

NEW YORK, NY 10009

Mike was always there with his Sony deck and hash pipe. He must have had hundreds of hours of the band on tape. And when I saw him in the funeral parlor, all white and still, I cursed that little drunken bastard who killed him out in Staten Island.

For years after we split, I tried not to think about Sheila. Not that it was too painful, I just didn't want to get swept up again in the beautiful mess of her life. Because she was beautiful, innocent too, and unhappy, and occasionally unfaithful, to mention only a few of her chameleonic qualities. She was also a scientologist which didn't help. Still, she was generous to a fault and I loved her dearly.

Those were the days of Max's, Tier Three, Copernicus, Bobby Sands, Henry Miller, The Book of the Law, Avenue B, The Alexandrian Quartet, Downtown Beirut, Blanche's, green chartreuse, opium, mascara, ecstasy and The Major Thinkers. We were hot back then, Pierce, Hammy, Slappy, Paul and I.

It was a blast to be all over the radio; and you do get better or, at least, more confident. We were writing songs by the new time and good ones at that. One night we recorded seven of these "masterpieces" and the dollar signs started ringin' up at the Black Rock. We spent the next six months in the studio trying to recapture the rawness of those bloody demos. The record was called Terrible Beauty and is still gathering dust up at Epic. When they dropped us, the balls fell out of the band.

Sheila was wearing purple the day we broke up. There were no tears, just an empty, aching exhaustion. I walked down those six flights of stairs with nothing but a few half written plays. I left everything else behind, including rock and roll—or so I thought.

Hammy now drums for Black 47. Pierce sings on and is still my brother. Slappy plays with Blue Nile among others. Paul does Saturday Night Live with GE. Sheila lives in Clearwater with her child and I never pass 18 First Avenue without thinking of her.