

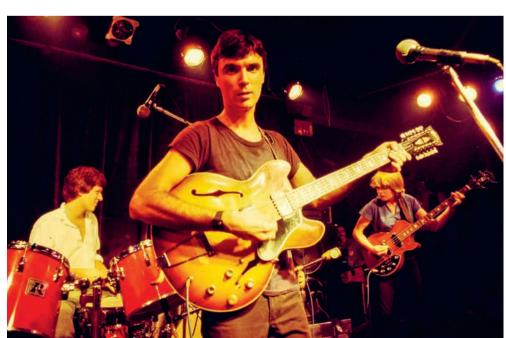
TUNE INTO ENGLISH

Talking Heads' Psycho Killer

È una delle canzoni più conosciute e ballate della band fondata da David Byrne. Si distingue per il ritmo coinvolgente, i testi accattivanti e il divertente intreccio di inglese e francese.

ew York art rock band Talking Heads' signature song Psycho Killer is a bilingual look inside the deranged mind of an assassin with multiple personalities. Taken from their 1977 debut album "Talking Heads: 77", it was one of singer David Byrne's first attempts at song writing, and was inspired by hard rock singer Alice Cooper and "bad guys in movies." This is most evident in the chorus²'s refrain³ of "Fa-fa-fa, fafa-fa-fa, fa", an apparent reference to Alfred Hitchcock's classic horror movie Psycho, where protagonist Norman Bates stutters over the word 'falsity'.

The opening verse is a jittery 5 stream of consciousness⁶ from a crazed serial killer with the later use of French suggesting he suffers from Jekyll and Hyde syndrome. The bridge, written by bassist Tina Weymouth (whose mother was from Brittany), is a murderous confession with the illusion that the singer's crimes will lead him to glory. Byrne originally asked an ex-girlfriend to write this in Japanese, but she refused when she heard the name of the song. Although written four years earlier, the single was released shortly after the arrest of notorious New York serial killer David Berkowitz, better known by his pen name⁸ Son of Sam. This helped the track become a minor hit. It has since been hailed as a masterpiece of post-punk and is listed in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. 8







& LISTEN

LOWER INTERMEDIATE B1



☐ GLOSSARY

- **1 deranged**: folle
- 2 chorus: coro
- **3 refrain:** ritornello 4 to stutter: balbettare
- 5 jittery: agitato
- 6 stream of
- consciousness: flusso di coscienza
- 7 to release: pubblicare
- 8 pen name: pseudonimo
- 9 to hail: accogliere
- 10 masterpiece: capolavoro
- 11 live wire: cavo sotto tensione
- 12 borderline: limite

David Byrne with his New York City band Talking Heads performing in the late 1970s. Top right: the single of Psycho Killer with the song Pulled Up on the B-side.

face up to: this phrasal verb means to accept a difficult situation.

> 'cause: an abbreviation of

qu'est-ce que c'est?: French for "what is this?"

This translates as "What I did that night What she said that night Fulfilling my hope I'm launching towards glory, okay"

I can't seem to face up to the facts I'm tense and nervous and I can't relax I can't sleep 'cause my bed's on fire Don't touch me, I'm a real live wire 11

Psycho killer, qu'est-ce que c'est?

Fa-fa-fa-fa-fa-fa-fa, fa, better Run, run, run, run, run, run away Oh, oh

Psycho killer, qu'est-ce que c'est? Fa-fa-fa-fa, fa-fa-fa-fa, fa, better Run, run, run, run, run, run away Oh, oh, oh, aye-ya-ya-ya-ya

You start a conversation, you can't even finish it You're talking a lot, but you're not saying anything When I have nothing to say, my lips are sealed Say something once, why say it again?

Psycho killer, qu'est-ce que c'est? Fa-fa-fa-fa, fa-fa-fa-fa, fa, better Run, run, run, run, run, run away Oh, oh Psycho killer, qu'est-ce que c'est? Fa-fa-fa-fa, fa-fa-fa-fa, fa, better Run, run, run, run, run, run away

Ce que j'ai fait, ce soir-là Ce qu'elle a dit, ce soir-là Réalisant mon espoir Je me lance, vers la gloire, okay

Oh, oh, oh, aye-ya-ya-ya-ya

Aye-ya-ya-ya-ya-ya-ya-ya-ya-yah We are vain and we are blind I hate people when they're not polite

Psycho killer, qu'est-ce que c'est? Fa-fa-fa-fa, fa-fa-fa-fa, fa, better Run, run, run, run, run, run away Oh. oh

Psycho killer, qu'est-ce que c'est? Fa-fa-fa-fa, fa-fa-fa-fa, fa, better Run, run, run, run, run, run away Oh, oh, oh, aye-ya-ya-ya-ya

Hey, hey, hey, hey

my bed's on fire: this is a metaphor for the singer's anxiety at night.

live wire: an electrical metaphor, this personality trait implies the singer is ready to explode.

This verse also refers o singer David Byrne, who suffers from borderline¹² Asperger's syndrome

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