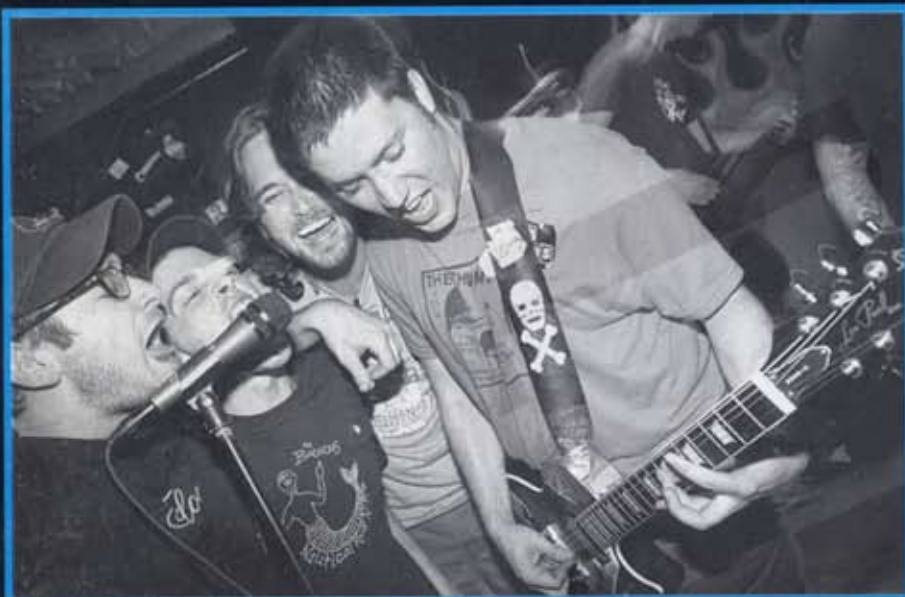




No. 16

RAZORCAKE

\$3



FEATURING TWO
OF THE BEST UNKNOWN
UNDERGROUND BANDS:

the
conversion



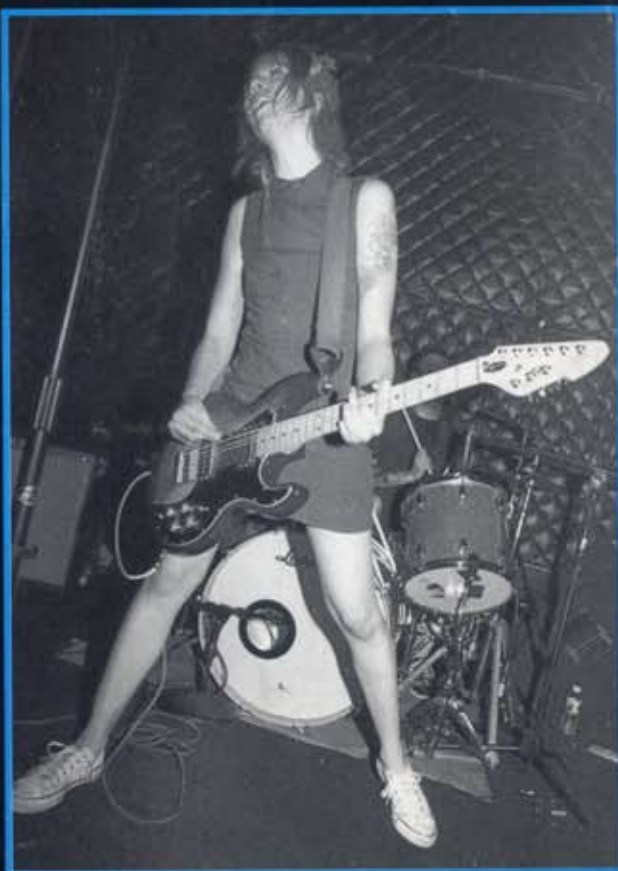
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TIM KERR
FM KNIVES
EXPLODING HEARTS
PROTECT PAC
BOYSKOUT



PLUS COLUMNS, REVIEWS,
COMICS, AND ALL THE
DRUNK GERMAN MEN YOU
CAN THROW A CHICKEN AT!



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I got up around 10am, after four hours of sleep. Someone falling down the stairs woke me up. I skirted bodies littered in the front room and went for a glass of water. There was a small beer lake on the kitchen floor. I grabbed the belt loops of the passed-out guy on the floor and scooped him out of the puddle. Wouldn't want him to die in a quarter inch of beer. It was unfathomable that people were still awake. I'd lasted until 6am. Some of the guys in the bands were shirtless, in the parking lot, and waving to the kids going to school. The bands I dig most tend to see touring as a vacation.

I'll admit. I was a bit worried, until the sixth or seventh beer, that inviting thirteen plus people – Tiltwheel, The Tim Version, Billy Reese Peters, the Grabass Charlestons, their pals, and two dogs – into my two bedroom apartment was a bad idea. The downstairs neighbors want my head already and have complained that we "walk too heavily." That's what I was thinking – I'm fucked – as I was swept up the broken beer bottles, the cigarette butts, the mistakenly discarded customized beer cozies. I am fucked, but in a good way.

If steam can't be blown, what's the point of it all? I didn't check bank statements at the door, but I have a feeling that everyone that night was dirt poor, but, man, were they happy, hootin' and hollerin'.

After I dropped the Tim Version off at the airport for their flight to Japan, after the aforementioned guy who could have drowned in the kitchen leapt up, put on my rubber kitchen gloves, then proceeded to stick them deep down the back of the pants of PJ, who didn't move when rubber was inserted and playful fingers dug deep.

AD DEADLINE FOR ISSUE #17

October 1st, 2003

AD DEADLINE FOR ISSUE #18

December 1st, 2003

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- Quarter page, 3.75" wide, 5" tall.
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- Please make all checks out to Razorcake.

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feathers in their caps, not black eyes, by:*

**Sean Carswell, Todd Taylor,
Megan Pants, Felizon Vidad,
Skinny Dan and ktspjn**

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This issue is dedicated to the memory of Todd Agajanian, Matt, Jeremy, and Adam of The Exploding Hearts, Wesley Willis, and Derek and Fred of the Zero Tolerance Task Force. May they all rest in peace.

Thank you list: High-flying digitizing action thanks to Julia Smut for her cover help and her Tim Kerr interview. Gigantic ear thanks to Tim's wife Beth for snapping some shots. Tear-filled thanks to Petite Paquet for the Exploding Hearts memorial and Chrystaei Branchaw for her pictures. Don't even think of fucking with the kids thanks to Trey Bundy for his Protect PAC piece. Demons in a halo thanks to Rob Ruelas for the Rich Mackin column illustration. Useless and Modern thanks to Lisa Connolly for her FM Knives pictures. "Someone kick and find out if she's dead" thanks to Rick Bain for his Smogtown shots. Symmetrical chest hair thanks to Randy Iwata for wrangling Nardwuar's interview. My legs don't work, so I must keep drinking thanks to the 10AM Too Drunk to Stop Party Crew. *Cop Boat*. It's all invisible to me thanks to Glenn Byron for constant vigilance with the website. We've stopped pretending it's fun thanks to Yesenia, Dale, Stacy, Ayn, Kat, and Donut Head for helping us stuff the inserts. High-ho, it's naked people thanks to Jason Willis for his video review. It's one of them things with words in it thanks to Greg Barbera for his zine reviews. Hot wings thanks to Not Josh for his zine and record reviews. Bring on the hate mail thanks to Cuss, Eric Rife, Wanda Spragg, Mike Beer, Puckett, and Sarah Stierch for their record reviews.

After some Mexican food, and beer with fruit in it, Replay Dave, the really bendable bassist for Grabass Charlestons – who nights before, had landed into "a bed of the meanest cacti West Texas has ever sprouted" then was arrested – chatted with me while I made some coffee.

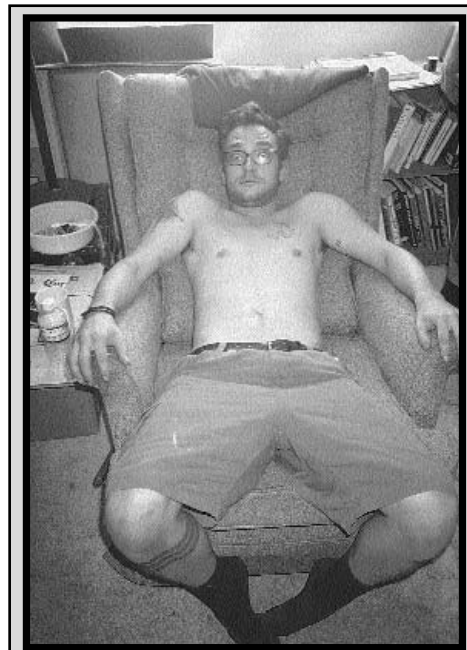
"You forgot to ask some questions last night that were on your list," he told me. The beer had gotten the better of my interviewing acumen. "Yeah, what'd I forget?" I asked.

"I never lived under an underpass. I lived under stairs until I got out of debt." I'd found out that Dave, in a financial bind, buckled down. He stopped as much spending as he could. Reduced his life possessions to what most people have in a broom closet, and saved his money until not only was he free and clear, but had a little saved. After I learned that, I admired Dave even more. I like stealth responsible people.

That night, when the bands were charging like super troopers through the fog of deep hangovers and the choppy seas of nausea, playing with tons of heart, it hit me pretty hard.

This is why we do *Razorcake*. Bands like these. This is why we hang on by our fingernails, save all our dimes, and scream along in print. There are folks out there who aren't just amazing musicians and great people, but friends in waiting and good times to be had. It'd be a crying shame if we just pattered along like a golf cart on a groomed, pre-planned course of life instead of lighting the fuse of a new firecracker and holding it as long as possible to keep the explosion close.

–Todd



Mr. Aaron Lay of Billy Reese Peters.
(Pushing fluids after a 20-hour bender.)

RAZORCAKE



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—From an unreleased Exploding Hearts demo

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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.



"They are lost in the canyons and the caverns of Frohburg. We are the CIA of drunk people!"

The Dinghole Reports

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

Ladies and gentlemen, and boys and girls! Presenting Little Jerry and the Monotones! Hey everyone! Sorry about that. I couldn't control myself. I'm just too excited about flying solo again, a free chicken! It seems as if Francis and Sicnarf have yet to repair their ham radio, therefore forfeiting their right to participate in these here ramblings. It's all Chicken, all the time! Pure poultry, baby! I realize my reports have been somewhat lacking as of late, but I'm prepared to make up for it all. I finally have some fresh new ruckus to share, and ruckus on a grand scale, I must say! I can whet your appetite for the long lost flavor of glistening newborn ruckus with two huge little words, **MEN'S DAY!**

About five years ago, I first met my good friend The Chancellor. The Chancellor is from the quaint little town of Frohburg, Germany, in the former GDR's Saxony region. He ended up working a summer at the same Wisconsin resort as myself, and instantly befriended my Pabst-guzzling friends and me. For five years now he's been telling us about the greatest event ever fathomable, Mannertag. Mannertag is German for "Men's Day." He explained Mannertag to an initially unbelieving crowd. Basically, on this day in his small rural area of Saxony, everyone gets the day off. All the men gather in groups and spend the day traveling from beer garden to beer garden in strange transports drinking beer, eating bratwurst, drinking beer, singing, drinking

beer, and being men! Of course, we had to ask about if there's a "Women's Day." The Chancellor would calmly reply, "No, just Men's Day," as if a Women's Day were a ridiculous suggestion! To us dopey Pabst-inhaling Wisconsin males, this sounded like a day in heaven!

honored. It was yet another milestone in this rooster's life, playing before the happy drunken men of rural Saxony. It was all too good to be true. Now, **ROOSTERS AND HENS, UND HERREN UND FRAUEN, PRESENTING... A NEW DINGHOLE REPORT!!!!**

needed quick Germanizing to acclimate to Frohburg's thick German beauty. Once in town, we acquired a substitute Chickenkit and joined The Chancellor's family and friends at the Mannertag Eve barbecue. They had just finished preparing the men's trailer for the following day. I stared in genuine awe of the absolute brilliance.

There stood a trailer set to hold about twenty men, decorated with branches and leaves, to look like a beer garden on wheels, with little cartoon bratwurst and beer bottles painted on the sides, all being pulled by an antique German tractor. One of the men began playing an accordion as everyone sang along to old German folk songs and the beer began to flow. It was like a dream.

Seeing as how the men were preparing their livers for the upcoming day of days, and seeing as how I haven't been NEAR a drumset for over six months, I felt a little Mannertag Eve ruckus wouldn't hurt. The Chancellor, the Hen, and I snuck out to the car and quietly set up the drums

in the road. I pulled on the Chickenhead for the first time since Milwaukee's Cactus Club in November. The rhythms were a bit rusty, but soon that fine Saxon pilsner kicked in and the gears of ruckus whirred again like a fine tuned wood-chipper! The barbecue party jamboree erupted in cheers, hollers, and joyous laughter. It had been a year and a half since Germany had witnessed my ruckus, but it all came back to them. Rockin' along to rhythm ruckus is like riding a bike, a souped-up monster bike with no brakes! Mannertag was mere hours away. I was ready.

On the morning of Mannertag,



Every year, The Chancellor would try to get us to fly out to his corner of the world for the greatest day of all days, Mannertag. It always seemed just one continent too far to travel, for our financial means. Well, this year I find myself living in Krakow, Poland, just a mere nine or ten-hour train ride away from Frohburg. I could finally make the long awaited pilgrimage to the most glorious of all celebrations, **MEN'S DAY!** Not only was I to be the first American to witness this royal event, but they wanted the **RHYTHM CHICKEN** to supply an American soundtrack for their day of hops and barley! I couldn't be more

Dinghole Report #31: Mannertag, a Day of Men, Beer, and Ruckus!

(Rhythm Chicken sightings #... oh I'm losing track, whatever)

TWO WORDS: MANNERTAG! Oops, I mean **MEN'S DAY!** My feathers were quivering in sheer blissful anticipation as The Chancellor's car whisked the Hen and I along the autobahn from Dresden towards Frohburg. He was blaring Heino on his stereo and singing along word for word. I would sing along for the chorus, "HEIDI, HEIDO, HEIDA! AHA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA!" After our five months in Poland, we

Rhythm Chicken

I bid the Hen farewell as she joined the Frohburg ladies to Leipzig. The ladies take advantage of Men's Day to go off on their own to the big city and do "lady stuff." Perms? Shopping? Manicures? Who knows? As The Chancellor and I walked across Frohburg at 10am, I could feel the tremors start. We started seeing groups of men going about by trailer, bike, or by foot. Many men were dressed up in one celebratory way or another. Some men had dress-shirts with bow ties and top hats. Some men had Al Bundy "No Ma'ams" shirts. Some had leder-hosen. It was as if all the males of Frohburg found a Happy Schnapps Combo album and adopted their dress code as the norm. I could soon smell the first winds of beer and bratwurst as the small local beer gardens and pubs started

wearing flowers and German folk hats. The grounds were full with HUNDREDS of men, all drinking, cheering, laughing, drinking, and just being men! Every time a new trailer would show up, all the horns would begin honking and everyone cheered. It was like Pulaski Polka Days, the Kewaunee Trout Festival, Milwaukee's South Shore Frolics, and Sheboygan Bratwurst Days all rolled into one huge festival, but it was ALL MEN!

It was time. The Chancellor and I scouted out a fine spot for rhythm ruckus and hauled the Chickenkit into the crowds of merry drinkers. Up on a deck in the beer garden, I sat behind my set and pulled on the Chickenhead. A few men noticed and curiosity mounted. I raised my wings and was about to go into the opening drum

something to yell about, it's ruckus at ground zero! How do I GET these gigs?!!

At this point I wondered how the Milwaukee Brewers were doing. I wondered how their new Rally Rabbit was doing. I figured that Mannertag was a much larger crowd than the Brewers can draw these days. I'm quite positive that Miller Park, being the stadium for a team called the "Brewers" in a city nicknamed Brewtown, USA, couldn't possibly sell more beer in one day than Frohburg on Mannertag. I thought about how much trouble it would cause if they tried having a MEN ONLY day for even one game. Under the Chickenhead my beak smiled a little more and I rocked harder.

I whirled the crowd up a few more times under that hot summer

down through the shallow stream! The singing grew louder. Freshly opened bottles were handed around. Little shot bottles were getting knocked back here and there. I was rubbing shoulders with men named Dietmar, Jurgen, Werner, Otto, Rheinhold, and The Chancellor! I wondered what the ladies were doing, but not for too long. I was handed another beer.

The next stop was the Burg Gnadstein. After playing this exact place last year, I felt comfortable with the venue, it being a castle. The trailer slowed to a halt in the parking lot below and the men marched up to the beer and bratwurst stand. Many other trailers were on display as some men walked around appreciating each other's transports. The Chancellor and I hauled the Chickenkit up to the

If you think about it, a huge crowd of drunken German men with a Rhythm Chicken in the middle giving them something to yell about, it's ruckus at ground zero!

overcrowding with men, men, MEN!

We started at the Schutzenhaus, Frohburg's rifle club. The parking lot was transformed into a large outdoor beer joint. We started soaking up the Radeburger, once the royal brew of King Johann! I noticed how many men were also knocking back numerous tiny bottles of those "shot sized" boozes. Everywhere we went the ground became more and more littered with those tiny empty bottles. Many men showed up on bikes that were decorated in various outlandish ways. The Chancellor told me how sometimes the bikers end up eating pavement quite hard, so he never bikes on Men's Day. I also saw a few guys with souped-up walking sticks, complete with horns and beer can holders! Then the antique tractor pulled into the lot with a trailer full of singing men! Horns wailed, men yelled, and the real beering began. For the first time that day I stood back and appreciated the true traditional age-old ruckus I had been invited to. It was beautiful.

After three or four Radeburgers, we walked across town again to the next meeting point, the Jagerhaus. This is where things really got swinging. There were dozens of trailers parked in the field nearby; each gussied up like bizarre floats in a drunkard's town parade. There were hundreds of wild looking bikes leaning up against anything out of the way. There were a few trailers pulled by teams of horses, with the drivers wearing top hats and bowties. One of my favorites was a small carriage being pulled by two donkeys

roll when a roll of firecrackers started going off behind me. I thought this to be a perfect intro so I waited, drumsticks high in the air. Of course, it had to be one of those ONE THOUSAND FIRECRACKER ROLLS, and the things continued going off for no less than EIGHT OR TEN MINUTES!!! My wings grew tired as I held my pose. More and more men turned to see what the motionless Chicken behind the drums was all about with his wings to the sky.

After what seemed like a small eternity, the fireworks ended and I unleashed my thunder. Hundreds of male heads turned and gathered around to witness this new addition to the festivities. I sweated out a good dose of rhythms as my ears flopped around recklessly. I gave it my all and raised my wings again to the sky. There was a roar unlike any other. Hundreds of drinking German men raised their beers and said, "HURRAAAAAAY!!!" I rocked out a few more rhythms and halted again in my triumphant pose. The cheers grew. I lowered my head and pounded a few thuds on the skins, then pointed to the left side of the crowd. They yelled. I repeated the blasts and called upon the right side. They yelled. THUD THUD THUD! (left side) YAAAAAAAAY! THUD THUD THUD! (right side) YAAAAAAAAY! I repeated this little charade, speeding it up each time, until I was pounding out another set of chicken rhythms and their cheers blurred into one big riotous yell-fest! If you think about it, a huge crowd of drunken German men with a Rhythm Chicken in the middle giving them

sun, and started thinking about my own ruckus juice. I was ready for more beer. I got up as if the show was done, but they kept egging me on for more. Giving in, I supplied one more round of my soundtrack for chaos. This time when I was done there were a few beers handed to me! Accepting their gratitude, I joined the mass of drinking manhood. Beer followed bratwurst followed beer followed bratwurst, and so on. More and more men continued showing up and the horns wailed, and the beer flowed. After five years of hearing about this mythical event, there I was at Men's Day in complete awe, but it had only begun.

After a good hour of beer, brats, and men, I was told it was time to move on. This time we were welcomed onto the trailer! About twenty of us circled around the old tractor, beers in hand, while the driver heated up the old engine. He removed the steering wheel column, inserted it into the side of the engine and gave it a hardy lurch. The old one-piston spat out, "PUTT! PUTT! PUTT! PUTT!" and it was running. The men cheered again as the driver put the steering wheel back where it belonged. The men started filing onto the trailer and each one was handed a freshly opened bottle of beer. Then the singing began and the tractor and trailer began its ride. Just picture twenty-some men riding a beer garden on wheels, drinking and singing across rural Saxony. It was madness. It was perfect! We rode through woods and over fields. At one point we were nearing a small bridge when the driver pulled us off the road and

castle courtyard, to the same stage that hosted my ruckus last time! This time, however, was different. Instead of a handful of men and women, the courtyard had about one hundred beer drinking men. That's right, ALL MEN... but wait. While setting up my set I noticed a new song being sung, and this time they were all singing it with more heartfelt emotion than ever before. "Was woll'n denn die weiber heir?!!" they sang, and all directed towards the middle of the crowd. Then I saw them, there in the middle of all the men, TWO WOMEN!!!! Eeeeeeeek! As it turns out, the song translates to "What the hell are the ladies doing here!" The women blushed and dashed out as the song continued for a few more rounds. Their infiltration had failed and the crowd of drunken men was pure again!

I set up my kit on the stage and pulled on the Chickenhead. The opening drumroll echoed like thunder in the stone castle's courtyard. By pure instinct the men raised their beers and gave a joyous bel-low. My return to the Burg Gnadstein was met with drunken applause as the Chicken ears flapped to the beat. I pulled the same stint calling upon opposing sides of the crowd. They totally caught on as the right and left side tried outdoing each other, louder and louder. I felt like the ringmaster of some "Tastes great! Less filling!" debate in a land where Miller Lite isn't good enough to wash toilets with. I pounded out a few more doses of my Wisconsin beer-beats and stood to take a bow. Once again, they demanded more. My throat was getting dry **RAZORCAKE 5**

so I quickly rolled out a barrel of encore ruckus and then turned my attention back to the Radeburger. After returning to our group of men, I remembered the Rhythm Chicken buttons in my bag. I handed them out to all the men on our trailer and they proudly wore them for the rest of the day like some sort of team jersey or club pin.

After a few more beers the men all boarded the trailer and new beers were dispensed to all. This trip took much longer. While we were traversing a few miles of farm fields the driver stopped so we could all take a piss break in the middle of nowhere. Climbing back aboard, new beers were handed out. The trailer rolled on and the men sang more drinking songs. During an extended break between songs I felt obligated to contribute what I could and started singing "HEIDI – HEIDO – HEIDA!" The others joined in and beers were hoisted as the rolling beer garden neared its next destination. The trailer was parked among many others near the Lindenuferwerk, a resort of some sort on a beautiful lake. I got the Chicken gig out of the way first. From the large wooden deck on the lake, I rained audio ruckus upon the new mass of drinking men. The later the day went on, the drunker the men became, the sloppier (better) my rhythms were, and the louder they all cheered. While waiting in line for another beer, some guy asked me in broken English if I liked Pearl Jam or Creed or Limp Korn-nut or something like that. I raised my voice and proudly replied, "Nein! Ich leibe Heino!" He then told me I was dumb, so I started singing the chorus to "Die Schwarz Barbara" until he walked away. Soon, some guys were skinny-dipping in the lake, scaring away the swans.

Later, our team of drinkers filed onto the trailer and habitually handed out new beers for the ride. Yet again, I rode along with the caravan of drinking singing Frohbürgers, completely awed at my surroundings. The Chancellor and I were both a good decade or two younger than the rest of the team, but they all drank us under the trailer! By that beer's end, we had rolled into Kohren, the town that hosted the first ever European Rhythm Chicken gig two Februarys ago. There was a huge gathering of men and beer stands in a town park area. We set up the Chickenkit in an open grassy area nearby. As I rolled out the opening roll and raised my wings, a curious yet anxious crowd formed a circle around me and the cheering began. As I broke into my all-out ruckus rock, I felt myself tiptoeing around that line between

chicken-ruckus and falling-over-drunken-pants-wetting-couldn't-drum-to-save-my-life-ruckus. The ruckus grew wild and sloppy.

Lucky for me, the crowd had been drinking all day. They roared. A small group of Kohren punks were right up front yelling their hearts out. With my wild drunken head-flailing chicken rock, my Chickenhead bounced around until it was on backwards. Seeing as how I usually can't see a damn thing through it anyway, this didn't hinder my show one bit. In my condition, a head-spinning Rhythm Chicken was exciting and new. I toyed around with it, split the crowd into two opposing yelling squadrons again, and then gave in to the god of chaos. Feeling the gal-



I also saw a few guys with souped-up walking sticks, complete with horns and beercan holders!

lons of Radeburger building up inside me, I ignored all barriers to social decency and let it all go. The spirit of true ruckus threw my body around into a few strange contortions before I was thrown to the ground. Only those in attendance can truly attest to my "drumming in tongues", but they probably don't remember it all too well either. All I remember is one of the local punks helped me up and thrust a reviving beer into my wing.

The trailer was moving on back to Frohburg for a barbecue at Otto's. The Chancellor insisted that we could stay for more Radeburger and walk home later. I staggered into a large party tent where inside I found a DJ playing song after song by AC/DC. There was a dance floor with about ten longhaired middle-aged German metalheads playing air guitar. Once again, I stared in disbelief. One guy was down on his

knees, leaning way back, playing an air guitar solo. By the way he was squinting his eyes and gritting his teeth, I knew he meant it! Feeling the heat of the moment, I joined the rural German legion of air guitarists and headbanged my way through "Back in Black" and "Thunderstruck." It was Men's Day and I was a man! I approached the DJ and requested some Heino, but he just rolled his eyes so I went back to the Chancellor and the Kohren punks.

At some point we decided it was a good time to find our way to Otto's back in Frohburg for some delicious yet sobering barbecue. Being in completely foreign territory, I let The Chancellor lead. It was about five km away, but the way we

audience. Growing bored with the wool-chase, we went back to the "trail" and more rousing choruses of Heino. After a few kilometers of wilderness, we abandoned the creek and were staggering through farm fields on a very roundabout path to Otto's. It had gotten dark when we finally found the Burg Gnadstein and reset our internal compasses. About thirty more refrains of "HEIDI – HEIDO – HEIDA!" and we were singing up Otto's driveway.

It turned out that we were hours late for the barbecue and the ladies, back from Leipzig, were worried about the Chancellor and I (mostly The Chancellor's mother and the Hen). The other men from the trailer were there and continued beering till the bitter end. From what the Hen told me, Otto was dancing around in his own Chickenhead (???), playing the snare drum with his hand, and guarding his Rhythm Chicken button with his life. The Chancellor's father, Dietmar, and his friend had a primitive grasp on English, but I heard their skills improved drastically with more Radeburger! After a few drunken versions of "Oh My Darling, Clementine," they assured the Hen that we were alright by fluently saying, "They are lost in the canyons and the caverns of Frohburg. We are the CIA of drunk people! We will find them DEAD OR ALIVE!" And so this gloriously new Dinghole Report comes to a close.

The next afternoon I was nursing my hangover in The Chancellor's rumpus room watching CNN when I saw something all too familiar. They were showing the beautifully manicured courtyard of Krakow's Wawel Castle, just a short walk from our post-commie shit-hole apartment. Then they showed George W. Bush and the wifey there shaking hands with Poland's president and his wifey. A line of Poland's soldiers were at attention and the media photographers were snapping shots like crazy. It seems as if Bush was thanking the people of Poland for sending two hundred troops to Iraq. It made me feel a little dirty seeing him in OUR castle. Well, better there than Men's Day. Boy, did we choose the right time to leave town.

Next time, unless Francis and the Doctor are back on the airwaves with their interrupting drivel, I'll tell you all how a pheasant saw me naked and answer that old question, "Why did the birds have a seance?" Until then, cluck Gary Coleman and all the hooshwash for which he stands!

–The Rhythm Chicken
Rhythmchicken@hotmail.com
www.rhythmchicken.com







Designated Date

I'm Against It



"So don't be sad 'cause I'll be there / Don't be sad at all"

"Life's a Gas" from the Ramones' 1995 *Adios Amigos!* LP. Written by Joey Ramone.

Designated Date

I know his birth name was Bryan Todd Agajanian, but I've always known and called him Todd my whole life (unless you count the times we called him "Aggie," a nickname he was shortly given while we were kids). Incidentally, the Todd I'm about to speak of here isn't the Todd a lot of you know as an editor here at *Razorcake*. That's Retodd. Back in 1977-78, when my friend Chris Vonovich and I were sharing the same second grade class in elementary school, in strolls this new kid who we pretty much knew was going to be our good friend from the get-go. Todd always had that vibe about him – you could instantly tell he was not only a cool guy, but a *genuinely good* guy. I think another reason we knew that Todd was gonna be tight with us was that we quickly learned that he was just as much a dedicated KISS fan as us. After hanging out with Todd on that first day, we realized how goofy he was, like Chris and me – possessing the same sense of humor and making jokes at whatever cost – not to say he couldn't be the utmost serious when he wanted to be.

His demeanor back then was very, very much the same as it was up to this year. No matter what Todd was going through or dealing with at the time, you could almost guarantee on seeing that smiling face along with his trademark positive and (very much) headstrong attitude glowing wherever he went or whoever he was around. And that characteristic thriving within Todd was a key factor as he battled his complications with leukemia he acquired the last two years, right up to his passing on July 28, 2003 at the age of thirty-two, fighting it all with both fists up the entire time.

Todd, Chris, and I had some very memorable times growing up as kids together. There was the always-fun (and loud) setting up of an impromptu stage at whoever's house we happened to be playing at that particular day, complete with household items slapped together for my drums, and

tennis rackets for Todd and Chris to jump around and pose with. As far as we were concerned, KISS was in the house with the three of us idiots doing our best impressions with our makeshift instruments and mimicking along to whatever KISS record was spinning full blast on the stereo. I'm also sure that Todd's Mom (Dora) and his two brothers (Mark and Steve) remember the time Todd was pretending to be AC/DC's Angus Young with a tennis racket out on their front porch. During his "lead guitar break," Todd ended up taking out the front glass window while he was trying to swat a bumble bee away with his "guitar." Whoops.

Always a big fan of sports, Todd was fortunate enough to be on the same Little League team with Chris almost every year, with Chris on the mound pitching and Todd behind the plate playing catcher. That was fun watching them together out on the field, as well as watching them practice and goading each other in our neighborhoods. Sports usually didn't lead into heated debates with Todd, as long as you showed respect for *anything* related with UCLA and the Los Angeles Dodgers. I always loved pushing his buttons when it came to the subject of the Bruins, asking obviously irritating questions as to why UCLA was doing this or doing that. And he knew what I was up to. It'd usually be something like: "Hey, Todd, what was up with your Bruins last night, man?" Todd, with his hand gestures getting in gear, would start up: "Daaale, don't even start!" And I'd continue pushing those buttons: "Yeah, Todd, but, uh..." And Todd would start getting even more edgy: "Duuude, don't even go there!" Watching Todd react was too much fun – *always* with the animated hand gestures, and whatever topic we'd be poking each other about, it would almost always end in the classic (palm out) "Stop it!" or the frequently used "Zip it!"

Being the passionate, emotional guy he was, I loved the way Todd

asserted himself with his personal beliefs or whatever was on the table of discussion (or argument). I mean, we'd be sitting around, having a pretty serious, in-depth talk that would turn into the subject of *Del Taco*, of all things. But we'd almost always be talking about food on any given day, as I'm sure Todd's wife Jenny can attest to, right Jenny? Todd would then go on his tangent: "Dude, two red burritos, with *extra* cheese, 'cause I wanna taste the cheese in there! Straight up *fat!*" Then I'd pipe up, "Don't forget the mild sauce," and Todd would say what he'd *always* say at the end of any conversation that ended with his overwhelming agreement: "*That's right!*" I always saw that remark as a little piece of Todd's overall passion of life he had inside him. And anyone who had the pleasure of having Todd in their life or simply meeting him could tell he had a truckload of it in that big heart of his.

Sometimes on Saturday morning, Todd and Chris would be on the phone with each other, and it usually ended up being the same, loud political discussion they'd always have. After hanging up, Chris' wife Kara would ask, "Why do you and Todd always get into that same conversation? All you do is end up yelling!" The funny thing was, Todd and Chris were both in complete agreement with each other, just doing it very loudly than most people do. Again, that passionate quality Todd had in his soul – he could bring it out in people, maintaining mutual respect all the time while doing so. As he was with all things in his life, he either loved something or had little to say about it. He'd talk for over an hour with you about something he was really into, yet if it was something that he didn't care either way about, he'd usually say something like, "Yeah, it's all right," and that was it. There was next to no gray area with Todd.

Discussing music was always cool with him because not only was he a big fan, but I liked that I could

turn him on to new bands or past ones that he never got into. But with that, everyone around him got to listen to him sing for the next two weeks or so when something really struck his fancy. I would get a kick every time he would change the lyrics to a song and then I'd start rattling his cage by saying something like, "Todd, that's not how it goes, man." To this he'd reply, "Duude, I'm doing the singing over here," with the imaginary mic in his hand. I'd keep badgering him: "But that's not the words, Todd." Of course, he would start noticing that I was out to push his buttons, as usual. So it would end with Todd looking straight ahead, index finger poised, and snapping back with, "*Listen* – this is the way it's sung now and you're gonna *like it!*" and we'd both start laughing immediately like a couple of morons. I miss that *so* much already.

As far as music and going to gigs, some of the best times I can remember are Todd, Chris, and myself completely cutting loose at the now-gone Bogart's in Long Beach. There was The Adolescents show, the first time the original line-up had played together in *years*, and the place became a tornado of fans as soon as the vocals from "No Way" kicked in. Another time of ruckus was the Big Drill Car show happening there, right before they took off to Europe on their "Batch" tour. Packed to the rafters, the stage became a launch pad for fans leaping out into the audience like sugar-charged flying squirrels. I'm very fortunate to have a video copy of this show, as Todd and Chris were amongst that squadron of flying squirrels you can catch quick glimpses of during the band's set.

His sharing *anything* he had to offer was another one of Todd's shining qualities. I remember how he'd split his last piece of bubble gum with me in grade school (which was funny how'd he run out, because Todd was the known gum connection, always gnawing

on at least a pack or more at one time on any given notice). There'd be times we'd be together eating and if there was one of us in the group not eating anything, there'd be Todd walking up to you with a donut he just tore in half or a cookie he just broke into two pieces. He was always doing that no matter how hungry he was, for as long as I knew him. Always thinking of others, with whatever he had in his possession to share. That was just *Todd*, God bless 'em.

One of Todd's absolute favorite places to be was the beach.

Monterey with his family, Todd was more than happy to be near the ocean and sandy shoreline. I remember one summer, quite a while back, Chris was awarded a pretty hefty work settlement. What happens? Both he and Todd dragged up from their ironwork jobs at the time and proceeded to blow the whole settlement surfing all summer long and living like kings. Chris told me that, now in retrospect, he's glad he was able to do that with Todd. I'm glad, too, because every time Todd talked about the many surfing jaunts he'd

rebar engineering alongside Chris as a union ironworker with the Local 416. Later on, they both became certified for structural work and ended up working their way up to journeymen status with the Local 433. Todd always took pride in that he was both a union ironworker and that he always did his work to the best of his abilities. But he had another goal set in his sights and that was to become a firefighter. The spare time he had was spent with his nose in a book studying and also reading up on whatever he could get his hands on

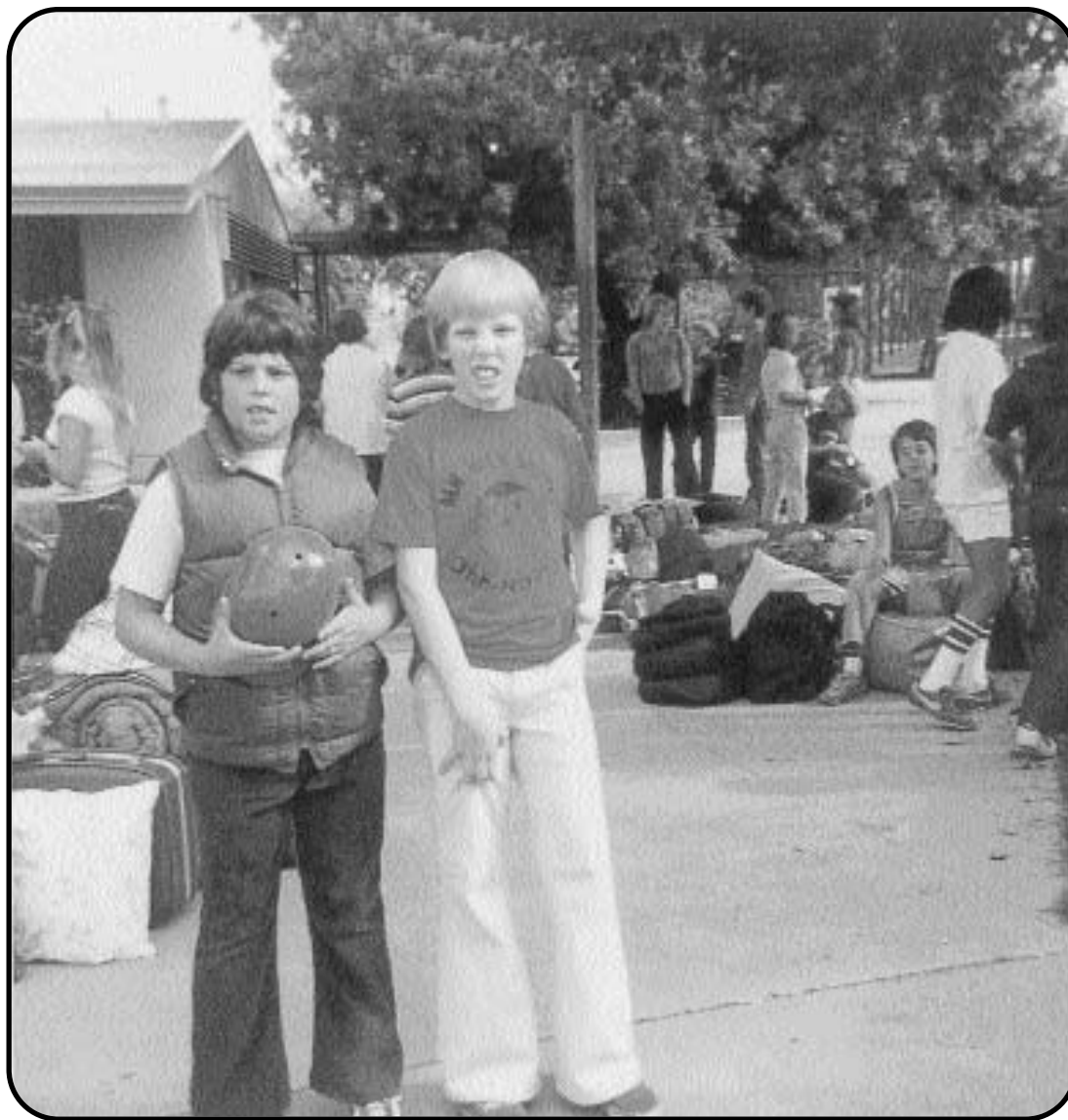
Anthony, Marcus, and Valerie. Todd loved Jenny and his children more than I could ever describe in words. He was *always* looking out for all of them, no matter what his situation. And I know Jenny loved Todd with just as much heart and devotion. You could see it every time they were together. I use to laugh when Todd would get all uppity in his living room sometimes. He'd walk back in to sit down in his recliner, look around, and start talking real loud: "All right, who took the remote control? JEN?" And Jenny would pretend to ignore him while changing the channels, telling him, "You need to zip it." Of course, Todd would start to get miffed, so I would chime in with what Todd would often say when someone started to whine - I'd make the "sad face" and say "Oooh... baby want his remote? Wee-wee-wee-wee!" Not liking the taste of his own medicine, Todd would look over at me with that smirk on his face and say, "Dale, don't even start!" It seems there was always that kind of messing around going on between Todd and me, each of us always ready to be set up for some kind of joke. I loved that. And I miss it, too.

Since the morning I learned of Todd's passing, my heart has been that much emptier and I keep filling it with past memories of him, like things we did and enjoyed together. Things we laughed endlessly about together. And the hours and hours of just sitting and talking with each other. I'm truly going to miss *all* of that with him, and just the thought of that hurts so badly. But knowing Todd, he wouldn't want anyone to be feeling the slightest bit down, especially if he knew it was because of him. Todd was all about good times and the many, many memories of him will live on to prove just that. Anywhere there's laughter, you can be sure he's right there chuckling along. It's actually a real good thing that each of us have our own special memories of Todd to fill our hearts when they are feeling a little empty.

Lord knows I've been going over a whole lot of mine every single day this past week. I'm really going to miss him. I know we all will. You can finally tell your homeboy Bob Marley how much *Uprising* and *Legend* meant to you, Todd... we love you.

I'm Against It
-Designated Dale
 DesignatedDale@aol.com

Designated Dale



Friday, June 12, 1981 Letting ready to leave for Camp - orange at Gardenhill School. Dale = 4th Grade Todd = 10th Grade

Bodyboarding and surfing kept Todd in continuous waves of higher-than-usual spirits on surf trips, from here in Southern California all the way down through Mexico. Whether it was camping on a beach or vacationing up north in

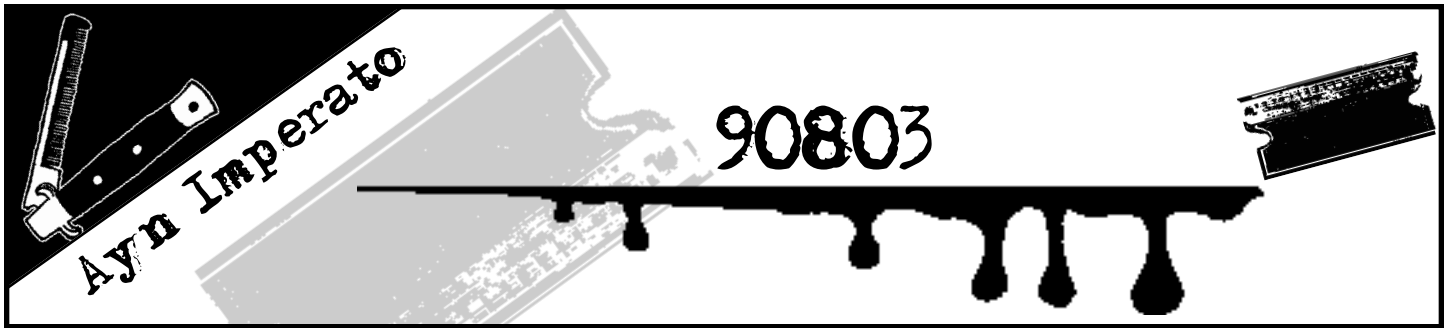
had over the years, he'd always look at me with that big grin of his and say that the summer he and Chris dragged up together was one of the best summers of his life.

Speaking of ironwork, around 1990, Todd started his work in

that would be to his advantage while waiting for his turn to enter the fire academy.

Around that time, Todd met Jenny, who ended up being Todd's wife and mother of his three beautiful (and always entertaining) kids:





The punk stud you meet at the bar at midnight can show up with a mullet-hawk and man-dals at dawn.

LA Girl LA World

It happens to everyone, sometime – the break up. When it feels like a nuclear explosion has been performed on your chest, or your heart is carved into two sections and each half squoosen on an electric juicer. And what better place to go for pure and total heartbreak than LA, when the scene of your life unfolds like a cardboard movie prop that fell over in the distance.

I never thought forever could end, but it did. I thought surely it was longer than five or six years. We never did get married – we didn't need that little piece of paper or those rules or those figures on a cake to symbolize our love. We had made a bigger show of commitment – a shared record collection. I sold my duplicate copies of everything because what was the point of having two of the same 7 inch or CD when you could trade it in for something that neither of you had. That way you could build something bigger and better together.

Separating that record collection before I left was like cutting an onion into a hundred tiny strips – the air pure poison. To lose your lover and your favorite records at the same time is just too much for anyone. It was too much for us. I wonder if I'll ever be capable of sharing records with someone like that again.

Right before I left for LA, a girl in a bar told me a little something that seemed to fit just right and would turn out to have a strange significance. She said, "A relationship is like a jar full of wine. You think you find a lid with just the right fit. I mean it seems to be so tight and perfect, even when you shake it around a bit. Then you put it in your backpack and when it gets turned upside down – liquid everywhere."

Being single after a long stretch of time in couple-town is like landing in a foreign country – all at once disorienting and strange, yet interesting, liberating and



even comical. Suddenly your jar is wide open and free.

I caught a glimpse of a bar where singles go to mate. Personally, I'd rather strap myself to a side of vibrating beef than pick up some stranger in some bar. Not that it's not totally hot to have wild, random sex – but that those experiences can and do come back to haunt you. Seriously. The punk stud you meet at the bar at midnight can show up with a mullet-hawk and man-dals at dawn, possibly pounding on your door in front of the whole neighborhood. Then you find out later that he plays in some hideous emo band, and every time you see him around you forever have to say to yourself: I slept with that man.

Or that seemingly well-adjusted rock and roll boy you hooked up with starts to call you obsessively every hour for days after the encounter, tacking an insanity reference to his name when he leaves it on your voice mail for the tenth time like, "Psycho Louie" or

"Crazy Rick." It was the sixth tequila shot that caused you to miss the wildly waving red flags, like the "I heart bitches" patch on his jacket or when he mentioned he was in anger management classes. Thanks, but I'll take my figurative side of shimmering beef.

To drink too much at any bar might be to subject yourself to The Bottom Feeder – the guy who trolls the bar at the end of a show near closing time while the club employees are sweeping the floor, trying for that last ditch hook up. Mr. Feeder preys upon drunk rock and roll girls and the judgment impaired – the girl who slammed a few Jack and cokes, just broke up with her boyfriend and is stumbling to the door, might hand a wayward phone number to this Bottom Feeding chap. He knows his greatest chances lie in alcohol consumption mixed with the tragedies of love and life.

I can't say it was easy to move to SoCal, but I'm still glad I did. I took a ton of planning, packing,

moving boxes, renting a trailer, trying to keep my cat alive in the crazy heat of the car while I stepped out for a minute to fuel up or get some water. The whole event was fraught with tiny annoyances. The first thing that happened in my first week of being single was that I couldn't open this jar of salsa I bought. It doesn't sound like a big deal, but it was the start of a chain of foiled events. I tried every trick: banging the side, running hot water on the seal, tapping the bottom – nothing. That freaking lid wouldn't budge. I ate my chips dry. Why didn't I just buy another or ask a neighbor to help? It was just the "principalities" of it. To buy another jar would be to give up. I kept trying to open it every day until my wrist hurt and I couldn't do it anymore. I just put it back in the cupboard.

Everything else in life seemed to mirror that unopened jar, sitting stubbornly on the shelf. Nearly everything broke after my relationship did – my computer crashed, then my stereo, TV, mirror and phone all broke within the first three weeks. The front door lock got stuck, cat got sick and the last paycheck from my job in San Francisco bounced, leaving me with a lot less money than I was counting on.

It was all about that unopened jar. Sometimes, it seems, the lid is so damn tight that you can't move forward. It was like trying to get a job in this town. Every day I'd call, email or fax something or other, yet the phone stayed silent. It seemed I was over- or underqualified for every last job in town. So after working at it all day, I took my low rider beach cruiser and rode it along the ocean to try to make sense of everything and ride out life's daily frustrations. I seriously wondered if I was going to make it at all.

Living by the beach is such a drastic change from living in the middle of the city, so cool and relaxing for a change. Riding my bike, I can pump out all that old city angst with every pedal and leave everything behind with each mile

traveled. I guess it's sort of like surfing in a way, in that there's a rhythm to it that matches the ocean. If I were any good at surfing I'd do that instead. However, I've had some unpleasant encounters with nasty waves in the past, involving lost bathing suits and truckloads of sand in not very fun places. For people like me, it's best to just ride on land.

Despite all the difficult, daily fights to get here, it's cool to live in a new town. People in Long Beach are eerily friendly, and I was lucky enough to find this cool place right across the street from the ocean. One strange thing I noticed: there are an unusual number of giant, beige, paper maché donuts looming along the city streets down here. It's like some secret, sugary cult we don't know about. Somewhere down beneath the LA sewer is the Donut Lord, residing over all that is fat-fried dough and glazed, breakfast foods. I've decided when you see one of these round, holed icons – it's best to just keep driving.

And then there are the stars. I noticed them early one morning as I walked home after a long night out. I can just look up and there they are. Maybe most people who read this won't understand what

the big deal is – but to a city girl, it's a novelty. I think the last time I saw stars in San Francisco was in the planetarium. There's so much fog, so many tall buildings and so many lights on at night, you can't see them. You forget they're there. The last few years before I moved, I just looked straight ahead and lived day by day. During that time, a friend sent me a quote by old school writer Oscar Wilde: "We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars." Now I think I know what he meant.

By the end of the month, I miraculously got two job offers in one day. I finally opened the jar – the lid released with a satisfying pop – and I had my chips with beautiful sweet hot salsa. Hasta la vista to frustration, waiting and pain. Suddenly everything seemed possible. It felt okay and even free to be on my own – I didn't need to rush out and find the "I heart bitches" guy, who would be a stand-in for something real. I didn't need that ill-fitting lid to a jar either. I had some new friends, my low rider beach cruiser and, first thing in the morning, the ocean to myself, slowly washing away the heartbreak. Despite that stubborn little jar, it's gonna be all right.

–Ayn Imperato





IT NEVER FAILS TO EXCITE ME WHEN I FIND OUT THAT, LIKE ME, SOMEONE ELSE COLLECTS SOMETHING – THE MORE OUTRAGEOUS AND DIFFERENT, THE BETTER.

“Here’s how Felizon’s mind works: Dolls, dolls, dolls. Dolls, dolls, dolls.” –her husband

When Todd, Sean, and I were in the initial stages of planning the publication of *Punch and Pie*, we all agreed that we’d ask Dan Monick if he’d be willing to contribute some of his photography. Dan is an incredibly talented photographer, and you’ve probably already seen his work on the cover of *MRR* or *Razorcake* or the latest Dillinger Four album. He very kindly agreed to let us pick out photos from his archives, and so, a couple of weeks before we sent *Punch and Pie* to the printer, Sean and I went over to Dan’s house to look at what he had.

The minute I stepped into the living room, I instantly recognized a fellow collector. What caught my eye was all the different forms of Jesus Christ that Dan collected. There was even the Jesus Christ Action Figure, complete with poseable arms and gliding rollers on the bottom of his feet to simulate walking on water. I had the same plastic figure at home; I liked to pose my Blythe dolls around it as if Jesus Christ was surrounded by a harem.

Don’t get me wrong; Dan is not a religious fanatic. I’m pretty sure he is more interested in Jesus Christ as a symbol and what he represents, but I didn’t want to probe Dan’s reasons for collecting. After all, we were there to look at pictures for *Punch and Pie* and to choose a specific photo for the book cover. So I just enjoyed looking at the stuff displayed on the walls and shelves, happy to know that I’d discovered another person who collected items based on a specific theme.

It never fails to excite me when I find out that, like me, someone else collects something – the more outrageous and different, the better. It’s an instant bond. And you earn a million brownie points and my loyalty forever if you come over to my house and ooh and aah at my own collections. Several months ago, the Knockout Pills were on tour and played in Los Angeles. After the show, they were going to come over and spend the night in our home. As they were unloading their van and right before Sean brought them upstairs, I was madly scrambling through the apartment, trying to make sure that I hadn’t left any incriminating pieces of uncool, un-punk, girly artifacts lying around. Of course, I couldn’t hide everything, and the Holly Hobbie Sewing Machine along with the Barbie Bake With Me Oven were right there on the shelf in plain view. That night, as we were all hanging out and chatting, Travis noticed the easy bake oven and remarked, “Hey, I

remember those! Don’t they work with a light-bulb?” We got into a conversation about toys from our childhood. Jason Willis got into it, too, telling me about toys he collected and other people he’d stayed with on tour who had cool collections. It was very thrilling to talk to people who understood the fun of collecting and who didn’t treat me like I was retarded for being thirty years old and still having toys in my home with no child as an excuse. By the next morning, these guys were my new best friends. They were welcome to come stay in my house any time, even if I had to give up my own bed for them.

After the Knockout Pills finished their tour and returned to Tucson, Jason kept in touch with Sean and one day sent him a link to a website that featured cool old toys from the sixties and seventies. His email read something like this: “Here’s something I thought Felizon might be interested in. And after having been to your home and seeing her collections, I know you can’t thank me enough. You’re welcome.”

I wrote back to Jason and sent him a picture of my newest growing collection: the Blythe dolls.

Forget everything else that I’d collected in the past; those were just infatuations. Yes, I’m still very fond of the Sea Wees and the Friends of the Feather and the Power Puff Girls and the witch dolls and all, but the Blythes... Well, this is real love. The changing eye colors, the different expressions on their faces when you look at them from different angles – there’s soul and allure to these little girls that make Barbie and the Bratz seem like, well, inanimate plastic things.

Right now, I only collect the reproduction Blythes made by Takara in Japan. What with the prices of the original 1972 Kenner Blythe dolls skyrocketing on eBay and topping the value of my own ’91 Honda, there’s really no way that I can acquire a Kenner any time soon. Hell, what with me being unemployed this summer and barely having enough in savings to cover my existing bills, I shouldn’t even be thinking about purchasing any of Takara’s upcoming releases. But, in much the same way that Sean looks forward to the next time Tiltwheel puts out an album because he *knows* it’s going to be good, I know (despite my financial limitations) that I want the next Takara Blythe doll. With that basic head mold and the four changing eyes, you can’t go wrong.

Here is where support from a fellow collector becomes crucial and helpful to the collecting lifestyle. My friend Pat (who I have successful-

ly converted into a Blythe addict and who understands the call of the Sirens) sympathized with my plight. After I told her that I was broke and longing for more Blythes, Pat came to the rescue. She came up with a plan for both of us to earn pocket money for dolls and possibly obtain that elusive vintage Kenner. The plan involved eBay and thrifting: we would sell Pat’s childhood toys on the internet and scour all antique malls and thrift stores in the Tri-City area. If there was a 1972 Kenner Blythe to be found in all of Southern California, it could possibly be hidden under a heap of dusty stuffed animals in a broken-down baby crib tucked away in the bowels of a San Bernardino thrift store. You just had to go look for it.

When Pat was a little girl, she amassed a fairly large doll collection, including fashion dolls and baby dolls, international dolls and regional dolls. Doll clothes, doll shoes, doll furniture, and doll accessories. Vintage Barbie and Midge, Ginny, Jill, Baby Dear, and Terri Lee; brand names like Mattel, Vogue, and Madame Alexander. Even after she’d outgrown them, Pat didn’t part with her collection. Instead, she carefully packed them away and placed the boxes in storage. Wrapped in layers of tissue paper, the dolls waited a few decades before finally being aired out, sold on eBay these past few weeks, and shipped off to other homes where their new owners waited excitedly, having paid a hundred (or more) dollars for some of them.

So far, the highest bid we’ve received for a doll has been a hundred and thirty-five dollars. The doll was made of plastic, probably stood about six inches tall and, though cute, hardly looked like a valuable antique. But obviously somebody wanted it badly enough to fork over the same amount of money that it took to replace the two bald back tires on my Honda.

Currently, I’ve sold three dolls for a hundred bucks apiece, some more in the hundred-twenty range, and a few others at sixty, eighty, ninety dollars each. And that’s just for the dolls alone. It’s pretty amusing to see what some people will pay for individual pieces of doll clothing. This past week, I listed a pink frilly slip tagged “Shirley Temple by Ideal.” I remember when Pat handed it over to me to sell; she did it in an offhand manner and said, “Here, you could try selling this old doll slip. I never had a Shirley Temple doll, so I must have traded a dress or something for it.” I started the bidding at three dollars. The winning bidder paid twenty-three.

It’s amazing when you think about how physically small some of this stuff is, and how

they're worth huge amounts to some people. But maybe it's not that much different when you think about, say, what a serious Ramones memorabilia collector will shell out for an authentic receipt for Johnny Ramone's first guitar (or how high an unnamed *Razorcake* contributor was willing to bid for it). Not so long ago, a doll collector in Pennsylvania sent me seventy-three dollars for a lot of small doll shoes, socks, and underwear.

Speaking of underwear: Another time, I ran an auction for a Ginny doll and several pieces of clothing. The dresses and underwear in that lot didn't all belong to the doll. One of the pieces was a pair of small bloomer-style undershorts that had been randomly thrown into the box in which the doll had been stored. Pat fished it out, looked at it quizzically, and said, "What should I do with this?" I took it from her, gave it the once-over, and said, "Let's add it to this pile with the doll." The bloomers sort of matched the doll's sweet, old-fashioned style. Anyway, I figured that having the additional clothes would ensure that someone would want to win the auction. I guessed wrong. The bidding stagnated at around fifty dollars, and no one met the reserve price. The next day, after the auction ended, I received an email from one of the bidders. She wrote that she bid on the auction only because she was interested in the bloomer underpants, the ones with the embroidered stars. She said she already owned the matching undershirt; she'd been trying to find the underpants to match. It wasn't a Ginny doll item anyway, and would I be willing to sell it to her outside of eBay for fifteen dollars?

Her check arrived within a week, along with a self-addressed stamped envelope and a small plastic baggie in which she wanted the doll panties to be sealed and protected. It was the easiest tax-free fifteen bucks that I'd earned this summer.

While some people might not understand the collector mentality (including the need to reunite a star-embroidered doll undershirt with its original mate), I identify with the compulsion all too well. For some toy and doll collectors, the need to collect comes from a desire to relive the fond memories of their youth. For others (myself included), a lot of it has to do with making up for *not* having fond memories of their youth.

I remember being eight years old and wanting desperately to own a Sea Wee mermaid mommy and baby. I'd seen the commercials that featured a little girl in the bathtub, swirling a lily pad sponge in the water and giving little Sea Wees rides, and I wanted that too, even though in our traditional (old-fashioned and patriarchal) Filipino household, soaking in dirty bathwater and playing in the tub was unheard of. Then, that summer, my mother's nephew, a doctor, came to visit, and one day he took us shopping. My little brother and I were generously told to pick whatever toy we wanted, and there were the Sea Wees! But did I get them? Noooooo-ooooooo. Because of the way I'd been raised, because I'd cowered in submission for so many things I'd done that I'd been told were stupid and worthless and deserved a beating – because I had no self-esteem whatsoever, it had become ingrained in me at that point in my life that to pick the toy I really wanted would be rude, greedy, and disrespectful. I

ended up pointing to some small doll that I was sure would cost very little, my cousin bought it for me, and I lived to regret that decision until I grew up to become a well-adjusted adult and discovered eBay. Now I own the original Sea Wees Mommy and Baby sets (all four hair colors), the Fancy Sea Wees and Babies, the TropiGals and Babies (complete with all four hula skirts!), the IcyGals and Babies (AND merpets!), and the Beauty Shell Carrying Case. But I don't own any of the rare Bubble Ballet Sea Wees. Nah, I'm not getting sucked into collecting those.

I'm not that obsessive.

Okay, I admit: in much the same way that a fervent record collector meticulously arranges his albums according to category or alphabetical order, I sort my Blythe doll clothes, shoes, handbags, and hair accessories in separate plastic bins. It is that same need for order and classification that compels me to list my eBay auctions according to theme. The first week that I started selling Pat's stuff online, I stuck to vintage Barbie items: Ponytail Barbie (final price: \$76), Bubblecut Midge (final price: \$122), and poor old Ken (final price: zero).

In the week that followed, my theme was vintage Ginny. After that, it was the Flagg dolls. Then I tried to mix things up a bit by throwing in some nearly vintage non-doll items, like a couple of clutch purses from the eighties, designed to look like rolled-up fashion magazines. Several years ago, Pat picked them up for a dollar in a thrift store. Last year, Sarah Jessica Parker revitalized the trend when her character on *Sex and the City* toted a magazine purse in one of the episodes. Thanks partly to SJP, Pat and I profited seventy-four dollars from a couple of fifty-cent bags.

After you list an auction, sitting back and watching it take off can be pretty fun, especially when you check the final bid history and discover that two people were duking it out to the bitter end. But you can never tell how much a doll's final price will be. Sometimes, you'll think that a doll is a sure-fire winner (ahem, like a vintage flocked-hair Ken – the *original* model, complete with the hard-to-find Campus Corduroy outfit), and he'll go for a week with not even one person placing a bid or showing the slightest interest. Other times, a doll with a hundred-dollar reserve will sit for days with people half-heartedly bidding five, ten, twenty



dollars (*as if* the reserve would be that low), and just when you're cursing the bastards for failing you, someone comes in at three seconds before the auction's close and startles you with a winning bid, courtesy of Sniper.com. Like Pat says, it's about as predictable as the horse races: you can never count on who's going to win, because there's always the possibility of the unexpected horse racing up last-minute to beat everyone at the finish line.

Having been on the buying end of eBay transactions myself, I'm familiar with that

the exact date and time the listing closes.

Obsessive? Compulsive? Guilty on both counts. To those who don't understand the collector's mentality, I'm sure I seem a bit touched in the head. In need of help, even. But if you have ever been at a flea market or record store and picked up a vinyl recording of an album that you knew you already had on CD but still had to purchase because vinyl is so much cooler, or if you own more than one pressing of a particular seven-inch, like, oh, say, Minor Threat, and you make people wash their hands

Pat and I have been selling her vintage dolls, toys, and random stuff on eBay, we've made a profit of over twelve hundred dollars. Split two ways, it's not a bad haul. Considering that we haven't yet uncovered a 1972 Kenner Blythe in any of our thrift store expeditions, the six hundred bucks that I've earned could get me closer to The Dream. Provided, of course, that I haven't already spent it on more of the Takara Blythe reproductions.

-Felizon

BUT IF YOU HAVE EVER BEEN AT A FLEA MARKET OR RECORD STORE AND PICKED UP A VINYL RECORDING OF AN ALBUM THAT YOU KNEW YOU ALREADY HAD ON CD BUT STILL HAD TO PURCHASE BECAUSE VINYL IS SO MUCH COOLER... THEN YOU HAVE TO ADMIT THAT YOU KNOW WHERE I'M COMING FROM.

stealth approach of waiting until the last minute to bid on an item. There's nothing more satisfying than seeing the words appear on the screen: "Congratulations! You've won!" Perhaps it's that competitive edge in me, but when I really, really want something, then I really, really have to have it, or my collection won't be complete. Once I'm convinced that this is the case, I will do everything in my power to attain the object. I've even been guilty of setting my alarm and waking up at an ungodly hour in the morning just so I could log on and snipe a particular early-release Takara Blythe that I absolutely *had* to have. And, to ensure that I don't forget about an auction I want to bid on, I keep a notebook in which I record every doll that I want to snipe, complete with title, brief description, and

before handling it, then you have to admit that you know where I'm coming from.

Now that I've switched to selling stuff on eBay instead of buying stuff on eBay, I have even more appreciation for collectors who are willing to pay heaps of money for the most obscure things, like a pair of baby doll shoes or a miniature tie for Ken. Their last-minute sniping, their multiple bids, their 300+ feedback that reveals their spending history all help confirm that I'm not the only one who believes in the importance of acquiring *stuff*. And, not only do they share and validate my feelings about collecting, their compulsion to complete their collections allows me to fund additions for my own family of Blythes. In the seven weeks that

NOTES:

A special dolly thank you to Abby in Poland, for her really cool letter and the page she sent me (taken from a Polish fashion magazine) that featured pictures of *Blythes in designer dresses!!!* Blythes in Poland! Abby, I don't know how difficult it is to obtain the dolls there, but if you ever happen to head out this way, come over and play with me and the Blythes! Oh, and the Rhythm Chicken is welcome, too. He and Sean can talk punk rock and stuff.

Send email to felizonvidad@hotmail.com, and I will send you pictures of my collections!





I am writing this because I have been accused of sexual assault.

I am writing this because I have been accused of sexual assault. Not legally, but via a zine called *Baby, I'm a Manarchist!* (a play off of the song, "Baby, I'm an Anarchist!" popularized by Against Me!) and related rumors. The short story is that sexual assault has two main schools of definition. To some, any crossing of any physical boundary is assault. This is a difficult definition, however, because the phrase "sexual assault" does not invoke the idea of boundary violation; it invokes the idea of its more common definition: of violence, malice, and cruelty. In the middle is a huge gray area that is important to discuss – all the more so because of how rarely it is discussed.

One of the "demands" that was made of me in this zine was to make a public statement of what exactly I did. Of three women who have publicly accused me of wrongdoing, one (who we both agree would be best left unnamed) has worked with me to draft a statement (in fact, the delay of submitting this column results from her request that I allow her time to digest this.) Another, Tali, (I use her name because she names herself in the zine) at one point Instant Messaged me her own version of the story, and I agreed with it and asked her to send me an email of that conversation. Instead, she told me to use my own words. A third, Laura (who also uses her name in the zine) has not responded to any contact on my behalf, so clearly I cannot get approval of anything I say, even though she demanded that I get it.

Here is what I did:

Tali came over my house to interview me for a project she was working on. It was on gender, actually. We talked for awhile, and broke off the interview to watch *The Simpsons*. I noticed that she recurrently sat next to me. I would get up, sit on the couch, and she would move a few inches so we would touch. Eventually, we wound up in my bedroom and I was giving her a backrub. I was aware

of her having a history of sexual assault, so I was, in my mind, sensitive of her boundaries. Early on, she had stated that breast contact was off limits. I asked if I could touch her in various ways, and would ask different things about what was okay. After massaging her back and shoulders, I was rubbing her around the ribs and belly area, and her shirt was partially pulled up. I had been asking directly if I could do various actions, but, more for want to not repeat the same phrase again and again said, "I am going to do something," and pulled her shirt up and kissed her breast. My idea was that this statement was a form of request. Her later discussion was that since it was a statement, there was an implied "like it or not" that she heard between the lines.

In any case, she told me to stop. I stopped. She clearly was upset, but not talkative or very demonstrative in any way. I was unaware at the moment that she was feeling trauma from a past attack that had just been triggered in her memory. She asked me to cuddle with her, and I did. After a while, I walked her to the train. Days later, she emailed me and told me how upset she was. We had sporadic contact since then online. In the last week of March, we talked online when she asked me to tell her my side of the story. She told me hers. I understood how the same actions could mean different things to different people. I told her how I better understood her "side" and told her I was sorry, both for my actions and because what I did was a betrayal of trust. She did not say she accepted the apology, but she did say "thanks." Days later, on March 29, she showed up at Beantown Zinetown, the zine fair I organized, with the zine *Baby, I'm a Manarchist*.

Around Christmastime, Laura, who I had a sexual history with, came over to my house to go sledding. We went sledding, had fun, had a beer or two, and were about to sleep. I asked if she wanted to sleep in my bed or the extra bed created by a recent room vacancy in my apartment. She said she wanted

to share my bed and non-sexually cuddle. The conversation we had before sleep involved her telling me she wished she had a penny, so she could give it for my thoughts. I told her that the way she was rubbing my arm wasn't entirely NOT sexual. We both had open, long distance relationships, and in her words, she "didn't think it was a good idea" for us to do anything sexual. While "Didn't think it was a good idea" is not a "yes," it isn't a "no" either. Say it aloud a few ways, and you will note it can convey different meanings. In any case, we did go to sleep. I woke up the next morning with an attractive woman in my bed, and I will say I was a bit touchy-feely. I also kissed her on her belly – which is a serious "not officially sexual, but who am I kidding" act. We had breakfast, hung out and talked for a while, and she left. Days later we chatted online and when I asked if she wanted to return some time, she mentioned she wasn't all that comfortable staying at my house again, because of what happened. I said that was fair. She said that she wanted to stay with friends. She mentioned that, during the night, I had gotten my hand down the front of her pants. Her last words to me for a while was that she was upset, but wanted to stay friends. I attempted to contact her via Instant Messenger, but she didn't want to talk. The last time I saw her was also the day of Beantown Zinetown, where she joined Tali in distributing the zine. Neither wanted to communicate directly with me.

A few days before the actual zine fair, I heard, second hand, that the Lucy Parsons Center – a radical bookstore that some related events would be at – sent out emails that they were canceling one event and banning me from another because I was accused of sexual assault. I was also called racist and transphobic. Racism and transphobia are things I am very opposed to, and these accusations had no backup or evidence – not even circumstantial evidence. (Ironically, I was accused of this four days before a transgen-

dered zine, done by two transpeople, published an article discussing how pro-trans I was for a straight boy.) Oddly, this email went out to many people and groups long before anyone sent me a copy.

At the actual zine event, people who refused to engage me in dialogue or even moderated discussion, handed out copies of the zine. While I cannot say who specifically did this, a few who were acting "in support of survivors" asked why some women weren't taking their sides, and the answer was that it seemed less like a statement about a cause and more a personal attack on me. The reaction was that they "didn't understand what it was like to be assaulted." In fact, some of those who questioned my accusers had been violently raped in the past, and wound up incredibly upset at the exchange and had to leave: survivors were traumatized in the name of supporting survivors.

The zine *Baby, I'm a Manarchist!* itself includes snippets from online conversations between me and these women (which I assumed were private conversations), many of these being individual or small clusters of lines from longer conversations without context. It also included stories from other people who had no connection with me (although the intro of the zine is clear about me being the subject) as well as the Antioch College Sexual Offense Prevention Policy. Oddly, the Antioch definition of sexual assault is "non-consensual sexual act including, but not limited to vaginal penetration, anal penetration and oral sex. Penetration, however slight, includes the insertion of objects or body parts." "Non-consensual sexual touching" is called Sexual Imposition. Yet, in the zine, Laura refers to my actions as sexual assault and rape. There are also repeated uses of the phrase "Rich has proved..." despite no actual presentation of the proof being reference.

Also in the zine was a list of demands made to me. These were not the result of any liaison or

mediator, nor did they seem to suggest any precedent or informed logic for them. They certainly had no “In order for us to forgive you, you must...” or “Unless you do these, we will...” statements. They were merely written and handed to me, and many others. A brief synopsis of them includes a demand to cancel a tour (which was in April, and was more of a trip than a tour); that I publicly admit what I did; that I disclose my “sexual misconduct” to roommates, lovers, activist groups I work with – as well as anywhere I perform or sell my zines; to stop touching “wymyn” (altogether); to seek therapy; to take anti-oppression training; to educate other men about this; and to take action to “compensate” those I harmed.

After the zine was distributed, a close friend, who I had a sexual history with, terminated our friendship after hearing about all this. Apparently, she had often felt pressured by me to have sex, and so did it more to shut me up, or because she felt guilty, or feared losing me as a friend, or because I wore her down with nagging – so she often was having sex she didn’t really want to have. She said, more or less, that she didn’t really want to bring this up with me until after reading the other women’s complaints about me. She brought up points of the relationship that I didn’t think I exploited so much as should have been more respectful and considerate of and simply was not – I was older, more stable in home and career, etc. I wasn’t decidedly mean. I really had not thought of a lot of stuff I should have. I was very literally selfish and ignorant.

One example was that growing up, her father had a history of violence during car trips. I knew this, that she was easily traumatized by yelling in a car. I still would yell at her during car trips. I knew something I did would have deep effects on her, and while I didn’t do this specifically TO hurt her, I was not even considering being sensitive to deep emotions I knew she felt. She used the word “rape” to describe how she felt some of my actions were “coercive” – not to describe any specific event, but to describe the tone of the relationship. This crushed me. The fact that my actions could even be perceived as such by the woman involved – that someone I loved and admired and respected had felt THAT hurt by me, was emotionally crippling.

As I got in my car to drive cross-country to Portland, I found

that the indymedia sites of the cities I was stopping at had warnings about the arrival of “admitted sexual assaulter, Rich Mackin” courtesy of the same people who did *Baby, I’m a Manarchist!* They quoted the zine as if it was another source.

The results of this led to, among other things, a sizable

Portland Zine Symposium in early August. However, there were plenty of copies of *Manarchist* as well as stickers and fliers speaking out against me. Many of these called for “dialogue,” “communication,” and “accountability.” Yet none of them seemed interested in actually creating dialogue, simply present-

who should have noted my power and privilege and thus been more mindful, aware and respectful? Yes. Do I clearly have some personal issues around sex, women, boundaries, and awareness of other’s feelings? Yes, and I need to work on this all. And I AM working on this all, and by all means, keep me in check, keep me accountable. But to label me a danger, a sexual predator, a serial rapist? Well, to co-opt a bumper sticker about post 911 bombings, “Justice, Not Vengeance.” Like any person, I need to take full and total responsibility for what I have done, but I can only take responsibility for what I personally have done, and what I specifically have done, not for what abstracts people assume I have done.

An aside I think is important...

A word about holding people accountable... a few friends of mine have reacted to all this by mentioning that they have noticed that I do seem a bit overly sexual, or numb to boundaries, or something similar. The feedback, even by some people who know the accusers, is that I am harmless, but irritating. While only I am in charge of my behaviors, I want to say that if you ever find yourself in this sort of friend role, PLEASE speak up. You don’t have to call your friend a sexist asshole, just point out specifics as you see them. If a friend annoys people, and it doesn’t seem to be a decided action, consider that they might benefit from being called on their shit. Part of being friends is helping someone grow. Sometimes the best thing you can do for someone is give them a wake up call, no matter how little they want it.

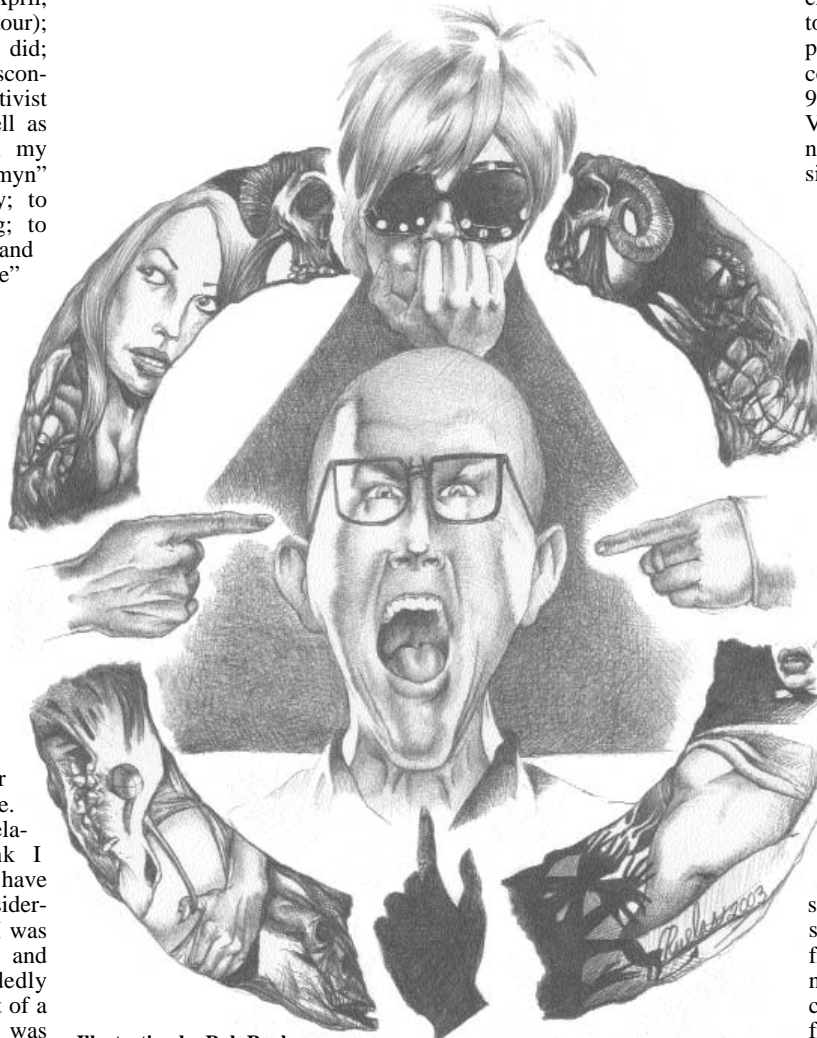


Illustration by Rob Ruelas

“Google search” list of sites that said “admitted sexual predator Rich Mackin” which contained links to sites filled with third parties misinterpreting the whole event in any number of ways.

In early July, the Portland anarchist newspaper *Little Beirut* republished the list of demands from *Baby, I’m a Manarchist!* These included points asking me to take ownership of my actions and telling me to “stop touching wymyn.” Obviously, I am acting upon some demands with more gusto than others, but it’s interesting that a three-month-old list of things to do was recently reprinted without asking the guy who it is about if he is doing any of the things on that list.

I was asked/ demanded by numerous people to not attend the

ing one side without contact information. It was clear the mood wasn’t to hold me accountable, but to humiliate and discredit me.

Let me speak candidly. I messed up. I have done some crappy things here. I admit it, and I am sorry for the bad that I have done. BUT I am only sorry for the bad THAT I HAVE DONE. Certain definitions of assault might apply to my actions, and the term “survive” has a definition that means “to continue despite.” When someone refers to “surviving assault,” the images conjured up do not involve kissing a breast and stopping when being told to stop.

Was it wrong for me to do what I did? Yes. Were there a number of choices I could have made to avoid the situation? Yes. In these situations, was I consistently the one

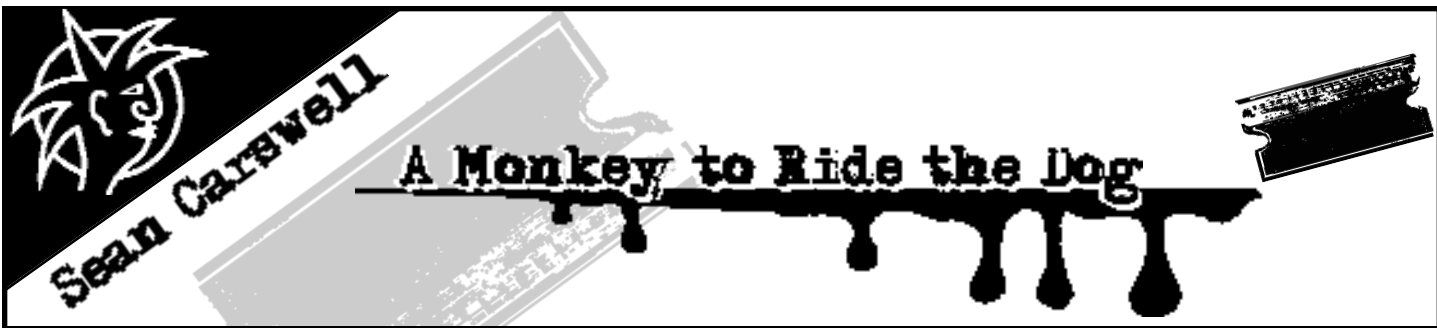
For a longer, more rantier version of this, you can check out www.richmackin.org/Projects/ABC/ABC.html

For more information on sexual assault and what men can do to make themselves more aware, check out. www.thesafetynet.org www.mencanstoprape.org www.menagainstssexualviolence.org

And to see some of the lessons I learned as a result of all of this, check out next issue’s column.

–Rich Mackin

Rich Mackin



But, if you're going to ask Todd, Felizon, and me to stop publication on a book that has already been printed, the least you could do is point to the spot on the doll where the bad man touched you.

How to Avoid Getting Blacklisted by a Bunch of Cowards

Part 1: Run Screaming from Message Boards

Thursday

Todd and I drove I-5 North to the Portland Zine Symposium, even though we both had this vague sense that it was going to be a shit storm. I dreaded the event with every mile we traveled. I know it sounds silly to dread an event full of kids who put out zines. It's hard to imagine a less threatening crowd. But there were extenuating circumstances, which basically amounted to this: a few months ago, two women accused Rich Mackin of sexual assault. Ordinarily, this wouldn't affect Todd or me personally, but, through our magazine, *Razorcake*, and through *Razorcake's* book-publishing arm, Gorsky Press, we publish columns and books by Rich Mackin. In fact, two months before the allegations, we had agreed to publish a second book of Rich's letters to corporations. Now, obviously, if we believed Rich Mackin were a sexual assaulter, we would be very hesitant to publish him. I was just about to start working on the layout of Rich's new book when these allegations came about, so I looked into them. They weren't very broadly publicized unless you spend a lot of time on anarchist or indymedia message boards, which I don't. But I followed all of the message board conversations very closely. I read everything I could about the issue. The women themselves had posted a letter explaining their allegations on the Pittsburgh Independent Media Center message board. Of course, I read that, and the subsequent seven pages of debate regarding the letter. I even called Rich and asked him what happened. Rich told me basically the same story that he wrote for his column in this issue. I talked things over with my wife, Felizon, who had read the letter and a bunch of the posts, and who is also a partner in Gorsky Press. I talked it over with Todd, who'd followed everything as closely as I did and who had asked Rich about the allegations, too. When we had all the information that was available to us, we reckoned that, based on what we knew, Rich had not committed sexual assault. The allegations were generally unsubstantiated. No charges had been filed. No hard evidence had surfaced for us to convict Rich. There was really very little to this case beyond a bunch of anarchist kids writing to message boards and calling for Rich's castration. Even they did a very poor job of explaining what Rich did to deserve it. So we had a tough decision to make: should we go ahead and publish Rich's **Razorcake** 18 book, or should we cave in to a

bunch of baseless accusations that flooded obscure message boards? Actually, it wasn't that tough of a decision. We went ahead and published the book.

After all the books were printed, but prior to our trip to Portland, the allegations of sexual assault started to stir up controversy again. Todd and I saw little signs of this. The most obvious sign came from Joe Beil – the guy who wrote the Martin Luther King assassination article in *Razorcake* #14. Joe was also one of the organizers of the Portland Zine Symposium, and, as far as I know, one of Rich's friends. Prior to the event, he emailed me and asked me not to release Rich's book at PZS. He said that he'd been getting a lot of flack about the possibility of Rich attending the zine fair, and that he wanted to avoid controversy.

I'm not one to shy away from controversy, so I went ahead and tried to schedule a reading for Rich, anyway.

It was a weird situation. Everyone I called seemed to be friendly and interested in having Todd and me do a reading, but when I mentioned Rich's name, the conversation quickly turned cold. The only exception to this came from Kevin at Powell's Bookstore. He was really cool, but he already had a reading booked for that night. Other than my difficulty in scheduling a reading, which is a pretty difficult thing to do even if you're not blacklisted, Todd and I had no idea how much flack we would get by going to PZS, or how deep the anti-Rich sentiment ran.

Part 2: Learn to Love Your Banishment

After eighteen hours on the road, we sat in Rich's apartment, downing a twelve-pack of Hamm's. Rich told us, "I'm not going to the zine fair. A bunch of people have asked me not to." Rich paused and said, "Plus, there's this." He handed us a copy of a newsletter called *Little Beirut*. The newsletter had printed a sidebar calling Rich a known sexual predator and they had a list of demands that he must meet. The newsletter gave no information about Rich or the allegations. They simply printed the list of demands. There was also no indication that, if Rich met those demands, he would be rewarded or even spared in any way. Rich told us that it came from the zine, *Baby, I'm a Manarchist*, which is the zine where the original allegations were made. "I just thought it would be a lot easier for everyone if I didn't go," Rich said.

Todd and I, of course, argued. We didn't see a reason to adhere to unreasonable demands made by anonymous reactionaries. (Not that all of the demands were unreasonable. Some of them were actually good ideas, and Rich was

adhering to those. But there were also some demands that were just ridiculous. For instance, there was the one that banned Rich from doing things like hugging his mother.) We also pointed out that there was nothing in the demands that explicitly said that Rich shouldn't attend PZS. Besides, we'd just traveled a thousand miles to support Rich's right to continue to write and publish. Surely, if we were standing up for him, he should stand up with us.

At this point, Shawn Granton walked in. Shawn was Rich's roommate and he used to do a comic for *Razorcake*.

We discussed the situation with Shawn, and, since he, too, was one of the PZS organizers, I asked him, "Can we just bring everything out in the open? Can we have a classroom at the zine fair where anyone who's interested can come and talk to Rich and say whatever they want and hopefully get enough information to decide for themselves whether or not Rich is really a sexual assaulter?"

Shawn shook his head. He said, "We worked really hard on this event. We want it to be about zines, not about Rich."

That seemed reasonable. Hell, I wanted the same thing. That's why I wanted a classroom: so we could air all the grievances right at the beginning and curb the gossip. So I explained this to Shawn and asked again if he could get us a classroom to have this discussion. Shawn said, "I don't know how to answer that." Which was his way of answering "no." Then, Shawn said, "We don't want to ban anyone from the Zine Symposium. But we'd really appreciate it if Rich didn't come."

We debated for a while, and Shawn kept going back to that phrase: "We don't want to ban anyone, but we'd really appreciate it if Rich didn't come."

In case you were wondering, yes, Rich was in the room the whole time. Apparently, he was starting to get used to being banned from places.

Part 3: Believe Everything You Read Friday

The zine fair opened up at two o'clock that Friday afternoon. Todd and I set up our *Razorcake*/Gorsky Press table and braced ourselves for whatever would come. At first, it seemed like no big deal. People came by the table and chatted with us. We sold some magazines and had a few cool conversations. One person handed me a flyer. On one side of the flyer was a dark photocopy of the cover of *Dear Mr. Mackin...* On the other side was a page-long attack on Rich "Makin" for trying to defend himself against the allegations of sexual assault. The flyer concluded by saying, "We are insulted

and offended that what could be a sincere and open dialogue with the community has instead been crafted into profiteering and more image-building for Rich Makin." This was interesting to me – the idea that you can at once criticize Rich for trying to give his side of the story, then ask for a dialogue. The whole idea of a dialogue is that you talk, but you also listen to what the other person has to say. With this in mind, I told the person who handed me the flyer that I was more than willing to talk to her about all of this stuff. She said, "No," and walked away.

Other than that, the early afternoon went pretty smoothly. We even got to meet Arwen Curry of *Maximum Rockroll* and Chris Boarts Larson of *Slug and Lettuce* and talk to each of them about the things we all go through in throwing away our lives for crazy newsprint punk zines.

At about five o'clock, Todd got up to take a stroll. I stayed behind the table. I chatted with the guy at the table next to me. He told me about his zine, *Brains*, which was a punk rock zombie story. I traded him a *Razorcake* for it. I asked him questions about his fiction writing, and while he answered them, a group of self-proclaimed anarchists assembled in front of the *Razorcake* table. There were seven or eight people in the group. A red-haired young woman interrupted my conversation and said, "I was wondering why you think it's appropriate to sell this book." She pointed at *Dear Mr. Mackin...*

"I'm the publisher," I said.

Another woman handed me a stack of flyers. "Will you put these on your table?" she asked.

I looked at the flyer. It, too, had a photocopy of the cover of *Dear Mr. Mackin...* The gist of the flyer was that Rich was a sexual predator and a danger to us all. I handed it back to the woman and told her I wouldn't give it out. I didn't see why I should. I didn't make the flyer. I didn't agree with what it said. I'd no more hand it out than hand out flyers to a Blink 182 show. At this point, the accusations started to fly. The group condemned Rich as a "rapist." I argued that no charges had been filed against Rich. No evidence had been presented. They called me a sexist, accused me of acting like a lawyer, and said I was "no anarchist."

For the record, I never claimed to be an anarchist.

The argument continued on for a long time. A lot was said, and I'll spare you all the *she said, I said*s. Their basic point was that I shouldn't publish a known sexual assaulter (or sexual predator, or rapist, depending on who was talking). My basic point is that, as far as I could tell, the sum of Rich's actions amount to him kissing a breast and putting his hand down an ex-lover's pants while the two of them slept together. I said I didn't defend these actions. And I don't. I agree that Rich needs to treat women better. But you can't call kissing a breast and feeling up a woman who chooses to sleep in your bed "sexual assault." They argued that we needed to broaden the definition of the term sexual assault. I argued that "sexual assault" already has a def-

inition. You can't start assigning new meanings to words. You can't start calling cats "elephants," or people will freak out every time you tell them that an "elephant" is running after them. By the same token, you can't start calling kissing a breast "sexual assault," or people will freak out about something that's not nearly as severe as it sounds.

To this, a dark-haired woman twisted up her face and yelled at me, "You're the reason why women get raped!" And, just to be clear, she didn't say *people like me* were the reason why women get raped. Just me. It's all my fault.

Todd joined me about fifteen minutes into the argument. The group continued to attack me. A couple of times, I looked over at Todd to see if he wanted to add anything. I could see him clenching his jaw and struggling to control his temper. This, mixed with his bald, heavily

aren't disgusting," I said. "Books are words on paper. They can't hurt anyone. If you don't like what a book says, don't read it. But don't try to censor it."

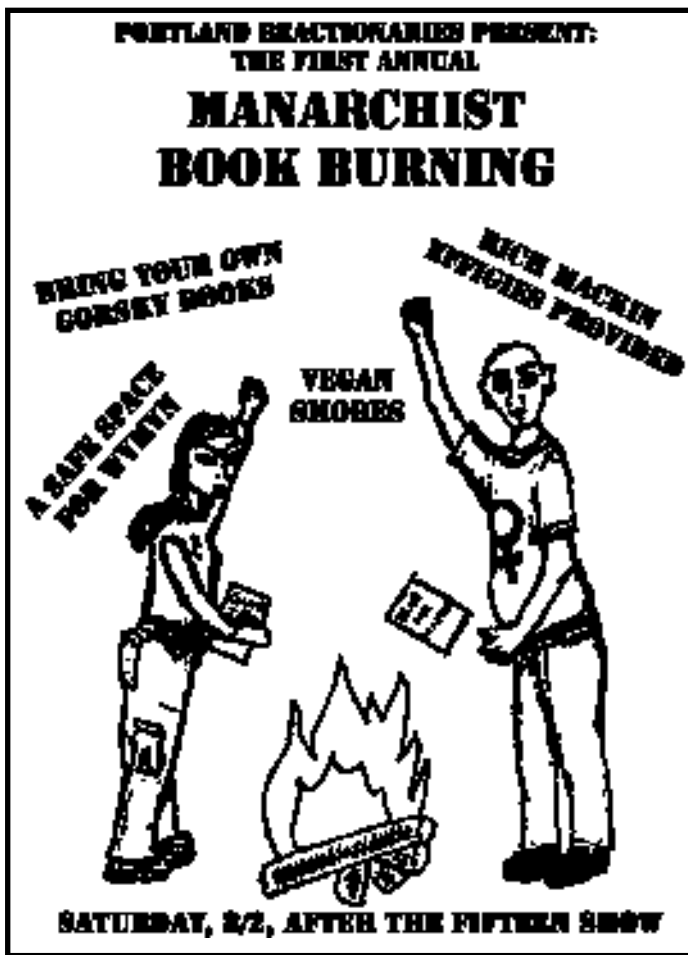
As soon as the word "censor" left my lips, the folks in the group got defensive. They weren't trying to censor Rich's book. They were simply trying to get Rich's publisher to stop selling it. Right? And Shawn Granton wasn't banning Rich from the PZS. He was simply asking him not to come. I understand what they're saying. I also know that they're setting up a slippery slope which is neither censorship nor banishment. It's blacklisting.

Eventually, the group stopped yelling at us and walked away. Nothing was resolved. The people around us, who had eavesdropped and heard most of the argument, came up to us to let us know they sympathized with us and to say that we'd been unfairly attacked. Then again, I'm sure other people said the same thing to the group, once they walked away from our table.

For the rest of the afternoon, one young anarchist woman (who had been with the group that confronted Todd and me) stood about twenty feet from our table. Any time anyone would stop to talk to us, she would swoop in and hand that person the Rich-is-a-sexual-predator flyer. She handed the flyers to everyone: old friends of ours who stopped by, strangers, *Razorcake* contributors, people who had come out to the PZS just to meet Todd and me. At one point, I was talking to an older woman about Jack London, and this young anarchist gave her a flyer. When the woman tried to give the flyer back, the anarchist said something like, "If you support this table, you're supporting a rapist."

The woman looked at the flyer and said, "Oh, I thought you were handing me an advertisement." She put the flyer down and went back to talking to me about *Call of the Wild*.

Around this time, apparently someone hung a poster on the easel at the entrance to the zine fair. The poster advertised Rich as a sexual predator, and, again, it had the cover of *Dear Mr. Mackin...* on it. I never saw the poster. I only know about it because people kept coming by the table saying things like, "Oh, is this the book by the rapist." It was a long afternoon.



scarred head, made him look like a mean motherfucker. Which he's not, but it didn't hurt to let him look like that. When he did get his temper in check, he helped me out in the debate. It went on and on and on. For over half an hour. A lot of accusations were thrown around by the group. Todd and I didn't yell back when they yelled at us. We kept things as calm and rational as we could.

In the end, they demanded that we take Rich's books off our table. One man had been cowering behind another woman during the whole conversation. He spoke so softly and timidly that I had to ask him to repeat himself. He spoke slightly louder and said, "Well, I think that book is disgusting."

Of everything, this was the first low blow to me. It hit me where I'm most sensitive. "Books

Part 4: Know that Proof Is Completely Unnecessary

That night, I read a copy of *Baby, I'm a Manarchist*. I'd been trying to get my hands on one since it was first released in April, but I couldn't find it anywhere. I took my time and read it carefully, cover to cover. I read a lot of sentences and paragraphs several times. It's difficult to read because it's edited poorly. It includes Instant Message conversations between Rich and Tali (one of his accusers), but the conversations are only fragments, and the statements have no context. For example, one conversation starts with Rich saying, "My problem is not that I am doing sexual ~~act~~ 19

things decidedly that I shouldn't but that I am doing things without entirely realizing I am." But I have no idea what these "sexual things" are. It could be anything from a rape to a foot massage (because massage is referred to as sexual in the zine). Later in the conversation, Rich says, "I really have nothing to say in my defense." This was a blurb that had been read to me by one of the people yelling at me earlier in the day. She claimed that it proved that Rich was an admitted rapist, but, again, the "sexual things" are never defined.

Also, Tali never discusses the incident in any detail. She even goes so far as to say, "Already people are demanding for 'the accusers' to give details, to give proof. I'm really sorry that I didn't video tape all those times Rich assaulted myself and other womyn (sic), so what do you want us to do, reenact it? I do not feel that it is necessary for me to give a moment by moment account of what went on in Rich Mackin's apartment all those times." Well, I don't want a reenactment. I'm not asking for a videotape. I'm not even asking for a moment by moment account. I just want to know the gist of the accusation. What was the assault? Where does it lie on the spectrum between a foot massage and rape? What other women? What do you mean by "all those times"?

Through it all, Rich's side of the story isn't contradicted by anything in the zine. Both of Rich's accusers (Tali and a woman named Laura), speak so vaguely and throw out accusations so freely that they reduce the whole issue to a matter of faith. Either you believe their stories or you don't, but they're not going to be bothered with telling you any details about what happened. I can see where this would be enough evidence for a bunch of self-righteous Portland anarchists to get on a high horse. But, if you're going to ask Todd, Felizon, and me to stop publication on a book that has already been printed, the least you could do is point to the spot on the doll where the bad man touched you.

To be fair to Laura and Tali, I should add that they never asked us to stop publication on Rich's book.

Part 5: Realize that Dirty Looks Are Irrefutable

Saturday

The next day was more intense. The poster that had been at the entrance of the zine fair the day before was moved to the women's bathroom. A sporadic flow of people would pass by the Razorcake table, stop and stand about fifteen or twenty feet away, and point and whisper. Very few of them would actually talk to us. Occasionally, someone would walk up to the table, pick up a copy of *Dear Mr. Mackin...*, look at it like it was poison, then drop it on the table in disgust. But, again, whenever I offered to talk about these things, people shrugged me off or walked away.

Around this time, I got to meet Mike Faloon of *Go Metric!* zine. He had nothing to do with all this drama, but I am a big fan of his zine, and meeting him was a bright spot in an otherwise dismal morning.

Early in the afternoon, Joe Beil came by the table. I tried to chat with him, but he slowly backed away from me while he was talking. I pointed to a copy of *Razorcake* and said, "Here's the new issue. It's got some of the zine reviews that you wrote for it. Take a copy, if you want." Joe stepped forward and grabbed a copy

of *Razorcake*. He rolled it up, stuffed it in his pocket, and walked away. It was clear that he didn't want to be associated with me or *Razorcake*.

I couldn't help wondering how different things would've been if the people who we've supported for a couple of years – specifically Joe and Shawn, who had approached us and asked us if they could contribute to *Razorcake* – would've said something like, "Sure, those guys publish Rich. They also publish us. Hell, they even gave us a free ad for PZS in *Razorcake* #15."

At the very least, if Joe and Shawn had spoken up, it may have kept Todd and I from being the only targets in this attack at PZS.

And, just to be clear, she didn't say people like me were the reason why women get raped. Just me. It's all my fault.

That afternoon, there was a PZS workshop that started out being about sexual assault. I didn't attend it, but I heard that it quickly degenerated into a Rich-Mackin-is-a-rapist discussion. I don't know if that's true or not. I do know that I could pinpoint the exact moment when it ended because suddenly a whole bunch of finger pointers and whisperers filed past our table. Todd was off at a workshop on the history of zines, and I sat behind the table with my buddy, Chris. Chris knew about all of this drama, but he had nothing to do with it. He's a friend of mine from my hometown. We've known each other for twenty-something years. He was living in Portland and just swung by PZS to see me and hang out a little.

Chris and I sat behind the table and suffered a weird hour and a half of dirty looks, blatant stares, whispers out of earshot, and refusals to talk. Maybe it was because I used to work construction with Chris's older brother when we were growing up, but this parade of dirty looks and vague ostracism triggered memories that I haven't thought about for years. I remembered being a seventeen-year-old carpenter who spent all my days out in the sun, my skin getting so tan that I always looked dirty, even straight out of the shower but especially at the end of the day, when I'd walk into a convenience store with the crew of ex-junky carpenters I worked for, all of us sweaty from nine hours of manual labor in the Florida sun, sawdust clinging to the hairs on my arms, eyes drooping and shoulders sagging with exhaustion. I remembered the wide berths I'd get from girls my age, the nasty looks, the upturned noses, and the comments like, "Mommy, he's filthy," or a side-of-the-mouth mumbling, "Shower much?" As if carpenters weren't allowed in this hallowed 7-11. At the time, I thought I brushed these things aside. I thought I moved on and moved beyond all of this. I worked through a bachelor's degree and a master's degree and a string of jobs digging ditches and painting houses and hauling trash to the dump and filling in septic tanks and building houses and working in warehouses and washing dishes and eventually getting stories published and getting anthologized in writing textbooks and helping to start this magazine and helping to start a publishing company that published two of my books and six others. Through it all, I thought I'd worked beyond this vague, cowardly ostracism that had nothing to do with any

choices I made in my life but had to do more with things I could hardly avoid, like being born into a world where I'd be a construction worker, or being born white and male.


And now here I was at the Portland Zine Symposium, getting all of these same feelings again and feeling pretty shitty, hearing talk about "male privilege" and "race privilege," which, for all practical purposes in my life, only meant that I had the privilege to get the heavy-lifting jobs that most women (and a lot of men, for that matter) couldn't or wouldn't do. And, as far as I can tell, the only "privilege" my white skin afforded me so far was that bit of skin cancer that grew on my nose before I turned thirty.

So, yeah, I just sat behind that table and got more and more angry.

The shitty feelings, though, were overcome by feelings that what I was doing was right. As a publisher, I need to stick by my authors. I need to give them the benefit of the doubt, to see them as innocent until proven guilty. I can't turn tail and run at the slightest bit of controversy. If I did, I'd be no better than St. Martin's Press and their literal burning of all the copies of the *Fortunate Son* biography. And, to reiterate, I didn't defend Rich's actions. I just defended his right to continue to write and publish. By the same token, I don't defend Martin Luther King's womanizing, or his horrible treatment of his wife. I just defend his actions as a great civil rights leader. I don't defend the vicious, manipulative ways that Emma Goldman treated her lovers and friends. I do defend her as a great writer and thinker. And I'm not trying to put Rich in a category with MLK or with Emma Goldman, here. I'm just saying that the importance of his letters to corporations, and the way they make you think about issues like sweatshops and the insidiousness of advertising and the corporate control of the US, outweighs the bad judgement of kissing a breast or copping a feel.

That night, Todd and I sat down with Rich again. We talked it over and decided to do a little forum of our own after the PZS. That way, we couldn't be accused of making the PZS about Rich (which it had become, despite anything we had done). The idea was to stop the finger pointing and whispering and to bring the whole issue out into the open. We made flyers and we talked Rich's friend Michelle, who's a really brave person, into moderating the event. Then, we went to bed.

Part 6: Understand that Rape Allegations Translate to Big Profits Sunday

A lot of people had packed up and left. The last day of the zine fair was more mellow. We still had to deal with the dirty looks and vague ostracism and shitty feelings. These increased when the PZS organizers had their second workshop on sexual assault, which again apparently degenerated into a Rich-is-a-rapist forum, too. Michelle passed out flyers for our forum, where Rich would be allowed to defend himself. Todd and I gave those flyers to people whenever we caught them staring. A few people came up to us and just talked about the issue, which was refreshing. I also found two of the people who had confronted me on Friday: the woman who said that I'm the reason why women get raped, and the guy who told me that Rich's book was disgusting. I was very friendly to  21

them and invited them to come out to our forum and to meet Rich and look into the matter themselves. They told me that they would be there.

Towards the end of PZS, I asked Shawn Granton if he or if we could make an announcement on the microphone to invite people to the forum. Shawn told me that the organizers had already talked about it, and, no, Todd and I wouldn't be allowed to make the announcement. Still, we managed to get the word out to most of the people at the zine fair. They would have their chance to confront the issue, interrogate Rich, look into the details of the allegations, and decide for themselves whether or not Rich was a sexual predator.

As it turned out, seven people who weren't involved in the forum showed up to it. Three of those seven people left within a few minutes. Of course, no one who pointed or whispered or confronted us came to the forum. Not even the ones who told me personally that they would be there.

Apparently no one was interested in details. They seemed to agree with Tali's statement in *Baby, I'm a Manarchist*: that details are "completely unnecessary." That a mere accusation is enough for a conviction. That, if Tali says, "Rich is an admitted sexual assaulter," then that's all the evidence anyone needs. It doesn't matter that Rich didn't admit to being a sexual assaulter. He denies it, even. But Rich's side of the story doesn't matter because, according to the flyers, it's simply "profiteering and more image-building for Rich Makin." Which is strange point of view, because I can't see how it's a good idea to build your image around sexual assault allegations, or how that leads to "profiteering."

So I sat there and listened to the forum without saying anything. It turned into a discussion about how well Rich had adhered to the list of demands. One guy asked Rich, "Have you touched any women since these demands were made on you?"

"Well, it's such a broad demand," Rich said. "I can't follow it exactly. Like, I had a job interview and, at the end of it, I shook the hand of the woman who interviewed me."

The guy clucked his tongue in disappointment.

I started to feel like it was going to be a long forum.

I listened to the talk about the alleged assaults, and the terminology that was being used in the zines, in the flyers, and in the discussions. Words like "survivor" and "victim" and "male privilege" and "safe space." Talk of how women "survive" from someone copping a feel, or who "heal" after guys make moves that the women don't want them to make. It makes women seem so fragile and helpless. I don't consider myself a feminist, but listening to this talk made me wish for representation from the opposing feminist mentality. The mentality where women take control of their lives. Where women reclaim sex for themselves. Where sex becomes a liberating act and a way of empower-

ing women. But it seemed these principles of feminism were discounted, and a new line of thinking had formed: one that expected women to curl up into a ball and cry "rape" with every unwanted touch.

Part 7: Never, Under Any Circumstances, Help a Friend in Need

Monday

Todd and I left Portland that Monday morning. For the first time in my life, I was excited that a road trip was about to end. I was excited to leave the really cool city of Portland, with all of its nice bike paths, with its block-long independent bookstore and record store where you can pick up obscure, out-of-print punk singles for four bucks. I was excited to leave a city

was allowed for people to decide things for themselves. And, of course, we talked about how badly it sucked that Todd and I were the targets for all the anger. Todd and I. Two guys who treat women – who treat pretty much everyone we meet – very well.

As we got some distance from Portland, one last thing really started to bug me. At one point in *Baby, I'm a Manarchist*, Tali says that she was sexually assaulted twice. Once in March of 2002. Once when Rich kissed her breast, a "couple of nights" before she wrote the opening essay in the zine (October, 2002). She says, "i was sexually assaulted last march and a couple of nights ago. when it rains, it pours ey? and it's raining!!! and cold. it's all kind of scary. the assault last march was a lot worse than a couple of nights ago. far worse... a couple of nights ago wasn't as bad but it caused me to have a flashback to last march which caused me to freak out..." When I read those lines, I read them as a plea for help. It seems to me that Tali is tormented by the assault she suffered in March. And, based on what I know about psychology, that assault will continue to torment her, continue to manifest itself in her relationships, until she gets the help she's asking for. There's nothing wrong with Tali, as far as I know, but even I can see that she's been injured emotionally. She won't feel like herself again until that injury undergoes therapy.

This is what disturbs me the most: that, at the very beginning, starting with the very first allegation, we have a woman who is asking for help. She doesn't need a lynch mob. She doesn't need a blacklist or forums or slanderous flyers or accusatory posters in bathrooms. Those things can effectively hurt Rich, but they can't help Tali at all. Tali needs someone to help her through these issues that are tormenting her. And, in the typical American way, people run off and fight half-cocked battles on her behalf; they seek vengeance on an ill-conceived idea of evil rather than helping this woman.

And, in Rich's case, he doesn't need to seek counseling about being a rapist. I know Rich pretty well. I've listened to him explain his life to me as we've driven thousands of miles across this country on book tours. Rich is a lot of things, but he's not violent. And that's what rape and sexual assault are: violent. So Rich doesn't need therapy to curb his non-existent violent tendencies. For the most part, Rich is a really good guy. I consider him my friend. But I have to admit that he's self-destructive, and he needs to stop being so self-destructive. Again, there's nothing wrong with Rich, but he has been injured emotionally somewhere along the line, and he won't feel like himself until that injury undergoes therapy.

But instead of helping anyone to get better, we're all running off to fight these ridiculous wars. Just like little good Americans.

–Sean Carswell



(above) An excerpt from *Wimmens Comix*, a seventies underground zine that celebrated sex as an empowering act for women.

where you can safely breathe the air and where the hills aren't hidden behind the smog. I was excited to drive back to my home in the crazy, often violent, always polluted LA.

We drove down I-5, among the Douglas firs and the twists and turns of the Willamette River. We talked about everything that was said over the weekend and everything that happened. We talked about the way that this whole situation with Rich was being handled, about how the Portland Zine Symposium wasn't supposed to be about him, but it was set up to condemn him. About how, sure, the legal system sucks, but at least it pretends to have some due process. At least the accused can defend himself. We talked about how few people would actually look into the details of what happened and how little room

Sean Carswell



**SO, YEAH, THESE ARE COOL COMICS IF YOUR MIND IS WARPED
AND IN SEARCH OF SOME WACKO CANDY.**

I had it all planned out. I was having my floors at the home refinished and we had to be out of the house for a mere five days. Right! Well in that time I had also thrown my back out and was off work and not allowed to do anything strenuous. What better recipe for getting ample amounts of reading in? Oh and I did read. Even when I was done with all the comics I was buried under, I started reading flower catalogs. How's that for being out of one's home for too long? As things go in the home contractor business, when we returned home, we found some problems.

At the front of the house, there were old floorboards in the flower beds along with empty cans of polyurethane, cigarette butts and large amounts of saw dust. All the screens were off the windows. A still-working smoke detector was laying in a bucket, not on the ceiling where it belongs, and there was polyurethane splattered all over my garage wall. Then, inside the house, the crew sanded down nail heads, so that I had shiny spots all over the floors, in one room the final coat had missed the wall by five inches, in still another room, holes still existed where the previous owner had drilled them in the floor for cable, and in yet another room, there was urethane on the walls and sanding swirls evident in the wood. So I gave the company a ring on the phone, and the company owners told me that he'd get them back out immediately, which meant four days later, and they did finish the job. The only problem is I can't bring anything back in until that dries. So the gist of my story is that I've been without a computer to write all this lovely prose for two fucking weeks. I should have known something would go wrong when the third worker coming in my front door the first day was carrying a microwave oven.

So all this time off and no lifting allows for plenty of television to inform my brain cells that I truly live in fucked up times. I'm greatly disturbed by the fact that crap rules the television: Court TV and Jerry Springer during the day, news in the early evening and reality TV at night. God, do I need cable. People seem to be getting more fucked up by the minute. Sure, some of this is staged but still there has to be some motivation to weigh 400 lbs. and stand in front of a crowd of people in nothing but your underwear (here's where I shudder, yuck!) and even flash them (it's a train wreck and I can't look away). Then the president breaks in for his garden press conference in which someone should have informed him that he, by no means, is Don Rickles. Then, when fielding questions

suffering from the same infliction as Reagan. He states that he is getting too old to remember a four-part question. At that point, shouldn't he resign as President and give the job to someone younger and more coherent?

Now, by no means am I a saint. In fact, often my wife reminds me that I'm a dick. But I'm not in the public eye and I'm not out to screw anyone. I think that humans are just blindly digging their own egos, and this allows them to do whatever they damn well please. For instance, in their autos, how many times do you see some egomaniac cut across three lanes to get in a turn lane or hold up traffic by making an illegal maneuver? Here's a good one: a guy drove down the bike lane (illegal), ran a red light (very illegal and dangerous), and then flipped me the bird when I caught up to him at the next light. Yes, I guess I was in the wrong for being on the same street with the fucking jerk. I guess it's still better here than anywhere in the Middle East, which is where I'll begin my reviewing and stop my ranting.

**PORTRAITS OF ISRAELIS
& PALESTINIANS**

Hardback by Seth Tobocman

This is a cool collection of drawings of the faces of the people who live in probably the most dangerous hot spot in the world. We see on a daily basis the brutality of the conflict in pictures and video, but to put it into drawings gives a new angle that contains much more feeling. The very first drawing in the book is the portrait of a woman with the heading, "Is she an Arab or a Jew?" which immediately stirs one's thought and breaks down the possibilities of choosing sides. The drawings are soft. I believe them to be charcoal in medium but they are still very to the point, and that point is that there are a whole lot of innocents being caught in the middle of the conflict. The introduction and the author's note give us the reason for this book, a brief background of what compels the author, and what his credentials are. The book then opens the mind to faces, those of ordinary folk, such as taxi drivers or people riding the bus. The book takes us on a ride through the cities into the people's homes, studies the towns and the religions, and gives us a view of a world so different than our own. In some respects, the book is warm and hopeful, but it then reminds us that these people live in bloodshed and curfews. They live in cities that were once thriving are now places where kids have to travel through mountains, around fighting, to get to school. They have hospitals that can't run because of the threat of fighting. These reminders turn this book into a sad retrospect. If

read with an open mind, this book can bring an understanding to the Middle Eastern way of life. It is sensitive in both view and writing. The pictures are simple yet truly beautiful – a visually stirring masterpiece.

(Soft Skull Press, 71 Bond Street, Brooklyn, NY 11217, www.softskull.com)

BLACK IMAGES IN THE COMICS

by Fredrik Stromborg, \$15.95 U.S

Racial images in comics from the 1800s to current should make for an interesting read. The simple fact that this is a case study of the portrayal of blacks in comics makes this book non-volatile. What I mean is the way this book is written, there are no sides taken and there is nothing demeaning in the presentation. The facts are presented and things are explained. For instance, we take for granted that if an illustrator draws a black person with big lips, a large flat nose, and big white eyes, that he is poking fun with stereotypes. The fact is that, in some cases, the artist may never have met a black person and is drawing the work simply by what he has heard. Here's a point, when I was a kid, we watched *Speed Racer* and a lesser-known cartoon called *Kimba the White Lion*. The creator of *Kimba* was Osamu Tezuka and, at the time, there were almost no immigrants in Japan so old Osamu has to put in a scene with natives, and since he only knew what he'd heard, he drew them all with the stereotypical features, grass skirts, and spears. This seems to be the process for most comics at the start of the century. The great thing about this book is that it has an international coverage, from Europe to Africa and all the way around to Japan, not just U.S comics. It is also presented in chronological order. To tell the truth, things seem to be improving in the portrayal of blacks in comics, yet there is still some work to be done. Of course, my favorite, the Green Lantern/ Green Arrow, got in this one for its favorable work in dealing with sensitive issues such as drug abuse, poverty, and racial tensions. My favorite thing in the book is the reason they give for the demise of the D.C title, Steel comics. That's right; they ring up the deathblow to that fabulously sloppy basketball goof and terrible actor Shaq! I found this book to be fun, shocking, and insightful at the same time. There is nothing prejudicial about this book at all. In fact, I found it as an ideal learning tool to teach people what not to do in comics. This book rules and I can't wait for the next book, *The Devil in the Comics*. If you're a black history buff – not that I am – you're going to find this some damn good reading. (Fantagraphics Books)

THE AMAZING SNOX BOX

By Brian Gage, \$20.00 US

The follow up to *Snark Inc.* is another brilliant ripping of corporate Amerika. This time, the beloved writer pokes his broomstick at the caged contraption called the television... I mean the "Snox Box." I must say, Dr. Suess would be proud of these gentlemen. You just have to love children's books written for adults – and that's not to say kids wouldn't pick up on the message here. The story starts on a planet far away where a king hides out from a mob of subjects who want a piece of his ass for being a prick and working them for nothing in his diamond mines. Out of nowhere arrives a slick salesman with the cure to his demise, the Snox Box, that will enthrall his subjects with information that will make them hip and informed. So the king signs the contract, the Snox Boxes are placed in every home, and the king becomes liked, but when the

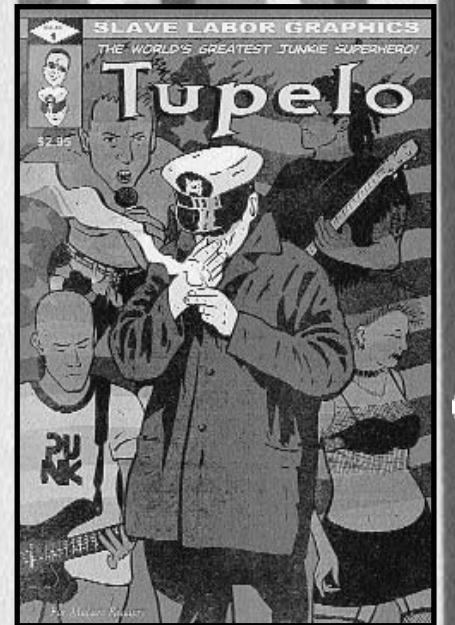
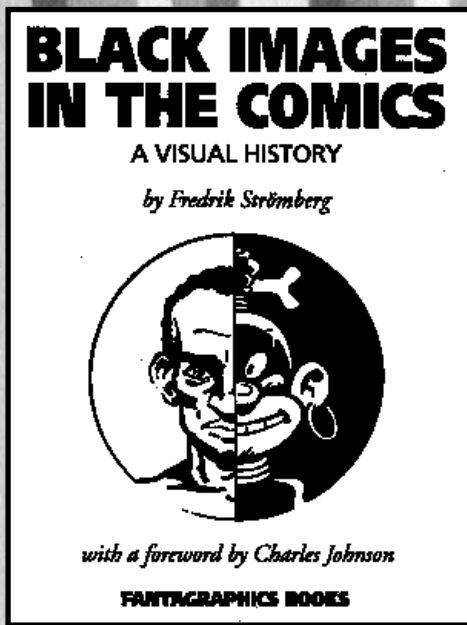
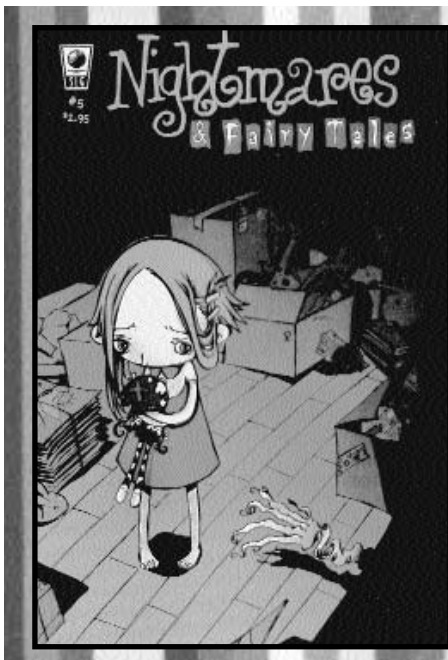
name of Famous Monsters. The guy in the sailor hat and peacoat was the lead singer of the group and, in the comic, he is brought to coherence by an injection of who knows what, but if you give him alcohol, he becomes the hulk. This band has built some sort of urban legend. It seems that the band dispersed after a member got shanked and died. The story goes that they felt one of the other members did it and the remaining two went into hiding. One of those hiding was this Tupelo character, who, as the legend has it, roams around avenging the ass beatings stupid people give to the homeless. They even have a story at the end of a supposed victim. So what is there left to say? Mystery and punk rock – isn't that what life's about? This one makes good on the premise that a good legend can make a great comic. (SLG Publishing, P.O. Box 26427, San Jose, CA 95159-6427, www.slavelabor.com)

communicates with the ghost of the head crazy who was killed there when it was an institution, but, of course, this is where we get "to be continued." *Plastic Farm* is a lot like the *Twilight Zone* in pulp, only these stories leave you hanging. Truthfully, I was left hanging. I want to know what happens in these stories. So, yeah, these are cool comics if your mind is warped and in search of some wacko candy. (www.plasticfarm.com)

NIGHTMARES & FAIRY TALES

by Serena Valentino & FSc \$2.95

I love comics where little kids get saved from hateful people. In this case, the people are her parents. Little Gwen is afraid of her new house. She thinks it is haunted so she won't go in. The lady next door assures her that she will be all right. When Gwen finally goes in, we find out who the monsters are – her parents. They start



salesman ask for his cut, the king throws him in the dungeon. Bad move! Our sly salesguy has a device that silences the box and in turn leads to the king's demise: his head on a stick. See what a union of people can do? I mean a well-mobbed together union with bats and stones. In the end, the salesman is in his rocket, well paid by the last planet, and heading for a brilliant blue planet in the Milky Way. Once again, Brian Gage has put joy in my heart by mocking the softness of society and showing us that we're a bunch of lazy fools. Yes, I'm humble! Unfortunately, my copy had the hard cover ripped off, but it still is going on my shelf to read again when work gets me down. Now that I know these guys are building a head of steam, I'm sitting on the edge of my chair in anticipation for the next book. Please go out and find this book. Storm the counter at Barnes & Noble and tell them they need to order this book by the loads. Well, go! (Soft Skull Press)

TUPELO, THE WORLD'S GREATEST JUNKIE SUPERHERO

by Matt DeGennaro & Phil Elliot, \$2.95 US

The cover on this one threw me because I thought it was a comic about some sailor guy. It seems this one is very loosely based on a band from the East Coast in the late seventies by the

PLASTIC FARM 1&2

\$2.95 US

Now here are some wild fantasy comics. In the first *Plastic Farm*, we meet this guy whose hangover induces the dream of a hell-bound cowboy and his dinohorse from hell. The cowboy has pure black eyes, see, and he walks into this bar... hey wait, is this sounding like a bad joke? Anyway, he trances the bartender to give him a drink, kicks some other guy's ass, takes out the sheriff and his deputy, and then gets speared by some gypsy. Of course, the story has some twists and turns that I didn't mention that make it much better than my terrible storytelling, but it is pretty entertaining reading. Now, *Plastic Farm 2* has a kick ass story told by a guy who is in an airport bar, waiting for the weather to clear. There was this insane asylum that was closed down and then bought by some monks to start an orphanage. Well, the loonies were released into the neighboring town where they procreated with the women of the town by raping them. This kid who is raised there is beat upon by the bullies, and fantasizes about being a superhero. Then the retarded offspring are brought to the mission and they terrorize the kid while he is drawing. One of the monks finds his work and deems it blasphemy and puts the kid in solitary confinement. While here, the kid com-

threatening her with violence if she doesn't go upstairs and unpack. Of course, when she gets upstairs, there are every kid's nightmare: monsters in the closet. Luckily for her, the lady next door gave her a doll that communicates with the creatures and makes everything all right. Little Gwen falls asleep and forgets to unpack. So, when dad comes grumbling up the stairs, she panics from the fear of being beaten. However, when he gets in the room, everything has been put away. The next day, the parents yell at her for being late to breakfast, so she gets none and is then told to walk to her new school because she missed the bus. Once again, she is befriended by the lady next door and taken to school. Okay, to make a long story short, the lady next door is a witch who protects Gwen and when things get real bad with the parents, she has the monsters kill the parents and Gwen gets to go live with the witch. It's very creepily drawn and the story bounds along better than I presented it (once again). I liked the comic, but it might be a little too much for the kids at bedtime. The cover art is awesome. I wish the whole comic was in color, but I ask for too much sometimes. This one is creepy great and will be kept out until after Halloween. (SLG Publishing)

–Gary Hornberger

GARY HORNBERGER

Who Are You?

NARDWUAR THE HUMAN SERVIETTE VS MARGARET CHO

Nardwuar the Human Serviette

Nardwuar: Who are you?

Margaret Cho: Well I happen to be the owner of a viagra pen.

Nardwuar: You are Margaret Cho

Cho: Yes, I have this pen, I don't know why I have me a Viagra pen because I don't use it.

Nardwuar: Actually, Margaret, maybe you'd like to introduce who's beside you Margaret.

Cho: Oh, I'm sorry. This is Bruce Daniels. He's my opening act, and we are travelling all over the world, doing the tour of a show. It's called *Revolution*.

Nardwuar: You are Margaret Cho, that All-American girl.

Cho: No, I'm gonna be the all-Canadian girl.

Nardwuar: Margaret Cho, I am very excited because you wrote something for *ROCKRGRL Magazine*. You interviewed Princess Superstar!

Cho: [yelling] She's my favorite star!

Nardwuar: Princess Superstar!

Cho: She's wonderful, I mean she is... I said, I called her up and I said, "Girl, you the best."

Some people always say, "Oh, you the best female. You the best white female rapper. You the best white female rapper from New York. You the best blond, white hair, white female rapper.... Rock... producer... from New York."

And I said, "No, no, no." I said, "You are the best hip-hop artist in the world." I said it flat out. I listen to her record till I can not stop listening. Her, and Miss Ani DiFranco, they my life support and Miss Bruce Daniels.

Nardwuar: What about Miss Joan Jett. Are you personal friends with Joan Jett?

Cho: I am personal friend with...

Nardwuar: With Joan's Jett?

Cho: With Miss Joan Jett's.

Nardwuar: Has she told you any good Runaways stories, Margaret Cho?

Cho: Um... no, we just party. So we don't really tell stories. Well, we do, but I don't remember them.

Nardwuar: Margaret Cho, is it true that you go to Morrissey's throat doctor?

Cho: I do. I actually do go and see the same man as Morrissey, but he can't make my voice sound as quite as good or quite as homosexual as Morrissey's voice. I wish he did 'cause I would love to have that sort of soulful [Margaret sings] but I don't have it...

You know why I love Mr. Morrissey's voice?

Nardwuar: It's like he's crying. When he's

singing, he's crying. I love Morrissey also.

Nardwuar: Margaret Cho, I'm going to the rock...

Cho: What?

Nardwuar: I'm going to the rock...

Cho: [laugh]

Nardwuar: I'm going to the rock show! Peaches! Peaches!

Cho: Aww.

Nardwuar: You love the Peach, don't you Margaret Cho?

Cho: I see, okay.

Nardwuar: You're in Canada. She is Canadian.

Cho: Are you telling me about *The Teaches of Peaches*? I was so confused. I say, you... the rock?

Bruce: I thought he was talking about Blink 182

Cho: I know. [laughs]

Nardwuar: Sorry about that, you know, "I'm going to the rock show!"

Cho: Oh, I love some Peaches. Peaches, I get a lot out of *The Teaches of Peaches*... That's where I got my GED, from *The Teaches of Peaches*. That's where I got my degree, from *The Teaches of Peaches*.

Nardwuar: Speaking about getting degrees and stuff, Margaret Cho, growing up in San Francisco, were you involved in any of the punk rocking going on there? Like you're a goth now. You're a goth now; but back then, were you goth or were you punkin'? Did you go to any punkin' gigs back then?

Cho: Punkin'?

Nardwuar: Punkin' gigs back then?



Cho: You mean like...

Nardwuar: Like were you down with the Dead Kennedys, Millions of Dead Cops? You know what I mean. Were you down with the punkin' thing?

Cho: Oh like...

Nardwuar: Dirk Dirksen!

Cho: Jello (Biafra). Jello and all of them. No. You know what? I was a little young for that, but I was aware of the punk scene and it happened all at the Mabuhay Gardens, all around us. This was a big thing, but I was too young, but I did hang out with a lot of punk rockers. I did wear a garbage bag at one point. I did it all.

Nardwuar: Margaret Cho what is your favorite yoga position and what is your least favorite yoga position?

Cho: Oh, I hate me the dolphin, because it just makes my head hurt and makes my hair fall out.

Nardwuar: What is that?

Cho: The dolphin is when you put your hands in this thing that is a triangle, right? And you put your head on the ground and then you put your leg and your booty up in the air. And it... this kills my hamstrings, okay, my hamstrings. You can play them like they a Slim Jim phantom on a bass, and then you be just laying like that for a long ass time until your face go all red. Everybody else does it and they all say, "Oh, it feels so good. I feel the release in my back." And all I feel is PAIN! Then, my favorite is of course is savasana. I practice savasana as much as possible. That's when you lay down and do nothing.

Nardwuar: Ba-boom! And you are Margaret?

Cho: What?

Nardwuar: You are Margaret?

Cho: Ah... *The Teaches of Peaches*?

Nardwuar: Margaret Cho.

Cho: I am the rock!

Nardwuar: No, you're not the rock. You're Margaret Ch...

Cho: The rock.

Nardwuar: You're Margaret Cho!

Cho: I'm Margaret ... ya...

Nardwuar: You're Margaret Cho, yes and Margaret Cho, what's really exciting about you is I love the fact you signed to ABC years back, because they had *Fantasy Island*. I love that, using that as a criteria. That's so awesome.

Cho: Did you pronounce it "Funtasy Island" [laughs]

Nardwuar: I've been brainwashed!

Cho: Fun, fun, Funtasy Island.

Nardwuar: I have to get into it, Funtasy Island.

Cho: Fun, Funtasy Island. No, I love *Fantasy Island*. It would flow seamlessly from *The Love Boat* into *Fantasy Island*, so it was a big vacation that she would be taking.

Nardwuar: Did you get to meet any of the *Fantasy Island* people since you were on ABC, or did you include them in any things you wanted to do?

Cho: I was never... uh... That was ten years after *Fantasy Island* was on, so I didn't get to meet any of the stars. I actually never met anybody except that guy with the beard from *Home Improvement*.

Nardwuar: Like, did you didn't get to push Ricardo Montalban around in his wheelchair, or anything like that Margaret Cho?

Cho: No, nothing good. I didn't get to hang out with Hervé (Villechaize).

Nardwuar: Margaret Cho, one other thing that I'm excited about you is *Little Darlings*. You like the movie *Little Darlings*.

Cho: Oh my god, it's such a good movie and I'm actually quite good friends with Tatum O'Neal.

Nardwuar: Did you learn anything about the movie? Come on, you wouldn't tell me anything you know. The secret of Joan Jett, the Tatum O'Neal!

Cho: They're all really great women and they're strong, really, really amazing artists, and I'm just... I think show business is kinda weird, because you get some sort of contact with people that you wouldn't normally, but then again, I don't even belong in show business. I'm not really in show business; I just sort of do some stuff.

Nardwuar: So you're hanging around with Tatum O'Neal – who is your friend, who is your celebrity friend there, Margaret Cho. Who wears a ski mask when they go out in public?

Cho: Oh, I can't say that because, first of all, she's already at my throat. She's gonna kill me... she's gonna hit... she's gonna cut... see we like Biggie and 2Pac, she's gonna get me. [laughing]

Nardwuar: You've even been talking shit about her. You're even telling me about the ski mask!

Cho: [laughing] No, see she says I'm Biggie, and she's 2Pac, and, see, we used to rap together and roll together back in the day. I don't know what has been happening. She has lost her mind. I'm not really sure, but you know, whatever, that's alright. It's alright.

Nardwuar: Okay, Margaret Cho, you don't want to divulge that, but I wanna know a little about Anna Nicole Shmi...

Cho: Ah, Shmi...

Nardwuar: Shmi...

Cho: Shmi, Shmith, Smith.

Nardwuar: Smith! Anna Nicole Smith. In your act...

Cho: Anna Nicole?

Nardwuar: Anna Nicole?



Cho: Anna Mic... you said... okay, well first of all, you said "Funtasy Island."

Nardwuar: "Funtasy Island."

Cho: [laughing]

Nardwuar: I said "Micole" because of Michelob, and you actually made out with Anna Nicole Smith!

Cho: Yes, I did. And she kissed me back.

Nardwuar: Now you're mentioning, in your act, because you kissed her a little bit there.

Cho: She has me on her show.

Nardwuar: And what does she think about that? Like you mentioning her?

Cho: I don't know. I love her. She's great.

Nardwuar: Have you had any feedback from mentioning people in your act? That's what I'm wondering about.

Cho: No, 'cause after I saw the show I was on, and she said, [Margaret imitates Anna Nicole Smith] "Margaret Cho." And that's the only comment that I had received. I don't even know if she's really in my show.

Nardwuar: The world is wondering, Margaret Cho, you made out with Anna Nicole Smith!

Cho: She's great. She's very soft.

Nardwuar: What was that like? Can you please take me through it, like if I'm there? Please, Margaret Cho?

Cho: It's like making out with a beautiful blond woman, which I think most people should do. He has [points to Bruce] a couple times... have you?

Nardwuar: You've done the Anna Nicole thing?

Bruce Daniels: No, she just hugged me, and then acted like we were best friends, and then didn't talk to me for the rest of the party.

Cho: She's so nice though, but she's really beautiful, and you know, it's just like kissing a woman.

Nardwuar: The thread that I'm working on here is what is it like when you talk about somebody, and they come to your show, and they see you talking about them like, did they get mad?

Cho: No, because everything is done in a loving way. You know, I don't ever really... I'm not like a mean person. I don't really slam people.

Nardwuar: Nobody's really ever taken offense to anything? Not one lawsuit? Come on? You're only as good as your lawsuits. How many lawsuits do you have there, Margaret Cho—?

Cho: [laughs] I don't have any. Oh, you know, wait. I did have one, but it wasn't against me. I was actually a witness to some other crime, so I had to go. And they subpoenaed me to court by coming to one of my shows.

Nardwuar: Margaret Cho, what's the difference between kissing Anna Nicole Smith and kissing Reverend Al?

Cho: Well, Reverend Al is...

Nardwuar: Your "husband to be," right?

Cho: Yes, he has stronger lips.

Nardwuar: And he is a cool guy, Reverend Al. Reverend Al, the Cacophony Society from Los Angeles. Can you tell the people about that? Your husband is amazing!

Cho: My husband is amazing. He is an amazing artist, he is an art terrorist, he is a genius, and he's gorgeous and he takes care of me and my dog. And he's writing a book all about this experience of leading a very large group of people through the art of war. They're truly causing a war through art, and he had millions of people dressed up like Santas and raiding federal buildings and then strapping themselves down with firecrackers and setting themselves on fire. So, yes, he is a religion unto himself.

Nardwuar: Margaret Cho, we're riding here to the airport in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. You once shit yourself and you talked about this last night.

Cho: I did, but I happened to be driving so I didn't...

Nardwuar: But you didn't finish the story, like you shit yourself, what happened after? Like, how did you clean up the shit?

Cho: What happened was, I went home and I was scared, because I didn't know exactly what to do with myself, because I was standing in my foyer [laughing] and I said, "I don't want to know what's down there. I don't want to know. I don't want to know," and I just said, "Well, I have to decide because I can't just stand here." So I can either go downstairs and just take everything, including my pants, off and throw it in the wash. I don't know what's gonna happen with that.

Nardwuar: Did you ring it out? I want some

Nardwuar the Human Service





more detail. Did you ring it out? What was going on, Margaret Cho?

Cho: Or should I take it and turn it inside out in the toilet like a diaper?

Nardwuar: What about just throwing it out?

Cho: That was my other choice. Then I thought I could throw it out but then, I don't know. Anyways, I still had to do the thing of taking off my pants, that was the hardest thing. So when I took off my pants it looked like exactly like when you pull apart a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. That's what it looked like.

Nardwuar: Ba-boom!

Cho: Ya, and then I spent about two hours in my shower, trying to remove the scent of the dookie from my bootie, and you know that's not easy.

Nardwuar: What about wiping your bum? A friend of mine, one day, was walking home from a party, suddenly had diarrhea and had to wipe his ass with a Subway sandwich. That's all that was around, he was carrying a Subway sandwich.

Cho: Was it a six-inch or a twelve-inch, or excuse me, a centimeter or was it... [laughs] I know they do it different here.

Nardwuar: It was a twelve-incher. He didn't really have time to think about it, because he kinda just put it to his ass, and wiped his ass.

Cho: Was there paper on?

Nardwuar: I know... A lot of people when I tell this story to are like; well don't they usually have a serviette, a napkin, with the Subway sandwich?

Cho: Yeah, exactly.

Nardwuar: He was so drunk, he just grabbed the Subway sandwich and then did the "uh uh uh."

Cho: What about that waxy paper? See, that stuff don't work. That would just scrape off.

Nardwuar: He was just drunk! I guess he probably was like, "Oh, I'll just use this," so that's what he used there, Margaret Cho.

Cho: He could have saved the sandwich, that's true.

Nardwuar: I know and he did it right on the lawn, right in front of his landlord. Then he almost got kicked out of the building the next day because the landlord saw him doing that.

Cho: Why didn't he just go inside?

Nardwuar: Because he had to go, and you know Margaret Cho when you gotta go you.

Cho: You gotta go. There's no way.

Nardwuar: Now, Margaret Cho, on the way to the airport here in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, I was talking to some local Vancouver comics a little while ago and they were saying, "Margaret Cho's coming to town and she has

that revolution sort of theme for her act this time; hmm... maybe Margaret Cho should try some comedy in the jungles of South America!"... Ba-boom! What about that joke?

Cho: Um... That's a good joke. [laughs] Why would I...

Nardwuar: Kind of jealous comedians. Kind of like, "Oh, she's doing a Che Guevara thing. Why doesn't she go to South America?"

Cho: Oh, I don't know. Why? [laughing]

Nardwuar: "She's on the revolution, Che tip, like Rage against the Machine."

Cho: Yeah but the Che tip, it's just a stupid pun on my name; [laughing] it's not about being political.

Nardwuar: They were like, "Come on, let's go to South America. Let's duke it out. Let's battle Margaret Cho in the jungles, South America."

Cho: That would be funny, if I went down there with some good Vancouver comedians, then we can have our own version of *Survivor*. Yeah, you gonna see who's gonna live, okay, you gonna see who, we will see? [laughing].

Nardwuar: You're ready to battle them.

Cho: Yeah, that would be really funny if you took a bunch of comedians and took them to the Amazon, and yeah, and you gonna see who is gonna survive.

Nardwuar: Margaret Cho, let me try this joke on you. Margaret Cho, what's good about gangs?

Cho: They got your back, and...

Nardwuar: No, they carpool!

Cho: They carpool.

Nardwuar: Ba-Boom!

Cho: And they got your back.

Nardwuar: How did I do on that one? How did I do on that one?

Cho: That was good. That was unexpected. Because what you did was you took a very suburban reference and then a very urban reference and you crossed it, you see!

Nardwuar: You are the Margaret Cho, and, Margaret, looking at you, I love your facial expressions. You are so good!

Cho: Thank you very much.

Nardwuar: Like how do you, how do you do all that? You are so good at that.

Cho: I'm a big fan of samurai films.

Nardwuar: Now speaking about facial expressions and stuff like that, Michael Jackson, have you ever met "the Jackson." Have you ever seen him? Have you ever touched him?

Cho: No, but, you know what, I've seen him. I was back stage when him and Lisa Marie were kissing and my manager was showing them how to kiss. I was somehow back there, because I

had the same manager at the time as Michael Jackson, and they were back stage very awkwardly, and he was showing them how to make out with each other. And it was the weirdest thing. This gay man sort of thing. You put your hand here. You put your hand here, and it was like an Arthur Murray dance class.

Nardwuar: How about Johnny Rotten or Henry Rollins, do you ever see them around? They have great facial expressions, don't they? Like, got any good Johnny Rotten or Henry Rollins stories?

Cho: Well I saw Johnny Rotten at the premier of the film, the documentary about them.

Nardwuar: *The Filth and the Fury*.

Cho: *The Filth and the Fury*, which was really brilliant, but he was really angry for the whole... there was a question and answer. He didn't answer nothing. He would just glare at everybody. And Henry Rollins, I used to live really close by, like down the block from him. And I never did see him ever, but I know he lived on my street.

Nardwuar: Did you have a favorite porn star at all? You've talked about male porn stars, how about famous female porn stars?

Cho: I love me some Houston. Oh, give me some Kobe Tai any day. Kobe Tai is really good. I like Jenna Jameson. She's really the superstar and we all cry a tear for Savannah everyday.

Nardwuar: Greg Allman ruined her, right?

Cho: I don't know who did, but I feel bad for Savannah. I don't know who ruined her. Savannah was self-destructive. I know that Savannah had problems of her own, so it wasn't as if somebody came and did it someday. It was like Savannah did Savannah, which was sad.

Nardwuar: Margaret Cho, is there anything else you want to add to the people out there at all?

Cho: I love Canada, I want to defect!

Nardwuar: And you love the lap dances you get in Canada too, right? From Ewan MacGregor look-alikes in Toronto?

Cho: I do, I do, I love them in Remingtons... ooooh... That boy, he was so young! I couldn't believe it. It was like I was getting a lap dance from a child.

Nardwuar: Well, thanks so much, Margaret Cho. Keep on rocking in the free world and doot doola doot doo...

Cho: Doot doo.... "Funtasy Island." "Funtasy!" "Funtasy!"

-Nardwuar

<<http://www.nardwuar.com>>



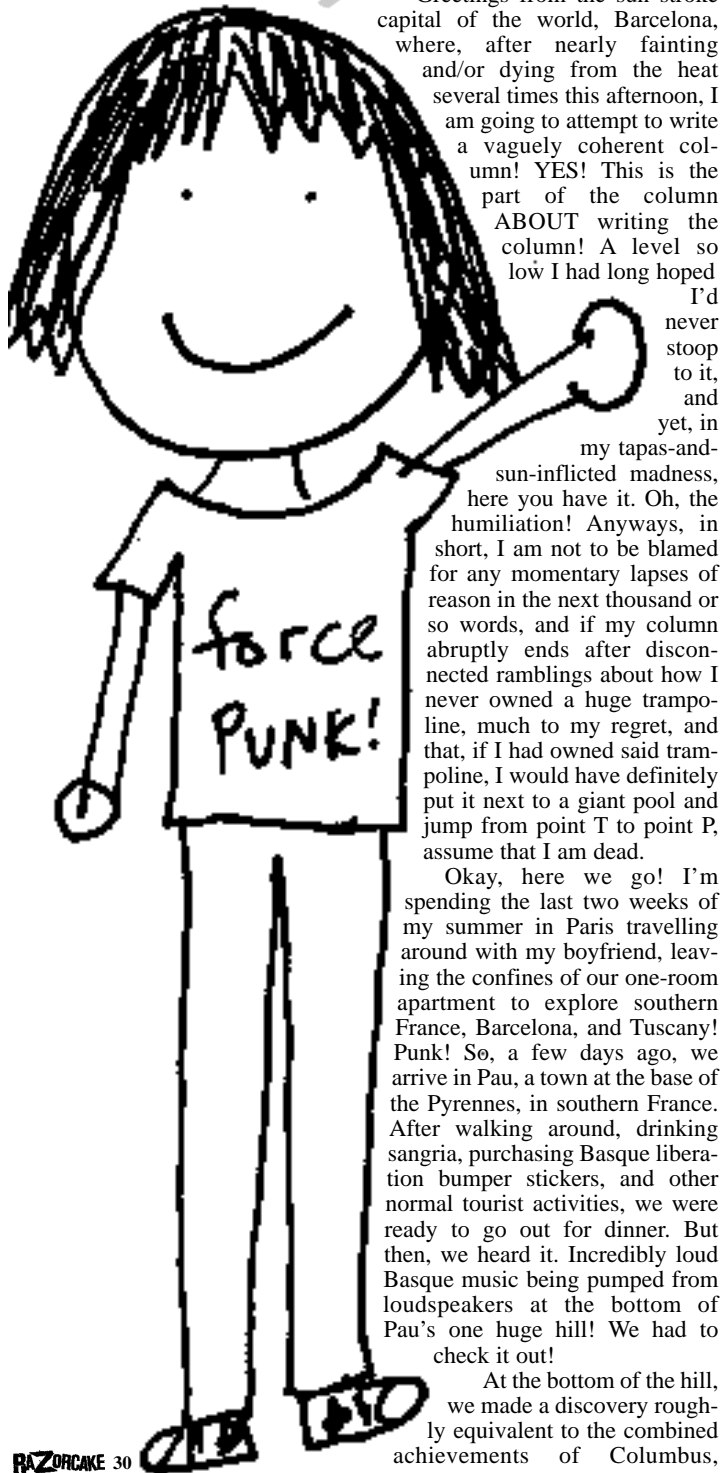


Maddy

Shiftless When Idle



*Who can jump onto a train going ninety miles an hour without being killed?
(Perhaps this could be simulated.) Who can drink the most Milwaukee's Best in two minutes?*



Greetings from the sun stroke capital of the world, Barcelona, where, after nearly fainting and/or dying from the heat several times this afternoon, I am going to attempt to write a vaguely coherent column! YES! This is the part of the column ABOUT writing the column! A level so low I had long hoped

I'd never stoop to it, and yet, in

my tapas-and-sun-inflicted madness, here you have it. Oh, the humiliation! Anyways, in short, I am not to be blamed for any momentary lapses of reason in the next thousand or so words, and if my column abruptly ends after disconnected ramblings about how I never owned a huge trampoline, much to my regret, and that, if I had owned said trampoline, I would have definitely put it next to a giant pool and jump from point T to point P, assume that I am dead.

Okay, here we go! I'm spending the last two weeks of my summer in Paris travelling around with my boyfriend, leaving the confines of our one-room apartment to explore southern France, Barcelona, and Tuscany! Punk! So, a few days ago, we arrive in Pau, a town at the base of the Pyrennes, in southern France. After walking around, drinking sangria, purchasing Basque liberation bumper stickers, and other normal tourist activities, we were ready to go out for dinner. But then, we heard it. Incredibly loud Basque music being pumped from loudspeakers at the bottom of Pau's one huge hill! We had to check it out!

At the bottom of the hill, we made a discovery roughly equivalent to the combined achievements of Columbus,

Balboa, and Mr. Ponce de Leon! We discovered the 26th annual Force Basque competition! Several hundred French Basque people sitting around a jai alai court, waiting for the games to begin! (For the record, jai alai, as it is known in the U.S., especially parts of Florida, is a game that involves 1.) flinging balls against a wall at speeds over 100 miles an hour, and 2.) almost certain death.) Sadly, there was no jai alai at this competition, but no matter, for we soon discovered that the Force Basque competition was far greater!

Six competitions involving traditional Basque peasant tasks, with four competing teams from four nearby towns! And the team members were no ordinary men! These men met and exceeded all stereotypes previously held for "strong peasant men"! Several of them took the phrase "barrel-chested" to a whole new level! And, they were anywhere in age from twenty to sixty. Not just young jocks here!

So, let the games begin! "These people have struggled for years for independence!" yelled the announcer, a middle-aged man who appeared to be half-drunk and rambled around the field constantly forgetting that there was an actual sporting event occurring, to the point where people would have to yell at him to stop talking so that an event could begin. Punk!

The games included: Soka Tira – the most amazing tug of war game I've ever seen – one huge guy on the end of the rope on either end, roped in and squatting, and then eight or nine other guys on each side. An intense battle to the finish that left grown men sprawled on the ground, palms aching! The team called St. Jean Le Vieux was clearly the crowd favorite, and won easily.

Then it was on to Zaculari, in which one man selected from each team carried a 180 pound sack over his shoulders from one end of the field to the other.

A twenty-year-old upstart dominated the race and made the crowd go wild!

Then it was on to the wonderfully named Untziketariak. Basque! If you thought carrying ONE sack was hardcore, try carrying two jugs full of eighty pounds of sand – EACH! Oh, the humanity! The competitors made the necessary preparations – chalking up their hands, singing Basque songs, wondering what the hell they had gotten themselves into, and then it began! Unlike the sack race, there was no official end to the jug race – the competitors just kept going until either 1.) they couldn't stand it anymore, or 2.) their arms fell off. Oh, the pain! Oh the anguish, both physical and mental! Accompanied by a coach that ran alongside them, shouting "Allez! Allez!" (Go! Go!), they began the treacherous ordeal. Some of the men were clearly not up to the challenge, starting out at a ridiculously fast pace, only to crumple to the ground twenty seconds later. No, this called for technique and concentration! Only one man had the necessary mental and physical stamina (Read: insanity) to carry the jugs

430 meters (about a quarter of a MILE!) to victory! The crowd went crazy, yelling "Allez! Allez!" and pounding on the bleachers! His coach walked alongside him, reminding him to breathe! Punk! Finally, after the aforementioned quarter of a mile, he threw down the jugs, and emerged a champion! (This last sentence was designed to give you an idea of the ridiculousness of the announcer and in no way expresses the opinions of Razorcake management.)

Then it was on to Orga Yoko. One of the greatest achievements of the human race (second only to the invention of sour gummi soda bottles and the NEXT event), Orga Yoko works like this: a man stands under a sheet of metal (held up by a wood beam). He has to raise a thirty pound piece of metal from the ground and bang it against the metal sheet above his head. Sounds easy enough? Well, the purpose of the game was to see how MANY times you could do this in a ninety-second period. Yes! Many men

started out fast and furious, only, as in the jug competition, to end up unable to lift anything, cursing god, man, and (Free Basque) country. The best competitors had a steady pace, producing loud, even banging sounds for the full ninety seconds. The winner completed eighty-seven lifts. (Note: please, try this at home.)

The creation of the next event, Lasto Altxari, will go down in history as the high point of Western civilization. Yes, it is downhill from here! This event is cooler than skateboarding, bike riding, and roller-skating COMBINED! This event is so hardcore it makes Minor Threat and even, I dunno, the Mentors, look like Britney Spears-influenced TRL guests! First of all, Lasto Altxari required a truck with a pulley attached to it. Why? To simulate one of the most ancient peasant activities: using a pulley to lift huge bales of hay into a barn. So, they attached a huge bale of hay wrapped up in plastic to the pulley. Each competitor had to raise the hay bale up to the top of the pulley and then bring it down again. Whoever did this the most number of times in a two-minute period was the winner. Seems like a boring enough event, right? Wrong, sir, wrong! The first competitor started off by JUMPING on

top of the huge hay bale and then grabbing the pulley up high on the rope and bringing it to the ground. Then, when he released the rope when the bale had reached the top, he quickly jumped up and grabbed the rope as high up as possible, which sent him flinging up ten or twenty feet in the air, narrowly missing the huge bale of hay as it came crashing down to the ground! Insane! He did this each time, as the crowd went crazy! Basque antics! Punk rock! Sadly, one or two of the competitors realized that there was roughly a fifty percent chance of death-by-haybale in that technique, and decided to lower the hay bale slowly to the ground, as they stood as far away as possible. I think I spotted one of them wearing a Jets to Brazil patch.

So, after a quick game of log sawing (cool, but nothing you couldn't see on ESPN at five in the morning), the games were over and St. Jean Le Vieux was the winner! The crowd applauded, the announcer stumbled around mumbling something about the tradition of strong peasantry, and children ran onto the field to grab as many pieces of wood from the log competition as possible. We had seen the Force Basque and lived to tell about it!


However, I am not done yet, although my keyboard is now soaked in Barcelona sweat and I can no longer tell if I am living or dead! Because there is a moral to be learned from the story! No, this is not the time for Biblical, Koranic, or MRRique proverbs! This is the time to suggest, to you, the reader, an entirely new direction for punk rock! Think about it. Why can't we have our own Force Punk competitions, basing the games on traditional punk rock activities? Scene versus scene in a battle to the finish!

Who can carry an amp the farthest? Who can wheatpaste the most flyers to a pole in ninety seconds? Who can jump onto a train going ninety miles an hour without being killed? (Perhaps this could be simulated.) Who can drink the most Milwaukee's Best in two minutes? Who can identify a real '80s hardcore band versus a current rip-off in three notes? Who can put the most studs in a jacket in three minutes? Not included will be: Who can create the safest "safe space"? and Who can eat the LEAST meat possible in ninety seconds? This would havta be a Force Punk competition for only the most hardcore of hardcore – for those who routinely do stupid things, preferably while drunk!

We could have Rev. Nørb be the announcer and recruit scene elders to coach the young punks! Felix Havoc could train competitors to tell the difference between '80s and '90s hardcore. Iggy Scam could coach the train jumpers. Paddy from Dillinger Four could lead the drinking competitors. Just think of it!

The Milwaukee scene would have a clear advantage in the drinking competition, but would fall dreadfully short in the studs adhesion event, where we'd get killed by the Minneapolis punks! The Bay Area punks, led by Iggy, could clearly jump the most trains, but might come up a little short when it comes to carrying amps (I've seen 'em, and they're a little scraggly-looking!) The Westfield, Massachusetts folks – where '80s hardcore is huge – would destroy on the hardcore identification event, but they have nothing on the power of the French wheat-pasting contingent! Oh, the opportunities!

In fact, I think we should bug Sean and Todd to sponsor the first annual Force Punk competitions! Write your letter to the editor today, demanding your right to compete! Free Basque! Free Punk! Vive la Force Punk!

maddy 



Rev. Nørb

Love, Nørb



DEAR READERS, LAST MONTH I WENT TO MY TWENTIETH-YEAR CLASS REUNION. AND PUKED ON MYSELF. DURING DINNER. I THINK. I DON'T REALLY REMEMBER. I WAS PASSED OUT MUCH OF THE TIME. I DUNNO.

Hail, if i'd a knowed people were actually reading this column, i woulda wrote better ta start off with (no, i mean, seriously, why is it that if one writes about some manner of issue one feels particularly impassioned about, it garners no reaction whatsoever; but if one is merely babbling, prattling on about idle flummery merely to fulfill contractual obligation, et al, people suddenly take notice? Like, i could be raving at the top of my metaphorical lungs about impending Armageddon, alien invasion, or the little man who lives in the six-point-five-dimensional universe parallel to our own and observes my every move, waiting to STRIKE from his wacky land of backwards time flow and take my place in the stupid three-point-five-dimensional universe i live in and ride my universe backward in time [for him, which is forward in time for us] so he can hop back to his home universe after a few decades and live his life over endlessly, AND NO ONE WOULD PAY ATTENTION TO MY LOGICAL AND IMPASSIONED DISCOURSE. However, if i, having jack shit to write about one month, toss off a few idle paragraphs about shooting baskets, people wanna see my hook shot? WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU READING THIS GIBBERISH FOR, FOO? Within the course of one 72-hour period last week, not one but TWO different people came over to my house and asked if they could hold my copy of *Amazing Fantasy* #15. Like, what kinda pathetic tourist attraction have i become??? What exactly has my role in contemporary punk rock society eroded to??? I run a fucking comic book PETTING ZOO f'r Chrissakes!!! [however, the hook shot is coming along just fine, thank you very much, but i'm still baffled as to how the hand knows where to throw the ball at. I mean, both my hand and the ball are completely out of my range of vision; shouldn't my shot be going wildly askew, bombarding pigeons and windows and the occasional stray priest as often as it hits the backboard? I also don't quite understand how i can go to a spot on a basketball court where it is completely physically impossible for me to even get the ball anywhere near the basket with a traditional jump shot {like, maybe it'll graze the bottom of the net on a bounce}, but if i shoot a hook shot from that same spot that is way too far for me to shoot a regular shot from, i can overshoot the whole backboard if i am feeling particularly mighty that day. Like, is that normal? Or is my freakish bodily construction once again manifesting itself in curiously inscrutable fashion? {i've also got this cool jump hook from about

doesn't even have an arc on it, it's just straight down the ol' hypotenuse in a Favre-ian frozen rope to the backboard, ricocheting off the glass and into the basket, leaving everything a-shakin' and a-rattlin' in the aftermath – dude, i swear to God it's like a fuckin' laser beam or something. Of course, if there are any observers present, i revert to properly pathetic form: Truly am i streetball's answer to Michigan J. Frog™) I mean, i can't throw a baseball or a softball or a football for shit. I'm fucking beyond pathetic. Absolutely hopeless. I also can't shoot a basketball from very far out – UNLESS, OF COURSE, I AM FLINGING IT SIDEWAYS, ONE-HANDED, OVER MY HEAD, BLINDLY. Then i'm kinda okay! I must be part fiddler crab or something].

All of which cannot help but serve to bring us to our first question, this one from a Ms. Megan Pants of California, to wit: Have you yet, or will you ever, see the Hulk™ movie? Megan, your answer is as follows: Yes [now, many of you {well, some of you} {okay, NONE of you} may, at this very point in time, be noticing that i, Rev. Nørb, am boldly scuttling the previous format of this column, where the plethora – the HUGE, HONKERIN' PLETHORA – of letters seeking my sage counsel were printed in toto {joke's yours, if you wanna}, followed by my profound responses, genial discourse et al... well, fuck that shit, man. That made the column look kinda... i dunno... fruity, TOO MUCH WHITE SPACE! TOO MUCH ORDERLINESS!! TOO MUCH TIME FOR THE READER TO COMPOSE THEIR THOUGHTS AND CHIP AWAY AT MY INSCRUTABLE INSCRUTABILITY!!! FUCK WHITE SPACE!!! WHITE SPACE SUCKS!!! FUCK THE MAN!!! FUCK THE MAN!!! The kids don't want your honkey establishment white space, man! The kids want a riot of alphanumeric characters jammed into every conceivable orifice a folded-over piece of newsprint has to give!!! And, 'pon my word, said riotous and pulpy orifice jamming is what they shall receive, in spades and such!!! Never more shall the unwelcome brightness of white space darken my already dark dimension of verbiage!!! If trees shall suffer, die, and be fatally mutilated that i may spew pointless points re: the Hulk™ movie {it was a piece of shit, Megan. An utterly irredeemable piece of shit. I mean, i THOUGHT the problem was going to be the CGI Hulk. As it turns out, i was actually fairly okay with the computer-generated Hulk ((although ol' Greenskin did kinda look like Hoppity Hooper™ or someone [{"Dig 'Em™" from

Sugar Smacks??]} as he BOINGed thru the desert)); that was the least of the movie's considerable woes. Not to put too fine a point on things, but i think i speak for all humanity when i say WHAT the fucking FUCK was all this SHIT about BRUCE BANNER'S DAD??? Nick Fucking Nolte??? WHO FUCKING CARES??? This was even worse than the first Superman™ movie, when they couldn't keep Marlon Brando's fat grey-hairy ass off the screen for longer than five minutes at a crack ((i mean, after about an hour pointlessly spent documenting Krypton's demise, for no other reason than to give Brando more screen time, they finally blow the fucker and his entire planet up, and you think, okay, great, they finally got past the Jor-El and Lara stage of things... but then the bastard keeps showing up in like hologram recordings and shit! Endlessly! Night Of The Living Jor-El!!! I mean, why the fuck didn't they just call the movie *The Adventures of Jor-El and Friends?* I mean, fuck, in the introduction, i think Christopher Reeve's name didn't come on the screen til AFTER Jor-El's AND Lex Luthor's AND the director's did! I'm not even sure he got billed above Margot Fucking Kidder, f'r Chrissakes!!! He's lucky to have gotten billed above Ned Beatty!!!). I mean, WHY do these director assholes think anybody is really paying to see a "name" actor in a supporting role in movies of this nature??? Nick Nolte will play the Hulk's dad??? Oh, THERE'S a box office bonanza!!! THERE'S a fuckin' main event!!! I mean, these people making these movies have NO CLUE what people read superhero comic books for. Class? Can you tell me what people read superhero comic books for? CLASS: PEOPLE READ SUPERHERO COMIC BOOKS FOR THE SUPERHEROS, REVEREND NØRB!!! Why, YES. That's EXACTLY correct. We go to see movies like *The Hulk* because we want to see The Hulk, just like we go to see movies like *Godzilla* because we want to see Godzilla, or *Giant Spider Invasion* because we want to see black VW Beetles with eight flailing hydraulic appendages attempting to approximate an invasion of giant spiders, and so forth. SO WHY THE FUCK DOES IT TAKE BRUCE BANNER FORTY FUCKING MINUTES TO TURN INTO THE HULK, THEN??? I have in hand my trusty, crusty copy of *The Incredible Hulk* #1, cover-dated May of 1962. Bruce Banner changes into the Hulk for the first time by the middle of page five. Furthermore, page one is just a splash page, thus the story actually begins on page two. Therefore, in the first three-and-a-half pages of the story, they found room to

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introduce Bruce Banner, General Ross and Betty, set up the antagonistic relationship between Banner and Gen. Ross ((Ross hates Banner, thinks he's a milksop)), set up the Banner-Betty thing ((Betty's sweet on Banner 'cause he's so smart)), have Banner get betrayed by a Russian spy, have Banner get exposed to gamma radiation whilst saving Rick Jones The Teenager ((thanks a ton Igor, ya lousy commie prick)), and instigate the initial Bruce-to-Hulk transformation. Three and a half pages! Yet, in the movie, i actually had to already get up and take my first piss before the Ang Lee brain trust could see their way clear to turn Banner into Hulk. Why? Nobody comes to see The Hulk in hopes that they can see some sort of "thriller" where some kid can't remember his childhood because ((as it turns out)) his dad wound up killing his mom while trying to kill HIM. I

babbling in dubbed English about the goddamn "homework monster" or suchlike, and you're getting all fidgety and worried, thinking how the kid is gonna go fucking ballistic pretty soon if he don't see that goddamn giant lizard, and you might not be far behind him. I mean, what are these people thinking? That they're filming *When Harry Met Sally* or *Doctor Zhivago* or *The Graduate*, but with a rampaging green behemoth thrown into the mix for good measure? DUMB-ASS, WE ARE HERE FOR THE RAMPAGING GREEN BEHEMOTH AND THE RAMPAGING GREEN BEHEMOTH ALONE!!! Shockingly unfair and unjust, i say!!! We wanna see the fucking HULK. We wanna see fucking GODZILLA. We wanna see KING FUCKING KONG. Everybody else is just a plot device. The characters don't need to be more than, like, shorthand ((or "archetypes" if you're feeling

((meanwhile, unbeknownst to General Ross, some evil-doer is doing evil which the Hulk is getting blamed for)), Hulk try to escape, Hulk see that the Evil Being Done poses a threat to Betty, Hulk stop escaping and fight Evil to save Betty, Hulk smash Evil but get captured by Army, Hulk break free, Hulk plenty pissed, Hulk almost smash General, Betty stop Hulk from smashing, Hulk go smash evil once and for all despite puny humans with guns trying to hurt Hulk, Hulk turn back into Banner. The End. I mean, more or less, THAT would've been a great movie. Instead, we have the "psychodrama" of Nick Nolte, who looked more like the amnesiac Sub-Mariner that time the Torch found him on the Bowery ((*Fantastic Four* #4, also dated May 1962)) ((*Fantastic Amazing Trivia Fact*: in *Fantastic Four* #5, the Torch ignites a copy of *Hulk* #1 to piss off the Thing, which,



mean, if you wanna make a movie like that, just call it *I Can't Remember My Childhood Because My Dad Killed My Mom While Trying to Kill Me* or something. Why drag the Hulk into this whole thorny fiasco? Hulk not care about puny human with butcher knife, and Nørb not care either! It was just like when i was a kid and Dino DeLaurentiis remade *King Kong*. We had the whole neighborhood piled into the Bay Theatre, we were mental with anticipation, veritably abuzz with excitement: "This is gonna be the best shit ever! Giant ape crawlin' up the World Trade Center, and jets shooting at him! Show us the ape, big daddy, show us the ape!!!" An hour later, we were still snoozing thru a bunch of shit involving fags in pith helmets, legions of over-choreographed natives, and some dizzy blonde who couldn't spell her name right. If you've ever taken a little kid to a *Godzilla* movie, you know what i mean: Unconscionable amounts of time are spent introducing and fleshing out secondary characters whom nobody gives a rat's ass about anyway, and the kid wants to see a fucking giant lizard breathing fire and fucking shit up, not some Japanese dorks babbling in dubbed English about the goddamn "homework monster" or suchlike. And, in point of fact, YOU want to see a fucking giant lizard breathing fire and fucking shit up, not some Japanese dorks

particularly Jungian today)) for more fully-realized personii. We don't need a fleshing out of Bruce Banner's character ((realistically, the only superheroes who have intrinsically interesting alter egii are Superman, Spider-Man, and MAYBE Batman, and that's being generous)) all we need to know is that he's a scientist WHO, BY THE WAY, TURNS INTO THE FUCKING HULK, and is mildly resentful of the day-to-day shit he has to take as a matter of course. All we need to know about General Ross is that he despises Banner for being a sissy, despises him even more because his daughter likes him, and mistrusts him because he suspects there's a connection between he and the Hulk. All we need to know about Betty is that she's the General's daughter and likes Bruce, to her father's chagrin, and all we need to know about the Hulk is that 1. Hulk will smash; 2. Hulk is the strongest one there is; and 3. the angrier Hulk gets, the stronger Hulk gets, and HULK - IS - ANGRY!!! I mean, that's your movie, and it shouldn't take more than five or ten minutes to set that whole scenario up effectively. The next two hours, by rights, should be Hulk smashing shit. Hulk smash, Hulk smash, Hulk smash, Hulk get captured by Army, Hulk break free, Hulk smash, Hulk smash, Hulk smash, Hulk get captured again by Army, Hulk break free

given that that comic book'd now fetch a price in the five figures, truly redefines the term "money to burn") than any character i've ever seen grace the pages of *The Incredible Hulk*. And what the fuck was up with that scene where Nolte goes to see Banner after the Army's captured him? That was like some bad College Alternative Theatre production you see in a thirty-seat boiler room, where some senior thinks he's written the great lost Samuel Beckett play, and the male lead is played by the drama professor, whose ludicrous overacting just serves to underscore why the guy teaches instead of acts for a living. And that crap where the screen was broken into little "panels" at times, presumably to evoke a comic booky visual mood, was completely asinine. I mean, one panel would show, like, a top view of a flying helicopter, and another one would show a side view of the same helicopter? Has anyone ever seen the same action represented from multiple points of view in a comic book, ever? ((other than, of course, two characters on separate ends of a phone conversation occupying the same panel, but separated by a jagged separation line [[all-time greatest parody of this visual condition was from "Starchie," the Archie™ parody that appeared in *Mad*™ back when *Mad*™ used to be a comic book, where Starchie and the

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Jughead character, "Bottleneck," are talking on the phone, and Starchie asks Bottleneck where he is, and Bottleneck pops his head thru the line and goes "I'M RIGHT ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS JAGGED SEPARATION LINE, YA MORON!!!" or words to that effect. Uh... maybe you'd hafta have been there!)) You ask me ((and you have)), the cutesy-pie multiple panel shit in that movie has got more in common with cubism than comic book art, and you can quote me on that! I don't know why you would, but it would help me sound more profound if you did! Also, as a final, vaguely-tangible indicator of a concept i shall term "Thrill Density," let the record show that when Star Wars™ was adapted to comic book form, it took six complete issues to tell the story. The Hulk movie adaptation fits into one double-sized comic book. If we arbitrarily set the Thrill Density of Star Wars™ at 1.0, it follows that the Thrill Density of The Hulk would be 0.333, since the story could be told in one-third the amount of comic books as the Star Wars adaptation occupied. The math is there, ma'am, the math is there!}, then die they shall – but for

Hot Dog, Polish, Italian, and Bratwurst. FOUR! Obviously, that dude on the Pittsburgh Pirates, after seeing three sausages and one Rev. Nørb depicted together, naturally assumed that i was the fourth and final sausage, and was actually attempting to assassinate ME, REV. NØRB, when he cracked the Eye-talian Sausage over the head with his bat during the traditional 7th inning Sausage Race at Miller Park, figuring that he stood a 25% chance of success, and, should he fail, another agent of evil would quickly take his place. THE ENEMIES OF REV. NØRB ARE AS PLENTIFUL AS GRAINS OF SAND ON THE BEACH, AND AS VICIOUS AS A TWO-PECKERED BILLY GOAT IN HEAT!!! QUICKLY!!! SEND IN THE BODY DOUBLE!!! ENCASE ME IN A VERITABLE EXO-SKELETON OF BARRY BONDS-LIKE ARMOR!!! HE HATES THESE CANS!!! HE HATES THESE CANS!!! Actually, i'm not at all worried, as long as the Pittsburgh Pirate next sent to fatally brain me with a baseball bat is the newly-acquired Jose Hernandez; that guy couldn't hit the fucking Sta-Puft™ Marshmallow Man with a club the

about my trip to Pittsburgh last month, but nobody asked] Cream of [Rhythm] Chicken soup??? Of COURSE he's gonna high-tail it for Poland! DUH, why do you think he's called the Rhythm CHICKEN, and not the Rhythm Viking, or Rhythm Mercenary, or similarly intimidating rhythmic moniker??? When the going gets tough, get the cluck out of Dodge, baby!!! Of course, i, Rev. Nørb, being made of sterner stuff, will work ceaselessly thru heck and high water to ferret out the true identity of this lowdown Hasenpfeffer-rustlin' lop-eared varmint posing as the Rally Rabbit, and when i do... goodnight Irene, or words to that effect!

Our fourth letter comes from Adam Miller, of Mill Creek Boulevard in Mill Creek, Washington, who writes: "Here's my question: Can you tell me what happened to KRK of *Flipside* zine fame?" Sure can, Adam. He's the Rally Rabbit.

Our fifth and final letter this issue comes dee-rect from The Hole – which, although it sounds like a prototypical sweltering and unventilated Texas punk venue, is actually deep within the bowels of the Pennsylvania

THE KIDS DON'T WANT YOUR HONKEY ESTABLISHMENT WHITE SPACE, MAN!
THE KIDS WANT A RIOT OF ALPHANUMERIC CHARACTERS JAMMED INTO EVERY
CONCEIVABLE ORIFICE A FOLDED-OVER PIECE OF NEWSPRINT HAS TO GIVE!!!

pussy slacker white space, die shall they not! Also, i don't like how there's always a space after the end of my ellipses. Like, it should go WORD, DOT, DOT, DOT, WORD, with no spaces in between the dots and the words... got it???

Anyway, sorry about the one-word answer, Megan, but i've got a lot of questions in the ol' mail scrotum to get to and miles to go before i sleep, so let's get to our second question, from a Mr. Dan Glenn Fury, from Parts Unknown. Dan writes: Is it a coincidence that one of sausages you were pictured with in issue #15 was hit by a major league baseball player? COINCIDENCE??? Hardly, Dan, hardly!!! It's not a COINCIDENCE, it's a CONSPIRACY!!! Look closely at the photo of me with the Klement's Sausages in issue #15 [OKAY! Not so closely that you notice the haircut. About every ten years, i try to grow out my hair into a Beatle 'do, with predictably ludicrous results. You will be happy to know that i've deep-sexed the Little Dutch Boy look {although i do still occasionally pop my finger into a dyke, just to see if i've still "got it"} for something more akin to a mullet, the only haircut with any integrity these days {has anyone but me actually gone into a barbershop and ASKED for a mullet by name? They always pretend they don't know what you're talking about... like that would be BENEATH their dignity or something. "Mullet? Mullet? Hmmm... not sure I know what that is..." It's like, listen, woman, you're a chain-smoking raspy-throated barstool mama who dispenses eight-dollar haircuts, likely just to pass the time during hangovers. DO NOT FOR ONE SECOND think i believe you don't know what a mullet is. Now make with the stylin' coif, lest the absence of same cause me to lose my temper and partake in a series of childish neutral drops in yo' parking lot!]]. How many Klement's Sausages do you see? That's right. THREE. Now, how many Klement's Sausages

size of the Sears Tower. Actually, i think the Pirate was just trying to be helpful: He had heard them playing "Blitzkrieg Bop" at baseball games these days, and thought he would prod things along down the logical path towards the next cut on the album – "Beat on the Brat" – except i reckon he thought it was "Brat" as in "Bratwurst" that he was supposed to beat with the baseball bat [the fact that he struck the Eye-talian sausage instead of the Bratwurst is probably due to the fact that any team that would trade Kenny Lofton and Aramis Ramirez for the aforementioned Jose Hernandez is likely not stocked to the gills with brain surgeons] [further, it was not lost on me that the occupant of the sausage that the guy bashed was a twenty-year-old woman. I mean, that makes the sausage a transvestite, i think, so the guy should probably be charged with a hate crime. As it stands, he got off with like a \$400 fine or something – which, i suppose, is enough of a deterrent to put the kibosh on any fanciful notions i might have of beating the meat in Miller Park]. Anyway, Dan, thanks for the letter!

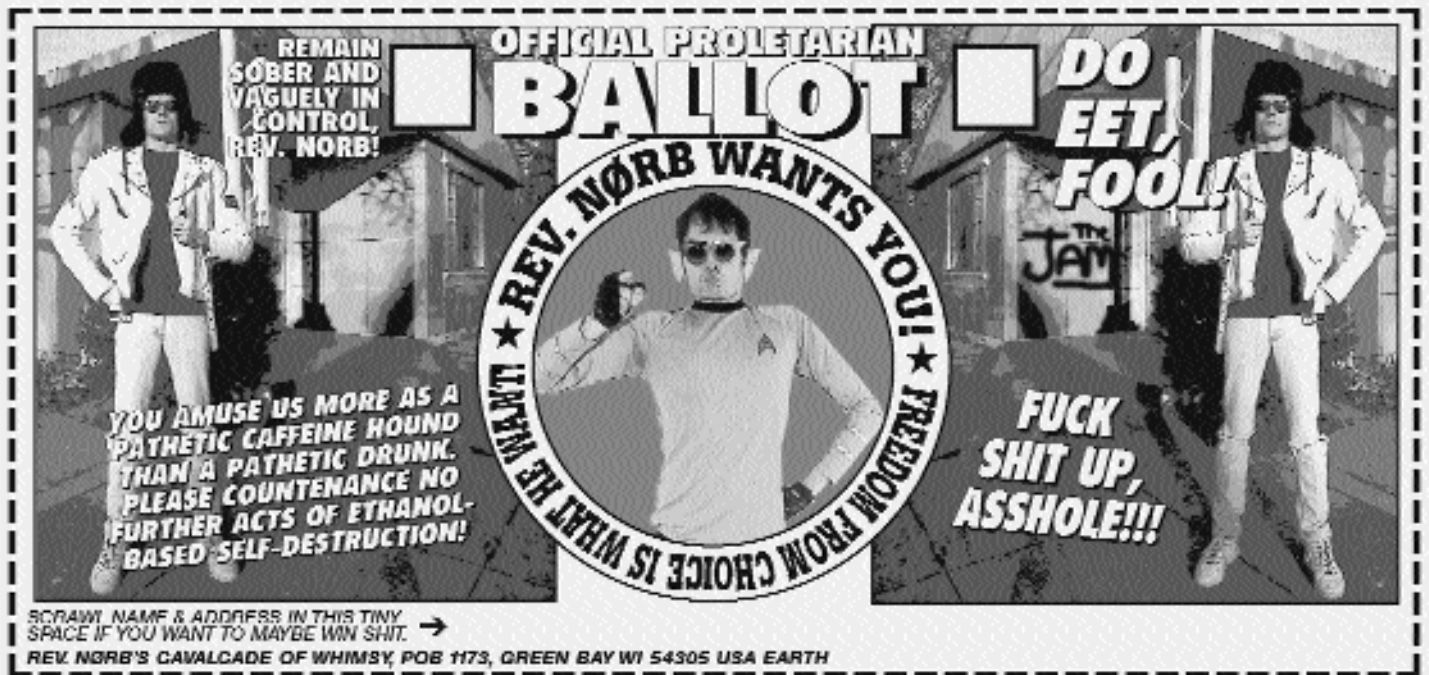
Our third letter of devotion and inquiry was actually lost by pure incompetence and slipshod housekeeping on my part, but the question was phrased something like "oh my goodness, Rev. Nørb, we have heard rumors of an impostor Rally Rabbit making the rounds at Brewers games, a Rally Rabbit with – as Michael J. Fox with Elvis – no Rhythm Chicken in him! Can this possibly be true???" First off, i apologize lustily to the querent for losing his or her letter or e-mail. As for whether the new Rally Rabbit is or isn't the Rhythm Chicken, well, DUH. Of COURSE it's not the Rhythm Chicken! Milwaukee is a tough place, man! Who the hell wants to cavort and frolic in a ballpark where, any minute, some bat-wielding steroid monkey might run out of the dugout and start walloping your head into Campbell's™ [note how i cleverly tie in Warhol iconography with his hometown's baseball team! Slick, huh? I'd tell you

Department of Corrections in Albion, Pennsylvania! Our correspondent, Joseph B. Mazer, writes about an interesting quirk of fate whereby he and a fellow inmate, after breaking some manner of prison straight edge via illicit consumption of cell-brewed wine, are apprehended [something about his buddy taking a leak out in the exercise yard] and chucked into "The Hole," which is, for all intents and purposes, one more hole than i've found myself embroiled in over the course of recent months. Joe, as a dutiful lay scientist, has made the following observations: "Now (in the hole) I have plenty of time to masturbate (sic) and play with my testicles (in the name of science, of course) and during one of my explorations, I made a striking discovery! I was just sitting here (naked) and I noticed that my testicles seem to have a life of their FUCK THE STAFF! own! Yes, it's true! With my hand cupped (oh so gently) under my scrotum with only enough pressure to reduce the weight of hanging, I found that my testicles tended to... to... to pulsate! Not like at 300 RPMs, but maybe two. At first I was scared, maybe there was some not before seen alien living inside my scrotum, but when it failed to eject itself from my body I felt a little more at ease. Which leads me to why I'm writing... why do my testicles do this?" And, of course, he signs the letter "Pulsating in Prison, Joe Mazer." Well, first off, Joe, congratulations at somebody finally sending in a sensible letter. It is exactly your type of truth-questioning Young Scientists that i had hoped i could share my vast stockpile of Scientific Knowledge with thru the machinations of this column. That said, i've been sitting with my hand under my balls for the last five minutes, and i have NO FUCKING CLUE what the fuck you're talking about. I did, eventually, come to sense a certain scrotal echoing of the pulsations of my brain – like, my brain would throb, and then a split-second later i'd catch [presumably] the tail end of the blood-surge working its way thru the nether regions –

but as far as pulsations independent of the Main Coronary Throb go, you're on your own on that one, Cool Hand Luke. I can say with some assurance, however, that your fears of alien life forms embedded in your testicles are groundless – there are no such things as aliens, except for Supernova, and one presumes that, regardless of how big your cajones have grown during the no-doubt exciting and culturally diverse activities you have been a part of as a moonshine-swilling registered guest of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, if Supernova were lurking around your sack, you'd know it, because they'd probably have some tinfoil in there [there are, however, mysterious organisms in the six-point-five-dimensional reverse-twin universe who are observing your every move, and waiting to KILL YOU. But they would not manifest themselves in mere

italia got... ummm... somewhat larger, and measurably more surly [i don't really think i gained anything in the transaction; i suspect that maybe said anatomical gizmos got smaller and more placid when i started drinking. I'm not sure. We're not always on speaking terms]. Like, The Creature is stirring. And it's saying shit like "Feed me, fuckhead! Feed me!" And i'm just trying to keep my distance, as best i can, because i don't really want any trouble [i've been thinking of maybe just dumping a can of tuna down my shorts and running, but what happens when The Creature finds out it's been duped?]. All i know is that i have an engorged, pissed-off dick that has shaken off the last vestiges of the tranquilizing fluids i had been constantly pumping through it for the last two and a half years, and it is not likely to go easy on any that might have the misfortune of crossing its path. I am unsure

LOOKED at the beer, to see if anything was really callin' my name. Nothing was, so i got back in the car empty-handed, and exclaimed, for no particular reason other than perhaps to hear myself say it, that "i think i kinda quit drinking again, maybe," to which Dirt Bike Adam innocently responds "yeah, I heard that some girl drove you to drink. Sorry about that shit, man." ...are you familiar, Joe, with the section of "Leader of the Pack" by the Shangri-Las where the dude crashes his bike, where they go "LOOKOUT LOOKOUT LOOKOUT!" and there's a simulated skid sound, and then a big quasi-collision, where it sounds kinda like a bowling alley would sound if they had carburetors and tailpipes where the pins should be? Well, dangit, Joe, THAT'S the sound i heard! And, once again, it was purely metaphorical (shit, i can't believe my luck)! I mean,



three-dimensional forms such as testicular invaders; their actual forms would be quite unknowable to we Earth chumps, as they only exist in dimensions 5 thru 11, and will eradicate us utterly without warning when it is in their best interests to do so. Actually, maybe you should run a quick tinfoil check, if you've got nothing else to do, which i assume to likely be the case. Grab your scrotum firmly in one hand, and crush. Does it feel like you're crunching up tinfoil in there? If so, we may have to defer to the Cynot 3 Ask-A-Nurse™ program. If you only felt things pop and rupture, you're good. I, myself, am a bit overdue for my weekly tinfoil self-test, but that is because i, Rev. Nørb, seem to have stopped drinking, again. Now, you're saying, "But Rev. Nørb! How could alcohol intake, or lack thereof, somehow affect your ability to properly discharge your testicular tinfoil self-inspection duties? Is this some lame hoax on a par with 'the dog ate my homework,' which you intend to use to justify your slacker loafing and indolent refusal to crush your scrotum weekly?" Well, yes and no. Basically, i haven't had a drink for about eight days [oooo! Eight whole days! Oooooo! Regale us with further tales of your steely resolve, Rev. Nørb!], and, also in the name of Science, i noticed that, after about the first seventy-two hours, my gen-

exactly what put the notion into my noggin that it would be a good idea to quit drinking again, but i think it happened towards the end of a twenty-four oz. bottle of MGD i was drinking whilst driving down to see my mom in Madison last Sunday afternoon [look, man, if you're actually drinking bullshit like MGD, you OBVIOUSLY have a bit of a problem]. Somewhere towards the bottom, i decided that alcoholism was really a lot of fucking work, and that i really ought to call up Joe King for valuable insights into my condition. It was at this point that the flashing lights and sirens went off – and, once i realized that they were only metaphorical in nature, i decided it might not be completely unwise to perhaps lay off the sauce for a while. Approximately forty-eight hours into my latest tilt with sobriety – that is to say, only far enough into things that a Tuesday night beer would've rendered Sunday afternoon's decision essentially irrelevant – i was hauling sundry members of Dirt Bike Annie ["the best live band in the world"] on a beer run [whilst listening to my New Favorite Local Or Maybe State Band Who Are Not The Leg Hounds, the Rumours, and wondering if it would be cooler to talk them IN to calling their first album *Fleetwood Mac* or talking them OUT of it], and, as they purchased their eighteen-pack of Budweiser, i kinda

NOBODY EVER SAID THAT TO MY FACE BEFORE. Well, he didn't really say it to my face, he said it to my windshield, but, i mean, shit, what's a man's windshield but an extension of his face, anyhoo? Yeah, it was like, DUDE, DO YOU NOT UNDERSTAND THE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT HERE??? THAT IS SOMETHING WHICH IS IMPLICIT BUT NOT EXPRESSED OUTRIGHT!!! God dammit Adam, YOU PANTSED THE EMPEROR!!! It was at that moment of momentous Shangri-La epiphany when the fateful decision was made: I am not drinking any more, because i fucking FLATLY REFUSE TO BE DRINKING BECAUSE OF A CHICK. I fucking WILL NOT HAVE IT!!! I do not need third party vendors driving me to drink!!! I AM PERFECTLY CAPABLE OF DRIVING MYSELF TO DRINK!!! AND HOME AFTERWARDS!!! MAYBE!!! Therefore, i now am officially on the wagon, until such a time that i feel i can resume drinking again without having the glory of instigating such a blessed event shanghai'd by some horn-swogglin' hussy!!! Although frankly, as usual, i think i took the drinking thing as far as i could go with it, wringing every drop of ludicrous Pabst™ pathos from it as my moistened state would allow: Dear readers, last month i went to my twentieth-year class **35**

Rev. Nørb

reunion. And puked on myself. During dinner. I think. I don't really remember. I was passed out much of the time. I dunno. My intentions were benign: I walked over to a former classmate's house, 'cause i knew he wasn't going to the reunion [i'd never been to one, but My Friend Stan {clever Slade reference to a song off the *Old, New, Borrowed and Blue* album, which is, therefore, an even cleverer Dirt Bike Annie/Kung Fu Monkeys reference} said to start going starting with the twenty year reunion, because everybody has pretty much given up being "cool" and you can pick up chicks] [i think that last part only works if you're not covered in your own vomit by eight PM], and he, i, and another old crony started an old high school ritual we called the Drinking of the Beer. This led to another ritual we called The Smoking of the Pot. This led to a brand-new ritual we call The Ordering Of The Guitars With The Credit Cards [i wound up, later in the week, with a silver Epiphone Les Paul Junior on my doorstep. Eh, i coulda done worse]. By the time i was dropped off at the reunion – in my ripped-up, grimy jeans, and my stinky "Shellac Tech" gym top – i was staggering and incoherent. I don't remember much else, until the part where i woke up and puked on my leg. I remember bits and pieces after that, mostly trying to kick the bright orange puke off of my frayed pants leg while talking to girls, and my ex-girlfriend introducing me to her [legitimate] rocket scientist husband, who shot me the most gloriously disgusted look ever shot my way. I guess he works on the Saturn V. I kept asking him if he knew Orbit. It was great. **HOWEVER! BE THAT AS IT MAY**, there is still ONE

salient drunken caper i have yet to pull – one merry, Pabst-fueled prank that The Fool has yet to effect – **ONE LAST GREAT DUMB THING DUMBER THAN ALMOST ALL MY OTHER DUMB THINGS** [except perhaps for the weekly tinfoil inspection, no wonder my cock hates me] **THAT I'VE DONE**: Somewhere right after the Drinking of the Beer and the Smoking of the Pot, i was looking at a copy of The Jam's *In the City* 45, and thought that, y'know, my house – being a worl' famous Lustron™ home and all – has an exterior made up of square shapes, kinda like that subway station wall that The Jam spray-painted their logo on for their first album cover. As a homeowner, i have a right – nay, almost a DUTY – to fuck up my house in any manner that amuses me. And, god dammit, right now, it would amuse me to **SPRAY PAINT THE JAM LOGO ACROSS MY FUCKING HOUSE!!!** Alas, the moment could not be seized: I had white Krylon™ Spray Enamel in the shed, Blue-Green Krylon™ Spray Enamel in the shed, and Fluorescent Pink Krylon™ Spray Enamel in the shed, but – shucky darn! – the shed was searched, and no black Krylon™ Spray Enamel was to be had. However, i'm virtually certain that it was meant to be my life's work to spray paint "THE JAM" across the tiles of my dwelling. Further, being off the sauce and all, i now realize that the likelihood of me achieving my life's dream of defacing my own home with spray paint doesn't stand much of a chance of coming to glorious idiotic fruition unless i can somehow convince myself to put one [of several] longneck bottles of Pabst™ in one hand, and a can of black Krylon™ Spray Enamel in

the other. I mean, who is gonna fuck up their own house sober? Likely not me, Joe – unlike you, my balls are not large enough to accommodate strange alien beings from Cynot 3 who can do the thing where they spin the guitar around their bodies, no sir – ergo no drinkee, no paintee. **THEREFORE!** In the interests of democracy! In the interests of lunacy! In the interests of the Krylon™ Spray Enamel Co.! I will hereby put the state of my sobriety to public vote! Somewhere within these pages shall lurk – i hope – [this column is already over three hours late as it is] – a ballot! And, aye, this ballot shall determine whether i, Rev. Nørb, resume drinking once more [and, presumably, get crocked enough to spray paint "The Jam" on my own house as a result], or walk the straight and narrow TFN. It's kinda like voting whether that fucking rabbit should get his measly bowl of Trix™ or not, except sort of even more pathetic, because The Crowd are not likely to write a song about me, ever [but if they did, i'd want it to be called "Nørbie is a Surf Rocker"]. One lucky entrant will win copies of all three of the fab and gear Leg Hounds CDs! One less lucky entrant will win copies of both the Rev. Nørb solo CDs! One hapless schmuck will win four or five Boris the Sprinkler CDs! Facsimiles not accepted! Ballot box stuffing encouraged! Send your completed ballot to **REV. NØRB'S CAVALCADE OF WHIMSY**, POB 1173, GREEN BAY WI 54305 USA EARTH. Keep those cards 'n' letters coming, folks! The fate of the Pabst™ brewery is in your hands!). Oh well.

–Love, Nørb

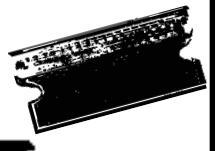


Rev. Nørb



Money

Lazy Mick



SMOGTOWN R.I.P.

NO MORE WAVES

The first time I heard Smogtown was in 1999, sometime after the release of *Beach City Butchers* their 7-song CD split with the Teenage Knockouts. Retodd pushed them on me and, after a couple of listens, I was hooked. Sludgy guitars, snappy drums, tense bass lines and a singer who used his voice as an instrument. It was like listening to early Dead Kennedys or TSOL. There was nothing slick about them. The more I listened, the more I heard. Storylines emerged. Themes were repeated within the songs and throughout the recording.

The opening track, "Bad Vibrations," is the antithesis of the Beach Boys vapid cheer that became a sound-byte for southern California "culture" and propaganda for corporations like Disneyland, the aerospace industry and real estate developers. But the picture Smogtown paints isn't so rosy:

*When you get home
your wife declares
Have you seen your daughter
and the clothes she wears?
She's living her
California dream
Experimenting with
methamphetamine.*

I had just moved to the South Bay. My apartment had a view of the ocean and was across the street from my favorite bar. I was digging the whole beach scene. I was about a mile from the spot in Hermosa Beach where Black Flag unleashed the second wave of LA punk. I skated on the strand where Keith Morris was so heavy, man. The sounds of South Bay punk rock (Pennywise, 98 Mute) blasted out of pick-up trucks and surf wagons along Highland Avenue. I could imagine Raymond Pettibon's punk rock propaganda posters defacing the telephone poles buzzing in the marine layer.

RAZORCAKE 38 The Ralphs where I

did my grocery shopping butted up against Hawthorne, the inland tract-housing suburb that gave birth to the fucking Beach Boys when I was just a twinkle in my father's eye. Suddenly Southern California was starting to resonate in unexpected ways and Smogtown was the soundtrack.

I can't say for certain when or where I saw Smogtown for the first time, but I'm pretty sure it was a show with the Stitches and The Pushers at Club Mesa in Costa Misery. Tweakers, punks, cons, alcoholics and people with funny ideas about race mixing stood around and bad-eyed each other. Skinheads worked the door. A Mexican meth dealer rolled up to the club on his BMX bike, tapped on the glass, and moved his merchandise. Slender girls with shitty tattoos and dangerous smiles suckered boys into buying them drinks so their newly paroled ex-boyfriends would have an outlet for their bottled violence. It was a good old-fashioned punk rock hellhole.

Their set was short, brutal, intense. Tim McVeigh rattled off a mid-tempo beat, not too fast, not too slow, martial but minimal. Chip Beef laid down the bass lines, the skeleton that supported Guitardo's muscular distortion and frenetic fuzz. Chavez barked the lyrics, his voice the fastest noise in the mix. The bouncers formed a bald wall, hedging the revelers in the pit. Plastic tankards of beer went airborne every sixty seconds or so. Guitardo wandered around the stage, wanting to go farther than his cord would let him. Chavez pounded beers between songs. Halfway through the set he was demanding more beer, and weed after the show. Tim banged his sticks together as if to say, "Enough bullshit, let's go!" and they blasted out another song. It felt like a DC-10 was taking off in the pit. Everyone knew the words.

On second thought, maybe it wasn't Costa Misery. Maybe it was Anaheim. Or Long Beach. Or Hollywood. It doesn't matter.

Music hadn't felt this important since I was a kid listening to Devo and The Ramones on my wannabe Walkman while delivering newspapers. This was music that took my imagination to places it couldn't get to on its own, music that made my body go spastic, music that demanded instant and immediate annihilation by weed, whiskey, whatever means necessary. I turned all my friends on to the band and with knowing nods and whispered assertions we agreed Smogtown was different from other bands, they might even be – Ssshhh! Don't say it! – *special*.

**EYES MELT,
SKIN EXPLODES,
EVERYBODY DEAD**

Smogtown emerged from a South County band called Vader's Crank. The name comes from their geek-stoner fascination with the meth Darth Vader might have made to finance the Empire's war against the rebels. (Science fiction conspiracy theory or eerie pre-science? Hmmmm...) Someone spun out and the band broke up. I don't know all the details, but if you're ever at the Doheny Saloon and you see a big guy wearing a sawed off denim jacket with Vader's Crank on the back, buy him a beer and he'll tell you the whole story. Guitardo was in an instrumental death metal band and some of those songs have worked their way into the Smogtown catalog. Guitardo, Tim and Chavez grew up in the San Clemente/San Juan Capistrano area, beach kids who surfed and skated together. Chavez comes from a military family and was born on an island that was home to a radar tracking station. Guitardo's family is deeply religious, and his mom regularly purged his punk rock records from the house. Chip, by all accounts, was the last piece of the puzzle, Fag Rabbit's former bassist who would only join the band if the boys got their shit together. They got a van, dubbed it the Gross

Polluter, and Smogtown was born. They put out a bunch of demos (now available on Disaster as *Tales of Gross Pollution*); recorded some singles, including the excellent "Audiophile" on Hostage Records; and appeared on some comps. They played with a handful of local OC/SB bands, a group they dubbed the New Beach Alliance. Brash, bratty, and belligerent, Smogtown launched a New Wave of suburban Southern California punk.

If *Beach City Butchers* exposes California's false promises, *Führers of the New Wave* – Smogtown's epic, full-length debut – targets the lie. The recording is more ambitious, the songs more sophisticated. The narrative possibilities introduced in *Butchers* are developed in *Führers* into a full-on concept album with a story as rich and complex as a movie. (Chavez copped the idea for a punk rock concept album from *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Seriously.) It's about a nasty bunch of boys in a band called the Führers who are the cancer of suburban Surf City. They party with bulimic models and kidnap Casey Kasem, demanding airplay and a long black limousine. The Führer's battle cry is an ode to street violence. Bodie 601, a Big Brother-esque entity, vows to run them out of town by blasting them with radiation. Each of the songs tells a chapter in the story. The last song serves as a coda of sorts by repeating the album's themes and revealing the fate of the characters and how they all fit together in the story. The songs are told from various points of view. In "I am the Cancer" the Führer's taunt their arch-nemesis. Bodie 601 replies with a Weirdos-esque broadcast to the citizens of surf city insisting they will "Kill this New Wave dead."

At first it all sounds a bit campy, like the outtake from *Repo Man* that opens the album. But beneath the Führer's bravado ("Knock out my teeth? I didn't need them anyway") is a bleak



Ray Chavez



Guitardo

SMOGTOWN



Tim McVeigh



Chip Beef

All of these pictures: Rick Bain

portrait of the domestic nightmare that spawned them. They come from nuclear meltdown families where kids sell cocaine in schoolyards and slut around town while mom keeps her blind eye fixed on a crucifix and dad stresses about his commute. There's no waffling. The lyrics are intense and precise. Smogtown packs more drama in a single verse than an entire movie of the week.

*Judy's mom called the cops-
somewhere around 9 am
She's worried sick so she
called her ex-husband and
He met with a Detective
named Officer Stone
And said, "You find my baby,
bring her home!"*

But it's too late for Judy. The Führers drugged her and dumped her body in the Santa Anna River.

SURF CITY CANCER

The Southern California species of punk rock has always been perceived as something of an anomaly. When punk rock first appeared out of the smog, purists from London to New York and everywhere in between sneered. LA was paradise on earth. What the hell could they possibly be mad at? The beach city strain of

punk was so reviled even Hollywood punk rockers tried to keep it out by giving it another name: hardcore. But beach punk proved to be as virulent as it was violent and it spread fast and far. Long after it died out in other parts of the Southland, it continued to thrive in Orange County. Now, TV shows like *The OC* (which, incidentally, was filmed not in OC but PV) want us to believe the county is a playground for rich playboys. It's not. They don't want us to know it's a different story outside the shopping malls and gated communities. They don't want us to dwell on the fact that white kids are minorities at many OC schools. (The county is ethnically diverse; the communities are not.) They don't want you to know that the county supplies a disproportionate amount of California's white prison population. Or that 122 hate crimes were filed in 2001. Or that a Filipino man reported being assaulted behind a 99-cent store in Huntington Beach by a trio of fourteen-year-old skateboarders who carried pipes in their waistbands and shouted white power slogans. Bad vibrations indeed.

This is and isn't the place Smogtown describes in their songs, but it would be foolish to say they're holding a mirror up to society (they can find better uses for those). In those final days of the 20th century, Smogtown seemed to be on a mission to annihilate the strangely persistent illusion of endless fun under the warm California sun that the Weirdos, Adolescents, Black Flag, the Crowd and all their vicious offspring couldn't kill off.

Smogtown's second and last full-length, *domesticviolenceland*, is a lot faster than *Führers*. The opening track pins your ears back. If Disneyland is the happiest place on earth, *domesticviolenceland* is a place where rat-infested palm trees shoot out of vacant lots choked with abandoned shopping carts, and an aura of suppressed violence lurks in the suburbs and on the freeways, wherever people are boxed in. It acknowledges the paranoia of boundaries compromised, divisions blurred where bad vibrations abound and you can get your skull cracked open anywhere anytime.

The staples of the Smogtown worldview are in evidence: the enduring fascination with surf nazi shtick ("Straight Off Adolf"), California as a place of broken dreams ("Manifest Destinoid") and campy sci-fi ("Neutron Blonde"). But instead of focusing on telling a story, they hammer you over and over again with edgy descriptions of everyday suburban duplicity.

*Mom's on a bender
This daddy's not mine
So we'll just pretend
And get middle class high*

It's like the scene in *Repo Man* where Duke blames society for his fate as he lay dying on the convenience store floor. But Otto doesn't buy it, and reminds Duke he's "a white suburban punk." Duke's famous last words, "But it still hurts," were true then and it's true now. Just another casualty of domesticviolenceland.

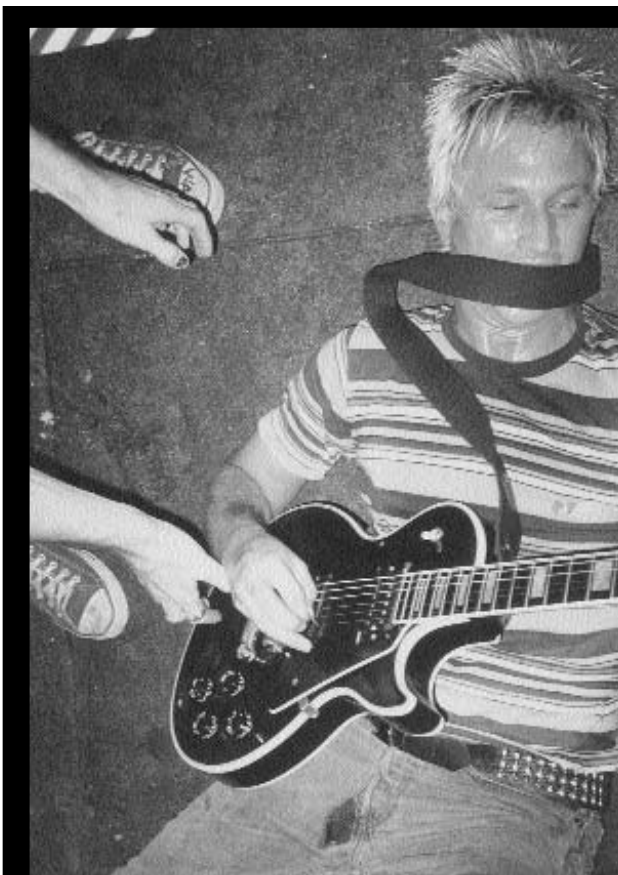
**NEW WAVE
MELTDOWN**

But the release of *domesticviolenceland* came at a bad time for LA/OC punk rock. Within a short period AI's Bar, Linda's Doll Hut and Club Mesa shut down. Staggering blows all. You couldn't just go to the punk rock bar on a random night and luck into a good show anymore. You had to do what kids in the rest of America did: seek it out.

The best thing about living in the South Bay was that it pushed Hollywood out of the center of my frame of reference. People were always telling me how far away I lived, as if LA County ended at the airport. But in truth I started going to more shows than ever. I could get to Long Beach faster than I could get to Hollywood, and pretty soon I was prowling OC bars and clubs, too. Hucklebuck would call me up and tell me about a show and off I'd go. I went everywhere: from the Galaxy to the Garage, Downey to Doheny, Headline Records to the Hollywood House of Blues. I missed as many shows as I saw, and while I didn't go to as many as the South County Smog City Wavers, I probably saw Smogtown more times than anyone else living north of the curtain.

Smogtown was famously unreliable. They cancelled shows with alarming frequency. Fans of the band learned to hang out in the parking lot and wait for visible evidence of the Gross Polluter before shelling out money for the cover or risk being assed out again. The Gross Polluter would break down. A shitload of relatives passed away. Once, they cancelled a show because it was raining.

Guitardo, who I've only seen sober once (at a gig he wasn't even playing) was usually the scapegoat. He had a penchant for forgetting his guitar. He injured himself snowboarding. Rumors followed him everywhere he went. When he had to borrow equipment at the Pusher's reunion show, competing rumors floated around the bar. Either his shit was in the shop getting repaired or he'd pawned it for



He'd jumped off the stage when no one was expecting it and landed on his back right at my feet. He's pissed himself a little and you can see the stain on his jeans. But what you can't tell from the picture is that he's still playing. That's Guitardo. There isn't a stage big enough for him.
photo by Money

speed, depending on who you wanted to believe. Chavez told me, "We always ask him before the show if he's okay. When he says, 'I don't know,' we freak out." I have a photo of Guitardo I took at the Flipside benefit at the Garage. He'd jumped off the stage when no one was expecting it and landed on his back right at my feet. His guitar strap is in his face, which is so red it's practically purple. He's pissed himself a little and you can see the stain on his jeans. There are hands reaching into the frame to help him to his feet. But what you can't tell from the picture is that he's still playing. That's Guitardo. There isn't a stage big enough for him.

Going to see Smogtown was a crapshoot. Will I make it on time? Will they show up? Will the sound be okay? Will they be too drunk/stoned/sketched/pilled-up to play? When it all came together they played some of the most memorable sets I've ever seen. The best I ever saw them play was at shitty little bar a few miles from the Doll Hut called Koko's. For a few months in the spring of 2002 they put on free shows that occasionally featured punk rock bands. I was at Chain Reaction that night to see the Briefs and dragged as many people as I could to Koko's. A bunch of us jumped in my truck and we passed around a pint of Old Crow on the way to the show. When we got there the boys from Smogtown were stoked to see us. The previous band was so bad they drove everyone out of the bar. Instead of playing to an

empty club, it was a full-on punk-rock all-star audience with members of the Briefs, Mad Parade, Manic Hispanic and all the Real Mackenzies. The bartender put out a bucket of beers for the band, Chavez distributed the rest to the audience, and then they blew the doors off the place.

The worst show was earlier this year at the Martini Lounge. Guitardo was shipwrecked. The guitar strap kept coming off mid-song and Guitardo tried to hold the guitar in place and keep playing, but then he'd pull a Jimi Hendrix and it would all fall apart. Chip and Tim soldiered on but Chavez was pissed. Toward the end of the set Chavez pushed him off the stage and stomped on him in the pit (even at their dysfunctional worst Smogtown was always entertaining). The crowd picked Guitardo up and put him back on stage. When he got back to his mic he said, "What? Isn't that how it goes?" He just had no clue. Incredibly, they played another song - "Suicide" - and Guitardo held it together long enough to salvage the show - barely. But the story doesn't end there. Chavez told me a few weeks later at the Doll Hut that, while they were driving home, he and Guitardo got into an argument over something stupid like a cigarette lighter and Guitardo ended up kicking Chavez in the back of the head and cracking the windshield of a mini-van they'd borrowed from a friend because the GP was in the shop. Chavez ended up with lockjaw and a concussion, but no hard feelings. They played an awesome set at the Doll Hut that night on a bill with Broken Bottles, but it was starting to feel like the beginning of the end.

When I heard the news they'd broken up earlier this summer, I just shrugged my shoulders. Oh well. Fun while it lasted. Standard OC punk dilemma. Their critics will say it's no big loss: they didn't play out often enough, and they never toured. But given the way they live their lives it's a miracle they lasted as long as they did. A more "professional" band might have found new members and kept going, but I'm glad they didn't. Some bands go through so many line-up changes they are little more than a name, an ego and a rotating crew of cast-off musicians - a band in name only, a parody of their former selves. Chavez swore to me one drunken night in Downey what seems like eons ago that he would never let that happen to Smogtown.

You haven't heard the last of Smogtown. TKO is going to release some new material before the end of the year, and there are rumors that some of the members are starting another band called the Subdivisions, but at this stage I think it's still more of an idea than a reality. The Beach City Butchers were blown up in a bomb blast. The Führers of the New Wave lined up and shot dead. But don't worry. Up and down the coast, from Seattle to San Onofre, there are kids partying in their parents' garages, ready to turn the page on the dinosaur age and start another New Wave Band.

-Money
Smog City Waver #45

Money





Seth Swaaley

SECOND TIME AROUND

It's the middle of March on a Friday afternoon in Baltimore and I'm standing on the corner of Howard and Lexington in that loose, fragmented realm of solitary mind, watching the forty-hour work-week crowds stumble by, listening to the rhythmic beats of hip-hop echo against the old store fronts, staring at the sewer smoke as it floats above the streets rusted potholes... the light rail slowly plods along and all the while I'm thinking, damn, I'm *really* back in Baltimore. It's been three years since I've set foot in this city, and honestly, I never thought I'd make it back, but I guess life is kind of funny like that, and now here I am, figuring, what have I got to lose, might as well give this place another go...

second, and in this husky voice he says, "Damn, it's hot today!" That's it. Nothing more. No startling truth. Just a simple observation. My only acknowledgement is a silent nod and there he goes, limping upstream and disappearing behind the faded eyes of the crowd.

I head up towards Lexington Market and wait for the light to change. An older black man is sitting behind a table of various colored vials selling skin oils. Tall man dressed in black suit... checkered bow tie... top hat with a red feather in the brim... passes out Muslim newspapers. Some crazy fuck is yelling out verses from the bible through a blow-horn. Something about Isaiah and how the "righteous shall prosper." A few feet away from him are three black men dressed in purple and black robes. They look like Arabian Nights. The leader of the group is standing on a

that otherwise wouldn't ever be seen together. It's sort of like the city's temporary melting pot. On a Friday afternoon you've got construction/factory workers covered in dirt to businessmen with tacky ties and brown collars standing side by side; you've got your wandering bums with their food stamps and your fat mothers trying to keep track of their children. Everyone is talking, laughing; there's a brief worry-free with their cashed paycheck in one hand and a cheap beer in the other.

You've got food vendors from every damn place imaginable: Greek, Italian, Chinese, Japanese; fruit stands, meat butchers selling everything from rabbit heads and ribs to maroon slabs of liver and pag maws - honestly, I don't know what the hell a pag maw is but it looks pretty cool. You've got your various dead fish on ice and oysters

vacant buildings that were once department stores - that decaying part of Baltimore, the city always talks about renovating but never does. I've seen the pictures of what this area used to look like back in the early part of the twentieth century. Old Fords lining the streets, the men dressed in suits and top hats, the women all done up in sleek dresses and high heels. At one time this was the center of shopping and entertainment, but unfortunately, those days seem to be long gone.

There's the Mayfair: that abandoned theater with the gothic building facade and the faded billboard painting of Billie Holiday and some Benny Goodman-looking group. How many times I used to walk by that building with the urge to take a crowbar and pry open the front doors, my imagination dreaming up what jazz ghosts I might be able to summon up from the past. Thinking

I GUESS IT ISN'T EXACTLY THE MOST POETIC PORTRAIT OF LIFE, BUT HELL, IT'S SOMETHING.

Holding up a brick wall across from one of the dollar stores that line Lexington St. when I see this homeless looking man - thick red beard and dark drunk eyes - stumbling towards me. He's got one pant leg rolled up above the left knee and this big, purple-yellow scar taking up half of his leg. The scar looks like it's all infected; it's gradually eating away at the bone. I wouldn't be surprised if there's some form of maggot nestled somewhere in the fine cracks. It's disgusting to look at, but for some reason I just can't keep myself from staring. I know it probably sounds strange, but I think there's a strange beauty, a sort of comic sadness in the most grotesque of things. There's a quote by Toulouse-Lautrec that's always made a lot of sense to me:

"Everywhere and always ugliness has its beautiful aspects; it is thrilling to discover them where no one has noticed them."

And there we are, this bum and me, two roaming souls, meeting eye to eye for a split

small stage, waving his hands in the air. He's holding a book - I'm guessing it's a bible of some sort - screaming bloody prophecies through a beat-up microphone about the "White Man" and the true origins of the "Black Jesus." A small crowd looks on, nodding their heads in approval.

To go along with all that religion you've got shady characters with crooked teeth and nervous eyes lining up and down the street. They're trying to hawk their stolen goods: everything from socks to batteries to headphones to bootleg videotapes to nose trimmers. Yeah, how the nose trimmer guy gets any sales is beyond me. People wait for the busses, cigarettes dangling from their tongues, cursing the damn schedule. And all I can do is smile and laugh at the strange, unexplainable rhythm of it all.

Lexington Market is one of the few places you can enter and feel like you're really seeing Baltimore for what it is. A city landmark since 1782. It's a place where you can find all kinds of different people from different parts of Baltimore

and fresh crabs sitting in wooden buckets; you've got greasy, fried chicken and gizzards and chitterlings; and you've got your bakeries with their carefully assorted displays of cakes and cookies and pies.

I stumble around, passing the food stands, listening to the various cat-calls, unable to decide exactly what it is I want to eat: a two dollar corned beef on rye or a crabcake or greasy dog at Polack Johnny's? (I mean how can you go wrong at a place that has the slogan: *Polack Johnny's is our name, Hot Dogs are our game.*) But in the end I always head over to that same Soul Food stand. I order my plate of BBQ chicken, two heaping sides of macaroni n' cheese, and yams. Grab a cup of beer and a newspaper, find a table of my own, stuff myself, all the while, constantly looking around at this curious, constant bustle of life that surrounds.

And then I'm back on the streets, filled with a sense of renewed strength and spirit. I continue on north up Howard St., past the closed-down shops, past the

about it now, the place has probably been infested with hordes of roaches and rats and every damn other vermin imaginable for years, and whether or not any big names ever played there I don't know, but still, it's the thought...

Mt. Vernon Park: I use to idle away countless hours in this park, smoking the tongue dry, staring at the stupid pigeons, watching the young couples walk by hand in hand, all in love. Sometimes my friend Katalin would sit with me and we'd watch the sun go down behind the old mansions that line Monument Street. We'd go on for hours talking about every damn thing we could think of: art and religion and love and all the things we wanted to see, all the places we wanted to go, how crazy and fucked up and confusing and amazing and unexplainable this world is. And now Katalin, there you are, off in India with your baby girl Ruby and that crazy fat long-haired Buddha boyfriend, who from what I remember, has a startling resemblance to the late Sam Kinnison, and here I am, three years later, sitting in the same damn spot, puffing

on this lost dream, and yeah, I guess you could say some things never change.

Go down Madison, take a right on St. Paul, pass the nice red brick building on the corner, and you see that apartment with the ugly gray bricks, the one with the lopsided cracked steps leading to the front door and the "NO LOITERING" sign. 712. Home of six months of maddening, lonely, and drunk-as-hell, fist-cursing nights. You got to take the three flights of stairs up to 301. Watch out for the deaf lady that's always sleeping on the stairs. Usually all doped up and passed out in lala land. One small 12 x 12 room: puke colored carpet... five dollar chandelier dangling like a loose tooth... two lights burned out... one window looking down on the back alley and fire escape ladders... a fridge with dead roaches belly up in the butter section. God, the first apartment I ever lived in, pretty depressing place now that I look back on it.

You had the couple next door arguing every night. 2 a.m. screaming matches going lost into the night. You had the crackheads upstairs and the heavy-set gay guy downstairs that always wore neon parachute pants and blasted Madonna every Sunday afternoon. And then there was that crazy, mysterious schizophrenic who was constantly cursing at his television set.

And there was Wendy and her five-year-old son Joe Ross who lived next door in #300. Wendy always had a strange group of people visiting her and through the walls I'd often hear Joe Ross singing to himself in the bathtub and I remember that one afternoon when I sat on the front steps with the two of them. Wendy shared her cup of vodka with me and told me how she suffered from bi-polar disorder, she was being treated at Johns Hopkins, Joe Ross, little angel of a kid who had these wild, magnetic eyes, all full of jazz and light, and I'm sitting there, looking at him, dreaming about the wonder of youth and how strange time is, and there's Joe Ross, all two and half feet of him, taking a hold of my finger with his little, innocent, delicate hand, saying in a high-pitched squeak, "Look, there goes the tour bus, the tour bus..." and I'm looking down the street and I don't see any tour bus, but there he is excitedly gabbling on to my hand and all I can do is smile and say, "Yeah, Joe, I see the tour bus."

St. Paul and Madison, watching the cabs and cars and busses and people go by with these thoughts, staring up at this ugly facade of what once was a home, struggling

to put where it is I'm heading into some form of coherent thought. But it's all jumbled images, lost days and nights, lost conversations, and hell, now I can't even tell if these are things that actually really happened, or if it's just my crazy mind writing out its own historical fiction.

Corner of North and Charles. Dirty liquor stores, alley ways full of trash and the CVS is all boarded

Predominately black joint. There's a pinball machine, an old shuffleboard, a jukebox with mostly modern r & b and hip-hop, and a small selection of dirt-cheap alcohol. If you're looking for much else, I suppose there's a lot better places to have a drink in. I order a twenty-two-ounce bottle of beer and find the empty corner. I'm not really here for camaraderie or to get drunk. I'm here purely for the sake of nostalgia, hoping to maybe wres-

my floor... digging underneath the old receipts and crusted toe nail clippings... tossing away the dirty clothes and bread crumbs and the whiskey's all gone and we're thinking, what the hell is open at this time. So we head up to North Ave., kind of fucked up part of town, but it's the only place we know of with a bar that opens at six in the morning. We've got our plastic cup of change and we're standing outside the Magnet Bar, ten till, screaming



Seth Swaaley

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photo by Todd Taylor

up but you've still got the fried chicken take out place and the gospel church across the street. A couple blocks up, there's this bar over on 20th. No sign on the outside. Just a building with the paint peeling off. Besides the faded-lit neon Budweiser sign, you wouldn't even notice it. Total dive. Not in the cool, modern sense of the word "dive," you know, those bars where the drinks are cheap and all the kids convinced they're artists or outcasts but really haven't gone through shit, go to hang out. No, this is the kind of dive you mention to someone and their eyes light up, their eyebrows raise, the lines on the forehead shoot out, and they say shockingly, "You mean you've actually gone into that place?"

You got to get buzzed in by the bartender just to open the door to the bar, and it's not the cleanest place, but it's really not that bad.

tle up a few comic demons on the way...

4:30 a.m... lying in bed... naked... drunk... listening to Beethoven's Overture to Egmont on repeat... room floating around me in some hovering form of cluttered haze. Phone rings. Beautiful, wild girl, who somehow, through my wave of loneliness and insanity, I've stumbled upon, is on the other end. Her and her friend are drunk. They've got a bottle of Jack. Want to know if they can come over. And so the night begins. The lights go back on and there we are, parading around the room... stumbling over kitchen tables and chairs... spilling whiskey left and right. I'm digging through a stack of papers and reading aloud a poem about a spider. There's music and laughter, and we're all poor as hell... scrounging up the pennies and nickels up off of

for them to open the door, surrounded by this menagerie of carnival bums and druggies and drunk insomniacs. And I'm off to the side with this foul-smelling guy with black gums, asking him if he knows Sam Cooke's "Bring It on Home" and what the hell do you know, he does. He starts singing, and he's good, I mean damn good! Not only does he have soul, but he's got the range to go along with it. Everyone is thinking, what the hell are these crazy white kids doing on North Ave at this time, but drink enough and logical explanations lose their worth, so finally they open the door and we bum rush in, empty our cup of change on the bar and say to the bartender who looks like he's still half asleep, "What can we get for this?" And next thing we know, we've got three beers and three shots. We down the Beam... my girl runs for the bathroom... I gag and

roll my eyes until all I see is white... the friend is over at the juke box putting in "Dancing Queen" for the third time in a row. And it's all insane, the three of us... free and drunk and my girl and I and dancing and whispering stumbled thoughts of love into one another's ear and I give her a good hard twirl and underneath our feet spins the black and white checkered floor and the bartender can't help but shake his head and laugh and somewhere the sun sits under the horizon, and somewhere lies the rest of the city... all asleep...

And now here I am three years later, staring at my own reflection: "life through the bar mirror," and whatever happened to that girl and those crazy times, I can't say. That sense of lost love and brief moments of here and gone, and all I've got to show right now is this dead cigarette and this cheap beer and this thick layer of sunlit smoke that hovers above and I'm wondering why the hell I even came into this joint and, fuck, now here I go, getting all sentimental.

An old guy with a derby cap and a cane is struggling to bring a can of Coors up to his lips and a few seats over is a lady the bartender calls Miss Lou. She's a

black woman, looks to be around fifty, dressed in a janitor outfit. She's got a lazy left eye and she's mumbling to herself and drawing on the newspaper headlines. I take a glance over. She's got George Bush neatly marked up with a

That sense of lost love and brief moments of here and gone, and all I've got to show right now is this dead cigarette and this cheap beer and this thick layer of sunlit smoke that hovers above...

Rollie Fingers style mustache and devil horns. You can have your Pollack, your Miro, and all that kindergarten art, but if you ask me, I say *that's* true art. Miss Lou takes a big sip of the King Cobra and yells out, "*That capitalistic motherfucker!*" No one else around the bar seems to pay any attention. I suppose it's an everyday occurrence.

Anyway, there we are, staring at the television all comatose-like as Judge Judy tears into some kid who's being accused of stealing his girlfriend's stereo system. And Miss Lou's yelling out, "*Defamation of character! Defamation of character!*" She then stares directly at this couple across the bar who's arguing. I get the feeling Miss Lou knows what it's about. The guy's denying

everything, says there is no *other* woman. Miss Lou laughs hysterically, mumbling something I can't quite get, under her breath.

The bartender, a frail looking old woman with a Midwest accent, says to me, "Don't worry, she's

totally harmless."

"Oh, I know." I say, "I just wish I knew what the hell she was laughing at."

Miss Lou scoots on over to the jukebox and puts a couple bucks in. Suddenly, the bar's blessed with a half-hour's worth of bad tunes. From Whitney to Mariah to modern "classics" like "Get Your Freak On" and "Shake That Ass." Miss Lou puts the beer down and sings and dances along to the music. She knows all the words. She has this bright, radiant smile; I mean she seems like she's truly content. It's almost as if she's this free-floating soul, oblivious to the world around her, as if she belongs in some different time, in some different place. Yeah, I know what you're thinking, maybe she's just some crazy drunk old woman in some

dead-end bar, and I'm just as insane for not cursing her to hell for picking that god-awful music. Maybe so.

Either way, suddenly I find myself, laughing out loud, unable to take my eyes off of Miss Lou. She does a circle around the barstool, and now she's really getting down, every part of her body's feeling the music and the other people sitting at the bar can't help but look. Miss Lou's even got the guy in the derby cap's attention and now we're all a bit drunk and laughing and god, *I'm* even starting to tap my foot to this ridiculous beat.

Miss Barbara flashes an old, wrinkled smile and asks, "Do you want another?"

I know I should really be going, but I take out a couple ones from my pocket and put them down on the bar, "Sure, why not."

Eventually the music stops. Miss Lou goes back to drawing on George W. The arguing couple goes on over to the shuffleboard. The same stale smoke from an hour ago still sits under the ceiling. I put some of the beer down.

All right, I guess it isn't exactly the most poetic portrait of life, but hell, it's something.

-Seth Swaaley



*By Petite Paquet
Photos by Chrystaei Branchaw*

So Talented. So Young. So Tragic.

Early on Sunday, July 20, the Exploding Hearts were traveling home to Portland from an awesome show at San Francisco's Bottom of the Hill on Thursday, July 17, and a surprise appearance at the Parkside the next night. What was to happen to them would be not only earth shattering to the band but also to the thousands of people who love not only their music, but also them. Just outside of Eugene, Oregon, Interstate 5 claimed the lives of three of the Exploding Hearts: bassist, Matthew "Matt Lock" Fitzgerald, lead singer, Adam "Baby" Cox, and, drummer, Jeremy "Kid Killer" Gage. Also in the van were guitarist, Terry Six, and manager, Rachelle "Ratch" Ramos.

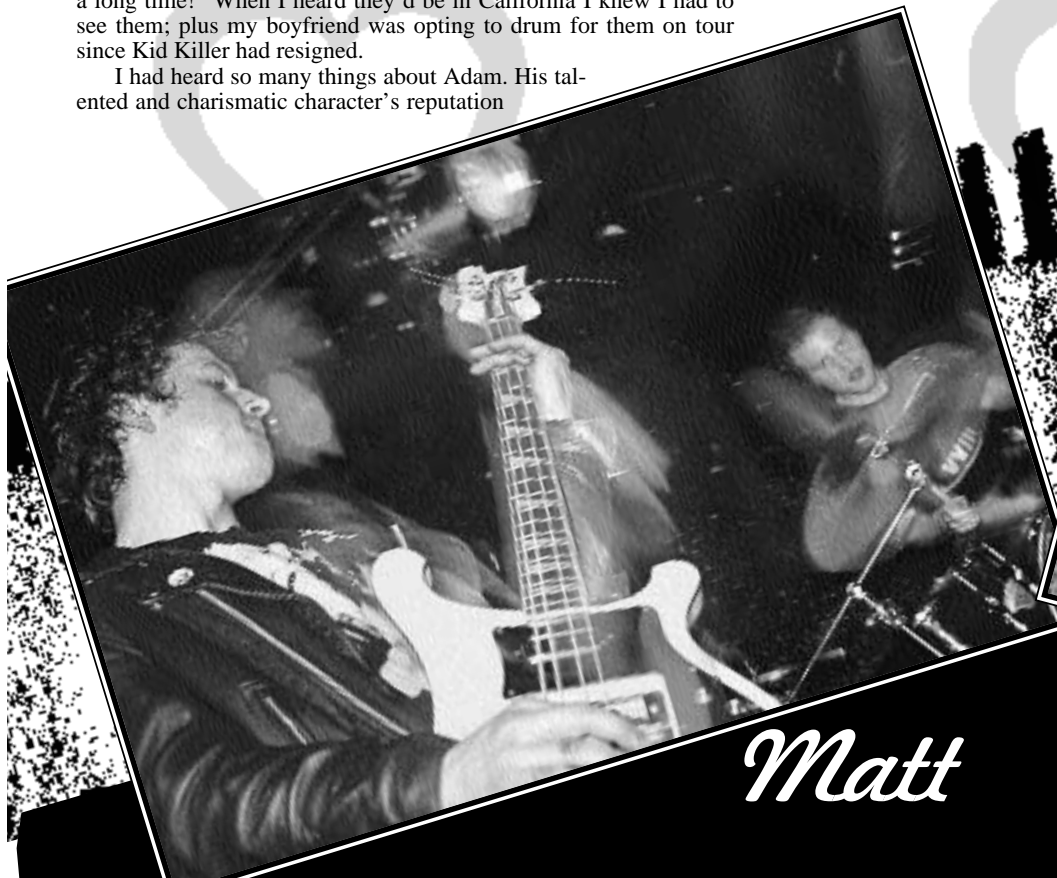
The tragedy came at a time when they were moving toward the zenith of a promising career. They were one of the few bands that we were willing to share with the rest of the world. We held our breath as they slowly poked their heads out of the rock'n'roll womb. So young and seemingly fragile, they had the eyes of babies who had just discovered what greatness they were capable of. There were rumors that they were going to play the *Conan O'Brien Show* and get a spot with Carson Daly. Adam and the others masterfully wrote some of the catchiest, sweetest pop songs to ever grace our ears. Ratch, the ever-patient manager and mother, was the one guardian who was to assure they wouldn't be consumed by the bull-shit of making it big.

I remember hearing their album, *Guitar Romantic*, for the first time and thinking, "Oh my God! This is the best thing I've heard in a long time!" When I heard they'd be in California I knew I had to see them; plus my boyfriend was opting to drum for them on tour since Kid Killer had resigned.

I had heard so many things about Adam. His talented and charismatic character's reputation

was indeed shown through his music. I mean, what other guy could get away with pink and white denim pants? The show at the Bottom of the Hill was euphoric, even though most people just stood there in awe. You could hear people whispering the lyrics over Adam's vocals. It was a four-man show of Mosrites and Rickenbackers, like a beautiful pop symphony. The next night, I stood outside the Parkside and heard a rendition of The Zeros' "Beat Your Heart Out" that made me tingle. Unfortunately, they got cut off after four songs. Did that stop them? No. We stood watching Adam scream the words to a song in someone's ear after the venue turned the P.A. off. The dude still continued dancing while Adam was screaming the words to "Throwaway Style." The Girls from Seattle also played the show at the Parkside. During their set, I stood next to Kid. Looking at his face, I saw youth and promise radiating from his smile.

The Exploding Hearts were loved by a lot of people, not as just a band but for whom they were as individuals. King Louie, who played keyboards for them on the *Guitar Romantic* album, said on the Goner message board, "They were my little brothers. The world will never be the same for me." He also shared a few memories about each of them with me. "Adam loved spray paint. He would spray paint everything. If you passed out drunk, pukin' in the toilet, you were gonna wake up later with pink down the back of your crack. So many times, Jeremy would be late for practice and we



Matt



Jeremy

would be like, 'Where the hell you been?' I can remember him saying, 'Dude, there were two Lexuses on the way from the bus stop.' He had to break the mirrors off because he believed there was a thing called street justice and he was part of it. I really loved playing with Matt. I remember we bonded when I heard about him buying a Winnebago. I was like, 'DUDE! YOU'RE BUYING A WINNEBAGO?! YOU DID WHAT WITH HER?!?! YOU DID IT ON THE TOP OF THE WINNEBAGO!'

Vas of The Girls told me, "Adam and Jeremy were like fucking

Kelly, a close friend of Adam's from San Diego said, "When the Exploding Hearts first started, Adam dropped off a CD-R – in which he had painted with pink nail polish – figures! I was fucking amazed when I heard it. I couldn't believe how good it was. I was so proud of it. I would show it off to all my friends and we all sort of fell in love with it. The last words I ever told him were 'I miss you.'"

We're not ashamed to cry or tell our friends we love them. We're not embarrassed to take the time to hold dear all the silly, stupid moments we had with them. We're not too cool to think of

the Exploding Hearts

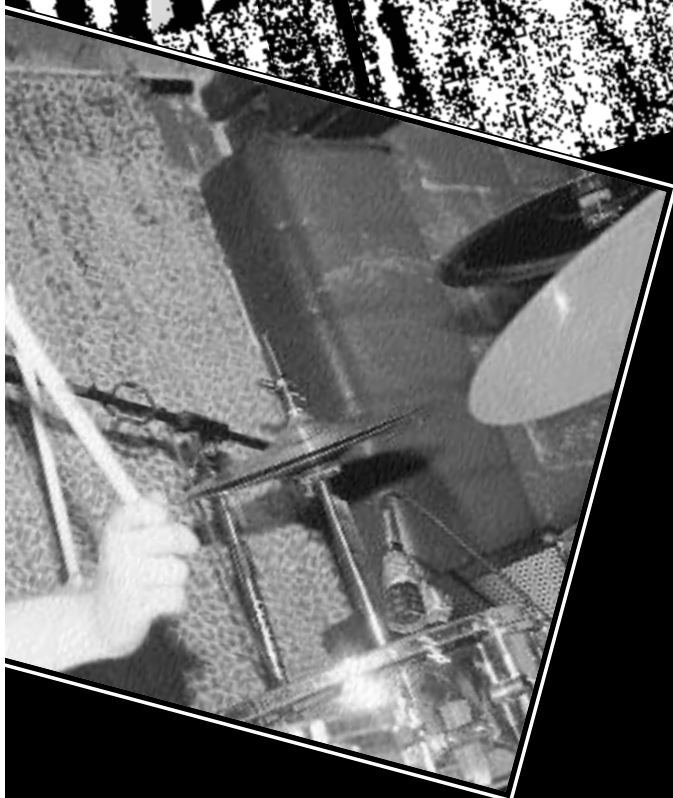
brothers. They did everything together – The Iguanas, the Spider Babies, the Exploding Hearts, and, fucking Jesus – they both died together." He also added, "Jeremy became one of my best friends in the last year. He'd always come up here and visit, and then him and me would blast every Oblivians record at four in the morning and party until eleven AM at my house. One time, Jeremy, Terry, and I sat on Adam's front porch drinking and banging on Adam's apartment door for two hours after a Mudhoney show."

Derek, a close friend of Kid and Adam's, remembers, "Adam... I've known Adam for almost six years. The thought that I will never get to have drunken, stoned conversations with him on the internet about his dog, Bluto, or how I am going to do techno versions of his song, 'I'm a Pretender,' it's just not right. I thought I would have all the time in the world to wrestle with Jeremy and sneak booze in club bathrooms with him."

our own lives, the lives of those we love, and the fleeting quality of life that this accident made horribly real.

Although Matt, Jeremy, and Adam were only here for a short time, this brings the immortality of rock'n'roll to a whole new light. Adam, Matt, and Kid – as people and as talented musicians – will always live because they left us with possibly the most incredible and timeless pop album. A huge piece of them will live every time we spin the record

o r



Adam

the timversion

WE WHIP A MULE'S ASS WITH THEIR BELT



INTERVIEW BY SEAN CARSWELL

PHOTOS BY TODD TAYLOR

From the first time I heard *Creating Forces That Don't Exist*, I knew The TimVersion was on to something good, something different. Which isn't to say that their sound comes out of a void. It doesn't. There's a strong, early-Replacements influence. There are snatches of obscure Gainesville bands like Panthro UK United 13 and Radon. A healthy dose of Husker Du flows through the songs. But in the end, everything is unmistakably The TimVersion. It's fast and raw and tight as hell, and when you start to make out the lyrics through all the screams and fury, they'll startle you with their intelligence. *Creating Forces That Don't Exist* made it into my heavy rotation right after my first listen to it, and I've been listening to it steadily ever since. It took them so long to follow it up that I wondered if they could. They showed snatches of bril-

liance in their seven inches and in their half of the split with the Super Chinchilla Rescue Mission (which is a tough band for anyone to follow on an album, but The TimVersion carry their half of the split with ease). Even their acoustic ten inch is amazing – and I almost never like acoustic songs. Still, a lot of bands can be great when they're only playing four or five songs in a row. The real trick is putting out a solid twelve or thirteen songs that have enough variety and power to make you want to listen to them again and again. So I was waiting for the new album. Finally, Dave from *Attention Deficit Disorder* knew I was jonesing for it, and he helped me out with a CD burn of The TimVersion's *Prohibition Starts Tomorrow*. I was impressed. I am impressed. I got the feeling that these guys must spend an inordinate amount of time practicing and perfecting their

music, writing and re-writing their songs and putting their guts into chords and lyrics. I pictured them to be perfectionists, or at least really serious guys with deep record collections. And they are. What I didn't realize, though, is that they're also wild drunks, the poster children for functional alcoholism. Which is fine by me. Actually, you put it all together, and you have the recipe for great punk rock. So I caught up with The TimVersion at the Anarchy Library and tried to talk to them about music, but mostly heard a bunch of crazy drinking stories. God love 'em.

The TimVersion are:

Shawn: drums

Scott: guitar

Russ: vocals, guitar

Mike: bass

Sean: Who's the abusive lady on your answering machine and why does she want you to bring her a picture of a naked midget?

Shawn: That would be my wonderful boss, Karen, who has been cool enough to let me work there as long as I have and consistently be late every fucking day. I don't even bother to set my alarm anymore. She just calls to wake me up. And, one time, she heard a story about me going to a strip club and having a midget sit on my lap. So Karen was very excited to see the midget picture. I had forgotten to bring the picture the day before, so she was reminding me.

Scott: Tell him how you earned the picture.

Shawn: The midget – her name is Little Lacy – walked around with a cup between her legs, and you had to wad up a dollar bill and throw it in there. Two dollars. That's all it cost me.

Sean: What do you do that the boss lets you be late every day?

Shawn: I work in a restaurant. I don't do much there. I show up late and bring pictures of midgets and get paid for it.

Sean: How many karaoke bars have you guys been kicked out of with Tiltwheel?

Russ: That was awesome. That was us and the Dukes of Hillsborough and Tiltwheel. It was the first night we met up in South Carolina. I walked up to the bar and said, "What's your best drink deal?" The bartender said, "Twenty-five-cent Natural Lights." So I put a five on the bar and said, "Give me as many as I can get with this." And this was a really nice place. There were customers wearing boating shoes and shit. It was so yuppie. They loved us. Especially Mike and his pick-up line.

Mike: Yeah. That was when I was single. The waitress came by and she said, "Can I get y'all anything?" and I looked at the menu and was like, "I don't see you on the menu." She tried to laugh it off, but I was like, "I'm serious." One thing lead to another. There was some alley activity. A few short moments. [laughs]

Shawn: You're just getting yourself in trouble here, Mike.

Mike: I'll quit kidding. We got kicked out because our roadie wanted to sing "Brickhouse" on karaoke and they shut down karaoke. So he made pretty big scene about it.

Shawn: They thought we were gay men. There was this girl dancing with this guy, and we said, "Can we cut in?" and the girl said, "Sure. All right." So we grabbed the guy and started dancing around him.

Russ: This girl was acting like, "Oh, I'm so hot." It was fun just to fuck with her. She was attractive, but she was taking too much liberty with her attractiveness.

Shawn: But, if anything happened to the air conditioning in the karaoke bar, we don't know anything about it.

Sean: What happened to it?

Russ: Our roadie cut all the belts and hoses. He was pissed.



Mike: He was that upset that he couldn't sing "Brickhouse." He said, "Hey Mike, let me borrow your knife." I was drunk, so I said, "Okay." I gave him my knife. He climbed up there. It was so inconspicuous. Five guys climbed up there, and four more were on the ground looking up. And he just trashed it. We drove by the next day and they had an air conditioning guy up there working on it. We did it on a Friday night. Apparently the next day, Saturday, was really busy and really hot. We never got caught.

Sean: Who was Frank Provost?

Russ: He's our old bass player. He got me playing in a band again. He's my neighbor now.

Sean: Why'd he leave the band?

Russ: He wasn't into touring. We wanted to tour. But it was no big deal. We're all still friends.

Shawn: He's in Hankshaw right now, which is really cool for him.

Russ: It worked out because we got Mike, and he can parallel park a van. You'd think that's all he's good for, but he's a pretty

good lay, too.

Sean: And didn't you once pass out while recording a song?

Mike: I was in Russ's bedroom. We were recording our acoustic ten inch (*Floribraska*), and it was only for a second. You can't notice it on the recording.

Shawn: He was hunched over the whole time. Just staring. It was an exercise in alcohol consumption.

Mike: We were a little stewy.

Russ: We recorded that ten inch, all acoustic songs, because we're all into country music – old stuff like Bill Monroe and Hank Williams. We had some kinda country songs that we'd been practicing, so we decided to do that dumb, stupid acoustic record. We all got together on a Sunday and watched the Bucs play. We had some beers while we watched the game. Then, we set up everything to record, which took another couple of hours, so we drank more while we were setting up. By the time we started recording, we were already drunk. I don't even remember recording a couple of songs. I don't remember doing

the acoustic version of "March 22." It got recorded, though. That's the bottom line. It didn't come out too bad, I guess.

Sean: What's the drinking song for Davey Quinn (lead singer of Tiltwheel, founder of the TV series *Cop Boat*) about?

Russ: It's just about drinking and playing records. In South Dakota, I think it was – somewhere on tour, anyway – Davey had these chords that he showed us. He was like, "I have this song. I want words for this." So he showed them to me. I don't even think I got them right. I played it for him later, and he said, "Oh, you made it better." Which means we fucked it up. But, we wrote it a couple of months after tour. We put some words to it.

Shawn: If there's anyone who needs their own drinking song, it's probably Davey.

Sean: Is it true that Wesley Willis (a schizotypic, Alternative Tentacles recording artist) wrote a song about you guys?

Mike: He did it when we played with him in Chicago. The song was something like [Shawn sings the keyboard parts; Mike sings the song], "This a test song. This a test song: The TimVersion. The TimVersion. All right. All right. We whip a mule's ass with they belt."

Shawn: "They rock. They rock like Dokken." That's a Wesley Willis quote.

Mike: Then we took him home and carried his keyboard upstairs. It was surreal. He said his address like sixty-five times.

Shawn: We said, "Wesley, where do you live?" And he was like, "All right, you go left here. You go right here." We drove all around Chicago, circling in on his house. It was like going into a vortex. He showed us pictures of his artwork and everything. He told me that he was gonna come to Tampa on tour and he needed a place to stay so I gave him my phone number. He said he was gonna stay with me for [in a bold, Wesley Willis voice] "Three weeks."

Scott: He had a nice apartment. We went upstairs and we heard a woman's voice say, "Wesley, you got some friends with you? How was your show?" [Also in a Wesley Willis voice] "There were a thousand people there. I rocked." And there were like thirty people there. It was awesome.

Sean: Who is OMS?

Russ: That was Old Man Scotty. He goes by Scroty now.

Sean: Why was he written about in a Tampa newspaper as being "your biggest fan"?

Russ: Because we opened for Fear at the Brass Mug. It's a shitty dive bar in Tampa. And this girl from University of South Florida newspaper... He was kinda fucking with her. He was like, "If you write about them, you have to put me in the article. I'm their biggest fan." He was just joking, but she put that in her article. He's been around forever. He was at our first show in Gainesville, and he's been at almost every one since. He's got kids now, though, so it's kinda hard for him to get out and about.

Sean: Mike, when was the last time you stole beer from a frat house?

Mike: Son of a bitch. Where'd you get all this information? Dave Disorder?

Sean: Russ wrote about you in *ADD*.

Mike: Bastard. We were in

Cincinnati, Ohio. We played our show, then went to a house where we were staying. The people there told us that they were going to a party. Russ and I were running late. They all went to the party and we figured, we'll find it. It's gotta be up the street somewhere. So we walked up the road and saw this building with lights on and doors open. There was an entire bar downstairs. It had a bunch of empty liquor bottles. We were thinking, this is weird. We heard some people upstairs, so we went up there and passed a couple of people on the stairs. There was an apartment with a door open. Russ and I walked in and there were four frat dudes playing video games. I was like, "Hey. What's going on?" They were like, "Nothing." They looked at us like we were crazy. We just said, "All right. See you later," because, obviously, we weren't in the right place. We went back downstairs. We were drunk and out of beer, so we decided to look behind the bar and see

if there was anything we could salvage. There was just a bottle of grenadine. Then, Russ cracked open the fridge and said, "Oh shit. There's Natty Lights in here." So we took it and took off. Good times.

Sean: Russ, when was the last time you passed out on stage?

Scott: Why is everything about alcohol with us?

Sean: I have questions about music. We'll get to those later.

Shawn: Fuck music. Let's talk about Russ being an idiot.

Russ: We played a New Year's Eve show – we don't play holidays anymore; it's a band policy – but we played on New Year's Eve at the old ADD house. I don't know why, but I was like, I'm gonna get a bottle of gin. So I got a bottle of gin from the liquor store. I started mixing drinks. I was making them pretty strong. They were so good. I was like, "Ummmm, delicious."

Shawn: You gotta skip all that shit and

Shawn: One of our friends drove off with the guitar duct taped to the front of his van. It looked like a unicorn. It was very majestic.
Mike: It was a big van boner.



talk about what happened on the stage. You were trying to play and you were unable to tune your guitar. Someone had to tune it for you. You can't tell the story. You don't even remember it.

Russ: I don't remember anything about that night.

Shawn: Our friend took Russ's guitar off his shoulders and tuned it for him. Then, we started to play one song. We got maybe a quarter of the way into it and it just took a shit. There was some sort of disarray about what song to play next. We started trying to play that. Next thing you know, Russ just fell. He fell right over his amp, knocked down his speakers. I just threw my sticks up and said, "This ain't gonna go anywhere."

Russ: We tried to play some Cheap Trick,

"He's a Whore." Or I did, I guess. I've seen the video. It's pretty intense. I don't know. All I know is that the video ends with me being carried outside and laid in the grass. Scott's wife is in the video going, "Roll him over on his side."

Shawn: [kidding] If you want him to live. Roll him over on the side if you want him to live.

Scott: Everyone else seems to know more about that night than we do.

Sean: Scott, do you really make a living off of eBay?

Scott: I did. For thirteen months. I worked for the evil Home Shopping Network. I fucked with them for a long time, then I quit. But I had all these CDs saved up and I was thinking, "Somebody would like this one and somebody would want this one."

So I started off selling them, thinking, I'll do this until I run out of CDs that I want to sell. But my wife pushed me. She said, "Go find other things to sell. This is kinda cool." And I was like, well yeah, this is kinda cool. I get to hang out with the dog. I get to go drink whenever I want. I can sleep in.

Mike: Tell him about Tori Amos.

Scott: I got a Tori Amos record for, like, twenty-five dollars and sold it for three hundred fifty.

Mike: Isn't that ridiculous? Can you believe that someone would pay that much for a Tori Amos record?

Scott: There was another record. Not a Tori Amos one. I bought it for a dollar and sold it for a hundred and fifty. [Scott pulls out a laminated sheet of paper and unfolds it] I don't leave home without this. This is my



cheat sheet. [He points at a name of a cheesy seventies teen star on his list and tells me that, if I ever see his album, I should buy it. But he also asks me not to include any real names in *Razorcake*, lest it drive up the price of the records.] As you can see, this is all horrible, horrible stuff. The good stuff is in my head, but this list is all the horrible stuff that's worth something. I work at Kinkos now, but I still sell stuff on eBay. I did it right before I left so that I could have some money to make my car payment. It's much better than working.

Sean: How big of an influence is the Replacements on you guys?

Russ: They're just one of the best rock bands ever.

Sean: Your name comes from them, right?

Russ: It totally made sense that we pick that name. The *Tim* version of "Can't Hardly Wait" is way more rocking than the

other one. (The Replacements recorded two versions of "Can't Hardly Wait." A faster, more punk rock version was recorded during a session for their album named *Tim*, and slower, more produced and radio-friendly version was recorded during a session for their *Pleased to Meet Me* album. Hence, the name "TimVersion.") But the Replacements were great songwriters. That's the most important thing for a band.

Scott: We're very focused on our songwriting. There aren't a whole lot of things that get blasted out real quickly with us. It's real important to us that we don't sound like anyone else.

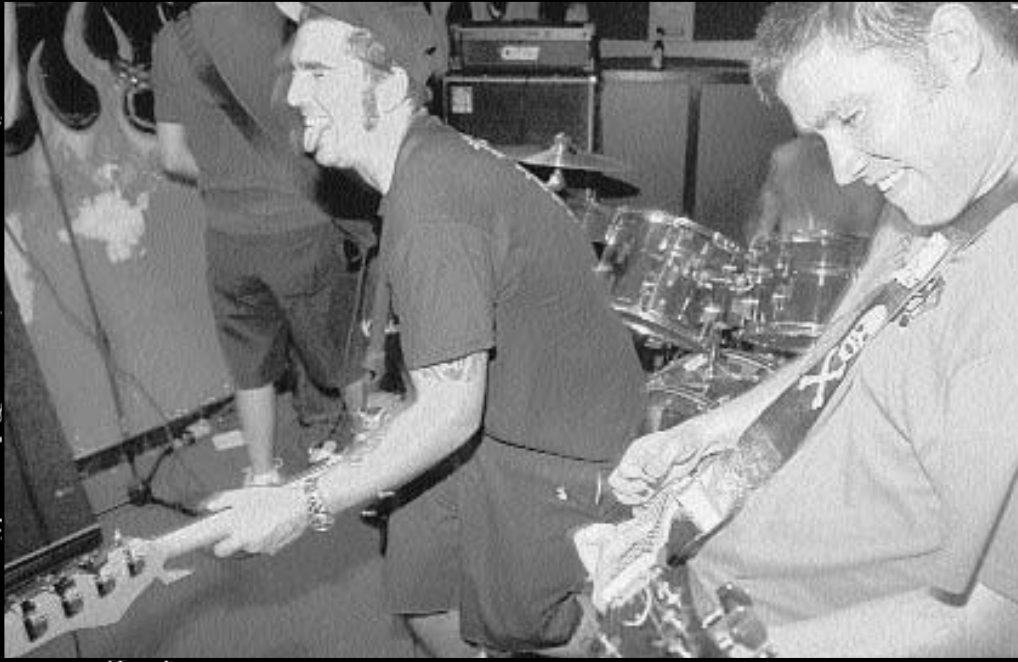
Sean: Okay, then I have a songwriting question for you. How come you have a song on one album that says, "If nothing's going on, it's 'cause nothing's going on inside your head," ("The Only Band That Puts Iced Tea in Whiskey Bottles" on

Creating Forces That Don't Exist) and you have another song on the split with Super Chinchilla that screams over and over, "There's absolutely nothing going on" ("Lloyd" on *Go Halves on a Bastard*)?

Russ: The first one has to do with Tampa's scenesters. There so much total scenester shit. It's very shallow. It's focused on that, I guess.

Shawn: People are always saying, "There's nothing going on." But there's plenty going on. They just don't give a shit. They don't put forth the effort to see what's actually happening. Everybody bitches about how crappy Tampa is, but Tampa is great. There's a ton of great bands and nobody gets a fair shake unless they're in this tight, little, ass-kissing circle.

Russ: The other one, "Lloyd," is about one specific night. We were hanging out in West Virginia with this truck-



er dude named Lloyd. He's actually on the cover of the record. He was trying to start a fight.

Shawn: He tried to fight all of us, individually.

Russ: Yeah. He was a laid off old trucker. He was asking for change and being a dick. He wanted to play Johnny Cash. He was literally grabbing my hand and trying to get money. But, by the end of the night, we were all hanging out around the jukebox, listening to "The Ballad of Ira Hayes" with this dude, and he was saying, "Johnny Cash is the greatest singer of all time." It was kind of a cool experience.

Shawn: We went from almost fighting this old dude to hanging out with him. It was a good time.

Sean: What are the "keep Russ happy pills"?

Russ: Russ has been on some medication for some time. They're Scoobie snacks, basically. I'm a dog fucker. [laughs] No, I get anxious. I get bummed out. And I guess it's just me being a pussy, but the pills even me out. They take the edge right off.

Sean: What kind of pills are they?

Russ: It's Paxil, which is not a big deal. Everybody I know is on Paxil now. Everybody I know is on medication or should be. I got off it for a while, but I was like, fuck, I hate life. I'm back on it now. It's not a big deal. You can still drink on them. You're not supposed to, but you can. You're not supposed to tear the tags off mattresses, either, but we do that every place we stay.

Sean: What about the rest of you? Have hardcore drugs made you better people?

Scott: Basically.

Shawn: Not me. I'm straight edge [laughs and takes a sip of his beer].

Mike: We're predominantly a beer band.

Scott: That was just a funny song title ("Hardcore Drugs Made Me a Better Person"). I saw it on a t-shirt on some underground, web site, t-shirt business. Some old lady – a *Leave It to Beaver*-type old lady – was shooting heroin on the shirt. I thought it was funny.

Shawn: Sometimes the song titles change as we go along. We didn't name that song for a while. Then, we were doing a show and a Christian thrash band played before us, so I said to Scott, "We've got to play this song first." So Scott goes up to the mic and says, "Hi. We're the TimVersion and our song's called, 'Hardcore Drugs Made Me a Better Person.'" The name stuck.

Sean: Shawn, were you really in a Steve Vai video?

Mike: Yes. He had a permed mullet.

Shawn: Yeah. A long time ago. I went to Gibbs High School. It had a bunch of old buildings. And basically Steve Vai's concept behind the video was him being a young kid. So they were at Gibbs to scout the location and shoot the video. And they didn't have a drummer. They needed a drummer for the video. Gibbs was an arts high school. I was there for the drums. They came and asked me to do the video. I'm twenty-eight now, but I look like I'm twenty-one. So, when I was fourteen, I looked like I was ten or eleven. But I could play the part, so, next thing I know, I was in Steve Vai's "The Audience Is Listening" video. If you ever see it, I look like someone out of the Stray Cats with eyeliner tattoos drawn all over my arms.

Sean: What happened when a Japanese guy tried to set up a show for you in Santa Monica?

Mike: I don't think he fully understood

what was going on. There's this outdoor mall where they have street musicians (the Third Street Promenade). But they don't have full on rock bands.

Shawn: He went down to City Hall and got the contract, but he couldn't read it. I couldn't read it, the way it was written. And he'd only been in this country for three months. So we meet up with him and we're like, "Okay, where are we playing?" He says, "Here." And Scott explained to him that we couldn't play. He showed him in the contract how the stores could shut us down and fine him a bunch of money. So we got drunk with him instead.

Russ: The crazy thing about Santa Monica is that I don't know anything about California. Whenever we told people we had a show in Santa Monica, they were like, "Oh, that's weird." Apparently, it's a really ritzy part of LA. No one there would even talk to us when we asked them for directions. It was wild.

Sean: Scott, when was the last time a bunch of drunks destroyed your guitar?

Scott: It was all kinda sketchy. I don't remember exactly what was going on. There were a bunch of people all over the stage. All I remember is that I wanted to tackle people while we were playing. I don't know. I think I tackled somebody and they hit Mike. I'm not sure what happened, but when I got up, my guitar was snapped in half. I wasn't very happy about that, so I made sure it was fully destroyed. I sobered up the next day and realized, shit, they got people to fix these things.

Shawn: One of our friends drove off with the guitar duct taped to the front of his van. It looked like a unicorn. It was very majestic.

Mike: It was a big van boner.



THE SOVIETTES

Annie: guitar ▶ Susy: bass ▶ Sturgeon: guitar ▶ Danny: drums

It doesn't sound like that big of a mountain to climb. Name one female-fronted band, beyond the Avengers, who consistently retained their sense of melody instead of just screaming when they got serious and political. After thinking about this for now, several months, it became obvious why I took a liking to the Soviettes so quickly. They've got the fun and bounce of The Go-Go's, the teeth and smart marbles of *Reject All American* Bikini Kill, the hot-wired, charging punk of the Avengers, and song topics that go far beyond boyfriends and bubblegum. They prove that melody and backup vocals don't always have to equal a frontal lobotomy and that serious issues - from personal to public to political - can be confronted while the crowd is singing and dancing along with them. My recommendation to listening to their self-titled, debut album is to give it several listens. When the songs separate from one another, when the lyrics start seeping in, when you realize that you've got four people who can not only play, but are intelligent, have good hearts, strong friendships, and Midwestern ethics, that the album spins itself into a brighter and brighter gem. The Soviettes are definitely an addictive listen.

Interview and pictures by Todd Taylor

Todd: A lyrics question. How do you, "Grab a knife and turn it into art"?

Danny: That's "Blue Stars." The song itself is about battling depression through the Minnesota winter and doing so through creating artwork.

Todd: Why a knife, then?

Danny: Because the knife is something you can use to commit suicide. It's pretty harsh, but so is life. But that is sort of what you have to do.

Todd: For the band, what is one criticism that's hard to duck?

Annie: [in funny voice] Criticism? What is this word? Everybody loves us all the time. What do you mean? [laughter]

Sturgeon: The one that's hard to duck is that we're angry young women. Grrr!

Annie: They might mean it as a criticism, but I'm like, "What do you mean?"

Susy: If girls write or play something political, it's because we're angry.

Sturgeon: Because we're girls. Now, all of a sudden, we have issues with things because of our gender and not just because we're people.

Danny: It seems like we get classified easier because of that. Because that's what they hear. Ninety percent, or even more than that, they're hearing girls.

Annie: We would be nothing with-

out Danny.

Sturgeon: Seriously.

Todd: Have people called you an all-girl band?

All: Yes.

Danny: All the time.

Todd: So, Danny, you're pre-op?

Sturgeon: One article, they had the photo of all four of us and they said, "This girl band trio." They couldn't even count us in the photo that they ran. There's four people in that picture. One of them is not a girl.

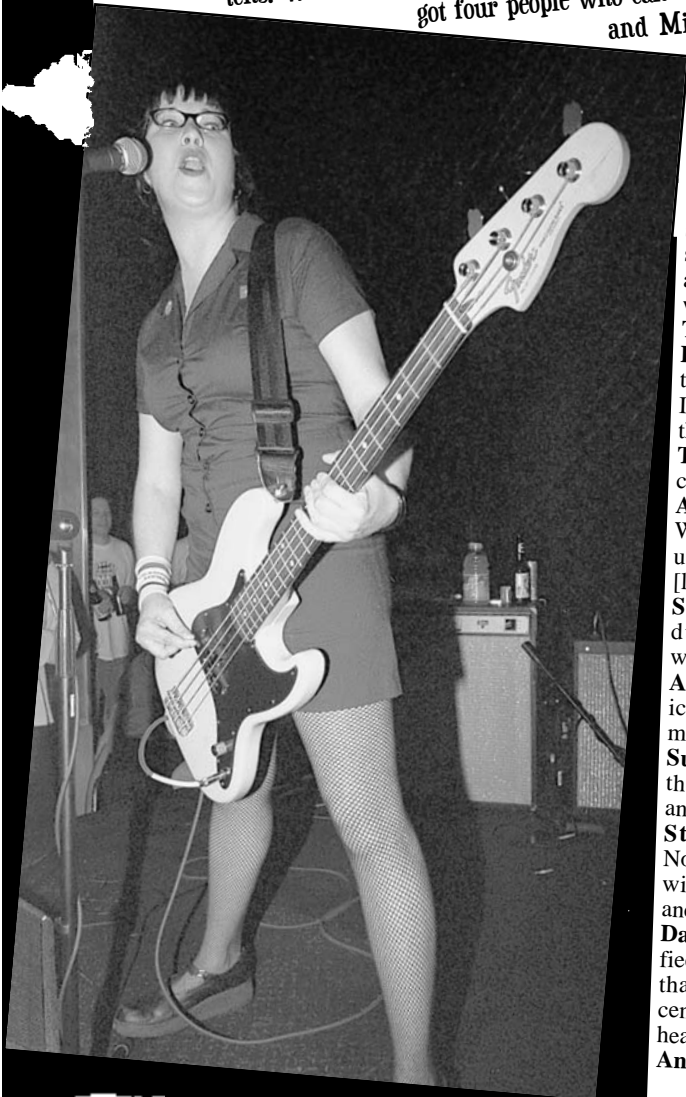
Danny: Not only do they have a drummer - shhh - it's a boy. It's a secret.

Todd: When I was talking to Susy yesterday, the question for the criticism is that after you recorded the album and could hear the songs on a regular basis, that everybody stepped up to the level on the album on a more consistent basis.

Sturgeon: Our other stuff isn't as good?

Todd: No. You realized how a song could be played - not only just the chords, but also the style behind it. When things become more effortless to play, they become more fun. You don't have to think and stare at your instrument all the time. You realize, "Oh, that's how it's supposed to sound," and everyone's in a groove.

Danny: Yeah, also because we all write songs, it's easy if one of us comes in with a song and say,



"Okay, I want you to do this thing here," because we know each other's styles.

Annie: We all have distinctly different styles. I really like that.

Todd: It gives it more depth.

Sturgeon: It's just more interesting than hearing the whole record written by one person or one voice.

Annie: Or one drum beat or one guitar riff.

Todd: That was my major trepidation when I first got your album. So many bands can put out a seven inch, and with four songs, it's not a stretch to listen to basically the same song four times and dig the shit out of it. But if you get an album and all twelve or so songs sound the same, I'm like, "I wish this was a seven inch. I'd listen to it more."

Danny: I really like not knowing what to expect from track to track.

Todd: What was the last thing you broke that, prior to breaking it, you didn't know you used it a lot?

Annie: My heart.

Susy: Oh, Annie.

Danny: Probably just some scissors or something.

Susy: I broke my hand last summer. Annie and I decided we were going to join a softball team and I told her that I'm super accident prone. They knew me by name in the emergency room when I was little. The first time I hit the ball - I'm running to first base - I totally tripped and slid into first. We sucked so bad. It was twenty to zero. I laid there for awhile. "Oh my god. My hand." Everyone was "Woooo!" I broke my hand and you guys made me play with a broken hand. It was all black and blue. Remember that? Then green. Then yellow.

Todd: Was it your dominant hand?

Susy: No. I also I didn't have health insurance so I couldn't afford to put a cast on it. It's still kind of weird.

Annie: My dog pulled me into a garbage can on my bike the other day and I thought I hurt my wrist. It's fine. I just bruised it a little. I called, "Sturgeon, something bad has happened."

Todd: What is the best trophy you've ever won?

Danny: I was the best free throw foul shooter at basketball camp. In front of four hundred kids, I put in nine out of ten. It was really great. The funny thing was that I'm not very good at that. For some reason, one day, and I took home a trophy. I don't know where that is now.

Susy: I won a Bruin Award when I was in soccer. We were the Fargo Bruins. It meant that I was a woman who had lots of spirit, a go-getter.

Sturgeon: What the hell's a bruin?

Susy: A bear.

Annie: I won a limbo contest once.

Susy: You did?

Annie: They played "Limbo Rock." It was kind of a big deal. Fargo.

Susy: Oh, yeah.

Todd: Who is your favorite teacher of all time?

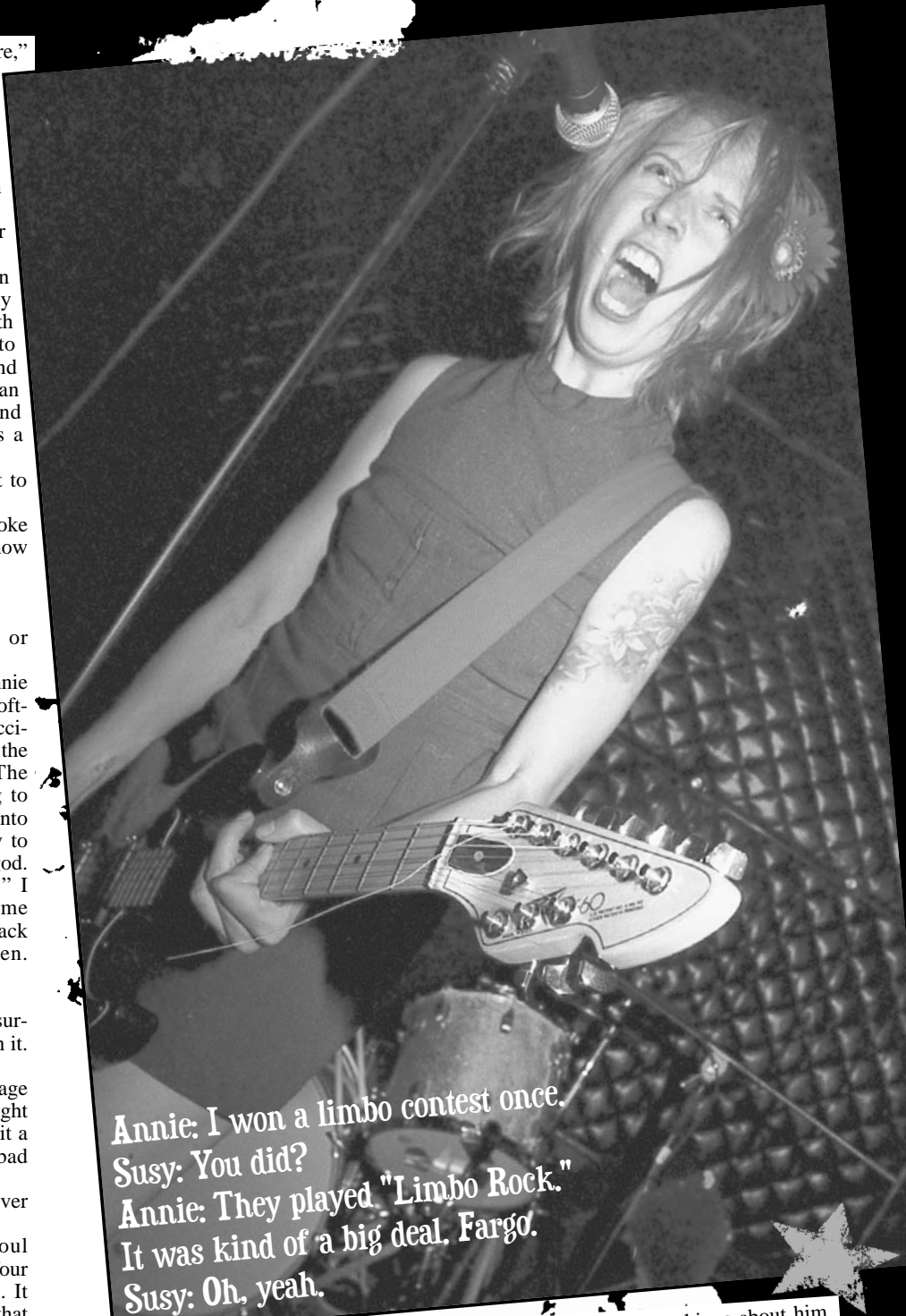
Annie: Sturgeon is my favorite teacher of all time. [laughter]

Susy: Ms. Bush. In the four, five combination class in Fargo, North Dakota. I found out years later that she's a lesbian. She's an old lady.

Danny: Mine is my American history teacher. His name is Rothman. I don't remember his first name. He was this old New York, Jewish guy. His accent and his

conviction were the best things about him. Just a very smart guy.

Sturgeon: I had a lot of great teachers, but I had a lady called Ms. Bibblenix. I had a program at the U., one of those advanced math programs. She taught math. I had failed out of the program the year before, then tested back in. She was really cool. She had that crusty '80s winged hair. It was all black and shaggy. She'd wear black cowboy boots and super tight black jeans. She wasn't married. She was young. She



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Susy: Oh, yeah.

Sturgeon: Nah. I'm not afraid to show my underwear. Sometimes I wear underwear that's really bright so people can see it. You're going to see it anyway. You might as well make it fun. We're not too shy. We're not too full of tricks, either. Can't really do any of those.

was a really good teacher, and I was like, "I could do that job. I could be a math teacher." And now I am.

Annie: My favorite teacher wasn't my favorite teacher because he was such an extraordinary teacher. I went to an alternative high school for my junior/senior year and I had this teacher, Gary. He was my physics teacher. I don't know what his last name is. He was cool. I'm pretty sure he was just high all the time.

Todd: Suzy, what's so great about your dog, Tucker?

Susy: Tucker's old. When I met Lane (Lane is the drummer for Dillinger Four), he had Tucker. It was his ex-girlfriend's dog that they had saved. He's really ornery. He'd bite people. We have parties at our house. We put a sign on our door: "Do not touch the dog." People would still be like, "Oh, but dogs love me." And he'd bite 'em.

Danny: There's a picture of Tucker on the split LP (with The Valentines). Max didn't make it for photos one day, so we just took a picture of Tucker, and put "Max" below it.

Susy: Tucker's disagreeable. He's old and he can't hear. The other day, Lane said, "Do you think Tucker thinks, 'Why don't people talk to me anymore?'" [laughter]

Danny: And Lane doesn't know how old he was.

Susy: When I first started dating Lane, I was like, "So, how old is Tucker?" "Oh, ten." A couple months ago, we took him to the vet. "Seriously, how old do you think Tucker is?" "Oh, about ten." I was like, "Three years ago, you told me he was ten." Tucker's fourteen now. He's got all of these gross warts all over him.

Sturgeon: He used to come to our practice when we practiced in the basement at your house. He would sit in the middle of the bass drum.

Susy: He follows me everywhere. He's a special guy.

Todd: Danny, what do you do in a "sound arts" class?

Danny: Sound arts is anything from scoring film to just learning the basics. Even old school, like spicing tape and all that stuff to learning digital stuff – Digital Performer, ProTools – all that junk.

Todd: How does that bleed over to your drumming?

Danny: It doesn't too much, actually. Anything I learned in sound

arts is way trumped by Jacques Wait who records us and produces us. He just knows everything. It doesn't, really, other than the kind of microphones that they're using to mic up the drums. I can tell him what overall sound I'm going for, I suppose.

Todd: Are there any tricks, on stage, that you won't do if you're wearing a skirt?

Annie: Tricks? I can't really do any.

Sturgeon: Nah. I'm not afraid to show my underwear. Sometimes I wear underwear that's really bright so people can see it. You're going to see it anyway. You might as well make it fun. We're not too shy. We're not too full of tricks, either. Can't really do any of those.

Susy: I guess if I fell down when I was drunk and my skirt happened to fly up.

Annie: That's kind of like a trick.

Todd: Do you know of any other female-vocal punk band who, when they talk about politics, they don't scream? I only came up with one. I thought about this for a long time.

Danny: What about The Avengers?

Todd: That's the one I got.

Susy: Give him a trophy!

Sturgeon: I was going to say X-Ray Spex, but she totally screams.

Todd: Trills.

Annie: Weird falsettos.

Sturgeon: Kathleen Hanna sounds exactly like Poly Styrene.

Todd: I didn't think it would be that rare. But it is. Kathleen Hanna does sing sometimes, but when she was in Bikini Kill, who I love, she screamed a lot. I don't want to lump you strictly into political pop punk – but a female-vocal band that covers serious issues – I think that's one thing that makes the Soviettes special in one big respect. When you get serious, you remain melodic.

Sturgeon: That's interesting.

Todd: Many punk-inclined ladies think that the combination to doing a political song is this: "I can't be sweet and poppy and serious at the same time." I believe it's a false premise.

Annie: We always said that we wanted to make songs that were catchy, songs that kids would want to listen to over and over that have something to say besides "I miss my boyfriend," or whatever.

Sturgeon: The other thing is that I don't think we ever thought about it in terms of, "If you have this subject matter, you have to have this style." Here's a song. Here's some lyrics. Here's how I'm going to sing.

This is what I care to sing about at this point in my life. I don't think we ever thought about it, like you can't do it.

Susy: No.

Todd: What are your biggest fears, facing your first tour?

Susy: Being penniless. I have no money.

Annie: I'm not worried about that. I think people will be nice to us.

Sturgeon: The only serious fear I have is that the van breaks down or we crash it. I'm ready to go.

Danny: We're all ready to go.

Todd: What are you most looking forward to?

Annie: Playing in front of people we don't know. Seriously.

Danny: Meeting new people.

Sturgeon: Going to new places.

Annie: I've never been anywhere. I'm really excited to go.

Susy: You've been to Wyoming, Annie.

Annie: I've been to Wyoming. I've been a couple places on family trips. I finally went to New York and Chicago this past year.

Todd: What type of communism do the Soviettes model themselves after? Trotskyism? Stalinism? Joe Strummerism? Care Bearism?

Sturgeon: What's Care Bearism?

Todd: How you spell your band name, it's both hard and soft. You have something – communism and the Soviet Block – that many people picture as hard, concrete, and gray, but with the "ettes" at the end, makes it kind of cuddly.

Danny: I would say The Ronnettes. [laughter] With no explanation.

Sturgeon: I think that in the very beginning of communism, it was this whole idea that, "Hey, we're going to get together and we're all going to put a part into it and we're all going to do it for ourselves and we're all going to make this work." It's kind of what we do.

Todd: In the album, you approach gender politics from three distinct areas. One, in "Matt's Song," it's approached from a male point of view. In "Her Neon Heart," the gender is put on a city, and in "Undeliverable," you have a lady who is being shelved by her boyfriend or significant other. Care to explain?

Annie: "Matt's Song" is about a friend of ours who is a boy and it's such a touchy subject. When you get into the bedroom

and there's any sort of confusion, it can be a really bad thing. Rape is one of the biggest four-letter words that there is.

Danny: I would say that it is the biggest.

Annie: Absolutely. I would never discount anyone who felt that they were, but when other people get involved and you weren't really there, and so-and-so is saying this and so-and-so is saying that. We had a friend that was caught up in the middle of it and was, "I don't know what happened. I'm sorry. It was like this and it was fun and all of a sudden it wasn't." And the girl was like, "Oh, but I never said that." There are men who do get falsely accused of rape and it happens and that's what the song's about.

Todd: As a listener, I'm just happy that there's a depth of narrative in an album. It seems more balanced. Sometimes, when I listen to a record, I feel accused by the person screaming the lyrics at me. On occasion, I feel, "Hey, I'm a good person. Why are you screaming at me?"

Danny: That's preaching, sort of.

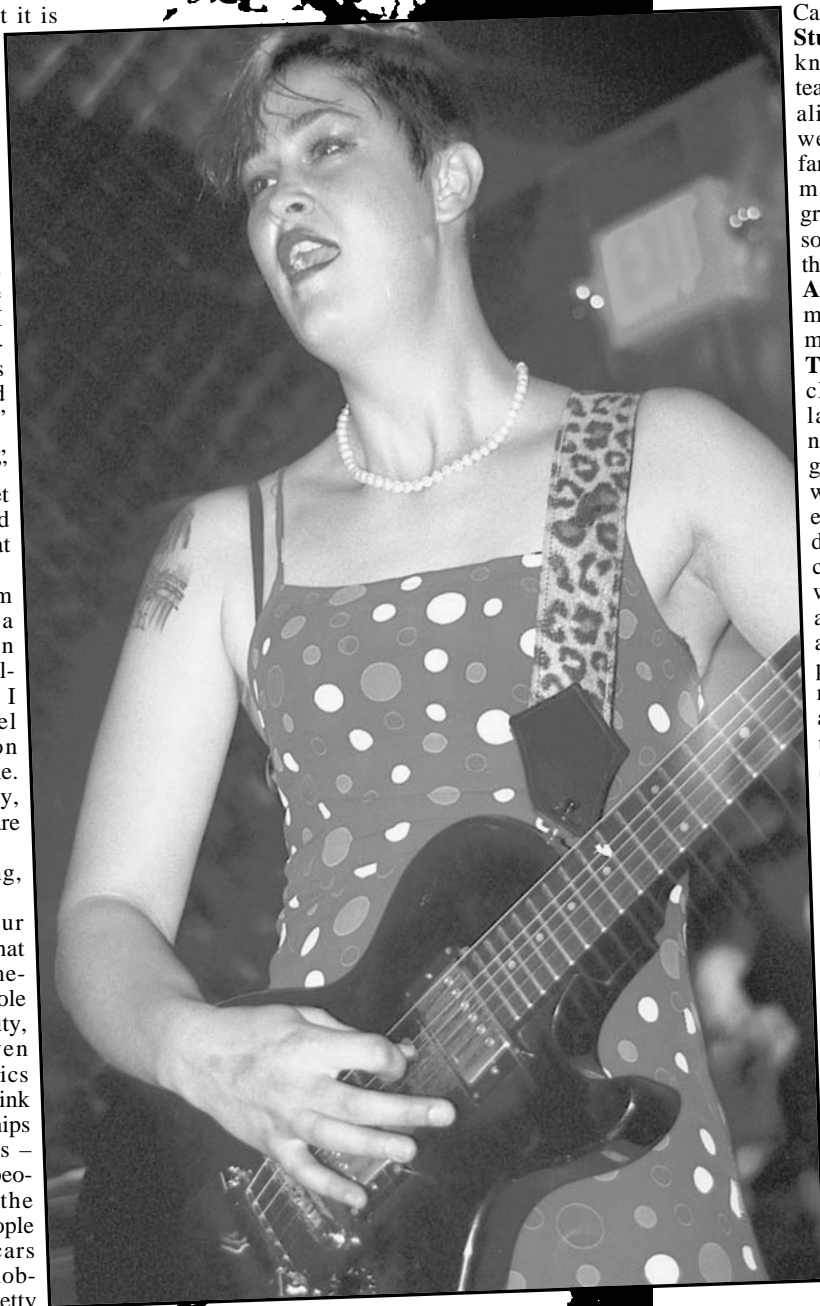
Sturgeon: In all of our songs, we write about what we know. That was something that affected our whole town, our whole community, for awhile. I don't even know what gender politics can mean, but I always think of cities as female, like ships and cars. I think of cities – well, what is it? It's the people and every city is the same. It is made of the people who have houses and cars and jobs and kids and hobbies. Where you go is pretty much all the same. I gave it a gender because I thought it would sound cooler. "Undeliverable" – I don't really know where that song came from.

Todd: Who has family members who are almost the opposite of you?

Susy: My sister's got an affluent husband who's an entrepreneur. He makes a lot of money. She's a stay at home mom. She has a boy and a girl.

Sturgeon: She's living the American dream.

Danny: Most of my family is opposite.



All: Absolutely.

Sturgeon: The ownership of different clubs around town means – because they're national – they get a lot of the bigger names. People who are going to come here, go to those clubs. Typically, those clubs tend to be quite expensive. First Avenue, the club that used to get all the big shows, was the place that everybody played at, period.

Actually, there's only one other person in my family who I can relate to and that's my older brother. Everyone else is strictly Americana. Get a good job, get married, have a house, all that stuff. Kids. Dogs. Cats. Food.

Sturgeon: Actually, I don't know. All my family are teachers, kind of. We're a lot alike. We get along really well. I have a really cool family. Big. Tight knit. High maintenance. But they're great. I've had such an awesome life and it's because of them.

Annie: My parents are both musicians and artists. So is my sister.

Todd: Where did the sound clip on the album of the lady saying, "We're the number one rock and roll group in the world and we're going to see that everything is going to be different. It's all gotta to change. The first thing we're going to do is build a radio station tomorrow and we're not going to play commercials, and no news, just rock and roll and the truth. One, two, three four!"

Susy: *Ladies and Gentlemen, the Fabulous Stains*. That was my idea. I saw that movie when I was fourteen on *Night Flight* and I'd never seen it again. It didn't change my life, but watching it when you're fourteen, it's so cool. My friend Brad had a copy of it, so I watched it again. That sound clip was originally going to be the start of the record.

Danny: I heard that song on the radio today. They didn't put the sample.

Sturgeon: Sometimes they do. A few years back, they played it on the big screen at the

Sound Unseen Festival here. I had never seen it before and it's such an awesome, awesome movie. It's so bad and it's so great at the same time.

Todd: What's the worst bit of advice you've ever followed?

Danny: When I was eighteen, my dad told me to go to school and be a business major. And that's the end of that.

Annie: I tend not to follow advice. Or ask for it.

Todd: Is Clear Channel doing its best to fuck Minneapolis?

Sturgeon: One article, they had the photo of all four of us and they said, "This girl band trio." They couldn't even count us in the photo that they ran. There's four people in that picture. One of them is not a girl.

Susy: It's a great place to see shows.

Annie: It's historic to this city – if thirty years can be considered historic.

Sturgeon: I think a lot of what we've got today is because that place has been around and has been having cool shows and it's a place where local bands can go and play.

Annie: Or open up for bigger bands.

Susy: You look at any billboard in the city and it's owned by Clear Channel. All of them.

Danny: And ninety percent of the radio.

Annie: Every time, "You're listening to blah, blah, blah, Clear Channel Radio." Ack.

Sturgeon: The radio is so bad. Thank god for Radio K and NPR.

Danny: At work we listen to the eighties station. According to them, there were only twenty-five songs that were from the eighties. It's terrible.

Sturgeon: When the news for the war was on, it was, "This is a Clear Channel update. We're doing really well over there."

Danny: "This is exactly how things are going."

Sturgeon: I heard that Colin Powell's son was doing the news for it.

Todd: Well, Michael Powell, the head of the FCC, is Colin Powell's son, who, on June 2, 2003, said, "We're not going to keep anti-monopoly restrictions on national radio or national television because those are archaic laws that didn't fathom cable and satellite. We should no longer restrict them." It doesn't make any sense because ABC, NBC, the big five, all made huge profits last year. And as much as people hate basic TV and radio, they're still free to watch and listen to. They're such a huge influence.

Sturgeon: All of them are CNN or Warner.

Danny: They're putting money before variety or new ideas.

Todd: Or dissenting voices.

Sturgeon: Or, god, even good songs. I think, in general, I think there's much more restricted information and filtered information and stomping down. Arise Bookstore, in this town.

Annie: This tiny little bookstore with vegan recipe books and the ARA (Anti-

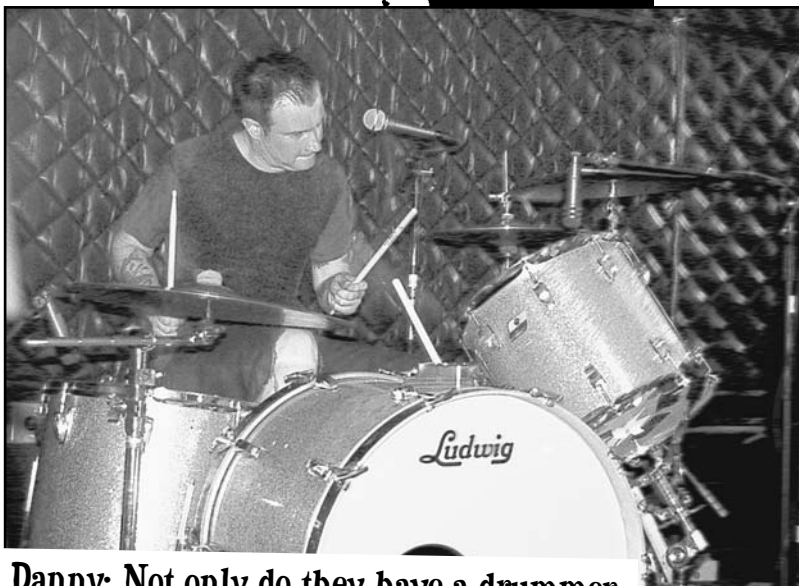
Racist Action) has meetings there sometimes.

Sturgeon: They got listed on the terrorist organization list early spring.

Susy: Oh my god.

Sturgeon: It's a bookstore, you know? For people who want to make an organic farm or if you want to know what happened in Central America.

Susy: People have different ideas.



Danny: Not only do they have a drummer - shhh - it's a boy. It's a secret.

Danny: People want to learn. Weird.

Sturgeon: Or know about political prisoners. It's so bad. I can't believe it.

Annie: They try to call it a free country. It's ridiculous. It scares me.

Sturgeon: If it gets worse, I really want to start thinking about Canada. There's federal grants for the arts.

Todd: Sturgeon, you were also in the band the Salteens. How does the direction of this band differ from that?

Sturgeon: Well, let me just say that I was in the Salteens for the last two years. Carrie and Emily really made the core of the band. I remember sitting in on their practices and it was really fun. I was all, "I'm going to buy a guitar and I'm going to learn how to play because I want to play in their band." It was a lot more – as hard as it is to believe because this band is so fun oriented – it was a lot looser and it was a lot more about basement parties, if that's possible.

Annie: They were less polished, but probably more fun to watch.

Sturgeon: It was so fun. Man, Carrie and Emily are just dynamos. You could see that a lot in American Monsters (another band that Carrie and Emily were in together). Together, they're so great. The combination of their vocals was complimentary to one another.

Annie: They've got great moves.

Sturgeon: She was like Little Richard.

It was all beer and blood and arrrrggghh! It was also very – again, I feel stupid in saying this in

comparison to this band – it was fast and dirty.

It was more punk.

Annie: If you can use that word anymore.

Danny: It was a lot faster.

Sturgeon: It was faster, but the mentality of it, there was never any thought to a future. I hate to say that because it was awesome.

Todd: When you first started playing your instrument, name some bands that you had in your brain at the time.

Susy: Go-Go's.

Sturgeon: Well, The Salteens. Emily taught me to play and I still

can't play very much. Jawbreaker. The Misfits and the Dead Kennedys were what I was listening to when I learned. I don't really know if it had anything to do with it.

Danny: Mine were the Ramones, The Damned, and The Ventures. I learned how to play surf beats first. I just taught myself from there. I still play them.

Annie: Sonic Youth, The Dead Kennedys, and the Descendents.

Todd: If you could shape beer bottles into a different design, what would it be.

Susy: Grenade.

Annie: A bowling pin. As long as it has a big mouth.

Susy: Budweiser has the bowling pin bottles.

Annie: They do? How cute.

Sturgeon: Is it real beer?

Susy: Yeah.

Sturgeon: They would be insulated and have a ring on them so you could put them on your belt.

Danny: I think that they wouldn't have a new shape. They'd just be way bigger. Just a really big bottle.

PROTECT PAC

the first logical step is making sure that the kids,
literally and figuratively, don't get fucked

ARTICLE BY TREY BUNDY
artwork by art fuentes

Kids get fucked. I think we can all agree on this. Look up, look down, look underground. Almost no one is looking out for the kids. Here in San Francisco, the last venue for kids to see punk shows on a regular basis, Mission Records, has ceased to exist as a place for young folks to meet, mosh and god forbid, drink a forty. George W. thinks if he shows up at a nursery school and plops his pampered ass down on the floor with a bunch of pre-schoolers while the cameras are looking that we'll forget about all that promised aid for public schools that never arrived. If a nine-year-old wants to go on his class field trip to the aquarium so he can see an alligator, he has to sell candy bars on the street (sometimes competing for shop space with crack dealers or worse).

hired by another musician friend to work as counselors at a summer camp for severely emotionally disturbed kids who had been removed from their families because of abuse or neglect. The experience resonated and we returned the following seven summers, eventually taking jobs in various group homes and residential treatment programs. I'm not here to get all Oprah Winfrey and tell you how rewarding it was because it wasn't. But the anger generated from constant exposure to what these kids had been through was always enough to keep me coming back. And anger is a two sided coin. It can be destructive or it can be productive. When it comes to channeling anger effectively, nothing beats sitting up all night trying to comfort a screaming kid who suffers from night terrors except

these bands are out there slammin' out their music, screaming for change, and rallying the audience. However, most of these people don't know what they can do to change what they're pissed about. They drink, fall down, and wake up the next day still pissed about whatever it is in the world that pisses them off. Myself included. I was pissed about all kinds of stuff. I still am. And so, it seems, are most people you find at shows. God bless'em. It's not easy to turn anger into action and those who manage to usually find themselves in small numbers, lacking any real power. As a group or a scene or a society, we aren't focused on changing any one thing. Crime. Abortion. Famine. The ozone. Racism. Drug addiction. Save the whales. How the fuck is anyone supposed to get anything done?

FUCKED UP PEOPLE DON'T GO TO HELL.

I shit you not, gang. I'm about ready to throw my vote at Arnold Schwarzenegger – that's right, The Governor – solely on the basis of his success in blasting an after school program initiative through the California legislature. Even an overpaid Republican bodybuilder from Austria knows it. Kids get fucked. And when they do, we all take it in the ass with'em.

These problems that kids face are common knowledge and most people have come to accept them. Now, let's take off our gloves and talk about how kids really get fucked. More than thirty-five U.S. states have laws on the books which state, to varying degrees, the following: an adult male who has sex with a child has committed the crime of rape and can be sentenced to twenty years in prison. However, if the adult male and the child are related by blood then he has committed the crime of incest. He is eligible for probation. I didn't type it wrong and you read it just fine. Sexual predators are being rewarded for not inconveniencing their neighbors whenever the mood strikes them to rape a child. This is called an incest exception loophole. We'll come back to it.

About eleven years ago,
RAZORCAKE 60 my band mates and I were

maybe restraining that kid physically to prevent her from committing suicide. This makes you angry. Angry at those who hurt her and made her this way. Angry at the system that promised to help her and then failed to participate in her healing. And because it's all right there in front of you, you're compelled by a sense of urgency and your natural response is to suck it up and focus solely on the needs of your client, much like the guys they send when you call 911. Properly directed, anger can be a miraculous source of fuel. And it's recyclable because just when just when you think you've run out of gas you realize that because your client has no lawyer, some judge has decided to grant the biological father (read: rapist) unsupervised visitation every other week effectively sending the kid right back to the origin of her misery on a bi-weekly basis. This makes you REALLY angry. At the end of each week, it helped a lot to be in a punk rock band.

All this time, we kept playing shows, making records, drinking tons, and trying to remain welcome company in the punk scene. We played, watched, and read about hundreds of shows. Gradually, it hit me like a ton of bricks falling in slow motion. All

Meanwhile, back at work, the kids I'm attempting to help are a mess. A mess that is not their fault. And the bricks keep falling. Our world is raising generation after generation of people so damaged and lacking in empathy that they'll never be able to give two shits about any of the things that are endangering our species, much less change them. Who's in charge of cleaning up this junkyard and bailin' our asses out of this mess anyway? Republicans? Democrats? I'm not exactly brimming over with confidence. Sure, on both sides as well as outside and in between, you can find lots of people who are compassionate, committed, determined and focused, but not nearly enough of them. And they all have their own particular issues that are chappin' their hides.

The problem here is that no matter who controls Congress, you need to be able to fork over a significant block of votes if you want any politician to give a rat's balls about your issue. That's why gun enthusiasts, retired people, and big, fat corporations usually get what they want. They are focused and they move in large packs. This scares the snot out of politicians and makes them very easy to push around. How



That's where they come from.

fuckin' liberating does that sound? Blackmail Congress! (See, activism can be fun). But it takes focus and it takes the numbers. So, whatever your social agenda is, you're going to need some help.

Where are we going to dig up our dedicated constituency? Back to the group home where a nine-year-old has just attacked his roommate and written "FUCK YU I AM GONA CILL YU AN BERN YU" on his bedroom wall using a magic marker and his own feces simply because you said the word "furnace" in his presence. The word probably reminded him of the emotional or physical torture he suffered at the hands of his abuser. Call me crazy, but when this kid grows up, he might be too busy being a junkie or a suicide or a sexual predator to bother showing up at the polls.

Addiction, depression and rape are themselves serious problems that need serious fixing but where do you think such afflicted people come from? Do you think they're emerging from paradise to become strung out, predatory, self-mutilating adults? I don't. Fucked up people don't go to hell. That's where they come from. Over-crowded foster homes equal over-crowded prisons.

So let's try to bring all this up to the present. The kids are still getting fucked. The good folks trying to right all the wrongs in the world are ass out with no constituency. And our band's favorite venue in the U.S. (Jay's Upstairs in Missoula, Montana where the Moose Drool beer flows strong and pure) has just announced that they will be permanently closing their doors in a matter of weeks. Things are lookin' pretty gruesome, but believe it or not, I've managed to locate some hope. And more than just a shred.

While I may very well live out my days without ever getting drunk on Moose Drool again, a plan is finally in action that can simultaneously protect the kids, ream those who prey on them, and help produce a future generation of strong, caring adults to go about the business of saving the world. The plan is The National Association to Protect Children or PROTECT and it's the first of its kind. It's a political action committee (like the NRA) made up of seasoned pros whose only agenda is the protection of children. PROTECT'S advisory board alone is an astonishing resume of accomplishment and dedication, comprised of world renowned lawyers, mental health profes-

sionals, trauma experts, psychiatrists, social workers, investigators, musicians, authors, journalists, artists, filmmakers, professional lobbyists and campaign directors with more accumulated experience than can be measured in centuries. Hell, even the guys who directed *The Matrix* are in on this. These are folks who know how kids are mistreated and it makes them sick. Sick enough to puke. But they ain't drinkin' tea. They've decided that focus plus participation equals power in Washington, where it will now be seen to that kids finally have a voice.

Here's a list of people who would do well to join PROTECT:

- 1) People who recognize the inherent obligation of a species to protect its young.
- 2) People who feel powerless to impact the problems that hit closest to their particular squat.
- 3) People touched by a sense of empathy or morality.
- 4) Gleefully self-centered people without a care in their hearts for the plight of others who just want a better world to wan-

der around being useless in.

- 5) People who are sick of rhetoric, evasiveness, and lies every time a politician is asked to speak to the needs of children.
- 6) Mean, nasty S.O.B.s who walk around pissed off all the time looking for some one to unleash their anger on. PROTECT is going after the fuckers who deserve it.

Here's how: Remember the incest exception loophole? PROTECT closed it in North Carolina and Arkansas. Illinois is next, in a matter of weeks, if Governor Rod Blagojevich knows what's good for him. And on and on it's gonna go. This means that evil rotten motherfuckers who prey on their children will be showering with their own kind instead of with kids.

PROTECT will also be lightin' fires under asses to implement two and three strike laws that will lock up predatory sex offenders, not shoplifters and dope fiends. (Many of the latter, by the way, were once the kids these laws weren't around to protect when they needed them). These battles are just the tip of the iceberg. PROTECT is also fighting for foster care and juvenile justice reform, better background checks on those who work with kids, better training and salaries for those who work in child protection, guaranteed mental health services and independent legal representation for victims of child abuse, accountability on behalf of the justice system regarding the handling of child abuse proceedings and a full scale war against child trafficking and pornography. The list goes on and on. I e-mailed Grier Weeks, PROTECT's executive director, and asked him what members would be called on to do. He mentioned various ways to help and followed them with this: "The most important thing we ask our members to do is join. The NRA doesn't have four million supporters. It has four million members. The AARP doesn't have thirty million who think it would be a good idea to fight for their rights, they have thirty million members. Children will never have political muscle until people get off the sidelines and start swinging."

That's exactly what PROTECT has done. They were incorporated in June 2002 with their doors swingin' wide open in January 2003. And they came out of the gates fast. They had to. Within days of hanging an OPEN sign in the PROTECT window, *Parade* ran an article about their successful efforts to change the incest exception law in North Carolina and the state by state battle to change similar laws elsewhere became a race against the clock. "At the same time PROTECT was starting up," Weeks said, "so were the legislative sessions in most states. So we got legislation introduced in Arkansas and Illinois in the first few months. That paid off because not only did we change laws, but we gave our membership critical momentum and

helped people to understand that we were not here to 'take positions' and 'talk' but to fight and win real battles."

This demonstration of instant action and effectiveness is indicative of the man who birthed the notion of a political lobby for kids. Author and attorney for children, Andrew Vachss, has been calling for an "NRA for kids" for years. As Weeks remembers, "When I first heard him say this in a newspaper interview, I nearly fell out of my chair. The guy not only nailed it but he was using a nail gun. And you just couldn't argue with his analysis of the kind of people who traditionally care about 'children's issues,' but also care about the environment, health food, and third world development." Of such people Vachss says, "You can be a wonderful, loving person but your love is a pad of butter on a 20 foot piece of bread. Who's gonna taste it?"

Who ingoddamndeed? PROTECT is the result of the blood, sweat, and tenacity of many people who share that belief and understand that it is our obligation to fight vigilantly and tirelessly to ensure that children have a voice in the political arena

because alone they're stuck in a nightmare where you try to scream but nothing comes out.

Now I know by now I'm sounding like a preachy bastard and I know that punks don't like to be told what to do. But I also know that every one wishes they could change things and it's tough to do it alone. Am I promising that if you join PROTECT today then tomorrow you'll wake up in a world that's all cold beer, good bands, and mandatory life imprisonment for gay-bashing nazi skinheads who beat up people at shows? No. But if we want quell a true source of misery on this planet then we have to start somewhere and as far as I can see, the first logical step is making sure that the kids, literally and figuratively, don't get fucked.

To learn more about the fight to protect children, organize music related fundraisers or join PROTECT visit: <www.protect.org> or fill out the card inserted in this magazine.

For the comprehensive dope on child protection visit: <www.vachss.com>



Children will never have political muscle until people get off the sidelines and start swinging.



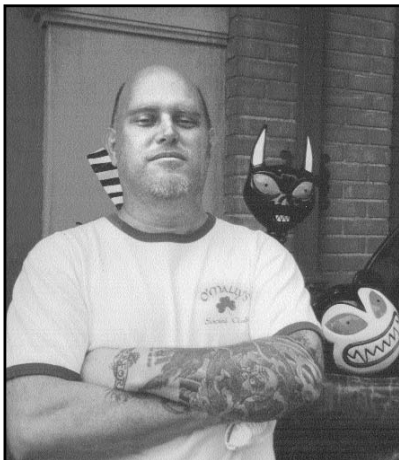
bringing the flag with...

(big smile)

.. Tim Kerr

by Julia Smut
photos by Beth

Tim Kerr is the equivalent to *Suburban Voice's* Al Quint. He's old enough, has paid more than his share of dues, and has been doing his thing continuously for so long, he has every right to be a complete fucking bastard. Or a jaded prick. Or a charity case. But he's not. He's the opposite. He's still excited. He's still on top of his game. Here's a guy who was an awesome, influential guitar player in the Big Boys - one of the rightfully heralded, truly original punk bands that shrugged off boundaries, took cues from funk, soul, and hardcore, and made some of the best albums of the '80s. Standing tall - much like the Minutemen's catalog - almost twenty years down the road, those records are still vital. The Big Boys' one-two-three punch of *The Skinny*



would be inflated to the size of The Hindenburg. Not Tim. He's so extremely humble, to the point that people admiring him is a strange concept. I suspect that if I could get an X-ray of Tim's chest and hold it up to the light, his heart would be much bigger than yours or mine. Say hey to one of the best eggs that have committed to the long haul. -Todd

In the first minute or two of meeting Tim, I felt totally at ease, like we had met before, which we had not. When he went back home, at the end of the week it felt like someone in my family was leaving for a long time. To most people, things are "okay." To Tim, things are "pretty fuckin' great!" followed with a (smile) or maybe even a (big smile). If you EVER get the chance to stop and talk to Tim, I highly recommend it. You'll never be the same and you'll have family in Texas. (smile) -Julia

Julia: Name, age and current occupation.

Tim Kerr: Eighteen forever. I do graphic art at the library.

Julia: Were you born and raised in Texas?

Tim: Hell yeah!

Julia: Would you or could you ever not live in Texas?

Tim: Ummm, no, I'll tell you why. We have been talking about this lately. We almost moved to Seattle one time in the '90s. Me and Beth (Tim's wife), before any of this music stuff ever got started, had talked about moving to California. At this point now, as

I went up to the
microphone and said
man, I'm not drunk, I'm
from Texas! I'm

Elvis, The Fat Elvis, and Wreck Collection deserve to be in any self-respecting record collection. By all accounts, if Tim stopped there, he'd be a rad dude.

Instead, Tim not only went on to be in more great bands - like the supergroup Monkeywrench and Poison 13 - he began producing bands. Hundreds of bands. People bandy around seemingly simple words like "garage punk" or anything akin to "blues-damaged punk." Tim, in no small way, quietly helped pave that road to be traveled on. If you haven't heard of him, that's fine. He's not in it for the ten-minute hot burn of fame. He's in it because it's his love, his seed that needs constant nurturing. What's really amazing is that with almost anyone else, going along with this long line of praise, their head

crazy as this sounds, I'm really pretty fuckin' proud I'm from Texas. It's hard to explain to people; it's not a Southern thing. There's a real distinct thing in Texas where the people are just a whole lot more open and bands are usually a lot crazier and kinda stick out like sore thumbs, for better or for worse, wherever they go. And the history of it – everything from Ornette Coleman to Thirteenth Floor Elevators – it's kinda cool being from there, ya know? Beth found this cartoon and it was a little boy and his dad and another guy. The little boy says to the other guy, "Hi, where are you from?" and the dad says to the son, "Son, don't ask the man where he's from. If he's from Texas he'll tell you and if he's not, don't embarrass him."

I told you that story when we (The Monkeywrench) were in Spain... I had snapped the neck on my guitar on the first song and I had gone through three amplifiers by the time we had got to the start of the third song, so they were all rushin' back there to try to fix my amps, and Tom went up to the microphone and said, "Oh, don't mind Tim. He's drunk." So I went up to the microphone and said, "Man, I'm not drunk. I'm from Texas!" and the whole place went crazy.

Julia: Name a Texas hardcore band that never got its due.

Tim: The Marching Plague from San Antonio, TX were pretty fuckin' great. There's a lot of bands; that's a really hard question. It was such an unbelievable community back then. It was even a community between states. It was just this big family and you never really wanted to leave anybody out. When you look at records from back then, there's always this huge "thank you" list 'cause nobody wanted to leave anyone out.

Julia: What did your parents do?

Tim: My dad was an elementary school principal and my mom was an elementary school librarian at two totally different schools and both my brothers were coaches. I think my dad really liked my involvement with music and art because, although I played sports around the neighborhood, I didn't really care for school sports. I think he was happy that one of his boys was more into art and music and things like that, so they were pretty supportive. When PBS first came on, it was the only other weird channel. They would have bands on there all the time. My dad and me would watch these shows. Johnny Winter was on one time with Tom Waits and this is way back. My dad comes in and is like, "I know that guy." I was like, "huh?" "Doesn't he have a brother?" "Yeah, he's

got a twin." "Yeah, I taught him geography in Beaumont." I thought, "You're cool dad."

"There are so many people who say punk rock stopped in '77, punk rock stopped in 1982, punk rock stopped with this... there's a day and they don't listen anymore."

Julia: When did you first start playing music?

Tim: I started playing guitar and piano in elementary school. The British Invasion had a lot to do with it. My brothers are ten and eight years older than me. One of them was totally into soul music and one of them was totally into Hank Williams and stuff like that, which I didn't like at the time, but now I do. Every time I can ever remember being in a car with the radio on, I heard their music, up until the Beatles. When that all happened, that was kinda like my music.

Julia: Do you even know how many bands you've been in?

Tim: [laughter] Ummm, I can sit and start countin'. It's not that many. Big Boys was the first. During Big Boys there was this band – it was one summer where everybody that was in bands at home were all in other bands just for the summer – and I was in this band called the Court Reporters. The Court Reporters were a total Gang of Four sound, a three piece, and that's where "Jump the Fence" came from. The Court Reporters were Chris Gates' all time favorite band, hands down. We played, maybe three shows and Chris taped them all. If you get *Wreck Collection* on CD, there's a hidden track at the end and it's Court Reporters doing "Jump the Fence" from a show that Chris had taped. So that's two.

Poison 13, Bad Mutha Goose, Monkeywrench – the first Monkeywrench, Jack O' Fire and sometime during Jack O' Fire was this thing called Fistfight. The more people you can plant seeds with or get inspired – that sounds really corny because it sounds like I'm trying to inspire people – but it's not that thought out. I just do what I do and if that action causes someone else to get up and do something, then I am overjoyed and overwhelmed. There is still so much to learn, see and do.

I think we talked about this at the studio, about what makes you stop. It's the weirdest thing to me that you have the seed in your head to begin with, you're seeking

out stuff that isn't given to you on that radio, that you found out about on your own, if that's in you already it seems to me

like that would just keep growing until you're dead because there's so much more stuff to hear and so much more stuff to see. There's so much more stuff to be surprised about. There are so many people who say, "Punk rock stopped in '77," "Punk rock stopped in 1982," "Punk rock stopped with this..." There's a day and they don't listen anymore. They think they're listening, but they ain't listening at all 'cause they compare everything now to that and don't just take it as it's something different.

With that in mind, that's what bothers me, too, when you get into these kind of interviews. I can't stress enough I'm totally proud of all this stuff. I'm amazed that we're sitting here right now doing this interview. I was amazed when *Razorcake* was sending me magazines. I figured they thought I was Tim Kerr Records. I'm totally proud of all this stuff. I don't mind talking about it with people. I think it's really great, but it really, really bothers me that there are so many people that that's (back then) the best thing that ever happened. It's horrible to say, but man, kill yourself, ya know? I don't even understand what you think you should live for if you think you've already missed it. And now you're living for these bands to have these reunions so that you can go back? Most people, when they go to reunions think that's what it was like, and it wasn't at all!

Julia: What do you see as the biggest improvement in the music scene from when you got into it to now?

Tim: I'm not sure there's any improvement. [laughter] I guess it's cool that there are so many people aware of all the stuff that happened. That's pretty great, 'cause anytime anyone's hearing something new, that's wonderful. As far as people taking the ball and running with it or bringing the flag, which is what I always say, there's not a lot of people that brought that flag. It's a totally different ballgame now. I was talking about this with somebody the other day, I can't remember who it was, about the whole label thing. I'm whatever they call it next. Whatever they call it next,

3
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proved
that it
only takes
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an
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rest of time
skateboarding
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very next
minute...
next breath...

Make something that a twenty years from now, when you put that needle down on that record, you just start smiling and think, "Man, that was a crazy weekend, I got this crazy nut from Texas to come down here and do this..."

that's what we're going to be. That's what we're going to be continually.

To me, punk rock now is so not the way it was. Whatever, who cares. Ya know, to each his own, but it's definitely not this big community. There's people doing it. Don't get me wrong, there are pockets, but it's a minority of people that have the idea of this being a community and everybody trying to get something changed. Not changed like in a political way, just a human thing.

Julia: What's the biggest disappointment or frustration in the music scene from when you got into it to now?

Tim: It's just a shame to see a lot of people who came from back then that didn't bring the flag. But, you know, who cares. I can't stress that enough. I'm not on a soap box about it. That's their life. They can do whatever they fuckin' want to do, but it is kind of sad.

Julia: What, if any, difference do you see between the attitude and motivation between the bands around when you got into the scene and the bands today?

Tim: It's different now, 'cause the only motivation back then was basically to have something to do, to keep people starting up things and doing fanzines, starting new bands, 'cause they're not going to play this on the radio, so it was fun. It was basically to keep your scene going and then hopefully get to see other people's scenes and have people come and visit your scene. It was really close knit back then. Everybody was reading all the fanzines. Now, it's really funny 'cause you'll go up to somebody that you'd think would know about different bands, like say a garage

band, and you'll start naming off bands like, "Oh, have you seen Lee County Killers?" "Who?" It amazes me, because back then we knew about every band, whether you liked it or not. Also, I think bands start up now more so because they think they're gonna make a living, be on MTV, they're gonna be the White Stripes. You're not starting a band because it's like, "Man, I saw these nuts up there last night, I wanna do that too." Skating has become like that a lot as well.

Julia: Have you ever had deep sound disagreements with a band that you were recording?

Tim: No, because basically I work for the band. If I have a problem with what they're doing, which has happened a couple times, I drop it because it's not my band. I'll suggest something. If I really feel strongly about it, I'll argue with the person for a little bit just to see how strong they feel about what they're talking about, but basically I'm working for them. I've had problems twice with engineers where the engineer decided they were going to mix the record and it didn't matter what the band said, it didn't matter what I said, it was them that was going to do it. That's bad. That's bad news because what happens is you start second guessing yourself. You're sitting there listening and you ask them to turn the treble up and they'll pretend to turn the knob, but not really do it and I'm thinking, "Okay, I don't hear any more treble," so if I ask him to turn it up more is he going to think I'm an idiot 'cause he really did turn it up, or what? When that happens I usually tell the band what's happening and tell them to decide what they want to do. But that's only been twice. Most of the time everybody's totally into it. Your biggest compliment is if the band likes it and if the band actually, in a really corny sort of way, kinda grew a little bit. Kind of grew closer, kind of realized some stuff that they didn't know they could do, that kinda stuff and that's great.

Julia: What do you do when things don't go smooth?

Tim: Things usually go pretty smoothly. There's things you can do when people are starting to freak out. First of all, it's always good to have somebody in there that doesn't have baggage with the band that cares about what's going on, because I can tell someone he's flat or their drum beat is slowing down, but if your singer tells you that, it's going to set something off that happened four shows ago and everybody's fighting and yelling. Also, when things are getting kind of crazy, if you just leave the studio, just go outside for a minute, it will help. Talk to people.

When you find out somebody's really upset about something, find out why. If someone in the band absolutely has to have a particular thing on that record then make the rest of the band listen to what's being said and let's try to figure out a way to put some of what he or she is talking about in there, because this could end up being, hands-down the greatest record ever made and the one person who didn't get their say is going to hate it. There's a lot involved and it's a skill in a sense, but it's not a skill that I studied or anything like that. It came about from being in so many bands and being around people all the time and kind of being looked at like "dad" or a band leader. And, it's caring about people. The first thing I tell a band is when we go in and record, we're not solving world peace. You should look at it like, let's document this point in

(smile)

(smile)



time. How we got to here, why we started this with this group of friends. We may not be in here tomorrow, somebody may die, as horrible as that sounds, but it can happen. Make something that twenty years from now, when you put that needle down on that record, you just start smiling and think, "Man, that was a crazy weekend. We got this crazy nut from Texas to come down here and do this."

Julia: Have you ever mic'd a vibra slap?

Tim: That was my pet peeve up until this year. This year, for some reason, somebody hit one and I didn't cringe. It's a long story. We did an instrumental in the Big Boys, I think it was an instrumental, I don't even remember now at this point, but Biscuit (the lead singer of the Big Boys) started playing a vibra slap on stage. He started making such a complete overblown, ridiculous production of playing that thing that it got to where I didn't want to hear it anymore. So now, when I hear that sound, it kind of takes me back to that.

Julia: Could you tell me how you ended up on guitar and Chris ended up on bass.

Tim: Flipped a coin. We were skating and we were talking about starting this band up and getting Biscuit to sing, 'cause we knew he sang. We both (Chris and I) played guitar so we flipped a coin to see who was going to play bass.

Julia: What did Biscuit's sweat smell like?

Tim: Baloney sandwiches. He did this show one time where he had sandwiches in baggies safety pinned all over this jumpsuit he had on. During the show, he's throwing the sandwiches out to the crowd. I swear to god, it had to have been at least a year later, we were at this big show and somebody throws one of those sandwiches up on stage, in the baggy and everything. So Biscuit takes it out, puts it under his arm and sings most of the set with this sandwich under his arm. Then, at some point, he pulls it out and eats it.

The best gross out story is in San Francisco. Big Boys had played there and here come the Dicks. Jello Biafra pulls Gary (the lead singer of the Dicks) aside and tells him, "You know, you really probably better not wear that nurse's uniform, because when the Big Boys were here, the singer wore a dress and people gave them a bunch of shit." Gary went out there anyway and some kid spit a

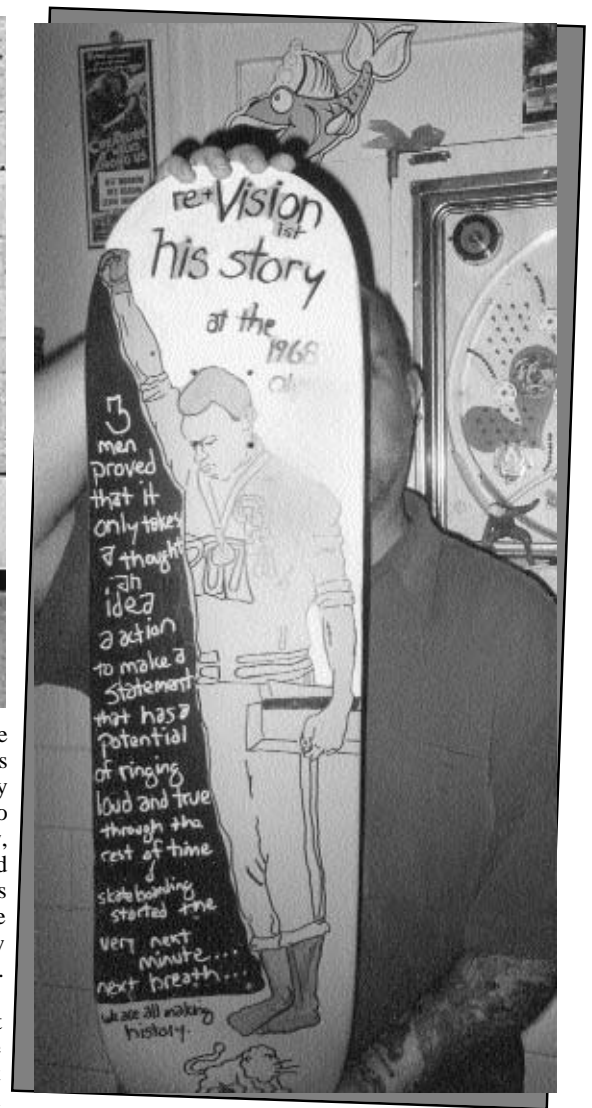
big loogie right on his cheek. Gary went right to the front row, where the kid was, and eats it. The whole front row stepped back. Texas!

Julia: Is it true people used to slight the Red Hot Chili Peppers by calling them the "Small Boys," as a reference to not being as good as the Big Boys?

Tim: Oh, I don't know about that. The very first time we ever saw the Chili Peppers, they were really amazing. It was total James Brown. It had no rock in it. It didn't have any kind of funky rock, funky punk. It was straight-up James Brown. Me and Chris got into an argument that night because I was going, "This is great. They call us funk? We need to start playing more James Brown type stuff," and Chris was saying, "That's not funk. The Ohio Players are funk." We ended up getting into an argument about James Brown and the Ohio Players. The first time we played with them, they did a Big Boys rap. It was weird, because every time I saw them after that they got progressively more funky punk, funky rock. There were other bands - Gang of Four was pretty funky sounding. There were a lot of bands doing something other than the straight-up Sex Pistols sound. There was that band here that was so great, Black Randy and the Metro Squad.

Julia: Could you clarify the whole Bad Brains coming to Texas and not digging the homosexuals story.

Tim: Okay, first of all, Biscuit never really... being gay was not an issue. He was gay. We all knew he was gay. We had friends that were gay. We didn't have songs about it. He didn't announce it on stage - not because he was hiding it - it just wasn't an issue. Nobody cared. So here come Bad Brains. They stayed at our house. To this day, they were probably one of the better bands I ever saw. They were



(big smile)

fuckin' amazing live! The Bad Brains came to the house. At the time, I was getting ready to do an art show so there were a lot of pieces around, and I had this thing called the Voodoo Box in the house. It was this altar kind of thing. They covered that up with a sheet because of their religion. I thought it was kinda funny, but no big deal. I didn't know anything about Rastafarian at the time. I do now, and I also realize now, that they weren't Rastafarian. They were the American version of "people that saw Bob Marley and decided they were going to be Rastafarian." A real Rastafarian is "to each his own." They don't agree with homosexuality or things like that, BUT "to each his own."

There was also a poster in our bathroom that Biscuit had done for one of our shows and it shut the punk rock club here – Raul's – down, so originals of this poster were kind of a big deal here in Austin.

It was this naked guy standing with a cowboy hat on and a big dick hanging down and it said, "Hot and bothered young men at Raul's, Dicks, Insert, Big Boys." Those were the three bands playing. It got the club shut down

because the T.A.B.C. (Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission) thought there was going to be nude people, and sex acts at the show. It was a big fuckin' deal when it happened and it scared us when it happened because we thought, "We haven't been together that long and we've already shut the place down."

Now, Spot (producer of many Black Flag, Hüsker Dü, and Descendents records) had just been staying at our house recording and had just left to go back to LA. I went into the bathroom and there's a piece of toilet paper stuck over the guy's dick. I thought Spot did it just kiddin' around, so I took the paper off. Didn't think anything of it. Go to the show. Bad Brains didn't see the Dicks 'cause they'd already seen pictures of Gary Floyd in that nurse's outfit. They watched Big Boys, and after we played, they were all hugging us and asking if all those people always come up on stage and sing along, going on and on and on. H.R. hugged Biscuit. I was standing right there. I saw HR step back like something was on his mind or an afterthought. Then H.R. asked Biscuit, "Are you gay?" and Biscuit said "Yeah." H.R. stepped back and just started yelling, "This is Babylon. This truly is Babylon. San Francisco's not Babylon. This is Babylon!" Screaming.

Both people screaming, that's the first part of "Brick Wall," because it was like two brick walls yelling at other. For awhile Biscuit was kind of yelling back, defending himself, which was stupid because, [Tim puts two fists together] "brick wall." Then, the greatest thing Biscuit did realizing what was going on – H.R.'s yelling, "This is Babylon" and Biscuit just looked H.R. right in the eye and goes, "Yeah, and I'm the Devil." Now, Biscuit had sold them "something" Rastafarians love, even after all accusations, that they were suppose to leave money with me for. Needless to say, the rest of the night was a little awkward back at the house. The next day I go to work and Beth is at home. Beth is a really, really great, great person, who doesn't get that upset about things. She calls me up crying and I have to come home from work 'cause something's going on.

Now, we have to backup for a second. Before the Bad Brains came to Austin, David MDC had called us from San Francisco to set the show up and none of us knew who Bad Brains were –

Biscuit knew but the rest of us didn't know anything



**#There's good people,
there's bad people, good
people don't do that shit.#**

about them. When MDC was touring with them, they started realizing the unbelievable stuff Bad Brains were preaching, like women should be barefoot having babies and they told MDC, "You guys are great. Why don't you come back to New York and record with us, but you're going to need to change some of your lyrics," and stuff like that. So, once again, to each his own. David was a nice guy but one of those people that would just bend your ear about whatever the lyrics he was singing were or issues and you kind of didn't know what to believe. So when he called and told us, "Oh, no, we've got to change this. Stop the show. You don't know what's going on. They're making us change our lyrics," we just took it as David, you know? Like, was it really that bad? We all learned later that it was that bad.

So I come home from work and MDC is on one side of our sidewalk and the Bad

Brains are on the other side of the sidewalk, yelling at the top of their lungs at each other. That's the next part of "Brick Wall." I walk inside, and I will always have this in

my mind, this picture, because I guarantee you, THAT was when the Bad Brains broke up and were never the same. Right at that point at that minute, because Earl, H.R.'s brother, the drummer, was sitting in a chair and looked up at me and was shaking his head saying, "Tim, I'm sorry," obviously questioning what was going on. I walked back and saw Beth and we talked for a second. Now I'm shaking inside because it's, like, something's got to happen here and I guess it's gotta be me that does this. So I go outside and I basically stand in the middle of them and said, "If you guys want to yell, go to your house." I was pointing at David. "Because this is my house and I don't wanna hear this stuff, so either go to your house and yell or shut up." So they were leaving. The Bad Brains had a show in Houston and H.R. didn't have a bed, so we gave him a rolled-up foam bed to take with him. Still, we're being nice with them, and they are leaving. Now I swear I saw this. When they were all leaving, H.R. went up to Beth and said, "Don't worry about Tim. We'll pray for him." Beth lost it and told him, "Get the FUCK out of my house!" over and over and backed him up out of the house. So they're gone.

Now we start seeing some things wrong around the house I had a picture of the Pope that I was using in this painting for my upcoming show, that had the words "No more Heroes," but now the picture is gone. The poster in the bathroom that shut Raul's down, now has a band aid stuck over the guy's dick so that the only way you can get it off is to tear the poster. All they had to do was come up to me and say they were offended by these things and I would have taken it down or covered it. Instead, they fuck it up or steal it. They gave me an envelope that felt weighted, like money inside, addressed to Biscuit. I'm not going to open it because it's addressed to him. Biscuit comes and gets it. There's a bunch of crumpled up paper in it, no money, and one little note that says, "May you burn it hell. –Bad Brains."

Okay, now the part that nobody has ever quite understood or gotten, except for people back then, is that us, Big Boys, as a band, the most important thing we had an issue with the Bad Brains was not any of the gay issues or anything like that. It was just basically, "You just fucked over somebody because you were supposed to give them this much money and you didn't do it. There's good

people. There's bad people. Good people don't do that shit. You owe Biscuit this much money, period." You also don't come into someone else's house and fuck with or steal things you do not agree with. That's where we were coming from.

That was the summer that MDC toured and got big. They went all over the United States. They sat, just like I'm sitting here with you, and went through all these interviews and told everybody about their gay friends that got fucked over by the Bad Brains. Which, fine, that's great... but it was amazing. We started getting this mail that was either like, "Man, we really support the gays and stuff and you can come to our town anytime at all," or it was like, "If you fucking faggots ever come to this town, we're going to, blah, blah, blah." It was amazing shit – because of MDC's interviews – when all we had a problem with was mainly the money and stealing issue. Don't get me wrong, I'm sure we had a problem with the whole gay deal, and a lot of what they were spouting out, but in general our biggest thing was the money. In my mind, though I agreed with a lot of what MDC was saying in those interviews, they were also just as bad as the Bad Brains because they were coming off like, the Bad Brains believe this and that's wrong! You should believe this. This is the right point of view. When the Bad Brains got to Houston, their tires got slit because word was already out. They were supposed to go to Dallas and the club called and wanted to know how much money it was that they owed Biscuit. They were going to take it out of their money and send it to us. I told the club that Bad Brains needed to pay us on their own. Thank you, but no. Eventually, probably because of all the shit they were getting, they did send us the money, but it was their roadie/ sound guy that did this. They didn't come back to Texas for a long time.

Julia: Why – and I admire you for it – won't the Big Boys do a reunion show?

Tim: Because the Big Boys were part of the show. The crowd was the other part. The crowd is ABSOLUTELY not the same now. The crowd that's coming now is coming to be entertained. It's a show, like going to a rock show now. It was absolutely not like that back then. We could be better, who knows, but it ain't us. I don't want people coming – which I've seen happen, at shows where a kid will come up to me – going, "Man, that was great. I saw 'em!" You didn't see them. Yeah, you saw 'em and it was kinda cool, but, I'm sorry, you DID NOT see what it was like back then, the community of it.

Julia: Do you have any advice – like, how do you approach what you do as opposed to fifteen years ago? Do you think you've mellowed out or do you just have a natural, nice way with of dealing with people?

Tim: I don't really approach it that differently. I think I probably don't argue as much. I don't feel like I have to prove anything to anybody. Religion's like that a lot where you have some Jesus freak that's really telling me all about Jesus and you can kind of tell it's because they're not really sure about it either. I don't think I've really mellowed out. I think I'm just more open. I never really shut myself off. I try to be aware of people and what's going on. Even in a case, like the Bad Brains scenario, you learn something. You either

learn something about yourself, you learn something about life, or you learn something. People say that I'm nice, but I think that's Texas.

Julia: Yeah, the first time I was introduced to you, you gave me a hug.

Tim: That's just being a human being. We wouldn't be sitting here and be family. This would be one of those kind of interviews.

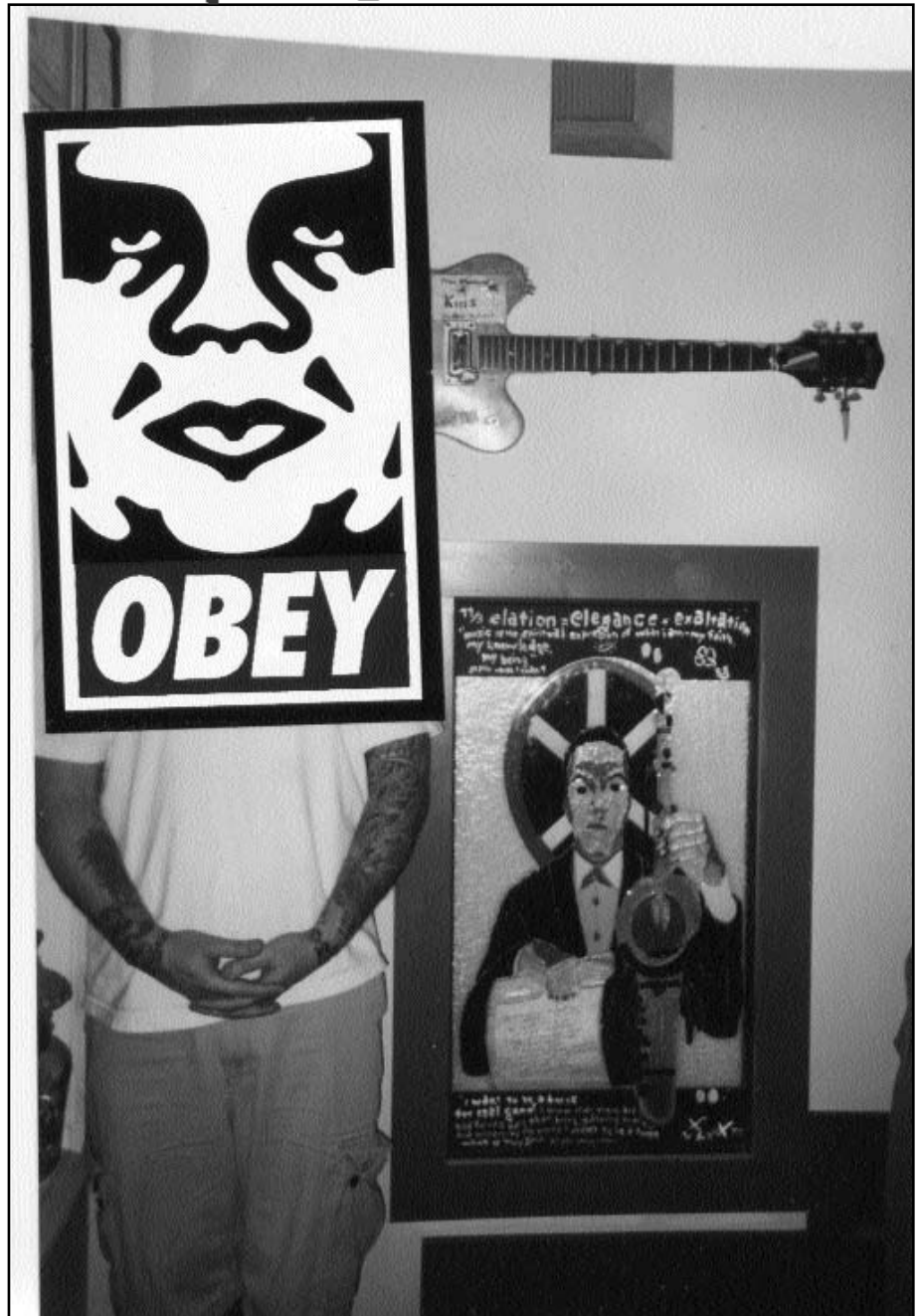
Julia: If there was any pair of shoes in this world you could have what would they be?

Tim: Brown winos and a new one now. There's brand new green Alvas that they only made in Japan. They totally look like the old school Vans with the stripe, like the ones Ian (MacKaye) used to wear, but these are green and they're fuckin' amazing looking. You can't get 'em here. You can only get them in Japan.

Julia: What size?

Tim: Size eight.

(big smile) A



The

FM

Jason Patrone: Vocals

Ed Carroll: Drums photos by Rev. Nørb and Lisa Connolly

Interview

by Rev. Nørb

Zack Olson: Bass

KNIVES

Chris Woodhouse: Guitar

The FM Knives' *Useless and Modern* CD will certainly go down in history as one of the more compelling Rock Artifacts of the early Third Millennium, not only for its inherent late '70s/early '80s pseudo-British-punk-rock-power-pop swellness (The Buzzcocks fronted by Mick Jones in lieu of Pete Shelley? The American 999? The Vapors croaked out of their gourds on Pabst Blue Ribbon and Geno's Pizza Rolls?), but also for its initial freekin' ENIGMATICNESS. I mean, who the fuck were these guys, and where were they from? Here? There? Everywhere? There was no back story, no known history, no personnel listing, no band photo, no nothin' - just an e-mail contact, an address to order more CDs from, and a black and white snapshot of a rather foppish looking new wave gent (or was it somebody's grandpa, back in the day?) on the front cover. AND, to add further layers of radical befuddlement to the equation, it was

on Moo-La-La Records - the Li'l Bunnies old label, f'r Chrissakes!!! One couldn't help but ask oneself what manner of mysterious beings ARE these FM Knives, and how have they come to emit such a compellingly ace album in such a curious vortex of anonymity? Needless to say, given the chance to interview the band - four Caucasian male humans from Sacramento - i gladly accepted, if only to slake mine own burning thirst for knowledge of whom these mortals be, and whyfore be they thus. The following conversation took place at Milwaukee's Cactus Club; we opted, rather indulgently, to conduct the interview in the warm, noisy bar in lieu of going back outside into the cold, shitty Wisconsin, and my ability to faithfully transcribe the band's various rantings and ravings suffered as a result. I apologize in advance for any erroneous transcription on my part, unless it's kinda funny.

Nørb [arriving at club]: Good evening. I am here to interview the FM Knives.

Club Dude: Cool.

Nørb [whistling as he walks thru club looking for band]: Doo dee doo dee doo, doo dee doo dee doo...

[ten minutes pass]

Nørb: Wow, i've been walking around the club for like ten minutes and i don't see anyone who looks like the guy from the CD cover...

[ten more minutes pass; eventually, directions are requested, the band is met, decorum is established and we hunker down in a booth.]

Nørb: Very well then. We will start with a trivia question. A tripartite trivia question at that. As you see, i am wearing a Milwaukee Bucks jersey with the numeral "1" on it. The question is as follows: YOU are from Sacramento, correct?

FM Knives: [general murmurs of assent]

Nørb: Wait, wait, that's not the question yet. Okay, okay, YOU are from Sacramento, and you are PLAYING in Milwaukee. Now, the player whose jersey i am wearing just had his number retired by the Sacramento Kings this month. His number, #1, has also been retired by the Milwaukee Bucks. HOWEVER! The number the Kings retired was NOT #1. Further, although this player played for a team

prior to joining the Bucks, he never played for the Kings. The question is this: 1. Who was the player; 2. What team did he play for other than the Milwaukee Bucks; and 3. What number did the Kings retire?

FM Knives: [general murmuring and consultation]

Nørb: I think i could also make this a quadrupartite question because i think the Kings did retire #1, but for a different player. If you get that, you get bonus points.

FM Knives [consultation ends]: Bob McAdoo.

Nørb: I'm afraid that's incorrect.

FM Knives [adamantly]: Bob McAdoo, Bob McAdoo, Bob McAdoo!

Nørb: Er, the player is Oscar Robertson, who wore #14 for the Cincinnati Royals, who later became the Sacramento Kings.

FM Knives: Ah.

Nørb: I think Nate "Tiny" Archibald wore #1 for the Kings but i might be mistaken.

Ed: We don't know any basketball trivia. Ask us baseball trivia.

Nørb: Well, this isn't trivia, but i was thinking of this on the way down: If you were a baseball announcer, what would your signature home run call be?

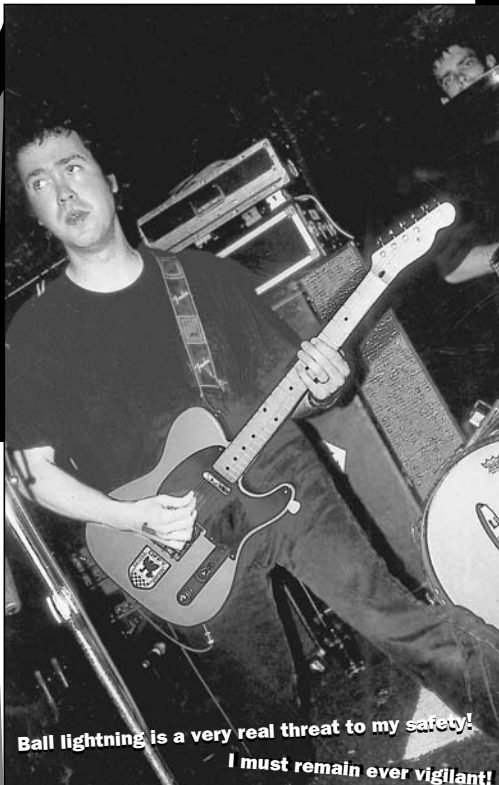
Ed [pause]: "That's a big dong!"

All: [miscellaneous chuckling]

Nørb: That's good, that's good... i was thinking mine would be "ELVIS - has LEFT - the BUILDING!" Okay, okay... we're gonna start the interview for real now: Because your CD packaging was so devoid of information, you were a virtual enigma to the rest of the world, so we need to start with real mundane background information... but, since it would be boring to ask who you are, what instrument you play, and your age, we will ask who you are, what instrument you play, and what the best album released in the year of your birth was.

Ed: Ed, the drummer, and *Arthur* by the Kinks.

Jason: I'm Jason, I'm the singer. Since I was born in '72, I'll say *Exile On Main*



Ball lightning is a very real threat to my safety!

I must remain ever vigilant!

Street and keep it generic.

Nørb: Mighty slim pickin's in 1972...

Jason (begging to differ): Well, there's *The Slider* in '72, there's *Ziggy Stardust* in '72, but we're not gonna talk about *Ziggy Stardust*.

Nørb: *The Slider* is a bit overrated, i must say...

Jason: It's no *Electric Warrior*. Chris, what year were you born in?

Nørb: No, don't actually divulge the year, just the record! It's more charismatic that way.

Chris: Ummm...I'm Chris, the guitar player, and it kind of wasn't an official release at the time, but there's a Pink Fairies thing that year that I like. I can't think of anything else!

Jason: What year?

Chris: 1971.

Nørb: Yeah, you're screwed.

Ed: Wasn't there a Kinks album that year?

Nørb: *Muswell Hillbillies*?

Ed: Yeah, that was '71. The first RCA album.

[conversation devolves into essentially forgettable *Muswell Hillbillies* v. *Lola* vs. *Powerman & The Moneygoround* esoteria]

Nørb: To be honest, i always found Ray Davies' voice kind of annoying. Not as annoying as Glen Danzig or that guy from Creed, but pretty annoying nonetheless. And, GOD DAMMIT, I'VE GOT PLENTY OF EXPERIENCE WITH ANNOYING VOICES!

Jason: Zack is our bass player, he's the same age as me, 1972. I'm trying to think of what he would say...

Nørb: Wasn't there a New York Dolls album that year?

Jason: Oh yeah, yeah, that's what he'd say.

Nørb: Well, then we can't have that!

FM Knives (as one): *HEART ATTACK! HEART ATTACK BY DUST!!!* [general merry sounds of consensus et. al.]

Nørb: I've heard good things about Marky's drumming in *Dust* (note: *Dust* = Marky Ramone/Marc Bell's band prior to the Voidoids)

Ed: Oh, it's unbelievable. UNBELIEVABLE!

Chris: "Marc Bell" on that first *Dust* record... you can't even believe it's the same guy!

Nørb: You wonder how he lost his chops throughout the years...

Chris: He was just drumming inappropriate stuff.

[discussion veers off to Sky, Doug Fieger of the Knack's old band. Needless to say, given the magnitude of record geekdom involved, this is not going to be the snappiest, most punchline-laden interview you've ever read]

Nørb: Okay, next question: Why aren't you the AM Knives?

Jason: Well, we don't see ourselves as, like, a morning kind of drug band. Like, "AM, man, let's do knives in the morning, too, man!" No, "FM Knives" just sounds cooler. "AM Knives" sounds like an early morning radio talk show shift.

Nørb: But, i mean, in this day and age, AM radio is per-

mailed the band to ask them if that was the actual lyric. Amazingly, it was.)

Jason: That would be me.

Nørb: Now, what exactly does that mean, "You didn't always look just like Nick Fury," like your girlfriend has got stubble and is missing an eye?

Jason: No. It used to be "you didn't always put me in a fury," but all the lines get changed to Marvel™ Comic



ceived – perceived – as being cooler than FM radio.

Ed: It is cooler.

Nørb: Well, in theory, but in reality it's all right-wing talk show hosts. But i mean, i mean, your music sort of harkens back to a time when FM radio was still considered something that was cool, or could be cool – not necessarily college radio, but just regular FM radio. I mean, that era – that era had the last vestige of optimism (that commercial FM radio could be trained to not suck) – that – that – that – yeah, exactly. Why am i talking? You guys are the stars of the show. Now, who here did i e-mail about that Nick Fury line? (i had heard a line in one of their songs that i thought went "you didn't always look just like Nick Fury," so i e-

things because we were getting bored at shows, so i'd hafta look at Zack and change it to a comic book thing, to see if he'd catch it, to keep him on his toes.

Nørb: Was it the old Sgt. Fury, when he had two eyes, or the "Agent of SHIELD" Nick Fury with the eyepatch..?

Jason: ...it's just sad you get these girls and (misc. laments), and everything goes in the shitter, and... have you seen that Nick Fury movie with Hasselhoff?

Nørb: WHAT? NO!!!

Jason: It's not that good, but Hasselhoff's Nick Fury. [various gasps of disbelief]

Nørb: Well, i did like Ben Affleck as Daredevil, believe it or not

Jason: Affleck? Daredevil? Really?



←...Who is this "Edgar Bergen" of which you speak, and why does he keep putting his hand up the back of my shirt?

Nørb: Yeah, but i don't really like Daredevil that much. But i like the new series going on now.

Jason: You don't like Daredevil?

Nørb: He never really grabbed me. He was like Batman, but monochromatic, and with worse villains.

Jason: But he would bust people for angel dust. That was the best. And it was funny. The angel dust dealers would be like "Yo, man! Come on, Jack!" It made it funny. Like the Falcon.

Nørb: "Christmas, Misty!" Like Luke Cage (Marvel's blaxploitation hero of the '70s).

Jason: Yeah, like Luke Cage.

[A-Frames begin set, further adding to already copious levels of background noise]

Nørb: Okay, you have been described as sounding similar to the Buzzcocks. Is this an apt comparison?

FM Knives: NO!!!

Nørb: Exactly! If you had your way, whom would you want people to say you sounded like?

Ed: Uh... the Kinks?

Jason and Chris: hyuk hyuk hyuk! [they feign dumping a pitcher of beer on Ed's head]



Otto Preminger very much enjoyed the opportunity to jam with his long-time idols, the FM Knives.

Nørb: I think you sound like the Starjets playing 999 songs in a barn. No, 999 playing Starjets songs in a barn!

Ed: I love 999. We all do.

Nørb: Of course you do!

Chris: I lean towards ripping off the Kinks as much as possible.

Jason: We don't really...

Nørb: No, i understand. I just wanted to see if you liked the tag or not.

Ed: Well, it's not an insult... but you can't copy the Buzzcocks. No one can.

Nørb: Even the Buzzcocks can't copy the Buzzcocks these days. They don't have the right drummer!

Ed: Yeah, you can't copy them, they've got a very signature sound.

Jason: I think we sound more like Stiff Little Fingers.

Ed: Yeah. Yeah. That's more apt.

Nørb: I'm still voting for 999.

Ed: That's fine. They're one of my favorite favorite bands.

Jason: But we don't wear ties like 999. We don't starch our shirts. We don't wear pastels.

Nørb: Well i wore a goddamn basketball jersey, don't look at me!

[amazingly annoying A-Frames riff obliterates several seconds of conversation]

Nørb: ...anyway, you were this amazingly unknown band from Sacramento, who nobody knew anything about, and the only information that could be gleaned from your CD was that you were on the same label as the Li'l Bunnies...

Ed: Not anymore. And thank God.

Nørb: Well, was anybody in the band actually IN the Li'l Bunnies? I wanna hear that goddamn story about the parade, and...

FM Knives: NO. NOBODY KNOWS WHO WAS IN THE LI'L BUNNIES.

Ed: That's a Sac secret.

Nørb: I AM GOING TO HEAR THAT PARADE STORY!

Ed: It's a Sac secret. It's just one of those things.

Nørb: I understand.

FM Knives: NOBODY KNOWS WHO WAS IN THE LI'L BUNNIES.

Nørb: That's okay. I don't know who the Rhythm Chicken is, either.

Ed [unconvincingly]: I honestly don't remember who was in that band.

Nørb: Well, these things happen. Have you had any people tell you that you sound like you're from England?

FM Knives: Yeah.

Nørb: What bands have you ever mistakenly thought were from England?

Jason: I've never made that mistake. I'm not as stupid as the people who listen to our band. I'm much smarter than all you people reading this!

Nørb: My friend once thought the Ramones – the quintessential American band – were from England.

Jason: When I'm singing in the shower, I always find myself singing along to English bands, and I feel like the biggest Billie Joe...

Ed: England is just a superior punk country. Way superior.

Nørb: I think there's a line in the sand between people who think British people singing punk is cooler and people who think singing in a fake Southern accent is cooler... you know, people who think "woman" has three syllables in it.

Jason: There's nothing cool about singing in that Wang-Dang Southern accent Supersuckers shit. There's NOTHING fucking cool about it.

Nørb: TESTIFY!

Ed: Bullshit! That's got nothing to do with... we don't like it.

Jason: That's not an opinion, that's a fact.

Ed: Yeah. Give me a British band any day. They have an honest quality that a lot of American bands lack. (note: i can say with some certainty that this is the first time i've ever heard this opinion expressed!) They're more straightforward. There are so many one-hit wonders in British punk...

Jason: ...and they're greater than the whole Nashville Pussy catalog.

Ed: American punk is a bunch of horseshit right now.

Nørb: Actually, i like the Nashville Pussy song on the Shakedown compilation quite a bit.

Ed: British bands are just better, for some reason. Who knows why? They just are.

Nørb: But, uh... the reality of English punk today is that it's mostly all ska-punk, and the dominant form of popular music of the day there seems to be Nu-Metal, specifically Slipknot...

Ed: Yeah, metal's the fucking death of everything.

Jason: Their critics are the biggest idiots...[indecipherable castigation of UK rock critics]...the Libertines and Supergrass are the two extremely good British bands right now.

Nørb: My friend's band just played with Supergrass.

FM Knives: REALLY???

Nørb: Wait, maybe it was Superdrag.

FM Knives: AWWWWW....

Nørb: Whatever. Supergrass, *I Should Coco*, i got that one. [attempting to figure out what the hell this band is talking about by throwing out band names] The Interpreters?

Ed: Incredible. One of my favorite bands.

Nørb: Go on with that, mysterious men from Sacramento! Please tell us, not what your influences ARE, but from whence your influences DERIVED!

Ed: We've been in bands for so long, we don't even know, we just play. We've all been in bands for fifteen years, in a million different situations, and this band just came together. I mean, we all decided to form a band, and we had no idea what we were gonna do when we got to the practice place. We wrote our album in three days, pretty much. We decided to just get together and did it. We didn't think about anything – all of a sudden we had songs, and we did it. That was all there was to it.

Jason: Yeah, we didn't sit down and plan out...

Ed: First practice, five of the songs on our album were written.

Nørb: Go on! Really?

Ed: Yeah. We had no preconceived idea at all. At all. I barely knew Zack, and I'd known Chris forever, but I was never in a band with him, and me and Jason were in a band forever but he was the bass player. We had no idea what was gonna happen.

Nørb: A very fortuitous coming together!

Ed: Yeah, we were in a bar one night, and were like, "Why don't we start a band up with Chris?" I almost said no. I had other bands goin' – that would've been, fuck – I would've kicked myself for the rest of my life.

Jason: Actually, we wanted to make sure it sounded exactly like the Supersuckers.

Nørb: Sir, you have been born with a tail!

Ed: We don't know where it's goin', but we're still writing songs.

Nørb: It appears that way. Speaking of your songs, of the thirteen songs on your album, seven of them do not mention the title in the lyrics whatsoever. What's the reasoning behind this?

Jason: Well, I write the lyrics, and, I don't wanna name any bands, but I didn't wanna be like a lotta bands whose song is just the title – it's like "title title, yeah yeah, title title, yeah yeah" and that's the song – I thought it would be more interesting if... you know.

Nørb: Well, like that "you're fogging up my tunnel vision" song, is that...

Ed: That's what I call it. I don't even know what the song title is. A lot of times I start the wrong song...

Jason: It's called "20/20." "20/20 vision," get it?

Chris and Ed: AHHHHH!

Nørb: But people don't want to – well, i dunno, maybe they do, who am i to say – but isn't that sort of a strange '90s-ism? Like, maybe i'm a traditionalist or something, but i'm sort of of the opinion that if you understand the chorus, you should know what the song is called. Like, isn't that the problem the Monkees ran into with their *Good Clean Fun* 45? No one could ask for the record because no one knew what it was called? Maybe your band is the exception that proves the rule, since you do that but don't suck.

Jason: A lot of New York bands do that thing where they have the really long title...

Nørb: Or a band'll just have a really catchy song title like "The Television Will Not Be Revolutionized" but you won't remember anything BUT the title. I don't

know, it's a little too much like writing free verse poetry a la Richard Brautigan or something. Anyway, since you don't have a lyric sheet...

Chris: Do you have the Moo-La-La one? (*Useless and Modern* was later reissued on Broken Rekids) (for the Christ's sake)

Nørb: Yes.

Chris: Oh... well, let me tell you the story behind the enigmatic cover.

Nørb: Yes, who was on the cover?

Chris: Our record label person was out of town when it was at the plant. I was blessed with the job of calling the plant that day, and the files didn't open, so we just decided to write off everything – all the liner notes and lyrics – instead of just having it be blank.

Jason: And also our old label was too cheap to spend the eight bucks to put in an extra page to have lyrics and stuff.

Nørb: But who's actually on the cover?

Jason: It's just some guy from some French punk comp. It's really bad. It's kind of a funny picture, but it was kind of a dumb joke.

Nørb: With no other information on the record, it seemed like "perhaps it's a person in the band?" [i conveniently omit the part about actually

looking for the French Wave Yahoo in the club that night.]

Jason: Perhaps it's my uncle! Yeah, we didn't spend anything on it except the \$150 we gave Chris to record it in six hours.

Nørb: Really?! Tell us about that.

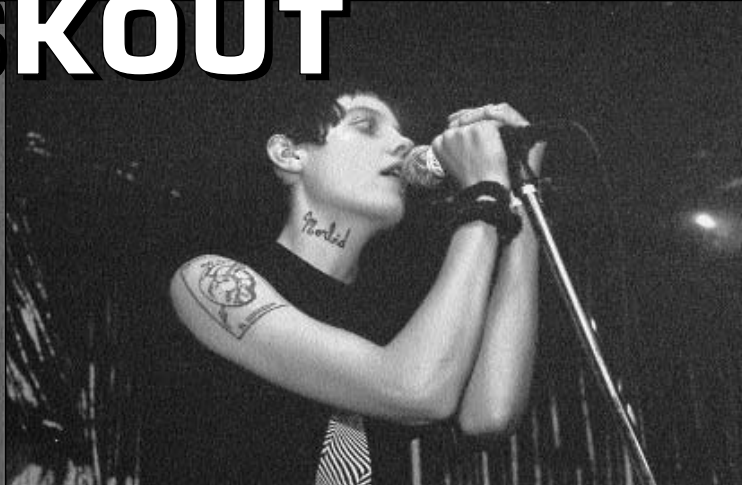
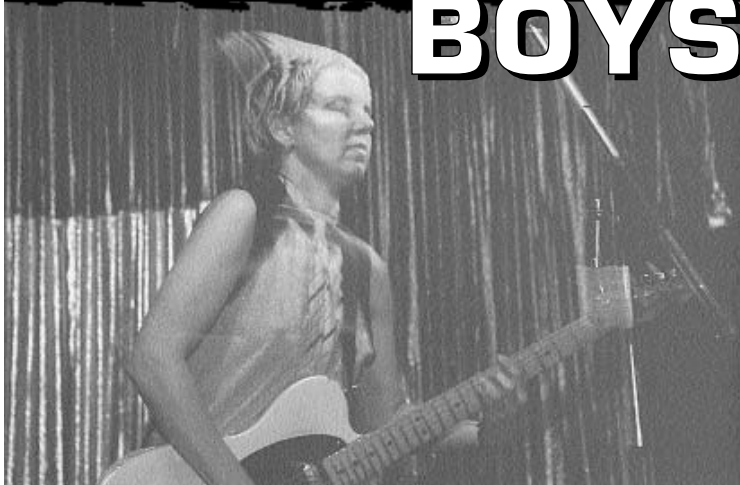
Jason: Chris was pretty much playing guitar, and he'd have to run over to the eight-track when we were tracking, and push buttons, and run back and play guitar...

Ed: And it was a totally hot-ass day. But we had no idea what we were gonna come up with. I didn't even know if we were gonna keep it. In retrospect, it was very haphazard, compared to other bands i'd been in.

[interview goes into a very long, drawn-out interlude where i repeat what i suspect are misunderstood lyrics to Jason, in hopes that he correct me, and great mirth follows. Unfortunately, not only do i have the majority of the lyrics correct, but Jason explains each lyric at great length, which was not the question. For the record, "selling all my shit to Vicki" is actually "selling all my shit...\$2.50" and "i paid your roommate for your pubic picture, now i feel like hell" actually references a yearbook picture]



BOYSKOUT



interview and photos by Kat Jetson

It all began because people thought they looked cute on stage. It was that mixed with some sweet talking (read: lying) that got Boyskout their first gig back in 2001. Things were a little bit different then for this San Francisco group of dreamy popsters. For one, they were a trio. A trio with, like, one and one half songs and borrowed drum sticks. But you know, they had that cute thing to fall back on.

Some bumme stuff happened and their original bassist departed. That left the core of the band – drummer Carrie and singer/guitarist Leslie – with, well, no bassist. Enter a boy named Daniel, who just happened to be able to play bass, dress mighty fine, and <<cough, cough>> move large pieces of musical equipment. Then along came China and she sang like a dream and played the keys. Bingo and perfect-o!

Boyskout were now a bulked-up, melodic and synthtastic quartet. And even though they have big-time record guys wooing them, they're really just a simple bunch who like girls, singing into glitter microphones, knife throwing, and Bambi.

Kat: What was the catalyst for starting Boyskout?

Leslie: Carrie and I were playing together in a different band called Tigerbeat. Tigerbeat played sweet, dreamy songs, and while we liked playing these types of songs, we wanted to also be playing music with more of an edge. So we started Boyskout.

Carrie: I think playing in Tigerbeat showed us that we had a unique compatibility. And we wanted to develop this musical relationship in a project that wasn't backing other people's ideas, but creating our own music and style.

Kat: You originally started as a three-piece. What was the reason for the change?

Leslie: The band changed drastically last summer. Our former bass player fell from a ladder and wasn't able to play her instrument for a few months. My friend Daniel came to our rescue and played the shows we had already booked prior to her fall. After he started playing bass there really was no turning

back. A few weeks later, China joined as additional vocalist and keyboardist.

Carrie: We became better musicians and our ideas grew more complex. This was happening around the time of the great fall. I don't think we ever sat around and thought about becoming a quartet. It just needed to happen, so it did.

Kat: Did you call your band Boyskout with a "k" for internet searching reasons or because you didn't want to be sued by The Boy Scouts of America?

Carrie: Both.

Leslie: We wanted to call ourselves Boyskout because our band was forming around the same time that the Boy Scout organization was making it clear that it didn't want to have anything to do with anyone who identified themselves as homosexual.

Kat: What other bands names did you consider?

Leslie: The Switch, SpaceScout. There was one really bad name... I don't want to say it.

Carrie: I thought we were called The Scouts for a while, then some people told me otherwise. That bad name Leslie won't say, well, it was really bad. I'm glad it's not our name.

Kat: No offense to Daniel, but you sort of have a girl gay thing going on. Is he cool with that?

Daniel: We have a lot in common. We all like girls.

Kat: On that note, do you mind being labeled a queer band?

Leslie: I don't mind.

Daniel: I'd prefer to be labeled as a good band.

Kat: What have China and Daniel added to your band?

Carrie: Daniel is a great musician and he has style. Our rhythm section is getting more intense; he likes to push things, like I do. He should carry more equipment, though. China's style and her influences have added a new dimension to our music. She's a good foil to Leslie.

Leslie: Daniel and China feel like family. They make being in a band feel right for me.

Kat: What do you think about

on stage?

Daniel: The Vibrations.

Carrie: Whenever I'm really into playing, I have flashbacks from times and events that I could never recall in normal life, and some events that I know never happened. I don't know why. I guess it's some sort of fully engaged meditation. Although I'm completely aware of what I'm doing, part of my brain takes off on its own. It's fucking bizarre.

Kat: Tell us what's it like driving in a van with Boyskout?

China: It can be very amusing.

Carrie: And violent.

Leslie: We like to rough each other up.

Daniel: I prefer to fly.

Kat: Does being in a band get you more dates?

China: It gets me in more trouble.

Kat: Do you remember what your first Boyskout show was like? How did you get that gig?

Leslie: Our first show was opening up for The Need. We couldn't really play our instruments but people said we

looked cute on stage.

Carrie: We were, as a band, more in the "talking" stages. Meaning, one night we were out drinking and talking about how great it would be to be playing shows. This girl who puts together shows heard us and we somehow convinced her that we were a real band and we had songs and we were good enough to play this show. I think we had less than two songs at this point. I might or might not have owned drumsticks.

Kat: What was the first song you ever wrote? It doesn't have to be with Boyskout, per se, but the first song you recall writing.

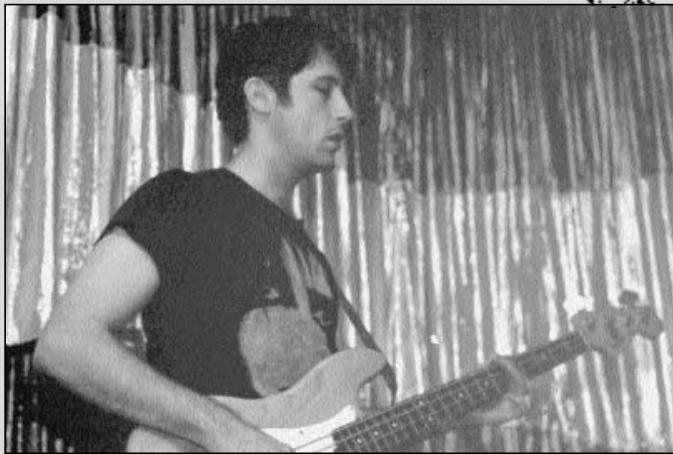
Leslie: When I was in the fourth grade I learned all of the words to a song called "Harper Valley PTA." One of the fifth grade teachers heard me singing it one day and got me to come to her class and sing it for everyone. It was a hit and all of the other fifth grade teachers asked me to sing it for the kids in their classrooms. It went all wrong though, because I had a cold and someone made me laugh while I was singing and a big gob of snot flew out of my nose and everyone saw it. That ended the performance. But, since that doesn't really answer the question, I first wrote songs when I was little. I went to the circus and got a stick with a fake glitter microphone. I was about six and I used to carry the mic around and make up little songs.

China: When I was five I wrote a song about a werewolf.

Kat: Tell me about the song you recorded for Bomp! Records. What's that all about? I hear Carrie drummed on a million-dollar kit.

Carrie: I did! But I like my kit better.

Leslie: We got an email from a guy who said he was into our music and that we really have something different going on, and would we be interested in being on this comp. We went down to record a song and I guess that they really liked it or us or something because we ended up recording five songs. So yeah, we have two songs that are coming out on a Bomp compilation in late August/early



September.

Daniel: Yeah. It's meant to be a San Francisco garage rock sort of thing with some really good bands like Coachwhips, Low Flying Owls, and Black Cat Music.

Kat: What other talents do you

still love her. I love her.

Kat: What's your guilty pleasure?

Leslie: No comment.

Carrie: Totino's Party Pizza.

China: Johnny Cash and petty crime.

Daniel: Today I had a popsicle.

Kat: Have you ever belonged to a fan club?
Leslie: No, but my family was Mormon for a few months.

possess that you don't mind sharing with a bunch of people you don't know, other than the obvious musician thing?

Leslie: I can tie cherry stems with my tongue.

China: Knife throwing.

Carrie: I cut my own hair.

Kat: Who's the coolest person ever?

Leslie: Chan Marshall (aka Cat Power). She gets to be as strange as she wants and people

Kat: What's the best description of your music that you've heard? And if no one's gotten it right yet, tell us how it should be.

Leslie: Early Cure... sort of, "I might like you better if we slept together." Dark but sweet and mellow but popish. New wave Joy Division (ish).

Kat: What posters were hanging in your teenage room?

Carrie: A glass print of Slash I



won at the state fair.

China: *Pulp Fiction* and a Roy Lichtenstein poster.

Daniel: Def Leppard.

Leslie: Bambi.

Kat: Have you ever belonged to a fan club?

Leslie: No, but my family was Mormon for a few months.

Carrie: When I was eleven, I wrote Patrick Swayze a fan letter. I wasn't just a fan though, because I understood and loved him. I'm a redneck, by the way.

Kat: Who do you think consistently makes good music?

Leslie: Devendra Banhart and Cat Power.

Kat: What would make you happy right now?

China: A nice drink on the beach with a piano.

Daniel: A new hubcap.

Kat: What's your first musical memory?

Leslie: Olivia Newton-John.

Carrie: Listening to the song that goes "...nobody's gonna cramp my style, nobody's gonna slow me down, no-o, I got to keep on moving..." on the floor of my mom's yellow station wagon.

Kat: What's your most cherished possession?

Leslie: Oliver, my Italian Greyhound and my Devendra Banhart CD.

Daniel: My Siamese kitty.

Carrie: My drums.

Kat: If you could be any animal, what would it be and what would you be doing with your days?

Leslie: This is cliché, but a bird. They get to fly. It must be fun.

Carrie: That fish that crawled out of water and began life on land. I'd spend the days running around on my little fish fin-legs, eating new foods, and growing new body parts.

China: A rat, running through the sewers.

Kat: What do you hope for the future of Boyskout?

Leslie: To be playing shows every night in foreign countries.

Kat: And, in conclusion, the ladies need to know (okay, maybe that's just me needed to know) boxers or panties?

Leslie: Boxers.

China: Tightly-whiteys.

Carrie: I'm a Gemini.

Daniel: Ummm...

Dan Monick's

Photo Page

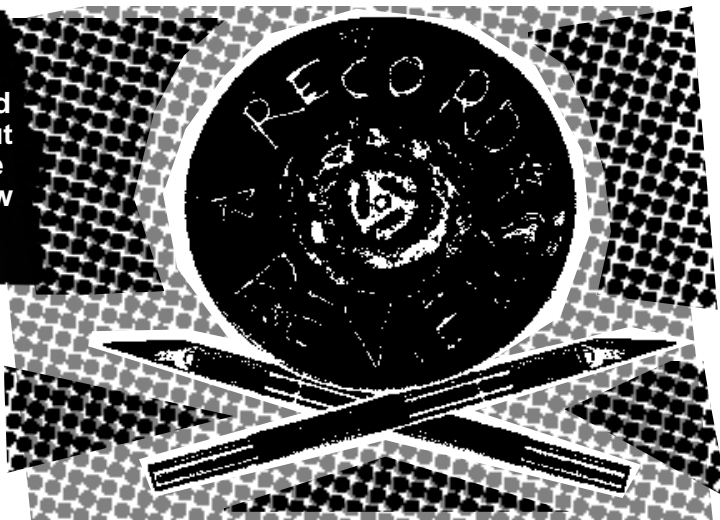


I thought the pictures would go good for an end of summer vibe. Empty/abandoned pool or something. Whadya think? -Dan

Dan's having some upcoming shows. Check out www.dmonick.com for all the details.



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.



This is also great stuff when you are vacuuming, washing dishes or putting that suppository in your pet's butt. Now that is a great soundtrack! –Donofthedeat

A FRAMES: 2: LP

Lyrics about math and atoms and electricity and alienation and what-not (sample song titles: "Nuclear" "Ionic" "Electricity" "Abstract") (sample verse: "She's a spasm/Protoplasm") intoned in a droll monotone over calmly spastic riffs that lead one to believe that the guitar player's mother was frightened by that Crucifucks song about the canisters whilst she was with child, backed by basslines that seem appropriately disjointed enough to match the guitar, yet deep 'n' shake-a- robo-booty rhythmic enough to lock in perfectly with the hard-hittin' drums – meaning that while the geeks spaz out to the sonic and lyrical occurrences occupying the higher frequency ranges, the stoned art pop two feet away might very well be simultaneously locked in some manner of rhapsodic groove coma down at the lower end. Not a bad gig, really – sort of like if Gary Numan kicked Steve Albini out of Shellac or something. And, right when one begins to feel the feeling that the entire record is one big drone-smash statement after another, the band serves up a brilliant slice of comparative goofiness in "Search & Rescue," which is almost Supernova-esque in its merry naivete (though not to the extent where the A Frames instruct everyone to string together all their belts because they lost their snorkels and their fins) (but TO the extent that i decide the band has more in common with the Epoxies than the Gang of Four) (thank fucking God). One thing i fully expected from this record that never materialized was at least one song where the singer purported to either be an artificial intelligence or an alien – no one said anything of the sort, and, as a result, i've been furtively looking over my shoulder ever since. BEST SONG: "Search and Rescue" BEST SONG TITLE: ah, i won't give 'em the satisfaction... but i will state, for the record, that if "Togetherness" is not a direct musical ripoff of "Apathy" by Suburban Mutilation, i will eat my own shit. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Recorded (quite well) by Chris Woodhouse of the FM Knives, which i didn't know until yesterday, despite the fact that i was in the same building as both Chris and the A Frames on two separate occasions this year. –Rev. Nørþ (S-S)

ACID REIGN: *Ready Yet?*: CD

Like its punk rock cousin, much of what passes itself off as "rap" these days is pretty dismal, to say the least. Just as punk has had to learn to live with oodles of boy-band-in-training pop-punk poseur fops whoring for fame, clueless fashion slaves trying to relive the glory days of 1977/1982/1994, and whiny emo buttercups taking PC-isms to new ridiculous extremes, so has hip hop had to endure both the rise of gangsta wannabes flooding the racks and airwaves with odes to guns, bitches and the ever-ludicrous worship of the bling-

bling, and the corporate raiders sucking the genre dry and trying their damndest to prevent anything new or inventive from leading the cash cow astray. If you do a little digging under the surface of either genre, however, a whole host of amazing sounds can be found just waiting to blow your mind. Such is the case with Acid Reign's debut. The three rappers here (Beond, Gajah, and Slowrider vocalist Olmeca) have apparently drawn inspiration from the Freestyle Fellowship/Project Blowed school of stream-of-consciousness delivery and married it to a level of hyper-speed delivery not seen since Chip Fu in his prime, resulting with one hell of a ride more often akin in tone to the jazz vernacular of Coleman or Coltrane than to your average purveyor of "street knowledge." Taken on a purely literary level, the rhymes and rhythmic structure of the songs contained here are impeccable, fusing social commentary with an impressive experimentation with meter – these are guys who obviously paid attention during the poetry component in English class, and it shows. For those that just wanna hear some really good music, this doesn't disappoint on that level, either. The beats and backing tracks here are strong and wildly varied, and the furious alliteration utilized by the rappers lends even more level percussive counter rhythms to the tracks, giving you even more to sonically digest. In short, this is one mind-bogglingly good record. If there were any justice in the world, these guys would rule the airwaves. –Jimmy Alvarado (Nomadic Sound System)

ALLERGIC TO WHORES: *Chaos Before Death*: CDEP

This one's a bit slower than their usual thrash gallop pace, but the level of quality hasn't diminished accordingly and the singer still sounds like he's about to burst a vein at any moment. Good stuff –Jimmy Alvarado (Dark Front)

ANCHORMEN, THE: *Nation of Interns*: CD (Unstoppable)

Their rhyme woosy with Vespucci. That's seriously the highlight of the album. –Megan (Unstoppable)

ANN BERETTA: *The Other Side of the Coin*: CD

After *To All Our Fallen Heroes* and *New Union, Old Glory*, I need another Ann Beretta record like I need a box set collecting the complete oeuvre of Jimmy Buffett with outtakes, especially when it's acoustic versions of songs from the first record. I've had it. If we're going to be honest, we need to acknowledge that Ann Beretta had one good album in them but kept tilling and seeding the same creative soil, never letting it lie fallow. And what it all boils down to is this – *Bitter Tongues* is a damn fine record. It is also the only Ann Beretta album you need. –Puckett (Thrown Brick)

ARAKI: *Ikara*: CD

What starts off with sappy minimal piano practice progresses into sappy sleepy interminable dance music that sounds like Depeche Mode dying of chronic diarrhea. I looked at Scene Police's website and it seems like they got some great shit; I hope I never find out why the fuck they put this out. –Cuss Baxter (Scene Police)

ASTERISK*: *Dogma*: CD

Superior grindcore from this Swedish trio that leaves the medicine to the doctors and goes straight for the intellect. Well, I guess so, as there's no lyric transcription, but from the song titles ("Adding Milk to DNA," "Another Dane Law Carved in French") to the quirky weirdness (a la Locust) that pops up here and there (and the dedication of one track to minimalist composer Arnold Dreyblatt) this blasts in the general direction of the thinking grinder. Forty-one tracks, including a cover of Queen's "Ogre Battle," in as many minutes (apparently their entire recorded body), and you've got probably the forty-one most frantic heavy minutes you'll see this year. –Cuss Baxter (31G)

AWAY FROM NOW: *Shadows Allude Invade*: CD

This is a strange little album from Australia. The vocals sound a bit like Frankie Stubbs from Leatherface, and some of the songs on this album do have Leatherface breakdowns and those hard,

fast, chaotic melodies. When the songs have these parts, I really like this CD a lot. Sometimes, though, they pull out of the breakdowns with some tough guy metal bits, which, at its best, reminds me of Sick of it All, but usually, the tough guy metal parts don't sound as good as Sick of it All. It's strange because the two elements don't match, and the combination makes for really long songs. I wish that they would cut out everything that doesn't sound like Leatherface. Of course, I realize that this would probably make them sound less original, but that's a chance I'm willing to take. –Sean (Pee)

BALZAC: *Beyond the Darkness*: CD

If you didn't make it out to Fiend Fest to see Balzac on their first US tour, you missed out. Let me tell you, they were fuckin' incredible. I saw kids seeing and hearing them for the first time get blown away by their set. I even got to hang with them for a bit each night that I went. Here is a little history for you. The band originated in 1992 and are from Osaka, Japan. The band is a Misfits-influenced band that has taken everything that is to be loved of the band and improved on it. They play original songs that are catchy and can compete against the Misfits catalog. This release is a collection of songs from their past catalog that they re-recorded for their North American introduction. Some of the songs on this recording were released earlier this year in Japan as the *Beware of Darkness* EP. On that EP, the song "The Pain (Is All Around)" and three live tracks did not end up on the American release. But the American release is chock full o songs. Seventeen studio and three live tracks fill the disc. In addition, you get a bonus DVD of videos that were only available in Japan. The differences I hear in this recording session, compared to the past versions, are the vocals are a little up front in the mix, the guitar is a little pushed back, and the tempo is a hair slower, I believe. The songs are still great though! I look at it as just a different version of a great thing. Fans of the Misfits, Samhain, AFI or Danzig, here is your next favorite band! –Donofthedeat (Misfits)

BATON ROUGE, LES: *Chloe Yurtz*: CDEP

...after listening to this all the way through, my Chloe Yurtz a bit as well. BEST SONG: "My Body-The Pistol" BEST SONG TITLE: "Velvet Barbed Wire" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: The first four songs reminded me of Penetration, the Lunachicks, SIN 34, Red Scare, the Cinch (infrequently) and Bikini Kill. Mostly of their shortcomings. The fifth song – "My Body-The Pistol" – was a complete about-face: Male vocals and a fuzzed-out robo-approach which either reminded me of Pilgrim State or No Scene (i forget which). And the last song – "Parish Priest" – sounded like one of those weird, soft tunes somewhere between the "real" songs (such as they are) on Jefferson Airplane's *Surrealistic Pillow* album: Echoey guitar and female murmuring sounding like it's coming from somewhere down the hall whilst the listener sits crumpled in a heap in another room, wondering whether the floor is really made out of water or not and if the toilet is working again. If someone would care to explain the Portuguese punk rock aesthetic to me at this point, i'd be all ears. –Rev. Nørþ (Elevator Music)

BEEHIVE & THE BARRACUDAS:
In Dark Love: CD

Arty, punky stuff that was interesting for approximately two songs. When I found myself pondering the potential of rocks having some semblance of consciousness, I knew I was in deep doo doo. -Jimmy Alvarado (Swami)

BENNY/BABY LITTLE TABLETS: Self-titled Split 7"

Baby Little Tablets are an earnest, squawking band who sing about midlife crises before they've even turned thirty. Benny, for some reason, enjoy holding hands like they're in a prayer circle. While I admire people who are in touch with their emotional side, displaying it like a badge is kinda goofy. Their song, "The Right True End" has a nice Hüsker Dü feel to it that makes it worth repeated listening. -Eric Rife (Boss Tuneage)

BERENICE BEACH: Runaway: CD

Dudes, Rancid is *soooo* passe, and the latter period Social Distortion added here for flavor didn't help matters much. -Jimmy Alvarado (Mad Butcher)

BLACK SOUL CHOIR: Cardinal: CD EP

So far as I can tell, they ain't Black, they ain't a choir and they sure as hell ain't playin' no soul. Their brand of noise rock ain't all that good, either. -Jimmy Alvarado (Init)

BLACKTOP CADENCE, THE: Chemistry for Changing Times: CD

Whereas Hot Water Music works on a volcanic structure of pressure blowing out hot lava, The Blacktop Cadence deals with cooling, slow-moving mantle. With two members of HWM - Chris on vocals and guitar, and George on drums - this effort from '97 will be instantly recognizable to their fans: structured and sweeping melancholy. And although The Blacktop Cadence is governed by a slow pace, measured steps, and almost whispered screams, it doesn't fit into a neat, prefigured little musical box. (No emo here.) Nor is it merely sleepy. For me, it's perfect hangover music. Man, those dudes (and lady) are talented. -Todd (No Idea)

BOB HOOKS AND THE SWAMP RATS: Disco Still Sucks: CD

A retrospective of an obscure '60s garage band. Although they hailed from Pittsburgh, these boys were apparently more sonically aligned with northwestern bands like the Wailers and the Sonics, even covering two songs by the latter and giving them a run for the money when it comes to wild, over-the-top rawk. Rather than being content to be a one-trick pony, though, these guys often switched things up by cranking out some sweet beat versions of obscure Stones and Kinks tracks, not to mention a disarmingly pretty cover of the Beatles' "Here, There and Everywhere." Good tuneage to be found throughout, although it's worth the price of admission for the pounding version of "Louie Louie" alone. -Jimmy Alvarado (Get Hip)

BOILS, THE: Pride and Persecution: CD

Okay, I am going to give them the benefit of the doubt about the Eagle and Iron Cross motif because I see Al Quint of

Suburban Voice in a photo on the inside, otherwise I would be a bit concerned of dodginess. That said, this is good straight forward punk/hardcore that is more energetic than fast, more raucous than loud, more cathartic than angry. Venting frustration can be a good time. -Rich Mackin (TKO)

BOTCH: An Anthology of Dead Ends: CD EP

Yay, metalcore. Oddly enough, I've been getting into shit like Converge lately so I suspect I should like this grinding, pulverizing, heavy-as-shit riffage more than I do. Maybe this just suffers in comparison to the new Weakerthans album. While I realize that a reviewer is supposed to be able to objectively evaluate the merits and downfalls of an album independent of anything else said reviewer may be reviewing or listening to, I long ago realized that reviewing a record is subjective as fuck and that I might love grindy shit one moment and wake up three days later wondering what I was thinking because there is no objective checklist to use for evaluating the artistic merits of a release. With all that gibberish out of the way, this is well done headbangist rock and on any other day, I probably would have turned it up to show all of my neighbors the error of their ways. -Puckett (Hydra Head)

BOUNCING SOULS, THE: Anchors Aweigh: CD

There will be no fans lost by the Bouncing Souls. They follow the formula that has made them popular. The songs have that hint of familiarity that makes it easy to flow right into a new release. The only drawback is more on a musician's note. It sounds like the drummer, in the recording, used the same snare drum that he would normally use for a show. It sounds like one of those really deep snares that people like to use because the sound projects in a live setting. In most cases, I noticed, in a studio setting the snare drum sounds like someone hitting a tin can or garbage can. That is the sound on the record and that's my sore spot while I'm listening to this. -Donofthedeath (Epitaph)

BROADCAST: Pendulum: CD EP

My friend Andrew calls Broadcast the band that Stereolab always wanted to be. I don't mind Stereolab, but Broadcast has always held my heart. Stereolab was always the more French-pop sixties group when Broadcast was the evil, moody-as-fuck and romantically bitter sixties pop group. But, of course, it's 2003, and not 1966. This is sort of a sneakpeak at their next full length - featuring one track, "Pendulum," that will appear on it - this song opens this EP - a tripped-out psychedelic, raw electronic single, my favorite song. Vocalist Trish Kennans has a delicate and amazing voice that counteracts the harsh raw tones of their recordings. Their music is a soundtrack - it's like a dream. This is the music that causes out of body experiences. "Small Song IV" is a rough and spacey vocal track that almost comes off more like an improv session. I just love the sound of their recordings. I keep using the term raw, but you can just hear a pin drop in the room. It's great. Broadcast is also known for their moody instrumentals, which shines on the tripped-out "Violent Playground" (no, not a Nitzer Ebb cover), and "One Hour Empire." These are the four tracks that truly stand out, compared to the more unexciting vocal track "Still Feels Like

RAZORCAKE

Vinyl rules, stupidass

THESE ARE THE TOP 7'S SINCE THE LAST MAG.



Underground Medicine Mailorder, Connecticut

1. Stupor Stars, Bernadette (Honeyhole)
2. Kill-a-watts/Sweet J.A.P., split (Nice & Neat)
3. Marked Men, I Can't Be Good (Mortville)
4. Clorox Girls, Baby (Johnny Cat)
5. Fliptops/Gloryholes, split (Johnny Cat)
6. Sleazies, Gonna Operate on Myself (Rapid Pulse)
7. Various Artists, Anatomy of a... (Portland Collective)
8. Hormonas, Teenage Pussy (Shake Your Ass)
9. FM Knives, Estrogen (Smart Guy)
10. Little Killers, Better Be Right (Crypt)

Dr. Strange Records California

1. Caustic Christ/R.A.M.B.O., split (Busted Head)
2. Stains, John Wayne Was a Nazi (Twisted Chord)
3. Skulls, Self-titled (Blazing Guns)
4. Lower Class Brats, Deface the Music (Punk Core)
5. Scholastic Deth, Revolution (625)
6. Dead Kennedys, Nazi Punks, Fuck Off (Alternative Tentacles)
7. Grimple, Self-titled (Prank)
8. Filth, Live the Chaos (Life Is Abuse)
9. Blatz, Cheaper Than Beer (Life Is Abuse)
10. Adolescents, Welcome to Reality (Frontier)

Disgruntled Mailorder, California

1. Neon King Kong, There's a Party (Vinyl Dog)
2. BellRays, Get It Right picture disc (Holy Cobra Society)
3. Lipstick Pickups, Better Than You (Kapow)
4. Sonny Vincent/Jimmy Page, Chainsaw, split (Musical Tragedies)
5. The Orphans, Chinatown (Kapow)
6. VOM, Live at Surf City (Kryptonite)
7. Broken Bottles, Bloody Mary (Revenge)
8. Henry Fiats Open Sore, I Was a Teenage Pretty Boy (Ken Rock)
9. Diskords/Low Rollers, split (Johnny Cat)
10. The Tears, She Ain't Right (Bancroft)

Tears,” and the noisy, chaotic closer instrumental “Minus Two.” I am anxious to hear their upcoming full length. Their last LP, *The Noise Made By People*, from 2000 was one of my favorites of the year. –Sarah (Warp)

**BROADZILLA:
Lady Luck: CD**

They look like they raided Cherie Currie’s closet circa 1976 and sound like some lost L7 demo with EG Daily handling vocal duties. Yes, it’s that bad. –Jimmy Alvarado (Diamond Star)

**BROKEN BOTTLES:
Not Pretty: CDEP**

I wonder about the future of the Broken Bottles. The way I see it, in ten years I may say, “I saw those guys at the Doll Hut with Smogtown,” and people will be amazed and say that they read about that show in such-and-such book and hundreds of people will claim to have been there when, in reality, only about thirty people were. Either that, or I’ll say, “Broken Bottles could’ve been the biggest OC punk band since Social Distortion, but they self-destructed,” and people will say, “Who?” One thing’s for sure, I’ve passed on Broken Bottles CDs and played Broken Bottles seven inches for dozens of people, and everyone has become a fan. *Not Pretty* is a perfect introduction to them, too. It’s melodic and catchy and a little disturbed (they sing about killing cats and starring in a porn with Kelly Osbourne) and, if radio stations got their hands on “Gothic Chicks,” Broken Bottles would be huge. Before that happens, pick up this awesome EP, and pick up their *Radioactive San Onofre* and *Bloody Mary* seven inches, while you’re at it. –Sean (Finger)

BRONX, THE: Self-titled: CD
Attention all hipsters: Scandinavian punk rock’n’roll has hit Hollywood. Please head in an orderly fashion to your nearest trendy shirt shop on Melrose to buy your officially sanctioned Turbonegro T-shirts, and take all of your friends along with you. Anyone caught on the Strip not wearing the aforementioned officially sanctioned Turbonegro T-shirt will be considered, like, totally lame. –Jimmy Alvarado (White Drugs)

**BUSINESS, THE:
Hardcore Hooligan: CD**

I have a world of respect for The Business. Along with Cocksparrer, they pioneered street punk. You can’t compare The Business to other bands. They’re the hallmark. Nonetheless, nearly thirty years after The Business started off, you have to be a little hesitant about a new album by them. What can they do to stay interesting this many years into the game? Well, how about an album comprised solely of songs about football (or soccer, as we Americans call it)? That’s what *Hardcore Hooligan* is, and, for a closet soccer fanatic, it works for me. There’s a song about Gareth Southgate, the English national team player who missed the penalty kick that would’ve gotten England into the finals of the 1996 European Cup. There’s “Viva Bobby Moore,” a song about England’s all-time best player (I’ve watched films of Bobby Moore, and the guy was amazing; he’s the only player I’ve ever seen who could legitimately be compared to Pele). They sing the praises of Michael Owen, the most promising English soccer player since Bobby

Moore (that’s my opinion, not everyone else’s, but you should’ve seen him against Argentina in the ‘98 World Cup, when he decided to take the game into his own hands, dribble past the entire defense, and score one of the all-time greatest World Cup goals). They curse Argentinean national team player Diego Maradona in two separate songs, first with the basic, “Maradona, you’re shit,” and second with a re-recording of “Handball,” which starts out, “3000 miles is a long way to go/ to be beaten by a dwarf in Mexico.” Not only was Maradona one of the shiftiest players to ever make it to the national soccer stage, but, in 1986, he got away with smacking a ball into the goal with his hand, which effectively eliminated England from the Cup, so, yeah, he deserves two songs cursing him. I hated that fucker when he played. I’m not standing by The Business, though, when they sing about Maradona and Argentina beating England in that Cup and finishing up by singing, “Everyone knows the final score/ but who won the Falklands war.” The coolest thing about this version of “Handball” is that it was originally on their *Welcome to the Real World* album, which was a recorded right around the time when The Business’s popularity was waning fast and new wave was picking up, so all the songs – which were written to be street punk songs – were recorded like someone was trying to make a Thompson Twins album. And every time I listen to *Welcome to the Real World*, I think that it would be one of punk’s greatest albums if they just re-recorded it to sound like The Business is supposed to sound. This version of “Handball” supports that theory. Beyond the direct attacks or songs of

praise about professional athletes, there’s a bunch of songs on *Hardcore Hooligan* that are just about drinking and going to soccer games. It makes me wish that I could get together with the guys from The Business, go to a English First Division soccer game, drink beer, sing songs, and root like hell for whoever The Business root for. –Sean (BYO)

BUTT: It’s Butt!: CDEP

Butt comes at you like a sonic attack, or so they say. I happen to agree. Best lyrics ever: “Somethin’ somethin’ ‘bout the pride we lack.” I want them to play my birthday party. –Megan (Butt)

**CARBONAS: I’m Astray,
Don’t Let On b/w Push Me: 7”**
Heavy and dirty, but like a wet and sticky Jolly Ranger taken from the ground and put in your mouth, there’s some odd sweetness coming through the crunch. The singer’s voice is the clutch and transmission: it predicts the pace, the shifting speeds, and makes the listen mid-tempo and gutsy. All I can think of for a comparison would be Space Cookie re-doing AC/DC, fronted by a crooner instead of a punker, and that helps, oh, about twenty people out, so I’ll say straight ahead rock’n’roll with plenty of pleasing snarl. Thankfully, Carbonas leave out the parts where hair is shoooken, feet are put on amps, and stands clear of noodling solos. Not bad. –Todd (Die Slaughterhouse, \$3)

**CAT ON FORM:
Structure and Fear: CD**

Sounds like an emo band trying to disguise itself as an art punk band, yet only managing to sound just as terrible

despite the plethora of strummed open strings to give their sound an "edge."
—Jimmy Alvarado (Southern)

CENTRO, EL: *Prohibido!*: CD
Pennywise sucked the first time.
—Not Josh (Finger)

CHAINS, THE:
***On Top of Things!*: CD**
Meticulously executed and profoundly anemic Nuggets-box-set '60s rehash from five Francophones (apparently Quebecois) (which would, i guess, make this Nuggets-box-set '60s rehash Vol. 2), who are to be commended for their impeccable playing and production and excoriated for their stunning and utter listlessness. I mean, this record is so sedate that it sounds like records that tried to sound like this back in the EIGHTIES sounded like, and that is about as far from a compliment as it gets (ladies and gentlemen – for those who couldn't handle the sheer, animal passion of the Fuzztones – here's the Chains!). At their best, the band evoke the clinical calculations of the Spongetones (minus the occasionally brilliant results); at their worst – a cover of Eddie Cochran's "Nervous Breakdown" so tepid it makes the Brian Briggs version sound like the work of blood-crazed Neanderthal sex workers – they sound like the only band they could ever be capable of out-rocking at The Great North American Rock-Off might be the Shoes. As far as i can tell, the only thing The Chains might conceivably be considered "on top of" is a frickin' road map. Just say "non!" **BEST SONG:** "Fortune Teller," although this version is much too slow for my manly tastes, and wouldn't anybody who would be into the song own several ser-

viceable versions (Hollies, Dogs) already? **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Nervous Breakdown" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** Bass player Frédéric Charest has the most accent marks in his name; guitarist Sébastien Houll and drummer Éric Boulanger are tied for second. —Rev. Nørb (Get Hip)

CHAINSAW: *Just Need It: 7*"
Some strong Japanese gallop-core here, loud as fuck and just a dash of metal in all the right places. —Jimmy Alvarado (Even Worse)

CHALET CHALET:
Self-titled: CD
The vocalist of this band is turning me on. I bet he's a good kisser. And the recording is so raw and exciting. Almost a little Sonic Youth back in day, at times (esp. with noisy guitar). It's fun and exciting and makes you want to jump up and down – not in a "oi pogoing" kind of way – but in a grabbing all your friends and screaming and hooting a lot like it's the Beatles' first US concert. I'm usually not into the newer melodic punk rock and roll shit, but the rawness of the sound, the hot vocals, and quickness of everything (this four-song EP is totally like a whirlwind) that is going on around me gets me excited for the future of this band. If you like loud, quirky, energetic post-punk with a more unique-non Dischordian feel, then go buy this record. I hate most modern music, and this is one of those few bands that gives me hopes for the future of rock'n'roll/punk. Chalet Chalet is like the sped-up evil brothers of all those boring bands like the Strokes, The Vines, and all those other wasteful MTV 2 crap-fests of bands. They don't give a fuck. Hot Hot Heat should stop trying to

sound like Dexy's Midnight Runners and try to sound like Chalet Chalet.
—Sarah (Walk In Cold)

CHARGERS STREET GANG, THE: *Through the Windshield*: CD
Recorded by Tim Kerr, this is sweet, large, ambitious Panorama Dome rock. The failure rate with bands incorporating the milestones in rock is high. It's a steep slope, but I think The Chargers Street Gang have got the combination to the safe cracked: high voltage, powering Hoover Dam type hooks, soaring, swerving vocals, and a drummer who sounds like he has four arms. When the foot's taken off the accelerator, it's sweating grooves (and that's a test most bands fail). Although everything on this album isn't solid gold, I still like it plenty. I have a theory. Not only have they passed rigorous riffs and chops commando training, but their appreciation for big rock is a deep well and not just an affection to get all pouty and crank their butts out like a bunch of twenty-first century dandies (such as the Mooney Suzuki). I bet you this: They know the Ron Asheton and not James Williamson version of the Stooges was supreme. In the end, *Through the Windshield* is a tasteful, yet forceful bludgeoning that fans of AC/DC, The Clone Defects, The Baseball Furies, and anyone who likes hairy balls and punk abrasions on their rock would appreciate. They all share the same viral, itching disease. —Todd (Get Hip)

CHEATS, THE:
***Cheap Pills*: CD**
Man, these guys blew my "fat guy + dork = good" theory out of the water. Plus they had decent album art to back it

up. They sing with that weird accent so that everything is fayest (fast) or sayed (said). They're from Pittsburgh. They should just use their own accents and say shit like slippy and yinz, then at least they'd be funny. This sucks.
—Megan (Da'Core)

CLOROX GIRLS: *Baby, Get Away b/w Hitman, Trashy Daydream: 7*"
I saw these guys and gal at our local DIY watering hole, Juvee, and they were great. The lead singer had supernatural microphone radar. It seemed like he could sing into at any angle and avoid getting smacked in the teeth. A very useful talent. Unabashedly and unapologetically lo-fi, they've got snatches of the Germs (although less slurry) and the weird poppiness of M.O.T.O. (though more straight forward). They have a lot in common with The Spits – that creeping, inside-out, fungal interpretation of punk – that I didn't immediately pop out on the first couple of spins, but when it revealed itself, it sounds pretty darn good. —Todd (\$3 ppd., Johnny Cat)

COBRA HIGH: *Sunset in the Eye of a Hurricane*: CD
I feel guilty reviewing this, since I don't like prog rock and I'm not crazy about keyboards. It also feels that I don't "get it." At the same time, I'm wanting to dust off some long forgotten Roxy Music LPs that haven't seen the light of day since 1984. At certain points the vocals are so much like Bryan Ferry, but mixed with stoner rock and a love of '80s music. It's so sincere they could probably turn me into a fan if I saw them live. —Wanda Spragg (Cold Crush)

CONVERGE: *Unloved and Weeded Out*: CD

When I get over to the used CD store in about fifteen minutes, that album title's gonna be a self-fulfilling prophecy. **WORST SONG:** "Flowers and Razorwire" **WORST SONG TITLE:** "Undo" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** Deathwish releases are available from all fine independent distributors and retailers worldwide. Send two dollars for stickers and a catalog filled with quality Deathwish merchandise. -Rev. Nørb (Deathwish)

COUNTERATTACK: *State of Affairs*: CD

This is a follow up to their 7", previously released on Reality Clash Records. Straight from the nation's capital, you get ten songs of slow to mid-paced or that is comparable to tough Japanese and French oi bands, with a bit of the Templars mixed in as well. The topics of the songs are sometimes political, sometimes social. All the lyrics were pretty good and have meaning. This CD is not mind-blowing but it is good and we'll see what these guys have to offer next. -Mike Beer (Reality Clash)

COURTESY CLERKS, THE: *Tales from the Vortex*: CD

I knew there was going to be trouble as soon as I saw the absolutely horrible cover art. Felix Havoc once said that just because computers exist doesn't mean you have to use them to design your artwork, and this is a prime example of why you shouldn't. Oh, and the fact that such awful artwork accompanies a really bad exercise in commer-

cially viable rock doesn't do much to change my opinion. -Not Josh (www.thecourtesyclerks.com)

CZOLGOSZ: *Saipan*: 7"

Harsh, scraping punk rock musically and lyrically in the vein of early '80s UK bands like Zounds and Crass. Not bad, but since they went so far as to call themselves anarcho-communists, I've got a couple of complaints to register. First off, Crass didn't use computers to design their art, and neither should you. I really shouldn't even have to say that, but it seems that more and more bands fail to grasp the point that pixelated computer printouts look like still frames from the old Super Mario Brothers game, which is to say, complete shit. And if you're going to have a song called "Pro-Life is Terrorism," make sure to include the lyrics, or at least an explanation as to why you feel that way. -Not Josh (Rodent Popsicle)

DAKOTA/DAKOTA: *Shoot in the Dark*: CD

Instrumental hoosh wash that couldn't even be saved by a singer. I had such hope with titles like "Hamburger Help Us." -Megan (Arms Reach)

DANNY AND THE NIGHTWARES: *The End Is Near*: CD

First off, Danny is Daniel Johnston (of Speeding Motorcycle fame) and it sounds like he might jump out of my speakers and start kicking some ass - something that you don't always think of when talking about Mr. Johnston. I can only call this a garage band in the most honest sense of the word and with great results. If you love Daniel

Johnston (hell, you might hate this) but if you hate him you might love this. It's more trashy than the Bassholes and as messed up as early Butthole Surfers. -Wanda Spragg (Cool Beans)

DEAD BY JULY: *Before Dishonor*: CD

Jimmy Alvarado came over while I was reviewing this and said, "Man, these guys should quit and take up macramé or something." I couldn't agree more, even if I actually knew what macramé was. -Megan (Bockhorn)

DEADWEIGHT: *Stroking the Moon*: CD

A drummer, a violinist and a cello player crank out some "alternative rock," meaning that they crank out music that provides stiff competition to any band currently on KROQ's playlist. Hell, they could easily open up for Metallica on their next tour, and considering the perplexed looks all them Hessians would sport on their faces as soon as these guys started their set, I would pay to see it. A great twist on the genre and, if I wasn't so horrified by the music itself (sorry, but "alternative" rock gives me hives) I might actually recommend this. As it stands, I'm trying to figure out who I know that might appreciate this as a gag gift. -Jimmy Alvarado (Alternative Tentacles)

DELMONAS: *Do the Uncle Willy*: CD

A reissue of a 1989 collection featuring selected tracks from this Childish-related vocal group's first two albums, as well as the obligatory unreleased gem or two. As with their later incarnation as Thee Headcoatees, the emphasis is

on punkified '60s rock and, as with that band, the music is top-notch. -Jimmy Alvarado (Get Hip)

DEMNER: *Woes and So's*: CD

Demner incorporate an incredible amount of bits from the ever-changing, but consistently recognizable Chicago sound. They've got hummy bits that'd be at home with the Alkaline Trio, a small bead of Pegboy's sweat streaming down their face, the sonic forearm force of the Arrivals. Even the sweeten, derelict pop of Lynyrd's Innards. With that said, as a whole, Demner lacks sinew. So many parts are there, but they seem just a little disjointed and just don't seem connected for maximum force, like they're trying too many things at once, instead of stewing in their own musical juices for longer. Five fingers vs. a fist type thing. But, since, they seem Chicago-centric in sound, I'm putting my bids in for more Effigies and more Naked Raygun in the monitors. I won't count them out in the future, but I wasn't blown away by this CD. -Todd (Johann's Face)

DENNIS MOST & THE INSTIGATORS: *Wire My Jaw*: 7"

...and, in marked contrast to the essentially unessential CD, this is the loudest fucking 33 rpm 7-inch I've ever heard in my goddamned life. I dunno if he still has problems dressing himself, but SOMEBODY knew what they were doing when they popped this I'll black vinyl pit bull out of their rock'n'roll birth canal! Given a second 25 years to hone his craft, this guy might really be able to kick some ass in the future. **BEST SONG:** "Tough Break" **BEST**

SONG TITLE: "Wire My Jaw" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Band eschews band photo on sleeve for drawing of what appear to be either fish heads or the ends of rabbit-toenail clip-pers. -Rev. Nørb (Bad Attitude!)

DENNIS MOST & THE INSTIGATORS:
Wire My Jaw: CD

...at my long-running day gig, i work with a lot of band photos. Not "bands" in the sense of the band you're in, or the bands you go to see, but bar bands. Cover bands. Lounge bands. Country bands. The Bands Of The Squares, Dude. As such, i've gained a true appreciation for the sublime beauty of unintentionally ludicrous band photos. Like, if you look at them long enough, a sort of assumed biography starts to take form: One invents a little story to go along with the picture (which is, of course, what those NYC abstractionists like Jackson Pollock hated the most about representational art). F'r instance, the short, athletic guy on the left with the mustache, tight jeans, folded arms and Mork-from-Ork suspenders is obviously the drummer, because he's shorter and more muscular than everybody else; he also appears the most confident, because, what the fuck, his job is to drum, not to stand there looking cool, so what the fuck does he care, and, as a result of his disinterest in pursuing "coolness" as a visual aesthetic, comes off, ironically, looking the coolest (in the most restrictive use of the term). You can also tell he's proud of being in the band, and looks down upon the other, less ambitious bands playing the circuit, for "playing the same old shit." Of course, were he in one of the bands playing the Same Old Shit, he would look down upon the Instigators for being a bunch of impractical dreamers who were unjustly full of themselves. Drummers, ya know? The next guy in - the dude in the horizontally striped shirt (the photo was obviously taken in the late '70s, where, by law, exactly one member in any given band photo was required to be depicted in a horizontally-striped top at all times) - is obviously the guitar player, because he looks the most stoned and least communicative. It's apparent that the guy just wants to play his guitar, and to be utilized in some manner where his guitar playing has some practical application as opposed to merely being an end in itself, noodling around in his room. He knows that people looking at him on stage is part of the deal, so he dresses the hippest - not out of any abiding desire to look flashy, but simply because he does not want people finding fault with his attire when they are watching him play his guitar. The third guy from the left is certainly Dennis Most himself, because you can tell this is the guy who's most uptight about what he (and everyone else) looks like in the photo - it's obvious he sat in front of the mirror for hours before the photo shoot, agonizing over exactly what buttons should go exactly where on his suitcoat, cuffing and uncuffing his pants legs (ended up cuffed. ERROR! ERROR!), and trying to work out poses that both appeared unposed and utilized his "good" side (wherever that might be). As a result, he looks like a totally stiff, un-hip Rock Doofus. The Burt Reynolds/Print King October 1978 Employee Of The Month mustache doesn't add much by way of Cool Points, either. The last guy is obviously the bass player, because he seems completely clueless. He realizes that he

should somehow be "dressing cool" for the photo, but has absolutely no idea what that might entail, so he's decked out in some platypus-like concoction of white painters' pants (ya know, i spent the last twenty years never thinking about painters' pants once; with any luck, it'll be another twenty before i think of them again), a leather jacket, a button up shirt and some kinda pointy white buck shoes. He also realizes that the role he has been assigned suggests displaying a certain "attitude," so he manifests kind of a confused grimace (my take is that he's thinking "fuck, i should've kept on with the trombone and bagged the bass guitar, not vice versa!"), on the grounds that, well, it's better than nothing, isn't it? I mean, i could go on for about four pages analyzing the band photo, and never once even mention the music - and, once ya get down to the music, it's about what y'd expect from looking at the band photo: It perfectly waddles the back-then-not-quite-as-delineated line between punk rock and rock rock - the Sacred and the Mundane - and winds up sounding not unlike a faster Dictators minus the Dictatorisms (leaving you with what? *Manifest Destiny?*). The recordings on this disc span a quarter of a century; the earlier stuff sounds tinnier but more vital, the new stuff louder but more pointless. I don't necessarily dislike it, but i'd be more than happy to swap the disc for an old promo 8x10 of the cover shot. BEST SONG: "Excuse My Spunk" BEST SONG TITLE: you know, it's really hard to beat "Excuse My Spunk" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: For a time, Dennis Most's brother was in the band - alas, it wasn't Donnie Most. -Rev. Nørb (Bacchus Archives/Dionysus)

DEROZER: Chiusi Dentro: CD
This is an Italian band that I truly believed would either be a skinhead band or street punk based on the band pictures. I was surprised to hear this band sound like a So Cal band that sings in Italian. Melodicore is the best description for this band. They could easily jump on a Warped Tour and feel very much at home. -Donofthedeath (Mad Butcher)

DESTRUCTION MADE SIMPLE: Terror Stricken Youth: CD

So far as I can gather, this is a local (San Gabriel Valley) hardcore band with an album put out by a label in Pittsburgh. While their lyrics aren't too shabby, something in their sound rings hollow. Maybe it's the absence of any feeling of conviction emanating from the songs. Maybe the production's just a tad too clear. Either way, it just ain't quite doin' it for me. -Jimmy Alvarado (A-F)

DIPLOMATS OF SOLID SOUND: Let's Cool One: CD

Instrumental soul that sounds like a bunch of white boys trying to emulate the theme from Cosby's early '70s television show. Hoo lawd! -Jimmy Alvarado (Estrus)

DIRT BIKE ANNIE: Show Us Your Demons: CD

Okay, you caught me. I like power pop. I mean, sure, I like Charles Bronson just as much as the next guy, but I'm just as likely to throw on the Figgs or something. The thing about power pop - and this is true for any type of music - is that it's really easy to be a parody. On the one hand, you've got really good bands

like Yesterday's Kids that play power pop without any sort of contrivance or pretension, and on the other hand, you've got mildly irritating bands (Tina and the Total Babes) that seem to be formed with the purpose of, "Dude, let's start a power pop band and cover a bunch of '80s bands. Hey, where'd you get that striped shirt?"...I think I've babbled enough. Technically speaking, Dirt Bike Annie is a fucking rad band. Catchy as all hell, swell harmonies, enough balls to keep the proceedings rocking at a reasonable level, and most importantly, no Holly and the Italians covers! Get this. -Not Josh (Dirtnap)

DISHES, THE: 3: CD

I had faith in this because Tim Kerr not only produced it, but even played on one track. The only reason I could justify him being involved was that he needed money badly enough to do this album. I would've sent him a couple bucks to prevent it. -Megan (File 13)

DISPENSING FALSE HALOES: With Prayers and a Scalpel: CD

Vaguely metal, vaguely hardcore, hella LOUD noise rock. Sorry, But this kinda stuff lost its luster at least six years ago. -Jimmy Alvarado (Init)

DIVISION OF LAURA LEE: 97-99: CD

This review period, I am the ultimate jaded man. Negative energy runs through me and I am not excited. After listening to this CD, I feel like we are doomed by what music we will be listening to in the future. I'm going to become a babbling old man reminiscing the good old days, listening to records that no longer are

produced. The Refused started a avalanche of followers in Sweden who aren't as original and interesting. This CD drones on and leaves me with a downcast mood that makes me have to dispose of this. -Donofthedeath (Lovitt)

DOUGHBOYS: La Majeure 1987: CD

Hey! Should this have gone to Designated Dale? Oh, well... Fuck you, Dale! The band's first three-track demo sees the light again and should be much appreciated by fans of the band or followers of bands like All or Big Drill Car. I was more consumed with drinking in the late '80s/early '90s than following the scene closely. So this band slipped through the cracks for me. I believe that some members later became the band All Systems Go. This is great melodic pop punk before the scene got saturated and diluted with thousands of the same. -Donofthedeath (Boss Tuneage)

DRIVE LIKE JEHU: Yank Crime: CD

One of the best albums of the '90s finally gets reissued on CD, with a few bonus tracks, to boot. I've honestly never fully understood why I like this album: nine-minute songs, atonal howls instead of vocals, nine-minute songs, the lack of focus, oh, and did I mention the nine-minute songs? Somehow, it all works, though; there's so much going on here that the noise is almost hypnotic. If you often find yourself on lots of narcotics, this is right up your alley. -Not Josh (Swami)

DT'S, THE: Live: mini-CDEP
I'm a sucker for any band that Dave Crider is in. The Mono Men were amaz-

ing and I'm still bummed that they broke up. That Watts album (which featured Crider and Aaron Roeder from the Mono Men) never got the credit it deserves, and now Crider is back with this five-song DT's EP. His tight and fuzzy garage-rockin' guitar is immediately recognizable, and the first song on this EP sounds like it could've been a lost Mono Men track. Then, on "Eyes to the Sun," DT's vocalist Diana Young-Blanchard steps in and throws the band in a whole new direction. She's got a voice like whiskey and cigarettes and Aretha Franklin blurred into one, and her voice gives the album a blues-y punk quality that I've only heard before in the BellRays. This EP comes and goes way too quickly, and the CD itself is only about three and a half inches in diameter, which makes it an easy one to lose. Other than that, I have no complaints about the DT's. In a perfect world, I could see them live at Tom's Strip and Bowl. —Sean (Estrus)

DUKES OF

HILLSBOROUGH: *If Only We Had Someplace to Go*: CD I am inching closer and closer to liking the Dukes, but I'm still not yet there, and I can't place my finger on it. The music: very similar to Hot Water Music. Definitely not a direct rip, but the similarities are startling. They can capture claustrophobic moments that break open to wide-open rides of songs that aren't afraid to let the bass ride in the front seat. Jeff's voice is the biggest departure and it sounds like a blown-out speaker. Maybe it's the pitch, but it makes me wince. I feel my brow furrow as I type this. I do, however, give full props to the album art. It's so simple — a picture of a 32 oz. beer being poured into a gas tank. That's poetic. So many of my friends like these guys, and I want to wave the banner too, but I just can't. —Todd (Attention Deficit Disorder)

DYSRHYTHMIA: *Pretest*: CD Instrumental math rock in jazzy shades of non-punk Bad Brain and lesser species, wherein you can be pretty sure they're playing with their eyes closed, grooving on the groovy vibes, AKA they never play or practice uninformed by bong hits (though, while being high undoubtedly makes making this shit fun or sweetly satisfying, no amount of recreational drugs is gonna make it fun to listen to). —Cuss Baxter (Relapse)

ECHOBOY: *Giraffe*: CD

Bloody amazing. I've only recently found Echoboy — but he has quite a history. This is his third release on Mute, where he has called on the always fine talents of producer Flood to assist. A mixture of post punk meets electro in a fucking remarkable album. You get a little bit of this and a little bit of that — and it makes for a very accessible album compared to his past releases. From folkish electro tracks to borderline disco songs that would appeal to those "electroclash" kids. It's great for people like me who have terribly schizophrenic tastes in music — and tend to be a little more open minded when it comes to the evolution of music. Three cheers for Echoboy. —Sarah (Mute)

ED GEIN: *It's a Shame that a Family Can Be Torn Apart by Something as Simple as a Pack of Wild Dogs*: CD Shit. I thought these guys were emo for some reason, but somehow it was in my

pile. I turned it on and the yelling started. Pretty potent hardcore with a strong metal influence, but definitely not run-of-the-mill by any means. There's a lot going on in there. The biggest distraction is the frequency of the samples between songs, especially when I'd listened to it enough to know that most, if not all, are from *Donnie Darko*. —Megan (Hex)

ELLIOTT: *Song in the Air*: CD

Ho. Ly. Shit. To my way of thinking, Elliott has been *that* band for a long time now, the band that I expect greatness of, the band that I expect to transcend whatever musical limitations I can imagine and blow my mind with an album that I couldn't have even dreamed of hearing. I've been expecting that since 2000's *False Cathedrals* which was the single best artistic achievement I heard that year. It was majestic, soaring, transcendent — all those big fluffy words which seem really important and convey really big ideas. It was a pop record, it was emo, it side-stepped every sub-genre as soon I had managed to pin it down; it remains one of my favorite albums to this day. I'm sure I reveal my bias as soon as I note that I have been waiting for this new record for three years. I've been tracking the songs which have leaked onto the internet. I've been anticipating hearing the whole goddamn thing on my headphones and when it showed up in my mail this morning, I knew how I'd be spending my afternoon — headphones on, listening to Elliott. And simply put, the three-year wait was worth it. While "Song in the Air" seems to be a radical departure from the poppier textures and conceits of *False Cathedrals*, it's really an extension and advancement of the ideas which were set out and tentatively explored within that album's confines. *False Cathedrals* was, to an apparently large degree, a bridge between the more straight-forward emo and pop of Elliott's debut, *U.S. Songs*, and this sonic experiment which seems to ignore emo altogether in favor of expressing more symphonic and classical tendencies (perhaps best acknowledged by the addition of a string quartet fronted by The Rachel's Christian Frederickson). The loops and beats which helped characterize parts of *False Cathedrals* are still present; that instrumentation now helps shape a soundscape which pays more attention to shoegazing bands like Slowdive and My Bloody Valentine than punk bands like Rites Of Spring or Embrace, which owes a large debt to bands like Placebo and almost no debt at all to ones like Hankshaw. And what it boils down to is this — despite changing two members (Jay Palumbo, now playing in Thirty-Two Frames, and Jonathan Mobley), Chris Higdon and Kevin Ratterman have created a masterful work, drenched in reverb and layers, crisp and clear yet still dripping with mystery. Higdon's angelic, soaring, childlike vocals still sound more like a choir-boy's than a singer for what is ostensibly a rock and roll band; while it still sounds like Higdon is yearning for something, his vocal tones also suggest that he knows exactly what he wants... and that he won't be denied. Ratterman, the other remaining holdover from the *False Cathedrals* sessions, is still wielding his studio like an instrument, seemingly treating the recording process as another possible

track. Frankly, I can't begin to imagine how Elliott could perform these songs live without taking stringed instruments on tour and even if that were the case, these songs would still be difficult to perform live. There's simply too much here, an embarrassment of musical wealth to hear, explore and mine, a host of new ideas which have yet to see birth in a rather insular, self-absorbed scene. And while it's true that *Song in the Air* is a studio album in the best sense of the term — which in turn means that the band must necessarily turn inward and close the door to the outside world — what emerges is a map of uncharted musical territory which challenges even the best and brightest songwriters to explore it. —Puckett (Revelation)

ENDS, THE: *Sorry XOXOXO*: CD

Since the whatever wave of street punk/catchy oi — fronted and fortified by Rancid, The US Bombs, and the Dropkick Murphys — has seemed to let some of the fire burn from its torch, there's quietly a new cadre of bands that have taken a lot of the now-familiar cues of CockSparrer, Blitz, the Sex Pistols, 999, and Peter and the Test Tube Babies. The Ends are right at the top. What's cool is that they're not afraid to add the less-than-strictly-street-punk elements, opening the dilation to include Elvis Costello and Eater, infusing the moodiness of Johnny Thunders without the self-indulgence, and the slash and fun of new wave. Instead of watering down or being wanky, a new bounce makes it fresh. Other bands — that have nothing really in common with The Ends, except they somehow vaulted out of a dead-end drive that so many brick in as their own tombs — would be Wednesday Night Heroes, the GC5, Mea Culpa, and Broken Bottles. There's some truly transcendent tracks on this. Highly suggested. —Todd (Pelado)

ENGLISH SOFTHEARTS: *Double Platinum*: CD

I've noticed a lot of the discs I've picked up of late have taken a bit of a shift toward the "arty" end of the punk spectrum. While this isn't always a bad thing (especially when it's obvious that the band in question is trying, for good or ill, to "do something different"), some bands can end up wallowing in a sea of their own excesses and egos. Luckily, this ain't the case here. Granted, some of the songs may be a little longer than is good for 'em, but the bulk of what's here is blissfully sloppy, skewed, minimalist to the brink of incompetence and played with tongue planted firmly in cheek. The result is something that would sound great sandwiched between Suburban Lawns and Flipper on one o' them weekend late night "underground punk rock" shows. —Jimmy Alvarado (Magic Spot Productions)

ENVY: *A Dead Sinking Story*: CD

I picked this up because it reminded me of a Rare Form 7" that I picked up in Maine (which you should too if you ever see it). Envy, however, plays the I scream, I whisper, I scream game in every song. Longest song I've seen in about five years, clocking in at twelve minutes and forty-four seconds. I'd had enough at fifteen seconds. —Megan (Level Plane)

ESCAPED, THE: *Escaped Generation*: CDEP

Once again, Bill from Rodent Popsicle brings us another CD worth your money. This time it's a CDEP by a band of lads called The Escaped. On this CD's eight tracks, some are fast hardcore and some are street punk. Either way, they are all good. The band even features two vocalists. One is more of a rough and tough vocalist and the other is a fast, crusty type. Regardless of how you label them, the main point is that they are really good and this combination works rather well! The musicianship, as well as lyrics, is great, too. All in all, this CD gets a big thumbs up and is well worth your hard-earned cash. I won't leave out that there's a CD-R video also included in this CD. Not bad and all this is for only \$5.98, too. Keep up the good work guys! —Mike Beer (Rodent Popsicle)

EXERCISE: *The Autumn Gentleman*: CD

The guys on insert look like dirty bastards (which I mean as a compliment). The music isn't. The music is firmly set in the mid-Discord era of Jawbox and Lungfish, which means there's still power left in the punches, but Gang of Four's and Wire's angles have found their ways in. An example: Get a mouse. Put it in a box. Roll it down a hill. (Not a big one. You don't want to hurt it.) Release it. It can't walk in a straight line, though it really tries. Thusly, are Exercise. Sometimes, I'm thinking, "Rock the fuck out. I can hear you can. You know how to. You want to. Do it." And although this CD's okay plus plus, and the people who put it out are fuckin'-a righteous (anyone who takes you to a place that has a sausage as the door handle is A-OK in my book), I hear afterburners that I constantly want to be goosed but aren't. —Todd (Learning Curve)

EXPLODING HEARTS: *Guitar Romantic*: CD

Interesting combination of sounds from this band. It took a while to put my finger on it, but I soon realized they sounded like a super-group comprised of members of the Crowd and the Dickies covering old '70s mod/punk pop ditties. Mighty catchy tunes only sweeten the deal. Three of 'em are dead now, which is a damn shame. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dirtnap)

EXPLOITED, THE: *Fuck the System*: CD

If you are an Exploited fan and you go out and buy this, don't look at the lyrics. It might bum you out. Otherwise, if you can get past the bad lyrics this is a good release. I, for one, usually pay more attention to the music before I even look at the lyrics. But when I picked this up, Jimmy Alvarado was at Razorcake HQ and he fucked it up for me. He told me to look at the lyric sheet. My mouth dropped. I was now tainted and biased to what was going to come out of my speakers once I get this disc home. I did have another view from a long time fan and he had mentioned something about the lyrics being stupid but the music was good. So let's see which side of the fence I was going to go to. I didn't go anywhere on the fence. I'm stuck on top. The lyrics are stupid and the music is good. One thing I do have to say is they seem to be leaning more in the Discharge camp than

their own. The lyrics are structured the same, in a sense. They're simple and to the point, even though the point is pretty blunt and not too thought provoking. For longtime fans who have stayed for the long haul, they will enjoy this. If you are new to punk and want to check out this band, I would steer you to the *Punk's Not Dead* LP instead.

—Donofthedeath (Spitfire)

EXPLOITED:

Fuck the System: CD

This is pretty solid musically, with the mid-tempo hardcore beats and crunching guitars you've come to expect from the Exploited. Lyrically, though, we're talking about a completely different ball of wax. Granted, the words that have accompanied the average Exploited song haven't exactly been poetry or anything, and it seems that they've only worsened with age. Wattie's voice is in fine form here, but he's wasted his talent on mediocre, hackneyed lyrics instead of tackling specific issues and taking to task the monoliths of the system he professes to despise. Sorry, but repeating "You're a fucking bastard" some thirty-odd times and tossing in the occasional "and a shit cunt too" does not a song make, and naming your songs after other, better known tunes ("Holiday in the Sun," "Noize Annoys") doesn't make 'em good. Ultimately, you're left wondering, to quote one of the songs here, "What's the fucking point?" Maybe he should refrain from hanging out with them poseurs in Total Chaos, 'cause that band's eagerness to peddle crap music is apparently rubbing off.

—Jimmy Alvarado (Spitfire)

EANGS, THE:

Metal Garage: LP

When I first put this on, I thought that the title of this record was dead on. Indeed, for a few seconds, it sounded like an unholy alliance of Venom and the Gories. When the vocals kicked in, I realized that I was playing this on the wrong speed. Whoops. Replace Venom with Kiss and the Gories with the Mooney Suzuki and you get an idea of the not good time I had listening to this.

—Not Josh (Bad Reputation)

FIGHT, THE: Self-titled: CD

Sometimes when you review stuff you have to contrast how much you like something with how good a job it does of what it tries to do. I don't see myself that impressed with this CD in contrast with a lot of other music. However, I am sure that this band formed with the intention of impressing me. Even so, nobody I have played this for believes me when I show them the band photo — they look way too young to be making music as well as they are, and everyone is shocked the singer is female — she doesn't sound like a boy so much as she has a really unique vocal style, especially to contrast her with most female vocalists. I bet these guys will be a real hit with the kids, and I just hope they stick it out for a while. A few years from now, and with a better name, I can imagine being completely in awe here. I do worry. They walk a fine line away from being the next Blink 182 or whoever, but they are definitely on the right side of that line. —Rich Mackin (Fat)

FIGHTING CHANCE:

Thus Hope Fades: CD

This month I got a lot of killer CDs to review. This one is no exception. Thirteen tracks of excellent street punk, hardcore, and even a reggae tune. It's all

done very well. Great vocals, great music, great lyrics = a great full length. These guys very strongly support the working class, which is evident in their lyrics. That's good by me. So, yes, bust out your wallet and buy this CD. I highly recommend it. —Mike Beer (Insurgence)

FLAMETHROWER:

Self-titled: CD

I was ready to hate this, but Flamethrower opens the record with a song about The Super Bee and have peaked my interest. It's rock, no way around it, but the band seems like lean towards Motorhead in a way that I like and, at the same time, giving me a feeling that someone in this band listened to Agent Orange in high school. With that said, and it's nit picky, the vocals lean a little away from Lemmy and towards Kurt Cobain. Fans of Zeke or Motorhead should seek this out. —Wanda Spragg (Dead Teenager)

FLATBUSH:

Smash the Octopus: CD

Some thoroughly razed music here, melding equal parts metal, hardcore and free jazz, and ending up with the Filipino/American equivalent of having Melt Banana whooped upside your head by your favorite grindcore band. While certainly spastic in every sense of the word, closer inspection reveals a level of precision and technical prowess that might be lost on the casual listener. Definitely not for those who are faint of heart, but a damn good listen if you're feelin' lucky, punk. —Jimmy Alvarado (Kool Arrow)

FLIP TOPS/ TRIGGERS:

Split 7"

Man, this is a good split. Flip Tops sound like Supercharger meets the Dwarves meets the Motards. Both tracks (and the two on their split with the Gloryholes) seem to show the Flip Tops maturing as a band from their full-length released late last year. Everything works so well now. The Triggers are so damn good. Female-fronted, no-nonsense punk'n'roll. —Megan (Johnny Cat)

FORFEIT THE DAY:

Demo: CD-R

Speed metal that's comparable to, um, other speed metal bands, I guess. Not exactly what I would call my area of expertise. I've got nothing but sympathy for the singer, who sounds like he's constipated. I've been there, dude, I feel for you. —Not Josh (kosfsh@yahoo.com)

FOUR SQUARE:

Three Chords.. One Capo: CD

Yawn... Stretch... Rub my eyes... This R.E.M., indie band almost put me to sleep. —Donofthedeath (Bad Taste)

FREE VERSE: *Inventing an Archetype: CDEP*

I reviewed their two-song EP awhile back. I actually kept it. It has survived a couple of clean outs of the collection. They have a dark, moody tone to them that I am attracted to but can't listen to all the time. This EP is a six-songer that shows better production and progression. The band has remained intact with the same three women grinding out their rage. The songs remain dirty, dark and angry while maintaining their rock edge. They still remind me of an old death rock band from the '80s but add elements, this time around, that remind me of that metal band, Kittie. This is one I will keep. —Donofthedeath (Demirep)

FROM ASHES RISE/ VICTIMS: Split CD

From Ashes Rise: Today, I drove my truck around to do some errands. To get to the photocopy place, I have to go through one of those up-scale outdoor malls/slash renovated downtown commerce places, and From Ashes Rise was awesome for that. It was like a movie, seconds before the apocalypse. Instead of taking at face value the shiny people with bits of plastic sewn under their skin, I could imagine the decay, the bombs ripping the place apart. It made me smile. And even though it was just a play in my mind, it made me feel better that music could dominate and bring the storm clouds, through the heat, and take out a Cheesecake Factory. For a more technical take on the band, see the upcoming review for their upcoming full-length, *Nightmares*. Victims: I probably would like this band loads more if From Ashes Rise didn't just waylay me. They're good, like a pipe to the knee from a passing car. They have a lot in common with fellow Swedes, Skitsystem, with the throttle twisted and shouting in full effect. It's furious and straight-forward, but the drummer hits his limits when they go full bore. I also hear a bunch of Motorhead in the bass – that chugga chugga, train derailing into a house of nails type deal. Not a bad split, but I'd be lying if I didn't say that From Ashes Rise is going to get more play. –Todd (Havoc)

FUCKTIFINO: *The Fast Effective Relief EP*: CDEP

This one is pretty touch and go for me. The weird thing is that I liked all of the odd songs and pretty near hated the even. The odd songs are fast, guitar-heavy street punk, with breakdowns that teeter on the metal side, which fully works somehow. The even songs seem to get slower and poppier, but with time they are growing on me a bit. –Megan (Fuktifino)

GC5, THE: *Kisses from Hanoi/ Horseshoes and Handgrenades*: CD

Glory be. It's cool to hear from *Razorcake* #13's cover boys, even if it's a re-release. The increasingly more difficult to get *Kisses from Hanoi* LP, originally released by Outsider, cozier up to the *Horseshoes* EP, makes for some prime Cleveland fuck the man listening. This is the era where the GC5 came into true form. They shed the growing skins of being very sonically close to Rancid, established their footing, planted a political flag right in the ass of corporate America, and began making songs that simultaneously makes one want to raise beers and burn WalMart's to the ground. With lines like, "And I strive to bite the hand that's feeding me at last/ And carry on the banner of the working class/ When I'm dead on my feet or shackled to the beat," you know what you're getting. Gritty, while retaining class-art songwriting, they sound like a super amplified and pissed-off gang of Johnny Cashes, updated to suit today's discriminating punk tastes. By all means, that's a great thing. This is their most political work (*Never Bet the Devil Your Head* became more personal.) Some of these songs are four years old and I still pull them out and crank them on. –Todd (Thick)

GHOULIES, THE: *Communication*: CD

If you can imagine what Zeke would

sound like if they slowed down and wrote incredibly general and vague political songs about how they're, like, totally pissed because, like, there are these companies, see? And they, like, make money and that's, like, totally unfair, see? And, like, television is bad, see? And they probably really mean it... *man*. At any rate, if you can imagine that, then you really don't need this record. And just to be perfectly clear, the above comments should be not be construed in any way, shape or form to constitute anything resembling a recommendation. They are, in fact, the exact opposite. I'm urging you to save yourself the time in your life that I just wasted on this boring piece of unimaginative, uninteresting and uninspired shit. –Puckett (Rockstar)

GIANT HAYSTACKS: *How We Lost the War: 7"*

Sounds like a mod version of *The Punch Line* era Minutemen, which doesn't make a hell of a lot of sense to me, though I guess this is not the gravest crisis of faith ever brought upon me by the postmodernist era. Might be the crude, early baby steps of a band that grows to do things of substantial tremendousness in the future; might be the only tolerable record by a band that later becomes an aggravating pack of pretentious, overexposed weenies. Only time will tell, but they're sure not winning any friends by adorning their front cover with a photo of a row of airport lobby seats – possibly the one image guaranteed to cause a Pavlovian homicidal reaction in everyone who comes across it. BEST SONG: "How We Lost the War" BEST SONG TITLE: "The Pigs vs. The Kids" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Band makes no mention whatsoever of '70s wrestler Haystacks Calhoun, even though, tipping the scales at 500 pounds or so, one cannot help but view him as the only appropriate choice for band mascot. –Rev. Nørb (Giant Haystacks)

GLORYHOLES/ FLIP TOPS: Split 7"

Gloryholes: Snotty sounding "who yeah!" rock with tambourine. Flip Tops: I like these tracks much more than I liked their full-length on Rip-Off, which I liked quite a bit. Everything just sounds like it's come together so much tighter and fits together better now. Dirty rock'n'roll with a garage-y feel. Well worth picking up. –Megan (Johnny Cat)

GREAT REDNECK HOPE: *'spllosion*: CD

Full-on noisecore. Not my cup of tea, but the song titles (e.g., "Girl, Are You Down with Bacteria? And If So, Would You Like to See the Inside of Our Van?") are brilliant. –Jimmy Alvarado (Thinker Thought)

HAPPENING, THE: *Shit Happens*: CD

An ultra-tight halfway mix between The Eyeliners and Discount by a power trio fronted by two Japanese ladies who are concerned with world and personal politics. I have a feeling they can play their instruments behind their backs, or upside down, or in the shower, yet there's enough playfulness and art-kept-in-check pretensions that's very appealing. When they slow it down, the songs actually breathe in and out and have nice flourishes, instead of repeating in a lock step. *Shit Happens* got a very clean pop rock'n'roll feel that at first didn't get me, but on the headphones,

there's no dead spots, so it's much better than first blush. I always enjoy the translations (it's sung in accented English): "The punch lines goes disarm or we'll break you arm/ We've got what it takes to wipe a whole country." Although not earth shattering, a welcome listen. This would fit right in on Crackle Records out of England, if that helps. –Todd (The Happening)

HEADHUNTERS, THE: *Escape the Grave 7"*

Punk bands can be so encouraging. Always railing against the system, stickin' it to the man, defending your right to be yourself, no matter how fucked up you might be. Of course, sometimes the venom of bands like the Headhunters can be diluted by lyrics like "Don't let them take your dreams away!" That's nice, but isn't "they" a little vague? And then there's the b-side, "Skinhead Time." The world needs another hooligan shout-a-long about "boots and braces" like it needs another Third World invasion. And what's with all the misplaced nostalgia? What exactly was so fucking wonderful about the good ol' skinhead days? Were Docs cheaper or something? Where there less poseurs or immigrants or what? Who cares? This sort of hooligan romanticism gives me the creeps. –Eric Rife (Haunted Town)

HELLS, THE: CDEP

Woo, here's some sexy two-piece rock'n'roll. Sexier than the White Stripes, even. Sounds like the Stooges run through Boss Hog with a little Blue Cheer on top. The man sings one song (and sounds like the guy from Mudhoney), but the lady sings the other five (there's a drummer, too, but I can't tell if he's a proper Hell) in a strong, sweet, accented (they're from the UK, but she sounds Scandinavian to me) voice that drips charm and authority. I expect if they can get themselves in American clubs and a full-length in our stores, they should do pretty dang well in today's climate. –Cuss Baxter (Artrocker)

HORDE, THE: Self-titled: 7"

They remind me of the Cro-Mags and that, my dear friends, is not a compliment. –Jimmy Alvarado (1234 Go!)

HOT CARL: *God Bless America, Popcorn Shrimp's on Sale*: Demo: CDEP

My memory of Dubuque is fuzzy. Did I see Hot Carl, or were they just around when people were falling out of trees in inflated inner tubes, before the paint fire, before I almost got in a fight with a guy who kept on pushing me to say, "Fred Durst is a genius"? I understand I was drunk for the better part of the week, and that may help explain why I didn't realize how great they were. Maybe it's I'm not so up on their name. Dunno. Hot Carl's got the hard, tightly structured but expansive melody of Tiltwheel (plus that "it sounds happy but it's not" quality), hitched onto guitar parts that Jughead of Screeching Weasel would approve of. (Plus the double lyrical meaning in SW. "I'm Doing Fine" is a song about losing it. And "Sympathy" is followed by the parenthetical "(or lack thereof)") But it's better than just that, much like Rivethead's Thundercat music machine is better than the sum of their parts. The songs punch and leave marks of their own and the all the bands I referred them to before are just whizzing-by signposts. I say write them,

send a couple of bucks, and have them burn you a copy. This one caught me by surprise. –Todd (Hot Carl, 140 Loras Blvd. #4, Dubuque, IA 52001)

HOT CROSS/LIGHT THE FUSE AND RUN: Split CDEP

Two songs and one video of each. Hot Cross' video is a simple live clip with attendant poor sound, and their studio tracks are too heavy on the jangle and noodle to get away with so much screaming about eyes and hands and voices and pictures. Light the Fuse and Run, on the other hand, turned in a better video (interview and live footage, soundtracked with the two songs from the audio part of the disc) and better songs: second one's a slow, quiet instrumental that evokes old Western movies, but "Ghost Town" shows that these fellows know how to write a dang song: meaty riffs, proper timing on the tension-buildup parts, discriminate use of "fuck's, and lyrics that, while obscure, actually bring to mind something concrete. Ain't no Flesh Eating Creeps, but what is? –Cuss Baxter (Level Plane/ Electric Human Project)

HUSBANDS, THE: Self-titled: CD

Easily the best CD to come across my desk lately. It's refreshing to have an all-girl band that you can lay aside any comments that focus on that alone, because – fuck – they rock harder, tighter, and more consistently than at least thirty of the bands I reviewed this time around. They're one of my favorite bands right now. Period. They're like the Animals, but with more balls. Super trashy, snarly, roots rock that gets you all hot. Then they throw in covers of the Drifters and the Shirelles to sweeten up the whole thing. Highly recommended. –Megan (Swami)

IRRITATE/HATED PRINCIPLES: *The Power of Heavy Metal vs. The Insanity of Punk: 7"*

Irritate: Mid-tempo metal with cookie monster vocals. Hated Principles: Gone are the days of tunes like "Flames of Hell" and in their place are eight tracks of some wicked sounding hardcore. While the recording quality leaves a lot to be desired, it does lend a creepy quality to the proceedings, with makes the ensuing racket that much more interesting. –Jimmy Alvarado (Hostile Regression)

JACK TRAGIC & THE UNFORTUNATES: *Coming Down Like a Hammer*: CD

...since this was already reviewed by another intrepid staffer last issue, I'll restrict my commentary to the only thing I recall of Jack Tragic from back in The Day: I was once sent a fanzine circa 1984 – from Connecticut, I think – that devoted more or less an entire issue to proclaiming what an asshole and menace to society Jack Tragic and his band were. Since I'd never heard of him or the zine before – or, 'til this CD, since – I was never completely sold that the zine wasn't just the work of J.T. himself, attempting some manner of press coup by distributing a bogus fanzine dedicated solely to propagating tales of his own alleged controversialism. Anyway, I think this is what GG Allin wanted to sound like at one point, until he realized he was doomed by his own innate poppiness and went off the deep end. Whoopee. BEST SONG: "Mind Loot" **RAZORCAKE 89**

BEST SONG TITLE: "Mind Loot" or "Milk Carton Mistress" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: At one point in time, band featured a member named "Dee Stroy," which appears to be the punk rock equivalent of "John Smith" or something. -Rev. Nørb (Dionysus)

JACKIE: Goes Electric b/w Stars Brought Low: 7"

Boring, forgettable new wave/post-punk. C'mon guys, ditch the Joy Division records already. A little Palatka every now and then never hurt anybody. -Not Josh (Glare)

JAGA JAZZIST: Animal Chin: CD EP

I had always respected GSL for being a label that always released interesting music - even if it wasn't particularly to my liking - and doing it independently. However, this release - as well as a slew of other back catalog albums I had recently ordered - turned my head and perspective completely around. It's an electro-fusion-jazz album with plenty of blip-and-twitter-core and a fair bit of drum and bass which basically means it's a stylistic mess which just so happens to be a brilliant gumbo of skittering beats and soothing jazz textures - think Goldie, Roni Size, Jazzanova and Underworld. This lengthy (nearly forty-three minutes) EP is all over the musical map but somehow it all coheres, congealing into a beat-driven mix of 1970s cool jazz and jazzy jungle's decidedly 1990s reworking of it. -Puckett (GSL)

J-CHURCH/STORM THE TOWER: Split CD

J-Church: Keep it fast. After years of sporadic listens to J-Church, I've finally

come to this conclusion: if they keep it buzzing, Lance Hahn's voice is just another instrument in the maelstrom. Think *Everything Falls Apart*, Hüsker Dü: equal parts melody and velocity. Bone snapping, crunchy parts and finger-snapping happy parts. The first two songs on this split, "Terror of Love," and "Ghost Writer," I'll say are two of my favorite all-time J-Church songs. However, the other two songs take heavy ether whippets and where Blake of Jawbreaker had a voice that could break hearts, when Lance's is up front, it's more thin and has a tinny tint to it, which I don't find as satisfying. Plus, 5:43 and 6:38 are too long for songs to clock in at. That's simple math. Storm the Tower: Not so good. The bar's been raised so much on hardcore. Not as rip sawing as Crispus Attucks, not as youthful as Life's Halt, not anywhere as inventive as Tragedy, nor as insightful as Strike Anywhere, or hacksaw-through-femur dangerous as DS-13, they get repetitive real fast. Sorry. -Todd (Broken Rekids)

JEALOUS SOUND, THE: Kill Them with Kindness: CD

My friend Brent rarely tells me about bands, but when he does, he's always right. He turned me on to The Weakerthans; about a year or so ago, he told me that I needed to check out The Jealous Sound, a band featuring ex-members of Knapsack and Sunday's Best among other indie / punk luminaries. The debut EP consisted of five songs of outstanding emo-inflected indie-pop which didn't fall too far from the previous trees and whetted my appetite for more. Thus, the full-length. It's a tremendous pop album - there's not much here in terms of the stuff that

usually fuels me (like politics, revolutionary sentiments, etc.), but it's an addictive record, one which practically demands to be put on repeat and allowed to play for about a week. Blair Shehan's characteristic breathy vocals combine with Pedro Benito's ringing guitar lines to yield a slew of majestic pop songs, each of which seems better than the one before. -Puckett (Better Looking)

JONNY AND THE GROADIES/CORPSE FUCKS CORPSE/GIFT OF GOATS/GET GET GO: Untitled: LP

Jonny: Pummeling, vaguely black metal sounding noise. Corpse Fucks: Disjointed noisecore with tons of tempo/meter changes. Gift of Goats: One stunner of a band who play wholly varied, wholly original hardcore (apparently no small feat these days). The closest equivalent I can muster is Black Flag at their pain-drenched prime, although these guys sound nothing like them. Get Get Go: More skronk, this with more going on than the first two bands in terms of dynamics. Can't say much else about these bands due to a startling dearth of info included. Recommended for the Gift of Goats tracks alone. -Jimmy Alvarado (Omnibus)

JUNKYARD: Tried and True: CDEP

Junkyard were a late-'80s hair metal band featuring Brian Baker from Minor Threat and Chris Gates from the Big Boys on guitars. As you may expect from Brian Baker and Chris Gates, Junkyard had more imagination and creativity than bands like Motley Crue or

Poison, and they had a way of writing songs up from the gutter, which you wouldn't really expect from a limos-and-groupies-scene band. They were also one of my brother's favorite bands, so Junkyard mostly reminds me of good times hanging out with him. But make no mistakes, this is late-'80s hair metal. Now, apparently they've reformed without Brian Baker (he's currently in Bad Religion, but he did write a song on this EP), and they've recorded new songs or new versions of old songs. There are a couple of hair metal songs at the beginning, a dreaded rock ballad, a pretty cool country song, a remake of one my brother's favorite songs, "Simple Man," and another metal song at the end. -Sean (Heatslick)

KAOSPILOT: Self-titled: CD

One would assume that a guy screaming full-bore into your ear would garner some level attention being paid by the listener. Surprisingly, that wasn't the case here. -Jimmy Alvarado (Level-Plane)

KERBLOKI: Self-titled: CD

Sweet! Something good! It's the Beastie Boys if they were more like classical music majors or something. Smart music, smart and creative lyrics, and three handsome white boys named The Chip, Kobra, and Urban Myth. I'm not very rap savvy, even though, like any good punk rock kid, I always loved Public Enemy and the Beastie Boys. It's such a chill out record, with a tight old school Blaxploitation feel, and even a wicked synth/electro feel. I'm digging the catchy dance track, "Please Don't Die in the Ice" (or should that be "Da Ice?"), with its wicked layered synth beats and catchy chorus. This is the song

those electroclash kids would be break dancing to. The nice thing about this album is that it goes from live drums/guitar/etc., to drum machine/synth in a matter of tracks. "I.T.U." is a remarkable cool and chill-out instrumental that reminds me even a bit of Looper. Just you wait. In a year everyone will be wearing Kerbloki. -Sarah (Bifocal Media)

KIDNAPPERS, THE: *Ransom Notes & Telephone Calls*: LP

As much as i love the Buzzcocks, i consider the graphics on (most of) their earlier releases to be even better than the music therein; technically, that makes their records mild disappointments, which just goes to show ya what a tough act to follow great graphics are (if you don't believe me, just ask Adolf Hitler, who, via his design work on the visual emblems of his government, legitimately qualifies as the most influential graphic designer of the 20th Century [seriously], but never did anything worth a shit beyond that). Now, by my calculations, the Kidnappers have the second coolest band logo of all time, that i can think of (the Buzzcocks more or less permanently occupying the pole position since time immemorial). It's red and orange on black, and it's got stencils and stripes and lines and an arrow and a quadrilateral and reversed-out letters and not-reversed-out letters and is, quite frankly, a thing of great wonderment and beauty. Therefore, the Sixty-Four-Thousand Euro Question is "Can the Kidnappers actually emit music as stunning as their logo, or are they doomed to try to scrape together a living merely off of the t-shirt concession?" (i take the liberty of assuming the only t-shirt the band sells or will ever

need to sell will be a black T with the orange and red logo, exactly the same size as on the album cover. If this is incorrect, please see your way clear to slit the throat of every idiot involved.) Amazingly, on initial stylus-platter contact, the answer appears to be a resounding "JA!" "A Bit of Your Love" lunges out of the starting gate (or do i mean the "paddock turn?" No, i'm pretty sure the paddock turn is not 'til later) like some sort of long lost *Sex Cow* era Teengenerate conflagration, spurred along by electric outbursts of cattle-prod keyboards and wisely shifting into a slightly more pop gear in the choruses (i'm thinking the Oysters, from Boston, ca. 1986, but you don't have to). MY GAWD. THIS BAND APPEARS TO BE AS GOOD AS THEIR LOGO! I don't know if i should feel happy for the band, or bad for the designer. The album careens along. "Midnight Ritz" lays off the slight pop throttle; "Close to You" opens it up tenfold. Then, for no apparent reason, the album suddenly derails (AH! The ever-persnickety paddock turn at last!), sliding ass-over-teakettle into the bramble bush of a truly forgettable cover of Teengenerate's "Right Now," which has, completely inexplicably, been retitled "Hey! Hey! Hey!" and credited as having been written by the Kidnappers. Uh... what say? This rather, er, quizzical selection is immediately followed up by a... uh... *Loli & The Chones* cover, which fares better in the translation, yet stands as almost as peculiar a sequencing decision as the inclusion of the camouflaged Teengenerate cover was a lapse in anything resembling good judgment. And, although the remainder of the album is certainly better than "decent" ("Break My Heart" is a great punk-popper, "Excuse Me" an

unholy cross between 999's "No Pity" and the Rezillos' "Bad Guy Reaction," and "Hit the Road" sounds like the contemporary garage scene meets *Road to Ruin*) (which is good), the work as a whole never really regains its composure after the whole "Hey! Hey! Hey!" debacle. Logo wins by TKO, but, hey, the quinella still pays. BEST SONG: "A Bit of Your Love" BEST SONG TITLE: "Hey! Hey! Hey!" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Shockingly, the song "Maximum Rock-N-Roll" simply appears to be about rocking-n-rolling to the maximum! Will wonders never cease? -Rev. Nørb (Alien Snatch)

KILL-A-WATTS/ SWEET J.A.P.: *Split 7"*

Kill-A-Watts: Wisconsinite juvenile delinquency has never sounded better. Biting, blood and hickey-drawing guitars, screams and screeches that could etch a very pretty fuck you into polished steel, drums that could blast holes in walls, and two songs - "1977 Sunglasses" and "X-Ray-Dead-Woman" - that jab quicker than knife wounds in a chicks-gone-bad-in-prison B-movie. Sweet J.A.P.: perhaps one of ten bands that wouldn't be shamed by the Kill-A-Watts and still be in the musical ballpark, eat fire and blow it all back through the speakers. Donde esta my eyebrows? Burned the fuck off. Much like how Scared of Chaka made the line between punk and garage irrelevant, I dare say Sweet J.A.P. are broadening that horizon while keeping it in the red. Such precisely sloppy assurance and danger-kicking rarely reached this high, this consistently. Awesome split. -Todd (Nice and Neat)

KINGS OF NUTHIN': *Shit Out of Luck 7"*

With a horn that sounds like it was plucked out of an early John Waters soundtrack, a barrelhouse piano and a vocalist who sounds like he chainsmokes filterless Camels, the Kings of Nuthin' have a lot of style. Whether or not all that flash and gruff humor translates into something you want to hear over and over again is probably something else entirely. This might be best described as skinbilly... lots o' tattoos, snappy black suits and tie ensembles and a macho frontguy singing about being down in the dumps. -Eric Rife (Haunted Town)

KINISON, THE: Self-titled: *CDEP*

Screamy screamy chugga chug chug whisper moan scream repeat. This is what I think Slipknot would sound like. -Megan (Fearless)

KRMTX: *Ice Hatchet: 7"*

Two new songs from a band previously known as Chromatics. The title track is a moody, bass-driven piece of minimalism and the b-side, "Curtains," follows along the same lines. A bit arty and a little less frenetic than previous efforts, but still a nice change of pace. -Jimmy Alvarado (GSL)

LADDERBACK, THE: *Trigger Themes*: CD

Man, this band is funky. They have a lot of funky breakdowns in their screamy hardcore that tries to impose as many "parts" to each song as possible, therefore making it "math rock hardcore," I guess. Or, come on, it's just prog rock made by hardcore kids. The songs usu-

ally range around 3:25 minutes each, but, with the 4,000 parts to each song, they all seem longer than they're supposed to be. There is no doubt they're tight as hell on this recording and very talented. There is just too much going on. I need to go lay down. I'm gonna invent a new genre and call it "Showoff-Core." –Sarah (BiFocal Media)

LARKIN: *The Curse of Our Fathers*: CD

I didn't know there was a large contingent of Irish people in Tulsa, OK. I wouldn't really know since I have barely been anywhere. But here they are, an Irish/Celtic band that follows the footsteps of the past like the Pogues – or more currently like Flogging Molly minus the punk leanings. They label their style of music as traditional Irish songs of drinking and rebellion. Former Brother Inferior vocalist leads this assemblage of musicians. This genre of music is always a welcome change when you need something a little more mellow. –Donofthead (Know)

LEG: *Self-titled: 7"*

What a pleasant surprise! The music is kind of like a cross between a sloppy DIY punk band (like Onion Flavored Rings or maybe Shotwell) and some of the more lo-fi Guided By Voices stuff (like "Game of Pricks"). I didn't really like the vocals at first, but I kept listening to this since I liked the music so much and after a few spins they grew on me. Neat shit. –Not Josh (Half-Day)

LIGHTWEIGHT HOLIDAY: *Light Holiday*: CD

Should this band be famous?

Definitely! Does that mean I like them? Not really, but I would be lying if I said this wasn't really catchy from the start to finish. If I was a major label A&R guy looking for some band that could write music that would mindlessly drill upbeat punk / top 40 pop rock into a person's brain, leaving them begging for freedom... I can't help wondering if we have come so far in punk rock / pop music that a band can't find a formula on the internet that will tell you where to put in the right breaks and chorus that will create something that sticks in your head. This is the basis for successful advertising jingles, right? –Wanda Spragg (Porterhouse)

LIMECELL: *It's Gonna Get Ugly*: CD

Here comes another one from this long running band. It's a solid release – plenty of streetpunk and hardcore with some fast, some slow, and some mid-paced songs. It's all that you would expect from Limecell: in your face and unpolitical. Limecell is one of those bands that you either love or hate. There is no in-between. If you like Limecell, you will be very happy with this release. If you don't like them, this release will not change your mind. –Mike Beer (TKO)

LOCAL OAFS/DYKE *HARD: Mortal Combat: 7"*

Dyke Hard: All girl (I think) super lo-fi pretty gritty punk. Sounds kind of unremarkable and then I found myself asking lots of questions, like, "Wait, was that a kazoo?" or, "Did she just say, 'I just want to choke you with my cunt?'" and it all fits. A decent listen. Local Oafs: surprised the hell out of me. They're really good. They're fast and

fun. The six songs come and go so quickly. –Megan (Cage Match)

LOCAL OAFS/MUSIC/NINJA: *Essen Sie Punk?: 7"*

Local Oafs: Holy fuck, there's nine songs on one side! They're not trying to jam them all on there, either. It just all fits! The craziest part about it is that it's really good, too. It sounds like everything is filtered through a tin can – super fuzzy and distorted. Somehow, though that just adds to it. The best thing of all is that they've got a guy name Shawn Michaels in the band. HBK – the Heartbreak Kid! Even if they don't know who he is in the wrestling world, I think it's pretty cool. Music/Ninja: They're okay, nothing that grabbed though. The best of their three songs is "I Make Money." Great packaging: all black and white comics. The insert has a whole set of strips all revolving around what happens when someone eats too much of the punk rock with the lyrics. –Megan (Standard Sjobuse)

LOCOMOTIONS, THE: *Self-titled: LP*

This album failed to sufficiently nuke me up until the point where the tremolo-bonkers instrumental "Sigma Attack" made its appearance (that would be last track, side one, if you're scoring at home); i had hitherto half-dismissed the contents of the album as not-overly-compelling garageyness, distinguished chiefly by the vicious, clean little guitar that kept snapping away at me through a side full of tracks that sounded like marginally more berserk cuts off those "PowerPearls" '70s/'80s UK home-made power pop

comp LPs. However, with the onset of the flamboyant tremolo of "Sigma Attack" (one assumes that, in Germany, the title bears none of the "getting jumped by fratboys" connotations it wields in the states) (in point of fact, the name comes from the dude's guitar), my interest and the band's apparent ability to satisfy same increased by an order of magnitude; the only dud on the entire second side is their Dogmatics' cover ("Saturday Night Again," which realistically should've been relegated to non-LP-B-side status). Prior to "Sigma Attack," everything seemed like a lesser version of something i'd heard done better elsewhere; after "Sigma," the band sounded like what i'd imagine the children of DMZ would sound like if they were bitten by rabid German Shepherds (dogs or humans, mox nix) and locked in the same basement that DMZ practice in by parents so terrified of the bestial transformations their offspring were undergoing that, in lieu of seeking medical attention, they merely instructed the imprisoned youths to practice "Mighty Idy" for hours on end, figuring that they'll harmlessly drop dead of exhaustion eventually – but, after ten minutes of slaving and violence, the kids decide to write "I'm on Fire" instead (which they very well might have been at the time), and their parents run out of the house, never to return, screaming like the guy on the *Kill the Poor* sleeve. The only real conclusion i can draw from this is that tremolo pedals can solve world hunger. Oh, and "She's Got Her" sounds a little like "Here Comes the Nice" by the Small Faces. BEST SONG: i'll say "Sigma Attack," although i don't really think that's the right answer. BEST SONG

TITLE: "Make Up Your Mind", "I'm on Fire" and "Come and Get It" are all pretty good... too bad they're already taken (what the fuck is it with these European bands recycling song titles? I mean, they don't even recycle REAL stuff over there). I guess I'll go with "Sigma Attack" again. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: As is only right and just, the bonus track is, in fact, "The Loco-Motion." Oops, you peeked! -Rev. Nørb (Alien Snatch)

LORDS OF THE HIGHWAY: *Lost in Sin: CD*

I'm not a big rockabilly fan, but occasionally a band like Lords of the Highway comes along and blows me away. At first, I wasn't sure what separated Lords of the Highway from the pack, but after repeated listens, I've got some theories. For one, Dennis Bell's guitar owes more to Dick Dale's influence than it does to Buddy Holly or Gene Vincent. Also, the rhythm section doesn't lie back and leave everything up to the guitar and vocals; they get off their asses and rip through their own side trips throughout the songs. There's a lot of energy and bounce to all the songs. The result is an album that stays true to the spirit of rockabilly, but incorporates '50s and early '60s rock'n'roll in new ways, gathers up a healthy dose of punk aesthetic, and makes something that's new and interesting and fun to listen to all the way through. I'm not sold on the cover of Danzig's "Twist of Cain," but it's got my wife dancing. -Sean (Rocknroll Purgatory)

MARKED MEN, THE: *Self-titled: 7"*

Cracklin', crankin' power pop punk in the vein of the Briefs (less bounce, more slash) - and I'm a fuckin' sucker for it. In one ear, I hear a rusty scratch of an anxious voice and in the other, I hear a catchy, playful Saints back line, making the enterprise poppy enough for some warm pogging and beer spitting, original enough so the shackles of the past are broken, barbed enough keep it from being wimpy, and gritty enough to believe it's heart felt. High praise. -Todd (Mortville)

ME FIRST AND THE GIMME GIMMES: *Take a Break: CD*

There are good covers and bad ones. The latest Misfits project is a bad one. This one is always a good one. First off, Spike, from the Swingin' Utters, is a good singer. The rest of the band are accomplished players with a resume that is among the more popular bands of today. I guess it helps to have a couple of Lagwagons, a NOFX and a Foo Fighter to back your shit up. As before, the band chooses a theme and runs with it. This one is the R&B/Soul session. Here is a list of songs given the MF&GG's treatment: Whitney Houston - "Where Do Broken Hearts Go"; Lionel Richie - "Hello"; Boys II Men - "End of the Road"; Bill Withers - "Ain't No Sunshine"; The Family/Sinead O'Connor - "Nothing Compares 2 U"; Seal - "Crazy"; Stevie Wonder - "Isn't She Lovely"; R. Kelly - "I Believe I Can Fly"; Chi-Lites - "Oh Girl"; Jackson 5 - "I'll Be There"; Ray Evans and Jay Livingston written - "Mona Lisa"; Vanessa Williams - "Save the Best for Last"; Aretha Franklin - "Natural Woman." This is some stuff you can pass off to your naive parents or that co-worker who is so clueless about music that they think you are friends

now. This is also great stuff when you are vacuuming, washing dishes or putting that suppository in your pet's butt. Now that is a great soundtrack! -Donofthead (Fat Wreck Chords)

ME FIRST AND THE GIMME GIMMES: *Take a Break: LP*

Who would've guessed that this gimmick would last so long? After a CDEP, eleven seven inches, and this makes their fourth full-length, they're still going strong. There are so many components that add up to their addictive sound: the songs they pick, the ability to adapt to those songs (who knew Black Flag's "Six Pack" could serve as the perfect intro to a Seal song?), and, of course, Spike's voice. On *Take a Break*, they say that they're paying homage to some of the best black performers, but I know the secret: it's all about Batman (the movie series, not the comic which I know little of except when Harley Quinn is involved). "What's this girl been drinking?" you ask? It's true and I have proof. It's all there in the songs. First of all, it was too obvious to put "Nothing Compares 2 U" by Prince (who wrote the entire soundtrack for *Batman*) right before "Crazy" by Seal (whose "Kiss from a Rose" was the theme song to *Batman Forever*). "Ain't No Sunshine" - okay, Batman lives where? Gotham City, the dark city and he's referred to as the Dark Knight. No subtlety there. "I Believe I Can Fly" is a reflection of the frustration that Batman felt that he couldn't actually fly. I mean, come on, how many gadgets did he have that could make it appear that he was flying? His calling card, the bat symbol, was shone where? That's right. Up in the sky, a sky that he could never reach on his own. "Oh Girl" can easily be seen as the damage done to Bruce Wayne by the loss of his parents at an early age. Just look at the lyrics: "I don't know where to look for love. I just don't know how." Truly saddening. "End of the Road" is the perfect song for the end of the love affair and epic battle between Bruce Wayne/Batman and Vicki Vale/Catwoman. "Save the Best for Last" is obviously not referring to that horrid piece of trash that was *Batman and Robin*, but for the characters they saved for that movie - Poison Ivy in particular. Speaking of Ivy, you can't get a more "Natural Woman" than her, so you know why that song's on there. Am I right or am I right? Get *Take a Break*, sing along, and see if you get "Vicki Vale/Vicki Vale/Ooh yeah, ooh yeah/I wanna bust that body" stuck in your head, too. -Megan (Fat)

ME INFECTO: *World We Digest: CD*

Black Sabbath changes their name and vies for emo stardom. -Jimmy Alvarado (www.meinfecto.com)

MEANS, THE: *Community Horse: CD*

Time was, late '80s/early '90s, noisy rock like this was all around, on labels like Matador, Amphetamine Reptile and Subpop, and I ate it up. I probably bought more new records then than at any time before or since. I'm talking about stuff like God Bullies and King Snake Roost, and Railroad Jerk and Monster Magnet and even Nirvana, the latter three before they figured out what they were doing and reduced it to a formula that just never rocked proper again. This is the Means second record (I never heard the first), and they've got

the same noisy aesthetic in spades, so maybe that means they intend to stay down in the scuz for a while. I'll be right up front if they do. -Cuss Baxter (Reptilian)

MICO: *Outside the Unbearable Grows: CD*

Emo/ alternative rock stuff that doesn't stand out from any other band doing this, except that this is on G7, so I guess it's left wing emo/ alternative rock stuff. I care lots. -Not Josh (G7 Welcoming Committee)

MISFITS: *Project 1950: CD*

I can't tell you how bad it is sitting here listening to this. This blew any good thoughts I have of the band from the early '80s out the toilet. It's '50s covers, basically done verbatim with the Jerry Only touch. The only redeeming factor of this release is on the bonus DVD - not the videos of these covers, but the five bonus videos. The first is the singer of Balzac singing with this incarnation of the Misfits. The second and third is Jerry Only singing with Balzac on a couple of songs. Then the last two videos are strictly Balzac. Someone out there will like this. It's just not me. -Donofthead (Misfits)

MISS LUDELLA BLACK: *The Skull of a Man: 7"*

A former Delmonas/Headcoatee hooks up with a former Headcoats' new band, namely the Masonics, and they crank out three bleak songs naturally up to their eyeballs in '60s trappings. The results are, of course, top-notch, but I am glad I don't own a straight razor. -Jimmy Alvarado (Smartguy)

MOTION CITY SOUNDTRACK: *I Am the Movie: CD*

I was real ready to not like this, but they manage to hook you in with great melodies and pull you in with that Moog sound that, if used properly, can make a person giddy. Better than Ozma and in the same league with Weezer. -Donofthead (Epitaph)

MOTORAMA: *No Bass Fidelity: CD*

White Stripes with drum machine, chick singer, an extra guitarist, and way too many no wave records in their collection. -Jimmy Alvarado (www.vidalocarecords.com)

MOUSEROCKET: *Missing Tooth: 7"*

Fronted by Alicia Trout of The Lost Sounds, this project is more straight forward, marginally garagey, and, dare I say, pretty. For the most part, it's liquid and laid back - with a few spasms - but what the hell, I like it. I can't provide you with many helpful signposts, except the fact they cover "Alone Again Or," which I know from the Damned, and it's softer around the edges, but simultaneously more desperate, which is quite a difficult thing to accomplish if you think about it. -Todd (Wrecked 'Em)

MURDER WEAPON: *Nervous Wreck: CD*

Fuck heavy metal, no matter how fast it's played. -Jimmy Alvarado (Martyr)

NADA, EL: *Nothing for Nobody: CD*

OC hardcore from a band that sounds like a slowed-down, simplistic Dr. Know. -Jimmy Alvarado (Finger)

NERF HERDER: *My EP: CD*
A goofy band that has a soft spot in my heart. If I listen to their stuff more than once, I'm usually entertained. It's goofy pop punk that I find more humorous than modern day Guttermouth or Vandals. This is a re-release of an old EP with bonus tracks. If you like the first two Vandals LPs or are just a plain nerd and love the Weezer, pull the bucks out of the pocket protector and splurge. -Donofthead (Honest Don's)

NEW BREED, THE: *Port City Rebels: CD*

The New Breed play eight songs of very nice, well done, tuneful singalong street punk Irish style songs with lots of hooks and melody. There is even some mandolin on here! Good lyrics about hanging out, drinking, and other stuff. The vocalist reminds me of the guy from Youth Brigade at times. Anyway this CD is really good and I would highly recommend it. -Mike Beer (Longshot)

NINJA GUN: *Pork's Not Dead: CD-R*

First of all, I almost threw this away. When I opened it up, there was a small pile of what looked and smelled like moldy used bandages. I was pretty fucking disgusted until I read the little note that came with this and I realized that they were pouches of smokeless tobacco, which is still disgusting. Anyway, the first song sounds kind of like a less noisy, more boring Archers of Loaf, the second song sounds like the Bon Jovi stuff from that cowboy movie he did the soundtrack for, and the other two are country songs that aren't as good as any country music that I listen to but still better than Brooks and Dunn. So there. -Not Josh (no address)

NOTHING FAMOUS: *Self-titled: CD*

Mall-punk for the masses! Vocals pulled way forward, drums are lost, super-simple riffs, super forgettable band. -Megan (Cheapskate)

OF DEATH: *Build a Bridge and Get Over It: CD*

I thought clubbing seals was all in good fun until I had to hear it recorded over lame art-core tracks. God lord, what made them think this was okay? -Megan (Alone)

OIL!: *Red, White & Boots + Bills to Pay b/w Pullin' on the Boots: 7"*

There are exactly two things that continuously propel America to the head of the pack on this mongrel burg we call Earth: Number one is our nation's unwavering dedication to quality footwear in the workplace; Number two is our national obsession with, and our renowned proficiency at, the game of soccer. Oil! celebrates both crucial facets of our national character most magnificently, and who shall say them nay?! Stand tall, America! Oil! has got your back during the penalty kicks! BEST SONG: "Bills to Pay" BEST SONG TITLE: "Red, White & Boots" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: This record would have been better if all three songs were called "KILL DAVID FUCKING BECKHAM RIGHT NOW" -Rev. Nørb (Noma Beach)

ONE CAR PILE-UP: *Worst Episode Ever: CD*

My mood swings swing wider than a home run hitter in baseball. This issue, I'm not that into pop punk. I guess I

have a little bit of pent up anger. Maybe, I'm just a big asshole who should give up music. But I do sometimes see the light at the end of the tunnel. One thing for sure, American pop punk is flooded with cookie cutter, paint-by-the-numbers bands. Something I find interesting is if a band is not from the USA, I seem a little more interested. I have come to really appreciate a release by Crackle. They seem to put out pop punk that is not only energetic, but raw at the same time. There have been very few releases that I have not liked. What caught my attention of this release was that this band took matters in their own hands. They worked hard and long to save and build a home studio because they never liked the results of their recordings when they contracted a third party to record them. I have been there before. I don't know how hard it is to build your own studio. I have been fortunate enough to have friends and relatives lately who have the gear and the know-how. But one thing I do know is it's not cheap! Now in their own hands, they spend four long years recording a new album's worth of material and re-recording songs they were not satisfied with in the past. The result is quite impressive. The songs have a strong Propagandhi meets Consumed sound and structure. The production is solid but not overproduced. Patience was their friend because I have no complaints about the mix. The guitars are up front but not overpowering. The bass and drum sound is solid. The vocals are in the right place and everything sounds individual and at the same time together. Their first attempt at self-recording is impressive. I'm looking forward to hearing more. This is their best effort to date. —Donofthedeath (Crackle)

OPERATION MAKEOUT: Hang Loose: CD

Fun time punk from the Great White North — a three piece, featuring two lovely ladies and one fine gentleman — singing fun, enjoyable, borderline pop punk songs. They remind me a bit of Sleater-Kinney, musically, if Sleater-Kinney would have stuck with the more fast paced punk rock of their first album. Operation Makeout has lots of breakdowns that remind me of Wire. Vocalists Jesse (bass) and Katie (guitar) have such different voices that they work so well together. Scratchy-voiced Jesse, couples with smooth sounding Katie, and it's really nice how they switch lead from song to song. We even get vocals thrown in by the fine drummer, Anna. The album, overall, is terribly enjoyable and fun, with lyrics that are poetic and even arty, yet touchable (as in I can relate man.. I can!). The most standout tracks are "Current Events," "Lost, Unwanted... But Still Nice," and the oh, so cute "Contents." There is also a sweet hidden track remix of "You and Me Geometry," by schizo-samplehungry-electro-noise monger Secret Mommy (aka Andy from the Red Light Sting). Operation Makeout give me high hopes for the future of punk rock. Thank you very much, Canada. —Sarah (Mint)

PARADISE ISLAND: Lines Are Infinitely Fine: CD

Arty, mellow, boring. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dim Mak)

PATH OF DESTRUCTION: 1:00 AM: 7"

I tried this puppy out on two different speeds. At 33 1/3, they were a compe-

tent, if not particularly interesting hardcore unit. At 45, they got amazingly better, tighter and the singer sounded like a psychopath sucking on helium. Is this a good review? If you consider someone saying your record sounds better at the wrong speed, then yes, this is a good review. —Jimmy Alvarado (Havoc)

PELICAN: Self-titled: CDEP
Righteous one-riff stoner metal, like Sleep with no singing and an extra finger for the little guitar strings. Occasionally gets a little too precious and abandons the glorious monotony that really makes the form, but with no guitar solos per se they're still way ahead of the pack. And "Pelican"? That ain't no metal bird. Perfect. —Cuss Baxter (Hydra Head)

**PHOENIX FOUNDATION,
THE: These Days: CD**
First off, this record label is called Newest Industry, which is a Hüsker Dü song. The Newest Industry logo is a spoof of the Hüsker Dü logo. So who does the Phoenix Foundation sound like? Gee, I wonder. The songs aren't as good or nearly as diverse, but the basic ingredients are there. The songs don't sound tired or boring at all even though they all go at about the same tempo, but for the most part, they're another band that is right on the edge of being great. I have the same problem with Gunmoll: some of their songs are spot on, but they never quite explode all over the place. Hopefully, this isn't the last we'll hear from this band. —Not Josh (Newest Industry)

**PLAN A PROJECT:
Self-titled: CD**
Twelve songs of very fast, upbeat, punky Op Ivy type of music with lots of singalong gang vocals included and intelligent lyrics. Even some talk of unity is included in some of their lyrics. Okay, these guys are a lot like Op Ivy (they even cover "She's a Bombshell" as a hidden track), but they are no ripoff. They are inspired, if you will. If this kind of music is your thing, I would definitely recommend this record. —Mike Beer (Go Kart)

**PLANET SMASHERS:
Mighty: CD**
EEK! EGADS!!!! HOW DID THIS SKA CRAP END UP IN MY HOUSE?!? QUICK, OPEN THE WINDOW!!!! CHUCK THE FUCKER OUT BEFORE IT KILLS OFF THE GOLDFISH!!!! —Jimmy Alvarado (www.stomprecords.com)

POLYSICS: Neu: CD
The American release of Polysics' second album, originally released three years ago and only now being domestically released thanks to the kindness and diligence of Asian Man, and oh what a record it is. The Devo influence is still firmly in place, but the tunes seem less melodic and infused with more intensity, making them just plain rock out harder than their previous long player, *Hey Bob! My Friend*. More succinctly, this is the equivalent of having Boogie Boy rape your eardrum with an old Casio keyboard. Hunt down either of album, play it loud and play it often, 'cause Polysics rule. —Jimmy Alvarado (Asian Man)

POSSIBLE SUSPECT: So Sick of Your Dependency: CD
You'd almost swear that Chi Pig of SNFU is singing here, but instead it's a

guy named Mark from the Netherlands. The first song is decent; not a bad listen at all. By the time I got halfway through the album, I realized that it's quite possible that they only recorded one bass and drum track and just play each song on guitar over it. It's repetitive, yep repetitive. I say repetitive. Hey! Hey! Hey! —Megan (Mad Butcher)

**POST STARDOM
DEPRESSION:
Ordinary Miracles: CD**
Bands like this make me feel like the owl on those old Tootsie Pop ads. How many tracks 'til it goes in the trade-in pile? Ah one, ah two, ah didn't make it that far. —Megan (The Control Group)

**PROTAGONIST:
Hope and Rage: CD**
NOTE TO ALL WOULD-BE "HARDCORE PUNK" BANDS: If you're writing songs that are longer than two minutes, you're doin' something wrong. Shitcan the set and start over. And, for the love of Pete, don't release a disc chock full of songs that clear four-plus minutes. It's almost as offensive as seein' your gramma in an "Assmaster" video. —Jimmy Alvarado (Blackout)

**PUBES: Wow, Baby!
Let's Go Wheelin'!: CD**
Never, ever thought I'd run into a band that reminded me of both Love Canal and "Get Out of My Yard"-era Wasted Youth, but that's exactly what came to mind while this was playin'. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.roadhousetunes.com)

**PUTRID FLOWERS, THE:
...And For The Little Children, Sing: CD**
Just so you know, the Putrid Flowers are an UNSIGNED BAND. They tell you this both in the liner notes and on the CD itself. So they are unsigned, okay? It's kinda strange that they are unsigned, since they seem to imply that Fat Mike said that they were the best band he has ever heard. Dunno. Also strange that they are unsigned because they are pretty good. I mean, pretty good. Not super awesome, but if I saw them live and they seemed pretty cool, I would buy this. Likewise, the lyrics aren't anything I will be quoting any time soon, but if I heard someone reading them at an open mic poetry reading, I would tell the reader that I liked them. Musically, it's pretty straight ahead rock for rock's sake. They could play a punk show and get a pit, but also not scare the normals away. One thing I will say, is that they have that "thing," where you can tell that they care about their music more than that it's cool to be in a band. At least I think so, but the music seems to have a passion underlying it. I wonder if this will still be the case if they ever become a signed band. I also wonder if they will make as big a deal about being signed as they do about being unsigned. —Rich Mackin (Putrid Flowers)

PW LONG: Remembered: CD
A label that once put out some mighty crucial punk, hardcore, and just plain weird tuneage is now apparently home to bad Southern rock. My, how things change with time. —Jimmy Alvarado (Touch and Go)

**Q & NOT U:
Different Damage: CD**
I thought their last record, *No Kill No Beep Beep*, was pretty good. This one isn't as good. And they have also dumped a member of the band since that

album. Hmm... I always did like their groovy drum beats and slightly danceable tunes, and a lot of it sounds like the latest Fugazi record. This is the record that is gonna make all the emo kids cream in their jeans. I don't really know what else to say. This review is really as bad as the effect this record is having on me. —Sarah (Dischord)

**RANCID VAT:
Crybaby b/w Strychnine: 7"**
Pretty good punk rock that's endearingly sloppy in a Rip Offs kinda way, but heavier and more rock. What else would you expect from Phil Irwin (AKA Thee Whiskey Rebel) and his wife? "Crybaby" is quite catchy for a band often lumped in with the Confederacy of Scum bands, but bands really shouldn't insist on performing Sonics covers unless their lead singer wears vinyl suits. —Not Josh (Casual)

**RESISTOLEROS, THE:
Rock 'n' Roll Napalm: CD**
Fang's Sammytown recruits a new band and goes the punk'n'roll route. Aside from the fact that there's nothing here as classic as "The Money Will Roll Right In," not to mention that there are literally thousands of bands out there that sound just like this, this ain't a bad effort. —Jimmy Alvarado (Steel Cage)

RETURNERS, THE: The Wag b/w Motorheartbeat: 7"
The A-side sounds like the Weirdos after suffering blunt force trauma to the head and waking up convinced they were A. Supercharger and B. German; the flip sounds like one of those songs off *The Armitage Shanks Sing and Play Twenty Punk Hits of the Seventies* that you never heard before and turned out to be a cover by the Users or the Killjoys or the Kusers or the Illjoys or someone like that (but is, in fact, another original). High praise aside, I have a bit of a problem with "The Wag," as one of my all-time favorite genres of music is moronic three-chord rock'n'roll that ushers in A NEW FANTASTIC AMAZING ERA of wacky dancing (The Twist, The Hucklebuck, The Uganda — hell, i can do 'em all at once!), yet I am COMPLETELY AND UTTERLY bereft of any idea how to do The Wag. I mean, one would assume it involves some manner of "wagging" — or, at bare minimum, "wagging" — yet, the dance i spontaneously flung myself into body'n'soul within seconds of this record hitting my turntable was conspicuous by the complete absence of either wagging OR wagging (hmm... perhaps this is a dance best performed sans pantaloons?). How MY personal interpretive interpretation of The Wag goes is like this: 1) Kinda stand there and twist over to the left, in sort of a demi-contraposto posture (yes, that's right, i said "demi-contraposto!" I'd tell you to look it up, but it's not in the dictionary) (at present) 2) Raise left arm up, as if flexing muscle to impress chicas 3) Raise right arm up in opposite position — that is to say, with the forearm pointing downward. However, keep your right fist pointed away from your body, kind of like Bowser from Sha Na Na would do 4) As the beat goes "BUP-BUP! BUP! BUP-BUP! BUP!", jerkily jab left fist up and back with each beat, as if to repeatedly punch a small, invisible offer off of the top of your head, whilst simultaneously punching your right fist out and up behind you, as if to repeatedly smack an invisible potential sodomist in the nutsack. 5) On chord changes, twist

in the other direction, and reverse the position of your arms relative to each other. 6) Iterate the operation at the dance down 14th Street, ya hear?! Should these instructions prove faulty after inspection, all i have to say in my defense is that (ahem) i'm into punk rock, and i throw like a Wag. Thanks, i'll be here all week. **BEST SONG:** "The Wag!" "The Wag! Thuhhhhhh WAAAAAAGGGGGG!!!" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Motorheartbeat" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** The band thanks "slime" on their thank you list! -Rev. Nørb (Swindlebra)

REVILLOS:
Jungle of Eyes: CD

A long-lost album from this revered group finally sees the light of day. While the songs themselves aren't all that bad, the overall feel of the album, sorta like Bananarama plundering through the same Stax of soul 45s that the Jam did to write "Town Called Malice," is just a little too '80s to be comfortable. Still, "Bitten by a Love Bug" should've been a massive international hit two decades ago. -Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

REVOLVERS/DUANE PETERS AND THE HUNNS: Split: CD

Hunns: I've never been a fan, but I picked this up primarily to give 'em another chance. As with other releases I've heard both by the Hunns and US Bombs, I don't find the tunes here particularly awful or anything, but I also don't find them especially inspiring, either. To me, they sound like a bunch of old dudes going through the motions in an attempt to recapture their gloriously misspent youth rather than a band rooted in the now and desperate to make their mark, and that just don't cut the mustard. **Revolvers:** Mid-tempo, power-poppy punk along the lines of Cocksparrer and the like. No big whoop, but they don't exactly suck, either. -Jimmy Alvarado (Dirty Faces)

RISE AGAINST:
Revolutions Per Minute: CD

I've been wrestling with this disc for several weeks now because - while I like the politics and sentiments expressed in these songs - the music sounds like stereotypical run-of-the-mill Fat. It's true that in recent years, Fat has substantially diversified, but assholes like me remember that long stretch in the '90s when everything sounded like NOFX and, unfortunately, this music supporting these lyrics isn't that different. With that said, this album won't be going into my sell pile soon. -Puckett (Fat)

RIVERBOAT GAMBLERS, THE: Something to Crow About: CD

These last two months, crawling through the endless amount of music that gets sent us, it's a rare CD from an unknown band that gets instantly glued to my home and truck stereos. By sheer hours amassed listening along, the Riverboat Gamblers have called my bluff and plunked down a royal, colossal sonic buffet that'll get you fucked upper than hell. They're so good, I'm going to sound like an asshole trying to explain them, but here goes. First off, all cliches are wiped away like insect guts off a windshield. Serve up all the best New Bomb Turks songs onto one album. Hyper-velocity, swaggering vocals where all the words are actually

sung, actually sound fun. If they started a gang, you'd join in a split second. Pile on the too easy to be easy instrumental velocity of the Candy Snatchers. Like chicken grease, squeeze all the bravado, sleaze, and sneer of The Humpers' prime form on top. Add two scoops of that covert pop element cloaked in hard-beaten, hard-won punk, like the Black Halos. Then, somehow, make it fucking catchy, claim it like it's never been done before, let it buck you home, then it bake in the Texas sun and have Tim Kerr produce it. *Something to Crow About* has so much energy, I swear lightning bolts are going to sizzle out of the speakers and light my carpet on fire. This is in serious running for a top ten of 2003 for me. -Todd (Gearhead)

ROCKETS RED GLARE: Moonlight Desires: CD

You know the difference between emo bands and toilet paper? Eventually you run out of toilet paper. -Jimmy Alvarado (Blue Skies Turn Black)

ROY: Tacomatose: CDEP

This song reminds me of sixth grade when I listened to They Might Be Giants all the time. Not fond, campy memories, but how my mom would make me turn it off because it was so fucking annoying. Imagine a whole album of "Birdhouse in Your Soul" complete with grating vocals. -Megan (Initial)

RUDE PRAVO: Non Mi Pento: CD

The cover of *Non Mi Pento* has a cartoon of them all causing some mischief. The thing that got me was that it looked like they were some bastard super group made up of Moby, someone who's a cross between Mike Watt and Shawn Stern, Rosie O'Donnell, a cross between John Lennon and Joey Ramone, and a long-lost Blues Brother. It's really pretty good, though. I hear lots of Business and some Stiff Little Fingers in there. They're Italian and sing in Italian, which brings me to a realization I had when I was listening to this. I've given this quite a few listens, but this would probably never make it into my heavy rotation. With music as catchy as theirs and lyrics encouraging sing-alongs, I want to do just that - sing along. With my Italian limited to, "Oh il mio dio, io l'embarrassed un pesce." I don't see it happening any time soon. So, when I get the urge to hear something that they could definitely do, I won't reach for them, but a band I can actually sing with as I bounce around and piss off my downstairs neighbors. People who aren't as afflicted as I should pick this up. -Megan (KOB)

SCUMBAG ROADS: Bad Girl Attraction: 10"

...one of the things that i find wholly unsatisfying regarding the majority of European punk rock (especially the stuff that might be seen as having descended in some way, shape or form from the Ramones, regardless of how nth-generation the bloodlines run) is that once The Punk Rock has made its initial mutation - has staked out its defining deviance from the norm, or what have you - it very rarely mutates further. Once a band sounds like what it sounds like, it sounds like that forever, or until they "progress," which is different from mutation. Bands will be FAST and LOUD and PUNK, yet an

entire set can pass by without the band ever finding some virgin cubic millimeter of your brain that hasn't yet been trampled by rock 'n' roll - some tiny cluster of heretofore unused synapses, ripe for the pickin' - and jabbing their own little pushpin in there, marking their turf forever and ever, or until you forget. I just never feel like a lot of the bands establish much of an identity above and beyond the identity they've established merely as a precondition to their existing; like, once the initial sonic character of the music is there, everything else could just be plotted out by some manner of punk rock algorithm. Of course, i freely admit that there may well be things in the music that i'm not picking up on, but i'm gonna give myself the benefit of the doubt and write that off as idle speculation right now. That said, about two-twelfths of this record is genius - and, of course, those twelfths would also be the two stupidest songs, "Deadly Potion" and "Dirt." The other ten-twelfths blaze along in a quite pleasant punk rock fireball, with the blaring guitar assault upon my eardrums feeling as nice as the hot water in the shower does when i've finally coaxed myself out of bed in the morning. However, sorta like the shower, the feeling only lasts 'til the towel. Rocks hard, but debatably non-essential. **BEST SONG:** I already told you this, it's either "Dirt" or "Deadly Potion." Now, since you made me repeat myself, i will tell you the **BEST LYRIC:** "I grab my giant noodle/pissing on the whole kaboodle" **BEST SONG TITLE:** Well, "Smash It Up," "Dirt," "I Don't Like You" and "Yeah Yeah" are all pretty good... too bad they're already taken. I guess i vote for "Bad Girl Attraction," contingent on it being some sort of pun on "Bad Guy Reaction." **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** Guitar player Andi Scum was (is?) in the Returners. The Wag!!! The Wag!!! THHHHEEEEE WAAAGGGGGGGG!!! -Rev. Nørb (Swindlebra)

SHEMPS, THE/ TO HELL AND BACK: Split 7"

The Shemps: Like a fawn getting its legs, stumbling out of the placental sac, and then learning how to wield a chainsaw. The Shemps started out in the world as mild mannered and have quickly evolved into a ripping unit. Parts pop, parts life of the party, part solid rock'n'roll mystery. I'd put them in league with The Stupor Stars. Nothing's missing, and Artie's vocal snot ratchets the proceedings up a couple notches. Plus, if you put "Suzie Werner played guitar on this recording, got arrested on tour, and quit the band a month later as a condition of her parole. Good luck Suzie!" in your liner notes, you know you're dealing with a band that tests the edge of the blade. To Hell and Back: With ex-members of Devoid of Faith and John Brown's Army, I was expecting more, uhhh, hardcore than a slowed down Zeke. I fall on the side of the pyramid that got their ass kicked while heavy metal got played on swung-open monster truck stereos in the parking lot in high school and those scars still haven't healed, no matter how progressive. I've just recently embraced Motorhead and AC/DC as part of my rehabilitative therapy, but this it too much of a step. Sorry. Go Shemps! -Todd (Gloom)

SHOCKER, THE: Up Your Ass Trav: CDEP

Former L7 member, Jennifer Finch, groups up some people and creates a new band. It's very much in the same vein of L7 and musically has elements of punk and Joan Jett. I remember young Jennifer and L7 opening up for my punk band that was headlined by St. Vitus in a shitty Hollywood club on a Wednesday or Thursday night. They played a rocking set for a band that was new. We went through our set. It had songs, at the time, that were almost ten years old mixed with current ones. They were right out front and rocked out to our set. We had a singer people hated, so it was great seeing people enjoy what we were doing. We made no money that night. But I do remember L7 enjoying our music. On this disc, I drew close to the cover song. The band covers the Juice Newton (Fuck you, Dale. It's not Kim Carnes!) hit "Angel of the Morning." It takes a certain voice to carry that song and the band backs it up. Other songs that I dug were "Smoke Rings," "Break in Two," "Your Problem Now," and "Bad Brain Good Head." Rocking punk'n'roll that should be burning though the club scene soon after their stint on the Warped Tour. -Donofthead (Little Pusher)

SHOCKS, THE: More Cuts for You in Zero 2: CD

A German punk rock band up to its eyeballs in Killed By Death worship. Features that twangy, non-distorted guitar sound that gets the trash-punks' trousers all sticky. -Jimmy Alvarado (Dirty Faces)

SICKIDS: Now and Then: CD

A now and then overview (hence the title) of an '80s band from Philly that have apparently decided to give it another go two decades later. Tempos here range from mid-speed to sludgy and there's a HEAVY Cramps influence throughout. -Jimmy Alvarado (Steel Cage)

SIGNAL TO TRUST: Folklore: CD

This band is from Minnesota and features x-members of The Misfires, Sicbay and The Hidden Chord. First things first. I adore the sleeve art. It's very poppish and looks like something Jet Set would be releasing instead. It's got a bizarre '60s feel to it with bright colors and deer versus wolves, but fuck, man, the inner artwork is this mess of grids with the lyrics scrawled over them. It makes me dizzy. That is not good. Musically, it's just like the Faraquet (R.I.P.) b-sides or something. Tight, tasty and enjoyable, but listening to it makes me want to listen to Faraquet and not Signal To Trust. Big whammy. -Sarah (Modern Radio)

SILK FLOWERS: Not Worth Mentioning: 7"

Sort of like how members of Hot Water Music let their country music influence shine through as Rumbleseat, members of the Starvations are moonlighting as Silk Flowers. Some of the same ingredients are there: the wailing vocals, the lyrics full of despair, and the fact the songs aren't grossly exaggerated caricatures. The music, however, is a different story. The Gun Club/Birthday Party influence has been filtered out, leaving a bare-boned, acoustic country

sound that is no less haunting than the music of the Starvations. Fantastic. –Not Josh (Postneo Music, no address)

SIXTH CHAMBER, THE:
Molded Truths: CD

The only progeny I know to have sprung from the Christian Death camp (Sevan Kand is the son of later members Gitane Demone and Valor Kand) teams up with Urinals/100 Flowers member Kjel Johansen, and Rahne Pistor, who may or may not be the guy who was in one of the more recent incarnations of the Undead. The resulting music comes off as a weird hybrid of early death rock (before it became “goth” and subsequently lost all credibility) and no wave, making for interesting tuneage, indeed. Much respect to these guys for opting to stand out from the rest of the pack. –Jimmy Alvarado (Novokkane Noise)

SKALINERS, THE:
Belly Dance: CD

Ska band from Germany that is good musically, but the singer’s tone rubs me like red fire ants between my toes. Maybe if they sang in German instead of English it would be better to these ears. –Donofthedeath (Mad Butcher)

SLEAZIES, THE:
Gonna Operate on Myself: 7”

Gotta hand it to Rapid Pulse, they sure know how to pick ‘em. Snuck a peek at the lyric sheet before putting this on the turntable and cringed at the silliness of the lyrics. Soon as the needle hit the groove, however, all my fears regarding what I was about to endure dissipated. Both tracks here are sweet sounding punk with more than just a nod toward the band’s ‘70s predecessors, particularly the Gears. Okay, I’m hooked and

awaiting my next fix, preferably a full-length. –Jimmy Alvarado (Rapid Pulse)

SLICK SHOES:
Far from Nowhere: CD

The way the punk music scene is today, it’s fragmented in sub-scenes that don’t interrelate. I remember back in my glory days, I would meet new friends at every show. I go to shows now and I’m just the non-fashionable old guy. Over this rant, I say that I will probably never really cross paths with this band. They are already on the Warped tour and I see MTV following behind. Just as there are demographics in everything else, I see this band falling into the 14-18 demographic: aural cheesy pleasure disguised as rebellion for the younger set. Color in the numbers punk rock to some fame and fortune. This is a band that can lure the youth into the darker, serious side of punk. Because there is always the small few who want more rebellion and more thought for their entertainment. Those people will crossover and continue the more underground movement of the punk scene. So, I believe both sides have a purpose. But being on the darker side, this music sounds so homogenized that I feel lactose intolerant and I feel a wet shit coming down the tubes. –Donofthedeath (Side One Dummy)

SLOW SLUSHY BOYS, LES:
Slush Puppy: 7”

A couple of instrumentals heavy on ‘60s kitsch. Both songs on this would’ve been big hits with Cissy and her friends had *Family Affair* been a reality show. –Jimmy Alvarado (Butterfly)

SOLEA: Even Stranger: CDEP
Ex-members of ... Knapsack ... Texas Is The Reason ... and Samiam ... gath-

er... to make five songs. So why does this sound like such a shitty rip-off of Sunday’s Best? Fuck Solea. If any of this sounds remotely interesting, check out The Jealous Sound. –Puckett (3 Mileage)

SOLGER: Codex 1980: CD

The only document you’re likely to hear of Seattle’s first true hardcore band, who existed for a mere six months in 1980, played six shows, recorded an ultra-rare, ultra-lo-fi 7-inch masterpiece, summarily threw in the towel, and guitarist Paul went on to join the Fartz. Thanks to record collector interest in the aforementioned 7-inch, Empty has released this retrospective. Collected here are remixes of the tracks from the EP, six live cuts, and original mixes – straight from the vinyl – in all their miserable sounding glory to appease purists. A must-have for any northwest music historians, not to mention those who like their music loud, raw and totally fucked up. –Jimmy Alvarado (Empty)

SOUTH FILTHY:
Soul of a Man: 7”

I’m not quite sure what it is, but the last couple of years, when I feel completely depleted, I’ve been going to roots that I’ve never listened to before. Johnny Cash, Otis Redding, and, recently, Leadbelly. South Filthy take on a Blind Willie Johnson song, the title track, and I’m not going to lie to you. I know dick-all about Mr. Johnson, but I sure like South Filthy’s interpretation of his song. It’s slow blood pumping, weight of the world in your exhale, steadfast stuff that I can appreciate when I want something slow without being light and sleepy. The B-side, “Speed Traps, Weigh Stations &

Detour Signs,” a Dave Dudley song off of the *Truck Drivin’ Son of a Gun* LP and shows that the South Filthy can switch gears without losing any speed. It’s got a nice “when the CB was king,” convoy feel. Not terribly far off the original, but it retains a faithful, beaten leather feel its own. Nice change of pace. –Todd (Wrecked ‘Em)

SOVIETTES, THE/
THE HAVENOT’S: Split 7”

Yes, the Soviettes are on the cover. Yes, there’s a long interview in this issue, and man, I couldn’t be happier. Their two offerings are as great as anything that they’ve released. With the crazy powerful and assured triple vocals on “30 Min or Less,” how every instrument not only locks into another, but propels the entire mission, I think, “So, this is what the Go Go’s would have sounded with a dude drummer if *Our Lips Are Sealed* didn’t get such a thoroughly poppy mix. Rad.” Quite possibly one of the world’s funnest riots on wax. Confetti and defiance. The Havenot’s: They’d be perfect on a bill with Water Closet or The Urchin. They’ve got that mid-paced, “They’re Japanese. Are they speaking English? Yes. They’re really saying ‘the Boys are back to street’” thing down. It’s crunchy and Japanese-clean, but their proficiency doesn’t overshadow some cool songwriting flourishes and finger snapping dynamics that wouldn’t leave fans of the Replacements cold. Good job, great split. –Todd (Nice and Neat)

SPECTORS, THE:
Beat Is Murder: CD

A retrospective of a neo-‘60s punk band that apparently hailed from Minnesota. They were more varied in sound (dab-

bling in mod, pop and psych in addition to the requisite Kinks and/or Nuggets worship) than many of the oodles of others that wallow in the same musical ghetto. Most importantly, they were danged good at what they did. —Jimmy Alvarado (Get Hip)

SPONGE: For All the Drugs in the World: CD

I would laugh at the cover for this almost every day for two weeks, so I felt it deserved a review. It's an overhead looking, down shot of a sensitive-tatted-rocker with "punk" lettering. Musically? I see Chris Cornell and Creed as BIG influences here. Wee ha! —Megan (Idol)

SPONTANEOUS DISGUST: 33: 7"

Not sure I can follow the wisdom of putting 33 songs on a 7" in this post-DRI age, nor of limiting its release to 33 copies, nor, especially, of sending ALL 33 COPIES out for review, but fuck it. I guess they figure most review copies go almost immediately back on the free market (that is, the ones that don't go almost immediately in the trash), and they're right. Verdict's still out on this one, though. I mean, it sounds like shit, like a one-armed butcher grinding his way through a frozen moose with a seized chainsaw, but I've got a soft spot for the inspired infantilism of bands like Sockeye and SpontDis rolls in that ditch with the masters. Try on the "Egg Pants," take in the "Fuzzy Penetrator," and bust out the "Hemoglobin Pileup." Me, I'll have a "Side of beef with a bacon leg/hangin' his boner on a mumbly peg." —Cuss Baxter (Pestilential Treatment)

SQUIRTGUN: Fade to Bright: CD

It really did nothing for me. No hair standing, no goose bumps and no chills down the spine. My excitement level is comparable to tofu. —Donofthead (Honest Don's)

STEAM PIGS, THE: Potshots: CD

Nice blurring of the lines between the classic Clay Records style of English punk, street punk, and American hardcore from a band outta Dublin. The tempo changes and million-chords-a-minute song structure keep things from getting stale and compliment the sarcasm-infused lyrics. The demo quality of the recording slightly saps some of the tunes' power, but the obvious work put in by the band manages to shine through. —Jimmy Alvarado (punkshitrecords@hotmail.com)

STRIKE ANYWHERE: Exit English: CD

A minute step slower and more melodic than *Change Is a Sound*, Strike Anywhere once again proves that positive, intelligent hardcore can be a powerful, challenging, and vital mission, not just a closed track game where they're yelling to the converted chained to a wall. Still in check are Thomas's snarl and polyp-busting screaming, the double Matt guitar attack, and Garth and Eric's formidable bass and drum landscaping. The best news, however, is that this album comes the closest to all of their recorded output in capturing this blast furnace of a live band. You can almost feel the sweat start to bead on your brow. If Kid Dynamite's memory is like a pulled tooth and your tongue keeps on going back to that empty

space, Strike Anywhere's a great choice. They're far from being a duplicate, but that massive creative spark — like if 7 Seconds charged out of the gate today instead of twenty years ago — is still alive and well. Punk's not dangerous? They were refused admission into Japan and were held in house arrest, until they were admitted to fly to Australia. —Todd (Jade Tree)

STRUNG OUT: Live in a Dive: CD

Over the years, Strung Out has become my least favorite band on the Fat roster. So that should explain my excitement level for this. Where's the Subhumans "Live in a Dive?" That's a boner waiting to happen. —Donofthead (Fat)

STRUNG UP: Self-titled: 7"

Hardcore punk in the early '80s style: fast and mean. Musically, I kinda like it. It's tight, well-played and interesting, even if it lacks the nail-biting intensity that one would expect from, say, Born Against (and yes, I know Born Against wasn't an early '80s band, but they were pretty fucking intense). Lyrically, um, let's just say that this band doesn't play metal and we should be thankful for whatever lyrics we get. I bet they rip live and I'd like to hear more. —Not Josh (Blazing Guns)

STUCK-UPS, THE:

Last Chance b/w Out of Control: 7"

Ever wonder what mannequins sound like when they're having sex? Or robots? Clinical but seriously pounding. Like clean pistons or furiously rubbing antiseptic surfaces. That's pretty much what I thought of with "Last Chance." Storefront window dummies banging like mad. "Out of Control" unleashes the drum monster and guitar cheetah, wilding up the proceeds with whirring, dirty blades. Weird, but lovely and bruisey weird. The Screamers and the Go Go's (live, not on record) fall through a glass table, they get one another's limbs attached wrongly, and viola, that's what I think these folks would sound like. Kinda. Sorta. Yes, I like. —Todd (\$3 ppd., Johnny Cat)

STYLEX: False Start: CD

This new wave keyboards new school bullshit has already started to breed what kills every great musical movement. With that said, Stylex sounds like a band that wanted to incorporate that "new sound" of synthesizers! Sadly, Stylex are mixing indie rock, rap music, dance music and punk rock — bringing me to the conclusion that they are very confused. Plus, they are lacking the anger that makes me like a few of the new wave of bands. You will always get great bands that can do this style of music, but that only brings a hundred bands that are embarrassing to anyone that owns keyboards. —Wanda Spragg (Friction)

SUGAR DADDIE: Hell or High Water: CD

Anything with this much pirate imagery can't be all bad. Yet, I don't suppose that these guys knew there was going to be a movie with the same name as their song, "Pirates of the Caribbean," when they started recording. Musically, this is sort of a grunge with Cookie Monster vocal thing. Lyrically it's a weird sort of cock rock meets children's rhymes, with an Andrew Dice Clay sort of twist. "Mother Goose just got an abortion from a man named Dr. Seuss," is an

actual line. Dr. Seuss appears again later to steal the singer's wallet in another song. —Rich Mackin (Thorp)

TABULA RASA: The Role of Smith: CD

A little too college radio, indie and emo to my liking. —Donofthead (A-F)

TAXI: Like a Dog: CD

Although I haven't the first clue where these guys hail from, this has a very early '80s LA-sounding punk rock feel to it, much like the Hostage bands, but without the OC twang. Thankfully, I still have quite a bit of a soft spot for that sound, so this was a good listen to these ears. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dead Beat)

TEAM EMU: Self-titled: 7"

Straight punk that's minimal in the same sense as early Misfits and a lot of oi, four songs of that, and then one long instrumental jam that's kind of moody and less than necessary. The sparseness of things mostly leaves me at a loss in terms of what direction the band is aimed in, but some of the vocals suggest poppy sensibilities. Also: blue vinyl, apparently limited to 200 copies, bad handwriting, bad grammar (watch those verb tenses!), and two Hoffmans. —Cuss Baxter (Ghostmeat)

TEEN CTHULHU: Ride the Blade: LP

Does Tipper Gore ever lie in bed at night wondering how many godawful death metal bands she inspired with her puritan antics? Teen Cthulhu is another in a long line of bands inspired less by real life experience than by an overwhelming desire to cater to childish (not to mention churlish) I'll-show-you-, Mom-and-Dad fantasies. If suicide, the prevailing subject of the album, is THIS boring, joining the Mormon church sounds like a keg party by comparison. —Eric Rife (Life is Abuse)

TELESCOPES: As Approved by the Committee: CD

An absolutely stunning collection of tracks by an English band active in the early '90s, who disappeared for a number of years and are apparently out gigging again. Collected here are fourteen tracks culled from their out of print catalog and seemingly sequenced into two different eras of the band's sound. The first seven are a maelstrom of noise and garage punk, sorta like Iggy fronting My Bloody Valentine while tripping on mushrooms with Sonic Youth: brutal and abrasive, yet oddly melodic. The remaining seven tracks turn the volume down a notch and rely more on experimentation and psychedelic pop sensibilities, not unlike Primal Scream with more balls. This is a band with music that screams for wider recognition and, if you're smart, you'll pay serious attention to prevent them from fading back into obscurity. —Jimmy Alvarado (Bomp)

THEORY OF ABSTRACT LIGHT, THE: Self-titled: CD

Here's what you might call a suite; nine tracks that could stand each on their own, but wouldn't have the same impact that way. Now, if you cut out the roughly four minutes of acoustic guitar strumming, you'd have around forty-eight minutes of high-grade ambient noise, the kind of noise that gets generated by machines and recorded on hidden recorders in public and is less like being in a motorcycle crash than it is like hav-

ing a dead elephant delicately set on top of you; no sharp edges, no blunt trauma, just encompassing suffocation and slowly crushing mass. It's all about the mass. No, it's also about sparseness, like massive sparseness. Simple drones and sounds that are so distorted you don't know what the original sounds were. This guy, Ben Carr (he's in 5ive), he knows what the fuck to do with solitude and a tape recorder. —Cuss Baxter (Odd Halo)

THESE ARMS ARE SNAKES: This Is Meant to Hurt You: CD EP

An emo band that sounds a tad more pissed than their bespectacled, agonizingly wimpy brethren. I'd say they sucked, but I'm afraid that they might get pissed off at me, I would summarily be put on their "enemies" list, and I wouldn't have a hope in hell of ever getting any homemade vegan cookies from them come the holiday season. —Jimmy Alvarado (Jade Tree)

THREATS: Twelve Punk Moves: CD

All new recordings from a band that survived into the mid-'80s their first time around and have now reformed to give it another go. The cuts here, hip deep in the British "street punk" thang, are strong and full of energy, which makes for some primo listening. Recommended. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dr. Strange)

TORA! TORA! TORRANCE!: A Cynics Nightmare: CD

My mind says this is a mixture of The Hives, At the Drive In and The Strokes. —Donofthead (Militia Group)

TOYS THAT KILL/ FLESHIES: Split picture disk: 7"

Toys That Kill. What can I say? What band, with *Control the Sun*, their second LP, can get slower and stranger, but better? What band has the big, sweaty balls to double scoop their originality and still want to pile more on? I mean, it's punk, but it's like how the Minutemen and The Big Boys were punk: a reinterpretation of the original meaning, so it remains vital and keeps the ears from getting lazy without it being a complete what-the-fuck?-athon. The guys pull one out of the vaults (looking at the date of recording and all) from *The Citizen Abortion* sessions, and it's a smoker. "Angels with Dirty Contracts" starts with a recorded fight, has synchronized whistling, and all the stakes that cordon off their distinctive style. Fleshies: the dirty underwear, microphone lariat brigade continues with a mid-paced crooner, "My Buddy," reminiscent of The Psychedelic Furs *Talk, Talk, Talk*, mixed with goat-throwing guitar sexy, and balled up for enjoyment akin to the delayed and pleasant stupefaction of just the right amount of cough medicine mixed into vodka. The new chocolate and peanut butter? Yes, sir, two tastes that go great together. —Todd (Geykido Comet)

TRIGGERS, THE: Self-titled: 7"

I am so happy to see girls who aren't afraid to rock just as hard (if not harder) than most of the boys. The Triggers are no exception. Punk rock with heavy influence on both punk and rock. I haven't listened to a bad song from these guys yet. —Megan (Johnny Cat) **RAZORCAKE 99**

TSOL: *Divided We Stand*: CD
Assuming that everyone reading this has at least an inkling of who TSOL are, I'll skip to the meat: Their "comeback" album, *Disappear*, was a good punk album. Sure, it took a little getting used to, primarily because of the band attached to it, but it was good and got better with repeated listens. It was not, however, a good TSOL album. Some bands, whether they perceive it as blessing or curse, you just expect more from. In the case of TSOL, their strength lay in their experimentation within punk's rigid boundaries – their melding of "gothic" and "hardcore" sensibilities, the complex interplay between instruments, a seeming fearlessness to challenge the listener to accept what they were doing on their terms rather than what was expected. That said, this IS a good TSOL album. Starting off with a couple of decent, if pedestrian, punk rave-ups, the boys spend the remaining eleven tracks plundering a whole host of styles and inspirations, tossing out knowing references to old English influences (the bass line that starts out "Fuck You Tough Guy" is reminiscent of the Damned's "Neat Neat Neat;" the chorus of "See You Tomorrow" references the piano plink plink of the Buzzcocks' "Something Goes Wrong Again"), adding to some numbers acoustic guitars and keyboards (the latter supplied by Greg Kuehn, who did time in the band during the *Beneath the Shadows* years and later joined Jack in Cathedral of Tears) in others, and varying tempos and styles enough to keep listeners guessing from one song to the next. The result leaves the impression that *Disappear* was merely a warm-up for the band, a chance to reacquaint themselves with form before they got down to the serious business of being TSOL and coming up with this, their true comeback album. Given that this is marked improvement on an already solid foundation, and assuming they plan to continue on this trajectory, the next album should be a monster. Glad to have you back, guys. We missed you. –Jimmy Alvarado (Nitro)

UNIT BREED, THE:

***Walking the Death Watch*: CD**
I can't tell if they wanted the art or the music to get out more. The lyric sheet is filled with paintings. The music is also super-arty and just as repetitive as the Dali rip-off paintings. The perfect way to listen to this would be: easy chair, feet up, cold beer, good book, volume off. –Megan (Suburban Justice)

URBAN WASTE: Self-titled: CD

Here is the long lost 1982 New York classic on CD! As far as I know, this was originally released as a 7" on Mob Style Records in 1982 and re-released as a 12" on Big City Records in 1987. I know the whole record was also bootlegged on the *Four New York 7"*'s comp. LP. Tracks of this recording were also on the *Compilation Dedicated to Tim Yo Mama and Killed by Hardcore, Vol. 1*. I'm not sure if other tracks appeared or are bootlegged elsewhere, but this is what I found in my collection. I think my brother has an original copy still. I do remember hearing it back then on the local college radio punk show. This exemplifies the start of the hardcore revolution. Punk became harsher and faster. The lyrics reflect living under the Reagan administration. This style of punk was fresh and powerful. Twenty

years later, you can hear the same stylings now in young punk bands across the country. This is a recording that deserves to be brought back from its safe storage. I wish this was more of a discography. I'm not sure if they had more recordings, but I'm sure they had more than just this. If you have followed my writing for any length of time, you will know I have a big soft spot for early '80s punk. That was the period that I had the fondest memories from. Oh, to be young again. –Donofthead (Hungry Eye)

UTAH!:

***Plays Well with Others*: CD**
I was so happy with the first song. I like that people are getting more creative with instruments and creating new sounds. Utah uses cellos, claves, xylophones, and more. The first song still retains a rawness and desperation and the cello gives it a resonance that makes it feel that the pain is important. From then on it's all downhill and goes into what one would expect from the aforementioned instruments. So mellow I think I'll send it to my mom. –Megan (Bifocal Media)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: 10: CD

This is the tenth release (hence the name) from Chicago's Punkhead Records. Twenty-six bands from twelve states. There's definitely some great stuff on there: Grabass Charlestons, This Bike Is A Pipebomb, the Bananas, Against Me!, and the Carrie Nations are in my tops. As far as comps go, it's pretty awesome – not too many bad tracks at all. I'll definitely be looking for more by bands on here and from Punkhead in the future. Plus you can't go wrong for \$3.50 (postage paid and with stickers and a poster) The only thing that gets me is on the included poster. They have a map of the US with all the states that the bands come from highlighted. I look up in the upper right corner, expecting to see that beautiful Vacationland state I call home, but no dice! They cut Maine right off the map! It got me so pissed I had to listen to the Carrie Nations track three times in a row, quickly followed by the Bananas before writing this. –Megan (Punkhead)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

***Dirty Faces Volume One*: CD**

A label sampler that also serves as a surprisingly good international punk compilation. Although I personally could do without the few ska tunes on here, even I find it damn hard to dislike that includes tracks by Antidote, Daily Terror, Colera, Agrototoxic, Blind Pigs, Calibre12, Public Toys, and a NEW TRACK by the legendary Olho Seco. Good stuff. Send 'em money. –Jimmy Alvarado (Dirty Faces)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

***Experiments in Audio Rocketry: A Mostly Acoustic Compilation*: CD**

The title tells you what you're getting into. Advisory warning: acoustic music, excluding Phil Ochs, the Kingston Trio and a few others, makes me want to smash, smash, smash. I'm straight up stealing *Go Metric*'s way of reviewing a comp. Averages. Eighteen tracks. Let's see how it fares. Against Me!: Yes. They light more fires with acoustic guitars than most bands can with electricity. They started out acoustic, and that's an unfair advantage, like a tank vs. Michael Dukakis. Justin Perkins: No. When I have to think, "Hippie? Does it sound

like that 'horse with no name' song?" buttons with arrows get pushed. NOFX: Yes. "Whoops I OD'd" is a good song. I already have it. I think of it as a companion piece to "Linoleum." Both are told from the perspective of the dead. Glenn's Army: No. Imagine They Might Be Giants, but serious, without juice. It's 50/50, not poo, but, still, no. Kevin Seconds: No. It's peppy enough, but he sounds like if the Indigo Girls had sausages, not rugs. Pipsqueak: Yes. Let's get pissed off and throw furniture in the fire to just watch it burn. Anxious folk I'm fine with. Billy Reese Peters: Yes. They win best song title awards with "Boner City Limits." It's got a beat you can tip a beer back to. Grabass Charlestons: Hell yeah. Some people just have music flying out of their fingertips. This proves that these guys could beat rocks together and I'd still get excited. Jesse Michaels: No. Operation Ivy: excellent. Common Rider: eh. Jesse by himself – "constructed a lean-to dream"? Todd – "Shhh, be quiet, I'm braiding a belt. I don't want to mess up." House On Fire: Yes. All the fight and anger of Panthro UK United 13 to a minimal voice and guitar. Distilled rage: "bring out your dead who fill your head." Fuck, Alex is good. My favorite track. Gunmoll: Yes. Burlap voice. Steely eyes. Tension. Fifth Hour Hero: No. Although the lady has a very pretty voice, it cuts a little too close to Suzanne Vega. Hex Country: No. Although I doubt if I've seen Hex Country, I've seen their ilk, encouraging me to take my beer to the far side of the bar on many an open mic night and wish I'd brought ear plugs. Bad Astronaut: No. I have a strange, life-long aversion to xylophone (or "vibes" if you know the lingo) or anything that sounds like them. Ann Berretta: Yes, surprisingly. I haven't liked anything by these guys since *Bitter Tongues*. Nice hooks. Lawrence Arms: No. The recording's weird and hollow and sounds like it was done through a wall. The Arrivals: Yes. So strong. Isaac's voice is amazing, full of simultaneous happiness and sorrow. This Bike Is A Pipebomb: No. Great band. Great, previously released song. Crudly recording. Average. .500. Much better than most comps but not a "Woah, fuck, dude, got to get it." –Todd (1-2-3-4 Go!)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

***LA County Line*: CD**

A compilation of bands from LA's underground, including Go Betty Go, Calavera, Union 13, Teenage Rage, Custom Made Scare, Speed Buggy, Crash Logic and a ton of others. While not a bad compilation per se, as it features some mighty fine talent in its ranks, there's something lacking in the overall presentation of the tunes. Maybe the track sequencing is off or something, but it just ain't making me all giddy like I should be. –Jimmy Alvarado (Split Seven)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

***Let's Get Rid of LA*: CD**

Over the years, LA punk has seen many comps come along, many purporting to be the definitive document of the city's so-called scene. While some have been, to put it politely, utter sonic horseshit, others have been quite good and a select few now reside in the "true classic" category. The dilemma, though, is that it's near impossible to effectively put together a "definitive" compilation of Los Angeles' punk scene, mainly because there are so many sub-genres,

sub-scenes and sub-regions within the County's parameters alone, and when you add the going-on-25-year argument over what is, in fact, "punk," things get very sticky, indeed. Enter this, a compilation of "fifteen bands from underneath the ruins of Southern California." Collected for your aural pleasure are one track each from The Rolling Blackouts, The Checkers, Neon King Kong, The Flash Express, The Orphans, The Alleged Gunman, Squab, Thee Make-Out Party, The Pinkz, The Fuse, Radio Vago, Miracle Chosuke, The Lipstick Pickups, Fast Forward, and the Starvations, all of which do what they do, from '60s-inspired trash rock to straight punk to Devo-damaged artpunk, and they do it very well. The non-inclusion of some personal favorites notwithstanding (and, honestly, who can say that they're pleased as punch with the lineup on ANY compilation ever released), there's some really, really good listening to be found here, and I can easily see it rightfully fetching huge sums of money on Ebay in a few years. Does it serve as an exhaustive document of the myriad hues of punk to be found in Southern California? Not by a long shot. Then again, when a comp rocks this hard, who really gives a fuck? –Jimmy Alvarado (Revenge/ Star Maps)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

***Liberation: Songs to Benefit PETA*: CD**

For those not in the know, PETA = People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. But you probably knew that. I believe in supporting this bargain priced comp because all proceeds are being donated to this organization. I may not like a lot of the bands personally, but you and others should purchase copies to give to people who either need to be introduced to punk rock or to pass around information about PETA. But then again, you might like the bands too. I'm one not to pressure anyone in believing in what I believe. But I do support the free sharing of ideas. My wife and I do support PETA. The bands featured are: Hot Water Music, Good Riddance, Propagandhi, The Eyeliners, Anti-Flag and NOFX, to name a few. There are CD Rom features on the disk too, like the short video of a slaughterhouse and messages from a couple of the bands. For the price, you get a lot for your hard earned bucks. It's also for a good cause. –Donofthead (Fat Wreck Chords)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *No Hold Back... All Attack!!!*: 2XCD

Some of the best punk rock and hardcore is coming out of Minneapolis and St. Paul these days, and this comp has solely Twin Cities bands on it. There are amazing songs by some great bands like American Monsters, Dillinger Four, Holding On, Rivethead, The Soviettes, and Sweet Jap. A lot of the bands on here will pleasantly surprise you, too. The variety of sounds on this comp is impressive, covering everything from emo to hardcore to street punk to rockabilly to pop punk to crust to a ton of bands that fit in between genres. Listening to it will make you a believer in the Twin Cities scene. This originally came out on vinyl in a three record set. I bought the records and listened to them a bunch of times, but after the first few listens, I found myself lifting the needle a lot and plunking it down on the next song. Now that I have it on CD, I can just hit the skip button. And that brings up my only knock on this album, which

is that they could have cut nearly half of the bands out of it and had one of those legendary comps that every record collection must have. Here's a good rule to use in the future: if the singer sings with the microphone in his mouth, or if the band name has a reference to a Nietzsche book, don't include their song on your record. Still, there's at least thirty good songs on these two discs, and I recommend this comp like a motherfucker. —Sean (Havoc)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:
Old Days Nostalgia: 3X CD

Three, count 'em, THREE discs of some of the craziest, most extreme hardcore to come out in the last decade or so. You get oodles and oodles of tracks taken from the SOA records back catalog, courtesy of Assuck, Society of Jesus, Man is the Bastard, 7 Minutes of Nausea, Cripple Bastards, Agathocles and a bevy of others. If loud, fast-as-fuck and wholly devoid of any "pop" hooks is your bag of worms, or if you just want to indulge in more auditory sensory overload than you ever dreamed possible, you could do far worse than this. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.soarecords.it)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:
South American

Teenage Garage Punk: 7"
The title says it all: Five tracks of "teenage garage punk" from four South American bands, specifically the Tandooris, Los Peyotes, Elio and the Horribles, and the Supersonicos. All four are more than competent at what they do, with Elio and the Horribles providing the most over-the-top track and the Supersonicos providing the two most memorable tracks, both of which are surfy instrumentals. —Jimmy Alvarado (Butterfly)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:
Strength Thru Oil: CD

One of the most controversial compilations in punk history is reissued for a newer generation of hooligans and hell-raisers. Twenty years on, it's hard to remember why this was such a big deal. Charges of racism were leveled at those responsible and its release was met with a big hoopla in England, but anyone with half a brain could see that the contents within have nothing to do with racial hatred and everything to do with class divisions. Still, despite all the negative feedback it received, it's hard to deny the quality of the tracks, which are still surprisingly good today. Featured here are mostly exclusive tracks from poets Garry Johnson and Barney Rubble, Infa-Riot, 4-Skins, Last Resort, The Strike, Cocksparrer, Toy Dolls, Criminal Class, and the irrepressible Splodge. Some mandatory listening here from a volatile era in British music history. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:
Swami Sound System

Vol. 1: 2003 Sales Report: CD
It's known in these parts that Swami's got the impeccable and far-ranging taste, and you can get in on it. The treats range from the rockin' party soul of the Sultans and Beehive & the Barracudas, to the hyper garage antics of the Husbands and Dan Sartain, to the ACTUAL 1977 punk of the Testors and Testor Sonny Vincent's recent punk slop, and beyond. Highlights are an unreleased Rocket from the Crypt ditty, the circa-'84-old-school punk of San Diego youngsters Mannequin Piss,

weird minimal lounge goofs the White Apes, and, holy of holies, Loincloth, ex-Breadwinner and current Confessor members waving the banner of pure and true metal with no fruity singing nor showoff solos — it's like freebase metal! Truly something for everyone. —Cuss Baxter (Swami)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: The
Creatures Wanna Dance: LP

I love the Ramones. The Cramps too. And so does damn near every one of the nine German, French, Danish and Austrian bands that make up this nifty comp. None of them are out-and-out ripoffs, but the singer for the Brain Eaters (to use just one example) has a serious Lux Jones, complete with hiccupping vocals. Same with the Reeturners, who are none too subtle with their oozing guitars and horror movie lyrics about eating corpses. The Hi-Tops on the other hand, employ the all too familiar "I-don't-wanna-(fill in the blank)-with-you" lyrics sung with a cheery, happy-go-lucky disposition. Others, like the all-girl trio the Elektras, are reminiscent of L7. The Grizzly Adams Band sound like they've listened to their Germs and early Social Distortion albums one too many times. "Baby Or Not" starts off with the guitar riff from "Lexicon Devil" with vocals supplied by a guy whose voice is a dead ringer for a young Mike Ness. The production values are appropriately trashy (and occasionally tinny) and it often feels like the musty, filthy days of early '80s punk all over again. If you're not put off by the obviously derivative nature of these bands, then this album is really quite good. —Eric Rife (Swindlebra)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: The
Shape of Flakes to Come!: CD

A cheapo label sampler from one of the coolest, most consistent labels around. It's got songs from Hot Water Music, Bitchin', Grabass Charlesons, fucking Combat Wounded Veteran and other bands that you like. It's only a buck and it's got an unreleased Panthro UK United 13, and if that doesn't appeal to you, I hear there's a new Faint remix album coming out, you jerk. —Not Josh (No Idea)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:
This is Bad Taste Vol. 5: CD

This label has sure changed though the years. They were more a hardcore/melodic punk label in the past. I guess their taste is changing or they are trying to widen the audience of their label. Well, here's the breakdown of what is on this comp. Danko Jones: Dirty rock-'n-roll with a '70s Detroit vibe. Four Square: Indie college rock in the vein of R.E.M. Logh: More college radio stuff that was kind of folk and emo. All Systems Go: Good, straight-up melodic punk that is every bit as good or better than All. Last Days of April: Songs that are too long, too slow and feel too much like I'm listening to the Verve. Satanic Surfers: The only band on this comp that sounds punk and has any hints of what I remember this label sounded like. Langhorns: Cool surf music. Hardons: They still sound the same to me after all these years. Overall, I was disappointed in the direction this label went. —Donofthead (Bad Taste)

VERY APE: Kosher Boogie: CD

First off, I'm giving this a very sympathetic review. One of the guys in this band looks like the bastard offspring of

Barbara Streisand and Green Arrow. That guy's life probably sucks enough without some smartass like me making fun of his band. This is like a less good version of the Humpers, with vocals that sometimes sound kinda like Rob Halford. Sorry, dude. —Not Josh (Alive)

VIBROLAS:
Vista Bruiser: CDEP

Punk rock'n'roll, heavy on the rock, with a healthy dose of stoner rock thrown in for good measure. Included is a song called "Bitchin' Camaro" that, sadly, wasn't a cover of the Dead Milkmen classic. —Jimmy Alvarado (Vibrolas)

VINNY JACK AND
THE JABS: Self-titled: CDEP

When I got the Blacklist Brigade CDs from No Front Teeth, I couldn't imagine British street punk sounding any more raw. Then, some of the guys from Blacklist Brigade started Vinny Jack and the Jabs, and they got more raw. These songs sound like they were recorded on someone's boom box as the guys were getting drunk, but before they could go out and get in a fight. It's tough and fucked up and sounds damn good through the fuzz. I'd recommend picking up anything by Blacklist Brigade first. Once you've been indoctrinated into the No Front Teeth school of street punk, though, Vinny Jack and the Jabs will be your next logical step. —Sean (No Front Teeth)

VIRUS NINE:
Blastin' Away!: CD

Punk Rock Listenin' Lesson #1,247: If a band has a song called "Stay Proud! Stay True! Stay Punk!" or any derivation thereof, the odds are that any song they are responsible for is gonna suck some serious turtle testicles. Like your average Casualties record, I'd dismiss this piece of shit as a joke, but I have no urge to laugh. —Jimmy Alvarado (A-F)

VON BONDIES:
Raw and Rare: CD

A live set, some BBC sessions (I believe) and a couple of other live tunes from a band that apparently wields a certain amount of respect in some circles, and it's apparent here why: there's some flat-out rockin' trash rock here. With the exception of the last two tracks, the sound quality is great, the performance is inspired across the board and the songs themselves are great. Some mighty impressive work is in evidence here, and one hell of a listen, to boot. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dim Mak)

VON ZIPPERS, THE:
The Crime Is Now!: CD

Lo-fi garage sounds from Estrus? Who'da thunk? I'd heard of the Von Zippers before, but never actually listened to these boys from the great white north. Political themes but pulled off in a pretty rockin' manner, which started me thinking: has there ever been a political garage band? I thought about it on and off for a few days, couldn't come up with anything, and then asked Todd if he knew of any. We sat around the office for a while, but neither of us could come up with any. Not my favorite Estrus release lately, but I'll definitively hold on to it and let it grow on me more. I'm pretty sure it will. —Megan (Estrus)

WE TALKED ABOUT
MURDER: Expecting

the Explosion: CD
Seems like most bands with sentences

for names are pretty cool. Most of 'em. —Cuss Baxter (Has Anyone Ever Told You?)

WEAKERTHANS, THE:
Reconstruction Site: CD

People keep asking me if I like the Weakerthans. Now I have an answer — a definitive no. Mellow whine-rock. Oh yeah, and if you mention Foucault, you're an asshole. —Megan (Epitaph)

WHAT THE KIDS WANT:
Inside Jokes Explained 7"

What the fuck DO kids want these days? Records with whiny girl vocals and goofy bass lines? How the hell would I know? I'm probably old enough to be the singer's father. Gotta give 'em credit though. "Fast and Reckless" is a cute song about delivering pizza, which I do know something about. The band has that naïve-but-full-of-beans attitude which is alternately endearing and nerve wracking. Their lefty sentiments are encouraging but a little more rage and a little less pep would go a long way. —Eric Rife (Talking Dog)

WHY NOT:
Caution Wet Floor: CD

It sounds like demo recordings by a South Florida band steeped in mid-'80s hardcore. While there really ain't much new or inspiring goin' on, a healthy dose of humor keeps the proceedings fun at the very least. —Jimmy Alvarado (SoFla)

WING:
Sings the Carpenters: CD

My brother-in-law sent an attachment to my wife via email and I heard her cracking up from another room. I walked in to see what all the commotion was about. On the screen, I saw a Chinese woman's picture and the music coming out of the speakers was a heavily accented, out of key, woman sounding serious singing Carpenters covers. I started laughing so hard I started to have aches. This shit is brilliant! This is a CD I would expect to see in an Asian market near the cash register. The songs are so bad, they start sounding good. You have to have a mental picture of this. Picture a Chinese woman in '50s singing in front of an all-white Nashville band playing Carpenters songs. Now picture those songs and think how they would sound over "Top of the World" or "We've Only Just Begun." It's funnier than your vision. This is the best CD to put on as the last music your guests would hear at a party at your home. Nothing could sour their moment like this woman's desecration of bad '70s music. —Donofthead (Wing)

YOU AND I: Discography: CD

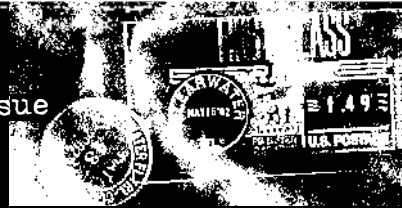
It's like trying to listen to a Morbid Angel record while babysitting a bunch of four-year-olds — everybody's screaming and crying at once and the needle keeps getting knocked off the record, at which time you can clearly hear the Bruce Hornsby playing next door. Something like that. Anyway, the metal parts are good, but the rest is just too much to put up with. It actually says, "I carved 'hope' in my wrist." I waved 'bye-bye' with mine. —Cuss Baxter (Alone)

Check out 45 more new record reviews at www.razorcake.com



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 St. #206, Seattle, WA 98121
- **3 Mileage**, 981 Broadway, 4th Floor, Suite 3, NY, NY 10013
- **31G**, PO Box 178262, San Diego, CA 92177
- **A-F**, PO Box 71266, Pittsburgh, PA 15213
- **Alien Snatch**, Morkiweg 1, 74199 Untergruppenbach, Germany
- **Alive**, PO Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510
- **Alone**, PO Box 3019, Oswego, NY 13126
- **Alternative Tentacles**, PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141-9092
- **Arms Reach**, 1220 W. Hood Ave #1, Chicago, IL 60660
- **Artrocker**, 3A Highbury Crescent, London, N5 1RN, England
- **Asian Man**, PO Box 35585, Monte Sereno, CA 95030
- **Attention Deficit Disorder**, PO Box 8240, Tampa, FL 33674
- **Bad Attitude!**; <www.bad-attitude-records.com>
- **Bad Reputation**, PO Box 67516, Dragon City Postal Outlet, 280 Spadina Ave., Toronto, ON, M5T 3A5, Canada
- **Bad Taste**, Box 1243, 221 05 Lund, Sweden
- **Bert Dax Cavalcade of Stars**, PO Box 39012, St. Louis, MO 63139
- **Better Looking**, 11041 Santa Monica Blvd., #302, LA, CA 90025
- **Bifocal Media**, PO Box 50106, Raleigh, NC 27650
- **Blackout**, 931 Madison Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030
- **Blazing Guns**, PO Box 40236, Downey, CA 90239
- **Blue Skies Turn Black**, 214 Thornhill, DDO(Qc), H9G 1P7 Canada
- **Bockhorn**, PO Box 10238, Beverly Hills, CA 90213
- **Bomp**, PO Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510
- **Boss Tuneage**, PO Box 74, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2WB, UK
- **Broken Rekids**, PO Box 460402, SF, CA 94146
- **Butt**, 9102 Edwards Dr., Olive, MO 63132
- **Butterfly**, PO Box 31225, 08080 Bareclona, Spain
- **BYO**, PO Box 67609, LA, CA 90067
- **Captain Oi**, PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP10 8QA
- **Casual**, c/o Franco Griesi, Via Falcone 13, 20010 Bareggio, Italy
- **Cheapskate**, no address given
- **Cold Crush**, PO Box 348, Hollywood, CA 90078
- **Cool Beans**, 3181 Mission #133, SF, CA 94110
- **Crackle**, PO Box 7, Otley LS21 1YB, UK
- **Da'Core**, 4407 Bowes Ave., West Mifflin, PA 15122
- **Dark Front**, PO Box 291, St. Charles, MO 63302-0291
- **Dead Beat**, PO Box 283, LA, CA 90078
- **Dead Teenager**, PO Box 470153, SF, CA 94147
- **Deathwish**; <www.deathwishinc.com>
- **Demirep**, PO Box 85364, Seattle, WA 98145
- **Diamond Star**, PO Box 592, Royal Oak, MI 48068
- **Die Slaughter Haus**, PO Box 16068, Atlanta, GA 30316
- **Dim Mak**, PO Box 348, Hollywood, CA 90078
- **Dionysus**, PO Box 1975, Burbank, CA 91507
- **Dirtnap**, PO Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111
- **Dirty Faces**, Universitätsstr 16, 44789 Bochum, Germany
- **Dischord**, 3819 Beecher St., Washington, DC 20007-1802
- **Doghouse**, PO Box 8946, Toledo, OH 43623
- **Dr. Strange**, PO Box 1058, Alta Loma, CA 90701
- **Electric Human Project**, 500 South Union St., Wilmington, DE 19805
- **Elevator Music**, PO Box 628, Bronxville, NY 10708
- **Empty**, PO Box 12034, Seattle, WA 98102
- **Epitaph**, 2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026
- **Estrus**, PO Box 2125, Bellingham, WA 98225
- **Even Worse**, c/o Saenredamstr.44-2, 1072ch Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- **Fastmusic**, PO Box 206512, New Haven, CT 06520
- **Fat**, PO Box 193690, SF, CA 94119-3690
- **Fearless**, 13772 Goldenwest St #545, Westminster, CA 92683
- **File 13**, PO Box 804868, Chicago, IL 60680
- **Finger**, 9231 W. Central Ave, Unit D, Santa Ana, CA 92704
- **G7 Welcoming Committee**, PO Box 27006, 360 Main Street Concourse, Winnipeg, MB, R3C 4T3, Canada
- **Gearhead**, PO Box 421219, SF, CA 94142
- **Get Hip**, PO Box 666, Canonsburg, PA 15317
- **Geykido Comet**, PO Box 3806, Fullerton, CA 92834
- **Ghostmeat**, 707 Forest Heights Dr., Athens, GA 30606
- **Giant Haystacks**, PO Box 22971, Oakland, CA 94609
- **Glare**, PO Box 82728, Portland, OR 97282-0728
- **Gloom**, PO Box 14253, Albany, NY 12212
- **GSL**, PO Box 65091, LA, CA 90065
- **Half-Day**, PO Box 3381, Bloomington, IN 47401
- **The Happening**, 2-12-18-104 Akatsutsumi, Setagayaku, Tokyo, 156-0044, Japan
- **Has Anyone Ever Told You?**, PO Box 161702, Austin, TX 78716
- **Hater of God**, PO Box 666, Troy, NY 12181
- **Havoc**, PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408
- **Heatslick**; <www.heatslick.com>
- **Hex**, 201 Maple Ln, N. Syracuse, NY 13212
- **Honest Don's**, PO Box 192027, SF, CA 94119-2027
- **Hungry Eye**; <www.hungryeyerecords.com>
- **Hydra Head**, PO Box 990248, Boston, MA 02199
- **Idol**, PO Box 720043, Dallas, TX 75372
- **Init**, PO Box 3432, Mankato, MN 56002
- **Initial**, PO Box 17131, Louisville, KY 40217
- **Johnny Cat**, PO Box 82428, Portland, OR 97282
- **Know**, PO Box 90579, Long Beach, CA 90809
- **KOB**, Via Cantarane 63 C, 37129 Verona, Italy
- **Kool Arrow**, 740A-14th St, #415, SF, CA 94114
- **Learning Curve**, 2200 4th St. NE, Minneapolis, MN 55418
- **Level Plane**, PO Box 4329, Philadelphia, PA 19118
- **Little Pusher**; <www.shockersite.com>
- **Loud and Clear**, PO Box 8216, Goleta, CA 93118
- **Lovitt**, PO Box 248, Arlington, VA 22210
- **Mad Butcher**, Kurze Geimarstr.6, D-37073 Göttingen
- **Magic Spot Productions**, PO Box 146, River Grove, IL 60171
- **Martyr**, PO Box 955, Harriman, NY 10926-0955
- **Militia Group**; <www.themilitagroup.com>
- **Mint**, PO Box 3613, Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6B 3Y6
- **Misfits**, PO Box 2043, Radio City Station, NY, NY 10101-2043
- **Modern Radio**, PO Box 8886, Minneapolis, MN 55408
- **Moon Ska Europe**, PO Box 184, Ashford, Kent, TN24 0ZS, UK
- **Mortville**, PO Box 4263, Austin, TX 78765
- **Newest Industry**, Unit 100, 61 Wellfield Rd., Cardiff, CF24 3DG, UK
- **Nice and Neat**, PO Box 14177, Minneapolis, MN 55414
- **Nice Guy**, PO Box 42815, Cincinnati, OH 45242-0815
- **Nitro**, 7071 Warner Ave., Ste. F736, Huntington Beach, CA 92647
- **No Front Teeth**; <www.nofrontteeth.co.uk>
- **No Idea**, PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL, 32604
- **Noma Beach**, PO Box 735, Sonoma, CA 95476
- **Nomadic Sound System**, PO Box 291578, LA, CA 90029
- **Novokkane Noise**, 1055 Sanborn Ave., #105, LA, CA 90029
- **Odd Halo**, PO Box 5359, Gloucester, MA 01930
- **Oi! Strike**, Paolo Petralia, via Oderisi da Gubbio 67/69, 00146 Roma, Italy
- **Omnibus**, PO Box 16-2372, Sacramento, CA 95816
- **Peet**; <www.peetrecords.com>
- **Pelado**, 521 West Wilson - C103, Costa Mesa, CA 92627
- **Poisoned Candy**, PO Box 9263, Missoula, MT 59807
- **Pop Riot**, PO Box 14985, Minneapolis, MN 55414
- **Porterhouse**, PO Box 3597, Hollywood, CA 90078
- **Punkhead**, 3716 South Normal, Chicago, IL 60609
- **Putrid Flowers**, c/o Ed Smith, 220-04 75th Ave., Bayside, NY 11364
- **Rapid Pulse**, PO Box 5075, Milford, CT 06460
- **Relapse**, PO Box 2060, Upper Darby, PA 19082
- **Reptilian**, 403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231
- **Revelation**, PO Box 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615-5232
- **Revenge**, 5835 Harold Way, #203, LA, CA 90028
- **Robotic Empire**, PO Box 4211, Richmond, VA 23220
- **Rockroll Purgatory**, 342 S. Walnut St., Wooster, OH 44691
- **Rockstar**, Verbindungsstrasse 9, 52080 Aachen, Germany
- **Scene Police**, Humboldtstrasse 15, 53115 Bonn, Germany
- **Side One Dummy**, PO Box 2350, LA, CA 90078
- **Silverthree Sound Recordings**, PO Box 3621, Fairfax, VA 22038
- **Smartguy**, 3288 21st St., SF, CA 94110
- **SoFla**, 6450 SW 32 St., Miami, FL 33155
- **Southern**, PO Box 59, London N22 1AR, England
- **Spitfire**; <www.spitfirerecords.com>
- **Split Seven**, 12405 Venice Blvd. #265, LA, CA 90066
- **S-S**, 1114 21st St., Sacramento, CA 95814
- **State of Grace**, PO Box 8345, Berkeley, CA 94707
- **Steel Cage**, PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125
- **Suburban Justice**, PO Box 56055, Portland, OR 97238
- **Super Secret**, PO Box 1585, Austin, TX 78767
- **Swami**, PO Box 620428, San Diego, CA 92162
- **Swindlebra**, Postgasse 12, 89312 Günzburg, Germany
- **Thinker Thought**, 1002 Devonshire Rd., Washington, IL 61571
- **Thorp**, PO Box 6786, Toledo, OH 43612
- **Thrown Brick**, PO Box 4831, Louisville, KY 40204
- **Tiberius**, 4280 Catalpa Dr., Independence, KY 41051
- **TKO**, 3126 W. Cary St #303, Richmond, VA 23221
- **Touch and Go**, PO Box 25520, Chicago, IL 60625
- **Union Label Group**, 78 Rachel E. Montreal, QC, H2W 1C6, Canada
- **Unstoppable**, Box 440422, Somerville, MA 02144
- **Vibrolas**, PO Box 73, Waynesburg, KY 40489
- **Voodoo Rhythm**, Jurastrasse 15, 3013 Bern, Switzerland
- **White Drugs**, 7095 Hollywood Blvd., #651, LA, CA 90028
- **Wide Stance**, 1233 Redtail Hawk #4, Youngstown, OH 44512
- **Wing**, PO Box 9278, Newmarket, Auckland, New Zealand
- **Wrecked 'Em**, PO Box 240701, Memphis, TN 38124



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 RITE-HANDED PRODUCTS, #2, 5½ x 8½, copied, 30 pgs.

Do people seriously not run off one copy and make sure that all the words fit on their zine? I can excuse it if it happens a few times. I've had to hand write things onto flyers after I fucked up at the copy shop, too. When it keeps happening in this zine, and it'll be a full line of text almost every page, I just get annoyed. Luckily, I didn't really have much desire to keep reading this so I just stopped. The best is this picture of a shirtless dude with two Screeching Weasel tattoos. They're both the Weasel head, exact same size, looking in the same direction. One is over his heart, the other on his left forearm. Fucking genius. The worst part is that I don't think in its context it's supposed to be funny. —Megan (Jesska, 8218 S. 77 E. Ave #2080, Tulsa, OK 74133)

ADBUSTERS, Vol. 11 No. 4, \$7.95 offset, full color cover, full color insides, lots of pgs. Don't let the cover price deter you. It's worth every penny. Ever since high school, the last time I'd read *Time* or *Newsweek* outside of a waiting room, I'd always wondered what a larger-scale, politically savvy, non-advertising riddled magazine would read like, and now I know. Graphically arresting and laid out in a very startling way, it doesn't rely on big, punchy pull quotes, but invites the reader to —surprisingly— read. It's a collage of email missives, diatribes (Hunter S. Thompson's three paragraphs starting off with "We have become a Nazi monster in the eyes of the whole world — a nation of bullies and bastards who would rather kill than live peacefully" is awesome in and of itself), and essays. I was also hugely pleased at the broad range of topics covered, from excerpts on Islamic banking practices, political activism of making corporations have fewer rights than human beings, to a nice range of satire and fiction. It effortlessly oscillates from scholarly to gutsy, to extremely political to almost whimsical, while keeping its goal firmly in place: "We want to change the way we interact with the mass media and the way in which meaning is produced in our society." No small task, and one that is achieved in its pages. —Todd (Adbusters, 1243 West 7th Ave., Vancouver, British Columbia, V6H 1B7, Canada)

BIG TAKEOVER, #52, \$4.95, 8½ x 11, glossy cover, 312 pgs. Truth be known, I read *Big Takeover*, not because it's a bad magazine, but rather because, like a

good book, it takes commitment to read it from cover to cover, which is exactly what I end up doing with every issue I find myself picking up. Jack Rabid's enthusiasm for the bands he likes is infectious and he's so adept at conveying that enthusiasm that you find yourself reading these long-ass interviews with bands you'd never dream of giving the time of day under normal circumstances. Ditto for his reviews, which often leave you wanting to go out and buy the latest release by a Britpop band you usually abhor. Ah, but isn't the intent of a "fanzine" to trumpet to the world that you have found absolute truth in a certain band's disc, even if the rest of the world disagrees? That said, included in this issue are interviews with Eric Idle, Johnny Marr of the Smiths, Pat and Alice from the Bags, Jazz/No Wave legend James Chance, The Adverts, Supergrass, Idlewild and others, as well as smaller pieces on the Feederz, Evan Dando, Billy Childish, (Smog), Reining Sound, plus tons of record reviews. It took me three weeks, but I made it all the way through and, like a good book, I don't consider a single minute wasted. —Jimmy Alvarado (Big Takeover, 249 Eldridge St., No. 14, NY, NY 10002-1345)

CUDGEL, #1, \$2, 5½ x 8½, copied, 41 pgs. *Cudgel* has a great attitude about music. They're open enough to be diverse and human about how music affects them while the coverage is focused enough to exhibit good taste. The premiere issue runs the gambit of how listening to Leadbelly almost lead a staunch lover of punk to give up loud fast rules, but comes to the conclusion that the world was better — and big enough — to hold both. The interview with The Chargers Street Gang was far above par. When any interviewer has the gall to ask, "What's the best southern rock song to have on while taking a shit?" gains instant bonus points with me, the deal is sealed with the simple, yet powerful line summing up exposure to the Chargers' live set: "I felt like I'd had sex with rock'n'roll." The Chargers then win my heart by stating, "Mike Watt's never gotten gay and boring." Proper props are given all the way through all forty-one pages. The whole issue, which includes an interview with comic artist Peter Bagge, local Ann Arbor hard workers, record reviews, and much more, always feels like you're in the middle of an engaging conversation. Unpretentious, funny, and knowledgeable. Well worth the two bucks. —Todd (Dustin, 608 Catherine St., Ann Arbor, MI 48104)

DAGGER, #32, \$2, 8½ x 11½, newsprint, 80 pgs. If I lived in Portland, Oregon, I'd probably pick this up when I saw it. It is free, after all. My biggest pet peeve is that, like *The Big Takeover*, the reviews are organized by reviewer. I read review sections pretty thoroughly, looking for a band I've heard about and want to know more, or to see what people think about albums I really like or hate. By sectioning it by reviewer, I never make it all that far into it before just giving up. —Megan (c/o Tim Hinely, PO Box 820102, Portland, OR 97282)

DUNK AND PISS, #11, \$1, 5½ x 4, 62 pgs. I was pretty surprised when I found out that Alex from *Dunk and Piss* is only 17, like that Winger song. He's a great writer and knows how to write a well-paced, interesting story, whereas most of the people I knew in high school couldn't even write a well-paced, interesting sentence. *Dunk and Piss* is a bunch of little anecdotes about his mischievous adventures, and also about sucking at laser tag. All I can say is that he's got a great sense of humor and this is totally recommended, especially if you suck at laser tag and would like read about others like you. —Not Josh (Dunk and Piss, 11 Alger Dr., Rochester, NY 14624)

FILM GEEK, #9, \$1, 5½ x 8, 26 pgs. As a kid who grew up watching movies with the full knowledge that *House* was much better than *Legends of the Fall*, I have no choice but to say this is great. Seriously, how many times have you seen some slick new Hollywood movie only to walk away wishing you had stayed home and watched *Tron* instead? This fanzine sympathizes. Articles on New Jersey's movie history, robbery movies, and disaster movies, as well as reviews of obscure B-movies and cult classics. Get this already! —Not Josh (Film Geek, PO Box 501113, Tulsa, OK 74150-1113)

FRACTURE, #22, \$3 (ppd./ US), 8½ x 11, offset, full color cover, 114 pgs. *Fracture's* pretty damn impressive. It's large enough to remain in the toilet magazine bin for over two months, and it's filled with an impressive array of voices. This issue's focus is "DIY or Lie," and although it's a topic that's been covered and re-covered, I give a definite tip of the hat to Dan McKee, who looks at it from both sides, states his biases, and puts the whole ordeal in very realistic terms.

(Such as music is expensive to make, and just because music is on a major doesn't necessarily mean the music sucks [like Billie Holiday and the Beach Boys], but it does suck that they are on a major.) I also enjoyed the sheer number of voices getting into the fray – with many current players, from bookers to zinesters to musicians to label owners – allowing to have their say and stating the pluses and minuses. Definitely a nice addition to the cannon of sell-out discourse, one that – quite honestly – was kind of burnt out about reading before getting this issue. Good job. The interviews are thorough (Dave Smalley of Dag Nasty states that he “respected Metallica for going out on a limb” for suing their fans who used Napster). *Fracture's* leagues above the cut and paste publicist wet dream crud that other zines aspire to. Thumbs up. –Todd (Fracture, Unit 100, 61 Wellfield Rd., Cardiff, CF24 3DG, United Kingdom)

GO METRIC!, #17, \$2,
7 x 8½, copied, 46 pgs.

Ever think that there's someone out there who uses a lot of the same brainwaves? I do. I think Mike Faloon is helming what could easily be a hand-in-hand companion to *Razorcake*. *Go Metric!* is infused with an undeniable love of punk music (mostly of the poppy variety), a great understanding of what makes music tick, a healthy sense of humor, and a fun rogues gallery of contributors. The music reviews are some of the best I've ever read. He gets to the meat, explains the heart and intent, and pulls no punches. The ultimate testament to *Go Metric!* is that many new, happy additions to my record collection reflect many of Mike's suggestions – mostly stuff I'd never heard of before. The *Baseball Furies'* new one is like a claw hammer to the snacks. It's great. In addition, there's a great column by Rev. Nørb about visiting Metropolis, IL, a list of French words to be deleted from American culture (“*raison d'être* – there will be reason to be”), and the reason for their removal, Josh Rutledge's call to arms for the Vapors first full length, an interview attempt with the Kill-A-Watts, an interview with a long-ago girl pop band, The Poptarts, plus more. You can't fake this type of enthusiasm, and it's so right on target, I couldn't help but read every page. –Todd (Go Metric!, 15 A South Bedford Rd., Pound Ridge, NY 10576)

GOD KWIT, #2, \$1,
5½ x 4, 30 pgs.

This zine is done in the same style as *Dunk and Piss*, only not as good. Chris isn't as good of a writer as

Alex, and his stories aren't as interesting, but this really ain't half-bad. Pick it up if you see it. –Not Josh (God Kwit, 953 Spencerport Rd., Rochester, NY 14606)

GRACKLE, #1, \$1 (or equivalent trade), 4 x 5½, copied, silk-screened cover, 27pgs.

Grackle is clearly written, positive, and unapologetic, three things I highly value. It's basically a story about moving to conservative Wichita Falls, TX, getting into biking, continuing veganism in a more hostile and barren environment, and looking up to one of the large questions in life: continue working labor-intensive jobs (she works as a house cleaner in TX), or go to college? The zine has a good grasp of gradual change. Its author is honest, hard working, and clear in thought, and that helps it be an engaging read. It's a simple coming to terms with a new town zine, but that doesn't diminish its power. If you're interested in a mainly quiet life gathering strength, this is the zine for you. I really enjoyed it. (It never hurts that I learned something. I didn't know that “Don't Mess with Texas” was penned as a campaign against litter.) Also, see the *Thoughtworm* review. They're interconnected. –Todd (Grackle, c/o Malinda, 1703 Southwest Pkwy., Wichita Falls, TX 76302)

GRIND THAT AXE,

5½ x 8½, copied, 14 pgs.

I respect the idea behind what they're trying to do: provide a forum where anyone can present their opinion to whoever picks up a copy. The problem is that in reality when you open up that type of forum you get lots of people with opinions who don't necessarily know how to phrase them, who can't write, or really aren't saying anything. In one instance, someone took the time to proof an article, using the paragraph symbol where the writer should have, and that is how it's left. In another, someone is describing her experience with Paxil and keeps contradicting herself. She states that her doctor, “decided that since I was bright enough to read ‘Palace Walk,’ I must not really be having memory problems, as much as I must be depressed.” She continues to list the reasons that she doesn't believe in the diagnosis, but goes on anti-depressants anyway. Once taking the pills, she says that she felt, “just alive and not dead, which was a good thing for I'd felt pretty suicidal before going on the anti-depressants.” Huh, how does any of that add up? Which is pretty much how I felt through the all fourteen pages. –Megan (830 - 17th Ave., Seattle, WA 98122)

HATEMACHINE #1, \$2,

5½ x 8½, copied, 38 pgs.

This is hard. I like Rocco a lot. He's so positive and earnest. When he visited LA, we went out and ate Mexican food together and he gave me a stack of zines. Rocco's a lifer – he's booked clubs, he runs a radio show, and he's a huge supporter. That said, *Hatemachine* suffers, not from enthusiasm and heart – he covers the Las Vegas Rockaround, Dead Bolt, his local music scene – but the fact that it's terribly hard to read. The grammar's bad, it needs to be proofed, and that makes it very hard to follow trains of thought along. Damn, that's hard to write. I hate to solicit on his behalf, but if you live in the Seattle area, are looking to lend a hand, want to help out a great guy, and have good editing chops, I suggest dropping Rocco a line. It'd be harder to find a guy with a bigger heart. –Todd (Rocco Galloway, PO Box 2743, Eugene, OR 97402)

HATEMACHINE, #3, \$2 (?),

5½ x 8, 28 pgs.

This is the “Women Who Kick Ass!” issue of a zine that focuses on balls-out rock and roll a la the Hellcopters or Nashville Pussy. It's got short interviews with Lili Z. of the No-Talents, Danielle Emerick, the Motorpsychos, Venus

6, and Broadzilla, among others. It kinda sucks, to be honest with you. –Not Josh (Rocco Galloway, PO Box 2743, Eugene, OR 97402)

HEY CABBY, \$4.95, 5½ x 8½, copied, glossy black and white cover, 40 pgs.

This is a series of stories transcribed by Arthur Ginzburg's son, ten years after Arthur's passing away. This oral history recounts many of the exciting, harrowing, and drudging days in his twenty-seven years as a cab driver who logged 1.1 million miles in New York City. The zine is put in sections – including robberies, weird calls, pimps and hookers – and the associated stories are bunched together, some being as short as a paragraph, others several pages. As I'd hoped, it was a great read, along the lines of what Studs Turkel does. Let the working folk talk, pay attention, and it's amazing what you'll learn – like December is the month with the most taxi hold ups and cabbies should never carry money in their left breast pocket. Arthur is a great, humanistic storyteller who is tough and hardened, even a bit of a wise cracker, but never macho or thuggy. During one hold up, he recounts, “a pistol bounced off the side of my head. Luckily, I have a hard head, so it **RAZORCAKE** 107

doesn't bother me much." What's also reassuring is that since Arthur is working class, driving through melting pots of different ethnicities, he has ideals that get gut checked in the real world. He realizes that although he'd been held up by black folks a lot, he never goes off on any sort of racial rant, having the good sense to separate good people from bad. But it's not all heavy. There's great stories about declining a blowjob from ten and twelve-year-old hooker sisters and kicking out Jerry Lewis for giving him a bad time. Besides, how many people do you know who've ridden with both Jonas Salk (who discovered the polio vaccine) and Muhammad Ali and almost fist fought with Paul Newman? Good stuff. The cover's a little high, but it's worth it. —Todd (Evan Ginzburg, PO Box 640471, Oakland Gardens Station, Flushing, NY 11364)

MY SUMMER VACATION,

#1-3, 5½ x 8½,

a buck for each, copied, 40 pgs.

I like *Snake Pit*. I can't say that enough. That does not, however, mean that I like every daily comic that comes my way. Quite the opposite, actually. I think that the most exciting part of Matt (he spells it with a heart, not an 'M')'s day is the drawing of the comic, which doesn't make for the most interesting reading. Sometimes the art seems like it's going to get better, but then it'll just drop off again. At the end of each issue, he swears he's working on improving the quality. The problem is I don't know if he's talking about the photocopies, the art, or maybe getting a more interesting life to write about. Chances are I'll never pick up another to find out. —Megan (Matt Delight, 699 Arguello Apt #102, SF, CA 94118)

PEE ZINE, #18, 25 & 26, \$2.50

(plus shipping), 5½ x 8½, copied, full color cover, 40 pgs.

All three issues of *Pee* are fairly similar. They're laid out in the traditional punk zine format, with columns first, then interviews, then reviews. The interviews tend to be done through email, which isn't my favorite format, but they make up for that by asking good questions and covering a wide scope of music and independent Australian culture. Their columns are raw, but there's a diversity in columnists, and the mere fact that they're in Australia makes what they have to say foreign enough to make it interesting (like, when does an American punk rocker ever write about his vacation in Fiji.) I'm really becoming a fan of Satanic Ian, too (who, despite his name, is one of the most level-headed punk colum-

nists I've come across). The graphics are interesting and the reviews are solid. The funniest part of the review section is the album that Pete Pee's mom reviews in each issue. It makes it clear where Pete gets his sense of humor. All in all, it's a good source for Australian punk. Highly recommended. —Sean (www.peerecords.com)

PENCIL FIGHT, #1, \$5, 7 x 8½, green ink on glossy paper, heavy stock cover, 96 pgs.

Pencil Fight has me teetering. It's very arty, which, in itself isn't bad, but it's so arty and me so dumb and out of the "hip ads loop," I sometimes had a hard time differentiating the content from the ads. I do admire their graphic design experimentation and pushing it, but sometimes, I think that they use words as graphics, and parts are almost impossible to read, which doesn't appeal to me so much. Me likey to read. On the plus, they're extremely playful with topics I'm familiar with (The Briefs interview is great. The designer even provides pictures of what the boys are talking about, and that's a cool detail.) They also deal with hip hop artists (an area in which I'm woefully deficient) and a range of stuff that I find mildly interesting, but their interest in it made me slightly more intrigued. (On an almost unrelated topic, for a book fair, since the price was so high for admission, I became Seonna Hong for a day and wore her name tag [I even got a book signed "To Seonna"] and she's in here, too. She paints cute little pictures with fairies and stuff.) All in all, it definitely has highs and lows. I'll flip through the next one to see how it develops. —Todd (Pencil Fight, PO Box 6645, Portland, OR 97228)

POOR AND FORGOTTEN,

#19 (?), \$1, 7 x 8½, 12 pgs.

This zine has a bunch of poems scattered throughout as well as a poorly written short story about asphyxiating while having sex in a car. I don't really like poetry anyway, but the story seemed to be an attempt at both erotica and black comedy (the title was "Your [sic] Oh So Breath Taking") while failing at both, coming across as a fourteen-year-old trying to get published in *Hustler*. Also included are reviews of two indie rock radio shows and a punk rock crossword puzzle that is pretty hard to read because the ink is faded. —Not Josh (Matthew Johnson, PO Box 59, Linwood, MA 01525)

ROCKBOTTOM, #18, \$2,

5½ x 8, 16 pgs.

This is a short zine focusing on rock and metal bands that seem to be

from the editor's native Pennsylvania. I don't listen to the kind of music that they cover, but they seem to really enjoy it so I'm not going to slag on them. Interestingly enough, Rockbottom is not only the name of the Rock's signature move, it is also the name of a discount carpet store in the South. —Not Josh (Marcy Miller, 12706 Pleasant Ridge Rd., Harrisonville, PA 17228-9406)

SKIN DEEP, #1, \$1,

5½ x 4, 30 pgs.

I really hope this is a joke. Skinheads writing poetry is just as bad as you'd think. Plenty of introspective lines like "Listen, bitch, there's no room for a party in these tite [sic] pants" and "Sometimes I think my braces are the only thing holding my pants up." Ugh. Fuck this. —Not Josh (Skin Deep, PO Box 13093, Minneapolis, MN 55414)

SLOUCH, #5, \$2.50, 7 x 8½,

copied, glossy color cover, 34 pgs.

Slouch is pretty darn good, but I wish it had an editorial. It's missing that little thread of continuity or focus to pull it all together with a tight little bow. I always like to hear what's going through the editors' minds when I crack open a zine. Even though it's easy to see they're intelligent and funny, I'm a sucker for knowing the motivation. *Slouch* begins with a very good collection of news snippets covering Bush's new fuckups, coverups, and runamoks. Following that is a good story, providing a checklist of what to do before you quit your job, an essay on how cops are training like armed forces, how fear is manufactured by the government, some Steven Seagal parodies, a primer essay on the importance of alternative media, a telling interview with a *San Francisco Chronicle* technology writer getting fired from his job for attending a protest, and an essay titled, "Does Your Bicycle Have a Penis or a Vagina?" All in all, they balance that tightrope between being serious enough to make their points stick while being humorous enough to not be a stick in the mud. Recommended. —Todd (Slouch, 733 Baker St., SF, CA 94115)

SLUG AND LETTUCE, #75,

60 cents, 11½ x 15, 20 pgs.

Slug and Lettuce is great. For those who've never encountered it before, it's a completely DIY newspaper-type zine that perfectly mixes personal writing with leftist politics and underground rock and roll. And it costs sixty freakin' cents. Lots of columns, tons of reviews. Nicely done. —Not Josh (Slug and Lettuce, PO Box 26632, Richmond, VA 23261-6632)

SNAKE PIT, Anthology #3,

8½ x 5½, \$3, copied, 98 pgs.

Ben Snakepit has found the perfect balance of dedication to his zine by writing every day down (complete with its own soundtrack), but also having a full life outside of it. I think that balance is just a reflection of the way he lives. Yeah, he might have done crazy things for three days in a row, but the next day all he does is eat burritos and watch movies. He also never feels the need to explain anything he does, which is the biggest distraction for me when reading any journal-ish zine. The beauty is that instead of using the space to fully reflect and analyze every incident from his life, he just lays it all out and lets each action stand for itself. Ben is such an amazing person, which just makes it all the more readable. He'll do things like bring his girlfriend tacos for lunch and always draws his friends in an admirable light. The degree of honesty is what gets me the most. He doesn't seem to hold anything back. The fact that he includes a quite personal letter from his mother is a statement to that. It is easy to understand how she would be impressed, proud, protective, and, at times, worried. She's got a wonderful son who makes a wonderful zine. Oh yeah, and it's wicked funny, too. —Megan (Snake Pit, PO Box 49447, Austin, TX 78765)

SUBURBAN VOICE #46, \$3,

8½ x 11, newsprint, glossy cover, way over a hundred pgs.

If I was ever in the power position to do so, I'd make a donut mold of Al Quint and have it replace the shape of the glazed raised. That way, every time you were delighted by a donut, you'd think, "Man, I like that Al Quint guy." He deserves that much, at least. It's the 20th Anniversary issue of *Suburban Voice* (over a year in the making) and it, as always, is a quality read. Al isn't a blind cheerleader — his live reviews reflect someone who constantly goes out and it's not all gloss when he's reviewing bands he's seen multiple times. Over the last several issues, Al's been honing down and focusing mostly on hardcore, and in his hands — scene positive, not scene cliquish — you get a true sense of what bands are thinking, who's active, and the entire vibe of the Boston DIY community. The interviews are an accomplishment in and of themselves. He does a great job of asking politically motivated bands exact questions, isn't afraid to state his own balanced opinion, and engages in real dialogues. Just when you think it's getting too heavy, he pulls out little facts about the band that only a true fan could know (like break dancing

past), and that's a true sign of great interviewing. In this issue: Amdi Petersens Arme, Balance Of Terror, Cut The Shit, Holding On, The Pist, Rambo, Martin of Limp Wrist and Crudos, and Vitamin X. If even a little bit of you enjoys hardcore, the zine is worth the price for the honest-take reviews alone. I hold a big slice of pizza and a donut aloft to Al. Fantastic stuff. He hits another one out of the park. -Todd (Suburban Voice, PO Box 2746, Lynn, MA 01903-2746)

THANKS FOR NOTHING, #4, & BOW WOW WOW, #5, a stamp each, 8½ x 11, 1 pg. each I'm speechless. This guy puts out a one page zine with not a whole lot of content and it fucking rules. He changes the name of his zine every issue (it's also been called Death of a Toaster, apparently) but it's not to confuse people (even if it did confuse me), it's just because this magazine isn't likely to become famous or anything so he didn't think that there was a reason to keep the same name every time. The enthusiasm of this guy is just fucking contagious, I swear, and he's pretty funny, too. The fourth issue presents you with the enigma that is Record and Tape Traders, which sells neither records nor tapes. The fifth issue has some haiku, which is usually pretentious but in this case

it isn't (evidence: the appearance of the phrase "SIKE!"). Worth a stamp and so much more. -Not Josh (Ben Trogdon, 191 Glen Oban Dr., Arnold, MD 21012)

THOUGHTWORM #10, \$2, 5½ x 8½, copied, silkscreened cover, 24 pgs. Much like *Grackle*, which is the companion piece to this zine, its author, Sean, is very kind and gentle, sedate and calm. The scenario is that he got a job as a librarian in a smaller, tree-deprived town and the move has been a series of small shocks. Instead of being reactionary or being defeated by relocating to a highly conservative part of Texas, Sean looks both deep inside of himself and also at what is unique - and great - about Texas. His first epiphany is the sky. "It's so big; so damn big." What's also interesting is how *Thoughtworm* barely overlaps, yet complements *Grackle*, with neither one of their overpowering one another. It seems that very together egos are putting these zines together and that's always a treat. Also, it's curious to read two accounts of the same happenings with very little dialogue between the two participants. Beyond the new situation in which they're thrust, that they have a garden, and they like to bike, it's still a mystery what other bonds keep

them together. I like that type of intrigue. Recommended reading. -Todd (Thoughtworm c/o Sean Stewart, 1703 Southwest Pkwy., Wichita Falls, TX 76302)

TWENTY-EIGHT PAGES LOVINGLY BOUND WITH TWINE, #6, \$2, 5½ x 8½, copied, linoleum block print cover, 28 pgs. Twenty-eight pages of funny, talkative, and playful stories about cat poo, getting a hot water heater replaced, feeling supremely dirty, and a kid named Herbie. Christoph can effortlessly weave a tale that is so good-natured, it's hard not to smile along. The distinction comes in the details. The writing's tight and conversational. The zine's actually bound with butcher's string, and on the page that has a picture of the plumber's van, he's white-outed, by hand, the phone number on it, possibly out of respect to the plumber. When Christoph talks about his twenty-one month old child, it's with great love, affection, understanding, and humor. The only thing I don't quite understand is that when he gets breast fed, it's called "noose chair." Everything else is explained and told from a well-adjusted, friendly tone infused with aged wonder. Yep, this is a good one. -Todd (Christoph Meyer, PO Box 106, Danville, OH 43014)

ZISK, #6, 8½ x 7, \$1, copied, 32 pgs. Holy cow! I was so excited when I saw this, but I thought it was joke, so I hid my enthusiasm. Then I found out that it really is a zine about baseball. Not only that, but it's put out by some of the same people as *Go Metric!*, one of my most favorite zines. It is so nice to have people writing about baseball in a passionate and knowledgeable way without pussyfooting around anything. They'll be brutally honest about their biases and loves of different teams. It reads like an afternoon from years back with my grandpa and uncles going back and forth, getting quite heated at times. The strangest thing was that no matter how much their arguments made them seem like they would never see eye-to-eye, we all knew that they were all arguing for the Mets, but just different aspects of the team. The same goes for *Zisk*. No matter what approach they're taking, you know it'll all come back to a love for something inside of Shea Stadium. Anyone who even occasionally catches the game at the park, on TV, or - my favorite, on the radio - should check this out. -Megan (They've recently moved. Email: <gogometric@yahoo.com> for address)





Sex & Guts #4

Edited by Gene Gregorits and Lydia Lunch, \$20, 280 pages

Despite an unimaginatively exploitative title and an unfortunate attempt to blur the line between magazine and book, *Sex & Guts* is, surprisingly, a good read. Helmed by Gene Gregorits and Lydia Lunch, Issue 4 features twenty-nine interviews with denizens from all corners of the underground, as well as fiction and articles from literary luminaries like Hubert Selby, Jr., Jerry Stahl, Bibbe Hansen, Nick Tosches and others. While the fiction pieces are interesting at worst, the real strength here lies in the interviews. Unlike those you might find in "real" magazines, many of the interviews, such as those with filmmakers John Waters, Larry Weasel and Laila Nabulsi, are presented with such a casual tone that it almost feels like you're eavesdropping on a private conversation at your favorite watering hole between two friends who happen to be discussing snuff films, Mexican death magazines, and the agony of getting *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* made into a film. All of the interviews featured in this issue are chock full of weird, interesting bits of trivia (who'd have figured Margaret Cho would even know who Jim Goad is, let alone consider herself a fan?), and often veer away from the interviewees' work in favor of finding out what excites them. Every time I put *Sex & Guts* down, I found myself picking it up again and getting sucked into conversations about what Chris D., Johnette Napolitano or Jim Foetus were doing these days. To be honest, the only gripes I have with *Sex & Guts* are with the cover price and the advertisements throughout. I can't see myself paying 20 bucks for a magazine, no matter how good, and I sure as hell don't like to see the latest Guided By Voices disc being hawked in my

books. —Jimmy Alvarado (Phony Lid Books, PO Box 29066, LA, CA 90029)

Things Are Meaningless

Al Burian, *perfect bound comic*, over 100 un-numbered pgs.

Here's my hypothesis: Since this is a perzine with pictures, I'll make the leap that Al Burian's is afraid of direct communication. This book is fraught with endless pontifications and crippling non-commitment. The visual aspects of this book are fine. It's well drawn with simple, sparse lines. The text of the book mirrors Al's own words; it's "bland tofu in the vegan entrée that is life." Blandness isn't an ingredient that makes a great — or even decent — book. He's so nostalgic and so non-confrontational, I just kept thinking, "Fuck, stop your complaining." With lines like, "We moped around aimlessly. It was awesome," as an essential core to this book, Al thinks too much without coming to a conclusion, acts too little, and makes (mostly negative) assessments of people he comes in contact with. Then he romanticizes many of the interactions in retrospect. Not very compelling reading.

He's decidedly half-assed through out the entire book. When he goes to New York, he complains that the "taxi cab is considered a standard mode of transport, for god's sake." I dunno, Al.

Blindly, I was able to fly into NYC, take a bus to a train, go over thirty miles, walk five blocks, see a great punk band, then get back on the train and the next day find a pool to skate, all without a car or a cab. No problem. There's no fucking way you can pull that in LA. The train doesn't even go to the airport. Al comes across as a grade-A wiener to me. I want to slap him around and kick him in the ass, and say, "Dude, all you have to do is ask to see if there's a bus instead of a shuttle to find out it's way cheaper." (Instead, he asks if the shuttle is ten times faster than the bus (it's ten dollars instead of one), then gets a black squiggly thunder cloud above his head and storms off.)

The problem is whittled down to this sharp point. In the movie, *Barton Fink*, Barton is this playwright who is supposed to capture the essence and soul of the everyday man, while exploring "the life of the mind." Charlie, who Barton thinks is a simple man, starts off many conversations with, "Oh, the stories I could tell," and Barton cuts him off. Barton never gets out of his small, closed universe to hear other's stories, thinking that the best stuff will pop right into his brain. Barton should just sit down and listen — to the postal worker, the waitress, whomever — but instead, as with Al, he faces these people with either disinterest or contempt. That's too bad. It's a rich world out there and unsuspecting people can provide you with startling insight. This book provides none of that. It's a closed, dead-end circuit.

If you get wet reading the *Ume Reader*, or think that *The Shipping News* was riveting, Al's right up your alley. For the rest of you, may I suggest a good book? Pick up *Revolt of the Cockroach People* by Oscar Zeta Acosta. It has nothing in common with this book and is well

worth looking for it. —Todd (Microcosm, PO Box 1443, Portland, OR 97293)

War Talk

Arundhati Roy, 112 pgs.

After the massive international success of her first novel, *The God of Small Things*, Indian author Arundhati Roy turned her talents to the writing of political essays. Over the past few years, she's published three collections of essays. *War Talk* is the most recent. In it, Roy takes on global politics from a sensitive, well-informed perspective. While it is a short book (112 pgs., plus about thirty pages of footnotes), *War Talk* showcases Roy's greatest talent as a writer: her ability to say very intelligent things in a simple way. On a less general level, *War Talk* collects six essays of Roy's. They focus mainly on the threat of nuclear war, the importance of dissent, and the effects that US imperialism has on the rest of the world. Roy lives in India, so she has a different perspective on world events than you're probably used to, and she also has the ability to write from the one country that was able to cast out an empire non-violently. This perspective makes it all the more powerful when she says things like, "Any government's condemnation of terrorism is only credible if it shows itself to be responsive to persistent, reasonable, closely argued, non-violent dissent." This raises the point that, if a country won't listen to it's non-violent protestors, it's saying that violence is the only recognizable form of dissent. This is an especially important notion to understand when you realize that the US government has granted two-thirds of the demands made by the terrorists who attacked the World Trade Center, yet non-violent war protesters have gotten nothing but pepper spray rubbed in their eyes and an occasional lump from a billy club. Think about that the next time you turn on Fox News and hear about the US government supposedly fighting *against* terror. Roy's essays do cover a lot of Indian politics, which I know little about, but she tends to focus more on the general ills of globalization and less on specific events. This makes *War Talk* valuable as a longstanding guide to how to view a hostile world with a faith in humanity rather than a focused argument about one issue. It's also interesting to read her take on the threat of nuclear war between India and Pakistan, because, in the US, anyway, the threat of a nuclear war doesn't seem nearly as present on people's minds as it was during the eighties, but with each foray into the Middle East, that threat is continuing to grow. This is especially powerful to read about in Roy's words, since she literally lives under the shadow of a nuclear attack every day. Beyond India, her essays also include a look at controlled media in democracies, not just the media monopoly in the US, but also in Italy and elsewhere around the world. She writes about "The Loneliness of Noam Chomsky," or the loneliness of speaking out against popular opinion. And her "Come September" essay gives a clear view into how the rest of the world reacted to how the US reacted to September 11, 2001. Throughout the book, Roy has a lucid eye for the ills that befall the global community, and she has a way of expressing her opinions without making you feel like the whole world has gone to shit. *War Talk* is definitely a worthwhile read. —Sean (South End, 7 Brookline Street #1, Cambridge, MA 02139-4146)



Little Runaway, VHS

Have you noticed how lately lots of folks have been yammering on about punk rock and porn? Like it's something "new," right? I mean, even though the original prison term "punk" is, uh, sexual in nature and pornography has worked its way just about everywhere since the dawn of civilization, folks are acting like it's a unique thing for the two to ever cross paths. Well, of course, LOTS of guys and gals connected to the punk scene have been involved with the "sex industry" over the years; ranging from Dee Dee Ramone hustling on the corner circa '75 to those S&M fetish *Punk Ladies of Wrestling* videos that Kembra Pfahler's been putting out. The list of participants can actually go on and on (Lisa B. Faloor's *Bikini Girl* zine from that late '70s! Wendy O Williams' adult loops! The Suicide Girls website! Someone you know who's gonna be doing some stripping tonight!), but okay, okay, I'll admit that it's sorta new to see a more "mainstream" XXX vid that's going out of its way to grab the punk rock nose ring while simultaneously appealing the usual porn hound consumer (which probably includes your Dad). Yeah sure, there have been a few others – in 1978 a hardcore movie called *Punk Rock* came out that was even less accurate than those episodes of *CHiPs* and *Quincy* from the early '80s (you can get it from Alpha Blue Archives if you're really interested) – but this *Little Runaway* one was done recently by a bunch of folks who probably have at least some of the same records you do. Well, maybe if you're over thirty that is.

So... anyone out there remember Kilroy? Early '80s LA punk band? Had a kind of British '77 cartoon punk look about 'em with all that goofy liberty spike stuff? C'mon! There was a letter once written to *Flipside* accusing them of following all the rules of McLaren's *Great Rock and Roll Swindle* to get as far as they had. Just a few of you, huh? Well I guess that makes sense. They were pretty popular on the west coast for a while there, but no one seems to be talking 'em up much these days (but hey, with all the punk nostalgia that's running rampant, that's sure to change eventually, right? Look for the complete discography on



CD soon!).

ANYWAY, this dude "Jim Powers" (Lane) used to be IN Kilroy and NOW he's a porn producer who's been tossing in some bits of this punk rock stuff into his films for a while now. "I once did a video called *D.P.* (double penetration) *Party Tonight* where all the music was by Guttermouth and it's the story of these punk rockers that invade this town and D.P. every woman in the neighborhood. They spray paint this house with Black Flag, Sex Pistols and all this stuff. NOFX did the theme song to the *Monkey Gang Bang*. I've used Piss-belly,

the Swingin' Utters, Jughead's Revenge... Fat Records gives us a lot of stuff to use," he tells xmag.com. No, really, that's what he said. Well anyway, from what I can gather, he and this guy Rob Rotten and a few other folks decided to remake Penelope "Beverly Hillbillies" Spheris's 1985 punk exploitation film *Suburbia* as a hardcore video called *Little Runaway* with all the usual stuff you'd expect in a modern mainstream porno. You know – lots of oral, anal and vaginal sex scenes that were shot on video in a couple of days with all the amateur lighting and cheesy acting you could want. The twist here is that they got D.I. and U.S. Bombs to play in a couple of scenes (with both live and synced sound) and stocked the soundtrack up with stuff from the Stitches, the Lower Class Brats and the Sick, and then dressed up a bunch of porn gals as the same kind of '77-UK-influenced / liberty-spike-looking-punks that you might've seen at a Kilroy show on a good night around 1983.

Like I said before, the plot loosely follows *Suburbia*'s – a kid (a girl this time; played by Rachel Rotten) runs away from her unacceptable home life (her father not only replaces her flyers with Barbie dolls, but has taken to screwing her step sister in the living room) and winds up at a punk show where someone drugs her drink. She passes out and gets rescued in the form of being taken to a punk rock crash pad house covered in graffiti and filled with losers. These losers fuck on camera a lot more than the ones from *Suburbia*, of course, but the acting is just about as convincing (and having had a bit part in a porn film myself, I can tell you that it *just doesn't matter anyway* since these scenes are gonna get

fast forwarded through by 90% of the viewers). Still following the plot? Okay, well, the property owner is gonna tear the place down, you see, and after he and his “meat head” pal break in and have a threeway with a junkie chick in the house (Ashly More; “you guys are lucky I’m just a whore”), the gal ODs and the punks take her body back to her parents.

Then there’s a funeral scene where they start a fight with her sexually abusive uncle and all of ‘em run off except for a pair who stick around to fuck in front of the dead girl’s coffin (“this one’s for you Courtney”). Okay, now that that’s taken care of, we’re back at the house where a (fatter, older) DI are playing (lamer, newer) versions of “Richard Hung Himself” and “Johnny’s Got a Problem” as porn veteran Dave Hardman gets a blow job while wearing a Skrewdriver shirt (Alert! For what it’s worth to you, there’s also some Skrewdriver graffiti on the walls and a swastika flag tattoo on Mr. Rotten’s leg connected to something else [I couldn’t make out the whole thing]). I dunno the contextual meaning behind this stuff for the filmmakers, but it was enough to (at least publicly) sink the interest of some of my peers. You know, it’s a weird thing about porn – because you’re dealing with sex and sexual fantasies – you’re going to move into some areas that are taboo for a lot of people. The thing to remember, of course, is that stuff that gets people off can be the stuff they have no interest in exploring beyond the realm of sextime. Rough sex, power games, and race-oriented fetishes are nothing rare; but I don’t really think the folks behind this movie were trying to tap into any of that to be honest. I think they just dig them some Skrewdriver.)

And then... and then... well, and then the tape ended. Ended right in the middle of the scene. Yeah, it’s pretty common in the cheapjack world of porn – I used to work at a video store and we’d have problems like this all the time, but as a result I have no idea how this thing ends up. Well, okay I have *some* idea. My idea is that sperm is involved somehow. I mean, it’s a long shot, but I’m willing to go out on a pornographic limb here and say “sperm.” Oh, and I hear Casey from D.I. gets a blowjob, too.

Okay, so there’s *Little Runaway*. Now I ask you, who do you think is gonna rent or buy it? Huh? Well I’m not totally sure but I’m guessing it’ll mostly be guys who aren’t busy sitting around listening to the Kill-A-Watts in their spare time or anything, but simply equate punk rock

girls somehow with kinky or extreme sex. The ol’ nympho archetype who usually gets served up in smut seems a logical match to the general perception of punks, right? So that’s a bunch of the market. Then there’s the curious punk types who’re looking for something a little different from the usual stuff out there, but still raunchy enough to do the trick for ‘em (and with some familiar fashion decisions, to boot). You know I *will* say that the cast all look pretty much like the kind of punks they’re supposed to look like. They’ve got zits and stupid hair along with some dumb tattoos and a few beer bellies. There’s no one with those giant, creepy boobs that make it look like they’re smuggling athletic equipment around under their skin, and the sex ranges from enthusiastic and dirty to bored and uncomfortably awkward (just like in real life!). It’s just funny that it took this long, really. I mean the cultural touchstones of this whole little scene have been codified for years, haven’t they? From Black Flag shirts and TSOL patches to colored mohawks and a bald character named El Duce, it’s all here; but the bottom line here is that it’s basically a porn flick. It’s gonna repulse a lot of folks and turn some others on, but that’s porn. By its very nature this stuff usually gets a reaction – sometimes a pretty *obvious* reaction – and stirs shit up for people (though that’s really a whole other article, isn’t it?). Anyway, I dunno if seeing girls with spiky hair get jizz all over their faces is something you’ve been waiting forever for, but if so, hey – here’s your chance! And if the market turns out to be there, you’ll probably get a few more chances down the road.

What’s that? You really dig sex but this kinda stuff doesn’t really “speak” to you? Well hey, the thing is that porn is a lot like punk rock. If you don’t like what’s out there (and you’re, you know, over 18), you can always make your own. Hey, if you’re comfortable with it and you’ve got the interest, you can bet that there’s an outlet for you. You might not get rich and you might feel kinda silly explaining it to your parents, but the human sexual appetite is so damn huge and varied that no matter what you do (alone or with some friends) there’s gonna be someone who wants to pay you to see it. Sure, you might not wanna run into them later and have them tell you about it, but they’re out there.

DIY, man! Be more than a witness! ...well, unless you just like to watch. –Jason Willis (Notorious Productions. Associated links: <<http://www.rachelrotten.com/>> <<http://www.mrfilth.com/>>

