

Forever
Rocking

By

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Prologue

Maybe it all started with Elvis Presley on July 5th, 1954 when he began playing Arthur Crudup's That's All Right song in the Sun Records Studio in Memphis, Tennessee. It became a popular record.

It did not take long for Elvis Presley to become popular in the fifties with so many women falling in love with him. And then many other young men wanted to cash in on the hysteria. The thought of girls screaming and desiring them would be a dream come true.

This was true for five young men that grew up together Manchester, New Hampshire. These guys were Jackie Brooks, Burt Clark, Carter Collins, Delmar Lee, and Sigmund "Sig" Ward.

All five guys were best friends since they were babies all born during the summer of 1942.

They wanted to start their own rock bands when they arrived in their teen years.

They finally started their own rock band calling themselves The Rocking Tones. Their parents thought the kids would lose interest and the group would fade away in due time. So they hoped.

But the band did not fade away. On the contrary, the teens in the early sixties started to fall in love with The Rocking Tones. They fell in love with their sound that was a mix between The Beatles and the Dave Clark Five.

So 1964 rolled around, and The Rocking Tones grew the same long hairstyles like The Beatles and Dave Clark Five. They figured this was the change of in the times and went with the new trends.

Then on September 20th, 1964, The Rocking Tones got an opportunity of a lifetime. They were selected to be

the opening act for The Beatles at the Paramount Theater charity concert in Brooklyn, New York.

After that performance, The Rocking Tones performed daily concerts around the New England area. It was a busy time for the young men.

Jackie was the lead guitarist and played a white with brown wood-grained pickguard Domino Californian electric guitar.

Burt was the rhythm guitarist and played a sunburst, Gibson Les Paul.

Carter was the bass guitarist and played a two-toned Fender bass.

Delmar was the keyboardist and banged his fingers on the keys of a Fender Rhoades.

Sig was the drummer and loved his red Pearl drums.

The band got another next colossal break when they appeared on the Ed Sullivan Show on Sunday, October 4th, 1964.

During that show, The Rocking Tones 1953 silver with red strip GMC Coach bus was parked out in the rear of the Ed Sullivan Theater.

The old bus was converted inside with a large closet installed in the rear along with a toilet. The closet allowed the guys to hang up their suits after a concert. Behind the driver was installed wall that had a table and semi-circle bench seat. The bench seat could seat eight people around the table.

Then there were six chairs installed on each side of the bus by the windows behind the table. There were spaced far apart to provide ample leg room during the trip.

Inside the bus sat middle-aged Gus McMillan the driver in one of the seats. He had it reclined back and took

a little snooze. Gus was not fond of rock and roll music but needed the job, so he tolerated the kids of the band.

An hour passed, and The Rocking Tones were finished with their historic appearance on television. They knew this would soar them to greater stardom.

Roger and the band walked out of the stage exit door with a four officer NYPD escort.

The Rocking Tones all wore their standard golden brown suits, tanned dress shirts with dark brown ties and brown leather ankle boots.

Roger always wore a black suit, white shirt with a white tie and wing-tipped shoes.

The NYPD had barricaded at the ends of the street where sixty fans of The Rocking Tones gathered. They cheered at the sight of their favorite rock and roll band members.

But not all of the sixty people behind the barricades were fans of this rock band. Fifteen of the sixty people did not cheer at the sight of The Rocking Tones. They were members of a Baptist church located in the Deep South. They had strong feelings that Rock and Roll were tearing down the morals of the country.

A tall and lanky Pastor named Elmer Watson from Montgomery, Alabama led this group of religious Baptist fanatics. Elmer always had his beloved old Bible in his hand and had an extreme hatred in his heart for rock and roll bands like The Rocking Tones. His Bible was passed down from his grandfather, who also was a religious Baptist fanatic. His grandfather was a member of the KKK back in his earlier youth.

This religious group protested behind the barricades and held four signs up in the air. These signs read “The Rocking Tones Are Pure Evil,” “Sinners!”, “Rock and Roll is Music of the Devil” and “Rot in Hell!”

Two NYPD police officers kept a watchful eye on the pastor and his followers. They were tipped off recently to keep an eye on Elmer, as they were deemed a threat to the band.

Jackie, Burt, Carter, Delmar, and Sig walked over to the front of their bus. They waved and blew kisses at their adoring fan behind the barricades. They loved this feeling and noticed that the crowd of adoring fans had grown over the past year.

They turned around and got inside the GMC bus. Gus closed the door and started up the bus engine.

Roger walked over and talked with two roadies named Tom Westham and Kenny Whitestone that waited by two Chevrolet G10 white vans. These guys were in their early thirties and had been with The Rocking Tones ever since they started going on the road.

After a brief discussion about the trip to Chicago with Tom and Kenny, Roger walked to his brand new red 1964 Corvette Stingray Coupe parked behind the bus.

Tom and Kenny both went back into the Ed Sullivan Theater to gather up the band's instruments from the show.

Gus drove the bus, drove away, and headed to the opening of the barricade provided by the NYPD.

Roger's Corvette drove after the bus.

While the bus made a left turn onto the street, those religious protestors hurled rotten tomatoes at the right side of the bus. Tomatoes splattered all over the bus windows.

"You sinners will burn in hell!" Elmer yelled out with fire in his voice while he held up his Bible at the passing bus.

Roger's Corvette still followed behind the bus, and some of those rotten tomatoes pelted the windows and the right side of his sports car. He was pissed.

The bus and Roger's Corvette continued their drive on down the street.

Elmer watched The Rocking Tones bus drive off down the street with piercing eyes. "All sinners will burn in hell," he said. A few of his followers heard him and nodded in agreement.

An hour had passed.

At a small diner off a two-lane country road in Pennsylvania, the bus and Roger's Corvette stopped off for a quiet dinner.

The place was called Walter's Diner. Roger had preplanned this stop and paid the owner extra money to make sure no other customers were inside to bug the members of the band.

An hour had passed, and Roger, Gus and the band members of the band walked out of the diner.

Roger got behind the wheel of his Corvette. The band got inside the bus.

The bus and Corvette drove out of the parking lot of the diner.

It was now 3:15 in the morning and Gus drove the bus down Interstate 80 heading west. The Interstate was quiet, and the only vehicles on the road were the bus and Roger's Corvette. Roger had kept his car a safe distance behind the bus. Then Roger let off the gas and let his car get even farther behind the bus. He anxiously watched the rear of the bus.

Then the bus suddenly exploded into a massive fireball with intense heat.

Pieces of flaming pieces of metal flew at Roger's Corvette.

He swerved his car to the left to avoid a flaming piece of the bus. His brand new shiny Corvette flipped over a few times. His car finally rested on his roof in the grassy median.

The highway was still quiet except for the crackle from the flames of the burning bus.

The driver's door to the Corvette creaked opened.

A few seconds of silence, then Roger crawled out of his smashed up sports car in pain.

He crawled twenty feet in the grass to get away from his car.

He painfully sat up on the road on his butt and watched that GMC Coach bus burn. His eyes rolled back in his head. He leaned over and passed out.

A Ford Galaxy drove east on Interstate 80. The driver screeched on its brakes the second he spotted the burning bus in the westbound lanes. The driver of the Ford sped away to find an emergency phone along the shoulder of the highway.

The next morning arrived, and all of the newspapers across the country had headlines that the members of The Rocking Tones band perished in that bus explosion.

The police investigation initially suggested that a deranged fan placed a bomb under the bus. They theorized that the fan installed the bomb under the bus while it was parked at the rear of the Ed Sullivan Theater. They figured security got a little lazy and the fan managed to slip through the barricade.

Fans all around the country mourned the deaths of their favorite rockers.

Roger only suffered a broken collarbone from his accident with his Corvette. But that scared him, so he quit the music business. He decided to go back to college to complete his marketing degree.

Two months had passed.

After months of investigation, the FBI raided the home of Elmer Watson in Montgomery based on an anonymous phone call. The call stated that they saw a 1952 Chevrolet Bel-Air with Alabama tags leaving Walter's diner that night. The tag number was traced back to Montgomery to a member of Mister Watson's church. That member claimed his tag was stolen a week before. The black 1952 Bel-Air was eventually found abandoned in some woods just outside Jackson, Mississippi. It was charred from someone setting it on fire.

While the FBI searched Elmer's garage, they found a timer similar to the timer on the bomb that exploded on The Rocking Tones bus.

Elmer was arrested, extradited to Pennsylvania, tried and sentenced to life in prison for the murder of the members of The Rocking Tones.

For years afterward, the music of The Rocking Tones never left the hearts of their many adoring fans. One such fan was Diane Dakota.

It was now June 2003, and Diane was a middle-aged old widow that lived in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Diane had worked as an administrative assistant at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) since 1963. She planned on retiring in a few years.

Diane had been a huge fan of The Rocking Tones ever since their Banging the Beat song came out.

She eventually became the President of The Rocking Tones fan club chapter in Massachusetts.

Because she was the President of the local fan club, she met Jackie Brooks, and he gave her an autographed picture of The Rocking Tones. Jackie autographed it with "To Diane, my number one fan, Jackie Brooks." She

cherished that picture, and it always hung on one of her walls wherever she lived.

Diane would spend countless hours listening to the two albums of The Rocking Tones. She later would play them for her seven-year-old grandson Danny Dakota.

He also became a huge fan of The Rocking Tones and loved living with his grandmother and hearing her countless stories of the 1960s.

Young Danny moved in with Diane after his mom and dad were killed in a car accident, because of a drunk driver. Danny was only six years old that horrible day.

Chapter 1

It was now October 2014, and the air was cooling down all across the New England countryside.

Danny Dakota had grown up into a fine young man. He was now a freshman at MIT majoring in music. Besides, Danny was great with the guitar and also had dreams of being a famous musician. It was those countless stories about The Rocking Tones by his grandmother Diane that gave him the bug to pursue music as a career.

It was early in the evening, and Danny was in his dorm room that he shared with fellow freshman Bobby Eastman. Bobby had short black spiky hair and believed that he was a ladies man on campus.

Danny relaxed on his bed, located on the right side of the small dorm room.

He studied his textbook on music history. On his bedside table to the left of his bed, a CD player played one of his favorite The Rocking Tones songs – Rockers at Heart. Next to the CD player was a framed picture of Jack and Heather Dakota both in their mid-thirties. They were his parents that were long gone but still vivid in some of his memories.

While he listened to that song and read his textbook, he would glance at an old poster of The Rocking Tones on his wall. This was a small gift from Diane that she had when she was a teenager.

The door of the room opened, and Bobby Eastman entered with three textbooks in hand.

Bobby rolled his eyes the second he saw Danny and heard that song from the CD player. A song he heard over and over again. "I can't believe you always listen to that old sixties music," he said while he walked over and plopped down exhausted on his bed.

"What do you mean, these are great tunes and inspired so many rockers of the eighties," Danny replied then he hummed along with the song.

"Whatever. I'm going to rest my eyes for thirty minutes. The gig starts in two hours. I hope you're up for it," Bobby replied, then closed his eyes the second he got on his bed, and his head hit the pillow.

"I am."

"Good, because I heard Cindy Perry was planning on showing up tonight," Bobby replied, as he knew Danny has a considerable inch to date Cindy.

Danny looked a little nervous while he glanced over at Bobby then at his closet. He really had the hots for Cindy the first time he set eyes on her during his American History class last month.

Two hours had passed.

A nightclub was located off MIT campus was called The Detention Center. It was a favorite hangout for many of the MIT students after classes. Instead of stamping a student's hand to show that they paid the small \$5 cover charge, the nightclub would hand out a Detention Slip to the student. For some of these students, this slip was far better than the Detention Slip they received when they attended high school.

The nightclub was packed tonight as so many students needed to unwind from a grueling day of hitting the textbooks, taking exams or listening to their boring professors.

There was a bar at the rear of the club, then a small stage and dance floor at the front. In the middle were scattered round tables that typically sat four customers. But often more students crowded around the table to party with their friends. Besides providing booze, the bar also served food like sandwiches, hamburgers, and chicken wings. Nothing fancy but good enough for the students.

On the stage was a drum set, two electric guitars, a bass guitar and a keyboard set up thirty minutes ago. This was the third attempt for this band to play at this bar.

Ricky walked onto the stage and sat behind the black Ludwig drums. A few of the students, mainly friends of Ricky, started clapping

Wendell walked onto the stage and sat behind his Yamaha keyboard. Wendell's friends began clapping.

Kent walked on the stage and over to his brown Ibanez bass guitar. He placed the guitar strap around his neck while the sound of his friends clapping was heard.

Bobby walked on the stage and placed his ash-colored Fender Telecaster electric guitar strap around his neck while his friends clapped.

Then Danny nervously walked on the stage. He had mediocre claps from a few of the students in the bar. One of the claps came from Cindy Perry.

Cindy was drop-dead gorgeous blonde with silky hair down to the middle of her back, perky breasts, a nice shapely ass, and large soft brown eyes.

Danny stared at the audience while he placed the guitar of his Sunburst Les Paul guitar around his neck. His knees got a little weak the second he noticed the bar was packed tonight. Then he spotted Cindy sitting near the front, and his knees almost gave out ultimately.

Bobby walked over to the microphone in the front middle of the stage. He saw Cindy then winked at her. "Hello, we're the Hard Tones. And welcome to our rock show where we do a song from the eighties," he said into the microphone.

Danny looked at all the eyes of the audience that were on him.

Bobby motioned for the band to start playing.

The band started a rock song. They started their version of Slash's By the Sword.

The drummer started banging out beat by hitting the cymbals.

Danny just stared at the audience while the fingers of his left hand just rested on the six non-vibrating strings. He started to sweat. He began to get pale. He began to feel weak in the knees.

Bobby looked at Danny for the intro riff. Danny just stood there in a stupor.

So Bobby had to jump in and play Danny's opening riff. He was furious while his fingers moved around the six strings.

Bobby noticed Cindy and smiled at her.

Cindy gave Bobby a little smile and wave in return.

Danny passed out and dropped to the floor, almost taking Bobby down with him. But Bobby was quick on his feet and was able to hop over Danny's body. He did not miss a note.

The band stopped playing.

"Ah, we have a slight technical issue to resolve. Give us a minute, and we'll be right back with our rocking show," he said into the microphone.

Bobby knelt down to Danny.

Some of the MI medical students rushed over to the stage to help Danny.

Cindy looked concerned from her seat.

Fifteen minutes had passed, and Danny was removed off the stage.

Carl Jenson filled in for Danny, and the Hard Tones put on an excellent show for the patrons of The Detention Center nightclub.

Hours had passed, and Danny sat on his bed back in his dorm room, looking ever so sad. He was upset with himself for passing out on stage again.

The dorm room door opened, and Bobby entered with his guitar case and amplifier in hand.

Bobby was quiet as there was something he had to say, and he was not looking forward to it.

He tucked his guitar case and amplifier inside his closet. He turned around and looked at Danny, who looked so sad.

I hate these moments. Bobby thought to himself while he stared at Danny.

Bobby walked over to Danny's bed.

"Ah, listen. The guys and I talked and ah, we, ah, agreed that the Hard Tones would survive if Carl Jenson were our rhythm guitarist," he said after he finally got the courage to tell Danny.

Danny looked at Bobby in a little disbelief they kicked him out of the band.

"This was the third time you passed out in front of an audience. And this was our third gig," said Bobby then he hesitated. "I don't understand it. I mean, you wail during practice and give us the sound we need. But you freak out in front of an audience. So I'm sorry we had to kick you out of the band, but we'll never make it with your stage fright."

Danny looked at Bobby. "I understand."

"I see you later. I have this hot blonde inching so meet with me," Bobby said then turned around, headed over to the door and left the room.

Danny glanced over at The Rocking Tones poster. "I guess I wasn't meant to be a rocker," he said then.

Danny got off his bed and headed to his door. He needed some fresh air to think about how he can have a rewarding career in music.

It was nighttime across the New England area.

The MIT campus was quiet but still had a few students that milled around the grounds. Some of them

had some night classes that just ended. Some of them were returning from a night of a little partying.

Danny bought a cup of coffee at the Caffeine Palace located on campus. This coffee shop stayed open late on school nights to provide the nighttime students with their much-needed caffeine.

Danny sulked on a bench by a sidewalk pondering his life while he drank a cup of coffee.

Then Doctor Richard Youngblood, an elderly professor, walked down the sidewalk toward Danny.

Dr. Youngblood had his old brown leather attaché in hand. He had thinning gray hair that went all over the place as if he did not believe in combs. His gray beard was straggly and in dire need of a trim. Personal appearance of the professor was not necessary. Physics was the driving force in his life and the main reason he never married.

Dr. Youngblood's eyes widened over the sight of Danny sitting on the bench staring at the sidewalk.

"Hello Danny," Dr. Youngblood said while he stopped at the bench.

Danny glanced up and saw Dr. Youngblood standing in front of him. "Hello, professor Youngblood."

"Why are you sitting out here so late? You should be in bed studying or sleeping," Dr. Youngblood said while he sat down on the bench next to Danny. He spotted the cup of coffee in Danny's hand. "Of course coffee will definitely keep you up all night," he added then noticed Danny's depressed look. "What's wrong? You look so down. Are you having troubles with your classes? If so, maybe I can help."

Danny took a drink of his coffee. "No, I'm doing fine with my classes. The problem is that I got kicked out of my band tonight."

"Kicked out? Why? You're a talented guitarist like your father."

"I pass out whenever I'm in front of a crowd. Stupid stage fright."

"I can't help you there. That's something you need to work out for yourself."

"I know. So, how have you been? I haven't seen you in a while."

"I've been busy with classes and research projects," he said then hesitated for a few seconds. "How's your grandmother?" he asked to change the subject.

"She's doing great."

"Give her my love the next time you talk with her." Dr. Youngblood said while he stood up from the bench.

"I will."

"I'll see you later, Danny. And don't worry, you can work out your stage fright," Dr. Youngblood said while he walked away. After he took a few steps away from the bench, he turned around. He looked back at Danny. He wanted to say something else but decided that maybe he might arrive at a later date.

He walked away, feeling a little sorry for Danny and his stage fright that's ruining his dreams.

Danny stayed on the bench sulking and drinking his coffee.

Then way off in the background, Danny spotted Bobby walk hand in hand with a female. He only saw their backs but recognized Bobby's shirt that he wore at the bar. He did not remember the blonde, as he could only see her long blonde hair that ended in the middle of her back. He shrugged it off, got up off the bench, and moped back to his dorm room.

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