

Red Hot Chili Peppers - Anthony's Sex Files

"Kerrang!" (n°673 - Juin 1990) - Mick Wall

Who? Red Hot Chili Peppers ... Where? Los Angeles ... When? June 1990, in the first of a series of classic Kerrang! interviews, we rewind seven years to find the RHCP on the verge of conquering the world. Happily, singer Anthony Kiedis is already obsessed with shagging ...

Los Angeles, 1990, was the perfect time and place to meet the RHCP. They were the face of the future. That they choose to combine rock and funk was hardly original (Funkadelic, Taling Heads and others had already broken the trail). But the way in which the Chilis did it was. In an era of hair-leased, MTV motivated, money-worshipping mindlessness, the Chilis stood out like a beacon. When they came along, it suddenly seemed there might be more than just shite at the end of the tunnel. The Chilis refused to conform, and actually set themselves as hard against the grain as they could go.

Often, that would lead to trouble. But instead of derreting them, the Chili Peppers just seemed inspired by the blustering reactions their then only semi-famous presence could provoke. When they performed live on the Johantan Ross Show a few weeks before, Flea had dangled upside down from a rope throughout the entire performance and Anthony had startled Ross by bouncing over his desk and running amok amongst the audience. In person they were no less mood-enhancing. At the photo session which followed this interview Flea leapt from the third floor balcony and hung from it by his fingertips when suddenly decided "this is too boring, we need something else". Anthony had driven to me to the session in an old jalopy he'd had for years and which, he explained "doesn't work right unless I drive at top speed". You might say that he and his band approached life in the same way ...

When he appears in the doorway, I'm immediately struck by how small he is. Onstage with the RHCP, Anthony Kiedis looks like one of those classical Greek statues: large, musclebound, big willy dangling. But in person, the singer with the original hardcore, psychedelic sex funk from heaven looks much more manageable. Five feet eight, long straight teacolored hair, younger than 27 years. Dressed in shorts, T-shirt and sneakers. Still with the big muscular arms, tough. As for the willy? Well, he never showed it to me, which is a shame. If he had, I might have sued him and made some money out of it. He explains how a similar situation came about ...

"It was backstage after a show and I was changing, and there was a girl there. We were all joking together and when she left no one was under the impression that she was perturbed my nudity in the dressing room"

Within 24 hours, however, the girl a student at the George Mason University in Virginia, had sworn out a complaint and Kiedis was tried and convicted on misdemeanor charges of sexual battery and indecent exposure. He was fined \$1,000 on each count. He paid the fine for indecent exposure, but is appealing against the sexual battery charge. The girl claimed Kiedis had dangled his dick in her face. Had he?

"No" he says sharply "I'm not that type of person. I'm a very funloving, friendly person. The fact that I was found guilty of misdemeanors and given a nominal fine pretty much indicated to my attoney and to hers that it was a pile of shit"

Unlike the singing voice, which has rapped and yapped its way through four albums with the Chilis, the speaking voice is even tempered, almost monotonous, or would be if what he had to say wasn't so interesting. We meet on an atypical Los Angeles day. It's pissing with rain.

"I love the rain" Kiedis tells me "It's very important to LA. The air pollution es so deadly here that without rain we would die. So you know, we are very lucky to have rain today"

We disgress to discuss the environment. Kiedis says it needs all the help it can get. I don't argue. Then the conversation steers itself back to safer ground: more sex crimes. In March, performing during MTV's spring break party in Daytona Beach, Florida, bassist and along with Kiedis co founder of the Chilis Michael Flea Balzary and drummer Chad Smith, were arrested by beach rangers after they had leapt off stage to much commotion, and Flea allegedly threw a young woman over his shoulder while Smith spanked her.

Both face charges for batterty, with Flea facing additional charges of disorderly conduct and solicitation to commit an unnatural ans lascivious act, Kiedis remains tight-lipped on the subject. It's clear he thinks the whole thing has been blown out of all proportion. Maybe if it had been solely a Chilis gig instead of a variety show, the girls would have understood ...

"Most people who come to our shows understand that there's a humor element to what we do, and it's not necessarily intended to offend anyone" Kiedis says "The first amendemt on the American Constitution gives you the freedom of speech and the freedom, you know, to do what you will from the stage"

Tell that to the Governor of the State of Minnesota, who is trying to introduce an over 21 lw for all major league concerts in the state.

"That's a terrible concept" says Kiedis "I hope they fail miserably. Creativity has always been threatened by certain right wing factions of society. But they have never succeedes and I don't see why they should now"

Nevertheless, the last Chilis album Morthers Milk came complete with "Explicit Language"stickers plastered on its sleeve.

"That doesn't bother me" he says. "Our lyrics are very explicit, whether it's about sex or friendship, or love for life in general. If

they wanna inform the buying public that it's explicit, I have no problems"

However, when a certain large chain of American stores wanted to buy 50,000 copies of the album, they balked when they saw the sleeve, the naked upper torso of a young woman cradling the four miniature figures of the band in her arms. The band's record company, EMI, got around the problem by redesigning the sleeve to make the bodies bigger, in order to obscure more of Moher's 'breasts. Kiedis says he is comfortable with the decision and denies any implications of selling out.

"The art of the RHCP is first and foremost that of our music, and we never change our music as a compromise for anybody's desires or tastes. That we should have to enlarge ourselves on the record is not really a big deal. It's what people might not be able to see past the silly faces in their photos, the smutty T-shirts, the whole zany, crazy jive? That some people might not take the band seriously at all? But that's like people going to see Jimi Hendrix play and coming away with nothing more to say than Wow, that guy can play with his teeth!" he says "This is showbusiness and we are here to entertain. The visual side of it is there, but there's a lot more to it than that. People who are truly interested will find that out eventually"

On the other hand, of course, some people take the Chilis almost too seriously. To the point of actually wanting to be them. Faith No More's Mike Patton for instance. I ask Kiedis for his opinion on the matter: dis Patton rip you off hook, line and sinker, or what?

"Yeah" he says, no hesitation "My drummer says he's gonna kidnap him, shave his hair off and saw off one of his feet. Just so he'll be forced to find a style of his own. It used to bother me. I thought What a drag if people get the idea that I'm actually ripping him off! But after it stewed in my stomach for a while, I just decided to accept it. He is just a kid. Besides, without his left foot he's going to have to change .."

In America the Chilis have just received a Gold record for Mothers Milk. It is only now that they have started to make any serious inroads into the British or European markets. This month they return to the UK for a clutch of dates. How important is it for the band to be a success this side of Atlantic?

"Everywhere we go in the world, we play our hardest every night we play. That's basically what we have to offer Britain. It's nice to expose what you have to offer to the entire world"

Do the Chili Peppers actually like it in the UK?

"To be blatantly honest, England is not our favourite place to go. It is not because we are not as well-known as we are in America; it's the weather we don't like, and it's very far away, and the food is not very good. They tend to overcook the vegetables" He adopts a teasing, bitter English accent "Y'know, steak 'n'kidney pie is not really my favourite ... Sooner or later, though, it's inevitable that we will conquer England, as well as Scotland, Ireland and the rest of the world. It's very much like the long term process of making love to somebody. You start off with the foreplay, you kiss them and you suck their neck and you titillate their sensory areas with your fingertips, with the first couple of records. Maybe you start giving them head with the third record, then you finally slip it in the fourth. That's essentially what we have done with our career up to this point. Mothers Milk was incredibly well received in America. Basically, we're still involved in the foreplay section with the rest of the world, since they didn't get our first two records"

It all comes back to sex with Kiedis. Almost as soon as we met, he told me he was on a sex diet. And he had the love bites - one either side of the jugular- to prove it.

"I've got a new girlfriend. She's 18 and demands rigorous sexual activity several times a day"

Kiedis's sex diet consists of "no fattening foods, lots of protein and a lot of exercise before you eat. Basically you cannot afford to have an ounce of fat because a sexual diet is for performance. But it's also for aesthetics: she's a model and she's perfect in her physical structure"

So this is lurve, Anthony?

"Love is a word taken much too seriously sometimes" he says enigmatically "People are afraid to say they love somebody, but the fact is I do love her. I'm not gonna marry her and I'm not gonna dedicate my whole life to her, because I need to devote time to myself and my music. But she understands. I just broke up with the girl that I lived with for two years. To get out of the frying pan and go straight into the fire would be stupid right now. But I do love her. She's the biggest sexual genius I've encountered in the last 10 years .."

He strikes a post-coital pose and lights a cigarette. Excluding sex, smoking is his one remaining vice.

"My guitar player (John Frusciante) is such an avid smoker, and he really loves the quality it gives to my voice. The raspiness"

Once upon a time, of course, smoking a cigarette was the least of Kiedis' problems. Heroin abuse and alcoholism had both threatened to take him over for much of the band's seven year career. Then his guitarist, friend and co-conspirator in the twilight world of drug addiction, Hillel Slovak, died.

"Like me, Hillel had the disease of drug addiction" says Kiedis "He didn't die of an overdose. He died from having a disease. No one wanted to accept that this young man with so much to offer was just wiped out in second. But in a strange way, we found

strenght from that. It forced me to make a choice. I could either join Hillel or I could try and sinish my life. I've been completely off all alcohol and all drugs for 21 months now. I mean, completely. I don't drink or use anymore. But I don't do it by myself. Hillel tried to do it by himself and he died. I do ir with the help o other addicts that have cleaned up. That's the only way I know how to deal with it"

New Chilis single Taste the Pain, the third to be taken from the excellent Mothers Milk collection, is released by EMI to tie in with the UK shows. A new video, directed by Alex Winter-the weedy blond guy in Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure- has been shot and features, says Kiedis with obvious satisfaction "some very twisted images of pain and brutal reality"

When he's not devouring his new girlfriend, Kiedis says he likes to spend his spare time reading (Charles Bulowski is a big influence) and listening to music (Sex Packets by the Digital Underground is a current favourite). But mostly he has sex. While still discussing his sex diet and the excercise involved, I enquire how often Kiedis lifts weights?

"No, no weights" he says.

Where did you get those big arms from, then?

"Sex" he replies.

What does he do, carry them around over his head before he gets them into bed? At last he allows himself a small chuckle "The only exercise I ever get, unless I force myself to do push ups, is sex and onstage. onstage is the cardio-vascular scenario; you know, an hour and a half running around everynight. And sex. You'd be surprised. I mean, you are holding yourself up above a girl any lenght of time. You know, utilising your pelvis or whatever"

Outside, it stopped raining.

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