

# THE ACCURACY OF THIRD EYE BLIND



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# The Accuracy of Third Eye Blind

How Third Eye Blind's Debut Album *Third Eye Blind*  
Predicted the Major Events of My Life from 2010 Onward

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*The Accuracy of Third Eye Blind: How Third Eye Blind's  
Debut Album Third Eye Blind Predicted the Major Events of  
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I'd heard an interesting theory, in which music pundit Chuck Klosterman wrote about how Radiohead's album *Kid A* predicted the events of 9/11. After I'd listened to the first few tracks of *Third Eye Blind*, I realized they lined up almost perfectly with major events in my life.

## Track 1: “Losing a Whole Year”

This track represents the final year of my relationship with my then-girlfriend. I had been given to her as a “birthday present.” Basically, I was at a bar, met two girls who were headed to their friend’s birthday party, and they invited me to go with them. Since they hadn’t gotten her a gift, they joked that I would be the birthday present. For the rest of the evening, after the gifts were bestowed, one of her friends (who’d had a little too much to drink) kept yelling, “Unwrap your present!” And yes, one day I thought I’d be telling this story on a talk show.

“So, wait a second,” the host would begin.

I’m thinking Conan O’Brien, although beggars can’t be choosers.

“You were your wife’s birthday present?” He would have just the right amount of awe in his voice.

“Yes,” I would reply, and wait for the applause to die down before I continued with the story.

Earlier that year, my girlfriend and I had moved in together. Our cohabitation would last for ten months. We had been in a relationship for four years before we decided to find an apartment. This was 2010, and I was almost thirty-two years old. I was not yet wise enough to realize that our moving in together was a last-ditch effort on her part to save our relationship from disintegrating entirely. At the time, I recall telling her how certain I was about our relationship, and that it was fine if she felt anxious or doubtful. When playing Black Jack, this is similar to feeling confident enough to double down on your bet when you don’t have a face card.

Back then, I was working with my father, day-trading options. I was probably in the mindset to gamble. Mostly, I was trading covered call options. Options are financial instruments. They allow you to either buy or sell a certain amount of shares of stock at a fixed price at a future time. Covered calls mean you already own the underlying stock, so you’re hedging if the price goes down by selling the right to own the stock to someone else. If the strike price (the price at which you are going to buy/sell) is more than the underlying stock price, then the option expires, and the seller keeps the premium (money paid for the chance to own the stock option). Of course, the subprime mortgage crisis hit around this time. There are a multitude of reasons for the subprime mortgage

crisis which include a housing bubble and predatory loan lending tactics. As it became more difficult to navigate the stock market, I talked with my dad, who foresaw the end of our business venture and suggested I look for an alternate means of income.

At that point in my life, the only thing I had ever been passionate about was writing. So I applied to graduate schools. I only looked at programs within the greater New York area since my girlfriend was an aspiring actress and needed to stay near the city. She had done some off-off Broadway work. Who knows whether I would have been able to get into any programs out of state? It's easy to look back and reflect on missed opportunities. Of course, this is a dangerous rabbit hole to go down. Plus, I am very happy with the program I would later attend: Adelphi University.

On February 23, 2010, I came home nursing bruised ribs and found her crying on the couch. I had taken a Judo class and rolled around with the guitarist of a hardcore band who, in 2018, embarked on a tour in Europe. He probably outweighed me by a good sixty pounds. He also possibly thought I owed him money or had offended a member of his family.

Concerning my girlfriend, I guess I had seen the writing on the wall, but she told me she wanted to end things, and I broke down regardless. I didn't take the dissolution of our relationship well. I hadn't yet survived having a ruptured brain aneurysm to help keep things in perspective. Eventually, I wrote a short story inspired partially by this breakup in which Superman discovers his ex-girlfriend is dating Bizarro Superman. This will not be the first time I make this mistake (believing a relationship is not over, not that I'm Superman). This reminds me of a rather dark anecdote. I had a friend who lived in Hong Kong and was out at a party. He was standing on the balcony of an apartment, which was pretty high off the ground. One of the guests, who was drunk, thought he could safely jump across to the neighboring balcony. When someone suggested he not try, the guest said, "I can *make* it." He tried. Sadly, he didn't make it. My brother, now a doctor, once told me the most commonly heard phrase someone says before having to visit the emergency room is "hold my beer."

## Track 2: Narcolepsy

My girlfriend moved out of our apartment two months after we broke up. This was the period between the end of my relationship with her and the beginning of graduate school. The rest of the time she and I lived together I spent in a haze. We had been living in a two-bedroom apartment, and before she moved out, I moved into the guest bedroom. This was awkward since we were still living together. We made it work, though. Our schedules didn't overlap, so for the majority of the time, if one of us was at home, the other person would be out. After she left, every time I was in the living room, I could look to my left and peer into the barren cavern that had once been our bedroom. Now it was just an empty wooden floor, which had collected an assortment of dust bunnies.

I neglected to turn the room into something new once she departed. As if the timing couldn't have been more perfect, I had been considering purchasing an engagement ring. Looking back at it, it was best for everyone involved that we didn't remain together. She married the first person she dated after we broke up. Again, this will not be the first time this happens. There's a movie with Dane Cook entitled *Good Luck Chuck*. Cook plays Chuck, who is cursed by a former classmate. He can never find true love. However, if a woman sleeps with him, she will meet her true love right afterward. It's a shame that this is what I think of sometimes when I reflect on the state of my romantic relationships. Why couldn't I have more similarities with Casanova or Warren Beatty, you ask? Well, that's a great question.

### Track 3: Semi-Charmed Life

I started the MFA program at Adelphi University on Long Island. Things were going much better, and I felt like I was making a lot of progress as a writer. Some friends of mine set me up with a divorced dancer/choreographer. She was about five feet tall; a dynamo with boundless energy. For the first time in a long time, I felt like an adult. She and I didn't have that much in common, but I liked being with someone. She knew what she wanted. Later, I learned this was not a unique thing, but at the time it seemed more impressive. Our relationship worked well for about two months. Then my drinking got in the way, and I also realized we didn't have much of a future together. But let me tell you, she was something else. She also had a dog who tried to hit me in the testicles every chance he got. The first two times it happened, I thought it was accidental, but then I realized he had it out for me. The only way he could have made it any clearer was if he spoke to me in English and told me flat out he was going to hit me in the balls.

## Track 4: Jumper

After my girlfriend moved out of our two-bedroom apartment, I needed to look for a new place to live. My brother was going to leave town to attend medical school, so I moved into his studio apartment one neighborhood over from where I had lived. A few weeks after I took over, his place was infested by mice.

I contacted the landlord who dispatched the handyman who set up traps, but they weren't effective. None of the mouse traps worked. So, I decided to take matters into my own hands. I realized the mice would head for the kitchen eventually, so I laid all the traps along the entryway. There was no way for them to cross the threshold without becoming ensnared.

Usually, very late at night, one at a time they emerged from my closet, paused to hide under the television set, and ran for the kitchen. A few moments would elapse, and then I would hear the thrashing and squeaking of the mouse trying to get loose from the trap.

In the end, I caught all of them this way, I think. It was at least five or six. It was a traumatic experience for everyone involved.

## Track 5: Graduate

This part is pretty straightforward; I graduated with an MFA in creative writing from Adelphi University. My MFA program was not subsidized, so as a trade-off graduate students were given the chance to teach undergraduate creative writing courses as adjunct professors.

Teaching was the first time I had felt a calling to do something other than writing. During my final year of graduate school, my thesis class was visited by a poet from Ukraine. She was in the United States after receiving a Fulbright grant. She had extolled the virtues of the Fulbright organization, so I decided to apply for a grant. I figured I would probably teach after I graduated, so this would be one of the few opportunities to do something extraordinary before getting bogged down.

Only two countries didn't have a language requirement to apply; the first was Malta, and the second was Macau. Malta seemed like an incredible place but also very limited. I remember speaking to a friend who lived in Hong Kong, and he pushed Macau extremely hard suggesting it would be the gateway to Asia for me and more of an opportunity.

The Fulbright organization recommends taking a few months to write and gather information for your application. I did all of my work in two weeks. I think the main reason I received the grant was that I was so far removed from the type of student who typically applies. Usually, they are recent college graduates, whereas I was in my thirties and had a master's degree.

In April of 2012, I was awarded a Fulbright grant to teach English in Macau. There are a lot of incredible stories from my time in Macau, but probably the most ridiculous was when I was solicited by a prostitute who said, "Me so horny," and "Me love you long time," which is what the prostitute in the film *Full Metal Jacket* says to Matthew Modine's character. It was surreal beyond anything I've ever encountered. Those same lines from the film also provided the title and chorus for the song "Me So Horny," by 2 Live Crew.

## Track 6: How's It Going to Be

Teaching in Macau was surreal. Being in Asia itself was surreal, especially during the first few weeks. Everything, even ordering food at a restaurant, had an air of magic to it. This sensation lasted for a long time. One of the best examples included the experience of crossing the street. There are few stoplights in Macau, so as a pedestrian you would simply walk and expect the cars to stop for you. This was a frightening proposition the first few times, but then it became second nature.

The city is also geared toward gambling, so it was difficult to find other things to do to occupy our time. Technically, we (myself and the other Fulbright teachers) were government employees who were forbidden to gamble. Regardless, it was wonderful, even though I was lonely for much of it. That is—you probably guessed it—until I started dating one of my colleagues. If we hadn't been in Macau we never would have gotten together.

When the Fulbright ended, I decided to stay in Asia and got a job teaching in Hong Kong the following year. That colleague, who was soon to become my girlfriend, went to graduate school in Washington, D.C. We remained together throughout the next year in a long-distance relationship. We talked every week on Skype, and I taught community college students in Hong Kong. I tried not to think about what I might be missing in D.C., and to be honest, the first half of the year was fine. It wasn't until I came home for Christmas and saw her that things got difficult. She spoke to me about having trouble with a long-distance relationship, and I don't blame her. I returned to Hong Kong after Christmas and focused most of my time on teaching, writing, and going to The Sha Tin Racetrack to bet on the horses.

## Track 7: Thanks a Lot

In November, after a few months of teaching, I realized I did not want to stay in Hong Kong for another year. My girlfriend, in Washington D.C., and I decided we would move in together the following year. You're probably thinking, "With his track record, what can go wrong?" I realized if I stayed in Hong Kong, it would be very difficult for me to leave in the future. I think that's what happens to foreigners who live in Hong Kong. They may or may not plan to stay for more than a year. One day, they wake up, and they've been living there for seven.

So, together, my girlfriend and I decided I would move to D.C. at the end of my teaching contract. She came to visit me in Hong Kong in June. I had already quit my job and gotten a position teaching in Virginia that started the following September. I would be going from making a decent living teaching at the college level in Asia with respectful, associate's degree-caliber students to rambunctious middle-school kids with learning difficulties. It was all coming together. Then, during her visit, she told me she had changed her mind about our relationship. When August came, I moved back to the United States, found an apartment in Virginia, and started my new life.

Luckily, my brother and his wife lived about half an hour away, so I wasn't completely alone. He was doing his medical residency in D.C. That fall, I began teaching middle-school English and writing for students with learning disabilities.

## Track 8: Burning Man

Teaching middle school.

There's nothing like it. I can only compare it to films about war. *Platoon* comes to mind; as does *Apocalypse Now!* When I mention this to people who aren't in the profession, they retreat a little. Since I was still in Hong Kong when I applied for the job, I conducted my interview with the principal over Skype. During our conversation, I mentioned how I thought teaching middle school students with learning difficulties would be similar to teaching ESL (English as a second language) students. That's sort of like saying, "Oh, a cricket player should have no trouble playing baseball. They both use a bat and a ball, right?"

I also interviewed with the English department chair, who had the thousand-yard stare. See, there I go with another reference to war. Before he left our interview to return to teach another class, he asked if I had any questions.

"What's it like?" I asked.

He didn't need me to clarify what I meant.

"While there are only ten students in a classroom," he began, "sometimes it can feel like more."

It was to be a very steep learning curve for me.

During my orientation, I had the following exchange with my supervisor after she posed this question to a group of incoming teachers: "What are some ways we can assess students without giving them grades?"

I felt the blood drain from my face.

"You can assess students without giving them grades?" I said.

Over time, I would learn about the following conditions: dysgraphia, being twice-exceptional, processing speed, executive functioning, etc. Dysgraphia can include having difficulty with spelling, penmanship, and putting ideas on paper. "Twice-exceptional" is another way of classifying a gifted student with a learning disability. Executive functioning can include cognitive functions such as planning, working memory, and problem-solving. I learned that medication can have unpredictable ramifications, irony, and sarcasm aren't understood very well,

and few of these students have a filter.

On the first day of student orientation, I met with my advisory (homeroom) class, which was comprised of sixth through eighth graders—all boys. I felt like a new prisoner who had been thrown into a cellblock with hardened criminals. We were supposed to have the students put together binders for each of their classes. I had already printed out the labels ahead of time. The students just needed to place the dividers in the rings, tear and fold the inserts, and slide them into the clear plastic displays. I only had the students fifteen minutes before they needed to attend their next scheduled activity.

When they departed from our advisory meeting, it looked like a tornado—or the FBI—had ransacked my room. During the maelstrom, I had attempted to help the kids, but they had seized upon the fact I was overwhelmed and took full advantage of my ineptitude.

The only thing I remember clearly was that one of them had taken his “Class Notes” tab, torn off the part that said “CL,” and was repeatedly saying “ass notes” over and over.

Another time, later that first year, a student was eating in my classroom. This was on a Friday afternoon, during club time, so technically he had permission to eat. Every quarter, students got to choose which club they wanted to attend. Clubs met every Friday at the end of the day for an hour and a half. Clubs included things like board games, Dungeons, and Dragons, soccer, cross country, etc. I was running the dungeons and dragons club. I stepped outside for a moment to clear my head. When I returned, I could smell it from the doorway.

“Are you eating tuna fish in my room?” I yelled.

“NO, It’s SALMON!” the student yelled back. It was the way he said it. It sounded like I was the one who made the major error in thinking it was tuna fish; not that the problem was someone eating fish in a room with little to no ventilation. Or, years later, after I had begun teaching high school, there was the time one of my students decided to apply some moisturizing lotion during class. The smell was so potent that we all had to leave the room, and I conducted class elsewhere.

At one point during my middle school tenure, probably from

the stress, I contracted shingles. This was May of 2016. I was playing guitar in the school play and noticed how it was getting more and more uncomfortable for me to sit for long periods in a folding metal chair. The next day, Saturday, my girlfriend (a new one) noticed I had some red marks on my side and back. When I inspected myself in the mirror, I immediately knew it was shingles. 2016 turned out to be a boom year. I had a basal cell carcinoma removed from my face. Basal cell carcinoma is a non-metastasizing type of skin cancer, which can destroy tissue but is typically not life-threatening. It's common enough that the American Cancer Society lists it among the footnotes when compiling their yearly data. In May, of the following year, I played guitar in the school play again. This time, I managed to avoid getting sick, but after the performance, as I was speaking with the father of one of the students who had played bass guitar in the band with me, I said, "One of these days, after your son becomes a famous musician, I'll be able to tell people I played with him."

However, most of my memories of teaching middle and high school validated the reasons I chose to become a teacher: to provide wisdom and share in moments of grace meant to allow people to feel less alone.

Over the years, I would often joke with my students about how one day I'll be living on a private island, counting my royalty checks, and drinking a fruit concoction out of a coconut husk. I'll be swinging in a hammock as the wind from the beach is gently rocking me back and forth.

Just before I reach pure bliss, I'll be rudely awakened from my dream.

In reality, I'll be in bed in my assisted living facility. The nurse will inform me that I have visitors. I'll be surrounded by some former students. One of them will ask, "Can Mr. Davis can hear us?"

## Track 9: Good for You

After teaching LD students for four years, I quit my teaching job. Some of my closest colleagues had left to teach elsewhere, and many of the students I truly enjoyed mentoring would not be coming back the following year. Most importantly, I decided I wanted to dedicate more of my time to writing.

Looking back on it now, it probably wasn't the shrewdest move to quit without having something else lined up already, but these decisions are rarely easy. I also learned that the singer of one of my favorite doom metal bands had quit, and the band was going to audition for new lead singers. I emailed them and wrote that I was interested in auditioning even though they lived on the west coast, and I lived on the east coast. I never heard back from them, which turned out to be fine as they reconciled with their original lead singer, and their sophomore album was released in April of 2019.

Here is the email I sent:

Dear Lou, Ryan, and Wayne,

Let me begin by saying that I discovered your band via YouTube about two months ago, and I've been listening to your debut album frequently. As a fan of doom metal, I can most assuredly say you are phenomenal. I'm sorry to hear about your parting ways with your lead singer, but I'd love to have the opportunity to audition. I can sing and play the guitar. However, currently, I live in Virginia and am teaching English and writing at a school for students with learning disabilities. My school year ends in June, so I could probably go west after that. I also don't drink, but I have no problem being in bars or around people who are drinking. I would be happy to make the trip to audition for you and discuss logistics before then if you would like. Let me know. Hope everything else is going well.

## Track 10: London

I applied to a bunch of Ph.D. programs across the pond; I didn't get accepted into any since no program had an adequate supervisor for my prospective project. I was going to write a crime fiction novel that centered around a fictional retelling of the shooting of the film *Jaws*. I know you're probably thinking, "Wait, there was no one to supervise this project?" I applied to ten schools in Europe and didn't get into any of them for that reason. There were probably other reasons as well, but that's the one I'm going to stick with.

## Track 11: I Want You

After realizing I'd be truly happy just being on my own, I took myself out of circulation from the online dating world. Later, after the ruptured brain aneurysm, I returned to the dating world, but again that's another story. Regardless, nothing came from that endeavor either. Of course, this is all counterintuitive to the title of the song since it sounds like the narrator has found the person they would like to be in a relationship with. However, for me, I realized I needed to spend my time on other pursuits to make them worthwhile. I would only focus on writing. It's like Rodney Dangerfield says in the film *Back to School*: "Always look out for number one, and be careful not to step in number two." I realized that the most important things to me were things I didn't share with anyone. Again, reflecting on this now, especially after the aneurysm and spending time with people who have significant others, I realize I'm an idiot.

## Track 12: The Background

I reassessed my life in terms of the goals that are important to me and how I should spend my energy to achieve them. At the age of forty, it's nothing like how I imagined it would be when I was younger. I'm hoping my career will be similar to Robert Prosky's, a character actor whose first film role was the antagonist in the movie *Thief*. He got the role at the age of fifty-one. There is a myriad of other people who didn't find any success in their fields until they were approaching middle age. I'm hoping this is closer to what will play out for me, than for example, Henry Darger, a custodian who died alone. Among his possessions was an unpublished manuscript of 15,145 pages separated into 15 volumes.

## Track 13: Motorcycle Drive-By

I was on my way to visit my parents when I suffered from a ruptured brain aneurysm. I almost died. The only symptoms I had were very sudden; I began to sweat profusely, and I felt weak. Either way, I fell walking on the jetway to get on a plane. It's a good thing I didn't board. That was over two years ago, and it's still a surreal experience. I still haven't recovered fully either physically, or emotionally, and I may never will. Like a motorcycle drive by, it happened quickly and changed my life. Or, perhaps, this song title represents the pandemic which was slower but just as a life-altering predicament. There's also the distinct possibility this part of my life hasn't happened yet, and I'll be gunned down like the mobsters in the film *New Jack City* who are shot to death in an actual motorcycle drive-by shooting.

## Track 14: God of Wine

Over the last two and a half years I have been reading a ton of philosophy to make sense of everything. From Aristotle and Nichomachean ethics to Camus and the concept of the absurd. Nietzsche has some interesting thoughts, and he theorizes about The Apollonian and The Dionysian in his work *The Birth of Tragedy*. Dionysus is, among other things, the God of wine. This is probably the most literal of the song titles when alluding to the events of my life; the jury is still out on Motorcycle Drive-By.

