

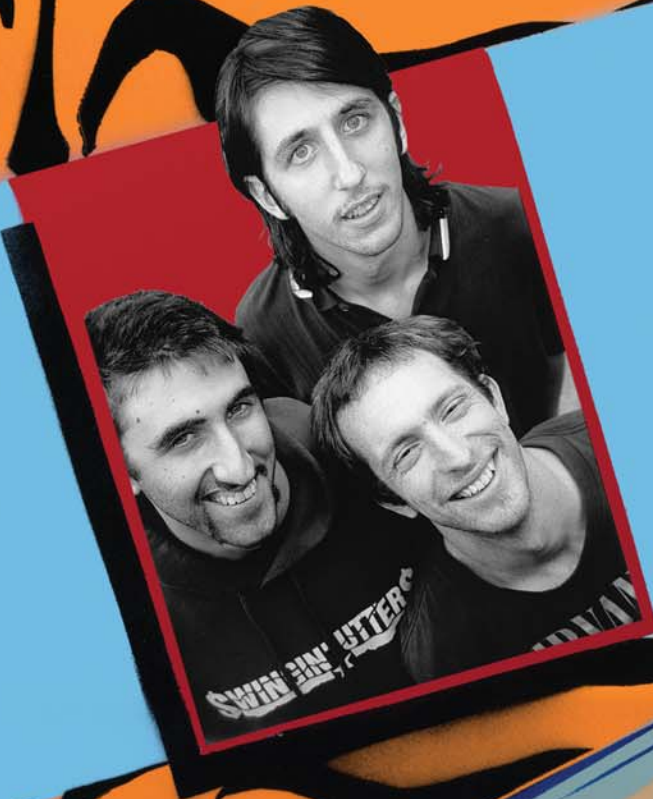
RAZORCAKE



Issue #

13

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THE
GC5

400 Blows
The Sharp Ease
Gwar
Pilot Scott Tracy
The Velvet Hammer
Joe Strummer Tribute

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Forty dollars. That's what I cleared last year, after taxes, when each roll of film, computer repairs, rent, and toner cartridges were counted against the money we get from subscriptions, distributors, and advertisers. Forty dollars. Curiously, that was also the exact amount I spent on clothing for the entire year.

Under all this, you may say, "You've got a fancy cover. You're doing fine. You're exaggerating." Annette, our super-nice accountant who specializes with musicians and artists, clicked the buttons on her desk calculator. Her fingers quickly tapped. The LED green numbers did not lie. "Forty bucks, Todd." I glanced at the red thread holding together some ratty pants that had survived a scooter crash from four or five years back, then I smiled and thought, "That's the best forty bucks I've ever earned."

Can it be? Instead of going to work nine to five, five days a week, slaving for someone to make more money off of me, I lived an entire year – seeing the Jewws and The Epoxies rock the fuck out of almost empty clubs, and Toys That Kill more than any other band, then travelling to Maine to spend more time with my special lady friend's family and trying my hand at candle pin bowling – and I didn't have to suck any corporate cock or do any job I didn't feel dirty after doing? Poor, tired, and struggling? Sure. Alive? More so.

Kooky and ironic, I know, but a little bit of capitalism – \$3 for this mag, \$10 for an LP of your new favorite band, \$5 for a basement or backyard show – can be the flu-like antidote to the larger ills that surround us.

You know what? It's almost more about working not to spend money – changing your oil yourself, finding the cheapest long distance, not buying stupid shit that'll break or rust too easily,

recycling mailing materials, watching where every dollar goes so you have to spend less time making money, just to spend it.

On the way to finishing this mag, I realized that I feel a lot less alone than I ever have. You see, *Razorcake's* not about who or what's going to be the next big thing. It's about what record's going to be on our turntables the longest, the books that will charge through and stain our brains, the friends – newfound and longtime – who will sleep on our floors.

Under all that, something's growing. It's loose but it's tangible. A community – based around music and the ideas that fuel that music – but it's much deeper than that. I can't tell you how rad it is for twenty of our contributors to come together, bowl, and just get to chill out and let loose in Vegas. If a good part of a hotel room's incidentals gets thrown through a window and one of us is wearing an 18-pack beer carton with a Suicidal brim flipped up, all the better.

Dude, there is no safety net. You gotta take advantage of shit before it slips away. Isn't it just a little bit cruel that your mind and body are always for sale to someone else?

As this issue came to a close, I also realized how many new people were involved in getting this together. This full-color cover's a huge thank you to Chris Francis, a guy I got to know better while skating a ditch. He just happened to be an amazing stencil artist. Whodathunkit? At first, I just thought he did some nice wheel-screaming laybacks.

Let go of the stupid stuff you don't think you can live without. Expect nothing. Make something yourself. Bring your friends. If you do it right, it won't cost that much money, but you'll still have your own life... and maybe forty bucks at the end of it.

-Todd

AD DEADLINE FOR ISSUE #14

April 1st, 2003

AD DEADLINE FOR ISSUE #15

June 1st, 2003

EMAIL OR MAIL US FOR THE RATES

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- Sixth page, 2.5" wide, 5" tall.

- Please make all checks out to Razorcake.

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- All ads are black and white.
- Make ads the right size and orientation.
- We don't reserve ad space.
- Send good laser prints for the ads. Use solely black ink on all art. Do not output your ad on a bubble jet printer even if it looks black and white. It will reproduce like complete shit when it goes to an offset printer.
- All photos must be halftoned using a 85 LPI (85 line screen).
- If we need to invoice you, we won't run you ad until we have the cash on hand, so make those arrangements before the ad deadline.

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the Pilot Scott Tracy pics; pasties thanks to Sye Williams for the Velvet Hammer pics; beer glass rings on a bar thanks to Seth Swaaley for his story; sketching thanks to Tom Wrenn for his illustration in Seth's story; Rich Mackin's relatives for the candid holiday shots; throwing up cake thanks to Chris Zeigler and Randy Bunoan for the Sharp Ease interview and pictures; slimy thanks to Randy Iwata for the shot of Nardwuar and Oderus; clear as winter ice thanks to both Eric Rife and Jessica Disobedience for their Joe Strummer remembrances; spooky mic stand thanks to Kat Jetson for her photo page; You came up from San Diego to stuff inserts in magazines? thanks to Cuss Baxter, also for his zine and record reviews; swollen-belly, third world thanks to the Slave Labor Stuffing crew – Donofthedeath, Dale, Money, and Kat; in the trenches of reviews thanks to Jessica Disobedience, Cuss Baxter, Donofthedeath, Aphid Peewit, Erika, Jimmy Alvarado, and Puckett.



Fat American does interpretational dance piece called Crush Small Nice People. (Super Chinchilla Rescue Misison in Japan)

Thank you list: CMYK thanks to Julia Smut for the eyeballs to make sure the cover'll print like it's supposed to; chicken gizzards thanks to Bradley Williams for both the Velvet Hammer and 400 Blows pieces; black-gloved thanks to Katie Rinaldi and John Southern for their 400 Blows photos; homemade theramin thanks to Zteven for

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Play It Sticky

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

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Razorcake is bi-monthly. Issues are \$3.00 ppd. in the US. Yearly subscriptions (six issues) are \$15.00 bulk rate or \$21.00 first class mail. 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. Prisoners may receive free single issues of *Razorcake* solely via Left Bank Books, 92 Pike St., Seattle, WA 98101, who have a book-for-prisoners program. Want to distribute *Razorcake* in the United States? The minimum order is five issues. You have to prepay. For \$7.50, you'll receive five copies of the same issue, sent to you when we do our mailout to all of our distros, big and small. Email <sean@razorcake.com> for all the details.



Sean Carswell

A Monkey to Ride the Dog



I saw him bang his hand on the podium and say, "We will not become another United States." And the Canadian parliament erupted in applause. I felt so embarrassed.

Wear Down Iraq

I turned on my computer within two minutes of crawling out of bed, and I checked my email before doing anything else that morning. I never do this. I usually let email wait as long as possible. Tomorrow's usually soon enough. But something compelled me to check it first thing that morning, so before I peed or got myself something to eat or drink, I had an email from a *Razorcake* reader staring me in the face. In his letter, he had a long list of criticisms about my recent columns. He noticed that, for about the past six months, all of my columns had fights in them and all of them were pretty much metaphors for war. And I was glad for this. Because most people who read my columns and talk to me about them just say, "Is that true?" and then are horribly disappointed when I tell them, "Yes, it's true. It's a metaphor."

Anyway, this one reader picked up on this and he picked up on my whole anti-war undertone and he took the time to write this whole long, detailed letter about why I was full of shit. I really appreciate that. I'm not being sarcastic. I really do appreciate it. It made me think.

Since it was too early to think, I went through all my morning rituals. I went into the bathroom and took a leak and washed the crust out of my eyes and stared at myself in the mirror only long enough to convince myself that I could go one more day without bathing. I went into the kitchen and made toast and iced tea and sat down and ate it and read a zine while I ate. I played two seven inches. I put on my cleanest dirty pair of jeans and a t-shirt. Then, I sat down to think about things.

First off, I started to understand where this reader was coming from. I realize that metaphors are not the easiest way to communicate to people in western cultures. People in western cultures want facts, not principles. When the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu says that water will always wear down a rock, people in eastern cultures understand this to mean that steady perseverance will always break down even the most resistant force. That substantial lifestyle changes come through patience and quiet but steady determination. That you don't have to be the biggest or the strongest, you just have to carve out your own way in the world. When people in western cultures read Lao Tzu, they say, "Doesn't that all depend on the rate in which the water flows and the density of the rock? Do you have a scientific formula to prove this? Which particle of water am I supposed to be in this scenario? Because if I'm one of the particles of water who has to bounce off the rock just so future generations of water particles can have a smooth run down the river,

then forget it."

I'm not saying one culture is better than the other. I'm just saying that I live in a western culture and I have to accept that. And normally, I prefer to write columns that deal with principles rather than facts because *Razorcake* only comes out every two months, and facts are only valid for so long, and the current socio-political climate changes so quickly that a fact-filled column could be obsolete before it reaches the ink-stained fingers of our readers. But fuck all that. We may or may not be at war with Iraq by the time you read this, obsolescence may or may not be right around the corner by the time you read it, but I'm gonna wrestle with the facts surrounding the war in Iraq anyway. So here goes.

Why Fight for Freedom When It's Free?

You always hear people say that we enjoy this freedom because someone fought a war for it. What I want to know is which war got us which freedoms? How did, say, the mass slaughter of two million Vietnamese people from 1964 to 1975 help strengthen the free press in the United States? How did eleven million dead on the battlefields of Europe in World War I grant me the freedom of speech? How is my life any more free now that the US government has killed tens of thousands of Afghan civilians – without finding Osama bin Laden or halting terrorism in any way – than it was before the US invaded Afghanistan? I know there's not literal connection from one to the other, but how is there any connection at all?

First off, let's examine the freedom of speech, because it's the most obvious freedom. The guys who wrote the Constitution thought that the freedom of speech was so important that they made it the first thing in the Bill of Rights. Freedom of speech is the easiest to examine because no one can cause any physical harm to anyone else simply by speaking. If someone listens to you and acts upon what you tell him to do, then that action can cause harm to someone else. But the speech never causes harm. If I tell you, "Kill President George W. Bush," then I cause no harm to Bush. If you go and kill him because I told you to, then I still cause no harm to Bush. *You* cause harm to Bush because *you* killed him. Now, I know you wouldn't do that (I never would've written that sentence if I thought anyone would kill the president just because I told him to) because you'd have to be an idiot to kill a president, and because you know that, and because you're free to make your own decisions and not just do whatever you're told. That's what freedom is.

In the late nineteenth century, Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes abridged

our freedom of speech. He said that people could speak recklessly and cause physical harm. For example, a person could walk into a crowded theater and yell, "Fire!" This would cause a general panic, and people may get hurt. So your freedom of speech includes everything but the right to yell "fire!" in a crowded theater, in a manner of speaking. But I disagree with even that. The way I figure it, if you're in a dark theater and someone screams "fire!" and you don't take a second to look around for flames (which should be pretty easy to spot) or at least sniff a little to try to smell smoke, then it's your own fault for panicking. By the same token, if you see "Terrorism Alert: High!" on your television screen every day and don't try to look beyond your TV before supporting a war in Iraq, then it's probably your own fault for panicking. Words are just words. It's actions that harm people. Opinions are just opinions. You don't have to believe them. And I support people saying as much crazy shit as possible because, the more crazy shit you hear, the better you become at recognizing it as crazy shit. And when you become better at recognizing crazy shit, you make better decisions. So, logically speaking, if people are free to say whatever they want, no matter how crazy it is, then people end up making better decisions in the end. That's why freedom of speech is important. So let's tie freedom of speech in with World War I and see where there's a literal connection.

In 1917, the United States began drafting young men into the military service to fight in World War I. Then, like now, a lot of people opposed the draft. The Sixty-Fifth Congress opposed the people who opposed the draft, so they passed a law called The Espionage Act. When you read The Espionage Act, it reads like a fairly benign document. Basically, it just says that anyone who obtains information regarding the national defense and uses that information to injure the United States or to help a foreign nation will be fined up to \$10,000 and sentenced to up to twenty years in prison. The act goes on to define what type of information they're restricting: "information concerning any vessel, aircraft, work of defense, navy yard, naval station, submarine base, coaling station, fort, battery, torpedo station, dockyard," etc. It's a pretty long list, and when you initially read The Espionage Act, it seems pretty reasonable. No country would want any of its citizens selling information about naval stations and torpedo stations to that country's enemies. I can see why a country would want to punish citizens who did that. The bill goes on to criminalize selling blueprints, defense secrets, maps, models, weapons, and so on. All of which sounds pretty reason-

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able. But look more closely. If you strip it down, it's illegal to obtain information about any "work of defense." Conscription (drafting people into the military) is a "work of defense." So, if you obtain information about conscription and use it to injure the US war effort, then you're in violation of The Espionage Act. And obtaining the information that conscription exists and injuring the effort by saying in public that you oppose conscription is a direct violation of The Espionage Act. It seems like a pretty liberal interpretation of the law, but it's exactly the interpretation that the law was written for. In other words, the law was passed so that the US Department of Justice could arrest anyone who spoke out against the war. And that's exactly what the Department of Justice did.

As soon as The Espionage Act passed on June 15, 1917, the US government started to round up and imprison anyone who spoke out against the draft. They raided the offices of various publications that were unfriendly to the draft and stuck all the editors, publishers, and workers of those publications in prison. They raided anti-war rallies and arrested the speakers. They broadened their attack and started to arrest labor leaders and well-known dissidents. They even went so far as to arrest an opposing political party's presidential candidate. Most of the people arrested were given extremely long jail sentences, too.

Under The Espionage Act, Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman were arrested for speaking out against the draft. They were both deported to Russia, and the arrest silenced their respective magazines, *Mother Earth* and *The Blast!* In September of 1917, police simultaneously raided forty-eight meetings of the Industrial Workers of the World, arresting 168 IWW leaders. IWW leader Big Bill Haywood, along with fourteen other prominent union leaders, was sentenced to twenty years in prison. Haywood fled the country rather than serving the time, but the other fourteen served their sentences. Thirty-three other IWW leaders were sentenced to ten years. The rest were given shorter sentences, but the raids effectively killed one of the most powerful labor unions in US history. In 1918, Philip Randolph was imprisoned for writing in *The Messenger* about the racism in the US military. He argued that black soldiers shouldn't fight for a country that doesn't treat blacks equally. Randolph almost got off the hook, though, because the judge couldn't believe that "a black boy" was smart enough to write the article. In the end, the judge was convinced and Randolph sent to prison. On June 16, 1918, Socialist Party leader Eugene V. Debs attacked The Espionage Act and was sentenced to ten years in prison for it. Two years later, he ran for president from prison and received more than a million votes.

I'm not sure if The Espionage Act is still a law. I couldn't find any evidence of it being repealed, but I also couldn't find any evidence of it being used to quiet anti-war protests after

World War I. In fact, I couldn't find any use of the law at all after WWI. Even when Reagan, Bush, Oliver North, and John Poindexter sold all of those weapons to Iraq in the eighties, Congress refused to dust off the old Espionage Act and send those guys to prison. So, again, it could be labeled as ancient history but keep in mind two things. First, if soldiers fought for our freedom in World War I, it certainly wasn't for our freedom of speech. In fact, World War I



effectively fought *against* our freedom of speech. Second, we can fast forward to the current administration and see that three separate acts of Congress in the past two years have aped The Espionage Act.

The first attempt at updating The Espionage Act was the USA PATRIOT Act. The USA PATRIOT Act was pushed through Congress with little resistance, mostly because it hit the congressional floor in the wake of the September 11th panic. The USA PATRIOT Act, under its first provision, claims that "the civil rights and liberties of all Americans, including Arab Americans, must be protected." And it essentially proposes that it will allow the government to do everything in its power to stop terrorist activity. When you first read the USA PATRIOT Act, it seems reasonable. Confusing, but reasonable. When you look closer, you see that it allows the US government to confiscate property from foreigners living within the US without giving warning or cause for the seizure. You see that it reverses more than a dozen laws that have been put into place this century to protect the privacy of citizens. You see that it makes it easier for the US government to obtain search warrants and to plant phone taps or other sur-

veillance equipment on people or their property. In fact, the "Enhanced Surveillance Procedures" essentially strip any pretense of due process away from search and seizure. Now, if the FBI wants to watch you, listen to your phone calls, rummage through your underwear drawer, whatever, they can. The only reason they need is, "Because I say so." But the scariest thing about the USA PATRIOT Act is that it sets up all these provisions to stop terrorists and terrorism without even defining what a "terrorist" is. It's the exact same thing as The Espionage Act not defining what a "work of defense" is. According to the USA PATRIOT Act, a terrorist is anyone who the government wants to call a terrorist. So according to this act of Congress, you have your full compliment of civil rights until someone in the government wants to call you a terrorist, at which point all civil rights are lost, you can be searched, your home can be searched, all your phone calls and emails can be monitored, your property can be seized, and you can be imprisoned, secretly and indefinitely, without being charged. But if you this scares you, don't let it. You have nothing to worry about because the guy behind the USA PATRIOT Act is Attorney General John Ashcroft, who is probably a nice guy, if you ignore the fact that he admitted to secretly arresting and imprisoning 548 people between September 11 and September 13, 2001. He's probably a pretty nice guy if you ignore the fact that he refused to disclose the names of any of these secret prisoners (which is what made them a secret, I know), he refused to hold these prisoners on any charge, and, when they demanded some sort of due process, he sent them to a not-so-legal secret military tribunal. If you ignore the fact that this is just what Ashcroft *admitted* to, and speculation by most human rights organizations – and even the *New York Times* – accuses him of doing much worse. But he's probably a good guy. The USA PATRIOT Act is probably a good idea, if you ignore all that.

Also, like all mean spirited little beasts, the USA PATRIOT Act spawned two offspring: TIPS and the Information Awareness Office.

The first little beast was Terrorist Information and Prevention System (TIPS). On the surface, TIPS was established to make it easier for people to report terrorist plots, which seems a bit paranoid and off to me, but I guess it could be reasonable. I don't like endorsing narcs, but I guess it's better to be a narc than it is to allow another September 11. But when you looked deeper into TIPS, you found that it was the law that encouraged plumbers, electricians, handymen, the cable guy, and anyone else who works primarily in other people's homes, to spy on people. Though TIPS didn't make it out of the House of Representatives, it's still scary that it was even considered. It's even scarier that Joe Lieberman, who ran for Vice President on the Democratic ticket in 2000, was in a unique position to ban the bill, and he didn't ban it.

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The second little beast is the Information Awareness Office. Permission for the Information Awareness Office did slide through Congress, and it now exists as a part of the US federal government. The Office has been granted \$200 million to set up a central computer database that creates a dossier on 300 million Americans. According to the *New York Times*, the Information Awareness Office is set up to record "every purchase you make with a credit card, every magazine subscription you buy and medical prescription you fill, every Web site you visit and e-mail you send or receive, every academic grade you receive, every bank deposit you make, every trip you book and every event you attend." This seems like a far-fetched goal to me, and I can't see how any organization could do anything with such a bulk of information (especially when they're given only sixty-six cents per person they monitor), but it's still a scary thought, and Congress has already allocated the \$200 million. What's even more troubling is the fact that the head of the Information Awareness Office is John Poindexter. For those of you who don't remember the eighties or didn't pay attention to the Iran-Contra Affair, John Poindexter was the National Security Advisor to Reagan, and it was Poindexter who oversaw the US government program that illegally sold weapons to the Middle East so they could get money to fund the overthrow of the popular uprising in Nicaragua. It's a confusing affair and I don't want to get too deep into it right now, but the important part of it is this: as part of the Iran-Contra Affair, the US sold Iraq things like chemical warfare production facility plans, chemical analysis equipment, and missile system guidance equipment. So, just to repeat that, the guy who's in charge of checking your email to make sure that you're not a terrorist is the same guy who taught Saddam Hussein how to make chemical weapons.

So, I'm not really talking about Iraq yet. That's true. But before the US races to the Middle East to fight for freedom there, maybe we should take some time to fight for freedoms that we're losing here in the US. And before the US races to Iraq to stop an evil dictator, maybe we should take a glance at the evil dictators who are hanging out in DC. And before we talk about the how advisable a war is in Iraq, maybe we should talk about why no one in the media is talking about that.

The Great Sucking Sound

I don't do it often, but occasionally I'll watch the news on TV. Every time I watch it, I can't help noticing that no one on the news is talking about whether or not we *should* go to war with Iraq. Everyone on TV is talking about when and how we should go to war with Iraq. In the meantime, when I talk to friends, neighbors, people at work, my landlady, the manager of the local drugstore, and so on, everyone's talking about whether or not we should go. So why is there such a huge gap between what everyone in America is talking about and what everyone on the news is covering? Could it be that the news isn't really news at all, and that the mass media is just a publicist for the state?

I remember during the first Bush invasion of Iraq, everyone I knew was glued to CNN. My friends skipped school and stayed home and watched a war that looked like a video game, and they watched world news reports that were eerily similar to episodes of

Sportscenter. I watched about twenty minutes of this before I decided that any war reporting that didn't include images of dead bodies was bullshit. Not that I want to see dead bodies. I don't. But that's what war is. It's the systematic tearing of life from humans who would have otherwise continued living. Endorsing war is endorsing the death of thousands of people, a lot of whom aren't even soldiers. And if you're going to support war, you should see the death. Every day. On every newscast. But CNN managed to cover an entire war without showing a corpse.

A couple of years later, I shared an apartment with a Gulf War veteran. We were talking about war one day and he went back into his bedroom and pulled out a photo album. The album had all of his snapshots from the war, and it was littered with dead bodies. He told me about walking through towns where everything was leveled, where he saw the charred remains of kids still stuck in their school desks. For the next few days, I went through everything I could find in the state university library there in town, struggling to find some information to verify my housemate's story. I couldn't. I continue to hear stories about the death in Iraq, though. Just a couple of days ago, I heard novelist Sherman Alexie speak. Alexie told about the twelve miles of dead bodies on the road to Baghdad, most of whom had been shot in the back. Again, I don't know where he got his information. I can't say for sure if it ever happened. If it was reported in the mass media, it was very well hidden. If it wasn't reported, that still doesn't mean it didn't happen. Most of us have never been reported on in the mass media, but we happen every day. Besides, I'll believe an ex-marine's snapshots and a first-hand account over CNN any day.

But the mass media continues to ignore the deaths in war and continues to fail to question wars at all. The coverage of the war in Afghanistan was essentially restricted to pictures of maps, aerial photographs, US Armed Forces press releases, human interest pieces about how the soldiers were helping to rebuild a school (without mentioning what happened to the school in the first place), and things like that. But there were no dead bodies. And *NBC Nightly News* (which just happens to be owned by one of the United States' largest defense contractors, General Electric) never asked the biggest questions. No one on TV asked basic things like, "Why are retaliating against Afghanistan for the September 11th attacks when the guys responsible for the attacks were Saudi and Egyptians?" and "Did anyone notice that Saudi Arabia and Egypt are nowhere near Afghanistan?" and "If you can't find Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan, how do you know he's there?" and "Since when do you bomb a whole country to find one man?"

When the US entered into the Gulf War in 1991, President George Bush kept saying, "We don't want another Vietnam." Most Americans interpreted this as, "We don't want another long, drawn out war where a lot of innocent people are killed," and agreed with Bush. In retrospect, it's pretty clear that what Bush really meant by "not another Vietnam" was, "If we don't let newspapers run any pictures of any naked little girls whose skin is burning off because of the napalm we dropped on her, then we can pretty much kill as many civilians as we want in Iraq." And he was right. Silencing the media helped him. And it helped Clinton. And now it helps George W. Bush.

So, again I ask: could it be that the news isn't really news at all, and that the mass media is just a publicist for the state?

Benevolent

Now, I know I've gone on and on here for a long time and it seems as if I still haven't spoken specifically about the proposed invasion against Iraq, but I have. I've talked about how our past wars have stripped American citizens of civil rights, the freedom of speech, and the freedom of the press. At the same time, all of the United States' wars, including the proposed one in Iraq, have supposedly been about fighting for freedom, for our beliefs, for civil rights. And wars are never about your freedom, your cause, or your rights.

This brings us to the last excuse that we always hear as a reason for war: that so and so is the next Hitler, an evil dictator, and, if he's not stopped, he'll try to take over the world. The US tries to paint a picture of itself as this benevolent protector of the world, sending its army all over to fight against tyranny and preserve justice and democracy. It just seems so silly.

If the US really believes in fighting against tyranny, why did it support slavery for four hundred years? Why does it continue to support contemporary slavery in the form of worldwide sweatshops? If the US is really benevolent, why did they kill all of those Indians? Because, keep in mind the next time you hear about the "next Hitler" that Hitler tried to wipe a race of people off the face of the earth and failed; the US tried to wipe a race of people off the face of the earth and pretty much succeeded. And if you think that's ancient history, then why does the US still refuse to honor treaties with Native American tribes? Why don't Native American tribes own the mineral rites to the land on their reservations? Why is the US government supporting the attack on the indigenous people of Chiapis, Mexico?

Even if we ignore slavery and the genocide of the Native Americans, even if we ignore sweatshops and Chiapis, even if we just look at the events of current US military history, the record is far from benevolent, far from just or democratic, far from an elimination of evil dictators. Let's start with Pearl Harbor.

Everyone cries for Pearl Harbor, and it was a tragedy. It's sad that all of those people were killed in Pearl Harbor. But it's a mistake to say that American soil was attacked, because Hawaii wasn't a state in 1941. It was a US colony. The United States had gone into Hawaii and forcibly taken it over. Less than fifty years before Pearl Harbor, the Native Hawaiians tried to kick the US government out of Hawaii. In 1895, the United States overthrew Hawaii's constitutional monarchy, imprisoned their queen, and set up a puppet government, placing Sanford Ballard Dole (of the Dole Pineapple company) in charge. So yes, it's sad to say that all those people died at Pearl Harbor. It's even sadder to say that all of those American soldiers were in Pearl Harbor because the US government had taken over a country and killed off most of the natives just so it could have a mid-Pacific port and a bunch of pineapple farms.

As we move away from history and into current events, we can look at 1954, when the CIA led its first coup against a democratically elected leader by overthrowing the prime minister of Iran, Mohammad Mosaddeq, and replacing him with Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi (the Shah),

who became a brutal dictator and later crowned himself "The King of Kings." Also in 1954, the CIA led its second coup against a democratically elected leader, this time in Guatemala, where they assassinated the president of Guatemala, Jacobo Arbenz Guzman, and replaced him with a series of military dictators. On September 11, 1973, the CIA and FBI combined to help plan and train the military overthrow of the democratically elected president of Chile, Salvador Allende. The military coup resulted in the brutal reign of military dictator General Augusto Pinochet. Pinochet has since been kicked out of office and is currently on trial in Spain for his

Rwanda sat on top of some oil reserves.

When you examine this whole record, though, from the first slave ship to the last CIA coup to the silent consent of the Rwandan genocide, it's really, really hard to believe that the US ever involves itself in a war for humanitarian purposes. Even if you believe that a war can be fought and people can be killed for humanitarian purposes, you have to admit that the United States' foreign policy record, coupled with their record for stripping civil rights at home during times of war, is awfully suspicious. And, to be honest, I can't believe that the United States has ever fought a war for freedom, for human rights,

fought any battles with anyone, and no one has presented any solid proof that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction. I'm not saying that Saddam Hussein is a good guy. I'm not saying that he's not a dictator. I'm not saying that he shouldn't be removed from power. I'm just asking why the president and the US military is so anxious to go to war with Iraq. Because you can't tell me it's



So, just to repeat that, the guy who's in charge of checking your email to make sure that you're not a terrorist is the same guy who taught Saddam Hussein how to make chemical weapons.

various human rights violations he committed while he was the dictator of Chile. In 1975, the US supported Indonesia's campaign to invade East Timor. The campaign ended up killing hundreds of thousands of people and virtually wiping out everyone who lived on the island. In the eighties, the US plotted to overthrow popular governments in both Nicaragua and El Salvador – succeeding in El Salvador, where the US can boast the honor of training ten of the men who orchestrated the El Mozote massacre that left nine hundred men, women, and children dead in a matter of hours. And really, the list goes on and on. The US has supported, trained, funded, and backed a massive list of dictators and tyrants throughout South and Central America, Southeast Asia, Western Africa, and the Middle East. And, at the top of this massive list of people trained by the US are the United States' two biggest enemies right now: Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden.

With all of this in mind, the best way to prevent military dictatorships and to foster justice and democracy globally is not to go to war. All the US has to do is to stop funding and training military dictators, and to stop orchestrating coups that put them in power.

But let's ignore that, too. We'll ignore slavery and genocide and sweatshops and Chiapis and the training and funding of military dictators and the CIA-led coups that replaced democratic governments with dictatorships. We'll ignore all of that and still say that the US is a benevolent protector of the world, and their only motive is to secure justice and democracy worldwide. If that's the case, why did the US completely ignore the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, when 800,000 people were killed in one hundred days? Eight hundred thousand people were slaughtered by an army that didn't even have guns – most of the people were hacked to death by machetes – and the benevolent protector stood idly by. Why is that? The US knew about it. The *New York Times* reported on it daily. Clinton mentioned it in news conferences. The UN Security Council chatted about it. Canada, France, Belgium, and the US all had troops nearby. Rwanda had no weapons of mass destruction. Hell, they hardly had guns. The situation would've been pretty easy to control, especially when you compare it to UN intervention in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Yet the UN and the US, in their quest for justice and in their battle against tyranny, let 800,000 people get hacked to death. And I hate to be a cynic, but I have to wonder if the US would've sat idly by if

for democracy, or to battle against tyranny. I don't know why the US fights wars. But I feel pretty confident that they don't have the best of intentions.

Finally, Iraq

With all of that said, let's look at Iraq. First off, I don't believe that the Gulf War was fought to liberate Kuwait. It's true that Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. It's true that he shouldn't have. It's true that he needed to be contained. It's true that the US didn't go into the Gulf War alone, that they were backed by the United Nations. I'll admit all of that. But, according to a University of Chicago political science professor, John Mearsheimer, and the dean of international affairs at Harvard, Stephen M. Walt, in a recent issue of *Foreign Policy* magazine, "In July 1990, but before sending his army into Kuwait, [Hussein] approached the United States to find out how it would react. In a now famous interview with the Iraqi leader, U.S. Ambassador April Glaspie told Saddam, '[W]e have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait.' The U.S. State Department had earlier told Saddam that Washington had 'no special defense or security commitments to Kuwait.'" And, after essentially giving Hussein's plans to invade Kuwait implicit consent, the US turned around and pressured the UN to support Bush and the Gulf War. It's weird. It doesn't make a lot of sense. Why would you tell Saddam Hussein that you don't care if he invades Kuwait, then turn around and fight a war against him for invading Kuwait? I'm not saying that the Gulf War was just about oil, but I am saying that if it were just about liberating Kuwait, then the US sure did take the long way around the barn.

When we look at the current plans to invade Iraq, the facts are equally confusing. First, the US claims that they want to contain Iraq, but Iraq is already contained. Since the end of the Gulf War, Iraq has committed no act of aggression. The United Nations has imposed sanctions on Iraq that effectively eliminate the flow of medicines into Iraq, but Iraq hasn't fought back. Even conservative estimates place the number of deaths as a result of the sanctions at around 500,000, but Iraq hasn't physically fought back. The UN weapons inspectors have looked everywhere and they haven't found shit. The most deadly weapons they've found are the ones that the US sold to Iraq. But, for the most part, Iraq has complied with the inspections. For the past eleven years, Iraq hasn't invaded any country or

for humanitarian reasons. It's not a fight for freedom and it's not a fight for human rights and it's not the benevolent act of the world's only superpower and Iraq hasn't invaded any other country and no one has shown any proof of weapons of mass destruction. So what is the purpose behind this proposed war?

I have no fucking idea.

As long as I'm asking questions I can't answer, though, what about this one: if the United States is so concerned with the possibility of Iraq possessing weapons of mass destruction, why did the US sell him all those weapons of mass destruction and plans for weapons of mass destruction and "dual use" chemicals that can be used for biological weapons, back in the eighties? Granted, I know George W. Bush didn't have anything to do with selling Hussein all that stuff. But George W. Bush's father did. And George W. Bush's Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, did. And George W. Bush's Vice President, Dick Cheney, did. And George W. Bush's Secretary of State, Colin Powell, did. And the head of George W. Bush's Information Awareness Office, John Poindexter, did.

War is Bad, Sure, But Not This One?

When you get deeper into this issue, it starts to make less and less sense. It's not as simple as the nightly news makes it seem. It's not as simple as it seems when you read the *New York Times*. The issues go way deeper than anything we can read on the internet or in zines or even in big, nationally distributed news magazines and journals. It's all so convoluted and complex and I doubt that very many people in the world really know what's going on. I know that, the more I research the situation, the more confused I get. So let's stick with some basic facts. Let's forget about all the ins and outs of the case and end this long rant with nice, comfortable generalizations. Here are five simple, tough-to-dispute reasons why the US shouldn't go to war with Iraq.

Number one: the rest of the world doesn't support a US invasion of Iraq. Sure, England is backing the US, and Australia's sending a few ships and troops to the Persian Gulf, but the rest of the world is staying out of it. Most of the nations in the UN are refusing to

back the US invasion. France has said that they can't imagine a scenario in which they back the US invasion. Germany, Russia, and China have all come out with statements that echo France's sentiments. Hell, even Canada is staying away. I was watching CSPAN the other night and I saw Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien talking to the Canadian parliament about the current Iraq situation. I saw him bang his hand on the podium and say, "We will not become another United States." And the Canadian parliament erupted in applause. I felt so embarrassed.

Beyond that, though, the basic fact remains that, if the US goes into a war in the Middle East essentially alone, it's gonna be expensive. Even if the US wins the war. Even if Saddam Hussein is taken out of power and the weapons of mass destruction are found and destroyed, it's going to be a very expensive war. It's going to be a war funded solely by US taxpayers. This means that all of the money for US schools, roads, libraries, social security, social services, everything, is going to be lying dead in the Middle Eastern desert.

Number two: Iraq may or may not have nuclear weapons, but Pakistan definitely does have nuclear weapons. Right now, the military dictator in Pakistan is friendly to the US, but he's not very popular in Pakistan. The longer he supports the US in the Middle East, the less popular he becomes. It's not unlikely that he could be overthrown, and if he is, he'll most likely be overthrown by a dictator who's not friendly to the US. And Pakistan has nuclear weapons.

Number three: I don't endorse giving terrorist what they want, and I don't often agree with

terrorists, but the guys who attacked the World Trade Center had some demands. Among those demands were 1.) get the US military out of Saudi Arabia and 2.) end UN sanctions in Iraq. Obviously, I don't agree with their methods in making these demands, but these are two pretty reasonable demands. The potential war against Iraq has already 1.) increased the size of US military presence in Saudi Arabia and 2.) worsened the situation in Iraq. So, essentially, the US is taking a shit on the two things that caused terrorists to fly planes into the World Trade Center. How do you think the terrorists feel about this (the ones who are still alive, that is)? What do you think they're gonna do next?

Number four: Bush's proposed "regime change" is nothing more than old fashioned imperialism. The plan is to go into a country, forcibly remove their leader, and install your own government. By definition, that's imperialism. And under no circumstances is imperialism acceptable. Not to oversimplify things, but you can trace the source of almost all the civil unrest in the world back to a time when the region where the unrest is occurring was taken over by another country. People don't forget it when you take over their country. It pisses them off. They fight you until you leave. Israel took over Palestine in 1949. The Israelis and Palestinians fought over that today. Fifty-four years have passed, and the fighting will continue tomorrow. So, if the US takes over Iraq and changes "the regime," how long do you think the Iraqis are going to fight the US over that?

Number five: US Secretary of State Colin Powell told NBC's *Meet the Press* that, if the "coalition forces" (the US and whoever backs

them) go into Iraq and orchestrate their "regime change," then the US and its coalition forces will hold the oil fields in trust for the Iraqi people and make sure the people of Iraq profit from the sales of Iraqi oil. The US will hold the land and everything underneath it in trust for the people who lived there first, and the US will give all the profits to the people who lived there first.

That's exactly what the US government told the Native Americans, right before nearly wiping them off the face of the earth.

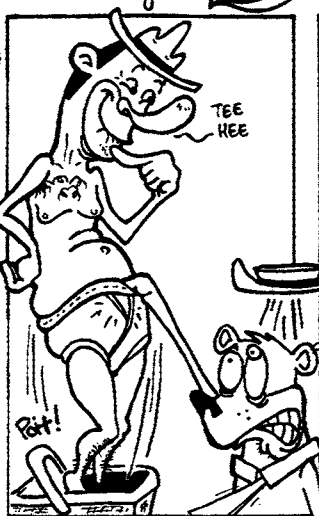
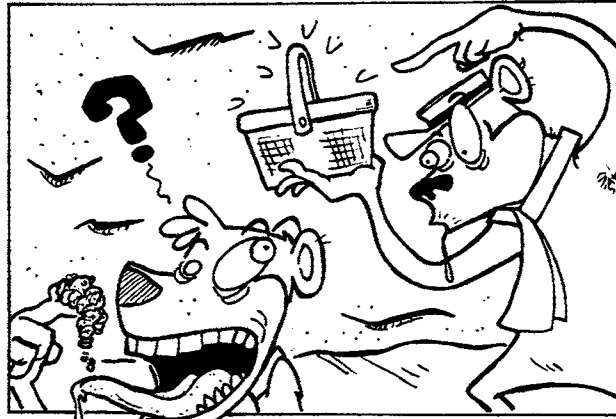
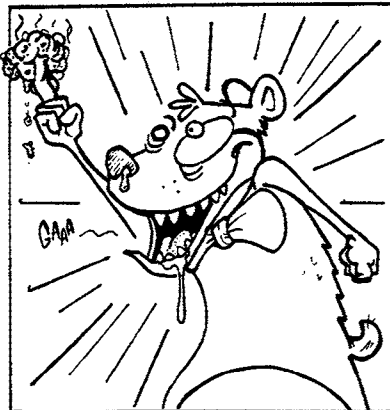
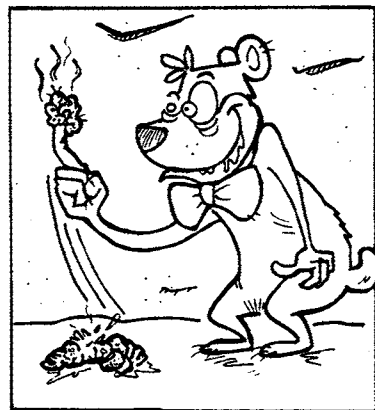
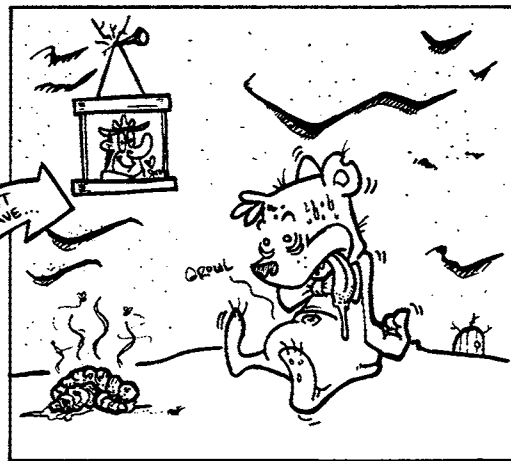
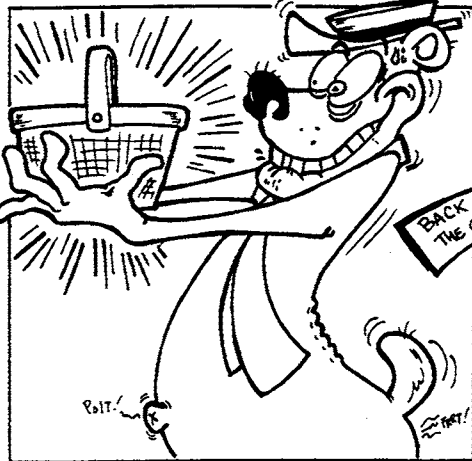
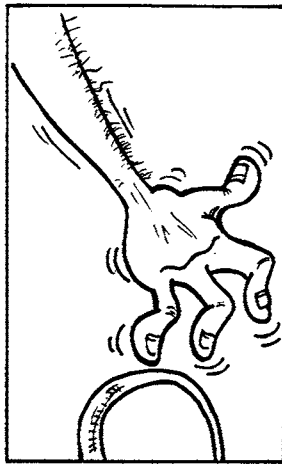
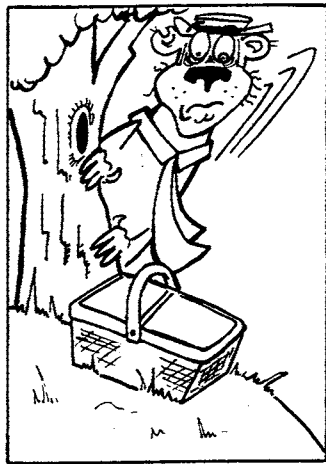
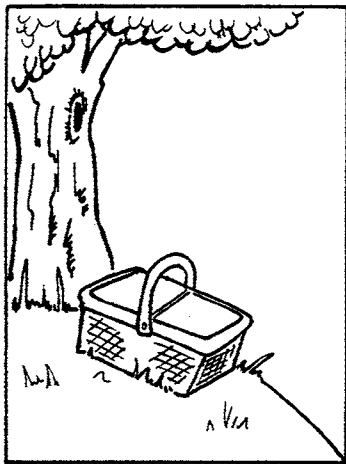
Yep, that's exactly what they told the Indians.

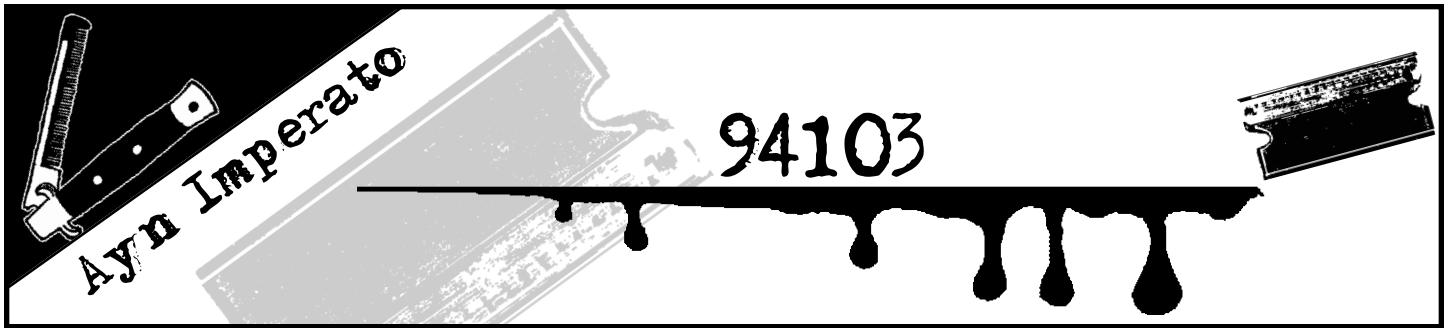
-Sean Carswell



Here's a list of some of the places where I got my information:

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... he only said, "I'll have to wait
300 tables to pay for that guitar."

Shitcanned Again

Another night, another out of town show. This time, there was so much loud music, spastic dancing, beer flying, glass breaking, and generally flailing limbs that no one even noticed that the one harmonica player on stage had been pantsed. He stood there with his pants around his ankles, with his jewels hanging out, playing a frigging harmonica and no one noticed.

By the end of the night he limped around the club holding his bruised sack in horrified pain, after being whacked by an errant flying limb. As the night wore on, he was joined by several other punk dudes, all freakishly walking around the bar holding their members with pained faces, after being punched or kicked amidst the musical fury. Through it all, one tall hairy guy, wet with beer, shuffled ape-like through the tiny bar throughout the night.

At the after party this time, we realized the grim truth in a horrified, shining moment – there was no beer. Or any other alcohol whatsoever. It was five minutes to two and too late for a beer run. Although there were over thirty people in the house, all just standing around expectantly, every single person forgot to buy beer.

What followed was an every-man-for himself raid of the cabinets, where someone unearthed two half-drunken Gallo wine bottles, a third of Tanqueray, and a last swig of cinnamon schnapps. People were grabbing mostly drunken beer bottles and cans that were just lying or sitting on the tables, then picking them out of the recycling bin to glean a last swill of malt.

And then it happened – one guy from The Eddie Haskells emerged from the bathroom with a bottle of Scope, raised like the torch of the Statue of Liberty. "It's all right, there's Scope!" he cried. Although most people shrunk away from the neon green bottle, a few of those guys did Scope shots for the better part of an hour, using the plastic cap as a shot glass.

Jeff, the bass player, was the ringleader. When he spoke you could smell his minty breath from across the room. "Come on!" he shouted, thrusting the full green cap at all those who passed by, like a Scope pusher man. The harsh green stuff was like liquid crack for alcoholics. And soon enough, the Scope was gone. It had been completely downed by the Scope punks.

Then the Listerine was brandished – the yellow kind, even. By the end of the night, the bottles started moving away from



name brands completely, into bottles simply labeled, "Mouth Rinse," which is basically second-rate Scope. Like the Night Train of mouthwash.

When every last bottle of mouth rinse in the house was emptied, we looked over at Jeff – The Haskells bass player. He was sitting in a wooden chair with his hands folded, facing the wall, with glazed, unresponsive eyes. It was too late to save him.

The rest of us mulled over their other dilemma – what would happen when they woke up the next morning? Would their mouths still be fresh and minty clean? They certainly would not be gargling with mouthwash to kill the taste, right? Even toothpaste would be hard to keep down, you'd imagine.

When we woke up the next morning, the

Scope punks were gone. Just mysteriously vanished, every last one of them. I'm sure sleep had eluded them as they drove a fast track to home, away from what they had done.

Our band, on the other hand, had our own troubles. It seems that on the drive home, our own bass player's Gibson SG flew out of our truck bed into the freeway. The worst part was that we didn't realize this or hear when it happened, since we were blaring The Devil Dogs' *Stereodrive!* and driving faster, apparently, than a person should with a truckload of exposed gear.

The first thing I noticed was this hippy lady kept driving by in her Lexus smiling and waving at me. But she just looked really friendly, like she was saying hi, instead of beeping and flash-

ing her lights like you'd guess a person might do after watching a guitar wing out on to the freeway. She just smiled and waved – I think I might have even waved back. Around five miles later a guy finally motioned for us to pull over, where he informed us that our guitar had fallen dead-center in the median line on the road, a few miles back. With tires smoking we hi-tailed it back over the five miles and retraced our drive, scanning for signs of it, or for splintered guitar carnage.

Glen was silent in the car. A waiter, when not a blazing rock god, he only said, "I'll have to wait 300 tables to pay for that guitar."

After a time, someone spotted a glimpse of something vaguely black and solid in the freeway median, so we pulled over on the shoulder to take a closer look. Our drummer and bass player, Mundo and Glen, raced in between cars across the road and started to walk along the narrow grassy strip that is the Route 101 median, knee-high in scrub brush, searching. It was a Gibson SG guitar, after all, and worth wading through the median like a prison-worker picking up trash in an orange vest.

Within minutes the cops came. Did they come to help? Think again. They came to order the guys off the median immediately. To make matters worse, they smelled the beer from the night before on our clothes and shoes and asked if we were drunk. Then, instead of helping us search, they made us all take the sobriety test. Instead of having the extra help searching for it while the loss was fresh, we wasted valuable searching time playing circus games with the cops. Meanwhile, our guitar was out there somewhere like some half-alive

road kill waiting to be found. While we watched the cop's finger move this way and that, and counted backwards from twelve, we could see semis racing by from the corners of our eyes. Precious time was being lost. I knew it then – the guitar was gone.

After the song and dance, the cop finally took our statement and made a brief effort to help search for the AWOL instrument. But by then it was too late – there was nothing for miles on the road. Someone had apparently pulled over, hucked the guitar into their car, and took off, 800-pawn-shop-dollars richer.

Then Glen remembered something. He had put a flyer of the club we played at in the guitar case. It had a date – the night before – and the name of the club and city where we had played. It was easily traceable. Maybe someone would open it, see the flyer, and contact the club. It would be that easy. Maybe someone would actually be a decent person and return the guitar after all. There was a moment of hope. Good and evil hung in the balance. Honesty and all that is good and true, or all that is selfish, materialistic, and just plain mean. There it was, the choices of life. Just one simple phone call from the person who found it on the side of the road. One month later, we are still waiting.

It was a careless, lost weekend. Shitcanned again. Sometimes that brings you unbelievable, unholy fun. Sometimes that leaves you with a leftover pain in your crotch, a mouth rinse hangover, or \$800 down.

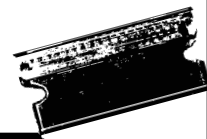
–Ayn Imperato





GARY HORNBERGER

Squeeze My Horn



"SEE IF YOU HAVE ANY FUCKING ARMS LEFT TO EAT THE FOOD WE DROPPED AFTER YOU STEP ON A LANDMINE TRYING TO RETRIEVE IT!"

Welcome to the year 2003. Nothing has changed here and everything is business as usual. Truthfully, I was hoping for some radical changes in the punk rock world. See, I was hoping since we have that shit for brains Bush guy in the White House, that we would be seeing a resurgence in some of the great music that we had back when Reagan was in office and fucking the country up. Not one group of musicians has emerged with some political tunes, either funny or serious.

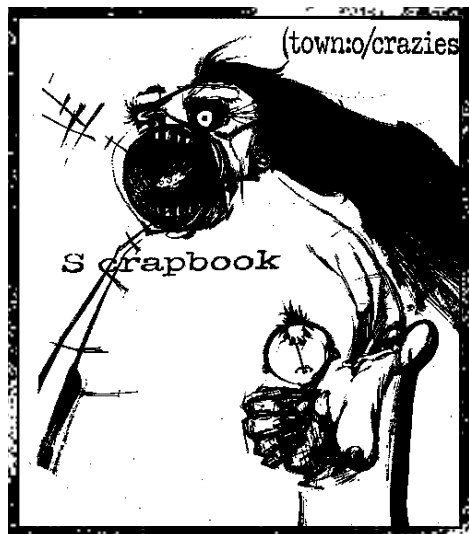
Now, let's go over some of the recent news that could warrant a band to think activism. First and foremost, this agenda the Bush family has with old Saddam and Iraq. This one is just fever blisters for some good old poli-punk slamming. I personally think that Pop Bush is just pissed and wants his face off that mosaic on the entrance to that hotel in Iraq. Then what about Bush Jr.? Is it just me or is this guy as well mentally as uncle Ronnie is currently? Every day I see some political cartoon in the paper that seems more true to life than we first think.

Since we are going after political figures, how about California's own Republican governor... What's that? You say he's a Democrat? Well, I must have a wool coat on then. Why is it that Gray would rather give monies to the prisons than to the schools? Either way, I'm screwed. I don't have my own kids that I pay taxes on and I don't have an inmate buddy that I write letters to.

Here's another subject that is even closer to home. If I were to install a home security warning to alert to the police that an unwanted person is in my house, it would be more money that I was losing because the police will not respond. They say it is because they don't have the manpower, but answer me this, when you see one of the many car chases that the Southland is popular for, how many cars do you see when it ends? I thought so. It's a damn shame.

I'm not musically talented, because if I was, I'd be in hog heaven. There are so many issues that should be making people mad, yet I'm not hearing it. See, I was always amazed that most of the guys in punk were not just runaway kids, but people with highly educated backgrounds who could look at current events and say, "Hey, that's something that will have some dire social implications and I'll get the news out to all through the medium called punk rock." In the very beginning I made the wrong call and dismissed the scene as a bunch of hooligans, but I was wrong. I read the lyric sheets of bands like Bad Religion, Bad Brains, Exploited and boxes full of others. Punk in its heyday had no gimmicks to sell millions of records and get that exclusive interview in *Rolling Stone*. Punk was

the people were approachable. So, I guess what I'm trying so piss poorly to say is I want to hear some complaining and I want to hear it in song, straight forward and to the point. Is that too much to ask?



Hi. Me again and I've had a full twenty-four hours since the previous thoughts. Of course, early this morning there was another tragedy when the news of the space shuttle exploding over Texas was blasted from my radio on the way into work. Do you think God gets tired of us, sighs, and then goes Old Testament to knock some sense into us? I feel sorry for the families of the crewmembers but does it make you wonder: an Israeli on board, debris scattered over the President's home state, an American disaster? No, I'm not cold hearted and I'm not a conspiracy theorist, I just think too much.

After I finished writing last night, I sat down to read my last two comics, and you know what? I found gold in the stack. All that crap I said about the lack of a return to political punk, it seems that it has found a home in the comics. It was a small book of comic strips written by David Rees. I have not laughed at such ballsy humor since Rich Mackin's corporate poetry. The title of the book is *Get Your War On* and it is a fucking masterpiece of political humor. Sarcasm does so well with current events. It's the same series of panels, of either people on the telephone or in the lunch room talking out of their asses about the possible war, or the anthrax mail, or the President, Operation Enduring Freedom, and anything else that has ridiculously taken place since the World Trade Center fell. The images are so Dick and Jane that you have to laugh, but when you think about it the realism – that you actually hear the same shit at your

job, on the radio, and TV – it is kind of scary.

During the War on Terror when we were regularly bombing Afghanistan, we were also sending food aid to the civilians. But, as Rees points out, the country was a minefield. One of the characters tells his friend, "Well, it turns the relief effort into a fun game for the Afghan people – a game called 'See if you have any fucking arms left to eat the food we dropped after you step on a landmine trying to retrieve it!'" His buddy replies back, "Right! Or maybe they could play 'See if, when you step on the landmine, the food package flies into your fucking decapitated head as it sails through the air!'" Rees puts his money where his mouth is and is donating all of the royalties from the book to the Mine Detection & Dog Center Team #5 in Western Afghanistan. Soft Skull Press is also kicking in a percentage of their proceeds. I really don't want to give anymore of the discussion away, so what I'm going to tell you is get your hands on this, it's really shockingly funny. I guess that the old punkers became comic writers, because this is what I thought I would be hearing on disc, but I'm instead reading it in print. So don't forget, it's called *GET YOUR WAR ON* by David Rees and it's put out by Soft Skull Press, 71 Bond Street Brooklyn, NY 11217, and you can contact them on the web at: www.softskull.com.

INBRED PICNIC #4

\$1 U.S.

This collection of shorts has some pretty funny and thought-provoking stories, but I think the first one, entitled "The Great Punk/Metal Crossover," is the big winner. The time is the mid-'80s and there is a social bonding in the men's bathroom at some local high school about the ideals of both punk and metal. The author places the two groups in almost a brotherhood of musical ideals. Weird, but let's go on. On the fourth page (seventh if you go by the number at the bottom of the page) in the panel "friendships were made" there is an artist's rendering of a kid with long hair and a pentagram shirt with his arm around a kid with spiked hair and a Black Flag shirt singing "V.A. rocks your liver." How fucking great is that? Oh man, is that sweet justice. This guy really fucking knows what he's doing. Using Verbal Abuse to relate punk to metal is like using apples to define gravity. You all remember V.A., the San Francisco band that put out one of the greatest raw punk albums of all time, just to follow it up with a lame metal album. Come on, grab your nuts and squeeze real hard and sing with me "V.A. rocks your liver." Ha, you remember now, doncha? Trust me, in a million years I would never have guessed I'd find this in the pages of a comic.

GARY HORNBERGER

This book is funny if you were a teen in the eighties because you can relate to almost all of the stories in there, but only if you were a teen during that time. If you like punk/metal stories, or stories about male bonding in the movie theater restroom (I'll leave that for you to read), then pilfer the paper because this one is ours. (Inbred Picnic, PO Box 163463, Sacramento, CA 95816)

PAUL THE PUNKER #7

\$1.00 U.S.

First, let's start with a physical description of Paul. He's your typical generic punker: mowhawk, dog bracelets, and combat boots. In #7 we find the story revolving around Paul's acid trip and the things the drug does to a hard-knock kid – basically all the bodily impair-

who, while digging for doughnuts in a dumpster, happens on this stars and stripes leotard with matching crown and bracelets. At first she tries to pawn them off, but then decides to keep them when the clerk offers only a dollar for them. She meets up with a friend and the two proceed to get drunk. While in her drunken stupor, she tries on the costume. What do you know, she can fly. So she dubs herself the smelly avenger and is off to save other homeless kids from the injustices of the police. Basically, we have a homeless wonder woman comic, which works for me, because now there's a need to know where did this costume come from and will she continue to help the needy. See, it works as well as any of Marvel's or DC's chick comics. To get this one write (Arriel c/o 3 Madison St., Cambridge, MA 02138)

SNAKE PIT #2

\$2 U.S.

Wow, I remember when I was young. This is the story of Ben, a guy who works at a record store in Texas and the daily events that happen to him over the course of several months. He starts with his travels as a roadie with a punk band. Let me tell you, it brought back a lot of fun memories. Band road trips are just plain fun; it's funny what we'll go through for music. A lot of road trips are the people you meet and Ben hooks up with a ton. After the road trip we return to the mundane life of work and living. It seems Ben smokes a lot of pot. Really, what this comic does is point out the highlights in life or what we perceive as highlights. There are many of them. The best part of this comic is when Ben stops drinking and then after a time decides to be



Gary Hornberger

ments that happen. I've read this hundreds of times and it seems that everytime it's the same, so let's move along to #8. Now, #8 is a little more interesting in the fact that the car ride turns out different than I expected. It seems that Paul is a wanderer and he's standing in the rain try to hitch a ride and he's contemplating that if no one picks him up, he's going across the freeway and rob a gas station. Well, lucky for Paul, a balding middle-aged man stops to offer a ride. Soon after introductions, the reader gets the feeling that the guy is gay, but it turns out he has a fetish for getting stomped on and for a \$100 Paul is more than willing to help. So what do I think of Paul the comic book? Well, it goes like this: if there are more road trip comics, we've got a winner but if I have to see another drug trip story, it better have a twist or it goes in the trash. To enjoy *Paul The Punker* for free, fly to Boston. Otherwise send a dollar to cover postage. (FNS Publishing PO Box 1299 Boston MA 02130; <FNSPublishing@msn.com>)

DIRTY GURL CHRONICLES #1

\$2 U.S.

By looks, I was afraid of this one. To tell the truth, I liked it. It's one of those David and Goliath stories. See, there's this homeless girl

THAT'S WHEN IT HAPPENED

\$3 U.S.

The idea is one script, seventeen interpretations, and it works oh so well. Here's the script: "It was huge! Like nothing we had ever seen before. And when it landed between us we were stunned into silence. George was the first to react. This could get messy! He stepped forward and we followed suit, descending upon the shimmering form. That's when it happened... a strange sound emanated from within our ranks and George staggered back...clutching his chest. In a flash it was gone never to be seen again." Now that you have the script, imagine it set to science fiction or a comical or even political cartoon. I love it. My favorite is the reason for the extinction of the dinosaurs. See, this space ship crashes and this T-rex goes over and starts tearing into it when suddenly the ship detonates its nuclear core and there is nothing left but bones. Try it with the script. Now that there's a visual. It's amazing that when we are vague with language how many different interpretations people or artists can give. This one can be had for a mere three dollars. Just send your funds to (Young American Comics, 412 1/2 University Ave. Suite #3, San Diego, CA 92103)

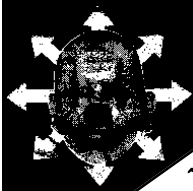
straight edge – you know, the X's on the hands. Then after a while he goes back to the bottle and the X's end up in his eyes. I also like it when he goes to parties. He depicts the other partygoers as monsters. So, I'm going to give this the presidential approval. I don't know if that does anything for Ben, but I did like his comic. (Young American Comics, 412 1/2 University Ave. Suite #3, San Diego, CA 92103, <www.youngamericancomics.com>)

TOWN:O/CRAZIES SCRAPBOOK

Let me just say the artwork these guys do is fucking great, the best that has crossed my hands. If I had original artwork by these guys I'd hang it in my house. Unfortunately, there is no price or contact on this one except for personal web sites – maybe because it is just a collection of loose art by these guys – but it's really worth having. So here's the info. Thien Pham <tindog@hotmail.com>, Wayshak <wayshak@scrapbookmanifesto.com>, Wahab <keepithiphop@hotmail.com>, Jerome <dudikoffl@hotmail.com>, Lee <www.nillo.com>

–Gary Hornberger





Rich Mackin

The Twisted Balloon



Why not take in huge amounts of personal information about total strangers who you share genetic makeup with?

How I Came to Be a Celebrated National Spoken Word Star Or I'm a Loser Bum Who Lives with My Parents

First of all, let me start off that Sean and Todd seem to decide Razorcake deadlines based on how unlikely I will be able to sit in one place and write a column in time. Twice so far this has involved a cross-country trip and me winding up writing the day before the deadline at Razorcake HQ. No small deal considering that I still sorta live in New England, and this is in Los Angeles.

This time last year I was gainfully employed in Boston, Massachusetts, where I had been living since age eighteen (having lived up until that point in Norwalk, CT.) But as the residue from September 11 kept building up and the economy got crappier, I was called into my boss's office. He explained to me that he had been given orders from his own boss that he needed to eliminate one person in every position, and he had to decide between three writers on my level. It came down to a choice to lay off one of two guys who worked their whole lives to get that job, both of whom had wives and kids and mortgages that relied on them, or me, the single, childless guy who got the job by having the right higher up come across my zines. The choice between thrusting a family into poverty and ruining a dream, or giving a guy enough severance pay to go on a cross-country tour was an easy one.

I spent the bulk of the year travelling and returning to Boston to work freelance at the same company, all the while sorting through my possessions, minimizing what I owned, knowing that I would find a new home as soon as I decided where to go. Boston had been get-

ting less appealing to me anyhow, so I knew I wanted to move OUT, just not where to move TO.

In July of 2002, I toured out to Portland, Oregon, and for enough reasons to write an essay just about that, I realized I had a destination. Come October I had exhausted my freelance connections, so the move needed to be soon. I had hooked up a free place to live in April for Oregon, but the question remained – what to do in the meantime?

Boston's housing situation

ling from coast to coast. It also means that, technically, I am homeless, which is amusing, since I have done workshops in which starry-eyed college students ask me how they can make a living doing what I do. Heh, when I know, I'll get back to you kids.

Of course, I am not really homeless as it is understood. I am surely not destitute or sleeping on the street, or being "crusty" or anything. In fact, were it not for all the tours and travelling, I am pretty much liv-

the word community is used a lot without really considering what it means. If you and I see the same band or attend the same rally, does that really make us a community? And I must say that it is unfortunate when the word is mostly used in context of "Is there really room for _____ in OUR community?" Is there room for someone waving an American Flag at the anti-war march? That guy said something I think is sexist at a human rights meeting... Is there any room for men like that in this community? Well, if not, what do we do with them? Is a community a group in which you only include people that think and act just like you do? Or is a community something made of people who interconnect and care for each other, problems and disagreements aside, and maybe even seek to help each other grow, instead of merely ostracize for negative actions...you know, like a family?

Yet, ironically, so many punks, anarchists, artists and activists are removed from their families.

I won't blame them all. For one thing, when I say "my parents" I mean my Mother, Cheryl Carman, and her husband, Roger Carman, a man she met when I was in high school. Mom's first husband, my father, is a man I have not spoken to for eight years or so, if you don't include three lines of forced small talk after eight drinks at a wedding. Surely, if someone in your family is abusive, or neglectful, or just plain bad, maybe they are a lost cause. Heck, sometimes they aren't, but kicking them out of your life for a few years might be what you both need.

But as a whole, I see many people I know living independent from their various uncles, cousins and grandmothers, save for an occasional card or end of year form letter. This is, of course, a shame.

I have recently crossed over the line from being a mindful meat eater to a full-on vegetarian, with future consideration of going vegan. As I contemplated a week of dinners



Rich Mackin with his cousin Bob and step dad, Roger (center)

sucks. Functionally, there are three times you can move and not have it cause you undo grief. Jan. 1, May-June, and Sept. 1. Fully a quarter of Boston's population moves on September 1, and as such, there are celebrated trash picks and related activity. I surely had no cause to stay the bulk of another year, so I confirmed with my housemates that I could leave in January with no problem. Come Christmas time, I officially moved out of Boston. Come April, I will live in Oregon. This means that right now, I don't really live anywhere. Which also means, to some extent, that I can call the whole nation my home, which to some extent, I am doing by travel-

ing with my mom.

That's right, I am thirty, unemployed, and live with my mom.

At the moment, I am still on a cross country tour, so I guess my life is cooler than what you would expect a grown man who lives at home to have. But still, when I return from this, I will spend a period in the house I grew up in, in the room I grew up with, eating dinner with my parents. I did this for a week before this trip, and I must say it was far more interesting and fun than I ever thought.

Having been involved with so many "communities" lately – zinesters, DIY folk, anarchists, punks, etc., I have been noticing that

Rich Mackin

with my parents, it hit me that the best way to deal with this was not to nag my mom about what I didn't eat, but to go shopping and make the damn meals myself. All the discussion in the world won't impart something onto someone the way that a well-cooked meal was. (And yes, even I was shocked at how good a cook I am with a nice big kitchen at my disposal.) Instead of trying to debate that you can eat a variety of delicious meat-free meals, I demonstrated. Saving my mom a few hours each night put her in a much better mood, which opened her up for discussion of my political reasons for my diet and other things. Soon, while we weren't exactly having me converting her to my mentalities, I had her seeking to learn about things most people merely scream at their parents about.

Of course, as I said, I am thirty. I also have been living away and alone for many years and have a resume of grown up things and have earned respect from a family that might have balked at equally valid points made by an eighteen-year-old. This is unfortunately a fact in many situations – to many people, the message is not as important as who the messenger is. I have gained some respect from my relatives when they realized that some of my ideals were not a fad. Not that one can't be wrong for ten years, but the idea is that duration means validity.

A major point in my struggle to earn my family's respect was the Bush inauguration. I was in DC protesting and my mother found that many of her coworkers were proud of me for doing so. The day after, my grandmother had been watching extensive news footage and said to my mother, "You know, for years, I have always thought that much of what Rich said and did was disrespectful and unpatriotic. But the more I look at the world around me, the more I realize just how right he has been all along." Thank you, George, for being the final straw in how stupid our society is to let my grandmother see that I might have a point here and there.

But anyway, I am in CT making vegetarian meals for my family, and they start noticing that they are enjoying the healthy food all the more, my mom actually lost five pounds after a lengthy weight battle, and both parents found themselves suddenly feeling much better all in all. This leads them to tell friends and coworkers about their new way of eating, which finds them suddenly realizing that they are knowledgeable in the reasons someone who likes eating meat would still take issue with the meat industry, why Equal Exchange fair trade organic shade grown coffee is better than Folgers, and even if they don't

act on it, how their consumption as Americans has effect on the environment and people of faraway lands. Wow, I save a few hours of housework and help mom lose a little weight, and suddenly I have my parents spreading the word for me.

Of course, my Uncle Gary still refuses to try any soy products. He has decided that they must suck. A standup comedian once said so.

Another thing I have realized that I like about spending time with my family is that now that I have not decided ahead of time that I will be bored and annoyed by my various relatives, how many of them have much more to say than I would assume. I guess this is why you talk to people instead of just walk

important to interact with the stupid and mean spirited, or at least people who have different opinions than you. One of the biggest problems I see in activist and other subcultures is a false sense of purity made by excluding others and limiting interactions to dealing only with those who are very like you. But when someone in such a case is forced to deal with the outside world, they shut down or freak out. Move outside your bubble and suddenly not everyone is concerned about your "safe space" and "comfort zones".

It's important to expand your horizons, whoever you are. I know many vegans who act as if the biggest problem in society is that there are vegetarians who refuse to

sometimes, you can best answer the question by finding out who you are NOT, which is why it is good to know more about the types of people you don't want to be.

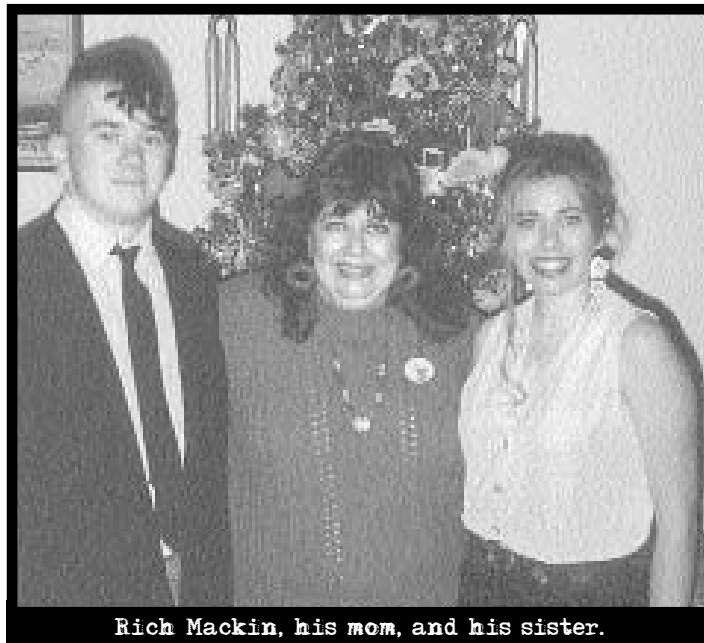
Consider the phrase "know thine enemy." If I wanted to know what makes a slightly racist cop tick, I normally would have no access to the mindset. That is, unless I am related to one of them. (Which I am. Yee ha.)

One thing about being able to pick your friends but not being able to pick your relatives is that you almost have to deal with these people who would otherwise be strangers. For instance, I already have many punks and zinesters who I know and who I can hang out with in my new home of Portland. But I also have two cousins living out there who, for all I know, have no ties to anything I am interested in politically, artistically or otherwise. But they do something with their time, and soon I will get to find out what it is. I already know that I understand much more about monogamous married suburban life and the details of choosing a number of careers via family ties that allow me to KNOW that I am not missing anything living the life I lead. (And I am speaking just for me, not implying my life is better for anyone but myself.)

It is interesting how so many politically minded people go out to the streets and protest or whatever in order to try and change the views and actions of strangers, but are uncomfortable with having discussions about the same things with family. Indeed, not all family will want to learn, and not learn about all things, and not learn from all relatives. But then again, no message is fully taken in by everyone it is put upon. At one strategy meeting for something years ago, it was asked how support could be increased, and people said that they would contact a large number of groups – other caches of activists. I suggested we each called up one relative a day (those who physically or emotionally could) and try to get people in our lives on our side. I was looked at like I was a madman.

But even the apolitical can gain to talk to the family. With "reality" shows dominating TV, it is clear that taking in huge amounts of personal information about total strangers is a popular mode of recreation. Why not take in huge amounts of personal information about total strangers who you share genetic makeup with? Just instead of watching a director's adaptation of them on a screen, you get to learn from their own words?

–Rich Mackin



Rich Mackin, his mom, and his sister.

around deciding what they must have to say. Best example is my Uncle Jimmy. He always starts stories the way that all old men do, and they always start like they'll be fifteen minute pointless rambles. But after two minutes of set up, which always turn out to be needed, he relates how being stationed in Boston in the Navy led him to steal a trolley car one night and go for a drunken 3 A.M. ride or relate insider info on nasty activity Shell Oil did in the early twentieth century. His wife, my Aunt Ruth, always has the most obscene jokes I have ever heard. When she asked me if I had heard of Eminem, it was because she thought it was amusing that someone is under fire for controversial lyrics when, "He raps so fast. I can never tell if he is being offensive." A bit more insight than I might expect for an eighty-eight year-old.

Now, not all my relatives are interesting or informative. Many of them are ignorant and mean. But, you know, sometimes I think it is

eliminate dairy, anarchist/ radicals who curse the dreaded liberals, and punks who live to do their hair and show off their record collection. And all these people can easily dig themselves into holes where all their conversations can be with people who will parrot their own thoughts. But a dinner with extended family might force you to really understand that some people want meat in EVERYTHING, are politically conservative (if not unadmittedly totalitarian) and could care less about how perfect your fin mohawk is or how many obscure 7"s you have, if they even know what a 7" is. Sure, it's annoying when your uncle or whoever asks why you dress/ act/ talk the way you do, especially when it's more of a veiled insult than an actual inquiry, but maybe your answer can be something you consider for yourself for personal growth. In order to explain who you are to someone else, you have to know who you are, and often, you don't really know until you actually have to answer the question. And

Rich Mackin



Rev. Nørb

Love, Nørb



Don't sass a man without pants!

Dear readers:

Like all Men of Science, or Hinkley, i had a vision – and in said vision, i glimpsed a sprawling, festive morass of an advice column, with scads of the kooky and curious applying for solutions to life's quandaries, both pertinent and impertinent. And then the next day i woke up at 12:15 in the afternoon with a bunch of change stuck to my ass (i don't understand it myself. First i thought it was a bunch of scabs, then, when i got up, i naturally started picking at them, and they all fell off and landed on the floor, and turned out to be money. Hmmm. Perhaps they WERE scabs, which, in a miracle of science so stupendous as to virtually require an act of faith to believe, mutated into cold hard cash upon their departure from my corpus delecti. I'M HEMMORRAGING MONEY! Much like the Milwaukee Bucks) and realized that in about ten minutes some guys in a van are going to be pounding on my door, demanding that i "ball the jack" and such, and that i really had nothing to write about and no time to write it. So, being of sound mind and body (in purely a de jour sense, i can assure you), i'm doing what any bewildered and frustrated advice columnist in my place would do: Writing this column, such as it is, in the nude. I dunno why. It just seems to make everything all better. BUT WAIT! I'VE PULLED THIS GAG BEFORE! Mere nudity won't cut it with an erudite bunch such as yourself! The ante must be upped! The pot sweetened! The plot thickened! Ha! One second for further deviance! Okay! Better! I am NOW writing this column nude EXCEPT FOR a fashionable silver jacket i got out of the Young Ladies department at Target™, and a pair of Newport™ cigarette sweatsocks (which have a bit of history behind them; consult your back issues of *Punk Planet* for further discourse). That's even funnier! And, curiously, I LOOK DAMN GOOD LIKE THIS! Wait! Wait! I must look even SILLIER! Okay! Now i have a pink plastic peace sign necklace on. And i've added a pair of yellow and blue rubber Elvis/Plastic Man™ type sunglasses as well! Fuck, i look absolutely stunning! You'd have to see it to believe it! Rrrrrrowr!!! WAIT! WAIT! THE CHAMPAGNE!!! Now i'm lurching around the house in a silver jacket, Newport™ sweatsocks, a pink plastic peace sign necklace, rubber Elvis sunglasses, and a \$3.49 bottle of Andre™ pink champagne! Why this is relevant to you i have no idea! BUT WAIT! IT GETS EVEN BETTER! MY HAIR IS DYED PURPLE! Or, more correctly, my hair WAS dyed purple. I dunno. I always wanted to have purple hair. I had it for about forty-eight hours (just long enough to enrage my ex-Marine father. Ain't it cool you can

be like thirty-seven and still piss the old man off by doing something totally gay like dyeing your hair purple? Think young, baby, think young!). Then the dye washed out. Now i look like Andy Warhol or someone. Ah, but did Warhol ever lounge around his house clad in nothing but sweatsocks and a silver jacket and a peace sign necklace and rubber sunglasses, swilling the cheapest of all possible champagnes at one o'clock in the afternoon, under the ludicrous pretext of writing an advice column??? WELL, FINE, THEN!!! PERHAPS HE DID!!! But did he do it while EATING JUSTICE LEAGUE™ FRUIT SNACKS??? Ha! Exactly! (although, shamefully, Warhol probably wouldn't've bombed out as severely as i did on the Justice League Trivia Puzzle™ on the back of the box... the Justice League Trivia Puzzle™ is in the form of six fill-in-the-blank questions, with the blank spaces numbered in such a fashion as to decode the JUSTICE LEAGUE'S SECRET MESSAGE™ when finished... as someone who owns the first hundred-plus issues of the original Justice League of America™ series [every issue from roughly 1960-1972], plus every issue since the 1987 relaunch, i've got to admit my change-scabbed ass blushed red with shame when i couldn't figure out that the answer to "Justice League's orbiting space station is the _____" wasn't "S-A-T-T-E-L-L-I-T-E" [it's "WATCHTOWER"]... i'm like "god dammit, i can't believe that's how you really spell 'satellite'!" ...i eventually had to peek at the answers, when my secret message began to look like it was written in Welsh or something... then i tried to be real impish and naughty by answering the question "Wonder Woman's strengths are flight, deflector bracelets and _____" with "PUSSY," but, since the real answer turned out to be "LASSO," both words had enough letters in common that my Secret Message wasn't messed up enough to be funny. LOOK, WHERE ARE YOU GOING WITH THIS??? Cripes, let's cut the buffoonery, and get to this issue's letters. Our first mailbag entry comes from Rev. Nørb, of Green Bay, Wisconsin, who writes:

Dear Rev. Nørb,
I seem to be having problems convincing members of the opposite sex to take off their clothes and roll around the kitchen floor with me. My minister seems to think that a joke involving both old-school punk and medieval Europe would help matters along somewhat. Can you help me?

Your Biggest Fan,
Rev. Nørb
Green Bay, WI

Dear Rev. Nørb:

Sure! Try this one out on the fillies: "What did the Undertones say when William the Conqueror's homeland fell to the Franks? 'There goes Normandy!'" The ladies'll be picking quarters off your ass in no time!

Love,
Nørb

The second letter is also from Rev. Nørb, from Green Bay, Wisconsin, who writes:

Dear Rev. Nørb:

Why don't women basketball players shave their heads, or get crewcuts, or something? Why do they always wear their hair pulled back in a stupid-looking and surely-not-particularly-functional ponytail? Are they afraid that if they shave their heads, we'll think they're all lesbians? I mean, don't we think that already?

Your Biggest Fan,
Rev. Nørb
Green Bay, WI

Dear Nørb:

Put some fucking pants on.

Love,
Nørb

Our third letter is also from Rev. Nørb, who writes:

Dear Rev. Nørb:

In a recent *Razorcake*™ review of the Fragments/Modern Machines split CD, staffer "Aphid Peewit," a Minnesota resident, speaks highly of the Minnesota Twins baseball club, at the expense of the Milwaukee Brewers organization, and its former owner, Commissioner Bud Selig. I've had problems sleeping ever since. Can you help?

If i had known i was gonna be sitting around on my naked heinie all day, i wouldn't've eaten all that bar pizza last night,

Rev. Nørb
Green Bay, WI

Dear Nørb:

Excellent letter. I, too, reacted with great consternation at Mr. Peewit's remarks; and, though this is hardly the ideal time and place for a long-winded (and serious) dissertation on professional sports, i don't have any amusing anecdotes about German hookers or masturbation to relate this issue, so, you know, why the fuck not. Therefore: Peewit, you ignorant slut: Your

Rev. Nørb

unconscionable propagation of the popular "Selig = Satan" myth vis-a-vis the attempted extermination of the Minnesota Twins baseball team might play well in the lower forty-eight states, but the sad fact of the matter is, AS ANY BASEBALL FAN IN THE UPPER MIDWEST WOULD KNOW, the MINNESOTA TWINS ABSOLUTELY POSITIVELY DESERVED TO BE SLATED FOR CONTRACTION. Absolutely. Positively. Without question. For those not In The Know (or, more likely, not In The Care), i'll set the stage here: Commissioner of Baseball Bud Selig™ was the former owner of the Milwaukee Brewers. The team is still owned by his family, which more or less kinda means it's still owned by him, even though he's the Commissioner, ergo prohibited from officially owning the team. Point ceded. The Seligs, as fate would have it, have essentially run the team into the ground. The Brewers haven't had a winning season in over ten years, haven't been to the playoffs in two decades, never won a World Series, and very likely will never even break .500 again, ever. Point ceded. The increasingly unpopular Selig family have almost become poster children for how NOT to run a baseball team (their sage embracement of the Rally Rabbit/Rhythm Chicken™ notwithstanding [and, since i broached the subject, and still have some champagne left, i'll relate an tangential anecdote here: As you may or may not know, a band i am in once recorded a song titled "I Want to Get to Third Base with You." As you may further know or not know, it has become customary in many baseball stadia for the PA dude to play snippets of certain songs at various appropriate moments of games – f'r instance, should a home-team batter be walked by an opposing pitcher, the PA guy is likely to play "I'm Walkin'" by Fats Domino, or "Walk This Way" by Aerosmith, or "These Boots Are Made for Walkin" by Nancy Sinatra, or similar cornball hijinx. Now, in my travels, it has been made quite apparent to me that NO stadium anywhere ever has anything to play when the home team hits a triple. Needless to say, this is where i come in: Brilliantly putting two and two together and coming up with three, i decide that it only makes sense to volunteer Boris The Sprinkler's touching power ballad, "I Want to Get to Third Base with You," as PA fodder for the rare occasion a Brewer actually raps out a three-bagger, and i ask The Rhyth if he'll lay a copy of the CD containing said tune on the PA guy, in hopes that my thinly veiled Nervous Eaters ripoff will have the "honor" of being played at Brewers games {like Boris don't have enough credibility prob-



Bl each: \$5
 Purple Hair Dye: \$5
 Rubber Elvis
 Sunglasses: \$1.49
 Plastic Peace Sign
 Necklace: 99¢
 Junior Misses' Silver
 Jacket: \$12.99
 Justice League Fruit
 Snacks: \$1.79
 Champagne: \$3.49
 Pants: n/a
 Not rooting for the
 baseball team that
 sells something called
 the "Gelati-Da" at
 their stadium:
 Priceless

lems as it is}. So, anyway, Rhyth gives the guy a copy of the CD, waggles a Ruckus Log here and there for effect, and the PA guy – who plays crap like the fucking Promise Ring and shit during games – tells him "nah, we don't want any of that punk rock stuff here." Like, YEAH, WE WOULDN'T WANT TO DO ANYTHING THAT MIGHT ALIENATE THE FANS, WOULD WE??? {I guess maybe that's only funny if you're a Brewers fan. Actually, it's more sad than anything}); their minor league system is a joke, the quality players they let get away is astonishing (Vi-a, Cirillo, Matheny, i guess Jose Valentin if you believe in that sort of thing, Burnitz i suppose is the exception that proves the rule), GMs and coaches are rotated like envelope stock, there is NO HOPE and none forthcoming, the fans are hostile and dwindling – all is, essentially, lost. Point ceded. Bud Selig also got Milwaukee area taxpayers to foot the bill for a snazzy new stadium, which people wound up getting killed trying to complete, then when they built it the roof leaked, then when they had the All-Star Game there it wound up ending in a tie. In short, everything Bud Selig touches turns to shit. Point ceded. The Minnesota Twins, however, have built a playoff team thru players drafted and brought up thru their minor league system, won a World Series in each of the last two decades, and have become a shimmery-like example of how TO run a baseball team on a limited payroll. Point ceded. Where this all begins to devolve into tabloid-styled hoo-hah ("hoosh-wash," if you will) is on the matter of contraction: Major League Baseball is currently stretched beyond a sustainable capacity, like Suzi Quatro getting fisted by Warren Sapp. Too many teams, not enough fans. There had been talk over the last couple years of getting rid of a few teams, among them – you guessed it – the Minnesota Twins. Here's where i got the beef: To anyone who doesn't live within a few hundred miles of Minneapolis, the notion of contracting the Twins seems as unwarranted and vile as the Minnesotans continually claim it is. I mean, here's the Brewers – worst team in the league, completely mismanaged, total jokes – and here's the Twins – playoff team, well-managed, great history – and because Milwaukee got conned into buying their team a new stadium and Minnesota didn't, it's the Twins who have their collective necks on the collective chopping block. IT SEEMS SO SEEMINGLY WRONG, DOESN'T IT??? Further adding to the negative aura of Osama Bud Selig is the notion that he wants the Twins axed in hopes that baseball fans in Minnesota will be then forced to turn to... you guessed it... Brewers games for ball-diamond succor. I mean, Bud Selig couldn't play the role of dastardly Jew any better if it was assigned to him

Rev. Norb

b y the WWE™, right? Well, HA! I refute these allegations! If Bud Selig only did ONE thing right in his life – which is actually pretty likely – that one thing of rightness was to propose the elimination of the Minnesota Twins!!! AND HERE IS THE ONE FACT THAT NO ONE EVER MENTIONS, WHICH IS THE ROOT OF MY ANGUISH: WHEN THE IDEA OF CONTRACTING THE TWINS FIRST CAME UP, THERE WAS NOBODY GOING TO THEIR FUCKING GAMES. NOBODY. I have pictures to prove it, except i can't find the god damn things. I went to a Twins game in 1998 and there couldn't've been more than one or two thousand people there. Seriously. Seriously. Dead serious seriously. Walking into the Metrodome was like walking into a library. People were speaking in whispers, so as not to distract the players. It was absolutely the most surreal thing i've ever seen in my life. I brought the pictures to work, showed my boss, showed my dad, it was absolutely amazing. 50,000 empty blue seats. I mean, i can not possibly overstate how empty the Humptydome was. Perhaps i'll just repeat myself over and over again! EMPTY! EMPTY! EMPTY! Nobody there! NOBODY!!! The place was so empty that i, Rev. Nørb, Earth's Greatest Rocker AND Earth's Worst Athlete GOT A BALL. Now, you're saying, hmmm, Rev. Nørb, surely you exaggerate for effect: Were the attendance as legitimately as dire at a Twins games as you claim it to be, surely we would have heard of such a phenomenon thru the media. After all, the tiny crowds of 3,000-4,000 for Expos games at Park Olympique in Montreal have been well documented, as have the similarly tiny crowds in Florida, etc... and, while, yes, it was a well-known fact that attendance at Twins games was "poor," it surely could not have been poor on the order of magnitude which you describe, or we'd know about it. Ja? Nein. Nein, nein, nein! Homicide, even! The reason NO ONE KNOWS how absolutely minuscule the crowds at Twins games really were like five years ago is because, well, first off, there weren't many witnesses, but, more importantly, attendance at baseball games isn't calculated like it is at football games: For football games, attendance is, amazingly, how many people actually attended. That is to say, how many tickets were used. For baseball games, it's just how many tickets were SOLD. At the Twins game in question, the attendance was given as something like ten or eleven thousand. It was, cross my fucking heart, maybe a TENTH of that. Now, ten or eleven thousand people is still shitty, as far as attendance at a professional sporting event goes, but it doesn't quite bear the same tragic heft as, say ONE or TWO thousand people does – which, of course, begs the question of who was buying those tickets, then? The answer being, of course, "the suits." Minneapolis has a corporate culture to it that is – thankfully! – pretty much absent in Wisconsin. The Twins were able to report attendances of "respectably horrible" figures – ten or eleven thousand – in lieu of SHOCKINGLY AMAZINGLY HORRIBLE figure like one or two thousand because BIG MINNEAPOLIS CORPORATIONS

BOUGHT ABOUT TEN THOUSAND SEASON TICKETS THAT THEY COULDN'T EVEN GIVE AWAY. Which is the heart of my beef (i know, i know, i keep saying that, but mine is a beef with many hearts): MINNESOTA SPORTS FANS SUCK SHIT AND ARE A BUNCH OF FAGS, PERIOD. They have absolutely no interest in their teams until/unless said teams are in playoff contention. Now, sure, there's always gonna be more fans in the stands when a team is doing well; that's not so much about the fickleness of fans as it is about the shittiness of the product on the field. However, i will say, with all the misplaced civic pride i can muster, that at least in Wisconsin when people say that "attendance is down," there's still at least, you know, 15,000 real live human people who bother to show up and root root root for the home team – not two thousand humans and 10,000 corporate phantoms. Of course, now that the Twins are doing well again, their games are (more or less) packed. At the Brewers/Twins game i went to in Milwaukee last summer, Twins fans outnumbered Brewers fans two to one – since they're winning, Twins fans will now, apparently, drive 300 miles for a game – WHEN THEY COULDN'T EVEN DRIVE DOWNTOWN FOR A GAME FIVE YEARS AGO. And, again, the truly rankling thing is that NO ONE KNOWS how deserving the Twins were of contraction. THE SAD FACT OF THE MATTER IS that Minnesota doesn't DESERVE a quality franchise like the Twins. Similarly, Milwaukee doesn't deserve a shitty franchise like the Brewers. WHAT I WOULD DO IF I WERE BUD SELIG: 1. Change my name to "Bruno Deluxe" 2. Contract the following underperforming franchises: Montreal Expos, Florida Marlins, Tampa Bay Devil Rays, Milwaukee Brewers; 3. Move Minnesota Twins to Milwaukee; 4. Rename Minnesota Twins "Milwaukee Brewers"; 5. Move franchise to NL Central, preserving Brewers-Cubs rivalry; 6. Shoot myself. Thanks for listening.

Love
Nørb

Our final letter actually comes from someone who is not Rev. Nørb of Green Bay WI, who is, FYI, still sitting around drinking champagne without pants on.

Dear Rev. Nørb,
I have a two part question. First part: If you, Rev. Nørb, are the world's greatest rocker, who in the hell is the world's greatest roller? Second part: I recently quit my job and like a lot of middle age post highschool graduates of the class of 1985, don't know what the hell it is I want to be when I grow up. I've thought about teaching, but I wondered what you think. I can't be a bartender the rest of my life, now can I?

Signed
Some Mysterious Dude Who Is Not Me Who Did Not Sign His Name

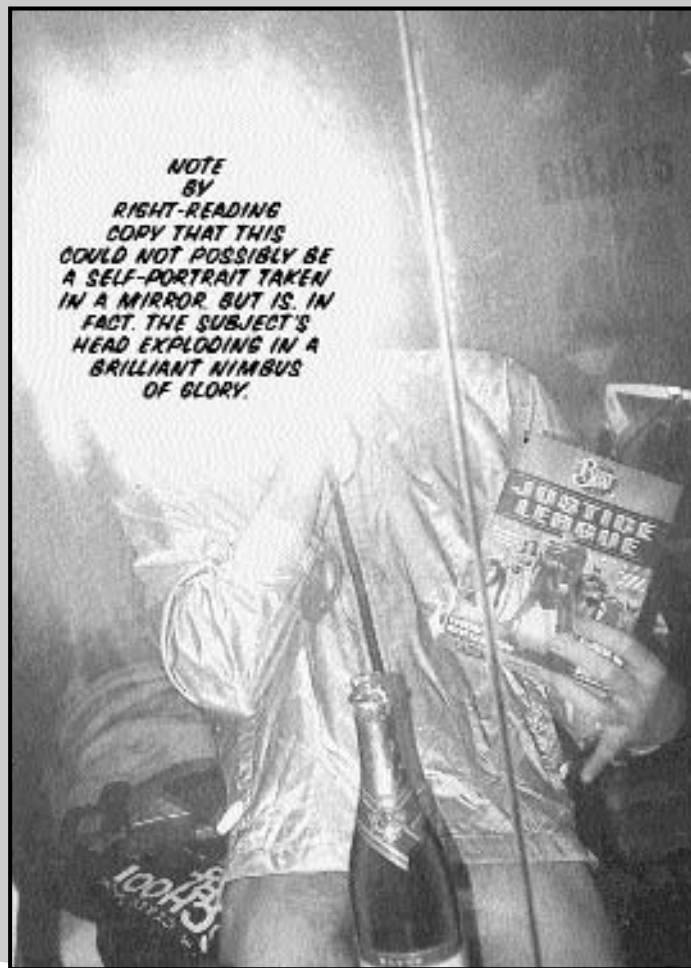
Dear MD:

This is actually a damn good question. EARTH'S GREATEST ROLLER! Think about it: the concept veritably boggles the mind. I'm inclined to say Derek... but maybe it's Woody? Damn! I didn't realize how hard it would be to answer questions that weren't actually written by myself. What has man wrought? Now i'm sitting at my computer in a silver jacket, no pants, wang flopping around, unsheathed anus despoiling all it comes in contact with, pink plastic peace sign necklace waggling to and fro, Newport™ sweat-socks hanging limply across my ankles, rubber Elvis sunglasses confusing me to no end, pink champagne almost depleted, Justice League™ fruit snack wrappers littering the floor... AND, TO TOP IT ALL OFF, I'M LISTENING TO MY BAY CITY ROLLERS CD! Surely i have evolved into something alternately more and less than human... and yet... yet ...yet, even from the lofty perch of my mutated state, the answer to your question seems baffling. I mean, surely Earth's Greatest Roller MUST be a member of the Bay City Rollers – i mean, "Saturday Night" is a damn fine song, and, in a supreme moment of who'd-a-thunk-it-ness, the keyboard part to "Take It to the Hole" off of Rev. Nørb's tell-it-like-it-is *Earth's Greatest Rocker!* CD is clearly derived from the guitar riff to the Bay City Rollers' "Money Honey" (which is more or less their only other really good song) – but, yet, i find no quick answers to my inquiry as to who – or whom – was the greatest among them. Derek? Woody? Les? Eric? Alan? Whom among them was truly the Alpha Roller, the cock of the walk, the Roller To End All Rollers? Perhaps the Bay City Rollers stand indivisible, with liberty and tartan plaid for all, and exist only as a unit, unable to be scrutinized on the individuated level? Hmmm. Yeah. That's got to be right. I mean, there never were any Bay City Rollers solo albums, were there? I mean, if there were, they would, like, have to look like the Kiss™ solo albums, but with plaid backgrounds instead of black... but there aren't. Are there? No... no... the Bay City Rollers have far too much integrity (Supporting evidence: Their existence was first made known to American youths via teaser ads placed on the backs of wrappers for, of all things, Wacky Packages™ stickers. "THEY'RE COMING! THE BAY CITY ROLLERS!") I thought they were advertising a local roller derby team or something) to be played against themselves this way... the Bay City Rollers are COLLECTIVELY Earth's Greatest Rollers, but yet are not ranked in singles competition, making this discourse much more thorny. Hmmm. Well, there WAS Linda Ronstadt; she had that album cover photo where she was wearing the blue satin jacket and lacing up roller skates... HEY! WAIT A MINUTE! I just realized that i'm thirty-seven years old, and have NEVER had sex with a girl in a satin jacket and roller skates. Well, what the fuck?! You would think that SOMEWHERE in America, there's a girl sitting at a computer typing up a column wearing nothing BUT a satin jacket and roller skates, thinking that her life's been nothing but a waste up to this point because she hasn't gotten it on with a guy in rubber Elvis

REV. NØRB

glasses, a girls' silver jacket, pink peace sign necklace, sweatsocks, and whitish-purple hair. I guess it's all about distro, man! Yeah... Linda Ronstadt. No, wait... did Linda Ronstadt really roll any harder than, say, Shaun Cassidy or Leif Garrett? And what about Davy Jones? Davy Jones is probably the King Daddy Prime Roller of 'em all! Davy Jones! No, wait... wouldn't Davy Jones just be a TV version of Paul McCartney? Paul McCartney, i'll say Paul McCartney... no, wait, i just remembered, when i was nine years old, i made my first guitar out of a two-by-four and a cigar box, and strung it with rubber bands, and i used to play along to that part of the song "Venus & Mars Rock Show" by Paul McCartney & Wings that goes "in my green metal suit i'm preparing to shoot down the city... and the ring at the end of my nose makes me look rawther pretty" because, for whatever reason, my rubber bands were in tune with the bass... so that doesn't ROLL, then, that would ROCK. It's "Venus & Mars ROCK Show," not "Venus & Mars ROLL Show." Rock ich nicht Roll. Therefore, it can't be Paul McCartney (what did Paul McCartney say when he took acid at the discount chain store? "I Am the Wal-Mart™!") (further, did you hear about the Beatles song off of *Revolver* that Peter Fonda inspired when he took acid in Wisconsin? "Cheesehead, Cheesehead")... so back to Davy Jones? No, wait... isn't it weird how everyone talks about the Monkees being a TV ripoff of *Hard Day's Night*, when, if you think about it, the Monkees were actually REAL-**LY** ripping off Elvis' sixties movie career? **ELVIS! ELVIS IS THE ANSWER! ELVIS PRESLEY IS EARTH'S GREATEST ROLLER!** I state for the record that, emphatically, Elvis Presley is my final answer as to whom Earth's Greatest Roller is!!! Don't sass a man without pants! From this i shall not waver, quaver, quiver or shirk!!! I am indefatigable! Steadfast! Resolute! Actually, no, i take it back: An answer of "Elvis" would not be offensive enough to Minnesota sports fans; Earth's Greatest Roller is... (ruckus log activated drumroll, please)... #74, defensive tackle **DAVE ROLLER OF THE GREEN BAY PACKERS!!!** Seriously, seriously... Dave Roller ruled! He played for the Packers for a few years in the '70s, back when their defensive line (Mike McCoy, Dave Roller... i can't remember the other two guys... but it was back when teams still let caucasians play the front four [which brings up a peculiar issue of race and sports: Why is it that the offensive line in football these days is always white guys and the defensive line is always black guys??? It's like they just arbitrarily chose to assign people tasks based on race, to foment racial hatred and theoretically more inspired performance. If anyone has a legitimate theory on this, i'm all ears) earned the nickname "Gang Green" (i had a big

Gang Green button from ShopKo™ when i was a kid, but, after the Boston punk band of the same name emerged with their killer tracks on the *Boston Not L.A.* compilation [still the h/c comp by which all others shall be judged!], i sent my button to Mike Dean, their drummer. I'm sure he was fucking thrilled). Dave Roller used to do this goofy dance whenever he got a sack, back before that type of thing became obnoxiously commonplace. Bearing in mind that the guy was a huge white oaf from the South, please visualize the following: Huge redneck dude in football regalia looms joyously over crushed quarterback, then



points both index fingers skyward and starts doing this wonderfully inane hop-jig-run-in-place thing as the crowd goes wild. You'd actually have to see the footwork to really appreciate it, it was absolutely the most retarded/great celebration type move ever, probably because it was so devoid of funkiness. Dave Roller's dance was so superb that i actually wrote a song called "Do the Dave Roller," which my band's guitar player refused to play (and refuses to this day), the lyrics of which are as follows: There was a man who played/ for the Green Bay Pack/he used to do a little day-ance/ every time he

got a sack/do the do the do the do the do the OW! do the do the Dave Roller! Just a big white boy/but he could give all hell/he couldn'ta been too good though/cause we got him from the CFL/do the do the do the do the do the OW! do the do the Dave Roller! Dothedothenow DothedothebabyDothedothenowDothedothebabyDothedothenowDothedothebabyDothedothenowDothedothebabydo the do the do the do the OW! do the do the Dave Roller! He used to do commercials/for Putzer's Big & Tall (a local big men's clothing store... the TV spots would feature

some properly effete announcer politely saying things like "all in-stock men's suits marked down—", then Dave Roller would be running around behind him, waving his hands in the air screaming "MARK IT DOWN, BO-AH! MARK IT DOWN!" in the guy's face) he'd holler "whatza matter bo-ah? You standin' in a hole?!" /do the do the do the do the do the OW! do the do the Dave Roller! ya sorta stand right there/point your fingers in space/look down at your partner/and kinda run in place/do the do the do the do the OW! do the do the Dave Roller! (key change) well if you don't like dancing/then never fear/ Dave only did his dance/'bout two times a year/do the do the do the do the OW! do the do the Dave Roller! (etc.) ...okay, granted, he was no Alan Page or Carl Eller... but, god dammit, those two sacks a year were the goin' most!!! Anyway, yes, that is my final answer. Dave Roller is Earth's **GREATEST** Roller!

As to the second part of your question, seeing as you graduated high school in the '80s as i did, therefore essentially grew up being told "there are no jobs for you, there never will be any jobs for you, get some insipid menial gig somewhere, expect to be stuck at it for the rest of your life, grind out a measly existence and be thankful you got that much", i would say that yes, you can

AND WILL likely be a bartender for the rest of your life (i can personally assure you of one thing: job security!). However, if that doesn't pan out, my only other suggestion is Commissioner of Baseball.

Love,
Norb

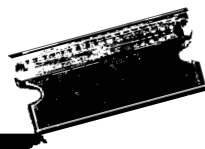
(Questions and pants can be sent to me at nrevorb@greenbaynet.com, or PO Box 1173, Green Bay, WI 54305 USA Earth. I

Rev. Norb



Designated Dale

I'm Against It



CDs are over-priced.

Q: How much did these shyster labels and chains bend us consumers over for?

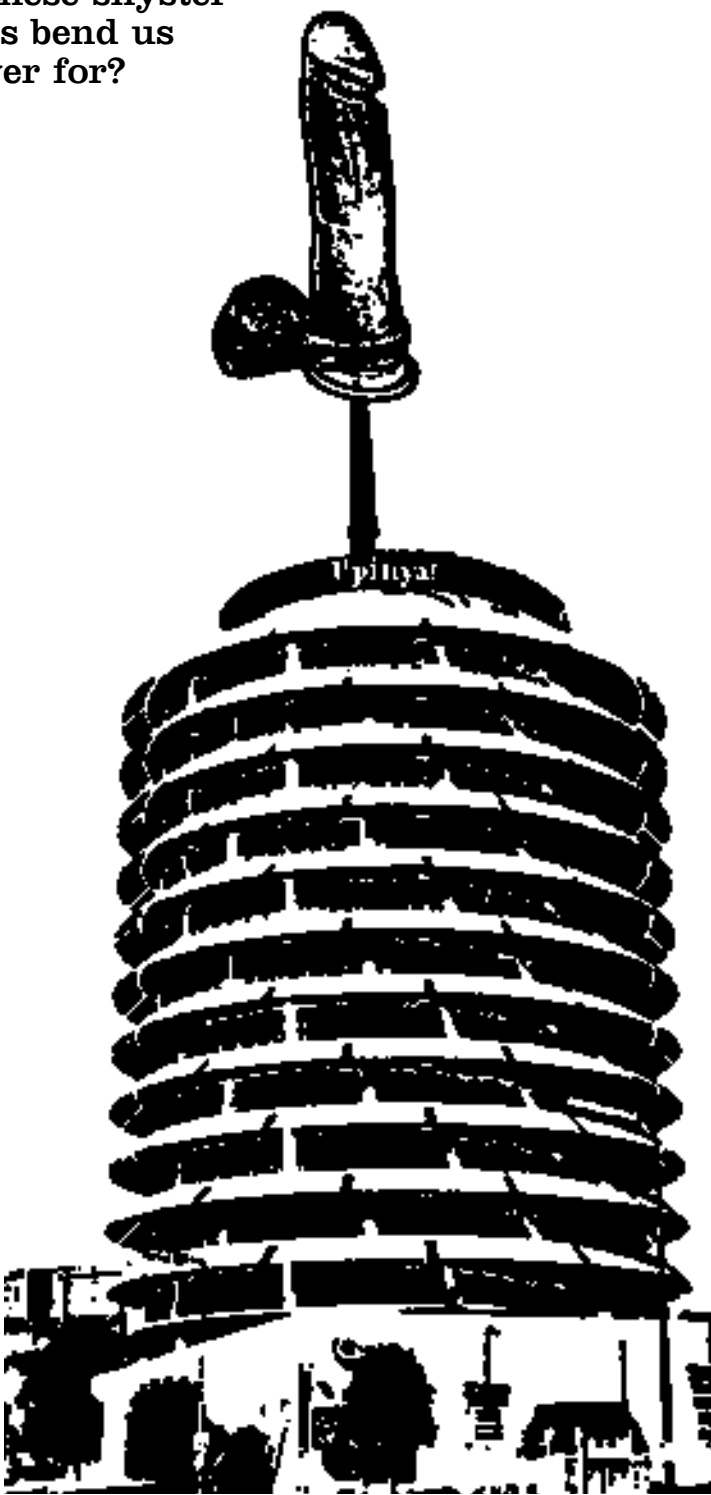
A: About 500 million dollars.

Designated Dale

As with most ravenous hoarders of the tuneage, I'm sure most of you Razorcakers reading this here column have heard or spoken about all the hoopla going on lately pertaining to the recent sales decline of compact discs. The reason music consumers most commonly agree on is the most obvious one – an uprising trend of burning CD copies at home. But then there's those who say the sales are down due to our current economy, blah blah blah, your Momma, yadda yadda yadda, the dog ate my homework, and so on. It seems almost everyone has a different reason on the matter, ya know?

I always thought CDs were over-priced rounds of plastic to begin with, but a newly-discovered, naughty twist to pricing the music medium has been brought to the consumer's attention on a major scale earlier this year. According to the prosecution, it seems there has been quite a bit of price fixing going on between record labels and music retailers. The attorney generals of forty-one states, including your pal Dale's state of California, filed suit in August of 2000, alleging that some particular labels and store chains violated antitrust laws when they overcharged consumers. How much did these shyster labels/chains bend us consumers over for? About 500 million dollars.

The labels, you ask? Capitol Records, Inc., EMI Music Distribution, Virgin Records America, Inc., and Priority Records LLC; Time Warner, Inc., Warner-Elektra-Atlantic Corp., WEA, Inc., Warner Music Group, Inc., Warner Bros. Records, Inc., Atlantic Recording Corporation, Elektra Entertainment Group, Inc., and Rhino Entertainment Company; Universal Music & Video Distribution Corporation,



Universal Music Group, Inc., and UMG Recordings, Inc.; Bertelsmann Music Group, Inc. and BMG Music; and Sony Music Entertainment Inc. And just which record store chains were fingered? MTS, Inc., Tower Records, Musicland Stores Corp., and Trans World Entertainment Corp. This case spearheads from a practice record labels used to subsidize the cost of promoting a CD for retailers that agreed to sell it for a "minimum advertised price" set by the labels, aka, Mr. Greedypants price-fixing. The labels argued that they used the program to "help record stores survive price wars against competitors that were drastically undercutting CD prices."

Sure, like these labels give a fat rat's ass what the competition does to each other once the finished product leaves their hands. These are the same labels who were crying like lil' bitches when all that Napster heat was going down. Look, please don't blow smoke up the chimney's ass, okay? Because *this* chimney doesn't like it. In the end, the labels and retail chains agreed to settle the case in order to avoid more costly litigation, although neither admitted any wrongdoing. "A settlement?" you say, as your cat ears perk up. "What's the deal with this settlement?" Being that these labels and chains agreed to settle with the prosecution basically means is that anyone who purchased a vinyl record, cassette, or compact disc from a retail store between January 1st, 1995, and December 22nd, 2000, is eligible for a refund. And even though it was just the attorney generals in forty-one states that went to court to win this settlement, all fifty states in the U.S. are eligible. What really amazes me about all this is that at the beginning of January of this year, only about 30,000 people had filed claims to receive up to \$20.00 each in refunds. Then, only three weeks

later, the number of filed claims jumped up to about one million, thanks to radio commercials, various news stories about the settlement, and a website that consumers can use to file their own personal claim online to grab their share of the \$67.4 million payout: <www.musiccdsettlement.com>.

The cash total of \$67.4 million was set aside for customer refunds, but the labels and stores also agreed to provide about \$75.7 million worth of free music CDs to schools, libraries and charities. You know something, \$75.7 million of free music CDs to donate is fine, as long as both the labels and chains take it in *their* asses like us consumers, meaning NO WRITING IT OFF ON THEIR TAXES. Strictly an out-of-pocket donation. And call me a chin-strapped retard, but how does the cash settlement and these “donated” CDs balance out to the 500 million that these snakes yonked to begin with? Let’s keep in mind that the estimated 500 mil is what they *supposedly* walked away with over the above-mentioned 1995-2000 time period. Quite frankly, I’d like to know the *actual* total that was scammed due to this price-fixing scheme, not just that five-year period. I’m certain that it’d make me ill. Now, anyone who bought a CD, cassette, or record during the specified time period can file a claim, but don’t go getting greedy as these case defendants, cocko, ‘cause you ain’t gonna get rich quick with this settlement. Why? Because even if you bought more than one CD, each customer is limited to only one claim, meaning *one settlement payment per person*, period. Kinda reeks of shit, don’t it, ‘cause I know that a lot of you here (as well as me) had purchased more than one CD/cassette/LP in that 1995-2000 time period...*waaay* more than one, I could safely bet.

And if this don’t stink of freshly-laid feces enough, hold yer nose, my friend, ‘cause it gets even *more* foul. There’s the standing agreement that if too many people apply for a piece of the settlement refund, the judge and parties involved in the case may drop the idea of a direct refund and distribute the settlement in some other way. What this breaks down to is that the amount you will be paid will be based on the total number of claims filed (up to a maximum of \$20.00 per claimant). Now, if the number of claims filed result in refund awards of less than \$5.00 per claimant, there will be *no* cash distribution to individual consumers. Which means if more than about 8.8 million people apply, “You’ll get nothing and like it!”

What will happen to all of that money if that happens, you ask? No worries – they already have it figured out for you. Get this load of crap: “The cash portion of the settlement shall be distributed to not-for-profit, charitable, governmental or public entities in each state, territory and possession, to be used for music-related purposes or programs.” Well, that’s just peachy fucking keen, ain’t it? ‘Cause you sure as hell know that everyone and their imaginary friend are going to be filing for a piece of the settlement, and rightly so, being that almost everyone I know (and don’t) buys music, right? These shitasses take it upon themselves to grift in the area of 500 million and *then* make a deal with the courts, after getting caught with their hands in their pants, to make good on 143.1 mil?

I’m no fucking mathmagician, but that’s not even *half* of what was pocketed on the sly to begin with. Those who were busted should make good on *all* of it, and *then* some. Why? Stop and think about it – just how much interest do you think 500 million clams generates? A pretty penny, you can bet. Then take into consideration that they’ve been pulling this for only (supposedly) five years? Adds up, don’t it? But getting back to your anticipated “refund”? Get ready to bend over. As our dear friend Clint Torrez would exclaim, “You get the big goose egg!” I can’t help but wonder how this recent “settlement” will influence the attitude of the average and not-so-average music consumer. I’ll say this – it adds nothing but more of the distrust I have with these types of major labels. I’d be a lying mofo if I said that I don’t burn CDs myself, because I do. And not that it’s any of *your* or *anyone else’s* business, but my burning CDs doesn’t even make up a small percentage of my collection. With the technology that home computers have introduced these last years, the recording industry is in a tizzy that they won’t be able gouge customers \$15-\$20 for a CD.

Then there’s the cries of Joe Blow screaming, “Who do these bands think they are, charging so damn much for their CDs!?” Don’t even start to blame the artists or bands that are signed on these labels, as it’s common knowledge that these folks make next to shit on their recordings, all depending on who they’ve signed with. Touring (when done within a band’s means) and merchandise is a band’s livelihood, in most cases. Take into consideration that when you’re signed onto most majors, the money made on each CD goes

back to the label and their associates, including the management and legal reps, not to mention recouping the money used to *make* the album *and* extravagant touring costs. The pie graph of money-per-unit-sold turns into a circle of tiny slivers very quickly. Thus, the double-edged sword of getting picked up by a major. Makes you think if you were in a band facing this situation, don’t it? If the *consumers* can’t even distinguish trust with these labels, how in the world could your *band* when approached with the opportunity to sign? This makes me appreciate the Mom & Pop labels all that much more.

I suppose some of the bands I’ve loved for years have always had superior management to look after them, sticking with ‘em even once they signed. It just makes me sick that there’s a wagon train of supernatural talent touring around in vans to make ends meet that will probably never get their just due. So the music industry goes, but there are always those bands who slip through the doors, a right place/right time situation that gives me some temporary faith in this sleazy system that’s far more dirty than the film industry itself. I’m not saying that getting picked up by a major is bad – some of my most-loved bands of punk’s past debuted on majors. But that

seemed to be at a time when a risk taker, such as Sire Record’s Seymour Stein, had a vision that this new wave of rock and roll was going to be the record industry’s new way of business. Thank god for his vision, or the world may have never got a chance to hear or see bands like the Ramones or The Replacements (but remembering the ‘Mats had four *excellent* prior releases on TwinTone). Even though it didn’t take off into the stratosphere back in the late ‘70s, punk was still a force to reckon with, even to this day with the market still trying to siphon off its tit and failing miserably with their catalogs of watered-down, shit bands.

So, *my* share of that settlement refund? I honestly think it’ll never come to be, but if that money ever *does* cross my hands, you can be damned sure that bands like Hollywood Hate, The Candy Snatchers, Throw Rag, or Blazing Haley won’t play their next gigs thirsty if I’m there in attendance. Until then, I’ll just keep watching what’s going on around me with a close eye. Not paranoid. Just close. I suggest we all do.

I’m Against It
–Designated Dale
<DesignatedDale@aol.com>



Nardwuar

Who Are You?



NARDWUAR THE HUMAN SERVIETTE VERSUS GWAR!

Nardwuar: Were you a spokesman for Circuit City?

Oderus: There's no level to the degree of prostitution I will whore myself out to in order to continue my existence as a fucked-up drunken piece of shit.

Nardwuar: Who are you?

Oderus Urungus: I am Oderus Urungus, lead singer of the most dangerous band in this or any other universe... Gwar!

Nardwuar: Oderus, the bitch is back?

Oderus Urungus: Yes, the bitch (Slymenstra Hymen) is back. She's here to claim a bloody vengeance. She wanted to castrate me, chop off my penis and put it in a zoo.

Nardwuar: What was she doing before? She was in the circus?

Oderus Urungus: She was in the circus, the girly freak show circus, doing things in Hollywood, with her Hollywood friends, but now she's back. As I said, she wants to chop off my pee pee.

Nardwuar: Oderus, are you the first band ever to spew on the audience?

Oderus Urungus: No! [Oderus then begins to talk in some sort of Gwar language] 'Abba spew on audience. Chee ga gu mess shela cooba. Show ka pluta koko ba. In loyer anus dosa o ka!'

Nardwuar: But you guys have new spew chambers?

Oderus Urungus: Yeah, spew, spewing everywhere. Spew, spew, spew. Spew on you!

Nardwuar: Oderus, is your cuttle-

fish, is it in the Hard Rock Café?

Oderus Urungus: It was in there before, but they made me take it out. But look at that thing [points to his cuttlefish], look at it, dripping with infected East Nile Virus. It's a beautiful thing, a beautiful thing.

Nardwuar: What is your view on Viagra? What do you think of Viagra?

Oderus Urungus: Well, I don't need it personally, but if it helps midgets who are impotent to fuck animals in the yard, then I think it's a good thing, as long as the animal gives consent.

Nardwuar: Oderus, who designs your loincloths?

Oderus Urungus: He does! [Points to another Gwar member]

Nardwuar: Oderus, what do you think of when you see this picture right here [Nardwuar shows Oderus a picture of Dave Brockie (aka Oderus) being grabbed in the crotch], of the person Dave Brockie? What do you think of that?

Oderus Urungus: This person needs to be killed. Look, touching himself like that, what is that? What is that shit? He's fat, he's fat, fat, fat.

Nardwuar: Oderus, you are Canadian. What is a Canadian killing dinosaurs for?

Oderus Urungus: [Still laughing at the Dave Brockie picture]

Nardwuar: What is a Canadian killing dinosaurs for?

Oderus Urungus: [Laughing]

Nardwuar: Oderus...

Oderus Urungus: What, what?

Nardwuar: Why are you killing the dinosaurs?

Oderus Urungus: Because they drove cars. I didn't like cars.

Nardwuar: But they are from Alberta, The Badlands?

Oderus Urungus: They wore shoes. I don't like shoes.

Nardwuar: What about the movie *Mystery Date*, Oderus? Wasn't that filmed in Vancouver?

Oderus Urungus: Stupid. I never saw it, I never saw any of the movies we were supposedly in, and we never made a fucking penny.

Nardwuar: Oderus, what are the new ways to kill people that you guys have developed?

Oderus Urungus: Ah, well, it's hard to, you know, when you kill people so many ways for so many years, but the more interesting way that we're killing people is slowly through alcoholism.

Nardwuar: If the guy from *Lord Of The Rings* walked out, how would you kill him?

Oderus Urungus: Which one?

Nardwuar: Frodo.

Oderus Urungus: Oh, I'd fuck him, then I'd stomp him, that little Bag End bugger.

Nardwuar: Is there any way to stop a Gwar show? Is there any way to stop a Gwar show?

Oderus Urungus: Yes. Don't go.

Nardwuar: Tell me about your influences. Wendy Williams, how important is she?

Oderus Urungus: I've been influenced by insulin.

Nardwuar: Oderus, what are the similarities between Gwar and pirates?

Oderus Urungus: Parcheesi and four rows over on the Jeopardy board.

Nardwuar: Oderus, did Gwar once do a show with absolutely no music, just acting it out?

Oderus Urungus: Yes. I would do my interpretive mime. Would you like to see it?

Nardwuar: Yes, please.

Oderus Urungus: [Silence, then sounds of a beating/struggle] That was JonBenet.

Nardwuar: Are there any challenges to Gwar at all, Oderus?

Nardwuar the Human Serviette



Oderus Urungus: Yes. Marilyn Manson is obviously a very, very powerful force. Limp Bizkit and Slipknot and Mudvayne. Oh my, yes. We're in awe of their power.

Nardwuar: Are you mad about the song "Gwar, what is it good for? Absolutely nothing! Gwar!"

Oderus Urungus: [sings] "Gwar! What is it good for, absolutely nothing!" ... and that's fine with me!

Nardwuar: DOA sang that and also from Vancouver, Skinny Puppy, Skinny Puppy!

Oderus Urungus: You are the most annoying human I've ever met! [Oderus then grabs Nardwuar by the neck]

Nardwuar: Thank you, Oderus, thank you, I appreciate that. Now, what was it like playing with Thor tonight?

Oderus Urungus: Thor is a little heavier than he used to be, but very, very, fun, funny... but he should get rid of the chick.

Nardwuar: Oderus, golf. What are the perks of being in Gwar? You play celebrity golf with Tommy Lee?

Oderus Urungus: Aren't you interviewing any of them? [Points to other bandmates]

Nardwuar: Well, okay, tell me which one I should talk to?

Oderus Urungus: No, shut up. Just interview me, I'm the funny one.

Nardwuar: Now tell me about playing golf with Tommy Lee.

Oderus Urungus: I didn't play golf with Tommy Lee. He wouldn't get in the same party with me, he wouldn't ride around in a golf cart. But I did go to his house and we went to the hot tub, and drowned a child.

Nardwuar: Oderus, please tell me about the rest of Gwar, the role-playing game. I wanna play with Gwar. Is there a role-playing game?

Oderus Urungus: No. There's no role-playing game, or is there? I don't know. Look at those guys over there looking at me like I'm crazy. There's games, there's products, there's merchandise. Be assured we sell millions of them and we never see a fucking penny. I'm paid in crack.

Nardwuar: Were you a spokesman for Circuit City, Mr. Oderus of Gwar?

Oderus Urungus: Yes, yes.

There's no level to the degree of prostitution I will whore myself out to in order to continue my existence as a fucked-up drunken piece of shit.

Nardwuar: Oderus of Gwar, did Disney fake the moon landing? Did they fake the moon landing?

Oderus Urungus: It's a fake. There isn't even a moon! Everyone knows it's made out of cheese.

Nardwuar: Oderus, why did you sink Atlantis? Why innocent people?

were in *Empire Records*!

Oderus Urungus: So what? We raped Liv Tyler in the bathroom, and it's not rape if she enjoys it halfway through.

Nardwuar: What about being in *thirtysomething*, that TV show? That was pretty good, eh, Oderus?

Oderus Urungus: Oh my God, what are you on, anyway? Thirty, forty, fifty, seventy, eighty, a million, who gives a shit?

Nardwuar: Now, which member of Gwar ate Jerry Springer?

Oderus Urungus: Well, actually, the hair farmers were using way too much hairspray and the ozone there opened up and as a result we were born, and as much as we hate them, we still love them.

Nardwuar: So why did you have Sebastian Bach of a hair metal band in your video?

Oderus Urungus: You said that was the last question! [Oderus grabs Nardwuar's neck again... screaming ensues]

Nardwuar: Ahh! Oh! Oh! Oh,



Oderus Urungus: Because I needed to usher in the era of the railroad.

Nardwuar: What exactly does the future hold for Gwar? What does the future hold?

Oderus Urungus: Pain, death, suffering, torment, uh, Ouiji boards, uh, flamingos, plate mail, flying 747s.

Nardwuar: But you've been in a lot of movies. *Empire Records*, you

Oderus Urungus: I don't know. The World Maggot. Okay? I've got a show to do, could we fuckin' hurry this up and finish this shit?

Nardwuar: Last question for you, Oderus.

Oderus Urungus: Thank you. [Oderus takes Nardwuar's hat and puts it on his head]

Nardwuar: You hate hair farmers. Gwar was formed as a reaction to the hair farming bands, right?

Oderus! Doot doola doot doo...

Oderus Urungus: Doot doot! Bye Ca-nanananana-da!

-Nardwuar
To hear and watch this interview go to <<http://www.nardwuar.com>>





One man's hoosh-wash is another man's science! One man's slick-slack is another man's savior! Ruckus is in the liver of the beholder!

The Dinghole Reports

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

Czesc? Dzień dobry. Hello? You guys there? Chicken to Funyuns and Sicnarf, you read me?

(Is that you, Rhythm Chicken? Did you make it to Poland? Are you bathing in kiel-basa yet? -F.F.)

[By golly, I do believe the ringmaster of ruckus has made it! -Dr. S.]

Of course I made it! This is my first Dinghole Report from Krakow, Poland! From Eastern Europe! From a post-communist region! From the other side of the FEEEEEE-RICKIN' WORLD! Na zdrowie!

(Holy chivalry, Mr. Chicken! You've really done it! You moved to Poland! What the cluck is up with you and the Hen? -F.F.)

[Indeed, Mr. Chicken, we were about to write you off as McNuggets by now. -Dr. S.]

Well, we're not on anyone's menu, yet, but we remain cautious! The Hen and I flew out of Chicago on Dec. 30th and arrived here in Krakow at 5:30 P.M. on NEW YEAR'S EVE! Our Polish contact, the mighty Tomek, met the Hen and I at the airport and took us right to our new nest. Seven months ago I left my luxurious home in Milwaukee (the "Nest") to live in my Northern Wisconsin "woodshed" until the Hen and I moved to our new home to start the new year. We now live in what I have recently dubbed the "Jaja Dom" (pronounced "ya-ya-dome") which roughly translates to the "egg house."

(Wow, so now you're living in a house again? -F.F.)

Well, no. Our comfortable little apartment, in reality, is one unit in a building of seventy-two units. Our building is one of about twelve identical buildings, all gray and splattered with graffiti. This is former-communist

housing at its finest! It's just that Jaja Dom rolls off the tongue a little more easily than "Maly Kurczaka Mieszkanie 22/32."

[Indeed, Mr. Chicken. You always choose a coop of extraordinary nature! Now, what we're all waiting to hear about are your exploits of ruckus and mayhem in the Rzeczpospolita Polska! -Dr. S.]

finished, it will be retractable into two "back-pack units" and easily transportable on the trams and buses. Once Ruckus Thomas hand-delivers the Chickenhead in three weeks, I will be fully poised to give these pierogi people a heavy onslaught of Wisconsin rhythm ruckus! AUDIO-PABST, if you will! Until then, my research continues.

[Please explain to us what this "research" entails. What have you learned? -Dr. S.]

Our first major discovery occurred while observing pedestrian social habits. Two normal strangers passing each other on the street will not say "Czesc!" (Hi). They will not give each other the "howdy" nod of the head. They will not make eye contact. They will not acknowledge each other's presence AT ALL! People at the bus and tram stops WILL NOT talk to each other, but, if they do, it is in very quiet polite whispers. Everyone seems to follow a strict code of "minding their own business" and do whatever possible not to draw attention to themselves. (The stumbling staggering winos appear to be exempt, and somewhat great in number.) Communism fell here about twelve or thirteen years ago, yet socially they act as if they are still under Stalin's thumb. I have noted an immense consumption of vodka, yet aside from the harmless, stumbling, staggering winos, I have yet to observe any substantial ruckus of any kind! True, there are street musicians who pander to tourists in the Old Town area. However, their tame folksy music and their overly sedating presence and posture are FAR from ruckus-inducing. These people have taken warmly to their newfound capitalism. They love



(Yeah! How are they responding to your thunderous ways? -F.F.)

Ok, I've been here for twenty-five days thus far, and I'm almost finished with my research stage. I have yet to secure my new instruments of ruckus, but they will soon be at hand. After my last American campaign of "Bigger Is Way Better!" I've begun designing my new downsized Polish version of the Chickenkit. When

their new Levi's and slurp down McDonald's milkshakes while waiting in line to see 8 Mile. They're all quite familiar with Chicago, but seem to have had no exposure whatsoever to the legends of ruckus, which I now refer to as "Wisconsinism." Veganism? Reaganism? Penguinism? NO WAY, MAN! WISCONSINISM! My Langenscheidt's Polish/English pocket dictionary has no Polish word for ruckus! The closest entry is "rucksack." Yeah, maybe I can wow them with my most untame RUCKSACK!

Rhythm Chicken

The Polish language doesn't even have the short "u" vowel sound! When they see the word "ruckus," they ask me what "root-skoos" is! ROOT-SKOOS? IT'S RUCKUS! I knew when I came here that I would be a missionary bringing my gift of ruckus to those less privileged, but just now am I beginning to realize the enormosity of this mission! It's been over a decade since their communist regime fell and yet they still can't look at each other on the street. I am coming to the scientific conclusion that this is because of the lack of "something to look at."

[Scientific conclusion? Isn't ruckus a form of rebellion against science? -Dr. S.]

On the contrary! One man's hoosh-wash is another man's science! One man's slick-slack is another man's savior! Ruckus is in the liver of the beholder! Mind the gap! Be kind, rewind! Turn your head and cough!

(Settle down, there, Chicken. You're losing us in your hoosh-wash philosophy! -F.F.)

[I think he's starting to shed some light on that a f o r e m e n t i o n e d "Wisconsinism." -Dr. S.]

(Okay, Chicken. Stop clucking around. What the hell do "hoosh-wash," "slick-slack," and "philly-sticks" mean? -F.F.)

[Yeah, I'm still curious what a "dinghole" is. -Dr. S.]

SILENCE, or it's a kilo of alum up BOTH your dingholes! No more hoosh-wash outta you slick-slacks! My dinghole is BULGING with Polish Philly-sticks, my Chickenhead is stuck in my parents' basement in Krakow, Wisconsin, and I'm without a drumset here in Krakow, Poland, a land completely VOID OF RUCKUS! Buck, buck, buck,... BUCCAW!!!

(He's digressing again. Doctor, I think he needs your help. -F.F.)

[Perhaps this is that "root-skoos" he was talking about. For this particular Polish ailment, I would prescribe for him to deliver another Dinghole Report. -Dr. S.]

Is THAT what you want? Sure, you two are all comfy back in Pabstland while I'm stuck in the kielbasa-capitol with NO proper tools to incite mass ruckus! Fine! Here's your #*#! Dinghole Report!

(Oops! I forgot to send him his Pabst! I wonder how the Zywiec is treating him? -F.F.)

Dinghole Report #29: Paint Me, Ruck-asso!

(Rhythm Chicken sighting #X1)
Yes, this is about sighting #X1. Until I am able to retrieve my sighting documentation from America, each new report will receive a temporary sighting number variable. Algebraic ruckus, indeed! So, Captain Foolhardy was my roadie for this particular tour in the summer of '99. He was finding comfort in taking schwiggers straight from the bottle of Fleischmann's gin (you know, the GOOD stuff!) between tour stops. We rolled through Egg Harbor, WI, and decided to hatch ruckus in the Harbor. On an island in the middle of the main intersection in



town was one of the many "artists" seen in Door County sitting in front of his easel, creating yet another generic watercolor classic small town scene that the Chicago types just can't seem to pay enough for! Captain Foolhardy and I threw together the Chickenkit right there on the island, in the middle of the intersection, just 3 FEET in front of the future Norman Rockwell. I pulled on the Chickenhead and pounded out a good two minutes of rock ruckus followed by another two minutes of ruckus rock! Motorists honked, slowed down, and yelled out of their windows. The Captain and I were snickering aloud as we hurriedly threw the drums in my car and sped off. At the next tour stops we noticed that we forgot my foot pedal in front of the painter! (see Fleischmann's above) SHICKEN! FUCKUS! When we returned to Egg Harbor the pedal was still sitting three feet in front of Poopcasso. I ran and retrieved my pedal and noticed that the painter just ignored me. Captain Foolhardy then informed me that the painter not once acknowledged his own personal Rhythm Chicken concert, squelching any and all reaction he may have felt compelled to display. He acted as though I WAS NEVER THERE! Only now am I starting to realize the possibility of his Polish ethnicity!

{Yup, gin makes ya sin! -Ruckus Thomas}

[Personally, I hope you get that Polski

Chickenkit going and you retrieve your Chickenhead soon. You really need to crank out some new ruckus over there. These "flashback" reports are getting kind of boring. Maybe Todd and Sean can just start printing Dinghole Reruns till you get your act together. -Dr. S.]

Hey, do you want quality or quantity?!!

(Looks like we're getting neither. -F.F.)

[Okay, Mr. Chicken. Why don't you just tell us a little more about your new habitat and we'll call it a night? -Dr. S.]

Hey! I never promised anyone more than one report per issue!

(Then what about that issue with that lame-ass "Ballpark Rabbit Reader"? I don't remember there being a Dinghole Report in THAT issue? -F.F.)

[Actually, I just think you ran off to Poland to escape the embarrassment of that whole Rally Rabbit scene. Maybe the Milwaukee Brewers won't be able to track you down in your "Jaja Dom." -Dr. S.]

Oh, sorry guys. I gotta fly. Tomek just got here and he's taking us to our first Polish punk show. We're going to see Apatia and Zlodzieje Rowerow. After tonight

my research stage is complete. Tomorrow, I move on to my production and experimentation stage of my current mission. I will not rest until Poland is fully "Wisconsinized!".....Oh! I almost forgot. A few weeks ago we took a short train ride to the small town of Oswiecim, more commonly known by its German name, Auschwitz. There, in the below-zero wind and blizzard conditions I was pleasantly surprised to see a fuckin' skate shop! THE AUSCHWITZ SKATE SHOP! Dobranoc!

(You know, Rev. Nørb hardly fits the Chicken's Polish stereotype. -F.F.)

[Yeah, no more than Ben Weasel fits the Australian stereotype. -Dr. S.]

(Screeching Digeridoo, indeed! -F.F.)

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p.s. The Polish word for chicken is "kurcze" or sometimes "kurczaka." I'm thinking of renaming myself for my Polish gigs from Rytm Kurcze to "Scared of Kurczaka!"

[Scared of Chicken? -Dr. S.]

-The Rhythm Chicken





HAVE A FEW DRINKS AND YOU'VE GOT SYMPATHY POURING OUT OF THE VEINS.

DE-TOX

At the de-tox center they were bringing in the first one of the day. A woman nurse wearing a blue blouse and white pants walked a man over to a metal-framed cot alongside a wall. She pulled back the sheets. Carl recognized her. She worked the day shift. She was the only nurse who had a nice figure. Her long brown hair fell down to the top of her ass, and you could tell she was well endowed behind that blouse. Carl had never seen the guy before. He was skinny and black and his dark eyes seemed to hide in the back of his skull. The man lay down and pulled the sheets up to his chin. The nurse left the room for a few seconds and then came back with a rolled up, wet towel in her hand. She placed it on the man's forehead, pulled up the blanket, and left the room. The man's hands shook violently as he stared up at the ceiling.

Carl sat by the window of his third story apartment across the street. He curiously watched the man wrestle with the blanket and lit a cigarette.

If he could only hook up some type of pulley system that would connect to the drug center. You know: a couple of beers attached to a metal cable contraption. Just a little something to get the boys through the fix-less nights. Useless thought, though. Have a few drinks and you've got sympathy pouring out of the veins.

He finished off the beer and grabbed another from the refrigerator. A block away, the traffic at the intersection was steadily becoming more congested. Every ten minutes a city bus would stop at the light. Everyone got off the bus, tired, defeated. It was your typical weekday. Carl shut his eyes and breathed in the thick smell of exhaust fumes.

He looked

over at the sink and remembered Joyce's orders before she'd left for work in the morning: wash the dishes and make the bed. He put the beer down and did a half-ass job of straightening out the pillows. He placed the sheets and comforter under the mattress. The sink was stacked high with a week's worth of dirty plates, pans, bowls, and silverware. It could wait till later.

Carl picked up the newspaper he'd bought earlier in the morning and sat down. The headline on the front-page read, "MASS WITHDRAWAL." It had something to do with the number of people in the U.S. who had quit smoking in the last ten years. He pulled out another cigarette. "Ha, this is for you boys," he laughed aloud.

Joyce unlocked the front door of the apartment. She walked slowly down the short hallway by the bathroom and over to the bed. Her white, buttoned shirt was untucked and her shoulder-length blond hair fell straggly over her ears. She threw herself down on the bed.

"Hey baby," Carl said, turning around in the chair.

"Hey," said Joyce, letting out an extended sigh. "Drinking already?"

"Yeah, you want a smoke?"

"What do you have? They menthols?"

"Marlboro Reds. Take one."

Joyce walked over, and Carl handed her a cigarette. She sat on the windowsill with her knees folded up to her chest, and looked out the window. She took the smoke deep into her lungs and blew it out lazily. Her eyes had a sad, faraway look.

"That bad?" Carl said.

"I'm sick of waitressing. I'm sick of the diner," said Joyce.

"How were the tips?"

"Sixty bucks. It fuckin' blows."

"Sixty bucks, that's not too bad."

"Well, then why don't you try doing it? I mean the fuckin' shitman was in again."

"The shitman?" Carl said.

"You know who he is. The guy I told you about last week. He comes in three or four times a week. At eight every morning. He's always shitting in his pants. He sits down at the table and every time I walk by the booth I smell it. Today he pulled out his money and there were brown stains on the bills. I had to get my boss. I don't even know why he lets him in."

"The people that come in the morning are nuts. There has to be some hospital around that lets them out for a couple hours. They all order coffee and sit in the booths for hours. They never tip. There's the old schizophrenic woman who yells at the customers. Last week a guy pissed in a cup and dumped it out right in front of the restaurant."

"I'm sorry. Maybe you can find something else," Carl said.

"I don't know. I'm just real tired. I don't even want to think about it. I just want to lie down for a while."

Joyce propped up the pillows, sat upright on the bed, and reached for the television remote. She flipped to all the channels for a couple of minutes and then left it on a late afternoon talk show. She stared mindlessly at the TV. Carl watched her and tried to think of something to say. He sat there and searched for the words, but couldn't think of anything.

"What?" said Joyce, annoyingly.

"Ah, nothing," said Carl.

The sound of degenerate conversations and jeering crowds echoed against the walls of the room.

"God, isn't there anything else on?" Carl asked her. "I mean, listen to these people."

"I know it's stupid. You're not even watching."

"Yeah, but I have to hear the shit."

"Fine, it's off."

Joyce threw the remote to the floor. She rolled over, faced the other direction and closed her eyes.

"You're going to sleep?" Carl asked.

"Just closing my eyes for a little. If I'm not up by eight, wake me up."

"Yeah, sure," he said dejectedly.

Carl grabbed a couple of twenty dollar bills from the dresser drawer, scribbled out a half-legible note, *WENT TO BAR*, and taped it on the TV. He walked out the door and down the two flights of stairs.

Jon's Place was an old restaurant/bar six blocks away. It was just off the freeway. The customers consisted mostly of truck drivers, stopping in for a quick coffee or a greasy diner meal. They sat in the booths, while the old-timers sat at the bar killing off idle retirement hours. All of the waitresses were old and had legs with purple veins and faces like leather. They hobbled from booth to booth taking the orders. The bar was in the back. It was small and shaped like a grand piano.

Carl sat down at the far side of the bar. Irene, the bartender, walked over. She was a big woman all around, in her late fifties, with wrinkles so bad that it was hard to tell what color her eyes were. Rumor was that before working at Jon's, she'd been a correction officer at a Maryland woman's prison.

"Hey, Carl, screwdriver?" said Irene, in her raspy voice.

"Yeah, that's good," he said.

Irene poured a strong one and brought it over. Carl mixed the drink with a thin straw, moving it around in a methodical circular motion. He watched the orange juice blend in with the vodka and put the straw in an ashtray.

He looked around the bar. There were a few familiar faces. He felt the need to be around people, yet at the same time, he didn't

want anything to do with them. Why the hell he spent so much of his time in bars, he couldn't figure out. It was just another place to hide.

Sitting on the other side of the bar was Jim. Carl looked away, hoping he wouldn't see him.

"Hey there, buddy!" yelled Jim. His eyebrows raised and a big drunken smile spread across his pale face. Carl hesitantly nodded back. Seconds later, Jim was sitting in the next stool over with a pitcher and mug full of beer. He grabbed a firm hold of Carl's forearm and said, "Hey, Carl, how ya' doing? Haven't seen you around much."

"Hey, Jim."

Jim was a talker. There are people who enjoy conversation and then there are people like Jim. Anyone who's been to enough bars in their life knows this sad breed. Every bar has at least one. They're usually heavy drinkers. It's likely they've done the A.A. stint more than once. Rarely are they out to cause trouble though. What they feed off of is the sound of their own voice. Every possible, uninteresting, random fact known to man is what they pride themselves on.

Jim was a good guy, just nearly impossible to sit alongside of. Carl tried to get up from the bar, but before he could, Jim had start-

ed up.

"Say, Carl, you hear about the fireman down in Glen Burnie who killed himself messing around with fireworks in his basement?"

"No, I didn't."

"Crazy shit, man," said Jim, throwing his beer down, foam dangling from his red mustache. His eyes were big and brown and looked like they were being charged by a couple hundred volts of electricity. "He'd been a fireman for over twenty years, then one day his head gets blown off by his son's fireworks."

"Pretty strange," said Carl, looking at everyone at the bar but Jim.

"God, Carl, did I ever tell you this story? No, I know I didn't. It was someone else... Pete I think... the old guy with the cane... comes in on Sunday afternoons. Anyway, to get to the point, you know where I work, yeah? I've told you before. Anyway, so this lady friend at work... cute gal... great smile... oh boy, what an ass!... So yeah, what was I talking about? Yeah, so this lady friend at work... great smile... Excuse me, Carl, I've been drinking for a while. So this lady friend, she's got this brother up in Pennsylvania, he's got two kids... daughter and a son. I think the daughter goes to Penn St... son works construction. But that's neither here nor there. So

her brother, some big shot business guy... Anyway, turns out his wife's father... or grandfather... *Shit!* I forget which one it was... No, no, now I remember, the grandfather. Well, get this, it turns out he designed the hood for the '67 Mustang. Now, the guy owns something like twenty factories, all around the country, designing cars. I mean we're talking big bucks, like multi-millionaire, you know."

"Un-bee-lievable," said Carl sarcastically. He took a big sip and finished his drink. He wondered how many more it was going to take to get the job done. He waved over Irene to get him another.

"Say, I got that one Irene," said Jim.

"No, really, that's all right," said Carl.

"What are you talking about! I'm buying you a drink, *damn it!* You *crazy?*"

"All right, thanks Jim."

Irene laughed under her breath, brought the drink over, and smiled at Carl. She'd been working there long enough to see it all.

"So, Carl, I was reading yesterday's paper. There's this guy from Canton, eighty-two years old, started lifting weights ten years ago to reduce the arthritis in his arms and hands. Now the guy can bench two hundred and seventy-five pounds! I mean, that's a lot

of weight! I'm lucky if I can get up to two twenty-five, and look at me." Jim stood up and threw down his mug, some of the beer spilling on the bar. He stuck his chest out, rolled his shirtsleeves up, and showed Carl his well-defined muscles. "I've got some strength to me, but Jesus Christ! That kind of stuff is damn near amazing!"

Jim went off to the bathroom. Carl took that as his cue to sit somewhere else. He walked into the side game room and put a couple quarters in the pinball machine. Next to him, an older man sat in front of a video poker game, smoking a cigar.

The bar was now starting to fill up with the after-work, early night crowd. A Johnny Cash song played on the jukebox. Carl tapped his foot and sang along, throwing in his own words "Love is a funny thing..." He was starting to feel pretty good. Everything around him seemed to have a warm brightness, a comfortable sense of clarity. Takes you ten drinks to feel all right; that *can't* be good, he thought.

He walked back to the bar and sat down. Sitting in the stool to his left was a rail-thin, blond-haired woman of about forty. She had a small, narrow face and beady mouse eyes. She was twitching like she had Tourettes and mumbling something incoherent

Seth Swaaley

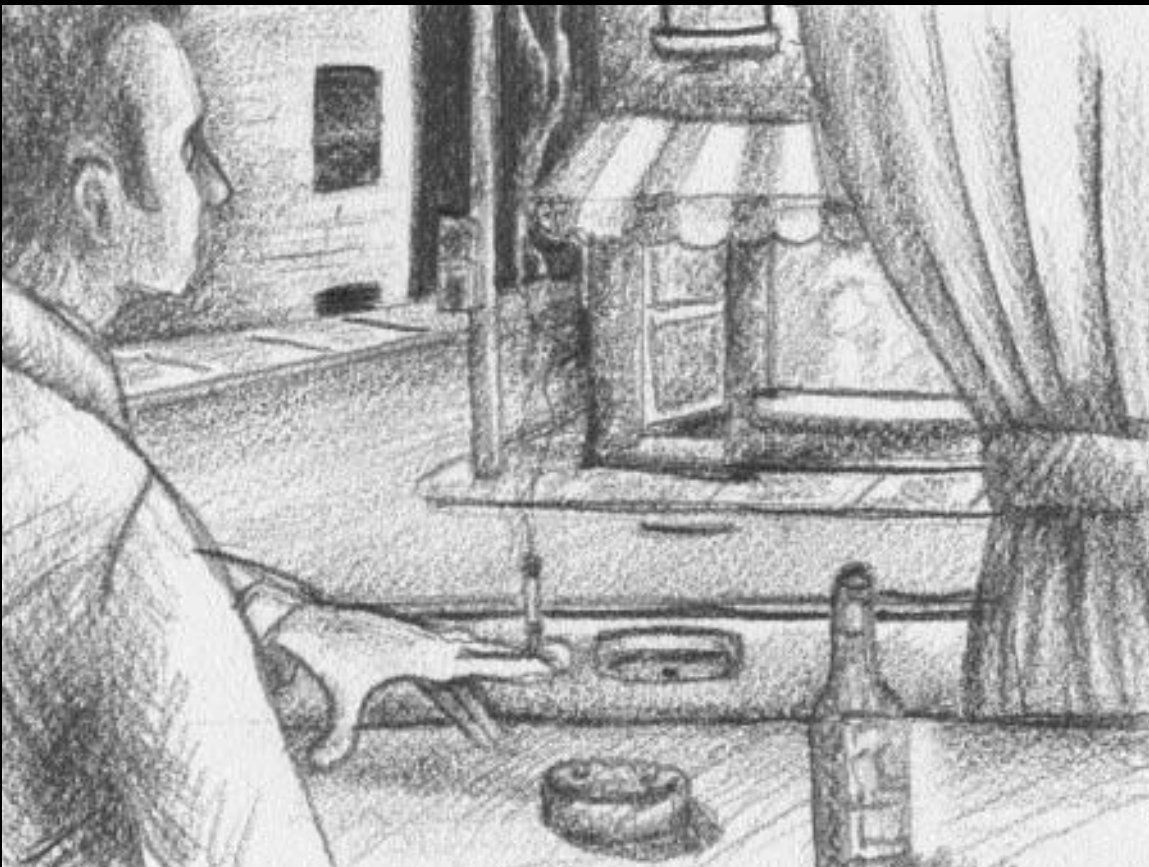


ILLUSTRATION BY TOM WRENN

"I wouldn't make eye contact if I was you," said Joe, an old regular who was sitting on the other side of Carl.

"Huh?"

"That lady next to you looks like she's trying to get your attention. She's nuts."

"Right," said Carl.

Carl looked at the woman. She smiled, did a 360-degree spin in the stool and drank down a half a pint of beer. She waved her hands in the air, and yelled, "Yeah, yeah!"

"Hey there," said the woman.

"Hey."

"What's your name?"

"Carl."

"I'm Kat. You from around here?"

"Yeah, couple blocks away."

"God dammit! That fuckin' jukebox! Where's the fuckin' music! You want some of my beer?"

"No, thanks, I got a drink."

"You from around here?"

"Yeah," laughed Carl.

"What's your name?"

"Carl."

"What do you do?"

"Do?"

"Yeah, for a living."

"Nothing."

"No really, where do you work?"

"I don't, unemployed."

"Yeah, right, I bet you're some kind of secret agent," said Kat, spinning around again. "Yeah! Yeah!" she screamed.

"Sure," said Carl, thinking, I'm going to have an aneurysm if

He's always shitting in his pants. He sits down at the table and every time I walk by the booth I smell it. Today he pulled out his money and there were brown stains on the bills.

this skitzo doesn't sit still.

Irene looked at Kat and shook her head. Jim was on the other side of the bar talking to some newcomer about the recent turmoil of the stock market. A couple of regulars were raising their beers and singing along to a Merle Haggard song.

"I don't have anywhere to sleep tonight," said Kat.

"That's too bad," said Carl.

"Those bastards at my halfway house. They lock the doors after ten. I swear I'm gonna get a lawyer and sue those fuckers."

"Maybe you should find a halfway house that gives you a set of keys."

"Yeah, whatever."

"You know, I could really use a place to stay. Last week I was here and I went home with this guy. I didn't want to fuck him; I just wanted a place to crash. But when I got back to his apartment, we were on the couch... and My

God! He was as hard as a rock!"

Kat put her hand into a fist and brought it close to Carl's face. "Italian. Yeah, I couldn't believe it. I'm just saying, you know if I crash at your place I could, you know."

"Sorry. Can't help you."

"Well, *Fuck You! Ass-hole!*"

Kat downed the rest of her beer, jumped off the stool, did a full pirouette, and then ran into the game room. Carl shook his head; thinking, how the hell do I always manage to attract the freaks. He downed the rest of his drink, left a twenty down on the bar, and stumbled home.

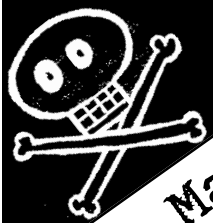
He fumbled with the keys for a minute and then opened the door

to the apartment. Joyce was lying in the same fetal position she'd been in when he'd left. Carl stood over her and watched her sleep. The room began to move violently around him. He had the spins real bad. He motioned to grab her arm. But for some reason, he just couldn't do it. He felt like a puppet that had some psychotic puppeteer pulling the strings.

Carl sat by the window, smoked the last of his cigarettes, and then passed out face first on the desk. When he woke up it was two in the morning. The right side of his cheek was numb. He felt nauseous and thought about shoving his finger down his throat, but he was too damn tired. He took off his clothes and lay down on the bed and tried to close his eyes. The room spun around him. He tried to focus on the shadows on the ceiling. Everything kept moving. He felt like he was on a merry-go-round going sixty miles an hour. He put his hand on Joyce's hip and listened to her breath. Down the street he could hear someone pushing a shopping cart and screaming all hell. It seemed like everyone was looking for a way out.

-Seth Swaaley





Maddy

Shiftless When Idle



PERIODICALLY HE WOULD LEAN OVER A LITTLE TO SCRATCH HIS BUTT. AH, THE NEW

I think that every *Razorcake* column I've written in the past few months has included at least ten insults to New York. You'd think I'd completely forgotten about the world's other, equally great, evils: war, sugar-free candy, sexism, emo, and the fact that its been at least six months since I've seen a This Bike is a Pipe Bomb show!

Seriously though (ha!), living in a city as big as New York is sorta like going to all girls Catholic school. It's a horrible idea, but you're guaranteed to see some pretty ridiculous stuff. (For a definition of "ridiculous," see Dee Dee Ramone/King's rap album.) So, in the interests of fairness and accuracy in reporting, I present to you: Three Ridiculous New York City Subway Sightings!

1. The other day I got on the subway and sat down between two guys. It was the middle of the day, with lots of people on the train. The guy to my left was mostly concealed under a giant puffy jacket and really baggy jeans. I happened to glance over, in a sorta downward direction, and I saw some sort of movement. I looked closer, and it looked like the guy was just adjusting himself. (Note: I am VERY glad that I'm not a guy - who wants to deal with that?) So I looked away. And then I saw it again. Movement. I looked over and this guy was going at it - furiously! This wasn't just regular old masturbation. This guy was giving his dick a serious beating! Up and down, side to side! One hand in his pants, and, in an act of admirable

boldness, his other hand outside of his pants grabbing and striking his dick through the fabric! His movements were so wild, he ended up elbowing me several times. I looked around to see if anyone else on the train noticed. Nope! Everyone else was just going about their business, la dee da, reading the paper or talking about Pink.

I started thinking, when this ends, its gonna end BIG, and I don't know if I can survive it! Visions of myself covered in a stranger's semen came to me! Would I end up bearing his child due to a bizarre mixup/spillage? When my daughter asked who her father was, would I have to say, "Your father was a man who masturbated so vigorously on the subway, that he somehow managed to impregnate me." And child-raising lesbians think THEY have it tough? My daughter was going to be scarred for life. She would spend her days on the subway, desperately trying to find a man masturbating! No! I could NOT stand for this! So, I slid a few inches away from him. And then looked to my right. I was right next to a guy sharpening a foot-long knife.

2. A few days before that, my mom was visiting for the weekend. It was the middle of January. Everyone in New York had thrown out their tiny Christmas tree and was entering the time period known as MLFTOTY (Maddy's Least Favorite Time of the Year) - the no man's zone between the glory of Christmas (yes, I am a SERIOUS Christmas dork!) and the joys of summer (in Wisconsin, there is no

such thing as spring. One day there's snow everywhere, piled in big, dirty lumps. And the next day, it's summer. Sort of.) But when my mom and I got on the subway that day, we found one New Yorker who hadn't left Christmas behind. At Union Square, Santa Claus got on the train! A very dirty Santa Claus. He had the whole ensemble - the long white hair, long curly white beard (this particular Santa was actually wearing two beards!), red suit, and... REALLY dirty red sweatpants. And he was huge - at least 400 pounds. And filthy. He made a grand entrance onto the subway, raising his arms as if to give a speech. Everyone got quite in anticipation of what Santa would say. He took a big, deep breath, and then shrugged and turned to face the wall. Periodically he would lean over a little to scratch his butt. Ah, the New York Santa.

3. A few weeks ago, my boyfriend and I were on the subway. It was crowded, and we were sitting about a foot away from a middle-aged woman, who was standing. Some teenage boys passed her, trying to sell candy bars, and she yelled "Get away from me!" And then, she reached into her big winter coat, and pulled out a pair of silky underwear and threw it into her empty shopping bag. My first thought was, "This woman must be homeless, and has to carry all her stuff with her." But then, it continued. She pulled two more pairs of underwear out of her pocket. Then she shoved her hand down her coat sleeve, and pulled

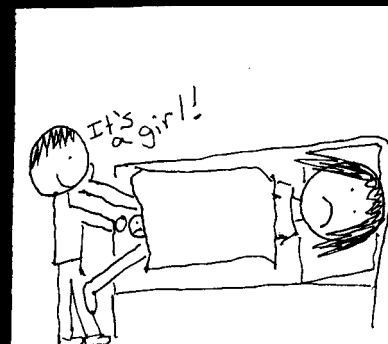
out more underwear. All of a sudden, a hanger came flying out, breaking in two, and dropping to the ground a few feet away. Ah ha! Stolen goods! And still, she kept at it! A silky nightie came out of her pants. More panties came out of the hidden, inner pockets of her coats. It was a mad flurry of silky underwear, coming fast and furious out of the never-ending pockets and hiding places in this woman's clothing! She tossed it all into her shopping bag, and then, after five or six minutes of continual underwear retrieval, she was coming up empty. But still she searched one more time - her socks, her pockets, her hood, inside her bra, in her pants, everywhere. This woman had to have no less than twenty pockets. Amazing.

All of this is proof of the fact that the New York subway is essentially a no-man's zone. Anything and everything can happen there, with no threat of police, puritans, or peaceniks. People organizing what are clearly stolen goods. People masturbating. People sharpening a knife before their next fight. Santa Claus on a bender. Alright! Let's hear it for the dirty, bizarre New York subway!

-Maddy

P.S. I just finished a *Tight Pants/Snakepit* split zine! A different comic strip for each day of my life in the month of December! Plus, Ben Snakepit's usual greatness! To get a copy, send me a buck or two. (Madeleine, 296A Nassau Ave #3L, Brooklyn, NY 11222)

Maddy





shawn granton ★ feb 2003

Joe Strummer

★ 1952 — 2002 ★

本 刊 特 刊 和

JOE STRUMMER



PUNKS AREN'T SUPPOSED
TO HAVE HEROES

TRIBUTES BY
ERIC RIFE
AND
JESSICA DISOBEDIENCE

ALL PHOTOS BY
ERIC RIFE

INTERRUPTING THE USUAL STATIC BY ERIC RIFE

If anyone needed further proof of the intellectual and editorial bankruptcy of *Rolling Stone*, there was ample evidence to be found in their January issue. The week that Joe Strummer died, the magazine chose to put N'SYNC's Justin Timberlake on the cover, complete with a six page spread.

Strummer, on the other hand, got two pages, comprised of little more than a short, rote history of the Clash, replete with the Associated Press-circulated quotes which had already been used to death in every other newspaper in the country. Five banal questions posed to Strummer shortly before his death were billed on the cover as his "last interview!"

The New York Times didn't fare much better; the photo they ran with his obit was not Strummer, but band mate Mick Jones. How the "newspaper of record" could make such a boneheaded mistake was hard to fathom.

Near the bottom of the heap was Tom Sinclair's obit in *Entertainment Weekly* which, like too many others, recalled Strummer's early days before deriding him (in the words of another music critic!) as "a man without a context" whose post-Clash work was "anti-climatic almost by definition."

Anyone looking for more fitting tributes needed to turn to the zines and punk websites untainted by the systematic constraints of mainstream corporate media. John Holmstrom, editor of *Punk*, perhaps put it best when he wrote of Strummer, "...he was one of the good guys in punk rock. When someone is a good person on top of having talent, it's a truly special thing." (In the spirit of full disclosure, *Punk* published several of my photos of Strummer's last US shows).

After shooting and interviewing hundreds of bands

over the last 20+ years, I can honestly say that Strummer was, truly, a very special person. I only got to meet him twice, but the few minutes I spent with him reassured me that this was a man of uncommon sincerity. Indeed, he was one of the very few musicians who I've shot who had lots of nice things to say about my work.

When the Clash exploded into my little suburban existence, I was at a fucked up period in my life. It was 1979 and I was with my grandmother at a Fedmart, having just returned from the hospital where I had been visiting my dying mother. I dropped eighty-nine cents on a 45 single I'd heard on the radio. "Train in Vain" became my favorite song and I played it everyday until a couple months later when I flipped it over for the first time.

Suddenly I realized that for all those weeks, I'd been listening to the *wrong* side. The song, "London Calling," was a stark contrast to the poppy, radio friendly track credited to Mick Jones. This song, with its dramatic intro, filled my ears with a tension I hadn't heard, but was still intimately familiar with. It was filled with revolutionary drama and the singer sang as if he was yelping out his last words before the goon squad around the corner caught up to him. This was a song that sounded *important*, an adjective I'd overuse for the next two decades to describe what would become my favorite band of all time. "London Calling" was Strummer's John Lennon to Jones' Paul McCartney.

At the time, *The Clash* and *Give 'Em Enough Rope* had yet to be released in the U.S. The only thing available on these shores, prior to the release of *London Calling*, was *The Cost of Living* E.P. which I never even saw until I got a job at a record store ten years later. With my mother's death a few months later, my demeanor and musical tastes changed dramatically. Suddenly Cheap Trick and Blue Oyster Cult weren't so damn relevant. Now, bands like Stiff Little Fingers, the Sex Pistols, Sham 69, and of course, the best of the lot, THE CLASH, dominated my turntable.

There was something immediately likable about Joe Strummer, especially if your politics ran to the extreme left as mine did. Clad in a Brigade Rosse t-shirt, performing at anti-racist rallies, Strummer was a nice contrast to the reactionary, right wing bullshit of people like Sammy Hagar,

Ted Nugent, and Rush. He was just the sort of hero (a very UN-punk notion to be sure) that people like me desperately needed in Reagan's America.

Of course, there were a lot of punks who hated the Clash, especially in the early days of the California scene. Wearing a Clash shirt to a punk show risked incurring the wrath of those whose allegiance to the L.A. bands bordered on the fascistic. Contrary to the popular image of punk being an inclusive community for outcasts and deviants, the California scene could be extremely exclusionary. Any show of support for bands outside of the U.S. (until the second wave of British punk hit with groups like Discharge, G.B.H., and the Exploited) was looked upon as concrete evidence of being a poseur. California punks were especially suspicious of anything resembling politics. The only "political" bands who got a pass were the Dead Kennedys, the Dils, and Canada's resident anarcho-syndicalists, D.O.A.

Twenty some years after their first tour of the U.S., all I can do is wonder why I didn't see their first San Diego show at Golden Hall. The image of the marquee which read "Give 'Em Enough Rope - The Clash," is forever burned in my brain. By most accounts, their first shows in the States were exemplary with only the California punks offering up contempt. Ironically, it was the mainstream press who hailed the Clash as the saviors of rock and roll.

When the Clash returned to the U.S. in 1982 for their *Combat Rock* tour, their best days were undoubtedly behind them. *Sandamista* had several brilliant moments (albeit clouded by the band's most experimental efforts) and their latter single, "Radio Clash," was revolutionary in the way it blended punk and rap, in the same way that "White Man in Hammersmith Palais" had successfully mined reggae.

Combat Rock, was of course, the band's breakthrough into the American mainstream. Suddenly all the assholes at my high school were mindlessly singing along to "Should I Stay or Should I Go" and "Rock the Casbah," two songs which, in my mind, didn't speak to the true creative potential of the Clash. It was pretty lightweight stuff, but I was already used to their occasional misstep, if you want to call it that. I didn't like the second side of the album but played "Know Your Rights" until the grooves in the record went gray.

Regardless, I bought tickets for the show the day they went on sale. Not too long after, Strummer went missing. Things had begun to look very bad for the Clash with the band kicking out Topper Headon shortly before Strummer went AWOL. Rumors of a cancellation floated about and I had a hard time concentrating in class with the thought that my favorite band in the world were on

verge of imploding. A couple weeks before the tour was scheduled to begin, Strummer was found wandering around Paris. To my great relief, the tour would go on.

They were again scheduled to appear at Golden Hall, with the English Beat opening the show. The Beat put on an amazing set, but when the Clash hit the stage, opening with "London Calling," an electric charge went through the place. Strummer's eyes were bugged out, and he sang as if testifying to the last days of humanity. There was conviction in those hands, furiously attacking his trademark Telecaster, as if milking it for all the soul it could produce. There was dedication in his words, mixed with the spit that was forever inadvertently showering forth from his lips.



The crowd began bouncing up and down to the jackhammer beat. I shouted along to the song, even as I became buried under a mass of people who were falling all over themselves. I sweated, hyperventilated, and became lost in a temporary state of near hysteria. To my relief, the band worked through their choicest material - "Brand New Cadillac," "Somebody Got Murdered," "Police on My Back," "Complete Control," "Clash City Rockers," "Tommy Gun," "Safe European Home," "Death or Glory," "Koka Kola," "The Magnificent Seven," and "Clampdown" among others - before finishing up with Bobby Fuller's "I Fought The Law." By the end of the night, I was a quivering mass of energy, confident that I'd been a witness to a moment in musical history as meaningful as the burning of Hendrix's guitar at the Isle of Wight. Despite all the beer and pot I consumed, I had a hard time going to sleep that night.

Over the next couple years I had the fortune of seeing the Clash two more times, opening for the Who at the L.A. Coliseum (where their forty-five minute set seemed woefully short when compared with the three hour marathon the Who cranked out) and at the 1983 US festival, their last American show before Mick Jones was kicked out and the band entered the most critical-

ly dire chapter of their career. The US festival was a great show marred only by my girlfriend, who chose to pick a fight with me right in the middle of (ironically enough) "English Civil War."

When the Clash returned to the U.S. for their 1985 tour, they were considered a paltry shadow of their former selves. Without looking at the credits of *Cut the Crap*, I couldn't tell you the names of the two guys who replaced Mick Jones. Still, Strummer was every bit the fiery iconoclast and carried the show for everyone except for maybe the most jaded fan. Jones had been kicked out for ideological differences, which was fine with me because I always believed Strummer was the heavyweight of the band. If he said Jones had to go, that was all I needed to hear. The crit-

ics ravaged *Cut the Crap* but being fiercely loyal, I found gems in between the chaff. It wasn't *London Calling* by any measure, but as long as there were a few things to sing along to, I was satisfied.

When they finally disbanded however, I was neither surprised nor all that upset. I knew it was only a matter of time before the weight of their convictions (which, arguably, occasionally sounded pretentious) brought them down. My commitment to them had begun to erode, but my faith in Strummer rarely wavered.

It wouldn't be until six years later that I'd see the man in concert again, this time fronting the Pogues who had recently fired frontman Shane MacGowan. A BIG Pogues fan, I was reminded of those heady days in 1982 when a Clash tour seemed doomed by internecine struggles and an M.I.A. singer. MacGowan's departure had left *Hell's Ditch* tour in question until Strummer, a long time compatriot of the band, was asked to step in.

I hadn't been bowled over by Strummer's *Earthquake Weather* album but enjoyed his performances in Alex Cox's dismal but entertaining film *Straight to Hell* and Jim Jarmusch's superior *Mystery Train*. I wasn't quite sure what to expect from this pairing, but it seemed like a logical match up.

The show was at the Wiltern Theater in Hollywood and I had third row tickets. I took a girl who, like most of the women I knew at the time, had little interest in either the Pogues or the Clash, despite my best efforts. I think she took pity on me, which was fine, because I needed a ride to the show.

When the band came out, Strummer, clad in a Hawaiian shirt, opened the set with "If I Should Fall From Grace With God" and I was taken back to that night at Golden Hall in 1982. Again, there was that electricity coursing through my body, and a feeling of satisfaction that I had been right all along – forget James Brown, Joe Strummer was the hardest working man in show business.

Halfway into the set, the Pogues gave Joe his due, ripping through Celtic folk interpretations of "London Calling," "I Fought the Law," and "Straight to Hell." As brilliant as the set was, I couldn't fully appreciate his contribution until I saw Shane MacGowan years later, desperately hanging on to the mike stand, clutching his umpteenth drink and slurring his way through his best material. In

retrospect, it's easy to see how Strummer's appearance saved the night, the tour and, briefly, the band itself.

Another nine years would pass before I saw Strummer on stage again, this time at the Sun Theater in Anaheim. A young woman stood in front of my friend and I, jabbering on about being too young to have seen the Clash. If Joe was playing for any one person that night, I think it was this girl. When he came out, he picked up his Telecaster, still adorned with the "Ignore Alien Orders" sticker that had somehow survived more than twenty-five years and launched into a set evenly split between new material and old. It

HE WAS JUST THE SORT OF HERO (A VERY UN-PUNK NOTION TO BE SURE) THAT PEOPLE LIKE ME DESPERATELY NEEDED IN REAGAN'S AMERICA.

was a great show interrupted only once by a screaming drunk. The guy was incoherent but Joe stopped playing to see what the guy wanted. Everyone else wanted him thrown out, but realizing

the guy was being a major nuisance, he invited the guy to watch the rest of the show from the side of the stage.

A couple years later, Strummer was doing an in-store appearance at Tower Records on Sunset Boulevard. There would be a free concert and then a signing to follow. Despite high-tailing it up to Hollywood in the carpool lanes of Interstate 8, my friend Alan and I arrived a few minutes too late to be admitted into the show. But another line had begun forming and in the interest of fairness, would be among the first people admitted into the signing.

When my turn came, I greeted the man without a lot of fanfare, not wanting to create one of those awkward embarrassing moments. He put out his hand and greeted me with a warm smile and signed a Clash concert bill and photo book I brought along. He was, like they always say, shorter than I imagined. I muttered something about Noam Chomsky to which he replied "Is he still around? I thought he was somewhat of a recluse." I told him that no, the good professor was still at MIT and was still America's most important dissident. I thanked him as he put out his hand again and thanked him for his time. He did not disappoint me.

Two years later, Strummer was scheduled to play the Troubadour in Hollywood. First it was one night, then two, then finally, a five-night stint was booked as one show sold out after the other. I'd never shot Strummer and the Troubadour, to their awe-

some credit, have a very liberal policy towards photographers. I saw the first two shows and much more importantly, captured them on film. They were among the best shots I'd taken and proudly handed them out to any of my friends who wanted prints (copies are still available for a very modest fee to cover printing costs).

The last time(s) I got to see the man live was at last year's Hootenanny, which had expanded from its usual location in Irvine to include shows in San Diego and Mountain View (near San Jose). He was in top form at the first show, located on the perimeter of Bill Graham's Shoreline Amphitheater. While groups like Hot Rod Lincoln and the Original Sinners played on opposite stages, Strummer could be found at the Epitaph booth signing stickers, tickets, and posters. Although his tour manager was doing his best to lead him away, Strummer would graciously stop every few seconds whenever an outstretched hand beckoned his name. No one who wanted a moment of his time or an autograph was turned away.

Then, as always, Strummer was on the outside both physically and artistic-



ly. While the rest of the show was dominated by rockabilly, punkabilly, shockabilly, and whatever else, Strummer's punk/reggae/world beat sounded oddly out of place – except for everyone who was in the audience. Newer material like “Johnny Appleseed” and “Yadda Yadda” was trotted out which everyone patiently endured, waiting for classics like “London’s Burning,” “White Man in Hammersmith Palais,” and “I Fought The Law.” Not to say that the solo material wasn't good – it was. But when the opening strains of “Police on My Back” cut through the muggy afternoon air, it was like a fuse had been lit. As the drums kicked in, the audience began bouncing up and down and I thought back to that show at Golden Hall twenty years earlier. I was thankful to be on the other side of the barricade, happily burning roll after roll of film.

The show in Irvine was equally good. Unfortunately, Strummer, who had been listed as the headliner, had to play second fiddle to the Rev. Horton Heat. For those of us diehards, it was an act of abomination on the part of the organizers. No slight to the Rev, but c'mon.

What would come to be his last U.S. show took place on July 7 in San Diego. Like the other Hootenannys, the concert would take place outside and again, the Rev. would headline. Strummer's show was exceptional and even the new material sounded better than ever.

I had printed out a few shots from the Troubadour shows and gave them to my girlfriend Alma for safekeeping in the event I could get them signed. After securing a backstage pass from a friend, she headed for the backstage area, intent on finding Joe while I shot Nashville Pussy, another Hootenanny standout. As I shot what was the umpteenth photo of guitarist Ruyter Suys, I felt a tug at my arm.

“I found Joe!” my girlfriend screamed, showing me the signed photos. “He loves the pictures and wants to meet you!”

We ran back to where Joe sat, quietly holding court with an array of fans and other musicians. He put out his hand, called me by name, and told me how much he liked my work. After having my work dismissed by editors, bands, club owners, and promoters, it was the ultimate reward. I kept my visit brief because it was readily apparent that he was not feeling well. He seemed very tired and in need of rest. We said our goodbyes and went out to watch the rest of the Rev's show, which for me was anti-climatic.

I heard the news of Joe's passing from Alan, who, like a grim reaper of the Internet, is forever emailing me links to newspaper obits with headers proclaiming “Dee Dee Ramone R.I.P.” It's not really the way I care to hear about my heroes passing on, but I appreciate the thought anyway. I was shocked but also felt strangely fortunate that I'd been able to meet Joe and document some of his last shows. But I also knew that a part of me died that day. I had met and been disappointed by too many of my heroes (a good reason not to have heroes, I guess) and the one who turned out to be as good as I had always assumed was one of the first to go. I recalled Malcolm McLaren's remark about Elvis' death – “Yeah, a tragedy isn't it? Too bad it couldn't have been Mick Jagger.”

Thw Clash were always more than just a band to me. They were an urgent bulletin on pirate radio station interrupting the usual static passing for news and entertainment that pollutes the public airwaves. They were a salvation of sorts, a dependable voice I could always count on when my other musical heroes jumped ship or mellowed out beyond redemption. They provided the soundtrack to my political convictions and gave me a voice which I could broadcast loudly as I wove my way through traffic. Strummer was more than just a punk who seemed to forever rise from the ashes, returning to confound his critics and give back to those who believed in him. He transcended the constraints of punk convention and chose people over ideology.

History, of course, will be the final judge of his contributions, so I guess it doesn't matter what a bunch of assholes like *Rolling Stone* and *Entertainment Weekly* have to say. And when you think about it, not even the words of the historians will matter all that much when compared with those awesome, brutal, beautiful, revolutionary chords that rang out like a Tommy Gun.

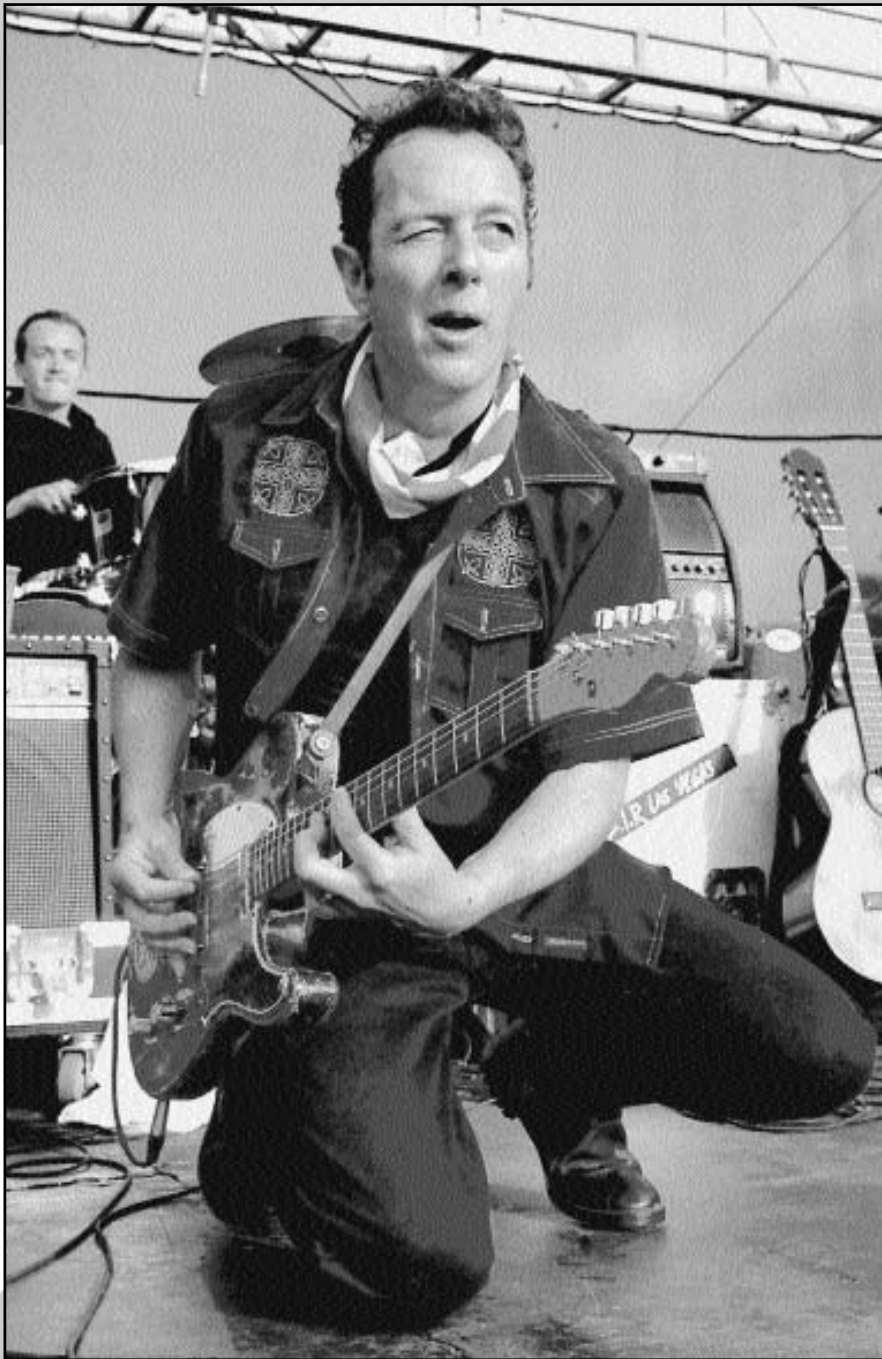


YOU'RE MY GUITAR HERO! BY JESSICA DISOBEDIENCE

The famous punks who didn't die tragically young, I expect them to live forever. And when they don't, it shakes me up. It was hard enough losing Joey Ramone, a little less hard (for me, anyway) losing Dee Dee – but it still shook me up, because half of the original Ramones were suddenly missing from the world.

It's like this, and it's a cliché. Imagine being fifteen. You're angry, sad, confused. You're filled with a rage so all-encompassing that you think it will consume you like fire. You think that one day you will ignite and whoosh! that will be it. Burning up in a brilliant blaze of pure rage. You feel like no one could possibly put words to what you're feeling. There are a few bands you listen to, but mostly you've given up on the old crap. You've sold most of your CDs so you can have money for illegal cigarettes and illicit, drunken nights alone.

Then one day, bored, you flip on the radio. It's all so much pop shit. It's like a gooey film on your eardrums and you hate it and you want to smash the radio. Suddenly, you happen to change to a station that's playing some sort of retro hour: seventies and eighties tunes. The last few minutes of an R.E.M. song finish, and then the music blasts through and changes every fucking thing. “Darling you've got to let me know... should I stay or should I go?” You turn up the music so loud it rattles the windows, and you dance stocking-footed around your room, sud- 37



denly joyous and pissed off at the same time. You don't even pay attention to your mom when she tells you to turn the volume down.

After the song is over, the radio DJ comes on and says: "That was The Clash with 'Should I Stay or Should I Go?'" **THE CLASH**. What a fucking brilliant band name, you think. **THE CLASH** – you picture fights and protests, bricks flying through windows and rowdy celebrations, bonfires, and blood. And you understand, right at that moment, that The Clash is going to mean more to you than any other band ever. First you find the album that "Should I Stay or Should I Go?" is on. You would have preferred to buy it on record, but you settle for a CD because that's all you can find. (You're overjoyed, years later, when your uncle gives you his old vinyl copy.)

You slowly start collecting all the Clash albums, bootlegs, and imports – anything you can get your hands on that says "The Clash" on it. You've started listening to other loud, searing bands; you

spike your hair so it's a weapon and write slogans on your t-shirts, like: "Mummy, what's a sex pistol?" or "combat rock." You've also managed to fall in love with the lead singer of The Clash. It doesn't matter that he's old enough to be your dad. All that matters is his beautiful face, frozen in time from twenty years ago, staring down at you from your bedroom wall; and his voice, soothing you off to sleep sometimes and other times making you want to start a riot of your own.

Then, four years later, you find out that this man is on tour with his new band, and he's coming to your town. You're elated. You feel like, after you see him up on that stage, washed out by the glare of multi-colored lights, playing those good old power chords, you could die happily. You wish you could meet him, and you wish you could tell him how fucking much he's meant to you without sounding like a complete idiot. You secretly harbor fantasies that he will fall madly in love with you despite the age difference, and ask you to join his band. Of course, you know that won't happen. But that's okay. You'll still get to see him up on stage. Your hero, right there in front of you.

On October 15th, 2001, the big day had arrived. I was about to see my real-life guitar hero in concert. Yes, I was going to see Joe Strummer, the love of my musical life. The man who was in my favorite band of all time. The man who, more than anyone else, I wanted to be with, or maybe just *be*. The man who had gotten me through tough times with good music to boot. I was going to fucking see Joe Strummer. I went to the show, dressed in a short skirt and cool shoes, hoping that he would somehow pick me out of the crowd and ask me to run away with him. I was shaking with anticipation. When he walked on stage, I thought I was going to melt into a puddle of giggles, like some dumb girl. Punks aren't supposed to have idols, I know. But we *do* have them, and it would be idiotic to try to deny that.

God, he rocked out. If I hadn't known, I never would have guessed that he's almost my dad's age. He still looked so motherfucking sexy. He and the Mescaleros played some Mescaleros songs, of course, but they played a lot of Clash songs, and a Specials song, and even a Ramones song. "This is for a dear departed," Joe said, and they blasted right into "Blitzkrieg Bop." And how could I forget? They played "Rudie Can't Fail," my favorite fucking Clash song. Thanks, Joe.

No, Joe never asked me to run away with him, but it was okay, because I got to see him finally, after waiting for over four years of my life – and when you're as young as I am, four years seems like an eternity. It was the best show I have ever seen.

So it's a little over a year later. The Clash were just about to be inducted into the Rock'n'Roll Hall of Fame (and about damn time, too – I still stand by calling The Clash "the only band that really matters") and there was even discussion of them getting back together for one reunion show in honor of it. I woulda sold my soul for a ticket to that show. And I've been trying to work on a Clash fanzine, filled with stories written by people about how they got into the Clash, and what that band meant for them. I was planning on sending a copy to Joe Strummer when it was all done, thinking that it would be a way of saying thanks for everything

he'd done for me and so many other people.

On December 23rd, 2002, I was leaving Baltimore, where I had been visiting my friend Ali, who's just as in love with Joe Strummer as I am, and The Clash is her favorite band, too. We had a hella rad time, as usual, having all kinds of crazy adventures: drinking beer, hanging out at punk rock shows, excited because we thought we might get to see The Clash! I flew home content, happy that I got to see her, excited about my life. I was listening to The Clash on my bus ride home from the airport. I got into my apartment, glad to be home and to have a couple days to relax before Xmas, anxious to kiss my boyfriend. There was a message on the answering machine, from Ali. She sounded devastated.

"Hey, Jess, it's me. I know you won't be home yet. But give me a call as soon as you get back. I have some really bad news."

My first thought was that something bad happened to someone we knew. I ransacked my backpack for her phone number and called immediately.

"Ali?!"

"Yeah."

"What the fuck happened?"

"Joe Strummer died last night."

"What?! This is some sort of awful joke, right?"

"I wish."

That was before they knew he had a heart attack. We imagined it had been some sort of unnatural cause. Murder? Drugs? Suicide? Joe Strummer wasn't supposed to fucking die; it *couldn't* have been natural causes, right?

I started laughing hysterically because that's what I do when I don't know how to deal with something. It wasn't until a few hours later, when a DJ at the college station I listen to played "London Calling."

"Well, I gotta go," I told Ali after we talked for a while about how unbelievable this all was.

"Try to have an okay Christmas," she said.

"Yeah, you too."

I hung up the phone, sat down in the middle of my living room floor, looked at the three Clash posters I have in my apartment, and tried to imagine life in a Joe Strummer-less world.

People gave me shit for being upset about Joey Ramone's death, and I got even worse shit for being sad about Joe's death. I was in no mood to deal with it. "Strummer's dead, so what?" some dude I vaguely know online said. He went on this whole rant about how Strummer was a sellout and so were The Clash. Unlike *his* favorite bands, Crass and Rudimentary Peni, who are oh so pure. 'Cause *they* weren't on major labels, and *their* members have done cool, important things since those bands broke up.

Yeah, so I ain't sayin' The Clash/Joe Strummer were perfect. No one is. And I'm not a huge fan of major labels myself, but I argued that because they were on a major label, The Clash were able to bring their politics to a wider audience. Sure, lots of people bought *Combat Rock* for "Rock the Casbah" and "Should I Stay or Should I Go?" but then they also had to hear "Straight to Hell" and

"Know Your Rights." And The Clash also did rad things like make their album prices lower, even if it meant a profit loss for them. There aren't too many bands that do that these days, on major or indie labels. And Strummer didn't do anything cool after The Clash? Bullshit. His solo career and The Mescaleros produced a lot of good fucking music. I'm sorry it wasn't "punk rock" enough. Blah.

...AND HIS VOICE, SOOTHING YOU OFF TO SLEEP SOMETIMES AND OTHER TIMES MAKING YOU WANT TO START A RIOT OF YOUR OWN.

This same boy also told me that mourning the loss of someone I didn't know personally was meaningless. Well, fuck you. Tell me how you feel when your favorite member of your favorite band of all time passes on. Tell me how you feel when the person whose words got you through a lot of shitty times is no longer here. And it's more complicated than all that, too. I'm not just feeling the loss of a great musician and a good person. I'm feeling something deeper than that – something that I can't even put into words. Something that I don't *want* to put into words.

The one positive thing that Joe's death has caused for me – it sparked something. It makes me want to carry on his legacy, in a way. Not necessarily through music – but I have promised myself that I will try as hard as I fucking can to make as much of a positive impact in people's lives and in the world as Joe Strummer did.

So I will raise a pint to my lips tonight, and before I drink I will say: "Whatever world you're in now, Joe, I hope it's just as rockin' as the one you left behind. So long, Joe. This one's for you."



It seemed to happen all of a sudden. Out of nowhere, the synthesizer made a roaring re-entrance into a form of music that had formerly shunned it. If you would have asked me ten years ago, "Hey, what do you think of keyboards?" I would have responded, "Shove it up your ass, twinkle toes— unless you're the Screamers." Keyboards were often rock's nemesis. They cluttered the Top 40 airwaves. Goddamn it, man, Michael Bolton's band uses one. "Alternative" music didn't provide the antidote. Too many wispy, feather-haired Euro-dressing puds coifed in their grandmother's clothes and poofy, lacey shirts pranced around keyboards. I was leery, skeptical, and full of venom. The enemy was easy to see. If a band member didn't have an instrument with strings or they didn't beat the hell out of it, they might as well be holding a wall-sized glossy of my mom getting gang raped on stage. I took it a bit too seriously. My heckles and threats were constant.

Enter a little band called Servotron, who engineered robots that were geared to kill all humans. Their set was furious. They were bent on destruction, and they had a keyboard. I was confused. What I was supposed to hate was sorta soothing, sorta cool. My ear had been cracked.

Skip a couple years. I had a similar experience with the Causey Way. Dressed in white and hypnotizing, they, too, brought big bundles of the rock and used the keyboards, not as a frill, but as an integrated part of their sound. They helped melt some of my hate. Since then, my hate's been slowly reversed. I sincerely believe that keyboards, when used properly, can add a new, fuller dimension to bands — from the Locust to Snuff, Lost Sounds, and the Epoxies.

I'd first met Scott Stanton — when he would only go by Causey — two years ago. He was one of the very first interviews to appear in *Razorcake* (#1). Since then, the Causey Way dissipated and he's started another project with his wife. It's called Pilot Scott Tracy. There's a little bit of overlap in the sound from the previous band they were both members of, but it's definitely taking off in a unique direction, and it's pretty addictive stuff. They're full of sultry, hyperactive jumps of songs that blaze and slither along with guitars, pounding drums, and — yes, I'll fully admit — a pretty fuckin' cool-sounding keyboard.

Buckle up, put on some goggles, and crack open a little bottle of booze (or fancy juice). It's time for . . .

PILOT SCOTT TRACY

Todd: Scott, did you take Tracy's last name? Your name is now hyphenated.

Scott: Yes, Tracy's last name is added to my last name. My last name is added to hers. Seems like the natural thing people should do when they get married.

Todd: For you, what is the most musical difference between your previous band The Causey Way — which you and Tracy were in — and Pilot Scott Tracy?

Scott: Um, that's kind of tough to answer. You see, I wrote all — well 99.9 percent — of the songs for The Causey Way and Tracy filled in the gaps by writing the keyboard lines and structuring a majority of the songs with me. Tracy and I co-wrote and recorded the Pilot Scott Tracy songs. We're the same creative writing team we were when we wrote the songs for the Causey Way, so I can't say we have this big change with PST. Tracy and I have had a lot of practice on writing and recording songs. As far as our first Pilot Scott Tracy CD, *Flight 0713*, if anyone is familiar with and likes The Causey Way, I'm sure they'll like Pilot Scott Tracy. As of now, we're moving on and written many songs that sound different. I think our country roots are rubbing off into our songs, but no one would ever pick that up and say we've gone country. A Moog doesn't really sound like a slide guitar. My voice might get as pitchy as Hank Senior and he might be an influence, but I'll never sound like him. Hank is far too

Todd: How's the band different, internally?

◁ Interview by Todd ▷ Photos by Zteven ▷

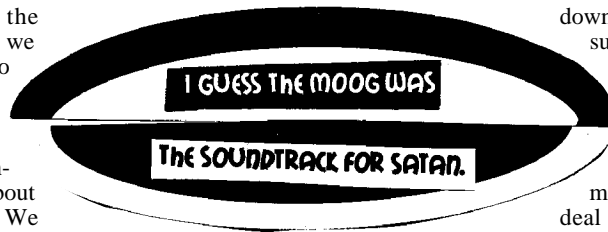


Scott: Pilot Scott Tracy is great fun because we're not a band in the tradition we've all come to know. It's enjoyable because we don't have to answer to any members within a band, we don't have to deal with labels, booking agents, promotion companies, or any of that. We're in control of that now and that makes life much less stressful. We have the control to dismiss whatever we may wish. If we want to stay on the couch and watch *All in the Family*, we can do that. But we haven't had to call anything off because we set everything up and we think about our well-being when we set things up. Therefore, we don't have to cancel stuff due to the fact that we're about to crack from road life and stress. We don't have to call a booking agent or club and say, "Man, our van is broken. We won't be able to make it to the show." Even if you are truly broke down, booking agents and promoters treat you like a middle school student and think you're lying. Nobody needs that shit when you're actually broken down in the middle of nowhere. Constant touring starts to feel like that in general. No matter where you are, you feel like you're broken down in the middle of nowhere. Booking agents can make pretty tough schedules. Mooney Suzuki used to mock their booking agent in a "friendly" way. They would say that the only thing he'd ever say to them is, "Keep driving!"

We took on that saying as our touring battle cry.

Todd: So, why the ending of one band and the beginning of a fresh new one? Not many bands have pulled that off except All and Toys That Kill.

Scott: I suppose I entered Pilot Scott Tracy with a much better mindset then I did with



the Causey Way – I got caught up in the hype with the Causey Way. In short, I had a "living the dream mentality" and I jumped the shark into another world. I became part of the hypocrisy that I was so against. I faced that. I didn't like where I was going and I made a hard change. After the Causey Way was done, and time had passed, Tracy and I realized we really liked the music we wrote and recorded. The answer seemed clear: ditch all the baggage that comes along with being in a "band" and just play some music. Pilot Scott Tracy is a very small part of our life. It's a way to make music, take some small trips, and meet some new people.

Todd: When and how did you and Tracy meet?

Scott: Gosh, that goes back sometime. Tracy went to college in my hometown of Pensacola, Florida to receive her Bachelor's degree. I didn't know her then because I was always out of town, skateboarding in contests. Tracy was into live music, so she knew people who I knew through music. This fact would play out to be important down the road. I was in a band called This Bike is a Pipebomb and Tracy was friends with the bass player, Terry. So when we played in Gainesville, we stayed with Tracy quite often. I remember one time that Tracy and I stayed up late talking about music and pop culture and we enjoyed each other's company a great deal. This certain Gainesville show happened to be the first show of a two-month tour, so I had a great deal of time to think about Tracy. I wrote her and said I'd like to visit her after the tour. Tracy agreed with my wish and I ended up visiting. I never left.

Todd: Hate to be cheesy, but was it a "your synthesizer or mine?" type deal?

Scott: As far as keyboards, one of the few things I brought with me was a Korg Monopoly and Tracy fell in love with that keyboard. To this day, Tracy believes that it's her keyboard. I suppose it is. She gained ownership over that keyboard somehow. Tracy and I get a lit-

tle ridiculous with our keyboards. We sometimes talk to them like they're little babies. We have issues, huh?

Todd: In "Love Is an Animal" you talk about "piggies." Although it's tongue and cheek, there's an anti-authoritarian sentiment. Have you been hassled by The Man?

Scott: [sarcastically, half joking] Yeah, as a white male... The Man has really beaten me down. Life is hard for me. Like most of the suburban white punks, I created a feeling inside that I had been beaten down by the cops and that life was unfair. The Man wouldn't let me skateboard at a certain place. He wouldn't let me play loud music. He wouldn't respect my crazy hair. I had serious problems to deal with and I was pissed. I suppose, as kids we became aware that things are unfair for so many people and we just tried to rebel anyway we can. We saw a lot of hypocrisy. So I guess, all in all, it's good that kids get angry about little things. It will make them see things clearer when they grow up. Hopefully they'll grow and look at real issues very critically. I suppose that's the thing I see most unfair about our government – they have kept things hidden and they don't tell the truths and the struggles of so many people. This is so elementary and a given for the majority of your readers, but far too many people don't know their history. If one studies the history of the U.S. with a critical mind, it makes things clearer as to why we still have so much injustice. America has some huge problems that are specific to our country and our country alone, but the USA has been successful at keeping such horrific facts from being talked about. Instead, all we hear about is how much better our country is compared to any other country. There's a serious problem when people push their beliefs and back it up with, "but that's what our forefathers wanted." Do they ever think that maybe our forefathers were a bunch of assholes? This is obviously very complicated, but I believe almost everyone has a big dream that that one day things could be simple and all people will live in comfort. This will never happen as long as we live in a world of extremes. If we have extremely rich, we will have extremely poor. If we have extreme liberals, we will have an extreme right wing. If we have religious, we will have anti-religious. When it comes down to it, we're all just trying to feed and clothe our babies, and capitalism and pop culture in the modern world has changed what that means. I'm growing more and more cynical of big business and the media, not the government.

Todd: I'm not a listener who's usually big on bleeps and bloops and synthesizers, but Pilot Scott Tracy's music has an organic feel to it. At times it feels very surfy. At other times, it has a great flow – like very well-structured songs, instead of purely experiments. There seems to be a soul behind your machines. Can



you take me through your thought process of putting a song together in this way?

Scott: I agree with you completely. I'm not much into "beeps and bleeps" or experimental stuff. Tracy and I use older keyboards, nothing past the '80s. I'm not a fan of all this new digital stuff that happens to be a song at the touch of a button. There's no soul in that at all. We write our songs just like most bands – a couple chords with two or three changes within the song. We have the standard setup of bass, guitar, and drums. Tracy just does the leads on the Moog. I don't see why bands need so many guitars. Guitars are such a dude instrument and there are only so many things you can do with a guitar to create a different sound. Guitars are kind of stupid in my book. Old keyboards, like Moogs, actually give one the option to create a sound that's totally original. It might sound far out there, but it's your own sound.

Keyboards are more common now. Things have changed. Not long back I'd never see a self-proclaimed punk band with keys in it and now it's pretty common to see keys in the lineup. I've been made fun of by punks when I played keyboards in a band. These "punks" would resort to the insult I became so familiar with in my skateboard days. Rednecks would yell, "Hey faggot, get a car!" while I skated down the street. Punks went with, "Hey faggot, get a guitar!" I still don't know why a skateboard or a keyboard created so much anger in these folks. For some reason, the heckler always resorted to a gay remark. I know keyboards have a bad name, and for good reason. We live in a world of prefab songs filled with Madonnas and boy bands. Keyboards turn me off because the way most people use them, but guitars turn me off as well. Damn, musicians turn me off. Walk into one of those Guitar Centers and tell me those people are not the worse.

Todd: I know you hate people saying it, but you do look a little like David Koresh. Scott: Did you know that David Koresh met his drummer in a Guitar Center in Hollywood? Koresh was recruiting people in a Guitar Center.

Todd: I bet that's not on a plaque there, next to a dude from White Lion's hand

RAZORCAKE 44 print.

Scott: Anyhow, you made a great point about experimental music and I agree. I believe I'm more turned off by the experimental music than I'm with the most popular pop song.

Todd: Any other form of music get you



scratching your head?

Scott: Emo gets on my nerves. They aren't the ground-breaking genius they may think they are. It's all been done before. I hear those songs on college radio that play on and on and I think one or two things: these guys are way too serious and pretentious or they think they're making some bad ass art. I guess those things go hand in hand.

Todd: Or they're super worried the trust fund's running out or their pants are too tight..

Scott: Whether it's completely experimental, emo, math, or powder punk, it all gets lame when it's not original in the least. It sounds like many of these folk buy the *CliffsNotes* to emo, or the *CliffsNotes* to punk when they write their songs. It gets comical for sure.

Todd: What gets me about emo is they cite great bands – Rites of Spring, Seaweed, Drive Like Jehu – and then they mostly come out with out-of-focus, whiny, tinkling, nutless crysongs.

Scott: What artistic nerve hits them and they think, man, I need to make this wonderful song public? Anyhow, as far as our writing pattern, I suppose I hear things a little differently than most of the people I have ever played music with. This could be simply from the fact that I can't tune my guitar by ear and I don't hear very well at all. You know, that can

be a problem when you play music in a band. I have no idea what I'm doing.

Todd: How did you come about to find that the synthesizer was the instrument for you, especially since it's such an antagonism to the populace at large?

Scott: Well, I haven't come to that conclusion. I like synthesizers because they make unique sounds. I also like that fact that they are very much about science, rather than rock and roll. Guitars are rock and roll. People who go to the Hard Rock Café love guitars. I have always loved the noises that come out of old synthesizers. Tracy and I watched this "satanic" movie the other night that was shot in the '60s and Mick Jagger does the soundtrack which is simply Moog noises. I love to picture Mick tweaking those knobs on the Moog. It's quite funny. So, I guess the Moog was the soundtrack for Satan.

Todd: When did you cross over away from purely guitar?

Scott: When I was in This Bike Is A Pipebomb, I'd use pedals through my guitar to create synth sounds. I'd catch shit for not keeping it real. I guess using pedals or effects was not keeping it real. I was breaking the rules in a world that was supposed to be rule free. Still, all in all, Tracy and I actually sit around and play guitar more often than we play keyboards. We mostly play old country songs on our porch. But when we record and play live we don't think that'd go over too well. It's kind of boring when it comes to a show. Admittedly, Causey Way and Pilot Scott Tracy recordings are filled with keyboards and new wave sounds and one would think we're all about keyboards. But neither band was all about keyboards. Instead of turning up the "shredding guitar lead" in our mix, we choose to turn the Moog lead up. The keyboards stick out in our music a great deal because other bands don't commonly use synthesizers the way we use them. I'm not saying that we're doing something completely new and original. We aren't at all, but we do use our keyboards in a different way. We have the same keyboards that Rush, Van Halen, and Phish have, but we just use them quite differently...

Todd: Or Rik Wakeman's prog rock supernatural fairy tales.

Scott: Thank God.

Todd: Amen to that. So why not take the guitars out completely, for PST?

Scott: The guitar has a sense of "coolness" to it. Like I said before, many popular rock bands have keyboards in their lineup, but they put the keyboard player way in the back, or behind a curtain so no one would see them.

Todd: No shit. Paul Stanley of KISS, when he was doing the song, "The Fight" as part of a band called Desmond Child and Rogue, employed Rik Wakeman to do synth. You can barely hear it. Sorry, I just hate Rik Wakeman.

Scott: I suppose they think keyboards are gay and it's cooler to be up front shredding the fret board and having a fan blow their hair. Pilot Scott Tracy isn't afraid to look gay. As a matter of fact, we're quite fond of it. If we must be categorized in the synthesizer/new wave camp, I guess I'm okay with that label. Devo, Tubeway Army, the B-52's and Blondie are big influences, but The Clash, The Specials, The Damned, and a million other bands before them are of great importance to us. American punk rock, too.

Todd: Well, that's what I like about the bands you're in. Your music's always full and thick. A lot of new wave rehash is really thin – they only seem to pick up on one or two dimensions of it. What aspect of your personality gets perfectly filtered into your music?

Scott: Well, I suppose it's clear. We don't take ourselves too seriously when we write our music. Life is already far too serious, and to bring that seriousness into something that's supposed to bring joy, well, that can be depressing. I suppose we all know far too many artists who take things way too seriously. They let people who critique them or review them in a negative manner shoot them down. I suppose they have self-importance issues. We're like most songwriters and I suppose what's on our minds comes out in our songs. We write about what we like and don't like. We based some songs off of a theme park experience. Tracy and I had the idea for the Causey Way after we went to Disney's Epcot Center. Those rides gave us so many ideas for songs and theme bands, so when we got home and wrote songs, those became Causey Way songs. "The Making of Me," that was a ride that showed in a G rated way how babies are made. "Carousel of Progress" became a Causey Way song as well. Tracy and I originally wanted to call the Causey Way, Republic of Phobos. We saw that name on a TV screen while waiting in line for the Space Mountain ride. Anyhow, then and now, Pilot Scott Tracy has many roots to the "If

You Had Wings" ride at Disney and that ride is probably long gone since flying isn't very sexy anymore.

Todd: Did your parents read you a lot of fairy tales when you were children?

Scott: Not that I remember. My dad was more the type to read the dictionary to me. I suppose that's why I vacated into fairyland as much as I could and I remained there as

PILOT SCOTT TRACY ISN'T AFRAID TO LOOK GAY. AS A
MATTER OF FACT, WE'RE QUITE FOND OF IT.

an adult. I was from a big family so there wasn't much time for reading to each and every one of us. I was much more a fan of cartoons. I suppose Tracy was reading fairy tales since both of her parents were public school teachers. Tracy's much more about the visual and cartoons as well. That seems pretty clear in the music we write and the bands we've formed. They're always visual.

Todd: You've touched on skating a couple times already. Do you have a hankering to hit a half pipe?

Scott: I'd love to skate a half pipe! It seems

the year I move, they build a skatepark.

Todd: You were a professional skateboarder for Zorlac, right?

Scott: Yeah, I was a pro skateboarder. This question brings up so many memories and so many present ideas I have about skateboarding. Skateboarding has reached the popularity that I only dreamed of long ago. But now that I see this reality come true, it's a bit of a nightmare.

Todd: How so?

Scott: Skateboarding in the general eye of the public has been reduced to a video game. It's now an extreme idea that sells Ford trucks. Fender guitars has an extreme guitar endorsed by a skateboarder. That's insane; not just the idea itself, but who they have to endorse as well as how lame the guitar is.

Todd: In your estimation, what skater deserves a signature guitar?

Scott: I would have voted for Lance Mountain, Ray Barbee, or Stevie Cab, but the guy they chose is a member of Tony Hawk's traveling circus. That fits into the business of it all, I suppose.

Todd: So, Zorlac?

Scott: I was sponsored by Zorlac years before I turned pro. I was pro just about the time George Bush senior was in the White House. That kind of dates what time period we're talking about. It was kind of a weird time all around. I remember flying around the world doing skateboard demos during the Gulf War. That was interesting and scary. Zorlac originated in Texas and had a whole different vibe than most skateboard companies of that time period, and that was my original attraction to them.

Todd: With one of your Zorlac boards, you had a Pushead-drawn balding clown skull as a graphic, right?

Scott: Yeah. Zorlac started with Japanimation and those ideas so long ago, years before any other skateboard company got into that art form. They had very original ideas. The owner, Jeff Newton, had some financial troubles and sold the company to some guys in California. This seemed to be a good deal at first because Jeff would be free of whatever debt he had built up. It turned out to be bad in the long run. The original creative idea that Jeff envisioned turned to crap because California Zorlac ran it into the ground. The business guys in California lacked the creative idea of what Zorlac was and should be. They took their California



like everywhere I live never has a vert ramp. But the minute I move, they build one. I live in Kalamazoo, Michigan now. The last place I lived just built a huge vert ramp. There was no ramp in Gainesville, Florida for the five years I lived there and

attitude and tried to continue this “Texas image.” They should have started a new idea completely.

The business guys at Zorlac California – their skateboards sucked and the graphics got worse and worse. They cut cost by any means necessary and this usually sacrificed the quality of the skateboards or the quality of advertisements. They never listened to the skaters on the team. They thought they had some clever ideas. I never had what I wanted with ads, graphics or boards and, as a result, I didn’t ride Zorlac boards. I’d ride other boards made by other companies, take the graphics off, and just say it was a prototype. I was able to trade my Zorlac boards at local skate shops because the boards sold well at the time.

Todd: Jesus. That’s not a good way to be on a team.

Scott: These guys at Zorlac California were all about making money and not too worried about being a professional skateboard company that real skateboarders would respect. They were far more about just selling skateboards by any means. One time, I saw my boards in a skate shop with my autograph on it. I knew that I had not signed it, so I called Zorlac and they said, “Yeah, we signed it. It helps sales.” I told them, “I guess I have no power over that and you all are going to do it regardless. Go ahead and sign my name, but DO NOT, and I repeat DO NOT ever sign my name and draw a peace symbol next to it.” I guess they thought that was a hip symbol and they attached my name to it. They probably put an anarchy symbol next to my name as well.

Todd: Why’d you keep on skating for them, then, and let them keep using your name?

Scott: I guess I didn’t really give it much thought to change companies. I didn’t really care. I never thought of skateboarding as a big career move or anything. That wasn’t a big reality for me. I was all about skating and having a good time. We only dreamed of Taco Bell and companies like that being our sponsors and being interested in skateboarding. The good thing about Zorlac California was the fact that they sent us so many places. This was a time when not many companies were sending their team riders across the U.S. and they sent us all around the world. I was very happy in that department and I was all about traveling and meeting new people and skating new spots. I felt so lucky that Zorlac was paying for us to go around the world and skateboard. It didn’t hit me ‘til later that we made those guys a lot of money by going around and being their little walking advertisements. Zorlac knew that sending us around the world to skate would generate big profit overseas, and they were right.

Todd: How old were you around this time?

Scott: We were suckers for sure, young kids just happy to skateboard for bread and water. I know those guys were laughing their way to the bank and paying us the minimum amount they could get away with. I was this passive kid who they took



DAVID KORESH WAS RECRUITING PEOPLE

IN A GUITAR CENTER.

advantage of. I never complained about money or anything like that. I rolled with the flow and wore a smile. A few of my fellow, older team riders who knew better gave the Zorlac owners some shit. Craig Johnson, Alan Losi and some of the others wanted to kill the heads at Zorlac. I never knew why they were so angry. Now I know and I wonder why they dealt with it. I guess there was no other place to go. Most skateboard companies sucked then. There weren’t a lot of skater-owned companies then and if there were, the skater owners usually got wrapped up in the business side and lost their original “vision” of what they wanted to start. Anyhow, as you can see, I could ramble on and on about the silly world of skateboarding. All in all, it was a good time and quite an experience.

Todd: I don’t mind at all. You also said

that you got out of skateboarding because it was “getting too extreme.” Explain that because you’ve said you’ve noticed how the realms of music and skating converge sometimes.

Scott: Exactly. I got out of the business side of skateboarding, but I never quit skating. The business side and the crap I saw on that level robbed my joy of it. I had to exit that world in order to enjoy skateboarding again. I was able to regain my love for skateboarding when I quit being a pro/commercial skateboarder. Idealization and realization can be the worst thing about anything. One dreams about something and envisions what it might be like for so long and when they finally “live the dream,” they see that it isn’t what they thought. One has to do things for the right reasons – let their gut feelings direct them, and I doubt one will ever be let down.

Skateboarding and music are similar worlds on the business side. I never expected the “punk rock/art world” of skateboarding or music to be hypocritical, so when I found out that it was just like any subculture of pop culture, I was let down. I expect bullshit at my dishwashing job or at my labor job. I’m prepared for it because they don’t preach anything different. But when you enter an artistic culture where people preach to be different and not absorbed by money, we see hypocrisy. I’ve seen “business folk” get absorbed with money, and “artist folk” get absorbed with fame. They both can wreck you and privatize you if you don’t watch out. In many ways, they’re one in the same. By the way, I believe skateboarding is very much an art form, not a sport.

Todd: Okay, final question. Now that you all are no longer in the Causey Way and in a “cult,” can you tell us a bit more about Tracy’s academic career? Did she finish her Ph.D.?

Scott: I suppose Dr. Tracy can explain this best. She did receive her Ph.D. and I know it was a brutal task for her.

[Tracy walks into the club.]

Tracy: Yes, I finished my Ph.D. in Film Studies at the University of Florida in 2000. I applied for academic jobs all over the country and made the mistake of joking that “I even applied for a job in Kalamazoo!” My fate was sealed. I got the job at Kalamazoo College – teaching film studies and critical theory. Turns out, it’s actually a great place. My co-workers are kooky, creative, and interesting people, and they’re very supportive of our rock’n’roll moonlighting. Some of my students were Causey Way fans, so they’re new PST recruits. About once a week, a student approaches me and asks, “Is it true that you’re a rock star?” “Absolutely,” I tell them. “This teaching gig is just a cover.”





the gc5

Interview by Sean Carswell

Photos by Jeff Costello

It's hard to listen to a song by The GC 5 and not become a fan. Their songs creep into you like a virus infecting everywhere from the top of your mind to the bottom of your throat. You'll try to sing along the first time you hear the song. For the next week, you'll sit in front of the speakers, reading along with the lyrics and memorizing every note, every chord, every drumbeat. You'll wander around town humming, "I know who's gonna get fucked in the end," to yourself. You'll get into drunken conversations where you'll end up slurring, "Have you heard of The GC 5? Why haven't you heard of The GC 5?" You'll dub cassettes and burn CDs of The GC 5's albums and EPs for your friends, who will then go out and buy the albums and EPs because they want to own their own copy. I'm telling you this before you read this interview. I want you to know what you're getting in to.

So who is this band about to burrow into your brain? First off, The GC 5 have nothing to do with The MC 5. I only bring up The MC 5 because, well, you gotta admit the names are similar. Everything else is different. The GC 5 play a solid, fast, tough rock'n'roll that mixes in the best of Cock Sparrer, The Business, the Swingin' Utters, and the Workin' Stiffs, but manage to make songs that sound uniquely like The GC 5. They blend together intelligent lyrics about working class politics, heartbreak, growing up on the road, and coming from industrial northern Ohio with music and a sense of humor that makes you want to sing along.

They're also one of those bands that I want everyone to listen to. So, when they drove past LA without playing LA on their last tour, I talked them into stopping for a couple of hours and doing an interview. Pete, the singer, had "some beer drinking to do" and headed northeast to Vegas, but Dave, Doug, and Paul hung out with me for an afternoon, and we talked about street punk, politics, Wal-Mart, and betting the devil your head.

The GC 5 are:

Pete Kyrou – vocals, guitar

Dave McKean – drums

Doug McKean – vocals, bass

Paul Weaver – lead guitar

Sean: Where do you get the strong working class values from? Do your parents have working class jobs, or is it the area where you grew up?

Doug: We're all fairly middle class kids. That's around us; you can't escape it. I think it has something to do with how you try to get a grasp on the way you view the world when you're in your late teens and early twenties. You define yourself within that. You take on certain values politically. You become aware of how you look at people. Things change in all sorts of ways. I think any lyrics that we've written about that come not in an attempt to propagandize or make up slogans. They're just a reflection of what our values are.

Paul: For myself, personally,

I wasn't raised working class or really even with working class values in the family, but my dad's a professor, so there's a sort of working class intellectualism to my upbringing. Obviously, a lot of the left pushes things towards an intellectual, working class mentality. So I've come around to it from the opposite direction. I didn't really live it, then talk about it.

Sean: What does your father teach?

Paul: He teaches English.

Sean: Commie. English teachers are commies.

Paul [laughs]: No, he's a die-hard centrist. And darn proud of it, too.

Sean: Dave, I read somewhere that you were working since you were eight. Is that true?

Dave: Can I ask where you read that?

Sean: In an interview with Vic Gedris in *World Wide Punk*.

Paul: Doug did that interview.

Sean: Doug's the one who said it.

Dave [shaking his head]: I had a paper

route. But as far as being sent out to do factory work, that's definitely not the case.

Sean: Odd jobs?

Dave: As much as any other kid. Nothing out of the ordinary.

Doug: We definitely had parents who didn't want us to be lazy.

Sean: So you guys were only eighteen or nineteen when you did your first album (*Kisses from Hanoi*)?

Doug: We recorded that in fall of '99, so Pete and Dave would have been eighteen, I would have been twenty, and our old guitar player was a couple years older than me. He would have been twenty-two or so at the time.

Sean: His name was Chris, right? What happened to him?

Doug: He was working a lab at school. He graduated from college the year before we recorded that record. So he was working the lab, and he got a chance to go work in the lab out at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore and do stuff out there. I sound like I don't know

what I'm talking about when I explain it, but I just don't know that much about biology.

Paul: He was working on a human genome project out of Johns Hopkins.

Doug: He was doing big shit and writing stuff that's actually going to be published. He's out in Chicago now. He moved out there just this fall and he's starting grad school out there. He's working on a PhD. Actually, he'd been working in labs for the last three years. He's got some experience under his belt. He'd been down to South America a few times.

Sean: How'd you hook up with the band, Paul?

Paul: I've been their friend for a long time. I've known them since we were playing in different bands in the same small town scene starting in our sophomore year of high school. And, I became obsessively friends with these guys. I'd spend every weekend over in their town. So I was just in the right place at the right time. I was the closest friend to these guys who could take over for Chris. But I couldn't even play guitar at the time.

Chris quit in a sort of hurried fashion, right before the summer tour they had planned. He'd gotten a pretty good offer to go out to Baltimore. He had told me in advance that he wasn't sure he could stay with the band. It got my gears turning, like, maybe I could learn to play guitar and join GC 5. That would totally fucking rule. I played bass in my old band. I hadn't really played guitar at all. These guys were kind of hesitant about it. But I was like, hmm, let me try to learn guitar. So we had a lot of shitty shows while I went through my growing pains. But it worked out okay.

Doug: I think our enthusiasm probably got us through that first tour.

Sean: But your sound is different than Chris's. You don't have as many solos. In that first album, he's got a solo on every song.

Doug: We have solos on almost every song on the newest record (*Never Bet the Devil Your Head*). To me, I think the new record is more of a guitar record than the first one.

Paul: Anything I'd learned about guitar, I learned from Doug and Chris, and mostly just by playing the songs that they wrote the guitar parts for. Rather than talk about my style, I'd rather talk about his. He was all into violin and things like that, and he had this amazing vibrato and touch on the strings. I don't know anybody who's played like that. If you want to compare and contrast, I'd say he

kicked ass and I'm a hack. If you want to call a guitar playing style "lyrical" or something like that, that's Chris. And then, I'm just bashing away at it.

Doug: Paul's taken a lot of the better aspects of what Chris did, too. I remember when we went into the studio to record the EP *Horseshoes and Handgrenades*, we didn't have the guitar solo written for one song before we went in. And Paul came up with

It seemed like the most bizarre thing in the world to do, to go play Wal-Mart on Labor Day.

this really nice, note-y solo that ended up on the record and made the song, in my mind. Paul's been good.

Sean: I don't know if you guys have ever thought about this, but I'm guessing you have. When ska first came out, people were pretty accepting of ska for a while, and it really got overexposed before it got a backlash. When pop punk came out, people were pretty accepting of it for a while. It really was overexposed before it got a backlash. But when street punk and oi started coming out, being the next big thing, people jumped on it right away. It had a backlash right away. People were right away like, "You guys aren't working class, you're this and that." Why do you think that is? Do you have any theories as to why street punk got a backlash so quickly?

Dave: Probably because people were so fucking smart.

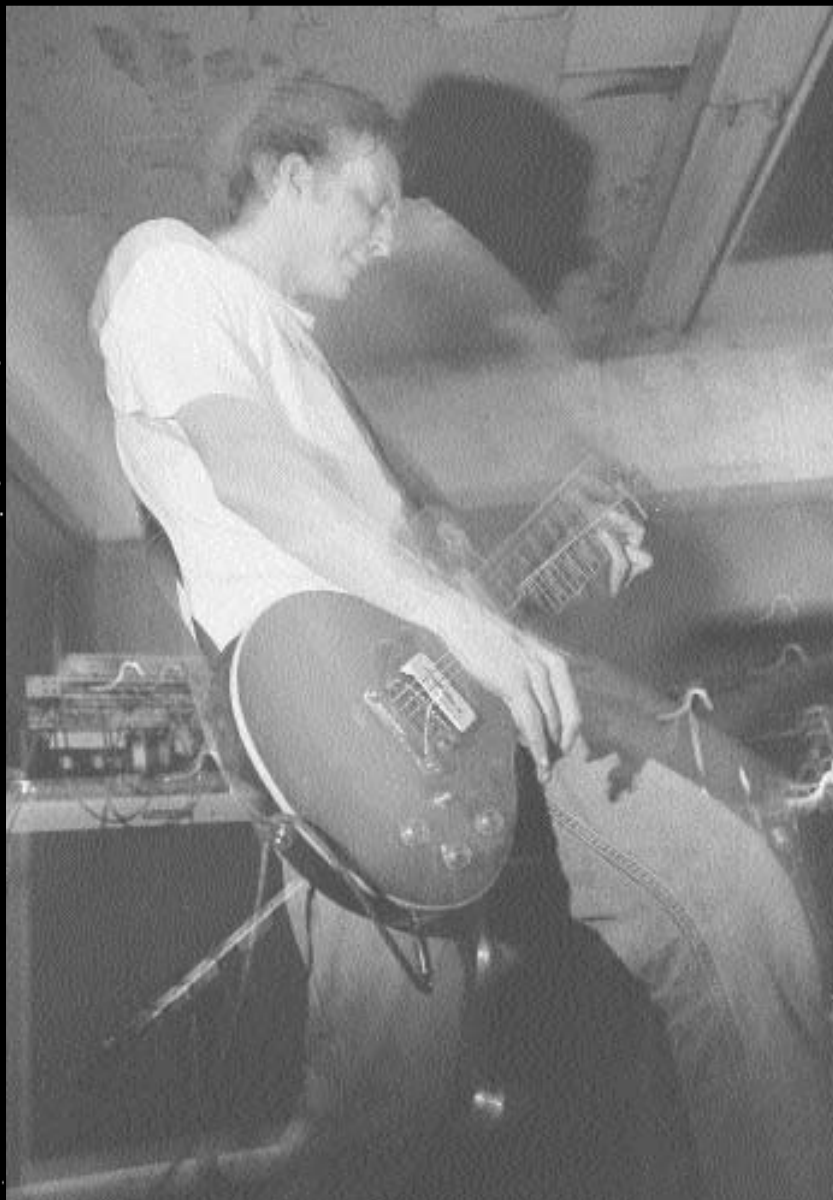
Doug: It's such a package that you're expected to adopt, like your lyrics, your look, your outlook on things. I love a lot of that music, maybe not so much the modern

stuff, but bands like Cock Sparrer, Sham 69, Stiff Little Fingers, and The Clash. Good anthemic British punk rock. I never thought that liking that stuff meant that we had to adopt this, this, and this, and we had to be whatever. If it's very packaged, I think people are right to have a bit of backlash against that. I think it's packaged even more so than ska or something like that. There's quite a dress code to street punk.

Paul: Well, with ska, I think it's harder to make yourself want to keep wearing a fancy suit every day. But it's easier with street punk. It's just wearing tighter pants and buying a set of boots. Especially if, say, you were into metal or something. You'd already have the tight pants. I say this like it wasn't me [laughs]. And you could already have combat boots for some other reason and wear those with three other fashions. It's easier to work your way into street punk. The one thing Doug left out was how reassuring it is to get into street punk the first time and about how it feels so good, how everyone sticks together, and you're never wrong. But seriously, it's such a cartoon. If you don't have the hindsight on that really fast, I'd question your ideas. I don't want to sound too harsh on bands who take it really seriously, but, to a certain extent, I do want to be that harsh. It's can be a pretty big trap.

Sean: Your musical influences are pretty apparent. But, reading old interviews, I saw that you had some literary influences, too.





Like Kerouac?

Doug: I hesitate to really overstate that. But, I read *On the Road* when I was in high school and still living with my parents. And when you have that very sheltered life of being in high school, and you read things like that book, it really influences you.

I don't know that there's a literary influence to anything we do. I guess any reasonably intelligent person is to some extent influenced by art. Whatever we do as a band is influenced by books we read or music we listen to or whatever.

Sean: What about you, Paul? With your father being an English professor, did you read a lot of books?

Paul: It was always non-fiction. I got into a humongous fight with a friend the other day about what was and wasn't fiction. It was

about what was fiction and what was non-fiction became an argument about whether or not drugs influenced your life, to what degree does that ruin or add to art. Like, would the beatniks have happened if they weren't the beatniks, or something like that? I don't know. I'm getting off the subject.

I always stay to pretty cut and dry things. I like reading about music more. And then I started reading philosophy, but obviously you can get into debates whether that's kind of fiction, anyhow. But now mainly I read mostly political history stuff.

Doug: Dave, what do you think about philosophy being fiction or non-fiction? One-word answer.

Dave: One-word answer: no. [Laughs.] Me and Paul will always get into these little discussions, arguments, whatever you want to call them, about anything and everything. I

wish I could have been there to see him arguing with another person besides me.

Sean: What do you guys argue about? What's the latest one?

Paul: What was the latest one? What's the latest thing? Actually, we were talking about Billy Zoom today (Zoom is the guitarist for X, and he also runs a music repair shop in Southern California). Whether or not he's a character, or whether or not he's a straight-up prick, or whether or not he falls somewhere in the middle by being a charismatic prick.

Sean: What's your point of view?

Paul: Charismatic. I'll take the good with the bad, whether or not he's an amazing guitar player. I'm kind of fascinated with people who are just crotchety and things like that. It cracks me up.

Doug: Dave thought he's just an asshole.

Dave: Paul had emailed him back and forth for two weeks and had an appointment set up for this repair job. The first thing, we got there. He opens the door, "What do you guys want?" I don't expect him to know who we are in the sense of, "You're the guys from Ohio who emailed me," but right off the bat, I was like, What the hell is up this guy's ass?

Sean: God is up his ass, Dave. He's a born-again Christian.

Paul: Goddamn! Goddamn it!

Doug: I kept looking for that vibe, because I kind of knew about that. There were a couple of things around the shop that maybe suggested it a bit.

Dave: His black shoes and turtleneck.

Doug: From watching *Decline of Civilization* and seeing his scenes in there, he's always curt with his answers and he just seems like a strange dude. I guess I was just kind of expecting that anyhow, and there was some of that. [to Dave] Looking at it, did you notice any of that weird, empty look that people who are born again have?

Dave: I didn't really notice it.

Doug: It still seemed like there was this huge wall up. He didn't have the normal born-again personality. I was on the lookout for it, though.

Dave: So he asked us, "Can I get this done tomorrow?" And if you email someone back and forth, he knows we're on tour, he knows we need this by today. He agreed to it beforehand. So we dropped it off and we went and ate lunch, did some stuff. When we came back, he's like, "Yeah, I was supposed to be somewhere by ten, but apparently I'm going to be late." And I'm like, I don't fucking feel bad for you. You had an appointment with Paul. This is your fucking business. You don't agree to do something if you can't do it. Be straight up about that shit. Totally rubbed me the wrong way. Like he's doing us a huge favor because he's looking at Paul's amp. It's like we're nobody and he's fucking Billy Zoom. I was totally getting that vibe from him. I fucking hate that. I don't care who the fuck you are, be a nice dude.

Sean: That's true. On a totally unrelated

note, you seem like nice, normal guys. What made you decide to cover a Dwarves song (The GC 5 cover "Saturday Night")?

Dave: The guy who ran Transparent Records was all about the Dwarves. That's his favorite band. We were doing stuff with that label at the time, and none of us are really huge Dwarves fans.

Doug: I had to ask my friend who's a Dwarves fan, "What would be a good Dwarves song for us to cover? What would sound kind of like us?" I just couldn't picture any of the songs working for us. So we sat around in his room one time and listened to Dwarves songs until we found one that could work, one that was kind of like a rock and roll type song. So it was just that the guy from the record label was going to do a Dwarves comp, and he asked us if we would do a song for it.

Dave: It was like, all right, sure, why not, we'll have fun recording that song.

Doug: It was fun. It's a cool song.

Sean: I always thought that would be a great song to do a Vegas-style lounge version of. You could sing that like you're Frank Sinatra, the way it's all set up.

Doug: Have you heard Blag's bluegrass album? It's called *Earl Lee Grace*. There's a bluegrass version of "Saturday Night." I think it's the first song on that. It's cool.

Sean: What inspired you to write a song about the Molly Maguires?

Doug: It just kind of reminded me of how history books are written. Just the fact that I was a history student in college and had to read about it in some other weird book rather than having learned about it in US History class in high school. The entire labor movement, the entire structure of what

your day is, the reason you only work forty hours a week, the reason you earn a living wage in this country is because a lot of bad shit went on, a lot of struggles. It's really an interesting story, and it's never told. It really struck me as an unjust thing, that I didn't know anything about that and I was in a position that I *should* know about it.

Sean: I wrote a huge article on the Molly Maguires for *Flipside* a few years back.

Doug: I saw that! That was you who wrote that?

Sean: Yeah, that was me.

Paul: Speaking of *Flipside* and Molly Maguires, was it a joke when they reviewed that seven-inch, and they said that there was some band from Cleveland, blah blah blah, and they're like, "And they have a love song to some girl named Molly Maguire"? And that was it. That was the totality of the

review. Was that a joke?

Sean: It was probably just some reviewer who didn't read the lyric sheet and wasn't able to piece together the lyrics. Or probably someone just wasn't listening too closely. But I don't know. I don't remember that.

Paul: Just making sure.

Sean: You guys wrote a song for Eugene V. Debs, too, right?

Doug: I went to college and studied history. I was really into how history is presented. And Debs was actually being discussed in class one day, in school, and people were just kind of ho-hum about it. They just couldn't seem to get worked up one way or the other about the fact that the guy made a speech against World War I and went to jail over it.

Sean: Well, he was a presidential candidate at the time, too, right?

Doug: Yeah, he got almost a million votes from jail. It's like what I was talking about with the labor movement in this country. There are so many amazing stories in the history of this country, and if they're presented at all, they're presented in a way that's just so boring and you can't get into. You're talking about this amazing stuff, and people can't work up an opinion over it. Even if their opinion is "Great, he's a commie bastard, he went to jail, he shouldn't be talking shit about the United States," at least there's something you're engaging in.

Paul: You push him into a fucking footnote, and that's what you're going to get: a footnote response out of people.

Sean: In one of your early seven-inches, there's a story about refusing to play in a Wal-Mart. What was the story behind that?

Dave: That was completely bizarre.

Doug: The local Wal-Mart was having a Labor Day celebration in Mansfield, where we grew up. And someone from Wal-Mart called and asked us to play. It seemed like the most bizarre thing in the world to do, to go play Wal-Mart on Labor Day. The fact that they use third world labor and child labor, just the fact that the Waltons are the richest family in America, and cashiers make \$5.15 an hour there. Obviously, there's a degree of things being wrong, but I think both of those things are pretty wrong.

Sean: Were they going to pay you to play? Do you remember?

Dave: I don't remember.

Doug: I would assume so. I would assume that if we were thinking about saying yes to it, we would probably gouge Wal-Mart for some money.

Sean: Who bet the devil their head?

Doug: Speaking of literary influences. I was looking through a book of short stories by Edgar Allen Poe, and I thought it was a cool title. The story kind of struck me, too.

Sean: What's the story about?

Doug: The story is about someone who's very vain and is a little too cocksure of himself. He's always saying he would bet the devil his head that he could do this. One day he and his friend are crossing a bridge. There's an illustration in the book, too. It's one of those old-style bridges with a turnstile at the end of it; it's a really weird drawing. But he says he would bet the devil his head that he could jump this turnstile, and this old man comes up and picks him up on his bet. He goes to jump the turnstile, hits his head on one of the rafters and knocks it off. Old man collects his head and takes off. His friend takes his body and





the GC5

feeds it to cats or something.

Sean: How does it relate to the album, though?

Doug: It's the same thing as Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon* with *The Wizard of Oz*. If you read along with the story at sixty words per minute and listen to the album, they go completely together.

Paul: I can't believe you just referenced Pink Floyd. [Laughter ensues.]

Doug: To answer the question in a serious way, it's not literally meant to go together. There's some long-ass dragged discussion to be had about it...

Paul: Let the record show that it doesn't follow as Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon*...

Sean: Wouldn't you like someone to try it, though?

Doug: Imagine the pissed-off emails we would get about that. [Returning to answering the question seriously] like anything, listen to the record, read the words to the record, take from it what you will. Read the story; take from that what you will. Take any relationship that there is between the two of them, and make of that what you will.

Sean: How'd you guys get hooked up with a record label from Ireland? (The GC 5's *Horseshoes and Handgrenades* EP was released by Leprock Records in Ireland.)

Doug: Our friend actually did a bunch of mail order with them and knew the guys pretty well – at least as well as you can know someone from another continent. He said they were good dudes, and that they ran a pretty good label over there. He sent them a tape of us and they said they liked us. So

we got to talking and they decided to put the EP out.

Dave: It's Leprock you're referring to? He used to be Walzwerk Records. He originally started Walzwerk putting releases out that he was one hundred percent behind, and then he started doing distro on top of that. It just got too out of hand for him. So he dropped Walzwerk, and then he wanted to start it back up again, start it off small again and do bands that he was one hundred percent behind. He scaled back the distro quite a bit. But when he decided to start it back up, he asked our friend who we were just telling you about, "What American bands are there right now that are up and coming? Who's out there?" He didn't really go out of his way to find us; it just happened that our friend happened to be friends with him and sent him a tape of our stuff.

Sean: Weren't you originally going to self-release *Never Bet the Devil Your Head*?

Doug: Yeah, we did actually go so far as to press them. We ended up talking to Thick and reaching an agreement on doing the record with them, like three days before the CDs came. We went through all the negotiations to see how we were going to release stuff, etcetera, etcetera, not very interesting stuff, but it turned out that we released it with Thick. It actually never really came out on our own; they pretty much released it. The time frame for it was kind of weird.

Sean: They basically took the ones that you pressed and released them with their sticker on it?

Doug: Yeah. We sent a lot of them out as promos. We took a bunch of them to sell on tour. It worked out pretty well. They've

been doing a good job

for us, doing the things a record label is supposed to do. We're glad we're not tackling that.

Sean: Tackling self-released records?

Doug: Yeah.

Sean: It's a lot of work. You guys are also doing stuff with Mark from the Hudson Falcons? He's putting out stuff for you?

Doug: Yeah. We started the label just doing a couple things. We put out a record by our friend's band, Tankaray. They had all these songs, and no one would put out their record. They were touring a lot, so it would make sense for them to have a record out to tour behind. They're a great band and they're great people, too. We put out a split with GC 5 and the Hudson Falcons, just to get more music out, I guess.

Sean: What happened with your summer tour with Tiltwheel?

Doug: We were going to tour the West Coast for twelve days or something with Tiltwheel. We were supposed to meet them in Las Vegas, go up to Seattle, and then back down to San Francisco with them. Without making it sound like there were any hard feelings or anything weird over it, it's just that we were talking to Davey Tiltwheel about the planning of it, and he's like, "I know people in all these places, I'll book us for this stuff." They went on tour, and he had a difficult time booking a tour from the road. They were having all kinds of financial problems and van problems and organizational problems, so a bunch of shows ended up not getting put together, and it ended up not being

worth their while to go from San Diego to do it. But we were out here on the West Coast, so we were stranded for a while.

Sean: For how long?

Doug: Three shows in twelve days, or something like that.

Sean: What did you guys do during that time?

Doug: Hung out. Made friends. Stayed at their house, ate their food. Planted the GC 5 flag.

Paul: We met and hung out with Pirx the Pilot. I guess we didn't meet them, but established a relationship that went beyond "You play my town, I play your town." We stayed with those guys for a while.

We also met two dudes in Eureka, California. They let us do a mosh pit at about two in the morning between four people and a kitchen.

Doug: If you can't appreciate absurd things on tour sometimes, there's no way you can continue to do it.

Sean: Speaking about absurd things on tour, you guys want to tell me about the mustaches again?

Doug: Especially if you're going to run a picture of them, I think it's best that we explain them in the interview. So Charles (from Tankaray) and Tankaray show up in Ohio, and Charles has got this goatee. He says he's going to shave the whole thing off, but first we convince him to shave so he has just the mustache, just to look completely awesome for a day or two. So the first or second day that he has this mustache, we're playing Charleston, Illinois. He hooks up

with this girl at the end of the night, they hang out backstage, and... They hooked up. So he gets a little action in the girls' bathroom, so we decided that mustaches were the way to go for the tour.

Paul: It also has to do with how amazing the bass player of Hüsker Dü looks with his mustache. It needs to be brought back.

Doug: So everyone on the tour is growing mustaches for the duration of the tour. We're thinking, in another month we'll all be looking really good.

Paul: We're going to take pictures in some nice sweaters. Make Christmas cards. Doug's got some nice sweatshirts for the occasion. One's got a big, giant bell on it that says "Jingle this." We'll put the pictures on postcards and send them off.

Sean: How'd you get hooked up with the *Rock N Roll Purgatory* guys? You've written stuff for them, right?

Doug: Yeah, I have written some stuff for them. Ben and Lisa (the editors of *Rock N Roll Purgatory*) are people we've known from shows. They interviewed us for their zine really early on. I think they were GC 5 fans. They're people from Ohio. They're from right around where we live. They're big supporters of a lot of good music. They're big Hudson Falcons backers, too. It's a cool zine, too. Ben's got a strange sense of humor. He has a gift for some very weird similes and metaphors.

He did the most serious interview with the Riffs that they've probably ever done. They're a Portland band that sounds kind of like Johnny Thunders and the Sex Pistols.

Real catchy, '77- type punk. Ben sent a bunch of totally joking questions to them, like, "What's one thing in life that you would try to pass on in your band?" Expecting answers like, "Never stick your dick in a blender." Or something like that. He ended up getting a five minute discussion on how heroin can completely fuck up your life, and how serious it is. And, if there's anything he can communicate through his music, it's, please, don't fuck around with drugs.

Sean: Ben is funny. Last issue, he wrote a whole article on why we should make more Amish jokes, and how, as a society, we don't make fun of the Amish enough.

Doug: Ben definitely kicks ass.

Sean: Tell me about the article you wrote for them.

Doug: I wracked my brain for a while, looking for something to work up a significant amount of ire about. Or some other emotion that would inspire me to write an article. I don't usually write. Around that time, though, I struck me how the history of rock is being rewritten by VH-1. Like, when they do their countdown shows and present who's important over the last fifty years of rock music, a lot of the people who VH-1 say are important are people who VH-1 ignored when they were around. They'll list Fugazi in the greatest hard rock bands of all time, or the Replacements in the greatest videos of all time. The irony is almost too much to even comprehend.



FOR \$500, WOULD YA?



THE SHARP EASE

It's hard to tell the world to lick your ass and make it sound sweet, but the Sharp Ease (guitarist Sara Musser, bassist Dana Barenfeld, drummer Christene Kings and the inimitable Paloma Parfrey providing vocals and ambiance) pull it off as a matter of routine. They're pop like Iggy, punk like the Pixies, performance art put to power chords and gone soggy from a few jugs of cheap wine; they fireball charisma so loud and hot it's like walking into a jet engine and they always leave just enough of a mess behind after they play (you know: Paloma spitting, Paloma barfing, Paloma splitting her pants, Paloma smashing an answering machine, Paloma smashing a cardboard cake with an acoustic guitar - whatever, the girl's a hurricane). The Sharp Ease make nuclear

INTERVIEW BY CHRIS ZIEGLER
PHOTOS BY JAMES BUNOAN

fusion out of contradiction, counterpointing Paloma's siren - the air-raid kind and the Greek kind - vocals with super - sweet background harmonies and woozy wall-of-fuzz choruses. This is the sound Phil Spector wanted when he was waving that pistol at the Ramones: LA's terminal excitement lit by TV - snow light and wrapped in early morning freeway fog, songs that are snapshots, not just singalongs. You're in love with the AM radio, the world's a mess in your kiss, and - says Paloma - anything worth waiting for will never ever come. Their single on Soft Spot Records is where you start; passed out on a couch somewhere in the South Bay is where you'll finish up. And all you'll remember in between is that it was dark, the Sharp Ease were playing, and you were loving it.

Chris Z: So what happened when you played the House of Blues show with the B-52s? Was Colin Powell really there with a bunch of Republicans?

Paloma: I heard that they came afterwards – that we were sort of the “after party.”

Sara: They were young Republicans who wanted to rock’n’roll!

Paloma: It was kind of cool, because they were Republicans against the war, which is why I didn’t say anything. I would have said something if I didn’t know they were against the war, but I didn’t want to piss anyone off who was against the war. I’m totally freaked out about the war.

Chris Z: What would you have said, for the record, if they were regular war-mongering Republicans?

Sara: “This is dedicated to you guys. It’s called ‘Lick My Ass!’”

Paloma: I don’t know, I probably would have asked my dad (Paloma’s dad is the director of the LA chapter of Physicians For Social Responsibility) who was actually there, for the perfect thing to say – he’s hyper – political. Or I probably would have said something like, “Give me your money – don’t give it to the military! Give the money to rock’n’roll!” Who knows? Or maybe something regarding health care.

Chris Z: Nothing personal for Colin?

Paloma: Making fun of the “Colin” part?

Sara: It’s such a weird, subversive subject, that he came to our show.

Chris Z: So “Lick My Ass” – is that like the Spice Girls? “If you wanna lick my pussy, you better lick my ass,” like, “If you wanna be my lover, you gotta get with my friends?”

Sara: There’s a lot of inspiration from that.

Paloma: It’s a little bit more about respect.

Chris Z: Yeah, you said earlier that it’s the new “R-E-S-P-E-C-T.”

Paloma: I was kind of joking, because I think “Respect” is an amazing feminist song, if you think about it.

Sara: We wrote “Lick My Ass” for joke purposes, but it’s taken on an anthem – like thing. The House of Blues crowd loved it. We had middle-aged moms coming up to us, like, “Oh, can I have a copy of ‘Lick My Ass’? Oh no. You know what? Give me three!”

Paloma: We sold out of everything. It was fucking weird. They bought everything.

Sara: “Lick My Ass” could revolutionize the whole world.

Chris Z: Like all those soccer moms are going to go home and be like, “Listen, honey!”

Sara: “If you’re gonna lick my

pussy, Harold, you better lick my ass!”

Chris Z: How about your other songs? Do you have anything else that started goofy and then took on some kind of deep meaning?

Dana: “Bumpin’ Pussies.”

Christene: “Going Modern.”

Paloma: Sara and Dana wrote “Bumpin’ Pussies.”

Dana: Fucking around.

Paloma: It’s kind of making fun of “lesbian” bands.

Sara: It’s very Indigo Girls.

Chris Z: So no Lilith Fair this year?

Sara: Absolutely not. I would burn it. I would drop a bomb on the

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Lilith Fair. It shouldn’t ever happen again.

Chris Z: How would you reconstruct it?

Sara: Remove everybody involved with it. And put in great bands.

Dana: And maybe change the name.

Paloma: The important thing is, if it’s going to be about women, then the funds need to be going to women who probably need it more than these fucking rock stars. Like Ladyfest here – Christene worked on that and that all went to the East LA Women’s Shelter. The organizers didn’t take a fucking penny. And that’s beautiful. And not all Ladyfests do that, either.

Sara: I mean, Sarah McLaughlin had her own booth of her own jewelry that she sold. There’s a big difference between that and a noble cause.

Chris Z: That’s something I notice a lot of LA bands do – they’re not political and crusty and singing about something they just ripped off from a Crass album...

Paloma: But I love Crass, though.

Chris Z: Yeah, but you don’t have to wear your politics on your sleeve to actually care. So maybe people don’t know the Sharp Ease politics – what’s your political side?

Sara: We’re definitely anarchists. We’re not completely active, but we do believe in non-commercial...

Paloma: ...especially in our art.

Christene: And we’re all feminists.

Paloma: A major thing

I like to do – that I think we all do – is that as much as the political is personal, I like to make the personal political. There’s a few songs that start off as political but somehow, I find in writing that it always ends up about people.

Sara: So anyone can relate.

Paloma: Yeah. “Advantage” started off totally political – like, “Who’s got the advantage?” – but ended up being a little personal. Like: “How do I relate to this in my everyday life? What do my friends here think about the advantages of being a woman or a man?” And it’s not even all about women or men, you know – it’s about people in general. Kids. Old people!

Chris Z: Do you get any of your politics from your dad?

Paloma: Yeah, he freaks me out and makes me think the world is gonna end. I think my uncle freaks me out more than my dad.

Chris Z: Is that the writer, Adam?

Paloma: Yeah, he’s very apocalyptic. But yeah, I grew up in a commune. I grew up protesting at least twice a week.

Christene: There’s a little picture of baby Paloma at her mom’s house, holding a sign that says, “BREAD NOT BOMBS,” and her little head is just barely peeking over it. It’s really quite great.

Chris Z: Do you think people in LA get what the band is about?

Christene: LA is a little sleepy.

Sara: It’s definitely a sleeping town – but we get asked to play a lot. And the LA bands are really great and really supportive. It’s a great community.

Paloma: I think one of our best shows was just a Halloween party with the Centimeters. Everyone there was an artist and everyone went completely insane. People went ballistic. People were hopping off of chairs, like romping on wheelchairs and running into each other.

Dana: And Sara was a sunflower.

Christene: She was all rocking out with a big sunflower on her head. You couldn’t help but go nuts. And Dana was Mrs. Roper.

Dana: Just because we knew everyone was going to be “dark.”

Chris Z: So you’re the ray of sunshine and everyone else is zombies?

Sara: Totally.

Chris Z: It's interesting you say LA has such strong community support, because LA has...

Sara: A bad rap!

Chris Z: Yeah, once you get out in the world. But if you live here, you know it's the best kept secret going.

Sara: We've got the best bands! And there's so many! I mean, there's a lot of shit, too, but so much great music!

Paloma: Even on tour, we'd talk about other bands we play with, and people would be like, "Oh my god, I love that band." And to us, they're just, like, our friends.

Sara: LA can be a really scary ugly big plastic place. But when you're an artist, you have to stick to people that ground you, that make you inspired and creative. And I think that's why the community is really strong. It's a family kind of thing.

Chris Z: I like LA having a bad rap. No one is paying attention, so everyone can do what they want.

Christene: It's not like the next big thing will come out of LA, so all the labels don't come here.

Paloma: And it seems like bands here have the most fun. There's so many founders in New York – everyone feels like someone's little brother or little sister. Here, you've got much more friendly and warm archetypes, like fucking Exene or Mike Watt. You don't even say hi to them sometimes because they're everywhere. It's not like, "Oh, I wanna be Lou Reed! I wanna be Sonic Youth!" People go to New York to fuck stars.

Christene: Well, people come to LA to fuck stars.

Sara: But movie stars! Not rock stars!

Chris Z: So how does all the LA music history fit into your band?

Christene: There's influences – you can hear it in the music.

Sara: I like the Pixies a lot.

Dana: [long pause] But they're not from LA.

Sara: Oh, they're not?

Paloma: But they do sing a lot about LA and they love LA and they talk a lot about it!

Sara: Who's from LA?

Christene: The Go-Go's.

Paloma: I'm a huge X fan, and my friend from high school lived in the same house as Darby Crash lived in in Venice, and he used to see his ghost or whatever. There was this one side of the house on Paloma Street – which I'm named after, kind of – and so it was like this trippy thing. We always wanted to be punk rock and steal that sign, but we were always too lazy to do it.

Sara: People always compare Paloma to Darby Crash. It's weird.

Paloma: Oh yeah, I've heard that a few times. But after I

read the book, I was like, "Oh, I'm nothing like him." But there's still having that feeling of, "Oh yeah, my friend lived in Darby Crash's house."

Chris Z: Darby's ghost? What the fuck?

Paloma: I don't know. They also did a lot of drugs there, too.

Sara: Well, the Pixies are from LA!

Paloma: [pause] No, they're not. But Frank Black lives on, like, Mulholland.

Sara: I heard he wears clogs!

Chris Z: Did you have to stand up for LA's honor on tour at all?

Christene: We didn't have to prove ourselves, but you could tell the feeling right before we'd play,

PALOMA GORGED AN AMERICAN FLAG CAKE TO BLACK SABBATH AND THEN VUKED IT UP TO THE DEAD KENNEDYS

like, "Oh, they're from LA."

Sara: In San Francisco, I was like, "We're from LA – don't hold it against us!" And people were like, "Nooooooooooooo!"

Christene: The crowds when we played were very receptive.

Paloma: Pretty much every room was filled, however small.

Sara: I think we represented. And I told a guy in Santa Cruz to fuck off!

Chris Z: What?

Sara: This is the set-up. This band was supposed to play after us and the cops came and broke it up and they couldn't play. So I was sitting in the bushes where no one could see me...

Christene: Drinking her medicine.

Chris Z: What's your medicine?

Dana: Vodka. Bottles and bottles, like water.

Sara: So I'm sitting there and I hear these girls ask this guy, "Why didn't you get to play?" And he's like, "I dunno, this fucking lame-ass band from LA played and sprayed shaving cream all over everybody." And I immediately got up and was like, "FUCK YOU, YOU FUCKING FAGGOTS! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THE HELL YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!" And he got really scared, and then I went to go get the girls, like, "LET'S GO REPRESENT LA!" And they're like, "Sara, chill out!"

Christene: She comes in like, "You guys! We gotta go represent! Come on!" Like rounding up the soldiers.

Sara: And then the guy was gonna, like, cry.

Chris Z: You made a guy cry?

Sara: Pretty much. And he was like, "I was just mad because I didn't get to play."

Christene: He was just a wanna-be beatnik.

Paloma: And he was kissing everyone's ass later, like, "Ooh, you're so good!" And he didn't even see us!

Dana: He was like, "The cops breaking are up our party – it's okay! They can't touch us at the beach! We can take our hands and clap them and get acoustic instruments and play at the beach!" And we're like, "What the fuck is this guy talking about?"

Paloma: And then I gave the band a heart attack because I disappeared for an hour.

Chris Z: Is that the best tour story?

Sara: Paloma and I almost got in a fistfight at a rest stop.... I saw the ghost of a deer, and I got asked to go to an orgy! I was like, "Ewwwwwwwwww!"

Paloma: There was a guy in Portland who smelled like B.O.

Christene: Worst body odor ever – we walked in and we were gagging!

Sara: And it was just one guy! But you know, the whole town of Portland smells weird.

Paloma: And he was a drummer, too, so the more he started playing, the worse it got, and the more I wanted to watch, but I couldn't! The smell kept getting worse but the music was getting better, and I was like, "I gotta gooooooo!"

Sara: And Paloma farts a lot!

Christene: We had a rule that when anyone needed to fart, they had to open the car window and stick their ass out. And so we would pull our pants down and wave our asses at cars.

Chris Z: Wow, so did you get like lonely truck drivers following you for like 400 miles?

Sara: I wish!

Chris Z: Didn't Jim from the Smell drive on tour?

Paloma: Yeah, he's awesome! He used to be a UPS driver, so I think he was stoked to be driving a van again.

Christene: We had a huge vision of him – he'd put on the Dirty 3, this dark macabre music, and we'd be driving through these dark, macabre redwood forests, and Jim would look all stoic with his hair perfectly coifed, and we'd picture him in a black velvet cape in a big black castle, and just be like, "Aieeeee!"

Paloma: Can we talk about some of the games we played in the van?

Chris Z: Like what?

Sara: First of all, we have a game called, "For \$500, Would You?" For instance, give us an example!

Dana: Usually, it's something shocking. Like, Paloma... Paloma's a good example because she'll usually do it.

Paloma: I'll do it all, as long as it's videotaped!

Dana: "So, like, Paloma, for \$500 would you poop in your shoe and walk around all day wearing your poop shoe?" And the funniest part is everyone else is like, "Aw,



no, maybe for \$1,000!" And Paloma will say, "Well, where can I wear the shoe?"

Chris Z: So it's a game of technicalities?

Dana: "Can I wear it in the record store? Okay!"

Sara: No, it has to be like, "Paloma, for \$500 would you do the smelly BO guy from Portland?" And she'll be like, "Aaaaaaah, that's just SEX!"

Paloma: As long as it's RESPONSIBLE sex!

Chris Z: Where do you draw the line?

Sara: Anything with animals.

Paloma: And condoms and family members. It has to be protected and it has to not be family members. And the really crazy ones have to be videotaped.

Chris Z: For like *Sharp Ease Gone Wild Vol. 1?*

Paloma: No, it's performance art. I do performance art sometimes. Just like... weird shit. I puke up cake.

Chris Z: On command?

Paloma: No, you put ipecac in the cake. I usually gag on part of it sometimes.

Patrick Miller (Sharp Ease visual technician): Paloma gorged an American flag cake to Black Sabbath and then puked it up to the Dead Kennedys.

Chris Z: That's the greatest single piece of art I ever heard of.

Dana: It was right before we played, too.

Sara: And she couldn't stop throwing up.

Paloma: We did this two blocks from where I lived, so I went home and took a shower while I was puking, so I was just puking in the shower, and then I show back up and everyone is like, "Are you OK?" And I'm like, "Yeah, let's rock!"

Chris Z: Paloma, what's the story about you chasing people around with a stick?

Paloma: How'd you hear about that?

Sara: It was my old band's drummer's house, and it was a Cinco de Mayo party, and Paloma was shitfaced drunk, and she had a blindfold on, and a bat.

Dana: She basically almost whacked everyone. They'd be like, "Whoa! The piñata's over here!" And she's like, "I got it!"

Paloma: I felt really bad about it.

Sara: And there's a song about it!

Paloma: "You're young and stupid and drunk..."

Sara: No, no, it's so lighthearted! It's a funny song! "Don't give Paloma the bat, she's gonna kill my girlfriend!"

Chris Z: So now that we talked about puking and hitting people with bats, tell me about the softer side of the Sharp Ease.

Christene: We really do take care of each other – if one person is having a hard time, we support.

Chris Z: Like a hard time puking?

shirt," and Christene starts rubbing my back, and I'm, like, crying in her tit.

Sara: I cried, too! I was like, "I'm feeling ve-r-r-r-y emotional!"

Christene: And I'm like, "My whole band is breaking down!" And Paloma was so distressed. I was going to cry, too, but then I composed myself. And Sara ended up falling into these really tall grasses – she stepped out of the van, took one step, and fell right down. And Paloma was so sad – we just held her!

Sara: We're an emotional band!

Chris Z: This is the most heartwarming moment I've ever had in an interview.

Christene: I really thought I was going to start crying. And then suddenly Sara is crawling out of the grass, singing "The Sound of Music," and she goes, "You know, I don't know if I can deal with this rock'n'roll go-with-the-flow bullshit! I'm much too conservative for this!" And she's weaving her head, just finished calling guys faggots and playing her ass off, and she goes, "You know what? I QUIT!" And then she passes out!

Sara: I don't remember any of this!

<www.thesharpease.com>



400

• Skot, vocals • Christian, guitar • Ferdie, drums.

BLOWS

Interview by BD Williams

I did another interview with 400 Blows that I scrapped. It was on one of those nights where there were loads of people around, Melt Banana had just finished playing, and we were at a loss for even the most basic concentration needed to do this interview. So I junked that one and decided to do another. For some reason in the first one we talked about CCR and flannel. That is only important because I mention it in this interview. I don't know why we were talking about CCR. 400 Blows sound nothing even remotely like that band. 400 Blows will knock your head off. If they don't, the crowd will. This is an interview with a band that has all the potential to rile up in the listener an urge to twist, turn, or snap out of the normal coolin' scene. I haven't seen them play yet where the crowd is not rowdy and ready to rock to the state of music that 400 Blows represent.

Photography by Katie Rinaldi and John Southern



BD: For the people across this great nation of ours who don't know who you are yet, why don't you tell them?

Skot: We're 400 Blows.

Christian: You mean our names and crap?

BD: Whatever you are.

Christian: You serious? Okay, we're 400 Blows.

BD: How long have you been playing as 400 Blows?

Skot: Almost five years.

BD: Skot, what's your history prior to this band? Musically, that is.

Skot: Musically?

BD: Or gutter shit, whatever.

Skot: Musically, no bands. This is my first band. My history prior to this band is basically contacting Ferdie in the *Recycler* (LA-based classified ads).

BD: Did you have the intention of doing something like 400 Blows?

Skot: I didn't know what I was going to do. I just knew that I wanted to do something... I just wanted to.... What did I want to do? I just wanted to play music that I would want to hear, that I wasn't hearing at the time. That's all. I don't know, I've always loved music, I don't know why I wanted to play music. I don't know how the fuck I ended up doing this. I just know that I wanted to do it, and somehow I took all the steps necessary, and now I'm here.

BD: Was your intention to be a singer, or did you want to be a keyboard player or something?

Skot: I don't play any instruments really. Other than just picking them up and fucking around, I don't really know what I'm doing. But, yeah, my intention was to be a singer and front a band and hopefully do something.... something interesting.

BD: Christian, same question. What's your history leading up to 400 Blows?

Christian: Ah, well, my mom always sang and played guitar all through my growing up, so there was a lot of music in the house. I took violin lessons when I was seven, took accordion lessons when I was ten, took bass lessons, drum lessons, always taking musical lessons growing up.... saxophone, everything. The only thing I didn't take lessons for is the guitar, and I'm playing guitar now, so that's sort of ironic.

BD: It's only five strings?

Christian: Yeah, it's minus the high E. Growing up, in high school and after high school, I've been in a lot of little punk bands and different projects. I saw these guys (400 Blows) play, and I asked if I could join them. In fact, we played together. A band I was in called Rig played with 400 Blows, and I saw they didn't have a bass player. I was playing bass with Rig at the time and I wanted to join 400 Blows cause Rig was coming to an end. I think that was our last show, the one with 400 Blows, and a month or two later, Skot gave me a call, and asked me to come down and play with them. The rest is history.

BD: So there was another guitar player before you?

Skot: Yeah, we had Brice, and Ferdie – the

drummer now – was the original guitar player and we had a different drummer. He was this nineteen-year-old Korean kid. He was really fast but just wasn't experienced at all, really.

BD: Was the sound anywhere the same?

Skot: It was a much sloppier, less rehearsed, version than we are now.

Christian: We still play a couple of the songs.

Skot: A couple of them.... Maybe two of the songs, or two or three of the songs....

Christian: "Premature" and "Bull".

Skot: Naw, maybe four of the songs are probably from that era. But the thing to me, as far as the band is concerned, is that I didn't feel like the band started until Christian joined the band. That's when it really felt like it had all its parts. That's when it became the body that it is now. It really felt the best, worked the best, with Christian on guitar and Ferdie on drums and me doing the vocals.

BD: If Ferdie were here I'd ask him this question, but since he's not, I'll let y'all fill in on his background leading up to 400 Blows.

Skot: Ferdie's a Pilipino kid who grew up in Manila and came to America when he was a young teenager. He was a postal worker for sixteen years, and when he was in his early twenties, he was in a Pilipino Top 40 cover band and basically just did whatever Top 40 hits were around at the time, played weddings and parties and different things like that. That was the only band he was ever in, I believe, prior to 400 Blows.

BD: That's fuckin' rad. A Top 40 cover band. On to record stuff. What have y'all put out so far?

Skot: We have two CDs and a seven-inch. The first CD is pretty much a live recording in kind of a shitty studio. Basically we went in with this guy Tom Grimmily, who we all love, and we just asked him, what's the most punk rock thing we can do here in recording this? And he's all, like, just play and I'll press a record and when we're done, we're done. And that's basically what happened. You know, some people love that record. I personally think it would have been nice to spend more time on it, but it's dirty....

BD: Low-fi?

Skot: Very low-fi.

Christian: I think it's a great document.... It's like a chronicle.

Skot: A great document of where we were at that time.

Christian: Yeah, there are no overdubs, no nothing, just mics.

Skot: At this point we've figured out so much more, we've become so much tighter, that it's hard to even think about that period. Because now it's the same thing, but a much more rehearsed and smarter sort of ballgame than it was then.

Christian: Well, it was four years ago. It's

a very visceral record, it's very raw. That's kind of the point, and we knew that when we did it. We weren't that naïve, we knew it was going to be a raw, warts-and-all kind of record. At the time it sounded like a great idea, and I think it is a good idea. I think it's a good document of where we were and what we were about at the time.

BD: Christian, earlier tonight when I talked with you on the phone, you said you were going over to work on the cover art for a record. You want to talk about that?

Christian: It's a twelve-inch. The CD that we put out ourselves (the second one, *Black Rainbow*) will be kind of re-released, I guess, under this label called Rehash. They also committed to doing some vinyl, so it'll also be available on double gate-fold vinyl.

BD: Shit, that's pretty fancy.

Skot: The new record has sixteen songs:

Ferdie's a Pilipino kid who grew up in Manila and came to America when he was a young teenager. **HE WAS A POSTAL WORKER FOR SIXTEEN YEARS,** and when he was in his early twenties, he was in a Pilipino Top 40 cover band...



twelve new songs and four from the old record, that we re-recorded just because we were in a nicer studio and we thought it would be cool to add those on, throw them in the mix, just to give people a different version of how we play those songs now.

BD: Sounds good.

Skot: Yeah, it'll be nice.

BD: I was reading a review written by Chris Ziegler from the *OC Weekly*. He was talking about you, Skot, in particular, and he compared your voice to an air-raid siren, and the people were wondering if you had any mechanical influences for your particular sound, i.e. blenders or food processors?

Skot: Um, no, I would just say that I try to focus on the rhythm more than the melody. Christian plays in a rhythm, and Ferdie plays in a rhythm. I try to find my own rhythm in what they're doing and which somehow works with it but isn't the same thing. Really, when I'm singing, all I'm thinking about, more than anything else – and when I write the vocals – is rhythmic

patterns and of course choosing words that I wasn't going to squirm thinking about later. Things that I liked. Things that meant something to me. Things that I could sing my entire life, and it would still be relevant, as opposed to writing a song like, say, about a girlfriend who you have right now but who you're not going to have ten years from now. It's more about writing – what sort of things do I go through in my everyday life that probably many people do? That I will always feel. So when I think of words, I think on those terms, and when I think of how I'm going to put those words in a song, I think of it rhythmically based on what we write, the rhythmic structure of our songs.

BD: A lot of your lyrics sounds almost like sci-fi; they make me think of robots. It's like the sound is a robotic kind of eerie. Lines like in *The Root of Our Nature*

where you talk about the "elevator to the sky" make me think sci-fi.

Skot: Right before I say "elevator to the sky," I say that this is the "slow elevator/elevator to the sky." I guess that particular lyric is just sort of a metaphor for life and death. Sort of like, we're all gonna go, and we're here for an amount of time. However long that is, we don't know, but that's sort of the slow elevator. The rest of the song kind of ties into it, I guess. I like metaphors; I use metaphors a lot. Don't ask me why. It's all about painting a picture, and metaphors paint a pretty good picture.

BD: Yeah, "Shipwrecked Sailor" is a lot like that.

Skot: Every song, really, as far as the lyrics are concerned are all pretty much metaphors for the human condition – being human, basically.

BD: The last time I talked with y'all, I asked if there were any sounds you were influenced by, and you said that you were mostly influenced by yourselves.

Skot: Well, you know when we write songs we don't go, oh, let's do a riff kind of like *that band*. We never do that. Everything is very organic; a lot of it is based on mistakes. Like someone is tuning up or does something, and we like the way it sounds. So those become riffs.

BD: You mean it really has nothing to do with CCR and flannel?

[Christian laughs.]

Skot: Naw, we were just fucking around then.

Christian: There are things that we like, there are sounds that we like, there are bands that we like. But just because you like a band doesn't mean you have to sound like them or play like them. You know what I mean. But there are things that come out of the amps or that we like. It's like, "Hey, I like that, let's use that for a song." That's kind of when it happens, it's more organic. I think it's pretty clear we're not trying to sound like our influences or what we like.

Skot: We all love rock. We all love all kinds of music. I think all three of us have favorites in just about any musical category that you can possibly think of. The one thing we take from the music we like is that whatever we like, we like the uniqueness within whatever music that is. If there's anything we take from any of these bands, it's just that a lot of the bands we like seem to be bands that tried to do their own thing within what they were doing.

Christian: Within the confines of a drum set, guitar, and a vocalist. We're obviously influenced by the rock paradigm. It's not like we're using a fuckin' saw and a fuckin' penny whistle. Clearly we like rock, loud guitars, and drums.

Skot: We're essentially a rock band, but we're trying to sound like our own kind of rock.

Christian: Right.

Skot: We're trying to find our own rock and not fit into a certain category or genre.

BD: What about Francois Truffaut (French screenwriter who wrote the adventures of Antonie Doinel in which one of the films is titled *The 400 Blows*)? Does he have anything to do with the band?

Skot: Well, I worked in a video store when I came up with the name. That video (*The 400 Blows*) was right across the counter, and it was always popping out at me, so I was initially taken by the title. I saw the movie and I love the movie. It's about a young boy coming from a semi-abusive household and sort of overcoming this by doing things and getting into trouble and

A lot of people look at the uniform, and they think it's **ALMOST FASCIST!** We're probably three of the most unfascist guys you could ever meet.



learning from them. There's no happy ending, which I also like, but it's really more based on the term 400 blows. At that time, it meant somebody who went too far went through the 400 blows, or it was a coming of age term for when a kid was growing up and going through his years of getting into trouble. They'd say, ah, he's just going through his 400 blows.

Christian: There's not like a real English translation. Basically, figuratively, it's a young boy, a hell raiser. That's what the term comes from, it's like a pest. A real pesky kid who drives you nuts, that's 400 Blows.

Skot: The movie, as far as I know, was done very, like... almost just handheld camera.... and sort of more, what's the word I'm looking for.... When you just figure things out as you go along, what's the word?

Christian: Improvisational?

Skot: Yeah, improvisational, which is kind of like us. We never know until we come up with a sound that we like and a rhythm that goes along with it.

BD: So would say part of what you do is based on Truffaut's ideals?

Skot: No, I wouldn't say so. Other than just the need to want to do something different and make it your own.

BD: Do people ever try to talk with y'all about French film, like someone might do with a band that draws a lot from horror movies?

Skot: I would say that none of us have any French films in our houses.

Christian: Well, not only that, but not many people know that we get our name from a French film. Nine times out of ten, people don't know where we got the name from.

BD: Yeah, I found out about the film by searching 400 Blows on Google. So you

don't get people thinking that you're like the French film dude's band?

Christian: They don't know where we got the name from. (Laughs, then sarcastically adds) Yeah, we're the French film dude's band.

BD: Yeah, you guys don't wear berets, apparently. But you do wear U.S. Naval uniforms.

Skot: I'll tell you where the uniforms come from. All our equipment's black. I was walking through an Army/Navy surplus store, and I saw these black uniforms which just so happened to be Navy CPO uniforms. I thought that rhythmically they'd go along with the music, the music using so much rhythm, that the look should be as rhythmic as the music. And also it would be interesting, because people wouldn't know what to think when they saw it. I mean, a lot of people look at the uniform, and they think it's almost fascist. We're probably three of the most unfascist guys you could ever meet. We're all for everybody and everything. But it's more like, after playing that way and using it, it's powerful. When you think of uniforms, you think of this unity, all these people going after the same thing with the same ideals, and it's very powerful. Power by numbers, kind of. Even though there's only three of us.

BD: What's up with the killer gloves?

Skot: The gloves are for a couple of reasons. One, they just seemed to go with the uniforms. I didn't acquire those until maybe a year into our playing. Two, not only do they go along with the look of the uniform, they're comfortable to wear. How I use the microphone stand, they leave less marks on my fingers. They just work in many ways. Comfort and look, it works on those levels.



Dear God, I Now Know That There Is Truly a Heaven

VELVET HAMMER

BURBANK

Article by Bradley Williams Photos by Sye Williams

I looked in the mirror. My hair was long, my t-shirt dirty, and I thought, son you look like hell. Immediately it occurred to me that I can't go to the Velvet Hammer in this condition. I'm going to talk to professional adult dancers, and, I thought, I should at least appear somewhat dapper. So I searched my closet for my best and only suit. It was the one I'd worn to a wedding, the same one I lost my whole paycheck in Vegas while wearing, the one that, when I passed out at the strip club, a dancer tried to remove from me to get laughs, and dollars, from my friends. I looked at myself in the mirror once more. Even with my best suit I still looked like hell. It was the shoulder-length hair and the shabby facial hair. They had to go.



I made haste down to the closest barber shop on Hollywood Boulevard. Inside, I saw the day-glow Marilyn Monroe and Charlie Chaplin painting and found the same Armenian man who had cut my hair the year earlier. I asked for the basic haircut. I was out of there in twenty minutes, clad in my brown suit and black patent leather steel-toed shoes. I was feeling like a crisp hundred dollar bill, and I should. I was on my way to the Velvet Hammer. Good Lord, I love L.A.

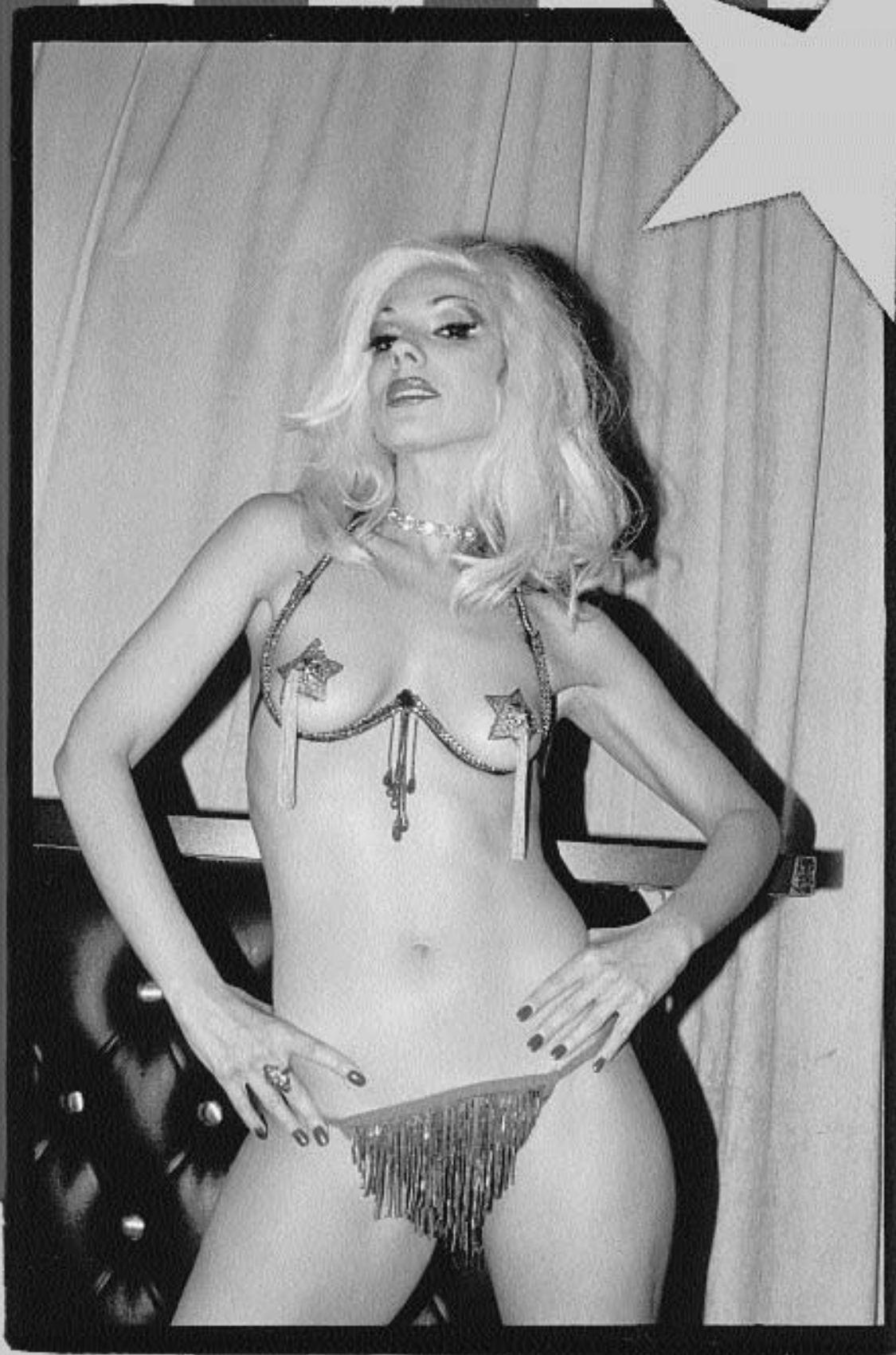
I caught a ride with Sye, who was going to shoot photos, and we got to the Mayan Theater in downtown L.A. right as the show was starting. I took a look around. The Mayan was built so that the ceiling, walls, and various other nooks and crannies resemble the inside of a Hollywood version of a Mayan temple. I took a deep breath and headed for the bar.

When I got my drink and turned in the direction of the stage, there was a woman dancing and dressed as if she were a female matador (or is it matadora?). Jesus Christ! She was hot. I had the feeling like I'd just walked into a circus sex tent. My perception was off. I hadn't known what to expect. The stage and the lights and the crowd sitting, sipping on their drinks, surrounded by the façade of the Mayan temple, the girl dancing with her matador's cape, kicking up a leg, spinning with her chin lifted high. It was almost like ballet, but better. She continued her dance. All the while, I was waiting for her top to drop. Oh yeah, I'd have to say that she was sexy, attractive, mysterious, erotic – a real turn-on. My heart was racing as if a revelation were about to occur, one in which all the world would feel the change. Flowers would grow, dogs would die, games would be won, bells would chime, more dogs would be born, cars drive, and... and I lost that one as I was waiting on her top to drop. It never did. But, good God, she worked the crowd – both men and women – into a frenzy.

After the proper media hurdles were dealt with, we found ourselves backstage and being greeted by Michelle Carr, who is both a dancer and the producer of the show. After a few words with her, all of our uncertainties as to the amount of range we could wander backstage were cleared. We had free roam. It would be smooth sailing from here on out. Back stage? No problem. Behind the curtain? No problem. What about the dressing room? The girl's dressing room? Not a problem. Just ask before you enter and let them know what you're doing. Dear God, I now know that there is a heaven.

The girls were the kind of girls where you'd want to describe them as having various builds, but you would decide against using "builds." Something about them came across as various flavors, not builds. Each possessed a style and a demeanor that was all to their own, each intriguing in some hot and dark fashion. My God.

There were, of course, other acts, all with themes. Some were based on space, with the dancer onstage in a set-up in a classic science fiction motif; neon green lights circling the girl like the rings of Saturn. There were babies in strollers, which weren't babies at all. There was a seven foot tall chicken man. There were French



maids and accordion players, all working together in some low-down orderly fashion.

And there were pasties. I will give pasties their just due here, at this moment!

Pasties are some of the greatest inventions ever. I have been to many a strip joint where the dancers have to wear flesh-colored pasties over their nipples. Those, I don't like. But there is an art to twirling the breast in the open air in such a way as to invite them to wave in a circular fashion and swing the sparkling tassel of the pasty as it glitters in the stage lights. All of the dancers were well learned in the art of pasties twirling. But there was one act that stood out. I don't know if it was because it was the hottest act, in that strangeness way that is the Velvet Hammer, or more so because of the perseverance and lack of concern for what anyone may have thought. It was a classic exhibition of the idea that "the show must go on." It was professionalism. It was rock'n'roll, and it was demonstrated by one of the Velvet Hammer guests of honor.

Tura Satana is a legend to some. She was the big breasted Asian girl in Russ Myers' *Faster Pussycat, Kill Kill*. Tura took the stage in a kimono while a dude dressed like a burglar – in a black cap, black clothes, and a black Lone Ranger-type mask – played the floor tom and cymbals to keep the rhythm for Tura's swinging of the tassels. The rhythm was a steady, rolling beat as Tura worked the crowd, but then one of the pasties started to fall off. It was only moments into her performance and the tension rose. Would she drop the pasty? If she did, what would happen? Without it, she would be twirling her breast tassel-less. Would it be like a twin prop running on one propeller? Would her show go out of control?

The pasty fell off and she picked it back up and put it back in place. Then she danced her way over to the drummer and began to let her tassel hit the cymbal each time it came around, in time to the beat on the drums. It was almost like a dirty cartoon portraying a beatnik party, what with the burglar outfit and the kimono dress, nakedness, and drumbeat. And I was privy to all this from the side stage, surrounded by other beauties. I was felling good in my dusty old suit and new eight-dollar haircut. How could it get any better?

In the darkness behind the curtains, among the ropes and scaffolding, which was packed into the corners of the stage area, we intermittently snapped photographs and got acquainted with a few of the dancers. Then we made our way down the stairway leading to the basement, and finally to the dressing room itself.

We strolled straight into the dressing room. If you enjoy your surroundings to be fifteen to twenty naked women strolling casually around, stretching fishnet stockings over pantiless crotches, bending over to pull on black stiletto boots, topless, and sipping on beers, if you enjoy this, then you either better start dating one of these beauties, get a job that puts you in strange situations (write for some magazine), or become the gay makeup artist who gets to sit with naked women in his face all day. Jesus Christ! The smell of powder and perfume. Women, women, women who love to drive you wild with the workings of their universal talent. Shoes, dresses, makeup, hose, mirrors, bright lights, hairspray, lipstick, and topless women. I need to write that again. Topless women.

I know there are some people, both men and women alike, who don't like adult entertainment, and I'm sure that they have complex reasons for that, but put that aside or turn the page. The Velvet Hammer is burlesque. Burlesque is not something you're going to catch late night watching *Skinamax* after the kids are in bed. Burlesque is live and shaking in your face. The Velvet Hammer is a celebration, a party to recognize the beauty of the female form... huh, yeah... it's about half naked women on stage!

The Velvet Hammer crashes down on the modern idea of beauty, but it is smooth and sexy. It shows the women in an atavistic way, as a part of American past that has been under-represented in the canon of whatever crap is taught as history. I'd be willing to bet that if this aspect of American history were taught in the schools there wouldn't be enough teachers to teach the classes. Students would fight to go to class and be schooled in the art of the women of the stage. Hell, I might even go back to school for that. Maybe,

but most likely not. I'd just go to any burlesque club I could find.

While the Velvet Hammer challenges the new "norm" of beauty, this is not a political rally. It does twist up a nice feminist cock-tail – with much emphasis on "cock" and "tail." No, the Velvet Hammer is not a Lilith fair. It is a show, and a show of the highest caliber. Imagine the classic American circus – ring master, clowns, tigers, acrobats – and replace the tigers with women of seamless attraction, and all the acrobats are female and all remove their tops, and the clowns... well the clowns are still clowns. But the ring master, instead of a guy in a top hat and a cane, instead of that you have a dominatrix with a German accent, Miss Astrid, slapping her rear and rotating her "axis of evil" for the audience, all the while coercing them into working their individual "axis of evil" on each other. If you can put that together then you're getting close to what the Velvet Hammer is like.

Miss Astrid, combined with the ladies of Russ Myers' *Faster Pussycat, Kill Kill*, the Velvet Hammer show girls – Ursulina, Valentina Violette, Ming Dynatease, Kitten Deville, Summer Peaches, Bobby Pinz, Maya O'Migh, Vermilion, Scarlett Fever, Lola La Cereza, the High Plains Harlot, Madame West, and Princess Kissameecoochie, and my God, the French maids, Bibi and Fifi Poubelle, the names alone conjure up countless stories and lives that have yet to be told and leave much to be lived. I need a drink just after calling those names back to mind.

I'm in for this one hook, line, and sinker. I'll be there each chance I can get. It's not everyday, in many cities, where you can see, in your dirty old suit and a new hair cut, a vaudeville-style burlesque show, that will leave you with a rejuvenated lust for all flavors of the female variety, and many fine pictures to boot.

Here's to hoping you and yours are having a fine 2003.

From Cloud Nine,
B.D. Williams



Kat Jetson's Photo Page

MARCIE:

There used to be a great little club in Los Angeles held at Fais Do Do called "Milk." It had an amazing two-year "ping-pong/ladies/beer" run. Quality live music every week, to boot! On this particular Day of the Dead evening, queer hero rockers, The Need played backing band to a slew of guest singers. In this photo, Marcie of Patsy is "getting her evil on." Don't let the look fool you... She's a sweetheart. But you didn't hear that from me. Photos of girls with cigarettes are neat. I'm a walking P.S.A.



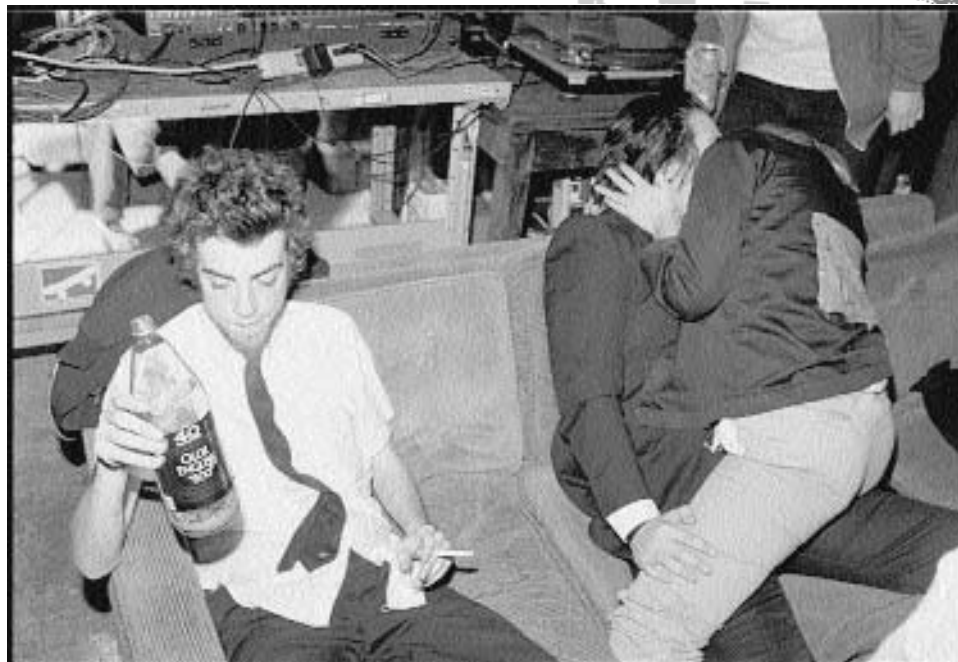
NICOLE:

Nicole of Radio Vago. That's a tube top on her head. I couldn't make something like that up. Radio Vago = hot.

Dan Monick's

Photo Page

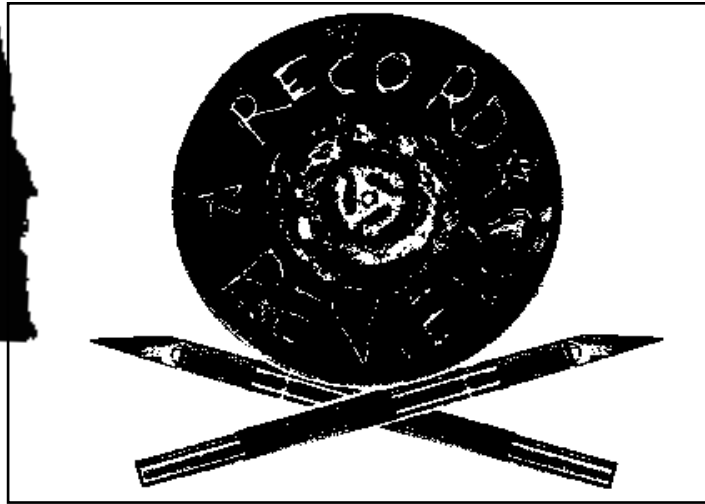
*"She says,
oh well, let's go to
the drive-in tonight.
It's Saturday night
and it's summertime.
Don't we all want to
be young together.
Don't we all want to
be young forever..."*



*...she says, oh
well, can we go to
the lake today? It's
summertime and it's
my only day off. Oh, I
only want to have a
little fun."*

*—"Queen of the
Bonfire," Selby
Tigers*

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.



Ever wonder what it would feel like, being that lone sock tumbling around in the dryer at the laundromat? –Donofthedeat

AFFLICTIONS, THE:
The Peotone: CDEP

Hey, I'm punk enough to know that the saxophone does not an unpunk record make! (See X-Ray Spex!) And a farfisa is, of course, many garage bands' delight! But these instruments have combined here to produce something that is only okay. A lot of the songs sound the same. Sorta that slowish garage-y feel. I wish everything was a little faster and had a little more energy. Come on! More craziness! I can take it! If this were a cereal, it'd be regular Cheerios. Could someone pass me the sugar, puh-lease? –Maddy (Captain Spazz)

ANCHOR/ BREAKDANCE VIETNAM: Split: CD

Anchor: A lot of guitar wanking in a Helmet-meets-death metal sort of way. The band sounds like it's just going through the motions. Emotionless metal hardcore. Also a really bad hair metal cover of Skid Row's "Youth Gone Wild." Breakdance Vietnam: Man, this CD went from bad to worse. Average, generic, mid-tempo melodicore. I need to find something to entertain me. I guess I will go pop that zit on my chin. –Donofthedeat (Triple Crown)

ANGEL CITY OUTCASTS:
2,000 Pints and Going Strong!: CDEP

Like with all catchy oi, you've gotta check the lyrics, lest you realize halfway through singing along that you're singing "God bless America the Great! Boot to the black man's face!" So I went on their website, and I discovered the lyrics to a song called "Popeye in Afghanistan." This song isn't on the CDEP, but the lyrics give you a good reason why you'd probably not like this band. The song is about a US soldier in the Middle East. Here we go. "Then he came upon a caravan/Trying to get across to Pakistan/When the evil one had showed his face/Our hero put him in his place/Let that be a lesson now/To all our enemies on the prowl/When you mess with the best the great US/You'll end up in a world of stress." First of all, that last rhyme has to be one of the lamest I've read in a long time. (A "world of stress"? Come on!) And second...well, do I even need to say it? If this were a cereal, it'd be United We Stand-Ohs. –Maddy (self-released?)

ANGELIC UPSTARTS:
Sons of Spartacus: CD

Now I know these blokes have been around forever, carrying the proud street punk torch and squashing nazi skin-heads beneath their jack boots whenever possible, but I don't know if I've ever heard more than a couple of their songs. But I was elated to see their pictures on **RAZORCAKE** 72 this disc: they're

unapologetically old, pudgy, ugly and all suffering from male pattern baldness. I was all ready to embrace my new musical heroes and then I hit the play button. Um, looking like the fat middle-aged guys in *The Full Monty* is one thing, but to look like that and sound fat and middle-aged is another thing entirely. It doesn't start out too bad – mid-tempo-ish and a bit workman-like – but then the wheels break off and the whole thing slides off into the ditch when they pull out a sappy power ballad that could have been penned by (ugh!) Brett Michaels from Poison. I guess it's kind of funny to hear some guys who look like this doing a hair metal style power ballad, but I'd like to hear their stuff from back when they had a little more hair and fewer chins. And zero power ballads. They probably tore it up back then. But as it is now, I'm sorry to report, these guys seem like they should share a crate of viagra with Bob Dole. –Aphid Peewit (Insurgence)

ANGER IN MOTION:
Reverends and Rednecks: 7"

Five tracks of raging, vaguely metallic thrash, recorded thirteen years ago by an Aussie band I'm assuming is long dead. Pity, 'cause it sounds like they were a mighty fine band, indeed. I'm hoping they have other stuff out there that's readily available, 'cause they are worthy of considerably more notice. –Jimmy Alvarado (Kangaroo)

ANTISCHISM: Self-titled: CD

This is a compilation of lots of Antischism seven-inches, split LPs, demos, and outtakes. I had never listened to Antischism before, and I really liked this CD! But, since I don't usually listen to music that sounds like this, I could not come up with the necessary comparisons to obscure bands and cereals! So, what do I do when I get a political crusty punk CD for review? Why, call noted crust punk expert, HJ Marcus, of course! So, here's what my friend HJ says: "Antischism rule! That song 'Greedy Bastards,' is that on there? That song is seriously one of the best songs ever! Hey, if you don't want that CD, could you give it to me?" –Maddy (Prank)

ARRIVALS, THE:
Exsenator Orange: CD

As they sing, "Some live by function. Some live by greed." By listening to the Arrivals, you just get the feeling that every countless note, every countless beat, every song to pass through their throats in the past twenty or so years was putting stock into this band, to making sense of the world through music. Think of how much time most bands waste in lieu of making great, original music. Instead of spending energy on slot jockeying other bands, sucking up to radio stations, wasting time on calling up Mt. Dew for sponsorship, it comes across that every second, for the Arrivals, it's the music. That's how their albums sound. Like complete universes – atmosphere, dramatics, and poignant lyrics (one song told from the perspective of a baby). Nothing's missing. Nothing's flat. The Arrivals are unsung blue collar powerhouses that have somehow found a way to muscle the density and curiosity of the Pixies and strap it onto a bottle rocket of brass-sacked rock. Inventive yet powerful, much like fellow Chicagoans of yore, Naked Raygun. That's just the beginning. The complexity's a couple layers deep and the songs will grow on you like tree roots. Not apt to let you go soon. Ignore the dodgy cover art. Ignore the enigmatic title. Buy, sit down, crank up, and let something original grow all over you. Rock on, motherfuckers. –Todd (Thick)

ASSAILANTS:
Hate Machine: 7"

Some of the material that came with this says this EP is the final statement from this Cerritos band, which is a shame to hear, 'cause these kids had it goin' on. Sweet mid-tempo hardcore with no discernible metal influence, which is how we like it best around these parts, and some smart/stupid lyrics to boot. Sad to see you go, guys. –Jimmy Alvarado (Violent Reaction)

ASSCHAPEL: self-titled: 7"EP

Do I hear a double bass and a moog? Venom meets Charles Bronson meets Devo? Well, not quite. Asschapel's too

gloomy for a plausible cover of "Mongoloid" and the cookie monster slays the mic, but it is good, punchy thrash that's fixated on skulls, rotting, and dying. It's hard not to make a Locust comparison, but with more metal, more spooky, and less art. Good for cleaning pop bacteria out of your ears. They hide their melodies in spoils of musical barbed wire, much like Tragedy. Good, gnarled stuff. –Todd (Hungry Ghost)

BASEBALL FURIES:
I Hate Your Secret Club: 7"

Fuckin' rockin'! I lost my concentration the first couple of times I listened to this, but when I finally got it, I wished my record player had a repeat button. The three songs on it are all awesome. It was rock'n roll on a very fuck you level – well worth getting up to reset the needle. –Petite Paquet (Estrus)

BLACK MONDAY/ KINGS ROCK: Split CD

Black Monday has been spewing their barrio brand of greaser punk rock and roll for years, and they just keep getting better and better at it. Jorge's vocals are gritty and melodic, and unlike so many other "singers" in the rock and psychobilly scenes, he can actually carry a tune that makes the ladies swoon. Rusty and Herman (the latter from Los Creepers) hammer out the rhythms. And Dave's frenetic fretwork is as lively to listen to as it is to watch. If this is any indication of what's to come, Black Monday's upcoming split with Speed Buggy is sure to make a splash. –Money (Split Seven)

BLAZING HALEY/ LOS CREEPERS: Split: 7"

It's nice having some Blazing Haley on vinyl. Both of their tracks – "Time to Burn" and "Run Away Truck Lamp Love" are excellent examples of their jump-started, thick-pistoned take on American roots music that stands a little taller than many other pompadour'd compatriots. The not-so-great news is that both of these tracks have already been released on their latest CD, *Mas Chingon*. Los Creepers: are okay. They play their instruments well. If you don't know the title of the song, they repeat "Man Gone Mad" about twenty times, they take a load of their sound from the first several Reverend Horton Heat LPs, and they cover ground that's been drag stripped over and over again, down to the forced laughing at the end of the song. I don't want to get too down on them, but when you start to make me think of Gene Vincent with the lament in "Mistakes and Broken Hearts," I want to hear your soul shattering and your guitar weeping. Dead souls, barely coping, you know? It just sounds a little too nostalgic and safe for me, like you're driving by the accident instead of being in one. –Todd (Split Seven)

BOILS, THE:
The Ripping Waters: CDEP

I'm not really sure how or when pirates invaded oi, but I've been noticing a trend of pirate-influenced songs in some of the latest oi releases. And I don't know why I like it, but I like it. Why not? Isn't it better to sing along to a pirate song than to sing along to, say, some geeky kid's heartbreak, or to sing along with a dozen consecutive unity songs? This new EP by The Boils grabs the pirate theme and rocks with it. There are five songs, not all of them pirate tunes, but all of them are fast, growling,

straight-ahead of songs that are vocally similar to the Stiff Little Fingers (which is never a bad thing when it's done well, and it's done well here) and musically in the vein of The Business's live show (meaning it has all the energy and rockin' anthems, but none of The Business's questionable, slow-down-and-clean-everything-up production values). -Sean Carswell (Thorpe)

BOOKS LIE: Weep: CD

I'm assuming they're supposed to be a hardcore band, but they sound more like a talentless emo band than anything else. A decade from now, when they've all sold out and got the corporate jobs that are their birthright, they can pull this outta the box in the back of the garage, show it to their kids, and tell them of a time when mommy and daddy were cool. Should work so long as they don't ever play it for the little rugrats. -Jimmy Alvarado (coalition-rec@hotmail.com)

BRIEFS/DISTRACTION: Split: 7"

The Briefs are tricky. "Ain't It the Truth" is another catchy, bonafide single that continues to, thankfully, blur the line between punk and new wave. Perhaps it's all the travelling in foreign lands they've been doing, but they seem more aware of their Americanism, in a self-aware, openly critical way. Paraphrasing here: "Yeah, we're stupid as a culture, but we (as a band) know it." Quoting here: "The TV news is nice and dull, but networks keep us comfortable." And they can make your toes tap and wonder, "Well, since they're on a major, maybe this song'll actually make it to the radio." There's also an homage to the movie, *A Christmas Story*, etching in the matrix space. It's what Ralpie's special ring decoded. The Briefs are a pony of many tricks. The Distraction: I've listened and listened to them, and the more I do, the more I think of the Stitches. It's the singer's voice. It's so like Mike Lohrman's and all the instruments do the very simple (and good, but not great) sweep of stripped-down punk. It's just that the Stitches released a great record recently and raised the bar on themselves, so The Distraction seem secondary to that. -Todd (Radio Blast)

BURMESE: Live War b/w Treaties of Greed and Filth: 7"

Musical brussels sprouts. Do not ingest. Feed it to your dog under the table or hide it under a cushion on the couch when no one's looking. Not meant for human consumption. -Aphid Peewit (Scenester Credentials)

CATALINA TIGERSHARK: ...is Making Poop Jokes a Threat Again!: CD

Sounds like it was recorded in the garage on a boombox. The vocals are snotty and the recording reminds me of what I may have heard over twenty years ago. The songs are mid-tempo and are on the poppy side of punk. The mud-diness of the recording will appeal to the punk purist, while it might irritate others. I want to hear what they sound like once they go into a real studio. It's hard to have an opinion from what I hear. The potential is there. -Donofthedeath (Catalina Tigershark)

CIRCLE TAKES THE SQUARE: CD

You sometimes read reviews where the reviewer goes on about how the record is so good it makes him or her want to break shit (I remember reading a Hank

Rollins piece about how the first time he heard the Stooges' *Raw Power*, he was working construction and he started throwing 2 x 4s all around the place) but what about a record that makes you want to smash something, and the first thing you want to smash is the hi-fi that's actually playing the record? Imagine a screamo record that screams about cutting itself and black blood, black halls, black hearts, blacked-out houses and blacked-out eyes, then quits screaming for a minute while the guitar gets all undistorted and pretty, setting you up for the punch of the screaming going back on, then the screaming goes back on, and sometimes a lady talks while the man is screaming and then the lady screams too, and it's like this constant seesaw between the quiet setup and the anguished yelling and it sure does piss you off and you wonder, "How come they can't at least scream about something happy or funny? I'm certain it's not physically impossible to scream about meatloafs or beanbag chairs or turtles." So you're just about to eject the CD when a track comes on with the setup music for the background of a *rap*, which just tears it, and that's when you almost punch the stereo in the face, but you pull up when you remember you still have to listen to Dan Melchior on there. That's what sometimes happens to me, anyway. -Cuss Baxter (Hyperrealist)

COFFINBERRY: Self-titled 7"

Think mod with vocals that don't fit, which doesn't mean I like one and not the other. I hate them both equally. -Megan Pants (Exit Stencil)

CONCUBINE FORMING: Stiff: EP

I can't believe it's 2003 (it is, right?) and I'm listening to a song called "Yo Mama." Another thing I didn't expect is that it actually sounds a little like Big Black. A little punker, but with a similar robotic beat. How's this: I got the turntable this is playing on in an era when people still said "yo mama" a fair amount, and Big Black/Big Neck? Does that mean I'm drunk? -Cuss Baxter (Big Neck)

CYNICS, THE: Living is the Best Revenge: CD

Screamy, Sonics-influenced garage rock with the all-important all-school garage instrument: the maracas! Of course, it seems like I can always take my garage rock crazier than it's given to me (with notable exceptions of the Sonics, the Brentwoods, and a few others). This comes closer to meeting my ever-difficult spazz quotient than ninety percent of the garage crap that's being released today. If this were a cereal, it'd be Apple Jacks. Fear not! It doesn't taste like apples/sound like crappy hipster garage! (Even though the guys in the band look totally square!) Shake! -Maddy (Get Hip)

D.O.A., Hardcore '81: CD

Happy 25th year D.O.A. California's best Canadian band (or so it seemed during the time, since they toured here so much), this is D.O.A.'s seminal second album with what's considered the definitive lineup (no offense to the current one) of Randy Rampage, Dave Gregg, Joey Shithead, and Chuck Biscuits (who, in this loose timeframe drummed for the Circle Jerks, Black Flag, and Nig Heist - furthering the California connections - then, later, joined Social Distortion and Danzig) has lost nothing since its inception in '81. It's a great hybrid of the Dils'

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Underground Medicine Mailorder, Connecticut

1. FM Knives, *Estrogen* (Smart Guy)
2. Seger Liberation Army, *Heavy Music* (Big Neck)
3. Exploding Hearts, *Teenage Faces* (Vinyl Warning)
4. Saviors, *Ruby Gloom* (Rapid Pulse)
5. Briefs/Distraction split (Radio Blast)
6. Stitches, *Automatic* (Vinyl Dog)
7. Kill-a-watts, *Let's Get High Voltage* (Flying Bomb)
8. Stitches, *Automatic* (TKO)
9. Final Solutions, *Eat Shit* (Therapeutic)
10. Briefs, *Gary Glitter's Eyes* (Screaming Apple)

Disgruntled Mailorder, California

1. Neon King Kong, *There's a Party* (Vinyl Dog)
2. Lipstick Pickups/Bikini Bumps split (Erectords/G.C.)
3. Briefs/Distraction split (Radio Blast)
4. Angry Samoans, *Don't Change* (Bad Trip)
5. BellRays, *Fire on the Moon* (Poptones)
6. Flash Express, *Ride the Flash Express* (Headline)
7. Stitches, *Automatic* (Vinyl Dog)
8. Candy Snatchers/Nashville Pussy split (Black Lung)
9. Distraction, *Transmission Ignition* (Pelado)
10. Marky Ramone, *I've Got Dee Dee on My Mind* (Heavy Drinking Productions)

Know Crap Mailorder, Oregon

1. Exploding Hearts, *Making Teenage Faces* (Vinyl Warning)
2. Exploding Hearts, *Modern Kicks* (Pelado)
3. Spitting Teeth, *Don't Believe the Hype!* (Havoc)
4. Distraction/Briefs, split (Radio Blast)
5. The Latin Dogs, *Kazaaamo* (Blammo)
6. Barse, *Council Estate*, (Rapid Pulse)
7. The Bomb Pops, *Everything Looks Like Her* (Rapid Pulse)
8. The Cheeraks, self-titled (Yakisakana)
9. BBQ, self-titled (Goodbye Boozy)
10. The Now/The Grout, split (Last Years Youth)

Illustration from the insert of Amdi Peterson's *Arme's Blod Ser Mere Virkeligt Ud Da Film.*

sabertooth and sickle socialist attack coupled to The Avengers frontal assault. (Randy played with the Avengers, too.) If that's no help, think of basic Dead Boys, speed it up a little bit without blurring, and you're on the right track, just turn down the self-annihilation knob a bit and have the band face wider issues than cocaine and self-mutilation. I know this is a personal problem, but I still hate Led Zeppelin, whom they cover, but to make up for the injustice of "Communication Breakdown" included is the *Don't Turn Your Back on Desperate Times* 1984 Peel Session. If you've passed their stuff up before, this is a gem, from one of the very first bands to incorporate and embrace the word "hardcore" and who actively kept it from being another stale cartoon. Thumbs up to lifer Joey Keithley, who's label is responsible for this essential reissue. -Todd (Sudden Death)

DAN MELCHIOR: *This Is Not the Medway Sound*: LP

...i saw this guy live w/full band in a bar across the street from where i work last year, and couldn't really make heads nor tails out of what exactly he was trying to do (although the fact that i don't remember whom he was opening for should be a backhanded compliment of sorts). On closer inspection, it is my esteemed supposition that, regardless of what he is TRYING to do, what he HAS DONE, as far as i'm concerned, is found a midground - (a midlands, if you will) - and, thusly, united - the section of the Venn diagram containing wry, quasi-smartass British songwriter types like Wreckless Eric, John Otway and the Jazz Butcher with the sector belonging to unaccompanied Billy Childish material and the like (may i note for your con-

venience that this album is a drumless work). Problem here is that, lacking the quirky songcraft of the former and the bloody-nosed immediacy of the latter, the guy achieves absolutely nothing superlative whatsoever (though he does score a few memorable lines like "we're all just animals...don't get cocky"). My favorite part is still the (likely unintentional) evoking of the Monkees first album in the instance when a refrain of "hey-hey-hey-hey!" in a song laden with 7th chords almost duplicates a similar passage in "Tomorrow's Gonna Be Another Day." I'm sure the guy is thrilled to know that. BEST SONG: "This Is Not the Medway Sound" BEST SONG TITLE: "Hey x 4" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: This stereophonic microgroove recording is playable on stereophonic and mono phonographs. It cannot become obsolete. It will continue to be a source of outstanding sound reproduction, providing the finest stereophonic performance from any phonograph. Well LA de fucking DA... -Rev. Nørb (Smart Guy)

DAN POTTHAST: *Sweets and Meats*: CD

These solo releases that Asian Man have been releasing lately are killing me! This release gives the listener the singer of MU330 accompanied by acoustic guitar, drums, and organ. I'm wondering if I picked this or was this assigned? I feel like I should be sitting in a Starbucks reading *Men's Health* while listening to this. I feel soiled. -Donofthedeath (Asian Man)

DEAD KENNEDYS: *Mutiny on the Bay*: LP

This is a live album that was recorded back when the Dead Kennedys were a

real band and not the current Dead Kennedys Karaoke Fiasco that they're pulling off now. The songs are taken from four SF-area live shows from 1982 and 1986. Most of the on-stage banner is cut out, and the sound quality is good, so this album is sort of a DK Greatest Hits. It has live versions of "Too Drunk to Fuck," "Holiday in Cambodia," "California Über Alles," "Moon over Marin," "MTV - Get Off the Air," and nine more of your favorite DK songs. It's actually pretty good. I don't know where you stand on the whole issue of the other three Dead Kennedys screwing Jello Biafra out of all the songs he wrote and suing him for money that they thought he should've made and re-releasing all the old DK albums on a label that claims to be "independent" but has a history of working with Warner Bros., Enigma, and BMG and released early stuff by Ted Nugent. But, if none of that bothers you, pick up this record. -Sean Carswell (Manifesto)

DEAD THINGS: *Because Sometimes You Just Want to Ride Your Bike to the Show*: CD

I think Dead Things is my new favorite everything. I picked up because I liked the cover art - a bunch of skeletons riding their bikes with instruments in tow. Then I looked at the track list and thought with songs like "Lemmy Rides a BMX" or "Shovel Fight" I had to check it out. From the first song it sounds familiar, they acknowledge that there are parts stolen from other bands, but they totally make it their own. Heavily guitar-driven with alternating male/female vocals and so much fucking balls! This is easily the best album in my review pile this time around. - Megan Pants (Slave Magazine)

DEADWEIGHT: *Half-Wit Anthems*: CD

Combine the worst excesses and most desperate commercial inspirations and aspirations of Big Chief, The Red Hot Chili Peppers, Primus, and a slew of would-be progressive yo metal bands who listened to too much Yes and fancy themselves to be talented musicians, and you have an idea of how much rancid, diarrhea-covered ass this sucks. -Puckett (Nuttfactor 5)

DEMONICS, THE: *Ritual on the Beach*: LP

Tasty, surf-fueled sparklings sprinkled here and there on this Demonic release with some straight-ahead rock and rolling that would most likely be a kickin' set to catch live. I don't know if it's just The Gears fanfuck wriggling inside of me, but the way The Demonic opened up their LP with the exclamation "Surf's up, motherfuckers!" on "Summoning Neptune" called to mind the "Surf's up!" shout on the Gears' "Let's Go to the Beach." Intentional, or not, it's all fucking great here, as well as their covers of "Aloha Oe" and even Nikki Corvette's "Boys Like Me." By the way, does Alien Snatch Records have an extraordinary supply of vinyl to press records with? Because this fucking LP has the girth to hold a stuffed Thanksgiving turkey. I know that the pressing plants in Europe usually turn out thicker records than here in the states, but this 12" spare tire could do some serious smashin' damage to someone's noggin'. Fuck yeah! -Designated Dale (www.aliensnatch.de)

DESTROY: *Discography*: CD

This is the predecessor band to Code 13. Felix of Havoc Records fronted both

bands. Destroy was a landmark band out of the Minneapolis scene during the early '90s. During that period, a new birth of DIY hardcore was igniting due to music becoming so bland and the after effects of the "crossover" scene. Bands like Destroy, Drop Dead, Born Against and others of the time jump-started their respective scenes and brought together like-minded people to play music they wanted to hear. I have to admit that I barely paid attention to this band during that period. But listening to it now, I'm the one who missed out on the opportunity to experience it firsthand. Hearing music in a historical perspective is well and good, but does not compare when it is experienced in the present. The music on this release does not sound dated and can compete with many of the bands of today. Their mixture of crust, hardcore, and blast beat thrash is done with precision and energy. Felix's vocals are dead-on powerful and makes you wonder how he maintained his voice through a whole tour from all the screaming and growling. The drummer maintains hyperspeed rhythms that most humans couldn't maintain playing for a few seconds. At least, not me. The guitars are recorded with a solid sound that is crucial for this type of music to achieve its power. The bass always ties it all together. This is the reason after all these years that you see the band's patches on kids' clothes. —Donofthedeath (Havoc)

**DIEFENBAKER:
Los Muertos: CD**

Although they appear to be from Sweden, they remind me of all the things I hated about Berkeley's Gilman scene back in the late '80s, namely vaguely poppy punk with enough col-

lege rock sensibility to make the whole thing annoying as hell to sit through. —Jimmy Alvarado (Suburban Justice)

**DISGRUNTLED NATION:
Self-titled: 7"**

Some mighty fine work from this Montana band. Tempo changes aplenty, personal lyrics that prove that life in a small town still bites the big one, and subtle, yet knowing, musical references to BGK and, of all bands, Journey. One kick-ass little piece of wax. —Jimmy Alvarado (Disgruntled Nation)

**DISTRACTION, THE:
Calling All Radios: CD**

Remarkably unremarkable pop punk that's a tad catchy, a little snotty, but mostly forgettable. Distraction is right — don't I have better things to do than listen to this? I can't wait until I've totally forgotten everything about this band, which should occur roughly a minute or two after I type this period right here: —Aphid Peewit (Dirtnap)

DRI: The Dirty Rotten CD: CD

Fucking amazing that some things stand the test of time. This former Texas band that moved to San Francisco around the same time as the Stains/MDC were representatives of an important time in punk rock history when thrash was mastered and crossover was introduced. This is a sort of discography of the *Dirty Rotten EP/LP*, *Violent Pacification EP*, enhanced and bonus tracks. Forty-four music audio tracks in all. The only thing relevant, in my opinion, is that it's missing the *Dealing with It LP*. That was also a classic that should have been included. That was their time period, in my opinion. I was turned off by their later material. I was also turned off that they left

behind the punks to focus more on their "crossover" career and not participate as much in the punk scene. The history was they were one of the fastest bands of their era. Songs like "No Sense," "Couch Slouch," "Reaganomics," "Blockhead" and "Busted" are energizing today as they were when I first heard them when they were first released. The lyrics were thought-provoking and political that challenged many issues of the day. The sheer speed of the music was unique at the time and was so mind blowing that I thought nobody could have pushed it to limits like they did. I was a devoted fan at that time. I remember one small show that they played at the Cathay de Grande in LA. I think the song list was fifty to seventy-five songs long, and I think they barely played thirty-five minutes. The song list was written on a bed sheet that looked like a massive banner placed behind the stage. They were fucking amazing live. When they went more in the metal route, they shows weren't as exciting. My alcohol consumption was much more important because I can vaguely remember seeing them. This is a worthy release of many great songs from an important time period of punk rock, and you can see how much they have influenced modern day thrash, hardcore, power violence, and fastcore. This is worth every single penny that you might have to fork over. —Donofthedeath (Beer City)

DUMBSTRUCK: If It Ain't Broke, Don't Fix It: 7"

A repress of the first seven-incher from a band featuring ex-members of Ripcord. The sound is spastic hardcore a la Gang Green. The Poison Idea cover was a choice. —Jimmy Alvarado (Deranged)

**DYSFUNCTION:
Wake Up: 3-song CDEPR**

Three tracks of authentic, homespun, home-recorded Russian punk recorded at the end of 2002, sung in Russian. It's deranged, low-low-low, go lower fi. Imagine sponge-thwok drums and guitars that sound like they're played under mattress in room from across the street and the mic chord barely reaches. It sounds so strange that the stringed instruments sound like a keyboard at times. And it's fronted by a guy who sounds almost like a cartoon vampire. Know what? I like it. It's just like vodka that comes in plastic bottles with the hand grip. Not the smoothest going down, but it's got a fire all its own and gets the job done. —Todd (Dysfunction c/o Vladimir Kozlov, Kashirskoye Shosse 132-1-125, 11582 Moscow, Russia; <www.dysfunction@narod.ru>)

**EDDIE HASKELLS/
FRACAS: Split 7"**

You've got some good rock'n'roll here with the Eddie Haskells. "Lust-n-Danger" is the better of the two, but they're both solid tracks. Fracas just didn't do it for me. Even their cover of Antiseens's "Fuck All Y'all" is just boring. —Megan Pants (Calendar of Death)

**EDGEWISE:
Complete Discography: CD**

Who are they? Did they break up? How many releases did they put out? Were they or are they popular? Did they tour? Who was or is in the band? What are the lyrics? No thank you list? So many questions and no info on the packaging. For a discography, I would at least expect a lot of info provided to inform those like me not in the know. All that is

written is this is a compilation of two recording sessions and they do S.O.A and Smiths covers. Okay, I'm going in totally blind. The music is East Coast metalcore that might be current or not. I would say they have that Strife mixed with Biohazard sound going for them. The production is on the polished end. The guitars are recorded clean with just enough compression to make it punch. The drummer sounds like he had lessons and took total advantage of the instructions. The vocals are clear, yet not sung. Almost rapping at times, which makes me believe the East Coast connection. Maybe I'm stingy, but I just want more than the music and a photo. —Donofthedeath (Thorp)

ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN: Listen Up, Baby!: CD

I had read somewhere that this was a re-issue with added tracks. Originally, this was just an EP that Man's Ruin had put out a few years back. I see that they have become more popular and the demand was there to bring this back from the grave. If you are a rock head, this should be in your bag of goodies. One of the pioneers of the current wave of rock and roll punk. On this release they have the sound and energy that makes me like a band like Motorhead. The vocals are throaty and the guitars are fuzzy. If you hate guitar solos, go to the next review. The songs are generally mid-tempo but rock you out of your seat. Stuff like this that is played so well talks to the little hesher inside of me. —Donofthedeath (TKO)

ENDLESS STRUGGLE: Till the End!: CD

This is part of the new school of studied leather jackets, spiked hair and tattooed hooligans, like the Unseen, The Casualties or The Virus, emulating their old school heroes like GBH, The Exploited or Broken Bones. These guys are a little more melodic, but they don't stray from the formula. —Donofthedeath (A-F)

ESTROGENOCIDE: CD

Completely worthless electronic misogyny by two thirteen-year-olds with altered voices and fake names so no one will find out they made this and beat them up. If you're gonna sing lines like "rape is good/rape is fun" and "I will cut your nipples off," why bother making the point that "Adolph Hitler... was an absolute zero"? So people won't thank you're an asshole? Nice work, smartypants. —Cuss Baxter (M. H. Records)

EXPLODING HEARTS, THE: (Making) Teenage Faces b/w Your Shadow: 7"

I picked this up on the recommendation of Roxy Epoxy. She gets high fives and a burrito. The B-side, "Your Shadow" is the ripper of the two. SweetTart melodies (tangy!) and candy knives to the throat punk pop (notice that the pop and punk have switched places). If the Dead Boys had a brighter (not lighter, but uptempo) alter ego, The Exploding Hearts could be the white part to their yin yang. The A-side explores their Phil Spector side, reminds me of the best that Mutant Pop Records released, especially the Connie Dungs, and is good, but I like 'em better when they bare their wax candy fangs. —Todd (Vinyl Warning)

EXPLODING HEARTS: Modern Kicks: 7"

This 7" was sweet enough to leave me requiring some major dental work. I think it could have been better if either side wasn't the same tempo as its flip. Both sides require a huge amount of pop enthusiasm. It's a good buy if you're trying to get a girl in the sack and need a mood setter. —Petite Paquet (Vinyl Warning)

EYES ADRIFT: Eyes Adrift: CD

Oh, man. In which Krist from Nirvana, Bud from Sublime, and Curt from The Meat Puppets plead for attention and renewed relevance by playing country-inflected rock. I think my ears are bleeding. —Puckett (spinART)

FABULOUS DISASTER: Panty Raid!: CD

Holy friggin' cow! I've been waiting a long time for this. To show you how long, I have had a copy of their last CD in my changer in my car since I reviewed it for Issue 1. And I have to tell you, many a CD has gone through that changer in that time. I just can't get myself to replace it with something else. The song "Red Blister" from that release is one of my all-time favorite songs, and I still haven't grown tired of it. I saw them live once when they were touring with Propagandhi, Avail, and J Church. The place was empty when they had to open the show. For the few who were present at the time, we were rocked out of our shoes when they performed. I've been hooked since. To give you a little history of their discography, their first release was *Pretty Killers*, followed by *Put Out or Get Out* which is the release that won't leave my car. *Panty Raid!* shows that they continue to progress as musicians and writers. The production on this one is more polished than their previous. The songs are tighter and faster. The vocals beautifully mesh together to create wonderful harmonies that make it appealing to people who like the music of groups like the Go Go's or the Graces. The difference is that these Bay Area women rock harder and have the tough appearance to stand up to any attack. They should be on tour with the Briefs by the time you read this. You have to see them live to appreciate how good they are and what you are missing. Now let's see how long this one stays in the car! —Donofthedeath (Pink and Black)

FALSDUCHESS OF SAIGON, THE: Easter Queen: 7"

Record: Knock knock.
Me: Who's there?
Record: The White Stripes.
Me: Oh.
BEST SONG: "Lyra Lace" BEST SONG TITLE: "Holiday Rumble" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Mary and Richard play drums, guitar and vocals! —Rev. Nørb (SS)

FLESH*PACKS: 5¢ Mail-In Rebate: 7"

...it's hard to tell if that (or anything) is actually the real title of this record, but I thought it described the band's sound more appropriately than other phrases on the cover such as "Four Zippy Songs" and "Malicious Fast & Furious Bar Chords." Indeed, the band is nowhere near as overtly poppy-punky as one'd assume from the neo-Otter Pop™ packaging, sounding much more

like those bands that turn up on the Teen Line compilations of late '70s/early '80s underground power pop bands — bands who existed in that brief window when (ah, the fools!) actually thought that "pop" could be "rock," on accounts no one told them otherwise yet (or they merely didn't listen) — than it does like something that would own a Queens t-shirt and black Chuck Taylors™. I can't say as this actually made me pick myself off the floor and dust myself off after initial contact, but I think it's fair to state that if I came home from Drivers Ed 20+ years ago and found this in the same package as I found the Boyfriends and Zeros 45s I mailordered from Bomp!™, I wouldn't question the wisdom of my purchase. BEST SONG: "Nothing to Live For" BEST SONG TITLE: "Trouble at the Y" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Cover clearly states "5¢ MAIL-IN REBATE — see inside for details." No details are provided inside. —Rev. Nørb (Short Hare)

FM KNIVES: Estrogen: Promotional Device: 7"EP

Gotta tip my hat to Jimmy Alvarado for nailing this — an American Buzzcocks (the caliber of *Singles Going Steady*) jangled together with Jam (pre-Weller falling asleep at the mic) somehow magically avoiding sounding like hollow ghosts or soulless musical students doing lines of their past heroes' ashes at a dusty shrine. How the fuck did they do it? I'm not sure, but the grin on my face says it's fuckin' good. I haven't seen such high mod-inspired energy since the breakup of The Gain. Even when the FM Knives slow down, they have this thing called songwriting that keeps it all together. Excellent. This'll get tons of spins. —Todd (SmartGuy)

GENE DRAYTON UNIT, THE: Due Bottom b/w Juicy Lucy: 7"

This is kind of like the music from a '60s detective show where they have the "sexy" chase scene. Not that interesting. —Megan Pants (Butterfly)

GIRLS, THE: Return to Zero: CD-R

Good fucking God! It's Turbonegro meets the Cars with a lot of ooohs and oh, oh, oh's. It was clean and pretty darn catchy. Word to the wise: buy this, listen to it, and if you don't like it... well, I guess you're shit out of luck if you don't like it, but I'm pretty sure you will. —Petite Paquet (no address)

HARKONEN: Shake Harder Boy: CD

This is so fucking epic. I think it wants to be death metal, but it doesn't get further than splinter rock. —Megan Pants (Hydrahead)

HEAT LIGHTNING: Even a Baby Could Do That: CD

Seriously damaged tinkle, like a less-sophisticated Sockeye. Or a more-sophisticated one, I can't tell. "I Wish I Had a Dog" ("Cuz dogs are better than cats") probably didn't take a lot of staying up nights to get written, but a "Mexican Robot" seems like a pretty advanced subject. "Nothing Is Simple" is actually a pretty well put together song with a nice violin line over a thick guitar melody. "5-0 Come Creepin'" has the funniest drums in the bunch (drums can be funny). The real crowning glory, however, is the ten-minute "Louie Style," a hilarious and vigor-

ously bent scat-noise jam. And for once, don't miss the retarded fiddle-rap extra track. —Cuss Baxter (Horrendous Failure)

HELLBOUND HAYRIDE: Who Shot the Hole in My Sombbrero? Live: CD

This is rockabilly with a surf guitar, but not quite surfably. And there's a whole lot of sleaze, but it's not sleazably. Damn, now I'm confused. Pretty much they've got the pretty standard badom bom bom sound with some sleazy/gravelly vocals. Repeat for each song. They don't mix it up. There isn't the sweetness in the vocals to make it all balance out. It just doesn't work for me. I guess this girl just needs some honey to go with her gravel. —Megan Pants (Split Seven)

HOLDING ON/ COALITION: Split: 7"

Holding On: Hailing from Minneapolis, modern day hardcore meets straight edge that is equal parts aggression and power. Lyrics of personal insight that makes them pissed. Coalition: Kiss mentioned the city in *Detroit Rock City*. The White Stripes, these guys are not. Metallic hardcore that is as beefy as the largest sausage in the deli. Lyrics that sounds like they are in the defensive of scene attacks. Great introduction to two bands I personally have never heard of. Great packaging, good music. —Donofthedeath (Martyr)

HOUSE ON FIRE: Self-titled: 7"
From the break apart of Panthro UK United 13 comes vocalist, Alex, and drummer, Shane (who left this band after this was recorded. Bummer. Personal experience has lent me to believe that people with Didjits tattoos are usually better drummers). The similarities to the almighty, highly missed Panthro are obvious: thick shouts and chorused screams, music so tight and swirling, you swear it could suck up a trailer park — astroturf, lawn frogs, and all — and crash it all right through your stereo. It's tough stuff by its pure force, not some dumb posturing. If Panthro's a little vague (go buy *Sound of a Gun*). It'll make you shake your steering wheel, I hear a lot of early Texas hardcore in the music — bits of Dicks, bits of Really Red — sidled next to early Hot Water Music to a time when emo hadn't been a gang raped term banded about in the bigger press. Yeah, it's fantastic stuff. Highly recommended for members of the USFC (a Leatherface appreciation society). —Todd (1-2-3-4 Go!, \$4 ppd./ US)

ICONS OF FILTH: Nostradamnedus: CD

I told someone at *Razorcake* that this new Icons of Filth wasn't much; I'm taking back that premature analysis. I'd only listened to it once, and the stupid title didn't do it any favors, but after a few spins, I'm coming to like it quite a bit. I can't compare it to their output of years past (I'm afraid if I listen to my copy of *Welcome to 1984* one more time, the needle might cut right through the plastic), but what they've got here is well-played, well-produced, Conflict/ Subhumans political punk with about 2000 (good) words in every song and a guy named Stig! —Cuss Baxter (Go Kart)

ICONS OF FILTH: Nostradamnedus: LP

Impulse buys can bite you on the ass

sometimes. Take this, for example. There are so many reasons why I wouldn't buy this. But curiosity sucker punched me into stupidity. Here is this relevant anarcho-punk band from the early 1980s that was stepping on the heels of like-minded bands of the time period, like Conflict, Crass and Flux of Pink Indians. From 1983 to 1985, they released the *Used, Abused, Unamused* EP, *Onward Christian Soldiers* LP, *Not on Her Majesty's Service* cassette, *Brain Death* EP, and the final kick in the gonads, *The Filth and the Fury* EP. All this is compiled on a discography CD titled *The Motorhate Projects*. I'm not sure if they released anything else until this point, but I would guess this is pretty accurate. They started out musically as average UK punk with politically charged lyrics, but grew musically individual which, at the time, only Conflict did better. The song "Evilspeak" from *The Filth and the Fury* (and which was also featured on the *P.E.A.C.E.* comp) is by far one of the best punk songs from the time period. Being the goofy high school kid at the time with my spiked hair, this not only spoke to me, but filled me with the aggression that I craved in my music. Now, to this stinky gem now rotting in my record collection. Here are the logistics. A band has reformed after not releasing anything since 1985. I'm assuming they saw the success of other reformations around them. Another guess is they have not been involved in the punk rock scene for many years. I'm lead to this theory because of the music. The music is very generic and doesn't represent even comparing to their early output. This shouldn't be the case since the original guitarist and singer are in this incarnation. The guitarist should have at least shown some progression in his craft after all these years or at least maintain some semblance of his trademark style. The music just doesn't sound genuinely angry or musically evil to me. I've only listened to the album once and was flabbergasted from what I was hearing. After the painful task of listening to the whole record, I dug through the collection to put on *The Motorhate Projects*. Night and fucking day or oranges and rotting worm infested apples, no comparison. If you have the slightest inclination on purchasing this release, be smart, ask the record store clerk to play the record for you before you get stuck with it. Cool cover art though. Live and learn.
—Donofthedeath (Go Kart)

INTROSPECT: Self-titled: CD

This was a huge surprise. It's a bold move that could have failed miserably. Combine elements of techno dance music, bend it with a strong leftist slant, add punk rock guitars and a vocalist, and see what flies. It may sound awful, and I was extremely apprehensive, but fuck it, I like it. A lot. The music, sans the words, reminds me a lot of a remix of the Revolting Cocks, Atari Teenage Riot, and the happy-fastness of early Bis. I know fuckall about electronic music (how it's made, what's been done, whatnot), and I'm hoping that if I go see these fine folks that they're not standing around humping what looks like washing machines (I've seen one electronica band in my life, for half a song. Yuck.). What's thankfully missing is the mind-numbing repetition. It's exciting stuff. Several things hinge my support. First, it's fucking catchy and it rocks. Second, as where Atari Teenage Riot failed — calling for a revolution while on a subsidiary of a major and selling over-

priced t-shirts — I get the feeling that Introspect are down for the cause. Third, anyone who can rhyme and blast through the lines: "Like a rock through a mosque in Jerusalem/ a bullet through the head in Vietnam/ a cannon through the wall at Antietam/ or the army through the people at Tiananmen" is all right by me. Fourth, I've never heard music quite like this before and it's appealing to hear punk music this far in the game clear another corner (much like how Against Me! is fusing country/folk into punk without diluting either). Perhaps I've got blinders on and there's a whole slew of electronic-based legions of crusties out there I've been overlooking, but I doubt it. If you're not too far dug in your particular punk trench, willing to take on some new fire, this comes highly recommended. The only thing I don't get is the "5" in the middle of their name. —Todd (A-F)

IRON LUNG: The Iron Lung Comedy Hour Live: Cassette

Iron Lung: yes. Comedy: debatable. Hour: no. Live: yes. Ten songs in about eighteen minutes, but most of them are only about forty-five seconds long so there's a lot of talking in between and, frankly, it's one of those "you had to be there" situations as far as the "comedy" goes. Of course, there's also the problem of lack of compression on the mix, so if you crank the volume enough to actually hear the talking parts, it's gonna be way too loud when the music kicks in. Like, I was driving to work in my Hyundai listening to it, and I had the sound way up trying to hear what they were saying about 7 Seconds, and then along came the next song and the vanity mirror cracked and my dinner spoiled. The music itself is drastic, violent hardcore and sounds pretty good (recorded at Burnt Ramen Studios. Is it a studio or a venue?). The packaging (100 made) is like somebody's art project, all plastic gatefold and xerox-inserted and maybe my favorite part (though I won't quibble with the genius who named a song "Modified for Arm Abduction").
—Cuss Baxter (Enterruption)

JABARA: Why We Wish: 12"

Originally released on CD by HG Fact in Japan, this is released here for the masses to hear the manic rage of this band. If you are familiar with the label, not all their releases are available outside of Japan. I'm not sure if this was one of them. It also sounds better on vinyl. It has a heartier feel to the music. Japan's hardcore is unique in their passion for the recording and the energy you feel in their music. It does not feel faked and you feel the compassion they spew forth. This is my second exposure to this band. My prior experience was a split flexi that they did with a band called Messed Up. Here, they blaze forward in a ball of fire with their mixture of Japcore, metal, and pulverizing punk blasts. Without compromising the power, there is always an underlying hint of melody in the music. I never researched the history of this band and its members. From what I hear in the music, they seem to be seasoned veterans of the punk scene. The musicianship is top notch and the songs are well crafted. From start to finish, you can't help focusing on the madness that flies out your speakers like a windstorm. If you are familiar with bands like Gauze, Paintbox, or Forward, you will be quite pleased with this band. —Donofthedeath (Prank)

KNUCKLEHEAD: Hostage Radio...: CD

Very strong and catchy street punk that's fast and clean like a Trans Am in Doc Martens and they're from Canada and you can sing along on every song and there's three videos and sixteen photos that you can play on your computer and it only has seven songs but they're good enough that you can just put it on "repeat" and let it play for about fifty minutes before you have to put on something else. Maybe Cocksparrer.
—Cuss Baxter (Longshot)

KUMPELBASIS: Mächte des Alltags: CD

I guess this is German street punk. All I know is that while I listened to it, I found myself missing the days when bands like Inferno were laying waste to the Rheinland. This stuff sounds like post-Epitaph punk-lite.
—Jimmy Alvarado (Intensive Scare)

KUMPELBASIS: Mächte des Alltags: CD

Man, this is good! I would take elements of Die Toten Hosen, Wizo, No Fun at All and some early period UK punk, add some German lyrics, and poof! This is what would come out of my chemistry experiment. Melodic punk that ventures into rockabilly, reggae and two tone and put this reviewer's head into a spastic bob, physically altering an ugly smile that opens up his mouth to expose his neglected rotten teeth to the masses. They offer a good musical variety, keeping this listener entertained. When the urge to get jaded starts to come over me, something always comes along and gets me excited again. —Donofthedeath (Intensive Scare)

LEVIATHAN: Self-titled: CDEP

I got \$6.25 that says Leviathan's singer tried out for the Misfits. His vocal devices are bad cartoons of Glenn's own goof, and he has this sickening thing where he leads into a "b" sound with an "m" sound, as in: "I like to sing, sing about mmblood." The songs are about nothing AND they're stupid. Also, the guitar player is one of those ones who thinks he's a good guitar player because he spent the extra hundred bucks to get the one with the wang bar and he learned how to make it go "woo woo, waaaw! Weeeeuw werrrrw!", and the whole mix has some kind of problem where the instruments never really sound like they were recorded at the same time (I've had the same thing happen to bands I was in, and I always put it down to inexperienced producers). It's funny, though, if you go to their website and look at the photos section, the press shoot of June 2002 sports some classics in unintentional self-ridicule. —Cuss Baxter (The Judas Cradle Productions)

LITTLE BARE BIG BEAR:

Little Man b/w Dr. Morgan's Panacea: 7"
URGENT MESSAGE TO AMERICA: Well, two things, really. #1: Liam Watson is THEE man, and #2) Cease and desist all further attempts to produce this mercurial quantity known as "psychedelia." Your collective attempts at same over the course of the last thirty-five years have been little other than an national embarrassment and a placebo for the dim-witted and unshaven. Give the limeys their due: They INVENTED psychedelia (Alice In Wonderland, man. I rest my case), and,

at this particular table, he who holds the Lewis Carroll card always has the high hand (plus they drink tea in the afternoon, superfluously insert the letter "u" into words like "labor" and "color" and wear ridiculous pence-nez spectacles at all hours of the day and night. If that's not psychedelic street cred in its purest form, i don't know what is) (and don't even start with the "but what about the weird gurgly noises on the Thirteenth Floor Elevators records?" bit, i don't even wanna hear it). I mean, NO AMERICAN can get away with singing lines like "fifteen tons of yellow orchids dancing on my bed" (nor should they), yet the Brits can pull it off, devoid of (almost) all irony, and have it ROCK magnificently, and never once incite the listener into wishing ass-kickings upon the artiste and his family. All told, i prefer "Dr. Morgan's Panacea" – sounding not unlike a lost "I Can Hear the Grass Grow"/"Cherry Blossom Clinic" era Move hit crash-landing into "Happenings Ten Years Time Ago" by the Yardbirds (given the restriction that the Move can't default into three-part harmonies whenever they get confused) – to "Little Man" – which sports the purest sonic simulation of "Journey to the Center of Your Mind"-era Nuge guitar as science will allow – but, on the whole, this record short-sheeted my brain and has surely warped my DNA to the point where, should i sire offspring some day, i'd be legitimately concerned about them being born with playing cards as bodies. BEST SONG: "Dr. Morgan's Panacea" BEST SONG TITLE: "Dr. Morgan's Panacea" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Big Bear was my favorite member of the Forever People™, one of Jack Kirby's first projects after returning to DC™Comics in 1971. "Kirby says 'DON'T ASK! JUST BUY IT!'" –Rev. Nørb (Butterfly)

LITTLE JEANS: Self-titled: CDEP

College radio type of stuff that plays in the background while I don't pay attention. –Donofthedeath (Asian Man)

LOCAL OAFS/ THE PRICKS: Split: 7"

Three tight, fast-as-fuck thrashers that come and go way too soon. I feel like someone just jabbed me in the ear with an ice pick and ran away. Local Oafs: They remind me of early Stupids with a drummer about as flashy as 7 Seconds' Troy Mowat, but damn if they aren't a fun listen. Considering I was bracing myself for some really, really bad pop punk, I'm mightily impressed. This bad boy is a keeper. –Jimmy Alvarado (Subway Star)

LUSTRA: Self-titled: CD

Formerly named Seventeen, from the Boston area, and now transplanted to the smog of LA with a new name, this is a band that definitely has goals to make it on a major. The production is big and recorded with a big time producer. Musically, they veer into different directions, from the garage sound of Nebula, to mystical sounds of the Beatles during the Sgt. Peppers period, to the industrial dance sounds of the Wax Trax label out of Chicago, to the '80s new wave sounds of Australians Split Enz or on their last track "Papilion," play a punked out tune that the Beastie Boys might have made. I know people have different influences in music, but the music just doesn't seemed focused. The songs' styles are all over the place and may confuse a listener if they like one

style or the other. I personally think that a band has to have some type of a focused sound for people to identify with. They're a great party atmosphere band that can hit all the bases, but didn't bring up the excitement factor for me. Who knows if they become big? I'm only one person sitting alone in front of a computer listening to this by myself. –Donofthedeath (X Off)

MANDA AND THE MARBLES: More Seduction: CD

I love this album. It's pop a la Joan Jett and the Blackhearts and Pat Benetar. It's so catchy that I heard two songs on a comp and just had have the full-length. For the first week I don't think I listened to more than four or five other bands because I was always listening to this. It's just done so well. Nothing about this album feels kitschy or tongue-in-cheek. Manda and the Marbles is good 'ol pop rock and it'll have a prominent place in my rotation from now on. –Megan Pants (Go-Kart)

MIGHTY GORDINIS, THE: For Bosomaniacs Only: LP

...i dunno, if the Platonic rock & roll ideal made flesh in the form of an automobile is, say, a 1965 Ford™ Mustang, this is more of a '73 Maverick or something (but dude! Three on the tree, dude! Can't fit a half-full beer can on the dashboard or anything, but it's got that three on the tree, man!). When they try to do the '50s thing, they sound a bit like the Meteors; when they do the '60s surf/hot rod thing, they sound pretty uninspiring (except for the song with the horns on it, that was pretty cool, even though it got me to thinkin' that it would be neat if a band covered "The Horse," which is kind of a scary thought); and, as one might assume when a Belgian surf/hot rod/'50s/punk band presumably attempts to evoke the spirit of vintage '68 John Sinclair ("American Revolution"), they just sound... uh... "interesting." Towards the end, the transatlantic deviance finally kicks in to momentous effect on "Shake My Iguana," a song that sounds so great the first time you hear it that you're scared to check the track listing lest you find out that's not really what they're saying, but by then the album's pretty much run its course. As an ass man, i can only conclude that this album was mis-routed to me by the editor. BEST SONG: "Shake My Iguana" BEST SONG TITLE: "Shake My Iguana" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Packaging depicts four nipples, three of which are female. –Rev. Nørb (Demolition Derby)

MISFITS/BALZAC: Don't Open 'Til Doomsday: CDS

Do you impulsively spend money on music and question why you would spend so much for something? This is the perfect case right here. I had heard of the Japanese 7" pressing of this, and it was not available in the US because the Misfits wanted exclusive distribution rights to North America. It took them a while to get it out in the states. I noticed it was available through their website and, without thinking, I paid for it, not noticing the CD was \$15 and if you add tax and shipping and handling, that put it a hair over \$21! I guess I'm paying Japanese prices. Oh well, I've spent more on things that I should have never bought and the price of collectible punk records is out of control. Well, this CD only has two tracks. The Misfits do a cover of Balzac's song "Day the Earth

Caught Fire," and Balzac takes a newer Misfits song (or 2?), "The Haunting – Don't Open 'Til Doomsday," and make it into one they could call their own. The Misfits track is respectable but doesn't totally capture the magic of Balzac. Now that Jerry Only sings for the Misfits, he doesn't have the range of a Danzig or Hirosuke of Balzac. Cool concept, but a little too expensive for casual fans. –Donofthedeath (Misfits)

MODERN MACHINES/ FRAGMENTS: Split CD

Last time around, *Razorcake* gave this a bad review, so I hadta come forward and put in my two cents! First of all, I confess to being close friends with both bands (the photo on the back of the CD was taken in my bedroom), so keep your grains o' salt handy! The Modern Machines play completely amazing poppy Husker Du/early Lemonheads-sounding/touch of Devil Dogs punk. (Yes, that *does* make sense, I promise!) Although a lot of my favorite Modern Machines' songs aren't on here, you still need to hear it. And get their demo tapes if you really wanna experience sonic glory! (Zines from *MRR* to *Now Wave* have been goin' ga-ga over their demos!) The Fragments play super catchy pop punk. And, puh-lease, do not think that I mean they sound like the Queers! Some of these tunes rank among the best pop punk songs I've heard in the last five years. And I give you a no-lame-lyrics guarantee! And great harmonies, too! The song "Burn This Place Down" (about the demise of the legendary Concert Café in Green Bay, WI) alone is worth ten bucks! (An important guarantee for pop punk these days!) If this split CD were a cereal, it'd be French Toast Crunch – an often-overlooked, but great cereal! One of the best CDs I've heard in a long time. –Maddy (New Disorder)

MORAL CRUX: Pop Culture Assassins: CD

It's not difficult to explain Moral Crux to people, but it's very difficult to explain why they're so fucking awesome. Basically, they play infectious pop punk in the vein of all that early nineties Lookout stuff: the Queers, Screaming Weasel, Mr. T Experience, Green Day, etc. They're not newcomers to pop punk – they've been at it since around 1989 – and they have all their poppy guitar hooks and sing-along choruses down perfectly. What makes them different, though, is that they replace your basic girl-trouble-bubblegum lyrics with intelligent, catchy lyrics about radical, left-wing politics. Songs that musically sound like they should be called something like "I Wanna Be a Teenage Ramone" actually have titles like "Prelude to a Riot," "New War Generation," "Stocks and Bombs," and "American Nightmare." It's hard for me to describe just how fun it is to hear a happy, bouncy song and sing along the lyrics, "I'm going window shopping with a brick." Also, with this new album, Moral Crux has finally found a way to smoothly blend in their *Side Effects of Thinking-era* Psychedelic Furs influence into the songs, and this adds one more cool layer to an already cool band. –Sean Carswell (Panic Button)

MY SO-CALLED BAND: Always Something There to Destroy Me: CD

Full disclosure: Chris Peigler has done some fine live reviews and a column for razorcake.com. We've never met, but

we definitely have a lot in common. Just want to get that out of the way. What's first apparent is how earnest these guys are. Songs confront alcoholism, the adverse effects of nationalism, looking back and wishing they were better to their families, and the difficulty of remaining true to punk rock, and themselves, in North Carolina for the long haul. My So-Called Band dams up a lot of different straight-ahead, early '80s hardcore. I hear everything from the Angry Samoans to DRI to Black Flag to The Freeze and early All. But, they aren't afraid to throw some slower acoustic numbers into the mix that don't stink. What I'm not sold on is the name of the band and the title of the record. Both seem a little too pop culture referential (the TV show, *My So-Called Life* and the song, "Always Something There to Remind Me"), as I hear a much more serious effort going on. As I listened to this numerous times, I got the inkling that the band wants to go in several different directions simultaneously, pulling it slightly apart. It's really close to getting the full blast effect of a great band, say, like, Smogtown or Pegboy, where you know everyone's on the same page playing the same song and the power spikes through the ceiling. As it stands, I like this CD quite a bit but I'd still like to hear a little more direct focus. –Todd (Suicide Watch)

NEARLY DEAD, THE: Kris and Holly Sides: 7"

...i mean, i quite understand the various forces that impel guys to form two-piece bands with their girlfriends (or sisters, or ex-wives – or someone who qualifies for all three categories at once [hey, Michigan's a weird place, man]), ya know? I'm COOL with it. What i'm NOT cool with is why i hafta be the poor sap stuck LISTENING to the results – i mean, what the fuck am i, the rock & roll chaperone? Can't you guys just practice, then get drunk and fuck on the anvil case or something? Human Spam™ Filter, kindly refrain from subjecting my hi-fi to further PDA-by-proxy materials! 'Sfar as the music goes, the Esquerita cover plows a pretty happenin' trench thru the combined fertile muck and bountiful mire of the eighth Cramps and second Super-charger albums, but the three originals have already slid from my short-term memory bank straight into the recycling bin, which is likely whence they came anyway. Kinda hard to play the "blues" with anything resembling conviction when any second it sounds like this record is gonna start drinking a chocolate malted with two straws and making out with itself. BEST SONG: "Rockin' in the Joint" BEST SONG TITLE: "PDX, OR, USA" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: The track hereon entitled "Sugar, Sugar" is not the Archies cover of similar name, which is generally spelled without a comma (and is a superior song). –Rev. Nørb (Subway Star)

NEW MEXICAN DISASTER SQUAD: Abrasive Repulsive Disorder: CD

Much like how The Curse is taking up the Kid Dynamite banner and beginning to make their own sound, I hear the same happening with New Mexican Disaster Squad: exciting expansion. The only problem is I can't nail who these Floridians remind me of. Perhaps early CIV (replacing vocals with yelling), where they hadn't quite let go of the vestiges of east coast hardcore but plugged in guitars that began to make

more harmonies alongside musical, punching fists. NMDS's sound is so instantly recognizable yet hard to thumb down to one thing in particular. It's clear, melodic hardcore, not afraid of screams, while avoiding being squeaky, processed, anorexic, or a tough guy act. I'm extremely interested in what they'll come up with next. Cool stuff. –Todd (Breaker Breaker)

NONE OF YOUR FUCKING BUSINESS: *Escapes from Hell: 7"*

If novelty records and collecting go with your mindset, this is a record for you. First of all, this is limited to 105 copies. For the novelty part, you might like or hate the packaging. I personally hate the packaging. The cover is a photocopy that is glued and stickered to the record! On top of that, there is a piece of glue in the hole where you would place the record on the turntable. That was record label owner Jean Luc's idea. After the laborious effort to get through all that, you have to be careful on how you play the record. The record plays in reverse so you have to start from the center. Since this a single-sided 7", the three tracks contained are engraved in parallel on two grooves, so depending on the groove, you get different songs. Also, one groove plays at 45 RPM, while the other plays at 33 RPM. That was my brother Katz's idea, who happens to be the guitarist and a person who knows about collecting. Did I go through the trouble? Nope. I called my brother to make me a copy on tape because I'm a lazy ass. On bass is Richard Ramos who heads the Agitate 96 record label. The drummer is the infamous Mike Thrashead who has played for the likes of Bad Acid Trip

and Naked Aggression and is currently in Reagan SS. I hate to say that I forgot who is on vocals. I need to stop drinking while I do reviews. Musically, they are noisecore, fastcore thrash. Songs that last as long as a blink of your eye – if you're lucky – or music for those with A.D.D. –Donofthedead (Headline)

NOW, THE: *Self-titled: CDEP*

I was caught off guard by this one. It looks like an emo album by the cover art, but no sir! You got yourself some pretty kickin' hahdcore here. It can get a little arty at times (especially on the third track), but only if you call doing something a little more complex and inventive than a chunk of what's out there arty. I also learned how many porn sites come up when you search for "the now hardcore" online while looking for more info on them. I didn't find any, but I wouldn't say it was wasted time... –Megan Pants (Robotic Empire)

...OF DEATH: *Generation of Vipers: CDEP*

The promo sheet sez, "the band combines unique high pitched vocals and blast beat rhythms." Note: Ms. Tight Pants is a big dork. She's not into all the cool new music. She likes rock and roll, power pop, and old folk and country music. She does not like whatever this might be. Maybe it's grindcore? If this were a cereal, it'd be Oh's. Not my thing. –Maddy (Protoculture Audio)

OZOMATLI: *Live: CD*

This is the audio version of a DVD that I think is exclusively available through the band's website. This was recorded

live in August of 2002 in San Francisco. What this recording captures is the magical aspect of their fantastic live shows. They bring together a broad array of people of different races with their fusion of hip hop mixed with Latin music varieties. The music the band produces is infectious and a cure for a good time. Most of the songs that are contained come from the self-titled first full-length and *Embrace the Chaos* album, like "O Le Le, Eva," "Chango," "Vocal Artillery," "Como Ves" and "Cumbia De Los Muertos," to name a few. An unreleased track titled "Ya Viene El Sol" is also featured. I wish they would have added "Guerrillero" off the *Embrace the Chaos* album. It's one of my favorite tracks. This and the DVD should tide me over until the anticipated recording and release of their next album. –Donofthedead (Ozomatli)

PARTY OF HELICOPTERS, THE: *Please Believe It: CD*

This very well may be the worst band ever. It's like Elliot Smith singing Prince out of key on top of some generic "rockin' 2000" riffs. Ick. –Megan Pants (Velocette)

PISTOL FOR A PAYCHECK: *At the Pinnacle: CDR*

Mediocre rock band. Sometimes I really wish there was more to say about music. If this were a cereal, it'd be Total. Yawn. –Maddy (Endless Vertigo Music)

PLATE-O-SHRIMP: *The Brunch of the Living Dead: CD*

I liked the two fast songs here, "Boss of Me" and "D-R-U-N-K," but the rest

came off as not-particularly-exciting mid-tempo rock/punk. –Jimmy Alvarado (www.plate-o-shrimp.com)

POPULAR SHAPES/ INTELLIGENCE: *Split: 7"*

Seattle slaps us once again with a double whammy. The Popular Shapes spin you on a tilt-a-whirl of pretty indescribable sound. Honestly, I can't really put my finger in it. It really is like a carnival ride. The guitar and melody of their two songs leave you dizzy and wanting cotton candy. If you have enough balance to flip the record over, The Intelligence will soothe your sixties sweet tooth. All in all, it's a pretty sweet ride. –Petite Paquet (Dirtnap)

PORCELAIN GOD: *Home Taping Is Killing Music: CD*

Super-homemade CD of "anti-hardcore psychedelic punk" recorded in 1982, that sounds like some kind of sub-Beefheart twenty-somethings with a \$25 budget for instruments and recording. Historically valuable, perhaps, but not in a Killed By Death way. And entertaining, but not in a 72-minute way. –Cuss Baxter (Slutfish)

PRESSURE POINT: *To Be Continued...: CD*

Every time something new comes my way from these talented street punks from Sacramento, I am amazed by their progression. The songs on this new release are catchy and upbeat. The production really brings out the melody without sacrificing their energy. The bass player is fucking amazing on this one. You have to hear him ripping on "Face in the Mirror." Take the shining elements of the Dropkick Murphys and the Beltones and mix that into a large

beer vat of lager. This is the end result that would be produced and shared with a good crowd of misfits. I need to get off my fat ass and try to see them the next time they come through. I'll shine my boots and hold my beer mug up high. —Donofthead (GMM)

PULSES, THE: Self-titled: CD

...this is one of those impudent records that dares the listener to listen to it until either 1. it is comprehended fully or 2. you're sick to death of it — both fates have yet to transpire on my end, so I imagine their fiendish will is being done even as we speak. My original synopsis of "I guess this is what the Pixies might've sounded like if they hadn't sucked" having been long since discarded on the grounds of it being too fantastic a flight of fancy to be contemplated, I can only say in my client's defense that many of these tracks would sound not at all out of place on any given 1978 UK punk comp, probably right between Magazine and Subway Sect, and that most every unforeseen turn into, like, Guided-By-Voices-ism is countered with a similarly unforeseen turn into, like, Scared-Of-Chaka-ism, ergo the Cosmic Equilibrium is more or less maintained — e.g., "Leisureworld," where you'd SWEAR some wise-apple drew a vertical line down the center of the singer, declared one half of the body Brainiac and the other half the Sniveling Shits, then the two halves punched each other daffy throughout the entire number. Also notice how "Pacemaker" sounds exactly like a Manplanet song without ever actually sounding like Manplanet, and how the chorus to "Sister Automatic" sounds like it was written by Rick Sims, even though it's actually nothing at all like any band he's ever been in. Curiously inscrutable I SAY SHE'S A WITCH!!! BURN HER!!! BEST SONG: "Clone Song" but maybe "Sister Automatic" BEST SONG TITLE: "Go Go Machine" but maybe "Sister Automatic" (I agree — too Urge Overkill) FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: "Sister Automatic" has the best typewriter solo since "Defamation Innuendo" by the Circle Jerks! —Rev. Nørb (Dirtnap)

RAISED FIST: Dedication: CD

Ever wonder what it would feel like, being that lone sock tumbling around in the dryer at the laundromat? This is what the soundtrack would sound like. From the opening drum roll, the music accelerates at a rapid pace, feeling like you are about to be run over by a Mack truck. The vocalist has the skills to compete with Spike from DRI. He is pretty phonetic for the sheer speed he has to sing to. The guitar is tuned down a tad and expels the metal at a high tempo force that it is played. The drummer bangs with the best of them and can stop on a dime and move into machine gun mode. The bass thuds like feet stuck in mud to effectively add the character of heaviness to their music. The lyrics are personal observations of question but written with thought and insight. Metalcore that beats you the way you like to be beaten. One of the heaviest releases I have heard this year. If you are familiar with this band, I personally believe this is ten times better than their *Fuel* album. Did I mention they are from Sweden? —Donofthead (Burning Heart)

RATOS DE PARAO: Onisciente Coletivo: CD

You jerk, jerk, jerk till your mind goes into a euphoria and the ultimate release is achieved. I'm not jerking off as you perverts might have perceived. Maybe in the shower all by my lonesome. It's me listening to something good while my head shakes from the excitement of hearing something good. RDP has been playing longer than many and keep representing the greatness of Brazilian hardcore. This latest release is a prime example of why they are so good. The songs range from a straight-up thrash affair to metallic moments of head banging range. They are not afraid to mix up a bit by adding some female vocals here and there. The main vocals range from the almighty scream to the throaty affair, depending on what works best. The guitars are played at precision and lead the rest of the band in their jackhammer attack. The drums are in time, whether it's an introductory drum roll to a blast beat thrash, bashing away while still in control. The bass is recorded right and always pulls things together. Not average or generic by any means. Sheer manic outbursts that shows why they are critical to the history of the international punk scene. Now I need something to wipe the sweat off my brow. —Donofthead (Alternative Tentacles)

RATTLESNAKES, THE: I, Explosion!: CD

I've seen the Rattlesnakes several times and I hadn't been totally blown away, but this CD's another case. It's like they've taken the best aspects of their sets and distilled 'em. Here's my take: take Zen Guerilla, axe out the reverb and delay so you're left with a warm and swampy groove attack with tremendously catchy choruses and in the background, lay a complex instrumental interlock a la The Hot Snakes (one song's instrumental chorus is eerily similar). Come out the other end of the tunnel with all instruments ablazing (and helping one another out instead of becoming "look at me"-athons). Another way to explain — smart, good time, ass-shakin' rock without the calculated mathy wank. Perfectly recorded, to boot. Not a stinker in the bunch. —Todd (<www.therattlesnakes.com>)

REVILOS: Attack: CD

I must profess ignorance of this band's music, for, while I consider myself a fan of their prior incarnation as the Rezillos, I've never heard anything past their earlier punk heyday. That said, all that comes to mind while listening to this is, "Whoa, what a difference a few years make." Where the Rezillos were revved up and tighter than hell, the Revillos are less manic, a lot looser in delivery and betray more influences, from Bo Diddley to rockabilly to surf and beyond, melded into their sound than their preceding incarnation. According to the liner notes, the original release of this was completely unauthorized and marred by inferior sound quality and mixes, so, with painstaking searchin' and reconstructin', the band has put this superior version together, featuring alternate mixes and alternate versions, as well as single, B-side and previously unreleased tracks. The result is some mighty tasty pop tunes with a heavy nod to the world of sci-fi and schlock horror cinema. Of particular note is a great cover of Screaming Lord Sutch's

"(She's) Fallen in Love with a) Monster Man." Great listening. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

RIFF RANDELLS: Lethal Lipgloss: 12"EP

What makes one band that takes cues from the Ramones like instructions off a chalk board work while so many others fail miserably? I'm not sure how the studying process of two chord rock goes, but the Riff Randells (the name's taken from PJ Soles character in *Rock'n'roll High School*), like LA's Pinkz, sure as fuck pull it off. Perhaps, it's easier to do it if you're from another country. (They're from Canada. Teengenerate, another Ramones-inspired, radioactive pinhead troupe, were from Japan.) Perhaps it's alternate universe thinking: "What if the Ramones were really ladies? What would they sound like?" Now you know. Really fucking good. I'd put the Riff Randells in the top ten percent of The Eyeliner's live show. They keep it fun, sound sexy, look tough, and have a bassist dude with an eyepatch, so all bases are covered. If you're looking for the reinvention of the wheel, look elsewhere, but if you're looking for girls who can blow big bubbles that burst melodies into daggers, here's the ticket, all laced up in a pair of ragged Converse. —Todd (Alien Snatch)

RIFFS, THE: Underground Kicks: CD

This band should rename themselves The Stolen Riffs because this '77 style Chuck Berry punk freely loots from the Sex Pistols' museum of guitar riffs. Imagine Steve Jones (or would it be Chris Spedding?) mixing martinis and muscle relaxants and sluggishly reworking the classic *Never Mind the Bollocks* guitar parts while Rik L Rik provides a vocal part with exactly none of the snarl or sneer of Johnny Rotten. But while this is venomous and almost lethargic, I can't help but grudgingly tap my foot to it because it all sounds so damn familiar. Stealing riffs is a grand rock'n'roll tradition — even the Pistols themselves have been accused of stealing some of these very same riffs from the New York Dolls — so I don't have any ethical problems with it. But if you're going to dig up old riffs and bring them back to life, bring them all the way back to life, not to some half-dead plodding zombie level. —Aphid Peewit (TKO)

RIOT99: Last Train to Nowhere: CD

I'm always curious: when a singer sings with an English accent, is he actually English? This band hails from Toronto, Canada and plays the rough and tumble blast of street punk. They play to the formula of the early UK oi and punk scene to perfection. On track four, "What Are They Fighting For?", the singer sounds like a dead-on Degsy from Oi Polloi. Good musicianship and good songs makes for a good listen. —Donofthead (Longshot)

RUMBLERS, THE: Hold on Tight: CD

I'd just like to thank Todd for handing me this disc because he likes to fuck with me on many levels, God bless 'em, but I'm always up for the challenge, right Todd? First, I'd like to comment on how fucking funny it is to find out that there's an actual greaser-type band (aka, fucking Fonzie band) called The Rumlbers. Why? Because

brother Mark of Hollywood Hate has always joked about the various gaggles of greasers at shows all belonging to a fictitious gang called The Rumlbers. Well, guess what, Mark? It's for fucking real now! The frontman's even called Donny Switchblade! The sound production on this record isn't half-bad, actually, but the songs smack of Social Distortion, third-rate Ramones knock-off bands (insert retch here), and tired '50s licks that every half-assed band of this genre slyly attempts to pull off. Even the second cut here, "Sinning (Feels So Right)," pulls directly from Bad Religion's "21st Century Digital Boy." What the fuck is this? I'll tell you what the fuck this is — an album that your pal the radio will shove onto the airwaves as "happening" or "hot." And you know what? Some listeners will buy this shit hook, line, and sinker — the same listeners who fell prey to The Ataris (and what the fuck is so original or interesting with *that* fucking "band"?). I got two words for The Rumlbers — *Blazing Haley*. And I unconditionally recommend BH to anyone looking for the real deal when it comes to early American, roots-based rock and roll. Check 'em out at <www.blazinghaley.com>. As far as The Rumlbers? I guess you weren't paying attention the last couple seconds...whatever — their info's below... —Designated Dale (Switchblade)

SADDEST LANDSCAPE, THE: Cover Your Heart: 7"

I-know-I'm-an-asshole rule: if you've got mutton chops and wear a western shirt while playing emo (I'm hearing breathy mumbles), I'll discount your band. If the name of your band is pretentious (Landscapes are inanimate. They don't have feelings. They can't be sad. They can be sad-looking.), I'll get annoyed. If said band goes from impassioned screaming to the careless whisper (otherwise known as the At the Drive-In screeching to George Michael syndrome), I'll start getting full-on pissed at your band. Pick either fillgree or rage or learn how to do some of that momentum building instead making music's version of epilepsy. The noisy bits are okay. Just okay. —Todd (Copter Crash)

SCATTERED FALL: For All I've Lost: 7"

Two speedier numbers on the A-side, neither of which were too shabby. Singer's raw-voiced, band is tight, etc. The flipside's where the meat is, though, with slower tempos, strong musicianship apparent, and just a tinge of that old OC dual harmony sound to add some 'oomph' to the proceedings. Damn fine work. —Jimmy Alvarado (Deadpan)

SCOTT BAI0 ARMY/ LINE OF DESCENT: Split LP

It's never a great sign that the snippets between the songs are more interesting than the songs. Scott Baio Army seem smart and funny, but their songs are average, muddy-sounding thrash, that, after listening to about ten times, I couldn't pull out of a lineup of second tier Spazz-influenced bands if my nads were hooked up to a high-revving go cart's spark plug. They do, however, include a pretty fancy tour photo booklet and a full newspaper page foldout for the lyrics, which is a nice touch. And if you're thinkin' I'm one of those guys who thinks hardcore's been done to death and lost its definition, may I

suggest Amdi Petersens Arme's *Blod Ser Mere Virkligt Ud Da Film 7*". That sumbitch rips nice and easy like freshly broken stitches. Line of Descent are a little bit better. Around the edges, they remind me of Tragedy for the doom and gloom and "we're all fucked-a-tude," but it's not as bombastic or wormy and troubling, so it's okay, too. Not earth-shattering, not shit sucking. -Todd (Paco Gardens)

SEGER LIBERATION ARMY:
*Heavy Music b/w
Chain Smokin': 7"*

Not sure what Bob Seger needs to be liberated from besides the '80s and '90s, but that's exactly what this single does, covering two numbers that I have to assume (with very little actual knowledge on the subject of Seger's career output) are from the late '60s/early '70s days when his band probably opened for the MC5, whose sound was a slightly raunchier version of the white R & B present here. In other words (in case that wasn't really a sentence), MC5-era Detroit rock'n'roll from the hand of the youth. -Cuss Baxter (Big Neck)

SHAKIN NASTIES: *Better Than Television: 10-song LP*

Hey, this ain't half bad. There's definitely a '60s jingle jangle goin' on, hitched together by a guy who sounds very similar to one of the lead singers of the Briefs, but instead of the more sophisticated and calculated moves of the Briefs, the Shakin Nasties go for more of the BBQ and faulty fireworks in the backyard, sniff cans of paint vein of rock, like The Four Letter Words (the California one, not the English one). Retarded and spastic like an amped-up, hard-helmeted twelve-year-old, but in an endearing way. What keeps it from turning into muck or pure annoyance is they don't forget melodies and the fact that when everyone's drunk, that's when get people to shimmy and roll out the good times. -Todd (Radio Blast)

SHUTDOWN: 1990-1995: CD

There are moments when this resonates with something more meaningful and emotionally stirring than generic hardcore, brief passages that sound more like the Mega City 4 or Hüsker Dü than another hardcore-by-numbers band with requisite youth crew anthems, but those moments are scarce and - considering what surrounds them - not worth finding. -Puckett (Boss Tuneage)

SKULLS, THE: *Babies/ Victims/ Erotic Neurotic: 7" EP*

What's amazing is how utterly simple Skulls songs are, but since not one member slouches, how powerful and great punk rock can sound with few frills. To be honest, I think the stuff they're releasing now exceeds their pedigree of being around in one form or another since '77. If they hadn't continued, they'd have existed as a nice, solid footnote in LA punk history as one of the Masque house bands which had one member go off to Wall of Voodoo. It's nice to have that as a touchstone, but these songs are seminal in their own right. It doesn't hurt that The Skulls are fantastic live and are extremely gracious people who recently played an eight-year-old's birthday. The only thing that has me scratching my head is why this EP was released. All three are on their recently released LP, *Therapy for the Shy*. Slightly different mixes? I can't tell. Anyhow, buy Skulls stuff. You won't be bummed. -Todd (Blazing Guns)

SLANG: Skilled Rhythm Kills + Live at Klub Counter Action 2001.6.30: CD

I loved the *Skilled Rhythm Kills* LP when I got it last year (see review in Issue 8). In fact, I even put it on my "top whatever list for 2002" that was listed on this here mag's website. I don't know if many went out and purchased it, but this is everybody's third chance to finally hear it. The first pressing was released on the singer's label, Straight Up, out of Japan. The second pressing was released by Conquest Wake out of Finland, which is the release that I have. Now comes the North American release with added live tracks to give you an easier access to some mayhem (and also for you shmucks who still don't own a turntable). The LP originally had thirteen tracks. This release takes it up to twenty-seven. You do the math. This is no-holds-barred, metallic-edged hardcore mixed with fierce vocals in their power attack. If you like things fast and brain damaging, check out these Sapporo City hardcore maniacs.

-Donofthedeath (Schizophrenic)

SLOW POISONERS, THE: Self-titled: 7"

They reminded me of how truly horrible music in the 1970s could get. File next to Nillson and forget for thirty years. -Jimmy Alvarado (www.slowpoisoners.com)

SMOKING POPES:
The Party's Over: CD

In all honesty the day before this came in, I said I needed to go get a Smoking Popes Album, and BAM! It was here. I love it. Ron Sexsmith has this great sweet, high-pitched voice that makes me get all mushy. Of course being the only band I know of to have a song called "Megan" doesn't hurt. They're mostly ballads, so if you think that only sissies like the Smoking Popes, well, you're probably right. Chalk me up for being a sissy. I'll still kick your ass, though. -Megan Pants (Double Zero)

SOMEHOW HOLLOW: Busted Wings & Rusted Halos: CD

Ever since Warzone's Raybeez croaked a few years back, Victory Records has been paying tribute to him by slapping his name and birthdate and deathdate on the back of each of their releases. On the surface, a noble effort, but do the pukes at Victory actually think that it does poor departed Raybeez any honor at all by putting his name on a bound-up cheesy emo turd like this - even if it's meant only as a posthumous tribute? It's bad enough that he was cut down in the prime of his life, but to be affiliated (no matter how tenuously) with a product so devoid of anything he ever cared about or stood for - well, hell you might as well dig what's left of him up and let Richard Simmons have his way with the corpse. That might seem like a tasteless thing to say, but these are tasteless times. How else could you explain the plethora of fame-hungry whores like Somehow Hollow sprouting up faster than all the bad "reality" TV shows across the face of the planet? Isn't it bad enough that we have a dangerously dim-witted, stammering huckleberry manning the helm in the White House? We're perched on the edge of utter annihilation, and you and I are expected to go about our lives with a quiet but ever vigilant stoicism. This is a volatile, savage era and we're all already at the point of exploding like kumquats under the pressure of the dumb, evil den-

sity of the world around us. Do we really need – or even deserve – these tattooed dandies calling themselves “punk” or “hardcore” or “emo” or whatever and dragging their musical baggage into our lives? Aren’t we at the point where this should be considered “piling on”? Yes, I’m sure these sensitive lads have spent countless hours cultivating their punk rock attitude, primping their punk rock look. I’m sure that just one of their colorful limbs alone is imbued with more ink-stained punk cred than I could ever hope to swaddle myself in. They’re on fucking Victory Records, for chrissake, the Microsoft of hardcore. But something seems, um, hollow. Oh, sure, they’re tighter than Avril Lavigne’s cute little wifebeater and they are possessed of a lucrative lack of imagination that’s bound to propel them to a new financial stratosphere; no doubt they’ll be on the next Warped Tour, trading backstage hi-jinx with other corporate android “punk” bands like Good Charlotte and New Found Glory, all with their Vans footwear proudly displayed. They might even, for all I know, be cute in that very marketable sullen teen-angst, he’s-too-sensitive-for-his-own-good kind of way. But isn’t this really just a boy band in “punk” clothing? Wait a minute – it just occurred to me: maybe I didn’t think this thing all the way through; maybe there’s really nothing more genuinely dangerous than a truly, TRULY innocuous faux punk band. What could be more insidious? Punk is, after all, supposed to be dangerous, right? You know what? Fuck it, let Somehow Hollow and their ilk take the label, let “punk” be all theirs. It’s a label so played out and bastardized and commodified that who the hell would want it anyway, aside from a bunch of career-minded suckwad opportunists like these fucks? This isn’t even war; this is simple self preservation. That wise old sage Jello Biafra was right: if we’re going to snip the vas deferens of this wildly proliferating breed of emorectus, we need to shut off MTV and VH1 now. If nothing else, do it for Raybeez. No one, no matter how dead, deserves to be violated like this. –Aphid Peewit (Victory)

SOOTHE: *To Prove Our Existence, We Play This Music. To Prove That We Are Alive, We Sing This Song: 7*

Soothe has to be the most ironic band name going, because what they play is anything but soothing. It’s a sonic assault of distortion and feedback and noise. But it’s really well-managed noise. In fact, I haven’t heard noise managed this well since Godhead Silo. It’s not really fast, but it plods out heavy and mean like Godzilla hunting down King Kong for the first ever monster movie title bout. On top of it all, a woman named Chippe screams, not looking for a melody or a song anywhere, but digging deep inside of her and letting it all out before she has time to understand it. This seven inch reminds me of Soothe’s other noisy Japanese counterpart, Bleach(mobile), and when I listen to this record, in my mind, I can see Bleach(mobile) going nuts in a live show at Mr. T’s. And then I start hoping that Soothe somehow puts together a tour of the US, so I can go see them and, well, be anything but soothed. –Sean Carswell (Devour)

SOVIETTES, THE: *T.C.C.P.: 7*
It’s altogether sweet (the vocals), slashing (the guitar work), heavy (Monkey

Hustle) and nicely anxious without any hand being overplayed. The result? I can’t help but think of live tapes of early (party/sex video era) GoGo’s or Penetration. Great songs played like how serial killers work. You may have already set up a profile (“ooh, girl pop punk”), may have done a character study (“chicks, dude”), but the most effective ones have new moves, techniques, and disguises that you never see coming. They can shut you up in unsuspecting ways. Unlike serial killers, The Soviettes stand out in a lineup against the waves of mediocre bands attempting the same. They’re more than lazily pulling Beach Boys and Ramones musical taffy. Power-wise, I’d put them side-to-side with The Beautys, a band I love. Lyrically, they seal the deal while spanning the damage of idle shit-talking, to the lower class bleeding, to a plea for more thirsty ears in punk rock not preoccupied with putting everything in little genre ghettos. More. I want more. –Todd (Pop Riot)

SPREAD EGO: *Micro-Manipulators: CD EP*

The latest in aural terrorism, courtesy of El Monte punk legend Frank D. This latest project plunders sounds he mined in previous bands, resulting in a synthesis of the melodicism that fueled his prior band, the Naggs, and the wild time signatures and off-kilter skronk of his first band, Cascius Clay. The result is a potent cocktail of equal parts Jesus Lizard and later Black Flag, with maybe just a smidge of Slug thrown in to give it some edge. This ‘un is gonna stay glued to the stereo for some time. If you’re looking for something that’s guaranteed to give you a headache in all the right ways, you can’t go wrong with this bad boy. –Jimmy Alvarado (spreadego@yahoo.com)

SQUAB/RADIO VAGO: *split 7*
Two songs from up-and-coming LA bands that have me thinking – not necessarily by sound, but by attitude – of Hollywood’s punk scene in the late ‘70s (think Screamer’s, Eyes, Alleycats). Punk, but not in a codified way, embracing elements that one would call new wave if it weren’t so loose and avant trippy. I know it sounds bad, but both of these bands have strong jam elements that, thankfully, stay in check. They use lots of instruments, record with what sounds like a lot of tracks. Squab is looser and more ambient with a thick, percussive spine. Radio Vago’s forefronted by Adrienne’s sex-dripping robot/android voice over simultaneously nostalgic/futuristic synthesizers. Nice split. –Todd (Dionysus)

STALAG 13: *In Control: CD*
In a weird way, on a very small scale, Nardcore is coming back. A couple of weeks ago, I went to see the old Nardcore greats Ill Repute haul their old bones out to rip through one of the best live sets I’ve seen in a while. It was way more than I expected. They tore through a bunch of songs from their *What Happens Next* EP and basically made me feel like 1984 wasn’t such a bad year. And now, on top of that, Dr. Strange has re-released Ill Repute’s Nardcore counterparts, Stalag 13’s 1984 album *In Control*. They’ve even included four bonus tracks on it. To be honest, I never heard much about Stalag 13 or *In Control*, but coming across this re-release, I’ve found a lost gem from a time period and style of music that I love. Musically, Stalag 13 fit nicely in

between Ill Repute, Agression, Youth Brigade, and, well, most of the bands on that *Somebody Got Their Head Kicked In* comp. It’s not totally original now, mostly because so many bands have been influenced by this sound since it first came out almost twenty years ago. Still, I can crank this sucker up and feel like I’m being transported back to a time before a bunch of these bands went metal and before Reagan’s second term fucked everything up. –Sean Carswell (Dr. Strange)

STARVATIONS, THE: *Horrified Eyes b/w Maintaining My Grave: 7*

Damn the loose post hole in the 7”. It warps the speed and mucks up the groove. Regardless, the Starvations are one of the best bands going right now. Incorporating roots – accordion, and subtle nods to southern blues on these two tracks – without using the past to noose up on and swing dead from a tree, they inject the whole business with new bacteria and paranoia you can’t help believe to be in the present tense. I can’t suggest their *One Long Night* CDEP on Kapow highly enough. These two songs fit right along those tracks. They’re a bit mellow, like a morning full of regret while patching together some blacked-out memories, but it’s all honest as all hell. This 7” dips like a small boat on blackened sea. –Todd (GSL)

STAYNLESS: *Old Salt: 7*
Sometimes a record is so boldly generic, so stunningly uninteresting, that one’s mind seizes up in a reverse satori that dulls the eyes and slackens the jaw; where all you’re aware of is the flickering of your brain’s pilot light and thoughts freeze still like frost on a window pane and there’s simply fucking nothing to say. –Aphid Peewit (Soul is Cheap)

STEVE VON TILL: *If I Should Fall to the Field: CD*
Sounds like the guy from Bauhaus trying to be Tom Waits but lacking the playfulness to work it proper. Sparse musical accompaniment certifies the full-on snooziness of one boring piece of wasted plastic. Three pieces of wasted plastic if you count the jewel case. –Cuss Baxter (Neurot)

SUBINCISION: *Berkeley’s Newest Hitmakers: CD*
Yernk. Did the cover of this one fool me. Four serious-minded looking gents and a lean, muscular name like “Subincision”? I guess they aren’t wearing hooded sweatshirts and the name isn’t laid out in an athletic font, but I was still expecting some preachy, testosterone-bubbling hardcore/straight-edge band – you know, a bunch of kids who grew up listening to Judge and abstaining from masturbation and stuff like that. Wrong. Catchy, happy, bouncy, well-scrubbed good-timey rock’n’roll with teenage spermatozoa concerns, aka: dating, girlfriends, making out, copping a feel, etc. I hear everything from the Clash, Pogues and Stray Cats to Ricky Nelson crossed with Generation X-era Billy Idol. A bit perky for my liking, but I can see some people really liking this fun rock. –Aphid Peewit (Substandard)

SUBINCISION: *Self-titled and Jingo: CD*
The first and latest third albums were in my box for review. Me, being the lazy me, shall review both on one review. The self-titled release has been re-

issued. I have no clue when it initially came out or what label it was originally on. But I do see in my collection that they were on the Substandard comp titled *Here We Are Nowhere* and on the Geykido Comet comp that I reviewed in this issue, titled *You Call This Music?! Volume II*. This band hails from the East Bay and sound like it. I can picture them on stage right now at Gilman St. Musically, on the first release, they are all over the place, playing punk, pop, street and everything in between. *Jingo* carries on what they have created and they have added more elements and instruments to the mix. Sounds that I hear in the songs are Tom Waits, the Pogues, and the Swingin’ Utters. I don’t know if it’s just me, but the singer sounds like Casey Royer from DI. Out of the two, I would take *Jingo*. The band has progressed in musicianship and writing skills and is the more enjoyable of the two. –Donofthead (Substandard)

SUPPRESSION: *Burnt Out Receptacles: 7*
Crazy, complex noisecore from a band comprised of a bass player and a drummer. Maybe it’s a good thing they don’t have a guitar player, ‘cause, considering the racket the two of ‘em manage to scare up, they might kill someone with any additional firepower. Fans of Unsane’s more up-tempo work, take note. –Jimmy Alvarado (CNP)

SWING DING AMIGOS/ LOS FEDERALES: *Split 7*
This is one hell of a split. I’m a huge fan of that hard-to-describe-but-you-know-it’s-there Tucson sound. There’s so much drive and you’re never quite sure where it’s going next. It’s fast, it’s crazy, it’s damn good. (And one of these boys can make a fork scorpion!) –Megan Pants (No Theme!)

SWINGIN’ UTTERS: *Dead Flowers, Bottles, Bluegrass, and Bones: CD*
The Swingin’ Utters have never been afraid to travel in strange directions musically. Throughout their past few albums, they’ve blended Pogues-influenced Irish folk songs with Stiff Little Fingers-style punk rock, but added all kinds of wrinkles to that sound. They’re not afraid to throw in a banjo, accordion, mandolin, or whatever else they can get their hands on, into a song. *Dead Flowers* even has a vibraphone in it. And really, I can’t think of any punk band that’s made music this diverse and multi-layered since the Clash. This new album pushes the envelope even on the precedents that the Swingin’ Utters have set for themselves. The songs are really all over the place, from folk songs to ballads to hints of early Swingin’ Utters street punk. The album is so varied that, at times, it’s hard to imagine that one band wrote and played all of the tunes. And it’s this type of variety that has me undecided about this album. I like it, even with its multiple personalities. At the same time, I miss the full guitar sound that earlier albums had and I know that and I’d still rather spin the Swingin’ Utters’ *Juvenile Product of the Working Class* or *Five Lessons Learned* than this new one. –Sean Carswell (Fat)

TEEN IDOLS/SQUIRTGUN: *The Dysfunctional Shadowman: Split CDEP*
Okay, you caught me. I like pop. I’m iffy when it comes to the Teen Idols. They have the potential to be a pretty

great pop punk band. What holds them back is that there's nothing extraordinary in there, nothing to just grab you and make you want to dance. You get little tastes here and there, but there is a simple solution: let Heather sing more. Listen to any song she's got vocals on, and it's apparent. She has a great voice that adds another dimension to the whole thing and just gives it something different, something that works. The two tracks on this have a little bit of Heather on backing vocals, so you can pretty much guess how I feel about it. There's also the super-annoying first band, second band, first band, second band track order. Oh yeah, Squirtgun's the other band. They blow.

—Megan Pants (Asian Man)

TEEN SENSATION, THE: *Glasses*: CD

I really, really, wish that I wouldn't have to keep repeating myself. Writing songs about being in love with cheerleaders is lame. And I say this as someone who still loves pop punk. But sometimes you just need to sit back and ask the question, "WWNRD?" (What would Naked Raygun do?) Answer: Not write lines like "She's a cheerleader at my school/And if you don't already know, cheerleaders rule." Or how about "Erin, Erin's on crack and heroin/I used to date her, but I don't date her anymore/She used to be a virgin, now she's a dirty little whore." What? Musically, this band attempts to rip off (badly) everyone from the old, garage-y Donnas (who I love!) to any of the many Mutant Pop bands. If this were a cereal... wait... this is so bad, it's not even a cereal!

—Maddy (Whoa Oh)

TEMPLARS: *Phase II*: CD

Hmm. Bands with strong affiliations with a particular hairdo always leave me a bit cold. These particular fellows have been around the block many times and are known for the fact that they prefer the "five o'clock shadow" look on top of their heads as well as on the front of their heads. Their music is rough and tumble and confrontational, but it almost sounds like they're wrestling with themselves. It seems a bit off-balance to me. You've got these gruff nail-spitting vocals trampling all over an energetic but twinky little guitar that sounds like it's coming out of Emmanuel Lewis's transistor radio. Weird. But some people worship these guys. Will some Knights Templar-fascinated skinhead come after me with baseball bat with a big nail sticking out of it if I say sorry, but I find this Oi Lite shit a bit of a snooze? As usual, it's just the bad Spinal Tap side of me, wanting all the volume knobs on the amps to go up to 11, but I think if the guitar sounded a little less vegan, I'd gobble this stuff up and probably visit the barber a lot more.

THINMEN:

Nothing Like Our Picture: CD
Actually, it's just like the picture. They both make me nauseous. —Megan Pants (Narrow People)

THREATS:

Live at CBGBs 2002: LP
I don't get how Dr. Strange can sniff the good stuff out. It all sounds so hinky on the surface. An old ('79), obscure Scottish band from Edinburgh that had tours with the U.K. Subs the Dead Kennedys almost twenty years ago reforms with two original members after

a Holidays in the Sun gig and they don't slurp shit. It's true. I'm also no huge fan of live records (The Ramones *It's Alive* is the notable exception), but this sounds great and there's not a lot of in-between song banter that may be cool the first time and bore on repeated listens. (They sound like Groundskeeper Willie to me, anyway.) No-shit, full speed ahead, no wank, no frills, energy-filled punk rock. Sure, they run in tandem with a lot of street punk and oi, but they don't seem co-dependent or handcuffed to a genre nor dinosaurs creaking on old bones. In bits, they remind me of all the usual suspects: Cock Sparrer, Blitz, and Cockney Rejects, but they definitely bring something — like a basic understanding of Motorhead type rock — to the table. Cool stuff. —Todd (Dr. Strange)

THUMBS UP:

Building An Army: 7"

When I first put this record on, I played it at 45 rpm and was thinking that it was cool to hear another crusty, pissed off female band like the Menstrual Tramps tearing it up and taking no prisoners. Then I read the liner notes and saw that the singer's name is "Adam." That's when I figured out it's supposed to be played at 33 rpm. Not bad, but I think it sounds better at 45. I'll give it one thumb up. —Aphid Peewit (Rodent Popsicle)

THUNDERCRACK:

The Crack: CD

Two reasons I picked this one up: 1) with a name that bad, the band's gotta be good, right? 2) One of the guys looks like The Rock, but way skinnier. So with these high expectations, how did they fare? Actually, they're pretty good. They've got that spooky voodoo-esque feel to them and distorted vocals to make them sound a step closer to Howlin' Wolf. To be honest, if I want to listen to something in this vein, I'll throw on the Starvations, who just do it better, but this has definite potential to grow on me. —Megan Pants (Estrus)

TIP-TOPPERS, THE:

Packed to the Rafters: LP

The 'Toppers are Norway's missing link to the *Valley Girl* film soundtrack released back in the '80's. Think Stan Ridgeway (ex-Wall of Voodoo) filling in Peter Case's vocal spot onstage with The Plimsouls with a little bit rougher of a production edge. Pretty damn good LP with a consistent roster of catchy jibs here like "Worth Your While" and my album fave, "Bedtime for Losers." Wave-os shall rejoice! ("Wave-o"?!) Haw! Remember *that* stereotype? I defy anyone who can't get their '80s-style bop on to this to go, like, gag yerself with a cock, fer shure. Totally. —Designated Dale (www.soundsofsubterranea.com)

TOY DOLLS:

One More Megabyte: CD

Their next-to-most-recent album here, this one originally released in 1997. Considering that the Dolls seem to have developed a template for songwriting over the years and have rarely, if ever, strayed from it, the songs contained here are quite exemplary, with some of them containing some of the catchiest hooks they've come up with in years. As per usual, a couple of cover songs ("I'm Gonna Be) 500 Miles," "The Devil Went Down to Scunthorpe") are given the Toy Dolls treatment. When you take

into account that the most run-of-the-mill Toy Dolls release is miles ahead of some other bands' best work, the fact that this one is especially good makes it a rare gem, indeed. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

TRAVOLTAS:

Endless Summer: CD

This has hit album written all over it. Now only if a major will pick these guys up and get them major radio airplay so they can film their MTV/TRL hit video. The can fill parks are ready for another band! —Donofthead (Fastmusic)

TRENCH COAT YUPPIES:

This is Next...: CD

Like the Starship Enterstink, this band's apparent mission is to boldly suck like no band has sucked before. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.trenchcoatyuppies.com)

TURBONEGRO: *Ass Cobra*

and *Apocalypse Dudes*: CD

Being religiously unaffiliated and no fan of kings, I can honestly say that the reformation of Turbonegro is better than the resurrection of Christ and better than happening upon a cryogenically preserved Elvis popsicle. I'm not shitting you — these are, undoubtedly, two of the best albums released in the past fifteen years. They've never been out of my high rotation stack since *Ass Cobra*'s release around '96. Since they're once more readily available, don't be a twat and not pick these up. Excepting the curious omission of "Little Boys Feet" (A Dicks cover) and "Screwed and Tattooed" off of *Ass Cobra* (but some MPEG movies are added), it's Norway's finest denim demons in their entirety, just the lubricant for the album they're busy making. Madness, the biggest rock you've ever heard, and roman candles up the ass, it's all coming your way. To me, it's sweeter than a high five from Jesus or a bacon and banana sandwich made by Elvis. Sweaty Norwegian sailor men, bring the darkness. Turbojugend forever. —Todd (Epitaph)

TYRADES: *Self-titled*: 7"

To start, and don't get me wrong, I loved this record, but I've never been one to dig on the English accent sort of singing. The songs are raw and sound like they could fall apart if someone broke wind in their direction — what any good punk song should be. What else would you expect from members of the Baseball Furies and a spunky gal? —Petite Paquet (Big Neck)

UNCURBED:

Ackord för Frihet: CD

Hard 'n' heavy fjordcore with the requisite Discharge-isms from these Swedes, not as fast as some, but a tad speedier than said influence. While obviously derivative, they've managed to inject enough of their own personality to keep them well outta the Dis-clone/D-beat ghetto that is no more creative or better than one where everyone apes, say, Blink 182. This'll get blasted often and loud. —Jimmy Alvarado (Sound Pollution)

UNSEEN, THE: *Complete*

Singles Collection 1994-2000: CD

Leaders of the new school of US bands like the Casualties, Global Threat, and the Virus that sport the spiked hair, leather, and studs ethics of UK punk bands from the past. Since their uprising in popularity and current release on BYO Records, this is a cool supplement to their fans. A compilation of tracks

from 7", splits, comps, and outtakes, this gives the new fans an easy opportunity to listen to their earlier material without much effort. I don't need to hype what is already hyped. The kids have figured it out by themselves that this is a band they want to support. I saw firsthand when they came through town last year. The kids were very supportive and I lost count how many of their t-shirts, patches, and buttons I saw that night. —Donofthead (Punk Core)

VANDALS, THE: *Internet Dating Superstuds*: CD

I think I might have liked this album about ten years ago, but that was also when I started feeling like Epitaph and Fat had so completely inundated the market with shit that sounded the same that I quit listening to punk because there was no goddamned difference between one record and another and none of it spoke to the things I was feeling and going through. I loved punk because it always seemed to relate to my life, but for a few years in the mid-1990s, punk rock fucking sucked. Thankfully, bands like Dillinger Four, Hot Water Music, PUKU 13, and a slew of other Mongols who resembled hordes rode in on steppe horses and decapitated motherfuckers like they were playing cranial golf or polo or some such shit and saved the scene from wanky Forbidden Beat bands writing fart songs. I'm sure that this record is catchy as all hell for the kids who like Blink 182 and The Ataris and other pop punk or for people who thought that the Inland Invasion/Sex Pistols show was a good idea, but this means absolutely nothing to me or my life. I know my roots. These ain't them. —Puckett (Kung Fu)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Dirtnap*

Across the Northwest: CD

Yes. This is exactly how a comp should be. Although it centers around a specific label, Dirtnap, Ken Wisconsin's a smart dude. Like the great comps — from *Flex Your Head to The Hostage Situation* — he does a great job of showcasing proven, excellent bands like The Epoxies and the Briefs, and including lesser-known, almost-just-as-ripping bands on his roster like the Gloryholes and The Pulses, but here's the crucial part, he doesn't stop there. He fills the comp to the brim with a total of thirty-one tracks by active bands that are in some way, shape, or form connected beyond his label (I see Vinyl Warning Records bands, Empty bands...) but still geographically fitting into the comp. There's definitely a feel to the comp — perhaps it has to do with the high keyboard quotient, the high percentage of female-fronted bands on here, or the melodic guitars that go beyond the stale diet of basic pop punk. The bands all seem like they'd all fit on the same bill without sounding exactly the same. That's fucking rad. There really isn't a stinker in the bunch. Think of it this way. If you're down with new wave poking around the fringes of punk, and you were to ask a DJ to put together seventy-two minutes of continuous rock done by contemporary bands, this would be the perfect radio show. Bands I'll be on the lookout for: Rotten Apples (super clear, powerful striking female vocals and the band's just as forceful with a keyboard slither), Stuck Ups (Dangerhouse-style punk), and Cookie (better than new Tilt, by leagues). The Spits pull off a beat box

fuck off to two of the bands on the comp, to end it all. My only gripe? In the booklet, no band is number 22 and there's two 25s. (Yes, I listened to it that much and notice such things.) Get it. –Todd (Dirtnap)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:
Fueled By Ramen: No Food. No Sleep. Just Records. CD

This entire album makes me want to go get something pierced, get a tribal tattoo, and a "Punk Princess" shirt. With the exception of Slowreader, who I just felt bad for. They're the new Wham!, just not as tough. My advice to the label: get a burger, take a nap, and think about what you've done. –Megan Pants (Fueled by Ramen)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:
Killed by Finnish Hardcore. LP

This is Volume 4 of the *Killed by Hardcore* series that compiles international hardcore from 1981 to 1985. As you can see, this edition focuses on Finland. Not much of this stuff came to the States during that time period. Besides my brother, reading about it in *MRR*, and appearing on a few comps, it was hard to be introduced to the music. Also, like many punk releases, it was limited in pressing. Many of the big bands are represented here, like Appendix, Terveet Kadet, Riistetyt, Bastards, Kaaos, Lama, Appendix, Tampere SS, Aparat, Varaus and Rattus. Many other bands are also represented here. In total, thirty bands and thirty tracks. Now that is some documentation! If you haven't heard Finnish punk before, it has a unique sound to it. Heavily UK influenced by the impending hardcore of the era, like Discharge and Chaos UK. But the environment and culture of the people took that influence and put their own identity to it. As always, a very informational insert is provided, listing what records the recordings came from. Also, in the liner notes it says that they are contributing 200 copies of this release to *Toinen Vaihto* zine (the *MRR* of Finland) to distribute to the bands and to sell the leftovers to fund the zine. I thought that was pretty noble since this was a bootleg. I have a friend who works for that zine and he said the zine received no copies. I hope by the time this review hits the stands, they didn't back out of what they said in writing. These comps are usually in limited pressing, so if you run across a copy, buy it without hesitation. A great series of comps that are a good history lesson and outperforms the previous series, which was the *Killed by Death* series. You can also watch eBay prices skyrocket for records that are featured on these comps. Even before this volume, old Finnish punk records are reaching all time highs in prices. So why blow all your money for the original when what is important is the music? –Donofthedeath (Redrum, No Address)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: ***Loved by Few, Hated by Most.*** 7"

Ahh, now that's what I'm talkin' 'bout.... Ten bands bring to the table thirteen tracks of blistering hardcore from at least three different continents. This is sure to melt the paint off the walls and make the neighbor's lawn die if played too loud. Guilty parties include Milkman, Bury the Living, Crispus Attucks, Dandare, Brezhnev, The Blurters, AVO, Something in the Water, Anger In Motion, and Jesus & the Gospelfuckers. –Jimmy Alvarado (Kangaroo)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:
Mechanized Death – A Tribute to the Accused. 2X 7"

A comp with sixteen bands, none of which I've ever heard of prior to this comp, crank out sixteen Accused covers. The results are adequate for the most part, but it would've been nicer to hear what they have to say and judge them on their own merits rather than how well they interpret the work of a long dead band. There's worse things on which you could blow your money, although, as I hate most tribute records, I'll be damned if I can think of one. –Jimmy Alvarado (Transparent)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:
Mob Action Against the State: Collected Speeches from the Bay Area Anarchist Book Fair. double CD

I've never gotten that into all the spoken/non-music CDs AK Press puts out, but I'm gonna start! This CD features twenty short speeches (most are under ten minutes), given at the, duh, Bay Area Anarchist Book Fair. The CD gets started a little slow, with a fairly pointless, rambling commentary by Lawrence Ferlinghetti, but then things get rolling real fast! The speeches by Christian Parenti (on capitalism) and Craig O'Hara (who talked about his job as a census worker – particularly of interest to me, as a former census employee myself!) were especially great. There are also speeches by Jello Biafra, Barry Pateman, Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz, and more! Best of all, these double CD gave me the chance to think through my own beliefs about anarchism and capitalism. Of course, I didn't agree with everyone – which is great. If you're planning a long car ride soon, pick this up! I don't think you'll be disappointed. And, of course, if this were a cereal, it'd be Cracklin' Oat Bran. A smart cereal that actually tastes good. Punk! –Maddy (AK Press)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: ***No Hold Back... All Attack!!!*** 3 X LP

That's right. Three full length LPs, fifty-five bands, "a DIY effort documenting Twin Cities Hardcorepunkrock&roll 2002" that lists for \$10.50. Holy shit. Not to get all regional, I had no idea that Minneapolis and St. Paul had that many active punk bands, period. The musical scope of this undertaking is vast – going all the way from hip hop of the 1-2-Go! Crew, to the blistered and rusted pop punk of Rivethead to the straight-up thrash of Damage Deposit to the one-line speedcore of Creeping Charlie to the dubby punk of The Ed Gein Fan Club to Onward to Mayhem's straight-edge to Ignoramus's hardcore with fiddle. I haven't put a stopwatch to it, but you're in for the better part of two hours listening to this from tip to tail. What I like: it's so far afield of what comps have become. This isn't some lame, discount attempt for a label to re-release tracks by their bands. Eight local labels helped put this together, and I suspect a slew of these bands aren't on labels at all. There are a good ten bands on here that I've never heard of – not even the slightest hint of – and I think they're all on to something. (The American Monsters, Big Fuckin' Skull, The Framed, International Robot, Path of Destruction, Red Satyrs, Red Vendetta, The Scamps, The Soviettes, and Sweet J.A.P) You bet they'll be on my hunting list the next visit to my local record emporiums. (I already picked up The

Soveittes.) I salute the comp's archiving altruism. There are definitely some gems on here, and I'm be amiss to not mention that the better known bands like Dillinger Four, The Crush, The Subversives, Misery, and Holding On all turn in smoking tracks. There are some nagging negatives: The cookie monster sure did do a lot of vocal appearances. Also, I understand the reasoning behind being egalitarian in having a free-for-all, no-rules, come-as-you-are comp, but some of the tracks aren't so good, regardless of genre. The predecessor to this comp, *No Slow... All Go*, did a good job of getting a wide swath of different styles of punk while keeping the ratio of juicy brats to dry hairballs to a bare minimum. A little trimming to, perhaps, a double LP and this would be a runaway fireball. As it stands, I give it a well-deserved salute. -Todd (No Idea carries this for \$9.10, pre-shipping.)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Oil: CD

Seventeen songs on this gave me some of this to say: ick, bad, bad-bad, God no!, don't care, dumb, even worse, boring, ooh funk!, blech, and various others. However, there are two great tracks amidst all that. (Which is a pretty good ratio if you check out the Fueled By Ramen standards.) The Matics and the Arrivals are just so damn good. If you hadn't noticed by last issue's cover, we like the Arrivals over here at *Razorcake* HQ. They just consistently blow me away. Little Dave kept talking about the Matics the weekend that we interviewed the Arrivals, so I've been meaning to check them out. This was a hell of a nice cut to be my first taste. There's a definite similarity to both bands' sound, but they both put their own spin on it and create something entirely original. If you want a whole buncha crap, get this. If not, just go pick up The Matics and the Arrivals. -Megan Pants (Thick)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Playing 4 Square 2: CD

About half a dozen songs on this comp come from albums or EPs that are worth owning. Those songs are interesting, engaging, challenging, stimulating. There are twenty-four tracks. You do the math. -Puckett (Suburban Home)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Rocked 'n' Loaded: 2X CD

A pretty rockin' comp here with all kinds normally disparate sounds filling up the track list, from '60s horror surf to rockabilly to psychobilly to skinhead punk to Detroit-by-way-of-Sweden rock'n'roll. Fifty-two tracks spread across two discs here, featuring music by The Templars, Nekromantix, Demented Are Go, Coffin Bangers, Hellvis, Hudson Falcons, The Cenobites and a truckload of others. A mighty fine, surprisingly consistent listen here. -Jimmy Alvarado (Rock 'n' Roll Purgatory)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Sick Kicks for Shock Rockers: 7"

A nice sampling of what's been going on towards the LA/OC border, featuring the Liberats, 40 Oz. Rescue, The Assailants, Psychotic Reaction, and Clit 45. The order of the day on this is hardcore and all six bands plant their feet firmly in that pigeonhole. While this ain't exactly *Flex Your Head* or anything, it is a nice sampler of some of the things you can find just under the surface of LA's pop punk wasteland. -Jimmy Alvarado (Violent Reaction)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Smoking Popes Tribute: CD

This is ass. The only redeemable song is Duvall's version of "Do Something," which is spot-on. Everything else sucks. -Megan Pants (Double Zero)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: The United States of American Oi! Volume 2: CD

I personally do not purchase that much oi. I guess that I believe that scene was primarily based out of the UK during the early '80s. Or Europe in general. The term came from there and grew amongst their own network. Also the environment and economics of the society at the time period fueled it even further. It just sounds funny that bands in the US are considered oi. But I do get stuff for review and never shy away from it. Well, GMM has put out a scorcher of a release. Not a bad track in the bunch. Bands like Niblick Hedbane, Oxblood, Anti Heros, Headwound and the Templars, to name a few, who contribute tracks of boot stomping, rocking fun. Time to shine the boots, cut the hair off, dry clean the flight jacket, press the white T and strap on the suspenders for a night of fun. -Donofthedeath (GMM)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Uterine Fury Records Fall 2002 Catalog Comp: CD

This is the most innovative recycling of crap to make a CD case in some time! (Trust me, that's a compliment!) Uterine Fury took an old floppy disk and used the shell to hold the CD. Note to punks everywhere: if you come across a ton of old floppy disks in a dumpster, you have landed on a gold mine! Sadly, the actual music did not interest me. Bands include Natur'es Incubator (sic), rayas-X, and The Zenith Slobot. The music I would describe as electronic, experimental, kinda metal something or other. There! If this were a cereal, it'd be something unidentifiable you found in a dumpster behind a goth club, but it would be in a super cool box! Kill me! -Maddy (Uterine Fury)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: You Call This Music?! Volume II: CD

Hefty size comp with thirty-five bands and thirty-five tracks. Many of the tracks are unreleased, which is a good thing. Highlights for me were tracks provided by Toys That Kill (former F.Y.P. makes the latter band an afterthought), Jag Offs (fast and furious, female-led screaming punk), Nazi from Mars (sounds like the Netherlands version of early Shonen Knife), Intro5pect (punk with a drum machine!), Kill the Scientist (reminded me of early Butthole Surfers with the sampling and rage), Spazz (power-violence kings!), Chris Dodge/ Dave Witte (crazy power-violence mixed with jazz-noise breaks and additional noise), The Voids (authentic sounding, old school punk flavor), Pornshot (bubble gum silliness), Lipstick Pickups (trashy, sloppy garage punk fun) and Four Letter Words (ten seconds of actual music in a twenty-three second track). A few downers for me on this comp were the underwear sounding track by As I, the Backside track for the use of the word God (and aren't they that Christian band from Sweden that P.O.D. signed to their label? I could be wrong; if I am, I'm kinda sorry...) and the track by ESL where the singer sounds like he is straining so hard, not hitting the notes, and not breathing. A good comp of bands

from different genres which is not painful listening through from start to finish. Kind of like having a jukebox in the back of the bar mixing it up with what people want to hear. -Donofthedeath (Geykido Comet)

VERMICIOUS KNID, THE: Days That Stand Still: CDEP

Tap your chest, hang your head, and cry, motherfucker, cry. The problem with this recording, much like the problem with most emo, is that it lacks balls. Cojones. Testicles. Guts. Intestinal fortitude. All that shit. Records like this are soundtracks for people who have failed and given up trying. As such, they diminish my life for the brief period of time that it takes me to skip to the next disc. -Puckett (Antiantenna)

VILENTLY ILL/ MR. CALIFORNIA AND THE STATE POLICE: Split: 7"

Vilently Ill: Well, that was a waste of two minutes of my life. Mister CA: ...and that was a waste of another two. Jeez, it wouldn't have been so painful if at least one of the bands were remotely funny. -Jimmy Alvarado (Proud to Be Idiot)

VILLIANS, LOS: No Estas Solo: 7"

The A-side is an up-tempo thrasher with sung vocals and a harmonica fill (!) or two thrown in for good measure. Good song overall. Ditto for the flipside, only it doesn't have the harmonica, is mostly in Spanish, and Alfredo gets to bang on the congas a bit during the slower spots. More focused and catchier, this is a marked improvement from their first album. -Jimmy Alvarado (Split Seven)

WANTED DEAD: Repercussions: CD

Was it Danzig or Wattie or Pushead or someone else I've long since forgotten about who first conveyed to me that the iconography of the human skull - in the form of a Jolly Roger or a Crimson Ghost - was the punk equivalent of the "real" seal on dairy products in this country? Whoever it was, they rattled the cage of a very old archetype and got it to leave its droppings all over my mind. And lo, all these many years later, though I've been hoodwinked a few times here and there, it still, more or less, holds true. Yeah, it's stupid and cartoonish and probably best personified by that cretinous thug kid on The Simpsons with the black skull shirt, but skull imagery almost always tells you that this is a band that isn't afraid of the repercussions of being stupid and cartoonish and delving into a bit of mindless skullduggery. Wanted Dead is one such band - at least sonically speaking. Fast, clean, compact street punk with some metal flourishes, they strike me as something like a cross between the Casualties and Agnostic Front. If I could ever bring myself to actually read the lyrics of a band like this, I would let you know if they're straightedge or not, but I don't really give a damn whether they think I should drink or not. But I will pour some cold PBR into my skull and listen to this album again. Good stuff. -Aphid Peewit (Chunksaah)

WHITE FLAG: T is for 20: LP

Ever like a band a lot, but just never get around to buying anything by them? White Flag has always been such a band for me. With the exception of a copy of *S Is for Space* I bought twenty years or so ago and assorted comp tracks and,

despite liking nearly everything I've heard from them, I've never owned anything else. Why? Haven't a clue. Their ability to meld punk aggro with a good dose of humor and a wicked knack for pop hooks is in abundance here on this, a "best of" album spanning twenty years' worth of releases. According to the liner notes, this vinyl version is mostly comprised of the their "pop punk" tunes, while a CD version is more comprehensive. Although the lack of vinyl trickery in evidence on their first two albums (groove breaks in the middle of the first album force you to manually pick up the needle and move it to the next track; an extra groove on the second album results in a "third" side) was a bit of a disappointment, there ain't a bad track to be found here and warrants no less than the highest of recommendations. Thanks for the second White Flag release in my collection. I promise to pay closer attention from here on in. -Jimmy Alvarado (Soundflat)

YOUNG AND THE USELESS, THE: Self-titled: CDEP

Thorp Records has been putting out some interesting things as of late. I thought I was going to get another generic pop punk band before I put this on. Boy, was I wrong. The guitars came crunching out of the speakers and the vocals screamed with bloody eye passion. The drummer throws down some double kick to accentuate the music. The songs maintain melody but delve heavily into the metal vein. Dillinger Escape Plan comes to mind. A sheer progressive metalcore attack to the aural senses. A good introduction that will keep me interested in what might be achieved down the road. -Donofthedeath (Thorp)

ZEKE: Live and Uncensored: CD

The middle-fingered roar of two-speed rock and roll is back with this disc, loaded with twenty-five slashes worth of live recklessness. There's also four unreleased, never-played-live cuts here as well as a handful of studio tracks from *Death Alley* to get your rock on with. Being that Zeke hails from Seattle, I can't help but think just how fucking funny it'd be if the Seattle Seahawks' quarterback would count off the snap like Zeke counts off their songs live onstage - HEY!... YEAH!... ONE!... TWO!... ONETWOTHREEFOUR!" That'd be ruling. It wouldn't hurt to hear the thunder of Zeke in that new stadium up there, either, as it would certainly get all the Seahawk fans riled up for the occasion, and I'm sure my brother Joe (California's biggest Seahawk fan) would definitely agree. ROCK IT. -Designated Dale (www.deadteenager.net)

ZERO TOLERANCE TASK FORCE: Punk Rockery: CD

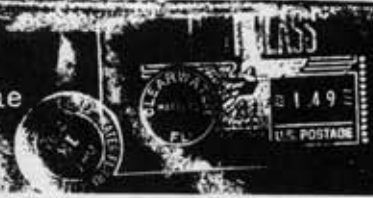
Bad, bad, *bad* punk rock from a band that, after thirteen years, has not been able to come up with a single song worth a second listen. Never thought I'd ever hear a band that would make the first Meat Puppets album listenable, and then this came along. -Jimmy Alvarado (www.ztf.com)

Remember to check www.razorcake.com to read all the record reviews that didn't fit here.



CONTACT ADDRESSES

to bands and labels that were reviewed either in this issue or posted on www.razorcake.com in the last two months.



- **1-2-3-4- Go!**, 420 Wall Street #206, Seattle, WA 98121
- **54' 40' or Fight!**, PO Box 1601, Acme, MI 49610-1601; <www.fiftyfourfortyorfight.com>
- **Acetate**, 2020 Broadway, Second Floor, Santa Monica, CA 90404
- **A-F**, PO Box 71266, Pittsburgh, PA 15213
- **AK Press**, 674-A 23rd St, Oakland, CA 94612
- **Alien Snatch**, Morikeweg 1 74199 Untergruppenback, Germany
- **Alternative Tentacles**, PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141-9092
- **Angel City Outcasts**, <www.angelcityoutcasts.com>
- **Antiantenna**, 4-1528 Queen St., W. Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M6R 1A4
- **Asian Man**, PO Box 35585, Monte Sereno, CA 95030
- **Beer City**, PO Box 26035, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0035
- **Big Neck**, PO Box 8144, Reston, VA 20196; <www.bigneckrecords.com>
- **Blazing Guns**, PO Box 40236, Downey, CA 90239; <crejectedmusic@yahoo.com>
- **Boss Tuneage**, PO Box 74, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2WB UK
- **Breaker Breaker**, PO Box 536071, Orlando, FL 32853
- **Burning Heart**, 2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026
- **Butterfly**, PO Box 31225, 08080 Barcelona, Spain; <www.butterfly-records.com>
- **Calendar of Death**, 1431A Park St, Alameda, CA 94501
- **Catalina Tigershark** c/o Andrew Frits, 1300 NW Amanda Loop, Silverdale, WA 98383
- **Chunksaah**, POB 974, New Brunswick, NJ 08903
- **CNP**, PO Box 14555, Richmond, VA 23221
- **Coldfront**, PO Box 8345, Berkeley, CA 94707
- **Copter Crash**; <www.coptercrash.com>
- **Deadpan**, PO Box 902, Artesia, CA 90702-0902
- **Demolition Derby**, PB 4005, 2800 Mechelen 4, Belgium; <www.demderby.com>
- **Deranged**, PO Box 543 Stn.P, Toronto, ON, M5S-2T1 Canada
- **Devil Doll**, PO Box 30727, Long Beach, CA 90853
- **Devour**, Chiyo Taguchi 2-1Kamimutsunacho Mishima Okazaki 444-0859 Aichi Japan, email: chippe@m2.catvmics.ne.jp
- **Dionysus**, PO Box 1975, Burbank, CA 91507; <www.dionysusrecords.com>
- **Dirtnap**, PO Box 21249, Seattle WA 98111; <www.dirtnappress.com>
- **Disgruntled Nation**, 917 Patrick Creek Road, Kallispell, MT 59901-7528
- **Dr. Strange**, PO Box 1058, Alta Loma, CA 90701
- **Endless Vertigo Music**, <www.endlessvertigo-music.com>
- **Enterruption**, PO Box 884626, SF, CA 94188-4626; <www.enterruption.com>
- **Estrus**, PO Box 2125, Bellingham, WA, 98227
- **Evil Owl**, <www.evilowlrecords.com>
- **Exit Stencil**, PO Box 110775, Cleveland, OH, 44111
- **Fastmusic**, PO Box 206512, New Haven, CT 06520
- **Flameshovel**, 1658 N. Milwaukee, #276, Chicago, IL 60647
- **Fork in Hand**, <www.forkinhand.com>
- **Fueled By Ramen**, PO Box 12563, Gainesville, FL 32604
- **Get Hip**, PO Box 666, Canonsburg, PA 15317
- **Geykido Comet**, PO Box 3743, Laguna Hills, CA 92654
- **GMM**, PO Box 15234, Atlanta, GA 30333
- **Go Kart**, PO Box 20, Prince St. Station, NY, NY 10012
- **Good Ink**, PO Box 19645, Seattle, WA 98109
- **GSL**, PO Box 178262, SD, CA 92177
- **Haunted Town**, 1658 N. Milwaukee Ave. #169, Chicago, IL 60647
- **Havoc**, PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408
- **Headline**, 7708 Melrose Ave, LA, CA 90046
- **High School Refuse**, Berlageweg 12, 9731 LN Groningen, The Netherlands; <ktvs@yahoo.com>
- **Hooligan Empire**, PO Box 10024, Kansas City, MO 64171
- **Horrendous Failure**, PO Box 7504, Ann Arbor, MI 48107
- **Household Name**, PO Box 12286, London SW9 6FE
- **Hungry Ghost**, PO Box 620241, Middleton, WI 53562
- **Hydrahead**, PO Box 990248, Boston, MA 02199
- **Hyperrealist**, Box 9313, Savannah, GA 31412; <www.hyperrealist.com>
- **Ice-Made**, <www.ice-made.com>
- **Immigrant Sun**, PO Box 150711, Brooklyn, NY 11215
- **In The Red**, PO Box 50777, LA CA 90050; <www.intheredrecords.com>
- **Insurgency**, 2 Bloor St. W., Suite 100-184, Toronto, Ontario, M4W 3E2 Canada; <www.insurgency.net>
- **Intensive Scare**, Lilienthalstr. 4, 10965 Berlin, Germany
- **Intensive Scare**, PO Box 3015, Bellevue, WA 98009
- **Judas Cradle Productions**, The, PO Box 1445 Grand Central Station, NY, NY 10163-1445; <www.judascradle.com>
- **Kangaroo**, Middenweg 13, 1098 AA, Amsterdam Holland
- **Kung Fu**, PO Box 38009, Hollywood, CA 90038
- **Longshot**, 726 Richards St, Vancouver, BC, V6B 3A4, Canada; <www.longshotmusic.com>
- **Lookout!** 3264 Adeline St., Berkeley, CA 94703
- **M. H.**, 36 Central Park Rd, Plainview, NY 11803; <mrhymson@aol.com>
- **Major Label**, PO Box 304, Hollywood, CA 90078
- **Manifesto**, 740 N. La Brea, Second Floor, LA, CA 90038
- **Martyr**, PO Box 955, Harriman, NY 10926-0955
- **Midrifts**, <www.midrifts.net>
- **Misfits**, PO Box 2043, Radio City Station, NY, NY 10101
- **Neurot Recordings**, PO Box 410209, SF, CA 94141; <www.neurosis.com>
- **New Disorder**, 115 Bartlett St., SF, CA 94110
- **No Idea**, PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604-4636
- **No Theme!**, 520 N. Bahamas Dr., Tucson, AZ 85710
- **Nuttsactor 5**, PO Box 170421, SF, CA 94117
- **Ozomatli**, <www.ozomatli.com>
- **Paco Gardens**, PO Box 18455, Denver, CO 80218-0455
- **Panic Button**, 3264 Adeline St., Berkeley, CA 94712
- **Pink and Black**, PO Box 190516, SF, CA 94116
- **Pop Riot**, PO Box 14985, MPLS, MN 55414
- **Prank**, PO Box 410892, SF, CA 94141-0892
- **Protoculture Audio**, 3917 Alamo Ave, Ft Worth, TX 76107
- **Proud to Be Idiot**, PO Box 410325, SF, CA 94141-0325
- **Punk Core**, PO Box 916, Middle Island, NY 11953
- **Radio Blast**, Hildegardstr. 13, 44809 Bochum, Germany
- **Robotic Empire**: 12001 Aintree Ln, Reston, VA, 20191
- **Rock 'n' Roll Purgatory**, 341 S. Walnut St., Wooster, OH 44691
- **Rodent Popsicle**, POB 1143, Allston, MA 02134
- **Scenester Credentials**, PO Box 1275, Iowa City, IA 52240; <www.scenecred.com>
- **Schizophrenic**, 17 W. 4th St., Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L9C 3M2
- **Short Hare Records/Black Tie Underground**, <www.blacktieunderground.com>
- **Sin Fronteras**, PO Box 8004, Minneapolis, MN 55408
- **Slave Magazine**, PO Box 10093, Greensboro, NC 27404
- **Slutfish**, 327 Bedford Ave #A2, Brooklyn, NY 11211; <www.slutfishrecords.com>
- **SmartGuy Records**, 3288 21st st., PMB #32, SF, CA 94110; <www.smartguyrecords.com>
- **Smog Veil**, 316 California Ave #207, Reno, NV 89509
- **Soul is Cheap**, PO Box 11552, Memphis, Tennessee 38111
- **Sound Pollution**, PO Box 17742, Covington,, KY 41017
- **Soundflat**, PO Box 102226, 42766 Haan, Germany
- **SpinART**, PO Box 1798, NY, NY 10156-1798
- **Split Seven**, 12405 Venice Blvd. #265, LA, CA 90066
- **SS**, 1114-21st Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
- **Stolen**, PO Box 41, Prahraan 3181, Australia
- **Substandard**, PO Box 310, Berkeley, CA 94701
- **Suburban Justice**, PO Box 56055, Portland, OR 97238
- **Subway Star** c/o Jansson, Ringvägen 37B, 61135 Nyköping, Sweden; <www.subwaystar.cjb.net>
- **Subway Star**, Jansson Ringvagen 37 D, 611 35 Nyköping, Sweden
- **Sudden Death**, Cascades, PO Box 43001, Burnaby, BC, Canada V5G 3H0; <www.suddendeath.com>
- **Suicide Watch**, PO Box 9599, Charlotte, NC 28299
- **Switchblade**, PO Box 266, Pedricktown, NJ 08067
- **Thick**, 409 N Wolcott Ave, Chicago, IL, 60622
- **Thinmen**, <www.thinmen.com>
- **Thorp**, PO Box 6786, Toledo, OH 43612
- **TKO**, 3126 W. Cary St. #303, Richmond, VA 23221
- **Transparent**, c/o Paul Holstein, 6759 Transparent Drive, Clarkston, MI 48346
- **Triple Crown**, 331 West 57th St., PMB 472, NY, NY 10019
- **Uterine Fury**, 312 Arrowhead Circle, Spartanburg, SC 29301; <www.uterinefury.com>
- **Velocette**, 83 Walton St, Atlanta, GA, 300303
- **Victory**, 346 N. Justine St. Suite 504, Chicago, IL, 60607
- **Vinyl Warning**, PO Box 2991, Portland, OR 97208-2991; <www.vinylwarning.com>
- **Violent Reaction**, PO Box 902, Artesia, CA 90702-0902
- **Whoa Oh**, 52 McLoughlin St., Glen Cove, NY 11542
- **X Off**, <www.xoff.com>



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.



2500 LEFT-HANDED PEOPLE DIE EVERY YEAR USING RIGHT-HANDED PRODUCTS (THIS IS NOT A PLACE TO DUMP YOUR DEAD PIGS),

\$1, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, xeroxed, 22 pgs. Take a hint from the title: I don't remember the last time I read so many words that said so little. My favorite part is the page and a half of reprinted Hemingway. Maybe next time they will replace the stream-of-consciousness emoting and the Jets to Brazil worship with more Hemingway. -Cuss Baxter (Jesska, 111A N. Stadium #153, Columbia, MO 65203)

BARRACUDA, #15, \$5 (U.S.), \$7.50 (other), 8 1/2 x 11, printed like a fancy magazine, 48 pgs.

If glossy magazines featuring lots of girls who look like Betty Page, lots of vintage cars, and tiki drinks is your thing (you know who you are), check this out. I'm really not into this whole subculture (for example, when someone asks me what kind of car my mom drives, I say, "A tan one."), so most of this was over my head. But one article, about George Seldes, a muckraking journalist in the early twentieth century, was really interesting and made this worth reading. -Maddy (PO Box 291873, LA, CA, 90029)

BIG TAKEOVER, THE, #51, \$4.95, 8 1/2 x 11, glossy stock, full color cover, 320 pgs.

I keep asking Todd not to send me any zine I can't read in fifteen minutes, and here he sends one that's over three hundred fucking pages. The Carter Family biography I'm reading is barely longer than this *Big Takeover* and I've been reading it for two weeks. So here's what I can get from the *BT* in fifteen minutes: Paul Westerburg (Replacements) cover, smoking cigar in western shirt. Interviews with the Flaming Lips, Wire, Mission of Burma, Mike Ness, Mike Watt, Pere Ubu's David Thomas, Kim Salmon (Wanda rejoice!) and some other people who play music. Articles on the Hot Snakes, Promise Ring, Sleater Kinney, Superdrag and more people of music-making. Also an article on some punk festival here in SoCal where all the old granddads of punk played, even the Sex Pistols, and I don't remember even hearing about it. A couple of things I found that I like: every article has every band mentioned in bold type, and the record reviews are organized by writer rather than band. I saw a full-page ad for the editor's old punk band, Even Worse (they have a CD out of stuff recorded in '81). Thumbing through the thing reminds me of getting my fingers all over the Sears Wishbook as a young shaver (because of the paper, not the fact that I want so many things in it).

Every single back issue (back to 1980!) is still available. There's a new Heroine Sheiks record (though I couldn't find a review of it because the reviews are arranged by writer rather than by band). Ringo Starr's son plays drums for the Who. Time's up. Good shit. -Cuss Baxter (The Big Takeover, 249 Eldridge St. #14, NY, NY 10002-1345; <www.bigtakeover.com>)

BRAINSCAN #19, \$2, 5 x 6 3/4, 65 pgs.

This is an extremely zine-y zine. Alex Wreck is extremely conscientious about zine culture as a whole - how zines are made (Hers is put together masterfully. Hand silk screened cover, nice ribbon binding, clear, readable, and interesting layouts), what zines mean overall, and how zines have helped save her life. #19 focuses on a couple things. The first is the Portland Zine Symposium (and includes part of a zine, *Fire Apparatus*, she made just for the occasion) and is full of small revelations about what happens when people who only know one another from the written word sit down and talk face to face. There's an overwhelming swell in her, re-realizing that making zines isn't just paper and glue, but a way to make flesh and blood and psychic connections in the hopes of building a larger community. She's also cognizant of how much time and energy goes into making a zine and what it means to her. Not completely comfortable with the role of being a teacher, she nonetheless goes to help the Rock and Roll Camp for Girls and is happy to see, firsthand, that young ladies are able to gain knowledge from the craft of the zine. The result is honest and humble. Very worthwhile reading. -Todd (Brainscan, PO Box 14332, Portland, OR 97293)

COMPLEXIFICATION STRATEGY: A TEN FOOT RULE SAMPLER,

\$1, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied, 16 pgs. It's been a long time since Shawn Granton put out a full-fledged *Ten Foot Rule* comic, which kinda bums me out. Then again, if I didn't keep bugging Shawn to do a comic for *Razorcake* and to illustrate my columns and stuff like that, maybe he'd have more time to do his own thing. So who am I to complain, right? In the meantime, Shawn has put out this little sampler zine. It's only sixteen pages, but it's got ten different comic stories. I've seen a few of the stories before, both here in *Razorcake* and in *READ Magazine*, but most of the comics are new to me. In case you're not familiar with Shawn's work (and in case you don't feel like flipping back a few pages to check it out), he writes simple, intelligent, slice-of-

life-type stories, and illustrates them in a very cool, remarkably detailed way. And though I really enjoy his stories, it's the artwork that makes the comics worth owning because Shawn takes the time to put all the windows and bricks into his skyscrapers, all of the plaid into his flannel shirts, all of the street lights and power lines onto his streets, all of the shingles on his roofs, and so on. I can really get lost looking into his drawings. So obviously, I'm a fan and recommend this. Also, in this sampler, Shawn promises a brand new, full-fledged comic to be released soon. That's good news. -Sean (TFR, PO Box 14185, Portland, OR 97293)

DEADBEAT, #4, 60 cents, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied (?), 38 pgs. Sort of your basic punk zine here. Articles about rethinking selling out, why corporate rock sucks, annoying Christian punks, album reviews, short histories of Black Flag, the Sonics, Aus Rotten, and more. This really wasn't bad. It just didn't hold my attention at all. -Maddy (PO Box 460106, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33346-0106)

EXTREME CONFORMITY, #6, \$2.50, 11 x 4 1/4, copied, 84 pgs. Larry Nocella, the guy who does *Extreme Conformity*, has a real knack for satire and a tight grasp on the absurd factors of our society. He picks up on the fact that humans, as individuals, are very intelligent, but as a group, we're idiots. His *Extreme Conformity* comics take this notion and have a lot of fun with it. This particular issue, "Time for Mandatory Castration," essentially takes the notion of "he's my president and if he tells me to get in line, I get in line" and tears it apart. The actual plot seems kind of crazy when I explain it - an evil deer, hell bent on destroying humanity, takes over the body of the mayor of a small city (alien matter scrambling makes this possible, in case you were wondering) and declares that all the men in the town have to be castrated. Of course, people start lining up to do their civic duty, but a lot of men also resist. This turns into a hilarious examination of civil disobedience and the way governments sell ridiculous ideas to the people they represent. The comics are by no means well-drawn, but they are endearing, and the story itself is funny and insightful. It's definitely worth checking out. -Sean (Extreme Conformity, PO Box 122, Royersford, PA 19468)

GENETIC DISORDER, #16, \$3, glossy cover, 73 pgs. Of many zines that I've seen lately, this is my favorite. It's coming from Southern California, so a lot of the content in *Genetic Disorder* is cen-

tered on that area. It includes "The Seven Days of 'Stache'" which is a review of seven nights with a mustache and trying to pick up on women at bars. It should be an inspiration. It has a listing, with pictures, of "The Skulls of Punk Rock" – no ratings, which is good – just a list, good for what to do and what not to do when creating the next all-encompassing skull. It also includes a damned good story called "People from the Valley." I liked this one. I've shown it to many people. Write for it. Get it. Everyone should read it. –Bradley Williams (Genetic Disorder, PO Box 15237, San Diego, CA 92175)

GLASS HOUSES, #2, \$1ppd or trade, free to prisoners, 4 x 5 1/2, copied on tracing paper, 14 pgs. This is a great example of how to write a personal zine. I read this in under ten minutes, and couldn't put it down. Arriel writes about how when she was younger, she thought of her life in terms of a movie. She writes, "I can remember being 14 years old, in an alley in San Francisco, smoking crack and waiting for my heart to explode, thinking, 'this would be a perfect time for the credits to roll' while my silent narrator played the appropriate song for a movie about the tragic death of a street kid." This is smart, realistic, honest writing. Check it out! –Maddy (Arriel, 19 Grove St. #3, Arlington, MA 02476)

GO METRIC, Winter '02/'03, \$2, 7 x 8 1/2, copied, 64 pgs. I started reading this issue of *Go Metric* during one of those incredibly long waits at the doctor's office, and, for the first time in my life, I spent an hour in a waiting room without grumbling to myself, "Goddamn doctors think their time's so much more valuable than everyone else's. Fuckers." In fact, I enjoyed my long wait. It gave me time to read Rev. Nørb's hilarious diatribe on the new Spider Man movie, Maddy Tight Pants's hard hitting essay about why the Dead Boys are cooler than The Boys, and an awesome tribute to Joe Strummer. Now, as one of the editors of *Razorcake*, it would be extremely hypocritical of me to say that a zine with a Joe Strummer tribute and columns by Nørb and Maddy is anything but fucking cool (though I do want to point out that any similarities between *Go Metric* and *Razorcake* are purely coincidental). But the best thing about *Go Metric* is how rad it is from cover to cover. This issue has an interesting interview with a guy who made a documentary about tribute bands (tribute bands... very similar to the article on tribute bands that we had in *Razorcake* #9), an interview with sci-fi writer and indie publisher Jim

Munroe (who we interviewed for an article in *Razorcake* #7), and, thankfully, a bunch of stuff that has nothing to do with shit we've covered in *Razorcake*. There's an interesting tour-diary-turned-rant-about-the-superiority-of-Japanese-pop-punk by one of the guys from Frankenheather. There's some pretty in-depth coverage of the MicroCineFest (an independent film festival). There's even an article about Godzilla movies that I really enjoyed, despite the fact that I'm not the least bit interested in Godzilla movies. The editor pits Ben Weasel's new album against an old Yes album (not to ruin the surprise, but Weasel wins). Someone wrote the most irreverent piece about Operation Enduring Freedom that I've read so far. There's a bunch of record reviews and a book review. And, at the very end, *Go Metric* announces that they're going to be the ones to finally release the Weird Lovemakers' lost album, *Must Die* (1. Woo-hoo; 2. Weird Lovemakers, who were interviewed by me in *Razorcake* #3). So, again, any similarities between *Go Metric* and *Razorcake* are purely coincidental, but if you like one, you're pretty much guaranteed to like the other. –Sean (Go Metric, 15A S. Bedford Rd., Pound Round, NY 10576)

LISTEN TO THIS, #3, \$2 (NO trades), 8 1/2 x 11, copied, 21 pgs. Can I just say how damn rad this zine is? Seriously. Four poignant short stories, so excellent that my only complaint is that the zine is not longer. They're all little snippets of life, with great attention to detail, and the author doesn't seem to be coming at the stories so much from a "punk" angle, as from an angle full of genuine human compassion. Telling you what the stories are about would be giving away too much. You'll just have to send for this and find out for yourself. –Jessica (PO Box 1661, Pensacola, FL, 32591)

MODERN DRUNKARD, August 2002, \$3.50, 8 1/2 x 11, black and white, 39 pgs. I like drinking, so right away the concept of this magazine kind of appealed to me. I was a little worried that all the humor would be tasteless and that the overall zine would be bland and stupid, but I ended up actually learning things! Okay, some of the humor is borderline, like one contributor's "big crusade" against Mothers Against Drunk Driving (hey, I like drinking, but I don't like drunk drivers), but it is sarcastic and all in good fun. It made me laugh. Some of the best parts of the zine were: "Cheers!: a short history of the toast," "The Savvy Drunk's Guide to Cheap Chugs," and part two of a continuing story about

Jackie Gleason. So, yeah, if you can get past the large amount of scantily-clad women in the advertisements, this zine's pretty fun. –Jessica (Modern Drunkard, 1522 Lafayette St. #1, Denver, CO, 80218)

PICK YOUR POISON, #3, \$2, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied, 64 pgs. Here's another set of stories by and mostly about Nate Gangelhoff, a kid who's dealing with the aftereffects of a misspent youth by writing entertaining stories about it. I really enjoyed the first two issues of this zine, but, to be honest, I kept hoping that Nate would go a little deeper with his stories. And I'm not talking about meaning-of-life deep. I just wanted to see a little more connection between the stories and the world at large, little bits of insight into why his characters do the things they do. With *Pick Your Poison* #3, Nate starts giving us these little insights and small revelations. His stories are by no means philosophical; they don't even pretend to be. And this is good. He doesn't try to be someone he's not. But with this latest issue, when he tells stories of getting fucked up and being reckless and destructive, he does it with more intelligence and understanding. Which isn't to say that this zine isn't primarily a collection of fun stories about being drunk, high, and a miscreant. It is. That's what makes the zine so enjoyable. It's also cool, though, to see that Nate is growing as a writer. –Sean (Nate Gangelhoff, PO Box 8995, Minneapolis, MN 55408)

POOP SOUP, #5, free, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied, 10 pgs. This zine looks like it took about three hours to put together. In a bad way. Included are: "Great Metal Quotes," Kama Sutra positions, an article about how all cops are not bad (which made a few good points, but was way too short and poorly thought out), a collage featuring Dubya and a Nazi rally, a mini comic book, and "Pre-Punk Jobs of Well-Known Punks" (the best part of the zine, although it did include Billy Idol as an "English scholar," which I highly doubt). If the creator of *Poop Soup* spent a little more time on this zine, it would be a lot better. –Maddy (FNS Publishing, PO Box 1299, Boston, MA 02130)

THE PORNOGRAPHIC FLABBERGASTED EMUS, #3, \$3, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied, 48 pgs. This is the third installment of Wred Fright's serialized novel, *The Pornographic Flabbergasted Emus*. The novel tells the story of four college students and their fairly unsuccessful punk band. It's not pornographic and there are no real emus, but you've got to give these guys credit for being flabbergasted. Each

one of the main characters is a mess in his own way; and when you put them together, they cause exactly the kind of train wreck that makes for some fun reading. This installment deals with the Emus gigs at a reggae festival and on a public access country music show, their feud with a mafioso-themed garage band, their respective battles with their libidos after a hot girl moves into the extra room of their house, their basic girl troubles, and one band member's hilarious phone call to his mother, wherein he tries to explain to her about his punk band. Through it all, there are a lot of laughs, some moments of deeper insight, and some very solid writing. I'm looking forward to the next installment. –Sean (Wred Fright, PO Box 770332, Lakewood, OH 44107)

PUNISH OR BE DAMNED, \$1, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied, 20 pgs. The cover of this zine immediately made me think, "Oh no, this is gonna be one of those zines with one page of writing somehow laid out over twenty pages." Instead, quite the opposite! *Punish or Be Damned* is full of writing – no art, no distractions (which can sometimes be a distraction in and of itself). The writer (who goes by the name Flamboloyd Flitzbottom!), touches on every political topic from terrorism to overpopulation to imperialism to gender roles to the dawn of civilization. It reads a bit like a personal political manifesto. And it's rather smart, too. I would recommend it to people just getting into politics 'cause it's a little too basic for anyone who's read *A People's History of the United States*. Still, a decent zine. –Maddy (2 Tinkham Glenn, Wilbraham, MA 01095)

QUICKDUMMIES, #15, \$3, 8 1/2 x 11, newsprint, 96 pgs. I really attacked the last issue of *Quickdummies*, and, in retrospect, I wasn't being fair to the magazine. I read a couple of things in it that I disagreed with, my claws came out, and I ripped the magazine apart. For some reason, though, the editor was undaunted, and he sent his next issue to *Razorcake*. As I read through it, I started to wonder why I'd been so harsh last time. This issue has cool interviews with Against Me! and Vitamin X – two awesome bands; an interview with Jen and Jason of *Clamor Magazine* that's pretty clearly an email interview, but they still talk about some interesting things; a really cool layout about an artist who's done a career's worth of impressive punk flyers; and a record review section that shows that these guys know their punk rock. So I went back through that last issue and reread it, and you've got to give the guy credit for covering great bands (Strike Anywhere, Toys That Kill,

The Urchin, etc.). A good proofreader definitely would help. Sometimes I'll read a sentence four or five times and still have no idea what it's supposed to mean, but for the most part, the writing is more cleaned up than most of the emails that people send me, so what the hell? I retract everything I said about *Quickdummies* in previous issues of *Razorcake* and recommend this zine. —Sean (Quickdummies, 16810 Bellaire Dr., New Orleans, LA 70124)

RADICAL SLUT DISCOVERY, \$2 or trade, 7 x 8, xeroxed, 56 pgs. Midge and Emiliiah write about their personal experiences of sexual abuse and discuss how sexual abuse should be dealt with in the punk scene. Although some of the zine was informative and some of it may be helpful to people who have been sexually abused (although I reject the whole "I am a Survivor" line of thinking), a lot of it failed to really examine sexism and sexuality. For example, in the "Are you a monarchist?" questionnaire, there are questions like, "Do you make jokes or negative comments about the sex lives of wimmin or sex work?" and "Do you come on to your female friends even jokingly." As a woman, I don't have any problem with men joking about sex. Most of my guy friends HAVE come on to me jokingly, and guess what, I joke back! This whole issue is really complicated and well beyond the scope of one zine review; but this zine would be a lot better if it would question its own assumptions as well. —Maddy (2866 Wildwood Drive, Clearwater, FL 33761)

READ #21, \$4, 8 1/2 x 11, color cover, 100 pgs. Big and well put together and poorly named (I changed the name of mine to "Bready"), it's got a passel of pretty funny interviews with the likes of Superdrag, Dillinger 4, the Briefs, Manifesto Jukebox, Electric Frankenstein and more; a Kittenpants section with great insults; a lame ripoff of the fake newspaper *The Onion*; many reviews; some funny short pieces; and one long occasionally-funny piece — the editor's grandma's memoirs — which, sadly, I lost interest in after about nine chapters. —Cuss Baxter (Read, PO Box 3437, Astoria, NY 11103; <www.readmag.com>)

RESIST, #14, \$1.50, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied, 86 pgs. Wow! Although I do like short zines, there's something to be said for a zine that takes a long time to get through. Matte writes about libraries, buying a house, a crazy

encounter with a Minneapolis cop while riding a bike, a long bike ride (with the famed Hard Times Bike Club!), gardening, how to make coffee from dandelions, and much more! Although I disagree with some of the articles (for example, Matte is really into the idea of individuals handling problems like unemployment, street cleaning, etc. I would prefer that government would be giving even more money and getting more involved in these issues, not less), I really enjoyed this zine. If you haven't read it, get yourself a copy. A lot of work went into this, and, at the very least, you'll have some good debates with yourself about your own politics and beliefs. —Maddy (Bicycle Lane Industries, PO Box 582345, Minneapolis, MN 55458)

SAFETY PIN GIRL #18, \$3, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied, 100 pgs. Full disclosure: Jessica Disobedience, who is responsible for the bulk of *Safety Pin Girl*, contacted me several months ago, wanting to do reviews and writing for *Razorcake*. She sent some samples and I liked what she did. She has several columns up on our website and is doing zine reviews for us. In a fashion that's in reverse of how this usually goes, I finally got my hands on her zine. I was already predisposed to like it, but I'm happily surprised at how good it is. I try not to put too much emphasis on age, but goddamn, I wish I was aware and put together as Jessica at twenty. *Safety Pin Girl* has many modes — listening lists, book lists, full-blown fiction pieces, a day-to-day drink and smoke diary with her visiting friend Ali, poetry, DIY tips on making candle holders, and much more — but what makes this stand out is that, yes, it's a personal zine, but it constantly looks outside of itself to find greater connections. It avoids a lot of the self-indulgence and over analysis and shifts through different facets of this young lady's life, from sex, to boredom, to Chicago underground tunnel entrances to bars, to times with relatives in rural Wisconsin. The zine reads like Jessica's sharing the front seat with you on a long drive and she's got some cool things to share. It's not preachy, but questioning with the sense of wonder still attached. Recommended. —Todd (Jessica, 4035 N. Campbell Ave., Chicago, IL 60618)

SHREDDING PAPER, #14, \$3.95, 8 1/2 x 11, offset, color cover, 100 pgs. There's a Flaming Lips interview, but the focus is on record reviews and there's over 250,000 of them in here, as well as a feature on the fifty greatest singles of all time (which

range from the Clash to Madonna). I don't generally give a great big hoot for review zines but this one has a hook that hooked me: each review lists, in the heading, the number of tracks and the runtime! No one ever tells you that shit. And they review a wide array of punk and non-punk indie stuff. A zine I would actually buy. —Cuss Baxter (Shredding Paper, PO Box 2271, San Rafael, CA 94912)

SLUG AND LETTUCE, #73, 60 cents postage (send stamps, not coins), oversized, offset, 20 pgs. *Slug and Lettuce* is an essential punk/activist resource, and it's amazing to me that Christine has been able to keep it going for so many years and yet it's still free if you find it somewhere, and only postage by mail. This issue has Christine's thoughts on her love for Richmond; the usual great comic Zero Content, done by Fly; columns addressing everything from ecology to mental illness; lots of great art by Cristy Road; and of course — music, zine, and book reviews. —Jessica (PO Box 26632, Richmond, VA, 23261-6632)

TURNING THE TIDE: JOURNAL OF ANTI-RACIST ACTION, RESEARCH & EDUCATION, Vol. 15 #3, \$2, oversized, offset, 15 pgs. This zine is filled with lots of incredibly informative, political articles. Sometimes they seem a little dry (I have a hard time reading straight fact/opinion articles that aren't based around some kind of story), but they're still very informative. This issue covers topics such as the Inglewood, California police beating of Donovan Jackson-Chavis; anti-immigrant racism and repression; and a very impassioned piece on The Clash's song "London Calling" being in a Jaguar commercial and that officially means "punk is dead." (I was really fucking sad when I saw the commercial, but I still love The Clash, and I don't think that any song being in any commercial means punk as a whole is dead...) All in all, a good read. —Jessica (Anti-Racist Action/People Against Racist Terror, PO Box 1055, Culver City, CA, 90232)

UNAFFILIATED, #3, free! (send postage), 8 1/2 x 11, offset, 28 pgs. The zine starts itself off with a Fugazi quote ("...history rears up to spit in your face. . ."), so right away I knew they were starting from somewhere good. It's full of radical politics — but it's not boring or preachy. It's cut'n'paste, while still readable. There's a really scary chart called "Where Are You Getting Your Media From?" and it's a breakdown of how four major

companies own basically all mainstream media in this country. It freaked me the fuck out, but I'm glad I know. There was also an excellent piece, a radical guide to women's health. I got kinda scared when I saw that there was some fiction and poetry, because a lot of times when fiction and poetry are thrown into this kind of zine, it turns out very bad — but this stuff actually didn't suck. And there's a comic, and music reviews, and a bunch of other good stuff. Definitely worth the postage. —Jessica

YOU IDIOT, #11, \$1, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied, 28 pgs. *You Idiot* is put together by Nate Gangelhoff, who is the same guy who does *Pick Your Poison*. It's comprised mostly of short articles about thoughts he had while at a crappy temp job, and quick research he did while at the temp job. Right from the beginning, Nate claims to be "debating the obvious," and even goes as far as to say that, if this were a political zine, the depth of content would be equal to saying, "Hitler is a bad guy." The zine can be basically divided into two halves: reviews of video games and reviews of books that Nate somehow found. The book reviews aren't typical in the sense that he covers a book about why bad mainstream eighties rock is satanic, a book about cat astrology, and a book about one of the Backstreet Boys. The best thing about the reviews are Nate's stories about how he came across these books (because, obviously, who's gonna read zine called *You Idiot* and genuinely care about a book called *Why Knock Rock?* that's written by two fundamentalist preachers?) The video game reviews are about getting high and playing anti-drug video games and playing religious video games. These reviews are pretty funny. They also made me think all kinds of weird things about the people who would make anti-drug and religious video games (like, for instance, people who would want these games made obviously believe that video games really *do* subliminally control the thoughts of the kids who play them, so the video game makers actively make games with the main intention of subliminal mind control. It's like they have no problem with brainwashing kids, as long as the kids are brainwashed with the "right" thoughts. Weird). So, while this zine isn't incredibly deep, it is interesting and it made me think about things that I probably wouldn't have thought about, otherwise. —Sean (Nate Gangelhoff, PO Box 8995, Minneapolis, MN 55408)





Bad: The Autobiography of James Carr
by James Carr, 238 pgs.

When James Carr was nine years old, he tried out for a boxing club at his school. The boxing coach paired James up with a kid who was way bigger than him, and the kid beat the crap out of James. That night, James bought a gallon of gasoline, dumped it in his boxing coach's office, and burned down the whole school. Things just went downhill from there for the kid. He went on to spend most of the rest of his life in reform school, juvenile detention centers, and prison. When he was out of prison, he mostly did things that landed him back in the joint. This continued until Carr was in his early twenties, at which point he started to make some sense out of all the abuse he'd suffered at the hands of prison guards, police, fellow prisoners, and the justice system in general. He also started to make sense of all of his self-inflicted abuse, and he found an intelligent way to break the cycle. Once out of prison, Carr went on to do some interesting things, both with the Black Panthers and with his seemingly settled life of husband, father, and college teacher. He definitely had the kind of life that warrants an autobiography. *Bad* is a great read. And, strangely enough – because this never happens with autobiographies – it has a somewhat surprising ending on a couple of levels.

The stories Carr tells of his early years are as graphic as they are gripping. He talks about the brutality of prison life, from the fights to the race wars to rape, in a very matter-of-fact way. For example, he describes raping another boy while at a juvenile prison camp by saying, "He stammered something I didn't pay much attention to, since by then I had his pants down and already had my cock halfway up his ass." Carr makes no apologies. At the same time, he makes no excuses. He doesn't blame society or the justice system. He doesn't try to rationalize away his actions. He accepts them as part of his past and moves on with the attitude

that the past is lost, but the present and future remain malleable. This way of thinking is most remarkable in the way that Carr is able to completely avoid dogmas. He doesn't see himself as a martyr at the hands of a cruel society. He doesn't view his past digressions as the result of poor parenting or economic inequality. Instead, he places everything into a much deeper, much more rational context. I'm not going to tell you what that context is. You have to read the book yourself to understand it. But, believe me, his examinations of the American penal system are refreshing and, though he wrote all of this thirty years ago, it's all still relevant today.

Beyond the sociological examinations and graphic violence, though, there's a lot of flat-out good reading in *Bad*. You get an inside look at late fifties/early sixties inner city LA street gangs – the ones that had themes and wore costumes. Carr at one point was in a gang that dressed like farm boys, and later he started a gang that dressed like pirates. You get to learn about Carr's lifelong friendship with Soledad Brother and prison reform leader George Jackson. You get a fresh perspective on the Black Panthers. And you get a view inside Soledad and San Quentin that is neither romanticized nor sensationalized. All in all, this is an amazing and insightful book. I highly recommend it. –Sean Carswell (AK Press, 674-A 23rd St., Oakland, CA 94612-1163)

**Crass Art and Other
Pre Post-Modern Monsters**
by Gee Vaucher, 105 pgs.

Chances are, if you've been into punk for a bit, you've come across Gee Vaucher, much like you've come across Raymond Pettibon or Winston Smith. You may not know it, and it isn't instantly obvious to the casual listener or watcher, but as how Pettibon's illustrations captured the bleak, stark strikes of Black Flag and Smith's witty, knife-sharp condemnations via collage gave a face to the Dead Kennedys, Gee Vaucher help put a graphic face to CRASS, England's seminal anarcho punk band that's still loved and reviled to this day. She provided the visual bullets.

Having met both Steve Ignorant and Penny Rimbaud in EXIT, an avant-garde performance group, and stayed with the band/collective for many years, she also became part of the core group who started Crass Records. She provided an enormous amount of visual support and helped give not only CRASS and their label-mates a visual identity, but, in the process – for better or for worse, to no fault of her own – helped develop the ongoing look of crust, doom, grind, and most bands that start with the letters "d-i-s."

With the cover to *The Feeding of the 5,000*, she uses gouache. It's painful how real it looks. The world she depicts is like an inverted Norman Rockwell in black and white. Instead of saying that the world is a nostalgic, nice place where we all run to a swimming hole, Vaucher's vision of that time was one of bedlam, seconds away from being blown to bits or burned black like smoke off a tire. She also incorporates a bit of Dali, where what you're looking at can't be real, but it looks so natural. Many images are striking and socially blunt. In another painting, you really can't interpret in too many ways where Thatcher is applying lipstick over a bleeding corpse, using its blood for a mirror reflection, surrounded by bobbies, while a car burns in

the background.

Also, much like Pettibon and Smith, the depth of their personal art catalog is vast, varied, and a lifelong pursuit well worth looking into beyond the bands they're usually associated with. This book is full color with heavy, glossy paper, perfect for showing your friends and although the price is steep – almost \$25 – the publishers sure as hell didn't skimp on production. It's nice looking and it's all here, from hyper real marching hot dogs Vaucher used as illustrations for children's books, to photo-realistic genitalia to collages such as "Still Life with Nude" (of a dead soldier on a beach, his wallet open, with a picture of a colorized, bare-breasted snapshot peering out), to the cranked-up ink splatterings reminiscent of Ralph Steadman (who illustrated *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*), to her more commercial work for *Rolling Stone* (for a Bee Gees record review) so she could produce her own *International Anthem*, a "nihilist newspaper for the living." This is a fine book to have if you want to peel back and look at the vast possibilities that the high water mark collision between art and punk music are capable of. Highly recommended. –Todd (AK Press, PO Box 40682, SF, CA 94140-0682)

The Flow Chronicles
by The Urban Hermit, 190 pgs.

The Flow Chronicles is one woman's search to "figure it all out." The book starts with the Hermit's time at a liberal arts college, and quickly moves into her quitting school, moving to The Big City, becoming a '90s-style hippie, taking a lot of drugs, working crappy restaurant jobs, and basically coming of age. *The Flow Chronicles* isn't a novel, though. It's pretty much a series of stories and anecdotes about the Hermit's late teens and early twenties. Interspersed throughout the stories and anecdotes are letters that the Hermit writes to herself under assumed names so that she can make fun of various types of people (mostly hippies, New Agers, and assorted wingnuts). The letters are generally pretty witty, and they give the reader a nice break between the stories. And the stories are told well. The Hermit has a strong writing voice, an active sense of humor, and a very engaging style. When I first started reading this book, I couldn't put it down. Most of the adventures that she has are fun to read in that I'm-glad-I-wasn't-there kind of way. She also captures the feel of the Northwest and its environments vividly. My main problem with this book, though, is that the Hermit has no love for her characters. In a way, it would make sense that she has no love for them, because the stories are all pretty much autobiographical, and the characters are based on the annoying hippies whose annoying actions convinced the Hermit to stop being a hippie. So I understand why she doesn't like her characters. Still, I have no love for hippies to begin with. When I read a book about hippies by a person who also has no love for hippies, it's hard to keep reading. It's like this: if you and I go to a party and neither of us like any of the people there, we're going to leave, right? But if you love some of the people at the party, I'm going to stick around and keep an open mind because maybe I'll find something I like about them. Similarly, if the Hermit and I are in a book together and neither of us like any of the characters, then I'm going to want to leave the book behind.

I wanted to give this book a chance, though, so I pushed through it and a weird thing started happening. I started to root for the hippies. I kept hoping that they'd do something cool or at least give me a glimpse into the aspects of their personality that made the Hermitt become friends with them in the first place, just so that I could have a reason to like them a little. No dice, though. The Hermitt doesn't give them any redeemable qualities. The end result is that I read a hundred and ninety pages of an angry woman complaining about all the people she hates. It's a shame, because the Hermitt is a better writer than that, and this could be a much better book than it is. On the other hand, if you like reading rants by angry people who make fun of everyone, here's a well-written book for you. -Sean Carswell (Microcosm, PO Box 14332, Portland, OR 97293)

**Quiet Rumours:
An Anarcha-Feminist Reader**
edited by Dark Star, 120 pages

My goal is to get through this review without receiving hate mail. Having said that, here we go. *Quiet Rumours* is a collection of anarcha-feminist texts, from Emma Goldman to contemporary writers like Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz. The book is really well laid-out with lots of great wood-cut style art.

Since the book is a compilation, there is some range of ideas and opinions. After reading the first few sections and underlining paragraph after paragraph and writing the word "No!" in the margin, I started to wonder, "Maybe I should just never say that I am a socialist with anarchist tendencies. Maybe I should drop the whole anarchy thing altogether."

Here are some quotes so you get an idea of what I'm talking about. "Observing and evaluating life routines must be the occupation of the comparatively idle, those with less responsibilities, i.e., men." (Note: What about class? Is a man who works sixty hours a week at McDonald's and Burger King idle? Even "comparatively" so? I doubt it.) Or how about, "Women are suspicious of logic and its rituals the same way the poor are suspicious of our legal labyrinths. Veiled in mystification both institutions function against their interests." (Note: Are all women suspicious of logic? I doubt it. Hasn't the idea that women are illogical and irrational been at the root of a great deal of sexism over the years? At any rate, wouldn't it make more sense to say "Humans are suspicious of logic." Now THAT'S probably more accurate!)

And then there are statements from the overly optimistic. Like this one: "Anarchistic preparation is not non-existent in this country. It exists in the minds and actions of women readying themselves (often unknowingly) for a revolution whose forms will shatter historical inevitability and the very process of history itself." (Note: Um, what women are you hanging out with?)

And then there's the old "women are the true progressives" argument, contained in statements like, "Feminist capitalism is a contradiction in terms." (Note: Why? It seems to me that women are perfectly capable and willing to use their liberation to make a lot of money and buy fun and stupid crap with it.)

These are just some of the general complaints I have with a lot of feminism. Fortunately, there were also some great articles in this book. "The Tyranny of Structurelessness"

by Jo Freeman alone is worth buying this book. She discusses how "structureless" movements, meetings, and organizations really do have structure. She argues that the structure in these organizations is even harder to overcome because it is based on personalities and friendships. She writes, "For everyone to have the opportunity to be involved in a given group and to participate in its activities the structure must be explicit, not implicit. The rules of decision-making must be open and available to everyone, and this can happen only if they are formalized." Her attack on elitism and insider-ism in progressive movements should be recommended reading for all leftists.

The book also includes two articles by Emma Goldman, both of which have the affect of making a number of the more contemporary contributors look silly. Goldman's appeal to all women, especially working class women, is absent from a number of the other contributors, some of whom seem to think that existing in small, isolated, ideological organizations is the best way to recruit average women to the movement.

Let's face it. Most women have reasonable demands: equal wages, an end to a culture of rape and sexual abuse, support for taking care of their children, and the right to do whatever men can do. Yes, the National Organization of Women has failed working class women horribly; but I am skeptical that militant (in some cases terrorist) organizations will be much better.

Still, I'd recommend this book to anyone interested in contemporary left-wing feminism and to progressives in general. There are some great articles in here mixed in with the bad and the ridiculous. -Maddy (AK Press, 674A 23 St., Oakland, CA 94612)

Small Town Punk
by John L. Sheppard, 211 pgs.

Since I grew up in both 1.) a small town and 2.) like the punk rock, I was excited to get this book. Before I even got down to read it, I flipped through it several times. The chapter titles were clever; either song titles to punk classics, like Suicidal Tendencies' "Institutionalized" or nice twists like "Sarasota's Alright If You Like Geezers" (from Fear's, "New York's Alright If You Like Saxophones.") On the cover was a beat-up pair of Converse. By all means, judging this book by its cover, I was digging it.

After several chapters, something started to annoy me. There's no doubt that John has natural talent. His dialogue is believable, his characters stand out from one another, the setting and pacing were all done well. In essence, he cleared the writing basics with flying colors. Then, as I turned more and more pages, it struck me. Buzz Pepper, the main character, is a major fucking asshole. Great, great, I know, I know, punks are "supposed" to be assholes. It's even explicitly in the book: "My ambition was to antagonize as many people in life as I could. I was a sour young man, filled to my nostrils with hate, hate, hate." But the main character is such a prick that his self-righteous hate and loathing cancels out every other emotion. The further I got in the book, the more I saw Buzz as flat and plain mean. Worse yet, the book is heartless. Buzz steals from his friends (pills mostly), and feels nothing for his extended family ("Another one of our relatives was dying, or some bullshit like that.") Buzz loves visiting his grandparents so

he can steal their pills. He makes fun of Japanese businessmen, asking if they'd lost something at a baggage carousel, then taunts them: "I think you lost a war!" He hates J.R.R. Tolkien and sci-fi nerds. He hates fat, Christian girls, ugly dykes, fascist school colleagues, and middle-aged fruits. He hates a "rat fuck" barber who just looks wrong and the hate is "justified" because he asks if Buzz likes Dungeons and Dragons. It's all in there. Even characters Buzz claims to like are the sum total of what they can provide for him. When his sister, Sissy – quite possibly the most likeable character in the book – is killed in a Pizza Hut, he doesn't seem too fazed and spends a grand total of one sentence memorializing her.

Okay, some people are stupid and dumb. Granted. Most of the people I know and cherish are marginalized by society as a whole. But the challenge – how I see it – is to share how one form of the punk rock lifestyle makes other people want to at least be with the character or listen to what they have to say beyond, "you're a fucking asshole." We all want to think we're at least a little bit smarter, more wise than the gen-

eral populace, that we've got a couple things figured out. Buzz is a self-centered, hot-tempered bore who provides no such insight.

Let's put this in some context. I think that if anyone is setting out to write "punk fiction," they're already at a disadvantage. Perhaps because I read *Small Town Punk* between Steinbeck's *Tortilla Flat* and a Richard Brautigan omnibus, it just seemed so tiny, so puny, and so safe, like here's a fiction ghetto, here's what you have to do, here's your shovel, dig your hole and some people will buy it. Both *Tortilla Flat* and *A Confederate General from Big Sur* deal with characters that society has deemed depraved, alcoholic, self-tortured, and poor. (Being punk without stating it explicitly, if you want to think of it that way.) Yet, both of those authors have a love for their characters and show that however fucked-up they may appear, no matter how many flies are biting their ass when they're impotent and the sun's burning their skin, there is something ticking inside of them that shows a truer, deeper meaning to the human condition. It may not be pretty, it may not be rosy, but at least there's a hand extended to

show you something you might have missed. *Small Town Punk* is all about a dickhead who's openly mean and has nothing to offer except an unwanted pregnancy. I mean, really, maybe I'm alone here, but independent publishing shouldn't be about "filling a niche market" or self-aggrandizement, but putting out stuff that is just as good, if not better, than any author in the mainstream can claim.

Here, let me ruin the book for you. The main character dies of a brain tumor at the end. And since Buzz wasn't nice to a single person in the book, I feel the same for him. Nothing. Good. Die already. And due to the fact that the author, John Sheppard, is still alive, this book can't be a memoir – it's fiction – so he can't even go back on the "well, I was a fucking dickhead and I'm just giving you the truth," standard line. Near the end, the book seems to provide its own prophesy. "It's our condition, people like us.... We don't believe in much of anything. We only know what doesn't work." Okay, you base a book on what didn't work? Guess what? This book feels the same. –Todd
(www.iuniverse.com)



STL 2000: A Year in St. Louis Underground Rock, VHS

Jason Pankoke of *MicroFilm* wrote a review of this movie that inspired me to hunt down a copy for myself. Shortly before reading Jason's review, I'd watched a recent movie about an underground rock scene, and the movie drove me nuts. It was so self-congratulatory and insular, and the kids interviewed seemed so naïve that I started to feel like I needed an anecdote to that film. After reading Jason's review, I thought I'd found the anecdote. I knew that I was holding *STL 2000* up to some pretty high expectations, and I also knew that part of me felt like the flick didn't stand a chance against my expectations, but I requested a review copy, anyway, and had the video in my VCR within an hour of getting back from the post office. And, to my surprise, it lived up to my expectations. This is a pretty fucking rad movie.

STL 2000 covers a year of the punk/hard-core/rockabilly scene in St. Louis. In the spirit of making a time capsule, this movie starts and ends at a New Year's party. In between, we meet local bands, hipsters, zine guys, writers, club owners, and disc jockeys. The interviews cover what seems to be a fairly broad cross section of the underground music scene in St. Louis. Not everyone interviewed has horribly intelligent things to say, but, to filmmaker Matt Meyer's credit, he does get them talking about a variety of topics. Some of the people interviewed lament the death of punk rock, some celebrate its vitality, some pine over the loss of the good old days, some look forward to the future, and a lot of them have very level-headed, lucid insights into underground culture. Two of my personal favorite points were the interviews with Phil Motion Sickness and the two owners of the punk club Creepy Crawl. Phil's interview was interesting not only because he explained the madness behind publishing a zine, but because, when he explained the madness, I recognized the look on his face as the same look I get on my face when I explain why I drive myself nuts working on *Razorcake*. But Phil always seems to have a good attitude. It comes through in *Motion Sickness* and it comes through in his inter-



views. The Creepy Crawl guys are interesting because one of them, Shannon Hill, is preternaturally laid back and open minded, and the other guy, Jeff Parks, gives the most dead-on description about the difficulties of opening a business yourself that I've ever seen. He describes what it takes to open a venue and covers everything from finding a spot to getting licensing and permits to basic accounting, and it's priceless when he tells you to figure out how much money you're gonna need and double it, to figure out how much money you expect to make and cut that in half, and to be prepared to get screwed because you're gonna get screwed; the key is to just keep from getting screwed too badly. It's been a long time since I've seen anyone that honest in an interview.

Perhaps the most jarring thing about *STL 2000*, though, is the pacing. It's remarkably slow-paced, especially in relation to the music it covers. In the first few minutes of the movie, Meyer films a poorly-attended basement show featuring the band Wreckless Angels. The show is moderately entertaining, but it's not exactly what you would call a high-energy set. After about a minute of watching the Wreckless Angels play, I realized that Meyers was going to stick with them for the entire song. It made me feel a bit restless. I felt like he should just get on with it. Then, I thought about it more and decided that Meyer *shouldn't* just get on with it. I realized that this was probably the only time I was going to watch this band, and I had the extra two minutes to spend listening to a whole song. So I relaxed. I listened and I watched the moderately entertaining set and I ended up really digging the song. At that moment, I decided that the movie wasn't paced too slowly. The

problem was just that I was used to movies being paced too quickly. I've grown accustomed to the rapid fire editing of the music-video era where images come and go so quickly that you can't really look at anything. Meyer, on the other hand, seems to feel as if no one really gives St. Louis a fair chance, so he makes sure that you get enough information to give it a chance. And I really appreciate that.

For the most part, the bands covered in this movie are pretty solid. None of the bands left me feeling like I had to rush down to the record store to pick up an album, but I am keeping most of the bands' names in mind when I flip through the *Razorcake* review pile and through the seven inch sections of my local record stores. All of the bands are worth the few minutes spent covering them. One curious thing about the bands, though, is that Matt Meyer is in the St. Louis pop-punk band, The Ded Bugs, and Meyer's film completely ignores his own band. Meyer takes the anonymity one step farther and pretty much eliminates himself from the film. With the exception of one bit at the very end, Meyer never lets himself be seen or heard in the film. He lets the film and the people in it speak for themselves. It's very respectable. By the end of the movie, I really admired the tenacity of the bands, the clubs, the fans, and everyone else in the St. Louis music scene.

I'm so entrenched in punk rock that it's easy for me to forget that punk rock scenes don't thrive everywhere in the US. There are so many good shows and so many good bands in LA that I tend to forget that the rest of the world isn't as privileged as I am here. But I come from a small town in Florida where punk rock barely exists, and I've spent years having to drive to Orlando to catch snippets of touring acts and local bands that just don't have a chance. I tend to forget about that, though. Watching *STL 2000* helped me to remember what it's like to struggle to have any kind of scene at all. It's good to remember that. It helps give me perspective. Maybe that's what I enjoy most about this film. –Sean Carswell
(\$10 ppd. to: Ded Bugs, 318 Stewart, DeSoto, MO 63020)

