

So that's what I did. I appropriated a lot of their vocal forms, and also their turns of phrase—either heard or misheard or twisted from blues songs. So "I Wanna Be Your Dog" is probably my mishearing of "Baby Please Don't Go."

**RON ASHETON:** Iggy called me up from Chicago and said, "Hey, how about you guys coming to pick me up?" That was the beginning of Iggy deciding, "Hey, why don't we start a band?"

**IGGY POP:** When we first started rehearsing, it was in the winter and I was living with my mother and father because I had no money. I'd have to walk about a half a mile through the snow to the bus stop. Then, after about a forty-minute bus ride, I'd have to walk another ten minutes to get to the Ashetons' house.

**RON ASHETON:** Iggy lived in a trailer on Carpenter Road, which is on the fringe of Ann Arbor. He'd take the bus into Ann Arbor to our house. I remember once, in order to get some money to buy an organ, his mother made him cut off all of his hair. She said, "I'll buy the organ for you if you cut your hair."

So he got this Raymond Burr haircut. Have you ever seen when Raymond Burr plays the mentally retarded insane guy with Natalie Wood? He had these little teeny bangs, almost a crew cut kind of thing?

Well, for some reason Iggy got a haircut like that, and he wound up wearing some baggy white pants, like coveralls, and the cops stopped him because they thought he was an escaped mental patient.

**IGGY POP:** The trick would be to get Ronnie or Scotty to open the door, because they'd always sleep until noon. I'd ring, ring, ring, ring the bell, and sometimes they'd answer, sometimes they wouldn't.

So I had to turn on the garden hose and spray their windows, throw rocks, yell weird things, throw snowballs. Finally I'd get in, and then I'd have to wake them up a couple more times. They were really moody guys—I'd spin a few records to get them in the mood. Later on Dave Alexander, who lived down the street, would pop over.

Ronnie, Scotty, and Dave were very good dreamers, which is mostly what my dusty Midwest is all about. The land that time forgot. Pete Townshend said something nice about that. He said it must be really difficult for a bright person in the Midwest because you don't have a London or a New York City that can provide you with fresh input, that can rub against you and rub off any illusions . . .

**RON ASHETON:** The first time Iggy saw the Doors was when they played at the Yost Field House for the University of Michigan graduating class. We all went down, but Iggy was the only one who got in, probably because he used to go to the University of Michigan and had an old ID card.

I hung around outside because I could hear the band playing. Morrison was really drunk and the kids kept yelling for "Light My Fire."

Morrison was making fun of them. He'd say, "The men of Michigan!" then do gorilla imitations. I think they threw beer at him and kept on screaming, "Light My Fire!" all during the set.

**IGGY POP:** I was not yet a firm fan of the Doors before the gig at the Yost Field House, because their musical approach was so different from the Detroit rock approach. And the MC5 did not like the Doors. Fred Smith used to say, "God, I hate those pussies."

But I went to see them at this gymnasium, and the concert was the homecoming dance for all these big, butch American clods and their girls. They were going there to see the band that did "Light My Fire."

The band got out onstage first, without Morrison, and they just sounded like pure shit. It sounded awful, worse than pussy—it was old pussy, ha ha ha. It sounded decrepit and disgusting and unbalanced—they were playing the riff to "Soul Kitchen" over and over, until the singer was gonna make his entrance.

Finally, Morrison lurched on the stage, but very sensuously. He looked incredible. I remember thinking, Hedy Lamarr in *Samson and Delilah*, because his hair was Hollywood-coiffed ringlets, and it was blue-black, greased and shiny. It was some good hair, I'll tell you.

Morrison had big, almost black eyes, because the pupils were totally enlarged, so obviously he was taking something, or maybe he was just excited. Yeah, right. And he was dressed really well in the black leather jacket, black leather pants, felt boots, and ruffled shirt, and he just sorta lurched forward, like "I'm gonna sing, but not yet . . ."

And the regular American guys were thinking, Who is this pussy?

When Morrison opened his mouth to sing, he sang in a pussy voice—a falsetto. He sang like Betty Boop and refused to sing in a normal voice. I think they got near to the end of the song and then just stopped. Morrison looked around, went over to the guitar player, and said, "Hey, my man, play that one . . ."

I think it might have been "Love Me Two Times," and it was happening. Until Morrison started singing in the Betty Boop voice again.

Basically the concert proceeded like that. I was very excited. I loved the antagonism; I loved that he was pissing them off. Yes, yes, yes. They were all frat people, football killers, the future leaders of America—the people who today are the rock stars of America—and not only was Morrison pissing them off, but he was mesmerizing them at the same time. I was humping this little girl that I brought with me, thinking, This is great!

The gig lasted only fifteen or twenty minutes because they had to pull Morrison offstage and get him out of there fast, because the people were gonna attack him. It made a big impression on me.

That's when I thought, Look how awful they are, and they've got the number-one single in the country! If this guy can do it, I can do it. And I gotta do it now. I can't wait any longer.

**RON ASHETON:** The first gig we had was at the Grande Ballroom. I said, "Hey, let's just get Dave Alexander to play the bass, I'll pick up the guitar, and my brother will play whatever weird drums we get for him."

The night before the show, we didn't know what Iggy was going to wear, so he said, "Don't worry, I'll come up with something."

So we go to pick him up and he's wearing like an old white nightshirt from the 1800s that went all the way down to his ankles. He had painted his face white like a mime, and he had made an Afro wig out of twisted aluminum foil.

As we were driving to the Grande Ballroom we were smoking joints. It was our first show and we were kind of nervous. Then this bunch of hoodlums pulls up next to us and tries to run us off the road. So we were a nervous wreck by the time we got to the Ballroom. When we got out of the car, the black security guard in the parking lot said, "Motherfucker, is that a mechanical man, or what?" He was just laughing his ass off.

**SCOTT ASHETON:** ~~Iggy had shaved off his eyebrows. We had a friend named Jim Pop who had a nervous condition and had lost all his hair, including his eyebrows. So when Iggy shaved his eyebrows we started calling him Pop.~~

It was real hot in the Ballroom that night, and Iggy started sweating, and then he realized what you need eyebrows for. By the end of the set, his eyes were totally swollen because of all that oil and glitter.

**JOHN SINCLAIR:** It was just so fucking real it was just unbelievable. Iggy was like nothing that you ever saw. It wasn't like a band, it wasn't like the MC5, it wasn't like Jeff Beck, it wasn't like anything. It wasn't rock & roll.

Iggy kind of created this psychedelic drone act as a backdrop for his front-man antics. The other guys were literally his stooges. They'd just get this tremendous drone going, but they weren't songs, they were like demented grooves—"trances" I called them. They were closer to North African music than they were to rock.

And there's Iggy dancing around like *Waiting for Godot* meets the ballet. He wasn't like Roger Daltrey, you know what I mean?

**RON ASHETON:** We invented some instruments that we used at that first show. We had a blender with a little bit of water in it and put a mike right down in it, and just turned it on. We played that for like fifteen minutes before we went onstage. It was a great sound, especially going through the PA, all cranked up. Then we had a washboard with contact mikes. So Iggy would put on golf shoes and get on the washboard and he would just kind of shuffle around. We had contact mikes on the fifty-gallon oil drums that Scotty played, and he used two hammers as drumsticks.

I even borrowed my ma's vacuum cleaner because it sounded like a jet engine. I always loved jet airplanes. VVVVVRRRRR!

**SCOTT ASHETON:** People didn't know what to think. John Sinclair, the MC5's manager, was just standing there with his mouth wide open. That was the master plan—knock down the walls and blow people's shit away. All we wanted to do was make it different.

There were a lot of people that didn't like it, and those were the people who started showing up at every gig. They'd yell to get a response, and Iggy would tell them to fuck off.

**IGGY POP:** On my twenty-first birthday we opened for Cream. I had spent the day transporting a two-hundred-gallon oil drum from Ann Arbor to Detroit so that we could put a contact mike on it and Jimmy Silver would hit it on the one beat of our best song. I got it up the three flights of stairs into the Grande Ballroom, by myself, and then we discovered that our amps didn't work. And when we went out onstage everybody yelled, "We want Cream! We want Cream! Get off, we want Cream!"

I'm standing there, having taken two hits of orange acid, going, "Fuck you!" It was one of our worst gigs ever.

I went back to Dave Alexander's house with him. I was heartbroken. I thought, My god, this is twenty-one. This is it. Things are just not going well.

Dave's mom served me a cheeseburger with a candle in the middle of it. The idea was to keep going and things would get better. Don't give up.

**SCOTT KEMPNER:** I was terrified watching the Stooges at Ungano's. I was going down there to see this amazing band and be ready for anything, but it was ten times more than I bargained for.

I mean, I was scared, actually nervous, but so exhilarated, and so involved in the sound of this band and this unbelievable guy Iggy—this wiry little thing—who could cause more damage than all the tough guys I knew in my neighborhood.

Other guys would punch you in the mouth, that would heal, but Iggy was wounding me psychically, forever. I was never gonna be able to be the same after the first twenty seconds of that night—and I haven't been.

We went back the next night, and it was the exact same songs, but it was totally brand-new. This had nothing to do with last night, this had nothing to do with rehearsal, this had nothing to do with sound check—this was living and being born and coming for your fucking children in the middle of the night right in front of you . . .

And every time I saw that band it was the same thing—there was never a yesterday, there was never a set they'd played before, there was never a set they were ever gonna play again. Iggy put life and limb into every show. I saw him bloody every single show. **Every single show involved actual fucking blood.**

From then on, rock & roll could never be anything less to me. Whatever I did—whether I was writing, or playing—there was blood on the pages, there was blood on the strings, **because anything less than that was just bullshit, and a waste of fucking time.**

**ALAN VEGA:** Iggy came out and he's wearing dungarees with holes, with this red bikini underwear with his balls hanging out. He went to sing and he just pukes all over, man. He's running through the audience and shit, and he jumped Johnny Winter, who was sitting beside Miles Davis. Johnny Winter hated them, but Miles Davis loved it. It was one of the greatest shows I've ever seen in my life.

**JIM CARROLL:** Patti Smith took me to see the Stooges for the first time. Iggy took his shirt off and came out in the crowd, and he was looking right at us, and Patti goes, "I think he's gonna come to us."

I said, "If he pushes me, I'm gonna fucking clock him." I thought, **What is this bullshit? Performance art? Ha ha ha.** But Patti was into anything like that, man. Raw energy in any form just lit her up.

**STEVE HARRIS:** Iggy took out his dick and put it on the speaker. It was just vibrating around. He was very well endowed.

**LEE CHILDERS:** Iggy's performance went beyond being just sexual. Geri Miller, the Warhol Superstar, was sitting in a chair in what could be loosely described as the front row, and Iggy walked over to her, put his hand on her face, grabbed hold real tight, then dragged her by the face across the floor, with her hanging on to the metal folding chair. What Iggy was doing to her wasn't sexual, it was just brutal. No one knew what to think.

Iggy was the first time I ever saw what was to become my rock & roll.

**IGGY POP:** I was out of my mind doing those gigs for four days. After that, I understood what it was that the audience needed out of me. And my attitude toward them was that I welcomed any support.

I mean, it could've been Charles Manson in the front row, and I would have gone, "Yeah, Charlie, good to see you baby, right on, hey, we got a fellow here in the front row tonight who's really standing America on its ear, let's have a hand for him."

You know, it wouldn't have mattered. It was like what **Hitler said**, "Go for the lowest common denominator."

With the Stooges that was really necessary, because those were the only people that really dug us. When we first started out, our fans were **JUST A MESS**—it was like early Christianity. It was the ugliest chicks and the most illiterate guys—people with skin problems, people with sexual problems, weight problems, employment problems, mental problems, you name it, they were a mess.

**DANNY FIELDS:** When it comes to Iggy, everyone hangs on me that I was doing a generational overturn—promoting Iggy as the next generation's Jim Morrison. That was not on my mind at all. I saw nothing similar between Jim Morrison and Iggy Pop. Iggy was dangerous.

Jim Morrison never went out, like Iggy did, and raised a four-hundred-pound bench over the heads of the first rows of kids in the audience like he was going to slam it down, and you thought the momentum of the swing was such that he couldn't stop it. You thought that the kids were going to get squashed to death. And then Iggy would seem to stop it in midair, like he was Nadia Comaneci.

As I later got to know him, and knew that no one was going to get killed at the show, I was never quite sure that that night wasn't going to be the exception.