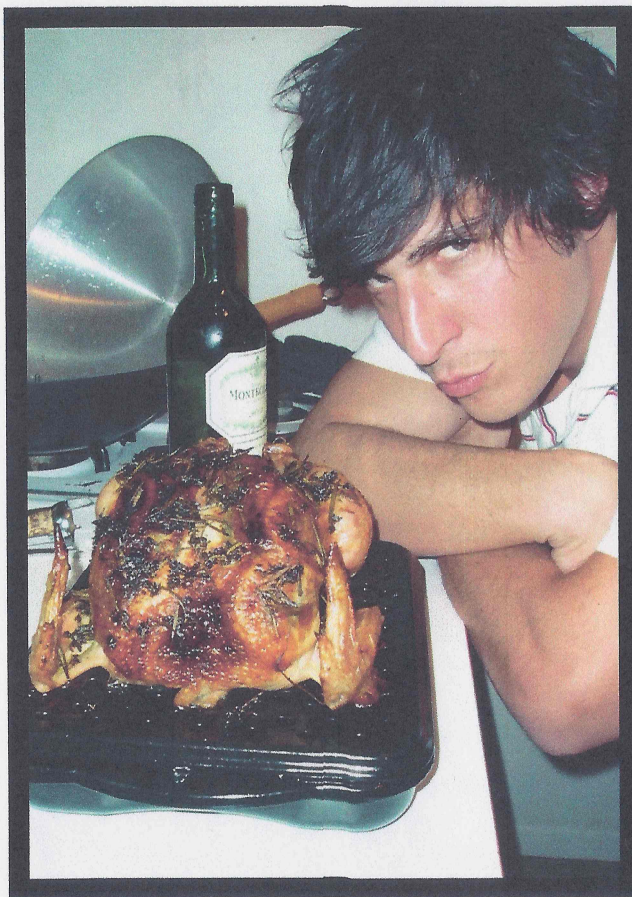


Whatever He Says You Are

BY JOANNA MCLEOD

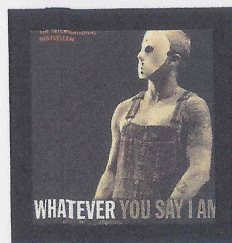


White tattooed bad boys sure seem to get along well with Anthony Bozza, with two of the most notorious in the music business allowing him full access to their lives. Bozza is responsible for writing one of the best rock biographies in years – *Whatever You Say I Am – The Life and Times of Eminem*, and he also co-authored (Ex-Motley Crue Drummer and Mr Pamela Anderson) Tommy Lee's autobiography *Tommyland* which is set for an October release.

Whatever You Say I Am deviates from the normal biography in that it doesn't follow the traditional chronological order of events. Instead, it examines key parts of the Eminem phenomenon, such as the hip-hop scene, his Detroit background, and Eminem's attitude to women. Bozza felt like Eminem had already written his own autobiography in his songs, and didn't want to repeat what the world already knew. Given the controversy surrounding the rapper's work and his rise to Golden Boy status in the American media, placing Eminem in the proper context was a more important thing to do. Bozza was the right person to provide that background. Having written for Rolling Stone magazine for eight years, and having already done three features on Eminem, he realised that the time was right for the book one night after he played 'Stan' three times for older peers in the music industry who were captivated by it. The next day Bozza wrote his literary agent a long email describing the moment, and before he knew it, the agent was using that email as a pitch and the book was optioned.

While Eminem wasn't interviewed for the book, he and his manager did meet with Bozza to discuss the project and give it their blessing, but *Whatever You Say I Am* isn't watered down due to closeness of author and subject. "I saw Em when he was going crazy [in 1999, when *My Name Is* was first released] and they were cool with that," says Bozza. "Later he was on probation and more focused on his career." What Bozza did hold back on was excessive details of Eminem's family life. "His daughter is very sacred to him, and all anyone really needs to know about that is that he loves her," he says. Bozza also hardly touches material from his early interviews with Eminem's mother and his [now ex] wife Kim, who he describes as a very private person. The forthcoming Tommy Lee collaboration promises to be a very different kind of book. "It's more about the visceral experience," he says. Bozza actually appears in the book as a character and in footnotes, filling the details of events he witnessed when Lee had indulged too much to remember. After witnessing the hedonistic life first hand, can Bozza imagine a day when authors become the new rock stars? "I guess anyone with a healthy blog page would like to think so," he laughs, "but there's this thing, a rock star gene that people need, and I don't think it's humanly possible for everyone to have one".

Read our review of *Whatever You Say I Am* on page 134.



WHATEVER YOU SAY I AM

Anthony Bozza

Bozza's biography of Eminem see-saws between time on the road with his subject and exploring the development of hip hop culture and racial identity in America. A former writer for Rolling Stone, Bozza provides some intelligent perspective; identifying that post *8 Mile* and *9/11* controversy over Eminem has dimmed and his talent has gained recognition. A well paced volume charting the ascent to stardom of arguably the most important figure in popular music since Kurt Cobain. Bozza notes that Eminem turns his life into entertainment before the public can. Subverting popular culture whilst still remaining a card carrying member. Highly recommended.

★★★★ 1/2

BY NICK SHEPPARD