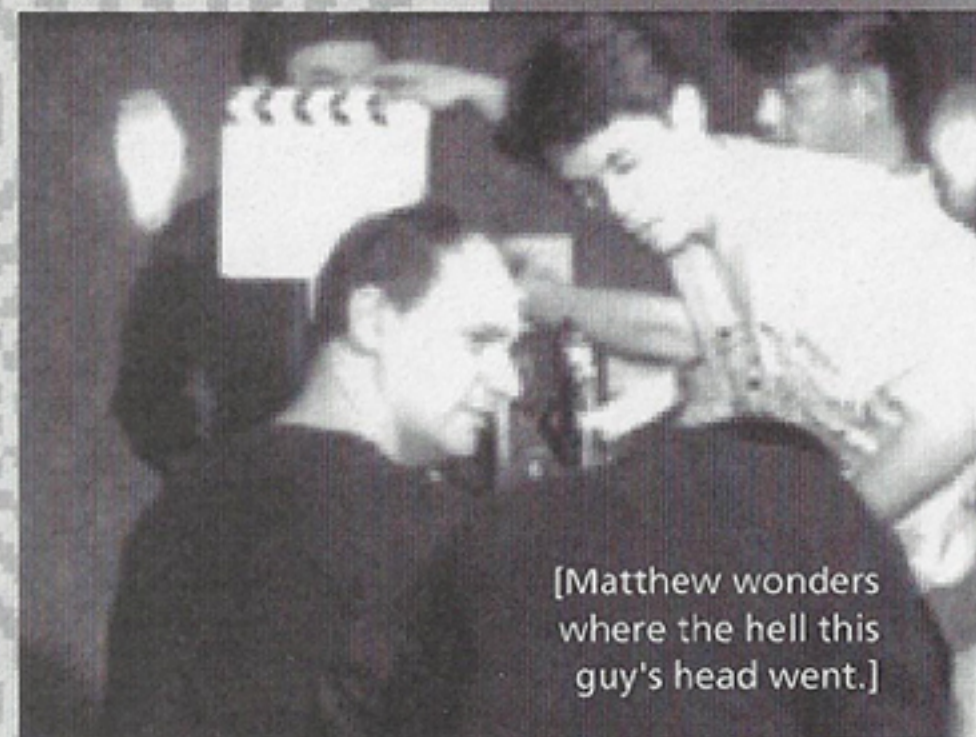


by Marie Jamora



[Matthew wonders where the hell this guy's head went.]

## Q & A with Matthew Rosen

# VideOK-E

Introducing the lasergun-slinging stormtrooper and psychedelic director...

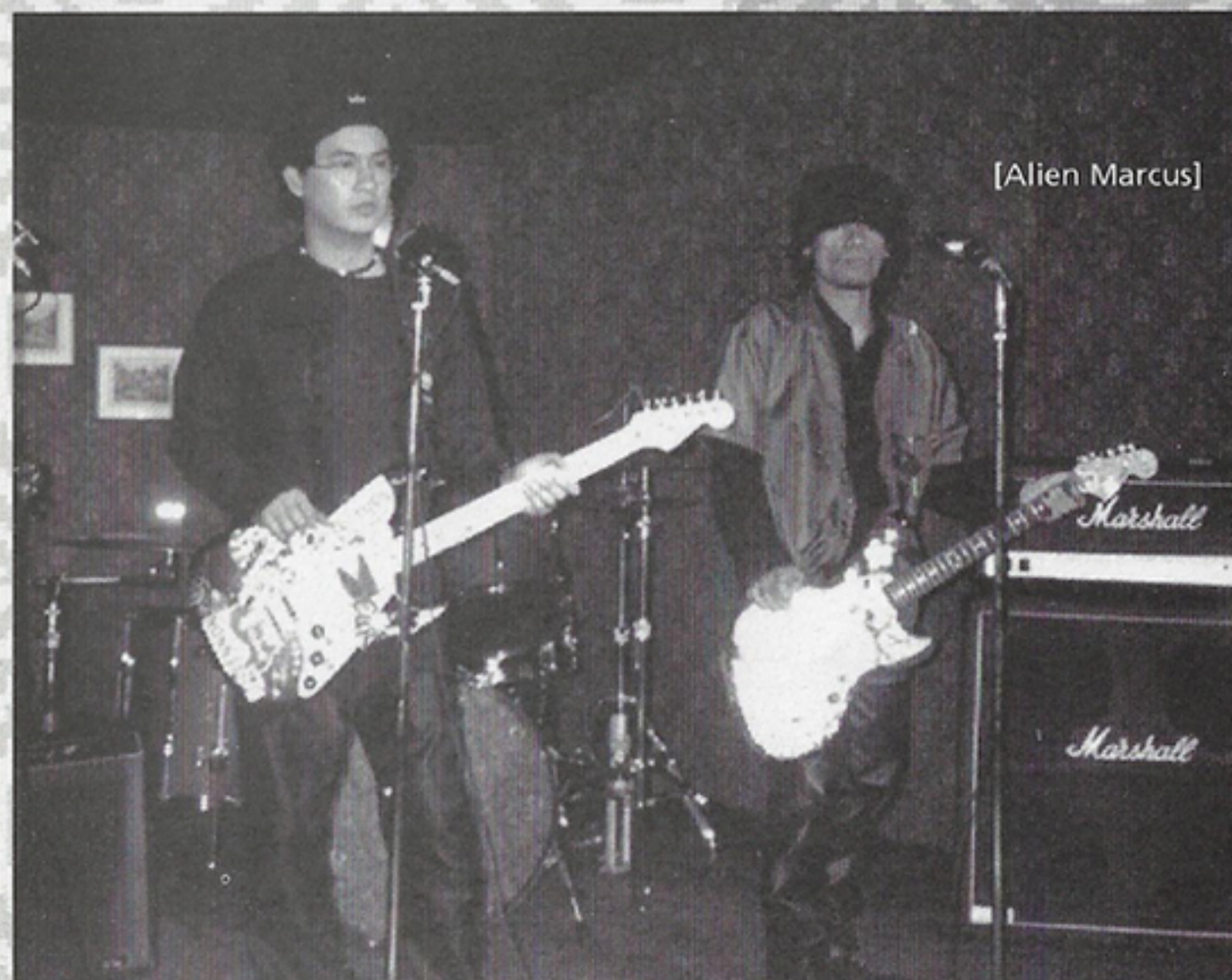
The name to blame for sticky videos and munchy 'headvertisements...

— Just another chippy off the E-block!

Presenting the creator of the shaggadelic *Kaliwete* and the kaleidoscopic *Bogchi Peechy*!

## = The Crunchy Interview With The Chosen Rosen =

\* Motoh is the generic name of Videok-



[Alien Marcus]

## HISTOR-E

**Q: How did you initially hook up with the band?**

E: Though their manager, Day. We were actually working on something else together. She was doing something with Hit Productions, and she asked Hit who could do blue screen because she wanted to do some blue screen effects, and so Hit actually put her in touch with ME so that we could do effects together. And it just so happens that she is also the manager of the Eraserheads, so when the E-heads needed an MTV, she asked me to do it.

**Q: Before meeting them, what did you already know about the band?**

E: I've worked with them before. We did a Chippy commercial together, so I knew a lot about the band. And actually, I like their music. The new album is great. I REALLY like *Sticker Happy*, but *Cutterpillow* is also good. I particularly like "El Bimbo." I like the MTV of "El Bimbo."

**Q: What other music videos have you directed?**

E: I did Vanna Vanna, that was the first film I did. Then I did the E-heads, and then I did Jaya. I'm in the middle of shooting one right now.

**Q: What do you think of the E-heads' old videos? Do you think you could've done better?**

E: Tough question! (laughs) Okay, it's difficult to say you could do better because an MTV, directorially, is about style and design, and that depends entirely on the individual. I would have done them all differently – not necessarily better – but I would have done them more differently. But I was impressed with all of them, actually. They were all good. They were all pretty good. "Trip to Jerusalem" was splendid.

## LEFT-E

**Q: Who are your influences and/or inspirations when it comes to directing?**

E: Difficult to say. I like the work of Bowie, The Cure – musically, I'm that way inclined. Directorially, I like the work of De Palma.

**Q: What was your reaction when you first heard the song "Kaliwete"?**

E: I liked it. It's my kind of music.

**Q: What images or ideas came into mind? Did you already have a notion for what you wanted in the video?**

E: Yes. When I went to the first meeting with them, I already had an idea for them. It's just whether I maintained that idea or not. 'Cause even when I hadn't heard the soundtrack and I hadn't spoken to them yet, from the music I knew from them and from the fact that we've worked together before I knew them, I had an idea. I had a plan. It was to make the MTV kind of European-looking. Give it more of a band feel.

In fact, I've been sounded off by Day, the manager, that they were after a performance video. And actually, what we got was very close to what I was looking for, although the treatment was not only mine, I shared it with the band. But it was very close. We were really on the same track, although we had very different ideas about the execution. But for the overall look, we both had the same ideas.

**Q: What were the clashes in ideas, in execution?**

E: There wasn't really a clash in execution. It was in planning. I was looking for something, I think, slightly weirder. And they were looking at something more slapstick humor. I think what we got was a really good happy medium between the two. So the funny bits are theirs (laughs) and the weird bits are mine. But I really liked the jive together.

In fact, what happened on the first meeting was that they gave me a shot list. Raymund had broken down the soundtrack – which normally I have to do, so it was a really welcome sign for me – and he'd already broken down the lyrics and came up with a well-prepared shot-for-shot list. And then we discussed that in the first meeting, and with the stuff on the shot list, I could have shot just like that (snaps fingers). I was quite happy

[Price check! Swiss cheese?]



with it. It was prepared so that I could have actually shot it. But when he gave me the shot list, he didn't have an overall idea on how it would look, it was just what he wanted to show. And what he wanted to show was very coherent, so there was no problem with that. So we discussed looks, and at the time, I was planning to do something European-looking...

**Q: Define European-looking.**

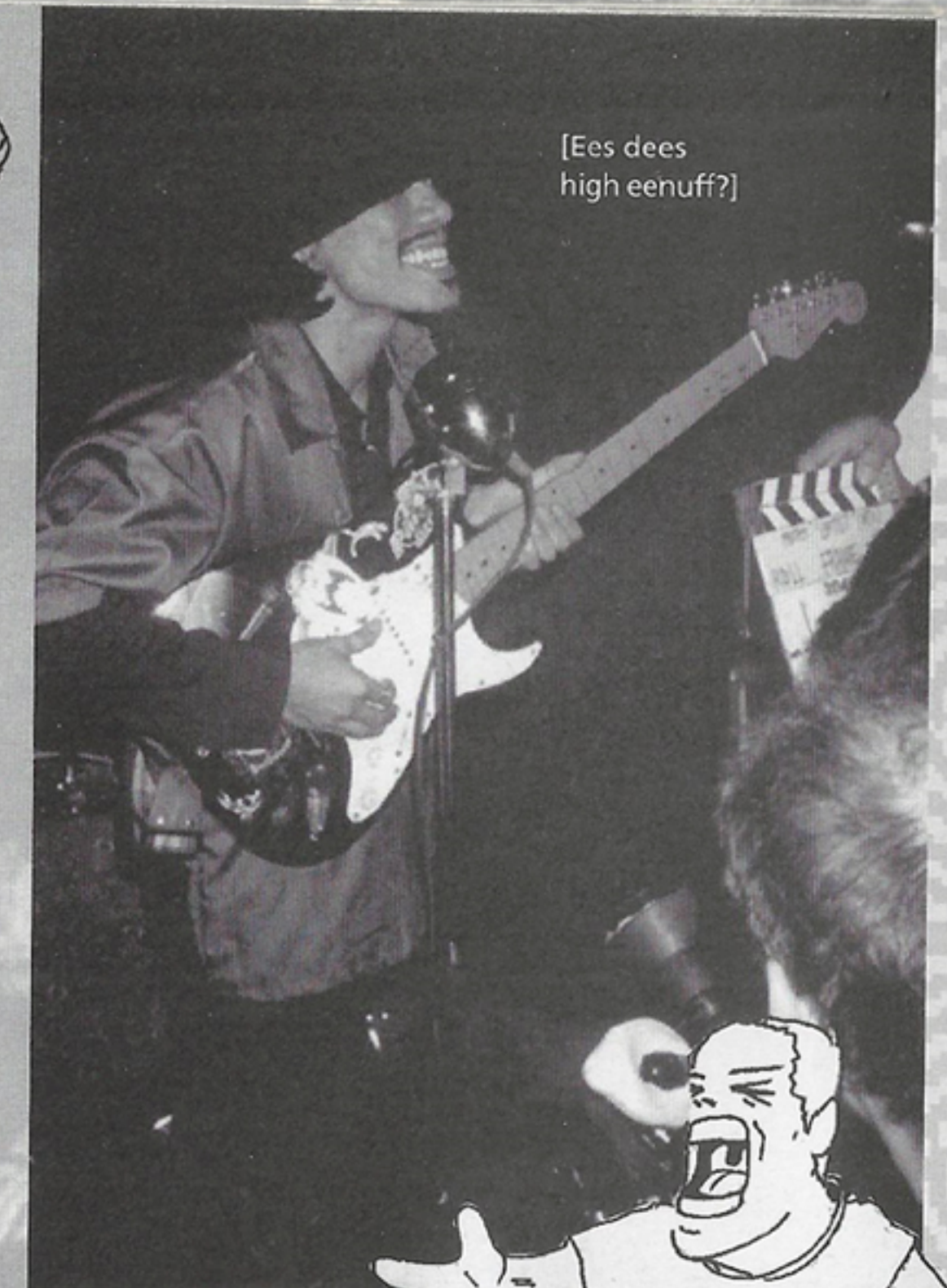
E: Um, (pause) wow (laughs). Okay, European-looking is, for me, more realistic in treatment, slightly more down-to-earth, more grainy. I find American MTVs more glossy, more glitzy. So I like something more down-to-earth and not over. If it's a humorous MTV, American MTVs are glossy with the humor and the English will be more under, more subtle, and will very rarely will have glitz and glamour. So that was the difference.

I was looking for something kind of grungy, but NOT really experimental-looking. And I'm in love with the claustrophobic set, which I think a lot of MTV directors are. I think the reason for that is because when you normally work in production, you require an extra-large amount of space – for the number of equipment, for lighting, for motion. And because MTVs are something even rebellious to a cause, you rebel against the idea of standard filmmaking. So the MTV gives you the chance to do something that you would never normally do.

In commercials, which is what I do most of the time, you're required to have a lot of space so that you can be ultimately creative. So I think



[Ees dees high eenuff?]



[Matthew in a rare hunched-over position (observe pictures on wall).]







when directors – particularly European directors – are given a chance to do what they want, they like to rebel against the standard filmmaking procedure where the claustrophobic set is an absolute never-go-near. So I wanted it to do something with a claustrophobic set.

### The 3<sup>rd</sup> DEGR-3

#### Q: What did you think the song meant?

3: Actually, I didn't think it meant anything until I asked the band that. After I had it translated, I asked them, "What does it mean?" – because it's so sublime and surreal – and they refused to tell me! They giggled a bit, but they refused to tell me. I think they didn't because they wanted the MTV to be as sublime and as nonsensical as the song. And as we were shooting through the MTV, they were giving little hints at what they actually meant, but they deliberately didn't tell me.

So what I what I drew from the song is what you got on the MTV. I think they were happy with the fact that it wasn't necessarily what they were talking about.

But for ME, when I first saw it, it had sexual overtones written between the lines. There was (pause) related feeling in it – that's what I got from it – like someone had been hurt by a girl. And these were all the things she did, and now it was kind of like a payback; which is why with this, the MTV is actually REALLY sexist. It's a REALLY sexist MTV. So that's why, halfway through it, we got a payback on the guys, with them strapped to a dentist's chair and the girl with the drill (laughs). So that's the payback on the guys and she gets off that, yeah.

#### Q: Who thought of the concept of the girl and who to portray her?

3: The girl? I can't remember. I always planned to put the girl in it, ever since I heard it. I think that Francis, the production designer, put Day in touch with her. And the girl is Dess – she's a dancer.

#### Q: During the shooting of the video, did you discover any of the band's whims or nuances? Any anecdotes you'd like to share?

3: They're crazy (laughs). They're absolutely crazy. They all have their own little personalities. I find Raymund incredibly creative – visually – and he helped SO much in the MTV to bring style and look. I find Ely...you know, I could relate Ely to a Lennon – a John Lennon – in the way he acts, in the way his mind works. He's a brilliant guy. I admire



[Don't ask.]

him a lot – not just in the way that he writes, I love the way that he writes, but – intellectually, he's a brilliant guy. Marcus is an absolute nutcase, and so is Budz, actually. Budz is also an absolute nutcase. No, actually, he's the friendliest, *siguro*. He's the easiest to talk to and everything, but the least...wild.

#### Q: Any flashes of brilliance you witnessed on the set?

3: The whole shoot was flashes of brilliance. You know, we discussed the shot list before we started rolling because I worked on it and put in my little bits in between before we went in. It's because the night before I shoot, I normally just listen to the song for four or five hours just over and over again, and I was up really late that night just listening to it. And I just had some REALLY weird ideas – like the speaker in the toilet – that stuff came to me the night before. I remember the stuff we were doing with the girl, Dess, also came to me the night before. And I put that in, so that was a surprise for them when I presented it to them. They liked it, and we shot everything.

Throughout the shoot we were saying, "Hey, it would be a good idea if..." or everybody got to go, "What if I do this? Hey, why don't we go and..." And then when we shoot, it's like, "Ah, I like that. What if we put this...?" So everybody had a go.

Yeah, it was a very spontaneous shoot. In fact, we shot TONS of material. I think the shot list that we had was already very full and we probably doubled the amount of shots. And I used EVERYTHING in the edit. I think there was just one frame that didn't make it. One frame of Dess that I didn't use, simply because there was no room for it.

#### Q: Was it true that it was during the shoot when the band was informed of winning the MTV Viewer's Choice Award?

3: Yeah, so you can imagine the buzz that went up in the shoot. Wow, HY-PER! They were so excited. And they couldn't get off the phone. They were calling everybody. There was this big BUZZ because they

won the MTV award. So THAT was a good thing; that was the interesting thing on the shoot.

#### Q: If you could explain the video, its style or its story, to people who haven't seen it yet, how would you describe it?

3: There is no story. It is just a MASS of visual impact. The thing there is that it's a secret – there's no story. It's got a slight theme, though. But the idea is that when you make something like that, you make it to be sensible enough to use a theme where you can put in it anything you like.

So, you can ask one person about the MTV, "What do you think?" And they could say, "You know what it's about? It's about this and that..." Then you can ask somebody else and it could be something completely different. And whatever they pull from it, it's fine, because I don't need anybody to know what I was doing. And the same goes for Ely; he doesn't need anybody to know what he was saying. So if the same goes for him, the same goes for me. I don't need anyone to know what it's about.

### Technicalit-3

#### Q: What are the working habits of the band? Were there any problems with the technicalities of the video?

3: The only problem I had, technically working with them, is that they like their music SO LOUD. They're very professional; they don't like to lipsync, they really sing it. Even though we playback – we have to playback for timing reasons – when we edit, we have to match the master DAT, so they have to lipsync. And even though they lipsync, they sing. They sing loud, really.

And because it got so noisy in there, Raymund – who was in the back – couldn't hear the monitors. And since I didn't want to put monitors on the set because it was so crowded already, we had the monitors up SO LOUD and I was right next to it, so I couldn't hear anything for a WEEK after that shoot! There was a ringing in my ears for the week afterwards!

But otherwise, they're INCREDIBLY professional. No problem at all. I think they must be used to lipsyncing, if not, they're naturals. But they're probably used to it.

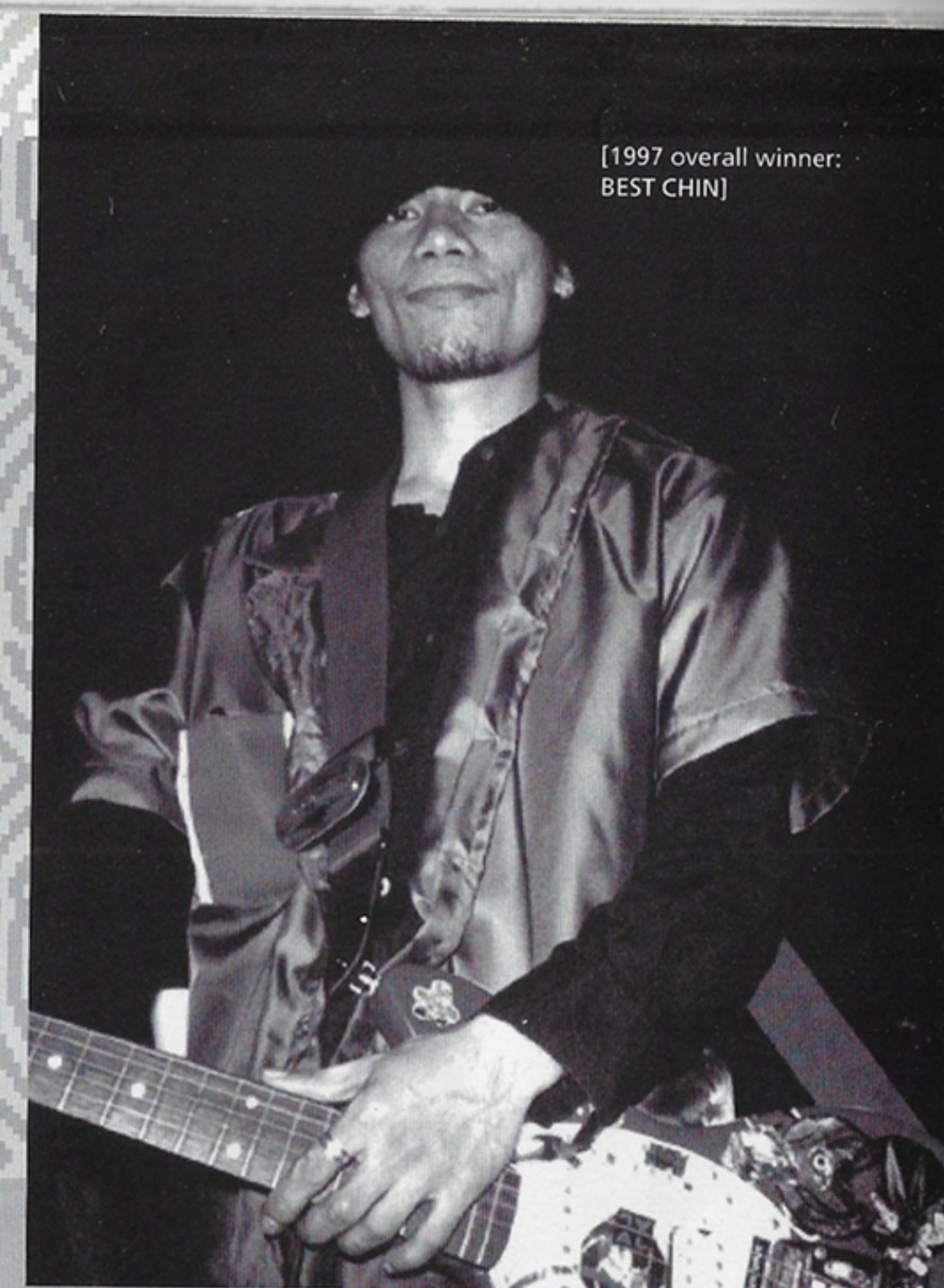
We also had logistical problems on the shoot because it was on the day of the typhoon. They were in Baguio the day before and they got split up on the road. So, Raymund arrived first at 5 o'clock in the morning because he didn't get held up, and then the rest of them trickled in later because of the typhoon.

We also had a brownout halfway through the shoot. And since the studio we were shooting in was kind of low – it's in South Pasong Tamo – we were literally waist-deep in water. So we all just had to stuff and sleep till the electricity came back on, which was about 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning. We shot from five in the morning until about four in the morning. But we all slept overnight because we couldn't do anything. I mean, they didn't have any working lights in the studio or anything. So when the lights went out, then, BOOM! (smacks hand) BLACK! After a while, no one could find their way out and everyone just flopped and slept where they were.

#### Q: You mean every time you shoot it lasts 24 hours?

3: No, it's never 24 hours. Personally, I only work until midnight, then I pack up and go. I don't like working in the wee hours – you don't think well; you don't produce well; but, there was no option. The guys are REALLY busy; it's very difficult to tie them down; so to get ONE day out of their life, I was lucky. And they had other things to go to. You know, they were expected to shoot off to do other things. And then another problem was that we worked with a VERY limited budget.

#### Q: How different was the original edit from the final?



[1997 overall winner: BEST CHIN]

3: Well, first you make that you call an "offline," which is a rough cut of the video that's very cheap to produce so that everybody can muck about with it. And then when you actually pay for the expensive online, that's it – nobody messes around with it.

So we made an offline and we showed it, and then everybody had a little bit of influence, particularly Raymund. But from a directorial point of view, I say this with much pride, the MTV that I showed them on the offline was not the MTV that you saw because they changed it – not a lot – but they changed it. And the finished product is much better than the original edit that I did. Raymund put in a lot more frames, doubled up a lot more frames than I originally put in, which made an already-wild MTV even wilder. But I prefer his edit.

#### Q: Who did the wardrobe for the band in this video?

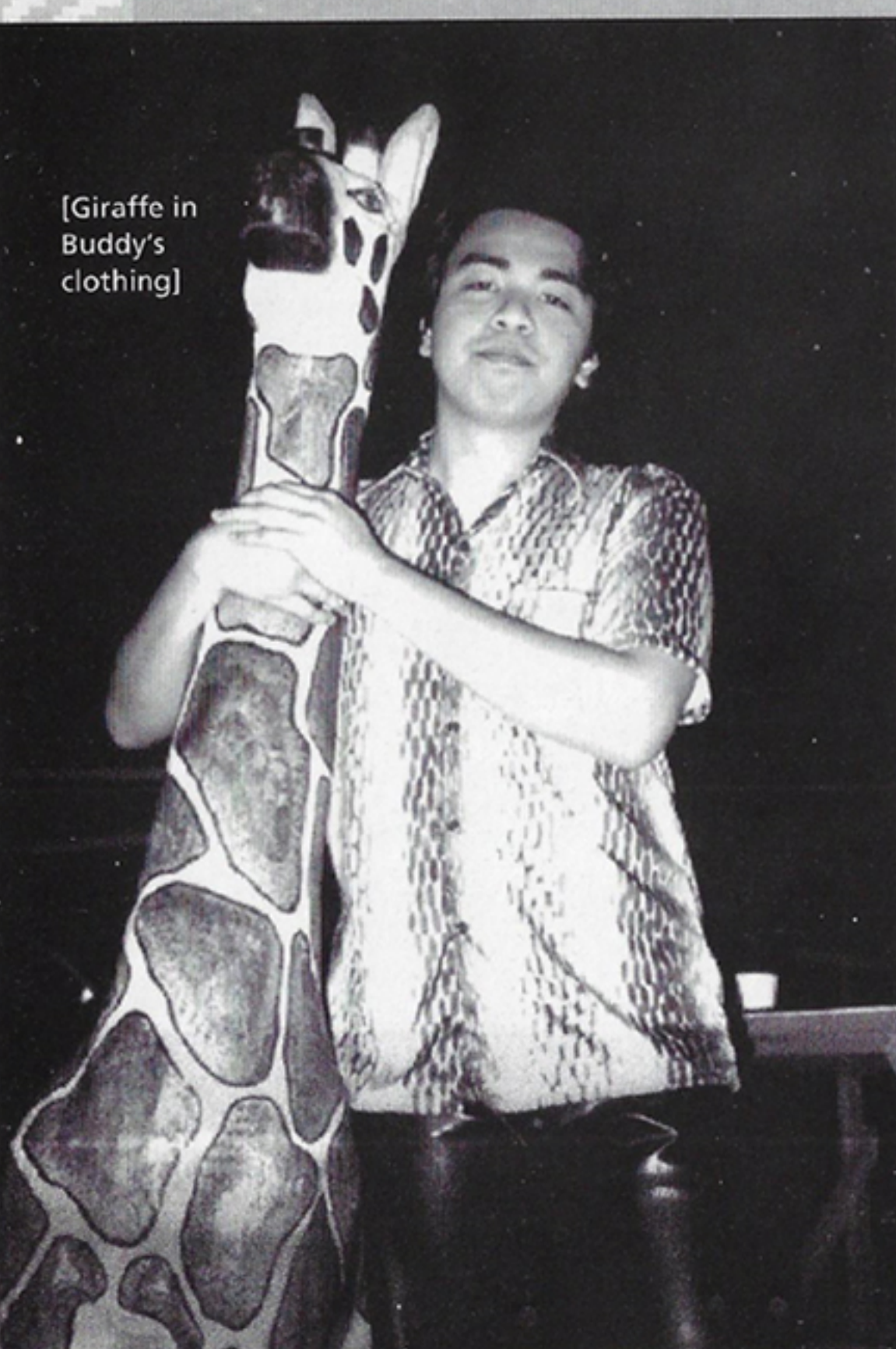
3: I'm not sure if their wardrobe was by them, or their wardrobe was Francis'. Francis (Reyes) was the production designer. He's an absolute genius. And the style that they had was very Francis; that's how he works. I don't know if that's because they're all friends and all have the same culture, or if Francis really designed what they wore for the shoot. I also use Francis in commercials as well and it looks the same. The design looks the same as for what he does for MTVs.

#### Q: So how would you describe his designs?

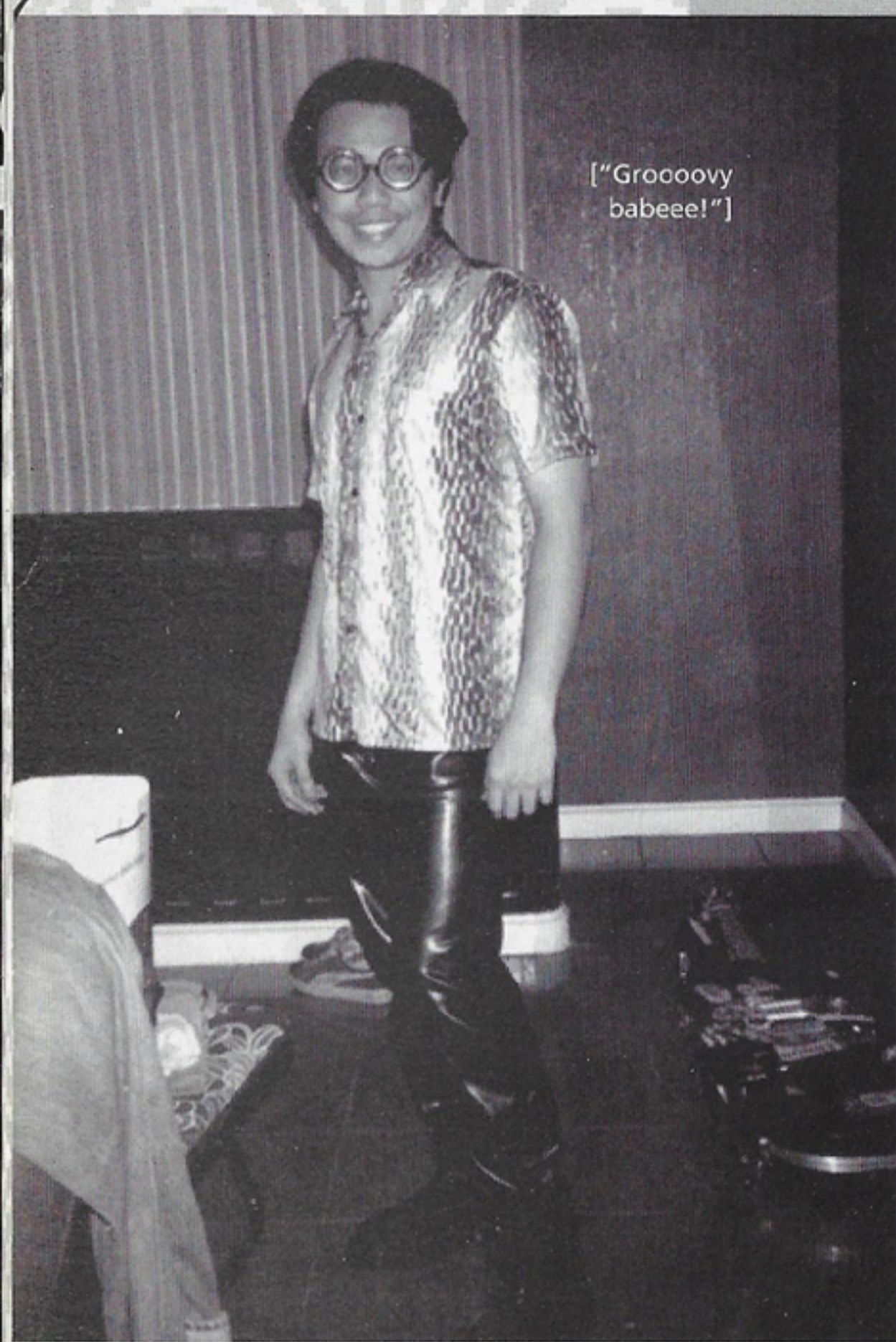
3: Outrageous and outstanding. There are different kinds of production designers. But there are only a couple that can do TRUE fashion design, and I think he's one of them. You know, MTV is powered by fashion. MTV and fashion are very closely knit. They run hand in hand.



[Giraffe in Buddy's clothing]







embarrassing. Because THEN, the fashion of that era was effects- motivated. And not subtle effects – really cheesy effects like wipes and mosaics and pixellations.

And in that video, I think I was the first person ever to use the Gemini, which, at the time, was the first ever digital effects machine. Because I was working at a company that was tied up with the RNDD department that MADE the first digital effects machine. And we put mosaic in this MTV and I THINK it was probably the first time. And we just mosaiced this old twiggly dancing thing in Boytronic, and the audience got up and clapped! You know, all we did was press a button! And it was the first time they ever seen it.

NOW, you put a mosaic in an MTV and it's considered "retro."

### Retro-spective

**Q: Now after the video's completion, do you have any regrets?**

Ξ: Yeah. I regret that we didn't have more money. The budget was low. But, you know, they're all low. What can you do?

The production design was brilliant with the limited amount of money that we had. But it could have been THAT much more with a little bit more. I could have shot more film stock; there were a couple of things that were a little raw that went in. And these were okay because, as it goes, the MTV was written to complement what we were capable of doing – which is an important thing to do if you've got a limited budget.

But the fact that it was imperfect goes with the style of the MTV. There were a few things I would have liked to have done: a few more shots would have made it better, a better quality dolly, or maybe have more lights on the set – not that it would make it any brighter, but it would've added a different kind of lighting. More money would have helped.

**Q: What are you most proud of in the video?**

Ξ: The overall. I mean, with any video, if you break it down to little things of what you're proud of, then there's something wrong with the overall. For me, the overall feel of an MTV is what counts. And I'm very proud of the overall feel. If you don't achieve a style in an MTV and you just work on the visual impact, it doesn't work. And I think it's a very close-knit whole style of MTV.

And fashion will spread because people like it. So if you look over the MTVs throughout the years, what they mirror is the fashion of the society of the time. And I think what we've got now is the fashion of the society of the time. I like it, seriously.

You know, the first MTV I ever did was in 1982, and I look back now on those MTVs and I laugh (laughs). Yeah, they're embarrassing and I'd never show it to anyone, but they won the Cannes Film Festival in '82. Two of the MTVs that I did in '82 won the Cannes Film Festival, but to look at them today, I would not dare show you.

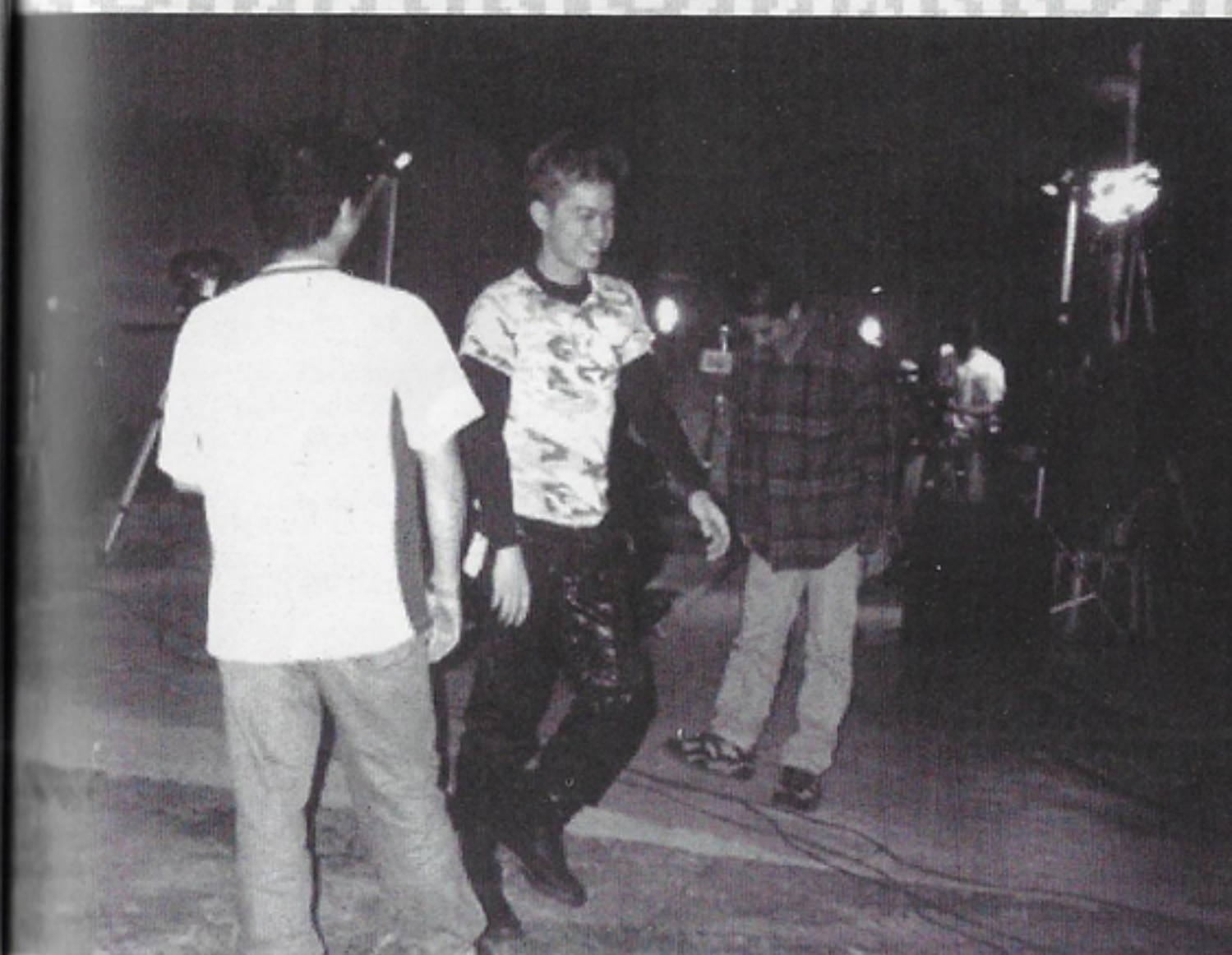
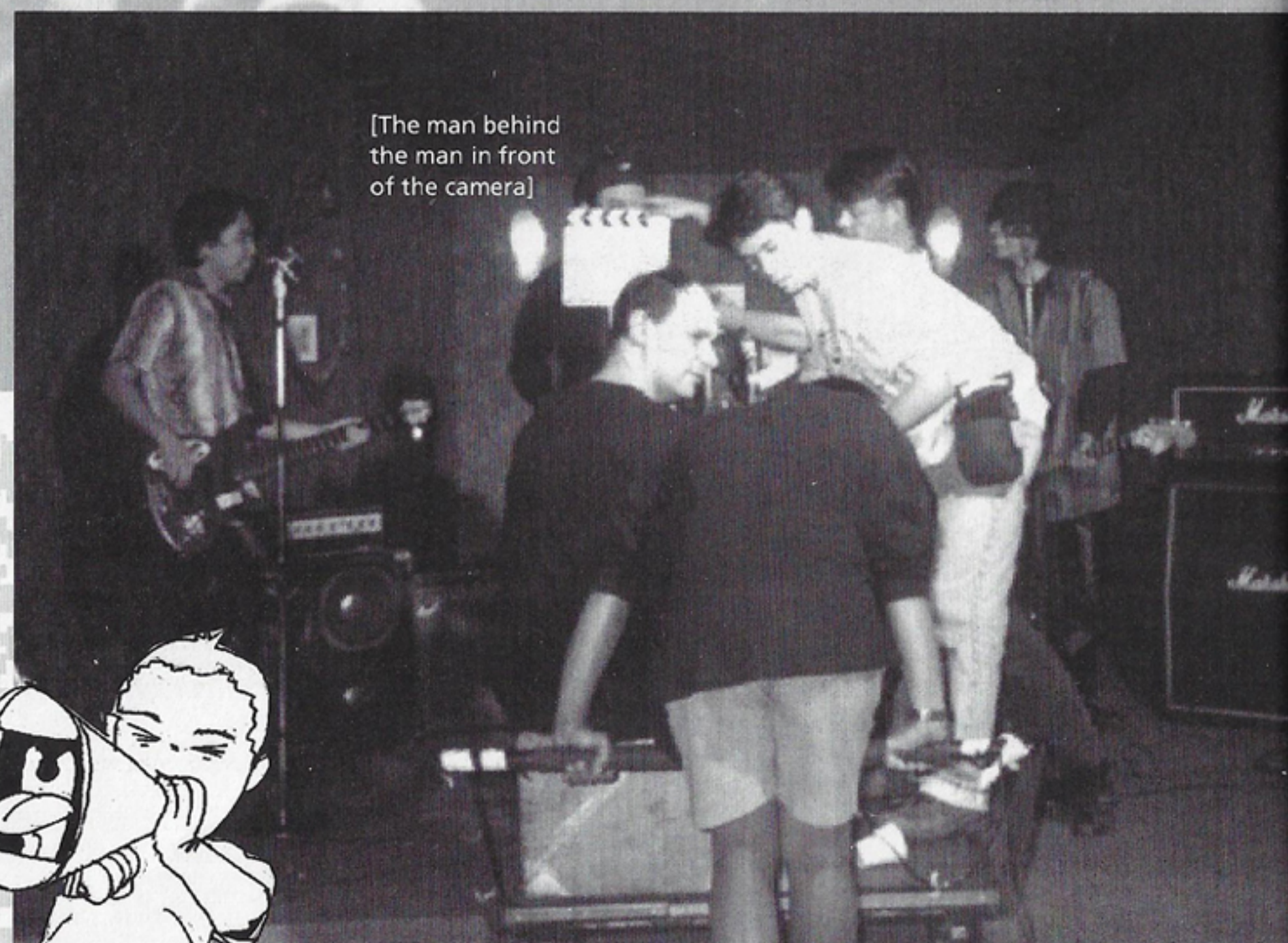
### Résum-Ξ'

**Q: What videos did you do in '82?**

Ξ: Oh, okay. In '82, the two that won in the Cannes Music and Video Festival – I won Best Cinematography for "Little Blonde Ballet Dancer" by Electric Theater. And then I got Best Special Effects for "You" by a German group called Boytronic.

**Q: Are you proud of them?**

Ξ: I was at the time. I'm probably still proud of them now, but when you look at them NOW, it's



[The beginnings of a breakdance showdown!  
(observe man in background scuffing shoe)]

### Pro-spective

**Q: Do you think that this video, or the song, is of international caliber? Do you think the band can make it abroad?**

Ξ: I think the fact that they won the MTV award for this year means they've MADE it abroad. Now they went to the States, they picked up their award, they MADE it abroad.

If you're thinking about selling abroad – (pause) musically, definitely. Yeah. The thing there is that their strength is their lyrics. It's not just their music. Their music is great, but their strength is their lyrics. Although they do English songs as well, I don't know if they have plans to hit internationally. If they do, I think they could do it. I definitely think they'd make it faster and easier if they wrote in English, but I don't think making it abroad is their main goal. I think they will still write in both Tagalog and English. But I think if their songs are Tagalog, they will definitely have a tougher barrier to break abroad. They're music definitely can make it; their lyrics can as well.

**Q: Do you think you'll be working with the band again?**

Ξ: I hope so. I hope so.

**Q: If you could direct another song on *Sticker Happy*, what would it be?**

Ξ: "Andalusian Dog." What would I do with it right now? Something...psychedelic.

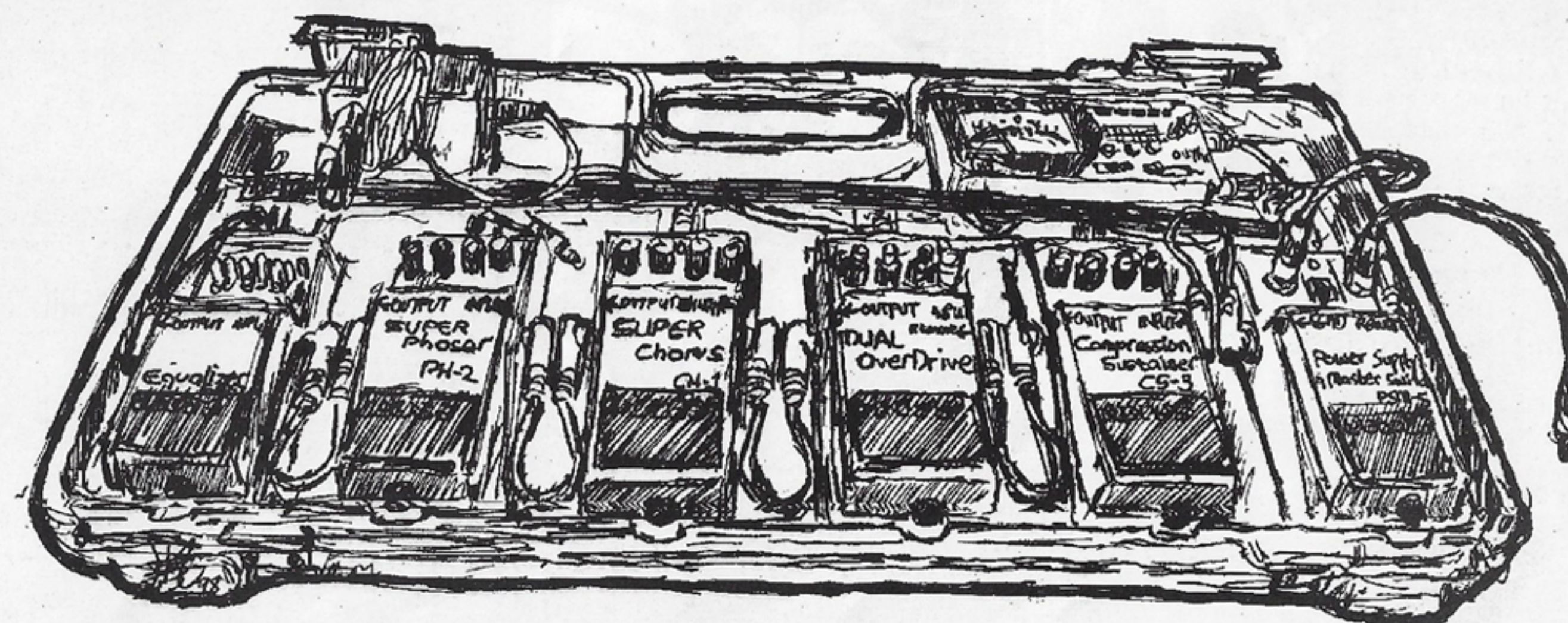
**Q: Any advice you'd want to give to the band, or to any future director that will work with the band?**

Ξ: (shaking his head) I don't think it helps. Because, you know, MTV is not a technically- based media. It's completely creative. So that creativity in an MTV is mine and what the band puts in is the band's. If somebody else does it, it'll be his. If I give any advice, it will be completely null and void. You do what you want, that's the essence.

END



## GAHETO #1: ELY'S SET-UP



"Gaheto 1"

illustration by Ely Buendia