

LOST SOULS

A fictional journey
through 50 years of
PINK FLOYD

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EA Media

FOREWORD

A few years ago, a local publisher asked me if I would be interested in writing a biography about Pink Floyd. I've been a freelance music journalist since 1987 and have written many features about Pink Floyd in that time. To be asked to work on a book about such an iconic band meant that, by a few people at least, I was considered to be an 'expert'. I felt honoured but declined. The reason I turned the proposition down had nothing to do with the fee I was being offered, nor with the projected six to eight months of hard, dedicated work. I rejected it because I felt that most things about Pink Floyd had already been thoroughly documented. To add a new perspective would be virtually impossible.

The offer did get me thinking, though. I've always been fascinated by Pink Floyd's music, the odd combination of egos involved and the intriguing, weird, wonderful, innovative, confronting, soulful, and monumental songs they created. A book about how they found and lost each other in pursuit of the one common goal of becoming a success? Now that would be an interesting challenge!

Writing an in-depth-non-biographical-behind-the-scenes essay on the inner workings of Pink Floyd seemed like a daunting task. Apart from Nick Mason's *Inside Out* autobiography - a great read, by the way -, Nick Sedgwick's *In The Pink (Not A Hunting Memoir)* and the handful of interviews that dared to venture into the band's psyche, there's not much written about what went on behind the

Floydian wall of silence. Sure, the music press seized the many opportunities whenever things between messieurs Gilmour and Waters got a little out of hand, but most of those features simply recycled the same quotes and anecdotes. We learned nothing more than that both men disliked each other for the way the other dealt with the heritage of the b(r)and name.

I had to think of a new concept. A concept, now aiming at an international audience, which would allow me to look at Pink Floyd from a more personal, subjective perspective. I decided to base my book on real-life events from the band's history, but also to add some 'made-up' stories along the way (like playing a round of golf with Roger Waters). I also introduced a fictional principal character, Matt, so I could (re)visit events and comment on the band's history as it unfolded. By placing these events in chronological order and having Matt present at them all, I realised my book was also becoming a kind of coming-of-age story. At this point I incorporated some of my personal experiences of working and growing up in the music industry as well.

Because I now had fictional characters meeting real people, my next challenge was to make sure the dialogue between them was not too far-fetched. For that I needed to come up with quotes that were as close to the 'imaginary truth' as possible. Enter many months of research. I collected hundreds of quotes from multiple sources including interviews - some of which I'd done myself -, books, DVD's, and YouTube-clips. (You'll find a full list in the bibliography section.) When it came to writing the book, I transformed many of the quotes I'd amassed into conversational exchanges that fitted the time, place and people involved. Other quotes I completely rewrote and, inevitably, some dialogue I just had to make up on the spot.

I realise that I was extremely fortunate to cherry pick from

such a rich tree of resources and I can't stress enough how grateful I am to all the journalists who in one form or another have contributed to this story - thank you!

Even though *Lost Souls* is largely based on real events and interviews, the main storyline is a work of fiction: a novel written from a journalist's perspective with information accumulated through some serious research, but with which I have taken huge liberties as I made it fictional. Or factional, if you please. Above of all, it is a book written with love and passion for the music of Pink Floyd and with the deepest respect and admiration for the band members, their crew, families, and all the people involved.

Edwin Ammerlaan
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ECHOES

Berkeley Hotel, London, July 5, 2017

“Actually, Matt, I don’t give a fuck what you think.”

His words reverberated through the old Victorian hotel room like gunshots in a cathedral. The look in his eyes was the coldest I had ever seen.

Stunned and unable to comprehend what had just happened, I desperately tried to think of a suitable retort. I’d been hurt by a long-time friend and he obviously didn’t care. Admittedly, we’d had our share of disagreements over the past fifty years, but they’d always been quickly dispelled with a handshake or a joke. Not today. Today was different.

Had I been too blunt in my observations? Had I underestimated how sensitive the issue was? I had no idea. I took a few deep breaths and as my confusion slowly faded, anger took over.

“Well, I think you’re an ass, too!” I heard myself blurt out.

Instantly, Roger Waters’ face softened and with a curious mix of affection and pity, he slowly raised himself up out of the chair and walked towards the door. As he passed behind me, I felt him pat my shoulder with his hand, exactly as he’d done fifty years ago on the day we first met.

“I think ‘pain in the ass’ is the expression you’re looking for,” Waters said as he left the room. “A pain in the ass. And proud of it!”

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BIKE

Ibiza & Formentera, August 1967

Uncertain whether the assistant considered me a daredevil or just plain batty, I wheeled the rental bike out of the shop and rode to the hostel to pick up my stuff. I was planning on spending the next couple of days on the island of Formentera, and thought a bike would be much more convenient than ambling about on foot.

I whizzed through the narrow streets at breakneck speed, indifferent to the short steep climbs, brutal descents, and the spattering of Spanish curses along the way. It was clear the local people were not used to seeing a fearless young tourist hurtle his bike over pedestrian walkways. When some refused to let Flash-Gordon-on-two-wheels pass, it took some spectacular breaking and skilful steering to avoid a couple of head-on collisions. With last month's TV footage of Tom Simpson's tragic death on the slopes of Mont Ventoux still fresh in mind, I slowed the Tour-de-Ibiza down until I reached the hostel where my rucksack lay waiting patiently next to the front desk.

A few handshakes and 'adiósses' later, I was back in the saddle. This time it was me doing the cursing. I'd not expected the weight on my shoulders to unleash the rivers of sweat that were now gushing out of almost every pore of my

body and I pedalled the last stretch to the ferry terminal as slowly as I could. Drenched and with the sun already burning my skin, I was glad to finally board the ship. A refreshing draught instantly cooled my overheated limbs, and I decided to stay put. When a rough-looking official told me I was blocking the way and to move on, I complied and secured my bike in the designated spot.

For such a small island, a surprisingly large number of people had booked the 30-minute trip to Formentera; the ship was buzzing with day-trippers, long-stayers and general sightseers. There were a couple of Americans, some locals, a few European tourists, and hippies. Lots of hippies. I didn't really know what to think of them. Their music seemed OK and some so-called hippie artists I liked a lot. Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Jefferson Airplane, and a few others I'd been introduced to by my older brother. It was creative, exciting new stuff. I wasn't too keen on the way they dressed, though. I couldn't see myself wearing leather vests, tie dye shirts, grungy jeans and sandals, let alone the Peace Symbol, which was pretty much a hippie fashion essential.

Most passengers had made a beeline for the shade of the lower deck, so I had plenty of empty chairs to choose from. As the ferry left the dock and the wind picked up, I no longer noticed the sun's rays on my skin.

It didn't take long before people returned to the upper deck. Some went straight to the railings to watch Ibiza recede into the distance, others settled down on a chair. One rather exotic and bohemian-looking group came over to where I was sitting and plonked themselves down onto the hot metal floor in front of my chair. The cheerful, laid-back mood of the party mesmerised me. Most were in their early twenties and some were smoking what looked like giant cigarettes.

One guy with long curly black hair and dark eyes, stood out from the rest. There was something magnetic about his presence and when someone handed him a guitar, the others all eagerly gathered around.

For a while, he just sat there with the instrument resting in his lap, smoking and chatting in a soft, dreamy voice, but I couldn't hear what he was saying. It must have been a fascinating story because everyone listened enthralled. He had the natural charisma of a bright young film star, and I imagined he was telling tales of his travels and the amazing people he had met along the way; how he'd gone boozing and gambling with Jack Kerouac in San Francisco, written poetry with Serge Gainsbourg in Paris or met Brigitte Bardot on the beaches of St. Tropez.

My eyes drifted over to one of the three girls in the group. She was without doubt the prettiest of them all. With long blond hair wafting in the sea breeze, sparkling green eyes and a Mona Lisa smile, she had a distant air. As if she was on a different planet. Or a different ferry. Sailing from Ibiza to Nirvana.

Enjoying the view, I continued to gaze unnoticed for another couple of glorious minutes when, suddenly, I felt the pat of a hand on my shoulder.

"She's way out of your league, man," a voice from behind whispered in my ear. Taken by surprise, my heart skipped a few beats and, blushing, I turned to see a tall man in his mid-twenties looking down at me with a somewhat cruel, yet disarming smile.

"Hi, I'm Roger," he said, holding two cans of lager in his left hand.

I was too startled to speak.

"And that's Syd and a few of our friends," he added, nodding at the guitarist.

Roger walked over to the guy he'd said was called Syd, handed him one of the beers, returned and dropped onto the empty chair beside me.

"Don't mind if I sit here, do you?" he asked with a slightly posh British accent.

"No, not at all. I'm Matt," I replied and shook his hand.

Roger had a long pale face with high cheekbones and piercing, grey-green eyes that were half-hidden behind a mane of dark brown hair. Dressed in jeans and in an unbuttoned, long-sleeved black shirt, he didn't look like your average British tourist.

"Are you guys hippies?" I asked, regretting the question the moment it left my mouth.

"Good God, no!" he replied, still grinning.

"Fuckin' hate hippies. Lazy bunch of wankers if you ask me. My friends Syd, Rick and I are musicians. We're taking a break for a few days to get ourselves some sunshine."

Syd had started playing his guitar. Waterloo Sunset, if I wasn't mistaken. He was softly humming the words while some of the others sung along.

"Is she your girlfriend?" I asked, nodding towards the girl with the rippling blond hair. "Or Syd's?"

Roger shook his head. "Nah, she's one the girls we met in Ibiza. She's a beauty, isn't she? We call her the Queen of Spain. Premier league, if you know what I mean. No use in trying. I think she fancies Syd."

"Does he fancy her back?"

"With Syd, you never can tell. He makes up his own rules and they tend to change from day to day. Some girls seem to be attracted by that, Matt, although most just find it confusing. I think our Spanish queen will need an armada, not just a ferry to conquer his heart."

Syd switched from the Kinks to The Beatles, but after a few chords of Penny Lane got bored and switched to a song

I didn't know. Something about a cat and a witch. It was a catchy tune. Then he looked bored again and stopped playing altogether. The group carried on talking. And smoking.

"I think I'll join my friends, if you don't mind," Roger excused himself. "Nice meeting you, Matt," he added, and with that jumped up from the chair and dropped onto the floor right next to the Spanish royalty.

Even though I was sitting a good ten feet away from them, I felt as if I was crashing a private party. Besides, I was starting to notice the sun's blistering effect on my skin. I got up, went inside, walked up to the bar, and ordered a beer. At home, I had two suspicious parents lurking around almost every domestic corner, so except for the odd party with buddies from school, my life up to this moment had mostly been alcohol-free. Here, on my first ever solo holiday adventure, drinking cervezas was exhilarating and it made me feel mature. Seventeen, but no questions asked.

Shortly after arriving at our destination, I walked back to the car deck to pick up my bike. On my way, I saw Roger and his friends waiting near the passenger exit.

"See ya!" I called over with a wave.

"Have fun, Matt," Roger called back.

"Nice bike, man!" Syd added.

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Stretching eleven miles from one end to the other, Formentera is the smallest of the inhabited Balearic Islands and has no airport and only a few paved roads. From the ferry, it looked like a piece of brownish rock sticking out of the azure sea. In Ibiza, some friendly natives had advised me to follow the road into a place called Sant Ferran de Ses

Roques where I would find a restaurant and bar called La Fonda Pepe, a hostel, a bakery and a few houses. Sant Ferran seemed like a good place to start my two days of sight-seeing. Luckily, the hostel had a bed to spare at a reasonable rate. Check-in was swift and painless, and after dropping my gear, I went looking for the one thing left on my mind: another cold, refreshing beer.

It was late in the afternoon, and with the cool sea breeze now gone, relaxing out on the café terrace seemed the sensible thing to do. It was busy outside. People were standing around talking, or sitting, reading books or newspapers. One man in a corner was writing notes, looking quite intellectual and preoccupied. I found a table with a couple of free chairs, and sat down, unsure of what to do or what to expect next. Nobody paid any attention to me or my beer, as if I was already part of the regular clientele. The cheerful sound of Scott McKenzie's San Francisco wafted out of the pub's open windows, followed by The Spencer Davis Group's I'm A Man. A perfect soundtrack to a perfect day.

"Hello, bicycle boy," I heard a timid voice next to me say.

I looked up to see Syd from the ferry smiling down at me. These guys continued to surprise the hell out of me.

"Hey, hello!" I said and held out my hand. "I'm Matt."

"Roger," he replied quietly, "Roger Barrett. My friends call me Syd."

"Cool place, isn't it?" I said.

"Yeah," Syd answered. "Good vibe. I like the music too."

"Is Roger, your friend I met on the ferry here too?" I asked out of curiosity.

"No, he's here visiting friends for the day. He's going back to Ibiza tonight."

There was something intriguing about this guy, although

I couldn't quite figure out what it was. His face was pale and he looked kind of tired, but from under his black curly hair his eyes sparkled with an enchanting mixture of mischief and mystery. No wonder the girls on the ferry were drawn to him.

“Roger said you play in a band together.”

“Yeah, we're called The Pink Floyd. We've just finished touring the UK. It's been pretty busy.”

“The Pink Floyd...,” I repeated, adding apologetically: “Doesn't ring a bell, I'm afraid.”

“No worries, man. We've only had one single out so far. But I'm not really into all that. Releasing singles and becoming famous isn't really my thing, I just want to write and play my songs.”

“What kind of music do you make, Syd?”

“We play songs that people can dance to. They don't seem to dance much now, but that was the initial idea. We play loud and we mess around with our electric guitars using all the volume and seeing what effects we can get. Right now, we're trying to develop this show using lots of lights...”

“Sounds interesting,” I replied. “Have you had any albums out?”

“Yes, in fact we have. Our first album was released just a few weeks ago. But hey man,” Syd said, abruptly standing up, “I've got to split. Come and look us up when we're playing sometime. Bye-bye, bike boy.” And off he went.

A girl I'd not noticed before was standing on the street just a few yards from the terrace, smiling and waving wildly at him. I watched him walk over to meet her and when they'd gone from sight, got up and walked over to the man who was still writing away on the corner.

“Excuse me, I'm sorry to disturb you, but could I borrow your pen for a second?”

Without looking up or saying a word, he lifted his hand

and offered it to me. I picked up a beer mat from an adjoining table and wrote three words on it: The Pink Floyd.

Back at the hostel, my sunburn and a massive thunderstorm kept me awake half the night. The next day I decided to take it easy. A little sightseeing, a swim and, hopefully, a kip on the beach would suit me just fine. I asked the landlady for a large towel, wrapped it around my neck, filled an empty bottle with water and jumped on my bike.

I headed down to the market in El Pilar de La Mola and from there followed the paths to the eastern tip of the island, in search of good sea views and a beach. The dusty roads wove through a barren moonscape, but I was enjoying my little touristic trip. And with almost no traffic to watch out for, I let my thoughts drift back to my encounters with the two Rogers. Syd was obviously a dreamer: the charming, romantic, creative poet-type. The other Roger was more outspoken, energetic and a go-getter; not someone you'd want to mess with. I wondered what their music sounded like and how it would be to play in a loud band. I smiled, realising I didn't even know what instruments they played. Noisy electric guitars, most likely. The Pink Floyd... I reminded myself not to forget that beer mat when I return home.

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Thanks to last night's thunderstorm, the heat wasn't as relentless today and, stretching out on the white sand, I closed my eyes. By the time I opened them again, a good hour had gone. After a quick swim to get the juices flowing, I was all set for some more sightseeing.

As I coasted towards the island's small capital of Sant Francesc Xavier, there was plenty of time to take in the

breathtaking scenery. I promised myself I would return to Formentera one day. Maybe I could buy a house here and write a book, or take up painting or, who knows, even write some music of my own. To be a successful artist and live on a sunny island. That really would be something.

I was still lost in reverie when, coming to the outskirts of the little town, I saw a familiar figure standing a hundred yards off to the side of the road. Hitting the brakes, I gaped in disbelief at the strangely disturbing scene. There, in front of two whitewashed windmills, was the unmistakable figure of Syd Barrett. Motionless, he was staring up at the rotating wooden sails. But that was not what bothered me. It was more about the way he was standing there, perfectly still with his arms stretched wide out to the sides. With his long dark hair and a white, long-sleeved linen shirt hanging loosely over his shorts, he looked like Jesus: a human cross in the desolate field of his promised island.

Something was definitely amiss. Not wanting to crash in, I got off my bike and wheeling it beside me, approached him on foot. I'd got to about ten yards from where he was standing when he abruptly lowered his arms and hugged them tightly to his body.

"Syd, it's me, Matt. Are you alright?" I asked, with concern in my voice.

Syd Barrett stared at me blankly but didn't reply.

The sparkle in his eyes was gone. I wasn't even sure he was seeing me at all.

"Is there anything I can do for you? Would you like some water?"

Nothing.

I took the bottle from the bike and was just moving forward to give it to him, when he suddenly turned around and walked away. I watched in disbelief as he strode with a

firm step in the direction of the town where the setting sun was disappearing behind a row of white houses. I was too dumbfounded to do anything, nor did I realise I would never see The Pink Floyd's Syd Barrett, again.