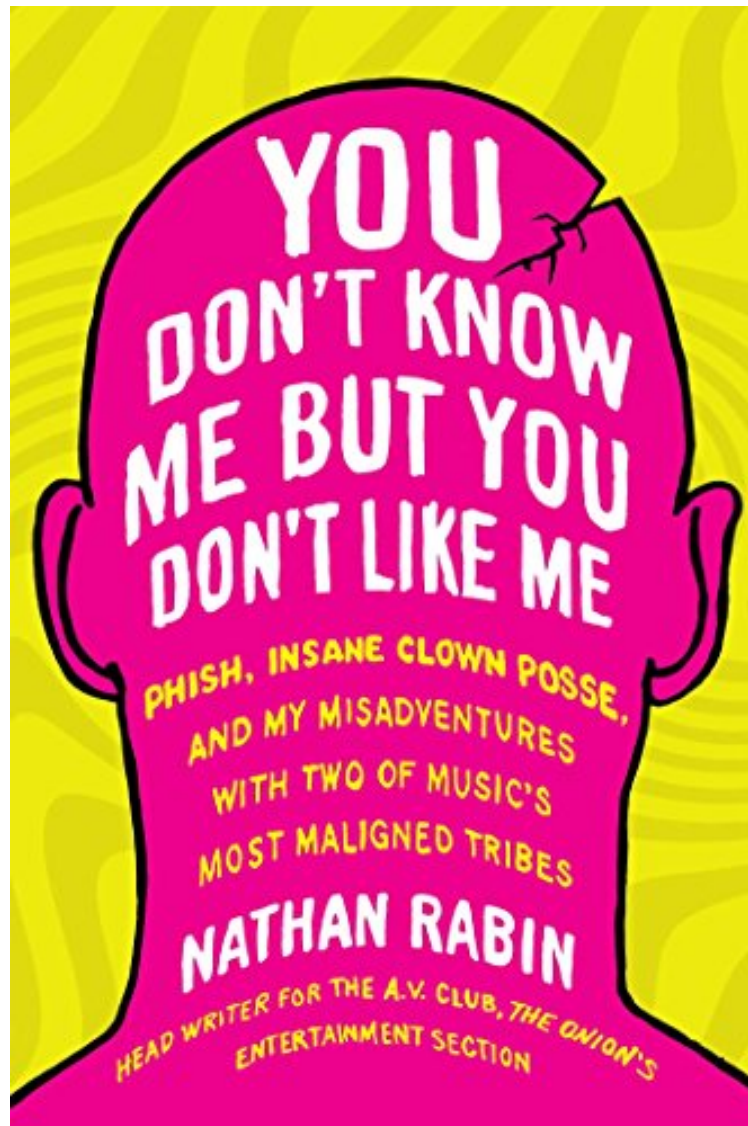


(Download free pdf) You Don't Know Me but You Don't Like Me: Phish, Insane Clown Posse, and My Misadventures with Two of Music's Most Maligned Tribes

You Don't Know Me but You Don't Like Me: Phish, Insane Clown Posse, and My Misadventures with Two of Music's Most Maligned Tribes

Nathan Rabin

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Nathan Rabin : You Don't Know Me but You Don't Like Me: Phish, Insane Clown Posse, and My Misadventures with Two of Music's Most Maligned Tribes before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised You Don't Know Me but You Don't Like Me: Phish, Insane Clown Posse,

and My Misadventures with Two of Music's Most Maligned Tribes:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. I enjoy getting a feel of the culture of fans and ...By Brooklyn Young
This book blew me away and I don't dare say that lightly. Picture hurricane-level winds pushing me from page to page in anticipation. I purchased this gem because of the overwhelming passion that I have for music. Even more so, I enjoy getting a feel of the culture of fans and how they find themselves identifying to and drawn to certain musicians. My interest in Phish is somewhat significant. It would probably be greater had I not been sober at the one and only show I'd attended, but that's irrelevant. I found myself anxious to delve into the Phish-y part of the book. My thoughts with the portion that focused on ICP were "meh". Then I began reading... Nathan is a genius. He has a way of writing that makes you feel not only that you are right there in the middle of Bethel Woods and Cave-In-Rock, but that you desire to be there with him sharing in the same crazy experiences regardless of where either band stands within your musical tastes. I didn't feel as if I was reading this book. I felt instead that Rabin was sitting there sharing his story while seated right beside me over coffee.
1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. I read it in two flights and weather delays Enjoying it all.
By DucksBucks
I really enjoyed the book and getting to know more about ICP. CONTRARY to the author you can be a casual fan without a Hatchet Man Tat. As I am. BUT I am a massive Phish fan seeing some 70 odd shows. Many of which were the same shows the author was at. Miami being a great run and great 1st show for Nathan. Mine being 12/6/96 look it up epic show. My only complaint is the very extensive drug references. Both bands do not need anymore of that kind of negative stereotypes. Even though I'm looking for the "stereotypes just save time" t-shirt. LOL. I have been to far more shows without "party supplies" then with. And the lot is not some free for all as he makes it sound. That's the only thing that kept me from giving it 5 stars. But if u like books about music and bands and "tour" it's a good easy read. And the stories are right on and makes me yearn to be paid to go to shows and write a book. I am glad Nat found love of a good woman, and beyond the drugs really loves Phish for their music! Good read.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Entertaining and insightful
By GVI
read this awhile ago, but for anyone who enjoys a memoir-ish ramble through ups and downs while simultaneously engaging with and digging into seriously unique subcultures, I highly recommend this. It's a fun, quick read about Nathan's longer-than-planned and very strange trip(s).

One of Rolling Stones 20 Best Music Books of 2013
When memoirist and head writer for The A.V. Club Nathan Rabin first set out to write about obsessed music fans, he had no idea the journey would take him to the deepest recesses of both the pop culture universe and his own mind. For two very curious years, Rabin, who Mindy Kaling called smart and funny in The New Yorker, hit the road with two of music's most well-established fanbases: Phish's hippie fans and Insane Clown Posse's notorious Juggalos. Musically or style-wise, these two groups could not be more different from each other, and Rabin, admittedly, was a cynic about both bands. But once he gets deep below the surface, past the caricatures and into the essence of their collective cultures, he discovers that both groups have tapped into the human need for community. Rabin also grapples with his own mental well-being he discovers that he is bipolar and his journey is both a prism for cultural analysis and a deeply personal exploration, equal parts humor and heart.

"A universal [story] about the ways we connect with the music we adore. By making it personal, and by profiling such a broad spectrum of fans, Rabin puts a human face on what would be caricatures." (Publishers Weekly)
"An extremely funny and engaging book about how fandom provides people with surrogate families and a way to escape day-to-day banality." (Rolling Stone (four-star review))
"[A] deftly told tale." (The Huffington Post)
I love this book. Not only is it funny and well written, but it is, dare I say beautiful. People could learn a thing or two from Nathan. Instead of judging new things and keeping them at bay because they're 'scary' or 'shitty,' he embraces them and walks away with rich life experiences. So, give yourself a rich life experience of your own and read this book. Then, when you're finished, go and see a Phish show. What do you have to lose? Nothing. What do you have to gain? maybe they'll play a thirty minute Tweezer and you'll get to see god. (Harris Wittels)
"Nakedly honest." (The Capital Times)
Awesomely funny. I've rarely read something that was so good at understanding and building empathy for such an unlikely group. (David Plotz, Slate Staff Pick, Best Books of 2013)
"[Insane Clown Posse] may forever remain the butt of jokes, but there's a lot of community-building going on here as revealed in the acclaimed book You Don't Know Me But You Don't Like Me." (Huffington Post)
About the Author
Nathan Rabin is a staff writer for The Dissolve, a new film website from the popular music website Pitchfork. Previously, he was the head writer for The A.V. Club, the entertainment guide of The Onion, a position he held until recently since he was a college student at University of Wisconsin at Madison in 1997. Rabin is also the author of a memoir, The Big Rewind, and an essay collection based on one of his columns, My Year of Flops. He most recently collaborated with pop parodist "weird Al" Yankovic on a coffee table book titled Weird Al: The Book. Rabin's writing has also appeared in The Wall Street Journal, Spin, The Huffington Post, The Boston Globe, Nerve, and Modern Humorist. He lives in Chicago with his wife.
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You Don't Know Me but You Don't Like Me
WHAT MADNESS HAVE I GOTTEN MYSELF INTO?
It begins, as these things generally do, with a girl. When I was twenty-five years old in 2001 I traveled to Marietta,

Georgia, to visit my younger sister, Shari, and became instantly enraptured with a radiant seventeen-year-old friend of hers I will call Cadence Caraway. Though we spent only an hour together having brunch, the memory of Cadence haunted me until eight years later when she contacted me on the message boards for the A.V. Club, the entertainment monolith where I have toiled as head writer since the beginning of time. We fell in love via e-mails and phone conversations before beginning a long-distance romance that found us shuttling back and forth between Providence, Rhode Island, where Cadence was getting her masters in teaching from Brown, and my hometown of Chicago. In Providence one of our most beloved and oft-repeated rituals entailed compulsively watching the music video for Miracles, from controversial Detroit horrorcore duo Insane Clown Posse. We were mesmerized by the surreal incongruity between the gothic artifice of Insane Clown Posse's wicked-clown persona and the videos glorious lack of self-consciousness. The self-styled Worlds Most Hated Group had been on the periphery of my consciousness since I started writing about pop culture for the A.V. Club. The band was an easy punch line for cynics, as well as the inspiration for the most mocked and reviled subculture in existence: Juggalos, the strange, often Midwestern creatures who wore clown makeup, greeted each other with hearty cries of Whoop whoop, Family, and Magic magic ninja what! and sprayed themselves with off-brand Faygo sodas during concerts rich in theatricality and homemade spectacle. They unite every year for an infamous multiday bacchanal known as the Gathering of the Juggalos. Deans of pop culture had treated the duo with equal parts fascination and repulsion, but after Miracles my mild curiosity about Insane Clown Posse and the wild, weird, disreputable world they rule as clown-painted demon deities evolved into something more serious. Yet even as someone fortunate enough to be able to write about his obsessions for a living, I had only a fuzzy conception of what a massive role Insane Clown Posse (aka ICP) and especially their passionate, intense, and unique fans would play in the next few years of my life. Cadence shared my intense obsession with Miracles even if the duos self-deprecating, tongue-in-cheek take on horrorcore couldnt have been further from her usual tastes. In one of her first e-mails to me, Cadence inquired, Do you like the band Phish? I freaked out a little bit. Asking someone if they like Phish is a loaded question. Its not like asking, Do you like Squeeze? Nobody is liable to care if you enjoy the music of the veteran British pop band behind Tempted and Pulling Mussels from a Shell, but if someone says theyre really into Phish, were often tempted to make sweeping generalizations about their personality, intelligence, personal hygiene, sobriety, class, education, and taste. Theres a great T-shirt from my employers at the Onion that reads, STEREOTYPES ARE A REAL TIME-SAVER. Thats certainly true when it comes to Phish and Insane Clown Posse. Buy into the stereotype of Juggalos as uneducated, violent, racist, and ignorant, or Phish fans as unemployed, weed-smoking, unjustifiably privileged space cadets, and you dont have to waste time listening to their music or actually interacting with any of their fans. Part of the revulsion people feel toward Phish and Insane Clown Posse is physical in nature. Being a hardcore Insane Clown Posse fan is an intensely visceral experience involving sticky clown makeup, soda-soaked clothing, homemade tattoos, and, in the case of the Gathering of the Juggalos, thousands of Juggalos gathering in a remote, drug-sex-and-alcohol-choked rural environment for days on end with extraordinarily limited access to showers, toiletries, and other niceties. On a primal level, a lot of people find Juggalos just plain gross. Phish fans arent held in the same contempt, in part because their fan base tends to be better educated and wealthier than the overwhelmingly working-class Juggalos, but as the biggest and best-known jam band in existence, Phish is one of the primary targets of our cultures long-standing antihippie bias. By the time I went to college in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1994, Phish was the hippie band, just as the Grateful Dead was the hippie band for generations before it. Like the Grateful Dead, Phish tends to be judged by the culture and attitudes of its fans as much as the content of its music. As a college kid, I came to see Phish as the band whose music you were casually forced to listen to in exchange for a free bowl of pot. I dont remember the music nearly as much as I remember those experiences. I think thats true for a lot of peoples perception of Phish: The music floats away into a noodly, interchangeable blur of guitar solos and free-form sonic experimentation, but the stoned grins, tie-dyed shirts, and mellow vibes of fans linger on. In part because its oeuvre was critically unfashionable and terminally unhip, I let Phishs music wash over me without really thinking about it or really, truly listening to it. As I grew older I internalized our cultures revisionist take on hippies as drug-addicted, myopic brats luxuriating in eternal adolescence. I inherited the widespread sense that hippies were getting away with something, that they were lazily opting out of civilization to get high in a field while the grueling machinery of late-period capitalism continued without them. The hippie ethos and Phishs mythology are inextricably intertwined: Phish isnt a band; its a way of life. Its a name that conjures up images of lost children with scruffy beards and tie-dyed shorts and sad, emaciated pit bulls on rope chains accompanied by dreadlocked white women habitually clad in flowing dresses. Do you like the band Phish? implicitly means, How do you feel about jam bands? How do you feel about people who follow Phish? How do you feel about marijuana and Ecstasy and nitrous and acid and mushrooms? How do you feel about traveling from town to town and devoting your life to the music of a group of middle-aged men? How do you feel about the Grateful Dead? How do you feel about the sixties? How do you feel about sex and freedom and the liberating powers of rock n roll? How do you feel about the open road? How do you feel about earnestness and sincerity and sneering, protective irony? Did I like the band Phish? I had no idea. Id lazily bought into the overriding cultural assessment of the band and its fans, but now I had a whole new frame of reference: my beloved Cadence. Phish had made my Cadence happy. I wanted to be

part of anything that gave her joy. I fell in love with her in a way that paradoxically made me feel powerful and powerless, bulletproof and vulnerable. I felt like I could accomplish anything with her by my side but the prospect of losing her terrified me. I didn't just want to be her present and future: I wanted to retroactively become her past as well. I wanted to somehow Photoshop myself into her memories. I wanted to travel back in time and twirl ecstatically at half-forgotten festivals. I fell in love with the woman Cadence had become but I was also in love with the beautiful child she had been. Maybe that's what my sudden urge to see as many Phish shows as possible was ultimately about: rewriting Cadence's history with me as the romantic lead. How could I hold on to my knee-jerk anti-Phish prejudice when the band meant so much to the greatest source of happiness in my life? As a freakishly smart, preternaturally verbal, obscenely well-read teenager in the sprawling suburban wasteland of Marietta, Georgia (Newt Gingrich's district), Cadence followed Phish to escape a dispiriting universe of jocks and skinny blonde girls, a soul-crushingly homogenous realm where everyone became a real estate salesman or stockbroker, got married in their early twenties, voted Republican, and traded lawn-maintenance tips at the country club after work. To Cadence, Phish fandom was a way of both asserting her individuality and joining a tribe. Though we grew up nearly a decade apart and several universes away from each other, we both sought out books and music and movies and ideas as a way of escaping a world where we didn't belong. For me, that meant throwing myself into art that expressed the bottomless rage I felt. I lost myself in the anarchic anger of Johnny Rotten or the righteous rebellion of the Coup. For Cadence, it meant traveling in the opposite direction, seeking out music and a scene that stumbled toward grace, toward transcendence, toward the eternal ideal of one nation under a groove. We are born with open minds. We want to explore, to learn, to grow, to see and experience everything. But as we get older our minds begin to close. We become stuck in our ways. Preferences become prejudices. Yes, yes, yes is replaced by Bartleby's Id prefer not to. New movements and stars and genres strike us as strange, incomprehensible, objectionable, and ridiculous. Our lust for knowledge and adventure is replaced by a desire for those damned kids to get off our lawn and turn down that crazy jungle music while they're at it. We fetishize the music and movies and movements of our youth. We retreat into the comforting cocoon of the familiar. After a lifetime of feeling different, I started to wonder if we're all secretly the same. I began to suspect that what divides us isn't as important as what unites us. We all hurt and ache and bleed and struggle and love. We just listen to different music and align ourselves with different subcultures while we do so. Like Phish, Insane Clown Posse has developed a vast, intensely loyal grassroots following despite being alternately ignored and mocked by the mainstream. In the case of Insane Clown Posse at least, it could be argued that the group has an intensely loyal grassroots following because it has been alternately ignored and mocked by the mainstream, not despite it. As Insane Clown Posse's Violent J likes to say, the colder it is outside the circle, the warmer it is inside. The sense of persecution many Juggalos feel from the outside world serves to bind them closer together. The parallels between the seemingly antithetical groups are legion. They each have elaborate homemade mythologies. Phish has its Gamehenge song cycle, a dense, C. S. Lewis/J. R. R. Tolkien-style saga of good and evil rooted in *The Man Who Stepped into Yesterday*, a concept album frontman Trey Anastasio wrote as his senior study while enrolled in Goddard College in the mid-1980s. *The Man Who Stepped into Yesterday* chronicles the fantastical adventures of an aging military man named Colonel Forbin who finds a door into the mythical realm of Gamehenge, a world populated by the Lizards, a peaceful people who led an idyllic existence dictated by the precepts of a manual called the *Helping Friendly Book* before an evil outsider named Wilson took advantage of their trusting nature to enslave them using knowledge gleaned from the book, which he had hidden away to keep the Lizards from harnessing its incredible power. Colonel Forbin tries to retrieve the *Helping Friendly Book* to aid the Lizards in their rebellion against the nefarious Wilson, only to have it fall into the hands of a character named Errand Wolfe, who uses it to overthrow Wilson and install himself as ruler instead of returning the book to the Lizards. In *The Man Who Stepped into Yesterday*, as in life, power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Phish has never released *The Man Who Stepped into Yesterday* as a studio album but its songs, characters, and conflicts live on in the band's regular live performances of songs from the opus. Insane Clown Posse has an even more convoluted and central mythology involving the afterlife collectively known as the Dark Carnival, rooted in a series of *Jokers Cards* that correspond to different ICP albums. Insane Clown Posse and Phish have both worked to cultivate a sense of community with their followers that obliterates the distinction between artist and fan. But more than elaborate mythologies, Phish and Insane Clown Posse offer fans the sense of community, identity, and belonging that comes with joining a tight-knit if widely disparaged tribe with its own set of rituals, traditions, and homemade folklore. When I examine my soul, I have to admit that this sense of community and belonging probably attracted me to Phish and Insane Clown Posse as much as the fascinating place they hold in pop culture. To research the curious ways of modern musical tribes, I decided to augment my travels to Hallowicked and the Gathering of the Juggalos by following Phish with Cadence throughout the summer of 2010. When that proved an epic boondoggle, I found myself heading out on the road to follow Phish in the summer of 2011 in a radically different, perilous new context: I was now broke, desperate, half mad, terrified that my world was about to be rent asunder at any moment, and, most dramatically of all, without Cadence. *You Don't Know Me but You Don't Like Me* is the rambling tale of a man who followed Phish and Insane Clown Posse for two years and lost his way, whose mind and mission got hopelessly scrambled somewhere along the glorious, hazardous road, and who just barely managed to

crawl his way back home. It is a much different book from the tidy, anthropological tome I set out to write, but its also the only book I could have written honestly and with a clear conscience. I set out to write a book about musical fandom from the outside in. Instead I ended up writing a book about fandom from the inside out. What could have motivated me to devote my summers to a band and subculture that had been so utterly foreign to me? Love plays a central role, but I also wanted to capture a snapshot of a funky subsection of the pop-culture universe. I wanted to do it before age and responsibility made traveling across the country to follow a rock n roll band impossible, before I really had to grow up. I didnt realize when I began that I had already passed that point in my life and that every time I headed out on the road, I did so at my own peril. I wanted to understand what attracts people like my beloved Cadence to the traveling carnival of a Phish tour. What compelled others to paint their faces like clowns and get tattoos of Hatchetman, the mascot for ICPs Psychopathic label? I wanted to delve beyond the caricature of jam-band fans and horrorcore scrubs. I decided to throw myself on the front lines of first-person journalistic experimentation, like Barbara Ehrenreich in Nickel and Dimed or David Foster Wallace munching on a corn dog at the state fair or A. J. Jacobs dressing up like Moses or that book where George Plimpton went undercover with the Symbionese Liberation Army and ended up offing all those pigs. My curious years following two of the strangest and strongest musical subcultures represented my first and last fling. Throughout my twenties I avoided many of the responsibilities of adulthood out of a delusional conviction that Id wake up one day and be transformed into a young Jack Kerouac. Id become a drifter, a gypsy, an upscale hobo, the Wandering Jew, a merry prankster, a good old American guest. A man like that cannot and should not be tied down by a mortgage, marriage, and fatherhood. As Billy Joe Shaver reminds us, doers and thinkers say moving is the closest thing to being free. As an American, I have an inalienable right to pretend that Im perpetually on the verge of throwing it all away and heading out onto the open road. I cherish that illusion. Or at least I did until it smashed up hard against a brick wall of reality.