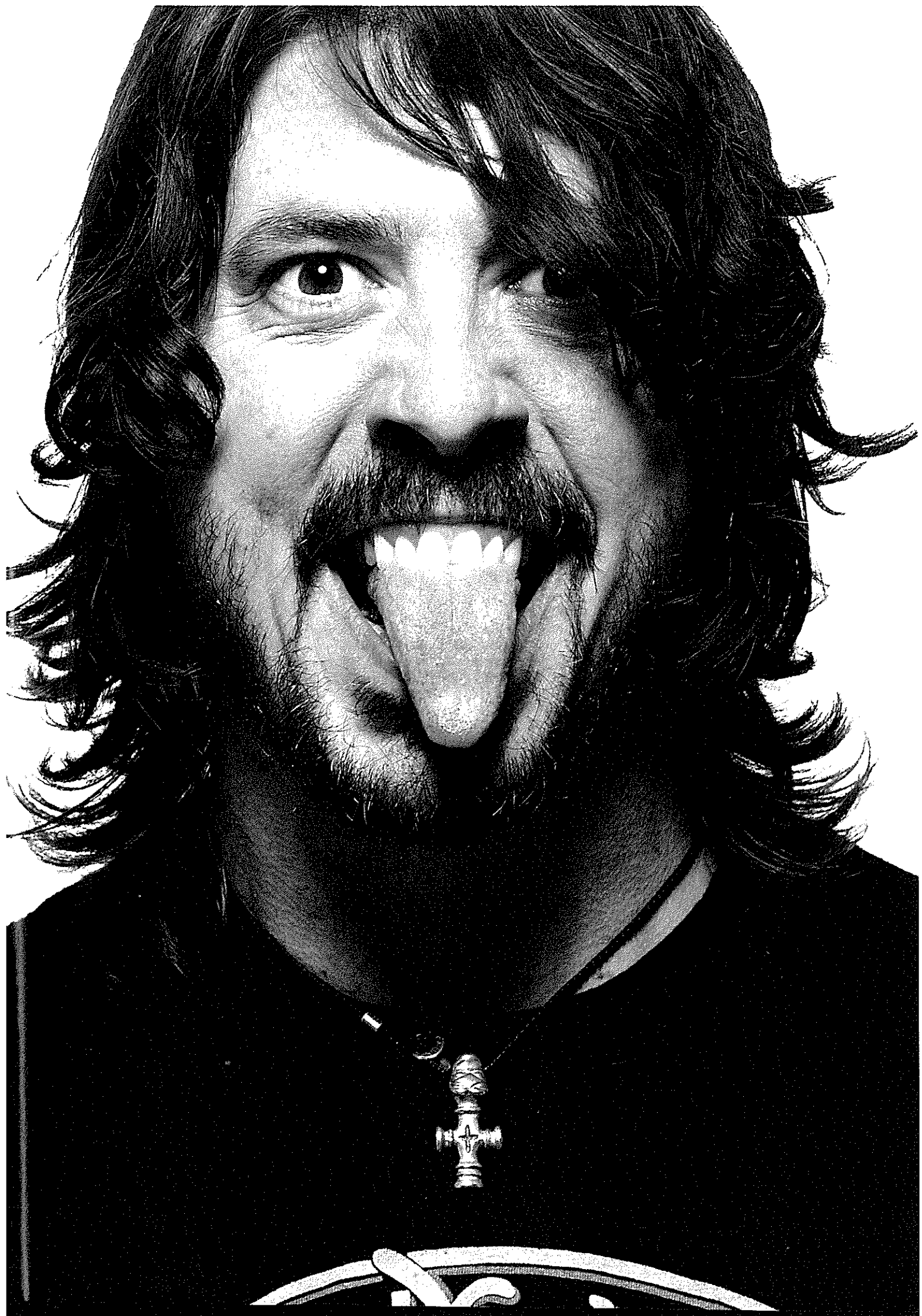


[THE Q INTERVIEW]

“I wanted
to take
acid and
smash
stuff.”

Breaking things is to be expected from **Dave Grohl**, erstwhile drummer. Less predictably, in this, his most revealing interview, he will also discuss matters as varied as his therapy sessions and nappy-changing etiquette. Then, he will take Q to meet his mum.

WORDS: TOM DOYLE | PICTURES: ROSS HAI FIN



Quarter past seven on a Friday night,

and the phone rings in Q's room at West Hollywood's Mondrian Hotel. "Hello, sir," says a Hispanic-sounding voice.

"Housekeeping. You need any fresh towels?"

No thanks, says Q, fine for towels. There is an explosion of laughter, and the accent shifts to an American twang.

"Hey, man, it's Dave Grohl. So I'm taking you on a tour of my Los Angeles tonight, right? I'll pick you up at eight. I'll be the guy in the grey BMW with the Motörhead air freshener."

Forty-five minutes later, right on time, the Foo Fighters frontman pulls up outside the hotel and opens the passenger door. Aside from the cigarette packets and lighters littering the seats, the inside of his car is spotless. Grohl himself is skinny and bearded, dressed in dark grey jeans, Fred Perry jacket and T-shirt sporting the logo of Johnson Motors, the Californian garage-to-the-stars that supplied motorcycles to James Dean and Steve McQueen. A slight crinkling around the eyes is the only indication that our driver is two years shy of his 40th birthday.

"Am I late?" he asks. "I've been sitting in traffic with strippers going to work."

There are no awkward silences with Dave Grohl. As we accelerate, carefully if speedily, away in the direction of the Hollywood Hills, he's already firing off anecdotes, punctuating them with a gaspy laugh that could only belong to a lifelong smoker. Sometimes he winds himself into a fit of amused incredulity, and the volume of his voice rockets. At other times, depending on the gravity of the conversation, his voice will drop and he will falter over his words as he attempts to nail his feelings. This is often accompanied by a furrowing of his brow and a massaging of his beard.

After a few minutes, he slows down to point out a house in which he would crash when his first band, Washington, DC punk outfit Scream, visited Los Angeles in 1990. It was a space shared with four female mud wrestlers from strip club Hollywood Tropicana. "We were these dirty little rock musicians, which mud wrestlers *love*," he says with a cartoon roll of his eyes.

Further down the road, he recalls late-night drives through these hills with Nirvana bandmates Kurt Cobain and Krist Novoselic, listening to early mixes of Nevermind. "Krist driving, me in the back, Kurt where you are," he nods. "Drunk on big cups of 7-Up and Seagram's 7 whisky. One night this fucking cop pulled us over, arrested Krist and dragged him off to jail."

He parks outside a white wooden bungalow, his first home in the city when he escaped here from Seattle in the summer of '96 after his first marriage, to photographer Jennifer Youngblood, fell apart. He rented it from a 70-year-old retired magician who lived next door. Grohl turned 30 and went through his second adolescence when he was living here, recording the second Foo Fighters album, *The Colour And The Shape*, and regularly hitting town. "I got a lot of shit out of my system in that house," he admits. "This was the birth of my independence."

We head into the San Fernando Valley, the expanse of suburbia that Grohl calls home: namely the leafy district of Encino where he lives with his ex-MTV producer wife Jordyn and one-year-old-daughter, Violet Maye. His extended family members are close by, too: elder sister Lisa and ex-schoolteacher mother Ginny moved here from Virginia a few years ago (his parents are divorced; his political speechwriter father, James, still lives on the East Coast).

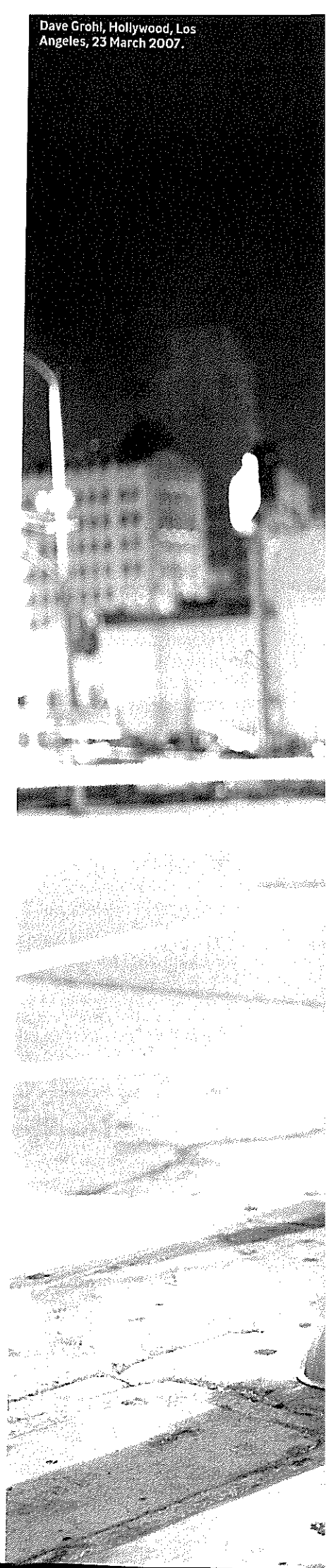
As we leave the Hollywood Hills and enter the Valley, he visibly unwinds. We've crossed the line between his old life and his new life. Though he's built the Foo Fighters up into one of rock's premier league outfits – they headline the V Festival and play outdoors in Edinburgh in August – he's just as proud of his status as a family man and homebody. Approaching 40, he's clearly giving some thought to negotiating the divide between advancing years and a career in rock'n'roll. One half of the Foo Fighters' 2005 album, *In Your Honour*, was entirely acoustic. This more mature approach extends to their new album, currently being recorded in the band's 606 Studios and due for release in September. Grohl hints that parts of it owe something to Paul McCartney and '70s FM rock mainstays Steely Dan.

"You know what?" he suddenly says, part way up the long drag of Ventura Boulevard, lighting up a cigarette as night falls. "Let's get a fucking drink."

Pulling up to the sidewalk and tossing his keys to the nearest valet, he is instantly recognised and turns on the trademark charm ("Hey, what's going on?"). As we enter a book-lined bar named Firefly, making for a patio garden out back where smoking is permitted, heads turn. Grohl orders two beers and reaches for his cigarettes.

You haven't gone unnoticed tonight. When did you first start being recognised absolutely everywhere you went?

Probably after the *Big Me* video [in 1996]. But →



[THE Q INTERVIEW]

it happened so gradually. Nirvana blowing up of course was like a fucking fireworks display. It surprised everyone. But you settle into that reality. It's been such a gradual decline... I mean, gradual...

...Incline?

Yeah! But it just becomes reality. I remember being in therapy once and the therapist saying, "Well, face it, you don't live in reality, you're flying around in jets, you're playing in front of thousands of people." And I said, "Fuck you, motherfucker! Who are you to tell me what my reality is? You sit down and listen to people's problems all day. That seems a little fucking strange to me!" This can become your life if you manage it and balance it. I mean, I have a beautiful wife, I have a beautiful daughter.

So that grounds you?

Yeah. My whole life is lived in a four-mile radius. Family, studio, home. I have a close circle of friends that I've known since I was five years old.

Who are?

... Who are Jimmy Swanson and Ritchie Creason. We're like fucking brothers. Ritchie's an insurance salesman. When all of this did happen, those were the hooks that kept my feet on the ground. And, God, man, I've seen so many people just fucking reduced by it.

Anyone ever tried to pick a fight with you just because you're famous?

Nah, but I had a chick pour a drink on me once. Just out of the blue. It was in Ohio on a Nirvana tour. I was like, "What the fuck was that for?" She said, "What makes you think you're so fucking special that I'd pour a drink on you?" I said, "OK, I get it. No sweat."

You're a father now. How has it changed you?

Oh, it's changed everything. Personally and honestly, it's something that I'd always imagined happening. I grew up with a tight family. I'm probably one of the few rock musicians that didn't have a fucked-up life. I mean, my parents divorced when I was seven years old and we grew up with no money. But we got by with very little and we were still the happiest people in the world.

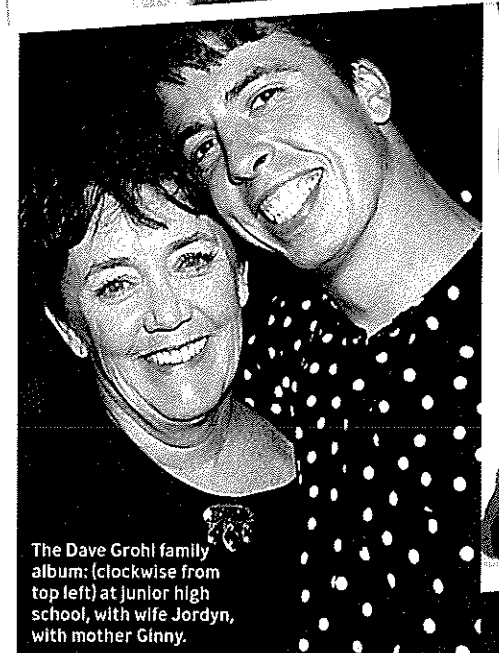
Thought that with your dad being a political speechwriter, you'd have been pretty comfortable...

No, I mean, we got by, but there was no luxury. The luxury really was that we were happy. We got by with very little and we were still the happiest people in the world.

Do your parents splitting up didn't break that happiness?

Vell, of course it caused a lot of pain and it caused a lot of struggle. But I don't think I really understood what was going on. We settled into this dynamic where we spent

I'm one of the few rock stars who didn't have a fucked-up life'



The Dave Grohl family album: (clockwise from top left) at junior high school, with wife Jordyn, with mother Ginny.



time with both parents. And both of them were wonderful, intelligent, creative people that helped my sister and me to learn to live happily. My idea is that my daughter and I are best friends and hopefully that'll last for the rest of our lives.

Did you attend your daughter's birth?

Yeah. I knew the science. I could've fucking delivered the baby myself at that point. I'd desensitized myself by watching those stupid TV shows with the graphic birth. But I was nervous. It was a sketchy birth because her [umbilical]cord was around her neck and there were a couple of times when her heartbeat dropped. That's the most frightened I've ever been in my life. They let you play music while you're giving birth. We found this CD that was lullaby versions of Beatles songs. The first song was In My Life, which we played at Kurt's memorial. Oh Jeez. I just felt it coming and I'm like, "You can't break down right now, man. I've got to keep it together for my wife." What a song and what a moment and what a memory.

So you're a dedicated family man now?

Oh, yeah. [Pulls out camera-phone pic of baby with the most enormous blue eyes] She's unbelievable. Jordyn goes to this Mommy And Me class, all of these mothers

with all of these babies who are the same age. She said, "Y'know, fathers are welcome." Which kinda meant, like, "Get your ass to Mommy And Me." I was like, "Alright..."

You could have said, There's no "Daddy" in "Mommy And Me"...

Right! It's not Mommy And Daddy And Me! So the next week I go and it was the first time I'd been in a room with fucking 15 infants. And it was great. But at the end of the class they start singing Puff The Magic Dragon and all the mothers are dancing with the babies. And I don't have a kid, so I'm just [sways around with forced, pleasant smile]. Fucking mortifying.

Any nappy-changing tips?

You can't be afraid of shit. That's the number one rule. And you have to be like a Nascar pit crew. When it's time to do it, it's [mimes disposing of a nappy]- Tsch! Tsch! - done. And the more fun you make it, the better. Sing a fucking song.

Is it harder to leave home and go on tour these days?

Well, it's weird, man. Because for years I could pick up and leave home with a backpack and a toothbrush. I didn't miss anything. I missed people, but I don't get attached to stuff. And having been on the road since I was 18 years old, my home was usually just a place to store my shit when I left. But now, I can't stand to be away.

How did you and Jordyn meet?

I met Jordyn one night in 2001. Taylor [Hawkins, Foo Fighters drummer] and I were



With Nirvana, São Paulo, 1993: group bath causes drummer's trousers to shrink.



Foo Fighters in 2005: (from left) Nate Mendel, Grohl, Chris Shiflett, Taylor Hawkins.

bar. Taylor was the looker. I mean, girls would send *him* drinks. Some bombshell comes up and starts talking to Taylor. I was just out of a Tenacious D session. I've got Vans trainers on, no socks, dirty shorts and a dirty T-shirt, surrounded by beautiful Hollywood. She waved her friend Jordyn over. I was like, "Oh my God. Not a chance!" So I'm just having some drinks and acting like a jackass. And by the end of the night I was pissed and I'm staring at her going, "You're my future ex-wife." [Laughs uproariously] So she gave me her number: "Jordyn, your future ex-wife." We saw each other a few times. But I realised that this was the flag, the finish line and I'm like, "Oh, wait a minute." So I backed out.

Because you'd been burned by your previous marriage?

No, because I wasn't ready for the flag. And then we were in London [in August 2001, before the V festival] and Taylor wound up in hospital. He did some drugs and OD'ed.

'Someone told me Kurt had died in Rome. I completely lost my shit.'

The rumour was that it was heroin...

We've never talked about that. But it [heroin] wasn't something that he'd ever done [in the past]. Which I think is why it happened – because he didn't know what he was doing. And he was gone, man. He was gone a couple of times.

He flatlined?

Yeah, for minutes and minutes. My whole world turned upside down. I'm, like, "God, how could this happen *again*?" I just thought, "What are we doing here?" To me, music equals life. [Eerily, Nirvana's cover of the Meat Puppets' *Lake Of Fire* begins playing in the background. Grohl pauses and raises his eyebrows in recognition.] It doesn't equal death, man. So there were a couple of weeks in London where I went to the hospital every day from fucking noon to midnight and I would sit with him. The day my daughter was born was the happiest day of my life. But up until then the day Taylor came out of it was hands-down the greatest day of my life.

Not the day Kurt came out of his coma in Rome?

Well, yeah, y'know, that was a weird one because... I don't know if I've ever said this before, but someone had told me that he'd died. And he hadn't. I was in Seattle, I had come home. I completely lost my shit. And then someone called back and said, "No, no, no, wait, he's not dead." I was just numb. I was confused. And after that, it really was only a short time before he died.

How long was it before the second call came in?

Ten minutes. I was already in mourning. I mean, imagine... [Sighs, clearly not to change the subject] Anyway, Taylor came out of it and looked at me and said, "Fuck you!" I went back to my hotel and I was still scared because I was afraid to feel too good. So I was sitting watching the snooker or something and this commercial comes on for chewing gum – this girl walking through the subway pickpocketing people. All of a sudden I think, "That's that girl Jordyn, that's that chick!" And over the course of the next few days I start having these dreams about that life that I'd been thinking about, settling-down dreams. In those two weeks, I changed forever. I thought, "I'm not waiting one more minute because life's too fucking short, man. It's too delicate." The day we got home I called her up and she said, "Wow, I never thought I'd hear from you again." So I took her to a restaurant right next door to here. And that was that."

Grohl starts restlessly drumming on his knees. "Shall we keep moving?" he says. Back in the car and resuming his role of tour guide, Grohl points the car east in the direction of North Hollywood. To our right, he says, is the house where he crashed on former Scream bandmate Pete Stahl's floor following his divorce, dogs peeing on his sleeping bag. To our left, through the darkness, we can make out Devonshire studios, where Nirvana first started mixing Nevermind. Down the street were the corporate apartments in which they lived at the time and which they trashed one night while mindlessly drunk. "In the early '90s, this was a fucking gnarly

neighbourhood," Grohl points out. "You could get your ass kicked by gangs or get shot up in a drug deal around here."

Doubling back towards the tranquil suburb of Sherman Oaks, we pull into a quiet, well-tended street of modest houses. "I'll show you the place I bought for my mom," he says. We slow down outside the last bungalow on the corner, and Grohl spots a shape in the front window.

"There's my mom," he shouts. "She's probably in her fucking pyjamas."

He fishes out his mobile phone. "Hi, Mom. I'm good. I'm actually right in front of your house. Me and my journalist friend are driving around. I'm giving him a tour. We'll come say hello."

Grohl's petite, brown-haired, sparkly-eyed mother answers the door, wrapped in her white dressing gown. "I'm Ginny," she says, then smiles the same full-beam Grohl family grin as her son.

We're interrupted her watching cosy Judi Dench sitcom *As Time Goes By* on BBC America, but she ushers us into the lounge. Foo Fighters photos and platinum discs adorn the walls. The two began chatting warmly, Ginny ignoring her son's constant swearing. They recall several childhood injuries, including the day he turned up on their Springfield, Virginia, porch, his head matted with blood after being crowned with a golf club by another child.

"I remember having to drive him to the hospital, his head wrapped in towels," says Ginny.

"The weirdest thing," says Dave, "is I couldn't feel any fucking pain at all."

"Ah," she sighs, "he was a pretty rambunctious kid."

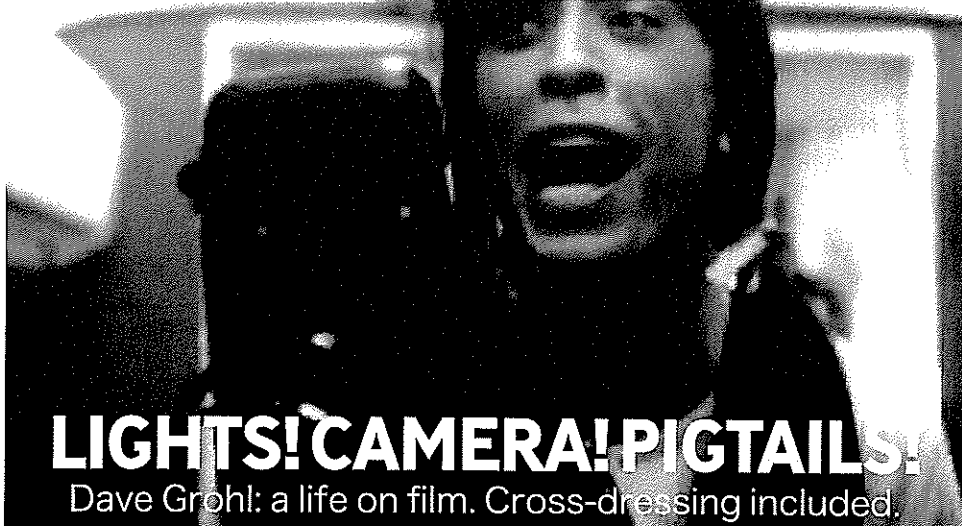
It's a flying visit, so we say our goodbyes and leave. There's a quick pit-stop at a low-rent rock hangout named Paladinos, where the Foo Fighters sometimes play pre-festival warm-up shows, before Grohl starts to get itchy again. "I'll take you out to the studio," he says.

The band's HQ is situated in nearby Northridge, the epicentre of the 1994 Los Angeles earthquake. Grohl pulls up the security gate, punches in the code and whisks us inside, parking outside the anonymous warehouse space that houses the studio.

It's an unlikely nerve-centre for a multi-million-dollar business. An unfancy warren of breeze-blocked rooms stuffed with guitars, amps and keyboards, the vibe is more comfy hangout than ultra-modern recording facility.

In the control room, producer Gil Norton is working the late shift on the new album, under a kitsch painting of Grohl in red smoking jacket and white cravat – a tongue-in-cheek present from the Foo Fighters' crew after their boss joked that he wanted an office with an old-fashioned oak desk from which to direct his operation.

Work on the sixth Foo Fighters record began here back in November and has, according to Grohl, "fucking flown by". He's cagey about revealing such specifics as lyrics and even song titles, even though mixing begins on Monday. "The album has me playing piano," he says, "which I've never done before." Not that Foo Fighters fans need worry that the band have



LIGHTS! CAMERA! PIGTAILS!

Dave Grohl: a life on film. Cross-dressing included.



NIRVANA
Smells Like Teen Spirit (1991)
PLOT: Cheerleaders in "Anarchy" tops and dreadlocked school kids bounce around in a murky sports hall. The riotous scenes were accidental – director Sam Bayer lost control of the moshing extras.
GROHL FACT! "We'd see the song on TV every night and laugh about it," says Grohl. "But suddenly the clubs [we were playing] got bigger."



NIRVANA
Heart-Shaped Box (1993)
PLOT: Photographer Anton Corbijn brings Kurt Cobain's childhood dreams to life. Cue a crucified man in a Santa hat and a foetus-strewn tree. Sensibly, Grohl keeps his head down.
GROHL FACT! Another director, Kevin Kerslake, claimed they stole his idea. He sued, but the case was dropped after Cobain's death.



FOO FIGHTERS
Big Me (1996)
PLOT: Spoof TV ad in which a hard-nosed businesswoman and a rebellious teen discover wonder sweets "FOTOS" can solve any of life's problems. Grohl's pigtails hint at a future in cross-dressing.
GROHL FACT! Fans began pelting the band with sweets during gigs after this. "They hurt like shit," says Grohl. "They're like coins."



FOO FIGHTERS
Everlong (1997)
PLOT: Grohl and Taylor Hawkins are a husband and wife plagued by nightmares (moving trees, enlarged limbs, axe-wielding teddy boys). Hawkins makes an alarmingly convincing woman.
GROHL FACT! Hawkins got the role after Grohl became worried his first wife would be jealous if she saw him in bed with another woman.



FOO FIGHTERS
Learn To Fly (1999)
PLOT: Grohl raids the dressing up box for this aeroplane-set clip, essaying a gluttonous female passenger, a camp flight attendant and a suave captain who has his coffee spiked by drug smugglers.
GROHL FACT! He relished the prospect of donning a dress: "There's nothing funnier than a man in women's clothing."



FOO FIGHTERS
All My Life (2002)
PLOT: A straight-up rock video for a straight-up rock song: just the Foo Fighters kicking out the jams in an amphitheatre. Strobes, slow-motion footage and fish-eye shots ensure all boxes are ticked.
GROHL FACT! The frontman's directorial debut. "Video directing is a scam," he says. "All you have to do is come up with an idea."



TENACIOUS D
Tribute (2002)
PLOT: An unrecognisable Grohl plays the Devil, who challenges joke rock band Tenacious D to write the greatest song in the world. They do, and Grohl duly implodes.
GROHL FACT! When reprising the role for 2006's Tenacious D movie, the make-up took seven hours. Grohl: "You know what got me through? Jägermeister!"



FOO FIGHTERS
Low (2003)
PLOT: Chucklesome sex tape spoof, featuring Grohl and accomplice Jack Black getting drunk and dressing in lingerie in a hotel room. Cue writhing and spanking, all filmed in authentic wobbly-vision.
GROHL FACT! MTV refused to show the video. "I wasn't entirely surprised," says Grohl, "but believe me, that's the edited version."



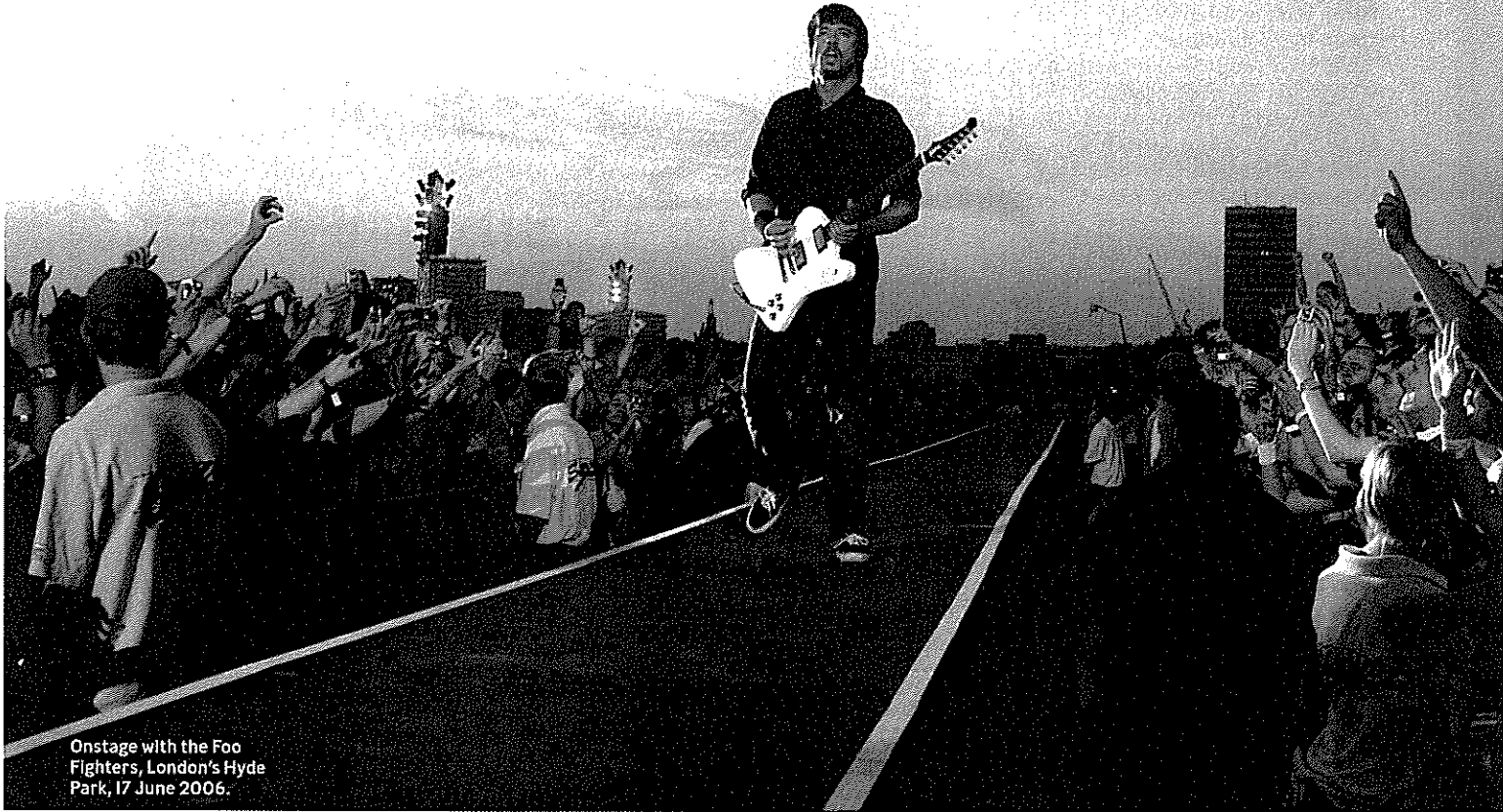
FOO FIGHTERS
Best Of You (2005)
PLOT: Grohl does "arty". Jerky performance footage is interspersed with images of blossoming flowers, newborn babies, forest fires and animals fighting.
GROHL FACT! "The song is about confronting pain in life," says the frontman. Director Mark Pellington was drawn to the theme following the recent death of his wife.



Watch selections from Dave Grohl's videography at www.Q4music.com

'He was a pretty rambunctious kid.'

DAVE GROHL'S MUM



Onstage with the Foo Fighters, London's Hyde Park, 17 June 2006.

→ completely mellowed. "There's other songs on there that sound like [*early-'80s California punk bruisers*] Black Flag," the singer stresses. "At the end of the day, I wanna jump up onstage in front of 80,000 people and make 'em kick up dirt for a few hours. But the quality and the craft of what we've done is far above anything we've ever done before."

Back in the control room, talk turns to a recent outing to see Black Sabbath offshoot Heaven And Hell, a rare guys' night out that involved the hiring of a tour bus to escort the participants to the venue in style. Norton shows Q photos of Grohl sucking on a beer bong, a yard-of-ale-styled appliance that allows an Olympian intake of lager. The singer continues recounting the evening's hairier alcohol-related high points as he leads us upstairs, through a corridor adorned with Nirvana and Foo Fighters memorabilia.

"Anyway," he groans in conclusion, "I woke up the next day and I'd cracked a fucking rib."

He flops down onto a sofa upstairs in the TV lounge/kitchen, kicking off his Vans, tossing his water bottle top across the room.

Your mum said you were a rambunctious kid. Fair?

I was a vandal. Me and my friends, we just wanted to listen to fucking Slayer and take acid and smash stuff. I got sent to Catholic school at 14. It wasn't for religious purposes. Strictly reform. I'd never cracked a Bible in my life and all of a sudden I've started studying the Old Testament. It's like, "Dude, all I did was take acid and spray-paint shit! Why am I here?"

You once said you'd never be doing this now if you'd carried on smoking an eighth of weed a day.

I don't think so. There's something to be said for clarity. I was a miserable pothead, too.

Paranoid?

Yeah. One of the last times I really got high, it was summertime in Virginia and really fucking humid. I was in my bedroom at my mother's house and Jimmy Swanson and I had just smoked, like, six bong hits each. We're sitting there watching David Letterman and I'm itching my arm [*scratches left arm*] cos there's mosquitoes everywhere. After 10 minutes I look down and I have a welt the size of a lemon on my arm. I just had this crazy panic attack. Like, [*whimpers*] "I'm gonna fucking die." And then the next night I tried to get high and I got another panic attack. And then I started getting anxiety at the thought that I was gonna get an anxiety attack. So I just quit.

You've been around a lot of hard drugs. Have you ever been tempted to try coke or heroin?

No. It wasn't my thing. I had a friend who OD'ed on coke when we were 18 years old. Most of us didn't have the money. In suburban Virginia, it was acid and whisky. It wasn't cocaine and tits. I'll never forget the first time I sat around a back lounge of a bus watching people do cocaine. Nobody took their eyes off the tray of coke. Urgh. They were vultures. It just seemed dark and fucked-up to me. I know that the day I get my face in a pile of cocaine is the day that it all goes straight fucking downhill.

You talked about being in therapy before. Do you feel more centred now?

Yeah, well, y'know, everybody has their problems. Like I said, I'm afraid to feel too good. But I count my blessings. I wake up in my beautiful home and I fucking jump out of bed. I don't like to think about the mid-life crisis or how many years are left. I have a lack of foresight in some ways. It's starting to come to me now when I think about Violet. Y'know, who's gonna be standing right next to me the day I die?

But from the outside you've got everything: success, family, money. Why the need for therapy?

A few different reasons. In the past, I went because a relationship [*his first marriage*] wasn't working out and I wanted it to. Around that time Kurt died and then therapy became really deep. And it helped. You have somewhere to go to cry. Or you have somewhere to go to just scream and let it all out. I get to fucking scream that to 11,000 therapists a night. If there's one thing about me... I don't want to burden anybody. I'd rather try to deal with those sort of things myself. So that's part of it.

What specifically gets you down?

There are just times where I feel like... You can imagine that sometimes it does become overwhelming. The responsibility is huge, as the leader of this massive organisation. It might seem like the garage band, but there's times where just everything becomes overwhelming and I need to fucking figure it out. When I was a confused punk rocker in Springfield, Virginia, I had this little boom box tape recorder and every night before I'd

→ go to sleep, I'd talk to it. Talk about all of these things that were on my mind or all of these problems that were bothering me. I'd stop and rewind and go to sleep listening to my problems. [Laughs] Because to be able to hear yourself saying these things helps.

What about the weird by-products of success? Like George W Bush using Times Like These as part of his 2004 re-election campaign.

Well, that was weird. And to me it just seemed like a pretty good example of how completely out of touch he was. You read those lyrics, they're about hope and love and compassion. And look at his administration – war and fear and death. It was laughable. You couldn't have picked a worse song. That's why I jumped on the John Kerry campaign [Grohl provided musical support on various Midwestern dates of the Democratic candidate's 2004 presidential tour]. I thought, "I guess the right thing to do is to go play the song where it's needed, where it makes sense."

In May 2006 an internet rumour circulated that you'd been found dead at your house. Ever get to the bottom of that?

I don't have the slightest idea how that happened. A friend of mine called my cell phone and left a message apologising to Jordyn, saying how sorry they were that they'd heard that I'd died. And I'm listening to this message, like, "What the fuck is that all about?" So I called up my friend and they're like [gasps], "Oh my God, you're alive." But it wasn't that big of a deal. It's kinda funny. A real milestone. You know you've made it [when that happens].

So, you're 38, hurtling towards 40. Have you thought about how you can square being in a rock band with growing older and becoming a dad?

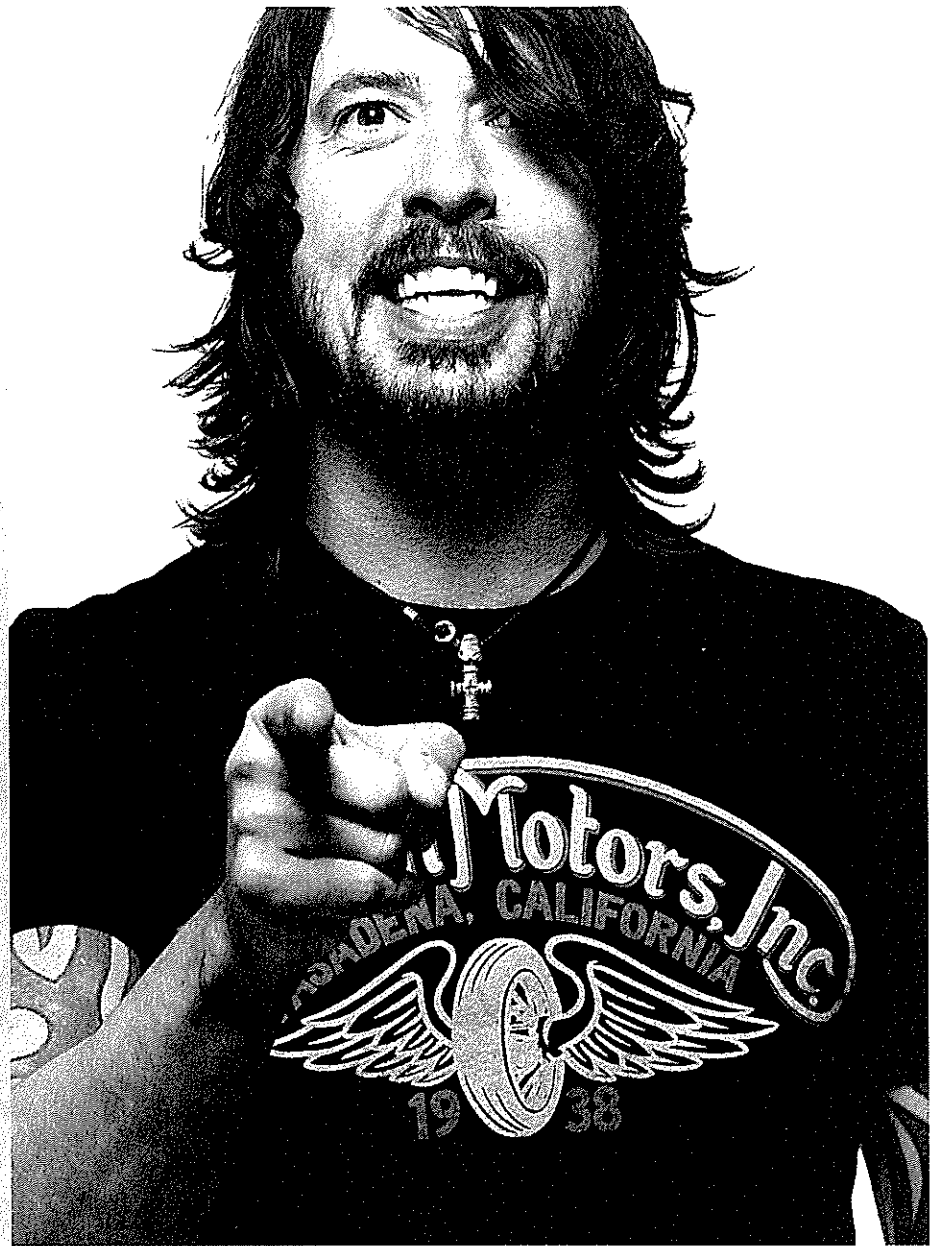
Y'know, one of my big revelations came when we played our first Neil Young Bridge School benefit show in 2000 [Young holds an annual concert in Mountain View, California, to raise money for a local school that assists handicapped children]. Friday night Neil has a dinner at his house for all the bands. I'd never met Neil Young before and I'd thought he lived out on some fucking massive estate and it would be this valet parking/catered event. And, dude, you get to his property and you drive another fucking 20 minutes and you get to this redwood cabin in the middle of a valley and the front door is open and you just walk in and there's Peg [Young's wife] in the kitchen making potato salad. That weekend I sat and I watched his family and it was the light at the end of the tunnel. I realised that these two things – being in a rock band and getting older – are compatible. These two things can happen.

You've said before you've experienced "great things and great tragedies"...

Yeah. But such is life. You just fucking play the hand you're dealt. I mean, there's been incredible highs and incredible lows, but it's not like I feed off of 'em, y'know. They come and go. And I expect more of both.

What would the 18-year-old Dave Grohl have made of the 38-year-old Dave Grohl?

The funny thing is when I was 18 years old I wore fucking T-shirts, jeans and Vans, I had



'The day I get my face in a pile of cocaine is the day it all goes downhill.'

long, greasy hair and I played in a rock'n'roll band [laughs]. Look at me now! But recently we played a show here in Los Angeles for a radio station and they had all these current alternative bands on the bill and I realised I was the oldest fucking dude at the gig. I'm looking at these kids and thinking, "That must be a mindfuck to be selling millions of records at 22." Then I stopped and thought, "Fuck, man, that happened to me." But rather than music being an escape from real life, it just sort of became it. Man, I wouldn't change a thing.

It's nearly 1am and Grohl is gently slurring with tiredness and rubbing his eyes. "Shit, I've got to drive you back to Hollywood," he says. Q offers to get a cab. "No, I'm gonna do it," he insists.

Northridge is a 45-minute drive from West Hollywood. Tonight, Grohl covers it in half

that time, foot to the floor, driving like a rock star for the first time this evening. At one point, he brakes and swerves to avoid another car suddenly pulling into a garage and the dark thought fleetingly passes through your mind that you might die in a car with Dave Grohl at the wheel.

Approaching the Hollywood Hills, and that metaphorical line between his old life and his new, he is suddenly overwhelmed by a life-affirming rush. "I haven't been through these hills in months and now I've done it twice in one night," he cries, his voice rising an octave.

Pulling up outside The Mondrian, Q prepares to say goodnight to David Eric Grohl: the man in the near-permanent sunshine state, periodic black clouds permitting. "You've seen most of the important things in my life tonight, man," he announces, exhausted but clearly buzzing. "This has been... epic." ☺