

Learning to Groove to the Beat of a Different Drummer

It was early in the fall of 1981, I was fifteen, and my boys and I wanted to debut our first little rock-n-roll band. We decided to plan an outdoor Halloween block party. It was all we could talk about.

So far my mom and little brother Heath were the only ones who'd been fortunate enough to hear us. Since we practiced at my house almost every night, they were forced to endure us butchering both songs we knew, over and over again.

They generally weren't all that supportive either, especially back before we all learned to tune to the same pitch. Mom would hole up in the back corner of the house plugging her ears, while Heath would just walk by and snicker.

Their attitudes quickly changed when they heard about our upcoming Halloween gig though. Suddenly they were very helpful, even offering to help roadie. Yep... they both jumped right in and toted our gear clean out of the house before we could even ask! It just goes to show you, people treat you different when they realize you're going big time.

Our first sound check woke the neighborhood before the dew even lifted that Halloween morning, and I suspect we checked our tuning at least forty times throughout the day. Yeah, we were a mite anxious, but nothing compared to how we grew as nightfall approached with no sign of our little drummer boy.

"Where in the world is Jessie," I barked. I considered kicking over one of his cymbals. It would've help solidify my image as the band's bad boy, but since I didn't have the money to replace it, I wisely resorted to just stomping down to the curb to scan the street and pout. Not much was moving, just a vampire and a pair of witches a couple of doors down.

Our singer Mac shuffled down behind me in his tie-dyed T-shirt. "Be cool dude," he said reassuringly, "We got a gig to groove. I'm sure my man Jess will be here soon."

"Well I can tell you this," our bass player Ray chimed in, "I ain't setting up his drums next time."

I nodded in agreement, "There won't be a next time for that little squirt if I get my hands on him!"

Of course, I was just blowing hot air. I wouldn't dare risk the wrath of Jessie's big brother Tad. Tad was about to graduate high school. His band had already played Shakey's Pizza twice! Shucks, next to Ted Nugent, Tad was our hero. Besides, everyone knew Jessie was the best musician in the band, even though he was only eleven.

By nightfall the little drive way was clamoring with ghouls and goblins, curiously drawn by all the music gear. Even a couple of old people stood around, probably wondering when we'd bring out the food and drinks. I figured they'd leave when they realized that wasn't going to happen.

"That's it," I finally cried, "I'm riding over to Jessie's house again."

I stuffed my bell bottoms in my tube socks and hopped on my Huffy. I pedaled the three blocks on pure adrenaline. Jessie's momma answered the door toting a bowl of sweet tarts.

"Where's little Jessie," I asked accusingly, "We're supposed to be playing!"

She smiled, rather warily, like she always did when she saw me. "Oh, ahh...", she said, "Jessie's out trick-or-treating."

My jaw fell slack. What in the world would an eleven year old be doing out trick-or-treating on Halloween?

"What's he wearing," I pleaded.

"He's cut up one of my best sheets," she replied, "He's gone as a ghost."

I tore out of there like I'd seen one. Back at the party I shouted, "He's a ghost!"

For a split second it didn't seem to register. Then Mac hollered, "Spread out! Check under every white sheet you see!"

For the next hour we were like a bootlegging band of Ghost Busters gone bad. We terrorized every poor boogeyman on the block, but Jessie was no where to be found. Eventually we all moped back to the party, if you could still call it that. It consisted mostly of Heath and my mom now. Somebody had egged our amps.

“What are we gonna do,” I fumed, fighting back tears.

“Look!” Mac shouted.

Up the street came a little ghost bopping along toting a pair of drum sticks and a pillow case slam full of treats.

Don't you hate when life doesn't go as planned? You get all excited, set something up, fine tune it, and then you spend all your time chasing ghost. Outside of just resigning to a life of it, how can we avoid such disappointment?

Through much trial and error I've found most disappointment simply stems from not being in tune with the Lord's will in the first place. How can we expect anything but failure when we don't have the Lord's blessing on our gigs? (*Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain. Psalms 127:1 NIV*) The Lord is the only builder with the blue prints to our abundance.

But anyway- It's never too late to start grooving to the beat of a different drummer. If you want to live a life worth living you must not only give your heart to Jesus, but surrender your will to His. Then seek the Ghost, the Holy Ghost! God never intended for you to spend you time entertaining ghouls and goblins anyway.

-Guy Sheffield 12-17-07