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**Filing Topics:** Memorial Day, Protest Music, Antiwar Song, Iraq War Dissent, Online Political Activism, Supporting The Troops

## **Modern Protest Singer to Neil Young: “I’m Doing The Best I Can!”**

*Ian Rhett releases second online protest music video, “(I Know Why You're) Semper Fi,” inspired by his sister, an active duty Marine, for Memorial Day.*

**San Francisco, May 16, 2006** – This Memorial Day (May 29), emerging musical talent Ian Rhett will officially release a music video for his latest recording, “(I Know Why You’re) Semper Fi”, an anti-war song inspired by his sister, an 18 year, active duty veteran of the United States Marines. The animated video dramatically illustrates the emotional toll placed on the members of military families and makes a plea for an end to all war. The music video can be found online at: [http://www.sharedvoice.org/semper\\_fi/](http://www.sharedvoice.org/semper_fi/).

In the 1000<sup>th</sup> issue of *Rolling Stone*, 60’s rocker Neil Young said, “I was waiting for some young singer eighteen to twenty two years old to come along... I waited a long time. Then I decided that maybe the generation that has to do this is still the Sixties generation.”

Rhett, who describes himself as ‘somewhat older than eighteen’ was both crushed and inspired when he read those words. “It took me close to 30 years to find my calling, or to have it find me,” he said. “Every day since 9/11, I’ve felt like I don’t have a choice but to do everything I can to make a positive difference in the world. I left a promising career in the corporate world to find my purpose, and it’s clear to me now that I’m supposed to write songs about current issues and share them. Mr. Young, I’m doing the best I can!”

Although this is only Ian’s second recorded song - he’s only been writing and singing songs for a little under two years now - his immediate success as a naturally gifted vocalist and songwriter is inspiring.

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His first recording, “(Didn't Know I Was) Unamerican” – a song about the virtues of dissent, global community and environmental awareness – was released on the Internet on September 12, 2004 as a viral video (called “Food for the heart and soul” by Ben & Jerry's and TrueMajority founder Ben Cohen) and has been heard by over a million people. The inspiring video prompted two Democratic Presidential campaigns in 2004 to invite him to perform at campaign events on the east coast.

Just getting his songs heard isn't enough for Rhett, though, who is committed to having his music make a difference in the world. He also wants to inspire listeners to take action. Thousands signed up with TrueMajority Action after he included a call to action at the end of the “Unamerican” video.

“The ‘(I Know Why You're) Semper Fi’ video supports the invisible army - the wounded veterans who are returning by the thousands to face an unacceptably underfunded VA, and a challenging post-traumatic adjustment to civilian life,” said Rhett. “I want to support organizations working on behalf of the men and women serving alongside my sister - it seems wrong that we're not holding our government accountable for sending them into a dubious war and then not have sufficient care when they come home.”

## **BACKGROUND**

The events of 9/11 changed Ian Rhett's life. He left a successful career in advertising and spent the next two years on a soul-searching quest to find “his purpose” – a journey that would eventually lead him to becoming a songwriter. On New Year's Eve, 2003, he broke a life-long creative block by dedicating two hours a day, every day to writing and rehearsing, and wrote over a dozen songs in the first few months of 2004. A month after his first-ever public performance in June 2004, he was invited to the Democratic National Convention, where he closed the Kucinich Presidential Campaign Gala. In late October that year, the Kerry Campaign invited him to Florida to perform at key rallies and events including the Florida State Democratic party headquarters' event on election night. Rhett counts among his influences Marvin Gaye, John Lennon, Johnny Cash, Ray Charles and yes, he even admires Neil Young. He lives in San Francisco and serves on the board of Children of Shelters, a local non-profit serving homeless children.

**For more information, see Ian Rhett's website: [www.ianrhett.com](http://www.ianrhett.com)**

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