

# Political Music is Mysterious

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I played the guitar once when I was seventeen in front of a crowd of college students. The building had a sign outside that read, Built During World War II. There was a spiked fence that ran a mile around Orange St. and the workers sold cheap beer in the back. I sang a song that was written by yours truly; it was about war and conformity in America.

Dejected individuals in their mid-20s fought over me at the end of the show. You spoke to me, they would say. You understand me, they would say. I may have sung about issues that they believed they understood, but they didn't understand me. "We're all just cops in waiting and congressman in training," I would say, and they would nod their heads in unison, like they had a clue about the world's actual tragedies.

I had a boyfriend one time. I remember him because of the willow tree he had tattooed on his left forearm during that punk rock show that was held at the Voltaire. I kissed him in places that he never revealed to another person. I sang him a song once.

Congress' power becomes dispossessed compared to the love of song  
The President turns out to be the same person  
Society forms citizens to solely care about possessions  
We are all fucking worthless  
You spoke to me, he said. You understand me.

Father always told me that I would make a change in the world. "There has to be those special people that veer away from the norm and make a change," he said. "You're one of them." Father never told me what to do if I didn't become that special person. All I remember is that one day I woke up and my guitar was missing. There was a white bookcase holding a 55-inch flat screen television instead. My Beatles poster was replaced with a factory painting of a New York City skyline. Even my cat looked different.

My first thought was, it must have been the alcohol, but then I remembered that I hadn't had a drink in three years. Not since I wrapped my arms around that Australian biology major from San Francisco. Shame never felt so resentful in my life.

My next thought was alien abduction. It reads stupidity, but I watched a movie once at that 1920s inspired movie theater that was just built a mile down James Avenue. A group of trained individuals came together to solve the mystery of the space ship that landed in the middle of the woods in Grants Pass, Oregon. The alien was found a few feet away, up in the branches that once held leaves, so the bears couldn't get to it. They discovered that people who had claimed to be abducted had memory loss and strange circle shaped tribal-like signs embedded in their skin. I checked my body from head to toe. I didn't have any.

I did the one thing any sane person would do. I called someone who would remember me; my brother Ace. It only took four rings for the answering machine to pick up. You have reached Ace and Eleanor Schoerke and we are on our honeymoon in Hawaii. Leave a message and we will call you back when we get back to California. Aloha.

My brother used to be a junkie that lived in a three-story apartment building across from a poetic venue I used to play at. He used to quote movies with his friends back in grade school. He once wanted to become an actor. One

day I saw him jump out of a window and climb a fence back into an alley on Ocean Ave. I thought he was acting out a scene that he wrote in his honors playwriting class. Turns out he was shooting smack because he was disappointed that he didn't get the lead part of Jacob in the school play, *Casual Love*. I never ratted him out; told myself that it was just a phase and that he was going through a hard time in his life. I should have told my father about it. A cop rolled up on him one day when he was bombed out in the same alley where he used to run from them. He was sentenced to jail for five years.

The last time I saw Ace was during Christmas a few months back. I gave him a limited edition version of Shakespeare's greatest plays. He just got out of jail and was living in a halfway house down in San Diego where he bunked with some ex-dope fiends that he later said became his family. He should still be living there. He never had a girlfriend in his life.

I began to worry. I knew a place where everyone would remember me. I played a song there once that I wrote about corruption in the government. The owners of the venue said it was their biggest turnout yet. It was March of 1995 and they took a Polaroid picture of me and hung it on the wall by the entrance. There was a willow tree out front.

It took longer than usual to get downtown because the driver said the venue didn't exist. "There is no place called the Gypsy!" he shouted. "Yes, there is!" I shouted back. When I finally got there, the sign had been torn down, and the bar looked like a straight hole in the wall out of a British television show in the '80s. I walked in and saw a man sitting on a stool in the middle of the stage. He had an Ibanez guitar. There were people smoking cigarettes in the back.

Our love for singing embodies more power than Congress' love for power  
The president's moral vision of what kind of shaped person we become  
Worries about materials, possessions, and perceptions Makes people inconsequential in the world.  
That's just like my song. I turned to the girl in the Blondie shirt next to me.  
"That's my song."  
"Prove it," she said.

I watched a presidential debate once. Father always told me that he wanted to become the governor. Ever since Kerry lost the presidential campaign to Bush, he vowed that he wanted to make a change in the world. He screamed at the television. He clasped his hands over his eyes. I wrote a song for him that had to do with politics. I sang it to him on his birthday.

It's us against them  
People act like we are going to war  
Like we don't need a leader, it's all about survival Everything has become corrupt

"You're going to become famous one day," he would say. Ever since then, I couldn't stop singing about corruption. It became my forte, the best talent I could have ever asked for. Father was a proud man.

I wrote down the lyrics to my song on a pad of paper at the end of the bar. I wrote my name. My address. That my guitar had gone missing. I asked the bartender what year it was. He said it was 1999, just as I knew it was. I don't remember if I have a boyfriend. If I do, he's a gentleman from the South. My mother died in a car accident like the woman in the movie theater down on Mason Boulevard, or was it Ocean Avenue. It was '60s themed. I play the piano. My father is a world traveler. I live in Milwaukee. My brother's in Hawaii.

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