

ROCK AND ROLL COMICS DVD | April 25, 2012 | ADD A COMMENT

# Mojo Nixon on The Story of Rock and Roll Comics: Truth is boring



The last great white buffalo Photo credit: zimbio.com



Video: The Story of Rock and Roll Comics trailer

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Mojo Nixon appears on the DVD of [The Story of Rock and Roll Comics](http://www.amazon.com/The-Story-Rock-Roll-Comics/dp/B0071BY10M) (released earlier this week). By phone, he discussed Rock and Roll Comics, the lawsuits brought against *Rock and Roll Comics*, and its founder [Todd Loren](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Todd_Loren).

*Give a little background about Rock and Roll Comics for those who are not familiar with it.*

It was a comic book company here in San Diego run by this guy named Todd (Loren) doing unauthorized comic books of rock and roll bands, famous ones and not-so-famous ones. I am in one of them. They did one on [ZZ Top](http://ultimateclassicrock.com/zz-top-la-grange-top-100-classic-rock-songs/). The first half is all ZZ Top and the last 10 pages is about me. Mine is supposedly the only authorized one and it's all lies. Well it's all true to the Mojo myth (laughs). They got me on the moon with a case of gin. Me and [Debbie Gibson](http://debbiegibsonofficial.com) in a hotrod. There was also this whole First Amendment freedom of speech issue. Is it against the law? Does a comic book company have to get permission of the artist before they do a comic book on them? It's a good question. If I wrote a book about ZZ Top, I wouldn't have to get their permission. I may not have their cooperation, but I wouldn't need to get their permission. What's a comic book? It's a visual book. There were lawsuits. Guess what. [New Kids on the Block](http://youtu.be/tblEwWYz-c) and [Axl Rose](http://blog.seattlepi.com/people/2012/04/24/steven-adler-%E2%80%98i-don%E2%80%99t-want-anything-to-do-with-axl-rose%E2%80%99/) sued. I'm glad to be part of it.

*Why do you think so many bands didn't have a sense of humor about that?*

I think a lot of times it had to do with money and the manager. A lot of times the band might not even know. Some people get rich by being a--holes, by controlling the product. They get it beat into them. It doesn't hurt a thing to let everybody record. Most people are going to buy the record and the outtakes album and they're going to download all the things. There's no reason to be an a--hole like [Metallica](http://www.nme.com/news/metallica/63361) and

fight the recorders. In my case, I'm a cult artist. My job is to keep the cult happy. Record away. I understand if you're a giant million-dollar machine, but there's no reason to be mean. There's no reason to be like this. Aerosmith sucked so bad after Rocks. It can only help them to have a comic book.

*You mentioned in the DVD that Todd wasn't making millions of dollars. You would think that these guys would understand that there's not a lot of money in self-publishing.*

If you're the hot band, you make a lot of money selling t-shirts, concert tickets. There's a lot of money in writing and publishing songs. I don't know how many he made, whether it was 5,000 or 10,000. What's a big seller for a comic book? It can't be that big. Comic books are also a part of the post-war rock and roll revolution. Comic books, rock and roll, dragsters, juvenile delinquents, James Dean movies, they all go together. They're all part of the same thing. A rock and roll band should be glad to be a part of it.

*You'd think that rock bands would be behind a guy using his freedom of expression.*

People want to control everything. The manager wants to control everything. Some bands, the only way you get their art...it says [Rolling Stones \(http://youtu.be/iLddJ1WceHQ\)](http://youtu.be/iLddJ1WceHQ) and it's got the tongue on it...the only way you can get their art is to buy it. Then you're not a band, you're just a giant corporation. You're U.S. Steel, Microsoft or anybody. You're just a bunch of a--holes with lawyers. And whatever rock and roll spark you had is gone. It's been replaced by a machine and a team of songwriters who emulate what they think you usually write.

*Tell me a little about Todd Loren. He was obviously a First Amendment crusader and he didn't care about pissing off rock stars. He also didn't seem to care about pissing off people who worked for him.*

He was kinda crazy. That's why I liked him. When all the nuts get together at the edge of town, Todd was one of them. He was one of those guys that was always looking for a fight. I figured out we're fighting the same guy. We're fighting the man, the power, the corporate hierarchy that controls everyday life, whether we want them to or not. He was a tad bit prickly and confrontational. I don't know how many comics they made, but it couldn't have been that many. They didn't sell half a million or even 100,000. He was making a little money. Bands thought "You're making money off of our good name. We spent all this time and energy." But you could also set up a deal where you do the book together. We'll give you a percent of the profits and you'll have some input into the content. Then you have the band that wants all the profits and complete control.

*[KISS \(http://youtu.be/kNGNLo8K6Fk\)](http://youtu.be/kNGNLo8K6Fk) cooperated with Todd Loren on the whole thing.*

They obviously understood. They've been about marketing more than music from the get-go. That old Jewish lady that's in the band...what's her name? He looks like that. He looks like he oughta be on the set of that [Coffee Talk thing on Saturday Night Live \(http://www.hulu.com/watch/4118/saturday-night-live-coffee-talk\)](http://www.hulu.com/watch/4118/saturday-night-live-coffee-talk). *How did it come about that yours is the only authorized bio in the history of Rock and Roll Comics?*

Because I was in San Diego. Their offices were in Hillcrest where I used to live. Me and Bullethead wrote down all this crazy s---. I told Todd "Feel free to expand and make me bigger and better." He did. He had some good cartoonists to draw some really funny pictures. It was good. It was fun. I was glad I was in it with ZZ Top. Billy Gibbons is a musical genius. I thought it was cool. It was just part of the Mojo myth. I'm not interested in the truth. The truth is boring. The truth is in the cubicle and you get a lot of lint on you. The myth is great.

*You said something on the DVD that really hit home with me. You talked about people dying in cubicles and having their souls sucked out. I know that feeling.*

I'm just glad I haven't been captured. I'm like the last great white buffalo out here on the plains hoping they don't catch me. I transitioned to radio. When I worked for [Clear Channel \(http://www.clearchannel.com\)](http://www.clearchannel.com), I played classic rock and I had to play [Journey \(http://youtu.be/2NQIPVgLMUg\)](http://youtu.be/2NQIPVgLMUg) and [Styx \(http://youtu.be/e5MAg\\_yWsq8\)](http://youtu.be/e5MAg_yWsq8), it just chipped off a little bit of my soul every time I played that mother-----r from Journey. I hate that guy. If he was here, I'd strangle him right now.

*Do you think we'll see anything like Rock and Roll Comics again?*

Oh yeah. There's a new group of teenagers that are horny and crazy being produced every year. There's a new group of kids discovering masturbation and all the things that go with it. There will always be the wild, the crazy, the free, the outsider, the nutjob. They're always coming. Every now and then they bubble to the top and get some light on them. For the most part they're in the meth lab in the dark in the distance from mainstream culture. It's a long way from true rock and roll to American Idol. American Idol is the devil. That's why it's the number one show because the devil wants the most people watching when he comes back. Jesus ain't coming back. The devil's coming back on [American Idol \(http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/tv-column/post/american-idol-2012-elise-testone-gets-the-hook/2012/04/27/gIQANjhVkt\\_blog.html\)](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/tv-column/post/american-idol-2012-elise-testone-gets-the-hook/2012/04/27/gIQANjhVkt_blog.html) real soon. (laughs)

*That would give me a reason to tune in.*

(laughs) The devil sounds a lot like James Brown.

*Anything else you want to add about Rock and Roll Comics?*

They used a couple of my songs in there. When they originally did it, they didn't have any money. I said, "Look, I don't know if this thing will ever get made. You can use my songs. If you make any money, send me some. If you don't, I'll kill you. I'm not going to worry about that. I'm not going to worry about the lawyers. Some people would say, "You're not big enough. Your songs aren't big enough." I think having fun and being nice is better than being a litigious a--hole. That's all I got to say!



**Gary Schwind**, Orange County Music Examiner

Gary is a music fanatic, highlighting the best in OC bands, venues, and music events. He is the author of "A Gopher I Couldn't Defuse," an illustrated collection of his weekly short story, the Uncle Sal Chronicles.