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	# 1 03-02-2007, 05:20 PM	
	ibanezcollector  Registered User	
	Join Date: Feb 2007 Location: Cleveland OH Armpit of the USA 	
How to do a Relic Guitar: Photo Tutorial 56k dont even try it..		
Ok here we go.. How to do a relic guitar, a practice that seems to be shrouded in secrecy. I am by no means a master of relic work but have been doing it for 2 years as a hobby. I want to present to the folks at talk bass how "I" do my relic jobs. First step is to get a guitar or bass.. pretty simple you would think. But if this is your first time you might not want to try this on your beloved instrument. A SX Bass or a Squier strat make a perfect candidate for your first few times. I will be using this Squier strat as the victim for this tutorial. Now I know the purists are going to bash and say its stupid or just play it and let it happen naturally. Well that doesnt always hold true for people hence hundreds of luthiers and custom shops are offering relics. If your guitar is nitro laquer this will be a 100x easier to replicate and also will look much more natural but in most cases this just isnt going to happen with todays durable thick poly finishes. The squier in this tutorial is a poly finish. Ok here is a shot of the body before any relic work, its black obviously and has aged white fender parts. *Sorry for the fingerprints and glare im not a camera man LOL*		



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Couple shots of the neck pre relícíng.. Notice I have already done a logo change on this neck before deciding to do this tutorial.. I can explain this more down the road if need be.

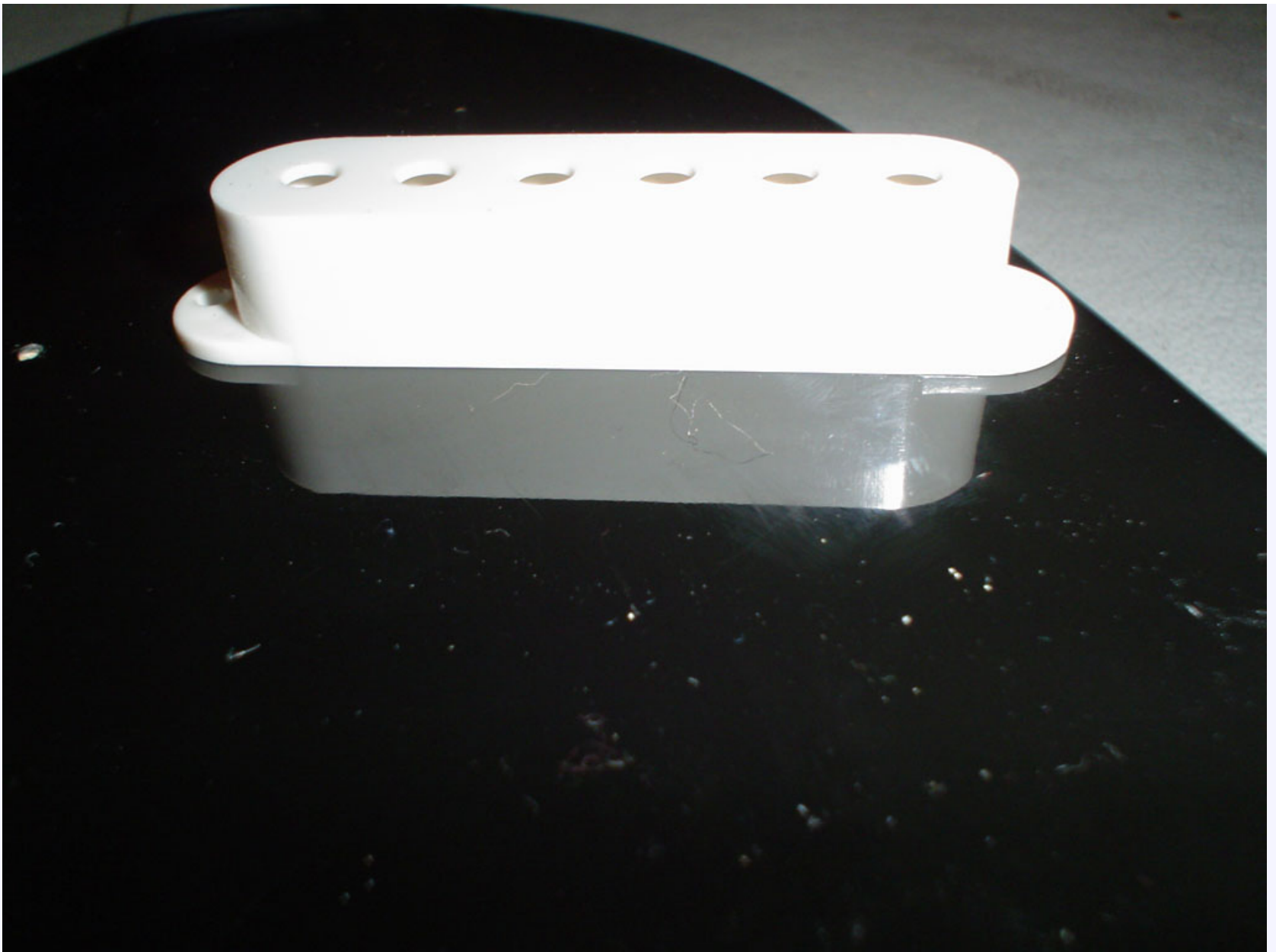






And a couple shots of the mirror like finish on this guitar.. Not for long 😊





This concludes the intro to this little tutorial now on to the next phase..

Now im going to ask nicely please if you have nothing nice to say please save it for another thread. PLEASE

Everyday things change but basically remain the same.

Last edited by ibanezcollector : 03-02-2007 at 05:23 PM.

 quote

#2

 03-02-2007, 05:25 PM



[saxnbass](#) 

Recently Converted Fender-holic

Join Date: Mar 2006

Location: Italy



 Supporting Member

I'm excited 

Also, please (later on) tell us how to do logo/decal changes. Thanks.

Eric

MIA J(CM#60)

EBMM 1994 Sterling(CM#71)

MIM Fretless J(CM#32)

CIJ '54 RI P

EBS Amps(CM#1)

Fender JAM CM#5

Domo-Kun Tribe Pasuta Banbutsunoreichou

 quote

#1

 03-02-2007, 05:27 PM

[ibanezcollector](#) 

Registered User

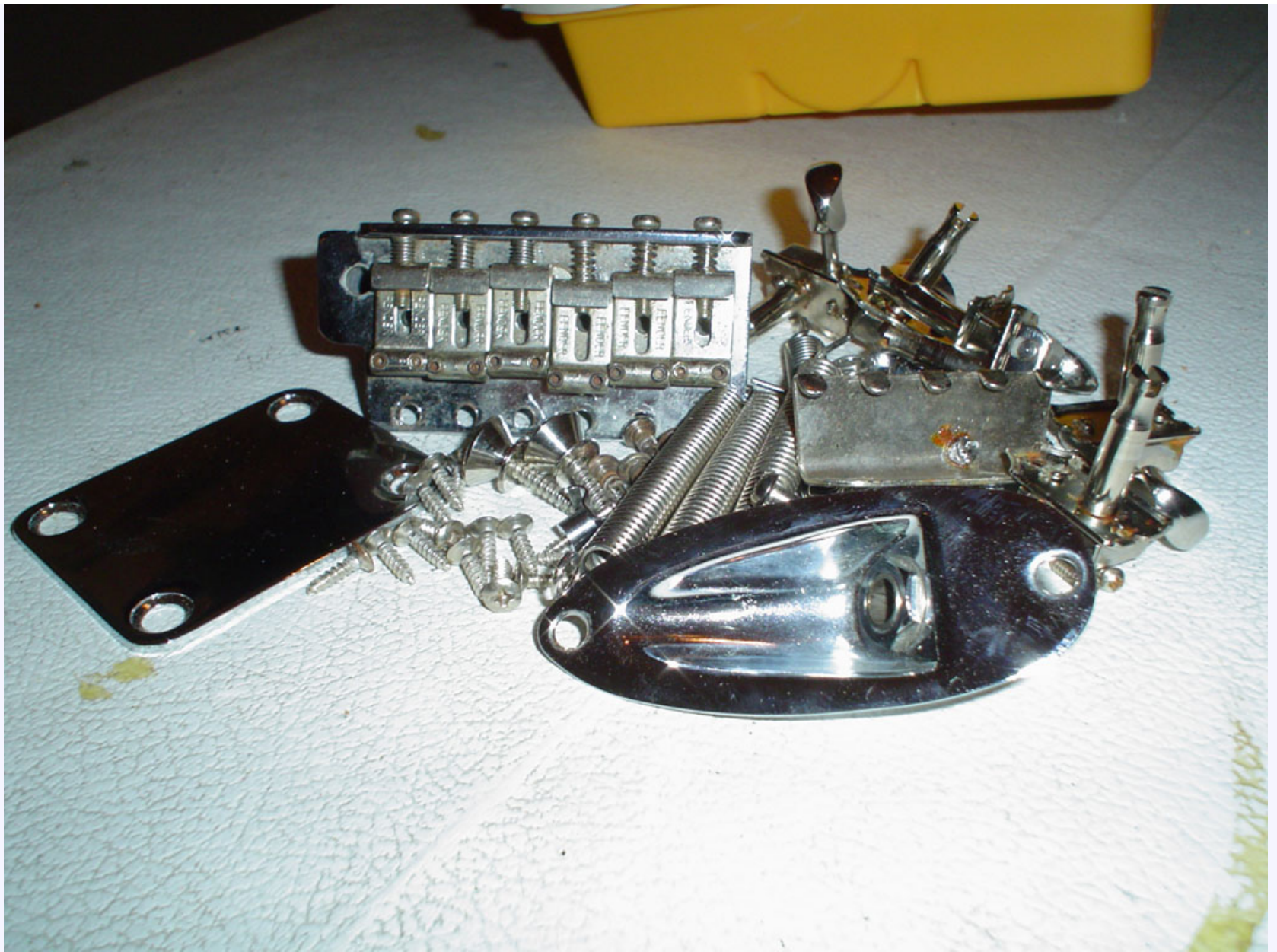
Join Date: Feb 2007

Location: Cleveland OH Armpit of the USA



ok Phase 2 would be a simple one.. Take her apart..

Ok here we go.. Pile of metal parts. Notice the bridge is already showing wear. I had this from a old project but it was once shiney and new and I will explain how I got that look.



One neck stripped of all her hardware

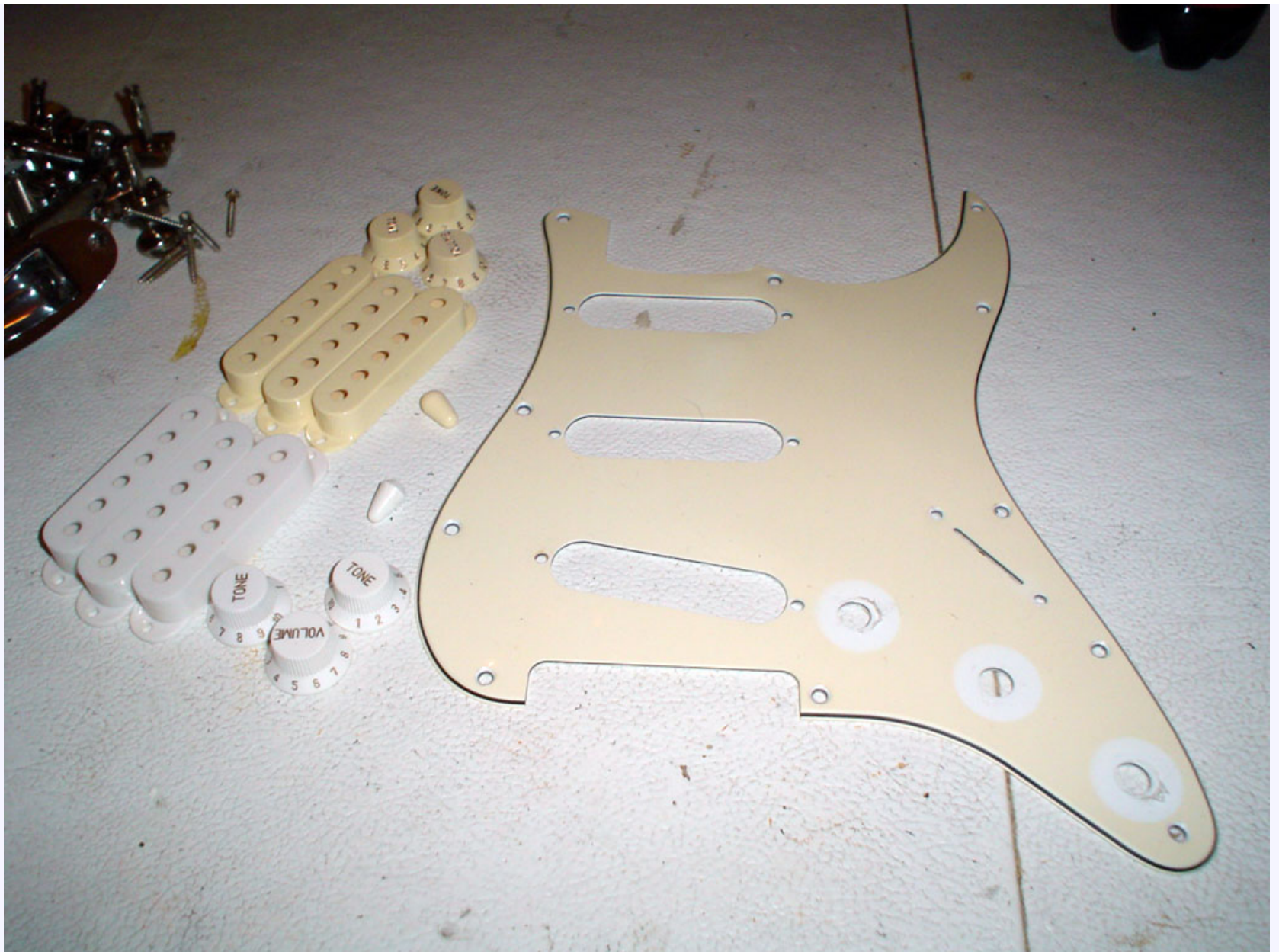


One naked body isnt she sexy?



And finally one pickguard and 2 sets of parts(aged white and natural white) I will be doing two different relic options on these. Aged white will get a small relic treatment, natural white will be getting a BIG time consuming treatment to simulate the old bakelite parts.

*This guard was once natural white as you can tell because of detail.. Under the knobs I kept it white exactly how a aged pickguard would look. This guard was created by using warm water and some Ritt Tan Liquid Fabric dye. Its a simple process. Fill a tub with water, pour in some of the dye. Check every so often till you get the color you are looking for. For me I wanted it to match the aged white parts from fender.. Pretty close huh..



Stay tuned..

Everyday things change but basically remain the same.

Last edited by ibanezcollector : 03-02-2007 at 05:31 PM.

 quote

1

 03-02-2007, 05:39 PM



[seanm](#)

You can call me Sean.

Join Date: Feb 2004
Location: Ottawa, Canada



Supporting Member

Count me in! Looking forward to seeing the process.

Fender MIM Club member #8, no #9!

[The Truthful Few](#)

quote

5

03-02-2007, 06:26 PM

[ibanezcollector](#)

Registered User

Join Date: Feb 2007

Location: Cleveland OH Armpit of the USA



Ok the first thing were going to work on is the pickguard if you have one. A true vintage guard always seems to be cleaner and not as faded under the strings and obviously under the knobs. We are going to simulate that as well.. Its about the details..

So here we have our stock cream colored guard. You can use white or mint.. what ever you want, even black, but black you can just fade the gloss off whats the fun in that 😊

This is the list of things I will be using for the pickguard:

0000ga Steel Wool must and I will say it 2x use 0000ga steel wool

Miniwax IpSwich Pine

Miniwax Special Walnut

Toliet paper must be plain no dimples or lines etc just cheap tollet paper

Paper towels doesnt matter what kind

Q-tips

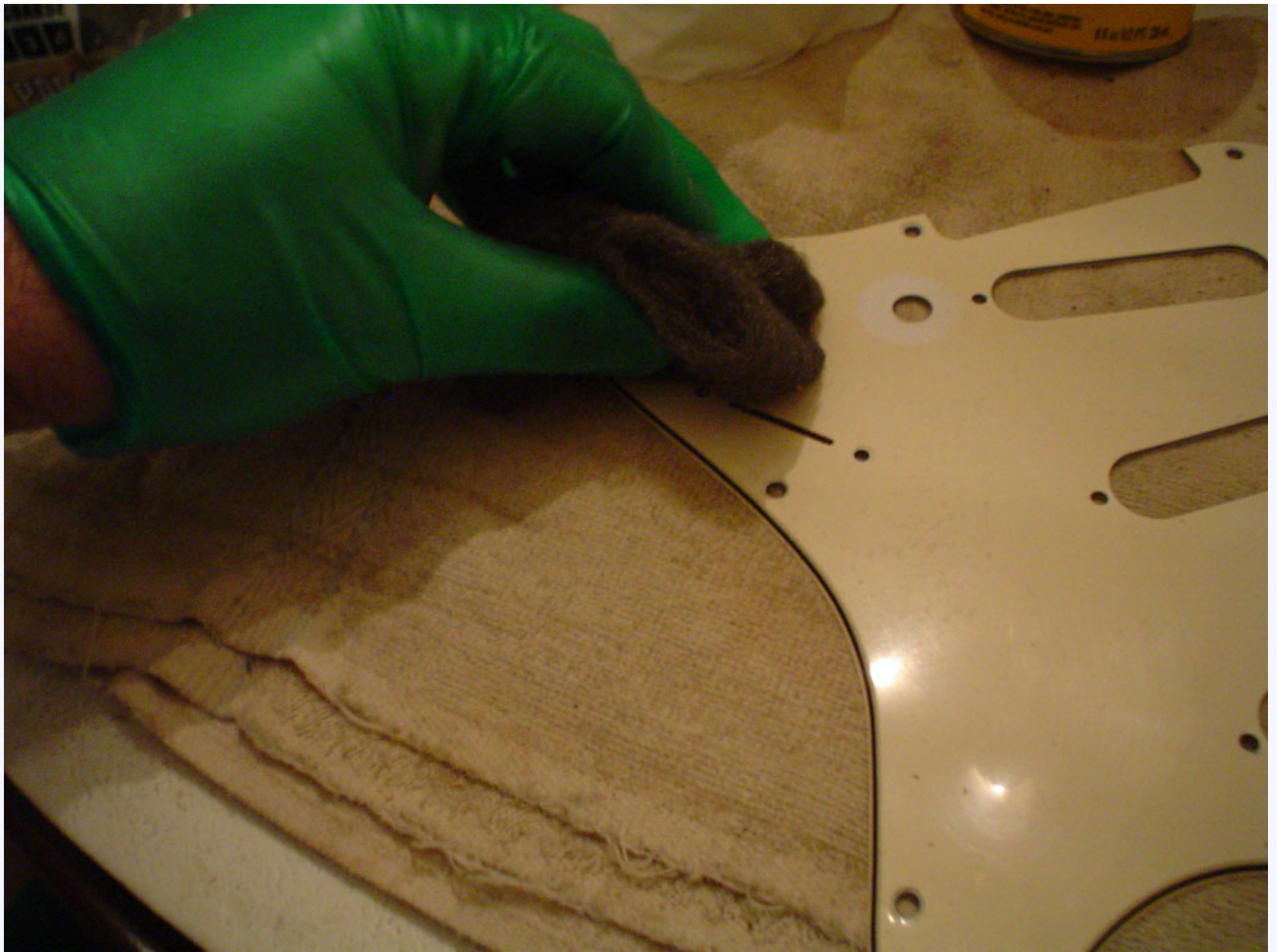
Rubber glove if you like not having dyed hands



First thing we need to do is remove the gloss from the pickguard as shown here



This is done by rubbing the 0000ga steel wool in variable ways dont keep a consistent up down or right left or it will show.. I use small circular motions.. This stuff is going to get everywhere but dont worry about cleaning it off at this point leave it there.



with the pickguard all rubbed down you will now see that there is no gloss left on it. Its nice and flat which is perfect for the next steps cause in this process we also roughed up the finish just enough to accept the stain.





the next step is were going to grab the IpSwich Pine and put a nice amount on a paper towel crinkled up.. Dont dip it so its dripping everywhere but make sure ya go some on there



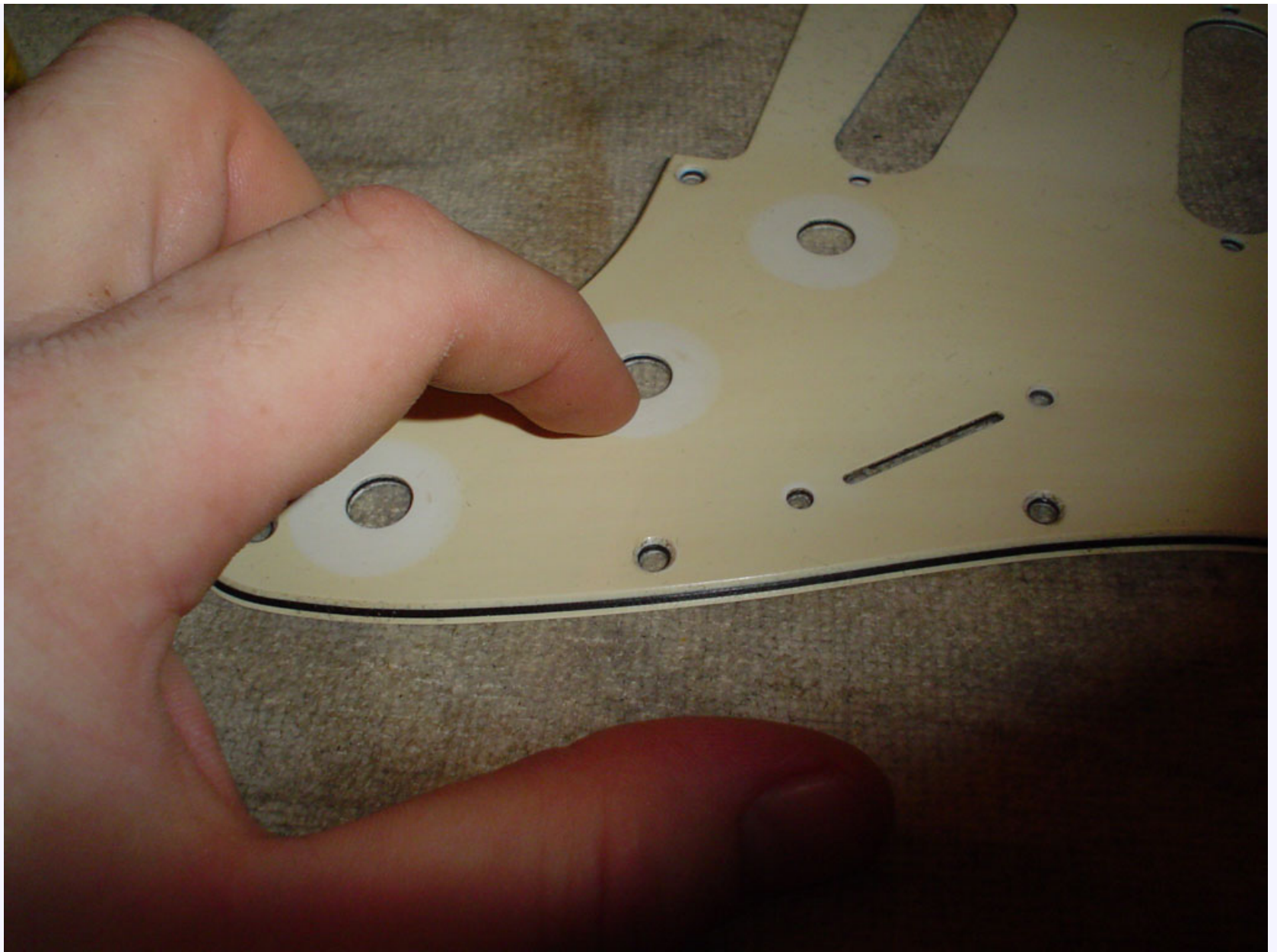
I basically just wipe it on from left to right making sure its got a good cover. You also dont want to wipe any where the strings would be. You should look close to this right now.



Now I will take my plain toilet paper and crinkle it up and begin dabbing in alternating dabs. Dont press to hard were just trying to get the uniformaty of the application to look more natural. Remember to dab in alternating dabs so nothing looks the same. *Pay special attention to the area under the strings you want ot blend this in as much as possible you dont want it to look like a seam is there. Just dab it a little more by that seperation of colors*



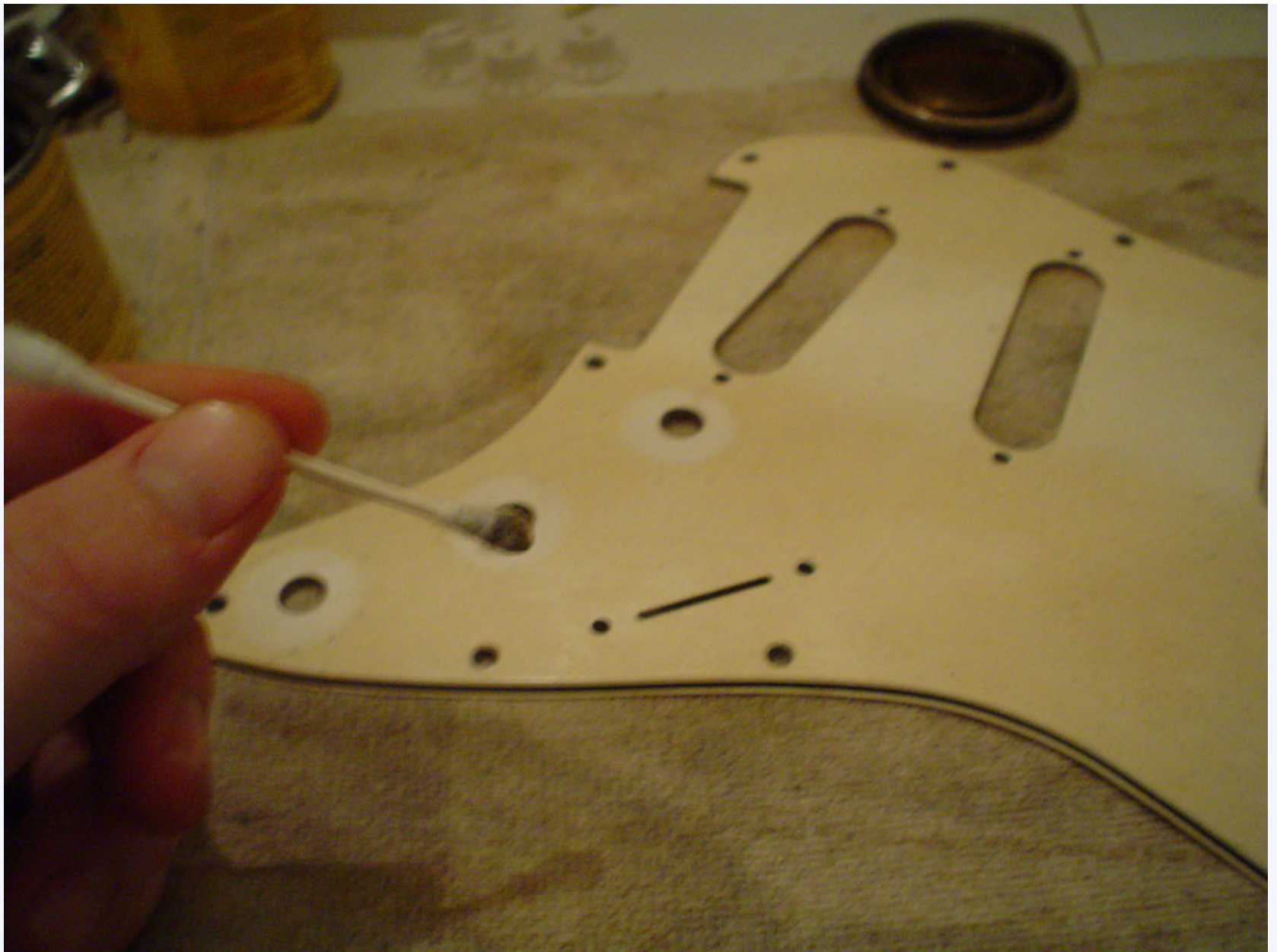
I then will take my bare finger and do circular motions under where the knobs would be. This is a detail step if you want to do it is up to you. Its not necessary.



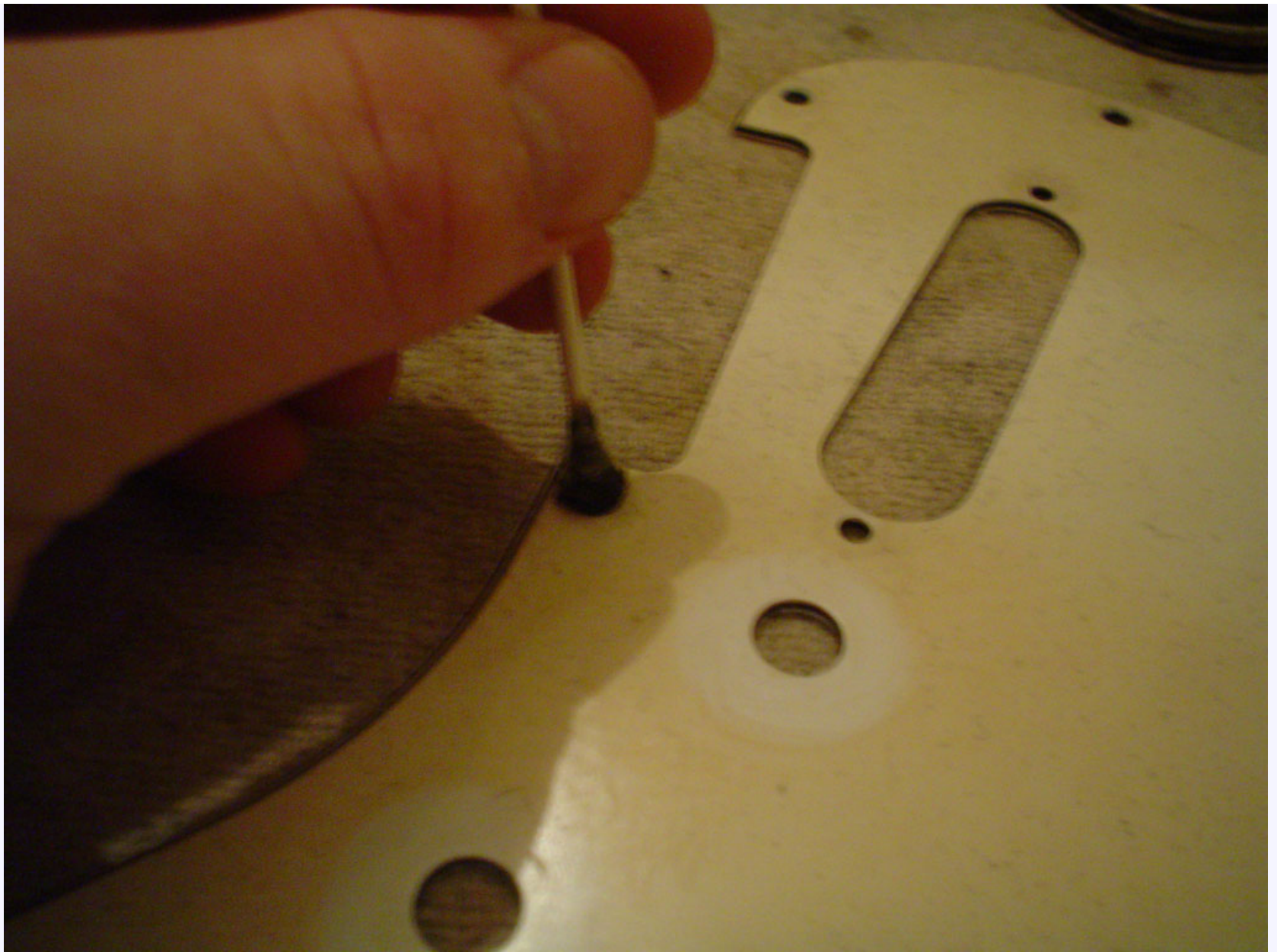
You should look like this right now.. You can repeat the above steps as many times you want. Its up to you to how you want it to look. But remember **KNOW WHEN TO QUIT** its easy to over relic your guitar and the most common mistake done by new guys. Check ebay there is some hideous relics on there that are just over done. Remember were trying to make this as realistic as possible.



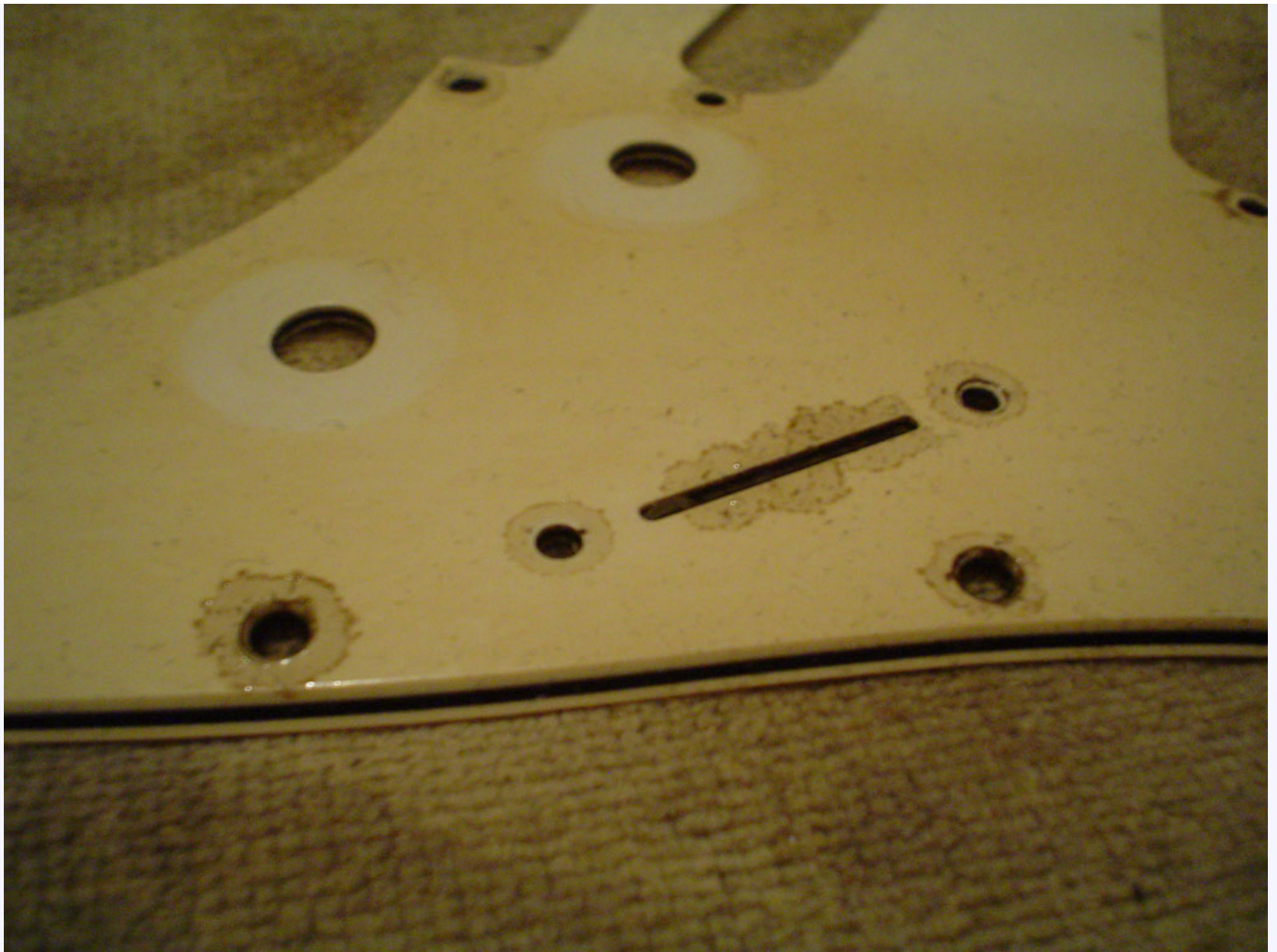
Next step is again a detail step. A lot of vintage strats will show dirt and rust stains around the screw holes. We will be using the Special Walnut stain for this part. Get yourself a Q-tip and dip it in the stain



Take it and push it into the hole.. Simple enough, I also will apply some by the switch this again is a detail step.



Now dont freak out when the two stains clash it will look like this. Not a biggie grab some more toilet paper and crinkle it up and dab very lightly to blend the two colors together. Remember when I said dont clean off the steel wool particles you can see were leaving them on for the time being and you will see why later on.



Now are guard is done, set it off to the side and let it dry as long as possible.. Stain doesnt absorb into plastic so we need to have time on our side.. It will dry till its really tacky and then were ready to finish our guard.. But until then just leave it alone for a week or so







Thats all for tonight boys and girls.. We will continue this tommorrow when we start working on the knobs and pickup covers....

Stay tuned...

Everyday things change but basically remain the same.

Last edited by ibanezcollector : 03-02-2007 at 06:50 PM.

quote

#6

03-02-2007, 06:55 PM

[Scott in Dallas](#) 

Registered User

Join Date: Aug 2005
Location: Dallas

While not a huge fan of the practice, I'm very impressed at the results. Nice, nice work. Subscribing. 😊

 quote

2

03-02-2007, 07:33 PM



[tplyons](#) 

Minor Metal
Moderator Emeritus

Join Date: Apr 2003
Location: Madison, NJ

 Send a message via
Skype™ to tplyons

 Supporting Member

Cool. Might have to buy an SX to try this with.

Currently abusing:

www.fender.com | www.gallien-krueger.com | www.daddario.com | www.hipshotproducts.com

\m/ Timothy Lyons

 quote

1

03-02-2007, 08:16 PM

[Cerb](#) 

Registered User

Join Date: Sep 2004
Location: Indiana

I've never been one to dig relics either, but definitely consider me subscribed. You've got a great eye for detail.

[My site](#)

[Current bass build thread](#)

[Photos and a sounclip of my last build](#)

 quote

1

03-02-2007, 08:29 PM

[ibanezcollector](#) 

Registered User

Join Date: Feb 2007
Location: Cleveland OH Armpit of the USA



ok I got a little extra time so figured we would finish the aged white pickup covers and knobs. Its basically the same technique as the pickguard but the covers get a extra step.. A secret ingredient 😊

Ok bust out the 0000ga steel wool again and take that gloss down to a flat sheen.. As you can see the steel wool breaks up rather easy leaving a trail of small metal threads. Might want to wear a long sleeve shirt and jeans if you got real sensitive skin. Def dont go rubbin your eyes.



One done, two to go.. See how the gloss is gone.. **if your guitar or bass only has black plastic parts then you can stop at this stage, you can how ever dab a little stain on a part you buffed flat to add a different texture to it.. Like on a bass black pickguard where your fingers would rub when say, playing slap it would be flat but that part would be a different texture**



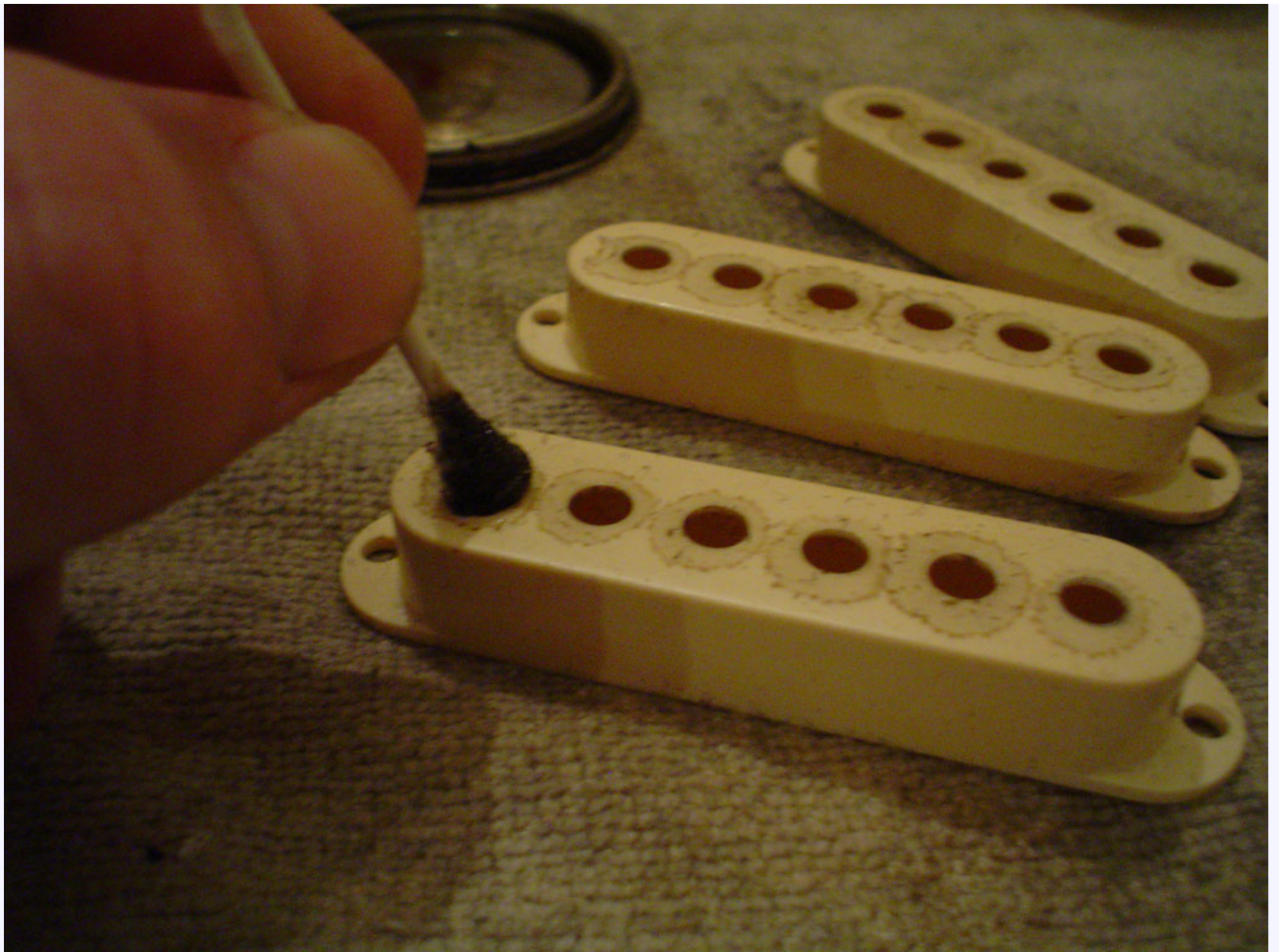
With all three buffed down, I will then take the Miniwax Ipswich Pine stained and again begin to dab it in random patterns on the top and partially on the sides of the covers only.. Smoke and dirt usually doesnt get where it cant go. Keep this in mind.. Remember its details that seperate a good relic from a bad one. If there seen or not its about details..



You can clearly see the color change from the stain. Not drastic but its enough.. Parts usually dont turn deep yellow unless you played in cigar bars for 40 years. Its usually a mid-amber color. Find a smokers teeth use that for your reference hahahaha.



Bust out the Miniwax Special Walnut stain and do the Q-tip trick again. Just dab it in the stain, dab a little off on the cans top and stick it right in the covers hole. Again the stains will react with each other but this is a good thing. When it spreads like that it creates a halo around the hole of a darker color just like it would in real life.



Dab the covers with the toilet paper and get ready for the secret ingredient.. Haha im building anticipation and its for nothing..



Ok grab yourself a pencil and very lightly and randomly draw some circles around the holes, some full circles, some semi-circles, some close to nothing. Its not a dramatic thing were looking for. Its when we put the covers back on the pickups we want it to blend well.



You can see in this pic its not a dark or big area we are trying to cover.. Just a little goes a long way. Dab the pencil marks with the toilet paper to blend them in. Just like with the stain



And here we have our finished pickup covers. Again put them in a safe place for at least a week.. Do not try to pick them up or put them in a bag they need to lay flat and be able to air dry unbothered.



Everyday things change but basically remain the same.

Last edited by ibanezcollector : 03-02-2007 at 08:50 PM.

 quote

[10](#)

 03-02-2007, 08:40 PM



the knobs are the easiest part to do.. Take you Miniwax Ipswich stain get some on a paper towel and dab it all around the knob. get it on nice and thick. Like so..



All three knobs with the stain on



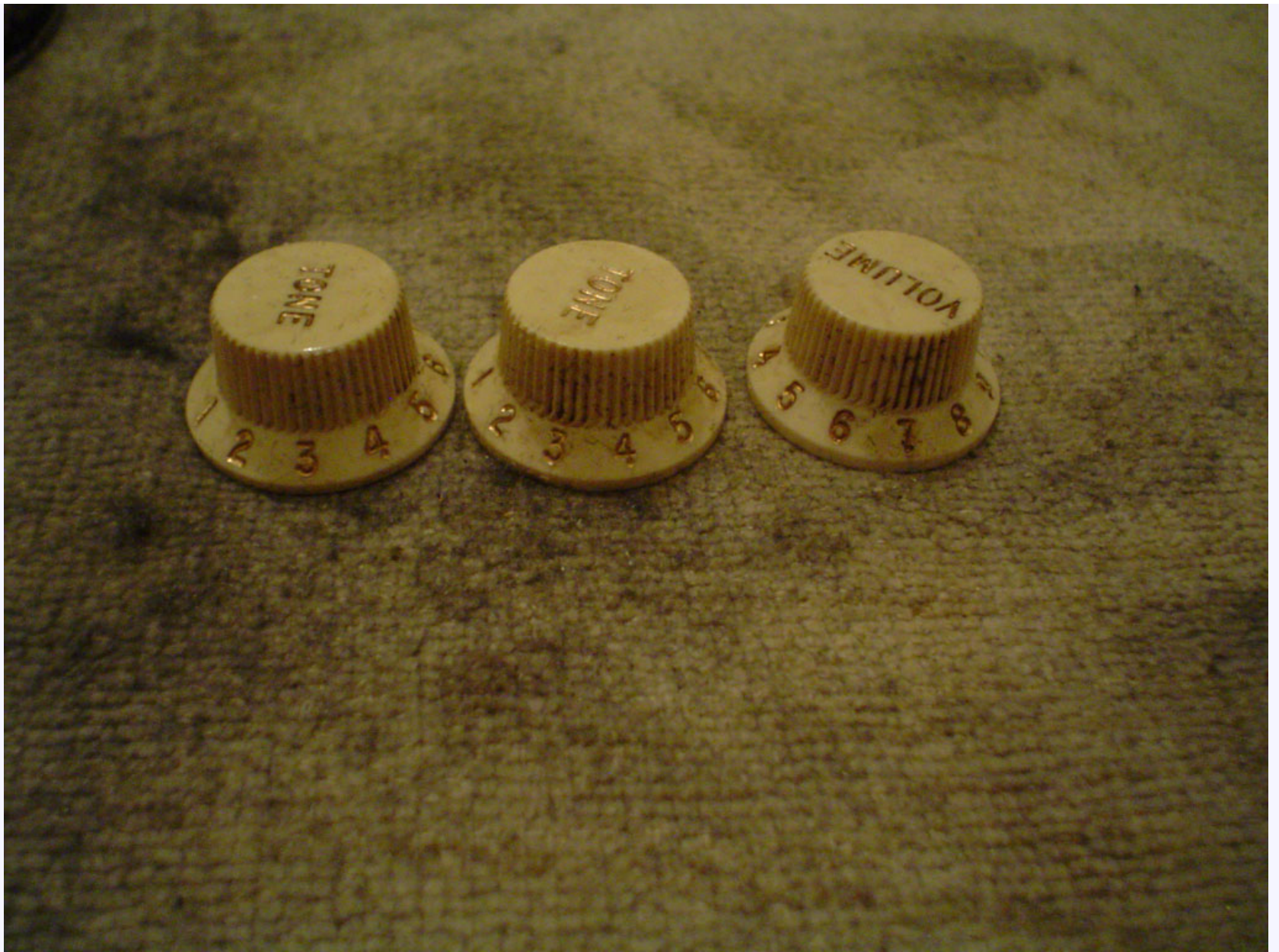
Carefully pick up the knob, trying not to touch it.. And put it in some toilet paper.

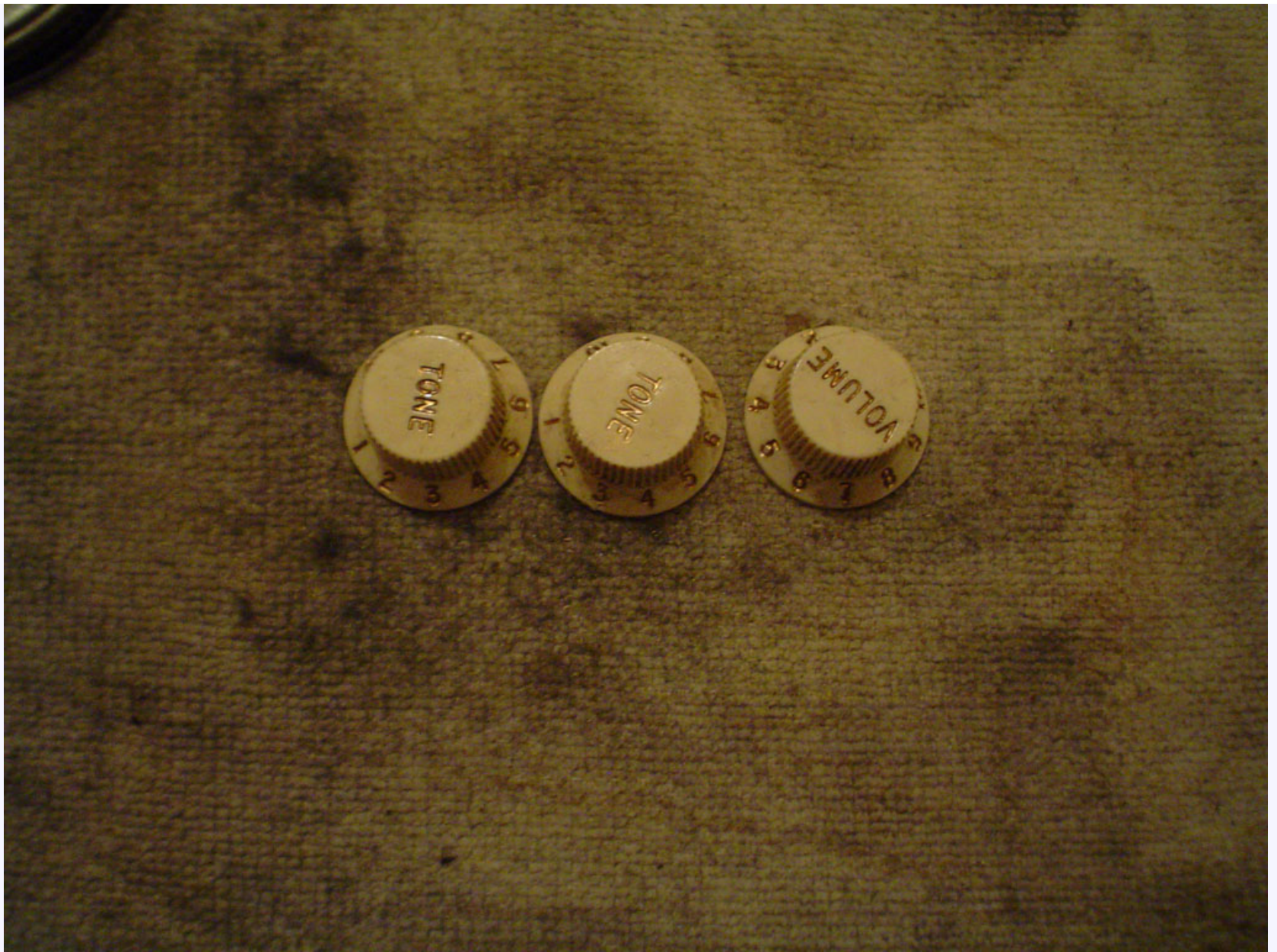


Grab the toilet paper and give it a good squeeze in your hand. This will take the majority of the stain off but it will also give it a random pattern in the grooves and the knob.



Knobs done.





And if your following this, we now have a plastic set almost done. It should look like this, at this point.. **I know I know my jazz bass doesnt have plastic knobs we will get to aging metal later on.**



Now when we go to simulate the bakelight knobs and covers of the 50s its a much harder ordeal. Lots of cramping in the hands, and time consuming. But stay tuned...

Everyday things change but basically remain the same.

Last edited by ibanezcollector : 03-02-2007 at 08:47 PM.

quote

11

03-02-2007, 09:01 PM



[Stock R](#)

n00b

Join Date: Dec 2005
Location: Toronto/Ottawa
★ Supporting Member

Quote:

Originally Posted by [ibanezcollector](#)



Stay tuned..

Awesome post so far. I'm looking forward to the rest of it. I'm not totally sure how you keep the areas under the knobs on the pickguard white. When you dip the pickguard into the tub of die, wouldn't the entire surface get covered?

Bass Newb



12

03-02-2007, 09:04 PM

[ibanezcollector](#)

Registered User

Join Date: Feb 2007

Location: Cleveland OH Armpit of the USA



Quote:

Originally Posted by **Stock R**

Awesome post so far. I'm looking forward to the rest of it. I'm not totally sure how you keep the areas under the knobs on the pickguard white. When you dip the pickguard into the tub of die, wouldn't the entire surface get covered?

a bit of gum goes a long way my friend.. LOL giving out all my secrets.

Chew some gum get it nice and gooey, slap it on there.. Push it down so it goes thru the hole basically sealing it from the back side, push it into shape and boom instant cover.

I have never tried tape maybe duct tape would work, but ive used the bubble gum method plenty of times.

Everyday things change but basically remain the same.



13

03-03-2007, 03:44 AM



[michele](#)

CB Basses fan # 1

Join Date: Apr 2004

Location: Italy

★ Supporting Member

I'm not one of those purists and if one dig the look of relics I see nothing wrong with buying one/making one if this gives you the right feel with the instrument. I've had a couple of vintage Fenders and understand the charm of a nice aged looking instrument.

I must say that you have a great eye for details and I think your work is great. It's also very nice of you to share your knowledge with the community. This one deserves to be sticky.

Bravo!

Wake up everybody!



14

03-03-2007, 03:53 AM



saxnbass

Recently Converted Fender-holic

Join Date: Mar 2006

Location: Italy



Supporting Member

I was just about to recommend that this be a sticky.

Eric

MIA J(CM#60)

EBMM 1994 Sterling(CM#71)

MIM Fretless J(CM#32)

CIJ '54 RI P

EBS Amps(CM#1)

Fender JAM CM#5

Domo-Kun Tribe Pasuta Banbutsunoreichou

quote

15

03-03-2007, 05:24 AM



THIRSTYGUMS

marvellous

Join Date: Sep 2005

Location: Northern Ireland



Supporting Member

COOL

STICKYSTICKYSTICKY

WWW.myspace.com/THIRSTYGUMS

quote

16

03-03-2007, 05:36 AM



vindy500

globe trotter

Join Date: Mar 2005

Location: horsens, denmark



Supporting Member

Send a message via
Skype™ to vindy500

subscribes

"Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive, because what the world needs is people who have come alive."

Domo-kun tribe shuhan

Cort club #2

quote

17

03-03-2007, 06:32 AM



[Nomad98](#) 

../

Join Date: Dec 2005
Location: Minneapolis

★ Supporting Member

This is GREAT! Thanks for taking the time to show us some of the trade secrets.

I'm in for the duration!

 quote

18

03-03-2007, 09:15 AM



[Mark Wilson](#) 

The Talkbass Panhandler

Join Date: Jan 2005
Location: Toronto/Niagara Falls, Ontario



★ Supporting Member

Killer!

I want to relic a bass of mine, so...subscribed.

Fender MIM Member #20
Cantaloupe Club Member #001

Quote:

Originally Posted by [Skel](#) 

Hey Jeff, just so you know.. girls underwear is SOOO uncomfortable too. It fits so bad. I struggled with that decision, that morning.

 quote

19

03-03-2007, 09:20 AM



[nubs](#) 

plays well with others.....

Join Date: Mar 2005
Location: Wisconsin

★ Supporting Member

Quote:

Originally Posted by **Mark Wilson** 
Killer!
I want to relic a bass of mine, so...subscribed.

me too!

Lakland 44-01
GK1001rb--Ampeg 2x15

Lakland owners club member #1
Gallien Krueger club member #4

 quote

20

 03-03-2007, 09:33 AM

[BassGod](#) 

Registered User

Join Date: Jan 2004
Location: Ajax, Ontario, Canada


Subscribed!

Graeme

EBMM Club Member #34

Gear:

2006 Limited Edition Ernie Ball Music Man Sterling
Yorkville xm200
Seagull Artist Cameo CW
Dunlop Crybaby 105Q

GAS:

Sterling fretless
Fender Geddy Lee Jazz

 quote

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