

The Life of an Idiot

A long time ago (1989 ish), in this exact galaxy, I was a musician. Or at least I thought I was: I had a band (comprised of some smoking hot "cats" as we called them), I wrote a bunch of pretty good songs (IMO), and we played some bars under various names, partied WAY too much, released a few CD's, even got a Myspace page (remember Myspace?), blah blah blah. You've heard it all before, a thousand times.

We thought we were the next "Big Thing", and it was only a matter of time before some huge record company was going to sign us to their label, and then the pearly gates would open and we'd be rich, famous, on MTV (remember MTV?) and live happily ever after. Rockstars.

Basically, like 99.9999% of all bands, we were INCREDIBLY STUPID IDIOTS.

I was young and thought I had all the time in the world, and partied harder and wrote better songs, and got into the digital age with a website and gave away Mp3's, we even played a multi-band gig at Off Broadway, and came in one morning hung over and played some acoustic tunes live on KDHX (if you live in St. Louis those names might mean something to you). Surely, we thought, we were a ticking time bomb waiting to explode onto the scene. BOOM.

And then life and reality hit me like a baseball bat.

My wife had our beautiful boy, who immediately got sick because of a rare genetic condition (if you are interested you can read his story at www.b6kid.com) and he nearly died as a baby, and then almost died again from RSV when he was 2 years old (that was another 10 days in the ICU), and all this time I was working as a heavy equipment operator by day, and playing music on the weekends while my wife ran her own sign language interpreting business. As my boy grew up, I realized my partying days had to end for his sake, and for my own health (which was deteriorating), especially when we got another crushing diagnosis: he was autistic. So I gave it all up, the booze, dope, cigarettes, and I was clean and sober for the first extended period in my life since I had begun playing guitar at the age of 15. If you are not a musician, you may not understand this, but I'll try to explain: all that stuff goes together, like peanut butter and jelly, and Donald Fagen and Walter Becker (or George and Ira Gershwin to the oldersters). If you played, and hung out with the happening cats you got ripped. It was just the *scene*, it was *what you did*.

But music wasn't fun for me any more. I went from 2006 to 2008 without picking up my guitar. If I wasn't high, or drinking and smoking I really didn't feel like playing. And I wasn't going to be around my kid stoned, and he kept getting better and better, and I realized I loved him like I've never loved anything before.

So like an old gunslinger, I hung up my guns, settled down and started really being a DAD, and I devoted myself to it, and I'll never forget or regret these years of sobriety and fun times with my boy, hell I even got into God and thanked HIM for blessing me with this great life, and a great wife (who still believes to this day that I'm a rockstar), and the greatest kid in the world

who has become my best friend. I would literally die for him (like most dads would, I think it's hard wired into us).

So I found myself laid off in the winter off 2008, (a LOT of heavy equipment operators don't work much in winter, it is extremely hard to dig frozen ground) and my boy was in school during the day, and I stumbled across this website: <http://rpmchallenge.com/> . Basically, you write a completely new album of 10 songs in the month of february, 28 days, just for the hell of it. I had started playing around with my acoustic a little already, and I suddenly thought, "I'm going to do this." I'm heavily influenced by Pink Floyd, and Roger Waters, and they wrote concept albums and like a true fanboy so did I. I had been kicking around this idea of a robot who falls in love, and decided to make my contest entry around this concept, and got to work on it. Around 5 songs into the project something amazing happened: I fell back in love with music *even though I was sober*. And the feedback I was getting from the other RPMer's was fantastic, and I realized I wasn't going to make the deadline, and I felt the concept and the music kept getting stronger as I continued. I decided "CYBORG" (what I was calling the album) deserved more than a half-assed rushed submission, so I deleted my songs and quit the RPM, and decided to take my time and do the album justice.

That was nearly 8 years ago. My health got worse (I had a heart attack in 2013), time was (is) just *flying* by, and the story kept getting more complex until I was seeing it in my mind as a movie (the backstory grew until the characters were as real to me as my family), and all this time me and a group of *really* good musicians recorded these songs in our spare time, and with their help it turned into a double album that we all now recognize as being our best work. I was completely, utterly obsessed with it. And, incredibly (to me anyway), it is finally done.

So now I'm going to ask a favor of you: please give it a listen. I'm 50 years old, and my heart ain't getting any better and this is the best of me. You may hate it, or you may love it, or you might go, "meh". But however you feel about it, *I need to know*. It is important for me to know what people think of CYBORG: I am literally begging you to just give it a listen, and read the story and then *tell me what you think*. Is it as good as I think it is, or am I deluding myself and I've wasted the last 8 years of my life? OCD is a bitch, and I had it bad for this album (and I want to apologize to my long suffering wife, and to my son for the time I spent on this when I could have spent some of it with you. Please forgive me, and I hope someday you'll understand it was something that I *had* to do for my own sanity).

Dave Ryder – December 28, 2015