

## Jason Everman Went from Being in Nirvana and Soundgarden to Being an Army Ranger

The Joe Rogan experience How the fuck does one go from playing in Nirvana and Sound Garden to being a soldier Um It's it's it's a longer story I don't know I don't know how I want to hear it How long an answer you want We got plenty of time Ok Um uh hm So I guess being a professional rock musician was something I kind of fell into It wasn't something that I like had a dream of you know it's like oh I'm gonna be you know I love playing in bands I love playing music but it was like at this punk rock level where you're never going to make a living at it you know it's just something fun to do And then uh started playing with Nirvana and even at that level you know still not making money from it but you know touring Was it the early days of Nirvana So Nirvana wasn't worldwide Um There were uh even on the Seattle level like one of the the the smaller bands you know like there was bands like Mud Honey and Sound Garden that were better known than Nirvana was at the time you play for Sound Garden too which is also hilarious Yeah And when when did you like so you're in in the beginning So did you just did you have friction with the band Like why did you wind up leaving So uh with Nirvana is just uh I guess initially like when I came on board like Kurt wanted a second guitar player for the live show basically like uh have a heavier sound live take some of the guitar playing responsibility off him so he could concentrate on vocals like that kind of thing And initially like I thought I was gonna be able to contribute to the band creatively And then it got to the point where I realized that wasn't gonna happen And the same thing happened with Chad the drummer I think and it was like everyone in the band including myself was like very poor poor communicators like a lot of passive aggression And you know I mean we were kids you know how old were you at the time 20 I think And yeah I just I just I wasn't equipped for it and uh became more and more unhappy with the situation and then ended up leaving So was it that like when you would try to uh put creative input in it would get shut down or they weren't interested or Kurt wasn't interested Yeah So like on the rare time where we actually rehearse as a band which was not a lot Um Kurt would kind of half heartedly like hey who who has ideas and like I'd throw a couple ideas out and then Chad like a very accomplished musician in his own right would throw some ideas out and then it just kind of be glossed over and like ok here's the new song I wrote

you know and start learning that So it was very uh a cursory you know it's like he he kind of like threw it out there but then it it wasn't gonna go anywhere And so um did you so you went for Nirvana first and then the Sound Garden Yeah like I left we did a US tour like the first full us tour that Nirvana did and 88 or 89 I can't remember what year it was but I think it was still the eighties And like I I left at the end of that tour like OK I'm I'm done like nice little four way foray into into rock and roll but I'm gonna do something else And when I got home um I was planning on going trekking in the Himalayas Like yeah that was the next that was the next thing It's like OK this was a nice diversion But uh I'm gonna kind of fulfill this dream I've had since I was a kid of like trekking in the Himalayas So I like I went to Metzger's Maps in Seattle and was buying maps of the Himalaya of Nepal and Tibet and all this stuff and like getting gear sorted and that's what I was gonna do And then at some point that summer or fall I can't remember what time of year it was into summer Um Kim from Sound Garden called me And uh was like hey he wrote the their bass player then like quit Do you want to audition for the band I was like you know at that point like Sound Garden was my favorite Seattle band Like hands down And I was like oh ok you know fully not believing I'd ever get chosen And then you did Yeah And how did that end Uh I got fired What happened Um It's complicated but I think at the end of the day um I I wasn't getting along with Chris that well the singer and you know obviously you know who's gonna go it was me Yeah So how does that translate into becoming a soldier Uh I mean there's more there's there's more to the story than that because there was still like I basically like getting fired from Sound Garden like put me in a pretty bad tailspin Um It I mean it was it was AAA rough patch in my life for sure And so in order to kind of and cut this tailspin off like I I had to do something radical and what I did was ended up moving to New York and So I mean there's more to the story than that Um but moved to New York like basically you know I I grew up in rural western Washington Like so it's kind of polar opposite to what I what my experience was like got a job in a warehouse got an apartment and kind of started my New York life and did that for a couple of years What was your plan when you moved to New York You just wanted to try it experience life in the city I think the main plan was like like get out of this funk that I was in You know how old were you at the time 2122 maybe young guy trying to figure out life Yeah I like the sound Garden thing Like getting fired from Sound Garden Like it broke my heart It was it was a bad spot for me and uh because I love that band and it was it wasn't about you know I never thought

they would get as big as they did Uh honestly it kind of surprised me when they did because yeah they're a great band But I think I always thought they were a little too quirky to be huge despite you know the Chris factor like you know this genetically engineered rock star you know Um but I always thought they were a little too weird to be have like mainstream success which was fine with me I thought they'd be like like a big indie band like Sonic youth or Butthole surfers like that level you know And um but it was more like I I just love that band and I love playing with them and like having that taken away Yeah It really it fucked me up for a bit So what happened So during this period 1993 um I I started I guess crafting the next the next chapter right For me And I'd always been really intrigued by the military Uh My grandfather both my grandfathers were World War Two vets Um So my maternal grandfather was a tank commander in World War Two and he was kind of my introduction to like military stuff you know and I'm I'm a little kid so I'm intrigued by it Like you know a tank commander That's cool Like he on D day he was an E four corporal like gunner on a Sherman tank on ve day His unit had made it all the way to Vienna and he was a company commander and it was just survival like attrition like you know I'm sure he was a fine soldier but it was just attrition that he went from corporal to captain and you know a year or whatever Um my grandmother's second husband um was a a corpsman in the Navy So his story is super funny Like he grew up in a small town on the Columbia River in Washington State So his I think there was like 20 dudes in his graduating class in high school And so they graduated June 1942 So right after graduation like 201 like every every male in his class went to the recruiter and enlisted and so he went in the navy Um his navy MOS was like a a pharmacist mate or something like that So he's like oh I'll be on the ship like working in the dispensary or whatever like wrong Like he graduates like they give him a helmet and attach him to a marine platoon infantry platoon and like you're the medic And so he did like seven amphibious assaults in the Pacific like the crazy stuff right Yeah like it was super hard and he had amazing stories you know Um And then my my father's father was in the coast Guard and he did um a lot of coastal patrolling um Oregon coast Washington coast Columbia River during the war Um Just you know looking for Japanese subs or whatever And so you because you had this sort of wanderlust that made you want to go trek in the Himalayas and you had this family that this background in the military you were thinking that this would be something that would be adventurous or intriguing to you Yeah like I've always I've always had a taste

for like high adventure like as a child like before probably even before I was school So like Saturday morning cartoons Like how old are you Yeah we're the same age So I imagine probably grew up with similar cultural influences So I remember in the like mornings watching TV shows like cartoons like Johnny Quest was the big one right Uh speed racer Marine boy like all this you know speed racer and marine boy were anime but they were like great you know marine boy was basically speed racer but underwater you know it's just super cool fantastical stuff Um Great to feed the imagination Like the the writing for Johnny Quest was so good you know and like the show in retrospect was like kind of progressive is like Johnny had two dads and like they had this like um multi racial like composite family like is like but the writing was so solid like super creative Um every I think it was only 26 episodes but each episode is distinct and well written and just just cool you know so I would watch this as a kid and be like I'm not sure what that is but I wanna do that you know So that was kind of the initial impetus for like and then growing up in the woods in western Washington like I was expected you know I was kicked outside after breakfast and not expected to be seen again till dinner time And what I did between then was like on me and so I'd go out and do stupid stuff like climb high tension power lines you know to the top like like 56 years old Like so so so stupid Right But it was like oh this is cool you know Um like and my mother she definitely facilitated this stuff Like um much to her credit like we'd go camping uh in the Olympic Rain forest on the peninsula and there's like a couple rivers there But one of the main ones is the Ho River And I had this as a child I had that like this \$20 you know Kmart inflatable raft with the oars And my mom would drive me up river like like 10 miles or 15 miles or whatever in our Volkswagen bus and like dropped me off me and my my \$20 Kmart boat in a life vest and she'd be like all right see you at the campground And so I would be doing this like you know white white water rafting by myself in my in my cheesy little boat for several several miles and you know Dennett drown obviously but it it kind of instilled again this it reinforced this sense of adventure you know and I'm sure my mom would go to jail for that today you know probably not jail But yeah definitely be discouraged Um So as background for the high adventure thing the military thing Um So 1993 I'm like ok II I need to do something I need that punctuated equilibrium right I need I need a uh a dramatic event in order to promulgate like the the next period of growth or evolution or whatever you really actively thought that way you were trying to achieve growth Yeah I

didn't want to stagnate I didn't wanna um fall behind you know um as like like I guess as soon as I figured out what life authorship was or the concept even though I may may have not have known the term Yeah I kind of endeavored to actively author my own life Um um you know pursuing the ends of making a life that kept me engaged kept me interested Um then was was meaningful to me you know So the military seemed like like more and more like a viable option