

# The big one that almost got away

by Jonathan Weber

8:20 p.m. - Friday night found me sprinting at top speeds, eventually closing the distance between the south parking lot and my story (dissolving by the moment): Def Leppard at the Thomas & Mack Center.

I ascended the steps to the will-call window. Lead singer Joe Elliot's high tenor screams shook me from my visions of grandeur with the solo/vocal break of "Gods of War," and I was still outside. I wondered how many songs I had missed.

"Next!", the guy at the will-call window barked. All he was able to produce was an empty ticket envelope with my editor's name on the front. "Go to the tunnel and ask for Melvin," said the guy's supervisor.

Rushing down the throat of the tunnel into the heart of the T&M, I encountered my next roadblock: Rick, the

350-pound security guard. "Melvin could be anywhere...I don't know where to find him," responded the bull-man, his screaming no match for the sheer power of Def Leppard's mega-hit "Animal." Through the black, half-parted curtains backstage, smoke and mist crept through as I stood a stone's throw away from Elliot and the rest of my story.

Not wanting to tangle Rick the bull man, I turned and plodded back up to the tunnel entrance.

The opening rhythms of "Rocket" escorted me out into the open air of the north parking lot. Determined to at least hear Def Leppard, I found a comfortable steel railing on the east side of the stadium.

By now "Rocket" had softened to a whisper. Elliot's haunting vocals lullabying with a lone-dreamy guitar. Deafening cheers



Def Leppard (Rick Allen, Joe Elliot, Phil Collen and Rick Savage) played the T&M Friday.

from within the T&M finally dissipated into the acoustic intro of "Bringing On the Heartache."

Forcing my drooping frown even lower, Def Leppard went straight into the mournful ballad "Have You Ever Needed Someone So Bad." The voices which butchered the chorus of "Photograph" during the Pyromania tour were now sweetly accurate. Elliot let the last chord ring momentarily before belting out "H-e-e-l-l-o-o L-a-a-s-s Vegas!" Hello Joe, I answered from my lonely steel perch on the wrong side of the red T&M wall.

Inside the T&M, drum-

mer Rick Allen's base drum thundered the beginning of "Pour Some Sugar On Me."

At 10:25, Elliot screamed a hearty "good-night." To my disbelief, the flow of leaving weenies jammed the doors permanently open. Way to get your money's worth, guys. Moments later the T&M crescendoed to a roar, and I knew that Def Leppard was back for more. I couldn't stand it anymore. In the confusion of exiting idiots (and serious lack of security), I slipped inside.

I made it inside just in time to see the newest member of the band, guitarist Vivian Campbell de-

liver a fluid, tasty lead to "Love Bites."

10:35, for the band's finale, "Photograph," Elliot's vocal chords of steel had volume and range to spare, hitting high note after high note.

After an avalanche ending, Allen rose from his digital-sampled drum kit and waved his single right arm. Elliot saluted the T&M crowd and said, "Don't forget us-we won't forget you." Me? Forget this heaven hell night?

Not even maybe....

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