

PAUL WAAKTAAR-SAVOY ON "THE SCOUNDREL DAYS OF HOBO HIGHBROW" BY PÅL H. CHRISTIANSEN

"I'm like Hobo Highbrow"

Paul Waaktaar-Savoy about being a novel character and about obsessed fans

["The Scoundrel Days of Hobo Highbrow"](#), the English translation of Pål H. Christiansen's novel "Drømmer om storhet", will finally be published in October this year. The English title of the book alludes to an a-ha song and album from the year 1986 because Hobo Highbrow, the main character of the book, is an obsessed a-ha fan who desperately follows Paul Waaktaar-Savoy through Oslo and even to his house with the intent to reveal his "inner self" to him. In an interview with Annette Schwindt Paul speaks about the book, about writing and the price of fame.

Annette: How do you feel about being a character in a Norwegian novel now translated to German and English?

Paul: Yeah, it's a weird feeling. When I received a copy of the book... not knowing what to expect, I had Lauren read through it first...so she could break it to me gently whatever the content might be. That plan backfired somewhat, as her Norwegian, good as it is, still has a some way to go. (waay, waaay to go :-))
In the end I read it myself and thought it was very funny, charming.

Is there a way famous persons can protect themselves from such obsessed people as Hobo at all?

Paul: Sure there is. We did everything we could to get attention when we first started out. Then came some years where we got sick of it; and did everything we could to change our fame into something else. The music changed into something less-eager-to-please. We started saying no to most press-requests. We moved out of London and all found new homes where we could start fresh...
You can have influence and regain some control in a situation like that, but it comes at a price.

After more than 20 years in business would you say that the behavior of fans towards you has changed?

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Paul: Yes, it changes all the time...and for the most part for the better. You meet people that 20 years ago would stand outside your apartment building, day in and day out, 7 days a week... Now they have a family with kids or whatever. It's kind of cool that we can all laugh about those times now .

From your own experience would you say that Hobo is a realistic character? And if you met someone like that what would you tell him?

Paul: Yes, absolutely. I am like that. I can latch onto people for their energy or inspiration to get me going. And it works a lot of the times too. There's a rarely a time where I'm not obsessed about some amazing musician/painter/writer and then I have to know every little thing about them; and see if that somehow relates to me. Anything to get a song out.

You are said to be an admirer of the American writer John Fante. In his novel "Ask the Dust" the protagonist has similarities with Hobo Highbrow in "The Scoundrel Days of Hobo Highbrow". Both are struggling, stubborn and desparate characters. What do you think about this?

Paul: When I read it I was looking more out for myself then I was for John Fante, but you might be right

Could you have become a writer too if you hadn't worked on your career as a musician?

Paul: I thought I could become a writer when I was 20 or so, but I know better now. Only with writing music (and sometimes lyrics) do I get these moments where it all seems so easy, as if no work is involved.

In spite of Hobo's failed attempts to present his inner self to the Paul in the book, do you think the two should get a second chance to exchange their point of views in a sequel?

Paul: Why stop there? You mentioned "Ask the dust": Make it a trilogy!