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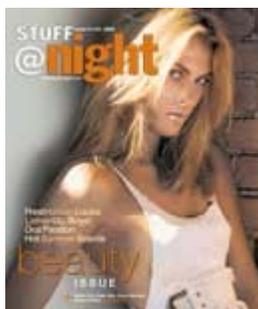
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PUNK PIONEER

Robert Quine, 1942–2004

BY MATT ASHARE

The first time I saw him play, Robert Quine, with his deeply receding hairline, baggy off-the-rack suit, and stone-faced expression, looked more like Lou Reed's business manager than the man on the business end of some of the most inventive and emotive avant-punk-rock guitar playing. That was in the mid '80s, when Reed brought on Quine, who'd indeed abandoned a career as a tax lawyer to become a punk pioneer with Richard Hell and the Voidoids in 1977, as his guitar foil for such seminal albums as 1982's *The Blue Mask*. It must have been a dream come true for Quine, who'd been an obsessive Velvet Underground fan, and whose hand-held cassette recordings of several of their shows were finally released in 2001 as the three-CD *Bootleg Series, Vol. 1: The Quine Tapes*, the first volume in Universal's *Velvet Underground Bootleg Series*.



Sadly, the 61-year-old Quine was found dead at his SoHo loft, on Saturday, June 5, of what appears to have been an intentional heroin overdose. Quine left his distinctive mark on dozens upon dozens of essential recordings, from the frantic, feedback-laced fretwork that introduced his singular style to the world on the Voidoids' 1977 debut *Blank Generation*, to the dreamy delay loops that adorned *Lustro*, a 2002 album that set Michael DuClos's poetry, as read by the likes of Deborah Harry, Kristin Hersh, and Lisa Germano, to artfully ambient guitar work. Along with inspiring some of Reed's best solo work, Quine played a crucial role in the recording of Tom Waits's classic 1985 album *Rain Dogs*, and added some of his trademark serrated soloing to Matthew Sweet's 1991 breakthrough



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Girlfriend. No, the reserved Quine never looked the part of the guitar hero. But the parts he played ensured that he will always be looked up to as one of the formative heroes of punk rock.

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