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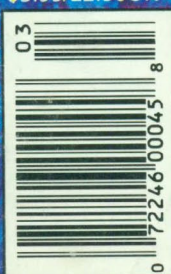
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MARCH 1994







BY JODI SUMMERS

## BLIND MELON'S SHANNON HOON

**W**hen some rockers finally get off the road, they traditionally head in the direction of some exotic locale like Hawaii or New Guinea. They just want to get away from the chaos and commotion that goes with playing in front of 10,000 people on a regular basis; they just want to be normal. To become a real person again, Blind Melon's vocalist Shannon Hoon retreated to what he calls "the womb." When Blind Melon are not out with Pearl Jam, Lenny Kravitz or Neil Young, Shannon heads back to his native home, Lafayette, Indiana, because for him, there's no place else on earth quite like it.

Granted, Lafayette wasn't always this paradise smack dab in the heart of the Midwest. Like any kid,

**"Drinking and fighting was all life was about in Indiana."**

when high school ended, there was nothing Shannon wanted to do more than leave town.

"When you've spent your whole life growing up in a certain environment, you're diseased with all the bad elements of it, and normally you don't even realize it," he confessed. "Drinking and fighting was about all life consisted of, and moving away, was all I wanted to do. But after that happens,

you end up stepping outside of the fire, so to speak. Then you can look back in and be more objective. You see all the bad things that you've been diseased with, but as long as you figure it out, then it's alright."

When Shannon returns home, life is not at all like it was at age 15. In the innocent times at rural McKutchen High School, Shannon wasn't one of the freaky musician types, or outcasts, like fellow Indiana native Axl Rose.

trees, Shannon joined the track and field contingent as a pole vaulter.

"Going through school, I totally wanted to be what my parents wanted me to be," he admitted. "At 16 years old, I had this realization that I'd been living my life for someone else. I go back and I look at family photos and I see it. I see the look in my eye, a lost kid who had his hair cut short to stay on the wrestling team when he didn't really want to be on the wrestling team. But



it was a way to be accepted. Then you realize you're doing it for someone else, and suddenly, you don't even have your own identity. Everything you loved doing hasn't played a roll in your life at all."

There was no great lightning bolt of enlightenment, yet slowly but surely it dawned on Shannon that he didn't really care about sports. He was doing it because his parents had suggested it. He was accepted by all the other jocks, and for some reason, the babes always liked the jocks, so it just put him in the right circles. But when he actually thought about whether he enjoyed doing sports, and whether or not it was making him happy, he realized none of it much mattered at all. So he quit, which resulted in total chaos.

"My parents freaked out and wondered what the hell was wrong because I'd wandered off with no form of communication," Shannon confirmed. "I built all these walls around me and didn't let a lot of people in. I had to push my parents away and go out and find my own self. We're all that way," he added. "I'm not any different than you. Figuring out how you got from

point A to point B is always a difficult time, but if you can piece it together, it's going to benefit you in the future, wherever it is that you may be going."

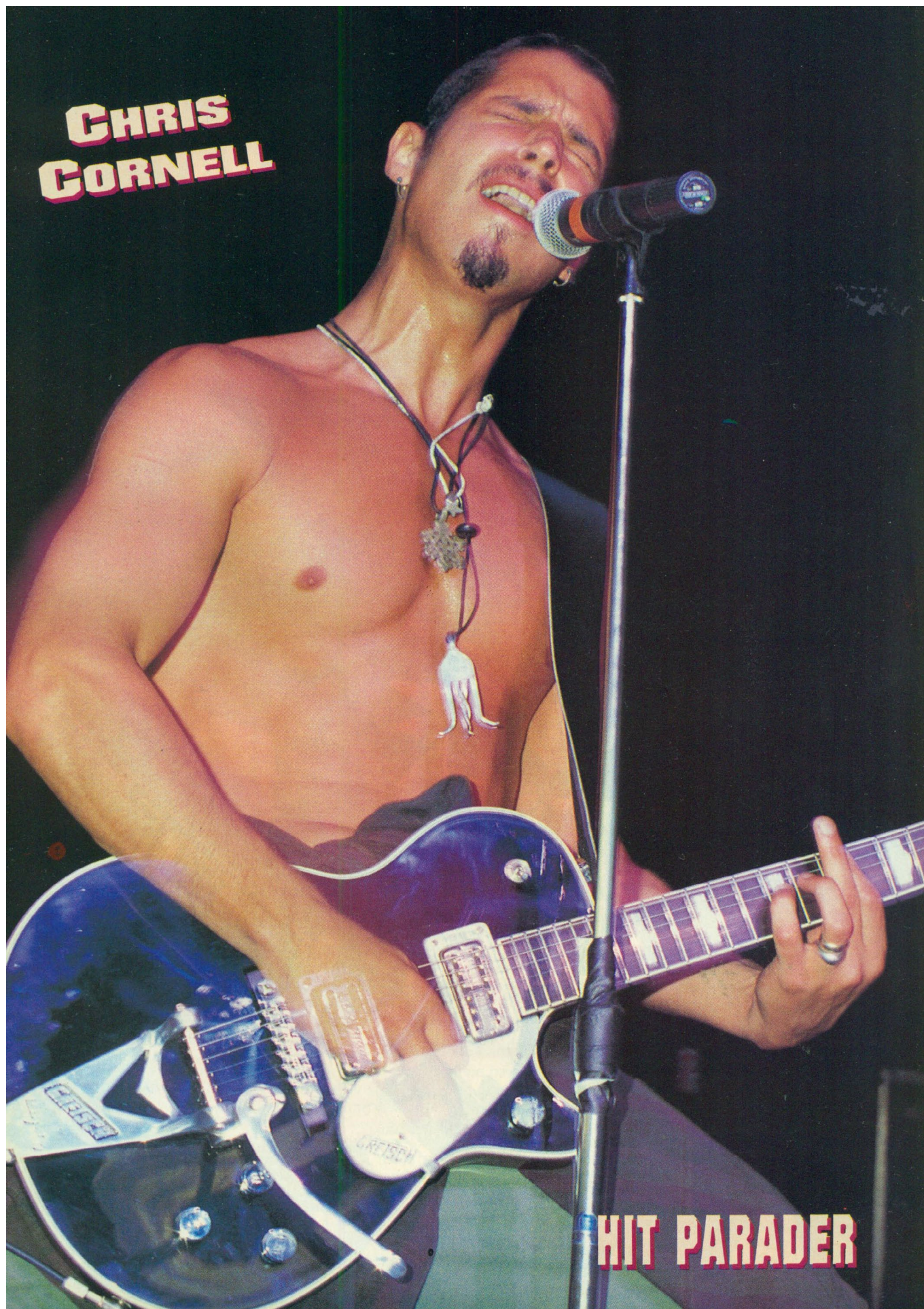
point A to point B is always a difficult time, but if you can piece it together, it's going to benefit you in the future, wherever it is that you may be going."

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