

College News Can't Get Its Fill of the Dropkick Murphys! We Speak to Tim Brennan

By Robin Komie

What do you get when you slap together punk rock and traditional Irish values? I know, most of you are thinking Shane MacGowen but I'm headed in a different direction. I'm talking about Boston punk rockers **Dropkick Murphys**. *College News* was lucky enough to score an interview with the guy that adds that extra something to the band. Let *College News* introduce you to the mandolin playing-tin whistle blowing-acoustic guitar strumming "new guy" Tim Brennan.

College News: I read that you were in your senior year of college majoring in English, when you quit to join the band. Why did you choose English as your major?

Tim Brennan: That was one of the things I was better at. It was sort of between that and History really, but I mean, I always had a really good grasp of the English language. I liked the literature and the classes I had to take were really interesting. Writing was attractive to me also as someone who relies on being creative.

CN: What were some of your favorite classes?

TB: It's tough to remember, it got to the point where three out of your four classes were English and it's hard to keep track of them all. I remember there was one I really liked. I had this funny little teacher. He was 5'3"; he wore the same clothes everyday. The same suit pants and shirt, he had this weird little lisp—he knew he was smarter than everybody. He made it apparent that he knew more about English than we did.

CN: Yeah, I think we've all had teachers like that before. What do you think you would have done with your degree?

TB: I was planning on going back to my high school to teach English and coach the basketball team. I would have still done music even if I were a teacher.

CN: So were your parents angry when you told them you decided to leave school and join the band?

TB: They weren't too thrilled, but they knew I wasn't in one of those bands that just tours and does nothing. When they realized the sort of magnitude, it became a whole new thing. We did Jimmy Kimmel and they were like "Oh my god!" Now they are a regular fixture at the shows around home.

CN: Have you finished school or do you plan to go back and finish?

TB: I haven't finished yet; I'd like to finish at some point, I'd like to go back when I'm ready. I wasn't too into it; I didn't necessarily want to be there. When I do go back hopefully it'll be at a point that I want to be at school, and I'm not just there.

CN: I think a lot of students feel that way sometimes. When you have children, how would you feel if your children decided to be in a band and were going to skip school to pursue their dreams? Would you say go for it? Or would you tell them to finish school?

TB: At least I could speak from experiences. If it were to come to that, I wouldn't want my kids to try to start a band from scratch and ditch school. If they were in school and were miserable I might say okay, I can't say my wife at that point would agree, I suppose it all depends on the situation.

CN: What bands were you into when you were younger?

TB: Green Day, I was into that and that was pretty much it. In high school I sort of moved on to the Clash and where punk came from—English bands and early 70's punk.

CN: Were you a fan of the Murphys before you joined the band?

TB: I was a fan of theirs because I was into punk. I was a huge fan of the Pogues and old Irish stuff. I remember one of my teachers and I were both really big fans of the same music and one day he brought in Do or Die. He was like, "You have to check this out." From then on we were big fans of theirs. Then my friend Marc joined the band and there was even a bigger reason to be a fan and then Marc got me into the band.

CN: When CJ Ramone joined the Ramones, he had said he was a HUGE fan of theirs. He felt amazed that he was playing with this band he grew up with. Can you relate to that?

TB: It was definitely like that for a while. Once the Warriors Code happened and I was on the record, it became something else. But yeah, for the first year and a half I was in the band I was like, "Whoa...oh my god!" You can't let them know you're a huge fan; you have to dumb it down. It helped that Marc was in it and we were friends before he joined the band and I met

James through Marc...so I wasn't like, automatically thrown in with a bunch of people I didn't know. It was kind of like playing with friends and Marc would sit around and teach me the songs. It was never anything like I was overwhelmed with stardom or being star struck. So I mean that was nice, that allowed me to just do my thing and not worry about stuff.

CN: I've read articles that Joey Ramone dreamed of success. He wanted his songs to be used in commercials, movies, and T.V. Do you share the same feelings?

TB: This is the first band that I've been in that's been like a substantial band. At this point, I'm just trying to play music for a living. I'm not concerned with anything like that. We've gotten this far without anything like that, I think we can take it or leave it.

CN: My generation of Punk Rockers grew up hating *MTV*. You were a poser if you watched/listened to anything *MTV* related. How does it make you feel that your songs are used on that channel?

TB: It doesn't make a difference to us really. It's one of those things if it's in an episode of the *OC*, someone comes to practice and says we're gonna be in the *OC*. We call our friends to tell them to watch it. We don't make money from that. We don't rely on it. To us it's kinda of funny. Recently our friends' band the Exit was used on *Law and Order CI* and we find that funny.

CN: But that's pretty amazing. OK, cliché or not...if you have one piece of advice to give our readers, what would it be?

TB: What I ended up doing was just "following my dream" with certain boundaries. But pretty much do what you have to do to make it possible with whatever you want to do in life.

CN: Okay, this question is for me because I'm an English major. Who is your favorite author and your favorite book?

TB: If you had asked me a few months ago, I would have said Kurt Vonnegut, but I'm thinking now David Sedaris. I really like his book *Naked*.

CN: Well thank you so much for the interview. It was really awesome and a huge pleasure! Good luck with the tour and I'll be seeing you in St. Louis.

TB: Thanks!

