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## Exiting the Flipper Universe

By Krist Novoselic in [Krist Novoselic: Contention & Conscious](#)

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Krist Novoselic's column runs every Tuesday on the Daily Weekly.

Last summer, after a show with Flipper in Portland, I was carrying my bass amp head to my truck when a kid stopped me by the door. "Hey, Krist, will you sign this? Nirvana changed my life," he said, and handed me a well-worn *Nevermind* CD. With my hands full, I set the amp down, signed the CD, thanked him, then excused myself, as I was in the middle of working.

There was a time in my life – when I was that kids' age – that Flipper did the same for me. And I never dreamed that I'd one day play bass with the band, much less put out a Flipper record, like we did with *Love* last month.

But it was in that moment in Portland I realized playing bass with Flipper wasn't going to work out.

Let's go back to 1983 when [King Buzzo](#) lent me this album called *Generic Flipper*. Instead of sped up Punk, the music was slower and kind of weird. I didn't know what to think about it until the third time I gave it a spin. I was floored! Wow, I thought, this music is as heavy as anything. It was some kind of epiphany that revealed the meaning of Punk for me - this music is its own world and as valid as any other.

My life has many blessings. Sometimes I'll assess things and ask myself: "Will wonders ever cease?" In 2006 I got an invitation from the band that led me to enter the Flipper universe.

There was a fellowship that led to inspiration. Playing with the band was compelling. There's nothing worse for a band than the feeling that playing is a chore and I never felt that way. I feel like we caught the muse and the result was a brand new Flipper record.

Having been a fan of the band and influenced so much by their music, I knew how to approach the bass playing. Instead of trying to explain how I played the bass in Flipper, I'll let the music do the talking on the new record.

To work on the album, I'd either travel down to Oakland to play or the band would come up to Washington. When we were up here, we'd call it band camp. It was communal living in the country, and between jamming and recording we'd share meals around a long table.

Mr. Jack Endino, who also recorded Nirvana's debut, *Bleach*, (released 20 years ago this week), recorded and mixed the Flipper record. Jack knows how to keep a band organized through the recording process, which ensures a product at the end of the session. (We also recruited Jack to record our live record, *Fight*.)

I'm happy and even honored that we were all peers in the Flipper universe.

But, the reality is that I used to play bass in one of the biggest rock bands in the world. And the life I've since grown accustomed to didn't always parallel my experience with the band. Flipper is true Punk Rock, and I lived that with them. I drove my own rig – with gear in the back – to shows. I set up my amp, tuned my bass - to Falconi - and played my heart out every night.

No matter how sincere my aims were, there was this disparity that was lurking behind the scenes. When I had to set the amp down to sign that autograph, I knew that things were not going to work out regarding touring with Flipper.

You might be asking - why don't you hire a roadie? It's not about carrying gear. It's about the "big rock guy" having his own roadie, thus the disparity is revealed again. And it's a slippery slope from there. I never put a dime into Flipper and the fellows in the band can be proud that the "rock guy" never floated their boat financially.

I'm happy with *LOVE FIGHT*, and I hope it endures. *Generic* will always be the band's opus and I'm happy for the opportunity to have added to the group's catalog, and for the fellowship that endures to this day. I wish my friends the best with their new bass player, and I can't wait to see them live soon.

As for me, there's election reform, pressing apples, [SeattleWeekly.com](#), and perhaps whatever musical endeavor comes next. If it's compelling - I'm in!

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