

JON WIEDERHORN & KATHERINE TURMAN

**LOUDER**

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**THE DEFINITIVE ORAL  
HISTORY OF METAL**

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**THAN**

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**INTRODUCTION BY SCOTT IAN OF ANTHRAX  
AFTERWORD BY ROB HALFORD OF JUDAS PRIEST**

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**HELL**

**"THE BOOK EVERY METAL FAN SHOULD OWN." —ALICE COOPER**

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# LOUDER THAN HELL

THE DEFINITIVE ORAL  
HISTORY OF METAL

**JON WIEDERHORN  
& KATHERINE TURMAN**



itbooks

# DEDICATION

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## **JON:**

TO MY PARENTS, NANCY AND SHELDON, FOR THEIR ETERNAL  
SUPPORT, WITHOUT WHICH I WOULD PROBABLY BE WORKING  
A REAL JOB.

MY WIFE, ELIZABETH, AND MY CHILDREN, JOSHUA AND  
CHLOE, WHO LEARNED TO FLASH THE DEVIL HORNS LONG  
BEFORE THEY DISCOVERED THEIR LOVE FOR SELENA GOMEZ.

## **KATHERINE:**

TO MY MOTHER, ANTONIA. THANK YOU FOR THE WORDS.  
PROUD, PROUD.

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**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

**ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

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I was eight years old, sitting in my uncle's bedroom at my grandparents' house, going through his vinyl. I pulled out the first Black Sabbath record. There's woods and a witch, and I'm a little kid looking at this going, "What is this? This is scary." And my uncle goes, "That's Black Sabbath. They're acid rock." I'm like, "What's acid rock?"

So I put it on and it starts with the rain and then that riff comes in and I'm like, "Oh my God." I was a little kid, scared, sitting in my uncle's weird dark room with his black light posters, and I had never heard anything like that. Up until that point I lived on AM radio in the car with my parents listening to whatever was on WABC in New York. This was my first exposure to anything like that, and I instantly liked it. I went, "What else is like this?" And we listened to Led Zeppelin and Frank Zappa and everything heavy and weird he had in his collection.

I started asking my parents to buy me records, and I watched stuff like *Don Kirshner's Rock Concert* on TV, and this other show, *In Concert*, which were about the only places you could see live performance on TV back then. I got way into music. I had a cousin who was twelve years older than me who was a biker and a musician. He lived down the street from us and I used to hang out in his basement when he'd jam. I'd sit there and watch, and I thought anyone with long hair was the coolest guy in the world, and anyone who had a guitar was the coolest guy in the world. That was my introduction to the world of heavy metal.

We were living in Long Island when I was in fourth, fifth, and sixth grade, and up until I started seventh grade, music to me was really personal. None of my friends were into music. They all played hockey. None of them gave a shit about Black Sabbath or Led Zeppelin. So I'd just sit in my house and practice my guitar and listen to songs. It wasn't until I was thirteen and starting seventh grade that I met kids who were listening to Zeppelin and KISS and Aerosmith and Cheap Trick and the Ramones, and that's when I really started to blossom.

All through junior high and into high school I gravitated toward like-minded people, and we were the little clique that all wore leather jackets and had long hair. By that time my parents had gotten divorced and I was living in Queens. Bayside High School had almost three thousand students, and the core of our group was about ten people. With the periphery kids who would kind of hang out with us, we had maybe two dozen people that were into hard rock and heavy metal. Others were just into disco or pop. In 1978 in Queens, you didn't have a lot of people listening to Rainbow. But we were into all this British and European hard rock; it wasn't even really called metal back in 1978.

At lunchtime, my friends and I had a little boom box and we would listen to cassettes and put the hard rock surveys together. We'd have a page and we'd write down the names Ace Frehley, Jimi Page, Ritchie Blackmore, Joe Perry. Then we'd walk around the lunchroom and try to get people to rate them one to ten and then try to figure out who's the best lead guitar player. This is how fucking nerdy we were at age fifteen! Everything was about music. And there was always the quest to find the next band. You always wanted to be the guy in the group to come in with something that no one had heard yet that was going to blow them away. One day this kid David Karibian came in with the first Van Halen record in his boom box at lunch time. He said, "Listen to this," and put on "Eruption," and we all sat there with our fucking jaws dropping. We had never heard anything like that before. I remember the first time I heard AC/DC. Another time, my friend Golden brought in *If You Want*

*Blood*, and it was the first time I ever heard Bon Scott. Holy shit. We were on a constant quest looking for the next cool band or the next heavier band—~~whoever was playing something harder~~ faster, more intense.

I bought the first Iron Maiden record at the Music Box, which was this record store in Queens around 1980. I didn't know anything about the band. I had never even heard of them. I bought it strictly based on the album cover because Eddie looked so fucking cool. And then I put it on and heard "Prowler" and lost my fucking mind, and went in the next day and said, "Oh my God, have you guys heard Iron Maiden?" And, like, four dudes went, "Duh, we got that last month."

We thought we were cool, but we were like the fucking plague when it came to girls. I didn't date one girl all through high school who went to my high school. I didn't go to my prom. As a kid in a leather jacket, ripped Levis, Chuck Taylors, and long hair, you weren't getting hot high school chicks. We were the burnouts. That's what the jocks would call us. They never fucked with us or tried to fight us or anything because I think even they understood we were no challenge at all. You could literally blow on even the biggest one of us burnouts and we'd fall over. None of us were fighters. All we cared about was playing guitar.

But the music made us feel strong, and being with other people who were into the same thing made you feel like you weren't alone or crazy. There's a reason I had Ted Nugent, KISS, and Zeppelin posters hanging all over my room. I'm not just some fuckin' weirdo. Look, there's a whole bunch of other dudes just like me.

By '80 or '81, we had already started getting into heavier, more extreme European metal stuff like Venom, Raven, and Mercyful Fate, and it could never get loud enough. At the same time American hardcore punk bands like Black Flag, Fear, and Circle Jerks were emerging. And all of it was starting to cross over because if you hung out at record stores as much as we did, you would pick up anything in the hopes that you were going to find something cool. To me, there were no genres and there were no categories. It was either good or it wasn't.

Then we got into the British stuff like GBH, Exploited, and Discharge because it was the next most extreme thing out at the time. When I first listened to Discharge's *Hear Nothing, See Nothing, Smell Nothing*, it sounded like nothing I had ever heard before. There was an intensity and brutality to that record and that band that I had never experienced in any other music. I didn't realize it at the time, but years later I recognized, "Okay. That's hardcore. That's sheer fucking brutality."

A pivotal point in my life was when I met Danny Lilker around '79. He was a sophomore and I was a junior, and we would walk to school together every day and we started jamming because he also played guitar. Danny was in a band called White Heat, which actually played in the city. In 1980, the idea that you were playing in Manhattan at Great Gildersleeves was amazing! I was totally jealous. We would jam all the time. We hooked up with these other friends and got rehearsal time at the Brewery, which was a rehearsal studio at a shopping center across from our houses. I would tell him all the time, "When White Heat breaks up, you and I are gonna start a band." He would be like, "Huh? We're not breaking up. Why would we break up?" Eventually White Heat broke up.

It was July 28 in the summer of '81. We rehearsed with this kid Paul Kahn on bass. Danny was on guitar then and Dave Weiss was on drums. John Connelly, who went on to become the singer of Nuclear Assault, was on vocals. It went so well and sounded so good; right then we decided we were going to form a band and call it Anthrax because Danny had learned about anthrax at school.

Thirty years later, Anthrax is still a band. Metal has gone through as many changes as we have band members, but it's still as addictive, as important, and as exciting to me as it was when I was a nerdy kid in the school lunchroom. As the ultimate fan, I've voraciously read biographies of m



favorite bands, watched metal documentaries, and combed store racks for metal mags.

So I'm excited that *Louder Than Hell* strives to tell the definitive story of metal through the musicians' own—often dirty and grammatically messed-up—words. Some credit Frank Zappa with the anti-rock-crit quip, "Writing about music is like dancing about architecture." But Jon Wiederhorn and Katherine Turman approached their book with true objectivity, letting the musicians do the talking. And there are few better qualified for such a massive task. I remember when Katherine sat behind me and vocalist John Bush on a plane from LA to New York for John's first tryouts and rehearsals in Anthrax. She didn't spill the beans or try to eavesdrop (she told me later!) as the info certainly wasn't out in the press yet, and she'd known John since his early Armored Saint days. The same was true when we were all at Pantera's New York gig that week. And Jon, who I first interviewed with in the mid-eighties for the now defunct *Power Metal*, has been with us nearly every year since, whether for *Rolling Stone*, *Guitar*, *Guitar World*, *Revolver*, MTV, or AOL. We have a mutual respect that comes out of years of journalistic excellence. Jon's critical eye and technical knowledge is only matched by his ability to relate to an artist like a friend, sharing the triumphs and empathizing with the frustrations.

Stories in this book about forty-plus years of metal—some of which I lived through, others which are new to me—give me the same kind of teenage excited-dork feeling I get when I'm onstage looking out at the audience and seeing that they feel it too, whether they're fourteen or forty-five. It's moshing in the pit, hands reaching out for a pick, screaming the words to "Among the Living." That's what makes metal special—no matter how old you get, you never outgrow it—and that's what makes *Louder Than Hell* timeless. It's a living history you can tap into whenever you want. Anthrax sang it first back in 1984, and we'll stand by it forever: "We're soldiers of metal, and we rule the night."

# HEAVY METAL THUNDER

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According to scientists the world over, heavy metals are highly dense chemical elements that are poisonous at low concentrations. Since 1869, when Russian scientist Dmitry Mendeleev published the first Periodic Table of the Elements, twenty-three metals have been deemed “brutally” heavy. Some have even inspired bands to adopt their names, including arsenic, cadmium, cobalt, thallium, and vanadium.

As with their musical namesake, heavy metals can be healthy: copper, selenium, and zinc are necessary for metabolism and present in many multivitamins. Similarly, Metallica is ideal for waking up on sleepy mornings, Guns N’ Roses hits the spot when driving long distances at questionably safe speeds, and Black Sabbath helps anaesthetize the brain when it’s time to unwind.

Counterculture hero and writer William Burroughs made the first literary reference to heavy metal in his groundbreaking 1959 novel *Naked Lunch*. He liked the term so much he used it again two years later in *The Soft Machine*.

“I felt that heavy metal was sort of the ultimate expression of addiction, that there’s something actually metallic in addiction,” Burroughs said later.

“There was a guy in our road crew named Peter Wagner, who referred to us as the Heavy Metal Kids,” said the late Dickie Peterson, front man for the pioneering sixties hard rock/metal band Blue Cheer. “But I think he did that because the heavy metal kids were the junkies in William Burroughs’ books. I don’t think he was talking about our music.”

Ed Sanders, cofounder of sixties underground folk band the Fugs, called his music publishing company Heavy Metal Music in 1965, in homage to Burroughs. The term *heavy metal* was first used in an actual song in 1968, when Mars Bonfire wrote “Born to Be Wild” for Steppenwolf, but again, the term wasn’t meant to label the band.

“I used the phrase ‘heavy metal thunder’ in ‘Born to Be Wild’ to help capture the experience of driving a car or motorcycle on the desert highway of California,” Bonfire said.

In 1968, *Rolling Stone* writer Barry Gifford used the term in a record review to describe Electric Flag’s “A Long Time Comin’.”

“I made it up,” he insists. “I was just describing the sound of the band, who, of course, bore no resemblance to what later became popularly known as heavy metal.”

Even Black Sabbath, who, to most fans, epitomize heavy metal, initially didn’t like the term.

**GEEZER BUTLER (Black Sabbath, GZR, Heaven & Hell):** Someone called us “heavy metal” as an insult in some review. It said, “This isn’t music. It sounds like a load of heavy metal crashing to the floor.” Somebody in England picked up on that phrase, everyone started using it, and we had no say.

**OZZY OSBOURNE (Black Sabbath):** In Black Sabbath, we didn’t care about what we were called. We were backstreet kids and we went on that stage with a fucking mission—to play music to de-ba- any fucker—and we could. In the early stages of Sabbath, there wasn’t nobody to fucking touch us.

**ALICE COOPER:** The first time I ever heard music referred to as heavy metal was in *Rolling Stone*—referring to *us*. I thought, “‘Heavy metal.’ What a weird term that is.” But I understood what they meant. I think it was referring to our attitude more than our sound. But we were also a very loud band.

**ROB HALFORD (Judas Priest, Halford, ex-2wo, ex-Fight):** I dare say we were probably the first to start calling *ourselves* a heavy metal band. Word goes around. I think it's fair to say it really started with Priest and Sabbath.

**RONNIE JAMES DIO (1942–2010) (Heaven & Hell, ex-Black Sabbath, ex-Rainbow):** Once I became part of a heavy metal band, I was as proud as anyone to be that. It's the kind of music I love. The heavier the better.

**EDDIE TRUNK (DJ, Host of "That Metal Show"):** The first Black Sabbath record, [1970's *Black Sabbath*]—that's where heavy metal was born—with that album and that song ["Black Sabbath"]. People will say Blue Cheer and Iron Butterfly [were metal], but Sabbath were the first band to embody everything that became heavy metal.

**ALICE COOPER:** We looked at what the Who did on "My Generation" as one of the first heavy metal songs. That, or [Iron Butterfly's] "In-a-Gadda-Da-Vida." If that came out and Metallica did it, everyone would go, "Oh, yeah, that's metal."

**LESLIE WEST (Mountain):** To me, heavy metal is like pornography. I couldn't tell you what it is, but when I see it, I know it.

**LEMMY KILMISTER (Motörhead, ex-Hawkwind):** Metal is the bastard son of rock and roll. If Eddie Cochran was playing today, he'd probably be in a garage playing with a metal band.

**JOSE MANGIN (Sirius Satellite Radio):** Metal is a lifestyle that includes the music, the fashion, the cred. It doesn't matter what bands you like, it's how you live—how you walk, how you move at a concert, how you talk to people, how you get excited about hearing distorted riffs. It's a motivator. It's therapy. Metal is community and it's a group with no doors.

**BOB LEFSETZ (Author of "The Lefsetz Letter"):** Heavy metal is not made for Wall Street. It's not intellectual—it's something you feel. It electrifies your body, truly plugs you into the socket and makes you thrust your body forward and throw your hands in the air.

**BIFF BYFORD (Saxon):** When I first met Ronnie James Dio, we talked about the way he uses the heavy metal sign. This is how he explained it to me: in the deaf sign language, the two fingers and the thumb is "I love you." I think that was the first one he used. The thumb went down later on.

**RONNIE JAMES DIO:** I'm of Italian extraction; my grandmother and grandfather on both my mother's and father's side came to America from Italy, and they had superstitions. I would see my grandmother, when I was a little kid, holding her hand, walking down the street, she would see someone and [make the devil's horns]. I learned it was called the *malocchio*. Someone was giving us the evil eye, so [with the horns, my grandmother] was giving us protection from the evil eye. So [did I] invent it? No, but [did I] perfect it and make it important? Yes, because I did it so much, especially within the confines of Sabbath. Because I've been lucky enough to have done it so much, it's been more equated with me than anyone else, although Gene Simmons will tell you he invented it, but then again Gene invented breathing and shoes.

**GENE SIMMONS (KISS):** What I started [before Dio] involved the thumb outstretched. Check our first

poster in 1974. I started doing it because of comic book artist Steve Ditko, who created both Spiderman and Dr. Strange, who both used the same hand sign. Spiderman used it upside down when he shot out webbing, and Dr. Strange used it as a magic incantation. I was paying homage. Later, I was told it meant “I love you” in sign language.

**DAVE MUSTAINE (ex-Metallica, Megadeth):** Most people do it wrong, and I’m not talking about outstretching the thumb. For the real devil’s horns, when used as a Satanic symbol, you don’t close your middle two fingers and wrap your thumb around them. You leave the middle two fingers outstretched and place the thumb between them so it resembles the snout of a jackal.

**BIFF BYFORD:** Obviously, now, it is the rock and roll, metal salute. It’s lost all the devil connotations. It’s just a great salute, isn’t it? We’re all here, we all like one music. Even models on the catwalk, they’ll give the sign—“rock and roll.”

**ROBB FLYNN (Machine Head, ex-Vio-Lence, ex-Forbidden):** In high school, we didn’t fit in with the jocks or the nerds. We were the outcasts. We had long hair. We were the nonconformists and we didn’t have a choice. But we found a community through heavy metal. We met other people who liked the same music and suddenly we were like, “We are not alone!”

**RONNIE JAMES DIO:** Heavy metal is an underdog form of music because of the way you dress, how you act, what you listen to. So you’re always being put down. It’s this fringe music and because it pigeonholes the bands and the fans, together we feel strength with each other and become one big pigeon.

**JOE ELLIOTT (Def Leppard):** It’s everything mimicked in *Spinal Tap*. There is an elitist [attitude] among some of us, and I think I put myself in that group. Sometimes heavy metal gets regarded as dumb, and some of us don’t like to be regarded as dumb, so we try to distance ourselves from it.

**PENELOPE SPHEERIS (Filmmaker, *Decline of Western Civilization II*):** I was approached by Harry Shearer and a producer named David Jablin [to direct *Spinal Tap*]. It didn’t work out because I felt like it was making fun of metal, and I loved the music so much I didn’t think I should do it. Rob [Reiner] kicked ass, though.

**LEMMY KILMISTER:** For me, it needs to be big and it needs to be loud. In a club, you can have conversations over bands that are playing jazz or pop music. Nobody can ever have a conversation over my kind of music. With my kind of music, [once] we start, you listen or you leave.

## KICK OUT THE JAMS: PROTO METAL, 1964–1970

**H**eavy metal was never officially “born.” It came together in bits and pieces between the mid-sixties and early seventies, and stemmed from a desire to rebel, shock, and create a level of intensity that did not then exist in pop music.

Strangely, it was British Invasion band the Kinks that captured the earliest sound of metal in 1964 with their third single “You Really Got Me.” The band played blunt, repetitive power-chord guitar riffs that they coupled with a primitive style of distortion—guitarist Dave Davies, taking a cue from surf guitarist Link Wray, used a razor blade to cut slits in his speaker cone to achieve the sound. From there, technological improvements allowed guitarists to use effect pedals to make their instrument buzz like swarming bees, or spiral as if caught in the eye of a tornado.

With louder amps, crazier effects, and plenty of social and political turmoil to inspire them, artists like Jimi Hendrix and bands like Hawkwind, Led Zeppelin, MC5, Blue Cheer, the Stooges, and, of course, Black Sabbath set out to change people’s perceptions of just how heavy music could be and what was possible with a bit of creativity and a lot of volume.

**OZZY OSBOURNE:** The first time I ever experienced the feeling I get from my own music was when I heard “You Really Got Me.” I got that tickling up my back, and that’s what I always go for when I write.

**JIMMY PAGE (ex-Yardbirds, Led Zeppelin):** A turning point in effects came when Roger Mayer began making his distortion boxes. I [was] playing this gig in the early sixties when Roger came up to me and said he worked at the British Admiralty in the experimental department, adding that he could probably build any electronic gadget that I wanted. He went away and came up with the first real good fuzz box.

**WAYNE KRAMER (MC5):** Jeff Beck was one of the pillars of pushing the guitar tone. And then there was [Pete] Townshend with [the Who], Hendrix, Jimmy Page, and what I was trying to do with the MC5. We were all trying to push the guitar so we didn’t just play the guitar, we played the amplifier as well. It was about getting that overtone sustain out of the amplifier. That was at the beginning of the invention of stomp boxes—fuzz tones and overdrives.

Flamboyant Seattle-born musician Jimi Hendrix developed some of the most inventive early uses for the distortion box, contorting traditional electric blues into flailing, contentious torrents of sound. That he was just as adept at performing beautiful emotional and psychedelic rock songs is a testament to his brilliance as a musician. Tragically, Hendrix died in 1970 at age twenty-seven after consuming sleeping pills and red wine and asphyxiating on his vomit. Yet in four short years he redefined the rock lexicon with three astonishing albums—1967’s *Are You Experienced* and *Axis: Bold as Love*, and 1968’s *Electric Ladyland*.

**RITCHIE BLACKMORE (ex-Rainbow, ex-Deep Purple):** I liked [Hendrix's] direct approach, his snarling guitar. He said a lot in one note. Before then, I was very impressed with people who could run up and down the fingerboard. But Jimi was just holding a note sustained, playing with a lot more feeling. His stage presence was unbelievable. He was like a spaceman.

**LEMMY KILMISTER:** What fans want is somebody that comes down from another planet that you will never possibly visit, and touches you, and goes away again. That's what a real good rock show is like. Aliens from another world come and kick you in the teeth and fuck off quick, you know? Hendrix was like that. He was really a quiet guy, a gentleman. He played the fucking Chitlin' Circuit for years. But by the time he got to where he was going, he was the fucking best. You'll never see a guitar player like him, ever. Van Halen and all them guys don't even get close. That man would do a double somersault and come up playing. I learned a lot about performing working as a roadie for Hendrix. And that's where I learned how to function on five hits of acid. He handed it out like dolly mixtures [British candy], and I used to go score it for him, too. That was part of my job—getting drugs for Jimi.

**ACE FREHLEY (ex-KISS):** I was sixteen when I heard *Are You Experienced*. I walked around with it all the time and brought it to school with me to show everybody. I brought it to band rehearsals. I lived with that album until someone ripped it off at a party. Of course, I went right out and bought another one. My guitar style was modeled in part after Hendrix. What really influenced me was his attitude—the way he dressed, the way he looked. He was so antiestablishment and nobody wrote music like him. He wrote about LSD, he wrote about sex and drugs and rock and roll. It was all about rebellion, and he was so radical and ahead of his time it ended up swallowing him up.

**CARMINE APPICE (Vanilla Fudge, Beck, Bogart & Appice):** Jimi Hendrix. Was he heavy metal? Yeah, he was heavy metal, then. But the drums weren't heavy, the drums were light. I think what makes heavy metal heavy is the sound of your drums. That heavy drum sound is what Vanilla Fudge and Black Sabbath had.

As difficult as it is to define heavy metal, it's even harder to pinpoint the band that started it all. Some cite Led Zeppelin, the eclectic, majestic group that formed out of the collapse of the Yardbirds. The band featured seasoned session musician and Yardbirds alum Jimmy Page, bassist John Paul Jones, vocalist Robert Plant, and his Band of Joy bandmate John Bonham, a forceful, stylistic drummer whose beats were often a hair behind the rest of the rhythm, giving the music a perpetual lunging feel. Although none of the members of Zeppelin ever called their music metal, they had a major influence on countless metal bands, including Black Sabbath, Judas Priest, and Deep Purple.

**JOHN PAUL JONES (Led Zeppelin, Them Crooked Vultures):** When Zeppelin started, I listened to blues and jazz. The only rock I listened to was Jimi Hendrix.

**RUDOLF SCHENKER (Scorpions):** I was in the Star Club in Hamburg expecting Spooky Tooth to play and the DJ was playing an album. I told one of my friends to ask the DJ what the album was; it was Led Zeppelin. It immediately kicked me like the first album by Jimi Hendrix. From then on, I watched Led Zeppelin carefully. Everything they did was a masterpiece.

**MARTIN POPOFF (author, journalist):** Jimmy [Page] and Robert [Plant] detest being called "heavy

metal.” It tells you that their heads weren’t in that space, and I think when people’s heads are not in that space, they shouldn’t be rewarded for having invented that thing.

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**GLENN HUGHES (Black Country Communion, ex–Deep Purple, ex–Black Sabbath):** I’ve spoken to Jimmy Page about [whether Zeppelin is metal]. It’s like, there are moments in [Deep] Purple that you would call metal. And there are moments in Zeppelin.

The influence of Led Zeppelin on hard rock and metal is unparalleled (just listen to early Judas Priest, Whitesnake, Guns N’ Roses, Soundgarden, and Jane’s Addiction). But there are a number of unsung (at least in metal circles) American bands that also took volume and rage to new heights—especially Detroit’s Motor City Five (better known as MC5), the Stooges, and San Francisco’s Blue Cheer, all of whom performed with frenetic energy and brazen sexuality that defined the otherness of the counterculture.

**DICKIE PETERSON (1946–2009) (Blue Cheer):** What we were playing was anti-music to a lot of people. They were saying we can’t play that loud, and we were saying, “Yes you can. All you have to do is turn up the amplifier, you idiot.” There was a time we went out and people weren’t kind to us at all. They didn’t know how to take what we were doing because we were one of the first bands knocking on the doors of volume. In 1968 we played with Iggy and the Stooges and the MC5 [Detroit’s] Grande Ballroom, and I honestly think to this day it was really the first metal show ever.

**IGGY POP (The Stooges):** [In 1967], we were a bunch of misfits livin’ together in a house saying “Yeah, we’re a *band!*” But we had not played anywhere. We *couldn’t* play. I was trying to figure out like, “What’s the *key?*” What could we do? I didn’t want to just go out and be a cover band because I knew that was death. I knew that, to take it to where I wanted to go, [there] had to be something really creative—something you couldn’t get anywhere else. At first, we didn’t know what to do, so [we] ended up hanging around the house taking lots of drugs.

**WAYNE KRAMER:** We would play the kinds of gigs that were available to us—teen dances and record hops. So we’d play what they expected, these tidy three-minute songs—and then for the last song we’d play [the feedback-saturated] “Black to Comm”—our *real* music. We noticed we could empty a room with it. People would be dancing all night, having a ball, and then we’d break in “Black to Comm” and the fucking room would be deserted. The people fled. We came to the conclusion that what we were doing was very powerful, and if the kids were just educated to appreciate and understand what it was all about, then that same power that forced them out of the room would force them into the room. And it did.

**IGGY POP:** We found a sound based very much on the MC5. They pointed the way—a pneumatic, industrial, valid, corporate jet mixed in with free jazz—Velvets, the Who, the Stones, Hendrix, Muddy Waters, and William Burroughs.

**WAYNE KRAMER:** We were part of a community with the Stooges. In our time in Ann Arbor, Michigan, we lived close to each other and hung out a lot. We both loved loud, distorted guitar and the Stooges and the MC5 were equally crazy, equally aberrant—each in our own way. We were friendly and collegial with our fellows, but I never got the sense that many of them real

grabbed hold of what we were talking about. We played at the [1968] Democratic Convention and the Chicago police were standing by. The minute we finished, the kids turned on the police, the police turned on the kids, and the rampage was on.

**IGGY POP:** These guys flew in from New York, saw me, and went, “We don’t know what he’s doing but he’s weird. People *like* weird things. We’re gonna sign him!” So they sign me. And then they left, and I stayed in my little Midwestern town [Ypsilanti, Michigan]. They called me to New York a few months later, and I made a record [1969’s *Stooges*], then went back home.

**STEFFAN CHIRAZI (journalist):** The Stooges were absolutely vital for the development of metal. They had true raw emotion in spades. [1970’s] *Fun House* is such a violent record. When I listen to the first song, “Down on the Street,” it makes me want to go down the street and smash windows because it really *is* a “fuck you” song.

**IGGY POP:** You have this leap from *The Stooges* to *Funhouse* to *Raw Power*. It’s very rare that you hear a band that grows that quickly and with that intensity and complexity in three years. It tends to be something more like, “Oh, that’s Sabbath, and that’s another Sabbath, and that’s a little different Sabbath. I was doing something based on the logical progressions and extensions of the way we live—of architecture, art, sociology, anthropology, fashion, crime, porno. There was a lot going on there before anyone else paid attention to that shit.

**STEFFAN CHIRAZI:** I love that famous quote from Iggy that went something like, “I wanted the girls in the front row to want to fuck me, not the girl.” It’s such an outrageously obnoxious, flippant comment. But he didn’t care. He wore makeup but would piss on your head at the same time. He was musically very important as well because a lot of the bluesy riffs were given this thorough, metallic, androidy crunch.

**IGGY POP:** [We did] “I Got a Right,” which is a really intense, up-tempo song. It was thrash before anybody was doing thrash. [But when we played it], not *one* person would move. They’d just stand there and fuckin’ stare at us, like “What the fuck is *this*?” When we played, the room would become like a cardboard cutout. After a while, it got uncomfortable; I was putting this stuff on and it wasn’t coming back.

**JAMES WILLIAMSON (The Stooges):** At [the New York club] Max’s Kansas City, Iggy cut himself in the chest with a broken martini glass. But we had seen it all at that point. He’s dripped hot wax on himself, and he’s been so stoned he couldn’t stand up, and people thought it was part of the act. The band was kind of desensitized to stuff like that. He wasn’t in any grave danger. It was just flesh wounds. But he got a couple stitches.

**BOBBY LIEBLING (Pentagram):** Iggy Pop was my hands-down idol. When I was using a lot of coke and heroin I was into the shenanigans that Iggy used to do in the *Raw Power* days. One night I made a big cross on my torso with this spiked bracelet I was wearing. I took it from breast to breast, and then from neck to belly button, and took my stomach and ripped myself wide open crosswise and just stood there looking at the people and bleeding all over the floor, and kept singing just for shock value.



**IGGY POP:** Stooges tours didn't exist. Nobody wanted to tour the Stooges. People would say, "Don't ever come back here!" And then we did one actual tour, which was our death tour, which *Metallica's* *K.O.* was recorded from. Everywhere we went there was some sort of major disaster. Clubs closed, theaters would arrest us. We played Memphis and [on] the front page of the newspaper was a big picture of me and it said, "Vice squad to attend concert." They came to the concert—five uniformed cops, two plainclothes, all with guns. They let me see their guns and said, "You pull any shit, you're going to jail." [So] I just got drunk and fell down a lot.

He never created an album that's entirely or characteristically metal, yet Alice Cooper is essential to the look and mood of the genre. Vincent Damon Furnier dubbed his band Alice Cooper in 1968 and soon after conceived a mesmerizing theatrical stage show that was equal parts Hammer horror film and French Grand Guignol. He allegedly came up with the "Alice" moniker after using a Ouija board to communicate with a seventeenth-century witch of the same name; he changed his legal name to Alice Cooper in 1974. Hendrix may have electrified the flower child, but as Alice says, "I drove a stake through the heart of the love generation." At the same time, other gender-bending frontmen—such as David Bowie and hell-and-hair-fire man Arthur Brown—impacted the antics of future stars, including Marilyn Manson and the members of Mötley Crüe.

**ALICE COOPER:** I was a fan of Hendrix and a lot of bands, but I knew I didn't want to be anything like them. For instance, I love Paul McCartney, but I can't compete with Paul McCartney on his level. So I thought, "Let me create a character that *he* can't compete with." I loved drama and I loved horror, and I said, "Well, nobody's doing that in rock and roll. Rock doesn't have a villain. Rock has a lot of heroes, but it doesn't have that *one* villain."

**KING DIAMOND (ex-Mercyful Fate):** I was totally inspired by the makeup of Alice Cooper. It's not that much makeup, but it totally changes his look and the way he came across to an audience. It felt like he was not of this world. If I had reached up over the stage and touched a boot, he'd probably just vanish in thin air. Right there in my mind I went, "If I'm ever going to be in a band I'm going to use makeup" because of what a strong feel it put across.

**ALICE COOPER:** When the Beatles walked into a room, everybody wanted to be near them. I always said, "When Alice Cooper walks into a room, I want everyone to take a step backwards." So I created this villainous character. I went to see *Barbarella*. The Black Queen, she had all the leathers on and switchblades coming out of her hands. I went, "Oh, that's what Alice should look like. There should be a real dangerous sleekness to him." Then I saw *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane* and there was this old woman trying to look like she's five years old again with the smeared makeup and all the wrinkles. I went, "Oh, *that's* Alice, too." So if you combine the two you get something that's really creepy and just unearthly.

**RITCHIE BLACKMORE:** From the beginning, I thought theatrics were really important to this music. I started incorporating pyro into the show in 1968. At the California Jam [in 1974], I wanted to do something sensational. People had blown the guitar up. So I said, "I'll blow the amp up." I told my roadie, "Just pile some petrol on the dummy amplifier and throw a match to it when I point to you." So he did that, and put too much petrol on there, and, of course, not only did we blow a hole in the stage, one of the cameramen went temporarily deaf. [Drummer] Ian Paice's glasses blew off and half the stage caught fire. It looked great—like it was well in control—but it wasn't. The

police came after me, and I had to jump into a helicopter to be rushed out of the area.

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**ALICE COOPER:** The thing about theatrics is there needs to be a punch line. In a movie, if it just ends, you go, “Oh.” But if it ends with the villain getting his just desserts there’s something really satisfying, even for me. So I knew if I was the villain I would have to die at the end of the show and that’s when we started coming up with all these different ways to kill Alice.

Back in those days we were doing tricks that didn’t have safety devices on them. We were hanging Alice one time in London in 1974, and the piano wire that was supposed to stop me before I hit the noose failed. If I didn’t have the self-preservation button in my head, it could have hurt me. I swung my head back so the rope went over my chin and didn’t catch my neck. We should have cut the noose, so in case my neck did hit it, it would fall apart. But I went right to the floor and right through the slot in the gallows and hit the floor and knocked myself out for a couple minutes. At that point we started replacing the piano wire with cable.

**ROB ZOMBIE (ex-White Zombie):** When I was little and I was an Alice Cooper fan, there were so many weird rumors and insanity. The show was larger than life, and the rumors become bigger than the reality.

**ALICE COOPER:** At a show in Toronto, somebody threw a live chicken onstage. To this day, I can’t understand why anybody would bring a chicken to a rock festival. “Let me see, I got my tickets, I got my wallet, I got my drugs, I got my chicken. Okay, I’m ready. Let’s go.” So there it was, a white chicken onstage. And I threw it back in the audience and they tore it to pieces. The kicker was the fact that the first five rows were all in wheelchairs. So it was the crippled kids that tore the chicken apart. There were white feathers everywhere. I just figured it would fly away or somebody would get a great pet from Alice, not knowing that I was throwing the chicken to its death. The next day I looked at the paper, and I was as surprised as anybody else. “Alice Cooper kills chickens and drinks blood.” I was like, “What?” But when you have an image like Alice Cooper, anything is believable.

For many members of Alice Cooper, Led Zeppelin, MC5, Blue Cheer, Hawkwind, and countless others, alcohol and drugs were a vehicle to creativity, a way to cope with hard times, a source of relaxation, and a pathway to easier sexual escapades. Of course, such escapism was a loaded gun that took the lives of Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin drummer John Bonham, and Stooges bassist Dave Alexander.

**JAMES WILLIAMSON:** I don’t know of anyone [who was more decadent than the Stooges]. The drug use and decadence weren’t an act: it was the real deal. It’s hard to imagine living a harder life than that and still surviving. And we nearly didn’t.

**DICKIE PETERSON:** I grew up being told, “If you do marijuana you’ll be a slave for the rest of your life,” and it only took me ten minutes to realize smoking marijuana was pretty cool. Then it was “If you take LSD you’ll be a slave for life.” I took LSD, and I wasn’t a slave for life. Then it got to be, “If you take cocaine, you’ll be a slave for life.” There was a time when I thought, “Hey, I’ve been taking heroin for six months and I feel fine. You know, just on the weekends.” I actually believed that you didn’t have to become addicted. I was wrong. The most important thing out of this is, don’t lie to the kids. If marijuana is not going to make you homeless and addicted, don’t

tell people it is, because they'll find out it doesn't, then when they get to the stuff that real [will], they ain't gonna believe you.

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**LEMMY KILMISTER:** My view on drugs has always been you can do whatever you like [on] either side of the gig, except heroin. But don't mess up the gig. When it's time, you better show up and you better deliver. That's the only rule I've got.

**JIMMY PAGE:** I can't speak for the others [in Led Zeppelin], but for me drugs were an integral part of the whole thing, right from the beginning, right to the end.

**CARMINE APPICE:** Being on the road back then was pretty wild. Everyone's heard about the mudshark incident with Led Zeppelin.

**RICHARD COLE (Led Zeppelin road manager):** I was in Seattle with Led Zeppelin and Vanilla Fudge, and we started to catch sharks out the window [of the Edgewater Inn Hotel]. We caught a big lot of sharks, at least two dozen, stuck coat hangers through the gills, and left 'em in the closet. But the true shark story was that it wasn't even a shark. It was a red snapper, and the chick happened to be a fucking redheaded broad with a ginger pussy. And that is the truth. [Zeppelin drummer John Bonzo [Bonham] was in the room, but I did it. Mark Stein [of Vanilla Fudge] filmed the whole thing. And she loved it. It was like, "You'd like a bit of fucking, eh? Let's see how your red snapper likes this red snapper!" It was the nose of the fish, and that girl must have come twenty times. I'm not saying the chick wasn't drunk, I'm not saying that any of us weren't drunk. But it was nothing malicious or harmful. No way! No one was ever hurt. She might have been hit by a shark a few times for disobeying orders, but she didn't get hurt.

**IGGY POP:** I think it was the combination of marijuana and alcohol, which makes you very sensual—and the pill. For the first time, [girls] were all gettin' really free. And a lot of them were going, "Well, let me try this guy, let me try [that] guy . . ." because they *could* try it!

**WAYNE KRAMER:** We were in San Francisco once and we met this girl who was a total freak and ended up with the whole band—fucked us all to death. We had a friend who was a photographer and he was hanging out at the hotel, and he happened to come into the room while some of the guys were in the middle of getting it on with this girl. And the *Berkeley Bar* published them. When some of the band members' wives saw the photos, there was hell to pay.

**CYNTHIA PLASTER CASTER (groupie, penis sculptor):** I got Wayne Kramer and Dennis Thompson [from MC5]. Wayne wasn't at his *biggest*. It wasn't his fault at all. It was a mold failure on my part. I only captured his head and a teeny-teeny bit of shaft. But there was more to come. Actually Dennis came in the mold, speaking of coming. That's only happened twice.

**LEMMY KILMISTER:** Hawkwind was one of the best experiences I've ever had in a band. Sometimes we'd do three hits of acid before we got onstage and sometimes five, because everybody said it doesn't work two days in a row, but we found out that if you double the dose, it does. But I got busted on the Canadian border, and they fired me. The most cosmic band in the world fired me for getting busted. Can you believe it? But the police had to let me go because they charged me with cocaine, and I really had amphetamines, so I was only in jail overnight. The longest time I've ever

been in jail was for four days. That was also a bust, but it wasn't me, it was the chick I was going to screw that night. We ride home, and they opened the trunk of the car and it was full of her pills. I've never been sentenced for anything.

**JIMMY PAGE:** [Zeppelin tour manager] Richard Cole ran into one of the air hostesses on the [Led Zeppelin private plane] the Starship, and she told him, "You know I made a lot of money off of you guys," and Cole asked her how. "Well," she explained, "when people on the plane used to snort cocaine they'd roll up hundred-dollar bills to use as straws. Then after they were high or passed out, they'd forget about the money. So we would go around and grab all the money that was laying around."

**NEAL SMITH (ex-Alice Cooper):** I'd fuck a groupie and kick her on the floor. I had more groupies sleeping on the floor than on my bed, I guarantee that.

**ALICE COOPER:** The very first time the band went to Paris, we felt we had to buy prostitutes because that was what you would do. We're all from Phoenix, and here we are at the Hotel Arc de Triomphe, and French prostitutes seemed like the right thing to do. They showed up and they were all, like, forty-seven years old, and none of us wanted anything to do with them, but we couldn't get rid of them. When I pictured prostitutes, I pictured something a lot better than that. But the girls were almost like World War II prostitutes. It was disgusting. Then we realized that we really didn't *need* prostitutes. The Hotel Arc de Triomphe was the SS headquarters during the occupation of France. So this place was just as decadent as could be. But the traffic of girls coming in and out was a blur and I honestly don't remember much of anything.

**NEAL SMITH:** There were twins—a brunette and a blonde—in Zurich, who came up to Alice and me in our room at the Atlantis Hotel after our show in the fall of '72. The blonde was knockout gorgeous. They follow us into our room, the blonde took my arm, the brunette took Alice's. I was having a great groupie sex, but even though I was in the next bed, I don't know what Alice was doing because they disappeared under their covers. Not a word had been spoken by the girls. Eventually Alice and I both emerged and these two gorgeous girls start speaking to each other in Swiss. They didn't speak a word of English. So Alice and I look at each other and just start talking in English. It was the most bizarre, yet in some strange way, wonderful evening that we'd had on the road. But, of course, there were many. I was with two girls several times in the same room.

**GENE SIMMONS:** Making and playing music is very exciting but it's not a goal in and of itself. Everyone who's ever picked up a guitar did it to get laid. And if they say, "No, I did it just for the love of music," they're lying to your face.

**LEMMY KILMISTER:** I don't care what people say. They're in it for the pussy. The music's important too, but it's more about the pussy. Chasing women is my biggest hobby. Actually, no, that's the career. The music is the hobby. I've always liked the strip club. Sure, having a lap dance is a tease but you can sometimes talk them into it, you know? And you can only talk them into it if you have a lap dance. You can't convince them to go home with you from the bar. I've been with five porn stars over the years. It sounds very glamorous and sexy, but they're just the same when they fuck as anyone else. Then again, I'm not as good in bed as the people I usually fuck, so I suppose it evens out.

**TED NUGENT:** I toured for the girls. I mean, I toured for the music, but if it wasn't for the sexual adventure you couldn't have got me on the road with a gun to my head. I would have taken it away and shot you with it. If all I had to do was look at those unclean heathens in the front row with their lack of personal hygiene and stenchy leather blue jean material, I'd take up crocheting.

**CARMINE APPICE:** Sometimes there were these mother-daughter situations. The mother was probably my age at the time—thirty-five to thirty-eight—and the daughter was seventeen. It was the kind of thing where you get a vibe, like you're in the room and you're hanging out with the daughter, then you can see the mother acting weird, like she wanted to be there, so you just sort of play it. You play the cards and it just sort of happens. But in those days, there was no AIDS, so anything went.

**LEMMY KILMISTER:** One time a chick just climbed up onstage and blew me. I was singing—well, I couldn't stop, could I? But that was in the seventies, when women were more liable to do that.

**IAN GILLAN (ex-Deep Purple):** I had a fantastic experience in Lebanon. I was working in Beirut in a casino with a band for about three months. There was this dancer, Angelo Manchenia, who tried to kill me one night. We were staying at this house in the mountains. Sounds romantic, but it stunk to high heaven. After we finished at the casino we used to party every night. Manchenia would come home and kick the bottles off the table and start dancing. I was sharing a room with [bassist] Roger Glover, and Manchenia was with this super-tall dancer girl with long red hair. The bathroom was not usable, so we'd stand under the moonlight and do what we had to do. I was doing that one night, and Manchenia pulled a big knife out of his boot and said, "I kill you [because he thought I was having sex with his girl]." Then he realized I couldn't be in the room doing what Roger was doing to his girlfriend and outside by the rocks at the same time. He said, "Ah, I've insulted you now I have to kill myself." I said, "Is there some way out of this?" He said, "Yeah, we can become blood brothers." So we did. We slashed our hands and let the blood mingle, and we went back to work and he forgot about his girlfriend being with Roger and we danced the night away and drank more wine.

Some proto-metal icons liked to push taboos even further than sex and drugs, dabbling in occult and Satanic rituals they viewed as a natural evolution of an uninhibited mind.

**NEAL SMITH:** [Guitarist] Glen [Buxton's] girlfriend was a friend of [guitarist] Robby Krieger and [drummer] John Densmore from the Doors, so we were going to have this séance. It ended up being the five of us. This is a rental house, and we paint a pentagram on the floor and all sit around the pentagram. It was Glen, Alice, [guitarist] Mike [Bruce], [bassist] Dennis [Dunaway] and me and [Doors producer] Paul Rothchild, Jim Morrison, and David Crosby. This chick is trying to conjure up spirits on the other side. Believe me, even though everyone had been drinking and smoking, it was embarrassing. She was screaming and moaning and groaning, and everyone was like, "What the fuck is with this woman? She needs some serious medication." She's probably still fucking crazy.

**RITCHIE BLACKMORE:** I don't believe in any organized religion. But one of my main passions in life is in communication with entities and spirits. I hear from idiots in the business, who go, "Oh, he's a Satanist. He lights candles in his dressing room." I'm not a Satanist. The reason I used

light candles was to have a little bit of meditation before I went on stage, and I hate the lights that you have in those dressing rooms backstage at, say, Madison Square Garden. But people were convinced that I had an altar in there or something, and I was sacrificing chickens.

**MICK WALL (author, journalist):** I think Zeppelin's mystical interests were more earnest and sincere than most people's. In the case of Black Sabbath, it was slightly more sci-fi. But for Jimmy Page [who purchased English occultist and author Aleister Crowley's house], magic was something to be taken seriously.

**JIMMY PAGE:** It's unfortunate that my studies of mysticism and Eastern and Western traditions of magic and tantrism have all come under the umbrella of [Aleister] Crowley. Yeah, sure, I read a lot of Crowley and I was fascinated by his techniques and ideas. But I was reading across the board. It wasn't unusual at that time to be interested in comparative religions and magic. It was quite a major part of my formative experience as much as anything else.

**BOBBY LIEBLING:** I was practicing all kinds of black arts and occult and Satanism, and I was a member of the Satanic church in the DC area. I did a lot of incantations and was in an actual coven. One night I was at my friend's house. We always kept a couple of copies of Anton LaVey's original *Satanic Bible* around, and books on witchcraft and spells and the occult. It was July 4, and we were completely sober. We were sitting in the basement and reading from the *Satanic Bible*, and all of a sudden I started to blow a little fog out of my mouth. I was into the reading and hadn't noticed that the room had gotten ice cold. All the pipes in the entire basement formed droplets of water that became icicles. The basement windows were covered with frost and the entire room was about 25 degrees. And this was in a matter of 10 to 20 minutes. I got so scared. I'll never forget for the rest of my life. To me, it was a sign saying, "You're fucking with the wrong thing, man." It scared me so badly that I just dropped that idea and threw all the artifacts away that came along with the game.

**JOE HASSELVANDER (ex-Pentagram, Raven):** Bobby conjured up something that scared him to death and he ran out of the house and never came back. Of course, you're supposed to close those doors, but they never did. And I think that's part of why he has had so many problems in his life with drug addiction and a lack of financial success. I really believe that, because something like that happened to me. I found these tarot cards dating back to the Salem witch trials that were at a house in New York where we lived with Raven, and they were coated in human blood. They were horrifying. I took about ten of them and they almost destroyed my life. A spirit was found in two of these cards, and the person who was bound to them had invoked demons and was probably responsible for the Salem witchcraft hysteria. He made people go nuts by sending his curses on objects out to them. It caused an incredible poltergeist outbreak in my house and I had to move. I was in Virginia, and that's why I'm in Massachusetts today. The toilets flushed black, there was an infestation of flies. Objects were flying off the counters at us. The house smelled like Rosewater Lavender, which was an old cologne people used in the 1600s. We would tell the spirit to leave [but] it would go to another room. I was someone who didn't believe in any of this, and in two weeks I had to become an expert or it would have killed me and my son. Finally, I found out who it was, what it was, and I had to return it to Salem, which I did. Since then it's still been a process of getting rid of the residual effects. I had an exorcism done—a cleansing of my house—several times, and I was finally able to leave and put miles between me and it. I'm a very religious person.

because of it today. I won't go into it any further, but I will say that Cliff Burton from Metallica had the other half of the artifacts that I had, and I really believe they killed him.

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**ALICE COOPER:** I was *never* Satanic. In fact, I'm a practicing Christian now. But when I was at the prime of my Alice Cooper notoriety and I was drinking, there was a big gray area where I started and where Alice ended. I had no idea. I was hanging out with Jim Morrison, Keith Moon, and Jimi Hendrix, and I thought I had to be Alice all the time. Those were times I was so drunk I don't remember anything. One night I was in a Rolls Royce, I was driving, [Aerosmith singer] Steven Tyler was in the car and we had a gun. The next day I don't remember if we knocked over a building. Eleven. We could have done anything. There were many, many mornings that I woke up after parties with all the wrong people, where I went, "Please don't let me read about something in the paper that I did." Because when you're drunk and you're Alice, you feel like you have the license to do anything. There were times when people said, "You and Jim Morrison were hanging from the balcony to see which one could hang the longest." I don't remember any of that.

**WAYNE KRAMER:** If the brain's pickled with vodka and heroin it ain't processing so well and you can't play for shit. Of course, that happened. And it got worse and worse. It reached a point where the show became something to get out of the way so I could get loaded. Then, it was *all* about getting loaded, and who cared about the show? I was very, very lucky. I can't count the number of times I'd wake up in a pile of puke, someone calls 911 'cause you stopped breathing. You wake up in an ambulance. You wake up with the EMS people standing around you.

**ALICE COOPER:** I looked around and noticed [that] everyone I was trying to be like was dead. I went, "Okay, I get it. Alice has got to be one thing and I've got to be another thing. I can't coexist with Alice; Alice has to be a character I play onstage." When the curtain comes down he realizes he doesn't want to live my life and I don't want to live his. He lives two hours a night onstage. He doesn't want to play golf, he doesn't want to be married, he doesn't want children. He doesn't like anything except what he's doing onstage, and you leave him up there. To this day, we have a great relationship.

**LESLIE WEST (Mountain):** I don't remember if I had sex with that many girls. I was probably too busy trying to get high, and I didn't care about the sex. One thing the girls were great for is they could go to the record stores and make sure your album was in the stores, and they knew where to go. I was really late at night, and a lot of them knew where to find drugs, which was useful back then.

## MASTERS OF REALITY: SABBATH, PRIEST, AND BEYOND, 1970–1979

As heavy as bands like Led Zeppelin, the Stooges, and Blue Cheer were, they lacked the power and sonic impenetrability of the metal bands that followed their lead. More significantly, they could be rugged or mysterious, but they were rarely both, and they were hardly ever frightening. Black Sabbath changed all that. Built on a foundation of dense, simple power chords, tempos that veered from sludgy to fleet-footed, blues-based solos more fiery than anything by Jeff Beck or Eric Clapton, and vocals more akin to a siren than a human voice, Sabbath was immediately loathed by critics and adored by fans in search of new ways to appall their parents. The band surfaced from war-ravaged Birmingham, England, and attacked with previously unheard aggression and ferocity. Moreover, their landmark 1970 self-titled first album was a witches' brew brimming with lyrics about death, darkness, and the devil. Not long after Sabbath introduced the core ingredients of metal to the masses, other aggressive bands, including Deep Purple, Judas Priest, AC/DC, and KISS, conceived their own formulas for metal domination.

**OZZY OSBOURNE:** When I was a kid, I was hungry. I had my ass hanging out of my pants. I hated the fucking world. When I heard the silly fucking words, “If you go to San Francisco, be sure to wear a flower in your hair” I wanted to fucking strangle John Phillips [of The Mamas & the Papas]. I was sitting in the industrial town of Birmingham, England. My father was dying of asbestosis from industrial pollution and I was an angry young punk.

**TONY IOMMI (Black Sabbath, Heaven & Hell):** When I first met [bassist] Geezer [Butler], he was out of his brain on acid. I saw him at the club and I thought he'd gone mad. This was before we got together. He was in a band and I was in a different band with [drummer] Bill Ward. We saw this guy trying to climb up the wall and we went, “Christ, look at him.” Little did I know it was Geezer and I'd be in a band with him for the next forty years.

**GEEZER BUTLER:** I wasn't on acid. I had a big lump of hash with me. I didn't try acid until years later. But we were quite a wild bunch. Ozzy had already [spent six weeks] in prison [for robbing a clothing store and being unable to pay the fine] when I met him. There were two old nightclubs in Birmingham back then. One was a blues club that used to be open all night long that I used to go to, and there was a soul club that Ozzy used to go to. So, at about six o'clock every Sunday morning, I'd be walking home from the blues club because I couldn't afford bus fare, and Ozzy would be walking home on the other side of the street from the soul club. We sort of made eye contact but he was a skinhead and I was a hippie, so we never really talked. Then he put an advert in the music shop I used to go to saying, “Vocalist looking for a band.” I went around to his house, and that was Ozzy. So we joined up together in the Rare Breed, but we both left that at the same time because it wasn't happening. Then one night I went around to his house and we said, “Let's put a different band together.” He knew Tony. So we went around to Tony's house and asked Tony if he knew any drummers. Bill just happened to be at Tony's house that night, and we got together from



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