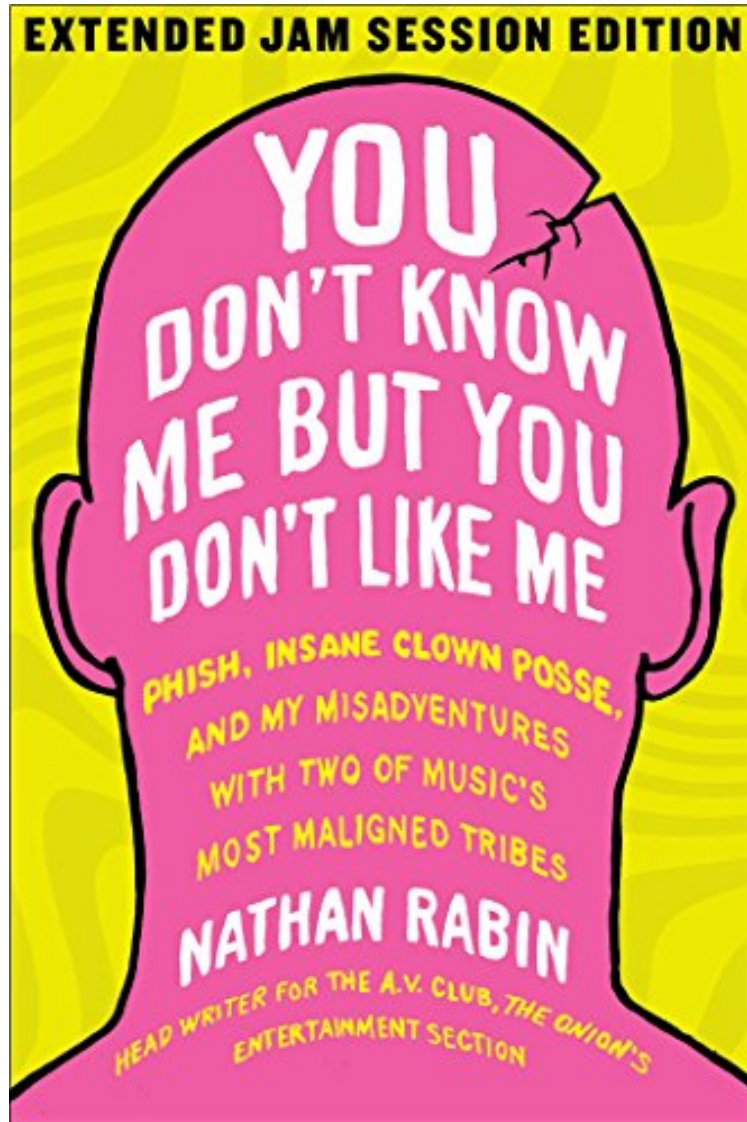


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# You Don't Know Me but You Don't Like Me: Phish, Insane Clown Posse, and My Misadventures with Two of Music's Most Maligned Tribes

*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 YoungThis 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 DucksBucksI 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 insightfulBy 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 Stoners' 20 Best Music Books of 2013 and one of Slaters' Staff Picks for Best Books of 2013 The ebook edition now includes Nathan Rabin's "Extended Jam Session"—a two-part bonus chapter about what writing this book did to (and for) his life. The first part chronicles the author's melancholy yet hilarious excursion on the maiden voyage of the Kid Rock Chillin's; the Most cruise, and the second part depicts the life lessons gleaned from getting sued by American Express over the charges the author racked up writing the book. The chapter sheds new light on a singular and unique exploration of personal and musical obsession and further highlights the book's theme of transcendence through utter, abject failure. When memoirist and former 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 sayhellip; 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 funnyhellip;. 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 AuthorNathan Rabin is the head writer for The A.V. Club, the entertainment guide of The Onion, a position he has held 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 an illustrated autobiography 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. Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

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 master's 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 video's glorious lack of self-consciousness. The self-styled World's 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 duo's self-deprecating, tongue-in-cheek take on horrorcore couldn't 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. It's 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 they're really into Phish, we're often tempted to make sweeping generalizations about their personality, intelligence, personal hygiene, sobriety, class, education, and taste. There's a great T-shirt from my employers at the Onion that reads, STEREOTYPES ARE A REAL TIME-SAVER. That's 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 don't 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 aren't 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 culture's 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 don't remember the music nearly as much as I remember those experiences. I think that's true for a lot of people's 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 Phish's music wash over me without really thinking about it or really, truly listening to it. As I grew older I internalized our culture's 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 Phish's mythology are inextricably intertwined: Phish isn't a band; it's a way of life. It's 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 & 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. I 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 "I'd 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....