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Von links: Tommy Stewart, Robbie Merrill, Tony Rombola, Sully Erna

Wide Awake In America

Godsmack Tackles Pain with Permanence

By: Anna Mossitee
Photos By: Markus Cuff

"When I was 14, I hid in the welding booth at school, stoned out of my mind! I stole some India ink from the art department, wrapped a needle in some thread, and started stabbing myself." Sully Erna's thick Boston accent comes sharply through the phone as he recalls his first tattoo experience. The Godsmack frontman is calling from Phoenix, Arizona, on the second-to-last show of Ozzfest 2000, where he and his bandmates, guitarist Tony Rombola, bassist Robbie Merrill, and

drummer Tommy Stewart, have been rocking crowds across the country all summer long.

Sully still bears that mark from his rebellious school days: a cross on one of his middle fingers that he says looks like, "one of those old prison tattoos." He adds, "Being raised on the streets, you just kinda do things, being a punk. I think that's what started me doing things, 'cause the other guys were doing it or whatever. But then after I got a couple of real tattoos, I just started to take an interest in the art, so I started blending things together and coming up with better ideas."

Sully's not the only ink collector in the band.

Tommy waited till he was of age to start getting tattooed, but his introduction was less about showing street credibility, and more about impressing the fairer sex. "My girlfriend at the time kinda talked me into it. She had a couple of tattoos, and she said, 'Go on, get one!' So I was like, 'OK!' I got a tattoo of Bill the Cat from the Bloom County comic strip, done by some guy in Florida. This one was like three inches high, and then the next thing you know I've got shit everywhere."

GODSMACK

