**Every Single Thing Wrong with Let Go by Avril Lavigne (Part 1)**

**WARNING:** Call professional help if you feel like committing suicide or cutting yourself. Please. We beg you. Don't ever kill or harm yourself. Symptoms can vary in severity and frequency, depending on the individual. You may experience these signs or perhaps even just a few. For these reasons, you should reach out to a professional. Reader discretion is strongly advised.

Once upon a time, there was a big purgatory for desperate mainstream radio listeners looking for some watermelon and Kool-Aid to spend all their gold on. It was called Avril-Mart. No, not Walmart. That store exists while this one is fake.

Avril-Mart was named after Avril Lavigne herself; she created it at least 20 years ago as a moment of epiphany when she realized there was a cheap way for her to be punk/emo… which meant that she couldn't be emo or punk. She could just build a store based upon the economic concepts of cheap pop music for everyone (that is, the masses) with rock, punk, grunge and emo levels of **less than two,** thereby acting out her fantasy of poser punk sodomy upon the music industry. It was how she viewed music and what it was like to her—as a retail industry, as a money-making pyramid scheme rather than a form of art or personal expression.

When Avril-Mart first opened in March 2002 with "Complicated", the global economy was gradually destroyed. Many posers and shortsighted morons alike went there to save a buck, but they didn't realize that every dollar they saved was an investment in Avril’s own apocalypse. Eventually, all the punk/emo businesses closed since punk/emo businesses had a thing or two about music and/or talent. They also paid decent living wages and bought reasonably ethical stock, whereas Avril-Mart sold all kinds of music for half the price via buying in bulk. The music-pioneering farmers were ruined because Lavigne and her team only kept prices low by importing bands and artists from other countries. Even Avril was imported. At Avril-Mart, production could be done for a fraction of the price, due to things like limited environmental regulations and a generally weak economy that led to exploitation of labor (understanding that generic pop trash like Avril Lavigne and her big box store were why poor countries were torture chambers to begin with). When all the poor buggers didn't know better than to participate in the forming of Avril and her corporate amalgamation's evil monopoly, they could still afford to shop for cheap junk, including useless items harvested from some clear-cut rainforest that the local Avril-Mart ruined.

**I like to ROCK! You like to ROCK! We all like to ROCK!!!!!**

**Wow, and I mean WOW! Was that enough emphasis for you? Now this is ROCK right here! I've never heard PUNK music this ROCKIN' before! As a soccer mom with four kids between the ages of 1 and 9, I've been around, and I KNOW what PUNK is; this most certainly IS PUNK! Everyone knows that the best local radio contest winners appear at live performances before they even sign a record deal. Like, that's so PUNK! That's what Avril Lavigne represents! I don't think I've driven the point home—this is the PUNKIEST PUNK that ever ROCKED the ROCK!**

**What we have are heavy-hitting guitar ROCKIN' jams like "Complicated" and "Sk8er Boi" that ROCK my socks off, hardcore songs like "Losing Grip" and "Unwanted" that make me want to start a mosh pit in my SUV (I got a ticket the other day while driving to this—the cops in this state just don't know how to be PUNKS) and fiery blasts like "Things I'll Never Say" and "Mobile" that make me bang my head against the wall! Yes, folks, it's that fierce and ROCKIN'—believe me because I KNOW. If you haven't already picked up THIS ROCK ALBUM, done by Avril Lavigne, YOU MUST have this album. Picking up her CD is your license to PPPPPUUUUUNNNNNKKKKK!!!!!**

(end soccer mom transmission)

Back to reality. Avril Lavigne's debut album is glossy, jangly, overproduced, mellow, meaningless, pretentious gobbledygook. A nonsensical word, yes, but that fittingly describes this artless piece of trash. There's a reason why this review took so long to be made. Rolling Stone declared in a December 25, 2009 issue (Issue 1094/1095) in relation to the end of the decade, "The world (and Britney) fell apart, but the soundtrack rocked." We don’t know what planet the guys and gals at Rolling Stone are on, but it's clearly not Earth or any other planet that can pick up its radio transmissions, because the soundtrack to the 2000s did not rock. The music industry rolled out some of the most horrible ear-assaults since "Mickey" and "Barbie Girl" during the '00s. "Complicated", "Sk8er Boi" and "Girlfriend" by Avril Lavigne were just three of them. She was a white Christian girl from a Canadian town—that town being Greater Napanee, Ontario. Her life was never full of pain. People were fairly wealthy, they went through breakups, parents divorced, no one in her neighborhood seemed to get a pony for Christmas. But were they happy? Of course, they were happy! Suddenly, Arista Records/Sony BMG discovered Lavigne and kidnapped her, thinking that she'd qualify as good music if they over-compressed as much of her edge out and made her so-called "rock" sound as sickeningly sterile as possible—while having her replicate the success of Alanis Morrisette and Pink at the same time. If she acted like her life was "full of pain" when she never truly was during her 17 years in the underground. If they made her sing about wanting to get out a razor blade or an X-Acto knife and cut herself with it via mild, vague references to appeal to Good Charlotte-loving "emos". If she pretended to man up, only for them to make her a weak damsel in distress who tried to squeeze into someone's pockets. If no one around the world could escape the generic pop songs they'd be forcing her to create. Not only was she viewed as nothing more than a generic pop diva by Arista before she could get big, but she would be forced to go even more pop in the late 2000s by RCA; "Girlfriend" just about sums it up. Avril and her family's plans to let Arista manufacture her worked big time; by 2002, no one could go to a school, outdoor festival, restaurant, mall, supermarket, travel venue or social gathering of more than five people without hearing this terrible, pseudo-punk earworm. It had been five years since the first 10 or so songs that used vocal distortion, one of them being "Believe" by Cher (not to be confused with the widely disliked Melodyne and Auto-Tune, which are also forms of VD), when Lavigne propelled herself to stardom with "Complicated"… and it was at that point that Lavigne's use of VD made you want to rip the radio out of your dashboard and throw it through an intersection. The Matrix and Clif Magness, who produced Let Go, simply forgot that enough was enough. Even Lavigne was unhappy with the finished product and her distorted vocals, which the producers wouldn't have run through Pro Tools had they bothered to keep her voice raw. Perhaps they should've done the same to her music, which would've totally made her punk. They should've let her be punk rock instead of a generic pop conformist. Rock and punk are not just raw or underproduced; they're supposed to be raw and/or underproduced (and the same can be said for the vocals). They're supposed to use power chords to deliver instant gratification, which Avril’s music somehow fails to accomplish; it amazingly defies the core elements of rock and punk. Also, trying to sugar-coat Avril's dreadful music with overproduction just blows her credibility. The straining Neptunes-style production and orchestration are good examples. This is a common problem for modern music; more time is spent polishing the finished product than actually coming up with songs to which people can relate.

Someone with more popularity than Avril Lavigne, of course, is bound to have any high-brow music fan or punk/emo guy go after her. When such people believe or are asked why they hate Avril, they'll say "I used to really love Avril Lavigne. I loved 'My Happy Ending' and I even tolerated 'Girlfriend'. Now she's such a hot piece of crap, not even the music industry wants anything to do with or invest in her, even though she was hot/popular at one point. Yeah, I really loved her back then," or "It all just sounds too pop." Even then, that's never really stopped Avril Lavigne from being under-hated, perhaps even overrated by fans who refuse to admit they're fans. For real, guys, she has barely made any good songs. Not even her older songs are that good. The only hidden gems she has are "Losing Grip" and "Unwanted", which people don't listen to because they prefer to focus on her hit songs from Let Go, Under My Skin and The Best Thing. Some may argue that any band or artist who inspired her has the same "unique" music and sound as Lavigne. Of course, she doesn't and neither do they. She's basic. Extremely basic. Too basic for her own good. Why, you may ask? Well, this is not her own music. It's Nickelback's, it’s Dave Matthews Band's, it's Matchbox Twenty's, it's Goo Goo Dolls', it's Alanis Morissette's, it's Pink's, it's Michelle Branch's, it's Lifehouse's, it's Third Eye Blind's, it's Stroke 9's, it could even be Jimmy Eat World's because they sold out on their core fanbase and went light rock with Bleed American (2001) and Futures (2004). This can all be found in the fact that Avril was matched with some talented professionals when she first came to New York. When Avril backed away from them, she was only matched with some more, and they wouldn't let her be the same as she was on her mixtape (Let Go: B-Sides). This spoiled brat was intended as one of the pivotal points of re-inventing punk for "this day and age". She claimed to be a punk fan, but then dismissed The Pistols and The Ramones by saying, "Why would I know that stuff? Look how young I am. That stuff's old, right?". Avril Lavigne was, in reality, more of a Christian music and pseudo-country fan. There were different ideas coming and going. She was constantly re-inventing herself, with Arista Records even making her reinvent her personal look so she and Alecia Beth Moore (professionally known as Pink) could be more "punk". The music itself was a huge gamble. As best as we remember–and we're talking about the 2000s–the Matrix sent Avril the lyrics. With no regrets, she would change a line or two with her muse on every song. For instance, the line "take off your stupid clothes" in "Complicated" was changed to "take off all your preppy clothes" at her request. Speaking of which, this song is supposedly about anti-commercialism (with the music video, which involves two security guards chasing Lavigne and her backing band around as they crash the mall, proving this truer), diversity, self-empowerment, feminism, how high school students tend to be fake by being stuck as different people when school lets out and non-conformism. However, not only does it come across as saying nothing and meaning nothing, but the Matrix got ahold of Avril's first (and, at the time, only) bootleg mixtape (it was titled Let Go: B-Sides). Even when she pitched "Losing Grip" and "Unwanted", which were written by Clif Magness, the label got a hold of both songs. After that, her music was made all poppy and generic. Her manager and producers were very toxic, with many false promises and bullcrap they tried to drive her insane with. Lavigne, of course, barely reacted to these things like the Canadian idiot she was. Therefore, Arista made her the very prototype of corporate pop, which is not what punk is or sounds like; in fact, punk is supposed to be anti-pop (with a few exceptions, as long as those bands are not embracing pop too openly to the point where any artistic merit is thrown out the window; such exceptions include Jimmy Eat World pre-Bleed American, The Ramones, The Replacements, The Buzzcocks, The Rezillos and Green Day pre-Dookie). She's playing a genre of music that has already been played to death, only she's even more commercial and radio-friendly than her non-pop influences. She's also arguably even radio-friendlier than the likes of Green Day, Blink-182, Sum 41, Linkin Park, Slipknot, Lit and System of a Down–to the point where she very rarely, if ever, falls into such rock band territories. Instead, she plays pure, completely inept, full-tilt pop in the style of Spears and Aguilera. Her trite, simplistic lyrics also give her widespread appeal. Essentially, Lavigne makes way too many statements that she thinks are important and quotes a bunch of crap, only for her to contradict that crap. She has nothing relevant to contribute to music as an art form and nothing that would make her tough, or rebellious, or non-corporate, or anti-pop, or an alternative to Britney Spears and other pop divas, or an honest person instead of a liar, or noisy/distorted enough musically for her songs to be forms of art. She is just a mindless corporate pop entity who's perfect for Catholics and SUV-owning soccer moms to crank up as loudly as possible. She does nothing more than rehash the same themes and sounds as musicians in favor of the brainwashed masses, which is exactly what Lavigne's first official release from 2002 finds her doing. Is it just us, or do "Complicated" and "Mobile" sound like practically the same song? Around the same time (and this was long before the success of Taylor Swift, who is more or less a rip-off of Lavigne, and Justin Bieber), we had such wannabe alternative idiots taking over the industry; that's the only thing Avril had to her. We can all condone The Beatles, The Byrds, The Kinks and The Who because they made—or at least used to make—good music; however, not only had The Beatles not made any new music for nearly 35 years at that point (they disbanded in 1970), but both John Lennon and George Harrison were dead. Lavigne is partly to blame for what little value there was in '90s pop music being completely wiped in the 2000s, as are her fans who say that she's better than The Beatles (but somehow think they played during the '80s), despite never listening to a single Beatles song. She hasn’t even been stomped out enough, likely because neither her fanbase nor her haters were big enough for the latter to do so constantly in the first place. We'll have you know, however, that nobody has cared about her or even given her support since 2009. Her old fanbase hasn't cared about or returned to her since 2007. The general public has despised this singer and paid no attention to her since 2013, while also judging her based almost entirely on that stupid, racist song about Japan called "Hello Kitty"—the only song by Lavigne that, instead of nobody caring about or paying any attention to the song to the point where it becomes obscure (or is perhaps loathed by punk-heads and metalheads, but not enough for others to consider it one of the worst songs ever), is hated by pretty much everyone in the world. "Hello Kitty" is the worst song from this wretched singer, period. Lavigne, whose CDs were bought endlessly 15-16 years ago (and we must repeat), is one who nobody cares about and most people didn't even have an opinion on her when she was at her peak from 2002 to 2008. With music nerds, she was pretty much a whipping girl; these rock/punk enthusiasts would trash her endlessly because "her music is not rock or punk". Well, we guess they were right about her. Her fans would end up being the only ones who cared about her when she was hot/popular… only for most of them to leave at the end of the 2000s; this is probably because nearly every pop station played her songs continuously and increasingly conservative moms were listening to this garbage all the time. Just because she doesn't nearly get the same amount of hate thrown at her as Justin Bieber doesn't mean she's a good artist, that no one hates her, that her influence on future generations wasn't negative or that music wouldn't have been the same without her. Punk-heads detest Lavigne. Metal-heads detest her, probably because one of them judged her based on "Hello Kitty", no joke. She only saw the general public come back after a four-year-hiatus so they could trash "Hello Kitty" when it was released in 2013. Rumor has it that no punk-head back in 2002 could believe what the music industry was doing to her after she'd been featured in her first MTV interview the previous year. This was their reaction:

**"Really?! A pop musician?! That’s what the music industry is planning on doing to her?! They're turning her into a generic pop conformist instead of a non-conforming punk like she thought they'd let her be?! They're using disposable pop trash to grant her wishes?! W-where do we even start?! Where do we even start with this?! So Arista Records told us that they were committed to signing a new punk artist when they had none to sign or churn out at all! This is not a punk artist! What is this?! First, several songs are banned by the industry because of the 9/11 attacks, tours are randomly postponed, Layne Staley dies… and THIS is what they do to punk! A-are they serious?! This is NOT what we were promised! They cancelled what Avril was looking forward to put out when they first signed her: one of the purest rock albums of the last 10 years and one of the best of all-time… and they give us this commercial pop crap sung by a spoiled teen girl instead. Oh my God. They give us a pop musician when they promised us that she would make new punk music for us to enjoy and she promised the same!** **The music industry just doesn't care, does it? They do not care about music and they don't care about the fans. It is one thing to not care about music… it is another thing to not care about the people within the roots of punk and grunge. This is unacceptable! A pop diva… that's what Arista thinks we've been wanting. That, and Pink. They heard her fans' screams as well as ours because we're long-time fans of rock music and we always will be. They saw all of it. They saw Avril Lavigne not saying a word about this, because they probably slapped her with an NDA. They saw how openly frustrated she was with her mixtape and how she wanted it to see it come to life. They saw how frustrated she was with the cancellation. Everyone involved in this was upset that Let Go: B-Sides had to be cancelled in favor of a poppy, over-polished debut album. She wanted to be an artist. She wanted to have some creative control on her first album, but they chose to dress it up as fluffy bubblegum pop. She wanted something that would be great. And this is what they give us: they give us PURE, COMMERCIAL POP CRAP when they promised us that they would make new punk music. This is horsecrap. This is absolutely insanity. I don't how anyone at her record label thought this was a good idea. I don't know what to say. I don't even know what to say anymore. How does the music industry screw up so often? How did it manage to alienate the fans so much? This is not punk. This is not the punk that we all knew. This is absolute bullcrap. Arista, you should be ashamed of yourselves."** Indeed, punk-heads. Indeed. She needs to stop acting like she's all artistic, all soulful, all punk rock, all about rebelling against the industry. She's been the complete opposite of all those things since the beginning, for over 21 years. At the same time, the punk community felt like giving Arista Records, a former division of Sony Music Entertainment and BMG, one year before they got bought out by someone (presumably Fat Mike of NOFX or Greg Graffin of Bad Religion, who had been rich and famous for decades, despite their pretenses); they also wished that within the first year of them getting bought out by a punk label, they would be dissolved, executive producer/CEO L.A. Reid (who was working for Pink, Avril Lavigne and Usher at the time) would be fired and Avril's debut album would get remade and it was the album that it should've been–a punk rock album like how the mainstream media was making it out to be instead of a pop one–and not just any punk album either. Lastly, the punk-heads wished (or perhaps still wish) for Lavigne and her producers to get nice, cozy jobs at an independent label that hadn't yet been bought out by a major record company so they could be treated like human beings, so Lavigne could be authentic like how they made her out to be in the first place instead of fake pop trash.

Avril Lavigne's music can pretty much be considered outdated. Even back when she was relevant, her music sounded like a horrible throwback to, let's say, the late 1980s. There is no difference between early 2000s corporate pop like Avril and soft rock, power pop, AOR, glam rock (more in the vein of Billy Idol than in David Bowie, of course), new wave (specifically the late 1980s stuff) or any hair metal ballad. When Lavigne first came out in 2002, she set pop music back 15 years so it could feel like it'd been behind the times for that long; and she came off as a horrible, forced throwback to music that stopped being popular in 1993–or 1960, if "Complicated"'s doo-wop-inspired choruses and swing rhythms help it count as such. For real, people. There was no one at her peak who loved describing her as a "dinosaur musician" like Stone Temple Pilots, Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd or Queen. They knew that they wouldn't get any kudos from people who hated pop and loved punk rock. Truth be told, more annoying papers were being sold than kudos in the 2000s, and Lavigne was one of them. Dr. Steve Williams, associate professor of sociology, gave us an abridged history of rock 'n' roll and its association with social climates and social movements–which, sadly, Avril contributed nothing to and never catered to anyone from such movements. The following, in his own words, covers the decades of the 1950s-1960s. There's been this association that music, whether it's jazz or rock, has an element of danger and a little bit of "coolness" that's associated with that danger, which has created moral panics. Stanley Cohen, a sociologist and criminologist, coined the term "moral panics". He used it when he was talking about the mods and the rockers (who were part of two youth subcultures) in England. During the early '60s, they had rumbles with the rockers, the subculture that was into early American rock and roll, whereas the mods were into more cutting-edge R&B. They had fights and the British media glommed onto that and probably made it scarier than it actually was. Stanley Cohen said this was an example of moral panic–where respectable adult society is freaked out by something new in culture. Usually, that new thing in culture is associated with young people and perceived threats to its cultural identity. For a while, there were about 10-year cycles of moral panics, the first one of which was in the 1950s. Rock and roll is not just an American invitation, but it's an African-American invention. If you look at basic rock and roll, the fundamental formula is basically African American blues with a little more speed and electricity. One of the moral panics associated with the first wave of rock 'n' roll was the fear of race mixing–that young black and white kids would get together over this music that had rhythmic, primitive, sensuous beats and instrumentation. Suburban moms and dads were freaked out about their daughters hanging out with young black men listening to sexualized music. There's a long, ugly history in America over the fear of race mixing and of lynching black men because of their perceived desire for white women. To have young, teenage white girls in America screaming to someone like Little Richard as he sang, "Good golly, Miss Molly, you sure like to ball. When you're rockin' and rollin', can't hear your mama call." That was brand new in the American experience and it freaked a lot of people out. It was a moral panic about not just sexuality and race mixing, but pureness and loud noise. Rock and roll sort of calmed down at the end of the '50s. A lot of things happened sort of simultaneously. There was a terrible plane crash that killed Buddy Holly, The Big Bopper and Ritchie Valens. Elvis Presley went into the military for a while and wasn't making music. When he did come back, he was a little bit out of step and wasn't quite the same. Jerry Lee Lewis' record company and radio stations stopped supporting his music; 50 years later, Avril Lavigne would suffer the same fate as Jerry. In 1959 or 1960, it seemed like rock 'n' roll almost disappeared. Mothers and fathers could breathe a sigh of relief as their kids listened to Brenda Lee and Neil Sedaka–"safe", white teen idols with glowing white teeth. By the mid-60s, things started percolating. Young people started to listen to folk music a bit more, Woody Guthrie, Joan Baez and Bob Dylan. Folk brought in greater lyrical content to rock 'n' roll. So instead of a basic, two-minute love song, you could have songs that covered just about anything. You had the British invasion in 1964. Young British kids were listening to American rock 'n' roll and R&B and were forming their own bands. In the ‘60s, you had all these amazing British bands: The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, The Kinks, The Who, etc. Now there was the idea of the self-contained band; instead of having songs written for them and using studio musicians, they were writing their own lyrics and music. They played all their own instruments and toured as a group, which meant they controlled what they were expressing. Combine that with folk music expanding lyrical content and suddenly you have a whole new set of fears. Things were being expressed in ways they weren't before. Not only was there suggested sexuality of rock and roll, there was an actual free love movement. There was more talk of actual drugs, so instead of the suggestion that someone might be on pills or smoking pot, they were very overtly making psychedelic music. The Beatles were admitting in interviews that they did LSD. A Harvard psychology professor, Timothy Leary told people to "tune in, turn on and drop out." You had Jefferson Airplane in 1967 singing about "feeding your head" and smoking caterpillars. Suddenly, the drugs and sexuality were overt. Music started to connect to other social movements like the civil rights movement. This was also a time of second-wave feminism–and you had music connecting to those ideas. You had music connecting to the general hippie counterculture–free love and rejecting materialism and adult "square" society. The anti-Vietnam movement was not as strong in the beginning as people think, but it did happen, especially after the bombing of Cambodia. That started off all these protests of these young people shutting down campuses, the calling out of the National Guard, the shooting and killing of four students at Kent State University and two at Jackson State University.

Fast-forward to the 2000s and now you have rock instrumentation (i.e. guitars, drums, basslines) and over-singing (or in other words, screaming as many meek and ear-piercing melodies as possible) being added to a lot of safe pop music, which is **NOT** a form of art, along with mainstream articles calling it "rock". A lot of music is also now nothing more than very-poorly repackaged '60s-'80s nostalgia. The death of classic rock sees the genre try to embed itself in the standardly recognized sounds of blues rock, teen rock (basically teen pop with a rock flavor), hard rock, traditional heavy metal, power/jangle pop, Southern rock, post-punk revival and more; the rise of modern rock and the infamous post-grunge sees them do the same as well, as is the case with the aforementioned hard rock genre. The uneducated masses don't bother to escape this by playing more challenging music, both old and new, that isn't radio-friendly and dares these people to sit through an entire album without going, "Oh no. No, no, no, this isn't music. No, we don't like this. It's just screaming. No, that's enough. Go to your rooms, kids. You're grounded." Music also now has a new element that best defines it; unfortunately, it's the same as it was with mainstream rock in the '80s, with the new decade's hit parade featuring several one-hit wonders capturing the ears of the public. Many of these new one-hit wonders have never, and will never, make much of an impact with regards to commercial success on either pop or rock radio. The year is 2002 and three years from then, "Because You Live" and "Beautiful Soul" by Jesse McCartney are being played nonstop on Radio Disney. Only the latter song is known by most people and pretty much sets Jesse up as a one-hit wonder, but he keeps going and will even co-write "Bleeding Love" for Leona Lewis in a couple of years. The decade is, above all (and will be by the time it's over), a time of international corporatization; this is partly because only two of the six dominant American record companies have been headquartered in the United States since 1990. Cross-promotional hoo-hah has been the rule of the music industry since the 1980s—the misuse of punk and grunge as fashion styles rather than music genres, the soundtrack album, the sponsored tour, the golden oldie commercial, the T-shirt franchise, the music video and pay-for-play programming—all of which are killing potentially good artists who have just signed major label contracts for the first time, and sadly, Avril Lavigne is no exception. She comes in strutting her lameness as if teen pop has never declined or isn't dying, even though it started declining at least a year prior. Her B-Sides mixtape (recorded between early and mid-2001 at an obscure record label called Nettwerk and released in December of that year, though a few songs were instead recorded at Arista Records) shows her having something great and interesting going for her, yet Arista decides to scrap that and retool it as the overproduced pop rock abomination that is her first real album, Let Go. At the same time, Arista Records is watering down Avril and forcing her to let pop radio take over her sound if she wants to have any commercial success. Now all these buying poptimists and tone-deaf critics who'll give positive reviews to anything as long as it sounds like everything else on the radio are over-analyzing Lavigne; they're giving her far more credit than she actually deserves. Still, Arista already ruined Lavigne and over-commercialized her before her career could even begin, and now whatever talent she had as a young Christian girl in the 1990s is long gone. It's gone forever. She'll never return to her roots in doing covers of already-bad songs and sticking to it; now she's one of those annoying pop divas you'll hear on Soft Rock 93, where "Complicated", "Sk8er Boi" and "I'm with You" are played over and over. Ignored by or long gone from the mainstream media and radio in favor of Avril are bands like Incubus, Metallica, Pantera, Judas Priest, Megadeth, Death, Helloween, Slayer, The Pistols, The Ramones, The Clash, Agent Orange, Wire, The Descendents, The Replacements, Bad Religion, At the Drive-In and DEVO. In a case being made that pop music is at its zenith, the era represents an overly patriotic swoon, with Toby Keith (B.I.H.) and the Arista Records-signed Carrie Underwood releasing "American Soldier" and "All-American Girl". Needless to say, both songs end up sucking and receive little-to-no mainstream attention. The entire decade is more notable than the '80s for creating more musical malaise and pandering to nostalgia, going so far as to repackage 1980s sounds for future generations. Even music directors for radio stations know this, with record companies tightly controlling and developing a formula for artists and radio stations tightening their playlists, all to the happy applause of the music execs. The rapid creativity of radio stations pre-1996 is all but dead and has been replaced by preplanned, survey-tested radio formats. No longer are program and music directors left to their own knowledge and gut as to what makes a hit. They defer to the "experts". It's a disaster. The same songs are played and replayed to the point of monotony. Music and then radio lose their audience, and since Avril Lavigne's music is made for just this purpose, it suffers. Actual rock music is replaced with such top 40-approved pop rock drivel on adult contemporary and modern rock radio, forcing millions of people who would otherwise be listening to Judas Priest or Bad Religion to endure Lavigne's sludge. On modern rock stations, however, they are instead forced to endure her band equivalent Good Charlotte, their pseudo-political complaining about nothing that really matters and their faux-rebellion. When they're not enduring Good Charlotte, then they either have to endure Simple Plan, Panic! at the Disco, Fall Out Boy, Nickelback or Evanescence. In a significant way, there is even more music that all sounds the same than there already was in the '80s as the 2000s progress. As they do, the decade goes on to represent the creeping destruction of musical creativity. The few shining moments in this decade are achieved by those acts permitted by their corporate producers to test the boundaries of acceptable, on-air material.

Lavigne thinks she's a tough rock 'n' roller because, according to YM Magazine, she used to get in fights with guys and kick them. Her parents were worried about her because she was so small and skinny. The boys' moms cheered, "Go, Avril, go!". Avril thought it was awesome. When she was performing at a radio showcase in Orlando, Florida in July 2002, it turned into what she thought was a "tiny riot" after she criticized Aaron Carter and O-Town for lip-syncing. This made the radio station furious. YM, the source of which this information comes from, claimed that "Avril didn't censor herself nor did her record label censor her". That, of course, is a lie. She's operated more than, and just as fraudulent as, a psychic with caller ID. It's why her songs have been commercial disappointments at best (outside of East Asia) since Goodbye Lullaby in 2011 and deserved it in the first place. This artist is most definitely **NOT** uncensored, vulgar (but her lyrics often have been since 2007's The Best Thing–with her frequently and unnecessarily belting out swear words–which shows how much she has regressed to a childlike state) or raw, she's the complete opposite. Record companies have, in fact, censored her as much as other corporate-sponsored pieces of crap who have been made to hog store shelves, spit-polished to look stylish, created to play songs like "Unwritten" (a token display of third-wave feminism by Natasha Bedingfield where she is purely misandrist and seeks supremacy rather than equality, despite her intentions) to try and be "cool" and played 600,000,000 times a day on the radio stations (too many of which are owned by iHeartRadio). Clearly the only reason Lavigne ever made it into the music industry was to fill the large venues the likes of Britney Spears and N Sync used to perform at. While record companies have been endlessly marketing her as a passionate young girl who can write her own songs for the past 22 years, she really just exists to do this: perform pre-written songs designed to appeal to the masses in big stadiums. This also explains why she's beyond generic and overproduced. We will concede that there was a time when its ubiquity hurt the ambient sense of its artistic worth. Now the pendulum has swung the other way, though, with so many people shaking their fists at the punk elites who disparage Let Go to this day and doing a little phony populism that "it's a very good album". It's not. It's very far from good. In addition to Lavigne and her American equivalent Pink's fake, shiny gloss, along with their opposition to the purpose of rock/punk, their songs never feel sloppy or diverse. Rock and punk were both meant to highlight the beauty and community found in places that were once overlooked immediately. They were very influential and important to the post-WWII era and American society. Rock music inspired many new styles of music like reggae and hip-hop while also inspiring older styles of music like classical and blues. Avril Lavigne and Pink only pummel out disguised radio pop you would hear on some corny WB or Disney show like One Tree Hill, Lizzie McGuire or some crap like that. It's devoid of dirt, grime and anything… well, original. Imperfect. Honest. Flawless in one's opinion, but very low-budget and flawed production-wise. Therefore, Lavigne is responsible for making every past generation fall into the cycle of "All of today's music sucks. My generation's music was much better." The main thing with this we'd like to point out is that anyone who says this likely relies on music charts/"Today’s Hits" playlists to look for new music. If you rely on that to tell you what's available, it's inevitable you'll be disappointed because charts and radio play have always catered to whatever can bring in the money. The charts were no different when Avril was at the height of her popularity in the 2000s than they are now, unfortunately. While bands and artists whose songs are to highlight the beauty and community that are currently/were once being overlooked in media (sort of like the earlier seasons of Sesame Street, which have nothing to do with music or anything we're talking about) are good, sparkling noughties pop music reminiscent of a Disney Channel Original Movie soundtrack is not. That's exactly what Lavigne's music sounds like and we hate her for it. The only way she (or perhaps Arista Records) thought she could be made famous was if she pandered to teenagers who were living in her time, posting every genre/style/subgenre of music on the internet. Most of the time, when this was brought up to people who said this, they scoffed and acted like it wasn't worth their time to dig. This might've just meant the music didn't matter to them as much as they made it seem. Lavigne only made it even more difficult to find good music outside of the internet because her record label, MTV and Clear Channel only designed her for profit and ego-boosting purposes. There were still people making good music around the time that she was, but it took effort to track down; Lavigne's took none whatsoever. "Sk8er Boi", despite eventually being released in September 2002 and becoming a smash hit in November (and being the only song with a pop punk edge on Let Go, though even then, it was purely akin to pop rock/power pop rather than the former), failed to meet Arista Records' expectations and only made them all the more desperate to go overboard with commercializing her music. They felt that making Let Go a crappy, inept post-grunge/pop rock album rather than a crappy, inept skate rock one a la The Offspring or Blink-182 would make Lavigne sound more like Faith Hill and give her songs the vibe they wanted—while also polishing nearly every song with hip-hop-style production that included droning electronic beats and turntables, believing that doing so would make her music more accessible; and boy, were they right. Then again, Lavigne quoted herself as saying, "I was born with a love for music. I listened to a lot of different stuff; everything from Dixie Chicks, Faith Hill and Shania Twain to Goo Goo Dolls, Matchbox Twenty, Third Eye Blind and Green Day." The beats on this album, much like in urban, techno and mainstream hip-hop/rap, are not even used musically or creatively.

With certain exceptions such as Bad Religion, The Sex Pistols, Led Zeppelin, The Rolling Stones, David Bowie (mainly his 1970s glam rock output), Pink Floyd and Rush, classic rock has long been considered out-of-fashion. Since Lavigne's first two albums (possibly even her third one) showcase her attempting to do that kind of music, she was seen by music elitists as outdated–and well, not punk rock, even before she ceased to be a musical fad in 2009. Even today, she is almost never considered retro or cool. Back then, Lavigne's producers were intent on having her step into Britney Spears and Faith Hill's shoes, yes. However, upon hearing her requests (one of them being "I want rock and punk inclinations in my songs"), L.A. Reid brought in The Matrix and Clif Magness; and all they did was try to make her sound as "old school" and "shockingly '80s" as possible. The finished product, which is this album, sounds awful. Every song, even the very few good ones, sounds incredibly dated. The album has aged like spoiled milk because, like we want to say, it sounds too 1987 for 2002 standards. The production sheen not only screams noughties, but you'll be left with rehashed, unoriginal pop music from 1987-1992 if you remove it. You won't even be left with a rock song if you strip away the guitars because of how cheap, blatantly disguised, watered-down and redundant everything sounds. Let Go, according to Wikipedia, was recorded between May 2001 and March 2002, but it sounds way older than that. Even "Complicated" sounds and is an outdated jam; it is a pathetic attempt at paying tribute to '50s R&R (rock and roll) and is nothing more than an insult to the genre that helped make rock music what it is today. It's just a pop song with basic 4/4 beats, swung rhythms and lyrics full of teen angst and one that panders to simple-minded people with an obviously mainstream understanding of music. Even with her first-ever hit ("Complicated"), Lavigne is by no means raw, heavy, fast-tempo, fuzz, "distortion and effects". Also, saying that rock songs "sound the same as every other rock song" shows how little the masses know of the genre and music in general. Rock is widely considered one of (if not **THE**) many diverse music genres. Comparing rock and classical music/jazz is not at all far-fetched either. Spend five minutes on Google or study the genres and you will see surprising similarities. Lavigne, being the pop sadist she is, sucks out the surging and propulsive energy of R&R while laughing. There is no tempo variety, with Lavigne and her producers favoring a very slow tempo of 78 BPM. There is no wide array of lyrical subjects and the ones "Complicated" focuses on are way too common. The genre's roots in blues, country and Southern America are completely dropped here. The song primarily draws on post-grunge, power pop, the aforementioned R&R, roots rock, blue-eyed soul and jangle pop–but as these elements and influences are all blended with pop or put in a commercial pop construct, they don't make the song any less bland. The purists who claim there was no more rock and roll as it was originally defined after the 1950s ended are also right because this song is a cheap imitation of R&R (let alone rock music in general). After the whittling and demise of all those '80s production excesses, Lavigne and her band (with the help of a faceless record company owned by BMG and Sony Music Entertainment) somehow end up bringing them back; instead of dialing back the reverb like punk-influenced bands such as Nirvana or actual punk ones, they choose to dial it up to 11, in opposition to these bands' stripped-down production. This is a big problem with the drum tracks, which are over-compressed and reverberated to the point where **a.)** every guitar track is completely buried and **b.)** they don't even sound like actual drums. The generic synth flourishes on Avril's Let Go album only add fuel to the fire, as does the songs constantly shifting between their inexplicable hip-hop production and live drumming; the former is an elaboration of why mainstream music, especially hip-hop a la Eminem, The Lonely Island, XXXTentacion (R.I.P.) or Lil' Wayne, is fake and has no creativity. As previously mentioned, the hip-hop fabrication was only thrown in during post-production because The Matrix and Clif Magness wanted to give Lavigne's music the vibe L.A Reid and his employees at Arista wanted. No, not a vibe that she asked for, one that her then-executive producer was asking for because of how desperate he was to recoup Britney Spears' losses. Seriously, the slick Max Martin-Dr. Luke-Neptunes-Kristian Lundin production on this thing sucks and prevents it from ever being actual rock music, let alone bearing even the slightest resemblance to rock or punk in any way. Listen to what we're about to say, Avril: pop songs with organic instrumentation **ARE NOT ORGANIC THEMSELVES. THEY'RE STILL FAKE.** Yeah, we really needed your sell-out excuses for songs that pander to the lowest common denominator, Lavigne, because they barely have any live instrumentation and can't decide whether to be purely electronic or rockier and more organic-sounding; they just switch back and forth between the two. Rock music is **NOT,** and we repeat, **ABSOLUTELY CANNOT** be limited to synth flourishes, over-computerized guitars playing the same four chords non-stop and a single, boring beat. But that's exactly what your producers, your record companies or whoever you've been working with since 2000 **HAVE STRAIGHT-UP RESTRICTED YOU TO.** You, Avril "Corporate" Lavigne, don't know any better than to conform to everything your producers tell you to do and yet pretend to act rebellious. You have no soul, even though you act like you do, which makes you the very definition of a poser. Your music is soulless, Avril. We can't believe you and your fans have **THIS** little taste in culture. Brainwashed sheeple cannot be punk or rock and roll if they're just going to follow and listen to whatever they're told or like the sound of pop music–just its melodic nature and the way it sounds–because they can't comprehend that computerized garbage like your music, Ms. Lavigne (as with everything else on top 40 radio), is too commercial, soulless and uniform to be considered rock/punk. Yep, you seem to have taken it to the next level with this production that belongs more in teen pop, new wave, techno, bad psychedelia, hip-hop or urban music. Punk is not supposed to be all spit-polished and vacuum-sealed or mix guitars with electronic beats, yet this sounds like it was produced and engineered by Max Martin or Dr. Luke (who both actually went on to produce and write for you, Avril, after Under My Skin). We imagine you and Arista Records had a conversation before they set out to make Let Go. You all probably know how that conversation went, but if Lavigne and her team didn't have that conversation, this album wouldn't have been the result.

* Lavigne is forced to bring back the anthemic sounds of hair metal and arena rock, which stopped being popular in 1991 and 1993 respectively; when they did, so would've the production excesses; thus, not only is a majority of 2000s corporate pop already dated, but mass amounts of low-quality music like Avril's would've been churned out between 1987 and 1992.
* She has an even more over-polished sound than any hair metal or arena rock band; not unlike everyone else in the McEmo genre, she sounds more classic rock, heavy metal, soft rock or pop-influenced than anything on both Let Go and Under My Skin. Also not helping matters is that pop punk would be slowly phased out by 2001 in favor of McEmo; a majority of these new bands carried little to no punk influences and ended up gaining far more prominence than actual pop punk bands, with a few exceptions like Green Day and Blink-182 (well, until their self-titled album in 2003, when the band moved away from their skate punk and melodic hardcore roots). Avril helped McEmo grow in worldwide popularity as a genre with her nursery rhyme-esque melodies, her sing-along choruses, her stage antics, her androgynous aesthetics (which were heavily toned down between Under My Skin and The Best Damn Thing), her complete and utter lack of dirty, raw sounds and her oversaturation in the mainstream–all of which have long been irrelevant, feel out-of-place and no longer belong in the evolution of music.
* Her music is not distinctive, due to it harking back to the wasteland of post-Led Zeppelin radio, when any second-rate band that sounded like R.E.M. would've been considered edgy and rebellious by MTV. Had "Complicated" been recorded in 1987, it would've sounded like every hair metal ballad at the time and whoever performed it would've been going through the same motions as those bands; the AOR ones like Journey; the soft rock ones like Chicago; the anthemic power pop ones like Outfield and The Romantics; new wave bands like Blondie and Lady Pank; older adult alternative bands like Crowded House; the sophisti-pop ones like Spandau Ballet and Tears for Fears, only dropping the pop beats and synthesizers in favor of rock beats and more guitars.
* Throughout the history of pop music, there has always been some incarnation of it being played; a major one involving Avril "Corporate" and her guitar-based contemporaries in the 2000s was more or less derived from '80s mainstream rock. In a world where popular artists appealed to the masses and didn't last long, we need to look at where rock was in the 2000s. Among the last classic rock bands were Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, The Who and The Rolling Stones, who were having their last go-round. Thanks to Avril "Corporate" Lavigne, however, top 40 radio was starting to harken back to the days of disposable hair metal and arena rock–an era where bands like Def Leppard, Mötley Crüe, Poison, Journey and REO Speedwagon were considered "cool". Even '90s modern rock was having its last go-round, with terrible throwback pop singers like Lavigne overshadowing the likes of Pearl Jam and Stone Temple Pilots, selling out arenas worldwide. Even most rock artists, both modern and classic, no longer got past venues like the House of Blues or Hard Rock Cafe. Avril "Corporate" was not one of them, and well, her music was pure pop with a thin veneer of rock. She sold out concerts entirely on two radio hits, "Complicated" and "Sk8er Boi", which is sad. On the other hand, Visual Audio Sensory Theater, or VAST for short, managed to work their way up from the bottom with two masterpiece albums and non-stop touring; they played their hearts out at every show. On the other hand, all Lavigne did was attempt to bring back cheaply-made forms of lowest-common-denominator entertainment that were prevalent in the late '80s.
* Lavigne ended up adding elements of arena rock, grunge, hair metal, soft rock, power pop and roots rock–all of which were long outdated–to her contemporary pop sound for the sake of pandering to nostalgia. Voila! Now she was in Hollywood and had a high profile, all for thinking that the only way to be punk was by simply pandering to '80s nostalgia. She managed to do everything worse with a higher, more image-obsessed budget, worse songwriting and her own persona that she thought made her "punk rock". Thanks to such top 40 live performances as hers, concerts were no longer events. No, not even rock concerts, as the music industry managed to regress them into Friday night parties. No longer were concerts a story. It was the 2000s and the insane crowd was breaking the barriers at Lavigne's concerts, which is why she unintentionally ended up bringing back stadium rock as a pop façade; a newer imitation that was even more cheap and over-commercialized than the genre it was trying to mimic.

How much you like this album depends on how well you tolerate trash made by someone who thinks her music isn't all about the atmosphere or thinks she's different from the other girls out there. It also depends on how much you care about evolving and complain about how such mainstream pop garbage is not part of musical evolution. Why, you may ask? Because you know how non-mainstream music and formerly underground genres like metal have evolved for the better. If you find any meaning and pleasure in a painting consisting of balls splattered on canvas, then here's the album for you. Let Go by Avril Lavigne is all about the atmosphere. Her whiny vocals, the excessive Pro Tools effects/vocoding, the jangly guitars and the bombast (thanks to heavy layering and overproduction) all create a sense of being stuck in traffic. All the drivers are wishing they were dead. This is purely an atmosphere–a harshly unpleasant atmosphere at that. If you like skittering, slithering rhythms with nothing else adoring them, buy this album. If you hate rock and roll, audible guitars or any instrument that's both audible and identifiable, buy this album. Please don't give us any negative notes for not liking you, OK? We all listened to this straight. This album is very boring, weird in a bad way, meaningless and corporate. If you like it, that's your business, but this is very overpraised. We tried not to "let go" of this (pun intended), but it's very bad "ferrying your noisy, poorly-behaved teens to and from school" music. It's not even good "put it on in the kitchen or living room" music. It's like a wall of unmemorable beats and noises coming off as being very thoughtfully put together–one that is devoid of sincere angst, emotion and passion and is only about as punk as Alanis Morissette or Phil Collins. This is music that's limited to its essential elements, which grow in real time, and never explores further than those elements. It's music made for your ears to adapt to, but when you listen to it with fresh ears you have a much broader picture of the piece and the nuance doesn't feel as special anymore; also, Avril never pushes the boundaries of what's technically possible or pave the way for more creativity by expanding what's possible, which further explains why she's not rock or punk. Almost every metalhead would bash her if they even knew her at all. And most people probably haven't even been Avril fans since her mainstream popularity ended in 2009 anyway, let alone ever being fans of a pretentious singer like Lavigne.

As Let Go is a shining example of how to save a music lover from wasting money on such overpraised trash, the songs all sound like someone was high on sugar, entered a recording studio with a few instruments and pushed buttons on every keyboard they could find. Some may call the songs "avant-garde", but this is what we call unlistenable. It's proof that if critics and casual listeners (and the younger and more inexperienced they are, the worse) rave about an album, it's best to leave it alone. Avril needs to listen to her first album again and remember what it's like not to write a song. She was, and is, trying too hard to be hip and strange–enough to leave the listener wondering what this girl was on. This is trash that ought to have been given away for free when it came out. Why anyone would pay for this is beyond us. Since Avril Lavigne was a Christian way before her fame and went to church every Sunday with her parents, it makes even less sense for her to think she can be herself, has ever been herself or can put as many pieces together to complete a project that's exclusively her own. Let Go resembles a gang of infants who cut loose on a few instruments with a computer doing the rest of the work for them. For those who bought Let Go, please do yourselves a favor and take some aspirin before you play it. You'll be glad you did. The sound on this album and the fact that Arista Records didn't let Avril have it her way makes it clear that she can't, never has and never will. No offense to Christians; we'll let them live how they're living and how they want to. However, we think that Christianity sucks. Even "Christian punk" gives punk a bad name like Avril's music does. Christianity is not punk and far from unique in that it rejects science in all forms and, ironically, people. It does nothing but serve as proof that there's no intelligent design, which is not punk. Christians believe there's a vast secular conspiracy to exterminate their ilk by not forcing kids to pray to their deity and taking the word "God" off of coins, which is absolutely not punk. Christianity is all about accusing others of hating Jesus, which is not punk. Asking "Why do you hate Jesus?" is like asking, "Why do you hate America?" We don't hate America, and if we did, that wouldn't be punk. The typical Christian MO in the universe, though, from the day it is miserably conceived and thrust into the world, destroys the most promising scientific mind possible in order to replace it with some moronic stubbornness; that right there is not punk and it'll never even be close. To suggest to fundamentalism and Christianity that the Bible is poorly-written fiction will probably result in you being burnt at the stake. Christianity is also very defensive about degeneracy; if you hear Let Go: B-Sides, "Losing Grip" (2003) or "Unwanted" (2002), you'll hardly recognize Avril's music. As L.A. Reid was the matriarch of his employees, everyone was focused on getting her on TRL (Total Request Live) and the radio. They gave her very specific marching orders in order to make her happy such as "we want you to make hits" and "you were singing country music in your auditions; we want a Faith Hill-like vibe so you can be a country singer, and if that doesn't work, we'll find whatever producers we can to meet our demands". Then they wanted her to cater to the same demographic as Britney Spears and The Backstreet Boys by having the same safe bubblegum songs as them; instead of letting her sing punk or actual rock songs like she wanted to since they heard that Lavigne was discovering guitar-based rock, they made her do generic pop rock/post-grunge songs a la Nickelback or Matchbox Twenty (the former of whom is an actual rock band), making her a prime example of musical degeneracy. Avril wanted "rock and punk inclinations" in her songs, **BUT THEY PUT THE LEAST AMOUNT OF EFFORT THEY COULD IN BENDING DOWN TO HER WISHES INSTEAD OF VICE-VERSA.** Didn't every artist want a hit? Surely, Avril must have wanted one as much as her record label wanted the same. L.A. Reid tried to make up for all this and let Avril's team compromise by making her sober, which was all during the 2000s–an even more bizarre decade to be sober in than the '80s. She tried to make it up to him and his employees by simply being a good girl. When the Matrix played "Complicated" for Lavigne, they thought it sounded like a smash hit and it was set as her debut single. Obviously, she wanted to be no worse than bland. She either wanted to be "alternative" (something that her 2001 bootleg mixtape was far closer to and more inspired by than anything) or, you guessed it, punk rock. Well, they made her bland post-grunge trash no matter what. What else was there for the masses to expect other than written-on-the-toilet-style, generic diva pop (with country pop-esque song structures and post-grunge-oriented sounds) from this Canuck? And this was only her first album. 22 years later, Lavigne still can't sing a song that doesn't sound **EXACTLY** like every other song her team has penned or that other artists have penned. We guess if there were 30 million losers buying everything she'd ever crapped out on a cocktail napkin between 2002 and 2007, why bother? We're not sure what kind of woman plays songs like these. They made the lyrics banal and tedious as though a 15-year-old girl wrote them in her tear-soaked diary just because they wanted a "Faith Hill kind of vibe" or because Warner Bros. Nashville wrote Faith's lyrics as such. It's hard to even gauge what this singer's influences are as a musician. She sounds as though she's just walking through each song, going through the motions. In any event, Lavigne has to be among the most uninventive, talentless artists in the "sound-alike pop radio" genre. The saddest part is, listening to bands and artists like Ashlee Simpson, Rascal Flatts, Faith Hill, Shania Twain, Maroon 5, Goo Goo Dolls, The Jonas Brothers, Panic! at the Disco, Skye Sweetnam, Michelle Branch, Katy Rose, Meghan Trainor, Ke$ha, Katy Perry, Paramore, Fall Out Boy, N Sync, Kelly Clarkson, Britney Spears, Hilary Duff, Nickelback, The Calling, Simple Plan, Blink-182, The All-American Rejects, Sum 41, 5 Seconds of Summer, Good Charlotte, Miley Cyrus, Selena Gomez, Demi Lovato, Matchbox Twenty, Jennifer Lopez, My Chemical Romance and All-Time Low—it is next to impossible to tell who's ripping who off. Maybe they don't even know anymore. Dozens of truly gifted British and North American bands only sold a fraction of the units that Avril did, whether before or during her 15 minutes of fame. Uninspired, uninventive and oozing with bad pop clichés, she is proof that there's no accounting for art and is exactly the person who made things so complicated (pun intended) by flushing pop music down the toilet (as if it wasn't horrible enough in the '80s and '90s already). Her music is too bland, slow-paced and tame, even though her record label gave her an ample amount of creative writing control to (quote) "avoid playing it safe so she could be punk, stand out and be herself". She lacks musical education and so do her past producers, in addition to her current producers, which isn't helped by her mass appeal and that the masses are also musically uneducated. Her only purpose is to get even more rich and famous than she already is; it's the money that matters to her, not the music, and it mattered to her parents all the way back in 2000 when they helped Lavigne sign her very first record contract more than punk. Her records were all financed because instead of doing more than just giving her a certain amount of creative control, such as bothering to fund her talent or encouraging her fans to do the same, they just ran the corporate system. They monitored and controlled her content very closely. Punk-like bands such as Nirvana and Pearl Jam and actual punk ones like Bad Religion didn't rely on digital editing. They relied on live performance. Pop music does not rely on live performance and Avril Lavigne is no exception. In summation: she is bad for going through the same phase of heavy reliance on/fascination with filling large venues and recording technology as every other famous music industry junkie. Artista Records attempted to comply when they found out that she wanted some rock/punk inclinations in her music, but they simply added rock instrumentation (e.g. guitars, bass lines, drums) to generic pop songs and mixed them as loudly as they could. The masses seemed to love these inorganic sounds, the over-compression, the excessive reverb, her alien-like voice, but others found them and Lavigne irritating. Lavigne wasn't one of those people, even though she should've been. She wouldn't have been stupid or unintelligent had she stuck to going down to her local music venue and feasting her ears on some actual human sounds, experimentation, pitch variations and all–all while never insisting on turning into a pop slave.

Things that alienate Lavigne consist of but are not limited to:

* Science
* Pokémon (because it is seen as Satanic by soccer moms when it's really not)
* Intelligence
* Fun
* Joy
* Thinking
* Literacy
* Reason
* Healthcare
* Genuine freedom
* Social programs
* Harry Potter books
* Evolution
* Abortion
* Non-pop music and non-conservative rock, especially noise rock, metal and punk
* Dinosaurs
* Rebellion

Oh yeah, did we mention Avril's vocals? She is one of the most awful vocalists out there. She has no range whatsoever. She sings with no passion. This ungrateful daughter is utterly horrible. The things that would've set her bootleg mixtape/demo album apart from the top 40 pack were its rawer, low-budget production and a lack of droning from Lavigne. Let Go sounds way too radio-friendly and extremely slick when taking its high budget into consideration, and Avril's vocal contortions from her scrapped mixtape made in 2001 are butchered beyond all belief; she sounds so whiny now that her voice is almost vomit-inducing. The only songs in which Avril sounds remotely good are... well, there were a lot on her bootleg album (Let Go: B-Sides), but this has none. Her voice is insanely whiny, breathy, raspy, **NOT EMO** and screechy. The first thing to establish on her being a very poor singer is that it seems to us like Lavigne hasn't had much vocal training. No, not even 22 years later. She's just droning on the songs because that feels "punk" to her. This not only causes problems whenever the songs demand anything difficult from Lavigne, but no one should do it. It makes their singing sound funny, not unlike yarling (which post-grunge is a lot more infamous for). Inspired by yarling, this is a weird trend that has been inescapable in most forms of rock and pop music since the late 1990s; it was first popularized by the likes of Green Day, Blink-182 and Alanis Morrissette. Droning is the idea of singing pop music with crisp, clear vocals, but in an "ah" or "er" shape, a la Mark Hoppus and Tom DeLonge. That's what drones sound like. That's what it sounds like in pop music. If you pronounce every vowel as the letter A or as "ah"/"er", you're technically gonna sound like you have a filing cabinet crammed up your nose. Most of the people who actually drone try way too hard to sound feminine, British or tomboyish; chances are they already have tomboyish or feminine voices or British accents to begin with, so they don't need to at all. It's an annoying, exaggerated vocal affectation that many pop singers are still using, thinking it is emotionally expressive or **"T0T4LLY PXNK RAWK"**… or something. "Hey, I'm singing the way a punk rocker or alternative kid is supposed to," they think. Paul Rogers did not drone. Johnny Rotten did not drone. Robert Plant did not drone. Ian Gillan did not drone. Liz Phair did not drone. Joan Jett did not drone. Joey Ramone did not whine or drone. Kurt Cobain did not drone. Bon Scott did not drone. Robby Takac did not drone. Pat Benatar did not drone. The Wilson sisters did not drone. Black Francis and Kim Deal did not drone. Cindy Wilson did not drone. Kate Pierson did not drone. Ozzy Osbourne did, somewhat, but to call his singing mere "droning" is like calling WWII a "disagreement". Bob Halford did not, though he did other unspeakable things with his voice. Robert Plant (another style model that no one has successfully cloned) did not drone. Al Green did it, but he's Al Green and is always willing to be himself. Who could we have pointed the finger at in the 2000s? Avril Lavigne, of course. **"Whah'd yah hahve tah gah an' mahke things sah cahmplahcahyted?"** she drones in her big radio song. The problem is that the current crop of drones is copping their shtick from someone else who was actually quite restrained at droning like all the other crops. Another is that Lavigne remains a very poor singer. It's outright awful and it seems like she hasn't had much vocal training, instead just singing the songs in the most obvious way possible. In particular, she seems to have a very narrow range that's comfortable for her—there are a lot of low notes on this album where she gets audibly fainter and breathier, like she's struggling to hit them; when she has to belt in her higher range a la Alanis Morrisette, Fiona Apple or Sheryl Crow, she sounds very strained and often continuously switches between her head voice and her chest voice. The effect is oddly childish, considering that Avril was 17 when she released this album—she comes off like a young performer trying to stretch her voice beyond what it's capable of. It doesn't help that there are a lot of noticeably pitchy moments where she just outright fails to hit the note that she's going for. It's not constant or anything, but it happens about once per song on average, mainly when she's belting; it's extremely noticeable when it happens. This just adds to the general effect of amateur level singing that pervades the whole album. The half-octave she sticks to never seems to rise above bad either nor does the higher cooing. On top of that, the ultra-computerized, artificially flawless, precise, sterile vocal sounds made by her that show up on every song from Let Go and Under My Skin are just horrible. "I Don't Give", the studio version of "Why" and "Get Over It" from her 2001 unsolicited mixtape also suffer from this, as they were recorded at Arista Records instead of Nettwerk. You can't tell the difference between her and the other pop princesses of her era since they've all been produced into these single, bland, homogenized Pro Tools effects. This is yet another one of the biggest problems with Avril Lavigne–her use of Pro Tools. Complaining about Pro Tools helps us understand what it means, whereas Auto-Tune is a self report to understanding that it's more than just an umbrella term. Pro Tools has been added to almost every artist's vocals in a certain amount since 1998, just like how producers add some level of compression to their voice. This stuff has been going on since the beginning of pop music. Most pop hits since the '70s have had spliced vocals where ideal takes are combined. Since advanced sampling began in the '80s, we've had computer and the adjustment of tiny vocal clips. That became easier in the '90s with manual pitching. In the 2000s, when full-featured DAWs and plugins became practical, we had more automatic pitch correction. But there's always something manual involved and there's a lot of work from Lavigne and other vocalists who suffered from this. They are the ones who made it happen. The result is always terrible, no matter how much or how little work from the vocalist makes this happen, let alone how many music engineers are told that Pro Tools is good software and should use it. It's not.

Max Martin, the producer of countless pop hits starting in the '90s, has detailed many times that he combines dozens of vocal takes and corrects pitch throughout the entire vocal tracks. People actually want this. It's a very distinctive sound, horrendously overused and occupies a completely separate area in most people's minds. The Matrix and Clif Magness simply followed his path whilst overproducing Let Go by Avril Lavigne, much to her then-executive producer's pleasure. "Complicated" feels like the masses wanted over 100 (if not 150) production tracks on it. What's interesting is that The Matrix also worked on her 2001 unsolicited demo; it has some stripped-down verses and a much rawer sound. Contrast that with something like a Matrix or Max Martin-produced Hilary Duff or Ariana Grande song, not to mention the stark difference in production taste.

With "Complicated" having over nine million listeners on Last.fm and over 664 million views on YouTube (for some odd reason), there's simply no wonder why it was unavoidable to have it being played on the radio. This song still pops up in other places every now and then to quasi-nostalgia. Released in 2002, it was allegedly never thought to become a hit… if only Avril could have predicted the heights that this single would ascend to as well. Arista Records cited Faith as a central inspiration for this pop rock track and Alanis Morissette as *another.* Everyone's lives were made more complicated from 2002 to 2009, and it was all just the fact of being a radio listener back then, letting Avril damage your brain cells. This song and "Sk8er Boi" are culturally significant because of their viral consumption during the advent of TRL (Total Request Live) as a viewing medium for non-punk music that MTV considered "punk" (like Avril Lavigne, Pink, Green Day, The Offspring, Blink-182, Good Charlotte and Simple Plan), boy bands, pop princesses and so-called "metal/grunge" bands sponsored by the network (like Disturbed, P.O.D., Matchbox Twenty, The Calling, Linkin Park, Semisonic, Drowning Pool, Nickelback, Creed, Papa Roach, Korn, Slipknot, Lifehouse, Foo Fighters, Breaking Benjamin, Evanescence, Seether, Bush, Puddle of Mudd, 3 Doors Down, Alter Bridge, Shinedown, Staind, Fuel and Hinder). Without this period of frantic sharing and listening/viewing, "Complicated" would have been looked upon with the same fondness of a Nickelback song. In fact, this song and "Sk8er Boi" deserve worse. Why, you may ask? Because we don't get why they would be so well-liked when Lavigne is basically Nickelback and Simple Plan in pop diva form. She deserves more hate for this reason and that reason alone. She was in heavy rotation on the radio for roughly seven years (2002 to 2009)–which is a bit more than a while. That's beside the point; Let Go was Avril's debut and it skyrocketed her to stardom for reasons we can't even begin to fathom. Well, actually, we can try: her lack of energy and the fact that she could put out boring, bland, horribly sung pieces of Muzak/elevator music like "Complicated" and "Mobile" must be why. Most fans say, for the most part, that she was way more than cotton candy music and instrumentally bland (at best), but the truth is that this album says nothing. In fact, none of Avril Lavigne's albums do. We could give a bunch of excerpts proving this, but the point is that none of it makes sense, so giving examples of some songs that make no sense is a nil point indeed. Fans waste hours trying to determine what Avril is trying to tell us all. We can say we've already figured it out. Here's a hint: nothing, because she can't articulate a thing. Instrumentally, it's pretty clear that her backing band sucks. Her drummers (Josh Freese, Victor Indrizzo, Matthew Brann, Alex Elena and Joe Bonadio) are normally not even present and they just have drum machines. Avril also takes credit for music and lyrics she didn't even write. The lyrics that she was quoted to have written are only half the music, so the musicianship must be weighed behind the album as well. This is all generally the same beats, snail-paced tempos, generic trip hop and power/jangle pop fills, whimsical bass lines from Clif Magness and so on. Avril's singing could've been half-decent, but instead it's horrible and she opts to shout or scream.

On this album, we also have some of the most pathetic guitar playing in pop history; the so-called "loud" riffs, which can only ever be heard or feel audible enough on a few songs ("Losing Grip", "Mobile" and "Unwanted"), are limited to two or three per song (thought they are more prominent on "Sk8er Boi"). Along with the lighter acoustic riffs, they are repeated over and over again; don't expect a solo or any other interesting thing either, because you won't find any (except for a start-stop riff played by Corky James with out-of-place scratching on "Sk8er Boi", which is followed by a breakdown that could easily be played by a preschooler; it doesn't even count as a solo). Normally, such jangly guitars are great at conjuring up warm, hazy summer breezes in California; indie pop, jangle pop (to a certain extent), beat music, folk rock and post-punk, you name it. Those genres have very distinct-sounding, jangly guitars. They give indie pop its subtlety and cuteness. They are the indie/DIY attitude that is the face of indie pop, post-punk and a portion of folk rock. They give folk rock the influence that it needs and can be part of its instrumentation and simple musical arrangements (which are largely acoustic-based). All four of these genres can best be described as "simple, but not as much as generic pop" and "marvelously innocent”, plus the 12-string guitar sounds are just right for them; unfortunately, though, they're not right for music that is supposed to be punk but comes across as '80s mainstream pop–repackaged for Millennials and Zoomers with no music education. They just aren't. Even worse, they are over-compressed and reverberated, losing much of their crunchy edge in post-production. The instrumentals on Let Go have no warm, hazy summer breezes to conjure up or even anything fire up anybody with, even though they try–causing them to clash greatly with the dark, angsty lyrics–nor should a punk album be made solely for that purpose. Punk is not background noise and it's not making sure that we, the tone-deaf buying public, don't have a boring day. It is music that fires up audiences with its energy, fast-to-medium tempos and atonality—a form of art with poetic lyricism, with highly expressive vocals, with passion, with evolution and different interpretations, with musically or lyrically sincere expression of personal emotions. Avril Lavigne is a generic pop artist; like all generic pop artists, her music is completely devoid of all those things and she's a pussified singer whose soft rock jams and ballads comprise a majority of her catalog. Therefore, her songs are pure background noise instead of punk and she's a noise polluter. It's not promoting violence or stalking either, dude. It's rebelling against increasing violence and reactionary sentiments in the subculture, not glorifying them, which Lavigne does anyway because **SHE DOESN'T KNOW HOW MUCH OF A SICK F\*\*\* SHE IS;** so her music is not punk and everything about it lyrically screams of awful attempts at irony and sadism. Oh yeah, and punk has way more to it than just sarcasm and trying to be ironic, Lavigne. Get your head straight.

Now take a look at the song lengths. **NOTHING UNDER THREE MINUTES AND 30 SECONDS! "Complicated" and "Anything But Ordinary" go on for FOUR MINUTES!** Songs that are over 3:30 in length only work if there's enough substance to back them up. Lavigne and her backing band have none. Pretty much the only decent track by her is "Losing Grip"; "Unwanted" is also not a bad song, but it feels like a reductive retread of "Grip". Every other song on the album seems to get mellower and slower than the last, with "Complicated" (a girly pop hit that is included as the second track on the album) and "Naked" (the final track) being the worst offenders. Avril tries as hard as she can to "rock hard" or get "punked out", only to fall flat on her face. She thinks that her music rocks, she thinks that it's punk and she thinks it can be listened to for enjoyment as well; in reality, it's still just background sound, as stated earlier. The songs try to be soothing and relaxing as much as they feel laid-back and relaxed, but all they end up doing is making your ears bleed. In fact, they can't decide whether they want to be soft or loud, and they fail at playing with both dynamics. Lavigne's nails-on-a-chalkboard vocals and the overblown, in-your-face, flashy, arena-friendly production don't help. Everything about this album is representative of a poser, flashy, anti-rebellious, pretense-ridden, hypocritical, overblown and annoying. It's like the songs exist just to turn you off! Crappy hip-hop beats, pop choruses sung by an irritating singer, gurgling yet crappy production a la Alanis Morissette, no punk flavor in the former song and no rock flavor in both, Avril having an unexplainable hatred for her partner, twangy guitars that feel average, over-exaggerated emotions, lots of pseudo-pain felt by Avril from the dude's misdemeanors for which he gets blamed by her, fatally computerized vocals, a rancid message about having no self-worth, pointless turntables, the whole **"WHY'D YOU HAVE TO GO AND MAKE THINGS SO COMPLICATED?!"** business that feels overdramatic to the point where someone might tell you to turn it down… both songs are just so sugary. Avril really **CAN** go and make things so complicated, can't she? We've never had the doubtful "fortune" of listening to a complete Avril Lavigne album, but when it comes to the singles, the story is somewhat different. These singles, specifically those from Let Go, were omnipresent on commercial radio in the 2000s. What can we say about it? They totally lack the passion, the intensity and the poetry that rock is supposed to have. The lyrics, music, vocals and arrangements are all beyond poppy, reeking of a "I want success at all costs" attitude that renders both songs highly repulsive to the ears. We wouldn't say they're the worst singles Avril Lavigne ever spawned, but they're certainly horrible.

In "Complicated" and "Sk8er Boi", Lavigne and the ballet dancer are mean-spirited jerks who submit to selfish whims; therefore, they care little for the actual feelings of their boyfriends. Yes, these songs are full of some of the most toxic attitudes in all of pop music. After all, this ballet nerd in the latter song begins trusting her boyfriend and finds a toxic declaration of love. Such declarations betray the trust formed long after the geek rejected her boyfriend because he was a "skater punk". Now if one was romantically interested, one should have been upfront about it before becoming friends. People are not blind: they know when their friends are romantically attracted to them. By not acting on that attraction, one sets up a bond of trust that is violated upon "heartfelt declarations" like this. Such declarations suggest the ballet geek's "friendship" was a mere form of obsession or romantic manipulation–meant more to self-gratify the skater boy's heart rather than to respect his dignity and desires–as well as her own. Also, the lyrics are horrible. Sweet Yoshi, have mercy on us all! Avril Lavigne has been annoying us to no end since we first heard these songs! They drive us up the wall every time we have the misfortune to hear them.

**To be continued…**