Counter Culture: A Brief Oral/Visual History of Independent Record Shops

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WHAT IS AN INDEPENDENT RECORD SHOP?

- A (usually) single, small shop owned by an individual or small partnership that specializes in selling recorded music. The shop tends to serve a local scene and/or focuses on a certain genre or genres of music.

- What it is not: Remember Virgin Megastores or Tower Records? Chain stores owned by a corporation. These stores had many locations and very similar layouts and aesthetics, and carried myriad genres and formats with a heavy focus on currently popular artists.


**METHODOLOGY (OF SORTS)**

- Purposive sampling
- Interviews with owners, staff, and customers
- Case studies of similar neighborhoods: South Street in Philadelphia and Oldham Street in Manchester.
- Lots of photographs using disposable cameras

**MANCHESTER, ENGLAND**

- Oldham Street in Manchester is kind of the Bleecker Street or St Mark’s (think not today) in NYC or South Street in Philadelphia. Funky, dirty, kind of cool. Lots of weird little shops, bars, cafes and of course, record shops.

- Vinyl Revival, Piccadilly Records, Clampdown Records, and Beatin’ Rhythm were located within a block or two of each other in this neighborhood, and a few other record shops are nearby as well.

- [Manchester Record Shops Map](https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=zrggzygahkcY.kahM1WxRTYMo)
WHICH BRINGS US TO:

TERRIBLE PHOTOS OF TERRIFIC RECORD SHOPS

BEATIN’ RHYTHM
BEATIN' RHYTHM
“Rummaging around in old shelves of LPs is one of the few things that makes life worth living, as far as I’m concerned.”

HARUKI MURAKAMI
“CHANCE TRAVELER”
BLIND WILLOW, SLEEPING WOMAN
(PUBLISHED BY ALFRED A. KNOPF NEW YORK 2006)