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'Eating Raoul'

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THE WHO THE END



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LAST TIME AROUND

THE WHO SAY GOODBYE

BEFORE THEY GET

OLD, AND HELLO TO A VERY

UNCERTAIN FUTURE

BY KURT LODGE

PHOTOS BY NEAL PRESTON



FOR NEARLY THREE YEARS, Roger Daltrey watched Pete Townshend slowly killing himself with drugs and alcohol. It was almost a parody of rock-star decadence: Pete moved out on his wife and children and started making the rounds of trendy London clubs, slugging back booze all night all he was nearly comatose, sneering cocaine to keep up the pace, dabbling in heroin and God knows what else. After twenty years together in a band that ultimately attained the heights of rock celebrity as the Who, Daltrey saw Townshend throwing away a life that apparently had come to mean more to Who fans than it did to Town-

THE WHO ON TOUR: DALTRY (LEFT) CHECKS OUT FIRST-NIGHT CROWD



PETER DINKLAUGE TAKES OFF IN PITTSBURGH, JOINS BOBBI DALYREY ON "LOVE LIVE ROCK" BELOW, BUFFALO.



shamed himself. Finally, late last year, the commercial guitarist he became. After a night of historic dissipation at London's Club for Heroes, Townsend suddenly turned him and collapsed, and had to be rushed to the nearest hospital.

Dulvey couldn't take it anymore. Something drastic had to be done, and he knew, at last, what it was. One night during Townsend's extended coma, when the Who had a meeting at their manager's house, and Dulvey stopped the band. "I don't want to lose anyone."

For a man who will lead the Who as passionately as he ever had in his past—much more—there were the saddest words in the world. But if Townsend were to be stopped from following Who drummer Keith Moon into an early grave, Dulvey felt he had no other choice.

"See, Pete didn't want to lose the years that before Moonie died," he explains. "I was the instigator—I was responsible for getting him back on the road after 1978. And after three years of America, he was a bloody genius. I felt responsible for that. It was really hard to live with, and I just didn't want to do it anymore. I mean, I think the world of that guy. I think enough of him to stop the Who."

Not stop it cold, of course. They could do one live would mean as long as they called it that, and know it was *just*, they could just wish it. "I want to do the group in the right way," says Dulvey. "On top, before we become providers of ourselves. There are no give Pete some freedom, because he deserves it."

Townsend is still amazed by Dulvey's selfless and loving gesture. The two have had many a well-publicized row over the years, and yet, says Pete, "Roger was the most enormous member of the group in saying that he would do anything, give up anything—even give up the group—if it would make me happy. You know? If it would get me happiness."

The question now, of course, is, will it?

ONE WEEK INTO THE WHO'S LAST FULL-SCALE run at a quiet, Private, it's a little weird. Fifteen years ago, when Keith Moon was alive and descending down him and (most) rooms with equal abandon, the Who's celebrated rockabilly career had a future that few other rockabilly bands of America. But this afternoon, up on the sixth floor of the Governor Marston, east downtown Pittsburgh, a liberal dozen people—yes, you can almost hear the rattling of chairs behind shut closed doors Can there be the same crowd back that exploded out of London's family Mad scene in 1973?

No. Of course not. One understands, then, the Who that survived into the Eighties, and to members, dispersed in their various ways, are committing their no-longer-boundless energy for tonight's show at the 1,500-seat Civic Arena. There are eight tough words to prove this farewell suit, and leaving takes a few points.

Townsend has already caught a cold, which may explain the two visitors he's wearing, if not the faded pink handkerchief that's knotted around his wrist. Drapes of *Neotoma*, the Joseph Conrad novel, lie on a table near the sofa where he sits, and a rack of portable recording equipment—yes, he's agreed to on-the-road songwriting—stands against a far wall. One year of a mostly climbing in his chips, Townsend looks a little ragged, but he's obviously alert and straight. His only screaming vice is a pouch for miniature Indian cigarettes, which he smokes steadily.

"I do miss a drink before going onstage," he admits, taking a hand through his discolored hair. "Then just a small brandy would always stop me from feeling nervous. But since I get on the stage now, I'm okay. I don't miss it," he says, waving the hand and doing more. "I don't miss any of it."

And the show does come, long enough. But tonight, nonetheless, it's miss any of that? He says it was a way to live and fight. "It was there a certain time, but I felt it was the last night of the last time. There was a tremendous amount of sadness, though, as well, because I know it's not what everybody wants." Blaming John Entwistle, for example, from living on the road more than any other aspect of his involvement in the Who. Therefore, Pete says, "I think John is probably... more than sad. He's not as sad, and that makes it very difficult,



THE REFORMED PETER TOWNSEND, LIVING IT UP

because he's actually *enjoyed* and *enjoyed* to work out how he feels half the time. But I think I know him well enough to know that he will probably remain the Who more than anybody in the world. He's living a whole life for his talent and passion that he knows he'll never be able to find anywhere else."

It would, of course, be possible to accommodate Entwistle—keep the band in shape, maybe perform on some sort of reduced but semiregular annual schedule. Townsend offers down at his simple feet, which are seated in black velvet shoes with intricate golden crests, and he creates his famous row in a clump of flowers. "I very much doubt that will happen," he says with a soft frown.

ROCK & ROLL GLAMOUR is so similarly stark supply in each of the other band members' rooms. Entwistle, the rock legend, is in the grip of a handkerchief that won't give up. Kenny Jones, the drummer—who is wearing a flower and has looked a debilitated, bone-deep habit—dresses the outfit but has been back to give their physical form an ancient form that is still pulled by a back injury he sustained while filming *Tommy* eight years ago. Only Tim Gorman, the affable, conservative-minded Californian, while playing keyboards on the tour, seems unaffected by his calling, gladly munching cheese and crudités from some tour-service platters and smiling at the camera.

Is this how it ends—in a whimper of cheese and Peter? Not exactly. Who fans couldn't wait out their arms waving

goodbye. Because, although it's billed in their U.S. tour song, this latest extension (which kicked off September 22nd near Washington D.C.) is also the longest tour the Who have mounted in twelve years, given the group's well-known refusal to accept anything might happen between now and mid-December, when the tour concludes. And they do have a future, however ambiguous. The band will tour Britain and Europe in the new year, then Australia, and for the first time, Japan. And Bill Curbishley, the group's managing manager, is already talking about the possibility of playing a quick cluster of dates sometime in 1991 and perhaps fulfilling the Who's longstanding plan to play Europe—Europe—maybe even during Kenny at Moon's open house. As Kenny Jones says, "Linda and others do work—out of it, concerts, or there or live dates somewhere."

So there is a massive plan, of sorts the Who will leave the road because it's killing them—so, more precisely, because it was killing Townsend—and in the future will reengage only to record albums and perhaps perform the occasional brief burst of concerts. They're had a lot, and now the three original members—Townsend, Dulvey and Entwistle—are working things. Their generation—the old hand bands and their kids of the Sixties—is just another link in the cultural memory chain. Hanging on to capture on stages for yet another new wave of fans, they would run an increasing risk of becoming irrelevant. Or worse, longer. As Dulvey says one evening, sitting into the writing room outside his hotel-room window: "I can't see the Who without its energy. If I go downhill, and if Pete goes downhill... well, like it or not, the two stages and the two sides" are important to the Who. I mean, could you see us as just standard managers, just players?" Dulvey's brow furrows up over his pale hair, eyes turn toward the ceiling of the room above him. "Do you really want to see the Who live that?" he asks.

ON THIS TOUR, AT LEAST, AND FOR THE FIRST time the Who live that. Beyond by what they choose to do as a spirit toward some sort of final curtain, they have been dancing through four non-hour-plus sets, linking out the songs from their new album, *1984*, with all the fan of their great, authentic hits. So far, it means like a game to go out on stage, as Roger says. Even Mick Jagger, who came out with his daughter, Jade, for the Who's second encore, at John F. Kennedy Stadium in Philadelphia, was notably impressed—and not just because his old pal had set a new ticket sales record at the same stadium when the Rolling Stones had played one year earlier.

"Mick was up on the side of the stage," Dulvey recalls, "and afterward, I said, 'Was you waiting' to go out and do it again?' And I think, actually, he really might have thought so. It was crucial and now, when we're still alive, and looked, 'Maybe we should have called that one last time, too.'"

The Who and the Stones go say back, but Pete is still bothered by Mick's rough hands on his head. They spoke briefly in Philadelphia. "He was saying some, 'Well, are you in Philly and then we went to Baltimore' it was about, you know a very heavy thing for the cracks." Pete cracks approximately "I don't give a damn how far it is in the truck. I just play."

