

Long Live Rock And Roll

Epilog – “Long Live Rock”

It's 3:30 in the morning, Saturday, October 19th, 1996. Our flight from Indianapolis just landed in Detroit for tonight's show. All I can focus on now is moving forward, on to the next thing. And tonight that means twenty three thousand fans chanting “ZigZag, ZigZag” at The Palace of Auburn Hills. Two days from now we will be in Chicago, and the day after that Milwaukee.

Special Agent Trevor Welch was assigned the task of sorting out the whole mess for the Federal Bureau of Investigation. They started with the crime scene in the studio and the six frames of video from Mike's camera and worked their way backward. Connie's connection to Premier Cart and Cartage led to interviews in Cleveland with the president and human resources director of the company. Employment and education records led back to Bensonhurst and Brooklyn College. Anthony Casso was questioned by the authorities in his prison cell in Florence, Colorado. He maintains that he hasn't been in contact with Connie Leggio for several years.

I'll leave the legal proceedings for another time. In fact we would all be better served if I just defer those details to Mr. Grisham – he would do them far more justice than could I.

And as for me, well they say it was an act of self defense. They don't know on how many levels that holds true in this situation. The Feds proclaimed me a “national hero” for assisting to unravel a major multinational disaster. Funny, I don't feel much like a hero. Not too long after that I began hearing rumors that I was being considered for Kennedy Center Honors. My government is acting likes it loves me. The band is headed out next month to tour Australia and New Zealand. Believe me, even with all that we have been through life is still good. In retrospect, if I had known what was going to happen to the lot of us, would I have still gone down this path? Probably. There wasn't anywhere else for me to be. There is no room in my life for regrets. I am however, still in search of that illusive “three way.”

Looking back now, it would be easy to second guess some of the decisions, and perhaps change a few things. But at the end of the day, I would still be pretty much the same person that I am now. If we hadn't “hit it big”, I'd certainly miss the money, the Astin Martin, the apartment overlooking Central Park, and our beautiful home in Topanga Canyon. Moreover, I'd regret not being able to make the impact we have had on young lives through the work of Love's Labour and the disaster victims we have assisted. Patty Townsend would have still moved mountains in this world, because that is who she is. ZigZag just gave her the vehicle. Certainly I'd miss the cherished relationships I have been able to cultivate with the likes of George Harrison, Tom Petty, Clarence Clemmons, Eric Clapton, Ed Bradley, Dustin Hoffman, Jerry Garcia and a score of other “celebrities.”

So I leave you with the song that we have closed nearly every concert with since 1983.

Labour of Love

“My world’s been turnin’ round in circles.
No one’d believe the way I feel.
Draw a fine line between the singer and the song,
But it’s not big deal.
Timeless hours on a never ending train.
Not chanced to pass this way before.
Pain and guilt and plans for treachery,
Lie behind every open door.

It’s all a labour of love.
Just a labour of love.
It’s all a labour of love.”

As Popeye would say “I am what I am.” Maybe I’d be playing open mic night in some downtown Houston bar instead of Madison Square Garden and the recordings would be sold at the shows and through the mail instead of at every record store on the planet. ZigZag wouldn’t be a household name, and my face wouldn’t have been plastered all over MTV. But none of that would have impacted my core being. The joy I get from the process far outweighs the end results.

“Six string scream through your head both night and day.
With a feelin’ strong again once more.
Logic lies somewhere between truth and destiny,
But you can’t take it anymore.

It’s all a labour of love.
Just a labour of love.
It’s all a labour of love.”

But there is no end game here. We keep doing what we’re doing because it is what we do. That’s where I find true value – in the “doing” not in the “being”. My only regrets would be linked to those loved ones in my life. If I’d never met Leah, or been there when R.L. or Scotty truly needed me. If Mike hadn’t stopped drinking, or Ollie given the opportunity to live life outside of his brilliant little mind. I dearly miss my pal Pee-Tee and my brother Eric. I mourn there family’s loss daily. But something deep down inside wants me to believe that both of them would want me to continue to “stay the course.” I know for a fact that Pee-Tee would have wanted it that way. His wife Gladys has told me as much.

Long Live Rock And Roll

“The house lights dim and your body feels the heat,
From a few folks who somehow care.
With weak kneed courage you’re bound to carry on.
Sometimes you’d love to quit but you just don’t dare.

It’s all a labour of love.
Just a labour of love.
It’s all a labour of love.
Just a labour of love.”⁸⁰

The day will come when platitudes are spoken over my lifeless body, and I’ll be lowered into the ground. ZigZag will be but a footnote in the long and illustrious history of Rock and Roll. A simple epitaph is all I require: “It was all for the sake of the song.”⁸¹

Long Live Rock

“Long live rock, I need it every night,
Long live rock, come on and join the line,
Long live rock, be it dead or alive.”⁸²