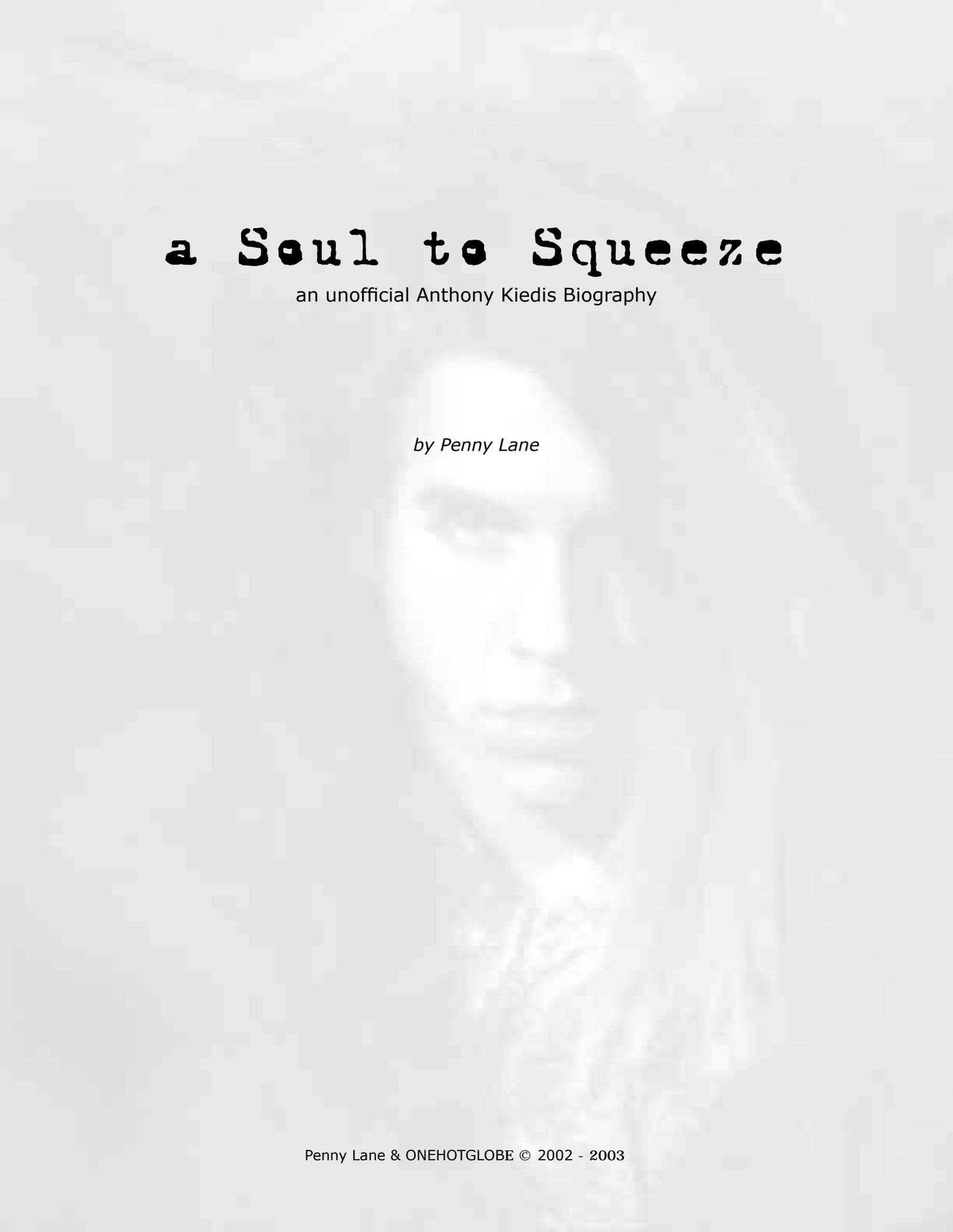


a Soul to Squeeze Chapter IV

FREAKY STYLEY



by Penny Lane



a Soul to Squeeze

an unofficial Anthony Kiedis Biography

by Penny Lane



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 4 : Freaky Styley

"Who are the Red Hot Chili Peppers?" asked the EMI executive.

"I, Flea, Hillel and Jack" Anthony replied and pointed at his friend "He's Flea".

"Great. Where are the other two?"

"At some fucking office at MCA. They're signing another stupid contract".

"W-what?"

"Is there any problem, mate?"

Nobody, except Flea, Anthony and the poor executive, knows for sure if those words have ever been pronounced. But if not those exact words something very close to that must have been told on that day of November 1983. While Red Hot Chili Peppers had been offered a record contract by EMI, at the end of the summer, another equally attractive contract had been proposed to What Is This by MCA. At this point the time for fun was over. The possibility that Jack and Hillel could sign two different contracts as members of two different bands was unacceptable and illegal. A choice was mandatory. Hillel and Jack sat down in front of each other. The two boys had been friends since early adolescence. What Is This had been their creature, more, their life for almost six years. All their hopes, all their ambitions had been poured in that band. And now, after working so hard and damning themselves for so many years, the band they had started as kids was finally having the chance to be heard everywhere. It was more that they could ever hope for. For a band obtaining a record contract is the crowning of their dreams. Obtaining it after 6 years is an unexpected gift from heaven. The Red Hot Chili Peppers had been the adventure of a crazy summer, a funny hobby. What Is This were their life.

"Anthony will be seriously hurt" Jack observed.

Hillel sighed. "I know. But we have no choice".

That night the twosome communicated their final decision to Anthony and Flea. Anthony went home and kept sobbing all night long. Flea slammed the door of his room and shouted "I DON'T GIVE A FUCK!!!".

"I'm trying to understand, guys" said the EMI executive "We have offered a contract to a band of four people and now you come up telling me only two will sign it. Is it correct?". Anthony shrugged. Those dumb executives were so fucking boring. "What difference does it make?" he said.

"Why don't you just try to tell me?"

Flea realized it was his turn to say something. "Come on, man" he went "It's not so hard to get. Since the day you've offered us that fucking contract the band has split up. Now there's just two of us".

The poor executive couldn't believe his ears. "What are you?" he asked Flea.

"Eh?"

"What's your damn role in the band. Do you play something?"

"I'm the bass player" said Flea, all proud.

"What about you?" the man asked Anthony.

"I sing, rap and I'm the fucking sex symbol" Anthony said with defiance.

"Great. So here we have a fucking sex symbol and a fucking bass player."

"Hey I'm not fucking anything man!" Flea protested.

"No, you're just fucking up EMI" the executive thought but didn't say a word.

"Is there any prob mate?" Anthony asked again, scratching his neck.

"All this is totally insane" said the man. "Where the hell is your manager? Gotta talk to my superiors".

The demo-tape which had caused EMI's interest was not the only tape the band had recorded that summer. Other tapes had been recorded in various shattered Hollywood studios, and all of them featured a bunch of songs, only a few of which would have appeared in the debut album. Some of them were just sketches of songs, like "Police Helicopter", "You always sing the same" and the famed "Stranded", but they all had a great impact in live shows. EMI would have released those demos in the compilation "Out in L.A." in 1994. But the relationship between the British corporation and the Red Hot Chili Peppers, born under a very bad sign, would have never been better than passable.

The recording sessions for the debut album were supposed to begin in January 1984. Lindy Goetz took the two survivors aside and ordered them to find a new guitarist and a new drummer as soon as possible. There were only two months left.

In spite of the initial resentment, Hillel's and Jack's decision not to follow the Peppers hadn't ruined their friendship with Anthony and Flea. Far away from business the ex-Los Faces were still the greatest friends. The four boys would gather together at weekends with so many stories to tell, and new adventures to plan, and their love affairs to talk about. Hillel was dating a beautiful blonde named Caroline Brick everybody used to call "Addie". Flea was starting to go out with a punky high school girl named Louisa Zeviar everybody used to call "Loesha". Anthony, oh, Anthony the womanizer, he had spent all summer nights fucking like mad German punk icon Nina Hagen. The singer had moved to L.A. a few years earlier and during the summer she had played many gigs together with the Peppers and, though she was much older than Anthony, she hadn't been insensitive to the allure of the Peppers frontman. Ten years later Anthony would have paid tribute to his German date on the stage of Woodstock Festival, saying in front of 200.000 people "I have made love to Nina Hagen. She's a sweet love making woman".



Deutsch punk icon Nina Hagen: "Sweet love making woman"

In 1984 though Anthony found another steady girlfriend. Her name was Jennifer Bruce, and she was a beautiful junkie. Her relationship with Anthony, which lasted more or less two years, was not different from many stories between two drug addicts. Though the two were important for one another, heroin always came first. Hillel and Jack helped their friends to reconstruct the band, introducing them to many local musicians. Eventually their choice fell on guitarist Jack Sherman and drummer Cliff Martinez, ex-member of Lydia Lunch's orchestra and punk band Weirdos. There was no time, and probably not even the interest, to recreate any "brotherhood". At the beginning of 1984 the new Red Hot Chili Peppers shut themselves in studio with producer Andy Gill and got the works started.

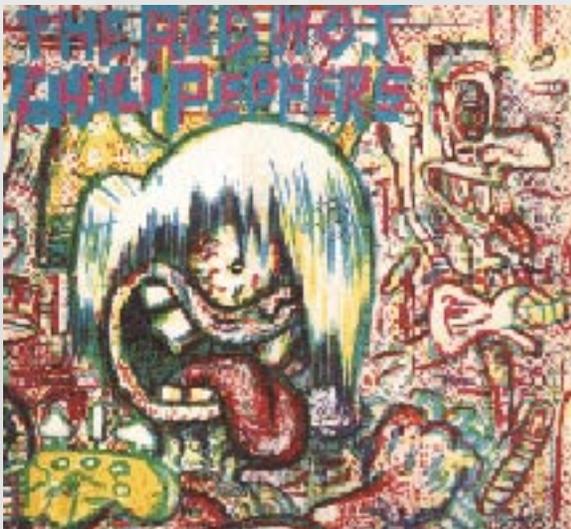
Oh Andy Gill! Poor Andy. If there's someone on earth who has experimented on his own skin the self-destructive insanity which was reigning in the Peppers in mid-80s that's surely poor Andy Gill. He had been the guitar player of Gang of Four, British post-punk experimental left-wing band of early 80s and had moved to L.A. to get involved in production. He found himself face to face with four Californian muscular and tattooed kids with weird hair-dos who hadn't the palest idea how they had to work in a studio, used to spend the working hours snorting coke or shooting up and shouting to each other "FUCK YOU MATE!".

"I still get annoyed at our incapacity to deal with our first producer Andy Gill" said Flea in 1991 "He would tell us, why don't you try this? And we'd say, fuck you mate this sounds like shit! Once we took away the shit from the toilet and put in on the mixing desk. We were just being terrible". Anthony was less verbose: "Andy Gill was too British for us".

"The Red Hot Chili Peppers", though recently it's been a little rehabilitated, is considered by everyone the band's worst album. Many people don't even think about it as a proper Chili Peppers' album.



Andy Gill: "Too British for us"



"The Red Hot Chili Peppers"

It was released in August 1984 and it sold very little. Apart from the songs already known which the band had been playing live a lot of times, the record featured maybe the only really exciting song from those sessions, that "True men don't kill coyotes" which also became the first single of the band.

MTV introduced the Red Hot Chili Peppers on MTV News in the summer of 1984. Of course the only members interviewed were Anthony and Flea. Anthony had bleached hair, a blue cap and a white t-shirt. Flea had half his hair shaven and he did part of the interview embraced to a huge dog.

"We're going to tour the world, we're going to spread our vibe wherever we'll go" said Anthony. When asked about their musical credo Flea said: "We play bone-crunching mayhem from heaven". Anthony said: "Me and Flea have been best friends all our lives, when we're together it's just pure energy". And Flea concluded: "Our music is an explosion of color and sound".

And an explosion of color and sound was the video shot for "True men don't kill coyotes", which MTV aired a few times and shortly forgot about. Anthony and Flea were truly exciting, and even Jack Sherman, wearing a funny fin-de-siecle striped bathing costume, finally looked at ease as the guitar player of the Red Hot Chili Peppers. The video also featured some frames of the guys painted in neon colors. In 1999 a journalist asked Anthony if he still remembered when in the first videos he used to get painted in neon colors (the gag was repeated a few years later in the "Fight like a brave" video and in some live shows), and he said "Of course I do. I have changed so much since then. I miss the bold naivety of young Anthony. I love that boy. But he's still here, somewhere. Life is so beautiful when all those painful lessons haven't still hammered your head in two".

The Red Hot Chili Peppers really started to tour the world, or maybe just America, or maybe just West Coast and Midwest, in October 1984. The boys were crammed in a Chevy minibus and would spend their spare time while traveling from town to town in cultural activities such as burping or farting contests and so on. Anthony never abstained from tasting "the local delicacies" and he wasn't referring to food specialties. The constant presence of a pusher backstage assured that no problems or trouble would occur. As an anonymous pusher from L.A. once told, "Every time the Chili Peppers fell in any town every pusher in that town would pop up backstage. They were the best customers ever".

Flea had realized that his best friend had fallen in a no-way out spiral. But on the other hand all his friends were more or less heavy users and he himself did hardly say no to a portion of magic mushrooms or some snort of cheap cocaine. Anthony seemed to possess a steel constitution and at the moment he looked like he was perfectly able to cope with both life on the road and drug addiction. Flea decided to push his worries at the back of his mind. Maybe he was bloating everything to exaggerated proportions.

But life on the road is pretty hard and such a close contact among four people 24 hours a day easily creates irritations and resentment. When he was tired or nervous Anthony always used to blame it on Jack Sherman. He was missing Hillel so much and he couldn't believe he had Sherman and not Hillel by his side. At least Cliff Martinez was a nice guy, but this Sherman was a real asshole! While the boys were doing their farting contests together with the roadies Sherman would open the windows of the bus with a disgusted look on his stupid face mourning that the air was stinky! Anthony had never heard such bullshit. And he was always tired and sleepy and while the others were partying he complained that they were too noisy! Shooting up in front of him was out of question, that sucker would have called the narco-squad in no time! And whenever he put the sock on his cock, he looked like he was doing it just because he was forced to! And, finally, as a guitar player he wasn't worth one of Hillel's toenails.



Old show with Jack Sherman (on the right)

What had Hillel and Jack been up to in the meantime? We had left them busy with a record contract and a pink future laying down before their eyes. In a few months that pink had turned deep gray. Actually What Is This had released a record, an EP, featuring five songs and entitled "Squeezed". All the people who had heard it had judged it much better than "The Red Hot Chili Peppers". But Hillel wasn't happy. He was missing Anthony and Flea and he was highly dubious about the new direction his band was taking. Besides, he was having problems with his girlfriend and drug abuse was starting to take its toll. In December 1984 he wrote on his diary: "Soon I will take it easy on this drug input, especially H. It sneaks up with you... no problems but too much is too much". And talking about his band he wrote: "What Is This feels slightly alien to me, but I'm not sure if I can go back to the Peppers and be happy. I am afraid to spoil valued friendships".

Anthony had absolutely no problem about it instead. At the end of the Peppers' first tour in January 1985 he was so fucked and pissed with Jack Sherman he couldn't even think to stay in the same band with him for one more second.

"That asshole is out" he told Flea one night. Flea rolled his eyes. He wouldn't have tried to make his friend change his mind, that was for sure. In any case Flea couldn't bear Jack Sherman anymore either.

"Right" Flea said "Who's going to tell him?".

"We are" Anthony said "Tomorrow morning we drop at his stupid house and tell him to go get fucked".

The morning after, as settled, Anthony and Flea downed a good portion of acid and coke, and headed to Sherman's apartment. Halfway through they were already pissing themselves laughing. They couldn't stop figuring out Sherman's face at the sight of them breaking in his house so early in the morning when they never got up before noon. When they actually saw him, so lanky and surprised, they thought they would have died laughing. None of them managed to even start speaking.

"What the fuck do you want?" Jack asked. He himself was totally fed up with those two ever-stoned kids.

"Jack..." Anthony started before another bout of laughter stopped him. "Flea, you tell him".

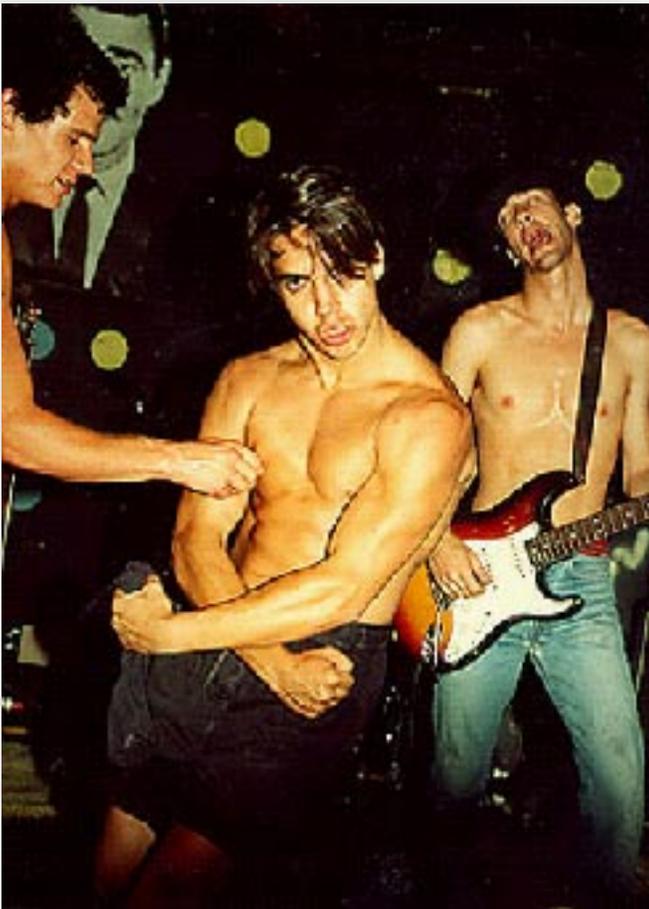
"You're out, Jack" Flea managed to say between tears.

"WHAT??" Sherman barked.

"Yup" Anthony said "fuck you".

Hillel came back in the band. Now the Red Hot Chili Peppers were: Anthony Kiedis, voice, Hillel Slovak, guitar, Flea, bass, and Cliff Martinez, drums. Jack Irons was still with What Is This. "I knew that Hillel eventually would have gone back with the Peppers" he said "And after all, he and Alain were not getting on anymore".

The main reason why Hillel and Alain Johannes were not getting on anymore is very simple: Hillel had been following in Anthony's footsteps and was finally ready to dive into the abyss together with his best friend. Now the Red Hot Chili Peppers had two severe drug addicts. Flea was doubting if he was able to take a situation like that on his shoulders. In a little time they would have started recording a new album and those two were always stoned as fuck. Anthony was so happy to have his friend back, his "Slim" as he used to call him, he didn't give a shit about anything else. Hillel would listen to him, would make him laugh, would give him suggestions. "Hillel loved me like no other friend ever did" Anthony said in 1996.



L to r: Flea, Anthony and Hillel

Hillel wrote: "It's very easy for us [he and Anthony] to feed off of each others energy, we giggle and we really feel above it all". Hillel used to tease Anthony about his oddities: when he saw him with a slack jaw he would close his mouth with his finger under Anthony's chin; or Hillel used to tell Anthony that one of his eyes was on the fourth floor while the other was on the fifth.

Only when the moment came to face their primary need the twosome used to part. Drugs were not a funny thing to share anymore, they were becoming something much darker. "Just because we loved each other so much" Anthony told in 1992 "we didn't want to see ourselves in that state".

After the disastrous experience of the first album, the Red Hot Chili Peppers decided that this time they would have chosen the ideal producer of their new record and would have imposed their choice to their record company. There wouldn't have been another Andy Gill. So, when the moment came to communicate their decision to EMI the boys didn't hesitate a second: "We want George Clinton" they said.

Whoever had had a little knowledge of black and funky music knew very well who George Clinton was. The creator of Parliament and Funkadelik and of that "psychedelic funk" which had exploded at the end of the sixties with worldwide famous bands as Sly and Family Stone and Clinton himself, had been living in retire in his native Detroit for many years. That was 1985, man! The charts were dominated by Michael Jackson, Duran Duran, Boy George. That was the year of Band Aid, USA for Africa, Live Aid. "Oh shit look here" commented Anthony in disgust "Millionaires fight hunger!". It took him one afternoon to write down "Millionaires against hunger". "I'm gonna put in on the new record" he thought. The Red Hot Chili Peppers were AGAINST the establishment and star-system. No wonder nobody was taking them seriously. Behind their provocative and goofy behavior those guys were starting to get on many people's nerves.



Saint Bob Geldof: Millionaire against hunger

Pre-production work on the new album began in March in a L.A. studio. The boys had already written down most of the new material but now they needed the touch of an expert. George Clinton met the guys in Los Angeles and was favorably impressed by their niceness and their musical knowledge. But Clinton was also a reformed cocaine addict who was now strongly against drugs, and it took him no time to grasp that Anthony and Hillel were taking totally the wrong direction. He thought he would better take the guys far away from L.A. and temptations and proposed to move the recording process to his studios named "United Sounds", located just outside Detroit, Michigan. For Anthony it was more or less a homecoming.

On March 16th 1985, Hillel wrote: "Saturday evening at the studio... long day from a long night from a long day... Everything is cool, Pepps sound great. Hit record. Leaving for Detroit on Tuesday". What is certainly true was that Anthony, in writing down the lyrics for the new songs, had given way to all his legendary "sexual gluttony". "George Clinton taught us to play giving it all completely" he said a few years later "Funk is hardcore music, expressing hardcore emotions. War and peace. Love and hate. You can only play it this way".



George Clinton

OK, let it be SEX then! "Black-eyed blonde", "Lovin and touchin", "Catholic school girls rule", "Sex rap", "Thirty dirty birds", all the new songs seemed to be an open challenge (and a kick in the balls) to the new-born "Parents for Musical Renaissance Center" founded by the wife of then-Senator Al Gore, Tipper. George Clinton had a high opinion of the guys. Most of all, he was seriously greatly impressed by Hillel. George was honestly sorry to see such a brilliant and promising guy, and his friend Anthony, mercilessly destroying themselves all the time. His idea of taking the guys away from L.A. had proved totally useless: at night, when the sessions were over, Anthony and Hillel joyfully dived into the Big Motor City looking for smack and cheap coke.

"While we lived in Detroit making Freaky Styley" told Anthony "Flea, Hillel and myself consumed mass quantities of cheap cocaine. Under the influence of said substance we would sometimes be miserable and we would sometimes dance and be absurd". Clinton knew about a little pond close to the studios, and he had learned that Anthony loved fishing, so every morning he would get Anthony out of bed early and push him to go fishing in the lake with him, always in the vain hope to keep him away from the needle. Anthony, whose steel constitution was still supportive, gladly accepted. For Clinton he would have done anything. He would get up, get dressed, shoot up his morning score and leave for the pond together with George, both armed with rod and line, and happy as fuck.



Freaky Styley

Freaky Styley was released in September 1985. This time everybody agreed that the second album of the Chili Peppers was way better than the first. But... the result was not completely satisfying yet. The band used to give its best in their live performances, and all the people who had attended even only one of their devastating gigs and then listened to the record were inevitably let down.

So, soon after the release of the album, the band went back on the road.

The Freaky Styley Tour was the longest and most ambitious tour they had done so far. It practically lasted six months, from September 1985 to March 1986, and included many gigs in venues much bigger than usual. Now that Hillel was back to the fold the guys were free to give way to parties and celebrations and none of them seemed to be even a bit reticent. In 1989, talking to the magazine "Alternative Press", Anthony and Flea started teasing each other recalling one of the first gigs of that tour, in Pittsburgh in October 1985.

Anthony: "That was our greatest Pittsburgh show ever".

The writer, Jason Pettigrew, commented: "That's what I heard. The guy that was doing the tour told me it was the best one. I think his name was Ben..."

Flea: [Whining] "Beeeeennnn! He was so mad at us !"

"Are you kidding?" the journalist asked.

Flea: "He told us that we would never be able to tour again if we kept doing live shows like that. [To Anthony] Remember the big talking-to we got ? What we did was we played our show and then we went off... Anthony got this 80-pound bag of popcorn and brought a hatchet out and mutilated it and threw it all over the place. We stayed up there and did a two-hour comedy act".

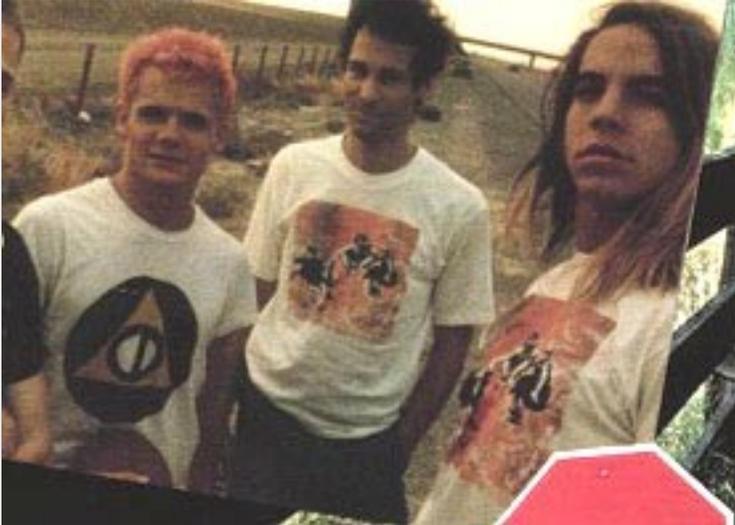
The band was traveling in the usual tour-bus together with roadies and manager Lindy Goetz, but now that Jack Sherman wasn't there anymore to control them the guys used to go crazy all the time. Anthony was often involved in disgusting contests with the roadies. Once he bet with one of the roadies that he would have eaten an entire roll of butter but halfway through the operation he had to rush to the toilet with his stomach upside down. But the next day he made up for that downing an equal quantity of feta cheese!

"We would stop at diners along the highways" Anthony told "and we would buy a portion of "all-you-can-eat-chili" each we would eat in the bus. But all that chili used to give us a certain intestinal activity and the bus did not exactly smell like roses. The sessions in the toilets were very intense".

In the middle of the tour the caravanserai landed in Grand Rapids. It was the first time that Anthony was playing in his hometown and Peggy could not miss the opportunity to

see his baby leading the crowd. Anthony paid her back convincing the others to play in the legendary cock-in-sock. The next day the local newspaper came out with a review of the show headlined as such: "If I had a son like him I'd shoot him".

In the first months of 1986 the tour came to its final phase. On February 1st Hillel wrote: "At the Hilton in Chicago. It was a pretty good show. Rooming with Swan, we're both high on H".



Flea, Jack and Anthony

Flea couldn't take it anymore. Anthony and Hillel were totally out of control. The last months of the tour had been tremendous, Lindy Goetz and Cliff Martinez didn't have any power on his two friends and he was left totally alone. After the tour was over Anthony had gone on holiday to Hawaii with Jennifer and Hillel had moved in his new beautiful house he called "The Castle". Flea went to see Jack Irons. Jack wasn't too happy either, What Is This was at the end of its tether, and he was tired and fed up.

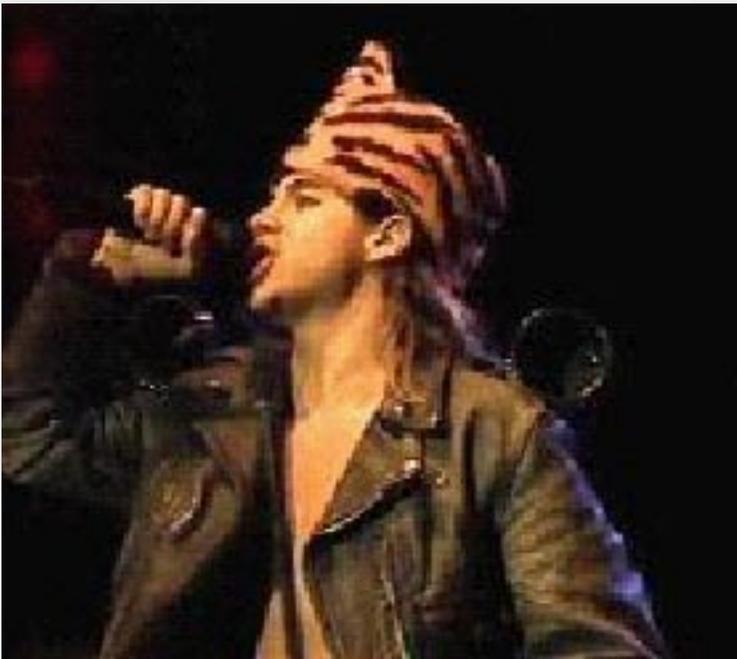
"I need you" Flea told him "I can't make it alone. Anthony is destroying himself with his own hands and Hillel is trying to imitate him. I don't know what to do, only you can help me. Please, come back".

Cliff Martinez was a nice guy and a good drummer, but the Chili Peppers at that moment needed much more. Jack told Flea he would have thought about it. Anthony had been back to L.A. for a few days when Jack called Flea and told him he would have rejoined the Peppers.

The Red Hot Chili Peppers left again for a short tour of Florida and then went straight to Europe where they played a show with George Clinton for German Television. A few days earlier a single had been released, "Catholic school girls rule", whose videoclip was promptly banned without too much fuss. It was the second single from Freaky Styley after "Jungle man" and of course it sold miserably. MTV was Law & Order, not differently from now, and since the video had been rejected by MTV, the single wasn't bought by anyone.

So the band went back to the studio. Though the Red Hot Chili Peppers were returned in their original line-up, the four boys hadn't been playing together for two years and they needed to have the old camaraderie back. Besides, they had written down some new songs and wanted to experiment them. The sessions were promptly renamed "The uplift mofo party plan", though nobody was thinking of a definitive album yet. For the moment all they wanted to do was playing together, and the results seemed fantastic from the first days. Hillel was the most enthusiastic one: "This is going to be a hit, it has to be. Every track is soooooo good".

Whoever had seen Anthony Kiedis in the video of "Catholic school girls rule" or in the German TV show would have been incredulous to know what was happening to the same man once the spotlights were turned off. It was not easy to believe that guy so good looking and full of energy would leave the stage and without even thinking about it he would go straight to the town's most degraded areas and spend the rest of his day together with the



On German TV, singing "Out in L.A."

most dangerous and untrustworthy people of the zone. But that's what was going on every day. He and Jennifer had practically split up, Anthony had no friends, he hadn't any relationship with his family, he almost didn't have a place to live anymore.

"All I had" he told years later "was this connection of mine named Mario who was a Mexican mafia gang ex-convict. He and I used to stroll on the streets downtown looking for our next score".

The Mexican mafia gang, like all the gangs in the world, had a territory of its own. "One afternoon" Anthony kept telling "it was very hot, cause the sun had been out for days, we went to this bridge. It was a freeway bridge and only certain members of this gang were allowed to go in, and

they let me go in cause Mario said I was going out with his sister, which was a lie so that we could go under the bridge and use this particular drug we'd just got".

Anthony had simply reached the final stage, the non-return point, the very bottom, and that afternoon he finally understood that. "That was the lowest point in my life" he said. The effect of this revelation was not immediate. Heroin cancels everything and once it started to flow in his veins the unpleasant sensation he had experienced a bit earlier disappeared.

Life went on as usual. The Red Hot Chili Peppers didn't have a new record to promote but decided to go back on the road in any case. And this time the disaster came to light, at last. The tour was christened by Anthony "The Whores Tour", and it was clear that nobody was feeling a whore more than him at this point. Hillel wasn't much different but at least he was more careful and reserved, and when he had to buy his smack he would hide from the others. Anthony was shooting up everywhere and in front of everyone, he would meet his pushers backstage and pay them under the sun as if he was buying candies. His performances were going all the way down the line.



Heroin: "I could not get enough"

Flea and Jack were more and more disgusted. Flea had been bearing the unbearable from his best friend, now he was starting to be fed up. What the hell, it was the time for Anthony to get a bit clean if he wanted to go on.

Once the tour was over, Flea took Anthony aside and without too much fuss he told him: "Anthony, you're out".

Anthony was hardly listening to him. What did that blue-eyed shorty want from him? Was he kicking him out of the band?

"You got it mate" Flea said "Go on rehab or you're out. Definitely"

Flea knew too well that without Anthony the Chili Peppers were a nonsense, and he wasn't certainly feeling like doing interminable auditions in the search of unlikely substitutes for his best friend. But at that point he was so expert of the junkies' psyche, living such at close contact with two of them, that he also knew that in dealing with drug addicts it was crucial to show your balls, or you were lost. That little hint of discouragement, or regret, or whatever he had noticed both in Anthony and Hillel couldn't be forsaken. The time had really come to do something.

On his behalf, after a series of insults and threats addressed to his friend and his family's maternal ancestors back to the twelfth generation, Anthony realized he didn't have to blame it too much on Flea. Flea was not a junkie so he hadn't a clue about anything. And... and after all listening to him for once wasn't really a bad idea. In those rare moments when Anthony looked at his shattered face and his empty eyes in the mirror a slight doubt would creep into his mind.

"I was realizing that drugs had stopped to be a funny hobby and were starting to invade all my time and become a negative influence rather than a mind-opening experience" he confessed years later.

Anthony also knew that his band was too important for him, almost as much as heroin, and he couldn't risk to lose it. If that had really happened nothing would have halted his sinking into the abyss. He and Hillel had been talking about the possibility to come out of the tunnel lately. During those brief sparkles of reasoning the two guys had found themselves in front of one another, and lying hadn't been so easy.

"This stuff is killing us" Anthony had told his friend "it's driving us to a very dark road. We should try to quit. When we go back to L.A. we'll quit, OK?". Hillel had nodded. Then the two friends had said goodbye to each other and had gone looking for their respective pushers.

Now Anthony and Hillel were back to L.A. but Flea had only asked Anthony to go on rehab. It wasn't right at all.

"What about Hillel?" Anthony kept babbling "Why don't you tell him you're out of the band? Why just me?".

"Hillel is not as severe as you" Flea said shaking his head.

"You haven't understood anything" Anthony shouted "YOU JUST HAVEN'T A FUCKING CLUE!!!"

Anthony was totally right but only the events of summer 1988 would have given him credit. What was sure for now was that Flea seemed to be totally unmovable. Anthony went whining to Hillel.

"We were supposed to go on rehab together" he sobbed "and now you've all dumped me, you too".

Hillel lifted his head from his drawing desk. Sometimes his friend was truly naïve! "Come on, Swan" he said "it won't be so terrible". He started to draw Anthony's portrait, so to console him. "You'll find some hot babes at the Center, come on. And I'll come to see you".

"You'll come too see me and bring me some good stuff?" Anthony asked, all relieved.

"Of course I will. If I won't get stopped" Hillel grinned.



Anthony portrayed by Hillel

Hillel had broken up with Addie a few months earlier and had started another stormy relationship with a girl named Maggie he claimed to be "madly in love" with. Maggie was, of course, a junkie, and was having a strange relationship also with Anthony, but he has never wanted to talk about her.

"I think that it's best for me to leave the Maggie affair alone" he wrote "save to say she inspired the song "No chump love sucker"".

It's not sure where Anthony had accomplished his first detoxification treatment. It seems that Blackie was relatively helpful cause he knew many people who had been treated in the same Center. The therapists of that Center used a variety of new and old treatments to fight withdrawal crises and the subsequent "craving", and one of these was acupuncture. Anthony promptly enthused about that "alternative" therapy. With the spasms of cold turkey it hadn't been of any help but now that those were gone Anthony thought that acupuncture fought craving very well.

"Acupuncture is the generation of nerves, the generation of life!" he babbled in 1991. In reality, like many drug addicts, Anthony had developed a certain "attraction" for needles as needles, and the idea he could be cured sticking needles into his body was really appealing! The same passion for needles would have also brought him to cover half his body with tattoos of any kind, but this would have happened only a few years later.

It's not clear either whether Hillel and his "stuff" has ever managed to pass beyond the guard spot of the Rehab Center but it's true that Anthony finally left the place clean and on form. He would have carried on the treatment at home, and this was surely helpful when a few weeks later he was submitted to his first HIV test. In spite of the worldwide alertness, Anthony, like many other junkies, had been keeping swapping syringes with his fellow addicts and now the consequences of his reckless behavior were scaring him to death.

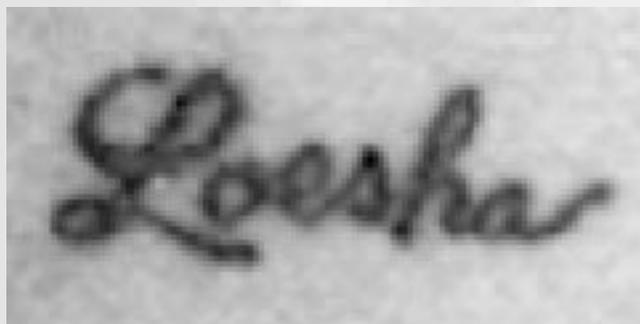
"It was petrifying" he told the Rolling Stone in 1994, "I was on pins and needles for days until I found out". But also this time the stars were with him: the test was negative.

The first thing Anthony did once he was out of rehab was finding himself a new apartment in Hollywood. The second was writing a new song full of good intentions, "Fight like a brave". The third was calling Jennifer to ask her if she had some good stuff to lend him.

*If you're sick-a-sick 'n' tired
Of being sick and tired
If you're sick of all the bullshit
And you're sick of all the lies
It's better late than never
To set-a-set it straight
You know the lie is dead
So give yourself a break
Get it through your head
Get it off your chest
Get it out your arm
Because it's time to start fresh
You want to stop dying
The life you could be livin'
I'm here to tell a story
But I'm also here to listen
No I'm not your preacher
And I'm not your physician
I'm just trying to reach you
I'm a rebel with a mission*

When Flea heard the new song written by Anthony he convinced himself that his friend had recovered and was determined to stay clean. "Fight like a brave is a metaphor to encourage anyone who feels he has no chance anymore" Anthony explained.

Anthony came back in the Red Hot Chili Peppers, who welcomed him with open arms. During his absence Flea Hillel and Jack had collaborated with various musicians and Flea had acted in two movies, though in minor roles. And finally Flea had got married! The punky high school girlie had become Mrs. Loesha Balzary! Flea went straight to the nearest tattoo wizard and had her name carved permanently over his left nipple, and over his heart. A new dawn was about to break.



Loesha: forever above my heart

In a sense it was true, Anthony had really learned a lesson this time: Hillel's. Enough with shooting up in public, enough with pushers chasing him everywhere, enough with being so overexposed. Now that everybody believed he was clean it was the right time to make them keep believing. Hillel was so good doing the clean boy even that sucker who was his brother hadn't realized yet how messed up he was.

Everybody would say Anthony is a junkie, Anthony is shooting up, Anthony here, Anthony there, and nobody ever took a look at Hillel, who was shooting up as much as him if not more than him, and then even dared talk to him with that patronizing tone!

Just to start with something, he vowed to himself he would have never gone back to the bridge again. He was doing some reasonable dough now, he didn't need to mix with local filth! And in any case he had been told that Mario was back to jail.

But the most important thing now was to concentrate on the new album. The boys had written several new songs while he was on rehab and now his turn had come to start working on them. As usual, the first problem to be solved was finding a good producer. The Red Hot Chili Peppers met many candidates, but none of them seemed suitable. "They were all idiots" Flea said quickly.

"What about Rick Rubin?" Lindy Goetz proposed. Rick Rubin was the founder of the label Def Jam, the mentor of Beastie Boys, Run DMC, LL Cool J. A key figure in the New York's rap and hip hop scene of late eighties.

"Rick Rubin?" Anthony quizzed "The bearded one?"

A meeting was organized promptly between the guys and the bearded one. But maybe that meeting happened in the wrong day. Hillel might have had taken bad stuff, Anthony might have been still deranged by his last acupuncture session, Flea might have had his first fight with Loesha, Jack might have had a toothache. What's certain is that Rubin fled after less than an hour, appalled. "Those guys really inspired me a fucking ugly sensation" he told years later.

END OF CHAPTER 4

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