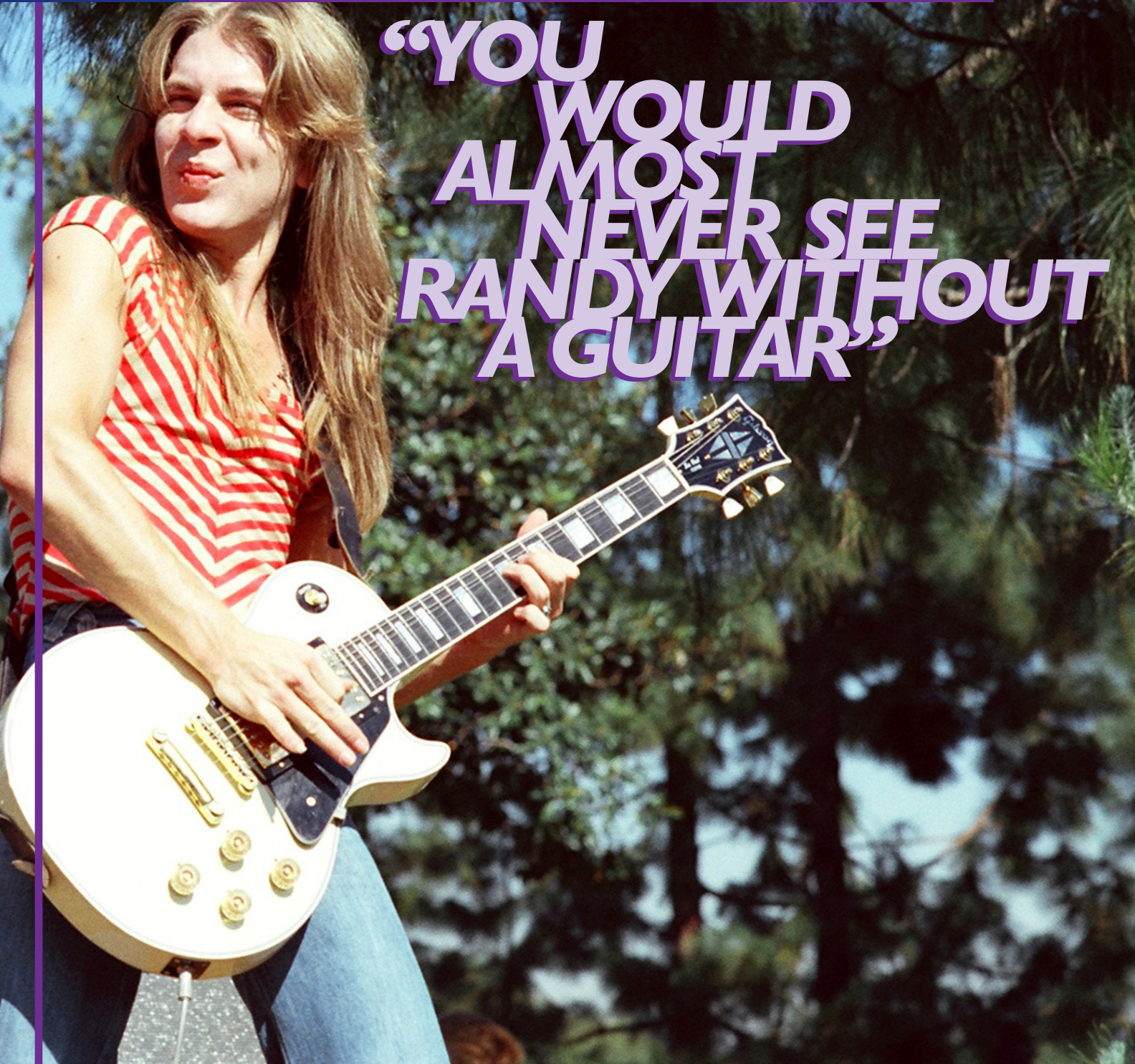




Photo: Ron Sobol

Remembering Randy

2017 IS THE 35TH anniversary of the death of Randy Rhoads at the tender age of just 25. Randy's formidable guitar playing had already established him as a remarkable talent with fans and musicians alike, and everyone was in awe of his ability. Yet the tragic flying accident on 19 March 1982 that took Randy way too soon hasn't diminished his influence and impact. Over the next 14 pages *Rock Candy* is proud to bring you a 360-degree appreciation of one of the greatest guitarists who ever lived. We talk to Bernie Tormé, who faced the immense challenge of replacing Randy in Ozzy Osbourne's band. Journalist Garry Bushell provides one of the last interviews ever recorded with Randy. And we get a truly revealing insight into Randy's character from his first guitar tech, Harold Friedman. With many remarkable shots provided by his close friend, photographer Ron Sobol, we hope you enjoy our tribute to Randy as much as we enjoyed putting it together...



Harold Friedman interview by Howard Johnson

HAROLD FRIEDMAN IS IN A UNIQUE POSITION TO REVEAL THE REAL RANDY RHOADS. FRIEDMAN WAS JUST 15 YEARS OLD AND A MUSICIAN HIMSELF WHEN HE MET THE GUITARIST FOR THE FIRST TIME BACK IN 1975. HAROLD QUICKLY BECAME RANDY’S GUITAR TECH IN THE FLEDGLING QUIET RIOT AND OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS SPENT ENDLESS HOURS WITH RHOADS, WATCHING HIM AS HE WORKED TO MAKE THE WORLD TAKE NOTICE OF HIS EXCEPTIONAL PLAYING ABILITY.

How did you get the gig as Randy Rhoads’ first guitar roadie, Harold?

“I first met Randy when he was 18 years old. I’m from the LA neighbourhood of Sherman Oaks, right down the street from the Magic Wand rehearsal space that was owned by Quiet Riot’s first manager, Dennis Wageman. Randy and [bass player] Kelly Garni had started a band

back in 1973 called Little Women that eventually became Quiet Riot around 1975. They found a drummer, Drew Forsyth, and had posted an ad for a singer, I believe. Kevin DuBrow had got the gig and the band had already written some original material and played their first gig when I hooked up with them. I bumped into Kevin getting out of his Opel GT with a guitar case in his hand.

I was an aspiring guitarist myself, so got talking to Kevin, and was quickly invited to the band’s rehearsal room.”

Be honest, now. Did you have aspirations to wheedle your way into the band?

“I had no aspirations at all. Once I’d seen Randy play I quickly realised I’d never be the one on stage, but that maybe I could do stuff behind the scenes. I went, ‘OK, that’s what it takes. And I’m a long way from that.’ Roadie is simply a shorter word for ‘frustrated musician’. So I hooked up with the group from their second gig in June of ’75 right through to the early part of 1979 when Rudy Sarzo joined the band.”

Quiet Riot rehearsed at Magic Wand. What was it like?

“It was a two-car garage out the back of a triplex that Dennis Wageman owned just off Magnolia Boulevard in Van Nuys. Dennis had converted it into a rehearsal room, complete with egg cartons stapled to the roof, and it was cramped. Drew was tucked into a corner with the drum kit sticking out, Kelly had some 2x15 Sun cabinets and Randy had a little Sun cabinet and a black Gibson SG that would never stay in tune.”

Was it obvious to you right from the get-go that Randy was a guitar hero in waiting?

“The day I first met him it was plain to see that he was on a different level to everybody else. Then once I started working with him I realised that you’d almost never see Randy without a guitar in his hand – unless he was smoking, that is. He practised constantly and I soon found out that he came from a very musical family. His dad wasn’t around, but his mum Delores had a degree in music herself and Randy was already giving guitar lessons at Delores’ music school. He’d quickly outstripped his own music teacher on a technical level. Once I started working gigs with Quiet Riot I used to witness the quality of his playing first hand. Around 1977 he developed a song called ‘Laughing Gas’ that was pretty much a seven-minute guitar solo in a nine-minute song. He’d get an effect going using an Echoplex tape delay machine and by doing that tapping thing he did. To this day people can’t believe what he pulled off there. But what was more amazing was that he’d say to me, ‘When we get to this part I want you to start messing with the Echoplex. You know, change it up every few bars. Change the delay. Try to throw me off.’ And he would do this live! I think that was because he was always looking to challenge himself, rather than simply playing your traditional rock guitar solos.”

Was that also why Quiet Riot played covers that stepped well outside of the traditional rock sphere?

“Could well be. They did a version of The Dave Clark Five’s ‘Glad All Over’ [that ended up on the first Quiet Riot album in 1977], an old ‘60s song called ‘Talk Talk’ by a band called Music Machine and also a cover of Manfred

Mann’s ‘The Mighty Quinn’, though I’m not sure they ever played that one live. They were all big Humble Pie fans, so they did ‘I Don’t Need No Doctor’ and ‘Stone Cold Fever’, pretty good versions too. But despite all this, Quiet Riot was mainly about originals. That was what was interesting and unique about them, particularly the way that Randy would write in a discordant minor seventh chord to get an off-key, weird tone.”

Did Randy use a lot of effects in those early days of Quiet Riot?

“Not at all. Randy really struggled getting a tone he liked with the Peavey Solid State amp head he had at the time, so he played a lot of different guitars, including a number of mine. But his pedal board back then was as simple as simple can be. He tried a dozen different overdrive and distortion boxes before he ended up with the old MXR Distortion Plus and a Maestro Phase Shifter. But it was around ’79 before he even added a wah-wah pedal. And aside from the Echoplex that was pretty much it.”

Did the band start to gain a fanbase quickly?

“We did a few local gigs that attracted some people, but it was really when the band started playing the LA clubs in 1977 that things suddenly exploded. By that time they’d changed managers and had left Dennis Wageman to sign with the Toby Organisation in West Hollywood, which was a much bigger deal. Pretty quickly Quiet Riot became almost like the house band at the Starwood, which was a well-known club on Santa Monica Boulevard. We started out doing Mondays and Tuesdays and pretty quickly moved to Fridays and Saturdays. But we’d get the odd decent support gig too. We opened for Yesterday & Today [Y&T] and Detective among others at the Starwood and opened for Black Oak Arkansas, Journey and Angel at other venues as well.”

Had the band – and Randy in particular – developed a look by this point?

“It was beginning to happen. The band started coming onstage to a song called ‘Riot Reunion’ [which would feature on the first album] accompanied by a fog machine, police lights and a strobe. Randy would start playing a guitar solo from offstage and then the band would hit the stage. Randy was already developing his stagecraft. There were times he would inadvertently yank the chord out of his guitar or get tangled up with Kelly. On more than one occasion I’d end up on all fours next to his pedal board. He’d often run around in front of his pedals while I was plugging him back in, then sit on my back and use me as a bench for the rest of the song! But then we started changing things up even more. Eventually I managed to acquire a really early wireless system for him. That meant I could throw Randy on my shoulders and start the show by walking from the

Photo: Ron Sobol