

# a Soul to Squeeze

an unofficial biography of Anthony Kiedis

by Penny Lane



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CHAPTER 02 :  
BREAKING THE GIRL

02



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*First of all I would like to thank Pascale and Maria for giving me the info I requested.*

*Secondly, I would like to dedicate this pamphlet to all the Red Hot Chili Peppers fans in the world and particularly to those who've been with me in this adventure which has been going on for 12 years now, to Jason, Yvette, Michelle, Zoe and all my friends of The Red Hot Chili Peppers Forum/Ezboard and One Hot Globe Forum.*

*And last but not least, everybody do a jig for my editor, the Great Ardnac.*

## ***NOTE OF THE AUTHOR***

This biography is mainly based on interviews and facts I have read on the press and that to my opinion are reasonably reliable; I have just briefly hinted at a few things I've heard with my ears from the man himself or from people close to him. Of course some things might be missing or inaccurate, but nothing has been made up. While reading on you will notice I have written some dialogs between Anthony and Flea, or Anthony and Hillel or other people. Of course those dialogs have been made up because I wasn't there and even if I had been there I would have needed a tape recorder with me to report them faithfully. However, the reason for those conversations is mainly to lighten up the story and to add something fresh to things we already know (you will notice the dialogs are inserted mostly in the points of the story all the world already knows about) cause repeating the same things over and over again would be rather boring. But once again, also those conversations are based on true facts and are written with a style echoing the typical way of expressing of the people involved. Also Dave Thompson, in his book about the Red Hot Chili Peppers, had to insert dialogs based on his intuition. I have followed the same rule.

*Penny Lane*

## Chapter 2 : Breaking the Girl

*Raised by my dad*

*he was my man*

*girl of the day*

*that was the way.*

Blackie had had a tough childhood. His father was so strict he didn't let him do anything. Now that he had Anthony with him he was determined to do all the opposite and give him total freedom to do anything he wanted to.

In 1973 Anthony began his new life in Los Angeles. His mother had made Blackie promise that Anthony would have gone regularly to school and would have done all his homework like all the other kids in the world, without distractions of any kind.

The school that Anthony was going to attend was still under question. Blackie was still hoping to get him enrolled at Beverly High but there was a little but not insignificant detail against it: Anthony did not live in Beverly Hills. Sonny Bono came up with an idea of his own: Blackie could use a Beverly Hills address declaring that Anthony was living in Sonny's house. It's an old trick, many parents use to enroll their kids in a "prestigious" institution, but this time it was discovered immediately. Blackie had to give in and got Anthony enrolled at Fairfax High School, at the crossing between Fairfax and Melrose Avenue. Fairfax High is known in all L.A. as the "rock'n'roll high school"; among its ex-students are people like Herb Alpert, Phil Spector, Ian and Dean and Guns and Roses' Slash, and in 1991 its gym has been the set of the shooting of Nirvana's "Smells like teen spirit" videoclip. Back in 1973 it was a school where middle class Jewish kids used to go.



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*Fairfax High, the "rock n' roll school"*

Not much is known about Anthony's first days at Fairfax High. He just flew with the stream and carried on without too much honor or trouble. Life at home was much more interesting.

"There was a startling dichotomy" Anthony said once about his father "On one hand he was always around making sure I had my homework done, helping me with my simons... on the other hand he was so much on the fast track, to this partying every night...".



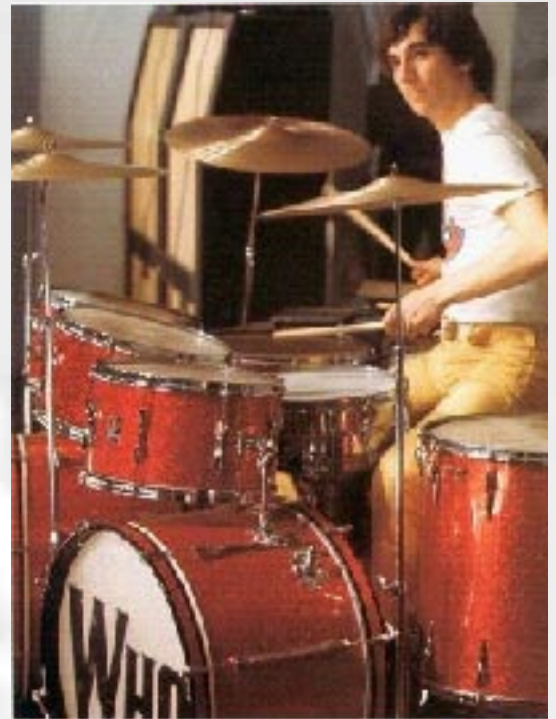
This startling dichotomy was having a huge reflection on Anthony's everyday life at this point. At Fairfax High he hadn't a single friend. His friends were his father's friends: Keith Moon, the drummer of the Who, who had moved to L.A. from native London at the beginning of the 70s, crazy, fucked-up, heroin and cocaine-addicted; Alice Cooper, the Marilyn Manson of the 70s, wild, bisexual and gamble-addicted; Sonny Bono, of course, whose passion for teenage girls was known from north to south pole.

"I got introduced to his fancies" Anthony kept telling "at a very young age. I had that kind of attitude, like, you're doing that? I wanna do it as well. How about it?"

At night Blackie and his friends would take Anthony to the most popular Hollywood clubs. "I used to spend my nights with a bunch of sodomizing adults" he told once, and only half in jest. Blackie knew everyone, and everyone knew Blackie.

He introduced girls and introduced... substances. Jimmy Page, the legendary guitar player of Led Zeppelin, once told: "Every time a band or an artist fell in L.A. they promptly went looking for Blackie. He knew where the right girls, and the right stuff, were".

"I think that my father had a kind of attitude that was good for me" Anthony said "to introduce me to everything from the adult world from day one. But the young mind may have some kind of trouble in digesting all that information". Indeed the adult world is not always suitable to a 11-year old kid, just arrived in a new city and in a new life. At school the other kids kept avoiding Anthony Kiedis: the boy was too weird. "My father was my best friend" Anthony admitted once. And in another occasion he said: "I was a freak of nature as a kid. A total dropout".



*Keith Moon, the Who's crazed drummer*



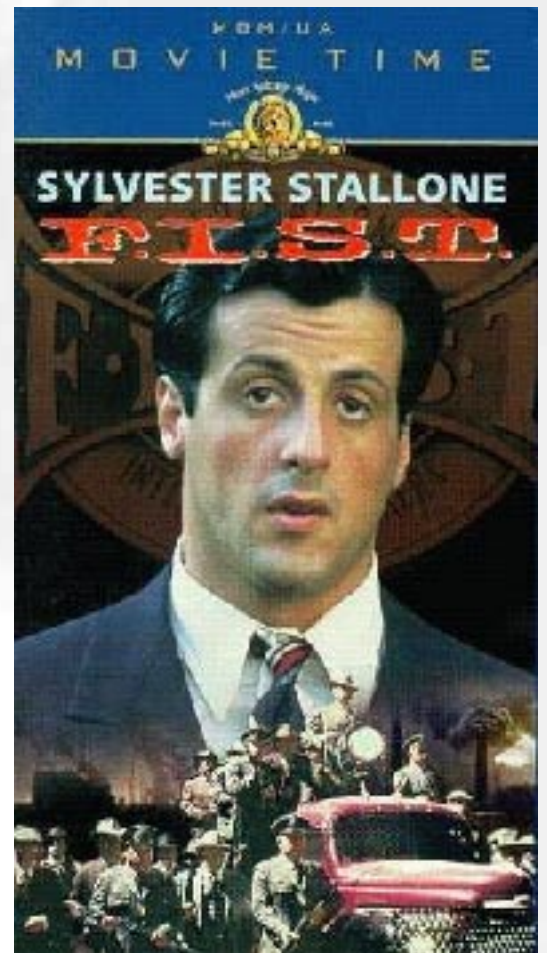
*Blackie (second from left) and friends back in the old punk days*

It's not clear whether Anthony first made friends with sex or drugs. Both were introduced to him by his father, but it's not known in which order. The story of Anthony's first sexual experience is world-wide known and it's been told a thousand times. Our boy, 12, was introduced to sex by Blackie, who pushed him to have a sexual intercourse with his then girlfriend, 18-year old Kimberly Smith. Anthony himself has given different versions of the story, though leaving some points unchanged. First of all, a quarter of a Qaalude tablet was circulating in his blood, making him all relaxed, which lets us think he had already familiarized with some drugs, and then... "I got stoned, and my father had a girl over at the house, and she didn't have her shirt on. I said to myself, you know, "How lucky could a boy be?" at the time, I thought I was the luckiest kid on the block." What people know about Kimberly Smith, apart from her name and her age, is that she had red hair. Nobody knows what's become of her, but she ended up in history, unwillingly or not, as Anthony Kiedis's first sexual experience.

Anthony's first chemical experience is not so well known. Also in this case Blackie put his hand on. "We started doing drugs together" Anthony told "Mostly pot, but soon afterwards pretty much experimenting with every mind-opening substance under the sun". Today, Blackie himself admits he feels a little guilty for having pushed his son towards drugs because "He ended up strung out in drugs". Many people openly accuse Blackie to have ruined his son's life with drugs, while many other only consider him as partly responsible. What's sure is that in no other middle-class family of the time things like that used to happen, and this fact was making Anthony even more aloof.

Blackie hadn't given up his aspirations to become a movie star and now that he had Anthony with him he was determined to make him follow in his footsteps. Anthony by that time had only acted in school plays but Blackie had other plans for him. He started by changing his name. What kind of chance could someone named Anthony Kiedis have to break in the movie world? None. A battle name was required. Since he was his son, Blackie gave him the same last name he had chosen for himself, Dammett. As a first name he christened him as "Cole". The origin is unknown. With this new brand name Anthony/Cole Dammett went to an audition for a small role in a Sylvester Stallone film, F.I.S.T., and he got it. The year was 1976.

F.I.S.T. is a pretty boring film. Those fans who damned themselves to purchase the home video to enjoy even only for a few seconds the first public appearance of the singer of Red Hot Chili Peppers were left deeply disheartened: in the home video version Anthony's part was cut off. Those few who managed to see the movie in some theater talk about a scarce scene featuring Anthony sitting at a dinner table. As for the rest, the burden is watching a quite long, boring and messed up movie. Just a curiosity: in the film the woman who played Stallone's wife (Anthony's mother) was Lithuanian.



*No more Rocky, not yet Rambo: Sly as Johnny Kovacs*





Anthony's first close encounter with a movie set let him down badly: "I had no idea how insignificant my part was when I got the job. All I knew was I was playing Sylvester Stallone's son. I was 14 and thought that was going to be a big break for me. Then I showed up and realized it was one day's work. I went up to his trailer to say, "Hey, I'm going to be playing your son, let's spend a minute together so we can get some rapport happening here". He came to the door and said: "What do you want, kid?". He didn't want to have anything to do with me".

*Lunatic Anthony and his doggy*

More small roles were to follow, in some TV movies ("Jokes my folks never told me", "It's a mile from here to glory") and in the sit-com "Jenny and Chachi", a "Happy Days" spin-off with Scott Baio. By that time Anthony had become a flower of a teenager. He was still walking around with that funny bob and a slightly myopic stare. His new friend Michael described him as such: "He looked like a madman, with that straight hair over his eyes and that tough look. He looked like a lunatic".

The first thing that Blackie thought when he saw Anthony's new friend was "Fuck! I knew I had to send him to Beverly High!". Actually, at a first sight, Michael Balzary did not look at all like the cool rampant teenager. Small, thin, shy, he looked much younger than his age and at Fairfax High he had no friends, just like Anthony. "We were two drop-outs" said Anthony once. The date of the fatal meeting is not known. The year was 1978. According to the legend, Michael Balzary was fighting with the only friend Anthony had at Fairfax High, one Tony Sherr. Anthony pounced over the twosome, parted them and shouted to Michael to leave his friend alone. Michael obeyed because Anthony did not have a reassuring look but love at first sight had struck him, and had struck Anthony too. In a couple of days Anthony brutally dumped poor Tony Sherr and become inseparable with Michael Balzary.

Michael was just two weeks older than Anthony but he was born on the other side of the world, in Melbourne, Australia. At five he had moved to New York with his mother, his sister and his stepfather, a jazz musician. In 1973, the same year Anthony had joined Blackie in L.A., Michael had moved to California. Michael was a midget with curly hair, pale blue eyes and a funny gap between his front teeth. He had inherited his stepfather's passion for music, and he was fond of jazz and blues more than anything else. Whereas his school mates were going crazy for rock'n'roll and used to damn themselves to learn Led Zeppelin riffs on their guitars Michael played trumpet and was a proud member of the orchestra of his school. He was a good kid, nice and studious. What in him had fascinated so much the much more life-wised and self-confident Anthony is still unknown, but the theory of the attracting opposites always explains everything.



In reality Michael at Fairfax High had more friends than Anthony. Michael would not arrive at school in the morning with his head blown up with beers, pot and orgies like his new friend. Michael was just a bit more normal and this may partly explain the fatal attraction.

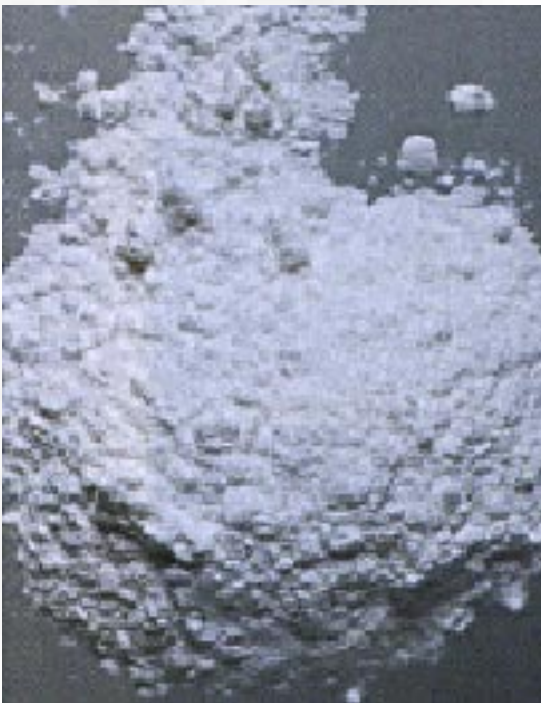
Now Anthony is eager to stress that as a teenager he was not exactly the carbon copy of his father. "Inside me there was also a lot of my mother's genuineness. I was in love with this girl and I stayed with her for 3 years. I was not meant to do the same thing my father was doing. At the same time I thought it was great to have all those beautiful women who came to my house and they didn't look bothered if I got to talk with them or if I got to have sex with them".

The girl Anthony was in love with was a student at Fairfax High and her name was Haya Handel. For incredible it may sound, the relationship Anthony had with her is one of the longest he's had so far in all his life. Haya was a beautiful brunette, leader of the school's gymnastic team and she must have had great balls, as people say, if she's managed to keep Anthony Kiedis by her side for 3 long years.

At school our boy was carrying on only thanks to his great intelligence. As for the rest, he used to fight with all his teachers and for most of the time he was totally stoned.



*The very fighter Michael Balzary*



From pot he had quickly passed on to magic mushrooms and acid and in a short time he had approached cocaine. He would find drugs in his house, not differently from many teenagers who become alcoholics raiding mom and dad's sitting room bar.

One day, around 1978, Anthony found himself face to face with another beautiful white line waiting to creep inside his nostrils, and of course he didn't draw back. The effect was mind blowing. Nothing to do with the excitement and 200 heartbeats/minute of the crappy coke he had been experimenting so far. Just the opposite. His head had become lighter than a helium bubble, and a tremendous heat had pervaded all his being. World had become such a wonderful place, a wild and colored heaven full of terrific sensations.

*"Heroin is my life and is my wife" (L Reed, 1966)*

"WOW" he went "that's great. What kind of coke may this be?"

"That's not coke, kid" said the first bloke who heard his babbling "That's smack.. Junk. Heroin. Horse. Whatever".

Michael Balzary was small but quite energetic and he used to jump around a lot, so that people had started calling him Flea. His ability as a musician and his niceness had helped him to overcome his shyness and his smallness and to make friends with many other kids. Apart from Anthony, his closest friends at Fairfax High were two Jewish boys, Jack Irons and Hillel Slovak, and a citizen of the world who came from a family of circus people, named Alain Johannes. Jack, Hillel and Alain were all members of a school rock band named Chain Reaction. Michael Flea Balzary hadn't converted to rock'n'roll yet but he had started getting closer, and his friends playing in a band had surely helped him to be less reticent.



1978: Flea and his friends

Michael introduced his friends to Anthony. Our boy loved music but just as a fan. He couldn't play anything and was still vaguely aspiring to do something in the movie world. Actually, when years later he was asked what he had planned to become in his adult life as a kid, Anthony replied: "An outlaw who lives and sleeps on Sunset Strip and only follows his own rules".

Reality was coming closer and closer to that scenery: one night police broke in Blackie's apartment while a party was going on. Drugs were flowing everywhere.

Blackie was dragged out and handcuffed under the kid's eyes, and taken to the central. This time he wouldn't have gotten away with it.

Anthony didn't want to call his mother and ask for her help. Since he had moved to L.A. Anthony had called her very often and had also visited her in Michigan a lot of times, but he had never told her the truth about life with Blackie. Could he maybe call her now and simply tell her "hey mom how ya doing, here's going great y'know, oh incidentally couldn't you be bothered mailing me some dimes, y'know dad is in jail and if I want him back home I have to pay his stupid bail!"?

Certainly not. Anthony was 15. He had done and seen as many things as someone thrice his age. He didn't need Blackie anymore, and he didn't need Peggy either. With his scrapings he paid his father's bail and soon afterwards he left their apartment. He had no idea where he would have gone but that didn't worry him too much.

Among Anthony, Michael, Hillel Slovak and Jack Irons a great friendship had been born. The four named themselves "Los Faces" and started hanging on Hollywood streets dressed up as skaters or surfers, doing their best to get in trouble. Many of their misadventures have become part of the legend: Anthony jumping from the roof of a building to a swimming pool, but missing the water and breaking his back on the concrete; Anthony and Flea going skiing in North California spending nights in a condo laundry getting warm next to the dryers... and who doesn't remember that story of the transsexual who took them up in his car going back to L.A., or the other one about them climbing a huge cardboard and celebrating cocks to the wind? Many of these adventures are traceable in the lyrics of one of the few songs ever co-written by Anthony and Flea, that nostalgic "Deep kick", published on One Hot Minute in 1995. That song also briefly hints to a trip to London, about which not much is known.

*Papa's proud and so he sent us  
Pounding hearts full and relentless  
Two boys in London, England  
Two boys in London, England  
Climbing out of hostel windows  
Wearing gear so out but in though  
Come on kid and do the no no*

It was the first time the two kids were visiting Europe and, allegedly, England did not suit them at all.

"Let's say England is not my fave place in the world" Anthony told British magazine Kerrang! in 1990 "I don't like how they cook, they tend to overcook vegetables and kidney pie is hardly my fave dish".

Flea, talking to New Musical Express in 1992, was less diplomatic: "Food is crap, people are grumpy, weather sucks and everybody listens to this fucked up music".

This was the end of the seventies though, and music wasn't fucked up yet. Punk rock had just exploded and London was burning. And while hanging round London's darkest pubs our two heroes one night happened to fall in a place where a so-called pub-rock band was playing. Their name was "Chili Willy and the Red Hot Peppers".

When asked by a fan what his greatest memory of his youth was, in summer 1999 Anthony replied: "Me, Flea and Hillel, in 1979, road tripping from L.A. to Michigan, straight thru the Rockies". Anthony and his friends had a deep passion for sports, nature and outdoor life. This trait might seem in contrast with other features of theirs, like spending all nights up hanging in clubs high on drugs and stuff, but maybe the contrast is not so deep as it may seem at first sight. What's sure is that nobody in "Los Faces" was aspiring to a regular ordinary life. Los Faces were wild and excessive and they had no fear to address any new experience.

On the contrary, any experience, even the most abysmal, deserved to be lived. The most assertive supporters of this theory were Anthony and Hillel. Flea was still a bit held back by his shyness, and Jack, the most regular of the four, was the only one who maybe sometimes stopped to think that some kind of limit, wherever it was, had to exist.



*Los Faces in all their splendor*

Though Flea was still his soul mate, lately Anthony had become more and more intimate with Hillel Slovak. Hillel was a Jewish guy, tall and skinny, with huge lips and long arms. Apart from being a Fairfax High student, Hillel was also the guitar player of Chain Reaction, who had just changed their name in Anthym. Hillel was a real guitar maniac and his hero was Jimi Hendrix, but Hillel was also an artist. His mother Esther was an appreciated painter and he had started following in her footsteps. Anthony couldn't play any instrument and he couldn't draw either but was highly fascinated by the artist's stereotype. And when, following Blackie's arrest, Anthony found himself out in the street, it was Hillel he asked for help. "Sometimes it's hard to find that dimension of friendship, which is just uncut friendship, it's just friendship for friendship, and that when everything else collapses, that's what's standing: pure friendship" said Anthony in 1998, talking about his friendship with Hillel Slovak.

Esther Slovak took him in her house; with a teenage kid and a pre-teen one she didn't think another boy could bring any more trouble. She certainly wasn't expecting to find her house deprived of the family jewels, the stereo and some other goodies in a few weeks. Anthony had to leave.

Flea was also having problems at home. His step-father Walter Urban Jr was an alcoholic ex- junkie who often became pretty violent. "There have been so many things I had to witness that no kid normally should have to" Flea said once. Los Faces were way beyond childhood and adolescence now. Anthony Flea and Hillel gathered together, they did a little math, and decided that the best thing to do at the moment was moving all together in a small apartment. The thought was very inspiring! Our three heroes found a hole in Hollywood and moved there with their scruffy clothes, records and drugs. Jack Irons, who was backed up by a regular happy family, chose to stand and watch. He wasn't ready yet.

Anthym had been earning a few bucks playing at school parties, but they didn't seem to be meant to a rockstar future. Two many blooming bands were hanging around L.A. and Anthym weren't any better or worse than any of them. They had lost their first bassist, and when the moment had come to find a new one Hillel and Jack had thought about Flea. "But I play trumpet!" Flea had weakly protested. Hillel had told him to stop whining, he would have taught him how to play bass and gotten him in the band in no time. And so he did.





*Three kids in Hollywood: Flea, Anthony and Hillel*

And Anthony? Anthony was the only real fan of Anthym. He would never have missed any of their gigs! Since he had moved in with his friends Anthony had become more and more immersed in Hollywood's underground scene. How he could go to school in the morning after those crazy nights it's still a mystery. Or maybe it's not if something named cocaine is allowed to enter the scenario. At night Anthony used to hang around Hollywood clubs, cheating everyone with his angelic face and college student clothes. After a while he would take Haya home and then he started wandering round again. In the morning he would get up, snort a few lines, and go to school resplendent and on top form.

Punk rock was about to explode in Los Angeles but Anthony was going crazy for funk. Funk was not music for everyone, it was first of all music for blacks, and it was the closest thing to sex Anthony had ever heard. Anthony had no fear to walk around the ghetto at night, and he had started pushing himself over there to buy heroin. L.A.'s ghetto clubs, from South Central to Bunker Hill, were way different from the clubs he had seen so far. The boys who used to go there were all black, music was terrific and smack was much cheaper than in Hollywood.

His mates had to understand they couldn't keep playing that fucked-up hard rock! They would have gone nowhere. That was music! Funkadelik, Defunkt, Sly and Family Stone! Music made for sex. He would have stuck it into their heads, those four sissies!



*Funk legend Funkadelik*

End of Chapter 2

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