

Dear Gary

story · January 14, 1997

Dear Gary,

I'm writing to discuss with you the impact of our last get-together. You see, ever since you converted me I've felt like a new person. But one thing is rather troubling to me and that is this whole business about my guitar. I know we've been through all this before but I can't help but wonder if it was really necessary for you to take it with you for, as you so quaintly put it, 'safe keeping'. You see, as I already told you, I am quite willing to do whatever it takes to purify my soul, however, this seems a little extreme. I'm writing to ask you to give it back, and I'll explain my reasons.

My Gretsch "White Falcon" guitar, was made in the 50's, then the company went bankrupt. That makes this particular guitar a collectors item, estimated value by today's market prices: well over \$5,000 dollars. Now, I'm not at all concerned about the money, I can assure you. I remember the story you told me about Jesus and the merchants at the Temple. But the fact that this is probably one of the only guitars of it's kind in the world makes it a special treat for me to have around, if only to look at it from time to time.

Which brings me to my next point. I have been playing guitar for over 20 years, I feel as though it's a part of my being, my peace of mind, my existence. Playing it gives me a feeling that is indescribable, and I believe brings me closer to heaven than I could ever get without it. So I never understood why you said that it was considered one of the 'Devil's instruments'. Music is beautiful and wonderful. It's something I don't think that God can replace.

I know you're probably not happy with me for thinking like this but I'm not so sure that your God and I see eye to eye. What kind of religion would ever label a guitar as 'Satanic'? I never thought I was a bad person before when I played guitar all the time. I mean, sure I wasn't an angel. I smoked pot, got drunk every Friday, cursed a lot and basically did whatever the hell I wanted to, but don't all kids do this? And did it make me a bad person? After all, I never stole anything or killed anybody. Doesn't that count for something? Then you came along telling me how bad I was and how I sinned all the time. That I was surely going to Hell if I didn't change my ways. You pointed out the posters in my room, the ones of my favorite bands like Slayer, Black Sabbath, AC/DC and Led Zeppelin. You explained that I was proclaiming that my room was the 'Devil's territory', and then you said

"ANYTIME YOU ARE IN THE DEVIL'S TERRITORY, HE CAN LOWER THE BOOM ON YOU AND DESTROY YOU!" That's really scary shit, Gary. That and all that business about how 'Kiss' (my other favorite rock band), really stands for 'Knights in Satanic Service.' Why do you have to pick on these guys? They seem like nice Jewish boys. Now I heard the guys from 'Slayer' drink goat blood, so you kind of have a point with them, but didn't you ever hear 'Led Zeppelin's' Stairway to Heaven? I mean, I think you're really being unfair by saying that if you play it backwards it says: "Hell has a killer jukebox" and "Satan just looks mean—he's really a lovable guy." Isn't this going a little too far? And for 6 whole months since I've been converted, I pray, pray, pray, and nothing seems to happen. I don't feel any different. I threw out all my records and tore down all my posters, but nothing has changed. I'm not any happier, I'm just bored constantly fighting off the urges I get to fall back into 'the ways of the sinners'. If this is the presence of 'the Lord', then I'm not sure there is one at all. Or maybe he just doesn't like me. You always say: "You can't fake the Lord, he knows what's in your heart and mind." Well then, he must know that I can't stop thinking about getting down Cherry Sexton's pants. This whole 'born-again' concept just seems a little bit weird to me. Being born once, was hard enough on my mother, I wouldn't want to put her through it again.

I'm sure all of this is very disturbing news to you. Gary, what I'm really trying to say is, I don't really care about the guitar. Keep it, or sell it and give the money back to some of those old people that write you checks all the time. What I really want is to go back to my own life, just how it was. Truthfully, I don't believe you can do anything to change my mind. In fact, just stay away from me, don't come around here preaching to me anymore, it won't work. I don't know if there is a Hell or not, but if there is I suppose I'm going there. Who knows? Maybe it **does** have a killer jukebox.