The Library of America • Story of the Week
From *Shake It Up: Great American Writing on Rock and Pop from Elvis to Jay Z* (Library of America, 2017), pages 151–65.

Originally published in *Trips: Rock Life in the Sixties* (1973).
Copyright © by Ellen Sander.

Ellen Sander

Ellen Sander (b. 1944) was *The Saturday Review*'s rock critic in the mid- to late sixties and also wrote on rock for *Vogue*, *The Realist*, *Cavalier*, *The L.A. Free Press*, the Sunday *New York Times* Arts & Leisure section, and many other venues. She is the author of *Trips: Rock Life in the Sixties* (1973), an important source for those seeking to understand the texture and allure of 1960s rock culture. A unique aspect of that culture was captured in Sander's piece "The Case of the Cock-Sure Groupies" (1968), a remarkably clear-eyed and nonjudgmental account of one of rock's less celebrated scenes. After her years of rock writing, Sander worked in various capacities in the software industry, from tech writing to computational linguistics. She then returned to her first love, poetry; most recently she served as the Poet Laureate of Belfast, Maine (2013–2014). Several collections of her rock journalism are available as Kindle ebooks.

Inside the Cages of the Zoo

Some years later, a group called Led Zeppelin came to America to make it, taking a highly calculated risk. The group had been put together around Jimmy Page, who had a heavy personal following from his previous work with the Yardbirds, an immensely popular British group that generated a great deal of charisma in the States. They got

Are you receiving Story of the Week each week?
Sign up now at storyoftheweek.loa.org to receive our weekly alert so you won't miss a single story!

a singer from another group, a knockabout band on the English club circuit, a raw ferocious guttersinger, Robert Plant.

John Paul Jones joined next, one of the foremost young sessions bass players in London, then drummer John Bonham, who had been working on a construction job to earn enough money to feed his family when he was asked to join the group. Jimmy Page and his guitar fame, together with Peter Grant, a burly ex-wrestler, ex-bouncer, a manager who knew the business from the tough side in, set out to put together the top group in the world. It is every musician's and manager's intention, but this band pulled it off. In 1970 they would knock the Beatles off the top of the Melody Maker popularity chart in England and would be the top touring group in the United States. It was a carefully laid-out strategy involving carefully chosen people, carefully made deals, carefully contrived music, all of which worked. A little luck, timing, and experience and a lot of talent pulled the troupe all the way to the undisputed top of the heap.

In the beginning they barely played England at all. The real money, they knew, was in the States. They had put together a first album, a spirited, crisp breath of freshness at a time when rock and roll was really getting bogged down. They released it in England, then in America, and followed it over the Atlantic to play.

The first tour just about broke even, a typical first tour; actually many first tours lose money. Jimmy and John Paul were stars starting all over again as relative unknowns with the new group and the generational leap in rock bands had yet to be proven. Bands had broken up and their key members re-formed that year (1969) and all the heavy blues musicians from London had a new group to tour with. This pattern would repeat itself with American musicians, but only months later.

With Led Zeppelin's first date at the Fillmore East in New York, they scored. The album had only been out a few weeks and the audience displayed a great deal of familiarity with the material. The reputation of Jimmy Page's guitar skill was enough to bring a full house out to hear the new band.

They began a second album back in England when they returned, rushing it a bit because they had no hit single, the express ticket to

high concert prices. Rock and roll fans are easily distracted and notoriously fickle. Before the second album was even finished, it was time for another tour. They packed their gear and the unfinished tapes and set off for another five and a half weeks in America.

They opened in San Francisco, playing and drawing well for four consecutive days. Before the tour was over they would travel 14,000 miles, playing thirteen engagements to hundreds of thousands of people. They arrived healthy, rested, and well rehearsed. From San Francisco it was down to L.A. for almost two weeks of concerts, interviews, and raving. San Francisco had gone exceptionally well; concerts in L.A. were selling out.

They made such an impact on Los Angeles that the ringside clique of pop cognoscenti couldn't stop talking about it for weeks. Not that their performances were that overwhelming; the reviews had been quite mixed, a fact they hotly resented over the following weeks. It was their carryings-on that set the popvine aghast.

John Bonham had dressed up as a waiter and served little Jimmy Page up on a room service cart to a flock of girls. When the fracas was over in L.A., they traveled to British Columbia for two concerts. When they arrived there they found the dates to be five hundred miles and only one day apart. They had to drive the distance overnight. From B.C. they went down to Seattle and from there to Honolulu, where even a few days of sunshine and rest after a concert didn't get them back in good physical shape.

But it's make it, get there, play, and go on. The rock business is volatile, rapid, and dangerous. There's no backing out of a concert contract signed. If a musician gets sick, they shoot him up like a racehorse and send him on. If he gets crazy, they slap him into line long enough to finish the tour before they dump him. For alien dopers a bust is legal ostracism, deportation, locked out of the money pile in America for a rock group aiming determinedly for the top.

Exhaustion, anxiety, release, sex, drugs, traveling, and trying against incredible odds with their bare hearts and whatever managerial leverage they could muster.

At 7:00 A.M., having flown all night, the group straggled into a

Detroit motel and walked right into the aftermath of a murder. The body had been removed only moments before and steam was still rising from the blood on the floor. Nobody asked who, what, where, why, or when. "I only knew I'd spew if I looked at it another second," said Robert Plant, and he grabbed his baggage, his room key, and stumbled into Room 254 for some sleep.

For a rock and roll band on the road in this raw naked land, the trip is not entirely a barrel of yuks.

They lived and worked and struggled to survive from day to day, from place to place, through unspeakable nightmares just to play music. It was loud, hard, gutsy rock, violent and executed with a great deal of virtuosity. Robert Plant, woolly, handsome in an obscenely rugged way, sang as if the songs had to fight their way out of his throat. Jimmy Page, ethereal, effeminate, pale and frail, played physically melodic guitar, bowing it at times, augmenting it with electronic devices, completely energizing the peak of the ensemble's lead sound. John Bonham played ferocious drums, often shirtless and sweating like some gorilla on a rampage. John Paul Jones held the sound together at the bass with lines so surprising, tight, and facile but always recessive, leaving the dramatics to the other three who competed to outdo one another for the audience's favor.

No matter how miserably the group failed to keep their behavior up to a basic human level, they played well almost every night of the tour. If they were only one of the many British rock and roll groups touring at the time, they were also one of the finest. The stamina they found each night at curtain time was amazing, in the face of every conceivable kind of foul-up with equipment, timing, transportation, and organization at almost every date. They had that fire and musicianship going for them and a big burst of incentive; this time around, on their second tour, from the very beginning, they were almost stars.

While fans and the business staff were overjoyed, others were grudging. One of the managers of a rock and roll emporium they played was downright bitter. "They [Led Zeppelin] played here the first time around when they were nothing and we bent over backward to put

them on. Now they're back for ten times the price and put on half the show. This isn't the sort of place where we make everyone leave after the first set, the kids are used to staying till we close." Because the group received a percentage of the gate receipts as part of their fee, their contract required the management to turn over the house after each set. "We're the ones the kids hold it against," complained the manager of the hall. "Now that they're getting big, they're getting away with it."

The group awoke to the Detroit late afternoon and munched on grilled cheese sandwiches in the motel snack shop, blocking out the next few hours before they'd have to play. Robert split for a brief walk and some shopping. As he crossed the street a motorist screeched to a stop beside him and spat in his face. He returned to the motel for a ride, all upset. "I'm white," he mused; "I can imagine how a spade feels here."

Detroit. The lowest.

He returned from the drugstore with shampoo, a comb, and some creme rinse for his copious mane, but no deodorant, which he needed regularly and badly.

During that evening's performance at the Grandee Ballroom, a converted mattress warehouse which was one of the country's oldest established rock halls, equipment failures plagued their music. The house was packed and restless, warmly appreciative, and relentlessly demanding. The vibes were heavy, the audience and crowd were infested with armed police who took a grim view of the scene. Even the groupies crowding the large dingy dressing room seemed particularly gross.

A pair of grotesquely painted, greasy-cheeked, overweight sex-bombs in their late twenties pushed their way through the young things to Robert Plant. One placed her hand on his thigh and brassily declared, "You're spending tonight with me." Robert grimaced and exploded. "Hey, wot, you bloody tart, old Robert's a married man!" The others tittered as he squirmed away, pausing to shoot them a leering wink.

The girls talked among themselves. The pair who had just accosted Robert bragged that they made their living boosting: shoplifting, and

selling the merchandise off. They claimed to make between two and three hundred dollars a week from their efforts, a story their sleazy clothing belied.

The group huddled together and commiserated, discussing the girl situation. The two in question were dubbed the "ugly sisters," cursed down, and a scheme was cooked up to get them later on. The plot was to bring them back to the motel and pelt them with some cream-filled donuts, then gang bang them.

They seemed particularly delighted with the aspect of abuse in almost any situation regarding girls who sought them out. "Girls come around and pose like starlets, teasing and acting haughty," said Jimmy Page, by way of explanation, not excuse. "If you humiliate them a bit they tend to come on all right after that. Everybody knows what they come for and when they get here they act so special. I haven't got time to deal with it."

John Paul Jones appeared at the door, looked into the dressing room full of girls and hangers-on, and closed it. He sulked miserably outside where fans badgered him constantly. Jimmy Page, inside, with that febrile, forlorn look that brought out perversity in fifteen-year-olds, sat inside, chatting occasionally and quietly to whoever spoke to him, neither receiving nor giving any invitations.

Robert and John, Cockney sports at heart, continued to turn their uproariously vulgar sense of humor on the situation. It was unquestionably the low point of the tour, Detroit, a town as foul as exhaust fumes and as hard as cement.

The following morning as they met outside the motel before leaving Robert was livid. Apparently he'd had one of the ugly sisters, despite the fact that the donut scheme fell through (late at night on the way home there was nary a donut shop open it seems). He ranted and railed, cursing the girl out because she hadn't come once all night. "Can you believe that?" he fumed. "I was *embarrassed*!"

They were leaving for a concert at Ohio University on a two-stop flight from Detroit to Columbus. The sixty-mile drive from the airport to the campus in Athens, Ohio, was beautiful, lush in the height of

springtime, but the group was too disoriented to enjoy it. Geography had been ripped past them at an unbelievable rate, so many time zones had been crossed and double crossed that the date, even the time, became irrelevant. The road manager kept it all together in between his own schedule of sexual sorties. He arranged reservations, arrival times, picking up money, waking the lads up in time. An equipment man was responsible for the thousands of pounds of instruments and sound equipment which had to be shipped, flown, expressed, driven, or otherwise transported from place to place intact. "How much time till the gig?" was the only question the group ever cared about at that point. Everything else was too fast, too complicated, or too troublesome to deal with. It got to the point by the time they got to Boston, where they asked a local disc jockey they knew to get girls for them, they didn't even want to bother wending their way through the groupies' come-hither games anymore.

Check into the hotel. A quick swim in the springtime chill. A bit of a drink at the hotel bar, crawling with conventioneers who pointed at them and guffawed. A sound check at the auditorium. Another nip at the bar. No supper.

They played a set, an encore, another. They were tired, keyed up, not knowing whether to shit or go blind, and they tumbled back to the hotel where they had to take pills to get to sleep. In the morning there was a mad, almost-missed-the-plane dash to the airport. It was a rainy Sunday morning in Hocking County, Ohio, as the cars hissed along the highway, skidding around wild curves on unfamiliar roads. The country music played soft. God's great word washed over God's great Midwest as country gospel quavered from the rentacar radio and the lads slumped in sleepy stupor through the careening drive, not knowing how dangerously fast the road manager was driving, seeming not to care. As the caravan of three cars turned into the airport the radio reported that John Wesley Smith had been shot in a fight in an eastside Cleveland bar.

Robert was first onto the plane, galloping down the aisle like a demented ape, his armpit hair hanging from his sleeveless open-knit

shirt, yelling at the top of his lungs, "Toilets, TOILETS! *Toilets* for old Robert!" The dear little Middle America passengers went into a state of mild shock.

Nerves frayed when they reached Minneapolis and the driver kept losing his way to the Guthrie Memorial Theatre. They arrived somewhat late; the performance nonetheless was spectacular, the audience laughing in polite embarrassment at Robert's orgasm sequence onstage, and applauding lustily afterward. It was a sit-down crowd, all natty and urban, country-club hip. Part of this particular engagement, it turned out, was the obligation to attend a party at the lady promoter's country house, full of young locals in blazers and party dresses who gaped at the group for several unbearably dull hours. Comparing notes afterward, other groups who had been through Minneapolis said that every group playing there had to go through the same lame scene.

The road manager called a meeting the next day. There was a decision to be made. There were four days until Led Zeppelin were due to play in Chicago. Nobody liked Minneapolis very much so it was decided by Jimmy Page and the road manager that the group would fly to New York for a few days of rehearsals and interviews by day, recording sessions (the second album was only partially finished) by night. They were reminded that the second album should be out by their third tour to stack the cards in favor of their success.

Their success was built on a well-engineered promotional strategy. Recordings, airplay, personal appearances, and publicity have to be coordinated for the greatest impact. A constant flow of albums, the release of a new one timed with the dénouement of the current one is desirable. Their names must appear somewhere at all times in some sort of press, columns, fan magazines, critical journals, underground papers—no possible exposure is left untried. Their English manager, American lawyer, road manager, and publicity agency, one of Hollywood's heaviest, conspired to pack the heaviest possible punch.

European performers are allowed only six months' working time in the States, for tax reasons. There is constant pressure to make every day, literally, pay. Little time for peace of mind or rest; play is nabbed on the

run. Working into the early morning hours is the rule rather than the exception. Recording sessions in New York last until exhaustion overtakes each man by turn.

Groupies drop in on the session to check out the music and make sandwich runs. These are the accomplished groupies, the ones with the savvy to check the studio out during the day and get the particulars as to time and location of Led Zeppelin's sessions. Much to the group's dismay the girls simply show up, everywhere, as if informed by some freak's celebrity service of their every move. These are the socialite groupies, the *grandes dames* of the grapevine. Soon the word gets out (half of grouping is gossip) and the scuzzy second stringers arrive in unmanageable numbers, just when the group really wants to work.

The girls chat among themselves, catty, bragging, doing one another in. The group's reputation is ripe and they are by now considered heavy scores on the groupie roster. None of them luck into an invitation to come along on the tour, though. There is a fresh crop in every city and the group is getting blasé and annoyed with these girls; their nerves are about shot and they are exhausted; too tired to care and too bored to resist.

Once an outraged bridegroom followed his wife to a motel where she'd come to see Led Zeppelin. He beat her up on the street outside while the group ate dinner in the restaurant, completely unaware of the scene. Furious parents have broken down hotel doors to wrench their daughters from musicians' beds. A groupie following a group from city to city, bearing dope as several do, is an extremely dangerous situation. Often groupies plague performers with their neurotic fantasies. Once in New York Grace Slick opened the door to her hotel room to find a man in her bed hysterically claiming to be the father of the child she was at the time pregnant with. But for better or for worse, groupies provide most of the companionship and all of the sex on tour.

Hardly anyone provides a good meal. At 3:00 A.M. the cruise around town for an open diner is often fruitless. Parties offer only crackers and cheese and such. With strange girls in the car, in a strange city, both the hunger and the loneliness are gripping.

There was one groupie in New York, about the biggest absurdity on

anyone's list. Well into her thirties, she claimed to be the ex-wife of a prominent producer and had researched the part to lie convincingly. She had dyed her hair pixie blonde (the roots showed only a little) and she wore high boots, a leather miniskirt, and a cowboy hat, the skirt just short enough to reveal a pair of well-shaped legs getting a little crepey at the thighs. She sauntered up to Jimmy Page, so in the know, dropping names, telling stories, talking English automobiles and pronouncing it Jag-you-are. She was cloying, enchanted with young Jimmy, a fellow Capricorn, brilliant, rich, ambitious, creative, just like her. And don't you know how Capricorns are vastly attracted to one another? And, she confided to the room at large (that being the control room of the recording studio), he was marvelous in bed last night, and in doing so, informs the mere teenage amateurs that Jimmy Page is her sexual territory. None of the other girls seemed particularly intimidated.

She had somehow got hold of the tour itinerary and she rang him up at weird hours of the morning to check him out on the road. When the group got back to New York, she appeared at the Fillmore East dressing room hovering over him. He'd scowl and move away but she was always—*there*—with some pretense at conversation with whoever would occupy her time and keep her from realizing that she was just beginning to be, generously speaking, unwanted there. At one point Jimmy left the room and came back cuddling the worst-looking girl, all sooty eyes, smeared lip gloss, and rotting teeth. He protectively led her over to the old babe and asked her to give the little wretch her seat. The lady clenched her teeth and finally left, standing up straight, her face crumpling under that tight mask. The following night she was out prowling for new blood in the Scene.

Led Zeppelin was on the way to Chicago. By that time word of their success on the tour was legend and they were very much in demand. The room was enormous, cavernous, packed; the enthusiasm was genuine and deafening. Members of the other band on the bill were old friends and everyone was happy before the show. Fired by the crowd the group outdid itself and the ovation was monumental. Ardent fans in Chicago, heavy Yardbirds' territory, were familiar with the group from a previous appearance. Jimmy Page was given a hero's welcome.

Fans attended by the tens of thousands, flamboyantly dressed and outrageously mannered. Call them hippies, heads, longhairs, freaks, praise or punish them, they alone knew who they were and why they were there. That same Chicago audience that cheered rock and roll into the night would have just as gleefully torn Mayor Daley limb from limb had he been there. Being a rock fan in 1969 was riding that edge.

There in Chicago, in the crucible of discontent, the city that became a metaphor for violent confrontation, these kids sought out a music that to them represented their desperation, anger, fear, and, more than anything, hope. Led Zeppelin is by no stretch of the imagination a politically oriented band, but what they do and how they catalyze their audience into a joyous, merging mass makes them a center for the mobilization of a power politicians haven't even found a name for. It is significant that the heroes of this age have not been statesmen or industrialists, scientists or generals, but poets, philosophers, satirists, and rock and roll stars who create out of their own personal torment the temper of the Sixties. They expressed their release through their art and embroiled their audience, who expressed their release through their lives.

Led Zeppelin were happy with their music. Jimmy Page fell seriously ill twice on the tour but played every night. "That's how you know you're a pro," he chirped on the plane.

Two nights in Chicago and one night in Columbia, Maryland. A day off? No, surprise, Atlantic Records was throwing them a party at the Plaza in New York. At the party they were informed that their album had to be ready in time for a marketing convention during the next few weeks. That meant another session that night and they dutifully trooped off to the studio.

Jimmy Page was getting snappy, ragged, and pathologically work-oriented. John Paul Jones seemed to let the bedlam bounce off a carefully cultivated hard shell. John Bonham was often bitterly silent and horribly homesick. Robert Plant who, much to the pique of Jimmy Page, was emerging as the star of the group, talked constantly about buying a christening gown for his infant daughter back home. Slugging down a glass of imitation orange drink one morning after a night of

clowning around so loud the motel manager checked out his room to see what was happening, he sighed, "God, I miss my wife," to no one in particular.

But the depression never lasted very long. Conversations were livened by riotous accounts of the previous night's misadventures and the group developed a remarkable flair for irritating waitresses and airline hostesses who ogled over them. In flight they would collapse in their seats, their eyes dull, faces slack, finally falling into uncomfortable sleep. They were coming stars, but they looked like something the cat dragged in.

Everyone was wrecked, drained, moody, jet-shocked, and almost sick. They were advised that the tour was going extraordinarily well, better than even expected, but it did not seem to affect them, or perhaps they didn't realize the implications of what they'd been through. But each time they faced an audience (and they never disappointed an audience the whole time) they knew. This music they played, these people who loved them, no matter how gut-bustingly horrible that tour was, made it all worthwhile. In those few hours the boys would be transformed from tired carping brats into radiant gods. Whatever happened, it never took the joy out of playing and playing well.

The tour came off in the black that time around. In a fairly typical arrangement, the group traveled with a paid road crew. The money they earned had to support those salaries, transportation, lodging, food, repair or loss of equipment, and every other road expense incurred. They retained a publicity firm, lawyers in both countries, a manager, and an accountant. Managers' and booking agents' fees are deducted from the gross, and by the time the accounting was done they might have gotten to divide among themselves one-third of the more than $150,000 that tour grossed. The fees they were able to get, from a flat $5,000 a night to over $15,000 for the particularly successful two-day Chicago engagement, were good, but not top money in the field.

The scheme had worked. That tour was a setup for the next one, the superstar trip, where they would gross $350,000 to $400,000 for less time, fewer dates, and much more comfortable living and traveling arrangements.

When Herman's Hermits, for instance, were at the height of their career, they chartered a private jet for a month at a time, stocked it with their favorite food, and played poker with their agent, often betting their evening's earnings in the game. From airports they would charter helicopters to the city and limousines to the gigs, never rumpling their soft teddy suits on the way, always sending the road manager out to cull and deliver the right kinds of girls. For more sophisticated groups there are the world's finest hotels, chauffeurs, managers, agents, and local rock and roll bigwigs to squire them around town through pesty crowds of clawing fans into the most lavish of private homes with all their needs provided for. Past all this scuffling, it's clear sailing for the duration of rock and roll stardom. Get it while you can, pop is fast and fickle, and scorn for fallen stars is merciless.

"In this business," commented John Paul Jones, "it's not so much making it as fast as you can but making it fast *while* you can. The average life of a successful group is three years. You just have to get past that initial ordeal. The touring makes you into a different person. I realize that when I get home. It takes me weeks to recover after living like an animal for so long."

"But playing makes up for it," chimed in John Bonham. He had overheard the conversation and responded to the sadness in John Paul's voice. "Wait till we get to Boston," he enthused, as much for his own sagging spirits as for John Paul's. "That's the place! Remember when we were there the last time? They were banging their *heads* on the stage!"

The Boston Tea Party was alive with anticipation. The house was oversold, the group had broken the second attendance record of the tour. Grist for the press mill, ammunition sending future dates skyrocketing in price. Glee for the businessmen, all of whom flew up from New York to be with them. For the boys it was sweet justice. All those dues on the road the last tour and these last five weeks seemed to be coming in that night. It was beginning to really dawn on them just how big they had gotten. The magic of Led Zeppelin had culminated with this Boston stopover and everyone was there just to enjoy it, wallow in it, drink it in.

More importantly there was Tina, a twenty-year-old art student who shivered with excitement. There was Rusty, who drove all the way from Providence to see them. Jody said he'd drive all day to see Jimi Hendrix and Linda emphatically declared she would spend her last cent on a Jefferson Airplane album. Colored lights flashed on wall-to-wall people who cheered each member of the group as he stepped to the stage.

The Tea Party was formerly a synagogue, the stage sat in front of what was once the altar. Out of reverence or love or just plain joy the words "Praise Ye the Lord" were left on the altar wall and the celebration of togetherness buzzing through the room like current did the benediction justice. In its own funky way the Boston Tea Party and its counterparts around the country are houses of holy worship.

The room was jammed, dancing impossible, the music so loud that ovations were as much relief as they were appreciation. Long fluid notes pealed from Jimmy's guitar. John ripped into dazzling percussion acrobatics. John Paul Jones kept a bass line running through like a keel, stabilizing the music. Robert sang in an erotic howl and fans writhed with the changes in sound, interjecting hoots, groans, and whistles at each lull in the sound. The floor resounded with pounding feet when the set was over and the entire building shook rhythmically to its foundations. Three encores and they're still yelling for more. "Let's give 'em another," urges Robert backstage. "We don't know any others!" croaks Jimmy Page in a desperate whisper, laughing, gasping, sweating, heaving, totally overcome by delight.

Robert marches out to the stage anyway. The audience explodes in gratitude and approval. The group launches into a medley of Beatles and Stones songs to the crowd's delight. They are ecstatic, insatiable, and merciless. But the concert is over, there is just nothing left.

Afterward the dressing room was full of admirers, all competing for the group's attention. Though they sense they themselves are the substance of the magic that transpired, these people want to touch the source. John gulps a warm beer. Jimmy collapses in a corner. John Paul Jones wipes sweat from his face and his electric bass with the same towel, then tucks the towel and the instrument carefully into a plush-lined case, gazing down at it a moment before he folds the top down

and clips the locks closed. Robert fumes, totally outraged because his favorite T-shirt has been stolen from the backstage area. "That's what it is," he splutters; "they love you and applaud you, you give them everything in your heart and they nick me T-shirt!"

Exhaustion, elation, and pride were all over the faces of Led Zeppelin. They exchanged congratulatory looks. It was late, very late. They had to play New York the next evening, the Fillmore East, the last date before going home. Everyone knew it was going to be a bummer after tonight but it was the last date. After Saturday, home to England. *Praise Ye the Lord.*

I had been covering this tour on assignment from *Life* magazine, living through the last three weeks of it with them, through the miles of exhaustion and undernourishment, suffering the company of the whiny groupies they attracted, the frazzled rush of arriving and departing, the uptightness at the airports, and the advances of their greasy road manager. I had been keeping a journal of our discomfort to document this unbelievably wearing and astoundingly exciting slice of professional life so germane to the rock and roll Sixties.

At the Fillmore East, on the last date of the tour, I stopped in to say good-bye and godspeed. Two members of the group attacked me, shrieking and grabbing at my clothes, totally over the edge. I fought them off until Peter Grant rescued me but not before they managed to tear my dress down the back. My young man of the evening took me home in a limousine borrowed from an agent friend and I trembled in exhaustion, anger, and bitterness all the way. Over the next week I tried to write the story. It was not about to happen. It took a whole year just to get back to my notes again with any kind of objectivity.

If you walk inside the cages of the zoo you get to see the animals close up, stroke the captive pelts, and mingle with the energy behind the mystique. You also get to smell the shit firsthand.

1973