

ISSUE #10

RAZZORCAKE



**SEARCHING for
EMMA GOLDMAN**

AGAINST ME!

EPOXIES

**MICHAEL
MOORE**

the FUSE!

VON STEINS

**INDIE PRESS
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RULE NUMBER ONE: DON'T BECOME AN ASSHOLE

"Few things are harder to put up with than a good example." -Mark Twain

It's not defeatist to admit we're all a little hypocritical. Having a social conscience, I'm aware of the ozone layer depleting, and that my truck's emissions are helping speed the process. It sounds great that everyone should ride a bike, but what about traveling bands and people who make magazines such as this one? (There's no physical way I can load a thousand pounds of magazines onto my Big Wheel. That'd pop me a mean wheelie, and the pedal's up front.) To produce, we make some concessions. Somehow, this magazine has to balance out the abuse of everyday living with words and pictures.

I was reading a little piece of paper in the self-titled, really cool Harum Scarum record the other day. It detailed why one of the singers, the lady who did the "Get The Steamroller Off My Cookie Monster" vocals, quit the band. She cited the modern abuses of everything from vehicular travel to electricity: toxic emissions, concrete, using non-renewable resources, dams, and ending her lament with the hope that this quite raging band will "go acoustic and tour on bicycles one day." This rubbed me the wrong way. I'd like to think of myself as a conscientious objector to a lot of things, but down deep, I think there is such a thing as "good" electrical use, "happy" electrical use - it powers amps, that when musical instruments are plugged into and turned up really loud, makes me grin. The trick to learn is balance. This leads me to a story.

Almost all of our shirts were off and we were sweating. The RV's air conditioning had decided to give up when the heat rose. We were playing a card game with quarters right before we pulled over to get something to eat at a gas station. Everyone piled out. Executive dietary decisions were made. Three 18-packs, instead of two, were purchased. I

was with Dillinger Four, one of my favorite bands of all time, catching up and hanging out. Paddy, the bassist, sat down across from me, and said, while unpeeling a silver wrapper, "I've never met a hot dog I didn't like." Their roadie, Gerty, unfolded a knife and sawed off the top of a cup. Billy, the guitarist, smiled, and dipped his hot dog deep into some cheese sauce. Return missions were deployed. More corn dogs were devoured. They were on sale. Hours later, playing songs that could choke out the radio, D4 proved to me why I think they're one of the best bands - politically conscious or not - on the planet. You couldn't have belt sanded off my smile as I beat on the curiously deep shag carpet that covered the stage.

With issue #10 of this magazine, we put a long-dead lady, the anarchist Emma Goldman, on our cover because she's irrevocably changed our lives, solely from books. *Razorcake* has a focus instead of a list of rules. Sean and I follow case-by-case guidelines instead of a dogma or a doctrine, and for it to continue to work, it will remain that way. (Plus, both of us would look pretty darn silly wearing a priest collar or a den mother's skirt.) Pretending to be holy or chastising how others live just isn't our gig. (For example, just because I'm not vegan doesn't mean I'm "anti-vegan," I just chose to eat meat and I am fully aware of the consequences.) I've always found it suspect that most people who are knocking hot dogs, beer, or Otter Pops out of your hand - because they think these things are bad for you - look down on those who they think are uninformed, when it's often a question of choice. What's troublesome is that these missionaries often chastise others at the cost of missing a greater possibility; having human electricity unexpectedly shock them. Folks like D4 and Emma Goldman, who punks happen to stake value in, are the most helpful through the power of chugging away at amazing songs and writing timeless books.

My only advice? I know we live in a complex world, but never forget to have fun, and retain a sense of humor no matter what you end up doing, even if it's serious business... it'll help you from becoming an asshole.

-Todd

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October 1st, 2002

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December 1st, 2002

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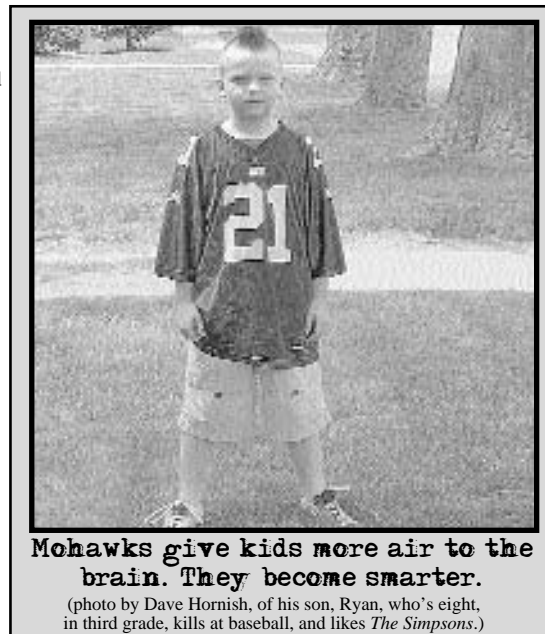
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Thank you list: Cover image thanks to the City Archives of Philadelphia.

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Mohawks give kids more air to the brain. They become smarter.

(photo by Dave Hornish, of his son, Ryan, who's eight, in third grade, kills at baseball, and likes *The Simpsons*.)

RAZORCAKE



Cutting. Tasty.

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

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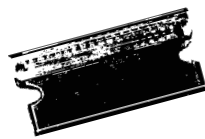
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 Yearly subscriptions (six issues) are \$15.00. Plus you get some free shit. These prices are only valid for people who live in the US and are not in prison. Issues and subs are more for everyone else (because we have to pay more in postage). Write us and we'll give you a price.



Money

Lazy Mick



"Yeah, I'm a fat bastard, but I'm a safe bet. When was the last time you saw a fat man with AIDS?"

holidays in the Rain

Day One

Our arrival was as smooth as a pint of Guinness. At London Gatwick Airport, Noel recognized Nick Cash of 999 and we stopped to say hello. We bumped into Nick and the gang again at the airport in Dublin, and we caught a ride with them into town in the H.I.T.S. (Holidays in the Sun) coach. Mick the driver drove us through the driving rain right to where we were staying: the Brewery Hostel on Thomas Street, about a block and a half from the Vicar Street Venue. It could not have been any easier.

We checked in and took a nap to prepare ourselves for a long night out. When we awoke, we were groggy, disoriented and out of sorts. In other words, in desperate need of a drink. When we got to Vicar Street, we were in for a jolt. There were skinheads everywhere. Big skins, little skins, old skins, fat skins. Skinheads, skinheads, skinheads. Noel and I looked at each other as if to say: I'll watch your back; you watch mine. But we needn't have worried. In the crowd, at the bar, and in the bog, the skins were perfect gents. Unlike their American cousins, no one seemed to have a chip on their shoulder and they weren't interested in random acts of thugery.

Appropriately enough, the first act we saw was an Irish punk band called Blood or Whiskey. I'd listened to them years before when I wrote for *Flipside*. I really liked their traditional Irish meets punk rock approach and was looking forward to seeing them. They didn't disappoint. Blood or Whiskey is a six-piece that features a bouzouki, guitar, tin whistle, bass, drums and banjo. Depending on who is singing, they sound like The Pogues, Dropkick Murphys and Swingin' Utters, but they play as if they'd never heard of any them. It was a lively, entertaining set.

After determining that Broken Bones was more metal than punk, we spent most of their set at the bar drinking with Arthur

of 999, who was also in The Lurkers. You can't miss Arthur. He's about 6'5", 275 lbs. and can really put the pints away. He greeted Noel with a bear hug that lifted her a good foot off the ground. Before he went on to play I heard him in the bog singing "Pissing for Jesus" with the solemnity of a concert soloist. 999 went on and they really surprised me with their energy, setting a precedent for the rest of the bands of the old guard, which is to say, everyone. Nick looks like a big-bellied bloke with a permanent scowl notched in his shaved

"Homicide". Like many of the bands, it was 999's first performance on Irish soil.

After the set, Nick took us backstage, but there was very little booze to be had, and I couldn't bring myself to pinch from the stash. I ran into Daryl from Cocksparrer whom I'd met in L.A. at the Variety Arts Theater. I also had the pleasure of meeting John from Captain Oi Records who, aside from bearing a striking resemblance to Alexi from the The Young Ones, wasted no time in declaring that *Razorcake* was the

before four o'clock in the afternoon.

When the Business took the stage I was anticipating that the skinheads in the audience would lose their fucking minds, but it didn't happen. There was no circle pit, just a small area at the front of the stage where people gathered to sing and dance, and the bald wall went four, five and six skins deep. It was an impressive sight. Up on stage Mick was his gregarious self, but when someone launched a pint at Terry the bass player (more on this phenomenon in a bit), he got very upset and had to be restrained. He invited "the cunt who threw the pint" to come up on stage, but there were no takers.

After much pomp and fanfare, the Stiff Little Fingers took the stage. Even though frontman Jake Burns is the only original member of the band (Bruce Foxton of The Jam has been with the band since 1991), I was really curious to see them. They came to the States not too long ago but their SoCal gigs got cancelled as a result of the disturbance on 9/11. It might interest you to know that SLF began as a cover band. Their name comes from a song off the first Vibrators album, *Pure Mania*. They opened with "Suspect Device," my favorite SLF song and it went downhill from there. The songs weren't as fast as I'd remembered and Jake was clearly getting off on his power chords. When he almost got hit with a plastic pint glass, he threatened to stop the show. I wish he had. "Nobody's Heroes" and "Listen" seemed to last forever. With close to a thousand people in the joint, the setting could hardly be called intimate, but they played like they were in a football stadium packed to capacity. They closed with "Alternative Ulster," a song named for a Belfast fanzine. Noel thought they were great, but I was glad when the Stiff Little Wankers ended their set and I could get back to having a good time. At least they didn't play any fucking reggae.

We went with a Dublin native named Gavin in search of a pub.



Peter Test Tube

head, but when the music started he was his old self again, just singing his ass off and having a good time. They played all the old favorites including "Feeling All Right with the Crew" and closed with

best 'zine in America. Daryl and John are in Argy Bargy together. We set up an interview, but it didn't happen; visitors to the Isle of Muddy Stout should be advised against scheduling appointments

Money

We ended up at a place called the Thomas Head near Christchurch. Heads turned as we walked into the trendy nightspot and we made our way to the bar on the bottom floor. It was not where Gavin wanted to take us, but it was raining (again) and I did not relish walking in it with a powerful thirst on me. I bought three shooters but no one would drink them with me (so much for stereotypes about Irish being heavy drinkers), so I drank one, brought one back to the bartender, and drank the other one. I spent the rest of the night nodding and agreeing with what others were saying. My night was pretty much done. When the bar closed we went to a Chinese takeaway (Hey! Hey! Woowohoo!) and had our first meal in twenty-four hours: sweet and sour chicken, beef and broccoli, and a plate of chips. (That's french fries for you ignorant non-world traveling fucks.) We were astonished and amused that the Chinese restaurant served chips, but we shouldn't have been. We ate some form of potato with nearly every meal. We were, after all, in the Promised Land of the Spuds. Grace be to God and pass the salt and vinegar...

Day Two

Dublin gets its name for the Irish words for "black" and "pool," which describes how my head felt when I awoke Saturday morning. When one finds oneself in a tiny room on a cool spring morning in the merry month of May with the rain softly falling on the windowpane and the bedwarmed flesh of a beautiful young woman by your side, the only thing to do is make love like crazy until you have sufficiently fucked yourself out of your hangover, even if the bed you are in is creakier than a rusty rocking chair. The creakiest beds in the universe, we discovered, can be found in the hostels in the fair city of Dublin.

And now I will let you in on the secret of Dublin hostels. It is relatively easy to get a private room during the week, but it is considerably harder to find one on the weekend, especially during the tourist season. Many hostels offer private apartments for rent. These apartments are almost never advertised and can be had for ten euros or so more than the cost of a private room. It's totally worth it, especially if you're traveling with a large group of people. In the hostel proper you get charged per person, but the apartments are rented at a nightly rate. You get a bedroom, a front room with sofa and television, a private bath and a kitchen with all the amenities, including washing machine. (Don't bother looking for

a dryer; they don't exist in this part of the world.) We tested the bed. It was creaky. The only downside was our apartment behind the Brewery Hostel smelled like beans, although it could have been an odor from the Guinness Brewery. It is said the first sensation a baby born in the nearby hospital experiences is the distinct scent of Guinness being brewed.

On my first visit to Dublin in the summer of 1992, I was dick-in-the-dirt broke and could barely afford to feed myself, much less drink and smoke. I have fond memories of a fish and chip shop near Christchurch that provided huge portions of fried goodness saturated with salt and vinegar and wrapped in newspaper. The place had no tables or chairs. You placed your order, paid and got the fuck out. It wasn't expensive, but it wasn't cheap either, and I could only afford it if I made it my only meal of the day. It was worth it. Saturday afternoon we endeavored to find it, and we did, which should come as no surprise as Burdock's Fish and Chips has been in business since 1913. We placed our orders and took our catch down a cobblestone lane behind Christchurch and ate in the shadow of the massive medieval cathedral. It's moments like these when you realize you never want to set foot in another mini mall again. We waddled back to the apartment and took a "nap." Creak, creak, creak.

Fortified, rested and clean, we were ready for another night of punk rock. Although we were sad that Nick, Guy, and Pablo from 999 had all gone home, Arthur was still around and more bands were arriving by the hour. We arrived right as The Varukers took the stage. The Varukers are heavy. Very heavy, like Sick on the Bus or English Dogs. It's an arresting combination of punk, oi and metal. Their new album *How Do They Sleep?* is excellent. The Varukers bass player was one of the few performers who stuck around for all three nights of H.I.T.S. He never seemed to miss a set and partied long into the small hours with a smile on his face. I asked him what made him so happy (code words for "Got any good drugs?") and he indicated his secret

was his girlfriend, a statuesque Japanese punk rocker.

After The Varukers, we went to the bar to look for the gang from Vice Squad, whom Noel had befriended the last time they were in the States. Beki, Paul, Tony, and Michael were all having a few pints. Beki was H.I.T.S. bona fide superstar, turning heads every-



Beki Vice Squad

then some by the Tubes' performance. *The Mating Songs of South American Bullfrogs* was one of my favorite albums as an angry young kid (I didn't realize there were keyboards on the record until I listened to it on CD many years later). I was thrilled to hear "Jinx" and "Blown Out Again." Peter was good in good humor: "Yeah, I'm a fat bastard, but I'm a safe bet.

When was the last time you saw a fat man with AIDS?" It was a great set. Peter was around all three days and spent most of his time on stage lending the stage manager a hand, adjusting mic stands, picking up pint glasses hurled from the crowd, etc. A punk rocker's punk rocker. Fans of Peter and the Test Tube Babies will be thrilled to hear that Captain Oi! is releasing all of their old albums.

Next up was Menace, a band I know next to nothing about so I'm not going to pretend that I do. But they were damn good and I'll be looking for them on my next trip to Amoeba. While I was standing there watching the set, I took note of the countless plastic pint glasses that were launched up on stage. Ireland has all kinds of weird sports like hurling – a cross

between rugby and lacrosse – but Ireland's true national sport is pint tossing. The object is to hit a performer on stage with a glass of stout or lager. The pint, however, has to be nearly full so that the target is thoroughly soaked. Although it was arresting, beautiful even, to see pints sailing through the air, it seemed to me like a criminal waste of beer. We're not talking about a pint here or there, but hundreds of pints a night. Pint tossing is harder than it looks. The singer and guitar players move around and usually keep an eye out for missiles coming their way. The drummer is an easy target but is protected by his equipment. On more than one occasion I watched a pint soar toward the drummer's kit only to clatter harmlessly off the cymbals at the last minute.

The highlight of the night was the headliner Cockney Rejects. A few years ago, Rhythm Vicar re-released *Greatest Hits Vols. 1, 2, and 3*. As a kicker, they added a recording of the Rejects live in the late '90s, and it was

pretty much unlistenable. I got to H.I.T.S. San Francisco too late to see them a year ago, but by most accounts, I didn't miss much. Experience has taught me not to expect too much from my favorite bands, especially when seeing them live for the first time. I don't know if it was the short flight from London or the water from the Wicklow Mountains, but the Cockney Rejects were awesome. For my money, it was the best show of the weekend. I was expecting Jeff to look like a fat auld lager-bellied sod, but the raucous East Ender was in excellent shape and looked like he could still do some damage on the pitch. The Rejects played all the classic songs: "I'm Not a Fool," "Bad Man," "Here They Come Again," "The War of the Terraces," "The Greatest Cockney Rip-off" and on and on. Once again, the crowd was enthusiastic but mellow. It was an amazing show I'll never forget.

Everyone filed out of the club to hit the after-party at Eamon Doran's in Temple Bar. We shared a cab with two Dubliners, and it would prove to be a fortuitous ride. The gent's name was Boz and is something of a punk rock Renaissance man. His band Steampig played earlier that night and he is the principal writer, artist and editor for his zine *Nosebleed*. Don't be surprised if his warped artwork shows up in these pages someday soon. The woman, whom we'll call Ms. Kitty, had recently returned to Dublin after running a skateboard shop in New Zealand. More on her later... It's always a great scene when punk rockers take over a bar, and that's what happened at Eamon Doran's, and the Celtic nouveau yuppies at the bar took it in stride. It seemed as if half the crowd from Vicar Street was in the massive three-story pub. Everyone got pretty shit-faced. We had a few more drinks with Vice Squad, the Argy Bargy boys and Danny from Anti-Nowhere League, who is a pro-skater. When we hit the wall, Noel and I went next door for some pizza and walked back to our apartment in the rain. By the time we hit the sheets, the sun was creeping up over the Irish Sea.

Day Three

Saturday was an election day in Dublin, and Sunday's press coverage was the last bit of hard news

the citizens of the city by the Liffey would receive for the next five weeks as it steeled itself for World Cup frenzy. On a more interesting note, Britain's NME made punk rock the lead stories and featured the Sex Pistols on the cover. We read these with interest over a mid-morning Irish breakfast near Dublin Castle. We went back to the apartment and rearranged the furniture in the front room. After a long nap, we decided to eat again and had an authentic Irish dinner of Guinness, smoked salmon and shepherd's pie. We were, as they say, ready to rock.



Mickey Fitz, the Business
all photos by Money

If Friday night more or less featured early Anglo and Irish punk, and Saturday night was strictly for the oi boys, then Sunday was hardcore night at Vicar Street. We got there too late to see Splodgenessabounds, and Special Duties was just starting to crank it up. (Ironically, Special Duties' first gig was in support of Splodge.) It was hard, fast and raucous. Steve Arrogant summed up the set with his closing remarks: "If anyone wants to suck my dick or buy me a beer, I'll be backstage." Nice work if you can get it.

Next up was GBH. I was never much of a GBH fan and this was my first time seeing them live. I was impressed with Colin's showmanship and ability to duck pint glasses. Unlike a lot of Brit punks, GBH look like musicians and not armchair football fanatics and lager lads. A young fan near the front was singing with his camera in hand, so Colin gave him the mic, took his camera, and photographed him singing along with GBH. He did the same thing with a skinhead's

video camera. It was nice and all, but I spent more time in the queue at the bar than I did watching the set.

The Anti-Nowhere League was Noel's favorite band of H.I.T.S. San Francisco, and they put on another spirited performance. To say that lead vocalist Animal is an odd fucker is an understatement. There is nothing punk rock about his hair, clothing, or stage demeanor. He comes across like a cocaine cowboy from yesteryear when hair was big and trousers were tight. Boz from *Nosebleed* called the set a wankfest

family. Sure the ritual of throwing perfectly good pints in the air is a little strange, but if it takes the edge off and eliminates the need to pound one's neighbor into oblivion, I'm all for it.

After the set it was back to Eamon Doran's for another after-party celebration. A band was supposed to play in the cellar but the show was cancelled. Everyone went about the task of getting more hammered than they already were. I observed that some bands were paid in full (I was the recipient of several shots of Jack Daniels) but other bands were not, which struck me as a lousy thing to do to a band just trying to get by in a foreign country. Anyway, the party moved downstairs where a DJ spun

punk records and we drank to U.S. Bombs and Flogging Molly. When they kicked us out of the cellar, we went to the pizza parlor again, and when they kicked us out of the pizza parlor, we hit the street and staggered back toward Vicar Street and our apartment. On the way we were joined by some wise-ass Dublin club kid who somehow ended up with a slice of our pizza and proclaimed that "America had it coming. Over here, every day is Sept. 11!"

We weren't much interested in his political views. When we reached Christchurch, Ms. Kitty invited me, Noel and a guitar player who shall remain nameless up to her apartment. I thought we were going up for a nightcap, but when we got there we were presented with a room decked out with a red velvet love seat, red velvet curtains and a red velvet bedspread. This is interesting, I thought, seedy but interesting. Ms. Kitty then led us down the hall and opened the door to a full-on dungeon outfitted with all manner of bits, whips, manacles, and restraints. Mounted on a tripod in the corner was a very expensive-looking video camera. Noel and I made polite conversation for a few minutes and excused ourselves, thinking Ms. Kitty had designs on the punk rocker she had lured back to her lair. We got in the elevator and laughed all the way down to the lobby. When we hit the street, the punk rocker was already there! He couldn't get out of there fast enough, and fled down the stairs. "That bird is bleedin' mad!" he said, and we all had a good laugh. All around us people in suits prepared for another week of work in the Hibernian capital. Noel and I went home, rearranged the furniture some more and creaked ourselves to sleep.

and judging from the number of pints aimed Animal's way, I think there were plenty of punks in agreement. I thought it was a solid set. To get a taste of Animal's perverse sense of humor, check out his "History of the Anti-Nowhere League" on the band's website at <www.antinowhereleague.com> and read about the most vile and intrusive use of a carrot in the "annals" of rock and roll...

The Exploited wrapped up the weekend with an explosive set. Wattie is a stand-up punk who hasn't slowed down a bit although something must be done about that horrible hair. Those mohawked dreadlocks are getting so long it's starting to look like a mullet. Our friend Gavin was in seventh heaven, pogoing away like a kid. Again, I was stunned and amazed by the civility of the crowd. When the set was nearly over I went and asked one of the bouncers how many fights there had been over the weekend. His answer was, "None." Unbelievable. Punks and skins, Irish and English, all one big happy

-Money



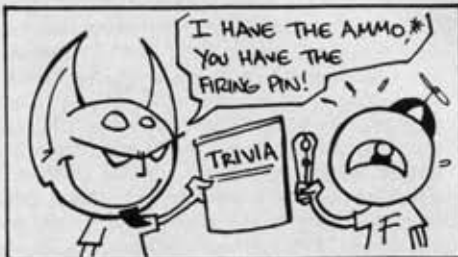
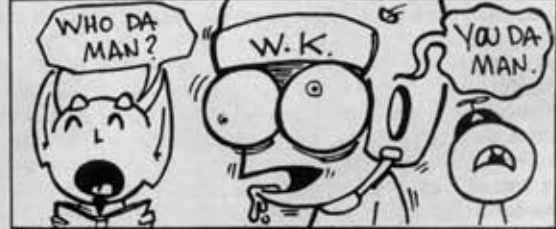
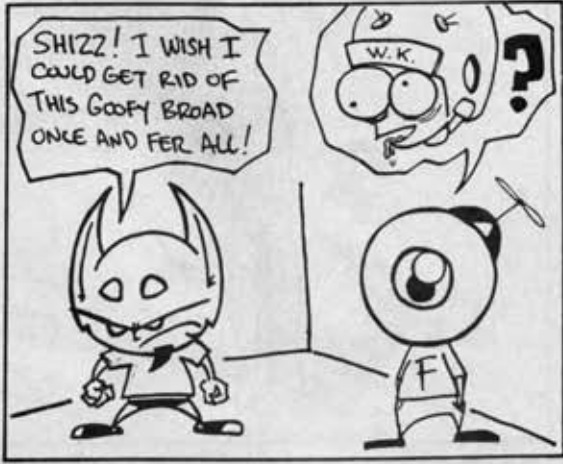
RAZORCAKE PRESENTS:

Lil BEEZ AND THE MISFINKS



ART. 01-02

WE COME UPON OUR FRIENDS, LIL BEEZ AND FRED AS THEY RELAX IN THE MISFINK TREEHOUSE...



* THE WHIZ KID IS, LET'S SAY, A LITTLE SLOW. BUT HE HAS A HEAD FOR USELESS FACTS. BUT ONE SMART THOUGHT IN HIS HEAD, AND HE PISSES HIMSELF. GAW! FRED!



THANK FOR ALL OF YOUR DRAWINGS! KEEP 'EM COMING!
THABEEZ B @ HOTMAIL.COM



Maddy

Shiftless When Idle



And if some of us are vegan and some of us work for porn distribution centers, we can still be friends!



puke. Right then. I scrambled to get out in the aisle, practically mounting this woman, and ran towards the bathroom, grabbed the door, leaned forward, and started puking everywhere! Of course, the eyes of every Greyhound passenger were on me, and I quickly shut the door and continued puking. In the original version of this story, there's all sorts of gross puking descriptions. In the interest of brevity, I'll just say that,

think it's funny, and everyone else seemed to think it was funny, too."

"I bet black people wouldn't find it too funny."

"Actually, I've told the story to a lot of people at my job, most of whom are black, and all of them thought it was hilarious."

"We came to this convention because we thought it would be a safe space, and it's just upsetting to find out that it's not," they said.

At this point, as though on cue, someone came up to me and said, "Cool to see you here! Funny fucking story!"

Then one of the two who had approached me said, "I just think that all of this is indicative of a white supremacist way of thinking."

"What?" I exclaimed in disbelief. "I think that to call me a white supremacist is crazy."

"What???" they both said in unison.

"I think that to call me a white supremacist is crazy," I repeated. At this point, they were clearly at a loss. And so, they changed the subject. Sort of.

"And, another thing," one of them said, voice rising. "We thought it was pretty sized of you to make fun of the woman for being large."

"Look," I said, "first of all, it was important to the story. I wouldn't have had to practically mount that woman if she hadn't been so large. And also, have you ever read my zine?"

"No," they both replied.

"Well, I make fun of myself a lot in my zine. And besides, it is a funny story." They shook their heads gravely. Finally, I said, "I just don't see where this is going. You're not going to convince me, and I'm not going to convince you. I just don't see the point." After saying this, the two walked off in a huff. My friend Ben said he saw them two minutes later giving each other what he described as "a very emo hug." He also noted that the guy seemed to be shaking and crying.

Perhaps the three words to best sum up my critical and analytic comments about this incident would be, "What the fuck?" I've written zines for the last nine years, in which, amongst other things, I vividly describe cool ways to kill yourself, proclaim my hatred for most girls, and write extensively about the various cruel and sadistic ways I "cared for" my pets, and this is what arouses so much outrage? In the grand scheme of things, this is about as benign as I get! I mean, my old zine got compared to *Answer Me!*, for Christ's sake!

And not only were they offended, they used the phrase "safe space," which is perhaps my least favorite phrase and/or concept of all time! It's fine if you're offended by something. In fact, you might even argue that writing that doesn't appeal to every last woman, infant,

Maddy

Razorcake readers, I apologize. Instead of my usual ramblings about Dee Dee Ramone, Vikings, and rock and roll, today, I am gonna get serious. Today, I am gonna talk about the Portland zine convention. Now, wait! Don't stop reading and just skip right away to Ben Weasel's column! (Welcome to Mr. Weasel, by the way!) I know, I know, we are all scared of zine conventions and the prospect of hanging out with hundreds of fellow zinesters. It sounds about as much fun as being stuck in a kayak in the middle of the Nile with Carrot Top and the collective members of Pearl Jam, but bear with me! This isn't a dumb story about how I went to such and such record store on such and such day, and met up with a buncha friends you don't know about. This isn't a chance to drop names! This is a chance to tell you about how I, Maddy, Razorcake writer and Sour Patch Kid-lover, am a white supremacist. Seriously!

The convention took place a few weeks ago and there was a Friday evening kickoff - lots of zine readings and bands. I was scheduled to read, along with some other zinesters. Little did I know what was to follow! I read a story from my zine, *Tight Pants*, about puking on a Greyhound bus. In case you haven't read it (and, don't worry, this is important to understand the rest of this sad, sad tale), the basic story is as follows. I got really drunk before getting on a midnight Greyhound to Chicago from Minneapolis, with the hopes of being able to remain passed out for the full ten-hour trip. (As we all know, alcohol is the solution to every problem.) A few hours into the trip, I woke up and started to feel ridiculously sick. And then a very large woman sat down next to me, blocking my exit to the bathroom. And suddenly, I had to

when I emerged from the bathroom, everyone was still staring at me. I made my way to the seat. My seat-mate got up to let me in, and then moved way over on her seat, giving me about half a seat of extra room, with most of her body out in the aisle, and said to me, with a look of utter distaste, "Damn, you nasty!" in what could be best described as a "Jerry Springer guest" type voice.

The story went over well, and I was minding my own business, hanging out with my friends Maureen and Ben, when a guy and a girl approached me.

"We want to talk to you for a minute."

"Okay," I said, figuring that it had something to do with a workshop on stealing that I was leading on Sunday. (Yes, I actually did lead a workshop on stealing! Punk rock!) The three of us went out into the hallway, as the rest of the readings were still going on.

One of them, I can't remember which, opened with, "We wanted to let you know that we were really offended by your story."

The other interjected, "We were really offended by the way you made fun of that woman's accent. Making fun of the way black people talk isn't funny."

Surprised, I replied, "Well, how did you know she was black? Lots of people, black and white, talk that way. And, although I do mention that she was black in the original version of the story, I left it out in the shortened version tonight."

"Look, that's how black people talk. You know that. That's an imitation of the way black people talk," one of them said.

"That's just not true," I protested, "and besides, that's just the way she said it. And I

child, and pet turtle is better, or at least more interesting, than, say, *Family Circus*. But no, it's not just that people are offended. It's that they feel like they have a right not to be offended. They have a right to a "safe space," where no one is ever going to challenge their beliefs or say anything that they don't agree with. No one's gonna stray from what two kids in a Portland auditorium think. Right? Right?

If I seem angry and annoyed by this, well, it's because, although it's funny and makes for a good story, it worries me. I'm worried that people like those two at the Portland zine convention might actually make some people "tone down" their writing out of ridiculous fears of being called racist, sexist, sizest, whatever. Think about a Mark Twain novel written as though everyone spoke "perfect" British English. Or a Nelson Algren story where none of the women are described as either attractive or ugly, fat or skinny, so as to avoid objectifying anyone. I'd like to think that it's just something in the Portland water. (After all, that's where Jim Goad of *Answer Me!* zine made the news after a girl complained about the content of his zine, landing a local retailer in some serious legal trouble.) Maybe on the west coast, in "idyllic" college towns, people want to seek out something they find offensive 'cause they never deal with real racism. Maybe, and this is perhaps more accurate, it's just that certain people take themselves too seriously.

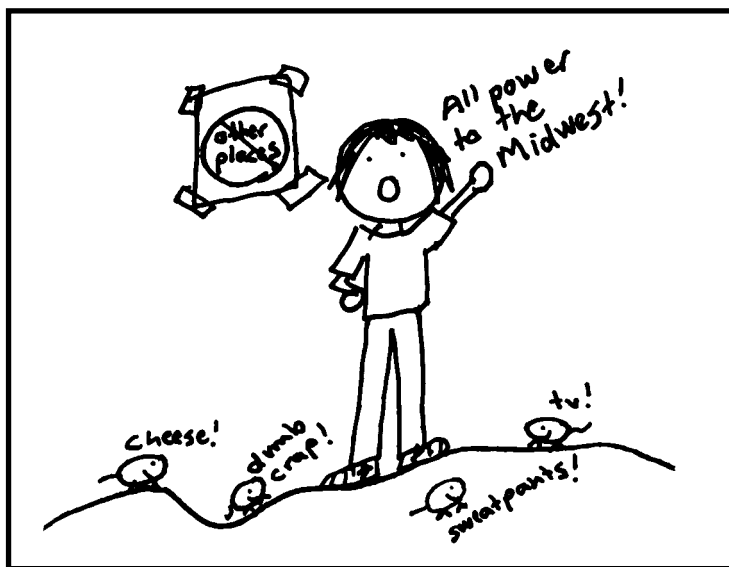
Growing up in the Midwest, land of beer, cheese, and sweatpants, I've never met anyone like those two at the zine convention. I don't think it's inaccurate to say that, in Wisconsin (where I'm from), people are not so uptight. Sure, people recognize racism when they see it,

and people do get into serious arguments about politics, but in the Milwaukee punk scene no one's gonna kick me out of a show for wearing a shirt with a naked woman on it, or try to get *Answer Me!* removed from a bookstore for joking about rape. No one's gonna act superior for not watching television when someone starts talking about their favorite show. (This actually happened in Portland. I'll spare you the details.) I'm not saying that I hate Portland. I don't even know if that incident was representative of something greater in their scene. (Or if the people who approached me were even from Portland.) But I do know that, in the Midwest, sure we have our problems. But, at the end of the day, we kick back with a corporate-brand cheap beer, some episodes of *The Simpsons* (on television, no less!), and eat our cheese-encrusted pizza with great joy and mirth! And, frankly, that's the way I like it! We go to our protests; we plan our basement shows; we put out our zines. And if some of us are vegan and some of us work for porn distribution centers, we can still be friends! (And I have friends in both categories - I wish I were the latter!) We don't need a "safe

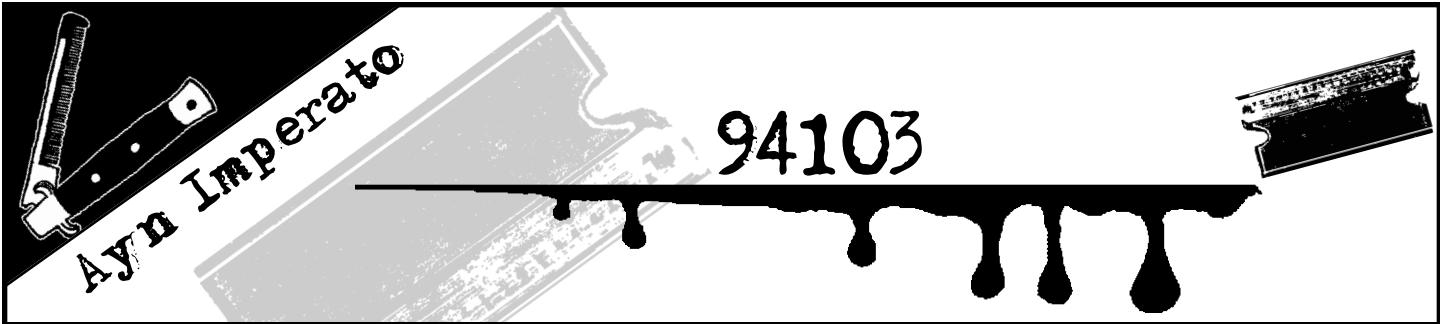
space"! We can talk and debate and let the best ideas win out. And, no matter what, we can still drink together. Unless, of course, some of us are straightedge. Ha!

So, although I had a lot of fun doing other stuff at the zine convention, met a lot of great people, stayed at a cool punkhouse, saw *Against Me* (so good!), and got a peek at the huge Union Pacific railyard (punk!), I think I'll stick to the Midwest. Let's hear it for the fat middle of the country where I can write my zine in (relative) peace! Thanks for bearing with my annoying rantings. Next time around, I promise to go back to writing about dumb crap. The end!

-Maddy



Maddy



We'll roast marshmallows in the toxic flames and drink beer from whimsical, light-up, self-cooling mugs.

Everyone Needs a Gnome

I opened my mailbox this afternoon. Inside, a record I ordered was stuffed, folded nearly clamshell style. But my vinyl taco was only slightly troubling. It was packed in there along with three bills, a credit card offer and - much more disturbing - three or four useless product catalogs. More and more pour in every day. They spill out like a tiny paper avalanche from my tinier mailbox.

How do I get on these mailing lists? You order something online with a credit card once and suddenly your mail is packed with these...these *catalogs*. They should just send a wedge of tree instead. Just deposit a large log on my doorstep and save the printing and mailing costs. Isn't it enough to be bombarded with 50 spam emails a day for penis enlargements, porn-cams and 30 Days to Financial Freedom? Now I need to wrestle with this?

My boss gets a ton of these catalogs also. Between her mail and mine, I have amassed an enviable knowledge of useless products. Not in my wildest fantasies would I have imagined some of these needless items existed. I have developed a perverse fascination with cutting out the funniest ones and sending them to friends. I now actually know where to purchase cast-resin cherubs and gnomes. As well as polyester pull-on stretch slacks and flowered grandma muumuu dresses should I, or anyone else I know, ever have a lapse of fashion sanity.

One of the worst catalog offenders is *The International Male* - high fashion for, apparently, the Florida-based man. Total Miami Vice get-ups. Flipping through this catalog, I am left to wonder: would the world be for lack without knee-length gauze caftans for men or tri-colored polyester shirts worn with "oyster"-toned trousers? I



Here you can purchase a gnome figurine, as well as a lawn goose complete with seasonal, interchangeable outfits for only \$19.99, much like my own featured goose. Only \$19.99!

think not. Amid the bevy of brightly colored and patterned swimsuit banana hammocks, I am left with the question - do we *need* a purple and gold celestial-print thong? I sense a resounding no. And I'm sure we will all be relieved when no poet or pirate shirts will ever again be sold in the greater Northern Hemisphere. Maybe in Miami loudly patterned, tri-toned, man-made fabric shirts with white slacks are all the rage. Maybe I'm just not "with it." But here in San Francisco there isn't a man I know, of any sexual persuasion, who would be caught dead in these fashion tragedies. Maybe I am stifling one's creative urge to dress poorly. Sue me. I'll send these catalogs to where you live.

At *Taylor's Gifts* you can buy a lawn statue of a dog crafted to look like it is burrowing into your lawn looking for a bone. It is only a torso with the hind legs sticking out. No head. It is essentially a plastic beagle's ass. Would you pay \$19.98 for a polyurethane beagle butt? Who, I decry, would?

Looking for a garden gnome? *Carol Wright* gifts has a staggering display. Here you can purchase a gnome figurine, as well as a lawn goose complete with seasonal, interchangeable outfits for only \$19.99, much like my own featured goose. Only \$19.99! Six tiny, changeable outfits! Or perhaps an American Flag windsock tickles your fancy? An array of seasonal dog costumes? Please, buy a plas-

tic crumb catcher to place between your oven and kitchen wall to avoid unnecessary fallout! Light up plastic ice cubes - neon colors! Only \$12.99 for a three-pack! Electric salad tongs! Shoes with spikes in the bottom to fertilize and aerate your lawn! A portable Thighmaster - Suzanne Sommers needs her royalty residuals in this failing economy. Damn it, do your part!

If you look at these things long enough, you start to think: *I* could use a self-adhering checkered nylon skirt for our bathroom sink, to hide those unsightly pipes underneath. And we *could* use the cardboard couch seat booster to plump up our sagging leopard couch seat cushions. These are the

weak moments in life. I know I will hit a personal low if I ever kick down \$9.99 for a Snoopy-printed plastic holder for our kitchen sponge.

I have tried writing the direct marketing place that supposedly removes your name from all mailing lists. I suspect they just sign you up for more. Probably at a dollar a piece. The catalogs are still rolling in. I have relegated a special recycle can for The Catalogs, lest they invade any other sector of my life.

Maybe I'll start to hold monthly bonfires – regular catalog blazes where everyone can bring all their junk mail, all their catalogs, and we'll burn it back into the earth. We'll roast marshmallows in the toxic flames and drink beer from whimsical, light-up, self-cooling mugs.

Another thought haunts me: I wonder what happens to all those unsold items? There must be a clearinghouse, a mega-store in Boise packed with this stuff. Everything's a dollar. Even the gnomes.

Maybe they ship the stuff back to some third world country from whence it came, where it was quite possibly crafted in a dollar-a-day sweatshop. Maybe the stuff sits there in a giant pile, like a museum

attraction, for the locals to stroll by and chuckle at the dumb stuff Americans buy: "Plastic beagle rear ends! What idiots!"

Maybe they melt the plastic down into huge globular vats and make more useless shit. Maybe that's why some plastic smells so funny. It may very well be the melted-down hybrid of plastic salad tongs and unsold dolls. Reused thirty, forty, fifty times like some bizarre Frankenplastic. By chance a person or a rodent or two fell into the mix over the years. Someone thought it might be fun to dive into the bubbling vat and did a cannonball to the bottom, only to be absorbed like a tiny flower of guest soap, dissolving in water. There are legends in there, in those needless gifts.

But what does this all *mean* in the greater span of organic humanity vs. economics? I do not know. I just wanted to share with you the avalanche of my mailbox, which could very well be your mailbox – this consumer reality I must face every single day. Of Day-Glo orange, moisture wicking socks. Of electric automatic avocado slicers. Of little plastic clips that hold your socks together in the dryer. Of twenty dollar plastic dog butts. I think, somehow, that says it all.

–Ayn Imperato





Sean Carswell

A Monkey to Ride the Dog



I figured it would do Billy some good to be humbled and it would do Glenton some good to let out some of his rage. Besides that, there was a fucking poisonous gas cloud outside.

POISONING SCHOOLCHILDREN AND OTHER PATRIOTIC ACTIVITIES

Sean Carswell

With five minutes left to go in class, the principal came on the loudspeaker to tell everyone that a rocket had exploded, releasing a poisonous gas cloud. No one was allowed to leave their classroom until the poisonous cloud passed. So there I was – perhaps the world’s most reluctant junior high school teacher – stuck with thirty-five twelve-year-olds, waiting for a poisonous gas cloud to pass. Since there were only five minutes left in class, all of our classwork for the day was done. Since I was a first-year teacher in a horribly under-funded school, I didn’t have my own classroom. I roamed from one classroom to another during the day, bringing whatever books and supplies I could carry. This meant that, in case of emergency, I had no

back-up materials: no games for the kids to play, no books with stories that I could read to the kids, no movies to show. Just to aggravate matters even more, when the poisonous gas cloud showed up, I was teaching in a football coach’s classroom. He had no back-up plan either. He once told me, “When kids get bored and act up in class, just make them do jumping jacks. It tires the little bastards out.”

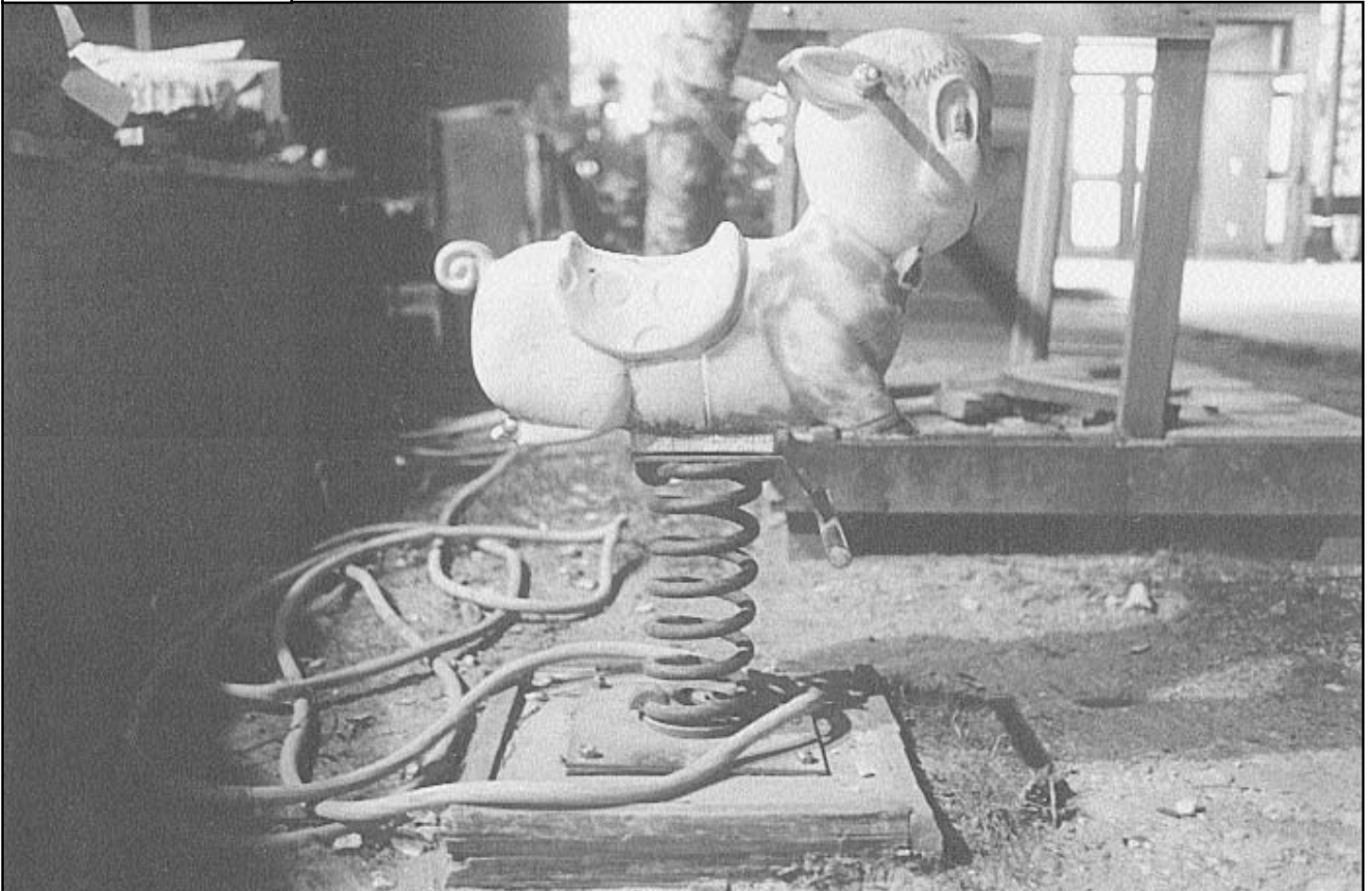
The only thing I had going for me when the gas cloud floated overhead (and on any other day that I taught junior high, for that matter) was that I was big and mean-looking. I kept my head shaved pretty close to the scalp and I wore Doc Martens to school every day and a few of my students had seen me at an all-ages US Bombs show earlier in the semester, going nuts in the pit and doing shots with Duane Peters, and those students told everyone in the school about it. So I wouldn’t say that the students feared or respected me, but I could occasionally

intimidate them.

The principal had said that the gas cloud would pass in forty minutes or so, so I figured I’d just move on to the next day’s assignment. I stood up and told the students to quiet down and open their books. I opened my planning book and glanced down at my lesson plans for the next day. Prepositions. Jesus, I thought, as boring as grammar normally is, this may be the most boring part of it. I launched into the assignment anyway, talking about how a preposition is anything you can do _____ a cloud. You know: in a cloud, underneath a cloud, surrounded by a cloud, etc. – which probably wasn’t the best way to explain it, what with the poisonous gas cloud above us. I talked for a couple of minutes, then asked one student to give me an example of a preposition. He said, “Who cares?”

“No, ‘who cares?’ is an interrogative statement,” I said. “Who can give me an example of a preposition?”

Photo by Dan Monick



Stacy, a pretty intelligent smartass, raised her hand. I gambled that she might actually be taking a shot at the question and said, "Yes, Stacy?"

"Are we going to die?" Stacy asked.

"You're getting closer." I said, undaunted and acting naïve. "'To' is a preposition, but not in that sentence. When you say, 'Are we going to die?', the 'to' in that sentence is half of the verb form, 'to die', which is actually an infinitive. Who can use 'to' as a preposition?"

Stacy's friend Kia raised her hand, and though I felt like it was futile, I called on her anyway.

"Are we gonna die, Mr. Carswell?" Kia asked. And when Kia asked the question, it changed everything. Because I knew Stacy was just trying to stir up some shit, but Kia was genuinely scared. And Kia had every right to be scared. There was a poisonous gas cloud floating by outside, and the only thing that separated inside from outside was the quarter-inch-thick glass windows. The windows were shut. They were sort of weather proof. Not a whole lot of poisonous gas could creep in, but still. Some poisons are pretty strong. It doesn't take a whole lot to fuck you up.

As I thought these thoughts and weighed the options of what type of gas this might have been and how far away the rocket had been when it exploded and how real this danger really was, the absurdity of my whole situation struck me. All of these kids were freaked out by the cloud, and I was trying to teach them about prepositions. I closed my book. "I'll tell you what," I said to the class. "Take out a sheet of paper and write about this cloud that's passing over us. Write about what you think it is, and why you think it's up there, and what you think of Kennedy Space Center taking chances with your life by sending a rocket full of poisonous gas up into the air above us."

Most of the kids took out a sheet of paper and started writing. I sat back down at my desk, keeping an eye on the kids and thinking about rockets. At the time, I was living in Cocoa Beach, Florida, which is the town I where I was born. One town over from Cocoa Beach is Merritt Island. That's where I grew up. And on the north side of Merritt Island is Kennedy Space Center, which is where, among other things, scientists designed the rockets that went to the moon. So I grew up with rockets. They were nothing new to me. When I was a baby, my mom would carry me out to the front yard so we could watch the Apollo rockets to the moon. As soon as I could walk, I'd go out to the front yard on my own to watch the rockets. After I learned to read, I started reading the newspapers on the day of a launch. I'd memorize the crews' names and their missions and which rocket it was: Apollo or Skylab or the Columbia Space Shuttle. I'd even read up on the test launches and satellites. I tried to learn about everything that the Space Center fired up in the air. Of course, by the time I was twelve or so and my hormones kicked in, I'd completely lost interest in rockets. And, yeah, I've heard all the arguments about rockets just being an extension of men's penises, or a metaphor for man's desire to stick his dick into everything, even outer space, but by the time I was in junior high, the only penis I cared about was my own. So I stopped thinking about rockets and stopped going outside to watch them shoot up into the air and started focusing more attention on girls.

I looked across the classroom at my students. About half of them were busy writing on their papers. The other half had given up on the assignment, but they weren't misbehaving yet. I watched Kia, who was kind of a punker in the sense that she wore black t-shirts a lot and dyed her hair crazy colors and was a free-thinker (well, for a twelve-year-old), but was mostly not a punker in the sense that her favorite band was No Doubt. The combination of her blue hair and the rocket that had just blown up reminded me of Angie Huber, a punker girl who I'd dated for about a week in junior high. Angie's stepfather, a guy named Fred Haise, had been an astronaut. I only knew this because Angie's mom always made a big deal about it. She'd always say his first and last name together, even though he was her husband, like everyone should know who Fred Haise was. According to Angie, though, he was just an asshole. The one time I met him, I could see her point. Not that he really did anything all that bad. He just criticized Angie a lot and looked mean when he did it. But Fred Haise had been on the Apollo 13 mission. He was one of the guys who had been in the rocket when they supposedly reported back to Mission Control, "Houston, we have a problem." Then, of course, they made a Tom Hanks movie about the Apollo 13 mission, but I didn't see the movie, and I never really did give much of a shit about Fred Haise. I did give a shit about Angie, though. I gave a shit about any girl who was goodly enough to make out with me behind some school busses when we were thirteen. I sat at the front of that classroom and thought about Angie and wondered what ever happened to her and if she still hated her stepdad and what she thought of that Tom Hanks movie.

I couldn't do this for long, though, because the poisonous gas cloud was still floating over us, and most of my students had given up on their writing assignment. They were gradually working themselves up. It started with a few students talking quietly at their desk. I never did much to stop this, and I was too busy thinking about Angie, anyway, to stop anything. The talking got louder as they tried to hear themselves over the other voices talking. I made idle threats about sending them outside into the poisonous gas cloud if they didn't shut up. My heart wasn't into my threat, though, and the kids sensed it. They kept talking, and when it got too loud for them to hear the person who was three seats away and talking to them, they started to leave their seats and walk around. This was the point where, as a teacher, I was supposed to stand up and do something. Shut the kids up and stick them back in their seats. But I didn't do anything. I'd always stopped them before they got to this point, and I was curious to see how far they would go. Pretty soon, more than half of my students were out of their seats and walking around, chatting with each other. Their voices echoed off the concrete walls of the classroom, and it almost seemed like a party. A few students even walked up to my desk to chat with me. I asked them if they'd seen *Apollo 13*. They said that they had, so I told them about Angie Huber.

"Which one was Fred Haise?" Laura – one of my pets – asked me. "Was he Tom Hanks or Kevin Bacon?"

"I don't know," I said. "I didn't see the movie."

"I think he was the other guy," said Travis, another of my students. "I think Fred Haise was the funny looking one."

"The one with the wife and the little baby?" Laura asked.

"I think so. Maybe not," Travis said, and he was about to explain why Fred Haise might not have been the funny looking one when two kids started fighting in the back of the classroom.

I watched the two kids go at it, but didn't do anything. Laura pointed out the obvious by saying, "Mr. Carswell, Billy and Glenton are fighting."

"Yes, they are," I said. I thought about getting out of my seat, walking across the room, and breaking up the fight, but decided instead to let it go. Billy had been asking to get his ass kicked for the past couple of weeks, and Glenton's mom was a hooker. I figured it would do Billy some good to be humbled and it would do Glenton some good to let out some of his rage. Besides that, there was a fucking poisonous gas cloud outside. Deep down inside, I felt like all bets were off. I felt like, if society's gotten to the point where Kennedy Space Center is sending poisonous gas into outer space in one of those great, big, explosive hunks of metal that they call a rocket, and if that explodes and that gas floats over me and the junior high school where I teach, and if the best thing they can do after sending that gas cloud over my hometown is to say, "Uh, you guys need to stay inside for a half hour until it passes," then, obviously, this society has no rules. So fuck it all. Let 'em fight.

The kids gathered around the fight, but no one stepped in to break it up. Glenton wrestled Billy to the ground and his fists rained down on Billy's face. Billy managed to cover his face with his forearms. Glenton whaled on Billy's forearms and ears and the side of Billy's head. A few girls told me that I had to stop the fight. One girl started crying. Some of the boys cheered for Glenton or encouraged Billy. Most of the boys just watched. They seemed hesitant, as if they didn't know whether or not they should stop the fight. Still, I did nothing. I let them fight. Part of me thought that surely another teacher would hear the commotion, rush into my classroom, and break up the fight. But, of course, that couldn't happen because no teachers could leave their rooms and come into mine because there was a poisonous gas cloud floating through the halls.

Then, something strange happened. It was almost like a realization spread across the room. I think it started with Glenton. I think Glenton was on top of Billy, pounding his fists into Billy's head and getting really tired when Glenton realized that I wasn't going to stop the fight. And if I wasn't going to stop it, no one was. And if no one was going to stop the fight, what was gonna happen now that he was too tired to punch Billy anymore? What was Billy gonna do? And if no one breaks up a fight, how does the fight end? I think Glenton realized this because he stopped punching Billy, got up, walked to his desk, and sat down. Billy stood up, too. His face was bright red and his hair and back were covered with dirt and debris. A paper clip clung to his cheek. He didn't go anywhere for a few seconds. He just stood there, taking deep breaths. Then he, too, went back to his seat and sat down. The rest of the kids just stood around, not talking, not doing anything. Just standing there. Gradually, they all sat down, too. I can't really explain it. Maybe they reached the end of their rebellion, and they had nowhere to go but back to the beginning. Or maybe I scared them by not breaking up the fight.

Maybe they realized that, with the freedom to do whatever you want comes the responsibility to respect others, or else those others might kick your ass. Or maybe the fight just wore them all out like so many jumping jacks.

When they were all in their seats, Kia raised her hand again and finally asked the question they all should've asked right from the beginning. She said, "Mr. Carswell, if it's so dangerous to everyone, why do they put poisonous gas in rockets?"

"Because the people at the Space Center – and the US government, too – take a lot of chances with our lives," I said.

Kia nodded. She seemed to want to ask me more, but she didn't. Justin picked up where she left off and said, "What do you mean?"

"Kennedy Space Center does all kinds of crazy stuff," I said. "Have you guys ever heard of the Cassini Space Probes?" A few students shook their heads, so I explained that it was a rocket with plutonium in it. The class didn't know what plutonium was, so I told them that it's a radioactive substance. I also explained how dangerous it was for KSC to put a radioactive substance in a metal container on top of tons of very explosive fuel, then to set that fuel on fire. I explained how it was very different from, say, launching a nuclear missile, but the mechanics of the Cassini Space Probe and the mechanics of a nuclear bomb weren't all that different.

Another student raised her hand. "I don't understand," she said. "I thought the Space Center just made the shuttle and stuff?"

"Oh no," I told her. "Mostly what the

Space Center makes is bombs." This seemed to interest the kids even more than Glenton and Billy's fight did, so I decided to go on that tangent. I told them that rockets were first made by the Nazis in World War Two so that they could kill a lot of people from a long way away. And that the top two Nazi scientists who developed the rocket bombs, Werner Von Braun and Dieter Huzel, came to America after World War Two and headed up the space program. I told them about all the different weapons they developed



out at the Space Center, like various Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles, nuclear submarines, and the SCUD missiles that the US Army used to kill a bunch of non-violent Iraqi civilians. And I just kept going. I was all worked up, partly because of that damn poisonous gas cloud, and partly because I hated the whole idea of the Space Center. It killed me that I had only two real employment opportunities in my hometown. I could either take a shitty job in an under-funded school, making lousy

money and struggling to teach thirty-five twelve-year-olds about prepositions; or I could go out to the Space Center, where I would get paid twice as much to develop more efficient ways to kill as many people as possible from as far away as possible.

I knew that most of my students' parents worked for the Space Center, and that I'd probably get into a lot of trouble when these kids went home and told their parents what I'd said in class. But I didn't care. I figured that people who dump a poisonous gas cloud on their kids' heads don't have a lot of room to complain. So I went on and on about the problems with bombs and rockets and missile defense programs, and, for once, my students really listened to me. Not one single student talked while I talked. No one passed notes or kicked the kid in front of him or put trash from a spiral notebook into a young girl's hair. They just sat there and listened and actually learned something useful.

Finally, the principal came back on the loudspeaker and told us that the poisonous gas cloud had passed. We were all allowed to leave our classrooms and go outside. I stopped talking and a few of my students actually groaned because they wanted to hear me slander the Space Center even more. I packed up my stuff, too, and got ready to head off to my next classroom and to teach my next group of kids. As I did this, I watched my students file out. And I thought, damn, these kids would be good students if the Space Center threatened to kill them every day of their lives.

–Sean Carswell

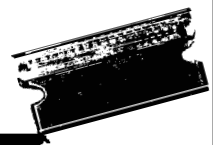


Sean Carswell 11



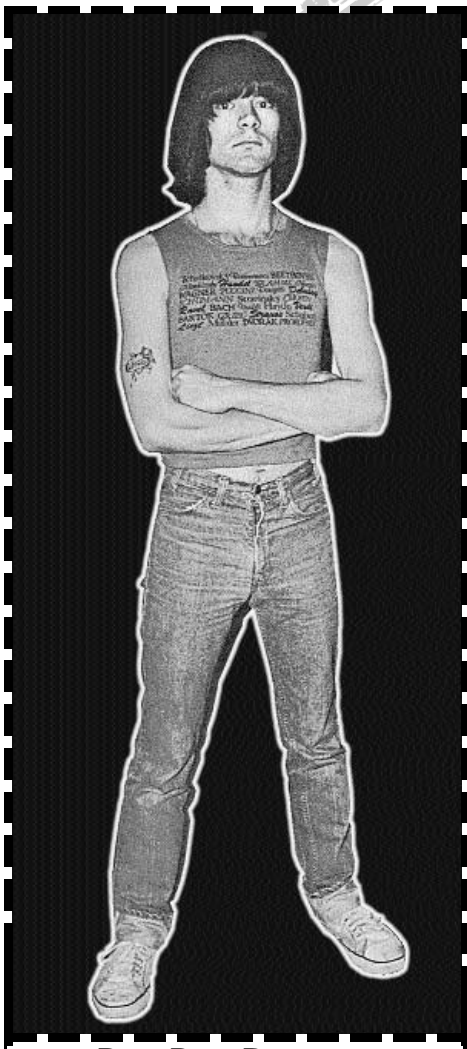
Designated Dale

I'm Against It



...Dee Dee was the one who had his fists wrapped tightly around the plunger of the detonation box, ready to slam it down and make those songs explode.

Designated Dale



Dee Dee Ramone

The *Razorcake*'s Official Collector's Edition
Dee Dee Ramone TRADING CARDS

In our last issue of *Razorcake*, we featured a page celebrating the life of a recently departed "brudder" – Mr. Douglas Glenn Colvin, better known to us creeps the world over as Dee Dee Ramone. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to get the thoughts in my head out and onto my computer hard drive for that particular tribute to Dee Dee. The reason being that, at around the same time, my immediate family and I were coping with a far more tragic loss of my father, who'd lost his battle to an evil cocksucker known as cancer. It's the same wretched disease that claimed the life of another Ramone, named Joey, almost a year **RAZORCAKE** [18] and a half ago. Shit. Pops passed

away just nine days after Dee Dee did... I miss him and his deep, unmistakable laugh terribly. And you know what, fuck it – I'd actually like to take a few seconds here and extend a *very* sincere thanks to all my friends who showed their true colors during my family's rough time these past months – you *all* know damn well who you are. I don't think you all really *know* how much it meant to us, especially me. I'm fortunate to have such folks in my life. Thank you all. And Aggie, I know you're reading this. Stay as strong as you've been this far with that sneaky leukemia. I really believe you can overcome this difficult time in your life, brother – you've definitely got it in you to do so, as well as a wonderful wife and family to support you all the way. Chin up, cuckoo.

Ahem... sorry to be such a downer to all the impatient readers (read: FUCK YOU), but things that I wanted to say needed to be said (Homer Simpson: "Done and done!"). Dee Dee's passing on June 5th was a real kick in the head, because I was under the assumption that he had given Uncle Heroin the permanent middle finger years ago. When I heard the news that his wife, Barbara, found him in the living room on the couch, void of life when she came home that evening, all I could do was stare blankly at the news update on my screen and ask myself, "Why?" as the back of my throat started to well up and ache, reminiscent of that same sickening feeling I felt when Dee Dee's fellow brother Joey succumbed to lymphoma. Precisely at that point, I was grimly reminded of the sobering fact that even though the Ramones could *never* play again because of Joey's death, it *really* ain't gonna happen now, because the Ramones song-writing team is together once again, but just not of this earth. Both of them gone at the age of forty-nine. Fuck. If *anyone* knew the dangers of drugs, especially heroin, Dee Dee was the one who walked the walk. But he also knew when to stop chasing those goddamn awful dragons. I just wish I knew why he decided to start packing poison into his veins again. It's sad, absolutely sad, of Dee Dee leaving the Ramones legacy behind, but a bit of a disappointment as well, that Dee Dee's life ended in the way so many of his music compatriots did.

I had the pleasure of getting to know Dee Dee after I got to interview him back in 1998 while working at *Flipside*. To say he was quite a character would be putting it mildly. Gears were constantly clicking and whirring in his head. There was always something going on at the moment with Dee Dee, no matter when you happened to catch him on the phone or around town at a show. There was his artwork and paintings, something that he really got into once he and Barbara settled out here permanently in Los

Angeles, miles away from their quiet, rural home out in Monticello, a town in upstate New York. There were the different line-ups of bands that he put together, one after another, gigging all around here, as well as up and down the west coast, cranking out new songs from his solo CDs, joyous, classic Ramones staples, and other fine rock and roll covers to sweaty bunches of fans. Dee Dee even enjoyed going over to perform around in Europe, but he always told me that "Ramones fans over there are very demanding... They can be really aggressive!"

There was also, of course, the constant love/hate relationship with the rest of the Ramones, something Dee Dee was always wringing his hands over. As much as he used to rant on and on about his fellow "brudders," there was a very special place in his heart for all of 'em because Dee Dee continued to contribute songs up to the last studio Ramones LP, *Adios Amigos* (which Kidd Spike as well as myself will defend to the death, right, Spike?). A couple years ago, Dee Dee got a band rolling with his old drummer and pal Marky Ramone called The Remainz, which played – you got it – Ramones songs as a three piece with Dee Dee singing and playing guitar, his wife Barbara on bass, and Marky on drums.

In the summer of 1999, I was more than ecstatic (I'm an extremely loud and proud Ramones fanboy, fuck you very much) to hook up my band with a few shows with The Remainz while they were doing some gigs out here in the LA area. Sharing the stage with half the members of the Ramones, a band that was the best thing to ever happen to rock and roll in over the last twenty-five years, was a definite high point in all my musical years, hands down. After The Remainz finished the rest of the shows to promote their live CD, Dee Dee and Barbara ended up relocating to Los Angeles, as I mentioned earlier, to do nothing but play gigs, spend time drawing and painting, and be Angelinos. This was cool, 'cause I was able to catch Dee Dee's solo band play some local shows, as well as keep in touch to see what was up in the life of the ol' Ramone.

He and Barbara seemed very content out here and that's why I can't imagine any reasons for him to start poking needles again. From what I remember, he rarely drank at all and the only thing I remember Dee Dee enjoying daily was smoking healthy rations of pot, which added to his already eccentric personality, god bless 'em. I'll never forget the last time I saw Dee Dee Ramone. I was taking some pictures of L7 at The Palace in Hollywood, for what was to be used in my column for the very last issue of *Flipside*. Anyway, after shooting some film of L7, who rocked the piss outta the audience, I

walked along the wall to the back by the huge bar to get my camera shit situated.

As I was getting everything broken down and back into the camera bag, I noticed quite a few people in the crowd looking in the same direction. So, naturally, I looked around to get a gander of what everyone is looking at and quietly pointing towards. I finally see what the gawkers were eyeballing – Dee Dee and Barbara were standing off to the side by themselves, looking around at the people in the packed venue. It blew me away that no Ramones fans

their number got disconnected. That's my Dee Dee Ramone story. It ain't nothing to base a motion picture on, but it's mine.

Yet, my happiest memories of Dee Dee and the rest of the Ramones have always been their live shows and LPs. Two years after forming their band, the Ramones got signed to Sire Records and unleashed a record in the Spring of 1976 to change the things of rock and roll to come. That self-titled LP featured Dee Dee's songwriting that pulled no punches on kicking the music industry in its excessive, oozing ass. And Dee Dee's share of

the Ramones would come through Southern California. Yep, these will always be the best and happiest memories of brother Dee Dee.

A funny memory of Dee Dee is his performance in the 1979 motion picture by Roger Corman, *Rock'n'Roll High School*, where he had a total of two lines: "Hey! Pizza!" and "Hey! Pizza! It's great! Let's dig in!" Although it wasn't Academy Award-winning acting, all the live performances Dee Dee cuts loose with the Ramones are worth the repeated viewings alone, especially the live concert sequence at the Roxy Theatre in Hollywood (aka the "Rockatorium"). And who could forget a fully-clothed, soaking-wet Dee Dee playing bass under a running shower in Riff Randall's bathroom during the "I Want You Around" dream sequence, where Riff pines for Joey? Good stuff, my friends, good stuff.

When the Ramones got inducted into The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame this past March, Dee Dee's acceptance speech eerily got the last laugh on the whole music industry. It was purely a middle finger to any executive suit who thought Dee Dee was just another "punk rock burnout" getting a bone thrown at him. While I watched this

as he surveys the audience, squinting his eyes. That look said it all. And his speech was the most classy "fuck you" that I've ever seen at an awards show. The only thing that would have made that part of the show extra special is having Lemmy Kilmister of Motorhead introduce the Ramones. He was and still is one of the biggest, oldest Ramones fans on this planet. Eddie Vedder? That bowel movement isn't even special enough to be flushed down my own toilet, let alone be chosen to open his goddamn trap at an awards show. But, then again, Vedder is part of that industry that he seems to be so vehemently against, not to mention up to his ears in Johnny Ramone's ass. I'm sure the executives involved in that awards show were more than pleased to see his dopey, rambling face up there trying to be funny. I would have given anything to see that dumb dick skulled with a bottle from the audience or Ice T yelling, "Get off the mic, fool!" I guess there's always next time...

Well, Mr. Colvin, thank you for sharing all those fantastic years of Dee Dee Ramone with us. God knows where the hell rock and roll would've been these days without the Ramones. Now that you're jamming in that big rehearsal loft in the

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were swarming around them. I mean, you couldn't miss Dee Dee, ya know? As soon as I saw Barbara, they both walked over with smiles on their faces to say hello, exchange hugs, ask what's been goin' on, etc. Dee Dee then insisted on buying me a drink at the bar and I just started laughing, reminding him, "Dee Dee, you know I don't drink, man!" As he pulled me over to the bar, he said, "Well, then let me get you a Diet Coke. You want a Diet Coke?" I thought that was really cool. We hung out a bit, discussed his paintings and how him and Barbara were digging LA and all. After finishing our drinks, we got up and Dee Dee said they had to go because someone from L7 was expecting them. I thanked him for the soda, and we loosely planned on meeting up at their place soon to check out their recent paintings and just hang out.

The memory of that night always makes me smile because as much as Dee Dee's mind was always going a hundred miles an hour, he actually remembered my alternate bar drink of choice, even though I'm sure he ran into tons of people in dozens of bars all the time. I never made it out to their place after that evening, but we did run into each other at a few more gigs and, unfortunately, only caught each other on the phone a handful of times after that before

material was just the soundtrack to do that. As any Ramones fan can see, Dee Dee collaborated fantastically with Joey, as well as with others who worked on their LPs. But in the writing aspect of the Ramones, Dee Dee was the one who had his fists wrapped tightly around the plunger of the detonation box, ready to slam it down and make those songs *explode*. And did they ever. He also had that same volatility onstage when you heard it though his Ampeg bass cabinets, or see it through his trademark bopping around and jumps in the air while cranking it out loud.

Going to see the Ramones live for the first time literally changed my life, because seeing that first of their many shows *completely* changed the way that I felt about rock and roll. "This is how bands are supposed to perform live," I thought, watching them onstage. "Less talk with lots more rock, and a wall of sound that just doesn't knock your dick in the dirt – it floors your whole fuckin' body!" I'm sure I'm not the only one who can attest that the Ramones were one of the best bands in the world to go watch and lose yourself for ninety minutes. *Nothing* else mattered when I was among the pogoing herds of people at their shows with fists in the air. Like Ned Flanders at church on a Sunday, I was testifying every time



Dee Dee Ramone
TRADING CARD #4

on television, I couldn't help but fucking laugh out loud with my thumb up in the air as he leaned into the mic and told the audience, "I'd like to congratulate myself, and thank myself, and give myself a big pat on the back. Thank you, Dee Dee... you're very wonderful." People thought it was a "cute joke" he pulled. Tee fucking hee. Guess what? The fans watching knew it was no joke at all, just a little reminder of who did what, just a little comeuppance from one of the best rock and roll songwriters who ever shouted "1-2-3-4!"

If you watch the segment closely, a few moments right before he gives his speech, you can almost feel the look of disgust in his eyes

sky, you can go look up Stiv Bators and Johnny Thunders to start that band up you guys never got off the ground while you were all living in Europe. I'm quite sure your "brudder" Joey was already waiting up there in that rehearsal loft for you, chomping at the bit to sit down and write songs – the thing you two loved doing together over the years in the Ramones.

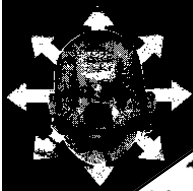
Bless the whole gang of you, especially you, Dad. I really do miss you all.

I'm Against It.

-Designated Dale

<DesignatedDale@aol.com>





Rich Mackin

The Twisted Balloon



...at what point does one see a plant and begin to visualize the processed food it could be used to make?

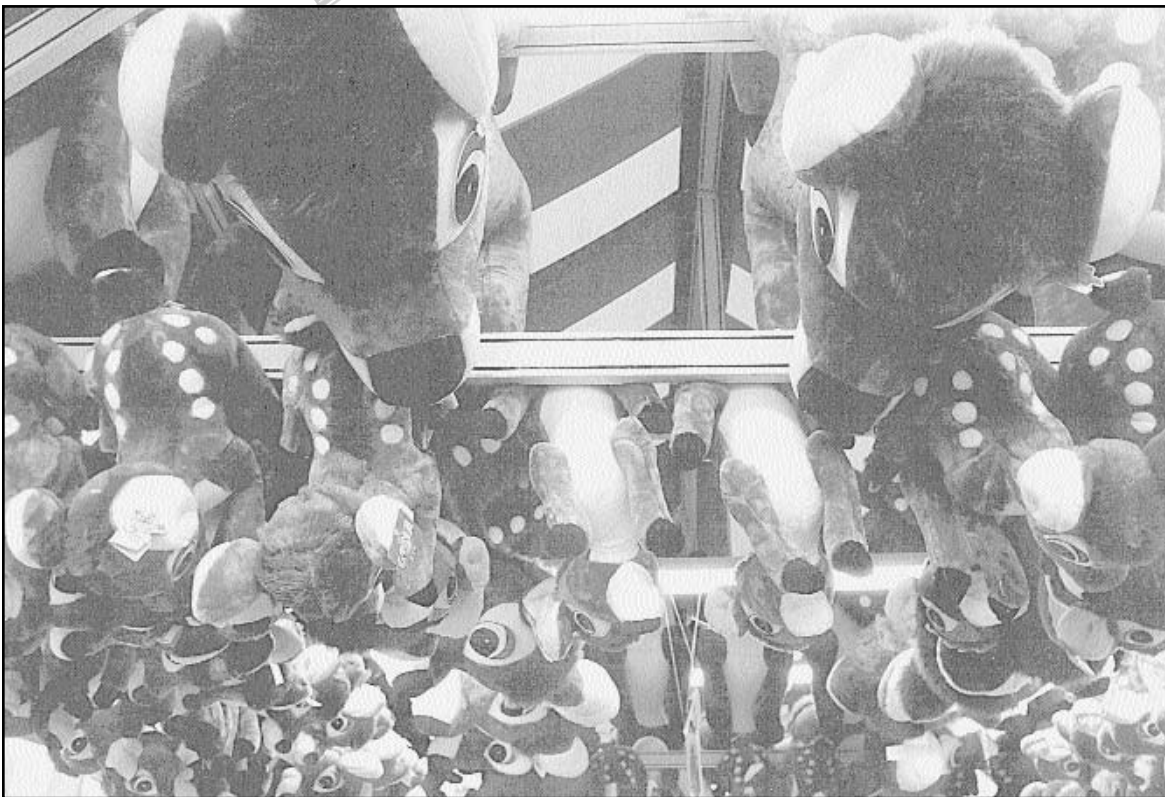


photo by Dan Monick

words for “artist” or “musician” because all people are artists and musicians, at least in potential. While we do mark some people as such in our society, we also have words for certain types of people like non-smoker and vegetarian. Non-smoker is clearly one who does not smoke. Surely, our tree-dwelling ancestors never rolled cultivated tobacco and inhaled the smoke, but then again, the language allows for smoker to be the term for those who perform unnatural action, and the others are merely non. But with vegetarian, the term is unusual if you really think about it.

A vegetarian is a person who does not eat meat. Some people are vegetarians because they don't think people should eat meat in a natural order, moral, or health sort of way (while others dislike the meat industry or something involved more

Without getting into the “too much information” category, I have been finding myself reading a lot about polyamory lately. If you aren't aware, that is the idea of not being monogamous as a decided and up-front lifestyle. It could mean hooking up with friends, having a significant other who you agree to be non-monogamous with, or any number of other situations. The thing that comes up a lot in discussion of this sort of thing is human nature: “But it's human nature to have a single lover,” etc. I am not going to say it is or isn't, because I don't really know that much about “human nature”. You know why? Because I have only really experienced humanity in context of turn of the millennium American (well, Canadian and English, too) activity. Sure, I even know about the

counter cultures and rebellious movements of our time and culture, but even they are based on this culture. You don't rebel against something you don't know about. I do know that whatever human nature is has to be based on more than what I see around me, because I do know that there are other cultures. I think that if the way a Papua New Guinea man hunts a boar makes his thoughts on food different than my grabbing a slice of takeout pizza, then it might be safe to say we might think differently on other issues as well.

The most referenced book on polyamory is called *The Ethical Slut*. Actually, I found it to be mediocre, less informative and more important simply because it's existence means some validity to those who feel this is the lifestyle for them. One thing that did strike

me was the use of terms like “polyamory” as opposed to “non-monogamy”, because “non” terms imply that there is a normal for the “non” to react against. Personally, that is one reason I dislike the term “nonsmoker” because it sounds like everyone would smoke, except for these crazy “nonsmokers”. To make a big deal about being straight edge, say by getting a “sXe for life” tattoo, somewhat strikes me like getting a tattoo that says, “I'm not going to hit myself over the head with a hammer.” Wouldn't that be considered an obvious point and not necessary? But if someone who is straightedge thinks that drugs are poison, wouldn't the fact that they don't do drugs be obvious, and that NOT doing drugs would be the norm, or at least the default.

I often bring up the fact that in many tribal societies, there are no

with the ideas behind meat than the actual meat itself). But like the straightedger, if people shouldn't eat meat, wouldn't the idea be that humanity is inherently vegetarian? And, if so, this of course would make the term “vegetarian” redundant.

Now, many people, usually meat eaters, bring up natural order and how people are designed to eat meat and it's natural and all that, but think about how accurate they are being. When I talk about eating meat, I am not thinking of raw flesh, I am thinking of prepared COOKED flesh. How many meat eaters would want to eat raw meat? Fresh kill? A carrot may be better tasting and easier to eat cooked, but I know I can easily consume it raw. I am not sure I can say the same about beef. Now, before the meat eaters get too upset about this col-

Rich Mackin

umn coming across as an anti-meat column, I can say this about any number of things.

At what point in evolution did apes go from picking fruit from trees to the idea of cultivating grain, harvesting it, making a powder from it, adding yeast and all that? I could see how nature might make a fruit look appealing, or make a carnivore want to try THAT kind of animal, but at what point does one see a plant and begin to visualize the processed food it could be used to make?

Speaking of processed foods, think about how far removed from the natural state of any given food the actual food product you buy is... Seriously, go into any store and just start randomly picking up packages and cans and think about the ingredients. For instance, corn syrup. Do you have any idea of how many things contain corn syrup? Most spaghetti sauces, for one thing. How does that come up? How many people consider that the tomato and garlic sauce they buy has a corn derived sweetener? Probably no more people than expect there to be horse hoof powder in their candy. Gelatin is derived from animal hooves. Yes, that's right, Jell-O is fruit flavored animal product! And candies, such as junior mints, have gelatin. So

not only is it something you don't expect to be a kind of meat, but the meat you might not have known existed is an ingredient you would never expect to find in a mint.

This might be why I think everyone should consider being vegan for a few days, even if you don't care about animals or their

You can argue that humans are meant to eat flesh (I do), but were we "meant" to use beetles as red food dye?

feelings or how they are treated. This is also what makes me think vegans must go somewhat insane in our society. By all means, I can see choosing not to eat meat or eggs or dairy, but to have to examine all those labels and look for that twelfth line that has some code word for an animal derived product seems a little overwhelming. You can argue that humans are meant to eat flesh (I do), but were we "meant" to use beetles as red food dye?

An old teacher of mine used to bring up how we have lost our place in nature, and one evidence is that we used to walk on dirt and grass in bare feet and now we walk

on floor and sidewalks in shoes. When was the last time your feet touched something that was there naturally? For me, the bigger difference of the state we are in and the state we would be in naturally is soda.

When I was thirteen, I got braces. (There is something that

our tree-dwelling ancestors never faced, but then again, I needed them because none of my teeth rotted out giving room for the replacements.) The orthodontist told me I shouldn't drink soda until I got them off, and I seriously wondered what he expected me to drink. Because I, like so many other American youth, considered soda to be the default drink. Luckily, I have grown out of this, but most people I know haven't. It's weird to see people who care about what they EAT imbibe a carbonated solution of the aforementioned corn syrup and caffeine, and if they really want to care about health, then they should find a substitute to

corn syrup and a number of strange chemicals. Of course, water comes from the sky and pools in lakes, and so far is still available for free (at least for now) and is actually something the body needs.

But we are indeed so far removed from how our bodies and nature work, from even stopping to think about how these things work, that we have industries based on low fat versions of junk food. Now you can eat crap that isn't AS bad as the regular crap. By all means, whatever you do though, don't grow vegetables and eat them. You want crunchy food? Eat potato chips. Or low fat potato chips. Don't eat a carrot, whatever you do.

True story: a woman I worked with told another co-worker that she hated Funyuns, the artificially flavored onion ring snacks, but bought them because it "was the only chip (her) daughter will eat." Funny, when I was a kid, the pediatrician never harped on my mom to make sure I had enough from the "chip" group.

Before we spent our days sitting in cars and in front of TVs and computers, we were active. Now we need to supplement our sedentary lifestyle by driving to the gym so we can run on a treadmill.

—Rich Mackin





Mrs. Rally Rabbit whispered into my ear, "You're just like the Dancing Homer!"

The Dinghole Reports

By the Rhythm Chicken
(Commentary by Francis Funyuns)
[Edited by Dr. Sicnarf]

[Well, folks, the issue #10 deadline is almost here and our friend the Rhythm Chicken is nowhere to be found. I'm assuming he'll be scratching along sometime soon, but I'll just start off his column by giving you a short preview of the most glorious Dinghole Report to date! What you are about to read may seem somewhat unbelievable, but I assure you it's true. I swear on my UW-Green Bay diploma in the name of all mathematical logic that the Rhythm Chicken has recently played to a stadium of 30,000 screaming sports fans! - Dr.S.]

(Yeah, but they're SPORTS fans! How punk rock is THAT? Worse yet, they're BASEBALL fans! Okay, we all know that the only sporting event worthy of lofty adoration from the punk community is a Packer game (or, of course, old footage of A.W.A. wrestling. All hail the Crusher!). I find baseball to be quite lacking in the ruckus category. What is so punk rock about men in tights spitting everywhere? - F.F.)

[Well, look at the Cramps, or Leonard of the Dickies. True, baseball may not be very punk rock. However, seeing as how the Milwaukee Brewers are DEAD LAST this season, I find it quite punk rock to support the underdog. - Dr.S.]

(Actually, I find the fact that the Brewers ARE dead last to be the only reason why they would even consider allowing a Rhythm Chicken concert during one of their games. I mean, c'mon! It couldn't hurt, right? - F.F.)

[Wow. A "Rhythm Chicken concert". That sounds a bit bizarre. Technically, the 30,000 attendees most likely bought their tickets to see the BREWER GAME and not the Rhythm Chicken. And then **RAZORCAKE** [22] there's that silly

name, the "Rally Rabbit". Would this even qualify as a Dinghole Report, seeing as how it was the Rally Rabbit and not the Rhythm Chicken? And how does the Rally Rabbit stand on the issue of ruckus? - Dr.S.]

(Yeah, and what about the Pabst, and the carrots, and the carrots, and the carryts, and Gary Coleman, and Big Bird, and the entire punk rock arena? So, hey! Where IS that Rhythm Critter anyway? - F.F.)



[This IS unlike the Rhythm Chicken. He's arrived drunk, hungover, half asleep, unclean, irate, etc... but he's always been punctual... and punktual! Yes, this is quite unlike him. - Dr.S.]

(Yeah, we better give the secret emergency Rhythm Chicken panic cry. Ready? - F.F.)

[Ready. - Dr.S.]

[(LET THERE BE RUCKUS!!! - F.F. & Dr.S.)]

—silence—

(Wow! He's never failed us on the panic cry! He should've crashed through the door by now valiantly clucking "OOOOOOOH YEAH" - F.F.)

[Yes. Something is definitely amiss. Oh Rhythm Chicken, where are... - Dr.S.]

cruel cruel joke. Please tell me that's radioactive birdseed in your beak. Please tell me that briefcase is full of yard beers*, PABST yard beers! - Dr.S.]

Good day, gentlemen. I am here to present my column to *Razorcake* magazine. Well, golly. It appears as if you've started without me. Good show. Very well, then. Have the readers been prepared for the alterations?

[Alterations? Are you feeling okay, Mr. Chicken? - Dr.S.]

Why, yes. I'm feeling mighty fine, and that is going to be the first alteration. From this point on I prefer to be addressed as Mr. Rally Rabbit. Thank you for your cooperation.

(What the FUCK has happened to you? This has GOT to be a joke, right RC? - F.F.)

No, no. Not RC. If you must resort to your immature sophomoreic abbreviations, then it's RR. But once again, I would prefer Mr. Rally Rabbit.

[Francis, I'm afraid that he really BELIEVES that he's this Rally Rabbit. This cannot stand. Todd and Sean surely will not stand for this. What about the Dinghole Reports? - Dr.S.]

Oh, yes. The second alteration will be the title of this column. It will now be called the "Ballpark Rabbit Reader".

[(WHAT?!!! - Dr.S. & F.F.)]

Yes, the Ballpark Rabbit Reader will help keep the *Razorcake* readers up to date on the ongoings of the new prince of major league baseball, the Rally Rabbit, me.

(You actually BELIEVE you're the Rally Rabbit! Holy FUCK, Chicken, you've lost it! - F.F.)

[I hate to agree with Mr. Funyuns,

Rally Rabbit

Chicken, but to wholeheartedly assume the identity of your corporate alter-ego is less than sane. Wasn't it just about a year ago that you swore vengeance on those Miller Park scum for labeling your image as the Rally Rabbit? - Dr.S.]

SILENCE! I AM THE GREAT AND MIGHTY RALLY RABBIT!

(I bet your corporate-bought sold-out ass can't even raise a ruckus! - F.F.)

[I hate to be so rude, Mr. Chicken, but if you can't raise a ruckus, well then what good are you to the punk community, the *Razorcake* readership? - Dr.S.]

I AM THE RALLY RABBIT! I AM IN THE MAJOR LEAGUES! I cannot be so unrefined as to raise a ruckus. I now choose to CAUSE A COMMO-TION!

[HA HA HA HA HA HA!!! - Dr.S.]

(HA HA!! C'mon everybody! Do the lo-commotion! HA HA!! - F.F.)

[Sorry, Chicken, but this is TOO MUCH. We're outta here. - Dr.S.]

(Adios, Commotion Chicken! - F.F.)

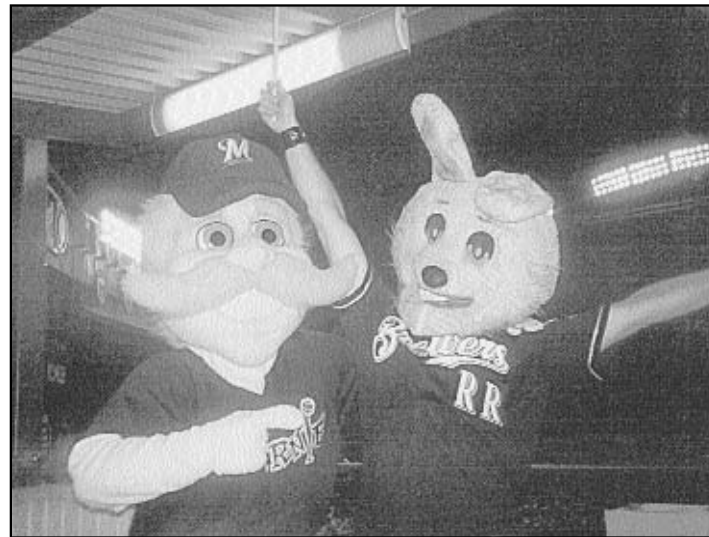
—Dr. Sicnarf and Francis Funyuns exit the column... out the door—

Very well. Now I can commence delivery of my first Ballpark Rabbit Reader.

Ballpark Rabbit Reader #1: Rabbit Commotion Concert Extravaganza
(Rally Rabbit sighting #1, #2, & #3)

It was a gorgeous, hot, sunny day at Milwaukee's Miller Park and the zillion dollar "accordion roof" was open. Mrs. Rally Rabbit and I showed up a few hours early for a scheduled Rally Rabbit serenade for the tailgaters. Miller Park's Mr. Media had arranged for a flatbed golfcart to make the Rabbit's show mobile, constant, and able to reach the far corners of the parking lot. There was also a swell sign affixed to the cart's rear which read "Rally Rabbit says, 'Go Brewers Go!'" The first couple audiences were the hungry folks lined up to buy brats at the Klemments Sausage Haus. The crowd was curious, yet well-behaved (total Les Nessman rip-off!). The next ten or so audiences were various small groups or families partying and BBQing near their cars. Many photos were taken of

friends and family posing with the great and mighty Rally Rabbit. Mr. Media was handing out little children's bunny ears to the kids saying, "Rally behind the rabbit!" Mrs. Rally Rabbit was busy taking photos with my camera. There was also a video camera man for Miller Park attempting to catch more footage for the jumbotron, and some lady taking photos for the Brewers' web page! I'm a media whore and I love



I'm a media whore and I love it!

it! This is TRULY the big time!

Lucky for them, The Great and Mighty Rally Rabbit agreed to doing these little public appearances for the proletariat. Next time they will most definitely have to deal with my booking agent. I am, after all, the marvelous and fantastic Rally Rabbit, A CELEBRITY!

So, the next couple of audiences were groups of untame partiers at the coach busses, groups of men who drank on the bus all the way down from Wausau, Iron Mountain, or Escanaba. They crowded around the Rally Rabbit, cheered and yelled, and hoisted their Miller products into the air. A small crowd of men directly in front of the Rabbit even began this reckless dancing where they were literally slamming into each other. Though it was definitely a commotion, I found it to be most undignified. We quickly scuffled off to a far corner of the lot. As we rolled away, the drunken animals begged for more, except for one intoxicated male who hollered out, "You're nothing without us, Rally Rabbit!" How could he say such a thing? I am the spectacular and amazing Rally Rabbit! He must've lost his mind.

A few audiences later, the Rally Rabbit actually made an infant human cry! I even tried lowering the commotion level, but the child still cried.

Soon the rolling parking lot gig was finished. Mrs. Rally Rabbit and I joined Righteous Thomas in the stadium to watch the first four innings in the bleachers with the common folk, the proles. Then Mr. Media arrived to usher the Mrs. and me up to the TV-announcer booth for a live interview. All in the everyday life of a celebrity superstar like myself. Mr. Media answered all my questions for me



while I made rock star poses for the camera. I do it all for the fans. I'm still getting paid, though. The interview ended and we were hurriedly escorted out to the Rally Rabbit's stage near the jumbotron.

The middle of the 6th inning arrived, and I was given the signal. I flawlessly displayed the perfect rock star performance, intermittently pausing to raise my paws skyward and accept the praise and worship from my 30,000 screaming fans. I am god. See me! Want me! How to become a rock star superhero! So the bottom of the 6th started and halted, leaving the masses wanting more. Mr. Media got orders on his walkie-talkie and he whisked us up to Bernie's Dugout. Bernie is the "other" Brewers mascot who dances around on a stage (known as his dugout) high above the crowd. The 7th inning stretch started with the Klemments sausage race. Yeah, whatever. Then I found myself thrust out with Bernie, high above my 30,000 adoring fans. I helped Bernie direct the stadium through "Let's Go Out to the Ballgame". The next song was "The Beer Barrel Polka". Roll out the barrel, indeed. How undignified. I proceeded to polka dance with Bernie, just to appease my fans, of course. How embarrassing. The Rally Rabbit shouldn't have to stoop so low.

—pounding at column door—

Anyway, the 30,000 adoring fans totally ate it up. As we were again hurriedly escorted to the Rally Rabbit stage, Mrs. Rally Rabbit whispered into my ear, "You're just like the Dancing Homer!"

The middle of the 8th inning arrived and I was sitting in my rock throne awaiting the signal from Mr. Media. I could hear various members of the Mistreaters and the Milwaukee Talkies in the nearby crowd yelling things about the Rhythm Chicken. I ignored their childish remarks and wanting for things of the past. Once signaled, I again graced the stadium with my divine rally rock. The 30,000 consumers were mildly whipped into a third rate frenzy as I caused a commotion once again.

—pounding at column door gets louder—

I raised my paws and accepted the worship and praise I truly deserved. I am their idol. I AM Journey, U2, and Madonna!

—Dr. Sicnarf and Francis Funyuns break down the column door and tackle the Rhythm/Rally monstrosity. They hold him down and force a whole pitcher of Pabst Blue Ribbon down his throat with Dillinger 4's *Situationist Comedy* blaring in the background. The Chicken/Rabbit flails about in wild inner turmoil. Sicnarf and Funyuns hold him close and scream in unison, "LET THERE BE RUCKUS!" Just then, the Rhythm Chicken rises ten times stronger than before, tears off his MGD shirt Incredible Hulk-style, and the Skoal is violently exploding from his beak as he loudly proclaims...—

OOOOOOOOH YEAH!!!!

(We saved him! He's the Rhythm Chicken again! - F.F.)

[There's only one way to find out. Check the column header to see if this is indeed a Dinghole Report or not! - Dr.S.]

????????????????

*yard beers = cans of Pabst, Blatz, or Schlitz which are lovingly scattered and aged in your front yard for a week or so, then joyously hunted like colored eggs on Easter Sunday! Nest time you will be introduced to yard wine and yard shots!

-The Rhythm Chicken
<rhythmchicken@hotmail.com>



Rhythm Chicken



...except that the male bears come home to find momma bear in bed with Goldilocks.

I would like to start this issue by sending my sympathy to the Drazan family, for their loss of father, husband, and outspoken citizen of La Mirada. There are few things in life that can bring a man to become a teary-eyed, bumbling fool. A loss of a friend is one of them, and dealing with, or expressing, emotion that one is suddenly thrust into is one also. So I'll try not to choke up in my revelation. As a kid I lived around the corner from the Drazan clan, and for certain I can't really tell you how we met. All the kids were younger than myself, but in our neighborhood we all would get together to play, kinda like that movie *The Sandlot*.

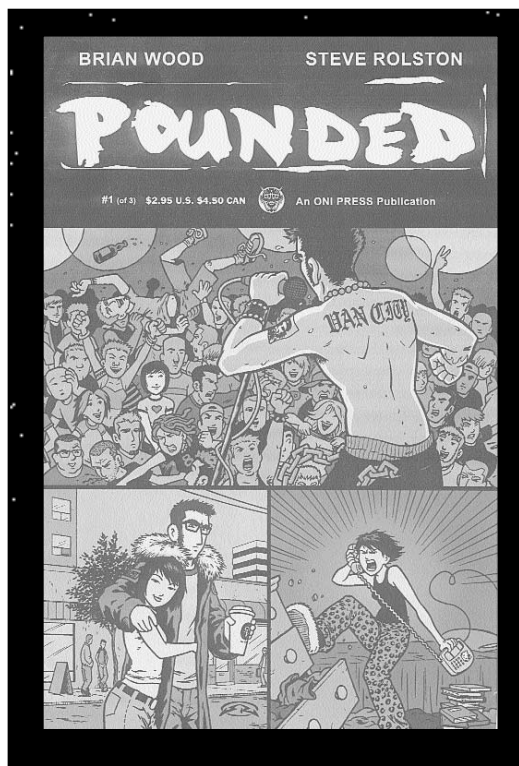
Now, as things were, Joe Drazan and I were friends and one day he invited me over to hang out. So around the corner I rode, knocked on his door, and to my pounding responded this big, deep bass growl, because everyone had those damn screen doors that you can't see into but they can see out of. So, anyway, I heard this "Who are you?" and I thought to myself, what have I gotten myself into? This was my introduction to Richard Drazan. If I had known then what I know now, I'd have known that he was just yanking my chain, but as a kid I didn't have a clue. Dick was, to me then, a monster of a man, a big truck driver who rode motorcycles and made ammunition and, most of all, spoke his mind. I don't know why, but I always associated him with that guy from *Animal House*. You know, the one who rides his bike through the frat house.

But he took care of us, too. Once he took us golfing, I think for Joe's birthday, and he treated us to everything. On top of that, he could swing the clubs pretty good, which was kinda strange because I could only imagine the hellfire he would bring down on the snobs who find themselves on the fairways of La Mirada. Within the last few years, Dick's youngest son (you all know him as Designated Dale) and I have become pals. We would go over to the homestead and share our dissatisfaction with our employers, because this is where we both bonded. See, Richard Drazan spent his life working in the grocery business and I've spent twelve years of mine in that same grind. The most fun we had was when I was at work and he would come in and complain about the service and the prices and I would tell him Ralph's was just down the street.

When this man was stricken with cancer, I didn't know how to react. I suppose each of us deals with loss in a different way. For me, it's to find the humor in past events and

hold them dear, just block out those feelings that would cause me to well up like a big baby. So, Mr. Drazan, wherever the good Lord sent you to roam, one day we'll all get together and tell wild stories and laugh until we cry, because that should be the only way we cry.

I'm surely going to miss ya. – Gary



BRACKET: LIVE IN A DIVE
\$??

Here's another comic about a punk band from that famous comic manufacturer, Fat Wreck. The strange thing is the artwork is stunning but the story lines are kinda weak, though this one is a vast improvement over the last. Maybe if they would slightly change their superpowers and get rid of the villain's flying record surf car, then we might have something. At the start, we're introduced to the four members of the band – or the superhero – squad and are given a description of their unique talents. I'm guessing that somewhere in the past, Bracket must have played high school auditoriums and covered monster rock songs because the story opens up to them doing just that. I like the concert t-shirts that the people in the audience are wearing, though. It's good to see that people who are into Molly Hatchet will hang out with people into the

Beatles or Bon Jovi. Now, in the crowd are some punks who have the power to change others into punks also, and when the band sees this, they jump into a phone booth (because there's always one at a show) and change into... um... well, I guess, Bracket the super band. The band chases the punks into a "punk" club, where they show off their talents. Then the story becomes like *Dawn of the Dead* and the punk zombies lead the band back to the evil lair. The evil lair is a "punk rock processing plant" where we meet "Massive Mac", the evil guy on the flying record. Our heroes fight in vain and are turned into a punk rock band. End of story. Did you all like that? Now, I like vinyl just dandy, but when I see Jabba the punk with his disco necklace, flying around the room on one, I just have to shake my head in disappointment. I would think when four guys have input, one could come with either a funnier or more evil character. I do, however, like the bands on the shirts at the end: Poison Idea, Angry Samoans, and "let's go get Cokes," the Faction. With a little tweaking this could have been a real funny comic. As it is, it's kinda average. (A Fat Wreck Chords Production)

I HATE CARTOONS

#1, \$4.95 U.S.

I like *I Hate Cartoons!* There's things in there that make me laugh. It starts with the Gobler toy catalog. We see Ira Gobler, the king of toys; he's a lot like the guy who sold bedspreads down in Long Beach. He brings joy to kids in the form of Señor and Señorita, the remote controlled sandwiches, Kiki the fashion Tiki, and – my favorite – Gobler's Wobblers, which is a large webble that one can stick their kid in and can roll all over town and always remain in the upright position. Actually, this guy has a website exclusive to these unique toys. Next in line is the story of Montgomery Wart and Murgatroid, two frog buddies, and Kisses, Murgatroid's tadpole cousin who has Tourettes Syndrome. Imagine the trouble one can get into with a kid cousin who has that affliction. Next is the story of Little Dead Riding Hood. Well, the twist on the traditional fairy tale is what happens to the wolf. No, I'm not going to tell you or you won't go out and buy your own copy. *Seesh!* After the fairy tale, there's some worthless babble about spit (please skip in your reading). Now, here in the middle, we have some bizarre stories, poems and bios, of which "Beware the Licker" is my favorite. "Why I'm Not a Standup Comedian" has such horrible jokes that they become drop dead funny. This thing is just full of the wicked and weird. There's Jojo the drunk who sees elephants that aren't pink. There's the "Swear

Gary Hornberger

Bears" that are a play on *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, except that the male bears come home to find momma bear in bed with Goldilocks. There's a couple of others in here, too, but if I keep going, I'll reveal everything and I wouldn't want to do that, so I put this in the recommend reading. Get off your lazy asses and get a copy of this one. (www.yumfactory.com or <http://attaboy.laughingsquid.org>)

THE MERCY KILLING

The tiny twelve-page *Goodfellas* story is what this one's all about. There's this guy who basically did straight-up jobs to a point where he owned his own business and carried a substantial bankroll, then lost it all. Of course, he needs money so he contacts one of his old acquaintances to maybe do some work. Of course, for the amount he needs, he has to do a hit and, well, he can't do it. So, since he's down on his luck, he ends up putting the hit on himself. There's a message here, just like in all stories like this, and damned if I know what it is. Life deals dirty hands to millions every year and we can't do a thing about it. Life is one big chain of events and this is one of those stories, so what am I babbling about? I don't know. I love the artwork on this one, but the story is kind of repetitive, only by the fact of overuse, but I do hope this guy does more comics because I like his visual. (Justine Giampaoli: E21@dangerous-minds.com, Tim Goodyear:<captainspaceship@aol.com>)

POUNDED

#1 of 3, \$2.95 U.S., \$4.50 Can.

It looks like another comic about a punk rock band, or maybe it's just about a guy in a punk band. Yeah, that's it, a guy in a punk band who has girlfriend problems. The thing is, this is



written so well that guys will identify with this dude. The white lies he makes up to avoid conflict are right on and, of course, some of them come back to bite him in the ass. His biggest conflict is that he's getting attached to his little cheerleader girlfriend but he can't seem to steer

clear of this girl band punk vixen who ties him up and leaves him in compromising positions for his friends to find. The little cheerleader is off at college and finds out about his deeds, but, hell, wouldn't you know it, we won't find out until issue #2. I've got to tell you, I thought this one was going to be a flop, kinda like *SLC Punk*, but I'm having some fun reading it, like a punk rock soap opera. This one also came with a CD, but, unfortunately, the music all sounds the same and, as Ken the Allnight Rocker would say, it's poop punk. Imagine twenty-some-odd poop punk songs.

Get the comic but spare the CD. (Oni Press, 6336 SE Milwaukie Avenue, PMB30, Portland, OR 97202)

SINKHOLE

#1 & 2

Every once in a while, I get comics that just by the cover I have high hopes but the inside stumps the panel. These two do just that. I'm not sure if these are stories about people with inner demons or demon people, or maybe they're anti-drug stories or the release of demons in a drug-induced state. Whatever they are, I'm at a loss to really give them a positive or negative type. Now, I understand some of the writing is meant to make the reader think and pass judgement of their own, but my interpretation will differ from someone else's, so what I'm going to tell you all here is find a copy of this and see how you interpret these quips. Remember, the comic is called *Sinkhole*. (Automated Comics, c/o Will Riley, 835 Greer St, Covington, KY 41011)

-Gary Hornberger





Me, I fuck up people's hair and they let me, hoping it'll somehow increase their chances of getting laid.

Gremlins, Third Degree Burns, and the Cochino

"You gotta quit wiggling around or you're gonna fuck the whole thing up. Just suck it up if it hurts that much."

The burning subsided, then began anew someplace else as my brother took another egg white-dipped clump of hair, pulled it taut and unleashed the blow dryer's full heat on my scalp. I squirmed again and he turned off the blow dryer. The Urinals, previously drowned out by the blow dryer's drone, came blasting out of the tape player on the counter.

"Look, Dopey, if you're gonna keep moving around like that, I'm gonna stop wasting my time right now," he said. "You're gonna end up walking around with only the three liberty spikes I've been able to put up so far, and you're gonna look like a fucking idiot. Now quit moving."

"I wish you would quit calling me Dopey, Dennis," I told him. "You know I hate that name."

Dennis gave me the name "Dopey" when, at five, he became fixated with *Snow White*. After watching it every day for two months straight, he somehow decided that I looked like a bald, mute dwarf. Much as I hated it, the three-year age difference between us and the size difference between scrawny me and his buffed out, Incredible Hulk-looking ass prevented me from doing much about it. I've been saddled with it ever since. Worst of all, it became a family nickname. Christ, even my grandmother called me Dopey.

"Quit whining, crybaby, and sit still," he said and took up another handful of hair. "We gotta get your hair all done up and get going or we're gonna be late. Don't know what you're crying about anyway. I told you a long time ago to cut off all that hippie hair and, if you had, we wouldn't be sitting here fucking with it now."

"Fuck you, closet case," I told him and then winced as he pointed the blow dryer's heat directly at my scalp just long enough to cause me to yelp. Giggling, he went back to work.

Capping was a ritual with roots deep in East LA's culture and, being products of that culture, we freely traded insults with each other and most of our friends. Despite all the shit talking that went back and forth during these sessions, Dennis and I got along well. Our both being punks and having pretty much the same interests had given us a relationship that sometimes resembled more than that of best

friends than of older and younger brother. I hung out with him and his boys, and they took me along to parties filled with older college girls, always keeping an eye on me to make sure I didn't get hassled and always making sure not to mention I was still a high school junior. Even with a schedule filled with college classes and work, Dennis still went to gigs as frequently as when he was younger, possibly even more.

"One must attend church as often as possible and show proper reverence," he would say and he meant it. Punk was his religion. It was *our* religion, and we believed in it with the same zeal as a Pentecostal congregation. Dennis, a high priest in punk's worldwide ministry, gave his best sermons while his latest budding disciple sat hunched forward on the toilet seat in our parents' bathroom, either getting his head shaved or subjecting himself to the same torture I now endured, the gospel sounds of Black Flag, Die Kreuzen, or the Stains always playing in the background.

"Almost done, little brother," he said after a while, taking another handful of sticky hair and again going through the same repetitive motion of stretch, dry, dip the next handful, and so on. A half hour had easily passed since I first sat down on the toilet seat and my ass was getting numb.

"Hey, Dennis, how come you've never joined a band?" I tried to turn to look at him, but the sharp yank on the spike he was drying into place told me I'd better keep my head where it was. "Nearly all of your friends have a band going and it just seems like you could be up onstage anytime you wanted with anyone you wanted."

"Ah, all that band shit just ain't my trip," he said. "Too much high drama, you know? Some kinda head-trip is always going down, even when you get along with everyone. Besides, I can't play a fucking note, I ain't enough of a self-centered prima donna to seriously entertain the idea of being a singer, and I'm too much of a self-centered prima donna to deal with inevitable obscurity. Having homeboys in bands is better. I – we – get into all the gigs free. I get all the beer I can drink, I don't have to go to practice every night of the week if I don't feel like it, and I'm not in the middle of a constant battle of egos."

"Anyway, I do more than my part for the cause right here," he added, outstretching his arms to indicate our current surroundings. "There's a place for everyone in this world, Dopey. Some of us play in bands. Some of us set up gigs. Some just show up. Me, I fuck up people's hair and they let me, hoping it'll somehow increase their chances of getting laid."

"Sometimes I think I want to do the singer thing," I said, "mostly 'cause it seems like a hel-luva lotta fun, you know? Remember that time Neto let me sing 'Cosmetic Christ' with him when his band played the All Nations Center? That was a real good feeling, man, kinda like – Ow! Shit! Move that fucking dryer to another spot already, man! – kinda like shot gunning a half-gallon of Pepsi, only without having to piss every two minutes. I think I'd be pretty good at it. I think writing would be cool, too."

"Better invest in lots of pencils and paper, 'cause ain't no band in East LA stupid enough to let your hippie ass sing," Dennis said and flicked one of the spikes on my head.

Our mother stuck her head into the bathroom.

"Dennis, the boy with the filthy words on his head is here to – Oh my god, what did you do to his head now?"

She came round in front of me and looked me over like she was trying to spot a diamond in a hill of toxic waste. Dennis continued working.

"It's just temporary," he said, not turning to look at her. "It'll wash out, *jefa*. Don't start freaking out or anything."

"*Hijole*, that's easy for you to say. I've got a porcupine and a hairless *chango* with no manners for sons." She slapped the back of his head. "Tell me, genius, how do you expect him get around with his hair sticking out like that? Jeez, he looks like he just got out of the electric chair.... What are you putting on his head now, more Jell-o? Can he even get into a car?"

Dennis shut off the blow dryer and closed his eyes.

"We'll make him stick his head out the window, all right? Jesus, back off already."

"'Back off already; back off already.' You watch. With all the things you do to his head, he's gonna end up bald by the time he's twenty. Well, you better clean up this bathroom before you go anywhere because I don't spend ten hours a day at work just so I can come home and clean up your messes. And your friend The Cochino is in the living room."

She left, muttering under her breath what was no doubt something about her *malcriado* sons and their foul-mouthed friends. A few minutes later, Neto strolled into the bathroom with "eat the rich" on his shirt and a sneer on his face.

Mom called Neto "The Cochino" because he once decided he wanted to be known as "ass-hole" and had Dennis shave the word into his hair. He soon reevaluated the name change, but the stunt earned Neto a three-week suspension from school (long enough for the hair to grow back in) and a more permanent nickname, cour-

tesy of my traumatized mother, the first person outside of our bathroom to see his 'do.

"Fuck, look at the *mocoso's* hair," he sniggered. "All spiky, dyed, and dirty. Thinks he's all fuckin' Mister Punk, *que no?*" He laughed even harder, moved over to the sink, and plopped his ass onto the counter. "Hey, fuckers, you gotta fuckin' hurry 'cause I gotta get to the fuckin' gig before I fuckin' hafta play. We gotta fuckin' soundcheck and if I'm late the band'll get fuckin' pissed at me and I'll be fuckin' fucked."

Mom was right, Neto was a *cochino* – one that had turned the usage of "fuck" into an art form.

"Watch your mouth, stupid," Dennis snapped. "My mom is just in the other room. Show some respect."

"And quit kicking your legs like that. Your jack boots are leaving scuff marks all over the drawers," I added.

"Fuck, sor-ry," Neto said. "Hey, Dennis, why you always listen to that same fuckin' tape

man? If I hear Darby Crash sing 'No God' one more fuckin' time, I'm gonna fuckin' kill something. Why don't pop this into your shitty stereo instead?" He pulled a cassette from his tattered Levi's jacket and handed it to Dennis. "I hear Hostile Intent are the best fuckin' band out there right now. Better than DI, Youth Brigade, Discharge, or any of that other played-out bullshit you keep listening to."

Dennis flipped the cassette back and forth in his hand, mulling it over, and handed it back to Neto. "I don't wanna hear that shit."

Neto looked truly offended. "Why not?"

"Because I've heard it a hundred times already, and it doesn't get any better. There's not one good song on there. Face it, Neto, your band sucks and you sing like a little retarded girl."

"Man, fuck you, fuckin' starfucker. If it wasn't for me, both your asses would be sitting at home every Friday night watching fuckin' *Ozzie and Harriet* reruns," Neto grumbled, replacing Dennis' tape with his demo. He turned

up the volume and began miming along and sneering into the mirror.

Dennis tapped my shoulder, his signal that he was done with my hair. I got up, elbowed Neto out of the way and looked in the mirror.

Dennis had again outdone himself.

Atop my head stood at least thirty spikes, each jutting out at ninety-degree angles from its place on my scalp, each equidistant to its nearest neighbor. It couldn't have been more perfect if he'd used a level and ruler. I looked down and saw that the front of the black Germs shirt I was wearing was covered with dried, caked-on drips of egg white and I had no doubt the back was even worse off.

"You look swell, fuckin' Fabio, now let's get the fuck out of here already," Neto said.

"Hold on, I still gotta get some shoes," I answered and started out of the bathroom toward my room.

"Fu-uuuuck, man, you're worse than my sister!"

"I'll only take a minute."

My hair was the hardest, most time-consuming part of dressing for a gig. The rest was simple: one pair of spurred jack boots, a Pendleton tied around the waist, suspenders hung down over that, a choice short sleeve dress shirt decorated just right (tonight's choice had "you don't belong" written on the back in big, block letters), a black Harrington wind breaker with dozens of band buttons on it, assorted spiked belts, bracelets and other accessories and I was good to go. I piled it all on in two minutes, tops, adding Dennis' old iron cross necklace to the ensemble at the last minute.

Neto and Dennis were already out in Neto's car by the time I stepped out of my room. I ran down the stairs, hopped into the back seat of Neto's beat up black Gremlin, head tilted just right so as not to fuck up the 'do, and began scraping dried egg off of my shirt with a fingernail.

"Did mommy kiss you goodbye, *m'ijo?*" Neto said, his face curled up in a sneer, and then cackled like a hyena.

"At least my mom doesn't deny I'm hers," I responded. "By the way, have you got enough duct tape to make sure your piece of shit car doesn't fall apart by the next block? I've got your mom and our kids to support, you know."

"Fuck you, little boy. All I'm saying is if I'm late for sound check and the vatos in the band get fuckin' pissed at me, I'm gonna beat your ass for making me late."

"You couldn't kick an old lady's ass if she no arms and was waving her ass in front of your foot, stupid."

"I'm just saying," he repeated, looking at me in his rear-view mirror.

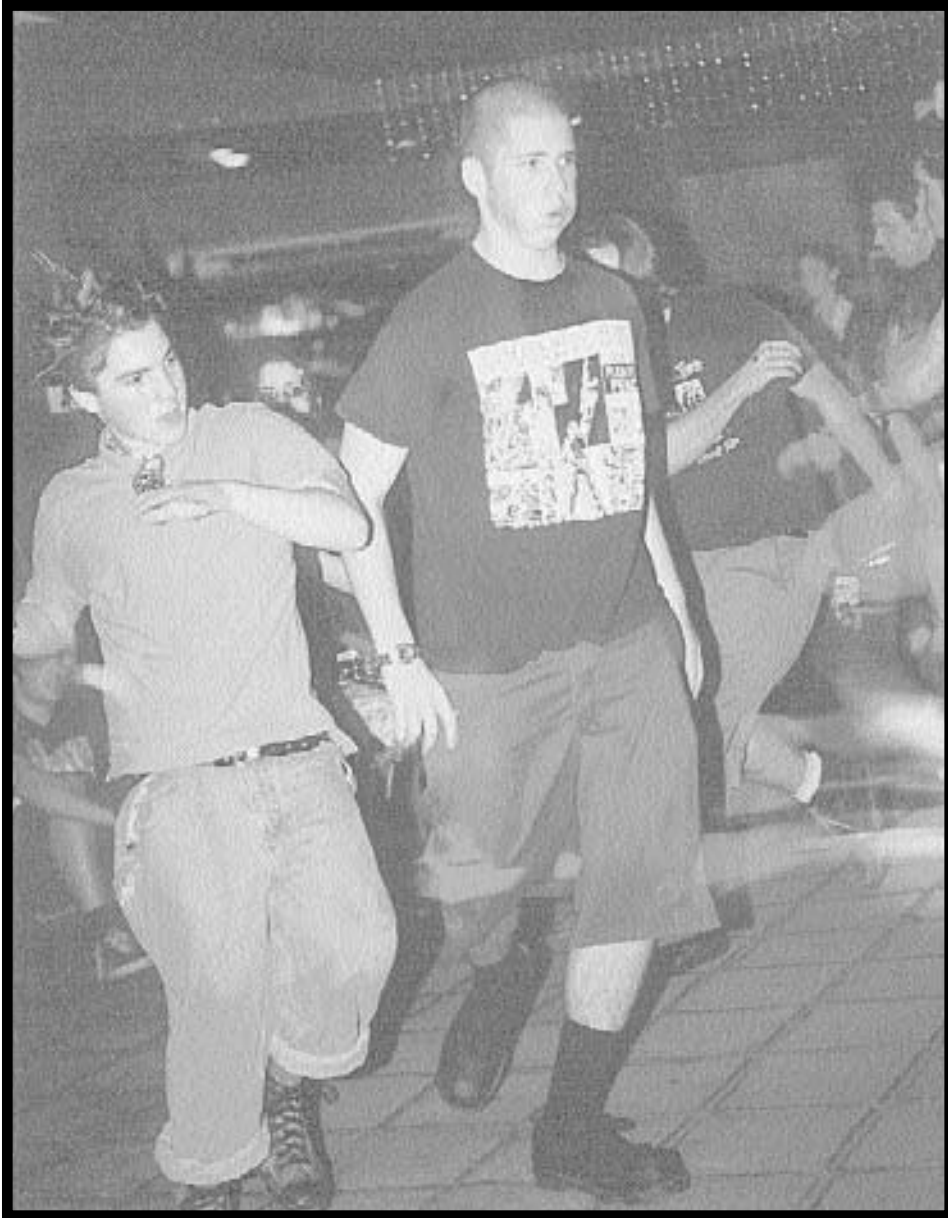
Dennis laughed. "Every week it's the same shit. You two are better than an episode of *The Jeffersons*."

"Glad to serve as your personal fuckin' entertainment, co-pilot," Neto said. "They shoulda called you Dopey instead, you bald-headed motherfucker. Hand me a fuckin' beer already."

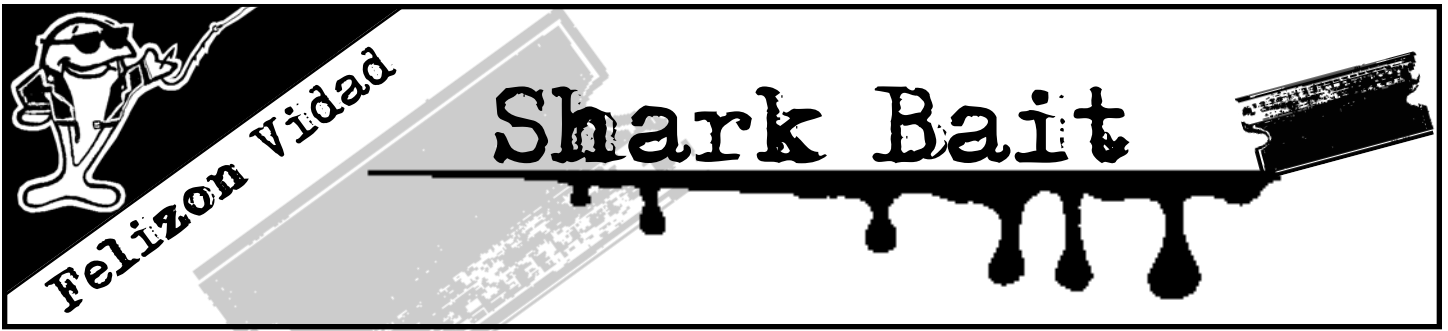
He started the car, took another tape from his jacket and popped it into the stereo. Circle One's "Beware" came from the Gremlin's stereo, easily the most expensive and most reliable part of Neto's car. Pleased, he cranked the stereo up, put the car in drive and we barreled into the quickly settling darkness.

–Jimmy Alvarado

That was a real good feeling, man, kinda like – Ow! Shit!...



Jimmy Alvarado



Close up, she looked less like one of The Eyeliners and more like Britney Spears's idea of Joan Jett.

HAMSTERS IN A CAGE

Hot Topic is for posers.

-Nikki T, punk rock girl in training

I'm engaged to marry a perfectly nice guy. He treats me well. Most girls would be content to have a perfectly nice boyfriend. (Hell, I know a lot of girls who would be content to have a boyfriend, period.) I should be happy that I've found someone who will tolerate my obsessive collecting habits and who will appear to listen every time I point out the fine details of my most recently acquired Sea Wee doll from eBay. I know I should give him my undivided attention and adoration, and I know that I shouldn't be looking elsewhere at other people, but I can't help it. Maybe I have a problem. But it's just this: I like to check out other girls.

Sean and I will be at a restaurant or a bar or in some crowded venue, minding our own business, drinking our drinks, talking smack about people, when the inevitable will happen. A girl will walk by, and I'll have to stop talking about Dale* to turn my head and check her out. Sean will say, "You never look at me like that," and I'll say, "Yes, but you never wear low-riders and show off your belly, either."

Sometimes I will look at what the girl is wearing, and other times I'll take note of her expensive makeup and hairstyle. All the time I will look at her body and consider the number of hours she must log in at the gym, wonder at the amount of dollars it must have taken to pay for that boob job.

One time, when I was still employed and could afford it, I was at my old gym, strolling the rubber path of my treadmill and trying to ignore the comparisons between myself and a hamster in a cage. I was absentmindedly gazing ahead of me when a woman I'd never seen before crossed my line of vision. She had the kind of top-heavy build that reminded me of a bird: full, wide breast and skinny legs. She wasn't conventionally attractive; her nose was large in

proportion to the rest of her face, and she had a receding chin. To admit my instantaneous thoughts upon that moment will reveal me as an extremely shallow person, but, hey, who hasn't had these kind of evil brain smirks randomly sneak up on them? The first thing that came into my head at the time was, "Geez, thank god for genes. At least I don't look like *her*."

I know that these were not very nice thoughts, and thinking these things did not make me a very nice person. I realized this immediately, and I mentally slapped my own wrist. I kept strolling. I would have forgotten all about it, too, if I hadn't walked into the women's locker room forty-five minutes later to hear a very loud voice having what sounded like a very one-sided conversation. The person was talking about her recent liposuction procedure. How wonderful it was, how *marvelous*, how *everyone* should have a great plastic surgeon.

I turned the corner and almost walked into the fabulous woman whose husband could afford to pay for her plastic surgery. Her back was to me, and she gestured animatedly with her arms. She grabbed a fold of skin around her waist and shook it at the woman listening to her. "See? When the doctor did my lipo, he told me he could put indentations here around my abs to make it look like I work out. I told him, 'Honey, I already work out.'"

It turned out to be the woman I'd noticed earlier. I went over to my locker and opened it, pretending to look for my keys, but I was secretly peeking through the crack between the lockers and trying to get a glimpse of this woman's chiseled abs. She was still grabbing at parts of her body, and the folds of skin were getting in the way.

"I just love my plastic surgeon," she continued loudly. I wondered if maybe she wanted everyone to hear her. She certainly acted like she wanted to draw attention to herself. "He is so talented! He is the best! He's done my breasts, my nose, my chin, even the skin around my eyes. See? He wants everything

to be beautiful! Do you know, when you step into his office, there is *nothing* there that *isn't* beautiful? The floor, the walls, the chairs, the flowers... They're all so *tasteful*. He's got it decorated so beautifully. He says he *just* won't put up with ugly."

Well, I had to bite my tongue on that one. I pulled back and shoved my face deep into the locker. But there was no stopping the jesters in my head, complete with evil laughter.

Honey, if he just won't put up with ugly, then you must be paying him an awful lot of money.

I slapped my wrist.

I can't help it. These kinds of ideas just jump into my head. I check out other women, and some reflex in my brain makes me scoff at the ones who seem to carelessly-on-purpose throw around signs of wealth and indulgence. It's even worse now that I've moved to Los Angeles and I have to save my spare change to buy groceries. Every time I see a thin woman with big boobs (usually fake), dressed in fancy Beverly Hills-type clothes (usually a tight, three-quarter-sleeved blouse; capri pants; and backless high-heeled mules), getting into or out of a shiny new car (usually black, usually of the foreign import variety), and talking on her cell phone (always oblivious to everything else), my immediate reaction is to think A), *Jesus, hang up the phone!* and B), *boy, you sure look like a bitch.*

It's not just the rich-looking ones who are subject to my scrutiny and criticism. It's also the poor-looking ones... but just the poor-looking ones who are actually not poor at all and who are really just trying to attain the secondhand-store look by spending a lot of money at places like, say, I don't know, Hot Topic in the mall.

Last week in San Francisco, I was hanging out in a bar with a couple of friends who were heavily involved in a business-related discussion that didn't include me. Naturally, I passed the time by scoping out the women. I was told

that this bar drew a punk crowd, but the majority of the people I saw looked like average college students. Then there was one girl who, from a distance, appeared to have made an effort to stand out from the crowd. Her hair, clothing, and accessories drew my interest. Cool. *Maybe*, I thought, *she's a punk rocker*. I noticed she even had the requisite studded punk rock belt. She was dressed all in black, wearing what I've seen on other punk rock girls: sleeveless black top, black bra straps falling down her shoulders, black leather bracelets, skinny leather choker, black jeans. Her look was very carefully orchestrated, and that's when I started to wonder if maybe her attention to details was more about capturing the punk rock look rather than the punk rock attitude and lifestyle. The closer I examined her appearance, the more I noticed that her clothes were too tight, too black, too *new*. Her jeans turned out to be a department store brand name, and they were cut in the low-rider style that is meant to practically reveal your pubic area. Close up, she looked less like one of The Eyeliners and more like Britney Spears's idea of Joan Jett. I don't know any real punk rockers who dress like this. I don't know any real punk rockers who buy their clothes at a department store in the mall.

I've been to a number of punk shows, and I've checked out all sorts of girls. I've seen girls with bald heads, chelsea cuts, liberty spikes, and those crazy fan-like sections of hair that have been stiffly sprayed to resemble wings sprouting off the sides of the head. I've been at shows where girls in mismatched plaids, torn rags, and ripped stockings have brushed past generic-looking sorority sisters who looked like they were all cast from the same template. I know that, in comparison to those squeaky-clean, All-American-looking types, the punk rock girls may look like they haven't washed their clothes or hair in months. I know that, when faced with the option of standing next to the punk rock girl

or next to the Old Navy walking advertisement of a girl, the general public will pick Old Navy over St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store.

But I won't.

She may not be sporting the light, subtle scent of a designer fragrance; she may be redolent of cheap beer and five different types of hair products that keep her liberty spikes sharp, unyielding, and tinted, but I'll stand next to a punk rock girl and I won't have an evil brain smirk. In fact, my brain is usually taking notes and trying to commit certain details for future reference: *hmmm, cool bag; sharp outfit; hey, wow, original idea... I'm gonna have to copy it.* My mental inventory list might run something like this: *man's extra-large blue button-down mechanic's workshirt with name patch reading "Mario", original pointy collar replaced by a faux fur black and white leopard print piece, probably handsewn in. Or: Bleached out denim skirt, originally must have been someone's old pair of jeans, cut and put together as a miniskirt; black knee-high platform boots and torn red fishnet stockings underneath.*

Sometimes it's not the whole outfit, but just that one piece that will make me stop, stare, and wish it were me who looked so cool. One of my favorite sightings of all time happened at a Knockout Pills show. I saw a kid wearing THE shirt: a white cotton tee with that shrunk-en-yet-soft-and-worn look that a beloved t-shirt will get after many, many cycles in the washing machine. That wasn't what made it so special, though. It was the large map of the Philippines, faded yet easily identifiable, that graced the front of that kid's shirt. I'm usually a shy person who never approaches strangers, but I just had to go up to that girl, point at her right nipple, and say, "Hey, I like your shirt. I was born there." The girl didn't act like I was some kind of nut or complete freak, which made her even cooler. She just looked down at her belly, saw where I was pointing, and said, "Oh, Manila? Thanks. I found it at a thrift store."

I doubt I will ever again have this kind of conversation where I approach a random stranger and introduce myself by way of pointing at her breast, but it would be nice.

Of all the girls I check out, these are the ones I admire: girls who are creative and original and who may have weird little conversations with strangers, but who also act like it's no big deal. They dress to look like nobody else, and they don't care what other people think. Fuck the stares; those bastards are just hamsters in a cage. It's not about money, plastic surgery, or

shopping at malls to buy things that make it look like they shop at thrift stores. They'll look like how they want to look. It's all about the attitude.

See, to me, that's when the girl watching gets good.

That's style. Punk rock.

-Felizon


NOTES:

*Eff you, Dale

**When I wrote my first couple of columns for the early issues of Razorcake, I had this whole concept of doing The Postal Series: Why Kids Go Postal, Why Teachers Go Postal. I wanted to give readers an insider's view of the farce that is public education. I planned to chronicle the issues that white-collar public servants (i.e.,

teachers) like myself faced, and I wanted to expose the nasty political and social issues that were taking place in the county where I taught in Florida. Then the Harry Potter incident happened at my school. Rather than take up a whole lot of space explaining it here, I'll just say that white fanatical Christian redneck media nazis should not be allowed to run a library in a small middle school where the students are predominantly black and from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. I was already on the verge of burnout and when no one showed public support when I tried to fight censorship at my school, that was the last straw. I wanted to walk out and give everyone the finger ("That will screw my principal!"), but the truth was, I

would only be screwing myself (I had no money saved and no other job prospects) and my students. So I stuck it out until the end of the school year, handed in my keys, and told them I was moving across the country to go work for a punk rock magazine. I guess that was a more graceful way of quitting than saying "Fuck you," but I still kind of wish that I'd shit on the school board's head somehow.

This column marks my return to writing, and I kind of felt like I had to explain my hiatus just in case that one Razorcake reader noticed the absence of Shark Bait for the past half a dozen issues. And also, because I just did that, I'm now making a public commitment to keep writing. (See that, Sean?) I have no more excuses. 

New Punk Fashions for the Spring Formal



Felizon Vidad



If a one-legged midget had walked in the door right then, it wouldn't have surprised me.

Midnight Carnival

It was some time after midnight when we left the bar. I carried two six-packs I'd bought on the way out and walked back to the apartment while Ruby and Toni headed over to the corner store to buy some cigarettes.

I unlocked the front door, walked up the flight of stairs, and opened the door to the apartment. I put three beers on a table and threw the rest in the fridge. As I slumped against the kitchen counter, I stared curiously at two potatoes sitting on a shelf above the sink. They'd probably been there for months. One had a root half a foot long sprouting from the back. The other potato was curved upward in such a way that it resembled an erect dick. The first night I spent at Ruby's I'd christened them the *Rat Potato* and *Dick Potato*. A month later and they were still sitting in the same spot. For a minute I thought about throwing them away, but I decided against it. I figured they gave the place character.

A few minutes later I heard the downstairs front door open. Drunken laughter and the smell of cheap smoke made its way up the steps. It sounded like more than two people.

Ruby stumbled through the doorway and took me in her arms. "I missed you, baby," she slurred, her long, brown hair covering her eyes. I looked over her shoulder. Toni stood in the shadowed light of the hallway. She was a friend of Ruby's who I'd met at the bar a couple hours earlier. She could put the drinks down, but rarely spoke, so I didn't have a whole lot to go on. Next to her were two people I'd never seen before.

"Yeah, right," I said to Ruby, brushing the hair away from her face. I kissed her on the lips and tried to count the number of red lines in her eyes. I got to six before I stopped. "Friends of yours?" I asked.

"Carl, this is James and Terri. Guys, this is my boyfriend Carl," said Ruby.

I gripped James's hand hard and shook it. It was soft and feather-like. He was skinny and his sunken-in cheekbones gave him a sickly look. He had a feminine voice and couldn't have weighed much more than a hundred pounds. The woman was big and burly. She had a crew cut and wore tight work pants. A janitor key ring was hooked to her belt. I felt the bones in my fingers go numb as she put them in a vice. All I could think was, tough lesbian.

I cracked my knuckles to make sure they were all there, laughed to myself, and then handed the two a couple of beers.

I walked over to the stereo in the living room, put on an Elvis Costello record, and sat down on the couch. "*What's so funny about peace, love, and understanding, yeah...*"

A month, and somehow Ruby and I were still going strong. Between the beer and whiskey nights and the sex-crazed mornings, it all felt like some strange and wonderful dream you never want to let go of. Ruby was about all I could ask for. She was beautiful, spontaneous, and like myself, often teetered on the edge of insanity.

Ruby made her way over to the couch and sat down next to me.

"What's wrong?" she asked.

"Nothing," I said, "just felt like sitting down for a minute."

"You're not mad?"

"Why would I be mad?"

"I don't know. You're acting strange."

"I'm just drinking. I'm kind of tired. Don't worry about it."

"Well, they're pretty cool. We met them outside of the liquor store. They just got back from some party. They like to drink. We're not doing anything anyway."

"It's fine. It's your place."

"After everyone leaves, I'll make it up to you, okay, baby?"

"All right," I said. Ruby put her wet lips on my mouth and pushed her beer-soaked tongue down my throat. I grabbed her tight around the waist. She kissed me on the neck and whispered, "I love me some Carl." I guess I had it pretty good.

Suddenly, my attention was diverted to the kitchen table. I closed my eyes for a couple seconds, gave them a good rub to make sure I wasn't hallucinating, and then opened them. James had a roll of scotch tape in his hand and was wrapping it around his face. His lips were taped tight and his nose was pressed down so it looked like he had a harelip. The right side of his mouth was raised and hung about an inch under his eye. The big lesbian stood behind him and watched excitedly.

"You doing all right over there?" I asked jokingly. James didn't say anything. He continued to tape up his face until the entire roll was gone. It was a little disturbing to look at after a long night of drinking.

Ruby ran into the kitchen. As she waved her hands in the air, I had the vision of a wild ostrich flash briefly before my eyes. "*Now, this guy's crazy! You're so crazy!*" she screamed. Toni stood by the window smoking a cigarette, a perplexed expression painting her face.

James still hadn't said a word. Maybe he

couldn't with all of that tape. He walked towards the living room, stood in front of the couch, and proceeded to drop his pants to the floor. I couldn't help but laugh when I saw his sad, little, tear-eyed dick hanging between his legs. Well, now this is going to get interesting, I thought.

Ruby continued to run around the kitchen: "*Oh shit, Carl, this guy's crazy! I love him! You're so crazy!*"

"Oh yeah, baby, he's a winner," I said to her sarcastically.

Tape Boy took off his shirt.

"God, it's so *small*, Carl, smaller than my pinky." Ruby laughed, unable to take her eyes away from Tape Boy's nether region. She was a big charge of drunken light and energy, and I felt it radiate into my pores.

A little sinister smile appeared from behind the mask of tape. Somehow, he'd gotten a hold of another roll. He began to tape up his nipples.

Then, with a quick and fluid motion of amazing dexterity – as if this was just as common as brushing his teeth – Tape Boy tucked his penis back through his legs and taped it to his ass. Obviously, it wasn't the first time he'd tried this.

The big lesbian rushed into the living room and handed Tuck Boy a black sharpie. He closed his eyes and marked the eyelids. As he opened them, we squirmed on the couch. In a matter of minutes, he'd transformed from a frail-looking cancer patient into some sort of strange-looking, B-movie horror villain.

And there we were on that couch, caught in between two strange worlds of fantastic reality. Yeah, sure, I was a little scared. I mean, who the fuck was this nut ball, and exactly what did he have in mind? Yet at the same time, I was overwhelmed with a sense of insanity that was, in a strange and exciting way, contagious. I guess when you have the feeling that you've gone crazy, you know, full off the rocker, you feed off of nights like these. And there's philosophy for you. Too many beers and some naked circus freak and my wild and beautiful girl and the night running laps around my consciously unconscious soul and I'm sitting there on the couch thinking I'm Schopenhauer.

I felt the world stop for a brief second, and had the rather disturbing vision of a satanic clown performing in front of me. Maybe *this* was hell? Tuck Boy glided across the kitchen floor thinking he was the second coming of Baryschnikov. He grabbed a hold of the dick potato. I took a long pull at the beer. It was full of cigarette ash. I nearly gagged as I spit the contents out on the floor. I grabbed a different

bottle, made sure it had beer in it, and washed the throat down. Tuck Boy stood in front of us and taped the potato in place of where his dick had been.

"This guy's not right," said Toni. It was the first thing I'd heard come out of her mouth in a while. Ruby grabbed my leg; she was all smiles.

The big lesbian had a spatula in her hand. She began to spank Potato Boy.

"No, not my spatulas! Well, just don't use them all," pleaded Ruby.

The sound of plastic on flesh echoed throughout the apartment. If a one-legged midget had walked in the door right then, it wouldn't have surprised me.

"See, Carl, that's how hard *you* should spank me. Just like that," said Ruby, nodding her head convincingly.

Oh God, I thought, what the hell is going on here? I ran over to the kitchen, grabbed another beer, and sat back down on the couch. I could feel the excitement in the air. This was way better than what Saturday night television had to offer.

After a couple minutes, the big lesbian stopped spanking Potato Boy. His ass was blood red and swollen. Big lesbian went into the kitchen. When she came back into the living room she was holding a foot-long butcher knife.

"No, not my knives!" screamed Ruby. "Carl, those are the *good* knives!"

Maybe, but I sure as hell wasn't going to be the one to grab them from the brute. "Be careful with that thing," I said jokingly.

As Toni hid in the corner of the couch looking like a dumb mute – her hands covering her eyes in random intervals – Potato Boy put the knife in

between the tape and one of his nipples. He slashed the tape away with wild flair, first the left tit, then the right.

"You're *crazy*, man, fuckin' *crazy*!" shouted Ruby. Her beer dangled in her hand and spilled all over my pants. Ash from her cigarette fell to the floor. I looked at Ruby, her eyes glowing like a big ball of stormy ocean dreams. Goddamn, I wanted to make wild and passionate love to her right then. Take her there on the couch and fuck the whole damn room and night

away into a world of circus obscurity.

Potato Boy looked down at the dick potato. He gripped the knife tight, raised it above his head, and held it suspended in the air. A hush fell across the room. All you could hear was an ambulance siren from a couple blocks away. With one crushing and violent blow, the potato dropped to the floor, like a head on a guillotine. All that remained was a small stump. I stared at the decapitated potato and thought, you doing

onds, speechless, not exactly sure how to respond. Ruby and I then stood up and gave him a resounding ovation. I shouted in a thick, English accent, "*Bravo, bravo, fine work, chap!*" Give me madness. I wanted more. Was this it?

Potato Boy didn't move. He just stood there with the same damn sinister smile from before.

"There's more?" I asked excitedly.

He nodded and proceeded to get down on all fours, his cherry ass facing the couch.

"Oh my..." said Ruby, grabbing my arm tight, her face turning pale white.

The big lesbian came out of the kitchen with a large cucumber and walked into the living room. The cucumber was nearly a foot long and a good six inches around.

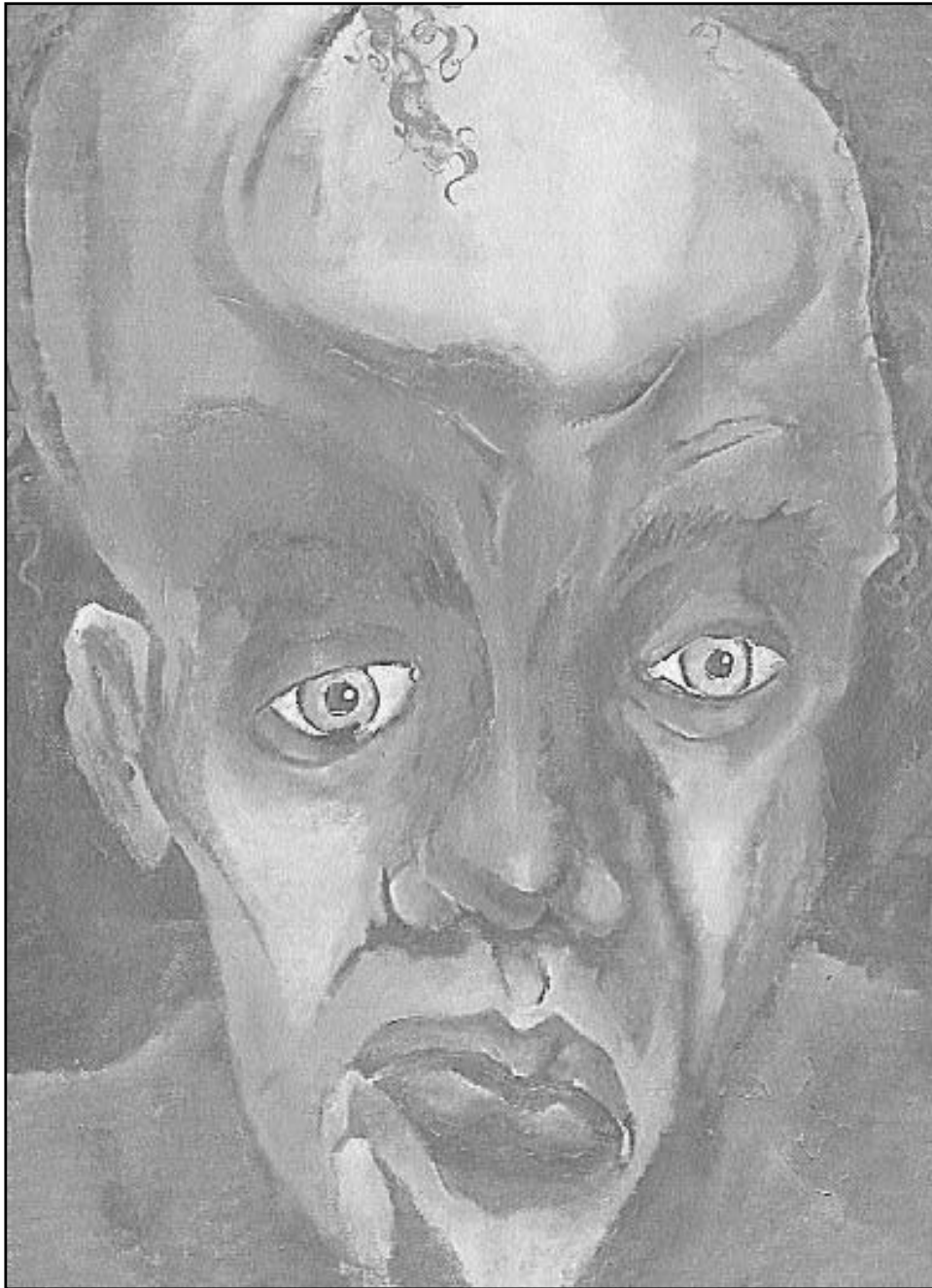
"Not the *cucumber*! God, you're *sick*!" shouted Ruby. I couldn't stop laughing.

The big lesbian handed Potato Boy the ice-cold cucumber. There was no hesitation. With one violent thrust, the cucumber went straight into his asshole. At least half of it was in there. A damn work of art in the world of skin stretching, I thought. His ass looked like a big, wide-open mouth. He rammed the cucumber in and out and stared at us, his head bent parallel to the floor, his face still a twisted mess of tape.

The cucumber gradually began to turn into a ball of mush. A minute later the top popped off. Some green liquid flooded the floor. Ruby bounced up from the couch and ran into the kitchen. She came back with two more cucumbers. She was jumping up and down, her tits in hysterics...

wild curves... baby eyes... all beauty in this sick and twisted midnight carnival.

Ruby held one of the cucumbers tight, stuck out her tongue, and slapped Cucumber Boy on the ass. He let out a half-audible grunt. It was the first noise I'd heard come out of his mouth since I shook his hand. I don't know what possessed me, other than mental instability, but suddenly I found myself with a cucumber in my hand. I pretended it was a baseball bat and stood in a crouched stance. I waited for the pitch. *BAM!* I gave him a good, **RAZORCAKE** [31]



Seth Swaaley

hard whack on the ass. I did it a couple more times. It felt liberating. He grunted and continued to work on the cucumber. It was now almost all disintegrated, pieces of green cucumber surrounding him.

Finally, he finished. I guess he got off on it. Or maybe he got off on us. Or maybe both. Who's to say? I suppose we've all got our own strange pleasures. For him, they just happened to involve big vegetables.

Cucumber Boy quickly put his clothes back on and tore the tape off of his face. "Ruby, do you have a broom?" he asked politely, as if the last half hour had never taken place. Ruby looked at him, dumbfounded and expressionless. She pointed to the closet by the front door. Cucumber Boy quickly cleaned up the vegetable mess with a broom and a pan and washed the floor with some disinfectant. A minute later the wooden floor glistened like a polished silver plate.

"Look, I just want to thank you guys for the beer and for having us," said Cucumber Boy.

"Yeah, you guys are all right. People usually kick us out after the taped face part," said the big lesbian. She wrote down a phone number and handed it to Ruby.

"Well, uh, thanks for coming. You guys are nuts." Ruby laughed.

I waved goodbye from the couch as they walked out the door. Ruby, Toni, and I sat next to one another and stared at the shiny spot on the living room floor. We didn't say anything. You can't try to understand shit like that.

Ruby broke the silence. "I'm pretty tired. Toni, do you want to sleep with us in my bed?"



I gave Ruby a dirty look and nudged her with my leg. She ignored me.

"No way," said Toni. "I got the couch. I'm not getting in bed with you two. A fuckin' cucumber? God."

"Come on, we're not going to do anything," said Ruby.

"The couch is fine. I don't trust you freaks," said Toni.

Ruby and I went to bed. We tried to make it, but I was too drunk to get it up. Besides, all I could picture were cucumbers and potatoes.

I woke up early the next morning. The sun was coming in bright through the blinds. The birds were outside doing their thing. I lay in bed with my hands behind my head and let the mind float off into some strange realm of empty space. Ruby turned over and put her head on my chest.

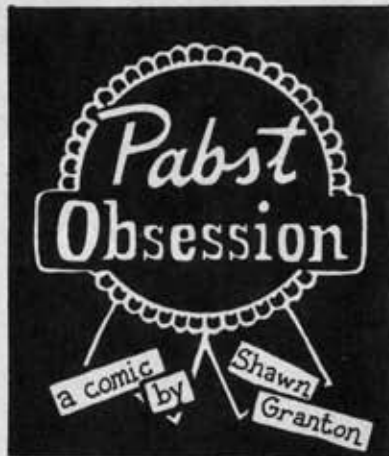
"I can't believe someone put a cucumber up his ass in my living room. Did that really happen?" she asked, thinking maybe it was all just a strange, alcohol-induced dream.

"Yeah, it happened. Pretty weird shit," I said.

I got out of bed and went into the kitchen. Toni was gone. I cooked some eggs and toast, and Ruby and I ate breakfast in bed. A couple hours later we headed towards my apartment. On the way, we passed by the bar. From outside, you could hear the roar of drunken regulars that were already well on their way. We walked down Howard Avenue, turned left on Madison, and took it until we hit St. Paul.

-Seth Swaaley





I FIND MYSELF LIVING IN *PORTLAND* (OREGON, OF COURSE!) THE FABLED "CITY OF ROSES." THIS TOWN IS GREAT N' ALL, BUT THERE'S ONE THING THAT STILL HAS ME PUZZLED: *WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH PABST BLUE RIBBON?*



THIS CITY (OR TO BE MORE SPECIFIC, THIS CITY'S PUNK/INDIE/HIPSTER/MOD/ROCKERS/ZINESTER/CARTOONIST/FILL IN THE BLANK *CROWD*) HAS SUCH A FIXATION ON THIS PUNGENT PILSNER. BARS ARE RATED ACCORDING TO HOW CHEAP YOU CAN BUY PABST IN IT!



The Jockey Club - \$1.50 a pint

TO ME, PABST IS JUST ANOTHER CHEAP, PISSWATER BEER. I DON'T CARE FOR PISSWATER BEERS. MAYBE IT'S DUE TO MY "REFINED PALETTE," BUT I TEND TO STICK TO MICROBREWS. AND THERE'S SO MANY GOOD BEERS IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST! BUT ASK A DIE-HARD PABST DRINKER WHY *PBR** AND NOT A LOCAL BEER AND HERE'S WHAT YOU'LL GET:



* Pabst Blue Ribbon.



Man, fuck that pretentious bourgeois "micro-brew" shit. Pabst is union-made beer brewed for the working class! It was selected as "America's Best" in 1893!

YEAH, PABST IS MADE "BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE." BUT SINCE WHEN HAVE YOU BEEN *WORKING CLASS*? DID YOUR PARENTS (OR YOU, FOR THAT MATTER) EVER WORK IN A FACTORY ON A FARM, OR IN CONSTRUCTION? OR IS DRINKING PBR YOUR WAY OF "SHOWING SOLIDARITY" WITH BLUE COLLAR FOLK? DOES PABST = THE MASSES?



WHAT I FIND FUNNY (OR IRONIC, IF THAT TERM *HASN'T* BEEN DRIVEN INTO THE GROUND AT THIS POINT) IS THE DAYTIME BEHAVIOR OF MR./MS. "WORKING CLASS" WHEN THEY ENTER ONE OF THE CITY'S NUMEROUS COFFEEHOUSES:



BUT STILL *WHY* PABST, AND NOT *HAMMS*, FOR INSTANCE? WHAT IS THE PARTICULAR NOVELTY IN PBR? IS IT BECAUSE IT CAN'T BE FOUND EVERYWHERE? IS IT BECAUSE OF THE TASTE? IS IT BECAUSE THEY USE "ONLY THE FINEST OF HOPS AND GRAINS"?



OR, IS IT BECAUSE SOMEONE SOMEWHERE DECIDED THAT PABST WAS GOING TO BE THE "HIP" BEER OF THE "IN" CROWD, AND IT CAUGHT ON? IF THAT'S THE CASE, I HOLD *OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON*, THE EPICENTER OF THE ÜBER-HIP, ACCOUNTABLE (DESPITE NO EVIDENCE TO BACK UP MY CLAIM.)



MAYBE IT'S DEEPER THAN THAT? MAYBE PABST THEMSELVES IS BEHIND IT ALL? DID THEY FIND AN ANGLE TO GET THEIR PRODUCT CONSUMED BY A DEMOGRAPHIC NOT SWAYED* BY TRADITIONAL ADVERTISING? TOO FAR FETCHED? THEN WHY DID MY FRIEND NICOLE GET A LETTER FROM PABST'S MARKETING DEPT. ASKING ABOUT AD RATES? *HOW* DID THEY FIND OUT ABOUT HER?



* Okay, maybe I'm giving too much credit here

AAH, WHAT DO I KNOW? I'VE BEEN KNOWN TO DRINK PBR FROM TIME TO TIME. HELL, IT'S DIRT CHEAP! THOUGH, IF GIVEN THE CHOICE, I'D DRINK *OLYMPIA*. YEAH, I DO REALIZE IT'S PRETTY MUCH THE SAME AS PABST (MADE BY THE SAME COMPANY, NO LESS), BUT THEY COME IN THOSE CUTE L'L BOTTLES (STUBBIES) THAT HAVE WORD PUZZLES ON THE CAP!



I THINK THE BEST ARGUMENT FOR PABST CONSUMPTION COMES FROM MY FRIEND PAUL, WHO SUMS IT UP SO:



AMEN, BROTHER! I'LL DRINK TO THAT!

shawnfr@hotmail.com

© 2007 Shawn Granton

REINVENTING

AGAINST
ME!



PHOTOS AND NOT EXACTLY AN INTERVIEW

BY RICH MACKIN

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

You have surely heard the saying "Actions speak louder than words." As a result, I find myself less interested in sharing the exact words of Against Me! and more interested in talking about what they did in the four days I spent with them and four shows I saw them perform.

I did conduct an interview with the band. Well, most of the band. Tom (vocals and lead/sometimes acoustic guitar), Dustin (bass and backup vocals), and James (guitar and backup vocals) were there, along with official tour videographer, Adam, and my own tour mate, Rosie Streetpixie. It started at around 1 A.M. with a full bottle of Jameson's Whisky, and ended at 5:30 A.M. with an empty one. Perhaps this also is an example of actions speaking louder than words, especially when the words are filtered through drunken, tired ears and tongues.

Oddly, before meeting the band, I had heard rumors that they were straightedge. Clearly this was not the case, as James started one conversation with, "Who's got two thumbs and likes beer? [pointing at himself with his thumbs] This guy!" and often punctuated the interview discussion with tidbits such as "Whisky. Monkey Whisky!" (if there was a context for this, he never said). Instead, they understand the difference between drinking as something fun to do, and drinking as THE fun thing to do... as evidenced by the line "the beer is not the life of the party" in the title track off their new album *Reinventing Axl Rose* (No Idea).

In a standard interview piece, I would quote the members of Against Me! as they discuss how they aren't in it for the money. They did say such things, but this isn't as unusual as was the fact that they split all money equally between acts, citing the fact that a car needs gas, no matter how many people were in it or how far it came. Granted, this money usually wasn't a guarantee or even door money, but the money from passing-the-hat or "if you can at the door" shows. It's easy to say that one doesn't

care about money. A lot of bands have lyrics about not caring about money and such, and they play these songs after ironing out riders and guarantees. It's not as easy to have the money in your hand and give it away.

Tom has said on more than one occasion, "I don't want to be a rock star." I asked him about this before the third show, and he looked sheepish and replied, "Aw, man, this is awkward," before changing the subject. Afterwards, well into the late drinking session, I asked again, and this time he did answer. "I don't care about being a rock star. I don't care about being famous. I just want to play music." This was met with agreement from his cohorts. I have seen so many punk bands over the years, read interviews with them, and talked to them enough about the DIY rhetoric that I'm not shocked or even impressed by this at all. What is impressive instead is the fact that Tom stayed after one show ended, in a basement, in order to help pick up cigarette butts and other trash left by the crowd. His face while doing so seemed to register guilt, as if the fact that a show leading to a mess was the band's fault. "This is where someone lives," he said, perhaps to me, perhaps to nobody in particular.

While the interview/article and personal interaction between the band and me had been scheduled far ahead (all starting when I found out that Against Me! was slated to be in Eugene, Oregon the same day that I was attempting to get a show for my own spoken word tour, and my attempt to piggyback the shows blossomed into four days of aligned tours). I first actually met the band the second day of the Portland Zine Symposium in Oregon. They had come to say hello to me and some other friends, as well as just plain check out zines and other wonders of DIY culture. The fact that many of the zinesters were wearing Against Me! shirts was apparently noticed and appreciated, but taken in stride.

Upon being introduced to Warren, the drummer, he hugged me. And he hugged me, not a handshake-hug, not a slapping on the back, I-don't-really-mean-it hug, but a true, honest, kind-you-

would-give-your-mom hug. When I met Tom, I was taken aback by his clean-cut boy-next-door appearance. Granted, for the next few days, every time I saw him he was dressed in the same black punk clothes (the band's look, if they had one, was faded black oriented, unchanged, with inside-out t-shirts), but he had boyish good looks and a smooth shave, and the kind of smile that lights up a room. If Against Me! start publishing posed photos of themselves on their CDs, they would soon be finding themselves on teenage girls' bedroom walls. This thought frightens me as much as it would the band, but it is the best way to drive the concept home.

The first show was in a punk house in Portland. Several bands opened, including Against Me!'s tour mates, Fiya, as well as Rosie and me doing our spoken word thing. But it was clearly the Against Me! show in the hearts and minds of most of the crowd. The problem was, it was a crowd. I had read earlier that weekend that the irony of a band like Against Me! is that they do what they do so well they outgrow the ability to do the DIY punk house shows that they are so conceptually tied to. At this show, three hundred people were vying to fit in a space that seemed like it could fit thirty. It was like trying to park a car in a mailbox. Still in all, the band played an amazing set, primarily off of the new album. The room felt like it was going to explode. While I do mean from the excitement of the band and fans, I also mean literally, as there was too much excitement and too many bodies to fit. People pretzeled themselves with one another, to fit all arms and legs in close enough to get a good view of the band and to secure a good sing along space. The band set straight to rocking with little goofing around or stage patter. Enough was said to make it clear that the audience was as much a part of the show as the band. (It was here that Tom announced "I don't want to be a ROCK STAR.") Of course, this wasn't really much of a concern to have to prove, as the band was surrounded and almost submerged by the crowd.

After the set, as the crowd went upstairs to drink the last of the beer, Tom indeed was alone in the basement, picking up cigarette butts and other garbage. If anyone was concerned about him being a rock star, they weren't there to help him play janitor.

The second show I saw was in Olympia, Washington, again at a punk house. This time, several bands were scheduled, with spoken word afterwards when the neighbors were less likely to complain. Among the spoken word performers was zinester Al Burian. Once again, there was no way that the amount of people who wanted to see the band could fit in the room. There was no way in hell that the amount of energy could either. Unlike the angst and anger of early punk or the average testosterone filled hardcore set, the energy at these shows had an air of hope and beauty. However, the physical problem of putting too many objects in any one space means that there won't be enough room for them all. Amps were in constant danger of being knocked down, and the drums – yes the drums, the

things normally far, far away from the fans – were knocked over by domino effects from bouncing fans. The band was always optimistic, and instead of complaining about potential damage to equipment, the concern was always for the fans and the dynamics of the show: "Is everyone okay? Is everyone's space being respected?" Tom would ask. It was clear he was sincerely concerned about everyone's well being, but at the same time, somewhat self amused. More than once, crowd bumping was less drastic, with merely the microphone being knocked over. It bears mentioning that enough people would be singing along at the top of their lungs at any point in any song that the lead vocal microphone was not immediately missed. It was clear that the crowd was divided into people who had not heard the band and people who knew every word. All interrupted songs were eventually finished, and the band left for a twelve-hour overnight drive to the next day's show.

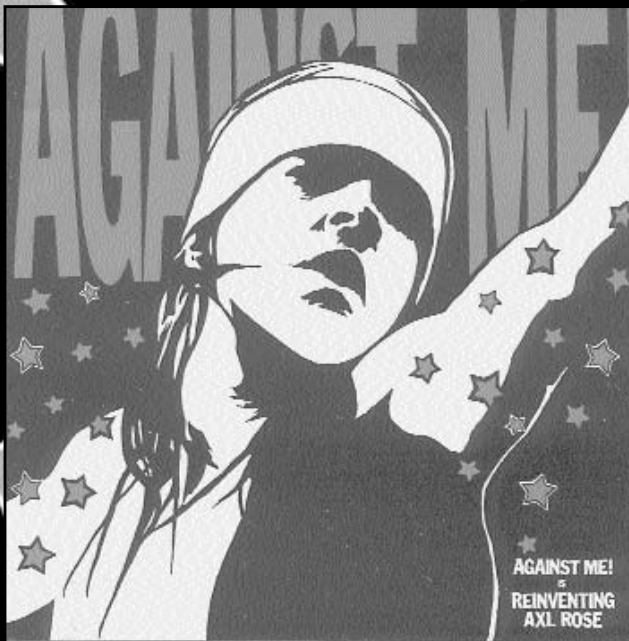
Personally, I avoided that drive and settled into seeing the band a third time two days later in Oakland. This was not a basement show. This was an apartment show. Several bands played in a kitchen – a normal, not especially big, no real reason that anyone would think you could fit a band in it kitchen. The band seemed unfazed. Fans came in and looked stunned at the very idea that a show was taking place in such quarters, but at no time did a single member of the band complain about anything except for the desire for coffee and/or alcohol, depending on the individual. Even this was more the

occasional "where can we get some coffee/beer around here?", not a need to get drunk in order to cope with such an insane situation. While the idea of a punk band hanging out with the crowd before and during the show is nothing new, I was still impressed by how hard it would be to distinguish band members from show-goers in the lineup on the sidewalk in front of the space. At the same time, I was noticing that a good dozen, if not more, of the people here for the show were people I recognized from Olympia and Portland. A few I

knew anyway, a few I had just met, but in any case, it seemed like it wasn't a single group of wandering fans, but that a number of people were indeed basing their own travels on the tour, and were forming a community as they did. The similarity to Deadheads was, well, I don't want to make too much of a comparison, but it is worth mentioning.

Not surprisingly, the show was shut down by the cops. The cops in question were pretty friendly about it all, and the obvious eventuality of the shutdown kept anyone from getting too upset. Within a few moments, the plan was made to continue at another space: a CD plant or distro of some sort, with actually quite a bit more room and more of a "basement feel" that the die-hard fans seem to discuss and crave. The band proved its adaptability again, not just by up and moving to a second venue across town, but by shifting, during the ride, into a three-piece acoustic act, not something the average punk band could pull off. Warren kept to the back, because a drum set would mean that fewer people could fit in the room, and beats were provided enthusiastically by claps and thumps from the crowd. The band was threatened by **RAZORCAKE** 37





crowd members that the only way out was through the fans, and that all the favorite songs better be played. Such was the crowd. This was only half a joke.

Against Me! was released unharmed to the home of our host – a young man named Will whose parents seemed completely happy to have fifteen strangers sleeping in their house. This is when I set about luring the band into the tour van armed with a bottle of whisky and a tape recorder.

The thing is, I felt as if I understood who Against Me! were as a band more by watching them than by whatever words we exchanged would represent. It was also strange that, despite the alcohol and exhaustion, James, Dustin and Tom all kicked into interview mode, not so much presenting a false sense of who they were, but a more thought out version of who they were. Dustin, who otherwise was more animated and goofy, became strangely articulate. Not that he wasn't otherwise articulate, but it was as if being interviewed tapped into his most thoughtful side. James, while not entirely losing his humor, suddenly was saying things he had put a lot of serious thought into. Tom obviously has been interviewed a lot, and while he was still passionate and emotional about every single thing, I could tell that he had said a lot of this before.

I asked if that day's show was at all typical. "We have no typical show," said Tom "but even this was a weird day."

Having cornered Tom now, we discussed the rock star thing. "We want to change what the role of the musician, the rock star, is in our society." This led to a discussion over the name of the new CD, *Reinventing Axl Rose*. Tom explained, "My favorite band was Guns and Roses. I loved Guns and Roses, (using past tense despite the G'n'R back patch on the black denim jacket he wore the whole four days I spent with him) but, Axl Rose was this... he was racist, sexist, homophobic. He is basically a huge asshole." Several lines into the discussion, it became clear what he was getting at: the idea of the rock star as a good example – not clean cut, like N'Sync – but instead of being about sex, drugs and rock and roll decadence, being a force for good and social change. That and, "We hope he will get mad and try and sue us," according to Dustin.

Frustrations were voiced, common for the political rock

band: fans who enjoy the music without paying attention to the lyrics, sometimes getting them diametrically wrong. "People think 'Pints of Guinness (Make You Strong)' is a drinking song, and it's about my grandfather being an alcoholic," Tom said. Later, several fans mentioned that maybe he shouldn't have written a song that was so fun to sing along to if the focus is the thirty-seven years of mourning caused by his grandfather James's death. Me, I suddenly felt bad about quoting the song ("Just like James, I'll be drinking Irish tonight") after taking the bottle of Irish Whisky from the guitarist, James.

Much of the best discussion of the interview fell under the "No, wait – don't print that" variety. I know who's toothbrush Tom used once without permission, details of Gainesville, Florida's gossip, and a few sexual proclivities of a member more than I would do well to write about. I did, however, also discuss the voting habits of anarchists and the need to acknowledge there is a system going on, whether or not you choose to take part in it or not. Tom voted for Nader this last election. Dustin, on the other hand, said, "I voted for myself. A protest vote is more a statement than not voting, so I write myself in."

The interview eventually became Tom, Dustin and me with an empty bottle, noting that the sun was rising, and that the park we had parked next to was actually a golf course, and Dustin wanted to go steal flags. Instead we went to bed. Bed in this case being whatever floor space had not already been claimed. Again, in case anyone was under the impression these guys are rock stars, they didn't debate whether the carpet in one room made a better bed than the area rug.

The final show I got to see was a free, guerilla show in front of a subway stop in San Francisco. It was three bands, played in short round robin sets so as to ensure each band got to play before the inevitable shutdown. Despite lack of permits and clear theft of power for the amps, the police told us that the show would have to shut down when someone complained, but we could go ahead to see if anyone would. The usual faces were there singing along, this time joined by droves of commuters enjoy-

ing the music of a band they had never heard of and wondering how so many kids seemed to know every word. And yes, I did say that actions speak louder than words, but the words that were all sung along to still were loud and clear.



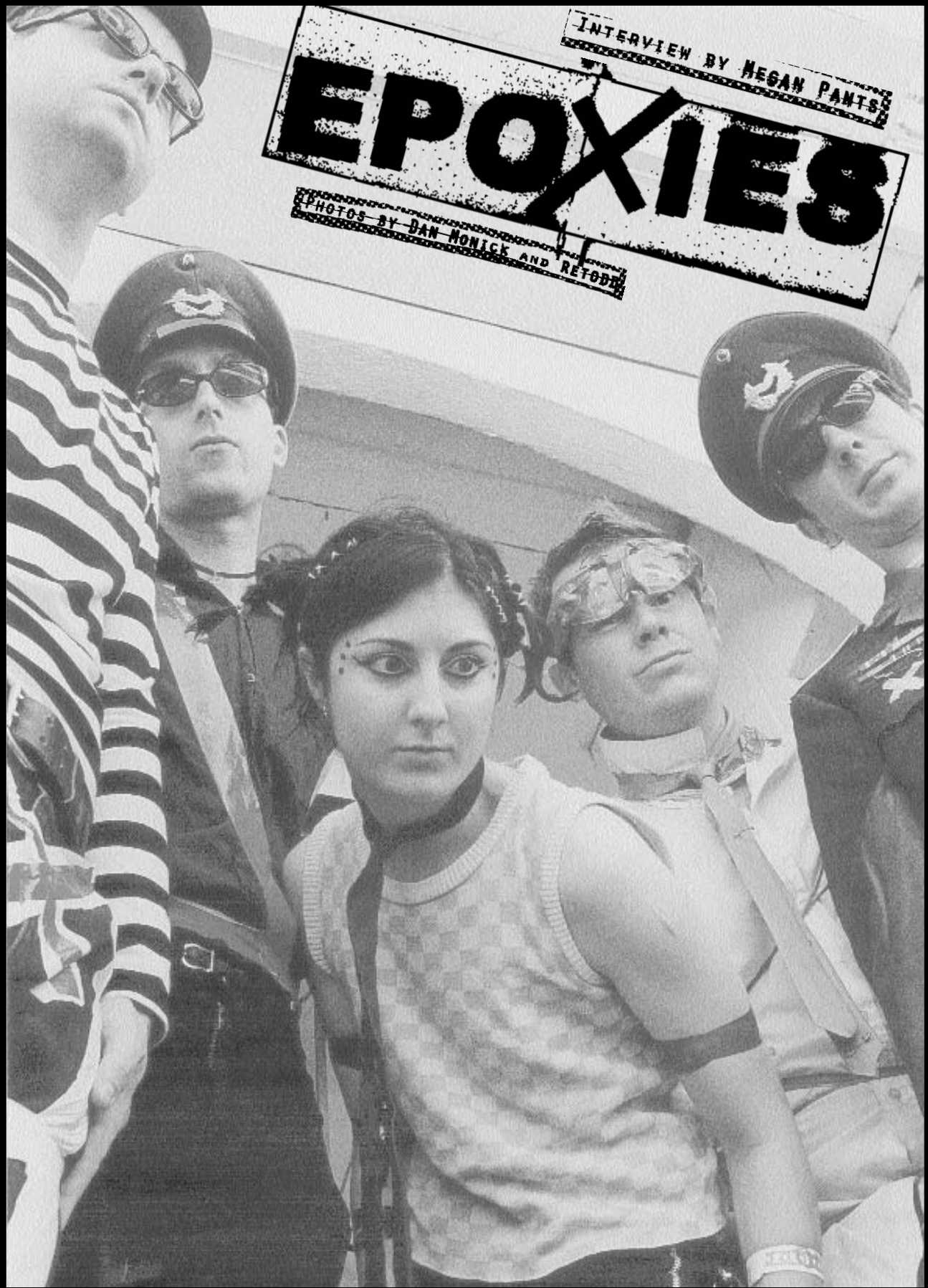
"WE WANT TO CHANGE WHAT THE ROLE OF THE MUSICIAN, THE ROCK STAR, IS IN OUR SOCIETY."



INTERVIEW BY MEGAN PANTS

EPOXIES

PHOTOS BY DAN MONICK AND RETOZ



Why isn't anyone afraid of "The Big One" anymore? In light of our current political situation - daily reminders that some nuclear warhead could be headed for our homes, Reagan's vice president's kid is running our country, emo is controlling the airwaves - everyone seems content to sit in front of their TV and let it come to them. Well, I for one am not, thanks to the Epoxies. Their songs are laden with desperate lyrics (executed beautifully, and at the same time powerfully, by Roxy Epoxy), but the music that it's set against *makes* you dance. I'm not kidding. You try to listen to their album without one little bop or nod. I dare you. I have to admit that I was skeptical about listening to their album. People kept labeling them as new wave, which isn't exactly a selling point for me, but I did put it on. And I haven't gone more than three days without listening to it since. Usually on repeat. And that was in February.

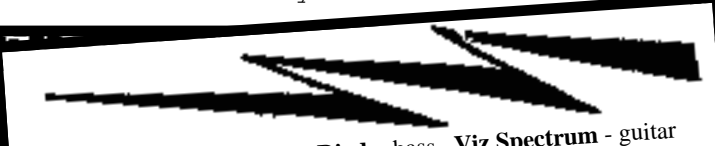
There is a very good reason the Epoxies are consistently escaping a solid categorization: they're breaking new ground. Sure, you can hear strong influences of Adam Ant, the

Rezillos, Kim Wilde, X-Ray Spex, and a host of others, all depending on the song, but there's something more there. Everything they do has a complimentary, and necessary, opposite. Are they a band with a schtick, and if so, what the hell is the schtick? Roxy's vocals jump from crooning to yelling to pleading to - hell - yodeling and back again. And it works. FM Static somehow found a way to make keyboards not only compliment some rockin' tunes, but to drive them. Hard. Dr. Grip is so focused on playing that you rarely see him open his eyes during a set. Both the Viz on guitar and Shock on bass, which are a little played down on the album, are nothing less than fierce live.

They are the perfect band to listen to when you're breaking hearts, healing your own, cleaning your room, stuck in traffic, or taking on the world. The music is immaculate, the lyrics intelligent. The Epoxies make you realize that, yeah, we're gonna die, but we have options for what we do in the meantime. We can sit and wait for it to come, or we can dance into our destruction. You have a choice. I've already made mine.



Dr. Grip - drums, **FM Static** - keyboards/vocals



Roxy Epoxy - vocals, **Shock Diode** -bass, **Viz Spectrum** - guitar

Megan: So, initially Viz and FM started the sci-fi garage band involving refrigerator boxes as costumes. How did that come about?

FM: You did some reading ahead. We need to change that reply right now.

Dr. Grip: We're actually from Poland.

Viz: Most people think it's Portland, Oregon, but it's not.

FM: Our English language skills have improved considerably since the advent of mind-reading technologies, which we stole from the Soviets. Hence our ejection and subsequent...

Viz: Don't talk too much about that. We don't want to arouse anyone's suspicion.

FM: Oh, back to the question. Yes, that's true. Originally, Viz and I had some idea about starting a band and we didn't know exactly what we were doing. We had a whole host of influences and ideas, but robot garage rock is sort of what we're calling it now, for lack of a better term. I think the Epoxies are halfway between what we imagined and a real band.

FM: You know, once we figured out that would be too much work.

Dr. Grip: I don't know about that. The robot thing was still in play when I started.

FM: Well, it was kind of a joke.

Viz: I don't think anyone thought it was a serious idea.

FM: Yeah, until we get roadies. Then we'll turn that joke into a terrifying reality.

Dr. Grip: They needed a drummer, not just a drum machine, and I started playing with them for just a couple of weeks and then Roxy came in and sang one of the songs and everything just sort of fell into place, really.

FM: Yeah, minus the money.



Dr. Grip: We realized we might be able to be a real band at that point.

FM: There was a definite moment of realization when we all listened to it and said, "This sounds good."

Now we need to stop fooling around quite so much."

Dr. Grip: No more dryer boxes full of dryer hose.

FM: Instruments are much more difficult to play wearing refrigerator boxes with dryer hose arms.

Megan: I would assume so.

FM: We had to find some sort of balance in there.



Megan: So, if those ice capading robots vs. the world had been sent here to destroy one band, genre, or person – who would that be?
FM: What band would be the worst band for us to shit talk right now?

Viz: [joking] The Spits.

FM: [still joking] The stinkin' Briefs. We hate those guys.

Viz: I hope the Spits and Briefs are destroyed.

FM: We're so all inclusive. That's the thing.

Dr. Grip: We love everybody.

FM: We enjoy all the meats of our cultural stew. There has to be terrible awful bands that are hateful in order to make anything work. It's kind of like censorship. It's kind of necessary.

Dr. Grip: I'm kind of voting for Live, actually.

FM: Toad the Wet Sprocket.

Dr. Grip: They're already gone. They pose no threat.

FM: Yeah, but there's so many Toad the Wet Sprockets in existence still.

Dr. Grip: What's that one band?

Creed!

Roxy: I'm not fond of any of the nu metal either.

FM: How about every rock 'n' roll band?

Dr. Grip: Ummmm...that would include, like us.

FM: Yeah, it would get rid of a lot of really good bands, but it would probably be really good for music if every band, including us, was wiped off of the face of the earth so something interesting could happen.

Megan: I've heard that Portland has a pretty big bar scene. I'm assuming that you guys also have karaoke bars. Have you ever seen a karaoke fight?

FM: I'm not sure how that would take place.

Megan: People can get pretty serious about it.

FM: As in "the mic is mine" type thing?

Megan: Yeah.

FM: I was thinking more of an operatic duel.

Dr. Grip: Like a musical. Like that Ozzy/Lita Ford song, what

was it?

Megan and FM: "If I Close My Eyes Forever."

Dr. Grip: I've seen that turn into something more like a duel, or more of an attack on the audience, you know?

FM: I've seen a lot of fights between the singer and the audience.

Megan: Because, Roxy, you started out singing in karaoke bars to get used to it, right?

Roxy: Yeah, I was just too petrified to do it, so they started pulling me out and getting me drunk and getting me to sing in front of people.

FM: There's this really crazy karaoke bar in Budapest, actually, where we first saw her sing.

Roxy: Yes. Yes.

FM: We were able to purchase her for a very reasonable price. There's attitude problems that decreased her market value.

Megan: Did you have a favorite song?

Roxy: I would sing "867-5309/Jenny" because I was confident that it was within a very narrow range that I could hit and wouldn't make a full ass of myself although the song itself did a pretty good job of that.

FM: I was fond of the "Break Up" song by Greg Kihn. That was my favorite of yours. She does a good "99 Luft Ballons" too.

Roxy: I never sang that. You sang that.

FM: I didn't do a very good job, as I recall.

Megan: One thing I've noticed is that you work really hard to support other bands. Did you get similar support when you were starting out? Was there anyone in particular who helped?

FM: Everybody practically that we've ever interacted with has been unbelievably supportive and helpful. I don't know if it's true that we do all that much for other bands. It just seems to be the thing to do.

Everyone takes care of one another. Certainly, we've all been there before and know that it's a real drag to drive 500 miles and not get paid. It's just a matter of respect.

Megan: I know you've taken pictures for bands like the Exploding Hearts and the Automatics. You did one of the covers for the Automatics, right?

Roxy: I did most of them.

FM: Pretty much all of them. I think all but one of the covers.

Megan: How many of you were involved with the Automatics?

FM: I was.

Viz: I was on one of the covers.

FM: That's true.

Roxy: I was on one of the covers, then I shot the others.

Megan: I actually have one question about one of the albums, *Ten Greatest*.

FM: *Ten Golden Greats*.

Megan: Why do you thank the state of Maine?

FM: Our bass player is from the state of Maine. A more interesting fact about that record is that we're not actually *inside* the barrels, but in fact *behind* them.

Megan: Oooh, trivia!

Dr. Grip: Trick photography, it's trick photography!

Roxy: I am so good.

FM: I also maintain that that's the best album the Automatics released.

Dr. Grip: I like that one, too.

Megan: Yeah, I just listened to it the other day.

Before you were the Epoxies, you were playing out as the Adhesives for a while.

FM: For a little while yeah, 'til we found out that



there was another Adhesives about a hundred miles from us.

Viz: They were none too happy about it.

Dr. Grip: We started crackin' skulls.

FM: In a side note related to both of the last two questions – I just got an email from one of the British Automatics' guys, including like...

Dr. Grip: "We're gonna fuckin' kill you."

FM: Yeah, basically. He called me gay and gave me a giant cease and desist speech and threatened to beat me up and said litigation would be forthcoming.

Roxy: Really? When was this?

FM: This was the day before we left. I didn't bother to respond to him.

Roxy: Oh my god, like everyone came out to see their reunion shows expecting to see you guys?

Dr. Grip: Maybe because they haven't been a band in twenty years.

Viz: They did tour the U.S. Their bass player was on *Fresh Air*.

FM: I really wanted to go see them. I'm sure they got really pissed at us by the end of the whole thing.

Dr. Grip: I'm sure a lot of people showed up to see you guys.

FM: Seriously.

Megan: So, what are you a doctor of?

Dr. Grip: Rhythmology.

Megan: I hear you're also a bit of an inventor.

Dr. Grip: That's Viz, actually. I'm a bit of a hack inventor. Viz is the real genius.

Megan: Was someone working on a bottle cap button maker?

Dr. Grip: Oh, that was me.

Megan: Did that work out?

Dr. Grip: I don't have the funding currently to pursue that project, but I still maintain that it could be a really great thing. How did that get out? How did you hear about that?

Megan: I dug.

Dr. Grip: At this phase they're extremely labor intensive. They involve a pair of pliers and some contact paper and a lot of pen and ink drawings. I didn't even make decent printouts or anything. It'd probably be cheaper to just give someone twenty bucks to make 'em.

FM: We're really interested in mechanization anyway, so it's appropriate.

Megan: Okay, this one you all have to answer: What's your favorite book?

Roxy: Crap.

Dr. Grip: Goodness sakes.

Roxy: *The Guide to Getting It On*. (Paul Joannides)

FM: What's the most pithy answer I could up with?

Roxy: I do enjoy the Sweet Valley High series.

Megan: Don't we all!

FM: Right now, in the van, I'm reading *The Screwtape Letters* by C. S. Lewis and I just got done reading *You Are Going to*



WE ENJOY ALL THE MEATS
OF OUR CULTURAL STEW

Prison. (Jim Hogshire)

Dr. Grip: Which I'm currently working on. It's very entertaining.

Viz: And informative.

Dr. Grip: Yeah, primarily informative.

Roxy: I also enjoy textbooks on abnormal psychology.

Viz: Oh, I know....

Dr. Grip: *Ferdinand and the Bull*.

Viz: I don't know if it is really my favorite, but I guess it is.

Dr. Grip: It's called *The Story of Ferdinand*. (Munro Leaf) It's a children's book. It's fantastic. I recommend it to everyone.

Viz: That and *On Food and Cooking*. (Harold McGee)

Dr. Grip: It's not an M. F. K. Fisher book, but...

FM: I like books about TV.

Megan: *TV Guide*?

Dr. Grip: Exactly!

FM: No, informative books about TV. I don't care about what's on.

Dr. Grip: I like books based on late seventies television shows.

FM: The *Starsky and Hutch* series.

Dr. Grip: The *Grease* photo novel.

FM: *What's Happenin'*. That's a good one.

Roxy: Okay, that deteriorated quickly.

Megan: Turbonegro said, "Why do American punk rock boys always go out with the American new wave hooker girls? I don't know. I don't like it." Respond.

FM: "In Norway we only go..." – how does it go again? – "In

Norway we go out with ourselves and commit homosexual activity."

They can teach us all a lesson, Turbonegro.

Viz: Because new wave girls are hot.

Dr. Grip: They always have spiky hair.

FM: And stickers in all the right places.

Megan: On the topic of romance, if you placed a personal ad for the entire band, what would it say?

Viz: I'm not a ladies man.

FM: You want to take this one, Roxy?

Roxy: No way!

Dr. Grip: You might want to hit pause on the tape machine while we try to think of a clever answer for that one.

FM: I had this idea that we should all take out personal ads.

Dr. Grip: I remember that.

FM: And put them up on the website, but also put them up on Yahoo and whatnot and see

what kind of responses we could get. Mine said, "My superior technology will enslave you." I think that's a pretty good one right there.

FM: Yeah, let's go with that.

Megan: Since you don't have any of your lyrics in your liner notes, what's been the worst mangling of your lyrics that you've heard?

Roxy: "I make some molded plastic." I think it was even more mangled than that.

Dr. Grip: "I make some moldy plastic."

FM: I can only imagine.

Dr. Grip: Actually, one that I've gotten was, "Talking with your toes" on "Need More Time." "Time can go slow" is what I think it actually is, right? Which I fully believed were the lyrics for quite a while.

Megan: Have you ever had anything blow up on stage? Or have you had to get all McGuyver?

Dr. Grip: Have we ever had anything NOT blow up on stage?

FM: McGuyver happens every single time.

Megan: You've got the duct tape.

Viz: I think Spinal Tap is

probably the main...

Dr. Grip: Pods and touchstones.

Viz: We're working towards that. Somewhere between McGuyver and Spinal Tap. We've used the Stonehenge pieces on several occasions.

Roxy: Every show.

Dr. Grip: Isn't that great? It'll probably happen tonight.

Viz: It'll be more like the pods tonight, though. It won't be as big of a deal, but...

FM: What you're gonna see is us spending like an hour and a half trying to make something work, that wouldn't be that cool even if it did work, but then it'll half work, so it'll be way less cool than if it didn't work at all.

Viz: Which makes it cooler than that.

FM: We had a bubble machine that we spent eons on and no time getting ready and finally when it was time for the big moment - this is actually the feather projecting device - we finally click it on and four feathers go, like two feet, gently waft onto the stage. Tadah!

Roxy: When the bubble machine worked it was fabulous. People were like, "Shut that off!"

FM: The bubble machine was kind of overpowering.

Dr. Grip: We had an incredible bubble machine for a few shows.

Roxy: It was a violent bubble machine!

Megan: It was violent?

Dr. Grip: It was so powerful that, literally everyone in the first five rows were going like this [shields face] and begging us to turn it off. And that was constructed by Viz here out of ...

Roxy: A soup can.

Dr. Grip: A lottery machine - what was it?

Viz: It was a lottery promo display of a guy who pulls tickets out of his stocking and smiles.

Dr. Grip: And a soup can, right?

Viz: Yeah.

Dr. Grip: And a juice bottle.

Viz: And a couple of fans that we found.

Dr. Grip: That one was incredible. The one that was purchased was really piss poor.

Viz: We really need to make our own devices for that kind of stuff.

Dr. Grip: You can't trust anybody.

Viz: The commercially available stuff just isn't that good at all.

Dr. Grip: Or up to the Epoxies' specs at all. It needs to be annoying.

Viz: It needs to be annoyingly powerful and incredibly fragile.

FM: Extreme and in your face.

Megan: So, Shock, what's so special about you?

Shock: What's so special about me?

Megan: Yeah.

Dr. Grip: He's a clone.

Shock: That would be the answer.

Roxy: Cloned directly from Viz.

FM: He's only six weeks old.

Dr. Grip: And he plays bass like a motherfucker, man!

Viz: That was all part of the plan.

FM: He was programmed in utero, so that really helped him along.



MY SUPERIOR
TECHNOLOGY
WILL ENSLAVE YOU.

FM: Bioengineering helped a lot, by all indications.

Megan: You guys have just toured the west coast so far?

Roxy: Yeah.

Megan: Do you have any plans go east at all?

FM: Yes, indeed we do.

Megan: Because I heard that you might be trying to escape your fate of getting married in D.C.

Roxy: Ahhh yes, I guess we will not be playing D.C.

FM: I've worked something out, so...

Roxy: Sounds like I'm going to be sold again.

Megan: What's the best heckle that you've heard at a show?

Roxy: "You're gay! You guys are gay!"

Dr. Grip: "Fuck you, just play!" 'Cause we'll stand around looking at our little toys.

FM: "Please stop doing your annoying shit!"

Viz: "Stop doing that shit and just play!"

Dr. Grip: "That was an Adam Ant rip-off!" when we were doing "Need More Time." Which isn't actually.

FM: It's a complete Adam Ant rip-off!

Dr. Grip: "Need More Time"?

FM: Yeah, the "oh-eo-we-oh"s.

Dr. Grip: Oh, the "oh-eo-we-oh"s, yeah. I talked to the guy afterwards and he was very happy that he'd noticed.

Roxy: Then there's Flip Off Guy in Seattle, who just stands there and goes like this [flips two birds up high], but that's kind of a common thing.

Dr. Grip: Yeah, the punk rock salute.

Megan: It's respect.

FM: At least he's not spitting on us. Gobbing.

Dr. Grip: True. It would be a really high compliment, though.

Roxy: Although he likes it when I jump on him. I heard he went into shock when I jumped on him.

Dr. Grip: Gobbing?

FM: A big loogie spit thing.

Viz: That's just what they say.

FM: Back in the old days when it was slam dancing.

Dr. Grip: Right, 'cause you had punkers.

FM: They have it all worked out to a science.

Megan: Finally, I've got a little game called "Fuck, Marry, Kill." I'll give you three people and you have to put them each into one of the categories. We've got Faye Fife of the Rezillos, Josie Cotton, and Nick Lowe.

Dr. Grip: I don't know what Josie Cotton looks like at all.

Shock: She's not bad.

Viz: Is there a time frame on this?

Shock: Yeah, can we go back in time?

Megan: You can validate it however you want.

Dr. Grip: I don't want to kill Nick Lowe, but I don't want to fuck him or marry him.

Viz: I'd marry Nick Lowe, but I wouldn't want to fuck him.

FM: No, he's probably the richest one of the three of them.

Shock: So that'd be the guy to marry.

Viz: That'd be the most advantageous.

Dr. Grip: It wouldn't matter to me rich-wise, I like his songs the best.

Viz: I'd probably fuck Josie Cotton.

Dr. Grip: I don't want to kill any of them.

Roxy: I think I'd fuck Faye Fife. I'd probably kill Josie Cotton.

Dr. Grip: Yeah, that might be the way to go.

Viz: And marry Nick Lowe?

Dr. Grip: He writes really good songs, too. He could write some really good songs for us, I think.

Roxy: I hear Faye Fife is looking pretty damn good these days.

FM: Yeah, I think Josie's gonna get the axe, unfortunately.

Dr. Grip: Yeah, she goes down.

Viz: No offense to her, should she happen to read this.





I might throw my guitar like a boomerang at their head...

An Interview by Namella J. Kim
with the Angriest Band in LA
— Or the World for That Matter

THIS FUSE!

Hey you!

You are being robbed, my good people. The best bands in the world are hidden amidst a cesspool of mediocrity and bulbous, over-hyped marketing ventriloquist dummy-heads. Most of you are well aware of this injustice. Many of you still aren't. It's no fault of your own. Corporations spend billions of dollars in research to keep you ignorant so they can keep themselves satiated with designer produce and yacht club memberships. How much longer can we stand to hear the next batch of crap some corporate dickhead in a weenie suit deems "cool", "edgy", "alternative", "cutting edge", "genius", or my most personally despised term — "brilliant"? Can't our intelligence level stand up to this brainwashing for the sake of no longer lining the satin pockets of these record industry lemmings? Take a proud and mighty stand against the way things are. Make a change to rebel against these social leeches by looking behind the curtain and calling out the fucking coward shit wizard. There are bands that are tugging away the ropes to expose the elaborate facade of dancing, musical, floating turds. One of these bands that answer the call for revolution is The Fuse!. These three young men have been showing what it takes to play by their rules, stray from tradition, set a new standard, break the laws, and do a mighty fine job of rocking — all in the same night. When asked about their influences, singer F-2 seethes while responding, "We have *no* influences!". There has been nothing like The Fuse! in the history of rock'n'roll. They are **RAZORCAKE** 46 not a derivative product. They

are not reinventing the wheel. They're putting nitrous ox in the carb and revving the 440 Hemi-engine until it blows. The Fuse! do not have anything released as of this interview, but they have quite a few projects in the works. If they happen to trample into your town, take the time to attend the show and experience the concert you will be talking about for years to come. A show by The Fuse! exhibits a feral anarchy like a Golding-esque stampede of mad children. There are body parts flying into view while women shake their bodies and guitars shimmer under the glaring lights. A garage psychotropic trip perhaps, but maybe it's just your enthusiasm finally convincing you to let go of your inhibitions. A rousing "Hey!" gets the crowd going further down the rabbit hole and into the lecherous world of The Fuse! Take the blue pill.

We entered the cone of silence (Lords of Altamont tour van — thanks for the loaner guys!) on the parking lot of a bar in the middle of one of the seediest corners in all of Hollywood: Sunset and La Brea Blvd.

Present for this interview were:

F-2: singer

F-1: drummer

Nam: Why did you guys start the band?

F-1: Why not? It's about time for a band to do something new, something exciting.

F-2: I had this idea for a band and I was like, "I better do it before somebody else does." And it's been two years and nothing has even come close anyway. So, I was like, "What's the point?"

Nam: So, does the scene totally suck?

F-2: Except for four or five bands, the scene

totally does suck.

Nam: Like who?

F-1: Who cares?

Nam: No, I mean who doesn't suck?

F-2: The four or five people you see me talking to at shows do not suck. I don't want to namedrop.

Nam: Nobody's gonna know who they are until *you* tell us. You might as well give a "shout out" to your "homies".

F-1: I don't need to give a shout out. They know who they are. (That is the four or five bands that don't suck. If you're questioning whether or not you are one of them, you automatically suck.)

Nam: So, where are you guys from?

F-1: I live in Downey.

F-2: I live in Norwalk. [pause] California.

(Both are suburbs just south of Los Angeles)

Nam: How did you guys meet?

F-1: We both had mutual friends and his old band broke up and F-2 wanted to start a garage band and I also wanted to start a garage band. It all worked out well in the end.

F-2: We never got around to playing the garage part, though.

F-1: We don't know the garage chords. Doh!

F-2: [self defeated] We tried.

Nam: What are you guys currently working on?

F-1: I am drinking Bacardi and juice. Currently, I'm just sitting here talking to you.

F-2: I'm debating whether I should go

inside the bar and get some drinks.

Nam: What was the inspiration behind the band?

F-1: Well, like I said, I was looking for a band and they were looking for a drummer. That's what inspired me.

Nam: Because drummers are whores.

F-1: Okay, I'm not gonna call you on that one.

F-2: I used to just play in my room in front of my little cousins and they would all go crazy. I figured, "Hey, if the kids are into it, if my little cousins are into it..."

F-1: Then we might as well get some free drinks out of it. Most of the shows that we play...well, I don't want to pay for the show so I might as well play it, that way we get in for free and get some free beer.

F-2: I wait for people to compare us to bands we've never heard of so I can go to the record store and find that record.

Nam: Who are some of the bands that inspired you? Where do you cull your creativity?

F-1: I like a lot of old traditional music, like old mariachi and African drums.

Nam: Like African rain dance bands? (I heart Chaino.)

F-2: Yeah, like African rain dance bands with a lot of group sing alongs and big mosh parts. Mexican mosh bands!

F-1: But not mosh like the nineties, MTV youth culture phenomenon.

F-2: Mosh - like the rite of passage with razorblades on your fist in a big drug induced frenzy. The real stuff, not this, "Ugh, I got cut with some guy's spike necklace," bullshit.

F-1: We look to the Congo for our inspiration.

F-2: None of this safety pin through the ear. We're talking about those big old bamboo sticks.

F-1: Damn crusty kids.

Nam: Some plates on the lips, too?

F-1: [a helicopter flies overhead] Man, I hope you get that fucking ghetto bird on the recording.

Nam: Yeah don't worry I think I'll tag it as "Apocalypse Now! With The Fuse!" Okay, so how long have you guys been The Fuse!?

F-1: The Fuse! has been around for two years.

F-2: Give or take a couple of years.

Nam: Do you feel you have progressed during said years? I mean, I had no idea what you guys were about until I saw you a year and a half ago. That was pretty early on at some weird bar in Culver City.

F-1: Yeah, I remember that show. It was a great show.

F-2: I don't see it as progress. I just see it as writing the songs and then saying, "Okay this is our new set."

F-1: The only thing that has progressed is my alcohol intake. My tolerance level for hard drugs and alcohol has definitely gone up. Yes, that's quite a bit of progress.

F-2: Being in a band helps you discover...new drinks!

Nam: Do you guys have anything set for release? I know you are currently headed into the studio. Can you let us in on some of that action?

F-1: We're gonna go into the studio and record twelve songs for ourselves and I guess we're gonna release it with Radio Beat Records.

Nam: Oh, George. He's a great guy.

F-2: He's gonna put it out and distribute it and all that stuff. We waited a while because I didn't want us to be the flavor of the month. I don't want someone to just put it out and then forget about us. I wanted us to do a record with somebody who was really into the band and is a friend. I don't want

to look back in a couple of years and think we compromised on certain things. That's one thing I have never done with this band, I never compromised anything. I figured we could make something with this band and maybe travel or something like that. I mean it would be great if we can have our friends there with us rather than some other, shady people. I see some people from labels and they're like your friends from work. They're not your real friends, they're just people you have to see every so often. I guess if you get along with them, you would consider them to be your friends, but they're not your *real* friends. I'm talking about your *real* friends.

F-1: That's the good thing about George, he's a really good friend of ours. Too many people say this town is filled with shady characters and you don't want to deal with them. You really want to deal with people who you know.

Nam: Who would you like to work with? If you guys could have total creative control - producers, labels, etc.

F-1: Kapow (Records) is pretty cool. I think we're gonna do a single with them. The guys from Hostage (Records) are pretty cool, but I don't know if the "bros" from OC (Orange County) will be down with us.

F-2: We played a show in OC and we just weren't that good.

F-1: They don't take too well to the tight pants and skinny ties. I think if we wore Hurley shirts they would have taken to us much better. You know what I'm sayin'? If we had worn Hurley shorts and fucking Blink-182, we would have won them over for sure.

F-2: I think the people in Orange County are gonna wait until we are on GSL Records or something.

F-1: Or Hostage, maybe then they will like

**We look to
the
Congo
for our
inspiration.**

Photos by: Retodd



F-3

us.

Nam: Wait. [dramatic pause] *Fuck that shit!*

F-1: Fuck LA. Fuck Orange County. If we make any money we're moving to Portland, actually we're gonna move to Eugene, Oregon.

F-2: We're gonna move when we get some money together. I mean I don't want to be like thirty and still playing in LA. I'd rather be thirty and play somewhere where they haven't seen us before.

F-1: Where nobody fucking knows us.

Nam: Spread the fucking gospel, my friend.

F-2: The only thing I'm looking forward to now with the band is perhaps going overseas, and that's about it. I set my goals kind of small. First, my goal was to start playing with the bands I used to see play. I've kind of done that already and it sneaks up on you. Then you have to think, "What am I going to do next?" So, now my goal is to travel overseas and see the other people's reaction. I think the best part of the band is seeing other people's reactions to our music. Sometimes I feel like I'm getting as much of a kick from seeing their reaction as they are from watching us when we play. It's mutual. Especially when they are standing in the front with their arms crossed and they're afraid to move.

F-1: [laughing] We get that a lot actually.

F-2: I don't know what they are afraid of. I mean are they gonna be afraid to move and go to the bathroom because I might throw my guitar like a boomerang at their head? You don't have to be at our show if you don't want to.

F-1: I don't know whether to take it as a compliment or take it like it's a total smack.

F-2: You can't deny the fact that it's a reaction. Some artists expect the crowd to hoot and holler and clap and all that shit. I think it's a reaction either way. If you just stand there or you simply walk out, it's a reaction. You pretty much spoiled their perception of what they thought bands could be onstage and what they can get away with. Especially all those haters in other bands going, "Who is this playing this show? Why are you playing this show? This sucks." Well, maybe your band sucks and maybe that's why you're in the audience and not *playing* the show!

Nam: Yeah! So what's your take on the LA scene right now? I know you have many interesting comments to share.

F-1: Like I said, I'm not gonna name drop, but there are bands that we like and people in the bands that we love hanging out with. It's all great but 90% of the bands here that we've seen are pure shit. How does that shit make it out of the fucking rehearsal space or garage? How? How?!

F-2: We could play two shows in LA on

the same night and one show would fucking suck and then we'd drive three blocks down the street and it would be the best show. So, I don't know. There's no sense of consistency within the LA scene. Maybe I have an unrealistic expectation from reading these punk rock scene books, but to me the LA scene is...I don't know. I look forward more to leaving (LA) than staying. Well, that says a lot about what I think of the LA scene.

F-1: I think it has a lot to do with clubs, promoters and bookers, and people here in LA. There are very few clubs that will allow new bands play and then if they do, they act like they are doing *you* a favor. There's one club in particular that I'm not gonna name because it would just popularize it more but their free Monday night residencies are a fucking joke. They get a band that draws really well and they say, "Okay you can play here every Monday night. You

F-1: The Fuse! has been around for two years.



fucking dollar sign for these clubs. We were lucky enough to get the opportunity to tour even though we didn't have anything out last year. All the cities were great. Eureka (California) was awesome, Portland (Oregon) was great; everywhere else but here – it's all so fucking money driven here.

F-2: I mean there are some really, super, awesome people out here in LA and if it wasn't for those people, I think the band would have folded a long time ago. It's a real delicate thing that holds the people I appreciate together, because it feels like we're struggling. It's like we're swimming upstream the whole time. Other bands are content rehashing a bunch of done, sixties rock'n'roll riffs and they're like, "Oh cool, I've got this old amp and some pedals." Everything sounds the same. Years from now people are going to be into the real sixties stuff and not this 2000 version of the sixties music.

Nam: You guys get compared to some real heavy-duty bands like The Who and the Jam. How do you feel about these comparisons?

F-1: I don't know.

F-2: I get pissed because sometimes I feel like when I'm at work, some people look at a person with a shaved head and loose clothing and think he's in a gang. Well, just because we wear suits, we're supposed to sound like The Jam! No we don't. Show me a song by The Jam that sounds like ours because I'd fucking love to hear it. It must be on some B-Side compilation I've never heard of!

F-1: It's a mixed bag, being compared to all these crazy bands.

F-2: It's great that people say that, but to tell you the truth it never registers with me because I never see what they are talking about. It's great being compared to these bands instead of being compared to some bands that I totally hate, that would be pretty frustrating, but I'd get over it. I get over a lot of frustrating aspects about this band.

F-1: I think when people come up to us and say, "Yeah that was great, it reminded me of The Who," they're just trying to be nice.

F-2: Music has this quality. Once it leaves, once you perform, once it's played and once it's in the room, each person can perceive it however way they want. Sometimes I see a band and I think they sound like something and then when I tell someone else, "Wow this sounds like this band. Especially when they go into this interlude." Then the person thinks, "I never heard that." That does not mean I'm wrong or right. Everybody has a right to their own experience with a band, but your question is, "How do we like being compared to

such and such bands?" Well, it's not that we're belittling people for not figuring out or deciphering who we're trying to sound like. It's just that I don't see the influence at all. Sometimes it feels like the way we present ourselves live is overwhelming. I think people are trying to make sense of it. It's like being attacked on the street and having the cops come and try to write a report. You're trying to describe the guy, but so much happened that you're probably describing the wrong guy altogether. That criminal will never get captured and that's like us. They're trying to make sense of it and trying to go with the closest thing they can imagine. I don't even think about it that much. I'm probably giving it the most thought right now.

Nam: Generalization is pretty stupid, but there are a lot of stupid people out there. You just have to knock it down to the lowest common denominator.

F-1: People are trying to make a good comment about you and they don't know how, so that's how they do it. It's the best way they know and that's fine.

F-2: It's not wrong. I think it's great because some kid comes up to us wearing baggy jeans and all of a sudden he comes to another show and he's wearing a tailored suit. I think it's great because there's not enough happening right now for people to jump into a trendy thing. There is no trendy thing right now. Like, if I tell someone about a band and they get into it. People ask, "Hey I really like your band, what other bands are you into?" I tell them, "Try buying a Gang of Four record." Maybe he will see what other people saw in us and he'll tell us, "Hey that's the greatest record." If all of a sudden we were to play in LA and there were some random people and a week later we came back and they're all dressed sharp and listening to soul music, I think that would be fucking great. I'm not all protective or territorial about what we are doing: [sardonic tone] "This is my scene." As long as it's in the context of what we are trying to do. I don't want to see a bunch of dudes come up talking like cholos and dressing all mod, that would be stupid. The way things are right now, people are saying they want to start gangs and they're getting all violent and all that shit. As long as they have enough respect for what we do and keep it in the realm of what it is and maybe pushing forward a little bit because a lot has happened since the sixties. You can't deny that. Seventies bands act like twenty years never happened. [laughter all around] Why do you buy cars from the seventies? Because you're fucking broke.

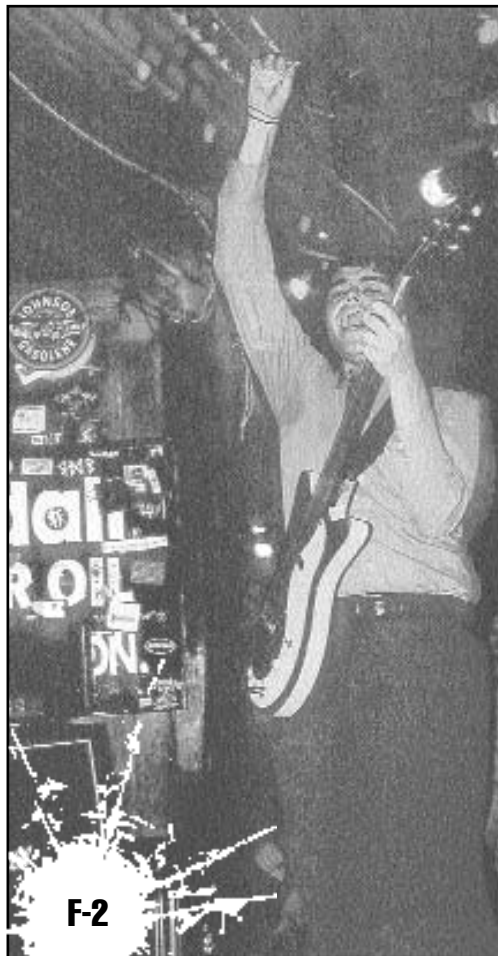
Nam: What's the working title for your upcoming album?

F-1: We still have to work on songs. We have to finish it. I think it's the last thing we have to worry about. I personally don't care what the album is called.

Nam: Any other comments?

F-2: Sometimes people talk to me and get

to know me and they're like, "Wow, I thought you were going to be an asshole and have a chip on your shoulder. It's not like I'm a negative person. I'm just real



F-2

F-2: Give or take a couple of years.

passionate about what I do. Sometimes I seem to get on people's cases because they're not into the kind of stuff that I'm into as much as I am. Sometimes it seems a little confrontational.

Nam: What are you into?

F-2: I'm into a bunch of different things. It's impossible. Sometimes I crave having a good discussion with somebody about something that is meaningful. Sometimes I come across just a little too...

F-1: Confused?

F-2: Yeah, people just go, "Whatever." People then say I'm a pretty cool guy and they didn't know I was going to be like this. Even in interviews people say, "Man you guys sound pissed." And you know what? Maybe it's just us being honest. A lack of pretense in these days may come across as being negative because we're living in such a P.C. society where people can't say certain things. It all becomes a pretense. I wish people would be more honest.

F-1: We like to tell it like it is. That pisses people off all the time.

F-2: It's like a strainer. Sometimes if your honesty pisses people off, that's fucking great. I don't want to spread myself too thin and spend my time talking to the wrong people anyway.

F-1: I can't believe these fucking people. I think we're very thankful to all the people that have helped us out.

F-2: We're not ungrateful.

F-1: Every time any of our friends show up to the gigs, I think it's great. When other bands help us out we try to do the same.

F-2: People who think of us as being negative are probably on the wrong side. The people who are our friends chuckle at comments like that, but the people on the other side might take it the wrong way. All it does is fan the flames of their dislike. That's great. Especially with the bands that hate us. Maybe our comments will piss them off so much that maybe the next time they play they will try to do something that's not their style and end up sucking that much more.

Nam: Who does all the songwriting? Where does all the drive come from?

F-1: All the lyrics come from F-2. All the music is a collaborative effort – equal parts, but the lyrics are all his. F-2 writes great lyrics!

Nam: F-2, intense lyrics.

F-2: What stands out?

Nam: There's a lot of drive and anger that comes out.

F-2: To tell you the truth, that's the way it's supposed to be. People from Bob Dylan to people singing folk songs in the Dust Bowl, were all pissed. The best music comes out of struggle. Like the seventies discontent with the British government. Or the sixties discontent with America's participation in the Vietnam War. The best music is born out of discontent. It's so fabricated these days when you watch MTV and you see a bunch of guys who look like they work at skateboard shops. I mean what pisses you off? The fact that you can't ollie as high as your friend. [Guffaws spill out onto the street.]

Nam: Well, that should do it. Do you want to add anything else?

F-1: We're not drunk enough to ramble, so let's cut it right now.

Indie Press Buyout

An Insider's Look into Independent Media Gone Wrong

by Jason Pankoke

***With obvious exceptions, the names and titles have been changed to protect the innocent and sidestep the moronic.*

November 1999

I'm sitting in my car in the parking lot of the publishing service house where I work on the edge of town. Although it's chilly outside, I crack open my front windows to let the sweet air trickle in and mix with the bottled-up toxicity emanating from the precious cargo stacked behind me, several hundred pounds of it.

Cracking open that first carton makes me feel like I have accomplished something worth celebrating for the first time in a long while. I take out a copy of my zine and flip through it, soak it all in. I hold proof that maybe, just maybe, I have what it takes to make it on my own someday.

I realize that, for a while, one or more jobs will be needed to support myself while embarking on this new project. Excited, I rev up the car and back out to take my cargo home, accidentally smashing my tail light into another car's rear bumper. Upon close examination, I see that the other car's bumper suffered one little scratch. Naturally, the colored plastic of my tail light shattered all over the place. I had either inadvertently christened *Micro-Film* or signaled my own doom in the publishing realm.

Early February 2000

I'm sitting in the cheap office chair in my home studio, listening to incredulous but not unexpected news from a friend of mine. She works as a copy editor for *The Nautilus*, our embattled alternative weekly newspaper that has recently weathered abrupt firings. The paper's production manager, in a fit of loyalty to his excised brethren, announced his resignation and the owners are in crisis mode to hire a replacement. Copy Editor leaks the situation to me because she wants to know if I'd be interested in taking a stab at it.



I tell Copy Editor that I would have to think it over. *The Nautilus* has had its ups and downs. Starting in a vein much more radical and funky, the paper became a shell of its former self once the Founder sold it to a media company based in Indiana. Bungled advertising revenues from the get-go had sunk the paper's monetary worth, yet the infusion of cash from the media company's investors hadn't done much other than prolong the paper's life span. Several editors went through the turnstile between 1994 and 2001, and the Founder eventually found himself banished from his own creation. Nothing is sacred there.

I had been involved sporadically with *The Nautilus* over the years, including a several-month stint as Copy Editor myself. Considering the alternatives to our sole alternative press – one conservative daily, one student-run college daily, two or three classifieds tabloids – I know that *The Nautilus* is the only place I want to work. Having had my fill of academic textbooks – the only other “genre” of publication produced in this town – the change in scenery, purpose, and immediate company would be quite appreciated.

Could this be a demented middle ground between gainful employment and no-holds-barred underground activity that might help make life interesting?

Late February 2000

I'm sitting in a coffee shop in downtown, across from the President and Vice-President of the media company that owns *The Nautilus*, as they divulge their plans for turning the paper around. For a purported job interview, these two guys wind up talking most of the time.

President is a life-long “newspaper man” who owns five

weeklies in Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, and intends to add three to five papers to the roster per year. His kick is to infuse *The Nautilus* with hard-hitting stories the likes of which would not appear in the other local papers. Vice President was enticed to jump ship from a rival weekly to embellish his business expertise on the President's publications. His kick is to raise advertising rates to become more competitive, as well as establish promotional modules to sell prospective clients on placing ads year round. At times, it feels like the duo's particular mantras come from completely different parts of the playing field. I find them earnest yet full of their own untested greatness.

I decide I have nothing to lose and put in my notice at the publishing service house on the edge of town, yet a trickle of trepidation scoots down my spine.

March 2000

I work nearly thirty hours my first two days on the job, almost fifty my first week, and wonder what I have just gotten myself into.

April 2001

I'm lying on the office floor late Friday afternoon, almost beside myself, after most of the others have gone home. The Arts Editor and Movie Editor sit near me at one of the Ad Reps' desks. We talk very gravely about whether we would show up Monday morning and be able to get into the office, let alone have jobs.

About a month ago, right around my one-year anniversary as Production Manager, the rumors started springing up that Investor No. 1 was getting sick and tired of dumping money into a losing cause. Although his funds indeed float all five of the weeklies, he apparently has an option that will allow him to pull money from the specific papers not performing well. Since our paper has *never* made money, due to very unsound, contract-less methods remedied only recently, any funds yanked would immediately hurt. Combine this situation with our equally hot-under-the-collar landlord demanding several months' worth of unpaid rent, plus the virtual abolishment of the word "raise" from our vocabulary, and suddenly *The Nautilus* skates on thin ice.

What else led to this predicament? Various attempts by the President and Vice President to make their presence known on-site have been met with trepidation. The ill-advised hiring of a less-than-adequate editor in 2000 caused internal headaches as he continuously allowed editorials bordering on the juvenile, much of it his own writing, that pissed off the community to no end. Editor-less since the fall of 2000 and with nary a freelance budget in sight, all of the Section Editors and the Assistant Editor have to self-manage, at times stretching their faculties to the limit.

That said, the paper finally verges on toppling over the abyss so many naysayers think should have already swallowed it whole.

July 2001

I'm sitting with my feet up on an Ad Rep's desk late one Tuesday night, taking a break from production work to stare out the front glass windows and allow my frustrations a respite. I usually don't sit around with chips on my shoulder, but it is simply one of those nights. We've had shaky ground erected underneath us for the short-term with another potential windfall predicted for August, lest the President find new investors or a buyer. Our salaries now come right out of the President's pocket.

I work downtown late at night every Monday and Tuesday in order to get the paper ready. I rarely log more than forty hours a week, but twenty-two to twenty-six of that comes by 9 A.M. Wednesday, when the printer's courier picks up the flats. It normally takes me all these stacked hours to compose the paper on the computer, print out proofs, correct

proofs, print out final lasers, paste them up, and cut in hard-copy ads where needed.

This means I coast from Wednesday afternoon on, but it amounts to an anomaly rather than a benefit. Keeping hours this uneven has resulted in off-kilter sleeping and eating patterns, with my energy level often bordering on the catatonic. Suggestions have been brought up to spread the editorial deadlines across the week to provide me with a more evenly paced workload. This would help somewhat. I like this job, but it leaves me quite ragged.

My only dependable companion on these dank evenings is the gnarled, half-decapitated mannequin standing in the back room where the printer and lightbox sit. With a surface texture reminiscent of urban decay, she looks like an escapee from an animated Tool music video. Often, I feel like how she looks.

September 2001

I'm sitting down at the front meeting table along with the rest of staff, listening loosely as the well-dressed woman introduces us to the positive achievements of *The Nautilus's* new owners. As she goes down the list of formalities – and dodges our queries concerning the company's practice of firing employees from pick-up businesses brought into their "family" – I zone out the window at the people walking about freely. Heh, business as usual.

Somehow, the now ex-President walked a crooked line to keep the paper from going under. First, the owner of a local music club and the operators of several local radio stations expressed interest in purchasing the paper, but ultimately balked. Then, the owners of another local music club were approached, although they took a wait-and-see approach. A local car-dealer entrepreneur and a former *Nautilus* editor then made an inquiry, but their meager capital backed an iffy business plan. Rumors abounded that the club/radio tandem intended to launch their own entertainment paper that would compete for *The Nautilus's* readers and revenue. Somehow, this leverage was used to sucker a deal out of another local radio group operated by a communications conglomerate from Michigan, playing to the cutthroat one-upmanship mentality that commercial stations are notorious for.

Naturally, the phantom competitor hasn't materialized. The ex-President and ex-Vice President attempted to pull a fast one by having themselves hired on by their successors as consultants – in effect, allowing them to run the paper as they had always intended without footing the bill! Several of my co-workers called them on the carpet by appealing to the newly hired general manager of the conglomerate's local stations. After attaining the confidence of the



head office in Michigan, she told the traumatic duo from Indiana that they were dismissed. It was not a mystery that, had their scheme worked and they navigated *The Nautilus* successfully out of the mire, they intended to sell their other papers to these people as well.

I know what's coming next. We'll invariably have to conform the paper into whatever the radio lackeys want. I don't understand this scenario, but what's more, how can *they*? Why would a conglomerate venture into publishing for the first time by buying a financially failing alternative weekly when the economic state of newspapers across the United States has been absolutely unstable?

October 2001

I'm standing in my office on a Monday afternoon, looking over a proof of the cover we are running this week. The story is about local residents staying put in lower-income areas of town and attempting to drive out the drug dealers and prostitutes. The article's author also provided photos, none of them attention-grabbing enough for the cover even though they are serviceable for the inside spread. Still, one of them makes the cover out of necessity.

In walks the radio group's general manager, who had been a few paces down the hall talking to our new Editor, a vast improvement over the Boy Scout we had last summer. The General Manager wants to see the cover, so I show her. She sort of smiles, offers a few encouraging words, and then goes on her way.

At this stage, all of us feel that *The Nautilus* now has a chance. Utilizing the cash flow that we are supposedly receiving from the radio group, we can reinstate the freelance talents as well as new blood that can only add dimension to the paper. Certain alterations have already been put into effect. Out are the back-pages personals and sex ads, in are expanded classifieds and car dealer ads. Out is the center-spread club guide, integrated back into the weekly calendar. Inevitable will be the cross-promotion of the radio group's individual stations, all of an ilk not quite in tune with the paper's traditional readership. Change is minimal at this point, and the radio group promises no interference with editorial content.

Mm-hmmmmmmmmmm.

December 5, 2001

I'm sitting down in my office, after coming in late yet again thanks to another endless Tuesday night. I haven't been here for

half an hour when the Editor walks in and asks, "Can we talk?" I nod. He closes the door.

Without fanfare, he tells me that, due to the company-wide budget revisions handed down by the head office, my position is terminated effective immediately. He says that performance has nothing to do with the decision.

I sit here with my best poker face. Inside, I groan.

He goes on to tell me that the Advertising Design Dude will take on my work temporarily, and that the company has been studying other similar weeklies with the intent of instituting a new "model" to increase office efficiency. Or, something like that.

About all I can say is, "I'm sorry to hear this."

He says that he wouldn't hold it against me one bit if I wanted to gather my things and walk right out. I have no intention on being so rash. The last thing I want is for the Advertising Design Dude to have to go through the crush I felt when I first started this job nearly two years ago. I continue puttering while the office is all but vacant during the lunch hour, and sit the Dude down for a crash course in my procedures and electronic organization after he returns. I then take two or three trips out the back door to dump my shit in my car.

Exiting silently is the best policy, I decide.

February 2002

I'm sitting in a downtown club one evening, not one block away from my former place of employment, when former co-worker Edward Burch sits down next to me to slug a pint. He recently became Music Editor at the paper, but also became the second person that winter to have his duties revoked. Edward's musical partner, Jay Bennett, had been given the heave-ho from the lauded pop band Wilco over the summer. The duo has been recording demos for their debut disc, *The Palace at 4 A.M. (Part 1)*, effectively occupying Edward's attentions. These topics color our slurred discussions.

Two more former comrades eventually fall. After begging reassurance from the radio group's accountant that he would have a job upon returning from a month-long vacation in New York over the holidays, the paper's Business Manager was told two weeks after his return that he had only one more week left. The Assistant Editor became badgered to sign agreements redefining his job and placing him under scrutiny; several refusals later, he lost his job as well.

I'm sure there's a drinking song to be found in here somewhere. Edward?

Early June 2002

I'm sitting down in a bar and grill in downtown, right next to the club not one block away from my former place of employment. Across from me is the Arts Editor, a genuine sweetheart, and we're talking about *Micro-Film* for a feature article scheduled to run in the paper at the end of the month. Of course, anything to get the word out on my zine is game, but doing so in *The Nautilus* – sorry, launched anew as *The LandScape* – just feels weird. A few days from now, the Advertising Design Dude – now the Creative Director – and the Copy Editor – now Copy Editor/Graphic Designer – will wreak havoc with me in an alleyway, shooting photos to run with the story.

Friends ask me what I think about the paper, post-Pankoke. I do



little more than shrug my way out of answering the question, even though they just want to know my opinion about the look of the paper rather than its content or imagined behind-the-scenes machinations. Leafing through any given issue of *The LandScape*, I get the impression that the radio group somehow arrived at a new overall feel gleaned from studying the “best” qualities of the “best” weeklies from around the country. Strangely, this must mean “generic” is the visual vibe of the moment. The paper stock is much nicer, as colors pop vibrantly unlike before, yet it only calls undue attention to the rushed look of the cover art. Photography is of a typical news-journalism aesthetic, while illustrations and political cartoons have been absent for quite some time (unless you count the ubiquitous syndicated strips, like *This Modern World* and *Red Meat*). Ad counts were noticeably lean through the winter and spring, although it looks like they’ve blocked more per page as of late. I still shrug, because it’s simply out of my hands.

For whatever reasons, *The Nautilus/LandScape* survives, and although its rabble-rousing (and lawsuit-inducing) days are long gone, it still packs enough editorial virtue between its covers that our Central Illinois college town needs to covet it dearly. Lengthy news stories covering unpopular topics in-depth – bloated university salaries, mental illness, inconsistent property taxes, racist mascots – appear each week without fail. Colorful interviews and features give testament to this town’s diversity – a look at an African-American owned beauty salon, a farewell to a beloved greasy spoon – while local arts of all stripes receive ample space, from long-gone movie theaters to a makeshift gallery’s opening to summer Shakespeare theater. Cantankerous columnists cut loose with their criticisms on social and political issues, while regular features take note of the significant (community member profiles, slow food reports), the mundane (layman science lessons, restaurant food critiques), and the superfluous (wine etiquette, dream analysis). The event calendar is still the most thorough in town, at times highlighting non-profit, alternative, and do-it-yourself items of interest. Music and movies round things out, often stressing the eclectic and indie. Come to think of it, the editorial aspects really haven’t changed very much.

Did corporate money truly save *The Nautilus*? I guess it’s still too soon to tell if the radio group will ever compromise the editorial. At the least, its existence has been extended, which can’t be said of the other four publications that belonged to the *Nautilus*’s former owners. It seems that the Indiana-based mini-empire has crumbled fast and hard. Prior to the sale of *The Nautilus*, they had already shuttered the doors of their Iowa paper back in January 2001. The staff of their Ohio paper walked out recently, while their flagship title in Indiana closed because the money wasn’t there. Their sole remaining weekly, also located in Illinois, actually wasn’t quite theirs from the start. As the Arts Editor explained during my interview, the yahoos have a large balloon payment due on that paper in July and if they can’t pay up, someone takes it away from them.

Ouch.

Late June 2002

I’m sitting behind a table in a convention hall on the campus of Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio. We’re having a blast at the fourth annual Underground Publishing Conference (UPC), organized by the folks who publish *Clamor* magazine. Somewhere on the premises, Mediageek.org bad boy Paul Riismandel, local IMC librarian Ellen Knutson, *Low Hug* editrix A.J. Michel, and squatter-at-heart Dave Powers take turns sitting in on workshops, roaming the floor, and interviewing other media-making visitors. Because I’m the brainiac who rented the table, I stay put the majority of the event’s two days, escaping long enough to see the documentary *Horns and Halos*.

Directed by veteran DIY filmmakers Michael Galinsky and Suki Hawley, *Horns and Halos* follows the thorny path tread by

author J.M. Hatfield after his controversial George W. Bush “tell-all” book *Fortunate Son* is dumped by original publisher St. Martin’s Press and then picked up by New York’s Soft Skull Press. This basement-dwelling small-press house for progressive culture, run at the time (late 1999) by the enigmatic Sander Hicks, intended to capitalize upon the book’s notoriety while sticking it to Dubya in the public eye. What we witness here is not strictly a story about how mass media bludgeons the left-thinking underdog (which is certainly in evidence), but how these mismatched rogues, Hatfield and Hicks, valiantly held their ground until the inevitable collapse. Mere weeks after *Fortunate Son* returned in early 2001, Hatfield was found dead in a hotel room, an apparent suicide. Hicks would soon be forced out of Soft Skull Press by its board members. We

shudder to think that the publishing world could be so fickle and cruel, but it hardly stops us from pressing on.

On a brighter note, I talk to several people I haven’t seen for a while, like Brent Ritzel (*Zine Guide*) and Karen Switzer (*Ker-bloom!*), and I meet many others for the first

time, such as Galinsky, Russ Forster (*8-Track Mind*), Michael Dean (*DIY or Die*), Terra Heinrichs (*Stir Crazy*), Josh Breitbart (Rooftop Films), and Shawn Granton (*Ten Foot Rule*). It’s gratifying to know that we have a broad-based community of media-makers outside the mainstream who not only love what they’re doing, but are willing to constructively talk about technique as well as content. Our stratosphere is not one for reckless gerrymandering or destructive competitiveness, but to infuse our creations with an open-minded liveliness to be shared. We choose the material for our zines and books and newsletters and web sites and micro-movies because of a desire to explore new ideological terrain, a need to record the undocumented, a calling to pummel conventional wisdom, an overture to paint in a different hue. Deficiencies in time, tools, money, and networking have traditionally hampered the underground, but the driven ones have always managed to see their goals through to the end. We believe that stagnation is only for the dead.

I trade a copy of *Micro-Film* for a pair of digest-sized zines bound with twine. It is just another little reminder that the UPC provides a uniquely level playing field for all involved, and it is as infectious as when Dave and I attended this event for the first time in 2000. In fact, *that* venture became the focal point of the only cover story I’ve written to date for the Weekly Formerly Known as *The Nautilus*.

You may insert irony when ready.

July 2002

I’m sitting in my car in the parking lot of Kinko’s after an interview. It’s sweltering, ninety-degree weather, and I wrench off the tie that I put on for the occasion. I try to breathe and have to minimize my efforts until I can get the air conditioning cranked up in my car.

I worked a freelance gig for four months after the infamous December purge, then took two months off to visit my family and produce another issue of *Micro-Film*. Many friends told me to think of the post-*Nautilus* era as a good sign, a chance to move on. Well, where should I go?

Six interviews prior to Kinko’s have turned up nothing. My former employer thrice removed, the publishing service house on the edge of town, would love to have me back but they’re running on a skeleton crew and don’t foresee any hiring until the fall. The university is also in a hiring freeze because the state continues to shave academic budgets. Minimum-wage work is not something I’m used to, but may have to be an option if this shit keeps up.

Later today, I plan to take out a copy of my zine and flip through it, soak it all in, hold the proof that maybe I still have what it takes to make it on my own someday.



Searching for Emma Goldman

by Sean Carswell



Changing the World with Words

My buddy Chris and I were hanging outside the Roxy after the Anti-Flag show. I felt like I feel after a good show: drenched in sweat, ears ringing, throat sore from screaming along with the lyrics. One look at Chris and I could tell he felt the same way. A few people who I kind of knew (guys I'd seen at shows a lot and chatted with enough times to be embarrassed about not knowing their names, but, to be honest, I didn't know their names) came up, and we started to talk about Anti-Flag's set. Gradually, the conversation drifted to the singer's between-song banter, which wasn't really banter at all. It was more like preaching. One of my friends asked why the singer preaches so much, my friend's point being that, with a name like Anti-Flag, anyone could guess what their political slant was. And if the whole crowd is singing along with their songs, chances are pretty good that everyone in the crowd knows what the songs are about. So wouldn't that make the preaching redundant?

Another one of my friends pointed out that it wasn't that he minded the singer's preaching so much, it was just that the singer expressed himself much better in the lyrics, and he should let the lyrics stand for themselves. This, of course, led to the old debate about mixing politics and music. The age-old question was posed, "What good does it do to *sing* about politics if you're not going to actually do something about it? Aren't lyrics just words, after all, and who in history has ever changed the world with words alone?"

"What about Emma Goldman?" one guy asked. "All she did was give lectures, and look at all the good she did. She spoke about birth control when it was considered obscene to talk about it, and she even got arrested in 1916 for it, but she still told a bunch of poor women how to prevent pregnancy. You can't say that wasn't a positive change made by words alone."

"Yeah, but giving birth control information is a very specific thing. It's different from saying, 'War is bad; we shouldn't be over in Afghanistan.' It's not like Emma Goldman thought she could stop a war by talking about it," someone said.

"But she did think that. And the US government feared it when she spoke out against a war. They thought it was so dangerous when people like Emma Goldman spoke out against conscription (drafting people into the military) that Congress made it a crime to speak out against World War I. And when Goldman did it anyway, they stuck her in jail for two years, then deported her after she was done serving her time," the Emma Goldman fan said.

I listened to this friend of mine (whose name I didn't know) talk about Emma Goldman and thought, why does this punk rock kid know so much about a woman who lived a hundred years ago? It's kind of strange.

I thought about it more, though, and realized that it probably

wasn't so strange. For one thing, a lot of punks consider themselves anarchists, and Emma Goldman was the grandmother of anarchy. For another thing, Emma Goldman has become a legend in the punk rock community. Punk bands have been named after her, like Dance Emma Dance and Songs for Emma; the woman who writes the column on punk parenting for *Maximum Rockroll* named her daughter after Emma Goldman; the Swedish punk band Randy sings about her in a few of their songs; and over the years, I've seen Goldman's quotes and Goldman's autobiography, *Living My Life*, in punk houses and underground bookstores and zine libraries all across the country.

Still, I thought, she may be a legend, but she's become a legend mostly in the sense that a lot of people know *of* her, but don't know anything *about* her. So as I stood on the sidewalk outside of the Anti-Flag show, my sweat drying and my friends arguing about punk and politics, I decided that I should write an article about Emma Goldman, for all the punk rock kids who have circle-A's on their leather jackets, for all the music fans who scream along with political lyrics but wonder if all the screaming does anyone any good, for all the women and girls who wish they had a tough-ass female role model, and for anyone else who reads *Razorcake* because they want a look at our society beyond the television-and-Wal-Mart culture. I even wrote the intro to the article in my head.

Then, I promptly forgot about it.

As Chris and I rode home from the show, Chris turned to me and said, "You know, I'm embarrassed to say it, but I don't know anything about Emma Goldman. Do you?"

"Yeah," I said. "I read her autobiography and a bunch of her essays and stuff."

"What's so cool about her?" Chris asked.

I thought about trying to condense her life into a twenty minute car ride – talking about how, even though she was in St. Louis, Missouri when President McKinley was murdered in Buffalo, New York, she was still temporarily arrested for his assassination; or talking about the time when her boyfriend was tarred and branded solely because he was her boyfriend; or talking about how, on one particular day in her life, she was standing in Sweden, after having been kicked out of America and having just recently fled Russia to avoid her own political execution, she faced ten days until her visa expired, and no country in the world would let her in; every government feared her. Rather than talking about how, for large periods of her life, she was considered the most dangerous woman in the world, I just told my favorite Emma Goldman story.

Shake the Hand of the Most Dangerous Woman Alive

When Emma Goldman arrived in San Francisco in 1908, she was met at the train station by a group of police officers, including the police chief himself. The officers didn't directly do anything.

They just made their presence known.

They followed her taxi to her hotel, where four more detectives were waiting for her. Confused and angry, Goldman turned to Alexander Horr, her friend and the person who booked the San Francisco leg of her speaking tour, and asked Horr why the police were following her.

"Don't you know?" Horr said. "Rumors have gone abroad that you are coming to San Francisco to blow up the American fleet now in the harbor."

Initially, Goldman thought that Horr was kidding with her. The police continued to tail her, though, and reporters and photographers tracked her down to ask about her plans to blow up the fleet. In her typical, no-bullshit manner, Goldman told reporters, "Why waste a bomb?"

As it turned out, all the attention that the media and police gave Goldman sparked interest in her speeches. People who ordinarily never would've come out to see her speak lined up hours in advance to try to get into her lecture. The hall where she spoke could hold five thousand people, and it was filled to capacity. People were turned away at the door, and the crowd grew hostile towards all the police officers who were taking up space in the hall. Fearing the hostility of the crowd, the police chief begged Emma to help him. He offered her this deal: he would march his officers out of the hall if Goldman would agree to *not* incite the crowd to riot against the cops. Goldman agreed, and the officers marched out "like guilty schoolboys, accompanied by the jeering and hooting of the crowd." (1)

Among the people who remained in the audience was a soldier named William Buwalda. Buwalda was a fifteen-year veteran and, by all accounts, he was an excellent soldier. He'd even been honored by the military for his part in the US attack on the Philippines. According to Buwalda, he'd heard of all the hoopla surrounding Goldman's lecture that night and decided that it would be the perfect opportunity for him to practice his stenography skills.

That night, Goldman spoke about patriotism. She spoke of how countries' borders were just arbitrary lines that senselessly divide people. She spoke of war as being little more than "two thieves too cowardly to fight their own battle," (2) so they pit the working class of one region against the working class of another. She evoked a vision of a beautiful world where people's hopes and dreams weren't destroyed by their jobs and their societies. In the end, the crowd loved what she had to say. Goldman was surrounded by admirers, by people who wanted to shake her hand and thank her for her speech.

Goldman shook hands and talked with different members of

the excited crowd. In the midst of the excitement, Goldman found herself face to face with the soldier, William Buwalda. Buwalda, who was still in uniform, stuck out his hand. Goldman shook it. According to Buwalda, he said, "How do you do, Miss Goldman?" (3) Then, he walked away.

A few police officers who witnessed this scene followed Buwalda home and reported the incident to his superiors. Buwalda was subsequently kicked out of the military. For attending an Emma Goldman lecture while still in uniform and for shaking Emma Goldman's hand, William Buwalda was stripped of his rank, court-martialed, and sentenced to five years in prison on Alcatraz Island.

Everybody Needs Some Emma Sometimes

Emma Goldman's 1908 trip to San Francisco, ending with William Buwalda's court-martial, is a good introduction to her. The story has so many of the aspects that were essential to her life: her courage in the face of authority; her ability to show anarchy as a positive, peaceful force (especially when compared to most governments); and the way that her speeches would both give people hope and also scare the hell out of people in power. I tell this story whenever I'm talking to people who've never heard of Emma Goldman. Hell, I tell this story whenever I can get someone to listen to it. And I've been telling it a lot lately, I guess, because Emma's been on my mind more often recently. It has a lot to do with the current political atmosphere. I think about the US government's unrestrained attack on the people of Afghanistan, and it inspires me to re-read Goldman's views on militarism. I hear about Attorney General John Ashcroft pushing his USA PATRIOT Act through Congress and crushing our civil rights into a fine powder, and I think of Goldman's work in the free speech movement. I watch a dopey Texas oil boy who can't get through a sentence without looking at a teleprompter call himself my leader, then try to start the next war in my name, and I dream of anarchism. And lately, I've been wishing that Emma were still around. I've been feeling like, if ever there was a time when we needed her back, now is that time.

So, a year after my conversation outside the Anti-Flag show and nearly a century after Goldman caused such a ruckus in San Francisco, I went back there to find her.

The Source on the West Coast

Of course, I knew she'd been dead for over sixty years when I headed to the Bay Area looking for her. Her death didn't dissuade me, though. I knew I couldn't meet her as a person; I couldn't sit down and have a chat with her. Still, I wanted to believe that something of Emma Goldman the human being still existed. I hated the thought of her life being forgotten, but something tells me that Emma Goldman won't be forgotten. Like I said, she's a legend. But it's the legend part that I feared even more. I feared her life was becoming a myth. And this bothered me because, if she's a myth, we can all cop out. We can say, "Sure, Emma Goldman did that, but I'm no Emma Goldman." But if we can see that she was a human, if we can see that, in addition to the great things she said and did, she had trouble paying her bills and had self-destructive love affairs and sometimes did the wrong things just like all of us do, then maybe we can see that standing up for what we believe in (even if our beliefs are unpopular), just like Emma did, isn't so far-fetched. So I had to meet this woman, her own death be damned.

Originally, I wasn't sure where to start looking. Then, I remembered something that the historian Howard Zinn said when I interviewed him. I'd



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asked Zinn a question about Goldman, and he didn't know the answer. He did tell me about "THE source" for anything pertaining to Emma Goldman: a woman named Candace Falk. He told me that Candace Falk had assembled an enormous collection of Goldman's letters, writings, and personal effects. He told me that she (along with a group of dedicated historians, archivists, and volunteers) has made this collection available to the public at the Emma Goldman Papers Project. I took that clue, did a little research on my own, and decided that, since I really had to meet Emma Goldman in person, the closest I could come to doing that was to go to the Emma Goldman Papers Project in Berkeley. I had no choice, really. I contacted Candace Falk, scheduled an interview, and drove up.

A Feminist, a Guitar Shop, and a Dog Named Emma

In 1975, Candace Falk, her boyfriend Lowell, and their dog were traveling from Vermont to California when they stopped to visit some of Falk's friends in Chicago. Among those friends was a guy named John Bowen. Bowen worked in a guitar shop in Hyde Park. Candace and Lowell stopped by. As they went inside the shop, Candace told her dog to wait by the front door. The dog came into the shop anyway. ("You know anarchists," Falk told me. "She wasn't going to listen to authority.") The dog ran up to Bowen. Rather than getting upset, Bowen knelt down to pet the dog. He asked Falk, "What's her name?"

"Emma," Candace said. "Red Emma Goldman."

"That's strange," Bowen said. "In the back of the shop, when I was cleaning the storeroom, I swear I think I saw some letters of hers."

Bowen went back to the storeroom, where he dug around for a long time, looking for the letters. Finally, he found them in a large boot box. He returned to the front of the store with the letters, and he let Candace and Lowell take a look at them.

The letters were in Goldman's handwriting, and they were addressed to Ben Reitman. For ten years, Reitman was Goldman's lover and her manager. He booked her speaking tours, promoted her lectures, secured travel arrangements for her, set up interviews with the press, and took care of a variety of Goldman's needs. Goldman and Reitman had a very rocky relationship during those ten years, partially because Reitman was a very promiscuous guy and slept with several other women while he was with Goldman. Though Goldman was a proponent of free love, her definition of "free love" meant that people were free to love each other without the involvement of the state. It meant that people had the capacity to be in love with more than one person at the time, and, if people found themselves in that situation, they should pursue their passions. Still, her definition of free love didn't mean sleeping with strangers nearly every night. Reitman's definition did, so there were problems. Still, Goldman forgave him for his affairs. She seemed to truly love Reitman and was willing to make some sacrifices to be with him. Their relationship had its steamy moments, too. As Falk points out, "He was a gynecologist. What can I say? He probably knew a lot more about female sexuality than most men did back then."

When Candace came across these letters in the Hyde Park guitar shop, she knew about Goldman's affair with Reitman and about his promiscuity. And the letters fascinated Candace. They showed her feminist hero in a different light; they gave Candace an intimate view into Goldman's love life. "I expected them to be so inspiring," Falk told me. "So I started to read the letters, and, first of all, they're really very sad. They're really very tortured. And almost every one of them was about how awful it felt for her

to speak about freedom and to give people a vision of complete freedom, and feeling absolutely tormented by Ben's understanding of freedom to be free love."

Still, Candace and Lowell pored over the letters while customers came in and out of the guitar shop. Finally, Bowen told her that she could borrow the letters and photocopy them. Candace took the letters and a stack of nickels to a copy machine at the University of Chicago, and they started the long, slow process of copying them.

Since this was 1975 and the copy machine was pretty old even for the time, it took a long time to copy each letter. While Candace and Lowell waited for the copies, they continued reading the letters. As they got towards the end of the stack, Candace came across a letter in which Goldman said that, if anyone were to read her love letters, she would feel naked to the world. At this point, Candace stopped. She wrapped up her copies, gave the letters back to Bowen, and she, Lowell, and Red Emma headed back for California. "All during the time," Falk told me, "I was thinking to myself, how could it be that Emma spoke so valiantly about her ideals when actually, her whole life was so tormented? I felt like I should keep her secrets."

About a year later, the owner of the guitar shop (Bowen's boss) decided that he was going to sell the letters. He contacted Falk about buying them. Falk's first impulse was to buy the letters and keep them a secret. She was still a graduate student at the time, though, and she didn't have enough money to buy them. While she was trying to raise the money, an archivist

from the University of Illinois called Falk and told her that she had no right to buy those letters, that those letters shouldn't belong to one person. They should belong to the public, and they should be somewhere that anyone could read them. This archivist also told Falk about several other similar letters that were kept in various archives throughout the US. This information gave Falk her second impulse: to research the universal issues underlying the love letters and write a book about Goldman's love life with respect.

At this point, Falk went on her own search for Emma Goldman. She applied for and received a grant. This allowed her to travel to various archives in Chicago, Boston, Ann Arbor, New York, and several other places, researching Goldman's life and loves. Along the way, Falk also learned a great deal "about the Spanish Civil War, about Kropotkin, about the Russian Revolution, about all these fabulous things." She spent six years doing this research, and in the end, she wrote the biography *Love, Anarchy, and Emma Goldman*.

Falk told me that, when *Love, Anarchy, and Emma Goldman* came out, "it was very controversial because no one wanted to know that their great hero was this way." My first thought was, what do you mean by "this way"? Because, though Goldman had an active love and sex life, I didn't find it to be very scandalous. Granted, at times it was a little weird to read Goldman's actual letters and see how she nicknamed and abbreviated things: her "Ms" (Mountains), her "T-B" (Treasure Box) and Reitman's "W" (Willy). It was even weirder to read Goldman's letter in which she longed for Willy: "Oh for one S— at that beautiful head of his or for one drink from the fountain of life. How I would press my lips to the fountain and drink, drink, drink." And Goldman and Reitman did have a bizarre Oedipal aspect to their relationship — Reitman called Goldman his "blue-eyed Mommy" and his mother his "brown-eyed Mommy". Goldman (who was ten years older than Reitman) signed all her letters "Mommy". And, though these things could be innocent enough on their own, the fact that Reitman was unnaturally close to his real mother added to the bizarreness of the nicknames and role-playing that he and Goldman did. Still, I don't

MOTHER EARTH

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JUNE 5th
IN MEMORIAM
AMERICAN DEMOCRACY.

see why these little things would cause much controversy, especially since *Love, Anarchy, and Emma Goldman* was published at the tail end of the sexual revolution. Besides, the things Goldman did in her bedroom weren't nearly as controversial as the things she said behind a podium.

After thinking about it for a while, though, I decided that, when Falk said that Goldman was "this way", she meant that Goldman's private life didn't match up to her public ideals. For example, Goldman preached total freedom and equality, yet her relationships were riddled with subtle power struggles. Still, when I read *Love, Anarchy, and Emma Goldman*, Goldman's flaws didn't bother me so much. I actually enjoyed learning about that part of Emma Goldman because, as I said earlier, I'd rather see her as a human who did great things despite her faults than see her as a mythologized "great hero."

Destroying Mothers

I wasn't sure what to expect when I got to Berkeley. I'd never been to the Emma Goldman Papers Project before, and I got a little bit lost on my way there. When I reached Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley's famous street of kooks and wingnuts, I knew I'd gone too far. I double-backed and drove a couple of blocks. I seemed to be in the right place: on the fringe of the university, just beyond the shops and the crowded strip. And there it was. A low, red brick building. Its door was obscured by the trees in front and it looked so unobtrusive that I was surprised that I'd seen it at all. I parked in the adjacent alley.

A couple of minutes later, Candace Falk showed up. Though she was probably in her late forties, she radiated with the enthusiasm of a kid, and even her wild, curly brown hair seemed to defy authority. We introduced ourselves and Candace, knowing that I was doing this interview for *Razorcake*, said, "I'm sorry if I don't look very punk rock."

"No need to apologize for that," I said, thinking to myself that dedicating your life to archiving the works of one of history's most notable anarchists is a lot cooler than wearing a leather jacket with a big, circle-A on it.

Candace led me through the front door of the EGPP and gave me the tour. She showed me the conference room, where one whole wall was covered with filing cabinets full of Goldman's letters. (Goldman had been an obsessive letter writer during her lifetime, and it wasn't uncommon for her to write ten letters in a day. Falk travelled to various archives in the US and abroad and collected and/or photocopied thousands of these letters.) On top of the filing cabinets were rows of books on anarchy, labor history, the free speech movement, and so on. Posters of Goldman hung on the wall, as well as a huge portrait of Roger Baldwin (the founder of the American Civil Liberties Union). I asked about the portrait and the books, and Falk explained to me that the EGPP was about more than just Emma Goldman. It was about archiving a whole movement and a period of American history that is being left out of textbooks and history classes.

From there, Falk took me deeper into the archives, through the cluttered desks and the computers and the stacks of books, stopping at a bookshelf. She grabbed a bound book off the shelf and said, "Here we have copies of *Mother Earth*." I knew that *Mother Earth* was the magazine founded by Goldman and her comrades in 1906. *Mother Earth* published the works of prominent anarchist writers like Alexander Berkman, Hippolyte Havel, and Emma Goldman herself. Eventually, in 1917, the US Post Office refused to deliver copies of the inflammatory "In Memoriam: American Democracy" issue because it condemned drafting young men into the army. I'd read all about *Mother Earth*, and had even read articles that once ran in *Mother Earth*, but I'd never seen the actual magazine. I looked at the professional layouts and the yellowing pages and asked, "Who reprinted all of these issues?"

"Those aren't reprints," Candace told me. "Those are the originals."

I paused and stared at the magazine in my hand and felt the

jolt of excitement that comes with holding an original document. Because I knew that *Mother Earth* was a small, underground operation run by a few dedicated people, just like *Razorcake* is. And I know that, with each issue of *Razorcake*, I handle nearly every copy as I load them into my truck outside the print shop, or stick mailing labels on them, or pack them into boxes bound for distributors, or whatever. In fact, my fingerprints are probably on the cover of the magazine you're reading right now. And I wondered who had handled this *Mother Earth* that I held in my hand. Had Berkman or Reitman or M. Eleanor Fitzgerald or any other of the anarchists I'd read so much about passed this magazine on to a friend? Had one of them stuck this magazine in a box that Emma Goldman herself took with her on her speaking tours? Had Goldman sold this magazine to a young, working class woman, who read it and started down the road that led her to rise up against the conditions in the factory where she worked? Had a young man read this magazine and decided *not* to sign up for the draft to fight another rich man's war? And exactly where had this magazine been passed around, put on a shelf, packed away, donated, unpacked, and archived so that, nearly a hundred years after it had been published, it ended up in my hands? And whose fingerprints were on the cover?

In the next room, I made a much more concrete connection to an anarchist. I met Barry Pateman, another historian working on the EGPP. Since both Pateman and Falk were ready to do the interview, and since I couldn't spend all day daydreaming about fingerprints on a magazine, we headed into the conference room to talk about the hows and whys of the archives that surrounded us.

The first thing I wanted to know was how Falk went from a boot box full of letters and a biography on Goldman's love life to this impressive historical archives. She told me that, while she was writing the biography, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), which is part of the National



that Mitch is making

to the coast. She asked

Archives in Washington, DC, decided to expand their reach. "This commission (the NHPRC) was set up to collect and organize the papers of the Founding Fathers. And that was supposed to be the basis of keeping the nation great. And Emma Goldman wasn't on their list. It was all men. The Great White Men Project. But there was a huge radical movement at the time, even among historians. This guy named Jesse Leimisch gathered a whole bunch of historians and petitioned the National Archives, saying, 'We don't want a Great White Men Project. We want a history of the people.' So, in a very typical top-down fashion, the National Archives chose the papers of the 'great individuals' - they still couldn't go for the people and movements, you know. But Emma Goldman got on the list, along with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Margaret Sanger, and Martin Luther King, Jr. So that's how we got started."

The commission offered Falk the position of editor of the Emma Goldman papers, and Falk accepted. I thought it strange that the US government - the same one that deported Goldman in 1919 because she spoke out against World War I - would later give me money to a project dedicated to keeping alive her words and ideals. Apparently, this irony hadn't slipped past Falk, either. As she says, "Our project started out with a kernel of federal funding which a lot of anarchists wouldn't take. But I felt like, okay, the government deported her, and we're bringing her back with government money." Apparently, even the NHPRC had a sense of humor about this, too. With a sardonic smile, Falk told me that the NHPRC "say that they started with the Founding Fathers and we're part of the Destroying Mothers."

In the initial stages of the EGPP, Falk befriended Sara Jackson, a woman who worked in the National Archives in DC. Jackson was one of the first African American archivists, and she loved the fact that someone was archiving Goldman's life. Jackson told Falk, "Candace, I'm going to declassify Emma Goldman's government documents for you." Falk was amazed. This was before the Freedom of Information Act had been passed, and government documents were nearly impossible to view. Thanks to the generosity of Jackson, though, the public was allowed, for the first time, to see the inside government reports dealing with the raiding of the *Mother Earth* offices in 1917, with Goldman and Berkman's anti-conscription trial, and with the false implications of Goldman's involvement in the assassination of President McKinley. J. Edgar Hoover's file regarding Emma Goldman's deportation was also declassified (the deportation of Goldman was one of the first cases that Hoover [who later became the first director of the FBI] worked on).

In return for her generosity, Jackson asked the EGPP to do her a favor. "Because she loved us and trusted us," Falk said, "[Jackson] would stick in a document or two about lynching during World War I. And we would make sure that those documents would get to the right historians, the ones who would use them." And in this way, the EGPP kept alive the spirit of Emma Goldman by engaging in their own subversive activities in the name of justice.

Over the years, the EGPP amassed the impressive collection that surrounded me when I interviewed Falk and Pateman, but they also had to struggle to stay afloat. As the federal funds began to shrink, the EGPP had to find other ways to raise money. They relied on donations from a wide variety of people: workers in methadone clinics, historians, writers, anarchists, the children and grandchildren of Goldman's old friends. Even Ben Reitman's

daughter Mecca donated money to the EGPP. They also relied on federal and private grants, and the money that they raised through selling their "Emmarabilia", stuff like t-shirts, calendars, magnets, and even a coffee mug with Goldman's mug shot and her words, "Sooner or later the American people are going to wake up." And even now, every day is a struggle for the EGPP to stay alive. The important thing, though, is that they stay alive.

Beautiful, Radiant Things

I knew I had my reasons for reading and re-reading Emma Goldman's autobiography and essays. I had my reasons for taking the trek to Berkeley to come as close as I could to meeting her. But still, a few hours spent reading books and a few more driving and conducting an interview were one thing. Dedicating your life to the woman was another. So, after hearing the story of their struggles, I had to know why Falk and Pateman had dedicated so much of their lives to Goldman.

I asked them the question point blank: what's so important about Emma Goldman in 2002? A long pause followed my question, but I got the feeling that they paused not because they didn't

know. They paused because they didn't know how to sum up all of the things that made her important. After thinking about this one for a bit, Falk summed it up nicely: "She represents somebody who underwent incredible harassment in her life. She really took a hit for her beliefs and she still had a vision of hope and promise and belief in beautiful, radiant things. I think everybody needs that. And you don't need it from a sugar-coated person who thinks the world is actually only nice. You need to hear it from somebody who is in the grit of it, who stares into the flames of violence and oppression. From somebody who can look into the ugliness and still believe there is beauty."

Okay, I thought, so they draw some strength off of Goldman's words and actions, just like I do. But there has to be more. They're historians, after all. What about the whole cliché about people who don't learn from history being doomed to repeat it? I tried to prod

them in this direction by asking them if they saw any parallels between the time when Goldman and Berkman were deported (which was also when the US was gearing up for World War I) and our current time and political situation. To my surprise, Pateman became passionate about the *lack* of parallels.

"One of the things we have to be careful about," he said, "is drawing too many simplistic conclusions. This is a far more complex society than it was in Goldman's period of time. In 1918, you could be a Wobbler (a member of the Industrial Workers of the World) organizer and the police could kick your door in, cut your testicles off, and lynch you, and nothing would happen to them. You could be a Wobbler organizer and come off a train and they could beat you to death with an iron bar. They could suddenly raid a building. The soldiers would just turn up, trash the Everett Wobbler Hall, and beat to a pulp anyone who was in there, and nothing would happen to them. So it's not quite the same now. But my argument would be that, in a way, the culture that we're in now is far more sinister than it was then. That's why I make the point that it's not the same. Violence now is far more cerebral. It's far more cunning and clever. It's far more inherent in everyday life."

Pateman went on to explain how the clumsy



brutality of a hundred years ago has been replaced by the manipulation of information and the media, how now it's difficult to know at all what you're fighting against. Pateman illustrated this point by asking, "How many Arab men are in prison now? How many have been imprisoned in the last ten months? How many? I don't know. I know there's a lot. I know there's over five hundred, but I don't know how many. Who does? Where's the names? Even in the radical left papers, where are they?"

I couldn't answer these questions, of course. And, truth be told, I agreed with everything that Pateman had said. Still, it didn't answer my initial question of why Goldman would still be important in the here and now. I kept thinking that there must be more, there must be something concrete about Emma Goldman that makes her such an attractive historical figure. Because she's not just a legend to punk rockers. Really, she's had several rebirths in underground communities. She's been an icon for early feminist groups; for anti-Vietnam War groups; for anti-Gulf War groups; for anarchists taking over the streets in Eugene, Oregon; for the protestors who threw bricks through Starbucks windows in Seattle; and for protestors who condemned those who threw bricks through Starbucks windows in Seattle. Really, with the exception of Che Guevara, I can't think of any historical figure who the people have embraced as tightly as Emma Goldman. So what makes people love her so much?

I continued to talk with Falk and Pateman about Goldman's life and about the EGPP's various projects, all the while trying to figure out what this elusive Emma Goldman quality was. Finally, after a couple of hours of questions, answers, and discussions, Pateman articulated this quality to me. It took him a while to articulate it, and he had to couch it in a larger framework, but this is how he explained the whole attractive complexity of Emma Goldman to me:

He talked about Goldman's life as a whole. He talked about the fame and notoriety she gained in her life. He talked about major events of Goldman's life: she went to San Diego, where vigilantes abducted Ben Reitman, covered him in tar, beat him with sagebrush, and branded him just to keep her from speaking. She was attacked and spat at continually. She was wrongfully accused of plotting to assassinate one president and convicted of the act in the nation's newspapers. She was imprisoned for speaking out on birth control and against the draft. She and her closest friend, Alexander Berkman, were deported and sent to Russia – the country of their youth and the place where the workers had recently revolted against the aristocracy and created what appeared (from the outside at least) to be a workers' paradise. Goldman went there and saw instead that Russia had become just as vicious as (and, in many ways, even more vicious than) any other country. Berkman and Goldman saw their friends killed in Russia because their friends were anarchists. The two managed to escape from Russia, but they were forced to live in exile for fifteen years in Europe while fascism was growing in Germany and Italy, and Stalinism was growing throughout Eastern Europe. Then, when she was in her late sixties, she went to fight in the Spanish Civil War, where the anarchists actually took over in Catalonia. And she had to watch the anarchists beaten back by the communists and the fascists. And she still didn't give up. "Even when she died," Pateman said, "she was still trying to stop the deportation of Italian anarchists from Canada."

"John Taylor Caldwell gives a beautiful story about Emma Goldman in 1937. She came to speak in Scotland and they booked

her in a cinema because she's Emma Goldman. But the communist party said, 'No. She is a representative of a large anarchist union.' And they stopped their members from going because they knew she was going to talk about the Spanish revolution. And the meeting was an embarrassment. Thirty people, including John Caldwell, showed up because the left disowned this woman for insisting to speak out for free speech, insisting on challenging Stalinism. Thirty people were there. They had to bring a table down, and everyone sat in the front row to listen to her. She sat down and didn't try to give it any mouth or rhetoric. She sat down and talked about the schools and the women's groups she'd seen in Spain. She talked about the way they tried to organize the shoe factories and collectives and anarchist lines without any state intervention, and how it was working, but it was being beaten back by their own comrades. And she didn't shout.

"Caldwell said that he cried at the end, because here was this woman: old, tired, beaten. But she never gave up. Maybe that's the best thing you can say about anyone: they never gave up."

And that seemed to really strike at the heart of the matter.

Out of the Chaos the Future Emerges in Beauty and Harmony

As I walked out of the Emma Goldman Papers Project, I felt like I'd found Emma Goldman. I made a direct connection to her – not as a legend, but as a person who said and did amazing things. And we can all still feed off of her strength and intelligence and gather inspiration from her. The spirit of resistance and her vision of beautiful, radiant things is alive and as powerful as it's ever been. And, thanks in part to Candace Falk, Barry Pateman, and the EGPP, everyone – even sweaty kids outside of an Anti-Flag show – can tap into it.

And maybe, in our own little ways, we can all be the next Emma Goldman.

To learn more about the Emma Goldman Papers Project, go to their web site at <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Goldman>. The EGPP will also be releasing the first two volumes of a four-volume set of books called Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of Her American Years in April of 2003. The books will be packed with Goldman's letters and reprints of other original documents, as well as a great deal of information about the early anarchist movement, the early free

speech movement, and the turn of the century labor movement in the US. And, through these books, you can go on your own search for one of American history's most dynamic and inspirational figures. In the meantime, you can still read the books that Goldman wrote, like *Living My Life and Anarchism and Other Essays*.

1. *Living My Life*, pg. 426
2. *Anarchism and Other Essays*, pg. 133
3. *Love, Anarchy, and Emma Goldman*, pg. 73
4. Everything else comes from my interview with Candace Falk and Barry Pateman.

PHOTO CREDITS

1. Page 54. Picture of Emma Goldman in a floppy hat, from the inside cover of the original version of *Anarchism and Other Essays*.
2. Page 55: Barry Pateman, photo by Todd Taylor.
3. Page 56: Cover of *Mother Earth*, June 1917. Courtesy of the Emma Goldman Papers Project.
4. Page 57: Candace Falk, photo by Todd Taylor.
5. Page 59: A stolen and bastardized version of Goldman's article in the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, October 24, 1897.
6. Page 61: Goldman in 1910. We stole this picture, too.



Von the Steins



**Interview and photos
by Bob Cantu**

“I have excellent news for the world, there is no such thing as new wave.” So spoke the late Claude Bessy (aka Kickboy Face) of Catholic Discipline in Penelope Spheeris’ documentary *Decline of Western Civilization*. The term new wave came into existence when “punk” became too controversial to use among music industry types. And, yeah, a lot of the bands that called themselves that were jumping on a bandwagon with an eye towards the dollar sign and the usual associated perks like groupies and mountains of coke. But the fact remains that quite a bit of early eighties music categorized as new wave was, if nothing else, fun. Devo, B52s, the Vapors. Colorful contemporary bands like Seattle’s the Briefs and Portland’s the Epoxies are tapping into the fun of that era, personalizing it, and adding a harder edge. And you can add Orange County’s the Von Steins to that list as well. But I wouldn’t call it a revival. Hell, most new wave purists will tell you they aren’t aloof enough, they aren’t robotic enough, they move around too much or their ties just aren’t skinny enough to be really new wave. Well, maybe we should forget about nomenclature for the moment and just say that it’s fun.

The Von Steins are:

Gunther: vocals
Helmut: drums
Magnus: bass
Miak: guitar
Udo: synthesizer

Bob: You guys are an Orange County band. What part of Orange County?

Helmut: Me, Gunther and Udo are from Anaheim. Miak and Magnus are from Cypress. But Anaheim is our frequent middle ground.

Bob: Are there good shows to be found in Anaheim?

Gunther: There’s not a whole lot of good shows. If you look really hard you might find some good stuff.

Udo: Let me tell you, Orange County bands... They all kind of have one way. So, when ever I tell someone, yeah, I’m in a band from Orange County, they say “Oh, Pennywise, Guttermouth...” No! I guess you can say that Orange County already has its categories. Either you’re ska or you’re No Doubt.

Bob: How long have you all been playing?

Gunther: The band’s been together since late ‘98, I think. Or, like early ‘99. Four years. Me and Miak played a lot of these songs in a former band we



were in. The same songs that we’re doing now. It just kinda turned into the Von Steins. Now we’re the complete freaks that we are now.

Bob: So, the “Say What”/ “Hot Sex” seven inch (split w/ the Four Letter Words) came out when?

Gunther: When did that come out?

Miak: Probably about ‘98.

Gunther: That was recorded at Rusty’s, the bass player from Le Shok. And he thought we were weird. “What’s wrong with you guys?”

Bob: Why can’t you be like a normal band?

Udo: It’s the synthesizer thing that throws people off. They’re like, “What do you mean you don’t have keyboards in the band.”

Miak: Even Le Shok have keyboards but for some reason they thought we were really weird. Especially Gunther.

Bob: Do you do everything in the studio while you’re recording that you do on stage?

Gunther: Oh, yeah.

Miak: You should see this guy at practice. He’s even weirder at practice.

Gunther: I’m usually holding a glass of Scotch and I wear my collar up... Actually, everything is the same when we record. We just belt it out.

Bob: Can people find that seven inch? Is it available?

Gunther: They can go on our web site and we’ll get it to them. Or if they want me to

give them oral sex, I'll be glad to do that and give them a seven inch.

Miak: We're not above anything.

Bob: When you're in music, you can't be.

Udo: We're a working man's band.

Gunther: Except, no ass play.

Udo: Of course, Gunther's speaking for himself 'cause Udo is on the straight and narrow.

Gunther: We just want to make it clear that the Von Steins love thick women. If you're a thick woman, come to our show, 'cause we love you.

Bob: There was an article about you in the *LA Weekly* and Johnny Angel pointed out that your bass player plays the same model bass as Bruce Foxtan from the Jam. What's the deal?

Magnus: I really like the Jam a lot. That's how it goes, he's one of my influences. Bruce Foxtan's bass playing was amazing. It carries the music. A lot of bands aren't like that anymore. The bass is so hidden. A lot of the rap metal... it's so murky, you can't even tell that there's bass playing. Bands with a really strong rhythm section, I like. Especially in groups like the Stranglers... great fucking bass sound.

Bob: Weren't you all little kids when those records came out? How did you find out about them?

Miak: Good music is good music.

Gunther: I loved it back in the day. Listening to it on record players with big ass head phones. But we're not trying to dig up anything. We're just doing what we want to do. We're doing what comes naturally. People say that there's going to be another new wave, we're not really pushing for that. We just are what we are.

Udo: Our generation now is kinda the same as when punk first started, you start to look back, punk was looking back to the sixties. You know the garage thing. Now we're looking back. Because, what music do we have now? It's fucking horrible! Rap metal and what the hell's on the radio? You have to look back to find something good.

Gunther: I guess you can say it's reminiscent of the whole eighties new wave stuff. We just do what we do, and we love it so much. We just want to do what comes naturally. If we ever do try to do something like someone else has done it, we're not serious about it. Bands that are doing the new wave thing and our really serious about it, it totally escapes me. It's a really derivative form of music, how can you be serious about it? You have to be tongue-in-cheek. We just do what we want to do and it's poppy. And it's really reminiscent of the eighties. Which, I do have to say that, it's a lot of our influences. If people want to classify us as a style, that's fine.

Bob: What is going through your mind when you're on stage and you're doing what you do?

Miak: Don't ask.

Gunther: I think I'm just making love to everyone in the audience. I want to make love to everybody in the world, no matter what race, culture or religion. I hope people masturbate to my voice. I just go nuts, balls out. And I'd like to stress once again that we like thick women.

Dale Bozzio of Missing Persons is a soccer mom! Oh, my God! Man, I had the biggest crush on her when I was seven!

Miak: I think that Gunther suffers from multiple personality syndrome. He's got a lot of things happening in his noggin.

Udo: He doesn't ever plan anything but before a show he'll be like, hey, I got this prop and I've got this and I'm going to do this... And, I'm like, what are you thinking? And then it just comes together. You actually see us laughing on stage because we have no idea what this guy is going to do. Pull out his dildo squirt gun? What's going on?

Gunther: It does squirt.

Bob: Can people get the EP that was circulating around?

Gunther: The six song EP? Yeah, on our web site.

Miak: It's sort of unofficially available. We're still looking for a label to put it out.

Bob: What's "Quit Your Sexy Job" about?

Miak: It's about quitting your sexy job.

Gunther: There's no real story behind that. I just date a lot of funky hos.

Miak: There's just a lot of strippers in Orange County. Seriously, every girl in Orange County basically looks like a stripper.

Gunther: And we go for the thick strippers.

Udo: You're making us look weird.

Gunther: No major record label is gonna want to sign us if we keep talking about thick women.

Bob: You played an exciting show at Club Beat It on the West Side, which is a predominately gay club. How did you end up with that show?

Udo: That was weird.

Gunther: It was weird because I found out the day of the show that it was sponsored by a gay porn site!

Udo: I thought it was going to be bands and stuff and then it was just us.

Gunther: And some transvestite cheerleaders.

Udo: We're not, like, homophobic but we were playing in front of this huge gay audience that was freaking out over Gunther taking off his clothes. It was cool but it was just kind of a surprise.

Gunther: It was cool because all the guys looked like Gwen Stefani in that one video she does with Eve and they're all wearing tight white shirts and

khaki pants.

Miak: We're all about sex. That's what we do.

Bob: Will you be going on the road at any time in the future?

Udo: September. We're going to infect the west coast with our groove.

Gunther: With our deadly sperm.

Udo: I don't know about that. I keep my sperm to myself.

Bob: Are there any bands out there that you're looking forward to playing with?

Udo: The problem is there are only so



many so-called new wave bands out there and you can only play with them so many times. It gets old. And since we have sort of a hard edge to us we get lumped with a lot of punk bands. Which is cool because even though we play with a lot of weird bands we always get a good response. So I know that we're definitely reaching some people that we wouldn't reach if we were only playing with bands that sounded like us. So that's kind of cool.

Gunther: I think it's weird 'cause we're too hard for the indie crowd and we're too clean for punk and we're not as serious as groups like the Faint, who take themselves really seriously. Who, like, pout and all that crap.

Udo: Pose.

Gunther: That's what we're pretty much about. It also makes it really hard to get a show. We don't really fit in with anybody.

Udo: If you want to do your own thing, there isn't a whole lot of audience out there. If we were to say "We are a new wave band...", then people would be, "Right on, it's new wave." But we're like, we're kind of this, we're kind of that... But we always get a really good response. I'm really happy that we can do our own thing

and get that kind of a response.

Gunther: If the Von Steins can teach you anything, it's "Don't do your own thing. It's so much easier to follow the crowd." [laughter]

Bob: You've played with the Briefs recently. How did you like that?

Miak: That was probably one of our better shows.

Udo: Sound-wise, my keyboards kept cutting out. But I still got good response.

Gunther: The vibe was good.

Udo: I had several people grab me after the set, "Wow, your keyboards are really cool!"



And I'd like to stress once again that we like thick women.

That was flattering.

Bob: What are you playing?

Udo: I play a Roland JX3P with a PG200. And I was playing Yamaha CS5. It's all vintage stuff.

Bob: You like that sound better?

Udo: Oh, yeah. It's so fat. You can't recreate that with the new stuff. A lot of newer bands use a lot of that new stuff and you can hear it. There's a certain bit of intensity missing because they're not using the REAL stuff.

Miak: There's kind of a technical quality to it when they're using newer stuff.

Udo: It's cold sounding. It's all sequenced. They just press play and sing along with it. I play everything live. Every other quote, unquote "new wave" band just press play and then play along with it. I don't see a lot of bands actually playing their stuff live. Which is cool. It makes me look neat 'cause I can actually play.

Miak: I think analog keyboards are a lot more organic sounding. Even, like, the digital/analog equipment...

Gunther: You can still tell whether it's old stuff 'cause it has that really clean sound.

Udo: All of my keyboards are at least twenty years old.

Bob: Isn't analog equipment more delicate.

Udo: Totally. If you bump it funny you're whole thing is thrown out of whack. You don't have a pre-set, so you have to create your sounds live. It makes it a lot more fun because it never sounds the same twice.

Gunther: It's more spontaneous.

Bob: Do you ever go to any of these eighties clubs that spring up?

Udo: I used to run an eighties club. That was before I joined the band. I'm kind of sick of the eighties. I don't mind the eighties sound, but I'm just so tired of hearing Kaja Goo Goo or "Come On Eileen" (Dexy's Midnight Runners). That's all right but can't we move on a little bit. People either want to be that or just listen to that.

Gunther: A lot of the bands from the eighties that are re-uniting... I don't know. I wouldn't say it's sad, but...

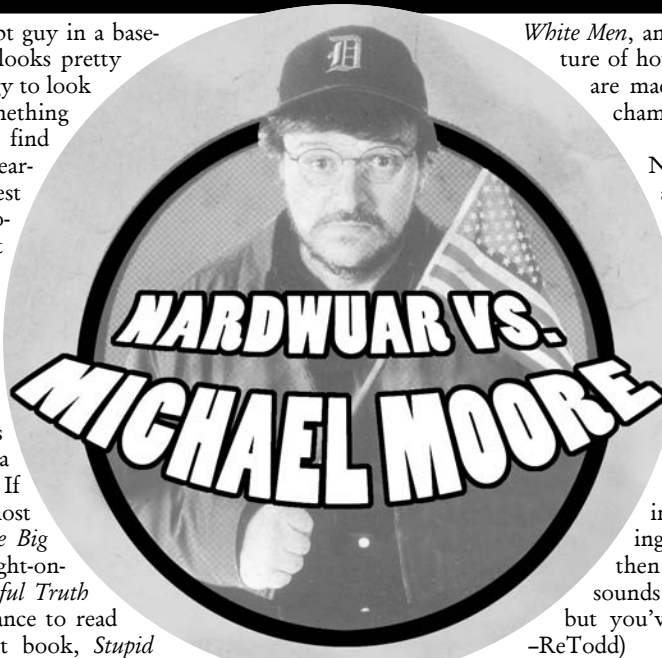
Udo: They're playing for the younger crowd that they didn't have in the eighties ...

Gunther: I saw this thing on VH1 on Missing Persons, *Behind The Music*, and where are they now? Dale Bozzio is driving a mini-van and picking up her kids from soccer practice and stuff. It's kind of weird.

Udo: Dale Bozzio is a soccer mom! Oh, my God! Man, I had the biggest crush on her when I was seven!



Michael Moore is a fat, unkempt guy in a baseball hat with shaggy hair. He looks pretty dirty. He doesn't have the energy to look like a slickster trying to pull something over on you, and that's why I find him – as a personality – so endearing. He's also one of the keenest observers of politics and corporate policies in America. What separates him from many of his more academic contemporaries is his ability to iron out very complex issues, distill them, and present them to ordinary people in a way they can understand, executed in a way that is neither condescending or a dumbing down of the material. If you haven't seen his movies, most notably *Roger and Me* and *The Big One*, seen his short-lived, but right-on-target television series, *The Awful Truth* and *TV Nation*, or had the chance to read *Downsize This*, and his newest book, *Stupid*



White Men, and are at all interested in the bigger picture of how policies that effect your everyday life are made in secretive boardrooms and judge's chambers, I suggest you give him a try.

For sake of clarity, there are two Nardwuar interviews here. The one with a gray background is from 1996, and the one with a white background is from 2002. If you're the type who listens to suggestions, I'd read the older one first. The second one dovetails nicely into it. The 2002 interview transcription was taken from a video tape. It is pretty chaotic because it stops and starts due to Nardwuar persistently pursuing Michael Moore – on the last leg of an extremely long book tour – outside his hotel room, to an interview in a van right before a TV interview, leaving his interview to address Nardwuar, and then returned to the TV studio. So, if it sounds like it ends and starts abruptly, it does, but you've got to admire Nardwuar's tenacity. –ReTodd)

Interview done in person Nov, 1 1996 , in the Lobby of Georgian Court Hotel, Vancouver, BC

Michael Moore: [speaking as he get out of his cab as he walks to the hotel] Rise up. Get rid of the name "British" in your province. You are your own province. You are your own country. You oughta get the Queen off the money, get the "British" out of the name. Just, do, man, just like... come on... you guys got such a great country, as it is. Just, like, get over it, man. Just get over it. That U.K. thing, man, the Brits, they're, like, dragging you down, man, they're like a big albatross , a big stone around your neck.

Nardwuar: Could we ask you some questions, Michael? Would that be okay?

Moore: Yeah, yeah, sure, okay.

Nardwuar:

Vancouver is home of The Vancouver Film School!

Moore: Oh, the great Vancouver Film School, and the famous alumni are...?

Nardwuar: Kevin Smith, the guy who did *Clerks*. He was only there for like three months, but they take credit for him.

Moore: Yeah, that's right. [laughs]

Nardwuar: So, Michael Moore, who are you?

Moore: I'm Kevin Smith.

Nardwuar: How's Superman's cousin, Michael Moore?

Moore: Superman's cousin? Who was that?

Nardwuar: From *Roger & Me*, the guy that got shot.

Moore: Oh, the poor guy that got shot, oh, he's alive. He's alive. He recovered. He was in a mental institution for a while, but he's okay now.

Nardwuar: How does it feel to be back in Canada? Canada, home of '60s thinking and David Gilmore, the CBC?

Moore: [laughs] Is he still alive?

Nardwuar: David Gilmore?

Moore: Yeah.

Nardwuar: '60s thinking. You're getting '60s thinking. You know what I'm referring to there, eh, Michael Moore?

Moore: [laughs] No, I'm talking about David Gilmore. Is he still with us?

Nardwuar: Yes, he's still functioning.

Moore: He's still functioning. [laughs] How do they keep him alive, is there, like, some secret drug or some kind of thing that the undertaker uses to prop him up?

Nardwuar: Taxpayer's money!

Moore: Oh, taxpayer's money, oh, that's it.

Nardwuar: You '60s thinker, you!

Moore: Oh! That's what the CBC guy said to me, right?

Nardwuar: In an interview.

Moore: That's right. The head of the... who was that guy, anyways?

Nardwuar: Alex Frame, or something like that.

Moore: Yeah, he kept pounding on me. He goes, "Aah, You're still in the '60s. You got '60s thinking," you know. And I'm going "'60s thinking? I was, like, three in the '60s." [laughs]

Nardwuar: How are you doing, Michael Moore? How are you doing?



Interview done in person at an undisclosed location, pretending to interview Ivana Trump, April 24, 2002, Vancouver, BC

Nardwuar: Hi, it's Nardwuar the Human Serviette here in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada at an undisclosed location outside of an undisclosed hotel. We're waiting here for filmmaker Michael Moore. He's been in town, promoting his book, *Stupid White Men*. He's declined all interviews, but will he decline us?

[Michael Moore's handler walks up to Nardwuar, who is standing on the sidewalk, outside of the hotel.]

Handler: Excuse me, interview Michael, is that what you're trying to do?

Nardwuar: Who?

Handler: Michael Moore. Is that who you're waiting for? What are you doing?

Nardwuar: Ivana Trump.

Handler: Why are you here?

Nardwuar: Isn't Ivana Trump staying here?

Handler: I don't think so.

[The handler walks away. Minutes later, Michael Moore walks out of the hotel.]

Nardwuar's Camera Guy: There he is. There he is. Go, go, go.

Nardwuar: Heeey, Mr. Moore. Can we ask you a couple of questions? Is that okay?

Moore: Oh sure, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Nardwuar: How are you doing there?

Moore: Doing where?

Nardwuar: In Vancouver, here.

Moore: Where am I?

Nardwuar: In Vancouver.

Moore: Am I in Vancouver? It's... ahh... it's a ahh... [pulls a note card from his pocket and begins reading mechanically, jokingly] "It's a beautiful city, Vancouver. It has a lot of nice people in it and I'm happy to be here. You like me. You really like me. Thank you."

Nardwuar: Do you mind, Michael Moore, if we ride with you to the airport and do an interview with you?

Moore: Why don't you ride with me right now to wherever this guy [his driver, the guy who ran interference in front of the hotel] is taking me.

Nardwuar: Do you think we could?

Moore: Yeah.

Nardwuar: We'd love to. Is that okay?

Moore: Yeah. C'mon. Let's go.

Nardwuar: Me and the camera man, Chris, are going to come with you, Mr. Moore. [They hop inside the van.]

Nardwuar: So, Michael Moore, who are you?

Moore: I'm a dead man right now. I'm just really... what city is this? Number forty-six?

Nardwuar: It's almost over. You're missing Idaho. Are you skipping Idaho, Mr. Moore?

Moore: I'm definitely skipping Idaho. I'm not going there.

Nardwuar: What is wrong with your mom's meat loaf?

Moore: [laughs sleepily] Oh, ho, ho, you don't want to go there.

Nardwuar: You're brand new book, Michael Moore, is on Reagan Books. Reagan Books. That is pretty wild.

Moore: You know... are you Canadian?

Nardwuar: I am.

Moore: You know, you guys are closer to the mother tongue than we are, but can you read that? It's not Reagan Books. It's Regan Books.

Nardwuar: Okay, I say Nirvana, you say...

Moore: No, no. You're missing the "a."

Nardwuar: I know. I say "Near-vana," you say "Nir-vana."

Moore: But it's spelled the same way. You just read the name of the title of the publisher wrong. It's Regan Books. It's missing the "a" that's in Reagan.

Nardwuar: But I just think of, like, Ronald Reagan, because I'm an uneducated Canadian, unlike you, being an educated American.

Moore: Well, there's no such thing as either. [laughs]

Nardwuar: But Reagan Books is pretty wild. Isn't Rush Limbaugh on Reagan Books, Michael Moore?

Moore: And Howard Stern and they put those wrestlers (like Mick Foley) out, too.

Nardwuar: And you're all in a great company with them, Michael Moore.

Moore: [sarcastically] Oh yeah, that's some company to be with.

Nardwuar: So, you're happy that your new book, *Stupid White Men*, is not air-brushed. Your last book was; not this book, correct? (*Downsize This! Random Threats From an Unarmed American's* cover had the dirt from Moore's fingernails removed digitally.)

Moore: That's correct. They see me with all my flaws and my inability to grow a beard.

Nardwuar: I think this book tour is going great, especially because you're not doing it in big, chain corporate stores. You're only doing university gigs, right, Mr.

Moore?

Moore: Just about. There's a couple of chain stores in there, but of the forty-six cities, I think, maybe, there's only, well, three.

[laughs] Why won't they have me?

Nardwuar: How much is your book selling for in Canada?

Moore: I have no idea. What does it cost here?

Nardwuar: I think, like forty dollars.

Moore: No way. You mean forty, Canadian?

Nardwuar: Forty Canadian dollars for your book, Michael Moore.

Moore: Ohh. Okay, that's like ten dollars, American, right?

Nardwuar: Well, it's a lot for us Canadians. Forty dollars, especially in British Columbia, where they lowered the minimum wage. What do you think about that Michael Moore, lowering the minimum wage?

Moore: They lowered the minimum wage here?

Nardwuar: Yes, they did.

Moore: What is going on with you Canadians? Why are you doing this? Why are you snipping away at your social safety net, you know? It makes no sense. You start punk-



Moore: I'm tired.

Nardwuar: Now, are you like, blacklisted?

Moore: Am I black?

Nardwuar: 'Cause I'm afraid that you're like blacklisted. You're going to be like Orson Welles. You know Orson Welles did...

Moore: What happened to him?

Nardwuar: *Citizen Kane*. And Michael Moore did...

Moore: Ahhh...

Nardwuar: *Roger & Me...* Orsen Welles fought William Randolph Hearst, Michael Moore fought...

Moore: Well, you keep answering the questions.

Nardwuar: Roger Smith! Are you okay, though? Are you gonna be okay? Are you going to be blacklisted? Is your life paralleling his?

Moore: Ahh, well, I don't think so. I've been very fortunate, you know. First I got *Roger & Me* out there, then *TV Nation*, two summers of *TV Nation*, we won the Emmy award, and now my book just went on the bestseller list, *Downsize This!*

Nardwuar: *Canadian Bacon*, didn't they kind of screw you on that? Because, that was a great film. Did it even get an official US release? Like Orsen Welles, he was kinda screwed. Are you like Orsen Welles? *Canadian Bacon*, could that have been an Orsen Welles film?

Moore: No, I don't think so. They did this market research with *Canadian Bacon*, the US company, and their test results told them that people didn't want to laugh at a film with a guy who had died. Namely, John Candy. So, because of that, and because they felt that Americans would think that the film was too anti-American, they did not give it the proper distribution in America.

Nardwuar: How much influence do these movie executives have?

Did they force you to hire Karen "MTV" Duffy? What was she doing on there? What was she doing on TV Nation?

Moore: What are you? You know, this is a prime example of people who drink too much coffee here in this part of the country. You know...

Nardwuar: Karen "MTV" Duffy! Why was she there? Louis Thereaux, he was way better.

Moore: How, how, how many hours a day do you spend at Starbucks, sir? You've got to calm down.

Nardwuar: Karen "MTV" Duffy! What's the explanation behind her?

Moore: What do you mean "What's the explanation behind her?" Look at her dammit. You know, she's great. What are you talking about?

Nardwuar: How can you single people out? Isn't it kind of scary to single these executives out? I understand you're going to be picketing outside of Nike. Isn't it dangerous? I mean you're targeting these people. These people killed Kennedy, Michael Moore. Aren't you a bit worried?

Moore: [laughs] Okay, I'm convinced now, it's not coffee, it's crack. The guy is on crack. What was the question? I forgot the

question.

Nardwuar: The question here was: Roger Smith was a bad guy. Roger was a bad guy. Does that make Bill Gates a good guy, because he's hiring lots of people? Bill Gates, the computer age, is he a good guy Michael Moore?

Moore: Bill Gates is the anti-Christ.

Nardwuar: But he's hiring people.

Moore: No, he's the anti-Christ. The anti-Christ will always come, it says it in The Bible, in Revelations, Chapter 6, Verse 3.

Nardwuar: But, but...

Moore: No, no, listen. I'm giving you a Bible lesson dammit, listen to me. You know, Bill Gates, he's come here to hire a lot of people, and to shift the technology into a situation where he will rule the world. He will rule the world. Do you understand?

Nardwuar: *Roger & Me*. Don't you think that it was better than *Canadian Bacon*? Was *Roger & Me* better than *Canadian Bacon*, Michael Moore?

Moore: *Roger & Me* was better in Canadian than it was in English.

Nardwuar: Are they forcing you to comedy? You're writing sitcoms now. Are they trying to dull you? You know, like Matt Groening, he did *Life in Hell* and it became *The Simpsons*. Are you going to end up that way? Please don't do it, Michael Moore. Don't give up...

Moore: You don't like *The Simpsons*?

Nardwuar: No, it's been mellowed out since *Life in Hell*. Remember? Matt Groening did *Life in Hell* and now he's off to...

Moore: Oh, man, *Life in Hell* sucked, man. *Life in Hell* sucked. You couldn't even read the damn thing.

Nardwuar: Are they trying to mellow you out? By doing *TV Nation* and now you're doing *Canadian Bacon*. Now you're writing sitcoms. Like, please don't give up, Michael Moore. They're pushing you into that home...

Moore: I won't let you down. I promise, I promise, I promise, I promise! [hugs Nardwuar] I won't let you down. I won't do it!

Nardwuar: Did you know that Mark Farner of Grand Funk Railroad has a dog named after him?

Moore: Mark Farner is, like, supporting the Michigan Militia right now. I mean it's like pretty scary stuff.

Nardwuar: And finally, Michael Moore, we'd like to thank you, here in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. You've inspired people. Like *TV Nation*. *TV Nation* – you had the thing about the car alarms, where you played the car alarms outside of the guy's house.

Moore: Yeah, that was cool.

Nardwuar: And people in Vancouver, while the Molson Indy was happening in Vancouver, played Indy sounds outside of the mayor's house, to tell him how bad it was with the noise.

ing on poor people in your country, you're going to end up looking like us. You don't want that.

Nardwuar: But you've got to be nice to us, Michael Moore, because don't the Canadian parkas pay for you? They finance you, don't they Michael Moore?

Moore: The who?

Nardwuar: The Canadian parkas. They're the guys who finance you, Michael Moore, your empire.

Moore: Who are the parkas?

Nardwuar: The people. The people who paid for *The Awful Truth* (Moore's television series). The Canadian parkas. That's what you refer to them as.

Moore: The Canadian parkas? I've never heard that term.

Nardwuar: You used that. The parkas paid for you.

Moore: When did I use that?

(Editor's Note: From <michaelmoore.com>:

"Mike's Book Tour Diary: Sunday, 2/24/2002:

Spent all day in the editing room on my documentary. The suits are coming to New York to watch it for the first time on Friday and I think they are going to like what they see. As they are coming from Toronto and not Hollywood, they cannot legally be classified as "suits" – more like, the "parkas" are coming, or the "beaverskins" are coming. This film has been entirely funded by Canadians and Germans, so it's nice to be dealing with a smart bunch of people who give you creative freedom and get where you're coming from.")

Nardwuar: Okay, play along with me here, Michael Moore. Help me. Help me. *The Awful*



Truth funded by Canadians.

Moore: No, I don't want any Canadians to buy this book. Not at forty dollars a book. Don't buy this book. That's outrageous. That's an outrageous price. I had no idea.

Nardwuar: Steal this book.

Moore: Well, no, don't get in trouble, either. Just, you know, channel it somehow. (Or borrow it from the library.)

Nardwuar: In your new book, Michael Moore, *Stupid White Men*, there's a lot of dwelling on toothpaste and zippers.

Moore: [laughs] Don't give away the ending to people, all right?

Nardwuar: Do you realize that in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, where you are now right now Michael Moore, this is where Bill Clinton bought *the* cigar. He bought the cigar right here.

Moore: No way. Is that true?

Nardwuar: Yes he did. He bought the cigar here.

Moore: It was a Cuban cigar, right? 'Cause we can't get that in America. He bought it here.

Nardwuar: Yes. Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. That's where it all happened, Michael Moore.

Moore: Unbelievable.

Nardwuar: We're trailing you, kind of, and thanks so much for letting us come along with you in your voyage...

Moore: Oh, no, I'm happy to.

Nardwuar: Have you ever been trailed by Inspector Clouseau characters? Like people running after you, trying to get a file on you, etcetera, etcetera?

Moore: Oh yeah. That happens every day.

Nardwuar: Any fun instances in ditching them at all? We thought, maybe, since we were waiting outside, we fooled your driver by saying that we were waiting for Ivana Trump. [to the driver] You fell for that, didn't you?

Driver: Ahh, yeah. [laughter]

Nardwuar: Do you have any little tricks at all for avoiding people or people who have chased after you, Michael Moore?

Moore: He wanted to meet Ivana Trump. That's the reason.

Nardwuar: Ahh, good comeback there.

Moore: Yeah, well.

Nardwuar: Have you requested your FBI file through the Freedom of Information Act or anything like that? Have you been able to do that or found any weird stuff on you? Like, I think there's even stuff on JJ from *Good Times*. There must be stuff on Michael Moore.

Moore: You know, I've never asked for my file. You guys should ask for it. Anybody can get it.

Nardwuar: Didn't the Secret Service ask for an episode of *The Awful Truth*?

Moore: Yes, they did, actually. They demanded that we give it to them and we wouldn't.

Nardwuar: Where are we going right now, Michael Moore? Can we follow you some more?

Moore: I'm going to go and do an interview, I guess. Right? Is that what we're doing? [Gets an answer from his handler.] See, I just go where I'm told. Come on along.

Nardwuar: Really, is that okay?

[Nardwuar struggles with the door.]

Nardwuar: I've got to get out? How do you get out? Okay, I'll go out this way.

[They get out of the van and walk into a television studio.]

Nardwuar: Following Michael Moore as he

jaunts around Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. By the way, your publicist said that you had cancelled all interviews today, Michael Moore.

Moore: I don't have a publicist. Who are you talking to, man?

Nardwuar: Harper Collins, Canada.

Moore: They're not my publicists.

Nardwuar: Okay. They set up all these interviews and you didn't do them. So, where are we going now, Michael Moore?

Please, tell us.

Moore: They shouldn't have set up any interviews 'cause they're not my publicists.

Nardwuar: And where are we heading, Michael Moore?

Moore: Well, I think I'm going to do an interview in front of a blue screen.

Nardwuar: And what is this for?

Moore: It's for a blue screen shot, I guess.

Nardwuar: Go ahead and knock 'em dead, Michael Moore.

Moore: All right. Thank you very much.

Nardwuar: Oh, can we stick around, just get a few, couple of words after.

Moore: I only have a few minutes right now. I've got to do this.

Nardwuar: Okay, can we just go in front of the blue screen for just, like, two seconds just to finish?

Television Interview Crew Guy: No. You'll have to leave now.

Nardwuar: Michael Moore, I wanted to show you. Look, I just brought this [Nardwuar pulls out a magazine] to show to your family [Nardwuar's getting both pushed and led out of the studio] called "Your Family Survival Guide to Terrorism."

Television Interview Crew Guy: We're rolling. We're live.

Moore: Okay. I guess I'm doing this show now.

Nardwuar: Is it better to be rich or poor?

Moore: Thanks a lot, guys.

Nardwuar: Can we stick around, Michael? Or does this mean it's over?

Moore: Nardwuar, this isn't my studio. I can't tell you.

Nardwuar: Okay, can we at least go doot doola doot doo... Thanks so much, Michael Moore, and doot doola doot doo...

Television Interview Crew Guy: You've got to go. C'mon.

Moore: Do doo la doot dooooooh.

Nardwuar: Almost. Doot doola doot doo...

Moore: Doot doot.

Nardwuar: Thank you.

[Nardwuar gets manhandled. He's screaming as he's being led out of the building]

Nardwuar: Is it better to be rich or poor, Michael Moore?

Moore: [laughs in the background]

Nardwuar: It is better to be rich or poor?

Television Interview Crew Guy: Is it better to be alive or dead?

Nardwuar: [still yelling as he gets pushed out of the building] Michael Moore, are you happy that Sammy Hagar is together with David Lee Roth. [doors slam shut] Thanks Mike. Appreciate it. [to camera] There we have it. An encounter with Michael

Moore in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. [A few moments later, Moore leaves his television interview for a minute to specifically address Nardwuar in the parking lot outside.]

Nardwuar: I was pushed out.

Moore: But those were your people.

Nardwuar: Wait a second. Let's just get a clarification here, Michael Moore. What happened here?

Moore: You were just pushed out by Canadians, not me. I love you, man. Those were your people

who pushed you out, violently. Did you see that?

Nardwuar: Yes, I did.

Moore: Your own Canadians did that. I'm appalled.

Nardwuar: Thank you. Can I have a hug?

Moore: Yeah.

[They hug.]

Moore: I'm so sorry. These were Canadian producers, Canadian TV people who did this to this man. I'm outraged by it and next time, stand up to 'em, man. You play hockey.

Nardwuar: Didn't I stand up?

Moore: No, no. You lost. They pushed you right out, man. You're the media. You're the truth.

Nardwuar: Hey, remember I talked to you once before and you said that I was on crack?

Moore: No, no, you are...

Nardwuar: Nardwuar the Human Serviette.

Moore: You are a national treasure, man.

Nardwuar: Thank you. You remember the last time I talked to you, you said that I was on crack?

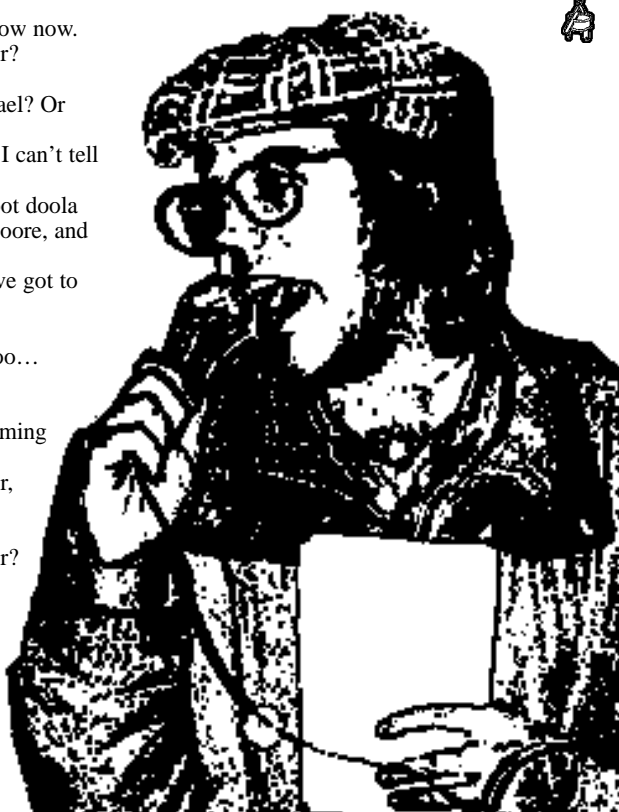
Moore: Yes, I do remember you. Yes.

Nardwuar: One last thing.

Moore: I was really disappointed that you weren't there last night 'cause no trip to Vancouver is complete without talking to you, so I really appreciate you being here.

Nardwuar: Well, thank you, Mr. Moore. We real-

Moore: You are a national treasure, man.
Nardwuar: Thank you. You remember the last time I talked to you,



Moore: Oh [laughs], really? Ow, that's so cool.

Nardwuar: Thank you so much for the inspiring...

Moore: The inspiration. [laughs]

Nardwuar: Thank you so much for inspiring people.

Moore: And now, I must go make the *Magnificent Ambersons*, thank you.

Nardwuar: Thank you, so much, Michael Moore, now going to a Fox broadcast. Keep on rocking in a free world, and... Fox are milking you now, they better take your show. Is your show going to be on, just quickly, yes or no?

Moore: Yes, *TV Nation* will be on.

Nardwuar: So Fox has picked it up?

Moore: Noooo, the BBC have put up the money for a whole new season.

Nardwuar: Are we going to be seeing it on the Fox?

Moore: You're going to see it here on CTV.

Nardwuar: Why won't we see it on the Fox? You're doing that press conference for them.

Moore: Are you an American or a Canadian?

Nardwuar: They're manipulating you.

Moore: Are you an American or a Canadian?

Nardwuar: They're manipulating you.

Moore: What are you? An American or Canadian?

Nardwuar: I love both nations.

Moore: Which are you?

Nardwuar: I'm an anti-fascist.

Moore: What are you? An American or Canadian?

Nardwuar: I'm an anti-fascist. I am a Canadian, born July 5, 1968.

Moore: Okay, dammit. Now, why would you care if it's on Fox, if I just told it's going to be on CTV? What do you care if it's on Fox?

Nardwuar: You are going to a press conference to milk Fox. Why are you milking Fox, when they are not gonna air *TV Nation*?

Moore: I'm going to a party that's put on by Random House, dammit, the publisher of my book right now.

Nardwuar: But, you're actually going to do a live satellite feed with the Fox network.

Moore: Oh, no, it's a special tonight on the election, in America, that's going all out across the country.

Nardwuar: I just think that Michael Moore should boycott Fox, unless they show *TV Nation*. You should not do any TV, you should not handle the regular media.

Moore: [silence] Okay.

Nardwuar: Well, thank you very much, Michael Moore. Keep on rocking in a free world and doot doola doot doo...

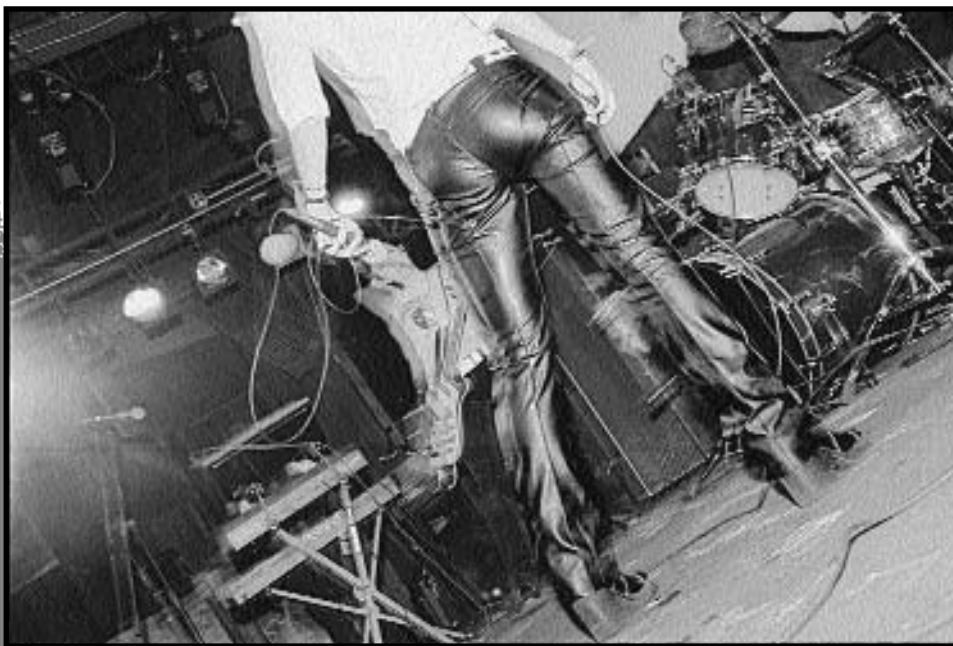
Moore: Okay, doot doot.

<www.nardwuar.com>

Dan Monick's

Photo Page

My good friend Dave G. a.k.a. "Sammy" a.k.a. "The Donald" just swung through town for a brief visit. He is a connoisseur of the word "pants".



He has greatly heightened my appreciation of the word "pants" in the years that I have known him. This issue's page is dedicated to him and the word "pants".

Please note: If you're an established record company, and you send us a pre-release without all the album art, we're probably going to throw that shit away... cock gobblers.

24 REASONS WHY:

Yes, I Have Been Drinking: CD
First of all, if Todd sent me this just because of the cover, next time I see him I'm sneaking a flower into his backpack when he bends down to get the flask out of his sock. It looks like a still from an outbreak of COPS: two short-dressed ladies on a sidewalk, one crying into her hand, the other passed out with her skirt around her waist and her skivvies barely covering the business between her widespread legs. Can't say much for the music, though. Mostly sounds like medium-bad '80s metal to me. You could find hints of Motorhead or Poison Idea if you really looked and were an optimist, but unless you were having an absolutely golden day, you'd say "fuck it" just like I'm about to. Fuck it. -Cuss Baxter (No label. That should tell you something.)

4-SKINS: The Good, the Bad, and the 4-Skins: CD

A re-release of the 4-Skins' first album, all digipacked nice and purty with five bonus tracks and an "album sized" poster. While most of the songs on this never quite captured the volatility of their tracks on the first *Oi!* compilation, this was actually a fairly strong debut from one of Britain's most reviled skin bands. Panther may not have been the most convincing singer in the world, but he did a decent job when he put his mind to it, and the lyrics are as far removed as possible from the "WE ARE SKINS! LET'S GET DRUNK! LET'S FIGHT! OI OI OI!" bullshit that seems to permeate that crap passing itself off as "street punk" these days. Quite a few "hits" can be found here, including "Jack the Lad," "Plastic Gangsters," "Low Life," and "Yesterday's Heroes," as well as live versions of "ACAB," "Chaos" and others. If you're a long-hair, I highly recommend picking this up and playing it around a bunch of baldies just to confuse the shit outta 'em.

-Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

ABNORMI: Normien Vastainen: CD

This punk outfit from Finland reminded me of two bands right off the top of my head: Disorder and Chaos UK. It's something about the din they produce which seems to be out of control but calculated that way. I don't know if they follow the same values of "Noise, not music," but I would agree that some of those bands' music might have crossed their path by virtue of some degree of separation. Guitars are buzz-saw, the bass thuds along to the beat, while the drums bash at a spastic rate, and the vocals are droning and



The cover features a picture of a guy sleeing. No doubt the last guy to listen to this disc.

-Jimmy Alvarado

strained. I wouldn't want to listen to this after a night of binge drinking. -Donofthead (Abnormi)

ADICTS, THE: Smart Alex: CD

Album number three for these boys gets re-released with extra tracks, lyrics and liner notes that, among other things, explain why they changed their named to ADX for a short period in the 1980s. The formula remains the same as their previous releases: take punk rock and bash it over the head with pop sensibility and a sense of humor. Standout tracks include the title tracks, "Crazy," "Bad Boy," "Tokyo," "Rockin' Wrecker" and "The Odd Couple." Be sure to thank Captain Oi for providing another gem from the old days on which to plunk your green. -Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

ADICTS, THE: Sound of Music: CD

A re-release of this punk rock institution's second album. Expanding the sound a little, yet continuing down the path begun on their first album, *Songs of Praise*, *Sound of Music* is a fine slab of English punk rock, replete with *Clockwork Orange* imagery, a healthy dose of humor, and some damn fine songwriting. Many of the tracks here are now considered classics, including "Chinese Takeaway," "Joker in the Pack," "My Baby Got Run Over By a Steamroller," and "Shake Rattle Bang Your Head." Also included are some B-sides, including their take on the Ramones' "I Wanna Be Sedated." -Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

ALLERGIC TO WHORES/MCCARTHY COMMISSION: split CD

Allergic: Heard these guys had somehow softened up and got all poppy poppy 'n shit. If they have, it ain't apparent from this disc, 'cause what I got comin' outta my speakers right now

is some pretty brutal hardcore. There is considerably more "metal" in the guitars than I remember there previously being, but it ain't all that annoying. Final verdict is that I still dig 'em. McCarthy: A little more run-of-the-mill in sound than Allergic to Whores, but that's more like saying the Rezillos are kinda run-of-the-mill in comparison to Teenage Jesus, meaning it ain't meant as an insult. Loud, fast hardcore with occasional dual vocal stylings and a socially conscious bent to their lyrics. My only gripe is that there was just a wee bit too much metal to the guitars, which effectively led them to being dropped from my favorite band of the week contest. -Jimmy Alvarado (Rodent Popsicle)

ALLERGIC TO WHORES/MCCARTHY COMMISSION: split CD

This split features a couple of HC bands that come from the brutal side of town musically and vocally. The first band is Allergic to Whores from Ohio. These guys spit out some rippin' hardcore that relies heavily on distortion and dirge. Some of the songs thrash it up, making them sound like a cross between United Mutation and Antischism. When they slow it down they come off similar to a few of the mid '90s Ebullition bands. The vocals are traded off between the guitarist and drummer with one of the singers sounding like Martin from Los Crudos/Limpwrist. Overall, they're pretty damn good, but there's no lyric sheet, so I'm left wondering where the hell they're coming from. The band name alone confuses me. Allergic to Whores? Huh?!? The other band on this split is McCarthy Commission out of Pittsburgh. They follow suit with more abrasive HC. However, they fall into a more simplistic, if not crude, reign, making them not quite as interesting as ATW. Stick to the Allergic to Whores songs on this CD. -Mike Dunn (Rodent Popsicle)

AMAZOMBIES: Bitches and Stitches: CD

Mid-tempo punk with a lot of Go-Gos in it, although I'm not quite sure it's intentional. This'll get played more than once. -Jimmy Alvarado (www.xcommunicated.biz)

AMDI PETERSENS ARME: Blod Ser Mere Virkeligt Ud Pa Film: 7"

I missed them when they came through town while they were touring the states. I forgot what the reason was, but I do regret it. I hate to miss the international bands when they work so hard to come here. I heard good things about the show and wished I was there. Well, these Danish maniacs have released their second EP, which is every bit as good as their first. Old school, in the Circle Jerks meets Black Flag kind of way. Everything about the packaging and music would lead you to believe that this was a long lost record from the '80s. Not many bands trying to claim old school pull it off. These guys perfect it and truly make this old guy crack a tear, an accomplishment that is not easy to achieve. It's amazing to me the rawness and the energy these guys put forth. I know that I'm not the only one out there raving about this. Taking something that is old and making it relevant today is something to cheer for. Their records are going to stand the test of time. A big thumbs up to Felix Havoc for releasing this in the US. -Donofthead (Havoc)

APOCALYPSE HOBOKEN: self-titled: 4-CD box set

One decade. 125 tracks (including covers of Roy Orbison, Bikini Kill, Kraut and Nip Drivers; radio appearances; and live sets). Only 250 of these box sets were made by the band, complete with a thick booklet that reads like a story, covering the ups and downs and detailing each recording session or where the tracks were culled from. If you've never heard of Apocalypse Hoboken, don't worry. You're in good company. They went on largely ignored, especially on the west coast, where I had the privilege to see them, eight or so years into them being a band, to an audience of three. Chicago-based, starting roughly in 1990, and eventually blipping on the national radar as the oddest signing Kung Fu Records had ever made (due to the fact that they're neither dumb as posts, sappier than an orchard of maple syrup trees, or peddling hair-gel emo to pre-teens), they're a true headscratcher of a band, taking their cues from classic punk rock, straining it into other arenas that weren't quite indie rock, that weren't quite experimental... well, that weren't quite right. I say that with the highest praise possible. They never fit, but they made great music the entire life of the band. It's spastic, irreverent, and generous in their intentional fucking with audience expectation and pushing their own envelope as far as possible. (For starters, they had a double seven inch called *Daterape Nation*, a song called "The Devil Has a Pussy.") I wouldn't be so bold to compare them to Flipper - AH always had a solid, very rock-based instrumentation amid the chaos to keep the beatings nice - but they weren't strangers to pissing humorless people off. If you've never heard

the band and you're in your local record store and see AH's *House of the Rising Son of a Bitch*, *Microstars*, or *Inverse*, *Reverse*, *Perverse* (the three easiest to find) I suggest you pick it up. If you're already a fan, email 'em soon. I'm not sure how long these boxes are going to last. I'm floored by mine. This is DIY done right. I'm still bummed they broke up. -Todd (Apocalypse Hoboken)

ARRIVALS, THE: Northern Hospitality: 4 Song-CDEP

The Arrivals are, without question, my favorite band that I've heard in the past year and a half, if not longer. You probably have no idea who they are. You're not alone. In that time I've met two people who have heard them. Two. I was just lucky enough to have someone play them for me after playing with them in Chicago. I was extremely nervous about listening to *Northern Hospitality*, since to say their full length, *Goodbye, New World* has been in more than heavy rotation would be so much more than an understatement. I should've known better. It kicks my ass for a good solid eight minutes and I keep going back for more. They actually pull off being a band, in the manner that they feed off of one another. Each member is integral to what they create, and what they create is some of the best music out there. Live, you can see how they play off one another, whether it's their own material or a Van Halen cover thrown in for fun (Say what you will, Van Halen is *hard* to play!) The lyrics (when you can fully decipher what's being said) are both intelligent and written to work perfectly with Isaac and Dave's cadence, but the balance between vocals and music is done so well that the vocals become just another instrument in the equation. "Hearts in the Right Places" is a bittersweet love song done acoustic, but somehow it's still rough. No lyric sheet though, so I end up looking pretty stupid singing, "Henry Ford is dead." Two of the tracks will be on their next release, *Songs in the Key of Obligation*. Get your hands on anything you can find by these guys. Your life will be better for it, well at least your record collection. -Megan Pants (Thick)

BANGS: Call and Response: CD

Within a week of moving across the country to California, some friends suggested going to see Toys that Kill play with Bangs in a town about four hours away. No job, no home, and no plans, I thought it was a great idea. To make a long story short, we spent about eighty bucks on gas, had to hitchhike after we ran out, and drive about eight hours one way to get there. Late. Toys that Kill had played all but three songs of their set, so I was pretty pissed. After some performance art (not helping my mood) Bangs took the stage. Two ladies and a guy on drums who are not afraid to rock. They blew me away, even in my salty mood. By the second song, I was up front bopping and dancing my day away. I never picked anything up. I was stupid. This album kicks so hard from the start, slowing for "Kinda Good," then picking right back up. Their alternating vocals are so, well, *true*. They don't sound like they're trying to be anything, which is a little too common lately. The music is catchy as hell and

the lyrics balance smooth and sweet with hollers that make you want to yell along. My only complaint is that it's only six songs long. -Megan Pants (Kill Rock Stars)

BELOW THE SOUND: More Like a Gunshot Than a Car Wreck: CD

Think early '90s Therapy without the major label production values. No, that isn't a compliment. -Jimmy Alvarado (Berserker)

BLAZING HALEY: Mas Chingon: CD

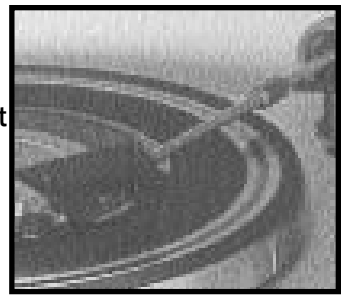
After waiting months for this full length to be finalized and pressed, I finally got what I was waiting for all along - the thunder that defines Blazing Haley: seminal rock and roll guitar that's not afraid to get loud; galloping standup bass that's so wonderfully thick live, you could cut it with a straight razor; manic, all-over-the-place drumming, making you wonder if Gene Krupa hit the crack pipe years back; and a singer who can wail it out with the best of 'em, still making it hard for me to believe that he's only been belting it out for only five years. Talent here, and lots of fucking of it. Ten songs that call to mind '50s teenage lust, like "Trailer Park Annie," "Date with Ivy," and the party-rocking "They Get Bad Fast." They even recorded their version of Black Sabbath's "Black Sabbath" as a bonus track, and I'd like to add that they've been playing it long before the instant adoration of Ozzy/Ozfest/The Osbournes became so recently fashionable. It's unfortunate that Blazing Haley sometimes gets lumped into the "rockabilly" category, aka The Fonzie Dung Heap, because BH have got one hell of an outfit happening amongst their peers, usually leaving them buried in the dust after just one of their tried and true live gigs. It's also really unfortunate that no record labels have taken the opportunity to get up off their asses and done something with Blazing Haley. I mean, fuck, at least talk with this band, fer chrissakes! What more do you need? A fucking engraved invitation? This disc kills the competition of what's considered "hot" for Top 40 standards. But, then again, fuck Top 40. This is rock and roll. This is Blazing Haley. -Designated Dale (Rode To Ruin)

BLOOD BROTHERS, THE: March on Electric Children: CD

I don't really know what screamo is (ditto kohlrabi), but I think this might be some of it. There's quite a bit of screaming and the surreal (read: post modern poetic) lyrics are heavy on words like "kiss," "lips," "she," "heart," and "milk." Don't misinterpret me (unless you care to); songs about who-the-fuck-knows-what with lines like "Do you recall when we were young? We licked the summer's salty tongue" are infinitely preferable to (most) ones about how two friends went in different directions and their friendship ceased to be. Anyway, about the screaming: I was sitting on the dumper trying to remember who this particular screaming reminded me of - because it was someone, I was sure - and I was about to go with Articles of Faith when I realized it was die Kreuzen (I'm pretty keen on the geography of my punk. Wanda heard

RAZORCAKE

Treated tenderly,
vinyl won't ever
leave you and will
never treat you wrong. Just
don't use it to put out a
grease fire.



These are the top 7" since
the last mag.

Underground Medicine Mailorder, Connecticut

1. Bomb Pops, *Everything Looks Like Her* (Rapid Pulse)
2. Plugz, *Move* (Blammo)
3. Loose Lips, *Addicted to You* (Just Add Water)
4. Rock Bottom and the Spys, *Rich Girl* (Breakmyface)
5. Ends, *Jump Ship* (Mortville)
6. Diskords, *Heart Full of Naplam EP* (Vinyl Warning)
7. Horehounds, *No Time For You EP* (Rapid Pulse)
8. Fear, *Fuck Xmas* (****)
9. Shoes This High, *The Nose One* (Raw Power)
10. Neon King Kong, *Mix up the Mix* (GSL)
11. Jewws, *I Need Your Lovin* (Alien Snatch)
12. Scat Rag Boosters, *I Mean It* (Goodbye Boozy)
13. Pits, *Belief in Ruins* (Rapid Pulse)
14. Hellcopters, *Killing Alan* (****)
15. Big Balls, *Fallen Angels* (Balls)
16. Rotters, *Sink the Whales* (Bacchus Archives)
17. Hellcopters, *Jesus Loves the Hellcopters* (****)
18. Richmond Sluts, *Sweet Something* (Disaster)
19. The D4, *RocknRoll Motherfucker* (SDZ)
20. Blutt, *Chutt...* (Heehaw)

Disgruntled Mailorder, California

1. The Slanderin, *Zombie Gang* (Headline)
2. White Stripes, *The Big Three Killed My Baby* (Sympathy For The Record Industry)
3. The Flash Express, *Who Stole the Soul* (Revenge)
4. Various, *Battle for the Airwaves Vol. 2* (Radio)
5. Lube, *Music of Chance* (Revenge)
6. Loose Lips, *Addicted to You* (Just Add Water)
7. The Starvations, *Horrified Eyes* (GSL)
8. Radio Reelers, self-titled (Zaxxon Virile Action)
9. The Cadavers, *Never Mind the Bodies... Here's the Cadavers* (Noma Beach)
10. Richmond Sluts, *Sweet Something* (Disaster)
11. Rebel Truth, *Doing It for the Kids* (THD)
12. Superhelicopter, self-titled (Yakisakana)
13. The Bomb Pops, *Everything Looks Like Her* (Rapid Pulse)
14. Real Kids, *Live in Detroit* (DUI)
15. Briefs, *She's Abrasive* (Dirtnap)
16. Gore Gore Girls, *Keep Your Hands off My Baby* (Get Hip)
17. Tyrades, *Detonation* (Big Neck)
18. Neon King Kong, *Mix Up the Mix* (GSL)
19. Hives, *Hate to Say I Told You So* (Gearhead)
20. Scat Rag Boosters, *I Mean It* (Goodbye Boozy)

something about Anti Flag on NPR today and came to ask me if I knew anything about them. I said, "They're from Pittsburgh." But I'm not sure I've ever actually heard them.) and then I realized the whole thing is pretty die Kreuzen, what with the not-really-for-moshing rhythms and wide dynamic range. I think the Blood Brothers might be from Chicago, too, which ties things up neatly for me (in case I'm being a knowitall asshole, AOF and die Kreuzen were both from the midwest). So, yeah, I think if die Kreuzen had been frozen after the first LP and thawed about two years ago, this might be the record they would have made. Beats the one they did make. -Cuss Baxter (Three One G)

BLOWN TO BITS: Ruling Class: 7"

This is what I know. I've been reading a lot of these guys in Bay area zines as of late. A lot of hype is out there. A friend told me their crowds are very loyal but violent. I've known the singer Jim for a very long time, probably coming on fifteen to twenty years. He's one of the long-standing punk friends I have, a tried and true crust punk for life. The only thing that surprises me is that it took him so long to get a band together. We spent many a night drinking as he yelled along to Chaos UK, UK Subs, Disorder, Exploited, Discharge or many bands of the day from the UK. Since I have fallen out of touch with Jim, him living in the bay area and I in LA, I felt compelled to sample his new band and first release with excitement. Pet peeve time here. I hate when bands don't include an insert. I can't always tell where a band comes from without some additional information. If the label can afford to print the cover, why not xerox some lyric sheets or include an insert? Starting with the cover art, it is very Crass influenced. That is very Jim, in my opinion. Easily recognizable as a punk release. Musically, they come off as more of a Swedish D-beat thing that is metallic in a crust kind of way. The east coast straight edge metal parts did surprise me. The vocals are so guttural, they seem to burn the inner lining of the throat. Background vocals are screamed to accentuate the point. Drums and bass follow along in the mayhem that they create. Still wish I had a lyric sheet though. Can't tell if the lyrics are intelligent or cutter. -Donofthead (Disintegration)

BOOTLEG BILL: Treasure Trove of Trash: CD

Okay, Sean. You know how to get my attention. Who else are you going to send a CD that is absolutely covered with porn. Not just your regular "high dollar" porn, but porn with trashy girls in gang bangs, BDSM, facials, pissing, anal fisting, squirting orgasms, and a guy taking a dump in a girl's mouth, all right there on the cover. So, with expectations really high at this point, I popped in the CD. Surprisingly enough, it didn't meet them. Very dull, southern style rock'n'roll. It actually sounds like most of the stuff I would hear on the jukeboxes in the redneck bars in Florida with one slight exception: the lyrics. For example, song titles include "Too Much Porn," "Smut Peddler," "Big Muff Earth Mama" and "Gorilla Crotch." Here is a little of what Bootleg Bill has to offer: "Gonna poke your hole until you're dead/Gonna slow fuck your face until

it's red" and "Hardcore porn has served me well/I'm gonna shit on your face, please enjoy the smell." I bet this guys gets all the chicks with lines like that. -Toby (Scarey)

BOTTLES AND SKULLS: Amped the Fuck Up: CD

Having a hard time with this one here.... See, I really dig the tracks that come from the seven-inch EP from which this was expanded, and I like the added studio tracks as well, but the live stuff, well, is just harshing the whole experience. I've listened to this disc no less than twelve times in the last two weeks and I've always ended up either turning the volume down or just ejecting the whole motherfuckin' thang midway through, which can't be a good thing. I know they probably put it on there as a sort of bonus for the buyer, but the live stuff is just blowing the whole gig. My suggestion is to either buy a copy of the original EP if it's still available or wait 'til a new full length is available. -Jimmy Alvarado (Sickroom)

BOUNCING SOULS/ ANTI-FLAG: BYO Split Series, Vol. 4: CD

The Bouncing Souls haven't covered any new ground in years. They're not a bad band, per se, but every time I hear them, I think of the rumor I once heard about them starting out as a Doors cover band. I don't know if that rumor is true or not, but the mere fact that it's *plausible* speaks volumes. Anti-Flag doesn't really cover any new ground here, either, but I don't mind that so much with Anti-Flag. Their lyrics are solid, their melodies are infectious, and they come across with a lot of speed and energy. So I find myself listening to the second half of this split a lot. And the big surprise: Anti-Flag not only covers the Buzzcocks' "Ever Fallen in Love," but they also pull it off. -Sean Carswell (BYO)

BROCKMEYERS, THE: Paul, the Album: CD

I'm not generally a fan of the sweet-sung pop punk, but this group is all right. The Brockmeyers have the power of the Ramones or, say, Weezer without sounding much like either one, and the lyrics are both obscure and literal enough to float above the level of a lot of this sort of stuff. And that Paul, he sure is cute. -Cuss Baxter (Hewhocorrupts Inc/Fudge Sickill)

BROKEN: Mad As Fuck: CDEP

Starts off sounding like the American equivalent of Broken Bones and veers midway into Turbonegro country. Not bad as a whole. -Jimmy Alvarado (Magilla Guerrilla)

BROKEN: Mad As Fuck: CDEP

I seem to remember knowing that these guys are somehow descended from the Pist, if that means anything to anyone. Lotsa big fat guys play old school New England hardcore with a little too much guitar solo. The kind of record that, if you put it on at a party, nobody would make you take it off, but nobody would ask you who it was, either. Wait, I take that back; only two of the guys in the picture are fat. -Cuss Baxter (Magilla Guerrilla)

**BROTHERS OF CONQUEST:
All the Colors of Darkness: CD**
Guys who haven't moved in time past when they first heard Metallica's first album *Kill 'Em All*. -Donofthead (Go Kart)

BUSINESS, THE: Saturday's Heroes: CD

Captain Oi gives the Business's second album the digipak treatment. Sound-wise, nothing's much changed, meaning the "big" sound is still intact. Musically, this is not as immediately satisfying an album as *Suburban Rebels*, although it does grow on you after a bit and there are some classics to be found here, including "Spanish Jails," "Hurry Up Harry" and a re-recorded "Drinking and Driving." -Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

CAUSTIC CHRIST: 7"

At the end of the day, it's the fast and heavy that we all come back to and it's bands like Caustic Christ that keep that brutal realm enticing and exciting. Says here it's two members of Aus Rotten and one each of React and Submachine and, as you might figure, you're not getting anything you couldn't have gotten ten or fifteen years ago, but then you're not getting something that sounds that old either. In fact, you're getting six bare-knuckle punches to the spine that you'll treasure for years to come and maybe pass on to your kids. -Cuss Baxter (Havoc)

CHANNEL 3: Self-titled: CD

Holy sheep shit, it's a new Channel 3 disc and, wonder of wonders, it doesn't suck in the slightest! Excuse me if I sound a little shocked, but, taking into account the "reformed punk band/suck-ass tunes" ratio that has pretty much been the rule rather than the exception, this disc has no business being as good as it is. What you get for your buck here is an album that quite nearly erases any embarrassing mistakes these guys may have made in the "big hair and Aquanet-induced brain damage" days of the '80s. I say almost because the "hidden track" here sounds like a Poison outtake, and I hope it was a joke on their part. Aside from this little faux pas, every track on this bad boy is a veritable instant "hit," a classic if you will, of epic proportions. Sound-wise, this sounds like the long-lost album that was never recorded after *After the Lights Go Out*, the road not taken all those years ago that they've decided they'd like to saunter down after all. I've gotta admit, I was a little apprehensive about these guys showing their mugs again after hearing they were peddling that "reforming to show the young 'uns how *real* punk is done" horseshit like Exene and a couple of other has-been glory hogs, but these thirteen tracks of auditory bliss force me to keep my tongue at bay because, unlike X and their even-more-dismal-with-each-release track record, these guys have got the tunes to back their boasts. So recommended it ain't funny. -Jimmy Alvarado (Dr. Strange)

CHRISTIANSEN: Forensics Brothers and Sitters: CD

I don't know what to make of this. It reminds me of At the Drive-In, but not as good or inventive. -Donofthead (Revelation)

COUNTRY TEASERS: Science Hat Artistic Cube Moral Nosebleed Empire: 2 LP

The Country Teasers are a band who combine the primary musical influences of the Fall and old country music with a disdain for people and the way we do things. Musically, the Teasers range the map from fucked country ditties and dirges to completely fucked country ditties and dirges but it's not always easy to hear the country through everything else going on. Frequently, there are three guitars battling each other, each with a single twangy line to carry over a quick two-beat, and at other times a lone guitar and leader B. R. Wallers' plaintive wail. Synthesizers or sequencers or whatever the fuck you call them make periodic appearances, generally to either comedic or hypnotic effect. Lyrical subjects tend toward: physical relations and misanthropy. Conclusion of the foregoing. Nature of Science Hat Artistic Cube Moral Nosebleed Empire: thirty-nine songs recorded from '91-'96 in various states of production (some sound as good as what made it onto previous records; others, not so good. Vocals are frustratingly muffled on some tracks) and, I suspect, varying states of intoxication. A few of the songs have been released before, on labels that I gather the band is less than happy with. Topics of discussion include: self-relations ("Only Whittlin'," "Good Pair of Hands," "Go Down Mighty Devil"), girl-relations ("Some Hole," "After One Thing," "Let's Have a Shambles," "Getaway!"), religious theory ("Adam Wakes Up"), England's postal system, bridge-burning, secrets in Welsh, Kenny Malcolm on smack, and who knows whatall else. A Wallers anthem of sorts is present in "No Limits": "... I won't give up the fight/ I do what the fuck I like," and indeed he does. Few of the songs have what you would call conventional structures and he obviously doesn't strive for pristine sound if it doesn't serve him. Overblown drum machine tracks lead into jerky, slide-guitar-stoked ballads and three-minute songs have a single verse a third of the way in. Wallers frequently addresses the band or the listener on tape, on one song directing the players through the various changes. Shit, if I keep this up I'm gonna forget to go to work. At any rate, Science Hat is a robust collection for lovers of the unpolished first-take and if you have to get the CD, the twenty tracks they whittled it down to will still satisfy. Conclusion of the foregoing. -Cuss Baxter (In The Red)

CRIPPLES, THE: Dirty Head: CD

Here's a mindfuck for you: Suicide and Sonic Youth join the Electric Eels in some really ugly '60s pop worship. Although I've got seven more discs to review in this batch, I wouldn't be surprised if this turns out to be the best new CD I hear all week. -Jimmy Alvarado (Dirtnap)

CROSSTOPS: Cloverleaf Fandango: CD

Heapin helpin of self-described Trucker Punk, mostly in the tongue-in-cheek nutshellicker vein that's hip with the vintage westernwear set, sprinkled with moments of extra speed (that is, velocity. **RAZORCAKE** 75)

Crosstops are, after all, speed) and heft as on "The Boob Song," a near-copy of MDC's "Chicken Squawk" with yodels substituted for Dave's chicken impression and the line "...my favorite ones are the ones attached to you," and "Rhinstone Cowboy" which sounds like an outtake from War of the Superbikes. Subject matter is pretty standard fare for the genre - boobs, asses, fucking, strong drink, UFOs and hippie derision - but the arrangements are splendid, rich with female backups and non-git/bass/drum instruments, and the lyrics are clever. The cover's beautiful, too: Fifty-eight-year-old guy, Pork Dukes T under his flannel, coffee mug in hand, leans on a shiny red semi surrounded by five Betty Page cowgirls and only one of 'ems sneering at him. "Come on, let's truck together" indeed. -Cuss Baxter (Tinnitus)

CROWS: *Durty Bunny*: CD

Formerly known as the Cheryl Cro(w) Mags, they stepped down from the moniker name to avoid a potential ass-beating by the recently re-formed Harley and crew (Cro Mags) when they played NYC. Well, what can I say but I'm fucking impressed. I'm predisposed to like it. Say Radon (not the shit that gives you lung cancer, but the Gainesville band that had the dude that draws *Milk and Cheese* design an early 7" cover) and Hot Water Music and my ears will perk. I'll tell you a secret. If you have great guitarists and bassist and a so-so drummer, the band will sound okay, regardless, but if you have a fantastic drummer, which Bill Clower is, the music just propels - it's meatier, thicker, screamier. And that's exactly what the Crows are: an ass-beating. When it's fast, it's a town riot. When it's quiet, it's a quiet, but effective ass-beating. When there's harmonica, it's an ass beating with a wind instrument. You get my point. Strangely, they remind me of early west coast punk mixed with a Midwest work ethic, and although they don't have the broken angularity of Black Flag, they have that no-nonsense, non-thuggie, creative toughness about them, even when they're joking around (Black Flag had "TV Party," Crows have "Durty Bunny"). In other words, it's catchy, but they both create music not by a simple formula, but by intensity and directness with an ear for an imbedded hooks. Very much recommended. -Todd (Crows)

CURIOSO:

Isso Fica Por Sua Conta: 7"

I noticed that some bands in Japan, like Tomorrow and Corrupted, are not singing in Japanese or English but Finnish, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. Since the bands I have heard previously did that, I was expecting something more on the line of fast punk, crust, metal, or sludge from this band. I figured since this is the same label that put out the first 9 Shocks Terror LP a few years back, that was what I was going to hear. I was completely wrong. These guys are very melodic with background vocals that are harmonic but don't detract from the energy. The songs are infectiously catchy and sound like they are having fun. It may sound weird, but this has the feel of the Monkees playing punk; a combination of the best elements of street punk and melodicore

mixed together. I'm not one of many languages, so I don't know if this band sings in Portuguese, Italian, or Spanish. But, for sure, it's not Japanese. A sure surprise that hasn't strayed far from my turntable since I received this. -Donofthedeath (Devour)

DECALS, THE: *Drive-By Kiss Off*: CD

Tough girl punk rock, heavy on attitude. The songs on this full-length live up to the promise of their single, which means that the tunes are rockin', catchy, and decidedly not wimpy. -Jimmy Alvarado (Fork In Hand)

DERITA SISTERS, THE: *My Bad*: CD

They're not sisters, or even women, and none is named Derita, so I guess maybe there's some inside joke there, but frankly, there's not too much funny going on here aside from a photo of a cauldron of potatoes. Frontman Mark Gilman, in his liner notes, laments the passing of the '77 DIY ethic and complains that now "punk is a hundred bands with Mohawks singing the same trite lyrics about how they hate the government." Derita's lyric: "Yer so fucked up in the head/ I just wanna see you dead." This CD is chock full of trite lyrics that are not about hating the government. Gilman: "1977...None of the bands sounded the same. There was no 'punk rock sound.'" With the exception of a few nice Fastbacksy guitar moments, this set is like the ultimate homogeneous stew of generic punk over the last twenty years - the Deritas may not sound like anybody else; they sound like everybody else. Gilman: "2001... The original punk ethic has been lost in the mainstream sea of shit. No one dares to be different." I'll let that choice nugget stand on its own; anybody reading this magazine knows what I'm thinking. Gilman: "And if you don't like us, remember this - we have survived for ten years and this is our 15th CD." Big fuckin' deal. -Cuss Baxter (Plastic Bomb)

DILLINGER FOUR: *Situationist Comedy*: CD

BOOOO! That's the exact sound my friggin' head made the moment all the instruments kicked in on this, my favorite album for the week. I've always been a little cynical when it came to this band, primarily because all of my fellow Razorcakers are so hot on Dillinger jock and I like ribbin' 'em for it, but, truth be known, I've secretly admired this band for their ability to add a little pop to their core and vice-versa and not sound like all the other shit bands that fail so miserably at the same formula. They're so good at it, in fact, that the resulting music is not hardcore, is not pop, but rather one damn fine slab o' tuneage that transcends the punk rock pigeonholes people will inevitably try to shove them into. Forget the powerful performances and obvious work these guys put into this album. Pay no mind to the substantive lyrics they've managed to muster. Fuck the fact that this might be the best release I've personally ever heard on Fat. That's all true, of course, but the simple fact is that this mutherfucker flat-out ROCKS, baby, and that's all a listener can hope for. Everything else is just icing. -Jimmy Alvarado (Fat)

DOWN BY LAW: *Punkrockdays*: CD

It's subtitled "the best of dbl" and I'll have to take their word for it, never having been into them. I didn't even know Dave Smalley was in it, which is funny as I was very keen on Dag Nasty once upon a time. But then, I never cared for All either, and Down By Law seems to be Smalley's tribute to them. I guess if you're a fan of Down By Law, you'll buy this CD. Blink182 probably gets their copies for free. -Cuss Baxter (Epitaph)

DRYHEAVERS, LOS: *Self-titled*: CD

Bilingual Spanish/English punk rock that falls in style somewhere between bands like the Bodies and a Scandinavian punk'n'roll band. Good, driving stuff for the most part and the singer sounds pretty rabid. Thought "Borracho y Agresivo" was a Dos Minutos cover, but it wasn't. -Jimmy Alvarado (Pandacide)

DUMPSTER JUNKIES: *Psychopathic Thoughts*: CD

Two bands come to mind when listening to this. The Crumbsuckers and Ludichrist, who were around in the mid to late '80s, who incorporated an east coast edge with a crossover sound of thrash and metal. Also, I hear parts of GBH in the mix. When they go for the full throttle assault, they just punish. They tend to have mosh parts in the songs, which I think is great (even though I hate the term mosh). What ever happened to the term "slam dancing"? The rawness and pure venom makes this a commendable release. It's ugly and gets my blood pumping. No sugar coating here. -Donofthedeath (Rodent Popsicle)

DUMPSTER JUNKIES: *Psychopathic Thoughts*: CD

Weird band. The name sounds like some lame '77-clone band, they look like a skin band, but they play hyper-drive metal-core, heavy on the metal. For what they are, they are really damn good, very tight, very reminiscent of both Pig Children and early Agnostic Front. A little confusing, but good. -Jimmy Alvarado (Rodent Popsicle)

ESL?!: *Horseshoes and Hand Grenades*: CD

This is some sloppy and kinda simple punk rock that reminds me a lot of RKL, except RKL's silly lyrics have been replaced here by serious, intelligent commentary on society and politics. The combination of the sloppy music and tight lyrics separates this album from most of the generic punk that comes out these days. If you like bands like The Thumbs or Pinhead Circus, you'd probably like this album. -Sean Carswell (Geykido Comet)

EXPLOSIONS IN THE SKY: *Those Who Tell the Truth Shall Die, Those Who Tell the Truth Shall Live Forever*: CD

The press release for this album states, "Total silence to total violence, that's what we're talking about here kids." Well put. Just when you think the storm has passed - it turns out you were only in the eye of it. Six epic tracks from this Texas four piece. It's instrumental, give

or take a few vocal bits tossed in with cryptic and mysterious ways to them. The album starts soft with delicate and ghostly guitar strums. Then enters the rock. Driving and uplifting, "Greet Death" is a well-written wake. The heavy, fuzzy guitars and equally heavy drums bring up thoughts of Hum, even Dinosaur Jr. EITS demands attention, and they do get it. Organization turns to feedback and chaos, then back into organization. "Yasmin the Light" edges towards Tortoise at times with the sweet intro, but that doesn't last forever. Even with the loud-as-fuck explosions (har har har! no pun intended, I swear) mid-song, this album still stays sweet at times, but the violence spoken of earlier is always following close behind. This violence moves in slow motion, however. "Have You Passed Through This Night?" is a creepy Disney voyage through time and mystery, with sudden jaunts and noises keeping you on your feet. They're keeping their eyes on you. There are two things I'd recommend doing while listening to this album: have an out of body experience or watch videos of car crashes on mute. -Sarah Stierch (Temporary Residence)

FARTZ, THE: *Injustice*: CD

Ahh, that's more like it. I thought that, after the waste of time that was their last album (why release your back catalog and then release new recordings of the same songs hot on its heels?), these guys were just gonna be content to sit back and rehash all their oldies like so many old bands that've reformed, but no, here's some brand new stuff, back to form and sportin' some kick-ass shit to boot. Although the reworking of "Buried Alive" was a mistake, the tracks here pretty much stand up to their "classic" work and blaze along quite nicely, thank you. You like your hardcore mean, nasty, and with some semblance of a point? Look no further than this. Recommended. -Jimmy Alvarado (Alternative Tentacles)

FLIPSIDES, THE: *Clever One*: CD

I always anticipate a new Pink and Black release with the anxiousness of a hyperactive child. They are very discretionary on what they will put out. Two of my favorite bands consist of two thirds of the roster. The Flipsides make up the last third. To put it out there so you can tell what this band sounds like, they're comparable to their label mates, Dancehall Crashers. The vocals are so similar, I would easily be confused. The music is similar in the poppy, rock vein. No ska though. There are also hints of some southern rock that I hear. Sounds like they share the same rehearsal space overall. From start to finish, this is a gem that is well past the rough. I would wet my panties after listening to this, if I wore panties. Maybe I will grab a pair from my wife. -Donofthedeath (Pink and Black)

F-MINUS/ CRACK ROCK STEADY SEVEN: *Baby Jesus, Sliced Up in the Manger*: split CD

If you haven't heard of F-Minus yet and like your punk hard and fucking fast, check them out. Crusty hardcore punk with gut-wrenching male and female vocals. They have five songs here last-

ing about five and a half minutes. Kind of a teaser, but well worth it. The Crack Rock Steady Seven sound is equally hard at times, but not as focused as F-Minus. The music is inconsistent, which can make it a hard listen. One minute it's hard as fuck, the next it's poppy ska. There are also too many samples of extraneous crap between their songs. It gives me the same feeling I remember when I heard Leftover Crack's *Mediocre Generation* album. They're a good band with some potential, but some tastes don't taste great together. –Toby (Hellbent)

**F.M. KNIVES:
Useless and Modern: CD**

Holy crap, what rock did these guys crawl out from under? Everything I can find about these guys point to a little Northern California hellhole known as Sacramento as being their home, but, based solely on the sound of this, you'd swear they was a bunch of Limeys. Featuring former members of a group known as Los Huevos, F.M. Knives have recorded THE quintessential album of 1977 England, the greatest album the Buzzcocks never recorded, provided they had borrowed the Damned's equipment and nicked the best riffs that the Undertones and the Boys could muster. Yet this doesn't sound dated in the least. While obviously taking their cues from punk rock's past, there seems to be an informed sensibility and energy at work here that keeps this from sounding rehashed and tired and instead as timeless, vigorous and crucial as the best of any of their apparent influences. Don't believe me? I dare any doubters to compare classic ravers like the Undertones' "Male Model," the Boys' "Sick On You" and the Buzzcocks' "I Don't Mind" to the tracks "DOA," "Summer Holiday" and the title track and tell me that the latter don't hold their own. Pick up twenty copies or so (to ensure you have a spare when you wear the previous one out) and tell 'em it came with the highest of recommendations. –Jimmy Alvarado (Moo-La-La)

FRAMTID: 8 Track EP: 7"

Just can't beat the feeling of a good blast of Japanese punk spewing out of the speakers. Need a little bit of Discore and feel crusty? These Japanese maniacs will relieve you quickly, like a twenty dollar bag of speed. Your jaw locks tight and your head shakes from the adrenaline that pumps throughout your body. You feel dirty from the sweat and dirt thrown at you, but you feel clean from the release. Many bands have done this sound to death, but when you come across a band that does it right, it's well worth the listen. –Donofthedeat (Wicked Witch)

**FUCK NEBULOUS PROSE:
Hal: 7"**

My brother handed me this. I thought this was going to be some garage punk thrash unit that he would be known to listen to. Wrong was I. This is a one man project by a guy named Sean Miller. The music he plays reminds me of the early death rock bands from the early '80s: a little Christian Death mixed with some Super Heroines and chop that up with some Birthday Party. Interesting. I was surely surprised.

Underground gothic is going back to its roots. –Donofthedeat (Fuck Nebulous Prose)

**G.I.S.M.:
Sonicrime Therapy: CD**

Many times, timing is everything, especially in regards to getting punk rock releases. Take this release, for instance. I heard from my brother that he saw on a message board from one of our friends (Friend 1) in Canada that another friend (Friend 2) of ours in Canada had some copies for sale of an official new release by G.I.S.M. I got in touch with Friend 2 and got him to hold a copy for me. I got in touch with another friend (Friend 3) who is friends with Canadian Friends number 1 and 2 to have him buy me the copy (since he owed me some money) and send it to me. It took a while, but Friend 2 gave the copy to friend 1 to take to Friend 3 when he went to pick copies of the new Razorcake that I had sent to Friend 3 to give to Friends 1 and 2. Confusing? That is how I got this copy. I got the first album, *Detestation*, by accident too. I ordered a few records from a small distro that had gotten some Stalin records that I had wanted and they ran out of what I ordered. Instead, they sent me a bunch of different Japanese punk records and I was truly surprised. I also had gotten the bootleg CD *N'th Nightmare*, but that was easy to get at the time. There is a second record out there whose title I've forgotten, but I know my brother has a copy. Back to this release. I love interesting packaging. This release came in a cool black, silver embossed box. Inside sat the jewel case with an insert that consisted of black gradient color samples that led to pictures of the band. The other side is a collage of images that I can't quite pick out the theme at the moment. Quite a bit of imagery for the senses. Sort of minimalist on one side and extreme on the other. If you know Japanese punk, you know the song titles are often out there. The intro is titled "Dual Improvisations for Hypochondriac" (a weird lounge music tune) and the outro is titled "Phenomenal Exile in Schizophrenic Patients" (eight minutes of wind noise, samples, and chanting). The other tracks are titled in code, like "KI-1" or "RUNS-3." That is their trademark sound – blazing metalcore punk that is spastic and epileptic in attack. The vocals are guttural. He could be mumbling for all I know. It's hard to identify them because they are always trying not to be pigeonholed into someone else's sound. They take elements from others and make it their own. They are just out there. I imagine it as getting a beer and milk enema while on three hits of LSD and mixing early Butthole Surfers and Napalm Death. Now get to work and try to find this. It's worth it if you are not into the cookie cutter patch bands that everybody is wearing on their studded sweatshirts. If you don't want to do the work, you can sample tracks by them on the reissue of the "P.E.A.C.E" comp or on the bootleg comps *The Punx*, *Hardcore Unlawful Assembly*, *Outsider* or *Great Punk Hits* that are available right now. I'm wind-ed... Time to get another beer and some food. –Donofthedeat (Beast Arts, no address)

**GHOST ORCHIDS:
Architecture: CDEP**

A stellar release. From San Francisco, Ghost Orchids have shaken me up. So many things go through my head while listening to this five song EP. From love to musical references. Whether its the bits and pieces reminiscent of Subpoena the Past and the Cure, or goth rock dance hall nights, Ghost Orchids lures you with passion and weariness; nights where things have become a blurry, rainy out-of-control cloud of emotion. This is a record I frequently lay in my bed and listen to the rain hit the streets of my drab Midwestern town at night. Dancey tracks such as "Time-Lapse Sequence" and "Architecture in Surgery" will lure fans into the likes of Joy Division, New Order, and Radio Berlin onto the dancefloor. Classic groups, one soon to be, with shots of keyboards, and uberhaunting bass lines. If you aren't zoning out on the dance floor to these tracks, you must be making out in a dark booth somewhere. Whether it's a discreetly empty feeling instrumental that numbs, killer drama dance tracks, or bath-tub suicide – it's all covered here. A gem. –Sarah Stierch (Global Symphonic)

**GLOBAL THREAT, A:
Here We Are: CD**

If you are a fan of early to mid-'80s UK punk, this is a band for you. They take the look and sound of bands like GBH, the Exploited, Varukers and the like, and meld it into their own in tribute to their heroes. For modern day references, The Casualties and The Unseen come to mind. In keeping with tradition

and adding elements that are their own, this was actually a good listen. –Donofthedeat (Punkcore)

**GOLDEN TICKET, THE:
Blue's the New Black: LP**

Occasionally somber, more often a little bouncy, it's girl-voiced post punk with the commanding bass of your Gang of Four and some of the jagged guitar of your Fugazi and more stuff like that. It seems really long, too, for eleven songs. I haven't timed it, but I repainted the entire yard while side one played, then went shopping and got two different haircuts while the other side was on. Shit, I forgot to get fudge. –Cuss Baxter (Aerodrome)

**GORE GORE GIRLS, THE:
I'm Gonna Get You Yet b/w
Keep Your Hands
Off My Baby: 7"**

Two excellent lady-made garage pop covers that aren't afraid of hand claps and tambourine shakes, and I'm buying. Faster, they remind me of early GoGo's with blushes of the Eyeliners. Lots of shimmy and shake that, oddly, would sound at home both on an oldies station that wasn't afraid to have alternate versions of their well-worn favorites ("Keep Your Hands..." was performed by the Beatles and written by Carole King) or a slow dance at a punk rock prom. Highly listenable and toe tappin'. –Todd (Get Hip)

**GORE GORE GIRLS:
Up All Night: CD**

Imagine that the Ronettes or Little Eva grew up in the punk community and then put out a garage

album that kept the original feel of their first hits ("Be My Baby," "Locomotion"), but sped them up and tattooed them. Well, the songs you're imagining would sound just like the Gore Gore Girls. The singalong factor to these songs are very high, but these girls know how to rock, too. Recommended. —Sean Carswell (Get Hip)

HAYMAKER: Self-titled: CD

Some pretty swell hardcore. The tempo is frantic without being so fast that it becomes silly, the singer sounds pissed, and the rest of the band is a little like a more metallic Brother Inferior. The lyrics aren't vapid or just plain stupid, not one single song reaches the minute-and-a-half mark, and there's even cover art by Pushhead, the first I've personally seen on a punk record in quite some time. What more could you ask for? —Jimmy Alvarado (Deranged)

HELGAS, THE: self-titled: 5-song 7" EP

Perfectly acceptable, well-executed mid-tempo pop punk with a couple of good lyrics. None of the songs are bad, but on the same token, none of them are infectious nor have deep-sinking teeth. It's like they took the least compelling parts of the Hollies (like the tempo) and stapled them onto heavily leashed '77 punk. It's just okay, but it sounds overwhelmingly neutral. I think a band like Moral Crux does this loads better, mixing bubblegum with firepower with the result of having a senior prom leading to a nuclear apocalypse. —Todd (They Still Make Records)

HENCHMEN, THE: Lust for Glory: CD

Raw, rude Stooze punk circa '82-'84 from this New Zealand band. So far as I can tell, the tracks are culled from assorted demos and a live show. If you like your punk rock primal and nasty, this is a definite keeper. —Jimmy Alvarado (Raw Power)

HOT WATER MUSIC: Caution: CD

I've had a long, satisfying allegiance with HWM. Not to overstate my case, but I was able to put them on the cover of *Flipside* #120 a few years back and in *Razorcake* #2, stated how they, and Leatherface, helped change the way I listen to music to this day (which they have). The last couple months, for me, have been filled with loads of reflection on a host of different topics ranging big and small, and I'll say this: I like the angry, fast, anthemic HWM better than the softer, more melodic, intricate HWM. I love it when Chris and Chuck vacillate hoarse to hoarser and molotov out the lyrics, setting everything in their musical landscape aflame. It makes me feel like, even if I'm alone, I'm singing along with a thousand voices. That shit's powerful good. *Caution* is 50/50 for me. I'm not completely convinced that, ever since they've learned to sing and carry a tune and play guitar parts that almost sound like keyboards, that it's been for the better of my enjoyment. I liked the snarl and rasp, the discomforting this-shit's-gonna-break, you-got-a-roll-of-duct-tape? tension. And, although, this album still covers the topics of sadness, loss, and regret, and, as a

band, they're one of the best live ones in existence, I still find myself reaching back in their catalog and pulling out *Forever and Counting*, *Fuel for the Hate Game*, the split 8" with Clairmel, and *Never Ender* to find my fists clenching up so tight and thinking, "This band could take the world on its own terms and knock its dick in the dirt." —Todd (Epitaph)

HYBRID MUTANTS: 2 on the Table: CD

Metallic punk in the mid-'80s style of Beyond Possession and the Boneless Ones, except that rather than skateboarding or the Tell Tale Heart, the Mutants sing about loss: loss of friends (to death and growing up), loss of trust, loss of Apollo 19. They do sing about beer, though; one particularly good section goes, "used to be this time of year we'd hang out and drink beer/ but now I'm drunk by myself throwing up in the wishing well." I like that wishing well part. Unfortunately, earlier in the same song is the line, "used to be this time of year we'd cut the rug like a couple of deer," which is just sick and wrong. —Cuss Baxter (LEM)

IL CANTO DI MALAVITA: La Musica Della Mafia: CD

And now for something completely different.... What we have here, folks, is a collection of authentic Italian folk songs written about the mafia. No big whoop, you might say, but considering that this disc marks the first time this stuff has been released on CD, that it has been banned in at least two countries so far, that the musicians who performed on it have chosen not to share their identities for safety reasons, and that it's a bitch to find, then you've got the makings of one damn intriguing CD. From a musical perspective, a lot of ground is covered stylistically (one of the tracks even sounds like a Mexican *corrido!*); most of the instruments utilized are acoustic, all of it performed very well. And then there're the lyrics. Much of the subject matter covered focuses on the "rules" of membership, but there is enough blood-letting, revenge, and wanton gangsterism to make Scarface, Cypress Hill, NWA, and the lot sound like De La Soul or PM Dawn. If you're looking for a change of pace, have a relative with a serious *Sopranos* addiction, are a lover of offbeat variants of traditional musical forms, and if you're able to find the dang thing, this could not come with higher recommendation. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.malavita.com)

JETS TO BRAZIL: Perfecting Lonliness: CD

I can't believe how much dough they're gonna rake in on this one. If you really think you need this: 1) I hate you. 2) Wait a week and get it out of the used bin, where it is sure to be after people hear (among many others equally as cheesy) "We live like astronauts/and our missions never cross." What?! This rocks so hard(ly), it makes Styx look like AC/DC. —Megan Pants (Jade Tree)

KLAMYDIA: Muista Kayttaa Pyorraillessa Kyparaa: CDEP
Flying under the radar and not making much noise in the states is this wonderful band that is one of Finland's oldest running punk bands. A friend of mine who I trade with in Finland introduced

me to them. Upon first listen, I was hooked. I asked for more and he came through with flying colors. They embody elements of '77, street punk, rock, and pop melodies. They sing in Finnish so I have no clue what they are singing about. Similar to Unborn SF or Die Toten Hosen but more fun. The music puts a smile on your face while your adrenaline is pushing towards the red. Four songs are kind of a tease, but you get four very good songs. I have listened to it over and over and haven't tired of it. If you ever see their music in a bin at your local record store, buy it without hesitation. Everything that I have heard by this band is superb! Beer-shaking fun! —Donofthded (Kraklund)

KNOCKOUT PILLS: Demo: CD

The Knockout Pills are comprised of former or current members of the Weird Lovemakers and Los Federales. They're every bit as energetic and fun as the Weird Lovemakers or Los Federales (or any of those great Tucson bands like the Fells or the Okmoniks), but the Knockout Pills also have a dose of clean rock'n'roll that sets them apart. There's four songs on this demo. All total, it's about eight minutes long, and, as far as I'm concerned, that's about an hour too short. Damn, I hope they record a full-length and someone puts it out. They're fucking awesome live, too. —Sean Carswell (Knockout Pills)

KNUT: Challenger: CD

Is it a truncated "Knut" or an elaborated "nut"? Because if you're gonna spell "nut" with a K, like "corn" with a K, it's not gonna get you any kudos (with a K) around here. While it is metalcore, it doesn't bring to mind any Korn I've heard, and it's on Hydra Head, you've put out some pretty primo shit. Way better shit than this. See, it's like a ponderous, angry metal, not the rolling, gumpity gumpity kind that gets your ball to rolling. It's not bad ponderous, angry metal (Wanda said she likes it - there's one less Christmas present to buy!), but it's just not super. Now, if it's an abbreviated "Knut", as in great American painter Knute Rockwell, it evinces an intellectual maturity barely hinted at on tracks such as "Whacked Out" and "Bite the Bullet." And with names like Didier and Roderic, they ought to be some cultured motherfuckers.

—Cuss Baxter (Hydra Head)

LAMA: Self-titled: CD

I'm guessing this a discography of sorts for this legendary Finland band that I only heard of from my brother's record collection. Like many bands that have grown in popularity after they had broken up, Lama influenced generations of punks down the road. They were together from 1979 and disbanded at the end of 1982. Hearing bands like Lama from that time period, I get excited like I'm hearing punk from other countries for the first time. Not fast, but blistering and raw in its own right. I have no idea what the lyrical content is because they are sung in Finnish. The music is early '80s punk that had that unique Finnish sound. To give reference, I hear a mixture of the Germs mixed with early UK punk like the UK Subs and how it got translated in Finland. I'm sure glad that this graced the palms of my hand. With

collector prices these days, it would cost a fortune to compile these songs from the original releases. —Donoftheded (Stupido Twins)

LEATHER UPPERS, THE: OK, Don't Say Hi: LP

Can't tell you if the Uppers are still around. According to the discography herein, their latest release was a song on Nardwuar's Teenage Zit Rock Angst compilation of 1995 (highly recommended), and this one is a vinyl reissue of a 1994 CD-only batch, along with tracks from two EPs. While I hate to imply that there's a "Killed By Death sound," if there is, these guys were surely doing it as well as anyone in the early '90s. It's raw and visceral and about hot dogs, sugar sandwiches and smoking monkeys. It's also on brown vinyl and limited to 500 copies, so see what you can do about that. —Cuss Baxter (Pantsuit Party)

LIARS: They Threw Us All in a Trench and Stuck a Monument on Top: CD

I'm going to start a cult for this band. When this CD made its way through the hands of various Indiana kids, we knew we had something hot in our hands. The show was booked, the show happened, the show destroyed, and we were all left tossing and turning in our beds, dancing in our sleep to Liars songs. Throw everything you knew about by Gang of Four, Wire, etc. out the door. Who needs them? Who needs obvious politics? We want the Liars. We want to dance and a destructive party-atmosphere. It opens with the hip-thrusting "Grown Men Don't Fall in the River, Just Like That," where they claim to "have their fingers on the pulse of America." Perfectly placed hand claps are coupled with the stunning vocals, talky and loud, crooned and screamed by way of the too tall (but in the best way possible) Angus. His extra cute vocals, backed by the rest of the extra cute boys, make the girls swoon with his Australian accent. The boys swoon too. They just won't admit it. One will not be ashamed to sing the lyrics to the now infamous (in our city) "Loose Nuts on the Veladrome" with its heart-stopping bass lines, pogo-inspiring drums, and totally chaotic monster of guitars, screams, and madness. You don't care what they say, as long as the words you make up sound good. Now you get a beer. My favorite two tracks have got to be "Tumbling Walls Buried Me in the Debris With ESG" and "We live NE of Compton." Two drastically different songs — the first being a bit more relaxed, the latter not so much. "ESG" is perfect daytime driving music, intimate too. It leads you with witty and tight-as-fuck drums (yes, drums can be witty, damn it) thanks to Ron (ex-Mercy Rule), and a funk-hay bass line by Pat (ex-Opium Taylor, Midwest yah!). The lyrics, "Leave your work at home, put down your briefcase," will brainwash you enough to do just that. See, it is like a cult! "We Live NE of Compton," is what disco should have been. If Aaron's guitar doesn't cut you like a knife, the bass will make you dance like Lisa Simpson's tap-dancing shoes. We end with "This Dust Makes That Mud," an epic masterpiece of zombification rock. This is the Liars own "Didn't We

Deserve a Look at You the Way You Really Are” (by Shellac). You have to listen to the whole damn thing, or you just won't get the whole experience. In the end it all makes sense. Not only do the Liars and the Locust write the best song titles on earth, the Liars are the epitome of everything you want. —Sarah Stierch (Gern Blandsten)

LOBOS, LOS: *Good Morning Aztlan: CD*

You know, I often find myself in arguments with people as to whether Los Lobos could be considered a punk rock band. Sure, it's no secret how they went from being a wedding band playing assorted *sones* and “Sabor a Mi” a gazillion times to sharing bills in Hollywood with the likes of the Blasters and Black Flag, but does that make them “punk”? Well, when the conversation rolls around (and, me being me, it inevitably does), this is what I say: Punk to me has always been about taking from “the rules” what you can and tossing the rest out with the garbage. Put more in a musical sense, either come up with something all your own, or rape and pillage what already exists and mix and match until you find a way to make it all your own, and never compromise quality for the sake of popularity. All of the “big names” in punk rock, from Dead Kennedys to Suicide to Black Flag to the Ramones to the Germs are perfect examples of that mentality. And so are Los Lobos. From their beginnings, Los Lobos have done exactly what they wanted, no matter the trend, no matter what style was “in” at any given moment. They have dipped into damn near every musical genre available to them, from *son huasteco* to *cumbia* to psychedelia, to soul to zydeco to punk to rockabilly to jazz, to hard rock to blues to *norteño* to art damage, becoming both an ethnomusicologist's wet dream and worst nightmare. They are the living embodiment of the term “American music.” They have had a noble career that has spanned nearly thirty years, have released a body of work that exceeds in quality the works of all of rock's luminaries and they've defiantly done it all on their own terms. They even throw their fans a curve now and then, as some will no doubt perceive this album. After years of melding and blending often disparate styles together, Los Lobos takes another look back at their roots (the last time being the phenomenal *La Pistola y el Corazón* [The Pistol and the Heart]) and give us twelve tracks of groove music steeped in soul, R&B, rock, and maybe a touch of *cumbia* to keep the boys in the 'hood happy. In most cases, a look back would be considered a regression, but with Los Lobos, it means an opportunity to plunder and revel once again in what was put away for a while, like favorite old toys picked up and put to new uses. Once again, they are dead-on in their explorations and while the initial reaction from the listener might be a resounding “huh?” after years of pushing the musical envelope, the party vibe will open 'em up and the strong, sometimes unorthodox hooks and great lyrics will keep 'em coming back for more. *Good Morning Aztlan* is a fine addition to an already mind-bogglingly good discography and proof positive that Los Lobos continue to follow their own path and

create a few new niches along the way. In my book, you can't get any more punk than that. —Jimmy Alvarado (Mammoth)

LOGAN'S LOSS: *Riot Like: CD*

I have never been to a Warped Tour, but I can picture the third stage at 10:30 am with this band trying their mightiest to attract the attention of the sparse crowd. Formula. They play within the numbers. —Donofthead (Sinister Label)

MAKERS, THE: *Strangest Parade: CD*

The Doors presented the world with their *Strange Parade*, a cheap poet's pastiche of psychedelic space junk, swirling organ-filled, emotion-tugging melodies and lines upon lines of a soon-to-be-dead man's brain fart stanzas. Meanwhile, into our latter days of numbskull nostalgia-mania, The Makers march forth on their very own *Strangest Parade* with a surprisingly charming outcome. Hey rocker boy, look around you; the world is swimming with shags and feathers, bell bottoms, hip-hugger, Euro-trash, glam, light imported beer revivalism. The more intelligent of the species will look back upon our times and proclaim only two great and redeeming qualities: The Makers and the way those pants make anybody's ass look J.Lo-cious. While every other band's homage to this particular time frame of music history looms somewhere over deadpan plagiarism of the MC5 and the oft hilarious, self mockery-inducing antics of trying to out-stooge The Stooges (nobody can ever be the Stooges — end of story!), The Makers style themselves after a more genteel mood and a general feeling of “groovy” (if your idea of groovy is dead hippies strewn across the highway... insert your own Morrison-ism here). Why do fat men grow beards? Why do the Makers live in the past? Why? Because both parties can do it so well. Michael Shelley is a majorette of mayhem along with his fellow neo-Romanticists cohorts who dash and sway into a thirteen song journey down the parade route of gypsies, dead rockers, suicidal thoughts, self-inflicted wounds of desire and other such Byronic themes interspersed with a heavy dose of punk rock's untamed spirit. Ah, to be young and dream forever in a day... —Miss Namella J. Kim (Sub Pop)

MARS VOLTA, THE: *Tremulant EP: CD EP*

Beep boop. Bjork. —Cuss Baxter (Gold Standard Laboratories)

MEXICAN CHEERLEADER: *Self-titled: CD*

Loud, guitar-heavy rawk with lotsa heart, but something is getting lost in the translation for me. No offense is meant here, as there is nothing tangibly wrong, per se, with this release, but some bands come across better live and I think these guys are one of those bands. —Jimmy Alvarado (Government Music)

MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES, THE: *A Jackknife to a Swan: CD*

Familiarity is comforting. I think I missed a few of their releases through

the years but their music remains consistent. I pop this on and it feels like an old friend. Dicky's vocals are raspy but continue to improve with age. I had heard some members have changed through the years, but I'm not one to notice too much. After the influx of ska bands in the '90s that overburdened most people, I am finally able to listen to that style more often. MMB always had their own identity amongst the copycats. They have an identifiable sound that they could call their own — mixture of their punk roots integrated with their love for ska, reggae, and melody. Fans who have strayed will enjoy this as much as their loyal ones who will have this on the day it comes out. I know I did. It's a good sign when I can listen to a release straight through and not pass over any songs. —Donofthead (Side One Dummy)

MISTER CALIFORNIA AND THE STATE POLICE: *Self-titled: CD*

Either these guys are geniuses or blithering idiots. Fifty-two tracks here, the longest clocking in at a little more than a minute. Although there are some truly inspired moments (“Disco Jesus,” “The Duck Song,” and “Poser”), most of it comes off like a series of punk rock brain farts committed to tape to keep friends in shits and giggles, but not much more than that. If distilled down to the best tracks, this would make one hell of a 7” EP heavy on diversity, humor and unmitigated gall. As it stands, though, it's pretty much a mess. —Jimmy Alvarado (Proud To Be Idiot)

MOURNSIDE / BRANDO: Split: 7”

Mourningside: modern day hardcore with sinister, dark lyrics. Brando: fast-core that is raw and abrasive like using sandpaper for butt wipes. —Donofthead (Rodent Popsicle)

MUNG: Off the Mark *(A 7 Year Boil 1991-1998): CD*

Decent enough modern punk/hardcore from a band that broke up four years ago. Although by no means my cup of tea, this definitely has some things going for it, not the least being a few damn snappy tunes. The Beastie Boys cover, while an inspired idea, leaves a lot to be desired in execution. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rodent Popsicle)

NEGATIVE FX: *Discography: CD*

Here is what I know. I heard that Taang! Records initially released this and did not repress this once it went out of press. I'm thinking, what the fuck are they thinking? This is one of those records that would keep selling slowly because it influenced so many. I hear elements of NFX in a lot of modern day fastcore bands. This, from a band from the early '80s, that only played five shows live. That is fucking amazing, to influence so many people years later. Luckily, a Belgium label saw the potential to reintroduce to the masses that this band was influential. You may be thinking, “This is 2002 and I'm reading an old guy's jaded review.” History has a habit of repeating itself and every style of punk from the past has been replicated, so you need the balance of finding out what bands came from the past and getting kicked in the ass with all the new

bands. These recordings have stood the test of time and are equal to what is put out now. So go out and pick up a piece of history while it's still affordable. —Donofthead (Reflex)

NERF HERDER: *American Cheese: CD*

Sometimes you want to write off something before you hear it. I was ready to shoot this to the moon. I put this on with hesitation and was overwhelmed by how poppy and infectious this was. My punkness was destroyed and formed into a pool of goo on the floor next to the hairball that my cat left a week ago. I keep losing punk points and I don't know how I can reclaim them. I try to look mean but a stupid grin overwhelms my face as I listen to this. I want to slam dance but my body uncontrollably wants to pogo up and down to the point I have bloodshot eyes. Don't tell my friends that I like this. —Donofthead (Honest Don's)

NEUROTIC SWINGERS: *What's Your Definition of Underground?: CD*

Another new band tries to recapture that old punk rock energy and sound and fail miserably. Let's have a hand for consistency! —Jimmy Alvarado (Lollipop)

NO GOOD HEROES: *Radio Rebelde: CD*

You know, in another world I would probably adore Rancid, as so much of what they do is right up my alley. As things have turned out, however, I wish they'd break up so all their lame clones would fuck off and quit polluting the planet with twenty-third generation Clash posing. —Jimmy Alvarado (Insurgence)

OLVIDADOS, LOS : *Listen to This!!!: CD*

Listen to This!!! is on par with the release of the Chiefs' *Hollywest Crisis* several years back. Los Olvidados were an insanely talented, visceral and dead-on spastic Sacramento band that was — shamefully — all but forgotten except by old fans, bands that played with them (like Black Flag), record collectors, and folks who remember their track on *All's Quiet on the Western Front*. Like the Chiefs, at the band's creative peak, they never released an LP, just a smattering of comp tracks. (And this becomes curious, due to the fact that all of these songs were recorded in solely two different studios from '81-'83. It's never explained why there's been a two decade lapse in putting these thirteen songs together in one bunch.) Make no mistake, this isn't just a worn out ticket to establish you, or them, some cred. The music's amazing. It's diverse and tries many tactics, but never loses intensity and power. It's a charging prototype that melds the eastern punk fuck and sleaze of the Dead Boys and Heartbreakers (especially in the vocals and guitar) transitioning against early Bad Religion and JFA (especially in the bass and drums). They don't avoid fast bits but they don't live and die by 'em, either, which gives them more depth. I'll be the last to say there's nothing good coming out today, but sometimes it's nice to look back and realize, woah, fuck, that's some excellent shit from the early '80s that still stands tall today. **RAZORCAKE** [81]

Complaints? Yeah, with the booklet, put in the lyrics, list the comps they were on (like the *Thrasher SkateRock*, vols. 1 and 2, and that's the top of my head), and it'd also be nice to know what connection they have to skating, since it's labeled as *Skate Punk, Volume Two*. From what I can get, they seem like punks who were skate-friendly, not pro skaters, like The Faction.

—Todd (Alternative Tentacles)

OUR WAR:
***If You're Not Already*: CD**

Pretty decent straight edge crew-core with some lyrics that are pretty fuckin' lame. —Jimmy Alvarado (Deranged)

OUT TO WIN:
***Persist and Destroy*: CD**

I'm older than a lot of you and I don't consider this hardcore. This is straight up metal that is similar to having a wrestler bash a steel folding chair on your head. The riffs are heavy and the double bass drums drop low tones into the chest. The vocals are so harsh that a blood vessel broke in my own eye. My only complaint I have of this release is that it only has six songs. The metal in me went into withdrawals after this ended. Might not be your cup of tea, but the hair on my head wanted to grow for this one. —Donofthedeath (Triple Crown)

OXYMORON:
***Best Before 2000*: CD**

Re-released for those without a turntable or plain missed out, are tracks from early 70's, splits, and comp tracks. These long-running German street punks know how to make a great bunch of music. Melodic and tight, they carry the oi flag with pride. Everything that I have heard from them in the past has been really good. This is no exception. I would highly recommend this because you get to hear the progression of talent. It also includes a video clip! —Donofthedeath (GMM)

OZMA:
***The Double Donkey Disc*: CD**
Caca poo-poo college rock. Kinda punky, mostly poop. —Jimmy Alvarado (Kung Fu)

PANIC: *Get Well*: CD
From one of the premier labels in the UK comes another great pop punk release. I hear great melody that puts me into pop bliss. What I love about Crackle releases are that they do not have overblown production and yet sound recorded in a garage. A mixture of, I would say, a stronger sounding Queers, Groovie Ghoolies and Screeching Weasel. In fact, I'm blown away by hearing some slight British accent in the vocals; it makes the music more appealing to me. With that, it blows away so many bands here in the states that play the same genre of music. I think this is the perfect moment to check out this band since this is their third release and you don't have to go through the growing pains. Also, the covers geek in me really appreciated the Men at Work cover of "Overkill!" —Donofthedeath (\$13 ppd to Crackle!)

PAYBACKS, THE:
***Knock Loud*: CD**
Loud, raucous rock'n'roll steeped in Detroit hooks. Kinda reminds me a teeny bit of old Cheap Trick every now and then. —Jimmy Alvarado (Get Hip)

PETER AND THE TEST TUBE BABIES: *The Mating Sounds of South American Frogs*: CD

Strange how some albums can bring back a flood of memories and moods in flashes, much like smells sometimes do. This, like Husker Du's *New Day Rising* (hell, who am I kidding? Change that to all of Husker's releases), reminds me of long ago summers. Flashes of long won (and lost) fights, lost loves, my younger brother putting this on for the first time in my aunt's basement in Spokane and feeling cheated 'cause it wasn't as "hard" as *Banned from the Pubs* and then having it turn into one of the most played albums in the collection throughout the '80s, driving around in a big-ass car covered from roof to tires with assorted graffiti *just begging* to get pulled over by a pig looking for someone to fuck with, and long-ago gigs in long forgotten backyards are all tied to the songs contained on this, the band's second album. Like Husker Du, this album is up to its eyeballs in hooks and catchy guitar bits (maybe not as over-driven, densely packed and played as Bob Mould's famous noodling, but there nonetheless), yet manages to maintain more than enough edge to leave no doubt in the listener's mind that this is a punk rock record made by a decidedly punk band. Lyrically, this ain't the Clash or anything, but Peter does get his point across succinctly and the music is so damn good that it doesn't really matter in the long run. My only gripe is that the album version of "Blown Out Again" has been deleted and the single version included twice. Aside from that, no complaints from this end of the world. Easily one of the best punk records ever released. Consider this mandatory listening, kiddies. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

PILOT SCOTT TRACY:
self-titled: CD-R demo
Emerging from the robes of The Causey Way (see *Razorcake* #1 for full interview), with front man and collaborating main co-songwriters, Scott and Tracy, there are traces of the old project transmogrified into something more slinking, sultry, and openly playful. The only thing I don't like is the name of the band. It comes across as way too emo for my tastes (like the name Pilot to Gunner). Yet, don't let that be too distracting. If you like new wave in the vein of Servotron, with music more suitable for slipping your hand under a special someone's underthings, instead of killing humans (Servotron's call to arms), while openly inviting the use of a synthesizer, you can't go wrong. Both Scott (ex-Causey himself) and Tracy have sexy android, almost hypnotic trances of voices and it doesn't hurt things one iota that they cover ground from intergalactic surf, to the state controlling your monkey brain, to what could be readings from children's books with equal grace, hummable vibration, and authority. Excellent, hard-to-categorize but fun-to-listen-to music. —Todd (Pilot Scott Tracy)

PIRX THE PILOT: *Fri Night Seafood Buffet*: CD
Sounding mostly like a modern meeting of the (UK) Subhumans and the (Boston) Proletariat (with occasional detours into K-style softness), the

Pirxes sing through a girl mouth and a boy mouth about politics personal and worldlike (and monkeys) with a pointy irony and, probably, a solid riotgrrl background. Delicious lyrics like, "I get the impression that the guy on the corner is laughing at me as I hand him a quarter." get healthy, non-condescending annotations in slightly aggravating typography. And strictly sung; no shrieking like some fellow (San Francisco) San Franciscans of yore (thank you very much). I think the CD is enhanced with a couple videos, but my ten-year-old Mac won't operate in that fashion. Anyway, ears up for a smart, non-clone band who has done their work toward proving you can use a monkey in a metaphor for anything. Or an analogy. -Cuss Baxter (New Disorder)

PITCH BLACK: Self-titled: CD
Horror punk coming out of the East Bay featuring ex-members of the Nerve Agents and Screw 32, which really didn't show up in the their sound. Let me start by saying I didn't care for this very much. I have no problem with bands going for the horror thing, but the band didn't do it for me musically. In fact, the best part of the CD was the artwork (cool cover courtesy of their singer) and lyrical content (horror themes, duh!). Musically Pitch Black play punk borderline on hardcore at times with goth interludes here and there. The songs generally had dreary intros with melodic guitar work throughout, which was alright musically, but unfortunately there was nothing that stood out. What really killed it for me, though, were the vocals. The singer sounds like a younger, higher pitched version of Rudimentary Peni's Nick Blinko. I found his voice both distracting and annoying at times. No thanks. -Mike Dunn (Revelation)

**PUNCH IN THE FACE:
Self-titled: 7"**

This will be one of the hottest, sought after punk releases this year. This band features Ebro from Charles Bronson/Los Crudos fame on vocals. Also, it is being released by Martin (Los Crudos/ Limp Wrist) on Lengua Armada. That alone should get you little punkers out there purchasing. I listened to this thing and a weird sense of familiarity came over me. I immediately recognized track two on side A, "Beer Cold, TV Loud, Homosexuals Flaming," but couldn't remember who originally played it. It drove me nuts! I dove into my record collection and could not find the source. I know this song. I think it's from an '80s comp that I have. Are the other songs covers too? I am perplexed and I know I have to go to the punk encyclopedia himself, my brother. If he doesn't know, I'm fucking crazy. I went to my brother's and played him the track and he said it sounded like Mecht Mensch or Koro. He went to his vaults and pulled out the EPs. We listened to both and the sound is similar but it's not the exact song. I felt defeated and went back home. I dug through the collection again for hours. No luck. I looked through my music index one more time and it struck me once I saw *Suburban Voice*. PITF was on the SV comp *No Sleep for Hardcore* and played the exact song. I forgot that this comp

was on regular rotation in my CD player for a few months. I feel so stupid. My mind is rotting and time has become a blur. -Donofthedeath (Lengua Armada)

**RADAR SECRET SERVICE:
Stop Communication: CD**

The sound of Joy Division and similarly gloomy Gusses, punked up just right to make this a dandy listen. These guys would've made a huge splash on "New Wave Theatre" twenty-one years ago. Peter most assuredly would've even asked 'em "What's the meaning of life?" on the air, and the latest Genkel Works product would've been theirs for the asking. A definite keeper. -Jimmy Alvarado (On/On Switch)

**RADIO WITH GUTS, A:
Beat Heart Sweet Stereo: CD**

I was charged to get this. I still like to dork out to a vast majority of The Connie Dungs catalog (which all three members of this band were in). The lyrics could be a little self-deprecating, but I can't deny that their CDs play like a darker, smarter, less pretend-shocking Queers. Easy-to-digest sadness would be one way to put it, like hard candy in the shapes of skulls instead of hearts. A Radio With Guts is fronted by the distinctive, old cartoon/ bottle of whisky wavering voice of Brandon Dung. (Like, say, if Huckleberry Hound was doing a Muddy Waters impression, which is not a bad thing in my book.) Getting to the point - I didn't expect to say this - but I really don't like this album and have a hard time listening to it all the way through each time I've sat down to listen to it carefully. It's vastly more "singer/song writer"ly, and like later Replacements albums became little more than Paul Westerberg solo projects with instrumental accompaniment, it'd probably be okay if I didn't have any earlier work to compare it to. It seems that Brandon's found about ten different effects pedals for his voice - from watery to scratchy to warbling - and every single beat and strum is controlled by the tempo of the voice. I just don't find it compelling. Sure, it's recorded really well, but the songs themselves aren't that catchy and, against my best efforts, I just want the album to end. -Todd (Stardumb)

**REIGNING SOUND:
Time Bomb High School: CD**
Imagine Manfred Mann with more balls. -Jimmy Alvarado (In the Red)

**RESONARS, THE:
Lunar Kit: CD**

Real-deal '60s retro, short on garage grunge but long on harmony and swirly guitar, like what was going on in the time of transition from suited mop-tops to paisley-crust acid-heads. Pretty good for what it is. -Cuss Baxter (Get Hip)

**RIISTETYT:
Tervetuloa Kuolema: 7"**

Yessir. Good old Finnish hardcore. The stuff that launched a thousand pretend stage dives onto unmade beds and possibly the sole reason a thousand thirtysomethings have ever even said the word "Finland." But wait, this is new Finnish hardcore. I seem to remember reading that Riistetyt, once among the ruling elite over there, had changed their name and commenced to suck

sometime mid-to-late eighties. I'm happy to report they evidently reversed that trend, and if it took them a while, that's life I guess. Seems like they're pretty good now; here's seven pieces of evidence for the jury's approval. -Cuss Baxter (Havoc)

**SEWERGROOVES, THE:
Revelation Time: CD**

Sweden produces an amazing amount of bands for a country of its size. Maybe I'm biased, but I never seem to go wrong when the band originates from that country. Here is a band I haven't heard for a few years, but I am glad they are still rocking strong. The music is straight-to-the-balls rock and roll with tinges of garage, southern, and '60s to this reviewer's ear. No frills and no bullshit. With the current state of rock released by the majors being stagnant and packaged, it's hard for me to listen to that crap. With a band like this, the energy of punk is displayed with its raw and genuine energy. The songwriting has improved since the last time I listened to this band, with the addition of a more permanent lineup. A minor historical note is that the drummer for the Hellcopters played drums for this band in early incarnation. I believe since the hype in major music magazines is so big right now for the Hives and the International Noise Conspiracy, which both originate out of Sweden, these guys could be also have greater exposure to the world. -Donofthedeath (Low Impact)

SIXER: Beautiful Trash: CD

I heard this band on the last *TKO Punch Drunk* comp, so I vaguely knew what to expect. They have ex-Ann Beretta guys in their lineup and what we have here is not too far off. Sixer plays mid-tempo punk with emphasis on rock. Unfortunately, I can't say that I liked this CD. The songs have a lack of hooks, making them unmemorable. They also seem to bypass catchiness for an almost underlying rock sound. There are a few of the songs that hit the mark, most notably "Get Well Card," but overall it leaves me uninterested. This CD kind of reminds me of a second rate version of The Dragons. Nothing terrible, but nothing spectacular either. I'll pass. -Mike Dunn (BYO)

**SKULLS, THE:
Therapy for the Shy: CD**

Hot on the heels of their 7" release on Headline comes this full-length, the first ever from this recently reformed punk band. For those not in the know, this band was one of the first wave of punk bands (along with the Weirdos, Germs, Controllers, Bags, Screamers and others) from Los Angeles and who later mutated into Wall of Voodoo. To be found here are re-recordings of classics like "Kill Me Kill Me Kill," "Incomplete Suicide," "Victims" and others, as well as some choice new material. The band sounds tight, pissed, and hungry, like a punk band should and the tracks are jaw-dropping, head-shaking good. To those who say no good new punk records are to be found, I say, "Fuck you, nay-saying gloomy-Gus. Here's one that'll make your toes tap and your testes vibrate with glee." Mandatory listening here, class. -Jimmy Alvarado (Dr. Strange)

**SNOWGLOBE:
Our Land Brains: CD**

Been listening to this for a few weeks and I keep wanting to say it's drugs music but I haven't had any drugs lately so I can't be sure. It might be coming-down-from-drugs music. It's kind of quiet (though I just noticed the insert says "...meant to be played at your city ordinance's highest allowable volume" - I'll have to try that) and invokes a less bombastic Flaming Lips or a less spastic They Might Be Giants. Wanda hears a lot of Kinks (the non-monster-riff, contemplative songs) and focused listens reveal arrangements full of strings and horns. I'm gonna trust that if you're the kind of person who would like this, you'll know what I'm trying to get at (I barely do), but if you can't figure it out, you might want to stay away (read: it's not punk). -Cuss Baxter (Bardot)

**STARVATIONS, THE:
One Long Night: CDEP**

Hey, I love old X. I love the Cramps. I love Link Wray, but, fuck Jesus, they didn't make mausoleums to suffocate in. They provided us with unbuilt engines to hop up even more. Three cheers for a band following its own path and investing in their own sound. Beyond the clubhouses and fascades of musical styles such as psychobilly, rockabilly, and voodobilly, are several bands that are tapping into some true weirdness, getting weird with it, and wiggling out with some sounds of their own, beyond the past. The names, locally at least, are limited. They share a commonality, not by clothes, not even by a genre-locked sound or contrived outrageous behavior, but by vision. Throw Rag, Blazing Haley, The Starvations. Unafraid to add accordion, unafraid to let the ghosts and skeletons of long-forgotten and obscure musical genres to seep into them like a mold. The Starvations are feeling the pulse of exciting, hard-to-find music, and like Frankenstein's monster with lightning kickstarting the sound, I, for one, can't wait to hear what they'll stomp after next. Set the CD player on repeat. You'll be signing high and long to "Grief" and "Last Night I Had a Nightmare We Got Married." Five of their best songs to date, and their last LP, *A Blackout to Remember*, was fantastic. -Todd (Kapow)

**STRIKE ANYWHERE:
Change Is a Sound: CD**

Retodd reviewed this a few issues ago and he is the one who gave me a copy of this release. Before I saw them in June, I never noticed or heard of this band until that day. On that day, I met the members of this group who I felt were genuinely nice and sincere in what they were doing. Live, they were so energetic and refreshing to me, I must have broken a tear on how much I liked them. I had a stupid grin the whole time as I watched in amazement. After that day, I heard from a friend in Finland that he heard great things about this band. I noticed more and more their name being mentioned in zines. Where the fuck had I been? Man, this is fucking good! That's the most intelligent reaction I have at this moment. The production is dead on. They play late '80s hardcore that is refreshing and intoxicating and lyrics that don't sound

like they came from the punk lyrics form book. Bands like this keep me excited about the genre. Out of every ten bands out there, one always shines. —Donofthead (Jade Tree)

STUPID BABIES GO MAD/ RUPTURE: split: 7"

SBGM from Japan has out, like, five EPs at this point. Their popularity is on the rise. This is no exception. It's true-to-form punk rock that is abrasive, angry and fast. Also, they're talented musicians and they don't leave that out. The songs add rock elements that are not annoying. The three songs on their side are worth the purchase for this alone. I notice that Rupture is a "fuck you" type of band without even listening. The choice of using sexually explicit artwork will hear cries from PC punks. That is the bait to their venom. The label on their side of the EP has a swastika and their band name on it. Their first "fuck you" song is titled "Washington PC." It attacks Fugazi, vegans, straight edge, Henry Rollins, and *Maximum RocknRoll*, to name a few. The second "fuck you" song is a GG Allin-styled attack against religion. Musically it's average. The humor takes it over the line. —Donofthead (Devour)

SUBTONIX: Too Cool for School b/w Rich Boys: 7"

With an up-front saxophone and a strident female vocalist, it's almost impossible to not mention that they sound a lot like X-Ray Spex, but beyond the easy comparison is an extremely edgy, all-girl Italian five piece that aren't mining cemeteries and fucking musical

corpses. At times, the sax comes across exactly like a siren, and the vocalist isn't so much interested in sounding as operatic as Poly Styrene, as she seems to be choking back and lashing out, which definitely serrates their edge. In the background is a band that sounds like they could be on Rip Off Records; well recorded lo-fi tension wrapped nice and tight around a steady beat. What a nice surprise. —Todd (Vida Loca)

SUGAR SHACK: Spinning Wheels: CD

Is anyone still using the stupid phrase "punk'n'roll"? A person who is would probably use it on this. Not wanting to go there, I'd say it reminds me variously of a lot of the big-balls rock coming out of Scandinaviland the past several years, the Candy Snatchers, many projects related to Tim Kerr (he produced this), maybe the Weirdos. Three and a half erect penises. —Cuss Baxter (Estrus)

SUICIDE NOTE: You're Not Looking So Good: CD

Highly noisy, mid-tempo hardcore with lotsa weird, ringy chord fingerings, a screamy singer, and just the slightest dash of pop sensibility. A pretty fun listen here. —Jimmy Alvarado (Ferret)

SUPERBEES, THE: High Volume: CD

Some serious MC5 worship going on here and, thankfully, they're very good at it. There's also some '60s punk attitude thrown in for good measure, which only serves to sweeten the deal. I'm mighty impressed. Hope my new neighbor Sean doesn't mind too much when I crank this puppy up to eleven at six in

the morning, 'cause I'll probably be doing that frequently with this bad boy. —Jimmy Alvarado (Acetate)

SUPPRESSION: Burnt Out Receptacles: 7"

I ask very simple things of people who release vinyl and one of them is, list the speed on the label. It's not really that hard. If you play side one of this at 45, it sounds like young girl kiddie porn. Pretty disturbing. Blowjob are superfine. Kids are okay. Never the twain should meet. Suppression is a noisy/noise, lo-fi two piece that brings to mind the likes of Jesus Lizard, the most caustic of Godheadsilo's output, and early Butthole Surfers. They sound like an open headwound feels, and they scream into it with chipped teeth. Really fucking loud, jagged, discomfoting, and nary a harmony in sight. Good for cleaning out rooms. Not for everyone, but okey doke on occasion in my book. —Todd (CNP)

TEEN SUICIDE: Self-titled: CD

Demo quality punk rock with keyboards and a good dose of creativity. A little rawer sound, a little more treble and a tad more over-the-top attitude, and I would've been drooling all over myself. As it stands, I'm merely impressed. —Jimmy Alvarado (Star Time)

TOASTERS, THE: Enemy of the State: CD

True ska will never die! I wasn't aware that this band has been going at it since 1981. In gangland terms, that makes them pretty OG in my book. Another fantastic full length, marking it their

eleventh, I think. If you love ska, you should already know about this or already own it. If you are oblivious to everything, put back that major label release and seek this out. Anything flying below the radar is way better than what the major label conglomerates try to make you think you like. A great blend of ska, reggae, and pop that should be appreciated by many. —Donofthead (Asian Man)

TOXIC NARCOTIC: Had It Coming!: 7"

I noticed at the local record store that this band was getting popular. I started seeing more kids wearing the patches and purchasing their media. I wasn't sure if I wanted to review this because of the generation gap between me and the kids who listen to them. I said fuck it and pulled it off the shelf of music that needed to be reviewed. This is a two track EP that was pressed on purple vinyl. I thought they could have fit more songs on this. What pissed me off more was the lack of an insert or lyric sheet. I guess the money was spent on the nice glossy cover. The first track, titled "Cockroach," reminded me of current day Conflict with its mix of reggae and thrash. The flipside track titled "War Song 2K" was more in the vein of a crusty metal track that is a mixture of the Amebix meets Discharge. Good production that increases the power of the songs. It's way better than what I thought it would be. —Donofthead (Rodent Popsicle)

UK SUBS: Universal: CD

Well, well, seems the Subs have almost made it all the way through the alpha-

bet. This is their umpteenth album in a career that has lasted forever and a week, and yet they still got it going on, baby doll. Loud-ass guitars, strong songwriting, an undeniable authenticity imbedded into their sound, and Charlie's growl, which doesn't seem to have aged a bit – what more could you ask for? Forget all those other bands trying to earn punker points by looking the part but having no clue as to what the fuck's going on, and give a band with a definite knowledge of what time it is the props they deserve. Put that bootleg of a Sex Pistols bootleg down and pick up some new music by a band that not only was around back then, but also still remembers too clearly what all this punk shit is supposed to be about. –Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

UNDER A DYING SUN: Self-titled: CD

I'm already depressed, unemployed and going through marriage counseling. Why do I need another emo release? –Donofthedeath (Substandard)

USERS, THE: Little Bag of Hope: CD

The cover features a picture of a guy sleeping. No doubt the last guy to listen to this disc. –Jimmy Alvarado (www.theusers.net)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Barricaded Suspects: CD

Jesus, what the hell's going on over at Dr. Strange?!? First a new Channel 3 disc, then a new Skulls disc, and now this. Originally released in 1983 on Toxic Shock records, this comp has not seen the light of day damn near since it was first unleashed on the earth. It's of particular note because it includes tracks by Tracy Scull's post-Undertakers band, Peace Corpse, and the first-ever recorded tracks by Mad Parade and Septic Death, not to mention tracks by Suburban Mutilation (pre-Boris The Sprinkler Norb), Roach Motel (featuring George Tabb), Massacre Guys (with a future Descendent/All member), Red Tide, Killroy, the Romulans, Abscess, and others. Tacked on for good measure are four bonus tracks from the aforementioned Peace Corpse, the Dull, the always-worth-a-giggle Pillsbury Hardcore and Zimbo Chimps. As with most comps from the time period, sound quality varies, but never gets any worse than listenable. Highly recommended listening fodder. –Jimmy Alvarado (Dr. Strange)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: BYO Presents - Sample This, Too!: CD

BYO has really upgraded their roster in the last few years. As a sampler, this has an incredible amount of bands to meet most people's liking. Samples from upcoming releases by The Bouncing Souls (!), The Unseen (I didn't like their earlier stuff, but this track is pretty good), Youth Brigade (Sean loves these guys!), Pistol Grip, One Man Army (My wife loves these guys!), Anti-Flag (I like these guys...), The Beltones (Sean and Retodd love these guys and I think Megan does, too! They are growing on me), The Forgotten and Manic Hispanic (They are so good that even if these weren't cover songs, they would still be one of the best bands out of OC).

Previously released tracks by NOFX, Leatherface, Manifesto Jukebox, Kosher, Sixer, Filthy Thieving Bastards, and Rancid. All that for a very low, discounted price. Pass on one six pack (or a twelve pack if you like cheap beer) and go out and get some new music. –Donofthedeath (BYO)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Color While You Listen: 7"

You're supposed to color the hideous (drawn by a weed-ganked 14-year-old?) xeroxed cover with the three included crayons (I got red, green, brown) while you listen to the mostly hideous xeroxed music inside. You'll have to endure three bits of quiet indie nebbishism (Flashing Astonishers, Visionstain, Pale Green Stars) and one log of Kornu numetal (Negative Seven) with the only payoff being the too-short track by Drunken Orgy of Destruction, 1 1/4 minutes of goofy lo fi metal in the great AC tradition. I wonder if the songs were selected by the same genius who drew the cover. Shit, I know what they should have done: made it a contest where you colored the cover and sent it back in so you wouldn't have to keep the record! Maybe the winner could get a full length Drunken Orgy of Destruction CD. Then you could give the crayons to a neighbor. Or just eat them like I did. –Cuss Baxter (Koala Syndicate/Substandard)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Dropping Food on Their Heads Is Not Enough: CD

One of the founders/owners of Geykido Comet, Heela Naqshband, was born in Afghanistan, but luckily, she and her parents left the country shortly after the Soviet invasion in 1979. Now that the US has invaded Afghanistan, Heela is trying to do something for her homeland. She and the rest of the Geykido Comet crew have released this album and are donating fifty percent of the proceeds (the money they make before recouping their expenses) to RAWA, an association of Afghan women, for Afghan women. This fact alone makes this album worth the eight bucks it costs. On top of the good cause, though, is some great music. There are songs from some big-name bands like Youth Brigade, Anti-Flag, and Bouncing Souls; songs from lesser known but still great bands like The Thumbs, Randy, Fleshes, and The Voids; and even a couple of pleasant surprises, like the songs by Co-Ed and Jack Killed Jill. A lot of the songs on this album have been previously released, but that didn't bother me. The comp is over an hour long, and listening to it is like listening to your favorite independent radio show. There are some tracks included that I ordinarily wouldn't be too crazy about – a hip hop song, a ska song, and a Chumbawumba song – but they actually work in the context of the album. Highly recommended. –Sean Carswell (Geykido Comet)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Hopelessly Devoted to You Vol. 4: CD

Hopeless Records brings you their value priced (\$3.98) fourth edition of their roster sampler. Included are some unreleased and released tracks by Thrive (I don't get the popularity),

Avenged Sevenfold (they should be on a metal label like Metal Blade or Nuclear Blast), Against All Authority (I thought they would have outgrown this label), Common Rider (has a former Operation Ivy member, good shit), The Weakerthans (boring college rock; I'd rather pick lint off my sweaty balls), Atom and His Package (brilliant to the point that most people won't get it), Mustard Plug (always had a soft spot for these guys, ska that always puts me in a good mood), Samiam (more lint pulling), Digger (my balls are going to be raw from all that lint pulling), Selby Tigers (Sean and Retodd told me they liked this band), Scared of Chaka (I know Retodd would want their CD in his coffin) and Jeff Ott, of Fifteen, (rubs me the wrong way, like having my prostate checked). See if you like anyone on here. Haven't heard of any of the bands and artists? Forget what I say, buy it since it's cheap. –Donofthedeath (Hopeless)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: How We Rock: CD

The Zeke track, "Live Wire," is easily the punkest thing released on an Epitaph album in decades. The rest of this comp is a who's who grab bag of Marshall-worshippin' rawk bands, including Electric Frankenstein, Randy, Supersuckers, Donnass, Hellcopters, Rocket from the Crypt, and others. Most of the tracks are not the best work I've heard from most of these groups, but if this stuff is your cup o' tea and you ain't got any of the albums these previously released tracks come from, you could probably do worse. –Jimmy Alvarado (Epitaph)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Killed by Hardcore 3: CD

This is my current favorite bootleg series out there right now. I wasn't too into the *Killed by Death* series. I thought it mostly had a bunch of mediocre bands. Also, because of being on those comps, those bands' records became inflated by every neurotic record collector who had to have a title and fame of ownership. That escalated the price of everything. Ebay is also responsible. This is the third in the series of international hardcore bands from 1981-1985, when punk got really mad! I hope this person has a humongous collection so he/she can continue putting these comps out. The bands included on this one: Negazione, Deep Wound, Appendix, Olho Seco, Gauze, Systematic Death, Die Kreuzen, and more. It even includes a track by the SoCal band the Patriots. I remember seeing them at the old punk club The Cathay de Grande. I also used to see their 7" around at the record stores, but I never picked up a copy. I do have a different track by them which was on the *We Got Power - Party or Go Home* comp that Mystic put out. The packaging is always decent with these releases. On the back cover are pictures of the original releases and includes a comprehensive insert with information of each track and band. I say keep 'em coming! –Donofthedeath (Redrum, no address)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS:
No Speed Limit Vol. 3: 2xCD**
This reminds me of the *No Fate* series of comps from HG Fact in Japan.

Packaged like a 7" EP with a massive booklet, the similarity continues with its roster of international bands and mixture of grindcore, fastcore, noise, sludge, crust, and more. You get forty-one bands and ninety songs on two CDs. Bands included that I recognized are Abstain, Unholy Grave, Hated Principles, Scumbrigade, Sewn Shut, and Rot. There are so many other bands on this that it blows my mind how much punk is out there around the world. It's so much to soak in on one listen. Good for a case of anger management. Not for the timid. –Donofthedeath (Civilisation)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Pachuco Boogie: CD

The Chicano/Mexicano community has long had a love/hate relationship with the pachuco. Ask anyone old enough to remember them and you are bound to get a bounty of conflicting emotions and opinions, ranging from declarations that they embodied the strength, defiance and pride of La Raza to dismissals that they were nothing more than common criminals. Yet fascination with the sub-culture has not waned in the sixty years since the pachuco and his zoot suit reached the consciousness of the general public via the Sleepy Lagoon murder case and the ensuing zoot suit riots in downtown and East Los Angeles, as evidenced by the play "Zoot Suit" and the numerous songs paying homage to the subject from the recent swing revival. On *Pachuco Boogie*, the tenth volume of its *Historic Mexican American Music* series, Arhoolie Records provides an overview of the music that was made by and about the pachucos during their heyday in the 1940s and early 1950s. As with the broader community, the music featured here is varied in both execution and viewpoint, from the decidedly pro-"pachuco swing," blues and mambo of the legendary Lalo Guerrero and Don Tosti (arguably the originator of the genre) to the condescending, dim view offered in the *canciones* and *corridos* of Las Hermanas Mendoza and Dueto Taxco to the "to hell with it all, let's just dance" stance of Jorge Córdoba and Conjunto Alamo. Unlike the dubious quality of so many other "historic documents" covering music eras gone by to be found in the racks these days, the tracks compiled here are some of the finest representations of the featured artists available, the sound restoration is impeccable and, most importantly, the songs themselves are damn good and guaranteed to make any listener, whether or not they claim(ed) the pachucada as their own, to dust off their *trapos*, *shinear las tablitass*, pull the *tando* down and boogie into the night. Highly, highly recommended. –Jimmy Alvarado (Arhoolie)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Punk Is Everywhere, Part 1: CD

It's a fifteen-band, thirty-track international comp that has not a single band I have heard of before. It has its highs and lows, like most comps, but it's pretty good for those who like melodic punk bands. Highlights for me were Bug Central (England) who had an early UK sound, Jason (Brazil) who played a more straight forward punk attack with a little UK thrown in, Wlochaty (Poland) has a classic oi

sound on one track and crust on the other, and Psychoterror (Estonia) and their crust sound. As you can see, the more punk the band was, the more I was interested. The most unique track was by Kalashnikov (Italy) who has a female singer. The song sounds to me that it could be a Top 40 song off the radio there. The song has piano and keyboards that gives it a new wave sound. I hate to say it, but that was my favorite band and song. –Donofthead (Volxdroge)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS:
Suburban Life Sentence: CD**

A collection of punk and hardcore featuring a variety of “name” artists like the Hunns/US Bombs, Smogtown (although, sadly, it’s the previously-released gem “Dance Asshole”), Showcase Showdown, Red Flag 77, Pinkerton Thugs, The Decline, Candysnatchers, the Boils, and tons of others. The proceedings are compiled nicely, the sense of continuity from one track to the next is good, and even bands that usually suck pretty hard turn in some strong tracks here. Not bad at all. –Jimmy Alvarado (No Front Teeth)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS: The
Boston Massacre Part Two: CD**

Grumpy old man time. It is inexcusable that you don’t own a fucking turntable. The CD player was a tool for you unaware fools to pay more for media that is less costly to produce than a vinyl record. I won’t even go into the debate that audio sounds better than digital. For you punk asses, Rodent Popsicle has to reissue four 7”s for those who don’t realize that a turntable is a valuable purchase. You get the Toxic Narcotic/A Global Threat split, The Profits 7”, Tommy and the Terrors 7” and the Lost Cause 7”. Since you rather spend money on those stupid patches, the label has made it easier for you to hear the music. Don’t you ever wonder what all the record collector scum are spending their hard earned money or trust fund on? Not CDs! Also, if all punk was on 8-tracks, I would buy a fucking 8-track player! –Donofthead (Rodent Popsicle)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS:
The Singles Second Strike: CD**

The first three songs on this come off the out-of-print, rare Rip Off’s single *Go Away*, and the second two songs come off the out-of-print, rare Motards seven inch *Kings of Blues*. So, in my little world, it should go without saying that this album is worth it for those five songs alone. Since everyone doesn’t live in my little world, I’ll explain. The Motards may have been the greatest trashy, garage rock band ever. I’m not exaggerating. They were awesome. They broke up over five years ago, and I’m still crying about it. I’ve listened to their two albums (*Rock Kids* and *Saturday Night Special*) hundreds – maybe thousands – of times, so I was stoked to see that their rare (and extremely expensive, thanks to collector fucks) seven inch was re-released on this comp. Just to make the comp even sweeter, there are five more bands that fly through that same fuzzy rock’n’roll stratosphere: the amazing Loli and the Chones, the Rip Offs, Registrators,

Stipjes, and Problematics. All and all, it’s a pretty solid disc. And, though this may be obvious, the Motards rule. –Sean Carswell (Rip Off)

**VERBAL ABUSE:
Just an American Band: CD**

Someone needs to give Mike Beer a plaque, medal, or a gift certificate because he’s not only re-issuing a string of some getting-harder-to-find, dead-on punk classics, they sound great and the packaging’s right on. Lead by long-time wingnut, Nicki Sicki Verbal Abuse were near the top of bands (often directly under Dead Kennedys on bills) in ‘83-’84 that refined, then later defined, the term hardcore when people didn’t completely separate it from punk. Making the exodus from Texas (like DRI and the Dicks later did) to San Francisco, and barely being able to live day-to-day, their desperation is only matched by their speed and intensity. The songs are wound so tightly, it’s amazing that they’re actually playing notes all the way through. The lyrics are simple – odes to beer, living in uncomfortable places with no money, and casual sex – but the band rings true, sounding exactly like they’re coming from a hard life. There isn’t a lot of fucking around on this re-issue. In addition to the thirteen album tracks, there are thirteen more live tracks (including a cover of Sabbath’s “Paranoid” and some songs overlap from the studio versions.). The sound gives out here and there, but that’s a small concession. The entire CD comes and goes, slash, trip, kick, stab. No complaints by me. –Todd (Beer City)

VEEXATION: Self-titled: CD

I’m pretty partial to hardcore bands, especially when they are able to add a new, unforeseen twist to the genre. Hell, I’d dig a hardcore band that makes up for what they lack in the originality department with some seriously aggro tuneage that makes me want to jump off the nearest piece of furniture in tried-and-true stage dive fashion. Sadly, this band does neither for me. Jesus, learn a new drum pattern, for chrissakes! –Jimmy Alvarado (www.loveearthmusic.com)

**VITAMIN X:
Down the Drain: LP**

Down and dirty, fast and delirious Netherlands thrash in league with the likes of Tear It Up and Life’s Halt, and the world’s a better place for it. With bands that play this rapidly, repeated listens depend on what they’ve gotten hidden behind the accelerator pedal and Vitamin X have several sneaky little twists. Like a car launching off the freeway into your lawn, you gotta watch the footage over and over again to catch what’s unique about this particular high speed musical accident before it crashes all around you and pins you to wall. I may be completely off, but I hear clips of Motorhead, snatches of Negative Approach, truncated AC/DC riffs, and Void damage. Not for the timid. They get extra props for explaining the dangers of biotech firms administering gene pollution. Goes right for the throat and keeps the hands right there. Orange Tootsie Pop vinyl. –Todd (Havoc)



CONTACT ADDRESSES

to bands and labels that were reviewed either in this issue or posted on www.razorcake.com in the last two months.



- **Abnormi**, <www.abnormi.finnishpunk.net>
- **Acetate**, 2020 Broadway, Second Floor, Santa Monica, CA 90404
- **Aerodrome**, 1521 26th Ave., Seattle, WA 98122; <aro@ero.com>
- **Alternative Tentacles**, PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141-9092; <www.alternativetentacles.com>
- **Apocalypse Hoboken**, <www.apocalypsehoboken.com>
- **Arhoolie**, 10341 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530
- **Asian Man**, PO Box 35585, Monte Sereno, CA 95030
- **Bardot**, 196 Alps Rd., Ste. 2, PMB 244, Athens, GA 30606; <www.bardotrecords.com>
- **Beer City**, PO Box 26035, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0035; <www.beercity.com>
- **Berserker**, 411 S. Impala Dr., Ft. Collins, CO 80521
- **Bootleg Bill**, PO Box 540364, Lake Worth, FL 33454-0364; <www.bootlegbill.com>
- **BYO**, PO Box 67609, LA, CA 90067
- **Captain Oi**, PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP 10 8QA, England
- **Civilisation**, c/o Oliver Schwarz, Parkstrasse 39, 89312 Gunzburg, Germany
- **CNP**, PO Box 14555, Richmond, VA 23221
- **Crackle!**, PO Box 7, Otley, LS21 1YB, England
- **Crows**; <www.interpunk.com> should have this.
- **Deranged**, PO Box 543 Stn. P. Toronto Ontario, M5S 2T1 Canada
- **Devour**, 5-19 Shiuojicho, Mizuhoka, Nagoya 467-0003, Japan
- **Dirtnap**, PO Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111
- **Disintegration**, PO Box 419, 1442A Walnut Street, Berkeley, CA 94709
- **Epitaph**, 2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026
- **Fat**, PO Box 193690, SF, CA 94119-3690
- **Fearless**, 13772 Goldenwest #545, Westminster, CA 92683
- **Ferret**, 47 Wayne Street #3, Jersey City, NJ, 07302
- **Fork In Hand**, PO Box 230023, Boston, MA 02123
- **Fuck Nebulous Prose**, c/o Sean Miller, 1600 St. Michaels Dr. #617, Santa Fe, NM 87505
- **Fuck You, Dale**
- **Fudge Sickill**, PO Box 7052, Villa Park, IL 60181; <www.fudgesickillrecords.com>
- **Gern Blandsten**, PO Box 356, River Edge, NJ 07661
- **Get Hip**, PO Box 666, Canonsburg, PA 15317
- **Geykido Comet**, PO Box 3743, Laguna Hills, CA 92654; <www.gcrecords.com>
- **Global Symphonic**, 7624 Sussex Ave., Burnaby BC, V5J 3V8, Canada
- **GMM**, PO Box 15234, Atlanta, GA 30333
- **Go Kart**, PO Box 20, Prince Street Station, NY, NY 10012
- **Gold Standard Laboratories**, PO Box 178262, San Diego, CA 92177; <www.goldstandardlabs.com>
- **Government Music**, PO Box 268162, Chicago, IL 60626-8162
- **Hater of God**, PO Box 666, Troy, NY 12181-666
- **Havoc**, PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408
- **Hellbent**, PO Box 1529, Pt. Pleasant Beach, NJ 08742; <www.hellbentrecords.com>
- **Hewhocorrupts Inc**, 196 Fairfield, Elmhurst, IL 60126; <www.angelfire.com/il2/hewhocorrupts>
- **Honest Don's**, PO Box 192027, SF, CA 94119
- **Hopeless**, PO Box 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409
- **Hydra Head**, PO Box 990248, Boston, MA 02199; <www.hydrahead.com>
- **In the Red**, 1118 Magnolia Blvd., PO Box 208, Burbank, CA 91506
- **Insurgence**, 2 Bloor St. W., Suite 100-184, Toronto, Ontario M4W 3E2, Canada
- **Jade Tree**, 2310 Kennwynn Rd., Wilmington, DE 19810
- **Kill Rock Stars**, 120 State Ave. #418, Olympia, WA 98501; <www.killrockstars.com>
- **Kapow**, PO Box 1287, Lake Forest, CA 92609; <www.kapowrecords.com>
- **Knockout Pills**, PO Box 43091, Tucson, AZ 85733
- **Koala Syndicate**, PO Box 35070, Syracuse, NY 13235; <www.koalasyndicate.com>
- **Krakkund**, PL 459, 65101 Vaasa, Finland
- **Kung Fu**, PO Box 38009, Hollywood, CA 90038
- **LEM**, PO Box 3052, Summerville, SC 29484
- **Lengua Armada**, 1010 1/2 Riverine Ave, Santa Ana, CA 92701
- **Lollipop**, 7 imp. Monségur, 13016 Marseille, France
- **Low Impact**, Box 475, 701 49 Orebro, Sweden
- **Magilla Guerrilla**, PO Box 1271, New Haven, CT 06505-1271
- **Moo-La-La**, 1114 21st Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
- **New Disorder**, 115 Bartlett St., SF, CA 94110; <www.newdisorder.com>
- **No Front Teeth**, PO Box 27070, London, N2 9ZP, UK
- **On/On Switch**, 780 Post Street, Suite 54, SF, CA 94109
- **Pandacide**, PO Box 2774, Petaluma, CA 94952
- **Pantsuit Party**; <www.theleatheruppers.com>
- **Pilot Scott Tracy**; <pilotscottracy@yahoo.com>
- **Pink and Black**, PO Box 190516, SF, CA 94119
- **Plastic Bomb**, Postfach 100205, 47002 Duisburg, Germany; <www.plastic-bomb.de>
- **Porterhouse**, PO Box 3597, Hollywood, CA 90078
- **Proud To Be Idiot**, PO Box 410325, SF, CA 94141-0325
- **Punkcore**, PO Box 916, Middle Island, NY 11953
- **Radio**, PO Box 1452, Sonoma, CA 95476
- **Raw Power**, PO Box 7127, Wellesley St., Auckland, New Zealand
- **Reflex**, PO Box 1013, 3000 Leuven 1, Belgium
- **Rip Off**, 581 Maple Ave., San Bruno, CA 94066
- **Replicator**, PO Box 18732, Oakland, CA 94619
- **Revelation**, PO, Box 5232 Huntington Beach, CA 92615-5232; <www.revelationrecords.com>
- **Rode To Ruin**, PO Box 23409, Santa Barbara, CA 93101
- **Rodent Popsicle**, PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134; <www.rodentpopsicle.com>
- **Scarey Records**, Via Galliera 32/1 10025 Pinl T.SE (TO) Italy; <scarey@libero.it>
- **Shrunken Head**, PO Box 23431, Oakland, CA 94623
- **Sickroom**, PO Box 47830, Chicago, IL 60647
- **Side One Dummy**, PO Box 2350, LA, CA 90078
- **Sinister Label**, PO Box 1178, La Grange Park, IL 60526
- **Star Time**, PO Box 43091, Tucson, AZ 85733
- **Stardumb**, PO Box 21145, 3001 AC Rotterdam, The Netherlands; <www.stardumbrecords.com>
- **Stupido Twins**, PO Box 301, 00121 Helsinki, Finland
- **Sub Pop**, PO Box 20645, Seattle, WA 98102
- **Substandard**, PO Box 310, Berkeley, CA 94701
- **Temporary Residence Ltd.**, PO Box 22910, Baltimore MD 21203-4910
- **Thick**, 409 N. Wolcott Ave., Chicago, IL 60622
- **They Still Make Records**, 1349 West Taylor 3R, Chicago, IL 60607
- **Three One G**, PO Box 178262, San Diego, CA 92177
- **Tinnitus**, 250 Napoleon St Ste K, SF, CA 94124; <www.tinnitusrecords.com>
- **Triple Crown**, 331 West 57th St., PMB 472, NY, NY 10019
- **Uncle Slam**, PO Box 18A534, LA, CA 90018
- **Vida Loca**, Casella Postale 17033, 00189 Roma Grottarossa, Italy; <www.vidalocarecords.com>
- **Volxdroge**, c/o Dirk Dommaschke, Knechtstedenstr. 13, 40549 Dusseldorf, Germany
- **Wicked Witch**, PO Box 3835, 1001 AD Amsterdam, The Netherlands



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.



ALCO-BEAT #13, \$0.50 or a couple of stamps, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied, 48 pages. Cartoon pirates on the first pages made me think I was onto something here. It's also put out by a girl in the Midwest whose name ends in "y", so I started thinking I might have another *Tight Pants* on my hands here. I should've known better and I now apologize to Maddy for the comparison. If I hadn't been at the laundromat with nothing else to read, I doubt I would've tried to read this past the Cedar Point roller coasters column. Why was there the need to *try* to read this? Most of the articles are cut and paste, which is fine, but they're layered on top of other articles. This makes it just about impossible to read. I also just don't think it's interesting or amusing to waste seven pages (small print too, by the way) on a play-by-play of what some guy is watching on TV. In the end it's just a jumble. Maybe I just didn't get it. -Megan (Alco-beat Zine, PO Box 1363, Madison, WI 53701-1363)

BARRACUDA #14, \$3.50, glossy cover, offset, 40 pgs. This magazine just can't fail with me. This issue features Von Dutch's VW Thing, the Caliente Tropics Resort, and an article on the joys of owning a big, smelly truck. The Real Man Revisited column (my favorite of every issue) follows Curt Flood's seven year fight to repeal the reserve clause in Major League Baseball. This magazine is just consistently good on so many levels. The articles are always informative, but they're also so interesting that I find myself talking about elements from them in pretty much any social situation for the next couple of days. The layout is done so well that it looks great without being artsy in a pompous way. And speaking of looking good, well, you can't beat the Barracuda ladies. Beautiful ladies, great props, and the text is always funny as hell. For all those reviews saying that this is one of the best men's magazines out there, chalk one up for the ladies loving it, too. -Megan (Barracuda, PO Box 291873, LA, CA 90029)

BOSTON PUNK FLYERS SURVIVING THE POST-RAT ERA, free, newsprint. This was put together to prove that the punk scene in Boston has, in fact, continued after the close of one of the city's central clubs, the Rat. Most of the flyers are less than a quarter page, so it makes some of them hard to read. Once I started going through them I began noticing how many of the clubs were not in Boston, or even Mass at all. I found more for Rhode Island, New

York, New Hampshire, and even Maine as I kept flipping through. On top of that, there were a lot of just plain boring flyers. I'm not saying that there isn't an active scene in Boston - I can't count how many times I drove three hours to see a show at the Middle East - I just think they could've dug around a little more for some better flyers to prove their point. -Megan (FNS Publishing, PO Box 1299, Boston, MA 02130)

COMMITTED TO THE CUSTODY OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL copied, 29 pages. You know, I think this one can speak for itself: *I am not a malignant malefactor/ I am not a rapist to be/ I am not a ruthless ruffian/ who shrieks imprison me./ I am not a contemptuous criminal/ I am not a murdering wanna-be/* I just want to torture Megan/ with my attempts at poetry. -Megan (Seth Ferranti, #18205-083/Bldg 5703-2, PO Box 2000, Fort Dix, NJ 08640)

DEADBEAT, #1 and #2, stamps/trade/donation, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, xeroxed, 18 pgs. A brand new, Florida-based fanzine that's got its heart in a good place, but is a little editorially loose. On the first page, he states, "I hate to use the word mainstream, since punk is supposed to be an "underground" subculture, but in essence, bands on Fat, Epitaph... and BYO are easily accessible and people know who they are." I neither necessarily agree nor disagree, but two pages later, he extols the virtues of Bad Religion (Epitaph), on the cover of issue #2 is an illustration of NOFX (Fat/Epitaph), and inside is a full page ad for the Warped Tour (Target). It's just that the interior logic is inconsistent. However, much to his credit, there's a full-length, funny, and insightful interview with a local band, The Mary Tyler Whores, live reviews, a list of upcoming shows, and a very earnest track-by-track explanation of The Misfits' classic, *Walk Among Us*. Enthusiastic. Give him some time, and I think this'll blossom nicely. -Todd (Mike Sokoloff, 400 East Atlantic Blvd. #16, Pompano Beach, FL 33060)

GARAGE AND BEAT!, #6, \$3.50, 8 1/4 x 10 1/2, offset, 54 pgs. Dumm dum dum dum dumm-mm... From somewhere in my mother's trunk full of Paul Revere and the Raiders albums comes *Garage and Beat!* After reading this, I feel like I've been living in a box. This is some weird stuff: bands I've never heard of playing songs I've never heard. Names like the Monks, the Lemon Drops, and my favorite, the Chesterfield Kings,

who look like Spinal Tap could have been fashioned after them. There are bands who pose for pictures wearing suits of armor - I was not aware of this. I like it, not because I'm all into the music, but because this stuff has avoided the crosshairs of my attention, and I think a lot of others as well. There was only one band in here (aside from the ads) that I knew of, that being the Woggles. I don't know how to say it.... *Garage and Beat!* will clue you in on some freaky (that's in a good way, folks) bands. -Bradley Williams (P. Edwin Letcher, 2754 Prewett St., LA, CA 90031)

GO METRIC, #15, \$2, 7 x 8 1/2, xeroxed, 66 pgs. This is a great zine. The writing is consistently good, they definitely seem to be unaffected by trends (they run interviews with defunct bands like the Primate 5), and are steeped in good garage rock taste without fear of open Queen adoration. On that tip, they interview Fugazi's Guy Picciotto solely on his admiration of Queen, quizzing him on his first encounter, what made them tick, and album recommendations. Funny, honest, and insightful. Also of note is the interview with Ira Robbins, who published *Trouser Press Magazine* (and the *Trouser Press Guides*). When I was a kid - around thirteen - I'd go to the library after hearing the independent radio show and read up on bands like The Stranglers and the Ramones in *Trouser Press*. I'd also be a fucking asshole if I didn't mention that Maddy Tight Pants makes an incredibly persuasive argument that "The Replacements Should Be Your New Favorite Band." I had no idea Tommy Stinson joined when he was twelve and dropped out of tenth grade to go on tour. Fuckin' A. Norb flexes heavy geekness in super analyzing a current crop of today's comics, and there's some right-on record reviews to round out a satisfying read. -Todd (Go Metric, 2780-F Ryewood Ave., Copley, OH 44321)

HOPEWELL #2, \$1, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied, 44 pgs. A good reason to get this would be if you live in the neighborhood of Dayton, Ohio and are interested in Indian mounds and culture. For instance, you could learn that after contact with the Adena, the Hopewell Indians began incorporating animal effigies into their pipe designs. You could also get driving directions to some places that you might not be allowed to go. Another reason to get it would be if you don't know anything about jazz and would like to read a well written, concise history of it. Here you

might learn that Roland Kirk was hard bop and that Thelonious Monk is known for an extensive hat collection. Francis even made a soundtrack for this article and you can get it if you send a blank. A third reason to write away for *Hopewell* would be that you would like to read an interview with Ken of Sound Pollution Records and read some reviews of his records and others like them (that is, hardcore ones). If you did get the zine, you'd also find zine reviews, an interview with the editor of *R'Lyeh Rising* zine and short pieces on racism in Cincinnati, sexism in life and tumors in colons. Here's something you wouldn't learn, though: how to run a rototiller. You'd probably have to go the rental place for that. —Cuss Baxter (Francis, 2915 Kenmore Ave, Dayton, OH 45420)

HORIZONTAL ACTION, #9, \$3, 8 1/2 x 11, newsprint, 72 pgs. This is almost the perfect zine. It's part punk rock'n'roll zine and part porn zine. The rock part includes interviews with Chosen Few, The Leftovers, The Penetrators, and the Testors. There is also a decent-sized review section, some small live show reviews, and an article on the MC5 documentary, along with an interview with the filmmaker. The interviews are just matter-of-fact questions regarding rock and porn. The porn part includes coverage of the AVN Expo 2002, an editorial on phone sex, reviews of some strip clubs, and complete porn reviews including a rating system that are socks instead of stars. For instance, Rocco's *True Anal Stories #15* gets a six sock rating. All this and a centerfold, too. The ads are even great, my favorite being a girl with a ghetto booty the size of a Volkswagen lying face down, butt up on a bed for Sack O' Shit, records and plus-sized thongs. I say almost the perfect zine because it seemed to cover mostly rock'n'roll style punk and didn't stray too far from that but, nevertheless, still great. Currently at the top of the toilet reading material here. —Toby (Horizontal Action, 1433 N. Wicker Park Ave, Suite 2, Chicago, IL 60622; <www.horizontalaction.com>)

LOLLIPOP, #57 Just when I thought I threw out all the rubbish, this comes to me. This has got to be the worst wanna-be, big-time glossy mag ever. "Let's just put a little of everything in and then everyone will buy our magazine" is the impression you get when you read this. How pathetic. Let's talk about Scott Hefflon, editor/publisher/writer. He's the kind of guy who calls labels begging and whining for them to do an ad in this crap he calls *Lollipop*. He tells the

label how great the band is; then, if the label doesn't take out an ad, he badmouths their release in his mag. He is so annoying that many labels won't even take his phone calls, never mind sending him stuff to review. I've got news for all you labels: save your money and don't send this little scumbag your stuff. His pay-to-play ethic is pathetic, much like his mag and his attitude. As far as all you readers of fine music mags, I wouldn't wipe my ass with this, never mind spending my hard earned money on it. Karma, come and get him! —Mike Beer (Lollipop, PO Box 441493, Boston, MA 02144)

LOUD AND OBNOXIOUS: THE BALLAD OF MEL LICIOUS, \$1, 8 1/2 X 11, xeroxed, 24 pgs. In his addendum, Jimmy says he was "ejected" from the Dimestore Haloes. Knowing nothing about the Haloes or Jimmy, I won't try to guess if this story has any autobiography. It follows the closing days of the rock career of a GG-style punk frontman who nightly rides a river of vodka into blackout and punches and pisses on his audiences, performs a lewd act in public, and is eventually forced to settle into a "normal" lifestyle. Jimmy certainly isn't the worst punk writer I've read, but this story is full of distractions and mis-steps. For instance, there's "After five years of touring, I had more drug connections than ass hairs," followed by "We cut up two big fuckin lines and did one each. We hi-fived [sic] each other." Now, has anyone who's done coke more than four times ever shared a high-five with their drug buddy? Then a couple pages later we learn that the narrator has never even tried heroin. What is this? GG for the Romper Room set? And would anyone in any era of punk rock ever have taken seriously a band named Tasteless with "Mel Licious" for a singer? I could go on but I gotta go buy some vodka. Anyway, I applaud and encourage Jimmy's desire to write, but he strikes me as a sad wannabe. —Cuss Baxter (Jimmy Reject, 115 W. Squantum St #203, Quincy, MA 02171)

MATTE # 2, \$6.95, heavy stock, color cover, 160 pages. For being so damn arty, one would think that *Matte*'s in-house artists could draw. And the page numbers go backwards. Aarrghhh! Hidden amongst all the other stuff (a screen play, a transcription of some guys watching a movie, and an interview and two columns dedicated to the break up of one of the staff member's band) were actually a few elements of interest. There was an interview with some of the creators of Oubapo-America, an offshoot of

a language created to challenge comic book writers, which was even more interesting when they decide to omit the letter "g" from the rest of the interview (one of the many techniques of Oubapo.) Another comic-related article, this one on Steve Weissman who is mostly famous for his big-headed, no-necked little kids comics, is also entertaining (despite having to turn the magazine sideways to read it.) The cover story on Mexican wrestling films was by far the best article in the issue. I love wrestling and watch it almost every week. I didn't even know this genre of movies existed. All in all, *Matte* was a decent read. It gave me a lot to vent about and some new movies to add to my "to rent" list. —Megan (Matte, PO Box 15345, Seattle, WA 98115; <www.matte.com>)

ORGAN, #74, \$3, 8 x 11, color cover, offset, 44 pgs. Devoted primarily to prog rock, prog metal, prog punk, and probably prog country too, and with as many words as possible on every page (except maybe the five pages that bear the same photo of Ian Mackaye), *Organ* is having a pretty hard time getting read in this house. Aside from my disinterest in bands like Sleepytime Gorilla Museum, there's the matter of the typesetting: it's all seven-point Helvetica with quantities of fucked lapses in line- and letter-spacing, everything crammed into outlined squares with no margins, making the line-to-line transition a visual approximation of getting slapped on both sides of the face sequentially by a shrill, drunken grandmother. I've got problems with the layout and general organization, too, but I'll keep them to myself. If you're keen on bands who take themselves too seriously (from the Otep interview: "I'm an artist and that's what I am beyond anything else," or from Dufus: "Dufus is a freak collective made to open minds to new and exciting ways through existence...") or get all mouth-watery at mentions of Zappa and King Crimson, perhaps you should try to read *Organ*. I said "try." —Cuss Baxter (*Organ*, Unit 212, 326 Kensal Rd, London, W10 5BZ, UK; www.organart.com>)

REASON TO BELIEVE #4, \$2, offset, 72 pgs. Somebody's trying to build the *MRR* of Europe. And not doing too shabby a job. There's a Slovakian scene report, interviews with Catharsis, Newborn (Hungary), Coche Bomba (France), HHH (UK), *Illegal* zine (Spain), Guerillavision (riot videographers), and Penny Rimbaud (re: having to buy the house he's lived thirty years in). The music covered is hardcore

and so are the politics. I'd compare it to *Heartattack* if I liked *Heartattack*. Instead I compared it to *MRR*. I will say I find myself dealing with issues over *RTB*'s jackhammer use of the phrase "DIY" as if it were a concrete thing rather than an attitude that you either have or you don't, but I reckon if you're doing the right thing, maybe it doesn't matter if your reasoning is a little off. There's good shit in it, anyway. —Cuss Baxter (Reason To Believe, 145-149 Cardigan Rd., Leeds, LS6 1LJ, UK)

SAVAGE AMUSEMENT #16, \$1, offset, 12 pgs. Short but sweet, *SA* provides news and reviews focusing mostly on 77-style and Oi. There's not much in the way of eye candy, but Trev has a subtle way with words (and spells 'em right, too). You'll breeze right through the thing without getting snagged on any forced adjectives or unfettered properisms. I suspect he writes just the way he talks, and that's the way it should be. My American opinion is that even if you have only a passing interest in the subject matter (he mentions a band called Barse every twenty-five words or so and I'd never even heard of 'em before), you'll get a dollar's worth just for the read. —Cuss Baxter (Trev Howarth, Rosehill, 20 New Front St., Tanfield Lea, Stanley, Co Durham, DH9 9LY, England)

SHOOT THE MOON, #1, \$?, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied, 32 pgs. You know that style of cartoon where the people have really big heads and really small, slit eyes and mouths and there's lots of hatch marks for shading? I don't know the name of it, but there's some of it in here and it's the best thing it's got going for it. The editor leads off with an "I hate zines" rant which I hope is ironic because she complains about spelling errors and in the same sentence spells "to" for "too." At least she admits her zine has neither a lot of contributors, good pictures nor information you can use. Just those cartoons, a bunch of diary entries in handwriting with "x"s for "i" dots, an interview with an aunt, book reviews, stuff like that. —Cuss Baxter (Shoot the Moon, 381 Rte 12 North, Northfield, VT 05663)

SKATE AND ANNOY: Vol. 2, # 1, \$2 ppd., 8 1/2 x 7, xeroxed with color paper cover, 39 pgs. Coming from a not-so-good, thirty-year-old skater who's fallen ten feet directly on his head severely in the last year, *Skate and Annoy*, seems to be made for me. The writing focuses on the older skate set, adopting a transition-friendly,

wider deck, soulful approach. Not only that, the photography is excellent, the layout's clean and inventive, the captions are witty, and coverage spot on. Instead of the "where the fuck were you?" attitude, they go out of their way to spotlight skateboard companies that still make old school decks - and tell you where to order from. They also tell tales of how they got into skating and continued for decades, feature an interview with the Texas Skatepunk Scrapbook travelling road show, and include a diary of an Olympic Village extreme sports fiasco. My personal highlights included the fact that a Zorlac Big Boys deck went for \$1,698 on Ebay, and I learned the same company made Ziploc baggies, napalm, and faulty breast implants: Dow Chemical. Excellent read. Look forward to more. -Todd (Skate and Annoy, 3439 NE Sandy Blvd., PMB #666, Portland, OR 97232; <www.skateandannoy.com>)

TMT, #20, \$1, trades accepted, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, xeroxed, 28 pgs. It's hard to go wrong, in my book, with not only interviews with Super Chinchilla Rescue Mission and Gunmoll, but with a testified allegiance to the USFC (The United States Frankie Corps, a loose organization dedicated to the proliferation of Leatherface adoration). The

interviews in this Australian zine are very conversational, but get to the point quickly. All in all, it's a zippy read. What sorta confused me, sorta intrigued me was a guy named Magoo, who lists his top ten live shows and keeps on people with odd names (Mugsy, Crusty Delany, Sweet Swinging Piglet, The Jackass) without introducing them. It also takes balls (balls that I don't have) for a devout Entombed fan to state that he was "touched and had my head warmed by..." Jimmy Eat World's "fruity, heart wrenching, tear jerking gay pop." Good read. -Todd (TMT Zine, PO Box 31, Greenwood WA 6024, Australia; <rabbit1@iinet.net.au>)

UNWAXED/FIGHTSCENE, Split, \$?, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied, 28 pgs. Split zines can be pretty cool, but they always freak me out a little bit because I worry about why the zine who got the front cover or got the first half of the pages or whatever, got billing over the other zine. Maybe whoever has the most issues out gets the top spot. I hope sometimes it's alphabetical. In the current case it's pretty even because *Unwaxed* gets the top half of both covers but the back half of the magazine. Plus they're both pretty crappy. *Fightscene* is zine for zine's sake: sloppy collages of newspaper clippings, a stupid article about

how the record store won't stock his zine because someone complained about the profanity in it (dear "deathmetalm53": that's not censorship, it's market preference), photos you can't see. I'll give the fellow small props on his piece thanking the women in his life for doing the things that women do. In spite of all that, though, I actually like the *Fightscene* side better than the monotonous *Unwaxed* side. At least *Fightscene* has some chaotic charm. Apparently, *Unwaxed* is a poetry zine (this is their issue 12) that specializes in rhyming love poetry. The less said about that, the better. Also they have record reviews, page numbers and interview done with them by someone else. -Cuss Baxter (Fightscene, 1800 Engel Rd #948, Lawrence, KS 66045)

WANT, Vol. 1, # 2, \$3, heavy stock, 30 pgs. This is mostly comprised of a journal-like story which they continue in the next issue. It starts early in the issue and continues past other features without any headings or page continuation notations, so you keep losing your place. It's filled with fake ads that aren't funny. It's also filled with tons of inserts that fall out all over your living room. Comics by the Brothers Fillbach are extremely well drawn. There's

even an insert by them called *Pistachio: A Child's Dream*, which is pretty damn funny. Twisted, yes, but funny. I'd save my three bucks and just try to find more by the artists. -Megan (Want, 11515 SE Stevens Rd., Portland, OR 97266)

WHIZZBANGER GUIDE TO ZINE DISTRIBUTORS, #6, \$4, 8 1/2 x 11, spiral bound, 36 pgs. The meat and potatoes of this are listings for zine distributors on an international scale. The distros are rated ("slacker," "old pro," "extremist/radical"), and given a chance to explain what they do in a couple paragraphs, along with all of their contact information. So, for instance, if you want to ever crack into Slovenia, there's a listing for that country. Also of note are listings for zine libraries, archives, info shops (and if you're a zinester interested in contributing to a community and/or having your stuff available for the general public without trying to break into the traditional library system, this is a good way to go), and zine stores. Roughly, the other half of the zine is broken down into who the editor notes as dependable reviewers, favorite zine picks, and some poetry. A very pragmatic guide. Useful. -Todd (The Whizzbanger Guide, PO Box 5591, Portland, OR 97228)





The Battle of Seattle: The New Challenge to Capitalist Globalization

Edited by Eddie Yuen, George Katsiaficas, and Daniel Burton Rose, 400 pgs.

Let's cut right to the point. This is the best book on the anti-globalization movement I have read. If you're looking for a wide range of opinions, debates, and issues surrounding the Battle of Seattle and beyond, you need to read this book. If you're at all involved in the anti-globalization movement, you need to read this book. The editors collected dozens of essays from everyone from Alexander Cockburn and Naomi Klein to less-known community activists. Plus drawings by Seth Tobocman and, of course, the required Noam Chomsky interview (!).

The book covers the international globalization movement, the differences between activists today and in the 60's, the ever-popular property destruction debate, new alliances between labor unions, community groups, and other organizations, the controversy over NGO's, post-Seattle protests, and the controversy surrounding race issues within the movement. Along the way, many more issues get drawn into the bigger picture as well.

The sections on the anti-globalization movement in Third World countries and the differences between the activism of the 60's and today are the most interesting and well-done. With such an international social movement, ideally we should all be as up-to-date on activism in Venezuela as we are in Seattle. This book gets the reader a step closer to that point.

The writers in the 60's section provide an excellent analysis of the differences and similarities between the movement today and forty years ago. In particular, they are eager to comment on the positive differences between the two. In her essay "Not Your Parent's Protest", Barbara Epstein writes, "The most important difference is that movements of the sixties, especially the anti-war movement, were directed

against the state; the Seattle mobilization was directed against global corporations." Epstein convincingly argues that today's protesters are taking on serious, complicated economic issues and forming alliances with labor unions and community groups that would have been unheard of in the 60's.

All too often, the movement gets bogged down by comparisons to the past. In this book, anti-globalization is explored in its contemporary context, without trying to make it fit a pre-existing mold. After reading this book, it's impossible not to feel like you're in the middle of an entirely new, exciting, and challenging social movement. If you're looking for an introduction to globalization, this isn't the right book for you. But if you already know about the actual protests and want to explore the underlying issues and debates within the movement, you couldn't find a better book. —Maddy (Soft Skull Press, 71 Bond Street, Brooklyn, NY 11217)

Jerusalem Calling: A Homeless Conscience in a Post-Everything World

by Joel Schalit, 218 pgs.

Jerusalem Calling covers a lot of ground: Schalit's childhood, his experiences having an Israeli military hero as a father, his conflicting youthful impressions about communism, his commitments to Marxism and critical theory, his beliefs about the conflicts in the Middle East and Bosnia, and his disillusionment with punk rock. In theory, the idea of writing a book sort of about your family, sort of about politics, sort of about your band, sort of about critical theory isn't the worst idea. However, in this case it results in a wandering, rambling book that never seems to make a clear or concise point.

The writing was problematic. Let me be blunt. If there's ever a reason I'd want to avoid continuing my education, it would be out of fear that, post-graduation, I would write sentences like, "No matter how diligently individuals who are convinced of the Internet's potential strive to escape history, they will always be confronted with forces like the religious right that are proactively intent on making new technology subservient to antiquity." Huh? Unfortunately, Schalit's book overflows with this type of writing, clearly written for a select crowd of critical theorists, graduate students, and Marxists. It's not that the ideas he expresses are too complicated; it's just that the language he uses is.

The actual content isn't much better. Schalit opens the book with a childhood story about a death-driven Christian teacher who purposely takes his students on a life-threatening hiking trip, with tragic results. Schalit argues that the teacher is an example of the idiocy of religion. He then dives into a critique of the religious right that quickly indicates his lack of contact with actual, living Christians. I don't like organized religion either, but his underlying argument that the world is logical and religious people aren't logical, therefore religion is stupid, is, well, about two hundred years old, and about as subtle as a crusty punk shouting, "Let's off the pigs."

A few dozen pages later, Schalit turns to the Middle East conflict. Here he just seems confused, saying one thing one minute and another the next. Glorifying his father as a war hero, then acknowledging that the Palestinians

are being mistreated. Talking about how the Golan Heights were fairly acquired (a ridiculous assertion for anyone who knows anything about the conflict) and then complaining about how he doesn't feel safe in Israel anymore.

Schalit also finds time to talk about punk rock, where he makes his most annoying arguments of the book. Basically, Schalit is another one of those indie hipsters who are disappointed that punk rock sold out and *still*, in 2002, offer up Nirvana as an example. Schalit makes sure to maintain indie cred by only, surprise surprise, liking the very early, Sub Pop work of Nirvana, all the while complaining about *MRR* calling punks who signed to major labels "sell-outs." Schalit stopped listening to punk altogether in the '90s, because of all the business influence.

Of course, if all you do is shop in trendy record stores, work for college radio stations, and be in a band on K, well, yeah, I can see how you're disillusioned. But you've gotta wonder if people like Schalit have buried their head in a pile of feces (or maybe just rare Sonic Youth records) for most of the '90s. There are still basement shows everywhere and high school kids making crazy, messy music. There are still hundreds, even thousands, of punk bands putting out their own records, booking their own tours, doin' things their way. Schalit seems to think that every band has a press kit, glossy band photo, promo sheet, and business card. If you're that cut off from the underground, then it's no wonder you're disillusioned. To Mr. Schalit, I say, how about checking out any of the following bands: the Dillinger Four, This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb, Against Me, The Devil is Electric, Chaos LR, Forced Vengeance, Toys That Kill, Yesterday's Kids, the Modern Machines, the Fragments, Shotwell... and that's just the music sitting next to my stereo right now. Point being, if you're jaded, it's probably your fault.

Interspersed with all of these rants about his childhood, the Middle East, punk, etc., are annoying asides, such as "We [Schalit and his girlfriend] pulled apart hot croissants with our fingers, sipped fresh orange juice, softly kissed each other, and savored the idea that we were in France and in love." I must ask the question, is this so necessary? Plus we get treated to tales of finding a new Derrida book somewhere in Paris and other tales of stereotypical young academics softly kissing or doing whatever else they do. Irritating.

The back of the book states, "*Jerusalem Calling* signals the emergence of a new breed of public intellectual..." I would disagree. *Jerusalem Calling* is exactly what you'd expect from an aging indie rocker with an interest in critical theory. Maybe it's not completely horrible and maybe there are some interesting parts, but this is certainly nothing new. —Maddy (Akashic Books, PO Box 1456, NY, NY 10009)

Terrorism and War

Howard Zinn and Anthony Arnove, 120 pgs.

Fans of *Razorcake* surely know who Howard Zinn is by now, if only because we mention him so much in the pages of this rag. If you're one of those readers who's heard Zinn's name a hundred times and wanted to check him out, but were intimidated by his hefty tomes like *A People's History of the United States* and *The Zinn Reader*, then you

may want to check out *Terrorism and War*. It's a perfect introduction to Zinn's writing in the sense that you get all of the things that make him an interesting writer: his calm, even tone in the face of absurdity; his ability to place events in a larger context without overwhelming you with information; and his knack for making very complex ideas seem very simple and obvious. Beyond these things, *Terrorism and War* is short, and it's easy to read. The book is very conversational, largely because it's presented in interview format (though it's clear that the text of the actual interviews have been cleaned up and edited, and he cites his sources). As you may have guessed from the title, Zinn discusses the attacks on the World Trade Center, the US invasion of Afghanistan, the ways that the US population and the media responded to both attacks, and, basically, our current political situation. In other words, Zinn's talking about what everyone else is talking about right now. So why would you want to hear about it from him?

First off, Zinn articulates his points and supports them very well. For example, Anthony Arnove (the interviewer) asks Zinn to comment on Bush's statement that the US is "a peaceful nation," and Zinn says, "You can't tell the Native Americans we were a peaceful nation..." And, rather than focusing on the history of US military intervention, Zinn discusses the endless string of wars and military campaigns that the US has engaged in since World War II.

Arnove directs this hundred-and-twenty page long conversation through a number of interesting points, from 9/11 to the different possible responses that the US could've had to the attacks to John Ashcroft's attack on civil rights to the current, unpublicized antiwar movement

to the moral dilemmas behind bombing citizens to a discussion of what other acts could be considered terrorism to his trademark optimistic ending. Along the way, he makes succinct, original points. For instance, when discussing the current anti-war movement, Zinn mentions that a hundred people recently marched through downtown Missoula, Montana in protest of our attack on Afghanistan, and he points out that "if there is an antiwar parade in Missoula, then there must be an antiwar sentiment in every state in the union, in every town and city." Now, I know Missoula doesn't speak for the rest of the US, but it's still good to know that an antiwar movement is out there, and it has reached remote corners of the US.

Zinn also points out, when asked about Bush's theft of the election, that real, positive change has never been made by a president. And he doesn't argue that it doesn't matter who's president, only that, if the people pressure any politician enough, the politician will respond. It's a compelling argument. It's also refreshing to see this new perspective in the face of a tidal wave of whining about Bush.

Terrorism and War, as a whole, puts our current political situation in a larger framework and clearer perspective than just about anything else you'll read this year. In the face of these desperate times, Zinn never gets melodramatic, preachy, or reactionary. In the end, he's even inspiring and hopeful. And, though I didn't agree with all of Zinn's points (and, believe me, I'd hate it if I ever agreed with all of anyone's points), *Terrorism and War* is still a book that I wish everyone in the US would read.

—Sean Carswell (Seven Stories Press, 140 Watts St., NY, NY 10013)



RKL: Still Flailing After All These Beers: DVD

Originally released on VHS, this DVD contains all the video footage of RKL lighting it up live onstage many moons ago. Included, as well, is all the funny footage of the band on the road with various exploits of band members, not to mention the hilarious art of scrawled graffiti on passed-out victims in their presence and singer Jason doing his impression of a water pump, spewing forth vomitus all over the stage. The live material is key stuff, reminding me why sooo many bands lifted from this band to begin with, but nothing else has ever epitomized the punk rock rhythm section like the crazy, insane teamwork of bassist Little Joe and Bommer fucking it up beyond belief on the drums. The bonus audio features here are shoved together quite nicely with twenty-five tracks of RKL rocking the fuck outta yer television while a slide show of many old flyers of their past shows decorate your screen. Wax nostalgic or go wax yer dolphin – just get this in your DVD collection, erection. —Designated Dale (www.maltsoda.com)