

Drive-by Truckers "Betamax Guillotine"

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It's the summer after high school graduation and our hero hasn't played his guitar in two months. His band was over the night that Bobby died. No more partners in crime. At night he dreams he's fronting his ultimate rock and roll band. All their equipment stacked atop their Anvil cases. (What better way to measure a band's worth to an eighteen-year-old.) The highway's calling, but it sure ain't as romantic as it once seemed.

It's 1979. The seventies last rites are being read by the very same assholes who killed them. Disco has driven a fork into rock's heart and within a year, video will dissect every little tissue until it is as meaningless as the rest of the fucking world. "Video Killed the Radio Star". No shit!

There's this legend (myth?) (truth?) about Lynyrd Skynyrd that claimed that Ronnie Van Zant was killed by a strike on the head from the on-board VCR mounted in the back of the plane, directly behind his seat.

By the early 80's, Skynyrd's crowd was being run out of town, There was no place for big, masculine looking, hairy men with beards and guts and sweat and spit. Not on TV. Sure the hell not on MTV.

Our hero grew up in North Alabama. He came of age in the seventies. He remembers the Watergate hearings interrupting his mama's soaps. Standing in line with his daddy at the Shoals Theatre to see Walking Tall, cutting class to go to the state line with Bobby. (Home was a dry county, but have no fear; the Tennessee state line is just fifteen minutes away if you haul ass.)

He listened to Lynyrd Skynyrd, Neil Young, Led Zeppelin, The Rolling Stones, The Who, ZZ Top, AC/DC, Aerosmith, Thin Lizzy, Blue Oyster Cult, Black Sabbath, The Sweet, Ted Nugent, Queen, Steely Dan, Todd Rundgren, CCR, The Band, and Lynyrd Skynyrd. Lot's of Lynyrd Skynyrd.

Years pass. Our hero moved to the city, then a couple of more cities. He got him a funny haircut or two. He became a punk rocker and tried to disassociate himself from his youthful transgressions. Much like so many well-meaning southern people who try to talk down their southern accents for fear of sounding "too-southern". (As if that was inferior or something.)

He starts having re-occurring dreams about arena rock. Perhaps he's being visited by spirits from his past. Now he wants to remember, He wants to re-connect with whom he once was and what he used to dream. When it was OK to be a little barbaric. When it was OK to turn your three guitars up to ten. When it was OK to ROCK!

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