

**Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction speeches**  
**Full transcript**  
**April 7, 2017, Barclays Center, Brooklyn (New York)**

**DAVID LETTERMAN**

Thank you. I can't even begin to tell you what an honor and privilege it is for me to be out of my house, honest to God. I know Neil Young was supposed to be here. And people are saying to me, like I had something to do with it, "Why isn't Neil Young here?" And the truth of it is, the poor guy just can't stay up this late. That's what I heard. Either that or he swallowed a harmonica, I'm not sure.

I am so excited—and you people know this—but for 33 years, every night I got to experience the gift and the blessing of live music. For 33 years. From the people who are in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and people who will be in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. And then, for two years, that went away. CBS caught me abusing a copier and fired me.

And when I came here to rehearsal this afternoon and heard live music again, I was reminded: Oh my God, what a gift live music is. I know all of these people. And my band and Paul Shaffer were tremendous. Never take the opportunity for live music for granted, that's the message I can bring to you folks tonight. It is a delight to be back here for this.

I—by the way, I've known Neil Young for many, many years. We met a long time ago on farmersonly.com. In 1988 is when I first met most of the people involved in Pearl Jam. We were all in a—we were in a band called Mother Love Bone. I wanted to change it to Mother Soup Bone and they said, "Get out." And then in 1991, things in the whole musical culture changed with the album titled Ten. And it was like a Chinook coming out of the Pacific Northwest, and it was, it had anger to it, and it appealed to twentysomething people who felt displaced and unemployed and left out. And I was almost 50 and even I was pissed off. And it was also easy to dance to, but that's another deal.

And then it turned out that these guys in Pearl Jam were something more than a band. They were a true, living cultural organism. They would recognize injustice and they would stand up to it, whether it was human rights, whether it was environment, whether it was poverty, they didn't let it wash over them, they would stand up and react. In 1994, these gentlemen risked their careers by going after those beady-eyed, bloodthirsty weasels at Ticketmaster. Those bloodsucking, beady-eyed weasels! I'm just enjoying saying that. And because they did, because they stood up the corporation, I'm happy to say, ladies and gentlemen, today every concert ticket in the United States of America is free.

As I've gotten to know these gentlemen, they're very generous of spirit. As a matter of fact, listen to this, tonight the entire balcony is full of former Pearl Jam drummers. Stand up! I want to say a couple of things about the music of this group. And the nice thing about knowing them for as long as I've known them, I know them as friends as well as cultural icons. And I would just like to say that one day I hope to come back here for the induction of my friend Warren Zevon.

Now I'm gonna start reading a list of songs and you're gonna start applauding and we won't get out of here til Sunday. "Jeremy." "Corduroy." "Rearviewmirror." Now here's one I like: the song "Yellow Ledbetter." Doesn't make Ten, the first album. Doesn't make Ten because they have too much good material, they decide, "We don't want to put this song on there with all this other really good material." So later, it's released as like a B-side. 25 years, it's an anthem, it's a musical icon. This gives you an idea of the quality of the gentlemen behind this music. For a lot of people, that

song would be a career. “Sirens.” “Given to Fly.” “Kung Fu Fighting.”

These guys, I used to have a television show, they were on my show for ten different times over the years. And every time they were there, they would blow the roof off the place. And I’m not talking figuratively. They actually blew the roof off the place. For two years, I did a show without a roof on the goddamned theater.

You know, the song “Black”—there was a period in my life when I couldn’t stop doing this: “Doo-doo-doo doo-doo-doo-doo. Doo-doo-doo doo-doo-doo-doo. Doo-doo-doo doo-doo-doo-doo. Doo-doo-doo doo-doo-doo-doo.” Great, now we owe them a lot of money. Honest-to-God, that’s all I could hear running through my head, and I kept wondering, “How many times does this refrain occur in the song?” I finally had to go to a hypnotist to get it to stop “Doo-doo-doo doo-doo-doo-doo.” One night on the show, I’m doing it, and the stage door bursts open. In walks Eddie Vedder. He sings the song with Paul and the band, then he comes over to me and he looks me right in the eye and he says, “STOP DOING THAT.” And I was cured, ladies and gentlemen.

I want to tell you a story that I’m very fond of, and it’s about friendship with a guy who’s done something for me that I’ll remember my entire life. I had three shows left to go, and Eddie Vedder was on that show. And he sang “Better Man.” I like to tell myself it’s because it rhymed with “Letterman.” And there was something emotional in the air, because as the show wound down, the realization that we were saying goodbye—as I said before, what I miss most is the experience of live music every night—but that was in the air. It was palpable. And at the end of the show, Eddie Vedder came up to me and he handed me this.

[Letterman holds up a child-size acoustic guitar with the name “Harry” painted on it.]

I don’t know if you can see that, but that’s the name of my son. He gave me this letter and he said, “This letter is for your son. I want you to give it to Harry.” I think we have a picture of my son, Harry?

[A photo of a young boy lighting a cigarette appears on screens, labeled “Harry Letterman.”]

Look at that. We’ve had him in all the best clinics. Taking a gap year in middle school, I don’t know.

So if you’re in show business, likely there’s a good strong streak of cynicism in you. And I would be the president of that club except for things like this. This letter to my son from Eddie Vedder, May 18, 2015. Three shows left for me. I’ll read you this letter now, if you don’t mind.

“Hi, Harry.” This is Eddie talking to my son. “Hi, Harry. My name is Eddie Vedder and I’m a friend of your dad’s. I wanted you to have this small guitar to start with. Try it out, make a little noise. I’ll make you a deal: if you learn even one song on this guitar, I’ll get you a nicer, bigger one for your birthday—maybe an electric one. You let me know.” And my son loves to fish—Eddie adds here, “Playing guitar is kind of like fishing. Fishing for songs. Good luck, Harry, in all things. Yours truly, Ed.”

It turns out that my son does play a string instrument, but it’s the violin – close enough. There are quite a few reasons why these people are in the Hall of Fame, but forgive me if this personally is the most important reason they’re in the Hall of Fame.

And so here we have them, ladies and gentlemen. Guitar: Mike McCready. Rhythm guitar: Stone Gossard. Drums: Matt Cameron, Dave Krusen. On bass, the guy from Big Sandy, Montana: Jeff

Ament. Vocals and guitar: Eddie Vedder. I am honored to induct into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame the legendary Pearl Jam.

## **STONE GOSSARD**

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Maybe the most important reason we came here tonight is not to receive this honor, but to honor those who have worked so hard for this band, to help it function, to help it grow, to help it flourish. All of us could fill sheets of paper with the many names and - of our loving family members, our oldest and dearest friends, our influences, our idols, our collaborators, our counselors, our contributors, the people who mediated for us, who lobbied for us, who assisted us in countless ways.

Those who fought for us, carried us, disagreed with us, gave us perspective, encouraged us. Gave us shoulders to lean on, and cry on. They've done boring paperwork, endless organizing, agonizing phone calls, computer work, torturous flights, drives, terrible conditions. They've hung lighting rigs and wound countless cables, purchased thousands of tambourines, changed tens of thousands of batteries, and even vacuumed our brooms. All to keep this band moving along. Sometimes only inching forward.

To all these people, we give our most sincere and deepest thanks. Your hard work and love, and dedication, means that this award is as much for you as it is for us. You make us feel like we're one big happy "Jammy!" In no particular order, we give our sincerest thanks to: George, Karrie, Liz, Simon. Kelly Curtis - our manager, Josh, John, Neil, Donnie, Nicole, Kevin, Brett, Jimmy Shoaf, Jimmy V, Andy, Sarah, Dicko, Dave Rat, Pete, Sonny, Larry, Jesse, Kille, Blue, Dan, Tommy, Peter, Nelly, Glen, Gary, Carol, Goldie/Michael Goldstone, Michele Anthony, Keith Wissmar, Eric, Anna, Elliot, Brendan O'Brien our long-time producer. Mark Smith, thank you so much. Tim B, Tim P, Rob, Ryan, Adrien, Gavin, Will, Karen, Jess, Christian, Siggy, Jamie, Betsy Lee, Dana, Raven, Scully, Jeff O, The Glews, Schnapp, Jacqueline, Harvey, Lance, Rod, Don, Diana, Dan, Sara B, Tom Conklin, Stranger. Brian, Doyle, Radar, Davy, Lampy Josh, Marty, Barry, Coby, Sam, Mat, Sunil, Brad, and Regan. And further... And further, all the incredible artists who have created what might be one of our most enduring artifacts: all of our incredible tour posters.

But, even more important than all these wonderful folks, we want to thank our fans and our fan club whose belief in us carried us through the times where we didn't believe, or we lost hope, or we lost the plot, or we lost each other. Thank you so much to the greater Pearl Jam community, whose fierce autonomy and evolving manifestation is still a source of amazement and wonder to us all. Keep doing what you're doing, we're having so much fun watching you.

And lastly, I want to thank our amazing wives. My amazing wife, Vivien, her beautiful family, our beautiful children, Viv, Marlowe, and Faye. My mom and dad, my sisters and their families. Thank you all for giving us this opportunity and this honor.

## **DAVE KRUSEN**

Hey, I'd like to thank the Hall of Fame for including me with this amazing band. And Pearl Jam saved my life. And to the Jammy. And to my family, my kids, I love you guys. Thank you.

## **MATT CAMERON**

Hello. Hello. Thank you all for being here tonight. We're very honored to be here as well. I would just like to thank my... my muse, my girl, my one special lady, April Cameron. Our beautiful children, Raymond and Josie. I would like to thank my parents for turning me on to Count Basie

and for letting me practice drums in their house for probably a decade or so. I really appreciate that.

My brother and sister for taking me to my first concert, David Bowie, Station to Station, 1977. Life changing experience. I would like to thank my brothers in Pearl Jam for inviting me into their incredible family, their incredible band, in 1998. My brothers in Soundgarden for inviting me into their band, 1986. And it's been said before, but... we... we so appreciate the fans and the... the life's blood that you give to our art form, rock and roll. Thank you.

## **MIKE McCREADY**

Thank you. Thank you very much. Whoop! That feels good. There are pivotal moments in life that change you forever. I've had many of these, but the first was in 1976. I was a Boy Scout. One day, 11-years-old, when my friends Danny and Rick told me about the rock band, Kiss. I asked my parents for a guitar that night. I want to thank my mom, Louise McCready, for her love and support, for teaching me about Warhol and The Rolling Stones, and dying my hair. My dad, Roy McCready, thank you for giving me the love and guidance and teaching me to train my mind, body, and spirit. Thank you to my first band, Shadow, and the Friel family for letting us practice, Shadow, for five days a week, for six years, in their house. Thank you so much.

To my second band, Pearl Jam. You're my brothers. I love you. I love you guys. I love your families. My dear friend, Duff McKagan told me one time, "You guys did it right." But we are only as good as the people that are around us. Our manager - Kelly Curtis, Michele Anthony, Michael Goldstone, Nicole Vandenberg, George Webb, Donnie Spada, Chris Adams, Brendan O'Brien and everyone at our offices, and our fan club, our road crew, and every person that holds us up so we can do what we love.

I want to thank the Red Hot Chili Peppers for taking us out in the beginning and treating us totally right. There have been many bands that have inspired me, many that inspired me, including Cheap Trick, Queen, Bowie, Hendrix, The Stones, Beatles, UFO, Kraftwerk, Ramones, Brandi Carlile, Sleater-Kinney, The Kills, Social Distortion, Muddy Waters, Sex Pistols, The Clash, and my new favorite band, Thunderpussy, and also the Stereo Embers, to name a few. My friends and family, a lot of you that came tonight and some were unable to make it - you bring me laughter and teach me how to live. I love all of you, all of my friends and family that are here tonight. And all of our fans, thank you for hanging out with us for so long.

And finally, to my amazing wife, Ashley, who keeps it all together, keeps my world together, I love you, 1-4-3. And our kids, Kaia, Jaxon, and Henry, you inspire me to be a better parent and I love you. Alright. Thank you.

## **JEFF AMENT**

When I was 12 or 13, my uncle Pat gave me some singles, of which one was The Kinks, "A Well Respected Man." This coincided with reading Death of a Salesman in Mr. B's 7th grade class. After that, I was put on a course to never be Willy Loman or the unhappy suit Ray Davies wrote about, which somehow parlayed into a lifetime of playing in bands. So, if I seem a little bit nervous, blame Ray and Arthur Miller, as I've never been very comfortable in a room full of suits.

In, in 1983, I moved to Seattle looking for my tribe. Other artists, musicians, individuals, hard workers, skateboarders, kids that spoke about the politics of Joe Strummer, Jello Biafra and Dave Dictor, and artists like Francis Bacon, and Basquiat, and Pettibon. I found a lot of these folks, many are still my friends. I met Stone within a month of moving to Seattle at those first Seattle punk rock shows I went to almost 35 years ago, which ultimately led me to our band and our community.

Being here with the band, who have become some of my best friends in the process, making music and art, traveling the world, supporting causes and programs together, making small differences, meeting great artists and creative minds all over the world. That's a pretty great fucking life. Thanks.

It's an honor and mind-boggling to be a part of a club that includes so many of our heroes: Neil, The Clash, Zeppelin, The Stooges, Cheap Trick. But the fact is that we were affected, and infected by bands that aren't here. So many important bands that made us want to pick up our guitars and write songs: Roxy Music, The Jam, Devo, X, Black Flag, Dead Kennedys, Jane's Addiction, so many others, all worthy.

But the very best part about tonight is that my mom, who gave me the keys to the piano and the arts, and my dad, who taught me about hard work and community, they're here with my family. And as Dave said earlier, only they know how far it is from Big Sandy Montana to the Barclays Center. So, this is for every small town kid who has a dream. Thanks to everybody who supports us and inspires us: our great friends, everybody who works with us, with the band. Kelly and George have been with us for 27 years - 26 years. But especially Pandora, who puts up with my consistent inconsistency every day. Thank You. I love you.

## **EDDIE VEDDER**

Alright. You're very kind. Thank you so much. I'd just like to start by thanking all those who... who came before us. The Trilobites, the Tetrapods, the Primates, Homo Erectus. Without them we'd be so much less evolved. And here we are in... in our modern technology - advanced technology age, and we've got a lot of evolving to do. It's evolution, baby.

So, climate change is real. That is not fake news. And we... we cannot... cannot be the generation that history will look back upon and wonder, why didn't they do everything humanly possible to solve this biggest of crises in our time. Anything can be obtainable. The Chicago Cubs winning the World Series. This... this is proof. And I use that analogy in regards to climate change, because it... it can be done, but here's the thing, we don't have 108 years to wait.

Lucky and grateful are two things I am every day. I'm just grateful to be alive. I also want to publicly apologize for making my bandmates suffer, with a singer who was climbing on the rafters and hanging off of pipes, and jumping off of balconies... they really didn't deserve that.

But, you know, they didn't know that the person that they gave the job to, that their singer was... was really into Evel Knievel. But it was also the power of music. I swear, I used to be able to, like, hold my whole body up with one finger. But if the music wasn't playing, I couldn't do it with both hands. It's the power of rock and roll. One illustration...

When I think about high altitudes, I think about my wife, Jill. You know, a kite does not rise into the air unless someone is holding the string.

MAN IN AUDIENCE [shouting out] I love you, Eddie!

Oh shoot, honey, I thought you were sitting down in front.

But it's so important, you know, especially if that, if that kite gets way high in the air, you really have to trust the person holding the line. And that person has to be loyal and believe in you, and then have the strength to reel you back. And so, to my wife, Jill, I thank you. And I'm looking

forward to all our future days on the ground, together. And I'm glad I get to hold the cord for you when you get to soar, as you do.

My two daughters, Olivia and Harper. I try to teach them everything I know and then they teach me the rest. Which is more of that than... than what I do know.

MAN IN AUDIENCE [shouts out] Eddie!

I'll get to you... And if somehow, someday, Chance the Rapper ever sees or hears this, I just want to tell him, my daughter, Olivia, loves you. And you have our highest approval. And I also, Chance, want to thank you for all the great work you're doing in Chicago. That's the kinda music activism that gives us all hope. So, these three girls I just can't tell ya, I just love 'em more than anything.

And that's a lot - it says a lot because I really love The Who. And the Ramones and The Band, and Fugazi and Iggy Pop and Sleater-Kinney and Guided by Voices, and the list goes on 'cause I've listened to music every day of my life, for my whole life. And a lot of that was in small apartments. When I grew up we lived in some tight spaces with my family. My mom's here... my brothers.

My mom... some really good parenting. She... she wouldn't tell us to turn it down, she would just kind of end up being fans of the bands that we were playing very loudly. And my brothers who we grew up listening to all that music together. I always try to play our songs, our new songs, to them first. So, they're such a good barometer and they've known me long enough, they know when I'm pulling some kinda bullshit, so they keep me honest and keep the records true.

Jase, Mike, Chris - we miss you. Gina, I love you, too. You know, how lucky I was to meet Jack Irons. I was working in a club... There's Jackie right there. I'm working as a crew guy at a Joe Strummer gig, in a little club in San Diego. Before my midnight shift, I get to meet Jack, who was the original drummer in the Chili Peppers. He also is a member of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame already. He's here tonight. Without meeting him, none of this happens, 'cause I don't meet Jeff and Stone, I'm not in this building. I'm probably not even on the planet, I'm certainly not in the spot that I'm sitting down now, or standing in now.

Jack, thanks so much, and thanks for your friendship. And... and you were a great drummer for our group! Somehow we were so fortunate that we had a few drummers. And, you know, taken that seat in the... the drum stool or... or the throne, 'cause they were all kings. We were so fortunate every one of them was great. But Matt Cameron has really been the one that really kept us alive for this last 15, 16, 17 years.

At a time when we didn't now if - we weren't sure what was gonna happen, and he enabled us not just to survive, but to thrive. And he became one of our brothers. And he was gonna end up receiving this accolade with either us or his other group, which are pretty damn good. So, he'll be back. We had the great Dave Abbruzzese. He was a great drummer - he is a great drummer. He's a great fuckin' drummer! And we wish him well.

Matt Chamberlain, Jack, and now Dave Krusen, who we got to play with this week for the first time in 25 years. It's great to see him; he's a great person. And speaking of Daves - Dave Abbruzzese, Dave Krusen - I really want to thank Dave Letterman for being part of our honor tonight. He doesn't know, but when I used to work a midnight shift - four years midnight shifts - I'd get there 11 to 7, and there was a small red TV... I was a security guard, there was a small red TV and Dave was my copilot every weekday, every night I worked for four years.

And, to have him be up here, it's an honor to be honored by him. Also, he did have so many great

bands on his show. I saw so many bands that later became influences for the first time on the Letterman show. And I'm just gonna tell you my side of that quick story, when I came into his studio and took the mic and sang "Black."

He was doing that "Doo-doo-doo doo-doo-doo-doo. Doo-doo-doo—" He was doing that every night for about three months. And I was always watching the show and it was starting to make me fucking crazy. And then it started getting weird. At one point I remember I smoked a little something, I'm sitting there, end of the night. I'm kind of relaxing. And, and he kept asking, "Paul, when... when is this band gonna be on the show? When are they gonna be on the show?"

He goes, "I don't know. I haven't--" "Have you called them?" "I haven't." And he starts looking in the TV — now I'm stoned to the bejeezus and Dave Letterman, who is my copilot back in the security thing, he just looks into the camera, which is looking into my bedroom, "Eddie... Eddie... Come here, Eddie." It was fucked. I thought the TV was talking to me. I lost my mind. Seriously thought, like, you know, you might have to go to rehab. You're tripping balls right now.

So lastly, we've been through a lot, this group, and if it weren't for everybody out there who cared about our music, if it weren't for everybody out there who came to the shows and brought their energy... Those were the things that really kept us together and we felt a responsibility to the music that was bigger than ourselves, or whatever our own personal needs of space or whatever it was - we knew that we were better together than apart.

And it was you that galvanized us and forged a brotherhood and a family. I love these people so much. And we love hanging out and we love touring. We love playing. We love writing. We love recording. And... I feel like maybe we're about halfway there to deserve something of this... an accolade of this kind of stature, maybe halfway there. But this is very encouraging and we're very grateful. And thank you very, very much.