

Stalking a dream

The Hermans tell the story of all struggling musicians

By: [Marcella Barnes](#)

Issue date: 10/9/07 Section: [Arts and Culture](#)

"The only hindrance was the band-aids on my fingers. They kept sliding off and exposing the fresh stitches on my index and middle fingers of my left hand. That sucked goat balls," said drummer Derk Schmidt.

Who the fuck is Derk Schmidt? Well, he's the drummer in The Hermans namesake and subject of the new book, "The Hermans: Stalking America." Schmidt was angry because a table-saw accident was hampering his ability to play his own bachelor party. But that's just one incident that the book chronicles. Apparently, being an unknown band from Missoula, Montana is a lot more interesting than it sounds.



The Hermans:
Apparently they love support beams.

Comprised of David Jones on lead vocals and guitar, Schmidt on drums and vocals, Chris Entz on lead guitar and Bill Pfeifer on bass and vocals, The Hermans are not your skinny-jean clad, too-cool for mainstream entertainment, indie-rock band. They're football-loving average-Joes with kids and wives. They love their beer and music. They are just four dudes who love to rock.

The Hermans are also marketing and publicity geniuses. As of this month, with the publication of the book, Schmidt and Jones can call themselves authors as well as rockers. The book is brilliantly simple. The premise is following a small-town, relatively unknown band, as they go on tour, starting from the very beginning: conception. From there, the reader gets to follow their story, which includes all the expected trials and tribulations (and a few of the more unexpected) of "trying to make it."

What makes The Hermans unique is that their hometown garage band story, which in many ways follows the archetype, is available for the eager consumption of anybody who cares.

The surprising thing is, people might actually care, especially because of how they wrote the book. They successfully avoided certain ruin by disregarding the novel form in favor of journal style. As the official band journal, it includes photos, press cuttings, miscellaneous correspondence from Schmidt and Jones, posters, and all kinds of other stuff. The highly visual format of the book is where it earns its greatest appeal.

Anybody with a passing interest in music, debauchery, dude-hood, or with a spare bit of time on their hands, can find entertainment within its pages. I'm a huge fan of the creative endearments Schmidt and Jones use for each other, such as "shit-bag" and "ass-head."

But don't worry if insults don't happen to tickle your funny bone or spark your interest. There is plenty of other stuff, including e-mails to family members and the shocking and terrible story of how Schmidt nearly lost a hand to a table saw.

In other words, it's got something for everybody, including a demo CD. Publicity move and income generators aside, it is supposed to be the music that matters the most. What The Hermans deliver on that front is not as unique as their book.

According to their website, The Hermans, like a good majority of other bands, claim that their music lacks a specific genre. Their MySpace page, www.myspace.com/thehermans, defines them as garage rock or grunge, which is still pretty broad.

Throughout the book you get an idea of some of their opinions on other types of music, disdainful in a way typical of many artists, with statements like, "we lost to a new-age, neo-gothic, typical teenage we-are-pissed-and-angry-and-we-don't-know-why 'heavy metal' band who actually make Bon Jovi look like the poster boy for talent" and "Today's scene of the 'emo'-tional ties and style-before-creativity approach to music envelopes some bands while others still just sweat buckets of rock and roll bile. Justin makes the first sound tolerable and the latter sound like lightning."

Of course their own sounds rocks (according to them).

Overall though, from the delivery of their opinions in the book to the actual songs, they are a lot like Jack Black. They've got that "School of Rock" passion, and some of the absurdity and sound of Tenacious D, with song titles such as "Stalking Matilda" and "Modern Day Pirate". They make interesting and OK listening, but like their book's tagline, they could be any band from any small town. They sound ordinary. That isn't necessarily bad though, and it would be unfair and inaccurate to make that claim about them. Their sound is solid, and at times exciting, and if any of the love they have for performing and music comes through in their live shows, then they are totally worth seeing.

Whether or not The Hermans are going to "make it," is still up in the air, but they've done something pretty cool with their book. And it's something worth spending your hard earned money on.

The Hermans will play Oct. 12 at the Slabtown Bar on NW 16th at 9 p.m.