**The Making of The White Russian Sessions**

**Chapter 1: Our Heroes Meet**

We recently put the first GOCR album, The White Russian Sessions, up for a free download on our website (gocr.org). This got me reflecting on the early days of the band and I decided to write some thoughts about the making of the record. Naturally this expanded into something bigger and I’m compelled to tell the story of the origin of the Gods of Cock Rock (yes, I’ve read a lot of comic books). I should mention that I’m in the middle of reading Pete Townshend’s memoirs right now and I’ll probably give a lot more details than are actually relevant. Blame Pete.

I first met Ravi in early 2001, at a gathering of fans of The Black Crowes. We were both huge Crowes fans, especially of their incredible guitar player Marc Ford. Right around then Marc started playing frequently at the Malibu Inn and a bunch of us that were regulars became friends. It turns out that there were a lot of guitar players among us, and we’d start throwing weekend parties in backyards and living rooms, where monster jams would ensue. Besides me and Ravi, we’d have Drew Grindley & Mike Boden, Chris DeCastro, Gabriel, Gil, Jake Drake (who usually flaked), the future Ann Romanelli… these were good times. I learned a ton of covers in those days… Stones, Gram, The Band, Neil, Steve Earle and dozens more. Ravi & I seemed to really click and we started getting together regularly at my house on Friday nights… even then we knew that there was something special in the way our two voices blended together.

Every week or so we’d get together in my living room, to drink and play music. Ravi had this huge, perfectly organized notebook of songs which I soon copied. The formula was nearly always the same. Ravi would get there early and Jamie (my younger son who was about 3 at the time) would get all excited to see him; even at an early age Jamie was a good judge of character. We’d crack a beer, watch the end of a Laker game (or metal videos on VH1 Classic if it wasn’t basketball season), and once we saw a Dio video we knew it was time to rock. We then played every song we knew until it got late and we were the only ones in the house still awake. Then we’d watch Big Lebowski, have a White Russian, I’d fall asleep and Ravi would go home. This was a lot of fun and eventually the inevitable happened. We started writing songs.

**Chapter 2: Ravi Bought a 4-Track**

The first step in getting ambitious about our songwriting was buying a 4-track tape recorder. Ravi picked one up at Guitar Center, along with a crappy microphone. We experimented recording some covers, including a version of Uncle Tupelo’s Still Be Around for a fan-created Jay Farrar tribute record. The first original song that we recorded was called Me; the lyrics had been written by our friend Scott Brendel about a space cowboy friend of his. It mocks him out pretty good and the recording came out OK. We played it for a bunch of our friends who were all encouraging so we kept writing.

The first song I wrote was I Really Want to Fuck That Girl. Now I love that song… it’s catchy as hell, has cool chords, it’s funny and completely impossible. But my wife feels differently. I hadn’t written a song in over 5 years, which was when my beloved 90’s band Pincushion Jones broke up. And the first thing I write is about banging chicks from the dry cleaners and jerking off in the shower?? She was less than impressed and still hates it to this day. I knew I was on to something if I got this kind of a reaction. Dump the Loser Emily came next… inspired by our friend Emily Lanigan’s latest loser boyfriend, the infamous Tony B. Ravi brought in Hate In Your Heart. Inspired by my one-car accident and the lie I told the cops to explain it, we came up with Dead Possum. At that point, we figured we’d had enough to record. How many hits can you fit on one record anyway?

We spent a day at Drew Grindley’s house and he recorded all four songs. Our process was much simpler back then; no click tracks, no electric guitars… just 2 acoustics and 2 voices on all the songs. I think we added a shaker to Hate In Your Heart but nothing else. They came together really quickly. Drew did a great job making us sound good – quality microphones and a guy who knew what he was doing with his 4-track makes a ton of difference. We rounded out the record with some covers that we recorded live using a single microphone in my living room; The Stones’ No Expectations, Supersuckers’ Non-Addictive Marijuana, Johnny Cash’s Rowboat and Golden Smog’s Radio King. They are uniformly shitty but spirited. Great songs, not quite adequately played and poorly recorded. You’ll notice that they’ve been left off of the latest downloadable version.

All that was left was the cover. We took a picture of my dog Tyler in the living room where we recorded, surrounded by guitars and empties. It was sent to our friend Michael Caronia who turned it into a CD package and the rest was history. We hand-manufactured a ton of these and sent them all over the world to anybody who asked nicely. By the end of 2004, we had become the Gods of Cock Rock and The White Russian Sessions was our great artistic statement. Fortunately, we got better.

Maybe soon I’ll tell you guys about the record release party or post a link to the Hate In Your Heart video.

Thanks for reading. Hopefully it was amusing for you – I’m pretty sure most of it is true.