

Duff McKagan's *It's So Easy (and Other Lies)*: A Translation and Analysis of Selected Chapters

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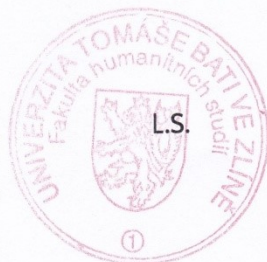
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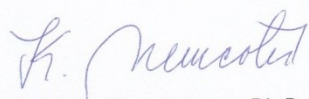
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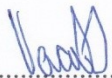
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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na překlad a analýzu vybraných kapitol autobiografie *It's So Easy (and Other Lies)* Duffa McKagana. Analýza se zaměřuje na vybrané výrazy, u kterých vznikly komplikace během překladu, a na hudební terminologii.

Klíčová slova: překlad, analýza, Duff McKagan, autobiografie, *It's So Easy (and Other Lies)*, hudební terminologie, Guns N' Roses

ABSTRACT

This bachelor's thesis deals with a translation and analysis of selected chapters from Duff McKagan's autobiography *It's So Easy (and Other Lies)*. The analysis is focused on the selected expressions which were complicated to translate, and on the musical terminology.

Keywords: translation, analysis, Duff McKagan, autobiography, *It's So Easy (and Other Lies)*, musical terminology, Guns N' Roses

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I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's/Master's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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INTRODUCTION

Duff McKagan's autobiography *It's So Easy (and Other Lies)* is a story which does have everything an autobiography of a rock musician should: sex, drugs, rock'n'roll, fame, fortune and fall. The book provides a great view into the life of the member of the world-famous band Guns N' Roses. The very first chapter provides a quick summary of first half of his life to the point where the alcohol abuse has caught up to him. Following three chapters provide inside into his beginning as a musician, his first time learning how to play bass and guitar and meeting future members of the band Guns N' Roses. This bachelor's thesis thus provides a translation and analysis of the first four chapters from the first part of this autobiography called "Knockin' on Heaven's Door."

The theoretical part of the thesis starts with the basics of the translation theory followed by the chapter on the types of translation, translation methods and translation of a genre-specific texts and terminology. The translation theory is followed by the chapter on equivalence. This chapter is, furthermore, divided into three subchapters. The first one, the equivalence at the word level, includes information on the words, its meanings, and non-equivalence at the word level and the problems which might occur during the translation of the non-equivalent words and expressions. The second subchapter focuses on the equivalence above the word level, thus dealing with the translation of the idioms and collocations, the strategies and problems connected with the translation of these. The last subchapter in the theoretical part deals with the textual equivalence.

The analytical part of the thesis is divided into four chapters where each chapter corresponds to the chapter in the book. The individual chapters include a selection of sentences from the book, firstly phrases dealing with the problem of general equivalence and secondly the sentences dealing with the musical terminology. As for my translation of the chapters, it has been provided in the appendix.

The aim of the thesis is to analyze own translation. Moreover, it aims to provide the most suitable translation of the autobiography, focusing on the choice of the vocabulary and terminology which is not only correct but also natural.

I. THEORY

1 ABOUT TRANSLATION

The term translation can have several meanings. According to Jeremy Munday, it can be either the process (the act of translating) or the product (the translated text) (2001, 4–5). Juliane House describes translation as simply replacing the original text, known as the source text (ST), with another one, known as the target text (TT). Translation can offer access to ideas and experiences that would otherwise be inaccessible to the non-speaker of the source language (SL) (2009, 3–4). On the other hand, according to Peter Newmark, this can be seemed as artificial, false and complicated because by translating the translator is pretending to be someone else. Therefore, there is an endeavor to transfer as many words from the SL to the target language (TL) (1988, 5).

According to Jiří Levý, the process of translation is a decision between opposites:

1. Translation has to be a reproduction of the original.
2. Translation has to be a reproduction of the idea of the original.
3. Translation should be readable as the original.
4. Translation has to be read like a translation.
5. Translation should follow the style of the original.
6. Translation should show a style of the translator.
7. Translation should be read as text written in the time of the original.
8. Translation should be read as text written in the time of the translator.
9. Translation can add or remove some information from the original.
10. Translation should never add or remove anything from the original (2012, 34).

To assure the translation is high quality it has to carry out at least following according to Dagmar Knittlová:

- Discourse in the TL has to appear **natural** and organic.
- Translated text has to have a **same interpretation** as the text in SL, moreover, the text has to affect the reader the same way the original would affect the speaker of the SL.
- The translation has to keep **the dynamic** of the ST – it should provoke the same reaction as the ST would (2010, 14–15).

1.1 Types of translation

Susan Bassnett mentions in her book an article by Roman Jakobson which distinguishes between three types of translation:

- intralingual translation,
- intersemiotic translation,
- interlingual translation (2002, 22).

1.1.1 Intralingual translation

Intralingual translation or rewording is “an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs in the same language” (Munday 2001, 5). This type of translation would occur, for example, during the translation of the text written in the Old English into the text written in Modern English. Another example would be when an expression written in one dialect is reworked into another one (House 2009, 4).

1.1.2 Intersemiotic translation

Intersemiotic translation or transmutation is “an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems” (Munday 2001, 5). This type of translation does not necessarily include words, but it is rather non-linguistic. An intersemiotic translation would be when a poem is reworked into a painting or when a book is ‘translated’ into a movie or an opera (House 2009, 4).

1.1.3 Interlingual translation

Interlingual translation or translation proper is “an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language” (Munday 2001, 5). This is the usual process of translation, where a text written in one language is translated into a different one (House 2009, 4). In terms of interlingual translation, there are four types of the translation. Some of them can be unwanted extremes, but those can be useful as well.

1.1.3.1 Interlineal translation

Interlineal translation is sometimes considered to be an extreme example of translation. This form of translation ignores the grammatical system of the TL, even though it can replace every grammatical unit of the SL by the grammatical unit of the TL. It preserves particularly linguistic information; therefore, this translation is usable in terms of metalanguages. Interlineal translation can be understandable during the translation of two closely similar languages, mainly because their grammatical systems may be remarkably similar (Knittlová 2010, 16).

1.1.3.2 Literal translation

Literal translation, unlike the interlineal translation, respects the grammatical system of the TL. The lexical words, however, are translated out of context (Newmark 1988, 46). Final text can be grammatically correct and natural, but the choice and usage of the lexical units may feel unnatural and foreign (Knittlová 2010, 17).

1.1.3.3 Free translation

Free translation barely respects the ST, as it reproduces the content of the text without the form of the ST (Newmark 1988, 40), therefore the text is left without the aesthetical qualities of the original (Knittlová 2010, 17). The free translation is usually longer than the original and is often not taken as a translation (Newmark 1988, 40–41). The only acceptable usage of this type of translation is during unprofessional interpreting (Knittlová 2010, 17).

1.1.3.4 Communicative translation and idiomatic translation

Communicative translation and idiomatic translation closely relate to the pragmatic aspect of the translation. Both types are frequently used, for example, during the translation of the sayings, proverbs and other conversational clichés (Knittlová 2010, 17). The idiomatic translation recreates the message of the original but alters nuances of the meaning as it prefers idioms and colloquialisms which do not exist in the original. Communicative translation attempts to recreate “the exact contextual meaning of the original” where both language and content are comprehensible and acceptable to the reader (Newmark 1988, 41)

1.2 Translation methods

Jeremy Munday mentions two general translation strategies identified by Vinay and Darbelnet. They are a **direct translation**, which is authors’ synonym for a literal translation, and the second is an **oblique translation**. The two strategies cover seven translation methods (2010, 56). The **direct translation** covers first three:

- **Borrowing:** The SL transcribes the word into the TL because there is a gap in the lexicon of the TL. Sometimes, borrowing is used instead of translation in the TL “to retain the shade of specificity.” There may also be some sort of explanation to help the reader to understand the term (Fawcett 1997, 34) e.g. Russian words like

datcha or *slasnost* are used in the number of languages to fill a semantic gap in the TL (Munday 2001, 56).

- **Calque:** A literal translation. Calques tend to make the first appearance in newspaper articles or some other type of literature as journalists and creative writers see themselves as word creators more often than translators. The most frequent example of calque is a translation of the word *skyscraper* which in Czech is translated as *mrakodrap* (Fawcett 1997, 35).
- **Literal translation:** A ‘word-for-word’ translation, the method that is used the most during the translation between languages of the same family. Although this type of translation is very often used, in some cases, it can be unacceptable, because the literal translation can have a different meaning in the TL or have no meaning at all (Munday 2001, 57).

Where the literal translation is not possible, the **oblique translation** must be used. The **oblique translation** covers remaining four methods:

- **Transposition:** A necessary grammatical changes because of the different language structure (Knittlová 2010, 19). Transposition can be obligatory or optional. According to Vinay and Darbelnet, the transposition is “probably the most common structural change undertaken by translators” (Munday 2001, 57) e.g. English *your* has in Czech two possible translations – *tvůj* or *váš*.
- **Modulation:** Changing a point of view and semantics of the SL. Vinay and Darbelnet describe the difference between modulation and transposition as following – modulation is “the touch stone of a good translator” while transposition “simply shows a very good command of the target language” (Munday 2001, 57–58), e.g. *elbow of the pipe* would be translated into Czech as *koleno potrubí* (Knittlová 2010, 19).
- **Equivalence:** Describing “the same situation by different stylistic or structural means” (Munday 2001, 58) so it is not the equivalence in a sense it is usually used. This method is typically helpful while translating idioms, proverbs or expressive terms such as *my sweet girl* which in Czech would be *děvenka* (Knittlová 2010, 19).
- **Adaptation:** A change of the cultural reference in the TL, for example when the situation in the SL does not exist in the TL (Knittlová 2010, 19). Therefore, adaptation can be understood as a situational equivalence. Adaptation is frequently used during the translation of book and movie titles (Venuti 2000, 91).

Knittlová adds to these strategies two more. First one is **transcription** or **transliteration**: rewriting the word into TL in a different alphabet. This can lead to sound distortion. It is typically used for rewriting, for example, Chinese or Japanese names; such as Mao-tse-tung, which becomes /mawtsetung/ instead of /mawdzung/ (2010, 19).

The other strategy Knittlová adds is **substitution**: replacing one word with an equivalent one. The substitution is based on that anything, in the end, can be called anyhow. There is a possibility to use a synonym, which does not add any new information or value to the original. The choice of equivalent is motivated by the semantic content of a previous statement (2010, 19), e.g. English *it* would be replaced in the TL by the corresponding word.

1.3 Gender-specific texts

According to Anna Trosborg, translation of the gender-specific texts is one of the most crucial aspects of translation. It is important, that during the translation, for example of English newspaper report into Danish, for the Danish version to preserve “all or at least the representative generic features of newsreports” (1997, 206). This might be difficult if there is a significant level of variation in the languages in the generic conventions and their realizations; the translator then must decide which generic pattern he or she must represent. It is important not to ignore the text genre’s generic realities (Trosborg 1997, 206).

There are four stages the translator needs to develop to become effective:

- **Knowledge of the codes:** Language programs around the world aim to establish communicative expertise. However, perfect knowledge of the codes is not necessary or sufficient to succeed in translation instruction. Nevertheless, it is not complicated to become expert in the translation of specialized areas of discourse.
- **Acquisition of genre knowledge:** During a translation of a specific professional genre is vital for a translator to not only be acquainted with the communicative goals of the particular discourse community, but with the associated communicative purpose of the specific use of genre as well. A translator needs to obtain genre knowledge, procedural knowledge (understanding of the tools and their uses, discipline’s methods, and interpretive framework) and social knowledge.
- **Sensitivity to cognitive structures:** It is required to know how the language is used in order to achieve the goals of the specialist community and communicative purposes. In addition, it is also necessary to exploit the conventions associated with

the specialist genre in order to “respond to changing socio-cognitive demands in specific professional context or certain novel situations in the target culture” (Trosborg 1997, 207).

- **Exploitation of generic knowledge:** Only after obtaining experience in all the levels above, the translator may interpret, translate and exploit the specialist discourse. Exploitation and taking liberties with conventions serve to achieve pragmatic success (Trosborg 1997, 206–208).

1.3.1 Terminology

The sheer process of translation is focused on “the problems of establishing terminological equivalence between languages” (Trosborg 1997, 217). A translator deals with the problems which come with synonyms and their usage and also deals with equivalents. The difference between synonyms and equivalents is that synonyms are two or more terms representing the same concept within one language while equivalents are terms representing the same concept across different languages (Trosborg 1997, 217).

Although synonyms and equivalents are recorded in dictionaries, there are types of synonyms which do not appear in them. One of the types is “stripping of compound nouns” such as *closed-loop control system* which gets shortened to *closed-loop control* or just simply *control* throughout the *Automotive Engineering* (Trosborg 1997, 220). However, this type of synonyms does not present much of difficulty during the translation. Nevertheless, there are other types, which do make the translation difficult. The common problem of translating is when the writer uses the synonyms in what appears as an arbitrary fashion in the ST (Trosborg 1997, 220).

To deal with such problems, it is suggested to “look to the linguistic context of the terms” (Trosborg 1997, 221). It is also recommended to establish equivalence regarding ST-TT and TT-TT relations. The constraints on the words and terms within the special-language texts are likely to be tighter than on ones appearing in the general-language text (Trosborg 1997, 221).

2 EQUIVALENCE

As was already mentioned, translation is a process of replacing text written in the SL by text written in another language. The text itself is not only a sum of its parts; in translation it is the text as a whole that is being replaced and not just its sentences or separate words (House 2009, 4–5). “Translation deals with the relationship between text as actual uses of language” according to House, and thus is entirely different than an activity like contrastive analysis, which relates two languages as abstract systems (2009, 5).

2.1 Equivalence at the word level

It is essential to first establish what a word is. Mona Baker uses a loose definition of the **word**: “the smallest unit of language that can be used by itself” (2011, 9). A lot of people assume that a word is the basic meaningful element in a language, but that is not true. There are much smaller units that can carry meaning. The term **morpheme** has been suggested by linguists “to describe the minimal formal element of meaning in language” because a single word can sometimes carry more than only one meaning (Baker 2011, 9–10). Each morpheme can have a different function, ranging from marking plurality and gender to changing the class of the word and adding an element of meaning, such as negation. Morphemes as such, however, do not have clear boundaries. In the word *girls* it is possible to identify two different morphemes: *girl* and *s*, but that cannot be done with the word *men*, where morphemes for ‘man’ and ‘plural’ have fused together. Thus an orthographic word may include more than one formal element of meaning, but the boundaries of those elements are not necessarily clear on the surface. It is important to keep in mind the distinction between words and morphemes as it can be useful in translation, especially when dealing with neologisms in the SL (Baker 2011, 10–11).

Baker then derives from Cruse, according to who there are four main types of meaning in words and utterances: propositional meaning, expressive meaning, presuppose meaning and evoked meaning:

- **Propositional meaning** derives from the relation between a word or an utterance and what it refers to or describes in a real or an imagery word. The propositional meaning provides a way to decide whether it is possible to judge an utterance as true or false. As an example, could serve the word *shirt* which propositional meaning is ‘a piece of clothing worn on the upper part of the body’ and thus under normal circumstances it would be inaccurate to use it to describe something that is

being worn on feet, such as *socks*. In case something in translation is being described as ‘inaccurate’ it is generally propositional meaning.

- **Expressive meaning** “cannot be judged as true or false” (Baker 2011, 12) because this type of meaning relates more on speaker’s feelings or attitude than on what the words and utterances it refers to. For example, there is no difference in propositional meaning of *Don’t complain* and *Don’t whinge* instead the difference lies in the expressiveness of the word *whinge* – the speaker finds the action annoying. Based on that, the two or more words or utterances can carry the same propositional meaning but have entirely different expressive meanings. This works not only with the words and utterances within the same language but also with the words and utterances from different languages. Consequently, the words and utterances can have both propositional and expressive meaning, like the word *whinge*, or they can have only propositional meaning, like the word *book*, or they can have only expressive meaning, like the word *bloody* and other swearwords and emphasizees. Words carrying purely expressive meaning can be omitted from an utterance without changing its informative content.
- **Presupposed meaning** “arises from co-occurrence restrictions” (Baker 2011, 12). The restrictions lie on the words or expressions that are expected to appear before or after a particular lexical unit. There two types of restrictions, but the difference between them is not always clear.
 - **Selectional restrictions** are a function of the propositional meaning of the word. The adjective *studious* is generally connected with a human subject and the adjective *geometrical* with the inanimate. Selectional restrictions in the area of figurative language are violated but otherwise are strictly observed.
 - **Collocational restrictions** do not follow logically from the propositional meaning of a word; they are arbitrary restrictions. For that reason, the collocational restriction tends to show more variation across languages. For example, teeth in English are *brushed*, but in German are ‘polished,’ in Russian are ‘cleaned’ and in Polish they are ‘washed.’
- **Evoked meaning** is connected with the variation of **dialect**, which is a range of language having currency within a specific community or group of speakers, and **register**, which is a range of language that is considered appropriate to a specific situation by a language user. As for the dialect, it can fall under geographical

category (e.g., a Scottish dialect), temporal category (e.g., words used by people of different age within the same community) or social category (words used by people in different social groups). When it comes to register, its variety comes from the following:

- **Field of discourse**, a relevance of ‘what is happening’ to speaker’s choice of linguistic items. For example, the speaker who chooses different linguistic items when participating in the game of football and when discussing the same sport.
- **Tenor of discourse**, a term for the relationship among people who take part in the discourse. The language changes depending on interpersonal relationships such as mother/child or doctor/patient. During the translation, it might be difficult to translate tenor correctly into the TL. For example, an American child might adopt a highly informative tenor and call their parents by the first names instead of *mum* or *dad*. This can be seen as highly inappropriate in other cultures.
- **Mode of discourse**, a term “for the role that the language is playing ... and for its medium of transmission” (Baker 2011, 14) e.g., the word *re* is appropriate to use in letters or emails but is almost never used in spoken English (Baker 2011, 11–14).

2.1.1 Non-equivalence at the word level

In translation can never be a one-to-one relationship between a ST and a specific TT, so the equivalence should not be defined as ‘identity’ or reversibility. Instead, each ST may have a number of different versions of translated text which could be called ‘equivalence’. Every one of these translations may differ depending on how similar the message or the function is (House 2009, 29).

During the translating process, it can sometimes be challenging to find the suitable equivalent for a word or an expression in the given context. Choosing an appropriate equivalent does not always rely only on the linguistic system or any other system the translator is using, but also on how both the translator and the writer choose to deal with the system in question. The translator may end up in the situation where there is no direct equivalent for a word occurring in the source text. This is called **non-equivalence**. As there are numbers of different types and levels of difficulty the non-equivalence may possess, Baker provides different strategies for dealing with them:

- **Cultural specific concepts:** The concept used in the SL may express a concept, which is unknown in the target culture. The concept can be abstract or concrete; it may be for example a religious belief or type of food. These concepts are often referred as ‘culture-specific,’ e.g., English word *speaker* (of House of Commons) does not have a direct equivalent in many languages.
- **The SL concept is not lexicalized in the TL:** The concept used in the SL is easily understood across nations, but it may not be lexicalized in the TL. Such word would be a word *savory*, which is quite easy to understand yet many languages miss an equivalent.
- **The SL word is semantically complex:** A word consisting of single morpheme may have more complex meaning than a whole sentence. These words may not look semantically complex at first, but it is only when the word is being translated into the language which is missing an equivalent for it when the complexity of the word truly appears.
- **The SL and the TL make different distinctions in meaning:** The TL may make distinctions in meaning, where the SL would not make any or the other way around.
- **The TL lacks specific term:** Often the TL has a general word but lacks a more specific one. It is because languages make distinctions in meanings only if they seem relevant to a particular environment. For example, English has several different hyponyms for the word *jump*, such as *leap*, *bounce*, *dive* or *plunge* and so on, which may be hard to translate into another language.
- **Differences in expressive meaning:** Words in the TL may sometimes have the same propositional meaning as the words in the SL, but at the same time, they may possess different expressive meaning. If the word in the TL is neutral, the translator may add a modifier or adverb to give the word more similar expressive meaning as it has in the SL.
- **The use of loan words in the SL:** The use of loan words in the SL may pose two problems for the translator. First of all, some loan words in the text may be used not only for their meaning but also because they may look elegant or because they sound good. This aspect of the specific word may be completely lost during the translation, because the TL may not have the equivalent loanword. The other problem loan words pose for a translator, are so-called **false friends**. These are

expressions or words which may have similar form in two languages but possess completely different meanings. Some false friends are not hard to spot, because their meaning is too great to miss but other may, for an inexperienced translator, be harder to recognize (2011, 15–22).

Baker provides a list of strategies used by professionals to deal with problems provided by non-equivalence at the word level. The most used strategy is a translation by a more general word. This works in almost all languages. A strategy which could be seen as the opposite of the first one is a translation by using a more neutral or less expressive word. Sometimes the text includes a culture-specific expression, which may not work or be fully understood by readers of the TL so the translation by cultural substitution takes place; the expression in the SL is replaced by one which may have a similar impact on the target reader as the original expression would have on readers of the SL. Another common strategy used during the translation culture-specific expressions, concept or buzzwords is a use of loanword. The loanword may be followed by an explanation, so it is easier for the reader to understand it when it is used again on its own. When an expression in the SL is lexicalized in the TL in a different form, it is possible to use paraphrasing. If an expression in the SL is not lexicalized, it is still possible to paraphrase. Furthermore, it is possible for some words and expressions to be omitted, and if the concept is too complicated or the TL is missing a name for a physical object, a picture can be used (2011, 23–43).

2.2 Equivalence above word level

The words almost never occur by themselves. Instead, they are often accompanied by other words. Moreover, the words are not strung together at random. There are certain restrictions on how the words can be combined to convey meaning. These restrictions exist in every language, and always have to be followed. Restrictions without any exceptions are usually written down in the form of rules. For example, one of the rules in English concerning word order is that the determiner cannot appear after a noun; thus, *beautiful girl the* is inadmissible. Nevertheless, some restrictions do allow for specific exceptions, and some restrictions apply to individual words, not to classes of words (Baker 2011, 52).

2.2.1 Collocations

One of the possibilities to view collocation was mentioned in chapter 2.1 under presupposed meaning. There, the term **collocation** was described as an arbitrary restriction which does not logically follow from the propositional meaning of a word. Another way to

describe collocations is mentioned by Baker, and it is defined as a “tendency of certain words [co-occurring] regularly in a given language” (2011, 52).

Certain words tend to co-occur because of their propositional meanings. The word *cheque* is more likely to appear together with the words *bank* or *money* and less likely with *moon* or *butter*. Nevertheless, this does not mean the meaning has to always account for collocational patterning. If that were the case, *carry out* or *perform* would collocate with *visit*. Furthermore, the synonyms or near-synonyms usually have a different set of collocates. Words like *spotless*, *flawless* and *impeccable* might be perceived as synonyms or near-synonyms, yet they do not pair with the same nouns (Baker 2011, 52).

Words included inside collocations may be combined in any grammatical order as long as it is acceptable. For example, words *achieve* and *aim* may occur in almost any possible combination, such as *achieving aims*, *achievement of an aim*, *aims having been achieved* and *achievable aims*, but on the other hand, some collocations have to appear in given word order. For example, *bend rules* is typical English collocation but it is unlikely to say that *rules are unbendable*, in this case, it would be more likely to say *rules are inflexible* (Baker 2011, 52–53). Collocations pose various problems in translation because of the differences in the patterning of the SL and the TL. Mona Baker provides a list of the more common problems which a translator may encounter during the translation:

- **The engrossing effect of ST patterning:** It would be logical to assume that if collocation found in the TL conveys the same or at least similar meaning as the one in the SL, the translator will not get confused by the differences in the surface patterning. While this is usually the case, there are cases when the translator gets too engrossed in the ST and for no reason at all produces the oddest collocations. A suggested way to avoid such collocations is to put the draft translation aside for some time.
- **Misinterpreting the meaning of a SL collocation:** Sometimes the translator may misinterpret the meaning of a SL collocation because its form corresponds to the one commonly used in the TL.
- **The tension between accuracy and naturalness:** The translator may be put into the situation where he or she has to make a choice – write what is typical or what is accurate. Sometimes using the most acceptable collocation in the TL may involve a change in the meaning. This change may be insignificant, but it may also be significant. For example, *hard drink* in English includes drinks, such as whiskey, gin, and brandy and it does not include beverages such as beer, but in Arabic, the

closest possible collocation refers to any alcoholic drink ranging from whiskey and gin to beer and spirits. The translator faced with such problem would have to decide how to translate this collocation-based on the given context of the text.

- **Culture-specific collocations:** The collocations can reflect the cultural setting of the SL. If the settings of the SL and the TL are significantly different, the reader of the TT would be faced with unknown ideas. These culture-specific collocations usually include cultural specific words or the concepts unfamiliar to the target reader.
- **Marked collocations in the ST:** In order to produce new images, the text can sometimes include unusual combinations of words. During the translation of the marked collocations, it is recommended to mark these collocations in the TT. However, the use of marks depends on the purpose of the translation and the constraints of the TL (2011, 58–65).

2.2.2 Idioms

While the collocations allow for several variations in form because of their flexibility, **idioms**, on the other hand, do allow for a little to no variety in form. They are frozen patterns of language, and their meaning is often impossible to deduce from the individual components. Unless the speaker or writer is making a joke or attempting a play on words, is it not possible to change the word order, omit a word, add a word, replace a word with a synonym or change the grammatical structure (Baker 2011, 67).

Some idioms are easier to recognize than others. Among the easily recognizable belong those, which violate grammatical rules, such as *put paid to* or *by and large*, and those violating the truth conditions, such as *it's raining cats and dogs* or *storm in a tea cup*. Moreover, expressions starting with *like* should not be interpreted literally. Generally speaking, the harder it is for the translator to understand the expression and the less sense it makes, chances are it will be recognized as an idiom. With this in mind, Baker mentions two cases how an unfamiliar idiom might be misinterpreted:

- **The idiom is misleading:** some expressions have both literal and an idiomatic meaning within the language, such as *take someone for a ride* (to deceive someone). These types of idioms are often used for both the idiomatic and the literal meaning, and the translator unfamiliar with this expression may interpret it literally and completely miss the idiomatic meaning.

- **The idiom in the SL is similar to the one in the TL:** some languages have idiomatic expressions which look similar but have completely different meaning (2011, 69–70).

Once an idiom is recognized and interpreted correctly, it can be translated into the TL. However, this might prove to be quite difficult. Baker provides a list of difficulties arising from translating idioms:

- **The idiom does not have equivalent in the TL:** Each language chooses to express itself differently and only occasionally expresses its meanings the same way as another language. While one language may communicate something by means of a single word, another may use a fixed expression or an idiom and so on.
- **The TL has a similar idiom which is used differently:** Some idiomatic expressions can be found in different languages. Although their meaning can be very similar, the context in which the given idiom is used might be very different.
- **The idiom is used in a literal and idiomatic sense:** As mentioned earlier, some idioms might have both literal and idiomatic meaning and as such can be used in the text. Unless the TL has an idiom, which conveys the same form and meaning as the one in the SL, it is impossible to successfully reproduce it in the TT.
- **The way idioms are used in the TL is different than in the SL:** The context in which an idiom is used, the frequency of use or the mere convention of using idioms differs from language to language. For example, English uses idioms quite frequently in the advertisements, promotional material or tabloid press unlike languages such as Chinese or Arabic (2011, 71–75).

After listing the difficulties, Baker provides possible strategies for dealing with them. By far the best strategy is a translation by using an idiom with similar meaning and form; however, this is achievable only occasionally. More often it is possible to find an idiom which has similar meaning but consists of different lexical items. Another strategy involves borrowing the source language idiom. In case the meaning of an idiom cannot be paraphrased, it does not have a close match in the TL or it does not fit stylistically, it is possible to omit the entire idiom. However, the most used way of translating idioms is paraphrasing (2011, 76–85).

2.3 Textual equivalence

One of the interesting aspects of textuality is **cohesion**, although it is frequently overlooked in the translation. It might be defined as “text-internal dimension” (Fawcett 1997, 91) but that is not the only definition. As for Baker, she describes cohesion as “network of lexical, grammatical and other relations which provide links between various parts of a text” (2011, 190). This is what to the certain extend creates a text. Cohesion is what makes connections between the words and expressions which are seen or heard. There are five main cohesive devices in English:

- **Reference** is used to describe a relationship between two linguistic expressions within the text. To make a reference, most languages use third-person pronouns; they usually refer back to something that was introduced earlier, for example by proper name or title. Besides pronouns, English also uses items like *this*, *those* and *the* to create links between expressions in the text. Another type of reference is **co-reference** which is not strictly textual.
- **Substitution** is a rather grammatical relation and describes the replacement of one item by another item. The items usually used in substitution include *do*, *one* and *the same*.
- **Ellipsis** is a grammatical relation which describes the replacement of one item by nothing, as ellipsis involves omission. Since the grammatical structure points to the items which could fill in the empty slot, the text with an omitted word is nonetheless understood.
- **Conjunction** relates sentences, clauses, and paragraphs to each other by using the formal markers. It signals to the reader what has been or will be said. There are five relations the conjunction expresses: additive (and, or, also...), adversative (but, yet, as a matter of fact...), causal (so, it follows, because...), temporal (next, after that, finally...) and continuatives (now, well, anyway...).
- **Lexical cohesion**: “any lexical item can enter into a cohesive relation with other items in a text” (Baker 2011, 210). There are two main categories – **reiteration**, which concerns repetition of lexical items, and **collocation**, which concerns a pair of lexical items somehow associated with one another in the language (Baker 2011, 190–231).

II. ANALYSIS

3 METHODOLOGY

The analytical part of this bachelor's thesis deals with the book *It's So Easy (And Other Lies)* (2011). This book is an autobiography written by a bass player of the band Guns N' Roses, Duff McKagan. At the time of writing this thesis, there has not been published an official Czech translation. Since the autobiography is written only by McKagan, it includes expressive words and subjective view on the events in this book. This influenced the choice of the words during the translation of the book. The first four chapters from the part of the book called "Knockin' on Heaven's Door" have been first translated. Subsequently, the translation of the selected chapters has been analyzed based on the information from the theoretical part of this bachelor's thesis. Both my translation and the original can be found in the appendix at the very end of the thesis.

The analysis draws from the research of the literature on the translation, which includes the translation methods, the problems arising from the translation and the strategies which deal with those problems. Furthermore, because the book is full of musical terms the research included the literature which deals with the translation of genre-specific text and terminology.

The analytical part of the thesis has been divided into four chapters, each referring to the chapter in the book. Furthermore, each chapter includes subchapter focused on the translation of the musical terminology. Each example consists of the sentence from the source text, the translated sentence and the comment which provides the explanation of the choice of the translation. I chose following sentences because their translation was somehow complicated or interesting for the translation.

4 ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSLATION

4.1 Chapter one

(1a)¹ Little did I know that the show would become *The Simpsons* and that within a few years I would start to see *Duff beer glasses and gear* everywhere we toured (McKagan 2011, 9).

(1b)² To jsem ale ještě netušil, že tím seriálem budou *Simpsonovi*, a že během pár let začnu vídat *sklenice na pivo a další věci s potiskem „Duff“* na každém turné.

The word *gear* in this context refers to *The Simpsons* merchandise. Czech has an equivalent *vybavení* for the word *gear* used in this context. However, the term *vybavení* is almost never used in this context; a better translation is *věci* or *předměty* as these terms are used more frequently when speaking about merchandise. As for the word *Duff*, instead of changing it into an adjective during the translation I have decided to describe how the logo is used on the items and translate it as *s potiskem “Duff”* putting the word *Duff* into quotation to point out that is the print. I have done this in order to make things clearer for the reader.

(2a) Others go to AA, and many more *end up in a pine box*, which is where I felt headed (McKagan 2011, 10).

(2b) Ostatní jdou k AA, a spousta dalších *skončí pod drnem*, kam jsem měl pomalu namířeno i já.

A pine box is an idiomatic equivalent to the word *coffin*. The pinewood is usually used to create a casket because it is plentiful. The whole expression *end up in a pine box* thus refers to someone dying. It could be translated into Czech as a calque *skončit v borovicové krabici*, however, this calque *borovicová krabice* is unknown in Czech; thus, there was no way I would translate it as such. Because I wanted to keep the form of the idiom and not translate it by its meaning, I decided to go with Czech *být pod drnem*. Some other Czech idioms which I considered during the translation were *natáhnout bačkory* and *zařvat*.

¹a refers to the sentence in the source text

²b refers to the translation

However, the word *zařvat* is used when someone dies during some activity, which is not implied in this sentence. The idiom *natáhnout bačkory* would be a better choice as not only the meaning but also the form is similar to the original; nevertheless, based on the information about the author, it is more likely he would use *být pod drnem*, because it more fits into his vocabulary as it does not sound so soft like *natáhnout bačkory* does. Furthermore, the idiom *být pod drnem* follows the structure of the original idiom with the only difference of referring to *grave* and not *coffin* by the word *drn*; thus I did not have to make unnecessary changes to the rest of the sentence.

4.1.1 Musical terminology

(3a) Little did I know that the show would become *The Simpsons* and that within a few years I would start to see Duff beer glasses and gear everywhere we *toured* (McKagan 2011, 9).

(3b) To jsem ale ještě netušil, že tím seriálem budou *Simpsonovi*, a že během pár let začnu vídat sklenice na pivo a další předměty s potiskem „Duff“ na každém *turné*.

While *tour* does have a Czech translation and means *procestovat*, in this case its usage is slightly different. The Czech equivalent *procestovat* or *cestovat* would make sense; however, it would completely change the meaning of the sentence, because the sentence would be suggesting that the band was on vacation and not working. The author uses the word *tour* in a musical sense and not *to travel*. Czech language does have the equivalent *jet na turné*, however, instead of keeping the verb phrase, which would create an unnecessary redundant sentence, I used only the noun *turné*, which in the context of this sentence communicates the same meaning as the original verb *tour*.

(4a) For the round-the-world *Illusion* tour, **Guns** leased a private plane (McKagan 2011, 9).

(4b) Na celosvětové *Illusion* turné si **Guns** pronajali soukromé letadlo.

Throughout the book, the author refers to the band Guns N' Roses by a shortened version *Guns*. In Czech articles and books about the band, such as *Guns N' Roses: Příběh nejslavnějšího turné* (2016), there sometimes appears the name *Pistolníci* as to refer to the

band. However, as not to confuse the reader by switching between the term *Guns* and *Pistolníci*, I have decided to dismiss the name *Pistolníci* completely. By using this name, it could be understood as changing the name of the band, especially when it is kept in English when it is used in its entirety. Just like Guns N' Roses, I kept in the original names of the other bands which appear throughout the book.

(5a) By early 1993, my cocaine use had gotten so bad that friends—some of whom did blow or smoked crack with me—actually started tentatively talking to me about it and trying their best to keep my dealers out of my life when I arrived back home for a break between *legs of the tour* (McKagan 2011, 10).

(5b) Začátkem 1993 se moje závislost na kokainu dostala až do bodu, kdy mi kámoši—někteří, co se mnou brali káčko nebo kouřili crack—ohledně ní začali domlouvat a snažili se vykopnout moje dealery z mého života, když jsem se vrátil domů mezi *jednotlivými šňůrami koncertů v rámci turné*.

The term *leg* used by musicians describes a part of a tour which is usually separated by bigger breaks in between. In Czech, the same concept is described by the word *šňůra*. It would also be possible to translate it by its contextual meaning and use the word *část* or to translate it as *během turné*. The latter of the two would be a better choice between the two, however, since there is a word in Czech, which has the same idiomatic meaning as the word *leg* in English, it felt appropriate. I also added *koncertů v rámci turné* to further specify the term *šňůra* for those who might not be familiar with it.

(6a) One of them—my version of Johnny Thunders' "You Can't Put Your Arms Around a Memory"—ended up on GN'R's *Spaghetti Incident*, *the album of cover songs* issued just after the end of the *Use Your Illusion* tour (McKagan 2011, 12).

(6b) Jedna z písní—moje verze „You Can't Put Your Arms Around a Memory“ od Johnnyho Thunderse—skončila na *Spaghetti Incident*, *albu coververzí*, které GN'R vydali na konci turné *Use Your Illusion*.

A cover song is a song, which is recorded or performed by someone else than the original artist. Czech uses a borrowing *cover* or *coververze* to describe the same concept. Instead of

using just the word *cover* I have chosen *coververze*, because some people might not be familiar with the term *cover*, thus using *coververze* helps them to understand that it is some type of song. There is no other Czech equivalent beside the borrowing *album* or *hudební album* to translate the English term *album*. However, there is no reason to add the word *hudební* to the word *album* because it is evident from the context of the sentence that the author is talking about music and not pictures, which is what the denotative meaning of the word *album* is in Czech culture.

(7a) I played a bit of everything over *the course of the sessions*—drums, guitar, bass (McKagan 2011, 12).

(7b) *Za čas strávený ve studiu*, jsem hrál více méně na všechno—bubny, kytaru, basu.

The word *session* has its Czech equivalent *sezení* which possesses the same meaning. However, to use this equivalent might be confusing for the reader. From the context of the previous paragraph and the rest of the sentence, it is apparent the author spent time recording in a studio. The word *sessions* refers to this time, however, to specify it in the translation, I have decided to describe where the author was, thus translating the entire expression *the course of the session* as *čas strávený ve studiu*. This description communicates the same meaning as the original.

(8a) I had grown up idolizing Prince, who played over twenty instruments on his *debut album*, which featured the amazing credit line “written, composed, performed, and recorded by Prince” (McKagan 2011, 12).

(8b) Když jsem vyrůstal, byl mým idolem Prince, který na svém *debutovém albu* hrál na více jak dvacet nástrojů, a které obsahovalo úžasné poděkování, ve znění: „Napsal, složil, zahrál a nahrál Prince.“

The term *debut* refers to something that is happening for the first time, in music it is usually a live performance. The Czech language has borrowed the word from English. However, in this example, it would be possible to translate *debut album* as *první album* as it does refer to the Prince’s album *For You* which was the very first album he released. Nonetheless, as I already mention, Czech does use the borrowing *debut* so, in order to stay

as close to the choice of the vocabulary of the original, I have chosen the adjective *debutové*.

(9a) My solo tour would send me first to play showcases in San Francisco, L.A., and New York, and then *to open* the Scorpions' arena tour around Europe and the UK (McKagan 2011, 13).

(9b) Na svém sólo turné bych se napřed předvedl v San Francisku, L.A. a v New Yorku, načež bych *dělal předskokana* pro Scorpions na jejich turné po arénách napříč Evropou a Británií.

In this context, it would be possible to translate *to open* by its Czech equivalent *otevírat*. Nonetheless, I have decided to translate this act by the Czech term for the opening bands. This gave me two options, the word *předskokan* or *předkapela*, both of which are used as a name for the opening act. Between these two terms, I have chosen the term *předskokan* because it is more general than *předkapela*, which has the word *kapela* in it and thus suggests that it is a band rather than a solo artist.

4.2 Chapter two

(10a) There have never been any easy *epiphanies* for me; it took a lifetime to start to understand even the slightest goddamn thing.

(10b) Nikdy *se mi v hlavě jen tak nerozsvítilo*; trvalo mi věčnost, než jsem začal chápat i tu sebemenší blbost.

The term *epiphany* refers to the feeling of sudden realization, usually based on the previous knowledge, which leaves the person in awe. While the Czech uses the borrowing *epifanie* which possess the meaning of the original, I have chosen to describe the feeling by the usage of the idiomatic meaning of the word *rozsvítit*, which usually means that the person had an 'aha' moment of realization. Moreover, the idiomatic expression *rozsvítilo se mi* is easier to understand than the term *epifanie* which might be unknown for a number of people.

(11a) Well, I'll tell you what will happen: you will suddenly see the eight brothers and sisters each take a minuscule portion at *the pot-luck buffet table* (McKagan 2011, 21).

(11b) No, řeknu vám, co se stane: najednou uvidíte, jak si každý z osmi bratrů a sester vezme maličkou porci *ze švédského stolu, složeného z toho, co kdo přinesl*.

The term *potluck* is cultural-specific and refers to the gathering where people bring usually homemade food which is shared among them. There is no such term in Czech. However, there is a similar term *švédský stůl* which refers to the table of food which is shared among a group of people. It would be possible to translate it only as *švédský stůl*; however, it would not be completely correct, and half of the information would be missing. For this reason, I have decided to further specify the type of food on the table and translate the whole expression as *švédský stůl, složený z toho, co kdo přinesl*. Since the paragraph in the book talks about family gathering and the term *švédský stůl* refers to the food, it should be clear what *složený z toho, co kdo přinesl* means.

(12a) *“Family Hold Back”* is a saying that comes from years of too many kids and not enough to feed us all of the time (McKagan 2011, 21-22).

(12b) *„Family Hold Back“ („Rodina se drží zpátky“)* je rčení, které vzniklo po letech plných dětí a nedostatku jídla, které by mohli sníst.

Family Hold Back is saying used by McKagan's family, and although it is not hard to translate or understand, I have decided to leave it in the English and provide translation in the brackets. Throughout the paragraph it is referred to several times by an abbreviation *FHB* and while it would be possible to change the abbreviation into *RDZ* (*Rodina se drží zpátky*), within the context of the first sentence this abbreviation appears in “If you are at any McKagan family gathering (a large crowd to be sure), try muttering “FHB” and see what happens” (McKagan 2011, 21) it would contradict the reality as *RDZ* for the members of the McKagan's family would have absolutely no meaning at all thus why I chose to leave it in English.

(13a) He went straight from the war to working for the Seattle Fire Department, *desperately* trying to provide for what would become a family of eight children by the time I arrived, born Michael McKagan on February 5, 1964 (McKagan 2011, 21).

(13b) Přešel z války rovnou k seattleskému hasičskému sboru, kde se *zuby nehty* snažil vydělat dost peněz pro rodinu, která měla osm členů, potom, co jsem přišel na svět já, Michael McKagan narozen 5. února 1964.

While the English word *desperately* has a Czech equivalent *zoufale*, I have decided to use an idiom *zuby nehty*. The meaning of this idiom is that someone is doing something viciously, doing everything to, for example, achieve or protect something. That is the reason I chose this idiom. This idiom emphasizes how the father was doing the best he could to provide for the family, which is what the original sentence is suggesting that was going on.

4.3 Chapter three

(14a) Originally it had a big red *A* for “anarchy” on the back, but I had taken a *Sharpie marker* and blacked it out when a Seattle band was in disbanded (McKagan 2011, 29).

(14b) Původně měl na zádech velké červené *A* pro „anarchie“, ale já ho začernil *lihovkou*, když se seattleská kapela rozpadla.

A sharpie marker is a type of a permanent marker. Because the term *sharpie* or *sharpie marker* is not used in Czech culture, there had to be a change. There is, however, a type of marker, which has similar features as a *sharpie* and that is *lihový fix*. Since keeping the term as that would be too formal, I have chosen to translate it as a colloquialism *lihovka*. Besides the colloquialism I used, it would also be possible to translate it as *fixka*, but because this term in my mind refers to the different type of marker than a sharpie marker, I chose my first option *lihovka*.

(15a) Of course, with my short *Day-Glo blue* hair and long coat, I must have looked like a Martian to them, too (McKagan 2011, 29).

(15b) Jasně, že s krátkými *neonově* modrými vlasy, jsem jim taky musel připadat jako Mart'an.

Day-Glo is a brand of a hair dye which makes bright colored colors of a hair dye. During the translation of this specific brand I had three options. First, keep the original brand; however, because this brand is not used in Czech culture, the reader would not know what to imagine. Second option was to find a brand of a hair dye, which is used in Czech Republic and makes similar colors of a hair dye; however, I was unable to find a brand which is known enough that the reader would not have to search for it. The third option, and the option I have decided to go with, was to dismiss the brand name all together and instead use a description of the color. This way, it is easier to imagine what the author's hair looked like.

4.3.1 Musical terminology

(16a) Slash, Steven, and I started playing together at *a rehearsal space* at the corner of Highland and Selma... In the end, though, I was kind of bummed out by *the rehearsal sessions* (McKagan 2011, 31).

(16b) Slash, Steven a já jsme spolu začali hrát *ve zkušebně* na rohu Highland a Selma. Stálo to tam pět dolarů na hodinu, patnáct, pokud jste chtěli PA... Nakonec jsem ale z těch *zkoušek* byl docela zklamáný.

A rehearsal refers to the time spent in order to practice particular activity, such as playing an instrument. This term has a Czech equivalent *zkouška*. *A rehearsal space* thus refers to the place where such practice takes place. The word *zkušebna* refers to such place; furthermore, it includes the word *zkoušet*, thus translating the expression as *zkušební místnost* is redundant. Moreover, *rehearsal session* refers to the time spent rehearsing. There is no direct equivalent and translating it as a calque *zkušební sezení* would sound too strange. However, to refer to the time and to stick to *rehearsal* as *zkouška*, I have decided to translate it as such, since the word *zkouška* is general and refers to not only the act of practicing something but, furthermore, it covers the time doing said activity.

(17a) As far as I could tell, there was really no discernible *rock scene* in Los Angeles in the fall of 1984—only the palpable hangover of a once-thriving *punk movement*, a thriving but really bad *heavy-metal scene*, and something called “*cow punk*” (McKagan 2011, 28).

(17b) Z toho, co jsem stihl vypořádat, mi přišlo, že na podzim 1984 nemělo Los Angeles žádnou specifickou *rockovou scénu*—jen zřejmý dozvuk kdysi vzkvétajícího *punkového hnutí*, rostoucí, ale otřesnou *heavy-metalovou scénu* a něco, co se jmenovalo „*cow punk*.“

The musical terms *rock*, *punk*, *heavy-metal* and *cow punk* all refer to the musical genres, thus translating the term like *heavy-metal* as *těžký-kov* or *cow punk* as *kravský punk* would be not only wrong but, furthermore, would make zero sense. The reason *cow punk* is put in quotation is because in the next sentence the author explains what the term refers to. Just like the musical terms in this sentence, all the other musical genres which appear throughout the chapters, have been used as borrowings.

4.4 Chapter four

(18a) Maybe the Stooges’ garagerock simplicity echoed the Sonics and Don and the Goodtimes records I loved to listen to as a little kid; whatever it was, the Stooges hit me like *an earthquake—I wasn’t moving so much as being moved* (McKagan 2011, 35).

(18b) Možná, že garage-rocková jednoduchost Stooges se odrážela na deskách Sonics a Don a Goodtimes, které jsem jako malý tak rád poslouchal; ať už to bylo cokoliv, The Stooges mě zasáhli jako *přivalová vlna—ne však vody, nýbrž emoci*.

In this sentence, the author uses the play on words. He uses the word *move* in its denotative meaning, but he also uses it as the act of being moved, which means to have a strong positive or negative feeling about something. Instead of translating it literally and skipping over the play on words I have attempted to recreate it. Similarly, to the author, I used the word *vlna* as a body of water but also as a part of an expression *vlna emoci* which has a similar meaning to the English word *moved*.

4.4.1 Musical terminology

(19a) I think if I hadn't been able to learn so quickly back then, I might have practiced a bit more and become a better *technical guitar and bass player* as a result (McKagan 2011, 34).

(19b) Myslím, že kdybych tehdy nebyl schopný se všechno tak rychle naučit, možná bych víc trénoval, a díky tomu se stal lepším *technickým kytaristou a baskytaristou*.

The terms *guitar player* and *bass player* have direct equivalents in Czech, *hráč na kytaru* and *hráč na basu*. Both terms have shortened versions *kytarista* and *baskytarista*, which is what I have decided to use in the translation. In Czech it is more frequently being referred to *guitar* or *bass player* as *kytarista* and *baskytarista*. As for the term *technical*, it refers to the possession of technical skills in playing said instruments and is frequently used within the musical community, just like the term *technický* in the Czech. Furthermore, the opposite of a technical player would be an emotional player whose playing is more based on how the music feels.

(20a) I was amazed how *the lyrics* managed to paint a picture in my mind (McKagan 2011, 33).

(20b) Byl jsem v úžasu z toho, jak *ten text* dokázal nakreslit obraz v mé mysli.

The direct equivalent in Czech for the term *lyrics* is *text písničky* or *slova*. The latter was my original choice as it frequently refers to *lyrics* as *slova*. However, the previous sentence has *words* in it: "...fascinated with how the words sounded..." (McKagan 2011, 33), thus using it again in another sentence would create repetition. To avoid this repetition, I have chosen the first Czech equivalent *text*. To refer to the song, instead of using the word *písničky* I used the pronoun *ten* to refer to the previous sentence where the author talks about the words to the song *Lovely Rita* by the Beatles.

CONCLUSION

This bachelor's thesis dealt with the translation and analysis of the selected chapters from the autobiography *It's So Easy (and Other Lies)* (2011) written by Duff McKagan. The book was chosen because it offers an inside view into the life of the world-famous musician. Furthermore, the selected chapters provide look into the beginnings of the author and the point where the abuse of his body caught up to him. Moreover, the book was selected because at the time of writing this thesis it does not have an official translation and this thesis provides at least a taste of the book to the Czech readers.

The first part of the thesis provided theoretical background. It included chapters focusing on the theory of translation, translation methods and translation of genre-specific texts. Moreover, following chapter introduced the equivalence and problems arising from the translation of non-equivalent words and expressions, and problems which occur during the translation of idioms and collocations. The theoretical part finished with a chapter on textual cohesion. The second part of the thesis focused on the analysis of the translated chapters of the book. It provided the possible translation of the selected terms and expressions from the book with the explanation behind the chosen words.

By writing this bachelor's thesis I provided a translation of the first chapters of the book based on the information from the literature on the translation and the knowledge of the musical terms used in Czech which I have read in different magazines and books throughout the years. Since this book is an autobiography and not a biography, I had to find not only words which provided a correct translation, but which would also fit into the vocabulary of a rock star. The translation of the individual chapters provided a new way of how I look at translation. Because this was my first time translating such a long text, and, furthermore, it was not a fictional book, but rather an autobiographical one, I had to think how to make my translation feel as if it was written by the original author. Furthermore, the analysis made me actually consider all possible choices of words and expressions, and justify what makes my choice the best one. Writing this thesis definitely helped me to get a bit better at understanding what makes a good translation.

I think the translators of this kind of literature have to deal with several problems. They not only have to make sure the translation is correct, but also that the choice of words would fit in the vocabulary of the original author so they should have some knowledge about him or her. Moreover, they have to make sure the message the author is trying to communicate is the same in their translation.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

E.g.	Exempli gratia, for example
SL	Source language
ST	Source text
TL	Target language
TT	Target text

APPENDICES

P I The translation – *It's So Easy (and Other Lies)* by Duff McKagan, chapters 1 – 4

P II The source text – *It's So Easy (and Other Lies)* by Duff McKagan, chapters 1 – 4

APPENDIX P I: THE TRANSLATION

KAPITOLA PRVNÍ

Znal jsem hodně feťáků. Hromada z nich buďto zemřela nebo do teď kráčí svým ubohým životem. U spousty těchto závisláků jsem osobně zažil, jak neskutečně prahli po životě, zatímco jsme spolu jako děti hráli hudbu a společně vzhlíželi směrem k budoucnosti. Nikdo se přece nenarodí jako feťák nebo alkoholik.

Někteří jsou schopní za mlada experimentovat a potom přestat. Někteří ne.

Když se Guns N' Roses začali dostávat lidem do podvědomí, byl jsem známý jako *velký* pijan. V 1988 odvysílalo MTV koncert, ve kterém mě Axl představil—tak jak vždycky—jako Duffa „Krále Piv“ McKagana. Za nedlouho potom se mě zeptala produkční společnost, která pracovala na novém kresleném seriálu, jestli by mohli použít jméno „Duff“ pro značku piva v onom seriálu. Zasmál jsem se a řekl jasně, bez problému. Celé to znělo jako nízkorozpočtový umělecký projekt nebo tak něco—chci říct, kdo dělá animáky pro dospělé? To jsem ale ještě netušil, že tím seriálem budou *Simpsonovi*, a že během pár let začnu vídat sklenice na pivo a další věci s potiskem „Duff“ na každém turné.

Tak, či tak, vzhledem k tomu, co jsem viděl, být známý jako někdo, kdo se rád napije, nevypadalo jako problém. Avšak v době, kdy Guns N' Roses strávili dvacet osm měsíců od 1991 do 1993 na turné s alby *Use Your Illusion*, dosáhla moje spotřeba epických rozměrů. Na celosvětovém *Illusion* turné si Guns pronajali soukromé letadlo. Nebyl to jen tak nějaký tryskáč, ale rovnou Boeing 727, který jsme si pronajali od kasina MGM, s obývánkem a samostatnými pokoji pro členy kapely. Při naší prvotní cestě, jsme Slash a já stihli to letadlo pokřtít ještě před tím, než se odlepilo od země, společným kouřením cracku. (Což bych mimochodem moc nedoporučoval—všechno tím načichne.) Ani si nepamatuju, že jsme vystupovali v Československu; hráli jsme ve venkovním stadiónu v jednom z nejkrásnějších měst východní Evropy chvíli po pádu Berlínské zdi, a já o tom věděl jen díky razítku v pase.

Přestávalo být jisté, jestli budu jedním z těch, co jsou schopní za mlada experimentovat a potom přestat.

Každý den jsem si dával záležet na tom, abych měl po probuzení vedle postele flašku vodky. V 1992 jsem se pokusil s chlastem skončit, ale po pár týdnech jsem s chutí začal zase nanovo. Prostě jsem nemohl přestat. Už mi nebylo pomoci. Začaly mi vypadávat chuchvalce vlasů a při chcaní mě bolely ledviny. Moje tělo nezvládalo útok alkoholu, aniž by mě za to nepotrestalo. Koks mi vypálil díru v nosní přepážce a z nosu mi teklo jako z

děravýho kohoutku na zanedbaným pisoáru. Popraskala mi kůže na rukou i na chodidlech, na obličejí a krku jsem měl vředy. Musel jsem nosit náplasti pod rukavicemi, abych byl vůbec schopný hrát na basu.

Existují různé způsoby, jak se z tohohle pekla dostat. Někteří zamíří rovnou na odvykačku, jiní do kostela. Ostatní jdou k AA³ a spousta dalších skončí pod drnem, kam jsem měl pomalu namířeno i já.

Začátkem 1993 se moje závislost na kokainu dostala až do bodu, kdy mi kámoši—někteří, co se mnou brali káčko nebo kouřili crack—ohledně ní začali domlouvat a snažili se vykopnout moje dealery z mého života, když jsem se vrátil domů mezi jednotlivými šňůrami koncertů v rámci turné. Och, ale já měl své způsoby, jak tyhle dobráky obejít. V L.A. to vždycky nějak šlo.

Jednou z věcí co jsem si nalhával, bylo, že vlastně nejsem na kokainu závislý. Přece jen jsem nechodil na koka večírky a nikdy jsem ho nešňupal jen tak. Abych pravdu řekl, představa, že jsem bral kokain, se mi hnusila. Moje užívání bylo čistě prospěchářské: využíval jsem jeho stimulujících efektů, abych oddálil opilost a mohl tak déle pít—občas až do rána. Vlastně většinou až do rána.

Protože jsem byl odhodlaný nestát se typickým „koka chlapem“, neměl jsem k dispozici nic, co by mi samotné šňupání ulehčilo. Prostě jsem vzal svůj balíček, otevřel ho, nedormle rozbil kámen na menší kousky a jeden z těch kousků si vrazil do nosu. Jasně, že jsem si uvědomoval, že si můj primitivní proces vybíral svou daň. Vnitřek mého nosu vždycky pátil jak prase; někdy to bylo až tak strašný, že jsem se bolestí lámal v pase.

A potom otěhotněla manželka mého hlavního dealera kokainu, Joshe. Začínal jsem se bát, že sama od kokainu neupustila. Jedna z věcí, která nikdy nezmezela z mého jinak pochmurného etického systému: skoro všechno může být považováno za zábavu, dokud riskuješ jen a pouze svůj vlastní život, ale ohrožovat život někoho dalšího je nepřípustné. Neměl jsem v plánu účastnit se ničeho, kde by mohlo být ublíženo nevinné třetí straně. Tady nešlo jen o obyčejné slušné vychování. Jsem z velké rodiny a v té době jsem měl kolem dvaceti tří synovců a neterí, které jsem znal od narození. Ne, v tomhle jsem si trval na svém a požadoval, aby Yvette, Joshova manželka, s kokainem skoncovala. Sice jsem neměl na to jít jí příkladem, ale nabídl jsem se, že jí za odvykačku zaplatím.

³ Anonymní alkoholici (pozn. překladatele)

Josh i Yvette mi oba přísahali, že, Bóže, jasně, že s tím skončila, a že v absolutně žádným zkurveným případě by to nedělala, zatímco bylo mimčo v *uteru*. Moc jsem tomu nevěřil.

Jednou jsem s nimi a dalšími kamarády strávil víkend na chatě u jezera Arrowhead v horách východně od L.A., kterou jsem si koupil. Jasně, že sebou Josh dotáhl drogy, a já dal jemu a Yvette jeden z pokojů v přízemí. Tušil jsem, že byla Yvette pod vlivem. Abych si své domnění potvrdil, potichu jsem se vplížil do jejich pokoje. Tam jsem ji uviděl, jak zohnutá šnupe lajnu kokainu. Při pohledu na ni jsem si uvědomil, že jsem si sám sáhl na samotné dno svého života. Přestal jsem se ovládat. Vykopl jsem je ze svého baráku a řekl jim, že už je nikdy v životě nechci vidět. Zuřil jsem—kvůli nim i kvůli sobě.

Ten den jsem s kokainem skončil a následující dva týdny plné deprese strávil s flaškou v ruce.

Pít bez užívání kokainu se stalo složitější. Už nemělo takovou sílu. Navíc na mě teď moje závislost na alkoholu byla mnohem víc vidět. V současné době už vím, co to je mít „DT“. Odborná definice *delirium tremens* říká, že jde o silnou psychózu, která se objevuje u člověka se závislostí na alkoholu. Mezi příznaky patří nekontrolovatelný třas, halucinace, stavy úzkosti, pocení a nárazové záchvaty paranoie. Tehdy jsem jen věděl, že to nebylo dobrý. Bylo mi strašně zle. Moje tělo na tom bylo tak špatně, že to vypadalo, jako bych chodil na ozařování.

Během turné *Use Your Illusion* jsem tu a tam zašitý ve studiích sám nahrál pár písní. Tenhle projekt sloužil především k tomu, abych zabil čas, který bych jinak strávil s flaškou v ruce a bez ponětí o tom, na co jsou demoverze. Jedna z písní—moje verze „You Can't Put Your Arms Around a Memory“ od Johnnyho Thunderse—skončila na *Spaghetti Incident*, albu coververzí, které GN'R vydali na konci turné *Use Your Illusion*.

Za čas strávený ve studiu, jsem hrál více méně na všechno—bubny, kytaru, basu. Taky jsem zpíval, a pokud si to album poslechnete, jde poznat, že jsem u některých písních nemohl dýchat nosem. Po nějaké době na turné se mě zeptal zaměstnanec nahrávací společnosti, který tam byl s námi, kamže to během volna mizím. Řekl jsem mu kam. Když se Tom Zutaut, který dostal Guns pod Geffen Records, dozvěděl o mých demoverzích, zeptal se, jestli bych nechtěl smlouvu na sólo. Geffen, řekl, by mohlo ty skladby vydat jako album. Bylo mi jasné, že mu nejspíš šlo jen a pouze o prachy—v tuhle dobu došlo k rozpadu Nirvany a Pearl Jamu, a Zutaut pravděpodobně usoudil, že moje seattlské kořeny a punkové kontakty by mohly pomoci vydavatelství zlepšit pozici GN'R.

Mě to ale bylo fuk. Pro mě to byl způsob jak si splnit sen. Když jsem vyrůstal, byl mým idolem Prince, který na svém debutovém albu hrál na více jak dvacet nástrojů, a které obsahovalo úžasné poděkování, ve znění: „Napsal, složil, zahrál a nahrál Prince.“

Super, moje vlastní deska hotova stejným způsobem jako Princova—u které jsem téměř vše zvládl sám—se prodává po celém světě.

Vydavatelství Geffen to album brzo vydalo pod názvem *Belive in Me* v létě 1993, zrovna když se *Illusion* turné schylovalo ke konci. Axl o tom albu otevřeně mluvil na pódiu během posledních pár vystoupeních. Já ho navíc začal propagovat ještě, když byli Guns na turné v Evropě—na autogramiádě ve Španělsku se objevilo tolik lidí, že musela zásahovka uzavřít ulici před obchodem s hudbou.

Měl jsem naplánované sólo turné hned po posledních vystoupeních GN'R—dvou závěrečných koncertech v Buenos Aires a Argentině v červenci 1993. Na svém sólo turné bych se napřed předvedl v San Francisku, L.A. a v New Yorku, načež bych dělal předskokana pro Scorpions na jejich turné po arénách napříč Evropou a Británií. Po návratu z Argentiny do L.A. jsem se přidal k partě přátel a známých, kteří by se ke mně na to turné připojili. Ti začali zkoušet, ještě předtím, než jsem se stihl vrátit domů. Společně jsme se pustili do příprav.

Axl zaslechl, že jsem plánoval vyrazit na další turné. Zavolal mi.

„Kurva, hrabe ti? Teď bys *neměl* nikam jezdit. Jsi blázen, že nad tím vůbec přemýšlíš.“

„Je to jediné co umím,“ řekl jsem mu. „Hrát hudbu.“

Taky jsem věděl, že kdybych zůstal doma, s největší pravděpodobností bych zapadl ještě hlouběji do toho drogového šílenství. Nedělal jsem si iluze o tom, že bych vystřízlivěl, ale říkal jsem si, že na turné—s kapelou složenou ze starých seattleských punk-rockových kámošů—bych to mohl částečně dostat pod kontrolu. A držet se dál od koku. Pokud bych zůstal v L.A., bylo by těžké odolat pokušení snadno dostupného kokainu. Management GN'R poslal Ricka „Náklad'áka“ Beamana, který sloužil jako můj osobní bodyguard na turné *Use Your Illusion*, aby se ke mně přidal i na moje sólo turné. V tuhle dobu už jeho zájem o moji bezpečnost nebyl jen povinností. Jakožto přítel se začal osobně pokoušet zmírnit mou sebedestrukci. Teď se naše cíle konečně spojily—aspoň co se kokainu týkalo.

Ale Axl měl pravdu. Ještě před prvním vystoupením v San Francisku se moje tehdejší manželka Linda porvala s nějakou holkou v zákulisí a přišla o zub. Všechno bylo od krve.

Show ve Webster Hall v New Yorku byla narvaná členy motorkářského klubu Hell's Angels a spustila se bitka. Ve snaze pomoci, jsem řval na dav, aby se zklidnili.

Po koncertu se lidi snažili dostat do zákulisí, ale já chtěl být o samotě.

„Jsem hrozně utahaný,“ řekl jsem ochrance. „Už to nezvládám.“

V hlavě se mi ozývala slova písně „Just Not There“ z *Believe in Me*, kterou jsme hráli:

You know I look but just can't find the reasons

To face another day

Cause I feel like crawling up inside,

Just fading away, fading away...

Turné pokračovalo podle plánu až do prosince 1993. Všichni byli stále zapálení pro všechno týkající se Guns, hlavně v Evropě. Publikum znalo všechny moje písničky a zpívali je se mnou. Členové kapely neměli moc zkušeností s hraním na turné, které vyprodávalo arény. Teda až na klávesáka Teddyho Andreadise, který hrál s Guns na turné *Use Your Illusion*, a který hrál s umělci jakou je třeba Carole Kingová, když se sotva dostal z puberty. Navíc se kapela dala dohromady narychlo a sem tam to v ní skřípalo: občas jsme mezi sebou měli neshody, včetně pěstní bitky na letišti někde v Evropě.

Po většinu času jsem se držel od kokainu dál, i když jsem v žádném případě nebyl úplně čistý. Sem tam jsem klopýtnul. Taky jsem vyměnil vodku za víno.

Přechod na víno proběhl bez problému, ale množství, které jsem ho vypil, se rychle zvedlo a já skončil na deseti lahvách denně. Ze všeho toho vína mě neskutečně pálila žába a já kvůli tomu neustále bral pastilky Tums. Nejedl jsem, ale hrozně jsem se nadýmal; bylo mi hrozně.

Na konci evropské šňůry vytáhl náš hlavní kytarista v Anglii nůž na našeho řidiče. Musel jsem ho vyhodit—naštěstí bylo turné u konce. Po návratu do Los Angeles jsem zavolal Paulu Solgerovi, starému známému, se kterým jsem hrával jako puberták v Seattlu, a zeptal se ho, jestli by nevzal nyní volné místo kytaristy v naší kapele. Už to bylo deset let, co jsem se Solgerem hrál. On za tu dobu stihl vystřízlivět; netřeba zmiňovat, že já ne. I tak s nabídkou souhlasil.

Začátkem 1994 jsem spolu s kapelou zamířil do Japonska. Tam jsme narazili na Posies, jangle-popovou kapelu veteránů ze Seattlu. Přišli se podívat na náš koncert a řekli, že jim přišlo super, že nová verze mé kapely byla více méně složená z punk-rockových hvězd ze Seattlu. Dobrý vědět: pořád jsem byl brán za chlapa ze Seattlu.

Po Japonsku jsme měli pár týdnů volno. Před začátkem další šňůry koncertů v Austrálii jsem se vrátil do L.A.

Doma mi bylo zle jak ještě nikdy. Ruce a chodidla mi krvácely. Neustále mi tekla krev z nosu. Sral jsem krev. Boláky na pokožce mi mokvaly. Můj barák v L.A. byl zaplaven páchnoucími výpary mého zchátralého těla. Aniž bych si to uvědomil, zvedl jsem telefon a zavolal manažerům s kapelou, že do Austrálie nepojedeme.

V tu dobu jsem měl koupený barák v rodném Seattlu—byl to dům snů, hned u jezera Washington—a já cítil, jak mě k sobě táhne. Pořídil jsem si ho o pár let dřív, skrytý před veřejností, v sousedství, kde jsem jako malý kradl auta a lodě. Díky nekonečnému turné *Use Your Illusion* jsem do té doby pomalu neměl příležitost se tam podívat. Usoudil jsem, že právě tohle by mohlo být ideální místo, kde bych se mohl zkusit dát dohromady, relaxovat, dobít energii.

31. března 1994 jsem zamířil na mezinárodní letiště v L.A., odkud jsem si sehnal let do Seattlu. Kurt Cobain čekal na tentýž let. Hodili jsme spolu řeč. Zrovna ho propustili z odvykacího centra. Oba jsme byli v prdeli. Nakonec jsme chytili místa vedle sebe a prokecali celou cestu, ale jistý témata jsme vynechali: já si procházel svým peklem a on zase tím jeho, a oba jsme to chápali.

Když jsme přistáli v Seattlu a šli si pro kufry, napadlo mě, že bych ho pozval k sobě. Tušil jsem, že byl nejspíš osamělý a tu noc by trávil sám. Stejně jako já. Ale u terminálu byl strašně velký dav. Já byl ve slavné rockové kapele; on byl ve slavné rockové kapele. Krčili jsme se vedle sebe, zatímco se ostatní lidi motali kolem. Mraky lidí. Na minutu jsem ztratil nit' a Kurt mezitím zmizel do přistavené limuzíny.

Po tom, co jsem přijel ke svému baráku v Seattlu, zastavil jsem na příjezdové cestě a zadíval se na střechu. Když jsem ho koupil, měl ji starou a děravou, a já musel zařídit výměnu cedrových třesů. Bylo mi řečeno, že ta nová střecha vydrží pětadvacet let, a když jsem se na ni teď tak díval, přišlo mi to vtipný: ta střecha mě určitě přežije. Přesto, bydlet v tomhle domě mi dalo pocit, že jsem to konečně dokázal, že si můžu dovolit bydlet v takovém domě, v takovéhle části města.

O pár dní později mi zavolal manažer, aby mi řekl, že Kurt Cobain byl nalezen mrtev ve svém domě v Seattlu potom, co si přiložil pistol k hlavě. Je mi to trapný, ale když mi tohle řekl, nic jsem necítil. Lidé v mojí kapele se několikrát předávkovali. Moje vlastní závislost se mi vymykala z rukou a moje tělo se hroutilo. Nezvedl jsem telefon a nezavolal Kurtovým spolučlenům z kapely, Davu Grohlovi a Kristu Novoselicovi. Usoudil jsem, že i kdybych jim popřál upřímnou soustrast, tak by to nemělo význam—o pár let dřív, v zákulisí na předávání cen MTV, kde vystupovali Guns i Nirvana, jsem se dostal do rvačky s Kristem. Vybuchl jsem, poté co se mi zdálo, že jsem slyšel nějaký kecy o mojí

kapele ze strany Nirvany. V mém podnapilém stavu jsem šel po Kristovi. Tehdy jsem všechny problém řešil jen barovou rvačkou. Kim Warnicková z Fastbacks—první pořádné kapely, se kterou jsem v Seattlu jako malý hrál—mi den po té show na předávání cen zavolala a seřvala mě. Cítil jsem se hrozně. Teď jsem se cítil stejně blbě, jak jsem zíral na telefon, přičemž jsem nebyl schopný ho zvednout, omluvit se za to, co se stalo, a taky vyjádřit upřímnou soustrast k jeho a Davově ztrátě.

Ne, že by Kurtova smrt nějak ovlivnila řešení mých vlastních problémů. Sám jsem je nijak neřešil. To přišlo až o měsíc později.

I potom, co se GN'R stali sakra úspěšní a můj život se vymknul kontrole, moji tři nejbližší kamarádi z dětství—Andy, Eddy a Brian—mi čas od času zavolali a přijeli do L.A. Jak se turné blížilo ke konci, nechtěl jsem, aby mě moc viděli. Tou dobou jsem si s nimi hrál na schovávanou. Ale oni viděli fotky v časopisech a rozhovory co dávali na MTV. A ke všemu jsem s nimi pomalu denně mluvil po telefonu. Volával jsem jim hrozně často a strašně později v noci, totálně střískanej. Andymu jsem volal snad každý druhý den, co jsme byli na turné. Ten mě v Seattlu bránil. Říkal lidem, že nemají ponětí o mém životě, ani o tom, čím si procházím. Byl ochranářský. Ale já věděl, že si se mnou bude chtít promluvit o věcech, o kterých by moje mamka mluvit nedokázala. Věděl jsem, že když jsem teď doma, byla to jen otázka času—buďto umřu nebo si se mnou Andy bude chtít promluvit. Nevěděl jsem, co budu dělat, až k tomu dojde. S těmahle myšlenkami jsem šel 9. května 1994 spát, přestože jsem v sobě ten den měl deset flašek vína.

10. května ráno jsem se probudil v mé nové posteli s ostrou bolestí v břiše. Bolest pro mě nebyla ničím novým, ani ten hnusný pocit, který jsem měl při myšlence na to, co se mi děje s tělem. Ale tohle bylo jiné. Tahle bolest byla nepopsatelná—jako kdyby někdo vzal tupý nůž a točil mi s ním ve střevech. Byla tak příšerná, že jsem ani nebyl schopný se převalit na bok postele a vytočit záchranku. Moje tělo bylo ztuhlé strachem a bolestí, a já jen skuhral.

Takže takhle jsem tam ležel, nahý na posteli v mém vysněném domě, v domě, který jsem si pořídil s tím, že ho snad jednou budu moci sdílet se svou vlastní rodinou.

Případalo mi, že tam ležím snad celou věčnost. Ticho prázdného domu se zdálo být stejně hlasité jako moje chraplavý, tlumený steny. Nikdy v životě jsem si nepřál, aby mě někdo zabil, ale teď jsem prožíval tolik bolesti, že jsem nechtěl nic víc, než aby to se mnou někdo skoncoval.

V tom jsem uslyšel Andyho, mého nejlepšího kamaráda z dětství, jak vešel zadním vstupem do baráku. „Čau, jak se vede,“ zavolal stejně, jako když jsme byli malí. *Andy*,

jsem nahore, chtěl jsem odpovědět. Ale nemohl jsem. Mohl jsem jen tiše vzlykat. Uslyšel jsem, jak jde po schodech—musel si všimnout mojí peněženky, co jsem nechal v kuchyni. Vystoupal nahoru a prošel chodbou.

„A do prdele, ono se to konečně stalo,“ řekl, jakmile dorazil do mého pokoje.

Byl jsem vděčný, že tam mám svého kámoše. Představa toho, že umřu před Andym, na mě měla uklidňující efekt. Avšak on měl se mou jiné plány. Natáhl na mě nějaké tepláky a pokusil se semnou pohnout. Musel mít nějaký náhlý příval adrenalinu, jinak by neměl šanci unést devadesát kilo mrtvé váhy, kterou představovalo moje nafouklé tělo. Zatímco mě dostal dolů a do jeho auta, ta spalující, bodavá bolest v mých střevech se mi rozšířila do stehen a dolní části zad. Chtěl jsem umřít.

Doktor, ke které mu jsem chodil už od malička, bydlel jen o dvě ulice dál, tak mě Andy vzal k němu. Přestože byl doktor Brad Thomas můj dlouhodobý lékař, od té doby co se ze mě stal alkoholik, jsem ho zase tak často nenavštěvoval. Andy a doktor Thomas mě společně odnesli do jeho ošetrovny v prvním patře. Slyšel jsem, jak se baví o mém zdravotním stavu, a ucítil jsem, jak mi bodl jehlu do zadku. Demerol. Nic. Další dávka Demerolu do zadku a zase nic, žádná úleva se nekonala. Ještě jedna dávka. Zase nic. Bolest rostla a já začínal panikařit. Skuhral jsem, zatímco se všechno kolem mě začalo pomalu propadat do tmy.

Rozhodli se mě převést na pohotovost v nemocnici Northwest. Doktor Thomas řekl Andymu, aby mě tam odvezl autem, že to bude rychlejší než čekat na příjezd záchranky. Řekl, že se tam s náma potká. Andy jel, jak rychle jen mohl, přičemž se snažil co nejméně cukat s autem—i sebemenší pohyb mi vháněl slzy do očí.

Jakmile mi v nemocnici zavedli do levačky kapačku s morfinem, začali se mě vyptávat na otázky, které jsem nedokázal zodpovědět.

„Jméno? Bydliště?“

To odpověděl Andy.

„Jak moc toho denně vypijete?“

„Berete momentálně drogy?“

Jen jsem skuhral.

Ta bolest mě naprosto ochromila. Morfin nefungoval tak, jak jsem věděl, že by měl. Tou dobou jsem o opiátech věděl svoje. Znal jsem ten příval tepla, který nabízely, avšak mě se teď žádného nedostávalo.

Položili mě na lůžko a odvezli do pokoje, kde už na ležel nějaký chlap. Ten pohyb mě donutil zaskučet v agonii.

„Kámo, já si zlomil páteř,“ řekl ten chlap na druhém lůžku. „A jsem rád, že nemám to, co ty.“

Doktor Thomas spolu s druhým doktorem mi udělali ultrazvuk břicha a já si všiml, jak můj doktor zbledl. Moje slinivka, která podle všeho dosáhla velikosti kopačáku kvůli všemu tomu alkoholu, praskla. Všechno uvnitř jsem měl pokryté popáleninami třetího stupně, které byly způsobeny trávicími enzymy, co vypustila poškozená slinivka. Je jen pár částí trávicího traktu, které se s těmi enzymy zvládnou vypořádat, a vnější část vnitřních orgánů spolu s břišními svaly mezi nimi rozhodně není—u těch to akorát tak spálí veškerou tkáň.

Chirurg s tlustými brýlemi vysvětlil celou operaci. Museli odstranit vrchní část slinivky—odříznout ji. Sešít mě zase dohromady. Načež bych zbytek života strávil na dialýze.

Najednou jsem chápal prosby, které mumlali ti chudáci ve středověku. Těch, které nechali naživu, potom co je probodli rezavým mečem nebo je opařili vařícím olejem. Přesně v té situaci jsem se teď nacházel i já.

Posbíral jsem poslední zbytky sil a zašeptal směrem k doktorovi.

„Zabijte mě.“

Prosil jsem znovu a znovu.

„Prosím, zabijte mě. Prostě mě zabijte. Zabijte mě. Prosím.“

KAPITOLA DRUHÁ

Než se jeden naděje, je život pryč. Jen neustále se prohlubující vrásky na obličejích mi připomínají, že už jsem nějaký ten pátek naživu. Necítím se jinak. Pořád mám ty samý střelený a pubertální myšlenky. Pořád říkám stejný stupidní vtipy. Podívám se na tu střechu z cedrových třesů na domě v Seattlu—která teď vypadá o něco hůř—a pomyslím si, *Počkat, vždyť jsem ji teď nechával předělat, ne?*

Ale na druhou stranu, ta hlavní otázka je jiná: Jak se mi podařilo tu střechu přežít? Nebo jinak, jak jsem se z tamtoho dostal sem? A jak jsem tam v první řadě vůbec skončil? To jsem se během psaní této knihy snažil zjistit. Ze začátku to totiž rozhodně nevypadalo, že můj příběh bude něco víc, než jen šokující výstražná historka. Měla všechno potřebné: sex, drogy a rock'n'roll, a slávu, bohatství, a pád. Ale místo toho se ten příběh stal—no, stalo se z něj něco *jiného*.

Než se pustím do zodpovídání těchto otázek, tady je to, co vím. Dovolil jsem sám sobě ztratit přehled o tom, co jsem si myslel, že bylo v životě důležité, a to i v době, kdy

Guns N' Roses začali být důležití pro ostatní. Tehdy—během těch pár světlých okamžiků, kdy jsem o tom vůbec přemýšlel—jsem měl milion výmluv proč vybočovat z kolejí. Ale nakonec se zdá, že to záviselo na neschopnosti se poprat s několika základními definicemi—co to znamená být úspěšný, co to znamená být dospělý, co to znamená být chlap. To, jak jsem se rád definoval, se odchylovalo od činů, které mě *skutečně* definovaly. A tohle rozpojení mělo za následek téměř katastrofální úroveň sebeklamu.

Ale to předbívám.

Obávám se, že tohle je jeden z těch příběhů, u kterého trvá věčnost, než se rozvine. Nikdy se mi v hlavě jen tak nerozsvítilo; trvalo mi věčnost, než jsem začal chápat i tu sebemenší blbost. Takže holt budu muset začít od začátku.

Můj táta byl veteránem druhé světové války, který měl první dítě s mou matkou, když mu bylo osmnáct a neskončil, dokud nedosáhl osmatřiceti. Přešel z války rovnou k seattleskému hasičskému sboru, kde se zuby nehty snažil vydělat dost peněz pro rodinu, která měla osm členů, potom, co jsem přišel na svět já, Michael McKagan narozen 5. února 1964.

V mojí ulici už pár Michaelů bylo—včetně jednoho, který bydlel hned vedle nás. Ten Michael, co s námi sousedil, žil spolu se svým dědečkem, který byl z Irska, a jeho děda mi prý dal přezdívku Duff, aby na naší ulici nedocházelo ke zmatkům. Když potom Guns N' Roses začali nabírat na obrátkách, můj táta začal rád prohlašovat, že tu přezdívku vymyslel i on. Tvrdil, že mi říkával McDuff. Tak či tak, Duff jsem byl odjakživa.

Nemyslím si, že existuje něco víc, co by si mohl malý klučina přát, než aby jeho otec pracoval u hasičů. V případě, že jsem se někdy na základce cítil trapně, protože byli mamka s tatínkem mnohem starší, než rodiče mých kamarádů a spolužáků, mohl jsem se alespoň uklidňovat faktem, že byl táta postarším hrdinou.

Oba moji rodičové dosáhli plnoletosti během hospodářské krize, a to mělo dopad na jejich myšlení ohledně peněz, práce, života. Pamatuju si, jak mi máma vyprávěla příběhy o tom, jaké to bylo vyrůstat během krize. Příběhy o tom, jak neměli dost peněz na to, aby si v zimě zatopili, o tom, jak museli neustále nosit svetry a bundy. Příběhy o tom, jak její matka zpravila rozbité brusle nebo panenku a to se potom stalo jejím prostým vánočním dárkem.

Pokud se někdy ocitnete na jakémkoliv rodinném setkání McKaganů (což je vždycky obrovská kopa lidí), zkuste zašeptat „FHB“ a sledujte, co se stane. No, řeknu vám, co se stane: najednou uvidíte, jak si každý z osmi bratrů a sester vezme maličkou porci ze švédského stolu, složeného z toho, kdo co donesl. „Family Hold Back“ („Rodina

se drží zpátky“) je rčení, které vzniklo po letech plných dětí a nedostatku jídla, které by mohli sníst. Skoro pokaždé si alespoň jeden z nás přivedl domů na večeři kamaráda a tohle je kde tajný kód FHB začal: ujisti se, že má host dost jídla, sám si vezmi malou porci, nic neříkej. Jako malí jsme se naučili šetrnosti a hospodárnosti skrze příklady.

Otec jako vedlejšák ještě natíral domy a já nikdy nezapomenu, jakou jsem měl radost, když jsem byl dost velký na to lozit po lešení a seškrabávat omítku a natírat společně s bratry a dalšími hasiči, co potřebovali práci navíc.

S Kaskádovým pohořím prakticky na zahradě, mě a mého bráchu Matta—spolu s naším věrným psem Moo—brával tatka na výlety k alpským jezerům zarybařit si a přespat pod širákem s medvědy a srnkami. V tomhle prostředí mi připadal můj táta vševědoucí a všehoschopný. Ale začínal jsem si všímat, jak po každém našem návratu z víkendu stráveného pod stanem nebo natíráním baráku, byla doma napjatá atmosféra.

Přestože jsem byl ještě dítě, začínalo mi být zcela jasné, že manželství mých rodičů nepatřilo k nejšťastnějším. Tatka byl věčně nervózní. Začínal jsem nesnášet jeho vztek a vznětlivost. Máma byla v mých očích andělem, takže když jsem v těch jejích rozpoznal bolest, zuřil jsem.

Když mi bylo sedm, odešel táta od hasičů a chvíli na to si našel práci jako požární inspektor v pojišťovně, díky které musel hodně cestovat. Alespoň se to říkalo. Já si jen pamatuju, jak jsem byl rád, že je pryč. Všechno se doma vrátilo do pořádku. My děcka jsme konečně nemuseli chodit po špičkách a místo toho jsme se mohli smát a žertovat a pouštět písničky.

Nedlouho potom, co táta skončil u hasičů, se máma rozhodla jít na profesní školení na vyšší odborné škole North Seattle, takže v pětáctyřiceti a po vychování osmi dětí mohla konečně pracovat mimo domov.

Mamka začala pracovat, když mi bylo devět. Během jednoho z prvních dní v její nové práci jsem přišel domů ze školy a našel svého otce—který byl ten týden doma—v posteli s manželkou našeho souseda. Matkou mého nejlepšího kamaráda. Jasně, že předstírali, jakože nedělají nic zvláštního a určitě si mysleli, že jsem příliš malej na to, abych si dal jedna a jedna dohromady. Ale já přesně věděl, co se děje: v ten moment jsem všechno pochopil. Pochopil jsem, co je to sex, co je to někoho podvést, pochopil jsem, že to, co vypadalo, jako tatkův hrdinský život, byl jen klam a taky jsem pochopil, že o tomhle nesmím před mamkou ani ceknout, protože jinak bych jí ublížil. Bylo to tvrdé přivítání do světa dospělých.

Od toho dne jsem s tátou přestal mluvit. Kompletně. Za nedlouho potom on i ta ženská odvedle opustili své protějšky a přestěhovali se do společného bytu. Moji rodiče se rozvedli. Já a můj nejlepší kamarád jsme se dostali do překérní situace—byla to jeho máma nebo můj táta, kdo mohl za to, že došlo k rozpadu obou našich rodin? Začali jsme se hádat a dělat venku bordel. On o pár let později dal svému otci k narozeninám useklou hlavu jejich kočky. Zabalenou jako dárek. Taky jednou začal sekát do stěny mého pokoje, zatímco jsem byl v posteli, která byla u protější strany. To vše jen kvůli tomu, že můj otec nedokázal udržet svého ptáka v kalhotách.

Tehdy jsem usoudil, že za to nějakým způsobem můžu já. To děláme, když nejsem dostat staří na to, abychom pochopili všechny okolnosti. Spousta věcí, co jsem začal dělat, jen abych se s tím vším popral—věci, které teď nazývám obranným mechanismem—se později obrátily proti mně. Když jsem o pár let později začal trpět náhlými záchvaty paniky, naučil jsem se je řešit alkoholem a drogama. Jasně, že když vyrůstáme, máme každéj svoje vlastní průsery, se kterýma se musíme porvat. Byla by lež, kdybych na svoje dětství sváděl všechny ty drogy a alkohol, co jsem v průběhu života spolykal. Mnohem přesnější by možná bylo říct, že jsem se ocitl ve spirále okolností, které mě začaly ovlivňovat ještě předtím, než jsem s tím mohl něco udělat: náchylnost k alkoholismu, rodinná historie plná panických poruch osobnosti, potřeba udržet tajemství a ochránit mou mámu, a vyrůstání v době, kdy se na experimentaci s drogami nepohlíželo jako na až tak na špatnou věc, jako dnes.

Takhle vlastně zůstalo na mámě, aby se o celou rodinu postarala sama. To znamenalo, že neměla moc na výběr a musela na mě nechat hromadu zodpovědnosti, a mě holt trvalo, než jsem se jí chopil. Přál bych si, abych byl během těch let, které byly pro mámu náročné, lepším synem. Do teď si nadávám za to peklo, kterým si kvůli mně musela projít. Snažil jsem se najít svém místo ve světě bez otce, který by mi šel příkladem.

Po odchodu mého otce nás nechával mámin bratr—doktor—trávit letní prázdniny v jeho chatě u jezera v horách východně od Seattlu. Tam jsem jednou, mezi šestou a sedmou třídou, zašel spolu s mým bráchou Mattem—z těch osmi děcek mi byl věkově nejbliž, byl jen o dva a půl roku starší—a pár dalšíma děckama na vodní lyže. Matt a jeden z jeho kamarádů řídili loď, zatímco jsem já a další děcko za nimi, lyžovali na dvojitém laně. Jak jsme nabírali rychlost, ztratil jsem balanc a pás připevněný k vlečnému lanu se vyškubnul.

Okamžitě jsem spadl po hlavě do vody, uvolněné lano vytvořilo na hladině smyčku, ve které skončila moje ruka. Pak jsem slyšel *zip*, jak se provaz zase napnul.

Ve stejný moment, kdy mě to lano začalo táhnout, mi paží vystřelila spalující bolest.

Do prdele, ta loď nezastavuje.

Brácha si myslí, že se pořád držím—že si to užívám.

Popadla mě naprostá hrůza, když se mi začala naplňovat pusa a nosem vodou a já začínal mít problém dýchat.

Provaz na mé pravé ruce se prořezal až na kost a serval mi sval od ramena po loket—prostě ho stáhnul jako ponožku.

Já se utopím.

Já umřu.

Najednou mi připadalo, jako by se čas pozastavil. Všechno se postupně zpomalilo. Soustředěně jsem se zadíval na zelenkavé světlo, které se odráželo zpod hladiny, na částečky visící ve slunečních paprscích, které v něm pomalu tancovaly. Hluk vody, která mi proudila kolem uší, byl nahrazen tichem. Cítil jsem na sobě jen bledě zářící slunce. Potom začalo to bledé podvodní světlo nabírat na intenzitě, až jsem přes něj přestal vidět. Obklopil mě pocit tepla a klidu a já měl pocit, jako by mě někdo vítal—bylo to, jako kdybych byl obklopen rodinou, několika generacemi, předky, které jsem nikdy nepotkal, ale z nějakého důvodu je znal. Když jsem se vynořil a všichni začali křičet a lidi se nashromáždili na břehu jezera, byl jsem už v bezvědomí.

Někdo na břehu mě přivedl zpět k životu. Urychleně mě odvezli do nemocnice. Doktoři mi byli schopní natáhnout sval zpátky na ruku, ale my neměli peníze na to, aby mi ho přichytili. Neměli jsme logicky ani peníze na kosmetickou operaci, takže moje paže do dneška vypadá, jako kdyby z ní někdo vysekl kus svalu sekerou.

Nedlouho po té nehodě jsem se zúčastnil studia o blízkých setkáních se smrtí na univerzitě Washington. Moje vzpomínky se objevily ve výsledné knize *Closer to the Light: Learning from the Near-Death Experiences of Children* (*Blíže ke světlu: Učení se od dětí, které se pohlédly smrti do očí*). To teplé, poklidné objetí mě zbavilo jakéhokoliv strachu ze smrti, který jsem do té doby měl. Poté zkušenosti jsem měl pocit výjimečnosti, ale zároveň jsem teď žil s tím, že zemřu mladý—že tohle byla jen ukázka smrti, která přijde spíš dřív než později a rozhodně ještě před třicítkou.

Po nakouknutí na druhou stranu mi to připadalo v pohodě.

KAPITOLA TŘETÍ

V září 1984 jsem s \$360 dolary v kapse namířil předeek svého 1971 Fordu Maverick na jih. To mi bylo dvacet.

Jak jsem mířil ven z města, měl jsem pocit, že mi leží váha Seattlu na ramenou. Jasně, že se tenhle typ sentimentu strašně zveličuje, když sotva vylezete z puberty. Zároveň jako u každého v mém věku, se v něm nejspíš odrážel i můj grandiózní pocit vlastní důležitosti, než jaký odpovídal skutečnosti. Ale já byl malým géniem scény, osmák, co hrál v kapelách s dvacetiletými, dítě, co dokázalo hrát na vše—kytaru, basu, bubny, ani jedno z toho zrovna na výbornou, ale dostatečně dobře na to hrát v kapele. Nyní, s pohledem upřeným k L.A. a se Space Needle ve zpětném zrcátku, jsem měl pocit, jako by na mě všichni spoléhali, že budu „ten chlap“. Část toho tlaku jsem si vytvořil sám, ale když jsem řekl, že odjíždím, lidi si mezi sebou začali šuškat a sázet se, jestli to v L.A. dám nebo jestli se vrátím zpátky domů.

Mojí první zastávkou bylo San Francisco, kde jsem zapadl k bandě punkerů. Plán: zůstat přes noc. Výsledek: zůstal jsem týden. A taky se to neobešlo bez holky. Navíc jsem znal a měl rád hodně lidí z punkové scény v Bay Area. Přesto jsem neměl v plánu se tam přidat do kapely a hrát pořád to samé.

Když jsem konečně vypadl ze San Franciska, mých krásných \$360 se scvrklo na šedesát babek. Vypadalo to bledě. Z telefonní budky na benzínce jsem zavolał bráchovi Mattovi, který v té době studoval na Kalifornské státní univerzitě v Northridge, která byla ve větším Los Angeles.

„Hele, brácha, víš, že jedu tam dolů?“

„Jo, slyšel jsem,“ řekl. „Kam míříš?“

„Netuším, do Hollywoodu. Maj nějaký volný místa v Black Angus?“ Matt pracoval jako kuchař v restauraci v údolí, aby si zaplatil školu. Hrál na pozoun a chtěl se stát učitelem hudební výchovy.

„Asi,“ odpověděl.

„Mám doporučení z Lake Union Café,“ řekl jsem. To bylo jméno restaurace, ve které jsem poslední dva roky v Seattlu pracoval.

„Možná ti budu schopnej něco sehnat,“ řekl Matt.

„Jak se tam dostanu?“

„Vezmi to po 5 směrem na 405 a vyjed' výjezdem Roscoe Boulevard. Na Roscoe se dej na západ, dokud nedojedeš na Corbin Avenue. Zaboč doprava. Restaurace jen na adrese 9145 Corbin.“

Jel jsem přímo tam a tutéž noc, 14. září 1984, jsem začal směnu jako pomocný kuchař.

Na konci směny jsem se rozhodl okouknout svůj nový domov: Hollywood. Zeptal jsem se, jak se tam dostanu.

„No, je to asi pětadvacet mil...“

Cože? Kde jsem teda sakra byl? Myslel jsem, že *tohle* bylo Los Angeles?

„Dáš se dolů na Venturu a pak doleva. Pak pokračuj celou cestu do kaňonu Laurel—budeš to muset vzít tama, aby ses dostal přes horu...“

Ech? Kaňon, který vede *přes* horu? To jde?

Vyrazil jsem, přičemž jsem vyhlížel cokoliv, co připomínalo hory. Viděl jsem hromadu kopců ale žádné hory. Po nějaké době jsem našel kaňon Laurel—cestu, která vedla do kopce a potom... Los Angeles! Z vrcholu toho kopce jsem viděl, že centrum nebylo o moc větší než Seattle, ale mihotání světél hustě osídlených nízko položených čtvrtí se táhlo do nekonečna—město se rozpínalo kam až jsem dohlédl.

Během prvních týdnů ve městě jsem strávil několik nocí u bráchy. Jenže jeho byt byl hrozně daleko od Hollywoodu, který outsiderovi jako já připadal jako centrum hudební scény v L.A. Když k tomu přidám jak dlouho mi trvalo tam dojet, bylo to skoro jako by bráchův byt—a Black Angus—byl v úplně jiném městě. Navíc jsem se nemohl jen tak objevit a zabrat mu byt.

Několikrát jsem proto přenocoval v autě v Hollywood Hills. Poldové neprojížděli hezké ulice, které lemovaly stromy, posazené nad Franklin Avenue.

Lesk a sláva letní Olympiády toho roku odezněla a přítomnost policie se od konce her přesunula do centra Hollywoodu a tím zanechala otevřené brány pro zločince a lupiče a celkově nestřeženou anarchii. Stejně tak byly vysoce aktivní i gangy. Crack se prodával po celém Hollywoodu. Já skončil uprostřed toho všeho—s basou na kterou jsem se pořád učil hrát.

Přesto všechno jsem měl důvěru ve své společenské schopnosti a věřil jsem, že toho mám hodně co nabídnout. Cítil jsem, že punk rock byl v 1984 v posledním tažení. První dvě vlny byly za náma—původní punkové skupiny a potom skupiny co hrály hardcore. Cokoliv následovalo, lidi v mém věku—ti, co si prošli punkem a vylezli na opačné straně rozhlížející se po něčem novém—budou ti, kteří to začnou. Budoucnost nám ležela na ramenou. Hledal jsem další kluky, kteří byli jako já a měli zájem o to pokusit se vytvořit další paradigma. Věděl jsem, že sehraju důležitou a podstatnou roli v jakékoliv hudební inovaci, která bude následovat. Ne, že bych si tak věřil, spíš jsem z toho byl nadšený.

Zatímco se mi tohle všechno honilo hlavou, objevil se v místním hudebním časopise *Recycler* inzerát, který během mého prvního týdne v L.A. upoutal moji pozornost. Šlo o hledá-se inzerát kapely, která hledala baskytaristu. Kontaktní osoba se jmenovala Slash. Usoudil jsem, že někdo s takovým jménem musel být stejný punk-rockový chlápek jako já. A pokud bychom měli podobný hudební pozadí možná, že taky vzhlížel k hudebnímu horizontu.

Z toho, co jsem stihl vypožorovat, mi přišlo, že na podzim 1984 nemělo Los Angeles žádnou specifickou rockovou scénu—jen zřejmý dozvuk kdysi vzkvétajícího punkového hnutí, rostoucí, ale otřesnou heavy-metalovou scénu a něco, co se jmenovalo „cow punk.“ To v podstatě byli rockeři v kostkovaných košilích, kteří se snažili hrát písničky Patsy Clinové, zatímco jejich tlustý přítelkyně zpívaly.

Slashův inzerát zmiňoval, že ho ovlivňovali Alice Cooper, Aerosmith a Motörhead. To bylo mnohem přijatelnější, než cokoliv na co jsem ten první týden narazil. A já se stejně jen snažil seznamovat s lidmi.

Zavolal jsem Slashovi na telefon a pokecal si s ním. Měl ten samý jemný hlas, který má dnes. Když řekl název svojí kapely, rozuměl jsem mu *Rodker*. Páni, pomyslel jsem, to je fakt divnej název pro kapelu. Domluvil jsem, že se potkám s ním a s bubeníkem Stevenem Adlerem ve 24 hodinovém lahůdkářství, co se jmenovalo Canter's, na Fairfax.

„Budem sedět hned v prvním boxu zleva,“ řekl.

Oznámil jsem mu, že mám modré vlasy a že budu mít na sobě dlouhý černo-červený kožený kabát.

„Hádám, že tě bude těžké přehlédnout,“ odvětil.

V tu dobu jsem si už byl vědom jedné věci: lidi ze Seattlu v té době prostě vypadali jinak. Když Seattlem projížděly kapely jako Black Flag nebo Dead Kennedys, vždycky říkali, jak místní davy vypadaly jinak, ale já jsem tomu nikdy nevěnoval moc pozornosti. Až do teď. V L.A. jsem se rozhodl využít svůj odlišný vzhled a tím přesvědčit lidi, co kontrolovali občanky u vstupu do baru, že jsem nebyl ze Spojených Států, a tedy neuměl anglicky. Když po mě chtěli občanku, nasadil jsem si brýle a zmatený výraz. Museli si myslet, že jsem Švéd nebo tak něco, ale ty vole ono to skoro vždycky zafungovalo. Teď jsem se chystal podívat se na druhou stranu mince.

Mířil jsem ke Carter's ve svém kabátu pasáka přesně, jak jsem slíbil. Byl to černý kabát, který sahal až na zem s červeným lemováním. Původně měl na zádech velké červené *A* pro „anarchie“, ale já ho začernil lihovkou, když se seattleská kapela rozpadla. Jmenovala se Fartz a naše logo obsahovalo anarchistické *A*.

Vešel jsem dovnitř, podíval se na první box vlevo a uviděl všechny ty zasnávané vlasy. Z nějakého důvodu jsem předpokládal, že ti chlapi budou vypadat jak Social Distortion. Místo toho, i když vypadali, že jim je tolik co mě, borci z Rodker měli dlouhé vlasy a rockerský holky.

Když mě šokoval už jen *pohled* na dva dlouhovlasé rockery z Hollywoodu, mohl jsem si jen představovat, jaké to bude s nimi mluvit. Jasně, že s krátkými neonově modrými vlasy, jsem jim taky musel připadat jako Marťan. Obě strany byly lehce překvapeny a zvědavý, když jsme se poprvé potkali tváří v tvář.

Slashovy dlouhé vlasy, jak se ukázalo, skrývaly stydlivého introverta. Přesto byl v pohodě. Měl pod stolem zastrčenou flašku vodky—on ani Steven taky ještě neměli jednadvacet a tohle bylo nejbližší, jak se mohli dostat k baru. Pili jsme vodku a jedli talíře Canter's polévky s ječmenem a fazolemi. Tu polévku pořád miluju.

Vyhazovači v klubech nebyli jediní, které můj seattleský punk vzhled zmátl. Slashova přítelkyně se lehce ztřískala, naklonila se ke mně a řekla: „Seš teplej?“

„Ne, nejsem,“ zasmál jsem se.

„Máš krátký vlasy—myslím, že seš teplej. V pohodě, mě to můžeš říct. Máš holku?“

„Ne,“ řekl jsem „Teď jsem se přistěhoval.“

„To je dobrý, nějakou ti seženem.“

Steven Adler byl hrozně milej a vyjadřoval se s nakažlivým, až dětinským nadšením.

Řekl, „Poslouchej, budem skvělí—rozhejbem nohy a roztleskáme ruce.“

Říká to do dneška, když si celý natěšený vleze za bubny: rozhýbeme nohy a roztleskáme ruce.

Všichni jsme potom šli ke Slashovi—bydlel s mamkou. Už ten večer na něm bylo vidět, že je mimořádný hráč, i když hrál jen na akustickou kytaru. Byl jsem ohromený tou čistou, emotivní silou, ze které tak snadno čerpal. Slash už tehdy byl ve své vlastní lize a sledovat ho hrát na kytaru byl „ty vole“ moment.

Přesto jsem měl strach, že on a Steven měli hudební základy někde úplně jinde, než kde jsem je měl já. Částečně k mým obavám přispělo to, jak to bylo v Seattlu—dlouhovlasí chlápci většinou poněkud zaostávali. Dlouhé vlasy v Seattlu znamenaly děcka z předměstí nebo z farmářských, či dřevařských měst. Dlouhé vlasy znamenaly heavy

metal. My z punkové scény jsme jim říkali „heshers“⁴. Byli jsme děcka z města. Mysleli jsme si o sobě, že jsme něco víc. Jasně, že některé z mých obav ohledně Slashe a Stevena měly pevnější základ—„Metal on Metal“ od Anvil byl součástí jejich repertoáru coverů, který hráli. A ukázalo se, že název jejich kapely byl Road Crew a ne tak hrozně divný Rodker.

I tak, čím víc jsme spolu hráli a mluvili o hudbě a poslouchali hudbu, tím víc společného jsme toho nacházeli. Slash mi ten večer ukázali svoje umělecké výtvary—avšak nikdy by mě nenapadlo, že ani ne o rok později bude ručně kreslit logo pro kapelu, ve které spolu skončíme, logo, na kterém jsou dvě pistole s trnitými stonky růží obtočenými kolem hlavní.

Slash byl výstřední chlápek. Měl v pokoji hada.

„Je hrozný zlatíčko,“ řekl mi.

Nic jsem neřekl, ale v duchu jsem si říkal, *Hmmm, had zlatíčko?*

I přesto byl super. Když nic jiného, pomyslel jsem si, je geniální kytarista—a líbí se mi. A co bylo možná nejdůležitější, teď jsem věděl, kde Slash bydlel a věděl jsem, jak se k němu dostat. Vzhledem k tomu, že jsem ve městě neznal nikoho jiného, byl tohle klíč k našemu přetrvávajícím přátelství. Během těch prvních týdnů jsem potkal kopu lidí, ale na většinu z nich jsem už později nenarazil. Teď jsem mohl najít Slashe kdykoliv jsem chtěl.

A jako přidaný bonus jsem měl rád Slashovu mamku. Chovala se ke mně hrozně hezky. Zavolala mojí mamce, aby jí řekla, že jsem v pořádku. Později mi volávala do Black Angus, aby se ujistila, že je všechno tak jak má. Během prvních týdnů v L.A. se mi stala náhradní matkou. (A popravdě v té roli pokračovala ještě několik dalších let.)

Slash, Steven a já jsme spolu začali hrát ve zkušebně na rohu Highland a Selma. Stálo to tam pět dolarů na hodinu, patnáct, pokud jste chtěli PA. Celý týden jsem s nimi vyhrával, zatímco jsem přespával v autě.

Nakonec jsem ale z těch zkoušek byl docela zklamaný. Slashův talent byl bezkonkurenční, ale to jak on a Steven hráli, nebyl můj šálek kávy. Ty písničky, co hráli, to, jak zněla kytara, Stevenův set s dvojitým basovým bubnem a se všemi těmi tom-tomy a cimbály—bylo to celý hrozně zažitý. Jeli podle existující formy. Já hledal lidi, kteří byli připraveni na to, vytvořit formu novou.

⁴ Fanoušek heavy-metalu, který má účes a styl oblékání stejný jako jeho idol (zdroj: onlineslangdictionary)

Navíc jsme neměli zpěváka. Přišlo mi, jako bychom byli školní kapela, i když taková, co měla úžasnýho kytaristu. Jelikož jsem byl v tuctu kapel a hrál s nespočtem profesionálních hudebníků, považoval jsem se za ostříleného veterána. Poznal jsem na Slashovi a Stevenovi, že se fakt snažili—že chtěli víc—ale já jsem se nepřestěhoval až do Los Angeles, abych hrál s lidmi, kteří se pořád snažili přijít jak na to.

O týden později jsem jim řekl, „Nechci s váma hrát, ale chci se s váma pořád kámošit.“

„Och, ok,“ řekli.

V tom věku to nebylo nijak divný—bylo normální říkat věci narovinu. Oba jsem je měl fakt rád, ale Road Crew nebyla to, co jsem v té době chtěl dělat.

I nadále jsme se spolu často potkávali. O pár týdnů později, v říjnu, mě Slash a Steven vzali do klubu v západním Hollywoodu, který se jmenoval Troubadour, na vystoupení L.A. Guns, které bylo přístupné všem věkovým kategoriím. Oba dva jednu dobu hráli s jejich zpěvákem, Axlem Rosem, v kapele jménem Hollywood Rose, která byla a skončila. Axl teď byl v téhle druhé kapele, která získala své jméno díky jejich kytaristovi, Tracii Gunsovi. Ukázalo se, že Tracii byl místním hrdinou. Chodil na stejnou střední jako Slash a hrál ve Slashových rivalských kapelách.

Troubadour byl skutečný rockový klub a já do té doby jen v jednom druhém rockovém klubu. Punkový vystoupení v Seattlu se odehrávaly ve zcela jiných prostorech—boudách, sklepech soukromých domů, VFW halách pronajatých na jednu noc. V L.A. tomu očividně bylo jinak.

KAPITOLA ČTVRTÁ

Všichni moji starší bráchové a ségry hodně poslouchali rock and roll a několik z nich hrálo na kytaru a zpívalo. Dům, sklep i garáž překypovaly hudebními nástroji. Co si pamatuju, Jimi Hendrix, Rolling Stones, Beatles a Sonics se neustále ozývali z rodinného sterea, soustavy Sanyo, v obývacím pokoji, kterou můj brácha Mark dovezl z Vietnamu, když tam dosloužil.

Pamatuju si, že jsem byl neskutečně fascinovaný *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. Byla to fotka na obale, co upoutalo moji pozornost—uniformy pochodové kapely, všechny ty obličejy. Ale pak jsem začal poslouchat ty písničky. Pouštěl jsem si „Lovely Rita“ pořád dokola, fascinovaný zvukem těch slov, exotickou kadencí. Byl jsem v úžasu z toho, jak ten text dokázal v mé mysli nakreslit obraz. Slyšel jsem tu písničku tolikrát až jsem byl přesvědčený, že jsem ji napsal—pro holku, která se mi ve školce líbila. Hudba

dokázala v mé hlavě vykouzlit obrazy a pomohla mi přehlušit to napětí a hluk, kterému jsem se doma snažil vyhýbat.

Další starší brácha, Bruce, byl v rockové kapele. Měl dlouhé vlasy a v pokoji koberec z ovčí kůže. Jezdil v kabrioletu. A měl nádhernou dutou, šestistrunnou kytaru Gretsch a basu Les Paul Custom pro leváky. Bruce neustále někde vystupoval a vracel se domů s historkami, které jen posílily moje romantické představy o rock and rollu. Navíc si mě občas vzal k sobě a nechal mě mlátit do jeho kytar a vyptávat se ho. Hodně to pro mě znamenalo; je o čtrnáct let starší než já a jsem si jistý, že jsem čas od času byl otravnější.

Jednoho dne se mě Bruce zeptal, jestli bych s ním nechtěl hrát na koncertě. Já? Cože? Hádám, že si nejspíš nevšiml faktu, že jsem se ještě na nic nenaučil hrát. Ostýchavě jsem mu to sdělil, přičemž jsem si zoufale říkal, jak mě mine moje velká příležitost.

„To neřeš,“ odvětil Bruce. „Naučím tě hrát na basu.“

Tak jo!

Bruce i já jsme oba leváci, takže naučit se tak hrát pro mě nebyl problém. (Až když se Bruce se všemi jeho kytarami odstěhoval, čelil jsem dilema, kdy jsem se musel přeučit jak hrát na zaprášené kytare pro praváky. Našel jsem ji ležet zapomenutou s v rohu máminy garáže.) První písnička, kterou jsem se naučil, bylo „Birthday“ od Beatles. První písnička navždy zůstane tvým základním hudebním kamenem a tahle mě naučila nejen prstoklad, ale zároveň zahrnula i základy celé bluesové durové stupnice, stupnice, kterou jsem později používal znova a znova během své kariéry v Guns N' Roses.

Od toho dne jsem zjistil, jak pro mě bylo jednoduché naučit se písničky jen z odposlechu—jakýchkoliv písniček, které jsem se chtěl naučit. Myslím, že kdybych tehdy nebyl schopný se všechno tak rychle naučit, možná bych víc trénoval, a díky tomu se stal lepším technickým kytaristou a baskytaristou. Každý se nejspíš můžeme podívat do minulosti a najít něco, co jsme měli nebo mohli udělat jinak—a lépe—a tohle je jedna z mých věcí. Avšak hrát hudbu jiných bylo uspokojující jen do určité doby. Cítil jsem, že bych toho mohl dělat mnohem víc, ale neměl jsem nejmenší ponětí jak napsat písničku nebo založit kapelu.

Potom jsem v sedmé třídě narazil na podomácku vyrobený leták na undergroundový punkový koncert. Nebyl jsem si sto procentně jistý tím, co to znamenalo být proti establishmentu—a neměl jsem ponětí o hudebním průmyslu, anebo co to znamenalo pracovat mimo něj—ale bylo jasné, že tyhle kapely nebyly součástí systému, který vytvářel třpytivé letáky pro show na Paramount Theatre nebo Kingdomu. Tentýž týden jsem shodou náhod poprvé slyšel Iggyho a The Stooges. Možná, že garage-rocková

jednoduchost Stooges se odrážela na deskách Sonics a Don a Goodtimes, které jsem jako malý tak rád poslouchal; ať už to bylo cokoliv, The Stooges mě zasáhli jako přívalová vlna—ne však vody, nýbrž emocí. Zadní část mých nohou ztrácela sílu, po zádech mi přebíhala husí kůže, svět se začal rozpadat a zanechávat za sebou jen tuhle dunící hudbu.

Chvíli potom jsem zažil nezapomenutelný sen svého života, sen, který se mi v mysli přehrával znovu a znovu ještě několik dalších let. V tom snu jsem zpíval v kapele ve sklepě místního kostela před všema svýma kámošema. Byl jsem posedlý hudbou, ječel jsem, vrískal, vrčel. Mezi diváky a kapelou nebyla žádná bariéra, a všichni kolem skákali stejně šíleně jako já, shazovali na zem flašky od piva a sklenice, které se roztříštily o podlahu. Svíjel jsem se kolem po střepech skla, ale necítil žádnou bolest. Slyšel jsem a viděl přesně, jak by měl rock vypadat: syrovej a dokurvenej, kde se nic nedrželo zpátky, syrovej a dokurvenej se všemi hranicemi zbořenými, syrovej a dokurvenej.

Když jsem se další ráno probudil, hned jsem zamířil do obchodu s deskami a pořídil si vlastní kopii *Raw Power* od Iggyho a The Stooges. Hudba mých starších sourozenců byla vytlačena něčím, co bylo moje vlastní. Jmenovalo se to punk rock a od teď to bylo to moje.

APPENDIX P II: THE SOURCE TEXT

CHAPTER ONE

I've known a lot of junkies. Many of these addicts have either died or continue to live a pitiful existence to this day. With many of these same people, I personally witnessed a wonderful lust for life as we played music together as kids and looked toward the future. Of course, no one sets out to be a junkie or an alcoholic.

Some people can experiment in their youth and move on. Others cannot.

When Guns N' Roses began to break into the public consciousness, I was known as a *big* drinker. In 1988, MTV aired a concert in which Axl introduced me—as usual—as Duff “the King of Beers” McKagan. Soon after this, a production company working on a new animated series called me to ask if they could use the name “Duff” for a brand of beer in the show. I laughed and said of course, no problem. The whole thing sounded like a low-rent art project or something—I mean, who made cartoons for adults? Little did I know that the show would become *The Simpsons* and that within a few years I would start to see Duff beer glasses and gear everywhere we toured.

Still, given what I'd seen, a reputation for drinking didn't seem like a big deal. But by the time Guns N' Roses spent twenty-eight months from 1991 to 1993 touring the *Use Your Illusion* albums, my intake had reached epic proportions. For the round-the-world *Illusion* tour, Guns leased a private plane. It wasn't an executive jet; it was a full-on 727 we leased from MGM casino, with lounges and individual bedroom suites for the band members. Slash and I christened the plane on our maiden journey by smoking crack together. Before the wheels had left the ground. (Not something I recommend, incidentally—the smell gets into everything.) I don't even remember playing Czechoslovakia; we played a stadium show in one of the most beautiful cities in East Europe not long after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the only way I knew I'd even been in the country was because of the stamp I found in my passport.

It wasn't clear anymore whether or not I would be one of those who could experiment in his youth and move on.

Every day I made sure I had a vodka bottle sitting next to my bed when I woke up. I tried to quit drinking in 1992, but started again with a vengeance after only a few weeks. I just could not stop. I was too far gone. My hair began falling out in clumps and my kidneys ached when I pissed. My body couldn't take the full assault of the alcohol without bitching back at me. My septum had burned through from coke and my nose ran continuously like a

leaky faucet in a neglected men's room urinal. The skin on my hands and feet cracked, and I had boils on my face and neck. I had to wear bandages under my gloves in order to be able to play my bass.

There are many different ways to come out of a funk like that. Some people go straight to rehab, some go to church. Others go to AA, and many more end up in a pine box, which is where I felt headed.

By early 1993, my cocaine use had gotten so bad that friends—some of whom did blow or smoked crack with me—actually started tentatively talking to me about it and trying their best to keep my dealers out of my life when I arrived back home for a break between legs of the tour. Ah, but I had my ways to circumvent all the do-gooders. There was always a way in L.A.

One of the lies that I told myself was that I wasn't really a cocaine addict. After all, I didn't go to coke parties and never did cocaine by itself. As a matter of fact, I hated the idea that I was doing coke. My use was strictly utilitarian: I used its stimulant effects to stave off drunkenness and to allow me to drink for much longer—often days on end. Actually, mostly days on end.

Because I was adamant about not becoming the stereotypical “coke guy,” I didn't have any of the fancy grinders that made coke a lot easier to snort. I would just get my package, open it, break a rock into a few smaller pieces in a half-assed way, and shove one of the pieces up my nose. Of course I could tell that my primitive process was taking a toll. The inside of my nose was always on fire; sometimes it flared so badly that I would double over in pain.

Then the wife of my main coke dealer, Josh, got pregnant. I started to worry that she had not given up her own coke habit. One thing that never seeped from my otherwise porous ethical system: almost anything could be deemed fun and games when it was your life and your life alone that you were toying with, but endangering someone else was unacceptable. I was not going to participate in any situation where an innocent third party was being harmed. This was not just basic human decency. I came from a huge family, and by this point in my life I had something like twenty-three nephews and nieces, all of whom I had known since they were infants. No, I was going to put my foot down here with Josh and his wife, Yvette, and insist that she quit. I didn't yet have the capacity to lead by example, but I did offer to pay for her to go to rehab.

Both Josh and Yvette swore to me that, Geez, of course she had stopped and that there was absolutely no fucking way she would do that while the baby was in utero. I was suspicious.

One weekend they came to stay with me and some other friends at a cabin I had bought on Lake Arrowhead, up in the mountains east of L.A. Josh had of course brought drugs, and I had given him and Yvette one of the downstairs bedrooms. I could tell Yvette was high. To check on my suspicions, I quietly entered their downstairs bedroom and found her bent over, snorting a line of coke. Seeing this for myself made me realize that I had sunk to an all-time low in my life. I lost it. I kicked them out of my house and told them that I never wanted to see them again. I was seething—at them, and at myself.

I quit coke that day and drank myself through two brutal weeks of serious depression.

Even though the effects of my drinking were more noticeable without the coke, drinking proved harder to rein in, much less kick. These days I know what having the “DTs” actually means. The clinical definition of *delirium tremens* is a severe psychotic condition occurring in some persons with chronic alcoholism, characterized by uncontrollable trembling, vivid hallucinations, severe anxiety, sweating, and sudden feelings of terror. All I knew then was that it wasn’t cool. I felt really sick. My body was falling apart so badly that I looked like I was getting radiation treatment.

Throughout the *Use Your Illusion* tour I had recorded songs on my own, ducking into studios here and there. This project had served largely as a way to kill time I would otherwise have spent drinking, and I didn’t know what the demos were for, really. One of them—my version of Johnny Thunders’ “You Can’t Put Your Arms Around a Memory”—ended up on GN’R’s *Spaghetti Incident*, the album of cover songs issued just after the end of the *Use Your Illusion* tour.

I played a bit of everything over the course of the sessions—drums, guitar, bass. I sang, too, and if you listen to the album, it’s clear I wasn’t able to breathe through my nose on some songs. Then at some point during the tour, a record label employee who was out on the road with us asked where I kept disappearing to on off days. I told him. When Tom Zutaut, who had signed Guns to Geffen records, caught wind of the demos, he asked me if I would like a solo deal. Geffen, he said, could release the tracks as an album. I knew he was probably being mercenary about it—by this time Nirvana and Pearl Jam had broken, and Zutaut probably figured leveraging my Seattle roots and punk connections could help the label reposition GN’R.

But I didn't care. To me it was a chance to realize a dream. I had grown up idolizing Prince, who played over twenty instruments on his debut album, which featured the amazing credit line "written, composed, performed, and recorded by Prince."

Cool, my own record done the way Prince did it—largely on my own—getting distributed around the world.

Geffen rushed it out as *Believe in Me* in the summer of 1993, just as the *Illusion* tour was wrapping. Axl talked it up on stage during the last few gigs. And I even started to promote it while Guns was still in Europe—at a signing in Spain, so many people showed up that the street outside the record store had to be shut down by police in riot gear.

I had scheduled a solo tour that would start immediately after GN'R's last shows—two final gigs in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in July 1993. My solo tour would send me first to play showcases in San Francisco, L.A., and New York, and then to open the Scorpions' arena tour around Europe and the UK. Returning to L.A. from Argentina, I joined the group of friends and acquaintances I'd arranged to back me on the tour. They had already started rehearsing before I got home. Together we did whirlwind preparations for the tour.

Axl heard I was planning to go back out on tour. He called me.

"Are you fucking crazy? You should *not* go back out on the road right now. You are insane even to think about it."

"It's the only thing I know how to do," I told him. "I play music."

I also knew that if I stayed at home, it would probably devolve into more drug insanity. I didn't have any illusions about getting sober, but at least out on the road—with a band made up of old Seattle punk-rock friends—I figured I had some chance of toning things down. And of staying off coke. If I stayed in L.A., the temptation of readily available cocaine would likely be too much for me to resist. GN'R management sent Rick "Truck" Beaman, who had served as my personal security guard on the *Use Your Illusion* tour, out on the road for my solo tour, too. By this stage his concern for me seemed to extend beyond his professional duties. He had taken a deep personal interest, as a friend, in trying to limit the damage I was doing to myself. Now, finally, our goals had dovetailed—at least as far as cocaine was concerned.

But Axl was right. Before the first gig in San Francisco, my then-wife Linda got into a fistfight backstage with another girl and lost a tooth. Blood spattered everywhere.

Hell's Angels packed the show at Webster Hall in New York, and brawls broke out. I shouted at the crowd to settle down, thinking I could somehow make a difference.

After the show, people tried to come backstage but I wanted to be alone.

“I’m too tired,” I told security. “I just can’t take it.”

Lyrics from “Just Not There,” one of the *Believe in Me* songs we were performing, reverberated in my head:

You know I look but just can't find the reasons

To face another day

Cause I feel like crawling up inside,

Just fading away, fading away...

I toured the record as planned until December 1993. There was still a fervor for all things Guns, especially in Europe. Audiences knew my songs and sang along. With the exception of keyboardist Teddy Andreadis, who had been out with Guns for *Use Your Illusion* and who had been touring with artists like Carole King since he was barely out of his teens, the band members were fairly inexperienced with arena-scale touring. The band had also been thrown together quickly and lacked cohesion: we had some rough patches, including an intra-band fistfight at an airport somewhere in Europe.

For the most part I did stay off the coke, though it was by no means a clean break. There were slip-ups. I also switched from drinking vodka to wine.

Downshifting to wine was all well and good, but the volume of wine quickly skyrocketed until I was drinking ten bottles a day. I was getting really bad heartburn from all the wine, taking Tums all the time. I wasn’t eating but I was badly bloated; my body felt awful.

At the end of the European leg, our lead guitar player pulled a knife on our bus driver in England. I had to fire him—luckily the tour was finished. Back in Los Angeles, I called Paul Solger, an old friend I had played together with as a teenager in Seattle, and asked him to fill in for the next part of the tour. Solger had gotten sober in the ten years since I’d last played with him; needless to say, I had not. Still, he agreed.

My band and I headed to Japan in early 1994. Over there we crossed paths with the Posies, a veteran jangle-pop band from Seattle. They came to our gig and said they thought it was cool that the new version of my band was sort of a Seattle punk-rock all-star band. Good to know: I was still Seattle.

After Japan, we had a few weeks off. I returned to L.A. before the next leg of the tour in Australia.

Back home I felt as sick as I ever had. My hands and feet were bleeding. I had constant nosebleeds. I was shitting blood. Sores on my skin oozed. My L.A. house was

awash in the fetid effluvia of my derelict body. I found myself picking up the phone to tell my managers and band that we weren't going to Australia.

I'd bought a house back home in Seattle at that point—a dream house, right on Lake Washington—and I could feel its pull. I had bought it a few years before, sight unseen, in a neighborhood where I used to go to steal cars and boats when I was a kid. In the interim, I had barely had a chance to spend any time there because of the endless *Use Your Illusion* tour. I thought it might be the right place to try to recover, relax, recharge.

On March 31, 1994, I went to LAX to catch a flight from L.A. to Seattle. Kurt Cobain was waiting to take the same flight. We started talking. He had just skipped out of a rehab facility. We were both fucked up. We ended up getting seats next to each other and talking the whole way, but we didn't delve into certain things: I was in my hell and he was in his, and we both seemed to understand.

When we arrived in Seattle and went toward baggage claim, the thought crossed my mind to invite him over to my place. I had a sense that he was lonely and alone that night. So was I. But there was a mad rush of people in the terminal. I was in a big rock band; he was in a big rock band. We cowered next to each other as people gawked. Lots of people. I lost my train of thought for a minute and Kurt slipped out to a waiting limo.

Arriving in front of my house in Seattle, I stopped in the driveway and looked up at the roof. When I'd bought the place, it had been old and leaky, and I had paid to have the cedar shakes replaced. The new roof was rated to last twenty-five years, and looking up at it now I thought it was funny: that roof would surely outlast me. Still, staying in the house gave me the feeling that I had finally made it, able to live in a place like this, in a part of town like this.

A few days later my manager called to tell me Kurt Cobain had been found dead at his Seattle house after putting a gun to his own head. I'm embarrassed to say that upon hearing the news I just felt numb. People in my band had overdosed multiple times. My own addiction had spun out of control and my body was failing. I didn't pick up the phone and call Kurt's bandmates, Dave Grohl and Krist Novoselic. I figured my condolences would be meaningless anyway—a few years prior, I'd gotten into a scrap with Krist backstage at the MTV awards, where Guns and Nirvana both performed. I lost my shit when I thought I heard a slight of my band from the Nirvana camp. In my drunken haze I went after Krist. My means of dealing with any sort of conflict had been reduced to barroom brawling by then. Kim Warnick from the Fastbacks—the first real band I played with as a kid in Seattle—had called me the day after the awards show and scolded me. I

had felt so low. Now I felt lower still, staring at the phone, incapable of calling to apologize for the earlier incident and to extend my sympathy for his loss and Dave's.

Not that Kurt's death made any difference in how I dealt with my own funk. I just didn't deal at all. Until one month later.

Even after GN'R became wildly successful and my world spun out of control, my three closest friends from childhood—Andy, Eddy, and Brian—would still call and come down to L.A. By the time the tour was winding down, I didn't want them to see too much. I was playing a game by then. But they saw the pictures in the magazines and the interviews on MTV. And I'd call them on the phone all the time. I called them too fucked up too many times, too late at night. I probably called Andy every second day while I was out on the road. He would defend me back in Seattle. He would tell people they didn't know what my life was like, what I was going through. He was protective. But I knew he was going to have a talk with me—the one my mom couldn't have. I knew now that I was off the road, it was just a matter of time—that either I was going to die or Andy was going to give me the talk. I didn't know what I was going to do when we had the talk. I went to sleep on May 9, 1994, with those thoughts in my head, albeit garbled by the ten bottles of wine I had consumed that day.

The morning of May 10, I woke up in my new bed with sharp pains in my stomach. Pain was nothing new to me, nor was the sickening feeling of things going wrong with my body. But this was different. This pain was unimaginable—like someone taking a dull knife and twisting it in my guts. The pain was so intense I couldn't even make it to the edge of the bed to dial 911. I was frozen in pain and fear, whimpering.

There I was, naked on my bed in my dream home, a home I had bought with the hopes of one day having a family of my own to fill it.

I lay there for what felt like an eternity. The silence of the empty house seemed as loud as my raspy, muffled moans. Never before in my life had I wanted someone to kill me, but I was in such pain I just hoped to be put out of my misery.

Then I heard Andy, my best friend from childhood, come in the back door. He called, "Hey, what's up," just as he had ever since we were kids. *Andy, I'm upstairs*, I wanted to answer. But I wasn't able to. I could only silently sob. I heard him start up the stairs—he must have seen my wallet in the kitchen. He made it upstairs and came down the hall.

"Oh, shit, it's finally happened," he said when he reached my room.

I was thankful to have my friend there. It was comforting to think that I would die in front of Andy. But he had other ideas. He pulled some sweats on me and began to try to move me. He must have felt a jolt of adrenaline—otherwise there is no way Andy could have carried the two hundred pounds of dead weight of my bloated body. As he carried me down the stairs and out to his car, the searing, stabbing pain in my intestines spread farther down to my quadriceps and around to my lower back. I wanted to die.

The doctor I'd had since I was a kid lived just two blocks away, so Andy took me there. Though Dr. Brad Thomas was my longtime physician, I hadn't let him see me very often once I descended into full-blown alcoholism. Together, Andy and Dr. Thomas carried me to his first-floor office. I heard my condition being discussed and I felt the prick of a needle in my ass. Demerol. Nothing. Another shot of Demerol in my ass and again nothing, no relief whatsoever. One more shot. Again nothing. The pain kept on spreading and I was starting to panic. I whimpered as my spirit began to blacken and fade.

They decided to rush me to the emergency room at Northwest Hospital. Dr. Thomas told Andy to drive me, as it would be faster than waiting for an ambulance. He said he would meet us there. Andy drove as fast as he could without jerking the car too much—every little movement made me moan and cry.

As they put an IV drip of morphine into my left arm at the hospital, the staff asked me questions I could not answer.

“Name? Address?”

Andy answered those.

“How much do you drink on a daily basis?”

“Are you on drugs right now?”

I just whimpered.

I was mute from pain. The morphine wasn't working as I knew it should. I knew a thing or two about opiates by that stage in my life. I knew the warm rush they offered, yet I was getting none of it.

They wheeled me into a room next to another guy on a gurney. The motion made me writhe in agony.

“Dude, I broke my back,” said the guy in the other bed. “And I'm glad I don't have whatever you have.”

Dr. Thomas and an ultrasound technician ran a scanner over my organs and I saw my doctor's face go white. My pancreas, apparently swollen to the size of a football from all the booze, had burst. I had third-degree burns all over the inside of my body from the

digestive enzymes released by the damaged pancreas. Only a few parts of the inside of your digestive tract can handle the enzymes, and the outsides of your organs and your stomach muscles are definitely not among them—it just burns all that tissue.

A surgeon with thick glasses explained the surgery. They had to take out the top part of the pancreas—cut it off. Sew me back up. And then I'd have to be on dialysis for the rest of my life.

Suddenly I understood the pleading mouthed by miserable souls back to antiquity, those left breathing after being run through with a rusty sword or scalded with hot oil. I was there.

I summoned all my power to whisper to the ER doctor.

“Kill me.”

I begged over and over.

“Please, kill me. Just kill me. Kill me. Please.”

CHAPTER TWO

It happens in a flash, life does. Only the ever-deepening lines on my face tell me that I have been alive for a while. I don't feel any different. I still have geeky and adolescent thoughts. I still tell the same dumb jokes. I look up at that cedar-shake roof on the house in Seattle—now looking a bit the worse for wear—and think, *Hang on, didn't I just have that redone?*

But then again, the real question is different: How did I manage to outlast that roof? To put it another way, how did I get here from there? And how did I find myself there in the first place? That's what I've tried to figure out through the process of writing this book. Because it certainly wasn't a given that my story would amount to anything more than a lurid cautionary tale. It had all the elements: sex, drugs, and rock and roll, and fame, fortune, and a fall. But instead, the story became—well, it became something *else*.

Here's what I do know, as I set out to answer those questions. I let myself lose track of what I thought was meaningful in life even as Guns N' Roses began to become meaningful to others. Back then—on the few occasions that I thought about it at all—I could think of a million excuses for going off the rails. But in the end it seems to have hinged on a failure to grapple with a few basic definitions—of what it meant to be successful, of what it meant to be an adult, of what it meant to be a man. The way I liked to define myself diverged from the actions that *actually* defined me. And this disconnect proved a nearly fatal level of self-deception.

But I'm getting ahead of myself.

I'm afraid this is one of those stories that takes a long time to unfold. There have never been any easy epiphanies for me; it took a lifetime to start to understand even the slightest goddamn thing. So I'll just have to start at the start.

My dad was a World War II vet who began having children with my mother when he was eighteen and didn't stop until he was thirty-eight. He went straight from the war to working for the Seattle Fire Department, desperately trying to provide for what would become a family of eight children by the time I arrived, born Michael McKagan on February 5, 1964.

There were several Michaels on my block—including one of the kids immediately next door. The Michael next door had a grandfather from Ireland living with him, and his grandpa apparently gave me the nickname Duff to simplify things on our street. Later, once Guns N' Roses took off, my dad liked to claim credit for the name, too. He said he used to call me McDuff. Either way, I was called Duff from before I can remember.

I'm not sure a little boy could ask for much more than having a father whose vocation happens to be working as a fireman. If at times during grade school I was embarrassed that my mom and dad were much older than my friends' and classmates' parents, at least I could find comfort in the fact that my pop was a heroic older guy.

Both my parents had come of age during the Depression, and that experience colored their thinking on money, on work, on life. I remember my mom telling me stories of what it was like growing up in the Depression. Stories of not having enough money to heat the house in the winter, of having to wear sweaters and coats all of the time. Stories of how her mother would fix a broken roller skate or doll and that would be her sole Christmas present.

If you are at any McKagan family gathering (a large crowd to be sure), try muttering "FHB" and see what happens. Well, I'll tell you what will happen: you will suddenly see the eight brothers and sisters each take a minuscule portion at the pot-luck buffet table. "Family Hold Back" is a saying that comes from years of too many kids and not enough to feed us all of the time. One of us would almost always have a friend over for dinner and this is when the secret code of FHB started: make sure the guest had enough to eat, take a small portion, don't say anything. We kids were taught lessons of frugality and thrift by example.

The old man also had a house-painting business on the side, and I'll never forget how happy I felt when I was finally old enough to climb up onto scaffolds and scrape and paint with my older brothers and other firemen who needed extra work.

With the Cascade mountain range practically in our backyard, my dad would take my brother Matt and me—along with our trusted dog, Moo—on backpacking trips up in the Alpine Lakes region to fish and camp under the stars with the bears and the deer. In that setting my dad seemed all-knowing and all-capable. But I started to notice that things around the house were tense when we would come back from a weekend of house painting or camping.

It was becoming painfully apparent to me even at that young age that my parents' marriage was an unhappy one. My dad always seemed agitated. I started to resent his anger and short temper. My mother was a saint in my eyes, and when I recognized pain in hers, I would become enraged.

My dad retired from the fire department when I was seven and soon found work as a fire inspector for an insurance company, a job that frequently sent him on the road. Or so the story went. I just remember being relieved when he was away. Our household returned to normal. All of us kids could stop walking on eggshells and could laugh and joke and play music.

Soon after my dad retired, my mom decided to take some vocational training at North Seattle Community College so that at the age of forty-five and after raising eight kids, she could finally join the workforce outside of the home.

Mom started working when I was nine. One of the first days she was at her new job, I came home from school and found my father—who was home that week— in bed with our next-door neighbor's wife. The mother of my best friend. Oh sure, they pretended nothing unusual was going on, and I am sure they thought I was too young to figure out what was happening. But I figured it out all right: all at once, in that very instant, I understood what sex was, what cheating was, I understood that my dad's seemingly heroic life was a deception, and I understood that I would have to hide all of this from my mom so that she would not get hurt. It was a harsh introduction to grown-up life.

From that day on I stopped talking to my dad. Not a word. Soon he and the woman next-door both left their spouses and moved into an apartment together. My parents got divorced. My best friend and I were put into the strangest of predicaments—was it his mom or my dad's fault that both of our homes were now broken? We began to fight and he began to act out at home. For his father's birthday a few years later, he presented his dad

with the severed head of the family cat as a present. Gift-wrapped. He also took an axe to the outside wall of my bedroom one night while I was on the other side in my bed. All of this because my dad couldn't keep his dick in his pants.

At that age I figured I must have had something to do with the problem. That is what we do when we aren't old enough to see the bigger picture. Many of the things I soon grabbed onto in order to muddle through—things I'd call coping mechanisms now—would come back to bite me in the ass. When, a few years later, I started to get acute panic attacks, I learned to self-medicate with alcohol and drugs. Of course, we all have shitty stuff we have to deal with growing up. I cannot with a straight face blame my childhood for the drugs and alcohol that I would ingest later in life. More accurate, perhaps, would be to say that a perfect storm of factors began to whirl around me before I had a chance to address any of them: a predisposition to alcoholism, a family history of panic disorders, the need to hide a secret and protect my mom, and coming of age at a time when experimenting with drugs was much less frowned upon than it is today.

My mom was pretty much left to provide for the household on her own. This meant that she had no choice but to leave me with a lot of responsibility, and I just didn't rise to the occasion right away. I wish I could've been a better son in those difficult transition years for my mother. I still kick myself for some of the hell that I put her through. I was trying to figure out my place in the world without a father to rely on as a role model.

After my dad left, my mom's brother—a doctor—would let us spend summer vacations at a cabin he owned on a lake up in the mountains east of Seattle. While up there, one time between sixth and seventh grade, I went waterskiing with my brother Matt—out of the eight kids, he was closest to me in age, just two and a half years older—and a couple of other kids. Matt and a friend of his were driving the boat, and another kid and I were skiing behind it on a double rope. As we sped along, I lost my balance and the belt attached to the towrope came whipping off.

In the instant I fell forward, the slack in the rope formed a loop in the water and my arm went through it. Then I heard it go *zip*, snapping taut again.

Searing pain jolted my upper arm at the same moment the rope started dragging me.

Shit, the boat isn't stopping.

My brother thinks I'm holding on—joyriding.

Sheer terror took hold as water gushed into my mouth and nose and I struggled for breath.

The rope had cut all the way down to the bone on my right arm and stripped the muscle from my shoulder to the elbow—just taken it all down like a sock.

I'm going to drown.

I'm going to die.

Suddenly it felt as though time had been suspended. Everything started to slow down. I looked intently at the cool green light refracted beneath the surface, particles suspended in the sunbeams, dancing in slow motion. Silence replaced the howl of water rushing past my ears. All I felt was the pale sunlight on me. Then the dim underwater light began to burn brighter until it saturated my field of view. A feeling of warmth and bliss washed over me and I sensed a welcoming presence—it felt as if I were surrounded by family, generations of family, forefathers I'd never met but somehow knew. By the time I resurfaced and everyone started to scream and people gathered along the shore of the lake, I had blacked out.

Someone onshore managed to revive me. I was rushed to a hospital. Doctors were able to roll the muscle back up my arm, but we didn't have enough money to pay for them to reattach it. Obviously we also couldn't afford cosmetic surgery on it either, so to this day my upper arm looks as if someone took a wedge of muscle out of it with a hatchet.

Soon after the accident, my mom had me participate in a study at the University of Washington on near-death experiences. My recollections appeared in the resultant book, *Closer to the Light: Learning from the Near-Death Experiences of Children*. That warm, peaceful embrace removed any fear of death I might ever have had. I felt a sense of exceptionalism after that, but I also now operated under the assumption that I would die young—that this had just been a preview of a death that would come sooner rather than later, and definitely by thirty.

After glimpsing the other side, that seemed just fine.

CHAPTER THREE

In September 1984, I pointed the grille of my 1971 Ford Maverick south, with \$360 dollars in my pocket. I was twenty years old.

Heading out of town, I had the sensation that I was carrying the weight of Seattle on my shoulders. Obviously that sort of sentiment is overly dramatized when you are barely out of your teens, and it probably also reflected the extent to which, like anyone that age, I maintained a rather more grand sense of my own importance than was warranted by reality. But I had been the boy wonder of the scene, the eighth grader playing in bands

with people in their twenties, the kid who could play everything—guitar, bass, drums, none of them particularly well, but all well enough to play in a band. Now, with my sights set on L.A. and the Space Needle in my rearview mirror, I felt as if everyone was counting on me to be “the guy.” Some of the pressure was no doubt self-imposed, but people had started talking once I said I was leaving, taking sides about whether I would make it in L.A. or come slinking back home.

My first stop was San Francisco, where I flopped in a punk squat. The intention: to stay overnight. The upshot: I stayed a week. Inevitably, there was a girl. I also knew and liked a lot of the people in the Bay Area punk scene. Still, I wasn’t interested in joining a band there and playing the same old kind of stuff.

When I finally left San Francisco, my \$360 kitty had dwindled to sixty bucks. The situation looked dire. From a gas station pay phone I called my brother Matt, who was by this point studying at Cal State Northridge, which was in greater Los Angeles.

“Dude, you know I’m coming down there?”

“Yeah, I heard,” he said. “Where you going to go?”

“I dunno, Hollywood. Any openings at the Black Angus?” Matt was paying his way through school working as a cook at a steak house out in the valley. He played trombone and wanted to become a music teacher.

“Maybe,” he said.

“I have a reference from Lake Union Café,” I said. That was the name of the restaurant where I’d been working for the past two years in Seattle.

“I might be able to get you something,” Matt said.

“How do I get there?”

“Take 5 to the 405 and get off at the Roscoe Boulevard exit. Go west on Roscoe until you hit Corbin Avenue. Make a right. The restaurant is at 9145 Corbin.”

I drove straight there and started a shift as a prep chef that same night, September 14, 1984.

At the end of the shift, I figured I’d go check out my new home: Hollywood. I asked for directions.

Well, it’s about twenty-five miles ...”

What? Where the hell was I? I thought *this* was Los Angeles?

“You go down to Ventura and make a left. Follow that all the way to Laurel Canyon—you’ll need to take that over the mountain ...”

Huh? A canyon that went *over* a mountain? How could that be?

I set off, keeping an eye out for anything resembling mountains. I saw plenty of hills, but no mountains. Eventually I found Laurel Canyon—a road that went up a hill and then ... Los Angeles! From the top of the hill, I could see that the downtown was no bigger than Seattle, but that the twinkling lights of densely packed low-rise neighborhoods went on forever—the city stretched as far as I could see.

I stayed with my brother a few nights during the first couple weeks in town. But his place was just so far from Hollywood, which to an outsider like me seemed the center of the L.A. music scene. With the added drive time from all the traffic, my brother's place—and the Black Angus—might as well have been in another city entirely. Besides, I couldn't just show up and take over his apartment.

So on many nights I slept in my car in the Hollywood Hills. The cops didn't cruise the nice tree-lined streets perched up above Franklin Avenue.

The luster of that year's summer Olympics had worn off, and the police presence had virtually vacated central Hollywood since the end of the games, leaving the floodgates wide open for criminals and thugs and general unwatched anarchy. Gang activity was in high gear then, too. Crack was sold all over Hollywood. I landed in the middle of all of that—with a bass I was still learning to play.

Still, I had confidence in my social skills and in the belief that I had a lot to offer. I felt punk rock was basically in its death throes by 1984. The first two waves were done—the original punk bands and then the hardcore bands. Whatever happened next, the people my age—who had been through the punk scene and come out the other end looking for a new direction—were going to be the ones to do it. The future was resting on our shoulders. I was looking to find other guys out there like me, interested in trying to create the next paradigm. I was sure I was going to play an important and vital part in whatever musical innovation would be next. This was not conceit on my part, it was excitement.

With all of this going through my head, an ad in a free local music paper called the *Recycler* caught my eye during that first week in L.A. It was a want ad for a band seeking a bass player. The name to call was Slash. With a name like that, I assumed he must be a punk-rock guy like me. And if we had similar backgrounds, maybe he was also looking toward the horizon musically.

As far as I could tell, there was really no discernible rock scene in Los Angeles in the fall of 1984—only the palpable hangover of a once-thriving punk movement, a thriving but really bad heavy-metal scene, and something called “cow punk.” This was basically

punk-rock dudes in plaid shirts trying to play Patsy Cline songs with their fat girlfriends singing.

Slash's ad had listed his influences as Alice Cooper, Aerosmith, and Motörhead. This was far preferable to anything else I had encountered that first week. And anyway, I was just trying to meet people.

I called Slash on the phone and talked to him. He had the same soft-spoken voice he has now. When he said the name of his band, I heard *Rodker*. Wow, I thought, that's a really strange name for a band. I arranged to meet him and drummer Steven Adler at a 24-hour deli named Canter's down on Fairfax.

"I'll make sure we have the first booth on the left," he said.

I told him I had blue hair and would be wearing a long black and red leather coat.

"Won't be able to miss you, I guess," he said.

One thing I'd already realized: folks from Seattle just plain looked different in those days. When bands like Black Flag or the Dead Kennedys came through Seattle, they would always comment on how different the crowd looked, but I had never thought much about it. Until now. In L.A., I decided to use this distinctive look to convince people checking IDs at the door to bars that I was not from the United States and thus spoke no English. When asked for ID, I would produce my sunglasses and a puzzled look. They must have thought I was Swedish or something, but, no shit, it worked more often than not. Now I was about to see the other side of the coin.

I headed to Canter's in my pimp coat, as promised. This was a floor-length black leather coat with red trim. Originally it had a big red *A* for "anarchy" on the back, but I had taken a Sharpie marker and blacked it out when a Seattle band was in disband. The band was called the Fartz and our logo included the anarchist *A*.

I walked in, looked at the first booth on the left, and saw all this fucking hair. Somehow I had expected these guys to look like Social Distortion. Instead, even though they appeared about my age, the dudes in Rodker had long hair and rocker chick girlfriends.

If the *sight* of two long-haired rockers from Hollywood was a shock for me, I could hardly imagine having to talk to them. Of course, with my short Day-Glo blue hair and long coat, I must have looked like a Martian to them, too. Both parties were a little surprised and curious when we first met face-to-face.

Slash's long hair, it turned out, hid a shy introvert. He was cool, though. He had a bottle of vodka stashed under the table—he and Steven weren't yet twenty- one, either, and

this was as close as they could get to a bar. We drank vodka and ate bowls of Canter's barley-bean soup. I still love that soup.

Club bouncers weren't the only people confused by my Seattle punk look. Slash's girlfriend got kind of smashed and leaned over and said, "Are you gay?"

"No, I'm not gay," I told her, laughing.

"You have short hair—I think you're gay. It's okay, you can tell me. Do you have a girlfriend?"

"No," I said, "I just moved here."

"It's okay, we'll get you one."

Steven Adler was really nice, and expressed himself with an infectious, almost childlike enthusiasm.

He said, "Listen, we're going to be great—going to get the feet stompin' and the hands clappin'."

He still says that to this day when he climbs behind a drum kit and gets excited: going to get the feet stomping and the hands clapping.

We all went back to Slash's place—he was living with his mom. It was obvious even on the acoustic guitar he played that first night that Slash was a special player. I was absolutely stunned by the raw, emotive power he so easily tapped. Slash was already in a league of his own and watching him play guitar was a "holy shit" moment.

Even so, I was afraid he and Steven were coming from a very different place musically than I was. Some of my fears reflected the way things had been in Seattle—long-haired guys there tended to be kind of behind the times. Long hair in Seattle meant kids from the suburbs or farming or logging towns. Long hair meant heavy metal. Those of us in the punk scene called guys like that "heshers." We were city kids. We thought of ourselves as ahead of the curve. Of course, some of my fears about Slash and Steven were more concrete—Anvil's "Metal on Metal" was part of the cover repertoire they played. And it turned out the decidedly less offbeat name of their band was Road Crew, not Rodker.

Still, the more we played and talked about music and listened to music, the more common ground we found. Slash also showed me some of his artwork that night—though I would never have imagined that less than a year later he would be hand-drawing a logo for a band we would be in together, a logo featuring two pistols with thorny rose stems twisting around the barrels.

Slash was an eccentric guy. He had a snake in his room.

“She’s really sweet,” he told me.

I didn’t say anything, but in my mind I was going, *Hmm, a snake, sweet?*

Still, he was cool. If nothing else, I thought, he’s a genius guitar player—and I like him. And perhaps most important, I now knew where Slash lived and I knew how to get there. Given the fact that I didn’t know anyone else in town, this was key to our remaining friends. I met a lot of people in those first few weeks, but many I never ran into a second time. Now I could find Slash whenever I wanted.

As an added bonus I also liked Slash’s mom. She was great to me. She called my mom to let her know I was all right. Later she would call me at the Black Angus to make sure things were going okay. She became a surrogate mother during those initial weeks in L.A. (She ended up continuing in that role for years, in fact.)

Slash, Steven, and I started playing together at a rehearsal space at the corner of Highland and Selma. The space cost five dollars an hour, fifteen if you wanted a PA. I spent a week jamming with them while sleeping in my car.

In the end, though, I was kind of bummed out by the rehearsal sessions. Slash’s talent notwithstanding, the way he and Steven were going about it was not my cup of tea. The songs they had, the sound of the guitar, Steven’s double-kick drum kit with all those rack toms and cymbals—it was all too conventional. They were working in a pre-existing mold. I was looking for people ready to create a new mold.

There was also no singer. It felt like a high school band, albeit one with an amazing guitar player. Having already been in a dozen bands and played with countless professional musicians, I considered myself a seasoned veteran. I could tell Slash and Steven had real aspirations—that they wanted more—but I didn’t move all the way to Los Angeles to play with people who were still trying to figure their shit out.

After about a week, I told them, “I don’t want to play with you, but I still want to be friends.”

“Oh, okay,” they said.

At that age, there wasn’t any weirdness—it was fine to be straight like that. I loved the two of them, but Road Crew wasn’t what I wanted to do at that point.

We did continue to hang out a lot together. A few weeks later, in October, Slash and Steven took me to an all-ages show at a West Hollywood club called the Troubadour to see L.A. Guns. The two of them had briefly played with the singer, Axl Rose, in a band called Hollywood Rose, which had already happened and died. Now Axl was with this other band, named for the guitar player, Tracii Guns. Tracii, it turned

out, was a local hero. He had gone to the same high school as Slash and they had played in rival bands.

The Troubadour was a real rock club, and at this point in my life I had only been to one other rock club. Punk gigs in Seattle took place in completely different types of spaces—squats, basements of private houses, VFW halls rented out for the night. Things were clearly different here in L.A.

CHAPTER FOUR

My older brothers and sisters all listened to lots of rock and roll and many of them played guitar and sang. Musical instruments littered the house and the basement and the garage. As early as I can remember, Jimi Hendrix, the Rolling Stones, the Beatles, and the Sonics constantly blasted from our family living-room stereo, a Sanyo system my brother Mark had shipped back from Vietnam after his tour of duty.

I remember being captivated by *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. The picture on the cover is what got my attention—the marching-band uniforms, all the faces. But then I started listening to the music. I listened to “Lovely Rita” over and over, fascinated with the way the words sounded, the exotic cadence. I was amazed how the lyrics managed to paint a picture in my mind. I listened to that song so many times that I even convinced myself that I had written it—for a girl I had a crush on in my kindergarten class. The music had the ability to conjure images in my head and help me drown out the tension and noise I was trying to avoid at my house.

Another older brother, Bruce, was in a rock band. He had long hair and a sheepskin rug in his room. He drove a convertible. And he had a beautiful Gretsch hollow-body, six-string guitar and a Les Paul Custom left-handed bass. Bruce was always playing gigs and coming home with stories that reinforced my romantic image of rock and roll. He would also take time to let me sit with him and bang on his guitars and ask him questions. It was a big deal for me; he is fourteen years older than me and I am sure I was a pest at times.

One day, Bruce asked me if I would play a gig with him. Me? What? I guess he hadn't noticed I had yet to learn how to play an instrument. I told him sheepishly, thinking with despair as I did that my big chance was about to pass me by.

“Don't worry about it,” Bruce said. “I'll teach you how to play bass.”

All right!

Bruce and I are both left-handed, so learning to play that way came naturally. (It was only after Bruce moved out with his guitars that I was faced with the dilemma of having to relearn to play on a dusty right-handed guitar I found forgotten in a corner of my

mom's garage.) The first song I learned how to play was the Beatles' "Birthday." Your first song always remains a musical touchstone and this one not only taught me finger dexterity, but also included the rudiments of the whole blues major scale, a scale that I would use and use again in my later career in Guns N' Roses.

From that day on, I realized how easy I found it to pick up songs by ear—any songs I wanted to learn. I think if I hadn't been able to learn so quickly back then, I might have practiced a bit more and become a better technical guitar and bass player as a result. I guess we can all look back and see things in our lives that we could or should have done differently—and better—and that's one for me. Still, learning to play other people's music was only satisfying to a point. I felt there was more I could do, but I hadn't the faintest idea how to write a song or start a band.

Then, in seventh grade, I spotted a homemade flyer for an underground punk concert. I didn't really know what it meant to be anti-establishment—and I had no notion of the music industry or what it meant to operate outside it—but it was clear these bands were not part of the same system that produced glossy handbills for shows at the Paramount Theatre or the Kingdome. That same week, I happened to hear Iggy and the Stooges for the first time. Maybe the Stooges' garagerock simplicity echoed the Sonics and Don and the Goodtimes records I loved to listen to as a little kid; whatever it was, the Stooges hit me like an earthquake—I wasn't moving so much as being moved. The back of my legs felt weak, chills ran from the base of my neck down my spine, the world began to crumble leaving just this pounding music.

I experienced the most memorable dream of my life soon afterward, a dream that seemed to rewind and play over and over again in my mind for years. In the dream, I was singing in a band in a local church basement in front of all of my friends. I was possessed by the music, shrieking, snarling, grunting. There was no separation between the audience and the band, and everyone was jumping around as crazily as I was, dropping beer bottles and glasses, which smashed on the floor. I writhed around on the shards of glass yet felt no pain. I could hear and see exactly how rock should be: raw and fucked up with nothing held back, raw and fucked up with no boundaries left unbroken, raw and fucked up.

When I woke up the next morning, I went straight to the record store and bought my own copy of *Raw Power* by Iggy and the Stooges. My older siblings' music had been supplanted by something all my own. It was called punk rock, and it was my thing now.