

The Luckiest Man Alive

After so many years of record collecting, there it finally was, in my hands. Pink Floyd: Animals, in quadraphonic.

Finally, after countless visits to record shops and thrift stores; the exhausting effort of standing and flipping through cases of LPs for hours on end; and the agonizing pain of squatting, kneeling, and digging through discount and dollar bins for even longer, turning my fingers black in the process and filling my nose with the musty smell that only comes from decades of neglected and forgotten LPs.

This was a rumored rarity that had never been seen nor proven, but here in my hands I could feel my excitement as though the LP jacket vibrated ever so slightly. The album had been slated for quadraphonic release, but never came to pass as the format was dead by the time the album was released at the tail end of the 1970's. I trembled in my excitement, heart racing and eager to discover what lay inside and its condition. Would it be in good playable condition? Would it be a sad and heartbreaking scratched loss? Or would it even be the correct record inside?

I already owned and had heard the quadraphonic versions of their other albums released in the format. My mind reeled thinking about how this album would sound in surround sound. I had fantasized about it, and played the stereo version through various audio decoders to hear what it might sound like. But here it was in the way the artists intended the it to sound in surround sound. It would truly be an event to play this LP for the first time.

I looked the album over. The jacket was the correct full artwork version, with its dark, foreboding, and moody sky overlooking a harsh and rusty-sepia colored industrial scene, including the iconic little pink pig floating amongst the smoke stacks of Battersea Power Station in London, England. The cover even had the stylish SQ quadraphonic logo printed in the upper right corner, and not a sticker. There should be no mistaking about what was inside.

As I slid the sleeve out of the jacket I could see it too used the correct artwork. Again the SQ logo appeared on the sleeve, again reassurance. My heart rate quickened. I wondered if the record itself would have the full-color center labels, or perhaps just the white Columbia promo labels? The record had been released for a short time in France in pink vinyl, and I wondered if this record might be pink also. All of this would be answered soon enough in the final reveal, as I began to slide the record out of its sleeve.