
Rob Sheffield

**Talking to Girls About Duran Duran: One Young Man's Quest
for True Love and a Cooler Haircut**

Title: Talking to Girls About Duran Duran:
One Young Man's Quest for True Love and a
Cooler Haircut

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Format: Hardcover

Language:

Pages: 288

Publisher: , 0

ISBN: 0525951563

Format: PDF / Kindle / ePub

Size: 9.6 MB

Download: allowed

Description

The author of the national bestseller *Love is a Mix Tape* returns, with a different-but equally personal and equally universal- spin on music as memory. "No rock critic-living or dead, American or otherwise-has ever written about pop music with the evocative, hyperpoetic perfectitude of Rob Sheffield." So said Chuck Klosterman about *Love is a Mix Tape*, Sheffield's paean to a lost love via its soundtrack. Now, in *Talking to Girls About Duran Duran*, Sheffield shares the soundtrack to his eighties adolescence. When he turned 13 in 1980, Rob Sheffield had a lot to learn about women, love, music and himself, and in *Talking to Girls About Duran Duran* we get a glimpse into his transformation from pasty, geeky "hermit boy" into a young man with his first girlfriend, his first apartment, and a sense of the world. These were the years of MTV and John Hughes movies; the era of big dreams and bigger shoulder pads; and, like any all-American boy, this one was searching for true love and maybe a cooler haircut. It's all here: Inept flirtations. Dumb crushes. Deplorable fashion choices. Members Only jackets. Girls, every last one of whom seems to be madly in love with the bassist of Duran Duran. Sheffield's coming-of-age story is one that we all know, with a playlist that any child of the eighties or anyone who just loves music will sing along with. These songs-and Sheffield's writing-will remind readers of that first kiss, that first car, and the moments that shaped their lives.

Insightful reviews

Brian: I read *Life is a Mixtape* on the recommendation of a friend late last year, and found it to be a really poignant biography of life and loss with music as a tremendously powerful backdrop. *Talking to Girls About Duran Duran* is similar in construct, but is more of a series of memoirs about growing up in the 80s, once again using music as the backdrop to all of life's lessons. While I found many of these stories funny, and in some cases even insightful, it never really came together for me as a unified book. Maybe it's not supposed to be, so I am not sure if this is actually a critique as much as an observation. I think reading it as a series of individual essays will lead to more appreciation of the book.

Anyway, there isn't anything really bad in here, it's more that there are parts I related to better than others. He spends a good portion of the book talking about his family, and in particular his sisters, which in places was humorous, but in reading some of these sections I found myself lacking interest.

All in all, I liked it, and found it to be an great airplane book (something you can pick up and put down without losing any plot lines or characters.) If you are a fan of *Life is a Mixtape*, it is a necessary sophomore read. If you haven't read *Life is a Mixtape*, read that instead, or maybe read *Eating a Dinosaur* by Chuck Klosterman.

Mosh: After reading Sheffield's first book, I was looking forward to reading this one. I thought his writing style evoked deep emotion, and - being a child of the '80s myself - I expected to identify with many of his experiences. It wasn't until I was about 75% through this book that I realized the problem. This book is not about THE 1980s; it's about HIS 1980s. We remember many parts of the decade quite differently. And he tends to be dismissive in a casual manner: "The Reflex"

was Duran Duran's "first and biggest U.S. number one hit, even though everybody likes 'Rio' a lot better." Perhaps everybody he knows, but to speak in a blanket statement that way - to me, anyway - comes off as pompous.

He also spends much of the book relishing, explaining, and defending his love of synth-pop new wave music. He tries to simultaneously put it across as a fleeting pleasure AND a tragically misunderstood art form. I'm not going to call him a music snob when he cites a little known song by even lesser known band; I've done the same thing. But he does so in a way that tries to make those bands seem greater than so many others. Okay, I've never heard of Haysi Fantayzee's "Shiny Shiny", let alone anything else they've done. But I can almost guarantee that the vast majority of the world can't name a second song by Ratt. That doesn't make Ratt a great band or me a better person because I liked them. And for someone who prides himself on his gamut of music appreciation, it hurt to read that he "drove [himself], by sheer force of will, to enjoy Simon & Garfunkel, and began relating to their sensitive little folk songs. Hello doucheness, my old friend. I've come to suck with you again." Really?

Oh, and given how much of the book he spends telling how much he learned about girls - from his sisters, from the girls in Spain, from Madonna... - he never seems to DO anything with what he's learned. This seems to beg the question of whether he learned anything or just heard it.

The one redeeming chapter, though, is the one where Sheffield discusses his grandfather. THAT chapter has the depth, emotion, and honesty that his first book had. Because it's not about telling us what the world was feeling; it's about what HE was feeling. And on that account, I will never doubt or criticize him.

Tuckova: Sheffield's gift is the way he drops in cultural references without pointing to them -- if you get it, you get that shiver of recognition (oh! oh! I remember that song/movie/commercial!); if you don't get it, you don't mind because he doesn't serve them with heavy hands (although absent his cultural vocabulary, i.e. if you did not love music in the 80s, I don't know if you can enjoy this book). His weakness is that in his desire to quickly engage, he tends to lack subtlety (GIRLS SILLY! BOYS SERIOUS!) and that can get very grating over the length of a book. Somewhere between those two things is that he writes like he (I assume) talks, which means he's probably a delight to talk to, freewheeling, jumping topics like lily pads, following the conversation rather than controlling it, but... he can come off a little in need of an edit in print. Loved the first half, was kinda tired by the end.

Kathy: As keen on song myself - Duran Duran as well, even though no longer all too passionately - and a female, I could not recover from simply how one-sided this ebook fairly is. In most cases it sort of feels like Sheffield is calling down on woman listeners, making them appear as though they have been incapable of realizing music, in basic terms ever targeting the glance and picture of a band. While male listeners, of course, take a seat to debate the music, the lyrics, the that means and the relationship to different happenings within the world. I'm conscious a lot of it was once to be eager about a grain of salt, even perhaps intended in a humorous method however it stored bobbing up so frequently that it easily wasn't humorous anymore. If this is often what Sheffield realized approximately existence whilst speaking with ladies approximately Duran Duran, might be he did not pay attention very well.

Carol: this is the issue: it really is enjoyable to examine the Nineteen Eighties and 1990s, whether you have been there the 1st time. yet past bar chatter, in case you would not have real issues to make approximately your actions in the course of those many years (or any decades) then you definitely are only writing down your memories. Rob Sheffield has written approximately song for an extended time, this means that he has interviewed many, many musicians. And yet, he spends such a lot of this publication speaking approximately health club classification and women that he had crushes on whilst Spandau Ballet was once nonetheless slicing edge. What approximately those things, Rob? That said, the publication isn't really a complete loss. His bankruptcy on Human League is kind of eye-opening, as he has interviewed Phil Oakey and has perception into the position the crowd performs within the heritage of music. yet better of all his his bankruptcy on his time spent in Spain within the quick post-Franco years, and the way track and politics have been interchangeable. this is often how Sheffield may still direct his talents. Oh, and you'll use the word "sex cookies" just once in keeping with book. i believe INTERPOL or UNESCO has governed on that.

Gretchen Alice: within the motion picture model of excessive Fidelity, Rob Gordon mentions that he is organizing his albums autobiographically. In TtGADD, Rob Sheffield is going one step additional and writes essays for his defining songs and moments from the 80s. the result's a deeply superb and emotional e-book approximately 80s pop and new wave. In Love Is A Mixtape, a e-book which I totally adored, Rob mentioned the unbreakable dating among love and music. In speaking to women approximately Duran Duran, Rob talks approximately why he loves his dating with music. The ebook lacks the pathos and heartbreak of affection Is A Mixtape...but it does completely captures the awkwardness of being a music-loving youngster who is thoroughly inept round the contrary sex. the explanation that I essentially worship Rob Sheffield is simply because he writes approximately song like it really is sacred, even the cheesy one-hit wonders like Haysi Fantaysi. I merely spent two-and-a-half years residing through the 80s, yet by some means the song stayed with me. ensure that you do learn his bankruptcy on Paul McCartney--it's hysterical and SO true.

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