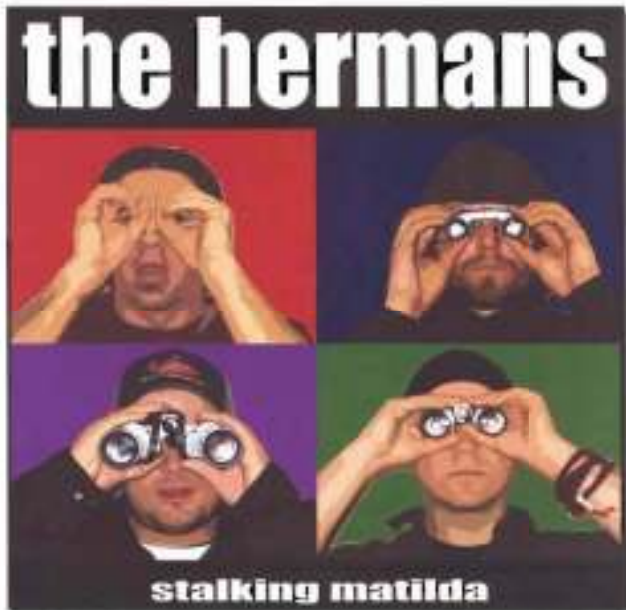


# Stalking the Hermans

An interview with the band *by Kelly Stoll*

The Hermans (who actually prefer to spell their band's name in lowercase letters; sorry guys, it's a proper noun and the editor is an English major) started out with just two members and no name, playing hole-in-the-wall Missoula bars for free. Now this group has recorded and released a CD entitled *Stalking Matilda*, has been on a nationwide tour, and just released its very own book chronicling life as an average rock 'n' roll band from Anytown, U.S.A. I was lucky enough to get a chance to meet two members of the Hermans as they prepared to play in Bozeman for the first time at the Zebra Cocktail Lounge. Dave Jones, lead singer and lead guitarist for the band, and Derk Schmidt, drummer, shared some laughs with me as they divulged their recent escapades and answered questions about their new book.



*The Hermans just got back from a tour. How did that go?*

**Dave:** We called this tour "the every-other-tour" because every other show was awesome and the other ones in between were "Pittsburgh" (a euphemism for "shit," according to Derk).

**Derk:** In Pittsburgh we only played for a crowd of 15 people.

**Dave:** And the day before Pittsburgh, we played for 250-300 in Philadelphia. The whole point of the tour was to go to New York to attend the Book Exposition of America, sell ourselves, and play a show. We got money to drive all the way from Missoula, so we decided to play some other venues along the way. The New York show turned out to be our worst.

*Why was it the worst show?*

**Dave:** There was an interesting story behind that. The band that opened for us... well, they played before... they were Czechoslovakian. The lead singer was the Czech Republic "Sting." All his

songs were in Czech as well as his whole crowd. Anyway, their show ended and we got on stage to play for the Czech crowd that was still there. I had my eyes closed singing and all the sudden I couldn't hear myself anymore. Turned out, the biggest Czech guy ever had grabbed the microphone and was slamming it into his face and had pulled it off stage. In the end, thanks to the help of my brother and dad, this guy finally got off the stage. The crowd went from 200 to 40 or 50 in a matter of two minutes and we ended up playing for just family and friends.

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*How does the East Coast compare to Montana?*

**Derk:** The attitude is better in the East. The further you go west, the more indie rock it becomes. We don't really feel we fit into the indie rock theme.

*If you had a chance to get really big after the book goes through, would you change your style if persuaded to?*

**Derk:** If I have to go indie, I'll quit.  
**Dave:** What do you mean? If someone says I'll give you a huge paycheck to dye your hair and wear chunkies? No fucking way.

*What did you guys think when you first were contacted by Running Press about a future book opportunity?*

**Derk:** At first, we weren't interested because it's our personal story. But then they told us we could have total creative control over everything—acts, media, and writing—so we said "ok."

**Dave:** At first I remember hearing the word *ghostwriter*. I said, "if you guys want to jump on the reality bandwagon then don't fuck with this at all." Later people down the road would say, "This didn't happen!" Yes, it's because the guy that wrote it lives in Connecticut.

*When you got the book offer, did your writing change?*

**Dave:** At a certain point after the first call had come, we realized we had to keep

going with our same style of writing.

**Dave:** We also started a website, writing letters to our friends so we could chronicle what we were doing.

*Did you edit anything out of the book?*

**Dave:** There was a lot of personal shit we had to leave out. I wasn't sure I wanted to include the picture of my daughter in the book and instead leave her out completely, but then again, she is my life. She's a big reason we're doing this.

**Derk:** We just wanted to tell a story but we had to pick and choose a little. Some stuff that was really emotional did stay in there—like when I cut my hand with a table saw.

*Yes, I read about that in the book and you mentioned you had to play one-handed. How was that?*

**Dave:** It was the worst shit ever! The best part of it was having Mick Shrimpton from "This is Spinal Tap" come up to me and say in his British accent, "I was sitting here having a beer and I'm listening to this and I'm like, there's no way he's only got one fucking arm." He later came and played drums with us.

*Where do you see yourself in five or ten years?*

**Dave:** Oh, owning a bar scene in Dover, Delaware.

**Derk:** Drunk at Flippers Bar in Missoula.

book review

## Stalking America: The Journal of an Unknown Rock and Roll Band

by The Hermans  
Running Press Book Publishers

Prepare yourself to laugh out loud when you begin reading the Hermans' account of their rock-n-roll experience. Their recently released book, *Stalking America*, contains scratch paper notes, journal entries, emails, newspaper articles, and even scanned-in cigarettes to chronicle the ups and downs and in-betweens of what it's truly like to be in a band. There's witiness and sarcasm pouring out of every page. The book begins with two guys hitting open-mic night in Missoula and ends with their success as a hit-blown band playing a show in Seattle.

Along with the text, countless pictures and illustrations give you a peek into the minds and lives of the Hermans. I highly recommend checking out this unique and hilarious depiction of band life. Along with the book, you'll receive a compilation CD of several original songs. —KELLY STOLL

