

Radios Headed to a Smashed City

One has to start out thinking that no one has ever experienced anything like this - *ever*. No one. You are the purveyor of the first fold in the brain technique. Another fold in the massive head organ. Just you. No one else. And now, the story of how the last week or months have been going for someone like me. A list of events. A conjunction of already thought about ideas, possibly. Maybe they have never been thought about or lived before. The prospect for new prospects and the beginning of the sky is just another reason to stay low and remain low.

Several months ago he told me tickets to a big rock and roll show in St. Louis. Now, that's about 4 hours away from our fair city of Kansas City. The show was going to be the event of the summer, or better yet, the best concert that was going to blow anywhere close to these parts in years. The band is Radiohead. Our fair remaining monoliths of rock that remain in the non-rock radio playing year of 2003. But, I'm not here to talk rock talk. I'm here to waste some minutes with other things that remain more pressing.

As we got closer and closer to the time of the concert, I agreed to make the journey with my friend simply referred to as '*the Kato*'. Money was initially an issue, and Kato wanted to originally take a broad out to St. Louis for the show with plenty of frolic. As it happened, the gal didn't pan out and he owed me some scratch. He was going to take the hit on the ticket and ante up with the fare for the weekend. Another friend in the group, Jeremy, was going to come along to round out the triplet scene that was going to take place.

I didn't think about the show much. Now, I knew that it was likely going to blow my doors down, but I felt it was better to not get expectations soaring about how the show was going to transpire. And it seemed as though the arrival for the show can way the fuck quicker than I expected. As it was planned, we were going to leave on a Saturday morning – stay through the night – go through Sunday – see the show that night – stay that night – and drive back on Monday. That would give us some time to fuck about with night living and poke our eyes around the daytime St. Louis.

Before we embarked on the journey, we agreed to push back our leaving a bit late. Originally, we were going to go on Friday night, but there was some kind of scene that we were going to attend. Some field party north of the city in a small town called Cameron. That was the loose prospect for the evening. And, we were going to make the trek up to this small hometown of a good friend who goes by the name of Scott. But, leading up to the field party, Scott wasn't returning phone calls – only sending out e-mails. Further, he called and left me an elaborate message earlier in the week about being tired of being anxious. He was fed up with answering the phone, making business arrangements, social plans and the like. So, we never hooked up with him to take the field party.

This still meant that we were going stay in town on Friday and leave the following morning. So, that Friday night Jeremy, Kato and myself decided to go out for a bit of drink and a solid KC evening send off. The boys came by in Jeremy's large white Durango for the commencement of the evening. The car matched Jer's demeanor. He is a

big guy with a silent sort of approach to life. He leans back, listens, speaks usually when spoken to and has a solid laugh. He's solid company and a good guy to have on your side. So, they pick me up for the evening and the boys are decked out in their evenings best. As I enter the truck, Kato apologizes about the fancy threads and the scenes we may partake in. This is all prefaced off an early correspondence I had several days before in regards to the Kansas City sceners.

It started with a phone message earlier in the week from a mutual friend by the name of Scott. He said that he was done with making plans, answering calls and the regular roll of civilization. Further, he denied a request to join us for the trek to St. Louie and the big rock show. In line with his odd musical tastes, he said that Radiohead's first album *Pablo Honey* was their only solid record and he wasn't up for the long journey down I-70. In between he peppered the e-mail response with other choice comments, most all were jokes. But, his flailing musical opinion that Radiohead's first album was their finest is pure horse shit. My respect for his musical tastemanship went into the gutter at that point.

After his scorching e-mail, because he wouldn't take phone calls, I came back with one of my own. Done with the hipster, midtown – too fucking cool attitude, I had to come back with my rebuttal. And both Scott and Kato were going to be privy to this. The basis behind my e-mail comeback was my preface that I'm getting tired of the scene going on in Kansas City. The semi-hip, talentless, dark haired, coke nosed, cock ringed, borderline heroin heads and all the nonsense in-between shit was getting old. This was confirmed at a local music showcase honoring the best in local music. The scene was drab, the people were acting as though it was a red carpet premiere for the new Casablanca. Most folks were as talented as the plastic sack around my morning paper and I've seen too much of it lately in this midtown scene I frequent for time to time. Bar after club and the scene remains. Cool characters come in and out, but the impetus behind the scene are these fucking sceners with little more than their genitals to get them either out or into a big jam.

We now return to the Friday night before leaving this fair city of ours. The boys pick me up in the Durango. I try the driver's side back door and a morocco falls loud to the ground. I pick it up and throw it back in. Then, I try the passenger side back seat, which has another morocco that falls to my feet. I pick it up, the car is laughing it up – the music gets turned up and we fly off. As of that time and lately since my break-up of 3 years of so, I never really mind where we frequent. But, on this night I didn't want to get into anything that was going to be too high on sceners. Taking some corners and heading east, we decide to hit a joint called the Velvet Dog. It's a hip kind of west coast vibe that has a host of beautiful women. And that's a big reason why we arrived there. It's always a reason to be out and about on the prowl. For me, I'm usually torn with going out on the prowl. As much as I like to look and talk, my oats of leaving for a one night fuck with a girl has evaporated quite a bit since my mid 20-'s.

We make it to the bar and it's a busy night. Back porch is packed on a 90 degree-plus night and the inside is full as well. We decide to head up to the more sparse confines of the second floor. As we approach the floor, Jeremy gets accosted by the waitress. She's an old friend and co-worker. They exchange the hug and we start ordering the drinks. I

get a Tom Collins and the boys get their assortment of mixed liquor. Now, in this dynamic of Kato, Jeremy and myself there is a definite social blend and etiquette. Jeremy is a big quiet guy. He tends not to say anything unless spoken to. It's his way. I have known him for about 5 years and it has always been the same. But when he does talk, it's honest, cutting and you appreciate it. As for Kato and I, we stammer on like a couple of loose lips. So, we were sitting at the table exchanging some talk about things of the night, day and perhaps yesterday. Again, the waitress comes over and exchanges some looks with Jeremy and gets us another round. We went through the first collection in a flat hurry.

The next round arrives and we are all getting restless. Something in the air tells us all that one more drink and were fucking out. Not much with the sight of women going down and the general air was something we weren't digging. And it was getting late. But, we try to convince Jeremy that he's getting the stink eye from his friend. May be high tide for him to get the hand around her proverbial waist and run with it. He nods us off and we take the check. It's cheap. Very cheap and another confirmation that this girl is on his junk. He nods us off one more time and we acquiesce. It was the right time for a trip to the dive haven of midtown – the Buzzard Beach. The eclectic and cool collection of drunks, druggies, one nighters, perverts, jokers and the lot. So, we scooped down our second drink and flew out. And the Buzzard was easily in our periscope.

On the way over, Jeremy turned up his mix of dance music. A staple in his car and we drove fast towards the west side of town. I can only take so much of the dance music. The up, down, sides and around just doesn't cook my food. I need more of a well-rounded diet of music. So, we arrived at the Beach and Rex was working the door. Rex is one of the coolest motherfucker on earth. And he's one of the funniest fucking cats I know. As we approached the door, everyone exchanged a bit of mouth smack and they moved on. I stuck around and talked to Rex for a while. It had been some time and I was surveying the sprawling Westport scene that was going on and on like a string being unwound from the invisible hand.

Rex talked to me about all the work her was doing and I was trying to recollect what I had gotten myself caught up into as of late. It had been a managerie of work, booze, strange girls, the city, sounds and all the rest. We talked until I couldn't hold my piss any longer and made my way inside. After getting a fresh drink, I headed outside to the portico to find the boys and see what kind of group they were wrapped up into. I found them the minute I hit the patio. And I see an old friend by the name of Dave, Conrad and some FC guy. They are all villains, semi-pro comedians and fucking dreamers. Also at the table is an attractive red headed girl that isn't saying too much and I scave quickly over her landscapes and begin in with my banter with Dave.

Now, Dave is a bartender at a comedy club in Kansas and is doing stand-up gigs at the same club. He's a solid comic and a cool cat. One good for a bar talk or sober revelations. So, we sit and I ask how him and the gal are doing. And we delve into his new clean life. He gave up the drink, smoke, caffeine, fat foods and such. He's a guy that was like all the rest of us in the group. Flopping without abandon through the food, drink and toxins of

this modern life. No more. He's clean and we quickly segway off that conversational stop in the road and talk about other shit. Somewhere in our talk, we get interrupted by the Kato calling over the other hopeful comedian, Conrad. Now, Conrad is a good kid, but he's the only true villain I know out of the group. And I don't know him that well. But, there has always been an appetite for destruction, crime and non-conformity in his blood. I had heard all the stories and knew what this kid was capable of.

Once Conrad stopped at our table, the Kato asked him if he was trying to get his leg up on the red head at the table. He flashed a big smile. But, the dilemma Kato was trying to peel into was the fact that Conrad already had a girlfriend. This didn't seem to phase him in a slightly drunken wobble and he just flashed a sinister grin that spelled out his whole plan. He wanted to bed down with this little flower at the table and absolve the pain of his current relationship. It was that simple. Kato is always good about getting the truth out of folks and that's what we got from this Conrad character. And the whole time I just nodded and waited for the next person to arrive at the table or continue my talk with Dave.

Following the Conrad talk, he went back to his table as Kato and Jeremy dissapeard somewhere into the bowels of the bar. I sat at the table and looked around at the folks that were about. Lots of black shorts, spiked jewelry, tattoos, rock shirts, big boots, drunken shouts and general congeniality in the air. Then, my air was about to be broken for the rest of the evening. The red head girl was at the table right up on my shit. She saddled close and her leg was rubbing my leg. Then, she said, 'Are you Joe Dimino?' I looked at this strange girl puzzled and asked her how she knew. She told me that she asked Dave while at the table. And she said she asked about an assortment of other things. As it went, I peaked her attention while talking with Dave. She liked my intensity and knew that there was something different about me. Her interests were peaked and I was ready to have some solid female companionship.

Now, this was the red head girl that Conrad wanted to bump junk with. And, she was obviously throwing me props. Without my approach, she was all up on my shit and we started talking. She was a mid-20's graduate with a math degree and wanted to teach high schoolers how to deal with numbers. And of course, she had just gotten out of a long relationship with a guy by the name of Guy. She talked about how he already had a girlfriend and threw her hat out there that she was on the prowl. I was in her path and it was just going to be another ride. Now, during the throws of this first brief conversation, I was impressed with her style. Manner of speech, her physical curves and the fact that she obviously had a brain. But, if she was the prodigy child of Conrad and FC, she was swimming in a pool of youthful temptations and motivations. These guys and her pairing with them means a large portion of maturity is throw out the door from the get go.

My beer neared it's end and I was ready to go back inside. This coincided with Conrad coming back out to the table and attention was already being diverted to what was going on between us kids. Again, as my life unfolds, I am unwittingly getting tangled into a web of someone's own desires or design. Not that I give a shit too much, because I thrive in these situations. But, to encroach on another quasi-friend's girls isn't my scene. But,

she's approaching me and not vice versa. I'm fine with the situation. Then, my mind wanders to how the Kato and Jeremy are doing. Maybe they too are getting their honey oats soaked and the hat trick is getting close to completion. I get my drink at the bar inside and come back out to the table. Everyone is at our table. Kato, Jeremy, Conrad and this new girl are milling about. As I arrive, the table thins again and I am alone with this red headed girl again. Now, she has a name and it's the same as my ex-girl friend of 3 years – Sarah. The fucking luck. Just can't escape the ex's shadow of gloom and old cloth. But, I'm not so concerned about this and ready to plod ahead with whatever is going to be for the evening with this girls.

After the folks clear the table, Sarah and I start talking again. Or, she begins unfolding her fact finding mission before my ears. She tells me that she knows about me. Oh yea, I come back. She says that she heard I was a poet/writer. I tell her I do a bit of it and she starts reciting a poem in my ear. This was the killer. I almost had to grab her and tell her that she needed to read the next guy and leave me the fuck alone. It was tackier than a motherfucker and I absorbed her poem and went on to the next topic. She transitioned well. We talked about how she got into math to disprove already proved equations and some other trinkets of already forgotten banter. Then, my drink was near it's end. As last call was just announced, she said I could have her beer. She wasn't much of a drinker and it was a solid gesture. Again, her face opened up into that sweet smile and pure invite for me to go into battle with her.

From this point, Kato and Jeremy said they were going to be outside waiting for me. I nodded and made my way inside with this Sarah girl. I told her over my last gulps that I enjoyed her company and would like to talk with her again. She said that she would be at the same place the following night. I nodded clearly knowing that I would be out of town. She shook her ass as she walked away and I drained the last of my drink and headed towards the door myself. Once outside, I gave Rex some more mouth jabs and made my way up the street. Kato and Jeremy were primed to go and we talked about late evening food options. At this point, Conrad is there with Sarah and we are all talking again. They are talking about food options as well. Looks like we are all going to meet somewhere for a late night diner experience. As the boys haggle over the options, Sarah begins in on me with more questions. I swear to Christ, I asked this girl maybe one question to her 20 all night long.

Her big question in this final segment of the evening was how old I was. In a roundabout way I told her that I was 30 and didn't even bother to ask her how old she was. I just waltzed on my way knowing she had to be in her mid-20's. Then, the banter of how we were to tackle the late night hunger was hitting a fervor. Conrad was demanding that we meet him at the dirtiest grease pit in town called Nichols Diner and we weren't all taking the bait. I would have swung because of the Sarah girl, but Kato and Jeremy were done. They climbed into the car to wait as Conrad pulled out a makeshift butterfly knife and started waving it around. Fucking drunk as shit with a knife demanding that we join them. I agreed with head nods and mozied my way to the Durango. I told them they could drop me off at my place. I had enough booze, broads and excitement for the evening. The knife put a fork in this kid.

The next morning arrived for the trek to St. Louie. It was agreed that I would be picked up around noon. This would be plenty of time to get the booze out of my bones and ready myself for the 4 hour trek down I-70 towards the bigger – more legitimate city in Missouri. The car arrived around noon and it had begun. I loaded up the bag, climbed in and someone was laughing about something. Slowly, we made our way out of Kansas City. A traffic jam was hampering us around the outer leg of the downtown loop. So, we sat in the horrible heat of Kansas City August and came up with a carte blanche of abject shit to keep the boat afloat.