

## **Beatle-Maniac**

by Thomas Hunt

I've been a Beatles fan since the beginning of time, when I was born in the early seventies.

I may have been born after the fall of the world's greatest rock band, but I think I'm living pretty large in the aftermath.

I remember when I was a kid, my parents gave me a box of '45s. I listened to all of them, desperate to find something other than the hair-band-disco-pop-trash that dominated the airwaves back in the eighties. All I had was the radio and that stack of '45s, because as a kid, I had no money.

After wading through song after song by James Taylor and some other drug-addled hippies, I found it. The apple record. One side had the outside of a green apple and the flip side showed the inside of the apple. I played the flip side first, I was disappointed, the song was crappy like an apple core. I flipped the record over halfway through the song. The other side was different.

It was a song named "Get Back". It wasn't poppy and tangy. It was loud, hard driving rock; lyrics that were

confusing and yet made sense. It was The Beatles. The motherfucking Beatles. You'd think my parents would have highlighted the album or something. It certainly didn't belong here amongst this pile of crap. I stole a sleeve off Disco Safari (some 70s garbage) and put it on my new Beatles record.

It was my first Beatles record.

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I got *Rubber Soul* on CD today, Monday. I'd made do with the record and the tape long enough. It was time to upgrade, to accessorize. It was after all the mid-nineties. There was no reason to be left in the past.

My favourite song on the album is "Drive My Car". I remember just a few days ago, I was listening to it in my car, driving my girlfriend home from work. I always had to do that kind of crap, picking her up, taking her back, driving her around. I asked her why she wouldn't get a license. She said she preferred to have me drive her around. It was just like the song. They would be singing "I wanna be famous, a star of the scream/But you can do something in between/Baby you can drive my car/Yes I'm gonna be a star/The newsworld hands them stardom/and these are the ways/on which I was raised"

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On Tuesday, I drove by the McDonalds on Fifth street. The flags were at half mast. Maybe somebody shot the kid raising the flag when he reached the halfway point. The only thing I wonder is whether the flags were going up or going down.

Virgin Megastore. The white album. On CD. Fuck Vinyl, this is the digital age. My girlfriend, the goddamned "voice of reason" wasn't around and now I had free reign. I slid it into the car stereo and drove to work. The first song on the album always made me wonder why they didn't call it The Red Album. The song never made me think of WHITE, it made me think of RED. It was called "Back in the USSR". A song about communist Russia. There was something about "traveling to the snow capped mountains, way down south" that made me feel all warm inside.

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It was Wednesday. The list of things to slay today was long and most of the paths were arduous and fraught with danger. I never wanted to kill. But I was hungry. I am not naturally evil, but I'm not an animal rights activist either. But I like a big breakfast from good old Mickey d's early in the morning and that was where I ate every

morning. It was the first on the list. Then I had to schedule a haircut for tomorrow, drop off the videos and I had to make an appearance at work. It was good to let them know I still worked there. It felt like I worked there at least eight days a week, but you know how those bastards are, they'd forget.

I called the salon first. It was the most important task, and I knew I had to call in advance, I hate when I can't get an appointment when I want one.

"I need an appointment with Jim, on Sunday at 2pm." I said into the phone.

"I'm sorry sir, he's all booked until next month. I can get you a two o'clock on Sunday with Jeff, will that be okay?"

Jeff was a son of a bitch, but I needed a cut. My hair was starting to grow down over my eyes. Jeff will have to do.

"Fine. Book it."

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My girlfriend and I got in a car accident on Thursday. At least that's what I told the police. They're so stupid. Asking me what happened. Like I would ever tell the truth. I said she hit her head against the dashboard. I didn't say she hit it repeatedly. I didn't say that I hit her

head against the dashboard repeatedly. I didn't say her blonde hair turned red from all the blood. She's in a coma now. I know, I know, it's serious.

They asked why my car was so messy. I told them it must have been from the gash in her head. It just kept bleeding, red. They didn't know I'd been banging her head back and forth on the dashboard like a rubber ball for what could have been ten minutes. There was times when I thought of strangling her, but that would have been wrong. That dumb bitch would just bounce back. Air would enter her lungs and she would come back to life as if nothing had happened. And besides I would hate for anything to happen to her. As I watched them wheel her away into the hospital all I could see were the rubber souls of her shoes.

A few hours later, I was cleaning the car. Have you ever noticed how much gunk builds up on your dashboard? My passenger side looks like someone spilled a large cherry slurpee all over the place. Tasty, but messy. I was scrubbing and scrubbing and scrubbing. So much red. So much red.

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It was Friday night. I usually went out on Friday, but I was most certainly without, a date.

I decided to go out, to a club. It was called "Classics Rock". The flier said it was the music of the old world in the world of today. The flier didn't have to say all that. One of the artists crudely pictured on the flier was The Beatles.

I was there. The music was not Beatles music. It wasn't even classic rock. It was Euro-techno-electrono-pop. I hated it. Then I heard it. It was the chorus from "A Hard Day's Night". They were, I believe the word is "mixing" it into the bubble-gum-euro-trash-pop.

I saw the young ones dancing, bopping and chanting when the words came. They sang the words, but they did not respect the music, or their creators.

This had to change. I went back to my car and got some supplies. When I went back in, the bouncer said he didn't remember me and made me pay again. But I didn't mind, we all have to pay for our fun.

I started by pouring gasoline from a small plastic bottle around the dance floor with a path leading to the stage. The floor was surrounded by paper decorations. These will burn well, I thought. I walked behind the stage and threw a rope over one of the eaves. Then I snuck under

the curtain and on to the stage right next to the man who I believe is called "The DJ".

"Hey dude?" I said.

"Yo." He said behind darksunglasses, his headphones half on and half off.

"Have you got "A Hard Day's Night" by the Beatles?" I asked knowingly. "Can you put on track 12? I think it's called, PANIC."

"What? I can't hear you man."

I screamed back at him "I said PANIC!" I slung the loop of the noose around his head and tugged on the other rope releasing the weight. The DJ rose to the sky, his headphones still half on, half off his head. The crowd cheered, they thought it was a silly illusion. I would soon show them the true reality. I switched the CD player to track 12 and shut off the techno pop CD so they could hear the true awesome power of the Beatles. They noticed. The dancing stopped and they looked at me. I smiled and dropped a match into the gasoline. Their eyes turned bright white as they felt enlightenment. I looked at them and heard Paul's words over their screaming. "Burn down the disco/Hang the blessed DJ/hang the DJ/hang the DJ/hang the DJ."

"Hang the DJ." I nodded. Check and Mate. I snuck under the curtain and out the back door.

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Saturday. 2pm sharp. I had faith in Jeff. From my chair in the waiting room I could sense the power within his fingers. He wasn't Jim, but I knew that he had the power. The power that could totally destroy me, or perhaps, it could save my life.

"Come and keep your comrade warm." I sang.

"Sir, you'll have to be quiet. You're disturbing the other customers." Jeff, that snotty little bitch of a hairdresser said to me loudly. I wanted to cut his throat right there.

"Am I next?"

"Yes. Step right this way sir." He pointed to the chair, I sat in it. "Of course, you'll have to take those headphones off, sir."

That pissed me off. But not as much as after the cut when he turned me around and I first saw it in the mirror. I had requested my usual, a bowl cut, just like my idol John. This was not a bowl cut. The motherfucker had taken too much off the sides and I looked like Travis Bickle. I wanted to be the spitting image of my idol John, but

instead I looked more like Yoko. But I held my emotions in check, for now. I gave Jeff the thirty bucks and a ten for a tip. He smiled, as if nothing had happened, as I walked out of the shop. It was funny how wrong first impressions can be.

That night I watched him close up the shop. As he turned his key in the lock of the front door, I stuck the scissors into his back. It only took about a second. He fell to the ground and the blood started to leak out. I reached down and felt his pulse fall slower and slower and slower.

I didn't have time to haul away the body. I had bigger fish to fry. I pressed the doorbell. A light came on. Then I heard a chain being unlocked.

"Ummm, what do you want?" Jim, my regular hairdresser said.

"I was wondering why you didn't have time to squeeze me into an empty page of your diary and supernaturally change me?"

"What?"

"You're repressed. But remarkably dressed." He synched his robe tighter and again looked at me with that

puzzled look as if he couldn't even recognize me. Me, one of his best customers. Perhaps it was the haircut, perhaps he didn't recognize me with this terrible taxi driver haircut.

"You're always busy, really busy, eh? Busy clippers."

"Man, I don't know what the fuck you're talking about. Why don't you just go home, and sleep off whatever the hell you're on." He started to close the door. I slammed it open and hit him in the head with a lead pipe I'd been carrying in the left pocket of my trench coat for just this purpose. I went inside, and closed the door.

I handcuffed him to a chair and I cut off all his hair. As I was finishing up, he came to.

"What the hell are you doing?"

"Just finishing up," I said, happily trimming away, "There. You're perfect, a true masterpiece, just like me." I picked up a hand mirror and turned it to him so he could see his new do.

"Don't hurt me man," he said all that typical kinda bullshit, "leave me alone", but we both knew the dance was over. All this foreplay for nothing. I laughed quietly to myself while he continued crying, praying and basically pissing all over himself. It was rather humorous after all that he would beg for his life now, when all he had to do

is grant me an appointment. All I had asked was just a little bit of his time, and now his time is over. I doused him in lighter fluid and threw a book of matches at his face.

As I watched him burn to death in his living room, I put another Beatles CD on my Discman and sang along to the poppy, catchy lyrics of the Fab Four. "Really busy/Busy clippers/Oh, hairdresser on fire/All around Sloane Square."

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It was Sunday. Tonight I would be like John again, I would show the world what happens when they take my songs and put them on commercials, when Imagine is banned from the radio, when that bitch Yoko sells off all of my art. They'll pay tonight.

It was dark now and they were coming. The little piggies were living out their little piggie lives. I hadn't invited them, but they were coming anyway. I was to be persecuted and crucified like Rocky Raccoon. I suppose burning a hairdresser isn't the same as burning a witch, and it seems society finds both of them equally unacceptable. Or it could have been one of the other things on my list. Who knows.

The knocking began promptly at eight. You can see them out the window, with their piggie knives. There was two of them, wearing their little uniforms like they were in Sgt. Peppers, but I knew they weren't. I figured if this was the end, I may as well go out with a bang like John Lennon always said.

I loaded the record in the player, pulled the pump back on the shotgun and prepared for violence. John screamed from the speakers at full volume that "Happiness was a warm gun."

Bang Bang, Shoot Shoot, I agreed with him as I got the one standing by the door, but I only wounded the other one. He lay on the ground clutching his leg, his fork and his knife to eat his bacon, and he seemed to be singing the song into his radio. I walked back to the front door, opened it and shot the singing fool in the head. "If I wanted to hear you sing, you would have your own record and I would have bought that at the mall. But I didn't. I didn't buy your record, I bought the fucking Beatles record, so shut the FUCK up."

More of them were coming, I knew the word was out. The Beatles have landed. Somebody call Ed Sullivan cause the sold out concert is right here, right now. I had taken the pistols from the cops, but I left them Gideon's bible.

As they surrounded the house, I picked them off from the roof with a rifle. "He's not a boy that misses much, Do Do Do do DO."

"Oh Yeah!"

As they marched up the block I saw blackbird singing in a tree across the way. I raised my rifle and picked him off. I just don't like birds.

I don't remember the rest of the album playing. The last part I heard was "She's well acquainted with the touch of a velvet hand on the windowpane." I sang it as I sat on the velvet couch.

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Night had fallen and today was a new day. It was Sunday. I started to get that feeling, you know. That everyday is like Sunday. Every day is silent and gray.

I found myself in a beat New Jersey boardwalk town. Walking along the sand, the waves going in and out. It reminds me of my childhood, when I was maybe three or four. I couldn't hear the Beatles. I could only hear the delightful song of the carousal and the taunts of the carnival barker.

Everything was peaceful. Silent and gray. I was relaxed finally. I couldn't hear anything. The silence

was unbearable. I didn't know how much longer I could take the silence.

I held my mother's hand while she turned a rack of picture postcards around and around and around again. I watched the images spin by. Pretty beaches, pretty girls, umbrellas, sand, wish you were here, wish you were here.