



# THE REAL ALICE

BY IVOR LEVENE

**A**lice Cooper can be considered the most schizophrenic moniker in the history of rock music. When you say, “Alice Cooper” you could be referring to the person, or you could be referring to the band. In fact, Alice Cooper is so closely associated with the character that vocalist Vincent Furnier plays, it can be hard to tell where one ends and the other begins, especially in the minds of the casual fan. Furnier legally took the name with him after he and the band parted ways in the mid ’70s, and it can be a challenge to pull them apart.

Prior to the recording of the classic, *Welcome to My Nightmare* (1975), the band and the singer parted company. Alice said, “We just kind of went our own way.” Alice, with Bob Ezrin in tow and Shep Gordon at the helm, went on to record the hugely successful *Welcome* album, and never really looked back, except perhaps in retrospect. In the 45 years since the breakup, the band has reunited a few times, for the Rock Hall induction in 2011 and more recently for a series of concerts in Europe in support of the last album, *Paranormal*. Many fans clamor to see and hear the original lineup, and we got a clear picture of the state of the union after speaking with the remaining members of the band.

Alice and the band have always been close to each other, and they have kept in close contact since the split. Drummer Neal Smith, bassist Dennis Dunaway and guitarist Michael Bruce all have some very interesting memories, and they were able to shine some light on the many-faceted diamond that is the Alice Cooper band. The group had a run of five commercially successful albums in the first half of the ’70s, starting with *Love It to Death* in 1971, followed by *Killer*, *School’s Out*, *Billion Dollar Babies*, and ending with *Muscle of Love* in 1973. That is a staggering pace by any standard, and with that the band joined the pantheon of rock music.

Even after more than four decades apart, each band member still has some vivid memories of their time together and apart. So, with that, we set out to separate the facts from fiction.

## THE SPLIT

The most obvious and oft-repeated question is: Why did the band and Alice part ways in 1975, when they were at the top of their game? There have been various rumors and theories floating around for decades. Substance abuse, egos, not wanting to split the money five ways, creative differences... the list is long and varied. Alice himself said, “Never let the truth get in the way of a great story!” If there was a conspiracy to split the band up, it only exists in the minds of the fans. If you speak with anyone who was there, one thing that they all agree on is that Alice has always treated his ex-band mates with respect and support, and the same can be said about Alice’s management. These interviews were set up at the behest of Alice’s team, which made it ob-

vious that Team Alice does a lot to support and help promote the band members. That doesn’t however separate the band from a little rancor. There are usually two sides to a story, however, in this case, there are four: Alice, Dennis, Michael and Neal.

Many fans preferred **Alice Cooper** as a band rather than the solo project it became. Read what the surviving band members have to say about the strength of Alice Cooper as a group.

vious that Team Alice does a lot to support and help promote the band members. That doesn’t however separate the band from a little rancor.

**GM:** *Why did the band part ways after Muscle of Love?*

**Dennis Dunaway:** There were several factors. One of them was the group being shoved into the background and treated more like a backup group. People were being brought in to decide what our stage should be; we didn’t think we should be made to look like The Monkees. They had us all in sailor suits on the *Muscle of Love* album, and that was something that didn’t support the image of the group.

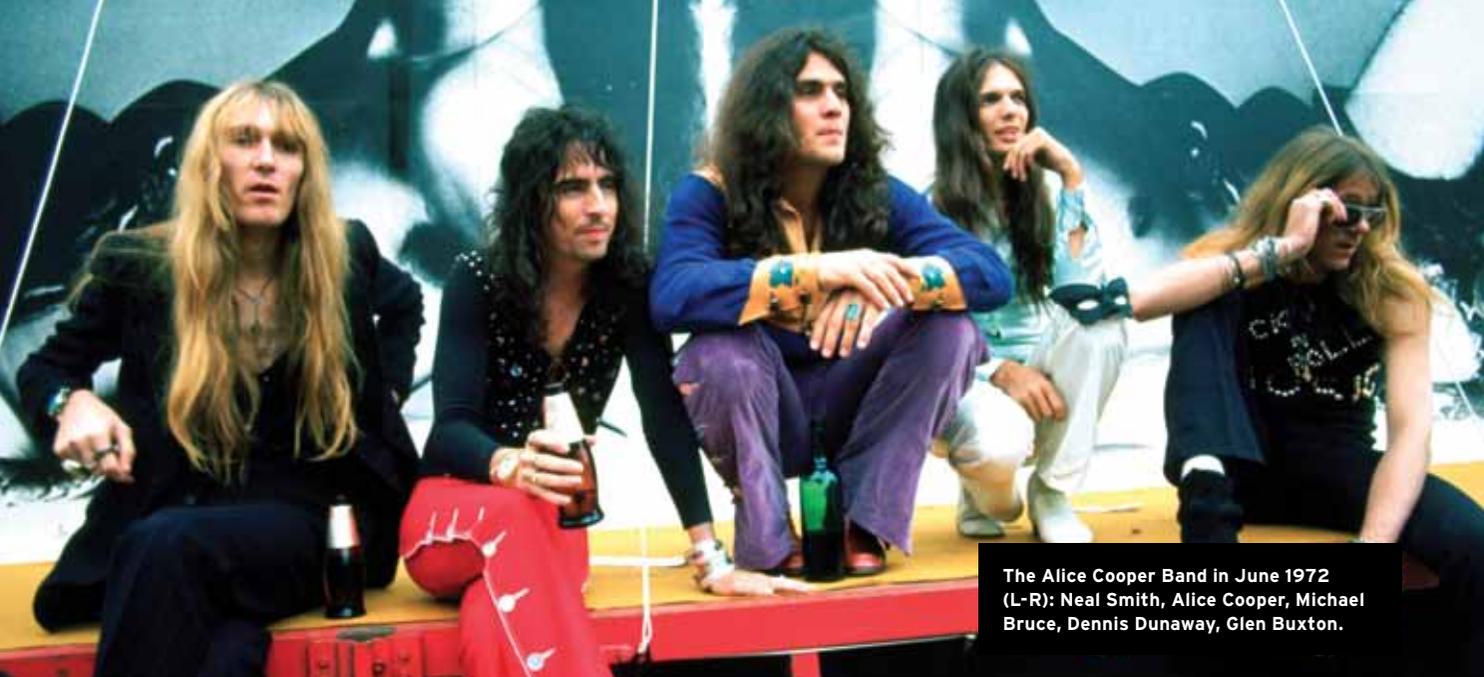
When Michael saw that we were being shoved into the background, he decided he wanted to do a solo album. So the band decided that we would take time off for Michael to do that album and then we would get back together to do the next Alice Cooper album. That’s what we thought we were doing when we did the *Battle Axe* album (1977, Billion Dollar Babies). But then as it turned out, Alice hadn’t intended to come back

Alice was also being separated from us by his bodyguards, who ended up just turning Alice’s room into the “party room,” and we did not feel invited anymore. The band would all hang out in one room and talk about what we were going to do, and then all of a sudden, we would be told that Alice was asleep in his room, when we knew that there was a party going on. The bodyguards were the party guys. They took over because they were always there, having to guard Alice.

**Michael Bruce:** We had planned to take a year off after *Muscle of Love*. Shep (Gordon) told us, “You know, the band is falling apart,” because we were having problems with Glen (Buxton, guitarist, 1947-1997). They wanted to try something different. I know Alice did. I just think everybody was a bit tired and wanted to do something new, and Alice did it in a big way. Alice ended up getting another band, but he’s selling more of the original albums now than when we were together, so I do really well. All I have to do now is cash the checks; I don’t have to go on the road.

When *Welcome to My Nightmare* came out, everybody was saying, “Wow, this is the Alice Cooper Band’s new thing.” When Alice played on the road, he had the band behind a screen, so you could not really tell who the band was. I think that Bob (Ezrin) really sculptured that to sound like an Alice Cooper (solo) album, and it was a smart thing to do if he planned to go solo.

**Neal Smith:** There are a million stories out there. Mike Bruce wanted take a year off to do a solo album in 1974. Shep got him a deal in England and he recorded his album, which gave everybody else in the band the liberty to do it.



The Alice Cooper Band in June 1972 (L-R): Neal Smith, Alice Cooper, Michael Bruce, Dennis Dunaway, Glen Buxton.

The deal was, we were going to take a year off and then get back together and do our eighth album. Everybody agreed to that. Michael did his album, and then we took the year off. Alice did *Nightmare* with Bob Ezrin and I did my project with Jack Douglas. Alice found success with *Nightmare* and stayed on his solo career.

It could have happened with Michael. Michael could have found success with his album, *In My Own Way*, and maybe he would have not wanted to come back with the band either.

If I would have had success with my solo album... I don't know. I love everybody in the band, it's great working with them and it's always the same thing. We get together for the Hall of Fame or we get together for the shows in the U.K. in 2017 and it's like no time ever passes. I know you hear a lot of stories, but nothing is going to tarnish the band's legacy far as I am concerned.

So the stories that you hear about the breakup have been changed over the years. It was purely about Alice finding success on his own. Alice was getting a little more press, but that was intentional. The public perception was one thing, but what happened inside the inner circle of the band was another thing. It was unfortunate because we were all such good friends. Dennis and Glen went all the way back to high school together.

It was just one of those things, it happens. Every band breaks up... well, except The Rolling Stones. That's another story. We are not blood, but boy, you cannot get much closer than we are as friends.

## REUNITING

The band has had a few reunions over the years since splitting in 1975. They reunited at their Rock Hall induction in 2011, they were guest musicians on the European leg of the *Paranormal* tour in 2017, and most recently in 2018 they contributed tracks to the live album, *A Paranormal Evening at The Olympia*, and the fans continually ask, "Will Alice do anything in the future with the original band?"

Legendary Cooper producer/arranger/musician Bob Ezrin told *Goldmine* that they **will** be working together in the future, and that he still regards them as a vital part of the fabric. When speaking about the band's involvement in the European tour and the follow-up *Paranormal* album, Ezrin made it clear that the reunion was not going to be the last time the band got together.

**Bob Ezrin:** It was important to me that they got to play together again. *Welcome 2* (2011) was the first toe in the water, where we did a couple of things together. And then on *Hollywood Vampires* (2015), on "School's Out," on that recording, I've got Neal and Dennis in for that and that worked out well. And then we decided to bring all three in for more than just one or two tracks for *Paranormal* and we had a really great time working together in Phoenix.

We had an award thing in Nashville where they did get to play live on stage together and we had done it for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, too, but there was something about after recording *Paranormal* where they had really found themselves again, and it was just great to see them on stage again. The audience loved it, it was wonderful to see the reaction. So, I thought it would be cool to have them be part of the show in Europe and I am glad they could do it. I think everybody is glad, I know Alice is. So hopefully there will be more of this. We've got another album to do. We are gonna keep going until someone shoots us. I am just sitting here right now working on an idea, a vision for what we wanted to do on the next album, and I was about to reach out to the boys, so there will be more. I'm not sure what the individual members will say.

**Dennis Dunaway:** It has always been up to Alice and his management. We never left, we are always ready. All it takes is a phone call and we're there. I've heard people say that there is a lack of interest. I don't see that because not a day goes by that I don't have 50 people suggesting that we get back together, as if I'm the one that's preventing it.

We always have fun when we do get together. It's Neal, Michael, Alice and I; it just continues. It's not like we have to fill in anything and there is nothing awkward about it. We always have a blast when we do it. It's more like the promoters have to be convinced. I don't think promoters care who is on stage with Alice as long as they get Alice. A lot of our fans tell me that we should get back together but they don't tell the promoters.

I would like to get the point across to people that it is not a rivalry, it is not like the original band versus Alice's touring band. Everybody in Alice's band are nice people. They are very respectful and we're respectful of them and they're extremely talented and fun to be with, so that's what made that tour work so well. I just wish we could have pulled it off in America. I'm not sure, there was a lot of talk of it and I

think it came very close to happening, but then it boiled down to the promoters, it didn't seem to have as many promoters convinced as in England, which you would think they would because the British tour was a big success.

**Michael Bruce:** There was talk of doing some more dates later in the year, but the word that Shep passed down was that the promoters did not want to pay the extra money to have us on top of Alice's band, so it didn't happen.

I have often thought, if Alice gets back together with the band and it is successful, fans are going to say, "Alice why did you wait so long when you could have had the band back together?" On the other hand, if he gets the band back together, we do another album and it doesn't do so well, people will say, "Why did you get back together with those old guys? You've got a great solo career, you don't need them." He's in a lose-lose situation.

I am not saying we would have to do the whole tour, Alice could do his band with us as guests. I love Ryan (Roxie, guitar) and Chuck (Garric, bass), they're great players. There is no reason we couldn't do a mixture of both, expanded a bit like we did in the U.K. There is plenty of room for everybody.

I wish there was going to be more of a reunion thing but I'm not going to hold my breath. I wish Alice well, he's a great artist and a very creative guy and I'm glad to have done what we did together, it was amazing. For a band from Phoenix that couldn't shoot straight, like Frank Zappa said in his book...five guys from Arizona. (laughs)

**Neal Smith:** My dream is still to do an album with Bob Ezrin with the four of us, but whatever happens—I don't know. But we'll keep plugging away at it. I know Dennis and Michael are ready anytime. Dennis and Michael are still writing some great songs, the chemistry is still there.

We talked about some shows in the spring. I thought they were going to be happening in August or September of 2018, right at this timeframe, but it just didn't happen. Michael, Dennis, and I have got our bags packed as always, ready to go.

Unfortunately, one of us is gone, but four of us are still around. So, I'm thankful we did the shows when we did in the U.K. and was disappointed that, for the fans, we didn't get to do anything this year. It's like 1974 or 1975 all over again for us.

## EARLY BAND/HISTORY

To say that the Alice Cooper Band had an interesting start would be an understatement. They had some pretty wild times on the Sunset Strip, encounters with Frank Zappa, and some questionable costumes! Each member shared what they could remember about their early days.

**Dennis Dunaway:** Well, we had changed our name a couple of times. We were The Spiders and then a band came out from Japan called The Spiders and we thought, let's change our name to something that nobody else will ever think of and we thought of The Nazz. And then we built a reputation in L.A. under The Nazz and then suddenly this east coast band comes out called The Nazz so then we decided ok, we really need to get something that nobody will think of.

We were thinking of everything from Husky Baby Sandwich to whatever and Alice said, "Alice Cooper. It's like Lizzie Borden, it's like the innocent little girl with a hatchet behind her back" and we're like, "I don't know about that, I don't know if we're ready for that." That night I went home and my parents asked, "What are you up to?" I told them, "We're coming up with a new name for the band." They asked

me what I had come up with and I said "Alice Cooper," and the expression on their faces sold me. They were in shock, and so then next night I went back and now Alice had me on his side and we both talked the rest of the guys into it, but only as a band name not as Alice's name, that was the name of all five of us."

And then the Ouija Board story came along. This guy that worked with the band, Dick Christian, had a Ouija board. He and Alice sat down and this thing miraculously spelled out the name that Alice was pushing for the band. I was skeptical but the Ouija board story got very popular over the years.

Alice and I met in art class when he was 15 years old and I was 16. I talked him into running cross-country so we bonded that way. We were running through the desert day after day. When we started a band, we didn't even know what we were going to play, I chose bass because that was the only instrument left after everybody else chose something. We did a show before we knew how to play. I pretended to play bass guitar.

Neal went to Camelback High School, which you could practically throw a rock and hit it, and the same with Michael Bruce, he went to North High. Glen, Alice and I went to Cortez High School. So, when we wrote "School's Out," it was so easy for us because we all went to high school at the same time, in the same years, in the same town, so everything was natural. In fact, to this day, every time we get together, we are high school kids again.

**Neal Smith:** We were all into it and loving it in the beginning. We found our groove and it was theatrics, blood, guts and gore. We were trying to make that wedge between the teenagers and the parents as wide as we could, and we were all loving doing it.

All the theatrics came from the five of us. Alice was 20 percent of it, I was 20 percent, but together we were 100 percent of it, coming up with the ideas for the guillotine, for the electric chair, the gallows. We all came up with those ideas. The snake was my pet snake, Kachina, that was on the *Killer* album.

We did so much work in our home studio before we ever went in the recording studio. That was back in the day when people were spending hundreds of thousands, and that was a lot of money then. It still is today. We did so much homework, that by the time we were in the studio, everything was defined and refined and we tried to do it as perfectly as we could. Everybody had a job to do, and they did it great. They were my best friends, the fact was that they all had original stuff and gave me the opportunity to do what I do best, and that was create parts for the songs, my drum parts.

## ORIGINAL LYRICS

One of the more fascinating conversations you can have with the band members is one in which you can see the genesis of the hits. Who wrote which songs? What were the different ingredients that went into the mix? Were there any changes to the songs as they were written?

**Dennis:** On "Under My Wheels," when I first started driving, I was Mr. Cool. I was driving down the road in Phoenix and suddenly this car next to me was honking and I could not look over because I was concentrating so much on staying in my lane. Finally, I took a quick look over and it was a bunch of girls, including this girl that I really liked and I thought, "Oh my God, this is terrible."

So then when I wrote the song, Glen Buxton said, "We can't make it a sappy love song." I said no, it's not, it's about a guy who has a brand-new car and he's not that good at driving but he gets all excited

because he's going to go pick up this girl and take her to the movies... so he's concentrating on driving when he goes over to pick her up and he doesn't realize she's already standing out on the curb and he runs her over. It was just for the fun of it. I was just thinking like Chuck Berry, you know? Couldn't get the seatbelt undone and stuff like that.

**Michael:** I wrote "No More Mr. Nice Guy" originally back when we did *Killer*. The original lyrics were; "I used to be such a sweet sweet thing but that was just a burn. I used to break my back just to kiss her ass and got nothing in return. All my friends told me, man, you are crazy for being such a fool. But I guess I was 'cause being in love, made me so uncool."

It was about a guy/girl relationship, so Alice got it and he personalized it for his image. And he was always good about that. He was always cultivating the Alice Cooper persona; he just changed the lyrics a little bit.

On the song "Crazy Little Child" on *Muscle of Love*, I had written the music and lyrics when I was a freshman in high school. There's a line in it, "Daddy-O is rich, Mama was a bitch, living wasn't easy in between. Beneath the silent screams, their baby, her baby, their baby in her teens was planning to escape." Those were the originals lyrics.

"Be My Lover" (off *Killer*) was something I wrote based on a true story. We were on a plane and this elderly lady was sitting next to me. I told her the name of the band was Alice Cooper and she says, "He's a guy, why is the singer's name Alice?" I said, "You really wouldn't understand." I didn't want to go into the whole thing.

## ROCK HALL

Speaking about the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame almost guarantees a discussion filled with both praise and derision. Put a dozen or so people together in a room and ask them what they think of the Rock Hall, and you will inevitably find yourself in a heated debate over which band should be in there, which act should never have been inducted, what the committee got right, and what they've made a mess of. The one thing that everyone agrees on is that nobody will ever agree fully with everyone else. Some people think that the Rock Hall is as disconnected from both fans and musicians as can be. Some think it's an impossible task to honor everyone without others feeling left out. One thing is for sure though: The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame incites dialogue.

The same questions probably go through the mind of anyone interviewing a band that has been inducted into the Rock Hall: What did it mean to you? How did the induction ceremony make you feel? And if you are interviewing a band who waited longer than they should have... For instance, ask the members of the Alice Cooper Band how they feel about the whole thing.

**Dennis Dunaway:** Talk about an amazing day. The day started at the Waldorf Astoria in New York City in the Grand Ballroom and all I could think of is that everybody has played there. The morning started with a rehearsal at 11:30am and here I am on stage with Bette Midler, Paul Schaffer's Orchestra, Dr. John, Elton John, Darlene Love, you name it. Everybody in the world is on stage and we're all singing the "Da Doo Ron Ron." I'm like, "Man, it can't get better than this"... and that was just the rehearsal.

I don't have an issue with them having waited so long to induct us, but Neal and Michael do. At the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame I hosted a book signing event for my book, *Snakes! Guillotines! Electric Chairs!*

“  
I would like to get the point  
across to people that it is  
not a rivalry, it is not like the  
original band versus Alice's  
touring band. Everybody in  
Alice's band are nice people.  
— Dennis Dunaway

*My Adventures in the Alice Cooper Group*. After the book signing, we played in the theater and afterwards there was a Q & A session with me in front of an audience. I called Michael up out of the audience and Jason Hanley from The Rock Hall said, "So what's it like to be an inductee now?" and Michael went into, "Well, you guys took so many years"... and I'm trying to kick Michael.

**Michael Bruce:** Well, unfortunately, when we got there, I had gained a lot of weight and I was really close to becoming diabetic. I was having trouble getting around, I had not really taken care of myself. Bob had (guitarist) Steve Hunter there because we didn't have Glen, obviously. So Bob is there and we came in and rehearsed "Under My Wheels" and "No More Mr. Nice Guy" but when we got up to play Alice forgot some of the lyrics...

**Neal Smith:** Just do me one favor? Spell my name correctly, N-E-A-L. (laughs) You would be surprised how many times I...even the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, they f\*\*king spelled my name wrong on my statue. I got it all fixed up and it's correct now, but that's my biggest pet peeve. I don't care about the band breaking up, but when people spell my name wrong, that is—as you can well understand, if you have a name that could have possible different ways of spelling it. (But) my biggest gripe about The Rock Hall is Glen Buxton wasn't there.

## ANTICS

The Alice Cooper Band tended to attract the attention of a very, shall we say, bizarre collection of fellow musicians. When you have a stage show that includes snakes, guillotines, murder and necrophilia, you are going to attract attention from the wilder side of rock. When asked, the band talk openly about their time spent with Frank Zappa and Keith Moon, both known for some outrageous behavior on and off the stage. And if you want to get a rise out of Neal, other than spelling his name wrong, ask him if he had as many drums as Keith Moon did.

**Dennis Dunaway:** I really liked Frank Zappa. He was brilliant. He would have this enthusiastic twinkle in his eye when he got an idea. He wanted to change the name of the band to Alice Cookies and he surprised us with that information.

We went over to have our first meeting with him after we had signed and his wife had us stay in the kitchen upstairs. Frank was downstairs, but she had us wait because she was baking cookies and we didn't know what for, but she said, "Ok, take this tray of cookies down to Frank; he's downstairs." We went down and he said, "Hello Alice Cookies" and we're all like, what? We are all looking at each other but he was so inspired that we entertained the idea.

“  
Glen, Alice and I were bored,  
and we said, ‘Let’s do something  
crazy.’ So we said, ‘Okay. Let’s  
jump off the second floor into  
the pool, and let’s do it naked.’”  
—Neal Smith

This was way before CDs —nobody had ever heard of a record the size of a CD. But he wanted to make each record look like a cookie. Each disc would be one song on a disc and the disc would fit in a tuna fish can and they would be stacked on the counter at record stores with a sign that said, “Get your Alice Cookies.” You had to get a can opener to open the can to get the discs out. We spent all afternoon with him entertaining that idea but we really did not want to change our name. We thought nobody would take us seriously, which seems funny in retrospect, but we lucked out because when we went back the next day all ready to tell him we’re not going to change our name, he said, “Oh my manager said it’s too expensive.”

**Michael Bruce:** Oh yeah, when we went over to his house to talk about the album, he sprung his idea on us. There was a thing that used to be called hip pocket records, they were little, smaller than CDs and they had this player that closed over the disk like a record player and you could take it to school. He wanted to have each song on one of those, in a tin, you know like a cookie tin and he wanted us to change the name of the band to Alice Cookies. And we were going, “Oh yeah Frank, that’s a great idea.” But you know, his idea for us was a joke.

I thought he didn’t take us seriously and we were very serious about what we wanted to do. We were trying to find somebody who could translate the theatrical nature of the music onto the record, and it wasn’t Frank Zappa!

**Neal Smith:** It was a business association that we had with Frank, it was all business. There were a couple of times, before *Pretties for You* and around the time when it came out, to help push our career and get us out in the public. We did some shows with him up the West Coast.

We didn’t hang out with him; it was all business. I was a fan of Jimi Hendrix, so Frank wasn’t exactly the rock guitar player that I would go out and buy an album, but I certainly respect the work. He was an amazing musician, he could put together some great bands. When we were in the studio doing *Pretties for You* (1969), he was producing the album and he had (producer, Ian) Underwood finish the album. Frank said he had the flu or something, but maybe we scared him off. I don’t know what it was. But he was always a gentleman.

**GM:** Michael, on your solo album, *In My Own Way*, didn’t you work with Keith Moon?

**Michael Bruce:** Producer Gene Cornish, and Dino Danelli of The Rascals produced it with me. Dino is an amazing drummer and he knew Keith. When we were recording in LA, Dino invited Keith down to the studio. Keith came in and we said hello to each other. I was really excited about him playing and I told our road manager, “You take care of Keith, whatever he needs, you take it care of it.” After I left, Keith wanted a couple of bottles of Napoleon Brandy, so our

roadie went out and got it for him. When I came back into the control room, I was sitting there listening while Keith was playing drums on *As Rock Rolls On*. I said, “Guys, why do you have delay on the drums, it sounds like it’s like two beats behind the tempo.” He says, “We’re not doing anything, that’s Keith”...he’s just so drunk, he’s playing in time but a couple of beats behind the beat and I went, “Oh my God.” So we couldn’t use any of it because he was just too out of it. It’s Keith Moon, you know, it goes with the territory.

I have heard stories about Pete Townsend having to put him in a rest home or hospital and keep him away from alcohol and drugs getting ready to do a Who album, because he would just go off the deep end. What happened that day, you know, it was a shame because he would have been so cool on *As Rock Rolls On*.

**GM:** Neal, apparently, you used to call up Keith Moon to find out how many drums he had, so you could have one more.

**Neal Smith:** Alice made that up, it’s not true. It’s insulting to me when I hear that story because why would I care? I love Keith Moon. My drum set was the biggest one. The only person I ever talked to from The Who was Pete Townshend when I did my solo album *Platinum God*. I wanted him to produce it, but he was working on another music project. He was very flattered that I had contacted him. He was the only guy from The Who I have ever been on the phone with.

How would you ever get Keith’s phone number? I don’t think Keith knew how to use a phone, except through a hotel window. I wasn’t quite sure he would even know which end to talk into, because every time I was there with Keith, and we were with him, he was... let’s put it this way, he was really partying heavily. And we were, too.

When we did that infamous jam session with Bob Ezrin at Morgan Studios in London when we were finishing *Billion Dollar Babies*, Keith was there with Marc Bolan from T. Rex. It’s too bad that it’s never been released. It was recorded but, man, it was a stoned-out drunken jam session. So yes, there was interplay between The Who, and us but believe me, it was more interesting than counting drums.

**GM:** I heard you shared a house with Pink Floyd. Is that true?

**Neal Smith:** No, they were just at a party at our house, these stories get changed. Pink Floyd played at The Cheetah Club, where we were the house band in late 1967. It was an amazing show. They came over to our house and partied the next night, that was the first time that they came to Los Angeles.

We were very aware of them though. I had a copy of *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn* in mid-1967 and was totally blown away by the album. Syd Barrett was crazier than anybody can ever imagine; he was something else. Syd was singing, “See Emily Play” then all of a sudden, he got shocked. I could see the spark come off his microphone and hit him in the mouth. He just stood back, put his arms to his side, and didn’t play for the rest of the show, he just stood there like a statue.

When he came over to our house, he was just standing in the corner of the room. We were all hanging out. They put his nose in the corner of the room, and he stayed there all-night long. I think they crashed there that night, but that was the only night that I remember, because they were on the road. They were traveling on their first tour, and if anybody knows about touring, you don’t really stick around for a couple of weeks.

Pink Floyd were amazing, we liked what they did theatrically with their show, but we took it in a whole different direction, obviously.

## ANTICS ON TOUR

**Dennis Dunaway:** The feathers... We used to rip open feather pillows from Holiday Inn and then use a CO2 tank to spray them all over the audience. The feathers would go up your nose and you'd be out of breath. You would try not to breathe but every time you inhaled, you could feel feathers go into your lungs. That CO2 tank blasted those feathers so powerfully. I had an Acoustic brand amp and when we were touring, suddenly it started sounding really muffled, and I thought, "Wow, did I blow a speaker or what? This doesn't sound right." So, we took the grill cloth off and the amplifier was full of feathers. It was dangerous, we always had all kinds of stuff laying all over the stage, tires and garbage cans and everything else. Then you were blinded, you could not see and you are trying not to breathe and people are throwing stuff at us, trying not to get hit in the head by a beer can. And then there was the danger of not only tripping over the corner of the drum riser or whatever, you could walk right off the front of the stage into the audience because you couldn't see where you were. The most dangerous thing however was the hostile crowds, our image got a really negative reaction in most places in the country at one time.

When we were, doing the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame thing, Paul Shaffer was there. I started talking to him and he says, "Hey, I'm an Alice Cooper fan. I was only 15 years old and I was at Varsity Stadium when you guys threw the chicken."

I said, "Oh, so you're the one that caused the demise of our pet chicken." They were our pets, Glen had named them. We were taking them on tour with us. We had Pecker and Larry, they were Glen's pets. He would keep them in his hotel bathroom and then we would have to come over to somebody else's room to use the bathroom because his smelled too bad."

**Neal Smith:** It was Easter Sunday, back in 1971. We were playing in...I believe it was Portland, Oregon. It was up in the Great Northwest. We had played the night before and were just sticking around the hotel for an extra day. And Glen and Alice and I at the time shared a room, and we did for many years, the three of us. We were staying at a hotel, and we were on the second floor with an open hallway that overlooked the swimming pool. And on the other side of the pool was the main building for the hotel, and there was a restaurant in there.

Glen, Alice, and I were bored, and we said, "Let's do something crazy." So, we said, "Okay. Let's jump off the second floor into the pool, and let's do it naked. We'll jump in the pool, and we'll run up the stairs naked. These people are having dinner and we're going to do it naked." This is after church and they were having their lunches and dinners at the hotel, it was a very popular place. I forget the name of the hotel; I have it written down somewhere.

So, we did it, probably because we were drinking beer all day and it was something crazy to do. Glen jumped off and ran back upstairs into our room. And then I did the same thing, and then Alice followed. Nobody complained.

We were pissed off, we thought we did something outrageous. Nobody yelled at us, the police didn't come, so it was pretty boring. Looking back on it, it was pretty freaking stupid. We just tried to do anything while we were on the road to keep ourselves occupied and entertained.



Alice Cooper and Dennis Dunaway performing on stage at the Rainbow Theatre in London, November 1971.

## SOLO WORK

There is more to Neal, Michael and Dennis than their tenures with Alice Cooper. Dennis and Michael are both involved in their own solo projects, and Neal... Let's just say that there are movies, museums and real estate. Each one of them talked about their solo projects.

**Dennis Dunaway:** I have a project going on now on Kickstarter called Cold Cold Coffin. We are not going to have musicians in it, it is going to be faithful to the storyline, which is a love story with revenge. It takes place in a castle. It's got a coffin and Calico Cooper, Alice's daughter. We've got to raise the money to make it happen but we're in pretty good shape at this point, so we're all feeling confident.

**GM:** *You should take all the Alice Cooper props, artwork and memorabilia and tour it around the world.*

**Dennis Dunaway:** I've been working on that. I call it Doctor Dreary's, which is the name that Alice gave me years ago because of my favoring minor chords and heavy lyrics. I have "Doctor Dreary's Snakes Museum of Rare Alice Cooper Artifacts." I have stuff that goes all the way back to when Alice and I were on the track team together at Cortez High. I have Nazz stuff, I have parts of Glen's guitars, Glen's amps, chrome mannequins from *Billion Dollar Babies* and all kinds of stuff like that.

**Michael Bruce:** I'm gearing up to do another album. I've collected some songs over the years that I had been writing for a Cooper reunion. I've got a quite a few songs. "Man Without a Heart," about a guy who didn't have a heart and didn't find love in his life. "Hostage of Your Love," a kick-ass song. "Left for Dead Meat," "Intergalactic Alien Blues," "Money Doesn't Talk, It Screams." Another one is "Born Screamer," it's got a violent cowbell solo, scratch your head on that one. It's going to be an interesting album, a shot right to the gut. I'm going to work out all my anxieties and frustrations about the original band on it.

**GM:** *Neal, are you the only rock musician selling real estate or are there more of you?*

**Neal Smith:** No, I know of a couple of other musicians that are in the real estate business around the country. I've used the handle "Rockin' Realtor" for many years. I don't put butts in seats anymore, I take people around to sell them homes. I have done that for over 20 years, but since the Hall of Fame, I have weaned myself from that and I am getting back into playing music. ●