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ROSE KENNEDY (1890-1995)

HER AMAZING LIFE

**Touching family
photos of the woman
who lived the joys and
heartbreak of a century**

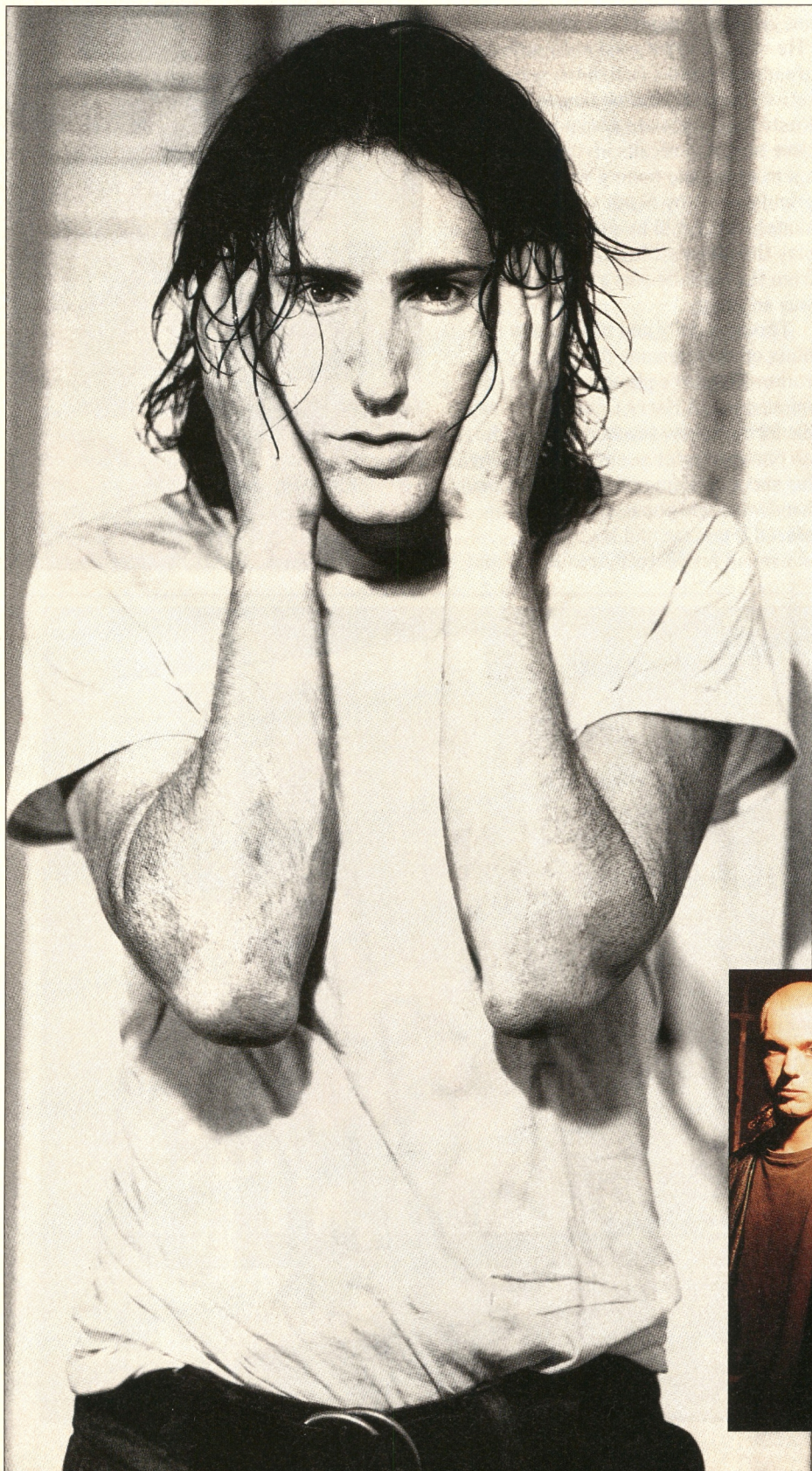


**Inset, left: Rose with
son John, Jackie and
husband Joe in 1960;
inset, top: Caroline
and JFK Jr. at their
grandmother's funeral
last week in Boston**



THE MUSIC OF RAGE

Is Nine Inch Nails' lead singer, Trent Reznor, fury incarnate or just a hardworking guy with a gig?



EVEN ROCK STARS CAN BE BROKEN-hearted. And when they are, they can usually count on a little help from their friends. But when word spread among Nine Inch Nails fans recently that group leader Trent Reznor's dog, Maise, had died after falling 50 feet from a third-floor balcony in a Columbus, Ohio, concert hall, the grief wasn't universal. "I'm sort of happy that Trent's dog died," said leather-clad Laurie Davis, 21, during a NIN concert outside Chicago a week after the accident. "I like it when he's depressed. It's good for his music."

Reznor would likely agree. Wailing his songs about self-loathing, sexual obsession, torture and suicide over a thick sludge of gnashing guitars and computer-synthesized beats, the 29-year-old rocker, like Alice Cooper and Ozzy Osbourne before him, has built his name on theatrics and nihilism. Nearly all of Reznor's lyrics are unprintable, and his videos, with their frightful scenes of dismemberment and sadomasochism, have been censored or banned outright by MTV. Yet Nine Inch Nails' three dark and complex albums—1989's *Pretty Hate Machine*, 1992's Grammy-winning *Broken* (EP) and their current Grammy nominee and million-selling megahit *The Downward Spiral*—all made *Billboard*'s pop charts. The group's continuing Self Destruct Tour, which played 83 sold-out concerts in 71 cities last year and has grossed more than \$10 million to date, has won raves from critics and

◀ "He's a good-looking guy," a fan says of Reznor, "but it's his anger that gets to me."

▼ The Nails, from left: Chris Vrenna, James Woolley, Reznor, Robin Finck, Danny Lohner.

JOSEPH CULTIGER/21



fans for performances as intense and viscerally thrilling as any in rock. "There is no music out there like this," said one fan after the Chicago concert. "They are a step beyond."

Much as Reznor's fans worship him—"He is my messiah," proclaimed one devotee on an Internet chat line recently—he may figure in the nightmares of their parents, who wonder what rock will come up with next. But even the shouts of fundamentalist Christians who picket the band's concert sites claiming Reznor is doing "the work of the devil" are music to the singer's ears. "Rock music was never meant to be safe," he told *Los Angeles Times* music critic Robert Hilburn last October. "There needs to be an element of intrigue, mystery, subversiveness. Your parents *should* hate it. If you think I worship Satan because of something you see in the 'Closer' video [with its images of a crucified monkey]—great!"

So is this guy the product of a warped childhood or not? Surprisingly, the answer is not. Reznor was raised from the age of 6 by his mater-

nal grandparents in little Mercer, Pa., north of Pittsburgh, after his parents, Mike, an interior designer and amateur bluegrass musician, and Nancy, a homemaker, divorced in the early '70s. And even though his only sibling, Tera, now 24 and mother of two, lived nearby with Nancy, Reznor did not grow up steeped in bitterness. "He was always a good kid," says his grandfather Bill Clark, 84, a semi-retired furniture salesman, as he pets Rusty, the chocolate Labrador Reznor gave him, and recalls idyllic days spent cane-pole fishing with his grandson, a Boy Scout who loved to skateboard, build model planes and play the piano. "Music was his life, from the time he was a wee boy. He was so gifted."

Though family and friends saw few hints of the fearsome dramaturgy to come—Reznor's playing "always reminded me of Harry Connick Jr.," says his former piano teacher, Rita Beglin—no one in Mercer seems surprised by his success. Remembered as clean-cut, handsome and popular, Reznor, who played tenor sax and keyboards, starred in his Mercer Area Junior and



JOSEPH CULTICE



◀ "He's the most exciting thing since U2 and R.E.M.," says *L.A. Times'* Hilburn of Reznor (shooting a video last year).

▲ Reznor (center, in 1983) was "quiet, polite and very creative," a high school band-mate recalls.

Senior High School jazz and marching bands, was voted best in drama by his classmates and performed with various local rock groups before and after graduating in 1983. "I considered him to be very upbeat and friendly," says Mercer's band director Hendley Hoge, 40. "I think all that 'dark avenging angel' stuff is marketing—Trent making a career for himself."

After a year studying computer engineering at nearby Allegheny College, Reznor moved to Cleveland, where he played in a succession of bar bands while working as a handyman in the Right Track studio (it has since been renamed Midtown Recording). "He is so focused in everything he does," says Midtown's owner Bart Koster. "When that guy waxed the floor, it looked great." During the studio's off-hours, Koster let Reznor work on his first album, *Pretty Hate Machine*. "How could I possibly stand in this guy's way?" says Koster. "It wasn't costing me anything, just a little wear on my tape heads." As for Reznor's pain-driven stage act, Koster believes "it's planned, but it is not contrived. He's pulling that stuff out

from inside somewhere. You cannot fake that delivery."

Off the road the reclusive Reznor spends most of his time composing music in a series of rented Hollywood homes. (One of them, the Bel Air mansion where he recorded *Spiral*, was the site of the Manson family murders of Sharon Tate and four others in 1969.) Though Reznor visited Mercer during the holidays and drops in on old pals whenever he's in Cleveland, he has claimed that he has few friends and no current love interest. (A rumored recent liaison with Courtney Love was "blown out of proportion," his managers say.) Indeed, his strongest emotional tie seems to have been to the ill-fated Maise: Reznor canceled a concert after her death. Now he's back on his yearlong tour—it winds up in New Orleans on Feb. 18—and his nightmarish exertions have lost none of their fury. "It's good," says Chicago fan Davis, "to see Trent back in hell, where he belongs."

■ STEVE DOUGHERTY

■ BRYAN ALEXANDER in *Chicago and Cleveland*, TOM NUGENT in *Mercer* and JOHN HANNAH in *Los Angeles*