

White Zombie Adjunct

By Mike Makuch

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Scintillating as that press release was, I feel compelled to recount to you, my faithful readers, of the time I saw White Zombie live in '95 at Hara Arena.

In 1995 I worked a number of jobs and one of them (the best of them!) was at Hara Arena as a caterer/beer pourer and runner. In my catering capacity I was required to wear a white long sleeve, button up shirt complimented with a black bow tie and black pants. Dressed as such, I served people their meal with a smile. I never smiled more, though, than the time I catered backstage for a White Zombie concert in 1995. This was the first time that I got to cater backstage for a concert. Which was awesome! I'd seen a lot of concerts at Hara, so it was a real treat to be able to be backstage and part of the action. I would be able to experience the concert experience in a completely different way, so I accepted the opportunity when presented to me with relish.

My day started early, I can't remember exactly, it was probably 7 or 8 a.m. It is necessary to have the catering lounge set up by the time anyone shows up, which was 9 a.m. After transporting food and beverage a great distance as the kitchen was a bit of trek (Hara is huge!), we finished setting up as the crew arrived.

There were many great and memorable things that happened that day. Sean Ysault, the beautiful female bass player for White Zombie, came into the lounge to eat. Against the wishes of my boss, I was told not to talk to the crew or band members, I approached Sean for an autograph, all the while asking her inane questions: such as who did the art for the backstage passes, for instance. (Rob Zombie created the art according to Sean, in case you're interested.) She signed my pass and went on her way, sitting with a couple guys who, in retrospect, were probably the guitar player and drummer and possibly wondering why I didn't ask for their autographs, as well. Ummm. Oops. By the way, having a backstage pass was cool, in and of itself, as I'd never been able to land one previously as a patron to the multitude of shows I'd seen in Hara's hallowed halls. And, for your information, being backstage is not the good time party scene, as portrayed in many movies and TV. In fact, it's all business, what with the crew running around getting everything ready for the show. Which brings me to the ultimate highlight of the day: seeing White Zombie perform a handful of songs in the course of a stage check.

After seeing Rob way down the hall standing in front of his own personal dressing room briefly, I killed time in the lounge wondering if he would partake of the sumptuous banquet his tour had requested be available. (No, he did not come anywhere near the catering lounge. Perhaps he had heard tales of Sean being accosted by a strange guy with long hair dressed in a white shirt and black bow tie asking weird art questions and simply did not want to deal with a potential fanboy? Or he heard, erroneously, that the food sucked, one or the other.) My reverie was interrupted by the pulsating sounds that begin the song, More Human than Human. I didn't just hear it; I felt it rumbling through the concrete up into my body and was compelled to move at breakneck speed around the corner into the concert hall proper. What I saw before me was amazing. Before me, and in only four or five short hours, the hall glittered with lights, lasers and other various and sundry stage effects. The lights had been turned off, as they would be for the actual

concert and White Zombie, minus Rob, were on stage playing a song as if it were the real show. They did a couple of numbers and then were joined on stage by Rob, who sang and performed the stage check with the same gusto as if he were already singing to the 4,000 odd people that would crowd the hall later that evening. It is hard to describe the elation and wonder I felt as I stood by, close to the stage, watching; which was, for all intent and purpose, a private show by White Zombie in all its theatrical regalia. Except for a few songs, where I was briefly joined by a girl, similarly dressed like myself, I had the whole hall and mini 'concert' to myself! Life can be good sometimes and after having seen the vast majority of concerts in my life up to that point at Hara, this experience was a real treat.

Another notable moment was seeing a couple of the members from the band the Melvins in front of their dressing room, which was just a few yards away from the catering lounge. I saw the drummer and the singer/guitar player, King Buzzo. I recognized Buzzo, but was reluctant to approach him because I didn't own any Melvins albums and I couldn't name a song from them if my life depended on it, though I'd seen some of their videos and liked their weird brand of music. It's too bad, because I had the sense that he would've been receptive to me talking with him.

That day was also special because I met a new friend for life at Hara. His name was Rich Clayton and he was hanging with a long time friend of mine named John Blair. I was allowed to watch the show after my catering duties were completed but I wasn't allowed to see the show dressed as I was. I new John would be drinking in The Pub, Hara's own little bar, before the show, so I went there to see if he had an extra shirt or jacket for me to wear. John was there with his friend Rich, who happened to have a flannel shirt in his car that I could borrow. Later and off the clock, I found John and Rich and enjoyed the rest of the White Zombie show. Little did I know that I would become good friends with Rich and see many more shows in his company in the years that followed.

I guess the last noteworthy moment came at around 3 a.m. after leaving The Pub, which is where I typically ended a great show in those days at Hara. Some of White Zombie's crew were outside trying to break into one of their merchandise trucks because they had locked their keys inside. They asked me if I had a coat hanger they could use, to which I said maybe. I found a plastic hanger in my truck, which is useless for breaking into trucks, at about the same time they got into the truck. Although I didn't really help, they rewarded me for my attempt by giving me one of their black crew T-Shirts, which was simply adorned with a white route sign with the number '666' inside it. Get it? Route 666?

Oh, by the way, the show kicked ass!