

RAZORCAKE

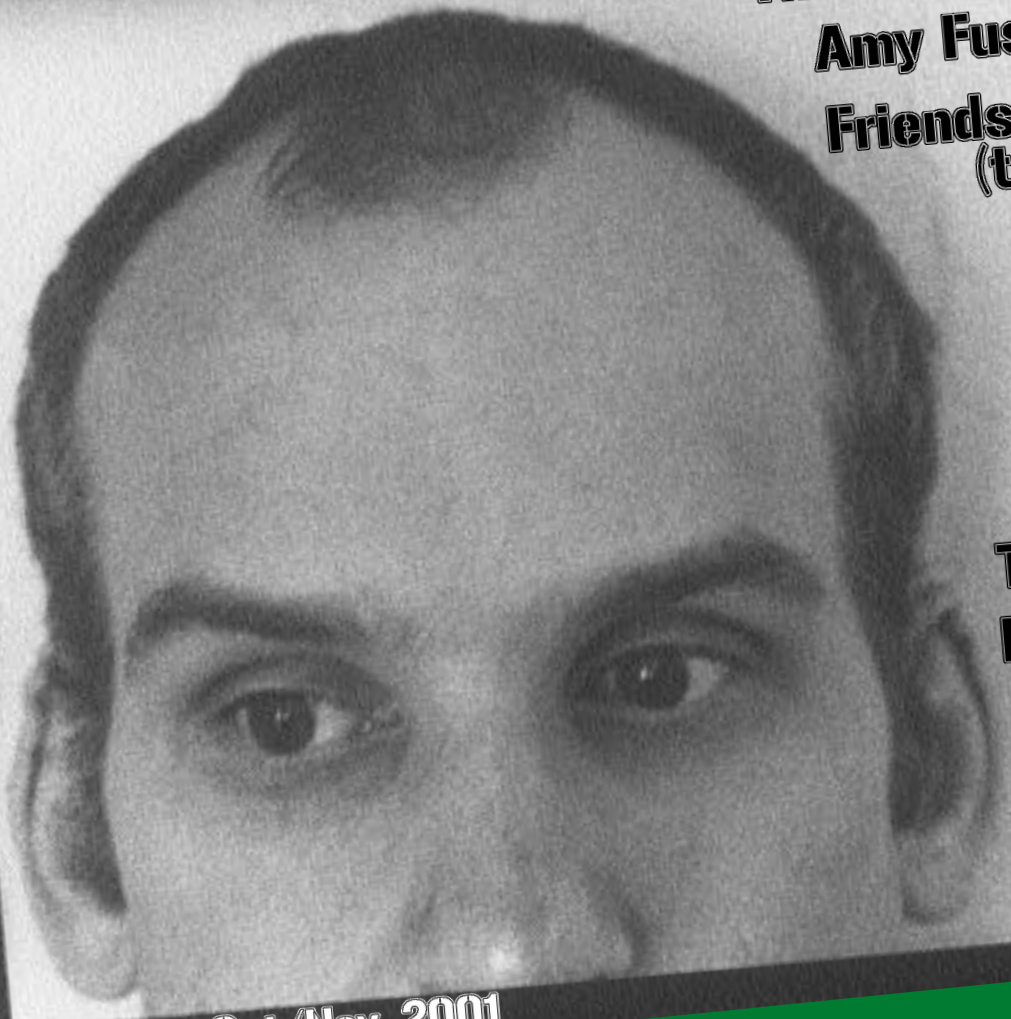


fanzine * webzine

RAZORCAKE

Nardwuar Vs. **Ian MacKaye**

The X-Rated Bible
Amy Fusselman
Friends Forever
(the band)



TSOL

Throw Rag
Radio Vago

Issue #4 Oct/Nov, 2001

\$3



RAZORCAKE

PO Box 42129, Los Angeles, CA 90042
www.razorcake.com

A little over a month ago, I was talking to Nardwuar. We pick each others brains on a regular basis. Because I've known Nardwuar for several years, I see a different side to him. Oh, he's still very much Nardwuar (it's no act), but the Nardwuar I know is insightful, inquisitive, and a hell of a researcher besides being a little loony. I think some people get him wrong when they say he clowns on his interviewees. Sure, he may ask Henry Rollins if his dick's like a soup can, but I see this stuff dislodging folks in rock'n'roll from the usual pandering interviews they're endlessly subjected to. To me, Nardwuar's the guy that'll ask practically anything if there's any sort of factual basis, regardless if it's going to piss people off. The stuff you think he's pulling the furthest out of his ass, he isn't. This is where Nardwuar is exceptional. He asks questions no one is supposed to know about. And he's dead on.

He gave me a list of people he'd lined up for interviews. I made him stop and repeat a name. Ian MacKaye. I can honestly say that Ian MacKaye was one of three or four peo-

ple that I'd never met that had changed my life beginning at fifteen - irreparably, and for the good.

I read through the interview several times. There is something very unique about it. Over the years, I've read over 50 interviews with Ian and I've read over 50 interviews that Nardwuar's conducted. It's not typical of either of them. Nardwuar later admitted that he had to kinda "be careful" around Ian and Ian, very aware of how Nardwuar operates, is very candid. It's a precise dance of an interview. Ian avoids no question (yet questions some questions) - and comes up with some incredible stories that I'd never heard about. The cool thing is that I got to see two brand new dimensions to people I thought I knew pretty well (at least in print), both a little off balance, but very much in control.

Secondly, I'd like to thank everyone involved with the interview. Schedules had to be hurried, facts had to be checked, and in the end, I come out fucking stoked as a dude running a small fanzine. Welcome to issue #4. Cynthia Connolly took the cover shot. Hell yeah.

-ReTodd

AD DEADLINE FOR ISSUE #5

October 1, 2001

EMAIL OR MAIL US FOR THE RATES

AD SIZES

Full page, 7.5 inches wide, 10 inches tall.

Half page, 7.5 inches wide, 5 inches tall.

Quarter page, 3.75 inches wide, 5 inches tall.

Sixth page, 2.5 inches wide, 5 inches tall.

*Covers are already taken in perpetuity (forever), but if you put in a request, we'll put you on the list.

*Please make all checks out to Razorcake.

ADVERTISING STIPULATIONS

*All ads are black and white. There are no immediate plans for color insides.

*Make ads the right size and orientation. If ads are the wrong size, they won't run or we'll chop 'em up with scissors to fit.

*We will not accept electronic ad files. Hard copy only.

*Send good laser prints for the ads. Use solely black ink on all art. Do not output your ad on a bubble jet printer even if it looks black and white. It will reproduce like complete shit when it goes to an offset printer.

*Only for full-page ads, we'll accept film. Positive stats, RRED (right-reading, emulsion side down) only.

*All photos must be halftoned using a 85 LPI (85 line screen).

*If you feel the need for us to invoice you, understand that your ad won't run until we have the cash on hand, so make those arrangements before the ad deadline.

*If any of this is fuzzy, don't hesitate to contact us. We'll explain it.

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Everyone else can be reached c/o Razorcake.



Henry, learning to fly

Razorcake is put together by:

Sean Carswell, Todd Taylor, ktspin, and Skinny Dan.

Thank you list: Hi-five thanks to Cynthia Connolly for the cover photograph and the interview shot of Ian MacKaye. Leaping belly bump thanks to Julia Smut for help with the cover and for laying out the TSOL interview. North of the border thanks to Nardwuar for the Ian interview and Randy at Mint for helping with him computer stuff. Shutter-snapping thanks to the multi-talented Kat Jetson, who took the pics of both Throw Rag and Radio Vago and bead-in-the-eye thanks to Jen Hitchcock who co-interviewed Radio Vago. Van-on-fire thanks to Liz O. for the Friends Forever interview. Bratwurst thanks to the Rhythm Chicken for not dying. Todd expresses pitcher-tipping thanks Mark, Kris, and Davey Tiltwheel for the tour. Ink-stained, doin' it on the boss'time thanks to Art for another comic and the illustration for the X-Rated bible article. Mega girlie thanks to Harmonee for helping design the righteous pink baby-ts and designing the Punk Rock Girl Page. Sweat shop thanks to Stacy, Russtacular, Art, Dale, Sara, Harmonee, Kat, and Donofthedeath for helping with inserts. In the trenches thanks to Aaron Poehler, Cuss Baxter, Liz O., Matt Average, Nam "You Want Some?" Kim, and Tim From Pomona for record reviews. Say hey to Maddy Tight Pants and Nathan, the newest additions to the Razorcake batter.

RAZORCAKE



Cutting. Tasty.

www.razorcake.com and PO Box 42129, Los Angeles, CA 90042



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Razorcake is bi-monthly. Issues are \$3.00 ppd. in the U.S.
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 These prices are only valid for people who live in the US and are not in
 prison. Issues and subs are more for everyone else (because we have to pay
 more in postage). Write us and we'll give you a price.



Money

Pog Mo Thon



SECRET SIGNIFIER FROM WASHINGTON

In 1863, intense opposition to the War Between the States drove many political societies underground, particularly those openly critical of the Union. To shield their doings from public knowledge and foster a sense of fraternity, secret oaths, handshakes and passwords were instituted. Although our present system is flawed, such arcane flummery no longer has a place in politics. Or does it?

While watching the Presidential debates last fall I thought I detected something odd in the way Al Gore and George W. Bush shook hands after their final melee. As I watched the tape over and over again, I kept getting the sense something else was being communicated, some awareness conferred those scoring from home were not privy to. Was it Gore's squint? Bush's hesitations? I went back to the earlier debates and found the same twitches, the same familiar falterings, as predictable as a hiccup. Was there

more to this chilly grip between rival-scions-of-competing-political-dynasties than met the eye? I went to Washington to find out.

Making myself a regular in the bars and restaurants around Capitol Hill, it did not take me long to pick up on the secret communication that was going on all around me. My breakthrough came when I observed energy lobbyists proffer their business cards to politicians face down while flicking the edge of the card with a carefully manicured thumbnail (such lobbyists are easy to make, I subsequently learned, as they are by necessity habitues of expensive nail salons, an excellent place for senatorial scuttlebutt). If the politician is disposed to doing business with said energy group, he or she will take the card and place it in his/her back pocket/pocketbook.

Got a hot stock tip for top White House strategist Karl Rove or Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neil? Simply grab a seat at the bar at Kelly's Irish Times (across from Union Station) during the CNN

Even Jenna and Barbara Bush are surprisingly skilled in the art of subterfuge. A sidelong glance accompanied by tucking a loose strand of hair behind the left ear means "I'll show you my underwear if you buy me a twelve-pack of Shiner Bock."

market report and announce, apropos of nothing, "voodoo economics." A member of your man's staff will whisper a secret Yahoo! e-mail address in your ear. When I was Instant Messaged by Karl and Paul simultaneously, I knew I had arrived.

In the Pentagon, I discovered it is not unusual to see high-ranking officers in the rest room with their pants around their ankles, inspecting their rumps before the mirror. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld greets members of his staff by whacking them on the ass with a riding crop, and the arrangement of the welts conveys the Secretary's marching orders.

Interpreting everyday expressions, gestures and tics is not without its hazards. For instance, the complicated series of snarls, snorts and other offensive ejaculations that emanate from Sen. Orrin Hatch's lunch table in the commissary are extremely difficult to decipher. Typically, he's either communicating with militia members bunkered in Idaho or composing a love sonnet to Pat Buchanan. The same holds true for Jesse Helms's cryptic eyebrow configurations. Those noxious emissions from Strom Thurmond? False alarm. It's merely a case of uncontrollable flatulence.

The Rosetta Stone of secret signifiers is the complicated handshake used by skittish GOP members called "The Flight of the Rogue Republicans." This complex recognition and response system rivals the pseudo-mystical balderdash of the previous century. It involves the energetic shuffling of feet, hooking the thumbs and flapping the forefingers in a manner suggestive of a pigeon fleeing the coop.

Perhaps the most conspicuously secretive man inside the beltway is Rep. Gary Condit. If you see him skulking around Northern Virginia

behaving in a strange or suspicious manner, be advised they have another word for such signifiers down at the DA's office: evidence.

Of course, not all secret signs point to political chicanery. One source close to the President informed me that when White House staffers shake hands they apply firm pressure with their thumbs to let their colleague know they just beat the President at Madden NFL 2001. I'm told he is easy to beat as he has a tendency to run up the middle and then veer sharply right.

When Colin Powell throws up three fingers at the end of a press conference, he's not calling down an airstrike, he simply needs three tickets for the P. Diddy concert at the MCI Center.

Even Jenna and Barbara Bush are surprisingly skilled in the art of subterfuge. A sidelong glance accompanied by tucking a loose strand of hair behind the left ear means "I'll show you my underwear if you buy me a twelve-pack of Shiner Bock." (Note: The twenty-dollar bill being proffered and the lurid lighting from the 7-11 sign are important contextual clues.)

Further, on numerous occasions I have observed aides, cabinet members, secret service men and members of the White House press corps pressing their thumb to their nose and wiggling their fingers while the President has his back turned. This is not a secret signal, but rather a friendly, good-natured gesture. As everyone knows, the President runs a loose ship and such ribbing is taken in stride.

It is important to note that if Vice President Dick Cheney clutches your arm while shaking your hand, his fierce gaze progressively narrowing, he's not challenging you with a secret sign, he's having a stroke. Call 911 immediately.

Money



Bush supporters are charmed by the president's wink.

-Money

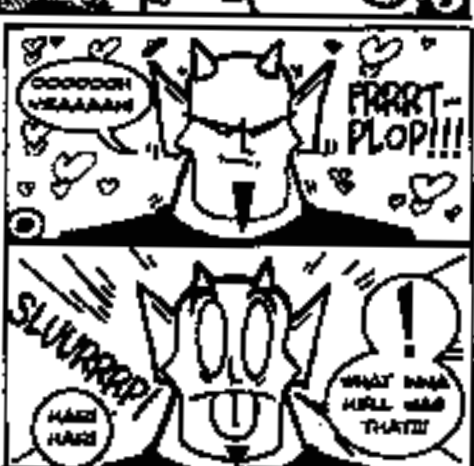


LOOK UP YER FARM ANIMALS, CUZ
IT'S TIME FOR...

BEEZLE

IN
"THERE'S NO ASS LIKE
HOME!"
PART ONE

THAT BEING SAID, OUR HERO SETTLES
DOWN TO SOME SERIOUS FOOTBALL...





DESIGNATED DILE

I'm Against It



Seems as though over the years, there has been many a motion picture tying in with all the different types of musical genres floating around all over the place. Usually, the standard practice in the films of yesteryear was not only to use some famous musicians' music as part of the film's score, but to actually star the musicians themselves, singing and/or playing right along onscreen.

Some of these movies include the on-Broadway-type films, starring famous singers at the time like Frank Sinatra, Gene Kelly, and Bing Crosby. There's the big band/jazz era of cinema that featured hot shits like Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman, and coolcat Cab Calloway. Besides their records, the movies that these above mentioned folks did are just about the only place newcomers can actually see these people perform these days, since close to all of 'em are long deceased.

Early country westerns even had the hokey roles of singing cowboys with the likes of Roy Rogers (No, the Lone Ranger didn't sing in any at the time - he was busy out on the plains killing villains - how fucking punk rock is *that?*). Later on in the '50s, there were some pretty damn good film moments with the likes of Chuck Berry, Fats Domino, Eddie Cochran, and Ritchie Valens (way before "La Bamba," the movie that had the cool Los Lobos cameo). Teens all over the U.S. flocked into theatres during this time to see their rock and roll idols up on the big screen starring and performing. A known fact is that a bunch of these over-crazed kids would jump up and dance in the aisles during the musical interludes of these flicks. (See? Your parents were as punk as fuck!). Alan Freed, who is credited with coining the

phrase, "rock and roll" and putting on fantastic all-star rock and roll shows in New York City, even starred in one of these films from the '50s with Chuck Berry ("Go, Johnny, Go"), which is some pretty key rock viewing, even today. Band films, usually documentary and/or fictional movies, were prevalent in the years to come with bands like The Rolling Stones ("Cocksucker Blues," "Gimme Shelter," "Let's Spend the Night Together"), The Who ("The Kids Are All Right," "Quadrophenia," "Tommy"), AC/DC ("Let There Be Rock"), Led Zeppelin ("The Song Remains the Same"), Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Free Bird" (fuck you very much - I fully endorse the Skynyrd. Does that make me less a person? No. Go kill yourself), and yes, there was even Pink Floyd's "The Wall" amongst a slew of others.

Also, in the SO BAD, IT'S GOOD DEPT. - even though it doesn't count as a theatrical release here in the states (it was released overseas in movie houses as "Attack of the Phantoms"), let's not forget the made-for-TV movie, "KISS Meets the Phantom of the Park," which solidified my belief that some musicians like KISS just shouldn't have acted at the time. *Maybe* later. And that's a *big* maybe. But this was pretty damn embarrassing. I mean, come on - the fucking thing was produced by Hanna-Barbera, a cartoon production company (yet the fuckin' thing hit the #2 ratings spot for the *whole* season in 1978 - right under "Shogun." Go figure!). Oh, hold on, wait a minute - Gene Simmons went on to perform in some "serious role" movies later on, like "Runaway" and "Trick or Treat"... Christ. And although I haven't seen it, I hear Paul Stanley is performing in the actual on-Broadway production of "Phantom of the Opera," which is a bit weird, 'cause it sounds too much like "Phantom of the Park." Coincidence? Hee. I'm surprised with all money Gene Simmons *doesn't* have (add sarcasm here), he hasn't worked out a deal to do a Broadway production of "KISS Meets the Phantom of the Park." Just think of making all that wonderful, extra money, Gene!

Hey, don't laugh - this is the guy that's pushing his idea of the KISS coffin - he was promoting it on Howard Stern's show not too long ago! Am I going on a tangent tirade here? Too bad. I feel better now.

Anyhow, just when most everyone and their brother thought that there were too fucking many music movies that seemed all too boring, too long, and the same type of thing, out crept some movies from the underground that featured a heaping amount of some of punk rock's greatest bands (please keep in your filthy minds that this is not a be-all, end-all list of punk films, ok, cocks?). One of these earlier films was a black and white documentation peering through the keyhole of the humble beginnings of an uprising "new rock scene." Directed by Amos Poe, "Blank Generation" is considered the essential punk film documentary, showing punk's roots sprouting up in NYC like a ravenous weed. With live performance footage, dating back to 1976 at the now infamous CBGB club down on the Bowery, "Blank" features sonic blasts from the past from the likes of the Ramones, Blondie, Johnny Thunders, Talking Heads, and more of their East coast counterparts. Word has it that a production company is actually re-releasing this long-lost (and hard as hell to find) movie on DVD in mid-August, which should be out by the time you are drooling over this. Not only are they releasing it on DVD, but also included on the same disc is Ivan Kral's (guitarist for the Patti Smith Group and Iggy Pop) "Dancin' Barefoot," which also contains a load of live footage similar to "Blank," as well as some early interviews with Iggy Pop, Blondie, and others. Definitely a disc to keep your eyes out for.

1978 was the year for one of Roger Corman's greatest works - "Rock'n'roll High School." Directed by Allan Arkush, "RNRHS" is chock full of campy goodness and pays homage to one of America's greatest - the Ramones. The story is set at Vince Lombardi High School about a raucous set of teens who are out to get lit, laid, and loud. P.J. Soles



"Rock'n'roll High School"



The Clash's "Rude Boy" "Kiss" "Phantom of the Park"



"Another State of Mind"



"Decline of Western Civilization"



DESIGNATED DILE

(“Carrie” and “Stripes”) stars as the overtly-spunky Riff Randall, the rabid Ramones fangirl on a mission to get the song she wrote to her heroes in leather with hopes that they’ll record it. The only way she can possibly get a chance to do so is go to the Ramones concert along with some of her classmates, but her new school principal, Ms. Togar (played by veteran NYC scenester/Warhol actress Mary Woronov) has other plans for the students, including ridding bands like the Ramones out of existence. What follows is good, old-fashioned teen rebellion from the students, along with some zany, B-movie humor, and a live mini-set from the Ramones at the “Rockatorium” club (which was actually filmed inside the Roxy in Hollywood). The Ramones also have bit parts in the film as well, including coming to the high school towards the end of the movie when the students take it over, and the end result is, well, explosive. One of the B-movie’s kings, Clint Howard, also stars in this great Corman classic, as well as Vincent Van Patten. Cameos of original LA punks can be found with careful viewing, like Kidd Spike (guitar slinger for The Controllers and The Gears) pogoing behind Johnny Ramone in one scene, and Darby Crash and Lorna Doom (Germs) alongside the stage while the Ramones are playing live onstage inside the Rockatorium (Roxy). Even Rodney Bingenheimer, the d.j. who broke the Ramones to west coast radio on LA’s KROQ radio, can be spotted in the chase scene inside the club. Other assorted LA scenesters can be seen throughout the movie with close scrutinizing, too. The soundtrack for “RNRHS” kicks your Mom’s ass, as well, with tracks included by the MC5, Devo, Alice Cooper, Chuck Berry, The Paley Brothers (doing a collaboration of “C’mon Let’s Go” with the Ramones), and a lot more, besides all the great Ramones tuneage. With some hope, I’m keeping my fingers crossed that the people who operate the small type of theatres will get some sense and start running midnight showings of “Rock’n’roll High School.” Hell, even double-feature it with some of these other punk cult classics I’m going on and on about here, ya know?

Other early punk films were done as well later on, like the widely known “The Decline of Western Civilization” that concentrated on the Los Angeles punk scene. Released in 1981, the performances from “Decline” range from LA’s best, such as X, Black Flag, Circle Jerks, Fear, Germs, Alice Bag

Band, and Catholic Discipline (Hey, Penelope - where were The Gears and The Crowd, dammit?! Hmmm.). The live cuts are taken from all over LA’s intimate club scene that spotlight various band member/audience interaction on camera as well as candid interviews with fans and band members alike. An LA classic.

Another movie that concentrates primarily on the West coast punk scene is a film called “Rage - 20 Years of Punk Rock.” A friend of mine has been telling me about this lost movie for a few years now and I’ve heard from some people that it was never even released, but lo and behold, this is another movie like “Blank Generation” that got rescued to be released on DVD so folks can finally get their paws on

has completely ruled it out, so time will only tell. (Mick! Joe! Work it out, guys!).

“Suburbia” tells the tale of a group of punk kids, calling themselves “The Rejected,” who live in an abandoned house, lovingly known to its inhabitants as T.R. House. Around this condemned housing area, the kids are being frequently patrolled by a neighborhood watch group called “Citizens Against Crime,” who are actually worse people than the punks themselves. The kids’ escapades and adventures of living day to day are captured on film, as well as going to gigs, which feature live cuts from TSOL, D.I., and The Vandals. Matt Ratt, from the old Nardcore band Ratpack, and Flea, who shortly played with Fear and is now rul-

ers even gave bit parts and cameos to some of punk’s past royalty, even if it didn’t feature their music or lifestyles. Some examples such as these are movies like “Clue,” which included Fear’s Lee Ving and “Something About Mary” has Jonathan Richmond from The Modern Lovers appearing in and out throughout the movie plunking an acoustic guitar and crooning to the camera. There’s Tito Larriva, the guitarist from the early LA band The Plugz, playing a devilish band-leader in “From Dusk Till Dawn,” Los Lobos, who I mentioned earlier, with a performing cameo in the Ritchie Valens movie, “La Bamba,” and X’s John Doe performing as the bassist in the Jerry Lee Lewis film, “Great Balls of Fire” and as a divorcee in the dark and creepy



On an even lesser-known note, Ratpack has had a soundtrack cut in one of the “Sleepaway Camp” slasher movie sequels a while back. And you thought Nardcore went nowhere back then... shows what you knew, tough guy.

it. “Rage” offers up the goods from the likes of The Dead Kennedys (one of Cali’s best), TSOL, The Circle Jerks, Gitane Demone, Duane Peters, Germs, Christian Death, and loads more. Another LA keeper to watch for.

“Rude Boy” is the 1980 tale of a fan-turned-Clash roadie named Ray Gange that provides what some fans call the best pre-America Clash footage on film to date, including live footage as well as on-camera snippets of the studio recording sessions for “Give ‘Em Enough Rope.” This is another film that needs to be brought back to the midnight movies, most definitely, especially since The Clash ain’t looking too favorably towards a reunion tour anytime soon, although they’ve been asked about it individually recently and no one

ing the funk rock world in The Red Hot Chili Peppers, both have recognizable parts in this film. On an even lesser-known note, Ratpack has had a soundtrack cut in one of the “Sleepaway Camp” slasher movie sequels a while back. And you thought Nardcore went nowhere back then... shows what you knew, tough guy.

“Another State of Mind” put Social Distortion on CA’s Orange County map with the documentary video of them hitting the road with Youth Brigade and touring cross-country in a renovated tank of a school bus. Great music and funny moments in this So. Cal. classic that also features D.C.’s Minor Threat. “Another State” is a great touring flick and makes me chuckle every time I pop it on.

To some extent, movie produc-

gem, “Boogie Nights.” The New York Doll’s David Johansen even grabbed a few film roles in “Scrooged” and “Car 54, Where Are You?” as did Joey Ramone with his cameo in the weirdo cult flick, “Roadkill,” as well as a humorous bit as an auditioning guitarist on TV’s, “The Drew Carey Show.”

Well, all this talk about rawk movies has made me wanna go dig into my mountain of tapes and view some. Feel free to email me with some of your rockin’ film faves and/or movies that you’ve caught some familiar musical faces in. Now, fuck off - the balcony’s closed.

I’m Against It
-Designated Dale
 <RamonesNYC1974@aol.com>





"You can call me arrogant, but I'm better than that, I'm lonely, drunk, and fat." -Tiltwheel

My Summer Vacation

I hate feeling like a tourist so I've come up with one measure to thwart being one. It's called "friendly bleeding" - basically, it's shedding blood, but not out of anger. Out of circumstance. My highly suspicious reason for this is that tourists don't like to bleed (and I doubt the "group bleed" will never be part of a package tour). Davey Quinn called me and invited me on tour with Tiltwheel. It wasn't exactly a roadie position, but an active participant, a friendly face, someone to depress the gas pedal, help get the van lost, and keep the beer-dar (the liquid hops form of radar) fully blipping and pinging.

I'm a guy with a bunch of half-baked theories. Here's one I have about music fanzines. It's very easy to make a little bubble around yourself, and if you don't get out once in awhile - past going to shows at the same venues, past getting music in the mail - you tend to lose sight that music's made by human beings and, for me, the music is made by people who are similar to me but have wildly differing talents and habits. Bands often toil in smoke, sweat, darkness, sleeplessness, long drives, missing trailer fenders, and popped fuses. I mostly work alone in my version of FanzineWorld: a controlled room with a stereo and a nice, comfy bed.

I'm on the same team as the bands I love by this simple fact: we own what we create and just as often, we create what we own.

I'm 29 and this was my first honest-to-goodness ten days on tour. In the grand scheme of things, it's nothing, but I'd be a fuckin' liar if I said it didn't significantly change my life. (It only takes a second to get your head split open.) Why Tiltwheel? Although this reeks of nepotism - it's in reverse. Before I helped start Razorcake, I'd known Davey for four years. It's no surprise I like him on many levels - as a friend, as a musi-

cian, and as a writer. But mostly as a friend. He's a goatee'd Buddha who has an incredibly tender and sad heart. He's also as wise, humble, and the recalcitrant ring leader of the Tiltwheel three ring circus; the most self-effacing guy I know.

Thankfully, I could free some time up and met them in their tour-in-progress in Washington DC.

Courtesy and pestilence

Washington D.C.: 6 AM. I was assaulted by a clan of cardboard warriors. All the Milwaukee's Best had been drunk and the twelver boxes were fashioned into helmets, elbow, knee, and chest protection. "Gaaahhhh!" At the side of the bed

were living inside of the cassettes. At night, the cockroaches became more brazen. When the lights went out, the kitchen wall shimmered from their bodies.

Someone had the bright idea to storm the nation's capitol. Beer case uniforms were removed for the veneer of respectability. The metro was chilling. We sat next to working, makeup-perfect stiffs rolling into Washington DC. Two things seemed to have overlapped: Gap ads cellophaned onto Orwell's 1984. A prettier, pastelly-er form of slavery. No one looked happy. Hell, no one looked human. They looked like the side of a commercial that TV never shows, where everything

And there were kids, all in matching shirts, going to learn some history, which was nice.

Comrades still down, I walked through the Natural History Museum. They had a chipmunk skeleton there - its bones, agile, fragile - and it had a nut in its mouth that it was never quite able to crack. And, being a skeleton, it's safe to assume the chipmunk's fucking dead. And it's still trying to crack that nut. It's tough not to feel like that chipmunk sometimes.

Davey woke up and started to puke. An elderly couple, on the next bench five feet away, looked at him as if he were a fish in a dirty aquarium. They didn't move, though. They had nice seats.

We retreated.

"If it's true that everyone hates war, then why doesn't everyone hates the nation we belong?"

-The Urchin, "Chairman of the Discount Liquor Store"

At this point, I should mention that I'd arrived with a great Japanese band, The Urchin (Big Champion, Kio, and Masa), and Yoichi of Snuffy Smile Records. By transposition, by looking through their eyes, I got more of the feeling that patriotism's a weird concept. Being the nation's capitol, American flags were as far as you could see. And I'm walking down the street with four Japanese guys who probably had grandparents who died so quickly from the blast of a U.S. nuclear bomb that their bodies turned to ash before their shadows could fall. The double

punch of politics and nationalism are the only way I know of that millions of people can be systematically killed on a geographic whim. I wondered what they thought, but didn't ask.

On a lighter note, I was also contemplating that Kio, the bassist, was 6'6". No matter where he stands at Japanese shows, I bet he gets a good view. I learned that Big Champion is a bug exterminator.

Upon getting off the Metro and returning to the suburbs, I realized



Davey Tiltwheel

there was a gaggle of guys who looked like a mix between medieval Leggo people and Gwarriors. Colorful, square heads. "Get your socks on!" Me, delirious. Them, drunk. They were previously running down the street. The scenario worked like dirty aquarium. The neighbors watched with puckered faces at the cloudy happenings but didn't say a word. We were staying at Super Chinchilla Rescue Mission's house, which, admittedly, was in disrepair since they were moving out. It was the first time I'd ever seen cockroaches trapped inside of video tapes. I mean, they

crashes and you work for someone else for nine hours to get a greener lawn or some righteous dry cleaning. Vacant, hostile eyes.

If you, too, ever get the plan to storm the capitol. Take heed. Nothing opens until 10 AM. Unprepared for this, the quickly sobering marauders commandeered park benches and slept. As ten neared, I watched the tourists trickle then chug by in a clumpy stream. It may be true that you are what you eat. It's also true, you are what you watch, what you pay attention to.

Refodd

that Super Chinchilla lived in the only house on the block that didn't have its lawn mowed.

Davey fell asleep again, sitting upright, head down, fingers laced. He was surrounded by a beer can fort. To his right is a lawn jockey with a beer case hat. My now ex-girlfriend (yet, still lovely and excellent) asked me one day: "Why do you exaggerate drinking stories? You don't drink that much." Secretly, there is two of me, as I suspect there are two of each of you reading this. There is home, responsible, bed-making, mom-kissing, bill-paying Retodd. Then there's rock'n'roll Retodd. If you don't have a rock'n'roll side, I suggest you look into getting one. They're fun. During the tour, if I could have turned into a fish that lived in beer, I'da done it in a second. The beer tallies are real.

Versions of Tiltwheel

Just as there are two versions of me, currently there are two versions of Tiltwheel. Home Tiltwheel and Touring Tiltwheel. Davey's the constant - guitar, vocals. (Currently, he's seeking sponsorship from the Gold Bond Medicated Powder that's battling out the crotch-specific bat wing rash.) It's strange for me to have a favorite band and not know who the members are. We made quick introductions. Mark, drums: Icabod Crane (for those of you who haven't read the book, renting "Sleepy Hollow" will do for now). 6'5", so skinny you think his bones are going to poke out of his skin at any time, with a long scar from his lip to the side of his nose, from a nail on a stair as a kid. He has small stars tattooed behind his ears. People call him Skeletor, but Skeletor wasn't skinny. Skeletor just had a skull for a head but was really buff. Kris, bass: soft-spoken, super curly hair. Kris is part of the underground pet shop network. He can rattle off aquarium fish jargon on command, but is smart enough to know it annoys most people. Kris had a roommate who got ahold of a five foot alligator and put it in another roommate's room, without prior consent, "Because he didn't have anywhere else to put it."

This particular phenomenon has happened to me a couple of times. I meet friends of friends, and within a couple days, I get the feeling that I've known them for years. Relaxed conversations, compatible senses of humor; I felt instantly at ease and gelled with Kris and Mark.

It'd be true to say that Davey, himself, is Tiltwheel. He writes the songs. Writes the lyrics. ("Don't mind the broken jaw. Mind the broken heart.") Sings. Without him, the band wouldn't exist. Conversely, he's not a one man

band with cymbals on his knees and a bass drum strapped to his back, and without all the members - past and present, touring and local - it'd be nothing. Davey brings the vision. Everyone else brings it to life and shape. It's an extended family. For "have a good tour" momentos, Bob Tiltwheel gave the van some porn and fellow drummer, Mark, a little fan.



Everybody was resting. It was a day off. I reattached a trailer fender and learned (don't try this at home) the if you have large blade fuses, and one's popped, you can poke a hole in the plastic with a knife, take the foil wrapper from a cigarette pack, roll it tight, and shove it in the hole, the fuse will work until you get a new one.

Baltimore, MD: Playing a game of hide and go seek in a mansion, I put down my beer and tried to get into a high cubby hole, but couldn't swing it. In the minute of trying, someone extinguished their cigarette in my beer unbeknownst to me, which resulted in projectile vomit number one as I choked the butt out of my esophagus. Later on that night, I laid a desk chair down and used the head rest as a pillow. There were rumors that Big Champion of the Urchin got lucky because a lady liked his name and wondered where he was so big. The

language barrier was but a small hurdle to the international language of love.

On the road to Hershey, PA:

Every time the sliding door to the van opened, there was a 50% chance of beer cans falling out. Davey rationalized: "When we're in cities, it's OK. They're already concrete messes, dirty already." The Boy Scout in me was in con-

Mark, startled by the fact that women showed up, proclaimed in deep, fake German accent, "Von vagina... two vagina... three vagina." Far fewer people went it. Most just sat on the grassy incline, smoked and chatted. When Tiltwheel played, the cobbled-together stage of particle board wobbled and jittered like an ocean swell. Kris put his foot through it and didn't miss a beat.

People came and went. There was no huge flood of humanity, nor was there a mass exodus.

Apparently, a couple Victory bands played. I didn't watch them. Prejudiced, Retodd? Maybe it was the matching, personalized Victory basketball jerseys they wore outside the barn as their "going around town" gear. Maybe because it was the booker had promised a guarantee to the two Victory bands "as a package" and that the Tiltwheel guarantee couldn't be backed up by meat, intimidation, or a label.

Conversation, ver batim:

Booker: Uhhh, I thought they'd draw more.

Davey: They weren't on the bill when we talked.

Booker: I know. I thought a lot more people were going to show and it wouldn't be a problem.

Davey: So, what does this mean for us? The Urchin - they came all the way from Japan. Where'd the Victory band come from? New York? And another band on the bill was from Germany.

Booker: I'm sorry. I know. I promised them, the two bands, four hundred dollars. They're a package deal.

Davey: How much did the door make?

Booker: Uhhh, let me check. Maybe I can talk them down.

[lapse five minutes of "intense negotiations."]

Booker: Uhhh. It looks like I can get you \$24 a piece. It was worse than I thought.

Davey: [silence]

Booker: You got any stickers? I'll buy one. [He hands over a dollar.]

Davey: [sound of a beer cracking open.] Here, take our CD. Keep your dollar.

Quick synopsis: Tiltwheel plays barn. Gets paid the equivalent of a handful of dried macaroni. Victory bands eat steak and lobster (well, they could afford to).

New Jersey: Fuck New Jersey's Bradley Beach that charges six dollars. We watched the ocean from a distance. It lapped coyly 100 yards away. They even had a demilitarized zone. The Berlin Wall's down, so I guess the municipal fathers of New Brunswick decided to make some softer ones in the name of capitalism.

I learned how to [REDACTED] 9

Kio (l) and Masa (r) of The Urchin

flict. We agreed that nature - or places with more trees and grass than concrete - wouldn't be littered.

Hershey Chocolate Factory:

Took a picture of the Urchin. Big Champion held the hand of a life-size Hershey's Kiss with legs and arms. The security guard looked suspicious. We walked by a kid who was yelling at his mom and dad, "I hate Chocolate World! I hate Chocolate World!" over and over again. It got funnier the more it got repeated. Dave Matthews was scheduled to play that week.

Barn Dance: Hershey, PA - the place when good intentions equal a handful of shit.

Picture a barn without a bathroom and an eagle eye neighbor. A barn with lots of rat poop and bird droppings. An elk head. An unlit disco ball. Time for a punk rock show. Quite a few folks showed up.

Retodd

speak New Jersey-ian. It's pretty easy. Liberal usage of the term "shitass" slides you right in. I'm serious.

On a beer run (Go, 30 packs. Go.), Jimmy "The Truth" (ex-Panthro UK United 13, current Super Chinchilla) and I came across a yard with a spray painted sign: "Free Stuff". Jimmy picked out a lovely wood cutout of a cartoon bunny couple, ripped off the "Happy Easter" letters, and that evening, asked all the Japanese to pose with. He then showed everyone the previews on his digital camera. They were cute.

I'm thinking of a low-rent, punk rock, early 2000's version of "Spinal Tap." The venue was an indoor soccer arena called Recreation Station, which also housed a Laser Tag battle dome and about half a supermarket's worth of video games. The place was run by Kenny Rogers' stunt double, and the guy had no sense of humor about that. The bands played on green astroturf at the mid-line. The staff wouldn't give anyone balls to kick, which was probably smart, because I woulda loved to have walloped one to the first band's drummer's head. Opening band tip: if you cover both Joe Satriani and The Misfits in the one-hour set, and if your drum set is bigger than a moving van, you're a bunch of assholes.

Super Chinchilla Rescue Mission: "The Chinchies," as they call themselves, bring the goods. Five guys, all playing their own songs, but as one. Slabby layers. Smart lyrics about desperation, curbside drinking, and dead ends that pinprick to light. Tem was capable of doing what would usually be solo guitar leads, but he placed them in the middle of the songs, muted, which go crazy. It all added to the contained insanity of the songs. They played pure power; insightful, tuneful strikes.

They're all mellow dudes during the day, slow-trickling to recharge their batteries, and it makes me think that, and not necessarily just on tour, the life you want is 30 minutes of a 24 hour day. That sliver. Chose what you want to do with that little piece - To choke on eraser dust. To paint your nails. To drive to a gym and lift weights. To complain about what you can't change. To play a new song. To prove to yourself that you aren't dead, aren't a human robot. Yeah, life sucks, but why can't it be that you're the one sucking as much out of it as possible? Music's a force and can change you from the inside as real and bland as a piece of toast or as real and exciting as a self-made war.

I screamed along to The

Chinchies in an indoor soccer arena and punched the air.

Jimmy, "The Truth," shirtless bassist extraordinaire began and ended the set with:

"This is a fuck!"

"This is a fuck!"

"This is a fuck!... but in a good way."

Kenny Rogers rushed in and said



Mark Tiltwheel

we can dance, but we can't touch one another. This curious rule deeply offended Jimmy's rock aesthetic, and replied, "This is a fuck."

Nichol, a longtime lover of The Tiltwheel, bussed down from NYC. Nichol, the only girl in a sea of boys, made me realize a couple things. She always smelled really good. How is this done? Even though she had a small suitcase, she had different and cute outfit every day. That's loads trickier than it sounds on paper.

NJ to Erie: I started the drive at 2 AM and continued until I started hallucinating mildly. It felt like I was driving into a tunnel, or that the world was collapsing into a cone in front of me. Instead of killing everyone, I handed the wheel over.

Erie, PA: "Twins Enthralled by Fish," has been decided to be the title of Tiltwheel's next album.

Touring, I've decided, if you like who you're with, makes you use one large brain. It's not really the smartest brain or the most logical brain, but it's a big, loose-fitting brain with some huge eyeballs. So, Tiltwheel's sitting inside the van outside the venue, listening to some distant music, untangling some fishing line, smoking (everyone but yours truly), killing time - seeing essentially the same sights. It's like everyone's looking at the same movie, but the surroundings seep in, like a garbage compost. Davey's

zoning out with the rest of us. When we drove in to Erie - pretty much vacant on Sunday - it was really obvious that there were all these 3-foot big, municipal fish sculptures, all painted differently, in front of businesses. Nichol said New York had life-size cow sculptures all over the place.

We were spacing out and there

were two kids - identically dressed twins - looking through a gate at one of these fish. The kids weren't moving. The fish was wearing a yellow bikini. The kids were wearing little pink and blue jogging suits. They were stock still, staring.

Davey turned to the van and said, "Twins enthralled by fish." Everybody laughed for a long time. He phrased it perfectly.

The kids didn't move for a long, long time.

We kept laughing.

Observation: I don't trust states where you can't buy cases of beer any day of the week. For Christ's sake, I did some growing up in Las Vegas, where my neighbor'd drink while mowing the lawn and if you're of age, every parking lot is a paved field of drinking freedom.

Toys That Kill: Their tour coincided with Tiltwheel's and they showed up in Erie. Essentially, it's the guys from FYP but they play their instruments really well and lay off the dick and fart jokes. They surprised my dirty socks right off. They were great. In the terminology of Sean, their guitarist, they were wicked bad. Dual guitars, nice, dirty hooks and wonderfully spastic vocals. They've got a drummer that looks like Opie. Todd Congelliere, the ringleader (and also the guy who runs Recess Records) was bummed. He'd pissed his pants in his sleep. Two

nights in a row. It was troubling him. Todd always wears a beanie. Even if it's 100 degrees. I often think of asking him why, but never do.

When they played Chicago, a fan showed up with the coat hanger logo on Toys That Kill's new album shaved into the back of his head.

Bob of My Three Scum gets a big plate of brownies in the after-life. He set up the show in Erie, intentionally all ages, and took it on the chin to the wallet-siphoning sound of \$200. After that, not only did he let us stay at his house, he fixed us dinner and breakfast, and bought us six cases of beer that the club owner over-charged him for. Bless him. All we did was stink up his house and tell him stories.

Cleveland: The Rock'n'roll Hall of Fame didn't suck as bad as a lot of people warned. The rumor is true. If you're a touring band with a CD to give them, you can get in for free. I think it depends on who's working. All of us got in for free. Davey was happy to have seen the original writing for the MC5's "Kick out the Jams." Nichol was impressed that they had post-shot John Lennon's bloody glasses. I was charmed that Jim Morrison's Navy admiral dad stood by his lizard king son in a letter to a Floridian judge even though he didn't understand why his son flashed his dong during a concert. It's called The Hall of *Fame*, not the Hall of *History*, so I'm a little less rankled than I originally was with the inclusion of 'Nsync's wardrobe, but I still want to pee on it.

Dancing and laughing without hesitation to The Urchin: Pat's in the Flats in Cleveland has one fuckin' great jukebox. Weird Lovemakers, Dead Kennedys, Real MacKenzie's, all on 45s - all free.

I'm not real quick sometimes. Although I own a couple of their albums, I always thought the liner notes to the Urchin's CDs were translations. Nope. They sing in English. Super-fractured, highly accented English. Sure, I thought some of the choruses were in English. I recognized "rock'n'roll" (sounds like "wook'nt'wole," and all things considered, their English is way better than my Japanese.) It was the sixth show in a row I'd watched of theirs and it was the first time they fucked up. It was charming. I'd've of loved to probe their brains. How bad did they think the tour sucked? Were they just being polite? And they played on - hugely proficient, accurate-as-fuck, pop-mitted punk with hooks big enough to be used for illegal whaling. I sang along, knowing only one or two words, making up many, many more.

Chicago: A Minnesota Viking

died at practice from heat stroke that day. Fucking hot, like someone with a wet blanket was bear hugging me. I wish bars didn't have so many TVs right behind them with the volume so high. An old man got hauled off the street, ball gagged, and shot. The story kept on being repeated.

For being relatively renown, The Fireside Bowl is a slum of mildew, falling tiles, and swelter, but rock knows no boundaries. The Arrivals were fantastic. I'd never even heard a whisper of them, and there they were, playing a cross between Pegboy and The Freeze - swinging, thick, melodious, bracing punk. I swear I got staple gunned to the floor. I just watched their set, impressed, dropped in a vat of sweat.

Strange Bedfellows: By this time, our group had swelled to fourteen people and literally took up any and all floor space. I'd passed out next to an undercarriage for a bedframe that was propped up against the wall. On the ground, two of its wheels stuck out, like little levers. It was a big, metal rectangle, eight foot by six foot. At about 6 AM, I was restless and whacked my head on one of the wheels, which toppled the undercarriage. I tried to catch it, but it was like catching two bowling balls six feet apart. The thing fuckin' whacked Toys That Kill Todd, who'd passed out near by, in the head. Luckily, his beanie absorbed some of the blow. He bolted upright, looked me straight in the eye, said, "Cock a doodle doo!" twice, asked, "Are you trying to kill me?", smiled, and went right back to sleep. I felt bad for almost maiming him but couldn't stop chuckling. I stopped questioning why he wore the beanie 24-7.

For breakfast, there was a cauldron of pasta salad and handmade, fresh bread made specifically for all of us by The Arrivals' singer's wife. We kept on running into such nice people. Shit like that chokes me up. Seriously. I'm still surprised when complete strangers are really, really generous.

For every fucked up thing that happened, someone came along and opened up. Strangers, except the fact they'd just seen the band play, let us stay on their floors. The band never stayed in a hotel. It's a very real underground (or network, netted by music, you pick). Even to itself. It shifts, morphs for each band, each week, each town, each eviction, each victim of gentrification.

For every dead battery, there was a jump start.

Dubuque, IA: Tiltwheel played a gay bar and the show had to be over by 9 PM. Lapse three hours

after the show. It looked like our van projectile vomited beer cans from the side door onto our host's yard. We contributed to the delinquency of minors on a major scale, and Davey was hitting on a girl whose mom was supposed to drive by and pick her up. Davey really tried to get her to roll down the grassy hill in an inner tube. He'd already done it a couple of times - fashioning the tube like an inflatable tutu - and was trying to spread its gospel. As she was having none of it, but still listening intently, one cop rolled by slowly. Beers were chucked into bushes, escape routes were planned, anti-cop sentiment was muttered.

I don't hate *all* cops, per se, but if life's taught me anything, it's this: one tends not to get arrested when there isn't a cop involved.

Another cruiser from another direction parked itself in front of the house and stared at us. Then another, then another, until there were about six cop cars. The party hive was poked. Then, mysteriously, fire trucks came. The cops didn't stop directly at the house but half a block up the street. The closest cop mildly watched us from a block away, window up. No menace on his face. They were there for so long, we got comfortable with them, and resumed drinking in plain view. I was beginning to dig Dubuque. After an hour, they drove away, without cuffing or beating us. If we were in LA, they'd at least get us on our knees and run our IDs. Minutes after, a guy walked down to the house, looking for his dogs. The cops had been at his house. Someone had reported the smell of paint thinner fumes.

Tiltwheel: Green Bay was their tightest show. Beginning with, "Hi, we're from Man Diego," Davey nailed his melancholia up as the set list, and burned through a lot of shit: the long drives, the hard floors, the early doors. Kris, Mark, and Davey pounded the songs as one beast with six arms. Real and hard and precise. Davey lit up and watched some tightly rolled sorrow burn. The Urchin was playing to virtually no one and he felt acutely responsible.

The musical result was exactly like and unlike magic. It was real but it was also a huge trick of transcendence. It was twenty-three hours of down time for a half hour of drunk-fueled dynamite. The act of repetition of prayers makes sense. As the songs were replayed, they become stronger. I've heard all Tiltwheel's songs before, but never exactly like that. That's what faith's all about.

Enter the Rhythm Chicken: Buckaw! It started off ordinarily enough. The Chicken bought him-

self and myself a pitcher of Pabst apiece and we drank directly from them. We called our rounds of shots. The bartendress accommodated. I'd never met the Chicken in person, and he's nicer, funnier, and a lot less fowl (nyuk, nyuk) than I could ever hoped for. We swapped stories. We drink. We drank. We drunk.

The Chicken disappeared. We followed the sound of distant thunder. He played across the street in the parking lot.

When we returned to the bar, I could smell the storm coming.

Davey and Nichol sat on top of the bar like royalty.

The bartendress refused payment. I started pouring pitchers from the customer side of the bar and she smiled at me.

Was this heaven? I think so.

The Chicken set up his kit inside the bar and started playing. Davey, for reasons unclear even to himself, took a full pitcher of beer - uncharacteristically not even taking a sip - and walked over to the Chicken. Without warning, he skulled the Chicken mid-beat so hard that no only did his head cave in a bit, but Davey knocked him completely off his drum stool. Beer splashed against the wall like blood and fizzled like sea foam. The Chicken laid motionless, ear dangerously a-kilter. Fetally, he didn't move for a good five seconds.

Davey, worried, began yelling, "I killed the Rhythm Chicken! I killed the Rhythm Chicken!" Sorrow - as sharp and final as witnessing a plane crash - filled his heart. But our clucking hero wasn't down for the count. The Rhythm Chicken clawed back to his seat and ripped to the end of his set, head still caved in.

Tiltwheel, as an institution, felt bad. As penance, we all took turns getting empty pitchers to the head.

I loosely remember this conversation, through the beer bubbles and Jim Beam:

Davey: Todd, you want a pitcher?

Me: Sure.

Davey: Take your glasses off.

Me: Thanks. [pocket glasses.]

Davey: [Takes a perfect swing. The pitcher exploded right off my temple. Davey has a handle for a souvenir.]

Me: [smiling]

Davey: [laughing, happy that the Chicken is very much alive.]

Me: [laughing, happy that I'm alive]

Davey then turned around and launched himself, head first, into the pool table. Which people were up until then playing pool on. But when you've got a beached whale of a man with tourettes on the felt, one gets the feeling that even beating him with a pool cue would just

rile him up some more.

Then I started yelling about "give me the good blood, give me the good blood." I looked around and Team Asswheel were all bleeding from the head. Kinship. I was no longer a tourist.

To finish off the ceremony, Mark and I puked together for a pretty long time in the alley. It was a blast, until I was informed we were driving down to Minneapolis. Right then.

Minneapolis: The aftermath: I was dirty, haggard, throwing up a fried egg sandwich breakfast, and took a short sleep on a library lawn. My hair was pomaded with beer. My arms stuck whenever I curled them up towards me. I realized, much later in the day, that the entire front of my shirt was a huge stain. I'd lost my socks, but not my shoes. I furtively bathed with some wet paper towels. My brain was stunned and I realized... I don't want gated community happiness. I've got what I want. Drunk brawl with my friends happiness. Happiness with dirty fingernails. And that reminded me of another Urchin lyric: "Let's spend the night with a bottle of blank." That's exactly what happened.

I felt like a momentary embodiment of Tiltwheel, a band that comfortably lives in a mess, in a condition that always seems to be on the verge of collapse, yet has never been swallowed in the eight years of its existence. The tour was like watching the wheel's lug nuts slowly loosen a little bit more on each spin and wondering if the van was going to careen into a ditch. Gas was expensive. Lights went out. Guarantees weren't. Many bookers didn't. Promotion was often a stack of hand-written flyers under the band's name misspelled left under the couch. It'd be wonderful if Tiltwheel could live off their music, and perhaps some day soon they will. Their songs are great, but me telling you this at this point is like a parent telling how good their kids are at social studies. I'm a little biased.

My End: I had to get back to making this here magazine, so I flew back from Minneapolis, while Tiltwheel's tour continued. I collected all of my scraps of paper (go chain wallet/ass pocket filing cabinet, go) and sat in a bar before my flight.

A guy had been sitting behind me for hours. He dropped his book after inserting a bookmark. Fixing to leave, he stood up. He was wearing a Tiltwheel shirt.

We don't own the airwaves; never will. This'll have to be one listener at a time.

-Retodd

Retodd



Maddy

Shiftless When Idle



Stealing from a corpse! Dude! Punk!

Three weeks ago, I was lying in my room, destitute, surrounded by half-eaten, stale boxes of Lucky Charms and various emo records I had smashed in the name of rock and roll! What could possibly bring me back from this, the lowest of all lows? Why, nothing else than the opportunity to express to the general public (operating under the principle that Razorcake fanzine caters to the likes of punk rockers, housewives, plumbers, and CEOs equally and without prejudice) one of the most important

the Ramones, and when discussing punk rock in general, there can be no doubt as to the following. If you want punk, you need look no further than Dee Dee!

Of course, although I'd like to think that I could just tell you, "Dee Dee is the best Ramone!" and immediately you would all go out and start Dee Dee fan clubs and send him monthly thank-you gifts in the mail, I know better. You (and me!) are all critical punk rockers who just happen to all wear the same clothes and

"We didn't write a positive song until 'Now I Wanna Sniff Some Glue.'" Ha!

3. It was Dee Dee's idea to name the band the Ramones! Who knows? Your favorite band of all time could have some crappy glam rock hippie name, like Glitter Magic or Purple Sunshine, if Joey had been in charge!

4. Dee Dee and his girlfriend Connie were the original Sid and Nancy, only much cooler! They

Maddy



beliefs I have held throughout the past ten or fifteen years. What awaits you, the reader? An essay on straightedge? Nope! Not for this Replacements fan! A diatribe against the slaughter of animals? Nope! Unlike Propagandhi, I definitely do NOT think that "meat is murder and dairy is rape." (Rape? Where did those guys take their biology class, anyways?) A critical and bruising critique of the capitalist system? Nope! Although I would sacrifice many records to take a class with Howard Zinn, I won't be quoting Bookchin today! No, the belief in question is much more important, more significant, and more shocking! Today, in the pages of Razorcake, I wish to assert that: Dee Dee Ramone was the coolest Ramone!

Now, I know, I know, is this really the best thing to be talking about immediately following the death of one Joey Ramone? Allow me to clarify that I mean no disrespect to his honorable Punk Rocker Sir Joey, wearer of unbelievably tight pants and very strange sunglasses since 1976. (More on the pre-1976 Joey later, I promise!) But, when discussing

listen to the same bands, right? Right! So, without further ado, on with the proof for my case!

Why Dee Dee is the Best Ramone in Eleven Easy Steps!

1. At the early age of fifteen, Dee Dee was already more punk rock than your average punk rocker will ever be! He was addicted to drugs, ran away from home, ended up with some hitchhikers who committed armed robbery, and spent three months in jail! All right!

2. Dee Dee wrote all of the best Ramones songs. This cannot be debated! "I Don't Wanna Walk Around With You," "53rd and Third" ("Then I took out my razorblade, then I did what god forbade. Now the cops are after me, but I'll prove that I'm no sissy!" Punk rock!), "Loudmouth," "I Don't Wanna Go Down to the Basement," "Listen to My Heart," "Commando," "Now I Wanna Sniff Some Glue," "Chinese Rocks" (later used without any credit given to Dee Dee by the Heartbreakers) et. al. Dee Dee once said,

pioneered what we now take for granted - getting really drunk and ending up all over each other, making out with the New York Dolls playing in the background! They created punk rock love! (Although Aaron Cometbus later refined it and brought it up-to-date with today's standards!) As Dee Dee says, "One night, as I was leaving CBGB's at four in the morning, I walked outside and saw Connie sitting on the hood of a car, filing her nails. I liked her right away. She was wearing a black evening dress and spiked, high-heel shoes, and she had a bottle of blackberry brandy in her purse... She was a prostitute, I was a Ramone, and we were both junkies." Plus, Connie didn't put up with anything! She was a tough girl, unlike all of the other glam rock model chicks trying to get Dee Dee's eye. Danny Fields says, "I loved the drama between Dee Dee and Connie. That's what boys and girls are supposed to do; stab each other, sure. I mean, you're not supposed to die, but short of dying - or missing a gig - it's alright." And, unlike stinky, stupid Sid and Nancy, who one sometimes has a hard time finding sympathy for, they

weren't complete idiots. After Connie's death (she was found dead in a gutter, of a drug overdose, and no one claimed her body), Dee Dee said, "Connie might have brought me close to death a lot of times, but in a way, she kept me alive. No one else did. I had all that responsibility - I had to play every night - and no one gave a damn if I had a place to live, or if I had any dope, or if I had anything to eat. Connie did. She was all I had... Later, I heard that this girl was trying to raise money to get Connie a casket, and all the girls pitched in, but then the other girl took the money and spent it on dope. A few years later I broke down over it."

5. Dee Dee has way cooler stories than any of the other Ramones. I am not sure if the following is true, and I really don't care. Dee Dee says, "Behind the building was a graveyard that had been dug up by the city. Some of the corpses had been buried upright in the brick wall. Once I went down there to get a loose brick, and a dead person's hand fell out of the hole where the brick had been. The hand was all bone, but a gold and diamond ring was still stubbornly stuck on its finger. It was an old engagement ring that some sucker must have bought this broad. The diamond ring must have been at least two and a half carats and the money I got for it at the pawnshop kept me in dope and Hostess cupcakes for months. A lot better than the nickel bag I got twenty years later for my wedding ring on 10th Street after I left the Ramones." Stealing from a corpse! Dude! Punk!

6. Dee Dee once said, "LSD was fun. I did it hundreds of times, and I don't think I ever had any bad trips, but it really wasn't my thing." Think about if you did a drug HUNDREDS of times, and it wasn't even your thing! This is hardcore! (Uh oh! I've lost all of my straightedge audience! Curses!) Think about the possibilities for the drugs that you ARE really into! Egads! Pass the heroin!

7. The Stooges were Dee Dee's favorite band.

8. Dee Dee knew when to quit. As he said, "Four middle-aged men trying to be teenage juvenile delinquents. I was just getting sick of playing in a revival act. It made me feel like a phony standing in a leather jacket and torn jeans - like I used to dress when I thought I was a worthless piece of shit." Which is not to say that Dee Dee ever gave up punk (although he did have a brief and embarrassing stint in the world of rap), he just recognized that maybe the world didn't need the Ramones to become a shitty metal-influenced band.

9. And now its time for the negative proofs! (And, for this, I'm only gonna talk about the original Ramones due to space constraints.) I am somewhat skeptical that I should even need to argue the following point, but Dee Dee was cooler than Tommy. Some of Tommy's crimes against humanity include having "a real dislike for Johnny Thunders because of his guitar playing," trying to look taller on the cover of their first LP by propping himself up against the wall on his tip-toes (Lame! Especially when we all know that being short is cool! Right? Right!), and once yelling to his fellow Ramones in the tour van "'Hey guys, can you lower the music?'" Tommy said. "I am tripping on LSD. Those Stooges songs are freaking me out. You don't want to run me off the road."

10. Dee Dee is cooler than Johnny. Of course, this is more controversial than the Dee Dee vs. Tommy verdict, but still, it is rather obvious when you con-

sider that Johnny Ramone was always a big Reagan fan. And if '80s punk/hardcore taught us ANYTHING (besides the fact that, sometime in the mid-'80s a special machine should have been invented to freeze hardcore at the peak of Black Flag, Circle Jerks, Germs, etc. so that we would never have to deal with emo hardcore!) it's that Reagan is not punk! Case closed!

11. And now, for the most contested claim of all. Dee Dee is cooler than Joey. Of course, this is like saying, "Which band is better, the Rip Offs or Teengenerate?" (the Rip Offs, says I!). But still, the answer becomes clear when we look at a few facts! Joey says, "I never really sniffed glue or Carbona. I never got really heavy into the paper bag. I did it, but I didn't get into it like Johnny and Dee Dee." What? No excessive glue sniffing? Come on! And read these two descriptions of Joey's fashion sensibilities prior to the Ramones: "John's hair was real long then. Down to his waist, like Mark Farmer from Grand Funk Railroad. He had on tie-dyed jeans and a tie-dyed headband and those same cheap Keds that he still wore even when our band got famous and we had money." "Joey was very tall, and had a red Afro hairstyle, modeled after Jimi Hendrix's. It was called the Explosion and was the sort of haircut you could get at Paul McGregors' in the East Village. Joey looked like a druggie. He could usually be seen wearing a yellow suede fringed jacket from Paul Sargent's, cranberry corduroy trousers from The Naked Grape,

moccasins instead of sneakers, and those freaky round tinted glasses that he still wears today." Moccasins? Tie dye? Insert "Granola Head" here! This just won't do! Although Joey did spend time in a mental hospital, and did write great songs like "Beat on the Brat" and "Judy is a Punk," he will never beat the blatant adolescent-fuck-the-world-angst of Dee Dee Ramone!

So there you have it! Dee Dee is the coolest Ramone! And not just because he was one of the cutest punk rockers of all time (circa the late '70s) and not just because he clearly has the largest penis of all the Ramones (see the cover to Rocket to Russia!). Dee Dee Ramone wrote some of the best songs of all time, hated almost everyone, got trashed all the time, and somehow managed not to die! Dee Dee, I salute you!

-Maddy

To read more of my ramblings, send three stamps for a copy of my zine, *Tight Pants*, to me at: 2208 North 72nd St. Wauwatosa, WI 53213.

My thanks to the books *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk*, and *Lobotomy: Surviving the Ramones*, for all the quotes you read above.

Maddy



Suspicious protrusions!





Roger Moser, Jr.

Drunk and Demented in Texxxxas



I will assuredly unleash a violent maelstrom of full-fury fisticuffs on your hairless lilly white hineys.

Summer Sucks, And So Do Scatterbrained Unskilled Drivers!

In my brew-knocked feeble lil' mind, I firmly believe in one realistically plausible certainty: when people die and go to Hell, they must surely make a brief stop-over in Texas during the summer months of June through August to prepare themselves for an infernal eternity wallowing in everlasting hellfire and brimstone. I utterly detest summertime... I hate the hellish heat... I hate the torturous humidity... and I hate the relentlessly miserable mugginess. Only Satan himself could comfortably dwell in such extreme tormentin' temperatures, and the last time I glanced at my driver's license, my name was still Roger (not Lucifer, not Beelzebub, not Mephistopheles, not the fiendishly unholy Evil One!). As the heat index boils, sizzles, and soars here in the vast purgatorial Lone Star State, tempers flare, emotions seethe, and anger runs rampant and wild... yep, a prime breeding environment for the most confrontational of all human idiosyncrasies: ROAD RAGE!!! Since my mama raised me to be honest and straightforward (and since she'd still whup my backside silly if I didn't do as she says!), I regretfully admit that I do indeed suffer from the ulcer-inducing scourge of "road rage" and all of its stomach-twistin' symptoms... uncontrollable gritting of the teeth, freakishly protruding vessels and veins violently streaking their way across my neck and forehead, tyrannically murderous bulging of the eyes to the point of almost rupturing them, the involuntary reflex syndrome of frantically waving my middle finger like there ain't gonna be no tomorrow, and the ear-splitting propensity to loudly unleash a verbal barrage of contemptuously foul language that'd make Larry Flynt timidly blush and cover his ears. Yep, I'm a street-shreddin', pavement-pummelling, tail-gating, bumper-bending son-of-a-gun... not by any lawless and reckless choice of my own, **RAZORCAKE** [16] but due to my

Roger Moser, Jr.



inalienable right to traverse from Point A to Point B in the most expeditious manner possible.
Ya see, I have no patience whatsoever for the leisurely, out-for-a-Sunday-drive types who sleepily amble along at a snail's pace (usually 10-15 miles *under* the posted speed limit)... I've obviously got someplace to be, so get yer ass outta my way, and don't be slow about it! People who drive so sluggishly and timidly might as well just put their feet to work and walk, 'cause they'll certainly arrive at their intended destination within the same amount of time, plus they'll cut back on the over-allotment of petrol-emitted pollutants harmfully inflicted upon the environment by their king-sized cozy'n'comfy Cadillac monstrosities (the drivers of such vehicles invariably bein' retired, white-haired, metamucil-munchin' geriatrics!).
Then there's the cellphone-yappin' soccer moms (lil' Suzy Creampuff cheerleader types who possess fewer brain cells than a stick of beef jerky) and their effeminate yuppy twit husbands who careen along in their gas-guzzlin' mini-vans and SUVs like the open

road is all theirs and theirs alone... they bulldoze their way through traffic like the right-of-way is forever within their greedy lil' grasp, like the streets and thoroughfares are paved just for their pristine and primpy presence, like they're above and beyond the rest of us earthly underling inhabitants! Well, I've got news for ya, Mr. and Mrs. Sunshine Suburbia... there is such a thing as a real world, and it thankfully lacks all of the drab high-dollar comforts that you mindlessly smother yourselves in... so the next time any of you Polo-wearin' Zimawillin' yuppie fucks suddenly pull into my path and then abruptly slow down to a snail's pace, I will assuredly unleash a violent maelstrom of full-fury fisticuffs on your hairless lilly white hineys. I'm a ragin' out-of-control lunatic driver, by gosh, and I own the gawddamn highways and by-ways (at least in my soused silly lil' mind!) in these here parts, so ya better be prepared to pay dearly if'n you arrogantly careen through my right-of-way, selfishly cut me off in heavy rush-hour traffic, or otherwise recklessly veer across my path.
Although Longmoo (the shitheap city where I currently drunkenly

dwell) is nothin' more than a dead-end redneck-infested hicktown with no prospect whatsoever for cultural growth, the constantly tangled traffic congestion here is as indescribably nerve-wracking as anything major urban areas have to offer. Hell, our local snooze-paper even recently published an absurdly laughable series of articles about the maddening traffic dilemma here in our socially retarded lil' town... the writer sheepishly skirted the problematic issues at hand while self-righteously expressin' shock, dismay, and indignation that so many motorists fail to comply with the posted speed limits while flagrantly ignoring the numerous stop signs and traffic signal lights that clutter the garbage-strewn streets in these here parts... yeh, the classic let's-blame-the-citizens-for-the-local-government's-shortcomings syndrome. The socially elite, politically inept city government (who pompously attempt to portray Wrongview as a sprawling metropolitan mecca) seemingly can't be bothered with the infuriating traffic flow problems here in Hell-on-Earth... when confronted with such urgent matters, they ignorantly scratch their prematurely balding thick skulls, meekly shrug their arthritic stooped shoulders, and blankly stare with wan open-mouthed glassy-eyed expressions masking their wrinkled old far faces. They, of course, have more important issues to tactlessly concern themselves with: the grand opening ribbon-cutting ceremonies for yet another cockroach-infested family-friendly Jiffy Burger Hut; fascistic council meetings for the rezoning and displacement of a working-class residential area wherein a corporate cash-hungry Shop-'Til-You-Drop Super Center (a.k.a. Wal-Mart) moves into the backyards of a citizenry who had absolutely no say in the matter; Cattle Baron Balls, stuffy black-tie'n'tux palm-greasin' "old money" banquets; and other such "classy" elitist affairs.
Yet a couple of reasonably simple solutions to the traffic woes here in Dungview (and numerous

other cities throughout the good ol' U.S. of Acreage, I'm sure) are painfully obvious (if only the elected officials would prioritize their vote-influenced duties and organize their agendas in order of importance to the taxpayers): 1) Just synchronize the friggin' stoplights already, you pious elected assholes, so traffic can freely flow several blocks at a time without creating a mile-long pile-up due to stop-and-go-and-stop-again red-light-(quick-as-a-flash-it's-green)-back-to-red redundancy. 2) Instead of enforcing excessive speeding infractions, coerce the cops into ticketing or, better yet, permanently suspending the licenses of the semi-comatose half-wits who slowpoke along in the passing lanes and effectively clog the flow of traffic with their snail-paced sluggishness... those lethargically dazed drivers are the ultimate menace to safe and efficient traffic movement, so get 'em off the streets, pleeeeeease!

Let me finish this rantin'-and-ravin' tirade by sayin' I'm, by no means, as dangerously aggressive of a driver as I've colorfully portrayed myself to be... I just wanna arrive at my intended destination as quickly as possible (and in one piece, I might add!) without bein' rudely infringed upon by the intolerable boorishness of others. Hell, I drive a stripped-down, souped-up-to-nothin' 4-speed economy car (almost as compact and lightweight as an empty beer can, I kid you not!), so I'm really not too much of a roadhoggin' daredevil threat... but I have zero tolerance for selfishly foolish putt-putters in their jaunty luxury-stuffed gas-guzzlers. If you're unfortunate enough to be amongst that unbearably offensive ilk, stare long and hard into your rearview mirror... those devilish maddog blue eyes bulging and hellbent on fury behind you are mine, so move on over or be prepared for a frenzied assault of bullets a-blazin' and beer bottles a-flyin'... yippy-tie-yie-yay and giddy-up'n'go!!!

Yeh, see what the torturous fieriness of summer has wrought... I'm now red-faced, fuming, and rampageously irate! Nothin' a foamy ice-cold brew can't cure, though! Anyway, despite the sheer flesh-scorchin' hellishness of summertime in Texxxas, I certainly appreciate and robustly enjoy three of this perditious season's side-effects: 1) boisterously loud and lively cook-outs along the calm lush shores of Lake Cherokee (an idyllic paradisaical oasis of aquatic acreage where I spent the entirety of my youth)... replete with a colorful and flavorful life-enriching montage of succulent and tangy

BBQ chicken slowly roasting to perfection on my Dad's old-time charcoal-fuelled grill; the swamp-inspired sonic swagger of CCR blarin' from a portable tape player down by the water's edge; fireflies (or lightning bugs, as we so affectionately call 'em way down here in the farthest reaches of the Deep South) delicately flickering within inches of the cool freshly mowed lawn; the comforting coo of a whippoorwill as it lovingly croons for its mate somewhere in the shadowy dusk-enshrouded distance; an occasional shooting star gracefully streaking across the infinite vastness of the cloudless celestial night skies; and a dazzling supernatural display of the moonlight's reflection hypnotically sashaying across the water's softly rippling surface. 2) The eye-bulgin', tongue-waggin', drool-inducing, weiner-hardening visage of scantily clad lovely ladies sensuously fluttering around in the barest (pun most definitely intended, folks!) of flesh-revealing attire (voluptuous, goddess-like physiques wondrously draped in brightly colored, form-fitting miniskirts; perfectly sculptured derrieres teasingly protruding from the frayed fringes of well-worn cut-off shorts; bodaciously buxom ta-tas euphorically jiggin' and buoyantly bouncin' in ready-to-burst bikini tops; and dainty strawberry-tipped toes deliciously exposing themselves to the world via sandals, flip-flops, and other open-toed footwear!). Hmmm, say lil' girls, wanna get all sugary-sweet with rotten roguish Rog underneath the ol' yum-yum tree?!? Ooops, the horny lil' devil in me is obviously once again rearin' his ugly lil' head, and now my hedonist-influenced hormones are vigorously overheating (my humblest most heartfelt apologies to all of you card-carryin' male-bashin' feminists out there... heh heh heh). 3) And, of course, the delectably intoxicating sweetness of frothy ice cold brewed beverages (but then I certainly possess a preferential propensity to heartily imbibe the malted spirits each and every season all year round... I'm German-Irish, afterall!). But there just ain't no cure for the summertime blues (to reverently plagiarize Mr. Rock'n'Roll Maestro Supreme, Eddie Cochran) like the frigid fermented foaminess of a cold beer to quench a fella's enthusiastic thirst for life on a long hot summer's day.

So here's to three of the finer aspects of summer's unrelenting hellishness: BBQ, women, and beer! Bottoms up... burrrrrp... ahhh!

-Roger Moser, Jr.





A lot of CDs pass through your hands when you are a reviewer, or even, to say the least, when you are the slightest bit interested in what new sounds in music are there to be heard. Me being one of these people, I could not let the premier album of Rizzo, entitled "Phoning It In," leave my ears unlistened. It's not all the time that an album will live up to expectations presented through its cover. Lucky for me, "Phoning It In" picked me up after the first ring and held up a great connection throughout its entirety. Even luckier for me was that these girls are as sticky sweet and crazy as I had hoped they would be. I love Rizzo. They are my new favorite band.

night.

Jen: We wrote two songs and they're both on the record. "Noise Boy" and "DJ Man." They're a couplet that go together.

Sarah: They're the sort of inspiration for Rizzo. I kinda thought maybe that's the only two songs we'd ever write.

Jen: Me too.

Sarah: And I was alright with that. [laughs] but we wrote some more.

Harmonee: I feel so bad, all I have (of the new album, "Phoning It In") is a promo disc. I have no comprehension of song titles.

Jen: Our website has the cover art, cuz you can buy our album on MP3 at Mordam, so I encourage people

[pause]

Sarah: You can ask [both start laughing]. How old do you think I am?

Harmonee: I actually thought you were really young, maybe eighteen or nineteen. And then I saw you play, and after talking to Jen, in particular, I assumed you were older, because you talked like you were older, so now I figure maybe twenty-four, twenty-five?

Sarah: I'm totally in this age thing where I just go like, "Well, how old do you think I am?," and that's how old I am.

Harmonee: Would you consider your songs to be autobiographical?

Jen: I'd like to say that I'm just one

cool, but I think I'm the best drummer ever, for Rizzo.

Harmonee: Was it hard for you to determine which song was gonna go on, "It Takes Two, Baby"?

Sarah: We didn't really determine it.

Jen: Well, we did because we really didn't want to pick, as we left it up to the label, and also there's time constraints. We had to take a short song, so we had three choices of songs because they have to be short to fit on a 45. Actually, Long Gone John of Sympathy picked the song. Which is good, cuz I didn't want to have to pick.

Sarah: No, I like it. I'm glad. It's a happy, fun song.

Harmonee: How do you like being on Sympathy?

Sarah: Love it.

Jen: It's great. John is wonderful.

Harmonee: Yeah, he's really nice.

Sarah: It's the best label a girl could ask for. He's just been nothing but cool to us.

Harmonee: How long did you play around town before you got picked up by Sympathy?

Both: [in a drawn out somewhat British accent] Years.

Harmonee: Really?

Jen: We actually first hooked up with him and he expressed interest a really long time ago and it just took a long time for it to happen.

Sarah: I met John at the House of Pies.

Jen: Right...

Sarah: When I was eating...

Jen: Fresh peach pie.

Sarah: And I was eating like two pieces at once.

Jen: About two years ago.

Sarah: And him and Pepper were like, he was with this guy Pepper we know, and he said, "Oh, you gotta meet Sarah!" and they were like, "So, who are you here with?" and I'm like, "No, I'm just eating all the pie."

Jen: Yeah, "I'm here alone with two slices of pie" is pretty much what was happening.

Sarah: Kinda right after that he came and saw us play and was like, "I wanna do a record," and we were like, "Shut up!"

Jen: Yeah, we didn't believe him, you know, cuz we've had a lot of people say, "Oh, we should do



to buy it on MP3. It's a lot cheaper, and you can make your own CD, which I think is cool, but then you don't get the cover art and that's the fun part of a record, so, I put it on the website and you can download it and look at it.

Sarah: Jen's a computer genius.

Harmonee: So you are in charge of the website then?

Jen: It's not really there yet. I'm gonna build something cool some day.

Harmonee: So, the name Rizzo, is it a reference to the Muppets, Grease, MASH, or none of the above?

Both: Grease

Harmonee: It is a Grease thing? Have you thought about wearing "Pink Ladies" jackets on stage?

Sarah: Well, we don't really want to be a theme band, but we both played Rizzo in our high school productions of Grease.

Jen: I think the character fits the image of our band well.

Harmonee: Can I ask how old the both of you are?

of those people that can just pull a song out of the air and make up something, like I know this situation exists, but I pretty much write about stuff that happens to me. I think Sarah writes about stuff that happens to her.

Sarah: I really wish, like Frank Black, the Pixies, I would love to write about an idea, a feeling or whatever, but... can't.

Jen: In fact, all our songs are just kinda stories, like they're linear in that way.

Harmonee: Were you part of any bands before hand?

Sarah: Nope.

Harmonee: First band ever?

Jen: Neither one of us has ever been in a band.

Sarah: I'm thinkin', for me, first and only band. That's pretty much how I feel.

Harmonee: You're having fun though, right?

Sarah: I have the best time! I think I'm a good drummer for Rizzo. I couldn't go be a drummer in like a "band" band. I know that, and it's

Harmonee

something” and you know it never really happens, but he was persistent. He was the only person that was persistent and actually serious and asked, “What is it going to take to do a record?” and finally we were like this, this and this and we worked it out and it happened.

Sarah: And we’re happy.

Jen: We’re glad that he was persistent, and he’s really cool.

Harmonee: This is your first album, right?

Both: Yeah.

Harmonee: Do you have any other favorite two piece bands?

Sarah: Love the White Stripes, the Names. I love the Need, and actually Kicking Giant, when we were very first starting out, was a big inspiration to me and then we played in Olympia after we had just been together maybe two or three months and Kay, from Kicking Giant, was there and came up to us and said something, you know, totally offhand, like, “Oh, good show” but to me I was like, “Oh my god!” [laughs] I was so excited.

Harmonee: How would you describe the overall sound of a two piece band versus a normal sized band?

Jen: It’s a different thing because you can’t hide behind a whole bunch of other - not that other bands are hiding - but you know you have to be really honest, and you’re really exposed and raw.

Sarah: Because there’s only one guitar, there’s only one drummer. If something sounds bad or is fucked up, you know who it is that’s fucking up and I think your songs have to stand alone and not rely on any kind of embellishment.

Jen: Your shit has to be tight.

Sarah: And that’s the one thing; if I ever do get stressed out, it’s playing live. I feel the pressure of not dropping (the beat, or drumstick), cuz if I drop there’s nothing to hide behind.

Jen: Which is kinda great, though.

Sarah: It makes me buck it up.

Jen: And being in a two piece band emotionally is an intense experience. Between Sarah and I, it’s different than being in a band where you have a bunch of people and two people can gang up on the other, or you have politics. It’s like a partnership. I love that about it.

Sarah: It’s fifty-fifty. Either we both decide to do it, or we don’t do it. Whatever it is, that’s that.

Harmonee: Have you ever had any major catastrophes on stage?

Sarah: I get worse stage fright now than I did when we started. Not so much now, but especially when we first started in the first two years. We still do it. Sometimes we’ll just fuck up and stop a song in the middle of a song. We’re real honest about it. We’re not trying to pull

anything over on the audience and I think they appreciate that. It’s like they’re in it with us and it’s cool. Yeah, if you call that a catastrophe - none of us have broken any bones on stage or anything like that. I’ve fallen on my ass...

Jen: Have you fallen down before?

Sarah: Yeah.

Jen: Sarah gets bloody.



Sarah: I bleed a lot. I tend to bleed.

Jen: Her hands bleed and sometimes I have technical things go wrong with my shitty gear.

Harmonee: But that’s part of the charm of going to see a live show.

Sarah: That’s part of the fun for me? What will be will be.

Harmonee: Well it’s a different thing every time you play. Instead of going to the same job everyday, you get to have some sort of inconsistency. What was the last show you went to that you weren’t playing at?

Sarah: Teenage Fanclub, Thursday night at the Troubadour, and it was so awesome! I’ve been waiting. I’ve never seen them. It was amazing. I had such a great time. Fuckin’ Troubadour sounded amazing and it was totally the believers. It was a room full of people ready to see the Fannies. It really did not disappoint.

Jen: I went to see the White Stripes and the Von-Bondies. It was so crowded that it was really hard to enjoy them cuz I’ve seen them in smaller rooms, but they were amazing.

Harmonee: What do you think gives you your special sound?

Sarah: The floor tom. My drums are magic. It’s me and Jen! Jen’s probably thought about it more than me, but I’ve never even thought about our sound. I’ve never thought, “Oh we should try to make this song sound more dot-dot-dot.”

Jen: It’s as simple as it’s the only thing we know how to play because we’re not really musicians. We just

Sarah: He was a crazy cat. But he was cool.

Jen: We used to make clothes for him and dress him up.

Sarah: Jen made him a leather Shaft outfit.

Jen: I had this long leather coat and I cut the bottom off it to make a short jacket so I had this big strip of leather.

Sarah: And I was at work

Jen: So I cut little arm holes in it and put it around him like a leather vest and I just left it on and then Sarah came home.

Sarah: And my cat’s running around in a leather outfit.

Jen: Then I found it; remember this?

Sarah: And you mailed it to me.

Jen: I was living in Seattle and I was going through old shit and I found the leather Mopar outfit. So I put it in an envelope with the return address “Naughty Kitty Fashions” and I sent it to Sarah in the mail.

Sarah: With no letter or anything.

Harmonee: Are there any outfits that you’ve worn onstage more than others?

Sarah: I certainly have my Rizzo uniform, basically.

Jen: Well, Sarah has to play in a skirt to allow freedom of movement and I have to play in pants because I just feel comfortable that way, and I have to like bend over and pick things up.

Sarah: I have to wear tennies. I’m usually wearing a skirt and some sort of tank or mussel. I need to be able to rock it.

Jen: Sometimes I dress up as myself five years ago.

Sarah: Me too. I bust out the knee socks.

Jen: But I realize it’s not even a time period of fashion, it’s an age of fashion where you’re at a certain age and you dress a certain way. All us nineteen, eighteen, twenty-year-old punk rock girls dress a certain way.

Harmonee: Well it’s right around the time where you discover music, you discover clothes and then they just kind of collate together, to go with your music. Any before-show rituals?

Sarah: [Short discussion on how dorky they would sound if they did in fact tell me what they did before their shows. They give in and tell me one]. We circle up and have a cigarette and just kind of shake our shit down.

Jen: Just kinda look at each other and focus before we go onstage, but the other one is too embarrassing. We can’t tell you.

Sarah: Next interview. [I’m gonna hold you to that girls!]

Harmonee: Do you have any favorite albums right now?

Jen: I’ve been listening to the Wax Wing record for a **RAZORCAKE** 19

The Twisted Balloon

I am a pale man with a bright red left elbow from driving too much as I tour. Learn from my hardship.

My Random Advice on (dis)Organizing DIY Tours

Not that I can picture the average person who reads this publication to be able to afford a cruise to the Bahamas, but I still maintain that a good road trip beats the hell out of any luxury vacation. Having talked to many people who tour and others who fly to beach resorts, I can definitely say that the tours are more inspiring.

Now, when I say tour, of course as a rule I refer to the idea of taking an act on the road, but also you can do a zine, film, book, art or whatever the heck you do tour. Or you could even be like my friend Mike Mullarkey (no really, that's his name) and just do an annual "visit-

you are. What do you like? What don't you like? What are your strength and weaknesses? I personally try and suck every little bit of action when I travel and rest when I get home, so a week of 4 hour-a-night sleep is fine by me. Other people can't deal with any stress and don't want to drive more than 4 hours a day. Do you want to get the word out to everyone you can, being interviewed, doing shows, etc. non-stop, or do a few shows and sightsee? How are you going to be without food/drugs (legal or not)/etc. that you like to have? Are you allergic to anything? Do you have any minor health concerns that might become major if unchecked?

well lest your only meal options be rest stop fast food.

Do you drink? Do you LIKE to drink? Will you be stuck in Connecticut where they stop selling at 8pm? In Massachusetts where

sure you know this before driving all day to a show you might not be able to get in.

Did you ask everyone you are staying with if they have cats that you are allergic to? Dogs that you

Rich Mackin



...don't depend on lots of money from gigs. Expect to lose money. Expect to lose money. Expect to lose money.

ing my friends" tour.

Me, personally, I do a spoken word act and thus do a spoken word tour, so I have a few thoughts specific to that (in that I don't need to tour with the members of my band, have equipment, worry about amplification, etc.). But take this all with a grain of salt anyway and apply it to your life if you can.

First off, how are you travelling? While I am a bike and public transportation type of guy, I endorse the car/van route of touring. I know a few who endorse the bus pass concept, especially when you can get one of those travel all you want for a flat fee deals, but your own vehicle gets you, your friends, and all your stuff to town and around it.

Think about who



PACKING

Let me start this by finishing the last section's thoughts...

Are you vegan? Vegetarian? Just plain food conscious? Maybe you should bring some snacks that keep

they don't sell on Sunday? Are you 19 and having alcohol will get you in trouble - stuff to consider.

Are you 21? Are you 18 and booked your band at a 21+ club? Often you can play at a show you couldn't otherwise get in, but make

are phobic of? Are you driving into hayfever country in pollen season?

Maybe it's a good idea to get a hat for that purple mohawk before driving through that rural south...

Is your blood sugar okay? The difference the effect of having a bottle of cranberry juice and some peanuts in your car can be amazing.

Other stuff to pack - lots of bottled water with sports caps. Or, what I usually do is drive with 2 sports bottles so I can hydrate and drive, with a gallon jug to refill them. I then refill everything to the max when I stop. I usually have a few Clif bars or whatever.

SUNBLOCK

I am a pale man with a bright red left elbow from driving too much as I tour. Learn from my hardship.

Baby Wipes - at least in the summer and south. My first road trip this was suggested. My travel partner just said "trust me." Driving

through Texas in June and being able to suddenly wipe your sweat off with a cool wipe was *nice*. I feel bad to endorse a disposable - so consider a wet washcloth in a ziploc kept out of the sun, but the point works either way.

I like to have a roll of toilet paper. I use it as tissue for my nose, as mini paper towels, etc. A TP roll is very space conscientious and you can fill the center with wadded up used tissue until you get to a stop.

Of course, you could also put garbage in a plastic shopping bag. It is good to have a few of these for such a purpose to hang somewhere. I have seen the floors of road trip cars that don't have these. They get scary.

Where are you going? Some people I know get excited about playing the big cities. Personally, the idea of driving in New York City is horrible, and I only play NYC because my mom lives close enough that I can park at her house and take a train in, but you can see how that complicates things. If you are a fledgling act or artist, consider how people in the big cities live in big cities and have stuff to do - if you are travelling more than touring, this works for you. If you are more concerned with how many people come to see you and your stuff, this works against you. I read at ABC No Rio in NYC and got maybe a third of the crowd I got at an all ages punk show in Duxbury, Mass. Because people in NYC can see all sorts of cool stuff, but kids in Duxbury are desperate for entertainment. Likewise, these kids were more grateful, receptive, and had more money to buy merch (sad but relevant point to make).

Who are you staying with? My friend Duncan has this seemingly endless network of cousins so that he can drive less than a half-hour from anywhere and have a place to stay. I have been touring (learning lessons the hard way) long enough that I have accumulated a network of friends of friends everywhere, supplemented by living in a college town that everyone moves away from after a few years, spreading about the country. It seems roughly half my gigs are places I want to perform matched with what lodging I can get and the other half are based on places that people I want to stay with are and I get shows based on proximity. This lets me visit friends and have fun with them, but I also feel like I am getting the most of the tour experience.

As a rule, I find it is better to stay with someone you know well enough to at least have heard their band's record, read their zine, or talked or emailed a few times. Ideally, you can stay with friends

who are understanding and sympathetic of your situation, feed you and clean up after your mess, but other than that, you want to stay with someone who will make your trip to wherever more than another stop. Ask them to take you to the restaurant that embodies the city - the places only that town has.

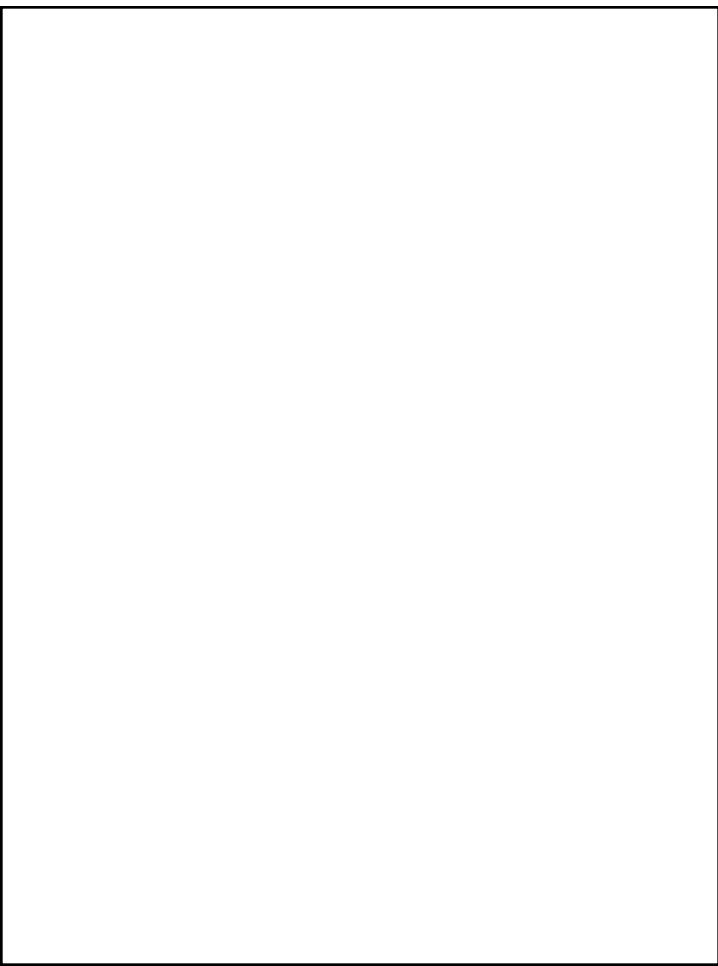
And here is a weird, but very real life factor - where *exactly* are you sleeping? Bring a sleeping bag. I will tell you that right now. I have slept in houses that were dirtier than outside and a layer of protection between the filth and me was welcome. But, well, my friend James was in a band, and every night on tour he would send the best looking member into the crowd to hook up with a girl so that the band could come along and sleep in the living room while they hooked up in her bed. Do I endorse this? No.

Disease, insane stalking, emotional issues, etc. come up, and sometimes it comes down to the fact that sleeping in a bed with a warm soft body beats alone on the floor. Alone on the floor beats alone in a motel bed you paid too much for. Personally, I even prefer the honesty of being on a floor and waking up and knowing that I am on tour and it is time to get up and rock and see America. It's better than the disillusionment of "home" that a bed in a motel strives for and fails.

When I started writing this, I originally thought about starting with the advice to tour when single or in an open or polyamorous relationship. Not so much because of all the sex (which is its own issue), but because of sleeping arrangements. Sex or not, I would rather cuddle with a female friend in her bed, given a choice. Of course, if you have a significant other back home, this might be an issue. Because even non-sexually cuddling means you spent 8 hours rubbing against someone.

Also, this is a case when touring with people effects things. I was once very single and touring with a very coupled guy and let me just say the difference between my liberated sexuality and his forced celibacy for the tour caused some frustration with one another.

Of course, touring with others is a big thing to think about. If you are in a band, you need to tour with those band members. If you are a solo act, I advise another solo act or two just to have someone to drive with and keep you company, especially if there are long drives. Sometimes a friend with free time will want to come and help for a trip (and why be a tourist when you can be on the guest list for a show every night?)



How are you paying? I have a decent job, so touring is paid vacation for me. I can afford to make a point to pay the extra money here or there for beer or better food, but that doesn't mean that a loaf of bread and jar of peanut butter hasn't traveled with me, saving me from having to shell out ten bucks for a mediocre, unhealthy meal at a rest stop when it came down to it. That doesn't mean I drink water all day and never buy soft drinks (Well, that isn't just a money issue... also a health and corporate thing). But anyway, touring costs money. Unless you are guaranteed money (Hahaha for most people reading this - especially if you are taking my advice on touring without an act) at a gig, don't depend on lots of money from gigs. Expect to lose money. Expect to lose money. Expect to lose money.

Now, since you are expecting to lose money, it does become crucial to have a good time. If you tour and lose money and workworkwork, you get burnt out. If you had fun, hell, you were on vacation when you were on tour. Plan down time. Watch sunsets; see what the locals do. I saw an amazing sculpture installation in Hamtramck, MI, that I would have never thought to see were I not on tour and a "fan" showed me...

BUT if you tour, you need stuff to sell. Two reasons. People will buy stuff and then you have more money. Standard stuff - shirts, CDs, buttons, yes - but I have even seen a band that has 2 guys in the back of the van doing little art mirrors while the other 2 drive and navigate - cures boredom and they had a cool thing to sell at shows and made way more money that way.

Oh, and you probably should do some stuff like call clubs and bookie groups and stuff. You know that. But just remember that fun is fun, and all fun is not in one genre. Find your niche and all, but consider weirder venues. Does a show need to be 4 punk bands when it can be a punk band, a goofy band, a guy playing accordion, a film and a play? (Actual event) Do shows need to be in clubs (or halls) when they can be in theatres, parking lots, bowling alleys?

Have fun, happy couch surfing.

-Rich Mackin



Rich has a new book coming out on September 30, 2001. It's called *Dear Mr. Mackin...* It's 200 pages long and it's available for \$10 ppd. from Gorsky Press, PO Box 320504, Cocoa Beach, FL 32932.

Rich Mackin



I'm willing to bet that these geniuses are the same people who believe that honking at a girl while driving instantly guarantees that she's gonna fuck them silly.

Punk Rock, Radio and the Greatest Comp Series I've Heard in Years

Back when I was a kid, finding punk rock on the radio was often a daunting task. Save for Rodney on the ROQ, the only thing remotely related to punk that one could find on mainstream radio was Joan Jett's "I Love Rock'n'Roll," AC/DC's "Dirty Deeds" and Devo's "Whip It," all of which were played at intervals of what seemed like every 15 minutes between such inspiring acts as Reo Speedwagon and the group responsible for "The Curly Shuffle." More succinctly, punk on the radio was about as rare as a sober day for Robert Downey, Jr.

Late one Saturday night, my

brother and I were up late, bored as hell and unable to leave the house. To combat being stir crazy, we turned on the radio and began flipping the dial from end to end in an attempt to find ANYTHING worthy of our attention. Suddenly, out of the patterns of static, came the Flesh Eaters' "Radio Dies Screaming" like an oasis in the middle of the most desolate desert imaginable. Figuring it must be some sort of fluke sure to result in the firing of some inattentive DJ, we listened on, waiting for it to disappear just as quickly as it had been found.

It didn't. Well, at least not for five hours, anyway. Although we didn't know it at the time, we had inadvertently stumbled upon "12

O'clock Rock," a show that actually featured underground music as the rule rather than the exception. From that night forward, we listened religiously to the show every Saturday night, taping each week's installment and taking the tapes to school so that we'd have something to listen to that had nothing to do with bands like Journey. Soon we were up to our eyeballs in great music from bands like the Mentally Ill, Die Kreuzen, B-People, Meatmen, Necros, Youth Gone Mad, the Stingers, Minor Threat, Alter Boys, Flipper, the Weasels, the Avengers, the Bags, the Mutants, and a whole host of others that even Rodney rarely played. We had stacks of tapes packed with all sorts of wild sounds and styles from groups that often faded back into obscurity as quickly as they made their marks. We were stoked.

What does all this misty-eyed reminiscing have to do with the here and now, you ask? Well, a few weeks ago, while out trading in horrible CDs for better ones, I stumbled upon a new series of punk rock rarities compilations called Hyped to Death (hereafter referred to as H2D). Put together by the guy who used to run Throbbing Lobster Records back in the '80s, H2D is a semi-bootleg series of CDs broken down into sub-series covering different aspects of the '70s and '80s underground, from North American punk (Hyped to Death) and DIY recordings (Homework) to US power-pop (Teenline) to UK punk (Bad Teeth) and DIY ventures (Messthetics).

The story behind the comps goes roughly like this: Mr. H2D was selling punk records to pay his way through seminary school. To entice potential buyers, he began recording "sampler" cassettes to give them a taste of what was for sale. One day he seized upon an even better idea: why not just put the tapes onto disc and sell those instead? Thus, H2D was born.

The compilation I picked up while out trading was the second volume of the Hyped to Death sub-series. When I got home and plopped it in the player, I was so

bowled over by what was coming out of my speakers that I vowed to hunt down whoever was responsible and force him to take every penny I could scrape together in exchange for as many discs as I could get. Lucky for me, the web address on the back of the disc was real and, after a couple of exchanged emails, the remaining nine discs in the sub-series were mine.

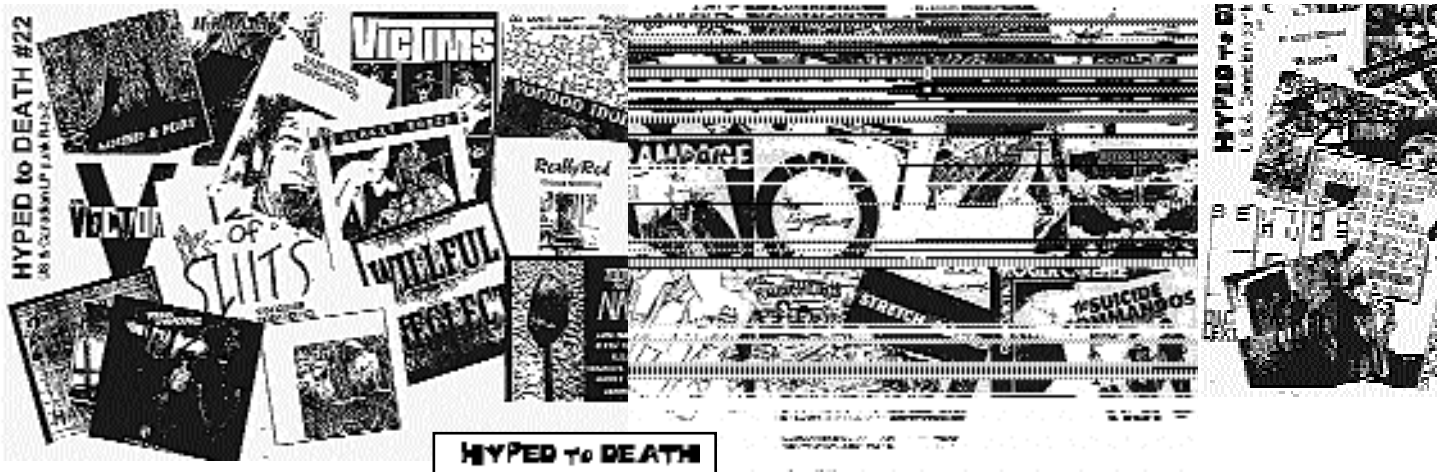
While there are obvious similarities between H2D and more celebrated rare punk series like Bloodstains and Killed By Death, mostly in the fact that they cover the same time period and basic genre, there are enough differences to set them apart. First, the compiling of tracks on all these discs is the work of one person, which means that H2D is blessed with a more consistent sense of purpose and focus, something that was quickly lost after the fourth installment of Killed By Death. Second, H2D is solely on CD, and the compiler has gone to great lengths to ensure that the sound quality of each track is the best it can possibly be. As previously mentioned, the series are semi-bootlegs, meaning that the person responsible is accessible, can be contacted by featured bands and he will make an effort to either compensate them or take them off of future pressings if they are not happy with their inclusion.

And then there's the music itself, the primary reason why anyone would bother picking of one of the discs in the first place. While most of the other rarities series are content to focus on one particular geographic area or pigeonhole and strip-mine it 'til there's virtually nothing of worth left, H2D is considerably broader in scope and sound. Picking up any random disc in the series, the listener will hear some of the same groups featured on other comps, like Snuky Tate, S'nots, Ambient Noise, VKTMS, and Bobby Soxx. He will also hear a ton of other bands whose sounds don't fit so easily into that exhaustively exploited niche. He will hear hardcore and proto-hardcore bands like Artistic Decline, Roach Motel,

JIMMY ALVARADO



Jairo moved in for the kill, delivering the coup de grace to the hapless piñata and then brutally stabbing it over and over and over once it was down.



Saigon and Social Unrest; boogie punk from Ricky Rivet's legion of post-Dolls endeavors; hard-driving post-new wave art damage from bands like Schematix, and oodles of others that either criss-cross over each of these sub-genres or eschew the whole thing and create their own. The tracks are very rarely sub-par and are sequenced in such a way that one track flows naturally to the next, even when they have nothing musically in common. The effect achieved is very much like both those anarchic radio shows that I listened to way back when and that most sacred of gifts given by one music lover to another, the holy "mix tape."

This is not to say that there isn't the occasional clunker to be found here. There are. The most glaring of these being the inclusion of former DOA member Randy Rampage's take on "Cheap Tragedies," a song done to greater effect by the Avengers on the first "Rat Music for Rat People" compilation. The inclusion of the old nazi-core band White Pride's song "Illegal Immigrants" will also undoubtedly bunch up the underwear of more than a few people, although as a Mexican with a very cynical sense of humor, I have to admit that I actually found that what they did to the chorus of the standard "Cielito Lindo" was worth a laugh. But the quality tracks far outweigh the lousy one by a margin of, say, 25 to 1 (which is no small feat when one considers that there are 311 tracks spread over the 10 discs in the series), long lost gems from the likes of Subterfuge, RAF, Rave, Ronnie and the Rayguns, a bevy of bands flying under the Stains moniker (although the one from East LA is annoyingly absent), Scientific Americans, Detention (live!) Sector Four, DOA, Screaming Sneakers, Dishrags, Young Canadians, Youth Brigade, the Alleycats, the Eyes, GG Allin, Reagan Youth, Toxic Reasons and Random Killing, to name a very

few.

The breakdown of what's covered on each disc is as follows. Please note that a.) for some reason, the series started with the letter "R" and is working its way through the alphabet back to where it began, and b.) the "missing" numbers in the series are actually installments in other series:

H2D #1 - US/Canadian Punk 45s from the letter "R;" #2 - US/Canadian Punk 45s Sa to So: 1977-1985; #11 - US/Canadian Punk 45s Sp to Te: 1976-1987; #12 - US/Canadian Punk 45s Th to U: 1977-1984; #21 - US/Canadian Punk LP tracks R to Z; #22 - US/Canadian Punk LP tracks R to Z; #31 - Northeast and Midwest Punk 45s V to Z; #32 - Southern and West Coast Punk 45s V to Z; #41 - Northeast and Midwest Punk 45s A & B; and #42 - Western and Southern Punk 45s A & B.

The series is obviously a work in progress. Even if he stops here, though, the creator of this series has already done a great service, both by giving back a very large chunk of our collective history and serving us with a very potent reminder that good punk rock defies all but the broadest categorization. In his world, there are no borders between hardcore, 77, old school, death rock, art damage or any other pigeonhole; it's all punk, whether it's the greatest song yet written or the worst tune ever committed to vinyl. As for me, I'm starting to save up to buy the other series one by one. I suggest you all do the same. For more information about this and all the other series available from Hyped to Death, visit the website at:

<www.hyped2death.com>
Tell em' Razorcake sent you.

I Forgot to Add Them! Don't Beat Me Up!

I got a call from Shane White a few days ago about The East LA punk article I wrote last issue, and

although he was impressed with the article, he was a little miffed that I didn't mention the band he and I were in together, the Looters. To be honest, I figured Carl Bellows had flogged the subject to death back in the first issue of *Pure Filth*. In retrospect, though, I should have included the Looters as well, so you can all do me a favor: take out your copies of last issue, open them up to the East LA article, clip out the paragraph that immediately follows this one and tape it in under the "L" section of the "bands" subheading. Thanks.

The Looters - Comprised of 2/3 of the Dog's Breakfast and 2/3 of Butt Acne, the Looters dedicated themselves to the glorification of pointless violence, Manson and hallucinogenic substances. The "Flying Alvarado Brothers" (as once they were referred to in an issue of *Ink Disease*), Jimmy and John, supplied the guitars and vocals, respectively, while Shane and Jason White used their bass and drum talents to give the music the necessary propulsion. Although live performances were extremely rare, all were awash in blood and virulence, the three most memorable being the inaugural "Joe's Pit" gig (which ended after the windows were all kicked out), the Culver City Mason's Lodge fiasco (highlighted by John's arrest before the band hit the stage for trying to sneak beer in and a riot closing the show one band later), and what's been referred to over the years as "the New Year's gig" (where a certain mentally unstable fan broke a bottle, danced around waving the shards around, got socked in the face by a skinhead for his efforts and spent the rest of the night telling anyone who would listen that he saw Jesus in a lightning bolt. He was NOT on drugs, mind you). After approximately one year of wanton mayhem, Jason quit and was replaced by Tony Quan, a graffiti artist, DJ, and one hell of a drummer. Sadly, Shane's interest in

the band waned and efforts to keep it going were for naught. The band called it a day in late 1986. As for their recorded output, the Looters appeared on the "Flex Your Mom" comp and were slated to appear on the aborted "Flex Your Burrito" comp as well. Numerous demos of varying quality and a soundboard recording of the Mason's Lodge gig were recorded, but most of them (including the soundboard) have been lost over the years.

Blah Blah Blah

I would like to ask for a moment of silence for the piñata senselessly assassinated by one Todd Taylor and Jairo Martin Perez at a recent birthday barbecue held at the Alvarado/Perez-Villalta compound. After Todd stunned it with some savage blows delivered jedi knight-style, Jairo moved in for the kill, delivering the coup de grace to the hapless piñata and then brutally stabbing it over and over and over once it was down. All at the pachanga were shocked at this vulgar display of brute force. You two should be ashamed of yourselves.

Why is it that no matter which one you go to, zoos are up to their eyeballs with morons who ignore the signs to keep their big yaps shut and instead yell at the top of their lungs to get the animals' attention. I'm willing to bet that these geniuses are the same people who believe that honking at a girl while driving instantly guarantees that she's gonna fuck them silly.

Is emo still the "in thing" or did all those sissies finally pack up their Fugazi backpacks and official Linus Van Pelt Security Blankets (with thumb-sucking slobber guards) and take a collective flying fuck?

Tune in next issue when the topic up for discussion will be whether the holes in his hands and feet create buoyancy issues for Jesus Christ.

Dale's Against It,
-Jimmy

JIMMY ALVARADO



The show was called..... "FAGGOT BUNNY DADDY." Do you believe in fate?

The Dinghole Reports

By the Rhythm Chicken
(commentary by Francis
Funyuns)
[edited by Dr. Sicnarf]

(Hey Chicken....wake up.....c'mon!
Up-n-at'm! - F.F.)

MMMMMMMMMMMMMM-
NGH.....Ooooooongh. Ugh!
Which one of you dinglickers shit
in my mouth?

[A-ha, are we a little hung over
today, Mr.. Chicken? - Dr. S.]

MMMMMMMMMMMMMM-
NGH.....What day is it?

(It's Monday morning. Cripes,
Chicken! Your place smells like a
thousand rotten livers! - F.F.)

MMMMMMMMMMMMMM-
NGH.....Wake me in 3 hours.

— 4 hours and 7 coffees later —

All right, I'm starting to feel human
again..... well, for a chicken.
Another Wisconsin summer
Monday. Every weekend there's a
festival. Every festival is an end-
less, gluttonous, and somewhat
medieval feast of beer and
bratwurst. For 48 hours the public
drunkenness ordinance is com-
pletely ignored or laughed at. And
more often than not, there's a
parade, which brings us to today's
topic:

10 Reasons Why Parades are
Cooler to Play than Punk Shows!

#1) You have a captive audience of
hundreds/thousands who normally
would never find themselves in or
near a punk show. I mean how
shocking or revolutionary is a punk
band when they're playing punk
rock in a punk club to a bunch of
punks who are expecting them to
play punk?

#2) The audience can't complain
about a high ticket price/cover
charge. Last time I checked parades
are free.

#3) Audience members don't spit at
you or threaten you with physical
harm..... or at least not as much.

#4) No squabbles over drink tick-
ets. THERE'S BEER EVERY-
WHERE! Which brings us to...

#5) Large percentage of the audi-
ence is drinking and/or drunk (well,
in Wisconsin, anyway). Which
brings us to...

#6) Audience will often toss you
some of THEIR beer!

#7) Your performance appears far
more interesting when sandwiched
between the Shriner go-kart
brigade and a high school marching
band.

#8) Punk shows usually end up
with all audience and band mem-
bers alike being kicked out at close.
Parades usually end up at the festi-
val grounds in the early afternoon
with countless hours of beer and
bratwurst consumption to follow.
Sometimes they even end with
Santa Claus!

#9) Parades include lots and lots of
candy tossing and eating!

#10) Punk shows don't have a
Grand Marshall.

Ten! Ten beautiful reasons why
parades are cooler to play than
punk shows! AH - AH - AH - AAH!

— lightning and thunder —

(Cripes, Chicken! Crack open a
Pabst and get on with it! - F.F.)

Pssst! gulp, gulp, gulp,
gulp...(smack) Aaaaaah!

Dinghole Report #10: Ruckus in the Frolics

(Rhythm Chicken sighting #197)
Every summer, the south side of
Milwaukee flexes their collective
liver with a weekend festival called
the South Shore Frolics. To my
knowledge, there is no real basis
for this celebration aside from mass

consumption of beer and brats.
Here, have a beer. Let's flip off the
northside! 3 days of beer, brats,
fireworks, hangovers, and one
hour-long parade! This was the 2nd
year that Bill and Dan of Rushmor
Records were gracious enough to
sponsor the Rhythm Chicken's
float, always a risky business
move. They provided me with one
big pickup truck, a driver, a cooler
of Pabst, and four 15-year-old girls
in bunny ears to toss the candy.....
Rush-MOR! Rush-MOR! Rush-
MOR! It was totally sunny and
about 85 degrees. The parade lasted
about one hour. I lost about 10
pounds in sweat. The audience of
thousands remembered the Chicken
from last year's parade and yelled
even louder, "Go Rhythm Chicken!
Yaaaay!" Candy and beers were
flying hither and yon. When the
parade brought me past the
Rushmor storefront, the sidewalk
full of Rushmor rock cretins
became most untame. It was nearly
a moshpit situation, folks..... FOR
A PARADE! The Chicken was
pelted with numerous handfuls of
candy as he taunted the near riotous
crowd. It was an all American star-
spangled ruckus in red, white, and
blue. Later down the parade route,
I heard one little boy yell out, "You
stink, Mr. Bunny!" Fuck yeah! I
never felt more alive! The parade
ended down at the Lake Michigan
shoreline where the Pabst flowed
like wine, the brats flowed like
Pabst, and we all lived happily ever
after.

(Hey, RC. I thought chickens ate
carrits, not pork. - F.F.)

[That's odd. I thought chickens ate
Trixx. Maybe Maddy could settle
this issue. - Dr. S.]

I eat WHAT I want WHEN I want!
Bring on the hens!

Dinghole Report #11: Pulaski Polka Chicken

(Rhythm Chicken sighting #200!)
Every summer in late July, the
small town of Pulaski, WI holds the
Midwest's largest polka music festi-
val, Pulaski Polka Days. It's a ver-

itable "Woodstock of Polka." 3
days of nonstop polka action. Every
tavern has a live polka band, every
song about drinking and/or being a
dopey white polish yahoo. The
main street is filled with festival
goers polka dancing, swilling, and
causing a well-rounded ethnic old-
world ruckus! Roll out the friggin'
barrel! For a tiny town, Pulaski has
some of the best old-man bars I've
ever seen. The Youth Brigade could
RETIRE here! Joe's Place!
Wicka's! Zielenski's Ballroom!
PARTY MARTY'S POLISH
PALACE! On Sunday at noon there
is, of course, the parade. The main
difference between the Pulaski
parade and Milwaukee's south side
parade is about 300 rolling farm
tools! Tractors! Combines! Manure
spreaders! Jeezers, eh! Two-thirds
of the parade was under direct con-
trol of John Deere. This may sound
like stiff competition for a Rhythm
Chicken, but I scratched on. At high
noon the temperature was 97
degrees and the humidity at 99%.
Perfect.....ugh. My sweat-drenched
wings kept those riotous ruckus
rhythms a'rockin'. Half of Pulaski
clapped and yelled. Half of Pulaski
stood dumbfounded in their
Oshkosh B'Gosh overalls scratch-
ing their heads wondering exactly
who or what had invaded their
wholesome little parade. "Ethyl,
now what kind of chicken is
THAT? Must be some new-fangled
crossbreed of sorts." Local polka
radio station WOWN was broad-
casting live coverage of the parade.
Their DJ ran out into the parade
with a microphone and asked, "So
could you please explain what the
Rhythm Chicken is," and held the
mic up to the Chicken. He was
answered with total reckless aban-
don rhythm chaos and backed away
in bewilderment. Overall, the
parade was a hoot! I'm just thank-
ful that I was in front of the horses
and not behind. Cluck cluck oom-
pa-pa!

(Well, didn't they have some type
of security to keep unwholesome
freaks like you from crashing their
parade? - F.F.)



It was an all American star-spangled ruckus in red, white, and blue. Later down the parade route, I heard one little boy yell out, "You stink, Mr. Bunny!" Fuck yeah! I never felt more alive!

This is PULASKI! An unmanned one-wheel oxcart could get into this parade!

[How about Gary Coleman or Big Bird? - Dr. S.]

NEVER! Pulaskians have SOME decency! Get lost, Sicnarf.

Dinghole Report #12: Wrigley Field and Ruckus Pride
(Rhythm Chicken sightings #193 through #196)

I woke up this Sunday morning in Krakow, WI and quickly drove 5 hours south to Chicago. I had to meet my two Belgian friends who drove from New York and Cleveland to see Fugazi with Shellac at the Congress Theatre and also assist with a Chicken tour of the windy city. We met at the home of Mike Finch (drum genius behind Chitown's amazing duo, Herc). Mike gathered about 8 ruckus enthusiasts as a roadie posse. Everyone grabbed a piece of the chickenkit and we hiked 4 blocks down to the Addison and Clark intersection directly in front of Wrigley Field. The set was quickly assembled and the Chicken let loose. Out came the cameras! On went the ruckus! Out came the cops! The sonic Chicken assault only lasted about 60 seconds 'till an officer told me to "get that *#\$! drumset outta here and never be seen here ever again, got it?" Just then I heard the crowd inside Wrigley Field all singing "LET'S GO OUT TO THE BALLGAME!" Wow! The 7th inning stretch! What



luck! It wasn't till I saw the photos later that I noticed the marquee reading "7th inning, Cubs 3, Brewers 4." Ha! The buncha sore losers can't handle a taunting chicken drumming in front of their precious ballpark. While tearing down Mike said, "Well, we could hit a gay pride parade 3 blocks up Addison." My chicken ears perked up. "A parade? TALLY-HO!" There were thousands of spectators in rainbow get-ups, pink triangles, tight black leather and chains, little sailor outfits, and other free-thinking ensembles. This was absolutely perfect. The handy Chicago Chicken Posse helped me move the traveling Chicken circus to 3 different spots along the parade route. I would set up with my back to the parade and try to compete with each float's pounding bass system. Some parade fans loved it, danced, and clapped. Many of them found the poultry serenade to be far too abrasive and told me to "just quit it!" Just then a float went by with a big rainbow, a thumping bass beat, and 8 or 10 scantily clad male dancers. One was wearing nothing but a speed-o and bunny ears while holding up a large sign advertising a stage performance in town. The show was called..... "FAGGOT BUNNY DADDY." Do you believe in fate? Later we enjoyed burritos and Old Style on Mike's back porch under the subway, then it was off to the concert. During Shellac's set, I enjoyed watching Todd Trayner's absolute sleestak attack on the skins. If only his ears were longer. Afterwards, we zipped up to Milwaukee for a good full hour at the Cactus Club before last call. The brews were earned and well-deserved. Let there be ruckus.....OH YEAH!

Rhythm Chicken

(So, what were you trying to say by playing at a gay pride parade? -F.F.)

Nothing. I'm asexual.

[We're doomed! Chickens reproduce like RABBITS! - Dr. S.]

Yeah, well I haven't swam upstream yet. As always, all profane cluckings welcome at rhythm-chicken@hotmail.com. Nest time I'll drop the bomb and clue you in on the BIG SELLOUT!" Rhythm Chicken sells his soul to Miller Brewing Company!"

(NO! - F.F.)

[NO! - Dr. S.]

-Rhythm Chicken



Sean Carswell

A Monkey to Ride the Dog



...now he was throwing-cans-at-cars drunk and trying to maintain...

Fifteen Bucks and a Cookie

Mark tossed his can onto the pile of empties in the corner of the porch. The can hit the top of the pile, which was up by the porch railing, and tumbled midway down to where the empty beer cans plateaued on the way to the summit. This caused a few cockroaches to skitter out of their caves.

I watched the cockroaches run between the planks and under the porch. "Your roommate is gonna yell at you again," I said.

Mark's roommate hated the pile of beer cans in the corner of the porch. Her point was that the pile was a breeding ground for roaches and we should clean up after ourselves. Mark didn't deny the roaches, but his point was that a homeless guy came by the porch once a week and cleaned up the cans for us and sold them to the recycling plant. Since the homeless guy was actually making money off the cans, it should be his job to pick them up and bag them. And not that anyone asked, but my point was that, as long as Mark's roommate yelled at Mark and not me, the pile of cans wasn't my business. I finished my beer and tossed my can on the pile. More roaches skittered.

"I'm kind of drunk," Mark said.

"Yeah, me too," I said.

"It's kind of early to be this drunk."

I looked at my watch. It was four-thirty in the afternoon. I nodded my head.

"You want another beer?" Mark asked.

"If you don't mind."

Mark walked past me into my side of the duplex to grab the beer in my refrigerator. I sat on the porch, watching traffic roll past, noticing the tight faced people in too expensive cars, waiting for my beer, keeping my eye open for Mark's roommate or more cockroaches.

When Mark came back with the beer, he said, "You know, all we do is sit on this porch and drink beer. You know that, don't you?"

I opened my beer and drank some. While sitting on the porch.

"Other people live full lives. They finish college and get up in the morning and go to work and earn a living and raise a family and we sit here and drink."

"Yeah," I said, feeling like, if those were the two choices – getting up in the morning, going to work, earning a living and raising a family or drinking on the porch – I was making the right one.

"Other guys go out and find girls and get laid and we sit here and drink."

"Yeah," I said, feeling like, if *those* were the two choices – finding girls and getting laid or sitting on the porch drinking – I was

making the wrong one.

"Other people paint paintings or start bands or read books and we just sit here and drink."

"I read books," I said.

Mark ignored me. "Other people got up and did shit today and we sat here and didn't do shit."

Actually, we had done shit that morning. I'd been sitting out on the porch reading when Mark had asked me to go to the plasma clinic with him. He was broke and wanted to make the quick fifteen bucks that selling plasma provides. He wanted me to go with him so that he'd have someone to talk to while he sat in the clinic waiting for the machine to separate the plasma from his blood, then for the nurse to put the blood back in his body. I wasn't broke. I'd worked for a month at the beginning of the summer digging footers and raking concrete for a construction crew. The hourly wage had been small, but I'd managed to get in enough hours to make enough money to quit working for a while and sit on the porch and drink until the weather cooled off a bit. So I didn't need the quick fifteen bucks, but I empathized with Mark. I knew how it blew to sit in the clinic, stuck in a chair with a needle dangling out of your arm, a quart of your body's blood in another room and a crackhead jabbering in your ear. I also knew that I'd get a free cookie when I was all done giving plasma, so I'd decided to go with him. I thought of all of this and said, "We did shit. We gave blood."

"I'm talking about living a sedentary life and you're giving me semantics," Mark said.

I couldn't argue with that, so I just changed the subject. I talked about a band who was supposed to play that night. Mark talked about girls he'd had crushes on in high school. We slowed the pace of our drinking, but we kept drinking. The pile of cans gradually got higher. One by one.

At around eight o'clock, a couple of friends of mine stopped by. One of my friends, Pete, said, "You get any phone calls today, Sean?"

I had not gotten any phone calls that day. Pete knew this. Pete's point was that my phone service had been disconnected. He was upset about this.

My point was that I hadn't paid my phone bill, so I had no right to be upset about my phone being disconnected. I recognized the cause and effect situation there.

Pete remained unconvinced. He went on bitching about my phone being cut off and other assorted things until he finally said, "Are you gonna come with us to check out this band tonight?"

I downed the rest of my beer, tossed the empty onto the pile, and said, "Yes I am."

"Fine," Mark said. "Why don't all you fuckers

leave me here to drink alone."

Mark was pissed off because the show was in a bar. Only people of legal drinking age were allowed in. Mark wasn't of legal drinking age. He didn't have a fake ID. Mark's point was that, when people start drinking together, they should stick together and not leave the guy without a fake ID drunk and alone while the rest of the people go off to a show. My point was that I'd given blood with Mark earlier, and that was enough. Now I had money and was going to go see some bands play. So Pete and our other friend and I went to the show.

But this isn't a story about going to a show. This is Mark's story.

Mark hung out on the porch alone. I'd left my front door unlocked so that he could still get at the beer in my refrigerator. He turned on my stereo and listened to an album and drank a beer. Traffic rolled past, but it was now dark. He couldn't see the tight faces of commuters. The commuters were all home. Mark drank his beer and cursed me and Pete and the other guy. Then, he sang along with the song. Then, he walked up to the pile of beer cans, thought briefly about picking the cans up, then decided it would be better to just pick up one can, crush it, and throw it at a car. When he missed the car, he tried it again with another can. Then another.

When there were a half dozen smashed beer cans in the road in front of his porch, Mark gave up and sat back down. At this point, he realized that *his* phone was still working. Mark went into his side of the duplex. He called every friend he could think of to try to talk one of them into coming over to the porch to drink with him, but it was summer time in a college town. Very few of Mark's friends were around, and those who were didn't feel like sitting on the porch and drinking. Mark finished his beer, crushed the can, and chucked it onto the street. It landed right in front of a car. The car swerved over to the curb and stopped.

Mark contemplated running into his house and hiding from the driver of the car. Then, he noticed that my front door was still open. The light was still on in my living room. Mark realized that, if he ran, the driver of the car would walk into my house looking to find the guy who threw the can. The driver of the car may get angry and do some damage. So Mark decided to hide in the corner of the porch and see who came out of the car.

He heard someone walk up the steps to the porch. Then, he heard two more pairs of footsteps. Mark crept over to the railing, ready to jump off the porch and split, if need be. The footsteps came closer. The first person stepped on to the porch. In the light, Mark recognized the guy

as my friend Jason. Still, Jason hadn't walked far enough into the light for Mark to recognize whether it was an angry Jason or a ready-to-drink Jason. Next on the porch was short, thin, dark-haired girl. She couldn't have been more than eighteen and still wore braces. And next came a much more grown-up looking girl with red hair and long legs. There was enough light then for Mark to realize that it was ready-to-drink, didn't-care-about-the-beer-can-thrown-at-his-car Jason and his two friends.

Mark stepped out of the shadows and said, "Hey there."

The two girls looked startled. Jason was startled, too, but he tried not to show it. He said, "Hey, is Sean around?"

Mark told him no, that I'd gone to a show.

"Damn," Jason said. "I was hoping to hang out on the porch and drink some beer."

Mark looked at the red haired girl and smiled. She smiled back. Mark looked at his feet, but he still had enough confidence to say, "Well, the porch is still here and there's beer in Sean's refrigerator. You're welcome to hang out."

Jason and his two friends decided to do just that. Jason introduced the two girls as Beth and Sandy. Mark wasn't paying close enough attention to notice which name went with which girl, and he forgot both of their names instantly, anyway. He'd been steadily drinking for the past five hours. He'd donated plasma that day. He hadn't eaten any dinner, and now he was throwing-

cans-at-cars drunk and trying to maintain because he was suddenly floating through ether like Charlie Brown at the school dance after everyone had coupled up and all hope seemed lost until the little red-haired girl swept him off his feet. All right, Mark told himself, the little red-haired girl is all grown up. I have to deal with this right now or I'm gonna spend my life kicking at footballs that some bitch is just gonna swipe away from me at the last second.

So Mark maintained. He got all three of his guests beer. He brought an extra chair out from his living room. The dark haired girl with the braces sat on the extra chair. Jason went into my house and found a cassette and played it. Mark sat next to the red-haired girl and tried to say something but couldn't think of anything to say. He finally decided to just open his mouth and let any words that wanted to come out come out. So he did. He opened his mouth and found himself saying, "I sold plasma today. They gave me fifteen bucks and a cookie."

Mark heard himself and wanted to slap himself on the forehead and scold himself for being so stupid. Luckily, though, he wasn't stupid enough to go ahead and slap himself on the forehead and scold himself, so he just smiled.

The dark haired girl rolled her eyes and looked away.

The red-haired girl turned to face Mark and said, "Oh really. What kind of cookie?"

Mark kept smiling, happy that the red-haired girl would at least humor him, but not happy enough to diminish his self-loathing. "Just a sugar cookie," he said. "It sucked."

"That's too bad," the red-haired girl said. She kept looking at Mark. Mark kept smiling. He figured it was best just to smile.

"You ever notice that the plasma clinic is right across the street from the Greyhound station?" Jason asked. "You ever wonder about that?"

"I don't wonder about that," Mark said. "It makes perfect sense to me. There's always one or two guys in there selling plasma to pick up a couple of extra bucks while they're waiting out their Greyhound layover."

"Exactly," Jason said. "It all has to do with what I like to call the 'scavenger class.' See, when Keirkegaard discussed the conflicts of master/slave relationships in respect to class divisions..."

Mark was suddenly lost. He hadn't read

alone. He drank his beer and darted his eyes. He wished the three of them would just leave. Then, he remembered that he'd been bitching about never doing anything like finding girls, etc., and decided that he had to do something. The rolling-eyes girl was talking about a professor and what he'd said in one of her classes. When she paused, Mark said, "I take classes."

The rolling-eyes girl rolled her eyes. Mark's self-loathing raised itself to another level. The red-haired girl humored Mark. "Really?" she said. "What classes are you taking this summer?"

"Bowling," Mark said, and immediately he wished he'd lied - said political science or organic chemistry or something. The red-haired girl laughed. Mark knew he was sinking and decided to swim for a raft. "We should go for a walk," Mark said.

The two girls liked the idea. So did Jason. Mark suggested that they bring beer. The walk suddenly sounded even cooler. Jason and Mark

went back to my bedroom, grabbed my backpack, dumped everything in it out on my bed, then filled it up with beer. As they were doing this, Jason said, "You know, Mark, Sandy doesn't have a boyfriend."

"Really?" Mark said, trying to figure out which of the two girls was Sandy. "Does that mean that uh, uh, the uh..."

"Beth?"

"Yeah, Beth is your girlfriend?"

Jason nodded. Mark wished that the night was a book and he could just flip back a couple of pages and read over the introductions again and find out which girl was

Sandy and which was Beth. Mark even thought about just asking Jason. Then, he decided that he knew the answer. Deep down inside, he knew that the red-haired girl was too pretty and too cool to be single and that the angry little girl with braces must be the single one. But what the hell, he figured. It's a nice night for a walk.

The duplex that Mark lived in was right across the street from the Tallahassee Civic Center. They walked over there, first, across the vacant parking lot, up the stairs, and alongside the huge glass walls of the Civic Center. The moon was new and almost all of the lights around the Civic Center were off. There was no traffic on the side streets. Everything seemed evacuated. It was strange to be alone in a place where you would normally be surrounded by thousands, even tens of thousands of people. Kind of eerie. The four of them walked away from the Civic Center.

They turned east up Pensacola Street and headed for the state capitol buildings. Mark lagged back a little so that he could walk with the dark-haired girl, who he decided was named Sandy. He didn't actually try to call her Sandy. He wasn't that brave or certain yet. He just noticed that Jason and the red-haired girl, Probably-Beth, had walked a bit ahead and Probably-Sandy had lagged behind. He felt sure that she was the single girl. Mark asked her about her classes, about her friends, about her hometown, anything he could think to



ask. Probably-Sandy kept her answers brief. So brief that Mark finished his beer and grabbed another one out of my backpack and drank it on the hundred yard walk up the hill to the State of Florida Supreme Court building. Jason and Probably-Beth sat on the steps. They were waiting for Mark and my backpack full of beer. Mark gave them each a beer. He grabbed a beer for himself. Probably-Sandy wasn't drinking. She didn't think it was a good idea to walk around the streets drinking alcohol. Especially since they were all under the legal age to drink.

This didn't bother Jason, Mark, or Probably-Beth. They sat on the steps of the State of Florida Supreme Court building and drank beer. Mark said, "One time, me and a buddy of mine ate a bunch of acid and decided to walk up here to the capitol. Only, it was the middle of the day. It was like a Tuesday or something. So we're walking up here - we'd just taken the acid. It hadn't even kicked in yet, when we get up here to this building and see a bunch of fucking Klansmen. I started thinking to myself, Christ, I must be tripping. And of course I was tripping. But there really were Klansmen wearing the white robes and everything. Walking on that sidewalk right there. Holding signs and shit. It was crazy."

"What did you do?" asked Probably-Beth.

Mark took a sip of his beer and looked across the sidewalk where the Klan once marched. He looked across the street to the state capitol building. He let his eyes run up all twenty-two floors of the state capitol. He looked past it to the moonless night. Then he said, "We sat down on the sidewalk there..." Mark pointed across the street, to his right. "...and watched them and tripped for a while. Then a cop came along and told us that the sidewalk was state property and we couldn't sit there any more. So we left."

"You mean to tell me that the Klan was allowed to march on the state's sidewalk but you weren't allowed to sit on it?" Jason asked. Mark nodded. "That's fucked up," Jason said.

"Yeah, well..." Mark said.

"Yeah, well we shouldn't be sitting here now," Probably-Sandy said. "Let's start walking back."

As they made their way back down the hill, Mark walked with Probably-Beth for a while.

"I liked your story about tripping acid with the Klan, even though it was sad," she said. "I have a have a happier story about cops and the capitol building."

Probably-Beth told Mark about a protest that happened about a year before. The Gulf War was just about to start. A lot of the students were protesting it. Probably-Beth and two of her friends brought a bunch of glass vial stink bombs to the protests. They threw them at cops' legs when the cops weren't looking. The vials would break on the cops' legs pretty easily, and all the stink inside would bleed onto their pants. "The cops never knew what hit them," she said. "They'd just brush their legs like a bee had stung them or something. Then you'd see them walking in circles like they were trying to get away from the stink." Probably-Beth smiled.

She told him a few more stories about crazy things she'd done. Mark listened. He finished the beer he'd been drinking on the courthouse steps and opened another one. He drank too quickly because he was excited and nervous to talk to Probably-Beth. Probably-Beth drank quickly, too, but she was only on her third beer of the night. She hadn't sold her plasma. She had eaten dinner. Mark should've known better than to try to pace his drinking alongside her, much less

drink faster. But Mark wasn't thinking clearly. In his mind, he was Charlie Brown finally dancing with the red-haired girl in a cloud of ether. In his mind, he floated and danced and drank and walked downhill from the capitol and stumbled into alcoholic blackout.

Though he'd been awake and alive and had continued to drink and talk and walk and everything else, Mark's memory of that night ended exactly halfway down the hill from the capitol building. From Mark's point of view, he'd taken one step on that downhill stroll that landed him awake in his bed ten hours later.

My memory lasted through the night. I'd gone to the show and stopped drinking. Five bands played. I spent the better part of the evening dancing around in circles and bumping into people. While the last band played, I saw my friend Jason, his girlfriend, and her friend Sandy standing over by the bar. I was kind of surprised to see them. All three were under the legal drinking age. I walked over to say hello. As soon as I got there, Jason handed me a beer. The band was loud. My ears rang. I could barely hear Jason when he said something about drinking all my beer. He said something else about Mark. I missed most of what Jason said about Mark, but I heard very clearly "spent all night hitting on my girlfriend."

The pile of beer cans was gone the next afternoon. The homeless guy had been by to pick them up. Mark gave him a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Mark also stole a can of Coke from his roommate and gave it to the homeless guy. The homeless guy sat on the porch. He ate the sandwich and drank the Coke. Then, he walked off with a plastic bag full of empties and cockroaches.

Mark's fifteen dollars of plasma money was down to five after the beers from the night before and after buying breakfast on the way to bowling class. Mark took his five dollars to the gas station down the street. He bought four quarts of malt liquor for eighty-nine cents a piece. He bought a stick of beef jerky with his last dollar.

I found Mark that next afternoon. He was sitting on the front porch, drinking a quart of malt liquor and gnawing on a stick of beef jerky. I walked past Mark and into his side of the duplex. I walked back to his refrigerator. I saw three quarts of malt liquor. I took one. I walked back out to the porch and sat next to Mark.

"I'm an idiot," Mark said.

"Yeah," I said. Not necessarily agreeing. Just letting Mark do the talking.

"Did you talk to Jason?"

"Yeah."

"When? I thought your phone was cut off."

"It is," I said. "I saw him at the show last night."

"How'd he get in? He's not twenty-one."

"Sometimes people who aren't twenty-one go to bars," I said.

Mark looked at the floor. I did too. In the empty spot where the empty beer cans had been, a roach popped his head up through the floorboards. His antennae flicked in the wind. He seemed momentarily lost. Or maybe I was giving him human characteristics. Maybe roaches don't have destinations in mind. Maybe roaches are never lost. Maybe roaches just assume that they are where they are supposed to be. Maybe the roach was in the right place and Mark was lost.

"Anyway, I'm an idiot," Mark said.

"Oh yeah?" I said.

"I think I spent a lot of time hitting on Jason's girlfriend."

"Yeah."

"Is that what Jason told you?"

"Yeah."

"I couldn't help it. She was so sexy and so nice to me."

"Yeah," I said, but I was kind of surprised. Jason's girlfriend was never nice to me. She was a condescending girl. She always wanted to have half-baked philosophical conversations. She didn't understand what she was talking about half the time. She usually rolled her eyes at me when I tried to change the subject. I didn't bring this up to Mark. I sipped on the top of my quart.

"And I dug her red hair," Mark said.

"Sandy's?" I asked.

"Is that what Jason's girlfriend's name is?"

"No," I said. "That's what the red-haired girl's name is."

This caused a lot of confusion. It was a hot summertime afternoon in Tallahassee. Both Mark and I drank way too much to achieve clarity. All thoughts had to fly through heavy cloud coverage. All understanding came and went quickly. Despite our obvious mental difficulties, without the aid of memories or eyewitnesses, we reconstructed Mark's night. Obviously, things were going well with Mark and Sandy. They walked down the hill from the capitol and told stories. They laughed with each other. It was a nice night. Jason and Beth walked ahead. Things seemed right. Mark couldn't believe it. So he didn't believe it. He made up his mind that he was hitting on the wrong girl. He decided that the red-haired girl was too cool for him. The red-haired girl was too cool to be single. He decided that he'd better face facts and deal with his options. When the four of them got back to the porch, Mark started hitting on the little angry girl instead. Since Mark was mistaken, since the little angry girl was Jason's girlfriend, things ended poorly. Jason, Beth, and Sandy left the porch. They went to the show and caught the last band. Mark drank one more beer and went to sleep.

"I'm an idiot," Mark said. His point was that other men live full lives. They meet women and get laid and get married and get jobs and earn a living and raise a family while Mark sits on the porch and drinks. And not that anyone asked, but my point was that Mark wasn't an idiot. He just spent too much time looking across the street at expensive cars and civic centers and capitol buildings.

Future events shined some light on this. Jason gave us the eyewitness account of the night. Mark's self-loathing had led him to hitting on Jason's girlfriend. Sandy had been interested in Mark, but she never would be interested in him again. I still keep in touch with Sandy. Her address changes a lot. Last I heard, she was doing stuff for a pirate radio station somewhere in Minnesota. Mark went on to graduate college. He found a girl and got laid and married that girl and got a job and earns a living and bred and does all the things that come easily if you don't ask big, obvious questions. He commutes home tight-faced in a too expensive car. He started drinking Scotch at the age of twenty-five. He gets drunk at home on Friday nights. He spends a lot of time wishing he was still on that front porch in Tallahassee in the summertime.

-Sean Carswell



GARY HORNBERGER

Squeeze My Horn



The music industry allows only so many people into heaven a year.

Well hello and welcome to my column on why people piss me off. At least that is what it seems to be turning into. This time I would like to address the issue of puffy pop rock. You know this year-old show called "Making the Band"? Well, I've had just about all I can handle of these non-musically talented teenage butt kissers. Really, do they write their own music? No! Do they play an instrument? No! In fact, if the big, fat ass music mogul or the agent or producer - whatever - decided to make one of the boy puppets dance naked all the while wearing clown makeup and elf shoes, they could easily have it arranged. It is absolutely pitiful how the music industry plays God, and now they've opened up the gates and given us a media view of heaven. They make it seem as if it is all a toil. Well, try doing it without any of the fat bucks that these record companies can produce. Just look through the pages of this magazine. How many of them have the advertising ability that these guys were getting from the get go? And here is the kicker; there are thousands of little girls who gobble up bands such as these. All because it's safe. These boys are wholesome and centered. Bullshit! These guys are simply in it for the power trip it gives them.

who to market to. Come on, have you ever seen a pretty rock star? Now, I know there was that '80s glam stuff, but I mean someone really stunning? Now look at all the girls - Spears, Agulleria - sorry if I misspelled but you get what I'm saying and the same goes for the guys. Oh, and here is another thing, when one of the 100 music shows that come on in a year are televised, do you see the same faces? You bet you do. Why is that? Because the music industry allows only so many people into heaven a year. Now remember this is my soapbox. Hell, I'm conservative about the music I like for reasons that go beyond the

sound itself, but all I'm asking is to think about what the hell you listen to. I've got this manager at work who has allowed me to quote him. He claims "it is a new era" for music, that in today's society you

ence of someone I don't want in or near my house. Secondly, there seems to be certain motorists who have taken the peeing Calvin sticker too far. It seems some asshole has made Calvin piss on the letters

U.S.A. Who the fuck puts it on their auto should be pulled over, ripped out of their auto, brown packaged up, and sent back to whatever dictatorship they came from and see how good they get treated there. How hypocritical can one be? Thus ends my griping. How about some comic reviews?

GARY HORNBERGER



THE DOOR
The old guy is professor Bledfill and he is the leader of the group. Then there is Suzie a bio-engineered blond bombshell, an Emu, and the head of Abe Lincoln.



THE DOOR
#1, by Rick Lundeen, \$3.95 U.S.

The Door is one of those comics that has a cover that perks interest. See, there is this old guy looking out a crack in the door and the door is in the middle of the southwest desert. Once you begin reading the story you are introduced to the character at a conference for time travel. The old guy is professor Bledfill and he

have been exposed to so many different music types that you can enjoy many different music styles. I include this because he claims to rap, and he also has a dead head tattoo. Music is just one of those things that can piss you off and make you happy.

Now here are another couple of things that have grabbed the horn. First, the city of La Mirada sent out paperwork encouraging non dog owners that if they live near a neighbor who owns a dog to report that person if their dog barks. I think they were encouraging them to basically have the dog debarked. I'm sorry, but why do we play God all the time? Barking is what a dog does. In fact if a pit bull didn't bark, people would never know what hit them. Barking announces the presence of the dog and perhaps the pres-

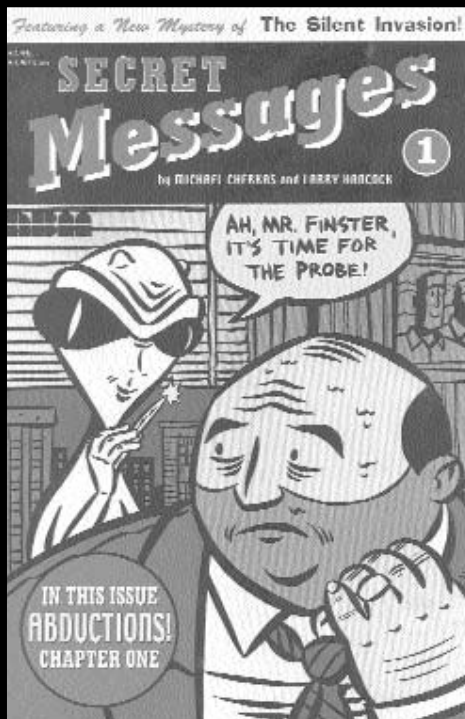
is the leader of the group. Then there is Suzie a bio-engineered blond bombshell, an Emu, and the head of Abe Lincoln. Together they call themselves "The Temporal Investigation Squad." The gist of their time travel is that they bio-engineered the brain of Hitler and put it in the body of a young Aryan body and sent it to the old west. In all actuality, it is an excuse to go back in time and gamble. See, they go back to kill Hitler and then stick around to cheat at poker. Pretty clever, right? I've got to tell you that this works well on a comedy level. Everything that these goofballs do is funny, and when they get done with the old west, they bio-engineer Elvis and go back in time to set Watergate straight for Nixon. Of course, Elvis is there for the detour to Vegas. So, like all the other comics, I've got to wait it out

for issue number two to see how the Vegas road trip turns out and what set of events they set up for the next trip - possibly a bio-engineered Hoffa in old mafia Chicago for a back ally game of craps? The art work is pretty good on this one too. The way things appear and disappear is cool and the different characters work well. In a paper sack, this one should be kept with the bread, so as not to crush a good book, because good, funny indie comics are starting to be hard to come by. (Epoch, 401 N. Wabash, Set. 635, Chicago, IL 60611)

JETCAT CLUBHOUSE

#2, by Jay Stephens, \$3.25 U.S., \$4.95 Canada

I'm looking at the cover of this one thinking to myself, hey it's kind of a mini Groovie Ghoulies, right? It has a mini Frankenstein, a mini mummy, and all that haunted Halloween stuff. The only problem with all of this is that it is written kind of for kids. There's some monkey bathroom humor, some Felix the Cat belly laughing, but nothing that would really tickle an adult's funnybone. Of course, if I was a kid



on a long trip to say Kansas or Texas, I would die for this stuff, but I'm not and neither are the readers of this zine, so I'll make the description of this comic short. This comic is about a grade school

girl whose alter ego is the crime fighting Jetcat, and her friends and enemies. That's it, people, not much to see here. Please move along. (ONI Press Inc., 6336 SE Milwaukee Ave., PMB 30, Portland, OR 97202)

SECRET MESSAGES

#1, by Michael Cherkas & Larry Hancock, \$2.95 U.S., \$4.50 Canada

Gumshoe detectives and aliens tend to make me skeptical, but everyone loves a good mystery. Nothing is given for free in this comic. In fact, at this point, the writers have me so lost that I'm going to have to get number two and possibly three to get a glimpse of where this one is going. It's a time piece from 1965 (a good year) and I believe the narrator has played a practical joke on some guy who is far too into alien conspiracy, and spooks him so bad he kills him. Then the narrator turns out to be some detective who cuts the story short and leaves us hanging for another story, but I think some-

how we're going to come back to the first one. Long story short, it is the typical gumshoe story: no cases, running out of money, can't pay the rent, ex-wife looking for alimony, and secretary who wants to get married. There, that takes care of ten pages of this comic. Of course, some mysterious woman calls to find her husband and pays a large sum up front, but just as our private dick starts looking for clues, we're left hanging, wishing we had a copy of number two, because on the back inside cover we get a look at the cover of number two with a glimpse of "the awful truth about alien love." Who is this detective? Who is his alter ego? Who are we looking for? All will be revealed in upcoming issues. Hey, they even have me hooked. Great writing for a goofy 1960's X-files comic. I know that for most comics to sell they have to be written in an almost soap opera style, but this one sets up real good. So if you're one of the alien mystery lovers and you don't just watch TV, go pick this one up, or wait for number two. (NBM Publishing, 555 8th Ave., Suite 1202, New York, NY 10018)

-Gary Hornberger

GARY HORNBERGER





I remember sitting in my bedroom when I was about sixteen or seventeen listening to the first TSOL EP over and over. I had a stereo that would automatically replay records and because the 12" was a 45RPM it kept dropping the needle in the middle of the disc. I had gone into the kitchen to get coffee and apparently the record player arm kept dropping on the "America, Land of the free, Free to the power of the people in uniform" lyric. When I got back to my room my mom had taken the record. "If I had to hear that damn 'America, land of the free' line again I thought I would smash this record." Apparently it had repeated about 18 times while I was in the kitchen and she was hearing it through the walls. Mom hates = is good. Later when Lisa Fancher at Frontier, who was about to finance the first Adolescents record, asked me if there were any bands I would recommend she record, I told her that I thought the best band around was TSOL.

For the next year our two bands would play a handful of amazing shows together - the Vex and Devonshire Downs stick out in my head - and I went absolutely bananas over their sound. Jack, beside being incredibly funny, has one of the voices I admire most; Ron has a signature style, something most guitar players never achieve regardless of ability; and Mike has always been the kind of focused and dedicated bass player that I compare bass players to when I look for them for my own bands. The bass player is the cement in any building, I promise. Without a guy like Mike you've got a house of cards - they may be a good hand, but they're coming down.

I've followed the band members through their various projects, and have remained fond of them as individuals and as musicians. They are, individually and collectively, amazing dudes.

I had the opportunity to follow them to a few shows this summer of 2001, and was jazzed to see them looking so up. Jack and roadie Raybo (who doubles as the singer of Bonecrusher) gave my five-year-old daughter orange juice like the total dad hosts. Ron's big brother Bob was out, and no surprise, just as cool as I always remember him. I met Jack's daughter who I had only seen as a baby picture in his wallet years ago when Tender Fury and the Flower Leperds played together. She was every bit as charming as her dad. Twenty years ago I could have never imagined the shoes we would wear. The shoes look good.

TSOL are currently touring their album "Disappear" which is an amazing blend of vintage TSOL and influences that range from Gang of Four, Magazine, and the Buzzcocks to Siouxsie and the Banshees and Adam and the Ants. Great stuff. TSOL were interviewed on July 20, 2001 in their mobile unit outside of the Ventura Theater in Ventura, California by Tony Reflex, Steve Godfather, and my man Todd. Todd took a bunch of pictures and was especially trick by carrying around the official camera backpack.

Interview by Tony Reflex

Reflex: So, why now? I know you guys did a tour about a year ago, kind of a reunion set up, but now there's a new album.

Ron: Originally it was that Bergamont Station thing (1), and then the idea just came around like a couple months....

Mike: ...out of oblivion enough to where Jack was talking to me and saying "Maybe you should come down and play on something I'm doing," and I said, "Wow, that would be cool," because I had all but forgot the fact that I'd ever be able to do music again.

Todd: What were you doing in the interim?

Mike: About 3-5 for sale, possession, transportation.

All: Ouch. [laughter]

Ron: I was busy. I was real busy.

Mike: When we heard the roster of bands it was like "My God! Those are *the* bands; that they'd even mention us in the same fucking breath." So we did it, we did four songs, and there was property damage, blood, and all the good components of a good show. It was nuts! It was wild, and it was fun.(2)

Ron: Right. And about a week later somebody called us and asked us to do the Social Chaos Tour.

Mike: They said, "We need a headliner. Our headliner dropped out for all of these English punk rock bands."

Reflex: Oh right, that thing that you and DOA played with.

Mike: Vice Squad, The Vibrators...

Ron: Chelsea, the UK Subs, yeah.

Mike: Right, so we did that. We just kind of tentatively did that because I was still on parole. I could only play in the States. My parole officer gave me the "We can't really tell you that you're allowed to do this, but I'm going to (drug) test you twice so that you won't have to come back for two months. I can't tell you that you can go, but bye. See you later." I hadn't really been any problem. So we did that and it was tentative and weird and we had a lot of learning to do; how to get along together, a lot of humility. You're living in this little box together and you get kinda not "up" sometimes. That was the first stage, right?

Ron: Right. We did a couple of shows around in LA and went up to San Francisco. Did a Thrasher party. It was fun. That was different. We actually got along. Got to get out there and experience things that we were probably blind to before. We take these trips more like a vacation, too. On our second day of this trip we were out fishing on a river.

Mike: I think, initially, from the gate, when Grisham told me about this tour I said, "Well, sure, I'll do it. If it goes well will you consider writing new songs?" and he went, "Well, yeah. We'll see." The "We'll see" was a lot better than ahhhhh...

Mike and Ron: Uhhhh... nnnnn... ahhhhh

Mike: ...So I was hopeful, right? We did get along, we did have fun, regardless of whether we played good. It didn't matter, whatever. The hard part came next.

WE FUNCTION PRETTY GOOD NOW, BETTER THAN WE HAD, BUT... LIFE SKILLS... FUCK.

Ron: A year or so...

Mike: Right. Maybe we'd done another little tour in there.

Reflex: And you're still relying solely on old material, no new material?

Ron: Completely. No new material.

Mike: So we're at, "This is fun, and this seems valid and relevant." We get the old guys, and their kids, but now we're also getting a lot of kids who have just discovered the stuff, and it was new and fresh to them. To us, we knew this is really old shit. We thought we had a deal in the bag with Epitaph. He's such a big fan (Brett Guerwitz, head of Epitaph) and Jack was always signed there and stuff, and they're such a solid label. We'd never really had any experience before with a solid label. So we started to try to write songs, and that turned out to be a long, protracted, semi-nightmare.

Ron: Yeah, we went through lots of really good songs but, for some reason or other, didn't feel right. They felt right to us [refers to Mike] but it was because we were stoked on playing again.

Mike: Then Jack would say, "I don't feel it." We give props to Jack, I mean, as much as we're all equals in this, he's been on board and playing the whole time where we haven't. So, where we are on the same level in a lot of

ways, we're not on the same level in a lot of ways. You know what I mean? I'm still waiting to break through some plateaus that I would have or should have if I'd continued to play that last ten year run. The only thing I was playing the last ten years was implements to...

Ron: Self-destruction.

Reflex: So you guys carried on playing with Joe (Wood) through what, 1990 or 1991?

Ron: I left him in, I think, '87.

Mike: TSOL was getting harder. More rock.

Reflex: I saw you guys toward the end and, no offense, it was horrible. It was at Night Moves in Huntington Beach. I'd also seen you earlier, at The Cathay de Grande and it was absolutely brilliant, but toward the end... I could see by looking at you guys that you just weren't there. I felt really bad about it. It was hard to see you like that.

Mike: It changed, and changed, and changed again. Ron saw the light first and said, "Fuck it, I'm done with it." He was done with the behavior. He was done with the drug shit. He was done with it all.

Ron: Yeah, it was right in the middle of another record

and I just said, "No. Sorry. No."

Mike: Yeah, and you know, being a good little fucking, "Give me a rut, and I'll move in," playing was all I knew. That took a lot of the heart out of it, too. I mean, me and Ron had been doing something together since we were teenagers.

Reflex: So, the two of you played together, and Jack and Todd (Barnes, the original drummer) played together before you all hooked up - is that right?

Ron: We started playing instruments at the same time. From going to shows and stuff, we picked up instruments. Mike played in The Accidents and I played in The Hoods with Steve Olson.

Mike: Our claim to fame was that we played two shows with the Flyboys, and then we broke up.

Ron: So yeah, Jack and Todd had Vicious Circle, and they had Johnny Coat Hanger.

Reflex: I saw Vicious Circle in Redondo Beach at the Fleetwood.

Mike: Yeah, but after one of those Redondo Beach things Jack checked out because some guy came back in with a gun... Who else?... Oh, fucking Houston. But he couldn't do it because The Klan was reforming. That was great, so Ron said, "Fuck it, great!" So me, Ron, and Todd started a band, and Steve Olson was going to sing,



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Steve Olson's girlfriend wouldn't let him do it.

Ron: Yeah. Actually we played at The Cuckoo's Nest as a three piece.

Mike: We identified early that we needed a little bit more. We knew Jack was in town. Through a bit of courting and a bit of whatever, we coaxed him out. There was no one quite as flamboyant and just as trippy. He'd show up at a party in full make-up, and he had a command over people. That's when it started to work, and the rest is some sort of history, anyway.

The new record thing was hard and Epitaph heard the first demos and didn't like the vocal stylings.

Ron: They thought it sounded too much like the Joykiller. Jack had been recording there and putting records out. He knew how to sing, and trying to get him out of that. He has two other records in the can over there. Gentleman Jack, and The Go.

Mike: I think they wanted "Dance With Me" personified. We kind of thought, well here's our first demo thing, and they said "Unhhh." And we felt, "Well, fuck." We thought we had an in with this, and no.

Reflex: The last time I took a record over to Brett, he told

JACK: A FRIEND OF ME HAS A VIDEO OF ME FIGHTING TWO GUYS. IN A DRESS. I WAS JUST FUCKING THEM UP. I'LL RUN NOWADAYS. I DON'T WANT ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT. ONCE YOU'VE BEEN STABBED A COUPLE OF TIMES, SHOT AT, IT'S NO FUN. I HAD A GUY PULL A GUN ON ME AT CHAZ RAMIREZ'S STUDIO.

me he hated it and that it sounded like L7.

Mike: We knew we had an in, possibly, with Nitro because of Dexter and stuff, being a big fan. Dexter's response, if I remember correctly was, "Yeah. Just don't make another 'Beneath the Shadows' because I already have one in the catalogue. Otherwise, make a record." And we were like, "OK. Make a record." But... well, Brett's a force, and he's a writer, and a great producer. I gave Brett one of the records and he liked it. He said he liked the guitar sound, which was a big compliment. So,

we ended up with Nitro, which seems to be working out cool. It still took a while to put the songs together. The recording process went quickly we ended up with three extra days in the studio.

Recorded 17 songs in seven days.

Reflex: How was it to work with Thom as grown ups, as opposed to as kids? (3)

Ron: It was great, man.

Tom: He told us about stuff we didn't remember. He had a lost TSOL album. He had a tape of some lost TSOL songs that

we forgot about, like some frigging rock opera shit that we made.

Mike: Yes, it was stretching it musically. So, that happened. Trials and tribulations, still, always with the band, then Mitch and Joe were about, because when I left the band they ended up with the name. (4)

Steve: When I was working at Triple X records, I was doing the artwork for the live album. I had the art all done and it was ready to go and then all of sudden I've got a lawyer calling me - and I'm being told, "If you *even* consider using the name True Sounds of Liberty, we'll sue. If you print TSOL backward, we'll sue. If it says LOST, we'll sue," so I was, "What the fuck am I going to do?" So I took a photo from the Cuckoo's Nest, and I tinted it. Then I found out that if you put a sticker on it, which is advertising, the name thing could be avoided. So that's why we put the TSOL sticker on. (5)

Mike: We figured there a number of ways to skin them. One of them was, "Blah-blah, the original members of TSOL." The fact of the matter is that they promised to pay me a pittance, and they paid me most of it, but not all of it. Then they refused to pay me the rest.

Ron: It's sort of like paying for a used car and deciding, "Well, I think I've paid enough on this car. Now it's mine."

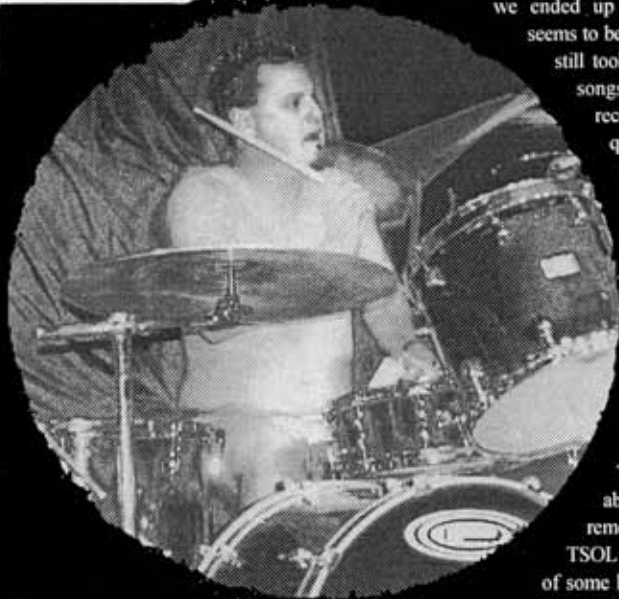
Mike: "Yeah, I paid six, you wanted twelve, we're done paying." Then, only then, did I break the code I'd had, which was not doing the reunion shows. We'd had an offer on the table from Gary Tovar (of Goldenvoice, a booker, super supportive of early LA punk) for a million years which was way more than I'd made doing anything with those guys (Wood-era TSOL). I went down and saw them. I said, "Where's the money? You said you were going to pay me this." And they said, "Well, ya know dude, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." So I said, "If you don't pay me then I'm going to do the fucking reunion shows and bury you." Joe's words, exactly, I remember them to this day, were, "Do what you've got to do." So I said, "OK." That's when our relationship with the Offspring started. They opened for us at the Celebrity Theater for \$250, along with the Cadillac Tramps.

(Reflex note: at this point we all started laughing. We were looking out the window at three Offspring tour buses and an equipment truck.)

Mike: I was told, "There's an up and coming Orange County band that are TSOL freaks and they want to play." I said, "Fine. Put them on." So, that's how all that worked.

Reflex: So you've retained the name?

Ron: Everything's squared. Nitro has been good. This is the first time anyone's offered to help. They're not really looking to get anything off of us except what they deserve for their work. We finally gained their trust. They know we're not going to pull something off, other than what we do on stage. They get a little scared about that. But they're willing to help us out and to pay for our gas. Out of seven



or eight record labels, that's a first.

Mike: Dexter may be worth whatever Dexter is worth. His label is a separate thing. And it's a small label. Truth be, it's much, much smaller than Epitaph. Epitaph is a mini-major now. They have juice and power. Nitro is a grass roots label just getting started. They have a budget. Like Ron said, they're nice. They're behind our music.

Reflex: Yeah, those folks are cool. In any starting business something has to be put in, but at a point it has to start to run itself. I guess that's why there has to be a budget.

Mike: They gave us artistic freedom, and they gave us respect. Now we'll see. I'll be better able to assess this in a couple of years. How did the first thing go? I don't really know that whether it goes, or doesn't go that it's any fault of theirs. The ball's in our court now. That's why we're out working it. We're not really scared of touring and stuff. Barring any major incidents, we're ready to work. And we're trying to position ourselves in a way for this new crop of kids that the music is relevant and new and stuff. You know at a lot of these Offspring shows, the audience doesn't know who we are. They don't know that we influenced the band they came to see. They don't know we've been around forever. The Warped Tour was good for us. Kevin Lymon (who runs the Warped Tour) did us really good. He did us a really big favor.

Ron: Yeah. Thirteen or fourteen shows and we played in front of 100 and something thousand people.

Mike: Yeah, on the west coast. That was a lot of love for us. We were the oldest band on the tour, and causing the most trouble on stage.

Ron: Getting talked to every single night about getting thrown off the tour.

(Reflex note: it suddenly gets really loud. Some young ladies think they have found Millencollin's van and get all noisy and giddy. Ron takes a walk. I then talk to Mike for a while about their touring vehicle and his new business. He requested I not discuss it in regards to the band's interview as he felt it would be a conflict of interest. Albeit to say that I am really impressed by his ingenuity and his hard work. Awesome.)

Todd: What did TSOL mean? Was it an acronym for different things at different times?

Mike: People have often misunderstood at times, but to us it was always True Sounds of Liberty and it came from a religious program we saw when we were young and starting the band. (6)

Reflex: I was a good Baptist. I remember the Sounds of Liberty...

Mike: The Sounds of Liberty Choir. "Call up and your soul will be saved. All you have to do is send in your money. Call now. The lines are open." I kicked over the TV and said, "We should call the band The True Sounds of Liberty." We all just went, "A-ha-ha-ha" and just forgot about it. Me, Todd, and Ron were constantly rehearsing in Todd's garage. We need a name. Somehow we tossed up True Sounds of Liberty. Pat Brown (7) was in there and he started to yell, "Yeah! TSOL! Yeah, TSOL!" and he ran out the door. We looked at each other. "TSOL? Hunh? We were going to call the band True Sounds of Liberty. What's TSOL?... oh...OK!" He was the first one to call the band TSOL.

Todd: Not to dredge up anything painful, but was part of the complexity of making this new record having a new drummer?

Mike: We had another drummer for a minute. Danny Westerman, who is a professional.

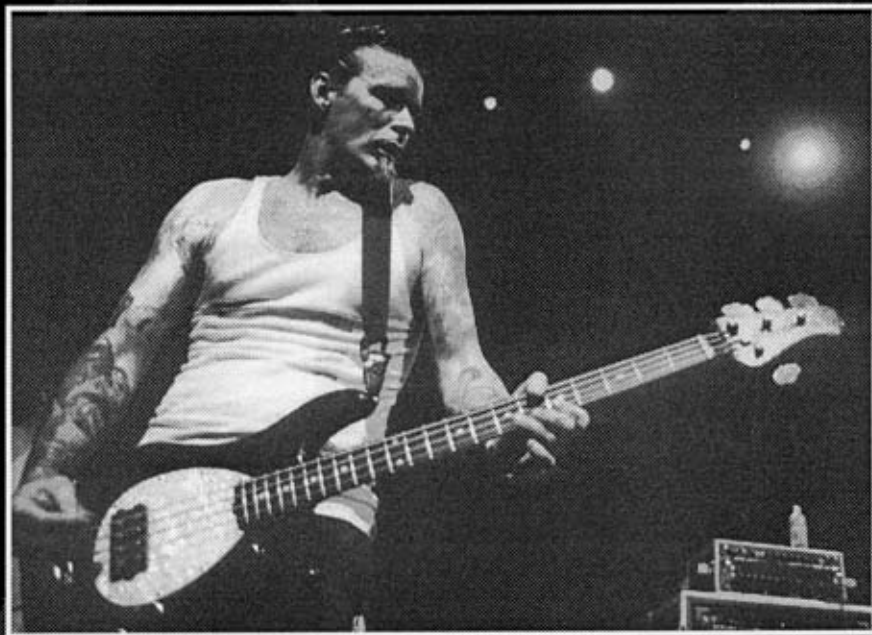
Todd: He was in Down By Law.

Mike: Right. Very good drummer. Crackier, poppier. Filling Todd's shoes is hard. Todd was a character, unmanageable - like us, up to the very end. We tried to get Todd to come aboard but the criteria was he had to change his lifestyle. We couldn't put a lit

match in here with us. Some of our stability was precarious at best.

He had arthritis and he had different things, and he had used the whole damn time. It takes a lot of work to get back up to what you're doing, especially for a drummer. It's like being an athlete. He was a little bummed out about the whole thing, and this and that, and whatever. Jack at one time had told him, and I at another, "Dude, this is your place. This is rightfully yours, but there's a couple of things you've gotta do. You know what you've got to do." So on, and so forth, and he passed away.

We were there when they unplugged him, and it was a



bummer.

But we knew he would want to go on, and we wanted to go on, and that's just the way it is. We deal with the kind of thing we came from - and the dope, and the heroin, and excess, the punk rock loss of values, or complete snubbing our noses or giving it the finger - if it was the wrong way to do things then that was our way - and to the hilt. Jack, in thirteen years of sobriety, says he has buried in excess of 60 people, and I know for sure in three and a half years, fifteen people that are dead. You know? That's what happens.

It's almost that with Todd gone that it put a little more fucking resolve into doing this. The record is dedicated to Todd. I have a little memorial at home. Everyone holds Todd in a special place. He was so talented, not only as a drummer, but he played guitar, played bass. He was just one of those guys. So even Jay - who is the closest thing to Todd's playing - can never be Todd. He used to play with Todd, hang out with Todd, travel with the band out of town with Todd. His mom would give Todd a note, putting him in Todd's custody.

Jay plays on some of Todd's drum kits. He's from Long Beach. He's like us in a lot of ways - a big, dumb, strong, won't listen in a lot of ways, kid. We love him and stuff, but the core band is definitely me, Jack, and Ron. It's kind of hard for Jay in some ways, and that's a drag, but there's no way to level the playing field. I mean, he just wasn't there twenty years ago and how can we just say, "Well, here ya go"? There were four of us then, now there's just three. It's a weird thing, and a weird dynamic that we're working through every day. It's a family kind of thing.

I have a lot of respect for Jack in a lot of ways. His command of music in general. He always blows my mind. We seldom, if ever, rehearse or write a set list. Usually, when we go on tour, we know that by the third show "It's on." The band will

be down. We're such a tight unit. There were two rehearsals prior to this tour and that was only because there are so many new songs that are in the set and we needed to not so much learn the songs, as put the titles with the songs.

Reflex: Oh yes, the drummer problem is what we refer to that as. They know the song as a riff or a beat, not a lyric.

Mike: Mistakes. We've all had our share. We never did anything quite half way. We embraced that thing for doing shit wrong. The hard stuff is doing things right, normally, like normal people do it. Simple things around the home. How to do things wrong, like dope fiend maneuvers, and scams, and hustles - things like that we're, "Oh, yeah. We can do this" but that's not how you're supposed to do it. I'll work hard. I'll have a pocket full of money. I still won't fucking pay my bills. "Aw, fuck, it's late. Shit, it's more money. Aw, damn, this ticket would have been ninety bucks. There's half the money." Knew the thing was due, but still! That's foreign! Register your car?! Insurance?! That's foreign. At least a couple of us are in a learning process. We function pretty good now, better than we had, but, life skills... fuck.

Grisham, still. He's fucking nuts. Out of his fucking tree. He's got this stroke of genius in him, too. We'll be in the studio and he'll sit down at the piano, and start playing. I'll be like, where the fuck did you learn to play like that? He always had a piano in his parent's house, and he'd fuck around on it. He never took any lessons? Or, we'll be playing something, or writing it - and most singers would go unh-unh-unh (meaning "I don't know") and Grisham will say, "Go to that part, you know, when you go to the D-sharp" and he'll pinpoint the part. I'll have to catch up with him. I'll say, "What? Oh, you mean here?" He'll go to it on the piano. "Got it." I'm still in awe of his skill, and Emory too. Emory blows my mind. He can name any song

from any TSOL era. "Beneath the Shadows" and he'll call it out and just goes into it. He just remembers it. He's got a great tone, a great style. I'm still struggling to just remember my one part that I have to remember. He'll have four parts all ready to go into the studio. A little subtle nuance here, an overlay there....

Reflex: I always wondered if he listened to Alice Cooper records, Siouxsie and the Banshees, early Cure. I hear all that stuff in his playing.

Mike: We all listened to the Banshees, Gang of Four, Elvis Costello - though when I listen to it now it sounds like jazz. It's incredible the shit he's playing. Early Crass stuff. We borrowed heavily, not the music so much as visuals, like the early shirt I gave you, where all the words ran together. Direct from Crass. We just thought that was cool.

Reflex: We traded shirts. (8)

Mike: The first TSOL shirts we ever made, we made twelve. We wanted to be elitist. People come up and say, "Aw, dude. This and that. This song is a direct rip-off of you guys." I personally feel that all rock and roll, based on the history of rock and roll, the length of the neck, and the amount of frets, it's all relative. Who didn't borrow, mix, mash, mesh, to come up with this or that? Who didn't borrow? Some is just more blatant and obvious than others. That's all.

Steve: Was Soto playing with you guys, or just Frank Agnew?

Mike: Frank played with us for a minute on the "Beneath the Shadows" tour. I think Ron wanted to bolster the sound a bit. Make it more of a heavy, full kind of thing.

Reflex: Spanky played for eighteen months with me. Sober, non-smoker. A good boy. Six weeks of TSOL, he's a chain smoking, hard drinking monster!

Mike: He was white knuckling it at one point and Jack forced him to drink a fifth with him and Jack used to be a blackout drunk. He'd be smiling and laughing and shit. Jamming whiskey like it was nothing, but since he wasn't there, it really was like something! So, if ya knew him, you knew he wasn't there. He made Frank drink, told him he'd do something heinous to him if he didn't, and Frank went on a long bender after that. Jack felt pretty bad about it.

Steve: So Frank was really the only outside member?

Mike: We had Jay of Bad Religion on board for a show. I was barred from a show. He played for TSOL and then Bad Religion for one night. They called me back for the next show. Todd hit the motor home or something on one tour, probably the same one Frank Agnew played on and we called Rikk out and he came and played drums. He just winged it and got us through the tour. On the last tour I couldn't go into Canada and a sound man filled in for me. I have a passport now and can go out of the country. We have a plan to go to Europe in November. I'm looking forward to it. This trip is set around fishing and skin diving. We went fishing

on the river in Fresno, and we plan to scuba dive in Florida. We have a punk rock guide in Utah that's going to take us fishing.

Steve: You guys still surf?

Mike: Only Jack still surfs everyday. He's the only one who still lives near the beach now, which is a weird twist. I live kinda close to the beach in Santa Monica, but it seems like I'm always working. I work at a tattoo shop. I'm an apprentice tattooist. Ron lives inland. Has a cool pad, impeccable taste. Bitchin' furniture. He's that guy that can look at car, a guitar and can tell you exactly what it is and if anything's been changed. He likes to shop for vintage stuff.

Reflex: You guys write when you're on the road?

Mike: Nah. Hopefully we'll just turn it on again and see where it goes. The good news is that we're playing together, getting comfortable. I'd like to see us stay close to the meat and potatoes of this record ("Disappear") so that if we build up a fan base they're not left out in left field because we changed again.

Todd: What's interesting about this record in the feedback people give me is that you and Ron are the most definable, and the vocals - some people really like, and some people really don't - but they think the instrumentation is great. Instantly they say, "OK, I can see where things are starting to compress over what they did prior, and that is really identifiable."

Mike: That's a great compliment. I just have this awe of Ron's talent and ability. With me, I was happy with the way it came out, but I think I'll be better on the next one.

It's weird 'cause we have to work everyday. We're not exclusively musicians. We have to shift gears. It would be nice to be musicians all the time, but we don't have that luxury. I work 15 hour days in a tattoo shop. I'm dead at the end of the day. If I have forty minutes to pick up a guitar, I call that a good day. If we can string the tours together enough then we can spend more time on the instruments, who knows what will happen?

Reflex: I will try to go out to Gorman for the last show of this tour because you guys will be like a machine by then.

Mike: It will be two weeks at home, and then out for another two. We've gotten good reviews. We didn't know what to expect. We expected some bad

of course. We're an old band coming back. People want the new thing. I didn't go with a five-stringed bass. We didn't go with a synthesizer or try some new hybrid shit. There's no rap in the mix, no speed metal meets pop meets hip-hop mixed in it. The stuff that's killing it. That's what's making it, but it's not our gig. Our thing is just our thing. The best compliment we've received is that some of the stuff is seamless with the older stuff. That's the best we could ask for.

Reflex: The sets are a nice mix of material. The songs fit together and compliment one another. [Commotion]

Mike: I'll leave you with Grisham.

Reflex: You guys had to work through some stuff together after Joe came in and took the band into another direction. You had to get back to here. Where'd ya go? How did you iron that shit out?

Jack: Did you see how mad they got at me when I said my voice hurts and I can't talk and you're gonna have to do it? They both got pissed off and they left the van. It's not ironed out. It's so bubbling under the surface that it's not even funny [laughing]. Some of that stuff is totally my fault and I totally take the blame.

Reflex: Well, you walked away from it all. You left the band.

Jack: Yeah. Mike asked me, "Do you mind if we take the name?" I said, "No. I don't care."

WE DEAL WITH THE KIND OF THING WE CAME FROM - AND THE DOPE, AND THE HEROIN, AND EXCESS, THE PUNK ROCK LOSS OF VALUES, OR COMPLETE SNUBBING OUR NOSES OR GIVING IT THE FINGER - IF IT WAS THE WRONG WAY TO DO THINGS THEN THAT WAS OUR WAY - AND TO THE HILT.

Reflex: You had no way of knowing you would all lose the name. So, Joe Wood is married to your sister.

Jack: Right. And living at my mother's house.

Reflex: Ooooooo. What's Thanksgiving like?

Jack: I don't even deal with them. It's really sad. When I call to talk to my mom they just hand the phone right to my mom. My sister won't talk to me either. She believes her husband.

Reflex: Well, she has to.

Steve: What about the kids? Aren't you like Uncle

Jack?

Jack: Yeah, she has two. Everything's cool with the kids. They don't talk about it either.

Reflex: So your sister won't be inviting you to do any vocals on her next album?

Jack: No. No. They don't like me at all. I'll tell you what makes me mad. I stayed out of the whole thing. I told Roche and Ron I said, "You guys do what you have to do and leave me out of it. You take care of it. I don't want any part of it." It got to a point where they were lying, they were stalling. They were screwing around. It got to the point where I said, "Look, do you want me to take care of this?" and Roche and Ron said, "Do what you gotta do."

Reflex: This back and forth - this was Joe and Mitch going back and forth...

Jack: Right. I called Joe up and said, "Guess what? Fuck you. I'm in charge now. You get nothing. You get no points. You get fucking nothing. You don't own shit. You can sue us if you want, but what we're going to do is take it and dump the whole thing on Napster and give it all away for free and just play live shows. You can go ahead and try to fucking sue us and you can fuck off." Then I just kind of went off and I said, "You're a liar. You're a full of shit. You're a lying asshole. I never want to talk to you again. Goodbye." Click. And then the next day he went in and signed the contracts at

Nitro.

Reflex: Maybe he'd realized that he'd pushed the wrong button?

Jack: It was a mess. I tried to stay out of it because he was my sister's husband.

Reflex: Maybe by doing that he was trying to make leeway with you; reconciliation.

Jack: He wanted \$50,000.

Reflex: But he let all that stuff go, right?

Jack: Yeah. He knew he was gonna get nothing.

Reflex: Maybe it was his bridge, letting it go.





Jack:

Yeah, but he wanted \$50,000 for himself, and \$50,000 for Mitch.

Steve: That's crazy.

Jack: It's fucking crazy, especially since they kept telling us they'd done this and that, that the band had been at its biggest when they were doing it, all this shit, right? Supposedly, at the biggest of all, Mike Roche's cut - when they bought him out - was \$10,000. So now, when the name is worth nothing - when there is no band - how is it worth \$100,000? And he can still sell shirts. I don't like even thinking about it because it just makes me mad.

Reflex: So he still has a claim? That's not letting anything go.

Jack: He's getting points on this record. They had to buy him off. I said, "He's not getting points out of my share. You guys do whatever you want, but fuck him." Nitro can sue us too, for all I care. Get in line. You never make any money from selling records anyway.

Reflex: No shit. Not in a punk rock band.

Steve: I don't get it. It's *your* band, *your* name. *You* fucking started it. Then someone comes in and says, "It's mine."

Jack: Well, one thing is, we were only a band from '80-'83. Three years. They were a band from '84-'91. Seven years, though someone can tell me that Creedence Clearwater Revisited have been together for a long time. [laughter] The True Sounds of Liberty, Revisited. [Mike brings in a guitar for Jack to sign.] Oh this is nice. Why does this guy want his guitar signed?

Mike: This guy has been to the two Universal shows. He came tonight and he's going to Las Vegas. He's ditching the wife and hiding the credit cards.

Reflex: Tomorrow night he's going to sell this to the Hard Rock Cafe. It's gonna be on the wall, behind the glass. With Joe Wood's picture right next to it.

Mike: Oh man, he signed Joe's name the other night. It was so cool. [laughter] The guy was so stoked.

Jack: I signed his name it. I've seen his signature.

Mike: This guy brought a CD. He said, "Can you have the singer sign it?" and I said, "Sure." [laughter] Brian said, "Dude, isn't that album with...?" and I said, "Shhhh..." Fuck it. The guy's happy. Let him go home happy.

Jack: I used to try to explain it to them. Or they'll say, "Hey, when I first heard 'Strange Love' it meant so much to me." I say, "Oh, thanks man. I really appreciate that. We really appreciate that." And I just wandered away instead of saying, "Fuck you."

Reflex: I get that a lot with people who want to hear "Balboa Fun Zone" which was an Adolescents album I wasn't on that people always request.

Steve: Well, what do you guys do when that happens?

Jack: I just smile and wave. "All right! We'll get to that baby. We'll bring that out for you, all right!" And when they come up later, "Why didn't you play it?" "Awwwww. We didn't have time, sorry, next time."

Reflex: I just pass the buck. "I was ready to go. Those other guys forgot it."

Jack: I've been mad when I've been put to this Joe Wood thing. People would give me shit and say, "Fucking metal band. Fuck you guys." It would make me really mad. It made me think of some guy fucking my girlfriend. So I'm already hurt, and he's fucking my girlfriend. But beside fucking my girlfriend, he's out fucking shit up around town. Everyone's getting pissed at him, and when they ask, "Who is that fucking shit up around town?" They think, Oh, it's the guy fucking this chick. You know what I'm saying? But they've ruined - I'm sorry - but they've ruined that fucking band. Bottom line, that is some sad shit. I've made a lot of crappy music in my day, but I never made it under that name.

Reflex: I saw them in the late eighties. We split, and we were really bummed. But then, "Change Today?" is a really great record.

Jack: Yeah, but it's not a TSOL record. They should've changed the name. They got voted in *Flipside* the most boring band to watch. That's really fucking sad. Whatever. God bless them.

Steve: Was it hard to get back into writing with these guys again?

Jack: Yeah. We had a hard time. One thing that was hard is that this thing is a real democracy, and all the other stuff I worked on was not.

Reflex: [across van] Ron. Do you listen to a lot of Alice Cooper records?

Ron: First concert I ever went to.

Reflex: I fucking knew it. I can hear it in your guitar. I hit it on the fucking head.

Ron: We were just listening to that "Mascara and Monsters." See, that makes a big difference, you bringing that point up because I was listening to "Dirk Wears White Socks" and I had stolen it off the "Dirk Wears White Socks" album. (9) God, I

stole... that Italian thing. I had stolen a vocal pattern for "Funeral March" from it. When we used to write together the stuff we listened to was different. A lot of Magazine, Damned, Buzzcocks...

Jack: ...Gang of Four and all that shit made us TSOL. We all go on, we learn to play our shit, and then we come back with a new set of influences. For me I think it's an OK record, but I'm really looking forward to the next one because we've gotten over a lot of hurdles. For just coming back after seventeen years, with the lawsuits, the water under the bridge, and all that other shit, it's a great record. You almost have got to listen to it as a first record. If you looked at it like it was just some kids, and they made their first record, you'd say, "Fuck. They did a great job." I'm looking forward to the next one.

Steve: What about the writing?

Jack: Well, that was tough, too. On the last Joykiller album - there wasn't a note on that fucking album that I didn't have something to do with. The last record I did with those guys I pre-apologized. When I went into the studio I said, "Look, I just want to say 'I'm sorry' in advance for what I going to do to you guys." This last Gentleman Jack stuff. I wrote it all at home. The band didn't even know the stuff. We went in the studio and I brought out butcher paper and just wrote all the notes on it and said, "It goes like this and this, with this kind of feel. Let's go." With TSOL it was a whole different trip. We wrote. Threw out songs, and wrote, and threw out songs, and...

Reflex: So this was collaborative.

Jack: Yeah, and it was tough, man, because of what I feel like now, about personal responsibility. I was listening to that Offspring song about driving in the car and fucking shooting somebody. I can't get behind that. You know what I mean? I don't believe in that. I'm nonviolent now. So you take someone who was once violent, and is now nonviolent, so there is now a lot of stuff I can't back lyrically. You start thinking, "All right then. What do I write about?" So it's tough.

Steve: Well, like with Tony, I've asked him, "Why don't you write something like the first Adolescents stuff anymore?" and he said, "I can't write shit like that anymore because I don't think like that anymore. I'm not gonna go home and jack off or do this or do that."

Reflex: Well, I might...

Jack: Exactly. It's tough.

Reflex: They've got a preconceived notion of what we're all about. It's a drag. No one wants to be pigeonholed by someone else's ideal, as opposed by the reality of what a band wants to do, and how things really are. I think your voice sounds great and I'm glad to hear you push it and challenge it, rather than aping something you did twenty years ago. I'm glad you're pushing yourself.

Jack: Yeah, I'm feeling OK. I wish some of the stuff got played live before we recorded it. Stuff changes from when you did it in the studio. A lot of

the problems are gone now. When we head into it, that's all gone.

The live shows have been lots of fun. The mustache thing was fun. We gave a kid his first shave in Bakersfield. If you think about that, it's a total rite of passage, man. Like, if you go to some societies it's a big deal. Getting your foreskin whacked, getting your first facial hair cut. That's important. I felt pretty tribal about that, man.

Ron: Get out your sack, kid.

Jack: Right. I'll never forget this buddy of mine - he's dead now - he was so fucking funny. My nephew wanted to go to a show so my older sister, told me, "Hey, your nephew wants to go to a show. Is that cool?" and I said, "Yeah, no problem." I pick them up. They're fifteen. They don't know what's going, right? They get in the car and they sit with my buddies in the back. My buddy looks over like this and he goes, "Let's see your sack, kid." My nephew goes, "What?!" "Bring out yer sack. Show me what ya got. I'll show ya what I got." My nephew was so bummed. I turned around I said, "Come on. Put your dick away!" [laughing] He's dead now.

Then they got in a fight in the car. These two guys got in a fight. Not my nephew and his friend. They're already freaked out. They're on a trip with Uncle Jack and it's already bad news. So one guys sitting next to me, and the other guy's in the back. The guy in the back said, "Hey man, how come you only got four months of time for that crime you did? That was a big deal." And I go, "Rat. Rat. Rat. Rat." And the guy in the back goes, "You fucking rat, bro?" And he turns around in the front, and he did rat and I didn't know! And he starts to yell, "RAAAAT! RAAAT!" Then they start yelling back and forth, and I'm just laughing. These kids are leaning against the side, and then a full-on fist fight in the car! It was so fucked, so fucked. Oh well. [general laughter]

Reflex: Does he still go out with you?

Jack: Yeah. He lives with me now. Living with Uncle Jack. [looks out the window] Look at this. No chicks, no nothing. Old man riding around the corner on a bike. I talk to my wife and she says, "What's going on there?" and I say, "Nothing."

Reflex: I've been to three of your shows this week and it's been pretty quiet.

Jack: I was telling a friend I can't remember when the last time was that I was on tour and picked up and messed with a girl. It's been twenty years. Normally, I just get out, grab a book, lay down, and read...

I should show you what I have for the Agnostic Front show. A skirt - pink with white spots. They can't figure us out, those fucking skinheads in the audience.

Reflex: Yeah, I worry that you'll get yourself killed. Baiting 200 angry skinheads in a dress. It's gonna be hard to spot you.

Jack: A friend of me has a video of me fighting two guys. In a dress. I was just fucking them up. The guy had said something about me. I don't

know what he did. His buddy kept pushing it. I don't remember it but I saw the video. I had a tube top on, too. I mean, what do you do? You go home, you've got a black eye, you're all bloodied, and say, "Some guy in a dress fucked me up!" Fuck that. I'll run nowadays. I don't want anything to do with it. Once you've been stabbed a couple of times, shot at, it's no fun. I had a guy pull a gun on me at Chaz Ramirez's studio. (10) Some guy came down from, whatever. The guy I was working with brought his producer, some guy from Hollywood. I got into an argument with him, and fucking around with him. He starts spinning around going, "I didn't do three tours in Nam to have some punk ff-fff-fff!" I turn around in the chair and say, "Shoot me, Jew boy." I had a couple in me that morning though. Chaz and I had been on the Thunderbird. (11) I wouldn't have felt it anyway....

END NOTES

(1) Bergamont Station/Track 16 is an art museum in Santa Monica, California. From April to June 1999 an exhibition curated by Exene Cervenkova and John Roecker called "Forming: The Early Days of Los Angeles Punk" took place which chronicled part of the Los Angeles punk rock scene. The exhibit culminated with a concert which featured an array of bands which included Devo, X, WeirDOS, Plugz, Adolescents, F-Word, and TSOL among others. Bootleg videos are floating around as well as a never-to-be-released feature film. This would be the last major rock performance by Rik L. Rik.

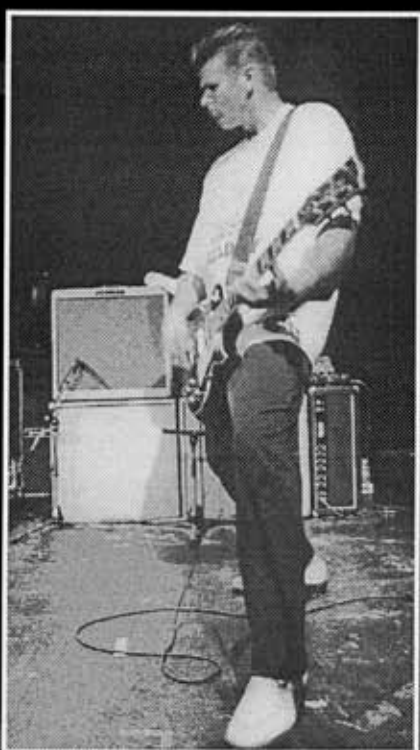
(2) The set at Bergamont Station was great. The place turned into a zoo. There was total bedlam. Mike Rouse, a local musician who owned some of the stage equipment used, got his nose thumped. He took it like a trooper and later commented that he'd expect no less from a great TSOL show. TSOL would play less than a week later at Fletcher's birthday bash at the Key Club with the Adolescents as a support. A bootleg video is floating around.

(3) Thom Wilson recorded "Dance with Me" and "Beneath the shadows" for TSOL, the self titled Adolescents LP and "Welcome to Reality" EP. He disappeared - no pun intended - for a while and was looked up by the Offspring to record "Smash." He was the engineer on the new TSOL release.

(4) In a very confusing TSOL dichotomy, there are actually two distinct bands who have used the name TSOL. One ran from 1980-1983, and the other from 1984-1991. The latter band, fronted by Joe Wood, retained legal claim to the name. The first line up began to reclaim the name after 1991 and has been caught in periodic haggling with the latter up until recently.

(5) Steve Martinez worked at Triple X records from the mid eighties into the early nineties. He was the in-house artist and did graphics for a number of Triple X releases at that time, including work for TSOL and Tender Fury.

(6) My favorite was an early misprint in a fanzine




which dubbed them True Sons of Liberty, which had a "Guns of Navarone" feel to it....

(7) Pat Brown was a staple at many early shows and parties in the beach area. He was the same Pat Brown of the early Vandals anthem "The Legend of Pat Brown."

(7) In 1980 I traded Mike a Mickey Mouse t-shirt for a TSOL shirt. It was one of 12 the band screened. Rikk Agnew is wearing it - actually borrowed from me and never returned! - on the back cover of the blue Adolescents LP. Gimme back my shirt, Rikk.

(9) "Dirk Wears White Socks" by Adam and the Ants.

(10) Chaz Ramirez was the owner and engineer of the Casbah Studio in Fullerton. Beside playing bass in Eddie and The Subtitles and collecting vintage vacuum cleaners, Chaz recorded a number of Orange County bands including Social Distortion, Adolescents, Eddie and the Subtitles, Pontiac Brothers (the band that introduced us all to the Doll Hut), Jack Grisham, Flower Lizards, Berlin, and a million others. Chaz, the consummate worker, fell through an acoustic ceiling while pulling out some electrical wiring he was going to use for his studio, and died from head injuries sustained in the fall three days later. Mike Ness and Dennis Dannell later bought the studio in order to keep that piece of rock and roll history going. It's current status is unknown.

(11) Thunderbird is a cheap fortified wine. Prior to his abstinence, Chaz would drink "shortdogs" which were the smaller bottles. 

THE PHARMACIST'S DAUGHTER

INTERVIEW BY MONEY

Amy Fusselman's new book, *The Pharmacist's Mate*, is a quirky novelette about the author's numerous attempts at artificial insemination. It's a hilarious tale underscored by her poignant account of her father's death. Irony abounds. Interspersed throughout are selections from her father's journal written while he served as the Pharmacist's Mate on the George E. Pickett during World War II. I met Amy during her recent book tour at Midnight Special on the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica where she played guitar, sang, and confessed to a punk rock past...

§: What was your punk rock band like?

AF: I was the rhythm guitarist in a five-member band called The Bread Group. (One of the four food groups - why we thought this was hilarious, I don't know.) My now-husband was the lead singer, and the two of us wrote most of the songs. I was not a good musician at all, but the lead guitarist, drummer, and bass player were great, which made up for it. My real contribution to the band was enthusiasm: I just couldn't get over the fact that I was allowed to play, even though I wasn't that good. That was a real change for me, because throughout grade school and high school I was a serious competitive figure skater. I practiced 5 or 6 hours a day, skipped school to attend competitions, the whole works. When I quit skating and went to college I was like a sailor on shore leave. Being in a punk rock band was heaven for me. On top of it, we, as a band, just had good luck - our third gig ever was opening for The Minutemen. And this was in Columbus, Ohio, so we also often played with two insanely good local bands - Scrawl and The Great Plains.

§: Is that how you met your husband?

Amy: I met my husband in biology class. But we started dating and being in the band at the same time.

§: What was playing with the Minutemen like?

Amy: Pretty humbling. I wish I remembered more of it, but the truth is, I was in such awe of how good they were and was so ashamed at how bad we were in comparison that I just drank a lot. It was our third gig ever and the house was packed with music dorks who had little patience for our brand of drunk-punk. The promoter (who I bullied into putting us on the bill) was way into us at the introduction: "Hey everybody!" he said, "Let's welcome The Bread Groooooop!". But after we played he pretty much hung his head and mumbled something about how we'd never played out before. Anyway, we got better.

§: Who are Scrawl and Great Plains?

Amy: Scrawl is one the greatest undiscovered rock bands of the century. Their song "Green Beer" is one of the best anthems ever. Their recordings include "Plus, Also, Too" (No Other, 1987) "He's Drunk" (Rough Trade, 1988) and "Smallmouth" (Rough Trade, 1990). They have a new one out called "Nature Film." You can get more info at <scrawl.net>. The Great Plains were this fantastic band fronted by the legendary singer/poet/voluptuary Ron House, now with Thomas Jefferson Slave Apartments. They were Columbus Ohio's version of musical royalty in the '80s. I should also say that another great band around Columbus at that time was The Gibson Brothers, which featured Don Howland and Jeff Evans. They were sort of super lo-fi hillbilly punks who had a couple of classic records. "Big Pine Boogie" is a gem and "The Man Who Loved Couch Dancing" should really be owned by everyone.

§: You played the acoustic guitar during your book tour. What songs did you play?

Amy: Now, Money, you know very well that I did not just play "the acoustic guitar." I played the legendary red, white, and blue, Buck Owens American acoustic guitar, a gorgeous instrument I bought broken on Avenue D for \$20, and which I hope to one day sell on ebay for enough money to send my son to college. As for songs, I played "Six Pack" by Black Flag, "Hell's Bells" by AC/DC, and "I Love My Mom" by the Bread Group. If I tour again - and I hope to - I am going to expand my repertoire. I would tell you the set list, but I don't want to give it away.

§: So, like, you won a contest about electrical engineering on boats?

Amy: Yes, as a matter of fact, I did. I had been a fan of this literary journal *McSweeney's* - which is published by Dave Eggers, the guy who wrote the bestseller, *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* - since I saw the first issue. I then became a reader of the *McSweeney's* web site <www.mcsweeneys.net>, which is where I saw the announcement that they were holding a contest to find someone to write a book about electrical engineering on boats. Basically, I entered the contest and won... even though my book doesn't have anything to do with electrical engineering. There are some boats in it, though.

§: But a lot of the book is about trying to get pregnant, becoming a vessel, no?

Amy: Absolutely. Did I say the book wasn't about boats? I meant electrical engineering. There is actually quite a lot of boat stuff in the book.

§: Did you like being pregnant?

Amy: I did. I did not have the awful symptoms I have heard women talk about, so I was lucky. Also - when I really started showing, I found that strangers on the street would just smile at me, really nice smiles, which I loved. Plus, I ate like a linebacker, and people just gave me more food. It was great.

§: What punk rock records do you consider essential listening for your kid?

Amy: Black Flag, "Damaged"; Dead Boys, "Young, Loud and Snotty"; the first four Ramones records; the first

Clash LP; and anything by Operation Ivy, Agent Orange, and Les Black and the Amazing Pink Holes.

\$: *The Pharmacist's Mate* is an extremely personal book. Did you find it exhilarating or terrifying to write?

Amy: Exhilarating, because I love to write. I didn't think too hard about other people reading it. I try to stay away from that, because it makes me less free.

\$: Did your dad talk about his experiences at sea much?

Amy: No, which is why finding the journal was so important to me.

\$: How did you come about getting your father's journal?

Amy: The journal actually appeared on my father's bookshelf one day. This was this old bookshelf in his study that had the same 50 books on it - *The Eye of the Needle* and everything Tom Clancy ever wrote, that sort of thing - for years. And then one day the journal was there, too. This was a few months before he died. I was so excited to see it and read it and to ask him questions about his time in the war that I didn't ask him where the heck the book had been all those years.

\$: In the vernacular of a food critic, how would you describe your book?

Amy: Rich and satisfying. Oh, wait - that's cigarettes.

\$: Have you considered that with a title like *The Pharmacist's Mate* you could be setting the little tyke up for a lifetime of drug addiction?

Amy: Actually, I was worried about that title, but only because I thought people were going to think the book was like a girly "Permanent Midnight," and obviously, it's not. I have a terrible time with titles, which is probably clear by now, from "The Bread Group." At one point I wanted to call the book "Two Logs," so it could have been much worse.

\$: Did you have a word limit to work with, or did you just know when it was over? I ask because your tour diary on the McSweeney's web site feels like an extension of the book, which, I suppose it is.

Amy: I didn't have a word limit, I just wrote until I felt done. But because the book is basically like a recording - it doesn't have an arc per se, or an ending where all the characters talk about what they've learned or whatever, it's more like, "Do you want to keep playing?" "OK" - I could conceivably go on for a long time. I very much consider the tour diary an extension of the book, and am hoping it will be published on paper some day.

\$: Do you have any sailor tattoos?

Amy: No. But my husband has a beautiful tattoo on his chest, over his heart, of a flaming hand with a wheel in the palm, from when he was walking down the sidewalk on First Avenue near Tenth Street, and got mowed down by a drunken driver who jumped the curb. He's very lucky to be alive. And then he also has a lot of scars from that experience. So I figure he has enough physical markings for both of us.

\$: Do you share your father's fascination with guns?

Amy: Yes. My father willed me his Seacamp, which I am very happy about.

\$: What's the most interesting thing you've ever shot at?

Amy: Just paper targets. That's all I've ever shot at.

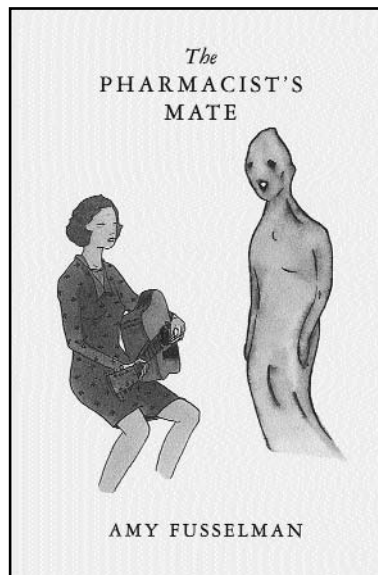
\$: What's *Surgery of Modern Warfare*?

Amy: A web site I edit for fun. It's at <www.surgeryofmodernwarfare.com>. I took the name from an old book I bought at the flea market. The book has fantastic images of how to sew up a leg full of shrapnel, etc. I figured if I ran out of stuff to publish I could always publish stuff from the book, but so far that hasn't happened. People keep submitting good writing and artwork!

\$: What are you working on now?

Amy: I just finished a piece for *Jane* magazine about my labor that will be out in October. I'm also working on ideas for another book, and noodling around on some stories and poems. I like to have about ten things going at once.

The Pharmacist's Mate can be ordered through McSweeney's Book at <www.mcsweeneys.net>. Why should you buy a copy? 1) Because it's a beautiful little book. 2) McSweeney's Books is a DIY outfit. Once the publisher's costs are recouped, all proceeds go directly to the author. 3) It's printed in Iceland.



Excerpt from *The Pharmacist's Mate*:

And did I say this already? That music is the best theater? That it is so ridiculous that it doesn't even make sense? That there should be these people onstage, standing there, wiggling little strings on blocks of wood slung around their necks? Jumping up and down and wiggling the strings? And how if you were deaf, and just saw them doing that, you would think, what the hell? What is that? And if you were never on earth before and someone has to explain it to you they would have to say there's this thing called music, and it's invisible. And it floats around in the air and it fills up whole rooms, and more than rooms, whole homes, whole football fields, whole stadiums. And we know it is there, because we can hear it through these little holes on either sides of our heads. And if we turn it up really loud we can feel it, we can feel it in our bodies vibrating.



Friends Forever: the band



(left) Friends Forever blowing up their van during a set.

interview by Liz O.

It's 5:15 p.m., Friday evening at the KXLU studio. Ben Wolfensohn, director of Friends Forever's recent documentary, escorts Nate, Josh, and their newest member, Jason, inside. The boys are apologetic.

"I'm sorry we're so late," says Nate.

Late? It's only been fifteen minutes since our set interview time. By music standards, being fifteen minutes late is the equivalent of showing up ten minutes early. As the stories go, Nate and Josh are the most sincere people we'll ever meet and from the tone in their voices. It's obvious that they feel really bad for their tardiness.

After Friends Forever is introduced on-air to the KXLU audience and given the opportunity to plug tomorrow night's show, we head into the abandoned booth for KXLU's A.M. sister-station. The window is open and we can hear the boisterous chants of 18-year-olds outside protesting about whatever it is that 18-year-olds protest about these days. We shut the window and somewhere in between discussions about Josh's new van (a VW nearly identical to the one in the movie save for a blue paintjob and the remnants of Grateful Dead stickers), the Rainbow Room, and where to find a good burrito in Los Angeles, the following conversation was exchanged.

Liz: How long was Ben following you around with a camera?

Nate: A good part of last year. I don't know. I'd say maybe seven to nine months all together.

Liz: What does it feel like to have someone follow you as you travel around the country in van with a bunch of dogs?

Nate: It goes through phases. At first, we're like, "What the hell is this guy doing?" Then you start get used to it. Then it becomes just this guy that's there. But, at first you hate it. You just wonder what the hell you're saying most of the time because it's being filmed. Then it's all right. It just becomes normal.

Josh: Yeah, you're super conscious at first about everything you do. After about two days, you just don't care anymore. You're more yourself. For the first couple days, you're pretty reserved and quiet, I would have to say.

Liz: When did you guys finally get comfortable with the camera around you?

Nate: I'd say, after we were in LA for awhile and we went back to Denver. So, it took me about a month.

Josh: I always felt comfortable. It didn't bother me. It was a little weird, but it didn't bother me too much.

Liz: So, how does it feel to not have a camera following you around?

Nate: Well, it's good that there is no camera around. But, now there is a bunch of footage that has been documented that makes me feel terrible. But, it's good to be back to normal.

Josh: It feels great to not have the camera around. It was... an experience - a good one. But, it's also nice not to have one around.

photos by Ben Wolfensohn

Liz: Nate, you said that you feel terrible about some stuff that was caught on film. What?

Nate: My life.

Liz: What about it?

Nate: When I first saw the movie I just... I don't know... I just hated my life. It's kind of silly. That's all I can really say. Just the whole thing. I just hate watching myself, or whatever. So, it's just kind of torturous, like watching a mirror of yourself or something like that. So, it kind of put me into a depression.

Liz: How about you, Josh?

Josh: I didn't feel terrible about anything. It was definitely odd to watch yourself in a movie and see - 'cause, obviously, out of everything that was filmed he couldn't capture everything that happened - so, it was kind of weird to see a certain take on the whole year. There was a lot of other stuff that was going on. Crazy stuff. Kooky stuff. I'm sure it was a nightmare for Ben to have to edit all of that into one congruent story. It wasn't too terrible.

Liz: Is there anything that you wish was caught on tape?

Josh: Well, when we were in Vegas - it was like the first or second day they were following us - and me and Nate were trying to get married. Not to each other. To our light girl. We flipped a coin to see who would get to marry her. It would have been kind of fun.

Liz: Where is the light girl today?

Josh: She's in Portland. She had important business up in Portland.

Liz: How do you deal without the light girl?

Nate: Well, we'll have to use somebody else for the show. Eddie, supposedly.

Josh: But, he's most likely going to get wasted. He won't even be able to switch switches.

Nate: Eddie is the mascot of the Museum of Death out in LA, right now.

Liz: Was there anything that you are really glad didn't make it on tape?

Nate: Nah, everything is fine that we got on tape. Like Josh said, it's kind of interest-

so sleepy that I probably would have driven off of the road.

Josh: It's pretty rippin' though.

Nate: It's no Celtic Frost. Yeah, it's nothing like Celtic Frost. A lot of those tech guitar rock people put me to sleep, like Joe Satriani and the other guy. They just put me to sleep. They have to have good subject matter like Celtic Frost. Like some mythi-

'n'roll sense, where he knows that business is probably the stupidest part of anything so let's make it the funnest part. So, let's rock-'n'rollify it. So, he just self-promotes himself all of the time, but he does it in the funniest ways. He's consistently advertising for himself. For many people that's considered super-cheesy. Even his use of dot-com is brilliant. I hate people who use dot-com, but I don't mind hearing out of his mouth, "Go to Troma.com!"

Liz: What was it like going to Troma? Was it like a Catholic going to the Vatican?

Nate: Yeah. That was a whole pilgrimage tour. That's what it was for us. We saw it just as a pilgrimage to Troma.

Liz: What about when they messed up your name at Troma?

Josh: That was awesome.

Nate: That was funny. A lot of people ask us about that because they think that it would bother us, but I think that it was great. For one, we were kind of having a... not really a feud but a... battle with Rainbow Sugar. They were trying their hardest to get into the Troma world. They were calling them all the time, sending them packages. So, I think that it was great that, when we got there, they thought that we were Rainbow Sugar. They probably hated us and now they will hate Rainbow Sugar and not us.

We tend to battle people in bands all of the time. It's like our whole realization that the whole thing is like an organized sport. So, our team was battling with the Rainbow Sugar team and we scored a goal at that point. We made Lloyd think that they are just a terrible band that plays in there van. That's brilliant.

Nate: So now we can call him as Friends Forever and he'll be like, "Who the hell are these guys?" Then they'll call and he'll be like, "Oh, that's that terrible band that plays in their van."

Liz: But, you have to admit that there is a Troma-esque quality to playing in your van.

Nate: Oh, yeah. That's the weirdest thing. I mean, I always loved Troma. I've been Tromatized since I saw "Terror Firmer," but I didn't realize all of these similarities. These guys have been doing what I wish could be doing what they have been doing for twenty-five years. I was just completely impressed. It proved that the spirit of what they do is not some idealistic (thing). They're just doing it and they have been doing it for twenty-five years. It's great to see a realistic triumph like that. It's a world you want to create so that people can live in it, not so that people can think that you're cool. That's exactly what they did. They're still living in that world because they love it, not because people think that it's something that it's not.

Liz: How did you guys meet up and start playing in your van?

Nate: Well, I came from a family of unicorns and Josh came from a family of wizards. When we were 35 years

Liz: Do you guys play outside of the van very much?

Nate: Well, we used to have this thing where, like, if we were to touch the cement we would be eaten by alligators. Now, lately, we're not believing that the alligators are there as much. I think it's more the extreme part too.

ing to see an edit of your life. It's kind of a melded sculpture of what it really was. It's not really that. He kind of picked and chose stuff to make it seem like something and that's what he got. So, it's kind of interesting. The only things I wish he got were the kids in Portland that wanted to kill us. After we played the Portland show, these little kids - about twelve - kept saying that they were going to kill us if we didn't leave. Man, that would have been a pretty good scene.

Liz: Did you stick the dogs on them?

Nate: No, we tried to sell them Jen for an hour of sex. They wanted to do it, but they didn't have enough money. So, we were trying to pimp out Jen and this girl Melanie. It would have been funny, but that was the lost scene. They actually kicked us out of Portland. We're not allowed back there anymore, according to these kids.

Liz: That's pretty rock star.

Josh: Yeah. They were chasing after the car and throwing bottles. Were they throwing bottles?

Nate: Yeah.

Josh: They were throwing bottles at the car and just chasing after us. They were about twelve. That was the funny thing.

Liz: Have you guys done any interviews for this yet?

Josh: Nah, this is our first one.

Liz: Cool. Then I can ask you all of the questions that you would be sick of if you have already done a lot of interviews.

Both: Yeah.

Liz: So, is it true that nobody can be Yngwie Malmsteen?

Nate: I think that it is probably true. The guy is a master at the guitar. We have tried for many years to be as good as him, but clearly we have failed. But, I do respect him. But, uh, I don't know. Yeah, I don't think we can be as good as him.

Liz: I heard that you have an Yngwie Malmsteen tape in your car.

Nate: Yeah. I gave it to Ben just because I thought that it was funny. Like, "Hey, man, you have to check this out. This is who he compared us to!" I bought it and I probably got through half of the album. It made me

cal thing going on.

Liz: Like Merciful Fate?

Nate: Yeah, Merciful Fate. They're great. Stuff like that where you're listening to it while you're driving, thinking about the world. But he doesn't have that - Yngwie Malmsteen. It's just like, listen to my awesomeness.

Liz: What was your impression of the encounter with the Yngwie Malmsteen dude?

Nate: What was my impression? Well, stuff like that happened all over. So, it was just like something that happened. It was funny. I think Mitch was there and he was like, "Man, some guy just hated you guys." I was like, "Wow! Where is he? I want to go talk to him." Then Ben got his camera and I was like, "So, what did we do wrong?" I wanted to know what we did wrong. Get his feedback. Then it ended up being documented and it was funny, I guess.

Liz: Did you find it to be a learning experience?

Nate: Yeah, I learned that we are a gimmick. I knew it. I had this feeling in my stomach that we probably were just a big gimmick. Then he told me that we were and I was like, "Fine." It was like solidity or something like that. He was right. It was like coming out.

Liz: How did you end up playing for Troma?

Nate: We just wanted to honor him by playing a show for him.

Liz: What is it about Lloyd Kaufman's work that you like?

Nate: He's brilliant. Like we were telling him, he is what I believe is what a true rock'n'roller is. I don't know how old he is, but he's got a better spirit than any guy out there right now. He has no respect for political correctness. Everything he does is purely for fun. He's trying to make things as fun as possible. He's brilliant. I could obsess over him for quite awhile.

It's hard to just put into words because he's kind of religious for me. He knows that you have to be business to a certain extent. So, he's handled business in a rock-

old, we both sent off to go on a walkabout around the land of Denver. I met him when I was 52 or 54, something like that.

Josh: It all started with that winter dance.

Nate: Well, yeah, we did meet each other on a double date. I was with a girl. He was with a girl. We were on this double date and we both thought that we were kind of funny. I don't know if he thought I was funny, but I thought that he was funny. Funny things would come out of his mouth. We just kind of became friends after that. I was like a freshman in high school.

Josh: We were like 15 or 16. It was one of our first dates, I think. Ten years ago.

Liz: So how did you hook up with the van?

Nate: Geraldine Fibbers.

Josh: Well, it came out of a bunch of reasons: 1) We wanted to play a show and the promoter kind of jerked us out of it. We still wanted to do it so we just decided to pull up in a car and play right there. 2) Another reason is that we used to play on the sidewalk with no car. The cops would always come by and tell us that what we were doing was illegal. Y'know, you can't sit on the sidewalk or stand on the sidewalk playing your instrument. But, it's totally legal if you are in your vehicle and no part of your body is touching the sidewalk. So, we were just traveling around just to do that. We were just trying to be completely legal with it. Then it ended up being kinda fun and exciting, so we expanded on it.

Liz: How many shows have you played?

Nate: Since 1997?

Josh: Yeah, I don't know how many shows though.

Nate: 1,000.

Josh: Hundreds of thousands of shows.

Nate: We would go on these super long tours and play anywhere. Try to play at least three times a week or something like that.

Liz: What are some of your favorite shows or places to go?

Nate: Tucson is great. We haven't been there for a long time, though. Santa Cruz. Olympia is fun. Picayune is great. In Mississippi.

I like the smaller towns, actually. They're just... The attitude of the people is what I usually like. Like, Santa Cruz is really just about making good rock music. That's what people focus on. It's not really about their jobs. They just want to create this world of rock. Same with Providence, RI. All of their creativity is going toward a certain idea. That's what is great about those places.

Liz: Do you guys get to meet a lot of entertaining characters?

Nate: Oh, yeah. Nate, this crazy guy in Santa Cruz, sits around and sings religious songs. There's plenty.

Liz: What was it like meeting Harvey Sid Fischer in a gas station?

Nate: It was pretty weird because he just started talking to our lightgirl, Jen, asking her about what she was eating. He was just this seemingly creepy old man in his white, old beat up car. There was a club across the street and these totally decked-out ladies walking around, so it just seemed like there was this guy just in the area scoping out the girls. He saw one that looked approachable, so he just started yelling from across the gas station. He mentioned that he had just played a show, so we asked him who he was. It ended up being Harvey Sid Fischer. Kind of a weird coincidence.

Liz: Where was that?

Nate: Here in Hollywood.

Liz: Did he tell you about your sign?

Josh: No, that's the weird thing. We asked him about astrology and he doesn't really follow it. We were hoping that he could tell us a whole lot about ourselves, but he didn't know a whole lot about astrology.

Liz: And is there anything that Harvey Sid Fischer's music has taught you about your sign?

Josh: I'm pretty loving.

Nate: I always remember all of the other songs. I'm probably a terrible person. I can't remember how the Scorpio one goes.

Liz: Are you still trying to finish 300 albums in one year?

Josh: Yeah.

Liz: How many do you have done?

Nate: We haven't counted for a month.

Josh: It's like 70.

Nate: We're pretty behind. But, it's getting tough. It's starting to make my brain turn to jelly. It's draining.

Liz: What's your game plan?

Nate: It's just to get the masters done and the cover art. It's not to actually release them. We don't have the money to do that. It's just to, like, get the masters and the cover art.

Liz: Are you doing them all under Friends Forever?

Nate: Yeah.

Liz: Are they kind of similar?

Nate: I try to make everyone equally different. There are a couple rules. Like, there can't be jams unless... One of the albums is to try and make the worst album ever. That one is going to be a jam album. No jams and a couple of other things.

Josh: Tell her who we're going to try to get to record that one.

Nate: Oh, yeah, we're going to try and get Steve Albini to record the worst album ever. We're just going to try to hound him this summer. All we want him to do is press a record or something like that and we'll say that he produced it. That's going to be a jam. I can't remember the other rules.

Liz: What about slow jams?

Nate: No jams. They have to be songs.

Josh: They have to be songs. Or compositions. Or pieces that people have written.

Liz: No, I mean slow jams. Like when the DJ gets on the mic and says "Let's slow the pace so you can suck some face."

Nate: Oh yeah!

Josh: Yeah! Definitely some love albums.

Nate: Slow jams, yeah. Not jammy jams.

Josh: Love songs. Romantic. Got it all.

Liz: What about your side projects?

Nate: Like the movie? I keep trying to make mine. It will be awhile. My time is more to these albums right now. It will be awhile before I get back to trying to make a movie.

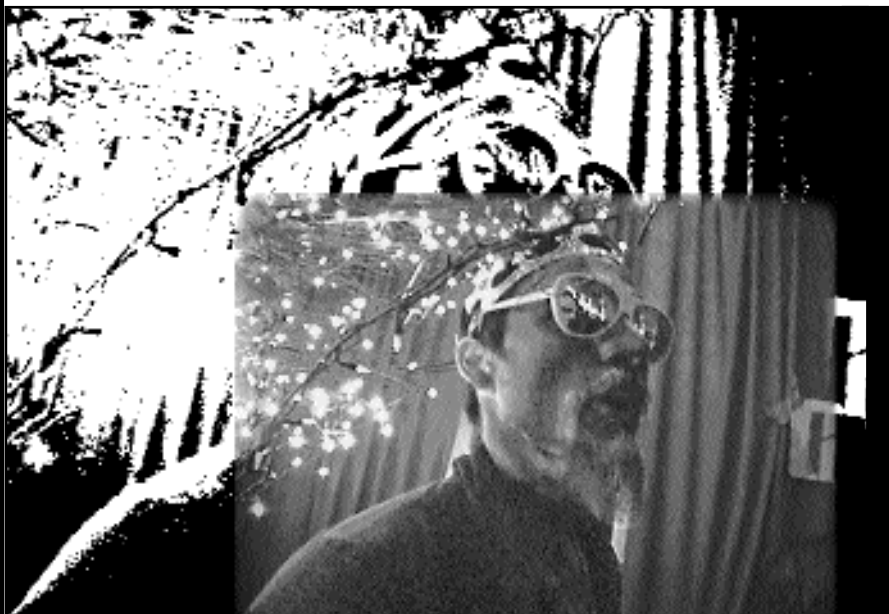
Liz: What's your movie?

Nate: Oh, it's just the one from the movie. We're just trying to make some movie drunk. There really aren't any side projects right now, honestly. It's mostly just making these records.

Josh: Although we have taken on a bunch of side bands like Purple Mountain Majesty. There is a plethora of bands that we're in.

Liz: Jason, How long have you been in Friends Forever?

Jason: About two weeks. I think that they're going to throw me out after this show.



Liz: Have they been treating you okay?

Jason: Yeah, they're great. They treat me really well. I've been freeloading the whole way.

Liz: How do you feel about the show tomorrow night?

Nate: Uh, that it will suck. We did a test show and it was so bland. It was so intangible. Like watching air. I can't explain it.

Josh: Yeah, that show was horrible, but the theme we had we didn't really connect on. The new theme that we are tackling is going to be great.

Liz: What theme are you tackling right now?

Nate: It's actually not Friends Forever. It's Friends Forever Extreme.

Liz: Like Extreme Sports?

Josh: Exactly. Extreme.

Liz: So, it's like Friends Forever for snowboarders?

Nate: Kind of. Yeah. You're right on. You can be in our show. You're bright and right there on the same map. She said our example, which is true.

Josh: Yeah, she's exactly right. Have you ever drank a Mountain Dew or a Code Red? That's what it's going to be like.

Liz: Have you been to any of the screenings? What did you think?

Josh: I haven't been to one.

Nate: I can't watch it.

Liz: Weren't you at the one at the Smell?

Nate: Yeah. I had to get pretty drunk.

Liz: What about the Madison Film Festival? Oh, and I'm going to ask you about Sundance too, so start thinking about it.

Nate: Aww, geez! Well, Madison Film Festival was way better than Sundance. But, yeah, that was torturous. I don't know why Ben wants to torture people with an hour and a half of our lives. Like I told him, it's like a new Chinese torture - sitting down and watching our lives. I think you'll get a lot of information out of the person. Y'know, whatever the secret it. Just sit them down in front of our movie and say, "Look, man, you'll have to watch this ten more times! What are the Russians doing?!" You'll get your information pretty quick. That's what it was like at the Madison Film Festival.

Liz: How about Sundance?

Nate: That place sucks bad.

Josh: It was probably the worst thing.

Nate: It wasn't even our movie. It was just everything that place stands for is absolutely terrible. Which, again, is why Troma is amazing. They are the only breath of fresh air in that whole town. Tromadance was truly, compared to that festival, great. It was just amazing.

Liz: So what about Sundance makes you the most ill?

Nate: Just how it's completely the opposite of what it claims that it's about. It claims that it's about independent cinema and what it's really about are big movie deals, big budget people. Now, I guess, they won't

even let a movie in if doesn't have one star in it. It's just a bunch of crap.

We got to play our coldest show ever. We got to wear the gloves. There's that extreme wind blowing.

Josh: That could have been our first extreme show.

Nate: That's another way to battle bands - see who can play the coldest show. Your body starts to shut down at certain levels.

Liz: What's your favorite concept for a show so far?

Nate: Well, one of my personal favorites was when we played "Iron Man" for 25 minutes. That was just an ode to Rainbow Sugar and the ending of their warehouse. Cindy wanted to play "Iron Man," but nobody wanted to sing it. So we played it for 25 minutes.

Josh: We had an extra bassist playing for that show. This guy from this band called Planes Mistaken for Stars.

Liz: Do you guys play outside of the van

After we played the Portland show, these little kids - about twelve - kept saying that they were going to kill us if we didn't leave. Man, that would have been a pretty good scene.

Liz: Did you stick the dogs on them?

Nate: No, we tried to sell them Jen for an hour of sex. They wanted to do it, but they didn't have enough money.

very much?

Nate: Well, we used to have this thing where, like, if we were to touch the cement we would be eaten by alligators. Now, lately, we're not believing that the alligators are there as much. I think it's more the extreme part too.

Josh: You've got to fight the alligators now. You can't be afraid of them.

Liz: Before the Smell, did you play any shows that were inside your van inside the venue?

Nate: That was the first one.

Liz: Have you done it since?

Nate: Yeah, just at Rainbow Sugar's place. It's winter.

Liz: Is that hard for you?

Nate: It's weird at first, but it made sense that night. With Rainbow Sugar it would have to be like that because their neighbors are just weird.

Josh: It kind of also defeats the purpose of playing in the car, too. Then it's definitely a gimmick. But, most of the time it's because we just don't like to book shows at all. We try to bypass all of that crappy stuff and just drive into town and play whenever we want to. So, it's just kind of weird to pull the car into the warehouse.

Liz: Are you guy's still challenging Rainbow Sugar?

Nate: Nah. That was just because they had gotten us. They wanted us to get interviewed for this terrible magazine in

Denver. We're like, "No way!" So, they got these two other guys to pretend that they were us. The interview came out and it was just terrible. So, that's how the whole challenge started. We had to get them back.

Josh: When the interview came out, it was right before a Melvins show and it just made us sound like such idiots.

Nate: We're like, "Aww, man, we're going to get you back."

Liz: But, you did.

Nate: Yeah. We got Lloyd Kaufman to think we were them.

Liz: How do you like Denver?

Nate: I love it in Denver. Creatively. It's not the most flourishing city, but creatively it's great.

The means of getting stuff done so that you can be creative is so much less than it is here. You have to have a full-time job here. So, when you can finally get creative and do your own stuff, you're pretty much wiped out. In Denver, you're not thinking

about all of these other things. I can see why people would move to Olympia because rent is so cheap that they can pretty much be brainstorming all day. Denver, for me, is kind of like that. All of these great atmospheric qualities.

Josh: It's the best city in the world, I would have to say. It's a great bunch. The kids that are really creative do stuff that you won't ever see anywhere else. The sad part is that they aren't appreciated there. They all kind of want to live or give up because no one appreciates them. I think that some of the best bands that I have ever seen in my life live there and are still playing there. It's kind of sad that nobody supports them. It seems like a big competition too, with the kids. Nobody is happy for anybody who gets any kind of recognition. Nate and I were talking about it. It seems like crabs in a bucket. Everybody is keeping each other down right now but the talent is just amazing and the magic that's in the air is just great.

Liz: Where are you off to after tomorrow night?

Josh: We just came up with an idea...

Nate: Someone made a suggestion that we drive up to Alaska and take a boat to the Soviet Union or whatever so we're thinking why don't we just tour the whole world, just not play any shows. But, we'll really have to consider the finances of that.



THROW RAG

Interview: TODD

Pictures: KAT JETSON

Additional questions provided by: KAT JETSON and KEN ALL NIGHT ROCKER



Names are like skin. Every member in Throw Rag has at least two. Music can be skin, too. If it's good enough. Throw Rag are a band with such a solid core, that by the time you hear or see them, you're getting the latest chuff of a much deeper, much older, and developed beast. Think of snakes. Slithery. Dark tongued. Nocturnal. The only way they can grow is by shedding. The only way they grow naturally is by eating things alive and whole. Unlike their brethren of the reptile kingdom, Throw Rag have staked their feast at the all-you-can-eat buffet of rock'n'roll, and have pried their guitar, bass, drums, and washboard deep into the sucking chest wound of the beast. All the bones - rock, skiffle, swamp boogie, country, sailor rock, hoodoo voodoo, punk, hillbilly, and moonshine insanity - are licked clean in the process. That's what I admire about 'em. They play from the dark places with a heart full of flames - with muses as far apart as Buck Owens and Lemmy Motorhead - to make seamless songs that'll make you want to dance, fight, and fuck - all at once.

Franco - Bass guitar King Taco Pearl - Rhythm guitar, egg shaker
Jacko - Washboard, harmonica, bugle, school bell, saw Gusto - drums
Dino - lead guitar Captain Tae Bo - vocals



Todd: Why this? Why not something else?
Jacko: This question is already making my head hurt.

Todd: Why Throw Rag and not running a weed whacking business?

AJ: It's fun.

Jacko: We provide a public service.

Todd: To whom?

Jacko: To starved kids who need good rock-'n'-roll.

Todd: Where did it come from? I think I'm leading up to the point that you guys are a unique entity. Also, I'm doing this from the point of view that I don't think a lot of people outside of California have heard of you...

Tae Bo: Seven years. I think all of us have probably played in bands – other than Jacko – since we were teenagers, but none of us here knew each other. I ended up in Orange County. Followed my ex-wife out there. So I put a band together with another guy who's not in the band any more. Met Jacko. He found Franco. It was weird how this group of people ended up.

Franco: We sort of just strung together. Tae Bo found me. They needed someone to play stand-up bass. We had someone in common that knew both of us but we didn't know each other. We slowly acquired people one at a time. Tae Bo was thinking what he wanted to hear in the music. Jacko came in. He found something he wanted to do. He just wanted to be in the band. He had so many skills.

Pearl: That was the thing I noticed. Actually, how I met Throw Rag - I was a complete outsider. I saw them the first time at their old rehearsal space, this warehouse in Santa Ana. I was in another band and we ended up playing together. I was a huge fan right off the bat. The first thing I noticed about Throw Rag was how remarkably different they were than every other band that was playing at that time. I still think that Throw Rag's pretty unique as far as the music, where it's coming from, the stage show. Everything. It seems oddly familiar in a lot of ways. Seems punk. Seems county. At times seems rockabilly. But it's none of those.

Jacko: I started out playing accordion. I sucked.

Pearl: He never knew how to play accordion.

Jacko: But that's why I did it.

Franco: I didn't know how to play stand-up

bass when we started, either.

Jacko: They asked, "What else can you play?" It was like, "Hey, I play washboard." "That's cool. You're in the band." It wasn't calculated, like an ad in the paper: "Do you like Oasis? Let's get together."

Tae Bo: I actually was running an ad in the *Recycler*. At the

It's still evolving.

Jacko: It really changed when Dino came along.

Franco: We became more guitar oriented.

Jacko: We became more rock'n'roll. It sounds cheesy. That's what's lacking in the music industry. There is no rock'n'roll anymore. You have to be classified. You could be a bunch of fat kids with garbage face and singing la de da melodrama crap like Creed and shit, or you're this. So when anyone comes and sees us, they remember our songs. They sing along to them.

Franco: They see the realness to it.

Jacko: It's no bullshit. Alright, we're a bunch of guys in our thirties. We're fat and skinny and fucked up. There's nothing attractive about half of us. But you know what? It works. People love it. People go, "That was a really kick ass show." We get off the stage; "That was so much fucking fun."

Tae Bo: Music for entertainment purposes. Life's miserable enough without people having to hear what we want to say. They want to not think. That's my theory – give people something they can go, drink a beer, whatever, watch a band play and be entertained for a half hour and not think about whatever they self-obsess over the rest of the week.

Jacko: We've got this really tight knit family of fans that come see us and they always have a great time. We're not trying to be super punk. We're just being us.

Franco: It's grown in a good way.

Tae Bo: Our other drummer was self-taught and never went beyond that and *Gusto's* come in. We had songs we'd written but weren't able to play because we weren't able to do it. *Gusto* came in and it opened the whole thing up. It kicks ass. Wee hooo! *Gusto* turned us into a rock'n'roll band and we didn't even see it coming.

Franco: Some of the songs have been played since the first time I was in the band, but they're played with totally different instruments now.

Tae Bo: Even when *Dino* was in the band, we were being stereotyped just because of the upright bass. Do you know how many times we've been called a psychobilly band? We had one song that was vaguely in that category that we haven't played for five or six years. Unless "psycho" means these guys aren't really all that together upstairs and "billy" means they have some hillbilly in them, but psychobilly, so far as an upright bass, triplets, and the same theme, we've never had anything to do with that. Luckily, bands like the *Humpers* gave us the opportunity to play other shows. So we went right to the punk side. The cool thing



When *Liberace* died, we were drinking beer in the Catholic Church parking lot directly across the street, waiting for him to die, smoking weed.

end, it said, "No pros, no longhairs." I ended up with a bunch of pros anyway, which is refreshing at this point – I'm not calling you guys pros – but they know how to play their instruments. When it started out, I was envisioning more of an acoustic hillbilly thing, but it became rock'n'roll. There was a point where we had Fenders and one day I realized we're playing on Marshalls.

Franco: It all evolved, not with any sort of intent. There was the stand-up bass, the washboard. It was way more skiffle-y. Banjo. We had people come in and play violin some times. Keyboards. Slide guitar.

is now, we just play with anyone. We just played the Hootenanny and the Vegas Shakedown. Those were great.

Franco: People that we're lucky enough to play with are completely different, from Dick Dale to Queens of the Stone Age to Big Sandy and His Fly-Rite Boys.

Tae Bo: Motorhead.

Pearl: If you look at the comparisons that have been made about Throw Rag, people want to talk about this music but they don't know how to describe it.

Tae Bo: One of my favorites was "Sammy Davis Jr. meets The Dead Kennedys." For whatever reason, I can live with that. Sounds good to me.

Todd: Jacko, how many washboard players are known to be actively playing in 43 states, Washington DC, and twenty-three countries as of July 13, 2001?

Jacko: [silence]

Pearl: (not the washboard player) 315?

Todd: Pretty fucking close. 396.

Tae Bo: Is that from Washboards International?

Todd: Yeah.

Pearl: Jacko's listed on that, too.

Jacko: Everyone on Washboards International - it's so funny - it's like the Whistling Dixie Jug Juke Wash My Nuts Band.

Todd: The Dirty Butter Jugband and the Cornbread Washtub Band.

Jacko: It's all old guys about fifty. It is a good website and they do sell Columbus Washboards which have the best filaments. I used to play old washboards but I smashed them up so much. I make them myself. So, basically, the washboard is literally the filament I use to play - is from six or seven washboards. It's a made washboard. I get a can and bolt it on it. License plate, school bells, you name it.

Franco: One of my funnest things to do, when we play a new place, is watching the look on the sound guy's face when we tell him that we have an electric washboard.

Jacko: One of the best was the sound checker at the House of Blues. "What kind of sound do you want? Do you want a raw sound or a rock sound?" It's a fucking washboard. It's a raspy sound.

Todd: Tae Bo, what were your "Bad Lieutenant" days? ("Bad Lieutenant" is a movie about a very wicked, drug-addled cop.)

Tae Bo: Who called me Bad Lieutenant? Ken Rocker?

Todd: Yeah.

Tae Bo: I liked that scene when Harvey Keitel's naked with those two girls and he's just making those beast noises [howls]. I like to do that sometimes when we play. Get naked and that breakdown he's having right there.

Todd: Dino, how many times do you get mistaken for Mark McGrath from Sugar Ray? [laughter]



The crowd got spontaneously naked in support of us is what really made it so exciting.

Pearl: I didn't put that on the website.

Dino: I'm his evil twin.

Tae Bo: There could be a lot worse things to look like.

Franco: Like that kid Gummo.

Tae Bo: [to himself] Dino hates it, man, but can you imagine, "Dude, you look exactly like Bobby Peru" (Tae Bo's referring to the black angel character, Bobby "just like the country" Peru who rapes Laura Dern's character, Lulu Fortune, in "Wild at Heart." I highly recommend the book by Barry Gifford and the movie by David Lynch.)

Jacko: [to himself] "You look like Judd Nelson." (circa "Breakfast Club")

Todd: Did you used to say Throw Rag

hailed from Catalina?

Tae Bo: We summer in Catalina. We winter on the North Shore of the Salton Sea.

Todd: Do you know, if you say it phonetically backwards, Catalina is "anal attack" (Say it out loud. Anil atac.).

Tae Bo: My girlfriend's got me on that "we can have anal sex when we get married" clause. I don't know if anyone else gets that one. I'm a man of considerable girth. It would be punishing anyways. I just don't feel like punishing anyone like that unless they're real good at what they're doing. It wouldn't be fair. Bloody. Horrible.

Todd: So what's the difference between Pirate Rock, and what you guys say you are, Sailor Rock?

Pearl: We're not Sailor Rock anymore. We're Limo Rock.

Jacko: Limobilly. Every show we change.

Todd: I think it's the white shoes. Pirates wouldn't wear white shoes, I don't think. They'd have big boots.

Tae Bo: With big buckles.

Pearl: Sailors are more ship shape. They stand at attention.

Todd: You guys are spiffy dressers... Tae Bo, who's the most important person you've ever puked on?

Franco: Somebody broke his leg by slipping in it.

Tae Bo: I haven't puked on anyone in quite a while. They were all, probably, important to themselves, but I've never puked on anyone important to me. At least not at the time. We have, on film at the Heritage Brewing Company, I vomited so far, perfectly timed with the song, it was eight feet or something. They marked it. There hasn't been any vomit for over three years. Rare nudity.

Jacko: It's only now that people will safely walk up to the front. There used to be an empty circle because Tae Bo was the projectile vomiter. He was scary.

Tae Bo: The sound guy from Bar Deluxe, Dirty Ed. We had a six or seven month hiatus. We were playing our first show back at Bar Deluxe,

and Dirty Ed's all, "Not that guy, man. Last time he was here, he puked on all my microphones, then he puked on my soundboard, I caught him puking in the alley." He was a total panicker.

Jacko: I remember the end of the show. He's like, "You're gonna have to clean these chords, man." Tae-Bo's "all right." Gets the towels and wipes.

Todd: Jacko, do you know somebody who got kicked by a police horse?

Jacko: It was at the Poll Tax Riots (in England). We came out of Lester Square and we went to see the Mack Lads and we got caught in this riot thing. I didn't even know what they were rioting

about. I was oblivious. There were chairs coming out of the windows. I was, "Gah, look at all these people looting, going crazy." My friend is standing there and this huge police horse comes in just. My friend goes, "Look at that big horse." The horse bucks, bam, right on his chest. Literally, he was on the ground choking. He couldn't breathe so we pulled him up. The next day, he lifts up his shirt. Fucking black bruise with imprints of the nail holes of the horseshoes and it broke two of his ribs. [pointing from the top of his torso down] It went black to purple, all the discoloration. He was like, "Check this out!" He was laughing and crying because it hurt so bad. The best bruise I've even seen in my life.

Todd: Franco, what type of tractor did your father invent?

Franco: The home riding tractor, which was the first over-the-counter production, home owner riding mower. AMF.

Todd: The people who make bowling balls.

Franco: That's right. He did that, too. He was a chemical engineer. He made swim fins. A bunch of things.

Tae Bo: Did they make Harley Davidson golf carts?

Franco: Yep... The cover of (Throw Rag's) "Chief Stinking Sour Blanket" 7" is him. He's all proud. He engineered the whole thing. That's his team. They took the picture of him on it.

Todd: Each one of you has to come up with one important step in becoming an official Throw Rag pleasure baron.

Jacko: Mine is definitely medication. Once my mental illness had taken over by the age of 26, medication was really good. Then I could remember what I did and not scream at people and attack 'em.

Franco: Computer porn is definitely a step in the right direction. It's how I like to start every day, frankly. Nice leather chair. Keeps me even keeled. Mostly peruse large ladies/ big girls and older/mature. That's my one, two punch in the morning.

Jacko: We ain't no Motley Crue. We're more like the Spinners or the Kingsman.

Todd: Tae Bo, true or false. Someone threw

your voodoo stick at you and you caught it mid air, very calmly, and said, "Looks like you were ready to hurt someone."?

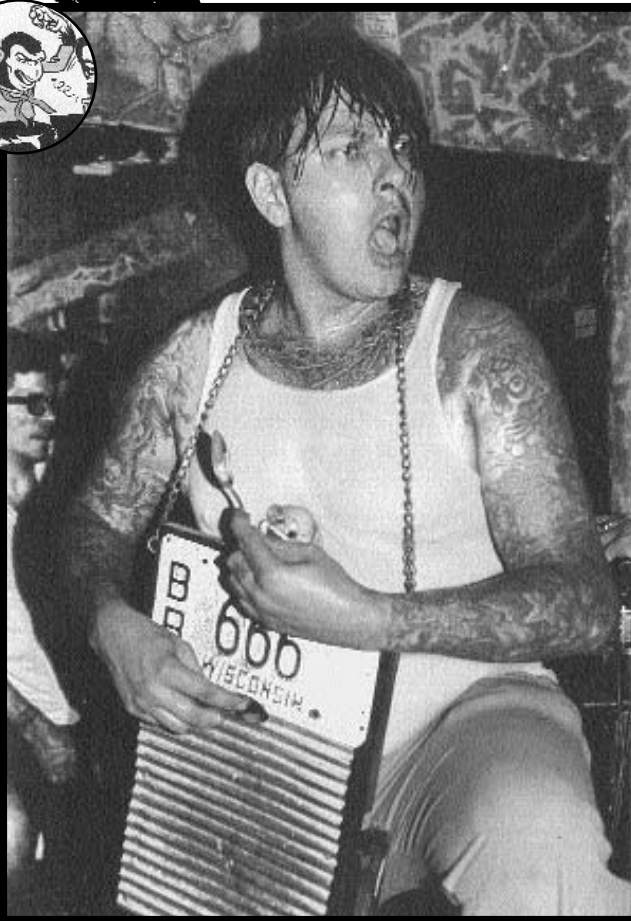
Tae Bo: True. I smashed things.

Jacko: You re-broke my arm with it.

Todd: The Cramps made one of their big breaks playing mental institutions.

What's going to be the big break for Throw Rag?

Jacko: Being put in mental institu-



Jacko: It's no bullshit. Alright, we're a bunch of guys in our thirties. We're fat and skinny and fucked up. There's nothing attractive about half of us. But you know what? It works. People love it.

tions.

Dino: We were offered Yngwie Malmsteen at the House of Blues.

Franco: But three days later, the drummer and the singer quit.

Tae Bo: [in yokel drawl] "This may be our big break. Thanks Yngwie." Wooh!

Todd: Were you guys officially banned from South by Southwest?

Jacko: Let's just say that we won't be playing with the Cherry Poppin' Daddies any more.

Dino: Or El Vez.

Jacko: The whole thing? Should we start with the crack smoking?

Tae Bo: There was only one A and R guy – isn't that what SXSU is geared towards? These bands being discovered. Happened to be the first guy I tagged. "Who let the fucking longhair in?" Wah, wah. Dreamworks or whatever.

Pearl: I was actually roadie-ing for Throw Rag and Tae Bo got naked. People were digging it and the owner of Schultz's Garden freaked out. "You can't do that. Get him out of here."

Jacko: He had Al Gore pictures on the wall.

Pearl: He went to the sound guy and said, "If you don't turn him off, I'm not going to pay you." Some commotion happened and there was no P.A. He tried to pull off Tae Bo. You guys played "Bonnie Brea." "Everybody just calm down."

Franco: The crowd got spontaneously naked in support of us is what really made it so exciting.

Pearl: One girl in particular, she was so pissed off that the guy was creating a scene – a really big girl – pulls her shirt and starts juggling her boobs. Triple D. "This is freedom of speech." Totally almost got in a fight with him. At one point, he pushed her. It even incited the crowd more.

Franco: The crowd wanted us to play.

Jacko: James, through the entire set, is trying to play the harmonica and everything's turned off, so he's grabbing the mic from the bass drum. He's so wasted he can't do it. All of a sudden, he gets in the fight and he's on the floor getting pounded.

Pearl: From that point, it was absolute chaos. Cops. Melee. One of the craziest fucking experiences of my life.

Dino: We're all trying to load the equipment. The cops were talking to us. "Where did they go?" And we were like, "Who? Where did *who* go?" "What's the name of your singer?" "Sleazo." (Who is now called Tae Bo, whose real name is Sean, which is important in about four sentences.) "What's his real name?" "That's all we know him by."

Jacko: The cops pulled over the getaway Astrovan and walkie talked, "We've got some guys in here. What's the guys names you're looking for?" And they're so fucking inbred and stupid, the cops that pulled them over said, "We have a Sean [pronounced "Sea Ann"] Wheeler." The other guy was, "OK, let him go. We're looking for a Shawn."

Jacko: Someone had given Tae Bo a bag of mushrooms and he ate the whole bag so instead of being "aaargghh" on crack, he was "laaaaa" on mushrooms. And the next



Radio Vago play danceable, hook-laden, synth-driven rock, that's like an '80s flashback, only it's actually

more titillating than horrifying. Edgy, dark and dramatic, they can sometimes be reminiscent of an early 70's Bowie, or an any-time Marianne Faithful, with a little bit of Cabaret thrown in the mix. Radio Vago is hands (and dancing feet) down, one of the most exciting bands in the indie music scene. The improvements they've made as a band in just the past year, are vast and obvious. They've learned how to feed off each other's energy, and are ready to rock you, wherever you are, even if you're the only person in the audience. So, after a couple of weeks of scheduling conflicts, and gobs of telephone tag, we finally got our chance to sit down with one of the hardest working bands in LA. Hitch and myself go to Jenny's apartment, and after interrupting their Baja Fresh feast, our investigative reporting goes deep to clue you in on what each of their porno names would be, celebrity encounters, and most importantly, the beauty of a nice pair of good fitting jeans.

Kat: I'm going to ask a typical question, but I'd like to know. How did you get together and do you remember where your first gig was?

Olivia: There was four of us originally. The drummer was my brother. My brother and I and Adrienne all went to college together. We were all driving in the car one day and talking about how we needed some other outlet, going from the local Jamba Juice to school, whatever. Out in Valencia there is nothing but strip malls. So we said "Oh, let's play music. My friend Jen plays guitar." We rented a space and kinda went from there. Jed (Olivia's brother) backed off



when he saw that we were getting really excited, because he is not a drummer. He was just doing it for fun. Jenny had literally stepped off the plane and her roommate, who was our friend, was going to our show and she jokingly asked if we needed a drummer. That just happened to be the night we announced that we needed a drummer for the first time. We met her and there were skyrockets. [laughs]

Adrienne: And this was at a house party, not like a venue of any sort!

Jenny: The first show with us all together was at Cal Arts.

Olivia: We only decided to get a bass

player about six months ago.

Jenny: We had one before.

Olivia: She dropped out and then Nicole came into it, and we are so happy she is with us! She is the total perfect addition to the band.

Adrienne: We played a long time and a lot of shows without a bassist. In a sense, Jenny and Nicole both fell into our laps. They were definitely a blessing.

Kat: What a place to fall!

Hitch: Were you guys in bands before, and how long have you been together?

Adrienne: A year and a half now.

Jen: I was in a couple of punk bands that went nowhere in New York.

Jenny [to Jen]: Tell them about the Chili Peppers band.

Jen: Oh, in high school I was in a Red Hot Chili Peppers cover band. I learned how to play one song then I couldn't take it. That's all they wanted to play.

Nicole: I was in a band for five years in Massachusetts. It was a riot grrl punk band. I started when I was sixteen. When I first got my bass I didn't know the difference between a bass and a guitar. I was like, "I wonder why it has four strings."

Kat: When I first got a guitar, I thought you tuned a guitar by making all the pegs aligned. I had Muppet drums, too. My parents got them for me, then gave them back because they said they were "broken."

All: Awww...

Hitch: Are you guys all transplants?

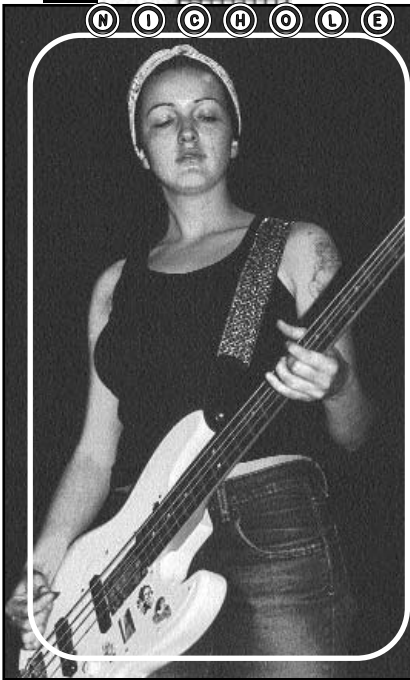
Nicole: Massachusetts.

Jen: Indiana.

Jenny: Chicago.

Adrienne: Seattle and Reno, Nevada.

Olivia: I'm from LA. I often find myself being the only one in a group.



Hitch: What would you choose as your wedding song?

Nicole: I already know mine.

Jenny: Christina Aguilera?

Nicole: No. That song by Dido - it's *reallllly* beautiful. I don't know what it's called.

Everyone: "Thank You."

Nicole: Yeah, that must be the title. It used to be a song by the Cranberries, but I changed it when Dido came out with that song.

Jen: I never thought of that - wedding songs.

Olivia: I think mine would keep changing.

Adrienne: I probably would pick an AC/DC song.

Hitch: "Back in Black."

Adrienne: Yeah! "You Shook Me All Night Long."

Kat: You guys could wear black to the wedding.

Jenny: Motley Crue "Home Sweet Home."

Hitch: Imagine slow dancing to that!

Adrienne: Or Screamin' Jay Hawkins "I Put a Spell on You."

Hitch: That'd be a good one.

Hitch to Jen: Wedding song?

Jen: I never thought of that, really.

Jenny: Red Hot Chili Peppers?

Jen: Oh yeah, Red Hot Chili Peppers since they're my favorite band. [lots of laughs]

Jen: I don't know. I really don't.

Kat: Did you ever consider calling yourselves something other than Radio Vago?

Every misspelling possible.

Kat: After the first time I saw you I was telling Dvin (Tadpole) that I saw and loved Radio Vago and I got lambasted! She was like, "WHAT IS IT WITH YOU AND SCOTTY (Tadpole)? YOU EAST COAST PEOPLE."

Hitch: Sure, blame it on the East Coast.

Kat: So did you think of anything else specific that you wanted to call yourselves?

Adrienne: Every week we had a name.

Olivia: The Collected.

Adrienne: The way we came up with that one was some weird computer mishap. We printed up something and it said "the collected" on it. We were like, that's it! It's a sign!

Olivia: It was supposed to print up a paper but all it printed out was all these "X"s and amongst the "X"s it said "the collected".

Hitch: Have any of you ever been thrown out of a club, bar, or whatever, and describe please.

Jen: I was thrown out of a peep show in New York. I dropped a forty ounce on the floor and it busted all over. They took me by my leather jacket and threw me out the door.

Adrienne: I never have been thrown out, but it's only because I was really sneaky with the things I did. They never knew it was me. I was always with one of my friends and we'd go to this big club and we'd do stuff. There would be full drinks and we'd run around to all the tables and drink them because everyone would be on the dance floor. Or we'd light off stink bombs.

Jenny: I got thrown out of a night club in Portland last year. I decided I was - I don't know who the hell I was - but I got up on stage and started playing with the band. They were friends of mine, so it was okay. I had a big cast on my leg. I jumped off the stage and they tossed me out.

Nicole: In Boston I was with four of my friends and we had to pee really badly. There was nowhere else to go so we went to this shitty bar and there were these two really big security guards. They asked if we were going to stay as customers and when we said "no," they were like "no." So we bum rushed them and ran into the bathroom. Everybody held the door while one person was peeing. I guess it wasn't really being kicked out.

Hitch: Chased. That's good.

Kat: Do you remember the first record that you bought?

Jen: Joan Jett.

Adrienne: Mine was the Eurythmics, "Sweet Dreams."

Jenny: Mine was Michael Jackson, "Thriller."

Nicole: I have two really embarrassing ones that I got at the same time. They are actually CDs and I got them for Christmas along with my stereo. One was "The Simpsons" soundtrack and the other was Bette Middler. I was really into "Beaches."

Kat: Wow. That is *really* trusting us a lot telling us that!

Olivia: I got two records at the same time. Wham and Duran Duran. Those were my two records.

Kat: Did you slow dance to "Careless

Whisper"?

[Someone says something inaudible pertaining to "intimate relations" with stuffed animals. There is much laughter. Some things are best left to imagination.]

Adrienne: Those were the times you were making out with your pillow.

Hitch: How did you guys hook up with the Need and touring with them?

Adrienne: We don't know!

Olivia: I know, we are still questioning that!

Jenny: We played with them and Patsy in December...

Olivia: Radio moved here, and we would just see her out, and she liked the band.

Hitch: You guys are great together. You really complement each other.

Adrienne: It's probably one of the first times ever where I truly felt that none of us sound alike, but at the same time we all work so well together.

Kat: It is total energy. You were three bands who are just really into music.

Adrienne: We definitely felt that all of us had the same idea in mind, the same energy in mind, and that was, "Let's play music. Let's have fun!"

Hitch: If you were a porno star, what would your name be?

Adrienne: Shadow Wettican (sp?).

Jen: Jeb Washington.

Nicole: Mine would be Margaret More. It's your middle name and your street name right?

Kat: No, it's your first pet's name and the first street you lived on.

Nicole: Sable More. It would be Sable Moore.

Olivia: Spike Amistoy. I don't think that works.

Hitch: It's good!

Adrienne: It is. It could be Spike I'mAtoy.

Jenny: Mine would be, "Jenny."

Olivia: You never had an animal?

Jenny: I never had a pet.

Jen: Wow.

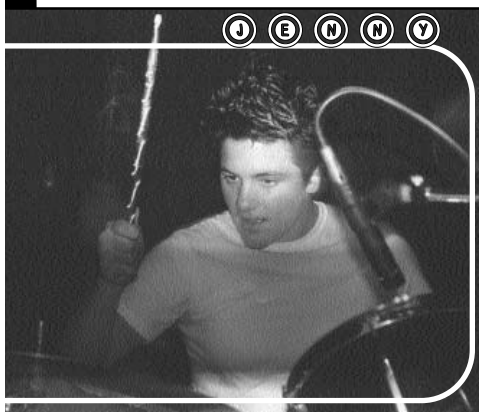
Adrienne: How sad.

Kat: We're going to bring a pet next time. Do any of you have a good celebrity encounter story?

Adrienne: I have one. He's not extremely famous, but within the punk scene he is. Ian MacKaye of Fugazi and Minor Threat. It was in Reno, Nevada and at the time I had spiky hair and I must have been sixteen years old. I walked by him and at the time he was this guy with a shaved head and wearing a hockey uniform. He grabbed my shirt and said that he liked my hair. I turned around and was thinking that he was some jock guy and I said, "FUCK YOU AND DON'T TOUCH ME!"

Hitch: How did you realize it was him?

Adrienne: Because he got up on stage and started singing! I mean, I had collected Fugazi and Minor Threat records, but they don't have pictures of him, really.



Adrienne: Yes!

Hitch: How did you get the name?

Olivia: I have a good friend who is a writer and he came up to me after our first show and told me about this short story he was writing called "Radio Vago." It is about this guy who has supernatural powers. His brain taps into other people's thoughts, and he starts to go a little crazy because he can't stop it. He starts traveling and realizing that his brain is a transistor radio and receives all these thoughts. We were throwing around so many names. We couldn't pick one out and we liked that idea.

Nicole: We actually think about changing a lot because we always get "Radio Vega" or "Radio Va-Jo."

Nicole: Kevin from the Backstreet Boys came into my work with his wife. It was really cheesy because he had his hand in her back pocket.

[A resounding "Ewwww!" echoes in the room.]

Nicole: I was on the phone with Olivia at the time, and it was around the time we were recording. When he came over to where I was I started talking really loudly about the recording. I was like, "NO, I NEED TO GO OVER THE VOCALS BEFORE WE GO INTO THE STUDIO." [laughter]

Adrienne: I don't even think I would recognize any of them.

Hitch: I have a serious question. I'm really interested in your creative process, and how you guys write the songs, and where the lyrics come from.

Jenny: We jam.

Nicole: Everybody just sorta comes in.

Jenny: We get into the groove... Kinda synch up.

Adrienne: It's kind of an energy thing, too.

Kat: So you'll keep playing a groove, and you just go up there and start singing some words?

Jenny: Sometimes it just fits. I remember the song "Shotgun"...

Adrienne: We wrote that in like 15 seconds.

Jenny: The song starts out and it's just Jen, and she just hits her guitar playing like two chords and I just came with that drum beat. And I think you [Olivia] just kicked in on your keyboard.

Hitch: That's magical.

Adrienne: It was almost as if we had already written the song and just started playing.

Kat: [to the whole band] Do you know about our [mine and Hitch's] dance fest?

Hitch: We totally jammed to your CD. It's like one of those times... We listened to that last song like a million times.

Adrienne: Which song?

[Kat starts singing the keyboard part.]

Adrienne: "Mail Order."

[This is the part where Hitch and Kat turn into complete Radio Vago geeks.]

Kat: I was all excited because Hitch got the CD from Jenny. So we're driving to Al's Bar and Hitch was like, "When this song's over, can we hear it again?" And she asked that about 10 times.

Olivia: That's so *cuuuute*.

Kat: And after the show Hitch came back to my place and we put it on and were dancing for my roommate and her friend.

Olivia: We love that.

Hitch: I can't even tell you. I love you guys so much. [Said with pure syrupy love.] I've seen like a kabillion badillion bands and like...

Adrienne: This is gonna make me cry.

Hitch: Seriously.

Nicole: Did you guys make up moves, cause Adrienne and I are looking for choreography.

Hitch: We had some worker/hammer thing going.

Nicole: That's really good 'cause we suck.

Adrienne: That's good.

Jenny: Oh, a little, like workman's thing.

Adrienne: We can do like mechanical workman type moves.

Hitch: Cause it's kinda mechanical some-

punk and new wave, and I used to wear suits all the time. In 5th grade, though. I would have rocks thrown at me because of my suits. I seriously wore them with full confidence. It stemmed from that. Like, an emotional reaction. Same thing with "Shotgun." That one came really quickly to me because of one sound in the guitar that reminded me of a haunted house that I lived in. Most of the time I just react emotionally to it.

Hitch: Like to the music. In the jam thing that's kinda cool... It almost seems like you guys are talking to each other. It seems like on stage you guys are always looking at each other and smiling. It really creates a great experience for the audience. You can tell you guys are having fun with each other. It's just cool. That makes sense with the jam factor.

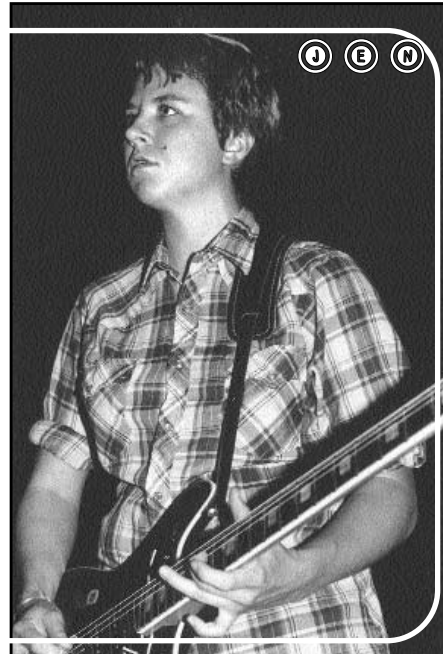
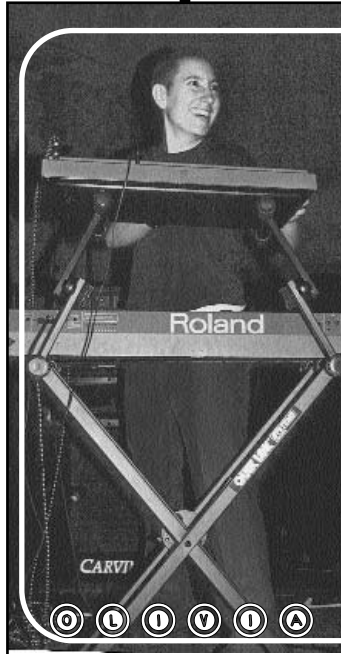
Olivia: I don't see how anyone can make music any other way besides jamming.

Hitch: I like to ask people that because I'm really interested in the creative process for all artists. A lot of times it seems like one person will bring something in, whether it's a riff, and people will go from that.

Nicole: That's how it worked in my old band, but this band is much more of a collaboration.

Adrienne: I like it a lot more like that, too.

Jenny: It's really cool because I feel like we're all at the same level [musically] so it's good to be in an environment like that. I've played in plenty of bands before where there's an



times.

Nicole: I know exactly what you're talking about.

Olivia: You guys are too cute.

Hitch: I know, it just turned into a goosh fest.

[More cooing ensues. We'll spare you.]

Hitch: I'd like to know where some of the lyrics come from. Like, "I was on the dance floor..." [from "My New Suit"]

Adrienne: Actually, that song came really quickly. A lot of the times I'll feed off on how the music makes me feel or what it reminds me of. An example would be, if you saw a picture of someone, or you saw someone that recognized you, of some love or ex of yours. It's kinda like that with the music. The first time around I'll just sing gibberish, and sometimes I'll sing lyrics to it. Mostly whatever comes out of my mouth. But most of the time it's all based on the feel. "My New Suit" reminded me of some disco or some dance floor thing. That came from a personal experience of when I was in 5th grade. It might have been because of the Eurhythmics or something. I was really into

imbalance.

Kat: So one person isn't off doing guitar extrapolation.

All: No, no.

Jenny: We're not anything like that.

Kat: Can you foresee doing this? Like going out on tour - going clear across the U.S. and back.

Adrienne: I definitely think we can do it.

Jen: It's a nice build. This last week on the road, and then next week we go 10 days and then...

Jenny: Then next year...

All [in unison]: The world!

Adrienne: Definitely. But I'm prepared to not have anyone there.

Jenny: Especially in Boise.

Adrienne: The thing is, I'm not worried. I'm a firm believer that you never know who's going to be in the audience. It can be just the sound guy and the door guy. But that person can say to their friends the next day, like, "You know what? You guys really missed out on show last night." It can be that one person who makes it for you.

Hitch: And the next time you come around...

Kat: They've told like three people and you have three more people at your show next time.

Adrienne: Seriously, you never know. Just like we can play for a crowd of people, a sold out show, and no one will like you. It doesn't really matter.

Jenny: That won't happen to us, of course. I'm just kidding.

Nicole: The Need definitely helped us out as far as building an audience for us up North. I mean, half of those people wouldn't have been there if it wasn't for The Need...

Jen: More than that...

Nicole: And all those people are like "Wow, you guys are really good. When are you playing again?", ya know. More than half. Probably nobody. [lots of laughter]

Jenny: Our friends that came up from LA.

Adrienne: We pay our fans really well. Really, though, I know there's people that have come up to me and have asked me about music or what I thought was good music. And because I've said stuff, they'll be like, "Oh yeah, I'll go check them out." So you never know.

Hitch: Plus up there [the Northwest] it seems like people go out to clubs. Not necessarily just to go out and see a certain band. The music scene is a little more about the music.

Adrienne: I lived in Seattle for six years... and it's gonna be really, really tricky when we play the Northwest because everyone's in a band up there. I personally feel in LA that there aren't that many bands that I'm into. I don't know if I've been spoiled living in Seattle. There are so many bands working with each other. You have to keep up with things. I seriously feel that there'll be people that like us, but at the same time we'll be dealing with an audience that's watching us in a critical way. There are so many good bands that haven't been signed, but they work their butts off.

Nicole: I don't think we can go into it with any expectations of anything, though. It's our first tour, and we'll go there and see what happens, and just deal with it.

Adrienne: It definitely depends on our attitude. I'm going to go there and have fun.

Jenny: It's like a vacation.

Nicole: It is.

Olivia: [sounding very tired] It's not like a vacation. It's a lot of work. We're playing a different city every night.

Nicole: It's hard, but I appreciate so much. As opposed to, like, going and standing behind a counter. Not using my mind at all. And not doing anything creative.

Olivia: It's going to be an experience.

Kat: I have a question. When Paul McCartney was in The Beatles he mentioned to some reporter that he liked



"jelly babies." I think they were some sort of cupie doll. Anyhow, the next time they played, tons of these things were tossed on stage. And of course, you know, the Foo Fighters thing with Mentos. So I want to know, what would you say you liked in the hope that you'd be inundated with it?

Jenny: Hundred dollar bills.

Kat: I can imagine it, "We loved hundred dollar bills. We don't see them enough."

Adrienne: Well, I wouldn't want people to throw salsa, or Tabasco...

Jenny: No food products.

Adrienne: But definitely it would be something spicy. I don't care what culture it's from. Just spicy.

Olivia: Wasabi peas.

Jen: A lot of ladies. [Tons of laughter.]

Olivia: Puppies.

[Lots of cringing at that thought.]

Olivia: No, I don't want puppies. Then I gotta take 'em all home with me.

Jenny: Hats. I need more hats.

Nicole: Probably really good pairs of fitting jeans.

[We all find this quite funny.]

Adrienne: Like Diesel gift certificates.

Nicole: Precious Moments.

[Hee hee. Ouch!]

Hitch: That's a good question.

Kat: Thanks.

Adrienne: That's a really good question, 'cause now I'm going to be so black and blue.

Hitch to Kat: I wrote down something, and it was something that we talked about, but I don't know what it means. It just says 16th birthday.

Kat: Oh! I want to know what you did on your 16th birthday.

Nicole: I did acid for the first time. [Lots of laughter]

Nicole: And the whole night I spent bawling into a pillow, like all night, in a corner. I was like "Don't come near me." It was horrible. It was for hours. It was miserable.

Kat: Wow!

Jenny: Okaaay, well... My parents had a surprise party for me. And I did go to Second City, which is like an Improv place in Chicago and it was cool because Chris Farley was in the audience. They called him up on stage and he did his whole little thing. I got his autograph. I was like, "Can you sign my ticket?"

Jen: I think I was grounded.

Adrienne: Mine was not great at all. We

were supposed to have a party with three of my friends and my mom didn't even show up.

All of us: Awwwwwww...

Olivia: I know there was probably some banner my mom made and some breakfast in bed. She always made breakfast in bed for my birthday. I can't remember, though, what I actually did in the evening with my friends.

Jen: I don't have any more questions.

Kat: Well, I do! You guys are probably like, "Please leave, we want to go to sleep." What is your least favorite band name? Like, it just irks you.

Jenny: I was in a band with my least favorite band name. It was called Bitch Machine.

[We all find this pretty gosh darn bad.]

Kat: I don't know anything about the band, but my least favorite name is Anal Cunt.

Olivia: Oh, that's bad.

Adrienne: Oh, that's really bad. I never heard that one.

Adrienne: There's a band called Jaded. I think that's a horrid band name. And I also think Stryper is a bad name.

Olivia: Oh, here's a bad band name: Tastes Like Chicken. That was actually a name my old band went through really fast.

Hitch: You can just look through The Weekly...

Kat: I have one more question. OK, this is it; the big round-up. The one that'll tie it all together.

[We all can't seem to get off of this subject.]

Nicole: Oh! We were in Amoeba this weekend, a record store in San Francisco, and I thought of the worst band name... Hot Tuna.

Hitch: Canned Heat.

Adrienne: Sugar Love.

Olivia: Meat Loaf.

Kat: Lastly, what super power would you like to possess?

Nicole: I want to fly.

Jen: I'd like to read people's minds.

Adrienne: I don't think I'd want to know what people were thinking.

Jenny: Did you ever see this one sitcom where this girl could start and stop time whenever she wanted? It was in the early '80s. That would be cool and fun.

Hitch: Like stop time and go into a store and just...

Jenny: Take what you want. At the time I was in junior high school and I was thinking I could just take my test, stop time, and get all the answers.

Adrienne: Maybe if there was a chance in life where you could do like some strange thing with your body at least once... Like I would want to spin my head.

Jenny: Wow, I could really see you doing that.

THE X-RATED BIBLE

Article by Sean Carswell
based on the book by
Ben Edward Akerley

Sketch of Jesus with a
porno mag by Art Fuentes



Cracks in the Porno Theater

When I was a kid growing up in Florida, there was a porno theater right in the middle of my hometown. I used to ride my bike past it every day on the way to and from junior high school. Occasionally, I'd see kids creeping alongside the outside walls of the theater trying to sneak a peak at the afternoon movies. Supposedly, there was a crack in the wall where you could see in. But there wasn't. I spent enough time looking for it myself and saw enough kids looking for it and thought of the mechanics of where a crack would have to be and how big it would have to be for you to see a movie screen from the outside and knew it didn't exist. But that didn't keep me from reading the movie titles every morning on my way to school and trying to figure out how I was gonna get into that theater. Then, when I was fourteen – only two

RAZORCAKE 62 years away from my first fake ID – the theater

closed. I was fucking pissed. In a matter of six months, someone bought the building, mopped up all the gizz, re-upholstered the seats, cleaned the aisles, and put potted plants in the lobby. They took "Search for the Wild Beaver" off the marquee and replaced it with "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife." At the front of the theater, where I once missed out on Ginger Lynn in the good, wholesome act of fucking, was now a minister in the, well, devious act of fronting an evangelical ministry. And I know I'm a freak for thinking this, but when a porno theater closes and is replaced by a church, it's a sure sign that your hometown is in decay.

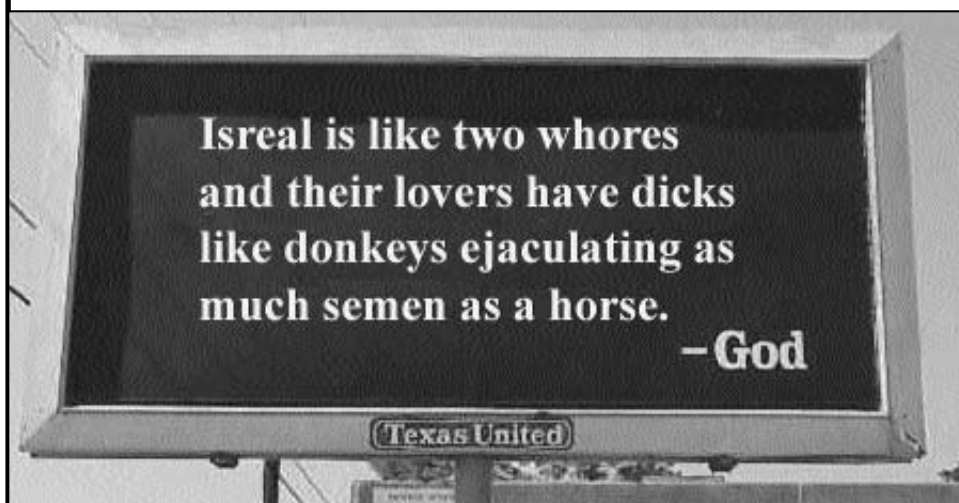
Several years later, I came across a book called *The X-Rated Bible* by Ben Akerley, and for the first time I started making the solid, direct connections between church and pornography. In *The X-Rated Bible*, subtitled "An Irreverant Survey of Sex in the

Scriptures,” Akerley goes through the King James version of the Bible and pulls out all the selections that deal with sex, debauchery, and bizarre violence. Along with the biblical passages themselves, Akerley provides a satirical running commentary. It’s a funny and disturbing book. As I read through it, I started seeing biblical heroes in a different light. David became more than the guy with a slingshot who killed Goliath. He was also the guy who assembled an army, killed two hundred men, circumcised their dead, erect penises, and presented the two hundred foreskins to King Saul as a dowry for his daughter, Micca (I Samuel 18:6-27). I also learned that Lot, the guy who was so pure that he was the only one spared the fire and brimstone at Sodom and Gomorrah, walked away from the burning cities with his two daughters, went into a cave, got drunk and fucked both of them (Genesis 19:26-38). I learned about a lot of sex in the Bible and could hardly believe what I read. I even went so far as to go to the library, hunt down a Bible, and double check to see if these stories were really there. And they are. There really is a story in the Bible where Noah really gets drunk, exposes himself to his son, then curses his son and all of his son’s offspring for looking (Genesis 9:18-29). Isreal really is compared to two whores who have lovers hung like donkeys who can ejaculate as much as a horse (Ezekiel 23). Some biblical stories really are full of hookers, orgies, and rapes. As I read through these stories, I thought, wow, if the minister read these biblical passages on a Sunday morning, I’d go to church.

Reading *The X-Rated Bible*, I also started to realize that very few people really do read the Bible. Although so much of our society is based on this ancient collection of stories, people only know a handful of the stories. They know the tales of heroes in battle but not the tales of the heroes returning home and exposing their genitals to the crowd during the victory celebration (II Samuel 6:12-20). People know the stories of Jesus forgiving the prostitute Mary Magdalene, but they don’t know about Jesus’s father, Jehovah, commanding one of his faithful, Hosea, to marry a prostitute (Hosea 1:1-3). People know about Paul’s abstinence in the New Testament, but they don’t know about Jacob (who later became known as Isreal) having four lovers who gave him twelve sons (and the twelve sons were supposedly the progenitors of the twelve tribes of Isreal) (Genesis 29:32-52, Genesis 30:1-24, Genesis 35:16-20). By pointing out these passages that no minister will refer to, Akerley gives us a more rounded view of the Bible and he gives us a new perspective to view sex in our society. In that sense, *The X-Rated Bible* is really an amazing book.

When I got done reading it, I thought, I have to meet this Akerley guy. I looked into it and found out that he lived in LA, right across town from me. So I called him up to see if he would be interested in allowing me to interview him. Not only did he agree to do the interview, he drove over to Razorcake headquarters to give me the scoop behind *The X-Rated Bible*.

I’ve noticed that fundamentalists who paraphrase God stay away from Ezekiel 23:20 (below). I wonder why.



The Scoop

The seeds for *The X-Rated Bible* were first planted in Akerley’s mind when he was a professor at University of Southern California. In 1972, a group of USC students wanted to form a gay student group. Essentially, all the student group wanted was a postal box in the student union and place on campus to hold meetings, but the request caused an uproar. According to Akerley, “the trustees had to go into a secret meeting [to discuss the gay student group] because they were afraid that John Wayne and all his macho glory and Tommy Trojan would suddenly get a limp wrist.” Amidst the uproar and secret meetings, a USC student wrote in to the campus newspaper, the *Daily Trojan*, encouraging the trustees to forbid the gay student group because “the Bible condemns homosexuality.” Akerley read this letter and composed his own letter explaining that, if you’re going to use the Bible as a platform from which you judge sexual morality, you’re going to be standing on a pretty shaky platform, because there are all kinds of deviant sex acts in the Bible.

Around this same time, Akerley was reading about the famous agnostic orator, Robert Ingersoll. In the late nineteenth century, Robert Ingersoll offered any minister in Cleveland one thousand dollars if the minister would read to his congregation on Sunday morning a biblical passage that Ingersoll himself selected. No minister took Ingersoll up on the offer because, according to Akerley, “they knew what they were in for.” They knew that Ingersoll had a rich collection of sexually shocking stories to choose from. Akerley knew this, too. He thought of all the stories he’d wanted to write about for the *Daily Trojan*. He thought about all the stories that Ingersoll could’ve asked a minister to read, and Akerley decided to write a book about those stories.

In 1985, Akerley finished the first edition of *The X-Rated Bible*. He sent it out to several major publishing houses and all of the publishers rejected the manuscript. Akerley then approached Madalyn Murray O’Hair, the famous atheist who fought all the way to the Supreme Court to ban prayer in public school. O’Hair was also the founder of the American Atheist Press. Akerley presented her with his manuscript for *The X-Rated Bible* and, according to Akerley, “she said, ‘I’ll publish the goddamn

thing.”

Initially, *The X-Rated Bible* was available largely only through mail order and at atheist conventions and book sales. Most book stores wouldn't touch any title from the American Atheist Press. Still, for over a decade, *The X-Rated Bible* outsold any other American Atheist Press title. Then, in 1995, Madalyn Murray O'Hair mysteriously disappeared. A few years passed and it became pretty clear that she'd been murdered (this was later verified when the FBI found her remains in Texas on March 15, 2001. There is no correlation between her murder and Akerley's book). At this point, renegade publisher and Feral House founder, Adam Parfrey, contacted Akerley about releasing *The X-Rated Bible*. Akerley agreed, and suddenly, *The X-Rated Bible* was causing a stir again. The new stir was different though. Rather than the initial response of Akerley being attacked (via radio call-in shows and television talk shows) by a slew of Baptists ministers, the new response was, essentially, a high rate of book sales. It even became a top seller for the Quality Paperback Club (which is the mail order book equivalent to the Columbia House record club). But I'm getting ahead of myself.

The Ecclesiastical Balls

When I had the chance to sit down and talk with Akerley, I asked him about the initial response to the book. He told me of an instance when he was on a radio call-in show with a fundamentalist minister. The minister insisted that the Bible was the direct word of God and it required no interpretation. Akerley, who carries with him an arsenal of confusing biblical passages, said to the minister, "I want a yes or no answer. Should a woman caught in adultery today be taken out and stoned [to death] like the biblical injunction demands?" The minister responded by saying, that the woman should be punished to the full extent of the law. Akerley repeated the question, again asking for a yes or no and again the minister dodged the question. Akerley tried one more time and got the same answer. As he related this story to me, a sort of checkmate grin came across his face and he said, "I couldn't get the dude to give me a straight answer because he knew I had him by the ecclesiastical balls."

After Akerley had gone through his initial promotion of the book, he came home with a ton of stories like this. It made me feel good to hear them, to know that any rigid belief structure could be broken down so easily. And that's most readers' initial reaction to *The X-Rated Bible*. Most readers are happy to know that, after a lifetime of being exposed to bizarre, anti-sexual morality, they finally have proof that the Bible is no place to look for sexual guidance. And they can rally behind Akerley and his arsenal of confusing biblical passages. But once that initial excitement wears off, a much larger problem becomes evident. Akerley explains this problem in the following anecdote:

"I did one of my first talk shows in '85 when the book first came out. One of the talk show hosts said, 'Ben, I think you're so far off base. All the Bible does in our house is sit on our coffee table and we stuff pictures in it. We use it as a picture album. How can you say that anything in that book means anything in today's world or affects any of us in our daily lives?' I said, 'You are so wrong. You don't have to read it. You don't have to know what's in it to be affected by it.'"

Akerley went on to give me several examples that demonstrate how the Bible affects us all. He talked about circumcision and how it had no medical benefit and no countries other than the US and Isreal perform the rite, but nearly every male child in

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any say in the matter. It's clearly an anti-sexual act, according to Akerley. He went so far as to point out that, "circumcision was actually thought, in the last century, to be a cure for masturbation. We were so anti-sexual that doctors convinced most American mothers that, if their sons were circumcised, they'd be much less likely to masturbate. So it all comes together as part of this Puritanical, anti-sexual view point."

So what else demonstrates the Puritanical undercurrent in our society? Akerley pointed out that sodomy (anal or oral intercourse between two people, regardless of their genders), in the Bible, is phrased as, "That which is against nature." And in states where sodomy is still illegal, the law books refer to sodomy as "a crime against nature." It's suspicious phrasing, to say the least.

The most damning of these Puritanical undercurrents running through our society lies in basic, adult, heterosexual relationships. Akerley told me about a study done by two highly esteemed sex experts, Masters and Johnson, that estimates, according to Akerley, "that fifty percent of all American marriages have some sort of sexual disfunction. Fifty percent. And in the majority of those cases, the sexual disfunction is due to religious orthodoxy." The most common disfunction for men was premature ejaculation, and the most common for women was the inability to have an orgasm. Akerley has several theories surrounding this strange phenomenon, from the way people in the US begin having sex in hurried situations like the back of a car, wondering when the cops are going to show up, to the way we refer to sex as being "dirty" or "doing the nasty." Also, a lot of the disfunction has to do with garden variety Christian guilt – the belief that sex is a nasty, sinful thing, and the quicker you finish, the less sinful you are.

Of course, this is a pretty heavy thing to blame on the Bible. After all, beyond all the interpretations and denominations and sects and cults, the Bible is really just a bunch of stories printed up on paper. It's a book. It's hard – impossible really – to place that kind of blame on the book itself or the stories themselves. Especially when you consider that most people don't even read the damn thing. Akerley was quick to point out (as were Masters and Johnson) that religion itself isn't to blame. It's the way people perceive the religion. Everyone reads (or otherwise becomes familiar with) the words in the Bible and the stories in the Bible and assigns meanings to those words and stories. Every person develops his or her own personal interpretation. And the disfunction stems from that. Akerley explains the differences among people growing up in the same society with the same influences, but having radically different interpretations of those influences by saying, "[It's] just like I thought that, if I masturbated, I was displeasing God. I was doing something to offend him. But I have other friends who never thought that. It never occurred to them that it was sinful or bad. But me, I would take purification baths... promise to never [masturbate] again and wash myself and get all the sins away. And then, of course, I'd wake up the next morning with a boner and start all over."

Beyond the Purification Baths

The story of the purification baths made me curious about Akerley's upbringing, so I asked him about it. He told me that his childhood was very difficult. When he was thirteen, his mother died, and he went to live with his aunt, who was very religious. Akerley spent some time thinking about becoming a Methodist missionary. He also dedicated a good chunk of time to an Adventist church. All the while, he was battling with his personal realization that he was gay. The juxtaposition of these two parts of his life tore him up inside. He began to feel that, as he says, "I was such a terrible sinner that no god could forgive me, that I was worthless, I was hopeless. I was a basket case... It's

hard enough to be an adolescent when you're straight and to try to deal with all the peer pressure, but when you're gay, it's more than a double whammy. It's just devastating." Finally, when Akerley was nineteen, he and a friend went to see a performance of *Inherit the Wind*, a play based upon the Scopes Monkey Trial. In the play, the character of Clarence Darrow (the radical lawyer who defended the Ohio school teacher arrested for teaching evolution) inspired Akerley. Darrow was a calm man. He was very intellectual. His arguments seemed very rational compared to the hysterical arguments of the prosecuting attorney, William Jennings Bryant. The character of Darrow, as well as his rational arguments regarding fundamentalist Christianity, caused Akerley to rethink both his religious beliefs and his sexuality. Finally, he was able to move beyond his own personal criticism and accept who he was.

This accepting perspective seems to define Ben Akerley now. When he came by Razorcake headquarters to allow me to interview him, a cloud of relaxed acceptance floated around him. He'd lean back in his chair, cross his legs, let a wry smile creep across his face, and tell me about King David's biblical, bisexual affair with Jonathan (I Samuel 18:1-5, I Samuel 19:1-7, I Samuel 20:31-42, etc.). He'd talk freely and matter-of-factly about his purification baths or his adolescent self-loathing. He seems to have become the very collected, very introspective character that he once idolized in Clarence Darrow. And, as if his personal ease weren't enough, Akerley comes armed with legions of great minds to back him up. When I asked him about our Puritanical society, he told me, "Here's [H. L. Mencken's] definition of a Puritan: 'A Puritan is a person with a terrible fear that someone, somewhere is having a good time.'" When he discussed his own personally, very liberal views of sex, Akerley backed it up by telling the anecdote about gay rights activist Morris Kight visiting USC and telling an assembly about the pleasures of gay sex. When an offended woman in the audience asked Kight if he believed it right to pursue pleasure for its own sake, Kight said, "Yes. Isn't it wonderful?" When Akerley discussed sex as a natural human function, he spoke of former Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders, who told *Playboy* that she was relaxed about the subject of sex because she grew up on a farm and saw the animals doing it all the time and knew it was just natural. And, when Akerley speaks of sodomy laws and "crimes against nature," he quotes sex researcher Alfred Kinsey, who said, "An unnatural sex act is a sex act which would be impossible to perform." Or, as Akerley sums it up himself, "if it exists, it's natural."

Akerley's arsenal of quotes, combined with his irreverent look at sex in the Bible, has the very real effect of not only proving that sex is just a natural human function that every person

engages in – no more scandalous than, say, sweating. Akerley also has the effect of making it very easy to internalize this view and eliminate personal hang ups. Perhaps this was the real reason why I enjoyed his book and I enjoyed talking with him so much.

The X-Rated Ex-Altar Boy

What makes Akerley's book and point of view so important is that, even in 2001, believing that sex is a natural human function is still a radical idea in the United States. I hardly need to remind anyone that less than two years ago, President Bill

Clinton ordered the bombing of a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan, thereby murdering over thirty innocent people, and no one in the US seemed to care. But he got one blow job (well, probably several), and impeachment hearings followed. And I do need to remind people that, on a more widespread and probably more destructive level, our current President will only allocate public funds to sex education if it's abstinence-only education. And the prevailing, just-say-no point of view regarding sex is ridiculous. It's beyond ridiculous. It's impossible. People physically cannot and emotionally should not abstain from sex. The result of this forced, unnatural abstinence then pops up all around us. Akerley described this best by pointing out, "In this country, we have more X-rated video channels, X-rated bibles, X-rated everything than any country that is not Puritanical. It's a cause and effect thing."

Of course, this made the jaded little fourteen-year-old alter boy

inside of me smile, because not only was I able to remember the time when a church muscled a porno theater out of my town, I was able to understand that the majority of porno theaters are born out of churches and their forced repression of sexuality. It makes me happy to know that human nature prevails in the end.

Author's note: Ben Akerley and I had a very long, very interesting conversation. I recorded and transcribed the whole thing, but it was too long to include in this issue. I tried to include most of the highlights, but there were just too many of them. To read the actual transcript of the interview, check out our web site.

"...they were afraid that John Wayne and all his macho glory and Tommy Trojan would suddenly get a limp wrist"



above: Ben Akerley

photo by Todd

NARDWUAR THE HUMAN SERVIETTE vs.

IAN MACKAYE

(of Fugazi, Dischord, Minor Threat, Teen Idles, Embrace, Pailhead, Egg Hunt)

Photograph by Cynthia Connolly

Nardwuar: Who are you?

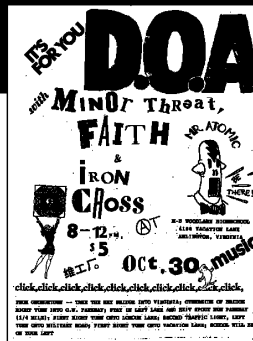
Ian: I'm Ian MacKaye of Fugazi from Washington, DC.

Nardwuar: Ian, you're here in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Burnaby. (to be exact) Canada. DOA, Minor Threat. You have a poster in your hand. What do you remember about that?

Ian: This show is fairly legendary in Washington, DC terms. DOA first came to Washington DC in October of 1979. They played a commune called Madame's Organ and, actually, I was sick that night. It was one of the two or three shows I intensely regret not going to. Everyone that came back said, "This band from Canada is incredible." This was 1979, when nobody was touring, and they showed up and played in a hovel, basically. It was a commune. The PA was made out of oatmeal canisters and stuff. The fact they had come – there's a live tape from that show that spread around. Everyone just traded and traded and traded. In 1981 we got word that they were doing a show in New York and wanted to come down and we had no real access to any venues whatsoever but there was this alternative high school, H.P. Woodlawn, and they let us do one gig before. We had another gig set up there, so we called DOA. "If you guys want to come down, we can't pay you. If you want to come play in this high school, we'll let you play in this show we have." It was a free gig, basically. They showed up. They played an incredible set. We passed the hat. We raised seventy-five bucks. They were totally happy to get the dough. The fact that they showed up meant so much to us. It was actually one of the main reasons that, as a band like Fugazi or any band I've been involved with, we've always had the philosophy, "You must always make the gig." If DOA can make it to a high school in 1981 just to pass a hat, we damned sure have to make it to every gig we commit to. That's the most important thing. That was really

In early July of the year two-thousand and one, Fugazi ended their Western Canadian tour playing the Bill Copeland Sports Centre in Burnaby, BC, Canada, a suburb of Vancouver famous for being the birthplace of Michael J. Fox. Despite the fact that the venue had a.) never been used for a rock concert before, and b.) there was a bus strike happening (not a great thing if you are trying to put on an all ages gig!), 2,500 kids showed up! It was one wicked [happening] that many will never forget. Thanks to Miss Terry, the amazing promoter who brought Fugazi to Burnaby, for setting this interview up.

What interview?



inspirational. DOA. I think a lot of people forget what an important band they were. The fact that they did all that touring early on – they were the mavericks. Them and Black Flag. Those were the bands that really blazed the trail.

Nardwuar: You also enjoyed the (Canadian) Subhumans, right? Didn't you guys play with them?

Ian: Yeah, yeah. Actually, Minor Threat didn't play with Subhumans. The Bad Brains and SOA played with Subhumans. Subhumans stayed at my parents' house. So did DOA. Everyone came and stayed at my parents' house. I remember The Subhumans guys, too. They were really great guys. That was a really cool show. That show was shut down. It was at a place called The Rumba Club. It was in a corner of an alley and SOA

and Bad Brains were great, then the Subhumans came on – actually, I think they played before Bad Brains – when they were playing, there was this guy, a Krishna guy, lived in an apartment building behind there – was trying to meditate but there was so much noise coming up that he called the police and the police raided the show during The Subhumans set and there was a long discussion about if the show would go on. The show did go on.

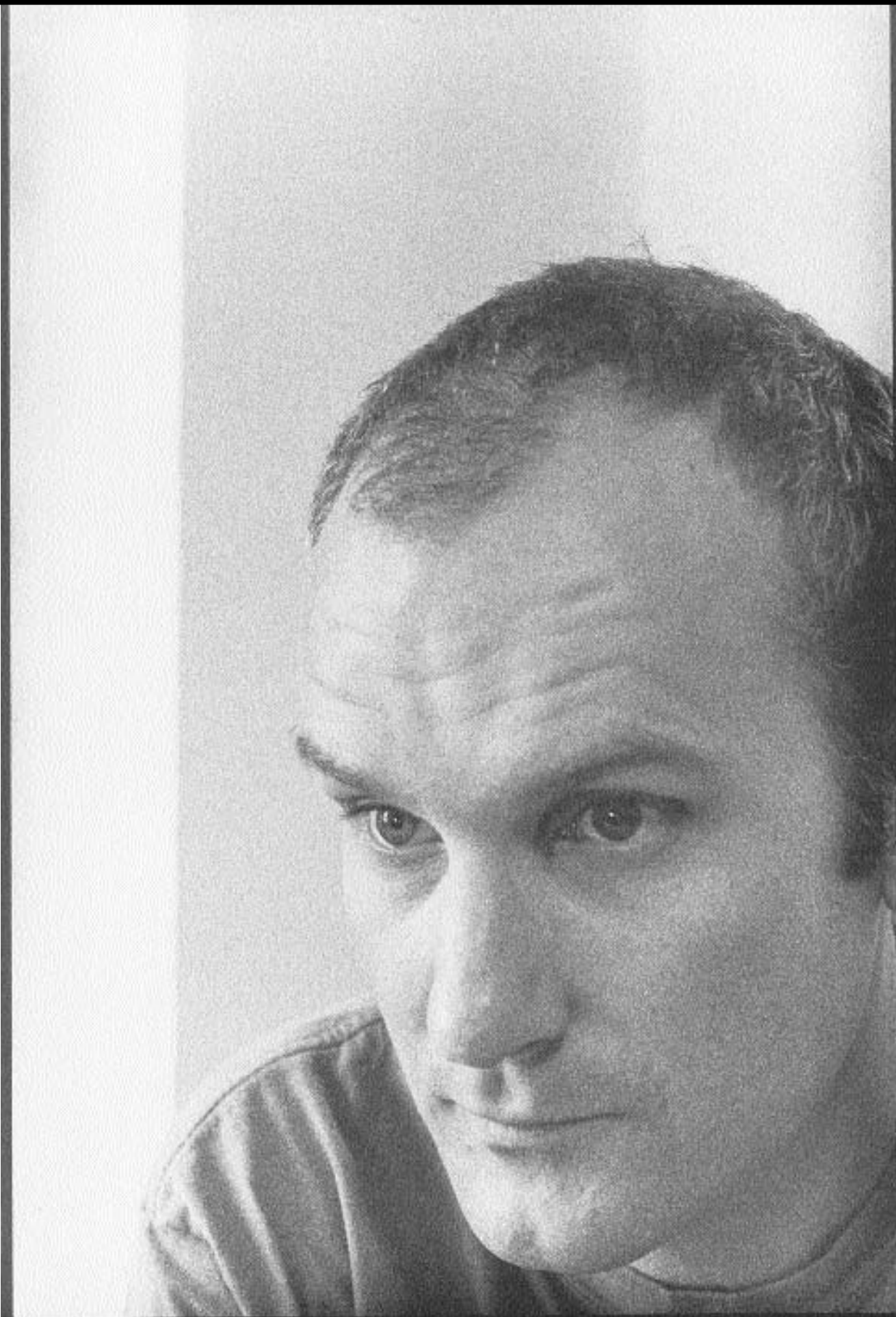
Nardwuar: When DOA did "Hardcore '81," was that the first time you heard the word "hardcore"?

Ian: I don't know, actually. I've thought about that a lot. I remember, from our point of view, the reason we started using the term "hardcore," we were really trying

to differentiate between what people were calling punk rock, which was this really Sid Vicious kind of New York or London, kind of posie kind of fashion. It was a fashion thing. That was punk rock. You were supposed to spit on yourself. All this kind of stuff. We thought, "That's a fashion thing." We're hardcore punk rock kids. Have you heard of the term "hard-shell Baptist"? A hard-shell Baptist is someone who's relationship with God is so intense they actually don't need to follow – they can smoke and drink and whore around, do anything they want – because that's how hard-shelled they are. So hardcore punk doesn't really need to do any of the stuff that people attribute to punk rock other than be dedicated to what they're doing. So that's why we started using that term. I don't know if DOA was the first band to use that. It was right at the same time.

Nardwuar: What about other Canadian bands? I know the rock'n'roll band Sloan and they told me they made a pilgrimage to Washington DC about 1988 and almost stayed at your house. Do you remember some guys from Halifax coming to your house?

Ian: Yeah, sure. There's also a band called



Jellyfish Babies from Halifax. Those guys were cool. They'd drive all the way down – we did this free show in the park. We'd run into them from time to time. I don't know many Eastern Canadian bands. I only know a handful. Obviously, when we've toured, we've played with bands. I remember a band called Porcelain Head.

Nardwuar: Porcelain Forehead.

Ian: You are the man. I always liked them. They were always cool. Over the years – The Viletones, of course.

Nardwuar: Did you see them?

Ian: Never saw them but that single was one of our – that was part of our constellation.

Nardwuar: One of their t-shirts is for sale in LA for \$250.

Ian: If people will buy it, that's what they'll sell it for, I guess.

Nardwuar: Ian, are you a vegan?

Ian: Why do you ask?

Nardwuar: Just curious what you've been eating on tour and how Canada's been doing. I understand you've had some good food there in Winnipeg.

Ian: Where'd you hear that from?

Nardwuar: Just heard it from a little bird. Did you eat good food in Winnipeg?

police. When they raided the house, it was in the paper that they were a Satanic cult and stuff. I don't think they were. I think that's just a typical misunderstanding.

Nardwuar: And Guy of Fugazi, Ian of Fugazi, lives by that Condit senator guy? He's in the news a lot, isn't he?

Ian: I don't know where Condit lives.

Nardwuar: I heard he lives right next door to Guy.

Ian: They live in the same neighborhood, but I have no idea where Condit lives, so I couldn't speak if he lives next to Guy or not.

Nardwuar: George Tabb said that when Minor Threat showed up for some gigs that you were wearing Izod golf shirts.

Ian: George Tabb, you can take it from me, his column is largely full of shit. He may not be full of shit, but his column is nonsense.

Nardwuar: Ian, your dad was in the Kennedy motorcade. I find this fascinating. Please explain if you could.

Ian: Where did you hear that?

Nardwuar: In *Punk Planet*, collected interviews.

Ian: Oh, yes. My father was in the White House Press Corps, 1960-1. He was work-

Nardwuar: He's a pretty smart guy, too, editing the crossword puzzle for *The Washington Post*. That's not too easy, is it?

Ian: I think it's sort of a habit thing. If you're in the habit of doing crossword puzzles, it's not that hard to edit them. He's been doing them for quite awhile. Both of my parents are certainly very intelligent people.

Nardwuar: When Fear played on "Saturday Night Live," Ian, did you go down to "Saturday Night Live" and check it out in New York with Rollins and the gang?

Ian: Rollins was not there. I'll tell you the story if you'd like to hear the story about that. At eight in the morning, some point in October, I got a call. I was driving a newspaper truck for *The Washington Post* at the time, so eight in the morning was brutal. It was Lorne Michaels' office, Lorne Michaels being the producer of "Saturday Night Live," and I get this woman's voice – "Lorne Michaels' office, please hold." I was completely delirious. Lorne Michaels gets on the phone – "Hi, Ian, it's Lorne Michaels of 'Saturday Night Live,' I'm calling you because I got your number from John Belushi. He says that you might be able to get some dancers up here 'cause we want to

I don't fight. I think, as a form of communication, it's a bankrupt form of communication.

Ian: I did eat good food. Canada's been very good for food. But I don't, generally, think it's that interesting to talk about my diet.

Nardwuar: What's something that you eat two of?

Ian: What do I eat two of?

Nardwuar: Like, right now, if I saw some cheese, I'd have two slices of cheese.

Ian: Two bananas could never hurt anybody.

Nardwuar: Doesn't Joe live in some sort of satanic house or some house that was deemed satanic?

Ian: According to the Prince George's County police, yeah. Joe lived in a house with a bunch of young kids living together. It was outside of a university. They listened to Joy Division, stuff like that, but they weren't Satanists by any means. But what had happened was that one of the people that lived in the house had found – in the university there's a biology section – they found a bunch of dead cats in the dumpster and they thought, "Oh, this will be cool. We'll get some cat skulls." So they had these dead cats hanging in the sun to try to get the hide off, to get back to the bones. And somebody called the

ing for the *Minneapolis Star* at the time, I guess. He was just in the press corps. He was just in the motorcade. He was just in a bus with a bunch of the other journalists following the limousine as they came into Dallas. They were two blocks back. They had no idea what had happened. The bus they were riding in suddenly accelerated and just whipped through Dealey Plaza – where the shooting occurred. And they saw everybody running. They knew that something bad had happened but no one had any idea. They didn't know what had happened until they hit the Parkland Hospital. They just pulled up in front of the hospital and that's when it became apparent that something very bad had happened at that point.

Nardwuar: Has your dad seen JFK or does he have any conspiracy theories about it – like the driver killing Kennedy.

Ian: My father doesn't really think anybody did it but Oswald. He has no conspiracy theories whatsoever about that. My father actually feels the real mystery is not the JFK shooting, but Martin Luther King assassination. He thinks that one was a set-up. He didn't think that James Earl Ray did that alone. He thinks that's definitely a conspiracy.

have Fear on the show." I was completely baffled by this. "Pardon me?" Then he says, "Hold on a second." John Belushi gets on the phone and he says, "This is John Belushi. I'm a big fan of Fear's. I made a deal with 'Saturday Night Live' that I would make a cameo appearance on the show if they'd let Fear play. I got your number from Penelope Spheeris, who did 'Decline of Western Civilization' and she said that you guys, Washington DC punk rock kids, know how to dance. I want to get you guys to come up to the show." It was worked out that we could all arrive at the Rockefeller Center where "Saturday Night Live" was being filmed. The password to get in was "Ian MacKaye." We went up the day before. The Misfits played with The Necros at the Ukrainian hall, I think, so all of the Detroit people were there, like Tesco Vee and Cory Rusk from the Necros and all the Touch and Go people and a bunch of DC people – 15 to 20 of us came up from DC, along with NYC kids like Harley and Abbie and Al. Henry was gone. He was living in LA at this point. So we went to the show. During the dress rehearsal, we were dancing and a camera got knocked over. They were very angry with us and said that

they were going to not let us do it then Belushi really put his foot down and insisted on it. So, during the actual set itself, they let us come out again. If you watch the show – have you seen it?

Nardwuar: Yes I have.

Ian: If you watch it – during the show – before they go to commercial, they always go to this jack-o-lantern. This carved pumpkin. If you watched it during the song, you'll see one of our guys, this guy named Bill MacKenzie coming out, holding the pumpkin above his head because he's just getting ready to smash it. And that's when they cut it off. They kicked us out and locked us out for two hours. We were locked in a room because they were so angry with us about the behavior. I didn't think it was that big of deal.

Nardwuar: They locked you in a room?

Ian: Yeah, we were locked in a room. They said they were going to sue us and have us arrested for damages. There was so much hype about that. The *New York Post* reported half a million dollars worth of damages. It was nothing. It was a plastic clip that got broken. It was a very interesting experience and I realized how completely unnatural it

new, it caused a lot of friction and I think a lot of kids who were involved in it fell prey to the more aggressive elements to society, so kids fought back. And then that language became a little bit too deeply engrained in the community and the violence itself became a problem and that needed to be eradicated.

Nardwuar: Have you been in the slam pit at all?

Ian: In my life?

Nardwuar: Yeah, recently.

Ian: No.

Nardwuar: I thought in Brazil, you jumped in the giant circle pit.

Ian: Ahh. That was 1994. That was actually a show we played at the Belo Horizonte Festival in Brazil. It was a giant, free festival. It was the first independent festival that they'd ever done. It was in a parking lot of a train station. There were about 4,000 people there. The stage was about twenty-six feet high. It was a totally absurd situation. But between the bands, over the PA they would play bands like Sepultura. They love grind-core, metal kind of stuff and when they would play these bands, a five or six hundred people circle would develop. And Guy

Ian: I didn't. Actually, it wasn't a mohawk. It was a stripe. It wasn't a haircut. It was a hair dye. He put a black stripe down his back.

Nardwuar: And what's this about it being in the freezer and melting on Jello Biafra, Ian?

Ian: Well, when the rat died – the rat was gotten – Henry worked at NIH, which was the National Institute of Health, and his job at the time when he was a teenager was he had to deal with, basically, gassing rats, which were experiment rats so they would just do these experiments with four hundred rats and he would take the rats in a garbage bag and then gas them and kill them all so he decided to liberate one of the rats, which was Spike, but whatever test they were doing on this rat ended up developing some very bizarre tumor and then the rat died. And Henry, instead of getting rid of the rat or burying the rat or whatever, he actually made a little milk carton coffin for it and put it into the freezer. The part of him melting onto Biafra, I don't know. You'll have to ask Biafra about that.

Nardwuar: When Henry Rollins quit Black Flag, did his hair end up on the wall of the Dischord office?

Ian: No. You're getting different stories mixed up.

Nardwuar: Please correct me, Ian.

Ian: On the wall in the office was a mirror that Henry had smashed with his head and we had pieces of this mirror with blood all over it and it was on a piece of cardboard that said, "Mirror that Henry schlonged his head on, plus blood." There was a bag of hair that belonged to me, but I got rid of it because it was disgusting after awhile.

Nardwuar: Has Henry every offered you, Ian, to get you into show biz or get you any acting parts or anything like that?

Ian: No.

Nardwuar: Because I've seen Minor Threat pop up there a tiny bit there in "SLC Punk." There's a little bit of Minor Threat in that movie.

Ian: Yeah. Henry had nothing to do with that, though.

Nardwuar: How about yourself, though? Have you ever listened to the Jim Rome sports show?

Ian: No. I know what it is. They play our music.

Nardwuar: Yeah. I thought that was pretty cool. Jim Rome.

Ian: Jim Rome.

Nardwuar: Jim Rome, the sportscaster.

Ian: The Washington Redskins football team, last year, apparently, during the third down they would play "Waiting Room" in the stadium. I didn't hear it myself, I was told that by many people, though.

Nardwuar: So that's what's probably influenced Limp Bizkit then, eh?

Ian: Perhaps. I don't know what to make of this Limp Bizkit thing. (There is a rumor floating that Limp Bizkit is going to cover "Waiting Room.") I don't



is for a band to be on a television show – particularly a punk band – that kind of has a momentum to suddenly be expected to immediately jump into a song in that type of setting. It was very weird. Largely unpleasant. Made me realize that's not something I'm interested in doing.

Nardwuar: Was Rollins the hardest dancer in DC?

Ian: I don't think there's any sort of meter for that sort of thing. I couldn't tell you.

Nardwuar: Or one of the wilder ones? Because you mentioned one of those guys at "Saturday Night Live." Who are some of the ones that were some of the more adventuresome dancers, Ian?

Ian: We all had our own styles. The thing about DC kids is that we actually danced. There was this whole thing that kinda came up later on which was called, whatever it was called. The slam dancing thing was kind of a media invention. We actually had choreography in our dancing, we felt like. We were also tough, though. It was an era when there was a lot of fighting going on. That was part of that era. When punk was

and I were watching this. We were incredulous. This seemed impossible that this many people were dancing. It was a huge, huge circle pit thing and Guy said, "I'll give you a buck if you go for that." I just did the whole, one circulation. It was incredible, actually. I was laughing so hard. It was totally enjoyable. Those kids were not slamming, per se. There were no punches being thrown. Just dancing in a giant circle.

Nardwuar: At Haagen Daz, working there with Henry Rollins, did you guys once put out rat poisoning as a topping?

Ian: That is true. But we obviously didn't serve it. We just thought it was funny because it was pink and colorful. And nobody ever asked for it. I don't think we would have put it out for too long, but I think the idea was that it looked so humorous among the jimmies, the sprinkles, the coconut, the raisins, then you have this pink confection.

Nardwuar: Did you and Henry also give a rat a mohawk?

Ian: Henry. That was his rat, Spike.

Nardwuar: Did he give it a mohawk?

know what to make of that.

Nardwuar: Ian, what do you think of that Poison Idea record, where it's "[makes throat slitting sound] Ian MacKaye"?

Ian: I don't think that's what it's called. I think it's just called "Ian MacKaye" and the cover is a big, spread asshole. I think you're getting two different records mixed up again. But, what do I think about it? Um, huh. It hurts my feelings, but I don't really care.

Nardwuar: Had you known those guys or done any gigs with them?

Ian: I don't know them, but their point of view – and a lot of people who assail my name or image or whatever – their point of view is that "There are people that consider him a god, so we're just trying to show he's just a human." But my position is that you don't throw rocks at human beings. So if you're going to be cruel to me, then you're making me into something that's apparently larger than life. If they're going to be ugly about my name or ugly about me, then all they're doing is reinforcing the idea that I'm not a human being, that I am some weird god. I'm comfortable with myself being a human being. I don't know why they have to waste their time writing about me. But that's twelve years ago, or eleven years ago. Let's get topical here.

Nardwuar: Well, how about your pockets? Do you carry five dollar bills in your pockets in case you have to kick somebody out and give them their money back?

Ian: No, I don't. But if I need to escort somebody out of the room and give them their money back, I'm sure I can borrow the money from somebody in the room, but I wouldn't carry it in my pocket. I have done so in the past, but we don't have that many problems any more. We don't really have to ask many people to leave. You'd be surprised, though, if you just give one person's money back, how much enjoyable an evening can be. Because usually it's just one or two people that are causing most of the problems.

Nardwuar: Have you ever planted anybody in the audience, just for a joke, and pretended to kick them out, just for fun?

Ian: No.

Nardwuar: Ian MacKaye of Fugazi, how about stuff that's been chucked at you? What kind of stuff's been chucked at you when you guys have been up on stage?

Ian: It's been quite a while. Recently, actually on our last tour, three nights in a row where people threw beer on stage. Huge, full glasses of beer. Generally speaking, people don't usually throw that much stuff. I guess we have a t-shirt now and then. Last night (in Victoria, B.C.), someone threw a spiked wrist band and – oh – an Indian necklace. It wasn't chucked at us. It was just dropped on the floor and tossed up on stage. And, oh, in Kelowna B.C., people were in the first row with their fingers in their ears so we gave them some ear plugs and about a

song or two, some ear plugs came on stage.

Nardwuar: Did Allison of Bratmobile inadvertently chuck a tampon at you guys?

Ian: You'll have to ask Allison about that.

Nardwuar: Do you remember the story at all or perhaps what I'm alluding to?

Ian: Oh yeah, but you'll still have to ask Allison about that.

Nardwuar: Well, what's your take on that story, Ian?

Ian: My take is that you'll have to ask Allison about that.

Nardwuar: How about your take on this story: Calvin Johnson glass ashtray.

Ian: I didn't throw it.

Nardwuar: What happened there? It's kind of dangerous if you open for Fugazi, isn't it?

Ian: No.

Nardwuar: Wasn't it for Beat Happening that night? Calvin got a glass ashtray in his forehead or something like that?

Ian: It was 1991. Is it dangerous to open for Fugazi now? No, it's not. 1991, we were playing Los Angeles. It was a different time and people there were very aggressive and when they were playing, someone threw an ashtray. It was not glass, however, but it was hard enough to split his nose open, but he didn't miss a beat because he immediately said, and you may actually get his reference, "Somebody broke my nose. Dump the whole balcony," which is a reference. Do you know the reference?

Nardwuar: [head shake]

Ian: I'm so disappointed in you, Nardwuar.

Nardwuar: Help me Ian, help me. Teach me, Ian.

Ian: It's a Germs live album where Darby says, "Somebody broke my nose. Dump the whole balcony." So, in other words, somebody broke his nose and he immediately quotes Darby, who is, of course a quintessential LA punk rock guy. I think that was Beat Happening's first big punk rock show experience. They'd played smaller shows, but I don't think they'd ever been in front of something like that. The crowds have been – they've gone through quite a cycle. I've been involved with music for twenty-one years now, so I've seen this scene go through all sorts of weird conceptions and that particular era was weird. When we first started playing, the music we played was so bizarre. That's what I find so funny, people talking about our old record being so classic, but when we first started playing "Waiting Room," at that time, contextually, with the music that was being played, people thought, "What is this weird, reggae crap?" They hated that song. So that goes to show that there's always room for growth and change and if you don't take advantage of that, you're just going to keep beating on the same drum.

Nardwuar: Ian, how about some crazy stuff from doing your own gigs and doing your own stuff, like a stage collapsing on you in Phoenix and helicopters overhead? Do you remember that? Didn't you go through the stage?

Ian: Yeah, I fell through the stage. It was a water-logged stage. I was jumping up and down and it went up to my knees and actually managed to cut my shins fairly severely, but meanwhile the police helicopter going around with a spotlight on us and skinhead kids rioting out in the street there.

Nardwuar: Ian, do you still have your bass from The Teen Idles?

Ian: Yes.

Nardwuar: When the Teen Idles flew out to LA to do a gig, did you play with The Mentors?

One of the main reasons that, as a band like Fugazi or any band I've been involved with, we've always had the philosophy,

[You must always make the gig.] If you can make it to a high school in 1981 just to pass a hat, we damned sure have to make it to every gig we commit to.

Ian: We took a Greyhound bus out to LA. We didn't fly.

Nardwuar: Sorry, I correct myself.

Ian: I'm so disappointed with you. We played at the Hong Kong Café with Vox Pop, who ended up being 45 Grave; The Mentor; and a band called Puke, Spit, and Guts. We borrowed Puke, Spit, and Guts' bass amp. We borrowed Paul Cutler's bass. We actually took this Greyhound bus out there carrying a guitar, a bass, and a pair of drum sticks. We just assumed we'd be able to borrow equipment. We did, actually, end up borrowing equipment, but they were not pleased about it and we were paid for that gig.

Nardwuar: Fifteen dollars.

Ian: That's absolutely right.

Nardwuar: And eleven dollars in San Francisco.

Ian: That's correct. At the Mabuhay Gardens. You know who we played with? We played with The Wrong Brothers there. That's new wave. The Wrong Brothers, instead of The Wright Brothers, you see?

Nardwuar: How did San Francisco respond to you with the speed and the aggression of The Teen Idles?

Ian: Well, the night we played was a new



wave night, so the actual response of the new wave crowd was one of disinterest. Extreme disinterest, I might say. But, the night before, the show we were supposed to play on was The Dead Kennedys, Flipper, and The Circle Jerks. Dirk Dirksen, who was the guy who ran the joint, The Mabuhay Gardens, just dropped us from the bill. He asked us for a photo. We sent him a fuckin' photo. Sorry. We sent him a photo and he just said, "Dumb photo." So he dropped us from the bill without telling us, so we'd taken a bus all the way out there for two shows and we got to the one show and it was gone so he put us on the next night, which was new wave night, but a lot of the kids we met, primarily HB kids from LA,

the Huntington Beach punk rock kids that came up for the Circle Jerks, and they seemed to like it.

Nardwuar: What were The Mentors like? Did they help prepare you for working with Tesco Vee (lead man of The Meatmen)?

Ian: No. They were just kind of scary guys. Big, with hoods on. El Duce would carry his SVT cabinet by himself. That's a heavy cabinet. They were kinda weird. It was all weird. We were all so overwhelmed by the whole experience. The whole thing was just strange. Tesco, on the other hand, I knew as a person. I didn't know him as a character.

Nardwuar: What do you think of Tesco Vee, because some people think his records are kind of crazy. Crazy. Tesco Vee. Hey, that kind of rhymes.

Ian: Uhm, I haven't listened to a lot of his records. I produced the one. "Dutch Hercules." And I know the first one, "We're the Meatmen and You Suck!," but I'd never listened to the other ones, really.

Nardwuar: When other Minor Threaters got involved with him, you weren't embarrassed for them or anything?

Ian: No.

Nardwuar: Ian, HR of Bad Brains. When they started out, was he a pre-med student?

Ian: So I've read. I didn't know of that until it was recently written about in a book.

Nardwuar: And what was HR like? Did he ever give any homophobia towards you at all?

Ian: No. Not to me. HR was the energizer. He was really passionate about what he did. He was a visionary. He really got a lot of us kids thinking we could do anything. He was really full of great ideas and was always the one who said "Go!" The Bad Brains always started their set with, "Are you ready?" They were a complete inspiration as a band, so I knew them on that level. When he became a rasta, things became more distant and all the homophobic stuff kinda came up later on. At that point, I didn't barely know him any more and now if I see him, we will say "Hi," but we haven't actually been able to have a conversation in twelve years.

Nardwuar: Ian, [reads quote] "I have some really great practice tapes with about seven minutes of music and about eighty-three minutes of arguing." -Ian MacKaye.

Ian: By which band?

Nardwuar: I don't know. That was a quote of yours.

Ian: Oh yeah. What do you want to know?

Nardwuar: What did you mean by that?

Ian: Minor Threat practice tapes. That band argued all the time. People ask, "Why did you break up?" Because we were sick of each other. We argued all the time. We were kids. Brian was 14 or 15. Lyle was 16. I was 18 or 19 and we were struggling how to live and grow up and that band was full of fire, so we had intense arguments. And, actually, one of these days, I might try do a record of just arguments because they're just so classic.

Nardwuar: Thurston Moore did those for Venom. Didn't he? Did the Venom stage

banter.

Ian: I never heard that. I'd like to hear that some day. There's one argument we have about how much to charge for the "Out of Step" record because I wanted to charge \$3.50. I thought \$2.50 for a single. Make it a twelve inch, make it \$3.50. Bam. It'd be nice. But we ended up having an argument for half an hour about that.

Nardwuar: Speaking of arguments and stuff, Ian, what was the last time you got in a true blue fist fight?

Ian: How do you define "true blue fist fight"?

Nardwuar: Real, full-on fist fight. Like James Dean.

Ian: I think in 1985. I had been in a hospital with a shoulder problem that they thought was cancer, but it wasn't. It was undiagnosed pain and I came out of the hospital. I had a biopsy on the shoulder and I went to see The Minutemen play. Rites of Spring had opened for The Minutemen. Brendan had been in a car accident and had his arm in a sling and they had to do an acoustic set because he couldn't actually drum. He had to play a stand-up snare, or percussion-type thing. And during that show, a guy punched my brother, Alec. And I think I hit him with a right, but my arm was sore and it just reminded me. It was such an intensely painful experience that it reminded me again I was done fighting for good and I did not fight again. I've had moments of altercations - not fights. In a sense of like there was an argument that got into a fight. More like somebody pushed me or did something where I pushed them back. But I don't fight. I think, as a form of communication, it's a bankrupt form of communication.

Nardwuar: There was a rumor in the fanzine *Butterfly Juice* that you once hit a kid in the head with a hammer.

Ian: That's not true. That's a mutation of a story about when I was in high school, there was a kid named Josh.

Nardwuar: Josh Freese of the Vandals?

Ian: No, because he's from Los Angeles and I'm from Washington DC.

Nardwuar: I was just throwing a joke out.

Ian: Oh, okay. We were in a theater production together called The Wilson Players. It was a community theatre that was actually in the school and I was building a flat. Do you know what a flat is?

Nardwuar: A house?

Ian: No.

Nardwuar: A flat of beer?

Ian: The flat would be the things you put up around the stage that backdrop the scenery, the set. To build a flat, you build frames, then you stretch out some fabric. You paint the fabric to look like walls. I was squatting on my hands and knees, banging, nailing down a frame for a flat. A bunch of kids were smoking dope in there, which was pretty normal at the time. It was 1979 and I was just building this flat and they were all getting high in the corner and Josh came over and tapped me on the shoulder and I stood up and said, "What's up?" and he was

at arm's length and he blew pot smoke in my face, which was just insane. I took a step back and threw the hammer at him. I hit him in the knee. I didn't hit him in the head, though. It was not in the sense I was trying to break his knee. It was that I was having a reaction to being sort of assaulted. I felt like I had been assaulted. I don't appreciate that. I was minding my business. He was a bully. Do you understand that?

Nardwuar: Yes I do, Ian.

Ian: I wouldn't hit someone in the head with a hammer. I'm not a malicious person.

Nardwuar: Ian, winding up here with Ian from the rock'n'roll band Fugazi in beautiful Vancouver, British Columbia Canada.

Ian: What fanzine was that? Butterfly?

Nardwuar: *Butterfly Juice Fanzine*. When SSDecontrol came down to New York, they brought a lot of their

As far as Boston and New York in a slam pit with "X"s on their heads, that sounds like a big cartoon to me.



crew with them and it was the Boston crew fighting the New York crew. Who do you think won versus the two crews?

Ian: Was I there?

Nardwuar: I was just curious what your take was. The intense loyalty. The Boston crew versus the New York crew.

Ian: What is your question?

Nardwuar: What is your take on that? The two crews fighting. Boston going down to New York and New York crew's there and there's a big slam pit and some of the kids from Boston had giant "X"s on their foreheads so they knew who was on their "team."

Ian: Hmm. Where did you hear all that from? Where's your source on all of this stuff?

Nardwuar: This is a friend of mine, Jonas told me this.

Ian: "X"s on their foreheads? Well, early punk rock, things were very regional. There were kids from Philadelphia, Boston, New York, DC, Richmond, Detroit, Atlanta. Part of being a punk rocker is feeling marginalized and looking for a family to belong to and because it was an era where there was so much sort of animosity coming towards kids who were punk rockers, they started to form fairly tight cells — their families. So,

when they moved and went into other places, they would run into other people who were also in their own kind of families. I know Boston had a crew of people. I know those kids from New York. I know those kids from Washington. I knew there was a lot of friction but not everybody from Boston hated everybody from New York and not everybody from Washington hated everybody from New York. It was sort of like, you just knocked heads. As far as Boston and New York in a slam pit with "X"s on their heads, that sounds like a big cartoon to me. I don't know what you're talking about, but sure, there were times when people had disagreements or whatever, but who would have won? Who cares?

Nardwuar: Has a lady ever come up to you

and said, "I want to have your kid?"

Ian: Uhm. In those exact words?

Nardwuar: Maybe not quite.

Ian: No. Not in those words and not in that kind of sentiment, no.

Nardwuar: Have you seen "The Filth and the Fury"?

Ian: Yes.

Nardwuar: How would you compare that to "Instrument" (the movie that covers 10 years of Fugazi's existence) and you guys played with P.I.L. at one time and have you met Johnny Rotten?

Ian: He didn't speak with me, so I didn't meet him, I guess. Minor Threat did open for P.I.L., October 31st, 1982, Ritchie Coliseum. We played for a pizza and a case of Coca Cola. That was our payment that night. When we came off stage, they pulled up in a limousine after us. It was sort of two ships passing in the night and I don't really compare "Instrument" to "Filth and the Fury." I never bothered comparing it. Did you?

Nardwuar: No. I was just curious if you thought of any comparison between the two.

Ian: No, I didn't think about it.

Nardwuar: How did you guys get on top of the Capitol building with Bikini Kill?

Ian: We're not on the top of the Capitol building.

Nardwuar: Well, there was some big concert there. It seemed pretty well in front of the Capitol buildings or whatever the American word is.

Ian: [laughs] Whatever the American word is? What does that mean?

Nardwuar: I dunno. American explanation. "Park." "Buildings." "Capitol." We don't have words like that in Canada, Ian. We have "parliament" and "democracy."

Ian: What is your question?

Nardwuar: Bikini Kill. Did you do a gig with Bikini Kill?

Ian: Fugazi and Bikini Kill played. We had originally hoped to play in front of the Supreme Court, but ended up only being able to do the show in a part about three blocks to the north of the Capitol, which is the home of the U.S. government, which, I guess, is not a parliamentary system, so I'm sorry about that. You seem put out by that.

Nardwuar: I was just joking.

Ian: Yeah. Thing is, Washington, there's a lot of federal land there and if you ask for a permit, you can use those grounds. You can't really have concerts there, but you can have demonstrations, but because our concerts tend to be — we have themes about them, usually — they're considered demonstrations, so we're able to pull off a lot of that stuff. Conversely, there's some places you can't have demonstrations, but you can have concerts. It just depends on where you go. For instance, the Lafayette Park, which

is right in front of The White House, we wanted to put a concert on there. This was 1988 or so and we just wanted to have a May Day celebration kind of concert. They wouldn't let us have one because it wasn't a demonstration, so we decided, okay, we'll have a demonstration for education of teenage pregnancies. May Day. It was kind of spring. And they said, "Yeah, no problem." All you have to do is come up with something. It's arcane and it's bureaucratic and that's the U.S. government. That's all governments, probably.

Nardwuar: Thank you very much, Ian MacKaye. I really appreciate your time. Keep on rockin' in the free world. And doot doola doot doo...

Ian: Nice to see you again, Nardwuar.

Nardwuar: Please, Ian. Doot doola doot doo...

Ian: Take care. That was rhythmic.

...for more Nardwuar interviews, go to
<<http://www.nardwuar.com>>



PUNK ROCK GIRL

Make the scene

DATE:

Make The Scene

make ART

make noise

make AFUSS

make OUT

Make art

Make noise

Make a fuss

Make out

Community:

I call it MA/Beary
in LA. I live around the
corner from my shop PullmyDA'sy
I walk here with my dog Bingo
Coffee on the corner Altered Stone
down the street - most of these shops
were started with no \$ it's about
exchange - place to hang and
hook up - This could be anywhere
USA.

- So if you're in my hood
Stop by and say Hi OXO

If you're a punk rock girl
or you're in love with one,
send in a picture and a short
reason why she's so rad
to the Razorcake PO.



59 TIMES THE PAIN: *Calling the Public*: CD

Let's start with the lyrics to the first song, "Rock the City." "Show me positive signs around the world/ Good injections and intentions all around the world/ Rock the city/ Create the backbeat of today/ Take the alternative way." This is the chorus of the song which is sung over and over and over. If that isn't bad enough, the music is bland, dull, over produced, radio friendly rock shite. The band heard The Clash once and decided to jump on the current bandwagon of bands trying to update that sound (some doing it well), but someone in the band heard Starships' "We Built This City" too. So you get a lot of cheesy repetitiveness, which I think they are considering to be anthems of some sort, but instead come across as gay sing-a-longs. Stay away from this at all cost. This is the kind of band I would heckle and throw shit at until they got off the stage or I got in a fight with them. You know, the bad band that opens up for the good band you are going to see due to someone's lame idea at their record company. The kind of band you want to beat out part of the admission price from for making you listen to their shit. Now that I think about it, let me know when they come to Atlanta. -Toby Tober (Burning Heart)

ALL: *Live + One*: CD

This is apparently the "live" part of the title, 'cause what I believe was the "+ One" part of the title (a live set from the Descendents) is not here. The sound quality here is a notch better than their last live album, *Traiblazer*, and the songs are a little tighter as well. Although Chad's vocals are a little more limited in range than Scott's or even Milo's (especially obvious on his take of "She's My Ex"), he does make a commendable effort to stay true to the oldies and succeeds for the most part. Live versions of the band's newer songs are what the listener should take notice of, however. Here, this incarnation of the band gels most, proving both why they've been such an influential force in punk music and why they'll never really fit in with the hordes they've spawned: they're a truly original, great band. -Jimmy Alvarado (Epitaph)

ANTIISEEN: *Sabu*: 7

Side one is one of them southern-tinged hardcore songs that you all know and love. This one's about what I'm assuming is a wrestler and not that wimpy looking guy that used to be in all them 1940s "Jungle Book" movies. Side two is a dirgy little ditty recorded live at the legendary Outhouse in Kansas. -Jimmy Alvarado (Steel Cage)

ATOM AND HIS PACKAGE: *Redefining Music*: CD

This is one of those CDs that I take out of my stereo only

RAZORCAKE 76



Well, its loud. Aside from that, I couldn't pay myself to be interested.
-Jimmy Alvarado

after being threatened. I could not endorse this more if I showed up to your house and put a gun to your head and told you to listen to it. The only person whose opinion I care about who had anything non positive to say about this is a guy who thought it wasn't "a joke" enough. If you aren't aware, Atom is this guy who records songs with a sequencer and sings and plays guitar along with them. He has a great sense of humor, and his music has all manner of funniness going on, but this isn't a novelty CD. There are vastly complex musical parts and an amazing range of styles on this. The lyrics are witty and poignant, and many of the songs are danceable even. I dare you, *dare* you to listen to "Shopping Spree" (not about what you think) and not get it caught in your head. Other highlights are Atom's mockery of those who deserve it in "Anarchy Means I Litter," covers of three Mountain Goats songs including my favorite "Going to Georgia," an amazingly kickass version of Madonna's "Open Your Heart" and the sing-along epic against racial caricature; "If You Own the Washington Redskins, You're a Cock." Of course, I like the whole CD, even if "Before my Friends Do" makes me sad. -Rich Mackin (Hopeless)

BAD FORM: *No More Neo No Wave*: 7 EP

I'm listening to this and wondering why your lousy band doesn't rock as fine and hard as these hard bodied boys. I don't know of many, if any, art tinged bands around today that achieve the level and magnitude of Bad Form's rockitude assault on your aural and tactile senses. You either get bands that are more concerned with how their trust fund junkie ass fits in their leather pants and NY Dolls

poses, or bands that are too concerned if the cat hair on their sweater will show up under the stage lights. These Bad Form cuties say fuck all that, it's "gonna rain, it's gonna pour," and this shit is coming down in torrents. Crank it up and let them massage your ear drums with some nasty beats and jangly guitar pickin'. Whew! -M.Avrq (Youth Attack)

BANGERS AND MASH: *As Primitive As Can Be*: CD

This is a highly entertaining and extraordinarily hilarious musical mock-up of 1964 and '65-era British beat groups... a true-to-form, tongue-in-cheek tribute to the merry mop-topped music-makers of the flashy swingin' Sixties. The garagey Mersey-style songs contained herein are amusingly adorned with thick (but very obviously fake!) Scouse-tinged vocal inflections and a frolicking romp of giddy butt-jigglin' instrumentation... yeh baby, it's as if Austin Powers is frenziedly fronting The Rutles at The Cavern Club in British-colonized Hades! If ya really wanna spice-up your next all-night house-bash, pop this groovilicious lil' platter into the cozy confines of your hi-fi unit, and then feverishly twist and shout the night away with the tastiest lad or bird of your choice. Bloody fab and gear, this one is! - Roger Moser, Jr. (British Cooking)

BLEED: *Motor Psycho*: CD

Prime-grade raunchy rock'n'roll from a band that really knows when to hit you with a good ballad ("Love Me") and when to turn up the attitude to 10 and rip shit up ("Lusty Lady"). I'm surprised Crypt isn't crawling all over these guys. -Jimmy Alvarado (MuSick)

BLOW UP, THE: *True Noise*: CD

This three-piece bring the trash, light it up on the porch, play with it, and watch it burn. The Blow Up hurl through stomping, red-line, pop the clutch and smash the Lambretta (an LI Series II if you're gonna get technical and go by the cover) though the garage door mania. They seem to revel in eradicating the pus of splinters from broken soul, broken strings, broken melodies, and pierced eardrums. It's one of those records where I'm always reaching for the volume knob and cranking it 'til my teeth chatter and my ears ring. Yeah, it's spazzy, but in the way that Scared of Chaka noise it up, upon returned listens, I had this revelation: "Holy fucking shit, there's some songs in there, some actual songwriting capability, not just fuzz, racket, screaming, scrambling, jamming, and cramming." *True Noise* is like finding change in your pocket after laundry. It doesn't stink and you feel unexpectedly a little bit richer. -Todd (Empty, <www.theblowup.net>)

BOTTLES AND SKULLS:

***Never Kiss The Wasp*: CD**

Hot damn juicy-fruit motherfuck, this is pure gut-pummelling high-octane aural unruliness! It's a raucously roarin' whirlwind of equal parts savage punkrock fury and primitive dirt-bag rock'n'roll vileness... as if Black Flag, Fear, Motorhead, The Wimps, and Nashville Pussy were all involved in a razor-slashed street scuffle deathmatch in a trash-strewn inner city alleyway. Man, I've got Bottles And Skulls so loudly blastin' right now that my ears are lacerated, convulsing, and profusely gushing irreplaceable amounts of blood. Waaahooooo, I'm brain-damaged beyond redemption thanks to the kick-ass sonic wickedness thunderously ragin' throughout this decadent and dangerous disc! - Roger Moser, Jr. (<www.bottlesandskulls.com>)

CAPITALIST CASUALTIES:

***Planned Community* 6 EP**

Yep, 6". You read that right. Unlike the 5" you futilely tug away at, this thing can be played. And loud! In a sense there's a theme to this record. School and church (the subject of the first two songs) all exist in the modern American community, and they are no longer what they appear to be, and this whole line of thinking that a planned community is a safe haven is shattered, as summed up in the title track. Where will you be when this band plays the show marking 20 years? -M.Avrq (Six Weeks)

CHARISMATICS, THE:

***Self-titled*: CD**

This is melodic high-energy pop punk that's as smoothly polished as a freshly minted 25-cent piece! The Charismatics perfectly create a frenetically pulsating sonic collage containing some of the most complex harmonies and intricately textured melodies that's ever jubilantly leapt into my ears. It's a stunning, power-

into my ears. It's a stunning, powerful, and energetically unrelenting release solidly similar to several of the sugary-sweet punk boy wonders on the Fat Wreck Chords roster... so if ya prefer your punkrock unruliness with a delectable dose of giddy good-time poppiness, then I thoroughly recommend the harmonious hi-jinks of The Charismatics. This disc is damn good all the way down to the very last ditty! - Roger Moser, Jr. (Stompbox)

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love this stuff! Full on thrash where it doesn't sound out of control. Tingles of crossover without being overtly metal. Mosh parts during the breaks in the song and steamroller fast sections. The great thing about punk is a new band recreates or changes the idealism of the scene all the time. It's a self-replenishing scene. I just wish that it would all fall under one banner again instead of being broken up into all the sub-genres. One big happy family. -Donofthead (625)

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Skip past the pointless introduction, and maybe just go on to track four, "Tomorrow Was Yesterday," and let the disc play through from there. Recorded live in Germany sometime last year, the DeRita Sisters play punk in the style of the Buzzcocks, and later period Dils. Really good stuff. Imagine they must be fun live. Wouldn't mind seeing them play here sometime. -M.Avrq (Ralf Hunebeck)

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RAZORCAKE

TOP 40 7'S

Underground Medicine Mailorder, CT



1. Mud City Mangers, *Tired of Losing* (007)
2. Killawatts, *Dig These Kids* (Yakisakanna)
3. Peer Pressure, *1979/1980* (EV)
4. Flakes, *Bad Girl/Hangup* (Lipstick)
5. Paul E. Ester and the Cruel Shoes, *Eyeliner EP* (Rapid Pulse)
6. Plugz, *Mindless Contentment* (Blammo)
7. Strong Come Ons, *Trailer Sessions* (Pleasure Unit)
8. Skinnies, *Out of Order* (Rave Up)
9. Briefs, *C'Mon Squash Me Like a Bug* (Sub Pop)
10. Zeke, *Evil Woman/Sockwaves* (Beluga)
11. Reds/Sweet J.A.P. (Nice & Neat)
12. Sheek The Shayk, *Just a Chick* (Havacone)
13. Various Artists, *Great Dance Tunes Vol 1* (HDP)
14. Gloryholes, *Screamer* (Dirtnap)
15. Beatings, self-titled (Pelado)
16. MHZ, *Action Figure* (Flying Bomb)
17. Skellet, *Suburban Rebel* (Ken Rock)
18. Reatards, *Get Out of Our Way* (Contaminated)
19. Stupors Stars, *Poison Arrows* (Pelado)
20. Head, *Total Commitment* (Evil Clown)

Disgruntled Mailorder, CA (June/July sales)

1. Flash Express, *Who Stole the Soul* (Revenge)
2. Beltones, *Shitty in Pink* (Radio)
3. Briefs, *Squash You Like a Bug* (Subpop)
4. Briefs/Spits, *Split* (Dirtnap)
5. DRI, *Dirty Rotten EP*
6. Smogtown, *Audiophile* (Hostage)
7. Guitar Wolf/Shutdown 66, *split* (Corduoy)
8. Clone Defects, *Lizard Boy* (Superior Sounds)
9. BellRays, *Suicide Baby* (No Tomorrow)
10. Dialtones, *Playing That Beat on the Radio* (Deadbeat)
11. Le Shok/Electric Frankenstein, *split* (Know)
12. White Stripes, *Lord Send Me an Angel* (Sympathy For The Record Industry)
13. Agathocles/Black Army Jacket, *split* (Deaf American)
14. United Blood/Pressure Point, *split* (Coldfront)
15. The Pattern, *Feverish* (GSL)
16. Razillos, *Radio Session*
17. Catheters, self-titled (Kapow)
18. X, *Home Is Where the Floor Is* (Rock'n'roll Blitzkrieg)
19. Backstabbers, *American Teenage Rock'n'Roll* (Fandango)
20. Stitches/Le Shok, *split* (GSL)

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FACET, THE: *Adult Comedy*: CD

Well, it's loud. Aside from that, I couldn't pay myself to be interested. - Jimmy Alvarado (Not Bad)

FIREBALL MINISTRY: *FMEP*: CD
After listening to Fireball Ministry's *FMEP*, what can one say other than, "Metal Lives!" Yeah, it may sound like something overheard at a *Heavy Metal Parking Lot* screening, but the words still ring true for a band like Fireball Ministry. Imagine grabbing four of the biggest stoners from your high school days and sticking them in the garage. Lock the door. Leave the stereo, a few instruments and every Ozzy-era Black Sabbath record. Come back six months later and listen to them play. Chances are, the results will sound like Fireball Ministry - slow, plodding beats that induce all sorts of head-bobbing, crusty hescher guitars and even the occasional metal castrato. This is the sort of album that will instigate air guitar battles and headbanging sessions that end in whiplash. Trust me, that's not a bad thing. -Liz O (Small Stone)

F-MINUS: *Suburban Blight*: CD
Holy shit! Just the CD I have been waiting for. 20 fast, loud, angry, balls-out hardcore punk tracks in only 24 minutes. None of which surpass the two minute mark. F-Minus is the best thing to come in the mail in a while. The last CD that did this to me was Asshole Parade's *Student Ghetto Violence*. Their sound kinda reminded me of them too with some female

vocals thrown in. Two guys (drum and guitar) and two girls (bass and guitar) all share vocals from song to song. All four of them churn out great, pissed off, gut-wrenching vocals equally as well. No pussies in the bunch (no pun intended). These songs, as the title implies, about suburbia and the disdain these great musicians, singers and songwriters feel about the living among these minions of sheep and their silly façade. All around a tight, fast-as-fuck fury. This is the best antidote for their glass house world, shattering it to bits. The CD has already racked up a shitload of frequent flyer miles on my CD player. It wakes me up in the morning as I get up to head outside the city for work to face these robots on a daily basis giving me relief that I am not alone in the anger I feel. Thanks to bands like this, I am not going postal. Instead, I am the manic at 5:30am driving too fast down the highway, windows down, radio blasting, pounding the steering wheel and dashboard while shaking my head back and forth on my way to be the consummate professional that I am. (Hey, at least I'm not doing my make up, reading the paper, talking on a cell phone, drinking and eating or the many other things the others around me are all doing aside from actually paying attention to the road.) Do yourself a favor. Get this CD, put it in, roll the windows down, turn it up to 11 and drive real fast. Preferably in a cookie cutter subdivi-

sion full of soccer moms and kids playing in the streets. Faster, faster, faster! -Toby Tober (Hellcat)

FUCKFACE: *Self-titled*: CD
This here is the last you'll ever hear from these guys. The world turned 5 degrees colder the day they split up. The *only* good straight-up hardcore band from San Francisco in the '90s. I'm not exaggerating. In SF proper of the last decade there were either bad hard rock bands, weird art bands, indie rock bands, and that sort of stuff. Then there were these guys. A breath of fresh air in the stench of urine and vomit-soaked sidewalks of the Mission. I like the vocals, with their maniacal edge, and the dense guitar sound floating over a gritty bass sound. Great stuff. The kind of record you can sit back and get into. Especially the dark edge they possessed. -M.Avrq (Six Weeks)

H2O: *Go*: CD
Sometimes I don't care if a band goes on a major as long as they don't put out a shitty record. I put this as a shitty record. They were on Epitaph, for god's sake. They were doing pretty damn good for themselves. I would figure they would have learned a lesson from Sick of it All on their experience on being on a major. This record has a sugar coating that tastes sour to this reviewer's mouth. I don't know if there is a Blink 182 formula of sound added, but surely is a disappointment. Maybe it's something in

the mastering, but the guitars sound like crap and they lost all the edge that they used to have. The only reason I'm keeping this is because my wife bought it and for their hidden track of their cover of Madonna's "Like a Prayer." I hope they can survive this record. -Donofthedead (MCA)

HATE BOMBS / INVISIBLE MEN: *split* CD EP
Limited edition souvenir single from when both groups last toured together. The premise is simple: Band A covers two songs by Band B, and vice versa. The Invisible Men do nice farfisa-drenched renditions of both "Love Bird" and "Is This What You Think Is Called Love," while Florida's Hate Bombs serve up reworkings of "Just Make Me Happy" as well as the unofficial anthem of NORML, "Green Connection." Quantities of this garage rock gem were sparse last time I checked, so grab one should you get the chance. -Tim From Pomona (try <www.theinvisiblemen.com>)

HEAVENLY: *Heavenly Versus Satan*: CD
As it says right here on the CD case, "This is a reissue and first ever US domestic release of the classic debut album by Heavenly!" I can hear where Heavenly inspired bands like Tiger Trap, Jade, and any various bands that involve an uplifting, fast paced, acoustic guitar sound fronted

by female vocals. I am not saying bands like this are boring or unimaginative. This is simply a great sound that aims to turn anyone's frown upside down. Light, airy and sweet. Kinda like a lemon meringue pie. Yummy. -Harmonee (K)

HI-STANDARD: *Love Is a Battlefield*: CD

A four-song teaser until they record their next full length. I love this three piece from Japan so much because of their ability to bastardize songs when they do covers. Here they do a cover of "Can't Help Falling in Love." Their own songs are right up there with their special brand of bubble gum-fueled fun punk. In the same vein as the Toy Dolls but Japanese style. They can always put a smile on my jaded face. Hearing singer/guitarist start blurting out in his thick Japanese accented English, I know I'm in for a good time. They always seem to be having more fun than the rest. Can't wait for their next full length and their next tour in the states. -Donofthedeath (Fat)

HITCH: *Self-Titled*: CDEP

Apparently these guys used to have a more metallic sound. That's fortunately absent now. Their sound is definitely unique in the sense it's drawing from all over the place. Imagine a band like the Minutemen or Dawson hooking up with folks like Drive Like Jehu. A weird but interesting mix. Now add a little more polish and

melody to that. "Midnight Party Special" is my favorite cut here with its discordant angle and cool pace. I wouldn't mind hearing more. Bring it on. -M.Avrq (Delboy)

HOLDING ON: *Just Another Day*: CD

There's something wholesome about no-bullshit, non-metallic, chokehold hardcore. Sharp, powerful breakdowns. Filler-free drumming. This shit's all filed down to its core and pipebombs out the stereo. Comparisons? I play 'em right between Crispus Attucks, DS 13 (there's a wee bit of gnarled melody deep inside), and Negative Approach (where you think the lead singer's sucking the venom out of his own blood). This shit's so easy to fuck up. The fact that Holding On make it yet another explosion without it looking like a fifth generation xerox copy of a show that happened two decades ago is impressive. Hard without senseless knuckle dragging or basketball-jersey-wearing floor punchers and tough without the macho pose. It's also recorded perfectly. The burrs and roughness are intact but the mix remains clear so you can hear the kung-fu from each instrument, if you're so inclined. Kick your ass good stuff. -Todd (Three-way release: THD, Havoc, 1 Percent)

HOLY MOLAR: *Self-titled*: 7 EP
Here they are, creating a new manifesto for today's wayward miscreant

fucks who should know better than to look to music to speak through, but for some reason never do. Discordant, choppy, and memorable, the Molars charge through six numbers of jail-break fury steeped in sexual double entendres, profound revelations, and the essential. I'd tell you what other bands these guys are involved in, but you're listening to the future baby! Get with it! -M.Avrq (Youth Attack)

I EXCUSE/ MANIFESTO JUKEBOX : *Split 7 EP*

Two songs apiece. I Excuse: ruptured, raspy and popping Japanese punk with the dual guitar swirl and battery of *Mush*-era Leatherface. You have to listen closely to hear the incredible interlock - how the instruments make a big puzzle, and the pieces themselves are interesting and can stand by themselves. I'm a sucker for subliminally complex, surfacely motivated and fast music. You don't have to notice the layers at first because the songs are instantly recognizable as well structured, but it totally helps add depth to future listens. Blazing. Manifesto Jukebox: from Finland are slower and more (polluted) atmospheric, going for a more mid-tempo rock vibe ala early Cult with a knife-inside-the-throat vocalist. Decent. A tad repetitive. -Todd (Snuffy Smile)

INTENSITY: *The Ruins of Our Future...*: CD
Whoa! This destroys! We're talking bone-crushing percussion with some

bottom heavy instrumentation keeping it all together. Hardcore done right. One song to the next they don't let up. And best of all, it's not the same stimulus over and over. Intensity make good use of varying tempos and build ups to create urgent energy that explodes from each track. "By the Throat" and "Amount to Nothing" are two burners on a flawless album. -M.Avrq (Bad Taste)

JELLYROLL ROCKHEADS: *Kill Trend Thrash*: EP

The sort of hardcore to have any fucker with a 1/4 of a brain set to drooling like a rabid pup in a school yard. A lot of folks shit their designer britches over Japanese hardcore, and with the full on attack of these here J-Roll Rockheads it's well warranted. And with the kiddie-kore doo-doo drawing flies over here in the US, a band like the Jellyroll Rockheads is a welcome respite from all these bands who can do nothing but write song after song of "here's what hardcore means to me" turdery. This seven inch salvo is essentially their demo from '99, and they give it to you straight and reject the establishment and other buffoonery lobbed at us daily. Comes on two different colors of vinyl. Damn if I remember which is rarest. -M.Avrq (Youth Attack)

JIMMY EAT WORLD: *Bleed American*: CD
The only thing worse than emo is mainstream, major label emo. Scratch

that. The only thing worse than emo is mainstream, major label emo with piano tracks. These jackalopeasses got no label support from Capitol and were eventually dropped. They sweated out an album, spewing all kinds of rhetoric about how cool it was to not have the corporate tyranny of deadlines, creative restraints, etc., but the Arizona heat has made their brains softer than baby shit after a day at the carnival because as soon as they finished the album they signed with Dreamworks. Dumb dumb dumb dumb, dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb. The terrifying thing is there was a bidding war for their services, which means more radio friendly emo ear puke to come. Jimmy Eat World, I dub thee the Rod McKuen of emo. Now please go fuck yourselves. - Moneys (Dreamworks)

JUCIFER: *The Lambs*: CDEP

Alright kids. Jucifer are finally back with a new release and it's just as rockin' as their full length. For those of you who are familiar with Jucifer, you know about their perfect mix between fast, sludgy rock and intense, rhythmic droning. Well, this EP keeps the energy high, like standing on the edge of a rooftop staring blankly below to the distant surface solely supported by increasing winds in every direction. Yeah, they fucking rock. This is the fullest sound coming from a two piece band that I've ever heard. Go ahead and try to clean all this mud off your shoes. Highly recommended for anyone interested in something worth listening to. - Harmonee (Velocette)

KAMIKAZES: *Time for Rock n Roll*: 7 EP

Well all right! I've been waiting years to hear something new from these guys and this sure don't disappoint. The tempo is less frantic here than on their *All Night Cram Session* EP, but in its place is more swagger, more balls, and more flat-out boogie. These boys don't so much bring the rock as take it and pummel you over the head repeatedly with it. As an added treat, they even delve into the usually dangerous land of the ballad and pull out a nugget as memorable and catchy as the Ramones' "I Want You Around." Enough dicking around, guys. When's the album come out and the "world conquest" tour start? -Jimmy Alvarado (Alien Snatch)

LEMMINGS: *Follow*: CD

The Lemmings flawlessly construct an intricately flowing swirl of pristine powerpop atmospherics that's altogether dazzling, mesmerizing, and illustriously intoxicating. It brightly resonates with celestial stratospheric guitar emissions (the leads are extraordinarily out of this world!) and angelic choirboy vocals that soothingly caress the innermost sanctums of the human ear... the bass rhythmically frolicks, flutters, and plunges headfirst into otherworldly divinity... the drums powerfully plod along as if

guided by the multi-armed fury of Shiva. Indeed, this is shimmering sparkle-shine sonic majesty at its most fluid, cohesive, and wondrously well-structured (grandiosely possessing certain aurally stimulating elements of Cell, Smashing Pumpkins, Cheap Trick, Swervedriver, Goo Goo Dolls, and even a bit of "Murmur"-era R.E.M.)... it's riveting alternative rock revivification that captivates the senses, stirs an entire range of emotions, and hypnotically liberates the soul along the way. Damn, I'm hooked! - Roger Moser, Jr. (ParkBench)

LIFES HALT / WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?: *Start Something*: LP

The happening album of the now. North and South California meet to release punk as it is today. Los Angeles darlings, Lifes Halt, start off with a mixture of punk rock that is not only fast and to the point but interlaced with their Latin heritages. Some of the songs on their side are sung in Spanish. I may not understand, but the message they are trying to convey is truly felt. I may not always be in the know but they are amazing. I had the impression that they were power-violence kids, but they carried more of a '84 vibe in their music. Fast and faster but not too fast. I guess I need to get out more. San Francisco's What Happens Next? have revived a whole genre in a matter of a couple of years. Renaming it Bandana-Core, they strive to thrash a new following while not making it too noisy for others to follow. I was part of the original scene and glad it's coming back. Slamming (or for new kids, moshing) in a leather or choosing flannel with some bandanas is an easy choice. The look was created in Southern California and it's more practical and more affordable. I sound like an adult talking about money, don't I? This all-star bay area band have put out a good amount of releases lately and this follows in their quality. Absolutely raging, fast punk rock with thought-provoking lyrics. Can't have enough thought-provoking lyrics. Hope more is to come from both these bands. I feel like a little kid getting the toy they dreamed for at Christmas. Aggression, rage, intelligence and some speed is all I'm asking for. -Donofthedeath (Young Blood)

LIMECELL:

If We Can't Rock, It's War: CD

Okay, see, this one has a lyric sheet, so now I know what they're singing about, and... I still think they blow a good portion of so-called punk bands outta the water. There's more than a few songs here with lyrics that're gonna piss off more than a few people (cf. "Get the Bitch to Do It"), but fuck 'em. This here is some prime punk rock, kiddies. The real shit, mind you, and not that crap that's been all prettied up and made palatable for the masses of spiky-headed numbnuts

whose sole interest in punk rock is "the girls." This is loud and ugly and rude and crude and flat out killer. You wanna separate the men from the boys, the punks from the poseurs? Slap this puppy on the player and see who's left in the room when it ends. - Jimmy Alvarado (Steel Cage)

LOS CRUDOS: *Discography*: CD

Finally this fucking thing came out! I've heard rumors that people out there were going to do a bootleg version, so Martin and crew rushed this out. This is vital in the sense that it is a history piece from a band that affected many without trying. They crossed language and race lines while continuing in their formula of addressing their views using Spanish lyrics over hardcore. They were trying to reach only their local community of Chicago but others around the world took notice. The rage was genuine. People all around the world sang along with them even though it was not in their native tongues. I respect that and that is why I tried to get all I could by this band in the past. I wasn't successful but I bought what I could get without paying some collector scum a high price for something that all should hear. Many already know about this, but others should look for this because they were a great band for their time period. They are now etched in the punk history books as a band that mattered. The CD includes four 7" singles, the songs from the split with Spitboy, *Canciones Para Liberar Nuestras Fronteras* LP, comp tracks, alternative version of certain songs and a live studio session. Act fast because I think only 1000 - 2000 were only made. Now I have to go to the record store to get the Limp Wrist 7". - Donofthedeath (Lengua Armada)

MAN OR ASTROMAN?: *Beyond the Black Hole*: CD

All but three of the songs on this album were released on *What Remains Inside a Black Hole*, a now out-of-print Man or Astroman? album. All of the songs were recorded between '93 and '96. It's more heavily surf rock oriented than their newer stuff and not quite as tight musically, which isn't a criticism. It's just an acknowledgement of how tight they've become musically. I'm a nut for everything Man or Astroman? releases. They take instrumental rock'n'roll to a whole new level and are really amazing musicians and anything more that I could tell you about them would just be me gushing about one of my all-time favorite bands. -Sean (Estrus)

MANIC HISPANIC: *The Recline of Mexican Civilization*: CD

Orale, these crazy vatos got some new shit out! This time they take rolas Los Descendents, Los Heartbreakers, Social Distortion, Rancid, Catholic Discipline and Offspring and "varrio-ize" them so that the boys in the 'hood can pick up

on the whole punk trip tambien. Those punker chicks are pretty fine, even if they are missing most of their hair and what's left ain't feathered. Que gacho. Sometimes they dance a fine line between parodying stereotypes and reinforcing them, but fuck it, I got a sense of humor, homes. Besides, these balazos will sound firme blasting out of the system in my dropped orange ranfla as I cruise through the dangerous streets of Monterey Park (hey, anybody who's ever had to be behind the wheel while on them streets ain't gonna argue with me). And if the chota don't like the shit I'm booming, lo chingare, ese. There's at least one happy vato in the varrio tonight. -Jimmy "El Grumpy" Alvarado, con safos (BYO)

MENSEN:

Delusions of Grandeur: CD

I think "mensen" is the Norwegian word for "girls who rock." At least it will be. Mensen dish out fast and fun rock'n'roll songs. The singer sounds a bit like Penelope from the Avengers, but the music behind her is trashy and tight, more like the Hives or the Burnouts or a lot of the punk rock coming out of Scandinavia these days. The lyrics are sung in English with a heavy accent and I can understand them about half of the time, but it doesn't matter. I keep listening to this album and enjoying it. It puts me in a good mood. The only caveat is that they cover a Rolling Stones song, and that's really, really annoying. Luckily, though, it's the last song, so you can just stop the album when that song comes on. Other than that, it's a really good CD. -Sean (Gearhead)

MISCONDUCT: *One Last Try*: CD

Continually improving with every album. They sound a little heavier and darker now, but that adds to the impact. Early '90s youth crew that brings to mind Mouthpiece, but more intense musically. Tempos range from mid to rapid fire, such as on the chorus of "I Believe." As always, good stuff from these guys. -M.Avrq (Bad Taste Records)

MURDER CITY DEVILS, THE: *Thelma*: CDEP with cool computer shit on it

I'm liking the MCDs better all the time. Early releases seemed really shouty and separated. Like there was music and then there was a guy shouting from the other side of the parking lot. It never quite meshed for me, but with this EP and *In Name and Blood*, I've become a fan. Although if I zone out to the instrumental parts, I've caught myself thinking, "I don't own any Doors. How'd that get in there?," those incidents are becoming less and less. So, if you're down with the dirty, hurt seagull in barbed wire vibe they've flown into, this EP's further exploration of the type of drowning, dark sea swell hinted at before. It's most evident with the use of languid organ, but the whole band's finding their own sound,

infusing the best ether whippits of Bauhaus, early death rock, and The Waterboys, chaining it to the rusty barge of punk rock, and sailing uncharted, dark oceans. On a completely different tip, imagine my surprise when this comes with a full computer video of a songs that's not on the audio CD ("Idle Hands") and lyrics to all the songs (which I wish were all printed on the insert because a lot folks don't have computers). Fancy. -Todd (Sub Pop)

MUTANTS: *Fun Terminal*: CD

This is one o' those bands that was pretty popular on the west coast back when they were active, but only seem to be remembered these days by collectors. They were from San Francisco, dressed really weird for their equally weird sets, trashed many a stage from the Gay Bay to Lost Angeles, were friends of the DKs and did *not* play hardcore. Au contraire, they sound poppy in a quirky, punky kinda way, somewhere between the B-52s and the Police's edgier moments. I remember taping many of their songs off of long dead radio shows and I always liked that arty new wave sound they had. Presented here is their only album, an EP, a demo and live tracks from a couple o' comps, including their tracks from "Live from the Deaf Club." It's kinda sad hearing this stuff after so many years because this style was a pretty damn good listen when played right and it's rare that

one hears it anymore. I imagine that most will say that this sounds dated, doesn't hold up well, blah blah blah, but for me it brought back memories of days when one could see Black Flag, the Go Gos, the Suburban Lawns and Los Lobos on the same bill; a time when punk rock was still more a concept than a set of marginalized pigeonholes that one should force themselves into and never deviate. -Jimmy Alvarado (White Noise)

NEIGHBORS, THE:

***Negative Reaction*: CD**

Gawd damn! The Neighbors kick up a bad ass racket that hits hard and heavy like Felix Trinidad! Lickety split tempos, heavy guitars, and ragin' vocals combine like Wonder Twins to shape up a bulldozer with one ton pick axes attached for extra measure. These guys are pretty much godhead. -M.Avrg (Six Weeks)

NO SLIDE: *Comp: 95-98* 7

5 song reissue of (duh) comp tracks, solid golf-club-meets-forehead thrash with no fruity trimmings. Includes the delightful "Peckerhead Kill Kill." -Cuss Baxter (Acme)

NOTA: *Live At The Crystal Pistol*: LP

On a personal level, NOTA are the most important band ever. Growing up in Oklahoma, where these guys hailed from, it proved that you could be in a punk and accomplish some-

thing, despite the rednecks and religious assholes that surrounded you. These guys were my piece of sanity in that fucked up time. They made it easier to deal with getting beer gutted assholes in Camaros throwing shit at you and calling you "faggot" as they sped by, or when the jocks would death threat you over the phone. And the classic, "Get a hair cut!" despite having a shaven head. Anyway, this is the vinyl edition of the long out of print classic tape from 1983, not to mention some stuff that never saw the light of day outside of live shows, such as "Carolina," "Apathy," and "Dumb Shit." As well as "Nightstick Justice" and "Riot Kids," which are taken from a practice recording. The recording quality is pretty damn good and captures their raw and urgent attack well. A seamless blending of hardcore punk with street punk and the '77 sound, not to mention political and social commentary as well as personal vision. Nearly 20 years later and this band still strikes a chord within. -M.Avrg (Prank)

OWLS: *Self-titled*: CD

Poppy in the way of Braid and Dismemberment Plan. Guitar driven in the sense that the six strings dominate with swirling and fluid sounds over solid percussion and slightly scratchy vocals. It took me a couple listens to enjoy the finer qualities of the music. But once you start to latch on it's pleasant. "I Want the

Blindly Cute to Confide in Me" is the cut. The guitar that bubbles around the singer proclaiming "There are secrets, there are secrets" is the ingredient to send the song over. This is the kind of music you play on a hot Sunday afternoon while in the throes of mid summer in deep contemplation. -M.Avrg (Jade Tree)

PANICS, THE: *1980-1981: I Wanna Kill My Mom*: CD

I've spent well over ten years living in Bloomington, Indiana over the course of my life, and honestly, at this point I feel I've gotten as much out that town as there is to get. Despite having the basis for what could be a decent creative environment for music, it's hard for me to avoid an assessment of Bloomington's music scene as basically one huge exercise in squandered potential. The few good bands that got going tended to die out quickly from lack of support; the long-lived bands were cursed with lack of vision or spineless commercial careerism or terminal media drought; and then, of course, there's the fact that the town is and always has been choking on its collegiate hick love for cover bands. Okay, you don't know whether I'm telling the truth or pushing my own agenda or what, maybe you have your own opinion and you disagree with me, whatever. Makes no difference to me. Just take this simple test: think of a town, say Chapel Hill, NC, or

Austin, TX, or Athens, GA (which is very, very similar to Bloomington in many ways). Being the kind of person you are, reading this sort of thing, you probably can think of at least three or four nationally-recognized bands from Chapel Hill, or Austin, or Athens. Now think Bloomington. What springs to mind? That's right, John Cougar Mellencamp. If you're well-read in terms of music "literature," maybe the Gizmos. Oh, and David Lee Roth was born in Bloomington, but moved away almost immediately. That's about it, and all those things happened well over twenty years ago. Of course, there are always a few bright spots amidst the waste, the main two being Virginia's Scraping (the various bands of Phil Traicoff), and the bands formed by the partnership John Barge and Ian Brewer: The Panics and the Walking Ruins. I personally witnessed the Walking Ruins blow other bands out the doors of various clubs around Bloomington more times than I can remember – they were real punk rock, unleavened by hyphenated bastardization (i.e. ska-, folk-, whatever-punk): the last true unknown unspoiled punk band. Frankly, they could have stood to be a little more spoiled in their time – I don't know how many times I'd be reading about some supposedly great new punk band in *MRR* and then when I'd check them out I'd think 'Geez, the Walking Ruins could crush these guys without even trying.' So, from

my perspective, The Panics were essentially the proto-Walking Ruins, and The Panics' newish CD *1980-1981: I Wanna Kill My Mom!!!* is merely the first chapter in a long and tangled tale – but an essential chapter, and one that's been almost wholly unavailable for far too long. The Panics' sole Gulcher 45 (recorded August 1980) is augmented with a surprisingly clear-sounding live show recorded about a week after the single, plus a couple of post-Panics cuts and four songs from the one-shot night in 2000 that featured a reunited Panics playing with a reunited lineup of the Gizmos. Barge's detailed and informative liner notes puts the story in perspective, and there's even a Quicktime movie included on the disc for you computer-savvy punx. It's a great snapshot of a time when the idea of punk was clearer, or maybe it just seemed that way. There weren't ten million punk bands yet, there certainly weren't ten million punk records yet, and no one thought it was a way to have a career in music. If you're the kind of person who bought, say, the book collections *Search & Destroy* or *Punk* magazine, or the Germs CD anthology, or Clint Heylin's book *From The Velvets to the Voidoids*, you really need to add this CD to your collection. Otherwise, frankly, you're missing a relatively important chapter in punk rock history, and you wouldn't want that, would you? –Aaron J. Poehler (Gulcher)

PHANTOM LIMBS:

Applied Ignorance: CD

Wild, psychotic, goth merry-go-round calliope punk. I realize that doesn't sound like a particularly attractive description, but I dare anyone one of you reading this to listen to this and honestly tell me that it doesn't sound just like that. It rocks in ways not heard too often since the Screemers called it a day 20 years ago, to boot. If I had the feria, I'd buy and mail copies to every punker in the US who has ever even entertained the idea of starting a band. See, this is how original, creative and flat-out good things can get with a little imagination and a desire *not* to sound like everyone else. Beyond recommended. -Jimmy Alvarado (Alternative Tentacles)

PINKOS, THE: self-titled: CD

Political punk that goes far beyond the empty slogans parroted by many. Instead, the Pinkos present their ideas with an informed background, and it shows in the lyrics as they read like stories and conversations. Think of the Dead Kennedys in this aspect. Musically they keep it simple with only two instruments: guitar and drums. They're catchy, solid, and interesting, as they stay away from the usual stimulus. As you may have gathered, the Pinkos are not your typical punk band. Which works in their favor, and yours, all the more. Have a listen. -M.Avrq (Empty)

PLEASURE FOREVER:

self-titled: CD

Pleasure Forever offer for their debut full length a first-hand listen to a world steeped in lives gone wrong and scenes of sinister occult. Like Nick Cave's often violently demented lyrics, the songs on this record are equal parts urban tragedy and circus sideshow morality play. Instrumentally they offer a simple piano, guitar, and drum three piece, but with each player's wide range of quietly atmospheric jazz to grinding rock, Pleasure Forever manages to defy categorization. I think within that quality lies their greatest power over the listener. Often on this record they musically turn on a dime. They hold the listener suspended over the railing with one thick forearm, only to pull them back onto solid footing with a smirk. I left this record feeling a fondness for their bitterly dark mood and the almost vaudevillian originality of their sound. -Nathan Grumdahl (GSL)

RADIO BIRDMAN: The Essential Radio Birdman (1974-1978): CD

Hell yeh, it's a cacophonously glorious crampacked collection of rock-'n-roll roguery from the formidable aurally blazin' force known the world over as Radio Birdman. Surely you've heard the rowdy robust well-structured tune-blastin' fierceness of the Birdmen at least once in your well-oiled life, and hopefully you're somewhat familiar with their occasional forays into topsy-turvy surf-

style savagery... if not, then ya must be as dead as Bob Dole's dick, by gawd! The fast'n'frenzied musical mastery contained herein is nothin' short of spirited, rugged, wild, crazed, awe-inspiring, and vigorously high-strung. It's no small wonder that numerous bands today frantically attempt to reproduce the ferocious sonic splendor of Radio Birdman, but failing miserably, none of 'em even come close! Yep, sure as shit, I'm gonna sit right here all day long, cool a few frothy beverages, and appreciatively absorb the auidal madness of the unique and mighty Birdmen... - Roger Moser, Jr. (Sub Pop)

**RADIO VAGO: self-titled:
8-song CDEP**

What these five ladies have done in the first year of their existence, most bands can't do in a lifetime: make a sound all their own that's engaging, fun, driving, distinctive and introspective (without drool-in-the-shoe boringness). They capture a loose, striking, moody, sometimes jarring, sometimes melodious sound. The over-riding vibe is the art-affected (as opposed to solely arty or art damaged), keyboard-friendly early LA punk. They probably didn't have the slightest inclination towards these bands, but I hear the keyboard subtle aggression of mellower Screamers, the sparse-yet-full, spanking arrangements of The Bags, and the eeire we're-all-gonna-die-but-don't-be-sad-for-me undertow of Joy Division.

And it rocks and swivels your hips. For some reason, they keep on making me think of a color: purple. It's the traditional color of royalty. Exalted. It's also the color of the deepest bruises - the feel that this EP is the result of previous musical accidents (so they knew what *not* to play) and Radio Vago definitely benefits from it. Really, really cool. Distinctive and instantly appealing. - Todd (www.radiovago.com)

RANDY: Human Atom Bombs: CD
Donofthead is right. There's something about bands from Scandinavia and Japan. They seem to play their instruments a little better and play the songs a little tighter and wait until they're ready to go into the studio to record. That's the case with this album by the Swedish band, Randy. More than most releases, *The Human Atom Bombs* is a whole album. All the songs fit together well and sound different and seem to work together as a unit. There's a lot of diversity, but all of the songs are heavily influenced by fifties rock'n'roll - Little Richard and Eddie Cochran and Buddy Holly. Below the really tight rock'n'roll, though, are very intelligent lyrics sang in clear English. It's hard not to sing along, and I don't even try to resist. Randy sings a lot about anarchy (an intelligent government system anarchy, not chaos at a punk show anarchy) and the downfall of the global economy, but they make it really fun. There's an anger hidden

underneath, but it is hidden. It's not preachy and it's not shoved down your throat. Instead, it creeps into your blood like (to use Randy's term) the punk rock flu. I highly recommend this album. -Sean (Burning Heart)

**RAPTURE, THE: Out of the Races
and Onto the Tracks: CD**

For their first record on Sub Pop, The Rapture craft a collection of engaging post-punk dance songs that are naked and lean. *Out of the Races...* has plenty of the muscling lo-fi bass and drum groove that has turned heads and won acclaim for these three boys. They make me think of early Gang of Four, Television, and PIL, but with a lot less polish and tuning of their guitars. The recording is primitively harsh and hard-panned, but it is a document that is hard to ignore. The Rapture seem to revel in their badly grounded guitars and clanging drums in a way that makes for a very liberating listen. Their abrasively bright guitars cascade over a backdrop of minimal bass and hustling drums and are worth the price of admission. What is the biggest compromise of this record is its weakly sung vocal content. Like the rest of the recording, it is flat and unrehearsed, but hints at an improvement in execution that will undoubtedly come with the next recording. - Nathan Grumdahl (Sub Pop)

REDUCERS SF: Crappy Clubs

and Smelly Pubs: CD

After waiting three years for them to follow up their incredible debut album, *Backing the Longshot*, the Reducers are finally back with *Crappy Clubs and Smelly Pubs*. Listening to it is like running into an old friend in a bar and realizing that you've actually been missing him, so it's exciting to down a few beers with him and hear all the new stories and go on to have new adventures. *Crappy Clubs and Smelly Pubs* still has all the catchy hooks and sing-along anthems as the Reducers' first album, but the songs seem to have grown. They don't rely on the fist-in-the-air choruses quite as much, and the songs are a little bit more complex, but they still float into your brain and stay there like a shot of whiskey. The lyrics are a bit more political and a bit more intelligent, but they still stick close to their oi/street punk roots. It's a really good follow up and a really good album. On the insert of the album, too, they've included pictures of their twelve favorite bars. Twelve. You have to love any band who has twelve favorite bars. -Sean (TKO)

RESISTANCE 77:

Retaliate First: CD

It says in the booklet that this was recorded in March-April of this year, but fuck if it doesn't sound like it came out in '78-'79. Sounding like a cross between the Undertones and the Boys, these guys have got tunes that

are very catchy, solid and anthemic in all the right ways. Jeez, just when I hit another low in my exasperation with the crap being passed off as punk these days, these guys pick me up, dust me off and make me smile and believe again. This comes as highly recommended as I could possibly muster. -Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

RONDELLES, THE: *Shined Nickels and Loose Change* CD

Awe... Should I go into the drama I went through just to obtain this CD? No. I suppose I shouldn't in hopes that it would not distract away from how amazing this band is. I love the Rondelles. They have been one of my favorites for a while now. They have a killer pop-rock sound that is distinctly their own. They are both talented songwriters (kickass pop tunes that make you want to get up and dance) and musicians (which is a combination worthy of my admiration and respect). Stand-up drums, fuzz guitar and a keyboard keep my booty shakin' and my toes a tappin'! *Shined Nickels and Loose change* is their first full length on K Records, following a few 7" singles. This album is a combination of some of the same songs from those singles as well as some new tracks, including a cover of "Like a Prayer," by the Material Girl herself. This CD was well worth the long six-week wait. -Harmonee (K)

RUBBER CITY REBELS:

***Re-Tired*: CD**

Lesson learned today that I shoulda figured out 20 years ago: never assume. Seem to remember these guys playing around L.A. back in the early '80s. I always thought they were some sort of power pop band back then and, following the nauseating overkill of the Knack's "My Sharona," never paid much attention to them as a result. My loss. As evidenced here, they were adept purveyors of trashy punk rock, and it's a shame that they haven't gotten their props like neighbors Devo and Pere Ubu have. Submitted for your listening pleasure are their tracks from the "From Akron" split LP and a raw but enjoyable live set from Akron's Crypt club circa 1977/'78. -Jimmy Alvarado (White Noise)

S.T.P., THEE/ BINGO: *Action: Split 7 EP*

Hoo, doggie! Some crankin' punk rock'n'roll from two bands I initially thought were one, both of which are apparently vying for the title of Italy's answer to the Candysnatchers. Some wild shit here that ranges in tempo from overdrive to nitro-injected full-throttle. After being stuck in traffic for more than three hours today, this is exactly what I need. -Jimmy Alvarado (Rapid Pulse)

SADO-NATION: *The Teal Project: 4-song CDEP*

Holy moly. It's the original Portland Sado-Nation from 1978. Well, sorta.

The first and last songs are Sado-Nation (with three original members, excluding the drummer Chuck) and the middle two are a band called Those Powerful Pheromones, which share singer/guitarist, David Corboy. My favorite track of the quartet is the first. "Nuke Up Now!"'s got that loose, chargey female-fronted wickedness. It's a re-recording more off the *We're Not Equal* LP from '82 that's a lot less shrill (Mish Bondage's voice is deeper, more powerful), less flirting with metal, more straight ahead, and more powerfully recorded. Pretty darn cool. Didn't much care for the second track, "Insomnia Insomniac," which overlapped with what I've been exposed to Jethro Tull a tad too much for my liking. "When the Sun Stops" picks it up with a bouncy beat and toe tappability. "16 Again" - I just really like the tension that Sado-Nation is capable of. They capture the vibe of sirens going off and people running by you and getting caught in a fun riot. Not sure why it's not a clean split (two songs then two songs) between the two projects. -Todd (Cordical Music Co.)

SAVES THE DAY:

***Stay What You Are*: CD**

Saves the Day is one of those bands that people tend to namedrop, i.e. "Oh, I just got the new Saves the Day record." Perhaps the name doesn't come up as often as Modest Mouse, but it still floats around hopelessly

boring conversational exchanges. Despite their reputation, I've never actually heard Saves the Day. So, when *Stay What You Are* arrived in my mailbox, I was struck by an odd curiosity. The next day, I slip the disc into my CD player while driving to work and react like so: "ACK!"... car swerves while attempting not to lose my breakfast... Think pop-punk guitars meet whiny emo vocals spouting the chorus, "At your funeral, I'd sing the requiem/I'd offer you my hand/It hurts too much to see you die." Perhaps it is wrong to judge an album on the first song, particularly one as insipid as "At Your Funeral." So, I fight the urge to fling the CD out of my car window and continue the listen. The second and third songs pass without a second thought as it is just sort of the same thing with less annoying lyrics. By the eleventh song, "Firefly," the album has faded to background music, with the only notable exceptions being "Freakish"- a sweet little melodic ballad and "As Your Ghost Takes Flight," which is basically the same as the other up-tempo tracks on the album but, for some odd reason or other, comes across as less annoying. -Liz O (Vagrant)

SHOCK: *This Generation s on Vacation: 7*

My pet peeves first. I work a shitty job so I got really good at talking shit. Why is it that the record label's logo is bigger than the band name on the

record itself? I thought the band name was Impact because the font was a bit bigger. Second, why didn't I get one of those cheap ass white sleeves to protect my precious red vinyl. Music fans or record collector geeks cherish to the point of obsession on how well a record can rate and how immaculate it is. Third, the sleeve shows a group of '60s garage dudes and what do I hear? I hear a vocalist who either hasn't reached puberty or is a transsexual. Pet peeves aside, a very good garage punk release that is not only catchy, but raw enough to make it worth while. The title track is the most amusing track and hums along long after it ends. The look is there, the sound is there, and I want to see and hear more! -Donofthedeat (Impact)

SLUMBER PARTY:

Psychedelicate: CD

This band is sweet. I can imagine Alice listening to this on her walkman through her adventures in Wonderland, pulling out some of those pastries she picked up at the white rabbit's house now and again, and I know she would turn this up after hanging out with that caterpillar, while sitting on the magic mushroom. It's almost Mazzy Star-esque. Chilling and soothing. Like it should, the title suggests its sound. -Harmonee (Kill Rock Stars)

SMD: *Pissing Beer*: CD

Yogi said that one of the guys in the band gave this to him at Al's Bar recently to, in turn, pass to me to review. Drunken speedcore here from the breweries of East Los Angeles. Pico Rivera to be exact. They chug along, sounding like a sloppy, pissed MDC, singing the praises of drinking, being drunk, anger, assault and battery, and even take nearly a minute to cover GG Allin. Musically, they've got the goods, but it's hard to distinguish them lyrically from the thousands of oi bands that sing the same kinds of things. Hell, Gang Green made a career out of this exact thing 10-20 years ago. In short, I like the songs, but the beer's getting a little stale. -Jimmy Alvarado (<www.kingofdrunk.com>)

SMOGTOWN:

domesticviolenceland: CD EP

Whenever I get a new Smogtown CD I go through four distinct phases: 1) Denial. I pop it in give it a listen and think "nope, it's not as good as the last one." 2) Infiltration. I keep listening. A hook, the ferocity of the rhythm section, a bit of lyrics infested with sneering sarcasm worms its way into my subconscious, forcing me to listen to same disc, the same songs, the same section of a song over and over again. I memorize the lyrics. I make sure my disc player goes with me everywhere I go. 3) Conversion. I accept the error of my ways, and am fulfilled by the truth: this is the best fucking record I've ever heard. I anticipate the next one,

in this case the full length, the way a four-year-old awaits Christmas. 4) Thanksgiving. I'm glad Smogtown is only a punk rock band and not a cult, otherwise I'd probably be down at LAX right now, passing out pamphlets, hustling for jack. -Money (Smog City Waver #45) (Disaster)

SMOGTOWN:

domesticviolenceland: CDEP

The terroristic trio of tunes contained herein violently assaulted, pillaged, and plundered my inner ears like a raging out-of-control maelstrom of mayhem and destruction. It's been many moons since the punkrock hooliganistic spirit within me has been so viciously shaken and so vigorously throttled... hell yes indeed, I'm overwhelmingly awed by the short bursts of frenzied energy generated by Smogtown (surging with sonic chaos and comparable to a well-blended bombardment of The Adolescents, Circle Jerks, Middle Class, and early Suicidal Tendencies!). They wildly wail, screech, and scream with enraged contempt against society's complacent ethical blandness, and they take no prisoners whatsoever along the way. This is punker than all-out fuck... so do yourself an ever appreciative favor and aurally overdose on Smogtown today! - Roger Moser, Jr. (Disaster)

SPACE COSSACKS, THE:

Tsar Wars: CD

Now that the trend of surf guitar punk has been dead for about five years, only the bands who were truly inspired by guitar legends like Link Wray and Dick Dale still play it. That's a good thing. No more of everyone and their brother trying to knock of the Ventures. Only the strong have survived. Only the dedicated will dare dip their feet into the surf. Among that short list of daring surf-guitar rockers are the Space Cossacks. They play uptempo, instrumental surf music along the line of Satan's Pilgrims. There's not a lot of flash or tricks to this album, but it's solid rock'n'roll. Perfect for cruising along with the windows down. This CD is supposed to come with a bunch of pictures of band photos and a novella if you stick it in your CD-ROM, but I was too lazy to try to figure that out. It doesn't matter. The music is enough. -Sean (MuSick)

SPEEDEALER/ SOCIAL LEPERS:

Trans-Atlantic Speed Trials: 7

Speedealer: Two doses of that high-octane thrash rock we all know and love. Shit, I'd almost forgotten how friggin' cool they were. Lepers: Considering that I loathed their first EP, this was a bit of a surprise. They still sound like a cheap Dwarves rip off, but I can actually say that I liked this stuff. Although a little short, this is a solid EP, of which there are 600 and all of 'em are on white vinyl. -Jimmy Alvarado (Bronx Cheer)

SPITS, THE: *Self-titled*: CD

Take everything you like about the Ramones and Devo, fuse them together and you've got the Spits. The songs are head down, fist forward, three-chord assaults laced with keyboards that saturate the songs with runny-nosed nostalgia. There is nothing bouncy about these keyboards. On the contrary, it's like air coming out of a hot air balloon mid-transit. The keyboards are there to make the song heavier. In the course of a song you might hear five, six different notes, tops. And we're talking whole notes, as in the finger comes down on the key and doesn't come off again for a full measure. Then it fulfills the loop and repeats itself, again and again and again, building momentum and tearing it apart. Like a train wreck. Like a robot's brainwaves. Like a fucked-up punk rocker who "can't get high offa alcohol no more." The keyboards turns songs like "Saturday Nite," "Remote Kontrol" and "Tired & Lonely" into dirges. The progressions may be predictable but The Spits are a brutal reminder that just because you know the train is coming doesn't make it hurt any less when it runs over your sorry ass. -Money (Nickel and Dime)

STACK: *Konkret*

Lichtgeschwindigkeit: CD

Dry your eyes my good friends. Stack are *not* broken up, like those dirty little rumors that were floating around said. Well, they were split for a while, but saw the error of their ways and are back full force. Perhaps even better than before. Essentially the same as when they first gelled, but sounding tighter and angrier. This disc is sort of a discography to catch you up from past to present. The first 18 songs are from the latest release, the title of the disc (*Konkret Lichtgeschwindigkeit!*), while the remaining 26 are from various splits, comps, and EPs. All quality nonetheless. I remember being totally floored the first time I heard them years ago, and they still pack that devastating punch. This stuff is so good it's unreal. Pulverizing hardcore that owes no allegiance to the past or present. They exist in their own realm of sound reality. The attack is full-on, over the top, and in your face. As it should be. Recommended? This collection is necessary! -M.Avg (Six Weeks)

STRIKE ANYWHERE:

Change Is a Sound: CD

Mark my words. Barring breakups or universal armageddon, Strike Anywhere is the future of melodic hardcore. There's nothing to complain about: unrelenting power, catchy choruses, swelling guitars, smart-as-fuck lyrics and if conviction was green paint every cop station in America would be the color of forests. They ooze the stuff. On first listen - in comparison to their scorching "Chorus of One" EP - the vocalist is very much more in the front of the mix and there's more melody. After the third listen, I didn't even notice.

They work as a unit. Songs, at times, breathe, and in those glimpses are tiny barbs and they allow you to see how the faster songs rip along with big hooks - not only constructing a wall, but nets, swinging bats, and huge embraces of sound. How smart can their lyrics be? Take this and take close notice of the breaks: "I wish the good cops/ if they exist/ the very best/ and a bullet for all the/ complications injustice deliberations what's the deal." It's not necessarily anti-cop. It's definitely not pro-cop, but it sets up the extremely logical argument that there is a possibility of a good cop (yet to be met, but you only need one example to topple a supposition) and that's juxtaposed against putting a bullet - not in the cop, but in what the cop's a defender and signifier of. Again, fuckin' smart. Another thing that impresses the hell out of me about Strike Anywhere is that they're doing this with open arms - directly offering inclusion of all races, creeds, and both sexes, and not limiting themselves to the usually narrowly-defined topicality and nutritionally obsessed posi-core of yesteryear. -Todd (Jade Tree)

STRONG INTENTION: *What Else Can We Do But Fight Back*: CD

Perfect follow-up to their astounding EP. Blazing, in-your-face hardcore that goes for broke every song. Choppy and fast paced on every song, and it doesn't get tiring. Which is a feat! Yeah, okay so they may slow down a little, as in "Dry Socket" but damn, they pretty much keep the needle in the red. Easily one of the best hardcore records of the year. -M.Avg (Six Weeks)

TEMPLARS:

The Horns of Hattin: CD

These guys have been a guilty pleasure of mine ever since my friend Art Muñoz turned me on to these guys a few years ago. Even at a time when I think skinhead music has hit an all-time low, these guys remain an exception to the rule. The sound here is more polished and less tinny than usual, but the songs don't suffer in the least. They still have that Oppressed meets 4 Skins sound and I personally wouldn't want it any other way. -Jimmy Alvarado (GMM)

THEE MICHELLE GUN ELEPHANT: *Collection*: CD

During the past couple of years, it seems as if I've read countless flattery-packed articles zealously praising the roarin' rock'n'roll splendor of Thee Michelle Gun Elephant. I unfortunately hadn't been exposed to their manic eruptions of musical madness until bodacious lil' Betsy Palmer (promo princess extraordinaire at the aurally eclectic Bomp HQ) sent this ear-scorcher of a disc to me several days ago (thanks so very much, Betsy dear!). Hot diggedy dog damn, now I know why TMGE have rightfully warranted all of the frenzied fuss! They noisily, raucously, and enthusi-

astically create a garagey post-punk cacophony of high-spirited rock-'n'-roll fierceness... it's hyperactively swarming with a charismatic overabundance of energetically uplifting originality and inimitable uniqueness! Oh man, I can only describe this eardrum-batterin' quartet as a four-headed nuclear-spawned reptilian monster sonically rampagin' through the smolderin' remains of The Who (circa 1965-67), The Stooges, Husker Du, Agent Orange, a harder-edged PIL in certain places, Mission Of Burma, The Makers, and even a bit of Dicks and Big Boys (with a spicing of Chuck Berry riffage tossed throughout). After only one listen to this gut-pummelling platter of joy, it blew the fuckin' enamel off my teeth in 30 seconds flat! - Roger Moser, Jr. (Alive)

THREE YEARS DOWN:

***Snakes Bite*: LP**

They look like they play jock-core, but that ain't what's comin' outta my speakers. What I'm hearing is some supercharged, overdriven punk rock'n'roll that's causing smoke to emanate from my turntable. Any band that pays tribute to Peter Criss by putting one of his trademark drum intros in the middle of one of their songs is okay in my book. -Jimmy Alvarado (702)

TIGHT BROS. FROM WAY BACK WHEN: *Lend You A Hand*: CD

You should have heard the over-

whelming "Yes!" resonating out of my apartment when I got this one in the mail. Tight Bros. From Way Back When are probably the most underrated band on the planet today. Their latest endeavor culminates with the all the fury and passion that drove them to kick ass all over this sweet land of ours and finds them venturing into some uncharted territories (Joe Tex cover!). I don't dare say it and mean for it to be comprehended as an asinine reviewer scumbucket description but damn it, this one's a little more soulful than their usual straight ahead, take-no-prisoners, rocking wild abandon (did I mention the Joe Tex cover?) i.e. the cult classic rock record of all time - their first full length, *Runnin' Thru My Bones*. Dave and Quitty make beautiful destruction together with their double guitar ballet of assault. You can't mistake those gut-wrenching pipes of Jared, whose voice harkens of Enrico Caruso gargling with straight lye. These guys will sweat, bleed, and barf for your undeserving asses to be moved into a frenzied state of all-out rocking because they are just the type of people that give a shit about rock'n'roll, and I don't mean no pansy assed "punk" shit either. As The Kids once said, "This is rock'n'roll!" Hell yeah, this is the pure amped-out shit right here. Go get this record and get laid. I'm serious. If any dude put this record on during a make-out session, I would be so floored by his (a) good taste, (b) if he can keep it up to this

beat, he must be one savage animal of a fuck, (c) damn that Joe Tex cover. After your sorry butt gets laid, take your date out to physically see Tight Bros. From Way Back When and watch the fireworks fly. Your date will be drenched in beer from head to toe, her lopsided neck will probably not be able to withstand the weight of her own head. She probably had too many beers trying to get drunk before she had to see you in the nude again, but most importantly, she'll be weak and ready... for round two. Ho, ho, ha, ha - no guarantees in this here review but try it anyways. Oh and yeah, yeah everyone sounds like the MC5 these days. Fuck you.- Miss Namella Kim (Kill Rock Stars)

TOYS THAT KILL: *The Citizen Abortion*: CD

With FYP going the way of a used Depends undergarment, my expectations for what, on paper, looks like a recussitation or a ghost-ridden bike of a just-departed band were really low. I liked FYP. They were stupid. Fucking stupid. And I say that with love. Lots of retarded love. Part of the sugar shavings of that candy necklace of love was the almost complete ineptitude of the band. And the dick and fart jokes. Because we all know the basic punk rock equation: bad band plays so awfully, it's good. If they're that retarded for real, even better. They helped redefine glorified incompetence, like a Taco Bell

employee with ADD, a sense of humor, and full access to the guacamole gun, but with instruments. So when the first thing I heard about that Toys That Kill is that they could play, methought "That's like saying that lady who had that sock puppet Lambchop could really act." Who gives a fuck about that? I want sock puppets and stained underwear. Joe Satriani plays well. Fuck that guy. Well, it's time to break out a can of pink, paint polka dots all over me and throw me in the middle of a monster truck rally. TTK are fantastic. Although seemingly incomprehensible - even to myself - they retain the spastic, wet, warm undie feeling of FYP - but they can play the hell out of a song and there's social commentary that involves no bodily fluids. As a matter of fact, without ever using the words directly, the whole album's chock full of anti-authoritarianism. We'll end with a song quote that sums it up nicely: "but what's a trip without a little danger?" It's nice when resurrections work out and the phoenix rising from the ash isn't just the dust settling from someone pissing out the fire. -Todd (Recess)

TRUST FUND BABIES:

***Self-titled*: LP**

Attention Hostage Records: If you're looking for new bands to be on your label, look no further than these guys. I don't think they're from OC, but some rules were meant to be broken and they sure as hell have the same

sound and vibe as Smogtown, the Numbers, the Bodies and all your other acts. *You can't lose with this one.* The money will be rolling in. Tell you what: I'll spring for the Havana cigars after you reach your first million after signing 'em, okay? -Jimmy Alvarado (Rapid Pulse)

TSOL: *Disappear*: CD

All right, I'll be honest. My first impression of this album was that it sucked balls. The only thing I'd heard worse was the last two Buzzcocks albums. Why? I don't rightly know, son. Maybe it was because their first four records - some of the finest work punk rock has ever seen - cast a mighty long shadow. Maybe it's because they turned in to utter shit almost immediately after Joe Wood took over vocal duties and I fully expected this to suck. Anyway, I thought this blew hard and I was not gonna hesitate to shout this tidbit of information from the highest steeple in the land. To be sure that I was correct in my loathing, I listened to the album again. And again. And again. And every time I listened to it, I began to hear more and more of the things that made me love TSOL in the first place. The solid backbeat coupled with the dark tonality of Ron's guitar. Jack's inimitable vocals. The sarcasm. The edge. What the fuck was wrong with me?! How could I have thought this sucked? Was I high? Unlike the aforementioned more recent efforts that the Buzzcocks are responsible for, this has been given a hallowed place in the heart (and record collection) of this dour, old-fart punker. Yes, I recommend it. -Jimmy Alvarado (<www.nitrorecords.com>)

TSOL: *Disappear*: CD

Maybe I'm risking my punk rock credentials by admitting this (oh no! Don't let the punk police take my punk rock passcard away!), but I've never heard a full TSOL album up until now. I always got the impression that they're one of those bands that's a lot better-known in California, like Love and, um, well, no one else springs to mind, probably because I've never lived in California. I know they've had a lot of instability in the past, including some kind of legal problem that temporarily prevented a reunited lineup of the founding members of the band from performing as "TSOL" - shades of Moby Grape (or Yes, if you want to be unkind). *Disappear* is doin' it for me, though - lots of screeching punk rock guitar and nonstop rhythms. They've got the shit down - just sitting here listening gives me that long-absent desire to crash into people and pump my fist in the air and shout along with the choruses, and goddamnit, isn't that what punk rock is supposed to do? This is the kind of music that comes to my mind when I hear people refer to "California punk rock," though these days they more often seem to mean some collegiate punk-pop band that

has more tattoos than talent. No radio-friendly bullshit here as far I can hear, thank god. The need to include radio-ready singles on albums has nearly destroyed the credibility of punk rock the same way it did metal and hard rock, and here TSOL manages to keep the hooky catchiness of the songs without some idiot trying to slick it up to sound like Blink 182. -Aaron J. Poehler (Nitro)

TUFFIES: *You Go Girl*: CD

Some of the songs on this appear on Bangers and Mash's CD, although these don't have the faux English accents. These are actually better versions, not because they're better in performance, but because there's more of a "punk" edge to 'em and they come off sounding like Rotters outtakes. Considering what tried to pass itself off as punk these days, you could do a lot worse with your money than spending it on this. This is some of the real goods. -Jimmy Alvarado (British Cooking)

URCHIN, THE: *Another Day, Another Sorry State*: CD

Todd scares me sometimes. It was a typical day at the *Razorcake* HQ. It was the day the contributors come over for slave labor inserting subscription cards into a new issue of the zine. He tried to sell me on this band called The Urchin. Without listening to it he told me, "If you don't like it, give it back to me." I guess I'm not giving it back. First of all, this band is from Japan. A big brownie point in my book of biases. Second, these guys play aggressive while maintaining pop melodies. Third, I love it when the vocalist's accent is super thick when they sing in English. I hate when Todd's intuition is dead on. Fucker. I still like him. -Donofthedeat (Broken Rekids)

VANILLA MUFFINS: *The Power of Sugar Oi*: CD

You know, in a few months, you're all gonna be inundated with so-called reviewers proclaiming this record and that were the best of the year, blah blah blah. Well, I want you to ignore all of them. Not one of them has an ounce of credibility because not one of them knows what the hell they're talking about. Only my words should be heeded by all you fine people, because I am the only one who has a clue. I, James Alvarado, being of hollow mind and scrawny body, would like to take this opportunity to proclaim to the world (or at least to the seven people reading this [Hi, mom and Karla (who I know is probably gonna say that she didn't, in fact, read this)!]) that this is, hands down, the best punk rock CD I have heard this whole year. I will further venture to proclaim that, unless Smogtown spits out that new disc they've been threatening to put out, this is the gonna be, hands down, *thee* best punk rock release out this year. I don't care if it's a greatest hits package (and I'm pretty sure it is 'cause I seem to remem-

ber some of these tracks being on their *The Devil is Swiss* LP). Take "Mating Sounds"-era Peter and the Test Tube Babies, add liberal doses of Cocksparrer, Slade and the Bay City Rollers and you still ain't even close, buddy. There's even a serious cover of WASP's "I Wanna Be Somebody" on here and it wails, daddy-o. God save punk rock. God save the Vanilla Muffins. Sweet Jesus, I'm all giddy inside... -Jimmy Alvarado (Reality Clash)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Critical Pedagogy*: CD

It's gotta be getting harder for kids to rebel these days, especially if their teacher is in a punk band. The theme of this comp is teachers in punk bands. Teaching seems an obvious and logical extension of punk, considering it's a more direct way to effect the world in a positive way, and work against the system. Each submission is accompanied by why a certain band member teaches, and their experiences in the education system. Overall, it's pretty interesting. And now, the music, which I'll critique using the grading system. Those bands getting A's are Countdown to Putsch, Seein Red, Power Ball, and Sid Vishnu. Bands getting B's are MDC (the vocals are totally different these days!), The Dread, John Holmes, and Hers Never Existed. Those who gets C's are Abstain, and Cluster Bomb Unit. All others see me after class so we can arrange a parent/reviewer meeting. -M.Avrq (Six Weeks)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Skins & Pins Volume II*: CD

A sampler for GMM Records featuring all their bald, inked cash cows and a few older heifers they've apparently taken to milking, including Agnostic Front, who do a spot on cover of SLF's "Nobody's Hero" that is marred by Roger's attempts at actually singing. Yeah, most of the stuff here pretty much blows and the three bands I liked going in are the same three I left liking, but those three songs are pretty damned good. For the curious, I'm talking about Condemned '84's "Face the Aggression," which I believe is off their first album, the Templars track and Iron Cross' "You're a Rebel," which originally appeared on their *Hated and Proud* EP and has apparently been included by GMM on an anthology of the band. While I may not like most of the bands on GMM's roster, I do have to give props to a label that has the common sense to release anything by Iron Cross. -Jimmy Alvarado (GMM)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Socially Transparent Disease*: CD

Wow! The inside cover of this CD comp has a hot, topless female drummer on it! She appears to be a member of Johnny Motel & The Fast Fucks. I'll have to go check out that band. Oh... I guess you want to know

about the music. OK. This compilation has a good, raw rock'n'roll feel to it ranging from garage rock to street punk rock'n'roll. There are 12 bands you get to test drive on this CD. They include The Dirtys, The Geriatric, The Hybrid Mutants, Plan III, Beefcake in Chains, The New Jacobin Club and The Nihilists. There are some definite stand outs on here. The GC5 have three cool cuts on here from some of their 7 inches. If you haven't heard them, check out their full length, *Kisses From Hanoi*. Great punk'n'roll. The Bump-N-Uglies have my favorite cut called "Fat, Loud and Drunk." "I'm drunk and loud/ I can't be tamed/cause I'm fat and proud/ I show no shame." Nothing intellectually stimulating here, but I can relate well. The Hard Liquors combine really mean-ass female and male vocals to blow your eardrums out while the only real downer on this comp is The Accused cover of "Paint It Black." Do we really need another one of those? I'll die happy if I never hear that song again. Also, the aforementioned band, Johnny Motel & The Fast Fucks, have a pretty good garage band track on here. Nevertheless, I will still go see them live the first chance I get. Did I mention there was a topless female drummer inside the cover? -Toby Tober (Transparent)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *South America in Decline*: CD

Six Weeks are like the National Geographic of punk. Especially with this *Decline* series. First there was America, then Japan, and now they've gone south of the border to deliver the goods from what's happening there. And it's pretty known now that the best in hardcore is mostly occurring outside the lower 48. I'm not dissing what's happening here, we're talking numbers okay. This collection is weighted in the thrashy side, with such bands like Ratos De Parao, Dios Hastio, and Apatia No. Then there's some more punky and poppy type bands like I.R.A., Pirexia, and Enemigos De La Clase. A pretty good comp that you'd be a fool to overlook. -M.Avrq (Six Weeks)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *South Philly Street Fight*: 7

A complimentary 7-incher that came with issue 19 of *Carbon 14* magazine. Limecell: The more I hear these guys, the more I find myself truly digging their brand of beefy, pissed off hardcore. Another winning track here. Serial Killers: One smoking track from a long-gone band that I'd completely forgotten about. Thanks for the refresher. Bad Vibes: They do a Cocknoose cover, short, to the point and way over the top. The Cosmic Commander's Intergalactic Rockestra: Straight up boogie punk that's long on attitude and short on temper. Who wins the street fight? A tie, as all good comps should be. -Jimmy Alvarado (Steel Cage)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *RAZORCAKE* 89

Sympathetic Sounds of Detroit: CD

Jack White, producer and male lead in the much talked about blues-rock duo The White Stripes, brings us another great CD from the bowels of his home town and recording studio in Detroit, Michigan. Now, here's what separates Jack White from the rest of those music guys with studios. Each of the songs on this compilation was recorded in the same place, using the same microphones and the same amplifiers. Each band brought in their own element of sound and creativity which was in turn shared on a separate level with all the other musicians involved. A concept album, per se, yet masterfully executed into this intense CD of sound and vision. Each song makes my heart beat faster. This CD is an example that there is still some musical blood pumping through the veins of this country -Harmonee (Sympathy for the Record Industry)

VERY METAL:

Life s Too Short: CD

The music - not the vocalist - make me think if Motorhead were a street-punk band. Although the band's name is taken from the back of Vivian's (the punk guy with four stars nailed to his forehead) jacket on the British comedy, *The Young Ones*, the hints of double bass drums and the really short guitar solos show that they're flirting with dirty metal. Not cock-rock nor buttrock metal. DRI and SOD-fashioned crossover metal

swirled in chunks with a band like The Business. Then coat it with some later GBH for good measure and you've got charged hair, charging guitars, frequent trips to the gutter, frequent flights and clashes with the cops, and lyrical exploration of being a fucked-up punk. Although they're extremely proficient and their sound is full, and granted, not many bands are doing this nowadays, after listening this to ten times, I'd still have a hard time pulling them out of a lineup. -Todd (Beer City)

VIZA-NOIR: Self-titled: CDEP

"Plastic Statuette" is a great song. Dark jangly guitars over choppy and catchy rhythms, and the bridge is a nice touch. For lack of better reference, this is sort of similar to stuff like Mission Of Burma, especially songs like "Pool of Flame," and Gang Of Four. This is really good stuff. Really musical, with an instrumental song like "The Pelt Room" that meanders slowly and quietly, ending with drums. Of all the stuff I've received for review, this has been getting the most play. -M.Avrq (Flameshovel)

VON STEINS, THE: On Display: promo-only CDEP

Holy whip sound on the keyboard. I'd be amiss to not mention this sounds a hellofa lot like Devo. (I'd also be amiss not to mention that the last time I saw Devo-tee Mark Mothersbaugh, he was asleep in front of an enchilada

for half an hour and even our straw wrappers that flew his head didn't wake him up. Soundtrack work must be exhausting.) Much of how The Briefs are kicking ass, lifting licks, and updating the bouncy punk sound that people under 25 never had the chance to see first hand, the Von Steins are doing to new wave. And the fucking geek in me is real happy. They nail the vibe; none of the songs fall flat or ring hollow and nothing wants me want to noose 'em by their (assumably) skinny ties. It borders on (good, fun, aerosol) cheese and (rocket booster) schtick with humanoid voices, propulsive drums, and stringy, weaving guitar work. It's impossible to be a tough guy listening to them, so I figure there'll be no transgender divide of the audience. The only thing I don't like about the CD is that the last song, "6060-842" has the exact same ringer sound as my phone and I flinch for the handset every time it plays. Cool shit. -Todd (1st Born Entertainment)

WORKIN STIFFS, THE:

Dog Tired...And Then Some: CD

If you've ever wondered what the Swingin' Utters would sound like if they dropped the Pogues influence, check out The Workin' Stiffs. It's solid, fast street punk with a lot of hooks and good songs to growl along to. The Workin' Stiffs are another band who has taken entirely too long between albums. Their first TKO album, *Liquid Courage*, still spends a

lot of time in my CD player, and their EP, *Through Thick and Thin*, is pretty cool, too. So, like most of their fans, I kept waiting for a new album and The Workin' Stiffs kept slacking off. To tide the fans over, though, they've released *Dog Tired...And Then Some*. It's a collection of the Workin' Stiffs early stuff, including their first LP, *Dog Tired*, plus the songs from two seven inches and from one compilation. Obviously, it won't show how they've grown as a band, but there are some really cool songs on here. They cover songs by GBH, the Cockney Rejects, and Sham 69 and also do fifteen original songs. My favorite is still "Wiggum" - a song about a cop. So I'm happy for now, but I'm still looking forward to some new stuff from these guys. -Sean (TKO)

YOUNG CANADIANS: Joyride on the Western Front: CD

A recording of this long-dead Canadian band's live contribution to the second "Western Front" festival, which occurred more than 20 years ago. The sound quality is a little raw but good, and the band starts off a little shaky but gets progressively better as the set goes on. Yes, "Hawaii" is on here. -Jimmy Alvarado (White Noise)

ZEGOTA: Message in the Music: CD

I like the way that certain forms of punk are headed and how some bands are getting more intelligent lyrically and subject wise while at the

same time they expand what "punk" is. Zegota is the term for Polish Catholics who helped save Jews in WWII. The politics might be a bit heavy handed (in the breakneck speeded, brilliant "Bike Song" the lines: "every pedal strikes a blow for freedom, every petal strikes a blow against global decay!" are a bit much, but also very catchy). But you can always choose *not* to read the rants that accompany each song and merely focus on the music. Lots of layered instrumentals - far, far away from the three chord verse chorus format. "\$59.95" is a highlight both lyrically and musically, and invokes a more intense "Sober" by Tool or some of the more intense Fugazi. The intro is the audio equivalent of a sunrise filmed at high speed. -Rich Mackin (CrimethInc.)

ZEN GUERRILLA: *Shadows on the Sun*: CD

Like a lengua burrito on a frosty San Francisco morning, this CD is at once soothing and invigorating. Also like that burrito, it can be enjoyed equally with or without intoxication. If Blue Cheer had hired a mongoloid Lou Rawls to sing, and switched from their regular marijuana weed to a variety with more sherm content, they might've made this record. Wanda calls em "the white BellRays," I say, "that's ridicu-

lous - this guy doesn't play guitar anything like that guy." In fact, Rich plies this sort of wig-shaking, Chuck-Berry-on-an-airplane-glue-bender guitartistry that knows few equals, though he knows when to tone it down, as on the laid-back "Evening Sun" (presumably about a newspaper, but don't ask me; I haven't understood the words to one Zen Guerrilla song yet). Also slightly off topic is the gospel raveup "Where's My Halo?" and the trancy loopy "Subway Transmission." My advice: don't be alarmed when your assrump commences to some kind of furtive waggling behind your back. Jump up and let it fly! - Cuss Baxter (Sub Pop)

ZERO ZERO: *AM Gold*: CD

With Zero Zero's new full length, I was admittedly a little shocked upon my first listen. While making a great departure from some of its members previous bands (Lifetime & Sticks and Stones), it is the degree to which this new band has formed its own unique sound that held my attention. Sonically, comparisons could be drawn to something akin to Stereolab and Tortoise. This recording has an interesting fidelity and feel I would associate with recent long players from mostly instrumentalist bands like Him, Aerial M, and Trans Am.

AM Gold is one of the few recent records I've heard that successfully optimizes the sounds yielded within the recording limitations of a record tracked in a practice space. Rather than trying for a very "studio sound," it sounds very live and human. You can hear the spaces between the instruments and the microphones. Zero Zero employ a large palette of effected guitars and several keyboards over drum and bass lines that are often heavily altered and compressed. It is this solid, driving rhythm section that is the most entrancing and rewarding part of *AM Gold*. A bit too often, the other musical elements can drag on into self-indulgence, especially on the tracks that feature only scant vocals. -Nathan Grumdahl (Jade Tree)





Contact Addresses

to bands and labels that were reviewed either in this issue
or posted on www.razorcake.com in the last two months



- 625**, PO Box 423413, SF, CA 94142-3413
702, PO Box 204, Reno, NV 89504
Acme, PO Box 441, Dracut, MA 01826
Adeline, 5337 College Ave., #318, Oakland, CA 94618
Alien Snatch, Moerkiweg 1, 74199, Untergruppenbach, Germany
Bomp/ Alive, PO Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510; <www.alive-totalenergy.com>
Alternative Tentacles, PO Box 419091, SF, CA 94141-9092
Angry Planet, PO Box 141092, Dallas, TX 75214; <www.ghoulstown.com>
Answer, Hase Bld No.2 B1, 5-49 Osu 3 Naka-Ku Nagoya City, Aichi 460, Japan
Bad Afro, Poste Restante, Frederiksberg Alle 6, DK-1820 Frederiksberg C, Denmark; <www.badafro.dk>
Bad Taste, St. Soderg. 38, 222 23 Lund, Sweden; <www.badtasterecords.com>
Beer City, PO Box 26035, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0035; <www.beercity.com>
Boss Tuneage, PO Box 19550, London, SW11 1FG, UK; <www.bosst.freestorage.co.uk>
British Cooking c/o Garage And Beat!, 2754 Prewett St., LA, CA 90031; <www.garageandbeat.com>
Broken Rekids, PO Box 460402, SF, CA 94116-0402
Bronx Cheer, PO Box 13, Glasgow, G12 8VT, Scotland, UK
BYO, PO Box 67A64, LA, CA 90067
Captain Oi!, PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP10 8QA; <www.captainoi.com>
Combat Rock Industry, PO Box 139, 00131, Helsinki, Finland
Combat Rock, 7 Rue de Paquis, 57950 Montigny-les-Metz, France
Cordical Music Co., 2527 SE Belmont St., Portland, OR 97214
CrimethInc., 2695 Rangewood Dr., Atlanta, GA 30345
Dead Teenager, PO Box 470153, SF, CA 94147-0153
Deaf American, #3 Bethel Church Road, Dillsburg, PA 17019
Delboy, PO Box 75, 9000 Gent 12, Belgium; <delboy_records@yahoo.com>
Dionysus/ Bacchus Archives, PO Box 1975, Burbank, CA 91507; <www.dionysusrecords.com>
Disaster, PO Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510
Empty USA, PO Box 12034, Seattle, WA 98102; <www.emptyRecords.com>
Estrus, PO Box 2125, Bellingham, WA 98277; <www.estrus.com>
Epitaph/ Burning Heart/ Hellcat, 2798 Sunset Blvd, LA, CA 90026
Fat, PO Box 193690, SF, CA 94119
Fear of Working, PO Box 2905, Fullerton, CA 92837
FFT Label, Asahi Plaza Umeda 704, 4-11 Tsuruno-cho, Kita-ku, 530-0014 Osaka, Japan
Flameshovel, 2322 W. Walton Ave., Chicago, IL 60622; <www.flameshovel.com>
Gearhead, PO Box 421219, SF, CA 94142
GMM, PO Box 15234, Atlanta, GA 30333
Go Kart, PO Box 20, Prince St. Station, NY, NY 10012
Havoc, PO Box 8585, MLPS, MN 55408; <www.havocrex.com>
He Who Corrupts, 196 Fairfield, Elmhurst, IL 60126
HG Fact, 105 Nakanoshinbashi-M, 2-7-15 Yayoi-Cho, Nakano-Ku, Tokyo 164-0013 Japan
Hopeless, PO Box 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409-7495
Impact, PO Box 15537, Long Beach, CA 90815
In the Red, 118 W. Magnolia Blvd., Burbank, CA 91506
Industrial Strength, 2824 Regatta Blvd, Richmond CA 94804; <www.industrialstrengthrec.com>
Jade Tree, 2310 Kennywynn Rd., Wilmington, DE 19810; <www.jadetree.com>
K, PO Box 7154, Olympia, WA 98507
Kill Rock Stars, 120 NE State Ave. - PMB 418, Olympia, WA 98501
Konkurent Onathankelijk
Muzienbedrijf, PO Box 14598, 1001 LB Amsterdam, NL
Lengua Armada, 1010 1/2 Riverine Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92701
Lookout, 3264 Adeline St., Berkeley, CA 94703
Mad Butcher, Bergfeldstr. 3, D - 34289 Zierenberg, Germany
Murder City Devils, 1122 East Pike St. - PMB 1037, Seattle, WA 98122-3934; <www.murdercity.com>
MuSick, PO Box 1296, Redondo Beach, CA 90278
Mutant Pop, 5010 NW Shasta, Corvallis, OR 97330
Nabate, BP 92, 4000 Liege 1, Belgium
New Disorder, 115 Bartlett Street, SF, CA 94110
Nickel and Dime, PO Box 12171, Seattle, WA 98122
Not Bad, PO Box 2014, Arvada, CO 80001
One Percent, PO Box 141048, MLPS, MN 55414-1048; <www.visi.com/~onepercent>
Owned & Operated, PO Box 36, Ft. Collins, CO 80522; <www.oandorecords.com>
ParkBench, 4017 West Osborne Ave. #8, Tampa, FL 33614; <www.thelemmings.com>
Prank, PO Box 410892, SF, CA 94141-0892
Pro Am, PO Box 304, Centerville, UT 84014
Radio, PO Box 1452, Sonoma, CA 95476
Ralf Hunebeck, Muhlenfeld 59, 45472 Mulhelm, Germany; <www.3rdgenerationnation.de>
Rapid Pulse, PO Box 5075, Milford, CT 06460
Reality Clash, PO Box 491, Dana Point, CA 92629-0491
Recess, PO Box 1666, San Pedro, CA 90733-1666
Red Reaction, 20 Vernon Street, Holyoke, MA 01040
Reptilian, 403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231; <www.reptilianrecords.com>
Roland Eisenbrand, Lehmkaul 19, 66822 Labach, Germany; <www.chicksrock.de>
Satan's Pimp, PO Box 13141, Reno, NV 83507
Side One Dummy, 6201 Sunset Blvd., Suite 211, Hollywood, CA 90028
Six Weeks, 225 Lincoln Ave., Cotati, CA 94931
Small Stone, PO Box 02007, Detroit, MI 48202; <www.smallstone.com>
Snuffy Smile, 4-1-16-201 Daita, Setagaya-Ku, Tokyo 155-0033, Japan
Solid State, PO Box 12698, Seattle, WA 98111
Square of Opposition, 2935 Fairview Street, Bethlehem, PA 18020
Steel Cage, PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125
Stompbox, 2887 A West Pioneer Parkway, Arlington, TX 76013; <www.stompboxrecords.com>
Sub City, PO Box 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409
Sub Pop, PO Box 20645, Seattle WA 98102; <www.subpop.com>
Tent City, 175 5th Av Ste 2341, NY, NY 10010
THD, PO Box 18661, MLPS, MN 55418
Theologian, PO Box 1070, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254
TKO, 4104 24th St., #103, SF, CA 94114
Touch and Go, PO Box 25520, Chicago, IL 60625
Vagrant, 2118 Wilshire Blvd. #361, Santa Monica, CA 90403; <www.vagrantrecords.com>
Velocette, 83 Walton St., Atlanta, GA 30303
Vicious Kitten, GPO Box 20, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia
White Noise, 537 SE Ash St. - Suite 400, Portland, OR 97214
Wonderdrug, PO Box 230995, Boston, MA 02123
Young Blood, 217 West Main St, Ephrata, PA 17522
Youth Attack, PO Box 126321, San Diego, CA 92112-6321



Send all zines for review to Razorcake, PO Box 42129, LA, CA 90042. Please include a contact address, the number of pages, the price, and whether or not you accept trades.



A CHARMED LIFE, #6, \$2 or trade, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied, 22 pgs.

This is a personal zine from comic book artist Pete Trudgeon. In it, he tells stories of going on a road trip to Toronto, going the Underground Publishers Conference in Bowling Green, and getting drunk with friends. The stories are amusing and give a good bit of insight into the life of a zine guy. Pete also puts out a comic book series called *Bathing in the Blue Light*. The series is pretty edgy, twisted, and full of conspiracy theory. I really enjoy it, but it's dark enough to make me wonder about the guy who puts it out. After reading *A Charmed Life*, I realized that he's really not as dark and twisted as his comic, but he's still pretty entertaining. —Sean (Rubber Suit Comics, PO Box 24894, Detroit, MI 48224)

ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER, #11, \$4.95 (comes with a CD), color cover, newsprint, 81 pgs.

Highlights: Weasels' pee stories, including one where a protagonist pees on his girlfriend, then blames her for wetting the bed; "Sloth's Toy Chest" treats toys like many people I know treat music — he uses little pieces of plastic as the ultimate sounding board for meaning of his life and comes away with more than just commodity, but larger meaning without sounding like a block of cheese; and the record reviews (who threaten to burn their editor's house down for forcing him to review the Aquabats). The overall feel is mighty stoned, piss drunk, wonderfully disorganized, and conversational. Like sitting around in a stained living room and shooting the shit with people coming and going all the time. Interviews include: Rocket From The Crypt, Propagandhi, Youth Brigade, Small Brown Bike, J. Church, and more. It's fun when someone doesn't take themselves too seriously but can crank out another great issue. Comes with a CD with a shitload of bands that would double the length of this review. Email 'em for the full list. —Todd (PO Box 8240, Tampa, FL 33674; addzine@gte.net)

BARRACUDA, #11, \$3.50 USA, \$5.00 Canada, glossy cover, some color, newsprint 40 pgs.

It's billed as "America's #1 Stag Magazine," and I can't deny it. Replete with pretty ladies slunk over righteous pinstriped sleds abound betwixt snappy, extremely well written articles in stylish, clean layouts. It's a DIY *Maxim*, except the ladies look like they're actually out of junior high. The coverage is as varied yet focused. Highlights: articles on Goldfish crackers make a fine substitute for parmesan cheese, how important it is to have a good gas cap to keep fuel efficiency high, and how cell phone usage is as dangerous as drinking and driving. My favorite was reading about how consummate gentleman sportsman Ab Jenkins scores probably the best argument for sobriety (as I crack a beer open — even the best argument isn't good enough) as he not only championed the Bonneville salt flats in the 1920s as the future site of land speed record trials, but set a 24-hour speed/endurance record that was broken fifty years later by a team of eight drivers. (How's about a follow up with Art Arfons, the creator of the Green Monster?) The only caveat: I think there's an new anti-nipple policy in effect, as there's a Photoshop clone tool hatchet job on Tracie's left one on pg. 11, but don't let that deter you. An excellent publication. —Todd (PO Box 29173, LA, CA 90029; www.barracudamagazine.com)

CINEMAD, #5, \$3.95, 8 1/2 X 11, offset, 60 pgs.

Cinemad is becoming one of my favorite independent magazines for a couple of reasons. First off, the interviewers prepare themselves with well-researched, intelligent questions and this results in very informa-

tive, intelligent interviews, the kind that I want to read whether or not I've heard of the person being interviewed. So I flipped through the pages of this issue and read all about R. Lee Erme (a character actor best known as the drill sergeant in *Full Metal Jacket*) and Suzuki Seijun (a Japanese gangster film director) — two guys I never gave much thought to before reading *Cinemad*, but two interviews that I really enjoyed. Also, editor Mike Plante's editorials are always pretty funny, and this issue is no exception. But what may be the coolest thing about this issue is that, finally, I got to read an independent film magazine that give credit to Bruce Brown and his *Endless Summer* movies, which are two of my all time favorite films. —Sean (Cinemad, PO Box 43909, Tucson, AZ 85733-3909)

MODERN INDUSTRY: FUTURISTA!, #1 and #2, \$4 each, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied, 56 and 60 pgs.

Editor Shawn Granton assembled a bunch of independent comic book artists to give their take on what the future may be like. Some of them are hopeful, some are funny, some sardonic, and some are downright gloomy. The styles of each artist varies, and Granton does a good job of arranging the comics so that styles and themes balance themselves out. I can't pick a favorite. I genuinely liked all the comics in these two collections. Most of them rattled around in my head for a few days, and I ended up reading each of these zines three or four times. It's a great introduction into the zine comics world — the kind of thing that makes you dig out dollar bills and send off for more comics. Highly recommended. —Sean (TFR Industries, 3719 SE Hawthorne #243, Portland, OR 97214)

REAL BOSS HOSS, #1, \$2, 8 1/2 x 11, copied, 28 pgs.

Garage rock, freak beat, that sort of thing. It's what you'll find here. And mighty opinionated at that! The editor doesn't shy away from letting you know what he really thinks about radio in LA (Radio here isn't as atrocious as some places I've lived in, or visited! Believe me!), or the lack of good record stores in the area, and certain labels and bands he finds vapid. Anyway, there's a handy dandy guide to various radio programs here in the LA area, as well as recommended record shops, and then there's an interview with Don Craine, a write-up on the first Vegas Shakedown in 1999, along with reviews, and the sort. —M.Avrq (PO Box 701, Downey, CA 90241; realbosshoss@yahoo.com)

REASON TO BELIEVE, #2, \$1, 8 1/2 x 11, newsprint, 64 pgs.

This is a political zine from England. There are articles about anarchism, May Day protests in England, democracy, credit unions, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and a collective called the 1 in 12 Club. There's also an interview with Unkind, scene reports from a bunch of former Soviet states, and tons of record reviews. The writing in it is pretty good. The subjects were handled fairly and intelligently. My only complaint was that some of the layouts made the zine unreadable, like putting their scene reports over a map. —Sean (Some Strange Music, PO Box 64666, LA, CA 90064)

SLUG & LETTUCE, #68, free, 11 x 17, newsprint, 20 pgs.

Putting out a zine and writing columns myself, it always impresses me how hard S&L editor Chris Boarts Larson works. Her writing is so sincere and her dedication shows through in both her *MRR* column and *Slug & Lettuce*. This is another strong issue: decent columns, a great big comic, and tons of book, zine, record and live reviews. But what may be coolest

about this zine are the photographs of live bands. They're clear and frenetic and wild and a good document of why going to a live show is so much fun. -Sean (Slug & Lettuce, PO Box 26632, Richmond, VA 23261)

SORE, #12, \$1 or trade, 8 1/2 x 11, newsprint, 40 pgs.

Sore is a punk rock zine dedicated more to the literary aspects of the subculture than to the musical aspects. Instead of band interviews and columns, the pages are full of vignettes and short stories, mostly fiction. The zine review section is as large as the record review section, and he even reviews some independent books. The zine is pretty good, but what really impresses me is that Taylor Ball, the editor of this zine, is still in high school, and he works an after school job. That's dedication. -Sean (Sore Zine, c/o Taylor Ball, PO Box 68711, Virginia Beach, VA 23471)

TOXIC FLYER, #31, 8 1/2 x 11. newsprint, 64 pgs.

Chances are, since you enjoy Razorcake, you'll dig this zine. Pretty much the same approach. Rooted in punk rock, but a broader spectrum of coverage. The main factor is the bands covered have to rock in some way, shape, or form. This issue has The Black Halos, AFI, The Throw Rags, The Yo-yos, Oxymoron, and more. -M.Avrq (Billy Whitfield, PO Box 39158, Baltimore, MD 21212)

YOUR FLESH, #45, \$5.00 US, color cover, offset medium stock, 96 pgs.

There's no disputing what a force *Your Flesh* still is; it's not merely a marathon runner huffing and puffing for one last gasp at finishing a too long race. They still sprint. This is their 20 anniversary issue and I've come to some personal epiphanies. With scant exception, I have the exact opposite musical taste as they do, but what's infinitely alluring is how well and articulately they can attack what I love, set it burning, then whip out the gold spray paint and glisten up what I think is pure manatee ass. And I end up reading the entire issue, half screaming and muttering at it, half in awe of how spot-on the writing is. And what I've come to realize is that I agree with or learn about everything that's non-musical in the issue. David Livingstone's review of the *World of Sid and Marty Kroft* 3-volume VHS boxed set is all-at-once horrifying, funny, self-effacing, and scathing. Ken Vandermark made me want to go out and rent "Twin Warriors," a kung-fu flick with a goat-voiced albino. What did I miss? Since it's a significant anniversary, I'd've liked a look back and glance ahead from the guy in the front of this particular (omni)bus, Peter Davis, the extremely talented man responsible for it all to put it in a more cohesive context. -Todd (PO Box 25764, Chicago, IL 60625-0764)

We ran out of room for zine reviews this issue. Reviews for the following zine were posted on www.razorcake.com: As the World Burns, Clamor, Grindstone, Horizontal Action, 3rd Generation Nation, and Trust.



CITIZEN FISH: GAFFER TAPE

(VHS video tape)

Citizen Fish bassist Jasper has been videotaping the band over the past ten years and he's finally edited all of his tape into one cohesive movie, *Gaffer Tape*. *Gaffer Tape* is a pretty good insight into the day to day life of a touring band, and what makes it a little cooler than most movies of this type is the fact that an outside director didn't film it, so you don't have any kind of editorial angles to it or any sensational or dramatic band shots. Instead, it is what it is: funny when the band is funny, dirty, smelly, lots of punk rock, lots of scenery (from the Arizona desert to snowy northern France to Stonehenge), flat tires, tired roadies, hanging out, and having fun. The movie starts off

with Citizen Fish's tour of the US in 1999, filming several live performances by Citizen Fish as well as a bunch of opening bands (of varying quality), and also a lot of travelling throughout

America footage. The second part of the movie documents the tour that Citizen Fish took through France and England after returning from the US. The last part of the movie covers a '96 Citizen Fish tour of Australia and New Zealand, then shows a lot of flashbacks of the bands history, early fliers, a music video shoot, and lead singer Dick losing himself over some bad-grammer rage. The whole tape is rich with live footage and rich with real footage of the band playing empty shows in Yugoslavia and packed shows in Australia and hanging out in the back of the van reading and getting drunk and having a punk rock picnic. It's a really cool video. Highly recommended.

-Sean Carswell (\$12 ppd. to Karoline, PO Box 20073, Oakland, CA 94620-0073)





Jobjumper

Phil Irwin, paperback, 334 pages
Jobjumper is the first book from *Hit List* columnist, the Whiskey Rebel (a.k.a Phil Irwin). It's essentially a memoir of Irwin's working life and all the crazy jobs he's had, from selling "home learning centers" (encyclopedias) door-to-door to working for a loan shark (more or less) to

working in a Radio Shack. If you know Irwin from his column in *Hit List*, you probably know him as a pretty good storyteller, and *Jobjumper* is best when Irwin is telling a story of, say, the time he was supposed to chaperone two adolescents on a trip to a theme park in San Francisco and, instead of taking them to the theme park, Irwin and his buddy gave the kids ten bucks to play pinball at a dive in the Tenderloin, then Irwin and his buddy went off to get drunk in strip clubs. During those sections, I felt like I was actually hanging out with Irwin, drinking beer, listening to him talk. He'd get excited, tell every detail, pause to comment on half of them, look for the funny parts, and crack me up. It was very engaging. And little aspects of the book made it cooler – like the way he rarely writes the word "beer" without tacking "ice-cold" in front of it. Or like the way he'll tell a story about everything getting fucked up because of something he did, then comment about how he just can't figure out what went wrong – and mean it. There's also something about the way Irwin describes all of the fucked up jobs and bumbling employers he's had that reminds me of all of the fucked up jobs and bumbling employers I've had, and it allows me to see some humor and pain in it all. And though it seems through most of the book that Irwin is just never going to recognize that big truth dangling in front of his nose – and I think I can say this without giving anything away – he does realize it at the end, and the book is satisfying for that reason.

My biggest criticism of the book, though, is that it could use some serious editing. I'm not talking about grammatical errors. That


doesn't bother me. But the book seemed pretty raw in the sense that some passages were great and some were difficult to get through. I could tell which nights Irwin was in a good mood when he typed and which nights he was in a bad mood, and that fucked with the flow of the book. Also, though Irwin is very entertaining when he's actually telling a story about something that happened at one particular time, he's also prone to summarizing large periods of his life by talking about things that would happen and how he would respond. That's never as interesting. I want to hear the details. I don't care if the same thing happened every day for six months, but pick one day and tell me about it. That way, I can feel like I'm there, watching things that are going on. I think with a little more work, Irwin and his editor could've trimmed out the summaries, expanded on the stories, and continued the flow of the book. He's also got a tendency to talk about a job and introduce the reader to – and describe – every single person working there, then most of those people don't show up in the book ever again. So, by page seventy or so, he's literally introduced probably sixty or seventy characters, and only a dozen of them are important to the story. So those are my complaints. Other than that, it's an admirable effort and a pretty cool first book for both Irwin and Steel Cage Books. I recommend checking out *The Whiskey Rebel's* column, and if you like it, check out this book. –**Sean Carswell** (Steel Cage Books, PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125)

Snapping Lines

Jack Lopes, paperback, 133

I should preface this review by confessing that I've worked construction on and off since I was thirteen years-old. When other people talk about their goals and aspirations in life – having a family, buying a house, amassing a cool punk rock record collection – I can narrow my life's aspirations down to one – to never have to work construction again. That said, I really enjoyed *Snapping Lines* even though most of the short stories in this collection were about construction workers and even though it took me back to those times and places that I never hope to relive. Lopez has a real talent for understanding the working class from the inside, and he notices things that only the working poor would pick up on – like being stuck on a freeway in Huntington Beach and noticing that you're the only one who doesn't look to be part of an SUV or jet ski advertisement; like feeling the sun baking you as you build shelter for the air-conditioned world; like recognizing the pain and desperation that causes drywall hangers to hate roofers. Most of the stories are told with sparse language and have simple plots with complex resolutions. The characters seem real. Their lives seem to exist in the same world as mine, and the understanding they achieve is relevant to me. He even ends the collection with a Christmas story that ties all of the stories together (thematically, at least), kind of like "The Dead" at the end of James Joyce's *Dubliners*. I know this isn't exactly the kind of thing that most *Razorcake* readers would check out, but it did come out this year and it was published by an independent (well, sort of) press and I couldn't resist passing on the recommendation.

-**Sean Carswell** (University of Arizona Press, Tucson, AZ 85721)

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