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English 1301

January 30, 2017

Microphonic Adolescence

The feedback echoed from the monitors. I place my hand on the mesh screen; the mic isn't quite warmed up yet. Guitars, drums, and bass are all being tuned to precision. Thundering orders are sent by the shadowed figure behind the mix board: "Guitars stage left. Now the tom and high hat. Ok how 'bout some bass?" I tap on the mic and a silent hum is emitted, one that can only be felt by the hands clasped around it. That's when I hear, "OK, center mic let's get some levels!" An uneasiness grows in the pit of my belly as I check the mic over the speakers. "OK, sounds good on my end!" which really meant two minutes 'til show time fellas, which was just enough time for my band mates and I to rally around the drum set with our fists held out in front of us committing to a "Fucking Awesome Show." These were the moments I lived for when I was nineteen.

Touring with five ugly guys in a van packed with musical equipment, luggage, the smell of stale cigarettes, and piss almost made me forget about what had brought us all together in the first place. An appreciation for each other's talents is what made Terror Eyes so successful. Touring the West Coast all the way

up to Seattle twice, and playing countless shows in Austin and San Antonio wouldn't have been possible if Danny and Federico didn't play guitar, if Brandon didn't play bass, if Adrian never learned drums, and if I never picked up a microphone. So every time we would perform on one these stranger stages there was an unspoken bond between us that would have read: "Hey, without that instrument we all wouldn't be here."

White knuckled and red faced I'd scream into the microphone, swing my head around like an accelerating tetherball about to snap at the string. I'd leap from speaker to speaker, jump into unsuspecting crowds, and hang from rafters. Indiana Jones would've been impressed by the way I'd lasso the mic cable in the air. I held on to the warm cylindrical handle as if we were conjoined at birth; it electrified my entire body. I never had my own mic, so using the one provided wherever we played was always a gamble. I never knew if I was getting one that would shock my lips when I'd get too close, work only when it was pointed to high heaven, or worst of all, was covered in sweat and spit from the previous bands' lead singer. Nevertheless, for the next thirty minutes I was a part of a coalition between brothers all because of a microphone.

We found ourselves lost in historical cities. A gang of best friends just searching for adventure at every street corner. Walking down Sunset Boulevard, stumbling into weed and sex shops was just the introduction to endless stories we

would tell again when friends got together for drinks. We ran into freezing Seattle Lakes with only our boxers and came back out shaking, crotch in hand. “I am the cactus and the cactus survives!” are words chanted after a show in a bar on Sixth Street the same night we lost Kyle 'til four in the morning in Austin, Texas. I remember waking up somewhere in New Mexico at sunrise and watching the burnt orange rays of a waking sun blanket the desert landscape. That was the first time in my life when I felt that my love for singing gave me something worth hanging on to, something I wouldn't trade for world. Now, not all these stories contain the use of a microphone, but without the commitment to that instrument these memories would be lost to another David, in another dimension, outside the perimeters of space and time.

The microphone was always that silent listener who knew my angst and was empathetic toward it. It channeled painful subjects coded in song lyrics to an audience I'd never see again. The microphone is an instrument for communicating ideas, it is a pedestal for the stage-less leaders, activists, musicians, and artists. Never in my life had I ever come across something more intrinsically pure, more youthful, and less significant than that of a microphone on stage warming up for the next performance.