

HUMP IN THE NIGHT

sex with the band. They're called trim co-ordinators . . ."

"My god," Evelyn gasps. "Are you telling me I've been . . . trim-co-ordinated?"
American Psycho, Brett Easton Ellis

IN BRITAIN the pimp-roadie is given a certain number of Head Passes. And yes, they are what you think they are.

"I've been asked," claims Digby. "And the answer is 'No. You work for an hour, you boring git, go do it yourself'."

Not all roadies screw around, many insisted that I make that clear. But the suspicion is always there . . .

British Roadie 'Y': "Oh god, all the time, yeah! I mean we had a massive row about three weeks ago, it was a massive suspicion thing. But I'm the guy who left school with two CSEs, I couldn't make this kind of money doing anything else. I mean, if she wanted me to get a nine to five . . . The biggest mistake I've ever made is to go with a Baggie because they're constantly going 'Can you do this? Can you do that? Can you get me my 10,000 mates in yak yak yak!' I always used to say to her, 'Well, can I come and sit next to your desk in your office like all the time you're working?'"

B IS ALSO FOR BAGGIE

"Ramp rats and vermin were always there, of course, at every show, in every town . . . There was the lumphead, the rock slut, the would-be tramp; there was the handsome young rebel and his tag-along idiot friend, and the hopeless flat feeb in the too-new leather, there was the fat chick with the sad eyes lined in thick black Maybelline.

"They were the vermin, The scuttling hordes . . ."

The Scream, John Skipp and Craig Spector

A BAGGIE is a hardcore fan, so-called because they equip themselves with large green army kit bags. The Wonder Stuff/Ned's Atomic Dustbin crew regard them with mixed feelings.

"I remember one kid who followed us to America and I remember asking him how much money he had on him—and he had thousands!"

"Yeah, they either have no money or loads of money . . ."

"What puts you off people like that is when they stand outside begging money off people for a ticket, knowing that they're on the guest list anyway so they can spend the money in the bar and they don't even watch the show!"

"Some of them are alright—Bill and Ben, Batman and Robin (common guest list pseudonyms), we've got a baggie who's an examiner called Big Mo who sorts them out . . ."

"They're always coming up to you and saying 'How do you get this job?' so you tell them . . ."

"Sod off!"

So how do you become a roadie?

There are now, apparently, courses that you can go on.

C IS FOR CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

DIGBY: "HOW can someone train you how to react when you've got some musician screaming at you that you're a useless c— because something's gone wrong? OK—I'm going to pretend to be a musician, I'm going to take half a gram of coke, get very drunk and give you an extremely unreasonable time with steam coming out of my ears . . ."

American Roadie 'F': "Being a Metal roadie is kind of like being in Vietnam. You've got these f—ing incompetent prima donna assholes who get all the credit while you do all the f—ing work. And then there's the

trucker.

But what about getting paid in the first place? Rock attracts its share of wide boys. One legendary punk guru and self-avowed 'Marxist' manager would pay his roadies on Friday afternoon after the banks had shut—so that their cheques wouldn't clear until the following Wednesday. He also cut the computer code off the bottom of the cheques so that they'd have to be processed by hand, thereby taking even longer to clear.

Like all casual work, the jobs can be few and far between. Almost nobody works all the year round.

"You can be all set up for a tour, got your passport, your visa and everything," says Collin, "and the call comes through four hours before you've got to leave to catch

between the band and the crew, a pretty hot way of communicating their socialist principals to those they work with.

Colin works for bands as diverse as The Manic Street Preachers, The Beautiful South and Swing Out Sister. The demands made on his talents are equally diverse. One day he was organising a crane to get a Chas & Dave grand piano into the upper window of an East End pub, the next he's explaining to Manic Richie that the reason his guitar is always so out of tune is that he hasn't changed two of the strings since his mum bought it for him five years previously.

The day after he's dressing up as

a penguin for The Beautiful South . . . but that's another story. Chas & Dave—diamond geezers that they are—cuddle Colin, personally thanking the crew during each show and sometimes getting them on stage for a jolly old Cockernee knees-up.

But it isn't always thus. Sometimes the roadie and the muso come to blows.

Digby recalls one particularly hostile night in Auckland, New Zealand, where The Clash faced a gobbing crowd for the first time in years.

"I was looking up at Topper (the

drummer) and then I heard Joe (Strummer) who was three foot away from me screaming—PAY ATTENTION YOU C—!—and he swung his guitar at me and the machine heads made like six dents in the front of me head. I looked like Vivian out of *The Young Ones*. I thought, cor! That's didn't half hurt! Rubbed me head, I had blood all over my hands.

"I grabbed a towel and put ice on it and walked into the dressing room and said 'You and me are going to have a little word!' He said to me 'What have you done to your head?' I said 'If you really want to take the piss, you and me are going to go outside for a talk about this!' But he seriously didn't remember hitting me, he was so wired up. You can't hit them because they're paying you, much as you'd like to . . ."

Dougal recounts the time he was coldcocked by one of Keith Moon's flying tom-toms whilst "clocking a tasty little chick in the front row". He also sought out his muso assailant: "So I go looking for him to repay him with a knuckle sandwich," but Moon managed to laugh his way out of a battering.

British Roadie 'T' gained

CONTINUES OVER PAGE

"The reason I'm a roadie is that I can satisfy two of my biggest loves—travel and music. And drugs."
—Colin (Manic Street Preachers)

drugs and the whores, heh heh heh!"

Most roadies start working for friends or, like Russ Hunt and Paul Kerr who now manages Simple Minds, relatives in bands, getting paid nothing or "as many T-shirts as you can eat". But the bigger a band gets the more skilled and specialised the labour required.

A "chimp" or gear-shifting "back line" roadie starts off on about £120-£300 a week, depending on his "pull" and the finances of the band.

A "Third Man" on a sound crew, the guy who works with the monitor man and the desk engineer (£700+), can earn between £400-£500 a week. All these figures are approximate, most people going out for what they can get, unless they're really in demand. And at the moment there's a lot of undercutting going on thanks to the recession.

Crew chief earnings can be in the £700+ bracket. Tour managers for top bands ("a tour manager is a cross between a nanny, a slave driver, a body guard, a social worker and a chartered accountant") can earn over £1100 a week.

It's generally agreed that it's the riggers who have the worst deal.

They start work earlier than anybody else, sometimes as early as 5am, clambering amongst the scaffolding to put up the lights. Their work is easily the most dangerous and they are usually last to finish work, often dismantling an elaborate lighting system long after the last flight case has been packed away. But, as one rigger put it—"It f—ing beats working".

The riggers also have the reputation for being the biggest animals on the road—with the exception of the truck drivers. It is generally agreed that nobody can out-shag, drink, fight and fart a

your plane and the whole thing's been cancelled."

In the USA all rates of pay are much, much higher. One female catering crew chief discovered that the people hired to do the washing up on a US tour were getting paid five times her weekly wage. This is because the Americans have got a union.

D IS FOR DICKHEADS

DIGBY: "OK—lesson number one for a musician. How to tune a guitar. You go—'DIGBY!'"

Russ: "The thing about Metal bands is that whether they're playing Wembley Stadium or Birkenhead Stairways—they all think they're massive f—ing superstars . . ."

Digby: "More guitars, longer hair, more gear and bigger egos. The Bigger the backline, the bigger the ego."

Dougal Butler: "Most bands look on most roadies as being little more than marginally useful dog shit."

Musicians vary widely in their attitudes towards crew. And vice versa.

"Roadies tend to be very like the bands they work for," claims Denise. "Just like dogs come to be like their masters, really."

Which probably explains why Metal attracts f—pigs whilst indie roadies are usually quite jolly lads. The identification between the roadie and the band can be so fierce that it transcends the loyalties professed by the merely obsessed fans. How many fans do you know who use the collective pronoun when referring to themselves and their idols?

Digby, when recollecting the glory days of The Clash's 1982 US 'Combat Rock' tour, does so with an unconscious passion:

"We were all dressed in black combat gear and everybody, got out of the way when WE came through, everybody. You know that woman who lives upstairs who's the sound engineer? WE used her husband to mix US because he could make US sound good even when WE are incredibly loud. And WE were incredibly loud, WE will kill you! Every single f—ing one of you!"

I'd love to meet the most fanatical Morrissey dweeb who can match that . . . Hang about, no, I don't think I would, actually.

If you work for Diana Ross you call her "Miss Ross" and you better have a damn good reason for talking to her. But if you work for any band containing an ex-Housemartin you'd better have a damn good reason *not* to expect to be treated as an equal. Madonna allegedly has the backstage area cleared of road crew every time she has to go for a piss.

Some bands—like The Mission and The Primitives—will insist that the crew accompany them on any record company junkets, which is a great way of earning the loyalty of your crew and pissing off the suits. The Beautiful South make a point of divvying up all tour profits equally



HOW TO SPOT A ROADIE

1 Baseball cap. Always on backwards. Not because he's a happening dope guy' but because it didn't come with instructions.

2 T-Shirt. Ned's Atomic Dustbin, Uriah Heep or Gun are the designs favoured by most, though the more adventurous stylists might try 'I'm With This Idiot' or Johnny Farmpants. The shirt should be baggy and soiled at the front and just short enough at the back to reveal the 'roadies cleavage'.

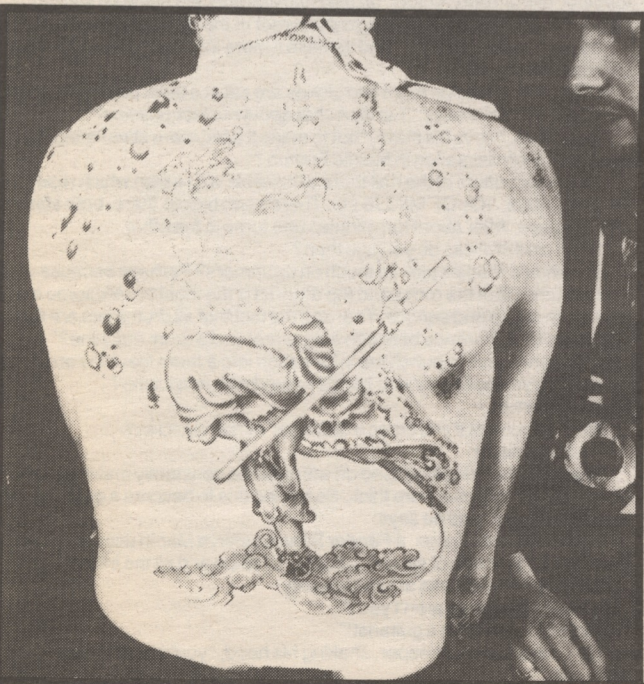
3 The laminates. A laminate is a rectangle of heat-sealed card in clear plastic that you can hang round your neck or clip to your belt loops. This will make you frighteningly attractive to women. Ideally the laminate should read 'Princa. Idaho Enormodome VIP. 1990' even if the gig is Catherine Wheel at the Lady Owen Arms. The phrase 'Access All Areas' only applies to the corridor behind the stage and not the House Of Commons, Mission Control, Houston, or other peoples houses.

4 Beer gut. This is a gut you get from drinking beer. This explanation is not as funny as we originally thought.

5 Keys. Roadies need two keys. The Van and The Dressing Room. The other 47 are there for ballast and to convey a sense of authority. They are all either from their little brother's lockable diskette case or collected from the tops of tins of John West Skipjack Tuna.

6 Beer. Roadies in their natural habitat drink Kestrel, Badger bitter and malibu or any drink that normal people only drink at Christmas. But when the band are on stage, roadies then raid the band's 'rider' and drink Sapporo Dry, Cognac and smoke big cigars.

7 Maglight. 'Maglight' is a posh, toasty rockbiz word for a small torch. The maglight is supposed to help tighten nuts, fix cables etc in the dark. The maglight actually gets used for peering into cans of Kestrel looking for fag-ends, finding their 'tackle' in the darkest hotel room and making scary ghost-faces by holding it under the chin.



Tattooed love god. Can drive a transit. Offers.

PICTURE: MARTYN GOODACRE

PICTURE: PETER WALSH



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"legendary roadie status" when he smacked Jason Donovan in the mouth. 'T' was in a backstage corridor explaining to a fellow roadie just how much of a bastard a former employer was and waving his hands about as he did so. Jason Donovan, polite and quiet young man that he is, meanwhile came up behind him unheard.

WHACK! 'T' accidentally backhanded Jase in the mouth.

"I didn't hear or feel anything, but



The Stannard twins Donnatello and Big Verne, Ned's roadies, share a joke (but not a pint)

before I knew what was happening I'd done it to his manager as well."

Eventually becoming aware of the chaos behind him, 'T' turned and was horrified to see both the star of the show and his manager standing against the wall, clutching their bloody mouths and looking rather dazed.

The show was held up for 30 minutes whilst Jason's teeth were sorted out but 'T' was not sacked. He was, however, dismissed from the (JUST SAY NO!) New Kids On

The Block tour when he was caught sharing a spliff with a band member.

But T's most horrific brush with violence was then he worked for The Sugarcubes.

"This bloke got on stage and started trying to kiss Bjork, like really hugging her. You could see she was cringeing, like absolutely terrified. So I ran on to remove the guy and he elbowed me in the throat, really savagely, I mean, that *really* hurts. So I started punching him like this—whack! whack!—and then I look up

and realise that it's all gone quiet. The band and the audience are frozen, just staring at me in horror as I'm punching f— out of this punter. That was a bit embarrassing."

And just as the Wild West had the Colt 45, the backstage has its own peacemaker, the long, black, heavy and incredibly well balanced Maglight torch—one bop on the head is enough to settle most arguments.

Not for roadies the arty-farty concept of trying to break down the barrier between the artist and the audience. This had hilarious results when the Manic Street Preachers, flushed with their recording contract, decided to give away their guitars to the audience at The Marquee. Unfortunately, they didn't tell the road crew.

"First thing I knew," says Colin, "was that there's this bloke in the crowd with one of *our* guitars, so of course I waded in to get it back." As far as Joe Roadie is concerned the stage is the stage and "any f—er who gets on once is going to get gently thrown off and any f—er who gets on twice is going to get his money back and get thrown out of the venue."

There was one spectacular incident, however, where a rather large gentleman was doing a sterling job keeping the stage clear, when, in the act of throwing a young

gentleman off the stage, he forgot to let go. A look of terror flashed across his face as he fell, arms waving frantically into the sea of thrash-metal fans he'd been none-too-gently man-handling all night. He remained terrified, his face a mask of grinning fear as he was passed back by the crowd at head level and gently deposited at the back.

Any regular gig-goer can tell you stories of over-muscled "bouncer" scum hired by the venue, gleefully beating the shit out of kids half their size. As a rule, though, roadies are not thugs or bullies, after all, most of them are fans themselves and on any tour the evening of a day off is usually spent at a gig checking out the "competition".

Given the delapidated state of many venues and the amount of travel done in vans driven by aggressive young men suffering from tiredness and/or the after effects of substance abuse, it's some wonder that the fatality rate amongst road crews is not substantially higher than it is.

In one infamous incident a roadie was crushed to death in a badly loaded van when the vehicle suddenly and violently upended. At the London Astoria there's reputed to be wall with a human head-shaped dent in it where another roadie came to terminal grief.

"There's nobody who hasn't been

affected by a death," says Big Al, soberly, "but you've got to get on, have trust in the people around you."

And then there's being shot at... The Wonder Stuff crew were packing the gear away at a US venue.

"I looked up at the balcony and there's one of the local crew firing a 9mm semi-automatic into the wall behind the stage. The bullets were going two feet over our heads. You've never seen two cases packed so fast. As we were leaving, like, really frightened, this guy says 'What's the matter?' The guy's shooting at us! And he says 'Yeah, it's alright, he's gone now to go get his Uzi, he's going to let that off in a minute'. He showed us the holes in the wall which he'd filled in with plaster and then he tried to sell us some crack."

"I walked out of the Ramada Hotel after my first night in New York," says Digby, "and all these people are lying on the floor or hiding behind cars and I thought 'Oh! They're shooting Starsky & Hutch! Lucky me!' So I stood there in the middle of the street and people are shouting at me 'GET DOWN! GET DOWN!' Then this bloke starts to run from between these two cars and he turns and he's pointing this gun at me and he fires two shots past me. These two cops open up



Load-grin: our roadies remember The Drummer From Cud

LAUGH? I NEARLY BOUGHT A ROUND! A short guide to roadie humour

Q: How can you tell when a drum riser is level?

A: When the drummer dribbles out of both sides of his mouth at once.

ROADIE JOKES revolve around the assumption that all drummers are morons.

"There's this MENSA banquet and at the top table there's this sign that says 'IQs of 200+'. There are two blokes sat there wearing dinner jackets and bow ties and one of them says: 'I know, why don't we have a conversation about the relationship between metaphysics and sensuality and the impact of that relationship, with regards to the dominant moral ideology of the 19th Century, on the Reichian concept of the repressed orgasm as a national psychological disorder of the German nation state?'"

"Super," says his chum, "and to make it more interesting, why don't we converse in Swahili?"

A bit further down the room two blokes are sat at a table bearing the sign 'IQ of 130+'. Bloke says: "Fancy a chat about nuclear physics?"

"Good idea," says his mate, "but to make it a tad more stimulating, let's conduct the conversation in Middle French."

At the very bottom of the hall there's this table with a sign which reads, in very big letters, 'IQs OF MINUS 20'. There's two blokes there, both staring off into space. After about ten minutes one turns to the other.

"What kind of sticks do you use then?"

Why should roadies pick so much on drummers? Perhaps because of all the instruments of the rock band the drum kit is the most troublesome and finicky to set up and service. That and the fact that all drummers are thick.

Q: What's the difference between a drummer and a drum machine?"

A: You only have to punch the information into a drum machine once.

Q: What do you call a guy who hangs around with musicians?

A: A drummer.

Q: What do you get if you cross a drummer with a musician?

A: A bass player.

This drummer is really pissed off with roadies constantly making jokes about how all drummers are thick. So he decides to become a guitarist. He walks into a shop and he says:

"Right, I want a Gibson, a Fender Stratocaster, a Martin acoustic, a box of plectrums, £50 worth of strings, a couple of amps and all the effects."

The shopkeeper looks at him curiously.

"You're a drummer aren't you?"

"No! No! I'm not! I'm a guitarist!"

"No," says the shopkeeper, shaking his head, "you're definitely a drummer."

"How can you tell?" asks the drummer.

"'Cos this is a chip shop."

ENTER SANDMAN
THE SINGLE 29.7.91



and pump five bullets into him and I'm just stood there."

E IS FOR, UM, E . . .

"A MATHEMATICIAN, a scientist and a roadie all die on the same day and go to heaven. St Peter sets them an intelligence test before he lets them through the Pearly Gates. They're each locked in a room with some rods, wheels and building bricks.

"In the morning the mathematician has made a totally accurate model of The Great Pyramid and used it to make mathematical calculations which have revealed to him the true meaning of life.

"The scientist meantime has used his bricks and rods to build a scale model of a single atom of God's beard which has revealed to him the secret of the universe.

"St Peter unlocks the third door and the roadie is fast asleep in a pool of drugs and his own vomit with his trousers around his ankles and a woman wrapped around his knob and the rods, wheels and bricks scattered all over the floor amidst the wreckage of a TV set, ashtrays overflowing with fag-ends and roaches and a dozen empty Jack Daniel's bottles.

"The roadie opens a bleary eye and says to St Peter: 'It wasn't me, it was like this when I found it . . .'"

Roadie joke (trad)

Drugs?
Digby: "Oh, yes please!"
Colin: "The reason I'm a roadie is that I can satisfy two of my biggest loves—travel and music. And drugs."

The author's only real experience of roadieing (baggie chimping actually, whilst selling fanzines with the *NME*'s current assistant editor WHOOOO! WHOOOO!) for The Redskins ended after three days in a wet Manchester when what felt like terminal flu almost developed into bronchitis. This was because—according to several of my interviewees—I'd mixed speed with alcohol.

Amphetamine sulphate—coke if you can afford it—is the traditional road crew drug, giving the illusion of boundless energy with the ability to cope with the tedium of hanging around waiting for the chance to start work.

American Roadie 'F': "When I first started working with smaller bands I was developing a real coke habit. Couple of lines every morning straight off the flight case. But when you start doing real tours, that gets to be a problem. You develop a respect for drugs. If it stops you doing the job then you don't take them and if you do coke for too long you spend a lot of time just wanting to kick ass. You've got to get on with people.

"You get some of these English bands coming over here and for the first few days they go crazy, like f—ing pigs, man. But you're not being paid to mother them. They all learn, one way or another. . . I love the way those guys talk—'wanker', 'bollocks', 'brilliant', 'orlright maybe!'"

Digby had to deal with more than his share of "speed psychosis" during his punk days, but he finds the current fad for cuddly drugs equally alarming.

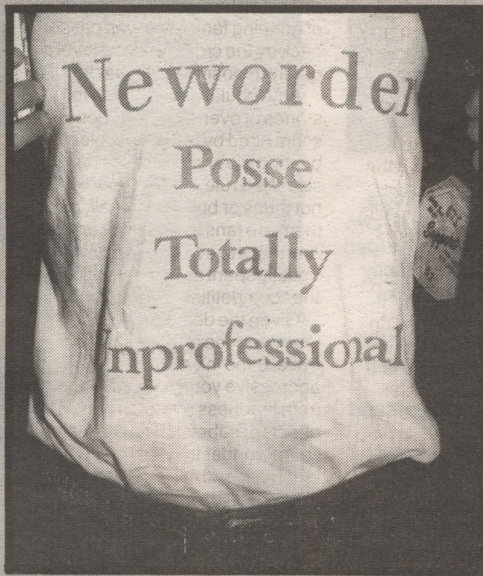
"The musicians on speed used to rip your head off. But now it's like 'Please move that amp, I love you!' All they do is bounce up and down in front of you and go 'You're great! You're fabulous!'"

But surely roadieing can be a healthy experience—surely an American tour can be accomplished with a healthy mind in a healthy body?

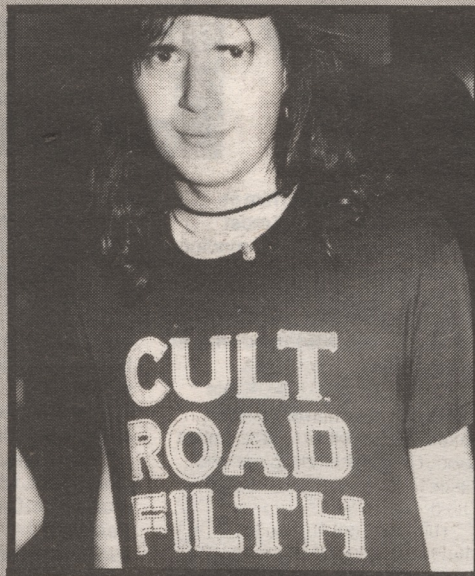
British Roadie 'L': (He turns in the tour bus and looks at me as if I'm MAD) "F— that! You need substances just to do it!"

Digby: "My father once said to me 'You don't take any of that Marjorie Anne, do you?'"

LUGGERS WITH ATTITUDE



Shirt to rule: what the fashion-conscious roadie is wearing this season



ROCK'S MOST FAMOUS ROADIES

RICHARD COLE: "Mother hen," "field pimp" and "hit man" for Led Zep. AKA "the ultimate rock roadie" and "the complete rock soldier". Born 1943, this ex-scaffolder was earning £20 a week as The Who tour manager in 1966. Worked as a gigolo in the south of France whilst drossing in Procul Harum's tour van.

"He knew every groupie in town and could actually say to a drummer as they were approaching some wretched Mid-western 'burb that he knew a girl there who loved English drummers."

In Zeppelin's early days he was earning more than Robert Plant and once ordered the singer to go fetch him some sandwiches whilst lounging by a hotel swimming pool. He went. It was Cole and not any member of the band who initiated the "red snapper" incident (famous and utterly disgusting Led Zep fish-sex story).

Little bit of a hard nut. Once smacked drummer John Bonham in the face, busting his nose, telling him: "Go on, f— off, don't you give me that shit at this time of night . . ."

Whilst in Zurich to see Rory Gallagher he reputedly beat up three Hell's Angels who tried to gatecrash the club.

"I don't want people coming up to Jimmy because then I have to throw people away or kindly ask them to move on and sometimes they won't move and I give 'em a flick of the foot to the jaw and someone carries them out . . ."

Whilst visiting Gracelands, Cole karated Elvis to a standstill.

Strung out in Rome in 1980, Cole issued a threat against manager Peter Grant's children. Italian anti-terrorist police kicked down his hotel door and discovered two switchblades, three syringes, a spoon, a lemon and an eighth of cocaine. He spent six months in a high security prison.

He was then visited by the British filth who wanted to question him about a couple of unsolved murders. Retired to LA on the \$200,000 he had left over from Led Zep. Then he fled LA from drink-driving charges (arrested twice on the same day). Current whereabouts unknown.

DEREK RYDER: Happy Mondays, Sean's dad.



Hit the Norse: Derek Ryder

PETER 'DOUGAL' BUTLER: Ex Mod, author of *Moon The Loon*. Became Keith Moon's personal roadie. Had to acquire the nickname "Dougal" because Pete Townshend refused to have one, despite the fact that he was known to the rest of the band as "big nosed c—".

Butler described his favourite on-the-road leisure activity as "consuming as many medicines as possible in the shortest time possible, then making a beeline for one of the bints . . ." followed closely by "screwing the bint/wrecking the hotel/falling senseless upon the floor". His book is a fountain of sensible advice to young roadies. "There is a built-in audience at all times: backstage staff, hotel and restaurant staff and many other menials who can be wound up, stitched up and generally f—ed up at relatively small personal risk or cost."

When a drugged up Moon started nodding off at the gig, Dougal sent for a hippy doctor with whom he crawled on stage. Moon, when asked to stop playing the bass drums replied:

"Wwwwwaaaauuggghhh!
"FOR CHRIST'S SAKE"
screamed Dougal, "STOP PLAYING THE F—ING BASS DRUMS, YOU C—, BECAUSE WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO INJECT YOU IN THE F—ING ANKLES! RIGHT?"

MICK THE ROADIE: Used to light Arthur Brown's helmet for 'Fire' and had a penchant for women with "big lungs".

BOOGIE (real name—John Tiberi): Grammar school boy who roadied for The 101ers and The Clash and took over from Nils Stevenson as Pistols roadie. An arty-boy McLarenite, he was sent to the US to look after Sid and see that the band got a decent sound. The rest is history.

PATSY COLLINS: AKA "The Psychopath": Died in a lift shaft accident whilst working for Deep Purple in Jakarta.

HOOK: One-armed Vietnam vet who roadies for satanic metal torture rock band in the novel *The Scream*. Uses white phosphorous to turn a stadium crowd into a flaming pentagram of screaming human flesh.

NOEL MONK: Co-author of *12 Days On The Road—The Sex Pistols And America*. Took the job of tour managing the Pistols in the US after working with the soul-influenced lounge act Chunky, Novi and Ernie. Had to beat up Sid and assault McLaren to maintain order. Had to stop Sid having oral sex on stage. Had to stop Sid having penetrative and oral sex on top of the bar and in front of the audience. Helped clean up after Sid suffered a diarrhoea and vomit attack whilst being given a blow job in his hotel room. Intimately searched a bollock naked Malcolm McLaren in a hotel corridor whilst pretending to be an FBI agent.

ANDY KERSHAW: Radio 1 DJ, used to roadie for Billy Bragg.

HARRY ISLES: A 50-year-old multi-linguist and former Bauhaus tour manager. This ex-headmaster was chosen to handle The Mission. Which means, basically, looking after Craig.

Craig is stood, bollock naked in the reception of a Finnish hotel screaming "Call the police" and abusing the hotel manager for being a "fascist" because he wouldn't open the sauna at 2.30 in the morning. Various members of De la Soul are staring at Craig in disbelief and giggling.

Harry, not allowed by law to cane his pop stars or even give them extra homework, advises Craig to shut up and go to bed. Craig is later to be found in the bar having a piss between two stools whilst chatting to a fellow musician.



Lemmy: "Anythin' you say Mr Hendrix . . ."

LEMMY: Used to roadie for Hendrix.

ALAN LEWIS: Quiet spoken and sensibly dressed ex-*Sounds* and *NME* editor was in fact a roadie in the '60s and had a reputation as a lager-swilling rock maniac.

MICHELLE KIRSCH: *NME* contributor, tour manager for the Michelle Shocked US tour where, rumour has it, Shooky went a wee bit paranoid and started seeing swastikas in the wallpaper.

JOE DEVLIN (ret'd): One of the few black roadies, notorious for his catch phrase—"have you ever seen a black roadie's knob?"

"I was just sat in this bar, right, and Joe comes up, and I'm 6'3 but he is *this massive skinhead*, and he goes 'Did you call me a nigger?' I nearly shat myself. It was one of his favourite tricks . . ."

"Once I was shouting to Joe to bring the flight case over and I was shouting 'The black case! The black case!' So Joe picks up this 150lb flight case and carries it over to me, puts it down and says 'Non reflective, mate. Non reflective' . . ."

RED: Drum roadie on the Sex Pistols US tour. Taught the band how to redecorate restaurant ceilings using butter and spoons. Developed a very close relationship with Sid whom he affectionately told: "Why don't you do yourself a big favour and take a f—ing shower?"

TOM HANKS: Star of *Big and Bonfire Of The Vanities*. Roadied for Aerosmith during their appearance on the spoof access TV 'dude' metal prog *Wayne's World* on the US *Saturday Night Live*.

JEEVES: Ultra-cool wardrobe roadie for upper class parasite Bertie Wooster.

BILLY HOSKINS: Hero of Richard Allen's *Roadie* (1979): "I love a man with muscles!" murmured the groupie as she nuzzled his rigid manhood. Billy laughed as the tequila and coke kicked in and he thought of his 'mates' back in miserable, grey, dead end jobs or on the dole, the teachers who encouraged him to get a real job, to become a model citizen. He was a labourer, sure, just like his dad. But he was a rock 'n' roll labourer and that made all the difference. 'Blowjobs' and LSD hadn't been amongst the 'perks' enjoyed by the hard working, hard drinking dockers of the East End."

ROMAN: Legendary Damned roadie. It would appear that when Bryn, a Damned bass player, got married, he and his missus returned to their honeymoon hotel, turned off the lights, smiled shyly at one another in the romantic gloom and embraced on the bed. Whereupon they were drenched with cold water that squirted violently from underneath them, drenching them, the bed, the floor and room beneath. A distraught manager beat on the door.

"Tell me," said Bryn, "has this room had any visitors?"

"Um, yes . . ." replied the manager. "Two gentlemen with champagne and flowers who asked for the key so they could leave them in the room."

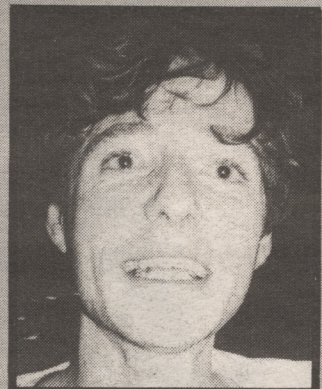
"And did one of them have a Johnson's jacket and a big nose?" And, of course, an inflatable kiddies swimming pool concealed under his arm . . .

GIMPO: Roadied for Zodiac Mindwarp. Claimed to be a Falklands vet and to be in possession of an Argentinian helmet, having killed its original owner. Was apparently fond of greeting visiting road crews with a baseball bat.

"Did you shoot many Argies, Gimpo?"

"No, but I shot a few sheep . . ."

SMITHY: Zodiac Mindwarp. Caught on video leaning from the stage to punch out a punter. Likes to jump out of windows. "That were fooking greeeat!"



Terry hears Havana 3AM's new single

TERRY McQUADE: Ex-Clash roadie, now co-manager of Flowered Up.

PHIL KAUFFMAN: Stole country rocker Gram Parsons' body from the airport and buried it in the desert next to the Joshua tree with ice cubes up its arse.

DARYL: Roadied for The Pogues and took over the bass chores when Cat married E Costello.

SCUM: "The world's scariest roadie". Made his name working for the punk band Open Sore. A short, toothless, bearded gentleman with facial tattoos. Why is he the world's scariest roadie?

"Because he looks scary and he smells . . ."

FLEA: Backline roadie for BAD. Once allegedly smacked Kylie in the mouth by accident.

DEPTFORD JOHN & DEPTFORD ANDY: AKA 'The Rascals'. Brothers. Peter, the guitarist from Fields Of The Nephilim, approached Andy one day and commented on how it was an amazing coincidence that the brothers had the same name as their birthplace.

"I come from Deptford," replied Andy. "My name's Armitage, you f—ing idiot." The exchange immediately entered roadie folklore.

The brothers may have been the inventors of the "Neff Chapatis" which are made by the road crew out of the flour which the band smear all over themselves before they go on stage to get that utterly convincing "cowboy" look.

BURGER: Possessed of a massive mouth. Often wins bets with the aid of 11 family size Milky Ways.

CHAG: A legendary truck driver and proud owner of a "Tibetan fist-f—ing chair". Chag has an invisible mate called Daniel The Badger whom other roadies and musicians have to take very seriously.

REBECCA: Respected Trucker woman. Four feet tall and considered the best "drive chief" in the—overwhelmingly male—business.

FRENCHIE: AKA Mr French. "Top Sausage" rigger. Got married in a Las Vegas casino to a Clash soundtrack and with Hell's Angels as ushers. "He nutted me once . . ."

BARRY BAKER: AKA The Mortlake Monster. Clash drum roadie. Brought up by his mother and grandmother. Many people were convinced that Topper Headon of The Clash was playing stainless steel drums. This was because Barry would use several pairs of spotless white gloves whilst handling each separate piece of equipment.

NEIL ASPINALL: Ended up as The Beatles' tour manager mainly because he was a mate who A) Had a van and B) was training to be an accountant.

MAL EVANS: Beatles roadie who started working for the band in his 30s. Whilst he was living in Los Angeles police were called to his home by neighbours who reported shouting and screaming. The police were greeted at the door by Evans clutching a rifle. They shot him dead.

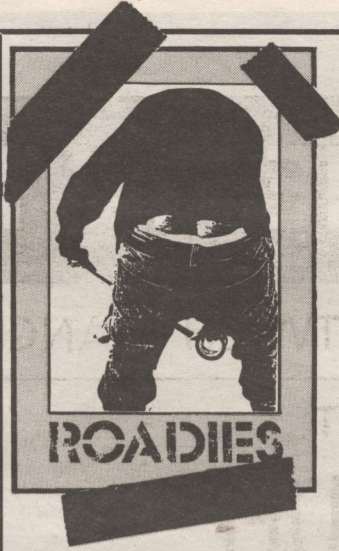
ROCKIE: Keyboard roadie. Built a six-keyboard Nickelodeon for '70s pop band Sailor. Before every tour he would demand a substantial increase in wages and be sacked only to be phoned up and re-employed a few days later when the band discovered that nobody else had a clue as to how the 'Nickelodeon' worked.

PHIL FREEMAN: AKA Obie Ben Kenobie AKA The Top Sausage AKA The Guru. This 43-year-old (who allegedly resembles "a Spitting Image puppet of Mick Fleetwood") is probably the world's top lighting engineer. Phil is revered by younger lighting engineers both for his experience and his willingness to teach others.

LIQUID LEN: Hawkwind's original lighting engineer, now works for Phil Collins. Earned his nickname for pioneering the 'lava-lamp' oil shows of the '60s and '70s.



CONTINUES PAGE 37



ROADIES

FROM PAGE 17

A roadie for The Alex Harvey Band went home to visit his parents in Wales and went to bed drunk leaving a large wodge of cannabis resin on the mantelpiece. When he came down to breakfast his mother was holding the dope between her fingers and sniffing it gingerly.

"What's this?" she asked, suspiciously.

"Um, it's erm . . . rossin!"

"Rossin? What's that?"

Mental agility was obviously of the essence here but the roadie was up to the task. He explained to his mother that "rossin" was a near-magical substance needed by him, as a roadie, to lubricate the moving parts and the mouthpiece of bagpipes.

And his mother believed him.

"Never let pipers fall asleep in your bedroom," says Digby, sagely. "They're all 6'5" and 18 stone and when they fall sleep you cannot f—ing shift them . . ."

British Guitar Roadie 'M': "I was doing this gig and there was so much dry ice that I couldn't see the guitarist at all! So I thought f— this—and I tootled off into the wings, got the old coke tin (a home-made dope pipe) and had a toot. Then the manager caught me—Gotcha! I said fair enough, shrugged me shoulders and walked to the side of the stage with him. I pointed to the dry ice and asked him if he could see any musicians. He looked for a moment and said 'You're right . . . give us a blast on that . . .'"

"It's nice," says a WonderDustbin roadie, "arriving at a customs post and you know you're clean and you can say to the customs 'Go ahead and search, take me lighter apart!'"

But it's even nicer, according to A Roadie Who Shall Remain Nameless, telling them: "Go ahead! Search for the drugs—because you know you've got them and you know they're not going to find them! F—them! European borders! F—them!"

The tour bus or transit van, loaded with hairy smellies, is an ace target for a career minded customs official. Out come the dogs, off come the trousers, down go the underpants, on goes the glove, up goes the finger. But the dog, being an incredibly stupid animal, is the weak link. There are various ways it can be confused. Wiping a large lump of

cannabis resin around the bus in a huge circle—floor to ceiling—will apparently drive the dug nuts. Here are a few other tried and trusted methods.

1) Pigeons

"We'd just come back from this gig in Amsterdam and we'd got all this gear. They pulled us over in Harwich and put the dogs on. And we're going 'Oh shit! He's gonna find it! He's gonna find it!' The guy was going 'I know there's drugs on here and I'm going to find them!'—and then this hatchback pulls up alongside us and he's got this open box of pigeons in there and the dog goes mad! That's my advice—carry pigeons."

2) Bacon Sandwiches.

"We'd just got to the Canadian border at 4am and this bloke's shouting 'Come on! Wake up! Everybody off the bus! So I walked down the front of the bus and popped this bacon in the microwave and walked off the bus eating this bacon sandwich. Voom! Dog not interested in drugs anymore! It's a fact—most sniffer dogs much prefer bacon to coke."

3) The Mission

"A dog got on The Mission tour bus and had to leave because of the smell."

But busts happen. One roadie spent a year in Parkhurst when he got caught up in the notorious "flight case bust".

A company stumbled across a lucrative sideline when they started smuggling cannabis into the country in the false lining of flight cases.

Pretty soon they'd moved onto filling the *entire* flight case with dope. But somebody slipped up and several cases, including one which allegedly contained a *mixing desk*, were left lying around Luton Airport for several days. Customs got suspicious . . . and the rest is history.

F IS FOR YOU MUST BE F—ING JOKING

THE SPUTNICKS, ever desperate to attract media attention, hired a young Japanese woman as a roadie who wore lingerie and high heels whilst working, thereby single handedly putting the cause of the female roadie back several decades. But, according to Russ, the average roadie is not a frustrated performer, definitely not a frustrated musician.

"More of a *failed* musician . . ."

Sometimes the urge to perform is too great and roadies defect to the other side—even forming roadie bands. The most notorious of these was Nigheist, a group consisting of Black Flag roadies who met their Waterloo at the Leeds F-Club where the lead singer's opening remark—"Are their any chicks out there who'd like to suck my dick?"—was met with a volley of well aimed spit, beer, ashtrays, coins and glasses from the pissed off punkfems in the audience who pushed the band off-stage and then commandeered the microphone to make a series of speeches along the lines of "Why don't you f— off back to America and take your cruise missiles with you, you sexist bastards!" to the ecstatic applause of the rest of the crowd.

Rumours persist of a British roadie band by the name of Bloodbutt—the name being the road

term for the piles which inevitably accompany many hours sat on the tour bus.

Colin is often dragged on stage to perform with The Beautiful South. This he does in a penguin costume.

"Um, I think I'd draw the line at generally being whipped and humiliated . . ."

This, doubtless, is why he's never worked for GWAR. Roadies for the barbarian costumed US schlock rockers are known as "slaves" and the point is emphasised when, early on in the set, a hapless guitar tech is dragged on stage, punched stupid, kicked to death, decapitated and then ritually disembowelled by the lead singer.

G IS FOR GAY

"THE BIGGEST disappointment of my life was finding out that Gene October is gay . . ."

Big Al: "Being at public school prepares you brilliantly for being on the road," claims Digby. "I was at a boarding school where you're bunged into a dorm with 25 blokes you've never met before and you've got to get on with them. It's much the same as being bunged on a tour bus. Don't bend down and pick up the soap in the showers . . ."

Ho hum. Are there any gay roadies?

"There's probably some in the closet," ponders a Ned's Atomic Dustbin roadie. "I don't know of a roadie that's openly gay. There's a certain amount of bravado . . ."

"Big lads fun," says Digby.

HIJKLMN OPQRSTU VWXYZ IS FOR EVERYTHING ELSE

WHAT HAPPENS to old roadies?

"After a while guys want to get settled down," sighs Digby, "get married, start families, drop out from the road . . . I met this guy who works for The Grateful Dead and I asked him how long he'd worked with the band and he said 24 years. 24 YEARS!!"

After the pub, back in Digby's squat, an impromptu roadie party overflows into an upstairs room where a sound engineer called Laura coaxes devastatingly groovy dance sounds out of several pieces of grey machinery and a keyboard. Opposite her a computer wizard strokes The Death Rattle Of The Gods out of a synthesiser whilst all around roadies laugh and frolic.

And then it hits me. Like a snare drum between the eyes. This is the celebration of the *death* of the self-important, strutting, conceited, puffed-up, bloated egocentric muso. The death knell of the strutting fop.

My fevered brain races. The roadie isn't reliant on the musician—the musician is a parasite on the roadie. When the last guitarist is made redundant the roadie will still be the lifeblood of rock 'n' roll.

"Digby," I slur, "this is the wake, the funeral celebration of the imminent death of the musician . . ."

And he leans back on his heels and collapses to the ground, clutching his chest and bellowing with laughter.

Revenge is sweet.

But soon he goes to bed. In the morning he's being interviewed for another job, guitar roadieing for another musician. And he needs the work.

ROADIE PRANKS — RHYMING SLANG OR WHAT!



PICTURE: STEVE CALLAGHAN

- Riding bicycles around the hotel
- Riding motorcycles around the hotel
- Riding motorcycles around the hotel whilst naked
- Riding motorcycles around the hotel whilst naked and attempting sexual intercourse
- Putting talcum powder between the drummer's cymbals
- Removing and exchanging all door numbers
- Sneaking into the hotel lobby at 4am and super glueing everything—ornaments, furniture and sleeping staff—upside down
- Blowing up a hotel room with the aid of a 'pyro man' and then sneaking back to bed when all the smoke alarms go off and pretending that you've been asleep when the manager knocks on the door and asks you to stop smoking. (Colin—Gypsy Queen)

- Hooking the lead singer's belt from the rafters and dragging him into the sky
- During the emotional highpoint ('In The Army Now') of a Status Quo set at Wembley Arena, the road crew lowered a miniature Stonehenge behind the band. The audience erupted with laughter, much to the consternation of the band
- Replacing the lead guitarist's strings with cheesewire (never actually done but often contemplated)
- Bombarding the lead singer with fake paternity claims
- Getting the hotel manager completely pissed and then persuading him to pretend to be the local government sexual health inspector who demands an immediate inspection of the band's genitalia (a fave of bands playing Switzerland).

Would-be stage-divers can get expert tuition from ever helpful roadies