Used Guitar Primer - Cleanup To Setup

Ever have a used guitar shipped to you? I'm never surprised at how absolutely grunged people will sell and ship a guitar. Only once have I recieved one I didn't have to touch, Mark Schloe take a bow for the GMC, I couldn't find anything to do besides fine tune. If they all came that way my life would be so much easier! This long tutorial is typically what I deal with on every used guitar that comes in the door, granted this particular guitar is one of my babies so it did get some extra time and just a little extra special attention.

I've had this guitar for over a year and it's finally getting done. Terrible, I know, but I also have 2 Donnies I haven't done yet either!! I'm too busy working on all YOUR guitars! ;-) I actually took this (and 1 of the untouched Donnies) to Jemfest this year! Shameful, I did want to have them 'show-worthy' by then. Then again, there weren't any *cleaner* guitars there!! LOL (yes, Kev, your RG Gear was clean, sit down) Why am I doing it now? I noticed it never made the Gallery and got it out to take high res pics of it. That's when I realized I never took pics of it because I never cleaned it. I was in the mood to take pics, and had planned on doing this exact tutorial, so off we go!

Even though this is a UVMC the principles are the same for all Ibanez Floyd equiped models. Hopefully you'll find some informative tips and tricks, there's alot of information here. Those of you with advanced skills probably have your own way of doing things, these are mine. If you know a trick share it with me, we can never have enough! To see what tools I'll be using click here.

There she is, my 91' Fretwear Catalog cover UVMC also featured in the 93' catalog on the accessories page and in other numerous Pocket Titan adds. It sure isn't the dirtiest that's walked in the door, it's actually pretty decent, comparatively, but grungy none the less!! Let's get to work!

1 note - PUT EVERYTHING YOU TAKE OFF IN AN ORDER SO YOU PUT THEM BACK ON THE SAME WAY!! Nut pads used on the high E shouldn't be used on the low! Pickguard screws from the bass side always have more finish wear, the ones over the single and bridge has the most. Guitars just don't look right if the wear patterns don't add up, these are picky details, but I'm PICKY! If you're not don't even bother reading further ;-}

First things first, remove the strings. I use a few different blocking methods for the trem and on this I used 2 - 2litre bottlecaps and a piece I made of very dense cardboard that's thick enough to wedge the trem close to as high as it will go. Put them under the back of the trem and just cut the strings with your snips or loosen the string clamps at the saddle and pull them out [you'll have to anyway].

This is how I would block a Jem trem, notice the bottlecap wedged into the crushed styrofoam that's conformed to the claw.

But if I'm just doing someting quick I'll more than likely grab my clamp. Throw the bar in the trem and clamp it to the body. Notice the cloth over the body to prevent dents or scuffs, and the styro wrap around the clamp shaft to prevent anything else. The red feet of the clamp accessorize this DNA well, and are rubber for soft grip and stick.

Back to getting these ancient strings off. Good time to tell you your allen wrench for both the nut pads and saddle blocks is 3mm. Starting with the nut unlock them all, removing the strings from the trem as you go. I snug the saddle blocks back up since I'll be working on the guitar at many angles and I don't want the blocks to fall out and get lost. Continue by removing the nut pads completely. At this time I'm also going to remove the string tree using a #1 Phillips. Careful, you can flec the black around the holes if you aren't while unscrewing, many times the screws are at an angle and under tension. Pull the truss rod cover while you have the screwdriver in your hands. You can now pull the strings off the tuners and you didn't have to scratch the headstock by dragging them out from under the string tree! Strings scratch, scuff, wear, and stab, always be careful and only work under adult supervision. ;) Here's what we have now.

Alot of work I'll be doing will require the neck off and there's no time like right now. Support the neck while you remove the neck screws using a #2 Phillips. Remember they have a distinctive wear pattern that corresponds to the plate, put them back in the same holes. I'll use my DeWalt, you use whatever you want. After I've unscrewed the plate I will usually grab the neck body joint quite firmly and turn the guitar back over so I have more control. To remove the neck you want to carefully slip it straight up and out of the pocket [the neck will not come out if you try slipping it out toward the headstock, straight up and away from the body is how to remove it], being careful not to let it twist or cock in an angle on any plane. It should slip right out. Some will be a hair snug and for these you want to just *slightly* wiggle it in all planes to slowly work it out. Careful, slow, and steady is the key. If your neck does not budge, STOP, and take it to a professional tech if it must be removed.

How can you tell if your MC is faded? Look under the plate.

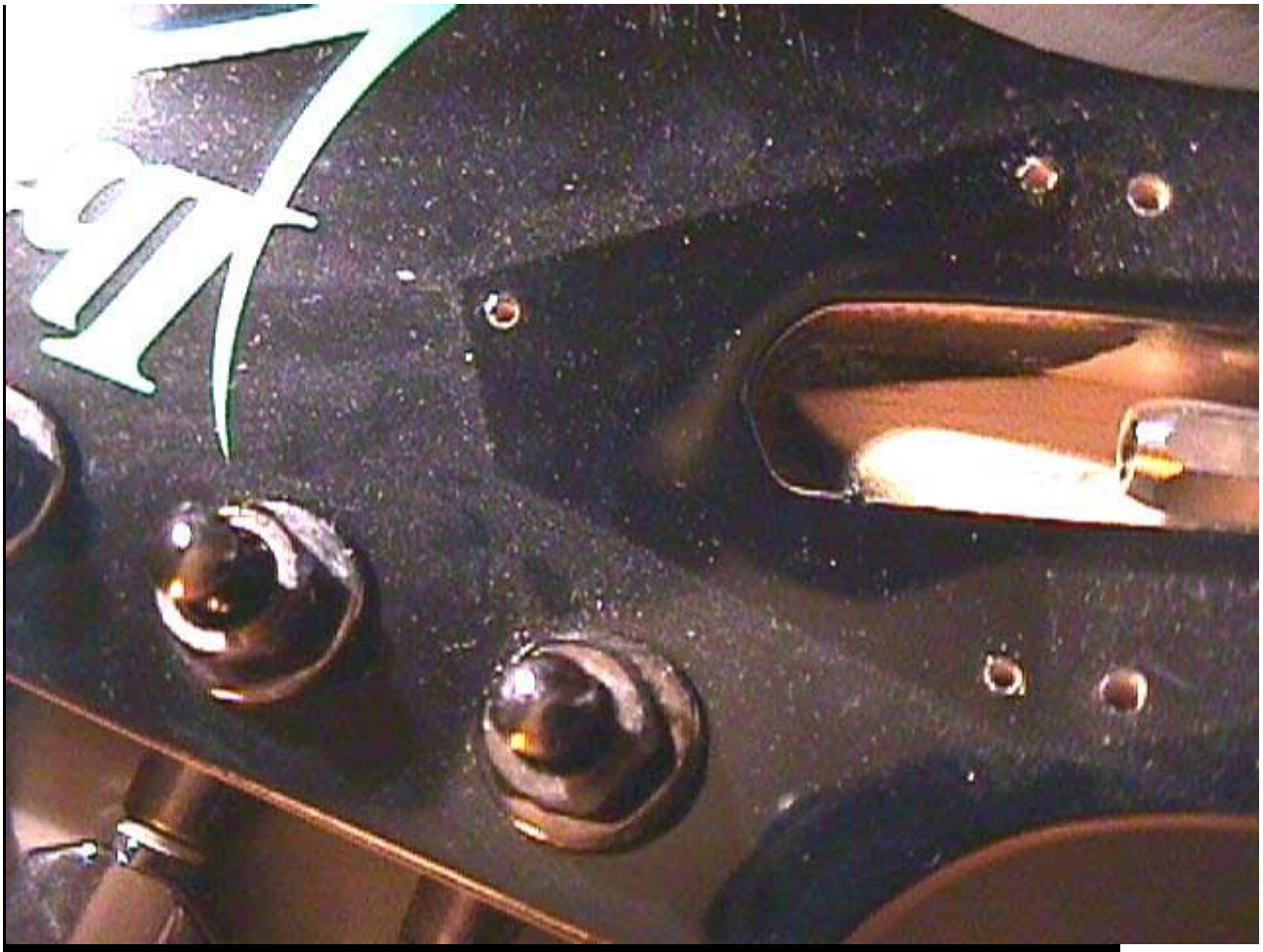
Is that sweet or what?!?! [Note - Japanese swirled UVMC's do not fade, I can't swear they won't if you leave them out in the sun for 10 years, but typically only ATD swirls will fade.]

Here's a weak example of the typical Bohemia address ATD stamp in pink/purple (also in black) and the factory UV77MC markings A-typical with an extra U. Normal large red H line or inspectors mark.

Enough show and tell, I've got a guitar to clean.

Time to clean the neck and I always start with the head. Take a 10mm socket and remove the tuner sleves and washers.

All loosened, just look at that surface. That's not dust, it's years of atmospheric buildup, assorted splatter, with a dust covering.



Let's introduce you to your rags. 1 will be used for clearcoat, pickguards, headstocks, keep these as clean as possible. The other (the yellow) is my neck rag, finger splooge, oil, and steel wool are not good things to be cleaning painted surfaces with, don't mix them up! ;-}

First thing I'm going to do is blow on the head (alright, I know what you're thinking!!!) just to move the loose dust off. Then use the rag to gently brush most of the rest. If the surface is extremely crusty I'll actually blot it with polish and just slowly smear it around letting the wetness break down as much heavy crust as possible, then wipe off. Sometimes the crust can be as scratchy as steel wool, this one's not that bad and I'll go straight to cleaning. To clean I typicaly use a cleaner polish, no wax or silicones. Anything extremely mild that's made for clearcoat will work. I have a favorite but they're out of biz now so my next bottle will be an experiment. Use just a *few* drops on the rag and work small areas at a time in small circles keeping it wet. Don't rub hard, you just want to break the crust up and mix it with the cleaner. We're not polishing, we're cleaning. To polish these polyester clearcoats you really do need machine power and a good pad. If the headstock is fairly clean my preference for cleaner is, don't gasp, spit. I hear you out there "Oh my god how gross, he's spitting on my guitar!" Yes I am, live with it! I learned long ago that saliva has forever been known as one of the best *natural* cleaners on Earth. You're going to use some in the next step :)

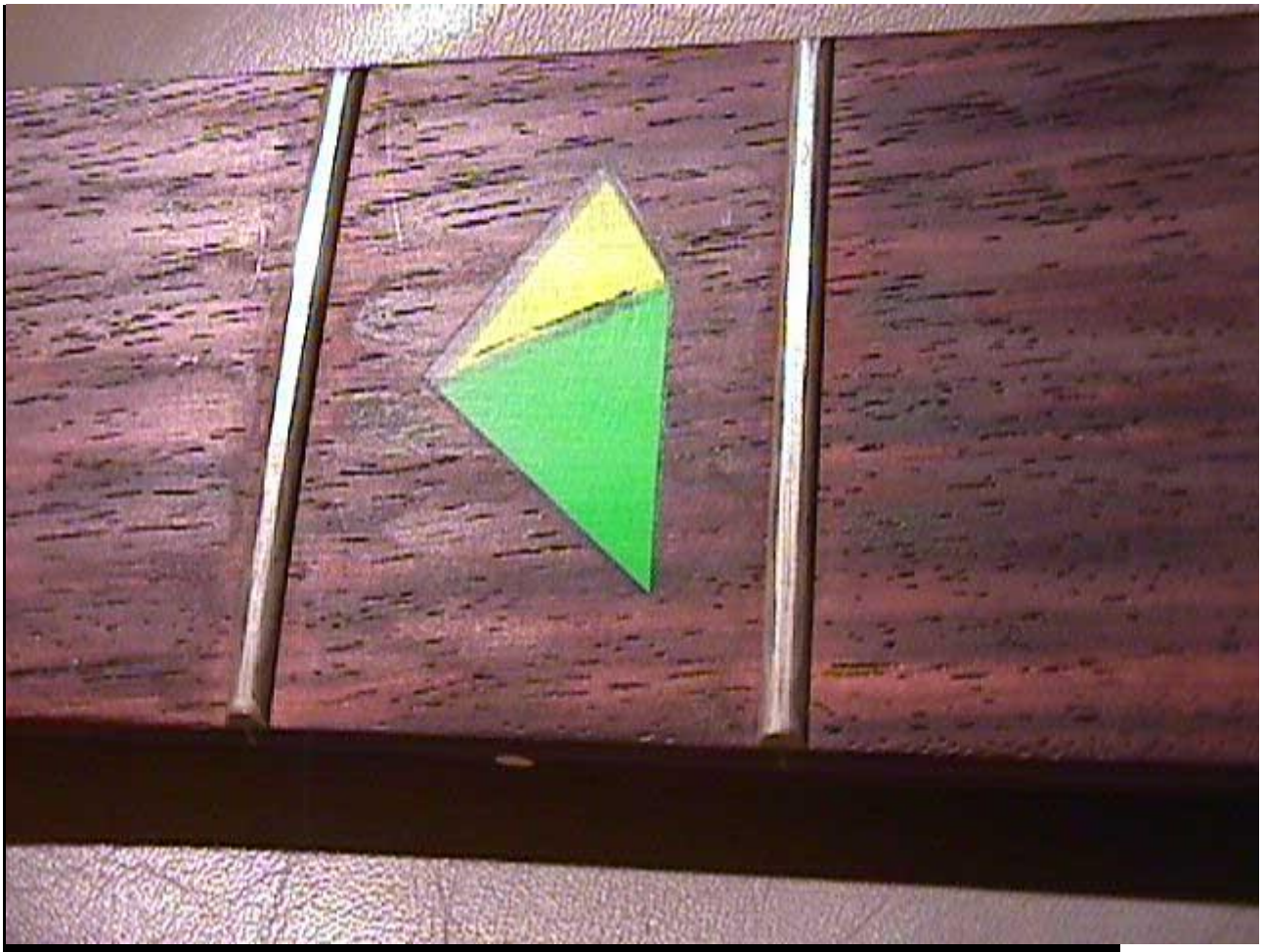
Face clean? good. Now start cleaning each tuner sleeve and washer. A little spit on your rag will do the trick, just rub till clean. As you finish each stick them back in their proper holes and when they're all done retighten them with your 10mm socket firm finger tight, you're only trying to keep them in place, not crack the clear on the headstock. Flip the neck over and clean the rest of the tuners. Here you see me with my metal mm ruler wrapped with my rag to clean between them, yup, just damp with spit. [If the screws remove easily I'll just pull the tuners for a thorough cleaning, if they seem stubborn I'll leave them in place as the small Phillip heads will strip all too easily.]

While we're back here let's tighten the nut, 2.5mm allen wrench, just finger tight! The object is to snug up the nut not split the wood ;-) Your nut needs periodic tightening as wood shrinks slightly over time, worse in drier climates. Even slight shrinking will loosen the locking nut and other metal to wood connections like the tuner nuts. Most guitars I recieve have a loose nut and a couple loose tuners. Loose parts will definately impact tuning stability, tone, and create some very strange resonance's as they vibrate.

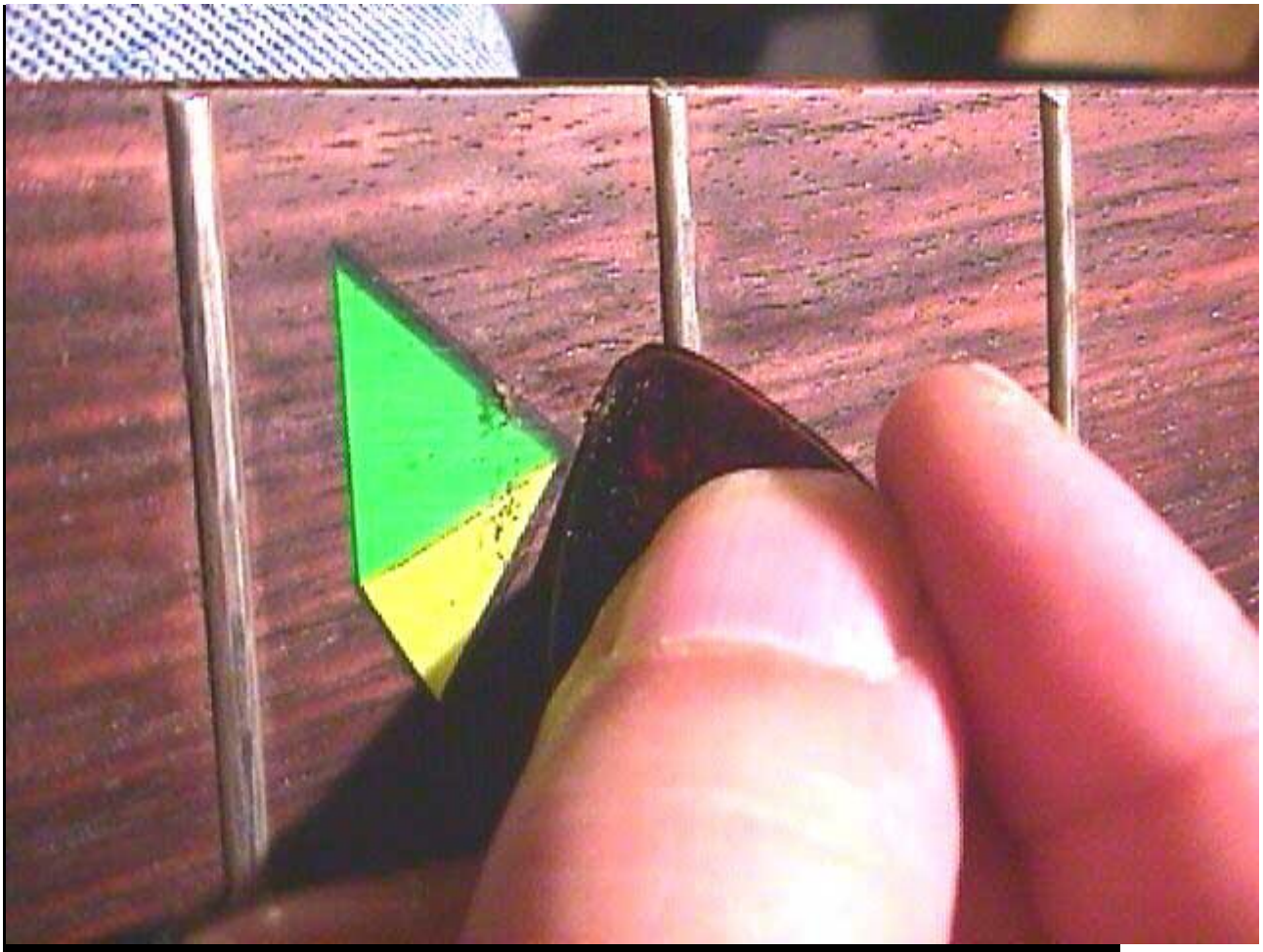
Ahhhh, now isn't that nice?

Cigarette break and we'll move on to the fretboard.

This rosewood board has some old crust on it.



Not too bad, but old crust is hard crust. I use the edge of a pick to scrape the heavy stuff off in the direction of the grain of course. (here the board is already clean and I had to find some crust to scrape to take the pic:) This picture does show the minimal fretwear that doesn't need any attention at this time.

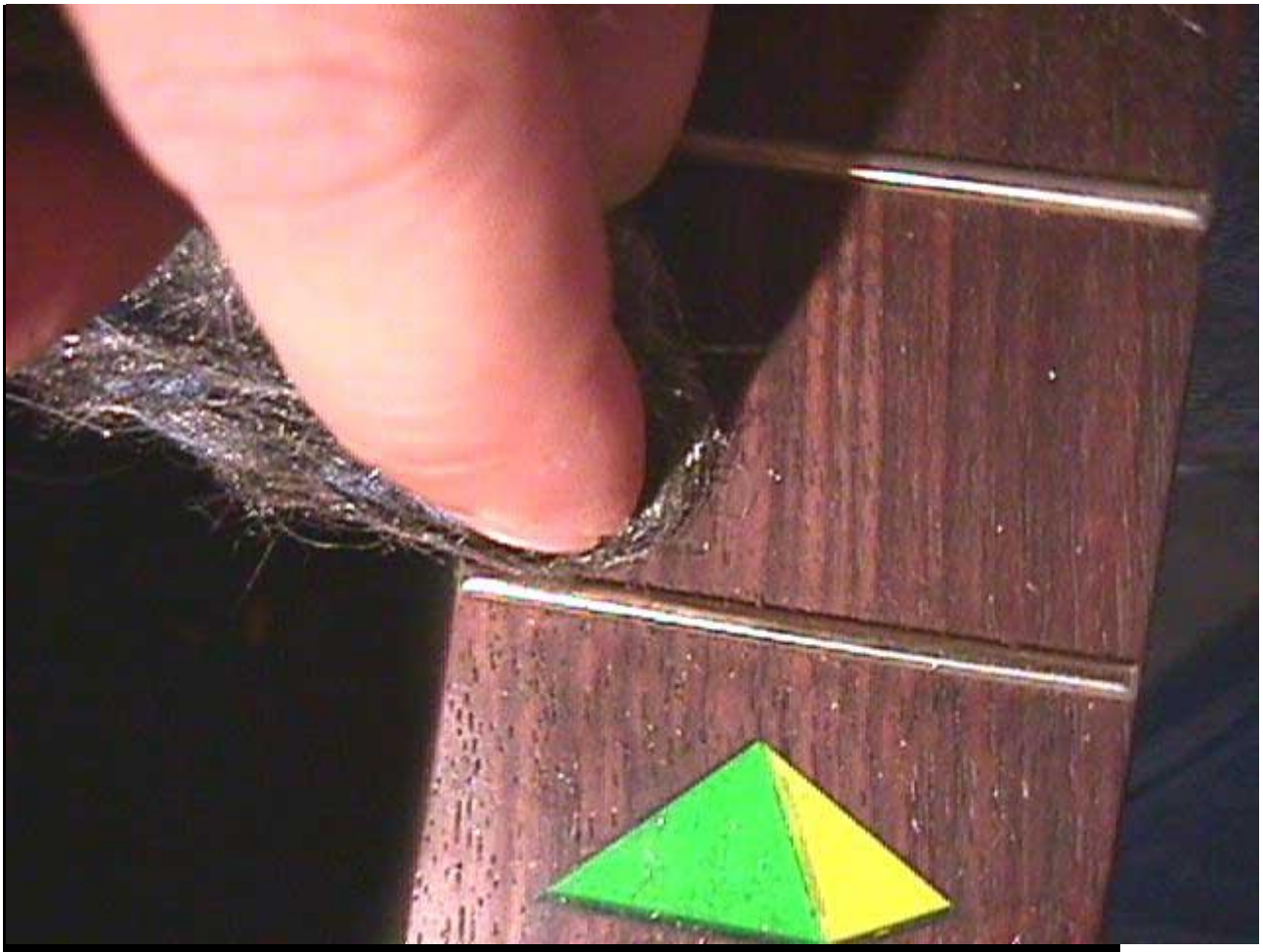


After you've scraped as much of the crust as you want the rest is elbow grease. If you keep your players board clean every string change it's a breeze. On these old crusters it's a pain. To clean in against the fret wrap the rag around your thumbnail. Always use your fingernail flat against the board pointed into the fret, your fingernail tip is sharp and will mar the board if you push into it.

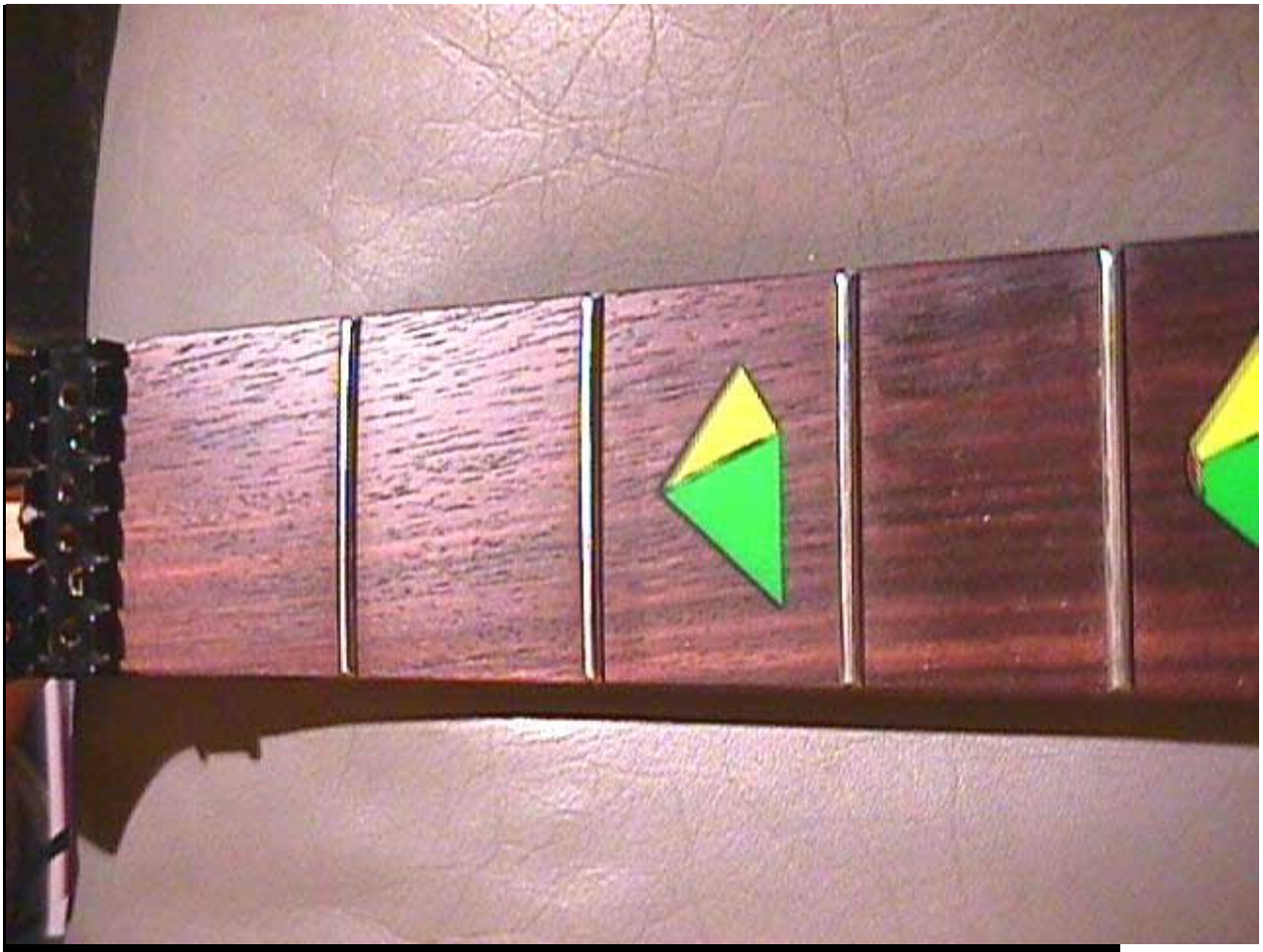
There ya go, nice clean board. Looks terrible doesn't it?

That's what board wear looks like on rosewood, polished from playing and stained from the old crust. You don't think I'm leaving that like that do you?! ;-) Time to get out the 0000 steel wool. Rub the entire board in the direction of the grain. This will also remove most of the oxidation from the frets.

For the best results pinch the edge of the wool and get right up against the fret. The golden rule is never rub against the grain, but, I will sometimes give a few light strokes against the fret beacuse I know I'll be polishing those scratches out pinching it up to the fret. This is very time consuming but worth the results.



Notice the dramatic difference?

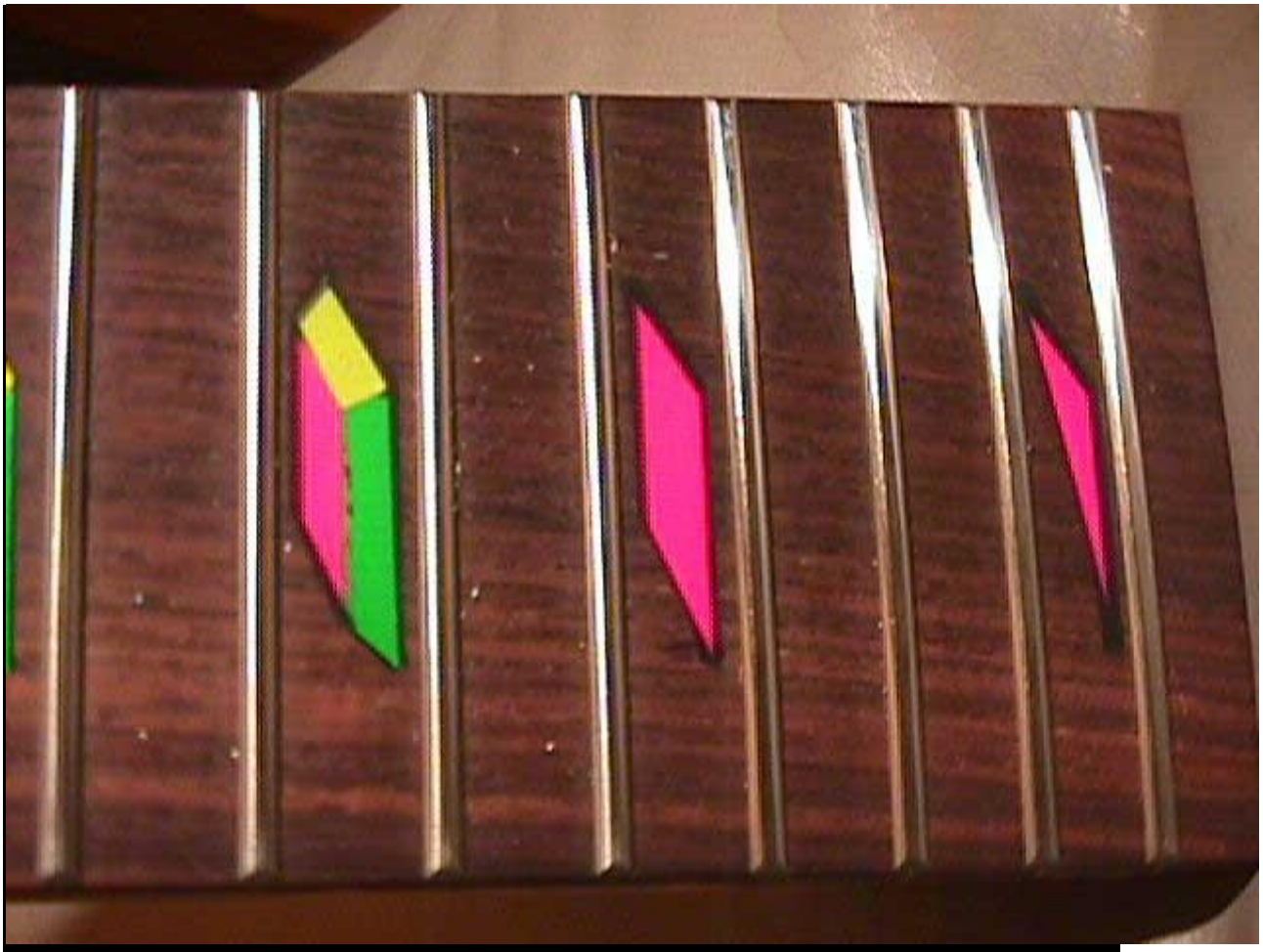


Better get to work, only 21 more to go!

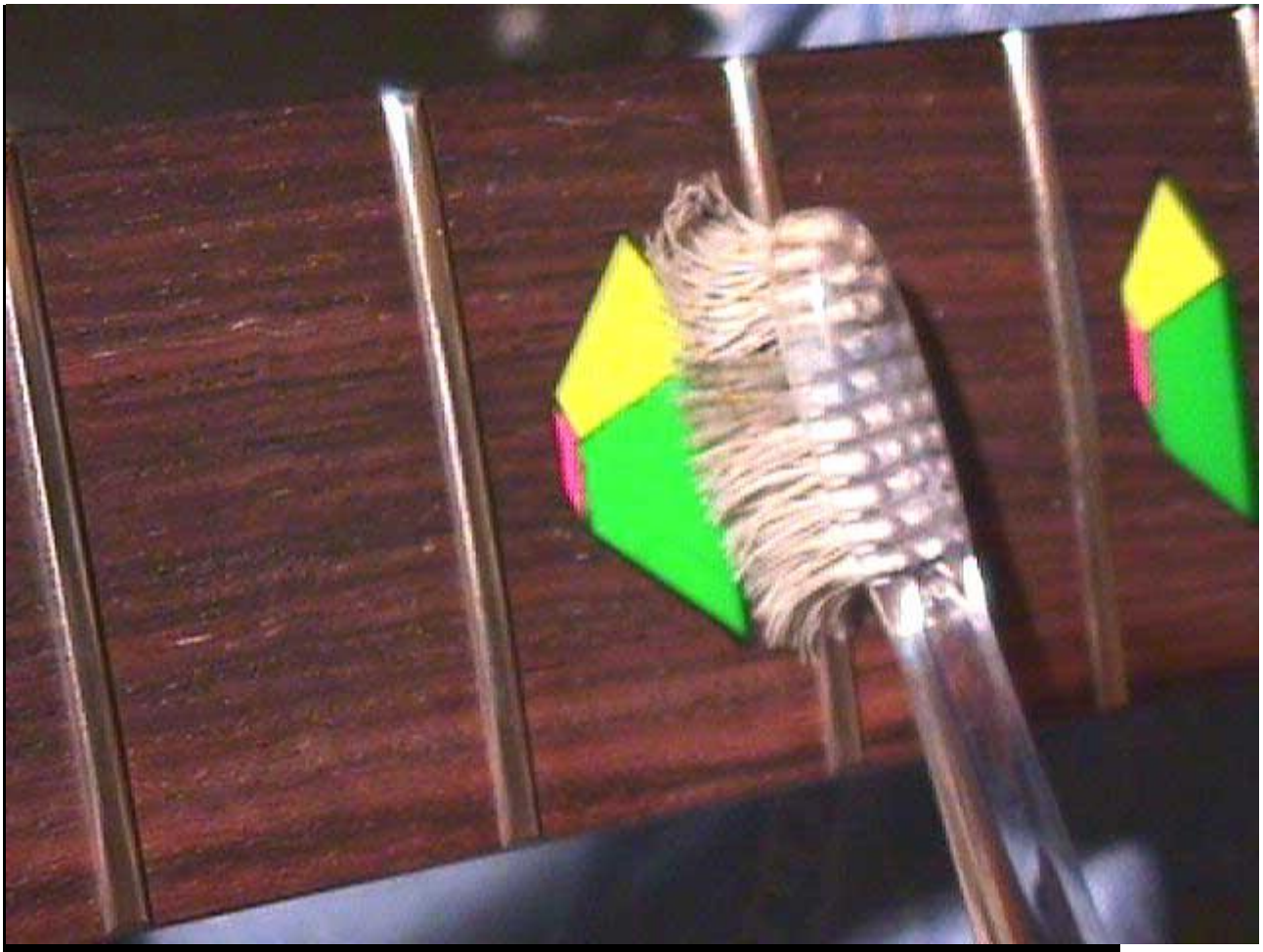
The wood looks great, time to finish up some details. Can you see the oxidation on the sides of the frets?

Not in that picture you can't, trust me it's there. You don't think I was going to leave that there do you? Use masking tape to tape the frets off with at least an inch of overhang on each side. Fold one end of the tape so you can easily remove every time. Detack it against your pants first before you put it on the wood, you don't need or want the full adhesive power. It can actually leave a residue on the board, and on clearcoated maple can pull clear off. Pinching the edge of the wool with your thumbnail (grow one) rub in the direction of the fret. You'll see the oxidation disapear and the fret brighten and polish. Don't forget to hit the top of the frets too. If you're seriously anal you can mask off each side of the board up to the frets and polish the angled end of the frets. It's 4 am so I won't be doing this tonight. After a few frets the tape will start to get dark and it's time to switch sides, then replace, you don't want to wear through the tape.

Notice the difference in 21-24? (the 4 on the right:) It's a subtle detail but I notice those the most. Back to work, only 20 more to go!



30 minites later the frets are shining. I'm cleaning the board of all the wool fibers and dust with an old toothbrush. It gets it out of the pores and from against the frets very well.

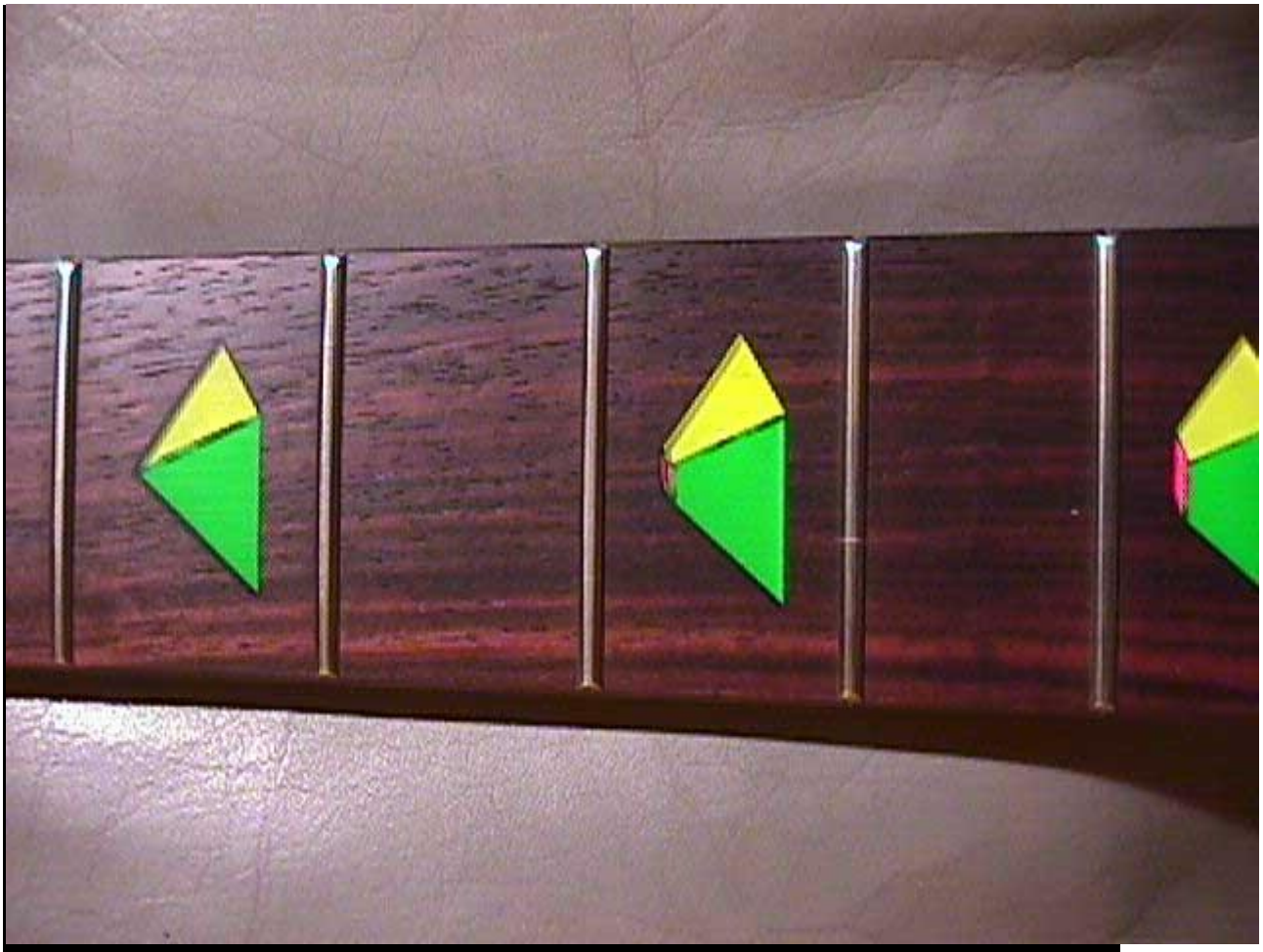


Now that the board is raw and dry from wooling I'm going to add some oil back to it. I'll use either bore or lemon oil for this. Lemon oil evaporates faster so it's bore oil on this one and every guitar that's special to me. Bore oil is specifically made for the bores in woodwind instruments, good stuff. Thanks to Rodney James for this bottle!

Easy, a little goes a LONG way. 2 drops in the tip of my rag and I'll stripe the wood between about 5 frets at a time (down low and about 10 up high where they're skinny) to unload the oil.

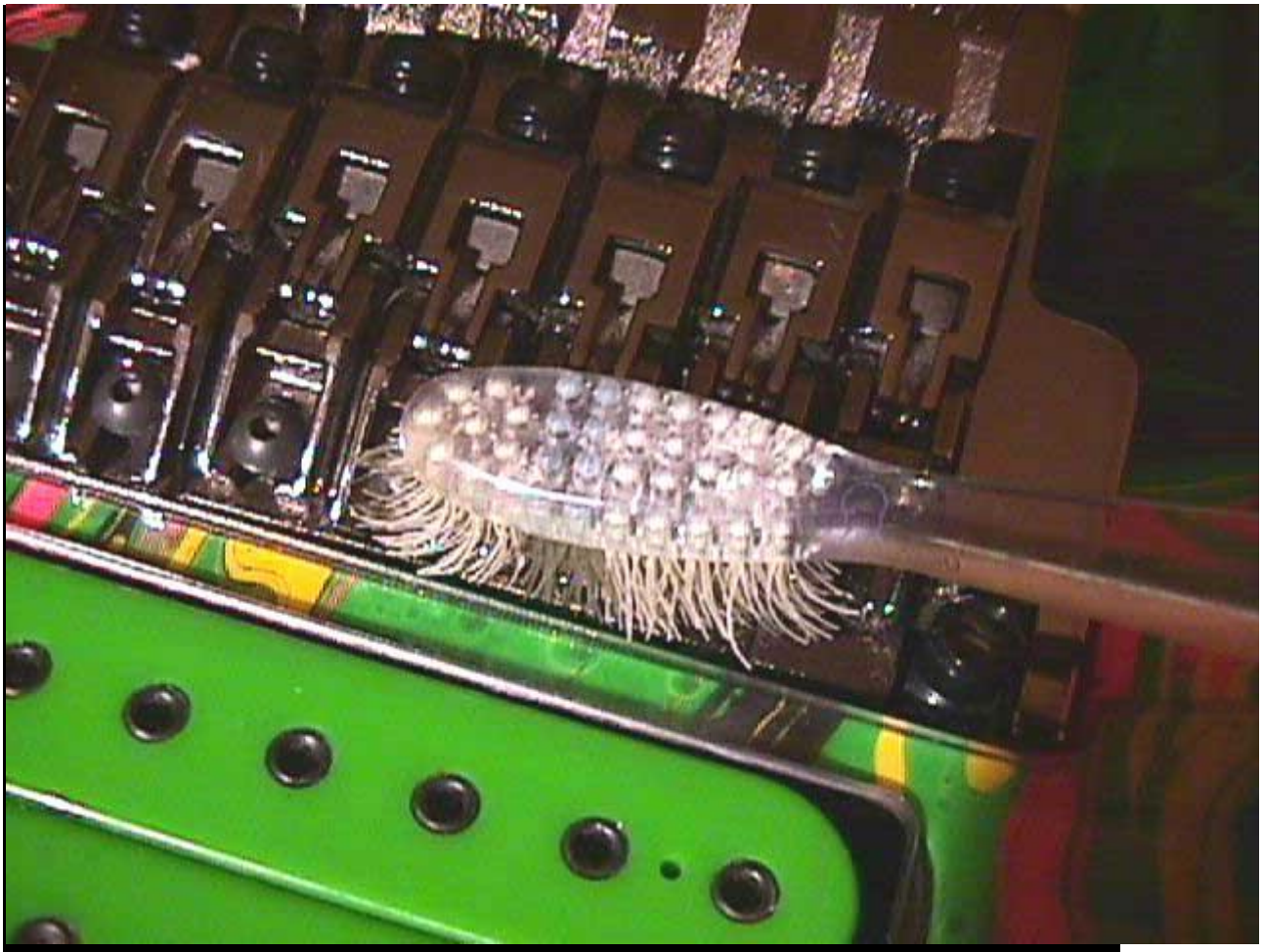
Go back and spread it around making sure to get right up against the frets. Reload and continue on till the board is covered. By the time you get to the end it's time to start buffing the excess off where you started. Buff till the wood is obviously no longer leaching oil.

Now this I consider finished. Remember what it looked like before? I'm happy.



Time for a cig or 2 and then tackle the body.

Body time. I usually start by brushing all the dust out of the nooks and crannies of the trem. This would also be a good time to wipe surface buildup off the trem itself, it's far out of the well and you have decent access to the sides. Your clean rag damp with spit works the best on hardware. (This guitar is odd in that the trem was extremely low in the cavity when I started, so low it had cracked the clear under it. I had the trem out earlier to analyze the problem and cleaned it completely at that time) Removing the fine tuners to clean the flat between them is a nice touch, but using the toothbrush works in a pinch. I removed these.



Clear pickguards, gotta love them. Everything from spilled beer to Cheeto's crumbs find their way behind there, including lots of atmospheric crud. Everything is usually stuck like a rock too. This one's fairly clean for having never been done, but far from *clean*. First off remove the knobs and switch tip. Wedge a heavy pick under one side on the knob and spin the knob.

This will give you enough clearance to get a pick under the other side. Work them back and forth and the knob will slip right off. If you're worried about scratching the guard with the pick [yes, it will if the clearance is tight] stick a piece of tape next to the knob where the pick will make contact, Scotch or masking, no matter which. The clearance wasn't that tight on this knob for me to worry about it.

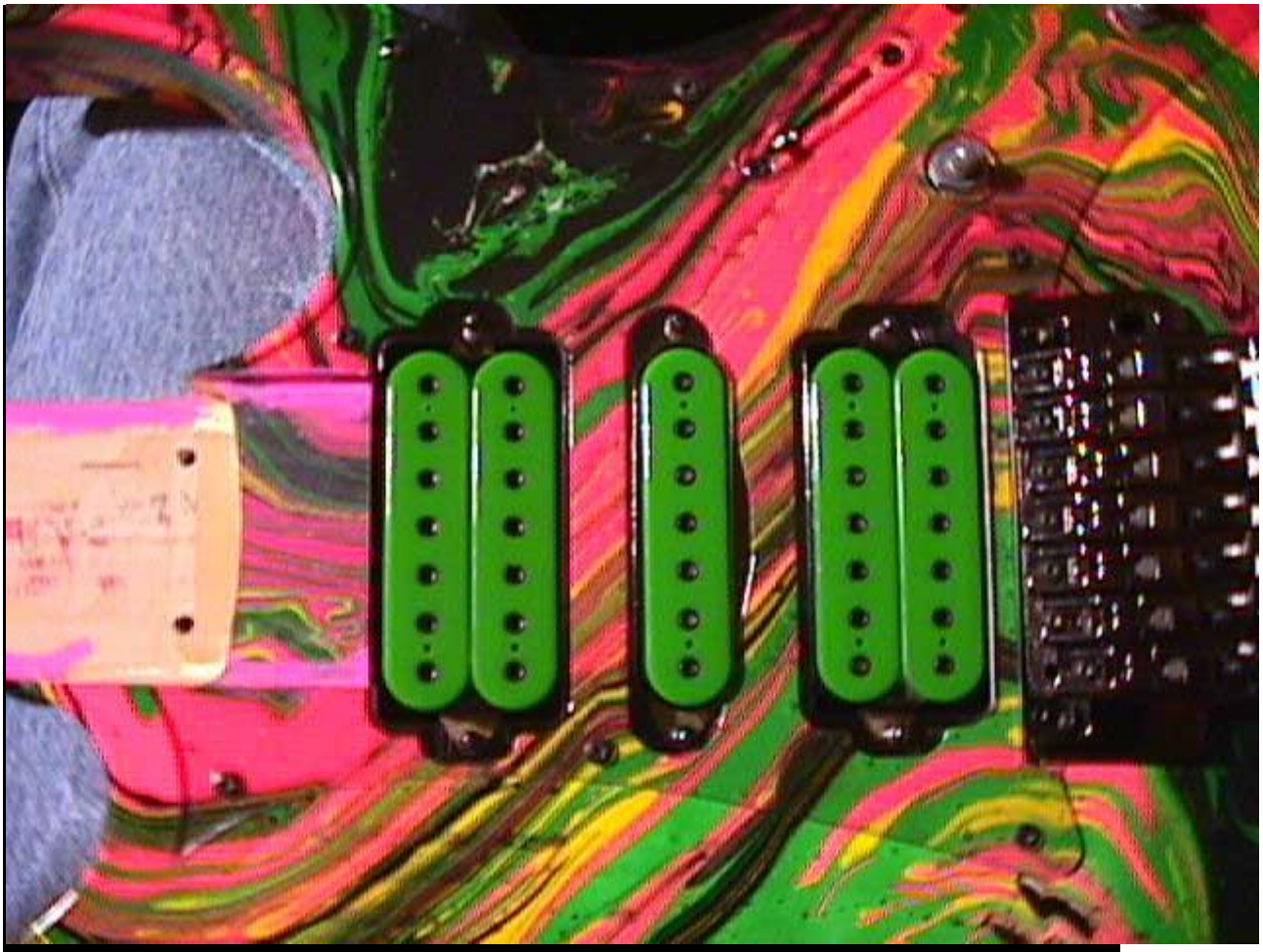
The switch tip will come off with your fingers if it's been off before. If it hasn't the chances are you'll need to use a pair of pliers. Use your rag to protect the plastic and only squeez hard enough to grip the tip. I'm using channel locks to get the right jaw opening, pinching more underneath the tip.

Remove the pickguard screws now, organizing them so they go back in their original holes, wear pattern. The first time a guard is removed you'll hear it cracking as it seperates from the clear, it's actually lightly glued on by the freshly sprayed and ultraviolet cured clear when originally assembled. I've pulled 3 month old DNA guards that cracked. There's actually nothing 'cracking', but that's the sound it makes as the guard releases. UVMC's have guard mounted pickups so you can only lift the guard so far to work underneath. GMC's, PMC's, and most FP's have direct mounts so the guards come right off. The best cleaner to use under the guard? SPIT! ;-) Don't use your cleaner wax, getting the trails of oil smears out from under it is a huge PITA. You don't want to rub too hard as even a clean rag can leave light scratches in the underside of the guard. Also be careful to not break the guard, it's very narrow and weak in several areas. Use care as you hold it wedged off the body as the pickup screws are SHARP and you can easily scrape them on the clearcoat if you're not careful and observant. Nothing like a nice scratch under a clear guard. You might not see it, but I will. You'll have a lot of fun cleaning the rails that run between the pickups!! LOL When you're done wipe down the tops of the pickups.

On every clear guard there will be areas underneath that will just not clean or polish, you'll find these on the clearcoat under the guard too. This is where the guard and the clearcoat have been in contact and over years the remaining solvents in the clear etch the pickguard, and the pickguard from contact makes the clearcoat matte finished. This can be machine polished if you remove the guard. The guard off also makes for easy 'complete' cleaning, but removing the guard without cutting the p/u wires requires removing all 6 p/u screws, much easier getting them out than it is to get the p/u screws rethreaded with the springs fighting you. If you go for it seek help! ;-) As soon as you're satisfied with your efforts screw the guard back on. If you tighten the screws you'll notice really dark, clear, shinny, oily spots around your screws. This is where the guard is in direct contact with the clear.

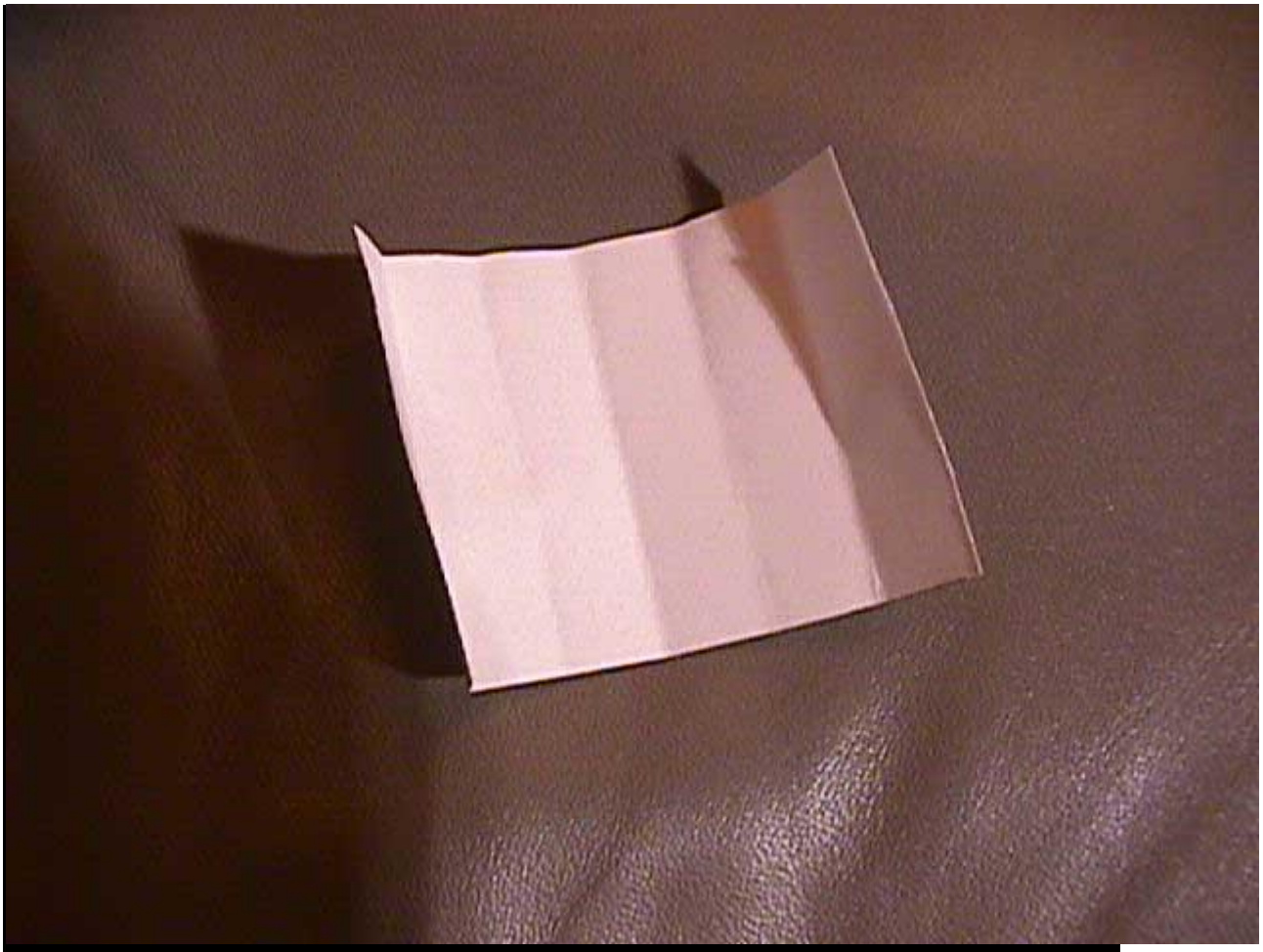
Just back the screw off till you see it disapear.

It's as good as it's going to get, time to reassemble.

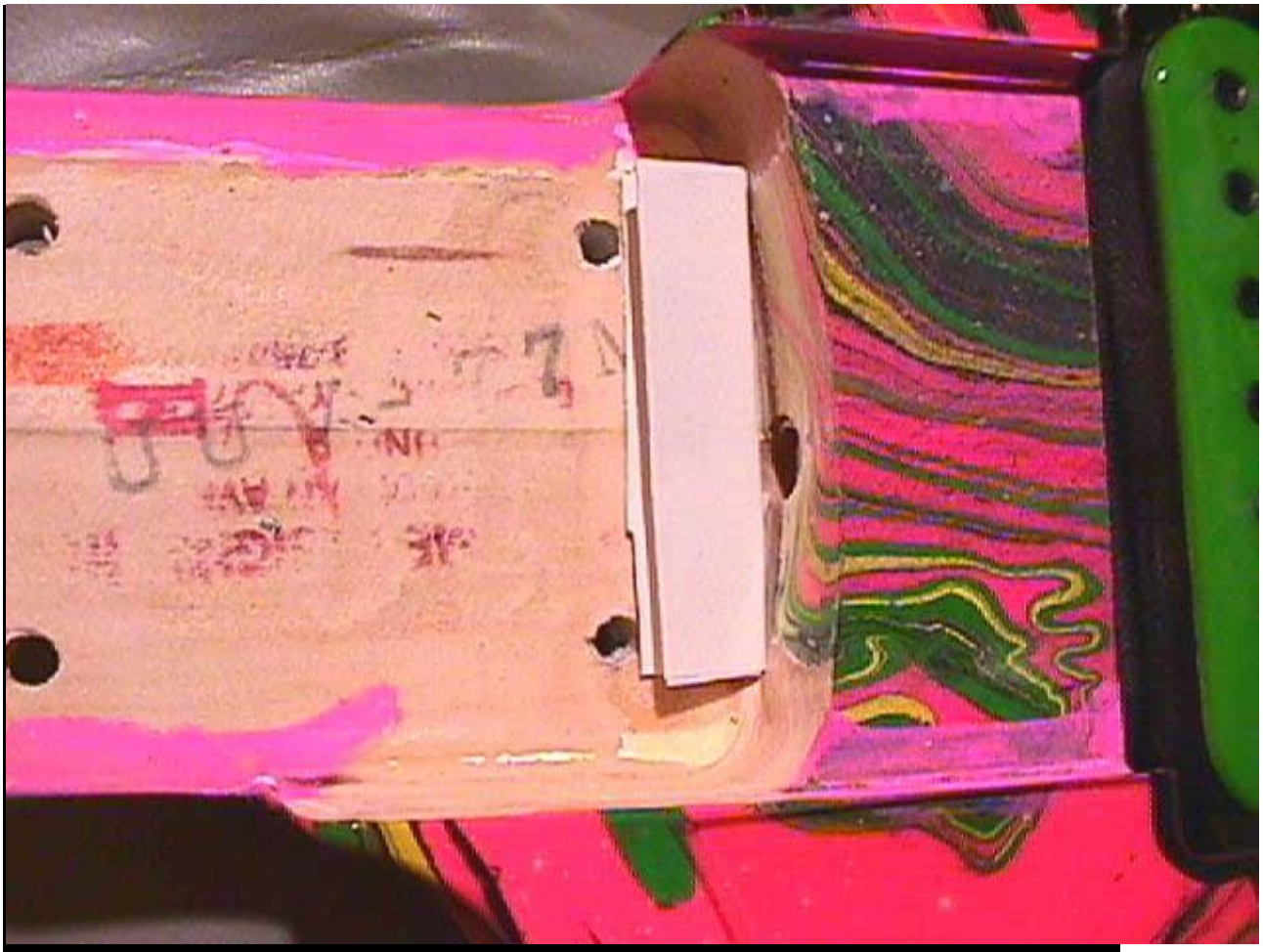


As found out before I started and alluded to earlier, this guitar needs an ample neck shim even though it already has one. I'm not quite sure why and at this point just want to keep working. I use folded paper, these guys that want brass should hang out with Eric Johnson. I used a 5 fold on this one. This is a very think shim and is being combined with the original shim glued in the pocket. A typical neck shim will be a 3 fold single shim, a piece of paper folder twice. It's about as thick as a buisness card which is also excellent for the job.

If you can't get you trem any lower and your action is still high (and you loosened the set screws in the trem posts!) I can almost guarantee you need a neck shim. Most of the guitars I import internationally do not have any neck shim at all. Some do, Almost never is there one missing from a US guitar. You'll also never get a perfect fourth of pullup range out of any Ibanez with low action without adding a shim.

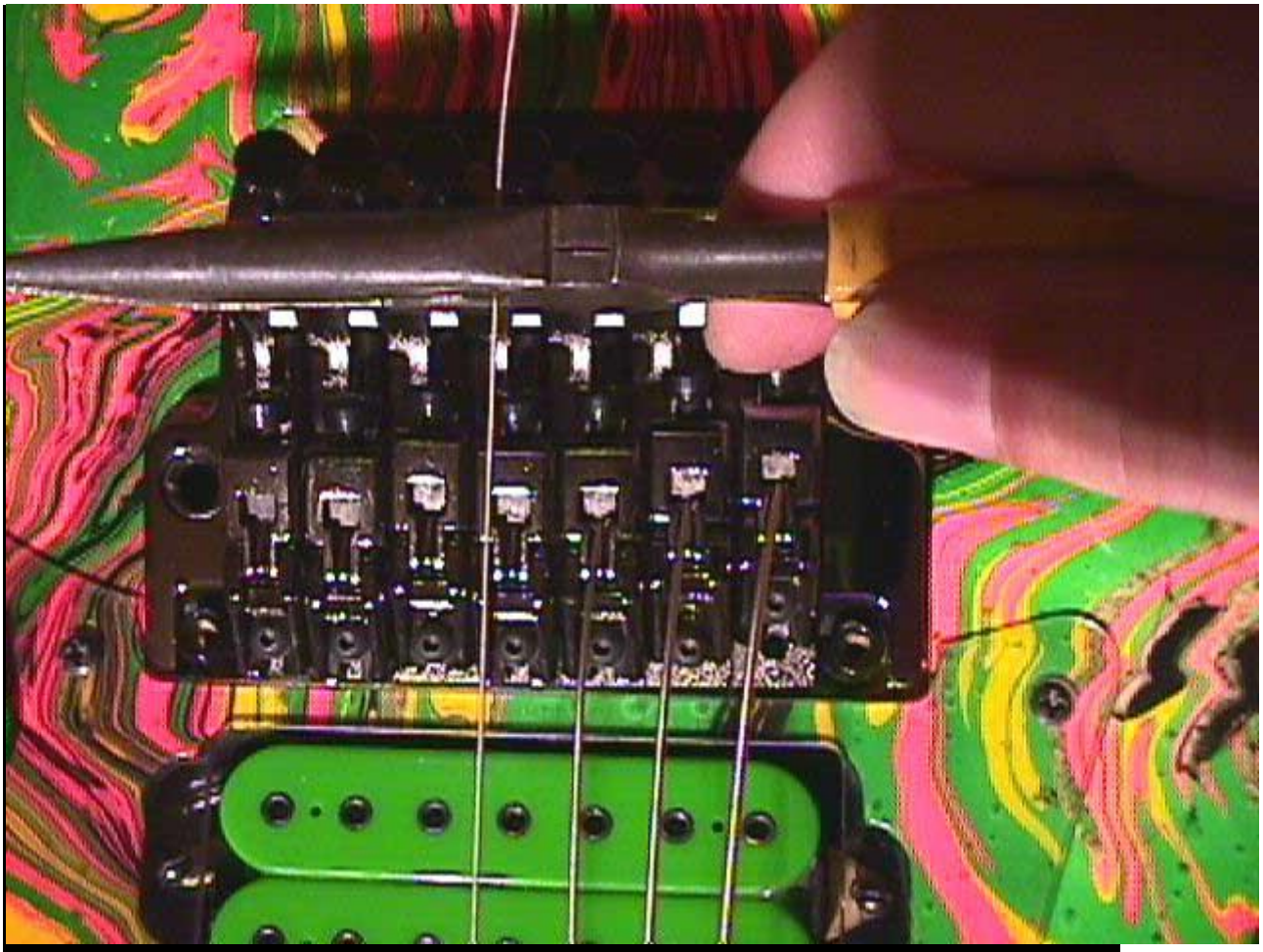


Yea, I count 6 folds too, I reconsidered before I put the neck on and cut it to 5, glad I did as the shim was perfect. Here it is in the pocket just where you want it. [Today I tape these in place with Scotch tape [clear office tape to the international crew] to keep it from shifting on reassembly]

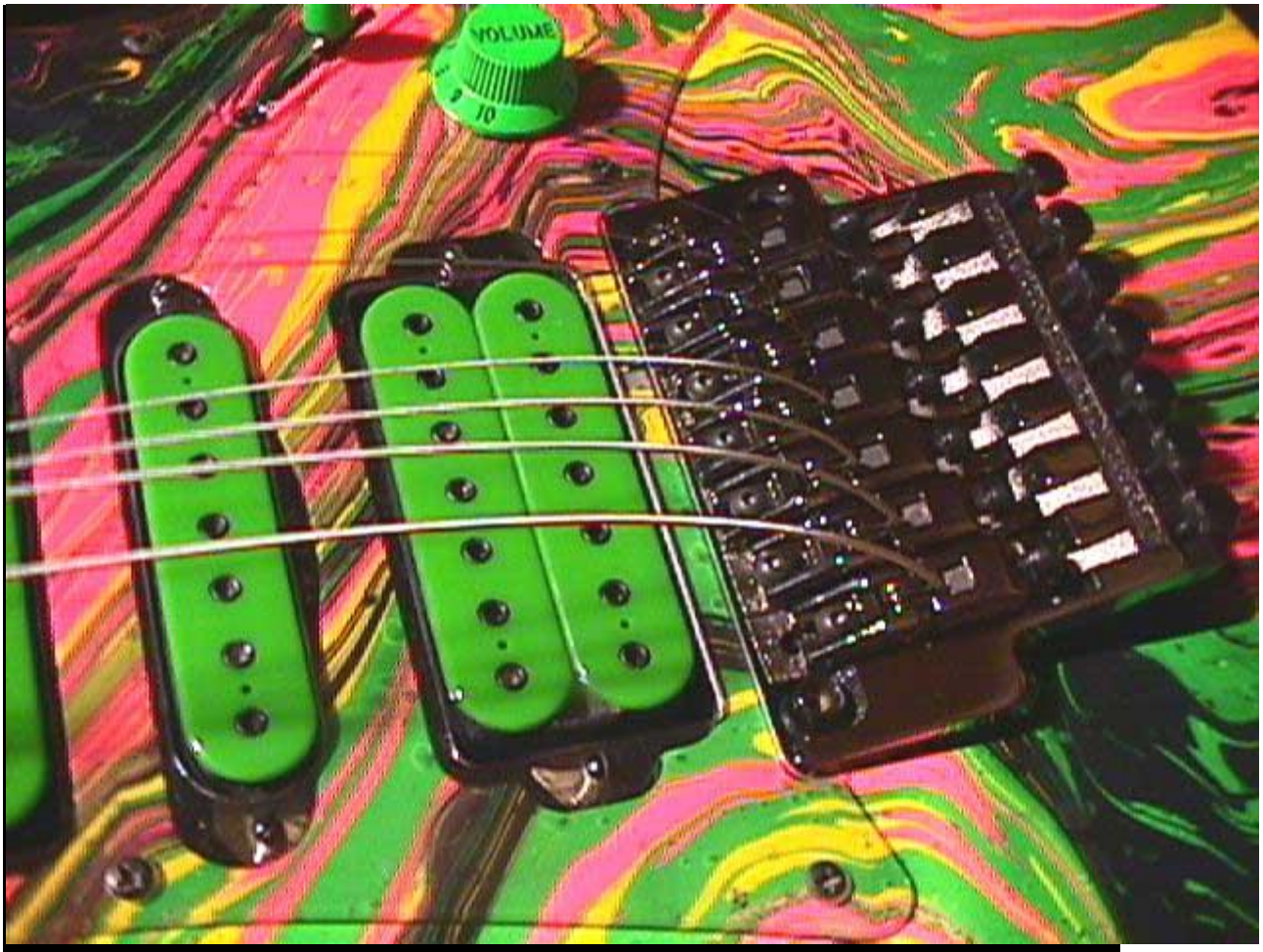


Set the neck into the pocket carefully so you don't disturb the shim and firmly hold it in place. Lift them upright or turn them over as a unit, you're not going to stop squezing them together till the last neck screw is seated. I turn them over. The neck plate still has the 4 screws in it the way I took it off. By dangling the plate over the holes the screws will slip right back where they belong in one stroke, lay the plate on the body and screw it back on. Start with the bridge side screws cause if you don't get this side seated the neck angle will be off. If you screw in a neck side screw first sometimes the bridge end of the neck will catch in the pocket and not seat. These are the tightest you will tighten anything on the guitar, but we're still not talking *grunt* tight. You can crack the clear in the relief contour at the corner of the plate by overtightening. 1/4 to 1/2 turn past snug is plenty. My torque setting on the DeWalt is 14 but I always just screw them till snug with the drill and finish torquing them by hand. This is a picture from removing the plate so it's apears the wrong screw is being tightened last, tough, it's time for a picture and I didn't take one putting it back on! You can also hold the body and neck vertical for reassembly and I do many this way as gravity is taken out of the picture. How I hold a guitar to rescrew the neck is more a factor of how I'm holding it at the time more than having a preference ;)

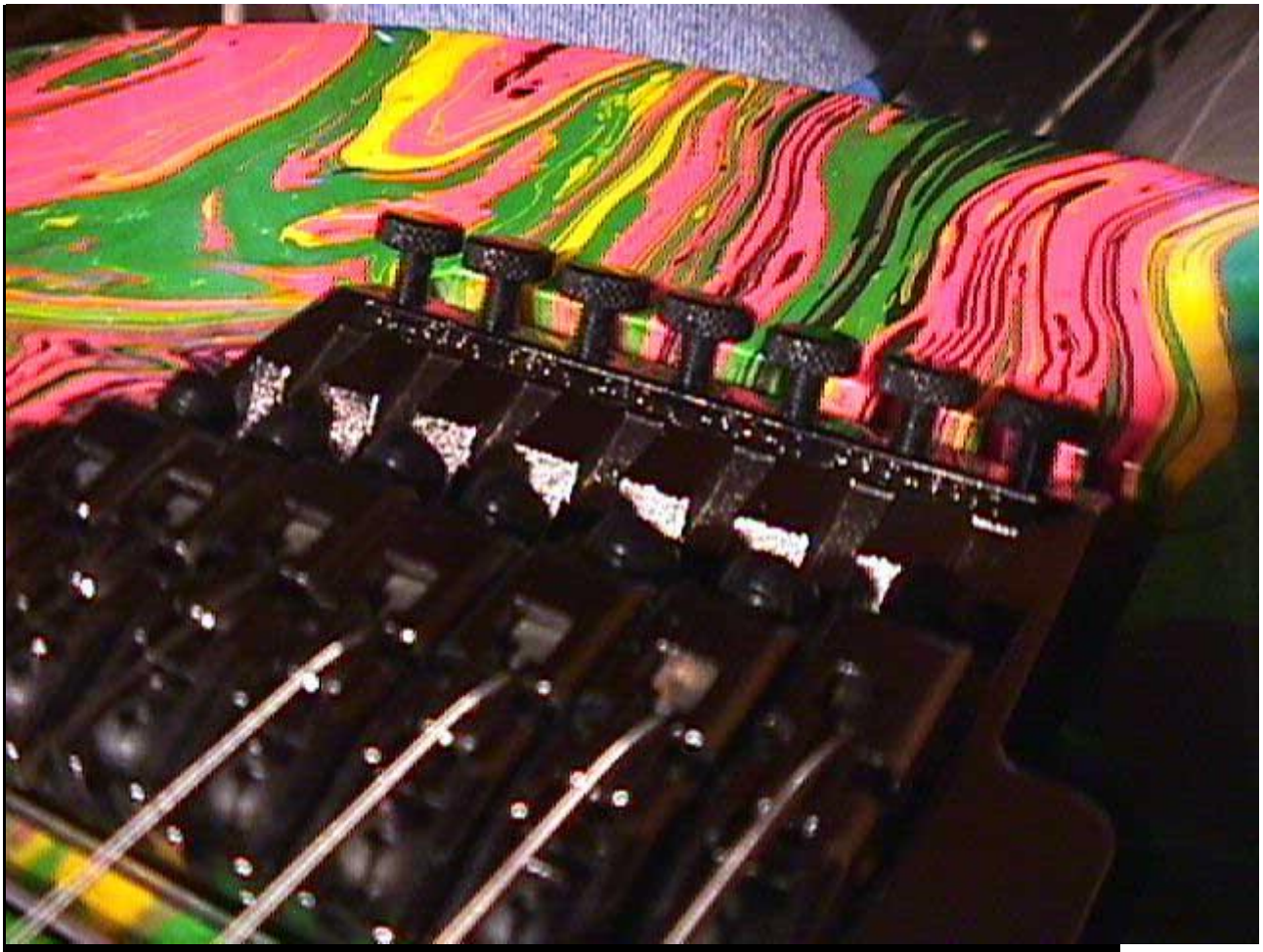
Now that the neck is back on we can reinstall the string tree and string her up. I always leave the ball end ON and just feed the string through the hole up to the ball. Your 3 year old stabs himself on the stub string ends of old style stringing and you'd be doing it this way too. I've been doing it almost 20 years. You have to cut the ball off the low B, the windings won't fit through the hole. Thread the string through the hole pointing away from the bridge so you can kink it back tword the bridge around the post. Slip them under the string tree and snip an inch past the saddle block.



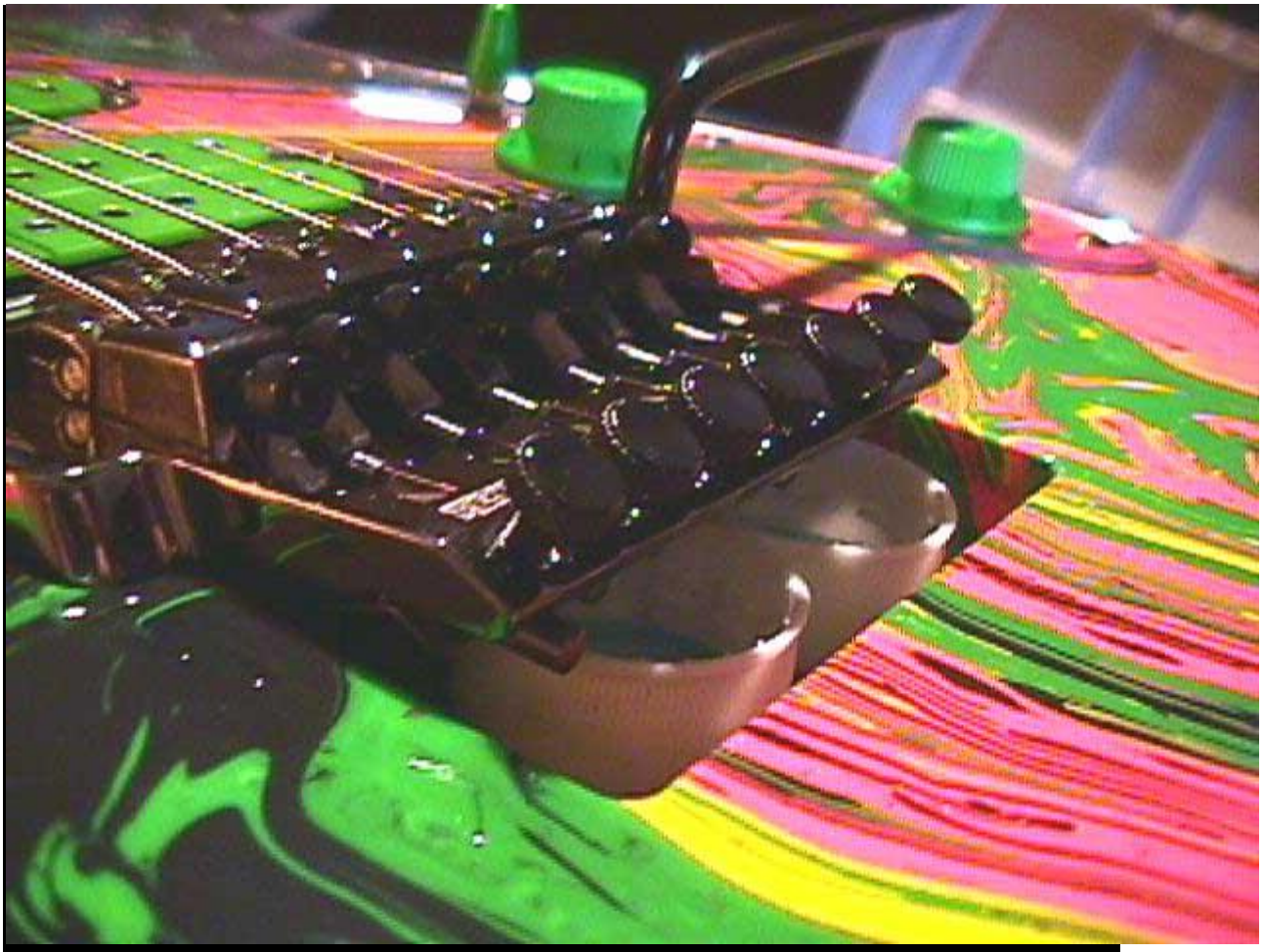
As you can see I get all the strings cut and locked before I start winding them down.



As good a time as any to adjust all the fine tuners to the same height. Make sure they're screwed in enough to have 2 full turns of adjustment to back out.



Hold the string taut as you wind it up and remove the slack, only remove the slack! Start at the low B and work your way to the high E. When the slack is gone I remove the additional wedge under the trem and let it rest on the caps alone. If you leave the trem level like this without any string tension to couteract the springs, the knives will slide up the trem posts and the trem will pop off. It happens very rarely but when it happens on a DNA you never risk it again, and why I use the additional rolled paper wedge till there is string tension back on the trem.



With the strings now closer to the board I can check the neck alignment.
Ooops, see how close the low B is to the edge of the neck?

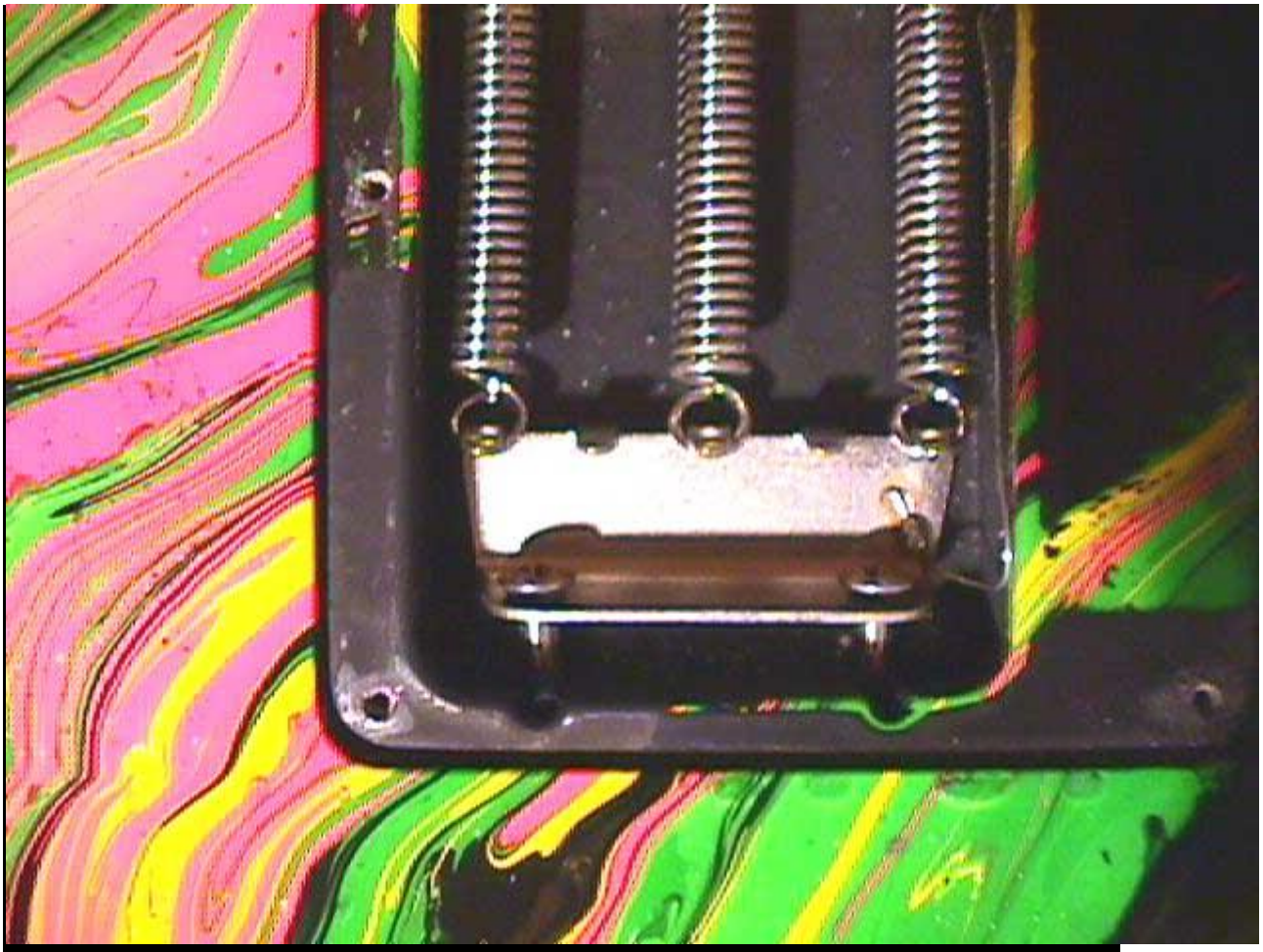
Loosen the neck screws a half turn and pull the neck in the direction it needs to go, snug the screws and check it again. Sometimes you'll have a neck that you have to actually force into position and hold with a death grip to keep it in line and get the screws tight again. If it's too far still you have a slight amount of adjustment at the nut, put the wedge back under them trem, loosen the nut screws, and slide the nut as far in the direction needed. Hold it while you tighten. This won't give you any more than a quarter mil of correction but sometimes that's all you need. If you need more the next step would be to evenly sand the side of the neck pocket. Just a little here will change the neck angle quite a bit. This one was easy.

With the trem now resting on the caps I can quickly tune the strings up to a few half steps flat of true. Pull the caps out from under the trem and finish tuning, it should be close enough that this is resonably quick.

Oooops, looks like the old strings were .008's LOL

If you can't tell why you should vist the Trem Angle part of the Tech section. The trem is angled far forward and I'm not close to tune yet. One quick look inside the trem cavity tells me the claw is way too far out. Screw the claw in to add enough string tension for 009's. I'll eyeball this in to about where I know it should be.

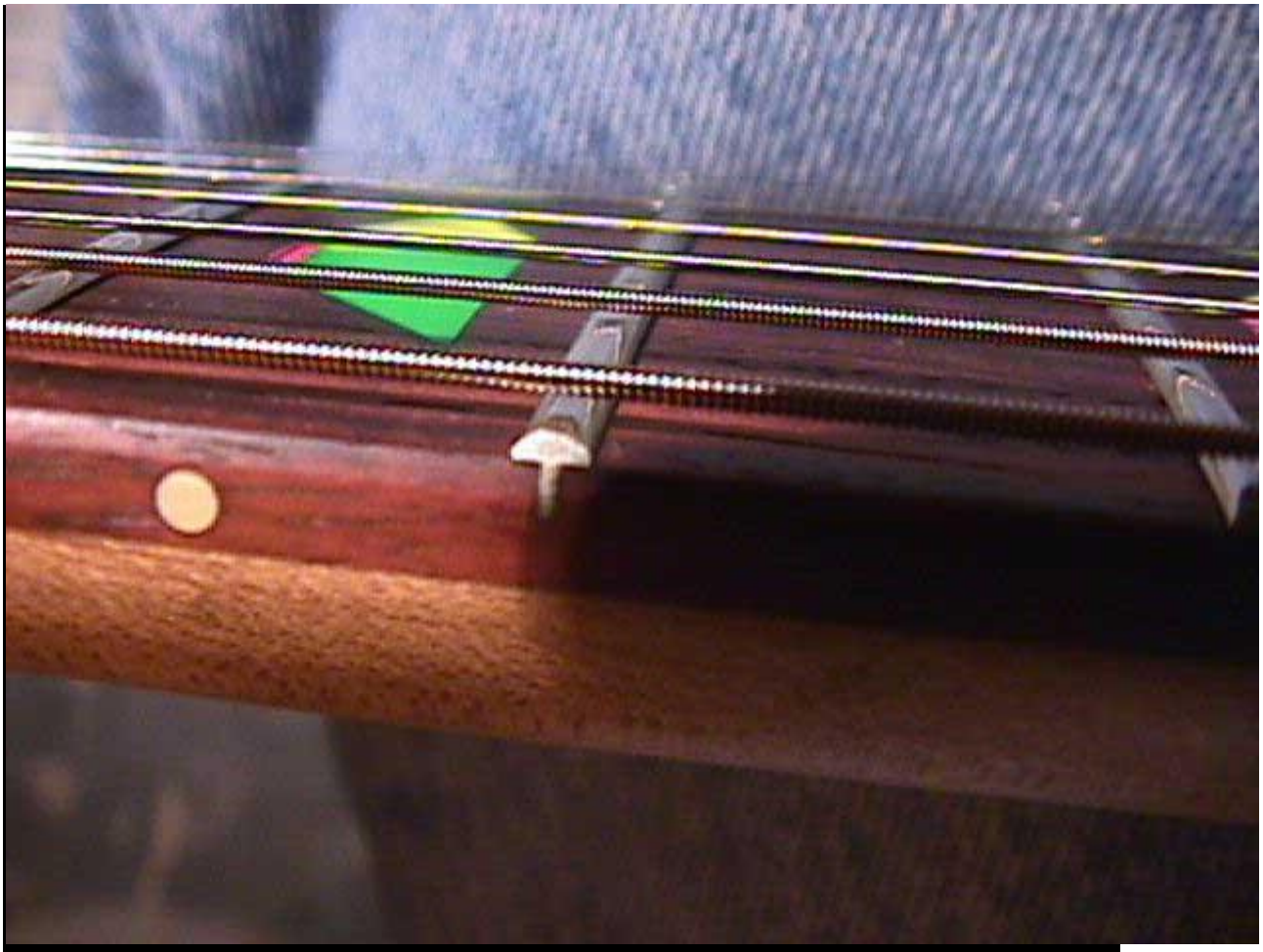
This is normally where it should be with a .009 setup.



After getting the strings in perfect tune could you believe the angle was perfect, I never touched the claw again! ;-) Check out that knife edge. Where's the knife edge? You didn't visit the Tech Section did you?

Time to clean the nut pads and get them back on the nut, do not tighten yet. A huge part of a double locking trem keeping tune is stretching in the strings. Just grab the string around the end of the fretboard and yank it back and forth with vigor! I'll usually work the string from nut to bridge from around the 9th fret to the pickups, and back again. The high E you have to be 'delicate' with but it won't stretch much anyway. The bigger the string the more it will stretch and they need to be stretched hard until you can stretch them good 2 times in a row with miniscule change in tune. Have fun with the low B! LOL I pull harder than shown, I just can't do it and take a picture at the same time.

With all the strings stretched and at aproximate pitch it's time to check the neck bow. I do this by eye, sighting down the edge of the neck into the glare of a light, getting the glare right on the edge of the frets illuminating just their end edge. This I can't show you in a pic or explain how much bow I want to see. Preferrably on the bass side I want to see minisclue bow from the end to about the 7th and then smooth bow to the nut, with the trebble side straight. That's a perfect situation, but not all necks cooperate. You can also check bow by fretting at the 1st and 24th fret and checking the gap in the center of the neck, around the 9th. (try fretting at the first and fretting at the 24th with your elbow while you try and take a picture!:)

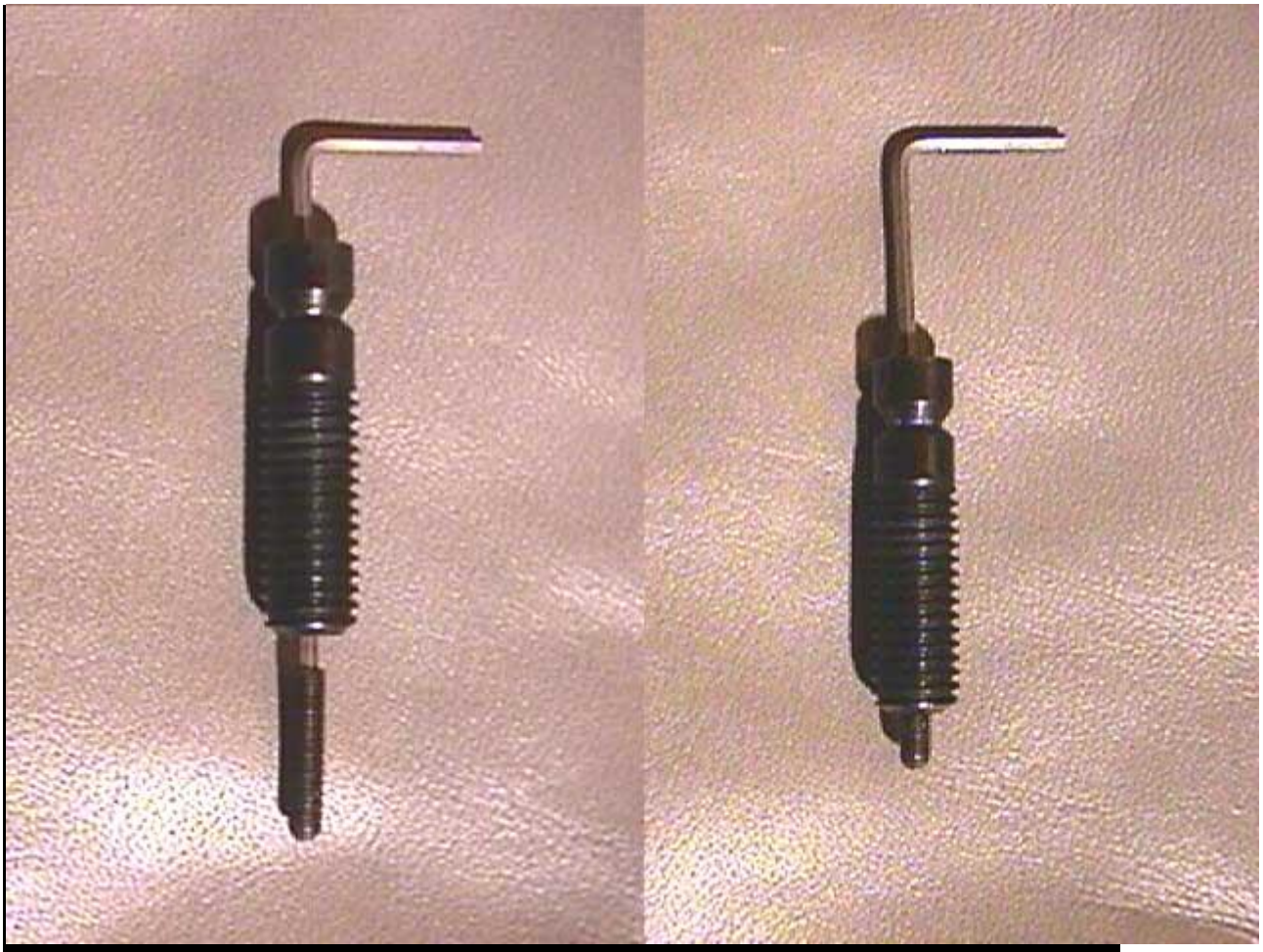


This neck has a little more bow than I like, and it's very smooth even bow down the whole neck, both trebble and bass sides, a little more on the bass. I'll give the truss a few 1/4 turns and see what happens.

Just slightly straighter but as I figured, it starts to backbow from the 3rd to the nut, this neck is destined to the bow it has. This isn't a problem, it's just not *perfect*. Guitar necks will take on many different personalities and you need to adjust them to play as well as that neck will. Minor inconsistencies can be taken care of with fretwork. I checked to see if any serious fretwork would be needed as that would be done before the board was polished. That way you clean all the fret dust, which can be considerable, out of the woods pores with the steel wool when you polish the board. I'm moving on to the action.

On a 7 string I personally like the low B 2.5mm off the top of the 24th fret and the high E 1.5mm off the top. I just dial this in by eye, I don't need to measure. Of course I'm backing out the set screws inside the trem posts using the 1.5mm wrench before I turn the posts. Many times you will need to loosen the post to unlock the setscrew, it can be too tight for the little wrench (and your fingertips!) I always back both posts out a hair before I back out the set screws.

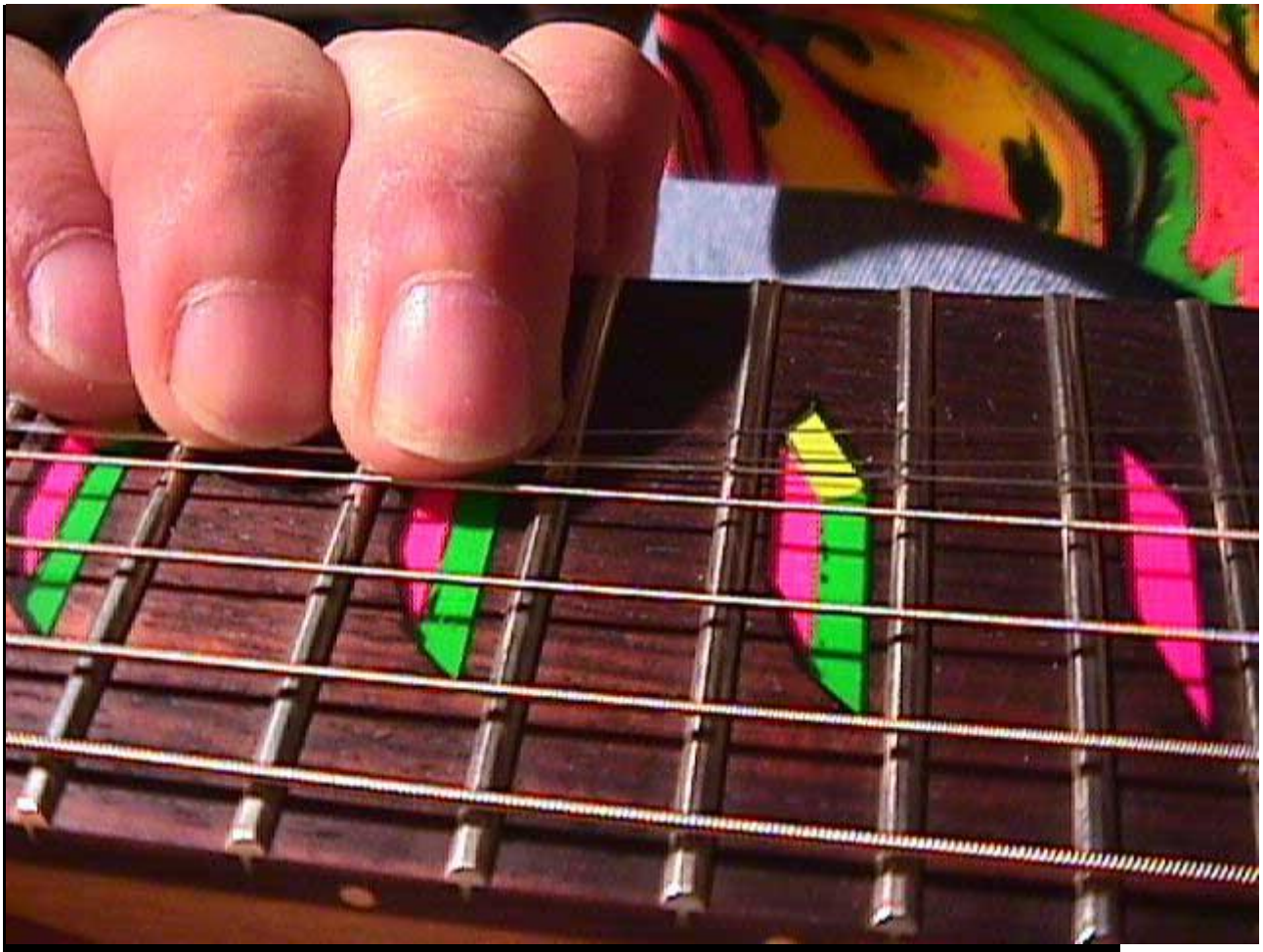
Here is a pic of the post with the set screw extended. They screw out the bottom and will not come out through the top of the post. The set screw locks the post threads against the threads of the post anchor and is critical to eliminate play between them, causing tuning instability.



Now I can go ahead and adjust the action height using the 4mm allen wrench in the trem posts. If the trem posts bottom out and the action still isn't low enough, guaranteed more neck shim is needed. Go back to page 6 for details.

When the action is right don't forget to retighten the set screws! I just tighten them finger tight, but I'll turn the posts down just a hair to really lock the threads together. With the neck shim that was added earlier the trem now sits exactly where I want with the correct height, sure am glad I went with the 5 fold shim! The point of the trem where it meets the guard is between .5 and 1mm above the guard on the bass side and just slightly under on the trebble. This is just my personal preference, you can adjust yours anyway you want by the thickness of the shim, the thicker the shim the greater the neck angle, the higher the trem sits on the body, the thinner the shim the deeper the trem will sit in the cavity, this would be after both configurations were setup with the same action.

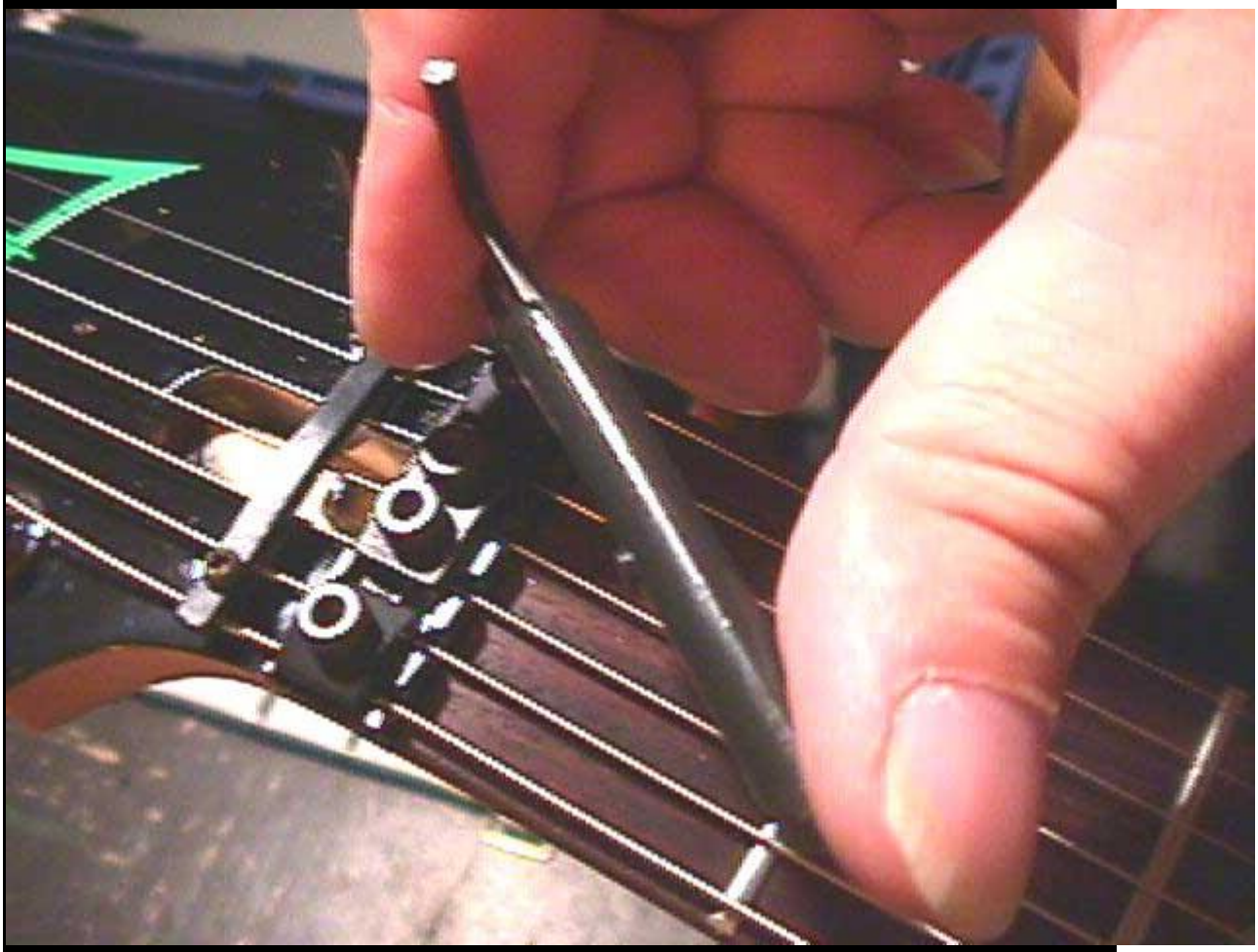
After the height is right it's time to check all the frets. Fret every note on the board to make sure you don't have anything choking on a high fret. On the unwounds do this by bending the string at least a full step to check for areas that choke. I like at least 3+ steps of clean tone and why I set my trebble side at 1.5mm. You might have to readjust the action slightly depending on the neck and how good your eye was at setting it up. ;-)



No problems with this one, I'll have to show that fix in another segment. Time to get it in perfect tune and check the intonation. Open string and harmonic at the 12th fret, all in tune and perfect. Unfortunately, this is a terrible way to check intonation. Fret each string at the 24th fret (or last fret and transpose) to check the intonation, and checked that way, this UV's intonation is WAY out. With the trem at perfect angle and in perfect pitch, hook the Edge adjust intonation tool up to the high E saddle and snug up. Loosen the saddle screw using the 2mm allen wrench and adjust the saddle.

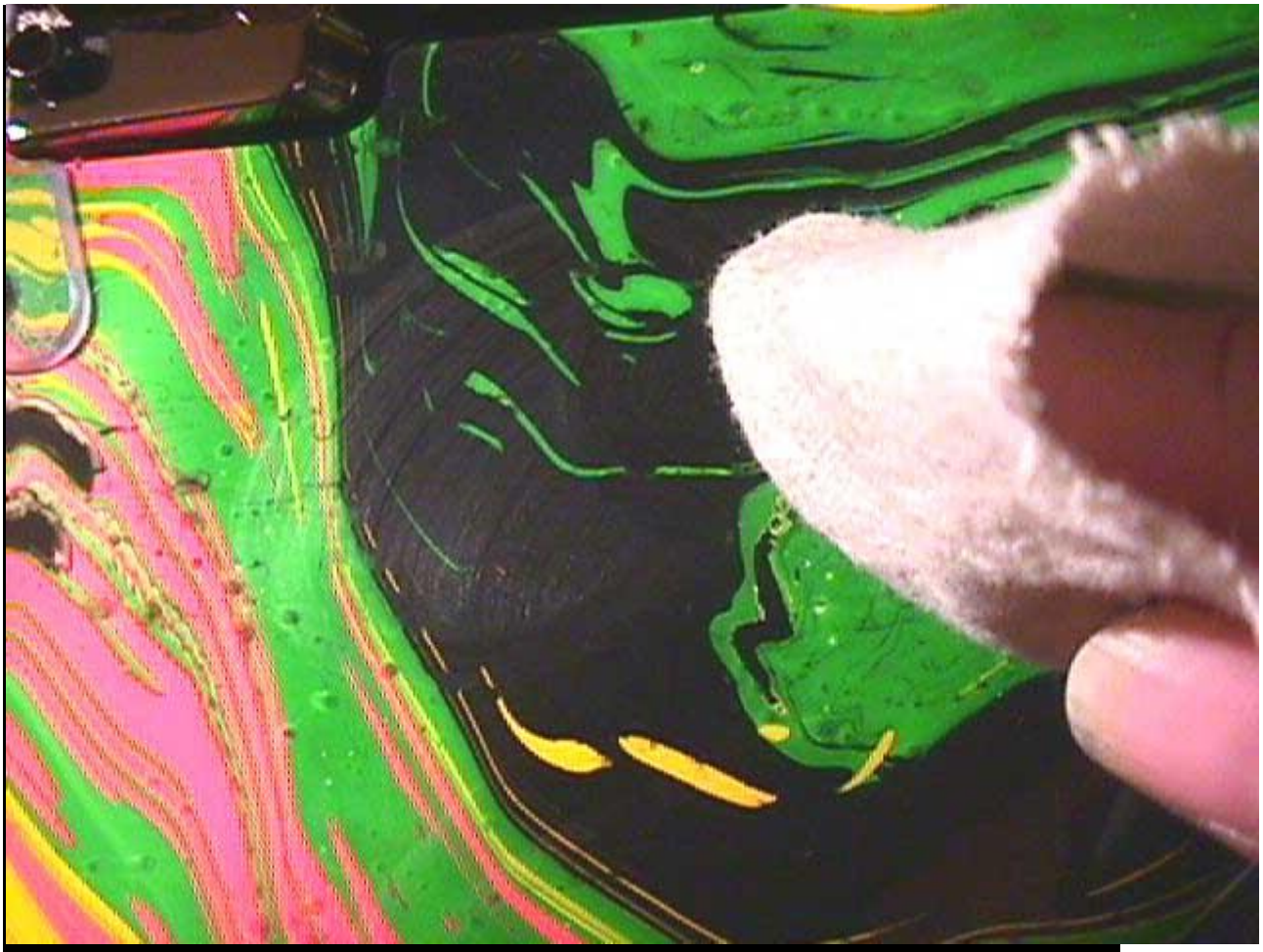
If the fretted note is sharp the string needs to be lengthed by moving the saddle away from the nut. Back off the string at the tuner to aid the tool. If the fretted note is flat the string needs to be shortened moving the saddle toward the nut. Retune the string and check the 24th, if it needs further adjustment continue until it's correct, then clamp down on the saddle screw, retune the whole guitar to perfect pitch, and move to the next string. Continue until done. I can't recomend the tool highly enough! They can be ordered through Stew Mac, unfortunately they have to be purchased as a set so you will get all 3 varients for $56. Before I bought the tool I'd grab my clamp to pin the bar to the body. It's fairly easy to move the saddle with most of the string tension off unless it needs to be moved a long way to lenghten the string. Unwind the tuner in this case to get enough slack.

From the saddle pattern it was obvious this intonation wasn't changed when the string gauge was and was still factory set. It's just been intonated for the first time. Shame. I'm locking down the nut pads and moving on. Finger tight only!! You'd be amazed at how many people will strip a nut overtightening the pads. If the tuning changes when you lock the pads down there's a good chance it's the pad turning as you lock it down pulling the lower string sharp and the higher flat. There's a trick to just seat the pad before applying that last finger tight torque which usually elliminates this. If your string tree is not low enough both strings under the pad will pull sharp as the pad stretches the string, check and lower the tree if necessary.



Time to put the truss rod cover on while I'm here. I'm going to adjust the pickup height now, a #1 flathead screwdriver will do. Turn the screw clockwise to raise the pickups, counterclockwise to lower. Set them where you like them just not so close the magnetic field affects the strings, this will kill sustain and sometimes pull the string slightly sharp. This is where I set mine.

Next is just to microtune with the fine tuners and play it for a stretch to check all the details. Of course I plugged it in and checked the electronics when it came in the door but now it's got fresh steel and will show it's character. I always wash my hands first as I don't want to clean the board much when I'm done, I've already done that. When I've had enough it's time to wipe the board down and finish cleaning the body. Just like I did the headstock and with the same cleaner polish, work a small area at a time making sure your rag is clean. This is where 1 piece of wool fiber in the rag will leave alot of scratches on the body. No need to use pressure, I'm just cleaning and the surface of this is perfect, just dirty. Any serious polishing should be done with a buffer and good pad but minor polishing can be done with the same polish, but NOT on a rag. You put it on your finger and use your finger like you would the rag. The rag will collect polish buildup which will scratch, your finger won't. Polish as long as your finger can stand it and wipe off the residue. If you're trying to get deeper scratches out you can wetsand it down starting with 1500 paper and mineral spirits to wet, and ending with 2000. This will require a machine buff afterwords if you want a truely professional result. If the scratches are even deeper start with 1000. If the scratch is extremely deep it should be touched up with clear first.



After wiping the rest of my fingerprints off the entire guitar from working on it, it's finally done. This job was started at 1 am and it was 7 am when I finished. I took a few short breaks and of course had to answer emails all night, but even without pausing to setup for each picture this is a time consuming job. Think the results were worth it?

I do!


DONE