

Hagar burns bridges in uncensored memoir

By Paul Liberatore, Marin Independent Journal

Sammy Hagar's memoir, "Red: My Uncensored Life in Rock," doesn't come out until March, but I've just finished reading an advance copy and I can tell you that there's one poor guy who's going to wish it had never seen the light of day: Eddie Van Halen.

Sammy's one of the nicest guys I've met in rock 'n' roll, but Marin's Red Rocker shows his former Van Halen bandmate no mercy, portraying Eddie as more street person than guitar god.

This is Sammy describing him just before their Van Halen reunion tour in 2003: "I hadn't seen him in 10 years. He looked like he hadn't bathed in a week. He certainly hadn't changed his clothes in at least that long. He wasn't wearing a shirt. He had on a giant overcoat and army pants, tattered and ripped at the cuffs, held up with a piece of rope. I'd never seen him so skinny in my life. He was missing a number of teeth and the ones he had left were black. His boots were so worn out he had gaffer's tape wrapped around them and his big toe still stuck out."

In passages like that, "Red" reads like one of those angry e-mails we write when we're really ticked off at someone and need to vent by trashing him or her. But once we chill out, most of us don't hit the send button. With this book, Sammy hits the send button.

And he hits it over and over. After describing the squalor that he claims Eddie lived in, Sammy lays into him again, writing: "This was Eddie Van Halen, one of the sweetest guys I'd ever met. He had turned into the weirdest (expletive) I'd ever seen, crude, rude and unkempt."

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