



STALKING WASHINGTON. The Hermans will be in Seattle Oct. 11 to promote their book and perform at Skylark Café.

Book chronicles band's plan for world domination

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Countless thousands of rock bands come and go. Most leave little of a legacy outside of the fans in their hometown who remember catching their gigs at local clubs. The Hermans from Missoula, Mont. may never get famous, but they have created a book that is an amusing and realistic portrayal of a band trying to make it.

The Hermans consist of David Jones on vocals and guitar, Derk Schmidt on drums, Chris Entz on lead guitar and Bill Pfeiffer on bass.

The book begins with a weekend trip to Seattle by Jones, a Philadelphia native, and Schmidt, originally from Michigan. Both are huge Philadelphia Eagles fans, and hit Seattle to catch their team play the Seahawks and take in a Pearl Jam show. Hanging at a bar watching bands, they decide to start jamming when they return to Missoula.

They recruit Pfeiffer and Entz, both Pennsylvania natives, to complete the band. They do what all bands do – write songs, practice, get gigs, make and distribute flyers to promote gigs, and do interviews with the local media. They also enjoy drinking beer and watching Eagles games in a local sports bar.

Jones has a brother who works for Running Press Book Publishers. He suggests the Hermans would make a good subject for a book about an up-and-coming band. They are ideal in the respect that they generate much written material. Band members write many notes to each other, which I imagine they post in their practice room or front doors. These

seem to be a primary form of communication, perhaps more so than phone calls, judging by their content. Most revolve around band business – upcoming gigs, recording songs, buying equipment. They have many entries in a journal, most written by Jones, some from Schmidt. Much of the book's text is compiled from these writings, supplemented by some e-mails between Jones and his brother. The visuals are photographs of the band onstage and flyers from shows at Missoula venues.

The Hermans have one story few bands can tell – their Spinal Tap experience. Schmidt has a woodworking business he runs out of his basement. One day he seriously cuts up one of his hands on a table saw. He is hospitalized, has surgery, is heavily medicated and has one hand in a cast. This happens shortly before the band is to play its biggest gig, a microbrew festival in a local park. Someone they know in the local scene knows Rick Parnell, who played Mick Shrimpton in “This is Spinal Tap,” a classic comedy film from the early 1980s that any true rock musician has seen dozens of times. Parnell is contacted about filling in for the gig. He hits a practice, learns some of their songs and does the show. Anyone who has seen the movie can appreciate the irony of the drummer from Spinal Tap filling in for Schmidt.

The band members desperately want to play outside of Missoula and finally got their wish earlier this year. One section of the book details their trek in a van over the Cascades in January, and shows in Portland, Olympia, Seattle and Spokane.

The book is laced throughout with the type of oddball humor that rock musicians consider routine and normal people may find unsettling, or perhaps even offensive. Of course, people who are easily offended don't read books about rock bands.

Pearl Jam bass player Jeff Ament, himself a Montana native, wrote the foreword.

The Hermans will sign copies of the book at Jackson Street Books in Seattle Oct. 11, and will play that evening at Skylark Café in Seattle.