

HAMMER
PRESENTS



TOOL

THE MAKING OF A METAL ENIGMA



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04 What do cow costumes, chainsaws and Scientologists have to do with Tool? From dive bars to Lollapalooza, this is the inside story of how the LA alt-metallers became massive.

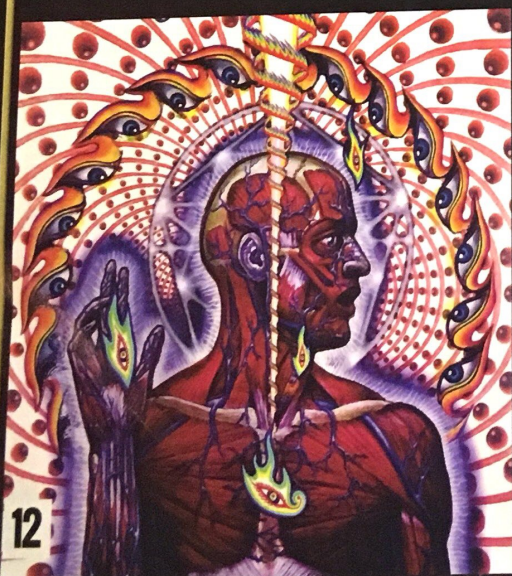
THE STORY OF PRISON SEX

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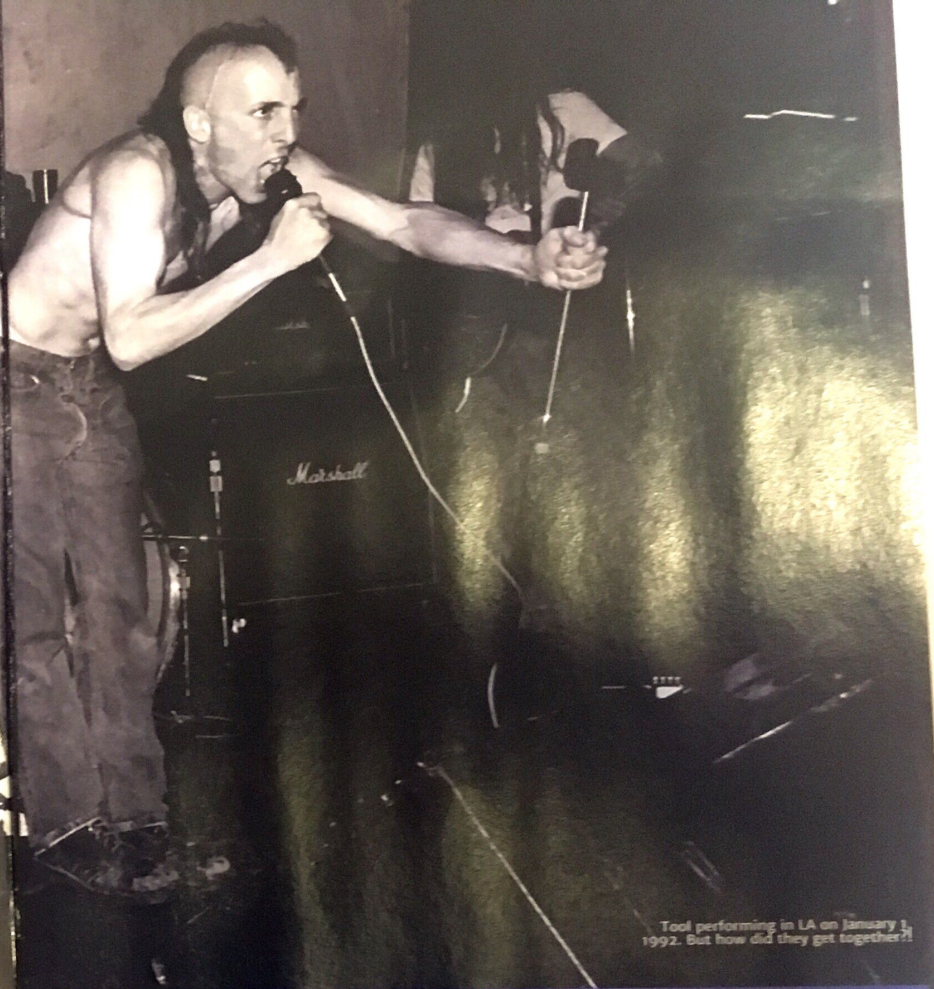
stunned viewers with its stop-motion brilliance. We go behind the scenes of the video for Prison Sex

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Tool performing in LA on January 1, 1992. But how did they get together?!

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Prison Sex won Tool an MTV Music Video Awards nomination and a ban from their channel

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Tool at the Green Jello loft in Hollywood, December 1991

THE BIRTH OF TOOL

When Tool formed and descended onto an unsuspecting Hollywood, alternative music was about to be dragged into a whole new world of dizzying possibilities

WORDS: JON WIEDERHORN • ADDITIONAL REPORTING: ELEANOR GOODMAN

The origins of Tool are as unusual as the band's music, and were strangely dependent on the comedy band Green Jello formed by Hollywood resident Bill Manspeaker in 1981. In the late 1980s, future Tool drummer Danny Carey had moved from Kansas to LA and joined the band Karmageddon, which included Green Jello guitarist Steven Shenar. At the time, Green Jello had a pool of 50 members,

and Steven asked Bill if he could bring his other bandmates to jam. Nine musicians met up at Danny's Hollywood rehearsal space. In no time, Danny was playing with Green Jello, and tipped Bill off about a 6,600 square-foot artist's loft space nearby, which became the band's home base.

"I had a whole scene going there," Bill said. "At three o'clock in the morning there would be 80 people at my house jamming, creating costumes [for Green Jello] and

being creative. Anybody that needed a place to stay could stay, so there were always 10 or 20 people living in the house, and we just fed off each other and played. I didn't care if I had 20 guitar players, 14 bass players and seven drummers all jamming. 'Yeah, sure! Come along. Play!'"

Soon after, Bill met future Tool guitarist Adam Jones, who had a good career working in Hollywood on movie special effects, for films including *Predator 2*,

"OUR MUSIC WAS ALL ABOUT RELEASING THAT PRIMAL SCREAM"

MAYNARD JAMES KEENAN

Terminator 2: Judgment Day and *Jurassic Park*, and had no intention of joining a band full-time. Adam, who was born in Park Ridge, Illinois, started playing guitar after he found an old acoustic lying around his house, and in his teens he played in a couple of no-name bands with his brother before forming The Electric Sheep with future Rage Against The Machine guitarist Tom Morello.

According to Bill, Adam's girlfriend at the time worked in an office with his girlfriend. It wasn't long before they were talking about Green Jello, who wore numerous goofy costumes on stage, including a cow, a pumpkin and a lump of shit (Shitman). Intrigued, Adam's girlfriend told her co-worker that Adam worked on costume effects. At their girlfriends' suggestion, Adam and Bill met to talk shop.

Around the same time, Adam met Maynard James Keenan through a friend the singer was dating. The two musicians bonded about art, movies and music and soon became good friends.

"One day, Maynard played me a tape of a joke band that he was in. I went, 'Maynard, you can sing. You sing good.' So I kept bugging him to start a band on the side with me, just for fun," Adam said in a 2008 interview. "At the time, I just wanted to play music as an outlet. I thought, 'Here's my job working on special effects for movies, and there's my hobby playing guitar.'"

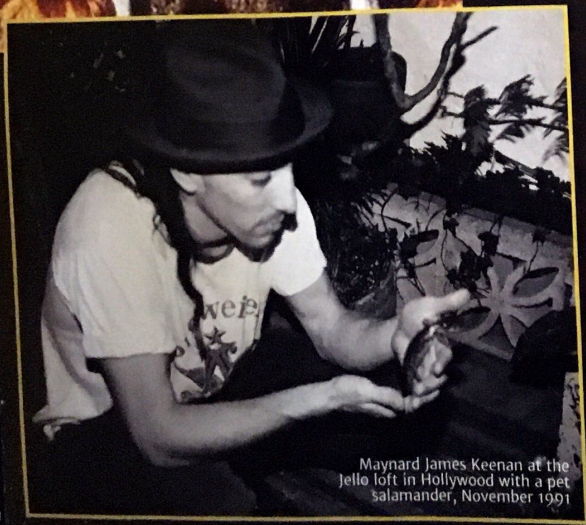
The songs Maynard played Adam were by the band Children Of The Anachronistic Dynasty, which he had formed in Michigan in the mid-80s before he moved to LA. One of the tracks was an early version of *Sober*, unrecognisable from the version that helped break Tool. Hoping to convince Maynard to jam with them, Adam brought him to Bill's loft, where he was introduced to the Green Jello team. Although Adam and Maynard didn't start playing together right away, Maynard, who was engaged by Green Jello's scatological humour, joined the band as their second singer.

"I was very welcoming to everybody," Bill said. "Somebody needs help, you give them food, you give them a place to live, you help them out creatively and you become friends. So Jim moves in, and he joins Green Jello and our little group of artists and musicians. But Jim's a little grumpy. When someone would come to the house, I had to tell them first, 'My roommate Jim is a little grumpy. He doesn't mean any harm, he's a good guy. If he says something rude or weird just ignore it. He's a good person.' So, Jim joins us and is creative. Then Jim cut his hair, and decided his name was going to be Maynard."

Maynard had a blast being a part of Manspeaker's crazy art collective, but at first he was reluctant to do something more serious, which is why he hadn't yet jammed with Adam. As time went by, however, he got tired of working on music video sets all day for less than \$50, so he decided that his creativity might be better applied in a professional band. And being new to the city gave him a different insight than that of many local musicians.

"I had just moved to LA in December '89 and it was strange for me. It felt different," Maynard explained. "It seems like kids that grew up there are kind of jaded because they've seen lots of people come and go and people fail and people succeed. They can't really be excited and let that excitement push them into some kind of success. Going around with friends to clubs, I started noticing that most of the people that were playing music clearly were taking cues from A&R guys or marketing people. I'm an opinionated guy, so I kept expressing that opinion, and a bunch of people said to me, 'Well, if you think you can do better, go for it.'"

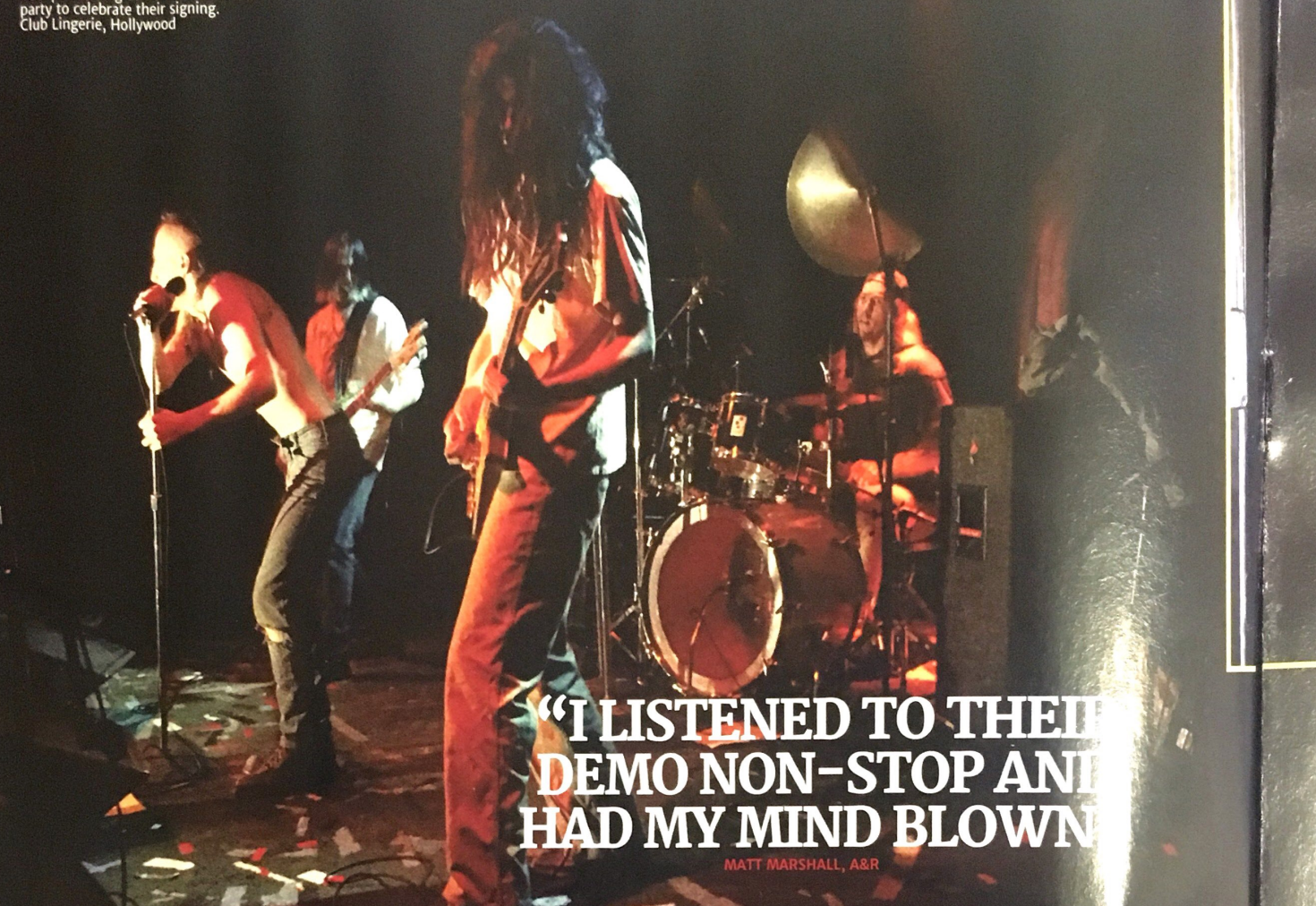
When Maynard agreed to start jamming with Adam, they recruited Maynard's friend Paul D'Amour, who had recently moved from Seattle to LA, to play bass with them. Since Maynard was already playing in Green Jello, and recognised Danny's acrobatic abilities, he tried to get him to join them in Tool. Danny, who was already playing with numerous bands at the time,



Maynard James Keenan at the Jello loft in Hollywood with a pet salamander, November 1991

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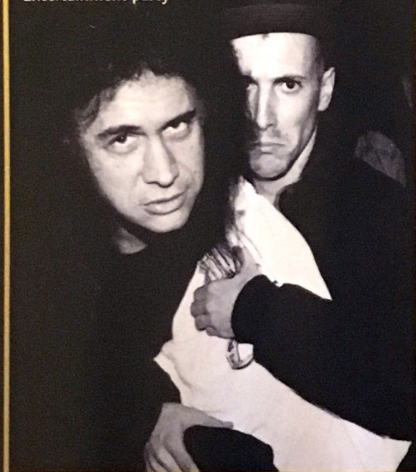
Tool performing at the Zoo Entertainment party to celebrate their signing. Club Lingerie, Hollywood



“I LISTENED TO THEIR DEMO NON-STOP AND HAD MY MIND BLOWN.”

MATT MARSHALL, A&R

Gene Simmons and Maynard James Keenan at the Zoo Entertainment party



declined the invitation, so they flagged down a former drummer of Autograph to join them on drums.

“The guy didn’t show up, and Danny filled in because he felt sorry for us,” Adam recalled. “We were laughing our asses off about it afterward, because Danny said, ‘Well, I’ll sit in on the session, but that’s it.’ He sat in, and then he went, ‘Wow, we should jam again!’ Then he said we should jam a couple of times a week. From that point on he was in.”

It wasn’t long before Tool had a handful of solid songs, which they eventually split between 1992’s *Opiate* and 1993’s *Undertow*. While Tool became more psychedelic and lyrically profound in the late 90s, they were initially motivated by being broke, living in a smoggy, overcrowded city, hating their neighbours and other pet peeves.

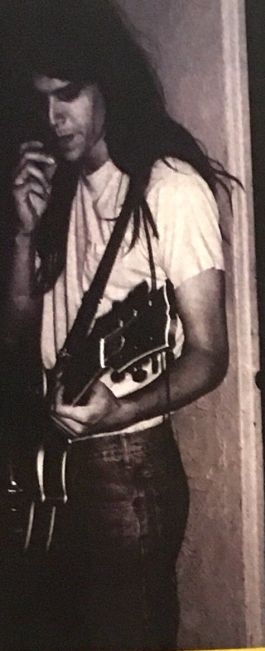
“My musical approach came from a lot of the frustration of living in LA,” Maynard said. “I was busting ass trying to survive. Rent was high, and there was a lot of weird hypocrisy in this dog and pony show that happens within the film and music industries, which I found very awkward. A lot of the original pieces were inspired by that kind of energy. The music was emotionally driven and reactionary. It was all about emoting and releasing that primal scream.”

When they had enough songs written, Tool started booking shows. Their first was at Bill’s loft. His friend Kevin Coogan, who worked at Green Jello’s label, Zoo Records, was there that night, and went to work raving about Tool. So his colleague, A&R man Matt Marshall, agreed to catch one of their shows a couple weeks later, at a venue called Club Lingerie.

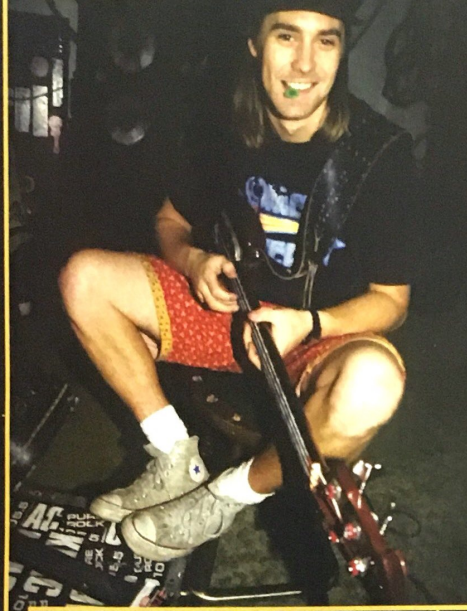
“It was one of their first gigs, so they went on at one in the morning,” Mae recalled. “I was so tired I almost didn’t stay. But luckily I stuck around and saw them playing to about 10 people. And yeah, I was sort of shocked and wondering, ‘Was I just tired, or were they as good as they appeared to be?’ I asked Kevin if he could get a demo for me from Bill. A day or two later he showed up with *that* tape, of a demo they’d made, and I spent a few days listening to it non-stop and having my mind blown.”

Tool were signed by Zoo Entertainment after only their seventh gig. Clearly, there was some luck involved, having met the right people at the right time. But the band’s approach to music was refreshing compared to all the other groups that were trying to get record deals by tapping into the alt-rock/grunge market and the success of Nirvana. Tool had a different kind of aesthetic; each member had a distinct personality that helped propel the band. Maynard was heavily influenced by songwriters like Joni Mitchell and The Swans’ Michael Gira, both of whom injected a lot of emotion and heart-on-sleeve vulnerability into their music. Danny

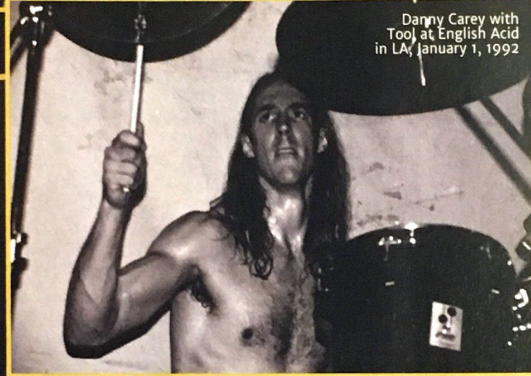
Adam Jones recording with Tool for their debut EP, at Sound City Studios in Van Nuys, LA, December 22, 1991



Paul D'Amour at the Jello loft in Hollywood, November 24, 1991



Danny Carey with Tool at English Acid in LA, January 1, 1992



MJK at Sound City Studios, recording Tool's debut EP

was a highly skilled drummer heavily influenced by proggy players such as Rush's Neil Peart. Paul, who came from the Midwest grunge scene, took a guitarist's approach to bass, giving the songs a melodic anchor. Adam wasn't just a power-chord riffer; he was also like a Surrealist painter who created dizzying pictures with sound, and didn't pander to conventional ideas of song structure.

"There was just no passion in the majority of the bands that were playing around town in Los Angeles," Maynard said. "There was this A&R feeding frenzy out there, and no one was really delivering live.

Then there we were, these four pretty pissed-off, relatively talented – comparatively – musicians. And I'd say we owed a lot to Nirvana. Nirvana opened the door for most music guys around town who were chasing their tails trying to find the next big thing. They hear us, and we don't sound like most of the other stuff going on. So they don't really get it, but they knew that it was different."

Matt Marshall played the band's demo for the president of the label, Lou Maglia, who was impressed. Soon after, the two of them were on a night out together to watch LA hopefuls Dumpster. When that band finished early, Lou agreed to go to see Tool at LA dive bar Coconut Teaszer.

"HE WOULD SPIT IN THE MIC AND HAD A BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAM"

SYLVIA MASSY, PRODUCER

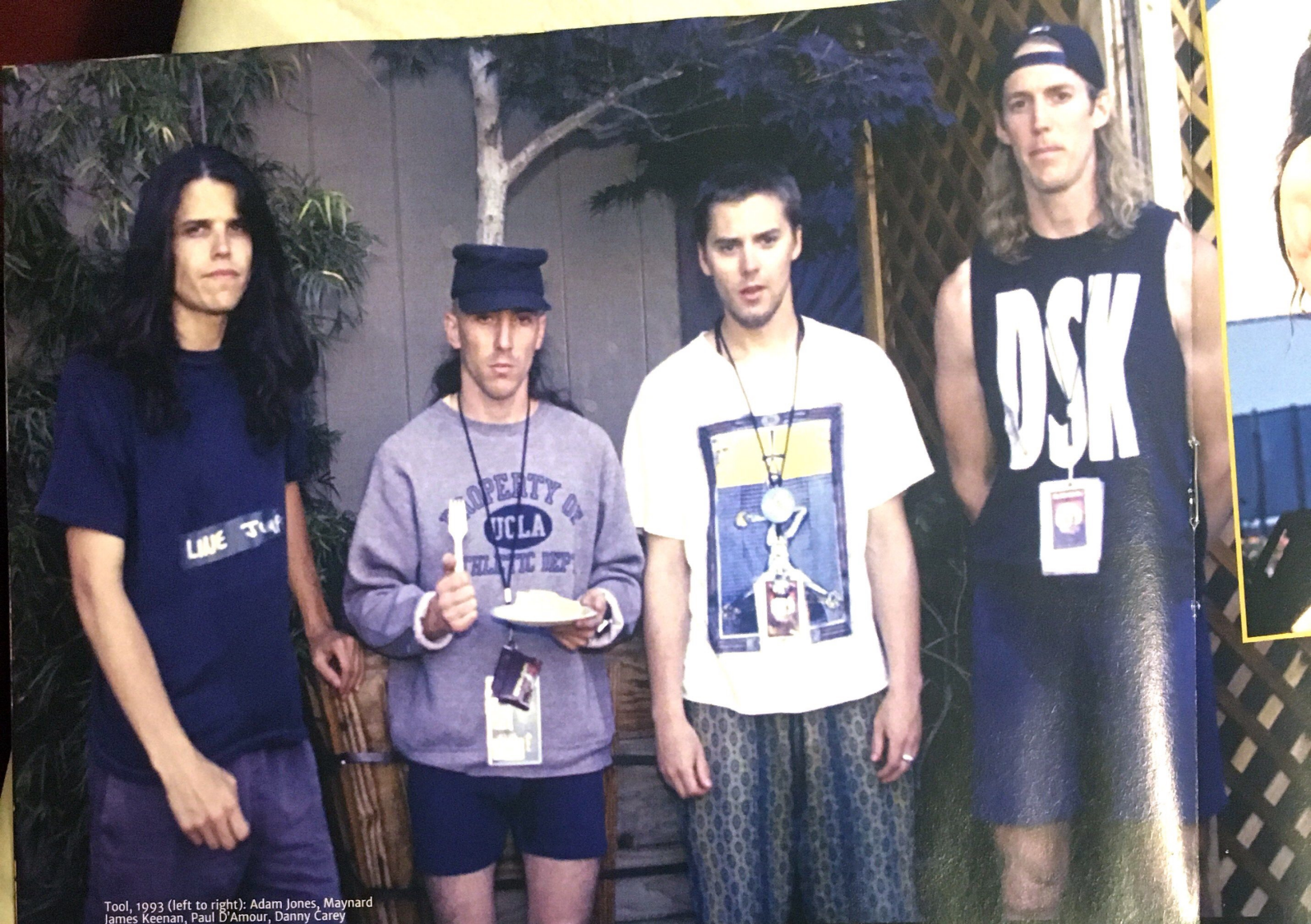
"The guys knew that there was a chance he'd show up," Matt said, "and they put on to this day one of the most ridiculously incredible sets I'd ever see them play. Maynard was super-intense, maniacal and all over the stage, and the rest of the band were just as phenomenal as they always were. Lou was like, 'Get them to my office tomorrow!'"

Zoo Entertainment hired producer Sylvia Massy to work with the band on the *Opiate* EP. Before they were scheduled to enter Sound City studios in Van Nuys, California, the band planned to play a New Year's show at Bill's loft. Knowing it would be a wild gig, they decided to set up professional recording equipment.

"I rented a remote truck with an API console in it and had it in the parking lot of the loft building," Sylvia recalled. "We ran cabling up through the upstairs window to get into the main venue up there, and there was a huge party. Green Jello headlined, but Tool opened. It was a mob scene there, and Maynard was on fire. He really engaged the audience. His stature was like a troll, and he would lean over and spit into the mic, and his shrieks, his screams, were blood-curdling and really exciting. Yet he had kind of a soft, feminine dynamic too, because his voice could be very soft and he had a lot of control over that. So two of the songs we recorded at the show [*Jerk-Off* and *Cold And Ugly*] were used on *Opiate*."

While Tool had written most of the songs on *Undertow* by the time they recorded *Opiate*, they decided to enter the international music scene with a bang, not a whine. So they put their loudest, most abrasive songs on *Opiate* and saved the rest for later. "For some reason, we felt like no one would take us seriously unless we recorded only our most killer, aggressive, in-your-face songs and put them out there at one time," Adam said. "And I think that got us typecast as a metal band right off the bat. It's kind of funny, because the song I thought was the least aggressive, *Opiate*, was the more popular one on the record."

Armed with *Opiate*, Tool headed out on their first proper tour, and later opened



Tool, 1993 (left to right): Adam Jones, Maynard James Keenan, Paul D'Amour, Danny Carey

“WE SMASHED OUR GUITARS AND TORE THEM APART WITH CHAINSAWS”

MAYNARD JAMES KEENAN

some shows for Henry Rollins. “We’d find ourselves in some place like Akron, Ohio, playing a venue that looks like it holds about 500 people, but there are only five people there and those are the guys that are gonna play after us,” Maynard recalled. “It was very awkward, but it didn’t really matter to us, because we were still getting to know each other. So being on a stage like that, hearing what things sound like in different venues, getting used to travelling, I think that was a very important step in our growth.”

Realising that they needed to release a full album soon, to headline clubs and possibly receive more mainstream attention, Tool headed back into the studio with Sylvia Massy, this time splitting their time between Sound City and the dirtier, grimmer Grandmaster Studios.

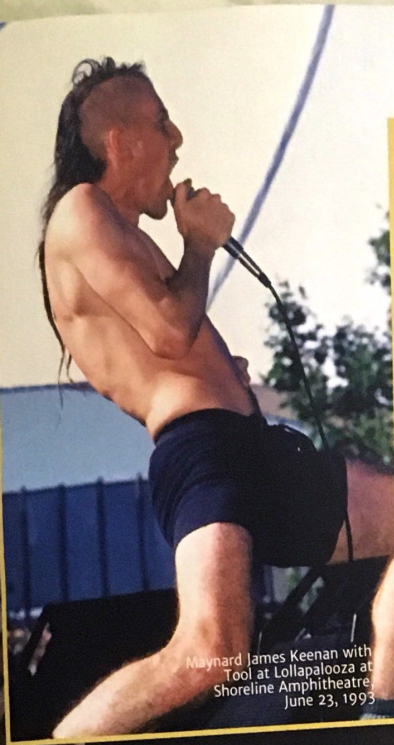
“That was a bit of a rugged place,” Sylvia recalled. “When we were recording at Grandmaster it was raining, and the water was pouring into the tracking room so badly that we had to stop recording because the sound was bleeding into the microphone. It was mouldy and there were mice living in the walls. At one point our monitors stopped working, and it turned out mice had chewed through the wire in the walls.”

Undertow may have been written mostly at the same time as *Opiate*, but sonically there’s a world of difference between the two. *Opiate* was gritty and heavy, balancing crunch with a bit of atmosphere. With songs like *Sober* and *Prison Sex*, *Undertow* did the opposite, allowing Maynard to emote in a way that revealed sensitivity along with pain. The rest of the band found individual spaces to play to their strengths, instead of tumbling all over one another.

“We developed a lot in between those two albums, just as songwriters,” Danny said. “Before, I had a tendency to play everything and anything I could think of at any given moment. With *Undertow*, I started definitely playing more for the song and maturing as a musician and listening a lot more to my bandmates. And they were doing the same.”

Tool spent approximately three weeks in the studio recording *Undertow*. Once they had recorded the main tracks, they decided to experiment and create something rooted in pure chaos and destruction. The result was the album closer, *Disgustipated*. The dissonant, jarring track was inspired by an acoustic anti-vivisection benefit show Tool took part in at the Hollywood Palladium.

“We bought a stack of five-dollar acoustic guitars in Tijuana, Mexico and we came out and started playing Maynard’s *Dick* [found on 2000’s *Salival* box set] for this sold-out crowd that wasn’t at all there to see us,” Maynard said. “Right in the middle of the song, we all grabbed these guitars and we just started smashing them and pulled out chainsaws and tore the hell out of these things. I had a shotgun with blanks in it, and I was shooting it inside the Palladium. Flames were leaping out of the barrel



Maynard James Keenan with Tool at Lollapalooza at Shoreline Amphitheatre June 23, 1993



Maynard with Rage Against the Machine at Lollapalooza, 1995

towards the curtain. I'm saying into the mic, 'This is necessary! Life feeds on life [the repeating lyric that would end up on *Disgustipated*]' and here are all these horrified people there to save the bunnies. They thought we were assholes. Of course, we were amused with ourselves, and that's all that really mattered."

"When we first got approached by this girl to play that show, she was wearing leather Docs and talking about how killing animals was wrong," Adam recalled. "We were like, 'Umm, you're wearing leather Docs,' So we said, 'OK, we'll do it,' but we went the other way with it. Life feeding on life is very natural. So, after we did this big thing, the same girl wearing leather Docs went, 'Oh, that was sooo great.' She totally missed the point!"

For *Disgustipated*, the band bought two pianos for \$100 each.

With the permission of the studio owner, they set up the pianos in the huge indoor parking lot, smashed the instruments and shot them full of holes. Then, with the help of Sylvia Massy and programmer

Eric Anest, they scrambled the sounds of demolition to create a haunting industrial track. It ends with a nine-minute recording of crickets, and a snippet of spoken-word poetry that was left on Maynard's answering machine.

For *Sober*'s record release party, Maynard somehow got the Hollywood Church of Scientology to agree to allow the band to play a special concert on their grounds.

"I kept getting calls from the Center wanting to hear the music, and it was like, 'Oh, I don't want to send them the music,'" said the band's former publicist, Leah Horwitz. "And then they came over and met with us, and they did the concert there, and it went well. It was just an interesting place to play."

"It was all a huge sarcastic thing," Bill said. "Scientology is a huge religion here in Hollywood. So Tool played the Celebrity Center in this gothic-looking castle, and only the super-important Scientologists get to go there and party. Maynard just wanted to sing these disruptive songs in this place of Scientology. He wanted to be annoying."

For all the buzz Tool had created, *Undertow* got off to a slow start. The EP shifted about 2,500 units in its first week. With strong connections from the band's label and management team, Tool

a sudden we were playing to 20,000 people a night. I had so much adrenaline, I'd come off the first song and then it would seem like I'd blink my eyes and it was over. But we got a lot of attention for that, so MTV played our video for *Sober* one time and they got bombarded with requests. We watched our record go from nowhere up to Number 50 on the charts, and it stayed there for two years."

As Tool continued to attract more mainstream listeners – *Undertow* would eventually go double platinum – the band started questioning why its subversive messages were winning over commercial audiences, and whether they had turned the wrong corner somewhere. In addition, personality conflicts erupted, and being in a crowded bus for months at a time exacerbated tensions within the band.

By the end of the tour, the four musicians that had been best friends needed some space, and parted ways with Paul D'Amour due to creative and personal differences.

"Some of the growing pains really started to set in when we were on the road for *Undertow*, where you're starting to figure each other out

and figure out what the nuances were and hang-ups and emotional and mental obstacles," Maynard recalled. "We started to really see that the business is a tough one to fucking navigate and get away from. I think we went from zero to jaded in under 30 seconds. The honeymoon was definitely over."

But the band's creative and commercial success had only just begun.

"THE STUDIO WAS MOULDY AND THERE WERE MICE LIVING IN THE WALLS"

SYLVIA MASSY, PRODUCER

were given a slot on the second stage of the 1993 Lollapalooza festival, which also featured Primus, Alice In Chains, Rage Against The Machine and others. Halfway through the tour, Tool were moved from the second stage to the main stage, where they were one of the highlights.

"At that time, that was the only tour of that sort in the world, which was just mindblowing for us," Danny said. "All of

“When we got signed [by Zoo Records in 1992], the most important thing for us was to have creative control,” Tool guitarist and art director Adam Jones emphasised in a 2008 interview with *Revolver*. “We went, ‘OK, if we take less money can we have control of the music?’ And the label went, ‘Yeah, no problem!’ And we said, ‘If we take even less money can we have final say over the videos.’ And they went, ‘Sure.’”

At the time, Adam was working in Hollywood on set design, make-up and special effects for big-budget movies, including *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* and *Jurassic Park*. He wanted to be able to use his moviemaking acumen to create strange, imaginative clips that were more like short films than conventional music videos.

The stop-motion animation in the band’s weird and wonderful second video, *Sober*, turned many MTV viewers on to Tool, but it was the even more unsettling follow-up, *Prison Sex*, that truly showcased Adam’s cinematic skills. But the creation of the clip was far from effortless. When people from Zoo first saw the treatment, they asked Adam not to make another thematic stop-motion video, especially if it didn’t star the bandmembers.

“There was a lot of banging heads with the record company, because they still wanted to do things in the traditional way,” Adam said. “They’d go, ‘Well, if you’re not gonna be in your video, we’re not gonna pay for it.’ And we’d say, ‘What do you mean? We’re supposed to have creative control.’ It was typical, slimy shit, but in the end they gave in.”

Frontman Maynard James Keenan wrote *Prison Sex* about the tragic cycle of domestic abuse; people who are sexually molested

when they’re young are far more likely to become abusers themselves later in life than those who were never abused. In the first verse, Maynard sings, ‘I’ve got my hands bound, and my head down and my eyes closed / And my throat’s wide open’, introducing the topic in no uncertain terms. In the lines after the bridge, the victim becomes the assailant: ‘I have found some kind of temporary sanity in this / Shit, blood, and cum on my hands / I’ve come round full circle.’

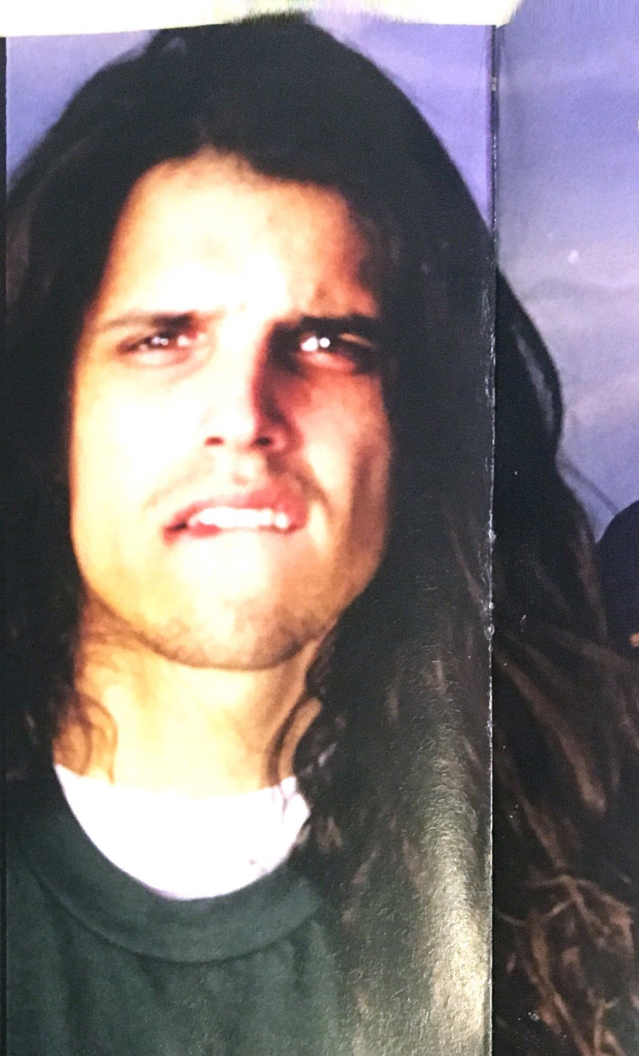
Adam, who directed the *Prison Sex* video, captured the menacing and horrific tone of Maynard’s lyrics by using dark visual metaphors about being physically and mentally dismantled and then abandoned. The clip contained no graphic violence or sex. Instead, the stop-motion animation used monstrous creatures, which wouldn’t be out of place in a Tim Burton film, to convey manipulation, confinement, abuse and hopelessness.

The *Prison Sex* video features a sinuous, sadistic female black leather creature that taunts, terrorises and maims a legless marble robot she keeps in a cement drawer. At one point in the video, the robot sees a wasp buzzing around and traps it in a bottle, suggesting that he, too, is now capable of cruelty.

Adam started working on the *Prison Sex* video with Fred Stuhr, who directed *Sober*. They began shooting in January 1994, and as they exhaustively created footage frame by frame to match the music of the song, they found themselves faced with a situation even more unnerving than their impending deadline.

“We were still there at three in the morning when the ‘94 earthquake [magnitude 6.7, which killed more than 60 people and injured more than 9,000] hit Los Angeles,” Adam recalled. “We were on the second floor of this old brick building

that used to be owned by [American filmmaker] Cecil B. DeMille, and it wasn’t too sturdy. The rooms started shaking, and before I even know what was going on, Fred ran over to stand in the doorway, because that’s what you’re supposed to do in an earthquake. But the other five of us who were there just ran out and ploughed him over and left him lying on the ground. It was the worst thing that’s ever happened to me, and the best thing. When I looked out I could see downtown Hollywood, and all the transformers were blowing. They were popping, so there were these lightning strikes everywhere and it looked



THE STORY BEHIND 'PRISON SEX'

The groundbreaking video for the track was banned by MTV due to its controversial subject matter, but it helped launch Tool’s legacy

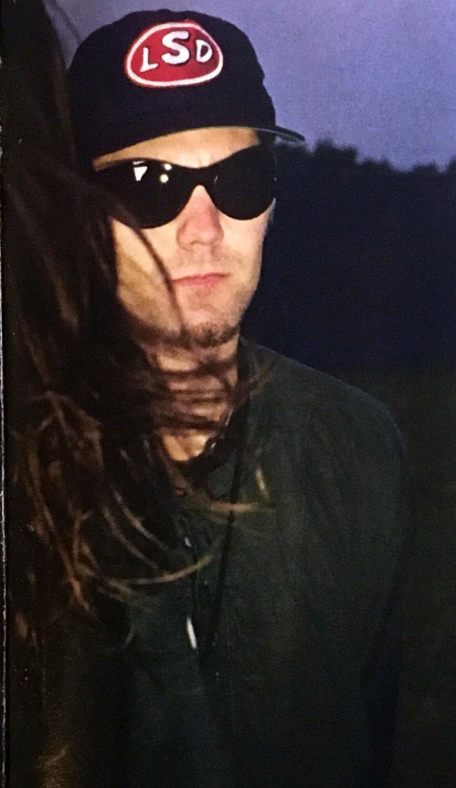
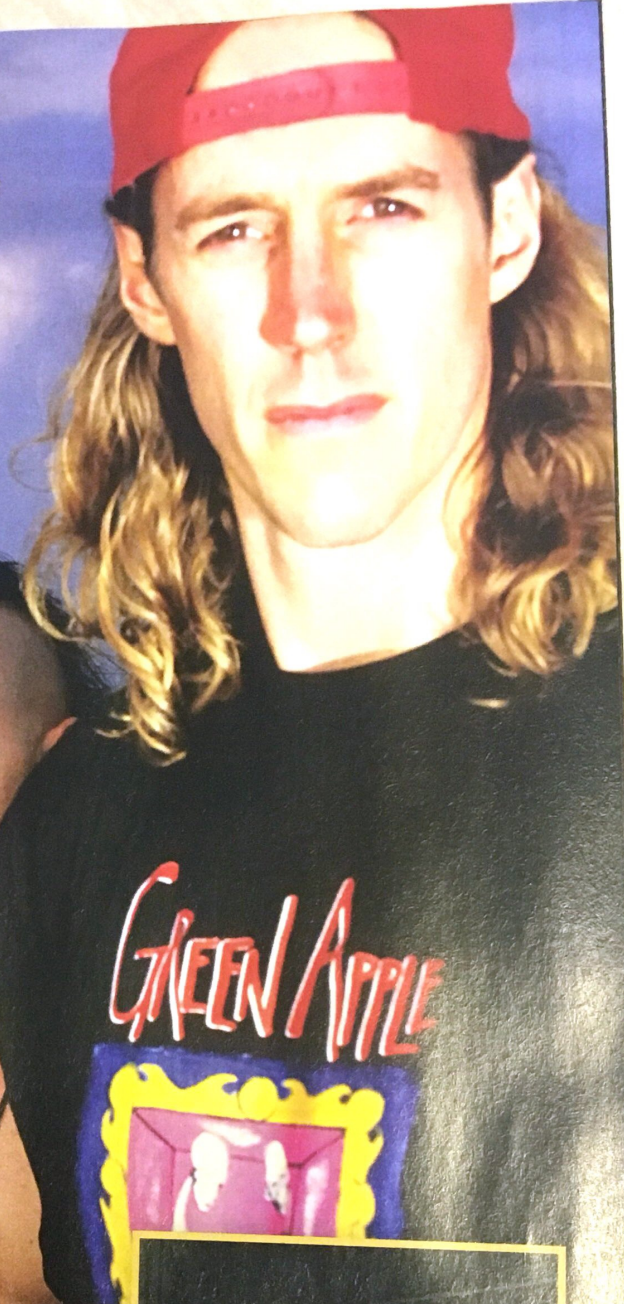
WORDS: JON WIEDERHORN

ADDITIONAL REPORTING: ADAM REES

GETTY: PRISON SEX VIDEO STILL: TOOL/SONY

“THERE WERE LIGHTNING STRIKES AND IT LOOKED LIKE THE CITY WAS BEING BOMBED”

ADAM JONES



like the city was being bombed. It was just so beautiful.”

When the aftershocks stopped, Adam returned to the studio to finish the shoot. Then he called his friend, video director and Failure frontman Ken Andrews, and asked him to help edit the video.

“I was familiar with the song already, so I knew what it was about,” Ken says. “I’d also visited Adam at the set, so I knew what the puppets looked like and I knew it was going to be pretty heavy.”

The footage was all transferred to tape, then Adam met Ken at his home in nearby Woodland Hills, California. The two planned to spend a couple days editing on a rented AVID machine. Of course, they hadn’t anticipated the resulting delays.

“Everything was set up, so I asked Adam what the first shot was,” Ken recalled. “He had one of my guitars and was playing it, so I grabbed a guitar. All of a sudden two days of guitar playing passed and no editing

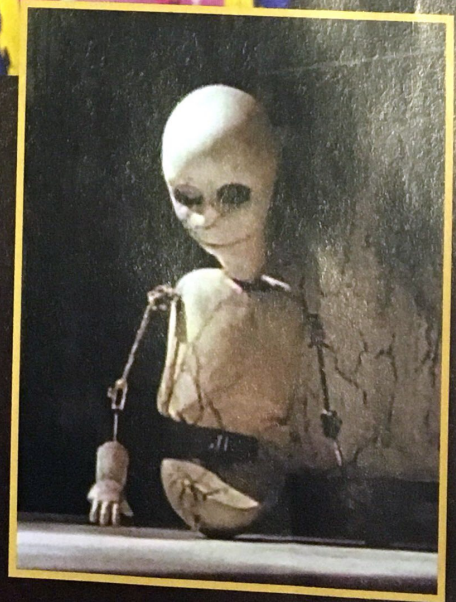
got done. Eventually he said, ‘Shit, we’re running out of time.’ So the last three days of actual work were a bit of a mad scramble.”

Once Adam and Ken started editing, the process was smooth, the results were outstanding and the pair made their deadline and submitted the clip to the record label.

The *Prison Sex* video was widely praised for its artistry and innovation, and received an MTV Music Video Awards nomination for Best Visual Effects. Ironically, the channel banned the clip after just a few plays, due to the station’s standards and practices department deeming it to be too unsettling even though it contained no blood or nudity.

Despite the resulting lack of airplay, being banned by MTV was a feather in Tool’s cap.

“Part of their whole thing has been to do everything different, and they don’t follow the rules, especially the rules of the music



industry,” Ken says. “Pretty early on, they gave off a healthy dose of cynicism and they had their troubles with the industry from day one. They’ve never played nice when it comes to record label stuff and business stuff. They’ve always been very independent.”

ADDITIONAL REPORTING: ADAM REES

GETTY; PRISON SEX VIDEO STILL: TOOL/SONY

THE 10 GREATEST TOOL SONGS

We've been waiting 13 years for that new Tool album, so we've had a lot of time to compile a list of their best songs so far...

BY JON SWEDER

Sober was the track that started the Tool fire



10. SOBER

(UNDERTOW, 1993)

THE BREAKTHROUGH SINGLE THAT SET OUT THEIR STALL

A fairly straightforward introduction to what would become one of the greatest experimental prog/psych metal bands, *Sober* moves to a pulsing bass line and simple beat and slowly builds with fragmented guitar chords, understated fills and brooding vocals. Then, in true Tool fashion, it erupts in a volcano of jagged guitar barbs and fuzzy sustained chords. In the chorus, Maynard sings, "Why can't we not be sober? / I just want to start this over / Why can't we drink forever?" The band have said the song was about a friend of theirs who couldn't write music unless he was loaded.

Tool were still relatively unknown when *Sober* was released in May 1993, but the masterful stop-motion video for the track started gaining traction on MTV when the band were on Lollapalooza that year. It wasn't long before there were as many fans screaming for Tool as there were for festival-mates such as Alice In Chains.



With *Hooker With A Penis*, Tool gave naysayers the finger

9. HOOKER WITH A PENIS

(AENIMA, 1996)

A SATISFYING DIATRIBE AIMED AT TOOL'S DETRACTORS

The aggressive, off-kilter *Hooker With A Penis* is about neither a sex worker nor a phallus, Maynard basically wrote the song about an annoying hipster dick. The dude was representative of the band's early fans that accused Tool of selling out due to their first full-length record, *Undertow*, being more commercially accessible than debut EP *Optic*.

As if to pour salt in the moshpit scrapes and cuts of anyone who felt that way, *Hooker With A Penis* is one of the band's heaviest, most primal songs, building from gauzy guitar feedback into a galvanic rock-out, redolent of a meth-fuelled Jane's Addiction intro. Then, Tool up the ante with a verse that features an insistent, staccato rhythm and shouted vocals that lambast the 'dipshit' that 'thought we were... suckin' up to the man'. In the euphoric refrain, a Danny Carey drum fill segues into the most satisfying part of the song, in which Maynard tells the naysayers, 'You can point that fuckin' finger up your ass.'

8. FORTY SIX & 2

(AENIMA, 1996)

MAYNARD AND CO. RAID

THE PSYCHOLOGY BOOKS

Maynard's first toe-dip into Jungian psychology with Tool, *Forty Six & 2* opens with an ethereal bass line before guitarist Adam Jones provides a counter hook using heavily muted notes. The track slowly builds, and Maynard softly sings about 'shedding skin' and 'wallowing in' his 'confused and insecure delusions for a piece to cross me over or a word to guide me in'.

The '46 and two' in the title refers to the teachings of American mystic Drunvalo Melchizedek, who wrote about how the enlightenment of man will require two extra chromosomes.

Around the two-minute mark, Tool expel the power of the shadow with edgier, more distorted riffs and the band rock out yet again, proving that they'd mastered the art of the structural ebb and flow. They also demonstrated time and again that they had the chemistry to present multifaceted passages without launching into the kind of self-indulgence that drags so many prog bands back to earth.

7. VICARIOUS

(10,000 DAYS, 2006)

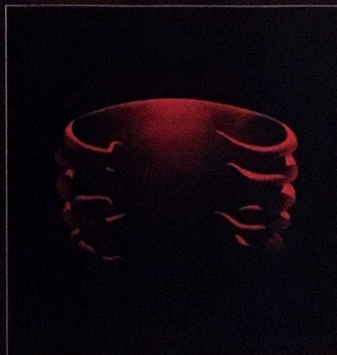
THE NEWS MEDIA GOES

UNDER TOOL'S KNIFE

The first new Tool song in just under five years (which would be made practically insignificant compared to the 13-plus years until the band's upcoming record), *Vicarious* dropped a little over two weeks before the May 1 UK release of *10,000 Days*.

It was worth the wait. A masterful combination of mind-twisting melodies and passages that fragment, dissolve and reconstruct, *Vicarious* exhibits an array of unconventional tempos, tumbling beats and other-worldly guitars. Lyrically it addresses society's innate hunger for atrocity and the media's willingness to satiate the public. 'She used a poison in his tea and kissed him goodbye / That's my kind of story / It's no fun 'til someone dies.' Maynard's commentary might seem sardonic, but during the hooky chorus he says he's no different from anyone else. 'I need to watch things die from a good safe distance.'

Debut studio album *Undertow*, which included *Sober* and *Prison Sex*, was a powerful opening statement.



6. SCHISM

(LATERALUS, 2001)

A TRIBUTE TO THE BAND'S

PUSH-AND-PULL DYNAMIC

While the rest of the band worked on *Lateralus*, examining every song and recording numerous takes, Maynard was getting frustrated. Unlike his perfectionist bandmates, he wanted to embrace spontaneity and roll with his impulses. So while he waited for the rest of the band to finish the music, he formed the side-project A Perfect Circle, which helped satisfy him artistically but caused friction with the rest of Tool. From the start, the tension and disaffection resonate in the lyrics of *Schism*:

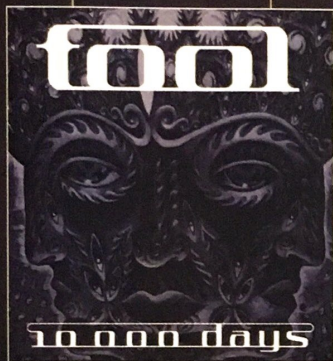
'I know the pieces fit / 'Cause I watched them fall away.' By the middle of the song, right before the band veer into a particularly proggy excursion, Maynard realises that, as much as he hates it, the discord is an important part of Tool's musical aesthetic: 'The poetry that comes from the squaring off between / And the circling is worth it / Finding beauty in the dissonance.'

5. 10,000 DAYS (WINGS PT. 2)

(10,000 DAYS, 2006)

MAYNARD'S EMOTIONAL TRIBUTE TO HIS LATE MOTHER

10,000 Days' title track is the second and final part of a heartfelt, 17-minute dedication to Maynard's late mother, Judith Marie. A religious woman who suffered a brain aneurysm that left her wheelchair-bound and severely impaired at the age of 31, Judith died approximately 10,000 days after she became disabled. Although the track pulses with a sense of menace and foreboding, most of it is fairly downtempo. The song rises and dips in intensity, as Maynard rails against 'ignorant siblings in the congregation' - hypocrites in the church community who behaved badly towards his mother. He also praises her religious dedication, and admits that while he's always been a non-believer, he will now embrace her faith ('*You were my witness, my eyes, my evidence*'). It's moving stuff.



The title track of *10,000 Days* is a heartfelt dedication to Maynard's mother

4. PARABOL/ PARABOLA

(LATERALUS, 2001)

THEIR MIND-BENDING DOUBLE-HEADER

Starting with deep flanged bass, elegiac guitars and soft vocals, Tool conjure a meditative state for *Parabol*. At the end, Maynard sings, '*We barely remember what came before this precious moment / Choosing to be here right now, hold on, stay inside*,' suggesting that the present is all that matters and, perhaps, the past and future are illusory.

As the track begins, an incendiary rhythm practically obliterates what came '*before this precious moment*'. Adam Jones leads the barrage with pulsing chords and a circular hook. The rest of the song, a combination of tribal drums, trenchant riffs and thought-provoking vocals, is the perfect backdrop for Maynard's musings over the meaning of existence or lack thereof: '*This body holding me reminds me of my own mortality / Embrace this moment, remember we are eternal / All this pain is an illusion.*'

3. AENIMA

(AENEMA, 1996)

A BIBLICAL LESSON IN

CUTTING SARCASTIC

The title track of Tool's second full-length record, *Aenima* is a play on the words 'enema' and 'animus'. Fittingly, the song is about a catastrophic geological event that flushes Los Angeles into the ocean, and with it the artifice and consumerism that Maynard despises.

Fortunately, the song is just as apocalyptic as the lyrics. Caustic, propulsive and just off-kilter enough to engender vertigo, *Aenima* seesaws between moody darkness and incendiary, apocalyptic light, peaking with the fiercely delivered tongue-in-cheek line, '*Learn to swim, see you down in Arizona Bay*'. For those who think Tool can't jam, there's a lengthy progressive middle section that floats like driftwood, until Danny Carey plays a section of tribal drums that segues into a dizzying, effect-laden guitar solo. *Aenima* is full of contempt, as Maynard expresses animosity for 'lattes', 'hairpieces', 'lawsuits', 'hip gangster wannabes', 'junkies' and 'Prozac'.

2. THIRD EYE

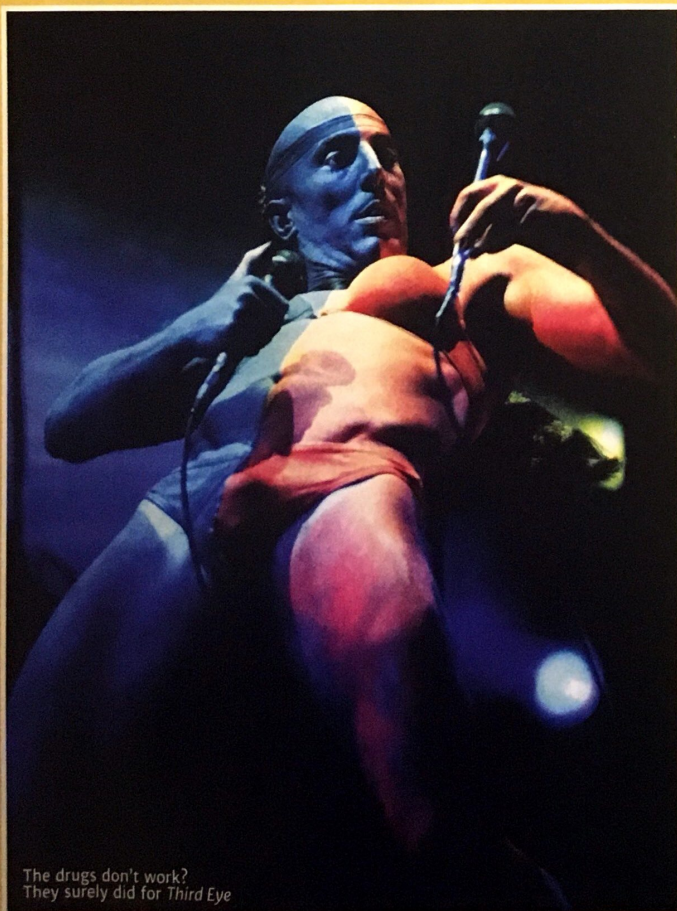
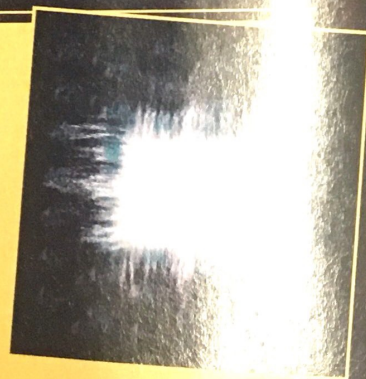
(AENEMA, 1996)

THE PSYCHEDELIC

MINDFUCK YOU ALWAYS WANTED

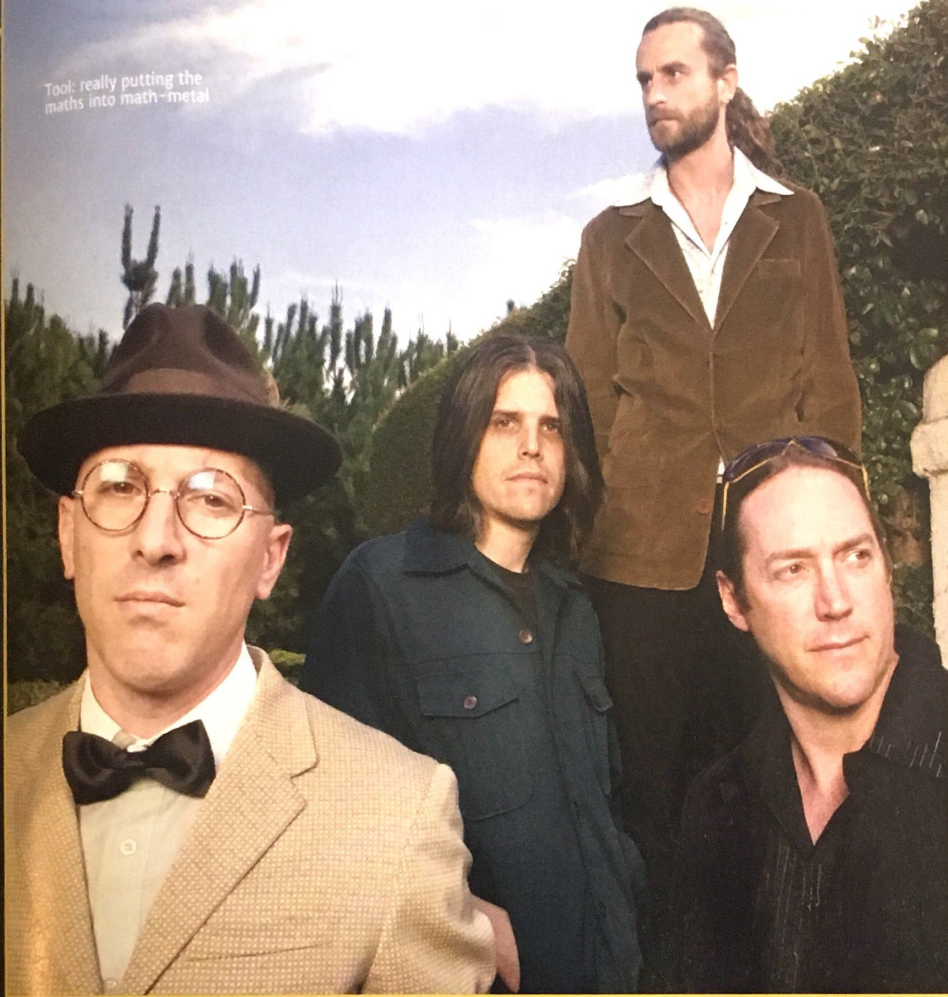
If there was any doubt that at least some members of Tool use psychoactive drugs as a tool for mind expansion, the track *Third Eye* dispelled that notion. Beginning with a strong drug endorsement by the late comedian Bill Hicks, the song presents an abundance of imagery that was likely to have drawn from vivid psychedelic experiences ('*I stick my hand into his shadow, to pull the pieces from the sand*') and seems to include a reference to peyote ('*But the eyes seem so familiar / Like phosphorescent desert buttons*').

But it's the music that presents the most direct evidence that *Third Eye* is about the spiritual side of hallucinogens. The song is a nearly 14-minute mindfuck that starts with a steady heartbeat and whooshing sounds and becomes increasingly trippier. Like many Tool songs, *Third Eye* presents a variety of syncopated beats, passages that rise and fall in intensity and moments of (literally) screaming revelation. But it is even more of a psychedelic journey, with extended guitar solos, dizzying sound effects, disembodied whispers and the repeated, jarring scream: '*Prying open my third eye!*'



The drugs don't work? They surely did for *Third Eye*

Tool: really putting the maths into math-metal



1. LATERALUS

(LATERALUS, 2001)

HOW TOOL TURNED A COMPLEX MATHEMATICAL EQUATION INTO THE GREATEST WORK OF PROG METAL

Most math-metal bands choose to use unconventional time signatures and abrupt rhythmic shifts, but would likely fail to solve basic algebraic equations. Then there's Tool. Self-confessed nerds, the members are acutely aware of how and why structural shifts affect songs, the relationship between sound and emotion, and how to use something called the Fibonacci sequence to create an astonishingly effective and beautiful track.

OK, you might want to take notes. In around 1202 AD, mathematician Leonardo Fibonacci discovered a numerical sequence that appears structurally in nature and, when mapped out, expands infinitely outwards to form a spiral pattern. Scientists and mathematicians have determined that the equation for the Fibonacci sequence and its relationship to what has been called the 'golden ratio', Phi (1.618), can be

found throughout nature, science and art in structures including spinning galaxies, fractals, the Giza plateau, the *Mona Lisa*, blossoming sunflowers, nautilus shells, human DNA, the cochlea of the ear and people's faces.

In basic terms, the Fibonacci sequence is the sum of two numbers in sequence, starting from zero followed by 1, in which each subsequent number is found by adding up the two numbers before it. The number increases in a non-linear way as the sequence is extended. The sequence starts 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13... because $0+1=1$, $1+1=2$, $1+2=3$, $2+3=5$ and so on.

How the fuck does this relate to Tool? Well, when they were creating *Lateralus*'s title track, they used the Fibonacci sequence (at first unintentionally) directly to

create the spiralling monolith of sound that is a microcosm for the experimentation and adventurousness of the band. It all started when bassist Justin Chancellor wrote a bar of nine notes, a bar of eight notes and one of seven. The idea was to create the sensation of the riff folding in on itself like a spiral. When the band realised that 987 is the 17th number of the Fibonacci sequence, Maynard viewed it as a sign, and took flight to create lyrics constructed of words, the syllables of which follow the Fibonacci sequence. Sticking to the theme, the song addresses the seeming randomness of evolution and Maynard's desire to stop 'overthinking, overanalysing' and instead embrace whatever nature brings his way. He also expresses the desire to 'feel inspired, to fathom the power, to witness the beauty, to bathe in the fountain, to swing on the spiral'.

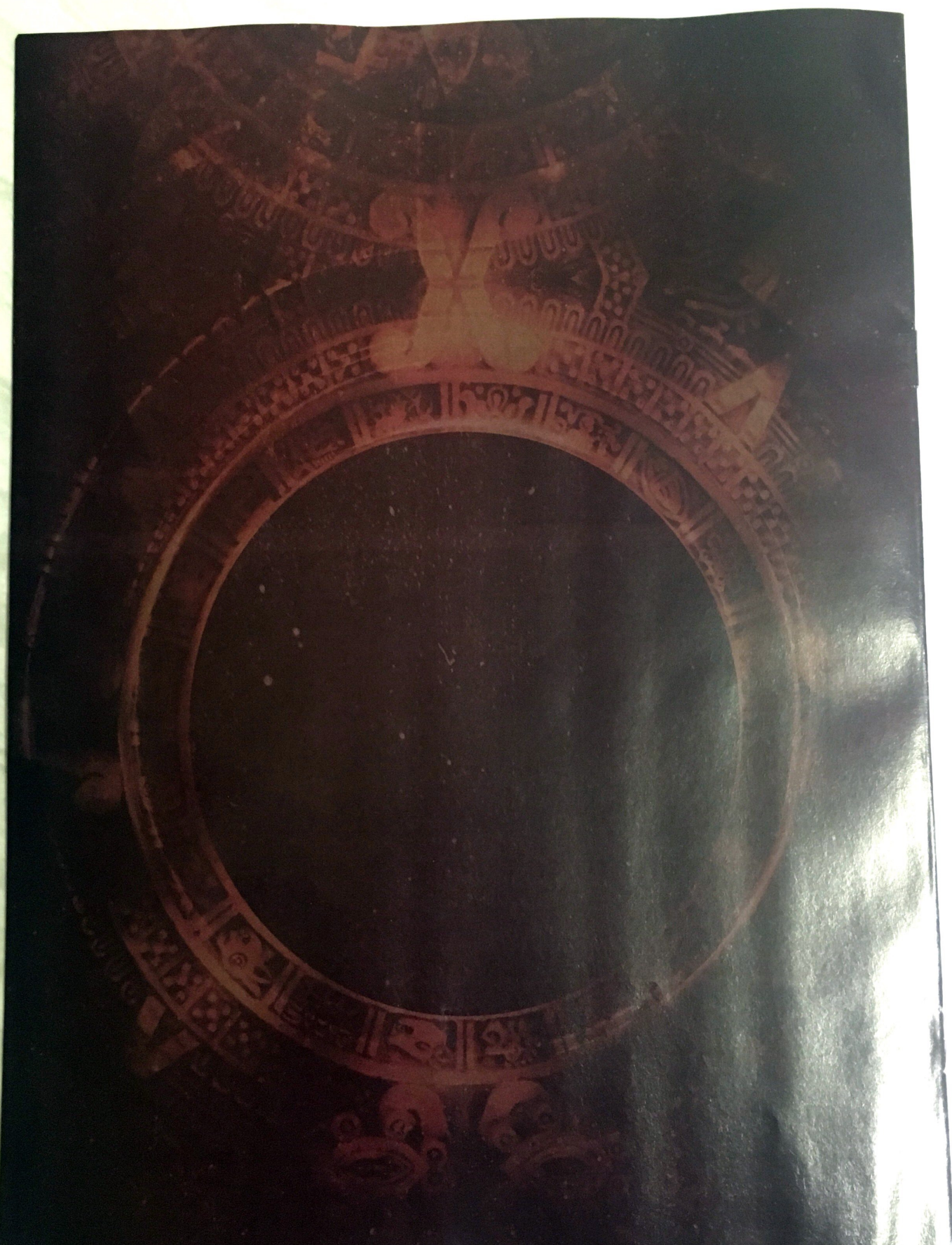
Beyond its impeccable construction and structure, *Lateralus* is an emotionally resonant track that pulses with life, exhibiting less musical darkness and more lyrical optimism than many of Tool's songs. Musically, the band connects with a soaring spirituality enhanced by contrast and diversity. At different points, Adam Jones, Justin Chancellor and Danny Carey play in different time signatures, and the way their passages roll over and twist around the beats is awe-inspiring, revealing their almost unfathomable chemistry to connect musically despite personal differences.

The musical depth is impressive as well. Adam plays a variety of styles including melancholy textures, steady chugs, angular, proggy riffs and ringing open chords, dropping out at times to let Justin carry the tune. Throughout, Danny propels the song with complex beats and fills comparable to Rush drummer Neil Peart crossed with the Mickey Hart Band.

Although it could've been a contrived exercise in self-indulgence, *Lateralus* revealed Tool's talent, creativity and mathematical ability to turn the 'golden ratio' into their *raison d'être*. Now, they just have to top it.

Tool did it by numbers on their number-one song





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