

# CHAPTER 11

## The Commando Strikes Back!

OH BOY HAVE I EVER GOT A PROBLEM! BUTCH AND JOHN DON'T GET ALONG IN THE SAME BAND. I GOT TO MAKE CHOICE.



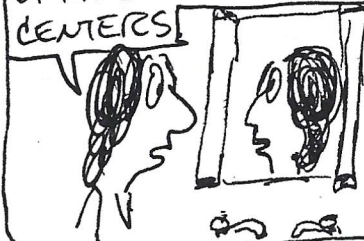
WITH BUTCH I MAKE GOOD MUSIC. WE WRITE GREATEST SONGS IN THE WORLD TOGETHER. AND BUTCH IS MY PARTNER. WE RUN BAND TOGETHER.



WITH JOHN I GET TO PLAY WITH GREATEST GUITARIST AROUND... MAYBE IN THE WORLD. JOHN KNOWS HOW TO RUN BAND BY HIMSELF.



WITH BUTCH I GET OUT OF BASMENTS AND INTO BARS. WITH JOHN I COULD GET OUT OF BARS AND INTO CIVIC CENTERS.



AT LEAST, THAT'S WHAT JOHN TELLS ME...



JOHN SOUNDS GOOD



YEAH, BUT BUTCH IS MY FRIEND. JOHN COULD NOT REPLACE HIM...



THAT'S RIGHT.



BUT THIS IS PROFESSIONAL SITUATION, NOT FRIENDLY.

YEAH.



I GOT TO MAKE MY CHOICE PROFESSIONAL, NOT AS FRIEND.



SO WHAT DO I DO? JOHN IS THE GREATEST MUSICIAN I'VE EVER PLAYED WITH, BUT BUTCH IS A GENIUS SONGWRITER.



DO PEOPLE PAY FOR GENIUS OR FOR HOT LICKS? WHICH IS MORE LIKE TO MAKE IT? GREAT GUITAR OR GREAT IDEAS?



MAYBE JOHN WOULD MAKE ME A GREAT GUITAR PLAYER?

RING! RING!



HI BUTCH... YEAH, I WAS EXPECTING YOUR CALL... YEAH, BUTCH, I'VE DONE NOTHING BUT THINK IT OVER...



THIS IS THE HARDEST DECISION I'VE EVER HAD TO MAKE, BUT I'M STICKING WITH KIRCHNER. ...YEAH, I KNOW... ARE WE STILL BEST FRIENDS, BUTCH?



GOOD... YEAH, SURE, I'LL SMASH ONE TIME FOR YOU IN CONCERT... WE TALK AGAIN, SOON...



HELLO, MAXWELL... CAN I COME IN, PLEASE?

SURE, SARGE. COME ON UPSTAIRS...

I GOT HOME FROM COLLEGE TODAY AND FOUND A NOTE THAT JOE CALLED AND HE WANTS ME TO MEET HIM HERE.

JOE'S NOT HERE, BUT ANOTHER FRIEND OF MINE IS THAT I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET...  
OKAY.

I HOPE JOE'S NOT GIVING ME THE RUN-AROUND ONCE AGAIN. HE'S BEEN PROMISING ME AN UNDERCOVER ASSIGNMENT FOR WEEKS NOW.

SAY MAXWELL, YOU GOT ANYTHING TO EAT IN THERE?  
CHECK THE FRIDGE.

SO HOW'S IT GOING WITH YOU? I'VE BARELY SEEN YOU SINCE THE BAND BROKE UP...

IT'S ALRIGHT. I'M TAKING CLASSES AND WORKING AND TRYING TO GET A NEW BAND TOGETHER.

I'VE BEEN WRITING SONGS BY MYSELF, TOO... BUT SO FAR I DON'T HAVE A BAND TO PLAY THEM.

NO, I USUALLY JAM OTHER PLACES THAN MY APARTMENT.

HMM... CHEESE...  
CHEESE...

NOT HERE.

MAXWELL!  
WHERE'S THE CHEESE?

IF I HAVE ANY IT'S IN THE FRIDGE... ANYHOW, CHRIS HAS BEEN PLAYING WITH KIRCHNER.

GREAT.

THEY'VE GOT ROGER LEIFER ON BASS - THE GUY KIRCHNER HAD AT THE FALL BALL; AND ALBIE SINGING WITH CROSS STILL TRYING TO PLAY DRUMS.

LITTLE BY LITTLE I THINK CHRIS IS GETTING FED UP WITH KIRCHNER, THOUGH. I DIDN'T ASK YOU ABOUT CHRIS! I ASKED YOU ABOUT CHEESE!

I THINK THERE'S SOME CHEESE IN THE FRIDGE. HEY BOB, COME IN HERE!

DOES HE HAVE THE CHEESE?

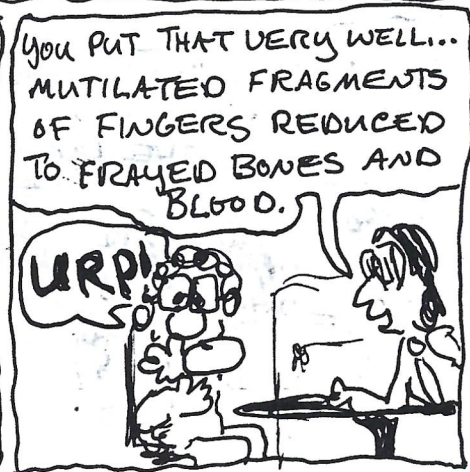
SARGE, I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET CRAZY BOB!

SARGE. OH. HI THERE.

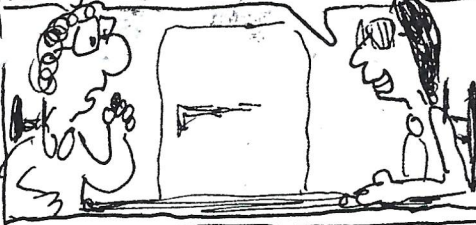
REALLY NICE TO SHAKE WITH YA SARGE! I'VE HEARD SO MUCH ABOUT YOU!

TH-TH-TH-THANKSSS.

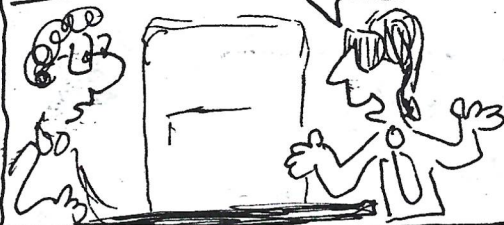




THAT WOULD SURELY PUT AN END TO HIS BEING THE MOST OVERRATED GUITAR PLAYER IN TOWN...



WITHOUT KIRCHNER, CHRIS WILL COME BACK TO PLAY WITH BUTCH AGAIN...



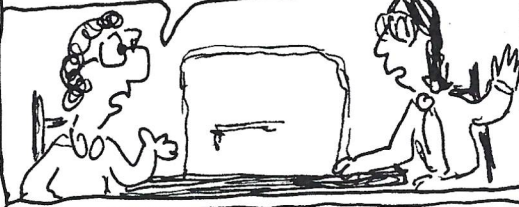
AND WE'LL BOTH HAVE OUR OLD JOBS BACK!

BIG DEAL

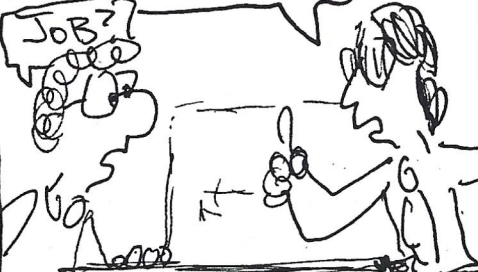


BUT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE BUTCH AND CHRIS IN A NEW BAND TOGETHER, RIGHT?

SURE. IT ONLY MAKES SENSE.



RIGHT! THAT'S WHY I KNEW YOU WERE THE RIGHT MAN FOR THE JOB!



BREAKING KIRCHNER'S FINGERS! IT'S ALL YOURS AND IT IS THE NEXT CONTRACT UP, I GAVE YOU MY WORD



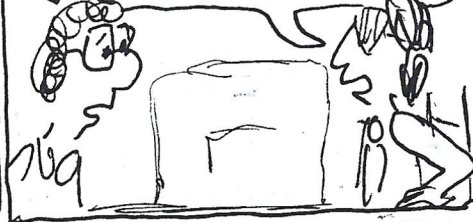
BUT JOE! THE VERY THOUGHT OF IT TURNS MY STOMACH!

COME ON, SARGIE. I KNOW BENEATH THAT CREAMPUFF EXTERIOR IS THE SOUL OF A TRUE COMANDO!



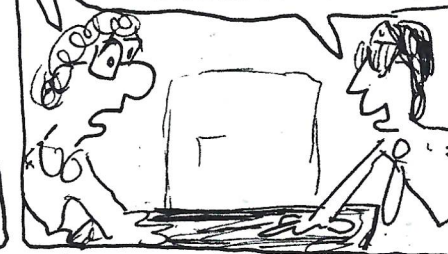
A COMANDO! YOU COULD TELL THAT? REALLY? GEE....

THIS'LL BE AN EASY JOB. IT'LL BE OVER IN AN HOUR...



NOW? RIGHT NOW? AS IN

THE TIME IS PERFECT. I'VE BEEN WATCHING KIRCHNER FOR WEEKS



HE'S IN PRACTICE RIGHT NOW, BUT HE'LL BE WALKING UP A DARK STREET ON HIS WAY HOME IN A HALF HOUR!



I'LL TAKE YOU THERE AND WHEN YOU'RE DONE, REPORT BACK HERE TO ME... NOT A WORD TO BUTCH ABOUT THIS...



BUT JOE! I DON'T THINK I CAN DO THIS!

DON'T WORRY! YOU'RE A COMANDO, RIGHT?



BOOM DA DA BOOM DA DA BOOM DA DA BOOM DA DA CROSS! SHUT-UP! I AM TRYING TO TALK TO CHRIS!



LISTEN I WANT YOU TO SHAKE YOUR ASS AROUND WHEN YOU PLAY. HOW MANY TIMES DO I GOTTA TELL YOU?



I EITHER PLAY OR I WIGGLE. ONE OR THE OTHER. NOT BOTH. I GET CONFUSED.



THIS IS IT,

I  
PRESENT!

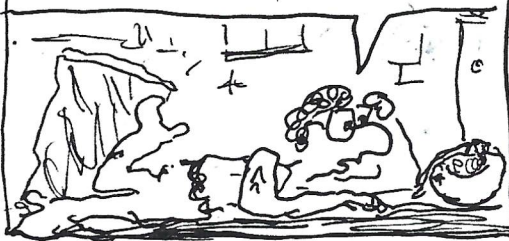
I CAN'T DANCE, JOHN!  
I'M A GUITAR PLAYER!

NO I  
WENT!

ON HIS ROOFTOP  
SPRING POINT.

A black and white line drawing of a man with a large, expressive face, wearing a hat and a suit, looking down with a somber expression. The drawing is done in a sketchy, expressive style with heavy black lines. The man's face is the central focus, with a large nose, deep-set eyes, and a slightly downturned mouth. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a light-colored shirt and a dark tie. On his head is a dark hat with a wide brim. His hands are visible, one near his chest and the other slightly lower, with fingers spread. The background is minimal, with some light, sketchy lines suggesting a landscape or interior space. The overall mood is one of melancholy or contemplation.

AFTER A MOMENTARY LOSS OF CONTROL, THE COMMANDO IS EVER-ALERT TO HIS JOB.



STILL NO ONE IN SIGHT. THAT'S OKAY! ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDO'S VERY SYNCHONIZED WATCH...



...IT COULD BE JUST ABOUT ANY TIME NOW...



THE COMMANDO GOES OVER THE PLAN ONE LAST TIME IN HIS HEAD! HE'S GOT TO GET THIS RIGHT THE FIRST.



KIRCHNER WILL COME UP THIS STREET AFTER PRACTICE, ON FOOT.



HIS ONLY KNOWN WEAPON IS A 1968 GIBSON LES PAUL IN A HARD-SHELL CASE.



THE COMMANDO'S ORDERS ARE CLEAR—HE IS NOT TO KILL KIRCHNER, BUT SIMPLY TO BREAK ALL HIS FINGERS.



A RELATIVELY ROUTINE MAFIA PRACTICE. A PIECE OF CAKE TO THE COMMANDO.



STILL, IF HE THINKS ABOUT IT MUCH, IT MAKES HIM GAG.



HE'D BETTER HYPE HIMSELF INTO IT! FIRST HE HIDES! THEN HE LEAPS THROWING KIRCHNER TO THE GROUND.



BEFORE HE KNOWS IT, THE COMMANDO IS GRINDING HIS HEELS INTO KIRCHNER'S FINGERS! GRINDING GRINDING.



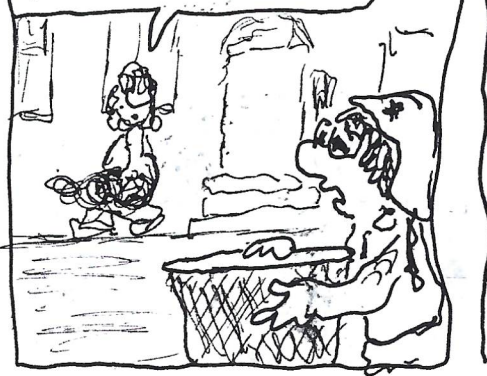
THE FINGERS ARE MANGLED! FLESH RIPPED OPEN BY FRAYED FRAGMENTS OF BONE, AND THE BLOOD IS STICKY BRIGHT RED.



UURRRPPP!!!

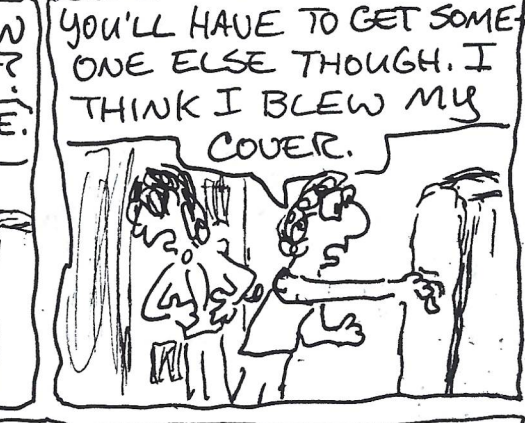


HELLO SARGE.



OH GOD! THAT WAS KIRCHNER! I BLEW IT!





END OF CHAPTER 11