

# RAZZORCAVE FUNKY CUTCAKE

fanzine • webzine



HOWARD ZINN

GOOD RIDDANCE

SMUT PEDDLERS

PATSY

SHAG

RODNEY BINGENHEIMER

FEB./MAR. 2002 • ISSUE #6 \$3.



I'm like you. I slept through my high school history classes. The whole idea of memorizing dates, battles, laws, tariffs, and the faces of rich, white men was worthless to me. I'd rather just take a third period nap. It took me years to get over the belief that history was nothing more than a list of people I would've hated and actions I didn't agree with. In the meantime, I still read a lot of books about events in the past. I read a lot about the Haymarket riots and the Molly Maguires and things like that because I could relate to those guys. Reading about them bummed me out, too, because, well, they were all killed in the end. I read *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair again and again. The whole *Jungle* and everything it has to say about socialism, not just the few pages that everyone has to read about the meat industry. But in my mind, this was never history because all of the people involved were just like me in a lot of respects. They were never going to change the world, pass laws, argue ethics in front of the Supreme Court, control the unwashed masses, or lead nations into a war or a depression. They were all just poor fuckers doing what they could to get by. That's why I liked reading about them.

A few years ago, Todd and I were hanging out and, after withstanding one of my hour-long rants about some obscure labor strike from the 1890s, Todd told me that I really needed to read *A People's History of the United States* by Howard Zinn. Seven or eight times over the course of that evening, Todd told me that I really needed to read *A People's History*. So I did. And it blew me away.

It was the first time that I'd read a history book that didn't make me feel insignificant for not being rich or powerful or the head of any state or large business. Not only that, but the book made me feel like I was part of something much larger, like this whole do-it-yourself underground of music and zines and everything else is one more in a series of movements made up of disenfranchised people fighting for a more equitable life for everyone. I guess I don't need to say it, but it had a profound effect on me.

And I'm not the only one. I saw a kid walking around the Citizen Fish show in Corona, carrying *The Zinn Reader*. I know of at least one record store that carries only one book that isn't about music, and that book is by Howard Zinn. Alternative Tentacles released a series Zinn's lectures on CD. Crusty punks working for AK Press sell his books at shows. Anti-Flag quote Zinn in the liner notes of their newest album. He's everywhere. His writings have seeped into the collective unconscious of punk rock, and chances are, if you read *Razorcake*, you've been affected by Howard Zinn one way or another. So of course we wanted to put him on the cover.

Then, when Todd interviewed Russ from Good Riddance – whose intelligent, articulate lyrics owe a lot to writers like Howard Zinn – and Russ mentioned Zinn in the interview, the connection came full circle. Russ earned himself a spot on the cover, too. So here's our new issue, from Howard Zinn to Good Riddance and all over the place in between.

–Sean

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Feb. 1, 2002

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Henry, now mobile, in a bubble.  
picture by Matt Average

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*Razorcake is made by: Sean Carswell, Todd Taylor, ktspin, and Skinny Dan.*

**Thank you list:** Holy-shit, you'd-do-that-for-us? thanks to Julia Costa for designing this cover and the Good Riddance layout; extreme gratitude thanks to Howard Zinn for letting two slobbs interview him; thanks to Karla X Perez-Villalta for additional Zinn questions; thanks to Matt Average for the Oath shot and for the Henry shot; Rick Bain and Kosick for their Smut Peddlers shots; Dan Monick for his Rodney Bingenheimer shots; Tony Adolsecnt for his remembrance of Rodney; Andy Harris for his Nardwuar shot; Sean Antillon for helping Dale interview Lemmy; Sara Isett for her book review; Shawn Granton for the *Big Lebowski* artwork; Bradley Williams, Dan Yemin, Nathan Grundahl, Cuss Baxter, Donofthedeat, Toby Tober, and Ms. Sarah A. Stierch for their record reviews; and for the slave labor, lift heavy things, get a paper cut and have a soda pop party, we thank Designated Dale, Dylan, the 99 cent store grocery cart (aka, the DIY fork lift), Harmonee, Rustacular, Skinny Dan, Donofthedeat, and Namella J. Kim. We'd also like to thank Rich for letting us tag along for his West Coast book tour, Little Jimmy for tagging along, too, and benjones and his lovely wife, Darby, for housing us in SF.



# 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.



Maddy

# Shiftless When Idle



Would be nice, but it's about as likely as seeing a sXe kid with a Candysnatcher's record.

## How One Girl Failed to Earn the Eight Hour Day!

In 1884, the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions passed a resolution stating that eight hours would constitute a legal day's work from and after May 1, 1886. The resolution called for a general strike to achieve the goal, since legislative methods had already failed. With workers being forced to work ten, twelve, and fourteen hours a day, rank-and-file support for the eight-hour movement grew rapidly, despite the indifference and hostility of many union leaders.

Maddy

Attention all Razorcakers and residents of the 21st century (which would exclude Dan Quayle, who, in his most memorable moment, while commenting on the Holocaust, made the statement "I didn't live in this century.")! I come before you with one, simple request. No, I am not asking for a lifetime supply of Lucky Charms, nor a complete collection of every Ramones record, including Dee Dee's rap album (although both would be nice). I'm not even asking for the Razorcake deadline to be a few days later, so I would be able to write this column on more than two hours of sleep! All I am asking for is a demand so basic, so simple, so fundamental in the dawn of the 21st century, that it most certainly could be granted! In the midst of war in Afghanistan and the proliferation of emo, amongst other evils, all I want is...the 8 hour day! Yes, that's it! I just want to be able to work from 8A.M.-4P.M., or 9P.M.-5A.M., however ya wanna schedule my tight-panted working self! I don't care! Just, please, let it just be eight hours!

Now, some of you might say, Ms. Maddy, our benevolent government granted us the eight hour day a long time ago! That's why we vote Republican, buy nutritious cereals, and always get a good night's sleep! Others of you might say, our great labor leaders of the past, led by the honorable Big Bill Haywood, Eugene Debs, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Mother Jones, et.al. devoted their lives to better working conditions, eventually bringing about the eight-hour day after much violence and ridiculousness on the part of Uncle Sam! That's why we cel-



brate May Day, listen to Billy Bragg, and use our time off to drink and rock and roll ourselves into oblivion! Naturally, I gotta side with the latter, 'cause if you ever catch me voting Republican (not to mention voting Democrat, or, on many occasions, voting at all—but that's another story altogether!) or eating a non-sugary cereal, well, you can strip me of my Razorcake duties and cast me into a pit of religious fundamentalists, the members of the Offspring, and violent hamsters!

So, what happened since the glorious days of the IWW? At what point did I lose the basic benefits that even the stupid AFL and their more-annoying-than-the-late-period-Beatles-leader Samuel Gompers obtained? Am I throwing too many allusions left and right for you Razorcake readers? Am I becoming a regular James Joyce? For shame! I will stop asap, and get to the basics! Okay? Okay!

Having come from a family where a trip to McDonalds necessitated an in-depth search of the house for change (I'm not joking—we did this so often, we had to formulate a POLICY about it—anyone who found a dollar bill had to locate its owner, and anyone who found a big pile of change had to do likewise, as well), and where a round of field trip permission slips and fees caused great consternation, well, I know a few things about being broke. But, ya know, I figured that once I grew up, got a full-time job, and didn't have to worry about loaning money to my mom, I would finally be able to relax a little, and would probably even have some extra money.

How could I have been so foolish?

I recently read the book *Nickel and Dimed* by Barbara Ehrenrich, in which she (a middle-class freelance writer) takes it upon herself to work for a year in various shit jobs, and write about her experiences, how she made ends meet, etc. Now, this is definitely a great book, and I'm a big fan of Ms. Ehrenrich. But you just gotta kinda wonder why someone needs to VOLUNTARILY seek a shit job to write about, when so many people, myself included, already actually live

### Plen to My Good Friend, Ross Perot!

Hi Mr. Perot!  
My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm writing because I recently found out that you make one million dollars in interest a day. I make approximately \$0.00 in interest a day, and make \_\_\_\_\_ an hour. I usually can only afford to eat(circle one) mac & cheese ketchup lint generic cereal and the best record I bought was that stupid new Jata to Brazil album. Talk about a waste of money. Anyway, since you have a lot of money, I was wondering if I could have \$1000.00. This really isn't much money when you think about it. I'm sure you won't miss it. It would be like me losing a penny. If you asked me for a penny, I'd give you one, no questions asked. You can just write me a check for the \$1000. My address is: \_\_\_\_\_

And while you're at it, could you also send my friend Madonna \$500? You can send it c/o Razorcakes/ PO Box 42129/ Los Angeles, CA 90042  
Thanks Ross! And God Bless America and the Perot Family!

\_\_\_\_\_  
(your signature here)

Send out and mail to: Ross Perot/ PO Box B/ Dallas, TX 75221

the lifestyle that she attempts to imitate. Why not just let yours truly or someone else write a book about what it's actually like to live in relative poverty, and not have a nice house and car to escape to? Of course, there are a few books like that – read *Rivethhead* by Ben Hamper or *Jobjumper* by Thee Whiskey Rebel – but neither of these books has received the acclaim of *Nickel and Dimed*, even though both are just as well-written, and funnier! What's next? A book about what it's like to be homeless written by someone with a house? An article on living the life of a Buddhist written by a Catholic? A photo essay on "My Days as a sXe Punk" by Oprah Winfrey? Perhaps! (And, it really wouldn't surprise me if these books were already written!)

So, what's my real life *Nickel and Dimed* tale of woe? Well, upon moving to Minneapolis, it took me a month to find a job. In that month, I had NO money, and had to charge everything to a credit card. Now, I am someone who operates with a very low standard of living, with my only indulgence being records and candy. So, I cut out any and all record purchases, reduced my candy consumption (the horror!), and still found myself in ridiculous debt after a month. I just paid off all of my debts a week or two ago, and now my loan payments for college are about to start kicking in. So, why does this matter? Well, based on conservative calculations (Dude, "conservative" calculations suck! This is a punk zine!), in order to have enough money to live, and save a little bit to possibly go to grad school next year, I need to work a lot. More than a lot. A ridiculous amount that completely undermines any outside activities, social life, zine work, sleeping, etc.

For the next four weeks, I will be working 88 hours a week! Yes, 88 hours! I will be working two full-time jobs, and one part-time job! This is more than double the number of hours that I am "supposed" to work, based on the gains of the labor movement! Ack!

And a few months ago, I found out that the IWW (yep, they're still around!) are campaigning for a four hour day! So, that would mean that, right now, I am working 84 hours a week more than the IWW wants to me! Bill Haywood would not stand for this!

Why so many hours? Well, if you live in Minneapolis, your rent is ridiculously expensive, and your utilities are too much, too. And then when you've got loans, bus fare, and food, you need to make a lot more than you could, working a 40 hour a week shit job. So, you've gotta work two jobs to have enough

money. And, if you wanna save any money to go to school to get out of your current miserable situation, you've gotta work three. So, if you wanna have an apartment and maybe turn on the heat in the winter, too (although I wholeheartedly approve of the policy of a bunch of my broke friends in Milwaukee – whoever turns on the heat first has to pay twenty bucks!), you have to work until you feel like you can't work anymore. And then work some more.

With my particular situation, the three jobs that I'm working do not conflict with each other. I work an office job from 8:30A.M.-5P.M., and I work a night job at a homeless shelter three times a week from 8P.M. to 8A.M.. And then I work at a cereal-themed amusement park (I am NOT joking!) every Sunday from 10:30A.M.-7:30P.M.. Now, if you combine all of those jobs in the most ridiculous way possible, you get the following (which is my actual schedule for this next weekend!): Saturday night: work at the shelter 8P.M.-8A.M., go from the shelter to the cereal park, work there until 7:30P.M., go from there to the shelter, work there from 8P.M.-8A.M., go from there to my office job, work there until 5P.M.. In case you were wondering, that's 57 consecutive hours of employment. In three days, I am working more than I should work all week! Please Kill Me!

So, I'm proposing one of two solutions.

**Solution #1:** Demand decent wages, so that I can work the eight hour day and not completely broke, with no heat, and crappy food. Likelihood: slim. It took labor forever to win the eight-hour day, and now its gonna be even harder to win it back, 'cause (little bit of politicizing for you, readers!) the battle would have to be fought across employers and industries. Can you really imagine a crusty punk burger flipper, a middle-aged, Oprah-watching secretary, and a brief-case toting bank employee all picketing together? Would be nice, but it's about as likely as seeing a sXe kid with a Candysnatcher's record.

**Solution #2:** Appeal to rich people for money. Likelihood: Also slim, but what the fuck? Why not try it? I'm assuming that you probably don't make enough money, whoever you are, so... somewhere in this article, you will find a cut-out-section entitled "Plea to My Good Friend, Ross Perot." Please fill it out and mail it in. Granted this is a selfish method, akin to Bob Mould continuing to rock and roll while leaving Grant Hart to suck, post-Husker-Du-break-up, but, come on! Sometimes you've gotta

do what you've gotta do! And *File Under Easy Listening* is a really great album!

So, even though we still have to work shit jobs, at least we can anxiously await the day when either a.) the IWW rises from the dead, or b.) Ross Perot sends us a check in the mail! Things are looking up for us, my friends!

See you in the Bahamas! I'll be the one with the leopard print swimsuit and the brand new Nuggets II box set!

**Also #1:**

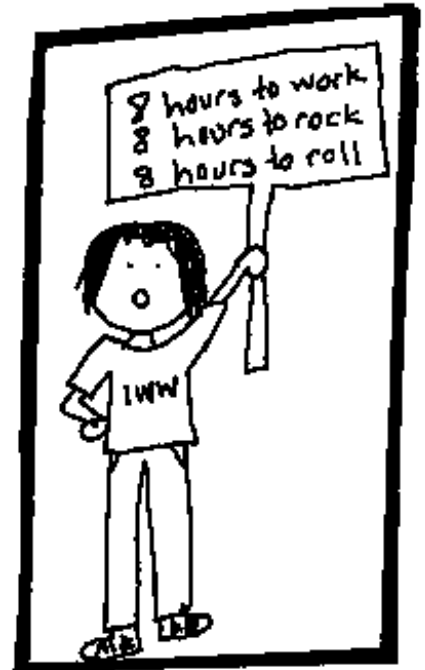
*As of 11/31/01, the Concert Café in Green Bay, WI will be closed. All punk rockers should take a moment of silence to reflect on the glory that was the Concert Café – the greatest punk rock venue in the United States! If it hadn't been for that place, not only would I not have gotten to see a ton of great shows, I also probably wouldn't have met a lot of my friends today, and would never have been able to spend my New Year's goin' crazy to the sounds of the Groovie Ghoulies and the Queers. For shame! So, thanks to the Concert Café*

*and Timebomb Tom for many years of rock and roll! Concert Café: R.I.P.*

**Also #2:**

*New issue of my zine Tight Pants out now! For more info, email me at: cerealcore@hotmail.com.*

– Maddy



Maddy

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Money

# Pog Mo Thon



*Suzy had a voice like an angel's hand-bell, and an ass like an overripe melon.*

## The Discovery of America (Part II)

### Jackson Sports Complex

The brotherhood of The Defeated came to another college town. When they approached the town, the van developed engine trouble and stalled. Spike ordered everyone out of the van onto the sidewalk, and they obeyed. They pushed the van into the nearest lot, which was across the street from a sports arena. There was an event going on but it did not seem to be well attended. While Spike went to investigate, the band crashed in the van. Spike knew what kind of gig it was, but he did not want to tell them, lest they be terrified.

When morning came he ordered each of the punks to rehearsal, which they did. Afterwards, he made an announcement:

"Jimmy has arranged for us to play at the Jackson Sports Complex. We go on at six."

The punks nodded their heads, each in his own fashion.

They loaded in, tuned their instruments and took the stage. The sports arena was empty, so they tried to burn the place down.

While Spike was singing, the punks started a fire with alcohol, their stinky clothes, anything that would burn. When they had done this they danced around like animals, like weirdos. But the fire grew too large and the punks rushed to the back of the stage, crying out for protection. The leader of The Defeated drew each one of them into the van by his hand and they drove away. The lighted fire could be seen over two miles away.

"That was really fucking stupid. I hope you are ashamed of yourselves."

They said:

"We are very surprised and indeed terror-stricken."

To which Spike rejoindered:

"Let's never do that again."

They all agreed, the first time they had done so.

### The Swallows

When they came to the western edge of the college town where they had played three nights, they saw another club from whence Punk Rock was being unleashed. Spike uttered his desire to go to the show. They started circling it, looking for a parking space. As they were driving on the southern side of the town, they found a stream that cut through a meadow.

And lo they discovered a parking space.

As they disembarked, Spike ordered them bathe in the little streamlet so they would not be quite so stinky, even though the punks were anxious to go inside and get drunk. Spike spoke:

"Jimmy has given us a place to stay."

"Here?" Measles asked.

"Yes."

And he added:

"If we had no other supplies but this spring, it would, I believe, alone be enough."

The punks scratched their heads at this loopy statement.

Then they went inside.

An all-girl Punk Rock band called The Swallows was on stage, mightily giving glory to Punk Rock. Mightiest of them all was the singer, Suzy Swallows.

When Spike saw Suzy, he began to think and ponder within himself what it meant or what was the reason that such a tremendous band was led by such a hot punk rocker. He was so tormented by this the tears poured out and flowed down his cheeks. He gathered the punks together, saying:

"Fellow punks, my heart is in great distress. I implore you to have pity and bestow great mercy upon me. I rely not on what I deserve or my worth, but rather on your boundless pity."

Seany Rock turned to Felch, and said:

"Spike is so spun."

To which Felch replied.

"Totally."



### Suzy Swallows

After the show Spike sat with Suzy in the back of the van, whispering words of woo. Suzy had a voice like an angel's hand-bell, and an ass like an overripe melon. Suzy smiled upon the leader of The Defeated as if it was as a sign of joy. Spike immediately concluded that he was about to get lucky.

"You give much glory to Punk Rock."

Suzy replied immediately:

"We just signed with a major label."

Spike was crestfallen; his erection became less erect.

"That sucks."

Suzy shrugged her delicate shoulders. She said:

"True, we have made a pact with an ancient enemy, but their sins are not our own. Our Punk Rock is just and true. We endure no sufferings. Punk Rock has separated us from sharing the lot of others who are less faithful. We wander through various regions of the country. Tonight I give my body to you so that we may glorify Punk Rock together."

When she said this, she unlaced her boots.

Spike wasted no time and penetrated her immediately.

"A hymn is due thee," he said.

They fucked for about the space of an hour. To the man of Punk Rock, Suzy's gasping and moaning seemed in its sweetness a rhythmical song.

### The Knockout Spring

After The Swallows left the town Spike gathered his brothers and said:

"Let us remain here for a few days to repair our bodies and fill our bellies with food. Then we will take naps."

Morty said to Spike:

"What about Punk Rock?"

To which Spike replied:

"What about Punk Rock?"

Morty responded:

"When are we going to give glory to Punk Rock again?"

"Very soon the radiance of Punk Rock will be upon us all, and we will continue on our journey to The Promised Land of the Punks. But first there are many matters that must be attended to."

"Like fumigate the van?" said Measles.

At this, there was much laughter and mirth making. Among the men of The Defeated, only Spike did not laugh at this remark.

Spike said:

"Before we refresh ourselves, let us take water from the spring and wash the van inside as well as out.

The punks grumbled and groaned, but they did as they were told.

"How good and pleasant it is that brothers live and work together as one!" Spike exclaimed.

When he said this, the man with whom they had previously spent three days in the Great Empty

Money

Hall by the Sea arrived with a delivery van full of beer and potato chips. He took these from the van, laid it all at the feet of the leader of The Defeated and said:

"Punks, do not drink from the spring here. It is too strong to drink. If a man drinks it, strange feelings will overpower him and he will not awaken for twenty-four hours."

Spike blessed the delivery van in the following manner:

"Goodly man, in your goodly van, you give us the strength we need to sustain us on our journey to The Promised Land of the Punks. You who are truly rad deserve our utmost praise. So we send you off with a salute. Join me brothers, in a raucous send-off, for he is a true friend of Punk Rock."

When Spike turned he found all sixteen punks sacked out by the spring, their bellies bloated from the intoxicating waters.

"Now," he said, "would be a good time to work on my solo project."

### The Need For Speed

When the brothers revived, they remained where they were until their spirits were sufficiently strengthened by beer and potato chips. When these were gone they

found many bottles of gin and jerky, too, flavored in the style of the Japanese.

On the day of their departure, however, a messenger came, bringing with him instructions for the next leg of their journey. They sat down together for a meal, and the messenger spoke to them, saying:

"You have a long journey ahead of you. Fill your vessels with the water from the spring here and bring as much as the van can carry."

Spike said:

"But the water of this spring is not good for my band. It knocks them on their asses."

To which the messenger said:

"Do as I say. You will find such potent spirits useful where you are going."

When the messenger was finished with his meal, he received the leader of The Defeated's blessing and returned to his own place.

Spike instructed the van to be loaded with vessels filled from the spring.

When all were assembled on the riverbank, the Avatar of Bergen County Punk Rock addressed those who traveled with him to The Promised Land of the Punks:

"Hear me brothers, we have a

difficult journey before us, more difficult than anything we have experienced so far."

"More difficult than smelling Measles' ass?" Ape inquired.

"More difficult than de-licing Morty's mohawk?" asked Duck.

"More difficult than keeping Seany Rock from dry-humping our leg when he stays up all night on speed?" Barrett wanted to know.

To which Spike replied:

"More difficult than all these things times tenfold, but we will persevere."

"How," they asked with one voice, "when all our lives we have run from adversity, responsibility and things that are not very much fun?"

Spike had an answer for them:

"We will persevere, because Punk Rock is our savior and our hope throughout the boundaries of the earth. Also, because I scored a bitchen batch of primo crank."

### Oh Shit, Skinheads!

Then the punks were driven here and there for seven days over the Interstates. The road was a black ribbon of asphalt from which they were given no respite. They could smell nothing but their own filth. They ate every second or third day.

On the seventh day there appeared to them a club not far away. When they were approaching the parking lot, a mob of ugly brutes emerged from the club and chased them away. For several hours, they circled the club, but every time they approached a parking space, a gang of skinheads rushed the van, waving fearsome standards and ax handles.

Their strength all but wasted from speed and sleeplessness, the brothers in the van implored Spike with tears in their eyes to tell them what to do. Only Jonaz, the violence enthusiast, had to be restrained from leaving the van, such was his eagerness to thump skulls and mangle bones.

When this continued on into the seventh hour, Spike guided the van into a narrow parking space behind the club. Spike ordered the vessels from the knockout spring unloaded from the van. When this was done, they drove away. Spike guided the van to a promontory overlooking the club. He ordered the punks to disembark the van while he sat smoking a cheroot in a girlish manner.

"My brothers, we are about to do a forbidden thing. We are going to kick a man while he is down, in sneakiness and in stealth. And then we're going to do it some more."

Outside the club, the skinheads found the vessels The

Defeated had left for them to find, and they began to party. Within a matter of minutes all lay prostrate in the gravel, rendered witless by the water from the knockout spring.

The brothers descended upon the parking lot and revenged themselves upon the fascist jocks and steroid monstrosities who masqueraded as punks.

Some skinheads were dressed in the uniform of shepherdesses or cocktail waitresses. Others were placed in compromising positions with their mates and photographed for the pleasure of those who go to the Internet in search of such things. Others were stripped naked and driven to remote places, like inner city community centers for troubled teens, and deposited there, their white power tattoos on display for all to see. Jonaz wanted to put the ax handles to uses they were not intended for, and was nearly talked out of it, but when he argued the secret satisfaction the skinheads would feel as a result of being violated in this manner would greatly advance their individual voyages of self discovery, the punks agreed Jonaz's reasoning was sound.

Jonaz snapped on some gloves and shouted:

"Let's get pagan!"

Thus was glory given to Punk Rock in a most irregular fashion.

### Idea Not So Brilliant

The following morning Spike addressed his band and those traveling with them. He said:

"Rise, silken sons of pleasure, from your sleeping bags and places of filth. Let us sanctify our bodies with rest so we may remain gracious servants of Punk Rock."

Given a respite from the hazards of their journey to The Promised Land of the Punks, the punks attended to various pursuits, each according to his own desires, each in their own way needful. Then they got really fucked up.

And lo Measles and Morty were smoking a joint in the parking lot next to a dumpster, a place considerably more pleasing to the senses than the van.

They were discussing the admirable qualities of the two dudes, Nimrod and Ramen, the poseur punk rockers, and discovered they could name none. They dimly recalled a third dude, but neither could remember his name. Then Measles stumbled upon a brilliant idea.

"I have a brilliant idea."

Morty asked:

"What is it?"

Measles answered:

"Let's initiate Nimrod and Ramen into the band."

Morty made a



face that augmented his uncertainty.

"Why would we do that?"

Measles responded:

"So that we may subject them to terrible things."

Morty was no longer uncertain. A clear note sounded in his ears.

"You mean, *the* terrible thing?"

Measles replied:

"Verily, I do."

Morty said:

"That is a brilliant idea."

Measles answered:

"I know."

They returned to the van and informed their brothers of the plan. All heartily agreed this was an excellent way to give glory to Punk Rock. Also, because it was exceptionally cruel.

They said with one voice:

"Let's get those poseurs!"

How, exactly, to get them was the thing. Numerous proposals were put forth, some in excruciating detail. They considered various tortures, including The Piper of Trousersnake, The Squishy Bedroll, The Unclean Egg, The Regurgitron and, of course, Disco.

The collective men of the unwashed assemblage scratched their lice-furrowed heads.

"The Regurgitron," they answered, with one voice.

Though they knew it not, things were about to get very nasty for Nimrod and Ramen.

### Piker's Dilemma

The least brotherly of the punks was Piker, the designated driver. He came by this distinction because he was the only one who was both clean, in a manner of speaking, and sober. In a fit of reckless restlessness he had agreed to convey The Defeated to The Promised Land of the Punks, but he had not considered what life on the road with fifteen punks in a van would be like without drugs, alcohol, Shirley Temple movies and other intoxicants. He felt rather like a rower lashed to the oar of a slave ship and each one of The Defeated took turns with the lash. His desire for whiskey was like a drumbeat in his brain, a rash on his ass, a rash with splinters and pus in it. Piker feared he would go insane long before they reached The Promised Land of the Punks.

Most distressing of all were the visitations. Each day his longing took the shape of an elder of great gravity who appeared to Piker a little after breakfast. His hair was snow white and his face was shining. A pair of quadruple amputees hovered over his shoulders like cornish game hens, their tiny tongues

parched and swollen. These little people scared the piss out of Piker. The elder never spoke to him, he only stared. After a while he pulled down his lower lip, where the word "THIRST" had been tattooed on the soft inner flesh of his chin. Then he disappeared.

Piker was on his way back from K-Mart, where he had bought a 12-speed blender to be used in the special initiation ceremony, when the elder appeared to him, strapped to the hood of a Thunderbird. He was gagged. He seemed to be in some kind of difficulty. Piker was mortified. He didn't know what to do.

The T-bird was driven by a sunglassed demon. The little amputees rode shotgun in a jar of fluid. The T-bird swerved and cut Piker off. Piker locked the brakes and skidded the van, narrowly missing a trench both deep and wide. The T-bird was gone. Piker wanted to die. While he was reflecting upon all these matters within himself, he turned into the parking lot of a Jiffy Mart where he bought with great eagerness a bottle of rum, a case of beer and a jug of wine.

He hadn't decided which kind of alcoholic he would become yet, and he wanted to be prepared.

### The Regurgitron

When they had completed the day's course in order, they all hurried with great eagerness to the initiation ceremony.

Nimrod and Ramen sat in folding chairs facing the punks. Felch, who had a special fondness for initiation ceremonies, assisted Spike. Before he became a punk, Felch had spent a year in college, where he joined a fraternity. This, of course, he kept a secret because fraternities are not very Punk Rock. At school he learned how to make tie-dye t-shirts and wear ridiculous hats. The fraternity kicked him out because he never went to class. Also, because he was gay. Felch kept that a secret, too.

Spike addressed the punks:

"Before we initiate these false men into our tribe, I must ask if there is anyone here who does not want to give glory to Punk Rock?"

Measles dropped a can. Morty punched him in the ear.

Spike continued:

"Let us celebrate."

And the brothers celebrated by drinking with wild abandon. Nimrod and Ramen drank nothing.

When all the beer had been consumed, Spike gave the order:

"Bring me The Regurgitron."

Felch brought forth The Regurgitron, which resembled in every respect a plastic bucket.

The leader of The Defeated spoke:

"None of us has suffered ill in the flesh or from the spirits that infest the human race since we have come here. That is about to change. Load The Regurgitron!"

The punks cheered.

Felch passed the device to Seany Rock, who held it under his chin and vomited into The Regurgitron. Seany passed the bucket to Jonaz, who also vomited into The Regurgitron. When each of the punks had vomited into The Regurgitron, each in his own manner, the machine was presented to Spike. He said:

"Gnarly."

Felch then plugged in the blender and poured a liberal quantity of the vomit into the blender. He then produced a box containing a dozen feral mice.

Felch selected a mouse and dropped it in the murk. He said:

"Request permission to puree."

Spike answered:

"Puree away."

He hit the button and the mouse disintegrated, so to speak, much to the delight of The Defeated. The mixture was added to The Regurgitron.

Then, another mouse was consigned to The Regurgitron in the same manner as before. When all

twelve mice had been relegated to The Regurgitron, Spike handed the device to Nimrod. He said:

"Drink."

And Nimrod drank.

And then Nimrod got sick. Instantaneously, and in spectacular fashion. It seemed to the men of The Defeated that no one could possibly get sicker.

They were wrong.

Next, Ramen took up the machine and drank.

Ramen spewed a perfect parabola of vomit and mouse parts. He looked, for a moment, like a firehose, if the firehose were connected to a water supply fed by a charnel house in the business of exterminating rodents.

Afterwards, when Nimrod and Ramen had recovered, they asked if they were now members of The Defeated. Spike informed them they were not.

"Why not?" they asked with one voice.

"Because drinking vomit is not giving glory to Punk Rock. Drinking vomit is really fucking stupid."



- Money

Next:

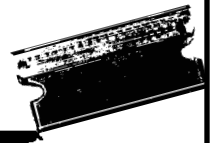
That Song on the Radio





Gary Hornberger

# Squeeze My Horn



*So this guy creates this little redhead in a plaid mini skirt and sends her to live with the others at the toy store where we find other dolls playing an erotic game of Twister.*

Gary Hornberger

I'm starting off my column by saying I'm sorry for my absence from the last issue. It seems that I was swirling around in a martini of current events, and I kept getting whacked by the swizzle stick. Call it my monumental moment of silence. The problem I was having was walking the tightrope of patriotism. In one instance, I was condemning terrorism and looking for retribution – you know, that biblical eye for an eye type stuff – but then my hatred turned to the media, to which I must say ran off the air in my house midway through the second day. How many times must my stomach be turned by a plane slamming into a god awfully high building? Are they trying to get public outrage on the issue?

Then what about all the flag waving? I've seen car after car with these window flags. Now let me tell you my problem with those. As early as grade school, we were taught that the flag was this sacred piece of cloth that had a text book of special instructions, such as it couldn't touch the ground, it had to be folded a certain way, and it couldn't fly at night if it didn't have a big ol' spotlight. So why do I have ill feelings toward these econo flags that fly by auto window? Because if the people that are flying them are so patriotic, then why do I see these flags getting exhaust brown, tattered, or lying in the middle of the street? I'll give you my take on it. These people are just lazy and stupid. Come on. It all revolves around making a buck. I work in a grocery store and even we got on the band wagon and are selling the red, white, and blue. In fact, from my point of view, the whole damn war is about the greedy. Hell, with that flag thing, I saw more of those Lakers flags on car windows last year, so does that mean that the Lakers are more favored by the public than civil liberties?

Here's another puzzle for me: that guy that half the country voted into the White House last year, and I didn't because I believe he's Spumco's poster boy for Jimmy the RAZORCAKE [10] Idiot. Well now it

seems that America loves the senseless jerk. Even shortly after everything went down he had that look on his face that he was in way over his head. I guess it troubles me that America – no, correct that – Americans have become so fat and lazy that they need things decided for them. We need to start doing a little free thinking and research of our own and make educated decisions rather than let a nineteen or twenty-seven inch box do it for us. I'm sorry if I offended any of you who can afford bigger screens. Hell, I even pull out my political science book to make sure I'm not talking out my ass every once in a while. I also read in the pages of this magazine where someone quoted the Dead Kennedys. Well, I'd like to use them too. Okay, everybody reading this now stop! Go to your record collection and pull out the *Frankenchrist* album, pull out the sleeve. Hey you, stop looking at the poster and read the sleeve, the song "Stars and Stripes of Corruption." This is as close to what I see going on in the US to date. Now, don't get me wrong. I'm not on a complete parallel line with ol' Mr. Biafra.

Everyone has a different take on culture. The point is that we piss others off when we stick our nose where it doesn't belong and sometimes we get a bite in our collective butts. I'm not condoning the action, just questioning our part as a so-called world governing body. Maybe I shouldn't even be using the term "we" or "us" because we only have control over the electing part of government. We have no control once we put an official in, and you can only elect one or the other because any other party is not in the majority. Really, how many Americans want to say they voted for a loser, no-name, change-the-norms candidate? After everything that has happened in the last couple of months I really don't know what I believe in. Am I an American? Yes, I believe so. Am I patriotic? Not if it means disregarding my rights that my forefathers gave me and everyone else on a little parchment known as the Constitution.

You know, even then I may not wholeheartedly agree with everything, but I sure as hell would take better care of the national symbol than to have it flailing off my truck (which is a GM made in Canada) and fall off and be swept away in a LA sewer system. So here I sit on my rope, high above the circus crowds hoping I can get to the other platform or, if I fall, there isn't a hole in the safety net.

Maybe I'll just sit here reading comics. I don't think anyone will care to bother my reading up here, so on to the reviews.

## ASTRO CITY, THE TARNISHED CITY

Hardback by Kurt Busiek, \$29.95

I'm putting this one in for two reasons. One, because I was reading this title regularly when I had time a few years ago, and secondly, I purchased this gem at one of those stores someone sets up around the holidays that sell books at unbelievable prices. That's right, I got it for \$7.99. Yeah, a \$30 book for \$8.00. Actually, this book covers a story line from the comics somewhere right around the time I stopped reading it. Anyone familiar with *Astro City*, appreciates the abundance of superheroes and villains alike, but most of all, the covers are usually done by Alex Ross, and he kicks ass. The main character in the story is a guy named Steeljack, who just got out of prison and, well, he has this strong resemblance to Robert Mitchum, but he's made of metal. So he gets back to the city but, when he looks for work, it seems nobody wants to hire the guy because he's basically marked. It just seems easy to remember a guy made out of metal. The only place that will take him is his old neighborhood, which is comprised mostly of bad guys who are basically just thieves. It just so happens that somebody's been knocking the bad guys off one by one, and they want to hire Steeljack to find out who and bring him in. He takes the job even if it breaks his parole. He needs the money. Now, at least he's up front with the fact that he's not the most educated

guy, but with the help of the local crooks for hire. (You know the type. Kind of a Burgess Meredith type with his hands in the pies of everybody.... yeah, the guy who trained Rocky!) So, he's introduced to this old superhero who tried to rig this deal with a bad guy to gain popularity, but of course that backfired, and he had to go into seclusion. Anyway, it turns out he's the real villain in the story and after some tight turns Steeljack figures out the plan and that he's the guy killing bad guys. But, wouldn't you know it, the good guys find out that he's broken his parole and tries to stick Steeljack back in prison (bear with me. It was a long story.). Of course he breaks free and eventually foils the plans of the bad guy. "What's that?" you say. "That's predictable." Well, just read the story. It's hard to put down and I don't want to give everything away. So, if you can find one of these wheel and deal book stores you might save some money on this one. Otherwise you'll have to pay in full, which isn't bad either, because this one is pretty cool reading. So good luck. Hell, maybe you'll find something else cool to read.

## BLACK TIDE

Preview, by Bishop

These next three comics I picked up at a show and had the pleasure of meeting the writers and the cast at Tidal Wave Studios, who produce these stories for Image Comics. Steve Montal and Darren Davis were totally cool and fed me with all the info I needed. They even told me to call if I wanted to do interviews with any of their writers or them. Of course, if you guys are reading this I'm sorry I haven't gotten back to you. It's just all that bog down time for the holidays. I still have your number. So, on to the comic *Black Tide*, which should be out this month. Okay, like it said, it's a preview so they're just going to tease us a little. From the cover it sounds like a party of three team up together to fight evil, but I'm not real sure if they're from the past or modern day. So, on the

inside we're introduced to only one of the team who's been sent to the desert to do some job, but somewhere along the line he's been set up and, after being thrown through a wall, has to make a run for it. This is where we're left hanging. I've got to admit this guy makes me laugh. After getting thrown through the wall he still has the ability to make a joke about his predicament. The art work's pretty cool, too! All in all, this comic has perked my interest so I'll go out and hunt a copy down and tell you all what the bigger picture is like. From what I've seen so far it should be pretty interesting.

### 10th MUSE

#1, \$2.95 US, \$4.70 Canada

All right, I read this one and although the story is kind of cool, it reminds me a whole lot of *The Relic Hunter* – the cartoon on channel 13 at three or four in the afternoon on Saturday. This one's about a threesome of friends – two chicks and a guy who have been best friends since forever and they're on their way to law school. After graduation they travel to Greece and, at some ruins, the blond reaches for some glowing rock and breaks her arm. Well, this is where everything goes awry. She misses the train back, gets picked up by some Mafia kingpin-looking guy who falls in love with her, then she develops this justice-like ESP and becomes the DA. And this is where she meets back up with her friends. Of course, over this time she has become the 10th Muse, who fights for justice and you know the rest. I don't know what to think of this one. The writing is pretty good, but it's kind of predictable. Maybe in some of the next few copies the story will change, but for right now I'm going to have to shrug my shoulders.

### DOLLZ, #1

Dollz is also done at Tidal Wave Studios and put out under Image Comics, like *10th Muse* and *Black Tide*. This one is pretty cool except for the fact that they really are dolls made by this Santa looking guy with God's ability to give a soul and life. So this guy creates this little redhead in a plaid mini skirt and sends her to live with the others at the toy store where we find other dolls playing an erotic game of Twister. At about the same time as the introductions with the new kid and her smart ass rabbit, a bad guy shows up to rain on the parade. This

guy immediately sheds his skin, turns into a robot, and commences to shred the dolls. Of course, the new kid ends up kicking his mechanical butt. So while all this is going on we're catching glimpses of the big, bad guy, Doktor Doll, and some detective and the church of the most holy transformation. If this thing comes together it's going to be one hell of a ride. Even with the kiddy porn kind of drawing and the toyshop of Santa God idea, I think this is gonna be one cool comic. (Tidal Wave Studios, PMB 726, 8424-A Santa Monica Blvd., LA, CA 90069, <www.tidalwavestudios.com>)



### NO USE FOR A NAME

(LIVE IN A DIVE) #1,

by No Use for a Name,

Punk bands doing comics? What is the world coming to? Gratuitous sex, drugs, and the lack of rock and roll? Now, my hopes were high when I opened it up, saw the cool art work, and the front page was covered in old flyers, but the story line, well, frankly, it sucked. It starts with a wild limo ride and the reader is lulled into a false sense that the band is rich. Yeah, like that will happen to anyone other than Mike Ness. So on this ride, they're sniffing buckets of coke, getting hand jobs by hotties, swimming in cash, and enjoying any other vice you can think of. There's also a badger in a bag. Huh? Anyway, the limo is about to go plunging off a cliff when we find out it's all a band member's dream, and he's back in the tour van eating PBJ's and smoking weed. Of course the events real-

ly do happen. The van goes over a cliff. The band survives and the band member named Squirrel tears them to shreds. End of story. Then in the final pages of this rag we have question and answer with the guys in the band and band madlibs and a band cross word puzzle and finally a search for turkey maze. I don't know what the fan base is for this group but I'd go out on a limb and say it's 12 year-old kids. Come on guys. You may be able to write music but get a writer for your comics. Hell, if you were able to find a good artist to do the same for writing, then you'd have someone else to point your fingers at. So, if you're looking for band memorabilia, go ahead and buy this, but if you're looking for comics to read, let it collect dust on the comic store shelf.

### OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS

#2, \$2.95 US, \$4.25 Canada

I read #1 and it was hysterical, so I was excited when I saw this show up in the mail. As a refresher, this is a comic put together by writers and artists who relate their favorite fan stories, either good or bad. There are seven short stories in this one and they all widen my smiled crack. The first story is great. It is a wonderful story of pure justice. It is told by Matt Wagner and happened when he was at Comico. One of his jobs at Comico was to send out acceptance and rejection letters, and it seems one fanboy was not to happy with his rejection letter so he decided to commit mail fraud and make old Matt a goat. The nice thing is these freaks almost always slip up, and a friend working at a local comic shop gets a letter from the same loony with a return address on it. It seems that this guy in trying to fake the postal system, and mailed a letter to the comic store from *Heavy Metal* with no stamp, thinking it would be sent return to sender but someone at the post office put the stamp on and sent it on its way. A few years later a nearly identical letter ends up in the hands of Mayor Koch. Well, I think you know what Matt did. That's right. He rung him up. Pretty cool story, right? Now, I don't want to give all the stories away, but let me give you one more. Joe Kelly, the guy who did *Deadpool*, is at a convention signing when these three guys come up wearing tank tops and floral Hawaiian skirts with the claim that they're the Lava Boys. So they talk a little about

*Deadpool* and then the head of the tribe pulls out a sharpie and asks him to honor him by signing his butt. Of course Kelly didn't do it, but come on, that's a very funny request don't you think? If you like funny, personal experiences, this is the comic to get. Hell, I'm waiting impatiently for #3. (CD Comics, PO Box 20481, Knoxville, TN 37940)

### DRUNKEN MASTER

#2, by Kiyoshi Nakazawa, \$2.95

This one's a comic / fanzine, so I guess because it's kind of short for a fanzine and has some wicked comics that's why it ended up in my lap. First off we get a preview of what's going on with *Drunken Master* so far: who reads it, where it's going, and so on. Next up is the short comic titled "Abortive." It's about this kid who's just turned seventeen and he lives in a society underground – why is unclear – but he's basically a street thug and just kills people to get what he wants or just to have fun. So eventually he gets caught and because he's a minor, he can't get the death penalty, but he gets banished to the outside. So they strap this unremorseful jerk to a chair and it sends him on a roller coaster ride up to the surface, all the while he's kicking to get out. However, when he does, he's outside, and with a beautiful world in front of him he claims "I can't live here. I'm in hell." Next on the agenda, we have results of a smoking questionnaire. This one is pretty funny. All one had to do was state their name, age, gender, career, if they smoked, and if they did what brand and why, and if they didn't what brand would they smoke if they did. The answers were very comical. Next is a short comic dealing with a hot day in the city. I'm going to have to believe it was filler. Then there's a cool interview with a band called the Hissyfits from New York who, based on the interview itself, will make me go see them. Then we get to read some mail in the "Letter Bombs" section. Some of the usual wacko stuff that finds its way to mags is found here followed by a couple of short strips to brighten your day: "Home Is Where the Home Is" and "Hospital or Graveyard." All in all, this is a cool zine. It changes up enough to keep you interested and is short enough to not make you tired. It also contains some "cool, makes you think," stuff to keep you going even after you put it down and that makes it worth searching for. (Kiyoshi Nakazawa c/o Shino Arihara PO Box 51033 Pasadena, CA, 91115-1033)

GARY Hornberger





# The Dinghole Reports

*I asked O'Reilly why he slept on the floor when a couch was empty. He replied, "I knew I couldn't fall off the floor."*

## The Dinghole Reports

by the Rhythm Chicken

(Commentary by Francis Funyuns)

[Edited by Dr. Sicnarf]

CHICKEN! CHICKEN! CHICKEN! THE RHYTHM CHICKEN! CAN'T YOU BOT-TOM-FEEDERS FUCKIN' READ?!! I AM A CHICKEN! CLUCK CLUCK! GET IT?

[Excuse me, Mr. Rally Monkey, but we're already into issue #6 of Razorcake here. Shouldn't we move on to more pertinent mat-ters? – Dr. S.]

MONKEY?!! You're treading on thin water, Doc!

(Okay, okay, okay! So you're a chicken. Big whoop! Two months have passed and your feathers are STILL all ruffled. The Doctor and I don't really care much anymore. – F.F.)

Rabbits are soft and cuddly! Chickens are wild ruckus-inducing hurricanes of pomp and valor!

[Well, if we agree to call you the Rhythm Chicken will you proceed with some more

reports? I need something to edit here. – Dr. S.]

(YOU'RE the editor? – F.F. to Dr. S.)

[Isn't that what it says on the header above? – Dr. S.]

All right, I can see I'M going to have to edit that MYSELF. Now that baseball season is over, can we get back to business here?

(Wait a minute here, Commentary by Francis Funyuns? Aren't I more like a devil's advocate? – F.F.)

[Try smooth jazz DJ. – Dr. S.]

ALL RIGHT, OKAY, ENOUGH!!! If you guys want, I can send you both back to your previous publications!

—silence—

That's better. Just remember who's the head rooster here. Now, on to today's subject. I received some fan mail recently (I really really read it!) which brought into question the sup-posed domestication of the Rhythm Chicken. This is surely an absurd concept. Though the

Rhythm Chicken has acquiesced to playing a few indoor concerts, these ones often become the more untame examples of a full blown circus of ruckus. Today's Dinghole Reports are of some of the more stellar highlights of.....INDOOR RUCKUS!

## Dinghole Report #14: Post Chixie Dicks Ramp Ruckus

(Rhythm Chicken sighting #150)

It was a Friday night in the big city. Timebomb Tom drove down from Green Bay with free tick-ets to see the Dixie Chicks at Milwaukee's Bradley Center. Juicy Jeremy and I acknowl-edged the surreal ruckus potential of such an event. We donned our thrift store cowboy hats and started Pabstin' heavily. Soon, we were in the sold-out 12,000 seat arena. The crowd at a Dixie Chicks show is quite diverse. There were suburban fathers with little kids, old couples, yuppies, country hicks, teenage girls, guys in suits, guys in overalls, horny guys with binocu-lars, and Jeremy and I in our thrift store cowboy hats double-fistin' \$5 beers. In-between songs, I felt compelled to endlessly yell out, "THE CHIXIE DICKS! THE CHIXIE DICKS!" Two wild redneck women in their 30s sat behind us. They got quite a rise out of Jeremy and I and kept leaving red lipstick kiss-marks all over our cowboy hats and shirts. The show ended. Timebomb Tom bought his "Earl's in the Trunk" bumper sticker. The full parking ramp was all jammed up with riled up Dixie Chicks fans. We were on the 5th floor and no cars could move for about an hour. Suddenly, I remembered the Chicken kit in my trunk! YES! Within' minutes the kit was assembled and the Chicken head adorned. I started playing and the huge cement parking structure just echoed and echoed and ECHOED the wild Chicken Rhythm. The cap-tive audience started honking their horns. People screamed, laughed, honked, and clapped. The rumble in the parking ramp was deafening! The car next to us had a father with three kids. The father was not amused and I was told the children looked terrified. I wonder if they ever have nightmares of the Parking Ramp Chicken Drummer Guy? After a few more minutes of thunderous ramp-rock and car horns, some lady ran down from the upper level and began SCREAMING at me. She appeared quite stressed and wanted me to stop. Apparently, she thought I was the reason for the traffic jam. We were laughing hysterically as we dismantled the Chicken kit to applause from the appreciative horn-honkers. We finally got out of the ramp and started heading across town to see the

Rhythm Chicken



THE CROWD IN THE ORDER WINDOW WAS GOING NUTS! RUCKUS!

Mekons play at the Cactus Club. On the way there, Timebomb Tom started yelling like crazy, "TURN AROUND! GO BACK! IT'S GREEN ACRES! GO BACK! GREEN ACRES!!!" I had NO idea what he was yelling about, but no sane man questions a spirited Timebomb Tom. I drove around the block and suddenly we all see it – Green Acres! Right there, on a cement wall of a train bridge underpass, in a crappy neighborhood, at 1 A.M., someone with a movie projector was showing an episode of Green Acres! We parked, got out, and sat on the curb. Green Acres. It was perfect.

**Dinghole Report #15: Wrestling Ruckus in the Ladies' Room!**  
(*Rhythm Chicken sighting #92*)

The Groovie Ghoulies had just finished rockin' the house down at Green Bay's Concert Cafe. The usual Green Bay post-show ruckus commenced next-door at the Speakeasy. The Pabst tapper flowed continuously. Gin and sin were in the air. It was time. Lord Kveldulfr and Ruckus O'Reilly helped set up the Chicken kit in the ladies' room! It was a very tight fit with the floor tom sticking out the door and the hi-hat leaning up against the sink and toilet. Dozens of faces were straining to get a view of the concert. The rhythm rock was unleashed. The drunks went crazy and the beer was flyin'. The gin-soaked rhythms flowed from the girlie shitroom like molten-hot ruckus! (Okay, okay. I stole that line from *Follow that Bird*. I just love to see it in print!) The chaos was reaching a feverish pitch when I was suddenly ATTACKED! A well-Pabsted Tim Double Zero (former Boris the Sprinkler bassist) literally DOVE into the cramped ladies' room. WRESTLEMANIA! ROCK! RUCKUS! The Chicken kit was demolished and the wrestling moved out onto the pool table. Tim finally had me pinned on the green felt and started wildly "mock-humping" me! He was screaming something about fucking the Chicken, recklessly banging away! The next morning Kveldulfr, O'Reilly, and I woke up in Tim's living room. Kveldulfr and I asked O'Reilly why he slept on the floor when a couch was empty. He replied, "I knew I couldn't fall off the floor."

**Dinghole Report #16: Bacon, Eggs, and Ruckus!**  
(*Rhythm Chicken sighting #88*)

The Bayview Family Restaurant is the Milwaukee southside's one 24-hour greasy-spoon diner that

always fills with rowdy street freaks around 2:30 am. This 2:30 am was unlike any other, until John Burger asked the waitress if the Rhythm Chicken could play in the kitchen. She didn't appear to understand his question and said, "Just ask Armando, the cook." John bolts into the kitchen and begins grilling Armando. Armando speaks no English. John just keeps nodding his head and asking Armando if the Chicken can play in his kitchen.....the RHYTHM KITCHEN! Armando eventually nods his head in confusion. GREEN LIGHT! Other members of the Tavern Squad hurriedly carry the Chicken kit into the kitchen. The drunk diners are asking where the concert is. Ruckus O'Reilly calmly replies, "In the kitchen." The drums were right in front of the grill. With burgers still sizzling behind him, the Rhythm Chicken started pounding out audio ruckus in the rhythm kitchen. Everyone in the dining room was crowded over to the order window to see what the hell was going on. They cheered, laughed, and became even more untame. Armando smiled. His workday brightened up a little. The waitress was trying to tell me to stop, but couldn't because she was laughing too hard! The crowd in the order window was going nuts! Ruckus! The show soon came to an end. While tearing down I noticed that I was playing right next to the EGGS! I fought the urge to sit on them, my children.

(You're weird, Chicken. – F.F.)

[Excuse me, Mr. Chicken. Don't you have any indoor dinghole reports that don't include the influence of alcohol? – Dr. S.]

Well, there is the telephone tour.

[Telephone tour? – Dr. S.]

**Dinghole Report #17: The Nationwide Coast-to-coast Rhythm Chicken Telephone Tour 2000!**

(*Rhythm Chicken sighting #144*)

Ruckus Thomas and I had just finished a fine dinner with Blatz on tap at the Shoreline Restaurant in Gills Rock, WI. While driving off I noticed that Gills Rock still had one of those big old telephone booths. I told Thomas that some day the Chicken should play IN the booth. (To sell out the booth would be out-doing the Descendents! What I'm telling you is the truth!) Tom says, "Well, as long as you're in there, why don't you call people and play for them over the phone?" I slammed the breaks. THAT'S BRILLIANT! A few weeks later I

was able to fit the Chicken kit into the booth (well, most of it anyway). I had found a way to tour America coast-to-coast in less than one hour, all from the phone booth in Gills Rock, Wisconsin! This even impressed ME! No stinky van. No endless hours on the road. No evil club owners. No heckling punks spitting on me. None of the usual touring headaches could TOUCH me! With every tour call, Mr. Moose would read off his introduction, "Hello. I'm Mr. Moose, also known as Orin Hansen, and I'm calling from the phone booth in Gills Rock, Wisconsin. You have been chosen as one of the lucky tour stops for this monumental and ground-breaking performance. This is the Rhythm Chicken Nationwide Coast-to-Coast Telephone Tour 2000. With Ameritech as his sound-system and the operator his sound-man, I now present to you, LIVE, from the phone booth in Gills Rock, Wisconsin.....THE RHYTHM CHICKEN!" Then the usual Rhythm Chicken show would start rockin' with Mr. Moose applying his professional mic placement (the phone) to achieve audio excellence! In less than 1 hour I played 25 gigs across America: Seattle, Sacramento, Kansas City, Austin, Milwaukee, Gills Rock, Cleveland, Green Bay, Columbus, Appleton, Pulaski, and New York City, baby!

Seven answering machines were reached, creating instant bootleg documentation. Patrons of the Shoreline Restaurant poured out and provided applause during the breaks. Mayhem! I've often thought of printing up tour shirts with all the phone numbers on the back. It's a whole new world. I've been gettin' the itch to tour again, this time from my north Wisconsin woodshed and the cordless phone from next door! If your phone rings and your caller ID says Nelson, Thomas from the (920) area code, answer the phone and enjoy the show! I owe Alexander Graham Bell a big one!

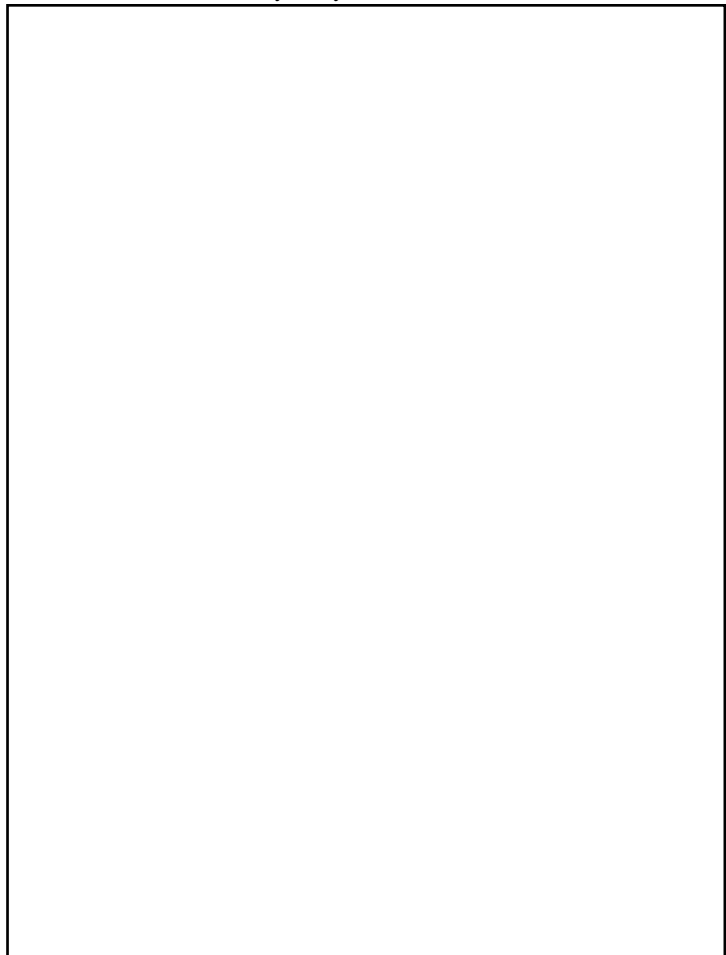
(Remember, you too can receive free issues of *Follow that Bird*, the Rhythm Chicken newsletter. Simply stretch your dinghole over your head, cluck three times, and send your snail mail address to [rhythmchicken@hotmail.com](mailto:rhythmchicken@hotmail.com). After 8 long months, I finally got another one out! Pabst and carrits for all! – F.F.)

[Also, keep on the lookout for "Bird on a Wire," the fancy Rhythm Chicken E-place. More details nest time! Good Evening. – Dr. S.]

-Rhythm Chicken



Rhythm Chicken





Roger Moser, Jr.

# Drunk and Demented in Texxxxas

*But, ah, there's nothin' more fun and satisfying than thoroughly repulsing someone worthy of such loathsome misbehavior.*

## SCOTT

During the fiery-leafed orange-burst season of autumn, I tend to become more introspective, more contemplative, and more pensive; and less jovial, free-spirited, and appreciative of life. When the first seasonal chill briskly sweeps through the rustling dying leaves which precariously dangle from the skeletal limbs of old hunchbacked trees, I deeply ponder the inevitable brevity of life while morosely wallowing in pitiful fits of misery born out of the depletion of sunlight when darkness envelops the day at an earlier hour and seems to linger for a torturous eternity or two. I become listlessly immersed in such a smothering swirl of cold lonesome sorrow, the warmth of life evades me like the lucid translucence of sobriety constantly evading a chronic two-quarts-of-vodka-a-day drunkard. There once was an effervescent glimmer of hope sparkling within me and brimming with youthful wide-eyed optimism, but it's nothing more than a faded, misguided concept now (it slipped through my fingers a long time ago when I wasn't looking, just like water trickling unnoticed through a drainpipe with precise fluid ease).

It's now been 10 years since the person who had the most profound influence on my life abruptly leapt from this tumultuous mortal coil. My cousin, Scott, died in late October 1991, forever indelibly altering the youthful essence in me while creating a turbulent whirlwind of emptiness within my soul. Scott was my best friend, my mentor, my beer-guzzling partner in crime, and the affable older brother I never had. Not a day passes that I don't think about him, not a night slips away that his disheveled image doesn't taunt my sleep, not an autumn approaches without a blinding blur of grief-stricken tears saturating my eyes while a dreadful lingering sadness enshrouds me with such dismal severity, I become paralyzed with moroseness to the point I no longer have the will to live. Ah, but the mind-boggling memories of mischief, madness, and mayhem! It all seems such a distant lifetime ago. We were daring, brash, adventurous, and young, insolent, idealistic, roguish, and uncommonly reckless. We were self-proclaimed kings of drunken craziness; the loudest, most obnoxious louts on the block; the most dastardly duo of animalistic hedonists to ever traverse the entire podunk parameter of our ram-

shackle lil' neighborhood. We were uncouth, unrepentant, undesirable, and too damn proud to give a shit. Essentially, though, we were bored beyond belief because we had nothing more relevant to occupy our time than luke-warm beer, furiously loud music, an unrelenting inhalation of clove cigarettes, naughty shameful thoughts of the fairer sex, wildly animated and gloriously descriptive conversations about our wayward half-hearted ambitions, and other such colorful forms of boisterous backyard belligerence.

During the dead-end decade of the '80s, Scott and I slovenly lived with our fanatically religious great-grandmother in her spacious antique-strewn, colonial-style mansion inexplic-

rous physical embodiment of Satan himself. Indeed, we were quite a shambolic visage in our tattered'n'torn second-hand clothing, ragged duct-taped Chuck Taylor high-tops, Scott's unruly swirl of dreadlocked shagginess, and my eight-inch spiked Sidney mane. Grandma would often implore us to adorn ourselves in a less disheveled display of street-scruff clothing, whereupon she'd kindly dish-out the cash to acquire a more suitable and socially appealing wardrobe. Alas, it wasn't to be. Scott and I would eagerly accept the money, and then we'd hurriedly breeze through the well-worn garments on the markdown rack at Goodwill until we found a bit of reasonably fitting attire (usually a faded old pair of Levi's and an oddly colored flannel shirt or a paisley-speckled pajama top). After thriftily spending a couple of bucks on our "new" apparel, we'd then allocate the rest of Grandma's charitable funds toward such detrimental expenditures as beer (and lots of it - huge unholy amounts, actually), cigarettes, porno mags, some much needed equipment for Scott's skateboard (usually grip tape, trucks, and/or wheels), and an occasional array of new albums and cassettes for me.

Ungrateful, we certainly were not - economically prudent, you betcha we were! It seems as if it was always the infernal smoldering season of summer during that youthfully incandescent era. Scott and I would lazily slouch about in Grandma's garage many an uneventful hour in the late afternoons and early evenings when the structural hustle'n'-bustle of routine life around us seemed to be at a complete semi-hushed standstill. (Granny's Commandment #1: "There will be no drinkin' in my house, boys. If'n ya don't like the way my gate revolves, then don't swing on it!") So there we'd be in the garage heartily ingurgitating a liver-saturating variety of brewed beverages galore while enthusiastically waxing poetic about complete utter nonsense that was only comprehensible to the two of us in our pristinely slurred state of shit-faced silliness. We ruminated, philosophized, belched, babbled, and deliriously whooped it up. The Clash, Dead Kennedys, Sex Pistols, Ramones, Black Flag, Big Boys, Buzzcocks, Bad Brains, Descendents, New York Dolls, and Jimi Hendrix loudly blared outta our trustworthy, yet battered and bashed, ghetto-blasters. Ah, so much for the constant droning



(above) Scott, December 25, 1987

ably located in a low-income residential area mostly inhabited by hard-workin', hard-drinkin' Hispanics and speed-addled, white-trash-criminals-in-the-making. Funnily enough, whenever Scott and I would drunkenly stumble through the streets on yet another misguided mission to the liquor store, the Hispanics would accurately refer to us as *el loco gringos* and the white-trash tweakers would shun us as if we were the lep-

Roger Moser, Jr.

buzz of rampaging crickets, grasshoppers, and tree frogs that were restlessly creating an all-natural racket in the surrounding lush vegetation!

Scott would effortlessly maneuver his way through an intricate array of circular patterns on his splintered and chipped skateboard. I'd be casually leaning against the curvaceously contoured exterior of Grandma's early-'70s model Cadillac, blankly staring downward at the semi-full can of beer in my right hand and a half-smoked clove cigarette in the other. Waiting, waiting, waiting. Finally, the sun sleepily settled into the shroud-like darkness of the distant horizon. The appointed hour had come when Grandma would slowly shuffle upstairs to bed. As soon as her nightstand lamp was switched off and she commenced to snugly snore her way into an impenetrable deep sleep, Scott and I would set into motion our ritualistic nightly swirl of festive debauchery. We'd giddily lug the ghetto-blaster and all of our beer inside where we'd fitfully settle in the den (strategically located downstairs at the opposite end of the house from Grandma's boudoir, thank the sweet Lord!).

And then we were ready to eagerly greet the decadent nocturnal activities which would soon stir quite a commotion within the hallowed walls of Grandma's tidy well-kept kingdom. Like well-oiled clockwork, our friends (and their friends and their friends' friends) would expectantly gather en masse on the small porch area outside the den. Scott and I would then open the door and graciously herd 'em all into our cozy lil' rompin' room for several hours' worth of pleasurable alcohol-soaked silliness. Let the vile and wicked array of unholy misbehavior begin. The music was always disturbingly loud, the conversations animated and lively, the liquid spirits cold and abundant, and the lovely lil' ladies all a-lookin' good! With such sinfully tempestuous surroundings vigorously fuelling our brew-embalmed egos, Scott and I wantonly competed for the attention of anyone who was gluttonously soused enough to give us a moment or two of their time. Scott would suddenly whip-out his semi-erect wang-noodle and wiggle it around in the air while excitedly exclaiming, "Hey, girls, wanna play with my wienie?!?" not to be outdone and forgotten, I'd sporadically unleash the contents of my bladder all over the television screen whenever a Madonna, Motley Crue, Duran Duran, or Poison video would listlessly flicker outta the ol' boobtube (a predictably frequent occurrence back then. It's a damn wonder I didn't short-circuit Grandma's TV with my near-constant steady streams of brew-laced weewee!).

And whenever a particularly annoying party guest would irritate us to the point of fraying our very last sleep-deprived nerve, we'd belligerently react accordingly: since the offending person in question was usually an obnoxiously stuck-up suburban rah-rah bitch, Scott would casually swagger towards her until he was intently staring into her eyes, face-to-face and less than a hair's space between them. He'd then breathlessly exhort, "Hmmm, I sure do like you, lil' girl," and before she ever knew what hit her, he'd nonchalantly lick her across the face until she squirmed, recoiled, and ultimately squealed, "Eeewww, gross!" Me? I'd take a less confrontational, but equally suitable, approach to such a bothersome nuisance. I'd slyly sneak outside, quickly locate the party-poopin' sleaze-



*Scott was outta there just like that, hittin' the open road, hitch-hikin' across the entire Midwest, and aimlessly traversing all points in between.*

bag's car, and then gleefully cut loose with an unrelenting splash of urine all over the luxurious interior of her daddy's high-dollar set of wheels (boy howdy, I sure did aggressively mark my territory a helluva lot in those days). But, ah, there's nothin' more fun and satisfying than thoroughly repulsing someone worthy of such loathsome misbehavior.

Like all good things in this brief situation-comedy called life, our colorfully orgiastic party-days at Grandma's manor inevitably came to an abrupt, reality-awakening end. After two blurry-eyed whirlwind years of smashed antiques, beer-splattered floors, displaced cigarette butts beneath the sofa cushion, vomit-coated bathroom walls, and numerous outspoken complaints from the neighbors, Grandma was left with the regrettable task of kickin' our lazy, no-good-for-nothin' asses outta her house, and pronto quick! I vividly remember it all comin' to an explosive boil one particularly disruptive night soon after our last visitor had drunkenly departed the premises. Scott was stone-cold passed-out on the floor next to the noisily pulsating jambox. I was deliriously slouched in my favorite fluffy-seated armchair, groggily sippin' my last lukewarm beer and procrastinating whether to properly dispose of the numerous bottles and cans strewn across the floor, empty the heaping nicotine-saturated contents of the ashtrays, and then quickly fumigate the smoke-heavy air with a steady assault of floral-scented Lysol; or whether I should just sluggishly stumble upstairs to bed and hope a lil' magical leprechaun would miraculously appear and expeditiously rid the den of its unsightly mess before Grandma crawled outta bed at the crack of dawn.

Too little, too late! While I was intently engrossed in a rambling disarray of brew-soggy thoughts, I never even noticed the shadowy hunched-over visage of Grandma lividly looming mere inches from the chair where I was so comfortably ensconced, but I sure as heckfire heard her distinctly familiar anger-tinged voice screeching like a savage wild monkey being neutered without benefit of anesthesia. Scott heard her, too (even over the distorted, decibel-soarin' cacophony of The Clash!), and he was

quickly roused outta his groggy alcohol-induced slumber like a startled deer caught in the blinding glare of an 18-wheeler's headlights. As Grandma ominously stood there inspecting the disastrously disturbing scene surrounding her, Scott and I knew we were both in a whole world of deep doo-doo. Grandma impatiently inquired if we alone were responsible for draining the entire contents of the numerous bottles and cans scattered across the floor. When we cheekily replied, "Yes, indeed, Grandma; it was us, and only us," she sternly stated the obvious. "You boys are doomed beyond redemption." She then produced her well-worn "Holy Book" and began extensively quoting the appropriate scriptures pertaining to the immoral evils of alcohol consumption. Scott soon interrupted Grandma's well-intended tirade with a heavy sigh, and then he stated a relevant point with all of the brew-ravaged eloquence he could possibly muster at the time, "Yeh, but Grandma, it clearly says somewhere in the Good Book there that Jesus and his twelve long-haired buddies drank wine until a feeling of euphoric merriment overtook their souls!" Scott was well-versed on the scriptures himself, but to no avail whatsoever when it came to the almighty thundering wrath of Grandma. She quickly dismissed Scott's semi-coherent utterances as "blasphemous devil-speak," and before we knew what hit us, we were both on the receiving end of a holy-rollin' prayer revival on behalf of our irredeemably lost souls.

As I insolently sat there and strenuously fought the overwhelming urge to slip into a stuporish deep-sleep, I heartily chuckled to myself and conjured a well-timed suitably realistic psalm of my very own in response to the surreal insanity of the moment: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of sloppy drunkenness, I shall fear no evil 'cause I'm one shit-faced motherfucker." Within less than a week, Scott and I found ourselves relocated to far less desirable digs. It was a rather ignoble and abrupt end to the golden-brewed era of our not-so-innocent youth and the bungled beginning of cold, harsh reality confronting us face-to-face and bitterly spitting its grim meaningless bile point-blank into our startled

bloodshot eyes. Our fat, miserable, money-grubbin' uncles forcibly removed Scott and me from Grandma's spacious palatial abode and expeditiously strong-armed us into a one-bedroom economy apartment clear across town. Since neither one of us was employed at the time and since we definitely did not want the stressful financial responsibility of rent and utilities, we soon shirked our newfound domestic duties with an impudent so-fuckin'-what attitude and numerous aloof twists of the ol' bottle-cap. After less than a month of a steady nutritional (insert extreme sarcasm here, folks!) diet of beans and rice for breakfast, Hamburger Helper (without the hamburger!) for lunch, and Black Label beer (the desperate poor man's brew) for supper (and midnight snack, too!), Scott restlessly paced the beer-stained carpet and then gathered his meager belongings (his sleeping bag, skateboard, and a tattered-and-torn duffel bag in which he stored his toothbrush, several wrinkle-paged copies of *Thrasher* magazine, a scattering of various skate-punk comp cassettes, and his threadbare wardrobe consisting of a couple of flannel shirts, three pairs of army-navy store workpants, and a handful of ripped-to-shreds t-shirts).

Swoosh, Scott was outta there just like that, hittin' the open road, hitch-hikin' across the entire Midwest, and aimlessly traversing all points in between. Scott was a spirited vagabond adventurer. He'd nomadically roam the long solitary highways and dusty well-traveled backroads of vast rural stretches of countryside while capriciously searching for a brighter day somewhere along the next horizon. He'd wearily walk himself ragged until his Converse-covered feet ached so badly. He'd venture into an isolated spread of timberland and make camp for the night. Often he'd hop a ride on the rails, hobo-style, where he'd be whisked away into the rapidly approaching darkness in the hay-strewn confines of a beat-up old boxcar rhythmically clanking along to exotic destinations unknown. During one such railroad journey through the desolate wilds of Wyoming on a blustery wind-swept night in late October 1991, Scott jumped from the slow-moving train he'd hitched in Omaha, and he began blindly walking through a raging snowstorm that suddenly appeared out of the ominous shadowy mountain ranges to the north. The flickering lights of a distant town that Scott had intended for his next stop-over were

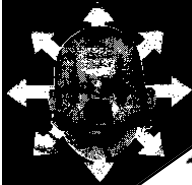
quickly extinguished in a complete disorienting white-out - a full-fledged roaring blizzard - a freak unseasonable winter storm that the most skilled meteorologist in the nation could never have predicted. The temperature had fallen so far below freezing, the infernal pits of Hell were more than likely matted in thick chunks of icicles and frozen ash. Knowing Scott, I'm sure he relentlessly struggled to find his way into town, wearily pushing himself until the wind's harsh chill enveloped him and slowly suffocated his will to live. A few days later after the ice had thawed and most of the snow had melted, Scott's body was found by railroad workers in a dilapidated old storage shed. He had found shelter from the wind's unrelenting swirl of coldness and the thick billowy blankets of snow, but the frigid arctic temperatures were too extreme for the fragile human anatomy to bear. He died in his sleep, huddled alone, tired and frostbitten, isolated and desperately cold in a vast hostile stretch of god-forsaken wasteland in the middle of nowhere.

Goodnight forever, Scott. It's now ten years later, and although I've obviously collected enough inner strength to stubbornly endure this multi-colored jigsaw puzzle of

a life, Scott's death has left my heart hollow and my spirit constantly struggling with the most pitiable of anguish. So today I mourn the future that became unattainable for Scott on a lonely cold night in October a decade ago; and, therefore, I grieve the sudden passing of my youth in the autumn of '91 when the fiery desire to rage with the world faded within me for the very last time. Ironically enough, I was always the one who fervently extolled the reckless virtue of living fast and dying young whenever Scott and I would exuberantly espouse our rhetorically jumbled philosophies during our slurred drunken moments of crazed adolescence in Grandma's garage. I suppose I have lived faster than most, but I didn't die young like Scott. I'm sure I'll go to my grave perpetually feeling guilty of that. But all I can do now is cherish the spirited inspiring memories that are forever indelibly etched into my mind. Sometimes late at night when everything around me is dark, calm, and quiet, I vividly recollect Scott's toothy impish grin when he was a wide-eyed, tangle-haired kid. Wherever he may be, I hope he's smiling like that now.

-Roger Moser, Jr





**Rich Mackin**

# The Twisted Balloon



*Pirates all talk with a gravelly, Tom Waits voice. Kinda like how all dogs that can talk have that same speech impediment like in Hanna Barbara cartoons.*



**Rich Mackin**

A hoy there mateys! Rich Mackin here from Razorcake HQ, a third of the way into my West Coast Book Tour, and it's strange to be writing a column with the editors walking back and forth behind me. Today, lets start off by talking about pirates. (And ironically, I just bought a 500 some odd page book about pirates, but that's real pirates. I'm talking pretend pirates.)

I have spent no less than five days in the month of October dressed as a pirate, and it somewhat surprised me how easily a good pirate outfit can be created from clothes I already owned. Of course, several of my friends dress pretty much like pirates on any given day anyways, my friend KT usually has a black or striped shirt, black shorts over striped tights, a bandana...all she needs is an eyepatch or something to remove any doubt. (It was discovered during the month that the eyepatch is what people think of as the defining pirate accessory – suppose that pirate didn't get an eye poked out? I mean, Blackbeard had both eyes...)

The first day of piracy that month, of course, was Columbus Day. As you probably know, 500 some odd years ago, a well known pirate named Columbus led a group of sailors on a trip. It was sponsored by Spain, the country that at the time was also expunging all of its Jewish population. Basically, Columbus was trying to find a shorter route to India and got very lost. He then "discovered" America, much the same way that if I were to walk into my neighbors' house, I would 'discover it'. (To make the analogy complete, I would also rape my female neighbors, kidnap a few as slaves and kill the rest.)

In case it sounds like I am picking on the guy, rewriting history, let's go to his writings, as reprinted by Zinn's Peoples' *History of The United States*: "(The Arawak people) would make fine servants...With fifty men we could subjugate them all



*The point is, pirates traditionally are law breaking violent types, and here we are blocking traffic and causing a scene for no good reason...*

and make them do whatever we want." The fact that the indigenous Arawak people were so kind and generous seemed not to impress Columbus and his crew for its own sake so much as that it made them all the more exploitable. (And I am not just quoting Zinn to make this issue more cohesive.)

In any case, our society, in its typical fashion, celebrates with white sales and other marketing of useless crap. Wholesale genocide celebrated by retail sales! So, as the teeming masses hit downtown discovering bargains, our crew donned pirate costumes and discovered downtown Boston, proclaiming it now to be ours, and offering the citizens a choice of converting to our religion and serving us or death. Strangely, many got both the joke and the point. Even one cop saw us as pirates and immediately asked if it was a Columbus Day thing. Since we were in the touristy areas of town, many people seemed on the

fence of if we were actually officially part of the tourist industry or not. Some people even had us pose with their kids.

So, we had about eight pirates at any given time – mostly pals of mine, but a few new friends came having seen fliers and such, and these people invited me to the pirate parade as listed later on. So, this group of punk pirates are wandering around discovering things in downtown Boston, and then we actually do discover something... the Taste of Boston festival. What this is, basically, is a street fair where you pay for tickets that let you buy samples of food from Boston restaurants. But also they had free samples of more snack and health food – LOTS of power bar type stuff, soy milk, cookies, chips, and toothbrushes too. We were immediately stopped by cops who wanted to know what our issue was with the fair, and we explained how it was coincidental. I was

impressed that the cops wanted to talk to a SPOKESPERSON, not the "leader." It's funny when anarchistic events happen and cops demand to talk to the anarchist leader. They merely warned us that if we did anything that caused trouble we would have to leave. Duh.

The only person who actually seemed annoyed was a crackpot sort of fellow who was offended by the "poison" sign of skull and crossbones at a food event. He accused us of saying the food was poison and told us to go back to Harvard Square (where teenage punk suburbanites hang out).

I started noticing that dressing as a pirate does effect your mindset. You start acting in character. And odder still, it effects how people act towards you. Samples are given out with a one per person rule, but go up, say that you can take the tray because you are a pirate and plundering, and they let you take whatever you want, by all



means.

After several successful hours of piracy, we headed our separate ways. But it was decided that the plundering of the food fest would be fun to recreate 5 days later at the Vegetarian Food Fest. So we agreed to meet there in pirate gear.

This of course means I show up dressed like a pirate by myself and feel like an ass. As I often say, two or more people and it's a movement; one guy and you're a crackpot. So I am walking around in a long coat, britches, knee stockings (like big socks, not tights for those eager to mock that stuff), buckle shoes, striped shirt, sword at my belt, big earring and bandana. People manage to see me and ask why I am wearing a bandana, since I normally don't. This reminds me of when a friend once said she could tell I wasn't wearing contacts since my eyes were lighter blue than normal, and I added that I was also wearing glasses.

I am not vegetarian, but don't eat much meat, and if it came down to it, understand vegetarianism more than the meat based diet of most people in America. The funny thing is, most people I know understand various meat related issues (mostly how horrible we treat our animals and all the chemicals we pump into them) but since they aren't vegetarian eat meat every meal – as if the idea of low meat consumption is impossible. Michael Greger, MD, the guy who taught an activist medic thing I did once, made this point: it doesn't matter so much if you eliminate animal products or get dogmatic about it, just understand what you eat effects you, and how you get your food effects your world. Acting upon this is more important than if you eat thanksgiving turkey or whatever. I will continue this segue with random comments on the irony that so much vegetarian and vegan food is meat substitute based, while I as a non vegetarian have gone months on salad, fruit, and PBJ. The last point of my segue is that it irks me to see vegans harass vegetarians for not being devoted enough when McDonald's still exists, and I will get back to piracy.

The next week is Critical Mass, the monthly bike ride that occurs on the last Friday of the month in many cities. Discussing the various points and politics of a mass bike ride in a city is its own column, but let me say that that night, it was basically a hundred some odd bikers, many in costume, so me, of course, I am a pirate. Actually, rather than bring a chance of clothes, I wore my pirate outfit to work, and the only person who

commented noticed the striped button down and thought I was dressed up. I rigged a pole to my bike rack and flew a nice three foot by five foot Jolly Roger behind me as I rode. Bike flags make a nice image, and I find that they make you a lot bigger and thus cars give you more room. The highpoint of the ride was seeing a guy who I met in DC at a protest. In DC he rode a unicycle and played accordion ALL DAY. Here he rode a bike that was actually two frames welded together to create a super tall megabike. Some of us went out for a nice dinner and to a Halloween party – I made another pirate feel bad by having a far more detailed pirate costume than his store-bought one. Of course, he probably hasn't been almost living in his.

The day after was the pirate parade. Someone came up with the idea of just randomly getting together, dressing as pirates and parading for no other reason. This seems similar to stuff I hear about in San Fran and LA. (thinking of the now annual hundred drunk Santa event) but Boston...never. Turns out that many of my friends from the group the Guerilla Poets were involved. The Guerilla Poets are a poetry group who read poetry in public. Sometimes, when its nice, they read in parks. Sometimes they read in malls, or Burger Kings, often getting kicked out by irate and confused security guards, usually not before they leave "poetry free zone" stickers. Oddly enough, the missing member tonight was Nate, the same guy who wrote *101 Pirate Jokes* – an actual book with kid-friendly jokes, mostly puns involving the "arr" sound. "What are pirates afraid of?" "Arrrrrrmageddon!" etc.

We headed down Fashionable Newbury Street – the shopping street. We pretty much made a scene, blocked traffic and made noise. Here is when I fully realized something weird. Clowns are all about cheer. You see a clown, odds are he/she is trying to bring joy in the tradition of a vocation based on balloon animals and laughter. Everyone hates clowns. Everyone fears clowns. If someone ever voices a thought on clowns, it is without doubt a negative thought. Pirates are thieves, murderers, sometimes rapists (although many famed pirates from the glory days we think of as pirate times were women, and it seemed to be a fairly feminist group, considering.) The point is, pirates traditionally are law breaking violent types, and here we are blocking traffic and causing a scene for no good reason, and PEOPLE LOVE US! Seriously, people see pirates, and they are happy. More than likely,

they say "YAR!" in that pirate voice. Pirates all talk with a gravelly, Tom Waits voice. Kinda like how all dogs that can talk have that same speech impediment like in Hanna Barbara cartoons.

So, we wandered about, all running into one store or another, shouting about how we were pirates and we were pillaging, but never actually doing anything wrong. Well, some low grade fireworks were set off in the street, and shockingly, no cops came as a result. As we marched, we saw the duck tours- converted military land/ sea vehicles converted into tourist trolleys. As some pirates boarded the duck tours, you could tell some of the tourists wondered if this was part of the tour. Once on the busboat, it was obvious that there wasn't much more to do, so the pirates then dropped off as mysteriously as they must have seemed to have jumped on.

Several pirates went to Emerson College, and it was decided that we should eat at the all-you-can-eat cafeteria. Whoever got there first proclaimed that we were pirates and that we didn't have to pay. Call it assured pirate speak, or call it apathetic kid making minimum wage at the cash register, but it worked. Let me say, bad as cafeteria food it, when it's free and you work for a living, it's a nice thing to have.

Some time later there was a pirate party, then I hit the Coolidge

Corner Theatre all night horror movie marathon. I talked to the manager (a friend) and said how I was going to change into comfier, less piratical clothes and was informed I would be denied entry unless I was a pirate. Let me say that a fourteen hour movie marathon is a good idea in theory, but so was communism. The first six hours are fun, after that it becomes more about commitment, being too tired to get up and go home, and finally, a sense of testing your endurance. Like a marathon or climbing a mountain. It wasn't about fun, it was about seeing it through.

And yes, I was a pirate for Halloween. I had earlier thought of more interesting costumes, but, hell, I had it ready. I once again wore it to work and was accused of just dressing like a pirate as my new style choice. And for twenty-nine of twenty-nine years, I went trick or treating. Todd proly is publishing his rant on old punks this issue, and I agree with him. I have friends who feel old at twenty-five, twenty-one even. And here I am almost thirty dressing like a pirate half the time and getting free candy from strangers. (I do bring toys to give to kids.) As someone once said, "You don't stop playing because you grow old. You grow old because you stop playing."

-Rich Mackin



Rich Mackin

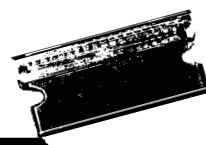
...and PEOPLE LOVE US!





Designated Dale

# I'm Against It



Designated Dale



## An interview with Lemmy of Motorhead by Designated Dale and Sean Antillon

Introduction by Sean Antillon

4:40 p.m. Monday, Oct. 1st. I come home from work and listen to my phone messages, not expecting to hear anything exciting... was I wrong! "Hey, Sean, this is Dale. Give me a call, I have something to tell you – You and me are gonna fuckin' interview Lemmy of Motorhead this Thursday night at the new House of Blues Anaheim at that Downtown Di\$ney place!" Oooo, damn, did that light a fire under my fat ass! Being as much a Motorhead fan as Dale is a Ramones head, I called him back and said, "HELL YEAH, BABY!" The night of the show came fast and we were both pumped to talk to the big limey.

I mean Lemmy. I had just bought a truck ('58 Ford) and, with some minor carb problems fixed, we were off. Getting to the new "Downtown Di\$ney," we were both shocked to find the House of Blues across the street from Di\$neyland! Motorhead plays the Magic Kingdom – Oooo, DAMN! As it was, our contacts for passes into the show were stranded outside the complex themselves, so we had no choice but to kill some time. You know – walk around, get into trouble and eat something. Dale and I are good at doing when we're together. But there was no fast food at this family/Di\$ney shit-hole citywalk unless you wanted a hotdog rolled in a pretzel. What the fuck is that? Then it will only run you \$8.00 a wiener!? No thanks. Then we were propositioned by three young Canadian girls to buy them smokes. Both of us being hungry (although Canadian bacon sounded good to me!) and non-smokers, we left the girls with a hearty "FUCK OFF!", and on to the Motorhead show. After seeing lots of friends, unsuccessfully trying to order food again, and screaming at a few more people, Motorhead took the stage. As always, a killer show, with dedications to the death of fellow brother Joey Ramone and the World Trade Center bullshit. Lots of new and old songs in the set that night with me in the pit and Dale upstairs taking pictures. To say the least, we both had loads of fun. With the show over, we both waited upstairs for Lemmy and the rest of his mates to come out and join the after party. Down a restricted stairway, a few turns here'n'there through a maze of hallways, and into a private dressing room, we sat down to lock horns with the Snaggletooth...



l to r: Sean Antillon, Lemmy, Dale

**Lemmy:** (jokingly) So, Yankee pig-dog!

**Sean and Dale:** [laughter] That's right! That's us!

**Lemmy:** We're not scared of you! We don't need no stinkin' badges! What do you wanna know?

**Sean:** So, you're born December 24th...

**Lemmy:** I knew that.

**Sean:** Uhhh, is it true that you got your name, "Lemmy"...

**Lemmy:** No, it's not. That was my idea, the t-shirt. I really fucked up – it's been bothering me ever since.

**Sean:** I read somewhere that it (Lemmy's t-shirt) said, "Lend me a fiver"? (Said in a slurry, English accent, "Lend me" sounds like "lemme", which could be spelled "Lemmy.")

**Lemmy:** Right. Well, I made a t-shirt that said, "Lend me a quid 'till Friday."

**Sean:** Right!

**Lemmy:** I'll never get out from under it. You're the only one who's said anything about it in 2 years.

makes racing gestures with his hands.)

**Sean:** There's a rumor that you roadied for Jimi Hendrix on a British tour?

**Lemmy:** Christ, it's not a rumor. Every interview I do in the last 25 years has asked me about that. You should scribble it out. Why not get it off somebody else before I give up that answer? (laughter) Yes, I was. For about seven or eight months.

**Sean:** How many records did you do with The Rockin' Vickers?

**Lemmy:** Ummm, two singles.

**Sean:** Those are quite hard to get.

**Lemmy:** Yeah. They were made in 1966. '65, one of 'em.

**Sean:** Wow, '65? Were you a guitar player or a bass player?

**Lemmy:** Guitar player.

**Dale:** Did anyone else out of that band to go and do something like you, Lemmy?

**Lemmy:** ...broke out, right? Yeah, they're all still The Rockin' Vickers. They fucking reformed, you know?

**Sean:** Oh, you're kidding!

**Lemmy:** They still got it. "Here's a medley of our greatest hits!" And they haven't got any. It's difficult to have a medley of greatest hits when you didn't have any. Then it's a collector's item, is it? (referring to the Rockin' Vickers' vinyl releases)

**Sean:** Well, I've seen a Rockin' Vickers on Ebay once and it was quite a bit...

**Lemmy:** A lot of the collected tracks are pretty bad 'cause they're all singles. So, in those days, you had a good A side and a throwaway B side, that the guy in the band wrote, you know? The A side written by somebody else or you would cover it from America, and then you had the B side which some bozo in the band wrote to make a few bucks, you know? So, um, a lot of them, they're really filler stuff, you know? How'd you like that on the B side the joke version of "I Go Ape" was "Zing Went the Strings of My Heart" (laughter all around as Lemmy starts jokingly croaking out a verse).

**Sean:** I'd fancy a Johnny Kid and The Pirates tune.

**Lemmy:** Johnny Kid and The Pirates were a great band.

**Sean:** Oh, great band!

**Lemmy:** They were the first ones with strobes. Only in those days, we

**Sean:** Wow.

**Lemmy:** (smiling) Can we get a little up to date here? C'mon! (laughter) Jesus, ya know?

**Sean:** Let's see, ah, you've also been credited as "Lemmy The Lurch" on a Hawkwind record?

**Lemmy:** Yeah, "Lemmy The Lout," as well. That's because I schmarze around people. I used to be faster on my feet. I used to be able to get up to the dam from my house up the road in like five minutes. Zrrr-zrrr-zrrr! Ya know? (laughter, as Lemmy

didn't have strobes, so their roadie used to get a pole and tape all the light switches to it and shake it, switch them on and off. It was the first light show, yeah. And Nick Green, he was the third guitar player. It was (Eric) Clapton backing Nick Green. Nick Green, was like, not as pretty as them, so he didn't take, you know? Didn't quite make it and he became an insurance salesman, so it kind of ruined his career as a guitar player. And then he made a comeback in the punk era, with Paris. They made three albums. I made a record with him called, uhh, "Blue Suede Shoes." A single. Now that's fucking obscure, you want obscure? That's on Sunnyside Records. It's not out on the compilations. I think it's "The Best of Lemmy" that, like, Griffin Records brought out, those assholes. I told them not to and they did it.

**Dale:** So someone booted the actual 7" ("Blue Suede Shoes") onto that record you were just talking about?

**Lemmy:** Yeah, and did you hear something about the new compilation of Motorhead, *The Best of Motorhead*, that thing that came out a short while ago, a three record set? Might be on that, too. All obscure shit.

**Sean:** Speaking of obscure, who is Captain Lockheed And The Starfighters?

**Lemmy:** Don Calvert and several people, including Brian Eno, and I was on the first record on about six tracks. And, then, uh, let's see, who else was in there? Dave Drop played on it. There was all kinds of people – Nik Turner, you know. Most of Hawkwind played on it. Then there was Lockheed Leaf And The Longships.

**Sean:** Wow, I didn't even know about that one. I was reading on Ace's webpage (Ace Trump, creator of the official Motorhead website – <imotorhead.com>) about Jeff Beck being at that (Motorhead's) 25th Anniversary show and there was a picture of him. And it didn't surprise me, but I was just like, "Wow, that's great!", ya know? It seemed like you guys had a good time.

**Lemmy:** I've known Jeff for years. And the bastard always arrives just too late to jam. (Smiling) 'Cause he hates that – he hates jamming. He plays more of that jazz-flavored stuff, you know?

**Sean:** So, there's no chance of the Bomber going back on a tour, huh? (The Bomber is a trademark Motorhead stage rigging that is constructed like an old war plane.)

**Lemmy:** We just have that in Europe. We never even play enough for it to be here, 'cause we don't sell enough tickets. So we can't afford it, let alone ship it over.

**Sean:** Yeah, that would be a pain in the ass.

**Lemmy:** Some gypsies stole the metal of the original one.

**Sean:** Oh, you're kidding!

**Lemmy:** Scrap metal. They took it in the middle of the night. Yeah, just the front of the set.

**Dale:** They stole the middle of your rigging from the Bomber?

**Lemmy:** Yeah, well, the Bomber is the rig. And it's the only four position light set, you see. They go from side-to-side and forward and back. So it's all completely independent.

**Sean:** And that's made off of the specs off a Heinkel He 111 Bomber?

**Lemmy:** No, it's just shaped vaguely like it. Just the nose is like that, you know. It wasn't particularly like an angle.

**Sean:** It was kind of nice to hear some of the older songs tonight.

**Lemmy:** [grinning] Well, that's why we played 'em for you, but, I mean, I've heard 'em...

**Sean:** I went nuts for "Damage Case." I was hoping. I was screaming "Limb from Limb."

**Lemmy:** [laughing] Well, there's no point in shouting it. We're gonna do the set we've got, you know? There was one guy the other night, and he was going, "LOVE ME LIKE A REPTILE"! and I was trying to talk to the crowd... "LOVE ME LIKE A REPTILE"! I said, "I'll fucking come out and fuck you like a reptile if you don't shut up!" (laughter all around) And then he goes, "LOVE ME LIKE A REPTILE!", you know? Oh, great.

**Dale:** [chuckling] Oblivious.

**Sean:** [laughing] So you play it... "LOVE ME LIKE A REPTILE!"

**Lemmy:** That's my audience – kinda depressing, isn't it?

**Sean:** So the name, "Motorhead," was the last song you wrote for Hawkwind?

**Lemmy:** Yeah.

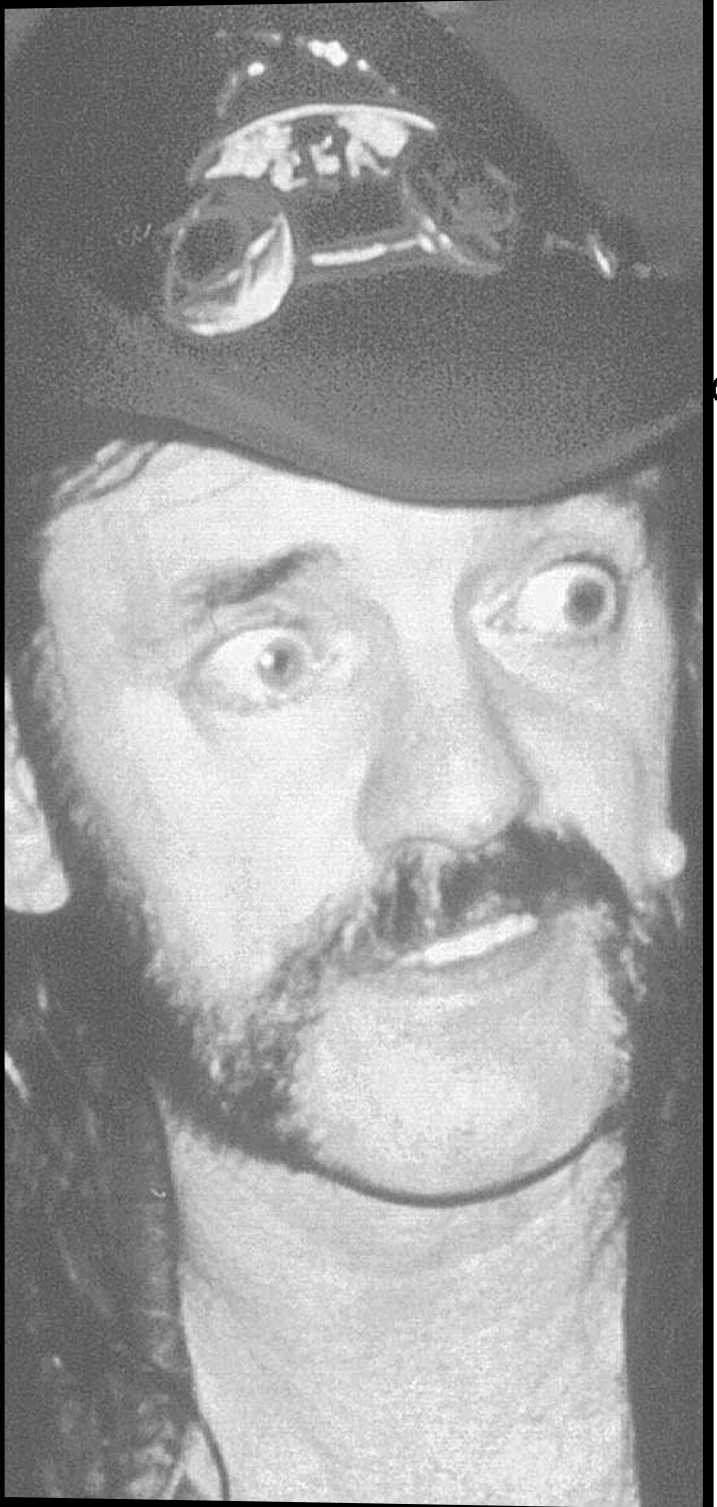
**Sean:** And the first (Motorhead) gig was at The Roundhouse, July 20th, 1975... with who? Did you open?

**Lemmy:** Greenslade. I had a real human skull on top of my amplifier and we had a German march recording of them marching up the streets in Britain; "Heil! Sieg Heil! tromp-tromp-tromp!" So fucking funny. I think it's funny, all that stuff, you know? And people get really pissed off – "How could you do that?" I say, "Aw, fuck you. You know what? Get a sense of humor!"

**Dale:** Is that like the same one where I read you played an air raid siren at some festival? It said that people just went blank after that.

**Lemmy:** That was at the Nuremberg show. And we played in the old Zeppelin area where he used to have the meetings, right? ("He," meaning one the Zeppelin family members who introduced the world to the gas-filled airships, like the disastrous Hindenburg.) His pulpit's still up there, a big tribute. But there

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"Heil! tromp-tromp-tromp!" So fucking funny.

I think it's funny, all that stuff, you know?

was a crowd on there, and the band was playing on the stage facing it. So there's Union Jack flags all over tribune. [laughing] He must have been twirling in his grave, right? The crowd, for some reason, we didn't get on that well – you know, bad day, or something, and I said, "Make a noise!", and they went "Aaahhh!" I said, "You made more fucking noise than that in '36!" You know, it's funny. You never know how many of the English don't know what you say, 'specially when you mumble like me, you know? I mean, if I'm mumbling bad enough to make you uncertain in this language, imagine what I'm like in a language you can't speak! [laughter]

**Dale:** With The Damned, anything else besides the show you did with Les Punks?  
**Lemmy:** No.  
**Dale:** Sean was telling me that there's an actual live album of the show that you did with them, the other 3/4 of The Damned.

**Lemmy:** I'm sure it's a very bad recording.  
**Sean:** Yeah, it's a bad bootleg.  
**Dale:** There was nothing else recorded?

**Lemmy:** Whenever The Damned got it together and did record it together, that's me playing bass on "Ballroom Blitz."

**Sean:** On the Damned's single?  
**Dale:** That is you playing bass?  
**Lemmy:** Yeah, the B side. The bass players were the only two people still awake, you know? [laughter] The bass player always seems to be the speed freak in the band. Fucking with the tapes for hours, you know? The Captain broke the toilet in the studio, so we had to leave. We also did "Over the Top," as well, a version of that. What else did we do? "No Class," I think. I'm not sure. It never got released 'cause we never went in to do the vocal in it.

**Dale:** Did the producer end up sitting on the tapes, Lemmy, or did you guys get those back?

**Lemmy:** I guess they still have them, the band, you know? It pisses me off that they never asked me to come and do the vocal. [smiling]... "Well, fuck you." [laughter]

**Sean:** The first tour, Motorhead supported *Blizzard of Oz*, Ozzy Osbourne...

**Lemmy:** First American tour. First gig in the fucking baseball stadium in Miami. Terrified. Fucking more people than we ever played to in our lives, ya know? It was a really good sound, too. [laughter]

**Sean:** You recorded "No Sleep Till Hammersmith" on that tour? Same tour, but you were in England, 1981?

**Lemmy:** No, we did that on one of our own tours the year before that.  
**Sean:** I've got here that it reached number one? On what chart?

**Lemmy:** It entered number one.

**Sean:** You're kidding.

**Lemmy:** No, no. And that was in the charts where everybody could get, not just the bloody heavy metal chart. That was the national chart. Straight up to number one. There was only one chart in those days. That's a fact. These "specialty"

fucking charts – what is the use of being number one in a specialist chart? That's all they listen to. There's no fucking fame in that, is there? What's that, the bloody "post modern" chart, like in *Rolling Stone*. What the fuck is "post modern"? Tomorrow? Right? [laughter]

**Sean:** You're credited with playing some guitar on records. On the *Bomber* credits, in a book actually, it credits you with playing 8-string bass?  
**Lemmy:** Yeah.

(Motorhead's mascot/ logo) helmets. Were those ever produced or was that just for you guys?

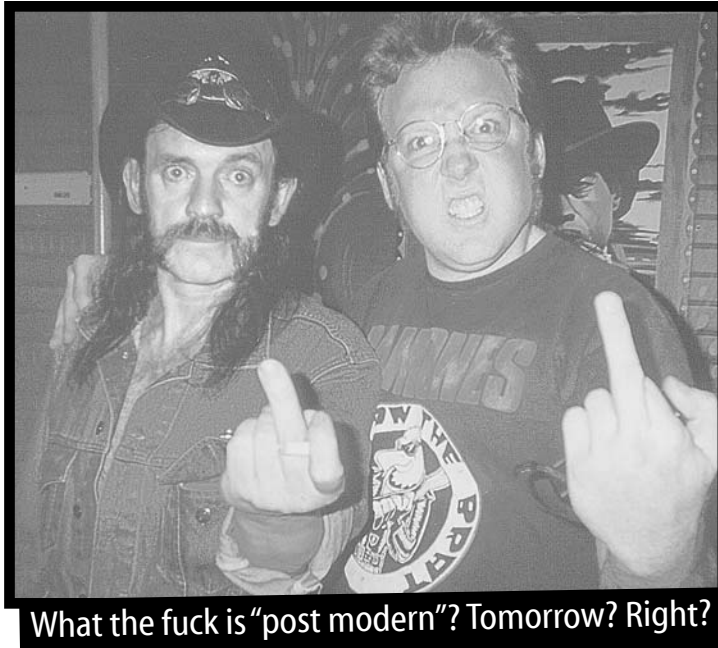
**Lemmy:** They're kind of hard to get under without pinching your ears. Big hinge on it. You have to pull it down. Quite good, though. Chains rattle a bit.

**Sean:** I can think of quite a few people that would want something like that.

**Lemmy:** I know. That's why I've got one. [laughter]

**Sean:** Do you collect any of the bootlegs just for yourself to remember shows, or something?

**Lemmy:** Not really. They usually sound like shit. Mostly you have the audience shouting 'cause he's out in the audience with the mic. I'd rather listen to an album or a professionally recorded live album, you know?



**Sean:** That's a real bass? Who made that?

**Lemmy:** Hagstrom.

**Sean:** Oh, it's a Hagstrom! Those are great guitars!

**Lemmy:** Jimi Hendrix had one. Noel Redding had one. In fact, at the beginning of "Axis, Bold As Love," you know all that screaming and feedback? That's two of them Hagstrom basses, being like, turned up too loud, beaten by Mitch and Noel.

**Sean:** For *Bomber*, you were presented silver discs by the Queen of England?

**Lemmy:** No, it was a woman dressed up as a, sort of, conventional Queen of England impersonator. She's the same one who was in the video for "God Save the Queen." (Motorhead's version)

**Sean:** There's a promo picture of you guys holding Warpig

They have mics and everything.

**Sean:** Let's see...

**Lemmy:** And, no, these are not breast implants. [laughter]

**Dale:** You showed one tonight! I think I got it here [holding up camera].

**Sean:** Actually, you showed the other one, too! [laughing]

**Girl in the Background:** Is that a sock?

**Lemmy:** A sock?

**Girl:** I'm kidding!

**Sean:** It's a squash!

**Lemmy:** No – these are three socks down there. [laughter] Sometimes it's a squash, other times it's a squeeze. It depends.

**Sean:** Depends on who you get.

**Lemmy:** Depends on the stimulation.

**Sean:** The name "Lemmy," and the image, have become a household name in pop culture.

**Lemmy:** Is it really?

**Sean:** I mean, I know quite a few people that I grew up with "Lemmy!" Have you ever thought of copyrighting your image?

**Lemmy:** No. You can't do it. It's not possible. You can't really copyright an image 'cause anybody could dress up, you know, just for Halloween and be arrested. Anyway, I'm not the first guy to go out like this. [laughter]

**Dale:** What about the name, "Lemmy"?

**Lemmy:** It's just a name, you know? The fuck, you gonna copyright your name then, and sniff the people out?

**Dale:** Sick the dogs! [laughter]

**Lemmy:** If you use it, get him! The Lemmy Police, right? [laughter] I don't think so.

**Sean:** Well, I heard Spanky, from The Little Rascals, is going around suing people that...

**Lemmy:** Well, that's the only income he's gonna get, isn't it? He's got a habit to support, you know?

**Sean:** Like Thunders. The pin cushion.

**Lemmy:** Yeah, like Thunders. Don't even talk about him. [laughter]

**Sean:** I think I only saw him good one time.

**Lemmy:** Lucky man. What year was that?

**Sean:** Oh, this was later on, this had to have been '87?

**Lemmy:** Ah, fucking mess. He was just a mess then. Poor John. He was a good guy, you know, basically, but, he was a mess. They found him stripped naked. That's how nice his friends were. They found him stripped to fucking tit. Nothing in the room but his body, naked. Nice guys, you know? Dignity. That's the real gem. He died with so much dignity, by the toilet.

**Sean:** Well, like Elvis, too. They say Elvis fell off the toilet and died with his bum in the air, huh?

**Lemmy:** Well, he died in the bathroom, but nobody knows if he was on the toilet or not. He definitely hadn't shit yet, you know, so there's no evidence, right? [laughter]

**Dale:** Yeah, he pulled a Lenny Bruce, that's right.

**Sean:** Ok, let's wrap this up. I hear that you are gonna be on *The Drew Carey Show*?

**Lemmy:** We've already recorded it. Coming on this next week or so.

**Sean:** Are you guys actually playing on *The Drew Carey Show*?

**Lemmy:** Well, I'm actually singing to the backing track of, ah, "Stagefright," but I'm singing "Sorry" instead because Drew's getting an apology out of Mimi and she's having the band say "sorry" for her. With his glasses breaking and the house shaking...





Sean Carswell

## A Monkey to Ride the Dog



*I also think it's great that the Big Lebowski is a fat, angry white guy in a navy blue suit. He reminds me of eighty percent of Congress, the cabinet, and the national news pundits.*

### THE DUDE ABIDES

Felizon came home and caught me at it again. I was half in the bag, sitting in the recliner with a thirty-two ounce white russian in my hand. Chris, a buddy of mine, sat on the couch, sipping his giant white russian. He was as far gone as me. *The Big Lebowski* was on the television. Felizon shook her head. "You guys are going bowling next, aren't you?" she asked.

"Uh-huh. Want to come?"

"Someone's gotta drive your drunk asses." Felizon went back into her room to change her clothes. Chris and I kept drinking and watching the video. The Dude screamed at the Big Lebowski: "You'd just met me. You figured, here's a deadbeat, a loser, someone the square community doesn't give a shit about."

The Big Lebowski held his ground, saying, "Well, aren't you?"

Chris and I laughed. Felizon screamed from the back room, "Well, aren't you?"

Oh shit. I knew what was coming. Felizon was about to come out and say, "Hey Chris, remember when Sean used to look like the Dude?" Because it's true. A skeleton's falling out of the closet here, but I have to admit that I spent a good couple of years of the pre-Lebowski early nineties looking like a twenty-one year-old version of the Dude, complete with shaggy hair, a gnarly goatee, stained t-shirts, and plaid, cotton bermudas. And I did spend a lot of time driving around town in the middle of the afternoon, drinking beer. But the most embarrassing thing that Felizon won't let me forget is where I took her on our first date: bowling. It's true. So I grabbed the remote control and waited.

Walter Sobchak grabbed the Big Lebowski, yanked him out of his wheelchair, and dropped him on the floor. A Pomeranian yapped and licked the Big Lebowski's face. I laughed despite myself and despite the fact that I'd seen this scene twenty times before. Felizon came out of her room and said, "Hey Chris, have you ever seen this picture of Sean?"

I turned off the video and said, "Fuck it, dude. Let's go bowling."

Bowling was even worse. Chris and I finished our drinks in the car on the way there, then ordered beers at the bowling alley. We got a lane, typed in our names (Felizon was the Dude, I was Sobchak, Chris got stuck with Donny), and started bowling. We interspersed our frames with lines from *The Big Lebowski*, starting off with lines that made sense: "I'm throwing rocks tonight", "Mark it, Dude", "What is this bush league psyche out stuff?" As we drank more and

ences became more gratuitous: "Don't mess with the Jesus" and "Pederast, Dude." When I finally burst out with the "Three thousand years of beautiful tradition from Moses to Sandy Koufax, you're goddamn right I'm living in the fucking past" line, I knew I had a problem.

I tried to stop watching *The Big Lebowski*. It was tough. I moved to LA: the home of *The Big Lebowski*. I found myself driving past a burrito stand that I recognized from the opening scene. I accidentally walked into the bowling alley where they filmed the movie. I met more and more people who could quote lines from the movie. I was surrounded by it. Still, I resisted as much as I could. I only watched it on special occasions: when I was too broke to rent a movie, when my life was bringing me down and I needed a laugh, times like that. I stopped drinking white russians when I watched the movie, and I stopped going bowling when the movie ended, but my obsession continued. Then, a few weeks ago, I needed a *Big Lebowski* fix real badly.

I'd been doing a lot of reading about the current US attack on Afghanistan. I read about Congress cutting taxes for large corporations, claiming that it's economic stimulus, not greed. I read about the new Patriot Act, which is an unconstitutional attack on the personal property of US citizens. It's supposed to be temporary, just like the Espionage Act, which jailed protestors of World War I, was supposed to be temporary, yet it's still a law and still enforced. I read about Congress pushing forward a plan to require all US citizens to carry a national identity card which would allow the FBI access to everyone's bank records, among other things. It was all so scary and frustrating that I couldn't stand it, so I popped my old tape of *The Big Lebowski* in the VCR and decided to forget about world events for a couple of hours and laugh. Current events were still on my mind as the tracking adjusted itself and the opening shot started to take focus through the grains of my old videotape. But as the movie started to emerge out of the fuzz, I started to understand where my obsession came from.

The Dude walked down a grocery store aisle, on his way to pick up a carton of half and half. The narrator pointed out that the "story unfolds around the time our conflict with Saddam and the Iraqis. I only mention it because sometimes there's a man, and I'm talking about the Dude here, who's just right for his time and place..." The Dude places his half and half on the check out counter. The cashier rings up his purchase. The Dude writes a check for 69 cents. On a television behind the cashier, George Bush is addressing the nation, saying, "This will not

stand. This will not stand, this aggression against, uh, Kuwait." That's interesting, I thought. Why do they start the movie here instead of just starting it when the two thugs shake down the Dude and piss on his rug? The opening scene is completely superfluous to the plot. So why is it in the movie at all?

I watched the whole movie, and when I was done, I guess current events were still on my mind. I thought back about the plot of the whole movie and how it related to that opening moment. I figured that the best way to do understand that opening moment was to look at the plot from the Big Lebowski's perspective. After all, he's the title character.

Basically, the movie starts out with the Big Lebowski facing a seemingly insurmountable problem—his wife, Bunny, owes money to a vicious, wealthy man. Bunny gets kidnapped, and rather than trying to find out who the kidnapers are, the Big Lebowski looks for a way to turn this dramatic situation into one he can exploit for his own financial gain. Then, the Big Lebowski picks a demon—the nihilists, a group of Germans who believe in nothing. He promises the Dude a bunch of money that he knows he'll never give the Dude, and pits the Dude and the nihilists against one another. Then, he creates a complex, confusing atmosphere similar to a magician's smoke and mirrors trick, pointing everyone against everyone else, bringing all kinds of peripheral characters into the fray so that no one knows exactly what's going on and who the bad guy is. In the midst of this confusion, the Big Lebowski follows through with his initial plan of exploiting the situation for his financial gain, and he rips off a million dollars from a scholarship fund for poor, urban kids. Only the Dude figures out what's going on, and when he confronts the Big Lebowski, the Big Lebowski says, "You have your story and I have mine." This is basically an admission of guilt, but it's also the Big Lebowski's way of saying essentially (though never explicitly), "Of course I took to the money. Of course I ripped off the poor and defenseless so that I could remain rich and powerful. That's advanced capitalism. Everyone knows that. What are you getting so upset about?"

When I looked at the movie that way, I understood why I was so obsessed with it. Essentially, *The Big Lebowski* follows the exact same formula that the US government follows when they engage in a war. I thought back to the past few major US wars and realized that they all fit *The Big Lebowski* formula perfectly. And the formula basically comes down to this eight point plan: 1. You bury yourself in an economic hole and wait for a solution to present itself. 2.

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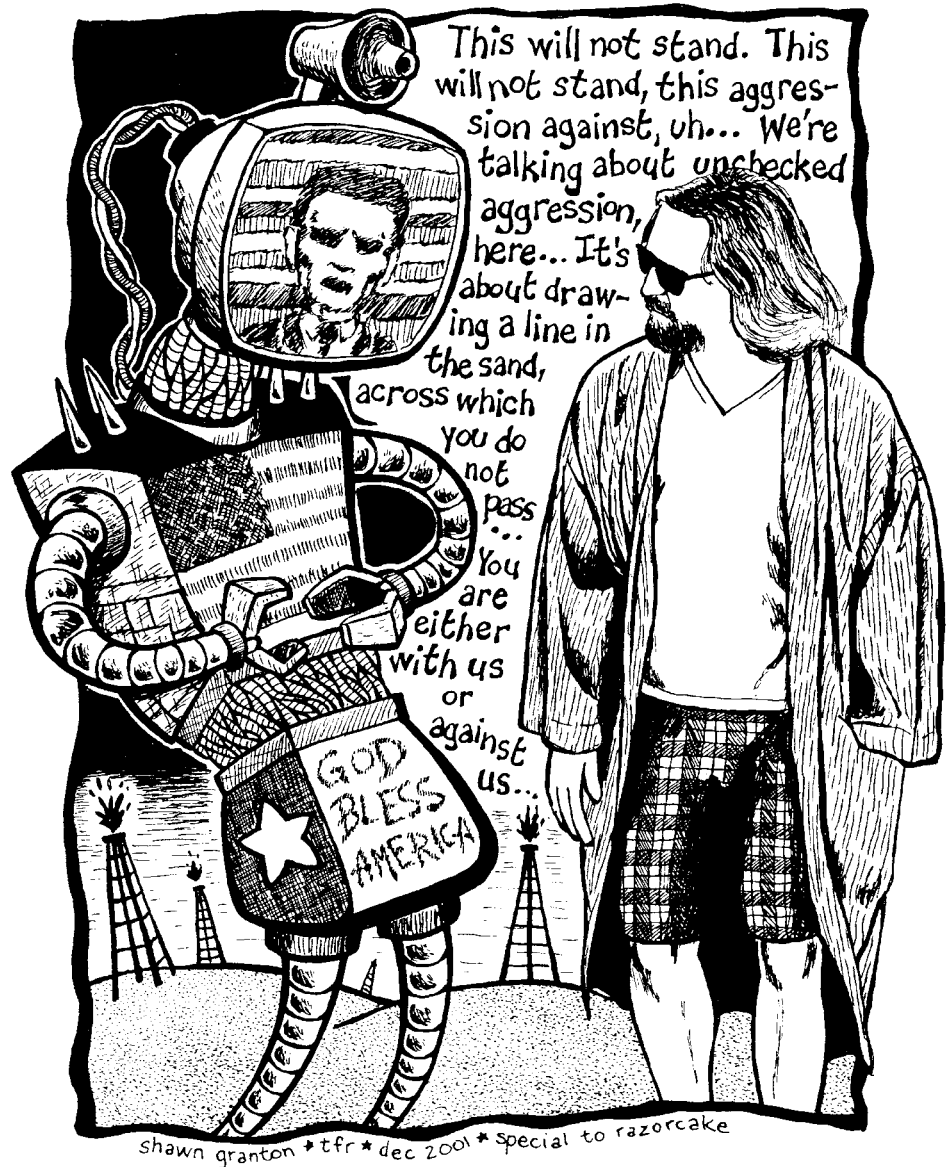
A single, dramatic event occurs. It can be a real event, like Pearl Harbor, or a made-up one, like Bunny's kidnapping or the Gulf of Tonkin. 3. You find an angle to economically exploit the event (steal a million dollars from a scholarship fund or steal forty million dollars from social security). 4. You pick a demon (any demon: nihilists, Germans, Japanese-Americans, Arabs, it doesn't matter). 5. You send people who have nothing to gain by fighting the war off to fight the war (the Dude; the working class Americans who either die in the war or come home with a sickness [Agent Orange, Gulf War Syndrome] that the US government refuses to help them cure). 6. You confuse everyone with smoke and mirrors (tell everyone that the Dude has a million dollars; tell everyone that "you don't want another Vietnam," and by that, you mean that you don't want to allow any sort of dissenting opinion at all. Or you cook up a ridiculous anthrax scare). 7. You continue to place blame while cashing your check (the Big Lebowski makes a million dollars; Ford and General Motors become the largest manufacturer of Nazi tanks during World War II; major corporations get a twelve billion dollar handout while thousands of Americans lose their jobs). And 8. when you get caught in a great big lie, shrug it off because you know that there's no accountability for the rich and powerful.

Wow, I realized, no wonder I keep watching this movie. It's one of the best movies about war ever, and they pull this off without having a single battle scene. That's pretty incredible.

Rather than letting myself stop obsessing there, though, I started obsessing about the characters and trying to see where they fit into a larger picture. Again, since he's the title character, I thought of the Big Lebowski first.

The Big Lebowski is funny because, in his first appearance in the movie, he tells the Dude, "My advice to you, sir, is to do what your parents did: Get a job." He curses the Dude for wanting a handout, saying, "Every bum's lot in life is not my problem." At the same time, the Big Lebowski has no job and he lives off of handouts. He's a walking contradiction. He reminds me of Texas Senator and former Republican presidential candidate Phil Gramm. Like the Big Lebowski, Gramm condemns handouts and tells poor people that they just need to work harder. This is evidenced by Gramm's attack on social welfare (he was one of the primary authors of the "welfare reform" bill) and his continued battles against a national health care system. In the meantime, as soon as a plane hit a building, Gramm was on the congressional floor scamming \$254 million for the Enron Corporation, where his wife sits on the board of directors and where Phil Gramm is a prominent stockholder. The Enron Corporation was also a top contributor in Gramm's \$20 million presidential campaign.

I'm not saying that the Big Lebowski is supposed to be a representation of Phil Gramm. I don't even mean to pick on Phil Gramm, here. A bunch of people in the upper echelons of our government are just as bad. George W. himself has refused to abide by a demand from the General Accounting Office to divulge any information about monies given to him by the Enron Corporation. So especially when the Big Lebowski squirts off his sad speech about how he can "look back on a life of achievement. Challenges met, competitors bested," his empty rhetoric and vague terms can make you think of



George W.'s impassioned-yet-meaningless speeches about "good versus evil" and "if you're not with us, you're against us." But remember that, when the Coen brothers wrote *The Big Lebowski*, George W. was still busy running Savings and Loans and oil companies into the ground, so surely he wasn't the model for the Big Lebowski character. He's just a guy who fits mold, because basically, the Big Lebowski as just another representation of the rich and powerful, the people who do no work and spend their time figuring out a way to steal most of the money that working people earn.

My favorite scene revolving around the Big Lebowski occurs when the Dude and the Big Lebowski's right hand man are inspecting the Big Lebowski's wall of plaques. It's funny because the right hand man never finishes explaining what each plaque is for. He says things like, "That's an award given, well, not necessarily given every year", and "Mr. Lebowski was awarded this for his various civic, uh, civic... oh, and this is a picture of Mr. Lebowski with the First Lady." There's even a picture of the Big Lebowski with NRA president Charlton Heston. It's a subtle stab at meaningless accolades showered down on so-called

leaders of the business community. I also think it's great that the Big Lebowski is a fat, angry white guy in a navy blue suit. He reminds me of eighty percent of Congress, the cabinet, and the national news pundits. And he's every bit as ridiculous as all of them.

The Dude is the perfect counterpart to the Big Lebowski, too. The narrator refers to the Dude as a lazy man, "in the running for laziest worldwide," but the Dude's not lazy. He may be unemployed and he may spend most of his time drunk and high, but he's not sitting around watching the tube. He's not perched in a wheelchair in Pasadena, hiding behind a desk and scheming to steal scholarship money like the Big Lebowski. No, the Dude is out in the world. He's fighting nihilists and known pornographers. He's helping rich broads conceive. He's bowling against pederasts named Jesus. He's getting his head cracked by reactionary cops. He's active. He's also a former activist, part of the Seattle Seven, one of the authors of the Port Huron Statement. The original Port Huron Statement, not the compromised second draft. Mostly, though, the Dude is someone whose failings in life mirror exactly the failings of the peace movement.

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Basically, everyone in the movie is able to manipulate the Dude because the Dude lacks the viciousness necessary to play the game that he's gotten involved in. Jackie Treehorn (the known pornographer) sends thugs after the Dude twice to beat him up. Maude Lebowski brings thugs to knock out the Dude and steal his rug. The police chief of Malibu hits the Dude in the head with a coffee cup. Even the nihilists attack the Dude with a marmot. And the Big Lebowski, though he does nothing to physically harm the Dude, is willing to let Bunny Lebowski die at the hand of kidnappers when the Dude does everything he can to keep her alive (the Dude may be incompetent about this, but at least his heart's in the right place). In the meantime, the Dude won't raise his hands in anger to anyone. He's the perfect representation of an anti-war protestor, because everyone is willing to take cheap shots at anti-war protestors: politicians mock them, the media attacks or ignores them, police swab mace in their eyes or attack them with riot gear, and the anti-war protestors lack the viciousness necessary to fight back. It's a sad fact of life, but it's easy to beat up a pacifist. He won't fight back. And even if you're completely wrong in beating up the pacifist, he still gets beaten up.

Also, while everyone else is fighting for large, greedy causes (too much money, oil pipelines, a global economy), the Dude and anti-war protestors are fighting for generally simple and just causes. Protestors just want the war to end. That's a pretty reasonable thing to ask. And the Dude, he's not greedy. All he ever wanted was his rug back.

Perhaps the saddest thing about the Dude and the anti-war protesters he represents, though, is that they both get so involved in losing the fight that they get a pretty clear idea about what's really going on in the fight. The Dude gets so wrapped up in the kidnapping that he's the only one who figures out that the Big Lebowski is actually exploiting the kidnapping to rip off poor little urban achievers. Out of everyone involved in the movie, only the Dude figures out what the Big Lebowski is really up to. And from a legal or public opinion standpoint, it doesn't matter at all that the Dude has figured out that the Big Lebowski stole a million dollars. Likewise, if you talk to an anti-war protestor, chances are that he can tell you about Dick Cheney's tie-in to Halliburton, Unocal's proposed pipeline through Afghanistan, the problems with the Northern Alliance, and so on. And from a legal or public opinion standpoint, it doesn't matter at all that he's gotten to the real reason that we're fighting a war. It's like the Big Lebowski says, "You have your story. I have mine." And it's funny because, even though the stereotypical angry white guy in a navy blue suit has been raping society for generations, the public always seems to believe his side of the story. Well, maybe it's not funny, but...

The saddest character of all, though, is John Goodman's character, Walter Sobchak. Sobchak is a Vietnam vet, and he wants everyone to know it. At the beginning of the movie, he echoes George Bush's Gulf War rhetoric almost exactly, saying things like, "We're talking about unchecked aggression, here," and "It's about drawing a line in the sand, across which you do not pass." There's even the scene where Sobchak pulls out a gun on another bowler because the bowler's foot slipped across the line in a league game. When the bowler refuses to surrender the frame, Sobchak pulls a gun out on

him and says, "This is not Nam. This is bowling. There are rules." It's an absurd act in a bowling alley, but when George Bush did essentially the same thing to Iraq, he garnered a ninety percent approval rating from the American public.

Sobchak isn't a sad character because he echoes Bush's rhetoric, though. He's a sad character because, throughout the movie, he comes across as a torn individual. During almost every scene, Sobchak is desperately searching to find some connection between his Vietnam war experience and the patterns of American society. When the Dude explains to Sobchak that Bunny Lebowski probably kidnapped herself, Sobchak says, "Those rich fucks... I didn't see my buddies die face down in the muck so that this strumpet..." The Dude stops him, telling him there's no connection between the kidnapping and Vietnam. But Sobchak's struggle continues. Later in the movie, when a waitress asks him to quiet down, he tells her, "I got buddies who died face down in the muck so that you and I could enjoy this family restaurant." And though the Dude doesn't stop him this time, again, it's clear that there's no connection. It's ridiculous, really, to think that a diner in Los Angeles wouldn't still exist if we had never fought the Vietnam War. And it's just further evidence of Sobchak's struggle.

It finally winds up when Sobchak is eulogizing his friend Donny and he digresses into a rant about Vietnam, which, again, has no connection to Donny. After the sadly hilarious scene of Sobchak scattering Donny's ashes all over the Dude, the Dude gets pissed and says to Sobchak, "What was all that shit about Vietnam? What the fuck does anything have to do with Vietnam?" And right there lies the crux of Sobchak's (and the American public's) internal battle: what the fuck does anything have to do with any war? Why do we never look back at a war and ask ourselves, how would our lives be different if we hadn't fought that war? Vietnam is a good war to look at to answer that question, because we supposedly lost that war. And our fear was that, if we Vietnam became a communist country, then all the countries around it would become communist. Pretty soon the whole world would be communist. Well, Vietnam is communist. You'll notice all the dominoes falling around it these days. You'll notice that communism is running rampant throughout the world, seeing as how it's the prevailing ideology in what, three countries now. So it's clear that the whole domino theory was a crock of shit. It was clear while we were fighting the war. Yet we were still able to use that theory to lead a CIA orchestrated contra war against the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. We lost that one, too, and no dominoes fell. So what did we fight Vietnam for? Cheap oil, rubber, and tin, and so that we could have a bunch of veterans come home dying from exposure to American chemical warfare. In retrospect, was that a good idea?

Anti-war protestors attacked the Gulf War claiming that the war was about nothing but oil. And they were right. The best evidence of this lies in the fact that Saddam Hussein is still in power, and he's not trying to take over the world, and he doesn't control the world's oil supply, and he's not sending armies over to the US to strip of us of our freedom, and the US never did anything after the Gulf War to help out the people of Kuwait once the people of Kuwait were no longer a valuable political pawn. So why did we fight the Gulf War? Cheap oil and so

that we could have a bunch of veterans come home dying from exposure to American chemical warfare. Was that a good idea?

Now we're in Afghanistan. It's pretty clear to anyone who looks closely at the war that we're really fighting there because China has recently been adopted by the World Trade Organization and they need oil. The best way to get them oil is by building an oil pipeline that goes from the Middle East to China. To get from the Middle East to China, you have to get through Afghanistan, and for some reason, Unocal couldn't make a deal with the government of Afghanistan. So we'll fight the war and, win or lose, we'll leave Afghanistan in a state of such economic disrepair that they'll allow the pipeline. Unocal, Enron, Halliburton, Dick Cheney, Phil Gramm, the Bushes, the bin Ladens and the Big Lebowski will all get rich from it. You, me, the American soldiers, the people of Afghanistan, the Dude, and Walter Sobchak will all get screwed. And as the narrator says at the end of *The Big Lebowski*, "I guess that's the way the whole darned comedy keeps perpetuating itself, down through the generations, westward the wagons, across the sands of time until... Oh look at me. I'm rambling again."

With that the ending credits roll, but I never feel like I'm finished with the movie. I guess that's where the obsession comes from. My mind always starts to replay scenes. I jump back to the Dude who – after it's all said and done and after he's lost pretty much everything – grabs a beer and heads back to bowl the next frame, to get ready for the semis. On his way back to his lane, he turns to the narrator, shrugs, and says, "The Dude abides." Sometimes, when I'm feeling cynical, I feel like the Dude abides in the sense that he does what he's told. He becomes a willing pawn in it all. Other times, I realize that the Dude is not a willing pawn. He's just a guy who's swept up in things larger than himself, and he abides by his own set of ethics, of right and wrong, and even though everything is bigger than him, he still fights, even if he's only fighting to be the Dude. And (Felizon's embarrassing picture of me notwithstanding), this is where I really see myself in the Dude. So often, I feel swept up in things that are larger than me. I watch the Supreme Court select a President whose lack of intelligence is rivaled only by his viciousness. I watch that President bomb the next poor country. I see the mass media remind me again and again that the bombings are carried out in my name. I see how futile it is to fight against it, but fight anyway and only end up losing. I try to ignore it all, to turn off my mind and watch my favorite movie, but there it all is, hidden between the lines, driving around LA in the Dude's Chevy Nova. In the end, though, at least I realize that, even if this is a pattern that keeps happening and will keep happening, I can recognize the pattern. I can do all I can to not be sucked into it, to not be a willing pawn. And if it all gets to be too much, fuck it, dude. Let's go bowling.

*\*\*ENDNOTE: I always recommend Clamor Magazine for a good dose of politics, but I especially recommend the Mar/April 2002 issue because it will have the latest installment of Felizon Vidaz's Shark Bait column (that she should've given to us, damn it).*

# THE BIG LEBOWSKI GUIDE TO MODERN WAREFARE\*

	The Big Lebowski	World War II	Vietnam	The Gulf War	War with Afghanistan
<b>1. Insurmountable problem</b>	Bunny owes money all over town.	World War I treaties threw the world into a global economic depression.	A country that had long been exploited for oil, tin, and rubber was now turning its back on its exploiters.	The US is dependent on oil that lies under the soil of an unfriendly Middle Eastern government.	Unocal wants to build an oil pipeline through Afghanistan, but can't come to terms with the Taliban.
<b>2. Single dramatic event (real or imagined)</b>	Bunny is kidnapped.	Pearl Harbor is bombed.	The Gulf of Tonkin incident.	Iraq invades Kuwait.	Two planes fly into the World Trade Center.
<b>3. Find an angle to exploit the event economically</b>	The Big Lebowski steals a million dollars from a scholarship fund.	The US government establishes a permanent wartime economy, stripping money from social programs and pouring excessive amounts of money into defense contracts, thereby widening the gap between the rich and the poor.	(see WW II)	(see WW II)	(see WW II)
<b>4. Pick a demon (real or imagined)</b>	The Nihilists	Fascism	Ho Chi Minh	Saddam Hussein	Osama bin Laden
<b>5. choose people who have nothing to gain by fighting a war to fight the war</b>	The Dude	The American working class, who just get fucked when they return home.	(see WW II) [remember Agent Orange]	(see WW II) [remember Gulf War Syndrome]	(see WW II)
<b>6. Smoke and mirrors (imagined)</b>	Tell everyone that the Dude has the million dollars.	Tell everyone that Japanese Americans are such a threat that they have to be stuck in concentration camps.	Tell everyone that anti-war protesters are causing the nation to lose the war.	Tell everyone that you "don't want another Vietnam" and by that, mean that you don't want anyone to have any dissenting opinion at all.	Tell everyone that you're "fighting terrorism."
<b>7. Continue to place blame while cashing your check (real)</b>	The Big Lebowski makes a million dollars.	Ford and General Motors become giant economic powers, despite the fact that they built the majority of Nazi tanks during the war.	After you "lose the war," send in American-based multi-national corporations to set up sweatshops.	Keep the demon in power to keep gas prices low.	Watch major corporations get a \$12 billion handout while thousands of working people lose their jobs.
<b>8. Get caught, shrug it off.</b>	You have your story, I have mine.	Yeah, we killed a quarter of a million people in Dresden in one day and dropped two atomic bombs, all after the war was already won. So what?	It's okay that we killed over two million people, left the countryside in ruins, and then started our economic exploitation of the country, because we "lost" the war.	Yeah, Saddam is still in power, and we're starving out the rest of the country while he lives in a palace. So what?	Watch Unocal build a pipeline and terrorism continue to thrive.

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*Why act that 20 is 50 and 30 is 80? What the fuck are we? Some new breed of quick-aging dogs?*

### THE THERAPY OF LONG, SATISFYING GRINDS

Thanks in large part to Mike Beer City and Donofthedeat, I got back into skating a little over a year and a half ago. Two consecutive broken ankles and a nasty concussion six years prior, I gave my skateboard away and thought I'd given it up forever. Donofthedeat wanted to toodle around with. Toodle is about the only skate move I've perfected. For years, I'd been talking over the phone to Mike, who owns a record and skate label, and he set me up with the perfect deck.

I'm no fat-panted trickster. Hell, I'm lucky to stay on my wide board with big wheels without cracking my skull. I dusted off and completed an entire pad set: wrist guards, helmet, the whole nine yards. Broken bones are no fun. I'm fully uncoordinated. I stick an arm of my glasses into an eyeball at least once a week when I put on my glasses. I slam into door jams of open doorways. By a good six inches. I trip up stairs. Even with a helmet on, I've taken falls in the last year that I walked away from bleeding from the head.

Then after six months of skating, something happened. I learned I was okay in abandoned, graffiti'd pools, public skate bowls, and schools that aren't a bust. (Say what you will about the lameness of public skateparks, I'm tired of getting arrested and ticketed for trespassing and willful destruction of public property.) The technical term for what I like to skate is transitions – smooth variances of horizontal to vertical. My wheels stay on the ground. I've learned carving frontside and backside and have been known to do the occasional grind, the occasional unintentional sack tap, and frontside disaster. I'm toying around with vert. I'm no pool monkey by any stretch, but I can hold my own. Most importantly, I'm having a bunch of cheap fun and getting away from the glowing lasso of the computer. As a residual effect, I'm actually getting back into shape and am

currently saying hello to some long forgotten muscles.

Recently, I was at a park in Las Vegas. It's a clover – four bowls all connected in the middle. It's pretty rad. Another good thing about bowls is that, for some reason, kids don't like them so much. I've got nothing against the kids, but it's nice to be in a crowded park and have a virtually empty bowl and an open session while the street part of the park is full of collisions. A misconception I've encountered is the one that most kid skaters are pricks. Sure, there are those whose fearlessness is only matched by their lack of respect, but most of them are pretty nice if you talk to them like human beings and not like turds. I almost always end up talking to some young ripper who's ten times better than me asking why my board is so thick or my wheels are so big. (My answers are always, "Dude, I'm a squirrely motherfucker. I need all the wood under my feet I can get. I can't ride popsicle sticks. Big wheels stick better.")

A twelve-year-old at the park was amazing. He could launch over a transition, fly ten feet, land on his tail, slap it silly, slide it for two more feet on the coping, and continue without breaking stride. To him, it was nothing. To me, it's something I'll never be able to do. I'm perfectly fine with that. He went on to ollie over 50-gallon trash cans like it was the most natural thing in the world for a twelve-year-old to do. One of the greatest things about skateboarding is that there are no coaches and no skate dads whacking referees unconscious. The kids can be competitive, but that's not the overriding sense of why they're snaking through concrete parks that look like the intestines of prehistoric beasts over and over again, day in and day out, all over the world. It's a real and true phenomenon that doesn't need sponsorship to exist. Just like punk rock. (More on that in a bit.)

When I was getting a drink of water, a dad walked up and talked to me. He wanted to know where his razor scooter riding 5-year-old kid could get skateboard lessons

and where a good place to get a board would be. I talked to him like an adult – I didn't swear as much. I made an effort to be nice and somewhat formal. I told him he should just buy the kid a board and have him ride it a bunch. The more I talked to the man, the more I realized that he and I were the same age. It was sorta strange. He was very tidy. Very suburban. Very respectful. He wore cologne. He asked me about the economy in Los Angeles. Maybe because I was doing my best to carve the bowl like a turkey (it was Thanksgiving) in tattered pants and shirt dirtied from mopping up the bottom of the bowl from falling a couple times, and that drops of sweat were falling on my grip tape as I talked to him, was why I felt younger – much younger – than he. Maybe it was because I don't have a kid. Maybe.

The older I get, the more I'm convinced that age has very little to do with the passage of time and more with how you approach the time you're given. You defeat it or you let it defeat you. Which side do you want to be on? Participating or watching?

### FUCK "LOGAN'S RUN" (1)

*"We'll carry the torch you fucking dropped. I'm getting old but that's no reason to stop."*

–Kid Dynamite (RIP)

*"Cokes and Snickers is all I need. Health sucks, health sucks."* –Jodie Foster's Army (JFA)

For some reason that's quite beyond me, there's an overriding sense in punk rock (and folks in general, but the terminology's a tad different) that being "old school" tends to start after hitting nineteen and the condition gets progressively worse from there. Hardened cynicism by 21, jaded by 23, and complete disenfranchisement by 25. I don't quite understand this. Why look forward to and relish the fact that you become an insufferable prick, or a hipster, or a cool piece of work, closed off to the world in an attempt to retain something that

happened in the past? Why affect a stance when there's living to be done? I can make some suppositions, and they sound really fucking dumb when I write them out, but here goes. Possible excuses: 1) "I'm so burned out because I listened to the same records over and over again and there have been no new good ones for the past ten years. Everything new sucks." 2) "I tried to change the world for a couple years and it shit down my throat. You can't change anything. What's really wrong, anyway? You're naive for trying." 3) Someone, somewhere said that being a thoughtless, avaricious prick was as cool as a leather jacket, and a whole subculture believed them, tattooed it on their hearts, and thousands followed suit.

To be sure, thankfully, there are many exceptions to the old, almost-dead, almost-certainly-an-asshole equation, but I just want to strangle people who have turned 30 and talk like they're one year away from cashing in on Social Security. As I write this, I'm 29. I, very slowly, heard my first dose of punk rock when I was thirteen. I lived in a town of 10,000. I had no idea – beyond the music on the tape – about punk rock. To me, it was as distant as Lithuania or Molly Ringwald's (2) panties. I taped JFA's *Blatant Localism 7* three times on one side of my brother's Pink Floyd cassette. On the other side was Black Flag's *Damaged*, two and a bit times. I listened to that tape over and over again. It's all I had, punk rock wise (it was also four years after the albums had been released, but I had no way of knowing). It was so much better than the *Pac Man Fever* LP I'd purchased months prior or Marty Robbins, who my dad fancied on the reel-to-reel. Good memories. I remember blasting my tape out in the garage, riding my hot pink Variflex skateboard back and forth, almost breaking my skull trying to hop over a piece of 2 by 4. Years later, I bought the original JFA 7" and Black Flag LP and I pop them in occasionally. It's still pretty fucking good music.

Here's where the waxing nostalgic ends. Dead bands are dead. They're finite. JFA's gone, along with thousands of great and not-so-great bands. Their trajectory has been mapped and charted and noticed, like the space shuttle that blew up. The notes have been put to magnetic tape. No matter how grandiose a literary load is shot in, say, Black Flag's face, remember this: Black Flag, and many influential bands like them, will never, ever record another piece of original music. All bands are small pieces to a huge puzzle that's very far from being finished. It'll never be finished. You may be, but don't let your ego mistake your being finished from the music being finished.

Also, don't take this as a slag on Black Flag (if you don't own *Damaged*, I still highly suggest that you tape it from a friend), but it's way too easy to have the past capture you, box you up, and suck you down into the ground. It's hard to hear new music when you're already buried, when your ears have already died. Like the Flag? Why not go pick up some Out Cold? Reagan SS? Crispus Attucks? Locust? DS 13? Guyana Punch Line? All fine, current melody beatings that hiss musical blood from Black Flag's severed veins, yet have leaked in their own sound and explored new and exciting possibilities.

So, I ask again. Why look at getting old as a bad thing? Why lament it? Why fear it? To be sure, I'm not looking forward to wearing adult diapers, shitting myself, forgetting my own name, driving slowly in the median of the road and hitting a bunch of landscape shrubs, and eating pureed corn dogs through a trachea tube, but that's a long way off. Why act that 20 is 50 and 30 is 80? What the fuck are we? Some new breed of quick-aging dogs? The more I've been in a truly do-it-yourself culture, after I mastered a modicum of social skills, I realized that I was very far from being alone. I'm not saying we're all making this huge chain, sticking the stems of daffodils in one another's asses and laughing all the way to the bank by hoodwinking the youth of today. You learn the schematics. You learn whom to listen to and whom not to. One of the coolest parts of being part of a real community that shifts and wanes is that you can make real long-term, like-minded friends.

You put calluses on your hands while carrying out your own theories on how you'd like your own, small universe to operate. It's a very real thing. Right now, you're holding part of my dream, vision, and hard work. I think it's a neat thing.

If you really have seen it all, and better, why stay around? Why not go do something new that tickles your soft and tenders instead of complaining from the sidelines or going to shows as frequently as the Pope and saying how the new generation's not only got it all wrong, but will never get it right? Being older, you should be smarter, wiser,

old" and not have it be a form of empowerment? I don't get it. At all. I know I've got a couple nuts and screws sheared in my head. (Seven concussions tend to add up.) Maybe I've got it all backwards. I loathed a lot of my youth. It was confusing. I got along, but I couldn't seem to control myself too well, had a tendency to punch and hate things before I understood them, was self-conscious and had long spates of self-loathing. In short, I was mixed-up but had a great family. I often couldn't separate enemies from friends, couldn't say the right things, had a hard time talking to people I didn't know. And

That's fantastic. Who wants to read first about a band in *Time* or *Entertainment Weekly*? Let them dictate those who are single-handedly retrieving and resuscitating punk rock from The Velvet Underground. It's a different world. They can have it. Let them rape themselves.

### LET'S PUT SALT IN THEIR WOUNDS AND MAKE 'EM SCREAM

*"Everyone likes to think that they're unique. This is my way of proving it. It will be a sorry day when we no longer do something for the hell of it."* -Art Arfons



*Mike Beer City, a guy who always keeps the words "skate" and "punk" close together, pulls a sweeper in 4Season's deep end.*

Photo by Jay "Weez" Neumann

be able to help out others a little better, have your shit wired a bit tighter.

Fuck "back in the day." History's fine. It's worth listening to, but if it doesn't enrich what you're doing now, become a mortician, because all you'll be doing is putting makeup on a corpse while the rest of the seekers enjoy a new form of music spawned from punk, but way too big and too new and too diverse to be given a name that will stick. To be sure, there were fantastic bands in the past - *arguably* the best bands that ever were - but if we don't challenge that, if we don't even try to come up with something new or relevant or our own, what's the point? Cynics dictate that we're all doomed to be musical Bob Rosses (3), remanufacturing automatic landscapes. Cynics can eat my ass.

What's the point of giving up so completely to an age before your life is less than half over? What's the power in saying that you're "so

maybe, just maybe, I'm not even close to being jaded because nine tenths of my heroes are writers and inventors. I read tons. Always have. Writers, generally, get better the older they get. It's one of the least youth-oriented markets around. Very few writers are worth a shit *before* forty. Inventors, I've always admired. By their very definition, they create something entirely new, something that had never existed before and could quite possibly change the world. How rad is that? Isn't that part of what punk's ideology is about? Changing the world. If even for a second. If even for a small group of people.

I don't want to sound cheesy like the greeter at Wal Mart, but I'm so very excited that we are where we are. Music, in general, is in a great, great place right now. Punk rock's got it all - 25 years of tradition, a solid following, a good cadre of reputable labels and stores, and is existing in an almost complete national media blackout.

records and tractor pulls, you directly benefited from the inventions he developed if you were in a car today. He's like the Ramones and Dillinger Four of jet-powered vehicles rolled into one.

First, a small dose of history on land the land speed record. The concept was born in Europe, a little over a hundred years ago. The French Automobile Club was formed in 1895. Three years later, one of its founders, Count de Chasseloup-Laubat, carved his name into history with the first ever run for the record. He drove his *electric-powered* car through the flying mile at an unheard of 39.24 miles an hour. His claim to the land speed record incensed Carmile Jenatzy, a Belgian inventor, who knew he could build an electric car much faster. His entry into the annals of speed was a bullet-shaped automobile named "Jamais Contente" - Never Satisfied. These two men battled for several years. In May 1899, Jenatzy

ReFodD

shattered Laubat's record and clocked an impressive 65.79 miles per hour. The speed record slowly crept up, using all means of propulsion from steam to gas to self-igniting rockets, to quite literally hooking a sidewinder missile to some wheels and doing some praying while holding onto a steering wheel. But I'm getting a little ahead of myself.

The year was 1952. Art Arfons was an Ohio farmer who, by happenstance, saw some drag racing and was instantly hooked. He worked at his family's feedmill. He was just a regular guy with an innate understanding of engines and mechanical substructures. I don't think he even finished high school, but he could fix a tractor like a surgeon and twist and weld metal as easily as a confectioner makes fudge. He was do-it-yourself personified. Mammothly resourceful. His first dragster wasn't that impressive. Actually, it had a tendency to blow up and only had two gears, but it was significant because it was slathered in green tractor paint and the crowd called it The Green Monster. The name stuck. All of Arfons' machines were monsters. They were wonderfully ugly, utilitarian machines. All thrust. Very little aerodynamics. They were built for one purpose – speed. Most every car Art made since then



*The birth of the modern safety cage. Arfons is the only human to survive a 600 mile-an-hour crash on land.*

– with a couple exceptions – were called Green Monster with a higher number. The second year into drag racing, in '53, making \$50 a week, building a house, and raising a family, Art built a second car from parts of airplanes, army tanks, and cars (he always had a huge junk yard). The car, Green Monster Two was powered by an Allison V-12 engine from a P-51 WWII fighter plane. Art's junk car clocked in at ten miles less than the then current world record. Arfons quickly became so good at making jet-powered drag racers that he set the top speed in three consecutive National

Hot Rod Association meets and whooped ass so soundly that the association outlawed aircraft engines forever. They realized that Art had made such a good car they couldn't beat it, so they banned it.

Undaunted, he set his sights on the land speed record. The only blueprints for the Green Monster were in Art Arfons' head. Arfons built the jet car in his own garage. His first speed attempt was in 1960 with a car named Anteater. It was Allison-powered, also, and had a respectable showing, but it fell far short of the land speed record of the time. Art's plan was simple. Get a

more powerful engine. So, as simply as I go to Goodwill to find a good pair of pants, Art went on a quest. Every junk yard he went to he'd tell them if they ever got a J-79 engine (4), in any condition, to give him a call, and he'd leave his business card. He knew the J-79 was still classified, but he also knew that sometimes a person could luck into an engine they're not supposed to have because the military was junking them without knowing it. He got a call from a Floridian scrap-only yard. The proprietor had a damaged J-79, taken out of commission for foreign object damage. Something – most likely a bird – had run through the engine. The junk guy wasn't too sure how he got the engine. He'd bid on a binful of stuff and it was in the middle of it. Arfons paid the man \$600 in cash and took it home.

With a brass sack, Arfons next called General Electric, who made the engine, and requested a repair manual. GE was incredulous. First off, they told him he didn't have the engine. He did. He convinced them. Then they threatened him and told him he couldn't have the engine. Arfons didn't budge. Two days later, an airforce colonel from Washington showed up, saw that Arfons wasn't bluffing, did indeed have the engine, and said, "That's a classified engine and you can't

legally own it.” As with any purchase under dispute, Arfons showed the man his receipt. The colonel stomped out. For reasons unknown, but very fortuitous, it was the last visit Arfons had from the military. He went to work on the engine, almost by complete intuition and without an instruction manual, stripped it, fixed it, and reassembled it.

By no means a wealthy man, Art had no logical reason to spend all of that time and money. It was his calling. He hung the engine up in his shop and proceeded to build yet another Green Monster chassis around it. It took a year to build and approximately 5,000 man hours (there’s no timecard to punch when you hire yourself). He worked seven days a week on it. To make a chassis to withstand such incredible amounts of heat and stress, you can imagine that the parts needed for The Green Monster weren’t about to be picked up at Pep Boys. He would have to make his own. Arfons, after looking at an intricate metal-forming machine that sold for \$10,000, and getting his hands on the blueprints of the machine, built one himself for \$36. It performed the identical tasks. Money may buy almost anything, but creativity and skill can most often make dreams cost-effective.

Just to give you an idea of how powerful the engine was after it was fixed, Arfons would have to chain the Green Monster down between two trees when he turned her on with full afterburner. The engine shrieked, windows rattled. The first time he fired the engine, there were initially a whole bunch of spectators standing around. It ran very fast up to idle. Everybody started running. They ran across the road and up the hill. They thought it was going to explode. Arfons knew better. He stood still, stared at his siren and his calling, and soaked in her sights, sounds, and smells. Just from the sound of the rocket firing, from the color of its flame, from her vibrations, he knew he had an honest-to-goodness chance at the land speed record. And, at the time, the Green Monster hadn’t rolled a foot by its own power.

After seeing the insane amount of thrust firsthand, Arfons verified that he’d guessed all along. Traditional automotive wheel brakes would melt if engaged at full speed. He needed to find another way to slow the car down until brakes could be used. Almost simultaneously, the government spent \$1,000 at the time to build, test, and develop an ejection system capable of parachuting astronauts safely back to earth. Arfons, faced with the exact same eventuality, except for cars, paid \$3 for a

sawed-off gun which he fired to eject his chutes. In doing so, he became the father and developer of the braking parachute for rocket-propelled cars that’s used to this day. It performed exactly like the government’s.

Art was many things, but he



*Art Arfon's plan was simple. Get a more powerful engine. So, as simply as I go to Goodwill to find a good pair of pants, Art and his Green Monster went on a quest for the land speed record.*

wasn’t a guy with a death wish. He knew what he was doing was inherently dangerous (no shit), but he went out of his way to make his rides as safe as possible. He made huge developments in the advancements of crush zones and roll cages in cars. Testament to this, he is only man to have survived a 600 mile-an-hour crash on land. He told the emergency crew if he were to crash to look for a capsule of steel tubes, which was the driver’s compartment and made to break away from the engine. When the crew got to the crash site, “Humpy” Wheeler went straight to the mass of tubes, looked inside, saw, and removed Art. Arfons was put in a plane, tended by doctors in flight, and they found that he miraculously suffered no broken bones, just facial cuts, abrasions, and a mild concussion. Arfons was incredibly lucky, too. His helmet had delaminated – many of the layers of its fiberglass construction had separated – exposing his head, and yet he was fine. He left the hospital the next day no worse for wear.

With the J-79 engine fully harnessed and most of the structural bugs ironed out, Art Arfons set three land speed records between 1964-1965, of 434, 536, and 576 miles per hour in his \$10,000, brutish, crude-looking car. (To put this in perspective, Indy 500 race-

cars go scarcely two hundred miles an hour.) His two biggest competitors at the time were Craig Breedlove and Donald Campbell. It cost more than \$4 million to build Donald Campbell’s Bluebird and \$250,000 for Breedlove’s Sprit of America. Breedlove finally beat

three years by hooking up a single turbine *helicopter* engine to a tractor. The man’s a visionary.

Here’s an inventor, who one year before collecting Social Security, crashed a car at 350 miles an hour, was bummed that his car was annihilated – yet planned his next one, and punks at 30 are complaining like Geritol-popping convalescents, acting like the world’s worth is redeemed *solely* by collecting old records. Don’t you see something wrong with that? Here’s a guy that did it on his own. He broke barriers. He smashed stereotypes. He didn’t have a template to follow. He didn’t have the support of zines, of the radio, of the corporate media. He didn’t have a lot of outside sponsorship. And he full-on took the unforgiving world on his terms.

Let’s take this full circle for a second. If you feel passionate for something – and that passion is real, it shouldn’t prematurely age you. It should keep you young, even if your body’s feeling old and crooked. If it’s not skateboarding, if it’s not loud and searing music, if it’s not hooking a helicopter engine into a tractor and towing something through the mud at high speeds, or going supersonic on wheels, it’s up to you to find it, keep it, and make it feel like you’re alive for a long, long time.

For Art Arfons, it was just him and his fucking cars. Just like it is for us. It is our fucking music. Our noise. Our fun. Our calling.

**-ReTodd**

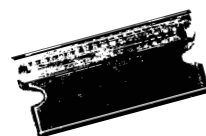
**Endnotes:**

1. “Logan’s Run” was both a TV show and a movie, and the premise was that when you hit a certain age – 30, I think – you got killed by the community.
  2. Molly Ringwald was my teenage fantasy. Slightly off-kilter. She hasn’t aged that well, but when I was 13, yeowch. None hotter.
  3. Bob Ross is an afro’d, linseed oil-huffing white guy that paints landscapes by pure technique. He whispers to his canvasses and sells hundreds of thousands of painting kits and millions of dollars of painting supplies yearly.
  4. The J-79 is a very successful engine design. It’s been used in the F-104 Starfighter, the B-58 Hustler, the F-4 Phantom, and A-5 military planes. Although they were first made in 1956, they’re still currently being manufactured at a cost of \$145,000. In full burner, the engine consumes approximately 10 gallons of JP4 aviation fuel per second. During this time it inhales enough air to fill a 10,000 square foot building.
- Most of the information culled about Art Arfons was from the book, *Man Against the Salt*, written by Harvey Shapiro. It’s a fair book. Lots of good info, but extremely redundant and should be way less than 471 pps. that it is. Published by Minerva Press, 1997.



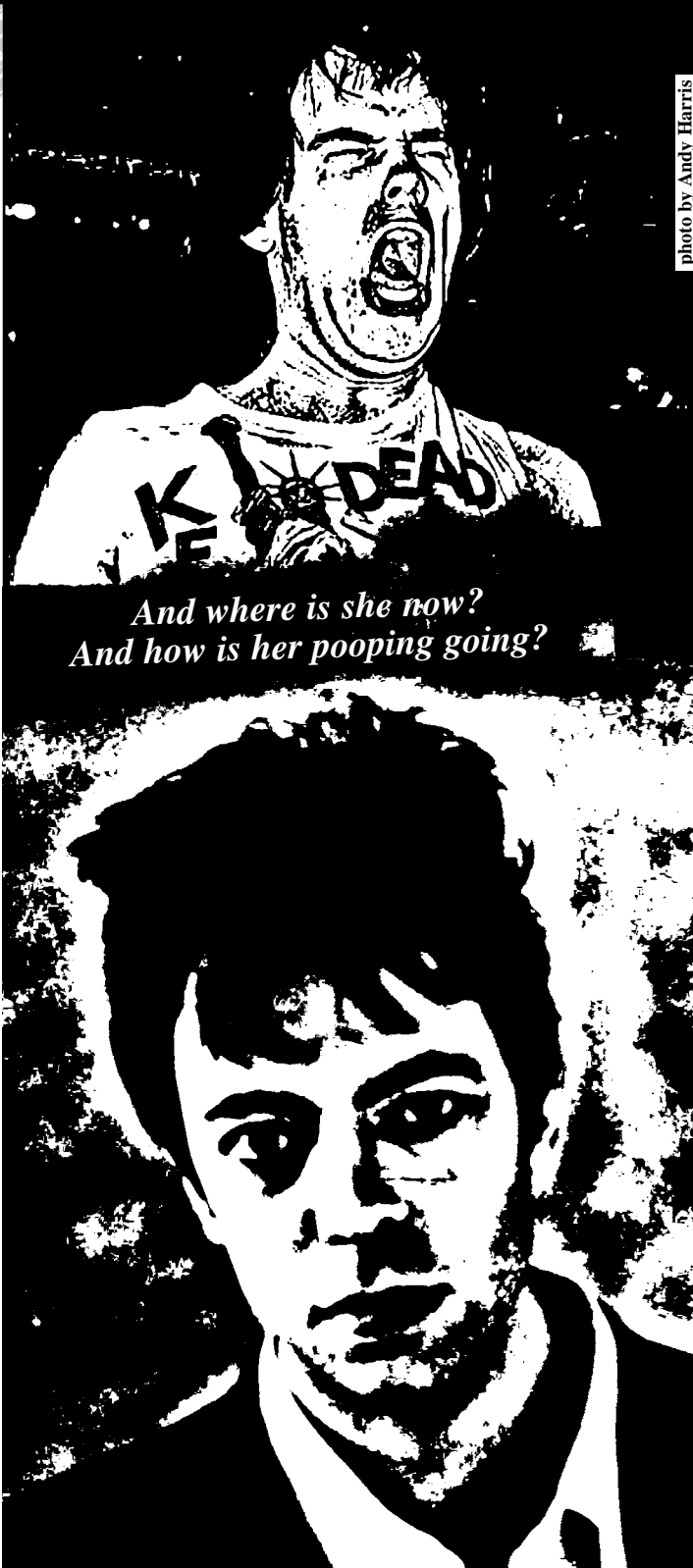
**Nardwuar**

# Who Are You?



Nardwuar the Human Serviette  
vs.  
*Ian McCulloch of  
Echo and the Bunnymen  
with a Little Help from Courtney  
Love.*  
**Part One!**  
(Part Two next issue.)

**Nardwuar:** Who are you?  
**Ian McCulloch:** [Deep breath] Ummmm...  
**Nardwuar:** You are the supermellow man!  
**Ian:** I'm supermellow? Well, I'm not really... Well, I AM in the super mellow thing, but the Supermellow man's Will Seargent's title and it's only the second time I've let him use one of his working titles because sometimes he'll have a working title for the song, but definitely that person in that song is me.  
**Nardwuar:** You're the King of Kings! Ian McCulloch!  
**Ian:** Uh, yeah... that's it...  
**Nardwuar:** Echo and the Bunnymen!  
**Ian:** Yes...  
**Nardwuar:** Now, Ian: Echo and the Bunnymen. The first band from Mars? The first band from Mars?  
**Ian:** Well, the second after the Spiders, but maybe the BEST band from Mars.  
**Nardwuar:** Do you still have voices in your head, Ian?  
**Ian:** Yep.  
**Nardwuar:** What have you been hearing?  
**Ian:** "Don't do it."  
**Nardwuar:** And Ian, total broken bone count for you?  
**Ian:** Total broken bone count? Hmm... None.  
**Nardwuar:** NONE?!?  
**Ian:** No. [semi-chuckling]  
**Nardwuar:** You've been totally safe all these years.  
**Ian:** Well...  
**Nardwuar:** Touch wood, touch wood.  
**Ian:** Well, I should've broken me leg. I ended up falling off stage in Santa Barbara and this was the night before we had two shows in Berkeley, no, it was Oakland University and it was on the tour where us and New Order co-headlined. I ended up falling off the



*And where is she now?  
And how is her pooping going?*

photo by Andy Harris

on a smaller stage than we were used to when it was a Bunnymen gig and I fell off the stage backwards 'cause I'd forgotten for the moment where I was and I assumed... well, I used to do this backwards gun thing during the song "Bed Bugs and Ballyhoo" and I fell down a shaft because we put big basebins in the orchestra pit so it meant that the gap – and this was probably a good thing – that the gap was only three feet wide. Went down there with me guitar, strapped to me back like Elvis and I just collapsed. It was quite a drop, like twelve feet or something. And I was lying there at the bottom, but me leg – me right leg seemed to have gone down separately from the rest of me body. It was almost like doing the splits down a wall, you know. And then a couple of the roadies pulled me up, phoenix-like, on one leg as I came out, carried me on the set and came offstage where my leg was twice as wide as my left one. I was in agony for days. A doctor in San Francisco prescribed the wrong treatment. He said deep heat. When I got back to England the doctor told me the opposite. He told me I should've had cold; icepacks and straight to the hospital. And what had happened was a pint of blood had clotted in my leg when we got to the hospital.  
Well, lucky it was the end of the tour because I could've ended up losing a leg or dying or something because the clot was that big. It would've moved at some point. But I got on to Liverpool, and I was in agony, and me wife was giving me absolutely no sympathy. She said, "Well, if you could do the other two gigs you must be all right." I couldn't move! I couldn't get out of bed, really, 'cause it was hurting that much! I went to the hospital, and he looked at it and said "Jesus Christ, you've gotta go straight in and get this removed 'cause you've got a pint of blood clotted in your leg and it's really serious!" So the following morning, I had it done. I've still got the scar. It's a great scar, down the side of me calf. But in the Oakland gigs, I'm hobbling around. I'd just been on stage. I'd still be grooving, but then coming off, I'd just be in total agony and limping around to the

**Nardwuar the Human Serviette**

dressing room. And in the dressing room, Courtney Love is in there sitting on the floor with Pete the drummer and Jake, who was kinda a roadie/keyboard player. And they're laughing! And I assume, because I was a bit paranoid in those days, that they're laughing at me. And they probably were, who knows, but I could've at least seen the funny side if I hadn't have been so... I was just pissed off so I said, "Ahh you, get out of my fucking dressing room!" [laughs] And she was shocked, you know, so she probably wasn't laughing at anything other than a joke they told. But that kind of started a few years of kind of non-talking. I know I upset her and I've apologized since. At that point, I knew I was going to split the band up at the end of the tour... I was just a bit paranoid, you know.

**Nardwuar:** What year was that Ian?

**Ian:** It was '87.

**Nardwuar:** '87?

**Ian:** Yeah, the back end of 1987.

**Nardwuar:** And Courtney Love was hanging around back then, then?

**Ian:** Yeah.

**Nardwuar:** Wow! That's pretty old skool! Well, I guess she'd been to England earlier and actually...

**Ian:** Well, actually, she came to Liverpool when she was fifteen, so very early on around there, you know, '81, '82. She was into Echo and the Bunnymen I think since, *Crocodiles*. It was 1980.

**Nardwuar:** And coming up shortly Ian, we're going to have some questions from Courtney Love for you that I can ask via me, Nardwuar the Human Serviette, but a couple more quick things here. Just wondering, Ian, have you seen Morrissey around at all? Has he been to any of your gigs? What's going on with Morrissey?

**Ian:** Nothing I know of. I'm sure I would have spotted that chin [laughs] if he was down in the front row, but no. I mean, we only have bumped into each other once to do an interview in England. He's was really nice, Morrissey. But I don't know where he lives now. Is he in LA or is he in London?

**Nardwuar:** I think he is in LA. Haven't you actually been to his house, Ian McCulloch of Echo and the Bunnymen?

**Ian:** Hehe. [laughs] Yeah, we dropped him off, me and Lorraine (Ian's wife). Well, Lorraine dropped him off because she was the driver, but we did an interview together in Liverpool and he pronounced chasm "CH-asm," which I've never ever told journalist or anything. I was just amazed that he mis-pronounced chasm when he was described in the interview as

the well read erudite kind of, you know, "booksmith." And I was described actually in the same interview as a bit of a "blaggard" [laughs]. I thought that was ironic.

**Nardwuar:** Have you ever been to his house for dinner before, though?

**Ian:** Oh no, no. We had dinner in Liverpool in the hotel. But we just dropped him off. It was his mum's house in Manchester in '82. No, '83. It was earlier on before they went big. Johnny Marr on the other hand, I did a lot of writing with.

**Nardwuar:** Ian McCulloch, when you see Vancouver listed on the tour sheet what do you think of? Like when you think of Vancouver, BC, where I'm from, what do you think of?

**Ian:** In the past, the first time we ever went there I remember, it was when we played the Commodore Ballroom years and years ago in the early eighties. I remember we had a night off on the first night, so me and the tour manager and few other of the night owls prowled the streets looking for, you know, dens of iniquity and stuff. And all I remember hearing in the main part of the center was a woman screaming or women screaming in far off, darkened alleyways. I thought, what the bloody hell is going on here? It sounded more scary than New York ever was, and I remember thinking there seemed to be real proper loonies on the street, which I dug. It was kind of like Liverpool on a Saturday night, you know.

**Nardwuar:** I understand that when you were here the last time, just recently, you experienced some Vancouver weirdos when you were at the Sugar Refinery.

**Ian:** Ahh, the Sugar Refinery... what was the Sugar Refinery?

**Nardwuar:** It's like a little cool kind of coffee shop on Granville Street, and I understand that you were there and a member of a Vancouver local band came up to you and serenaded you on the piano.

**Ian:** Yeah. Who told you all this? Did you find it on the website?

**Nardwuar:** A friend of mine, Sarah Kehayas. She's a writer for *Chart Magazine*. She was hanging out with you that night. She was the girl wearing the Velvet Underground t-shirt.

**Ian:** Is she the one that noted that I had great skin?

**Nardwuar:** Yes. And you said that she should watch out for using skin products, that they're very dangerous.

**Ian:** I just use soap and water. These people who sell to women all around the world all these... your skin is whatever it is. I'm sure some things help slightly, but I've never had a problem with soap and water.

Cold water and soap. I remember Paul Newman saying he used to wash his face in buckets of cold water with ice in and that's how he kind of still looks great. I mean, he still looks all right for someone who's like, seventy or so. But that was it, really. It's nice when someone says you have good skin.

**Nardwuar:** You were mentioning that Liverpool was pretty crazy or is pretty crazy. And how about Vancouver, with Blair there. I think he was from the band, ahem, Numb, serenading you on the piano. Does that happen often? Like, you'll go into a place and someone will start playing on the piano and singing to you, intentionally?

**Ian:** In certain places, yeah. If there's a piano there, yeah they'll be someone on it. But it was just a bit annoying the way he was doing it. If he had sang a beautiful song... But it was embarrassing, you know. I think he was singing, "Ian McCulloch, smack him in the bull-lock." But I think me lasting memory of Vancouver now would be; I flew in from San Francisco the day of the gig. I was just flying in, and I happened to have a window seat and seeing all the timber rolling down the river and what a great looking town it was. When I was a kid, I used to love anything that showed Canada. You know, I could always tell the difference between an American program and a Canadian, and I'd go, "This is Canadian" and I waited 'til the end and then it'd say, "Made in Canada TV" or whatever. I remember when I was about seven, eight, or nine thinking that one day I'd have a log cabin in Canada, you know, somewhere in the snow. There's something about the Canadian twang as well, you know. I'm wise to three of greatest singer/songwriters: Leonard Cohen, Neil Young, and Joni Mitchell. And Ron Sexsmith I love as well. You know there's this lilt to the way Canadians speak and the way they write songs that's more special somehow than a lot of similar style American stuff.

**Nardwuar:** Well, Ian McCulloch of Echo and the Bunnymen, do you keep up with any Vancouver soccer history? Like Peter Beardsley! He played with the Vancouver Whitecaps in the NASL.

**Ian:** Yeah, I remember that! Maybe that should be my team then over there. Do they play in an American league or...

**Nardwuar:** It was a Canadian-American league. It was like the league that had like Pele, and Alan Ball and all those people. And we also had Bruce Grobelaar. He was the goalie for the Whitecaps! Bruce Grobelaar, eh?

**Ian:** Oh, of course! You've remind-

ed me, they've got to be my American League team. Is it still going, the league?

**Nardwuar:** No, it is not. But the Vancouver team has been renamed the Whitecaps but they still have the name "Whitecaps" going on. And believe it or not, Peter Beardsley just returned a few weeks ago to play a game, 'cause he wanted to come back to Vancouver to play one game, so he came back to play an exhibition game. Peter Beardsley was still rockin' all these years later!

**Ian:** Yeah, he's only really just stopped playing in proper teams over here. He's one of them. He just loves playing and keeps himself fit. And he was a great player, Peter Beardsley. One of the best. The Whitecaps, they are my second team!

**Nardwuar:** We also had Kevin Hector. Do you remember Kevin Hector at all? We had Kevin Hector and Rudi Krol. Remember that guy from Europe? It was one hell of a team! So, Ian of Echo and the Bunnymen, you and John Peel, you guys love Liverpool FC don't you? John Peel loves Liverpool FC doesn't he?

**Ian:** Yeah. He doesn't go to the matches as often as he'd like 'cause I think he finds it hard to kind of get off with working. But also I think he's so shy. He doesn't realize that he can actually get tickets for nothing. I've got a season ticket which I pay for every June or July - the money goes off - and it makes me feel good that I've got my own piece of Anfield.

**Nardwuar:** How much do you support the team? Do you like drink Carlsberg because they sponsor Liverpool and...

**Ian:** Naah, I don't drink lager really. I'm more of a bitter man. I have drunk Carlsberg many times, but I'm not that stupid. Yeah, I love them. I travel when I can. I try to get tours fitted around when we've got more home games, but every season I'll miss five or six home games, which is a drag, but I try to get to the main ones.

**Nardwuar:** Do you think Robbie Fowler will last the season?

**Ian:** Good question. Yeah.

**Nardwuar:** He's pretty wild isn't he, wearing those nasal strips on his nose?

**Ian:** [laughs] Yeah. It is a bit strange isn't it. He seems to have done away with it. I know why most people do wear the nasal strips. I mean, it certainly wouldn't be to necessarily breathe easier.

**Nardwuar:** Well, Ian McCulloch of Echo and the Bunnymen, now its time to "get jiggy here" with Courtney Love...

**Ian:** [laughs]

**Nardwuar:** As I mentioned earlier, I have a whole bunch of questions here to ask you directly from Courtney Love. So I'll be, like, the messenger here.

**Ian:** Okey doke.

**Nardwuar:** But just to preamble this whole thing, and you kind of mentioned it a little while back there, when you first met Courtney, you said when she was like, fifteen or sixteen?

**Ian:** "When did she first meet me?" I think the question should be. It might have been before she came to Liverpool in New York. I know she came to some of our New York gigs in, possibly, 1981. If not, it probably was in Liverpool, but it might have been one of them... is this a question from her?

**Nardwuar:** No, this is just some preamble here.

**Ian:** Ah yeah, the old preamble there. I don't know. I'd like to ask her. She has probably got more of a vivid recollection. I mean, I was in a daze. As it says in the song, "I've been in a daze for days."

**Nardwuar:** Did she ever steal your clothes? Because that's how I first became aware of the Courtney-Ian McCulloch connection. Because I saw some mention that she once stole your clothes. Do you ever remember anything like that?

**Ian:** It's quite possible. I don't know what it would have been, but I know I've got a coat missing from the wardrobe. I think she might have stole a look rather than actual clothes. But if she did steal them, good luck to her, that's fine, I don't mind.

**Nardwuar:** So when was the last time you saw Courtney Love or talked to her, because there was some mention that you were going to collaborate with her on a solo LP, Ian?

**Ian:** Yeah, well, I'd still like that to happen. I have a song that I'd love her to sing on. I think it's down both of our strasses. It's a bit of a rocker. It's a great tune. It's called "Really Really Want You." It's kind of like "Sweet Jane" revisited, and I'd love her to sing on it. I was thinking about Courtney, oh, last week thinking, it'd be great to get in touch with her and me to ask her directly, or possibly via a messenger.

**Nardwuar:** Such as me, Nardwuar the Human Serviette.

**Ian:** Hehehehhe. [Laughs]

**Nardwuar:** Okay, Ian let's get right into this. Questions for Ian McCulloch of Echo and the Bunnymen from Courtney Love. First question from Courtney Love to you, Ian. Courtney says, "Tell Ian, that to people who matter, he is the most important rock star ever."

**Ian:** Brilliant. That's lovely to hear.

**Nardwuar:** I was really pleased

when she thanked the band on her last album. What can I say? That's not even a question to be answered. I think it's - I kind of agree, but it's sounds so much nicer, yes, it's so much nicer coming from Courtney. That means a lot.

**Nardwuar:** And Ian McCulloch of Echo and the Bunnymen, number two question or statement from Courtney says, "Tell Ian that I was with U2 in New York City and that Bono said 'Ian was always better than me. We just had better management.'"

**Ian:** Hahaha... [laughs] Yeah, that's exactly what I've been telling people. That is fantastic! I don't believe this! Can't these people tell the world? That's lovely again from him. After all the things I've said about him, what a gentleman! I'd love to have a drink with Bono. If I could get him to shut up for five minutes, he might learn something. What a dude to say that. I mean he will still embarrass me from time to time, but he's got a really good band I think, you know, and again hats off to him. Or cowboy hats off to him.

**Nardwuar:** It's interesting that Bono said that because one of the questions I had for you was why was U2 more successful than Echo and the Bunnymen and I guess that kind of answers it right there! Better management!

**Ian:** Totally. Because this came up recently. And probably a much better record company, to be quite fair. We did everything right. We were the coolest group on the planet. But Bill Drummond, I mean he was a cool maverick manager, but at some point he should have said, early on, "We're going to get a manager because I don't know what I'm doing." And you know that's why we went to Iceland because we were maverick, you know. And it was just, kind of, we didn't realize what was going on. Paul McGinnis, from day one, he obviously saw U2 and thought poor rock band, but these guys can be massive. Bill Drummond saw us, thought we were the best group he had ever seen, or that there had ever been, and thought we could be massive, but if we aren't, who gives a fuck? [Laughs] That's been the nature of it, ever since. I kind of like it 'cause at the end of the day we don't have as many millions as U2's got, but I don't know whether I'll ever use them. All I know is that I'd be still going to the football on a Saturday, still liking pubs to drink in.

**Nardwuar:** Liverpool number one, Vancouver Whitecaps number two!

**Ian:** Hehehehhe. [Laughs]

**Ian:** So, Ian McCulloch of Echo and the Bunnymen, Courtney also says, "Ask him if he ever noticed

me."

**Ian:** Of course! [Laughs] She became through sheer noticeability one of the most famous, not only women, yeah, women, because I think it's important that there are famous women and not just famous men or famous men's women. Tell Courtney she's one of the few that have mattered as well because she's a southern icon.

**Nardwuar:** When did you first find out that she was in a band? Like after you hung out with her in the early eighties? When did you first find out that she was in a band and stuff that was really starting to happen?

**Ian:** It was when I heard the first single off *Live Through This*. I was like, "bloody hell!" I just didn't expect it to be that good. I kind of felt proud, you know, because even though we hadn't spoken since the day in Oakland, I felt like she always kind of cited us, or made us her main influence. Can I just check who's calling? Hold on a sec?

**Nardwuar:** Sure, no problem, Ian. And we're speaking to Ian McCulloch of Echo and the Bunnymen, and I Nardwuar the Human Serviette, am going to...

**Ian:** Hello?

**Nardwuar:** Hello! You're still there!

**Ian:** It was some idiot trying to send a fax. Um, yeah, so I kind of felt proud that I was part of that in some way. I was kind of, not responsible, but influential in what she chose to do. To answer the other question that never got answered, 'cause I was so overwhelmed by what was said, I last saw Courtney at the one of the KROQ Weenie Roasts.

**Nardwuar:** The Weenie Roast, That's hilarious! Using that as a benchmark!

**Ian:** Yeah, it's a mad name for it. You know it's like , you had Woodstock...

**Nardwuar:** You have Woodstock, you have the Reading Festival, you have T in the Park, you have Lollapalooza and you have the Weenie Roast. It's like so low down there on the names. Although Kiss got back together at one of the Weenie Roasts!

**Ian:** Really? I mean, I thought it was great. Blur pulled a fast one on us 'cause they were meant to go on before us. It was Blur, then us, then Oasis. I think. And Blur phoned the festival, "Oh the van's been hijacked in Los Angeles with all the equipment and we'll have to go later." And I thought, wow, what a great scam. We should have done the same and gone on after Oasis. And, miraculously, the Blur van turned up as soon as we'd finished. And it was obviously because, in

Britain, they were much bigger and also it would have looked, because of the Oasis-Blur rivalry, if they were two below Oasis, it would have looked really bad. It didn't matter to us because we blew them all off anyways. But I thought it was funny, these whipper snappers that pulled a fast one on us. But that was a great day, just walking in and seeing Courtney standing there and I was like, "All right, Courtney, nice one." And she was surrounded by people, as was I, but by probably less people. I think on the last few tours our paths haven't crossed for some reason. Obviously, I want her to sing on one of these great songs I've got. Or maybe even write one with her if she's up for it.

**Nardwuar:** Ian of Echo and the Bunnymen, Lorraine is your wife, and there's a question here from Courtney Love, to you Ian, that says, "Ask Ian if he remembers walking down the mall street by the Café Tabac and me and my friend Robin following him and Lorraine for eight blocks."

**Ian:** Hahaha. [laughs] Yeah, but luckily our blocks in Liverpool are a lot smaller than the ones in America! It was fine. I'm sure I would remember two obvious American girls - by obvious I don't mean obviously American girls walking down, you know... I'd felt flattered, but a little bit shy as well, and nervous, just more about wondering whether me hair looked okay or I had the right coat on, you know.

**Nardwuar:** Ian of Echo and the Bunnymen, who is Dorian?

**Ian:** Is this a question from Courtney?

**Nardwuar:** This is kind of a clarification thing for people to understand what's going on because Courtney's question says, "Tell Ian I thought Dorian was a lame-ass groupie and I, Courtney Love, was there to learn!"

**Ian:** Hahahaha. [laughs] Fantastic! Yeah, I mean, she learned very well. Dorian. There's only one Dorian and that's Dorian Gray, who is me. I don't know anything to do with that, but your dog, Julian Cope, I know Courtney gets on all right with Julian... Unless this was still part of your learning process, Courtney. What the hell were you doing hanging around with the Teardrop Explodes anyway?

**Nardwuar:** Ba-boom! Here's a question I have for you Ian. Who is Balfe? Who is Balfe?

**Ian:** Who is Balfe? David Balfe. He co-produced with Bill Drummond, our manager. He was part of our bad management team, but Balfe was the one who, if it had've been just him and hadn't been so annoying... I mean, I actually liked Balfe. But, everyone else,

he ended up playing keyboards in the Teardrop Explodes, but they hated him. And Will didn't like... he didn't mind him but he didn't like his interference. But Balfe was the one who first said to us you should go – all the bands should go – live in New York or Los Angeles and you'll be absolutely huge. He said there's a vibe already. He knew from day one. As soon as we recorded *Crocodiles*, he said go and live in America and just tour the arse out of it and you'll be the biggest group on the planet – and we said "No." [Laughs] We're going to live in Liverpool, which is where we live, and then we'll go and tour America when we tour. But he had a point – our growth in America, it was kind of every tour just went bigger and bigger, but U2 were doing three times longer tours and getting three times bigger every time they went there. America, in those days, was wide open particularly for groups like us. But yeah, Balfe, I don't know how Courtney got on with Balfe. I actually didn't mind him.

**Nardwuar:** Because here's a question for you, Ian McCulloch of Echo and the Bunnymen from Courtney Love that I, Nardwuar the Human Serviette, am relating to you, this is the question to Ian: Courtney says, "Remind Ian of the night he told me and Balfe that The Birthday Party and The Fall were playing at the Hammersmith. He was eating fries in a little place in Soho I liked, and me and Balfe went to the Hammersmith and there was no one playing. Hahaha!"

**Ian:** Hahaha! [laughs] I even don't remember that one, but it sounds like me, yeah.

**Nardwuar:** Very devious there, Ian.

**Ian:** Yeah.

**Nardwuar:** Now moving on here, I have a question for you again, who is Paul Simpson? Because the name Paul Simpson is coming up here.

**Ian:** Oh, he's one of me oldest mates. He was actually in the original Teardrop Explodes, playing one-finger keyboards, then Balfe replaced him. But he's still one of me mates. He's great and he lives... when Courtney lived in Liverpool, it was either above his flat or below his flat. And he remembers it fondly I think, even though he said they were mad times. It was Julian on the bottom flat, I think, and then it was either Paul or Courtney and Robin and then it was Paul possibly on the top flat on a road called Devonshire Road. I passed it quite often, you know, every week. Today as I go into town, it's on the left, and I always remember those heady days.

**Nardwuar:** Because Ian of Echo and the Bunnymen, Courtney says

"Ask Ian about that guy Paul Simpson. Tell him that guy was pretty mean to me."

**Ian:** Hahaha. [laughs] Does she say what he did?

**Nardwuar:** No!

**Ian:** No? Well, tell Courtney I'll have a word with Paul. I know he know he remembers Courtney fondly now. We were all so much younger and so much madder then. There were things running around our heads. We didn't know, you know, why they were there, you know. It's like, you know, the voices in me head. They're still there, but now I can keep them at bay. We probably all had the same voices, you know.

**Nardwuar:** It's amazing, Ian

poops anyway? Us greatest stars that have ever lived don't need to do that kind of crap.

**Nardwuar:** I thought that was pretty weird though. "Tell Ian I was once in Julian's weird storage room." Julian's weird storage room? He had a weird storage room? What was that?!

**Ian:** Hahahaha! [laughs] I don't know. He cultivated his weirdness, whether it was storage rooms... Instead of having a weird attic, he'd call it his weird storage room because Julian tried to be weird, and he never was, I don't think. Tell Courtney that I never believed for a minute that he was weird.

**Nardwuar:** Who was his first wife?



*It's nice when someone says you have good skin.*

McCulloch of Echo and the Bunnymen, what Courtney remembers.

**Ian:** I know! Her memory's unbelievable. Me sending them off to a non-existent gig!

**Nardwuar:** Here's a crazy one coming up! Now it's a question about Julian, so I would guess it's Julian Cope.

**Ian:** Yeah.

**Nardwuar:** And the question to Ian McCulloch of Echo and the Bunnymen from Courtney Love via me, Nardwuar the Human Serviette, here it is: Courtney says, "Tell Ian, I was once in Julian's weird storage room looking at letters from his first wife about how she couldn't poop in a stranger's house."

**Ian:** Hahahahahaha! [laughs] Yeah that was Cathy all right... and who

**Ian:** Cathy.

**Nardwuar:** And where is she now? And how is her pooping going?

**Ian:** I think she got remarried or she might be re-divorced. I don't know. Lorraine sometimes sees her in the street, but I think she's doing all right. It destroyed her for the better. And he was so horrible to her, and I think it was unforgivable, some of the things he said. I remember reading an interview. He was like – he just ditched his first wife. And the things he said, I can't even remember, but it was horrible. Just soul destroying, you know, and there was no need. He could have just said, "We split up. We grew apart," but he had to be Julian about it, thinking the world revolved around him and that we all needed to know the stuff. It was pathetic.

**Nardwuar:** Well that's hard to hear because Julian Cope had some great tunes, I think.

**Ian:** Yeah, he had some good tunes over the years, but I don't like him. He stole three of my tunes, I'll tell you. The tunes you like might like might be mine.

**Nardwuar:** Which ones were they?

**Ian:** "Spacehopper," "Robert Mitchum," and "Read It in Books," he said he co-wrote. So, he's a thief which is worse than anything.

**Nardwuar:** Well, Ian McCulloch of Echo and the Bunnymen, back to Courtney Love's questions for you, and there's still a few more here. Courtney says, "Let Ian know how grateful I am for letting me play with them that night and it made me feel great."

**Ian:** Awww, made both of us, me and Will, feel great as well, Courtney! [laughs] This is great, you Human Serviette. This is great, all these combination of questions... and I'm kind of just, you know... it's dead nice, y'know.

**Nardwuar:** What night did you play with her? What is she talking about?

**Ian:** It was The Viper Room (in Los Angeles). It was with Electrafixion, the group that me and Will had just before we reformed the Bunnymen and she came up on stage and did "Do it Clean" with us. And she told me my hair was too sticky up and it was the nineties and get with it. But it's now 2001, and I'll do what the hell I want with me hair. It's actually gone quite long, but I like might get it all spikey-ed up again. But it was a thrill for us as well, 'cause we actually talked a lot more that night, and she was really lucid. She seemed really sorted, and she looked great. And you know, it was a great night I thought.

**Nardwuar:** Did anyone else come out to that Viper Room gig?

**Ian:** No, it was kind of a secret one. We played somewhere else and we were asked by Sal, who owns the Viper Room, if we'd do it, and we did. It was a good vibe. Somebody else might have been there, of course... do you know that someone was?

**Nardwuar:** No, I was just curious if anyone else showed up. There's always interesting people that, you know, hang out around there.

**Ian:** I think, Christina Applegate was there.

**Nardwuar:** Wow!

**Ian:** So, yeah, next question!

Check back for Part Two of this interview next issue!

To hear this interview go to <http://www.nardwuar.com>







*Any band who can put more than one hundred songs across two discs and not have the whole thing sound like utter shit deserves a great deal of respect.*

**SEE? I DON'T HATE EVERYTHING...**

*When you're a reviewer, you never cease to be amazed at how often you end up being called an asshole.*

Don't get me wrong, now. I'm not planning to use this space to argue the point, prove those who

that conclusion.

What does get my goat is the prevalent belief that I don't like most music. This is usually the conclusion that follows the "He's an asshole" comment we just covered in the preceding paragraph. More accurately, what I'm hearing through the grapevine (most people quick to deem someone an "asshole" are also slow to take personal

no matter where or when, whether I have a radio handy or not, whether anyone else can hear it or not. I constantly write songs in my head and I've spent more than half of my life making others either happy or miserable (usually the latter) by sharing these songs with them. I've got a room filled with CDs, ADATs, records, 45s, cassette tapes, videos, magazines, electric guitar equip-

to add to the genre they've decided to call home. People who wear all the right clothes, make all the right poses, play all the right notes, say all the same pseudo-obnoxious things that have been said a million times before, sneer on cue and still end up being dull. I hate that shit.

Sadly, these bands currently seem to be dominating the popular culture as well as what was once called the "underground." Hey, 10 million Blink 182 fans can't be wrong and as long as they continue to fly the punk banner, they are effectively the most visible embarrassment the rest of us have, as are Sum 41, New Found Glory and all those other "punk lite" poseur fops you see on MTV. If I were emperor of the universe, I would hire people to develop technology that would result in new, interesting ways to wipe the whole fucking lot of 'em off the face of the earth, along with 98% of those current buffoons trying to rap and every single Latin pop star making a stab at the American market.

I mean, I have nothing against bands that happen to fall into a certain musical niche. It happens, you know? If you play drums fast and scream a lot, the odds are you're gonna get lumped into a "hardcore" pigeonhole, and so on. But once they get labeled as such, what are they doing to set themselves apart from the pack? To add to the genre? To keep things growing and progressing? Hell, to just make me shake my ass, sing along, tap my foot and smash shit up? That's what I'm looking for; some conviction, some fucking quality, and there's been plenty of that missing lately.

But not all has been gloom and doom. Despite the millions of reviews I've written whining to the contrary over the course of the last year (or last five, for that matter), I actually found plenty to be excited,

JIMMY Alvarado



*Picture by Matt Average of Mark, ex-Charles Bronson, now in the Oath, in Vienna*

would call me such things wrong or whine endlessly like some emobrainwashed moron with his feelings hurt, tearily sucking my thumb as Jimmy Eat World plays softly in the background. No, that ain't me. If the general public feels like it's worth their trouble to go around labeling people with absolutely no ties to the federal government as assholes, so be it. I'm an asshole. Thanks for caring enough about little ol' me to waste that much of your life coming to

credit for doing so) is that there is a plethora of conversations that usually include the following sentence(s): "God I hate that Jimmy. That asshole hates EVERYTHING! Give me another one of those clove cigarettes, Muffy..."

Truth be known, I see myself as more than just a fairly music-friendly guy. I don't just love the stuff, I look at it as a necessary supplement to my life, like tacos, Tommyburgers or Cap'n Crunch. I'm always listening to something,

posters and flyers cutting across a wide swath of possible musical genres, from punk rock to porro, blues to bossa nova, hardcore to jarocho, reggae to raga, and so on. In short, I absolutely love music.

What I can't stand, though, is boring music made by boring people. Music that couldn't even move a spastic kid on crank. Fake music. Music that was obviously made by people who couldn't be bothered to think of something new or different

thrilled and pleased as punch about and most of it was of recent origin.

What follows is an incomplete list of sorts with eighteen mostly punk-related bands and/or releases that I found frighteningly faboo lo, these last twelve months. Aside from the fact that they are more or less in alphabetical order, they are in no particular order of importance. I'm limiting the list to punk/underground-related bands because, a) that's pretty much what I've been reviewing here all year, b) I imagine most of you reading this could care a fig how cool plainchant, Balinese gamelan music and my Tito Puente box set are, and c) If I told you EVERYTHING I found interesting this year, Todd and Sean would have to put out a supplemental issue of the mag and they've intimated that they'd buy me a dog just so they could kick it if they are forced to do that.

**ALL NATURAL LEMON & LIME FLAVORS** *Straight Blue Line* CD – Although they owe more than a little of their sound to My Bloody Valentine, there's enough of their own personality and maybe a little psychedelia in the mix to make this more of an extension of an idea that just a straight-up rehash.

**BELLRAYS** *Grand Fury* CD – Another dose of crucial sonic bombast and soulful bluster from one of the best bands out there making noise. This one is more focused in attack than "Let It Blast," but it'll still peel the paint off the walls if you play it too loud.

**BRIEFS, THE** – My first impression of this group was a resounding "eh," but once the hook to "Rotten Love" got under my skin, I was a goner. To date I have yet to hear a shitty release from these guys, which is a little hard for me to swallow considering they call Seattle home.

**CHARLES BRONSON** *Discography* CD – Any band who can put more than one hundred songs across two discs and not have the whole thing sound like utter shit deserves a great deal of respect.

**CRUDOS, LOS** *Discography* CD – What many bands currently clinging to the "hardcore" flag fail to realize is that the idea was to take all the frustration, isolation, anger, desperation and feelings of futility one had inside and channel them through the music. Sadly, bands adhering to that basic criteria seem to have been replaced for the most part by metal-headed jocks more interested in providing the soundtrack for geek and fag-bashing par-

ties, high school proms and football locker rooms. Los Crudos didn't fall in the latter category. Dedicated, provocative, intense and seriously pissed off, their songs gave voice to many of the miseries to be found in barrios across the United States. As a rather embittered product of East Los Angeles, I could totally identify.

**EX-MODELS** – Disjointed, chaotic, angular and yet completely rockin'. These guys put just enough "art" back into punk to make it quirky, but not so much that it becomes an over-inflated, pretentious mess. They're also as "hard" as your average hardcore band, to boot.

**GEHENNA** *Negotium Perambulans In Tenebris* CD – If you MUST put metal in your hardcore, make sure you take the rest of it waaaay over the top. To call this band brutal would be like calling Hitler a failed painter.

**GIL SCOTT-HERON** *The Names Have Changed, But the Song Remains the Same* CD – This is actually a "best of" CD that my friend and fellow music whore Barry Barnett compiled for me. While not punk, per se, Scott-Heron's music is just as, if not more, seditious as anything Crass, Black Flag, Dead Kennedys, or Discharge were ever able to muster. Just listen to "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised" and tell me you don't feel like stickin' it to The Man. There are a variety of other "best of" CDs available. Do yourself a favor and pick one up.

**"HYPED TO DEATH"** – A series of compilations covering the formative and teen years of the punk rock underground. While the "rare punk" genre has been systematically run into the friggin' ground since the appearance of the *Killed by Death* series twelve or thirteen years ago, H2D is more all-encompassing than most of the others in the game and isn't afraid to expand the definition of what "punk rock" means.

**LE SHOK** – Synthcore madness that gives one a migraine in all the right ways. Play loud and make sure that bottle of aspirin is handy.

**LOS LOBOS** – Although I guess most would not technically label them a "punk" band, Los Lobos have taken what they learned from that scene and forged their own path through the music world, avoiding the temptation of superstardom and instead doing whatever they damn well pleased (they followed up the immensely suc-

cessful "La Bamba" soundtrack with an LP consisting solely of traditional Mexican music. Fuck you and your profit margin, Warner Brothers!). With each new album and side project, they have taken identifiable music genres, tweaked them all to hell and effectively created new avenues of musical expression to explore. Start with the recently re-released *Just Another Band from East L.A.* and progress forward.

**OUT COLD** – Hands down, one of the best hardcore bands on the circuit today. These boys take the rough-necked virulence of Negative Approach, the creative chord progressions of Minor Threat and give them both a serious ass whuppin.

**OZOMATLI** *Embrace the Chaos* CD – As Donofthedeath so eloquently put last issue, this is a mighty fine album from a mighty fine band. Hell, I'll even go further and say that although the rhyming skills of Chali 2na are sorely missed, this blows their previous releases out of the water, which is no small feat considering their last album was almost perfect. If you haven't seen or heard these guys, get out from under that rock you call home and see them or at least buy one of their releases.

**PHANTOM LIMBS** – If there is a Hell, this is what its amusement park sounds like. Unadulterated synth chaos that would make the late, great Screamers and Church Police hang their collective heads in shame.

**SAIBON** *Number Two 7"* EP – Taut, claustrophobic punkcore that makes you want to beat the crap outta the world just to ease the paranoid feelings that just won't let up. A true masterpiece that should definitely be followed up with something in a longer format.

**SLAYER** *God Hates Us All* CD – While it ain't *Reign In Blood*, their latest proves that the boys from Huntington Park can still rip the heads off of any who try to usurp their throne. They also seem to be incorporating even more hardcore punk into their sound as the years go by. My question is when does *Undisputed Attitude II* come out and if there'll be any Bloodcum covers on it this time.

**VANILLA MUFFINS** *The Power of Sugar Oi!* CD – My friend Art Muñoz introduced me to these guys, quite possibly the nicest thing he's ever done for me (well, aside from just being a good friend) and I thank him kindly. Simply stunning

songwriting goin' on here, perfect hooks, total power in their execution and accents so thick that lyrics are rendered irrelevant. If pop punk bands sounded remotely like this, I wouldn't be howling for their blood every two months.

**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *The Hostage Situation* CD – Living proof that OC and the Southern California beach punk scene isn't all about Blink 182, shitty pop punk bands. With one disc, I found myself a truckload of new favorite bands.

### Blah Blah Blah

Missed the recent gig celebratin' the twenty-first anniversary of East Los Angeles' legendary Vex, the premier Los Angeles punk club for a time in the early eighties that provided both "big" acts like Black Flag and Suicidal Tendencies, as well as local neighborhood bands, a relatively consistent place to play. The show featured performances by the Stains, thee Undertakers, the Brat, Los Illegals and others. I found out about it two days later and have been kicking myself in the ass since for missing it. Popular consensus holds that the show was great and that one John Alvarado was recruited at the last minute to drum for the Stains. I guess all those years of our playing that album in our room over and over finally paid off.

Billy Branch tells me that Blues Experiment and Jazz from Hell are currently in the studio, which is about the best news I've heard all week. The latter are working on their first album and, having heard some rough mixes of their recording thus far, I can safely say that it's gonna knock more than a few people on their asses. Yes, it's that good. If you're in the LA area, be sure to check 'em out. Don't forget the aspirin, though.

I'm still working on getting the East LA punk rock family tree together. If you are/were in a band from the area and would like to make sure you're included, please get a hold of me through Razorcake. If you're in a punk band from East LA or the surrounding area that is currently active and would like some acknowledgement, get a hold of me as well.

Tune in next issue when the topics of discussion will include whether skinheads are actually failed Buddhists seeking an alternate path toward nirvana, and whether birds have an equivalent word to "dimethylphosphate" in their respective languages.

Takin' on all punk-ass suckas,

–Jimmy

Jimmy Alvarado





# PATSY

INTERVIEW BY KAT JETSON AND JEN HITCHCOCK \* PHOTOS BY

IS A CHARISMATIC AND TALENTED TRIO OF FRIENDS WHO HAVE BEEN PLAYING AS A BAND, ON AND OFF, FOR ALMOST SEVEN YEARS. THEIR SOUND IS A UNIQUE BLEND OF SNAZZY SWAGGER AND DEVASTATINGLY MASSIVE ROCK RIFFS. ONE OF YOUR INTERVIEWERS, JEN, HAS BEEN AN AVID SUPPORTER AND FAN OF PATSY SINCE THEIR INCEPTION. AS FOR ME, I'M SOMEWHAT OF AN LA NEWBIE, SO I MISSED OUT ON ABOUT 5 YEARS O' PATSY ROCK, BUT I LOVE THEM BIG, TOO. SO, WITHOUT HESITATION, THEY AGREED TO GRANT US AN INTERVIEW. GETTING THEM IN THE SAME PLACE, ON TIME, IS ANOTHER STORY. AS DRUMMER KERRY SAID CALLING ME FROM HER HOME



ABOUT 20 MINUTES AFTER THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO BE AT MY HOUSE, "YOU KNOW WE'RE

PATSY. YOU KNOW WE'RE GOING TO BE LATE." TARDY OR NOT, AFTER INTERVIEWING THEM IT BECAME OBVIOUS HOW MUCH THEY INSPIRE, RESPECT AND LOVE ONE ANOTHER. AND NO, THEY ARE NOT A CHRISTIAN BAND!

**Kat:** Originally I thought the name Patsy was because of Patricia and Marcie. That is not it though.

[They all shake their heads.]

**Kat:** OK. I then thought it was because of Patsy Cline but that's not it either, right? So tell me why it is "Patsy."

**Marcie:** Stone. Patsy Stone.

**Kat:** Who is that?

[Patsy looks at each other in

utter disbelief.]

**Kerry:** Come on! You are supposed to know that. You should be prepared!

**Patricia:** You didn't do the research.

**Jen:** Who is Patsy Stone? I mean... I know, but, uh, I just want Kat to learn.

**Kat:** Whatever.

**Marcie:** Patsy Stone – she hangs out with Edwina. A hit TV series...

**Patricia:** British comedy series...

**Kat:** "Ab Fab" (*Absolutely Fabulous*)?

**Marcie:** YEAH!

**Kat:** I've never seen "Ab Fab."

**Patricia:** Whoa! That is shocking.

**Kat:** So that is what it's about?

**Marcie:** She is a big lush, and she likes to drink a lot. Not that this relates, but they'll all be walking and she'll wander off and do some coke. They are just constantly trashy.

**Kat:** See that! You learn something new

when you interview someone.

**Patricia:** It seems kind of dated now. That was back in the '90s or something.

**Jen:** When did you guys start playing?

**Patricia:** December '94. That wasn't really the start, that was like, Marcie knocking on my door saying "You wanna jam, you wanna play?" She brought Kerry.

**Kerry:** [to Marcie] She didn't even know we were coming, huh?

**Jen:** How did you guys meet?

**Marcie:** I went to see Patricia's band Quiver because they were a lesbian band. They were my first lesbian band.

[Laughing.]

**Patricia:** I was the only real lesbian in that band.

**Kat:** And then you just met Kerry?

**Kerry:** I had heard of Marcie, from Rad Girl Marcie (Marcie's first project.)

**Kat:** So Rad Girl Marcie was just you and your guitar?

**Marcie:** Yup.

**Kat:** Was it an acoustic guitar?

**Marcie:** Yes, with lots of stickers all over it.

**Patricia:** [Teasing Marcie] What kinds of stickers on it?

**Marcie:** Mary's Danish...

[Laughter]

**Jen & Kat:** [same time] I loved Mary's Danish!

**Marcie:** And the Pixies. I had a No Doubt sticker on it... but they were cool before.

**Jen:** They were great – that first CD!

**Marcie:** But now that sticker is covered up with other stickers.

**Patricia:** Did you ever look up Patsy in the dictionary? It is very fitting. It is just the most fitting name we could possibly find.

**Jen:** What was your favorite toy when you were little?

**Kat:** I love this question.

**Kerry:** I loved my brother's Hot Wheels. You could play with them in the tiles and pretend they were streets.

(I see Kerry later the night of this interview and she pulled me aside and said, "I don't know what I was thinking. I don't even like Hot Wheels. It was Little People. I liked Little People best.")

**Patricia:** Toys. That is hard. That involves from me being two until now!

**Jen:** Well, think about the one that stands out most in your head. Like, when I was little, I had a little Lassie dog that ended up being just a strip of fabric because it became so worn, but I still carried it around.

**Marcie:** Does a blankie count?

**Kerry:** How did you play with it?

**Marcie:** Well, I didn't. That is why I wouldn't really consider it a toy, but they took it away from me because I kept sucking on it. My favorite toy was my toy box. I had all these lame toys in it; I mostly had books. But I had a really cool toy box that was like a bench thing that you could sit on.

**Patricia:** I wanted everything! I remember asking my dad for a different toy every week and I always got it. I was spoiled. I remember being horrified of dolls. Give me

a doll and I'd start crying.

**Jen:** They are kinda freaky. Like little fake people.

**Patricia:** I don't know what it is. I probably need therapy for that.

**Marcie:** I've been freaking out about pressure cookers again.

**Jen:** Do you have a pressure cooker?

**Marcie:** No, but that little thing that goes on the top... I can't even think about it.

**Kat:** The idea of a pressure cooker is kind of creepy. Pressure. Cooker. All this pressure is cooking something, and it could

KAT: WHAT  
WOULD YOU  
GET TATTOOED  
ON YOUR  
KNUCKLES?

KERRY: "OUCH"  
[MAKING A FIST.]

JEN: "FEEL  
THIS" [HOLDING  
BOTH FISTS UP.]

PATRICIA:  
"YOUR DEAD"  
[HOLDING BOTH  
FISTS UP.]

explode.

**Marcie:** I don't even think of the cooking part. The object itself... it terrifies me. Just that top part.

**Kat:** So, that would not be a favorite toy of yours.

**Marcie:** It is my anti-toy. Patricia's anti-toy is a doll.

**Kat:** As a band, what accomplishment are you most proud of?

**Marcie:** Our new songs. Our CD!

**Patricia:** Yeah, there is something that we never thought we could do on our own because we can't really accomplish *anything*.

[Laughs.]

**Patricia:** I don't know what motivated us to

make a CD, but we actually, from scratch, did everything. Like we made phone calls! We called people we didn't know! We were on the ball.

**Kerry:** It's all because of her. [Points to Kat]. She told Ted!

**Patricia:** You were an important part of the process. The CD is our biggest accomplishment. And now we just don't know what to do with it.

**Jen:** We were wondering about the artwork. It is really cool and we wanted to know the significance.

**Kat:** And the significance of the title, too.

**Jen:** [to Patricia] Did you draw everything?

**Patricia:** Yeah, except the wolf. I went down to the library and found that. I was trying to find an actual picture of schoolgirls with briefcases but I could never find that so I just drew it in a very simple way. We actually didn't have a lot of time to do it.

**Jen:** I really like it.

**Kat:** What were you thinking? "I want schoolgirls, a wolf, and some blood.?"

**Marcie:** It's kind of an underlying Patsy thing. We have this dress that both of us share, that's like a catholic schoolgirl dress and we have a briefcase that we always carried.

**Patricia:** It could be so many things.

**Jen:** But what is that little spot of blood?

**Patricia:** That's because the girls...

**Marcie:** You're not supposed to say!

**Patricia:** I can't really talk about this. It has deep significance we just can't talk about.

**Jen:** [whining] I just want to know what the little spot of blood is... and the tail and the briefcase.

**Marcie:** [to Patricia] *Don't* say anything!

**Patricia:** I should mention that we are a big huge fans of artwork.

**Kat:** So basically, it is for you to know and no one else to find out.

**Patricia:** It's just not right to tell what is in there.

**Jen:** When you guys broke up for that period of time, did you ever think that you were going to get back together and play music again? How did it change you guys?

**Patricia:** Actually, I'm to blame for breaking up the band. It was the most devastating thing to think that I would never play with them again. I didn't say anything but I was like... it's over. I was going to quit music. They are like my musical soul mates.

**Jen:** You can feel that. You guys always seemed like more of a family, so it was weird when you broke up. How do you feel now? Musically and personally. Has it changed anything?

**Patricia:** I think it is much better. It is just about music.

**Kat:** When you wanted to play together again, did you just sit down and say, "Let's do this again," or...

**Marcie:** I was never really able to talk to Patricia. She would just brush me off when ever I'd see her, so it was really hard. Finally one day, I was able to

get her alone and I just started [crying] saying I couldn't play with anyone else. I couldn't talk!

**Patricia:** Marcie never cries. She could see a dead puppy on the streets... So when I see her crying, it's like, whoa! She is "Ms. No Emotion."

**Marcie:** I had to talk her into it.

**Patricia:** We're just bad communicators. That is our main problem. I guess that is why it took us so long for us to talk about playing again, because we just can't talk.

**Marcie:** Musically, I just can't. I can write stuff, but it is nothing without Patricia.

**Patricia:** I don't agree with that.

**Marcie:** It's like as a whole thing... I just need her to be in my life and to play music with. I always had Kerry because we were in Paige together.

**Kat:** What would you get tattooed on your knuckles?

**Patricia:** I would probably do something corny like my cat's name or something.

**Kerry:** I was going to do happy faces but now I want cat claws or something. Does it have to be a word?

**Kat:** No, no.

**Kerry:** OUCH [Making a fist.]

**Jen:** FEEL THIS [Holding both fists up.]

**Patricia:** YOUR DEAD [Holding both fists up.]

**Jen:** I would like to talk about the Patsy fans. What has been one of the most embarrassing or surprising or frightening thing that a Patsy fan has done?

**Patricia:** The sweetest thing just happened.

**Marcie:** We were playing at Que Sera in Long Beach and we were loading our stuff in. I hear someone asking for Marcie.

**Patricia:** And we don't know anybody in Long Beach.

**Marcie:** It was the bartender and she is like, "Are you Marcie? Phone call." We thought it would be one of our friends joking or saying that they weren't coming or getting directions or something like that. It was this little girl named Stephanie, I think, and she was like, "I just wanted to say that I can't be there tonight because I'm not 18, and it's 21 and over so I'm not old enough to go but I wanted to wish you good luck and tell you we love you!"

**Jen:** Awwww! That's cool.

**Kat:** That is so sweet. It has got to be so awesome just to play something that is so important to you, something that you love so much, and to have someone just connect with it. It's got to be a great feeling.

**Marcie:** It is!

**Jen:** So, no one has ever flashed any titties or anything?

**Marcie:** That doesn't stand out as much as a phone call or the look on someone's face. Flashing tits will get attention if we are NOT playing!

**Kat:** Radio from the Need played on some of your songs. Did you ask her, and did she choose the songs, or did you have an idea of what you wanted her to play on?

**Marcie:** She would rather

play on something that she knew better, like "Colostomy." She knows that song. She has a little dance for it and everything. She also did stuff on "Muddy Waters," and I just practiced with her at home on that one.

**Patricia:** We asked her last minute. She had a little time and she basically sat in the studio for maybe an hour. We totally manipulated the whole thing. She played through the whole song, but we picked certain parts of her guitar to go over certain things. Now I can't think about the song without those parts!

**Marcie:** Patricia plays them.

**Patricia:** Yeah, I actually play one of her parts. I'm playing my part and then I try to play some of the stuff she's playing. It's hard to duplicate.

**Jen:** Would you like a corny or a dorky question next?

**Marcie:** Dorky.

**Jen:** Who has been an inspiration in your life?

**Kerry:** That is kinda corny.

**Jen:** Oh. I asked the corny one by accident...

**Marcie:** L'il P. (Patricia)

**Patricia:** Musical or just inspiration?

**Kerry:** These are really hard!

**Patricia:** My inspirations are so cheesy.

**Everyone at once:** MADONNA!?

**Patricia** [embarrassed]: To know that this will be printed... I feel like a freak on the Jenny Jones show.

**Jen:** I love Madonna. I'm inspired by her too! She is the whole package!

**Kat:** She is fantastic. I don't see the problem with being inspired by Madonna.

**Patricia** [not believing us]: Come on guys!

**Kat:** It's okay, really!

**Patricia:** I'll just have to live with this. But she really is [my inspiration.]

**Marcie:** Pippie [Longstocking] really inspired me. I used to watch her every weekend. She taught me that if you put your mind to it and practiced hard enough you could do it. She would walk on water and it was just because she would keep trying.

**Kerry:** I'll just go musically. Brendan from Fugazi. I just love the way he plays. My brother too. He is really good.

**Kat:** This is going to be a plug for Milk, (a weekly club at Fais Do Do - on Thursday nights) because I think it's a really good idea. How did you and Belinda decide to do this?

**Patricia:** Before Milk, we used to do all ages shows next door to Fais Do Do, in the ballroom. We called it Saint Lucy's. Everybody was pretty involved. Marcie too. We just wanted one extra all ages space in Los Angeles for touring bands. There are very few. There was Jaberjaw, and then Jaberjaw was gone. We had nothing until The Smell opened up. Outside of LA, all ages shows happen all the time. It was for selfish reasons, too. We wanted to book bands we liked and have a really good place for them to play.

**Marcie:** Our friend Belinda had this idea forever, since the beginning of Saint

Lucy's, to have one night with the singer of a band playing covers. That was the original idea.

**Patricia:** We just wanted to treat the bands really good and give them a good experience so they'd come back to LA. Whenever we go on tour, we'd hear that nobody wanted to play LA. So we wanted to be able to give bands a good experience so they'd want to come back.

**Marcie:** Just last night Rizzo played and they were like, "We love playing here."

**Patricia:** Fais Do Do has an incredible sound system.

**Marcie:** It sounds good when you're up there [on stage], not just when you're out there. It feels good... and the lighting is perfect.

**Kat:** Not to put a label on it, but it's really cool to have a place for chicks to meet other cool chicks, too.

**Patricia:** Definitely.

**Kat:** I wish there was a place like Milk in Connecticut, when I was 18.

**Marcie:** It's a candy store.

**Patricia:** It's a playground for women... girls. It's like the Chuck E. Cheese for dating women. No, really... we give bands that don't usually have a chance to play a place like that, an opportunity to have a really good show. Where are they gonna go if there's no more Milk?

**Kat:** Why is it called Milk?

**Patricia:** It was Belinda's idea. She wanted to have an actual milk bar, where we'd just serve milk drinks. But, Fais Do Do doesn't have a real liquor license; just beer and wine, so you can't mix drinks.

**Kat:** It's really just nice to know it's there.

**Patricia:** It's comforting.

**Kat:** Did Patsy ever consider having a bassist?

**Patricia:** Yeah, but no.

**Kat:** So originally, you thought it would sound just fine with two guitars and drums? Did you ever feel like you were missing something?

**Kerry:** Yeah, we were fine. I mean, I wanted to just to see how it would sound - not necessarily have someone forever in the band - just kinda curious.

**Kat:** It sounds really full. It doesn't sound like you need a bass player. I think a bass might overpower your drumming. You're not a Tommy Lee drummer. Your drumming has more of a jazz feel.

**Patricia:** It's always been something we've been curious about, but we are so connected already, and we know how we work on the songwriting process so well, that I'd feel bad for anyone that would try to write songs with us. [Directed to Kerry] Don't you think so?

**Kerry:** Yeah.

**Patricia:** It'd be like, "Who is this person in this room?"

**Kerry:** And I probably wouldn't even play with them...

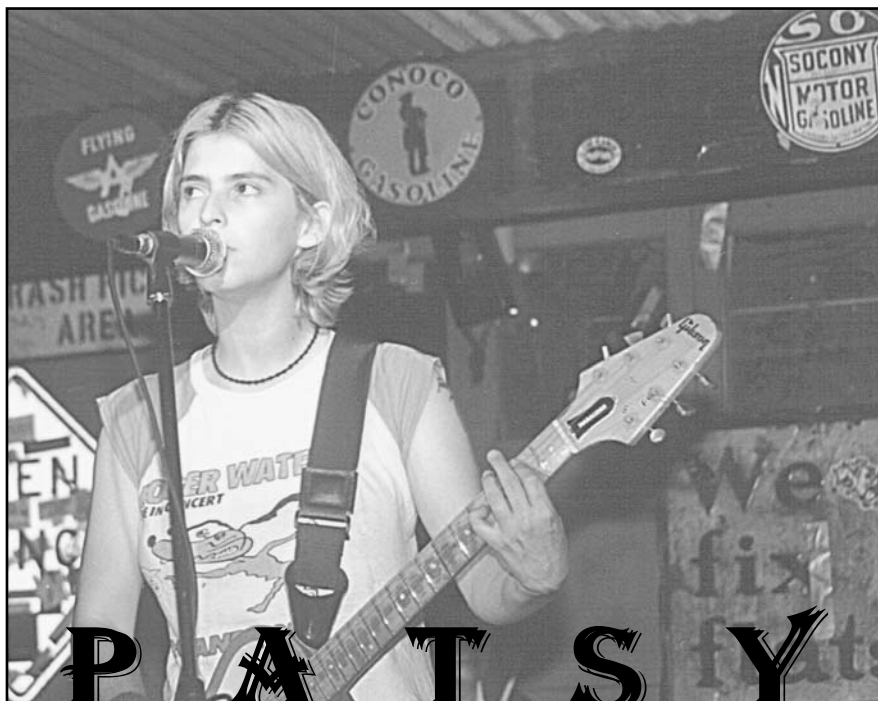
**Patricia:** You'd totally ignore them.

[Lots of laughter.]

**Kerry:** As it happens, sometimes I'm fol-

**JEN:** SO, NO ONE HAS EVER FLASHED ANY TITTIES OR ANYTHING?

**MARCIE:** THAT DOESN'T STAND OUT AS MUCH AS... FLASHING TITS WILL GET ATTENTION IF WE ARE NOT PLAYING!



# PATSY



Following Patricia, sometimes Marcie. Honestly, I don't know if I would follow them. That would almost seem more limiting.

**Patricia:** I feel like if there was a bass player in the room, they'd probably be ignored by the three of us. I'm glad because it works out with the way Marcie's guitar sounds and the way Kerry plays.

**Patricia:** [to Marcie] Do you have thoughts on a bass player?

**Marcie:** I am the bass player. I play with 13 gauge strings. Flatwound. I just won't change the strings because it sounds warmer. I like a booming, clean, bassy sounds.

**Patricia:** And she plays through a big, huge bass amp.

**Kat:** What's your favorite album cover?

**Patricia:** Here's my cheesy answer to that. I'm a big fan of heavy metal covers. I love every cover to every Iron Maiden record.

**Jen:** Eddieeeee!

**Patricia:** [sounding very proud] I love it! I love all of Pink Floyd's covers.

**Jen:** That's so funny because it's so different from your own CD.

**Patricia:** I'm fascinated by album covers.

**Kat:** I think it's such a sad thing that there's CDs and not vinyl anymore, because...

**Patricia:** You're limited.

**Kat:** [Picking up the Patsy CD] 'Cause if this were big.

**Patricia:** You could do so much.

**Marcie:** Its costs so much to do vinyl.

**Patricia:** We dream of doing vinyl.

**Marcie:** If we had a lot of money, we'd totally do it. I remember when I was a kid I played with the zipper on the Rolling Stones album. My favorite toy.

[Uproarious laughter]

**Jen:** When questions collide...

**Kat:** Favorite album cover, Kerry?

(Silence. I've stumped her. But later that night she also tells me, "Oh, my favorite album cover is Joy Division's *Closer*.")

**Marcie:** I also used to stare at my mom's Donna Summer record. I was so impressed that it folded out. I'd just open it and fold it back up.

**Kat:** I love the AC/DC cover *Highway to Hell*. I mean, when I was a kid, it frightened me, but Angus looks so cool sneering with those devil horns on his head.

**Patricia:** All demonic things are just amazing.

**Jen:** Fleetwood Mac, *Mirage*. That's a great album cover.

**Kat:** Stevie Nicks, *The Wild Heart*.

**Kat:** I want to know what music you listened to today.

**Marcie:** I'm still disturbed by Stevie Nicks. [Everyone gasps in unison.]

**Marcie:** I'm sorry. I know that I'm a one and only, but she scares me.

**Jen:** Well, she's a witch.

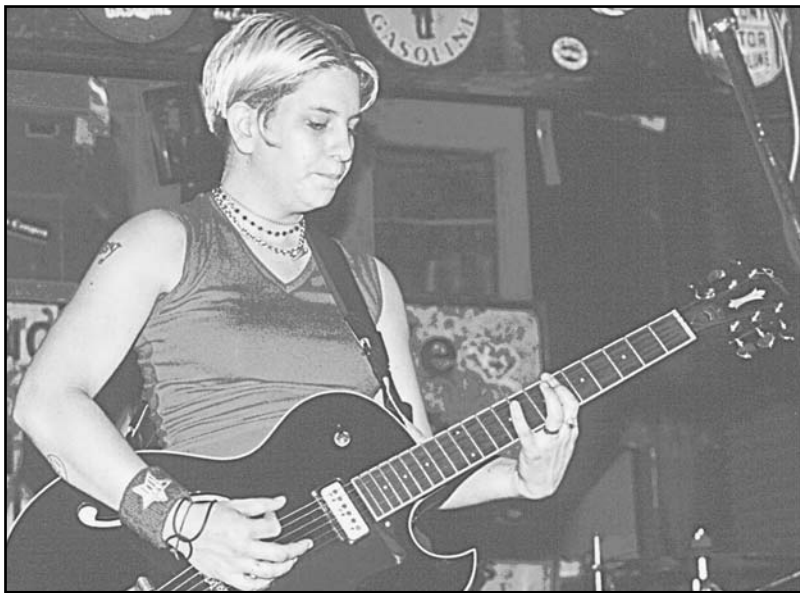
**Marcie:** That's probably why. Is she really? I've always been afraid of her. I was Christian! Wicca creeps me out. It makes me feel bad in my soul, like there's something wrong.

**Patricia:** But we're not a Christian band! Make no mistake.

**Kat:** I'll make sure that's bolded.

**Marcie:** We're Catholic.

**Jen:** Whoever's in the audi-



# PATSY

ence, if you're not Christian, Marcie feels weird, so stand in the back.

**Patricia:** What was the original question?

**Kat:** I wanted to know what you listened to today.

**Kerry:** Creed. Jars of Clay.

**Patricia:** Joke.

**Kat:** Stryper.

**Kat:** What has been your most memorable music-related moment?

**Marcie:** We went to the Knitting Factory last week... It was all last minute. We originally went to meet up with a friend, and it just so happens that I knew a waitress there and she got us in to see PJ Harvey. When I first heard about it I thought, "Uhm, well," 'cause I really like her old stuff, but not the new stuff so much. Anyhow, we went in, and it was the most *amazing* show. She played a mix of all her records. And she played "Rid of Me" solo.

**Patricia:** That was pretty inspiring.

**Jen:** That's the best place to see her; at a small venue.

**Marcie:** She seemed like she was so much more comfortable. And the audience...

**Patricia:** You could just feel the respect in the room. Every single person in the room was there because they truly loved the music. She has such an amazing presence.

**Marcie:** We just walked away in awe. It's been a long time since that's happened.

(So, somehow we end up discussing what I asked awhile ago which was: What did you listen to today?)

**Marcie:** I download stuff. I don't own CDs. I own the Tracy & The Plastics CD, but that's 'cause she gave it to me. I download everything. I'm a nerd.

**Patricia:** What are you listening to, Kerry? You never tell me.

**Kerry:** I got the new Tori Amos

**Marcie:** How is it?

**Kerry:** Erm...

**Marcie:** Not good?

**Patricia:** On a scale of 1 to 5.

**Kerry:** [sadly] 2. It's Tori and it should be a 5. Right now my favorite song is "Returning the Screw" by Fugazi. I kinda got into Fugazi again.

**Patricia:** I listen to a little bit of prog-rock, a little bit of metal, a little bit of Madonna. Big fan of disco. Big fan. Disco brings me to tears.

**Jen:** Sometimes it just lifts you up.

**Kat:** I want to know if you really had a crush on your Sunday School teacher.

**Marcie:** No, no, [the song] just happened.

**Patricia:** It's one of those Marcie-isms. It just happened.

**Kat:** It's the most rocking song on the album. I mean, where did that come from?

**Patricia:** It's a total joke. It's just ironic that that's the song people want to hear the most. We can write a whole record like that, in like, 10 minutes. And it would probably make money.

**Kat:** Honestly, that's my least favorite song on your record. I never even listen to it.

**Patricia:** [said quite appreciatively] Thank you.

**Jen:** [obviously making fun of my honesty] I flat out hate it. I think it blows.

**Patricia:** I think we should get more into doing things like that.

**Marcie:** I'm telling you.

**Jen:** You could have an alter-ego band.

**Marcie:** I want to. Patricia doesn't want to do it. I have songs. One is "Tripping with Velvet."

**Kat:** If you could change your name what would you change it to?

**Marcie:** What's weird is that I have one, but when you said it, I just lost it. But my online name is Willemena Peters. Willemena J. Peters.

**Kat:** I love that it's got a middle initial.

**Kerry:** You asked this of Radio Vago.

**Everyone:** Oooh, busted!

**Kat:** Actually, I asked them what their

porno name would be. They didn't make those up, it's just your first pet's name and the first street you lived on.

**Kerry:** Uhm, Harry Stench. I don't know. Actually, I have thought about that before. Like, my name's Kerry. I don't feel like a Janet, or...

**Marcie:** My real name's Marcela, but it's not really me.

**Patricia:** My name just feels like an old lady. I feel like an old lady with this name. Why can't I just be a regular name? Patricia's too long. But then again I hate when people call me Pat or Patty or Trish. Trishy!

**All of us in unison:** Eww!

**Jen:** Does anybody call you that?

**Patricia:** All the time. Even at work - this new guy says to me, "What's your name?" "Patricia." "OK, Pat." "It's Patricia." "Alright, Trish." And now he calls me "Patrece." I'm like, "What is this?"

**Jen:** I actually have one more question, but I ask it of every single band that I interview. If Patsy was a television family, what family would that be? Like, what TV family do you relate to the most?

**Marcie:** *Ellen*?

**Kerry:** *7th Heaven*.

**Patricia:** I always pretend like I'm in *Seinfeld*.

**Marcie:** That's not a family!

**Patricia:** It's a family of friends.

**Kerry:** *The Simpsons*.

**Jen:** Would you be the Flanders?

**Kerry:** Hell no! I want Homer to be my dad. Not really, though. I love my dad.

[We find it kind of funny that Kerry's worried that she might offend her dad with that comment.]

**Kerry:** I said that once when I was little and it really hurt his feelings. I said "I wish that man was my dad." I don't know why I said it. I think he had a nice car or something.

**Kat:** Some snazzy wheels.

**Marcie:** *Facts of Life*?

**Kat:** Everyone would be Jo.

**Marcie:** I would have to look at a list of TV shows cause I can't think. But I like *7th Heaven*.

**Patricia:** No, you just have a crush on that girl.

**Marcie:** [said shyly] Yeah, so what?

**Kerry:** Yeah, they ARE gonna think we're Catholic!

**Patricia:** All this frickin' interview is about Catholics and...

**Kat:** All this fucking interview is about...

[Lots of laughter.]

**Kat:** That should be the end of the interview.

**Marcie:** While we're on our way to Hot Box to see women strip. Lesbians... licking each other.

**Patricia:** Ooooooooooooo!

[Strangely enough the tape cuts off.]

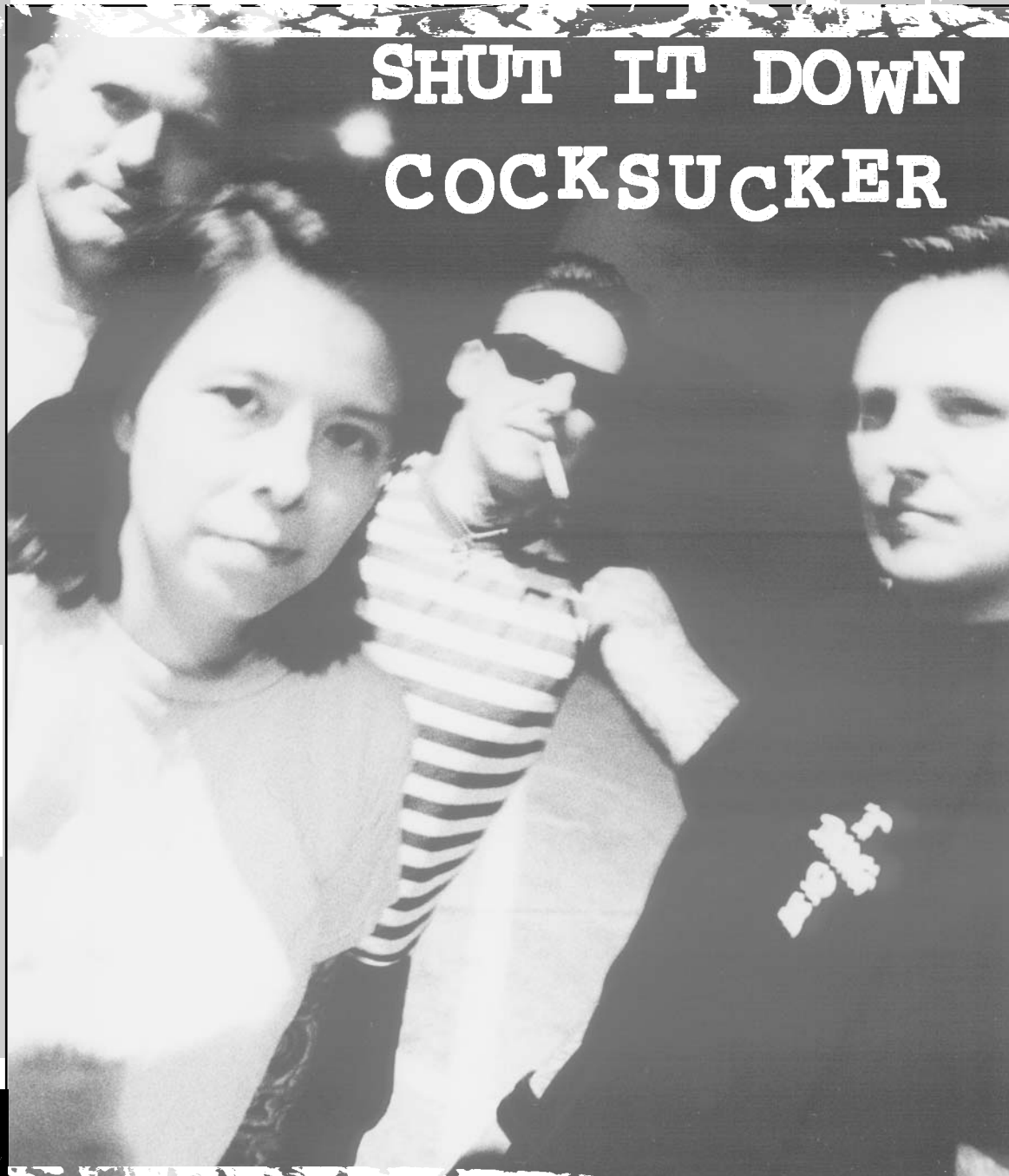




# SMUT PEDDLERS



## SHUT IT DOWN COCKSUCKER



Interview by Money and Pete • photos by Rick Bain, Kosick, and ReTodd

Like a tug boat with a yacht engine under the deck plates, The Smut Peddlers are walking proof that appearances can be deceiving. They're not a street punk band, but their sound is too boss, too mean for straight-up rock and roll. Many of the band members haven't touched drugs in years, but they have more songs about dope than the Velvet Underground. Covered in tats, they look like the last person you'd want to bump into in a dark alley, but they're some of the nicest punk rockers you'll ever meet. The

frontman looks like a drill sergeant, but sounds like a game show host. The drummer punishes the tubs with reckless abandon, but put her behind the wheel of a Singer sewing machine and she can sew like the wind. Such schizoid splits are to be expected from a band with one foot in the South Bay and the other in Orange County. The result is a signature Intercounty sound that conjures up the best of beach punk, hard knock rock and their brethren in the New Beach Alliance. But try to straightjacket their sound, put them in a pigeonhole,

and the label quickly loses its stick. Their new album, *Ism*, promises to make classifying the Smut Peddlers even more difficult. Ripping new songs like "Riot at the Pier" will make the LA/OC distinction irrelevant. This is music of and about the West. It's for the wild SoCal kids who inhabit its beaches, bars and burbs, and would rather die than be anywhere else.

The Smut Peddlers were interviewed at the home of John Ransom, the lead singer. Half of John's front room has been converted into an aviary. Inside the huge cages reside an exotic menagerie of parrots. The air is punctuated with chirps and blurps, screeches and squeaks from the restless birds.

**John:** All.

**Gish:** I have a regular job. I probably wouldn't do that.

**§:** What are your jobs?

**Gish:** I sell skateboard wheels.

**John:** Steam fitter.

**Julia:** Graphic artist.

**Roger:** I work at a Harley dealer.

**Gish:** Rebel!

**§:** So there's another band out there called the Smut Peddlers. Have you contacted them about doing a split?

**Gish** (tongue firmly planted in cheek): I never even heard there was one. This is the first I've heard of it.

**Julia:** What?

**Gish:** According to this guy, there's another band called the Smut Peddlers.

**Julia:** Yeah, I heard about them a while ago. A year or so ago. A guy at *Big Brother* told me. He was supposed to set up this rumble. He wimped out. Or they wimped out or whatever. Some Internet radio show called me and put me on the air with them and they were all like "We didn't know.

**Julia:** I don't know if they really show up so much as they like to talk about it.

**John:** The only time I ever saw them was at Club Mesa because they have nice bouncers there who are friends with the cops, because they are aspiring cops. And Club Mesa had good lineups of Hostage Records bands that the cops like so much.

**Gish:** I don't know any cops. I know a fireman though.

**§:** Besides "Yo Yo," what other songs are about Julia?

**Julia:** Easy! Just for the record, I'm not Japanese. I'm Chinese.

**Gish:** But you are rice eyed.

**Julia:** I am rice eyed, but my genes and chromosomes were *not* made in Japan.

**Gish:** I don't know what other songs are about Julia. I'm sure there are some.

**Julia:** At least a little bit.

**§:** Looking at the lyrics from the new album, there is a little bit of rainbow flag bashing.

**Roger:** Really?

**§:** A little.

**Roger:** Numerous songs, or one?

**Julia:** More than one. Fag talk.

**Roger:** Oh, that's just everyday life!

**John:** I just resent the fact that any group has the rainbow as their logo because I used to like the rainbow. I have a multi-colored vehicle. I like a lot of things with bright colors. I like birds with bright colors. And my favorite color happens to be purple, which is, allegedly, a certain subculture's official color, according to some.

**Julia:** According to Jerry Falwell.

**John:** It puts me in a bad spot.

**Julia:** I believe it was Falwell who said purple is the color of the gay.

**§:** Of the gay?

**Julia:** Of the gay. I think that was his exact quote.

**Gish:** What colors do the heteros get? All the rest?

**§:** How many birds to you have?

**John:** We're currently down to twelve.

**§:** Twelve birds?

**John:** Ten.

**Roger:** From fifty.

**Gish:** Two dropped this morning.

**John:** There's Scooter and Tomata the Senegal parrots, Coltrane is a Congo African gray, Lansky and Lemon are Meyer's parrots, Falena and Paul Lummis are yellow-naped Amazon parrots, Millhouse Cosmodyne is a Jardine's parrot, Gringo a yellow-naped Amazon and Magna double-yellow-headed Amazon hybrid and Whitey is a Citron-crested cockatoo.

**§:** You have a bird that makes sounds like an old lady?

**John:** That bird is gone. I sold it to my boss because its mate died. I got a male and a female from an old lady, and they fucking coughed like they were dying of pneumonia. They sang "Old McDonald Had a Farm." The female died and the male didn't like me so I had to get rid of it.

**Coltrane:** Smells like asshole.



The Smut Peddlers are: Julia (a.k.a. Martha Stewart, a.k.a. Hell on a Sewing Machine) drums; John, microphone; Gish, bass; Roger, guitar.

**§:** Have any of you ever actually peddled smut?

**Julia:** I almost did. I almost worked for *Hustler*.

**§:** Almost?

**Julia:** They didn't pay enough.

**Gish:** I don't think I have.

**John:** It depends on what smut is.

**§:** Is there any kind of smut you wouldn't peddle?

**Gish:** Kiddy porn.

**Roger:** Snuff films.

We're just doing a side thing. It's no big deal."

**Roger:** We haven't heard anything since.

**Julia:** We're dealing with legal matters as we speak.

**Gish:** I think it actually ended up helping us more than anything because they bought way more ads than we could ever afford to or would even want to. A lot of people were like: "Fuck, I see your name all over the place. You guys are coming up!"

**§:** Is it true that Orange County Sheriffs come to your shows because they can get more work done there?

**Roger:** What kind of work?

**§:** Police work.

**Gish:** I'm taking the fifth.

\$: What did that bird just say?

**John:** I can't repeat that.

**Julia:** Where did he learn it?

**Gish:** He said, "I'm taking a dump."

**Roger:** No, he didn't.

**John:** I'm taking the fifth. He doesn't like strangers.

**Julia:** That bird used to yell, "Shut it down, cocksucker!" at me.

\$: What are some of the more interesting things your birds say?

**John:** Some of the weirdest things?

**Bird:** Yeah.

**John:** Um...

**Bird:** Yeah.

\$: Maybe I should ask the bird.

**John:** They say, "Shut it down. Shut it down, cocksucker." "Motherfucker." "Fucker." "Sucker." "Tucker."

\$: Do they know any Smut Peddler lyrics?

**Gish:** "Cocksucker." "Motherfucker." "Fucker..."

\$: Are there any Smut Peddler love songs?

puter after one's spouse has fallen asleep.

**Julia:** That wasn't my song! That was written by a co-worker of mine who will remain nameless.

\$: What's up with the Hunns song "Sideways Heroes"?

**Gish:** You'd probably have to ask Duane about that.

**Julia:** As far as we know, it's directed at us. But it's not really all that inflammatory.

**Gish:** I imagine it's directed at us. I think it could be better. I think it's about the catchiest song on the album.

\$: Is there bad blood there?

**John:** Not with me. I personally enjoy 50% of the Hunns although I don't know any of them very well, and I think that some of them don't like me. I don't know. Duane Peters seems like a nice guy. He's a legendary skateboard hero. Even when he's sideways.

**Roger:** And he's a snappy dresser, too.

**John:** I heard some things third-hand that

**Roger:** It's the American way.

\$: Julia, is it true that you're a big Phish fan?

**Julia:** I couldn't say, because I've never actually heard them, but I've seen the guitar player play in another band. He played guitar just fine.

\$: Never been to a Phish show?

**Julia:** No.

**Gish:** Can you prove that?

**Julia:** I've been to a Grateful Dead show once, and it kind of sucked.

**Roger:** I can say there's no correlation between the Smut Peddlers and Phish. I feel confident about that.

**Julia:** Although we both have a "P" in our name.

\$: Why do some people call you the Martha Stewart of punk rock?

**Julia:** Because I have a sewing machine that I happen to be able to make things on. Unfortunately, because I'm capable of doing that, now all of the sudden I'm



**Roger:** All of them.

**John:** "Yo Yo," Bipolar Girl," "Salt Lake Girls."

**Gish:** "Fag Song"?

**John:** "Angel Baby," although that was not an original.

**Julia:** I don't think most people have ever heard that one.

**Gish:** I wrote lyrics for a love song and John refused to sing them on the new record.

**John:** That's because it had reference to being inside you. It was a little too personal and I told him he should save it for his solo debut. Along with Julia's song about going down and pleasuring one's self on the com-

puter after one's spouse has fallen asleep. there was an Internet thing going on, but at the time I didn't have a computer. I heard about some stuff that was said in cyberspace. It sounded pretty bad. I never got to read it, but I heard it was about the Smut Peddlers.

**Gish:** I don't think there's any bad blood. I'd say there's no blood. I mean I've seen all of them and none of them attacked me, and they all said hello. I don't know if it's personal or a thing that's in the past. It's just something that still gets dragged around. It's kind of a past thing.

**Roger:** If they ever want to play softball with us, we're ready.

\$: Why softball?

Martha Stewart. I can make a pillow and curtains and a Halloween costume that I'm quite proud of.

**Gish:** I like the traveling punk pillow myself.

**Julia:** I'm going to get rich quick off of punk rock bondage pillows. E-mail me and I'll give you all the details.

\$: How does it work?

**Julia:** I'm still working on the patent so I don't want to divulge too much in print before I cash in.

\$: Will people be able to purchase the pattern at Sears someday?

**Julia:** Probably Simplicity.

**Gish:** Or you can to [www.punkypillow.com](http://www.punkypillow.com)

and order it there.

**Julia:** No shit.

**§:** Or if you have an extra \$25 you can order a punk rock sock monkey. (Seriously, you can at [www.buyolympia.com](http://www.buyolympia.com), but why you'd want to is another thing altogether.)

**Julia:** I hate those things. Those things have frightened me since I was a kid. My mom's friend, Gladys, this 300 lb. mannequin-looking woman gave one to me and my mom made me keep it in my room. It terrified me.

**Gish:** That's what happened.

**Julia:** You know what they are?

**Gish:** No.

**Julia:** Brown tube sock with a beanie and big red lips.

**Gish:** I think when I was a kid I poked a little hole in mine and fucked it.

**Julia:** Along with the mustard jar.

**Gish:** Hey, wherever it fit.

**§:** You fucked a mustard jar?

**Gish:** Well, when you're a kid – at least me

**§:** Caught by the police.

**John:** Yes, that is true. At least a couple of times. One day I painted my steering wheel red. We were playing the Doheny Saloon, and I had to drive my truck down there.

**Julia:** Didn't they pull you over because they thought you were drunk?

**John:** I don't remember.

**Julia:** Didn't they give you a field sobriety test?

**John:** I don't know, but I got red paint all over my hands.

**Roger:** How about the time you lost an \$800 surfboard off the top of your car.

**John:** That was also another night at the Doheny Saloon, this time on the way home. I had a brand new ten-foot Hap Jacobs longboard strapped to the roof. We were leaving the saloon, and there was a drunk in front of the car. I got out to move him out of the way, and I had a cup of tonic water that looked like an alcoholic beverage. There were police all over, and we drove away quickly to avoid police harassment, and I had neglected to check the stupid soft surfboard racks. The board was sucked off at about eighty miles per hour and reduced to a pile of Styrofoam chips. We looped back and I got off the first available off-ramp and I heard something go klunk-klunk. We went back. I was going to go back on the freeway and salvage the fins but drunks were going a hundred miles per hour and it was too dangerous. It felt like a death in the family. Terrible feeling. It still makes me cringe.

**§:** John, when are you going to begin your career as a Tijuana radio DJ.

**John:** I haven't heard yet.

**§:** Were you ever a DJ?

**John:** No, but I would like to be.

**§:** Because there's at least one time during every set where you bust out your DJ schtick.

**Roger:** That's more of a game show thing.

**John:** I'd like to be a TV game show host or voice over commercial guy like that guy Don Pardo on *Saturday Night Live*. But I'd love to be a disc jockey where I could play

all the shit I want to hear. I really like Reverend Dan on KXLU. Everyday when he's on, it makes me feel like a million bucks because he plays music that I like. But when I'm back at work where other people control the radio, I have to listen to KROQ, Power 106, KZLA, and they all fucking suck. Reverend Dan is God's gift to mankind as far as disc jockeys go.

**§:** Does the new album have a title?

**Julia:** Not yet. We're still thinking.

**Gish:** But it seems like it should have the word "dead" in it because every song has somebody dying. A lot of death.

**Pete:** Gish, did something happen while

you were at the dentist the other day?

**Gish:** Um, yeah. I'm a recovering drug addict, and I haven't done drugs in over ten years. Other than caffeine, nicotine, aspirin. I had to get a rotten molar and a few wisdom teeth pulled out. My dentist was afraid to pull it, so they sent me to a guy who will knock you out to do it. I remember I was sitting there talking to him, and I was watching him load the stuff in my arm. The next thing I remember is waking up, and there's a nose air thing hanging over me and I asked the nurse what it was and she explained that it was nitrous but now it's oxygen. I started flipping out, demanding that they turn it on. They dragged me out, and I told everyone there they were fucked for turning it off. It just goes to show what an asshole I am when I'm fucking loaded.

**Pete:** John, I was watching a Smut Peddlers video and there's this footage of you chugging Arm & Hammer baking soda. What's that all about?

**John:** I think I have a herniated esophageal sphincter, which produces a gastroesophageal reflux disorder.

**Pete:** Layman's terms?

**John:** Commonly known as GERD.

**§:** GERD?

**John:** Intense heartburn after virtually every meal. Tums and Rolaids are ineffective. Zantac, Tagamet, all that crap doesn't phase me, but Arm & Hammer baking soda works immediately. I hear it has bad effects.

**Julia:** What kind of effects?

**John:** People at work say that shit is going to kill me.

**§:** How much do you eat. Do you mix it?

**John:** If I'm at home, I mix it in a glass of water. When I'm at work, I carry a baggie that looks like an eight ball of blow that I carry with me at all times. If I don't have it, I'm fucked and I have to go get it.

**Julia:** I remember the first time I saw him do it. It was in Arizona. John and Roger showed up. They flew in and me and Gish drove in. We met at this all-you-can-eat Chinese restaurant. And John had what? Twelve plates of food?

**Roger:** Twelve fucking plates.

**Julia:** And he ate every single bite.

**Roger:** We were waiting outside for him for like an hour. Every time we went in he'd have another plate. John finally came out, and he was so full and sick he could barely even walk. He showed up at the club, and he had baking soda all over his head.

**Julia:** We start the set and John is all turned around and I didn't know what he was doing and when he starts singing this cloud of white dust just came out. He looked like a smoke machine. In between songs he'd try to take a swig or whatever and when he started singing there'd be this big puff of dust.

**John:** I usually forget to bring the baking soda to the gigs because I'm nervous or something, and I have to run and get it at the last minute. And when they're up on stage, they...



and a couple other kids I knew – you just go around the house as soon as you discover you got a boner and start fucking anything that your dick will fit into. Girls, mustard jars, it didn't matter.

**§:** John, what was your first sexual experience?

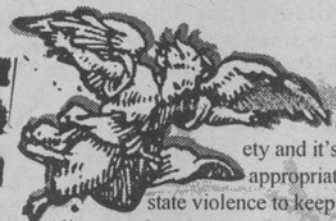
**Gish:** With another person.

**John:** Reading a *Playboy* magazine while I was three or something. I don't know. I guess my first sexual experience was getting born.

**§:** Is it true you were literally caught red-handed?

**John:** With what?

# GOOD RIDDANCE



Santa Cruz's Good Riddance always surprise me. I've liked each of the five albums they've put out over the last ten years. After each one was released, they'd spend quality time in high rotation – yet their latest, *Symptoms of a Leveling Spirit* is my runaway favorite. Lead singer and songwriter, Russ Rankin, has matured. He's become less blatantly pissed, stabbing, and stomping, and both more cerebral and cement in his convictions – which have become as well informed as they've become passionate. Talking to him, he emanated the over-riding sense of a person who's taken some long, unflattering looks at himself and the world around him, and instead of withering in self-pity or nihilism decided not to be consumed by the darkness. Not to sound like a pansy – we're still talking punk rock here – but Good Riddance, as a band, has blossomed with their latest release.

It's a little too easy to put this all on Russ' shoulders, since he writes most of the words, and with him stride-by-stride since 1990 in this miniature musical democracy has been guitarist Luke, whose style of playing has been copied so many times the last decade, in a better world he'd be cashing royalty checks for copyright infringement (if guitar sounds could be legally protected). To counter Russ' mind is bassist Chuck's ass. His ability to fart on command often silence very noisy rooms for the amusement of all. Chuck's the comic relief, the man in a lady's body stocking, suggestive banana, and mis-applied makeup. It's a strange balance, yet it works well. In no small part, *Symptoms* is a markedly different Good Riddance album. I think this is due to the most recent addition to the band, drummer Dave Wagenschutz. He's a thinking man's fighter of a drummer, pure no-shit attack who can midtempo into a song and give it breathing room and atmosphere. (He was in both Kid Dynamite and Lifetime, two other bands I highly recommend.)

So, if you don't mind a little romance in your revolution, a little thinking in your cultural battles where hardcore wrestles with punk and they both pin a little bit of pop to the mat, you can't do much better than Good Riddance.

Interview in Santa Cruz with Good Riddance's Russ Rankin by ReTodd  
Pictures by ReTodd

**Todd:** I have not a trick question, but a trivia question. What do Good Riddance, Michael Bolton, Link Wray, and Carcass all have in common?

**Russ:** None of have sold more records than Sum 41?

**Todd:** Probably true.... But you're also all vegetarian or vegans. Just a fun fact... So, the title of your new album, *Symptoms of a Leveling Spirit*, that's a James Madison quote, isn't it?

**Russ:** From what I gather.

**Todd:** What does it mean? It doesn't seem very obvious.

**Russ:** I heard it on a Noam Chomsky double CD that I have from various speaking engagements of

his. What he was talking about, when the United States was founded and the origins of our democracy were being discussed, weighed, and decided on, the idea was that the power should reside in the hands of the wealthy, who they called "the more capable set of men." What Chomsky was saying was that's sort of a messed up idea and that's sort of how the world is today. But, at the time, they had good intentions. They thought that the rich were going to be these benevolent rulers that were going to oversee the building of democracy and were going to look out for all of the masses who didn't know any better and would hurt themselves if they tried to get involved. I think that's where it began, but the quote means James Madison, among others, is worried that if people found out that they weren't being included in the public arena and they weren't being included in the decision making, that they might get upset and want to press their agendas. This was the 18th Century. He was already worried about what he called "symptoms of a leveling spirit," which means that if a small group of disenfranchised people rise up, another small group – who up to that point have been isolated – will see it and be empowered by it and it will spread. And that needed to be avoided. That was also the beginnings of the public relations industry in this country because it's

a free society and it's not really appropriate to call in state violence to keep people in line, so other ways needed to be found – ways that appear to be peaceful and happy, but in reality, you end up with television and the corporate-owned media keeping people pacified and in line, whereas in a fascist society, or a more totalitarian society, will call in state violence for that type of stuff.

**Todd:** Who would be the most anti-Madisonian founding father of that time? Did any of them dissent and say, "James, this isn't going to work out. We need a more populace government?"

**Russ:** I don't really know. I don't pretend to be an expert on this stuff, but from what I've heard and what I've read, Thomas Jefferson was the only guy who had a sort of different opinion, but it didn't drive him so hard that he was going to fight to the death for it. I think that the people who made the laws, the people who were involved with all of this, were mostly rich, white landowners who didn't want to pay their taxes to England.

**Todd:** Backpedaling on personal history of Good Riddance. How do you come to an astute understanding of American history all the way from your demo tape, which had the song, "Free Sex"?

**Russ:** Yeah. That's horrible.

**Todd:** Where did the transformation come from?

**Russ:** Growing up. Becoming more interested in some things and less interested in others. Just me,

personally. That song that you were talking about was written about a girl that I went to high school with who was famous for getting drunk at parties and then finding some bedroom and dudes would line up (and she would have sex with them) and all week at school she'd wonder why everyone was laughing and snickering at her. It's sad, now that I think about it, but at the time I thought it was humorous enough to put it into a song. If I had it to do over again, I wouldn't.

**Todd:** What was the tone of the song?

**Russ:** Pretty crass and vulgar. That was an era for me where punk had to have some shock value to it, had to be disturbing and inappropriate. That's what I was into.

**Todd:** Regionally, like RKL?

**Russ:** It was worse than that. The lyrical sensibilities were bordering on The Mentors. Pretty bad. I would never write a song like that today. (The Mentors had songs such as "Golden Showers," "Clap Queen," and "Service Me Or Be Smacked.")

**Todd:** Do you guys ever play it now?

**Russ:** No. There's a few people who are old enough and when they come to our shows, they yell it out to embarrass us. That's what you get. You can't hide from it. When you're around as long as we've been, or the



name's been, you're invariably going to have stuff that you wish you hadn't said or hadn't done. Even on our first release on Fat (*For God and Country*), there's a song called "Man of God" that takes a

depending on when you ask him, he'll tell you a different story about it.

**Todd:** What's the best thing you've ever received from another band? Either a gift or opportunity...

**Russ:** Yeah. We recorded about eight songs about a year ago that those guys are just sitting on. Chuck and Craig pretty much run the band, so who knows what'll happen.

## The worst is if you're quiet and people presume that you're a dick.

pretty hard view against organized religion and I don't think I'd write that song today, and not because I'm born again or anything. What other people do to get themselves through the day, faith-wise, I don't think it's my job to criticize or put them down any more. I used to think it was. It's a matter of just growing and learning new things. Tolerance changes. Stuff like that.

**Todd:** Going off of that a little bit, what authors have you adopted directly into your song lyrics?

**Russ:** One time, on our first album and our first seven inch, a song called "Decoy," the first verse deals with the futility of war and how we blind ourselves to it because we feel it's necessary to achieve our goals and the second verse deals with the meat and dairy industry and the slaughter of animals and how we blind ourselves to it because we think we need to have it. We would be horrified if someone did that to our family dog, but if it's a cow we don't know, it's OK. The chorus that binds them together - "custom will reconcile people to any atrocity" is a George Bernard Shaw quote. I put it in a little parenthesis on the lyrics sheet.

**Todd:** What instrument did you play in your high school band?

**Russ:** I played snare drum. I was in the marching band.

**Todd:** Coming from a purely fan-based view of Good Riddance, seeing the band perform, talking to you a couple times over the years, and seeing your video ("Exposed! 1994-1999"), how did you and Chuck meet? You seem like very, very different people. You seem almost shy, very reserved, and Chuck's a prankster.

**Russ:** I met Chuck when he joined the band. Luke and I were the guys who have been in this band together since 1990. And Chuck we met in 1994 when we needed a bass player. He's from Long Beach. He moved up here because his girlfriend that he was living with was going to the university up here, so Chuck moved up to Santa Cruz and was working at Kinko's. Luke went in to make flyers for "bass player needed." Chuck conned us into believing he was a bass player, and, initially, his bass playing skills were suspect. Now he's really, really good.

**Todd:** Do you think that's why he got naked a lot? To distract from his lack of skill?

**Russ:** Well, he's just that kind of guy. Really gregarious, really outgoing, always like to be the center of attention. He's goofy. His mannerisms, he can make you laugh. He's a character.

**Todd:** He has a soft spot on his head, too, doesn't he?

**Russ:** Yeah, he's got a bump or something. And

**Russ:** I think that when No Use For A Name took us to Europe for our very first time. *For God and Country* had just come out. We had never done any tour longer than ten days. It was supposed to be a



month tour and it ended up only being a couple weeks because everybody got sick and we had to can it, but just for us to get over there and get to play - you know, this was in '95 and Fat was really blowing up - and No Use just put out *Leche Con Carne*, which was doing really, really well, so their shows were huge. They were good shows for us to be able to go out and play. Some kids knew who we were just because Fat has that kind of reach - people had heard of our name. None of us thought we'd ever get over there. Sick Of It All took us to Australia and have taken us to a lot of places and have done so much for our band that we'll never be able to repay them.

**Todd:** Speaking of Sick Of It All, aren't you in a side band with the singer, Craig?

**Russ:** Yeah, I play bass in Creep Division and Chuck plays guitar.

**Todd:** Do you have only one self-titled release?

**Todd:** How does it differ from Good Riddance?

**Russ:** It's just cheap. That's the only way I can describe it.

**Todd:** Describe cheap.

**Russ:** We wanted to sound like if you went to a VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) show in 1984. We wanted to sound like the third band on a six band bill, just because we all have fond memories of those kinds of bands; one take live recordings on really bad equipment, blown speakers, just cheap. It's fast. It's thrash.

Generic lyrics. It's just fun. When I play in that band, it reminds me of all the music I grew up listening to.

**Todd:** Like a clean release?

**Russ:** Yeah, and what's funny is people - maybe because of who's in the band - but people really dig it. A lot of older people have told me, "This music makes me feel like I'm in high school again." Fast, stupid wind-up monkey beat, generic breakdowns, and singalongs. It's really funny.

**Todd:** What's been the oddest mechanical failure the band has had on tour?

**Russ:** We had an axle freeze up on us.

**Todd:** While driving?

**Russ:** Yeah. The last vehicle we actually owned had "Desert Tours" painted on the side and it had a flamingo.

**Todd:** Like an airport shuttle bus?

**Russ:** Yeah. We had that thing in the summer of '99, our US tour. It'd been giving us trouble all tour. When you buy a vehicle as a band, what we've learned the hard way - you invariably end up going cheap because you don't have a lot of money. You buy something that's used, it's got a lot of miles on it, and you're stuck with it as it declines. This was the last hurrah for this thing and we'd spent all tour getting up early and taking it to mechanics and have it break down. We

were on our way on that bridge that goes over the water right before you get to New Orleans. There's no place to pull over and the axle just froze up and the transmission went out, both at the same time. We never drove it again. We had it towed and we talked the opening band that night into buying it.

**Todd:** Why?

**Russ:** They were from Louisiana.

**Todd:** At least they didn't have to tour in it.

**Russ:** We haven't had anything really weird. It's always a transmission, alternator, battery terminal.

**Todd:** Tires blowing, weird, cancer-looking nodes popping out of them?

**Russ:** We've had huge tumors, like big bubbles, come out of tires. Those are cool.

**Todd:** Is there any indication that you have an FBI file?

**Russ:** No.

**Todd:** Why so emphatically no?

**Russ:** I'm kind of upset about that.

**Todd:** Have you ever inquired?

**Russ:** No. I feel like we're not that high profile enough to be that dangerous. By dangerous, I mean danger to any kind of doctrine that's going to try to close up kids' minds and teach people to be in fear and stuff. We've never seen ourselves as any threat to anybody, really. A lot of times, people have written us letters and kids have talked to me. "Because of your lyrics, I looked at something in a different way," or "I got interested in some weird line of socio-political work." I've had people who are our age (around 30), but have listened to us for a long time and have listened to punk since they were kids, who are teachers now, who are teaching my lyrics in their class, which is really, really weird.

**Todd:** That's great.

**Russ:** As far as an FBI file, I don't think so.

**Todd:** I was thinking of Howard Zinn, and how he had one, and he's such a soft spoken guy.

**Russ:** Howard Zinn: he's no joke, though. Everybody knows who he is and he's been on the

straight through, no matter who's song it is. To me, that's more effective songwriting. Each song sticks with a theme, and especially if I'm writing vocal melodies when I'm writing a song on my guitar at home, it's much easier that way.

**Todd:** What's the number one fear in your life – something that you've been struggling with for awhile?

**Russ:** I've got so many fears.

**Todd:** The reason I'm asking is that I suppose – in your case – that fear overcome becomes courage.

**Russ:** I have fear about what will happen if there is no more Good Riddance. We're all getting older. I have fear about who will I be, what will I do? I dropped out of high school. I never went to college. I have no skills. I'm a bum that got really lucky. What will I do? I have fear about my primary relationship with my girlfriend. I fear that our band will stop and will not have a relevant place in the big scheme of things, which is nothing I can do about. It's tough to not worry about things that I have no control over. What I've practiced doing is not mak-

## I almost wish that I could watch "Friends" and forget all of my problems.



front lines for a long, long time. Good Riddance, in our wildest dreams, could never hope to be that potent. And another thing, we get pegged a lot of times as a political band, but really, we're not. I'm interested in that stuff a lot more than the other guys. A lot more. They put up with it. There's aspects of it that I think that they find appealing. I think they'd rather be in a band that had something relevant to say than just about "the girl at 7-11 who won't call me back" kind of songs all of the time. But as far as that goes, that's my struggle. My lyrics are what I'm really interested in. They all read them and they've got to OK them, but to paint us all with the same brush, judging from my lyrics, I think would be – it's not surprising it happens – but it's sort of a misrepresentation of the band as a whole.

**Todd:** What percentage, roughly, of the lyrics do you write?

**Russ:** 100%.

**Todd:** And the musical notes themselves?

**Russ:** Luke writes three or four songs a record. In the old days, we tried to jam and come up with riffs and parts and then tape and glue parts on top of parts and then you have a song. I've never been a fan of that style of song writing, but it got us where we were going. Probably our second album (*A Comprehensive Guide to Moderne Rebellion*), I got the idea that when writing a song, it'd be a good idea to have a beginning, a middle, and an end so the song flows. So that's what we started doing – bringing songs that are as finished as they can be to practice. When I'm at home, I've got a song, I show it to the guys – the bare bones of it – sing them some sort of melody, even though I don't have lyrics, just sing something so they'll know how the vocals will sound. If they like it, then we start working on it. Then people are going to add their two cents or suggest a change here. It almost never goes

ing decisions based on fear, but making decisions in spite of fear. Just do the thing.

Don't worry about it. It's hard, but I'm getting better at it.

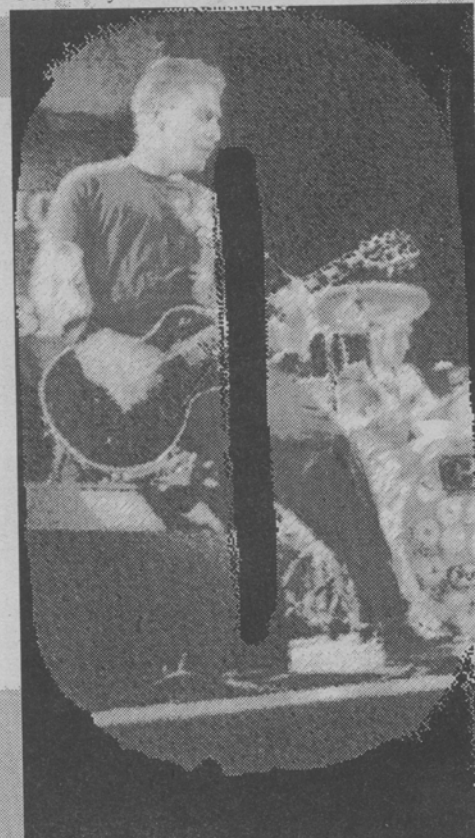
**Todd:** When was your first tattoo?

**Russ:** 1990.

**Todd:** What was it?

**Russ:** The Statue of Liberty dumping out a bottle of beer. Upper right arm.

**Todd:** Why that?



**Russ:** 'Cause I would go to AA meetings. I still do. And someone had drawn on the chalkboard, with colored chalk, the Statue of Liberty: a really cool rendition of it, in front of an American flag, but instead of holding a torch, she was holding a bottle of beer upside down with a drop coming out of it and I thought it was a really powerful image. I like Americana anyways. Stars and stripes. Something about it appeals to me, not really in a patriotic way, but in an artistic way. And a friend of mine already had it on his leg, so I decided to get the same thing.

**Todd:** Are you happy with it still?

**Russ:** Yeah. Some of the work's a little shoddy, but I don't have any tattoos that are so badly done that I'm embarrassed about them and I don't have any tattoos that I regret. Fortunately, I wanted to get tattooed when I was really young, and I would have probably gotten bad tattoos done really badly by someone who was really drunk and I'd probably be really drunk, and I waited until I was 22 to get my first tattoo. What I do now, if I really want to get a tattoo, I wait about a month and a half to see if I still want it, then go.

**Todd:** What was the last letter that you received that totally knocked your socks off?

**Russ:** I get really cool mail from kids. Sometimes six or seven page letters, and one was from a girl, who, there's a song of ours called "Favorite Son," and it deals with if somebody is really close to you is taking drugs and is really depressed and probably suicidal and how sad it would be to lose them, but realizing at the same time that there's not a lot that you can do. That helplessness. That's what the song's about. And this girl – the song just rang true for her in her relationship about her father so much that it prompted her to write this crazy, amazing letter. When we played Minnesota, she was at the show, and she's like, "I wrote that letter. It's so cool that you wrote back," and she wanted a hug and everything. That kind of stuff happens pretty frequently, but this was a really cool letter and it was one of the few times I get to actually meet the person, too. To know that you can touch somebody's life, in what I hope is a positive way, is really, really cool and it's something I take for granted too much and will look back on some day as a really great opportunity because that's what bands have done for me. I am who I am today, a lot, because of the bands I listened to and the lyrics that I read.

**Todd:** Did you ever write any bands?

**Russ:** That's one thing I never would have done. So, when people take the time to do that, it's extra cool because I never took the time to write the bands that I liked, that I still like.

**Todd:** Have you ever had to share the stage with a band that you ideologically were opposed to? I'm thinking of huge festivals in Europe, that sort of thing, like if Skrewdriver did a reunion without their lead singer or something.

**Russ:** We've been on larger shows with bands that could, maybe, be borderline racist bands, but would never say they were and I could be totally wrong and we've also been on bills with bands that we knew on the bill that none of us like at all and are completely opposed to, but that was just the thing. They were just on the show. Most of the time it doesn't happen. At this point, we're really able to

pick and chose a lot, either bands we take out with us, or when bands offer us stuff, we can say yes or no, so we're pretty fortunate.

**Todd:** What person or band do you like, but they're offensive as hell? I'm thinking of the picture of Chuck in the tray card of *Ballads of the Revolution* with GG Allin.

**Russ:** I think Chuck's the only person in our band that likes GG Allin. I couldn't stand the music. I mean, god, there's some catchy Skrewdriver songs, but I don't own any of their records and never would. Sometimes you hear music before you really understand what it's about, what the person's saying. More so, I think I like a lot of bands that don't have a lot to say about anything, but I just like their music. I'm not going to go out and buy a record of a band that's patently racist or sexist or homophobic. A lot of the punk that I listened to in the early '80s had some homophobic overtones. A lot of the LA stuff.

**Todd:** Descendents. (The song, "I'm not a Loser," off of *Milo Goes to College* can be read a couple ways: "Your pants are too tight, you fucking homo. You suck, Mr. Buttfuck. You don't belong here. Go away, you fucking gay. I'm not a loser!" In the context of the entire song and the times (1983), though, it's apparently name calling. Sure, it's a not the most sensitive choice of words, but not a call to gay bashing. The preceding lines are LA-style class war: "I'm working sixty a week. You think that life is really tough when your pappy won't buy you a brand new car? Take a girl out. She won't fuck you.")

**Russ:** Yeah, one of my favorite punk songs ever, is "No Way" and there's a kind of an objectionable line in there. ("I cannot live in a world this gay.") It's The Adolescents and I still think they're one of the best bands ever. I think it's just one of those things that if you ask those guys now, "Would you write that song differently?" Maybe they would say yeah. It's like our song, "Free Sex," it's kind of the same thing. You're young, you're pissed off. You just want to shock people and you're just writing these songs and you never know that...

**Todd:** People are actually going to be listening to you ten, fifteen, twenty years down the road.

**Russ:** That's another thing that's weirdly hard about writing songs. You don't realize when you were a small, local band like we were, and then suddenly you're a band that's on a world stage, even to a small extent like we are and everything you do is under a microscope. Suddenly, everything you write and say, you have to be held accountable for. That's hard to get used to.

**Todd:** Even stuff you try to control can be misinterpreted. I came across some internet stuff that accused Good Riddance of being a white power band - and the only "evidence" that was alluded to was that Chuck doesn't have any hair.

**Russ:** We've been accused of being the most outrageous things. The internet makes it even worse. I don't have a computer. I'm convinced because it's printed out in a font that it legitimizes rumors and innuendo and kids can pass it on to their friends. Since the internet came around, I've had more and more kids come up to me and ask the most outlandish things like, "I read that all you guys were really all women." It's upsetting. I have no control over it. All I can do is if people ask me about something, I can say, "No, that's not true." I've seen mes-

sage boards where people write crazy shit and sign it me, Russ from Good Riddance. I don't own a computer and I've never been on a message board in my life, but how can you stop that and how can you stop hundreds of kids from thinking that's really me? The problem I have with the internet is that there's no accountability. People can talk all the shit that they want and never have to back it up or be called on it and any time you're in a situation like that, it just makes for trouble.

**Todd:** To be fair, the album I'm citing is *Operation Phoenix*, you list organizations like PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) and The Santa Cruz AIDS project to show your support, but why do you list your sponsors on there, too? Is that part of the music business? I'm pointing no fingers, but it's conspicuous that Porn Star clothing gets a mention on an album that has a song, "Eighteen Seconds" which rallies against domestic violence. I'm not saying there's a direct correlation between domestic violence and pornography, but the logic seems a tad fuzzy.

**Russ:** I've been asked this question about a thousand times and I was the one guy that didn't want to put any of those people on the record because I thought it was corny. I was outvoted and in the minority opinion. In our band, we vote on things, but I'm the guy that does all of the interviews. It's hard not getting furious when I keep on having to answer these questions and I didn't want it there in the first place. A lot of times when clothing companies sponsor you, they ask you to list them and to some degree, I think there's nothing wrong with that. Porn Star, basically, Sean, our old drummer, was friends with the guy. Sean got most of the Porn Star stuff. After awhile we all lost interest in it and didn't want to wear it. And Puma. Sean and Luke wore Puma shoes. I never had any. That whole thing is just a mess. It's a product of the state of punk these days that I thought we'd never have to worry about. It's one of those things that it happens - kids ask me for autographs - I wish I would have been through some program to prepare me mentally for dealing with something that I never in a million years would think I would have to do.

**Todd:** It's a brand new wrinkle.

**Russ:** It's really ironic that it was the most crass flag waving for corporate sponsorship on *Operation Phoenix* because it hasn't been that bad before or since. What we do now - a big part of being in a band our size, that's good - is strings, sticks, cymbals, and drum heads are much cheaper. This is good when you tour as much as we do. And people can call me a sellout 'til I die and I don't care.

**Todd:** Tools of the trade.

**Russ:** And I'll put those companies on our records. But usually, we'll put the guy or girl's name - who-

ever the person is who helped us out, like Greg at Ernie Ball strings. Kurt Soto at Vans. We were on the Warped Tour in 2000 and every couple weeks they'd have what they called a shoe drop. Vans would have tons of shoes and all of the bands would just go and pillage but they never had any vegan shoes that we wanted. And Kurt, who was the Vans rep on tour, super cool guy, and he kept on going. "Dude, I'm so sorry. I'll try to get you some Geoff Rowleys. They're backordered." We're all, "Don't worry about it. We'll live without these shoes." He kept apologizing the whole tour. We never got them. The last day of the tour, he gave me his card. "When you get home, call me. I swear to God, I'll get you these shoes." So I called him when I got home and he sent me a big box of shoes. So, on this record, we put Kurt Soto at Vans. He's a real person that we've talked to and he totally hooked us up. So that's the kind of stuff I don't mind doing. Whoever's our liaison on these different companies that have been cool, we don't mind putting them in the thanks list. Because we like the people, then putting their product in there is OK. I don't want to put corporate logos in our things. A company like Porn Star - I think I had one pair of Porn Star shorts, initially. I'm guilty by association on the record, like you said, but Porn Star's not a company that I deal with any more.

Something got thrown at me and I wasn't prepared for it, but I



n't prepared for it, but I had to do something right then. Different bands handle it differently. Some bands care. Some bands don't care. Some bands want to have the glory of the big sponsorship but don't want to get asked about it. It's kind of a mess. Any time that that kind of stuff - corporate sponsorship, corporate owned media, big business - getting their claws into this scene, it's going to create some weird, weird, really ironic situations.

**Todd:** Have you ever seriously contemplated writing a book?

**Russ:** All the time.

**Todd:** Any headway on it?

**Russ:** I'm lazy and have no direction. I've kept tour journals as far back as 1997, but my band mates would kill me if I publish that stuff. I read *Get in the Van* by Henry Rollins. It's so powerful but at the same time it seems so over-dramatic, really, really self-involved. It makes for interesting reading, but I don't know. Bill Stephenson (one time drummer of Black Flag, current drummer of The Descendents and All, also partial owner of The Blasting Room recording studio in Colorado), I had the book with me, and we were in the studio and I was like, "Do you want to check this out?" And he's like, "I was there. I don't have to read a book." I'd be like, "Is this true?" All this dramatic me-against-



the-world; the way that Henry writes. And Bill was like, "Oh, that's Henry. He just thought that everybody was out to get him." Bill's got a much more laid back take on life and some of my stuff. I totally go for Rollins and it's over-dramatic and it's just really self-centered and I don't want – some of it's cool to read, but I don't want to put it out there. I've also done some poetry and stuff and I've also thought I'd write a book – at the time that *Operation Phoenix* was being written – I was probably in a really low point in my life. I was super, super depressed. I was suicidal. Isolating all the time. Didn't want to be around any more. Really kind of gnarly. And when I read those lyrics from that record, it sort of bums me out that I was ever that self-centered and just so unhappy. It made for a really powerful, pissed-off record, but I would kind of like to write about that period – how I got there and how I came out of it.

**Todd:** On the converse – do you think if you're happy you can make a really good record?

**Russ:** That's interesting, because I thought it would be hard to. When we did our EP (*The Phenomenon of Craving*), all of those songs were written during a really happy period for me. A really good time. Actually, the last record, too. It's no so much pissed off. It's a little more cerebral and a little more reflective, lyrically. I've got enough things that I find upsetting or that I've got specific opinions or ideas about that keep me on the punk side of the world that I never see that as a problem. I can't see myself writing a straight pop song. We've written some really pop-oriented songs – "Jeannie," that's a song about a girl and that's about as far as we'll go. I don't think we'll ever have a song like that again.

**Todd:** I have a specific question about lyrics. Explain the line, "Titillated insects too complacent to complain." Why refer to insects?

**Russ:** That line is written from the view of the James Madisons of today. People who were kept complacent and afraid, in my opinion, by entertainment. Titillated by the Super Bowl and MTV, and pay-per-view and organized sports. People get wrapped up in that type of stuff, and sitcoms, and then they don't worry about the big picture. People are polarized and separated from one another. It defeats communities. It defeats any type of kindred spirit. If you watch *Cops* enough times, you'll be convinced that every one of your neighbors is out to kill you so you'll never leave your house.

**Todd:** Sean, the guy I do this magazine with, made this point. He doesn't follow Julia Roberts any and he doesn't hardly watch TV, so how in the fuck does he know what her newest hairstyle is? He doesn't even care, but entertainment culture is so pervasive.

**Russ:** You can't just say that all entertainment is bad, but I think it definitely serves a purpose. I think it's no accident that it's like that. Watching the news in the US about the stuff that's going on in Afghanistan right now is really, really interesting. We left for Europe about ten days after 9/11. We were there the whole time when the bombing started and it's a way different slant. It usually has been. If I want to get the real scoop on something, I'm going to read the *Manchester Guardian* or some other newspaper that's not from here. Because, for some reason, American media, almost exclusively the mainstream media, the big papers, to me, I think

they're full of shit. They do their part to keep people afraid and marginalized and unsure and clinging to really superficial slogans and ideas which keep us from rising up, like the James Madison thing, and thinking, "Wait a minute. This really isn't true. This really isn't happening." When you hear George Bush Jr. say, "We're going to get the evil," it sounds like a sixth grader talking about the guys that took his lunch money. How do you qualify evil ones?

What about all of the SS guys that the CIA employed the day after the armistice in World War II? What about all of the other crazy fascist crooks that our country has employed to do our dirty work for us? It's one of those things that people like me spend a lot of time thinking about. I almost wish that I didn't know it. I almost wish that I could watch "Friends" and forget all of my problems. I watch hockey a lot. It helps me.

**Todd:** How far does your hockey obsession go?

The only thing I know about the sport is the Hanson Brothers (The band Nomeansno's alter egos).

Are you really fighting for a mullet and a beard?

**Russ:** No. Mullets are kind of like late '80s for hockey. If you watch the movie "Youngblood," that was the high point of mullets in hockey. My hockey obsession is pretty deep. I play in a league. On satellite, I watch hockey every day. Through the band, I've got friends on three NHL teams now. One, a really good friend. So I get free tickets and get to hang out with these people and they like our music. That's been really cool, getting a chance to meet them. It's weird how it works. I'm totally in awe and hanging out with someone who plays in the National Hockey League, but they want to know what it's like to tour Europe and they want to know – to people who don't do this, it holds some air of unobtainability. It's some separate thing that they don't know about.

**Todd:** Or a romance with the idea of taking music on the road.

**Russ:** If I get two tickets to a hockey game, he's saving me \$300. If I get him into a show, I'm saving him ten.

**Todd:** From the times I've met you, you seem like a very reclusive guy; introspective. How did you decide to become the most obvious, outspoken member for a punk rock band? Was it difficult or is it sort of an alter ego?

**Russ:** I was the guy that didn't know how to play anything when the band started. That's how it happened.

**Todd:** Did you have any difficulty singing in front of people?

**Russ:** The first couple times we played I was really, really drunk. That helped. After that, it was a little bit difficult. And then, when the Fat thing happened, getting in front of some bigger crowds was sort of strange. The very first time Fat Mike (owner of Fat Records and lead singer/guitarist of NOFX) ever saw us play, was when we supported NOFX. They did a three-night stand at the Roxy in LA. He'd signed us, put our stuff out, but he'd never seen us play. It was packed. It was pretty nerve wracking. I've got bad, bad self image a lot of times. I went through a period when I was a little heavier, was depressed, and just thinking about myself way, way too much and it didn't do me any good having to be singing in a band. But, I don't know. I'm getting better and not being that way. Being on tour and

doing what I have to do helps put me in situations where I need to be affirmative and outgoing and meet people. The girl that I'm seeing right now, too, she works in television. She's really outgoing and she's really good with people and being with her has helped me put myself out there a little bit more and not be the quiet guy as much. It's not in my nature to be loud and outgoing and gregarious, but I think I can find a happy medium where I can be social.

**Todd:** It's a long process.

**Russ:** The worst is if you're quiet and people presume that you're a dick.

**Todd:** How did you meet your fiancée – is it past the girlfriend stage?

**Russ:** Yeah, we're engaged. I met her on tour. She's Canadian. She used to work for this television station called Much Music out of Toronto and she had been a fan of the band before, I guess, and when we played through in '99. We went to do this in-store at a skate shop, go play a couple songs for free, and she was there to interview us. Our publicist had set it up but didn't tell us and she interviewed us and I thought she was really cute. So, we're riding to the venue after that and our publicist Melanie was in the van with us and I was just joking around and said, "That girl was really cute. I wonder if she's single." And Melanie's all, "I'll ask her. She's going to be at the show tonight." I was all, "You don't have to do that." Then I pretty much forgot about it. And then the next day, we were driving to Montreal, and I called Melanie to get the press info and guest list stuff, and she said, "The girl from Much Music is single and you should call her." And she gave me her number. I totally freaked out. So I called her and we just talked every day for two weeks on the phone for the rest of the tour but we never hung out. Then I bought a ticket and went back there when I got home and that was June of '99. Still together. Now she's moved to New York City and is working for another television station there and also working part time for the National Hockey League, doing a show called "Cool Shots."

**Todd:** Is Chuck's wife Canadian also?

**Russ:** Yes. And our t-shirt guy, Mario, married Chuck's wife's sister. Both of those girls are from Montreal. French Canadian.

**Todd:** A technical question. How does one order vegan food in Japan? Do you know Japanese?

**Russ:** The time we went, we had a guy that drove and interpreted for us. And we're going again in a couple weeks. It's pretty rough. I was surprised how hard it was to find stuff.

**Todd:** Seafood. It's a bunch of islands.

**Russ:** Everything has fish or fish sauce. We'll survive. We'll figure it out.

**Todd:** I had some questions for Chuck, but since he couldn't make it, maybe he's told you.

**Russ:** OK.

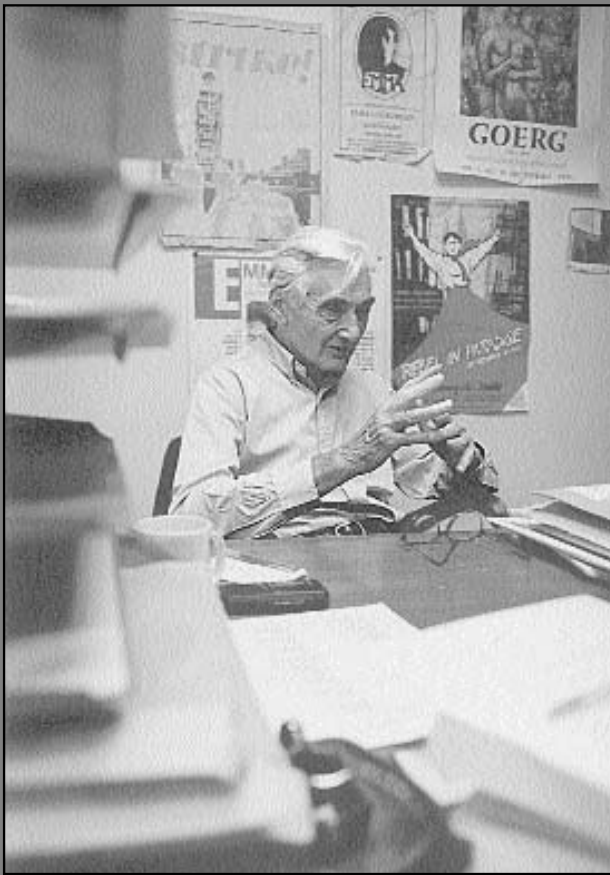
**Todd:** Is it true that when he was in high school, he used his own poo to write "anarchy" across the bathroom?

**Russ:** I don't know but I wouldn't put it past him.

**Todd:** Why, when he was growing up, was all the toilet paper in his house moist?

**Russ:** [chuckles] Let me call him. [gets Chuck on the phone.]

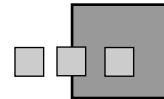
**Chuck:** I used to masturbate inside of them. 



# DON'T BE A CORONER OF HISTORY<sup>1</sup>

A HOWARD ZINN INTERVIEW  
BY SEAN CARSWELL AND  
TODD TAYLOR

INTRO BY SEAN CARSWELL  
PHOTOS BY TODD TAYLOR



A strange thing happens to you when you read *A People's History of the United States*. You come out feeling optimistic. You felt that, even if you can't change the world, you can change some things about it, and make things better in some small way. Beyond that, though, you felt like all of the people around you could do the same. You start recognizing the over-worked, frazzled teller at the local Bank of America as a woman with all the strength and potential of the women of the Lowell textile strikes. You start to pay more attention to things like full-time UPS workers risking everything to help get benefits for part-time workers. You see how that relates to you, how striking UPS workers are one more step on the same path that brought us health-care benefits, minimum wage, and child labor laws. You understand clearly that the people who bring positive change in our lives are not the President of the country or the CEO of large corporations. Positive change comes from the common people who stand back up every time they get pushed down.

Of course, this will lead you to hunting down everything you can find by or about Howard Zinn. The more you read by him, the more blown away you will become. One thing that will amaze you is his writing style, because, though he tackles some very complex issues, he has such a clear understanding of these issues that he's able to relate his understanding to his reader in a very fluid way. He's not light reading by any stretch of the term, but at the same time, he's very easy to read. His stories flow naturally. His points come across clearly, and the more you read of him, the more you come to recognize a very subtle, stabbing sarcasm. And he can be downright funny at times.

Equally as impressive as his writing, though, is his life itself, because Howard Zinn is genuinely a man whose life reflects his philosophies. He grew up in a cold water flat in Brooklyn. When he was eighteen, he went to work in a shipyard and there, he helped to organize his first union. He

fought in World War II. He enrolled as a freshman in college when he was in his mid-twenties. The GI Bill covered his tuition, but he spent most of his college years working the four-to-midnight shift in a warehouse to support his family. After receiving his doctorate in history from Columbia University, Zinn took a job teaching at Spelman College, an all-black, women's college in Atlanta. While he was there, Zinn was active in the civil rights movement, working closely with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, joining in on sit-ins, demonstrations, and organized efforts to help black southerners register to vote. His activities in the civil rights movement got him fired from Spelman. They also inspired J. Edgar Hoover to start what would become a lengthy FBI file on Zinn. After Spelman, Zinn took a job at Boston University. Undaunted, Zinn remained an activist and continued writing inflammatory articles for *The Nation*, *Harper's*, and *The New Republic*. He fought against the war in Vietnam. He battled a conservative administration at Boston University. After Daniel Ellsberg obtained classified documents regarding the US involvement in Vietnam, Zinn helped him edit and release the documents in a book called *The Pentagon Papers*. Zinn also wrote several books himself, the most well-known being *A People's History* (which has, to date, sold over 700,000 copies), but really, you can't go wrong with any of his books. And even now, at the age of seventy-nine, Zinn continues to be active, speaking out against the war in Afghanistan, publishing frequently in *Z Magazine* and *The Progressive*, and even writing the Colorado Coal Strike section of the recent book, *Three Strikes* (Beacon Press, 2001).

Six months ago, if you had asked me who I would interview if I could interview anyone alive, I would've told you Howard Zinn. Luckily, Todd and I were heading to Boston recently anyway, and Todd set this interview up. On October 18, we met up with Howard Zinn in his office at Boston University. Here's what we talked about.

**Sean:** In previous interviews, when you discuss important events that are overlooked by traditional history, you tend to bring up Shays' Rebellion and the Ludlow Massacre. Why these two particular events?

**Howard:** I guess Shays' Rebellion because it tells so much about the origin of the nation. Especially because the origins of the nation have been romanticized and the founding fathers have been deified. Almost every reference to the founding fathers is a reference which is done in awe. You have all of these biographies coming out about John Adams – a best selling biography – Thomas Jefferson, the *Founding Brothers*, all of these. And a very close look at Shays' Rebellion begins to dispel the idea that we had such a pure and good and democratic beginning. The fact is that our beginning was fraught with conflict. With class conflict. A class conflict that existed before the Revolutionary War for a hundred and fifty years and also manifested itself during the war with mutinies against Washington's army and after the war with Shays' Rebellion. Shays' Rebellion is important not just because it was a rebellion of small, poor farmers against the rich of Boston who were over-taxing and taking over their land, but because Shays' Rebellion, although it was repressed by force, put a scare into the founding fathers. If you read the letters that go back and forth after Shays' Rebellion, their letters – Jefferson, Madison, Washington – express worry about whether this new nation can handle future rebellions. There's one particular letter that I think of: General Knox, who was one of Washington's generals, wrote to Washington right after Shays' Rebellion, and he said, in effect, "These people who fought in the revolution think that, because they fought in the revolution, they deserve an equal share of the wealth in this country and we better do something." My point is, the Constitutional Convention was convened with Shays' Rebellion in mind and with fear of future rebellions. Fear of slave rebellions; fear of farmer's uprisings. Shays' Rebellion was not the only one, although it's the only one that's at all known. But there were similar farmer's rebellions in other states of the union. So this puts a new light on the Constitution and the founding fathers. And what I say is reinforced by what James Madison says in *The Federalist, Number Ten* when he's trying to persuade people in New York to ratify the Constitution. He says, "We're going to have factions based on who has property and who doesn't. These factions are going to come in conflict with one another. But if we set up this kind of government, we can control these factions." So that's why Shays' Rebellion is important.

The Ludlow Massacre and the Colorado Coal Strike are important because, Shays' Rebellion is one side of the spectrum in the late eighteenth century, and here in the twentieth century, you have the continuation of class conflict expressing itself very dramatically and violently in the Colorado Coal Strike. Basically, the same forces operate. By that, I mean you have poor people – at that time it was farmers, now it's miners – poor people being exploited and put upon by the wealthy classes and the government playing the role that was foreshadowed in the Constitution. That is, the government playing the role of maintaining law and order. They don't maintain law and order in Colorado when the miners are on the run, when the national guard is having its way, when the national guard is in control. But after the massacre of April, 1914, and the miners take up arms and they go on a rampage through the countryside, killing mine guards, blowing up mine properties, then, for the first time, the federal government – which has been standing by, watching – sends troops in to quash things. So both events are very revelatory about the nature of American society.

**Todd:** Going back further, what is the undisputed text of Columbus? Because I've read that you're a revisionist, but how can you be revisionist if you're using source text?

**Howard:** That's an interesting question. You become revisionist not because you're revising the original text, oddly enough. You become revisionist simply because you are going to the original sources and paying attention to them, whereas the standard histories are ignoring the original texts. They're ignoring what

Columbus said; they're ignoring what las Casas (Bartolome de las Casas, a Spanish priest who sailed with Columbus in 1498) said; they're ignoring what another priest, Montecino, said. And standard histories have made up their own heroic story of Columbus to suit the patriotic needs of the country. So when you go back to the originals and you bring it forth, they cry revisionist.

**Sean:** On *Booknotes*, you told the story of a teacher in California who was teaching your Columbus chapter from *A People's History* and she got in a lot of trouble for it. She was investigated by the school board. Do you remember how the case was resolved?

**Howard:** Yes, I do. She wrote to me and said that they'd set up an investigative committee because a parent got excited when she read the first chapter of my book. The parent said that the teacher must be a communist. I mean, who else would say such a thing about Christopher Columbus, our hero? [laughs] So the teacher wrote to me and said they'd set up this committee. Then, sometime later, she wrote to me and said, "The committee has talked to the students and so on, and the committee has exonerated me." The students told the committee that she had not only used my book, but she used the standard text, and the students liked my book better than the standard text. So she was free and clear. At the same time, I'd been invited to give a commencement address at Earl Warren College of the University of California, San Diego. So she said, "I see you're coming to San Diego and I'd like to throw a celebratory party to celebrate the fact that I was exonerated and the fact that you are here." So she was okay.

**Todd:** At the beginning of this century, Emma Goldman was being deported and was considered a true threat to American security. Are the forces that be so entrenched and so powerful that they don't pursue eradicating or deporting people such as yourself or Noam Chomsky? How can you explain the difference in attitude?

**Howard:** I don't think it's a difference in attitude. They would love to deport me and Noam Chomsky [laughs]. And sometimes there are times when I'd like to be deported. Please, send me to Paris. Send me to Tuscany. But, of course, Noam Chomsky and I were born in this country. Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman were born in Russia. They found a way. They challenged Emma Goldman's citizenship, so they had a legal basis for deporting her. They don't really have a legal basis for deporting me or Noam Chomsky, although they could have a legal basis for rounding us up and putting us in detention. But, there are certain things that they don't dare do because they have an idea of how far they can go without arousing too much opposition. Because civil liberties are still a touchy issue with the American people.

**Sean:** I've got another Emma Goldman question. Emma Goldman was twenty when the Wounded Knee Massacre occurred. How come, in everything I've ever read by her, I've never seen Emma Goldman discuss the Indians or Indian society?

**Howard:** That's an interesting point. Not only that, but you don't hear her – and this is a great big gap – talking about the race issue. And there were race riots that took place in this country. In East St. Louis in 1917, blacks were massacred. And she was in America. She wasn't on trial yet. What you say is true. You know, I'm going to investigate this, because you're right, I haven't seen any indication that she showed any interest in or wrote anything about Native Americans or blacks. I'm going to turn to THE source. The source is on the west coast at Berkeley. Do you know about the Emma Goldman Papers Project? A woman there named Candace Falk has been assembling an enormous archive of Emma Goldman-abilia. Really, everything that Emma Goldman ever wrote. Anything pertaining to Emma Goldman, so if anybody knows anything about this, she would. I'm going to ask her.

**Sean:** It just makes sense, when you look at the

construct of Plains Indians' societies, they were anarchists, essentially.

**Howard:** Yes. You would think that she'd be very conscious of the structure of Indian society and how closely they approximated an anarchist ideal.

Consider this: the radicals and progressives at that time, before the 1930s, I would say, they generally were white-oriented. They generally were not that conscious of the race question or of the Native American question. There were a handful of people, but the socialist party, for instance, did not make a vocal statement about the race issue. The IWW (International Workers of the World) took in blacks and whites and all sorts of people into the union, but I don't remember them taking a particular stand against the race riots at that time. That's a very important issue.

**Todd:** This is a really broad question, but which is larger, racism or classism?

**Howard:** It's complicated. They're intertwined. But if I have to say what is basic, really basic, it's class. Racism itself would not be enough to account for slavery. They're so deeply intertwined that, the truth is, neither one alone was enough to account for slavery. If slavery weren't profitable, the difference in color would not have led to slavery. So class and class interests were involved. But if they didn't have blacks from another culture who were helpless in this new world, and who were susceptible to racist ideas, then it would've been hard to have slavery, also. It's really hard to separate the two. But if I had to say which I think is fundamental, I would say it's class. If you look at the United States today and you think about what is crucial. And it's this: if we could solve the class question, if we could really create economic equality in the United States, I would say we would go eighty or ninety percent towards solving the problem of racism. Not totally. And the fact that I say "not totally" shows that it's not that simple. Racism is, in itself, a powerful force.

**Sean:** How does institutionalized racism work as a form of social control?

**Howard:** Well, there we get down to economics. Institutionalized racism means that, if you have an economic system in which there must be a lower class, there must be unemployed, there must be a large pool of people working at the worst jobs and the lowest paid jobs. Once you have a system like that, then the most likely people to be victims of that are people of color. That's where prejudice comes into the economic picture. And then that institutionalized racism serves as control over the lower classes. You control them by depleting them of resources, and if they rebel, you put them in jail. This puts a number of people of color in prison. It is one of the forms of control of the lower classes. Imprisonment is one of the forms of institutional racism.

**Todd:** On a similar note, is the name of a Jack Daniels drink called "Lynchburg Lemonade" offensive?

**Howard:** Well, it's Lynchburg, Virginia, so the question is, is Lynchburg offensive. The name. I guess the question of what is offensive ultimately has to be answered by the people who are offended. It may not offend me, but if it's offensive to black people, then it has to seriously be considered. And maybe if black people become the majority of the population in Lynchburg, Virginia, maybe they will change the name of the town.

**Sean:** What about the Washington Redskins?

**Howard:** There, too, you have to go by how Native Americans feel about it. A lot depends on what accompanies it. In

other words, if you have the Cleveland Indians without the logo or the Atlanta Braves without the tomahawk chop, you know, conceivably "brave" is not a bad term, and maybe even "Indian," but when it has all of these things that accompany it, then it becomes unacceptable.

**Todd:** Switching gears a bit – since we're basically a music magazine – do you think that music can be used to advance political issues and causes or does it distract people?

**Howard:** Well, both. Certainly music can be a distraction and an escape. Sometimes a welcome escape. You need it. But music can also serve a very important social function because music can do things that mere prose, mere ordinary political agitation can't do. It can deepen the feelings that people have about issues. You hear Bob Dylan singing "Masters of War" and it's a more powerful statement than anybody could write about war. In the sixties, during the Vietnam War, music played an important part. And when you think of the music of the labor movement, Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie and all of those labor songs that helped people together. And, of course, when I was involved in the Civil Rights movement in the south, the church meetings. The music. When I first heard the Selma Freedom Chorus in Selma, Alabama, wow. It gave people courage. It revved them up. People were able to do things that they otherwise wouldn't be able to do. You might say it has the opposite effect. The patriotic songs and the marching songs. Bugles blowing have sent soldiers to the front lines. So music can be used both ways.

**Sean:** What do you do to relax?

**Howard:** I watch movies. I'm a great fan of movies.

**Sean:** Which ones?

**Howard:** Well, thinking of music, I'm think of a film like *Round Midnight*. It's about a black musician in Paris. It's really, really good. I like all sorts of movies from absolute escape like Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers and the Marx Brothers to good political films like *Three Days of the Condor*. It's funny because the other

Now that we see it's coming back to us, we have to really consider whether we want to be an empire.

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day, I read a story about how Hollywood, because of September 11<sup>th</sup>, is rethinking its films. They're saying, "We've had too many films critical of the government." [Laughs] Really? They sited *Three Days of the Condor*. One. It's like saying, "We have one black person in this city. That's too many."

**Todd:** Getting out of entertainment and into the manufacturing of phrases and images. "Right to work" was a phrase made by a public relations firm. They used very soft words for a pretty devious thing, like to break a union. Do you know of any other instances where media or media related firms have been able to take over union resolve? I'm talking about basically soft force or intellectual force over Pinkertons coming in and bashing unions over the head.

**Howard:** It's an interesting point. If you can ween people away with words then you don't need the Pinkertons. "Right to work" is a

good example. “Right to life” is another one. Who can be against a right to life? And, of course, the government uses all of these euphemisms: “Operation Infinite Justice.” [Laughs.]

**Sean:** Have you ever belonged to a union?

**Howard:** Oh yeah. When I was eighteen, I went to work in a shipyard. I was a shipyard worker for three years. I belonged to the Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilders of America, CIO. That was before the CIO and AFL joined. We also, when I was working in the shipyard, we – the apprentices of the shipyard – formed our own union. I was one of the organizers in the union. Then, I belonged for a while when I was working in New York after the war. After World War II. The war [laughs]. The best war. I was knocking around at various jobs before I went to school on the GI Bill. I worked for a while as a member of the State, County, and Municipal Workers Union. When I was going to school, I was working the four-to-twelve shift in a warehouse, loading trucks, and I was a member of District 65 in New York, warehouse workers. And what else was I a member of? We had a teachers’ union here at Boston University. We went on strike in 1979. Now I’m a member of the Writer’s Union. That’s my list of union memberships.

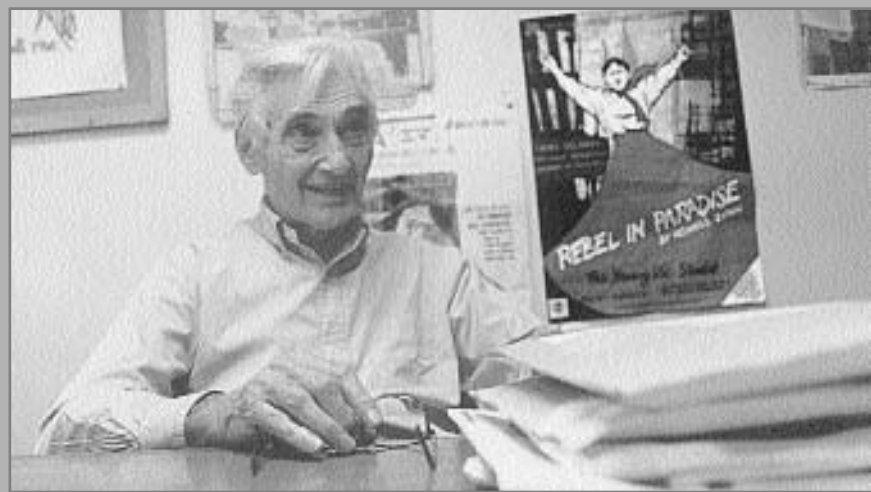
**Todd:** Have you ever really wanted to fudge a fact? Say, you have a great point that you’ve already made, and maybe you just can’t get the date right, or something’s not particularly there. I’m not saying lie. I’m just saying stretch it so that maybe you’ll fill the points in later on?

**Howard:** Yes. That happens because you’re not sure of the figure. I once gave a figure, writing about the 1930s, about bootleg coal mining. Bootleg coal mining was that the mines had shut down and the miners were out of work. This was in the depth of the depression in the 1930s. And not only were the coal miners out of work, but they didn’t have coal themselves to heat their homes, so they did bootleg coal mining. They went out on their own and did mining to have coal for themselves and also to sell coal and make some money. An interesting sort of private enterprise operation. So I saw somewhere

Marxist notion of the working class, and basically these were industrial workers. It’s not clear that service workers were involved or certain professionals like doctors, lawyers, engineers. The economy has changed so much since that early, classical definition of the working class because now we have all these service workers and now we have so many professionals who are working for a corporation. People who you would call middle class who are working for giant corporations, and they’re white collar workers, and they may be well paid – so in that sense they’re not as bad off as industrial workers or service workers – but I would argue that we probably could use a new definition of the working class which includes anybody who’s subject to anybody else’s authority when working on a job. So this would include a lot of middle class professional people. It would include doctors and nurses who work for some HMO. In other words, people who are not owners of their own enterprise. It may be also – and this is something to consider – that small business people who work, they’re workers. They work for themselves. Like people who run magazines, they work. They’re partially in control of their own destiny but, on the other hand, they’re subject to the power of the market and everything else. I would prefer to use a very inclusive definition of the working class. I’d like to include all of those people who are, if they’re not exploited by an immediate employer over them, they’re exploited by the system and therefore have a cause to want to change the system. Having a very inclusive definition of the working class creates a great opportunity for organizing people.

**Sean:** I have a kind of involved question for you. It took ten years for the “threat to national security” to pass and the US government to give out information on the El Mozote Massacre in El Salvador. Would information about that event really have been a threat to national security if it had come out at the time?

**Howard:** It would have been a threat to the political security of the people running the government. That whole idea of threats to national security is a very interesting one. The phrase is very useful for the government to try to encompass the citizenry in the same box as the government is in. To say, “we’re all in this together. It threatens all of us.” But there are so many ways in which the United States has been involved in other countries – our aid to El Salvador being just one of them. To expose all of these ways in which the United States has intervened in other countries in very ugly ways – either overthrowing other governments or supporting death squad governments – to expose that certainly would be no threat to the people of the United States. But it would be a threat to the government. In fact, this came up during the Vietnam War when the Pentagon papers were purloined by Ellsberg and xeroxed and distributed. When it came to trial in 1973, I testified in Los Angeles. One of the issues was, did the release of *The Pentagon Papers* threaten the national security of the United States. And that’s what I was talking about on the witness



a figure for this, for how many tons of coal were mined this way. It was an enormous figure, like two million tons of coal. And I wasn’t sure it was true, but I used it. I used it waiting for someone to correct me.

**Sean:** Did you ever get called on it?

**Howard:** I never got an answer. But things like that happen. Or you say, “So many people showed up at this demonstration.” I don’t know. These are not things you lie about. They’re things where you’re not totally sure but you take a chance and figure, if somebody corrects me, I’ll accept it.

**Sean:** Popular belief in the US is that there is a poor, a middle class, and an upper class. Sometimes people will throw in an upper middle class. Who is the working class?

**Howard:** That’s a good question, because there’s a traditional

stand. I was saying, “Look, here’s what the papers said: they gave you the history of American involvement in Vietnam. Divulging this information is no threat to the security of the American people but it’s an embarrassment to the government.”

**Sean:** So then, does a democratically elected government have the right to keep secrets from its people?

**Howard:** It’s interesting that you say “a democratically elected.” The presumption being that, if it’s democratically elected, then we trust them. That’s like saying, “Does a democratically elected president have the right to take us into war because he’s been democratically elected?” I remember John Updike, the novelist, was one of the minority of writers who supported the war in Vietnam and his argument was, “We elected him president, and therefore, he has the right to take us into war.” But no, I don’t. The fact

that people have been elected – and of course, we’re begging the question of how democratic our elections are; we’re choosing between two characters who have been put up before us by the most powerful financial entities in the country and when one of them is elected over the other, we say that we elected him. Well, Reagan was voted for by twenty-eight percent of the electorate. Clinton by twenty-six. Bush by, who knows, twenty-four point nine percent. But putting that issue aside, even if you assume they were democratically elected, no, they still have no right to keep secrets from the American people.

**Sean:** What about, say, plans on how to build an atomic bomb or blueprints on a stealth bomber?

**Howard:** Well, it depends on whether or not you believe that the United States should build stealth bombers or that the United States should build atomic bombs. After all, the United States builds weapons presumably secretly, and then it sells them to other countries. So the whole business of secrecy is kind of a fake issue because hardly anything technological remains a secret for very long. You know, we charge the Rosenbergs with giving the secrets of the atomic bomb (to the Soviet Union), but everybody in the scientific community said that the Russians would’ve had the atomic bomb in a couple of years, anyway, spies or no spies. To me, the whole business of spies is a very interesting one. I haven’t seen anybody really expose the whole “spy” myth. By spy myth, I mean that every two years they find an FBI guy or a government person who gave away naval secrets to the Soviet Union. And it’s all done in a sort of atmosphere which suggests, wow, what this guy did is, wow. So the guy is sentenced to a life imprisonment or thirty years imprisonment and just barely escapes execution. But when you dig down underneath all of what these spies did, it doesn’t amount to anything. It’s not important.

The Alger Hiss case is one of the most famous spy cases. Hiss gave documents to the Soviet Union. How did he get them? He buried them in a pumpkin on Chambers’ (Whittaker Chambers, the man who accused Alger Hiss of being a communist and a spy) farm or something like that. And Hiss could’ve been sentenced to long years in jail, but the statute of limitations was up for some reason. But he could be sentenced for perjury. So he spent four years in prison. But no one ever said what was in the pumpkin papers and whether it was trivial or not trivial, you see. I think somebody, someday will write something that will say, “All of this spy stuff is like Halloween. They’re trying to scare the hell out of us and it doesn’t amount to anything.” Here the Russians have ten thousand nuclear weapons; we have ten thousand nuclear weapons, so what more is there to do? Oh, they’ve discovered that we have a new listening device in a submarine. What’s the big deal? And some poor joker, to give away these piddly secrets, I feel for these dumb people who do this.

**Todd:** This is maybe not the right question for a historian, but how do you see American civilization coming to an end?

**Howard:** Well the Roman Empire came to an end, but the Roman people didn’t come to an end, so I see the American Empire coming to an end just as other empires have come to an end. I see the beginnings of it with September 11<sup>th</sup>. Because September 11<sup>th</sup> brings home for the first time for the American people – as soon as they get over the immediate horror and think about it, which is bound to happen sooner or later. For the first time, Americans will begin to think, we’ve over-extended ourselves. We’ve gone too far. We have been an expansionist power ever since World War II. Well, we were an expansionist power all of our history, but especially since World War II. We sowed the seeds for resentment all over the world: in Southeast Asia, in Latin America, and more recently in the Middle East. And it has come back to haunt us and to terrify us with September 11<sup>th</sup>, with anthrax, with people scared as hell. So now we better rethink the position of the United States in the world and whether we want to be an empire. Being an empire puts all of us in jeopardy. The American Empire, while it was just reeking havoc on other nations, didn’t bother us. Now that we see it’s coming back to us, we have to really consider whether we want to be an empire.

Sweden is not worried about terrorism. New Zealand

is not worried about terrorism. Holland is not worried about terrorism. Why not be a modest little country without all of these enormous ambitions?

**Sean:** To switch gears again, what’s the role of gender in history? Specifically, where are the women in traditional history texts?

**Howard:** In traditional history texts women don’t exist very much. They’re not paid attention to. Their movements are ignored. The women textile workers of the early nineteenth century don’t appear in books on the Jacksonian period. You have books on Jacksonian democracy, the Age of Jackson, and this is exactly the time when women in the Lowell textile mills were organizing and going on strike to better their conditions. But they’re not there. They’re ignored. A few women will make the texts in a line or two. Susan B. Anthony and the right to vote. The right to vote is always a safe issue because they don’t care if people vote. It doesn’t matter. Let ‘em vote. We’ll do what we want anyway. So they’ll give attention to the suffragists but they won’t give attention to Emma Goldman, this powerful woman of the turn of the century. They won’t give attention to Helen Keller except as a victim. They won’t give attention to her as a

socialist, as an anti-war agitator, as a powerful radical. Mother Jones doesn’t appear in traditional histories. She was an incredible labor organizer. I suppose, maybe the new histories have to pay some attention to the women’s movement because the women’s movement became such a force, but I wouldn’t be surprised if it’s treated very lightly. There’s been a tendency to treat the sixties and the movements of the sixties very lightly. You don’t have any real treatment of the anti-war movement, even in the new texts. They may deal with the Vietnam War, but they won’t deal in any full way with the anti-war movement. They won’t deal in any full way with the women’s movement or the gay and lesbian movement or the disabled persons movement. But, of course, women have begun to write their own histories.

**Sean:** What damage does this do to young women in junior high and high school to read history and feel constantly ignored? Or to any group who reads history and feels ignored?

**Howard:** It lowers self-esteem. It creates a passive citizenry, because it leads people to believe, well, we’re not movers in history. We’re not important in history. These other people have the power. They’re the people who matter. So it’s demeaning and self-demeaning. The function of traditional history, really, is to create a citizenry that looks to the top – the president, Congress, the Supreme Court – to make the important decisions. That’s what traditional history is all about: the laws that were passed, the decisions made by the court. So much of history is built around “the great men.” All of that is very anti-democratic.

**Todd:** Dovetailing on to that, there have been opportunities for very popular – I’m thinking of sports right now – people who went against the war or had protested and that has pretty much been forgotten. How many people remember that Muhammad Ali gave up his belt to not go to the Vietnam War? And what about the Black Panthers in the ’68 Olympics<sup>3?</sup>

**Howard:** That’s a great story in itself: the sports figures who’ve entered the world in a political way and what’s happened to them. I remember Jim Bouton<sup>4</sup>, the pitcher for the Yankees. He was very politically involved. He didn’t last very long. I don’t know if it was his pitching or his politics.

...there are  
times when  
I’d like to be  
deported.  
Please, send  
me to Paris.



**Sean:** I'm going to ask you to comment on a Helen Keller quote. She once said, "I learned that the power to rise in the world is not within the reach of everyone." And your own life challenges that statement. Would you agree or disagree with that statement?

**Howard:** She just said that it's not within the reach of everyone. She didn't say it's out of the reach of everyone. Which means that there are people who can rise, even in this society which keeps people down, but they're the Horatio Alger myth. Some poor people become multi-millionaires. That's not true of the majority. Most people are not in a position to become powerful figures in society.



**Todd:** Were there any very staunch supporters of the civil rights movement who either renounced it or went to a more conservative stance?

**Howard:** That's interesting. The civil rights movement lasted a very short time. A very short span of years. There were people who came out of the civil rights movement, then became more conservative. But they did not renounce the civil rights movement. I don't know of anybody who was involved in the civil rights movement who renounced the ideas of the civil rights movement or their activities in the civil rights movement. There were people who came out of the civil rights movement who did not move on to other issues. I'm thinking of those people like Bayard Rustin. He was a veteran of the civil rights movement, but when it came to the presidential election of 1964 and the democratic convention and the issue of whether Mississippi blacks – because they were forty percent of the population – deserved to have forty percent of the delegates from Mississippi, and the democratic leaders said, "Oh no, we're not going to give you that." And Bayard Rustin went along with the democratic leaders. He said to the people in the civil rights movement who had come up from the south to demand representation, "No, I think you should hold back. We don't want to hurt the democratic party." The same thing happened with the war in Vietnam when other black leaders said to Martin Luther King, "You should not speak out against the war in Vietnam because it will hurt our cause." So there were people in the civil rights movement who limited their commitment and wouldn't go beyond civil rights.

**Sean:** Did you have any personal encounters with Martin Luther King?

**Howard:** Personal encounters. Yes. A few. I taught in Atlanta. Atlanta was his hometown. His sister was a colleague of mine. His father was a local minister. His brother was a graduate student in the university where I taught. And King and I met a few times socially. Our paths crossed in Albany, Georgia where I went down to write a report (about civil rights demonstrations<sup>5</sup>) and he went down to give some help to the people. Our paths crossed socially because the black intellectual community in Atlanta was relatively

small and everybody knew everybody else. So I'd see him from time to time. In the anti-war movement, we spoke from the same platform at a huge Central Park rally against the war in 1967. Just glancing encounters. Maybe the most important connection we had was that, when I wrote a report on Albany, Georgia criticizing the FBI, a newspaper man asked King if he agreed with that report and that the FBI should be criticized and he said, "Yes." At that point, J. Edgar Hoover set up the wire tap apparatus for Martin Luther King.

**Todd:** Have you ever been exposed to what's called reverse racism? Have you ever been in a place or in a rally or walking down the street and because of the color of your skin, have you ever been antagonized?

**Howard:** You mean have black people ever treated me as a white enemy? I've had black people suspicious of me. I taught and lived in a black community for seven years. A number of people in the black community in Atlanta had not had contact with white people in any egalitarian way, and here I was, a white person coming to teach in a black college. So some of my colleagues looked upon me with, you know, "What is he doing here? What is his motivation?" And some of my students, I could see the very first day in class, I could see by the way they were looking at me, they were thinking, who is this dude? What's he doing here? However, that changed. For the people who got to know me and my students, that dissipated. Other than that, I'll say this, living in Atlanta, when I'd go out into the city – the white city – I was in enemy territory even though I was white. When I came back to the black community, I was at home. I felt at home. I felt safe.

**Sean:** We have the same feeling. We live in a predominantly latino community.

**Todd:** We were sitting on a stairway today next to a nice restaurant on Newbury Street and a lady – in all honesty – asked us to park her car. She rolled down the window and said, "Are you guys the valet?" We said, "We'll steal your car, but we're not the valets."



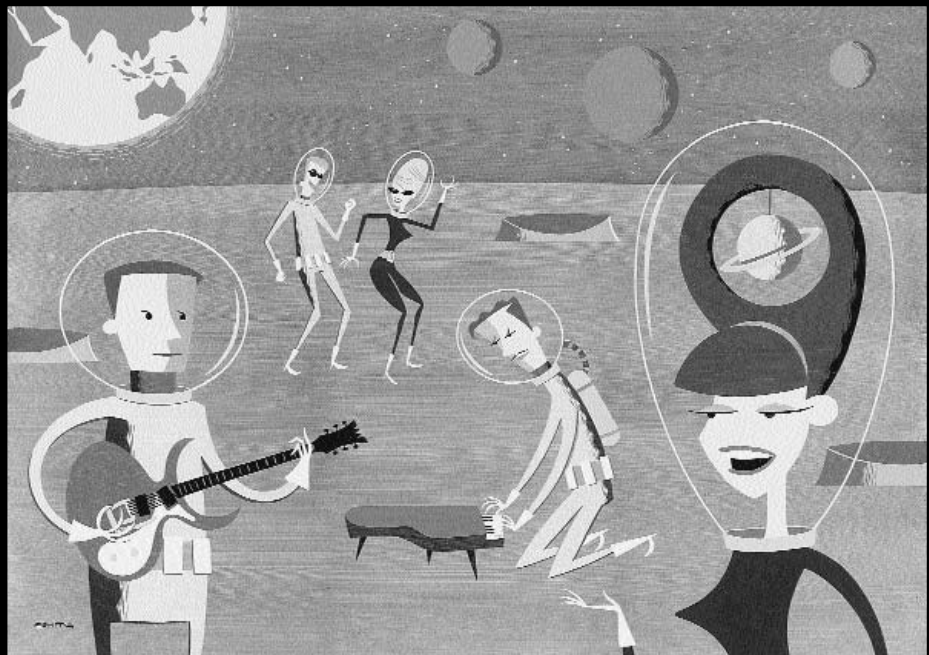
## FOOTNOTES

1. On the same day that we did this interview, Howard Zinn spoke at the Boston Public Library about his new book, *Three Strikes*. During that talk, Zinn discussed the difference between history as a living, vital force and history as a collection of trivial facts. He warned the audience, "Don't be a coroner of history." This seemed to sum up Zinn's work pretty succinctly.
2. There are again **two methods of removing the causes of faction**: the one, **by destroying the liberty**, which is essential to its existence; the other, **by giving to every citizen the same opinions**, the same passions, and the same interests. – James Madison, *The Federalist, Number Ten* (1787)
3. Tommie Smith and John Carlos won the gold and bronze medals, respectively, for the 200 meter dash in the 1968 Olympics. They walked out to receive their medals wearing black socks and no shoes to symbolize poverty amongst black Americans, wore a black scarf and black beads to symbolize lynchings, and rose black gloved fists in the air. It was a pretty powerful statement. Both men were expelled from the Olympic team and banned from Olympic Village.
4. Jim Bouton is alive and is active on the lecture circuit. In 1969, he wrote a tell-all book about major league baseball called *Ball Four*. Recently, he came out in support for Ralph Nader in the 2000 presidential election. On a strange note, while making a comeback to baseball in 1977, Bouton and a teammate came up with the idea for Big League Chew.
5. This report was titled "Kennedy: the Reluctant Emancipator." It originally appeared in the December 1, 1962 issue of *The Nation*. You can read it in the *Zinn Reader* available from Seven Stories Press.

# The Wonderful World of Shag

interview by  
Kat Jetson

artwork by  
Shag



5 Planets

**One day while perusing the Shag website ([www.shag-art.com](http://www.shag-art.com)) I decided that I would finally email the fella who, in my book, is the keenest artist in all of paint-land. No doubt he's a busy guy, creating his art sometimes fourteen hours a day. But besides that, he's also been known to collaborate with ultra-hip designer Paul Frank, put out a book or two, tool around in his '64 Thunderbird, and be a dad. Needless, I thought, what the heck! If nothing else, I'll get to tell him how rad I think he is. I must have had a burst of confidence dart through my being that day, because not only did I send him an email chock full of compliments, I also asked if he would grant me an interview. Imagine my whammy when I hopped online the next day and saw that there was an email from Shag happily accepting my offer. The decision was made that I would drive to his swinging tiki hideaway to converse, and, as he said, see some of the art in person. Did I ever. That, and a tiki mug collection that would make Don Ho proud. I have to say, our talk time felt more like a conversation and less like an interview. Step inside the wonderful world of Shag...**

**Kat:** You originally went to school to become an accountant, but began working as a commercial artist almost immediately after graduating. Why the career change?

**Shag:** Even when I was taking accounting classes I was working on the side as an illustrator. I wasn't making much money at it, so I didn't think it was a viable career choice.

**Kat:** Who did you work for? Mostly record labels?

**Shag:** Yeah, mostly indie labels. This was back in the day. Enigma Records, Dionysus... Mostly small, local labels.

**Kat:** So when you were doing that did you have creative control?

**Shag:** Nah. It was mostly them telling me what to do.

**Kat:** I've seen gig posters of yours for bands like The Bomboras and was wondering if you offered to do those or they asked you?

**Shag:** They asked me to do that. That wasn't really something that I wanted to pursue. I thought there was already a lot of artists who did rock posters like Kozik and Coop and that market was

already getting saturated with second and third level

Kozik and Coop wannabes, so I wanted to completely stay away from it. I did it for The Bomboras because they were friends and they were completely desperate.

[We're laughing here, but somehow I think that's not really a joke.]

**Kat:** Now when you're asked to do layouts for say, CD covers and what not, do you sit down and talk with the band and get their ideas?

**Shag:** Generally I don't even accept those kinds of jobs anymore unless they want it in sort of the Shag style that I do. Like Jake, formerly of The Bomboras, called me two weeks ago and wanted to know if I could do the album cover for the band he's in now, The Lords of Altamont. They have an album coming out on Sympathy. And I told them that I would do it if they wanted like, a Shag thing, but if he wanted me to do stuff like I used to do for The Bomboras, that I couldn't do it for him.

**Kat:** The Bomboras album, *Head Shrinking Fun*, has a bunch of altered board game boxes on the sleeve with the names of their songs and such. Did you create every single board game?

**Shag:** Yeah.

**Kat:** Wow! So, I don't understand exactly how that works. Was it all created on computer?

**Shag:** That I did on the computer. I scanned in the actual board games they were based on and then changed stuff on the computer. In some cases I put the band members on the board games or whatever.

**Kat:** It just doesn't do it justice to have it on CD. I had to get that on vinyl. I mean, they're so intricate. It seems like a lot of work!

**Shag:** Yeah, that took a long time.

**Kat:** It seems to me that your paintings have a familiar quality about them. I almost feel like I know them. Perhaps it's mostly because there are repeated visits by the cat, wolf, crows, etc. Did you always intend to have "characters" and for them to have recurring roles in your paintings?

**Shag:** No, originally I didn't even think about that. I didn't even think of them as recurring characters until people started mentioning it. I'll put a cat in a painting and won't think anything about it. People started asking me, "What's the wolf's name?" Or "What's this character's name?" And I'd be, like, "Nyah."

**Kat:** I read that you were approached by Universal to help create an animated series called *Spy Lounge*. Is that still happening?

**Shag:** No. That was a really bad experience. It was me and three other people who had partnered together to create this animated property. I was the artist, there was a writer, there a pitch man, and a guy who was financing the pitch. Universal picked it up and then



the four partners started arguing amongst each other about the contract that Universal was offering. At that time I was like, "I'll sign anything." I just thought it would be cool to have a cartoon. Another guy was sort of the same way, but two other guys were holding out and saying that it was a rip-off contract. At the time it turned into this really big deal, and we all had to get lawyers, and it turned into a horrible thing. But now, two and a half years later, I'm really glad that it didn't happen because having had a lot of other animation offers since then I realized that that contract was a really bad contract. If we had gone into this arrangement it could have been really bad because they could have gotten control of my artwork and I could have seen very little money.

**Kat:** So if you were offered something like that again, you would consider it?

**Shag:** Yeah, if the concept were perfect and they were willing to negotiate with me on a contract, I would certainly do it.

**Kat:** I would love to see a cartoon with your little people with no elbows just sorta floating around.

[laughs]

**Kat:** All the artists that I know of, it seems like, fifty years after they're dead people are saying "Wow! Weren't they fantastic?" So I was wondering, how does it feel to be realized and appreciated as an artist in your lifetime?

[embarrassing laughter]

**Shag:** Yeah, but unfortunately sometimes it seems like those artists who are a little successful while they're alive, fifty years later, people don't even know. So sometimes it works the opposite way. At this point, I'm not thinking about, or trying to work on any legacy. I know artists who are a little older who suddenly have this mid-life art crisis and they realized that they want people to remember them after they're dead. And the way to achieve that is to get into museum collections and stuff, so they spend all this time trying to do that, and convince art critics or whatever that their art is important and should be included in books and museum collections.

**Kat:** Seems like a lot of effort if you're not even going to be around.

**Shag:** Yeah.

**Kat:** Do you listen to any music while you paint?

**Shag:** Yeah. I used to listen to a lot more music when I painted, and then I had a child. It ended up that she didn't really like the music I listened to that much, so if it would keep her occupied, I'd let her listen to the music she liked, or watch a video or something.

**Kat:** Would it mostly be just mellow background music?

**Shag:** It was pretty mellow.

**Kat:** Before you sit down to paint do you have a very specific idea of what you're going to be painting?

**Shag:** I do sorta thumbnail sketches. The way I paint I have to know pretty much exactly what it is I'm going to paint because I can't paint things out and erase mistakes. I paint the backgrounds first and then I paint things on top of those backgrounds. And once something's painted on top of those backgrounds, I can't paint over it because it destroys the background, basically.

**Kat:** How long does it usually take from beginning to end? I know you have many different sizes of artwork, but generally speaking.

**Shag:** A little painting might take three or four days, and a big painting may take three weeks.

**Kat:** There seems to be a color scheme happening with each of your photos. I can look at one of your paintings and say, "Oh, this is an orange one," or "This is a green painting." So you know you want a painting with a woman doing this and such, but do you know, "I want this to be a purple painting.?"

**Shag:** The color is usually the first thing I decide upon. Sometimes I'll come up with a sketch and at that point I'll sorta know that this is going to have to be an orange painting or green painting.

**Kat:** Do you remember your first showing of art?

**Shag:** Mhmm.

**Kat:** And how long ago was that?

**Shag:** My very first show was in 1995 or 1996. It was a place called Kakao in West LA, which is like a little coffee house. One of those really tiny places.

**Kat:** Was there a good and immediate reaction?

**Shag:** Yeah, there was. But, at that time, the paintings were priced like \$200 or \$300. Three hundred was the most I could imagine anyone ever

paying for any painting. So that's why \$300 was my uppermost price limit. I personally would never have paid more than \$300 for any piece of art. So that's how I decided on the prices.

**Kat:** Did you have intentions of doing more than that one show, or just thought you'd see how that one went first?

**Shag:** I liked doing these paintings and I liked that people liked them. I didn't see it as the major focus of my career at the time. I still thought it was commercial illustration and record album layouts. Mostly I thought I could augment my income a little. Originally, painting paintings was just a hobby, and it was really fun, but I didn't see it getting to the point that it would be my career. It just slowly happened that the demand for the paintings grew and, at the same time, the prices started going up to the point that one day I sat down and looked at how much money I made that year and I realized that I made a lot more money on the paintings than from any sort of commercial art.

**Kat:** This has all happened in a relatively short period of time. Now you have so much merchandising going on that you must have had to learn a lot of business sense quickly. I mean, was it like a crash course?

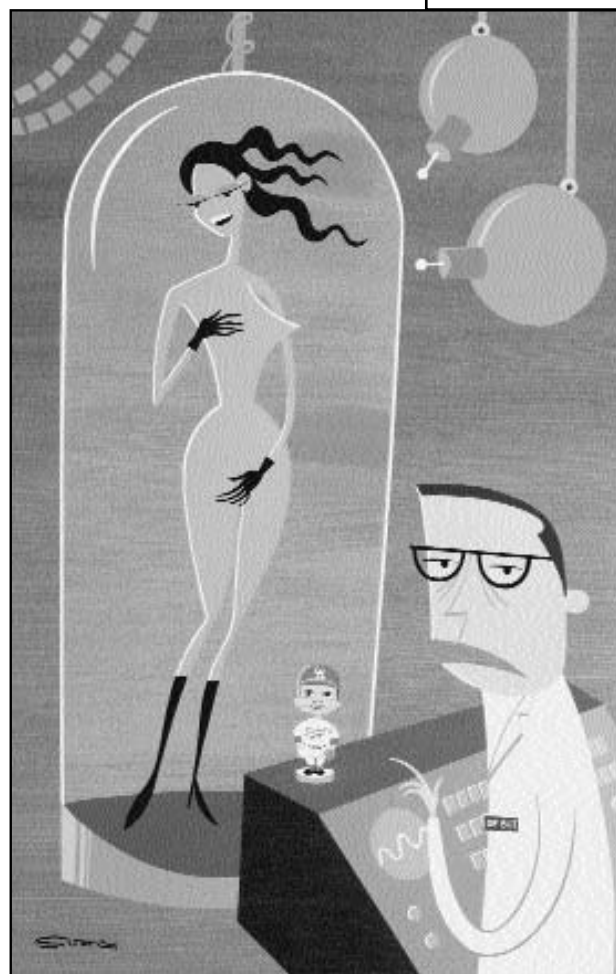
**Shag:** Yeah, I've made some mistakes on the merchandising deals I've entered into and stuff. It's the same thing when the first person comes up to you and says, "I'd like to make t-shirts of your art." "You're like, "Great! Do whatever you want. This is cool, there's going to be t-shirts."

**Kat:** Do you have a favorite piece of Shag merchandise?

**Shag:** I like the tikis most. And the handbags and barstools I did with Paul Frank.

**Kat:** Speaking of Paul Frank, I had read that he was going to use some of your designs for his merchandise. How did you hook up with him?

Birth of Venus



**Shag:** I just kind of knew him. Not from his band, but just from seeing him around. I'd see him at a bar or something and we'd always say, "We should collaborate." But I never took it seriously. When we'd have a few drinks and say, "Yeah! We should collaborate. That'll be great!" Sounds like a great idea and then the next day I'd be like, "Pfft. Right, that'll never happen."

**Kat:** And it does!

**Shag:** And it did!

**Kat:** You've been in a couple of bands – The Huntington Cads and The Tiki Tones. Do you wish you still had time to play guitar?

**Shag:** The Tiki Tones was founded to be a hobby band. None of the guys in the band were going to take it seriously. We weren't going to accept shows unless they sounded like they'd be a lot of fun. We weren't going to try to get any sort of record deal, and we weren't trying to impress anyone but ourselves. And then as the band went on, the other guys started taking it a little more seriously. For a while I went along with them; they sorta dragged me along. And then, finally, I realized that it was great that they wanted to pursue it and practice, like, twice a week, but I didn't...

**Kat:** That was never your intention.

**Shag:** When we sat down and formed this band that wasn't the idea. I'd like to be in a band that was sort of like the original intention of this band. I don't have the time or the mental energy to devote to something like that. When I quit that band, that was the first time I hadn't been in a band since, like, 1984. And I didn't have to go to practice and I didn't have to stay up until three or four in the morning on some Tuesday night to play some stupid club where seventeen people show up. It was, like... [laughter] great!

**Kat:** Some people really thrive on that.

**Shag:** Oh yeah.

**Kat:** That's living to them. Those are the people who should be creating music.

**Shag:** Absolutely. When I was twenty-two or twenty-three, I felt that same way. I felt that I could devote every night of the week to my band and trying to get this band to go somewhere.

**Kat:** You had a record label for a while, Mai Tai Records. How did that come about? Basically, how were you given a label is what I'd really like to know.

**Shag:** At that time, I was the art director at Doctor Dream Records, which was a local Orange County label. They released Orange County punk bands and sort of middle-of-the-road alternative music. I wasn't that into most of the stuff they released, cause I liked surf music and instrumental stuff. One day I just talked to the guy who owned the company and said, "Hey, there's this band and they sent me a tape of their record, and they're really good. I'd like to release this on my own label, but have it be distributed through you guys, and have your promotions department work this." So he agreed to it, just because he respected my taste or something. And the record did really well. It did better than most of the other records that came out that year.

**Kat:** What was it called?

**Shag:** That was called "Shig and Buzz." It was an instrumental duo that sounded like The Shadows from England. So, the guy who owned Doctor Dream asked if I wanted to do something else. The second thing was *Secret Agent Sounds*. I guess because it was a really good idea that no one else had thought of, we were able to get a bunch of great bands on it.

**Kat:** I love that record.

**Shag:** Yeah, it's a really good record. The idea that you could just approach these bands and say, "We want you to do a spy song," and we'll put it on this compilation and everybody was really keen on the idea, so we were able to get Man or Astroman?, Laika and the Cosmonauts, and Combustible Edison. Basically, every band we asked said yes. It ended up selling a LOT of records. A lot more than any of the Doctor Dream releases had sold for at least four or five years. It was the biggest record they'd had, and it was keeping Doctor Dream Records afloat. Because of that record, the next records we released did pretty well. Then after a couple of years of doing Mai Tai Records, the guy who owned Doctor Dream sold it to

Mercury Records. When he sold it to Mercury, I sold

my share to Mercury, as well. So I didn't own any of it, even though I stuck around and helped them release albums under the Mai Tai name. And then Mercury was bought by Polygram. Polygram is label that basically closed down all the little labels that it had bought up. Not just little labels; A&M and Geffen were closed down the same time Mai Tai and Doctor Dream were closed. And they still owed me money.

**Kat:** This sounds like something from Spinal Tap.

**Shag:** I know! They owed me money and they weren't going to pay me, so I got some of the masters back. I could release *Secret Agent Sounds* on another label if I wanted to, but I have no desire to be involved in the record industry anymore. It's just too cut-throat.

**Kat:** It seems kinda sad.

**Shag:** It is sad. So many people get screwed in the record industry. That's kind of what I like about art; there's less people being screwed.

**Kat:** Yeah, like I've never heard of "the sleazy art guy."

**Shag:** I think there's probably an element of that in every entertainment industry, but definitely not as much in the art business.

**Kat:** What do you like about creating music and what do you like about creating art?

**Shag:** I liked creating music kind of for the same reason I create art. I just wanted to make something I liked, and hopefully other people would like it, as well. The first Tiki Tones album was me wanting to make exactly what I would like to listen to. I just want to paint a painting that I would want. I was never that big of a fan of performing live. I hated the promotion stuff that went along with being in a band, like, interviews... Which is strange because I don't mind doing interviews to talk about art.

**Kat:** Good thing, seeing that I'm here.

**Shag:** But I hated when I was in a band and had to do an interview.

**Kat:** [being silly] Well, Shag, it seems like you found your little path.

**Shag:** I guess so!

**Kat:** In your book, *Supersonic Swingers*, there is a plate called "5 Planets" and there is a guy playing a blue Mosrite guitar. You comment on the painting and say that the blue Mosrite still eludes you. I was wondering if it still does.

**Shag:** Yeah, but since I'm not playing in the band anymore, it's not as big of a priority. If I saw one that was really cool, I would buy it. Occasionally people email me when there's one on eBay.

**Kat:** Oh, that's so funny! You've got people looking out for you.

**Shag:** I'll get emails that say, "We saw in your book that you're looking for a blue Mosrite..."

**Kat:** If you could live in one of your paintings, which one would it be?

**Shag:** You know, that's hard to say because, in my mind, the paintings all connect outside of the frame of the painting somewhere. There's a lot of stuff going on between this painting and that painting, but they all sort of exist in this same world. I don't think I could pin it down to one because I always, sort of, in my mind... ya know, outside of this tiki bar is the world that this painting is happening.

**Kat:** Do you have a piece that you are most proud of?

**Shag:** No, I generally... Going back to the music thing, bands usually like the last song they wrote. It may not be the last painting I did, but I always like the last group of paintings I've been working on. But it's just because they're fresh and new.

**Kat:** I wonder how difficult, or maybe not difficult, it is for you to let your paintings go after you've invested so much time in them.

**Shag:** I've never had a problem with that.

**Kat:** Really?

**Shag:** In fact, I don't own any of my paintings. Well, with the exception of one in the bathroom.

**Kat:** Ah, the bathroom painting.

**Shag:** I've never had a problem giving them up because I always felt like, if I really, really wanted that painting for myself, I could always paint another one. I never have, but that option is there.

**Kat:** Have you ever signed anything as your real name, Josh Agle?

**Shag:** Ya know, I think... I've done some real straight graphic design where it's been attributed to Josh Agle, but almost all of the illustrations say Shag.

**Kat:** One of my favorite things, which I've seen in a couple of your paintings, is this woman who has a beehive and the beehive will be hollowed out and she'll have either, say, a bird or a planet dangling in the beehive. It's really creative. I was wondering where the idea of that came from.

**Shag:** It's based on something I actually saw. I didn't see one completely hollowed out like that. Back in the late eighties, I went to a John Waters film festival and he was there and he spoke and they had a beehive hairdo contest. The winner had... she had this enormous beehive and had sorta hollowed it out in the middle and she had suspended a little Christmas ornament in it. And that had impressed me enormously. I thought that was the greatest thing. So I just exaggerated that and made the opening a lot larger, and whatever was hanging in it larger and heavier.

**Kat:** Are you fan of other people's art?

**Shag:** [pointing to some pictures on his wall]: You look around and those black and white drawings are one of my favorite artists, named Gene Deitch – he did those in the late forties, and you can kind of see how he's influenced me. There's definitely...

**Kat:** Shoes.

**Shag:** Shoes. And the angular quality, I guess. I collect that stuff.

**Kat:** I was on your website the other day and saw that you had a new set of paintings. One was called "The Birth of Venus." Randomly placed in the painting is a Dodgers bobble-head doll. I was wondering if it was the Tommy Lasorda one.

**Shag:** It's like the generic Dodgers bobbing head doll. In fact, I think it's the same head that every baseball club used back in the sixties.

**Kat:** Yeah, just put a different number on him and that's your guy.

**Shag:** He's like, generic baseball guy.

**Kat:** [laughing] Is there a purpose for that in the painting?

**Shag:** That painting is going to Japan, and I knew the Japanese love baseball, and I thought it would kind of freak them out if I put a little Dodgers bobbing head doll in that.

**Kat:** Have you had an opening in Japan before?

**Shag:** No. I have two shows opening and those will be my first in Japan.

**Kat:** They'll probably freak over your paintings!

**Shag:** It'll be interesting to see. I get a lot of emails from Japanese people who have seen my stuff.

**Kat:** How do you decide which paintings will be made into prints?

**Shag:** It's based on two things: One is popular request. There are certain paintings that people ask for over and over. And the other thing is for specific things. Like the show in Japan, I had to do a specific print for this show in Japan. Every gallery show I try to have a print for that show. It's usually a print of one of the paintings in the show.

**Kat:** Your latest one is great. The "Coolest Ghouls" one. I like it because they are standing in front of the Disney Haunted Mansion.

**Shag:** Yeah, I'm returning to The Ghastly Ones print. I'm actually going to return to that theme one more time. It's going to be hitch hiking tikis in front of a haunted tiki bar.

**Kat:** I went through all of my questions already!

**Shag:** Well, we can talk about Disney, and how those attraction posters were a big influence on me.

**Kat:** Oh yeah, good subject. You could talk about that. The old ones are great.

**Shag:** The old ones I love. They're silk screens, too, and the only prints I do are silk screens. Partly because that's the look I like; the broad, rich areas of color. The Haunted Mansion poster is great. I love that. All the ones for Tomorrowland I loved.

**Kat:** It's too modern now.

**Shag:** The revised Tomorrowland where it's all copper colored and brown – Jules Vern's idea of the future, as opposed to 1950's American idea of the future.

**Kat:** Yeah! Where's it's all silver and sparkly.

**Shag:** I haven't talked to anyone who likes that, but apparently the people I know are not like the general populous.

**Kat:** It's amazing. I'll pay \$48 to go on the Haunted Mansion and Pirates of the Caribbean.

Oh! I have a couple of more questions. I'm really excited about this, because I'm going to Las Vegas in December. I just saw The Venetian's website and they have a new cocktail bar called Venus in the hotel, and you designed a bunch of stuff for them, such as the art work for the menus, napkins, etc. I mean, that's like the ultimate.

**Shag:** Oh yeah! I was really, really excited about that job. And it didn't pay that much, but I accepted it just because it was so cool.

**Kat:** Are things like the menu and such going to be available for sale, or do you have to be sneaky and steal things?

**Shag:** Oh, I've talked to people already who have stolen it [the menu], so that's what I would suggest!

**Kat:** Of course that's what I'm going to do.

**Shag:** I haven't been there yet, and The Venetian hasn't sent me anything. The only way I've seen the actual production menus and



**Coolest Ghouls**

swizzle sticks and stuff that I've designed is people who've gone there and stolen them and shown me, but they didn't give it to me. They're like, "Oh no, I'm keeping these."

[Lots of laughter.]

**Kat:** Oh, that's horrible! So, where would you go to get the ultimate tiki/polynesian experience?

**Shag:** Well, the best was the Kahiki in Columbus, OH, which closed down last summer. And now, I think, the best place is in Ft. Lauderdale, FL; it's called The Maikai. Those are the ultimate places. And in LA, you can still kinda get that. I like Bahooka out in Rosemead. Plus when you drive to it, you can drive past all those cool tiki apartments. Tiki Ti is nice. Small, but the best drinks in LA.

**Kat:** Trader Vics is just a block from where I work, so I think that's neat.

**Shag:** I like Trader Vic's, too. It's funny, I remember as a kid my mom driving me past that Trader Vic's in West LA, and her telling me, "That's the first place I ever got drunk. I was in college and I went out with a boy and we ordered these drinks and they were so sweet and they tasted so good that I thought, 'There can't be any alcohol in these drinks.'"



LIZ O. AND RETODD CATCH UP WITH

R O D N E Y

LA'S LONG RUNNING, HUGELY INFLUENTIAL DJ

B I N G E N H E I M E R

pictures by Dan Monick



I can't remember when I first heard of the man known as Rodney on the Roq, but I do remember countless Sunday nights in the late 1980s and early 1990s when I would feign sleep as he broadcasted into a dark bedroom from KROQ 106.7's Burbank studio. Despite his quiet voice, Rodney came across as a preacher converting previously clueless kids to a life of underground pop and rock. I'd clutch onto a pad of paper and a Hello Kitty pen in anticipation as bands like Nirvana blared across airwaves for the first time. Rodney would break and I would scribble down bands and songs, album titles and record labels as if it were doctrine. The next week was spent catching rides from one San Fernando Valley record store to another in search of the almost-all indie and import playlists. Bands like the Nymphs and Redd Kross ruled the ninth grade record collection only to be surpassed by Suede's eponymous debut and Supergrass' *I Should CoCo* three years later.

In February of 1992, my friends and I met Rodney Bingenheimer for the first time. We were nerdy fifteen-year-old girls at a Siouxsie and the Banshees concert when we saw him from behind the KROQ booth. He looked as he sounded – slight of build and dressed in hipster black. We waited for his autograph.

When it was our turn, I gushed like a starstruck fool as to how I worshipped him and could he “please play James’ ‘Hymn From the Village’ Sunday night?”

The next night, Rodney played that same James song for “the girl at the Siouxsie show.” I called the station to thank him and taped the autographed ticket stub to my window, where it remains.

Years passed and by some strange twist of fate, I ended up working as a DJ at the reincarnation of Rodney's English Disco. After about two years of working and socializing with the Mayor of the Sunset Strip, it's obvious that the man far surpasses the image. Rodney is a legend within the music community, yet he is easily attainable. He is associated with the biggest names in rock history – Brian Wilson, Phil Spector, David Bowie – and while he can spin a classic rock yarn, he is more inclined to discuss new bands like Boo! or Cyclefly. He may not be a household name outside of the West Coast, but his influence has reached countless movements over the past few decades – from seventies glam rock and punk to eighties new wave and gothic and nineties Brit Pop. -Liz O.

**Liz:** How did you end up in LA and do music in the first place?

**Rodney:** I ran away when I was a kid, came to Hollywood. Ended up staying with Sonny and Cher, who took care of me and looked after me. Ended up doing go-fer work – going to the studio, bringing pizza, and just hanging out with them. Then I met The Beach Boys, Mamas and Papas.

**Todd:** So, how did you actually meet Sonny and Cher? Answering an ad in the paper? Driving by?

**Rodney:** No. They came to my hometown. They came up north, in San Mateo. It was a round theater thing that they played in. I met them there. I had this weird Sonny Bono hair and Cher said, “You should come to LA.” I said, “All right.”

**Todd:** Where would be the first place ever that you saw a DJ in a club as opposed to a live band performing?

**Rodney:** In London. That’s how I got the idea for the English Disco.

**Todd:** Because I think people take it for granted that you can see a DJ and that’s a relatively recent phenomenon.

**Rodney:** Mine was first (in LA). Then the Sugar Shack, then The Odyssey. Chuckie Star, who started at my club, started the Sugar Shack and the Odyssey. Then I started DJing at the Starwood club. I did all-punk night: the Germs, Bad Religion, Fear were playing. And I’d be in the other room playing punk records, like I did with the Ramones night we did here (at his current location at a club called Tempest).

**Liz:** So, how did the English Disco come about?

**Rodney:** When I went to London one time – I did PR for Bowie and David said, “Come to London.” I said, “All right.” So I went to be with my ex-girlfriend at the time, Melanie, and I ended up going to all of the recording studios. And while I was in London, I went to all these clubs and they’re playing all of this amazing music. Bowie, T Rex, Slade, The Sweet, Suzy Quattro. I gathered up a handful of records and came back and hooked up with my partner, Tom Ayers, and we just started the club.

**Liz:** What was the reaction to the club at first?

**Rodney:** Lines. It was amazing. It was the new music. It was on Sunset Boulevard. Everybody used to hang out there: Andy Warhol came there. David Bowie, Led Zeppelin, T Rex...

**Liz:** What were some of the most scandalous moments of the English Disco?

**Rodney:** God. Every night was a scandal.

**Todd:** Did you ever get to see David Bowie and Iggy Pop make out with one another?

**Rodney:** No.

**Liz:** David Bowie and Mick Jagger?

**Rodney:** No.

**Liz:** Those are just rumors then?

**Rodney:** Yeah.

**Todd:** Teen heartthrob at the time, Shawn Cassidy – one of his first shows – did he open for Iggy Pop? (August 11, 1974)

**Rodney:** He opened for Iggy Pop.

**Todd:** How did the crowd react to that?

**Rodney:** Shawn was more into the whole glam thing, doing “Rebel Rebel.” Iggy headlined and did his show with Nigel Harrison – from Silverhead at the time; became a Blondie member later on – and the band was... one of the original members of the Stooges was in the band, too.

**Liz:** You know what’s really interesting that I just noticed the other night? There’s this website – it’s a big anthology of groupies. All these ‘70s groupies were, “Yeah, we were regulars at Rodney’s English Disco.” Were there specific Rodney groupies?

**Rodney:** Yeah. There were the Rodnettes. They would follow me around and get me french fries and stuff. I used to be addicted to Tab. I’m not anymore. I’m on iced tea now.

**Todd:** How did a twelve-year-old Brooke Shields get into your club? Did she have a chaperone?

**Rodney:** No, they used to runaway; sneak out late at night and stuff their mattresses and go over the hill from the Valley.

**Todd:** Was Jodie Foster there, too?

**Rodney:** Yeah and Linda Blair.

**Liz:** Christie McNichol?

**Rodney:** Yeah. Mackenzie Phillips, passed out stoned. I used to take care of them, lift them up. Call their parents to come down and get them.

**Liz:** They were seriously twelve and thirteen at the time, right?

**Rodney:** No, they weren’t that young. Maybe fourteen, fifteen. I’d never seen anyone twelve or thirteen there.

**Liz:** So, how did you end up getting started on KROQ?

**Rodney:** The people who started KROQ hung out at the English Disco. Michael Swiensburg and Gary Bookasta (the General Manager at the time) asked me, “Hey, would you like to do a show on KROQ?” I said, “Well, I’m doing my club. As soon as my club is done with, I’d love to come over and do it.” My first show (in 1976) was The Ramones, Blondie, The Damned, and The Sex Pistols.

**Liz:** Who was your first guest?

**Rodney:** The Ramones. My very first show.

**Liz:** Wow. What was KROQ like when you started there?

**Rodney:** It was, like... one big party. [laughs]

**Liz:** Were all the shows kind of like yours at the time?

**Rodney:** No. It was a rock station and I started bringing in the new music. Punk, at the time, was the new music.

**Liz:** So you were responsible for KROQ spearheading the new wave in punk in the ‘80s?

**Rodney:** Right, especially with Blondie, Talking Heads, and The Clash. And a lot of the New York bands as well. Of course, LA – The Runaways (also on his first show in a phone interview), The Quick, The Berlin Brats. And then The Germs came. The rest

I learned of the Rodney on the Roq show in the seventies through a group of friends – Mike Satras was the first, I think. Maybe Kirby Jones or Gail Worley – I don’t remember. I loved to tune him in on Sunday, and later, on Saturday nights. “It was all happening!” He started the show with a voice over on Generation X’s “Wild Dub.” It was the most!

If you tried hard enough you could talk to people like Angus Young or Bun E. Carlos on the radio. I remember once when Kid Spike and the Gears were on. I snatched off a guy who stole Spike’s jacket – on live radio! Two minutes after I hung up the phone, the thief called and threatened to kick my ass! He had been listening to Rodney’s show, too!

Rodney was totally supportive of flunky local bands like mine. He gave the Adolescents our first radio play – this was a year BEFORE we recorded “Amoeba.” He was hip to our trip before we were hip to it. “These guys are a totally happening band out of Orange County.” Then he’d play “Wrecking Crew” or “Do the Eddie.” On Tuesday nights he spun records at the Starwood while Black Flag would be playing in the room next door! How cool is that?

Always ate sensibly, oatmeal, poached egg, can of Tab. Had the best records of any DJ, coolest memorabilia, and knew everyone. He was the Ramones’ chauffeur in *Rock and Roll High School* for crying out loud!

–Tony Adolescent

is history.

**Todd:** When did you first meet The Runaways?

**Rodney:** Joan Jett used to come to my club and I helped put them together, along with Kim Fowley. Joan Jett was a big Suzi Quattro fan. She worshipped her. Literally bowed down. She was a blonde then. She had the Suzi look; leather coat and stuff and I’m still mad at her for stealing my Suzi Quattro wearing a leather bikini poster. Kim Fowley then came to my club and he got a hold of Cherie Currie from The Sugar Shack and I brought him Jackie Fox. And that’s how the Runaways formed.

**Todd:** When did Sandy West come into it?

**Rodney:** She came in at the very beginning when they were a three piece, when Mickey Steele of the Bangles was originally in the band. It was Mickey Steele (who went on to join the Bangles), Joan Jett, and Sandy West.

**Todd:** I talked to Jim Decker of the Crowd. He was dating Sandy West when the

Runaways formed.

**Rodney:** Really? She was dating a guy? Congratulations, Sandy.

**Todd:** The Crowd and the Runaways would play house parties together.

**Rodney:** The Runaways used to play a lot of back yards. They used to play Phast Phreddie's back yard.

**Liz:** How did KROQ evolve into what it is now and how do you see yourself fitting in at this point?

**Rodney:** Fitting in? Hmm. I'm kind of out there, challenging the new music.

**Liz:** But what exactly happened with KROQ being more on the Top 40 side now

Denny's every day and then you changed?

**Rodney:** No, I still eat at Denny's.

**Todd:** Don't you go to the International House of Pancakes anymore?

**Rodney:** For dinner, yeah.

**Liz:** Wasn't there a Copper Penny restaurant that you ate at?

**Rodney:** Pennyfeathers. Whenever I used to do my show, I'd say, "Hey, meet me down at Pennyfeathers." And everybody would be hangin' out. "Hey, what's happenin'?"

**Todd:** And you have a booth named after you at the restaurant, Canter's?

**Rodney:** Yeah.

(Recorded December 3, 1980 live at the Starwood, that was originally on the *What We Do Is Secret* EP ) Oh, wait. No. The most requested song on the show was actually "Skeletons" by the Inflatable Clam Boys. It's a Halloween song that people started requesting all the time.

**Liz:** Did you have something to do with *Germicide*?

**Rodney:** I hosted that show that they played at the Whisky A Go Go. I'm on the album.

**Todd:** And that's the album where Darby says, "Clear the balcony!"

**Rodney:** Right. Kim Fowley, myself, and Belinda Carlisle, all three of us introducing the Germs. She used to be in the Germs.

**Todd:** She was the drummer.

**Rodney:** I had the Germs on my show twice.

**Todd:** I've heard that Darby was a sweetheart a lot of the time.

**Rodney:** I hate to wreck his image, but he was a gentleman. I had a girl who would open my DJ booth at the Starwood. He would come up, "How do you do? Can I buy you a drink?" He'd buy you a drink and be very polite.

**Todd:** Do you know whatever happened to Lorna Doom?

**Rodney:** She's in New York.

**Liz:** Did you have anything to do with Cheech and Chong's "Up in Smoke"?

**Rodney:** Oh yeah. I was in that. I invited a lot of people to show up to the Roxy for the shooting of "Up in Smoke." The Germs were originally in "Up in Smoke," but they thrashed the movie set so they cut out their segment. Somewhere there's footage of them when they actually were in "Up in Smoke."

**Todd:** Maybe that'll come out with the DVD.

**Liz:** How many movie appearances have you made?

**Rodney:** So many.

**Liz:** You were in "Suburbia," right?

**Rodney:** "Suburbia," I was talking.

**Todd:** And you're driving the car for The Ramones in "Rock'n'roll High School."

**Rodney:** Yeah. If you get the DVD, you can actually type my name in and see all the different scenes that I'm in.

**Todd:** Do you still talk to the Ramones?

**Rodney:** Yeah. I talked to Joey right before he passed away. Nobody knows it, but he was really into stocks.

**Liz:** How many parking tickets have you had?

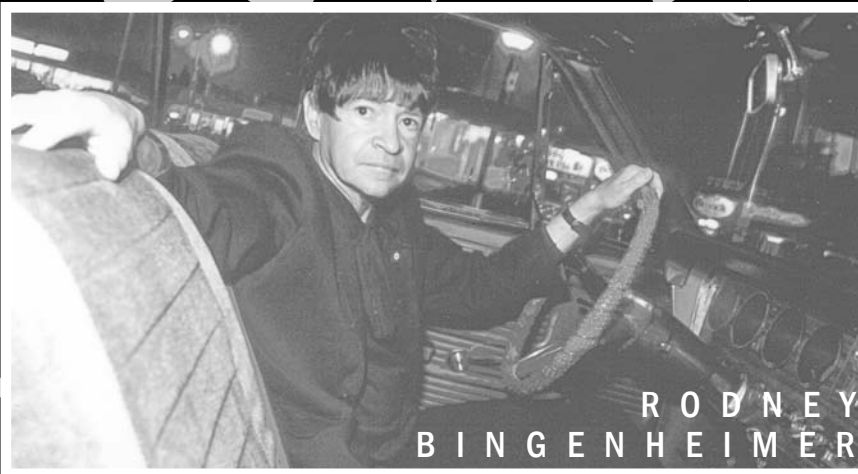
**Rodney:** God, one time I had a thousand dollars' worth because of where I used to live I couldn't park anywhere except out in front. In Los Angeles, they only allow you to park for an hour. And when you live in a place, what can you do?

**Liz:** What was punk rock called before it was called punk rock?

**Rodney:** Hmm. Punk rock.

**Liz:** Really? We heard the term "dirty glitter."

**Rodney:** Oh, that was when I first started my show and there was no name for it, so I



— and it wasn't when we were kids. So, how exactly did that happen?

**Rodney:** Probably because the ratings got so huge. (Spring 2001 marked the tenth consecutive time that KROQ rated at number one with 18-34 adults. It was also the first time in six years that an English-language radio station had been top-rated in the LA region.) So many people are listening, especially in the Orange County area and throughout Los Angeles.

**Todd:** What would you attribute your longevity at the radio station? So many DJs have come and gone. It's amazing in the world of corporate structures that they still retained you at all.

**Rodney:** I have a secret for that and that is: "Stay out of people's hair. Stay out of the way. Don't call them and don't bug them. Do your thing and get out."

**Liz:** Did you get into music for girls?

**Rodney:** I got into music for music.

**Todd:** Would it be correct to say that you're one of the few people who've made a career of being a fan of music?

**Rodney:** Probably.

**Todd:** Would you attribute that as a part of your longevity?

**Rodney:** Yeah.

**Todd:** Switching gears completely. You're also a creature of habit, is that correct?

**Rodney:** Yeah.

**Todd:** You first ate at

**Liz:** What do you usually eat when you're at Canter's?

**Rodney:** I went from grilled cheese sandwiches every night to turkey sandwiches. Now I'm into barley bean soup and a sandwich.

**Todd:** Why do you think you have such a regular schedule?

**Rodney:** Because I get a lot more things done that way. I still go out late, sleep late, and still get things done, at the same time.

**Liz:** Have you ever been stalked?

**Rodney:** Hmm. Yeah.

**Liz:** Would you say you're pretty stalk-able considering people know where you're going to be?

**Rodney:** Courtney Love used to stalk me. She talks about it in my movie. Tori Amos would come to Pennyfeathers.

**Todd:** How far would this stalking go? Did it ever get scary?

**Rodney:** No.

**Todd:** Is it true that you got into a food fight with The Damned at Canter's?

**Rodney:** I don't remember that. I took the Damned to this restaurant in Beverly Hills. It might have been there.

**Todd:** Did you get in a food fight there?

**Rodney:** Yeah. I think we did.

**Liz:** What's the longest-running number one song you've had on your show?

**Rodney:** "My Tunnel" by the Germs. "My Tunnel." That's before it was out, too.

called it dirty glitter, because I went from glitter to punk.

**Liz:** How many gold records have people given you?

**Rodney:** I never counted them. I should some day. Ten or fifteen.

**Todd:** Do you keep them on the wall?

**Rodney:** Yeah. Coldplay's in the bathroom. Nirvana's in the bathroom, too.

**Todd:** Who gave you the first one?

**Rodney:** Blondie.

**Liz:** Which album was that?

**Rodney:** *Parallel Lines*. I have others – *Hot Child in the City*, Nick Gilder, and *Mickey* by Toni Basil. I got a punk one. Youth Brigade. They made a special one for me.

**Todd:** Did they home spray paint it gold?

**Rodney:** Actually, you know, to make records, they (the record manufacturer) use a metal stamp. After they used that, I got the original Youth Brigade.

**Todd:** You have the original plates?

**Rodney:** Yeah.

**Liz:** What keeps you going with music, especially because you hated the '90s?

**Rodney:** Well, Brit pop, because I hated the '90s so bad. The only thing that was coming out was Brit pop.

**Todd:** Why did you hate the '90s so much?

**Rodney:** Probably because the whole grunge thing was really big. The whole style. Piercings and tattoos, especially on girls.

**Liz:** Speaking of girls, which do you like better – goth chicks or mod chicks?

**Rodney:** Ooh, that's a hard one. That's a tie.

**Liz:** Because, I heard you say – it was when I was a kid, 13 or 14 – that your favorite types of girls, they had to have that whole mid-'60s look going or they had to have that Siouxi look going.

**Rodney:** Right. I just got this new record. Oh, it's so amazing, too. They Might Be Giants. They do a song called "Bangs." All about girls with bangs. I'll play it on Sunday. And there's a song on there about disco. It's really funny – it's perfect dance disco beat. I was going to bring it tonight and play it because it's so new, but it's different for clubs.

**Liz:** What bands have you played with?

**Rodney:** The Tube Tops.

**Liz:** Who else was in The Tube Tops?

**Rodney:** Eric from Hole. Thurston Moore and Pat Fear, Dave Markey, and myself. And then there's The Tube Tops 2000. Which is Clem Burke of Blondie, Kathy Valentine from the Go-Go's, Melissa from Hole and Smashing Pumpkins, Pat Fear, and Eric from Hole.

**Todd:** Did you ever play bass with Rod Stewart?

**Rodney:** Rod Stewart And The Faces. I did that when I was in London. It was for "Top of the Pops." It was more of a lip synch kind of thing. I did it with Blondie, too for "Rockin' New Year's Eve," 1980. We did "Dreaming."

**Liz:** Who wrote your theme song?

**Rodney:** Phil Spector and Harry Nelson,

which is not really my own theme song, it was a theme song for a movie called "The Big TNT Show." Phil Spector had produced The Byrds, Joan Baez, and Lovin' Spoonful. It was a big concert that they filmed.

**Liz:** Can you tell us the time when you got in trouble for playing the "Springtime for Hitler" song. (The song, written by Mel Brooks, was originally released in 1968, and was the musical centerpiece of his first movie, "The Producers.")

**Rodney:** That was one of my biggest requests. One time I got in trouble. It took a while, though. It went on for a long time. I used to play that in my club. Kids used to kind of mime and make fun of Hitler, take their combs out and make Hitler mustaches. Now, it's the biggest thing, ever, now that it's on Broadway. That, along with "Sit on My Face, Stevie Nicks" by the Rotters.

**Liz:** What guest caused the most trouble on your show?

**Rodney:** Nobody really, but one of the oddest guests on my show was The Specials, of all people.

**Liz:** Really? What did they do.

**Rodney:** You'd ask them a question and instead of yes or no, they'd just nod. It's radio. You can't see that.

**Todd:** Did you ever have any unexpected guests?

**Rodney:** One time, when I had Siouxi, she brought Debby Harry, Clem Burke, and Michael Des Barres.

**Liz:** Who influenced your show?

**Rodney:** Me.

**Todd:** Did you have anyone you looked up to before you started even thinking about being a DJ?

**Rodney:** Growing up, Wolfman Jack. You could call him alternative because he was really out there.

**Liz:** Why didn't you ever start your own record label?

**Rodney:** Because I'm a DJ on the radio. The FCC frowns on that.

**Liz:** What is it like to be flocked by kids who listen to you, when you go out, and they see you at Canter's?

**Rodney:** It's a good thing. They're there, supporting my show.

**Liz:** Does that happen when you're any place other than Los Angeles?

**Rodney:** You'd be surprised. It happens even more. It happens even bigger. If I go to London or San Francisco, because people hear about my show and they think it's even bigger than it is. It happens less in LA. It's very odd. I did an English Disco in London. Lines of people coming up to me.

**Liz:** A couple weeks ago, I was talking to a girl in Boston online and she's like, "Yeah, I was in LA a few weeks ago. I was just really upset that we were there when Rodney's wasn't going on because we've always wanted to see Rodney on the ROQ."

**Todd:** Do you know of any famous punk rockers who attribute you to turning them into punk rockers?

Being a rabid fan of both The Go-Go's and The Bangles in the early '80s, I couldn't help but be hip to Rodney Bingenheimer. In my teens, I was a pen pal, corresponding with other Go-Go's and Bangles "aficionados." We would trade all kinds of memorabilia – for free! I'd get audio tapes in the mail that were labeled, "The Bangles host Rodney's show," or "The Go-Go's Stop by Rodney's After Video Shoot." Living in Connecticut at the time, I'd be so jealous of my LA pen pals; they had Rodney and his radio show every week. Being that I was still a young pup, I didn't have any immediate plans of moving to LA. So until then, I would have to find an alternate way to tune in. Astonishingly, I somehow coaxed an LA pen pal to tape a chunk of Rodney's show for me every week. I'd send him a supply of blank audios, envelopes and stamps. All he had to do was turn on KROQ, throw in a tape, and flip it over after 45 minutes. I was so giddy receiving my weekly tape. A sort of sneak peek into what was the next "godhead" thing. I mean, this is the guy who launched the careers of everyone from Fuzzbox to The Ramones. Much later I ended up moving to LA, but I still have over 100 Rodney on the ROQ audio tapes sitting at home in Connecticut. One day I'll send them over here and relive the moments, but for now I'll just tune into Rodney on my own radio. Ain't nothing like the real thing.

–Kat Jetson

**Rodney:** So many. It's endless.

**Todd:** Brett Guerwitz?

**Rodney:** Yeah. When I was doing my show, he came up and brought me a tape. Bad Religion. And I was, "OK, I'll play it." It was back when we could play cassettes on the air. By the time he got into his car and turned on his radio, I'm already playing it.

**Todd:** Are there tighter FCC standards now or would somebody know not to give you a tape with swear words on it?

**Rodney:** We're never really supposed to do it... but still.

**Liz:** How many records, would you estimate, that you have in your collection?

**Rodney:** God, thousands and thousands.

**Liz:** Do you have them all at your place?

**Rodney:** Storage and my place. I actually had to get rid of some because I had so many. I had fours and threes and fives (copies) of everything. I actually had to get rid of a lot of them.

**Liz:** Do you have them cataloged?

**Rodney:** No.

**Todd:** How do you know where your records are?



### RODNEY TRIVIA:

Brooke Shields did the introduction to Rodney on the Roq compilation #1, which featured The Adolescents, Black Flag, the Crowd, and Agent Orange.

The Suburban Lawn's self-produced single, *Gidget Goes To Hell*, first appeared on the radio on Rodney's show.

What's the origin of the name Bingenheimer? Bingen is a town in Germany and "Heimer" means home.

Rodney is credited with "hand clapping" on the Ramones *Hey! Ho! Let's Go: The Anthology*.

**Rodney:** I just know.

**Todd:** Have you ever lost a record that you wished you could have found?

**Rodney:** Yeah. Now and then. The 45 of "Springtime for Hitler." And "Springtime for Hitler" – by someone from the Bonzo Dog Band, they did it, too. (it was "Legs" Larry Smith in the b-side was "I've Got a Braun New Girl (In God Wet Rust)"). I lost both of them. I just found them recently.

**Liz:** Do you still record shop a lot?

**Rodney:** Yeah. I go to Melrose Music.

**Liz:** Do you mostly look for old stuff or new stuff?

**Rodney:** New stuff.

**Liz:** Have you ever introduced two people and they hooked up?

**Rodney:** Belinda Carlisle and Morgan Mason. They got married. I wish somebody would introduce me to somebody.

**Liz:** We heard that you reunited Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello. Is that true?

**Rodney:** Yeah. I got them back together, then they did the movie, *Back to the Beach*, with Pee Wee Herman. I was in that, too. I was a DJ.

**Liz:** What was a band that you think should have gotten really big but didn't?

**Rodney:** Birdland. I got in a big fight with our program director over Birdland. I

almost got fired. I was defending Birdland and Red Kross. That was when Lewis Largent was program director.

**Liz:** Before he went to MTV.

**Rodney:** Yeah.

**Liz:** Before KROQ and MTV became the same thing.

**Rodney:** Yeah.

**Todd:** I don't know anything about Birdland. What type of music was it?

**Rodney:** They all looked like the characters from "Village of the Damned." They all had blonde bangs. Really exciting kind of punk pop band.

**Liz:** They were good... What's the band that you totally thought would not have gone over and ended up becoming major rock stars?

**Rodney:** Nirvana.

**Liz:** You were into Nirvana, weren't you?

**Rodney:** The first album, *Bleach*, I played.

**Liz:** I bought *Bleach* because of that...

**Liz:** Is it true that Edie Sedgewick (a Warhol starlet) used to type your column?

**Rodney:** Yeah. I used to write for *Go Magazine*. I didn't have a typewriter and didn't know how to type, so I used to go out to all these clubs and review things and take down notes, and Edie worked at this company called Green and Stone and they were producers – they produced Sonny and Cher, Buffalo Springfield, Iron Butterfly – I used to have her type my column.

**Todd:** What would be the main difference in punk rock music – for you – over the last twenty years, being a DJ in LA?

**Rodney:** Punk rock was more hardcore back then. Harder edge. Punk rock now, it's more power punk or punk pop.

**Liz:** What do you like better – vinyl or CD?

**Rodney:** That's hard. I don't like the packaging of CDs. I don't like those plastic cases. Whenever I call the record companies, I ask them to send me the little cardboard ones. The promo ones are a lot better. Vinyl – I like the covers and artwork and stuff.

**Todd:** Vinyl's harder to play in your car.

**Rodney:** Yeah. CDs are easier to take around. I used to carry – when KROQ was in Pasadena – records up stairs. Hurt my back. Crates.

**Liz:** We've also noticed that you've supported Rolan Boland and Sean Lennon and we're wondering how you feel supporting the progeny of the people who were at the original Rodney's English Disco?

**Rodney:** It's weird. I'm just looking after the sons and daughters.

**Liz:** Who's also from the group that you play on your show? The rock star progeny?

**Rodney:** Wendy Wilson.

**Todd:** Who would you say had been your nicest musical guest?

**Rodney:** Blondie and Siouxsie, hands down. They always came back, even when they got huge, huge and they always came back when they were the biggest band in the

world. Clem's going to be here tonight. They're going to be hanging out.

**Liz:** Who does your hair?

**Rodney:** Matt at Fred Segal in Santa Monica.

**Todd:** Tell me about the movie that's being made about you, *Mayor of the Sunset Strip*.

**Rodney:** It's all done.

**Todd:** Are they going to preview it at Sundance?

**Rodney:** Unfortunately, it won't make it in time for Sundance. The timing. It's just going to have a screening and premiere in LA. 2002.

**Todd:** And the director is Hickenlooper?

**Rodney:** Yeah. George Hickenlooper.

**Todd:** That's the guy who did *Hearts of Darkness*, the documentary about the making of the film *Apocalypse Now*.

**Rodney:** Right. And *Some May Call It Slingblade*.

**Liz:** So how did that project come about?

**Rodney:** Well, Chris Carter from Dramarama, it was always a dream of his. First off, he wanted to do a book about me and we were turned down by all these publishers and we have great photos and stuff, but they want to hear the stories. They want to hear the sex, drugs, and rock'n'roll. I'm not going to fink on anybody. Chris decided, let's do a movie. So, he got ahold of George and George was a fan from listening to my show and said, "Let's do it." And George did it for the love of music and my being, I guess. He didn't get any money for it. He was just doing it.

**Liz:** So is there as much sex and drugs in rock'n'roll as people think there is?

**Rodney:** Now it's a lot tamer.

**Liz:** Back in the day it wasn't?

**Rodney:** No. [laughs]

**Todd:** There are bands that have been around since you've been here. The Crowd is still releasing brand new material. Who do you think would be your contemporaries – not just in DJing and music – but have been along for the ride the entire time and still contribute?

**Rodney:** I'm surprised the Go-Go's are still going. A lot of those bands from the '80s are back. Brendan Mullen, who started the Masque, is having a book release party for his book all about LA punk.

**Todd:** Would you say that people like that are part of the inspiration to keep on going?

**Rodney:** Yeah. The Cramps are still going. The Cramps were regular guests on my show, too.

**Todd:** It's true that you don't do drugs, don't smoke, don't drink.

**Rodney:** Yes.

**Todd:** It seems interesting that you're immersed in a culture that revels in that.

**Rodney:** There was a time once when Suzi Quattro came to my club and we went in the freezer. We had a big walk-in freezer. She whipped out some cocaine. I took a couple sniffs to see what it was like. It made me happy for awhile, but after that I was back to normal.



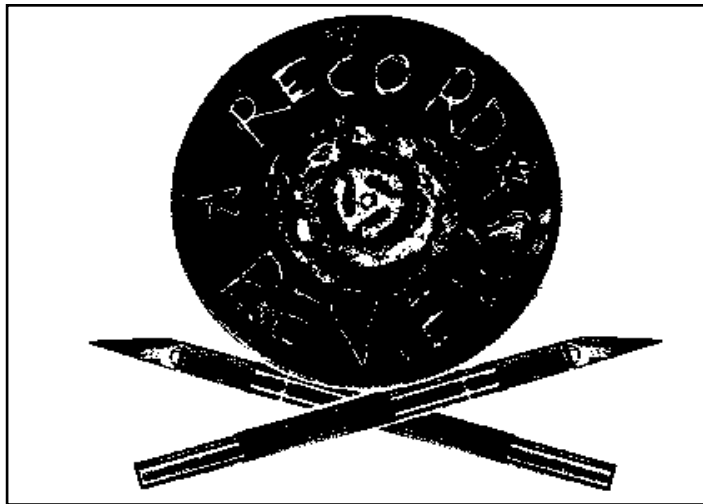


**ALKALINE TRIO/HOT WATER MUSIC: Split: CD**

It's an appropriate pairing in a yin yang way. Alkaline Trio sound happy as shit, but the smiles are broken tooth lyrics sharpened to daggers, all dark undercurrent, all sugar-coated fuck you in the pop context. Hot Water Music sound pissed as all hell and as gruff as a kennel of kicked-in-the-head Dobermans, but their lyrics are overwhelmingly positive and hopeful. OK, these songs: Alkaline Trio's Matt Skiba's got it going on; breathless melody that'll make ladies shed tops like they're entering tanning salons instead of a rock show, the hummability that'll place A3 on the loudspeaker as I pump gas, and I still can't slag him. Skiba writes some fucking tight, snappy songs that look and smell like those little heart-shaped candies, but don't easily dissolve from memory. They cover Hot Water Music's "Rooftops," and have provided two originals. HWM's ability to soar and propel with post-hardcore power, steering into brutal-tongued and burning acoustic-heavy songs takes me to places I never thought the band would go, but I'm stunned at how warm, meaningful, and heart-felt they still sound, even if they're slower and more sparse arrangements. Great split. -Todd (Jade Tree)

**ALTA MAY: We As In Us: CD**

When I lived in Shitport, Louisiana, I torturously sweated and toiled in a vending warehouse where the hours were long and the labor grueling. The easy-going custodian who half-heartedly cleaned and maintained the premises was a mildly retarded black woman named Alta May (not a very common name at all, I might add). And this was during the early to mid-'90s when grunge loudly reared its monstrosity huge head and reigned supreme in the carcass-strewn dinosaur-rock kingdom of FM-radio stagnancy. Now here's where the irony of the situation kicks in, folks: this gruff'n'gritty trio of tune-blasters, who are aptly named Alta May, feverishly flail through a grungey maelstrom of sonic skull-crushers that brings to mind the flannel-enshrouded era of Seattle's sullen sounds which were buried deep in richly textured strains of heroin, decadence, darkness, and death. I assuredly do not intend that to be construed as a negatively toned statement, 'cause Alta May grandly radiate a mesmerizing glimmer of aural energy that equals, and sometimes surpasses, the best of what Nirvana, Mudhoney, Alice In Chains, Green River, Tad, Love Battery, and countless others had to offer back when grunge was king and the predictable rapmetal moronity of today was nothin' more than a speck of laundry lint in some major-label rep's coin pocket. Ah, yes indeed, those were the days... or were they really?!? -Roger Moser, Jr. (Glazed)



**It's the same euphoria I get when I suddenly sneeze and a highly audible fart comes out simultaneously. Oh joy! -Donofthedead**

**AMAZOMBIES:**

**Shipwrecked: CD EP**

These are three ladies from Seattle who sometimes sound like Joan Jett and other times like the Ramones. There are five songs on here with what I think is their best track saved for last - "At the Bar." The cover photograph is of a pre-twentieth century sailboat. It looks like a pirate ship to me. Is this a pirate ship? I'm not sure. Are these young ladies really pirates? Amazonian zombie pirates? I like it. -Bradley Williams (www.amazombies.com)

**ASUNDER/LIKE FLIES ON FLESH: Split: CD**

Both bands play prosaic death metal songs that, like the Energizer bunny, just go on and on and on and on... -Jimmy Alvarado (Life is Abuse)

**BELTONES:**

**Cheap Trinkets: CD**

You know it's a good day when you're listening to a two-year-old album by a band, thinking that they really need to release something new, and that very day, their new album arrives in the review pile. That's what happened to me with this new Beltones. And believe me, I'm not disappointed. *Cheap Trinkets* brings back most of my favorite elements from the Beltones first CD - growling vocals, angry, heartbreaking songs, the sense that you're so far gone that one more drink couldn't hurt - but a new element has been added. While the Beltones' sound still has its core in early Stiff Little Fingers, they've added a rockabilly edge to the songs. Which isn't to say that they've gone rockabilly. They haven't. They've just added that little bit more of a roll to their songs. The lyrics have changed somewhat, too. On their first CD, *On Deaf Ears*, the lyrics were jarringly personal - songs about the singer's mother dying, songs about old friends going off in different directions, songs about being so

**BLACK WIDOWS, THE:**

**Arocknophobia: CD**

It's some kind of secret mystery group that wears panty hose on their faces and plays instrumental surf with a goodly handful of organ and goes in two speeds: exciting fast and pleasant slow. I can't believe the name Black Widows ain't been used before, but it seems to be working for these guys. -Cuss Baxter (Vital Gesture)

**BLOODHAG:**

**Necrotic Bibliophila: CD**

In a quick nutshell, Bloodhag, in all seriousness, are a black or death or scary metal band of geeks that sing exclusively songs about science fiction authors, replete with almost impossible-to-decipher, unholy vocals and chonka chonka riffage that comes out of the sky like lightning. I like them a bunch, perhaps because they sound so tough and their music could pound Korn into the soft earth, and they're saying, essentially, "read science fiction, you dink." It's a definite plus there's a lyrics sheet, that you have to read. And reading and literacy is their mission in life. Like thick glasses on a human skull, they coalesce the tenets of NorthWest EduCore (slogan - "Reading is... fuuuuck you"), along with proper library etiquette, and they get down to the business at hand: making your ears bleed and your mind expand. Standouts include the lyrics in "Octavia E. Butler" - "Don't make Octavia write for a hundred years before you treat Black women as good as guys with pointed ears"; in "William Gibson," the lyrics - "Dystopian vision forged with typewriter ribbon"; and the male falsetto voice in "Kenneth Robeson." Skullastically sounding like pissed-off, peed-on mutants with extra arms (for extra thrashing), Bloodhag continue to discover new ways of re-interpreting the phrase, "Get lit." Yeah, it's recommended... like a reading list. -Todd (Rock and Roleplay)

**BODIES, THE: Firepower Is Our Business: CDEP**

The Bodies are as catchy as they sound mean. They're working class. And, thankfully, they don't oi it up, since they're from America. They just look like regular dudes - jeans and t-shirts. And they rock out. And they drink a lot when they play, which is endearing. What's disarming is that Abe's voice could easily be on a pop punk album. It's very smooth, very easy to listen to, and he does this thing called enunciation instead of gargling marbles in a Cockney-affected accent. It's refreshing. The band plays flawless, powerful punk rock, and although they're from the bombing range around San Francisco, they sound like the very best of true Orange County punk. Slicing wire guitars, punished drums, bubbling bass melodies, and a solo-less experience. And although I essentially dis-

mixed up and angry inside that you have to start drinking to keep from killing people. On this album, the lyrics have gotten less personal. There are a lot more songs about women. Still, they carry that Beltones' edge, singing about getting in a fight that a cop breaks up ("could you take your foot off my neck for a second so I can peel my face off the ground"), or singing about losing a girlfriend ("the good lord stole her away from me. I swear I'll settle the score with that rotten motherfucker"). Even when they try a love song, it comes across like a nudge from a chainsaw ("I know a lot of things like this are better left unsaid, but your kisses taste better than a kick in the head"). I'll be honest. I can't get enough of this album right now. I'm listening to it every day and have to keep myself from listening to it more than that. And I can't wait to see them live again, especially now that they know enough songs to play for longer than twenty minutes. -Sean (TKO)

**BLACK CAT MUSIC: Hands in the Estuary, Torso in the Lake: CD**

Pull the curtains to shut out the sunlight, enter Black Cat Music. This band is the sound of chains swinging in a basement. Like the Murder City Devils, their souls are steeped in a dark and sinister underworld. Their music shares elements of that Seattle band, too, although it is a little more methodical and dynamically sparse. Their sound is an odd one. At times, when within one song they veer close to territory of Led Zeppelin, old Nation of Ulysses, and goth at the same time. The singing is somewhat atonal and grating, but only becomes unbearable when the tempo of the songs slow way down. It is an interesting record and but hard to recommend except to those attracted to the darker side of things. -Nathan Grumdahl (Lookout!)

agree with their supporting of the death penalty (but take their point that scumbags should get their due) and don't quite share wanting to wave the flag with them, I can't but help cranking the stereo and singing along. The music's just too good to dismiss on small points of political disagreement, especially since the times I've seen them play, they've been really nice guys. (I think most of these songs were previously released on both Vulture Rock and Radio, sans the last track, but I've been known to fuck up.) -Todd (TKO)

**BRANDNEW: Your Favorite Weapon: CD**

Mass appeal. Can you say MTV? I want to direct the video. I will dress them in the latest skate wear - brand logos that are jumping out of the screen so that they can get extra money from their clothing sponsors. Oh, I can't forget the studded belts and the chain wallets. I would go to the local punk record store and place all over their instruments punk stickers of every punk band that ever existed. That would give them credibility. Make sure their haircuts are spikey and shiny and at least one member would have a florescent color dyed in right before the shoot. They would have to look like they are individuals. I would have them lip syncing live at an outdoor arena with a high school aged group as an audience fueled on cheap keg beer. Making sure the crowd is going to look energetic, I would yell, "More blood, more beer!" Nothing promotes attention more than underage drinking and free beer mixed together. While shooting the performance, I would yell, "Jump!" every ten seconds at the band to "show" their energy. At one point, I would instruct the singer to take his shirt off so he can show off his fake tattoos, stage prop piercings and the top of his boxers to attract a larger female audience. Oops, I must be blending together a Blink 182 video with a Good Charlotte video. Fuck it. It will still work. -Donofthedeath (Triple Crown)

**BRIAN JONESTOWN MAS-SACRE: Braveryrepetitionandnoise: CD**

Mostly mellow, '60s-influenced rock that owes more than a little of its sound to the late, great Love and just a dash of the psychedelic incarnation of the Stones. Really good shit that makes me wish I still smoked dope. -Jimmy Alvarado (www.bomp.com)

**BROTHER BRICK: The Same 7"**

I was a little put off by the pic of the band. I see three dudes in flannel and long hair and I automatically think "hippie grunge shit." Yeah, I'm a bigot. Fuck you. Luckily, my fears were unfounded. Straight-up Detroit r'n'r here. Both songs are blessed with solid riffage and the title track

even lifts a piece of Sabbath's "Fairies Wear Boots" and puts it to good use. -Jimmy Alvarado (Rockin' House)

**CHAOTIC DISCHORD: Now That's What I Call a Racket/Live in NYC: CD**

Never paid any attention to these guys because: most generic band name ever (I always got them confused with Chronic Disorder); but it dawns on me: maybe it's on purpose. This reissue (I guess) starts with a giddy spoken intro and then flails right off into Mob 47 territory (both in intensity and vocal clarity). Good, good stuff. The live portion is righteously noisy and goofy and I think this is one special (lo fi) slab. -Cuss Baxter (Punk Core)

**CHICKEN HAWKS, THE: Hard Hitting Songs for Hard Hit People: CD**

Well I'll be a soused silly sonuvabitch, this is the friskiest, most sonically spectacular display of badass rock'n'roll rowdiness to ever thunderously roar outta the Midwest! It's a decadent voodoo-laden whirlwind of tornadic fury that's as hot and steamy as a crawfish-boil in Hell - untamed, uncivilized, unrefined, and downright unruly, just the way Beezlebub requested! The vocals are robustly belted-out by a devilishly delicious wildcat momma who enthusiastically exudes a sweat-drenched swirl of sex, sin, and sleaze; the wildly out-of-control slide-guitar frantically slithers throughout a steady crunch of fretboard-rattlin' rhythms like a venomous snake stalking its prey in a cool, well-shaded patch of San Augustine grass; a virile hoochie-coochie helping of honky-tonk keyboards strut in and out like a proud budding alleycat prowlin' for pussy on a Saturday night; and a ferocious rumbling brannigan continuously erupts between the bass and drums as if they're stubbornly dukin' it out to the death! Damn straight, this is a dark, magical mix of The Cramps, CCR, X, The Faces, Big Mama Thornton, and The Rolling Stones thoroughly soaked in a murky baptismal of Mississippi River swampwater. This juicy skull-thumper of a disc has cast an everlasting spell on me, and now I'm uglier, meaner, and nastier than I was just two hours ago. I've been Chicken Hawked, yeeeeeew hot damn! -Roger Moser, Jr. (RAFR)

**CHIYOKO: Cinematic: CD**

I'm sorry. I fell asleep. Who was I reviewing? Oh yeah. Press play on the CD player. ZZZZZZZZZ. -Jimmy Alvarado (Boo-the-Cat)

**CIVIC MINDED 5: E=CM5: CD**

I've seen the Civic Minded 5 play on the side of warehouse in freezing winds. And they were fucking great. Lazer reminded me of the intensity of

Greg Ginn. Then someone tripped over the lamp chord and everything went black and we drank more and people bumped into one another. I've seen the CM5 in a Vegas dive bar and got threatened I couldn't take pictures unless I faxed in a request. That night, they sucked balls. They played a fucking twenty minute medley that they'd restart over and over again. They were just very bad drunks. I've seen the CM5 smash a guitar in NYC and it was joyous. The crowd got rowdy. Fun, punch your friends rowdy. In other words, live is a mixed bag, depending on their sobriety and their we-hate-one-another levels of irritation. Enter this CD. Fuck your first song. If anything, put it after ten minutes of blank space at the end. It's a "parody" of Aerosmith's "Sweet Emotion." Jesus, it's painful and it's shitty. Things pick up mightily right after that. Then they do things I like: fuckin' spazz, almost-kazoo vocals jumping all over themselves like little dogs having fun humping. And if you listen beyond the frenetic din – and I'm not calling anyone a pussy here – the musicianship is as inspired as it is warped and speedy. Guitar lines fray and splice and stop and bunch up suddenly and make very basic song structures crackle like the front of a retard bus with the brakes locked up, after it hits a brick wall. It's funny. The CM5 are an unavoidable accident. There's a lot of screaming. Like someone's in a lot of pain, which, in my book, makes for a very enjoyable record. Favorite track: "Kiss My Black Ass." Rolickin'. –Todd (Recess)

#### COMING DOWN:

##### *The Pirate Songs*: CD

Pirates? Yes, pirates? I was reading in the last issue of *Razorcake* an article by Harmonie about Count Chocula, Boo Berry, and Frankenberry cereals. It was that story combined with the amount of pirate related images I've seen lately that makes me wonder if there has ever been a pirate cereal to compare with the likes of the Count Chocula Crew. I'm no expert on cereals, but for a pirate cereal it would have to be in the marshmallow cereal genre like any of the CCC. There would be wheat crisp things shaped like skulls and bones. The marshmallows would be gold coins, blue swords, black cannon balls, and brown peg legs. Just an idea. But this CD isn't about cereal. It's about screams, hopeless(ness), and being knee deep in shit. The first song caught me off guard and then held me there. E-mail them for a copy. –Bradley Williams (Coming Down)

#### CRUDOS, LOS:

##### *Discography*: CD

Wild, bombastic, fast, uncompromising, and yes, brutal – all words that accurately describe the phenomenon that was Los Crudos. Coming out of the barrios of Chicago, these guys helped reinvigorate and repoliticize a

style of music that, at the time, was sinking deeper and deeper into a macho-jock-metal cesspool and going from bad to just flat-out pathetic. If you can understand the lyrics, you will find the topics up for discussion range from indigenous people's rights to the treatment of immigrants to racism both within and without the punk scene and beyond. Even if you can't understand what they're saying (the lyrics are in Spanish), it's obvious that they're not just outraged about something, they're flat-out pissed and hell-bent on being heard. And then there's their "music," the equivalent of running headfirst into a moving train and jamming an ice pick into your ear while a lunch whistle screams in your ear. Included here is, I believe, damn near every song they committed to vinyl, as well as a "live in the studio" session. Even if you're only remotely interested in hardcore, consider this mandatory material for your collection. Plop it in, set the volume at full and prepare to have the skin peeled back from your teeth. –Jimmy Alvarado (Lengua Armada)

#### CRYPT KICKERS:

##### *Lamentations of the Living Dead*: CD

This is the world's best damned two-man quartet in existence today! Maybe they are one of the only two-man quartets. Guitar and harmonica balanced with drums and banjo played together and in a way that can only be done if you are two fellas from the North Country of Alabama. Dead men, devils, down'n'out, picking and rocking, slopped up in filling helpings. It makes me want to shake the spiders out of my boots and get to walking before the down and outs come creeping up to my door. –Bradley Williams (Nation of Kids)

#### CUTS, THE: Self-titled: LP

Neo-'60s/Voxx fuzzrock straddling that fine line between the Standells and Love. Kinda wary of bands like this 'cause so many of them suck, but the fact that there are some great songs and inspired performances here makes this an exception rather than the rule. Good stuff for a nice summer drive through the shitty parts of town. –Jimmy Alvarado (Rock'n'Roll)

#### DECALS, THE: *Drive-By Kiss Off*: CD

Wow! Its yet another "rock" album. I seem to be getting a lot of rock albums for review in my own zine lately – rock being defined as: a.) not punk b.) could be played in a bar. Nothing wrong with it, of course, but if I can imagine that any band's following is almost entirely made up of a bar crowd... well, call me crazy, but I'm not gonna be too excited. (As we all know, bar shows suck, and all ages shows are where it's at! I've thought this since I was 14 and, at the age of 22 – well within the legal limits to attend bar shows – I'm still opposed!) Okay, so here's the part where I shut

up and talk about the music, dude. The Decals have a female lead singer who does not sound like Kim Shattuck, contrary to other reviews of this CD I've seen around. In theme, they probably come closest to a band like the Eyeliners, but with much worse lyrics. Nothing too exciting here, but nothing too awful either. And if you've spent enough on expensive drinks all night, you might just find yourself loving it. This is Golden Grahams – only great when you're really drunk and someone hands you a box of 'em! –Maddy (Fork-in-Hand)

#### DEPARTURE, THE:

##### *A Necessity for Ruins*: CD

The Departure play what has become the teenage sound of punk today. That "almost metal" guitar playing and three part harmonies are lost on me, but the ultra high energy of earlier punk rock and hardcore is there. The singing is fast and pushed to the wall and you can feel the sweaty boys playing the shit out their instruments behind it. It is a recording that would make you drive your car faster on the way to high school. Unlike a New Found Glory or No Motiv record, there actually is some fresh and unique production to this recording. They get serious points with me because they are not afraid to track a tambourine over a heavy guitar breakdown on "Bleached Just Right." –Nathan Grumdahl (The Departure)

#### DICK ARMY: *Unsafe at Any Volume*: CD

I reviewed a couple of Dick Army seven inches back in the old *Flipside* days. They were trashy punk rock songs, fast and snotty and seemed like they were held together around the edges by patches that were as threadbare as the knees of their jeans. I just dug out those seven inches not too long ago and wondered if these guys would ever put out a full-length album. Then, what do you know? Here comes *Unsafe at Any Volume*, which is kind of like a full length, only about ten minutes too short to be called that. Still, this CD has eleven songs, most of them two minutes and most of them sounding like the band listened to some Stooges and some Adolescents, then got drunk and played whatever the fuck they wanted. And there's something about that that hits me just right. –Sean (Vital Music)

#### DILS, THE: *Dils Dils Dils* CD

Fuckin' commies. For only officially releasing three singles, the Dils left pretty deep slashes across the chest of LA punk. It doesn't sound groundbreaking today, but the Dils burst the US punk scene's hymen when it came to politics and were not-very-arguably the first west coast band of their kind, sorta like a state-side Clash in a left-leaning flashpot. And they went for the jugular. "The Sound of the Rain" may sound a little Peter,

Paul, and Mary-ish until you listen closely to the lyrics: "I don't listen to the cops. I wish they were all dead." This is a re-release of the Dils first demo version of "Blow Up." *The 198 Seconds of the Dils* Dangerhouse single from '77; ("Class War" and "Mr. Big"); and the *Les Dils* single from Vancouver's Rogelletti Records ("Sound of the Rain," "It's Not Worth It," and "Red Rockers"). Falling into a strange pattern of the last two Dils collections I've stumbled over the years – this is the third record of theirs that's half very good studio, half sorta pooppy live recordings (still weirder yet, the one from Lost Records, was called *Dils Dils Dils*, too, but it has a couple of different live songs, but Lost Records is out of business). My personal bias is that the studio stuff rules, the live stuff – it's okay, but not essential. So, Dionysus knows what they're doing and/or they know what you want. Not on here is the smoking pressure of the "You're Not Blank"/"I Hate the Rich" single. Those are on the *Class War* Dionysus reissue. Woo. Sorry about the geeking out. FYI, the Kinman brothers are still around – after becoming Rank and File, after Blackbird, and currently as Cowboy Nation – but this is what the punks'll remember 'em by. –Todd (Dionysus)

#### EASY ACTION: Self-titled: CD

This is pure skull-crushing Detroit-bred rock'n'roll brutality! It's a mammoth screaming slaughterhouse of sound that's drenched to the bone in blood, sweat, attitude, and crazed balls-out fury. The razor-slashed gargoye vocals demonically shriek and growl in unbridled fits of roaring rage. The guitars are thickly laden with maximum distortion overdrive makin' 'em heavier than a tyrannosaurus rex's testicles. The bass furiously belches forth an unrelenting maelstrom of low-end locomotive rumble and the drums stomp, bash, and boom along like the explosive end result of 100 million Tomahawk cruise-missiles obliterating their intended targets deep in the heart of Afghanistan. Since Easy Action are so obviously incomparable to any other band I could possibly mention, I'll just state for the record that this cacophonously killer combo is comprised of former members of Negative Approach, Laughing Hyenas, The Necros, Gravatar, and Thrall. Indeed, they're a ferocious sonic force not to be dealt with lightly. After several enthusiastic listens, I sit here shitfaced and stewed, wondering what in the hell just hit me upside the head with such lethal full-force intensity; the life-altering auditory terrorism of Easy Action, of course! –Roger Moser, Jr. (Reptilian)

#### ETERNAL 13: *Layback Grind*: CD

This 13 song release is cool if for no other reason than that the packaging is designed like a giant matchbook. This is driving and noisy and has a lit-

tle bit of a Black Flag feel to it, although not nearly as intense as I would hope for. The fourth song gets pretty thrashy, but doesn't manage to kick the energy level over the top. Overall, a cool aesthetic and a cool sound, but something's missing for me. Also, the lack of lyrics pissed me off. These guys could develop into something monstrous if they keep at it. -Dan Yemin (Extravertigo)

**FASTIDOS, LOS: *Ten Years Tattooed on my Heart*: CD**  
Italian skinhead music that is pretty good musically, but would someone please translate "Italians shouting 'oi!' sound just as stupid as Americans shouting 'oi!'" for them? Thanks a heap. -Jimmy Alvarado (Mad Butcher)

**FLAMING STARS: *Ginmill Perfume*: CD**  
These guys swim in that gray pool somewhere between punk, '60s garage rock, the Modern Lovers, surf music and Leonard Cohen, if you can believe that. I know that doesn't sound like a good thing to most, but this is actually one of the better CDs I've heard this year. I'll be playing this puppy lots, boyo. -Jimmy Alvarado (Alternative Tentacles)

**GAMITS, THE: *A Small Price to Pay*: CD**  
What do you think of when you think of Colorado? I would venture a guess

that most people think of skiing, hemp clothed hippies, or the Denver Broncos. When I think of that state, my mind always drifts to the wonderful folks at Suburban Home Records and their hardest working band, the Gamits. Under your nose, they have been striking out from the land of those powdery slopes and touring the shit out of this country. Chris, Forrest, and Matt have lived, breathed, ate, shit, and played their music and it shows on this new record. They deliver fun, tight, energetic poppy punk rock that is refreshing and genuine. I feel like the Gamits are one of this country's most under appreciated secrets. This is the record to buy for your kid brother when he asks for a Blink 182 record. -Nathan Grumdahl (Suburban Home)

**GET HUSTLE: *Mad Power/Who Do You Love? 7"***  
One of my favorite releases of the year, by one of my favorite bands. Get Hustle, once from LA, now from Portland, features ex-members of various hip San Diego bands. Some of the neatest art work as well, it's a must have for record-art junkies. With a new track - "Mad Power," you get to hear their distinct evolution from rock band (guitar, drum, piano) to cabaret style drama with an organ, piano, and drums, hobbling organs, delicate piano, jazz drums and the infamous Valentine wailing her strong, possessive voice. It's as if the

Doors made love to Diamanda Galas and Gitane Demone. The second track is a fab cover of Bo Diddley's "Who Do You Love?" with dancy piano and a gospel feel. You'll be clapping your hands to this one. Who do you love? Get Hustle, baby. Woo!  
-Sarah Stierch (Gravity)

**GET UP AND GO'ERS/  
DEAD END: *Split 7"***  
A couple of hard rocking Swedish bands lock Viking horns on the vinyl tundra. Get Up And Go'ers' melodic hardcore reminds me of a tad slower, a tad more dirty, spitty, lower-fi Kid Dynamite. So, yeah, I'm predisposed to like the swelling to burst choruses, catchy slaps of melodies, and lyrics that deal not only - thankfully - with DIY culture and people giving up their dreams for security, but the appreciation of old juke boxes with Johnny Cash and Ronettes selections. I'd like a little more speed, but I'd definitely pick up a full length. Dead End start off on the wrong foot, breaking the "If your soundbite is over 10 seconds, especially at the very beginning, you suck" rule, but they make up ground quickly in a hybrid sound that's equal parts the poetic penumbra of Marginal Man (with lyrics like "The process of communication never seem to be up for debate so we cover it up in beautiful descriptions," and the pretty, languid breakdowns) which rips directly into scratchy voiced, vocal tagteaming

that makes me think if Dag Nasty's Dave Smalley gargling Drano. Which is a nice thing to hear when listening to music. Recommended. -Todd (Bridge, Armed With Anger)

**GODDAMN GENTLEMEN,  
THE: *Sex-Caliber  
Horsepower*: CD**  
Like a \$3 donkey show, it's fast and dirty and a little mean. There's lots of shouting, and it wouldn't be what it is without the organ - the thick and gleeful organ. Comparison points that come to mind include the Candy Snatchers, the Delta 72 and the Gun Club, but there's way more energy than either of those last two. I don't know about the Gentlemen part, but I'll vouch for the Goddamn. -Cuss Baxter (Uppercut)

**GONADS:  
*Schiz-oi-phrenia*: CD**  
A new album's worth of jokey oi stuff from a band I didn't know were still around. "Hitler was an 'omo" is destined to be a classic. -Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

**GOOD RIDDANCE / KILL  
YOUR IDOLS: *Split*: CD**  
Good Riddance's West Coast hardcore and Kill Your Idols' East Coast hardcore make the argument that American geographical quibbles are essentially meaningless. Both are exciting bands, both are still gaining

speed and smarts years down the line. Interestingly, they're both getting harder and faster in a musical world that's largely basking in emo's mellowness, which is a thumbs up in my book. Good Riddance: lead singer and lyricist, Russ, is becoming a smart, smart cookie and the band is following suit; sharp time changes, crystalline breakdowns, and swelling beats that makes them leagues beyond 1-2-3 youth crew stylings and beat-'em-about-the-head-and-neck politics of less finessed bands. It's amazing how much Dave Wagenschutz's drumming gives the band such a dark and compelling atmosphere. Kill Your Idols: I really had a problem with the production with their last CD. They excel as the musical equivalent to mistreated pit bulls, but it seemed that they'd been de-toothed and refitted with spongy dentures on that outing. Not so with these three short beatings of songs. They've re-harnessed their early 70's power that can only come from severely choking their songs while slipping a wee bit of melody in for good measure (you know, like someone's shoe tips on the floor when they're being hung and a good song's on the hi-fi). Short but very sweet. -Todd (Jade Tree)

**HENRY FIAT'S OPEN SORE:  
Makes Your Cock Big: 7"**

Rip-roarin' rock'n'roll riffage slopped on top of a harried hardcore holocaust. Slap this puppy on the turntable and I guarantee that even the most sedate party will turn into a frenzied, violent bloodbath. Yeah, I recommend this fucker. -Jimmy Alvarado (Rock'n'Roll Blitzkrieg)

**ICARUS LINE, THE:  
Mono: CD**

So I put this in my computer's CD drive, and I get a video of the Icarus Line, who I've never heard before. The video is a good edit job of the band playing at a couple of different clubs. One looks like Emo's in Austin, Texas. The other might be LA or something. I think the actual song is a studio recording dubbed over the video. Anyway, no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't get my computer to play anything but the video. The CD packaging lists 12 songs, but they are nowhere to be found, as far as my computer's CD player is concerned. I even tried taking out the CD and flipping it over, to see if there was anything on the other side. This works on my turntable, but apparently the same laws of physics don't apply to laser technology. So it looks like I'll only be able to review the video and the CD packaging. The song being played in the video, "Feed a Cat to Your Cobra," rocks pretty hard and reminds me of Ink and Dagger, with maybe a little less heaviness and a little more "rock." I liked this song a lot. It was pretty damn catchy and had good dynamics. If the video is any indication, this band

also goes off pretty hard when they play live, and I would definitely go see them if they came to Philly. The artwork that comes with the CD is pretty cool and looks like photos or video stills that have been painted over, kind of like that movie, *Waking Life*. The lyrics seem to revolve around themes of despair and deceit. This is the best thing this label's ever released. Sorry I couldn't review the whole album. Next time, don't make it so hard for the technologically impaired. -Dan Yemin (Crank!)

**IGGY & THE STOOGES:**

**Wild Love: CD**

Bomp's historically significant Iguana Chronicles series raucously continues with this dark'n'decadent trip into the crazed creative process of The Stooges as they aurally unwind during various practice sessions in the early '70s. This casual, laid-back archival recording contains one hour and six-and-a-half minutes worth of raw, ragged rehearsals and loose, drug-addled jams that sound as if they were recorded in a dimly lit garage in the wee whiskey-fueled hours of early morning's somber shadows - murky, muffled, and psychotically distorted, it is! Iggy's vocals are manish, gruff, and criminally intimidating, and James Williamson deftly swaggers all over the fiery frets of his demonically possessed guitar as if COOL were his middle name (I've always thought Jammin' James was one of the most spectacularly proficient guitarists of all time, but he's just so damn under-appreciated!). Then there's the thunderously volcanic bass and drum interplay between the Aseton brothers and sporadic snakelike stirrings of a lone, bile-spewing keyboard. Of the thirteen deliciously deviant ditties contained herein, seven of 'em have never before been released! And my very own smokin' sweet personal picks: the alley-prowlin' barroom debauchery of "Pin Point Eyes"; the haunting hypnotic urgency of Dylan's "Ballad of Hollis Brown"; James Williamson's extended solo jam, "Delta Blues Shuffle," which begins life as a mudbug swampwater romp ala Led Zep's "In My Time of Dying" before blossoming into a space-booogie whirlwind of Hendrixian riffage; a raunchy and unruly run-through of Bo Diddley's "I'm a Man"; and the hellish suffocating swirl of "Til the End of the Night." Take heed, children, The Stooges started it all for that, you should be eternally grateful. And Bomp continuously keeps the ragin' spirit of The Stooges alive and thriving. For that, I'm eternally grateful. Now if you'll excuse me, I'm gonna "move ass, baby"... -Roger Moser, Jr. (Bomp)

**INTERNATIONAL NOISE  
CONSPIRACY, THE:**

**Capitalism Stole My  
Virginity: CD-single**

Simple rock'n'roll here with a key-

board. The problem is, there is no rock in their roll. These songs stir nothing in me. Not that they are awful; they just don't do anything for me. Now, with that aside, I got a chance to see this band live on tour with The Hives (who were fucking great and should not be missed). I decided to wait around and give them a chance. I saw the keyboard and right away I was like, "uh oh." Then they came out. It was very strange. The band looked like they were rocking out. Everybody had all the "rock" moves down pat. The music was a different story. It was as if someone was playing a joke on them and unplugged all their instruments and played a tape of a dull rock band with a keyboard instead. My eyes and ears were in a bit of an argument together. Then, they continued to play and I realized that it was indeed the band on stage that was coming out of the speakers. Even when the singer introduced the band members and they did their little solo jam thing, it still didn't jive. The bass player stepped forward and went crazy but the music never really changed. This all fucked with my alcohol-soaked brain and I ran out of the club screaming for my mommy. -Toby Tober (Burning Heart)

**INTIMATE FAGS, THE:**

**Self-titled: CD**

Very '70s-sounding punk rock stuff from a bunch of dudes from Japan. Their bio stuff says they're really influenced by Dangerhouse and What? Bands, but I hear Dead Boys in their sound more than anything else. No matter. They're pretty fuckin' cool, whoever they sound like. -Jimmy Alvarado (Rip Off)

**IRON CROSS:**

**Live for Now: CD**

These guys were one of my favorite bands when I was young, bald, and didn't own a pair of pants without holes in 'em. In my band's practice space beneath my house, we would crank "New Breed" over and over, driving those less appreciative of Iron Cross' grumbling fury bananas. Their name was scrawled on everything with a surface in that little room, from lyric notebook to ceiling to milk crate-turned-into-chair furniture. I loved this fucking band. For some reason, though, I always found myself being hassled by pigs whenever I wore one pair of torn up Levis with this band's name scribbled on them. I remember being drunk at a party one particular night (which actually was a pretty common occurrence for me as a kid) and spending almost an hour trying to explain in slurred speech that a. being a Mexican kid from East LA, I was not a nazi; b. that the band was not a nazi band, just one with an unfortunate name; and c. that I was most certainly NOT drunk. This was way before the whole bald head=nazi dumbass thing, mind you. Anyway, at least two

of the three responses were true, the most important here being that these guys weren't a nazi band. Although reviled and misunderstood in their own scene and ignored by most outside it, they were nonetheless one of DC's finest punk rock outfits, woefully under-appreciated in their time and damn near forgotten in the period between then and now. They also have the distinction of being one of the (of not thee) best "skinhead" bands ever to come outta the United States (a feat not too amazing in retrospect, considering the dismal quality and embarrassing track record of bald boy bands thus far produced in this country). Unlike other bands that feel some need to constantly flex some "working class" pose in thought and deed, these guys were the real deal, penning songs that dealt with actual events in their lives and scene. Submitted for your listening enjoyment are the songs from both their *Skinhead Glory* and *Hated and Proud* EPs, remixed versions of the tracks from the *Flex Your Head* comp, and assorted unreleased gems. And yes, after all the years that have passed by, these guys are still one of my favorite bands. Even if you are not one of today's flock of shaven sheep, do yourself a favor and pick this puppy up. Punk rock rarely gets any better than this. -Jimmy Alvarado (GMM)

**JACK PALANCE BAND: Get  
This Shit Under Way: CD**

Rockin' fun. I was ready to toss this baby before it even played, but I always give everything a listen. Not that I always like what I get, but in the mystery meat pile is something to be discovered. Here is a band that is raw but is rocking in a fun way. Many might disagree, but I hear a mix of a good garage punk band at a bar mixed with Dead Lazlo's Place and Dillinger 4. I hope Retodd does not become offended by using D4 as reference. A review is an opinion of one and this one is mine. Also, I don't like to get Retodd mad. You wouldn't be reading this if Retodd (and Sean too!) wasn't around. I look forward to seeing if what comes about from these guys in the future. Chattanooga, TN is probably not that bad of a place with a band like this. -Donofthead (Attention Deficit Disorder)

**JELLYROLL ROCKHEADS,  
THE: Intense and Mild: 7"**

Manic. These Japanese punks bar no holds and thrash for a good time. Songs flash by in less than a minute. Eleven songs are squeezed onto one tiny platter of fun. The lyrics are sung in English, the translation comes off skewed, but the themes are clear: smoke pot, get drunk, and rock out! They seem silly but the aggression is there; screamed vocals backed by wild abandon. They made their way into Cali but it was a week night and in OC. If I was fifteen years younger I would have gone! I, for sure, missed out on a good rockin' time. There is a

cover here that I recognized but can't seem to put my finger on. The mind is deteriorating. My memory might be going, but I have something that is material here and it will outlive me any day! -Donofthedeath (625)

#### **JUDGE DREAD:**

##### ***Dreadmania: CD***

A re-release of the first album by skinhead/rudeboy hero Judge Dread. If you've never heard of him before, imagine that period in the late '60s when rock steady was losing popularity and "classic" reggae was starting to take over the airwaves. Now imagine a white, English guy peppering the tracks with double entendres that would make Lord Creator blush. If you have heard of him, here's 15 reasons why he's rightfully considered a legend. Highly recommended. - Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi!)

#### **JULIE'S HAIRCUT: *Star Never Looked So Bright: CD***

I think the name of the band and CD gives it all away. FUCKING CRAP! Jesus H. Christ. How did this get sent to *Razorcake*? What is the latest label for this kinda music - slow-alternative-prog-college-radio-pop? I just label it SHIT and carry on. Nothing remotely resembling punk here in any way shape or form. Sounds like any one of Smashing Pumpkins' slower songs, but that would be an insult to the Smashing Pumpkins (and I'm not

fan). The only thing this bands needs is a good ass-whooping. -Toby Tober (GammaPop)

#### **KENT 3, THE: *Spells: CD***

This is a great album to listen to but a really tough one to review because I'm completely at a loss for buzzwords. There are no easy classifications for The Kent 3. That's a good thing. When you listen to as much music as I do, and you find something that's this original, you'd happily give up easy classifications for something this diverse. A few things are certain: 1. These guys have an awesome record collection. Every note and chord of this album proves that. They clearly still listen to Devo, especially "Working in the Coal Mine," and they probably have everything that Sicko ever put out. 2. These guys face a lot of weird stares when they play a show. People must scream for them to bring out the punk rock, not realizing that these guys owe so much to so many varied punk misfits like the Bags and Mudhoney. 3. These guys must smoke a lot of pot. I know. We can smell our own. 4. I'm now going to sing the praises of one more obscure band that blows my mind and leaves me wondering why no one else is screaming for more of The Kent 3. Long live The Kent 3! And now, it's time for the buzzwords: kind of an indie rock meets new wave then regresses to punk with country elements and art house noise without the pretension. See how meaningless that is? -Sean (BurnBurnBurn)

#### **KILL DEVIL HILLS:**

##### ***36 Minute Struggle: CD***

Some of the songs on this recording take me back in my memories to times and places that once I only barely realized were happening. And now the memories come back with such force that I don't see how I could have overlooked them. Maybe I didn't overlook them. Maybe I was just too drunk. This CD comes at me like a fist made of tangled, rusted wire that pops me in the jaw and when I come to the first thing I notice is that the weather has changed. What does that mean? Check it out for yourself. I really like the cover and back-cover artwork - scratchy, penciled, creepy looking little people with no arms and big blank eyes. This is also the first release on Honest In Secret Records out of Murfreesboro, Tennessee. I hope that this is just the beginning of much more to come. - Bradley Williams (Honest In Secret)

#### **LOCUST, THE: *Flight of the Wounded Locust: CD***

What a goober I am: I've lived in San Diego three years and I've never owned so much as one Locust song or seen them play. I've heard and liked them, I'm just too scared to do anything about it. But, what you (and I) get is: superpowerquirkviolence with loopy synthesizer swadge. It's about 11 minutes, half new stuff and half old stuff (from Arab on Radar split; but these songs aren't on the 7" ver-

sion of *Flight*). I get the impression the kids down here don't even like the Locust anymore because they got uppity or something, but I don't know 'em, so they're fine by me. -Cuss Baxter (Gold Standard Laboratories)

#### **LOS FEDERALES:**

##### ***La Maldicion de Los Federales: CD***

Los Federales are fast, raw, and noisy, but the more I listen to this album, the more impressed I am. I hear a lot of early eighties hardcore in it. Sometimes I can close my eyes and feel like it's a remake of *Not So Quiet on the Western Front*, but then more elements rise to the surface - tinges of great Tucson garage bands like the Weird Lovemakers or the Fells. The songs become more complex and less derivative, and the music is something that could only exist here and now. The lyrics are all over the place, with intelligent songs about living in the global economy or being forced to grow up as nothing but a consumer, songs about "How Your Church Can Destroy Your Childhood in One Easy Lesson," and songs that are just about waking up hungover. This is seems to be a purely DIY album, too, with lo-fi production values and straight-outta-your-printer packaging, but who cares about that. This is a great new band. I really like this album and I'm keeping my eyes open to see what these guys do in the future. - Sean (No Theme)

**LURKERS: *Wild Times Again/Non Stop Nitro Pop*: CD**

Two full albums circa the late '80s from this legendary band. While nowhere near as crucial as their early work, the albums here have a nice oipop feel to them that's at least miles better than what's come out of Stiff Little Fingers over the course of the last few years. -Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi!)

**MALA VISTA: *Self-titled*: CDEP-R**

Holy cow, this is pretty darn good. Stay with me on this - it's a cross between Really Red (they're from Texas, too, were hardcore, came out in the '80s, and weren't scared to put their very smartly organized politics on their sleeves and weren't afraid to fuck with punk's structures) and *Finding the Rhythms*-era Hot Water Music (for the gruff, dueling vocals, the essence of speed, and creative, stealthy bass lines.) With that out of the way, I really enjoy the rawness of Mala Vista. The CD plays like a new circular saw blade - biting right through the task at hand, showering the listener with some familiar debris, and just creatively ripping the shit out of their instruments from the word go, until the CD stops spinning. Five cool, believable, honest, anti-establishment screams from the bars, gutters, and store clerk stations of Longview, TX. -Todd (Mala Vista)

**MANSFIELDS, THE: *Kill Your Radio*: CD**

The liner notes by Mutant Pop's Tim Chandler refer to the Mansfields as "punkabilly," which I guess pretty accurately describes this Colorado trio. I hear whispers of Social Distortion and Hank Williams in these seven songs. Actually, now that I listen to it again, I would say that the Social D influence is more than a whisper and is definitely in the forefront. The song structures are built around the same "3 chords and an attitude" that you'd expect from a Mutant Pop release, but the guitar leads definitely depart from the typical power chord attack of your typical punk rock band. This would probably be a lot of fun in a live setting. -Dan Yemin (Mutant Pop)

**MEDICATION TIME: *One Free Miracle Ticket*: CD**

Some pretty rockin' metalcore here, kids. This sounds like one o' those bands of yore who had their feet firmly planted in the hardcore scene, but secretly sportin' a Metallica shirt underneath that spiked leather jacket with Discharge scrawled on the back. Good, good shit here that's gonna reach maximum volume on the stereo when next my girlfriend takes off to run errands and leaves me alone to my own devices. Oh, and the cover of "Sex Dwarf" was priceless. -Jimmy Alvarado (Life is Abuse)

**mi6: *Lunchbox*: CD**

Generic. I'm not at the TV watching MTV and I still hear Blink 182, New Found Glory or Good Charlotte. -Donofthedeath (Kung Fu)

**MOMENT: *Songs for the Self-Destructive*: CD**

Minute by miserable monotonous minute, Moment irritate and annoy my much-abused ears to no end with their poppy crybaby emo banality. "Waaa-waaa-waaa. My pussy's hurting. Waaa-waaa-waaa. I'm such a tortured lil' suburban twit. Waaa-waaa-waaa. My soul's lost in a swirl of caffeine-saturated confusion. Waaaaaaa!" Gawd, somebody obviously lopped off these whiney lil' brats' testicles. Yep, it's neutered sonic sappiness for Generation Duh, and all I can do is sit back and pity the fools who consider aural drudgery like this to be a viable form of artistic expression. Complete utter uselessness! Now if you'll please excuse me, I think I shall cover myself in a thick colorful coating of chunky Moment-induced vomit. Mmmmm, sweet! -Roger Moser, Jr. (Espo)

**NECK: *Necked: A Few Odds from the Oul' Sods*: CD**

More traditional Irish music given a punk rock transfusion. The difference between this CD and the hundreds of others like it is that this one is actually good. Lotsa attitude, craftsmanship and fun infused in the music and that makes a world of difference. -Jimmy Alvarado (neck-neck@another.com)

**NEWTOWN NEUROTICS: *The Punk Collection*: CD**

For every band that hit the big time after the initial couple of waves of English punk, there were more than a few that, sadly, didn't. Newtown Neurotics were one of them. An amazing band with hooks coming out of the woodwork and political conviction oozing from every song. These guys didn't write mere songs; they wrote bonafied anthems meant to be shouted from the tops of the terraces to wake up a sleeping population oblivious to the world crumbling around it. Sonically, they were the stepchildren of the Ramones and first cousins to Stiff Little Fingers, whose Irish punk-cum-reggae mirrors the sounds here. Time has not been good to this fine band's good name and it's a safe bet that most newer punks (and a bunch of older ones as well) will have no clue as to how great this band was. Hopefully, this release will change that. An essential collection of tracks from an essential band. -Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

**NUMBERS, THE: *2: 7***

In my little mind, there's two Numbers. The Numbers I can't get enough of who play scorchers like "Downtown Girls" and "Me, My Enemy, and I" and The Numbers who play "Mechanics of Wealth," who I

wish would end their songs sooner. The faster they go, the better I like 'em, because when they lose their inertia, I always start to think about - of all fucking things - Pink Floyd and I don't really like any band that makes me think of huge, pink, pig balloons, when all I want to think about it whiskey, music that pins my ears back, and not dropping off a balcony before the headlining band starts playing. I'm a simple guy with simple tastes. When The Numbers rage, they're near the top of the OC's beach invasion - complete throats of snot, with so much bad attitude to break off and spear the audience with, and helping create the sound that will come help to define how punk's going to be referred to in the next twenty years. But then they slow down more and more and I find myself heading for the bar. I'll give 'em the benefit of the doubt and wait 'em out. Two excellent songs on here, one not so good. -Todd (Hostage)

**OUT COLD: *Will Attack If Provoked*: CD**

I'll make this as short as their CD. Out Cold have picked up the torch that Negative Approach extinguished when they broke up. No small feat. No short time in coming, they've apparently been around for years and years. But, get this: they springboard beyond the shadow cast by NA. They're more brutal, heavier, faster and angrier than any other band that I've heard in a long, long time. And behind the thrall are some fast-locking, oddly melodic instrument interplays that separates them from pure thrash, blurcore, any semblance of pop, and puts them in a very rare league indeed: straight-ahead, non-reflexive hardcore. By the strength of this CD and a tape Jimmy Alvarado made me, I'm in the process of ordering their entire back catalog. They lay waste to all that metally, grab-yo'-nuts play acting, and all that "weren't the early '80s great?-core" that's been replaying a little bit too close to history as of late, and get down to brazen business. Fourteen songs, nineteen minutes and five seconds long. -Todd (Acme)

**PAINTBOX: *Cry of the Sheeps*: CDEP**

Diverse energy. If you have been following my reviews, you should know that Paintbox and HG Fact are my favorites. I love this Japanese band and label from Japan. I check the website every month to see what might be coming out. Right on top of the new releases available for overseas consumption is a new Paintbox EP! I pull \$10 out of my wallet and write out an order and mail it away. I get a page from my wife and I call her back. She alerts me that a package came from Japan two weeks later. Woohoo! That night I rush home and put on my latest acquisition on the stereo. Starting off is the title track - has anyone heard a sheep cry before?

It starts off melodic with the harsh vocals over hard-edged music with trumpets, metallic riffing, and a section with dogs barking in tempo. What a masterpiece! That was only the first track! Track two, titled "Big Ant," is a rager in the Japcore sense. Straight forward and angry. The third track is even faster! Don't know what the song is called since it's titled in Japanese. Pure unadulterated power. Not feeling short changed, there is a hidden track where they show some humor. You get a chipmunk reggae song to top things off. In a short period of time, they have put out three EPs and two full lengths. What are you waiting for? -Donofthedeath (HG Fact)

**PARK: *No Signal*: CD**

A delightful melding of emo and pop punk, (jeeppers! My two fave punk subgenres!) that resulted in my putting my head through a wall repeatedly and detonating firecrackers in my ears in an attempt to quiet the fucking caterwaul emanating from my speakers. Instead of executing convicted murderers, they should force them to listen to this all the way through. -Jimmy Alvarado (Boiled Music on Lobster)

**PINBACK: *Blue Screen Life*: CD**

Wimpy college pap... er, pop. To the shitcan with thee! -Jimmy Alvarado (Ace Fu)

**PINKZ, THE: *Something About You b/w Be Mine 7"***

Fuck, this is great girl-strewn power garage pop in the firing range of Buck and early Muffs. Nice, bubblegummy thick choruses, catchy lyrics, fuzzed out guitars, and production that's not too slick and not blown out (so it sounds human and fun without being clinical). It's the stuff that Josie and the Pussycats wished they could have pulled off, if they had daggers hidden in their Converse and smoked a lot of weed. The Pinkz are kind of like a sweater on fire from a bunch of firecrackers. At first it's soothing - "Yeah, I like that familiar beat," snap-snap-snap, then they're exciting on their own as they toss out these two incendiary little nuggets of songs that make me get up and flail around like a flaming tard. Way cool single. Me play lots. -Todd (Gearhead)

**PIPEDOWN: *Enemies of Progress*: CD**

Thought provoking. I like it when a band does some research and instigates people to seek additional knowledge. Opening up the insert, I see that they have a sizeable list of websites and books that they recommend. I think too many punks don't read. Old geezers like me who don't go out as much tend to read more to get stimulated. The lyrics here are not too preachy but do ask people to look and question what this society has become **RAZORCAKE** 79

compliant to. Me, I have a lot of anger towards this generic, conformist society we live in. I live for anger-based music that questions. This fits into my cup of tea perfectly. But followers of my writing might be saying that you don't always listen to hardcore. That is true because my emotions go all over the place, including my musical tastes. But one thing for sure is I listen to punk rock and all its sub-genres 80% of the time. Before popping this in, I thought I was going to get another mediocre melodicore release. Boy, I was wrong. The singer reminds me of the singer from Sick of it All and the music is a blend of Good Riddance meets Sick of it All. Serious as a family death. Nothing excites me more when I can truly tell that a band is serious and not into it for the money and fame. The music and lyrics are well thought out and truly make them stand out. I am impressed and this is going straight into the car for ongoing listens. If it means anything to you, this is on Anti Flag's personal label. -Donofthedeath (AF)

**PLUGZ, THE: Move b/w Mindless Contentment, Let Go: 7"**

Hell yeah. The band that often got mistaken for being from East LA because they were Mexican and played LA all the time (they were from Hollywood), The Plugz were part of the very first wave of Southern

California punk rock – full of desperation, sharp pain, and great songwriting. Fuck, it's just such good music that's the obvious bridge between straight-ahead, no bullshit Chuck Berry rock'n'roll and where early Los Lobos launched from, soaked in the same type of infectious swagger and rockabilly dance that The Gears and The Zeros would embrace and tackle in tandem to The Plugz. So, when Xene says X were the first and only band in the world to operate in a void by plugging the patchchords of punk, rockabilly, and poetry together, you may hold this seven inch aloft and say, "Nay. History is here, in these grooves, pressed in 1978. Although you may control the museums, this piece of vinyl contradicts thee." This is another "fanclub release" (with the matrix number scratched off from the acetate, no less), but I don't think this 7" has been available for years and years besides on eBay, so it's well worth the hunt. Hell yeah. -Todd (it's a bootleg, smartypants)

**QUEERS, THE: Live in West Hollywood: CD**

It's the infamously insolent Queers, so this decadent lil' disc is, of course, crampacked with the ultimate in sonic snottiness and balls-out brattiness. It's lewd, loud, live, and as sick, twisted, fucked-up, and belligerent as it gets! This is exactly the kind of brain-damaged audial wickedness that the Ramones brashly blasted

outta their first couple of albums, except The Queers are definitely more demented, dirty-minded, and deviantly uncivilized. Their frenzied spine-snappin' songs taunt my senses silly, terrify my ears somethin' fierce, and agitate my soused old soul as if there ain't gonna be no tomorrow! All of their crazed, hyperactive should-be hits are frenetically tossed throughout this monstrously powerful release, including "We'd Have Arrived Doing Heroin," "This Place Sucks," "I Want Cunt," "No Tit," "Blabbermouth," "Noodlebrain," "Granola Head," "Fuck You," "I'm Not a Mongo Anymore" (my personal perverse fave!), "I Hate Everything," "Teenage Bonehead," "I Only Drink Bud," "Ursula Finally Has Tits," "I Like Young Girls," "Fuck the World," and a heapin' handful of covers, too (Tommy James & The Shondells, Angry Samoans, Mr. T Experience, Ramones, etc.). Hell yeh, this is true authentic punkrock rambunctiousness just like the Ramones meant it to be! I ain't no gawddamn homo, but, man, I do love them Queers... -Roger Moser, Jr. (Hopeless)

**RAZZELS, THE: Throttle: CD**

If I were a wayward just-shy-of-bankruptcy bettin' man, I'd resolutely gamble my very last dime on the prospect of Buffalo, New Yawk becomin' the next glimmerin' goldmine of a musical mecca just as

Detroit, Austin, Athens, Chapel Hill, and Seattle once were. Thus far, the scenic Niagara Falls region of upstate New York has spawned the smokin' sonic insanity of The Irving Klaws, the Treebirds, and Doombuggy. And now we have the riproarin' powerpop wrath of The Razzels! It's a well-structured whirlwind of over-amped melody-laden bounciness thickly layered with a snotty snarling edge, a whiplash avalanche of spastic auditory giddiness – poppy, punky, and pleasurably perfect – and some of the liveliest, most upbeat sounds to ever vigorously shake my ears! Long after repeatedly blastin' this addictive disc at the loudest decibel levels possible, I'm still euphorically tappin' my toes, bobbin' my head, and twistin' my backside silly like an American Bandstand dancer possessed. It's that damn catchy, folks! Absolutely enthralling! -Roger Moser, Jr. (Get Hip)

**REAGAN SS/ JOHN BROWN'S ARMY: Split 7"**

Reagan SS: Holy hardcore in a handbasket. It's definitely not a throwback band, and the mode isn't silky and mellow, but boy how do I like it. They're fronted by super abrasive, early JFA'y, blurry-yet-decipherable, urgent and harmed vocals. The instruments play both like a severe pipe wrench beating, but aren't just that blunt – they've got that tricky, satisfying interplay that's in some greats



of yore and today, like Minor Threat and Out Cold. What Barry White's baritone is to making love, Reagan SS is to down and dirty hardcore fucking. Sometimes you just gotta stab it. And they do. My favorite track (of seven – on one side of a 7", folks) is "Taste the Rich" flavor, which makes me want to go to Reagan's place today and kick him in the head when he's raking leaves, and say, "That's for the deregulation of the airlines, you fuck." Then tie him down and lob jelly beans down his throat. But I digress. John Brown's Army – featuring Nate Wilson from the sorely missed Charles Bronson – I'm sorry to say this; you're okay, but when put across the vinyl from Reagan SS, aren't going to get a lot of play. Sorta goat-throaty, pretty common, mid-tempo hardcore. –Todd (Gloom)

#### **RECKLESS BASTARDS:**

##### **Self-titled: CD**

Good, solid and trashy punk rock a la the Oblivions and the like. "I Used To Be a Loser" is one of the better punk songs I've heard this year (2001, that is). Surprised no label yet is all over this band like ugly on a gorilla. - Jimmy Alvarado (Reckless Bastards)

#### **REDS, THE:**

##### **It's About Time: CD**

Greg can now sit back and let the dough just roll right in. He's finally found the missing link between the

Rip Offs and Loli and the Chones. Classic stuff, to say the least, especially the unlisted cover of the Urinals' "I'm A Bug." -Jimmy Alvarado (Rip Off)

#### **RENO DIVORCE:**

##### **Naysayers and Yesmen: CD**

Hot damn whooooo-weee, these sonically smokin' sultans of sin rotundly crank-out a sizzlin' skillet full of slicked-back ducktail punkrock rowdiness! Reno Divorce are the savage young bastard sons of Social Distortion, and they meticulously, yet energetically, create the boxcar-ridin', prisonbound sounds of Mike Ness and crew during SD's hootin'-and-hollerin' hellraisin' heyday. This is robust, ballsy, and brash rock-'n'roll swagger at its coolest and most bad-ass. It's undeniably the everlasting aural epitome of hotrods, big-boobed gals, tattoos, whiskey, and boisterous streetscruff unruliness. It oozes sin and sweat and cheap sex – sordid backalley debauchery beneath the pale glow of an old hunchbacked streetlamp, bloody-knuckled bottle-smashin' brawls in a smoke-enshrouded pool-hall, and booze-soaked bums drunkenly stumbling through an endless maze of neon-lit, vomit-slicked streets. Hell yeh, the explosive sonic fury of Reno Divorce brings out the devil in me and makes me wanna drink and fuck and get downright

dirty and nasty! If I were dictator for just one day, this would be a mandatory disc to be played loudly in each and every home, business, institutional learning facility, penitentiary, and church across the nation. Amen, motherfucker! -Roger Moser, Jr. (Reno Divorce)

#### **REVILLOS: Rev Up: CD**

Hooray! The Revillos! For those who don't know (and can't guess) the Revillos are the Rezillos with a "v" instead of a "z." They covered a lot of Rezillos tunes, and also wrote new, ridiculous, dancey, keyboard, girl-groupy new wave. I am no huge fan of keyboard-based new wave bands, but the Revillos are an exception to the rule! This CD is a re-release of their *Rev Up* LP (which I spent way too much on in a record store in Paris two years ago – if only I had known!) plus five bonus tracks. And the bonus tracks are good, too! Of course, the "Rev Up" song, "Yeah Yeah," is the coolest. (Later parodied by Boris the Sprinkler as "Yeah Yeah No" – punk trivia, all right!). This is a good record for a Halloween party, dance party, or sleepover party! Yay for cool reissues! Do yourself a favor, and buy this – but if you don't have that Rezillos double CD yet, you better buy that first! (The Rezillos are one of the Top Five Bands Of All Time! How many bands are in my Top Five? Uh, more than five. I'm a dork. I can't keep lists. But the Rezillos are really one

of the greatest bands ever – so get that, get this, get, uh, I dunno, a weird yellow vinyl skirt so you can look cool like 'em, too! This is Cinnamon Toast Crunch. Yum! –Maddy (Captain Oi)

#### **RIP OFFS: Got a Record: CD**

The Rip Offs were one of those bands that I'd been hearing about for a long time, but had never heard. Their records and seven inches were all out of print and pretty hard to find, but finally, earlier this year, Jimmy Alvarado made me a tape of all of the Rip Offs stuff. The first time I listened to them, I knew I'd been missing out for all these years. The Rip Offs have a really raw sound, kind of like Teengenerate or the Motards. Songs that would be straight ahead rock'n'roll if they weren't so fucked up and crazy. I listened to the tape a bunch of times, thinking about how cool it would be if someone reissued these songs. Well, I guess former Rip Offs bassist Greg Lowery read that thought bubble of mine because he reissued *Got a Record* (the only Rip Offs full length). The songs still sound like they were recorded in someone's garage or practice space (which, according to the liner notes, they pretty much were), but the songs are still great. If you aren't one of the lucky few who picked up this album when it first came out, here's your chance. I highly recommend it. -Sean (Rip Off)

**ROCK\*A\*TEENS, THE: Noon Under the Trees: C/EP**

*Noon Under the Trees* is a finely constructed EP from this North Carolina band. The layout is like that of a faded, old, yellow paged diary or novella from the past. The songs are a melancholy ride through mini portraits of friends and lovers and the lazy afternoons wasted in their company. The sounds captured are soft and gorgeous. Their reverbed-up guitars, fuzzy keyboards, and cushy drums are the real meat and hook bringing me back for repeated listens. Not to say the singing isn't well spoken and dreamy, because it is. These southern gentlemen would fit nicely on a bill with the Starlight Mints, the Flaming Lips, and Superchunk. -Nathan Grumdahl (Moodswing)

**ROCKET 69/DION BLADE & THE NEW KINGS OF ROCK: Split 7"**

Rocket 69: The phrase "Iggy humped Kiss" is on their side of the cover. That pretty much sums it up nicely. Huge sound, huge riffs, huge tracks. Dion Blade: Take the aforementioned phrase, add "while being sodomized by Motorhead" and you get the picture. A darn good single. -Jimmy Alvarado (Rockin' House)

**SATURDAY SUPERCARDE:**

***Everyone Is a Target*: CD**  
Generic. I'm not at the TV watching

MTV and I still hear Blink 182, New Found Glory, or Good Charlotte. -Donofthedeath (Liberation)

**SENTIMENTALS, THE:**

**Self-titled: double 7" EP**

This is a catchy, enjoyable, street punk band. No surprises here, but that's O.K., since I don't really like surprises much anyway. The recording is really rough, but in this case that's an asset instead of a liability. I'll definitely listen to this again. Eight songs in all here. There's also a rendition of the traditional "When Johnny Comes Marching Home." -Dan Yemin (Head Line)

**SEROTONIN: Universal**

***Time Constant*: CD**

I commend the energy of Serotonin captured on this CD. Their kinetic drumming and hard strumming are struggling out from underneath a net of mushing sounds recorded here. The problem is that every song on *Universal Time Constant* is that it is like the content of ten songs put into a pot and slow cooked until they fit into the measure of one. Their push and pull between hard-driving, post-hardcore spazz and quiet deconstructed art rock is so changing and unrepentive it is migraine inducing. Some might call it dynamic, but I found myself screaming for a road map back to the hook of the song. The problem of the clean, jangly breakdown is that if it is overused, it will be

the death of your music. The rocking parts of this outfit are there but they are lost when they refuse to throw down their fucked up time signatures and overwritten parts. -Nathan Grumdahl (Bifocal Media)

**SHODS, THE: Stop Crying: CD**

This disc is living, breathing proof that life sucks big time. I reviewed an album by these guys a couple of years ago and was so completely taken by their Jam-y approach to rock'n'roll that I've pretty much wore the vinyl down to nothing. Naturally, I was more than a little excited to see this smiling up at me from the "review me" pile. The verdict? Life sucks pretty hard, boyo. Gone are the great hooks bristling with tense energy and in their place are bad '70s/ '80s rock trappings. Only one song, 13 tracks in, has any semblance of that old spark. Fuck, I wish I still drank heavily, 'cause this wouldn't be so painful. I hope they at least got paid well to suck this hard. -Jimmy Alvarado (Acme)

**SHRINKS, THE: Nowhere to Live: 7" EP**

A picture perfect marriage of Hostage neo-beachcore and the Rip Off redux of '60s slop/ '70s punk rock. Four songs here, not a bad one in the lot and all coming to you with enough velocity to put a foot clear through your ass. -Jimmy Alvarado (Rapid Pulse)

**SKULLS, THE: Life Ain't So Pretty b/w Incomplete Suicide, Kill Me Kill Me Kill Me: 7"**

Hands-down, this some of the most gorgeous packaging I've ever seen with a 7". Ever. It comes in a converted envelope that's been screen printed with three different inks, it comes with a button, and it comes with a 33 pg., glossy booklet - complete with rare-as-hell pictures from a gamut of late '70s LA photographers, and text by Billy Bones himself that covers any and all things you'd ever comprehend asking about The Skulls (including guest lists from the Mabuhay Gardens and their What? Records contract). For a 7", for crying out loud. As much as the songs that are on the wax - which are fantastic slabs of pure LA '77 punk rock with snotty, spastic colon vocals; hollow-bodied, slashing guitars; drums as heavy hitting as domestic violence; energy that makes production values almost irrelevant; and skewed and angled and wrangled pop. The song "Life Ain't So Pretty" had never been recorded before this 7" - and it comes with a glitch in the vinyl, punk. This is pure testament that the presentation of music is, in and of itself, an overlooked art form. And in this instance, when the music is so good to start out with, a great 7" is like taking a bit of an art museum home with you and letting it spin around on a needle. How fucking cool is that? Very, very highly recommended. -Todd (Headline)

**SMUT PEDDLERS: *Ism*: CD**

What's this? A Smut Peddlers song about multinational corporations ("Playstation Generation")? What the hell happened? Where's all the songs about getting high? The Smut Peddlers have fucking nailed it. That's what. Not only has the lyrical telescope been opened up beyond being a fuck-up (although the theme isn't totally discarded, it's just more of a starting point instead of an end destination), all of the songs on *Ism* can be laid next to one another like an audio series of Polaroids that go from urban California landscape shots, to shots from space, to shots at the tips of needles and the lives the swirl into them, to surf spots during a storm, to abandoned pools, to abandoned lives. The result is a crisp, unflinching, distinct string of songs that stand out by themselves, yet fit into a definite larger framework. Songs go from highly personal ("I can't tell the difference between trying and greed") to revolting against gentrification ("It's a natural result of a bureaucratic cult who is fucking with the balance of power") to just fun – "Dogtown Boys Vs. The Taliban." Hand-in-hand with the vast improvement of the lyrics is that the Smut Peddlers play like a band now. They're all in tight synch – Julia's and Gish's drums and bass provide an almost-unbreakable, rattling cage and spine to all the songs, Roger's razorwire guitar never chokes or flails or wanks – it just seems to sneer – and John's carnival barker/ monster truck announcer voice takes breaths and wraps itself in and out of the songs instead of just talking along. Fantastic. One warning, if you listen to this too much, you'll be humming and toe tapping "It was an Inglewood heroin morning" when you're pushing your shopping cart with a smile on your face. Fuckin' catchy. –Todd (Ransom)

**SPITTING TEETH: *Legacy of Cruciality*: EP**

I'm generally pretty happy about the bandana thrash revival. It's super to hear bands like What Happens Next? and Life's Halt tear it up old style, but this record begs the question: how soon 'til it's played as fuck? The music part's mostly fine (though they're playing a little fast to squeeze much power out of a couple of the numbers) but, out of eight songs, TWO are about straightedge, and the embarrassingly-titled "Million Man Mosh" is about circlepitting. I mean, if they're joking, I gotta say it's been done. And if they're serious – well, it just goes to show you don't have to be drunk to be dumb. –Cuss Baxter (\$4 ppd; 1-2-3-4 GO!!! Records)

**STITCHES, THE: *Four More Songs from the Stitches*: 12" EP**

OC's favorite fuckups, who half the time can't figure what type of line to do (pool line, coke line, guitar line), break their too-long vinyl silence

with four as-close-to-perfect cuts of mid-tempo punk as you can get. Iggy, Pistols, Clash – are all broken and mashed and chipped and pock marked – then wrung out like a bar towel and distilled. The result is that they dish out instantly catchy songs ("hey, I know that riff... sorta") but you don't get any the wank or fluff or solos that usually runs in tandem with hedonism. I was skating at a park when Mike, the singer, showed up. He slapped on a helmet and skated the hell out of the place. He was obvious – tattoos, older, distinctive, slushy style. I was standing next to a couple of fat-panted, suburban-doughy kids, who looked at one another and said, "Dude, that guy rips. What the hell was that move? And his pants are so tight." That pretty much sums up the Stitches. The packaging on this 12" is immaculate. Faux Japanese printing with corner promo thing on one side, full color sleeve with tons of great photos, and lookie, my vinyl's white. –Todd (Kapow)

**SUPER CHINCHILLA****RESCUE MISSION:****Self-titled: CDEP**

Oops. Forgot to review this four-song CD last issue due to me being all excited about them being on our cover and all. Speaking of covers, don't let the CD's art sway you – the front is a poorly backlit Godzilla puppet with boxing gloves and not very engaging at all. In the microgrooves of the CD itself, that's where the magic is. Stretch pop 'til it screams, bend hardcore 'til it becomes melodic without losing speed, throw up a deep mesh of intertwining walls of guitar, bass, and drum sounds (like cyclone fences surrounding brick walls, laced with strings of dynamite – heavy, yet loose and fun) and have Seth yell and scream some dark yet bright poetic lyrics that are drenched in sweat, whisky, and barely concealable desperation, and you've got one fuckin' great band. Every time I listen to this on the headphones, I keep on cranking the volume higher with each song. And my ears ring for the next half hour. Fantastic. This band is one huge reason I continue to thrive off music. –Todd (Attention Deficit Disorder)

**SUPERSLEUTH:*****Thirty-One Months*: CD**

In the annals of suckdom, this will definitely make it into the "Faboo Fifty." Not only are they trying desperately to relive the glory days of the whole straight edge trip with what sounds like a grand total of two records to reference, they also cover Minor Threat's "Bottled Violence" and leave exactly one note intact. The result of their efforts over the course of 13 songs is that they sound like a weak, 12th-rate Uniform Choice cover band (who they also cover, incidentally), who, in turn, at their best were no more than a weak, 12th-rate Minor Threat cover band. Next

time, append the band name with "a lame tribute to a scene we know nothing about." –Jimmy Alvarado (www.failedexperimentrecords.com)

**TILT: *Been Where? Did What?*: CD**

Backward progression. Most punk bands start off raunchy and loose and progress to play more of a rock thing as they become more talented as musicians. Tilt, on the other hand, started playing more of a rock thing at first and progressed to their trademark punk sound. This is an out-takes, demos and comp tracks release. As a fan, I had a hard time listening to this at first. It was painful. I was actually shocked at the earlier material that I haven't heard before. Once it got more to recently recorded material half way through the CD, I got comfortable. Familiarity came to me and now I was ready to enjoy. The energy level that I was in tune with came forth. Oh joy, three covers also! Two TV show theme songs and an X cover! The covers geek in me got stuck right in the middle of this release as I re-listened to the covers. Tilt fans and collectors will buy this regardless of what I have to say. If you are interested and never purchased a Tilt release before, I say buy *Collect 'em All or Viewers Like You* before buying this. Those two are their more trademark records and is their best representation to date. For those who have no clue, this is a female led punk band that has aggression and melody. –Donofthead (Fat)

**TOOTHPICK ELBOW: *Best Wishes*: CD**

This disc made me miss Plain Wrap all the more. Could the man responsible for "Magnetic Shoes," "Green Light Red Light" and quite possibly history's perfect song lyric, "boomshackalackalackaooogachuckaooogachucka" truly be partly to blame for this shit? Don Wrap, wherefore hast thou forsaken us and instead punish us with mierda like this and Lutfefisk? Thy penance is much too severe, methinks. –Jimmy Alvarado (Spiritone)

**TOXIC NARCOTIC/A GLOBAL THREAT: *The Split*: EP**

Two songs each. Toxic Narc injects the venom with fantastic wide-load production and John Brannon throat tearing (one song is "Asshole," which I swear I hear every time I hear TN). The excitement simmers down a little with AGT, but they hit a fine, neck-wringing, slightly metallic groove so you can listen to both sides the same amount of times. –Cuss Baxter (Rodent Popsicle)

**TRAITORS:*****Everything Went Shit*: CD**

The Traitors were kind of a super-group in reverse. After the original members went their separate ways, singer Todd Pot fronted Apocalypse

Hoboken, drummer Matt Skiba formed Alkaline Trio, and guitarist Mark Ruvolo formed No Empathy (I think. I know he was in both bands, I just don't know which was first). *Everything Went Shit* has all thirteen songs that the original Traitors recorded, and those thirteen songs alone are enough to make this a killer album. Early Traitors' songs sound a lot like Apocalypse Hoboken, but more straight ahead and no nonsense, less fucked up (this isn't necessarily good or bad. It's just different). And Matt Skiba is a good drummer. He has a real knack for mixing up the tempo, slowing the songs down to a resonating intensity, then letting everything explode. After the album burns through the thirteen Todd Pot fronted songs, Billy Smith takes over the vocal duties, and he sounds strangely similar. You almost don't notice at first, but as the album carries on, it becomes more evident. Likewise, the sound of the band gradually changes in the sense that you don't notice at first, but by the time you get to the end of the album, it's almost like you're listening to a new band (which, due to member changes and all, you pretty much are). So it's an interesting documentation of the life of a band, but it's also seventy-plus minutes of good, gnarly punk rock. –Sean (Johann's Face)

**TRANS MEGETTI, THE:*****Fading Left to Completely On*: CD**

With the brains and sinew and non-ess of bands such as Drive Like Jehu and Hot Snakes in mind, The Trans Megetti are able to make intricate, swelling, breathing songs that go from quiet whispers to whips and caterwauls and back to sparse, chattering arrangements. It's what I like to call (and I think I'm the only one, so fucking sue me) map rock. Not math rock – they're not so technical that it's pocket protector time – it just seems that they've got so many strains (like lines of streets) and open areas (like parks) and fast-moving parts (like freeways) and swirls (on-ramps) and they've got the whole mess figured out before hand, like city planners, but for songs, and that by the end of the album, you get the feeling that you've traveled around a lot and the trip's been satisfying and you've got a good feel on how they came up with what they did. Map rock. What's impressive is that the songs never completely dissipate or forget where they're going (run out of gas). Groove, is what I think it's called. Some warnings: the vocalist is a tad whiny (or high pitched), but it doesn't bother me here, and the music could be construed as sorta whimpy, but, fuck it, it makes me shake my ass and shimmy and be all introspective and stuff. –Todd (Gern Blandsten)

**TRUST FUND BABIES:****Self-titled: 7" EP**

I heard these guys are no more. Pity, 'cause they would've

been nice to see 'em blow up huge, or at least play on a double bill with Smogtown and Spontaneous Disgust. Three tracks, sparse production, total power. -Jimmy Alvarado (Rapid Pulse)

#### **TWELVE HOUR TURN:**

##### ***Bend Break Spill: CD***

Boring. Bend CD to pieces. Break case with foot. Spill beer on top of mess to reclaim sanity. Emotive physical reaction with a play on words on my part to justify writing and having to listen. -Donofthedeath (No Idea)

#### **UNKNOWN, THE: *Pop Art: CD***

The Unknown hail from the great underdog rock city of Cleveland, Ohio where they have been kicking around for the last ten years playing uptempo pop punk. They do an above average job of writing hooky driving songs in the tradition of such bands as the Descendents, Bad Religion, and Big Drill Car. The production is similar to a lot of early All records with clicky sounding drums, clanky thin bass, and heavier guitar dominating the mix. The vocals are well sung but somewhat undistinctive and predictable. I would recommend this record to someone if they were hungry for the early '90s crop of tight pop punk. Sadly, they struck me like a communion wafer. At the end of *Pop Art*, I am left with no taste in my mouth whatsoever. -Nathan Grundahl (Boss Tuneage)

#### **VARIOUS ARTISTS: *920 Blues: LP***

Whoah, I'm impressed! This is a comp of Wisconsin bands playing some flat-out rockin' punk rock sure to make you tear shit up as you crank the stereo and shake your ass all over your parents' living room. Ten bands representing, including the Reds, Shut Ups, Mistreaters, Teenage Rejects, and more. There ain't a shitty song in the bunch, not even the track by the Strong Come Ons, whose seven-incher did nothing for me. Send every cent of your allowance to the address at the end of the review section. -Jimmy Alvarado (Trick Knee)

#### **VARIOUS ARTISTS:**

##### ***Chicago's on Fire Again: 7" EP***

Holy shit, this is a hardcore fan's wet dream. A veritable who's who of Chicago hardcore here, with Trepan Nation, Los Crudos (a track not available on their discography CD), Billy Builders, Charles Bronson (a Negative Approach cover) MK Ultra, Landmine, The Killers, Dangermouse, Authority Abuse, Strength In Numbers, and Kung Fu Rick, all scrunched up nicely on seven inches of wax. As can be expected, everything goes by in a blur, but shit howdy if it ain't a glorious din. Four words kids: seek this fucker out. -Jimmy Alvarado (Lengua Armada)

#### **VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Killed by Hardcore, Compilation 2: LP***

Retrospective. This is the second in the series after the tired but true *Killed by Death* series. I don't think that this series will inflate an already inflated collectors market. The market for collectable punk rock is insane. God bless for bootlegs like this for me. The focus for this series is 1980 to 1985. This grandpa here was in his prime when this shit was coming out. Back in high school, I used to read *Maximum Rocknroll* like it was the bible. Reading about all the new hardcore that was coming out from all over the world was new and exciting to me. My brother and I sought out releases like they were going out of style. I heard a couple of MRR radio shows and listened religiously to the local punk show on KXLU. I think that was more important to me than listening to Rodney on the Roq. Smaller punk bands from all over were getting air

time. To make a comparison of this comp, it has a similar feel and energy of *Welcome to 1984* that MRR put out in 1984 and the *P.E.A.C.E.* 2xLP comp that Radical Records put out around the same time. International is the name of the game. Band names that were easily recognizable for me were Headcleaners (Sweden), Indigesti (Italy), Mecht Mensh (USA), Riistetyt (Finland), Suburban Mutilation (USA), Target of Demand (USA), E.A.T.E.R. (Sweden), Kuro (Japan) and The Abused (USA). That is only what I recognized! More is to be had here! It's the same euphoria I get when I suddenly sneeze and a highly audible fart comes out simultaneously. Oh joy! Historically essential and it brings a tear to my eye for times long gone. Back to reality. -Donofthedeath (Redrum, no address)

#### **VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Reno: Where Dreams Come to Die: CD***

Full-on, top-notch hardcore and occasional grind here from a bunch representin' Reno. Most of the tracks on here are strong, and there's no pop and no macho metal bullshit to be found anywhere. Features Redrum, Headgrenade, Vae Victis, This Computer Kills, The Livid, Bloody Victim, Iron Lung, All Opposed and the Scurvy Bastards. Damn good stuff. -Jimmy Alvarado (Sedition)

#### **VARIOUS ARTISTS:**

##### ***Sonic-Xperience: CD***

14 tracks of German EBM, electro, dark techno, synth pop and industrial. A collection of fab songs, give or take one or two. From intense throbbing EBM ala' Massiv In Mensch to drama synth-goth by November Process, this is a great introduction to the latest German electronic vibes. The only bad thing is that the cover/back cover is in English, when the inside is all in German, including band bios. But, it still makes me want to kill people and drive fast. -Sarah Stierch (Sonic X)

#### **VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Supersonic Sounds from the Fuck You Movement: CD***

Someone tell me! Why can't the established underground labels cobble together a compilation this varied and high caliber while some kid in his shit-town bedroom can? From the Charm City Suicides' over-the-top version of Reagan Youth's "Go Nowhere," to the excruciating noise of Crank Sturgeon, Irreversible Nerve Damage and (MITB completists take note) Bastard Noise, to the fat grind/hammer damage of Suppression and Pus del Recto, and back to the fleshy and raucous punk rock of Kojak, ain't a bad pickle in the barrel. And to ice this pickle cake, you're treated to prank phone calls between tracks! Some of them are pretty funny, too. You have eight dollars, right? -Cuss Baxter (\$8 ppd; C.N.P.)

#### **VARIOUS ARTISTS:**

##### ***Viva La Vinyl Volume 4 LP***

Fifteen bands doing fifteen tracks of hard-hitting punk rock. Although there's a definite lean towards the more "rock" side the equation, there's enough tracks touching on other sub-genres to keep you on your toes. Best of all, there's not a clunker in the lot. Highly recommended. -Jimmy Alvarado (Deadbeat)

#### **VULTURES, THE:**

##### ***Alcoholic Lady/Soda Pressing: 7"***

Attention all bands! Attention all bands! The official best format for the seven-inch is the time-honored "hit single" style - a great, original tune on the A-side, and then a cover on the flip side! Occasionally, one other song may be allowed.

There will be no debating on this issue! Having said that, the Vultures have the formula right, but I wish side A rocked a little more - still, it's decent rock'n'roll (a la a mix of Pelado and Rip Off records - ya know, what everyone likes these days!). Side B is where it's at, though! I'm a sucker for Boys' covers, and their version of "Soda Pressing" is pretty true to the original, nothing breathtaking, but pretty cool nonetheless. Probably a good band to check out live, if '77 rock and roll is your thing! (And it better be!) This is pre-sugar-added Kix (remember those days?). Kix was still a good cereal back then, but nowhere near as good as it would become in later years. Hopefully the Vultures will one day reach the sugary Kix level of greatness! -Maddy (DirtNap)

#### **WILL HAVEN: *Carpe Diem: CD***

Kleenex. Boo hoo, emo, Helmet, paper cut, pain, etc. -Donofthedeath (Revelation)

#### **X: *Aspirations: LP***

The 1980 debut album from these Aussie legends, who're apparently still slogging it out live. The sound is raw, primal and LOUD, as it should be and is so often not anymore. Wanna freak out one of your "punk lite" friends? Slip this bad boy in the sleeve of one of their Rancid or Blink 182 records and watch their mind melt down at the sudden overload. Rumor has it that they still sound this crazed and rockin', which is more than can be said about the American band with the same name. -Jimmy Alvarado (Rock 'n' Roll Blitzkrieg)

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# RAZORCAKE

Holy shit, you  
mean they can  
be played on  
both sides?

The top 7"s  
from  
Oct. 1st –  
Nov. 30th



## Underground Medicine Mailorder, Connecticut

1. **Brides**, *Born in a Grave* (Sack of Shit)
2. **Randoms**, *ABCD/Let's Get Rid of New York* (\*\*\*\*\*)
3. **Avengers**, *We Are the One* (\*\*\*\*\*)
4. **Dils**, *Class War/Mr. Big* (\*\*\*\*\*)
5. **Bobby Soxx**, *Hate in the 80's/Scavenger* (\*\*\*\*\*)
6. **Greg Lowery Experience**, *Gonna Break Your Heart* (Rip Off)
7. **Riff Randels**, *How 'Bout Romance* (Lipstick)
8. **Pinkz**, *Something About You* (Gearhead)
9. **Epoxies**, *Need More Time* (Dirtnap)
10. **Stevie and The Secrets**, *Gimme a Call* (Telegraph)
11. **Numbers**, *Green 2* (Hostage)
12. **Negatives**, *Wanna See What You Got* (Hostage)
13. **Piranhas**, *Dictating Machine Service* (RocknRoll Blitzkrieg)
14. **Electric Frankenstein**, *Sick As a Dog* (Telegraph)
15. **Defnics**, *Look at Me Mom* (Smog Veil)
16. **Candy Snatchers/Nasville Pussy** (Black Lung)
17. **TV Killers**, *Splosh You Up* (Deadbeat)
18. **Dogs**, *Class of 1970* (Dionysus)
19. **Various Artists**, *I Was a Teenage Plasmatic, Tribute to Wendy O* (Jonny Cat)
20. **Dictators**, *Avenue A/ New York New York* (Norton)

## Disgruntled Mailorder, California

1. **Various Artists**, *I Was a Teenage Plasmatic* (Johnny Cat)
2. **Pinkz** *Something About You* (Gearhead)
3. **Expoxies**, *Self-titled* (Dirtnap)
4. **Antiseen/Hellstomper**, *Keep It Flying* (Steel Cage)
5. **Piranhas**, *Dictating Machine Service*, (Rock N Roll Blitzkrieg)
6. **Skulls**, *Life Ain't So Pretty* (Headline)
7. **Hard Feelings**, *Soul Party* (Gearhead)
8. **Fakes**, *So Fashionable* (Hostage)
9. **440's**, *Ass Gas or Grass* (Rockin' Bones)
10. **Pushers**, *Junkie Son* (Hostage)
11. **Zeke**, *Evil Woman* (Beluga)
12. **Negatives**, *Wanna See What You Got* (Hostage)
13. **BellRays**, *Good Thing* (Revenge)
14. **Briefs**, *Squash Me Like a Bug* (Sub Pop)
15. **Flash Express**, *Who Stole the Soul* (Revenge)
16. **Defnics**, *Look at Me Mom I'm Not Dead* (Smog Veil)
17. **T.V. Killers**, *Splosh You Up* (Deadbeat)
18. **Bonecrusher**, *Sights on Today* (Hostage)
19. **Dr. Know**, *Burn* (Mystic)
20. **Nothing But Puke**, *Self-titled* (Steel Cage)



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.



**3.05 METRES: A TEN FOOT RULE PRIMER**, \$3.00 ppd., 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, photocopied, 32 pgs. This is a special issue of *Ten Foot Rule*, made specifically for Canzine 2001, but, of course, you didn't have to be at Canzine to appreciate it. Essentially, this works out like a "greatest hits" of Shawn Granton. It's a selection of some of the best comics he's done over the years. If you've never read anything by him, this is a great introduction (and even if you think you've read everything by him, you'll probably find something new here). The stories aren't "about" anything, per se, but they're all cool, slice-of-life-type stuff about going to see Joe Strummer, weird co-workers, working at a clothing store that sold the Skull and Bones Society tie, and so on. His comics aren't always funny, but they don't necessarily aspire to be. They're just cool, insightful ways of looking at the world, and that's always more enjoyable than a cheap laugh. I'm a big fan of Shawn's comics. I even conned him into doing the artwork for my latest column, so, without a doubt, this is highly recommended. —Sean Carswell (TFR Industries, PO Box 14332, Portland, OR 97293)

**BABYSUE**, Vol. 8, Issue 2, \$3.50 ppd., 8 1/2 x 11, photocopied, 32 pgs. I was going through this latest issue of *Babysue*, reading a comic about how everyone is an asshole; another comic about a black lady who doesn't realize she's pregnant until she has a baby, then tosses the baby in a dumpster; a story about how fathers should take their sons out hunting and masturbate over the bloody remains of the freshly killed carcasses; another comic lampooning Jesus. I started thinking to myself that, if any other zine did this, it would be pretty offensive, but when *Babysue* does it, all I can think is that this guy really needs some new material. You just can't be offensive when you tell the same jokes every time. I'll admit that he did catch me off guard a couple of times and I actually laughed despite myself, but I was really hoping he'd do something new. Then, in one of the last comics, he came out and admitted what was probably pretty clear to anyone who's read the zine more than once — he's gay and not comfortable with his sexuality. It was pretty interesting to read this comic. It was even kind of funny that, in true *Babysue* fashion, he couched his coming out in a comic about how he hates "homos." Okay. I can't say he didn't come up

with any new material this time. And if I ever become a psychiatrist, I'm giving this guy free sessions just so that I can figure out what the fuck he's thinking. —Sean Carswell (Babysue, PO Box 33369, Decatur, GA 30033)

**BURNT**, #2, \$1 ppd./3 stamps/trade, 8 1/2 x 11, photocopied, 20 pgs. As I read *Burnt*, I felt like I was the teacher of a high school writing class and I'd given the class a bunch of punk rock zines and assigned them to put together a class zine. In some ways, *Burnt* is endearing. It's an earnest effort and you can tell that all the people involved took a lot of time putting it together. Some of the writing is really strong. One of the writers, Meg Wilson, wrote a story about being in her high school Sociology class and debating abortion with a dogmatic Christian and a dogmatic leftist and she managed to put a fresh twist on the story at the end. I was really impressed. She gets an A. Another guy, John BlueZine, wrote a story about getting sucker punched. He deserves an A also. The writer named Joe gets a pretty strong B+ for his article on Rhinos, solely because he was curious about an issue, researched it himself, and felt compelled to write about it. That's admirable. The rest of the zine covers shit jobs, racism, record reviews, poems, and journal entries, and it's all laid out in the classic cut-and-paste punk style. It's all over the place in terms of quality, but in a lot of ways, this is exactly what a zine should be. These kids did a good job and it's worth a buck or three stamps. —Sean Carswell (*Burnt*, 400 Park Rd., Parsippany, NJ 07054)

**CHICKENHED ZINE AND ROLL**, #3 \$2 ppd./stamps/trade, 7 x 8 1/2, photocopied, 44 pgs. A little over a year ago, I traded Josher (the guy who does CZAR) for a copy of his second issue. I gave him one of my old zines in exchange. It was a good trade. I got to read all about Josher's life and the things that were mixing him up inside. He's got a very raw writing style, but he's honest, entertaining, and tells a good story, and that's all that really matters. Anyway, I'd wondered whether or not he was still putting out a zine and was pretty stoked to find his third issue in my mailbox. This one is all handwritten and Josher tells stories about quitting smoking, shaving his mohawk, dealing with a crack-head neighbor, and having a really difficult conversation with his father. His stories can get long-winded, and you can't necessarily

expect them to have a point, but like I said, his writing is honest, entertaining, and he tells a good story. I thoroughly enjoy it. Josher's girlfriend Teri helps him out in this issue by writing a funny story about her and her friend reeking havoc on her friend's deadbeat dad. It's a nice little bonus. I hope Josher keeps putting this zine out. Finding it in the mailbox is like getting that annual Christmas letter from your fucked-up-but-cool cousin, and by the time you're done reading it, you're thinking, I gotta drink with this guy at the next family wedding. —Sean Carswell (Chickenhed Zine and Roll, PO Box 330, Richmond, VA 23218)

**GARAGE AND BEAT!**, #4, \$3.50, 8 1/2 x 11, offset newsprint, 48 pgs. Ahhh yummy-yummy-yum-yum, another visually delicious issue of *GAB!* from the scholarly dashing sonic-meister himself, Mr. P. Edwin Letcher! I always eagerly await the imminent grandiose arrival of *Garage and Beat!* like a lil' snot-nosed kid feverishly anticipating a toy-tossin' visit from jolly ol' Saint Nick. It never fails to dazzle the eyes, entertain the mind, and create a euphoric feeling of fuzziness deep within the soul. From its illustrious inception several months ago, each issue of this dandy divine mag seems to surpass the one before it in all-out eyesmmerizing magnificence... and this one's certainly no exception! The interviews contained herein are informative and in-depth with the rockin'-and-rollin' likes of The Greenhornes, Hilton Valentine (guitar-maestro supreme of The Animals), and the charming Germanic label exec, Ritchie of Screaming Apple Records. There's a descriptively wondrous dissertation regarding recent Yardbirds comps and Manfred Mann collections, a page-long plea for the re-release of a couple of out-of-print '60s-era Swedish albums, a humorous gut-ticklin' run-through of cheesy faux-Beatle albums, and the usual expansive array of well-written reviews. *GAB!* is the ultimate in good-time reading material, as wholesome, fresh, and fun as the music it covers! Get your copy today, kiddies, or forever be square. —Roger Moser, Jr. (P. Edwin Letcher, 2754 Prewett St., Los Angeles, CA 90031; <www.garageandbeat.com>)

**MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL**, #223, \$3 ppd. Dec. 2001, 8 1/2 x 11, newsprint, 180 pgs. MRR seems to have found their keel a bit firmer, it no longer looks like a sinking ship, and is still seek-

ing its direction. I've been a casual reader of it since '86 – been a subscriber a couple of times – and you can't take away that it's a monolith, a sounding board, and a lightning rod. Some of the writing remains finger-pointy (re: when Arwen claims, "you are (still) being used," then she references a TV commercial as a sounding board for patriotic manipulation. What about all the people who're smarter than their TV?) instead of offering pragmatic or clever solutions to dissolving the corporate media's headlock. But, I have to give total credit to any mag that continues to support Mykel Board lounging around with his schlong a-flappin'. That guy could make me laugh at my mom's funeral. What also can't be denied is that MRR continues to be a viable resource for new music – and even if they hate it and you disagree with them – at least you know which bands are releasing stuff. On another positive note, it looks like someone's making the photos more legible before plooping them into their layouts. This issue features: Good Riddance, Manifesto Jukebox, The Pokers, The Bluebloods, Vitamin X, The Flakes, Seven Days of Samsara. –Todd (PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146-0760)

**SCREWED AND TATTOOED**, #2, September 2001, free (but if ya have at least one charitable bone in your body, I highly recommend tossin' 'em a couple of bucks for postage... believe me, ya won't be sorry!), 8 1/2 x 11, xeroxed, 60 pgs.

Hot damn doggy, I didn't think it could possibly be done, but the eye-ingratiating second issue of *Screwed & Tattooed* has surpassed its punkalicious predecessor with a much thicker content and a grander variety of wild'n'woolly wordplay than the first! The dynamic decadent duo of GooBoy Quisp and Laura Logical proudly present a punkrock reader's paradise full of expressive opinions, spirited observations, and a diligent dedication to punk'n'roll unruliness in its purest, most passionate form. So, here we have a couple of brutally honest editorials, a "celebrity"-strewn letters section, a well-researched article about The Decline, a couple of commentaries about bein' punk in a shallow plastic environment inhabited by oblivious mallpunk wannabees and other such trend-following scum, an informative page or two pertaining to all of the latest newsworthy punkrock events and scheduled releases, extensive in-

depth interrogations with The Short Fuses and Jakkpot, a stellar Top 50 countdown of the "Most Underrated Punk Records" of the past 24 years, and a grandiose descriptive display of blunt to-the-point reviews. Hell yeh, even the ads are visually appealing! Upon receiving this mayhem lil' marvel of a mag, I eagerly read it cover to cover, and now I'm wistfully craving more. So hit them photocopiers hard again real soon, GooBoy and Laura. I'm a-sweatin' and salivatin' in anxious anticipation of S&T #3! - Roger Moser, Jr. (Screwed & Tattooed, 39 Kearney Ave. #5, Seaside Heights, NJ 08751; <[www.screwedandtattooed.com](http://www.screwedandtattooed.com)>

**VERBICIDE**, #4, \$2 ppd., 8 1/2 x 11, glossy cover, newsprint, 68 pgs.

At first glance, *Verbicide* follows the standard punk zine format with columns, band interviews, record reviews, etc. The quality of their interviews vary. The interview with Soft Skull Press was very well-done. The interviewer asked intelligent questions and kept the conversation flowing very nicely. Other interviews didn't fare quite so well, but I read them, anyway. The record and zine review sections weren't as lengthy as most

review sections in zines are, but that's fine. The columns, though, aren't really columns. Instead, the zine is full of short stories, poems, and vignettes. I have to respect that. I even get the sense that the interviews and record reviews exist solely to draw people into the magazine, then ambush the readers with literature. It's a very noble plan. But *Verbicide* doesn't stop there. They also have a spread of Rich Mackin's letters (Rich Mackin? Hmm. Where have I heard that name before?), and a couple of pages dedicated to the insignificantly significant comics of Matthew Blackett. My favorite piece in this magazine, though, was the travel journal that one of the editors wrote about going to the Underground Publishers Conference in Ohio. I especially liked it because I'd gone to the UPC the year before he did, and we both had very similar experiences. Strange. –Sean Carswell (Scissor Press, Yale Station, PO Box 206512, New Haven, CT 06520)

*\*\*Roger Moser, Jr.'s review of the latest issue of Wonkavision can be found on <[www.razorcake.com](http://www.razorcake.com)>.*





### American Hardcore: A Tribal History

Steven Blush, paperback, 333 pgs.

If you ever wanted to take a crash course in early eighties hardcore – like if you went to Hot Topic and picked up a new Bad Brains t-shirt and wanted to have all the attitude and arrogant jaded know-how that wearing that shirt generally requires – *American Hardcore* would be the perfect book for you to pick up. It's amazingly comprehensive and it's almost (almost being a key word, here) worth picking up solely for the sheer girth of information. Blush goes into a good bit of detail about some of the larger early eighties punk and hardcore bands like TSOL, the Dead Kennedys, the Misfits, Bad Brains, Black Flag, and Minor Threat, thereby making this only the third or fourth book about Black Flag and Minor Threat that was released this year. To his credit, though, Blush also interviews most people who were in punk or hardcore bands between 1980 and 1986; a little bit of history is given to most acts. You can really learn a lot about the Dicks, the Big Boys, the Zero Boys, both Youth Brigades, SS Decontrol, the Meatmen, MDC, etc. Even if you know a lot about all of these bands, chances are, you'll be surprised by some of the stuff Blush digs up.

Still, there are some very fundamental problems with this book, and they have to do largely with Blush's unique brand of logic (which is to say his complete lack of logic). He constantly contradicts himself throughout the book. In the introduction, Blush claims that "*American Hardcore* ain't no revisionist history," but in the two previous sentences, he explains how the bulk of his information was gathered by interviewing people who were over the age of forty and talking about events that occurred fifteen or twenty years earlier. Now, I don't care who you are, if you wait fifteen or twenty years before discussing an event, you will romanticize the event or become overly critical of it. You will add fifteen years of baggage to that event, and when you discuss it, you will revise the history of it. Blush isn't basing his information on fanzines that were published between '80 and '86.

He's not using interviews that the bands gave while they were actively involved with the hardcore scene. He's not using any source material at all. Therefore, it's a revisionist history. That's what it is. He uses the same kind of logic when he claims that he's trying to be objective, but he also claims that he has to tell things from his own point of view. It doesn't work like that. Being objective means not having a point of view. And I don't mean to harp on these two points. I know they seem trivial, but they're indicative of a larger problem of the book. Blush's complete lack of logical thinking permeates the book and makes it very frustrating to read. I'll give a few more examples.

When discussing Youth Brigade (LA), Blush claims that they broke up in '85, but they "occasionally reunite." Then he doesn't say anything more about them. But since 1985, Youth Brigade have released *Happy Hour. To Sell the Truth*, a split with the Swingin' Utters, and a couple of EPs. They're currently working on a new album. They went on a national tour last year and have played probably a dozen shows around LA this year alone. I just saw them play last month and most of their set consisted of songs they'd written after '85 (and the show was fucking awesome). That's a lot of work for an occasional reunion.

Blush also glamorizes the violence of early hardcore shows (that's not revisionist, is it?) and implies that hardcore lost its relevance when the violence started to fade. Now, maybe I'm wrong here, but I thought an important point of being a part of a civilization was to move away from violence. Call me crazy, but I think going to a show and not getting punched in the head is a good thing and a sign that hardcore is moving in the right direction.

In one of the greatest gaps between rational thinking and Blush's logic lies in the line, "I don't wanna deny the legitimacy of today's teen angst. I just feel like, 'Yo, make your own fucking music! Why just ape the music of my salad days?'" As if no rebellious music existed before 1980 or after 1986. As if Greg Ginn, Jello Biafra, and Ian MacKaye were pure visionaries whose inspiration came solely from their genius and had nothing to do with the Ramones, the Dead Boys, the Sex Pistols, the Clash, or any other seventies punk band (or from Jerry Lee Lewis, Woody Guthrie, and Joe Hill, for that matter). As if everyone who was influenced by Bad Brains or the Circle Jerks were just a bunch of posers who couldn't get it right. This kind of arrogance on the part of Blush is indicative of so many aging ex-punks who act like rebellious music only existed during the years when they felt rebellious. I know I say this kind of thing all the time, but punk rock doesn't end because you quit being a punk. And hardcore definitely didn't end because Blush wanted to go on to a career writing for such socially relevant magazines as *Details*, *Interview*, and *Spin* (Blush really has written for all three of these magazines. That's how you know he's truly hardcore). And I guess it's this arrogance that really made me hate *American Hardcore*. It pisses me off that Blush makes blanket statements like "By 1986 Hardcore was over." Then goes on to give reasons why it ended, like "The new crop of kids weren't replacing the scene's intelligentsia." In the meantime, shortly after hardcore supposedly ended, bands like Operation Ivy and Born Against came out. Those bands were pretty good, too. It seems to me that Op Ivy has had a little bit

of influence over music. They did one or two original things. And maybe Born Against's powerful lyrics about the El Mozote Massacre weren't quite as socially relevant as when the Meatmen sang "Whippin' my wood to the girlie mags/ Provin' to myself I'm not a fag," but Born Against were pretty hardcore.

Hardcore and punk music has just gotten better since then, too. While I was reading this book, I decided to put it down one night and blow off some steam. I drove to the Smell in downtown LA, where 100 or so kids wedged into a dank warehouse space and were subsequently blown away by DS-13. DS-13, who released one of the best albums of 2001 and an album that just about every hardcore band that existed between '80 and '86 could only dream of putting out.

There's a lot more wrong with *American Hardcore*, but I'm gonna stop my rant before I pop a vein in my forehead or something. I just want to say that there is good information in this book. It is thoroughly researched (not well-researched, but thorough). Still, the only real reason to pick this book up is so that you can spend a lot of time getting angry about some sell-out *Details* reporter trying to define an underground movement. -Sean Carswell (Feral House, PO Box 13067, LA, CA 90013)

### An American Addiction:

#### Drugs, Guerillas, Counterinsurgency

Noam Chomsky, audio book

Trying to keep up with the actions of the US military in foreign lands is somewhat like playing the arcade game Pop-A-Mole. The ugly head of US intervention (coupled with massive human rights violations) pops up. You try to swing at it and knock it down, and just as you swing, it ducks the hammer and another ugly head pops up. By the time any reliable information about one military action finally filters through the US government and down to the people, some other atrocity is being committed somewhere else, and the short attention span of our society is screaming, "Why are you worried about Iraq? We're bombing Yugoslavia." So you look into that, and by the time you find anything out about it, the US is out of Yugoslavia and into Columbia. It's a dizzying pattern. Noam Chomsky is one guy who seems to be on top of this Pop-A-Mole machine. He seems to know exactly when and where the next head is going to pop up. This is a tribute to how knowledgeable and well-researched he is. In the case of *An American Addiction*, though, he's swinging at the ugly head of US intervention in Columbia – certainly an immensely important issue – but the US military has already gone on to Afghanistan. And so it goes.

Still, *An American Addition* succeeds in giving a great deal of information about the Colombian government. Chomsky delves into the idea of a "Drug War," explores the reasons why the concept of a drug war itself is flawed, and demonstrates that the very terms "drug war" are nothing more than a euphemism for killing peasants to satisfy the needs of the very wealthy. From there, Chomsky investigates other motives that are probably behind US involvement in Columbia. Despite the fact that our nation's attention is currently focused on a different US military action right now, *An American Addiction* is still in important work for two major reasons. First, war in Afghanistan or not, the US government continues to dump billions of dollars into a bogus "Drug War" in Columbia, and that money will



continue to flow south for at least a few more years. It's important to know why that money is really going down there. Second (and perhaps more important) Chomsky doesn't restrict his argument to Columbia. Instead, he examines the patterns of behavior that the US government tends to adhere to with respect to foreign policy, and he applies these patterns to Columbia. It is important to understand that Columbia is not a unique case, that it follows a well established pattern of foreign policy, and that that pattern will continue to be used in other countries around the world until the majority of the US citizenry recognizes it and fights against it. —Sean Carswell (Alternative Tentacles, PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141)

### Dance of Days:

#### Two Decades of Punk in the Nation's Capitol

Mark Anderson and Mark Jenkins, paperback, 414 pgs.

As any discerning fan of the musical genre can attest, punk rock rarely translates well to the written word, and the most wretched attempts to capture punk's spirit have often been the efforts of those who try to "document" the scene(s). In more than one instance, what is usually touted as "years of extensive research," be it by jaded veteran with a bias for friends' bands or clueless outsider slumming for credibility, results in a really neat picture book accompanied by some incomplete, miserable blather passing itself off as history.

Even the few well-written documents that do exist miss a great deal of what was going on during the time covered, merely resulting in a series of snapshots of particular scenes, but never a full and comprehensive picture. Part of the problem is with punk itself. While it is easy to identify the "stars" in nearly every other musical niche (eg. Led Zeppelin vs. Dick Army and the Prosthetic Implants, Simon and Garfunkel vs. Otto and Lou), punk, supposedly the antithesis of that line of thinking, leveled the playing field, making stars of everyone, fan and band alike. In short, if you're planning to document a punk "scene," you better expect to bring a lot of paper, pencils and erasers, 'cause you're gonna need 'em just writing down the names of everyone involved.

As a document of the DC punk scene, Anderson and Jenkins' *Dance of Days* is a valiant effort, and one that almost succeeds. Starting with the beginnings of veterans like the Slickee Boys, White Boy and the Razz and ending things up somewhere in the mid-1990s, the two take the reader on a dizzying ride through an account of one of the most consistently creative musical scenes in the history of American rock music, filled to the brim with insider factoids, first person accounts, and profiles both positive and negative of many of the movers and shakers in the DC scene.

Jenkins' account of the scene's early years is executed with a detached yet loving hand, deftly getting to the point in a way that only years of work in the journalism field can provide, yet also laying the foundation of the book's major characters, the Georgetown punks. Picking up where Jenkins leaves off, Anderson follows the Georgetown punks (specifically Ian MacKaye and Jeff Nelson) through the tumultuous 1980s/90s eras of harDCore, "Revolution Summer," punk percussion protests, the beginnings of "emo," the rise of Fugazi, the fall of Riot Grrl, and throws in the comparatively brief history of the influential Positive Force DC, to boot.

Less detached from his subject than Jenkins, Anderson's writing skirts a fine line between inspired accounts of what sound like some amazing gigs and sludgy attempts at incorporating punk's PC wing of political activism into the tale. At his best, he can make even a mundane band sound vital to the history of rock'n'roll, their concerts events of Woodstock proportions, their records mandatory (quick related personal note: For the bulk of their entire existence, I have hated Fugazi with an intensity heretofore saved only for the likes of the Bee Gees, John Denver and the Backstreet Boys. After reading Anderson's spirited descriptions of their shows, I borrowed *13 Songs* from Todd'n'Sean. I have since been made to both grudgingly admit that I now like Fugazi and suffer Sean's repeated offers to indulge myself in a good "emo" cry into his backpack. In exchange, they copied two of their other albums for me. Seemed like a fair trade to me). At his worst, he confirms certain elitist biases whispered in that scene for decades and touched upon by Anderson himself: if you aren't favored in the Dischord scene, you ain't shit.

The lion's share of the book's coverage goes to MacKaye, Nelson, their immediate friends and their label, while other "name" Dischord bands (most glaringly the highly influential Void) are given little attention, and other labels (like Outside Records) and bands (United Mutations, DC Necros) are given even less or no coverage at all. If one attempts to document a "scene," shouldn't they include as many different perspectives as are available to insure balanced coverage, and not just focus on the kids in the popular crowd?

Maddeningly, once the Dischord kids turn their collective backs on the harDCore scene they started (a scene described in such a way that it makes the reader feel like he missed out for not living in DC in its heyday) it is rarely mentioned for the remainder of the book except when it serves to illustrate the violence and ignorance swirling the "true" punk scene of the Dischord bands. Its continued existence is never denied so much as ignored, like the bastard stepson who no one wants to talk about.

Additionally, the latter parts of the book oftentimes read like nothing more than blow-by-blow accounts of assorted political actions and much of the character development built into the beginning of the book is largely forgotten. Lastly, it is never addressed in any real depth why these people not only found themselves attracted to the punk scene in the first place, but also why they've stuck it out this long in spite of the violence, the negative press, the infighting, the revolving door of band lineups, the gigs, the protests, the backbiting, the pointless cries of "sellout" and other general silliness.

Still, you've got to give these guys credit for one hell of an effort. It's damn hard to effectively tackle 20-plus years of music and give credit to all who are due. MacKaye, Nelson, and all their friends and their collective efforts are more than worthy of a book and, had the subheading read *Two Decades of DISCHORD Punk in the Nation's Capitol*, this would've been damn near perfect.

It is, again, a valiant attempt, one that almost succeeds, one that places *Dance of Days* among the top books ever written about punk rock, the sum total of which can be counted on one hand with fingers to spare. It is patently clear that Anderson and Jenkins are both fans and believers in the music they cover and, despite any of the

book's shortcomings, this fact comes through loud and clear. —Jimmy Alvarado (Soft Skull Press, 98 Suffolk St. 3A, New York, NY 10002)

### Fortunate Son: George W Bush and the Making of an American President

J.H. Hatfield, paperback, 404 pages

If I had the good fortune to be born to a wealthy family, was charming, good-looking, unpretentious, and unafraid of exploiting my families' extensive business and political connections, I might run for president too.

That's what George W Bush did. Along the way he partied his way through a number of intensely Ivy League schools, allegedly got arrested for cocaine possession, lost a lot of other people's money while making a few million for himself, helped out on Pappy's presidential campaigns (where he excelled at the crucial role of campaign hatchet man), and managed to get himself elected Governor of Texas. Twice. J.H. Hatfield's biography *Fortunate Son*, chronicles W's life thus far and does so in depressing detail.

There is an almost numbing repetition to the ebb and flow of W's public life and the patterns are revealed rather early in Hatfield's painstakingly researched book. W makes this crappy business decision, or treats this person poorly, or institutes this policy to screw this group of people, or has beneficial business relationships with this group of near-criminals, and he walks away from it all either wealthier or more politically influential. Fortune is repeatedly kind to W; not simply because of his family name and money, but because the right to lay claim to them opens up doors of influence and exemption that would be otherwise shut to those of equal charm and wiliness.

Perhaps he's lucky or perhaps he's brilliant but W was able to make millions for himself personally as he skillfully steered the companies he managed to the edge of a steep financial abyss. The pattern was always the same: some business man rich enough and shrewd enough to recognize the political benefits of bailing out a company chaired by the sitting President's son bought out the company and gave W a nice little settlement package – and usually a salaried position – in the new and improved company. It happened three times in the mid- and late eighties and by the early 1990s Bush was wealthy enough to complete plan b the family tradition: (a) make a few million, then (b), run for office.

But he put his political aspirations on hold temporarily (although not really, as we'll see) to step into the one career he truly enjoyed: his stint as a managing partner of the Rangers baseball team. He loves baseball and his heart was in his work. He worked his heiny off to get a team of investors together to build a new stadium (albeit largely at public expense). Hatfield gives a reader the sense of how potent W's charisma must be. People like him for a reason. He's confident, charming, easy going, and fun to be around. He believed 100% in what he was doing and in the world of rich, baseball-loving, Texas white men, Bush was a smooth and skillful negotiator. The stadium got built – with much acclaim and to-doing. He also used his high profile position of management spokesman to go through the motions of launching a run for governor of Texas all the while denying he intended to run for governor of Texas. (W's penchant for publicly declaring one thing and privately – hell, sometimes publicly – doing the exact opposite is a trusty political maneuver, one the

current Bush administration still relies on.)

Shortly after this, W proceeded to unseat the wildly popular Governor of Texas, Ann Richards. This occurred in part because Ms. Richards was perhaps too witty and sassy for her own good during the campaign, and in part because W's handlers severely limited his unscripted exposure to the media. The chapters that detail W's time as governor of Texas give a sick sense of déjà vu. The pre-September 11 policies of the Bush White House are just leftovers served on a national scale. He'd done it all before in Texas. It was there he learned how to call himself a centrist and a compassionate conservative while never failing to ultimately stake out a position firmly on the right and one far less than compassionate.

What is most alarming about the book is that W doesn't appear to have any idea what it is to be a public servant. He ran for governor twice and managed to finagle the Presidency as well, but one never quite gets the feeling that he's doing it for the public good. He does it because he can. Because he has the money and family connections and the tenacity and political shrewdness to see it through. In the end, political power and influence is just a handy thing to have when it comes time to help one's friends.

St. Martin's Press originally published *Fortunate Son* in 1999. The book was in its final proofing stages when a story about W's 1973 cocaine arrest broke in Salon.com. St. Martin's urged Hatfield to research and write up the cocaine story and they included it as an Afterward. Hatfield cited three sources who claimed that yes, indeed, W was arrested for possession in 1973, but a judge friend of his

Daddy's expunged it from JR's record in exchange for three months of community service. (An event that allowed W during his presidential campaign to respond authoritatively to relentless press questions about drug use, "I have not used drugs since 1974.") Problem was, none of these sources would say so on the record and there wasn't time for Hatfield to dig up someone who would. St. Martin's moved ahead as scheduled and the book was published with high expectations of best-sellerdom. Then reports that Hatfield was a convicted felon surfaced in a Dallas newspaper and the national press fixated on this factoid to the exclusion of all else. The general conclusion drawn was that a convicted felon wrote the book so the arrest story, of course, must be an unsubstantiated rumor. Sloppy logic of the classic media-frenzy kind, true, but the pressure from the media (with the Bush 2000 Campaign eagerly aiding and abetting) was sufficient to suck the spine from St. Martin's.

Initially St. Martin's defended the book. They said it was fact-checked (twice!) and all Hatfield's sources were corroborated by other sources. Then, less than a week after it was published, St. Martin's pulled all copies from bookstores and announced their promise to burn them. (You read that right: A major American publisher cheerfully promising to burn books.) Shortly after, in what is perhaps an indication that St. Martin's isn't truly a fascist organization, but rather, a capitalist one, the recalled copies were remaindered so as to recoup some losses.

-Sara Isett (Soft Skull Press, 98 Suffolk St. #3A, NY, NY, 10002)

### **Working for the Man: Stories from behind the Cubicle Wall**

*Edited by Jeffrey Yamaguchi, paperback, 100 pgs.*

*Working for the Man* is one of those books that I started to flip through, just to see what was inside, and ended up sitting down and reading half of it right away. It's that engaging. It's a collection of stories about working a white collar job and hating it, kind of like a *Temp Slave*, if *Temp Slave* got hired full-time. The stories give a good amount of insight as to why office work sucks, but almost all of the stories manage to avoid the "just bitching about your job" trap-pings by injecting healthy doses of humor. At times, the stories go even deeper, giving a glimpse into why people act the way they do, why corporate jobs are so dehumanizing, and how people fight back for their little bit of humanity. It was especially interesting for me to read this book because I've never worked a full-time, white collar job. I've never sat in an office, staring at a computer and three cubicle walls, getting annoyed by inter-office memos and staff meetings, trying to kill time by going to the bathroom or hanging out at the water cooler. It's all foreign soil for me. Even though I couldn't relate to it all on a first hand basis, our society is so completely dominated by this kind of corporate office mindset that I could definitely see the humor and enjoy it. *Working for the Man* is a quick read. Very enjoyable. I highly recommend it. -Sean Carswell (Stroboscope Productions, PO Box 20403, Brooklyn, NY 11202)

