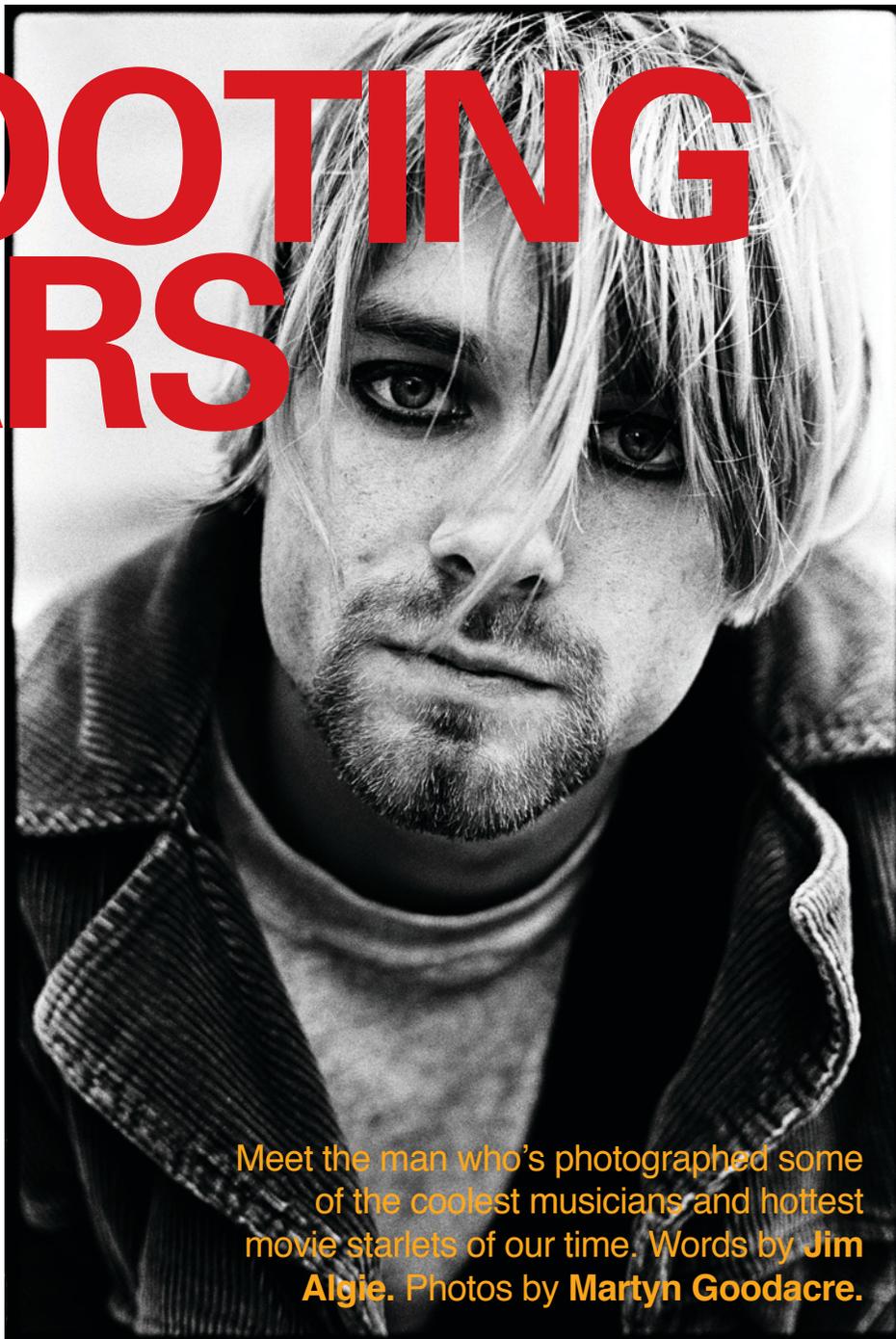


# SHOOTING STARS

**Kurt Cobain,  
London, 1990**

"They weren't famous yet, but their first album had come out and more recently, the single 'Sliver' so they were touring with Tad and staying in a basement bed and breakfast. Kurt was a tiny little guy who seemed quite miserable and hardly spoke two words. Actually, I remember taking this photo quite clearly because in all the others, his eyes were a bit squinty, but then he opened them up completely."  
"I haven't made a tenth of the money I should've from this photo. They've used it for photos and posters and T-shirts all over the world."



Meet the man who's photographed some of the coolest musicians and hottest movie starlets of our time. Words by **Jim Algje**. Photos by **Martyn Goodacre**.

**A**s the biggest typhoon in 15 years was bearing down on Koh Samui, I sent an email to our correspondent down there, telling him to batten down the hatches.

Martyn Goodacre's reply read: "The typhoon is just starting so we're not sure if to stay in the beach house which may flood or get crushed by a falling tree. It's only a heavy storm at the moment. We still have electric. People are a bit worried and are leaving the beach areas. I'm having a BBQ as it is my birthday."

After an ominous one-day silence, my next email from Martyn read: "I've farted bigger storms than that."

In a way, you can't blame the guy for being a bit jaded. After all, Martyn's done photography assignments where he's snorted coke with Michael Hutchence, and driven around with the late INXS frontman in his Ferrari. He's gotten pissed with Shane MacGowan in London and Joey Ramone in New York. He's also met and shot celluloid celebs like Liv Tyler, David Cronenberg,

Keanu Reeves and Ken Russell.

But in the late 80s, before his rise, Martyn was taking photos of bands playing at the University of London Union, and publishing them in the university newspaper. "I was around 27 then and thought I should finally find a career after eight years of squatting in London. So I got a portfolio together to show *SOUNDS*. They told me to shoot more gigs and come back and see them. So I went to a gig every day for a week, printed them all up, and the editor didn't remember me, and said he meant come back in three months. They told me to piss off," says Martyn, who hails from the central English town of Malvern (pop. 30,000).

"Then I went to see *Melody Maker* with some photos of the Screaming Trees I'd just taken and they were doing a story on them, so they bought a photo then and there, and two months later I had three photos in one issue of the *NME*, of Happy

Mondays, the comedian Emo Philips, and The Family Cat. Then I didn't get any work for two months."

Back then, the bigger music mags in the UK were paying 23 pounds per photo and double that for a colour image. But the perks for the higher-echelon music-biz shooters were luxuriantly decadent: being sent abroad, sometimes twice a week, wined, dined, and enshrined in five-star hotels. By the mid-90s, however, "the record companies said we've got a recession on, which was bullshit, and they cut all that back. But I think it's come back a bit in recent years."

All the while Martyn was playing rhythm guitar with bands like Fabulous, who released three singles in the 90s.

Pop-punk kinda stuff like the Buzzcocks and the Ramones? I ask him on the phone. "But less tuneful," he replies. Yeah? Like Sonic Youth kinda atonal guitar? "Only by accident," Martyn says. "I was quite tone deaf and had trouble tuning my guitar."

For all their musical failings, the group's manager, James Brown, who had been the features editor at the *NME*, turned their shagging, snorting and strumming lifestyle into a template for a magazine called *Loaded* that revolutionised the publishing industry and spawned a legion of asinine impersonators.

Martyn became one of the mag's original photographers.

"Before *Loaded*, all the men's magazines like *GQ* told you what kind of suit to buy, how to tone your biceps, and do stuff you couldn't afford to do. 'Loaded' said, 'We're men, but we've lost the plot, women have gotten the upper hand, and we're just gonna have fun.' Though people came to think of it as a tits magazine, James brought in some of the best writers around, people like Howard Marks.

"I have great memories of James dancing drunkenly on the table in the office and telling everyone they had to buy another bottle of champagne or they'd be sacked," says Martyn, going on to say that staffers could be seen snorting coke from morning til night in the office.

For one of their early issues, he was sent to Koh Pangan to shoot the Full Moon Party, and ended up coming back to Koh Samui every year since. Two years ago, he met his Japanese girlfriend there when she was opening a restaurant on Bohput Beach called Two Tigers. Ever since, he's been helping to run the restaurant, and doing the occasional assignment or update for FARANG.

So why did he quit shooting stars?

"I just got a bit bored of it really. It's good fun seeing yourself in print, but you're doing the same thing again and again. I didn't like the bands so much, I got sick of going to gigs, and you just get too old for that."

In retrospect, who were the biggest dickheads he had to photograph?

"Adam Ant was very rude to me, but we all know he has mental problems, and he apologised to me later. Beck's road manager was a complete asshole. Luscious Jackson were no fun and Henry Rollins was a bit stupid. But most people were fine."

Anything Martyn misses about show business?

"I miss all the free records."

Visit his website at [www.martyngoodacre.com](http://www.martyngoodacre.com) or you can purchase a small selection of Martyn's prints at Rock Archive [www.rockarchive.com](http://www.rockarchive.com).

**Shane MacGowan, Filthy McNastys Whiskey Bar, London, 1997**

"During this photo shoot we ended up in a restaurant in Soho with Shane's long-time girlfriend, Victoria, who wrote a book about him. Shane saw Harvey Keitel eating in there, and he went over to his table and was doing all these drunken gangster impressions. I don't know if Harvey knew who he was. Shane was a mess, saliva running down his chin. But if you can open him up he's one of the most interesting people around. In my opinion, he's just super shy. That's why he drinks a lot."



## Road Warriors



### **Michael Hutchence, Sydney, 1996**

"He was a pure gentleman. I was more upset about him dying than anyone else [I've ever photographed]. It was just about a year before his death, and you could tell he was under a lot of pressure. It was near Christmas time, and Paula and the kids couldn't come over and meet him because of Bob Geldof. Altogether we spent three days with Michael, and everywhere he went in Sydney people would shake his hand and say hello. It was amazing how much respect he commanded."

### **Joey Ramone and Martyn Goodacre, New York, '98**

"I was there to shoot Skunk Anansie, and I was with this writer in a club in the East Village called Coney Island Baby, and the writer spotted Joey Ramone. I wouldn't have recognised him, because he was wearing a purple anorak with his grey hair and a pony tail tied up. He was producing a London all-girl punk band called Fluffy, and all the girls were slagging me off because I worked for the NME, but Joey defended me and told them to back off, maybe because I was telling him how much The Ramones had inspired me. I wish I could remember more about what we talked about after all those Long Island Ice Teas, but for the next two hours we mostly just reminisced about punk rock. I've been disappointed by meeting so many of my heroes, like Jonathan Richman, but not Joey Ramone. He was a very humble guy."





**Liv Tyler, London, '96**

"I have to admit I didn't even know who she was at the time, but the 'NME' was doing a story about her film 'Stealing Beauty'. She's stunningly beautiful but, like a lot of models, she looks quite gawky in the flesh. Liv was quite chatty and I probably could've gotten a date with her if it wasn't for this moody PR woman."

**Beck, Amsterdam, 1999**

"The first time I photographed him I'd been flown to Amsterdam and his manager told me I had seven minutes to do the shoot. The second time was also in Amsterdam for a Japanese magazine called 'Rocking On'. Their editor came up with the idea for the background and the idea of him [Beck] with a toy guitar and then he smashes it up at the end. Much different from working for the 'NME' over a decade, because they never told me what to do – it was always spontaneous, even most of the covers. Beck is just kind of a professional guy who's a bit nervous and twitchy."

