

Ok here's a warning...reading this will make you very angry at the brothers VH. I do NOT want this thread to turn into an Ed an Al bash fest, but you do have the right to make your thoughts and opinions about them known. Some of the stuff here will really piss you off as a VH fan, but lets try not to rip them to hard ok. And these chapters will also show how Ray Daniels fucked up the greatest rock band in the world, and the reunion of Classic Van Halen

Chapter Nineteen

Source of Infection

“For some reason,” acknowledged Sammy Hagar, “the changes I’ve experienced in my life have always been very big and very dramatic. I have shed my skin so many times over the years, I refuse to take stock of the work I’ve accomplished. You would never catch me shouting, “Hey world, look at me! Look where I’ve come from and what I have done. I’m worth this much money, and I have this much power.” Though I have every right to be proud of my achievements, I’m not the least bit interested in bragging about them. I don’t care about what I’ve done in the past. I’m only concerned with what I can do in the future. It’s not that I take anything for granted. I believe that when you die, you are shown an inventory of what you’ve done in your life and are judged accordingly.”

Until the very end, everyone in the Van Halen organization thought Ed Leffler was going to pull through. When his condition suddenly took a turn for the worse, no words could describe the anguish and pain that gripped Hagar after his death. The Van Halen brothers were equally devastated. After the funeral, the band got together for an informal discussion about their future. They were all curious about one thing. In the past, had Leffler mentioned to anyone who he thought should succeed him as manager in case something happened? When the answer turned up no, they all looked at each other with some misgivings. During their manager’s entire stay in the hospital, no one had mustered up the courage to pose the management succession question to him. Up to his last breath, everyone had tried to convince themselves (and Leffler) that everything would be all right. When the worse case scenario came to pass, it left the four musicians entirely clueless as to how their business affairs had been run. No one, including the accountants, could provide anyone with answers. Ed Leffler’s business sense and management style allowed Van Halen to fully flourish. That unique level of trust between the band and its manager played a critical role in the development of Eddie and Sammy as one of the most prolific songwriting teams in rock. Their partnership had produced three straight, chart-topping albums. Outside of the Rolling Stones seven consecutive No. 1 records in the ‘70s, no other rock band outside of Led Zeppelin had come remotely close to matching the remarkable streak. The incredible chemistry that existed between guitarist and singer was as formidable a duo as any Page and Plant, Townshend and Daltry, or Richards and Jagger combination. Leffler’s presence was the thread that bound everything together. When he died, the fabric of the band began to unravel. His losing battle with cancer threw the group into a tailspin the likes of which they’d never recover.

“Don Engel was Leffler’s close friend and attorney,” Hagar said. “We asked if Ed had ever confided in him the name of a person to manage Van Halen, in the event something went wrong. Don said, “No, Ed just told me the names of people he didn’t want involved.” Howard Kaufman was mentioned as one, and somebody else, because they handled too many artists. Now you would think that as much as Leffler and I talked every

day, this kind of thing would have come up. It never did. Not once did I ever say, “Ed, if anything ever happened to you, what’s our deal at Warner Bros.? Who do you talk to there? Who did you make the deal with at Warner/Chappell? Why did you do this? Why did you do that?” We always talked about the band, the direction we were taking, problems within the group or Van Halen’s future. We often talked about my personal problems with Betsy, or our kids. For some strange reason, it just never crossed my mind to ask him any questions about our business. We wrote the music and completely trusted him to run our affairs. There was no reason to ask him any questions about a successor, because he was going to be with us to the end (or so we thought.)

“I never realized how much we took him for granted, until it came time for us to find a replacement. We had decided to delay looking for a new manager until the start of the new year. No one seemed to be in any hurry, least of all myself. To this day, it’s still hard for me to believe he’s gone. It is true that you never appreciate how much someone truly means to you until they’re gone. Although Ed’s death was especially hard on me, it really had a demoralizing effect on Eddie and Alex. They loved the man and would have done anything for him. I honestly believe that Eddie stopped trusting me the day Leffler died. He had always been there to ease his worries and to reassure him that the projects I involved myself with, outside the Van Halen framework, were okay. With Ed gone, the balance of power he always maintained between the brothers and myself, started to tilt in an ugly direction.”

Soon after the funeral, a distraught Hagar decided to get away from the band. He and Kari flew off to Maui, where the couple rented a house, with plans to stay there a few months. Outside of a November 5 appearance at Neil Young’s seventh annual Bridge School Benefit Show at the Shoreline Amphitheater near San Francisco, Sammy remained isolated on the tropical isle. Shortly after Leffler’s death, his private utopia was interrupted by a disturbing call from Cabo San Lucas concerning the club. The Cabo Wabo needed another cash injection to continue operating. An outraged Hagar lowered the boom on the manager. He had just been down there for his birthday bash and raised tens of thousands of dollars for the bar. How could it possibly need more money with the holiday season approaching, and tourists starting to pour in?

“David Haliburton was the worst manager in the world,” Sammy asserted. “People just hated him, because he was such an asshole. When Ed Leffler died, he kept hitting me up for money. I said, “David, I ain’t giving you no more money. Close the club on Monday and Tuesday; fire half the employees; do whatever you have to do but cut expenses. I’m not putting any more money into the club.” The two of us were on really bad terms. The last three months before Leffler died, this guy started stealing money and doing a lousy job keeping the bar open. The club had been going down for a long time. It was losing money every month, and because we toured so much that year, Mike and I couldn’t go down and support it. My birthday bash was the only time we were down there in 1993.”

Hagar was planning to quietly celebrate the holidays in preparation for what he knew would be a busy year. In addition to making a new album, there was also the business of selecting a new manager for the band. The process was not going to be easy, and he knew it. It was going on three years since Van Halen put out its last record. Sammy and Eddie’s songwriting skills would be put to the test, especially in the absence of Leffler’s fatherly influence. Unfortunately for Hagar, he was about to face a year of adversity he would not

soon forget. The church refers to the seven deadly sins of man as greed, gluttony, lust, sloth, envy, wrath and pride. Starting January 1, 1994, the Red Rucker would come face to face with these human failings, when he unexpectedly found himself in a battle for the soul of Van Halen.

The new year filled Hagar with a sense of hope. After all, how could it possibly get any worse than the personal loss he had just suffered. That question would be answered sooner than he ever expected. The first indication that 1994 was heading in the wrong direction came when David Haliburton again phoned the singer's Hawaiian retreat. This time it was New Year's Day, and he had an announcement to make. The suitcase heir was quitting and had given the Cabo Wabo's keys to the employees the night before. Jolted by the news, and somewhat relieved, Sammy immediately chartered a flight to Cabo San Lucas to see what shape the club was in. When he walked into the bar, he was taken back by what he saw. The place was in utter chaos. Haliburton's total neglect of the club's business affairs had left it in dire financial straits.

As he inspected the books and totalled up the damage, Hagar's shock turned to anger when he realized his baby needed almost \$300,000 to stay solvent. "When Ed Leffler died," discovered Hagar, "everything at the Cabo Wabo went downhill. Leffler used to keep an eye on Haliburton, even though he stopped bringing money up from the club in June. He was either spending it or putting it in his pocket. On New Year's Day, the asshole calls me in Maui and says, "I quit. I gave the employees the keys." When I finally got to the bar and started checking things out, I was thinking, "Wow, what's going on here? Why aren't we selling any beer?" I found out that from June 1993 to January 1, 1994, David had not only stopped keeping the books, he quit paying the bills. He didn't pay the government their taxes on the building, or the employees, or their workman's comp. The club owed something like \$170,000 in back taxes. None of the vendors had been paid, so they stopped selling us beer, food for the restaurant and tee shirts for the gift shop. I kept mumbling to myself, "I'm going to kill this guy." The place was totally wiped out. "I reported my findings to the band and told them how much we owed. Eddie and Al said, "We ain't paying it." Mikey said, "Let's do what we have to do. I don't want to let it go." I didn't either, so instead of letting the government seize the property, I talked to Marco Monroy, who had built the club. I told him I needed his help to save the bar, and would he be my partner. His family was pretty influential down there, plus they were politically well-connected. The governor of the state was a family friend. Marco intervened on my behalf, and the government had mercy on me. Instead of going into my pocket to pay the back taxes, they allowed the club to make \$3,000 a month payments toward the debt. All we had to do was stay current with everything else. Marco arranged all this and said, "I'll take care of the payments; don't worry about it." I told him that would be great. To come in as my partner, paying off the debt would be his equity in the place. He even paid off the vendors off and started remodeling the club. We shook hands on our deal and I flew back to Hawaii."

Envy

With the bar problems apparently solved, Hagar returned to Maui to enjoy the island paradise. His reprieve was short-lived. Toward the end of January, Sammy received yet another surprise phone call. This time it came from old friend, John

Kalodner. He was calling to inform him that Geffen Records was set to release a Sammy Hagar greatest hits album in a couple of months. Kalodner wanted to know if he would participate on the project. “Kalodner called to let me know what Geffen was planning,” he said a bit surprised. “John said, ‘Leffler held us back for all these years. Now that he’s gone, we’re going to do it.’ Before I could object, he says, ‘Would you do a couple of new songs for it?’ I asked him for how much, but he didn’t know. So, I said, ‘Well, if you guys pay me \$500,000, then I’ll do it. Otherwise, you can put a greatest hits record out, and I won’t support it.’ Now I wasn’t sticking them up, but I figured if they’d give me that kind of money, it would be worth my time to work with them on it.”

Ed Leffler had negotiated a clause in Hagar’s original Geffen contract that called for him to be paid \$250,000 in the event he agreed to record two new songs for a greatest hits record. Sammy had a special purpose in mind for the additional half million dollars he was requesting—it was earmarked for his divorce. The matter had been dragging through the courts for over 18 months, because Sammy’s accountants were slow in getting financial information on his various holdings to Betsy’s lawyers. Since California law clearly stated that the assets of his marriage be divided equally, Hagar was expecting to hand over a substantial amount of cash to his wife. He figured that instead of pulling the money out of his pocket, he’d try his hand at picking someone else’s—namely Geffen. Though the logic was sound at the time, the act itself was immediately misinterpreted by Eddie and Alex.

“The tension between the Van Halens and myself,” pointed out Hagar, “really started in late January. That’s when they accidentally heard about my involvement on the greatest hits package Geffen was putting together. One day, while they were speaking to Don Engel on the phone, he mentioned in passing that he was talking to Geffen Records about Sammy’s greatest hits record. I had not told the brothers what was going on, because I was waiting for Kalodner to call me back. If Geffen accepted my request for an additional \$500,000, then I was going to give them the songs. If they didn’t, I would not get involved. There was no need for me to say anything until I heard back from the record company.”

For years, Ed Leffler had kept Geffen from releasing a greatest hits album of Sammy’s solo material. Every time the subject was brought up, Leffler would tell them that Van Halen had a new album coming out and to reconsider. Since the label was getting fifty percent of the profits from anything new the band recorded, they would back off. When David Geffen sold his company to MCA Records, keeping the company at bay was difficult but manageable. After the manager unexpectedly died, however, the floodgates were opened and there was no control switch to stop them. Management green-lighted the project. Since he knew all the principle players involved, and Van Halen had no manager when Kalodner stunned him with his disclosure, Sammy decided to handle the negotiations himself, with Don Engel’s assistance.

“Leffler always knew what to say,” divulged Hagar, “whenever the subject of the greatest hits record came up. He always said the right things to keep both Geffen and Warner Bros. happy. When Capitol released “The Best of Sammy Hagar” in 1989, we had absolutely no control over that. When Eddie and Al found out what Geffen was doing, they called me in Hawaii and wanted to know why I was getting involved with the greatest hits package. I was flying into Los Angeles in a couple of days, so I told them I’d

explain everything when I got into town. Kari and I flew in from Maui and checked into the Bel-Air hotel. From there, I went straight to Don Engel's law office. Then I placed a conference call to the brothers at a prearranged time. With Don listening, I explained to Eddie and Al that my involvement with the greatest hits package centered on my divorce. I told them the main thing holding it up was money. To settle the property issue, I was going to have to make a large cash payment to Betsy. The deal with Geffen was simple. If they gave me the half million I requested for two new songs, I would also do a two-week press junket in Los Angeles and New York to promote the record. That ended my involvement with the album. There would be no new single release and no videos. If Geffen didn't pay me the figure I thought was fair, I wasn't going to have anything to do with the record."

Hagar says he repeatedly emphasized to the brothers that the only reason he was involving himself in the greatest hits package was to settle his divorce with Betsy. "When I finished my explanation," he replied, "Eddie and Al assured me they understood, and everything I was doing was fine with them. Their comments should have been reassuring words to hear, but they weren't. I knew they were up in arms over what I was doing and didn't dig for one minute my involvement with Geffen, whatever the reasons. Frankly, I didn't care. I wasn't making any money off this project, and they damn well knew it. If they couldn't deal with it, that was their problem, not mine. From my standpoint, buying Betsy off in one large chunk was a good business deal."

Kalodner called Hagar two weeks after their initial conversation and said the label had agreed to his terms. He flew into Los Angeles to finalize the agreement with Geffen, then went to Conway studio where he recorded "Buying My Way into Heaven" and "High Hopes" with producer Mike Clink. The two songs had previously been submitted to Van Halen for consideration, but Eddie rejected them. "You know what's amazing," he mused. "I presented those songs to the band two albums in a row, and they passed on them. When Eddie and Al found out I was using them for my greatest hits album, they got really pissed off. "What are you going to do now Sammy, go solo?" Those two were so paranoid, they were suspicious of anything I did outside the band. Eddie had totally closed down on me after Leffler's death. Without Ed around to validate exactly what I was doing, the brothers stopped believing me. When I gave those two songs to Geffen, Eddie honestly believed I was only out for myself and was trying to become a solo artist again. He thought I was going to pull a Roth trip and screw him and his brother. Again, without Leffler to verify what I was saying, Eddie and Al grew increasingly suspicious of me. They stopped trusting me after that.

"I was ticked off by their ridiculous attitude. I had been in this band for almost nine years and had never done a thing to warrant any type of suspicion. For reasons known only to themselves, the brothers couldn't stand for me to do anything outside the band. However, they did whatever they wanted to musically, under the context that it was for Van Halen. If Eddie and Al wanted to do an instrumental for the record, we'd do it. In other words, they had a solo project within the band. I didn't play guitar on the albums, and I didn't write the music. My job was lyrics and melody. We had built Eddie's 5150 studio into a state-of-the-art facility. Since it was located right outside Eddie's house, and Al lived less than two miles away, the Van Halen brothers became studio rats. They were in there all the time, doing whatever they wanted. Eddie would write music, tell Al what to do, and

they would play for hours. It's not that I really complained about this arrangement, but the scenario was strange to deal with, especially when they were griping about me doing outside projects. And the thing is, I never did anything outside the band, so what was there to bitch about?"

Lust

The new year was barely six weeks old, and already Sammy was getting a bad taste of what life in Van Halen was going to be like without Ed Leffler. The Red Rocker longed for the soothing effect his old friend had on the band, especially when the brothers started turning on him. For the longest time, Sammy had absolutely no idea who was fueling their suspicions. He says the drastic behavioral changes Eddie and Alex exhibited toward him were quite unsettling. Tensions especially boiled over when it came time to select a manager for the group. Though the atmosphere was friendly between the parties when potential names were initially discussed, it turned ugly soon afterward.

Throughout the process, Hagar sat in amazement as Eddie and Al continuously objected to the various people the band interviewed for the manager's job. For reasons known only to themselves, he says the pair would come up with the lamest excuses to dismiss people from the list. Surprisingly, the individuals they were rejecting were no lightweights in the music business. A number of well-regarded managers expressed an interest in managing Van Halen. The band met several of them in their offices, while others were interviewed over the phone. After weeding out several candidates, they invited the finalists to lay out their management proposals.

"There was Doc McGee," revealed Hagar, "whom we knew from his Bon Jovi days. There was Neil Young's manager, Elliot Richards. We met with Toto's managers, who were really nice and interesting gentlemen. We talked with Tom Petty's manager, Tony Dimitriades, and Tim Collins from Aerosmith. Herbie Herbert, from Journey, was thrown into the mix, as were Cliff Bernstein and Peter Mensch. Paul McGinnis from U2 was mentioned, but we never called him. The process was going smoothly, until we got together to discuss the various proposals. Ed and Al had something negative to say about every person we had interviewed. I was shocked, because everyone who survived the cut was a top-line manager. Finally, I suggested we team up Johnny Barbis and Shep Gordon to manage our affairs. Johnny was a marketing whiz and Shep was a manager Leffler highly respected. Combining their respective talents would make them a dynamic team. The brothers got really excited with the idea and asked me to set up a meeting."

When Hagar called Gordon and Barbis about combining their respective talents to manage Van Halen, the two music executives were excited over the idea. Sammy had known Shep for a long time, and counted him as one of his closest friends. Gordon had also managed Alice Cooper's affairs since he started in the business. Barbis had been a close friend of Ed Leffler's for years, and the Van Halen's knew him well. "Johnny flew in from New York," he announced, "and Shep caught a flight from Maui. We all met at Shep's L.A. offices for lunch, and the meeting went better than I expected. That evening, I went to dinner with Johnny and the brothers, and we had a great time. The next day, when we all got together, Alex started things off by saying, "I don't think they're going to work. Shep Gordon stole money from Alice Cooper. He made side deals with promoters, like with P.A.'s. Alice would be paying out \$15,000 a week, but Shep would

only be charging promoters \$10,000, keeping the other five.” I looked at Alex and said, “You’ve got to be kidding! Shep Gordon is one of my best friends. You’re an idiot to say that. Shep and Alice are best friends, and he’s been managing Alice’s affairs for 26 years. He never burned him. For God’s sake, do you think Alice would still be with Shep if he had stolen from him?” I looked straight at Alex and asked him where he heard that. He simply replied, “Well, I just heard about it.” At this point, I knew the brothers had been talking to somebody. I just wasn’t quite sure who it was.”

The next day the band got together for further discussions over the management situation. When Hagar arrived for the meeting, another figure was present. It was Alex’s brother-in-law Ray Danniels. The voice behind the whisper in Eddie and Al’s ear now had a face. Apparently the brothers had enlisted the Canadian to be their unofficial advisor in the management hunt. “Ray was in the room with us discussing the different management proposals,” the singer stated. “Immediately he tried to sell himself to us by stabbing every other manager we had talked to in the back. Instead of coming into this thing telling us what he could offer, he did the opposite. He says, ‘Well, if you want to use so and so, that guy steals money from his clients. Oh, you want to use that guy, he was caught doing drugs. That guy there, oh, he’s hated by every record company.’ You know what I mean. He had something negative to say about every single person, and Ed and Al are going, ‘Oh really!’ I’m sitting there listening to this guy saying, ‘Bullshit!’ Then he started attacking Shep and Johnny, two of my very best friends. He said quote unquote, ‘Shep stole money from Alice Cooper. He made side deals with promoters. Johnny Barbis will burn you guys; he’s a promotion’s man, and all he’ll do is sell you guys out and sell you cheap.’ When he said that shit, I said, ‘Listen you fucking asshole. Those guys are my friends. Don’t ever say anything bad about them in front of me again, because I’ll punch you in the fucking face.’ Outside of Ed Leffler, Shep was one of the most brilliant managers I knew. Johnny was just a great guy, and the brothers knew that. They would never do the things Ray Danniels was accusing them of. I was so damn mad, I went off and busted him on the whole thing. I said, ‘You’re a piece of shit for the way you’ve come into this band talking to us. I would never allow you to be my manager.’ After that, I had to get out of there. Later I heard from Michael Anthony that Ray stayed up all night with Eddie and Al slamming me. He said things like, ‘Sammy wants his guys in there so that he can make side deals. Him and Ed Leffler made side deals. Him and Ed Leffler stole from this band.’ It was all total bullshit, and these guys, I’m telling you, it was really, really bad.”

The subject of Danniels handling Van Halen’s affairs was closed as far as Sammy was concerned. However, Ray was far from being out of the picture. From the very moment Hagar confronted him with the lies he was spreading about other managers, then threatening to punch him out, a dangerous enemy had been made.

“Ray Danniels is a cunning snake,” declared Hagar. “He’s like the devil where he can tell you everything you want to hear. When it came to me, Ray couldn’t pull off that shit. From that day on, the two of us never got along. Michael Anthony was on my side at first in vetoing Ray as manager. Unfortunately, he’s the spineless wonder type. He has no say-so in the band unless Ed and Al need his vote. Then they make him do what they want. When Mike informed me that he was siding with Eddie and Al to vote Ray in, that did it for me. In our next meeting, I told everyone that if Ray Danniels became the new

manager of Van Halen, I was quitting the band. Alex jumped up when I said that and wanted to fight me right there on the spot. We were pushing each other and would have gone at it, if Eddie and Mike had not split us apart.”

“In the nine years I had been in the band, this was the first time Al and I ever started screaming ‘Fuck you, fuck you!’ at each other. When things simmered down between us, I told Alex that if he and I were going to fight over Ray Danniels, Van Halen was over. If I kicked his ass, the band would never be the same. If he kicked my ass, the band would be broken for good. Finally I said, ‘Al, if you really want to fight me, let’s take it outside and really do it without Ray Danniels being an issue.’ Eddie quickly entered the conversation and said, ‘Listen Sammy, why don’t you call David Geffen, or so-and-so, to see what they think about Ray.’ That broke the tension, and cooled off the situation between Alex and me. I told Eddie I’d call around to see what I could find out.”

Hagar wasted no time in making phone calls to people around the industry to get information on Ray Danniels. Sammy says he was totally dismayed by the negative reaction he got from people who knew the manager. All the individuals he polled were unanimous in their opinion that Danniels was not a wise choice for the band.

“He had the worst rap for a manager I had ever heard in my entire life,” said an astonished Hagar. “Straight up, I was told that if Van Halen hired Ray Danniels as their new manager, the band was finished. I got the very same answer from record company presidents, financial people and promoters. Everyone I spoke with in a position of authority, who had some sort of contact with him in the past, told me quote unquote, ‘If you use Ray Danniels, this band will go down to nothing. This guy is a slime bag. He will stab you in the back, and he will rob those guys.’ Every one of the people I spoke to felt the same way about Ray. Ed and Al still wouldn’t listen to me when I reported my findings back to them.”

“I even went to Mo Austin with a list of managers’ names we were considering. He looked at it and said, ‘Ray Danniels! Who’s that?’ I explained to him that he was the manager for Rush and he said, ‘Na, forget it!’ Eddie and Al still didn’t care when I told them what Mo said. They were like moths drawn to a flame when it came to Ray. They had a single-minded consciousness about him. No matter what obstacles were thrown in the way, nothing was going to stop them from voting their man in as Van Halen’s new manager. He had to have made some sort of deal with them, because the brothers offered to give a bigger percentage of their earnings than they gave Leffler. Now I didn’t do that, and that’s why we never got along. I wouldn’t give him what he wanted. Here’s the thing. Michael Anthony’s the key. He would never say it now, but if he ever gets kicked out of Van Halen, or quits, he will have one helluva story to tell. He knows everything, because he was at a lot of the meetings with Ray and the brothers that I didn’t attend. When Mikey was on my side, he told me some unbelievable things about Ray Danniels. You know what? Mike is still on my side, but he can’t acknowledge it, if you know what I mean. If he did, the brothers would kick him out of the band.”

After Johnny Barbis and Shep Gordon were voted down as a management team, Hagar’s last chance to get a good manager for the band rested with Tim Collins, who handled Aerosmith. Sammy thought he would be a good fit for Van Halen, because he could help break Eddie from his drug and alcohol dependency ! just as he had done with Joe Perry.

Hagar says that when the Boston native first hooked up with the Aerosmith guitarist in the early '80s, he was in terrible shape, worse than Eddie Van Halen ever thought of getting. Collins not only cleaned up Perry's act, he was instrumental in reuniting him with Steven Tyler. When he assumed management duties of the reformed band, a clean and sober Aerosmith once again became a powerhouse in the music business. Sammy believed the manager would do a good job of keeping Van Halen psychologically sound. Things were starting to get a little goofy in the studio, as he puts it, between Eddie and himself, and the band needed someone to calm things down. Another factor weighing heavily in Collins' favor was his strong relationship with MTV. Having won three video awards on their last album, Hagar thought it was especially important for Van Halen's new manager to have a strong relationship with the music video channel. Ray Danniels, he found out, had absolutely no pull at the network. Sammy thought it was vital to have MTV's support when the new album was released. An Aerosmith/Van Halen combination, he was convinced, would make both bands a powerful combination to be dealt with on a worldwide level. "I figured with both groups under his control," explained Sammy, "Tim could make phone calls and say, 'Oh, you don't like Van Halen. Well, you aren't going to get Aerosmith either.' Hearing that, people would go, 'Wait a minute; let's talk.' With both bands at his disposal, it would give Tim considerable clout in all aspects of the music business. He could definitely help us out in the European market where we had trouble. I really thought the brothers would understand that and vote him in. When I mentioned his name to Alex, he said, 'Tim Collins? He already manages Aerosmith. That's all he'll ever do. Aerosmith will be No. 1, and we will always be second.' I told Al that wouldn't be the case. In fact, I had already asked Tim that very question, about juggling both bands. Since these guys were already slamming every manager we talked to, I thought I'd better confront him on the issue before he spoke with the brothers.

"Tim was very matter-of-fact with me on the subject. He told me that if we scheduled everything just right, one band would be recording their album, while the other one was out touring to support their new release. Tim was up front and to the point with me about where his true allegiance rested. He said, 'Sam, if there was ever a time when both Aerosmith and Van Halen had a single coming out at the same time, my loyalty would lie with Aerosmith first. I'm not stupid enough to do something like that, but if it did happen and I was forced to make a decision for whatever reason, Aerosmith would take precedence over Van Halen.' After he said that, I knew he was the one we needed. If I would have posed that same question to Ray in regards to Rush over Van Halen, he would have said, 'Oh well, of course it would be you.' He would have said we were No. 1 over his wife, his kids, you name it, just to manage the band. When Tim told me that, I was thinking, 'Wow, that's a great statement. That's what I want to hear.' I told Al about my conversation the next day, and he said, 'That is a psychological ploy. He's been messing with all these psychologists that are involved with Aerosmith. He knows exactly what to say because of them.' I looked at Alex and said, 'Well, Ray's had fucking Rush for 23 years. Do you think he's going to be more loyal to us than them?' He said, 'Oh, Rush is going to retire. They are washed up. Ray knows they're finished. He told me that himself.' Alex went on and on with all this horseshit about Rush he'd been told by Ray."

Hagar says he was appalled at the negative comments directed toward Rush by Alex Van Halen that he attributed directly to Ray Danniels. Sammy was even more offended at the fact that Al's brother-in-law wanted to manage Van Halen so badly, he was willing to sell out his other band to get the job. For over two decades, Danniels had stood behind Rush. From what Hagar was hearing, apparently that was a thing of the past. The Red Rocker even spoke to Ray himself about the Canadian trio and was astounded by the answers he received.

“Ray even bad-mouthed Rush to me,” said an incredulous Hagar. “Can you believe it? He was saying shit like, ‘If they had a good singer, they could have made it on pop radio.’ He was telling me that with the kind of music they play, Rush would never be any more than they already have been. I started hammering him with questions. I said, ‘Ray, Rush should have been the Canadian Led Zeppelin. Why don’t they sell records? Why did their last record only do 400,000 or 500,000 records?’ He said to me, ‘If they only had a singer.’ He was crazy to say that, because Geddy Lee has one of the most unique voices in rock. Rush’s big problem is they never had any videos which is one of the major complaints I had against Ray. I knew his dealing with MTV would bury us. I even called over there and asked them about their relationship with him. They didn’t even know who Ray Danniels was. When I told them he was the manager of Rush, they said, ‘Well, we never had a relationship with Rush. We’ve only had a couple of videos from them.’ In other words, Ray had no clout with them whatsoever.”

About a week after Alex and Sammy had their conversation, Hagar received a phone call from Danniels. He was in management discussions with the band Extreme, and wanted to know his thoughts about taking the band on as a client. The Boston-based outfit had been under the guidance of Louis Levine, who also managed Michael Bolton. The group, featuring Gary Cherone on vocals and Nuno Bettencourt on guitar, hit the big time in 1991 with Pornograffiti. The double platinum album featured the No. 1 smash, “More Than Words” and the Top Ten hit, “Hole-Hearted.” After that record, the group stumbled badly and never again recaptured its past glory. “Ray was kissing my ass so bad you wouldn’t believe it,” added Hagar, shaking his head. “He called me and said, ‘I have been asked to manage Extreme. I want to know your opinion of it.’ He was trying to get me to say okay. Instead I just said, ‘I don’t think you should do it. Extreme is a bunch of losers No. 1, and second, their career is over. Ray went on to tell me that he had hired a guy in New York to handle the situation, so it wouldn’t get in the way of things. He says, ‘I promise you some other guy will manage the band. I’ll just oversee it and help them out politically.’ Let me tell you, he got way involved with them. When I brought up the subject of Ray managing Extreme to Alex, he said, ‘Ah, fuck them. That doesn’t matter; they’re nothing. Besides, he’s got another guy to work with them anyway.’ I’m thinking to myself, ‘Here we go again!’”

While the debate over a new manager raged on, Van Halen was in the studio working on the album they were dedicating to the memory of Ed Leffler. David Lee Roth released *Your Filthy Little Mouth* on March 26. It entered the Billboard charts at No. 78 and dropped off fourteen days later. While Warner Bros. was trying to squeeze some airplay for Roth anywhere in the country they could, the Red Rocker was busy promoting his 12-song greatest hits album for Geffen. He called the record *Unboxed*, to poke fun at all the artists and bands that were releasing boxed set collections at the time. Released on April

2, Sammy stayed true to his word and did a two-week press junket. He did the David Letterman Show and appeared on CNN's Showbiz Today. He was slotted to do the Tonight Show and perform "Give to Live," but the brothers forced Michael Anthony to withdraw from Sammy's band at the last minute, thus cancelling the performance.

When Hagar returned to Los Angeles to resume the management debate, Sammy was convinced more than ever that Tim Collins was their man. Aerosmith was scheduled to kick off the Japanese leg of the Get a Grip tour in Yokohama on April 27. Collins flew out to L. A. about two weeks before the tour to talk with Van Halen and listen to some of the new songs. He answered all the brothers' questions about conflict of interest and band loyalties. He laid out his ideas for integrating his management style with both groups. The more he explained his plans regarding Van Halen, the further impressed Hagar became. After about a week of meetings with the manager, urgent business in San Francisco called Sammy away. As he was leaving for the airport, he told Collins they would speak shortly. Hagar was fairly confident that Ray Danniels was going to be cast aside in favor of the Aerosmith manager. When he returned to Los Angeles a couple of days later, to resume work on the album, he was stunned by what he saw in the studio. Eddie Van Halen's long hair was gone, and replaced by a crew-cut.

"When we took a break from recording that day," the singer said, "I found Alex outside smoking a cigarette, and asked him what had possessed Eddie to cut his hair. He then told me about the late night rendezvous with Tim Collins. After I had left town, Eddie called Tim late one evening in his hotel room and told him he needed to talk to him right away. When he arrived at the studio around two in the morning, Alex was there and sat with Tim through this meeting. Eddie was in really bad shape, just fucked up out of his brain. Valerie had apparently kicked him out of the house, because she didn't want him drunk around the baby. Tim sat with Eddie for two or three hours that night, while Edward laid his heavy guilt trip on him. At one point, Eddie started crying, grabbed a pair of clippers, and cut all his long hair in front of Tim. He said, 'I'm so frustrated. I've got to stop drinking. I've got to stop doing drugs. I'm not happy, I want to kill myself. I can't make a record like this. My wife hates me.' Alex told me his brother released every insecurity he ever had on Tim Collins that night. "About a week after this episode occurred, I received a phone call from Tim in Japan. He confirmed Al's story, and told me he was bowing out of the management picture. He said, 'I'm sorry Sammy. I really love you and Van Halen, but I don't think I can handle both bands. I don't think it would be fair for me to attempt it. Besides, Steven Tyler doesn't want me to do it.' That was a polite way for him to really say, 'I have my hands full with Joe Perry and Steven Tyler. I can't take Eddie Van Halen, too!' I understood where Tim was coming from completely. I told him thanks for spending all that time with us and wished him good luck. From that point on, I resigned myself to the fact that Ray Danniels was going to manage Van Halen whether I liked it or not. But, I had meant every word I told him in our first meeting, when I discovered he was the one behind the rumors about Shep, Johnny and the other managers. He was never going to be my manager, I didn't trust him, and I certainly didn't like the way he conducted business. The animosity between us really started to heat up when I absolutely refused to sign any documents that would acknowledge Ray Danniels as my manager."

Greed

Ray Danniels unofficially came on board as Van Halen's new overseer later that spring. As work on the album progressed, Hagar quietly went about the task of separating his publishing money from the Van Halen account it was previously going to. Before Ed Leffler died, all the band's publishing income went into Yessup Publishing. The funds would then be divvied up from there. Shortly after *Unboxed* was released, Sammy instructed ASCAP, the music firm that monitored and collected album and song royalties for Van Halen, to separate his share of the proceeds. He now wanted his portion sent to Nine Music, the holding company that received all royalties from his solo work. After completing that task, the singer realized he had some publishing dollars coming from Warner/Chappell for the greatest hits album that was now on the market. He asked Van Halen's lawyer, Gary Stamler, to talk to his publisher, Rick Shoemaker, about the situation.

"Gary was involved in negotiations with Rick," recounted Hagar, "because he was making a publishing deal with Van Halen for the new record. Shortly after I asked Gary to talk with Rick, I received a phone call from him. He wanted to know what kind of money I was looking for. I said, 'Rick, until the Van Halen deal is done, you and I are not going to talk about money. I am not going to screw them out of anything. I don't want this to be used as any kind of leverage. I'm a fair guy. When you finish the Van Halen thing, call me.' He said okay, and after he finished working out the deal with Gary, he phoned. I told Rick my publishing contract with Geffen called for a \$250,000 advance on the greatest hits record. I wanted an additional \$500,000. He thought that was a little steep, but like John Kalodner before him, he told me he'd see what he could do. About ten days later, Rick called and said my request had been approved. When I hung up the phone, I had a big smile on my face. Without help from anyone, I had negotiated an extra million dollars out of the greatest hits deal."

During a break one day in the recording studio, Hagar made an offhand remark about the money that Warner/Chappell owed for publishing money on his greatest hits record. Ray Danniels overheard the comment and asked how much the contract guaranteed. When Sammy replied a quarter of a million dollars, the manager offered to intercede on his behalf to raise the ante. "Ray came over to me," he smiled, "and said, 'Sam, I can get you \$350,000 if you let me go talk to them for you.' I just kind of looked at him and said, 'Oh really. That's odd. I already made a deal, and they are giving me a total of \$750,000.' You should have seen the reaction on his face when I told him that. He was humbled, believe me. Ray thought he was really going to show me how great a businessman he was. My remark was not intended to lead him on, but he smelled money and jumped on the statement. He wasn't making anything with Van Halen yet, so he was looking to make some cash anyway he could. I didn't mean to hurt his feelings, well, maybe I did unconsciously. I wanted to let him know, that I knew, how much of a jerk he really was. After our conversation, Ray went to Alex Van Halen and told him I had been responsible for holding up Van Halen's publishing contract for the new record, while I negotiated a deal for my greatest hits record. The brothers would have freaked out if I had told them Ray offered to make the publishing deal for me. I never said a word about it. After he got involved with the band, I never told Eddie and Al anything about my business dealings, unless it had something to do with Van Halen."

That particular incident, plus the mistrust Hagar's involvement with his greatest hits package created, played right into the manger's hand. He was able to use these episodes as fuel to flame suspicions that had already surfaced within the band. Despite his misgivings over Danniels' appointment, Sammy says he was completely unaware of the damage he was doing to undermine his credibility.

While this silent war was being waged, south of the border, Marco Monroy had done a remarkable job turning around the fortunes of the Cabo Wabo. Though it still owed a tremendous amount of money to the government, it was holding its own financially. Part of the thanks went to the \$300,000 Monroy had put into the club remodeling it. The architect had also hired an experienced club manager to get the place back on its feet. When Sammy flew down and saw the changes, he couldn't believe his eyes. He also knew he had to gain control of the club from the band, or Monroy's superb rebuilding efforts would be in vain.

"Right after Marco and I shook hands in January," replied Hagar, "he started pouring money in the club. He paid off the vendors, took over the debt to the government, bought new furniture and remodeled the entire club. I'm telling you, he turned the bar into a showplace. It was absolutely beautiful. Everyone in the band knew the situation with the government had been worked out thanks to Marco's intervention. I was totally up front about his involvement. If the band wanted to stay in the club, all they had to do was pay their share of the debt owed. I asked the brothers at least ten times if they wanted to stay involved. Eddie and Al would say, 'No, we want out. We want out!' Fine, then let's get it done."

"We hired this guy named Tito Roberts to run the Cabo Wabo. He had relocated from Mexico City to take over another club in town. Marco talked him into running our place, and he came in and did a great job. Since there was no deal in place with the band to sell their interest, I had to warn Marco to back off from what he was doing. I said, 'Marco, you're spending all this money. You know what can happen. If I don't get this club back from the band, I'm fucked. I can't sell you a piece of the club, because I don't own it.' I had to make something happen as soon as I got back. Alex still wanted to give the bar back to the government so they could write off their whole investment. I said, 'If you're going to give it to the government, then I'll take it. I don't want a tax write-off.' Al goes, 'What about the debt? How are you going to pay for it? What if they come after us?' I told him that was my responsibility, and I would indemnify everyone if it happened, just get the lawyers together and draw up a deal."

Alex Van Halen's prediction that Cabo San Lucas would one day become the Riviera of the Pacific was about to take place. Though the building boom hadn't reached the harbor town yet, it was close at hand. Property values were climbing steadily, and modern civilization was slowly encroaching on the area. The land the Cabo Wabo stood on was worth millions but, for some reason, that aspect of the bar was lost on the Van Halen brothers. Ray Danniels intervened on Hagar's behalf and had Gary Stamler and Michael Karlin draw up papers to transfer the brother's interest in the club to Sammy. The singer in turn, went to Ed Leffler's widow and offered her the same deal. She could relinquish the estate's right to the Cabo Wabo or pay its fair share of the debt. She signed her interest over. Hagar then approached Betsy. She loved the area and the club, and didn't want to sign away any claims to it at first. Sammy, however, convinced his soon-to-be

ex-wife that the holdings were a money losing proposition she didn't need to be saddled with. Still in love and willing to do anything that her husband asked, she signed papers giving up her stake in the property.

"Believe me," lamented the Red Rucker, "the papers I had to sign with the brothers to get the club was a really shit deal for me. The terms were unbelievable. For instance, if I ever made a penny selling it, I would have to repay the band the money they wrote off on their taxes. Next, if I ever brought the concept to the United States and tried to franchise it, they would get fifty percent of the profits forever. That same deal also extended to anything associated with the Cabo Wabo name. I had to sign all these documents that stated in the event anyone got sued, I paid all the costs. It even said in the contract that I could not let the club interfere with the band. If Eddie and Al voted that it was not a good time for me to travel to Cabo because they needed me, I couldn't go. God's truth that fucking clause was in there. I had to agree to all these conditions, otherwise there was no deal."

Hagar had no bargaining power, and he knew it. Apparently, neither did Michael Anthony. The brothers made him divest his interest in the club as well. If he didn't, Sammy says, they would have kicked him out of Van Halen.

"When it came right down to it," he said assuredly, "they didn't want Mike to have anything to do with the Cabo Wabo. They especially didn't want him and me to own the club. The bottom line to the whole deal was this. I gave the brothers what they wanted, which was control over me. Eddie and Al knew that I'd do anything to keep my wonderful, great idea. They wanted to rub my face in it and say, 'See, it didn't work. We lost all this money.' Believe me, they didn't like the idea of me saving it. What they pulled on me was nothing but a powerplay; I guarantee it. The funny thing is it backfired. From January 1, 1994 when David Haliburton walked out to January 1, 1995, we paid off all the outstanding debts, redesigned the club, and I pocketed a tidy \$300,000 profit. It was unreal."

Gluttony

Making Balance was not a very fun proposition for Hagar. Though the band was working with a real producer this time, Bruce Fairbairn, the atmosphere in the studio was anything but pleasant. The Canadian-born studio veteran had caught the band's attention for his impressive work on Aerosmith's last two albums, Permanent Vacation and Get a Grip. Unfortunately, the producer would inadvertently get sucked into the mind games that were being acted out at the 5150 studio. He would later play an unwitting role in the final drama that unfolded between Sammy and Eddie Van Halen.

Throughout the recording of the album, the brothers, particularly Alex, would remind Hagar of the mistake he made recording "High Hopes" and "Buying My Way into Heaven" for his Unboxed collection. The singer admits he might have backed off the project completely if it hadn't been for his pending divorce. With his motives behind the project clearly stated, Sammy refused to let anyone make him feel any guilt for his decision. That included Alex Van Halen, who had money problems of his own.

"It used to really tick me off," said Hagar frankly, "whenever those two brought up my greatest hits record. I had participated on the Unboxed record for two reasons. One, I

needed the cash for my divorce. Two, I really believed the release of the greatest hits package would stop any speculation on Eddie and Al's part, that I was angling toward reviving my solo career. Hell, I didn't need the extra money for those two songs. If push came to shove, I could have taken the money out of my bank account to settle the property issue with Betsy. As I look back on those events now, I realize there really wasn't any one thing I could have done to forestall the inevitable. Ray Danniels was slowly gaining control of the brothers. I'm sure he was behind the scenes telling these guys, 'Hey, you better watch out for this guy.'

When Hagar received his publishing check from Warner/Chappell, the divorce lawyers for both sides got together to hammer out a settlement. It was not a very happy scene. Betsy's attorney even had to pull her away from Sam as the terms for the divorce were being finalized. "While the lawyers were talking," said Betsy, "Sam and I were sitting in an empty courtroom waiting for our hearing. I said, 'Sam, we've probably got 30 or 40 more years on the planet. You can always come home if you ever change your mind.' He said, 'Well, I'm not closing any doors Betsy.' I started crying, and he put his arm around me. He said, 'Oh God, we shouldn't even be here.' My lawyer then came inside and dragged me away saying, 'Don't sit near him. Don't you go anywhere near him.' Sam knew I loved him, but you know, I realized that people have a different capacity for love. I'm a person that cares and loves deeply. Sam was very tender and passionate with me the whole time we were together. A part of me was spiritually evolved enough to forgive him, and willing to believe he would return some day."

"I'm so thankful that I had Andrew and Aaron in my life when Sam left. Otherwise, I wouldn't have had anything and been totally alone. I'll tell you what's interesting. Most of the times women in divorce retain everything, and the men go off by themselves. In this case it was reversed. I was the one that was cast adrift. Sam kept the house, the lifestyle and all our friends. I was the one left holding the bag. Right after he left me, I thought the only way I was going to get through it was to replace him as soon as possible. I got involved with this guy who was totally in love with me and wanted to get married. The problem our relationship had was my inability to let Sam go. Let me tell you something. No one going through a divorce has any business dating. Every time I was with him, I did nothing but cry about Sam. We went back and forth over this subject for over a year, and it was awful. Finally, we both knew our relationship wouldn't work out, because I still wanted my husband to come home."

Betsy's lawyers made it clear to her that since she had been married for so long, California's tough divorce statutes entitled her to support for life. To their astonishment, she didn't care about the financial aspects of her case. Her attorneys often got upset with her, she says, because of the dispassionate manner in which she viewed the proceedings. They were looking out for her best interests, but were hampered by the strong feelings Betsy still harbored for her soon-to-be ex-usband. In her mind, she had come to the conclusion that a friendly settlement would make Sammy feel more comfortable to come back home to her one day. When an agreement was finally reached, Hagar's wife only accepted the cash value for her half of their community property and alimony for nine years. She steadfastly refused to take any royalties her husband earned from his music, or make him financially responsible for her well-being the rest of her natural life.

“I know it must have been rough for my lawyers to deal with me,” admitted Betsy. “They were trying to do the best job they could for me, and there I was going, ‘I don’t want to make Sam mad. I want him to come home.’ I was so stupid about the divorce, even my son Aaron wanted me to fight for everything. My friends would say, ‘Betsy, you got so screwed in your divorce settlement.’ I said, ‘No, no, I’ll be fine. I got enough, I’ll be fine.’ I’m not a malicious or vindictive person. I wanted Sam to come home so bad, I thought if I made the divorce easy on him, he would. The whole situation was so horrible in the first place, I just wanted to make sure I had something coming in. I didn’t complain about the arrangement. I always felt I was going to be fine. My lawyers wanted to go after everything of Sam’s. They wanted to go through his home studio in Mill Valley and confiscate all his tapes. They said, ‘You are entitled to the royalties of any song that was written while you were married.’ I said, ‘No, don’t do it. I don’t want to do that.’ The other lawyer involved said this was the most amicable divorce he had ever been involved with.”

Betsy admits that her intense love for Sammy blinded her to the realities of divorce. Instead of settling for what was fair, she went for less. She received half the value of the three homes they owned and other real estate holdings her husband had around Southern California. Betsy also retained some IRA accounts and half the gold Hagar always kept in a safe. Her total take from the 23 years of devotion to her marriage was a fraction of her husband’s net worth. The alimony payments would stop in December 2003. From that point on, with no job skills other than her songwriting talent, she would have to fend for herself. Even that important fact of life didn’t phase her. Money had never held any real value to her, especially after everything she’d been through with Sammy. Love was the one commodity she took stock in. For over two decades, Betsy had gladly stood by her man. Sadly, that sentiment was not returned.

“The one thing I’m very sorry I didn’t get was my mother’s silverware,” confided Betsy. “Sam wouldn’t let me have it. Once, I went up to Mill Valley to get all my things out of the house. All the locks had been changed and the gate recoded so I couldn’t get in. I told my lawyer about it, and he said he’d get the police to escort me up there so I could get whatever was mine. Like a fool, I told him no, I didn’t want to do that. Sam and No. 2 decided which of my things I could have. They just threw things into boxes, and one of the band’s roadies drove them down to Spindrift. The only thing I got from my home of all those years were the items he decided were okay for me to have. I remember a time Andrew came back from visiting his father, and he told me he’d polished silver during his stay. I thought to myself, ‘How funny; that’s my mother’s silverware.’ Sam had a library built for me too, and I had several beautiful books I had collected over the years. I asked him if I could have them back, and he said no.”

“Sam always told everyone how horrible I was during the divorce, and how I went after him. He has no idea how easy I was or maybe he does. When my lawyers got involved, right away, they started thinking Sam had moved money and hidden it somewhere. They saw that he was a lying, cheating jerk. The way to get to Sam is through his money. If you mess with it, you’re in big trouble. In the beginning, he was furious about having to give me anything. He said, ‘Betsy, you spent all of the money you deserved while we were married. You shouldn’t get a penny!’ He seemed to forget that I was the one who was responsible for redecorating and furnishing all the houses we lived in. I bought all

the clothes and our food. Sam didn't go out and do any of that stuff. It was so comical of him to accuse me of spending all this money on the family, yet he would go out buy Ferraris without thinking twice about it. Finally, Ben Winslow, his attorney says, 'Hey look, this is California. You have to give her half.' He was totally upset about having to give me anything. Again, I didn't care about the money. All I wanted was for Sam to come home, and at one point, I thought he would. When I flew into Los Angeles to see my attorney, this one particular driver I knew from the limousine service we always used met me at the airport. He told me he had picked Kari up one time, and they started talking. She said, 'Look, don't worry. I know about Betsy. Sam and I are just going to have fun; he won't leave her.' Obviously that didn't last very long."

The saddest part of divorce, says Betsy, was losing touch with her husband's family, especially Bobbi. Once they accepted Kari into the family, she quietly bowed out of their lives altogether feeling betrayed.

"Divorce is a ruined concept," offered Betsy. "I likened the experience to high school. When you're going through it, you are nowhere ready to deal with it. I could have been very mean to Sam, but I wasn't. Throughout the proceedings I wanted him to come home, so I made every effort to be nice. You know his entire car collection was registered in my name. He had eight cars at the time of the divorce, half of which were Ferraris. He had put all his automobiles in my name, because of his awful driving record. Sam could not get any insurance. Since the cars had to be insured, the only way we could get a decent premium was to register them all in my name. One of my friends said I should have rented a flatbed truck, drove it up to Mill Valley, and taken possession of all them. The only thing I got out of it was my 1953 Chevy truck, and half the cash value of his collection."

"Sam really couldn't drive 55. When he wrote that song, believe me, it was the truth. Not only did he speed, but he was dangerous. One time when I was with him, we got pulled over in Marin County by an officer that had followed our car for some time. This highway patrolman was so angry at Sam's reckless driving, he wanted to haul him off to jail. This man even walked over to my side of the car and said, 'Do you know this man?' I said, 'Yes, he's my husband.' The patrolman says, 'What on earth are you doing in a car with him. He's a horrible driver!' I said, 'Well, he's my husband. I have to come with him.' I can't even describe to you how furious that officer was. Usually, Sam got off because cops recognized him. He would sign autographs, tapes, and most the time get a warning. But his cars were all registered in my name, because no insurance company would touch him with his record. Since he loved his cars so much, I didn't let my lawyers make an issue out of me owning them."

When the divorce was finally granted, Betsy says she was not prepared to face the real world. "Do you know the saying, 'Woman, get thyself to a nunnery?'" she echoed. "I always joked with my friends that's exactly what I should have done. My whole life had been sheltered. I went from living at home with my parents to being with Sam. Even though we had a tough life at times, Sam protected me. Since he handled all the money, I didn't know what the real world was like. When he left me, I was a trusting fool left all alone with what most people would consider a lot of money. Sam always had so much help in that area. They gave him good advice and watched over his business affairs. I didn't have that, and consequently, I made a lot of mistakes."

“I think the most criminal thing that Sam did by leaving me was setting this naive woman loose in the world. For years afterward, I made bad monetary calls, because I wasn’t fit to be alone. That was the cruel part about our divorce. After 23 years of marriage, where you’re dependent on one person for everything, preparing yourself for single life is hard. Not only was I clueless to how things worked in the real world, our divorce had left me an emotional wreck. My judgement was so clouded, I just wanted to isolate myself from the everyone so I wouldn’t make any more errors.”

Life did go on for both parties. When the curtain call for that bittersweet symphony was over, the next settlement to be brokered was the contract Ray Danniels was submitting to Van Halen. With the new album in the mixing stages, it was time to finalize his management deal with the band.

Hagar says that when he read the agreement that had been drawn up, he couldn’t believe the terms Al’s brother-in-law had proposed. “I remember the son-of-a-bitch wanted to get paid for the rest of his life,” said an utterly amazed Hagar, “and that was for every Van Halen record sold in the catalogue. Even if he got fired tomorrow, he wanted 20 percent of everything. And get this. He wanted 20 percent of gross, not net. When I saw what he was trying to do, I went to the brothers raising hell. They were willing to sign Ray’s proposed deal the next day. I went to Ed and Al and said, ‘Are you guys crazy?’ You don’t understand, I was the only guy fighting this. Michael Anthony didn’t have a real vote per se, so his involvement was limited. He’s not a full partner, just a salaried musician in the band. He was almost replaced on every record we did, but believe me, I fought for Mikey too.”

Hagar refused to sign documents granting Ray Danniels any authority over his contributions to Van Halen since 1985. He thought the Canadian manager’s demands were outrageous, considering he was stepping into a position that was already running smoothly, thanks to his predecessor. Because of his intense distrust of Danniels, Hagar wanted to implement a codicil into the manager’s contract to insure a smooth transition, in case he was ousted from the band. The concept was called “the sunset clause,” a prorated pay scale that would eventually phase him out five years after leaving the band, for whatever reason. The language Hagar worked out with attorney Don Engel stated that if Danniels was replaced, or left the band for any reason during the first year, he would be paid his previously agreed upon full percentage. The second year, he would get half of that. The third year Danniels would receive five percent, the fourth, one percent, and after five years, Van Halen was finished paying him. The idea came to Hagar from a conversation he had while touring with the legendary Joe Cocker, nearly twenty years earlier.

Hagar refused to sign documents granting Ray Danniels any authority over his contributions to Van Halen since 1985. He thought the Canadian manager’s demands were outrageous, considering he was stepping into a position that was already running smoothly, thanks to his predecessor. Because of his intense distrust of Danniels, Hagar wanted to implement a codicil into the manager’s contract to insure a smooth transition, in case he was ousted from the band. The concept was called “the sunset clause,” a prorated pay scale that would eventually phase him out five years after leaving the band, for whatever reason. The language Hagar worked out with attorney Don Engel stated that if Danniels was replaced, or left the band for any reason during the first year, he would be

paid his previously agreed upon full percentage. The second year, he would get half of that. The third year Danniels would receive five percent, the fourth, one percent, and after five years, Van Halen was finished paying him. The idea came to Hagar from a conversation he had while touring with the legendary Joe Cocker, nearly twenty years earlier.

“When Ray Danniels initially proposed his contract terms, I thought of my conversation with Joe Cocker. There was no way I was going to let Ray tie up every guy in this band. He wanted to make money off the whole Van Halen catalog from the first David Lee Roth record until now. I fought him for a month. First thing, I wouldn’t give him any of my percentage of 5150, OU812, For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge, and Live: Right Here, Right Now. I kept going to Eddie and Al saying, ‘Come on you guys; think about this.’ All they would say was, ‘Yeah, yeah, yeah. Whatever you say.’ They would not stick up for me. Ray had them convinced that the reason the old catalogue didn’t sell was that Ed Leffler never pushed it, because he didn’t own a piece of it. Well, the reason Leffler never pushed the Roth stuff was the simple fact he didn’t give a shit about it.”

“This band had sold 65 million records in their 18-year career, and Ray Danniels knew exactly what he was walking into. He wasn’t fooling me with the bullshit he was telling the brothers. Eddie and Al went ahead and gave Ray a large piece of their percentage of the old catalogue with Roth. They even gave him part of their percentage for the albums I was on. I refused to give him anything. I didn’t need Ray Danniels breathing down my neck, sucking my dick, holding my hand and selling me out all in the same picture. You want me to tell you something else? Ray Danniels makes more money off the David Lee Roth era albums than Michael Anthony. How about that one? Ray Danniels makes more money than Michael Anthony period! It’s sick, man. Ed and Al go along with it, because they make more themselves.”

Hagar’s rage at Danniels continued to bubble under the surface, as he saw the manager manipulate the Van Halens like puppets on a string. “I never signed a contract with him after I saw how he was doing things,” he said defiantly. “This guy came in and immediately wanted twenty percent of everything. I said, ‘You’re walking into a band that’s already making millions. You have the nerve to ask for more than the last guy made who did everything in the world for us! All you are going to be doing is making the same deals Ed Leffler already made with the promoters; the same deal with our record contract; and renewing the same publishing deal already in place. You think that since you’re the manager, and you come in to answer the phone, that you should get twenty percent? I absolutely refuse to sign anything that gives you more than Ed Leffler made.’

With the new album coming out, and plans for an extensive tour starting to unfold, some sort of agreement with Danniels had to be reached. During one conversation with Ray, Hagar mentioned the unfair treatment Michael Anthony had been receiving from the Van Halen brothers. The bass player, he felt, at least deserved an equal percentage of the stage money they earned from their nightly road performances. “Michael Anthony stands there on stage every night,” insisted Hagar, “and works as hard as me, or anybody else out there. I thought it was chicken shit that he didn’t get his fair share of the stage money. Well, Ray Danniels, to get his vote, went to Mike and said, ‘I will get you your equal percentage of the touring money.’ You want to know why he told him that? Because he knew I’d vote him in as manager. Ray went in and made the deal with the brothers to get

Mikey his stage money, although he still didn't get anything from merchandising, the records or publishing. Mike got conned and made a deal with the devil himself, though he didn't have to do it that way. A long time ago, he could have come clean if he would have just stood up for his rights. But I'm not here to ridicule Mikey. He did what he felt he had to do."

Hagar ended up signing a deal with Danniels, recognizing him as the manager for only the upcoming Balance album and tour, nothing else. Sammy's contract called for Ray to make 17 percent of net, not gross, like he originally wanted. Eddie and Alex Van Halen gave him the same percentage across the board for everything.

Wrath

On October 2, 1994, Eddie Van Halen made the daring statement that he was giving up alcohol for good. The announcement was met with considerable skepticism considering the fact the guitarist had failed three previous attempts to go into rehab to kick his habit. With the help of a therapist, he boldly declared his days of drinking were a thing of the past.

"Eddie's affair had a lot to do with him making that statement," noted Hagar. "Valerie had been trying to get Eddie to quit drinking forever. When that incident happened, she had an ace on her. She said, 'Now, you're going to stop drinking. You are going to straighten up, or I'm leaving you.' Now I'm not quoting what I heard, I'm telling you that's what happened. Listen, I don't blame Valerie for taking a stance like that. She was the one positive influence in his life. For years, she had been trying to get him to stop drinking, and she absolutely refused to let him smoke in the house. Despite her best efforts though, "I never interfered in Valerie and Ed's marriage. What goes on between a couple is not anyone's business, unless they ask for your help. No one really understands the strange quirks between two people that makes their relationship work. It's like an invisible substance. Valerie was totally cool with me, and I think she was happy that I tried to help her husband. She knew I was a positive influence on him. A couple of times Valerie asked for my help when Eddie would tell her, 'Hey, I'm going to go get some drugs.' She'd ask me to stop him, and I'd go over and say, 'Man, come on Eddie. Fuck, let's go into the studio and work.' About the only thing Valerie ever had against me was this competitive thing she felt I had with Eddie on stage. I was half of the star of the band. She used to push her husband to compete with me more, because she wanted him to be the man. That's the only thing that I ever felt from Valerie, and I understood it. Other than that, if she ever said I wasn't a positive influence on Edward, then I'd be very, very disappointed."

Hagar's management deal with Ray Danniels was completely separate from the one he signed with Eddie, Alex, and Michael Anthony. The way Sammy had his contract structured did little to endear him to the manager. Ray's animosity toward the Red Rocker would escalate over the coming months as he carefully picked his engagements. The Canadian was determined to erode the singer's leadership role in Van Halen. Despite the contempt Sam felt from the band's new administrator, he carried on his business as usual. One such case involved his involvement in an all-star musical tribute to Elvis Presley. The performance, along with other musicians strongly influenced by The King,

was going to be broadcast live on pay-per-view, October 8, from the Pyramid Arena in Memphis.

“Johnny Barbis had called me up,” disclosed Sammy, “and asked me if I could take part in an Elvis tribute. Bon Jovi had backed out, and he wanted to know if I’d take his place. Of course I said yes, because I was an Elvis freak. I took Guns ‘N Roses drummer Matt Sorum with me and played ‘Good Rockin Tonight,’ the Elvis Presley tune Montrose played on their first album. I told Ed and Al what I was doing, and they didn’t care. Eddie knew how much I loved Elvis. We used to lightheartedly debate about him all the time. One night when I lived in Malibu, Jon Bon Jovi, Eddie and myself talked about Elvis all night. Jon had bought a house down the street, so I invited him over. We ordered pizza, had some wine and argued the entire evening. Eddie did not dig Elvis Presley at all. He said, ‘What the fuck man. He didn’t write his own tunes, he made them fucked up movies, why the fuck is he such a big star?’ I’d say because Elvis was the most charismatic...and he’d cut me off and say, ‘Bullshit!’”

Sammy’s appearance at the event was the highlight of what had been a rather dismal year. Though he was not allowed to contribute “Good Rockin Tonight” to the Elvis tribute album released later, it really didn’t matter to him. He got paid for doing something he would have done for free. Before Ray Danniels started his pitch battles with Hagar, Sammy fired off one of his last impudent shots. The manager dodged the bullet, but the message had clearly been sent.

“Johnny Barbis said they wanted to pay me \$25,000 for my appearance,” replied Hagar. “He wanted to know who he should speak to about it. I phoned Ray and said, ‘Call them up and make the deal.’ I tried to throw him a bone, because I was trying to keep peace in the valley. Now, I had a totally separate arrangement with Ray. I had language put in my contract that stated he does not manage me, or anything I do as a solo artist, unless I chose to put a deal through his office. It was like, ‘Ray, someone offered me this deal. Call them up and handle it for me.’ If I chose to do that, then I would give him 10 percent of the deal. When I threw the deal his way, Ray goes, ‘I don’t want ten percent of anything. That’s embarrassing to me.’ Well anyway, I sent Ray a check for \$2,500 after the show was over. He was such an asshole, he wouldn’t even cash it.”

Van Halen should never have paid him 17 percent for anything. Those guys agreed to pay Ray for things he had no part of. I made it clear that he wouldn’t get a thing from me for 5150, OU812, For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge, and the Live album. That’s another reason why he pulled all his shit behind my back. I retained my 30 percent without giving Ray Danniels a fucking penny, because he didn’t deserve it, he’s a criminal. I voted to give him percent of the new record and of the tour, just like everybody else, mainly because of Michael Anthony. I didn’t screw him in any deal. I just gave him his percentage of what he did, not something he didn’t do.”

The way 1994 had been going for Hagar, he never knew what to expect when he answered his telephone at any of his homes. Perhaps the biggest surprise call he received came from Mo Austin, the legendary head of Warner Bros. He phoned the Hagar residence in Mill Valley to let Sammy know that he was stepping down as president of the label. Austin had been forced out in a boardroom coup, orchestrated at corporate

headquarters in New York. He was leaving the company he'd built into a powerhouse with his second in command, Lenny Waronker, at the first of the year.

"You know," he remarked soberly, "I was the first guy in the band that Mo notified, when all this happened to him. He called me at home and said, 'I just wanted to tell you that I am stepping down. I didn't want you guys to hear it from the news media.' I said, 'Wow Mo, that breaks my heart.' He goes, 'Look, circumstances happened, and it's time for a change.' The news really upset me, because he had been such a strong ally of the band. I said, 'You aren't going to quit the business are you?' He laughed and said, 'No, what do you expect me to do, play golf? My whole life has been music. I'm going to take some time off, and see what I'm going to do next.' Anyway, during our conversation, Mo said, 'So, I don't know what you guys are going to do, if you're going to exercise your option, or what.' Now that news really startled me. You see, I'd always heard about these options Ed Leffler had made with the label. He always tried to put a key man clause in our contract that stated if Mo and Lenny left Warner Bros., we were automatic free agents." Austin's comment about Van Halen exercising their option intrigued Hagar.

He called his bandmates and informed them of the shake-up at Warner Bros. Then he called Ray Danniels to let him know what was happening. Hagar says the manager was shocked that Mo Austin had personally called him with the news of his departure. This was the first he was hearing about it. Sammy also informed Danniels about a possible out clause in Van Halen's contract they could now exercise since the label president was leaving the company.

"That was a real tricky thing," admitted Hagar. "Don Engel swore he never saw it in the contract, but Leffler always told me we had it. Mo's son, Michael, kind of hinted it was there as well. He said, 'Yeah, my dad says you guys are free agents if him and Lenny leave.' I'm positive Mo and Ed had some sort of a little agreement between them, but it went to Leffler's grave with him. With the lawyers going 'I don't know, I don't know,' there was no one to corroborate what actually happened. When I first brought it up, everybody started freaking out on me. Ray Danniels says, 'No, no, no, I read the contract.' I then told them there might have been a side deal somewhere. It ended up going nowhere."

The gentleman's agreement might have come to light had the group upheld a request Austin made of them. He set up a meeting with Ray Danniels and the band to propose an option with them. If Van Halen could get the new album mixed, and the masters sent to Warner Bros. by late November, he would orchestrate a massive marketing campaign behind the record, guaranteeing huge sales over the holidays.

"Mo came to the studio shortly after he called me," announced Sammy, "to listen to the record. He sat in a room with Ray, Eddie, Alex and myself and said, 'If you guys would do me a favor, can we get this record out by November?' He was looking straight at me when he said that. We said, 'Wow, that's pretty quick, but yeah, it's possible.' He said, 'If you can get this record out this year before I quit, I promise you I'll make this the biggest record that you've ever had. I will almost guarantee you an extra million records sold.' Now Mo wanted our record out during his last quarter because he got a percentage. We knew that, but at the same time, he was giving us an opportunity of a lifetime." With

all the upheaval going on at Warner Bros. over Austin's forced departure, artists like Eric Clapton, Madonna and R.E.M threatened to leave the label. If Van Halen followed through on the outgoing president's proposal, they'd more than likely be free to go. Their contract they'd been given, their contract would be fulfilled, and they were free to go. In light of the chaos erupting throughout the entire Warner Bros. organization, finding a new home for the band seemed an attractive option, especially with Hollywood Records. The \$50 million deal was still on the table. Sammy was excited by Austin's proposal the deal that had been offered. He even spent two weeks at the Canyon Ranch health resort in Tucson, Arizona, on a rigorous outdoor fitness program, to get in shape for the upcoming video shoot, "Don't Tell Me (What Love Can Do)."

"I thought we should get off Warner Bros.," said Hagar candidly, "because of all the changes they were going through. We always had a bad relationship with them to the point Ed Leffler thought it was time to move on. When Ray Danniels first came on board, we told him about the deal Ed had been working with Hollywood Records. We were going to start off with them as one big family. They were going to indemnify us for any lawsuits if there were any. With the Balance album coming out, our contract with Warner was finished. All we had to do now was put the record out and everyone would have a Merry Christmas."

Hagar's plan for a happy holiday would never materialize. Ray Danniels thwarted the hopes of the outgoing Warner Bros. president by telling him it was impossible for Van Halen to have the record ready for a December release. The manager, he later learned, was more interested in currying favor with the new regime than doing what was in the best interest of Van Halen. In the coming year, Sammy would discover that under Danniels' principle style of management, two things were important to him. One was to nullify his leadership role in the band, and two, squeeze the profit centers in Van Halen today, not tomorrow. The Red Rucker may have survived the seven deadly sins of Ray and his disciples, but that round was nothing compared to the transgressions he would be crucified for the following year.

on to chapter 20

Part 1

Chapter Twenty
Rise of the Animal

The man that hath no music in himself, Nor is not mov'd with concord of sweet sounds, Is fit for treasons, strategem, and spoils; The motions of his spirit are dull as night, and his affection dark as Erebus: Let no such man be trusted.

The Merchant of Venice

Life in Van Halen the past year had turned Sammy Hagar's world upside down. The theatrics being acted out against him never seemed to end. As the Red Rucker survived one foreboding Shakespearean scene after another, it became increasingly clear who the author of this production was Ray Danniels. The manager's ongoing farce, written around the singer's character, would have made the 16th century dramatist proud. The subtle twists and turns, Danniels weaved throughout his plots, were constantly keeping Hagar

on edge. Though the final script had yet to be written, the pre-production leading up to this tragic ending was already in the works. When it came time to unveil the intricate grand finale, the manager wanted to make sure his players were well rehearsed. Lies, betrayal, mistrust and greed were factors that would play critical roles in the systematic destruction of one of the greatest songwriting partnerships in rock and roll history. In order for Danniels to soften up Hagar's control over the band, he had to have the full cooperation of Eddie Van Halen. Without the guitarist in his corner, any future plans he had for Van Halen were useless. The family ties with older brother Alex were strong, but Eddie was a different matter entirely.

Reserved and shy, the guitarist only cared about making music. He could care less about the business aspects of his profession. After all, that's why they hired a manager. Danniels understood the importance of establishing a solid bond with Al's younger sibling, if any of his objectives were to be met.

The release date for "Balance" had been pushed back to the second week of February. With that discovery, Hagar may have thought his two week fitness regimen at Canyon Ranch a waste of time. He would soon learn to the contrary, it wasn't.

The athletic singer was going to need his mind and body finely tuned for the trials he was about to face the coming year. Though he never suspected it, the hourglass of time had been turned over on his days remaining with the group. As the sands slowly trickled away, the seeds of dissension were being sown to supplant him as Van Halen's lead singer.

While a storm was brewing in Ray Danniels' Toronto offices, a different type of weather system was battering the Monterey Peninsula. At the start of the new year, Betsy had leased a ranch house for herself and Andrew on the outskirts of Carmel.

She had moved out of the home on Spindrift, because it held too many sad memories for her.

The two acre property she was going to buy, near the banks of the Carmel River, served a dual purpose. It was close enough to town for her youngest son to go to school and have a social life, but far enough removed from the population center to provide her with the isolation she craved. It was also just fifteen minutes from Aaron's home. On Jan. 10, a terrible Pacific Coast storm descended on the region, pelting the area with torrential rains. Within hours of the deluge, the river had swollen its banks.

"Somebody came through our neighborhood earlier that evening," disclosed Betsy, "and said it would be a good idea to evacuate. I told them I wasn't leaving. When I agreed to purchase the home, the realtor told me the ranch was situated on a 100-year flood plain, but had this huge berm built all around the property. The area had never flooded before, which is why I didn't leave when the first warnings were issued. Around midnight, a man that was helping me remodel the house came over and said the river was flooding. Before we could get out, water started rising on the property, because a section of the berm had broken. The two of us carried as much furniture to the second level as possible before the downstairs flooded. In no time, there was four feet of water in the house. When I looked outside from the second floor, it looked like we were on an island surrounded by the sea. I called Sam from Andrew's bedroom in the middle of the night to let him know what

was happening. I told him a workman was with us, and that the authorities were aware of our situation. About four o'clock in the morning, search and rescue came and got us. I put my cat in a pillow case and handed her out the window. Andrew crawled out of his window and was lifted down to the waiting boat. This flood was a terrible, horrible thing. I had originally leased the house with the intention of purchasing it after my divorce became final. After the flood, I got out of the deal because the berm wasn't built on the property. It needed to be rebuilt, so if I bought the ranch, I wouldn't even own the land the structure sat on. I talked the problem over with my realtor. She told me that I was not legally bound to purchase the property, so I didn't go through with the deal. The lady who owned the place tried to sue me for breaking the contract, but withdrew her case the day it was going to trial.

Here comes a pair of strange beasts, Which in all tongues are called fools.

As You Like It

Warner Bros. decided to release the new Van Halen record in Europe before its scheduled U.S. debut. Label executives then asked the band to do a short promotional tour overseas the last two weeks of January. During rehearsals for the junket at the 5150 studio, Hagar found himself embroiled in a nasty confrontation. The showdown pitted the Van Halen brothers against Sammy, and would signify the beginning of the end for the group as he knew it. The skirmish had been carefully orchestrated by their esteemed manager. "We were working on the set list," noted Hagar, "for some of the mini-concerts we'd perform as part of the promotional campaign. During one of our rehearsals, Michael Karlin, the band's accountant, and Gary Stamler, Van Halen's attorney, showed up unannounced. It was odd to see those two together. When they walked over and said they needed to see me, I knew something was up. As I followed them into a room, Eddie, Mike and Alex were already in there. Ray Danniels was conspicuously absent. I sat down, and Gary Stamler cut right to the chase. He said, "Sam, we have this problem. We want to talk to you about this publishing deal Ed Leffler made a few years ago." I looked at him and said, "What are you talking about? What publishing deal?" I glanced over at Eddie and Al when Gary said that, and they looked at each other like this was the first time they were hearing anything about this. I knew better than that. As I watched them sit there semi-calm, I thought, "There's some shit getting ready to come down here. Something strange is going on. They're trying to trick me." Stamler proceeded to tell Hagar, that right before the "For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge" album came out in 1991, Ed Leffler had gone to the band's music publishers, Warner/Chappell, and negotiated a new deal. The new contract called for Van Halen to receive a \$4.5 million publishing advance per studio album. In order to close the lucrative deal, Leffler had put the entire Van Halen catalog up as collateral including the first six albums with David Lee Roth. According to Michael Karlin's figures, the "For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge" album had recouped most of the advance, about \$3.5 million. "OU812" had brought in \$700,000; "5150" around \$50,000; and the old Van Halen catalog with Roth, \$300,000. "Ray Danniels," charged Hagar, "had stumbled upon the deal when he was going over the various contracts Leffler had put together before he died. He thought he'd found some hidden financial chicanery on Ed's part, and informed the brothers. Because I was so close to Ed Leffler, Ray told the brothers I knew about this publishing agreement. No one in the band had any idea this had taken place, least of all, myself. I swear to God on that. Only

Leffler and our accountant knew anything about this publishing deal. Gary asked me what I knew about it, and I said, "Wow, I had no idea." Alex said, "Sam, you never knew?" I said, "You fucking A I never knew about this. I'd never wanted to take money that wasn't mine." First off, it wasn't that much money. I had made millions of dollars for this band. I didn't need to cheat anyone out of \$300,000." The startling news reminded Sammy of a conversation he had with Ed Leffler, two years earlier, right after the "Live: Right Here, Right Now" album was released. He was supposed to get a separate \$80,000 publishing check from Van Halen for two of his songs on the two-disc set, "Give to Live" and "One Way to Rock." Over the years, Van Halen often performed the tunes live, with Hagar's "One Way to Rock" becoming somewhat of an adoptive signature piece for the group. When a separate check for his songs never arrived at Nine Music, the publishing company he created for his music, Sammy started making some inquiries to its whereabouts. The answer the singer finally received stunned him. The monies had been deposited directly into Van Halen's bank account instead of delivered to him, per Ed Leffler's instructions. "I was puzzled by this odd transaction and went to Ed for an explanation," he responded. "Leffler told me, 'Sam, don't worry about it. You are in good shape. This band has been good for you. You shouldn't worry about that money. It has all been accounted for on a Van Halen record, so don't worry about it.'" I looked at him and said, "Bullshit, Ed. What do you mean I shouldn't worry about it?" He told me not to make any waves, because it wouldn't be worth it. Leffler had been running my business affairs for 17 years, so I trusted him completely. Besides, the sum wasn't worth arguing about, so I forgot about it and let the matter go completely. After the meeting with Karlin and Stamler was over, Sammy went into another room with the brothers. The timing of this impromptu conference left Hagar with the distinct impression it had all been prearranged to see if he knew anything about Ed Leffler's wheeling and dealing. By gauging his reaction, or possibly a confession, Danniels could validate his claims that the two had lined their pockets at the brothers' expense. The Van Halen's had known about the publishing deal for several weeks, but never breathed a word of it until the new record was in Warner Bros. hands. They were afraid the singer would stop working on the album, if his honesty was called into question. Their assumptions, The Red Rocker says, were correct. "Everything was happening so fast," gasped Hagar, "that when they asked me what I intended to do about the situation, I just said, 'I think I should pay you guys back. This is really weird that happened.'" Eddie and Al were being very cautious with me. Ray had told them about this deal a long time ago. Instead of confronting me themselves, these chickenshits had Michael Karlin and Gary do it. The "Live" album was still out there selling, so I said, "Why don't I give you the publishing for 'One Way to Rock' and 'Give to Live' since I get money for that, and you don't share in it. I'll give you that money until the \$300,000 is paid back." They said, "Sure, okay." Eddie and Al reassured me that what I wanted to do was cool and they dropped the matter for the time being, that is. Michael Karlin never said a word about this deal, because he would have been fired by Ed Leffler, or in this case, Ray Danniels, for volunteering the information. Don't get me wrong, Michael is a good guy. He does his job exactly as it's prescribed and won't divulge a thing beyond that. He will put all the financial information you're entitled to know in a statement. You have to figure out what's going on from there. If you have a specific question, he'll answer it; but he won't go any further. Honestly, I didn't want to go into my pocketbook and pay those fuckers. I didn't want to hand them my

cash and say, "Sorry, here's \$300,000. Ed's mistake. He's dead and gone, I know he's sorry. Here's the money." Leffler wasn't around to defend himself, and I felt it was grossly unfair that I was now being held accountable for his actions." According to Hagar, there was no way Ed Leffler could be condemned for the publishing deal he made. The manager wasn't a greedy man, but he was always trying to get Van Halen the biggest advances he could from every source available. He had already engineered record high rates from Warner Bros. for points, royalties and album advances. Leffler even revived a revolutionary idea for concert touring that Led Zeppelin's Peter Grant pioneered in the '70s the 90/10 split. Instead of asking for the large guarantee he knew the group could easily command, Leffler instructed the band's agent, Barbara Skydel, that Van Halen could be booked for \$25,000 down, provided the promoter agree to a 90/10 split after expenses. Regardless of how many tickets were sold, this deal removed any fear on the promoter's part they would lose money booking the band. Since their cut of the profits was directly linked to paid attendance figures, Leffler correctly surmised that promoter's would work hard to sell the shows out. Everyone would make money, and both sides would walk away happy. The last frontier for Leffler to exploit was the band's publishing deal. With several Top Ten singles and two straight No. 1 albums to their credit, the manager had considerable clout going for him when he approached Van Halen's publishers. Leffler was absolutely convinced that Eddie Van Halen and Sammy Hagar were the greatest songwriting team on earth, and the new album about to be released would prove it. His confidence was amply rewarded by the multimillion dollar agreement he orchestrated with Warner/Chappell. When a music publisher agrees to an advance, they are giving the band a giant up front loan for a percentage of their business. Once the company recoups its money, the publishing company will make anywhere from 15 to 50 percent of the group's overall publishing from that point forward. The fee could almost be considered an interest payment, since the advance is a gamble on the company's part that they fully expect to cover. If they don't, they lose out completely. Van Halen's previous track record especially Hagar's platinum streak with Geffen justified a multimillion dollar leap of faith on Warner/Chappell's part. However, to hedge their bets against the huge risk they were taking with Leffler, the publishing company would only agree to the manager's terms if he put up Van Halen's entire catalog, from 1977 to the present, as collateral. From the outside looking in, the publishing deal Leffler struck made it somewhat appear that he and Hagar were profiting from Van Halen's past. Hagar vehemently denies that was ever the case. For some reason, he says, Ed Leffler was obsessed with generating a lot of upfront money for Van Halen through advances. To a large extent, he had succeeded beyond anyone's wildest imagination. During his tenure as manager, Leffler's deals earned the Van Halen brothers more money than they ever dreamed possible. Since he obviously wasn't around to explain his reasoning behind the Warner/Chappell deal, the episode became Ray Danniels platform to put credibility behind the accusations he was leveling against Hagar and Leffler. The charges had no merit, but Danniels bold move had successfully instilled strong doubts with the brothers about the honesty of their former manager and current singer.

O! beware, my lord, of jealousy; It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock;
The meat it feeds on.
Othello

Alex Van Halen would not let the publishing issue go away. The perceived deception Danniels had fostered inside him continued to fester away. In the general scope of things, Hagar says, the amount of money in dispute was peanuts compared to the revenue flow the band generated from other sources. On top of that, Sammy's \$80,000 publishing check from the "Live" album had already been deposited into the Van Halen's Yessup publishing account. Technically, the brothers had profited from his past as well. However, since Hagar brought Ed Leffler on board as manager, his argument fell on deaf ears. The brothers were convinced they'd been swindled. As far as the Red Rocker was concerned, trying to reason with the pair, especially Al, was like talking to a rock. "Their state of mind," inferred the singer, "that Ed Leffler and Sammy Hagar had conspired to cheat them was a sad indication of the damage Ray Danniels was doing to the band. The first thing he did when he became manager was tell Eddie and Al about the publishing deal. This controversy started the bad blood in this band that never ended. If they thought they were doing me a favor by agreeing to take my money from the "Live" album until the debt was satisfied, they were wrong. The more I thought about it, the further convinced I became that I was the one getting screwed. When a riled up Alex demanded several days after our first meeting, that I pay the money back immediately, any semblance of trust between us was destroyed forever. He cornered me and said, "Sammy, you stole \$300,000. You and Ed Leffler knew about it the whole time." I told him he was crazy, and we almost got into a fight right there. I said, "You calling me a liar Alex? I'm looking you right in the fucking eye, and telling you that I didn't know about it."

Ray Danniels was in the room when this confrontation took place. Alex said, "Gary Stamler said you told him you knew all about this." That did it. I said, "Let's get Gary in this room right now and confront him." Suddenly, Ray jumps into the conversation and says, "No, no, no, we don't have to do that. We don't have to do that. You guys are crazy. Let it go!" You know why Ray said that? The lying piece of shit had told the brothers that Gary Stamler told him that I knew about Leffler's publishing deal. I made both brothers look me in the eye and tell me that they believed I didn't have anything to do with it. I said, "I'm not leaving this room, and I'm going to get Gary on the phone unless you motherfuckers sit and tell me that you believe me." Ray cooled Eddie and Al out real fast. Michael Anthony later told me Eddie was up in arms with Ray Danniels about this. He said, "Ray, if Sam didn't know anything about this deal, why did you tell us that he did in the first place? "He told them that if I had called Gary, all kinds of trouble would have been stirred up." Over the years, Sammy had found it impossible to deal with the Van Halen brothers once they collectively set their minds on something. Alex was obnoxiously stubborn over this affair with the publishing, says Hagar, because he was in financial trouble. Eddie's personality, however, was more fragile. He says that if the guitarist had talked to him about the Leffler deal, they could have worked it out. "If Eddie would have had the guts to talk to me alone in a room about what happened," he surmised, "we could have hashed this thing out heart to heart, soul to soul and the issue would have easily been resolved. Together, Ed and Al are impossible to deal with. Alex is as hardheaded as they come and as adamant a fool you'll ever meet. This guy had no qualms about cursing you under his breath, while he looked you in the eye and said he believed every word you were telling him. Al went about his business like nothing ever happened, but you always knew that in the back of his mind, he was holding a grudge against you."

Every man has a fault, and honesty is his; We have seen better days.

Timon of Athens

Hagar's chief complaint against his accuser was simple. Alex Van Halen didn't contribute anything to the band's bottom line. Sammy not only generated half the band's, he was also responsible for half the income the drummer enjoyed. Brother Al shared equally in all the monies brought in, but did little or nothing to earn it. The fact he had no problems stripping Michael Anthony of his earning percentages in Van Halen irked him even more. As he continued to rant about his debt, the Red Rucker says it took sheer will power on his part to keep a level head and not put the drummer in his place. "Alex Van Halen never wrote one thing in this band," argued Hagar. "In my head, I'm going, "Al, you've made millions of dollars off me. Why the fuck are you getting uptight about this? Why do I have to share publishing with you in the first place. Let's blow off the \$300,000 and go forward. We're all in this together anyway." When he wanted the fucking money now, I was pissed. When I joined Van Halen, I used to joke that I'd taken a pay cut. Well, that was the truth. Leffler and I had made more money on our own, than these guys ever thought about making. I'd been getting screwed by these guys from day one, because I co-wrote every song with Eddie and shared monies with everybody. At the same time, I unknowingly took the money, so yeah, I was guilty. For some reason, these guys became extremely bitter, and Alex made this money a real issue. Of course, they had a bad guy there in Ray to fuel these conspiracy theories, which were total bullshit!" Hagar says he was particularly miffed by the drummer's rude and abrupt behavior toward him. Ever since Ray Danniels came into the picture, their relationship had been going downhill. Sammy had heard rumors that Eddie's brother was in trouble with the IRS and owed them hundreds of thousands of dollars in back taxes. He says he doesn't know whether or not that was the reason Al was so anxious to get his hands on the \$300,000, but something was egging him on. The one thing he knew for certain was this. The brothers became increasingly hostile toward him whenever the subject of the publishing deal came up. Alex's bitterness continued to grow toward his fellow musician until it became an issue he couldn't ignore. "You know," argued Hagar, "I don't think Al ever knew just how bad his financial troubles were. This is where he's not a man. He just overlooked it. There was never any compromise on his part about the publishing situation. Alex doesn't write any of the songs, and that was a sore issue with him. Since he's Eddie's big brother, he shares 100 percent in everything we brought in, as if he deserved it which he doesn't. Alex didn't want to do one thing that would ever change that. He wanted to make sure that all these little publishing issues weren't brought up. All he wanted to do was say, "You stole the money!" Alex wanted to make THAT the issue, so he wouldn't have to answer any questions about what he did to deserve any of the publishing income. I got so damn mad, I finally confronted Ray, I confronted Eddie, and said, "Wait a minute. When we get a \$4 million advance for writing songs, why does Alex get a million? Tell me why . . . he doesn't write the songs! When we get a publishing check for \$7-8 million for all these wonderful songs that Eddie and I write, why does Alex get \$2 million? Those questions caused a lot of tension and arguments in the band. "This guy was more interested in protecting his publishing money," declared the Red Rucker, "than he was in paying the mortgage on his home. Finally, I had enough of Al's' whining. For years, he had made millions of dollars off the songs Eddie and I wrote. If he was going to be an

asshole about \$300,000, I wanted an explanation as to how, exactly, he had been cheated. Alex and Eddie had no problem taking Michael Anthony's money from him. He and Eddie got away with it by making Mike feel guilty for taking a free ride in the band. Alex had been equally as guilty, but since his last name was Van Halen, it didn't count. Mikey wouldn't go against the brothers. He did not feel man enough to stand on his own two feet and say, "I'm worthy." For some reason, he didn't think his contributions were credible. I thought they were, but he didn't."

You are not worth the dust which the rude wind, Blows in your face.

King Lear

The publishing issue was the opening Ray Danniels had been waiting for to solidify his relationship with Eddie. His behind-the-scene maneuvering enabled him to strengthen his overall alliance with the brothers. Danniels had deftly managed to cast doubts on, the all future words spoken by Hagar to the brothers. "After Alex blew up," confessed Sammy, "I called Michael Karlin to find out exactly how much Leffler and I owed. When he called me back with the figure, I contacted my accountant and told him to bring me a check for the specified amount. I paid Eddie and Alex both Leffler's and my share of the money that Warner/Chappell had received. They didn't bring the incident up again, but I would never forgive them for the way they slammed the good name of Ed Leffler. I should have left Van Halen then, but I was committed to the upcoming tour. I also held out some hope that I could reason with Eddie about what was going on before it was too late." The European promotion went off without a hitch. On Jan. 17, Van Halen debuted "Balance" over 240 stations throughout the U.S. on the "Westwood One" radio network from Air Studios in London. During their promotional stint overseas, Van Halen played two unannounced live shows at the Luxor Theater in Arnhem, Holland, and the Factory in Milan, Italy. The band also appeared on the "Headbanger's Ball" program for "EuroMTV". When Warner Bros. released the group's album in this country, it promptly debuted at No. 1, selling 295,000 copies the first week. That remarkable milestone of four straight number one records tied the consecutive streak mark of the great Led Zeppelin. The joys surrounding this truly extraordinary achievement would be short-lived for Hagar. A painful episode had befallen Betsy, only this time it would have profound repercussions on Sammy. His best friend, Bucky Berardi, had been found dead. In his pocket was a \$40,000 settlement check from the city for his 17-year old son's death. Found at his side was a wadded up legal document from the city that he had to sign, absolving the municipality from further damages. "When they found my brother," said Betsy sadly, "he had that check in his pocket from the city. I think that's what did him in. He couldn't deal with the fact that he was getting money for Benny's death. Bucky was real sensitive, and when his son died, it just crushed him. His second wife, Penny, called and told me Buck had been found in a storage locker they rented in the harbor. Apparently, he died of a heart attack. I called Sam up and told him about Bucky's death. I started crying and he said, "You know Betsy, he's in a better place. Don't be upset, because he's in a better place." After Benny Berardi died that tragic summer day in 1990, Hagar had asked his lawyer, Ben Winslow, to intervene on Bucky's behalf. He wanted to know if there was anything he could do about getting some type of financial settlement from either the truck driver's insurance carrier, or the city itself. Sammy knew his friend didn't care about any money, but for his own good, he hired his lawyer to look into the

situation. Betsy's brother had met Penny at the time of his son's accident. She was the mother of the teenage girl Benny was dating at the time. Their mutual anguish over the unfortunate incident brought them together, and they eventually married. The couple had been living in a boat house with her children from a previous marriage. That evening, after Buck received the check in the mail from the city, he went on a drinking binge with some characters Penny wasn't very fond of. "Bucky had married a really nice chick," added Hagar. "She was very down to earth, and they got along real well. Penny called me right after I had talked with Betsy. She said, "Sammy, Bucky is dead, but he didn't commit suicide." I told her, okay. Then she says, "He didn't come home last night. He called me about two o'clock in the morning, and was hanging around some really bad people that I don't like. I told him not to do that. He had already gotten into a fight with someone earlier. He called to say he wasn't coming home, and that he was down at the docks in Sausalito. I stayed up all night waiting for him. Around five o'clock, I went looking for him. Buck was over at my storage locker. I found him laying on the ground dead. That's the way it happened.

There is nothing good or bad, but thinking makes it so, We know what we are, but know not what we may be, When sorrows come, they come not in single spies;

But in battalions.

Hamlet

Hagar says his close friend had never been the same since the death of his son. Now he had joined him. During the funeral services, Aaron, Betsy and her mother sat in the front pew. Sammy sat alone in the back. After the assembled mourners had paid their respects and left, Betsy went to the back row to sit beside her ex-husband. He began to weep as she put her arm's around him. Bucky Berardi was buried on a beautiful hillside location between Mill Valley and San Francisco. It was a cemetery Hagar didn't even know existed in the area. Penny had mentioned to her sister-in-law that this site was the place Buck always wanted to be buried whenever he died. Betsy granted his final wish and also bought a plot for Penny right beside her brother. After the services were completed, Sammy lingered behind to be alone with his friend. Standing beside the grave, he cried some more. In a cruel twist of irony, the middle-class Berardi family he grew to know and love so well, had seen its fortunes ravaged by death. Chester, Benny and Bucky were gone. The poor upstart Hagar's, save their father, were alive and prospering. The unaccountable forces of nature had literally reversed the roles of Sammy and his best friend as adults. Bucky had lived the very life Sammy had escaped from, and now, at age 49, had paid the ultimate price for it. "I was sorry to hear Buck had died," said David Lauser. "I knew him very well. He was a down-to-earth, sweetheart type of guy. But man, let me tell you, what a hardass. He wasn't afraid to fight anybody. Bucky was a tough guy, but he wasn't mean. I remember he had a half-brother, Tom Sprouse, and a couple of occasions when Sam and I were playing at the YMCA, those two would get into an argument and punch each other out. They were crazy and would fight each other at the drop of a hat. Bucky had fists twice as big as my hand. He was about 5-10 and built like a rock. There were times we played at the Nightclub when the Hell's Angels, or some really tough looking people came in, and they'd start hassling us. Buck would jump up and knock out the people who were accosting Sam with one punch. Believe me, he was one tough dude and was always watching Sam's back. "The thing about Bucky,

besides being a great mechanic, was the fact he was a deep thinking cat. Now you would consider most mechanics to be sort of bone head guys, when it comes to every day life. Not Bucky. When he spoke to you, he was very wise and reflective. I guess his dad Chester was like that, a salt-of-the-earth type of person. The Berardi's were a family of hard working, blue collar mentality type of people. Buck rebuilt my first Volkswagen engine, and he took me under his wing. I really dug the guy. He was sweet and always had something interesting to say. I remember when he lost his son in that car accident. Buck constructed a cross with the words Ben Berardi on it. He went to Highway 1, over the Marin County headlands where the accident occurred, and stopped traffic on this two lane highway. He then proceeded to paint his son's name on the spot where he died. People were bonking their horns, and he would walk up to them and say, "You'll have to wait a minute. My son died here, and I want to finish this." The horns stopped after that. It just shows you what kind of a guy he really was. Bucky Berardi was a very soulful guy with a big heart. What happened to him, and his son, just wasn't fair. With that sorrow behind him, Hagar had to prepare for the world tour in which Van Halen was about to embark. The "Balance" road show was scheduled to kick off March 11, in Pensacola, Florida. The day before the show, Alex Van Halen fainted in the hotel lobby. We thought we were going to have to cancel the opening show," interjected Sammy, "and possibly postpone the whole tour. The busted vertebrae in his neck had flared up, causing partial paralysis. Alex had absolutely no feeling in his hands when we rushed him to the hospital. The doctors were able to fix the problem so he could play, but Alex had to wear a neck brace all the time. That's why you always saw him with it on during our concerts. This injury Al suffered from, was the result of a traffic accident he had a few years back, when he rolled his car. The crash had left him with three ruptured vertebrae that he never had repaired. It never affected his playing, and as long as his head was kept straight, he had no problems performing. During the tour, we had chiropractors, masseuses, and even acupuncturists flown in and out, to work on him every day."

O God, that men should put an enemy in their mouths; To stem away their brains! That we should with joy, pleasance, revel and applause; Transform ourselves into beasts.

Othello

Early in the tour, Hagar caught Ray Danniels talking to Eddie and Alex in confidence. Michael Anthony later told him the manager had gone to the brothers to report he had found an interesting clause in Van Halen's contract they were entitled to release a greatest hits package. Sammy says he started laughing when Anthony relayed the conversation to him. Ed Leffler had waged wars with Warner Bros. for years to keep them from exercising that option. Danniels' revelation was nothing short of comical. "Michael told me that Ray asked the brothers why they never considered the subject," reported Hagar. "Eddie said, "Hey man, why do we want a greatest hits record? Every album we have done has been number one. We're still a big band, and we're not falling off. You can buy any Van Halen record you want. Every one is on CD. Any fan that wants to, can go buy a record. It's not like they're out of print. Besides, we don't write hits; we write albums!" Ray said, "Well, I think that we can help the old catalog along and muster up sales for it, if we do this." After Mike told me what Ray had said to Eddie and Al, I knew exactly what he was up to. Since he had been given a piece of the old catalog, he was figuring out ways to boost its sales to make some money. Ray had hammered the

brothers and told them that Leffler was stealing which is why Ed didn't mind just taking 15 percent. Danniels said he had to have more of a percentage, because he wasn't going to steal and all this other horseshit. He didn't discover a damn thing in our contract. A greatest hits clause is a standard provision written into band contracts on every label. When the contract is up, like ours was, the company usually has the rights to two greatest hits records. Not everyone releases them because it's not worthy of them. Ray didn't discover shit. They band knew about the greatest hits and had been fighting it Ed Leffler, Alex, Eddie and myself because we didn't want one. It was a joke for him to claim he had discovered, in our contract, that Van Halen was entitled to release a greatest hits record. Who did he think he was, Inspector Clouseau? Ray Danniels was hard-pressed to find ways to improve the financial outlook of Van Halen with the group's contract up for renegotiation. The manager discovered there was no he could improve on the state-of-the-art deals Ed Leffler had made with Warner Bros. on points, royalties and album advances. Even the publishing arrangement with Warner/Chappell that the brothers had maliciously engaged Hagar about, was kept intact. The only thing Danniels did was separate the old Van Halen catalog from the agreement. There were only two points in the band's contract he could exploit. One area covered the greatest hits. The other involved the royalty rate of the six Roth albums he was now getting a percentage of. Danniels wanted to raise it to the same level the Van Hagar albums were making. "Ed Leffler," complimented Hagar, "had purposely kept the advance figure for a Van Halen's greatest hits package to a low figure of \$350,000. By doing that, the label would be in no real hurry to pursue that area of our contract. The classic record company take on a greatest hits record is this. First of all, every recording contract a band signs gives their label the option to release a greatest hits package at their discretion. Usually, the clause says the company has the right to release an album of the band's hits at the end of their contract. If the artist has a successful career, the greatest hits provision is rolled over to the new contract you sign. Most record companies don't want to release a package in the middle of a band's career, unless they think the group is on a downward spiral. If a label senses that a group has reached its creative peak, and is on a decline or, the fans are losing interest in their new music, they'll quickly release a greatest hits album to capitalize on the band's popularity. Also, if a group is going to switch labels after fulfilling their contract, a record company will release a greatest hits record immediately. They hope to cash in on the band before they have a chance to release a new album elsewhere. There are a number of excuses label executives can come up with, says Hagar, to put out a greatest hits package. That's why Leffler was always on the defensive with Warner Bros. The manager was always aware of the label's intentions, and made sure all incentives for a greatest hits record were removed from Van Halen's contract. He even added language that said, in the event Van Halen left the company for another record label, Warner Bros. could not release a greatest hits record for two years from the official date of the band's departure. In the event Van Halen moved on, Leffler wanted to make sure Sammy and Eddie had a healthy head start to write and record a new album, before their old label could bombard the market with greatest hits material. The only thing Ray Danniels really uncovered in Van Halen's contract with Warner, was Ed Leffler's shrewd negotiation skills. The deceased manager had carefully constructed the wording in the greatest hits clause to give his band every financial and political advantage necessary, in case they opted not to renew another deal with the label. "Balance" was the last studio

album on the current contract. Although Warner was still going through a lot of internal dissension, Hagar says he didn't see any problems signing another deal with them, provided the same provisions were rolled over from their old contract. Once the singer figured out Danniels' real intention was to exploit the greatest hits stipulation in their contract, he went on the defensive. Van Halen was still in its creative prime. They had released four straight No. 1 albums and were one of the biggest rock and roll bands in the world. Rehashing the past, especially when it was only being done for money, was the last thing he thought the band should ever do. However, with Ray Danniels running the show, the Red Rocker was starting to be wrong about a lot of things. During the tour," entertained Hagar, "Ray was kissing my ass so much, I actually thought that he was going to be okay. I should have known better. Ray Danniels is very clever and smart. In a lot of ways he's very stupid, but in the same token, he's methodical and reserved. He would never just jump up and start talking to you. You ask Ray a question, he'll stop and think, then give you the answer that's good for him. In that sense he's smart and evil. After Ray was officially recognized as our manager, the chemistry between Eddie and me really changed. Over the years, I had been able to handle Eddie's delicate and gentle nature without any problems. Ed Leffler knew how to stabilize his emotions as well, and whenever it appeared our nerves were becoming strained from working together, he was there to smooth things out. With Ray Danniels as manager, our unusual alliance completely unraveled. Throughout the "Balance" tour, signs of tension between us erupted periodically." Despite the chaos erupting around me, tried my best to keep things together."

To be or not to be: that is the question. Whether tis nobler in the mind to suffer; The shags and arrows of outrageous fortune, or take arms against a seer of troubles.

Hamlet

Part 2

One enjoyable moment for Hagar was the news his greatest hits collection, "Unboxed," had gone gold. It was the fifth consecutive time Geffen had hit paydirt with the singer. When Van Halen brought its live act to Houston, Sammy and Kari felt like celebrating. The show's promoter, Pace Concerts, had been involved with Hagar and Van Halen for years. Subsequently, company president Louis Messina had become a very good friend, and was instrumental in breaking the Red Rocker as a solo artist in Texas. When the couple arrived in town, Messina promptly invited them to join him and his wife for dinner. "We had a great time that night," Hagar laughed. "Louis and I talked about what an asshole Ray was, and how much he had fucked the band. He told me things about him I didn't even know had gone down like special deals with promoters. Louis explained the whole scenario that night, and I'm going, "You're shitting me!" He told me Ray would offer him shows for \$350,000 dollars, then give them to somebody else for \$100,000. That was his move. I know that for a fact, because I checked it out through our booking agent, Barbara Skydel. For instance, when we played New Orleans, Ray wanted to charge Pace \$250,000 for the show. Louis said he couldn't pay that much, because it was a small building and he'd lose his ass even if it sold out. Ray then turned around and gave it to Don Fox at Beaver for \$60,000. "Let me tell you, Ray Danniels was out to screw Louis, and all the old Leffler guys, no matter what. He stuck them up to where their payout on a

sell-out was \$3,000 and we'd make \$300,000. Then he'd take his old friends, who had never worked with Leffler because he hated them, and give Van Halen to them for nothing. We'd make our percentage, but the guarantee was shit. In other words, if the show doesn't do so good, don't worry; you won't lose anything. Ray would screw anybody, even his friends, but he gave them better deals than he did Louis." Unable to make any improvements on Van Halen's record contract, Daniels exploited the only other lucrative area of the band's revenue stream touring. He kept Leffler's deal of a 90/10 split with promoters after expenses, but he increased the guarantee ten-fold from what it used to be. Instead of booking Van Halen for \$25,000, promoters often had to pay upwards of a quarter of a quarter of a million to land a date with the group. "Let me tell you," pointed out Sammy, "Ray upped the fuck out of the guarantees to guys like Louis Messina and others Leffler had worked with over the years. A lot of those shows didn't sell out completely. Not only did the promoters not get their ten percent, they lost money as well. When these guys got screwed, Ray would not give them any money back. He blamed them for the loss and moved on. Hell, he even said Louis was one of the worst promoters in America. That was an amazing statement considering our biggest shows were the one's he promoted. The biggest bombs we had were the Don Fox shows. Leffler and I never worked with him once, but when Ray came in, he did a lot of our shows." After dinner, Hagar suggested the party walk back from the restaurant instead of taking the limo. They were about a mile away from the hotel. As they made their way back, the group made a side detour that yielded some startling surprises. "When we finished our meal," continued Hagar, "we were a little tipsy, so I thought we should walk the shit off. It was about 10:30 at night when we left the restaurant. As we were strolling toward the hotel, we walked in front of this house with a big neon hand in the window that said fortune teller, palmist reader. I looked at everyone and said, "Let's go in." Louis' wife goes, "Oh, I've been to this lady. She's good." I looked at her and went, "You're saying this is good? Come on man, this is a joke!" Judging from my own experience, this place was like a commercial to me, you know, psychic hotline stuff. Anyway, we all walked into a real strange scene. There were about ten kids inside and a bunch of Middle Eastern men, sitting around smoking cigarettes and drinking coffee under a low ceiling. We're standing in the living room of this house, and they go to get her. This woman comes out and puts on a special kind of costume. She's real shifty-eyed with cigarette burns all over her fucking arm like she'd been tortured. I'm serious, man. Louis's wife goes in first. She comes out and says, "Whoa, that was good." Louis goes in and comes out going, "Wow, man; blew my mind." Kari goes in and comes out saying, "I don't know; I couldn't relate to the lady. She was trying to trip me out." Then it was my turn. I walked in, and the lady goes, "Do you want to do tarot cards, or do you want me to do a psychic reading with a crystal ball?" I asked her which she preferred, and she told me the cards. Tarot readings are only effective if the person translating the message really knows what the cards are saying. Robert Dudas, he says, was an expert at reading the cards he laid out. After spending countless hours with the Czech immigrant over the years, Hagar was confident he could spot a phony. To his surprise, the woman before him displayed a remarkable talent for rendering an accurate clarification of what the cards predicted lay in store for Sammy's future. "I had been with psychics before," countered Hagar, "so I knew their routine. This lady put the cards down and her interpretation was quite good. I could tell she knew tarot. She shuffles the cards after her first reading, and starts laying

them down one at a time. Suddenly the lady stops and says, “You must be very careful.” She put down the next card and said, “Oh, my! The people that you work with; those people don’t like you. They will do anything to hurt you. “I swear to God this woman said this to me. No names were ever mentioned, but she goes on to say, “You have to be so be careful. The people you are working with right now in your life, for some reason, they want to destroy you; they want to crush you. You have to watch your back at all times. These people hate you, despise you and are conspiring against you. They are putting anything together to hurt you. They just don’t want to get rid of you, they want to control you; they want to hurt you.” God’s truth man that’s exactly what this woman told me. I thanked her and left. When I told Louis what she’d said, he started going off. He says, “Them motherfuckers, that fucking Ray!” Now this woman had also told him that he and his wife were going to get a divorce. I remember Louis saying “Yeah, she didn’t have much good to say about my wife. I’m fucked.” They separated, but I don’t know if they got a divorce. It was amazing though, how this lady went off about the danger I was in. She told me these people were treacherous and how much they disliked me. She didn’t know why they were against me, but insisted they really had it in for me and there was a conspiracy going on. It was an unreal experience. I mean, who’s going to take stock value of any woman who lives in a house with a neon hand on her living room window advertising palmistry and psychic readings? But I’m telling you man, what that lady said was definitely happening to me. Three weeks after Hagar’s career problems were revealed to him in tarot cards, another incident took place in Louisville, Kentucky. It too would also have far reaching implications on the band’s future. Before the “Balance” tour started, a representative from the American Harvest foundation contacted Danniels to see if Van Halen would be interested in sponsoring food drives at their shows around the country. The band agreed to get behind the charity and encouraged fans to bring canned goods and non-perishable items to their shows. The national headquarters for American Harvest was located in Louisville. The head of the organization, Stan, was a major golf nut like Eddie,” vouched Hagar. “On our day off, he invited him out for a round of golf. Later that afternoon, Kari and I were riding back to the hotel on our tandem bike, when I spotted Eddie getting out of the limousine. He was dragging his right leg behind him, like some Frankenstein monster. I asked him what in the hell happened, and he said, “Man, my leg is killing me.” We took him to the hospital to see what the problem was. The doctors told Eddie he had a degenerative bone in his hip and needed surgery to replace it. From that day forward, he walked around with a cane and during shows, sat down on stage a lot. He couldn’t do any meet and greets if there were stairs he had to negotiate. His hip hurt so bad, he couldn’t walk up or down the steps. Around this time, we were scheduled to go overseas and open several dates with Bon Jovi. I told Ray we shouldn’t do it with Eddie limping around, even though we would lose quite a bit of money if we canceled. Ray Danniels put Eddie on painkillers, so he could function on stage and keep the European dates. Despite the growing differences between the singer and guitarist, one thing neither could deny was their gift to create music. Eddie always seemed to come up with the right music for the lyrics Sammy brought him, or vice versa. “Balance “had been a painful album for Hagar to write. It dealt with the emotional conflicts caused by his separation and divorce from Betsy. The words that came pouring out of him, he says, had a more grown up feel to them. Gone were the angst-ridden teenage messages that had dominated his style of writing for years.

After two decades of writing songs about sex, drugs and rock and roll, that part of life no longer interested him. The painful end of his 23-year union had a lot to do with the internal changes he made. "There's no doubt the break-up of my marriage had a great affect on me," imparted Hagar, "when I wrote "Balance. "Can't Stop Loving You," is Betsy's perspective about the divorce. That song is basically her saying, "I still love you, and I want to put this marriage back together again." She keeps coming back to me saying can't stop loving you no matter what. That's all she wants to keep on loving me but it's not going to happen on my part. I sang that song totally honest and soulful. I believe 'Can't Stop,' represented the integrity and truthfulness of the entire record.

I am alone the villain of the earth, And I feel I am so most.

Antony & Cleopatra

Midway through the arena tour, Sammy discovered Ray Danniels trying to pull a fast one on Van Halen fans. He had authorized promoters to extend the range of premium priced tickets to encompass nearly the entire arena floor. In the past couple of years, promoters invented an area called the Golden Circle to capitalize on the growing influence of ticket scalpers, who often charged double and triple the face value for tickets close to the stage. They reasoned that fans willing to pay ticket broker's aggressively higher prices for their favorite bands, would tolerate a two-tier price structure when tickets went on sale. The best seats in the house were marked \$10-15 higher than seats in the rest of the arena. The Golden Circle usually involved the first 20 rows in front of the main stage. It sometimes extended to lower balcony seats right next to the stage as well. Hagar caught wind of the manager's deception to include practically the entire floor, and confronted him about it. "Ray had extended the Golden Circle by another 1,000 seats," exclaimed the singer, "all the way back to the sound booth. Hell, I can't even see myself back there. I chewed his ass out, when I found out what he'd been doing. I said, "You're charging people in the back \$45 for the same seat the guy in the front row has! That's bullshit Ray. Don't be fucking the fans over. Roll back the ticket price now!" I busted him on it big time. It was a very cheesy move he pulled just to make more money. He was trying to bring in another \$100,000 on top of the \$150 to 175,000 we were guaranteed every night. Since Van Halen was one of the few bands that could guarantee a sell-out in every town they played, Ray tried to increase our percentages above the guarantee. He didn't care about cheating the fans. When I told the band what he was doing, we all made him stop the bullshit." After the band's last arena date in Sacramento on May 15, they took a few days off before flying to Paris to begin a six-week run of European festival dates. Van Halen was going to assume an unfamiliar role on their second jaunt in two years through the continent opening for Bon Jovi. In an amazing reversal of fortune, the New Jersey-based outfit's popularity had soared overseas, while its support in the United States had dropped considerably. Bon Jovi had recently released a greatest hits album in Europe, and had asked Ray Danniels if Van Halen would be interested in being their support act. A tour over there had previously been discussed, and this offer gave the band the opportunity to cross the Atlantic and perform without the pressures of selling tickets. Van Halen would be playing before more people every night than they could ever possibly draw on their own. Besides that, they wouldn't have the added expense of dragging their stage equipment from country to country. Touring Europe as a second bill act was an eye-opening event for the band;

Eddie's sore hip and Al's injured neck notwithstanding. Danniels committed the band to 21 festival dates. The cool reception Van Halen received from the capacity crowds of 60 to 70,000 people on a nightly basis jolted them. It nearly mimicked their headlining romp in 1993 when the dumbfounded band realized they weren't the rock gods in this part of the world they thought they were. "In most of the festivals we played," sighed Hagar, "while I was singing, I'd see makeshift signs that read "Jon," or "We Love Bon Jovi." It was actually kind of cute to see these young girls holding signs up, but Eddie couldn't handle it. He was freaking, because he wasn't a guitar hero to any of these kids. Not once during the entire time we toured over there, did the crowd ever chant, "Eddie, Eddie, Eddie." After some songs, I tried to get the crowd fired up by yelling Eddie's name over the loud speakers. Every time it was met with dead silence. By the end of the tour, he was so bummed out, he even cut his guitar solo down to one minute. Whoever heard of Eddie Van Halen playing a one minute guitar solo? They did in Europe. It got so bad for him over there, sometimes he didn't even solo during a show. Man, I'm telling you, there were no drum or bass solos, or acoustic versions of 'Give to Live' and 'Eagles Fly.' This tour had to be one of the most depressing times on the road I ever witnessed with Van Halen. In probably half the shows we played, we got no encores. This band was absolutely nothing over there. There would be occasions where we had our little contingent of 10,000 fans jumping up and down yelling "Yeah, Van Halen!"

But you know what when this scene is happening in a stadium with 70,000 people, it's embarrassing. I'd be standing on the stage looking at this ocean of people not responding to our music thinking, "Sorry, I thought maybe you would like this." It was totally fucked for us. We'd play the last song of our set, say thank you and that was it. Ray Danniels said we were big over there. Screw him! Sometimes we even went back on stage for an encore when the crowd didn't want one. We just said, "To hell with it. Let's go back and do another one. "Van Halen wasn't getting called back for any encores until we finally wised up and made 'Jump' the last song of the set. That would get people going, and we'd come back for another song. Even then, it didn't always work. Bon Jovi sold out Wembley Stadium three consecutive nights toward the end of the tour. We ended each performance with 'Jump,' and nobody cared. Each night over 70,000 people had paid money to see Bon Jovi, and Bon Jovi only. I was amazed that nobody gave a damn about Van Halen. Believe me, this band was totally humbled by the experience. The last festival date for Van Halen was June 28, at Sheffield, England. Afterwards, the unconquering heroes boarded a plane for the welcomed journey back home. The long flight back gave Hagar plenty of time to think about the problems the group was facing. The lukewarm response they had received the past few weeks convinced him it was time to take the band's music in a new direction. Eddie Van Halen had so many musical dimensions in his arsenal, Sammy says he had to figure out a way to tap into it. The band was going to have to pump up the volume, but not necessarily Van Halen style. He thought a different drum beat, like the one heard in dance music, would change the tempo and give Eddie a chance to be creative with the various sounds he loved to tinker with. If Van Halen ever wanted to be a truly global band, it was crucial to win over European audiences. This last foray overseas was a qualified disaster. Throughout its 18-year history, Van Halen had continuously neglected the multi-national continent in favor of the more lucrative American market. Now it was paying the price for that arrogance. Something had to be done to change Europe's perception of the band, or Hagar's ultimate

dream of making Van Halen the preeminent rock and roll band in the world would be dashed forever.

What men dare do! What men may do! What men daily do; not knowing what they do.

Much Ado About Nothing

The second American leg of the “Balance” tour was set for mid-July. Sammy, Alex and Michael Anthony spent the two-week break enjoying their family and friends. Eddie however, was going through his own private hell with Valerie back in Los Angeles. Her representatives had recently been contacted by the supermarket tabloid, “The Globe.” They wanted to get a reaction from the actress concerning a story they were going to press with detailing Eddie Van Halen’s torrid two-year affair with 33-year old Andi Remington. The magazine spoke with Bertinelli’s publicist, Heidi Schaeffer, who told the scandal sheet the couple’s marriage was now solid. She said Eddie’s fling came while he was in the middle of a boozy haze. Schaeffer also said Eddie’s drinking didn’t excuse his actions, but it did explain why the affair happened. The publicist further asserted to the “Globe” that the guitarist hardly remembered Remington, nor any of the specifics that went down between the two. When the issue hit the newsstands on July 15, the green-eyed blonde jogged Eddie’s memory with vivid accounts of their sexual exploits both on the road and in Valerie’s bed. The story was accompanied by a picture of a nude Eddie with a guitar around his neck and an “MTV Video” award in his hand. When the article broke, the embarrassed paramour was in Holmdel, New Jersey, playing the first of two sold-out shows at the Garden State Arts Center. “Yes sir!” bellowed Hagar, “when that story broke, it was a bombshell. I had never seen that woman on tour with us, because Eddie didn’t bring girls on the road. I knew Eddie had some problems, but we kept them quiet. I don’t know what went down between him and Valerie when that story came out, because I wasn’t hanging around him then. Besides, it’s not my place to talk about Eddie’s extracurricular activity. There’s a certain bond you have with your friends, and I’m not into taking cheap shots at him. I still think of Eddie as a friend even though he might not consider me one. I’ll tell you this right now; Eddie did not bring women to our shows. If he had chicks, they weren’t at the gigs. I was the only one stupid enough to drag them along.” When the dust finally settled over the embarrassing revelations of Eddie’s extramarital affair, Van Halen went about the task of playing music. As they continued to do blockbuster business around the country, Hagar says he began feeling more and more isolated from the brothers. Whispers of a greatest hits album continued to surface from time to time, and Danniels influence continued to grow. It was slowly dawning on the singer how much damage the manager had actually done to the internal structure of the band. For months, Ray had successfully fueled the brothers’ ever-increasing insecurities about their singer. After a few months under the manager’s reign, Sammy says he finally asked himself if the ongoing battles with Danniels were actually worth it. As the question became more of a philosophical debate rather than a judgement call, the singer decided providence had already dictated the outcome, so why not just let it be. “When Ray came into this band,” observed Hagar, “I started feeling like I was really bucking the fates. I kept thinking, “Why am I fighting this, if these guys are so adamant about it? Why does everyone else want this but me?”

Why battle on and be miserable? You know, be Zen, go with the flow and be happy. "Listen, I knew Ray was an evil piece of shit, and he pissed me off most of the time. After all hell broke loose about the money and the publishing deal, I just flat out didn't trust him. For months, I had been trying to hold on to Ed Leffler's values; hold on to the way things were and protect those people I cared about. Believe me, I loved this band, but it always seemed like I was fighting, fighting, fighting. For a long time, I was like the stiff birch tree in the wind, instead of the willow. One day it just dawned on me that my negative attitude was getting me nowhere. I started going, "You know, it just doesn't matter. What if all this falls apart, and I am right, and they're wrong? What if I am wrong, and they are right? What if the tour bombs, the record bombs, what if I leave? What if I get kicked out? What if Eddie dies?" "I finally realized that challenging the inevitable was a waste of time. About four months into the tour I just went, "I'm just making myself unhappy arguing with Ed and Al all the time. You know what fuck it. It just doesn't matter anymore. I'm ready to let it go. I quit!" "That's when I relinquished control of the band. The in-fighting was ruining my life. Instead of going out on stage every night pissed off at Eddie, I decided to project love and a positive attitude. I went on a mission to pour my heart out to the crowd. Once I did that, an amazing thing happened I saw the light. Up until Ed Leffler died, I was in control of Van Halen. I called the shots, and we did things I thought were right for the band. Now make no mistake, Leffler wouldn't back me if he thought I was wrong. Whenever he sided with the brothers, that was the end of the discussion. It wasn't always me verses them, because most of the time we got along great. Eddie was no leader, and neither was Alex. With Ray Danniels in the picture, I was in for the fight of my life.

Lord, what fools these mortals be.
A Midsummers Nights Dreams

Hagar says the manager was so intent on solidifying his relationship with the brothers, sometimes he put his own health at risk. The Van Halen's were notorious smokers and had a separate limo take them to shows apart from Hagar and Michael Anthony. Ray Danniels suffered from severe asthma. Hagar says that over fifty percent of the time on tour, the manager was huddled with the brothers in their limousine discussing future plans with them like a greatest hits record. Strong whispers that Danniels was making a deal with Warner Bros. had raised his concern that the project might become a reality. With certain odd situations now taking place at soundcheck, the singer started to realize what the manager was up to, during those excursions back to the hotel, after the shows. Sometimes, if the drive was quite long, the manager would have the Van Halen's limo pull over so he could ride in the trailing car with Sammy, Kari and Michael Anthony. The musicians would watch in amusement as Danniels, gasping for air, jumped out of Eddie and Al's smoke-infested car. He'd take his inhaler and quickly squirt the contents into his aching lungs. When he came back to the waiting limo complaining about all the cigarettes he'd been exposed to, the prior would just shake their heads and ask him why he exposed himself to such hazardous conditions in the first place. The manager would artfully dodge the question. One particular point of contention that bothered the Van Halen's was the Cabo Wabo down in Mexico. Since they had divested their interests in the property, reports were coming back to the brothers about how well the club was doing. Alex, in particular, thought Hagar had sandbagged the cantina's problems so he

could gain complete control of it. Whenever the bar's success was mentioned, Sammy says Eddie and Al had to bite down on their tongues real hard and swallow their pride. They had absolutely no one but themselves to blame for their decision to absolve themselves of the nightspot. Also, nothing was ever mentioned about their part in forcing Michael Anthony out of the venture as well. Needless to say, the song the club was named for off "OU812", rarely made it on the band's nightly set list. Ray told me the Cabo Wabo was a real sore subject with Ed and Al," offered Sammy. "People were going down there for vacation and coming back to the brothers saying, "Wow, I went to your club; it's great. The place was packed and there was a long line of people out front to get in." Al would tell them, "Well, I don't own the club. Alex started claiming that I had fucked him and his brother by letting the club run down, then acting like I didn't give a damn about the place. Once I gained control, the club mysteriously started making money. Let me tell you something right now. I gave those two every opportunity to stay in the Cabo Wabo. I had to sign away my life practically to get their interest in the place. The club was making money, because I got a real partner who cared about the bar. Marco spent nearly a half million dollars of his own money fixing up the place and paying off all the debt. Second, I went down to Cabo as often as I could, and worked my ass off to support it. When the Van Halen express pulled into Danniels's hometown of Toronto, for two sold-out shows at the Molson Amphitheater August 18-19, a decision was made to film the shows for a later pay-per-view special in December. Hagar says the band's two performances were the best of the tour. "I told Ray I thought a pay-per-view was a brilliant idea. I said, "Ray, this is great, but let's make it cheap. There's no way we can pull this off for \$39.95. Make it less than ten dollars so kids can con their parents into seeing it. They will tell mom and dad that since they're too little to ever see Van Halen, this is the only way they can do it." I figured that if we made this pay-per-view inexpensive for parents, they would let their children see the telecast. Ray thought the lower price was a good move as well, so he made arrangements to sell the show for \$9.95 when it aired. It was my idea, but I'll give Ray some credit here. He bit on the suggestion and made it happen. Another interesting recommendation also came to light during the Toronto concerts. Though he didn't know it at the time, this particular conversation would have a profound affect on the Red Rocker's future. Sammy heard Danniels say the band had been asked to do a song for a soundtrack Warner Bros. was producing, for a big-budget film being released next year. When Hagar asked Ray to be more specific, the manager told him that Van Halen had been invited to contribute music to a movie called "Twister. Sammy was mildly shocked when he heard the news. He had been aware of the movie for months. John Kalodner had called him at home before the "Balance" tour started, and said his new employer, Sony, was working on a soundtrack project. If Hagar was interested, he could contribute a song to the album they were producing. Over the years, Sammy had received several offers to appear on motion picture soundtracks. The most recent invitation came in 1993 for the "Mrs. Doubtfire" movie starring Robin Williams. The producers wanted to use "Amnesty is Granted" for the closing credits if Hagar would sing the song. He had to decline because of the potential problems it would cause with the band. After the brouhaha with Eddie and Al over Leffler's publishing deal however, the Red Rocker says his loyalty to Van Halen changed. Motion picture soundtracks were now an option he was willing to explore. Kalodner had switched labels since the release of Hagar's greatest hits package the year before. When Geffen decided

their future was strictly in alternative music, they eased the veteran out of the company, as they purged all their hard rock acts. Kalodner had been hired by Sony to watch over their multimillion dollar investment in Aerosmith, who was now officially on board. The executive had been instrumental in reviving the band's career in 1985, and had a long standing relationship with them. The group was about to record their first Sony disc, and the company wanted Kalodner around to babysit them, among other things. "When we spoke at the first of the year," clarified the singer, "John said, "Sammy, I think Columbia is going to do the soundtrack for this Steven Spielberg movie. The film is only in the script stage right now, but it's going to be big. It's a \$75 million dollar production called "Twister." Would you like to do a song for it?" I asked him when it was coming out, and he said in about 18 months. I told him I'd love to do it. By that time, I figured I'd have something straightened out with the band, regarding my freedom to do outside projects. Around that time, a good friend from my Capitol days who was now working at Fox, Jeff Bywater, also called me at home. He was in charge of putting the soundtrack together for a movie called "Independence Day" that the company's film division was producing. While Ray was managing Van Halen, Jeff brought a lot projects to the table and asked me what I thought about them. I told him to run them all by our manager, because it would be better if Van Halen did it instead of myself. Nothing ever happened on his end. When we were in Toronto, Ray was showing Alex and Eddie an outline of the movie script Warner Bros. had sent him. They wanted the band to do a couple of songs. Ray's an ass-kisser, and that's the only reason he was interested in "Twister". He talked to me about it, and I said, "What a trip! John Kalodner told me about the film months ago. He said it's going to be a huge movie. His instincts are good; we should check it out." I was all for doing the deal, but I'm sure my announcement messed with Ray's head a little bit. He thought he was plugged in to everything. I called Kalodner in September and said, "You're not going to believe this, but now they want Van Halen to do "Twister." John told me there were two soundtrack projects in 1996 that we should consider, "Twister" and "Independence Day. "He thought both of them were winners. John then asked if I still wanted to contribute a song to "Twister." Although Sony had lost the soundtrack to Warner Bros., he still had his connection with the executive producer of the project. I said, "No, since Van Halen is in the running, I'm going to have to bow out. I would never do anything to undercut these guys.

I hate ingratitude more in man,
Than lying, vainness, babbling drunkenness,
Or any taint of vice whose strong corruption;
Inhabits our first blood;

Twelfth Night

As the "Balance" bandwagon headed into the fall, Van Halen was on course to perform more dates during one single tour, than they'd ever done in their entire career. The wear and tear on the musicians was starting to show. Alex still wore the neck brace to protect his fragile neck. Eddie was limping around with a cane and taking painkillers for his aching leg. His battle to control his liquor intake was also unsuccessful, according to Hagar. For maybe half the tour, the guitarist imbibed heavily, despite his constant denials that drinking was a thing of the past for him. Unfortunately, after years of sobriety, brother Al also began to partake in alcoholic beverages. He was separated from his wife and, despite his attempts at reconciliation, his marriage was falling apart. The marital discord was devastating him, and periodic doses of booze were his way of coping with

the grief. "Listen," Sammy chided, "Eddie really became a horrible person when he tried to quit drinking. Throughout the tour, he was constantly battling his addiction. Every time Eddie got drunk, he ended up hating himself. The guy was one miserable bastard to be around, because the more he drank, the worse his guilty conscious got to him. Often after shows, Ed would walk straight off the stage into a waiting limousine. He wouldn't change his clothes, shower or even eat any food. For some reason, all the cat wanted to do was head back to his hotel room and be by himself. Eddie did drugs too, but I'm not going to sit here and make him out to be a drug addict. Within a year or two after I joined the band, he started cleaning that up a lot. He just became a closet user, like myself. I don't smoke dope religiously, but I do light up three or four times a year. I'll do cocaine three or four times a year as well. I'm not saying Eddie was that sparse with it, but his main problem was alcohol. When he would drink, his emotions would swing wildly. He would cry and almost have breakdowns. I don't want to say he necessarily had them, but you would certainly assume that it was going to happen if he didn't get his shit together. He had extremely bad mood swings and used to get in a lot of trouble, as we well know, with chicks and all that other shit. In a year of surprises on a professional front, Hagar received some startling personal news as well. His constant companion of nearly four years, Kari, was pregnant. Taking the news in stride, Sammy asked her to marry him after the "Balance" tour ended in November. The overwhelmed Texas beauty said yes. Hagar insists the pregnancy wasn't a mistake; they were just planning on having a child much later. That revelation was tempered by another more portentous display of disrespect the Red Rocker began noticing at the scattered soundchecks he attended before shows. "I'd walk on stage," he announced, "and Eddie would start playing the riff for 'Hot for Teacher.'" This started happening quite a bit the last few weeks of the tour. For some stupid reason, he started playing riffs from songs we never played in concert, like 'Beautiful Girls.' I guarantee you that Ray Danniels had been talking to the brothers about what songs should be on the greatest hits album. On past tours, Eddie had never played any of the old shit at soundcheck. When he started hitting the chords to these songs, I would be thinking, "What the fuck is this? Is Eddie just trying to piss me off, or is he making a hint that I should be singing these songs? Why is he playing them?" Of course Al would kick in and play for a few seconds while some of the roadies would be yelling, "Yeah!" "Believe me, the whole situation was weird. Now, if I would have gone up there and started playing 'Three Lock Box,' fucking Eddie would have freaked out. The brothers would start playing those old songs and I'd just say, "Okay, check, check, check. You've got it. Everything's cool, bye." I'd walk off the stage, not because I was being a prick, hell, I didn't know the lyrics to those songs.

What! Wouldst though have a serpent sting thee twice?

Merchant of Venice

One of Hagar's major concerns about Ray Danniels' presence in the band came to pass around this time. "MTV" refused to play the video "Amsterdam," despite the fact Sammy had rewritten the lyrics and the band spent nearly \$500,000 filming it. The music channel's refusal to play the clip shocked the band. "Don't Tell Me (What Love Can Do)," was the first video "MTV" played to start the new year. Van Halen had even performed on the network's Spring Break concert special in March. Their absolute refusal to air the expensive video, says Hagar, spoke volumes about their manager's clout. "The first time we presented the video to them," groaned Sammy, "they said

change the lyrics. So, and I'm sorry to say this, I rewrote the lyrics, and we reshot the video. We really thought that 'Amsterdam' was going to be a big, big hit for us. When we resubmitted the song to "MTV," their people said, "We don't want to see Van Halen sitting around on chairs singing ballads." They absolutely refused to play it on their network. That clip turned out to be the most expensive undertaking we ever did for any Van Halen song. Ray Danniels had absolutely no fucking juice with them, buddy, to get them to change their minds. Another problem the group faced was oversaturation of their top markets. Van Halen had been on the road so long, the band was revisiting areas they had performed during the first leg. Ray Danniels had devised a tour schedule to take advantage of both arenas and amphitheaters. For eight weeks, from March 11 thru May 15, Van Halen played strictly indoors. When they returned from their European excursion, the group resumed their tour outdoors for another solid two months. Hagar grew increasingly concerned that Van Halen was exposing themselves too much in these markets. "Every town that we had sold-out previously," lectured Sammy, "we were back in that area within three or four months. I'm going, "Whoa, whoa, whoa! What's going on here?" Ray would say, "Sam, we sold out there; we did great business." I told him that's where bands like Ted Nugent, J. Geils, Peter Frampton and other groups had gone wrong in the past. When they came through areas two, even three times, nobody wanted to see them because they already had. I told Ray he was crazy for booking this band like that. We argued and fought about it, and finally I put a stop to it. There's no telling how long he would have kept us on tour if I hadn't put my foot down. Ray didn't understand that our fans would travel long distances to see us in concert. I said, "Ray, do you know how far people drive for a Van Halen show, you fucking idiot? They drive 200, 300 miles. That's nothing to them." He would book us in an area we had played indoors, that had a shed fifty miles away. I was really fighting this thing, because I knew our audience better than he did. My concept was this. A true Van Halen fan would want to see us every night. I'd have to say to them, "Well, too fucking bad. Once you see us two or three times, you're not going to want to see us again. I'd rather you want to see us ten years from now, because you still don't have enough. "I didn't want to cheapen the Van Halen experience for people by overplaying a market. You know what I mean? Don't be a whore to your fans, because nobody likes one. You buy a whore, you screw her, then you want her to get the hell out. You certainly aren't going to marry the bitch. Ray Danniels was a whore and he was turning Van Halen into one.

What's the matter, you dissentious rogues, that, Rubbing the poor itch of your opinion;
Makes yourself scabs!

Coriolanus

Sammy may have given up his leadership role in the band, but that didn't keep him from voicing his opinions especially on stage. After the night's last encore song and people were heading toward the exits, Hagar would hang around the side stage for a few minutes, then grab a microphone and ask the fans to please be careful driving home. His deep concern for the audience was spurred by his rock anthem, "I Can't Drive 55." "The only irresponsible thing I ever did as a musician," concluded the Red Rocker, "was write 'I Can't Drive 55.' When that song became popular, I thought kids would just get high and go wild. It really bugged me. I could just see that song coming on the radio, and people start speeding down the road doing something reckless like kill somebody or

themselves. I've been in this business for a long time, and I always felt it was my duty to show some concern for the audience. Unlike a lot of musicians, I gladly accepted the responsibility that came with being a role model. My concerns over how people reacted to 'I Can't Drive 55' prompted me to warn fans not to act foolishly when they left the arena. If you look at tapes of my old "V.O.A." shows, you'll see me saying, "It's the end of the show, and you people are all fired up. You be careful driving home. I want to see you next time. "It just became one of those little things that I decided to address at our shows. I made my little announcement on every Van Halen tour, including "Balance". Hagar's routine was always the same after each nightly performance. The group would all hold hands and bow to the crowd. As everyone walked off, Sammy would linger behind until the excited crowd calmed down. He'd then grab a microphone and say his piece. Sometimes Michael Anthony would join him in urging the fans to be cautious on their way out. "You know," counseled Hagar, "you can't talk straight to a crowd when they're yelling and screaming for you. As soon as everyone ran off stage, and I heard the audience settle down, I would grab a mic and say what I had to say in the dark. I didn't ask for a spotlight, and kept my announcement was short and sweet. The whole band should have stood with me and done the same thing, but Eddie and Alex interpreted my actions as a way to upstage them. After ten years of doing this, suddenly they started to flip out over what I was doing. Al would say, "We're all leaving the stage at the same time from now on. Those are the rules around here. Fuck this shit, you standing back all the time. We do our bow and we all walk off together." I said, "Well, do we have to hold hands walking off too?"

Alex and I would go at it. I'd say, "Well, why don't you just stay out there for an extra fucking minute and let me do this. "He'd say, "We don't want to stand out there like your back-up guys. "I said, "What are you talking about? I think it's an important thing to say something to these people to calm them down before they jump into their automobiles and kill themselves. If you don't like me talking, then Eddie, you do it!

Talking to the crowd after the show was something, in my heart, I always felt good about doing.

It became one of my trademarks from a solo artist all the way through Van Halen. After the encores, I'd say, "A lot of you people are screwed up tonight, because you've been drinking. You've had a great time and are fired up. Please calm down when you get into your car and be careful driving home. We want everyone to be safe. We don't want anyone ever to be hurt after a Van Halen concert." I used to say that type of thing every single night. They tried to make me stop doing it, but didn't give a shit how they felt. I just started doing it when we bowed. With a mic in my hand, I'd say, "Be careful, drive safely. We want to see you next time. The Van Halen's unmovable concern for their fans notwithstanding, they cared even less about their public image. Hagar was particularly miffed at the thoughtless way Eddie Van Halen depicted his public persona. Though the guitarist had no obligation to assume any type of role model status, he felt the musician should be accountable for his actions on stage when it came to his relentless smoking. It was nothing for Eddie to go through a pack of cigarettes during a two hour show. "How many guitar players," challenged Hagar, "put their fucking cigarette in the head of a guitar nowadays, only because they saw Eddie do it? It's probably one of the reasons they started smoking in the first place, so they could look and play like Eddie Van Halen. I

always used to get on his ass about putting that cigarette in his guitar on the stage. I'd get in his face and say, "Look Eddie, just because you smoke, why do it in front of everybody? You've been trying to quit smoking your whole fucking life. Why do you want to stand up there with a cigarette, and let some young kid that idolizes you say, "Well, I've got to have a cigarette too!" In photo sessions, I used to grab cigarettes out of his hand and stomp them out. He used to always stand there with a beer in one hand and a cigarette in the other. I know it sounds like I'm burning on Eddie, but I'm not. His addictive personality caused him to do a lot of stupid shit. The whole band, says Hagar, was to blame for allowing Ray Danniels to keep them on the road for nearly nine months. When the Red Rocker discovered Van Halen was playing four shows around the Bay area the weekend of his birthday, another integrity issue was called into play. Hundreds of people, from around the country, had booked their vacations in Cabo San Lucas to celebrate Sammy's birthday bash at his club. There was absolutely no possible way he was not going to show up for the event despite the clause in his contract prohibiting the bar from interfering with band activities. Since Van Halen couldn't cancel their remaining dates before heading to Japan, Hagar hired a publicist to get the word out nationwide that his birthday celebration had been moved back three days. After three consecutive shows in Sacramento, San Jose, and Irvine, California, on October 16, Sammy and Michael Anthony flew directly to Cabo for his annual blowout. "My birthday happened to fall on Friday the 13th," he groaned, "and wouldn't you know it, I got sick that night when we played in Sacramento. I did the last two shows anyway and said, "Ray, hundreds of people go to my birthday bash every year. They plan their entire vacations around this one event. I am not going to let them down and not do the shows." That was the end of the discussion. The brothers shit when they found out I was going down there and reluctantly agreed to let Michael Anthony go with me. The shows were a success, and hundreds of people packed the club every night. Mike and I had a great time, but unfortunately, it would be the last appearance he ever made at my birthday party. I flew back to San Francisco on October 19, packed my things and took off for Japan the next day. It was an exhausting week for me, but there was absolutely no way I was going to let those people down and not play the Cabo Wabo.

All the world is a stage, And all the men and women merely players. They have their exits and entrances; and one man in his time plays many parts.

As You Like It

Japan had always been a stronghold for Van Halen, and the whole band was looking forward to the seven sold-out dates they were playing. Kari remained behind to make the final arrangements for the couple's November 29 wedding at Mt. Tamalpais, near Mill Valley. She would rendezvous with her future husband in Hawaii, along with the other wives, for the final two shows starting Nov. 4. Hagar's San Francisco flight arrived in Tokyo a few hours before everyone else, because they left from Los Angeles. His long flight across the Pacific had given him a considerable amount of time to rethink the group's musical future. Again, the band's subdued reception in Europe continued to haunt him. Van Halen needed to reinvent itself, period. Sammy was convinced a new wrinkle needed to be added to the mix. "If Van Halen wanted to be a truly celebrated band," he contended, "our music needed to be accepted worldwide. I can't tell you how much our dismal experience in Europe that summer affected me. It was the catalyst I

needed to formulate a new direction for our next record. Bon Jovi may have been touring on a greatest hits record, but they were huge in Europe, much bigger than we ever hoped to be. This band had never taken off there, because we never worked the continent like we should have. Eddie and I needed to write another album then extensively tour there afterwards. But, to appeal to a worldwide audience, I strongly believed we needed to somewhat change our music. With Eddie playing guitar, we'd always sound like Van Halen, so I wasn't going to concoct something for the band to do that would con the audience. Hagar wanted to travel the world with Eddie and Alex in hopes they would draw inspiration from the different types of music they were exposed to. He talked at length with Alex about changing in his drum beat in order to put a whole new spin on Eddie's music. "I wanted all of us to go to dance clubs worldwide," he declared. "I wanted to go to London, Paris, Rome, New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles to listen to the grooves coming out of the dance clubs there. Listen, I hate dance music, but I thought Alex would hear something in the grooves, then come up with a hip new beat for the next album. I wanted all of us to analyze the sound, turn it into a rock beat and make a couple of songs that were totally augmented versions of some twisted electronic dance music. I was positive that's where the future in rock was. Rock and roll music is old fashioned in a sense. I wanted to capture a feeling from Van Halen that no one had ever heard before. Eddie has so many musical dimensions to him that's what always separated him from the pack. His versatility is amazing. That's why everyone went wow, when he played keyboards on 'Jump.' That's why I wanted Alex to hear a beat instead of playing the same old thing he'd been doing from this band's beginning. When Peter Gabriel came out with 'Shock the Monkey,' that was a brand new beat. When the Police heard Bob Marley's reggae music, they incorporated that sound into their own music and rode it all the way to the top. I was hoping these guys would get inspired by my idea. Eddie was interested, but Al goes, "Ah man, it's all one, two, three, four." He just didn't get it. Van Halen was the hottest rock and roll band in the '80s. Hagar wanted them to be the coolest group of the '90s. In order to accomplish that, a musical spark was needed from an outside source that would enable them to explore that unknown territory. "Eddie and I were like Robert Plant and Jimmy Page," he said proudly. "We could take our songs, transcend the normal parameters of music, and go off in any direction we chose. This band would always be Van Halen, no matter what we did, because of Eddie's guitar playing. Now I'll admit this idea could have gone either way. It could have been great or really sucked. We could have tried it and said, "This ain't in our hearts. This is not Van Halen. "That would have been fine with me, because we tried. When the Beatles wrote "Sgt. Pepper's, "they took acid and changed their musical style completely. I was hoping that we could listen to music created under a different environment and draw something out of that. Van Halen had been a giant influence on every band that came up through the '80s. Now I wanted us to be defined by great rock and roll songs, not as an inspiration to other musicians and groups. Hagar began thinking about redefining Van Halen's sound as far back as the "Live:

Right Here, Right Now" tour. An experience at a Miami disco club opened the singer's eyes to a brand new world of sound he didn't know existed. The music was so powerful, he even suggested the band rent a house in the desert, overdose on mushrooms, and trip out for three or four days after the tour ended. He figured the experience would change everyone's lives, and they could go directly into the studio and make a record. Pete

Townshend, Eric Clapton and John Lennon had written some of their greatest songs when they were under the influence. Hagar says he doesn't endorse the unorthodox method to create music. He just thought it was an option worth exploring, since he felt the band's music was tired and needed to be reformulated. Ed Leffler's death quashed those ambitious plans. Instead, the songwriter would use his divorce as the vehicle to modify his lyrical approach to writing more grown-up songs. "Before we started writing the next record," pictured the Red Rocker, "I was hoping the brothers would understand my desire to shake things up musically. I was hoping Alex would hear something in the sound of dance music that I don't understand. I really tried to get him interested in the direction I was wanting to take. Imagine Eddie's playing guitar to this great new beat, and I'm singing lyrics that aren't corny. The position I was coming from was this. "Edward, you are one of the greatest rock and roll musicians ever from the beginning of time. I want to be that good of a lyricist. You and I together will write the greatest rock and roll songs ever. "I'm telling you, we would have accomplished something extraordinary. Believe it or not, U2 ended up doing the exact same thing I wanted to do on their 1997 album. If all this shit hadn't gone down between us, we would have beaten them to the punch. It really was unfortunate.

I have seen better faces in my time,
Than stands on any shoulder that I see;
Before me at this instant.

King Lear

After the hectic pace Hagar had put his body through the previous week, when he arrived in Tokyo, he was understandably suffering from jet lag. Unable to sleep, he went down to the hotel restaurant to eat. As the singer was being escorted to his table, he noticed a beautiful sanctuary outside the hotel eatery. Sammy asked the waiter about it, and he was told it was a sacred Japanese garden. It had 1100 year-old shrines in it, and only guests of the Ritz-Carlton and people who belonged to a specific religious community, could gain entrance. He walked through the garden after his meal and was enchanted by its beauty. The refuge had a very peaceful, soothing effect on him and, afterwards, he went back to his room and fell asleep. A few hours later, the phone woke him. The band had just arrived in the country, and Eddie wanted to check in to see how things were going. "During our conversation," Sammy stated, "Eddie mentioned the troubles he was having, adjusting to the time change. I told him about the garden downstairs, and how a walk through it had been very therapeutic for me. I suggested he take a stroll himself. Eddie said he might do that. We then started some heavy rapping, like we used to do when Ed Leffler was alive. I started telling him about the ideas I had for our next album. "Balance "had been the weakest of the four studio albums, even though there were some great songs on it like 'Seventh Seal,' 'Don't Tell Me,' 'Can't Stop Loving You' and 'Feelin'.' Bruce Fairbairn did a bad mix on that record, and Eddie's sound didn't have any balls to it. I told him we needed to be inspired again as a songwriting team. That's when I explained my idea to change the drum beat, and why we had to shake things up. I said, "Eddie, when we get back, you and I should try to write these kinds of songs. While I was trying to get my point across to Edward, all the sudden he says, "You know, I'm going to decide what I want to do at the first of the year, then I'll tell you. It will either include you or it won't, because there's a lot of options I got pissed off when he said that,

and quote unquote replied, “What the fuck are you trying to tell me? Who in the hell do you think you’re talking to?”

He kind of fumbles for words and goes, “Well, you know man.” Hell, I didn’t know what he was talking about. I said, “What do you mean options? What the are you actually trying to say?” He just says, “Well, there are options.” At this point, I was so damn mad, I yelled into the receiver, “Fine Eddie fucking go do your options, asshole. I don’t even know what the fuck you’re talking about. “At this point, I was furious, and slammed the phone down. I immediately left my room to take another stroll through the Oriental garden downstairs.”

A thoroughly angered Hagar left his room for a couple of hours to relax in the garden. While he was enjoying the sanctuary, he made a decision to concentrate only on the present, and forget about the future. The band was in Japan for ten day to do a job, and that’s the way he was going to approach things from that point on. When he returned to his room, the phone started ringing. “Right when I walked through the door,” he groaned, “the telephone rang. It was Eddie wanting to talk again. He said, “Oh man, hey, I want to do it! Hey, I’m sorry. The vibes are all fucked up between us. He asked me where I’d been, and I told him in the garden downstairs. Eddie goes, “Oh, you should have called me. I really wish you would have called me to go with you.” Just like that, he was a brand new guy. Eddie Van Halen’s remarks about “his options” continued to bother Hagar the two weeks the band was on the island nation. The guitarist tried to buddy up to him several times, but the damage had already been done.

Throughout the Japanese tour, he says, Eddie’s drinking was getting out of control. “That was another farce,” claimed Sammy. “Eddie never got sober to start with, okay! All that talk about him giving up alcohol on October 2, 1994, was bullshit. On the “Balance “tour, he tried to quit. He would stop, then start again, stop, then start. He would say, “Oh man, I’ve got the shakes; I’ve got to have a drink. I can’t play without it.” One of the roadies, or Scotty Ross, would then get him a drink. By the time we played Japan, Eddie was not sober. He was already back drinking strong and was so fucked up those last two shows in Tokyo, I don’t even know how he managed to play. He and Al would drink a case of Sharp’s or O’Douls every day, but big deal. It only helped disguise what was really going on. Kari met up with Sammy in Hawaii for Van Halen’s last two shows at the Neal Blaisdell Arena. It had become somewhat of a tradition for the band to end their tour in the tropical state. After the concerts, they would all spend some time unwinding before going their separate ways. “We all rented bungalows in Maui at the Kalanei Hotel,” conveyed Hagar. “Alex’s wife, Kelly, came over with their son, Eric, but she didn’t stay very long and left. I felt really bad for Al, because he was there by himself most the time. Valerie didn’t show up for our last show, because she was drinking Mai Tai’s on the beach. She also condemned me and Kari for drinking wine, in front of her husband on the plane flight to Hawaii, when he was trying to quit drinking. Well excuse me, but Eddie had not quit drinking, especially in Japan, so none of it really mattered. We all had some good times on the beach the two weeks we were there. In a strange sort of way , it seemed like our last hurrah together.

This book was never released fellas, so there was no title. Sam even went to court to prevent the writer that helped him write the book from releasing it. I'm guessing that he didn't want to air all this dirty laundry, especially since a reunion would still be possible. And as we all know, it was possible. These chapters leaked out to the net back in like 2000 I think, maybe later and I was really fascinated when I read it. Up until then I had a different vision of what all these guys were like in my mind. Reading this sort of changed that, but like I said, this is Sam's side of what went down.