

## Modern Drummer 1994

"We're an energetic bunch. When we play it's pretty much balls-out, full throttle." If you don't know at least that much about the Red Hot Chil Peppers...shame, shame, you haven't been paying attention. Underground dance-floor faves, darlings of MTV and Top-40, tattooed trend-setters--the Peppers have fused funkadelia and punk abandon to create their own butt-shakin', head-bangin', super-energized sound.

When Chad Smith auditioned for the band in '88 to replace the exited Jack Irons (recently of the band 11), he recognized the energy at the core of that sound right away. "I didn't have any pre-conceived notions; I just went down and jammed. It was really fun. Everyone was laughing and yelling at each other. I was thinking, yeah, this is good."

Lots of people agreed. Mother's Milk came out in '89 and spread the word further and wider. In '91 it was Blood Sugar Sex Magik, the breakout album that spawned hit after hit: "Give it Away", "Under the Bridge", "Breaking the Girl". Then, Lollapalooza. The Grammys. Mass exposure. A slew of punk-funk imitators, most of whom can't touch the Peppers' power and ingenuity.

As the band's star began to rise, so did Chad's. More ads began appearing in music mags--Chad unerwater in a giant aquarium, Chad smoking a cigar in an angel suit, Chad chomping on a crash cymbal.... Not many drummers could get away with such silly antics, but the fact is, Smith's seriously solid and funky drumming--on album, live, and at clinic appearances--lent so much credibility to his reputation that no one seemed to care. A video on DCI and a corresponding book soon appeared, followed by a (Not soon to be forgotten) spot at Modern Drummer's Festival Weekend '94....

Now it's mid-summer: by night the Chili Peppers are finishing up their as-yet-unnamed new album, by day they're rehearsing at SIR Studios in Hollywood for Woodstock '94 and a short European tour. As I walk down the corridor toward the rehearsal room, strains of "Give It Away" get progressively louder. I peak my head through the door and catch Chad's eye. He smiles from behind his Pearl "Octopus" kit and motions toward a leather couch where drum tech Louis Mathieu sits.

The band is ripping it up. No, there weren't any light-bulb heads in sight, and everybody was fairly clothed. But these guys were rockin' way harder than most bands do at actual shows--Flea is digging into his bass and unconsciously doing his patented head roll, singer Anthony Kiedis has his rap stance happening, newcomer Dave Navarro (late of Jane's Addiction) is testing his six-string pose on a monitor speaker. Chad, at the center of the tornado, is slamming away. From this scene, it's obvious that the live Chil Peppers energy comes from a very real and sincere place.

"I'm not that much of a showman," Chad half-convincingly says later, "but I am enjoying myself and I think people can see that. I'd never let the theatrical stuff get in the way of the actual drumming, but when you're comfortable and playing what's in your heart and soul, people pick up on that sort of honesty. It's gotta be a natural thing, though, not like, 'You're crazy! You're zany! You're wacky! Okay, you're a Chili Pepper.' You just gotta be who you are. I think that's part of why they wanted me to join the band. With any good musician, part of the way they sound is their personality flowing out of their playing."

After rehearsal, Chad's Harley leads us to a classic old Hollywood restaurant, were we try to get to the root of that Chili Pepper energy.

**CS:**For me, it's really about kicking those guys' asses. Of course there are dynamics in the music, but I've always got to be really powerful, really solid. At the beginning of a tour I

might think about conserving energy, but I get so excited, I just get out there and start cranking. And if at the end of the show I'm dying, then I just won't party the next night.

**AB:How about tempos? Does all the excitement and energy ever affect that?**

**CS:**Oh, don't think that when we were at Woodstock we weren't feeling like...(Chad air-drums and sings a double time parody of "Give It Away") It's a thing we all talk about. You've gotta relax. Flea is pretty good about tempos. Dave gets excited and always wants me to count shit off. For a while some things used to be fast. I used to tape stuff just to see.

**AB:What do you do to control tempo?**

**CS:**Usually I'll think, okay, here's where I'm feeling it, and then I'll try to just kick it back a little from there. That compensates for the adrenaline factor. Then it's usually in the pocket and everyone's like, "Yeah".

I try to give everything its full value, make it really fat without dragging. We have all these things going back and forth; "Kick back, but make it really exciting! Put it in the pocket, but then you really gotta go!" And if it ends up feeling a little excited, that's okay.

**AB:In your video..**

**CS:**You've seen my video?

**AB:I have indeed seen your video.**

**CS:**So you know all this stuff.

**AB:I even have your book in my bag.**

**CS:**Jesus Christ, don't embarrass me any more than I already am.

**AB:For those who don't have the video or book...**

**CS:**Go out and buy them cause I get like twenty cents from each one. (laughs)

**AB:...you talk about playing single kick.**

**CS:**For one thing, I was always a big Bonham fan, who had an amazing single kick. Also, I know that if I got a double kick, I would want to throw it in a lot because it's a new toy. I have it at home and I'm working it up, and you can use it tastefully, so maybe I'm making excuses. But it's also that on the stuff that we're doing, it's never like. "Oh gee, I wish I had a double pedal because that would be really bitching in this part."

With the Chili Peppers, Flea plays very percussively, with a lot of slapping--not on all his stuff, but on some of it, especially the older songs--and I don't want to clutter up the bottom. I do't want to be going "diga-da diga-da diga-da" at the end of a song. That's ridiculous:it's very non-musical.

**AB:You do a lot of syncopated parts with single kick. Sometimes a hard thing for drummers to get over is playing those types of things while the hi-hat is staying constant on quarter or 8th notes. Was there anything that you ever worked on as a way to free up your brain to play that stuff?**

**CS:**I used to practice doing triplets with straight four on the hi-hat, or playing in six with my left foot and in four with my right and then switching. These are just mental things that you have to work on to get over. I'm not totally ambidextrous, like this arm can do this while this arm does something else. Certain accents are still difficult fo me. It just takes practice.

**AB:Since you do a lot of quick bass drum parts, do you need to muffle your bass drum any special way to make notes sound clear?**

**CS:**What I do is fold a U-Haul packing blanket once, stick it inside the drum, and put the front head on. Then I tune it for live, where I also use a Remo Falam Slam impact pad, I tune the head really slack so that it's like one twist above wrinkles. If you can get used to

playing with it that slack, you get a really good punch. You hear the attack really good. Sometimes the drum can sound good to you from behind the kit, but you go out front and it's not happening. So be sure it sounds good out front. That's what works for me.

**AB:Anthony was saying in rehearsal that he likes the fact that you play for the song. Do you ever have to consciously make a choice as to how busy your individual parts are going to be?**

**CS:**Yeah, I do. Lots of times Flea and I will be jamming and coming up with parts, and we'll play off each other. In some cases I'll simplify. Sometimes I'll just cop something in one of my limbs off of what he's doing, accenting along with him. Lots of times it'll sound too busy, so I'll have to pick out the important notes. At this point with the band, it's more about just listening to everybody. It's the whole vibe of the song and what Dave is doing, what the vocal is doing--trying to play what the song needs.

I think I'm maturing a little bit more. I think I'm playing less. I'm trying to concentrate more on the groove and not about playing a fancy part so that drummers will go, "Oh, that's cool." I'm more concerned with the overall feel. Rick Rubin, who produced Blood Sugar and the new album is really good at that--"That's too much, play half of that." We definitely worked on stuff more on this record than on Blood Sugar. We really ripped some things apart--"Okay, on the second verse you're gonna do what? Let me hear just you and Flea. Okay, now play by yourself...no, don't do that, do this...crash here...play out there...set that up, don't set that up." Rick really made a lot of good suggestions.

**AB:Is it hard getting used to someone picking your stuff apart like that?**

**CS:**No, not if you can set your ego down a little bit. I respect him. He's real musical, real smart. He has a good concept of space. I respect his background. I don't always agree with him, and we've knocked heads a couple of times, but that's just two artists trying to see their vision through. And Flea, Dave, anyone in the band can make a suggestion. I'll always try 'em. It really helps.

**AB:Getting back to the actual parts you play: We talked about the bass drum. How about the hi-hat?**

**CS:**I've always played the hi-hat plenty loud because I've played in so many bands where drums weren't miked, back in the backyard party days. Man, I like them loud, real sloshy. I've since curbed it a little bit. There's a certain sound to an open hat; it sounds like you're hitting.

**AB:You seem to have a lot of fun playing the hi-hat; you add lots of different colors with it.**

**CS:**The hi-hat is amazing. There was a Gene Krupa tribute years ago. All of the drummers came out and busted their shit, man, doing all of their solos. Jo Jones came out with just a hi-hat and blew everybody away. That's the shit, man. What was it like when there was no hi-hat, when they had the low-boy? I'm a big fan of the hi-hat more than the ride. In funk music, you can accent so well with it, with different open and closed sounds. It's definitely one of my favorite things to play. And there's nothing like tightening up on the old hi-hat in a verse to make things go "shhhhhp." It really has a lot of personality.

**AB:Another thing you talked about in your video was ghost strokes.**

**CS:**What you need to know? They're very spooky. Actually, they're a big part of my so-called "style", if you can say that I have one. They're really funky and they fill up stuff. You can be doing full-on doubles, which isn't really that ghosty, but there are so many different dynamic levels. When you play a straight boom-tat, 2/4 groove, it can sound kind of stiff. But if you just drop your hand in there, where you think it naturally fits in, it can make such a difference in the groove. I'll usually do it in places that have more holes between snare shots.

**AB:On the other hand, rather than fill up space with ghost notes, you sometimes seem to accentuate the space between notes by stretching the time.**

**CS:** On "Blood Sugar", going into the last chorus--"bam, bam, bam, blood sugar baby"--we kind of ritard that because it explodes even heavier when it comes back in. We never talk about it but we know that we do it. It's just from playing together. There is tension and space, big time. Rick is a big fan of that too.

**AB:"Mellow Ship Slinky" has that sort of thing going on.**

**CS:**You mean the "bomp, bomp, bomp, bomp, da dunt da dun, uh ba da dunt dunt da dah" part? I remember John Frusciante was physically leaning back when we played it. I had to consciously lay back. If you lay a click track on it, it would probably drag, but the feeling of it is that it gives you that full value thing, which is cool. Then it kicks back into the swing part, "do, do, a-dack-a-do."

**AB:There seems to be a jump between the last two albums, particularly in that sense; there seems to be more space on Blood Sugar.**

**CS:**For one thing we had been playing together for a couple of years by the time we recorded Blood Sugar. Mother's Milk had a good energy, but it wasn't a real relaxed energy, which I think Blood Sugar had. Blood Sugar sounds like a band playing in your living room. There are minimal overdubs. We were just trying to capture a good performance, with natural sounds. Mother's Milk had sampled drums, triggered shit, overdubs. Blood Sugar is definitely more natural, organic, which is the way we want to sound. It was a maturity in songwriting, too. There's also not the latest technology on there. It's like an old board, crappy old mic's, regular drums.

**AB:What about this new record?**

**CS:**It's different on different songs. We were really prepared when we went in to do Blood Sugar. We had twenty songs together, and it was just a matter of getting good performances. This time we had about fifteen songs, but they weren't all finished. Sometimes that can be an advantage, and I think for us it was, especially with the way Dave creates. You can use the studio as a real tool; things change when you hear them in the nakedness of a studio environment. So it's different this time, but it's still real organic and natural-sounding.

**AB:Tell us about some of the new stuff.**

**CS:**There's a song called "Evil", which is kind of like a ZZ-Top, boogie kind of thing. With a straight beat it would have sounded like boring rock 'n' roll. So I do a free-jazz odyssey thing over it. It's like my interpretation of jazz on steroids. It's different, but it works. There won't be a lot of air drumming going on when we do it live. The other guys are the rhythm section and I'm sort of the lead.

I played with my hands on some songs and we even had Stephen Perkins play with us. Il Perk came down and rocked. One song, "Stretching you Out", is kind of a combo thing, where we all played together. I was playing the drums, Stephen was playing all his crazy percussion stuff.

"Junkie Song" was just me playing drums, Flea playing an ashtray, Dave playing the floor tom, and Stephen playing this thing called a cajon, which is like a wood box with a hole in it. Anthony sang over it, and it turned out cool. Rick loves it, he's like, "It's rad. It's the dope, it's the rope, it's the fly." Stephen's a really good musician and a nice guy. He plays interesting stuff.

Then there's a song called "My Friends." It's kind of a Tom Petty-ish, Stan Lynch kind of feel--not really slow, but I had to play quiet and straight. The hardest thing for me is to play slow and solid with conviction. I can play hard and fast all day--no problem. But to really groove quietly and at a slow tempo...kids should put a metronome at point 2 or something and just try to make it sound really good and solid and grooving.

**AB:Some drummers think in terms of 16th notes when they have to play slowly.**

**CS:**Steve Smith does that. I saw that in a video somewhere. Not a bad idea.

**AB:Do you ever find yourself doing that?**

**CS:**No, I very rarely do a counting thing. Except at the Modern Drummer Festival (where Chad did several duets with percussionist Larry Fratangelo), Larry wanted to do something in seven. I'm thinking, "All right...this is easy, man. Think...in...seven." (laughs) But I don't really do that. I'm more listening to where other people are placing their notes than counting.

**AB:Do you and Flea ever jam together as you did in your video?**

**CS:**Yeah, especially when Dave is late for rehearsal, like today. But coming up with parts, just me and him? Not often--i's more of a band thing. We do have two things that we recorded on the new record that just has bass and drums--a song called "The Intimidator", which didn't make it onto the album, and something temporarily called "Slow Funk". Dave didn't have a guitar part ready, and while we were in the studio we just wanted to lay it down. But usually everybody jams together.

**AB:Do ou get to do the sort of duets you did with Larry Fratangelo at the MD Festival very often?**

**CS:**That was a treat because he and I hadn't played together in a long time. We were in a band together in Detroit, where he still lives, and he was in P-Funk. We played on the Grammys together when we brought out George Clinton and the P-Funk guys. It was really fun. There were about thirty people on stage--two drummers, five bass players.... The Grammys are generally so uptight. It was nice of them to ask us to play, so we decided to pay homage to George and turn people on to some of the real funk.

**AB:You've done a few sessions lately.**

**CS:**I wouldn't all myself a "session man". i just get lucky through friends or friends of friends. Ross Garfield, the Drum Doctor, turned me onto a John Fogerty thing. John had asked Ross for suggestion on drummers, so ther's Josh Freese, myself, Nick Menza from Megadeth, Curt Bisquera, Eddie Bayers, Steve Jordan. Some of the last stuff Jeff Porcaro did is on there.

The way John works is very interesting. It was just me, him and a bass player. We played a pretty straight-ahead rock tune like two or three times, and it sounded good. He's like, "Sounds great. Maybe just try this in the chorus", a couple other suggestions. So we went back in and did that. "Cool man, sounds great, let's break for lunch." I figure, great, we got it, no we're gonna move on to another tune, maybe a swampier CCR thing. But after lunch, it's "Okay, we're gonna do it again." "Uh...okay." So we did it again..and again...and again...and again--like twenty times. And I'm going, "What the hell, man?" I'm used to three or four times--if you do't get it you move on to another song.

So we came back the next day and played it twelve more times. He was still saying, "Yeah, sounds good, man. I really like what you're doing. Let's do one more." I asked him, "Is this the way you did it back in the CCR days?" and he said, "No, we'd do it a couple of times and that was it." And I'm like, "Yeah, that seems to be the way to do it!" But he said, "Yeah, but we were a band then, and this isn't a band. If we had rehearsed for months before, then it might have been a different story."

Then I came back on the third day, and we played it five more times. I think he was finally pleased with it because we went home early. I saw the engineer a few days later and asked him, "What did you do yesterday?" "We edited drum tracks." "Oh, cool." "Yeah, seventy edits." "Seventeen edits?" "No, seventy!"

**AB:How did you manage to stay fresh after all the takes you had to do?**

**CS:**I just had to really zen down. I said to myself, "Okay, this is the first time I've played this." It's a long process, but he's trying to get that really special feel for the performance,

and that's cool. In the end he was happy; he was a really nice guy and I was very honored to do it. Ross told me I'm on the record, so I'm pleased.

**AB:You've done other outside projects, like a Queen remix.**

**CS:**They wanted to put something special on the American CD release of News Of The World, so they asked Rick Rubin to remix "We Will Rock You/We Are The Champions." Me and Flea just rocked out at the end of it. We put a groove to it. So that was different. Then I did this Johnny Cash thing, which was amazing. I walk in and I'm all excited: "Hi, I'm Chad, the drummer for the Chili Peppers." "Glad to meet you, I'm Johnny Cash." he says in that voice. He was very charming, a total gentleman stud man in black. He goes, "What do you want to play?" "What do I want to play? Anything you want. I'm here for you." So he sits down and puts on his reading glasses, goes to his folder, plays me some songs. "This is a song that Kris Kristofferson wrote for me, Chad. What do you think of this? And here's one that Dolly Parton gave me. What about this one?" So it was pretty rad.

It was me, Flea, and Mike Campbell from Tom Petty's band. It wasn't really our thing, but it was cool. We played four or five songs--"Heart of Gold" by Neil Young, a Leonard Cohen song, some religious songs, some train-feel Johnny Cash kind of stuff.

**AB:Do you think studio work is something you would like to do down the road?**

**CS:**Oh God, I don't know--maybe. I like the studio. But I prefer playing music that I like and with people that I like over doing jingles and soundtracks. I don't think that's for me. The main thing about being a studio guy is probably adapting to each situation, being able to wear different hats. Like Jim Keltner--he's just such a nice, easygoing Southern gentleman, he puts everyone at ease. I'm sure that's part of why people like to work with him. He's no slouch on the drums either. I think you have to have the personality for it and treat each situation differently.

**AB:Speaking of different, you've got a new look in the photos accompanying this story. What's the deal?**

**CS:**I'm paying homage to the fathers of the drumset. Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, Chick Webb, Baby Dodds, Big Sid Catlett, Ray McKinley, Jo Jones--those guys were amazing. It was such a cool time. They looked so stylish.

I think that if you're really serious about your instrument you should at least check that stuff out. Jazz swing was the rock music of the day, and those guys were like rock stars. Gene Krupa was a teen movie idol rock star guy. He really brought the drums to the forefront. We owe him, and all those guys, a lot of nods.

**AB:When did you start listening to that sort of stuff?**

**CS:**My dad was a little bit of a swinger. He'd break out his navy suit. "When me and your mom were kids..." (laughs) Later in high school I had a drummer friend and we would sit and shred and listen to Santana and funk and swing stuff. The sound on some of those recordings isn't very good, but you can get the feel of what's going on. Later on I got into it just because I wanted to know more about where the instrument had come from--how the low-boy became the hi-hat, how cymbals started getting bigger. There's a cool book called Drumming Men (by Burt Korall) that's all about that time.

**AB:Another of your passions is sports. You mention it in your video.**

**CS:**i love sports, especially basketball. I think those guys are just awesome athletes. I'm a big Detroit Pistons fan. I actually went home a couple of times and played the National Anthem at the games. I met Isiah Thomas at the MTV Awards one time. He sat right in front of us. We started to talk and he said, ""Next time you come to town, do you want to play the National Anthem at one of our games?" I said, "Yeah!...but I'm a drummer," but he said, "Do whatever you want. It'll be fine."

So I got a 1960s Chicago Symphony version of the anthem--it's pretty bold, lots of horns and stuff--and I did sort of a John Bonham version, bringing it down for a section, and

then rocking out at the end. They loved it. It was really exciting. I was never so nervous in my life. Usually I've got the guys in the band running around. I went back for a playoff game and did it again.

I also like to ride my bike and go scuba diving--this is beginning to sound like The Dating Game. I find movies really inspiring, too. People ask me, "What do you listen to when you're in a rut?" Lots of times it's not music. I'll go to a really great movie, or watch it at home--rent Raging Bull or a Fellini movie. Just like in music, there's balance, dark and light, dynamics, power. I get lost. I go to a basketball game, and if it wasn't for the clock, I'd be lost. That's art to me. My wife is an artist, and especially when we travel, we try to go see stuff. It's a whole new perspective, and I think it's important that people stretch out.

**AB:We mentioned your book earlier. You used a drum tablature system, which is different from what most books do.**

**CS:**I was really pleased about that. I'm not a big technical reader guy. The drum tab is like a graph cut up into sections of quarter notes--1 e & 2 w & ah--and it puts a little dot in the graph right where each note falls--where the snare drum or the hi-hat or the bass drum is. So you can just go, okay, beat number 4--that's where the snare drum is...It makes it really simple.

**AB:What sort of training did you have when you were young?**

**CS:**I started playing the drums when I was seven, when I was growing up in Michigan. I didn't take formal lessons, but I played in the symphonic bands, concert bands, jazz bands--any band class that would help me get an A to balance out my D in current events or biology or whatever. (laughs) I'm not an expert reader at all, but that's where I learned to read.

Later I played in bands with my brother. Since he is about two years older than me, he was a big influence on me musically because I would listen to all his records. He was into Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin, black Sabbath. Anyway, when I graduated from high school, I went right to playing in clubs. I played all kinds of stuff--rock, wedding bands, anything that I could get my hands on just to play, because I knew that's what I wanted to do.

**AB:How were your parents about your career choice?**

**CS:**My parents were very supportive, which is great. They were a little concerned, but they were always really cool about it. I definitely have to thank them for that. If I ever got punished, I got grounded. But they would never say, "Since you sneaked out of the house and stole the car, you can't play the drums". I think that maybe I got good because I got grounded so much. (laughs) I got lots of practice.

**AB:So where did you go next?**

**CS:**I played in a band in '82 with Larry. He was in P-Funk right before that. He was a big help. I'd gotten to the point in my drumming where I felt what I was pretty good, but I didn't really know about dynamics and building songs. Larry was instrumental in opening my eyes and ears to that stuff.

So we were in this band; this guy put together this supposed Detroit super group around great musicians. He owned a place called Pine Knob, which is an outdoor theater in Detroit. We rehearsed there for about a year. He didn't know anything about music, but he tried to tell us what to do and what to play. It was just a wierd scene. But the good part was that I got to play everyday with some really good musicians. Larry and I really hit it off, and he sort of took me under his wing. Probably my first really funk influence came from Larry. So I matured a lot in that year.

**AB:When you were playing the clubs, you must have also been learning a lot about the different aspects of playing live, like monitor mixes and sound and things like that.**

**CS:**It's good not to piss off the monitor guy. Sometimes at a gig you don't have time for a

sound check. Lots of times I've played outdoor shows where you are winging it. But you should definitely setup your drums and get comfortable with them before they start setting up the mic's so you're not moving your stuff for them. But after that, you should try to be nice so they will give you a good mix. (laughs) I just tell them I want bass guitar, kick and snare, little bit of guitar, and a little bit of vocal. Sometimes they can throw toms in. When I have my own mix I usually get the whole drumset in there--not too loud, but just so it's not like you're here and the drums are over there.

**AB:What happens if you get a lousy mix?**

**CS:**If it's not happening, don't get pissed off and let it ruin your whole performance. I've seen guys look really upset on stage, and you're watching and wondering what's wrong with the guy. You have to bear with the situation, and hopefully after two or three songs they'll have it together. They'll usually take care of the singer first. Drummers get the shaft in that department.

In any amplified situation it's important that you hear what's going on. When I was in the band Toby Redd, I demanded a monitor. "Well, we don't have the money for it." "You want to play together? I need to hear what's going on. I have to have a monitor."

**AB:What was Toby Redd about?**

**CS:**It was a rock band from Detroit. We put out a record on RCA, but nothing really happened. We went on a couple of tours and then we started playing the clubs again five nights a week. At this point I knew everybody in Detroit, all the bands. Eventually I thought to myself, "I don't want to be hanging around at thirty years old and still playing the bars. I'm out of here." So it was either New York or LA. I had had enough of the cold weather, and my brother lived in San Francisco, so I just came out here to LA and went to Musicians Institute.

**AB:How long were you there?**

**CS:**A couple of months. If I had been a kid coming out of high school, I think it would have been really good, but I was twenty-six years old. That's not to say that I was above them: there were definitely things to learn. But the semester that I went, they tried to get everybody in kind of the same place.. The bummer was that it was about \$4,500 to go, and after about half a semester they gave me ten percent of my money back. So on the back of Mother's Milk I thanked PIT for the huge refund. Now they put me in their ads-- "Alumni Chad Smith of the Peppers!" But I think it's a good place--it's like a trade school. You can learn a lot.

**AB:How come you decided to go there?**

**CS:**I just wanted to better myself. I also wanted to check out LA to see if this was what I wanted to do. After being there fo a couple of months, I auditioned for the Chili Peppers...and now I'm rich and famous! (laughs) My mom says, "Don't you just pinch yourself every day?" But it's true, because there are guys who can do my thing no problem. I certainly paid my dues, but I'm still lucky to be able to do what I love for a living. (Chad pauses, sincerely)Man, I am just so lucky.