



A dark, pulsating rhythm oozes from the speakers. The air is thick with smoke, illuminated by laser light. Sweaty bodies are packed on the dancefloor, each renting out a few square feet of space. Everyone wants to be the DJ and that DJ is Blake Sheridan.

SEX.DRUGS.DJ

by Blake Sheridan

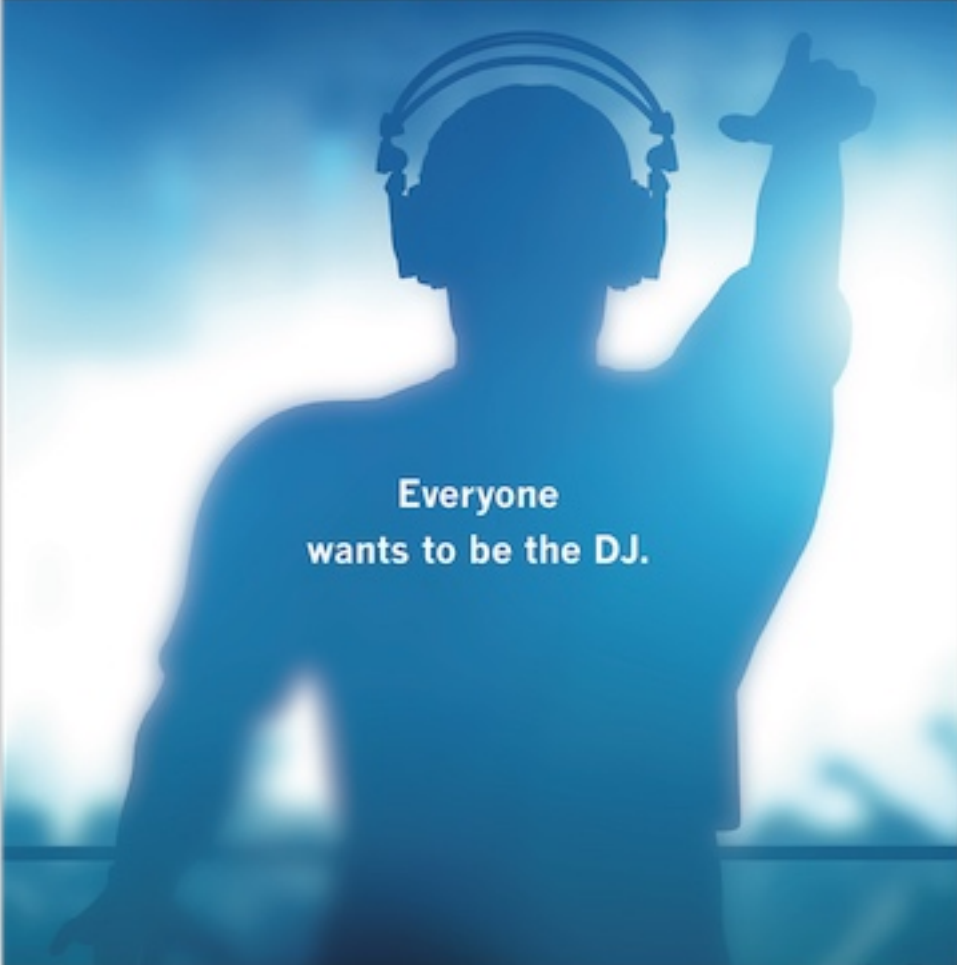
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a novel by **blake sheridan**

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A silhouette of a person wearing headphones and raising their right hand, set against a blue background with a city skyline at the top. The person is shown from the chest up, facing forward. The background is a gradient of blue, with a darker blue at the top and a lighter blue at the bottom. The city skyline is visible in the upper portion of the image.

**Everyone
wants to be the DJ.**

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PART I - THE ROOTS

One - A Breakthrough

A Thursday in July

Fresh off work and ready to enjoy a three-day weekend, I walked in the door to find my roommate—Adam—on the couch, hunched over the coffee table, chopping, mixing, and cutting up a huge pile of white powder on a large mirror.

No stranger to drugs, I immediately knew it was either coke or MDMA—also known as Molly or E. We generally bought E in pressed pill form and our coke quantities were just an eighth at a time, so I had never seen so much before. I snickered because it looked as though Adam dumped out a bag of flour and was about to make drug cookies.

I waved my finger at the coffee table. “What’s all this, you gonna make a cake, Betty Crocker?”

“So, it came to me today,” unfazed, he continued to swirl and chop the powder with a credit card, “we can sell caps at parties and start clocking way more cash than with that press tab shit.”

Knowing Adam, that quantity of powder was *not* cheap, free or paid for. He most likely got it fronted to him—paying for it from the proceeds of sales—

from some rather unsavory individuals, even less respectable than those we usually bought pills from. That pile of powder came with consequences if not handled right and Adam wasn't exactly known for being delicate. So, I asked him how much it cost, fronted.

"A grand, but we can easily triple that." Adam pulled out a box of gel caps from a plastic bag, and his plan immediately became apparent. "So, we cap this up and take some with us to our gig next weekend."

"Why not this weekend, yo?"

"Nah man, let's save the majority for the big party."

It made sense that we wouldn't waste a new product on the smaller gigs lined up this weekend. But I did the math and had snuck shit into parties before in socks or underwear—the notion of thirty gel caps in a baggy in my crotch did not sound appealing.

"Aight, bet. But that's a lot of weight to try to sneak into a party. You plan on crotch'in' that much?"

His eyes lit up like a kid. "We won't have to, bro, that's the beauty of it! When was the last time a bouncer asked to see inside your case?"

I thought for a second. "Never, I suppose."

He was talking about the hard-sided, metal or plastic case we brought to gigs that held our records. I thought about it and he was right—the only time anyone checked was when a bouncer quickly looked to make sure there were actual records in there. Those sorts of spot checks were rare and happened only on occasion at large events.

“Exactly, man. So, we put the caps in a tape case or something, in between some records, and boom! We get that shit in with no hassle. If they see the tape case, you tell ‘em it’s your promo tape. No one will question that.” *Shit, why didn’t I think of this before?*

Honestly, it was brilliant and I kinda wondered if someone gave Adam the idea. He was clever, but not *that* smart and he hadn’t been a DJ long enough to have dreamt up the scheme. As a DJ, I was never frisked and rarely ever hassled. It was almost too perfect, and I was totally in.

My roommate Adam was an interesting cat. We met through a chatroom, back when I alternated between a ‘Ravers’ room and one specifically for people in the San Francisco Bay Area. There were about thirty of us from the Bay Area room that regularly talked via online and on the phone and

those long chatroom conversations inevitably led to some of the group looking to meet up IRL—in real life.

The occasional meet-up event brought together many people from online, but it somehow ended up being more of a drunken, hook-up party than anything else. For me, communicating online wasn't about those parties, it was an amazing way to shed my shyness and who I *was*, to become who I wanted to *be*. It wasn't an honest way to meet people, but I assumed that's how everyone approached it, so I didn't really care.

Through the course of meetups, it didn't take long for Adam and me to become friends, in a group of like-minded people. We met at one of the group events and talked for quite some time about music and life. Over the next few months, we hung out regularly, bullshitted and talked about music. On occasion, Adam would come with me to a gig, and I could tell that's what he really wanted—the spotlight that came from DJing.

So, there was no surprise to anyone that we became roommates in San Leandro, in the East Bay Area. Adam needed a roommate and welcomed someone compatible. For me, there was a symbiotic opportunity in Adam's friendship that I wanted to

take advantage of. He was a larger guy with a protectionist streak, so I felt safe to have him as a friend. I got a bodyguard, and he had the opportunity to learn about dance music and DJing.

As Adam told it, he had a complicated past. Originally from the Bay Area, he had a fake New York or Chicago accent that seemed exaggerated when he was around me, dropping colloquial terms that weren't native to California. I didn't really mind, and it was a little comforting to hear someone speak in a similar manner to me, even if it wasn't quite his natural style.

Only a few years older than I was, Adam got involved in some stupid shit and said he spent four years in Solano State prison. He had the tattoos and stories to go with the felony that landed him there, so I never delved into whether it was true, or an embellishment like the rest of his facade. Still, his stature and presence made him truly not the kind of guy you wanted to fuck with, and Adam was a great asset for a little asshole with a big mouth like me.

Adam's girlfriend—Kristi—came out of his bedroom and welcomed me. She didn't live with us, but might as well have, since she stayed there so

fucking much. I *really* hated having her around all the damn time but tended to keep that shit to myself. It was painfully obvious to everyone—except Adam—that she was just using him for drugs, his extroverted behavior, and party connections. But she was Adam’s girl, so I played nice and tried to keep my snark to a minimum.

An average chick, Kristi was rail-thin skinny and unattractive, but her lack of physical presence didn’t matter to Adam—he was enamored with her blowjobs and how her ‘vagina fits my cock like a glove.’ That’s all he ever went on about and it got old. He never talked about how smart or pretty she was, just how great the sex was. Of course, anyone that met her could see why her looks nor brain were selling points. Kristi was a user, and I suspected Adam was either using her too or was blissfully ignorant to it all.

Kristi sat down next to the coffee table, and her eyes opened wide when she saw the massive pile of powdered drugs. It was pretty obvious that she wanted to get high, but I wasn’t having any of that—her nose had expensive taste.

I grimaced at her and said, “Yo man, let’s have a capping party and get this shit done.”

Adam agreed and he handed me a box of gel caps to start up the simple process.

- Step 1: Grab a gel cap and open it by pulling the ends apart.
- Step 2: Take one side of the cap between your fingers and tap twice on some powder to fill it.
- Step 3: Place the other side of the cap over the other with the powder.
- Step 4: Repeat.

We continued the process with machine-like accuracy for about thirty minutes, placing complete pills in a big glass bowl next to the table. *A proper candy dish, if ever there was one.*

“Man, I feel like playing some records. I—I think I’m fuckin’ rollin’ yo.”

“Holy shit, you’re right man,” Adam replied.

“Dude, we probably should have used gloves or something to cap these things.”

“Yeah, but where’s the fun in that?” Kristi asked, giggly from her contact high off the powder. She wasn’t the brightest light bulb in the box but occasionally had some amusing moments.

There were two hundred caps, prepped and ready for sale or use. Adam licked his credit card, I spot cleaned the mirror with my finger, and rubbed the powder on my gums—a common practice with coke and E. Then, with a sense of accomplishment, we were ready to be high for a few hours.

Adam went to the couch with Kristi, and both quickly zoned out like zombies. I grabbed some House tracks from one of my record crates and started mixing them together. He then got up, went to the kitchen and came back with a beer in each hand. One was placed next to one of my turntables, and then he continued to the couch.

The longer I stood there, blending and mixing records, the more beer magically appeared next to me. Adam made trips to and from the sofa and I assume that's where the beer came from. It felt like a scene in *A Clockwork Orange*. You know, the one where the day flashed by in fast-forward? That's the one. Adam and Kristi were snuggled under a blanket, and then they weren't. Off to their room to fuck, then back on the couch. The whole time, I was completely oblivious to my surroundings, but for the glimpse of sped-up life around me and the fresh beer that randomly popped up next to the turntable.

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For several hours, I kept at the DJing and I don't know exactly when I snapped out of it, but Adam and Kristi were gone, leaving me alone to realize it was morning. We had a busy weekend ahead, so I dragged my ass to bed.

My eyes opened and the piercing brightness of the day nearly blinded me. Maybe that's a little melodramatic, but it was more than I could handle. The light only met one eye, though, because the other was buried in a filthy carpet that smelled of spilled beer, cigarettes, mud and a little shit. At the same time, there was this throbbing in my head that made it hard to process the situation, but I could tell it wasn't nighttime and I wasn't in my bed.

This couldn't have been a coincidence—I swear I had been in that position before. Obviously not the same spot in the same place, but I kept thinking, 'not this shit again.' The taste of booze lingered and felt like it was seeping out of my pores. That was when the nasty, post-party shame set in and reminded me of all the other times I woke up like this.

I looked around, but the harsh light strong-armed my brain, no doubt punishment for a night of overindulgence. I slowly rolled over to my back and

my body let out a quiet groan, telling me to knock that shit off. If I had it my way, I would have stayed with my face plastered to the shit-smelling carpet and gone back to sleep, but I figured that wasn't going to happen. The whole process was a fucking struggle.

I used my hand to feel around me and look for my cellphone, which was face-down on the carpet by my side. I snatched it and tried to read the screen, but my eyes fought every step of the way. Barely able to make out the numbers, I thumbed through the notifications, before clearing them. The time was 4:38 and the sunlight blazing through the windows indicated it was the afternoon. *The summer, California sun has no pity for the hung-over man.*

It was Sunday and that meant the previous two nights were spent here—Greg's apartment—on a bender. That wasn't the first time we transformed Greg's place into a rave-den of drunken and drugged debauchery. But there was no one else around, indicating they had more sense or late-night lucidity than I did.

The weekend started as they always did. After I got my lazy ass up Friday evening, I sorted through new records to decide what would be played throughout the weekend. It was kinda lazy to play the same shit at several parties, but I knew that most

kids wouldn't remember if the same song was heard at different events. Plus, that bit of DJ optimization meant I didn't have to return home each night to swap out music, and more often than not, I didn't.

After my records were packed, Adam joined me to grab a bite to eat at a local hot dog joint. Not one of our wisest decisions, the food was cheap, and the restaurant was near a liquor store. We picked up various shooters, a handle-jug of vodka, and it was off to Greg's to 'consume and boom.'

Centrally located in Haight-Ashbury in San Francisco, Greg's apartment was the perfect location for people to meet up before or after a night at the club in SoMa, early in the morning after a rave, or to spend the weekend partying. The neighborhood was skeezy as fuck and his place was a rathole on the second floor of a four-unit building, but his neighbors didn't care about loud music or people coming and going at all hours of the night.

Like any other night, we showed up around eleven, complete with a varied selection of pills and powders, but none of the newly capped pills. Bringing the medicine cabinet-like drug selection was what the partygoers wanted, but we were also reliable dealers. Greg's other guests brought beer, booze, weed, whatever they wanted, but Adam and I

were the ones that brought the hard shit, and everyone knew it.

In between the drug sales and use, we drank too much shitty booze and played the same records over and over. DJs rotated all night and music would shift from House to Jungle and back, but the place was packed, and it was loud all night long. We kept at it until sometime in the early morning when the party had run its course, usually a few hours after the Sun rose.

It was always easy to spot the wind-down—one by one, people dropped like flies and passed out in various locations. A lack of sleep, getting too fucked up, or a fun combination of both was usually the cause, but sooner or later, we all tapped out. Greg's floors and his solitary, comfy couch became the resting place for all the unconscious, unwashed ravers, sleeping off a hard night of partying.

A few hours of sleep and everyone slowly woke up, ready to face another day. Some fought dehydration, others a hangover, so any water bottle was snatched up and any clean glass was filled from the tap—anything to bring some relief. A hero of the group always made the trek to Del Taco to get a few twelve-packs of cheap tacos, and I wolfed down as many as my stomach could handle.

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Greg had a decent sound system and DJ setup in his apartment, which was about all he had in that place. Furniture was limited, and it was painfully obvious a DJ lived there. A small, worn-out, leather sofa in the living room, aka ‘the comfy couch,’ was all he had. “All the more room to dance, man,” he often said.

I’m pretty sure Adam and I left Greg’s place to play a gig here and there—we were regularly booked at events—but remembering them was a different story. I was usually way too high and way too drunk to remember where I was or what I did. I slept during the day and my nights were a blur, all blended better than one of my DJ mixes.

When we all got together, it was a quest to get torn-up, each gathering more ridiculous than the last, but the weekend ended as quickly as it started, and I always wondered where the time went.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Blake Sheridan spent the last 25 years DJing, producing, remixing and his music has been heard by millions of people all over the world.

He currently resides in Los Angeles with his wife and two cats.



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