

"Brain Stew" Green Day



By Douglas Baldwin

Despite the huge sales of 1995's *Dookie*, older (and perhaps jaded) observers of the music scene wrote off Green Day as recyclers of skinny-tie punk circa 1979. Nothing on their follow-up, 1995's *Insomniac*, seemed to contradict that judgement—"Brain Stew" sounded like just another radio-friendly ode to substance abuse. But in light of the ambitious and visionary *American Idiot*, "Brain Stew" could almost be consid-

ered the equivalent of the Kinks' "You Really Got Me" or the Who's "My Generation." In other words, its monolithic riffage works as an appetizer prepared by a pop-music chef capable of far more thought-provoking entrees.

POWER POP

If ever there was a textbook-perfect introduction to power chords, "Brain Stew" is it. The term "power chord" refers to a classification of two-note harmonies, or dyads, that came into

common use in the mid-1960s, when the introduction of distortion as a deliberate effect quickly led to the realization that playing full major or minor chords under such conditions would generate little more than harsh static. As a result, guitarists pared down their chord grips to those shown in Figs. 1A-D. Figs. 1A-B consist of a root note—the note that names the chord—and the 5th (thus the suffix "5" in the chord name). Figs. 1C-D simply add another root note, one octave higher. "Brain Stew" uses Figs. 1A-B through most of the song, and Figs. 1C-D for the outro.

When you play power chords, it's essential to mute unwanted strings. "Brain Stew" requires an aggressive strumming technique, but if you allow unwanted strings to ring, your performance will probably cross over into something less than guitarist Billie Joe Armstrong's tight brand of pop-punk. Furthermore, the addition of deliberately strummed muted strings plays a vital part in the song. This can be seen in the interlude, where the muted strummed strings are notated with the "X" symbol in both the

tablature and standard notation. To mute the appropriate strings in the A5, G5, F#5, and F5 chords, place the tip of your 1st finger on the 6th string, and your other finger(s) accordingly. Then, let the side of your 1st finger drape over the muted strings (shown with Xs in the chord blocks). The trick is to use your finger as if playing an ineffective barre chord—press down just firmly enough to mute the unplayed strings, without sounding any notes. The E5 requires the same muting, except that in Fig. 1C your 1st finger falls on the 5th string while muting the higher strings. Fig. 1D requires still more finesse: your 1st finger plays a mini-barre shape on strings 5

and 4 while also muting the higher strings. Alternatively—and perhaps more effectively—you can simply lay all your fret-hand fingers lightly across the strings to mute them between chord stabs



NAME THAT NOTE

With the exception of the E5 chord, which includes an open string, these power chords are movable—you can pick your fingers up and put them down somewhere else on the same strings, and as long as the shape remains the same, the chord type remains the same. However, the note name of the chord changes with every new place you put your fingers. Remember that each of the chords in "Brain Stew" has a 6th-string root. If you can name all the notes on string 6 [Fig. 2], you can play all the power chords associated with these notes. ♪

TONE ZONE

GUITARS 1 & 2: Bolt-neck solidbody
PICKUP/POSITION: Humbucker/Bridge
GAIN: 9
EQ: Bass/Mid/Treble: 8/9/10

Figs. 1A-D

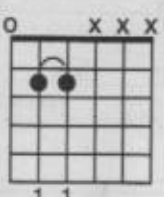
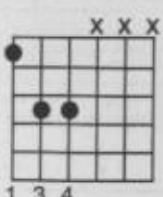
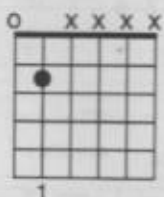
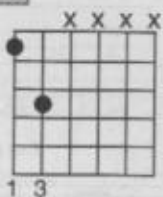
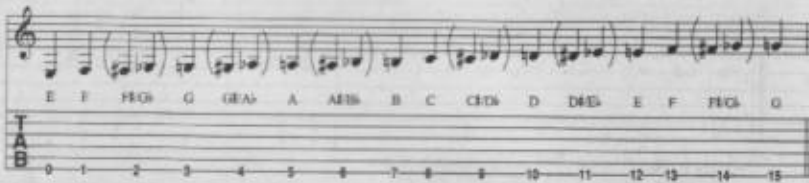


Fig. 2





BRAIN STEW

As Recorded by Green Day
(From the Reprise Recording INSOMNIAC)

Words and Music by Billie Joe Armstrong,
Mike Pritchard and Frank Wright

Transcribed by Adam Perlmutter



**TRACK 5:
ON THE CD**

Lyrics

Verse 1

I'm having trouble trying to sleep.
I'm counting sheep but running out.
As time ticks by, still I try.
No rest for crosstaps in my mind.
On my own, here we go.

Verses 2 & 4

My eyes feel like they're gonna bleed,
Dried up and bulging out my skull.
My mouth is dry, my face is numb,
Fucked up and spun out in my room.
On my own, here we go.

Verse 3

My mind is set on overdrive.
The clock is laughing in my face.
Crooked spine, my senses dulled,
Passed the point of delirium.
On my own, here we go.

Intro

Moderately Slow Rock ♩ = 85

0:12

Verse 1

Gtr. 1: w/ Rhy. Fig. 1 (4 times)

Gtr. 1 (dist.) A5 Rhy. Fig. 1 G5 F#5 F5 E5 End Rhy. Fig. 1 8

f

TAB

7 7 5 5 3 3 4 4 3 3 2 2 1 1 0 0

0:38

Interlude

Gtr. 1: w/ Rhy. Fig. 1 (2 times)

0:50

Verses 2 & 3

Gtr. 1: w/ Rhy. Fig. 1 (3 1/2 times)

F#5

F5

E5

4 7 Gtr. 1 Rhy. Fill 1 End Rhy. Fill 1

4 4 3 3 2 2 2 2 1 1 0 0

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1:16

Interlude

A5 G5 F#5 F5 E5

A5 G5 F#5 F5 E5

2:06

Verse 4

Gtr. 1: w/ Rhy. Fig. 1 (3 1/2 times)

Gtr. 2 (dist.)

A5 G5 F#5 F5 E5 *play 3 times*

mf
4. My eyes feel like they're gonna bleed...

Gtr. 1: w/ Rhy. Fill 1

A5 G5 F#5 F5 E5

Fucked up and spun out in my room. On my own, here we go.

2:31

Outro

Gtrs. 1 & 2

A5 G5 F#5 F5 E5 A5 *play 6 times*