

CIA Admits Role In 1985 Coup To Oust David Lee Roth

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CIA agents reportedly seeded false information in Rolling Stone and other media outlets to convince the public that Roth was toppled solely by his bandmates in a bloodless revolt.

LANGLEY, VA Shedding new light on a tumultuous period of upheaval that dominated international headlines nearly 30 years ago, the U.S. government declassified hundreds of documents Tuesday that confirm the CIA covertly organized and executed the coup that ousted lead singer David Lee Roth from Van Halen.

According to a preliminary analysis, the newly released information includes more than 1,600 pages of formerly top-secret material detailing the CIA's clandestine plot to infiltrate the platinum-selling rock group and unseat the magnetic, impulsive musician from his leadership position in the spring of 1985. The documents reveal that the agency worked behind the scenes for years, beginning after the release of the disco-inflected "Push Comes To Shove" single in 1981, to foment the internal turmoil and unrest needed to destabilize the band and ultimately force Roth to step down from the American heavy metal act.

As Van Halen's creative direction became uncertain in the early 1980s, it became increasingly apparent that we would have to take the steps necessary to remove Roth from power," said former Deputy Director of Central Intelligence John N. McMahon, describing the covert process by which he and his colleagues quietly forced a schism between the vocalist and members of the band's inner circle in order to disrupt the dangerous cult of personality that had taken hold around the hard-rock frontman. Well before the commencement of the Hide Your Sheep Tour, Roth had become too unpredictable, too brazen, and he was preventing the band's sound from moving toward synthesizer-driven, radio-friendly rock. So, we felt we needed to act, and quickly.

Quite simply, our office determined that Roth was no longer fit to exercise control over Van Halen, and that his aspirations for the band were not aligned with the best interests of the American people," he continued.

Dubbed Operation Diamond Cutter by the select top-ranking CIA administrators who orchestrated the plot, the confidential initiative reportedly sought to quietly undermine Roth's influence within Van Halen and replace him with Sammy Hagar, a charismatic but largely inert puppet leader who agency officials were confident would be easily manipulated once installed atop the iconic rock group.

The CIA confirmed that it was able to exploit preexisting strains in the band by capitalizing on internal concerns over Roth's long-term musical ambitions following the release of his solo EP, as well as pent-up tensions that had simmered for years after the lukewarm commercial and critical reception of Van Halen's Fair Warning album. Additionally, American intelligence operatives succeeded in enlisting Roth's manager and utilizing the double agent to convince his client that relinquishing his position would allow him to pursue what was portrayed as a budding and potentially prosperous film

career.

Based on the things we heard coming out of Van Halen's studio at the time, we were given authorization from the highest levels of government to seek every possible avenue to subvert Roth's command, said one CIA operative speaking on condition of anonymity, claiming that the agency recruited and trained numerous groupies and entourage members to ply longtime Roth ally Alex Van Halen with alcohol in order to ensure that he was in no state to oppose the takeover. Had we not moved when we did, there's no telling what kind of detrimental effect Roth would have had on the band's move into more mainstream pop territory and the state of rock music as a whole. We saw the opportunity to remove this uncontrollable megalomaniac from power while safeguarding the American people from his potent influence, and we seized it.

The last thing we wanted was to have another Panama on our hands, he added.

As revealed by the CIA, prior to Roth's successful ouster from the group, the agency also funneled hundreds of thousands of dollars in untraceable funds through intermediaries to bankroll the production and distribution of such incendiary works as VOA and the "I Can't Drive 55" single in order to bolster Hagar's profile in the eyes of the band's supporters.

Despite the prevalence of critics who question the legitimacy of the post-Roth Van Halen regime, McMahon said that he has no regrets whatsoever about the agency's false flag mission.

Overthrowing Roth was a risky, highly controversial maneuver, but I believe that history will justify our actions, McMahon said, acknowledging that the coup ultimately proved ineffectual, as the vocalist's departure merely ushered in a series of decreasingly competent replacements, culminating in Roth reclaiming his seat of power long after the band had ceased to have an impact in the international community. This was a self-aggrandizing degenerate who needed to be toppled in order to bring stability to the band's direction. We did what needed to be done.

That being said, none of us could possibly have foreseen that For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge would indirectly result from our actions, he added, solemnly shaking his head.