

Phat Dance



a Soul to Squeeze

an unofficial Anthony Kiedis Biography

by Penny Lane

Penny Lane & ONEHOTGLOBE - 2002



First of all I would like to thank Pascalle 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 editors, the Great Ardnac and Ken.



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 the style echoing the typical way of expressing 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 15: Phat Dance

The summer of 1998 was burning and the Red Hot Chili Peppers were working like mad. Every afternoon the four buddies would gather in Flea's garage, plug in their equipment and start jamming. Anthony would sit quietly on a chair, observing his mates sweating on their instruments and producing a huge quantity of music and he recorded everything in his tape recorder, at moments wondering how the hell he would ever managed to write lyrics for all that material. He watched John and he couldn't believe it was really him. The guy looked like a ghost. A beautiful ghost maybe but he didn't have anything of the boy he had met in Flea's basements ten years earlier. John had always been strange but now Anthony thought he was almost impossible to understand: he spoke of spirits, of dimensions, of auras.

"Sometimes I can't talk straight to you" John told him one of those days "It's like you have too many defenses. I'll wait till you're asleep and then I'll talk to your astral body".

Anthony was pretty puzzled about that: he had this vision of himself peacefully sleeping and snoring and John who in the meantime talked to his astral body floating over his poor real body. Hey! Who knows what my fucking astral body might say when I'm fast asleep! I don't like this game at all!

"No, Anthony" John patiently smiled "It doesn't work like that. I can't talk to your astral body with my physical body. It would make no sense. I'll have to talk with my astral body as well".

"Oh".

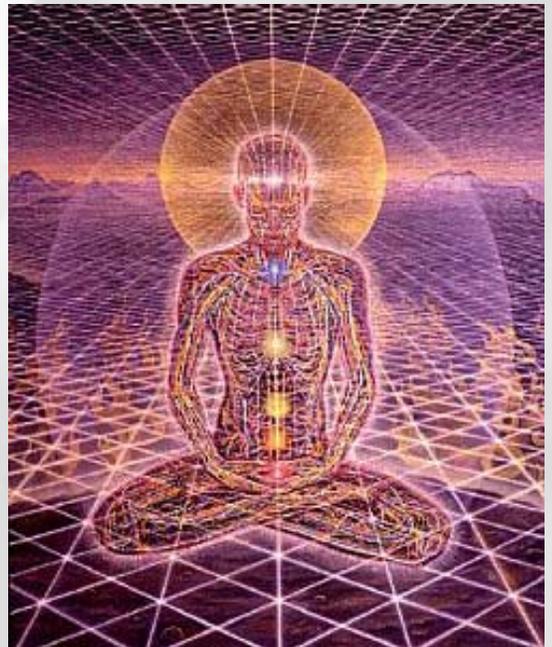
"It's easy. Let me show you".

Anthony shivered. "No. Not really".

He had already had that kind of experiences a few times, particularly during his breakdown of 1995, and he didn't feel the urge to repeat the game; but his dark side was undoubtedly attracted by those things.

That weekend he, Flea and John went together on a road trip to Big Sur, the mythical resort on the ocean near San Francisco described by Jack Kerouac in one of his novels. They had some acoustic instruments and a DAT player, they mounted a tent, pulled three surfboards out of their trunk, and for three days they lived in total isolation from the rest of the world, playing, cooking, surfing, swimming, and loving every single moment of it.

At night, sitting by the fire, John kept telling his weird stories, like the eldest guy at a Scout convention.



The new pepper vibe

"To this day" he said to his besotted mates "I feel much more affinity with the ghost world than this world. For two to three years ghosts have been my best friends, my usual companions".

"Do you see them now?" Anthony asked.

John shook his head. "Since I'm sober it's been more and more difficult".

Flea just sighed, and didn't say anything.

"You mean that you have to get high to see them?" Anthony asked. He couldn't believe that.

John shrugged. "Let's say that before I started using I found it very difficult to come in contact with these entities. I had to become a junkie to expand my knowledge. Now that I'm much wiser I don't need junk anymore, that's because I quit".

Anthony was more and more incredulous. He had never heard anything like that!

"I thought you had quit because you were dying," he mumbled.

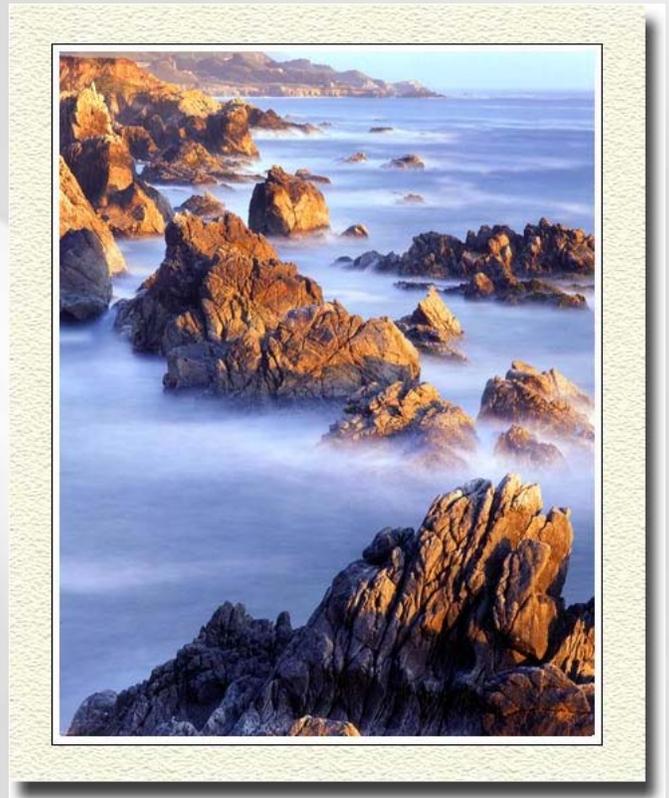
"Oh no" John smiled "I didn't care at all if I lived or died. I quit because that cycle has closed. I've had enough of that universe. Now I want to taste a bit of this universe. It's interesting, isn't it?"

A few days later Anthony came up to Flea's garage announcing he had written the lyrics for two songs, "Road Trippin'" and "Parallel Universe".

Flea was aware that Anthony had totally fallen for John Frusciante. He hadn't been so mesmerized by anyone ever since Hillel's death. John's new personality was exerting a tremendous power on Anthony's spirit: Anthony had started getting very interested in art, paintings, all the stuff that was so important for John, and lately he had also given signs he was absorbing John's musical tastes. Though he had started as a punk rocker, John had soon developed a strong predilection for British new wave bands of late 70s-early 80s, like Joy Division, New Order, Siouxsie and the Banshees. John felt a great affinity with pure artists like Ian Curtis, the leader of Joy Division who had hung himself just as his band was taking off to mainstream popularity in 1980. It was a genre that Anthony had never been too fond of, but now that John was making him listen to those things he found out that he liked them a lot! John was living at Chateau Marmont at the moment, the posh decadent hotel on Sunset Strip where John Belushi had died of an overdose in 1982, and Anthony often dropped by at night just to chew the fat and listen to records. John always had so many things to tell him, positive things, and Anthony at the moment only needed to hear positive things.

John says to live above hell

Live above hell: for Anthony it had never been too easy.



Big Sur

In September Anthony shot a number for the MTV series "Biorhythm", and had to relive all his troubled life for the joy of MTV watchers.

"What's the meaning of my journey?" he smiled at the end of the program "It's that I don't know yet. It's still in motion. It's still a work in progress".

He wasn't looking too good actually: he had lost weight again and his face was starting to show all his 35 years. If anybody asked him about his drug use he always gave very veiled and contorted replies, as if to say: "After all, it ain't your fucking business".

That night he stood in front of the mirror in Flea's basement and he didn't like what he saw: there were a few too many lines here and there, he was pale and his eyes were crossed and tired, but it was not just that. He couldn't focus on what it was, but he was sure there was a detail somewhere that didn't fit, something that had always been there but that now had no need to be there anymore, something that was contributing to make him look old and... he heard a door violently slamming upstairs, and then silence. He lifted his eyes to the ceiling. Nothing. He shrugged. Flea and Marissa had been fighting like mad in the last few days, he had heard them from his bed even at night, and he had hardly spoken to either of them.

"Fuck" he thought, "When a story is over, let it be over once for all". Not that he had a great experience about it: he hadn't been involved in a serious relationship for two and a half years.

Then he looked back in the mirror and it suddenly struck him. Now he knew what he didn't like anymore in his face: his long hair.

Anthony's hair had been a sort of legend since the Red Hot Chili Peppers had started going on top of the charts, almost ten years earlier. Brown, straight, silky, thick, simply beautiful, Anthony's hair had always played a great part in his charm and his sex appeal and for many fans and groupies putting their hands on that hair was like winning a trophy at a tennis game. He had always had it very long, down to his waist and in the last three years even to his ass, and whereas in his everyday life he often used to tie it up in a long horse tail, on the stage the hair had the same importance of many other stage antics or even more: who doesn't remember the final chords of "Give It Away" or "Higher Ground" when Anthony used to revolve on the stage like a lunatic waving his mane like a windmill? His public image was totally identified with his long hair: nobody had ever thought to one day see Anthony Kiedis jumping on the stage in short hair!

"But what the fuck" he thought, running his hand on the chestnut locks "It's spoiled, ruined. It needs a cut".

He tried to imagine how he would have looked in short hair. Maybe younger. New. Fresh. Hadn't Blackie told him so a few months earlier? His dad had cut his hair too, at the beginning of the year. Actually now he looked much younger and handsome. "It



Ian Curtis

takes more than a haircut to be really clean," his mother had told him. Anthony shrugged. Of course his mom was right. But after all, also that could be a start.

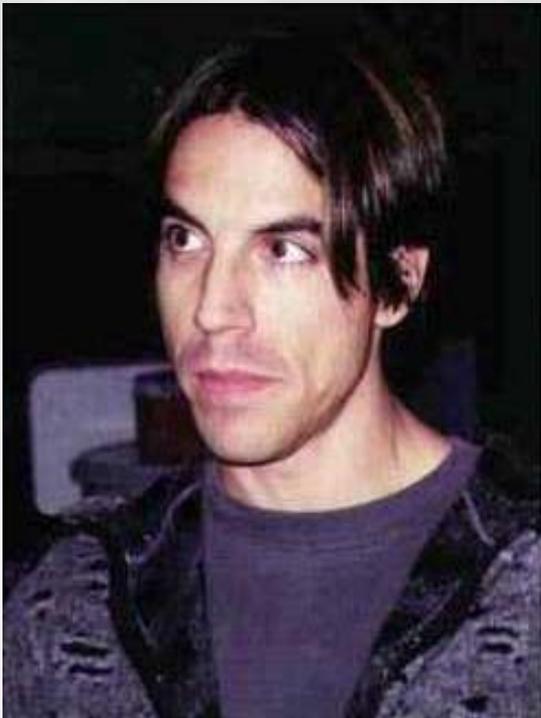
Two days later Flea was sitting at his table having breakfast, all alone, ruminating about his love story which had turned totally sour. Maybe Anthony was right, when a story is over let it be over once and for all. But the thought of cutting the cord with his five-year girlfriend paralyzed him. He still loved her. It was just that he couldn't stand her anymore. He bitterly smiled. Then he heard Anthony coming up from the basement and thought, hey, the boy woke up early today! He hadn't seen him in two days, actually, busy as he had been with Marissa and all that crap. Anthony's head started to pop up from the stairs and Flea had to blink twice before being sure of what he was seeing.

"Oh my God" he burst out "What the fuck have you done?????"

Anthony just giggled and sat at the table.

"I'm in a time warp. We're in a time fucking warp" Flea went on "We're back to high school. Jesus, where's your history book? Did you do your fucking homework?"

Flea hadn't seen Anthony with a haircut like that since their last days at Fairfax High. His mythical mane had gone. The man had cut his hair up to his neck...



Anthony's new haircut

The first pictures of Anthony with his new haircut started circulating a few weeks later. Many fans were a bit dubious: how could he keep rocking out on the stage without his long hair?

"Why did you cut your hair?" a fan asked him some time later "It was so good seeing you rocking out with that long hair!"

Anthony simply replied, "Everything must come to an end".

On other occasions he just dismissed the thing as "irrelevant".

"Frankly I don't give a shit how my hair looks like," he said to a Finnish magazine "It was just the right moment to cut it, that's all".

The Red Hot Chili Peppers had finally planned a full scale tour in November, their first tour since John had come back, with ten dates in South America preceded by some US gigs in small clubs in places like Las Vegas and Santa Barbara. "It'll be a very

laidback tour" Chad said "We'll also have our children with us".

Just a few days before the tour started, Anthony popped up in New York to see his friend Ivy "Supersonic" Silberstein, a stylist specialized in the creation of weird hats. Anthony and the girl had some photos taken together for an alternative fashion mag and they also went together to a Halloween party. But Halloween must have a strange effect on Anthony's hormones, since after five years history repeated itself. The night after the party Anthony, Ivy and other mates went to have dinner out at the French restaurant

"Balthazar", Woody Allen's fave eatery in Manhattan, and as soon as Anthony put his eyes on the place's main hostess he broke into pieces.

*One reason why I got you for my woman
is that you can do the movin' more
Get you on the bed to the bathroom floor
Keep it moving 'cause I need the hardcore
Another reason why I love your ass
You're dancin' like every dance could be your last
Do ya Do ya Do ya Do ya wanna dance
Let's get it on like black trash
Oh Yohanna my Yohanna
Hot butter melts across your mouth
Dancin' and a Dancin' and a Dancin' Machine
Somebody move, somebody scream*

New York born Yohanna Logan was a 23-year old blonde giantess attending her last year at New York Fashion Institute of Technology. Actually, she had taken the job at Balthazar just to afford her school's high fees but her ambition was to become an appreciated fashion designer. Not exactly beautiful, she had a pretty and witty face and a striking body that made many people wonder if she was a model. "Model? Horror! I work with models, but I'm a stylist. I set the rules".

Anthony had never been intrigued so much by such a combination of a pretty face and a glamorous body with a strong personality. After a few days of wild sex in the girl's Manhattan apartment he started to pack his things, expecting of course to see Yohanna doing the same to follow him down to L.A.

"Oh no, I just can't" she said.

"What?"

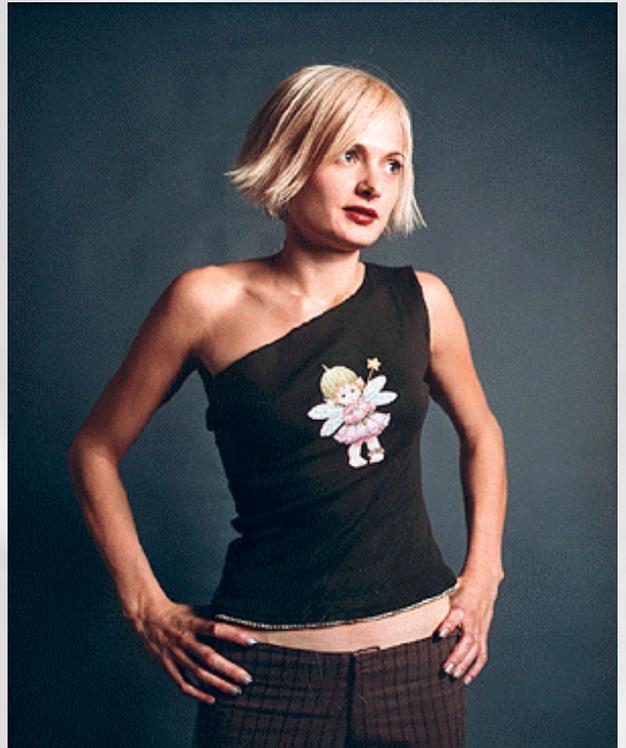
"I can't come to L.A. I have a job here and I have to attend my courses. But I'll call you soon".

Anthony stood open-mouthed. That was the first time a woman was saying something like that to him. What was happening? Was it his short hair? Was he getting old? Was he just losing the grip?

"I thought you said you loved me," he mumbled.

"Of course I love you" she said "What's love got to do with it? I just said that I can't leave New York now. Maybe next year, if we're still together".

Semi-convinced, Anthony finished to pack his things and took a flight to L.A.



Yohanna in one of her creations

"OK, maybe it's better to slow down a bit" he thought. He had taken off in overdrive with this girl and maybe he had scared her a little. He thought it was also better not to call her immediately and keep her at bay for a while, but as soon as he reached Flea's basement he was already dialing her number.

Flea was nowhere to be seen. At night Anthony started getting worried. He called John just to be reassured.

"Hi mate" John said "Good to see you back. What was it like in NY?"

"Oh I've farted a bit here and there" Anthony said "And I've also fallen in love like an asshole".

"Great" John said, "So maybe you can do something with Flea".

"What's up with Flea?"

"He's at the hospital".

"Eh??"

"Oh it's nothing serious, they're releasing him at the moment. Marissa has fled – it's over. Flea had a strange reaction, severe stomach pains, chain vomits and stuff. At first they thought it was appendicitis but it's just a heartache".

Poor Flea! Now that everything seemed to be back in its place he had to face this traumatic separation. Anthony, as usual, decided that he had to stand close to him, but Flea seemed to have taken the end of his relationship even worse than his marriage's. He was constantly crying, puking and threatening suicide.

"I don't know what to do with him" Anthony told John "I've never seen him in this state. What if he does something to himself? I can't control him 24 hours a day. What the fuck?"

"Give him time," John said, "Maybe working on the record will help. At least, I hope".

John was single, Chad had just divorced, Flea was in trouble, and Anthony was totally blown away by his New York mistress. She said she would call him and she didn't. Was she playing or what?

"What did you do last night?" his friends asked him.

"I've been sitting by the phone," he would say, "Waiting for a call from another zone".

After all, working on the record would have helped all four of them.

The Red Hot Chili Peppers started working on the record at Ocean Studios in mid-November with... Rick Rubin.

"I don't think we could ever work with another producer" Anthony said "He knows us too well".

Rick Rubin was enchanted by the new melodies played by the guys, particularly by John. He and John would often kept working all night, also after the other three had left, and Rubin started involving John into record production. Actually John was able to play a lot of instruments and he had also learned how to sing, so Rubin thought it would have been interesting using some of John's new capabilities on the record.

One of those days Flea communicated to his mates that he was going to Australia for a while; he wanted to spend some time with his biological father and his grandma and he needed to break out. Anthony, John and Chad knew very well how much he needed it.

"We'll keep working, us three" John stated.

Anthony wasn't too sure. He wanted to go back to New York to see Yohanna, and then he had planned to attend all NFL's Wild Cards and Superbowl together with his friends Master P, Guy Oseary and Chris Rock. And, though he didn't want to admit it, he was having problems in writing lyrics for that huge amount of music.

What the fuck?

"I'll be working till Christmas" he promised John "then I'm off for a while too".

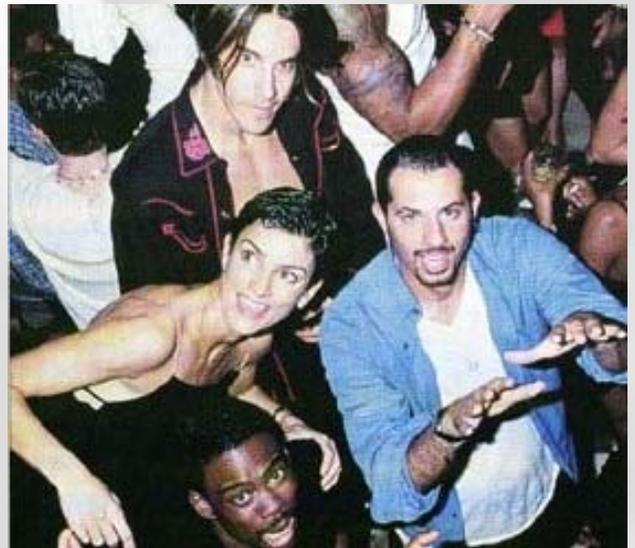
John just nodded. The end of the year was approaching. Anthony did not know what to think about 1998. If 1997 had been the year of nothing, 1998 was the year of too much. But the things were looking promising enough after all and maybe 1999 would have been a perfect year.

As usual, he went to Michigan to see Blackie and Peggy and he even took Peggy and Jennifer to New York to celebrate New Years. He spent about one week at Yohanna's house, spilling his guts to her like he hadn't done to anyone in ages. Yohanna wasn't someone to mince words. She knew that her new boyfriend had a terrible reputation, and she wanted to hear from his lips how much truth was in there.

*She wanna know am I still a slut
I gotta take it on the otherside*

Anthony didn't lie. She just wanted to know the truth and he told her the truth. He was also too tired with lying. At the end she just said, "OK, I won't be judging you".

Relieved, Anthony left New York and happily went with his mates to their planned "NFL Tour", and then at the end of January he went back to L.A. to finish working on the new record.



Anthony and friends celebrating Superbowl 1999

"We have recorded 20 songs" Anthony told the press "Out of these, 14 tracks will be selected and remixed".

The title?

"Not yet".

Rick Rubin, as usual, was left alone in the cutting room. This time the axe fell on "Gong Li", "How Strong", "Bunker Hill" and "Phat Dance". Anthony was a bit disappointed that his eulogy to his new chick's ass was cut off from the album, and so were many fans after they heard the song.

"It's a good funky song," Anthony explained "And it deals with the beauty of the ass".

But Rubin had chosen another direction for the record: this CD was to celebrate the Chili Peppers' new found sobriety and maturity, spirituality and harmony with the (parallel?) universe, so the funky element had to be reduced to the essential. With "Around The World", "Right On Time", "Get On Top" and possibly "Purple Stain" it was enough with funk. And it was enough also with the old wild sexy boys image of the past:

every lewd detail had to be cut off. This time there wouldn't have been any "PARENTAL ADVISORY" sticker on the cover! Actually in US the last time the sticker had appeared on a Peppers cover was on BSSM, but in Europe also One Hot Minute had been released with the sticker on.

"That's quite ridiculous" Anthony laughed "Those people didn't move a single muscle when they heard a song like "I Like Dirt", just because there's no four letter word in it. I could write down the dirtiest song in the world without any fuck or shit and get away with it. But if I write a simple love song with a fuck in it, here is the sticker!"

The fat assed censors were probably too distracted or bored to listen carefully to the lyrics of "Purple Stain", "I Like Dirt" or even "Otherside", and gave green light to the whole record. The album's title, "Californication", revealed early in April 1999, just raised a few eyebrows.

"Fornication?"

"Nothing to do with fornication" Anthony fastidiously stated, "The title was inspired by a trip I made around the world two years ago. I went to India, Tibet, far east, and I was stricken by the way my hometown has such a huge influence on the rest of the world, even those far away places. But it's not an attack to California" he quickly clarified "it's more like a love statement".

During the recording sessions Anthony had left Flea's house and moved to Suite 78 of Chateau Marmont, the decadent hotel at 8221 Sunset Boulevard, where John had lived during the darkest days of his life. He was still going back and forth from New York cause Yohanna hadn't showed any intention to move to L.A. yet. "I hate New Yorkers" he finally exploded in an interview. But in April they went on a holiday together, once the sessions were over, a scarce week in beautiful Maui.

"Are you going to marry her?" someone asked him.

"I'm already married" he said "With my band mates".

On April 20th 1999, in a little town named Littleton, Colorado, two kids broke in their high school holding a gun and fired, killing 12 teenagers, before turning the gun on themselves. A bunch of artists jumped on the tragedy wagon and expressed their feelings about the event, led by ultra-boring Canadian singer Celine Dion, someone who never draws back when it's the time to show her face around for a "noble" cause (i.e. promoting a new record). The Red Hot Chili Peppers jumped on the same wagon but luckily with something more decent: a small tour in various town of the country (Detroit, Minneapolis, Philadelphia and Portland) where the only people admitted to the show were those who contributed with a proposal about how to end violence at the country's high schools. The suggestion had come straight from the program director of a Seattle radio station named "The End". The minitour was christened "Teen Tolerance Tour" and started in May. The Chili Peppers played some of their songs from their upcoming album, like "Scar Tissue", "Parallel Universe" and "Californication". With all the good intentions in the world, it couldn't be unnoticed that also the Chili Peppers were promoting a new record.

The choice about the first single to be taken from "Californication" fell on "Scar Tissue", a deeply melancholic song about a man who's full of scars but he's still determined to carry on living (*"I'll make it to the moon if I have to crawl"*). In those days Anthony and John were often toying with the press about this image of "scarred but surviving guys" and of course the press couldn't ask for anything better to bite.

Also the director of the video for Scar Tissue had to conform to the new order. The last time the Peppers had shot a video directed by French photographer Stephane Sednaoui had been seven years earlier, soon after John's departure, and the video in question was "Breaking The Girl". Now that John was back it seemed to be an appropriate choice. Stephane Sednaoui still remembered the most acclaimed video he had shot with the guys, the pagan-oriented "Give It Away" and decided to locate his new Peppers video in a similar environment, the Californian desert.

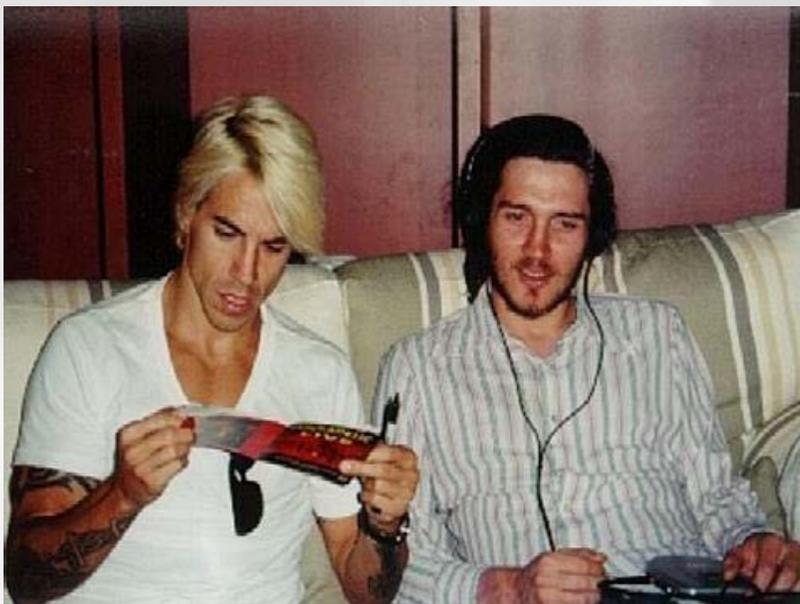
"Stephane Sednaoui had the main idea for the video" Anthony told "that is to picture us full of scars while riding an old convertible in the desert. We've been through a lot of traumas in the last years, spiritually, emotionally, physically, but we still carry on together... in a car".

When the day came to start shooting the video though something else caught their general attention. Anthony arrived at the location driving his huge black Grand Cherokee, but when the troupe saw the driver getting down nobody was sure anymore who had been driving. The platinum blond guy closed the door of the jeep and started walking towards the video set.

"Oh my God" Flea mumbled "this time he has decided to kill me for real".

Everybody watched Anthony until he was close enough not to let any space to doubt. That was really Anthony Kiedis! Then, laughter exploded from every corner of the desert.

"Stay cool, guys" Anthony assured everybody "I just tripped on a bottle full of peroxide".



Peroxide Anthony and John in Baltimore

With Anthony sporting his new platinum look the band embarked in a short American tour that included an appearance at HS Festival in Baltimore. Then the guys packed their things and took off for a European tour, which would have soon proved to be the most effective and successful promotional vehicle of the year. A new generation of teenagers were on the brink to discover the Red Hot Chili Peppers, from Europe to Australia, from South America to Japan, from South Africa to US. Nobody seemed to know that Anthony Flea and Chad were all over 35 now, and nobody seemed to care.

The world was getting tired with the new pop sensation of the day. The world was asking for real people who played real music. If they were also good looking, even better. The world could ask for nothing more. The world was ready for Californication.

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