies. It don't matter how important you think you are. Look at Shakespeare, Napoleon, Edgar Allan Poe, for that matter. They are all dead, right?

**The press:** Well, Bob, in your opinion, then, is there one man who can save the world?

**Dylan:** Al Aronowitz.

**Link:** <http://www.interferenza.com/bcs/interw/65-mar3.htm>

## **Bob Dylan Interview**

by Nora Ephron & Susan Edmiston

*This interview took place in late summer of 1965 in the office of Dylan's manager Albert Grossman. Dylan had just been booed in the historic Forest Hills concert where he abandoned folk purity to the use of electric accompaniment. He was wearing a red-and-navy op-art shirt, a navy blazer and pointy high-heeled boots. His face, so sharp and harsh when translated through media, was then infinitely soft and delicate. His hair was not bushy or electric or Afro; it was fine-spun soft froth like the foam of a wave. He looked like an underfed angel with a nose from the land of the Chosen People.*

**Q:** Some American folk singers--Carolyn Hester, for example--say that what you're now doing, the new sound, "folk rock," is liberating them.

**A:** Did Carolyn say that? You tell her she can come around and see me any time now that she's liberated.

**Q:** Does labeling, using the term, "folk rock," tend to obscure what's happening?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** It's like "pop gospel." What does the term mean to you?

**A:** Yeah, classical gospel could be the next trend. There's country rock, rockabilly. What does it mean to me? Folk rock. I've never even said that word. It has a hard gutter sound. Circusy atmosphere. It's nose-thumbing. Sound like you're looking down on what is... fantastic, great music.

**Q:** The definition most often given of folk rock is the combination of the electronic sound of rock and roll with the meaningful lyrics of folk music? Does that sum up what you're doing?

**A:** Yes. It's very complicated to play with electricity. You play with other people. You're dealing with other people. Most people don't like to work with other people, it's more difficult. It takes a lot. Most people who don't like rock and roll can't relate to other people.

**Q:** You mention the Apollo Theatre in Harlem on one of your album covers. Do you go there often?

**A:** Oh, I couldn't go up there. I used to go up there a lot about four years ago. I even wanted to play in one of the amateur nights, but I got scared. Bad things can happen to you. I saw what the audience did to a couple of guys they didn't like. And I would have had a couple of things against me right away when I stepped out on the stage.

**Q:** Who is Mr. Jones in "Ballad of a Thin Man?"

**A:** He's a real person. You know him, but not by that name.

**Q:** Like Mr. Charlie?

**A:** No. He's more than Mr. Charlie. He's actually a person. Like I saw him come into the room one night and he looked like a camel. He proceeded to put his eyes in his pocket. I asked this guy who he was and he said, "That's Mr. Jones." Then I asked this cat, "Doesn't he do anything but put his eyes in his pocket?" And he told me, "He puts his nose on the ground." It's all there, it's a true story.

**Q:** Where did you get that shirt?

**A:** California. Do you like it? You should see my others. You can't get clothes like that here. There are a lot of things out there we haven't got here.

**Q:** Isn't California on the way here?

**A:** It's uptight here compared to there. Hollywood I mean. It's not really breathable here. It's like there's air out there. The Sunset Strip can't be compared to anything here, like

42nd Street. The people there look different, they look more like... you want to kiss them out there.

**Q:** Do you spend a lot of time out there?

**A:** I don't have much time to spend anywhere: The same thing in England. In England everybody looks very hip East Side. They wear things... they don't wear things that bore you. They've got other hangups in other directions.

**Q:** Do you consider yourself primarily a poet?

**A:** No. We have our ideas about poets. The word doesn't mean any more than the word "house." There are people who write `_po_ems` and people who write `po_ems_`. Other people write `_poems_`. Everybody who writes poems do you call them a poet? There's a certain kind of rhythm in some kind of way that's visible. You don't necessarily have to write to be a poet. Some people work in gas stations and they're poets. I don't call myself a poet because I don't like the word. I'm a trapeze artist.

**Q:** What I meant was, do you think your words stand without the music?

**A:** They would stand but I don't read them. I'd rather sing them. I write things that aren't songs--I have a book coming out.

**Q:** What is it?

**A:** It's a book of words.

**Q:** Is it like the back of your albums? It seemed to me that the album copy you write is a lot like the writing of William Burroughs. Some of the accidental sentences--

**A:** Cut-ups.

**Q:** Yes, and some of the imagery and anecdotes. I wondered if you had read anything by him.

**A:** I haven't read `_Naked Lunch_` but I read some of his shorter things in little magazines, foreign magazines. I read one in Rome. I know him. I don't really know him--I just met him once. I think he's a great man.

**Q:** Burroughs keeps an album, a collection of photographs that illustrate his writing. Do you have anything similar to that?

**A:** I do that too. I have photographs of "Gates of Eden" and "It's All Over Now, Baby Blues." I saw them after I wrote the songs. People send me a lot of things and a lot of the things are pictures, so other people must have that idea too. I gotta admit, maybe I wouldn't have chosen them, but I can see what it is about the pictures.

**Q:** I heard you used to play the piano for Buddy Holly.

**A:** No. I used to play the rock and roll piano, but I don't want to say who it was for because the cat will try to get hold of me. I don't want to see the cat. He'll try to reclaim the friendship. I did it a long time ago, when I was seventeen years old. I used to play a country piano too.

**Q:** This was before you became interested in folk music?

**A:** Yes. I became interested in folk music because I had to make it somehow. Obviously I'm not a hard-working cat. I played the guitar, that was all I did. I thought it was great music. Certainly I haven't turned my back on it or anything like that. There is--and I'm sure nobody realizes this, all the authorities who write about what it is and what it should be, when they say keep things simple, they should be easily understood--folk music is the only music where it isn't simple. It's never been simple. It's weird, man, full of legend, myth, Bible and ghosts. I've never written anything hard to understand, not in my head anyway, and nothing as far out as some of the old songs. They were out of sight.

**Q:** Like what songs?

**A:** "Little Brown Dog." "I bought a little brown dog, its face is all gray. Now I'm going to Turkey flying on my bottle." And "Nottemun Town," that's like a herd of ghosts passing through on the way to Tangiers. "Lord Edward," "Barbara Allen," they're full of myth.

**Q:** And contradictions?

**A:** Yeah, contradictions.

**Q:** And chaos?

**A:** Chaos, watermelon, clocks, everything.

**Q:** You wrote on the back of one album, "I accept chaos but does chaos accept me."

**A:** Chaos is a friend of mine. It's like I accept him, does he accept me.

**Q:** Do you see the world as chaos?

**A:** Truth is chaos. Maybe beauty is chaos.

**Q:** Poets like Eliot and Yeats--

**A:** I haven't read Yeats.

**Q:** they saw the world as chaos, accepted it as chaos and attempted to bring order from it. Are you trying to do that?

**A:** No. It exists and that's all there is to it. It's been here longer than I have. What can I do about it? I don't know what the songs I write are. That's all I do is write songs, right? Write. I collect things too.

**Q:** Monkey wrenches?

**A:** Where did you read about that? Has that been in print? I told this guy out on the coast that I collected monkey wrenches, all sizes and shapes of monkey wrenches, and he didn't believe me. I don't think you believe me either. And I collect the pictures too. Have you talked to Sonny and Cher?

**Q:** No.

**A:** They're a drag. A cat got kicked out of a restaurant and he went home and wrote a song about it.

**Q:** They say your fan mail has radically increased since you switched sounds.

**A:** Yeah. I don't have time to read all of it, but I want you to put that I answer half of it. I don't really. A girl does that for me.

**Q:** Does she save any for you--any particularly interesting letters?

**A:** She knows my head. Not the ones that just ask for pictures, there's a file for them. Not the ones that say, I want to make it with you, they go in another file. She saves two kinds. The violently put-down--

**Q:** The ones that call you a sellout?

**A:** yeah. Sellout, fink, Fascist, Red, everything in the book. I really dig those. And ones from old friends.

**Q:** Like, "You don't remember me but I was in the fourth grade with you"?



**A:**No, I never had any friends then. These are letters from people who knew me in New York five, six years ago. My first fans. Not the people who call themselves my first fans. They came in three years ago, two years ago. They aren't really my first fans.

**Q:** How do you feel about being booed at your concert at Forest Hills?

**A:**I thought it was great, I really did. If I said anything else I'd be a liar.

**Q:** And at Newport Folk Festival?

**A:**that was different. They twisted the sound. They didn't like what I was going to play and they twisted the sound on me before I began.

**Q:** I hear you are wearing a sellout jacket.

**A:**What kind of jacket is a sellout jacket?

**Q:** Black leather.

**A:**I've had black leather jackets since I was five years old. I've been wearing black leather all my life.

**Q:** I wonder if we could talk about electronic music and what made you decide to use it.

**A:**I was doing fine, you know, singing and playing my guitar. It was a sure thing, don't you understand, it was a sure thing. I was getting very bored with that. I couldn't go out and play like that. I was thinking of quitting. Out front it was a sure thing. I knew what the audience was gonna do, how they would react. It was very automatic. Your mind just drifts unless you can find some way to get in there and remain totally there. It's so much of a fight remaining totally there all by yourself. It takes too much. I'm not ready to cut that much out of my life. You can't have nobody around. You can't be bothered with anybody else's world. And I like people. What I'm doing now--it's a whole other thing. We're not playing rock music. It's not a hard sound. These people call it folk rock--if they want to call it that, something that simple, it's good for selling records. As far as it being what it is, I don't know what it is. I can't call it folk rock. It's a whole way of doing things. It has been picked up on, I've heard songs on the radio that have picked it up. I'm not talking about words. It's a certain feeling, and it's been on every single record I've ever made. That has not changed. I know it hasn't changed. As far as what I was totally, before, maybe I was pushing it a little then. I'm not pushing things now. I know it. I know very well how to do it. The problem of how I want to play something--I know it in front. I know what I am going to say, what I'm going to do. I don't have to work it out. The band I work with--they wouldn't be playing with me if they didn't play like I want them to. I have this song, "Queen Jane Approximately"--

**Q:** Who is Queen Jane?

**A:** Queen Jane is a man.

**Q:** Was there something that made you decide to change sounds? Your trip to England?

**A:** I like the sound. I like what I'm doing now. I would have done it before. It wasn't practical to do it before. I spend most of my time writing. I wouldn't have had the time. I had to get where I was going all alone. I don't know what I'm going to do next. I probably will record with strings some time, but it doesn't necessarily change. It's just a different color. And I know it's real. No matter what anybody says. They can boo till the end of time. I know that the music is real, more real than the boos.

**Q:** How do you work?

**A:** Most of the time I work at night. I don't really like to think of it as work. I don't know how important it is. It's not important to the average cat who works eight hours a day. What does he care? The world can get along very well without it. I'm hip to that.

**Q:** Sure, but the world can get along without any number of things.

**A:** I'll give you a comparison. Rudy Vallee. Now that was a lie, that was a downright lie. Rudy Vallee being popular. What kind of people could have dug him? You know, your grandmothers and mothers. But what kind of people were they? He was so sexless. If you want to find out about those times and you listen to his music you're not going to find out anything about the times. His music was a pipedream. All escapes. There are no more escapes. If you want to find out anything that's happening now, you have to listen to the music. I don't mean the words, although "Eve of Destruction" will tell you something about it. The words are not really gonna tell it, not really. You gotta listen to the Stapes(Staple?) Singers, Smokey and the Miracles, Martha and the Vandellas. That's scary to a lot of people. It's sex that's involved. It's not hidden. It's real. You can overdo it. It's not only sex, it's a whole beautiful feeling.

**Q:** But Negro rhythm and blues has been around underground for at least twelve years. What brought it out now?

**A:** The English did that. They brought it out. They hipped everybody. You read an interview asking who the Beatles' favorite singer was and they say Chuck Berry. You never used to hear Chuck Berry records on the radio, hard blues. The English did that. England is great and beautiful, though in other ways kinda messy. Though not outside London.

**Q:** In what way messy?

**A:**There's a snobbishness. What you see people doing to other people. It's not only class. It's not that simple. It's a kind of Queen kind of thing. Some people are royalty and some are not. Here, man, somebody don't like you he tells you. There it's very tight, tight kinds of expressions, their whole tone of speaking changes. It's an everyday kind of thing. But the kids are a whole other thing. Great. They're just more free. I hope you don't think I take this too seriously--I just have a headache.

**Q:** I think you started out to say that music was more in tune with what's happening than other art forms.

**A:**Great paintings shouldn't be in museums. Have you ever been in a museum? Museums are cemeteries. Paintings should be on the walls of restaurants, in dime stores, in gas stations, in men's rooms. Great paintings should be where people hang out. The only thing where it's happening is on radio and records, that's where people hang out. You can't see great paintings. You pay half a million and hang one in your house and one guest sees it. That's not art. That's a shame, a crime. Music is the only thing that's in tune with what's happening. It's not in book form, it's not on the stage. All this art they've been talking about is nonexistent. It just remains on the shelf. It doesn't make anyone happier. Just think how many people would really feel great if they could see a Picasso in their daily diner. It's not the bomb that has to go, man, it's the museums.

**Link:** <http://www.interferenza.com/bcs/interw/65-aug.htm>

## ***PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: BOB DYLAN***

*February 1966.*

*A candid conversation with the iconoclastic idol of the folk-rock set.*

*As a versatile musicologist and trenchant social commentator, Nat Hentoff brings uniquely pertinent credentials to his dual tasks in this month's issue - as the author of "We're Happening All Over, Baby!" (on page 82) an insightful anatomizing of America's youthful new generation of anti-establishment social activists, and as interviewer of this month's controversial subject, about whom he writes:*

*"Less than five years ago, Bob Dylan was scuffling in New York - sleeping in friends' apartments on the Lower East Side and getting very occasional singing work at Gerde's Folk City, an unprepossessing bar for citybillies in the Village. With his leather cap, blue jeans and battered desert boots - his unvarying costume in those days - Dylan looked like*

*an updated, undernourished Huck Finn. And like Huck, he had come out of the Midwest; he would have said 'escaped.' The son of Abraham Zimmerman, an appliance dealer, he was raised in Hibbing, Minnesota, a bleak mining town near the Canadian border. Though he ran away from home regularly between the ages of 10 and 18, young Zimmerman did manage to finish high school, and went on to spend about six months at the University of Minnesota in 1960. By then, he called himself Bob Dylan - in tribute to Dylan Thomas, according to legend; but actually after a gambling uncle whose last name was similar to Dylan.*

*"In the fall of that year, he came East to visit his idol, Woody Guthrie, in the New Jersey hospital where the Okie folk-singing bard was wasting away with a progressive disease of the nervous system. Dylan stayed and tried to scrape together a singing career. According to those who knew him then, he was shy and stubborn but basically friendly and, beneath the hipster stance, uncommonly gentle. But they argued about his voice. Some found its flat Midwestern tones gratingly mesmeric; others agreed with a Missouri folk singer who had likened the Dylan sound to that of 'a dog with his leg caught in barbed wire.' All agreed, however, that his songs were strangely personal and often disturbing, a pungent mixture of loneliness and defiance laced with traces of Guthrie, echoes of the Negro blues singers and more than a suggestion of country-and-western; but essentially Dylan was developing his own penetratingly distinctive style. Yet the voice was so harsh and the songs so bitterly scornful of conformity, race prejudice and the mythology of the Cold War that most of his friends couldn't conceive of Dylan making it big even though folk music was already on the rise.*

*"They were wrong. In September of 1961, a music critic for The New York Times caught his act at Gerde's and hailed the scruffy 19-year-old Minnesotan as a significant new voice on the folk horizon. Around the same time, he was signed by Columbia Records, and his first album was released early the next year. Though it was far from a smash hit, concerts and club engagements gradually multiplied; and then Dylan scored his storied triumph at the Newport Folk Festival in 1962. His next LP began to move, and in the spring of 1963 came his first big single: 'Blowin' in the Wind.' That same spring he turned down a lucrative guest spot on 'The Ed Sullivan Show' because CBS wouldn't permit him to sing a mordant parody he'd written about the John Birch Society. For the nation's young, the Dylan image began to form: kind of a singing James Dean with overtones of Holden Caulfield; he was making it, but he wasn't selling out. His concerts began to attract overflow crowds, and his songs - in performances by him and other folk singers - were rushing onto the hit charts. One of them, 'The Times They Are A-Changin',' became an anthem for the rebellious young, who savored its message that adults don't know where it's at and can't tell their children what to do.*

*"By 1965 he had become a major phenomenon on the music scene. More and more folk performers, from Joan Baez to the Byrds, considered it mandatory to have an ample supply of Dylan songs in their repertoires; in one frantically appreciative month - last August - 18*

*different recordings of Dylan ballads were pressed by singers other than the composer himself. More and more aspiring folk singers - and folk-song writers - have begun to sound like Dylan. The current surge of 'protest' songs by such long-haired, post-beat rock-'n'-rollers as Barry McGuire and Sonny and Cher is credited to Dylan. And the newest commercial boom, 'folk-rock,' a fusion of folk-like lyrics with an r-'n'-r beat and background, is an outgrowth in large part, of Dylan's recent decision - decried as a 'sellout' by folknik purists - to perform with a rock-'n'-roll combo rather than continue to accompany himself alone on the guitar. Backed by the big beat of the new group, Dylan tours England with as much tumultuous success as he does America, and the air play for his single records in both countries is rivaled only by that of the Beatles, Herman's Hermits and the Rolling Stones on the Top 40 deejay shows. In the next 18 months, his income - from personal appearances, records and composer's royalties - is expected to exceed \$1,000,000.*

*"Withal, Dylan seems outwardly much the same as he did during the lean years in Greenwich Village. His dress is still casual to the point of exoticism; his hair is still long and frizzy, and he is still no more likely to be seen wearing a necktie than a cutaway. But there have been changes. No longer protesting polemically against the bomb, race prejudice and conformity, his songs have become increasingly personal - a surrealistic amalgam of kafkaesque menace corrosive satire and opaque sensuality. His lyrics are more crowded than t!ver with tumbling words and restless images, and they read more like free-verse poems than conventional lines. Adults still have difficulty digging his offbeat language - and its message of alienation - but the young continue to tune in and turn on.*

*"But there are other changes. Dylan has become elusive. He is no longer seen in his old haunts in the Village and on the Lower East Side. With few exceptions, he avoids interviewers, and in public, he is usually seen from afar at the epicenter of a protective coterie of tousle-topped young men dressed like him, and lissome, straight-haired young ladies who also seem to be dressed like him. His home base, if it can be called that, is a house his manager owns near Woodstock, a fashionable artists' colony in New York State, and he also enjoys the run of his manager's apartment on dignified Gramercy Park in New York City. There are tales told of Dylan the motorcyclist, the novelist, the maker of high-camp home movies; but except among his small circle of intimates, the 24-year-old folk hero is inscrutably aloof.*

*"It was only after a long period of evasion and hesitation that Dylan finally agreed to grant this 'Playboy Interview' - the longest he's ever given. We met him on the 10th floor of the new CBS and Columbia Records building in mid-Manhattan. The room was antiseptic: white walls with black trim, contemporary furniture with severe lines, avantgarde art chosen by committee, everything in order, neat desks, neat personnel. In this sterile setting, slouched in a chair across from us, Dylan struck a refreshingly discordant note - with his untamed brownish-blond mane brushing the collar of his tieless blue plaid shirt, in his black jacket, gray vaudevillian-striped pipestem pants and well-worn blue-suede shoes.*

*Sitting nearby - also long-haired, tieless and blackjacketed, but wearing faded jeans - was a stringy young man whom the singer identified only as Taco Pronto. As Dylan spoke - in a soft drawl, smiling only rarely and fleetingly, sipping tea and chain-smoking cigarettes - his unspeaking friend chuckled and nodded appreciatively from the side lines. Tense and guarded at first Dylan gradually began to loosen up, then to open up, as he tried to tell us - albeit a bit surrealistically - just where he's been and where he's going. Under the circumstances, we chose to play straight man in our questions, believing that to have done otherwise would have stemmed the freewheeling flow of Dylan's responses."*

**PLAYBOY:** 'Popular songs,' you told a reporter last year, 'are the only art form that describes the temper of the times. The only place where it's happening is on the radio and records. That's where the people hang out. It's not in books; it's not on the stage; it's not in the galleries. All this art they've been talking about, it just remains on the shell. It doesn't make anyone happier.' In view of the fact that more people than ever before are reading books and going to plays and art galleries, do you think that statement is borne out by the facts?

**DYLAN:** Statistics measure quantity, not quality. The people in the statistics are people who are very bored. Art, if there is such a thing, is in the bathrooms; everybody knows that. To go to an art gallery thing where you get free milk and doughnuts and where there is a rock-'n'-roll band playing: That's just a status affair. I'm not putting it down, mind you; but I spend a lot of time in the bathroom. I think museums are vulgar. They're all against sex. Anyhow, I didn't say that people "hang out" on the radio, I said they get "hung up" on the radio.

**PLAYBOY:** Why do you think rock 'n' roll has become such an international phenomenon?

**DYLAN:** I can't really think that there *is* any rock 'n' roll. Actually, when you think about it, anything that has no real existence is bound to become an international phenomenon. Anyway, what does it mean, rock 'n' roll? Does it mean Beatles, does it mean John Lee Hooker, Bobby Vinton, Jerry Lewis' kid? What about Lawrence Welk? He must play a few rock-'n'-roll songs. Are all these people the same? Is Ricky Nelson like Otis Redding? Is Mick Jagger really Ma Rainey? I can tell by the way people hold their cigarettes if they like Ricky Nelson. I think it's fine to like Ricky Nelson: I couldn't care *less* if somebody likes Ricky Nelson. But I think we're getting off the track here. There isn't any Ricky Nelson. There isn't any Beatles; oh, I take that back: there are a lot of beetles. But there isn't any Bobby Vinton. Anyway, the word is not "international phenomenon"; the word is "parental nightmare."

**PLAYBOY:** In recent years, according to some critics, jazz has lost much of its appeal to the younger generation. Do you agree?

**DYLAN:** I don't think jazz has ever appealed to the younger generation. Anyway, I don't really know who this younger generation is. I don't think they could get into a jazz club anyway. But jazz is hard to follow; I mean you actually have to *like* jazz to follow it: and my motto is, never follow *anything*. I don't know what the motto of the younger generation is, but I would think they'd have to follow their parents. I mean, what would some parent say to his kid if the kid came home with a glass eye, a Charlie Mingus record and a pocketful of feathers? He'd say, "Who are you following?" And the poor kid would have to stand there with water in his shoes, a bow tie on his ear and soot pouring out of his belly button and say, "Jazz, Father, I've been following jazz." And his father would probably say, "Get a broom and clean up all that soot before you go to sleep." Then the kid's mother would tell her friends, "Oh yes, our little Donald, he's part of the younger generation, you know."

**PLAYBOY:** You used to say that you wanted to perform as little as possible, that you wanted to keep most of your time to yourself. Yet you're doing more concerts and cutting more records every year. Why? Is it the money?

**DYLAN:** Everything is changed now from before. Last spring. I guess I was going to quit singing. I was very drained, and the way things were going, it was a very draggy situation - I mean, when you do "Everybody Loves You for Your Black Eye," and meanwhile the back of your head is caving in. Anyway, I was playing a lot of songs I didn't want to play. I was singing words I didn't really want to sing. I don't mean words like "God" and "mother" and "President" and "suicide" and "meat cleaver." I mean simple little words like "if" and "hope" and "you." But "Like a Rolling Stone" changed it all: I didn't care anymore after that about writing books or poems or whatever. I mean it was some thing that I myself could dig. It's very tiring having other people tell you how much they dig you if you yourself don't dig you. It's also very deadly entertainment wise. Contrary to what some scary people think, I don't play with a band now for any kind of propaganda-type or commercial-type reasons. It's just that my songs are pictures and the band makes the sound of the pictures.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you feel that acquiring a combo and switching from folk to folkrock has improved you as a performer?

**DYLAN:** I'm not interested in myself as a performer. Performers are people who perform for other people. Unlike actors, I know what I'm saying. It's very simple in my mind. It doesn't matter what kind of audience reaction this whole thing gets. What happens on the stage is straight. It doesn't expect any rewards or fines from any kind of outside agitators. It's ultra-simple, and would exist whether anybody was looking or not.

As far as folk and folk-rock are concerned, it doesn't matter what kind of nasty names people invent for the music. It could be called arsenic music, or perhaps Phaedra music. I don't think that such a word as folk-rock has anything to do with it. And folk music is a

word I can't use. Folk music is a bunch of fat people. I have to think of all this as traditional music. Traditional music is based on hexagrams. It comes about from legends, Bibles, plagues, and it revolves around vegetables and death. There's nobody that's going to kill traditional music. All these songs about roses growing out of people's brains and lovers who are really geese and swans that turn into angels - they're not going to die. It's all those paranoid people who think that someone's going to come and take away their toilet paper - *they're* going to die. Songs like "Which Side Are You On?" and "I Love You, Porgy" - they're not folk-music songs; they're political songs. They're *already* dead. Obviously, death is not very universally accepted. I mean, you'd think that the traditional-music people could gather from their songs that mystery - just plain simple mystery - is a fact, a traditional fact. I listen to the old ballads; but I wouldn't go to a *party* and listen to the old ballads. I could give you descriptive detail of what they do to me, but some people would probably think my imagination had gone mad. It strikes me funny that people actually have the gall to think that I have some kind of fantastic imagination. It gets very lonesome. But anyway, traditional music is too unreal to die. It doesn't need to be protected. Nobody's going to hurt it. In that music is the only true, valid death you can feel today off a record player. But like anything else in great demand, people try to own it. It has to do with a purity thing. I think its meaninglessness is holy. Everybody knows that I'm not a folk singer.

**PLAYBOY:** Some of your old fans would agree with you - and not in a complimentary vein - since your debut with the rock-'n'-roll combo at last year's Newport Folk Festival, where many of them booed you loudly for "selling out" to commercial pop tastes. The early Bob Dylan, they felt, was the "pure" Bob Dylan. How do you feel about it?

**DYLAN:** I was kind of stunned. But I can't put anybody down for coming and booing: after all, they paid to get in. They could have been maybe a little quieter and not so persistent, though. There were a lot of old people there, too; lots of whole families had driven down from Vermont, lots of nurses and their parents, and well, like they just came to hear some relaxing hoedowns, you know, maybe an Indian polka or two. And just when everything's going all right, here I come on, and the whole place turns into a beer factory. There were a lot of people there who were very pleased that I got booed. I saw them afterward. I do resent somewhat, though, that everybody that booed said they did it because they were old fans.

**PLAYBOY:** What about their charge that you vulgarized your natural gifts?

**DYLAN:** What can I say? I'd like to *see* one of these so-called fans. I'd like to have him blindfolded and brought to me. It's like going out to the desert and screaming and then having little kids throw their sandbox at you. I'm only 24. These people that said this - were they Americans?



**PLAYBOY:** Americans or not, there were a lot of people who didn't like your new sound. In view of this widespread negative reaction, do you think you may have made a mistake in changing your style?

**DYLAN:** A mistake is to commit a misunderstanding. There could be no such thing, anyway, as this action. Either people understand or they *pretend* to understand - or else they really *don't* understand. What you're speaking of here is doing wrong things for selfish reasons. I don't know the word for that, unless it's suicide. In any case, it has nothing to do with my music.

**PLAYBOY:** Mistake or not, what made you decide to go the rock-'n'-roll route?

**DYLAN:** Carelessness. I lost my one true love. I started drinking. The first thing I know, I'm in a card game. Then I'm in a crap game. I wake up in a pool hall. Then this big Mexican lady drags me off the table, takes me to Philadelphia. She leaves me alone in her house, and it burns down. I wind up in Phoenix. I get a job as a Chinaman. I start working in a dime store, and move in with a 13-year-old girl. Then this big Mexican lady from Philadelphia comes in and burns the house down. I go down to Dallas. I get a job as a "before" in a Charles Atlas "before and after" ad. I move in with a delivery boy who can cook fantastic chili and hot dogs. Then this 13-year-old girl from Phoenix comes and burns the house down. The delivery boy - he ain't so mild: He gives her the knife, and the next thing I know I'm in Omaha. It's so cold there, by this time I'm robbing my own bicycles and frying my own fish. I stumble onto some luck and get a job as a carburetor out at the hot-rod races every Thursday night. I move in with a high school teacher who also does a little plumbing on the side, who ain't much to look at, but who's built a special kind of refrigerator that can turn newspaper into lettuce. Everything's going good until that delivery boy shows up and tries to knife me. Needless to say, he burned the house down, and I hit the road. The first guy that picked me up asked me if I wanted to be a star. What could I say?

**PLAYBOY:** And that's how you became a rock-'n'-roll singer?

**DYLAN:** No, that's how I got tuberculosis.

**PLAYBOY:** Let's turn the question around: Why have you stopped composing and singing protest songs?

**DYLAN:** I've stopped composing and singing anything that has either a reason to be written or a motive to be sung. Don't get me wrong, now. "Protest" is not my word. I've never thought of myself as such. The word "protest," I think, was made up for people undergoing surgery. It's an amusement-park word. A normal person in his righteous mind would have to have the hiccups to pronounce it honestly. The word "message" strikes me as having a hernia-like sound. It's just like the word "delicious." Also the word "marvelous."

You know, the English can say "marvelous" pretty good. They can't say "raunchy" so good, though. Well, we each have our thing. Anyway, message songs, as everybody knows, are a drag. It's only college newspaper editors and single girls under 14 that could possibly have time for them.

**PLAYBOY:** You've said you think message songs are vulgar. Why?

**DYLAN:** Well, first of all, anybody that's got a message is going to learn from experience that they can't put it into a song. I mean it's just not going to come out the same message. After one or two of these unsuccessful attempts, one realizes that his resultant message, which is not even the same message he thought up and began with, he's now got to stick by it; because, after all, a song leaves your mouth just as soon as it leaves your hands. Are you following me?

**PLAYBOY:** Oh, perfectly.

**DYLAN:** Well, anyway, second of all, you've got to respect other people's right to also have a message themselves. Myself, what I'm going to do is rent Town Hall and put about 30 Western Union boys on the bill. I mean, then there'll *really* be some messages. People will be able to come and hear more messages than they've ever heard before in their life.

**PLAYBOY:** But your early ballads have been called "songs of passionate protest." Wouldn't that make them "message" music?

**DYLAN:** This is unimportant. Don't you understand? I've been writing since I was eight years old. I've been playing the guitar since I was ten. I was raised playing and writing whatever it was I had to play and write.

**PLAYBOY:** Would it be unfair to say, then, as some have, that you were motivated commercially rather than creatively in writing the kind of songs that made you popular?

**DYLAN:** All right, now, look. It's not all that deep. It's not a complicated thing. My motives, or whatever they are, were never commercial in the money sense of the word. It was more in the don't die-by-the-hacksaw sense of the word. I never did it for money. It happened, and I let it happen to me. There was no reason *not* to let it happen to me. I couldn't have written before what I write now, anyway. The songs used to be about what I felt and saw. Nothing of my own rhythmic vomit ever entered into it. Vomit is not romantic. I used to think songs are supposed to be romantic. And I didn't want to sing anything that was unspecific. Unspecific things have no sense of time. All of us people have no sense of time; it's a dimensional hangup. Anybody can be specific and obvious. That's always been the easy way. The leaders of the world take the easy way. It's not that it's so difficult to be unspecific and less obvious; it's just that there's nothing, absolutely nothing, to be specific and obvious *about*. My older songs, to say the least, were about

nothing. The newer ones are about the same nothing - only as seen inside a bigger thing, perhaps called the nowhere. But this is all very constipated. I *do* know what my songs are about.

**PLAYBOY:** And what's that?

**DYLAN:** Oh, some are about four minutes; some are about five, and some, believe it or not, are about eleven or twelve.

**PLAYBOY:** Can't you be a bit more informative?

**DYLAN:** Nope.

**PLAYBOY:** All right. Let's change the subject. As you know, it's the age group from about 16 to 25 that listens to your songs. Why, in your opinion?

**DYLAN:** I don't see what's so strange about an age group like that listening to my songs. I'm hip enough to know that it ain't going to be the 85-to-90-year-olds. If the 85-to-90-year-olds *were* listening to me, they'd know that I can't tell them anything. The 16-to-25-year-olds, they probably know that I can't tell *them* anything either - and they know that I know it. It's a funny business. Obviously, I'm not an IBM computer any more than I'm an ashtray. I mean it's obvious to anyone who's ever slept in the back seat of a car that I'm just not a schoolteacher.

**PLAYBOY:** Even though you're not a schoolteacher, wouldn't you like to help the young people who dig you from turning into what some of their parents have become?

**DYLAN:** Well, I must say that I really don't know their parents. I really don't know if *anybody's* parents are so bad. Now, I hate to come on like a weakling or a coward, and I realize it might seem kind of irreligious, but I'm really not the right person to tramp around the country saving souls. I wouldn't run over anybody that was laying in the street, and I certainly wouldn't become a hangman. I wouldn't think twice about giving a starving man a cigarette. But I'm not a shepherd. And I'm not about to save anybody from fate, which I know nothing about. "Parents" is not the key word here. The key word is "destiny." I can't save them from that.

**PLAYBOY:** Still, thousands of young people look up to you as a kind of folk hero. Do you feel some sense of responsibility toward them?

**DYLAN:** I don't feel I have any responsibility, no. Whoever it is that listens to my songs owes *me* nothing. How could I possibly have any responsibility to any kind of thousands? What could possibly make me think that I owe anybody anything who just happens to be there? I've never written any song that begins with the words "I've gathered you here

tonight . . ." I'm not about to tell anybody to be a good boy or a good girl and they'll go to heaven. I really don't know what the people who are on the receiving end of these songs think of me, anyway. It's horrible. I'll bet Tony Bennett doesn't have to go through this kind of thing. I wonder what Billy the Kid would have answered to such a question.

**PLAYBOY:** In their admiration for you, many young people have begun to imitate the way you dress - which one adult commentator has called "selfconsciously oddball and defiantly sloppy." What's your reaction to that kind of put-down?

**DYLAN:** Bullshit. Oh, such bullshit. I know the fellow that said that. He used to come around here and get beat up all the time. He better watch it; some people are after him. They're going to strip him naked and stick him in Times Square. They're going to tie him up, and also put a thermometer in his mouth. Those kind of morbid ideas and remarks are so petty - I mean there's a *war* going on. People got rickets; everybody wants to start a riot; 40-year-old women are eating spinach by the carload; the doctors haven't got a cure for cancer - and here's some hillbilly talking about how he doesn't like somebody's clothes. Worse than that, it gets printed and innocent people have to read it. This is a terrible thing. And he's a terrible man. Obviously, he's just living off the fat of himself, and he's expecting his kids to take care of him. His kids probably listen to my records. Just because my clothes are too long, does that mean I'm unqualified for what I do?

**PLAYBOY:** No, but there are those who think it does - and many of them seem to feel the same way about your long hair. But compared with the shoulder-length coiffures worn by some of the male singing groups these days, your tonsorial tastes are on the conservative side. How do you feel about these far-out hair styles?

**DYLAN:** The thing that most people don't realize is that it's *warmer* to have long hair. Everybody wants to be warm. People with short hair freeze easily. Then they try to hide their coldness, and they get jealous of everybody that's warm. Then they become either barbers or Congressmen. A lot of prison wardens have short hair. Have you ever noticed that Abraham Lincoln's hair was much longer than John Wilkes Booth's?

**PLAYBOY:** Do you think Lincoln wore his hair long to keep his head warm?

**DYLAN:** Actually, I think it was for medical reasons, which are none of my business. But I guess if you figure it out, you realize that all of one's hair surrounds and lays on the brain inside your head. Mathematically speaking, the more of it you can get out of your head, the better. People who want free minds sometimes overlook the fact that you have to have an uncluttered brain. Obviously, if you get your hair on the outside of your head, your brain will be a little more freer. But all this talk about long hair is just a trick. It's been thought up by men and women who look like cigars - the anti-happiness committee. They're all freeloaders and cops. You can tell who they are: They're always carrying

calendars, guns or scissors. They're all trying to get into your quicksand. They think you've got something. I don't know why Abe Lincoln had long hair.

**PLAYBOY:** Until your abandonment of "message" songs, you were considered not only a major voice in the student protest movement but a militant champion of the civil rights struggle. According to friends, you seemed to feel a special bond of kinship with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, which you actively supported both as a performer and as a worker. Why have you withdrawn from participation in all these causes? Have you lost interest in protest as well as in protest songs?

**DYLAN:** As far as SNCC is concerned, I knew some of the people in it, but I only knew them as people, not as of any part of something that was bigger or better than themselves. I didn't even know what civil rights *was* before I met some of them. I mean, I knew there were Negroes, and I knew there were a lot of people who don't *like* Negroes. But I got to admit that if I didn't know some of the SNCC people, I would have gone on thinking that Martin Luther King was really nothing more than some underprivileged war hero. I haven't lost any interest in protest since then. I just didn't have any interest in protest to begin with - any more than I did in war heroes. You can't lose what you've never had. Anyway, when you don't like your situation, you either leave it or else you overthrow it. You can't just stand around and whine about it. People just get aware of your noise; they really don't get aware of *you*. Even if they give you what you want, it's only because you're making too much noise. First thing you know, you want something else, and then you want something else, and then you want something else, until finally it isn't a joke anymore, and whoever you're protesting against finally gets all fed up and stomps on everybody. Sure, you can go around trying to bring up people who are lesser than you, but then don't forget, you're messing around with gravity. I don't fight gravity. I do believe in equality, but I also believe in distance.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you mean people keeping their racial distance?

**DYLAN:** I believe in people keeping everything they've got.

**PLAYBOY:** Some people might feel that you're trying to cop out of fighting for the things you believe in.

**DYLAN:** Those would be people who think I have some sort of responsibility toward *them*. They probably want me to help them make friends. I don't know. They probably either want to set me in their house and have me come out every hour and tell them what time it is, or else they just want to stick me in between the mattress. How could they possibly understand what I believe in?

**PLAYBOY:** Well, what *do* you believe in?

**DYLAN:** I already told you.

**PLAYBOY:** All right. Many of your folksinging colleagues remain actively involved in the fight for civil rights, free speech and withdrawal from Vietnam. Do you think they're wrong?

**DYLAN:** I don't think they're wrong, if that's what they see themselves doing. But don't think that what you've got out there is a bunch of little Buddhas all parading up and down. People that use God as a weapon should be amputated upon. You see it around here all the time: "Be good or God won't like you, and you'll go to hell." Things like that. People that march with slogans and things tend to take themselves a little too holy. It would be a drag if they, too, started using God as a weapon.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you think it's pointless to dedicate yourself to the cause of peace and racial equality?

**DYLAN:** Not pointless to dedicate yourself to peace and racial equality, but rather, it's pointless to dedicate yourself to the *cause*; that's *really* pointless. That's very unknowing. To say "cause of peace" is just like saying "hunk of butter." I mean, how can you listen to anybody who wants you to believe he's dedicated to the hunk and not to the butter? People who can't conceive of how others hurt, they're trying to change the world. They're all afraid to admit that they don't really know each other. They'll all probably be here long after we've gone, and we'll give birth to new ones. But they themselves - I don't think *they'll* give birth to *anything*.

**PLAYBOY:** You sound a bit fatalistic.

**DYLAN:** I'm not fatalistic. Bank tellers are fatalistic; clerks are fatalistic. I'm a farmer. Who ever heard of a fatalistic farmer? I'm not fatalistic. I smoke a lot of cigarettes, but that doesn't make me fatalistic.

**PLAYBOY:** You were quoted recently as saying that "songs can't save the world. I've gone through all that." We take it you don't share Pete Seeger's belief that songs can change people, that they can help build international understanding.

**DYLAN:** On the international understanding part, that's OK. But you have a translation problem there. Anybody with this kind of a level of thinking has to also think about this translation thing. But I don't believe songs can change people anyway. I'm not Pinocchio. I consider that an insult. I'm not part of that. I don't blame anybody for thinking that way. But I just don't donate any money to them. I don't consider them anything like unhip; they're more in the rubber-band category.

**PLAYBOY:** How do you feel about those who have risked imprisonment by burning their draft cards to signify their opposition to U. S. involvement in Vietnam, and by refusing - as your friend Joan Baez has done - to pay their income taxes as a protest against the Government's expenditures on war and weaponry? Do you think they're wasting their time?

**DYLAN:** Burning draft cards isn't going to end any war. It's not even going to save any lives. If someone can be more honest with himself by burning his draft card, then that's great; but if he's just going to feel more important because he does it, then that's a drag. I really don't know too much about Joan Baez and her income-tax problems. The only thing I can tell you about Joan Baez is that she's not Belle Starr.

**PLAYBOY:** Writing about "beard-wearing draft-card burners and pacifist income-tax evaders," one columnist called such protesters "no less outside society than the junkie, the homosexual or the mass murderer." What's your reaction?

**DYLAN:** I don't believe in those terms. They're too hysterical. They don't describe anything. Most people think that homosexual, gay, queer, queen, faggot are all the same words. Everybody thinks that a junkie is a dope freak. As far as I'm concerned, I don't consider myself outside of anything. I just consider myself *not around*.

**PLAYBOY:** Joan Baez recently opened a school in northern California for training civil rights workers in the philosophy and techniques of nonviolence. Are you in sympathy with that concept?

**DYLAN:** If you mean do I agree with it or not, I really don't see anything to be in agreement *with*. If you mean has it got my approval, I guess it does, but my approval really isn't going to do it any good. I don't know about other people's sympathy, but my sympathy runs to the lame and crippled and beautiful things. I have a feeling of loss of power - something like a reincarnation feeling; I don't feel that for mechanical things like cars or schools. I'm sure it's a nice school, but if you're asking me would I go to it, I would have to say no.

**PLAYBOY:** As a college dropout in your freshman year, you seem to take a dim view of schooling in general, whatever the subject.

**DYLAN:** I really don't think about it.

**PLAYBOY:** Well, have you ever had any regrets about not completing college?

**DYLAN:** That would be ridiculous. Colleges are like old-age homes; except for the fact that more people die in colleges than in old-age homes, there's really no difference. People have one great blessing - obscurity - and not really too many people are thankful for it.

Everybody is always taught to be thankful for their food and clothes and things like that, but not to be thankful for their obscurity. Schools don't teach that; they teach people to be rebels and lawyers. I'm not going to put down the teaching system; that would be too silly. It's just that it really doesn't have too much to teach. Colleges are part of the American institution; everybody respects them. They're very rich and influential, but they have nothing to do with survival. Everybody knows that.

**PLAYBOY:** Would you advise young people to skip college, then?

**DYLAN:** I wouldn't advise anybody to do anything. I certainly wouldn't advise somebody not to go to college; I just wouldn't pay his *way* through college.

**PLAYBOY:** Don't you think the things one learns in college can help enrich one's life?

**DYLAN:** I don't think anything like that is going to enrich my life, no - not my life, anyway. Things are going to happen whether I know why they happen or not. It just gets more complicated when you stick *yourself* into it. You don't find out why things move. You *let* them move; you *watch* them move; you stop them from moving; you start them moving. But you don't sit around and try to figure out *why* there's movement - unless, of course, you're just an innocent moron, or some wise old Japanese man. Out of all the people who just lay around and ask "Why?", how many do you figure really want to know?

**PLAYBOY:** Can you suggest a better use for the four years that would otherwise be spent in college?

**DYLAN:** Well, you could hang around in Italy; you could go to Mexico; you could become a dishwasher; you could even go to Arkansas. I don't know; there are thousands of things to do and places to go. Everybody thinks that you have to bang your head against the wall, but it's silly when you really think about it. I mean, here you have fantastic scientists working on ways to prolong human living, and then you have other people who take it for granted that you have to beat your head against the wall in order to be happy. You can't take everything you don't like as a personal insult. I guess you should go where your wants are bare, where you're invisible and not needed.

**PLAYBOY:** Would you classify sex among your wants, wherever you go?

**DYLAN:** Sex is a temporary thing; sex isn't love. You can get sex anywhere. If you're looking for someone to *love* you, now that's different. I guess you have to stay in college for that.

**PLAYBOY:** Since you didn't stay in college, does that mean you haven't found someone to love you?



**DYLAN:** Let's go on to the next question.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you have any difficulty relating to people - or vice versa?

**DYLAN:** Well, sometimes I have the feeling that other people want my *soul*. If I say to them, "I don't *have* a soul," they say, "I know that. You don't have to tell me that. Not me. How dumb do you think I am? I'm your *friend*." What can I say except that I'm sorry and I feel bad? I guess maybe feeling bad and paranoia are the same thing.

**PLAYBOY:** Paranoia is said to be one of the mental states sometimes induced by such hallucinogenic drugs as peyote and LSD. Considering the risks involved, do you think that experimentation with such drugs should be part of the growing up experience for a young person?

**DYLAN:** I wouldn't advise anybody to use drugs - certainly not the hard drugs; drugs are medicine. But opium and hash and pot - now, those things aren't drugs; they just bend your mind a little. I think *everybody's* mind should be bent once in a while. Not by LSD, though. LSD is medicine - a different kind of medicine. It makes you aware of the universe, so to speak; you realize how foolish *objects* are. But LSD is not for groovy people; it's for mad, hateful people who want revenge. It's for people who usually have heart attacks. They ought to use it at the Geneva Convention.

**PLAYBOY:** Are you concerned, as you approach 30, that you may begin to "go square," lose some of your openness to experience, become leery of change and new experiment?

**DYLAN:** No. But if it happens, then it happens. What can I say? There doesn't seem to *be* any tomorrow. Every time I wake up, no matter in what position, it's always been today. To look ahead and start worrying about trivial little things I can't really say has any more importance than looking back and *remembering* trivial little things. I'm not going to become any poetry instructor at any girls' school; I know *that* for sure. But that's about *all* I know for sure. I'll just keep doing these different things, I guess.

**PLAYBOY:** Such as?

**DYLAN:** Waking up in different positions.

**PLAYBOY:** What else?

**DYLAN:** I'm just like anybody else; I'll try anything once.

**PLAYBOY:** Including theft and murder?

**DYLAN:** I can't really say I *wouldn't* commit theft or murder and expect anybody to really believe me. I wouldn't believe anybody if they told *me* that.

**PLAYBOY:** By their mid-20s, most people have begun to settle into their niche, to find a place in society. But you've managed to remain inner-directed and uncommitted. What was it that spurred you to run away from home six times between the ages of ten and eighteen and finally to leave for good?

**DYLAN:** It was nothing; it was just an accident of geography. Like if I was born and raised in New York or Kansas City, I'm sure everything would have turned out different. But Hibbing, Minnesota, was just not the right place for me to stay and live. There really was nothing there. The only thing you could do there was be a miner, and even that kind of thing was getting less and less. The people that lived there - they're nice people; I've been all over the world since I left there, and they still stand out as being the least hung-up. The mines were just dying, that's all; but that's not their fault. *Everybody* about my age left there. It was no great romantic thing. It didn't take any great amount of thinking or individual genius, and there certainly wasn't any pride in it. I didn't run away from it; I just turned my back on it. It couldn't give me anything. It was very void-like. So leaving wasn't hard at all; it would have been much harder to stay. I didn't want to die there. As I think about it now, though, it wouldn't be such a bad place to go back to and die in. There's no place I feel closer to now, or get the feeling that I'm part of, except maybe New York; but I'm not a New Yorker. I'm North Dakota-Minnesota-Midwestern. I'm *that* color. I speak that way. I'm from someplace called Iron Range. My brains and feeling have come from there. I wouldn't amputate on a drowning man; *nobody* from out there would.

**PLAYBOY:** Today, you're on your way to becoming a millionaire. Do you feel in any danger of being trapped by all this affluence - by the things it can buy?

**DYLAN:** No, my world is very small. Money can't really improve it any; money can just keep it from being smothered.

**PLAYBOY:** Most big stars find it difficult to avoid getting involved, and sometimes entangled, in managing the business end of their careers. As a man with three thriving careers - as a concert performer, recording star and songwriter - do you ever feel boxed in by such noncreative responsibilities?

**DYLAN:** No, I've got other people to do that for me. They watch my money; they guard it. They keep their eyes on it at all times; they're supposed to be very smart when it comes to money. They know just what to do with my money. I pay them a lot of it. I don't really speak to them much, and they don't really speak to me at all, so I guess everything is all right.

**PLAYBOY:** If fortune hasn't trapped you, how about fame? Do you find that your celebrity makes it difficult to keep your private life intact?

**DYLAN:** My private life has been dangerous from the beginning. All this does is add a little atmosphere.

**PLAYBOY:** You used to enjoy wandering across the country - taking off on openend trips, roughing it from town to town, with no particular destination in mind. But you seem to be doing much less of that these days. Why? Is it because you're too well known?

**DYLAN:** It's mainly because I have to be in Cincinnati Friday night, and the next night I got to be in Atlanta, and then the next night after that, I have to be in Buffalo. Then I have to write some more songs for a record album.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you get the chance to ride your motorcycle much anymore?

**DYLAN:** I'm still very patriotic to the highway, but I don't ride my motorcycle too much anymore, no.

**PLAYBOY:** How do you get your kicks these days, then?

**DYLAN:** I hire people to look into my eyes, and then I have them kick me.

**PLAYBOY:** And that's the way you get your kicks?

**DYLAN:** No. Then I *forgive* them; that's where my kicks come in.

**PLAYBOY:** You told an interviewer last year, "I've done everything I ever wanted to." If that's true, what do you have to look forward to?

**DYLAN:** Salvation. Just plain salvation.

**PLAYBOY:** Anything else?

**DYLAN:** Praying. I'd also like to start a cookbook magazine. And I've always wanted to be a boxing referee. I want to referee a heavyweight championship fight. Can you imagine that? Can you imagine any fighter in his right mind recognizing *me*?

**PLAYBOY:** If your popularity were to wane, would you welcome being anonymous again?

**DYLAN:** You mean welcome it, like I'd welcome some poor pilgrim coming in from the rain? No, I wouldn't welcome it; I'd accept it, though. Someday, obviously, I'm going to *have* to accept it.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you ever think about marrying, settling down, having a home, maybe living abroad? Are there any luxuries you'd like to have, say, a yacht or a Rolls-Royce?

**DYLAN:** No, I don't think about those things. If I felt like buying anything, I'd buy it. What you're asking me about is the future, *my* future. I'm the last person in the world to ask about my future.

**PLAYBOY:** Are you saying you're going to be passive and just let things happen to you?

**DYLAN:** Well, that's being very philosophical about it, but I guess it's true.

**PLAYBOY:** You once planned to write a novel. Do you still?

**DYLAN:** I don't think so. All my writing goes into the songs now. Other forms don't interest me anymore.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you have any unfulfilled ambitions?

**DYLAN:** Well, I guess I've always wanted to be Anthony Quinn in "La Strada". Not always - only for about six years now; it's not one of those childhood-dream things. Oh, and come to think of it, I guess I've always wanted to be Brigitte Bardot, too; but I don't really want to think about *that* too much.

**PLAYBOY:** Did you ever have the standard boyhood dream of growing up to be President?

**DYLAN:** No. When I was a boy, Harry Truman was President; who'd want to be Harry Truman?

**PLAYBOY:** Well, let's suppose that you were the President. What would you accomplish during your first thousand days?

**DYLAN:** Well, just for laughs, so long as you insist, the first thing I'd do is probably move the White House. Instead of being in Texas, it'd be on the East Side in New York. McGeorge Bundy would definitely have to change his name, and General McNamara would be forced to wear a coonskin cap and shades. I would immediately rewrite "The Star-Spangled Banner," and little school children, instead of memorizing "America the Beautiful," would have to memorize "Desolation Row" [one of Dylan's latest songs]. And I would immediately call for a showdown with Mao Tse-tung; I would fight him *personally* - and I'd get somebody to film it.

**PLAYBOY:** One final question: Even though you've more or less retired from political and social protest, can you conceive of any circumstance that might persuade you to reinvolve yourself?

**DYLAN:** No, not unless all the people in the world disappeared.

**Link:** <http://www.interferenza.com/bcs/interw/66-jan.htm>

***90's***

## **Artículos Revista TIME**

### **Winners of 1991**

*Publicado el 6 de enero de 1992*

Boris Yeltsin, the comeback kid of Russian politics, deftly toppled the Kremlin and inherited the nuclear button . . . The Teamsters said goodbye to the Mafia. Against all odds, the most corrupt U.S. labor union elected an underdog reformer as president -- Watch out, wiseguys . . . Sam Skinner moved up from Transportation Secretary to displace arrogant-to-the-end John Sununu. Skinner was just what George Bush needed -- a crisis manager who flies coach class . . . Wal-Mart isn't just a discount store anymore. Sam Walton's brainchild surpassed Sears in 1991 as the largest U.S. retailer . . . Nirvana found its place in alternative-rock heaven. The hit single Smells Like Teen Spirit has become an anthem for apathetic kids . . . Aung San Suu Kyi couldn't pick up her Nobel Peace Prize this year because the regime in Burma (also known as Myanmar) holds her under house arrest, but she provides a beacon of democratic hope to people caught in one of the world's worst remaining tyrannies . . . Luke Perry and Jason Priestly are the lucky residents of Beverly Hills, 90210, the coolest ZIP code on earth. For fans of these sensitive heartthrobs, swooning is still in style . . . Ties were big sellers this year. For folks too strapped for a fashion overhaul, flashy neckwear was an easy way to spruce up a dull outfit . . . Air kissing, once mocked, is the way to greet people at social gatherings these days, now that the three-strain flu and everything else is going around. Direct eye contact, however, is still permitted.

. . . AND LOSERS

Donald Trump's jet is gone, his yacht repossessed, his casinos are ailing, but he still has plenty of financial advice. Anybody care to listen? . . . The art market collapsed after its 1980s hysteria. Old masters still fetch a fortune, but the products of hustlers like Julian Schnabel have fallen off the wall . . . L.A. Gear, the trendy sneaker outfit that not long ago talked of whipping Reebok and Nike, has proved that when it comes to athletic shoes, fashion is fleeting . . . Louisiana voters were spared the ex-Klansman and instead got the twice-indicted womanizing gambler. Some choice . . . Clark Clifford, former Defense Secretary and bank executive, claimed ignorance about the B.C.C.I. scandal, but investigators were more than a little skeptical . . . Germany found that reunions can be angst ridden and downright divisive -- not to mention expensive . . . But that didn't mean anyone wanted Erich Honecker back, except for some character in the Chechen-Ingush region of Russia who invited the former East German boss to settle down there.

. . . AND FOILED COMEBACKS

Christopher Columbus, hero of 1492, came under attack as a ruthless invader. A bad year, all in all, for dead white males . . . And some live ones: Mark Spitz and Bjorn Borg hoped to relive their heydays but found it takes more than high self-esteem to be a world-class athlete . . . The 1970s were the years that taste forgot. Why celebrate platform shoes and Partridge Family LPs? Keep them in the attic where they belong.

**Link: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,974625,00.html>**

## ***Seattle's The Real Deal***

*By JAY COCKS;PATRICK E. COLE/SEATTLE*

*Publicado el 23 de marzo de 1992*

The great American music machine still maintains its twin capitals in New York City and Los Angeles, but its epicenter is inclined to shift as frequently and erratically as a tropical depression. Athens, Ga., was the regional rage just . . . well, was it yesterday? And there was Minneapolis only a few years back; before that it was Philadelphia, Detroit, Memphis.

These days -- these moments -- it's Seattle. One band after another has sprung from the environs of the city's fast-lane bar scene onto the national charts. The lyrical metal band Queensryche has sold more than 2 million copies of its album Empire. Alice in Chains, which lays down a kind of altered- consciousness heavy metal -- the Doors, slamming -- is approaching platinum-level sales with Facelift. Nevermind, by the Seattle-area trio Nirvana, has sold 3.5 million, and the group's single Smells Like Teen Spirit, with its arch lyric ironies and crusher guitar chords, hit Billboard's Top 10 and helped get the band on Saturday Night Live.

Seattle boasts four thriving independent record labels; six key music clubs, like the Vogue, in the downtown area alone; and nearly that many recording studios. Representatives of rival record companies prowl the streets in major- label wolf packs, looking for the next bust-out band: Heard War Babies yet? Checked out Mudhoney? Get on it, and get with it. As Steve Slaton, regent of the local deejays, puts it, "Seattle seems to be the center of the musical universe. It's just the real deal."

The Seattle sound is cussed, aggressive, incisively individualistic, and it comes, like matching tie and handkerchief, with its own attitude: cut down on flash, look regular, sound loud and sound off. "People here do what they want," says Terry Date, producer of Badmotorfinger for Soundgarden, which has toured with Guns N' Roses. "There aren't a



whole lot of love songs that come out of here. It's not happy music. It definitely has a dark side to it."

More than any other group, it is Nirvana that typifies the new Seattle heat. "I feel stupid and contagious/ Here we are now, entertain us," is one of Teen Spirit's more memorable lyric refrains, fully characteristic of the band's spiky style. The core members of Nirvana, lead singer-guitarist Kurt Cobain and bassist Chris Novoselic, teened together in Aberdeen, Wash., and teamed up to form Nirvana in 1987 (drummer David Grohl signed on later). Both were fans of the brooding postpunk musical musings of Husker Du, as well as of the shameless theatricality of Kiss. Nirvana's first album, *Bleach*, was recorded in three days at a cost of \$600 and, when distributed by an enterprising local label called Sub Pop, made the band's members stars on the underground circuit.

Seattle rockers take almost as much pride in their ornery individuality as in their music. "I can't stand it when people come up to me and say, 'Congratulations on your success!' " Cobain told a music magazine recently. "I want to ask them, 'Do you like the songs?' Selling 2 million records isn't useful to me unless they're good."

Despite all the prescribed attitude, the musicians are benign about their surroundings. The Seattle area, says Geoff Tate, lead singer of Queensryche, "is attractive to me because it's home. It's a very good place to live from the standpoint of reality." Says Layne Staley of A in C: "The bands support each other. Here it's a little more lighthearted." Tate also sees a link to an honorable British tradition. "There is a blue-collar element, and it's a very moody place due to the weather," he says. "It has the same sort of atmosphere as Birmingham, England."

It was, in fact, the ever trendy, famished-for-a-new-thing British music press that first started seriously boosting bands like Nirvana and the Seattle scene in general. "Sometimes having the English behind you is the most important thing," says Daniel House of Seattle-based C/Z Records. Says Damon Stewart, Sony Music's A.-and-R. man on the scene: "Through the British press, the whole pop scene really lit this fire."

The Seattle sound is neither quite as original nor as dynamic as its boosters like to claim. To anyone, for example, who watched the Who trash the stage or the Clash spit into the audience and split every eardrum within range, the sight of Nirvana bashing instruments on Saturday Night Live looks all too practiced, like a bunch of art-school wimps trying to act tough. Still, A in C's Staley insists, "it's not about who's the wildest. There are no gimmicks."

But -- the impression persists -- perhaps there is some secret. Says Geoff Mayfield, Billboard's associate director of retail research: "What I'm hearing now is that bands from L.A. or the Midwest are moving to Seattle and telling record companies, 'Yeah, we grew up here, and this is where we make our music.' " But rockers around the country with the

same idea should be prudent. Before tearing up roots, they should think about that shifting epicenter. It would be terrible to desert the rehearsal garage in some town that was about to become the next newest, neatest place.

**Link:**

**<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,9751422,00.html#ixzz0iwUkb6Z2>**

## ***To The End Of Grunge***

By **CHRISTOPHER JOHN FARLEY** Publicado el 20 de septiembre de 1993

PERFORMER: NIRVANA

TITLE: IN UTERO

LABEL: GEFEN

THE BOTTOM LINE: The Seattle trio takes a great leap forward with an aggressive, abrasive rock album.

Nirvana: a place or state of oblivion to care, pain or external reality. This is not heaven, surely, but a state in which suffering is transcended and desire extinguished. In any case, ever since the members of the post-punk rock band Nirvana became the surprise darlings of MTV and pop radio, they've gone through a media barrage that seemed the very opposite of nirvana. Now their powerful new album takes all the band's media-glare anguish and alchemizes it into noisy, brainy rock 'n' roll. "Teenage angst has paid off well/ Now I'm bored and old," Kurt Cobain sings on the opening song, Serve the Servants. "Self-appointed judges judge/ More than they have sold."

In Utero: inside the womb; before birth. The title is a misnomer. Nirvana has been reborn. Its 1991 album Nevermind was a great leap forward (after Bleach, in 1989), selling more than 4 million copies. Song after song started off with gorgeous guitar hooks, as in the anxious chords that kicked off Smells Like Teen Spirit, or the bouncy bass-guitar strumming that launched Lithium. Its punk-inspired, we-couldn't-care-less ethos seemed to reflect the restless apathy some young people felt toward their times. "Oh well, whatever, nevermind," Cobain sang on Teen Spirit. The strength of Nevermind was its ambiguity; the next logical step was an album with structure, a clear vision.

Grunge: loud, crunching rock 'n' roll. Grunge is dead. Put away the flannels that dressed it up, because real innovators like nothing better than to tear off the labels stuck on them by critics. Producer Butch Vig, Nirvana singer- guitarist Cobain, bassist Krist Novoselic and drummer Dave Grohl helped originate the grunge sound. On *In Utero*, they enlist the help of producers Steve Albini (Breeders) and Scott Litt (R.E.M) to help dismantle it. The two producers make the album a satisfying whole.

The tracks produced by Litt -- *All Apologies* and *Heart-Shaped Box* -- have an immediate, radio-friendly tang. The latter song is the album's most accessible, powering along at moderate rock speed and conjuring images of emotional entrapment: "I've been locked inside your heart-shaped box for a week . . . I was drawn into your magnet tar pit trap." In contrast, many of the Albini pieces sound ravaged, almost ruined; but as with buried treasures, there are rewards for persistence and exploration. If you listen repeatedly to such sonically explosive songs as *Serve the Servants* and *Pennyroyal Tea*, the structure of each gradually becomes clear, and melodies surface.

Alternative rock: however Nirvana defines it. Despite the fears of some alternative-music fans, Nirvana hasn't gone mainstream, though this potent new album may once again force the mainstream to go Nirvana. *In Utero*'s one misstep may be the dubious song *Rape Me*: "Rape me, my friend . . . rape me again." It's meant to be antirape, but beer-blown frat boys may or may not get the irony. The last and best song, *All Apologies*, seems to anticipate and confront such questions: "What else should I be/ All apologies . . . What else could I write . . . All in all is all we all are." It's a riddling, fitting ending to a great album. Nirvana may not mean heaven, but the trio's new release is very close to divine.

***Link: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,979260,00.html>***



Portada del informe dedicado al movimiento grunge publicado el 25 de octubre de 1993

## **ROCK'S ANXIOUS REBELS**

By **CHRISTOPHER JOHN FARLEY** Publicado el 25 de octubre de 1993

This is the story of how a gas-station attendant and high school dropout grossed more than \$50 million for a record company and found himself in the middle of rock's noisiest controversy.

Only three years ago, Eddie Vedder was working the night shift at a service station in San Diego, sometimes telling people he was a security guard to impress them. He doesn't have to worry about that anymore. Today the 28-year-old singer and lyricist for the alternative-metal band Pearl Jam is rock's newest demigod. His group's debut album, *Ten*, has sold nearly 6 million copies and still ranks in the Top 30 of the Billboard album chart more than 90 weeks after its release. This week the Seattle-based quintet will release its second album, called simply *Vs.*, which is expected to be one of the biggest-selling albums of the year.

They haven't built that Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio, yet, but when they do, they'd better save a room for Vedder. He's got all the rock-idol moves down. Does he have a painful, shadowy past? Check. Does he have an air of danger and sensuality reminiscent of Jim Morrison? You bet. Does he refuse to adopt the trappings of a rock star, thus demonstrating that he's such a genuine article he doesn't need stardom? Absolutely. Is he happy to be on the cover of *TIME*? No way.

Vedder is a product of the thriving world of alternative rock, a musical genre that rejects the commercial values of mainstream pop. Alternative has no strict definition, but it has a feel. Its musicians reject show-biz glitz. They support progressive social causes. Many of them avoid dating groupies and models. Their music is usually guitar-driven, with experimental touches. While pop songs are often about love, alternative lyrics are usually about tougher feelings: despair, lust, confusion. Alternative rock is a reaction, especially among the twentysomething generation, to all the years of being subjected to Madonna's changing hair color and MTV close-ups of George Michael's butt.

Alternative rock has been simmering for years, ready for this moment of boiling over. The Georgia-based band R.E.M. was an alternative pioneer in the mid-'80s that went mainstream years before Pearl Jam was even formed. What's new is that the record charts are now crowded with alternative bands ranging from the arty-rock quartet Smashing Pumpkins to the folk-tinged Soul Asylum. MTV's *Alternative Nation* program and the *Lollapalooza* road tour, which feature the new breed, have become the hippest venues going.

And therein lies the controversy: alternative music is currently one of the most potent forces in the mainstream, which has triggered an identity crisis and rancorous debate

among musicians and fans. If these rockers are stars now, fans ask, haven't they become everything we're against? Nothing better symbolizes the struggle for this musical genre's soul than the success of Pearl Jam, a band adored by followers but reviled by some fellow musicians as sellouts, poseurs or opportunists riding on the fame of their fellow Seattleites, Nirvana. Nirvana leader Kurt Cobain has said that bands like Pearl Jam are "jumping on the alternative bandwagon." Cobain and his crew have released a new album, *In Utero*, that is deliberately abrasive (three weeks after its release, it ranks No. 3 on the Billboard chart).

Vedder, who has already had his share of inner conflict, has been dizzied by the transformation from outsider to idol. "Any kinda quick success of the kind we had is inevitably bound to provoke some degree of contempt," he told Britain's *Melody Maker* newspaper. "I end up having a lot of difficulties with it myself. I'm being honest when I say that sometimes when I see a picture of the band or a picture of my face taking up a whole page of a magazine, I hate that guy."

In keeping with rock tradition, alternative is defiant. The twist is what it's rebelling against. What angers today's rockers and their fans is that life is so unjust, which they learned at a vulnerable age. Alternative rock is the sound of homes breaking. If you are in your teens or 20s, chances are your family has been through a divorce. Alternative music has become an emotional sound track, speaking directly to unresolved issues of abandonment and unfairness. "I tried hard to have a father/ But instead I had a dad," Nirvana's Cobain sings on *In Utero*. One of Pearl Jam's biggest hits, *Jeremy*, is a song about a boy who kills himself in a classroom: "Daddy didn't give attention/ To the fact that Mommy didn't care." Pearl Jam's keen sense of angst has garnered the band comparisons with the Who and U2.

Can they survive the hype? While Pearl Jam, Nirvana and their colleagues have a real message to deliver, most of this was overlooked during the past two years by trend watchers who were more interested in the way they dressed and the Seattle scene they came from. Style mavens fixed upon the thrift-shop wardrobe of flannel shirts and torn corduroy jackets, dubbing it the grunge look. For a fashion shoot, *Vanity Fair* dressed Manhattan socialites and celebrities in flannel and denim. All this exploitation made the term grunge deeply unfashionable among American youth, but bands like Pearl Jam have shaken off the label, becoming better known for their music than their baggy shorts.

In terms of influence, alternative musicians borrow from the rough edges of rock's history. Out of the 1960s comes the spirit of social protest and artistic freedom. From the late 1970s come the primitive, do-it-yourself sensibility of punk and the slam-dancing and stage-diving mayhem that went with it. "We rip off everyone equally," says Shannon Hoon, lead singer of Blind Melon, which has sold more than 1 million copies of its first album this year. The trick is to sample riffs from somebody who's so long gone that the modern repetition of it sounds fresh and new. Even the theatrical group Kiss -- whose members wore demonic makeup onstage -- is cited as an influence by today's alternative

rockers. "I had the worst crush on the God of Thunder, (Kiss bassist) Gene Simmons," says Kat Bjelland, lead singer for the punkette group Babes in Toyland. "They appealed to me because they're really basic. Plus they're so evil!"

Alternative rockers keep a clear conscience about all the borrowing because their hodgepodge sound is homemade, not the formula of a record company. "I don't like labels," warns alternative rocker Juliana Hatfield, a winsome woman with a girlish voice and a guitar that barks. "But if you want to put me in that category, it's O.K. with me, because being labeled alternative has a certain amount of respect that goes along with it. It means that you've started out on your own, the ethic of doing everything yourself."

The alternative movement was dependent on the entrepreneurship of dozens of independent record labels, or indies, that sprang up during the 1980s as major labels focused more on such superstars as Bruce Springsteen and Madonna.

Seattle's Sub Pop Records was founded in 1986 to capture the musical moment, market it and move on to the next moment. Sub Pop co-founders Jonathan Poneman and Bruce Pavitt envisioned their small record company as a kind of Motown of the Pacific Northwest. "The problem with the music industry in the '80s was that the major labels had their doors shut to new ideas," says Pavitt, who used to work for Muzak, the elevator-music company.

Sub Pop's proprietors had keen ears. They produced some of the first recordings by a whole string of bands that went on to national success: Nirvana, Smashing Pumpkins, Soundgarden and Alice in Chains. As soon as the bands became widely heard, however, they jumped to major labels. After Sub Pop's most promising band, Nirvana, left the company and released the huge hit *Nevermind* (more than 4 million copies sold) on the Geffen label, other major labels began an indie-band feeding frenzy. Bands that had been playing in taverns were being offered \$300,000 contracts. Many of these groups were founded on the principle that mainstream music was bankrupt, which only made them more attractive to mainstream labels.

Pearl Jam came together as a serendipitous offshoot of a Sub Pop band called Green River. Rock legend, passed along by the resentful, has it that bassist Jeff Ament and guitarist Stone Gossard split from that band because the lead vocalist wanted to stay true to the experimental spirit of alternative rock, while Ament and Gossard wanted to become big-time rock stars. The band they formed, Mother Love Bone, combined a heavy-metal sound with bouncy tunes. Just as the group seemed ready to break through in 1990, its lead singer died of a heroin overdose.

Enter Eddie Vedder. He was living in San Diego, fronting an all too fittingly named band called Bad Radio. A musician friend gave him a cassette marked simply stone gossard demos '91 and told him the guitarists on the tape were looking for a singer. Vedder

listened to the tape, then went surfing. Lyrics came to him. "Son, she said/ Have I got a little story for you." Vedder rushed back to his apartment, wrote three songs and recorded himself singing the lyrics over the melodies. Vedder sent the demo tape back to Seattle, where bassist Ament listened to the deep, intense growl of the California stranger. As he recalls that day in Rolling Stone, he played the tape three times, then picked up the phone. "Stone," he told his pal, "you better get over here."

One of the songs would later become one of Pearl Jam's biggest hits: *Alive*. The song is about a mother who has disturbing news for her son: "While you were sitting home alone at age thirteen/ Your real daddy was dying." The emotions in *Alive* were torn from Vedder's own life. Vedder was born in Chicago, the oldest of four children. The first records he can remember enjoying were Motown records, songs by the young Michael Jackson. Neil Young came next, and the Who's album *Quadrophenia*. He identified with its portrayal of adolescent trauma. Vedder never knew his real father. He was raised by a man who he thought was his father and with whom he often clashed. By the time his mother told him the truth, Vedder had migrated to San Diego, and his biological father had died of multiple sclerosis.

Vedder followed the tape to Seattle, where guitarist Mike McCready and drummer Dave Krusen rounded out the new band's lineup (Krusen was later replaced by Dave Abbruzzese). The group landed a deal with a major label, Sony's Epic, but when its first album came out in 1991, the musicians found themselves in the midst of the hype storm about Seattle bands. Nirvana exploded into prominence first, with its anthemic *Smells Like Teen Spirit*. When Pearl Jam drew attention as the Next Big Seattle Sound, Nirvana's Cobain seemed to bristle at sharing the limelight, dismissing Pearl Jam as retrorockers and copycats.

"Everyone was kind of taken aback because Pearl Jam was such a complete success right away," recalls Eddie Roeser, lead singer of the Chicago-based band Urge Overkill. "They want to make honest music -- it's not their fault that they're commercially huge."

Pearl Jam's fame built steadily with such hits as *Alive*, *Even Flow* and *Jeremy*. What really put the band over the top was its live performances, dominated by Vedder's vocal power and mesmerizing stage presence. He reminded fans of an animal trying to escape from a leash. Especially in the first year or so, he hurled himself into crowds, surfing on upraised hands. He climbed the scaffolds around a stage, dangling from dangerous heights. He stood still in front of a microphone, folded into himself, tearing emotions out of himself as he sang. "I'm kind of a cynic about these guys who cross their arms when they sing," Soundgarden's Kim Thayil says of the first time he heard Vedder sing in a Seattle club. "But there were songs that Eddie sang that sent shivers up my spine." Pearl Jam cemented its reputation as a heavyweight contender in August at the MTV Music Video Awards, where the band won four awards, including best video of the year for *Jeremy*, and joined Neil Young for a stirring version of his song *Rockin' in the Free World*.



Pearl Jam's new album, which is full of animal confrontation, was called *Five Against One* until the band changed the name to *Vs.* at the last minute. (As a result, the first pressing will be devoid of title.) The new disc combines politically correct views with punk-inspired belligerence. The music is layered with guitars and strong percussion; the tunes have the power of heavy metal but the melodic flavoring of great pop. Several of the songs are vitriolic attacks on patriarchal society. *Glorified G.* is a slam against rural lugs and their weaponry: "Got a gun/ Fact I got two/ That's okay man, 'cause I love God." The song *W.M.A.* is a critique of an actual crime in which a black man named Malice Green was beaten to death with flashlights by Detroit police. "White Male American/ Do no wrong," the song goes. "Dirty his hands it comes right off."

The irony is that the initials W.M.A. could stand for many of the people who will buy Pearl Jam's album. In fact, they stand for all the members of the band, as well as most of the people in the alternative rock scene, though female musicians have grown in prominence. In the liner notes to the Nirvana compilation *Incesticide*, lead singer Cobain wrote, "If any of you in any way hate homosexuals, people of a different color, or women, please do this one favor for us -- leave us the f--- alone!" And Scott Weiland, the flame-haired singer for Stone Temple Pilots -- grungelike newcomers who have an antirape song called *Sex Type Thing* -- recalls feeling disturbed at a recent concert when he looked out into a crowd made up of the kind of good-looking, middle-class guys who used to beat him up in high school.

Alternative musicians are a far cry from the strutting, white-male rockers of decades gone by. They tend to be antisexist, pro-tolerance and pro- underdog, whether it's animals or humans. The same goes for female rockers. When Chicago hyperintellectual singer Liz Phair, 26, played her explicit debut album *Exile from Guyville* for her parents, she was surprised at the reaction. "The first time my mother heard it, she wept," says Phair. "Not because she was shocked, but because she was so moved at hearing something so revealing from her daughter."

Many alternative rockers have tried as well to broaden the demographic reach of their music to be more inclusive. The annual traveling rock carnival Lollapalooza, which helps bring regional acts to a national audience, has made a point of including rap acts such as Arrested Development and Ice Cube. "A lot of white kids will not go to a black show," says Ted Gardener, producer of Lollapalooza. "They'll buy the records, but they won't go see the band. They're afraid they might get killed. And some black kids feel the same way about white shows. Our attempt is to try to bring new styles of music together." The sound track to the movie *Judgment Night* features collaborations between rappers and rockers, including one by Seattle rapper Sir Mix-A-Lot and local band Mudhoney. "Alternative and rap grew out of the same thing," says Sir Mix-A-Lot. "We both did our thing in a basement, and it grew and grew until the major labels took notice."

Yet any movement that pays so much homage to purity and anticommmercialism is bound to be divided by charges of hypocrisy, especially when the lure of big bucks is at hand. The movement now finds itself drifting from the ideals that gave it birth: to express anti-Establishment ideas and make music for misfits. "It appealed to me and my friends because our generation is so dead to the world. There's nothing waiting for us when we get out of school," says Bonnie O'Shea, 21, a student disc jockey at the State University of New York at Oneonta. But when 5 million people buy an album, they can't all be outcasts. Some of them are going to be Rush Limbaugh fans who just like the beat. "I don't think all of these new fans know what they're listening to," says O'Shea. "I hope it's a short-term thing. I want my music back."

Whose music is it anyway? Adults are always trying to find out what kids are up to, replicate it, and then sell it back to them. The kids like rap? Let's give them Vanilla Ice! Usually the youth-oriented products that adults come up with are all too obviously a grownup's conception of what a young person wants. The suits are, after all, suits. Getting a handle on youthful culture is like trying to hold onto one's adolescence. It slips away -- it's meant to.

As a result, the debate over who's fake in the alternative world rages on. The following exchange took place on MTV's cartoon series *Beavis and Butt-head*:

Beavis (watching Stone Temple Pilots' video *Plush*): Is this Pearl Jam?

Butt-head: This guy makes faces like Eddie Vedder.

Beavis: No, Eddie Vedder makes faces like this guy.

Butt-head: I heard these guys, like, came first and Pearl Jam ripped them off.

Beavis: No, Pearl Jam came first.

Butt-head: Well, they both suck.

Members of the indie community are wary, almost paranoid, about the movement's being copied or co-opted by the mainstream. "One of the things that I think has really affected the underground negatively," says Bill Wyman, columnist for a Chicago alternative newspaper, "is this whole idea that this is 'our' little scene, it's for us, we play really loud music, we don't want fans, we don't want major record deals, it's uncool to be popular and to publicize your band."

Nirvana's Cobain once wrote a song called *School*; ridiculing the alternative world: "You're in high school again! No recess!" Just as in school, certain styles and viewpoints are considered "cool" in the alternative scene; those that don't fit in are derided. This year the critically acclaimed band Smashing Pumpkins had a hit single called *Cherub Rock*, an attack on alternative dogmatism: "Stay cool/ And be somebody's fool this year."

"A lot of these parameters that are bandied about in the alternative-music community are ways of criticizing people," says Smashing Pumpkins singer Billy Corgan. "And again, it

goes back to high school. You know, I don't like the clothes that you wear. That just becomes what alternative music is rebelling against."

If alternative bands keep flooding into the mainstream, then the word alternative may go out of style, just as "progressive rock" became passe in the 1980s. "Alternative" has become a marketing tool. "Five minutes ago, I saw an ad for Bud Dry: 'The alternative beer with the alternative taste,' " says Jim Pitt, who books musical acts for NBC's *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*. "Pretty soon you'll see an ad where they're moshing, 'Out of the mosh pit and into a Buick.' It's the cycle of American pop culture. Things get absorbed."

Pearl Jam is now on probation, forced to prove that success hasn't spoiled it. The group and its record label have responded by promoting the new album very little and even holding off on making rock videos for the time being. Some critics of the band claim its members have handled their fame poorly. "I've heard Eddie Vedder complain about MTV, as if he had been bound and gagged to make the video for Jeremy and forced to sign a record contract with a major label," gripes Alternative Nation's veejay, who goes by the name of Kennedy. Her advice: "Don't bite the hand that feeds you, and if you're not hungry, get the hell out of the kitchen."

Yet in most respects, Vedder is showing a surfer's balance. His only visible excess is that he has taken to lugging a bottle of wine around stage when he performs. He has the same girlfriend, Beth Liebling, that he's had for nine years. Even the spat with Nirvana is patched up. "That's all been taken care of now, that whole relationship," he told *Melody Maker*.

On Pearl Jam's first album is a song called Release, for which no lyrics are given, perhaps because the subject matter is too painful for Vedder to see in print. It captures the feeling of embracing the past, with all its hurt and controversy, and setting out on a new course. "I'll ride the wave/ Where it takes me," Vedder sings, imagining he is singing to his lost father, dreaming that he is uniquely himself but still somehow an amalgam of his father and his past. "I'll hold the pain/ Release me." It's a healthy attitude in a music genre ruled by high school passions. If he keeps it, the dropout who became a rock star may be ready for the head of the class.

**Link:<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1825138-1,00.html#ixzz0iwYEPpQL>**

**<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/0,9263,7601931025,00.html>**

## **WHERE'S THE NEXT SEATTLE**

By **GINIA BELLAFANTE** Publicado el 25 de octubre de 1993

Sometime in 1991, Seattle became more than a quintessentially livable city where the coffee was strong, the people were friendly and the plastic was recycled. The unleashing of bands like Nirvana and Pearl Jam beyond the Pacific Northwest transformed Seattle into an adjective inextricably linked to the word sound, a marketable life-style packaged in flannel and devoid of shampoo. What turns a city into a seminal music scene? Minneapolis, Minnesota, the home of proto-alternative rockers like the Replacements and Husker Du, had its moment a few years ago. So did Austin, Texas, ground zero for the Butthole Surfers; and Athens, Georgia, the birthplace of R.E.M. and the B-52s. One necessary ingredient they all share is a healthy slacker class. Like Seattle, they are home to large universities, and they have been able to support an infrastructure of mom-and-pop record shops, cutting-edge clubs, vintage- clothing stores and alternative newspapers. They are also far enough away from New York City and Los Angeles to consider themselves cool, and unincorporate enough to make room for the strikingly unconventional.

A homegrown record label can make a huge difference too, like Seattle's Sub Pop, which produced Nirvana's early recordings. Ultimately, it's the big national labels that cash in on local sounds. Primed by their success with Seattle, the record companies are now grazing hungrily in college towns, those intrinsically hip places where collective shoe preference may run the narrow gamut from Birkenstocks to Doc Martens but ears are all wide open. The academic triangle of Chapel Hill, Raleigh and Durham, North Carolina, boasts popular alternative bands like Superchunk, not to mention a label, Mammoth Records.

Jay Faires, founder of Mammoth, set up shop in the area quite simply because "there are a lot of 18- to 22-year-olds who don't have much to do, who smoke a lot of pot and who eventually pick up a guitar." Record executives are also looking at Halifax, Nova Scotia, a five- college town with dozens of hometown bands, as well as Portland, Oregon -- Gus Van Sant-land and a grunge Mecca in the making. But formulas aren't foolproof. San Diego, with its proximity to L.A. and its image as a dumb blond of a city, would seem like an improbable locale for a thriving anti-Establishment culture. But in fact it has spawned bands with names like Rocket from the Crypt and rust; both have signed with major labels. Explains Kane (that's just Kane), president of Headhunter Records, a local label: "There's a lot less attitude down here, people are less jaded, there's a freshness." Keep your eye on Toledo, Ohio.

**Link: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1825103,00.html>**

## ***Never Mind***

By **BRUCE HANDY;LISA MCLAUGHLIN/NEW YORK, JEFFREY RESSNER/LOS ANGELES AND DAVE THOMPSON/SEATTLE** Publicado el 18 de octubre de 1994

The last weeks of Kurt Cobain's life were filled with turmoil and anguish -- and gossip. Rumors floated through the music industry that the singer- songwriter's band, Nirvana, was breaking up; that Cobain, who had survived a tranquilizer-induced coma just six weeks earlier, had suffered another overdose. The stories seemed to be justified when the group unexpectedly backed out of headlining the Lollapalooza tour this summer.

The truth, it turns out, was that Cobain, who claimed to have overcome an addiction to heroin, was indeed abusing unspecified drugs. A record-industry source told TIME that two weeks ago Cobain's wife Courtney Love, front woman for the group Hole, gathered doctors and friends together in Seattle, the couple's home, to try to scare Cobain into dealing with his problem; Nirvana's managers even threatened to drop Cobain from their roster unless he got cleaned up. The intervention seemed to work, for Cobain checked into a California treatment center. But according to a missing-persons report filed by his mother, he fled early last week. Seattle police periodically checked Cobain's house, finding no traces of the singer.

Last Friday, an electrician visited the house to install a security system. When no one answered the front door, he walked around the house, peering through windows. He thought he saw a mannequin sprawled on the floor, until he noticed a splotch of blood by its ear. When police and the coroner broke down the door, they found Cobain dead on the floor, a shotgun still pointed at his chin and, on a nearby counter, a suicide note penned in red ink, reportedly ending with the words "I love you, I love you," addressed, a source said, to Love and the couple's 19-month-old daughter Frances Bean.

Kurt Cobain, dead at 27. The news came as a shock to millions of rock fans, and MTV preempted its usual programming for hours of J.F.K.-like mourning, with a somber Kurt Loder playing the Walter Cronkite role. Given Cobain's talent and influence, however, the reaction was understandable. Nirvana came from the music-industry equivalent of nowhere, with a rough-edged first album recorded for a chiselly \$606. The next, Nevermind, released 2 1/2 years ago, contained a series of crunching, screaming songs that also had catchy melodies, part punk, part Beatles. Selling almost 10 million copies and knocking Michael Jackson's Dangerous from the top of the charts, the album fibrillated the psyche of a generation. It also launched the commercial vogue for grunge and made Seattle famous for something other than cappuccino, rain and bad professional sports. Before long, equally abrasive Seattle groups like Pearl Jam (a Nirvana rival), Mudhoney

and Alice in Chains joined Nirvana high on the charts. The New Liverpool, Rolling Stone called the city in early 1992 (launching searches for the New Seattle).

Cobain was at the center of it all, the John Lennon of the swinging Northwest, a songwriter with a gift for searing lyrics as well as seductive hooks, a performer with a play of facial expressions so edgy and complicated that they rivaled Jack Nicholson's.

If the loss of an oddly magnetic, brilliant musician was jolting, though, the manner of his death was not entirely unexpected. Cobain spoke so openly on the subjects of drugs and depression and suicide that writers searching for easy obituary ironies didn't have to look very hard. Cobain himself even began joking about it; a song called I Hate Myself and I Want to Die was recorded but dropped from the last album. "It was totally satirical, making fun of ourselves," Cobain told a reporter earlier this year. "I'm thought of as this pissy, complaining, freaked-out schizophrenic who wants to kill himself all the time. I thought it was a funny title."

Love, an alternative-rock star in her own right, was in Los Angeles at the time of Cobain's death but reportedly flew to Seattle Friday morning. While talking to the pop-music critic Robert Hilburn of the Los Angeles Times early last week, Love broke into tears describing her husband's recently fragile condition. "I just don't ever want to see him on the floor like that again. He was blue," she told Hilburn, recalling Cobain's overdose in Rome last month. "I thought I went through a lot of hard times over the years, but this has been the hardest." A source who had been close to Cobain confirms what now seems obvious: the European incident, labeled an accident at the time, was an unsuccessful suicide attempt. "You don't take 50 pills by accident," ; notes the source. Two weeks after returning to Seattle from Rome, Love had to call police when Cobain locked himself in a room along with some of the guns he enjoyed keeping around the house; police removed four weapons that day, including a Colt AR-15 semiautomatic rifle.

Growing up in the depressed logging town of Aberdeen on Washington's Pacific coast, Cobain had, by his account, a relatively happy childhood until his parents, a cocktail waitress and an auto mechanic, got divorced. He was only eight at the time, and he claimed the traumatic split fueled the anguish in Nirvana's music. He shuttled back and forth between various relatives, even finding himself homeless at one point and living under a bridge. His budding artistry and iconoclastic attitude didn't win him many fans in high school; instead, he attracted beatings from "jocks and moron dudes," as an old friend once put it. Cobain got even by spray-painting QUEER on his tormentors' pickup trucks.

Cobain formed and reformed a series of bands before Nirvana finally coalesced in 1986 as an uneasy alliance among Cobain, bassist Krist Novoselic (a hometown friend) and eventually drummer Dave Grohl. Cobain married Love in 1992, when the band was first peaking on the charts, when she was already pregnant with Frances Bean, and when both parents had already developed heroin habits (Love claims to have kicked hers immediately

after finding out she was pregnant). "It's a whirling dervish of emotion, all these extremes of fighting and loving each other at once," is how Cobain described the marriage last year, proudly showing off nasty fingernail scratches on his back.

It was Nirvana's unexpected stardom that seemed to eat at him. He appeared unusually tortured by success, even in a profession famous for containing people who are tortured by success. "He was a very bright, sweet, generous and caring individual, perhaps a little too sweet and sensitive for the business he was in," says Michael Azerrad, author of *Come as You Are: The Story of Nirvana*. Danny Goldberg, the former head of Nirvana's management company who now runs Atlantic Records, says, "In all the years I knew him, he had very mixed feelings about being on this planet." Goldberg remembers another of the band's handlers once asking the singer why he was moping. "I'm awake, aren't I?" Cobain replied.

He suffered the usual torments of the underground poet moving into the mainstream, and was worried that his band had sold out, that it was attracting - the wrong kind of fans (e.g., the guys who used to beat him up). True, he liked the money that went with mall-rat adulation. But in interviews he exuded a pain beyond standard-issue superstar whining. He said his heroin use was a kind of self-medication for stomach pains, but what he really seemed in search of was psychic equilibrium.

"None of this would have happened had he not been famous," insists Daniel House, a friend of Cobain's and the owner of an independent record label in Seattle. "When Nirvana started catching on, he was kind of bewildered. His music was so personal, it amazed him when people came out in droves to hear it."

They were there, though, because Cobain conveyed meaning and even beauty in his harsh recordings. His lyrics could be sour, occasionally frightening if opaque. Take these simultaneously blase and acerbic lines from the group's biggest hit, *Smells Like Teen Spirit*: "And I forget just why I taste/ Oh yeah, I guess it makes me smile/ I found it hard, it was hard to find/ Oh well, whatever, never mind." Cobain's sometimes fierce, sometimes weary growl, the sometimes convulsive, sometimes grating guitars, the very loud drums: all of it communicated anger, maybe loathing, definitely passion, no matter how inchoate.

His subject was the same perennial, youthful fury captured by the Sex Pistols, before they too self-destructed, and by the Who, before Pete Townshend survived to purvey nostalgia to Broadway theatergoers. Youthful nihilism may not be new, but no artist invents all his materials; it's what he does with them that counts, and Cobain wrote great rock songs as he explored a familiar theme with genius.

Last year a journalist visited a home he and Love were renting before they moved into the house in which Cobain would end his life. He had decorated one of the walls with this

graffito: NONE OF YOU WILL EVER KNOW MY INTENTIONS. It could serve as his credo as well as his epitaph. "Guess we won't be getting the deposit back on the house," he joked.

**Link: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,980562-1,00.html>**

## ***The Best and Worst People of 1994***

*Publicado el 26 de diciembre de 1994*

### 9 Courtney Love

Alternative rockers are notoriously mopey, but Love's husband Kurt Cobain took the attitude to a tragic extreme and killed himself with a shotgun. Months later, Love revealed the couple's horrifying original plan: to commit a double suicide following the birth of their daughter.

**Link: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,982055-1,00.html>**



## **Artículos Revista Newsweek**

### ***Pearl Jam's Primal Scream Therapy***

*Rock: The Seattle Band Returns To Rage And Roll*

NEWSWEEK

*Publicado el 25 de octubre de 1993*

No one hates the star-making machine more than stars. Every so often, when some rock band is whining to the media about the media, one is reminded of Frank Zappa's sublime directive: "Shut Up 'n Play Yer Guitar." Pearl Jam emerged from the pleasuredome that is Seattle in 1991. Nirvana broke bigger, but Pearl Jam had a longer run: their debut album, "Ten," has sold 5 million copies and remains in the Top 30 after nearly 100 weeks. Singer Eddie Vedder has fretted over the commercialization of his songs, which are full of anger and grieving. And he has been bewildered by the odds and ends of fame, such as Shannen Doherty's telling the press that she wanted to meet him. (Yikes.) Pearl Jam's second album is titled "Vs.," presumably a jab at the media for pitting the record against both "Ten" and Nirvana's latest effort, "In Utero." Fortunately, Pearl Jam doesn't waste much energy on resentment. These guys know when to shut up and play their guitars.

"Vs." is an absolutely first-rate rock-and-roll album: streamlined, propulsive and full of urgency. (The band didn't come up with the title until the midnight hour, so the first discs to roll off the press will be called simply "Pearl Jam." Collector's item, anyone?) The key here, as on "Ten," is Vedder's dark, tremulous voice and his weirdly poetic lyrics, which return again and again to issues of abuse, power and rage. The most startling tunes on "Ten" were "Jeremy," about a neglected child who wigs out in class one day, and "Alive," about a teenager whose mother tells him that his father isn't really his father. According to the new Rolling Stone, Vedder's real father died of multiple sclerosis before the singer knew he was anything more than a friend of the family. "My folks..they've given me a lifetime's worth of material to write about," he says in the interview. One lifetime, at least.

The new album makes it clear that Vedder is still an ardent disciple of the no-pain-no-gain school of songwriting. "Rearviewmirror" is an exquisitely tense bit of riff-driven rock: I took a drive today/Time to emancipate/I guess it was the beatings/Made me wise. "Daughter," banged out on an acoustic guitar, is written in spooky, disjointed prose: A young girl, violins/Center of her own attention...She holds the hand that holds her down/She will rise up. ("Violins" is indistinguishable from "violence." If a schoolkid had written this, they'd give him a special test.) Vedder can overdo it, as in Troubled souls

unite and It's my blooooood. But Pearl Jam's best tunes still go from a whisper to a scream. Vedder is famous for climbing stageside scaffolding and diving into crowds, as well as for leaning into microphones, his eyelids fluttering, his eyes rolled back in his head. The name of the game is catharsis.

Vedder doesn't possess a bottomless bag of vocal tricks, but guitarists Stone Gossard and Mike McCready goose him along with bits of thrash and heavy metal. Their distorted, muscular riffs contribute to Pearl Jam's central irony, which is that the creepiest songs are also the catchiest. Early on, some insisted that the band was merely the sanitized, user-friendly face of the Seattle grunge invasion--that Vedder et al. were the Beatles, while Nirvana was the Rolling Stones. Pearl Jam is certainly the more accessible of the bands. "Vs." should debut at No. 1 and (God and Garth Brooks willing) spend some time there. But surely there's no sin in being popular if you don't trade away your fearlessness or your fear. It's 1993. Meet the Beatles.

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**Link:** <http://www.newsweek.com/id/122971>

## ***The Poet Of Alienation***

***Rock: Cobain's Corrosive Songs Defined A Generation***

*By Jeff Giles | NEWSWEEK*

*Publicado el 18 de abril de 1994*

He'd come to install an alarm system. The irony is that long before electrician Gary Smith found Kurt Cobain's body, it was clear that what Nirvana's singer really needed protection from was himself. Cobain wasn't identified for hours, but his mother, Wendy O'Connor, didn't need anyone to tell her that it was her son who was found with a shotgun and a suicide note that reportedly ended, "I love you, I love you." The singer had been missing, and his mother has feared that the most troubled and talented rock star of his generation would go the way of Jim Morrison and Jimi Hendrix. "Now he's gone and joined that stupid club," she told the Associated Press. "I told him not to join that stupid club."

Cobain didn't overdose like Morrison and Hendrix, of course. But the singer's self-destructive streak seems to have been bound up inextricably with drugs. In March, while in Rome, Cobain overdosed on painkillers and champagne. Nirvana's spokespeople insisted that it was an accident, portraying Cobain and his wife, Courtney Love, as stable, happy

parents who drug days were behind them. But the truth about Cobain's last months was far messier than we'd been led to believe. On March 18, Cobain reportedly locked himself in a room of his spacious Seattle home and threatened to kill himself; Love is said to have called the police, who arrived on the scene and seized medication and firearms. On April 2, the police were summoned once more-this time by O'Conner, who told them her son was missing. The rumormill has it that Cobain and Love's marriage was on the rocks; that his friends performed an "intervention," and that while Love was promoting a new album by her band, Hole, Cobain was fleeing a rehab clinic in Los Angeles. According to the AP, O'Conner's missing person's report read, in part, "Cobain ran away from [a] California facility and flew back to Seattle. He also bought a shotgun and may be suicidal." All these dark machinations will make for an uneasy legacy-precisely the sort of legacy he didn't want. "I don't want my daughter to grow up and someday be hassled by kids at school," he once said of Frances Bean Cobain, now 19 months. "I don't want people telling her that her parents were junkies."

Which raises a question: what will they tell Frances Bean? Where her father's career is concerned, at least, the answer is reassuring. They'll tell her Cobain and his band hated the slick, MTV-driven rock establishment so much they took it over. They'll tell her that with the album "Nevermind," Nirvana replaced the prefab sentiments of pop with hard, unreconstituted emotions. That they got rich and went to No.1. That they were responsible for other bands getting rich and going to No.1: Pearl Jam, Soundgarden, Alice In Chains. That Cobain never took his band as seriously as everyone else did-that he once wrote, "I'm the first to admit that we're the '90s version of Cheap Trick." But that despite his corrosive guitar playing, he wrote gorgeous, airtight melodies. That he took the Sex Pistols' battle cry "Never Mind the Bullocks," mixed it with some twenty-something rage and disillusion, and came out with this lyric: "Oh, well, whatever, never mind." And finally, that he reminded his peers they were not alone, though all the evidence suggests that he was.

Cobain was born just outside the desultory logging town of Aberdeen, Wash., in February 1967. (Yes, he was 27, as was Morrison, Hendrix and Joplin.) The singer hated being the crown prince of Generation X, but the fury of Nirvana's music spoke to his generation because they'd grown up more or less the same way. Which is to say: grunge is what happens when children of divorce get their hands on guitars. Cobain's mother was a house- wife; his father, Don Cobain, was a mechanic at the Chevron station in town. They divorced when the singer was 8.

Drugs and punk: Cobain always had a fragile constitution (he was subject to bronchitis, as well as the recurrent stomach pains he claimed drove him to a heroin addiction). The image one gets is that of a frail kid batted between warring parents. "[The divorce] just destroyed his life." Wendy O'Conner tells Michael Azerrad in the Nirvana biography, "Come As You Are." "He changed completely. I think he was ashamed. And he became very inward-he just held everything [in]....I think he's still suffering." As a teen, Cobain

dabbled in drugs and punk rock, and dropped out of school. His father persuaded him to pawn his guitar and take an entrance exam for the navy. But Cobain soon returned for the guitar. "To them, I was wasting my life," he told the Los Angeles Times. "To me, I was fighting for it." Cobain didn't speak to his father for eight years. When Nirvana went to the top of the charts, Don Cobain began keeping a scrapbook. "Everything I know about Kurt," he told Azerrad, "I've read in newspapers and magazines."

The more famous Nirvana became, the more Cobain wanted none of it. The group, whose first album, 1989's "Bleach," was recorded for \$606.17, and released on the independent label Sub Pop, was meant to be a latter-day punk band. It was supposed to be nasty and defiant and unpopular. But something went wrong: Nirvana's major-label debut, "Nevermind," sold almost 10 million copies worldwide. On the stunning single "Smells Like Teen Spirit," Cobain howled over a sludgy guitar riff, "I feel stupid and contagious/Here we are now, entertain us." This was the sound of psychic damage, and an entire generation recognized it.

Nirvana-with their stringy hair, plaid work shirts and torn jeans-appealed to a mass of young fans who were tired of false idols like Madonna and Michael Jackson, and who'd never had a dangerous rock-and-roll hero to call their own. Unfortunately, the band also appealed to the sort of people Cobain had always hated: poseurs and bandwagoneers, not to mention record-company execs and fashion designers who fell over themselves cashing in on the new sights and sounds. Cobain, who'd grown up as an angry outsider, tried to shake his celebrity. "I have a request for our fans," he fumed in the liner notes to the album "Incesticide." "If any of you in any way hate homosexuals, people of different color, or women, please do this one favor for us-leave us the f--k alone!... Last year, a girl was raped by two wastes of sperm and eggs while singing...our song 'Polly.' I have had a hard time carrying on knowing there are plankton like that in our audience."

By 1992, it became clear that Cobain's personal life was as tangled and troubling as his music. The singer married Love in Waikiki-the bride wore a moth-eaten dress once owned by actress Frances Farmer-and the couple embarked on a self-destructive pas de deux widely referred to as a '90s version of "Sid and Nancy." As Cobain put it, "I was going off with Courtney and we were scoring drugs and we were f--king up against a wall outside and stuff... and causing secnes just to do it. It was fun to be with someone who would stand up all of a sudden and smash a glass on a table." In September '92, Vanity Fair reported that Love had used heroin while she was pregnant with Frances Bean. She and Cobain denied the story (the baby is healthy). But authorities were reportedly concerned enough to force them to surrender custody of Frances to Love's sister, Jamie, for a month, during which time the couple was, in Cobain's words, "totally suicidal."

Tormented rebel: By last week the world knew Cobain had a self-destructive streak, that he'd flailed violently against his unwanted celebrity-but the world had been assured those days were over. Nirvana recently postponed its European concert dates and opted out of

this summer's Lollapalooza tour. Still, spokesmen maintained that Cobain simply needed time to recuperate from the overdose in Rome. They offered a tempting picture: Cobain the tormented rebel reborn as a doting, drug-free father. Even Dr. Osvaldo Galletta, of Rome's American Hospital, says he believed the overdose was an accident: "The last image I have of him, which in light of the tragedy now seems pathetic, is of a young man playing with the little girl. He did not seem like a young man who wanted to end it. I had hope for him. Some of the people that visited him were a little strange, but he seemed to be a mild sort, not at all violent. His wife also behaved quite normally. She left a thank-you note."

It'd be nice if we, too, could come away with that image of Cobain and his daughter. And, in truth, those who knew the singer say there was a real fragility buried beneath the noise of his music and his life. Still, there are a lot of other images vying for our attention just now. Among them is the image of Courtney Love and Frances Bean Cobain, who are said to have arrived at their home in Seattle, via limo, late Friday. Again: what will people tell Frances? Ed Rosenblatt, Geffen Records president, says, "The world has lost a great artist and we've lost a great friend. It leaves a huge void in our hearts." That is certainly true. If only someone had heard the alarms ringing at the rambling, grayshingled home near the lake. Long before there was a void in our hearts, there was a void in Kurt Cobain's.

<http://www.newsweek.com/id/112089>

## ***You Call This Nirvana?***

*An Abrasive Album Cools A Romance With Geffen Records. There's Got To Be A Morning After.*

*Publicado el 17 de mayo de 1993*

Alternative rock and big business are strange bedfellows, and it seems they've finally woken up and stared each other in the face. Late last month the Chicago Tribune reported on rumors that the world's pre-eminent post-punk band, Nirvana, had returned from the studio with an abrasive uncompromising album-an album that Geffen Records found "unreleasable." Both the label and Nirvana's management company, Gold Mountain, insist that the Geffen staff hasn't even heard the album. But sources confirm the Tribune's story. And Nirvana has now agreed to commission a hit-making engineer named Andy Wallace to tinker with the band's tapes and give them a more commercial sheen. Geffen Records faces a possible lawsuit from the record's producer, Steve Albini. Nirvana, whose success inspired a generation of alternative bands to migrate to major labels, faces a chorus of "Say it ain't so."

Nirvana's 1991 album "Nevermind" was full of fury, but it had the heart of a pop record: the vocals took center stage and the crashing guitar never got in the way of a good hook. Even before the album sold 4 million copies and the accompanying single, "Smells Like Teen Spirit," launched the behemoth known as grunge, the band members talked about making a punk record. Dissatisfaction with their hothouse celebrity seemed to strengthen their resolve. In March the band went into the studio with Albini, a highly principled iconoclast whose contempt for major labels is well documented. (The producer sends recordcompany presidents faxes like, "D, Baby: Can't adequately express how horrible the J tape is!")

By choosing Albini as their producer, Nirvana made it clear that they intended to shake fainthearted fans out of the tree--just as PJ Harvey did when it chose her to record the follow-up to her too hip debut album, "Dry." One music-industry insider who has heard the resulting Nirvana effort cites songs like "Rape Me," "Heart-Shaped Box" and "Moist Vagina," and says, "Frankly, this is a great record, but it is actively and stridently anticommercial. It's a pointed reaction to the gloss and approachability of 'Nevermind'." Albini told the Tribune that the band members were "ecstatic" with the album when they left the studio. And why not? Nirvana's record would send a message to alternative bands: don't check your credibility at the door.

The official Gold Mountain press release on the episode reads in part: "The band are considering doing some additional recording and it [sic] is not yet decided on the final composition of the album." Some, however, believe that statement was meant to hold off the press while both Gold Mountain and Geffen tried to prevent Nirvana from committing what they believe to be commercial suicide. "From what I understand," says a source close to the band, "everybody at the record label and everybody at the management company thinks that the record blows and gave it the big thumbs-down." David Yow, whose band, the Jesus Lizard, is said to have influenced Nirvana's new album, says, "They shouldn't compromise. As far as I can tell, they're happy with the record, and they should make the record company release it as it is."

Even among major labels, Geffen Records has a checkered history in artist relations. In 1983 the company sued Neil Young for making "unrepresentative" albums. (David Geffen expressed regret over the suit in one of his recent meet-the-press outings.) Just last year it rejected Aerosmith's first stab at "Get a Grip." And now Nirvana has hit a snag. Wallace, who's remixing the album, also buffed up "Nevermind." Front man Kurt Cobain recently criticized that record in the Los Angeles Times: "We really didn't follow through on the mixing. It ended up too commercial and slick." The band may have agreed to Wallace's repeat performance to avoid a second trip to the studio. Or they may have conceded because, as the source puts it, "Kurt's incredibly fickle. He likes being your defiant, punk-rock, angry young man, but he also enjoys making millions and millions of dollars."

There's one hitch in the remix plan: producer Albini has a clause in his contract that states that no one can tamper with his tapes. Albini will not answer questions about the Nirvana fracas. Still, he speaks bluntly about the wave of young groups that have gone to the majors. "The gullibility of these bands will never cease to amaze me," he says. "Every one of them thinks that the record company is on their side. The labels have been hiring hip, young people to lull the bands into being comfortable with the big, faceless record company. That way, the band doesn't think, 'Hey, Geffen-this is the company that sued Neil Young! This is the company that gave us Nelson!' These guys are like hawkers on the street at a peep show. They promise people the many glorious things that are inside the door, but when you go in, you find out it's \$15 for a beer."

Jonathan Poneman-cofounder of Sub Pop, the independent label where Nirvana got its start-does not believe that major labels are necessarily seats of evil. But of one thing he is sure: "Nirvana ushered in a cultural revolution and made the Geffen company millions. If they want to make an album of hand claps, they have earned the right ... What the Geffen company is ultimately guilty of is a complete lack of faith and respect for Kurt, Dave [Grohl], and Chris [Novoselic] as artists."

Both Gold Mountain and Geffen Records deny that any pressure has been brought to bear on Nirvana. Janet Billig, of Gold Mountain, intones, "You can't mess with an artist's creative process. You have to let them make the record they're going to make." Gary Gersh, who signed the band to Geffen, insists, "Nirvana has complete control over what they want to do with their record." Sounds like fair play. Smells like corporate spirit.

## **A DUTCH TREAT**

The mating dance continues. An alternative-rock band named Bettie Serveert is thinking of following Nirvana into the shadowy world of high finance and the major labels aren't too proud to beg. The Amsterdam-based group recently made their U.S. debut with a strangely wistful disc called "Palomine." The album, on the independent label Matador, is marked by Carol van Dijk's husky vocals and Peter Visser's distorted, Neil Youngstyle guitar inventions. Van Dijk was born in Canada and, luckily for Americans, does not sing in Dutch. Her vocals can be urgent or wonderfully drowsy. Her hair is almost always in her eyes. Matador discovered Bettie Serveert in Holland; the major labels discovered them in Hollywood. Billboard says the band's show at the Whisky A Go Go was attended by the presidents of Warner Brothers and Virgin, as well as by David Geffen. Let the games begin.

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**Link: <http://www.newsweek.com/id/119662/page/1>**

## ***Searching For Nirvana II***

Since The Surprising Success Of Nirvana, Scruffy Punk Bands Are Doing A Whole Lotta Lunch. Urge Overkill, Your Table Is Ready, Sirs.

NEWSWEEK

*Publicado el 30 de marzo de 1992*

In his home in Lawrence, Kans., Peter Fitch picks up the phone on the third ring. "Pizza Hut."

Fitch doesn't really live in a Pizza Hut. It's just that these days, he's gotten a little paranoid. The phone has been ringing constantly, always some record-company guy, or maybe a lawyer or a music publisher-someone from a coast somewhere, representing more money or more power than Peter Fitch and his ratty-jeaned friends know what to make of. Fitch's voice sounds quavery, shellshocked. "We didn't ask for this," he says. "We don't want it." You see, Fitch plays drums in a talented, somewhat underripe punk band called Paw. Last month Paw was part of a healthy but unsung local scene that included such notables as Kill Whitey and Sin City Disciples-it's no Seattle, maybe, but the locals can call it home. Paw has never made a record and has barely played outside Lawrence; the members wanted to try Los Angeles in February, but they all work minimum-wage jobs, and the L.A. clubs had never heard of them, so they decided they couldn't afford it.

That was last month. This month Fitch's little punk band is suddenly one of the most hotly sought-after acts in America. Record-company executives have started flying to Lawrence to scout them. When the group performed at a heavy-metal bar in Austin, Texas, two weeks back, as part of the schmoozy South By Southwest music conference, half the music industry was there. One talent scout says he walked into the club, saw 20 other A&R people (it stands for Artists and Repertoire) and left. "I didn't want to be a sheep," he says. Next week Geffen Records plans to fly Paw out to L.A. to lunch with its marketing staff. "It's really asinine and out of control," says Fitch. "We're just a bunch of scumbags from Kansas in ripped jeans, and we're sitting in the best restaurant in Austin, eating \$35 entrees. That's not reality."

Oh, but it is. After the recent, unexpected success of Nirvana, a punk trio from Aberdeen, Wash., whose "Nevermind" album has sold more than 3.5 million copies, the record industry is jumping through hoops to court punk bands--bands with names like Helmet, Hole, Come, Afghan Whigs and Urge Overkill. "Now everyone says, 'Get us the next Nirvana,'" says Tim Carr, who scouts talent for Warner Bros. "It's a feeding frenzy." In an industry known for theatrical groveling, this is a particularly juicy prospect. "Clive Davis went into my lawyer's office," says Courtney Love, who plays guitar and sings-screches, really-in the abrasive L.A. band Hole. "He said, 'I'm begging you, I'm begging you ... I'll give them a million dollars.'" Clive Davis, 59, is the president of Arista Records, best known



these days for turning Whitney Houston into a star and Aretha Franklin into bankable elevator music. Hole is best known for a song that begins, "When I was a teenage whore." Love, 25, is also the pregnant wife of Nirvana leader Kurt Cobain, a tidbit whose value is lost on no one. "I had one A&R guy tell me, 'Sleeping with Kurt Cobain is worth half a million dollars,'" says Charles R. Cross, editor of the Seattle Rocket and a new regular on the A&R lunch circuit. After an intense bidding war that even included Madonna as a bidder, Hole signed with Geffen last week. Of this educational experience, Love concludes, "I learned about this thing called creme brulee at all these lunches, and it was the most amazing thing I ever had."

Janet Billig, for one, is amused. Billig, a part-time law student, is the director of artist and media relations at Caroline Records, the independent label that put out Hole's "Pretty on the Inside" last August. "When we signed Hole," she says, "part of the idea was, 'No one's going to poach them from us, they're the most abrasive thing I've ever heard'." But since Nirvana, no one is safe. Love says, "One guy told me, 'You know, with Nirvana [having succeeded], we could really make some stupid money. Nirvana reminds me of when the Police broke through'." Not only record companies, but lawyers, agents and publishers are cramming into clubs where the patrons pierce their body parts and the plumbing is always an issue. At a Feb. 11 Hole show in L.A., the guest list outnumbered the paid crowd. "It was like being in a sauna with all these people you'd never want to be in a sauna with," says Leigh Lust (ne Lustberg), a talent scout for Capitol. "If you dropped a bomb [on the club], you would rearrange the face of the music industry." In Seattle, things have gotten so silly that the label that nursed the scene, Sub Pop, now shies away from local bands. "They've become too jaded," says co-owner Bruce Pavitt. "Half the people I know are making a living giving sound bites to MTV."

### **Fresh fruit, sirs?**

Since Feb. 12, the Afghan Whigs' lawyer has received 22 calls from labels or major publishers wanting to work with the Whigs-not bad for a band that appeared on the cover of its last record with its hands dripping with blood. Helmet, an arty New York band whose independent records have sold fewer than 10,000 copies apiece, recently signed a deal worth more than a million dollars for three albums-but not before lunching with 14 suitors. A Warner A&R man says he bowed out after the band asked for a higher royalty rate than Prince. "We joked that after we got signed, we were going to send a basket of fruit to Nirvana," says guitarist and singer Page Hamilton.

Feeding frenzies of this sort are nothing new to the industry. What's new is that this one is for punk-rock acts, distinguished largely by their stance against the record industry. Suddenly, this stance is worth something. According to Marc Geiger, an A&R man at Def American Recordings, "The bands that were worth \$5,000 a couple years ago are worth \$250,000 now." While that seems a windfall, it isn't always. The figures are advances against royalties-loans that the bands have to pay back out of their earnings. "Driving the

price up is very dangerous for a young band," says Lust. "If they don't sell, they're totally in debt. Imagine the stress on the band."

But for the record industry, the punk boom makes sense. Punk bands remain relatively low-maintenance—they don't need to be promoted to radio, which is the industry's biggest cash drain. And with MTV, they can reach a national audience anyway. The companies are content to lose money on most of the acts (85 percent of all major-label releases lose money) in the hope of making \$50 million on one Nirvana. The music also represents an ideological, uh, free lunch. So far, the '90s are shaping up as the decade of anger: angry women, angry African-Americans, angry gays, angry taxpayers. For a \$7.8 billion music industry run largely by European white males, punk offers anger without guilt.

For its show at CBGB last Friday night, Afghan Whigs asked owner Hilly Kristal not to let any A&R people in. Fat chance. At punk clubs across the nation, the sharks continue to circle, drawn by the smell of blood—and the phone calls of well-connected lawyers, managers or agents. And sometimes, maybe, by a good band that deserves a shot.

#### **A PUNK TOTE BOARD**

The Sex Pistols sang, "There's no future." Did they mean Mortons was out of desserts?

\$\$\$ Helmet: Sound like a million, plus they lunched with Madonna's manager. \$ Babes in Toyland: Female grunge-rock band, now marketed as "foxcore." \$\$ Urge Overkill: Toured with Nirvana, plus wear sharp velvet suits. \$\$ Afghan Whigs: Sub Pop band, couldn't keep the A&R people out of CBGB. \$\$ L7: Foxcore quartet used Nirvana's producer but signed pre-Nirvanamania. \$\$\$ Hole: Courted by Madonna, married to Nirvana. Whoa! You make the call. \$ Come: The new kids on the block, still doing breakfast.

*MARC PEYSER*

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**Link: <http://www.newsweek.com/id/118762/page/1>**

## Artículos Revista *Entertainment Weekly*

### **X & DRUGS & ROCK & ROLL**

Publicado en el N° 131 el 14 de agosto de 1992

#### ***HEROIN MAKES A BIG-TIME COMEBACK AMONG THE YOUNG AND THE SENSELESS***

I remember when a case of beer would keep a houseful of people happy," laments Mudhoney bassist Matt Lukin, who turned Nirvana's Kurt Cobain on to punk rock in Aberdeen, Wash., way back in the early '80s. But those innocent days are over. Both mosh rockers and post-Brat Pack actors have caught a scary new buzz: heroin. Since 1987, Grateful Dead keyboardist Brent Mydland, Red Hot Chili Peppers guitarist Hillel Slovak, former New York Dolls guitarist Johnny Thunders, and Will Shatter of Flipper (one of Nirvana's main influences) have all died narcotic-related deaths. Two weeks ago, Wiseguy TV star Ray Sharkey, who has a long history of drug use, was busted for possessing coke and heroin on location in Vancouver, Canada. Last week the story broke that Nirvana's Cobain and his wife, Courtney Love, lead singer of the female grunge group Hole, were both stoned on heroin during Nirvana's Saturday Night Live appearance last January, and that Love continued using smack during the first few months of her pregnancy. Not restricted to show business, the drift to heroin is part of a nationwide post-crack trend. Between 1990 and 1991, the most recent figures available, heroin-related emergency-room visits increased by 82 percent in New York, 95 percent in Detroit, and 177 percent in Baltimore. According to the Drug Enforcement Agency, global opium production has increased by one third since 1988, and the average purity-i.e., strength-of street heroin is up from 10 to 50 percent in some cities. There's a parallel growth in the press obsession with stars' drug habits: The latest blood sport in the media is consigning celebrities to the junkie heap. Gossips say that a Hollywood romantic pairing was actually a publicity stunt to cover up a young star's rehab trip abroad. Details magazine demanded that Keanu Reeves confirm or deny rumors of his "Just Say Yes" behavior while researching his role as a hustler/druggie in *My Own Private Idaho*; Reeves said no. "There is every indication that heroin is back," says Charles Diamond, director of Rock Medicine, San Francisco's health care unit for concerts. And ^ Diamond predicts that with heroin, like AIDS, "a lot of well-known artists will be dying." The opiate invasion can be observed in microcosm in Seattle, alternative rock's hot spot and the fastest-growing capital for heroin overdoses in America. Late last month the federal government gave the town \$800,000 in emergency funds to fight a 225 percent increase in heroin-related emergency- room visits. "People used to come to Seattle's boho community to dry out and drink wheat grass," says arts maven Susan Purves, "but starting in the mid-'80s, heroin became extremely cool here.

Heroin is the crack of the '90s." The first sign of a smack comeback, says Purves, was "a line of ridiculous teenagers heaving away in the bushes" at a 1986 concert by Nick Cave's bandmate Blixe Bargeld. Later signs were more tragic. In 1990 Andrew Wood, the leader of Seattle's now-defunct Mother Love Bone, died of an overdose, followed this summer by Seven Year Bitch's Stefanie Sargent (Entertainment Weekly, 128). "She wasn't a junkie," says C/Z Records' Barbara Dollarhide. "You can just screw up once and it's eternity." Wood's friends were galvanized by grief: His bandmates formed Pearl Jam and with members of Seattle's Soundgarden recorded a CD tribute to Wood, Temple of the Dog. "I was completely inspired by the way the music scene pulled together after Andy's death," says filmmaker Cameron Crowe, who captures the Seattle ambience in his upcoming movie, Singles. Wood's haunting song about his habit, "Chloe Dancer/Crown of Thorns," appears on the Singles soundtrack and in Crowe's 1990 film, Say Anything. But when local record executive Daniel House says, "Every year or two somebody I know dies from heroin," he isn't impugning Seattle alone. "I don't think it's any more prevalent in the Pacific Northwest than anywhere else," says one prominent West Coast outlaw rock star who recently lived in Seattle. "When I came back to L.A. there were a lot of people using here who weren't when I left 11 months ago. Everywhere I go, it's there." Jello Biafra, a veteran of the San Francisco group the Dead Kennedys who now owns an alternative record company on the West Coast, sees the heroin trend spreading among friends on both coasts. "And the most painful thing about being involved in music," he says, "is watching my friends die. I don't get along well with people who reek and stink of death and disease and failure." Maybe all this means that the next big trend will be heroin recovery. People will look for inspiration in the examples of Guns N' Roses' Slash and the Red Hot Chili Peppers' Anthony Kiedis, musicians who have slam-danced with dope and wriggled free of the pit. Another, Dave Mustaine of Megadeth, says, "I was told that I had to do heroin if I wanted to be great. I spent \$500 a day for five years on freebasing heroin. If I hadn't screwed up like that, I'd be on easy street now." Mustaine kicked his habit more than two years ago, and sobriety is a high he highly recommends: "The party's not over. The party's just starting."

## Next Time, Try Sparkling Water

**N**O, KURT COBAIN wasn't trying to reach nirvana. The grunge rocker's overdose in a Rome hotel room last Friday was accidental, his record company said. Cobain fell into a coma after wolfing down a large dose of a prescription sedative and polishing off a touch of champagne in the Excelsior Hotel suite he was sharing with his wife, grunge Courtney Love, and their 2-year-old daughter during a break in his band Nirvana's European tour. After having his stomach pumped at a state-run clinic, Cobain

*The Grungemaster General with wife Love and daughter Frances Bean*

transferred to a private hospital, where he began to emerge from his coma later in the day. The singer, who has admitted to past heroin use, was suffer-

ing from "fatigue and severe influenza" at the time of the incident, said Geffen Records, and "inadvertently" overdosed.



*Artículo escrito por Kendall Hamilton y publicado el 14 de marzo de 1994*

## Articulo Diario *The Times*

### ***Cobain to Fans: Just Say No; Nirvana's New Father Addresses Drug Use***

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Los Angeles Times

Monday, Home Edition

SECTION: CALENDAR; PAGE: F-1

BYLINE: ROBERT HILBURN; TIMES POP MUSIC CRITIC

Publicado el 21 de septiembre de 1992

"I don't want my daughter to grow up and someday be hassled by kids at school... I don't want people telling her that her parents were junkies."

Kurt Cobain, the 25-year-old leader of the acclaimed and hugely successful rock group Nirvana, is sitting in the living room of his Hollywood Hills apartment, holding Frances, his and Courtney Love's 4-week-old baby.

It's Cobain's first formal interview in almost a year, and it takes time to open up.

A shy, sensitive man, he speaks easily about his daughter, but there's one thing he's uncomfortable talking about even though he knows he has to.

Nirvana is the hottest new band to come along in years, and several of the articles on the group have speculated about Cobain's alleged drug use.

He now admits that he's used drugs, including heroin, but never as much as has been rumored or reported in the rock press. He also says in a quiet, but forceful way, that he is now drug-free.

"There's nothing better than having a baby," says Cobain disarmingly. "I've always loved children. I used to work summers at the YMCA and be in charge of like 30 preschool kids.

"I knew that when I had a child, I'd be overwhelmed and it's true... I can't tell you how much my attitude has changed since we've got Frances. Holding my baby is the best drug in the world."

Yet Cobain, whose music speaks eloquently about the anger and alienation of youth, worries that the persistent rumors are threatening to turn him into a stereotype of a wasted rock 'n' roller. He also doesn't want to be a bad role model for the group's teenage fans.

He knows some people won't believe him when he says drugs are no longer part of his life, but he still feels compelled to speak out.

"I would say I tried to set the record straight," he says, when asked how he'd respond to someone who questions his sincerity. "That's all I can do. We have a lot of young fans and I don't want to have anything to do with inciting drug use. People who promote drug use are (expletive). I chose to do drugs. I don't feel sorry for myself at all, but have nothing good to say about them. They are a total waste of time."

If you watched the recent MTV Video Awards and didn't know much about Nirvana and all the drug rumors, you would have been puzzled when Cobain looked into the camera after accepting a best new artist award and said, "It's really hard to believe everything you read."

But it was no mystery to the millions of fans who have either bought Nirvana's debut album, "Nevermind," or have fallen under the spell of "Smells Like Teen Spirit," the band's wry hit single. They thought they knew exactly what he was talking about: the heroin rumors.

While his wife--leader of the band Hole--watches a tape of the MTV Awards show in an adjoining room, Cobain, wearing a T-shirt and jeans, talks at length about what he only alluded to during the MTV telecast.

"I've been accused of being a junkie for years... back way before 'Nevermind,' "he says, his face tense as he wrestles with the subject. "I know that a lot of it has to do with the vibes that I put off... the things I'd be doing during tours... backstage when writers would come in to see us.

"I've had this terrible stomach problem for years and that has made touring difficult. People would see me sitting in the corner by myself looking sick and gloomy. The reason is that I was trying to fight against the stomach pain, trying to hold my food down. People looked me and assumed I was some kind of addict."

The continuing stomach problem--which he says doctors have been unable to diagnose--is aggravated by stress and bad eating habits on the road. This is a central reason Nirvana has done so little touring in recent months, he says.

On the issue of drugs, he says he "dabbled" with heroin for several years, defining "dabble" as maybe once or twice a year.

"It didn't bother me at first (when people started talking or writing about possible drug use) because I've always admired Keith Richards and all these other rock stars who were associated with heroin. There had been some type of glamour element to it."

The "dabbling," however, changed dramatically after the "Nevermind" album was released last fall.

Until that album, Nirvana was an underground group--one of many admired bands from the suddenly hot Seattle alternative-rock scene.

Formed in 1986, the trio--also now featuring bassist Chris Novoselic and drummer Dave Grohl--combined punk independence and energy with a melodic pop sense that at times is reminiscent of the Beatles, which was the first rock group ever to catch Cobain's ear.

"Bleach," the band's 1990 debut album on tiny Sub Pop Records, sold less than 50,000 copies, but it touched a nerve in critics, fans and record companies around the country.

The group was then signed by DGC Records, part of the powerful Geffen Records complex. "Nevermind," released in the fall of 1991, turned the band into stars almost overnight. The album, which went to No. 1 on the pop charts, has sold more than 4 million copies in the United States alone. Cobain was hailed as an artist with the imagination and depth to become a voice for the '90s.

While it was Cobain's songwriting skills that enabled the band to achieve mainstream success, it was his link to the underground/punk world that made him uneasy in the mainstream spotlight. Not only did the mainstream represent compromise and superficiality to him, but he also felt overwhelmed by the pressures that were thrust upon him.

"I guess I must have quit the band about 10 different times in the last year," he says, handing the baby to his wife, who has joined him in the living room.

"I'd tell my manager or the band, but most of the time I would just stand up and say to Courtney, 'OK, this is it.' But it would blow over in a day or two.... The music is usually what brings me back.

"The biggest thing that affected me was all the insane rumors, the heroin rumors... all this speculation going on. I felt totally violated. I never realized that my private life would be such an issue."

The drug use temporarily escalated, he says, early this year, when the pressure on him was apparently at a peak. The group went on "Saturday Night Live"; Guns N' Roses and Metallica were trying to talk the trio into touring with them this summer, and there was the band's own concerts, including some dates in Australia.

The "Saturday Night Live" period was touched on in a recent Vanity Fair magazine profile of Courtney Love. She is quoted in the story as saying, "We (she and Cobain) got high and



went to 'SNL.' After that, I did heroin for a couple of months." The reason the quote became a cause celebre in pop was that Love was pregnant with Frances at the time.

(Love has denied that she knowingly took heroin while pregnant. The magazine, meanwhile, stands by the story.)

Cobain, who also has a home in the Seattle area, says he did develop a "little habit" early this year. "I did heroin for three weeks," he says, flatly, now smoking a cigarette.

"Then I went through a detox program, but my stomach started up again on tour. I was vomiting really bad... couldn't hold anything down.

"We went to this doctor who gave me these tablets that were methadone. By the end of the tour, I had a habit again... and I had to go into detox again to straighten myself out again. That took a really long time... about a month. And that was it."

Danny Goldberg, an Atlantic Records executive who remains one of the managers of the band, confirmed in a separate interview that he's seen a dramatic change in Cobain since last spring.

"Kurt is someone who had a hard time dealing with the unexpected intensity of the success," Goldberg said. "He came from a very difficult background, literally didn't have his own apartment when I first started managing him. Then, in a matter of a few months, he became an international celebrity. He got confused for a while, but seems to have bounced back. He has a healthy baby and is functioning the best I've ever seen him."

Goldberg says he thinks becoming a father has helped Cobain get a perspective on his career and life.

"I believe the day (last spring) I saw a change was when he had these ultrasound (pictures) of the baby. They are like little black-and-white Polaroid photos and you see the baby's hands and things in the womb. He put it up on his wall at home.

"I think that took him out of thinking about himself and made him start thinking about the next phase of his life, where no matter what happens, this person was going to be in his life. He came out of the 'Oh, man, I was a punk rocker and now I'm a rock star and I never wanted to be a rock star' attitude. He was so thrilled about having a baby."

Back in his apartment, Cobain takes his daughter from his wife and reflects on the future. He is looking forward to what he thought only a few months ago might be impossible: recording another album.

"We've been wanting to record a really raw album for almost a year and it looks like we are finally ready to do it," he says. "I have been prescribed some stomach medicine that has helped ease the pain and I've been going to a pain management clinic. I also meditate. We'd like to put the album out before we go on tour again early next year."

He pauses after the mention of touring. The band followed the MTV Awards with concerts in Seattle and Portland, but they were the group's only U.S. dates this year.

"We might not go on any more long tours," he says, hesitantly. "The only way we could tour is if I could find some way to keep my stomach from acting up. We could record and play shows once in a while, but to put myself in the physical strain of seven months of touring is too much for me. I would rather be healthy and alive. I don't want to sacrifice myself or my family."

## Articulo Diario *The Tech*

**Mourning the loss of Nirvana's Kurt Cobain**

**By Scott Deskin**

**Associate Arts Editor**

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Publicado el 12 de abril 1994.

Since the announcement of Kurt Cobain's sudden death last Friday, I've had a chance to think a bit about what his presence meant to me. As a resident of the Seattle-Puget Sound area for the last few years of high school when the first shockwaves from the "grunge rock" explosion were felt, I was troubled by Cobain's passing. He was the unwilling representative for the members of "Generation X," but he assumed that role with menacing authority. His songs were laden with anthemic rage and frustration, pushing the envelope for a new punk aesthetic.

His success with his group, Nirvana, signified his de facto voice for angst-ridden youth everywhere: after the commercially muted debut, *Bleach* (1988), on the Sub Pop label, Cobain's trademark riffs and howls struck radio and MTV gold with *Nevermind* (1991), a more refined but no less scathing album that probed everything from drug-induced hysteria/contentment ("Lithium") to the smash "Smells Like Teen Spirit," a song every bit as energized as the Rolling Stones' "Satisfaction." Cobain certainly had a gift for

performance and hard-core showmanship that forced most rock fans to reevaluate their listening habits, shifting away from the MTV-endorsed glam rock of the late 1980s.

Nirvana's last studio effort, *In Utero* (1993), is a tougher listen than *Nevermind*. Without the catchy pop hooks that made *Nevermind* such a surprise, many of Nirvana's "fans" jumped ship, unlike the following of Pearl Jam, another Seattle group whose sophomore effort *Vs.* (1993) outsold Nirvana's album by at least two to one and poised them for arena-rock glory. Nirvana was not destined for such success; Cobain was content to play in smaller venues, and he openly rejected the praise that was heaped upon him. Unlike most major rock stars, Cobain was uncomfortable in his new world, and his alternating love/hate relationship with the media finally proved too much to bear.

Kurt Cobain's apparent suicide, as so many journalists have duly noted, has earned him a place in the hallowed halls of rock martyrdom, something that Cobain himself would have chosen to avoid. Nirvana's tragically shortened career recalls two other "punk" groups of the past: The Clash and the Sex Pistols. Neither Mick Jones of The Clash nor John Rotten-Lydon of the Sex Pistols have come close to emulating the phenomenal presence of their former groups with their present ones (Big Audio Dynamite and Public Image Ltd., respectively). Maybe rumors of a breakup of Nirvana, revealed posthumously to have happened earlier in the week, saddened Cobain and added a crushing emotional and artistic burden.

Ironically, Cobain's life seemed to be looking up. He had enough money to get away from touring, if that's what he needed to sober up. He had a loving, talented wife in Courtney Love (lead singer and guitarist for the group Hole). He even had an 18-month-old daughter. But, as the drug-induced coma he entered about a month ago proved, his grip on reality was slipping. It seemed that his life was being consumed by the instant-celebrity status and media machine that thrived on his music. Cobain, who proved to be a growling, thrashing threat onstage was actually a melancholy (perhaps even manic-depressive) man whose career demands were constantly underwhelmed by his fragile ego.

In no way do I condone Kurt Cobain's suicide. It was an incredibly selfish thing to do, and proves that, despite any noble intentions, his disregard for the impact of his death to his loved ones has proven him as much of a bastard as the media has portrayed him to be. By taking his own life, his entry into rock martyrdom will always be blighted; the modern mythology surrounding John Lennon defies criticism, while "simple" drug overdoses created larger-than-life heroes out of Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, and Jim Morrison. Musician-as-saint status will escape Cobain, and a more tarnished anti-hero image will remain.

Rarely are the deaths of major rock stars resolved immediately. Two recent books exhumed ex-Rolling Stone Brian Jones to suggest he was murdered rather than simply drowning in a drugged-out state. Until the contents of Cobain's suicide note are revealed,

we're not privy to what he was thinking (no, I'm not suggesting a cover-up or even a murder, yet), but it still seems like a tremendous waste. It's only been a few days, and already people feel complacent about Cobain's passing, as if they had seen it coming. Perhaps I wasn't shocked either. In a culture of disposable media heroes and video immortality, some bands seem eternal. In the case of Nirvana, Cobain violently altered his testament to rock history, cutting it dramatically short.

## Mourning the loss of Nirvana's Kurt Cobain

By Scott Deskin  
ASSOCIATE ARTS EDITOR

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## Articulo Diario *Los Angeles Times*

### **Nirvana's Kurt Cobain swaps alienation for optimism**

The Atlanta Journal and Constitution

**LOS ANGELES TIMES**

**BYLINE: Robert Hilburn**

**SECTION: ARTS; PAGE: N-01**

**Publicado el domingo 19 de septiembre de 1993**

Seattle - As Kurt Cobain walks into the living room of his rented house, he's made an odd choice in clothing. The most important new voice in American rock in years is wearing a black thigh-length thrift-store dress over flannel long johns.

"Wearing a dress shows I can be as feminine as I want," he says, in a jab at the macho undercurrents that he detests in rock. "I'm a heterosexual... big deal. But if I was a homosexual, it wouldn't matter either."

As one of rock's most celebrated figures, it's easy now for Cobain to make such statements.

Nirvana's "Nevermind" album, which has sold nearly 10 million copies worldwide since its release in late 1991, reflected the anger and alienation of young rock fans in a way that has led critics to hail Cobain as the voice of a new generation. Nirvana's new album, "In Utero" ("In the Womb"), is due in stores Tuesday.

Even Beavis and Butt-head, the hopelessly moronic headbangers on MTV, think Cobain (and all other Seattle rockers) are cool.

But there was a time - back in high school in nearby Aberdeen - when it was difficult for Cobain to express himself so freely.

In those days, he felt alienated from the other kids, most of whom didn't understand why he wanted to paint rather than play sports or why he dreamed about getting out of Aberdeen someday instead of joining the other boys in thinking about taking over their fathers' timber mill jobs.

So, Cobain isn't just being provocative for provocative's sake when he wears a dress or includes a pro-gay reference in a song. He feels deeply about the issue because he was frequently tormented by teens and adults in his hometown because he didn't seem manly

enough. He also was appalled by the misogynistic attitude of most of his male peers in the tough logging town.

"Yeah, you know, there were a lot of Beavis and Butt-heads back there," he says. "The only difference is they weren't as clever as the guys on TV."

It's past 1 a.m. in the house about 15 minutes from Seattle's downtown, and Cobain has been talking since early evening about the pressures that could have destroyed him following the massive success of "Nevermind."

"We couldn't comprehend what was happening and we didn't handle things very well," he says, referring to late 1991 when the trio's major label debut sold a million copies in six weeks - remarkable considering the band's record company expected sales of 200,000 tops.

"We had grown up admiring punk bands and thinking all those groups on the pop charts were embarrassing . . . and suddenly we were one of those bands," Cobain adds. "So, we thought we'd better screw this up, and we tried for a while."

Igniting rumors of drug and alcohol abuse, the band caused chaos during appearances on British TV and often was surly and sarcastic during interviews. It also thumbed its nose at the mainstream fans who were turned on to the band by MTV. There were even whispers that the band was making a follow-up album so raw it would be unlistenable - a perverse joke on the group's huge new audience.

The media attention on Cobain was especially intense because the album, which included the anthem "Smells Like Teen Spirit," combined the radical independence of the Sex Pistols with traces of the melodic grace and craft of Lennon and McCartney.

Adding to the media furnace over Nirvana was Cobain's February 1992 marriage to flamboyant punk star Courtney Love. The couple was widely characterized as the John & Yoko or the Sid & Nancy of the '90s, depending on your generational touchstone and the darkness of the tales heard about them.

The most incendiary public moment was in a Vanity Fair profile in summer '92, which suggested Love knowingly took heroin while pregnant. Both Love and Cobain have furiously denied that, though the magazine stands by its story. Their daughter, Frances, is now almost a year old and apparently in good health.

Even before that article, Cobain had withdrawn, turning down tour offers so lucrative that the inactivity prompted additional speculation about serious personal problems, including a possible nervous breakdown.

The pressure was so bad, Cobain says now, that he thought often of quitting the band, but the closest he got was a series of late-night messages on Nirvana bassist Chris Novoselic's answering machine.

Cobain describes the long layoff after "Nevermind" as essential. The young musician, who suffered from severe stomach pains during months of extensive touring following its release, says the time off helped him regain his physical and emotional health.

The trio went with record producer Steve Albini early this year into a Minneapolis studio to record "In Utero."

"I have become a lot more optimistic," Cobain says, sitting with bassist Novoselic. (Drummer Dave Grohl was out of town.) "Once something like marriage and a baby happens to a person, you find a lot of strength that you didn't know you had.

"I still feel anxious doing interviews because I think the media beat us up pretty bad before, but I want our fans to know that I'm proud of this record... that it's not some kind of joke. Music is too important to me to do that. In fact, there was a time when music was all that was important to me."

## Articulo Revista SPIN

KURT COBAIN: When rock becomes religion, our gods are rendered mortal.

by Charles Aaron (SPIN, Diciembre de 1994)

If growing up as a Pisces on bended knees in the church of punk rock taught me anything, it was never to trust anything or anyone, even myself, particularly if there was money or love or God involved, never trust a melody because melodies sell people things they don't need, always place blame and always accept it, and remember that, in the words of punk forefather Graham Greene, "We are all of us resigned to death: It's life we aren't resigned to."

In other words, punk rock kept me from wanting to kill myself as a dopey kid, but left me with very little to live for as a dopey adult, except the laughter of survival or some such. The happiest people are the best liars. Stunted punk ideas like that still scurry from the right side of my brain to the left. And I say the "church" of punk rock because Johnny Rotten was a tortured Catholic, and I was a tortured Baptist, and my punk-rock dream come true wasn't some quaint DIY vision of hearing "real" rock'n'roll again. It was about

rescuing Jesus from the repressive lying assholes and convincing Him to scream "Fuck off and die" at everything and everyone I hated. Punk rock was my substitute for spiritual ritual, my excuse for living. And it inevitably had to fail.

Kurt Cobain, born too late in a trailer park in Aberdeen, Washington, felt cheated that he didn't even get his chance to fail. He missed punk proper, missed the black-joke blubbering of hardcore, missed the Beatles AND the Knack, for that matter. Instead his parents divorced, his father beat the shit out of him, and he dropped out of high school. But once he got his band together (Dave Grohl on drums instead of those other guys), he gave us Nevermind, its title a blunted response, either intentionally or unintentionally, to the Sex Pistols' Never Mind The Bollocks. And more than a decade after the fact, Nirvana perfectly expressed how shitty and sad and funny-pathetic millions of so-called normal kids now felt, instead of just speaking to a bunch of "weirdos" and "fags". With an album produced so that it blared comfortably next to Guns N' Roses on the radio, and because of the clever video for "Smells Like Teen Spirit", and because Kurt Cobain was a great songwriter, Nirvana became a No. 1 punk band. Fairly legitimately, no big swindle.

But unlike other insecure, long-suffering punk grunts, I felt more disoriented than validated or vindicated. As time went on, questions nagged. What does an invigorating postmortem on punk offer anyone in the '90s? Aren't Nirvana fans just gonna use Cobain, a deeply conflicted dweeb with serious emotional and physical problems, as some kind of spiritual martyr? Aren't we going to end up gawking at the same lame suicidal striptease that Sid Vicious and Darby Crash put us through? Still, I got fed up with indie types bitching about the band, calling them the postpunk Police, not acknowledging their talent. I guess I wanted to stupidly give myself over to punk one more time.

Then came In Utero, even more overwhelming than Nevermind. Recorded with indie Stalinist Steve Albini, it sounded like a punk-rock record-- the drums thwapped, the guitars squalled, and Cobain's lyrics, especially on "Pennyroyal Tea", when he ached for a "Leonard Cohen afterworld" where he could "sigh eternally", were almost too much. In retrospect, like Sylvia Plath, Cobain seemed to cherish suicide as his muse.

So when the news agencies reported that the "grunge poet" had swallowed a shotgun blast in the garage of his Seattle home, I wasn't really shocked. Just depressed by the trite inevitability of it. Heroin, shmeroin: At that moment, Cobain was simply another artist who dared to let contradictory emotions fight it out and coexist in his work, and another who didn't survive. Because of his artistic courage, and because he was genuinely as confused as his fans, he ended up feeling responsible for this whole "voice of a voiceless generation" bullshit that gets dumped on anyone these days who's talented and quotable. Sucked into the country's spiritual vacuum, he became "the sad little sensitive unappreciative Pisces Jesus man", as his wife Courtney Love cracked with a sarcastic precision Cobain would have appreciated while she read his suicide note at the Seattle Center memorial on April 10.



As Cobain told biographer Michael Azerrad in *Come As You Are*, "I'm such a nihilistic jerk half the time and other times I'm so vulnerable and sincere. That's pretty much how every song comes out.... That's how most people my age are. They're sarcastic one minute, caring the next." That dichotomy is what punk rock should've always been about, but it wasn't and it isn't. The attitude, the form, the word, are more limiting than liberating. Still, a "punk" revival lingers, with entertaining pop cartoons like Green Day and the Offspring. In the liner notes to *Incesticide*, Cobain soberly claimed that "Punk rock [while still sacred to some] is to me, dead and gone. We just wanted to pay tribute to something that helped us to feel as though we had crawled out of the dung heap of conformity." Maybe that's what he tried to believe, in the same way he needed to deny his drug use because he "had a responsibility to the kids". But to me, he just sounds like a scared, true-believing punk trying to talk himself into being a benevolent rock star, and failing.

Many fans, like members of an extended family, are mad at Cobain for abandoning them or for being weak or for never recording Nirvana's version of the White Album, or for whatever. Maybe some of those fans also feel pretty silly for worshiping a rock star and expecting him to handle the pressure like it was no biggie. Maybe it's just too banal and brutal to accept the bottom line--that he was sick and in pain and a tragic line was crossed.

Sociologist Donna Gaines wrote of Cobain's death: "His suicide was a betrayal; it negated an unspoken contract among members of a generation who depended on one another to reverse the parental generation's legacy of neglect, confusion, and frustration. Cobain broke that promise. He just walked." Kurt Cobain was an artist who wrote songs that expressed his painful, contradictory emotions. He had a responsibility to his art, his family, and his friends. His fans were not his family or his friends. It was not his responsibility to reverse their parents' neglect. To suggest otherwise is perversely arrogant.

Because we don't believe in God, because we don't believe in politics, because some of us come from less-than-ideal families, we insist on indulging in a warped, presumptuous romanticism of pop-culture figures that is unfair, unsatisfying and destructive. And we never wise up. The most vivid image I have of Cobain is from the last Nirvana show I saw, in November of '93 at New York's Roseland. On a big stage, bare except for wiry red roses poking up here and there, he stood stoically before a sold-out moshing mob, singing song after song, sounding better than ever, but looking totally defeated. The room became a free-for-all as the band played "Smells Like Teen Spirit", and a barrage of debris flew toward the stage--bottles, boots, flannel shirts. Cobain never flinched, screaming as if locked in a trance, a professional punk, going through the motions because we wanted him to. The barrier between performer and audience was like a Berlin Wall; he must've felt like an idiot for ever trying to jump over. We were lucky to have him for as long as we did.

## Artículos Diario EL MUNDO

De Todo Corazón

JULIO RUIZ

Publicado el jueves, 10 de febrero de 1994. AÑO VI NÚMERO 1.555

Componentes: Kurt Cobain (voz y guitarra), Chris Novoselic (bajo), Dave Grohl (batería y voces), Pat Smear (segunda guitarra y voces) y Melora Creager (chelo). Escenario: Pabellón de Deportes del Real Madrid

KURT, guitarra en ristre, trasteando con la derecha y pulsando sus cuerdas con la zurda, con la camisa por fuera y ese aspecto desaliñado que le ha hecho (incluso a su pesar) imagen del grupo que lidera. Chris, con una camiseta del Gato Félix, bota, bota y eleva su estatura baloncestística, más aún si cabe, en tanto se lo pasa bien (salta a la vista) dándole presencia a su bajo. Detrás, al fondo, Dave genera truenos con su batería. Apabullante. Esta es la alineación titular de Nirvana.

Hace dos años, Nirvana acudió a presentar su millonario disco de ventas, Nevermind. No hay comparación posible. Hoy sigue habiendo fiereza, pero controlada. La cabeza pensante de Nirvana ha dejado de lado los momentos en que se daba tanto asco a sí mismo, que quería morirse, en frase casi textual. Eso se refleja (lo que se va por lo que se viene) en una hora, más propinas de concierto, que dejan sin resuello al espectador. Una batidora que tritura sin miramientos.

Desde que la función se abre con Radio friendly unit shifter, se pone en marcha la serpiente sinuosa que maneja Cobain. Introducciones pausadas y a cámara lenta, con sigilo, para desembocar en un estruendo tormentoso. Es la seña de identidad de las canciones de Nirvana. Arriba y abajo, en la cresta y en descenso. Y, para contentar a todos sus seguidores, el grupo va eligiendo, casi al cincuenta por ciento, temas de Nevermind e In utero (segundo y tercer álbum, respectivamente) con el fin de repartir minutos entre sus discos más populares para alegría de sus fieles. Por un lado, Breed, Come as you are, In bloom... Por otro, Serve the servants, Penny royal tea, Dumb... Incluso para satisfacer al temprano seguidor de Nirvana, Chris alerta: «¿Alguien se acuerda de nuestro primer disco?» Y suena About a girl. No es la única, que también hay hueco para Sliver, una de las piezas de su recopilación de rarezas que fue el álbum Incesticide. La locura llegó en el himno Smell like teen spirit.

En la recta final de la actuación se hacen cuentas. ¿Cuál falta? ¿Qué tema nos dejarán sin

oír? Se van con Rape me, la controvertida canción anti-violación y retornan para los bises. Pero se dejan en el tintero (el programa llegó hasta los veintiún temas) Sappy, su colaboración en el disco No alternative e incluso una versión de Bowie del The man who sold the world. ¡Lástima de guinda!

Dicen que ésta es (parodiando un slogan que sabe a cerveza) «posiblemente la mejor banda de rock del mundo». Y si no lo es, que venga otra y lo demuestre. Quizás, ahora, en pleno 1994, en algún sótano de Seattle, está en plena gestación (in utero) la banda que mañana tome el relevo de quienes hoy están en el podio.

### **Rock de franela**

**Tomas Fdo Flores**

Martes, 8 de febrero de 1994. AÑO VI NÚMERO 1.553

Están, como otros muchos artistas del mundo del rock, en esa tierra ambigua, y peligrosa, que hay entre la rebeldía y el derroche de marketing más especulador. Nirvana juega a chicos irreverentes y algunos personajes inconfundibles, y poco sospechosos, como Neil Young los celebran y alaban. Toda la generación del llamado grunge, que ellos mejor que nadie representan, ha sabido arrinconar las babas de un dominante pop. Sustancialmente dinosaurio, nostálgico y bobalicón. Han dado una fuerza regenerada a una manifestación cultural que se va demasiadas veces frente a la ventanilla de pagos de la gran industria que se ha generado a su alrededor.

Las bandas germinadas en la ciudad de las fábricas de aviones, en Seattle, al noroeste de Estados Unidos, han devuelto las ganas de batallar al rock pero están acabando en las fauces del negocio que decían detestar. Siempre ha pasado así. Sólo que esta vez ha sido, digamos, que demasiado deprisa. Con todo ese alarde de electricidad y el orgulloso origen independiente que para algunos, como es el caso de Nirvana, es ya sólo el texto del primer renglón de sus biografías. Porque muchos de sus gestos son sólo parte de la campaña publicitaria. De poco sirven los espíritus revolucionarios si al final solo tienen emblemas para los carteles. Las ideas que aportan no son siempre innovadoras. A veces más bien muy conservadoras, sobre todo en las actitudes. Confundir la parafernalia con el combate es un juego un poco insultante para el aficionado. La generación de «grunge» casi al completo, corre el riesgo de convertirse en el soporte sonoro para la moda de las camisas de franela a cuadros y, la verdad, es un poco triste.

Su heroicidad ha sido su capacidad para soliviantar a la música pop. Ellos solos, con la

herejía de su rock eléctrico, reinventado cien veces en las últimas décadas, han dado en el clavo. Han puesto boca arriba la máquina de los discos. Destruyendo algunos mitos del pop, llamando a la conciencia «roquera» de las nuevas generaciones que les tiene como sus héroes particulares. Por eso aunque su música toma los patrones clásicos del rock más irreverente, forma parte del dominio juvenil de los noventa. Cuestión de ciclos socioculturales.

Cada cual necesita sus mitos. Lo inquietante es que todo quede anclado en las formas. En las poses, algunas un poco reaccionarias. Bastante lúgubres para estos tiempos en los que si algo se echa en falta es precisamente grandes dosis de tolerancia, de cambios mentales, de esa huida de la uniformidad que siempre ha clamado el rock. En algo más que simple y rutinaria iconografía, por muy «roquera» que sea. En la llamada gran revolución cultural de este siglo.

#### **El rock de las sierras eléctricas**

**Son los máximos exponentes del sonido «grunge», surgido en Seattle - Presentarán los temas de sus discos «Nevermind» e «In Utero» - Su telonero será la banda Buzzcocks - Es la segunda vez que el grupo de Kurt Cobain actúa en España.**

SILVIA GRIJALBA

Martes, 8 de febrero de 1994. AÑO VI NUMERO 1.553

Vivían tranquilos en Seattle; sus aficiones favoritas eran el alcohol, alguna droga, fichar de ocho a tres de la madrugada en los clubs de rock de la ciudad y ensayar de vez en cuando unas canciones llenas de distorsiones, en su minúsculo local de reunión. La sequía musical de los noventa, ávida por encontrar algún movimiento que representara esa época, se fijó en ellos, construyó toda una ideología alrededor del grupo y Nirvana, que actúa hoy en Madrid y mañana en Barcelona, se convirtió en la punta de un iceberg saturado de decibelios al que los entendidos llamaron movimiento «grunge» -tiñoso, desaliñado-.

En el fondo, los tres chicos con pinta de leñadores toxicómanos, convencidos de que la música con ruido entra, no pensaban que esas canciones personales, llenas de letras con dobles sentidos y un sonido en el que parecían converger todos los revulsivos socio-musicales de los últimos tiempos, fueran a convertirse en algo tan importante como un movimiento con identidad propia.

«La gente joven de Seattle -comentan- se ha dedicado durante los últimos años a beber

cerveza y hacer un rock and roll muy especial, que no tenía nada que ver con el de Los Angeles ni con el de Nueva York, era algo distinto que salía de un pueblo diminuto, que nadie conocía. La verdad es que los primeros sorprendidos del éxito de las bandas de Seattle fuimos nosotros. Es como cuando estás jugando a las canicas y de pronto alguien te dice que eres genial, te llevan por todo el mundo enseñando lo bien que lo haces y la gente empieza a copiarte. A nosotros nos pasó algo parecido».

SUB-POP.- Aunque ellos fueron el caso más significativo y los primeros en saltar del underground al estrellato de las multinacionales, otras bandas como Pearl Jam, Mudhoney, L7 o Hole -banda liderada por Curtney Love, la mujer de Kurt Cobain- empezaron a copar las portadas de revistas de todo el mundo y a convertirse en el nuevo ejemplo de la juventud. Uno de los culpables de que todo esto cuajara fue el sello discográfico independiente Sub-Pop. Una compañía casi casera, formada por dos músicos frustrados, que un día de locura decidieron darle una oportunidad a esos melencólicos que parecían sacados de una coctelera con ingredientes extraídos de los movimientos musicales de las dos últimas décadas y sacaron discos, de tirada ínfima de los grupos que ahora, siguiendo las normas de la vida, han dejado su regazo para meterse en las garras de las discográficas multinacionales.

Pero el éxito de Nirvana o lo que es lo mismo, del «grunge» no tuvo nada que ver, al principio, con los planes de marketing que todo lo saben -después ya sería otra cosa-. La primera imagen que captó la atención del público fue la de la portada de su disco Nevermind.

IMAGEN.- Una foto subacuática, de tonos azulados en la que un niño casi recién nacido buceaba desnudo, con los ojos abiertos, mirando fijamente al objetivo. La imagen invadía las paredes de todas las ciudades de Europa y casi todos se preguntaban quién era esa banda de la que tanto hablaban en Estados Unidos y que, según decían, estaban creando un sonido nuevo, algo inusitado, el no va más absoluto dentro del panorama musical del momento.

El punk, el rock clásico de los setenta, el heavy, el pop más puro y algún toque sinfónico sacado de los supervivientes de Woodstock componían un movimiento que aunque en un principio parecía una broma, una tomadura de pelo de unos chicos que explicaban el porqué de su sonido diciendo que «teniendo en cuenta que en Seattle todo es silencio, nadie toca el claxon y en Seattle hacer ruido es una auténtica provocación, mayor de lo que puede ser en Nueva York» con el tiempo fue contagiando a todos los estados de la sociedad. La moda (otro arte cíclico, al que últimamente se le veía el plumero y resultaba descaradamente «evocador») se apuntó desesperadamente a un movimiento que tradujo en su estética lo que expresaba en su música. Camisas de leñador, pelos grasientos y mal cortados, vaqueros rotos, botas y superposiciones continuas (en ellos); vestidos de gasa, medias rotas, jerseys de manga corta encima de otros de lana, maquillaje corrido y pelo con las raíces siempre mal teñidas (en ellas) eran las nuevas normas de una moda que adoptó

rápidamente la juventud de a pie y que al momento pasó a las pasarelas de todo el planeta.

El «grunge», lo más cutre que se había dado en los últimos tiempos, la exaltación del macarra por excelencia, comenzaba a dar dinero y, definitivamente, se había puesto de moda. Nirvana vendió lo inimaginable de su disco Nevermind, se convirtieron en miembros imprescindibles de las listas de éxitos de todo el mundo, formaron parte de los recopilatorios favoritos de todo el mundo y en un momento, para su desgracia, sufrieron la mutación que, en el fondo casi todo grupo espera: pasaron de ser una banda de rock sin más a un auténtico fenómeno de masas. Su vida privada se filtró en las revistas de fuera del ámbito estrictamente musical. El embarazo de Courtney Love -la mujer de Cobain, cantante del grupo- causó el escándalo definitivo. En un reportaje en el Vanity Fair, en el que Love aparecía embarazada, insinuando su barriga debajo de un salto de cama transparente, aparecían en boca de Courtney unas declaraciones en las que se suponía que confesaba continuar inyectándose heroína durante su embarazo. Ella lo negó todo, puso un pleito a la revista y Kurt sacó su vena de barrio y amenazó con llamar a sus amigos los matones si la periodista que firmaba el reportaje no rectificaba. Con esa historia empezó todo; la influencia de Nirvana iba más allá de lo meramente musical, ellos no acababan de soportarlo y comenzaron a surgir rumores sobre una posible separación. Pero después de una gira mundial y algunos meses de descanso. De pronto, siguiendo las reglas de la sorpresa táctica, Nirvana atacó con un nuevo disco: In Utero.

El trabajo fatídico, el del auténtico riesgo, con el que el grupo que había estado de moda durante un año y medio tenía que demostrar que sus mentes no estaban vacías. Unas semanas antes de salir al mercado la prensa empezó a decir que el disco no se publicaba; las canciones no habían gustado a la compañía y había que grabar de nuevo. ¿Marketing o un bulo? Nunca se sabrá, pero el caso es que In Utero no tardó en salir y resultó ser incluso mejor que la primera entrega de la banda, más arriesgado, duro y con letras mucho más fuertes. El dinero y el respaldo del éxito previo consiguieron que el propio disco y todo lo que lo envolvía: vídeo -uno de los mejores del año-, carpeta y fotos -a cargo de Anton Corbin, el fotógrafo «oficial» de U2 y Depeche Mode- y una producción menos cautelosa, con la que ellos reconocen que «suenan como realmente es el grupo; en el primer disco teníamos demasiado miedo de fallar».

Después de In Utero, el rodaje de la banda parece imparable. Las puertas de las iglesias comienzan a llenarse de bolsas de ropa usada, repletas de camisas de franela, chaquetas de ganchillo y jerseys de canalé. La moda del «grunge» comienza a apagar sus luces y en la música el proceso es similar. La palabra mágica ya no sirve, por sí misma, para llenar conciertos; el secreto está en ofrecer algo que a alguien influyente le parezca nuevo. Nirvana lo han conseguido, logran mantenerse y ahora, como Judas, reniegan de lo que les sacó de la miseria y les permite cambiar la cerveza Bud por las botellas de Mœt Chandon de dos litros. «Ahora en Seattle -declaran- hay un montón de grupos haciendo música, la mayoría son una porquería, pero hay algunos que no están mal y por lo menos esta moda del "grunge" ha servido para que abran más bares y la ciudad es más divertida. Desde que

se rodó Twin Peaks en un pueblo de aquí cerca no había pasado nada excitante».

## **Nirvana en el infierno**

**Nirvana en el infierno** Con su ascenso meteórico, Nirvana no ha alcanzado ningún estado de perfección. El éxito les ha llevado a reconocer los límites del infierno de la heroína. Ahora, los reyes del grunge vuelven a España dispuestos a olvidar el mal sabor de su anterior visita presentando in utero, su último trabajo.

Por Javier Rey

**El suficiente para un viaje de ida y vuelta al infierno. Cobain, su cantante y líder indiscutible, no ha salido indemne del tránsito. En el despertar de su pesadilla hipodérmica, el rey del grunge se ha dejado parte del resabio punk: La cólera de los adolescentes ha tenido buenos resultados / ahora me siento aburrido y viejo, canta en Serve the servants, el primer corte de In Utero, nuevo álbum del grupo.**

Publicado el domingo, 6 de febrero de 1994. AÑO VI NÚMERO 1.551

Tampoco sus compañeros han resistido inalterables el trajín de la fama. Ahora que Seattle figura ya en los circuitos turísticos como capital de un movimiento cultural alternativo, Chris Novoselic, el bajista, se ha comprado una granja en las afueras. Novoselic, 28 años, descendiente de croatas, es tal vez el miembro del grupo más preocupado por cuestiones políticas.

También su afición a la bebida, acentuada en los primeros días del éxito, ha llegado a preocuparle: «Siempre he bebido bastante. Todo ha ocurrido muy rápido. Han sido demasiadas sensaciones...

el éxito del grupo y todo eso. Pero ya lo he superado». Hasta Dave Grohl, el batería, que entró en el grupo en 1990, un chico calmado y amante de la moda «superpuesta» prendas variadas, colocadas unas encima de las otras ha sentido sobre su piel la presión del público y hace sus esfuerzos por mantener la calma: «¿Qué hemos hecho? Sólo somos una banda de rock, se supone que no es para tanto, aunque para mucha gente sí lo es. De todos modos, estoy orgulloso de ser el batería de Nirvana. Dicen que hemos agitado la industria y eso resulta algo difícil de creer, ¿cómo pueden tres jodidos perdedores haber hecho mella en el rock n roll?».

La industria musical es un monstruo insaciable. Su avidez sin límite ha tenido mucho que ver en la concesión de un pasaporte a la fama para Nirvana. La ebullición creativa de Seattle y otras ciudades del Norte estaba necesitada de un aval, de un éxito masivo, transgeneracional e internacional. Y ese llegó con Smells like teen spirit, single de

Nevermind.

Resultaba difícil de creer que un álbum desafiante e insolente como Nevermind consiguiera subvertir el orden del pop. Al menos el de las listas de éxitos, desplazando incluso a un Michael Jackson aún libre de sospechas. Teen spirit se convirtió en himno para una generación de jóvenes norteamericanos crecida entre dos administraciones republicanas (Reagan y Bush).

Era la chispa que faltaba. La canción pronto se programó fuera del circuito habitual de los éxitos de rock y llegó hasta discotecas y clubes de muy variado pelaje. Nirvana recogían en su música y sus letras el espíritu indómito de una juventud sin esperanza, aunque el ruido nunca olvidara por completo su deuda con la melodía. Nada nuevo, ningún ingrediente desconocido hasta el momento. Una receta que otros grupos trabajaban desde hacía bastante tiempo. La diferencia estaba en el éxito.

Kurt Cobain nació hace 27 años en Aberdeen (Washington), una ciudad desaliñada, de lluvia casi permanente e índices de suicidio por encima de la media nacional, situada a un centenar de millas al sudoeste de Seattle. Aberdeen conoció mejores tiempos en el siglo pasado, cuando sus burdeles eran poseedores una extraordinaria reputación entre los pescadores de ballenas que recalaban en su puerto. Cobain se crió en medio del divorcio de sus padres y creció en un terreno abonado a la leyenda, en un paisaje cotidiano de drogas, alcohol, desempleo y violencia.

«Mi vida fue una mierda hasta cumplir los 17 años reconoce el propio Cobain . Me pasaba la mayor parte del tiempo en mi habitación, escuchando música y tocando la guitarra. Los Estados Unidos me parecían tan grandes que creía que nunca saldría de Aberdeen. Intentaba hacer amigos, encontrar a alguien a quien le gustara la música o el arte, pero todos querían ser deportistas o leñadores».

Cobain era bueno pintando, pero pronto se dio cuenta de que la música le interesaba mucho más. Su admiración por los Melvins, una banda local, acabó por decidir su futuro. Kurt conducía la furgoneta del grupo, cargaba y descargaba su equipo y escuchaba cientos de ensayos. El líder de los Melvins se convirtió en su mentor. El fue quien le presentó al espigado Novoselic. Ambos formaron varios grupos con los que descargar su furia juvenil hasta llegar a Nirvana.

La banda desarrolló un sonido poderoso y se hizo bastante popular tocando en las fiestas salvajes de los estudiantes de Olympia, una ciudad vecina a Aberdeen, pero mucho más animada gracias a su universidad liberal, a la que decidieron trasladarse.

Novoselic y Cobain formaban entonces una pareja llamativa. Poseían la fuerza provocativa y escandalizadora del rock n roll primitivo. Borracho y belicoso, el primero; arisco, agresivo y premeditadamente desagradable, el segundo. «Mi visión de las cosas ha sufrido un cambio



radical dice Cobain desde el presente , aunque todavía odio a la mayoría de la gente, pero no con la misma intensidad. Odiar tanto llega a ser muy ingenuo». No dudaron en insultar al primer productor que se les puso por delante. Era un hombre de Sub Pop, el emblemático sello independiente de Seattle, y aguantó de todo, pero después de grabar una maqueta con diez canciones en una tarde llegaron a un acuerdo. En octubre de 1988, Nirvana publicaba su primer elepé, Bleach, que obtuvo unas ventas más que aceptables para el circuito independiente. Pero la explosión de ventas de este disco llegó siguiendo la estela de Nevermind. En el invierno del 91 el grupo había fichado por el sello DGC una filial de MCA, a su vez una división del gigante japonés Electric Industrial Co , deseoso de incorporar a su cuadra grupos con el estilo emergente de los últimos meses: pelos largos, tatuajes, desaliño general, guitarras distorsionadas, baterías del neardental. El olfato, la visión del creador y director de DGC, David Geffen ex directivo de CBS y descubridor, entre otros grupos, de Gun's and Roses y la expectación suscitada por Seattle y su efervescencia, hicieron el resto.

Nevermind alcanzó el «número uno» en EE UU en enero de 1992, justo el momento en el que los rumores sobre los problemas del líder de Nirvana con las drogas inundaron los papeles. Para entonces, Cobain, hosco, introvertido, narcisista e innegablemente carismático, había estrechado su relación con Courtney Love, también estrella, cantante de Hole, con carrera y éxito propios; una mujer incapaz de pasar desapercibida, y que inmediatamente se convirtió en el chivo expiatorio de los fans de Nirvana.

El razonamiento era sencillo: si el cantante se drogaba eso se debía a la nueva influencia.

El unico instigador. Cobain tardaría tiempo en reconocer sus problemas con la heroína. Ante la presión de los rumores, su compañía de discos se decidió a emitir una nota en la que se admitía que el cantante padecía unos problemas estomacales, debidos en buena medida a una dieta desequilibrada y al «stress» propio de las giras. Los problemas estomacales eran ciertos úlcera pero había algo más. Kurt se confesaría finalmente a Michael Azerrad, autor de Come as you are: The story of Nirvana, una suerte de biografía oficial: «Courtney y yo empezamos a tomar heroína en Amsterdam, durante una gira del grupo. Y, pese a lo que diga la gente, yo fui el único instigador, fue idea mía».

Más tarde, cuando Courtney continuaba en Europa con su grupo, los dolores de estómago se volvieron insoportables y Cobain reincidió por su cuenta: «Me encontraba tan mal que pensé: "si voy a morir de algo, que no sea por este estúpido problema estomacal". Entonces decidí adquirir el hábito, quería convertirme en yonqui durante unos meses, tal vez un año».

Y Kurt y Courtney vivieron como una pareja de yonquis.

Su vida era una rutina, aunque no la rutina hipodérmica al uso: «Nos levantábamos, conseguíamos material y nos pasábamos el día pintando, escuchando música y tocando la guitarra. Siempre estaba haciendo algo artístico». Al parecer ambos no compartían el

mismo grado de adicción: «Yo era muy egoísta. Si ella tomaba medio gramo, yo ya había tomado uno».

Para muchos, habían nacido los Sid y Nancy de los noventa. Ellos no se esforzaban en evitarlo. En muchas ocasiones se registraban en los hoteles como «señor y señora de Simon Ritchie», el verdadero nombre de Sid Vicious. El embarazo de Courtney Love añadió tintes dramáticos a la leyenda. Por un momento ambos pensaron en la posibilidad del aborto. Pero después de consultar a un especialista en defectos de nacimiento decidieron convertirse en padres. «No tuve el bebé para dejar de tomar drogas», confiesa la cantante de Hole, «aunque sé que si hubiera continuado mi carrera se hubiera ido al infierno y yo acabaría convertida en una de esas yonquis, con las manos y las muñecas llenas de marcas de pinchazos». La inminente gira de Nirvana por Australia, Nueva Zelanda, Japón y Hawai aparecía como una amenaza, así que la pareja decidió comenzar un tratamiento conjunto de desintoxicación.

Aparentemente todo funcionó. Al fin y al cabo, no llevaban demasiado tiempo «enganchados». La gira comenzó y Kurt experimentó entonces algo desconocido hasta el momento:

no tomaba heroína pero todo el mundo a su alrededor estaba convencido de que sí lo hacía. Las relaciones entre el cantante y Chris Novoselic se enturbiaron, y mucho más las de sus respectivas mujeres. Estar de gira ya no era tan divertido como antes. Ni siquiera sabían los nombres de las personas que les acompañaban. La leyenda de Nirvana amenazaba con devorar a sus propios creadores. «Antes, éramos vagabundos en una furgoneta dice un nostálgico Novoselic; ahora tenemos un director de gira, un equipo permanente, planificación y toda esa mierda. Así que alguien dice: "A las ocho en punto, a escena". Y nosotros deberíamos decir: "Nos vamos a comprar discos, jódete". Antes esto era una aventura, ahora es un circo».

Courtney se unió a la gira en Japón y ambos decidieron casarse en Waikiki, Hawai, el 24 de febrero de 1992. A la ceremonia no asistieron ni Chris ni su esposa, Shelli. Kurt lloró durante la boda. Poco antes se había administrado «una pequeña dosis de heroína».

La pesadilla se había reanudado. En casa, Cobain se pinchaba a escondidas. «Sabía que estaba tentando a Courtney todo ese tiempo, pero no podía parar de hacerlo. Creo que la razón era que todavía no me sentía por completo como un yonqui, aún estaba saludable».

Volvió a intentar dejarlo y de nuevo volvió a recaer. Finalmente, ante la inminencia del parto, Cobain se decidió a hacer el intento definitivo. Se registró en una clínica especializada y pasó 25 días llorando el «mono»: «Durante esos días, cualquier cosa me afectaba emocionalmente. Me bastaba con leer o ver la televisión para echarme a llorar».

Courtney dio a luz el 18 de agosto de 1992 a una hermosa niña que recibió el nombre de

Frances Bean y que parece haber resultado el salvavidas que Cobain estaba reclamando.

«No temo a la muerte, pero sí tengo miedo de morir ahora, porque no quiero dejar a mi mujer y a mi hija. No hago nada que pueda poner en peligro mi vida».

El cantante parece haber olvidado su tendencia autodestructiva, pero ni él mismo duda de que la droga, como el odio o la frustración que le acompaña desde niño son la espita que abre su torrente creativo. «Tengo un montón de pinturas de ese periodo y creo que las mejores canciones del pasado año las compuse bajo los efectos de la heroína».

Algunos de esos temas se encuentran en *In Utero*, que apareció, cómo no, envuelto en numerosos rumores sobre la negativa de la discográfica a editarlo. El disco supone un guiño hacia los comienzos, un puñado de canciones llenas de genio e ironía, tan duras y rudas como su primer trabajo. Puede que sus ventas vuelvan también al nivel de entonces, pero eso, al líder de Nirvana, no parece importarle en exceso: «Hicimos el álbum que queríamos. Como mínimo lo aceptará un puñado de gente y podremos continuar actuando, aunque tengamos que volver a los clubes».

A donde vuelve Nirvana es a España, seguramente con esperanza de mejorar su anterior visita. Entonces, Courtney Love se sintió mal y la pareja, temiendo un adelanto del parto, visitó un hospital: «En mi vida había visto un centro tan espantoso. Las paredes estaban sucias y las enfermeras no paraban de gritar a Courtney. Fue un infierno». A estas alturas, Cobain ya debía saber que el infierno siempre pasa por Nirvana.

#### **Nacimiento y muerte de la Generación X**

IAN KATZ

Analista de «The Guardian»

Publicado el domingo 31 de Julio de 1994. *AÑO VI NÚMERO 1.725*

Debe de resultar muy confuso ser veinteañero en EEUU. Durante la mayor parte de los años 80, la generación de posguerra se lamentó de que sus hijos fuesen viejos prematuramente. Querían empleos y no porros, anteponían el triunfo a la rebeldía y consideraban que la palabra «radical» era una marca de pantalones de montar en bicicleta. Eran unos aburridos. Pero luego, de un día para otro, al parecer, los sosos «trepas» se convirtieron en la Generación X. En apariencia, habían cambiado sus trajes elegantes por los trapos del «grunge». En lugar de disfrutar de carreras profesionales

precozmente prósperas, acababan desempeñando empleos de baja estofa muy inferiores a su preparación.

Se sentían deprimidos y oprimidos, por lo cual se dedicaban a divertirse todo lo que podían. Escuchaban a los Nirvana de Kurt Cobain. Tomaban drogas de diseño. Se tatuaban las axilas. Los estamentos respetables de Estados Unidos los calificaban de «gandules».

Surgió toda una industria en torno al retrato de la Generación X. Donna Tartt escribió la novela. Ben Stiller hizo la película: Reality bites (estrenada en España sólo en vídeo). Se realizaron hasta estudios académicos. Una industria paralela rechazó las acusaciones generacionistas. Un ejército de veinteañeros dio prueba de sus aptitudes periodísticas explicando que se los incomprendía absolutamente. Orgullosos y serios jóvenes de las generaciones posteriores a la de posguerra fundaron grupos políticos públicos con denominaciones como Lead Or Leave (Lidera o abandona) o Third Millenium (Tercer milenio).

Ahora, de repente, se dice a los veinteañeros estadounidenses que jamás existió la Generación X. El mes pasado, el artículo de portada de Newsweek llevaba por título «El mito de la Generación X». Los juveniles comentaristas que ayudaron a definir el fenómeno redactan extensos mea culpas explicando que todo lo hicieron para llenar unas cuantas columnas de prensa. Douglas Coupland, el novelista que acuñó la expresión, dice que detesta verse asociado con esa idea y que ha vuelto su atención hacia Dios.

A quienes no se crean del todo que se trató de un engaño los revisionistas les ofrecen no pocas pruebas. Los sondeos muestran que los jóvenes adultos son más y no menos optimistas que sus mayores con respecto a su futuro. Si en los estudios aparecen deprimidos por el estado del mundo, es porque eso deprime también a las demás personas. Además, lejos de quejarse de su suerte, la mayor parte de los veinteañeros afirma que le va tan bien como esperaba o mejor.

Pero al mismo tiempo que se escriben las necrológicas de la Generación X, un nuevo equipo generacional de gente que se mira el ombligo se ha puesto a trabajar para establecer en qué consiste ser veinteañero. El mes pasado se publicó Next, una antología de escritos de veinteañeros que contiene perlas de sabiduría reflexiva tales como ésta: «Intentamos escapar de la historia y descubrimos que escapar de la historia constituye una trampa. Forjarse un porvenir es cosa del pasado». Entretanto, ha surgido gran cantidad de revistas dirigidas tardíamente a los miembros de la Generación X. Tienen nombres como Shift, Real, Hypno, Bikini y Axxcess.

Hay localizaciones de Internet para veinteañeros y, a partir de este mes, un servicio de información en línea enfocado a la gente de la generación posterior a la de posguerra. Su fundador habla muy seriamente de crear «una conciencia generacional».

Casi todas estas tonterías, por supuesto, obedecen a la mercadotecnia. Hay cuarenta millones de estadounidenses de edades comprendidas entre los dieciocho y los treinta años y gastan anualmente 125.000 millones de dólares en bienes y servicios. Todo el mundo quiere su porción del pastel. Lo irónico, claro, es que sus ansiosos pretendientes comerciales tropiezan con uno de los pocos rasgos que unen realmente a los veinteañeros: que no les gusta sentirse objeto de la mercadotecnia.

También tienen en común algunas otras cosas. Son verdaderamente la primera generación que ha crecido a la sombra del sida. Ello implica que los veinteañeros deben ser más proclives al uso de preservativos o tener menos práctica en las artes románticas que la generación de sus padres.

Sin embargo, las lumbreras y los sociólogos aficionados no se dejan disuadir. Una revista publicitaria estadounidense contiene el más reciente intento ingenioso de destilar la esencia de la «veinteañeridad». Lo importante era que los veinteañeros no habían tenido ninguna experiencia dramática y unificadora como fueron los asesinatos de John Fitzgerald Kennedy o Martin Luther King, explicaba el autor. Sólo conocían acontecimientos de escasa relevancia, como el final de la Guerra Fría y la peor crisis económica de esta mitad del siglo. El tenía la respuesta: en lo sucesivo, habría que llamarlos Cooes, por ser hijos de experiencias contradictorias (en inglés, children of contradictory experiences).

#### **KURT COBAIN SE «ODIABA» Y «QUERIA MORIR»**

**El líder de Nirvana escribió la canción premonitoria «I hate myself and want to die». Los productores no quisieron incluirla en su álbum «In utero», por considerarla una llamada demasiado fuerte a la autodestrucción. La canción en la que Kurt Cobain explicaba las razones de su futura muerte tuvo que esperar a un posterior disco recopilatorio para ver la luz. Al quitarse la vida de un disparo en su casa de Seattle, Cobain dejó claro que sus proclamas autodestructivas no eran una pose ni parte de una operación de marketing. Ahora ya se ha convertido en mártir, en la voz mártir de la Generación X, que, al igual que pasadas generaciones del rock, ya tiene por quién llorar.**

**Cristina de Alzaga**

**Publicado el 10 de abril de 1994**

NUEVA YORK.- Frente a la casa de Kurt Cobain en el barrio de Madrona, en Seattle, sus admiradores permanecen desde el viernes bajo la lluvia, llorando. Este ejército de jóvenes

soldados de pelo largo, uniformados en sus camisetas baratas y pantalones vaqueros rotos, se ha quedado sin su general.

El portavoz de la desilusión de toda una generación -la llamada Generación X-, el líder del grupo Nirvana, dejó huérfanos a sus seguidores el pasado viernes al pegarse un tiro en la cabeza. A unos pasos de la puerta de la casa del cantante, una universitaria de 20 años se enjuaga las lágrimas que resbalan por sus mejillas: «Es duro ser joven hoy en día. El ayudó a abrir los ojos de la gente para que entendieran nuestros conflictos».

Las emisoras de radio de todo el país se han visto desbordadas por llamadas de fans que también lloraban la muerte del líder de Nirvana. Y el primer éxito del grupo, la canción Smells like a teen spirit («Huele como un espíritu adolescente»), se repite machaconamente, no importa hacia dónde muevas el dial.

La cadena de televisión MTV, que emite vídeos y programas musicales durante gran parte de su programación, suspendió el viernes la emisión normal para emitir un especial del grupo. Judy McGrath, presidenta de la cadena declaró: «Kurt era tan importante para los millones de jóvenes que ven MTV que decidimos hacerlo como una oportunidad para llorarle. No podíamos emitir más Nirvana de lo que ya hacemos, pero en momentos como éstos quieres darle a la gente la oportunidad de unirse y, en la manera más digna posible, recordarles qué brillante portavoz y compositor era».

Cobain, de 27 años, lideró sin pretenderlo un movimiento que ha ido más allá de la música. Como hicieron los Beatles en los 60, Nirvana abrió el camino para otra media docena de grupos, con base en Seattle, que han cambiado la historia de la música. El «grunge» salió de pequeños locales y garages en esta ciudad del estado de Washington, al noroeste de Estados Unidos, para extender por todo el mundo una nueva manera de tocar, vestir y vivir, la de los jóvenes de los 90.

Cobain fundó Nirvana en 1986, junto a Christ Novoselic y Dave Grohl. Su primer álbum Bleach (lejí), grabado bajo el sello independiente Sub Pop, consiguió ventas impensables para una pequeña compañía discográfica. Las multinacionales vieron en su éxito un filón a tener en cuenta en estas bandas de música alternativa, iconoclastas y despegadas de lo hasta entonces considerado como «comercial».

Pero la fama llegó para Cobain demasiado deprisa y con demasiada fuerza. Hace unos meses, declaraba al periódico The New York Times: «Lo estoy intentando por última vez y, si este es un buen año para nosotros, entonces tendremos una carrera. Pero no voy someterme a estar los próximos diez años de mi vida enclaustrado en un apartamento y con miedo a salir de mi casa. No merece la pena».

El cantante, que el pasado mes de marzo fue internado en un hospital de Roma a causa de una mezcla de alcohol y tranquilizantes, reconoció que el grupo estaba atravesando una

crisis: «Estamos exhaustos. Hemos llegado a un punto donde las cosas están empezando a ser repetitivas».

Obligado a cancelar su gira europea, el grupo tampoco iba a participar en el tour de rock alternativo más famoso de Estados Unidos, el Lollapalooza. El pasado febrero, el cantante posó para unas fotografías con un rifle en la boca, una macabra premonición de lo que sucedería apenas un mes más tarde. «No espero vivir para cumplir los 30», declaró Cobain en una de sus últimas entrevistas». Sus últimos meses han sido una carrera sin retorno, un vertiginoso descenso a los infiernos dirigido por un frenético deseo de autodestrucción y el abuso de las drogas, que él justificaba para aliviar un dolor crónico de estómago que arrastraba desde su adolescencia.

En el libro *Come as you are: The story of Nirvana*, Cobain declaró a su biógrafo que, en algunos momentos, se sentía incapaz de soportar más tiempo el dolor: «Quería matarme. Quería volarme la cabeza». El cantante recordaba su introvertida adolescencia («Mis compañeros de clase pensaban que yo era el chico con más probabilidades de llevar un AK-47 al colegio y cargarme a todo el mundo»). Y el trauma que para él fue el divorcio de sus padres cuando tenía sólo siete años. Contradictorio hasta el final («Algunas veces soy un gilipollas nihilista y otras, tan vulnerable y sincero»), en su último disco, aparecido el año pasado, se incluía una canción titulada *I hate myself and I want to die* («Me odio y quiero morir»), aunque él le restó importancia afirmando que era una broma («Pensé que era un título divertido») y aseguró estar en un buen momento: «Nunca he sido más feliz. Soy un tío más feliz de lo que mucha gente piensa».

Según un amigo, sin embargo, la procesión iba por dentro: «Lo único que le hacía feliz eran su mujer y su hija. Probablemente hubiera muerto antes de no ser por ellas». Pero tampoco su vida familiar estaba pasando por su época más feliz. Hace un año unos agentes tuvieron que acudir a su casa para detener una pelea durante la que Cobain golpeó a su mujer, Courtney Love, y el pasado 18 de marzo, ésta volvió a llamar a la Policía alegando que su marido se había encerrado en una habitación con varias armas y temía que se quitara la vida.

Ambos estaban siendo objeto de una investigación para decidir si se les arrebatara la custodia de su hija Frances, de 14 meses, después de que la revista *Vanity Fair* recogiera unas declaraciones de Courtney Love en las que ésta reconocía haber tomado drogas durante el embarazo.

Courtney y su hija se encontraban al parecer en California cuando, el pasado viernes, Kurt Cobain se pegó un tiro en la cabeza. Gary Smith, un electricista que iba a instalar un sistema de seguridad en la residencia del cantante (valorada en 400.000 dólares, unos 60 millones de pesetas) encontró el cuerpo sin vida en una habitación situada sobre el garaje. Junto a él había una nota cuyo contenido no ha sido desvelado por la Policía.

Familiares, amigos y compañeros de trabajo han declarado el dolor por la muerte de «un artista de tanto talento, amigo querido, amante esposo y padre». Pero también están quienes ven ya el negocio en esta tragedia. Las tiendas de discos esperan que las ventas de los discos de Nirvana se disparen como sucedió cuando Lennon fue asesinado.

El disc jockey Dave Herman, de la emisora WXRK, duda de que el grupo pueda continuar sin él: «Eso sería como si los Rolling Stones continuaran sin Mick Jagger. Y The Doors no pudieron hacerlo sin Jim Morrison».

«En el diccionario, Nirvana significa libertad sobre el dolor, el sufrimiento y el mundo exterior», declaró Cobain. Al parecer, la definición no guardaba ningún parecido con la realidad del grupo y su líder. Como había predicho, no ha vivido para cumplir los 30 años.



# Reseña bibliográfica de libros directrices

## Heavier than heaven. Kurt Cobain la biografía

Charles Cross



El periodista Charles Cross recabó durante cuatro años más de 400 entrevistas (la mayoría de su autoría) y tuvo acceso al diario íntimo y a las numerosas cartas que Kurt Cobain solía escribir pero nunca enviaba. La biografía reconstruye minuciosamente la vida de la última estrella que dio el rock: su infancia; su adolescencia en la calle; su crónico dolor de estómago y su adicción a la heroína para aliviarlo; el origen de sus musas; y la certeza que tenía desde los catorce años: llegar a la cima del rock y morir en la gloria. La historia es la de una lenta agonía. También es una tragedia americana, pero no una tragedia épica de grandes espacios y rutas infinitas, sino la de un pueblo pequeño y prejuicioso, la tragedia doméstica del adolescente suburbano atrapado por la mediocridad. Cross prefirió ignorar las horas de grabaciones, las cifras de ventas y la mirada de crítico de rock para adentrarse en Kurt Cobain hombre. *Heavier than Heaven* es una letanía de drogas, intentos de suicidio y el sufrimiento de un hombre que transformaba en canciones su dolor. Cross tuvo el mérito de ser el editor de *The Rocket*, la revista de Seattle que le dio su primera tapa a Nirvana.

## PUEBLO CHICO

Kurt Cobain nació en una pequeña ciudad de Washington, Aberdeen. Cuando pudo gritárselo al mundo, Cobain afirmó que ese lugar era el infierno y que lo despreciaba: la quintaesencia del pueblo pequeño americano y puritano, el paraíso de la “basura blanca”, con profusión de trailers, alcohólicos y desempleados, material humano para Jerry Springer. En una biografía para Nirvana que escribió cuando buscaba sello discográfico (y que nunca fue publicada), lo describía así: “El vocalista de Nirvana nació en Aberdeen, cuya población consiste en rednecks prejuiciosos que comen y matan ciervos, les disparan a putos y drogadictos y no les gustan los raritos ni los modernos”. Pero el propio Cobain confesó que su infancia fue bastante feliz: su padre, Don, trabajaba en una maderera, su madre Wendy estaba en casa. La familia era pobre: sus abuelos paternos, Iris y Leland, vivían en un trailer, y a los Cobain jóvenes les costaba pagar el alquiler.

La felicidad duró hasta que Kurt cumplió los ocho años, cuando sus padres se divorciaron. No fue un divorcio razonable. Fue una guerra. Las cartas que llegaban para Don a la antigua casa eran devueltas cubiertas con excrementos. La nueva pareja de Wendy era un

hombre violento que llegó a romperle un brazo. Kurt escribió en la pared de su habitación: "Odio a mamá, odio a papá. Mamá y papá se odian. Estoy triste". Ese mismo año Kurt tuvo que ser ingresado a un hospital: estaba desnutrido. Los dolores de estómago que iban a acompañarlo toda su vida acababan de hacer su aparición. Poco después quiso irse a vivir con su padre, y ambos se mudaron a un trailer, que instalaron frente al de sus abuelos. A partir de entonces, sugiere Cross, Kurt iba a quedar en medio de la batalla parental: yendo y viniendo de casa en casa, peleando con su padre que sólo sabía comunicarse con él mediante invitaciones a comer hamburguesas o jugar partidos de béisbol. Cuando fue lo suficientemente grande, comenzó a pedir asilo en casas de amigos, e incluso prefería vivir en la calle. De 1982 a 1986 pasó por diez casas distintas, huésped de diez familias diferentes. Estuvo preso varias veces, por escribir graffitis en las paredes del pueblo, por trepar techos borracho, por estar borracho y ser menor. Su principal actividad era intoxicarse con cualquier droga que tuviera a mano y tocar la guitarra que le había regalado su tío. Cuando tenía 17 años, su madre decidió que ya no sabía qué hacer con él, y lo echó de la casa.

Eventualmente volvería a vivir con su padre, pero nunca volvió a tener una relación con él. Años después, en un collage que cubría dos páginas de su diario, escribió sobre la foto de su padre: "Papá: me hizo vender mi primera guitarra. Quería que fuera deportista". En la canción "Serve the Servants" de In Utero le escribió "Traté de tener un padre/ pero tuve un papi".

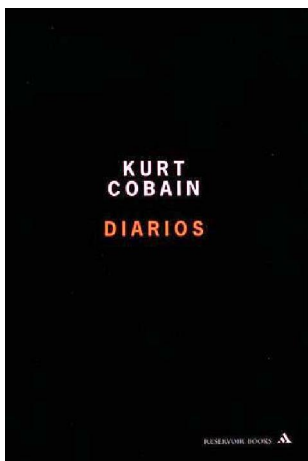
#### KURT REVISIONISTA

En "Something in the Way", la canción que cerraba Nevermind, Kurt Cobain aseguraba que, después de haber sido echado de su casa, dormía bajo un puente, el Young Street Bridge. La verdad es, según narran todos sus amigos en las entrevistas concedidas a Charles Cross, Kurt jamás hizo tal cosa. "Hubiera sido imposible", dice Krist Novoselic, bajista de Nirvana, que conoció a Kurt en la secundaria. "Iba ahí a fumar marihuana, pero nunca pasó una noche ahí. No era posible, con las orillas embarradas y la marea que subía hasta que no quedaba un lugar seco. Eso fue revisionismo." La verdad, sin embargo, es igualmente desoladora: en sus meses sin hogar, Kurt durmió en una caja de cartón que alguna vez había envuelto una heladera, y más tarde eligió pasillos de departamentos que tenían calefacción central: escapaba por la mañana, antes de que los vecinos se levantaran. Cuando fue descubierto, Kurt decidió que lo mejor sería pasar las noches en la guardia del hospital de Grays Harbour, el mismo donde había nacido diecisiete años antes. Fingía ser pariente de algún enfermo, miraba TV hasta que se dormía, y ordenaba comida a habitaciones vacías para poder cenar. No fue su única mentira. Kurt insistía en que la primera banda que vio en vivo fue Black Flag. En realidad, fue Van Halen, y le encantó al punto que se compró una polera y la estrenó en la escuela.

Kurt solía contarle a cuanto periodista se le pusiera delante que compró su primera guitarra con el dinero que obtuvo de vender armas. Su madre tenía varios rifles, y planeaba usar uno de ellos para matar a su segundo marido, el padrastro de Kurt, que solía golpearla. Una vez, tras una tormentosa reconciliación, ella tiró las armas al río

Wishkah, en compañía de su hija Kim. Al otro día, Kurt le pidió a su hermana que lo ayudara a encontrar las armas, y las vendió. Pero sólo se compró un amplificador, porque ya tenía una guitarra. Por qué decidió narrarlo así es fácil de entender: un punk suburbano, menor de edad, que cambiaba armas por su instrumento, es una historia mucho más mítica. Pero muchos creen que el libro de Cross desmitifica al Cobain sincero, crudo, en estado de pureza y lo convierte en un publicista preocupado por reescribir su historia y manipular o inventar su imagen pública. En fin, se lamentan porque convierte a Kurt en una estrella de rock, mucho más preocupado por la leyenda que se construye a su alrededor que por lo que realmente pasaba en su vida.

### Kurt Cobain – Diarios



El material que da forma a esta publicación proviene de los escritos personales de Kurt Cobain pertenecientes al periodo 1988-1994, conteniendo cartas no enviadas, dibujos, notas manuscritas, reseñas inventadas, diatribas de rockero malhumorado y viñetas los cuales fueron vendidos por Courtney Love a la editorial Penguin por 4 millones de dólares. En la prensa de Estados Unidos, casi todas las reseñas de los “diarios” de Cobain indican que se trata de un material “perturbador”, que revela cómo un inocente cantante de una banda punk se convirtió en una estrella desilusionada y heroinómana. Los demás miembros de Nirvana –Krist Novoselic y Dave Grohl– no quisieron hablar de la publicación ni juzgar a Courtney Love por ceder los derechos, y en un comunicado de prensa manifestaron: “Creemos que es un error hablar de algo tan privado. No queremos vernos involucrados con estos diarios en ningún sentido”. Los diarios, por otra parte, ya habían sido citados en parte en *Heavier than Heaven*, biografía de Kurt Cobain de Charles C. Cross, aprobada por Courtney Love.

Los Diarios fueron publicados en castellano por Mondadori en su colección “Reservoir Books”. Dentro del material más interesante desde el punto de vista artístico se destacan los comentarios inéditos –liner notes– de las canciones de *In Utero* y los borradores de las canciones de *Nevermind*, incluso la primera versión del clásico *Smells Like Teen Spirit*. Para los que traten de descubrir en estos textos erráticos los motivos del suicidio –de la tristeza– de Cobain, se incluye la nota que escribió antes de su sobredosis en Roma y varias reflexiones sobre su adicción a la heroína y sus problemas estomacales,

más algún que otro rezongo contra las compañías, los periodistas y la sobreexposición de la fama. Pero lo que vienen a demostrar estos Diarios es que el misterio del dolor ajeno es imposible de develar, aun cuando las reflexiones más íntimas estén al alcance de la mano. Quizás Courtney Love –que editó el material– se haya quedado con los textos más fuertes. Por ejemplo, no se incluye aquí la nota suicida de Cobain. Estos Diarios son crudos, a menudo graciosos, muchas veces predecibles, ingenuos, trágicos. Es notable que meses antes del suicidio, Cobain todavía planeaba la estética de los videoclips de Nirvana, por ejemplo. Por cada referencia mórbida hay diatribas vitalistas, llenas de ingenuidad adolescente, contra los programadores radiales, los periodistas de rock, el corporativismo e incluso la hipocresía de la escena punk alternativa.

Estos diarios fueron publicados con la menor intervención exterior posible, sin comentarios, siguiendo un orden cronológico intuitivo, e incluyen reproducciones fotográficas de los originales, escritos con la letra de Cobain.

### **Extractos del libro**

> “Sólo me pondría una camiseta teñida a mano si estuviera hecha con la sangre de Jerry Garcia y la orina de Phil Collins.”

> “El punk rock es arte, y es libertad. El único problema que he tenido con la ética de los situacionistas del punk rock es esa negación absoluta de todo lo sagrado. Para mí hay unas cuantas cosas sagradas, como la superioridad de ciertas mujeres y la contribución de los negros al arte.”

> “Estoy a favor de la revolución a gran escala organizada de forma violenta y alimentada por el terrorismo. Hacerse pasar por el enemigo para infiltrarse en los mecanismos del imperio y empezar a corromperlo lentamente desde adentro. Los hijos sublevados toman por asalto Wall Street. Sí, ya sé, soy un cliché andante, ignorante y confundido.”

> “Me siento como un cretino escribiendo sobre mí mismo como si fuera un icono semidivino del pop rock americano o un producto confeso de una rebelión de elaboración corporativista, pero es que he oído tantas historias y declaraciones de mis amigos disparatadamente exageradas y leído tantas interpretaciones freudianas mediocres y patéticas basadas en entrevistas que hablan de mí, desde mi infancia hasta el estado actual de mi personalidad y de mi fama de heroinómano perdido, alcohólico, autodestructivo, aunque abiertamente sensible y delicado, frágil, sosegado, narcoléptico, neurótico, un pobre diablo dispuesto en cualquier momento a meterse de sobredosis, tirarse de un techo, volarse la tapa de los sesos o las tres cosas a la vez. ¡Dios, no soporto el éxito! ¡Y me siento tan culpable!”

> “Después de todo el bombo publicitario y la atención que nos han prestado este último año, he llegado a dos conclusiones: 1) Hemos hecho un disco comercial mucho mejor que el de Poison. 2) Hay el cuádruple de periodistas de rock pésimos que de bandas de rock pésimas.”

> “Siempre he sido así de flaco. Sólo me conocen por mis fotos, y las fotos te hacen cinco kilos más gordo. Sufro de narcolepsia. Sufro de malos hábitos de sueño y alimentación. Sufro por estar de gira durante siete putos meses.”

## **KURT INTIMO**

> “Soy varón, tengo 23 años y produzco leche. Nunca me habían dolido tanto los pechos, ni siquiera cuando los matones del secundario me retorcían las tetas. Ellos ya tenían vello ahí abajo mucho antes de que yo dejara de jugar con muñecas. Llevo meses sin masturbarme porque he perdido la imaginación. Cierro los ojos y veo a mi padre, niñas, pastores alemanes y comentaristas de noticieros, pero no a chicas desnudas y voluptuosas haciendo mohínes y estremeciéndose de placer con las posturas ilusorias que evoco en mi mente. No; cuando cierro los ojos, veo lagartijas y bebés sirena, aquellos que han nacido deformes porque sus madres tomaban píldoras anticonceptivas nocivas. Tocarme me da auténtico pavor.”

> “Sí, Larry –dijo él dirigiéndose a Larry King. Durante el rodaje de la película descubrimos que la población indígena de Alaska era una de las más cariñosas, amables, etcétera. Otro trozo de carne oligofrénico del cine de acción que se afana en dar una imagen de actor distinguido. Sí, señor, eso es espectáculo, ver cómo Sylvester Stallone se abre paso a tientas en una entrevista con un acento a lo Pedro Picapiedra mientras vomita frases para estar a la altura de un tipo inteligente de los que se expresan con un montón de ‘concerniente a’. Bla Bla. ¿La población indígena de Alaska? ¿De qué está hablando? ¿De los esquimales? ¿O de los colonos redneck borrachos que nunca ven la luz del sol y se pasan 9 meses del año metidos en una lancha con vísceras de pescado hasta las pelotas?” [Nota “suicida” escrita en el Hotel Excelsior de Roma antes de una sobredosis de heroína].

## **LA ENFERMEDAD DE COBAIN**

> “Hace tres años que sufro una afección estomacal no concluyente y bastante molesta que, por cierto, no está relacionada con el estrés, lo que significa que no es una úlcera, porque los ardores, las náuseas y el dolor que siento en la parte superior del abdomen no siguen ninguna pauta. Nunca sé cuándo va a ocurrir. Puedo estar en casa en un ambiente de lo más relajado bebiendo agua mineral natural, sin estrés ni agobios, y de repente, paf, escopetazo en el estómago a quemarropa. Y luego puedo hacer cien conciertos seguidos, meterme ácido bórico por un tubo y asistir a trescientas mil entrevistas en televisión y no soltar ni un solo eructo. Mi caso ha dejado a los médicos sin más ideas que las habituales: ‘Kurt, toma otra pastilla para la úlcera péptica y vamos a meterte por la garganta este tubo de fibra óptica con una cámara de video en el extremo que se llama endoscopio por tercera vez a ver qué pasa por ahí. Sí que te duele, sí. Tienes el estómago sumamente inflamado y rojo. De ahora en adelante prueba a comer helado, a ver qué pasa’. Por favor, Dios. A la mierda los discos exitosos, hazme dueño de una enfermedad estomacal extraña e inexplicable que lleve mi nombre. Y que sea el título de nuestro próximo álbum doble: La enfermedad de Cobain. Una ópera rock sobre un joven anórexico tipo Auschwitz que vomita jugos gástricos. Y de regalo un video casero sobre el endoscopio. Así que después de tomar bebidas proteínicas, de hacerme vegetariano, de practicar ejercicio, de dejar de fumar y de consultar a un montón de médicos, decidí aliviar mi dolor con pequeñas dosis de heroína durante tres semanas enteras. La cosa sirvió de paliativo un tiempo, pero luego volvió el dolor, así que lo dejé. Fue una estupidez y no volveré a hacerlo nunca más.”

> “Decidí consumir heroína a diario debido a una dolencia estomacal que llevaba sufriendo desde hacía cinco años y que me había llevado literalmente a pensar en el suicidio. Todos los días de mi vida durante cinco años. Cada vez que tragaba un bocado de comida sentía un dolor atroz que me daba náuseas y ardores en la boca del estómago. El dolor se volvía aún más fuerte cuando iba de gira debido a la falta de unos hábitos alimentarios correctos y regulados, y de una dieta adecuada. Desde el comienzo de dicha afección me he sometido a diez intervenciones distintas en las zonas gastrointestinales superiores e inferiores que han revelado una inflamación brutal en el mismo punto. He consultado a quince médicos distintos y he probado unos cincuenta medicamentos para la úlcera. Lo único que he visto que funcionaba eran los opiáceos fuertes. Había muchas veces que me veía literalmente incapacitado en la cama durante semanas, vomitando y muriéndome de hambre. Y llegué a la conclusión de que bien podría ser un yonqui si ya me sentía como tal. Tras la última gira europea juré que no volvería a ir de gira a menos que pudiera ocultar o resolver mi problema de salud. Me pasé cerca de un mes inyectándome heroína, pero luego me di cuenta de que no podría conseguir drogas cuando fuéramos a Australia o Japón, así que Courtney y yo nos desintoxicamos en la habitación de un hotel. En Australia tuvimos que cancelar unos cuantos conciertos porque el dolor me dejaba inmóvil, doblado en dos en el suelo, vomitando agua y sangre. Me estaba muriendo literalmente de hambre. Bajé de peso hasta casi cincuenta kilos. Siguiendo el consejo de mi manager, me llevaron a un médico que me dio fiseptona. Las

pastillas parecieron funcionar mejor que cualquier otra cosa que hubiera probado antes. Poco después de reanudar la gira vi que en la letra pequeña del frasco decía: ‘Fiseptona: contiene metadona’. Otra vez enganchado. Sobrevivimos a Japón, pero para entonces los narcóticos y la gira ya habían empezado a hacer mella en mi cuerpo. Y no me encontraba mucho mejor de salud que cuando dejaba la droga. Al volver a casa me encontré con que Courtney se había vuelto a enganchar, así que ingresamos en un centro de desintoxicación donde permanecimos dos semanas. Ella se recuperó. A mí me volvieron al instante los mismos dolores y náuseas de siempre, y decidí suicidarme o acabar con el dolor. Me compré una pistola, pero me decanté por las drogas. Seguí con la heroína hasta un mes antes de la fecha prevista de nacimiento de Frances.”

### Bob Dylan, Crónicas, Volumen I

## BOB DYLAN



### CRÓNICAS VOLUMEN I

La figura de Bob Dylan ha generado estudios de su obra, biografías autorizadas o no autorizadas, y documentales como los de D.A. Pennebaker (Don't look back) y Martin Scorsese (No direction home) Resulta aun más interesante acercarnos a su vida desde su propia pluma, “crónicas” narra sucesos no muy escurridos de su biografía, a través de un espíritu inquieto y anárquico, ofreciéndonos un texto honesto narrado sin órdenes cronológicos.

Los años le han permitido a Bob tener una mirada relajada pero profunda sobre su vida. Este referente de la cultura ha tenido siempre la idea de querer contar lo que deseaba, anteponiendo de esta manera su integridad artística que termina sumando a su leyenda evitando indiscreciones carentes de contenido. Este primer volumen de sus crónicas, de las que ya se han anunciado que vienen dos más, está dividido en cinco partes: Pulir la partitura, La tierra perdida, New morning, Oh mercy y Río de hielo. Acertadamente, The Boston Globe, ha catalogado a Bob como “un gran reportero que ostenta talento para los detalles”. En estas páginas no hay héroes, no hay miradas edulcoradas de nadie.

Bob nos habla de su pasión por el jazz; de su amistad con los principales representantes de la generación beat; de no avergonzarse para nada de sus orígenes humildes; y de la viva impresión que sigue manteniendo en la memoria cuando John Hammond lo descubrió.

El lenguaje es sencillo, el estilo es evocador; y aún así, Dylan no suele caer en muchas digresiones, característica esta que se da cuando se escriben crónicas, memorias y

diarios. La narración va creciendo en interés cuando confiesa su desesperación por querer grabar un disco con temas propios. Es necesario recalcar la pasión que Dylan encuentra en la lectura, en la influencia de poetas norteamericanos como Whitman, o narradores como Mark Twain y Herman Melville. Es el testimonio de un artista integral apasionado no solamente por la música sino también por la pintura y el cine, en especial por la persona de Fellini y sus películas *La strada* y *La dolce vita*. También se refleja la estela de todos los años de aprendizaje de este autor, quien fue ante todo, un lector omnívoro y un atento analista de los cambios históricos de su tiempo. Y lo curioso radica en que jamás pidió llamarse “La conciencia de una generación”, sintiéndose siempre ajeno a todas las protestas que acaecían. Simplemente quería ser un cantante folk. Lo que ocurría a su alrededor lo llevaba a almacenar y reflexionar en los temas que estaba por escribir, como muy bien se deja leer en el capítulo *La tierra perdida*. Su aptitud para manifestar el inconformismo reinante provenía de una extrema sensibilidad y capacidad de aprehensión, no de un compromiso político.

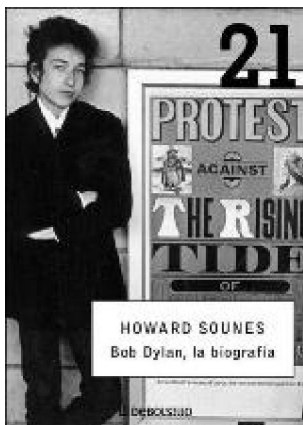
Las páginas más conmovedoras son las dedicadas al cantante folk Woody Guthrie, a su admiración por Joan Baez y a su predilección por Jack Kerouac. En el capítulo *Río de hielo* aflora un poco de “frivolidad” puesto que hay más personajes conocidos por el gran público y al que Bob los trata bien, pero sin perder su acidez natural.

Varias veces nominado al premio Nobel de Literatura, esta leyenda viva nos demuestra que no solo de talento se hace una obra imperecedera, este texto es también una declaración de amor por el saber, el no quedarse estancado en las aguas de la superficialidad y el exitismo. Hay páginas en las que expone su ferviente admiración por Balzac, Maquiavelo y Ginsberg, autores muy distintos entre sí, pero cada uno con cuotas de ambición, cuestionamiento y entrega total, siendo estos algunos ejemplos del fundamento intelectual en el que descansa hasta el día de hoy su tan envidiada creatividad.



## BOB DYLAN LA BIOGRAFIA

Howard Sounes



Es la primera biografía sobre Bob Dylan traducida al español que se publicó en la Argentina. En inglés, el primer trabajo valioso pertenece a Anthony Scaduto y se editó en 1971, cuando el cantautor estadounidense apenas tenía treinta años. Después salieron tres biografías más: la de Robert Shelton (1986), la de Bob Spitz (1988) y la de Clinton Heylin (1991). Shelton y Spitz se concentraron en el período de mayor creatividad de Dylan, en la década del sesenta, pero no le prestaron demasiada atención a lo que había ocurrido con su carrera después del accidente de moto sufrido en 1966. Heylin, en cambio, dedicó buena parte de su libro a ese período y en 2000 publicó una actualización

titulada *Behind the Shades-Take Two* .

Howard Sounes ha optado por seguir este último camino sin descuidar la primera parte de la vida del músico y enriquece hechos ya conocidos con nuevos datos obtenidos mediante una investigación que contiene innumerables entrevistas a amigos, parientes, ex novias y colegas de Dylan.

Sounes no pretende dar todas las respuestas ni buscar la verdad absoluta. Sí nos permite ir viendo el desarrollo de ese adolescente fascinado por el *blues* y el *rock and roll* , que luego aprendió a amar la música *folk* y manifestó una identificación casi enfermiza con Woody Guthrie, su primer y último ídolo. En el ambiente bohemio del Greenwich Village (Nueva York), Dylan terminó de pulir y definir su identidad artística. Adaptaba melodías tradicionales a sus propias letras, cuyas influencias literarias son muy variadas e incluyen tanto el fervor de los textos bíblicos y la austeridad lírica de baladas anónimas como el fragor visionario de Dylan Thomas, Arthur Rimbaud o el poeta *beat* Allen Ginsberg, con el cual mantuvo una duradera amistad. "Le interesaba escribir canciones que fuesen fruto de preocupaciones sociales -explica Sounes-, pero también estaba interesado en baladas románticas y temas cómicos. Etiquetar a Bob sencillamente como 'cantautor de protesta', algo que los periodistas hacían cada vez con más frecuencia, era desmerecerlo." Entusiasmado por la forma en que los Beatles habían reinventado el *rock and roll* , en 1965 decidió añadir instrumentos eléctricos y batería a la guitarra acústica y la armónica con las que había acompañado sus canciones hasta ese momento. Ellas se volvieron más surrealistas e impulsaron a toda una generación de compositores a elevar el nivel del lenguaje *pop* . Entonces estalló una polémica que hoy parece absurda. Sus antiguos *fans* lo acusaron de haber traicionado sus ideales y lo abuchearon en sus actuaciones. La biografía, entre otros aspectos, analiza en detalle la supuesta gravedad del accidente que marcó el comienzo de una etapa de reclusión hogareña, la conflictiva relación con su mánager, el retorno a los escenarios, el divorcio de su primera esposa, su conversión al cristianismo y un poco conocido segundo casamiento.

A lo largo de este recorrido vital se van registrando las actitudes de un hombre reservado, casi enigmático y ferozmente celoso de sus asuntos privados. En definitiva surge el retrato de alguien tan complejo como sus canciones. Sounes no pretende idealizar a Dylan y le atribuye rasgos de hombre "manipulador, rencoroso, egocéntrico y machista". En su opinión, el aspecto más destacable de su talento "quizá sea el hecho de que pueda empatizar con casi todo el mundo, sea bueno o malo, y expresar esa experiencia individual en una canción". Estas críticas feroces y su énfasis por destacar hechos de la vida privada del autor le valió la desaprobación y el no reconocimiento del libro por parte del músico.

## La biografía de Bob Dylan

Anthony Scaduto



Interesante biografía sobre Dylan, recogiendo de las fuentes más cercanas al artista, y realizando un auténtico trabajo de reconstrucción periodística. Una obra desmitificadora, que ha recibido elogios del propio Dylan. Abarca el periodo de mayor creatividad del músico 1963-1966 recopilando sus principales referentes e influencias. El autor puntualiza en el legado artístico y a diferencia de otros biógrafos opta por relegar elementos de la vida personal del músico.

Dentro de las declaraciones recogidas se seleccionan aquellas que realizan aportes sustanciales a la obra del autor. Los familiares testimonian acerca de vivencias que pudieron afectar la sensibilidad característica del trovador como así mismo su capacidad de reinventarse. Los amigos dejan constancia de la evolución de su carrera musical a partir de vivencias compartidas y por último el testimonio de sus pares viene a dar cuenta del análisis objetivo de la obra, muchos de ellos denostarán su originalidad en tanto otros lo reivindicarán como un cantante único.

Anthony Scaduto con su libro se posiciona como el principal referente al momento de hablar de biógrafos de Dylan, el libro es la única biografía que ha recibido la venia del músico antes de ser publicada.