

As he quickly shoved his copy of the record contract back into his bag, the teenager who had wandered over greeted him. "You're Sage aren't you?" Reluctantly accepting his newly arrived fame, Sage replied "On my better days, yes." The teen for some reason began to question the guitarist about music, politics, whatever came to mind.

"What do think of today's music industry, it's gotten pretty shitty, I mean it looks like no one cares anymore and it's just become about the money..."

Not knowing exactly how or where to start Sage said "Wanna hear a story? I think this will explain my thoughts better then I could just from saying" as he stared at his messenger bag, something that carried much more then some papers and notebooks, but memories of how he stumbled into this life.

"This was probably ten years or so ago, I can't really recall it exactly but at the time I was living in New York City in this tiny loft apartment, it's probably long gone now but anyway, that's not important. During the day I worked as a messenger for some hotshot exec, running errands, delivering packages and letters, whatever he asked. Now this wasn't well paying job by any means but it afforded me other opportunities such as meeting bands, club owners, basically the big names of the music industry around here. One night, I was supposed to deliver a few contracts for some band to look over, consider, you know? Well,

that night for some reason I couldn't get into the club where I was supposed to meet them, the bouncer was probably new or something, a real prick

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who wouldn't let me in. Even after an explanation with the mentioning of my boss, the band I was supposed to meet and the record deal, the ass wouldn't let me in. So I said screw it and walked around back, towards the back entrance where the roadies and other touring personal get it and started banging on the door. After a minute or so, my friend Alex, recognizing my screams through the heavy door, let me in. Once inside I managed to snake my way through the sea of groupies, hanger-on-ers, fans and tour people to the band's dressing room. I pushed the door open and my nose was filled by the intoxicating smell of hard liquor and sickly sweet incense that very well suited the atmosphere. Inside the harshly lit dressing room, the band was sitting scattered about the room, the guitarist and singer sitting with two barely clothed groupies on the couch, and the drummer and bassist over at the table waving their arms about madly and shouting about some card game.

The singer looked up from his acquaintance and said "Don't mind them, acid and cards never mix. It's the third time I've had to explain to them that the red queen isn't really off her head and trying to eat them. My name's Eli, you must be the record exec's slave, am I right?"

“Ha, that’d be me. I was told to bring you over a contract. My boss seemed very interested in getting your autograph.

Saying, as I threw the contract over to him, “It’s actually an amazing offer for an unknown band like you have here, a three record deal, a 500,000 dollar advance on the first record and all with the minimal involvement of the record company. Pretty sweet huh?”

The guitarist, Toby, had stopped messing around with the groupie and said, deeply focused “What constitutes minimal involvement? Would we be free to design our own album art, have complete control over singles? Mixing? Songs, meaning none of that processed bullshit that isn’t written or played by the band which is then packaged into some half assed shot at a record?”

A little uneasy now, I replied “Look, Toby, my boss wants you on his record label; he is willing to do whatever it takes if you haven’t already noticed and wouldn’t dare involve himself in something that is clearly your job.”

“After having said that, I decided it would be best if I just left the band alone to think about the contract. A few business days later, I heard from my boss that the band had accepted and were to start recording that week. A few months later, I quit my job with the record company because the environment became too much and it was taking a huge toll on me mentally. It was during this time that I had picked up the monthly issue of *Rolling Stone* in which there was an article about the band I had gotten signed. Apparently my old record

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company sued the band because they wouldn't allow the record company to have enough say in their work. It also had turned out that, that the seemingly fragile individual that was the guitarist had committed suicide in the middle of the whole legal battle."

Moral of the Story- You cannot put a price or limit on human creativity.