

Can someone explain to me why this song is hillbilly, redneck, ugly, nasty, stupid-ass, smelly, low-brow trash whereas the rest of Avril Lavigne's discography (at least up until *The Best Damn Thing*, when she started imitating Ke\$ha) is just trash?

Where the hell do I even begin with this? This is a redneck song, or at least it's just generic pop rock with redneck instrumentation and hillbilly lyrics about Lavigne wallowing in her own self-pity. Hell, when the song was released in March 2002 as her debut single, absolutely nobody seemed to like or care about it until it went all the way to #2 that summer.

I literally rolled my eyes and scoffed to myself. If anything, this chick thinks she's so "punk" like on all her other songs. Here, she's just embracing basic trailer park trash stereotypes to sell records—not just to her primary demographic of teeny boppers and soccer moms—but to dumbass hicks.

They shrugged, too drunk to care. But something about those angsty, disposable teen pop lyrics irked me.

I can't help but think of how redneckish this song is. Her shrill, whiny voice grates on my last nerve as she victim-blames her boyfriend, going so far as to say in the first verse that she only likes him because he has a vehicle and they go to places together in it. Who gives a fuck about you and your boyfriend driving in his car? It's just another thing about that whole "2000s corporate pop" scene I can't stand. Well, at least she didn't say a pickup truck.

I almost wish I had a woman to pine for, someone to give me a motive to keep going, to make me believe there's a prize at the end of the finish line. And you know what? There are lots of women like that. Avril is not one of them in my experience. She is just as bad as the men who treat women like shit, always playing games and letting women use them for what they can get, let alone a total poseur.

Keep in mind that I waited 20 years for something to happen that I hoped would never happen again; over the next few weeks, perhaps even months, I couldn't get that damn time capsule from 2002 out of my head. I made multiple remixes of the song, and now I know how much of a mistake that was. And her voice? Ugh! So whiny and affected, like a valley girl who'd read a few too many teen angst memes.

I'm pretty sure Mom knew everything about her background back when she was all over the radio and MTV way before I did. And her background is horrible. I discovered it just three years ago, right as her 20th anniversary approached. I haven't stopped bashing Avril since. I knew her 20th anniversary was going to be one of the worst things the world would have to endure. I scoured her background, looking for posturing and hypocrisy. She grew up middle class, for Christ's sake. She neither grew up on the mean streets of her native Canada, or in the case of "Complicated", as a hard-scrabble farm girl like she's pretending to be on said pop hit. She knew nothing about heartache and hardship. She knew nothing about punk, going so far as to say

The Sex Pistols were too old for her to even remember them in a quote.

But deep down, I was jealous. Jealous that she could convey simple truths in catchy words, jealous that people connected with her in a way they never did with me. My edgy, cynical worldview was a barren wasteland compared to her raw honesty.

Things came to a head when I met a girl named Jenna at a coffee shop. Huge Avril fan, with the lyrics tattooed on her forearm. We started dating and I couldn't help ragging on her idol.

"You know it's just commercialized schtick, right? She doesn't live that life."

Jenna got defensive. "Why do you care so much? It's art, it's real to me."

We fought a lot after that. I couldn't help tearing down the things she loved, out of my own insecurity.

Until one night, she laid her head on my chest. "You know, my dad used to beat my mom. I thought it was normal. Avril's songs helped me realize we deserved better. They saved me."

I felt like I'd been punched in the gut. Here was truth in those lyrics I never understood. The music connected us, even me, in a way I pushed away.

When we broke up, it broke me. I realized I'd lost myself, my humanity, in my need to tear others down. I didn't grieve my loss, I grieved what I'd become.

And so I wrote this, an admission and an apology. To Avril, to Jenna, to anyone I scorned out of bitterness. Avril was right - I was complicated, and I'm still trying to simplify. Her music was never the problem. I was.

I'm done trying to be so high and mighty. It's time to just chill out, like Avril said. Lay back. Let it be.

This cheap-ass pop rock tune somehow became the anthem of the working class in America, thanks to its twangy guitars and swung backbeats. It certainly doesn't help that Lavoigne and her producers took notes from Shania Twain, The Dixie Chicks, Matchbox Twenty (who released a similar song called "Unwell") and classic rock bands like Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers. The former three were quoted by her as major influences and some of her favorite artists. What's even more infuriating is how people cannot see through the bullshit—that this song is just another corporate pop tool used by the bourgeoisie to keep us proletariat in line.

I know how many roughnecks and hicks enjoy this song. I know how many of them think there's something "manly" about the song and Lavigne being a douchebag to her ex-boyfriend for no discernable reason. They probably think they're joining her in rebelling against the system as they watch the music video where she and her band vandalize a mall and these security guards are chasing them, that they're speaking truth to power.

But they're not, it's all a lie. This Shania Twain-sounding trash, this whole genre of music—manufactured by the very same incompetent elite that keeps us down. They feed us this vapid, commercialized pop crap to distract us from the real issues. Our wages are shit, our jobs are disappearing overseas, we can barely afford health insurance or a decent place to live. But hey, no one needs to worry about all that when we got Avril and her heavily synthesized voice, warbling about how some boy doesn't listen to her! "No one understands me, especially you!"

But everyone understands how much you suck, Lavigne.

The fools think this is their music, that it speaks to them. I hear poseurs at the bar going on about how Avril tells it like it is. "She's one of us!" Oh really? Because the last I checked, Avril was a trust fund baby who never had to work a day in her life. But the rubes just gobble up this rebel image she's peddling.

This song is garbage and it's so uninspired. She just feels like she's churning out the same tired formulas over and over again. Gated reverb on the drums, over-compressed guitars, generic

Kristian Lundin-style production that was everywhere back then, and of course, Tom Lord-Alge's bombastic mixing. We can't have a proper 2000s pop rock song without him or his brother Chris Lord-Alge having worked on it. The overdrive never really pushes the boundaries of what The Who or Big Star pioneered with their riffs. It's just safe, boring crap.

The jangly power chords always in the chorus, her vocals subpar at best, the melodies sappy and annoyingly catchy. It feels like her guitarist is just playing the same four chords of modern pop rock over and over again. Verse, pre-chorus, chorus, verse, pre-chorus, chorus, bridge, chorus, refrain. It never changes and they don't even bother to amplify it up. The lyrics are always some variation of teenage angst or generic "revenge song" bullshit. It's soulless, manufactured crap and I'm sick of it.

She doesn't even try to make it interesting with powerful vocals or a big, energetic build-up. The song just plods along at the same monotonous pace and volume the whole time. Yes, they do introduce some brief guitar crunch in the second chorus (third in the Matrix Mix), still plagued by generic R.E.M. chords, and faint hard rock undertones in the final chorus towards the very end. But that's literally it. This song sucks. It sucks hairy donkey balls. The music video is shit too.

And speaking of the drums, I thought Tom Lord-Alge was onto something with the gated reverb, a nod to Phil Collins, a nod to arena rock and hair metal in the '80s. The more I listen to it, the more I realize how derivative it sounds. Just the same old mix of

Beach Boys-inspired, jangly power chords and loud overdrive stolen from The Who, set to hip-hop beats so Lavigne can sound current, set to generic lyrics about teenage angst. The guitar riffs never go beyond their influence or even attempt to break new ground. It's like Avril's session musicians took The Who's guitar pedals and settings, but then forgot to play a decent tune.

I can't agree with real punks more, she's so stupid. All her songs released between 2002 and 2005 sound like the discounted, clearance bin version of Nickelback. You know, same power chords, same pseudo-aggressive lyrics, same backbeats, same angsty teenage crap that hasn't been relevant since George W. Bush was in the office. But at least Nickelback had the decency to be upfront about how much they were ripping off everyone else.

If Avril Lavigne is Nickelback for even stupider people but is more respected than Chad and his bandmates, then NB is just Creed for dummies. Remember them? The Christian rock band that thought they were Deep Purple but ended up just being a bunch of bland, edgeless hacks? Yeah, those guys. Well, Avril is their discount bin daughter—churning out generic, "rebellious" anthems for angsty middle schoolers and soccer moms alike.

But even Creed had to steal their style from somewhere. And who did they rip off? Alanis Morissette, of course. The queen of the "angry chick" singer-songwriters of the '90s. She at least had the balls to write her own crappy songs and shriek them at the

top of her lungs. Avril and Nickelback are just her watered-down descendants.

Alanis, though, she got it from somewhere, too. She's pretty much a discount version of Collective Soul, the band that brought you "Gel" and "The World I Know", A.K.A. the songs you had to listen to on repeat for three years straight if you were alive in the mid-90s. They were the kings of bland, catchy radio rock. Alanis is just them with ovaries.

Collective Soul though, they're no one-trick ponies. Oh no, they stole from the best. Namely Weezer, the ultimate kings of power pop. Those geeky assholes still think it's 1964 and they're the next Beatles. Newsflash: if you're still singing about high school at 30, you're a loser.

But Billy Joel, as unoriginal as he is, still has to answer to Elton John. The guy who stole all his style from The Who and The Beatles and passed it off as his own. I mean, "Crocodile Rock" is just a bad rip-off of "Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da". And "Bennie and the Jets" is "Revolution 9" if it was written by a 14-year-old girl.

But Weezer, as hacky as they are, at least have some rock cred. See, they're really just a candy-coated version of the hard rock stylings of AC/DC. You know, the Australian-British band that's been making the same song for the past 40 years.

"Thunderstruck", "Back in Black", "You Shook Me All Night Long"... could they **BE** any more basic?

Without The Beatles, we'd be stuck with Avril Lavigne and Nickelback playing the same three to four chords for eternity. God help us all. I've heard this song, which means I've heard the guitar tone, which was probably stolen from Pete Townshend.

I swear, it makes my blood boil. I'm surrounded by idiots who would rather embrace this fake rebellion than admit the truth of our situation. This song is just the bourgeoisie's way of pacifying us. Make a few pithy songs about teenage angst and suddenly nobody remembers that we're living in a plutocracy. It's genius, really. Keep the masses distracted with a few chords and a pretty face and they'll never rise up.

I'm just so goddamn tired of it all. Tired of being surrounded by apathetic sheep who can't see past the veil. They're like a bunch of Epsilons who've been drugged up by the state. Snort a little soma and tune into the radio, don't worry about the exploitation, the oppression, the fact that we're slaves of the corporate machine. Big Brother has spoken and Big Brother says Avril is good. Yeah, right.

I feel like I'm the only one who gets it. The only one who sees through the trance we're in. This song, this entire culture—it's all a plot to keep us in line. And as long as the fools keep listening, nothing will ever change. We'll be dancing to the bourgeoisie's tune for the rest of our miserable lives.

I'm just so done with all of this. I want to scream it at the top of my lungs, but nobody would hear me anyway. They're too busy

rocking out to the witch Avril to pay attention. So I just have to sit here and stew in my impotent rage, watching my people be duped day after day. Some revolution.

That's enough for tonight. I'll just have to content myself with being the only one who knows the truth. Maybe one day, I'll be proven right. A few hundred years from now they'll look back and say "Goddamn, how did we fall for that? How did we let the corporations control us?" But by then, it'll be too late. We'll be another footnote in history, a cautionary tale of people who let themselves be led to slaughter by a chorus and non-distorted, surf rock-oriented chords.

So in the end, it's all just The Who and The Beatles. The real innovators. The ones who actually created something new. "Complicated" is not just redneck garbage as I mentioned earlier, it's fucking derivative as shit.