



THE GROHL TRUTH

WORDS BY NICK SCOTT > PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVE BACCON
STYLING BY MELISSA BOYLE > GROOMING BY ALLISON BOYLE

GQ CHARTS THE {9} LIVES OF THE COOLEST CAT IN ROCK

Cotton check shirt, \$235, by Nudie. Crew neck t-shirt, \$155; slim jeans, \$260, by Ksubi.

I THE FRENETIC FIGHTER

“And so I went, ‘FUCK YOU ALL!’ and wound up with a back-pack, hiking up this mountain road to get to the house, and I’ve got these dogs chasing me, and I’m running through brush — *ksch, ksch, ks ch, ksch* — and I finally get home and my grandmother’s there, but she’s been dead for years, so... really insane stuff...” Dave Grohl’s account of a recent nightmare, told at five-syllables-per-second to Foo Fighters bassist Nate Mendel, hits *GQ* like a tsunami as we enter the hotel room. He’s like an AK47, his rounds of quickfire monologue broken up only by occasional tobacco inhalation and the related peels of hoarse laughter.

The key to the Foos’ successful brand of sledgehammer, whupass rock his relentless nervous energy may be, but that doesn’t stop Grohl from wanting to calm down a little. “I went to a yoga class the night after Motörhead’s 30th anniversary party,” he says. “I turned up so devastatedly hungover, and sat there stretching thinking: ‘Be cool, don’t throw up in front of everyone,’ and I had to do some down-dog pose, put my head upside down and the whole world spun like a top. I sat on the kerb later, pouring water over my face for 45 minutes. It was awful.” >



"I DANCED BY MYSELF TO 'PUFF THE MAGIC DRAGON' WITH 12 MOTHERS GOING, 'ISN'T THAT THE GUY FROM THE FOO FIGHTERS?'"

{2} THE GROG HOUND

"Name a drink that they bring to your table on fire... No hang on, what about a fine wine? Actually, I'm just going to go with Jägermeister. No, no that doesn't fit — too fuckin' gnarly. Hey what about this: I'm going with Brennivín." Never let it be said that Dave Grohl takes his alcohol analogies lightly. When double album *In Your Honor* was released in 2005, he dubbed the visceral rock disc his "Jack-and-Coke record", its acoustic counterpart his "Sapphire-and-Martini-with-Kylie record".

So why, when it comes to the Foo Fighters' sixth studio album, *Echoes, Silence, Patience And Grace*, has he gone for a fiery Icelandic schnapps? "When you first taste it," he explains, "it's one of the most unusual things you've ever put in your mouth — depending on the individual, of course. Really fucking weird. But after two or three, it's the most delicious thing in the world, and you end up smashing windows and chucking up out of cars." One for the grans, then, Dave?

{3} THE (UNGROOMED) GROOM

Grohl met his second wife (he was married to photographer Jennifer Youngblood for four years in the mid-Nineties), former MTV producer Jordyn Blum, in 2001. "Taylor [Hawkins, Foo Fighters drummer] and I were hanging out at the Sunset Marquis whisky bar," as he told it to the UK's *Q*

magazine. "I was just out of a Tenacious D session. Some bombshell comes up and starts talking to Taylor. I've got Vans trainers on, no socks, dirty shorts and T-shirt, surrounded by beautiful Hollywood. She waves her friend Jordyn over. I'm like, 'Oh my God, not a chance.' By the end of the night I was pissed and staring at her going, 'You're my future ex-wife.' So she gave me her number."

{4} THE FOO FATHER

Grohl's groggy charms weren't lost on Jordyn, and the couple welcomed their first child, Violet Maye, into the world in April last year. But suggest that a home life knee-deep in green faeces and primary-coloured plastic is a left turn off the rock 'n' roll highway, and Dave's likely to screw his face up like he's just hoovered up a line of NapiSan. "Fatherhood and what I do are absolutely compatible," he says. "I don't bring the baby to the bar, man." So no excruciatingly un-rock 'n' roll moments in his time as a father? The facial contortion tightens. "Yes. My wife goes to this class called Mommy And Me, and I went and was the only father there. And they have this thing called 'Dance Time' where you pick up your baby and dance around to songs, and since Jordyn was holding Violet, I had to dance by myself to 'Puff The Magic Dragon'. With 12 mothers going, 'Isn't that the guy from the Foo Fighters?' That might be the most embarrassing thing I've ever done." >

* MEMOIRS OF A GEEZER.

IT'S THE LESSER-KNOWN ANECDOTES THAT MAKE THE LIFE OF THE HIRSUITE, HARD-ROCKIN' MAN OF THE PEOPLE SO COLOURFUL.

A LARGE BIG DAY OUT

After the Foo's Big Day Out set at the Gold Coast in 2000, Grohl decompressed by having a few backstage beers before riding back to the hotel on his moped. Barely off the site, he was duly pulled over and breath tested. Thinking he was merely signing autographs for the law, punters driving by ped him the metal sign and yelled, "All right, Dave! Great show!", as he blew 0.15 roadside. A few hours in the local watchhouse later, Grohl copped an \$800 fine and a three-month suspension. "Now, every time I go to Australia," he says, "I get stopped at immigration and have to tell my ridiculous story."

LEMMY & THE STRIPPERS

In 2002, Grohl assembled a hard rock dream team for his side project Probot. Among them was gravel-voiced growler Lemmy of Motörhead, a long time hero of Grohl's. After warming up with half a bottle of Jack Daniels, Lemmy finished barking the track 'Shake Your Blood' in two takes, looked Grohl's way and enquired: "All right! Who wants to look at some tits?" Metal icon and acolyte then retired to a nearby skin-pit for a day of flesh, booze and laughs.

POST-RELATIONSHIP BLUES

During the mid Nineties, Grohl and Veruca Salt's Louise Post were alt-rock's first couple (just check out their duet on the *Touch* soundtrack's title track for proof; it positively sizzles). However, erstwhile ladies'

man Grohl grew weary of their relationship and, allegedly, called it off via text message. Duly pissed off, Post responded by referring to Grohl, while onstage, as a 'shag hound'. Nice.

THE MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS

As a teenager growing up in the wilds of suburban Virginia, Grohl's music of choice was metal and prog-rock and his preferred drug was 'shrooms. On Christmas Day 1984, he was given an ample supply by a well-meaning friend ("Merry Christmas, dude!") and imbibed them with gusto. Rather than endure his mother's annual, well-attended Christmas bash, Grohl motored around town in her Ford Fiesta, belting out Led Zep's 'Rain Song' at lung-busting volume through the sunroof. "I tripped my fucking balls off right in front of my mother's friends, who were all teachers at my school," he admitted. "So it was kind of a nightmare."

BIN YOUR HONOR

While in high school, Grohl informed his buddy and first bandmate, Larry Hinkle, that he had a new song, going by the name 'Gimme Three Steps.' "The lyrics were incredible, I couldn't believe it... it was genius," said Hinkle when he had heard the song. After some time, Grohl smiled, thanked him and then confessed, "Dude, it's a Lynyrd Skynyrd song."

>> JEFF APTER IS THE AUTHOR OF *THE DAVE GROHL STORY*, PUBLISHED BY OMNIBUS PRESS.



Wool Henley knit top, \$290, by Filippa K. Crew neck t-shirt, \$155; slim jeans, \$260, both by Ksubi. Jacket and necklace, Dave's own.



Nylon zip jacket, \$400, by Filippa K. Crew neck t-shirt, \$95, by Nudie. Cotton v-neck knit, \$530, by Miu Miu from Belinda Menswear.

"I JUST DID A BUNCH OF ACID AND SMOKED A TONNE OF WEED — BUT I NEVER TOUCHED HEROIN OR COKE."

{5} THE ALOOF COMIC

Right in the middle of *Echoes, Silence, Patience And Grace* comes a moment of pulsating light relief from the album's dark core — a track named "Cheer Up, Boys (Your Make-Up Is Running)". Surely a thinly disguised swipe at the new emo movement, the latest mutation of the emotional hardcore punk subgenre that originated in Grohl's native Washington DC in the Eighties?

"It's not so much a swipe as... well, if you were to spend 24 hours with this band, you'd realise we rouse at each other, pick on each other, and that's just the way we are. We make fun of the people we love most — and that'd have to be dudes with eyeliner." Meaning rock's glummost nipple-gazers? The Bright Eyed Fall Out Boys, all catching the same Death Cab as Cutie and co? "Noo — just dudes with make-up." The wry smile. "In bands. Who play sad music. With black hair." A common Dave Grohl interview scenario breaks out, where all present break into chuckles while he drags ponderously on a cigarette and smiles wryly, eyebrows arched, cueing in your next question.

{6} THE MOURNER

Grohl had been thumping the tubs with Nirvana for almost four years when, in 1994, frontman Kurt Cobain was found dead with 1.52mg of heroin in each litre of his blood — three times the lethal dose. Twelve years later, as Jordyn was giving birth to Violet, with Grohl present, a CD — lullaby versions of Beatles songs — played in the

background. "The first song was "In My Life,"" Grohl told *Q*, "which we played at Kurt's memorial. Oh Jeez, I just felt it coming and I'm like, 'You can't break down right now, man. I've got to keep it together for my wife.' What a song and what a memory."

{7} THE REFORMED STONER

Shortly before Cobain's actual death, Grohl was at his former home in Seattle when a call came through from Rome. Cobain, apparently, after slipping into a drug-induced coma, had died. Ten minutes passed before a second phone call revealed it to be a false alarm. Then, in August 2001, Taylor Hawkins flatlined after an OD incident in London.

It's no wonder that Foo Fighters these days is a drug-free unit. "Each to his own," as Grohl puts it, "but there's some things you've got to be really careful with. I was never into hard drugs — I just did a bunch of acid and smoked a tonne of weed, but I never touched heroin or coke. You've got to watch your ass with those two drugs."

{8} THE 'NICEST MAN IN ROCK'

For Australian listeners, by far the most eye-catching title on *Echoes, Silence, Patience And Grace's* track list is 'Ballad of the Beaconsfield Miners', an instrumental composed during the band's three-night acoustic session at the Sydney Opera House last October. Grohl was moved to tears when he heard that Brant Webb, survivor of the mining disaster in Tasmania in May, had listened to the Foo Fighters while trapped to lift his spirits and distract him from the drilling.

"I don't think anybody has ever made me feel better about what I do than those guys requesting an iPod with our shit on it," he says. "You realise your music reaches places and effects people you never realised it had. It made me feel legitimate about what I do — you know, this isn't all about fucking free beer and PA stacks — it has something more to it."

{9} THE REALISTIC ROCK-VET

Early next year, Dave Grohl will enter the last year of his 40s. In the course of writing this article, the baby on the front of *Nevermind* celebrated his 18th birthday — up there, as aging rites of passage go, with the realisation that you could feasibly have sired an Arctic Monkey.

A personification of rock 'n' roll Americana, with all its Jack-and-tatts aesthetics and youthful, good-time tenets, Dave Grohl may be. But will he go on and on? Will he one day enrol at the Mick 'N' Keef School of Geriatric Denial? "I can't imagine playing our songs when I'm 65 years old," he says. "I don't think I could physically do it. We might just come over and sit right down there [points to the hotel gardens through the window] and play cellos and harmonicas, but I won't be bouncing around the stage screaming my ass off drunk." **GQ** *Echoes, Silence, Patience And Grace* is out now.

*GROHL BY NUMBERS.

6 The number of cents the enraged Grohl would have had George W Bush donate to the John Kerry campaign — one cent for every time the Republican Party used the song "Times Like These" at its 2004 election rallies.

415th The name of the US night fighter squadron that coined the term 'Foo Fighters', referring to balls of light seen in the skies over Germany during WWII.

7 Grohl's age when his classically trained flautist and political speechwriter father divorced from his English teacher mother.

3 The number of overlapping circles tattooed on Grohl's wrist — the Celtic-style symbol adopted by his idol, Led Zeppelin drummer John Bonham.

3 The number of years Grohl was embroiled in a legal battle with Kurt Cobain's widow, Courtney Love, over the rights to Nirvana's back catalogue.

