

Roky Erickson

"What If Punk Never Happened"

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Well on a cold Tuesday morning, I was walking into town,
Had my headphones blaring, didn't notice what was around,
I crossed the road, a car swerved and nearly ran me down,
Looked in the driver's seat, I swear to God it was Doc Brown,
He said "Are you Michael J Fox?" I said "No I'm Jonny Fox",
He said "Close enough, get inside,
I'm taking you with me to see another time,
A place you could only have dreamed in your mind,
An alternative reality situated just outside of Clapham,
So strap yourself in,
Cos where we're going you don't need roads,
To get to where punk never happened"

We landed in a concrete desert, rubble as far as the eye could see,
I says to Doc "Where we goin'?"
Doc says he's following me,
We found the only building in the city that was left standing,
It was my local venue,
I know cos I recognised the landing,
And there's a gig on tonight! This town ain't so bad,
I got everything I need, right here in this pad,
So I pulled out a bottle and took a heroic swig,
Made myself comfortable and got ready for the gig,

Well an hour after doors and there was still no-one there,
The soundman was on acid, the fucking long hair,
The bands never showed cos they didn't see the point,
When all the kids are at home still smoking a joint,
They won't go out and do nothing, not on your nelly,
They're just watching the telly and then feeding their belly,
Their parents listen to The Beatles, while they listen to Nirvana,

Cos Green Day and The Pistols, well they never heard either,

They got long sleeve T-shirts and they never shower,
They still believe in flower power,
The hippy dream's faded but they got nothing new,
So they wear flares and slippers and burn incense sticks too,
The kids would rather skate than go out and smash the state,
While their parents sit still and meditate,
Action's at a low when people just don't care,
They zoned out to their surroundings, the anger's not there,

And I'm stuck in this hippy, grunge reality,
Where the buildings are crumbling down from apathy,
They grab you at school when you've just turned 13,
And show you your brand new, life long routine,
You can sleep and work, and work and sleep,
So you can save up the money to buy a new jeep,
So you can sleep and work, and work and sleep,
Then sleep. Then work. Then work. Then sleep.

I pulled a fanzine out my back pocket, held it in my hands,
And watched the colours slowly fade away,
The words bled right off of the pages til it had nothing left to say,
I banged on the jukebox but it was useless,
It had no good records on,
Not even something weak like 'The Best Punk Album In The World Ever Volume 1',
Outside the windows, I saw the excavators coming to tear the place down,
No-one stopped them, for there is no community left in this town,
There's no-one around to fight Margaret Thatcher,
The power of the flower just couldn't match her,

Too strong was the will of Parliament to cause damage,
That with no punk rock everything went unchallenged,
Land got knocked down to build more land,
That got knocked down again for a couple more grand,
With no punk the protests were full of throwbacks calling each other comrade,
Of course the young folks' attendance started to fade,
So it was easy for the police to move in, they were trusted,
And that's when the whole damn town got busted,

They moved CCTV cameras in everywhere,
But the people were too apathetic to care,
They made them carry I'd cards to state where they're
from,
As if by being born they had done something wrong,
They shipped all the poor folk to live out in the edges,
So the rich folk could move in and peer over their
hedges,
"But before you leave, you'd better build our homes,
There, we've done you a favour, now you're on your
own,
This ain't your home no more, go find somewhere new,
I know you ain't got the money, cos it's me who
employs you,
I know everything about you, what you eat, how you
dress,
Your hobbies, your turn-ons, your email address,
While I had you working in the dark, you didn't realise,
That I completely stopped your ability to organise,
I didn't let you have a reason to communicate,
I banned punk rock knowing you hippies would seal
your own fate,
I controlled everything you wrote, everything you
created,
I distracted you with advertisements so you forgot what
you hated,
I fed your dark side, kept you consuming and
competing,
And like a dog that doesn't know when to stop eating,
You took it all, oh and long was it my intention,
You could have beat me if punk rock was your
invention",
Instead the city will be sold to the highest bids,
If only Sham 69 had of united the kids,

If only the 4 Skins had told us ACAB,
If only The Ramones had let us know we were a happy
family,
If only The Buzzcocks had shown us how to do it
ourselves,
If only Crass had shown us there are things more
important than wealth,
If only The Vandals had shown us it was OK to smile,
If only The Dead Kennedys had helped us put our
government on trial,
If only Rancid had played live, and brought with them
that vibe,
If we had Sick Of It All and Madball we could put them
all on the frontline,

If we had GG Allin we'd have learned it's OK to be

hated,
If we'd have had The Refused then we could have
innovated,
If we'd had Poison Idea then they couldn't push us
over,
If we'd had Minor Threat then we could have done it
sober,
If we'd have had Against Me we could have done it all
unplugged,
If we'd had Operation Ivy we could have done it then
fucked off,
If we had The Blitz, The Clash, Disorder, Propagandhi,
The Exploited, NOFX and anyone that's handy,

There's a lesson to be learned, one that I will take
home,
When I return to my normal reality zone,
Punk rock has the power to change the world,
It lies in every single punk rock boy and girl,
So don't let anyone tell you you're not worth the earth,
These streets are your streets, this turf is your turf,
Don't let anyone tell you that you've got to give in,
Cos you can make a difference, you can change
everything,
Just let your dreams be your pilot, your imagination
your fuel,
Tear up the book and write your own damn rules,
Use all that heart, hope and soul that you've got,
And the love and the rage that you feel in your gut,
And realise that the other world that you're always
looking for,
Lies right here in front of us, just outside this door,
And it's up to you to go out there and paint the canvas,
After all, you were put on the earth to do this,
So shine your light so bright that all can see,
Take pride in being whoever the fuck you want to be,
Throw your fist in the air in solidarity,
And shout "Viva la punk, just one life, anarchy"

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