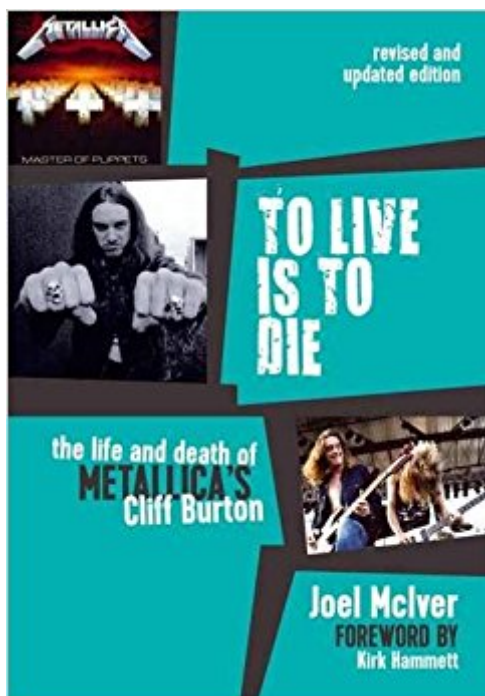


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# To Live Is To Die: The Life And Death Of Metallica's Cliff Burton



## Synopsis

Metallica - the seventh-biggest recording act in American history - are consummate musicians, but it wasn't always that way. Their early career is marked by a gradual evolution from garage-level thrash to sophisticated, progressive heights - an evolution driven by their bass player, Cliff Burton. Burton pushed the band to new heights with his musical training, songwriting ability, and phenomenal bass skills across three albums: *Kill 'Em All* (1983), *Ride The Lightning* (1985) and Metallica's undisputed masterpiece, *Master Of Puppets* (1986). He was the first heavy metal bassist since Black Sabbath's Geezer Butler to regard the bass as a lead instrument, delivering intricate live solos based on classical fugues and even laying down a solo track on Metallica's debut album. Cliff's life was short but influential; his death was sudden and shocking. At the age of just 24, he was killed when Metallica's tour bus overturned on a remote Swedish mountain road in the early hours of September 27 1986, crushed to death after being thrown from his bunk through a window. The driver, who has never been identified, told the rest of the band that the bus had hit black ice, leading to the accident; singer James Hetfield refused to believe him and has often spoken publicly about his doubts. With Cliff's death, Metallica's most critically acclaimed period of activity ended. They went on to record huge-selling albums, but by their own admission never pushed the creative envelope as radically as they had done in the first four years of their career. In 2006, a group of dedicated Metallica fans unveiled a memorial to Cliff at the site of his death; the cult of Burton grows year on year, with bassists of many musical styles (even outside heavy metal) acknowledging his influence. This revised and updated edition, published to mark the 30th anniversary of Burton's sad passing, adds a new appreciation of Cliff's influence on a new generation of rock and metal bass players, with commentary from the cream of the modern bass scene, plus a look at his signature bass gear and Metallica's current activities, which reference the Burton era more profoundly than ever before.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Joel McIver is the bestselling author of *Justice for All: The Truth About Metallica* which has been translated into 9 languages. He has written for *Rolling Stone*, *The Guardian*, *Metal Hammer*, *Classic Rock*, and he is the occasional guest on BBC. He is currently the editor of *Bass Guitar* magazine. *Classic Rock* magazine has called him "by some distance Britain's most prolific hard rock/metal author." He wrote the official biography of the world's biggest death metal band, *Cannibal Corpse* and co-wrote *Megadeth's* bio from bass player David Ellefson.

Full disclosure before getting into this review: I became a Metallica fan in 1996 with the *Load* album and had never heard of Metallica, or listened to any of their songs, prior to that. That also means that I never saw Cliff perform live, and didn't fully learn about him until after my conversion into a Metallica fan. So it was great to pick up a book that described who Cliff was as a person, and what he contributed to Metallica. This book paints Cliff as an all around nice guy, and a very talented musician. I was amazed to learn that it wasn't just Cliff's natural talents that allowed him to produce the sounds he did as a bass guitarist. He actually had circuitry installed in his bass to help make it sound the way it did. Fascinating! I also liked learning about how Cliff would record his parts separate from the other band members and how that allowed him to more accurately follow the rhythm tracks laid down by James. I also learned a lot about how Cliff joined the band. Previous books on Metallica made it seem like Metallica thought Ron McGovney sucked in the bass role and simply replaced him. In fact, while the band did intend to do just that, they also were very cruel towards him and Ron decided to beat them to the punch by quitting before they could fire him. Lastly, the author considers how Cliff might have reacted to Metallica's change in sound in the 90's, by arguing that he was into the type of "greasy, bluesy" music the band put out after the *Black Album*. Although I personally find such statements reassuring, at the same time, nobody knows for sure because Cliff wasn't there. So .... \*shrug\*. But all in all, this is a great book for Metallica fans, regardless if you're old or new school. Cliff was a mastermind and that makes it all the more sad that he died due to a freak accident.

I've been a fan of Cliff Burton since 1984, there is no other bass player like him and can play like no other. If you're a fan like me there is no question that you should get this book. The author did an outstanding job this book, there were lots of personal experiences of Cliff that I didn't know. The book tells lots of experiences from friends, family, musicians, and co-workers, even from his at the girl friend. I couldn't put this book down, it was almost like closure for me, I wouldn't play bass today if it wasn't for Mr. Burton. I hope this review inspires you to get the book. If you're a fan of Burton or Metallica, get it! This book was by far better than Dave Mustaine's autobiography. Long live Cliff \,,/ \,,/

This was a really good read! Even for an obsessive Cliff historian like myself, there were bits of obscure info in here, and interviews from people I'd never heard from before. It really paints a good picture of Cliff the human being, and shows how and why he was such a unique and special person. It'll also enlighten a lot of people on just how important Cliff was to Metallica's early years. It really was his inspiration that helped lift them above the other thrash bands that were fighting for supremacy during those years. The other guys in the band really did look up to Cliff like a big brother, and they knew if Cliff gave his blessing to something, it was gonna work out!!

It's a great book on the life of Cliff and how he attacked the bass. He gave it his all and sad to see his early death.

To hear his life's story is to hear what it's like to be a die hard metal player. Nothing left out really great book!

Finally a book about Metallica's Cliff Burton and as the author mentioned....why a book has not come out about such a great talent and inspiration is mind boggling. Most likely because it's mostly a private thing with Metallica and his family. The book is great and provides a lot of information on Cliff's style which to me was amazing when I first heard it. Flea from the Red Hot Chili Peppers said it best when describing the amazing talent which was Cliff. The book is full of facts and information from many people that knew Cliff including Metallica themselves as well as close members of Cliff's family and friends. Other bands who met him and knew him are also in there (Megadeth's Dave Mustaine & Dave Ellefson, Tom Araya of Slayer and many others). The writer of the book does a great job of keeping you interested and does a fine job, I also appreciate the insight into Cliff's

playing methods. The only reason I did not give the book a full 5 stars is because the writer was unable to get members of Metallica (other than Kirk Hammett who wrote the forward) to contribute to the book. Instead many facts and interview quotes are taken from the past. Great book that every fan should read.

Great book, nicely written.

Excellent in-depth look at one of the greatest bassists of all time.

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