Annals of the Naked Rowdies #532

by Kevin Myrick

Bardan O'Connor stared at himself in the mirror but didn't recognize the image before him. He was pale and looked like death. He tried to psyche himself up for the latest show with a shot of Irish whiskey. He slapped himself hard in the face.

"Get it together man." The man in the mirror looked nothing like he used to, his eyes raccoon circled by sleepless nights and an endless bender started some 10 months back in New York City. He hadn't taken a drink in 10 years, but it only took one to get him back on the train to hell.

His naked flesh shimmered in the bright lights of the dressing room as he looked himself over, a red imprint on his face. "This is no way for a Naked Rowdy to be," he said.

He poured himself another shot, but he didn't have a chance to drink it. A stage hand from the theater knocked on the door.

"10 minutes," he said.

Bardan pulled on a pair of jeans and pulled a t-shirt over his hair. He went barefoot out to the stage, where the rest of the band waited.

"Ready?"

"Yer not already too drunk are ya?"

"Just drunk enough," Bardan said.

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They played a good show in San Antonio that night, but it wasn't a huge crowd. During the intermission Bardan puked his guts out in the bathroom sink. But he was ready to go for another set after he snorted a line of cocaine off the tit of a groupie in the bathroom stall. He didn't think she was over 18, but he didn't care. Life was one endless high.

They played late into the night at the big rowdy bar. It was 3 a.m. when they finally packed up and got back on the bus. The driver took off for El Paso, where they planned to play the next night's show.

Bardan laid in his bunk and drank from the bottle he'd left in the dressing room before the show, passed it to William, their Boston-born drummer.

"I don't know how much longer I can do this," he said.

William told him to go to rehab.

"Get dried out before the bottle takes you to the grave," he said. "All of this isn't worth it. Not worth your life."

"That'd be a good line in a song."

He passed out on the bus and never woke up again. William found him choked on his own vomit in his bunk early the next morning. They never played a show in El Paso.