

A Vixen Among Wolves

(unpublished)

Editing Sample from

Allyson Brooks

Author's Original Manuscript

It was my senior year. Theoretically, all I had to do was survive another nine months and I was out the door with a diploma and (presumably) a bright future.

I didn't make it.

I was practicing the fretless bass a minimum of four hours per day. My goal, whenever possible, was to get that up to eight hours per day. I played with the metronome set on the 2 and the 4—not on quarter notes. I was taught to play on the 2 and the 4...it changed my playing forever. When you're a jazz bass player, the high hat is on the 2 and the 4.

I was still playing with Broken Arrow. That was the only island of sanity I found away from practicing my fretless bass. School started to drift out of sight in the rear view mirror.

I was not turning in any homework. I was bored. I was restless. I did not care about their science class. I did not care about their English class. I wanted to play music. Period.

I think you see where this is headed.

Allyson's Re-Writes & Edits

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I didn't make it.

I was practicing the fretless bass a minimum of four hours per day. My goal was to get that up to eight hours per day. All my discipline went into music instead of school.

To help me get a feel for a steady rhythm, I used a metronome. Most of the music I played was in 4/4 time; that is, each measure had four beats. Most musicians set the metronome to click on all four beats. But, I played with it set to click on the second and fourth beats—not on each single beat. I was taught to “play on the 2 and the 4,” as it's called. The 2 and the 4 are also known as either “the back beat” or “the swinging beats.” Jazz drummers hit the high hat on the 2 and the 4, which helps keep the time steady. Learning to count the music this way was the biggest lesson that got me in the pocket.

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Commented [23]: Not every reader will understand how music works. Here, I tried to break down how the 2 and the 4 work into simple layman's terms. Feel free to change it if you like.

Author's Original Manuscript

Let that soak in for a second. I'll repeat it: the roadies were getting paid more than the band.

Not even exaggerating.

At one point, we had a conversation with Allen Kovac. The label had paid more than one advance to the band. Those monies all went to Allen. Like, we willingly handed it over to him. He told us he used the advances as payola to get our records played on radio stations around the country. Seemed legit; that's how things worked back then.

In short, the advances, the merchandising deal, and the fees for playing live gigs were getting funneled into other directions. The band got a small stipend each week because we were so broke, we had no means of paying any bills back home. Granted, we were taken care of on the road, but we all had apartments or a car note back home. I did...and also had a husband who needed part of my income.

Allyson's Re-Writes & Edits

Let that soak in for a second. I'll repeat it: the roadies were getting paid more than the band.

I am not even exaggerating.

At one point, we had a conversation with Allen Kovac. The label had paid more than one advance to the band. That money all went to Allen. Granted, we willingly handed it over to him. He told us he used the advances as promotional payments to get our records played on radio stations around the country. To us, that was okay; that's how business was done.

Instead, the advances, the merchandising deal, and the fees for playing live gigs were getting funneled into other directions. The band got a small stipend each week because we were so broke, we had no means of paying any bills back home. Granted, we were taken care of on the road, but we all had apartments or a car note back home. I sure did. And I also had a husband who needed part of my income.

Commented [36]: Just to give you a heads up: Payola has been a federal crime since 1959. A loophole in the law existed (at that time in the late 1980s) wherein a third-party, independent promoter could use "promotion payments" to get station directors to play their client's songs. In 2002, the NY District Attorney found the loophole to still be in violation of the law. EMI had to pay \$3.75 million to settle the case in 2006. Source: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/entertainment/emi-settles-payola-case-for-3-75m-1.616472>

Author's Original Manuscript

As a point of reference, I don't receive any publishing money from my five writing credits on *Rev It Up*. The album hit #52 on the US Hot 100 and was in the Top 20 in two European countries—so once again, there was money coming in. Vixen technically owns the publishing, so should be receiving royalty payments...but it's a strange game to try to track down those monies. EMI was sold to somebody who was sold to somebody, and we would literally need to hire an attorney to find the money and figure out how to get it distributed.

Anyway, back in 1989 and 1990, I think each member the band was on a \$500 per week salary. We decided to apply the rest of the band fund toward the band. As I already mentioned, payola was still a prominent expectation for radio play back then.

I don't remember how many songs we came up with for the album, but I do remember they all had to pass by Allen Kovac before we got to the studio. He was the one who decided which songs were in and which were out. He had a more objective ear than we did, but it was annoying to have an outside party telling us which of our songs were "good enough" for OUR album. Among the four of us, there wasn't a strong leader who could put their foot down and over-ride management. I don't think Bruce Springsteen or Mick Jagger would have had the same problem Vixen was facing.

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Back in 1989 and 1990, each member of the band was on a \$500 per week salary. We decided to apply the rest of the band fund toward **the band's promotional expenses.**

I don't remember how many songs we came up with for the album, but I do remember they all had to pass by Allen Kovac before we got to the studio. He was the one who decided which songs were in and which were out. He had a more objective ear than we did, but it was annoying to have an outside party telling us which of our songs were "good enough" for OUR album. Among the four of us, there wasn't a strong leader who could put their foot down and override management. I don't think Bruce Springsteen or Mick Jagger would have had the same problem Vixen was facing. But that's the way it was—which was still mostly fine as long as we got to write our own songs.

Commented [37]: FYI-This is actually what happened from 1988 to 1997.

Commented [38]: A Heads-Up Here: Originally, there was a sentence talking about payola. This sentence could easily be taken as an accusation of a federal crime. Regardless of what was actually going on, the last thing you should want is a lawsuit from EMI/Universal Music Group for libel.