

THE TEMPLE OF SET

VOLUME I



MICHAEL A. AQUINO

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- by -

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... the Eighties cover before me, & are abased.

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13: THE ABASED EIGHTIES I: THE CLONING OF NIKKI SIXX

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From that time on the obliteration of Joseph Curwen's memory became increasingly rigid, extending at last by common consent even to the town records and files of the *Gazette*. It can be compared in spirit only to the hush that laid on Oscar Wilde's name for a decade after his disgrace, and in extent only to the fate of that sinful King of Runagur in Lord Dunsany's tale, whom the gods decided must not only cease to be, but must cease ever to have been.

- H.P. Lovecraft, *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*

You must stop imagining that posterity will vindicate you, Winston. Posterity will never hear of you. You will be lifted clean out from the stream of history. We shall turn you into gas and pour you into the stratosphere. Nothing will remain of you: not a name in a register, not a memory in a living brain. You will be annihilated in the past as well as in the future. You will never have existed.

- George Orwell, 1984

In the very first episode of the recently-revived *Twilight Zone* television series, a man telephoned his home only to find the call being answered by his double - a *Doppelgänger* (as Goethe called such magical mirror-images). This story of an "ultimate identity crisis" was resolved only when the double finally killed the progressively-more-insane original ... or was it the other way around?

Stories involving doubles created by magic, science, or impersonation have always been fascinatingly shuddersome. Who can forget the *Metropolis* robotrix, who went on a rampage of apocalyptic destruction while the real girl whose features she had taken lay imprisoned in the pentagram-emblazoned house of Rotwang the magician? Who was "the Man in the Iron Mask" immortalized in Alexandre Dumas' tale - said to be a double of the King, and to possess "too much" knowledge of the infamous *chambre ardente* Satanic orgies whose exposure scandalized the French court?

To many people, one's appearance and one's name have a significance beyond mere convention. They are "extensions of the soul", as it were. To know the true and/or complete

name of a god or daemon was often to have power over him; the mere utterance of the 72-letter name of the Hebrew God - known as the "shemhamforash" - was reputed to destroy the universe if pronounced correctly. An Indian legend says that if the name of Shiva is uttered repeatedly, he will open one of his eyes, again destroying the universe [if YHVH hasn't trashed it first].

To take away one's name, or to deny him the right to assert it, is thus an act psychologically akin to murder. Without a name, one is merely a piece of animal flesh displacing time and space. With a name, one has **identity**. In Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* the bewildered humanoids constantly spoke of themselves as "we"; the climax of the story came when one bold soul struggled upward through the mists of this confusion and began to speak of himself as "I". "To be or not to be: that is the question," said Shakespeare's Hamlet - as indeed it is.

In 1985 another young man was fitted for an "iron mask" - rather a different type of heavy metal than that to which he had previously been accustomed. His name is Matthew Trippe, but he is better known to rock music enthusiasts as Nikki Sixx, cofounder, composer, and bass guitarist for Mötley Crüe.

Who or what is Mötley Crüe? The most controversial, if not notorious branch of rock music is "heavy metal", known for music, costumes and lyrics which espouse Frazetta-like fantasy, intense sexuality, and an exultant, emotional, neo-barbarian life-style. While its roots can be traced back to such groups as the 1960s' Iron Butterfly and Alice Cooper, contemporary heavy metal might be said to have come of age with the band KISS, whose musicians invariably appeared in exotic black/silver costumes and face-paint. KISS concerts went beyond mere musical recitals; they were orgies of fireworks, hydraulic stages, hyperamplified sonics, and general audience hysteria unequalled for spectacle since Adolf Hitler's Nürnberg rallies of the 1930s. Bat-winged Gene Simmons, famed for his fire-breathing and prehensile tongue, would taunt the audience for not screaming loud enough: "You **know** you can do better than **that** - I want to see you bring the **roof down!**" - in answer to which there would erupt a feral roar that would come pretty close to doing just that.

Why heavy metal at all? The answer is not at all difficult to see. This is not the secure 1950s, when the world was America's backyard to work or play in; nor the 1960s, when - secure in our virtue - we set forth from Camelot to slay the dragon of monolithic communism; nor the 1970s, when we immersed ourselves in nostalgia, backbiting, and escapist fantasies.

These are the 1980s, when all of our comforting illusions have been shattered, and when Americans of all ages find themselves surrounded by depressing and dehumanizing realities which they shrink from confronting. We thought we had conquered racism, only to find that tensions are higher and more destructive than ever. Neighborhoods once secure are now fortified with steel bars, alarms, firearms. We are dismayed to see that America, far from being the world's savior, is intensely hated by many people who consider it as the "great evil". Commercially we are increasingly despised by those who consider us merely a spoiled consumer economy, ripe for the plucking - and the most profitable destination for heroin, cocaine, and angel dust. Even the beautiful governmental temples of Washington, D.C. are blighted by ugly concrete barricades against terrorists. Commercial successes still occur, but are increasingly characterized by a "yuppie" ethic that views the dollar not just as the supreme god - but as the **only** god.

In this "arid wilderness of steel and stone" it is not surprising that the spirit of Moloch prevails. It is a time for witch-hunts and scapegoats. Elder America scrabbles for solace in "moral majority" religious fundamentalism, but younger America - having been brought up in a *de facto* materialist environment, is not so easily coaxed into a primitive religious stupor. Rather it responds with passionate frustration at being so near to a technological paradise, yet ever denied it by the inexorable decay of the social and moral fabric so necessary to support it. Heavy metal, like the torchlight pageants of Nazi Germany, is an explosion of fury - fury at being

hemmed in by the problem and seeing no rational solution to it - of creativity prevented from creating - of idealism without meaningful ideals. ["**Yes!**" thundered Hitler, "we **are** barbarians!"]

Under the cruel and jagged armor of heavy metal, therefore, one frequently finds a surprisingly rich outpouring of artistic, poetic, and musical talent - which in turn explains the seductive appeal of this type of music to a wide range of audiences. One does not go to a heavy metal concert to lighten one's heart, but rather to drive oneself to heights of raw emotional frenzy, followed by a dizzying descent into emotional exhaustion. Thus are the grinding frustrations of reality at least momentarily bludgeoned into the background.

By the early 1980s a number of heavy metal bands had begun to appear on the scene, and the race was on to see which could be the most outrageous. Twenty years ago we used to think that the Fugs, the Stones, the Fish, and the Mothers of Invention were just about as raunchy as you could get, but now they appeared as models of drawing-room decorum next to metalloids who looked and sounded rather like the beast-men from the island of Dr. Moreau. Of these, one of the most bizarre was Mötley Crüe. Formed in January 1981 by Matthew "Nikki Sixx" Trippe together with Mick "Mars" Reese, Tommy "Lee" Bass, and Vince "Neil" Wharton, the Crüe was signed by Elektra/Asylum Records in mid-1982 and went on to become one of the flagships of the heavy metal fleet after the 1983-84 smash success of its second album, *Shout at the Devil*.

Middle America - still dominated largely by the generation who thought Elvis' hip-movements too shocking for television - reacted to heavy metal with increasingly hysterical alarm and indignation. Writing in the *New York Times* earlier this year, columnist William Safire praised the U.S. Senate's hearings & citizens'-group efforts to censor or suppress heavy metal. "What's to be done about sex-violence, sadomasochism, and Satanism being sold to youngsters?" he fumed. "I am a libertarian when it comes to the actions of consenting adults. With complete consistency, I am anti-libertarian when it comes to minors. Kids get special protections in law and deserve protection from porn-rock profiteers."

Allegations that serial murders and teenaged "Satanic" gangs were inspired by heavy metal music fueled calls for censorship-ratings in music similar to those applied to pornographic & violent films, and Mötley Crüe - as Mick Mars later told me - appeared to be careening straight for an "X".

In mid-1984 the buildup of such public pressure resulted in a decision by Mötley Crüe's management to sanitize the band. The leather, chains, flames, and Satanic insignia of *Shout at the Devil* gave way to circus-clown attire - pastels, polka-dots, and garter-belts - on the cover of *Theatre of Pain*, Crüe's third album, released earlier this year. Composer Nikki Sixx, whose Satanic lyrics had already been censored on the second album [even to its title, which was originally *Shout **With** the Devil*], was warned that he was the main cause of the Crüe's Satanic image and instructed to deny it publicly.

There was, however, a problem: Nikki Sixx happened to **believe** in the Satanism he espoused in the songs he wrote, and he didn't want to be "sanitized". What to do? On April 1 road manager Richard Fisher told Sixx that he would be replaced upon the expiration of his contract that year. It is entirely possible that, at that time, it was contemplated that Sixx' departure from the band later in the year would be openly acknowledged and a replacement just as openly added to the group. But now events took a turn which would ultimately result in a maze of intrigue, deception, and cover-ups to rival Watergate itself.

"In April we had just gotten off tour with Ozzy [Osbourne]," recounts Sixx, "and the band members decided to go our separate ways for a couple of weeks. I chose to go and stay with Jeff Rogers, whom I had met in Naples, Florida while doing a publicity stunt in February. On June 1 Jeff and I were invited to a party by a friend of his named John Spears. We got there at 8:30 PM

and got stoned. At 10 PM Jeff and John asked me if they could use my car to get some more beer ...”

Sixx refused, but said he would drive them. Directed to the Pavilion shopping center in north Naples, he parked the car and strolled into a movie theater to visit the manager, whom he remembered from a previous publicity engagement, while the others headed for the row of shops. Leaving the theater, Sixx walked back towards his car, then noticed a man walking out of a bookstore in front of him.

“Out of nowhere I saw John catch up to him, and by the reflection of the light I saw a knife, which John put up against his throat. I panicked and ducked down behind a car. John ran to my car and called, “Come on, Nikki!” I stood up and looked at Sam [Weiss, the bookstore owner], who saw me. Then I ran, jumped in my car, and sped off.”

At first it seemed that there would be no aftermath to the incident. On June 22 Sixx returned to work with the band, making a series of publicity appearances in Arkansas, Tennessee, North Carolina, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania to promote *Shout at the Devil*. Unknown to him, a second robbery had since been committed - this time using a rifle owned by Sixx. In Erie, Pennsylvania on August 28th, Sixx was arrested by two policemen who showed him a warrant for his arrest on the charge of armed robbery.

“I waived extradition and was returned to Florida. I spent 39 days in seclusion. Then our record company put up the \$50,000 bond so that I could work on our latest album, *Theatre of Pain*.” He returned to Los Angeles for recording sessions from November 27 to December 21, 1984 - after which he helped make the video for the song “Smokin’ in the Boys Room” from *Theatre*.

On December 8 disaster struck. Lead singer Vince Neil’s sports car went out of control in Redondo Beach, California, resulting in Neil’s arrest for vehicular manslaughter and drunk driving. Intensive efforts were made to overcome the adverse publicity of this incident, to include dedication of *Theatre of Pain* to Nicholas Dingley (killed in the crash) and a message on the jacket exhorting fans not to drink and drive. While fans’ attention was focused on Neil’s tribulations in Los Angeles, however, another drama was taking place - unnoticed - in Florida.

Nikki Sixx’ trial was scheduled for December 27, and after finishing *Theatre* he and Mick Mars drove to Florida in Mars’ Lamborghini (which Sixx had decided to buy). December 27 came and went; Sixx could not bring himself to appear and had jumped bail. Four days later, shortly after midnight on New Year’s Day, Sixx and Mars took the Lamborghini out for a spin, whereupon there followed an episode straight out of *Smokey and the Bandit*. Recalls Sixx:

“The speeding ticket was quite a laugh. I was moving at 102 down U.S. #41 when I passed a Highway Patrol car. He put his siren and lights on, and caught up with me. When he was about 50 feet behind me, I floored it. Then I had to make a turn. I slowed down to 130 and spun the car to make it turn around 1-1/2 times. Then I had an 8-mile straightway. I floored it again, going past 170. In a little over a minute I saw a massive roadblock and slammed on the brakes. One thing I learned is that you can’t outrun a radio!”

Sixx received a ticket for (a) 189 mph in a 45 zone [which means the entire 8-mile stretch in under two minutes!], (b) speed too fast for conditions, (c) ran stop sign, (d) willful & wanton reckless driving, (e) ran red light, (f) driving on wrong side of road, (g) improper change of lane or course, (h) careless driving, (i) improper passing, and (j) improper turn. [“How,” I later asked him, “does one make a **proper** turn at 189 mph?”]

For these transgressions Sixx was slapped with a \$750 fine by Judge Anderson the following day; he recalls that passenger Mars - who had been rather vocal in his annoyance at the arrest - was hit for twice that amount. Little did Sixx realize, however, how important that traffic ticket would be in the months to come.

Sixx' failure to appear in court on the armed robbery charge had apparently not filtered down through the police bureaucracy by January 2, so he and Mars were able to pay their fines and go. Sixx headed for Erie, Pennsylvania where his ex-personal manager resided. "She hid me until March 4th, when I was caught and taken to the 'Erie county prison'. I fought extradition for three more months, but on June 28th was finally taken back to Florida's Collier County Jail."

Meanwhile Mötley Crüe was on tour. Nikki Sixx' replacement, however, was not appearing under his own name of Frankie Ferraro; rather he was appearing as ... **Nikki Sixx!**

How could such a transpersonation succeed? It is not as difficult as it might seem. Sixx had always appeared in exotic face-paint and with a shaggy head of hair. On neither of Mötley Crüe's first two albums is there a close-up photo of him in which all of his features are clearly visible, and on *Theatre of Pain* the lower half of "Nikki Sixx" face is covered in both photos, so that any difference between his jawline and that of the previous Sixx cannot be seen. As bass guitarist and background vocalist, Sixx is not as instantly recognizable to live audiences as, say, lead singer Neil or lead guitarist Mars. Ferraro's eyes are blue while Trippe's are green, but rock-concert audiences are not usually fine-tuned to such details - particularly when they are not alerted to the fact that an impersonation is taking place.

So all through the spring and summer, while thousands of Mötley Crüe fans were applauding the new "Nikki Sixx", the old one remained locked up in the Collier County Jail. In July he spoke to Elektra's New York office, which assured him that he could still write music for the Crüe, and that he would continue to receive royalties for the band's performance of his songs. ["Did you ever see any of that royalty money?" I later asked him. He responded, "Not a cent."]

At the end of October, still sincere in his personal commitment to the Prince of Darkness, he wrote to the Temple of Set, identifying himself and applying for admission. Since it seemed a bit odd for a rock star to be buried in a Florida jail, we called Elektra Records' Los Angeles and New York offices. We were informed by both that the real Nikki Sixx was on tour, and that this Matthew Trippe fellow was simply an impostor who should be ignored. I wrote back to the Man in the Iron Mask, asking for some evidence. Along came a series of letters crammed with anecdotes about the band, song lyrics [some "uncensored" from the sanitized versions on the albums], mail from fans, and - the Lamborghini traffic ticket:

FLORIDA UNIFORM TRAFFIC CITATION 70811-LV

COUNTY: Lee M.P. C.P.D. S.O. OTHER

AGENCY: DISNEY RECORD
 Forward to Record Section: DISMAY, Tallahassee

IN THE COURT REGULATED BELOW THE UNDERSIGNED CERTIFIES THAT HE HAS JUST AND REASONABLE GROUNDS TO BELIEVE THAT THE CITATION SHOULD BE ISSUED

DATE OF VIOLATION: 12/12/89 MONTH: 12 DAY: 12 YEAR: 1989 AT: 12:55 A.M. (P.M.)

NAME (PRINT): NIKKI SIXX FIRST: NIKKI MIDDLE: DANIEL LAST: SIXX

STREET: 1339 Kingswood CITY: FT. MYERS STATE: FL ZIP CODE: 33907

DATE OF BIRTH: 1/18/61 DAY: 18 MONTH: 1 YEAR: 1961 SEX: M HEIGHT: 6'1"

DRIVER LICENSE NUMBER: 1A099 STATE: FL TYPE: OPERATOR YEAR LICENSE EXPIRES: 8/84

YEAR VEHICLE EXPIRES: 84 STATE: CA VEHICLE LICENSE NO.: 8847

OWNER: Nikki Mars MAKE: Lamborghini MODEL: Vehicle COLOR: Black

OWNER'S ADDRESS: 1000 W. CA. H. DR. CITY: FT. MYERS COUNTY: LEE

OWNER'S ADDRESS: 1000 W. CA. H. DR. CITY: FT. MYERS COUNTY: LEE

DID UNLAWFULLY COMMIT THE FOLLOWING OFFENSE CHECK ONLY ONE OFFENSE EACH TICKET

UNLAWFUL SPEED (89) MPH. SPEED APPLICABLE 35 MPH.

INTERSTATE PLANE HWY. WITH 20 FT. MEDIAN OUTSIDE BUS OR BUS. DIST.

CARELESS DRIVING VIOLATION OF RIGHT-OF-WAY

DRIVING WHILE IMPAIRED IMPROPER OR UNSAFE EQUIPMENT

RAN STOP SIGN CHOCOLATE, SUBSTANCES OR NO TAG

WILLFUL & WANTON RECKLESS DRIVING CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES IMPROPER DRIVER CONTROL WITH AN UNLAWFUL LICENSE

RAN RED LIGHT DRIVING ON WRONG SIDE OF ROAD NO VALID DRIVER'S LICENSE

IMPROPER PASSING FOLLOWING TOO CLOSELY DRIVING WHILE LICENSE SUSPENDED OR REVOKED

LANE OR COURSE IMPROPER TURN

OTHER VIOLATIONS OR COMMENTS: Arrested on complaint. Nikki Sixx also

INVESTIGATION OF: Matthew Trippe SECTION: PROPERTY DAMAGE ACCIDENT CASE: YES NO

LOCAL ORDINANCE: Lee County JA1

ARREST DELIVERED TO: Lee County JA1 TYPE: PROOF OR UNIT RECEIPT NO.:

DATE OF ARREST: 12-12-89 TROOP OR UNIT: HPF

RANK, SIGNATURE AND IDENTITY OF OFFICER: Matthew Trippe BADGE NO.: 88 I.D. NO.:

COURT INFORMATION: 12-12-89 DATE: 7:00 TIME

COURT: Lee County JUDGE'S NAME: John Manning

SECTION: PROPERTY DAMAGE COURT APPEARANCE REQUIRED: AS INDICATED ABOVE.

THIS CITATION IS FOR A CRIMINAL VIOLATION. COURT APPEARANCE REQUIRED, AS INDICATED ABOVE.

THIS CITATION IS FOR AN INFRACTION. COURT APPEARANCE REQUIRED, AS INDICATED ABOVE.

THIS CITATION IS FOR AN INFRACTION WHICH DOES NOT REQUIRE APPEARANCE IN COURT.

I AGREE TO COMPLY WITH THE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE REVERSE SIDE. WILLFUL REFUSAL TO POST BOND OR ACCEPT AND SIGN THIS CITATION CONSTITUTES A MISDEMEANOR AND MAY RESULT IN ARREST.

I AGREE AND PROMISE TO COMPLY AND ANSWER TO THE CHARGES SPECIFIED IN THIS CITATION.

SIGNATURE OF DEFENDANT: Nikki Sixx

FUTC (REV. 10/83)

Sixx' application to enter the Temple of Set was reviewed by the Council of Nine at the Temple's Conclave in Las Vegas at the end of October. On one hand there was sympathy for an avowed Satanist, particularly one who had stuck to his guns under such adverse conditions. On the other hand it seemed inadvisable to admit someone under indictment for armed robbery,

bail jumping, and Smokey-and-the-Bandit car-chases at precisely the moment when Satanism was being pilloried in the media for heavy metal horror and criminal activity. Ultimately it was agreed that admissions to the Temple should be based solely on the sincerity and capability of the aspirant, whether or not it might be convenient for the Temple in terms of public relations. Nikki Sixx was admitted as a Setian I° on Halloween.

His ordeal in Florida, however, was only just beginning. Present in the audience at his trial on August 13, he recalls, were Mötley Crüe producer Tom Werman, director Daniel “Doc” McGhee, Ozzy Osbourne, and Brian Johnson [of the band AC/DC]. Sixx did not have an attorney and was assigned public defender David Mourik, who told him that the prosecution had an ironclad case and advised him to plead “no contest”.

Trusting Mourik’s advice, Sixx did so and was returned to jail - for another three months - to await sentencing. In early November he was sentenced to pay a fine, six months' probation, and 2 years' community control (a form of house arrest, which would restrict him to Florida). Since the bookstore owner had testified that the robbery had occurred in order to support drug habits, Sixx said, he was also ordered to attend a drug rehabilitation program.

What he did not yet know was that the establishment in question turned out to incorporate intensive Christian-fundamentalist religious programming as well. The community control and drug-rehabilitation sentence seemed odd to Sixx, who did not have a drug habit [nor, as a successful rock musician with a sizable income, would he need to rob a bookstore in order to support one]. And that wasn’t the trial’s only surprise, as he wrote to me:

This is weird. The dude who **planned** it was found “Not Guilty”. He's the one who **robbed** the man. Jeff was in the car and got 3-1/2 years. I was blamed as the mastermind and I got 2-6 months. Strange as hell!

But anything, even a drug program, seemed better than the Collier County Jail, so Sixx reported to the “New Life Center” of Fern House, Inc. in West Palm Beach. His initial joy at being out of jail [“Beds - real beds! - TV, couches, pop & candy machines!”] soon changed to apprehension when he began to realize what he had walked into. “It’s a church of God, and they preach that you should accept God in your Will. Screw them! All you really need is faith in **yourself**. They’re the types that want one to ask for forgiveness and to be ‘Born Again’. These people are brainwashed. Rules here are strict: No playing rock music or wearing T-shirts that invoke the Devil.” And:

They cut my hair! And I mean it is **short**. They cut all the black off and left me with only short brown hair, and then denied me the right to dye it, saying: “It is the work of the Devil.”

A short haircut could perhaps be survived, if not enjoyed - but other, more ominous developments began to be communicated by Sixx via phone calls during the following weeks: He was forbidden to communicate with friends from his “former life”. He was forbidden to go into a music store. Mail addressed to him was intercepted, confiscated, and/or destroyed. Even his guitar was confiscated. Verbal abuse and intimidation by the staff became a daily routine. Even his telephone calls to me were cut short abruptly by the staff after one or two minutes. It seemed that a systematic effort was underway, first to cut off all of Sixx’ contact with anyone who had known him as the insidious heavy metal Satanist, and then to work on him psychologically until he had completely lost his identity and could be reprogramed into a good little Born-Again Christian.

Increasingly concerned over Sixx’ plight, I asked Tom Traxinger, the Court Counselor who had assigned Sixx to Fern House, to investigate. He did so - with the result that, after his query had been fielded, Sixx called to say that he had been promptly hauled before one of the program

directors, told that he would now be **permanently** restricted to the premises, that his phone calls would henceforth be restricted as well, and that the slightest infraction would result in his immediate return to jail. He was told that the the Temple of Set is “a sick, crazed cult” with which he should have nothing more to do.

At this news I wrote to the head of Fern House, promising public exposure of the treatment Sixx was receiving unless his human and civil rights were immediately and meticulously respected. The result was (a) a phone call from the program director saying that he “didn’t take lightly to threats”, and (b) Nikki Sixx being dumped at the West Palm Beach bus station at 8 PM with \$2 in his pocket and a warning that he had until 1 PM the following day to report to his probation officer - 200 miles away in Naples!

Sixx called Temple of Set Priest Roger Whitaker from the bus station, and Whitaker offered to wire him funds for transportation. Sixx, however, was able to obtain emergency travel funds from Mötley Crüe’s Tommy Lee and complete the journey in time.

Lodged with friends in Naples, Sixx thought his troubles at an end. He began to speak about forming a new band, of returning to his musical career.

It seems that the vested interests behind Mötley Crüe thought otherwise. With the original Nikki Sixx safely out of circulation in jail or a religious-deprogramming/ drug-rehabilitation program, the replacement Sixx could continue to perform with the band until fans had grown completely accustomed to him. But the house of cards was beginning to tremble. Sixx’ ex-manager told him that Elektra was beginning to receive mail and phone calls from confused fans voicing suspicion about Ferraro. Sixx added that he was called by Doc McGhee, who said that if he continued to assert his identity, the company would prosecute him for fraud and see that he was returned to jail.

Then Sixx’ ex-manager called the family with whom he was staying, warning them that he was schizophrenic and quite possibly a physical danger to them. She phoned Priest Whitaker, first saying that she was just a housewife who had never worked as Sixx’ manager, then relaying the same warnings about prosecution of Sixx should he refuse to cooperate in the Ferraro substitution. Priest Whitaker recommended an attorney to aid Sixx in a legal claim for his name, musical accomplishments, and royalties. Sixx responded that Gene Simmons of KISS had advised him against confronting Elektra until he had first made his plight known to his many fans and rallied popular support behind him.

So the Man in the Iron Mask remains today in Naples, Florida on probation and under “community control”, while the current “Nikki Sixx” works on a fourth album with the other three members of Mötley Crüe. Through the kind interest of Paul Kantner, he has been referred to a skilled attorney specializing in the music business, who hopefully will see fit to take his case.

What exactly is going on here? Part of the answer comes from Adept Demon O’Brien, who reports from contacts in the music business that, due to the Neil disaster and the whopping \$2 million fine it entailed, Mötley Crüe is in dire financial straits. One speculates that corporate interests advanced this sum on condition that the group adhere to puritan standards of personal behavior henceforth, the idea being that the Crüe was still a good bet as a moneymaker but that any more adverse publicity could destroy it permanently.

If it were ever contemplated in 1984 that Sixx’ armed-robbery charge could be survived, that option probably went out the window at the end of the year when the Neil accident occurred.

It **does** seem peculiar that Sixx, who just drove the robber to his destination, not knowing that a robbery would occur, would be advised to plead “no contest” to an armed robbery felony charge and be found guilty - while the actual perpetrator was found “not guilty”. It also seems peculiar that the executives behind Mötley Crüe would not have provided Sixx with privately-retained legal counsel to fight for his innocence.

Then there is the nature of Sixx' sentence, which appears tailor-made to keep him (a) stuck in Florida and (b) out of circulation in "community control" (house arrest) preceded by a "religious deprogramming" operation which, if it had been allowed to control Sixx totally without external attention, might have succeeded in destroying or seriously damaging his unique artistic and **Satanic** personality.

If Sixx had received his just due "behind the scenes", with Elektra sending him regular royalties for his musical work, it could at least be assumed that the best was being made of a situation which, if known publicly, might have resulted in the total ruin of the band. However the attempt to "erase" Sixx seems to have extended into monetary matters as well. Sixx states that he has seen no money from Warner's/Elektra at all since the beginning of 1985, and that checks from them in late 1984 were in the form of intermittent "pocket money" payments. On calling Elektra in New York in mid-85, he was told to "be patient", and later that his earnings were being placed in an "escrow account". He says that Mick Mars alerted him to the odd fact that the Florida state envelope containing the letter about this escrow account was actually postmarked in **Los Angeles**.

So it looks as though a deliberate decision were made to disconnect Matthew Trippe from his identity as Nikki Sixx, both publicly and - insofar as possible - psychologically. It is not known exactly who made such a decision. Whether or not the other three original members of Mötley Crüe anticipated the ordeal Sixx would endure as a consequence, the longer the Ferraro replacement persisted, the more they were trapped into continuing with it. Even Ferraro himself, whether or not he believed the replacement a temporary stand-in, is now stuck in the stage persona - which, in the long run, will probably prove as unfortunate for him as for Sixx - since, no matter how talented he may be, he is replacing another. Mars and Lee, at least, seem to have enough concern and affection for their old friend that they have stayed in occasional touch with him and on at least one occasion helped him with funds.

To merely expose the situation before the public eye might do damage that would help no one. Any corporate backers would promptly write off Mötley Crüe as a loss. Mars, Lee, and Neil would be disgraced for appearing to have cooperated in the abandonment and suppression of their old comrade. Ferraro would appear to have exploited Sixx' misfortunes and have deceived Sixx fans. And the real Nikki Sixx, after receiving an initial burst of publicity and sympathy, would remain saddled with a felony conviction and denied any royalties deserved from Warner's/Elektra.

A better solution might be for an out-of-court, private settlement to secure for Sixx the past/present/future royalties he deserves, as well as the right to publicly assert the name Nikki Sixx as soon as the probation/community control is lifted. Alexandre Dumas' story suggests a magically-appropriate end to the whole story, wherein - by advance agreement - Ferraro slips quietly out of the Nikki Sixx role and the real one just as quietly slips back into it!

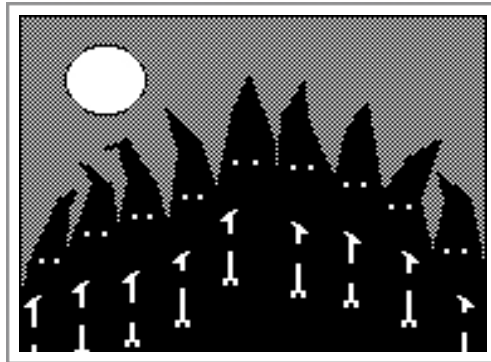
A move should also be made to throw out the felony conviction, if in fact Sixx were not a knowing participant in the robbery and did nothing more than drive the perpetrators to the scene, then flee it in panic. He could presumably be criticized for poor taste in choosing friends, and penalized for fleeing the scene of a crime with the perpetrator - but that is a far cry from a felony conviction for armed robbery on his record, which will haunt and cripple him throughout his life.

Like Milton's Satan, Nikki Sixx attained great heights only to fall to the lowest depths. The issue is now whether, also like Satan, he will be able to rise again to a greater dignity than before: a dignity born of the ordeals he has undergone and survived - loss of fame, wealth, freedom, the near-loss of his very personality and name. If teenaged fans once cheered him as a symbol of adolescent *Sturm und Drang*, people of all ages may now cheer him as one of those very uncommon, very noble individuals who would risk all, endure all - rather than refuse to Be.

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Shortly after the first contact from this mysterious individual, I asked Temple of Set Adept Demon O'Brien, a music industry professional and close personal friend of KISS' Gene Simmons, if she could verify his story. O'Brien telephoned me on January 4, 1986 to say that she had just met with Simmons in Knoxville, Tennessee, where KISS was doing a concert, and that he had confirmed to her that Matthew Trippe was indeed the original Nikki Sixx - but that, since KISS was also signed with Elektra, he would not say anything publicly about it. With this confirmation [and the traffic ticket], I decided to run the *Runes* story.

Subsequently both the American *Rolling Stone* (June 1988) and the British *Kerrang!* (March 1988) and *New Musical Express* (January 1988) ran major stories on the Sixx/Trippe controversy. A lawsuit initiated by Trippe was dismissed for not falling within the statute of limitations. Warner's/Elektra and the four current members of Mötley Crüe have steadfastly maintained that there is no truth whatever to Trippe's account of events. He himself, in Internet interviews, continues to assert it to this day.



The Nine Unknown

- by -
Nikki Sixx II°
May XXII ÆS

In the Eye of Set
There lurks a mysterious,
Invisible Force:
The Council of Nine.

They gather and frown
At the Christians' cross
In mourning for man
And for his mind's loss.

Then, in a final flash of glory,
Set
Shalt thou come
To grace the night.