

a Soul to Squeeze

an unofficial biography of Anthony Kiedis

by Penny Lane




Good Time Boys

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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 3 : Good Time Boys

Punk rock descended on Los Angeles at the end of the seventies, and it was soon clear enough that it had little to do with its British cousin and also with its New York's brother. L.A.'s punk rock was so raw, sparse and violent it was promptly renamed "hardcore".

Two were the most important bands of this scene, Germs and Dead Kennedys. Germs released only one record, "G.I.", in 1979. One year later their leader Darby Crash shot up the "final score" and gave his band to history.

San Francisco's Dead Kennedys were luckier but not less violent. Their first album "Fresh Fruit for Rotten Vegetables", of 1980, is a milestone of Californian punk and hardcore. Both bands were the most extreme expression of L.A.'s punk club scene, a scene dominated by the use of heavy drugs, first of all heroin. Other important bands of L.A.'s hardcore scene were Circle Jerks, Black Flag, X, Social Distortion and Red Kross. Still linked to the scene, even if not exactly punk, were Minutemen, Butthole Surfers, TSOL, Fishbone and Firehose.



Punk rock! San Francisco's Dead Kennedys

Anthony had welcomed with great enthusiasm the punk explosion in L.A. Though his heart was still beating mainly for funk, he found himself more and more fascinated by Californian punk rock's great energy and violence. He and Hillel started showing up in clubs like the "00", the "Eldorado", and the "Power Tools".

Compared to punk and hardcore the music his friends were playing seemed to belong to another era.

Anthony was still supportive but he was aware that if Anthym weren't going to radically change they were soon to be forgotten. It was him who started pushing his mates to listen to funk and hardcore and to look for a new style. Though he wasn't a member of the band, Anthony was exerting a heavier and heavier influence on the sound of Anthym. His friends had allowed him to become their MC and the charade Anthony used to tell to introduce the shows of Anthym has become part of the legend: "Cal Worthington calls them the hottest rockers in L.A., their parents call them crazy and the girls call them all the time. But I call them like I see them, and I call them, AN-THY-M".



L to r: Hillel, Jack, Alain and Flea. The hottest rockers in L.A.

The era of Fairfax High closed down on Anthony, Flea, Hillel and Jack in June 1980. Flea had already decided that music was his future and he didn't enroll in any University. He started working as an assistant at a Vet Hospital and at night he kept playing with his band. Anthony enrolled in the same University his father had gone to, UCLA, and chose the faculty of Political Sciences. Hillel and Jack went to Northridge. During his first (and only) year at UCLA Anthony seemed to be putting a bit of order in his messed up life. He left the Hollywood pad he shared with Flea and Hillel and moved to the UCLA campus with a buddy. He was still with Haya, though their relationship was at the end of its tether. As everybody knows, it was during this year that, according to the legend, a crucial episode of his life occurred. To cut it short, his roommate had a friend who was deeply interested in him. Anthony claims that this girl was very obsessive, but he didn't like her at all. "I had a girlfriend and I wasn't really into her" he tells "but she was undaunted. She kept sending little messages, asking me out all the time, and breaking in my room at any moment".

One day he got fed up and decided to react the only way he knew. The girl as usual was knocking at his door. Anthony took his clothes off and went to open the door. The only thing he was wearing was a sock over his cock and balls.

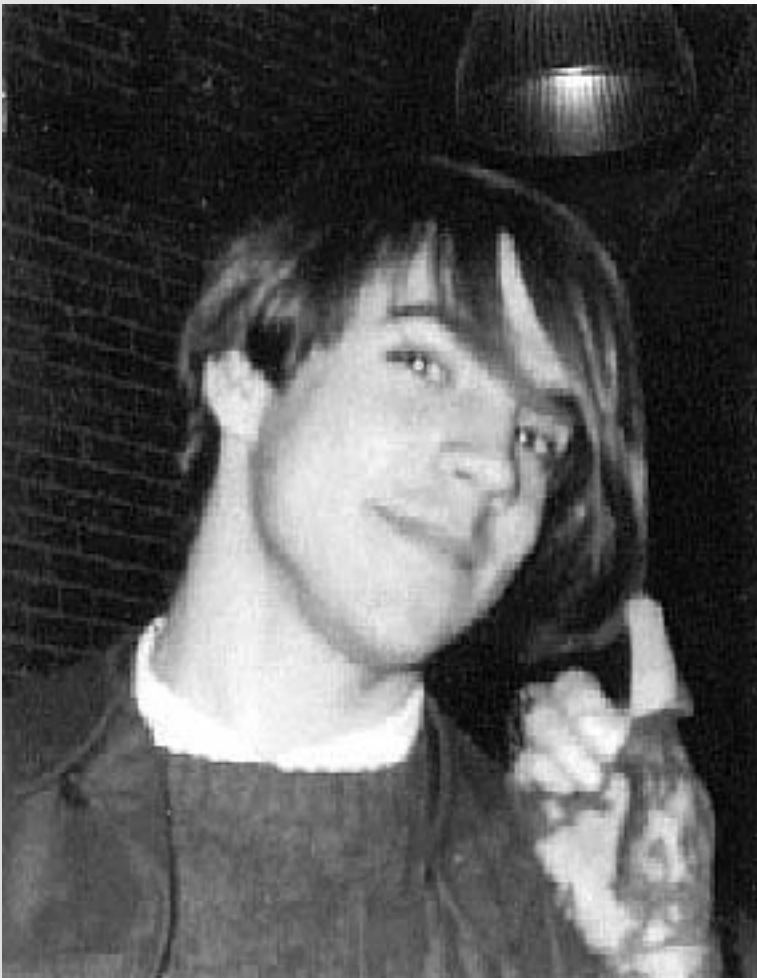
Anthony managed to stay at UCLA for less than one year. He had been trying but that kind of life wasn't for him. "My existence was going in a totally different direction at that time" he says. He had been missing his friends, the nights at the clubs, his old crazy life. University had nothing to teach him. All he needed to learn he would have learned it just living. He didn't need anything else.

In the middle of 1981 he and Haya split. The break up with what had been his girlfriend for 3 long years represented the loss of the last sheet anchor he still had. In a few weeks Anthony quit UCLA, came back to living with Flea and Hillel in their Hollywood pad, started a part-time job in a small movie production firm and without any regret or hesitation he simply jumped into the abyss.

The Hollywood apartment has become part of the legend. It was the dirtiest and smelliest place in a mile. Anthony Flea and Hillel firmly believed that to show one another their mutual affection they had to share all their experiences, sexual and corporal included. "We were three kids who used to sleep, fuck and puke on the same floor" Anthony said once. The same poor mistreated floor was more and more often covered with used condoms and syringes. Friends would drop by all the time to smoke pot and drink beer, and nobody was interested in putting some order in all that mess. The landlady, alarmed by the neighbors' tales about what was happening in the pad, would show up every now and then with a very menacing look, but she was invariably greeted by Anthony on the doorway with his sock on, if not completely naked, and she had to back off. Nights always ended with a drink, a fuck, and a heroin score. The proper career of Anthony as a junk addict started here.

Suddenly Flea had lost his mind to punk rock. As many other teenagers of that time Michael had been totally conquered by punk's great excitement and violence and now he only listened to Germs and Circle Jerks; his bass playing was more and more influenced by this late infatuation, Anthym had started getting on his nerves and so had on Hillel's.

The passion of Anthony for hardcore punk and funk had been influencing his friends and roommates at an alarming rate.



The Hollywood apartment was constantly echoing of the shouts of Darby Crash and Jello Biafra but also the rhythms of Grandmaster Flash and the first generation of New York rappers. The reason why Anthony liked rap so much is pretty simple. Anthony, though he hadn't clear in mind yet what he was going to do with his future, had at last understood that this future was undoubtedly linked to his greatest passion after sex and drugs: music. But in what way? Anthony couldn't play any instrument and he did not feel like sitting down and learning. He couldn't sing, though his voice was potent enough, cause he had problems staying in tune. Generally he used to wreak his "artistic skills" writing poetry and telling jokes. The charades he would articulate to introduce the shows of Anthym were going longer and longer, and Anthony's visage was starting to get known in the Hollywood underground club circuit.

Hanging in Hollywood

His extroverted personality was helping a lot in all this, and briefly his appearances as stand-up comedian started to become more popular than his friends' songs. Now rap was offering a new possibility: his rhymes and short poems could be rapped with a musical background and so become proper songs. "Rap" says one of his famous quotes "gave me the inspiration that I could do something with music without being Marvin Gaye".

That summer of 1981 some important things happened. Anthym changed their name in What Is This, Flea left the band, Anthony got a Mohawk and a new TV channel was born. The transition of Anthym to What Is This was a natural evolution. The sound of the band didn't reflect that name anymore, it had gone far beyond it.



Grandmaster Flash

The time had come for Anthony to make up another rhyme to introduce the gigs of his friends. The band was still formed by Alain, Hillel, Flea and Jack, but Flea had had enough. His new passion for punk rock was too deep and too much in contrast with the sound of What Is This, and pushed him to quit the band. After some sparse attempts, a few of which carried on together with Hillel, he enrolled in a punk band named Fear. He and Anthony were still adventuring in the wilderness of California during a series of crazy and unforgettable weekends, and when Anthony one day came back home with a new Mohawk haircut Flea promptly ran to the nearest hair stylist to imitate him. The first outcome was that little Flea got quickly fired from the vet hospital where he was working. But hey who gives a fuck! He was a punk-rocker man! The drifting towards heroin addiction both Anthony and Hillel had undertaken miraculously spared Flea.



Anthony got a Mohawk

Maybe it was because Flea was physically frailer than his two friends, or because more simply he was not genetically prone to that, but what's sure is that, though he practically shared everything with Anthony and Hillel, Flea never became a junkie. "I tried it" he once told "but I didn't like how it made me feel. I would wake up in the morning feeling like shit. I couldn't play, I couldn't think, I couldn't do anything. I realized it was not for me". Jack too had decided to stay away from junk and this fact had led to a first thin but undeniable fracture inside the group of friends: Anthony and Hillel were getting tighter and tighter and their vice somehow was cutting off the other two.

It was a hot August night and Anthony was sitting in front of the TV with an iced beer in one hand and the remote in the other, when, zapping here and there, he dropped in a new TV station which was airing music videos. That was something really new! "Wow, music on TV, what's going on!" he shouted "Dude, check this out!". In other thousands American houses things were not going differently. Music had changed forever, and video "had killed the radio star".



MTV: "Dude, check this out!"

The new revolution marked the beginning of the hedonistic eighties. The sound of a band was not enough anymore, what was much more important was how they looked. A new battalion of British made-up hunks started invading MTV airwaves, joining forces under the name of "Second British Invasion". The music those bands were offering was light and poppy, vaguely influenced by early 70s soul and beatlesque echoes. "At that time I couldn't even hear bands like Duran Duran" Anthony said recently "only years later I listened to some of their stuff and I realized that after all they weren't so bad".

Listening to Duran Duran and Spandau Ballet was out of question for Hollywood punk rockers. They constituted a closed impenetrable circle and whoever was out of this circle was watched upon with superiority and despise. "Our bands" said Anthony once "are considered underground, but we have much more to tell than all top 40 records altogether".

Time was going by, and Anthony was still at stall. Heroin use was now invading most of his day and what was left was spent wandering from club to club and sleeping with a lot of different women. Occasionally our man found himself busy in some part time job which was needed to satisfy his habit, or, as he put it, "to let me punk out my way on Hollywood's contorted insidious streets". After Haya he had not had any other steady girlfriend, and drug addiction hadn't spoilt his legendary sexual glut-tony. "My sex life was rocking out and I was happy" he said.



Duran Duran: rubbish

But another revolution, sigh, much more grim than musical's, was about to start up. In 1982 the first cases of AIDS in the gay communities and among drug users were divulged by press and started to occupy the main pages of American dailies. In 1983 all the world was talking about "the plague of the 21st century". Only several months later it came dramatically clear that HIV was not only transmitted through used syringes and anal sex between homosexuals, but also through simple sex acts between people of different genders.

In the meantime little Flea was feeling very frustrated with punk band Fear. Punk rock was at the end of its tether, that's true, but it wasn't just that. Due to the provocative and goofy behavior of their frontman Lee Ving, Fear were considered by everyone as a homophobic band. Ving, who in 1983 starred in one of the top selling movies of the year, *Flashdance*, during his shows often insulted long-haired guys in the audience, calling them faggots and threatening to sodomize them all. It was a behavior Flea could hardly stand. He himself, so small and frail, was often called faggot by big bullies and once he was beaten up by a gang of homophobic nazis outside Mayfair Supermarket (Flea would have told the story in "Pea", on *One Hot Minute*). Flea was not happy with Fear, but at the same time he did not want to go back with *What Is This*, and in any case he had already been replaced. To occupy his time he played a small role in an underground (now cult) movie named "Suburbia", which flopped miserably.



Flea with Fear: homophobic redneck dicks?

Flea was very frustrated and often talked with Anthony about his feelings. "Fuck them" Anthony would tell him, referring to Fear "They don't appreciate you. You're wasting your time". Flea picked up his bass and started playing. He was so pissed off. Defunkt were on the turntable and he started distorting one of their riffs, building up a new melody.

"That's funny" Anthony giggled listening to his friend's mutation.

"What?" said Flea absent-mindedly.

"That stuff you're playing. I wrote something which fits perfectly".

Flea stopped playing. "You wrote what?"

"No, don't stop" said Anthony, searching in his notes "Here it is. Listen to me".

"It's preposterous. Ludicrous. It's insanity, baffling, confounding. It's the sort of things you do once your life and then you go phewww. I'm glad I made it thru that".

So said Anthony in 1998 thinking about the day when everything changed. The debut of the Red Hot Chili Peppers in April 1983 at the Rhythm Lounge under the name "Tony Flow and the Miraculously Majestic Masters of Mayhem" has been told a million times. The band had suddenly blossomed from an idea of Anthony's. Actually he was the only one who had to debut that night, with one of his brief shows as stand-up comedian to open the main show of ex-punk rocker Gary Allen. But Anthony didn't want to debut without his friends, and the song he had written on Flea's bassline had enthused him too much. He gathered all his historical friends, Hillel, Flea and Jack, and asked them to back him up with a musical background, while he recited the lyrics of the song, which now had also a title, "Out in L.A.".

*Antwan the Swan, from the pretty fish pond
Was a bad mother jumper, you could tell he was strong
He war a cold paisley jacket and a hellified hat
And between his legs was a sweat young lass*

*He threw a hundred women up against the wall
And he swore to fear that he'd love 'em all
By the time he got to ninety nine, he had to stop
Because that's when he thought that he heard a phone*

*Last night and the night before, I heard a
Fop outside, then I came in doors
Freak out!*

As everybody knows, the audience was so stunned by the gag the club's promoter prayed Anthony and his friends to repeat the show.... "if you like you can play some more song...". The four boys, still stoned with the acid they had downed before the gig, gladly accepted. The only problem was they didn't have any more songs and the band virtually did not exist.

Writing "Get up and jump" in a few days was easy. It was a funkyass song with lyrics inviting everyone to "get up and jump", and some nonsense around, like the first example of that no-words singing later to be found in other songs as "Soul to Squeeze" and "Around the World".

It wasn't hard either, for this improvised band which did not exist, to find a suitable name. "I was wandering on the Hollywood Hills" told Anthony "and I saw this name flashing from a psychedelic bush". Bullshit. Though Anthony was more or less permanently stoned it sounds highly unlikely that while walking on the hills he met a chili peppers bush with the name "RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS" written all over it.

The truth must be something else. The guys loved hot Mexican food and all of them were fond of chili. The Red Hot Peppers was the name of Louis Armstrong's support band, and Flea, with his deep knowledge of jazz and blues, couldn't ignore that.



Flashing from a psychedelic bush

And finally, Anthony and Flea hadn't forgotten that pub-rock band they had seen in London some years earlier, named Chili Willy and the Red Hot Peppers. By the way, that name was nice and got general approval, so it stuck.

Under the name Red Hot Chili Peppers, ex-Los Faces played their second show at the Rhythm Lounge a few weeks after the first one. "People were queuing around the block!" a besotted Flea would tell later. The third song Anthony and friends wrote together was "Green Heaven". Only looking at the title you can perceive a step forward.

First of all many themes which will inspire several future songs are already here: love for nature and animals, mainly dolphins (Anthony's fave animal is the killer whale), a fierce attack to the American system ("The President is a whore") and some "new age" colored verses. With these three tracks and a series of covers of ultra-popular songs, Red Hot Chili Peppers carried on playing in Hollywood clubs during spring and summer 1983.

But.

What were exactly Red Hot Chili Peppers? Basically it was a funk/punk band formed by four bold youngsters: Anthony, the singer, Hillel, the guitar player, Flea, the bass player, and Jack, the drummer. Unfortunately, for three of them it was a little more than a hobby. Hillel and Jack were still the full time guitarist and drummer of What Is This and they strongly believed in their band, a band they had created and with whom they had been playing for so many years. Flea, though frustrated and pissed off, was still the bassist of Fear. Only Anthony didn't have anything else in his hands. Initially this didn't seem to be a problem. Hillel, Jack and Flea were playing with Red Hot Chili Peppers and with their respective bands, but for all the people who attended both gigs it was clear that Red Hot Chili Peppers were light years ahead of What Is This and Fear. And among those people some record company executives started to show their faces more and more often.



Anthony and Hillel at a very early show

Anthony had almost lost contact with his family. He and Blackie would still hang out sometimes but things weren't the same anymore. Anthony now only trusted his friends, they were his real family. On the other hand, every time Blackie saw his son and realized what was happening to him he felt devoured by sense of guilt.

Occasionally Blackie still got some role in a few films or TV movies and he had also started a PR company.

Incredibly, he would always obtain roles as a wicked drug dealer, and while Anthony was descending all the way into the abyss his father was forced to get a living interpreting one of those people who one day or another could have murdered his only son. However, it was during the shooting of one of these films Blackie was playing in that the director heard for the first time of the Red Hot Chili Peppers. The director had a friend who had a job in the musical industry, his name was Mark Richardson, and one day he suggested his friend to go and see this new band everybody was talking about. Richardson went and was immediately stricken. It's not hard to understand why. In the latter months, during which the band had been playing a huge quantity of gigs, a spectacular transformation had happened in each of them. Basically Red Hot Chili Peppers were four rock'n'roll animals and their shows were devastating. Flea was not anymore the shy kid with the large pale blue eyes, he was a wild bleached-haired punk-rocker and on stage he poured all his innate aggressiveness. Hillel was a guitar virtuoso and he looked like he had been born on a stage with a guitar in his hands. Even the reserved Jack, the most "normal" of the four, every time he sat behind his kit underwent a miraculous change. And Anthony was the frontman every band had always dreamed of. In the last months Anthony had blossomed a flower of a man. Nothing in his physical appearance was showing his heroin addiction. His hair was growing longer and longer and Anthony had started bleaching it. He was just a little taller than Flea but his physique was perfect. At their shows many girls were showing up at the front and Anthony never avoided to tease them with his wild and raw sex appeal. The gigs always ended up in a state of quasi-total nudity and the legendary cock-in-sock performance at the Kit Kat club in September was only the corollary of an unforgettable summer.



An ideal frontman

Since Anthony had put it into practice to frighten his stalker at UCLA, the cock-in-sock gag had become part of the mythology of the four friends, who until then had just played it in their apartment to entertain their mates. But that night, in the strip club, the temptation to perform the gag in front of a real audience seemed irresistible.

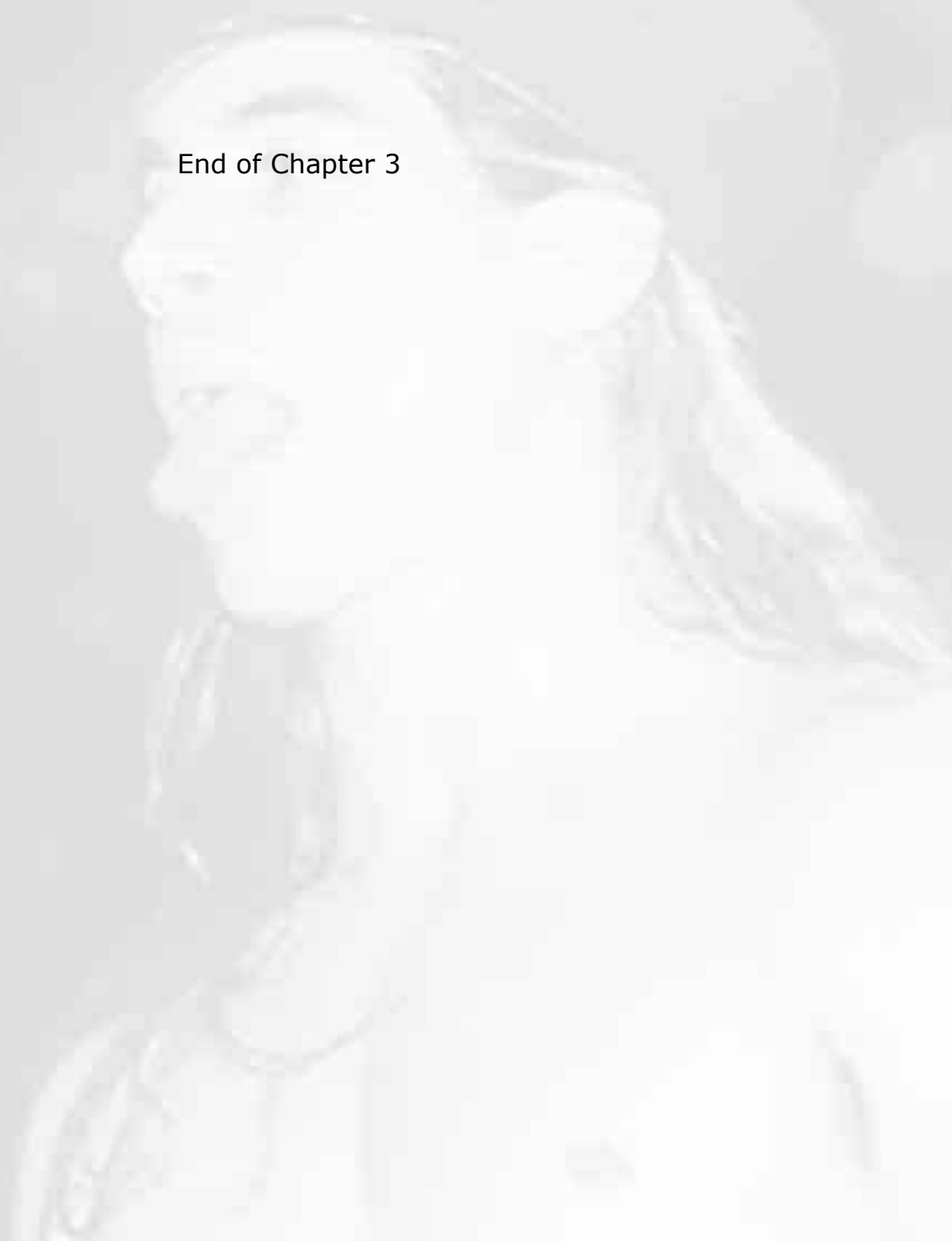
"We were backstage at the end of the show" Anthony told in 1999 "we were nervous and people were calling us out and we suddenly wondered, shall we do it? And we went, let's do it let's do it!"

The Red Hot Chili Peppers went out again, totally naked if not for a sock on their cocks, and started playing Jimi Hendrix's "Fire". The audience watched in a besotted silence and at the end exploded. The legend had been born.

"We started playing little clubs" Anthony says "and after a while we realized that people were paying attention to what we were doing and at the same time we understood we were enamored with the fact that we were creating art, and that's a good feeling". Mark Richardson took the Peppers to a recording studio to record a demo and introduced the boys to a friend of his, a Jewish guy named Lindy Goetz who had a certain knowledge of the showbiz and promptly proposed himself as the band's manager. The boys said yes and Goetz started taking their demo on a trip of the main record companies. The demo tape featured five songs: Out in L.A, Get up and jump, Green heaven, Sex rap and Baby appeal.

After only six months of their existence, in October 1983, the Red Hot Chili Peppers found themselves in a record company posh office with a brand new record contract in front of them, ready to be signed. And at this point, all the problems that during the summer had been joyfully swept under the rug exploded dramatically.

End of Chapter 3



IMPORTANT LINKS YOU MUST KNOW !

- + [OneHotGlobe](#) ~ a red hot chili peppers fansite > www.onehotglobe.tk > onehotglobe.net
> onehotglobe.com
- + [One Hot Globe forums / onehotforums](#) ~ <http://rhcp.proboards6.com>
- + [Red Hot Chili Peppers BBS](#) ~ <http://pub47.ezboard.com/bchilipeppersbbs>
- + [Red Hot Chili Peppers official fansite BBS](#) ~ <http://pub56.ezboard.com/brockinfreakbbs>

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