

Get Off Of My Cloud! Payin' Dues!

This is the first installment of my column so this could really lead anywhere. When toying with the idea I committed mostly because I feel the need to express my opinion pretty regularly, and typically on topics that mostly only mean something to me. I can't even count the number of times I've heard "Jerry let it go, or honestly dude nobody really cares". And maybe they don't, but this can be my medium to express those opinions, what grinds my axe 'and or sharpens it I guess. That's another little thing I wanted to dive into in this little preface to my writing for this magazine. Every column does not need to be about what pisses' you off. Because as I stated above and people are happy to point out. NOBODY REALLY CARES what pisses you off, that why its you and that's why it pisses you off, "Its your cross to bare, carry it yourself!" Don't get me wrong I will bring up the little shit that gets under my skin, but I will try to not make it the focal point of my article's. If it tends to creep towards that direction I apologize!

So If you're reading these little invitations into my mind I may as well introduce myself, because the idea of being informal seems ridiculous to me. A lot of the time if I read an article or review in a magazine I take it to heart a bit more if I knows who's mouth its coming from. That being said, once you know that mouth you can attribute or take away any merit that is coming from that character and deem to your hearts content if that mouth should even be heard or just ignored and fucking shut! I'm sure we can all relate to the thought of how many opinions we've heard and how many of those we actually marinated on. Few and far between my peoples'!

My name is Jerry Lee Queen, I front the **BLACK KNOTS** out of West Virginia and I'm "kind of a big deal" at least in my own mind. Ha, but who isn't. But seriously we reside in Huntington, a college town. The stomping ground of Marshall University; you know the movie "We are Marshall"? That was about us. One of the more exciting things to ever happen to our fair town, located on the OHIO RIVER on the borders of Kentucky and Ohio. And as West Virginia was the brother vs brother state. (if you don't know why grab a history book and be enlightened). The Black Knots are



made up of two cats from WV and Two from KY. Makes for good banter and or at least us busting each others balls while we are on tour living entirely closer than four grown men should! Ha... The smell of must and the show the night before will haunt me the rest of my days! But anyway that's about it, we started the band about 7 years ago and some line up changes a album in the can endless shows and what not have found us where we are today. And where we are at the present moment is signed to Dead Beat Records for our upcoming full length release "The Guitarmaggedon" and a 7 song CDEP on Teenage Heart Records in support of the album. We may do some promotional 7"s on some European labels but to be perfectly honest the work load In front of us is well, "a work load"! so I'll focus on that, as opposed to who all I can find to pimp my dumb ass! As well the band owns their own restaurant in town called "Knuckles Sandwich Co." I opened it up to help labor a lot of the cost of being in a band. Yes Children its expensive if you are not being taken care of, which we have never. But fuck it, its Rock

N Roll! You do it cause you love it, you'll do anything to continue to do what you love because that's the nature of any addiction. Heroin, Coke or Rock N Roll! But all this falls into the no shit category! The restaurant is wicked kick ass and helps to showcase the band, and it beats the hell out of a real job!

We have recently been on the road playing CONSTANTLY which is always a good time but it is now creeping towards a end. Time to go back to the studio and kick out those ("nothing but hits bitch!") and we are all really looking forward to it. Its time consuming, viciously long and some of the best fun of your life. Who doesn't get off on creating, art, just to be a part of it I guess. And when I say "it" I'm implying the entire circle of art regardless of your medium. I always remembered the quote from the John Cusack film "High Fidelity" when his ol' lady was like "you realize as soon as you sell one of those things your part of it". I always dug that idea. I've been doing it for a hot minute and feel humbled and privileged to be part of "it". And that brings me to the title of this here flag ship article

PAYIN' DUES WHAT THE FUCK DOES THAT MEAN?

Ask anybody regardless of scene, musical preference, lifestyle, career. Etc. what that means and everybody will instantly give you some idea. If you've done it, you typically feel you did it to a degree somebody else hasn't and that they should experience the same tribulations to appreciate or experience whatever the hell it is that they needed to Pay Dues to deserve or experience. This is a concept I have tooled with as far back as I can remember. I see nothing more asinine then watching some busted squatter punk preach about punk rock to another busted ass squatter punk "usually a little younger, a little dumber" about what he needs to do achieve PUNK UBER MAXIMUS! I don't know if I'm just getting older, or experiencing a bit of the "I've seen it's and am over it's!" But having been doing this for some years I've only come to a few conclusions. First off I am in no way the authority on anything, is anybody really.. (that was rhetorical.) But the only things I can talk about is being in a working band, and my involvement with other working bands, clubs, promoters, sponsors, labels, etc. AKA a few friends and a lot of assholes!

But the only idea I have been able to wrap my reasonably educated yet still mediocre mind around is that we all just make our own way. So many bands think the next show is their big break or that they're already there "whatever that means". But just the sheer unnecessary ego that accompanies so many bands for absolutely no reason. We are all out here in the grind doing what we love, so how and where does that ideal get perpetually lost? We'll many bands look at all other bands as the enemy or below them. This is retarded, because every band is different. Hints it's a different band, so do what you do and put that all that effort into trying to make a good tune or benefit your own band. As opposed to talking people into believing you and why you are better.

"NEWS FLASH" IF YOU ARE BETTER YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AN ELITIST ASSHOLE TO JUSTIFY OR PROVE IT , PEOPLE JUST KNOW IT!

Now don't get me wrong, I walk into every show as a war! I want the other bands to not know how they are going to follow me or open up for me. This is what makes you better. The best thing to happen to any artist is two things! Be around people that inspire you and be around people that are better than you! Because fuck it, if your not getting better your just stagnate and that nobody cares about. That being said, I feel like some examples should be listed being as this has taken a turn towards a cautionary tale for being a schmuck!

I don't really want to list any bands specifically because throwing mud typically only gets you dirty and encourages others to do the same and I'd like to think I'm above it or at least bored of it. Once again, I take no high ground and can easily be shallow and talk unnecessary shit. But at the end of the day it is as I just said, unnecessary.

But one instance I can reflect on or at least its ridiculousness was at "SKATOPIA" in Ohio (somewhere) I don't remember the name of the town. First off a bit of background on SKATOPIA, its wicked lawless

punk rock and skateboarding in a bed of metal, punk rock and fools like us spitting our RNMFR! Sounds like a dream right (once again rhetorical!) This compound of huge bowl and half pipes, outdoor skate ramps, cars on fire, etc. right off the bat takes you back to that time when you never thought you'd grow up. And you celebrate by realizing you never did! That being said, something very annoying comes with complete CHAOS! That's right boys and girls... the answer is CHAOS! For any event going a certain level of planning takes place by promoters just to make sure shit runs smooth that way everybody has a good time. If you plan the day before, you can roll up, party, play your show in your designated slot or whatever and its wicked stellar good times had by all. If you remove that sacred ideal of "planning" that's right you know what you have? CHAOS.. But this was a first for me in the many years I've been playing..

Typically, if there is chaos at a festival, show, or whatnot its with the crowd or cats attending. At "SKATOPIA" it was in reverse. Everybody was down (the crowd) for watching some bad ass cats skateboarding (and people believe me when I say there was serious bodacious blowout skating!) (Fucking Wicked)! But the problem didn't lye there, it was with the band planning. The way the show was laid out was a huge 20 ft. deep Bowl in between two stages in this building that looked like a old barn! "OUT OF CONTROL WICKEDLY KICK ASS ROCK N ROLL SCENARIO! Except that it was a train wreck..

Each band was supposed to set up while another was playing that was one band could finish while another could begin. Seems and sounds seamless enough. Except here's the kicker, no true band order.

Ok.. I'm gonna build a retarded stew for you here..

Add: a shit tone of bands
Add: support from Bam Margera
(JACKASS the TV show on MTV)
Scoop out: any band planning
Add: The "This may be my big break" ideal

Enjoy!

Fucking Train Wreck! We had a slot to go on at like 11:00 and then a band from NY was like no that was our slot, and we were like its all good..

So then we had a slot at 12:45am and some band from "god knows where" was like (hey guys we got skipped and that is supposed to be our slot. .. so we where like fuck it, you guys go ahead.. Trying to be cool and courteous.. and this just kept continuing.. !

See, you have to realize once you missed your spot, you didn't just have to sit through their set you had to sit through the next bands set who was playing on the opposite stage.. so its like a hour and a half every time you get set back.. pain in the ass when it's the middle of the night and your like 4 hours away from anything that looks familiar . The last time was at about 3:45am (this event goes 24hr!). We had been pushed back like 4 times and now we were gonna go on and get it done. The novelty of the place had worn off. 16 year old girls getting naked and kids throwing fire crackers at each other had a novelty to it earlier on (you always dig rooting for kids hooking up, because once upon a time you were that kid!) But now it was just fucking late and you realize you have an hour set ahead of you and its already 4:00am and you have to load and unload and a surplus of bullshit that just accompanies playing festivals.. But we where still psyched, but then retardation had to strike!

We we're just about to start loading our gear on stage and some mediocre up-start new metal band was like hey this is our slot. "And we're being goofballs as always"! being like dude, yeah its our spot and trying to involve them in the ridiculousness of the scenario because (that's just what you have to do so you don't pull your hair out!) And they are busting out this stupid attitude like this is for MTV and the

Crew of JACKASS is watching and this is their slot and all of a sudden we are thrust into this debacle of literally fighting for a 4:00am slot that nobody is watching at an event which has become the equivalent of a managerial sinking ship! So we were laughing all this off and as we turned our backs, these little new metal rats grabbed their gear and shoved it on stage. Easily one of the weakest lamest things I've ever seen.

Now we have to do battle for a fucking time slot, are you kidding me. All because Bam Margeria thought the place was cool. I mean the man likes the band "HIM" can we really take him seriously..

But it was at about this time we had two choices, either literally fight for a slot (that sucks at 4) or wait another hour and a half 5:30am for another slot. Ha

WE SAID FUCK IT!.. LETS HIT THE HIGHWAY!

And we did, we wanted to play even if it was just on principal but people had to suck the fun out of it. And if your not having fun playing Rock N Roll then why are you doing it! Which brings us to the point of this whole example from the Black Knots road Logs. Payin Dues.. These kids were wanting to jump onto a stage really cause they wanted the notoriety of being associated with something that somebody else said was cool.. To skip all those horrible shows that are just part of being in a band. The ideal of "just take me to the top"

What they didn't realize is their were no scouts with record contracts waiting in the crowd, and its those horrible shows that you play day in and day out that make you a great rock band. That's payin dues. Doing it with no hope of a Trump Locker full of cash at the end of some slew of shows. Doing because you cant stand not to. Because a crowd can see why your onstage, and when you waste their time your equally wasting your own. Payin Dues is only about experience, bettering what you do and making some good tunes with your best friends! And if that's not what you experience every night or there is a different goal in mind your in for a sad awakening.

But anyway, that'll about wrap me up for our first installment! So everybody whatever you do, Do it right. Whatever the fuck that means.. ha,
That may be the ideological thesis for our next installment!

Take pride in your rock n roll before somebody with no soul takes it away!
Keep Killen Killers!

- Jerry Lee Queen