

Chapter 18

Eric Lee auditioned for Patti and played with her for about a week. So they were working out her tunes, and she was doing "Land of a Thousand Dances," and she finally turned to him and said, "Eric, when I say, 'Do you know how to pony?' I'm not talking about dancing."

He said, "Yeah, I know," but he was really embarrassed that she was talking about sex.

DANNY FIELDS: I was having an affair with Richard Sohl, and Patti Smith and Lenny Kaye said something about wanting a keyboard player, so I introduced them to Rickie Sohl, and that worked out very well. But I don't know what was said between them: "Hey, I have an idea, you recite poems and I'll strike a few chords. . . ."

PATTI SMITH: Right now I've been in this room in this city for so long I don't see it anymore and you know I'm not being stimulated. Lately I've just been doing a lot of cleaning inside my brain. My eyes are not seeing anything around me. So I've been dreaming a lot, recording dreams and trying to look within, but I'm not worried about it. I'm just waiting for the moment when I'll get to take a train or plane someplace and I know I'll spurt out because I've just got to see new things. I think Rimbaud said he needs new scenery and a new noise, and I need that.

Down at the Rock & Roll Club

RICHARD HELL: Me and Tom Verlaine went together to see the New York Dolls at the Mercer Arts Center—and the Dolls had a lot to do with me wanting to do a band. There was just so much more excitement in rock & roll than sitting at home writing poetry. The possibilities were endless. I mean I could deal with the same matters that I'd be sweating over alone in my room, to put out little mimeograph magazines that five people would ever see. And we definitely thought we were as cool as the next people, so why not get out there and sell it?

Up until we went to see the Dolls, Tom would take his acoustic guitar to a hootenanny night, to some club in the West Village, once every couple of months. It was the most he would do. He didn't pursue anything very hard here. But he did write some songs, I don't know how many—five or six. Really funny ones. And we used to goof off. With me improvising shit while he was playing guitar. Just goofing off.

After seeing the Dolls, I kept pressing Tom to get together a band instead of just this acoustic hootenanny stuff. An electric band. And he would just stall and prevaricate and nothing ever happened. And I don't remember exactly how it came about, but finally he sat down and showed me how simple bass playing was for rock & roll. I thought it took some skill to play a musical instrument, and I didn't have any. But he showed me and that sealed it. There was the beginning of a band, because Tom already knew this drummer from Delaware, and so we started rehearsing together. But it was the Dolls that really inspired us.

DUNCAN HANNAH: There was a real pecking order at Max's. If a pretty boy would come in the back, I'd go, "Who's that? Good, very good. Nice threads. He didn't get that here, he got that in London. Hmmm. Very cool." And I remember the first time I saw Richard Lloyd. I thought his hair looked like an Easter chick. He was really pretty.

I said, "Wow. Who's that?"

"He's new—he's a male hustler and he's a great guitarist too."

"You're kidding. Cool."

"He was living in Los Angeles."

"Cool. Cool."

RICHARD HELL: Tom Verlaine and I were both working at this film bookstore called Cinemabilia, and Terry Ork was the manager of the store. He was always interested in cute young boys and so he was really friendly to us. We had a lot in common in our tastes and Terry said he knew this kid who played guitar and who he thought might be what we were looking for, because he knew we were trying to make a band.

And that was Richard Lloyd.

RICHARD LLOYD: I was looking for a place to live and I met this guy at Max's Kansas City who worked for Andy Warhol named Terry Ork.

I was a bum. I had stayed at Danny Fields' house for two weeks and he had made it clear that I had a definite time limit. So I was like, "Does anybody have a floor that I can sleep on and hopefully not get too many advances made upon me?"

At that time, that's what I provided in a relationship: ME. No money, no effort, no work, but you did get ME. I would go up to girls in a bar and I would say, "God, I'm in love with you, do you wanna take me home and I'll just live with you?"

You know, "I won't pay the rent, I will keep my own hours, I will do what I wanna do, but you'll have me—AROUND." And I had a lotta takers.

Terry Ork said, "I have a huge loft in Chinatown with an extra room—the guy that lived there just moved out and you can have it if you want it."

The deal we cut was that I was supposed to provide the drugs, and Terry would provide everything else. Of course, as it turned out, I didn't provide the drugs, because providing the drugs would have meant coming up with some money. But I moved in anyway.

TERRY ORK: I felt pretty cocky about my taste. I felt like I could walk into a room and say, "Oh, that kid's got it, that kid hasn't got it." Yeah, Svengali, thank you. Heroin makes you real smart, huh?

RICHARD LLOYD: Terry began to pursue this band idea, but Tom Verlaine wasn't interested, from what I gather. Richard, Tom, and Billy Ficca had been in this band the Neon Boys and they'd actually put an ad in *Green*. It said something like "Wanted: Rhythm guitarist. Talent not necessary." Dee Dee Ramone had shown up, and Chris Stein too, but I guess they didn't possess the sufficient "no talent," or whatever.

RICHARD HELL: Dee Dee showed up at an audition we held when Verlaine and I were trying to find a second guitar player for Television. We put ads out and not very many people showed up. It was funny, we couldn't have auditioned more than four or five people, and two of them were Chris Stein and Dee Dee Ramone. This was before we'd ever met either one of them.

DEE DEE RAMONE: Tom Verlaine and Richard Hell were very calculating, grownup, determined people. Everyone else was just kind of blundering into everything, but they were different. I thought they were heatnicks.

RICHARD HELL: We tried to show Dee Dee a song and he was just dying. He would just play bar chords, because that's all he knew. You only need one finger to play a bar chord. And we'd tell him, "Okay, this is in C." And he'd start playing, and we'd say, "C." And he'd say, "Oh! Oh!" And just start playing something else. It was total trial and error. And we'd say, "No. No. No, man; C!"

Dee Dee would look up with this quizzical look and move his finger a little bit . . . We'd shake our heads no and he'd move it a little bit further . . . He was really funny. He was just like a little puppy dog coming to this audition. But eventually we had to say, "Sorry."

DEE DEE RAMONE: I was kicked outta there because I couldn't play good.

RICHARD LLOYD: Terry Ork finally told Tom Verlaine that he was willing to have them rehearse in his loft, buy them amplifiers, support the band, and put in money so they would be able to do shows. And I guess that I was part of that bargain.

At that time, Terry had been doing heroin once a week, you know, as a vacation. It was part of being hip; it wasn't grotesque sticking needles in your arm. And personally, by this time, I was in such an alcoholic state that I needed something to calm down my shakes. I needed to get away from alcohol. So I began to ask Terry to let me try some heroin.

TERRY ORK: I think Jim Carroll was the first one to shoot me up with heroin. Yeah, in his room, overlooking the basketball court. Gerard Mangia and I were living on Fifty-third Street and Third Avenue—which was the place where male prostitution thrived in New York City—and we had a great apartment there. So we were giving a party that night, and we went back to Jim's house to get some heroin or some shit.

"He's new—he's a male hustler and he's a great guitarist too."

"You're kidding. Cool!"

"He was living in Los Angeles."

"Cool. Cool."

RICHARD HELL: Tom Verlaine and I were both working at this film bookstore called Cinemabilia, and Terry Ork was the manager of the store. He was always interested in cute young boys and so he was really friendly to us. We had a lot in common in our tastes and Terry said he knew this kid who played guitar and who he thought might be what we were looking for, because he knew we were trying to make a band.

And that was Richard Lloyd.

RICHARD LLOYD: I was looking for a place to live and I met this guy at Max's Kansas City who worked for Andy Warhol named Terry Ork.

I was a bum. I had stayed at Danny Fields' house for two weeks and he had made it clear that I had a definite time limit. So I was like, "Does anybody have a floor that I can sleep on and hopefully not get too many advances made upon me?"

At that time, that's what I provided in a relationship: ME. No money, no effort, no work, but you did get ME. I would go up to girls in a bar and I would say, "God, I'm in love with you, do you wanna take me home and I'll just live with you?"

You know, "I won't pay the rent, I will keep my own hours, I will do what I wanna do, but you'll have me—AROUND." And I had a lotta takers.

Terry Ork said, "I have a huge loft in Chinatown with an extra room—the guy that lived there just moved out and you can have it if you want it."

The deal we cut was that I was supposed to provide the drugs, and Terry would provide everything else. Of course, as it turned out, I didn't provide the drugs, because providing the drugs would have meant coming up with some money. But I moved in anyway.

TERRY ORK: I felt pretty cocky about my taste. I felt like I could walk into a room and say, "Oh, that kid's got it, that kid hasn't got it." Yeah, Svengali, thank you. Heroin makes you real smart, huh?

RICHARD LLOYD: Terry began to pursue this band idea, but Tom Verlaine wasn't interested, from what I gather. Richard, Tom, and Billy Ficca had been in this band the Neon Boys and they'd actually put an ad in *Creem*. It said something like "Wanted: Rhythm guitarist. Talent not necessary." Dee Dee Ramone had shown up, and Chris Stein too, but I guess they didn't possess the sufficient "no talent," or whatever.

RICHARD HELL: Dee Dee showed up at an audition we held when Verlaine and I were trying to find a second guitar player for Television. We put ads out and not very many people showed up. It was funny, we couldn't have auditioned more than four or five people, and two of them were Chris Stein and Dee Dee Ramone. This was before we'd ever met either one of them.

DEE DEE RAMONE: Tom Verlaine and Richard Hell were very calculating, growrup, determined people. Everyone else was just kind of blundering into everything, but they were different. I thought they were beamiks.

RICHARD HELL: We tried to show Dee Dee a song and he was just dying. He would just play bar chords, because that's all he knew. You only need one finger to play a bar chord. And we'd tell him, "Okay, this is in C." And he'd start playing, and we'd say, "C." And he'd say, "Oh! Oh!" And just start playing something else. It was total trial and error. And we'd say, "No. No. No, man; C!"

Dee Dee would look up with this quizzical look and move his finger a little bit . . . We'd shake our heads no and he'd move it a little bit further . . . He was really funny. He was just like a little puppy dog coming to this audition. But eventually we had to say, "Sorry."

DEE DEE RAMONE: I was kicked outta there because I couldn't play good.

RICHARD LLOYD: Terry Ork finally told Tom Verlaine that he was willing to have them rehearse in his loft, buy them amplifiers, support the band, and put in money so they would be able to do shows. And I guess that I was part of that bargain.

At that time, Terry had been doing heroin once a week, you know, as a vacation. It was part of being hip; it wasn't grotesque sticking needles in your arm. And personally, by this time, I was in such an alcoholic state that I needed something to calm down my shakes. I needed to get away from alcohol. So I began to ask Terry to let me try some heroin.

TERRY ORK: I think Jim Carroll was the first one to shoot me up with heroin. Yeah, in his room, overlooking the basketball court. Gerard Malanga and I were living on Fifty-third Street and Third Avenue—which was the place where male prostitution thrived in New York City—and we had a great apartment there. So we were giving a party that night, and we went back to Jim's house to get some heroin or some shit.

I think it was his parents' house, above the Catholic school, where Jim injected me for the first time. I had no idea he was a male hustler or I would've grabbed him right there.

By the time I met Richard Lloyd, I had moved to a loft in Chinatown and was a weekend junkie. Using heroin was like taking a vacation a few days a week.

RICHARD HELL: My first experience with junk was with Terry Ork. I loved it. Yeah, I used to look forward to the dates we'd make to get high.

I didn't have any reservations about junk. It was just the ideal state as far as I was concerned. Not only did it physically make you feel as good as you possibly could—after all, it's a painkiller—but it felt like the fulfillment of all my fantasies, the way you got to dream but direct your dreams like a movie director.

RICHARD LLOYD: You could do dope, and then you could drink all night, and you wouldn't shake at all, you wouldn't get drunk, nothing would hurt, you could play guitar like you've never played before, you could fuck for six or seven hours, straight—you know, like a machine, "Mr. Machine."

You could do no wrong. I was one of these people with whom heroin had the opposite reaction. Instead of falling asleep, I would be awake for like months—thinking profundities and having phantasmagorical opium dreams.

So I began pressing Terry to do it twice a week, then three times a week . . .

RICHARD HELL: Just nod out and dream. And some sort of scenario would fade in and you'd really be living it—I mean, when you're dreaming you're actually having an experience, you're actually going through whatever you're dreaming, you only realize when you wake up that it was a dream.

And when you're nodding, you're not just watching it, you can change it—you could nudge it this way and that—as if you could make whatever you wanted to happen, happen.

So yeah, I liked it, ha ha ha, and heroin seemed so safe at the time, you know? Because it's true that you'd have to do it every day for two or three weeks to develop the mildest habit. And that seemed like such an easy thing to avoid. How could people be afraid of that? What kind of risk is that? No risk—but it's amazing how it catches up with you.

TERRY ORK: Tom Verlaine was very priggish, he didn't smoke marijuana, inject heroin, and he didn't even drink that much. I think Verlaine

was scared of any derangement of the senses, and Hell was just the opposite. He would just luxuriate in it.

Tom Verlaine was a very bright boy, very learned, but there was some tightness within him. He was just so tightly wound. He was always concerned about men coming on to him. I mean, he was pretty, but I think he didn't really know what life was about. He had just accrued experience from books—it was all read, and not lived. He was very naive in a lot of ways. As opposed to Richard Hell, who had both feet in the ooze.

Hell was definitely the one thinking in subversive terms. Hell was the one who always had the most awareness of what the text was trying to denote. Hell was a boulevard surrealist, groping for the breakthrough, the one grasping for liberation.

RICHARD HELL: Tom Verlaine and I had gone to boarding school together off in the hills of Delaware. We got to be good friends when we started rubbing each other up with this plan to run away from school.

It happened pretty quick—I got suspended in twelfth grade for taking morning glory seeds. Tom was in the schoolyard the day I got back from suspension. It was the week of my seventeenth birthday. Tom and I just wanted to be out living on our own. We figured we'd go to Florida where it would be warm, and be artists, writers, poets—something like that. But mostly we'd just beachcomb and live off the fat of the land. And try to seduce girls.

We put together fifty dollars or something. And we spent most of that getting the train as far as Washington. Then we started hitching back to Lexington because I wanted to pass through my hometown and be like the conquering, returning hero.

A rich guy I knew had a farm with an extra house on his property. It was like a servant's house way out in the fields. They put us up there and they'd come out and we'd party at night. They'd bring liquor and girls. There was a girl there who I'd known before. What happened in the year and a half since I'd met her, she'd become a slut and it was great. I remember looking between her legs with a flashlight—she was available for whatever I wanted to do. So we stayed there for maybe a week then we started off for Florida again.

We spent the next couple of days hitchhiking south. We got to Alabama, about two hundred miles from the Florida border. We were stranded on this country road late at night and it was cold. We were also getting taunted by rednecks who would drive by, pretend to stop, and when we came up to the car, they'd step on the gas and spray us with gravel. And we

were getting really disgusted and furious, so we figured we'd have to give up for the night.

We built a campfire in the field by the road and started pushing each other, getting ourselves giddy with our freedom and our anger. We somehow broke into throwing the burning sticks from the fire around the field. We were so disgusted with Alabama. Pretty soon the whole place was going up in flames and we were still laughing and dancing and getting off on it and then the sirens come on and outta nowhere this police car and fire engines . . .

They caught us. We made up some story that we were kids returning to school in Florida but they didn't go for it. Anyway, they found out it wasn't true when they checked us against missing persons. So we were found out. My mother had relatives in Alabama who came and got me. Tom's dad came and took him outta jail. Tom went back to school. I was very disappointed in him because I got a bus ticket to New York and left home. He finished high school, then went to college for a year before he came to New York.

But when he moved to New York, we would go to Max's and be like spies. People thought Tom and I were brothers. We were inseparable.

TERRY ORK: There was a definite love/hate relationship going on between Richard Hell and Tom Verlaine, and Richard Lloyd fit in beautifully to that mix.

I was in love with Richard Lloyd and I was in love with the way that Lloyd interacted with Hell and Verlaine. I was in love with the guitar duels and how they all just played against each other in that marvelous way.

And Lloyd was certainly even more "lived" than Hell or Verlaine. I mean, for god's sake, he had really been fucked-up by being in the hospital, all that chemical shock therapy. He said that he sensed that he couldn't connect in the same ways anymore, and that he was a little crazy.

RICHARD LLOYD: I wasn't sane. I had been insane. After I was hospitalized a number of times, in increments of nine months to a year, I would go insane. I would be placed into a hospital or an institution, do the *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* thing, and then come out. And after whatever they had done to me—shock therapy—would wear off, I would look around and see that I had my life back, and then there would be this certain fear, like, "Is it gonna happen again?"

My parents would not sign for electroshock, so the doctors got them to accede to giving me chemical shock therapy, which consisted of them giving you a drug that puts you to sleep, administered every four hours, by

injection. The thinking was that after you got a tolerance to the sleep drug, when it no longer kept you asleep for the four hours, they took you off that medication and put you on the opposite medication—like a high-powered speed—and let it wring you out like a sponge.

I slept for about eight days. It was a very pleasant drug, you know, just sleeping for a week—then it started wearing off. And I knew something was about to happen when I kept coming up to consciousness. It was like air bubbles coming up from the sea—you're down there and it's so quiet, there's no tension and the air bubbles are coming up.

Then one day, they said, "Okay, I think he's ready." And then they gave me this other injection and I started feeling not so good. And they took me and put me in this room, and I was like, "Wait a minute, it's rubber . . . I'm in the RUBBER ROOM!"

By then I was starting to kick and bounce around like a rubber ball—and they'd come every half an hour and open the little window, and watch me, until I stopped moving.

Right after the chemical shock treatment, I had a friend come visit me at Greystone State Mental Hospital in New Jersey. He just started weeping in front of me—because, later on, he told me that he didn't see me, that I had been erased.

RICHARD HELL: I had been really impressed with how the New York Dolls had managed to make things happen for themselves. When they were first going, they would play the same night every week at the Mercer Arts Center. They were associated with the Mercer Arts Center and I thought that was perfect, because people could depend on that. They didn't have to read the paper in order to follow you.

I liked it that if there was a cool band and if you wanted to see them, they'd always be playing on Friday nights at the Pit, or wherever. It seemed like the ideal way, if you were good, to draw the people who would be interested in you as quickly as possible.

So that's what I proposed: that we find a place where we could do that. And I figured, "Where is a bar where nothing is happening? With nothing to lose if we tell them to let us play there one night a week? We'll charge a door price, but you can let in any of your regular customers. You can't lose, because the people who come in will be buying drinks who wouldn't have been there otherwise, and we'll have an audience."

So we all decided we were going to keep our eyes open.

We used to take a bus down Second Avenue or Third Avenue or something to get to Chinatown to go to our rehearsal loft. Verlaine and

Lloyd were apparently walking to a bus stop to go to rehearsal and they spotted CBGB's. They went in and talked to Hilly Kristal, the owner, and asked him if our idea appealed to him.

RICHARD LLOYD: Hilly was like, "What kinda music do you play?" We said, "Well, what does 'CBGB-OMFG' stand for?" He said, "Country, Bluegrass, Blues, and Other Music for Uplifting Gourmandizers." So we said, "Oh yeah, we play a little of that, a little rock, a little country, a little blues, a little bluegrass. . . ."

And Hilly said, "Oh, okay, maybe. . . ."

He was gonna have the place be like a drive-in. He was gonna put the stage in the front of the place, so people could hear the music from the street, too. We said, "Hilly, that's not gonna work—first of all, the person taking money at the door won't be able to hear what anybody's saying; second of all, when people leave they're gonna walk right in front of the band; and third of all, you're gonna get complaints from the street."

That just shows you the kind of bizarre ideas that Hilly had from the get go. So Terry Ork ended up going on our behalf, to guarantee Hilly an audience. He said, "Look, the band's playing around, we do our own poster; we take an ad out in the *Voice*, we'll guarantee you a bar."

So Hilly gave us three Sundays, in three weeks' time.

DUNCAN HANNAH: Onstage, Richard Hell and Tom Verlaine looked like they could blow up at any minute—like they were just trying to keep the peace. Sometimes they'd have a fight onstage. It would be like a Sunday night, there'd only be like fifteen people there, and someone would play something wrong, and Tom Verlaine would start yelling at Richard, "Ah, fuck you." And Richard would yell back, "Don't take it so seriously, asshole."

DANNY FIELDS: I thought Television was fabulous! The arms of Richard Hell and the neck of Tom Verlaine were so entrancing that I needed no more art, music, life, love, or poetry to make me happy after that. They were the most gorgeous thing I'd ever seen. The skin between the two of them . . . they had the most perfect skin in the world. Tom Verlaine's skin and Richard Hell's skin were in a class of like "God made that and then threw away the skin formula." And then there was Richard Lloyd, who I fucked.

Everybody fucked Richard Lloyd. He was another one with gorgeous skin. He was another gorgeous beauty. It was the band of beauties.

DUNCAN HANNAH: Parti Smith wasn't at the Television shows at the absolute beginning, but as word spread, then she got there. Parti always acted like she was old, but, I mean, how old could she have been? Twentynine? So she'd come down to CBGB's and be checking out these boys.

RICHARD LLOYD: Parti Smith started coming to see Television play at CBGB's. Everybody knew that Parti was nuts for Tom. It was like, nudge-wink-wink, you know, "Go for it." I think Tom was ambivalent. I don't think he wanted to get swallowed up by anybody, but frankly, I wasn't paying attention.

TERRY ORK: Parti Smith just came up to me and said, "I want him. I want Tom Verlaine. He has such a Egon Schiele look." She just told me, "You gotta get that boy for me."

It was pretty cut and dry. So I told Tom. He was very enamored with Parti as a poet and a scenemaker. I guess he knew that she was gonna get signed to a record deal. Plus, I guess he liked her physically, I mean they had the same kind of body structure.

RICHARD HELL: I wasn't upset when Parti started going out with Tom, except that it made me nervous to have Tom do anything that was gonna boost his ego further, ha ha ha, because it was getting pretty dicey. Tom thought he was a big deal when he started going out with Parti. But I never hung out with them—that was when I couldn't be around Tom, I was just hating him.

DUNCAN HANNAH: I knew that Allen Lanier was Parti Smith's old man. I lived on Thompson Street and Parti lived nearby, and I would run into her at the laundromat, which was a very Shangri-La kind of thing—washing Allen's clothes.

I said, "What are you doing?"

Parti said, "Oh, washing my old man's clothes."

I mean, feminism existed, right? And this seemed kind of like a servile thing, but Parti was traditional that way. I didn't know anybody that would talk like that: "Yeah, I got to wash my old man's clothes, cause I'm his old lady."

Wash clothes? Shit, nobody cool would wash their clothes.

But Parti told me about the triangle between Allen Lanier, Tom Verlaine, and herself, which that song "We Three" is about. It was like a problem. Parti knew that I knew Allen—I knew them as a couple—and now I knew Tom and Parti as a couple, so Parti was in two couples. It was kind of a little neighborhood scandal, but she was trying to work it out.

DEBBIE HARRY: I remember the look on Parti's and Tom's faces when they were caught kissing behind CBGB's, whoa. Tom blushed and Parti went, "Fuck off."

Parti didn't really ever talk to me much. We weren't very friendly at all—especially when she showed up at one of Blondie's auditions for drummers. All of a sudden Parti walked into the room—I had Clem Burke there—and she said, "Heey, you're pretty good, what's your name?"

I said, "Parti, I'm working with this guy."

She just went, "Oh." You know, instead of, "Oh pardon me," like she hadn't done anything.

RICHARD LLOYD: Parti really liked us. She had the crush on Tom Verlaine, and she really wanted to help us. Her own band was just getting fleshed out and they were starting to draw, so she asked Tom, "Do you think it would be a good move for me to play at CBGB's?"

Tom was like, "I think it'd be a great move for you. Why don't we do some shows together, because then you'll bring in new people for us, and we'll give you a new audience, too."

TERRY ORK: Parti was being managed by Jane Friedman, and I guess Clive Davis, the president of Arista Records, was already showing interest in signing Parti, but Parti and Jane were still nervous about getting a record deal.

So I went to Parti and said, "Hey listen, I think that we got some thing happening here. Let's try you and Television for a few weekends. Let's rip."

So they played Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights at CBGB's, and it just became huge. Each weekend got bigger and bigger. It lasted for six weekends. After that, I went to Hilly and said, "You can't beat these figures with your country and bluegrass, dude!"

And I considered that the official beginning of the scene.

RICHARD HELL: The scene definitely started snowballing. CBGB's was clearly where things were happening, from the very first time we played there. We were really unique. There was not another rock & roll band in the world with short hair. There was not another rock & roll band with tom clothes. Everybody was still wearing glitter and women's clothes. We were these notch-thin, homeless hoodlums, playing really powerful, passionate, aggressive music that was also lyrical.

I think we were the best band in the world that year. Well, for the first four or five months.

BOB GRUEN: The first time I saw Richard Hell, he walked into CBGB's wearing a white T-shirt with a bull's-eye painted on it, and the words Please Kill Me written on it.

That was one of the most shocking things I had ever seen. People had a lot of wild ideas back then, but for somebody to walk the streets of New York with a target on his chest, with an invitation to be killed—that's quite a statement.

RICHARD HELL: I don't ever remember wearing the Please Kill Me T-shirt, though I do remember forcing Richard Lloyd to wear it. I was too much of a coward.

RICHARD LLOYD: Richard Hell had designed a T-shirt for himself that said Please Kill Me, but he wouldn't wear it. I was like, "I'll wear it." So I wore it when we played upstairs at Max's Kansas City, and afterwards these kids came up to me. These fans gave me this really psychotic look—they looked as deep into my eyes as they possibly could—and said, "Are you serious?"

Then they said, "If that's what you want, we'll be glad to oblige because we're such big fans!" They were just looking at me, with that wild-eyed look, and I thought, I'm not wearing this shirt again.

TERRY ORK: I approached Hilly and I said, "Listen, I wanna come back here with Television and I wanna book the club." I said, "Hilly, look what you got, look at the crowds we had here!" I gave him a big pitch because I wanted control. I said, "You gotta go new music every night." The music didn't have a name yet.

Hilly said, "Okay, okay."

So we did.

And that's when it really began to break, and we started getting other great bands, like the Ramones.