

0.5 The Growse-Glowsock Affair

She already expected us. Second table on the right, as arranged. We, that was yours truly, specialist editor at Guitar Licks & Tricks, and Dick Johnson, our photographer (mind you, this is famous D.J., not the mute dweeb from Chapter 0.1). We had scheduled the date for 15:00, and she was on time. We as well, of course. It's not an every-day occurrence that you get the opportunity to meet the marketing CO of a famous tube distributor. Ms. Ann-Cathrin Growse-Glowsock, Psy.D., gave a most professional impression already from a purely visual point of view. "Whewww ... she lights me up like an AC30-deployed EL-84", Dick whispered under his breath as we approached. His thoughts must have already been on-topic, because today it was going to be about amplifier tubes. Meeting in a cafe seemed strange at first, but Growsock (as she was dubbed in the editorial office) had already apologized for any inconvenience: "we have such a bedlam in the test area right now, I don't dare let anybody in there." Of course we suspected that they had some exquisite new hyper-tubes – still secret. We hoped that we could elicit the odd detail out of her.

Having done the introductory prelude (here's my card – can I please have yours?) and a secret look to the bounty (indeed: "CO Marketing") we quickly got down to business: "Dr. Growse-Glowsock ..." "Please, that's Ann-Cathrin for you guys!" "Thank you! Ann-Cathrin, how do you manage again and again to find these great NOS-tubes?" "Well – that's a most difficult question – and right at the start!" she smiled flirtatiously, "that would be what we shall ask Ed, our director of purchasing – he'll join us later." Wow, this is gonna be a blast! "So you produce all the tubes here in Valleymoon?" "Oh no, of course not, we have a global network of suppliers. The US, Russia, China, Cambodia, Algiers, Laos, and many others." Of course ... stupid question ... wherever you can buy quality products. By now Dick had set up his camera and butted in, in his inimitable fashion: "your super-bulbs are really so GRAND, I'm over the moon with them." "Well, right now the KT-88 is indeed a top seller," she stand-offish-ly replied. My God, Dick – she's a manager with a doctorate ... could you find an any more dopey come-on? Another try: "Ms. Growse-Glowsock, with a doctorate under your belt, do you fare better in this man's world? You, as a woman ..." Oh sh.., that's not it, either. "I mean, not all of your competitors have staffed their exec-positions with university graduates, have they?" Phew ...in the nick of time ... "Would you pose this question to a man, too?" Her green eyes were painted every so lightly with this glittery stuff (well, not the eyes, but just above) ... it looked really good, even though she squinted now and then. Green glitter-eyes with that ginger mane ... oh, man ...well ... thank God she was not looking for an answer but continued: "actually, I first took courses in geography. Economic geography, to be precise. But during the 10th semester I realized that I was not going to get hired anywhere. So I broke off my studies and worked some casual jobs for a while." "Was that already in the electronics sector?" "No, that came but later. I worked at the university's copy-shop. That's where I took notice of a psychology professor. Or rather, he took notice of me." There was a bit of a mischievous smile on her face. The old story: *I once had a girl, or should I say, she once had me (L/McC)*. Psych-Prof ... 'course, as a specialist journalist, you can't compete. "So you got your doctorate with the psychologists?" "Yes! At the Institute for Speculative Psychology, with Professor van Bonner. You know him?" "Sorry, no. Speculative psychology?" "Right: what might Schopenhauer have said to Nietzsche? That was the subject of my thesis." "Very interesting. So what would he have said?" "Not much! Which is why I didn't have to write all that much – tee-heel!" Now the green ones smiled again. "Right, always economize," Dick barged in again. Before he could add a 'typical female!', I kicked him under the table. That must have hurt because he already hauled off for a counterstrike – but at that moment an immense behemoth approached our table, and Dick was distracted.

"Ah, here's Ed now, our managing director of production," she exclaimed with a honey-tone voice," Eddy-darling, sweetie – we're here!" Must have been easily some 250 lb of sweetness that came crawling towards us. Designer specs, grey braid at the back of the neck: Eddy. "Director of purchasing or of production?" I quietly asked because my memory couldn't fit it all together. He heard it and introduced himself right away: "Edward Growse, purchasing and production." Understood – it does happen in big corporations that a board member takes care of two divisions for some time ... or maybe cost-saving measures? Whatever. "I tidied up, we can go in" Ed reckoned, saving the day for Dick, because a few pics had to be taken (location, location ... or genius loci, as Growsock probably would have put it). We paid up and piled into the SUV. "Fasten seatbelts, please – Eddy really hits the breaks when a speed camera is indicated!" Sure, we'd do the same. And off we went: on the road to Tubilic, Ltd.

"Ann-Cathrin, you mastered in psychology but now work in tube marketing? ..." "Indeed. You know, when after 16 semesters I checked out the employment market for speculative psychologists ..." "...you realized that ..." "exactly! And then Hans, my professor, had less and less time for me because of his wife, so it was a lucky coincidence that Eddy and his band played a gig at the university." Such is life – hence the double name. Spontaneous idea: back home they would have a vacancy for the chief district executive ... no, maybe not. The west of the city almost silently rolled past the V12, the streets became narrower and more contorted. As Ed pulled into the driveway with the triple garage, a giant Great Dane yelpingly jumped up to the fence. They wouldn't have a little nosh for us before we ... "Jeez, you got a lovely place here – that tube business brings in some heavy dough, doesn't it?" Oh no - who had made this retard my photographer! Luckily, Growsock had already gone ahead to the door, and Ed pretended not to have heard anything: "Let's go downstairs to the test-field right away." Yikes! So THIS WAS Tubilic! *He* boxes and *she* types up the invoices! That's almost like we had seen it in Tonopah at the pickup guru's ... Never mind, we'll see it through now. Ed already opened one of the many basement doors. Neon tubes flickered to life, bathing meticulously stacked-up small cardboard boxes in cold light. Tidy it was – gotta give the guy that. Gold Lions, old GECs, new Tungsols, everything accurately piled up. "Ed. You have ..." the remainder of the sentence was drowned out by infernal bellowing that all of a sudden burst forth from the other side of the door. "Bonzo would like to say hi", Eddy remarked with a malicious smile, and opened the door. This was the Scottish version of the Great Dane. They stand about a yard high at the shoulder. In their younger years. Fully grown that may increase to 4 ½ ft. The Giant Scottish Great Dane will measure yet another foot on top of that, at the very least. As long as they do not bob up ... it won't, will it? ... Noooo ... of course it will. The dog was completely overjoyed, woof-woof, pant-pant ... if at least not that 2-ft-tongue ... and that deafening roar in the reverberant basement ... the things you gotta endure as journalist ... "Has he happened to waggle down an expensive tube sometime?" Well then, Dick could indeed also shoot good questions, although the present situation necessitated a lot of accompanying gesturing – multi-medial communication, in a way. But as quickly as it had come, the episode was over: upstairs Growsock clanked a pot, there was one last "Ch-ch-ch", and the dog was gone. I'll have to get at least 20% hardship allowance for all this ... or else the editor in chief will have to do the job himself next time.

Where were we? "Ed, which is the better tube, the 6L6-GC, or the 5881?" Again, Ed displayed that malicious smile: "That would be the 5881 – we get a better markup on that." Big laughs. "But don't you write that in the article. On the other hand: most people know that anyway, don't they?" He added: "6L6-GC for your average moron, 6L6-WGC for the one seeking to spend a bit more, 5881 as premium-merc, and 5881-WXXS for the snobs. The insides are always the same". Ed's laughter was suddenly interrupted by very enraged green eyes that must have finished taking care of guzzle-guzzle and wanted to attend to the visitors.

"His humor takes some getting-used-to, but with tubes he's really on top of the game, like no other" she sought to distract. "Of course, the insides are NOT always the same: this 5881-WXXS here e.g. is a heavy-duty-version with brown base, while the regular 5881 over there has the black base. That is something entirely different." Dick shot a querying glance at Growsock and released the shutter: once brown, once black. No, he had not forgotten to put in a color film – we are a specialist publisher, after all, and have been working with digital for years. Digital in color, even.

For confirmation, Growsock now brought on the big guns: instrumentation! "With the 5881, we get about 10% more compared to the 6L6" she remarked. "Occasionally – when a special order comes in, we can even measure power. We have bought a gadget specifically for that." She pointed to a contraption that probably was a tube-testing device: "on the left side, the 5881 has about 10% more than the 6L6." Dick industriously kept shooting, and I decided to enter the professional discourse: "Left, that would be ..." "She means the instrument on the left side", Ed seconded, "we operate in a highly targeted, concise manner. No superfluous pleasantries. *10% more on the left*, and everybody knows what is meant." "So what does the left device register?" "Well, the tube that has been inserted. Plug in, there we go." Quickly, another question – before Dick comes up with the next mischievous idea: "That will then be the plate-current that is shown on the left instrument?" Ed was not in the mood to get a lot into theory, though, and preferred to remain very practical: "we first do a selection process on all tubes: those with the straight glass container get loaded onto the blue trolley, the bulbous ones are placed on the yellow one. I think every musician has the right to selected tubes. In fact, the guys in China should already do the selecting, but since Sinh Ter has left the export division, we occasionally receive the tubes in a rather colorful mixture. Logn San, the new guy, is just too ..." "He is in training and will be certified soon. We ale vely 'appy wit te tube man'factulel." Growsock's humor certainly was of a different caliber. "The individual numbers printed onto the boxes, this 34/-52, for example, that ... " "... that's already on the boxes. Although I think you can order the cartons without those numbers. Nobody does that, the market demands the numbers, and we serve the market."

This had turned out to be an interesting meeting, after all. "You imply that you have not laser-printed these labels individually but ... isn't that deceit, somehow? Or even ..." Now our psychologist sooo got going ... there was a job market for speculative psychology, after all: "you have no clue, do you! You're absolutely 404! A musician on stage, opening up to the world, in a way baring his or her soul – will he or she not need the maximum in gear performance that the market can offer? Feed selected premium ware to the combo amp, maybe even remakes of the legendary black-plate powerhouses with the larger and longer base – that will give him or her that vibe ... no: the FORCE to be truly inspired!" "Jack, you got shots of the meter? Maybe Annie ... sorry: Ann-Cathrin ... could sit beside it giving you a smile? I'll get into some more technical stuff with Ed, meanwhile." She didn't give up that easily, though. "You sell an 6L6 for \$5 to the players – they surely feel they're getting pure rubbish. Can't go in front of an audience with that. A 5881-JKAS at \$49.90" ... (Ed's 'with the same junk inside' got drowned out by the dramatically mounting fortissimo) ... "that'll do the magic and make them play like gods. Like Clapton at 22, like Morse and Moore combined in one person!" O.K. – she knew her stuff. "So it's all psychology?" "Nonsense – of course an el-cheapo tube can't cut it like a premium tube will." Now they seemed to switch roles; apparently Eddy-darling wanted to remain at the wheel, too: "That needs to be clarified from the ground up. Tubes: not just anybody can do that. We are the champions here."

He elaborated: “a JKAS for example will give you those satin highs, with a well defined share of bass and lots of headroom. The JRK, on the other hand, delivers particularly delicate, mild treble, well-defined bass and powerful mids, and the BLL has those tight basses, strong mids and satin treble, and headroom in spades. A 5881 puts out delicate treble, creamy sustain, particularly mild mids, with great headroom. The 5881-TLT brings creamy treble, fine sustain, powerful bass ...“ he faltered “... no, that’s strong bass. Powerful bass, that’s the 5581-WNK. And, of course, the 5881-WNK/JRK-STR-highgrade. The latter combined with particularly silky and super-clean treble.” Growsock applauded ecstatically. “That’s why I put him in charge of production”, she remarked smugly, and immediately added “Without Eddy, this joint wouldn’t do so wonderfully – he knows tube specs like no other.”

"And the numbers, those on the boxes?" Dick tried to dig deeper. "Numbs are for dumbs," Ed laughed. "It's only on the balance sheet, where numbers you have got to read." Not a man modeled after Leo F., then. We needed something tangible, though, to keep the head-editor-boss out of our hair. Next try: "The JKAS features gold-plated grids, doesn't it? That's in order to ..." "Gold is a precious metal", Growsock embarked. "The more precious the metal, the more classy the sound – pure logic. You wouldn't want to wear an aluminum ring on your finger, either, now would you?! Gold grids, and a black-anodized glass bulb." "...and the longest cylinder possible," Dick barged in, only to sulkily shut up again with an "Ouch!" "Are NOS-tubes indeed as good as they are said to be? They've been lying around for a number of decades, after all?" "In most cases, it is not possible to exactly date NOS-tubes," Growsock submitted sibilantly. "We are always happy when again somebody finds a case in some attic, and we hope that such tubes continue to be found for a long time. Myself, I just a few months ago discovered a huge supply back in the old country, in the basement of the house my grannie was in the process to sell. More than 1000 pieces! One has to wonder about all the stuff that people hoard." "And these are truly old?" "Of course! My granny's house was in the area where the GDR used to be, actually very close to the SOG-Tube-combine. She always said 'vee haf nossing ofer herrr', but what the little they had, sey haf nott srone away. I was just surprised that Ed didn't find those tubes. He rummaged around in that basement for days before I arrived. Wonder what he was looking at and for, my darling blind-shell!" "Main thing is you keep turning up those antique precious tubos – I'll sell 'em."

Those two truly had found their perfect work-sharing arrangement. Ann-Cathrin and Edward: enterprising, slaving away serving the discerning guitarist, supplying premier tubes. Their business was indeed going well, although ... "The competition does not concern you at all?" "Well, the guys at TOD, The Other Distributor, they do niggle us. But the grapevine says they are not getting a grip on their personnel expenses. We have a different scenario here." The green ones were gleaming again. "Plus, we do have some big names under contract, our party really rocks! What's-his-name – no, musn't tell you who – buys three new quartets after every gig ... and he's gigging almost daily. What wicked endorsement!" "Huh? Doesn't endorsement imply something like sponsoring? The guy *pays* for his tubes?" "Sure, his roady was a bro' in the old commune – convinced our man that this brown, way-cool – no: way-hot sizzle only is on when he's burning our prewar-MOV's. We call it an endorsement because, in a way, he's endorsing our V12. And that's just him alone! That is so cool. That endorsement, that is so ... so ..." "Von Holen?" "Right!"

Dear Ann-Cathrin Growse-Glowsock, Psy.D., dear Growse, Edward – thank you for having us. And special regards to Stronzo, or whatever its name was.

Counter statement, on behalf of Ms. Glowstock, Phy.D.

In the so-called “pre-release of Physics of the Electric Guitar”, a series of untrue allegations about me are included. In this respect, I state:

- 1) My name is not at all Growse-Glowsock but Grous-Glowstock.
- 2) I have done studies neither in economic geography, nor in speculative psychology. Correct is rather that my doctorate had the subject: *“The difference between being in itself and being per se from the point of view of solipsism – and the corresponding criticism by Schopenhauer”*.
- 3) My assigned doctorate supervisor was neither an alcoholic nor was he “Prof. Hans van Bonner”. It seems there was confusion with Edward Grous’s student band “Van Bonjovous”.
- 4) The “pre-release” creates the impression that I had red hair. Correct is that I am blond; a natural blonde, all over.
- 5) The “pre-release” creates the impression that I had relations with my doctorate supervisor that ended at the intervention of his wife. Correct is that his wife did not even know about me at the point in time.
- 6) The “pre-release” creates the impression that our company would select tubes merely according to color and/or shape. Correct is that we certainly select according to other aspects. For this, we deploy expensive special equipment.
- 7) The “pre-release” creates the impression that I would not know what is indicated on the “left instrument”. Correct is that I know very well that “mA” is indicated there.
- 8) My grandmother did not live in the GDR, but in Poland; she hailed from Upper Silesia. Never were any tubes found in the basement of her house. She passed away already 11 years ago, not “a few months ago”.
- 9) The “pre-release” creates the impression that 50% of our company’s tubes would be rejects. I state: this is untrue. 50% of our tubes are not rejects.
- 10) Edward Grous and I do not drive a V-12 but an S-63 that, according to the manufacturer’s specifications, has not 12 but 8 cylinders (source: WWW.Mercedes-AMG.com).
- 11) The “pre-release” creates the impression that we would gain economic advantages from “Von Holen”. Correct is that we do not know “Von Holen” at all.

August 24, 2010, Anna-Katerczyna Grous-Glowstock

Statement by the author:

Applicable law requires the publication of a counter statement without appraisal of its content. I wish Ms. Glowstock that she may recognize with Schopenhauer that her being in itself and per se is not so terrible, after all.

August 25, 2010, Prof. Dr.-Ing. Manfred Zollner