

# RAVOCRAKE



**RIVETHEAD TYRADES TEXAS MAFIA**  
**GEORGE SELDES WASIL ADKINS**





**R**ight around the time we were wrapping up this issue, Todd and I went to West Hollywood to see the Swedish band Randy play. We stood around outside the club, waiting for the show to start. While we were doing this, two young women came up to us and asked if they could interview us for a project. They looked to be about high-school age, and I guess it was for a class project, so we said, "Sure, we'll do it."

I don't think they had any idea what *Razorcake* is, or that Todd and I are two of the founders of it.

They interviewed me first and asked me some basic questions: who's your favorite band? How many shows do you go to a month? That kind of thing. One of the young women finished it up by asking, "How important is music in your life?"

I knew what kind of answer she was looking for. Something succinct. Something that sums it up wisely in a sentence or two. If I'd had more time to think about it, I could've quoted Donofthedeath, who's told me a bunch of times, "When people stop being passionate about music, they lose their souls." Or I could've summed it up the way Jimmy Alvarado did in his *Descendents* review: "This is essential in ways only previously reserved for things like air and water." Of, if I were Todd, who just wrote and released the book *Born to Rock*, I could've said, "I just wrote a book on that." I could've given her the whole story, told her how I spend forty to fifty hours a week putting out this magazine, how it's a full-time job that I don't get paid for. I could've told her that I don't have a couch in my living room because the eight feet along the wall, where a couch would fit, is taken up by my CD racks. I could've told her about how I ride my bike past a record store every day on the way home from work, and it takes an incredible force of will for me to not go in. I could've talked for

hours on the subject and brought in visual aids: rare and impossible-to-find records that only I and four other people have or ancient punk zines that have moved with me through a dozen apartments. Instead, I just mumbled, "It's pretty important. I do a punk magazine with him." And I pointed my thumb at Todd.

About an hour and a half later, Randy took the stage. They launched into "Dirty Tricks," ripped right through it, and started "Addicts of Communication" without a pause for breath. It was unreal. They were so tight, so perfectly in time with each other that their songs sounded as immaculate as the recordings. On top of that, thought, they were going nuts. Jumping around, dancing like chickens, screaming, getting drunk. Blasting out one song and rocking into the next and never letting the energy lag – even when they were tuning. Even when they paused to drink beer, they made it seem like part of the show. I was blown away.

It was one of those rare shows where, after leaving, all I could say is, "Fuck, that was great." It was one of those shows where I felt like, if I could articulate this, if I could take these feelings and find the right words to describe them, if I could pass this on to a reader and let him feel it, then I could finally show how important music is in life. And why it's so important.

I still haven't found a way to articulate it perfectly and succinctly. I can't sum it up in a witty sentence. I could tell you in the meantime to pick up all the albums by a band that can give you that feeling, listen to them again and again. Focus on the angry parts on good days. Find the humor in the lyrics on bad days. Feed off the energy. Make it a part of you. Keep going to shows. Keep reading zines. It's all out there.

—Sean

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April 1st, 2004 (no joke)

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June 1st, 2004 (no joke)

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Sean <sean@razorcake.com>

Todd <retodd@razorcake.com>

*Razorcake* is distributed by Big Top Newstand Services,  
2729 Mission St., Ste.201, SF, CA 94110, info@bigtoppubs.com

Cover drawn with a goddamn ball point pen by Rob Ruelas: szamoras1@aol.com.  
Bands, labels, whomever, email him if you're interested in him doing work for you.

**Thank you list:** No boobies allowed thanks to Rob Ruelas for drawing the cover. Pick up your own Jamba Juice thanks to Julia Smut for her help with the cover. Bionic thanks to Dan Monick for his picture in Rich's column. Bringing friends to rip off rich people thanks to Jeff Fox for the George Seldes article and for the DVD review. Friends don't let friends go see the Dirtbombs thanks to Petite Paquet for the Tyrades interview. No ride to the Pixies show thanks to Gabe and Kat for the Texas Mafia interview. Movable plastic turtle thanks to BD Williams and Matt Comer for the Hasil Adkins interview. World's smallest beeramid thanks to Ben Snakepit for the J Church tour diary. Invasion of Club Med thanks to Chris Pepus for the Ann Coulter article. Blind midget thanks to Keith Rosson for his illustrations. I heard she was born with a dick thanks to Paddy Costello for his help with the Rivethead interview. BYO probably cheated thanks to the Blatant Stereotypes for kicking ass at the Punk Rock Bowling Tournament. Drowning emo cats thanks to Jimmy Alvarado, Speedway Randy, Aphid Peewit, Donofthedeath, Greg Barbera, Potsi, Puckett, and Toby Tober for all their reviews.



Mr. and Mrs. Frankie Norman Warsaw  
Stubbs and the King, Las Vegas, NV.

# RAZZORCAKE



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

**"She lost her mind but found some shorts."**

—From the song "Egg Bound" by Leatherface

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# WHO ARE YOU?

**Nardwuar:** Who are you?

**Fletcher:** I am Fletcher from Pennywise.

**Nardwuar:** Fletcher from Pennywise, welcome to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. We have a little gift here for you. [Nardwuar hands Fletcher an old Vancouver gig poster] And what do you see right here?

**Fletcher:** I see the Subhumans, which were one of my favorite bands of the day, "Slave to my 'Privates'." ("Slave to my Dick") Wow, this is some good stuff; this is an old, old punk rock flyer.

**Nardwuar:** From Vancouver, British Columbia Canada. [reading poster] "Oh Canaduh, what's wrong with you?"

**Fletcher:** Your borders, your customs agents...

**Nardwuar:** But our bands are just great, right? Like the Subhumans, 'cause you saw the Subhumans play with Black Flag years ago, right?

**Fletcher:** Right, in a kitchen in Carson. Henry Rollins' first performance... DOA, I mean, come on. Two of the best bands ever out of Canada, I would have to say.

**Nardwuar:** Fletcher of Pennywise, we're here at the Warped Tour. Can you please tell me the story? You and Kid Rock and Kid Rock's chain.

**Fletcher:** Oh, man. Yeah, what if he gets mad? He's got a bunch of Hell's Angels on his side now. Well, I came out on the Warped Tour to see some shows - we weren't playing on it. Kid Rock's manager was being extremely lame, apparently trying to get them better billing, get him onto the main stage and get him better positioning. Kevin Lyman and Darryl Eaton, two of the Warped Tour godfathers, got me really drunk and egged me on to go after Kid Rock and kind of teach him a lesson. And it kind of turned into, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" and he said he wanted to be a rock star with all the bitches and money like us. And I was thinking like, "Well, we don't have a lot of money and we definitely don't have the chicks hanging around our bus,"

but he got it eventually in the end. And I said, "We're gonna have to make a little sacrifice for your stardom" and I kind of ripped his chain off his neck and threw it in the swamp.

**Nardwuar:** Which is sacrilege to a rapper, right?

**Fletcher:** Uh, I don't know. I actually ripped mine off afterwards and said I'm gonna join you in the sacrifice, but he was pretty bent out of shape. The next day when I went on stage when they were playing. I think he was drinking a beer and I

with him. I said, "Have him meet me over here," so he brought nine guys and claimed that I came at him "gangster style." And I'm like, "Gangster style? I was by myself." So whatever. He wound up being pretty cool about the whole thing. I offered to buy him a new necklace 'cause the bummer was that his son bought it for him and it was a gift. I felt bad, so I bought him a new necklace. I think the one you see now is the one I paid for. But he actually wound up being a cool guy and, you know, he got really

two guys and eventually pummeling them. I was with one of The Warped Tour guys and I said, "Let's go." And he was, like, "Whoa dude!" So we ran in there. We didn't throw any blows, and we just said, "Hey, get off him!" They all got up pretty quick and ran back to their bus and got surrounded by police. They tried to make a quick getaway on their bus, but it didn't work out too well. The cops were on them in a heartbeat, and the guy got beat up pretty bad. I said, "That's not how we do it, y'know,

no rat-packin' and yellin' and stuff." This guy twice my size gets up and goes, "That's how we do it." And I was like, "Oh." It wasn't too bad. They were cool.

**Nardwuar:** Other Warped Tour experiences. Didn't you come against Eminem? Wasn't he on a Warped Tour then, Fletcher?

**Fletcher:** Yes, he was, but I didn't have any problems with Eminem.

**Nardwuar:** Just his posse.

**Fletcher:** I remember when we played here (University of British Columbia) in this very spot with Eminem, I believe, and we were on after him. And when he was singing "My Name Is, My Name Is What?" and the whole crowd just screamed "Pennywise," and we felt pretty bad 'cause we were waiting to go on and they were all waiting for us. That was back when he was a little bit smaller. Actually, I

didn't see that much of him. He always had a bodyguard and ran back to the bus and didn't hang out very much. You know, whatever.

**Nardwuar:** Fletcher, how has The Warped Tour changed? Like this year, you're one of the few independent bands, like you and Mad Caddies. There aren't many independent bands on The Warped Tour are there?

**Fletcher:** At the moment there aren't. I mean, I think it's not The Warped Tour that's changed. I think it's punk rock, or so-called punk rock in general. All these bands that are claiming to be into the scene



took it away from him and drank it, like right in the middle of a song, and did some stuff and got chased by about seven security guards and knocked over all the motorcycles... stuff like that, you know, the usual fare.

**Nardwuar:** What's the aftermath? Have you seen him since?

**Fletcher:** The next day when I came back to assess the damages, which were some broken bus windows, some damage to a semi, some motorcycles and a couple of other things, I had to apologize to him and say, "Hey, sorry about that." And so he brought nine guys

famous. I saw him a couple of years later and said, "I guess the joke's on me now" and he said, "I guess so." [laughs]

**Nardwuar:** It's funny, Fletcher, all these famous bands started on The Warped Tour. For instance Eminem and D12, and didn't you fight D12 as well, Fletcher of Pennywise?

**Fletcher:** No, no, no, there was this incident, you see... See how stuff gets misinterpreted? There was an incident where D12 was going after - I think it was Kool Keith - it was another rapper on that tour. I just happened to be walking around a bus and I saw fifteen guys chasing



and into punk rock are basically signing to major labels. Hey, that's their prerogative, and I'm not going to bag on them. They can do whatever they want. It's become so commercial and becoming so accepted by the masses; that's tainting the scene a little bit and then you get a bunch of bands on The Warped Tour. This is our first show, so I haven't really been out to see what the vibe is with all these bands that are on major labels.

**Nardwuar:** How many indie bands are on the tour, do you know?

**Fletcher:** I have no idea, but it's probably outweighed by major label bands, which is really weird on The Warped Tour, you know?

**Nardwuar:** Fletcher, you talk about punk getting popular. Check out this *Guitar Magazine* cover. [Nardwuar hands Fletcher the Magazine.] I love what it says. What does it say right there?

**Fletcher:** "How to Play Punk Rock: Good Charlotte, Pennywise, Dropkick Murphys." I haven't seen this.

**Nardwuar:** How do you play punk rock, Fletcher? How do you play punk rock?

**Fletcher:** Not like Good Charlotte. [laughs]

**Nardwuar:** Isn't that wild though? I just can't believe what it's come to: "How to play punk rock," and there's Good Charlotte!

**Fletcher:** That's pretty scary. I'm kind of at a loss for words seeing this. Like I said, everyone's into their own thing. I'm not going to bag on anyone for doing what they do. I play punk rock by getting...

**Nardwuar:** At least they ask you though. At least it does mention Pennywise.

**Fletcher:** Yeah, I haven't seen the article, so I don't know what I said in there, but I'm sure there are probably some people who are mad at me. I play punk rock. I have a couple beers before the show, maybe a couple White Russians, and go out there and have a good time and don't really care too much about how we look or how we act.

**Nardwuar:** Fletcher of Pennywise, I thought I'd give you this button right here. "Ask Me How to Play Punk Rock," since you are in *Guitar Magazine*.

**Fletcher:** Excellent. You know, I'm going to wear this with pride.

**Nardwuar:** Fletcher of

Pennywise, [singing] "Wake up, wake up, whoaaa!" The band Goldfinger has a song called "Wake Up" and I think Pennywise does too?

**Fletcher:** Yep, we have a song called "Wake Up." But ours is about the president of our record label being strung out on crack and heroin and me going to his house in the morning, knocking on his door to go to the rehab.

**Nardwuar:** And theirs is about the internet. Now Fletcher, can you blow the balloon on the band Goldfinger? Electric Love Hogs, they started as a metal band. There's all these metal bands that turned punk, right, Fletcher?

**Fletcher:** There's a lot of dirt under the rug about a lot of bands out there. Yeah, Electric Love Hogs, they were a metal band at one point. Sunset Strip, man.

**Nardwuar:** And they turned into Goldfinger. Is there anybody else out there you'd like to expose?

**Fletcher:** Uh...

**Nardwuar:** Like Face To Face, didn't they used to be a metal band?

**Fletcher:** Come on man, yeah, Face To Face. I've seen some disturbing pictures of...

**Nardwuar:** Victoria's Manor, they used to be called.

**Fletcher:** In their blue spandex pants and white boots and shit like that. It's pretty bad.

**Nardwuar:** Fletcher of Pennywise: Madrid. What's the story about you stealing a newspaper truck?

**Fletcher:** Wow, you've got a lot of information on your hands. Um, wow... you see, I'm not supposed to remember all that shit when I'm drunk. I think it was about seven in the morning. We were leaving the bar and we were pretty drunk and unable to walk, I think. We needed a ride and kind of commandeered a newspaper truck and kind of forced the guy off... I think we blocked him in the road. We dove in the back of his newspaper truck, and we were lying there in the papers – just three or four of us – and we just rode around for awhile until he got mad and he just drove us to our hotel. We said we weren't getting out until we got to our hotel, so he drove us to our hotel. I think I was

**Pissing in the lobby... yeah, that's right, I did pee in the lobby. I think I was snorting ham, too, down at the breakfast buffet in front of everyone.**

**Yeah, that was bad.**

NARDWUAR THE HUMAN SERVIETTE

Photo by Dan Monick

kicked out of there within two hours after that.

**Nardwuar:** Was that for pissing in the lobby, or was that for pissing before you went to the truck?

**Fletcher:** [laughs] It's all good shit, man. Pissing in the lobby... yeah, that's right, I did pee in the lobby. I think that was during breakfast; yeah, that was bad. I think I was snorting some ham, too, down at the breakfast buffet in front of everyone... yeah, that was bad.

**Nardwuar:** Now, who was in Madrid? Was it at some festival in Madrid where you trashed some of the Offspring's stuff?

**Fletcher:** I'm not going to take the blame for that. That was Mike Clarke from Suicidal Tendencies. But I will tell you the story. It was pretty funny. We were on pretty shaky ground with the Offspring at that point, but everything's fine now. We were hanging out in our dressing room with Suicidal. It was us, Suicidal, Lagwagon, and the Offspring was in their dressing room. They weren't really, you know, down with hanging out with us. Brian (Holland) came in, in a full-blown leopard skin suit, like head-to-toe leopard skin suit and creepers and it was pretty funny. But he came in and asked for a beer, and Mike Clarke just turned around and goes, "Ooooooh, look at you man. Look at you, wooooo!" Just started totally bagging on him and it was kind of an awkward moment for poor Brian, and when they were onstage, Mike decided to do a full-sprint run into the side of those makeshift dressing rooms and knocked down three walls and destroyed the whole dressing room. So, I'm not taking the blame for that one. Even though I probably did get blamed and had to pay for it.

**Nardwuar:** Fletcher of Pennywise, have you ever put anyone in a chokehold? You know, grabbed them by the neck and lifted them up by their neck?

**Fletcher:** Probably. I don't remember who though. It might have been more than one person.

**Nardwuar:** Fletcher of Pennywise, what have you guys turned down? I've heard you've turned down a lot of offers of a lot of money. What are some of the things you've turned down?

**Fletcher:** Well, we've never had a meeting with a major label. They've come sniffing around quite a few times and they just wanna go out to dinner and buy us some lobster, and we say, "I can buy my own fucking lobster." So we've never gone that route. I believe Ford Motor Company offered us quite a

large sum of money to do a commercial for them, which actually was a cool commercial. But, uh, we felt it wouldn't be good for our, y'know, for what we're backing and what believed in. So, it was a lot of money. You could probably buy a house with that amount of money and we decided we wouldn't do that. And, uh, there's been numerous things. Uh, we've turned down The Sex Pistols, to open for them, because, I don't know, Johnny Rotten really isn't that cool. He just thinks he is.

**Nardwuar:** Fletcher of the rock'n'roll band Pennywise. Black Flag, did you sing for Black Flag or was that your singer Jim (Lindberg) for the Black Flag reunion?

**Fletcher:** The Black Flag reunion? Um, I don't know. He was gonna sing on the comp, the benefit for the West Memphis Three. But as far as Black Flag, we haven't played with them or actually sang with them to my knowledge. You might have got some bad info on that one.

**Nardwuar:** No, I thought Jim maybe was going to sing with them at that opening of the Punk Rock Hall Of Fame or something like that. He was going to do a fill-in, 'cause somebody didn't show up.

**Fletcher:** Oh, oh, you're right, you're right. That is correct. He did. See, I'm bad, you're good. But you probably don't drink as much as I do.

**Nardwuar:** No I don't. But you...

**Fletcher:** There was that, there was that show. Yeah you're right. It was the punk rock revival show, basically, and it was incredible. Like, TSOL, Black Flag, Devo, X, The Adolescents. It was the first time a lot of these bands had played in years, and Keith Morris was sick and Jim went up and sang some songs. That is correct.

**Nardwuar:** Fletcher, winding up here. Fuck. You put "fuck" in a song with "Fuck Authority." What is your advice to people about putting "fuck" in a song? Because there's that band that goes "She fucking hates me" and they had a big hit. What is your advice to people about putting "fuck" in a song?

**Fletcher:** It seems to be pretty popular these days. I mean you can get on the radio with a song that has the word fuck in it. It's a pretty entertaining thought. I mean, I'm all for the word fuck. I have it tattooed on my back in really big letters. So y'know, the more people who put "fuck" in songs, the better off the world will be.

**Nardwuar:** Fletcher of Pennywise, did Pennywise always have a big pit, i.e. a hard pit? Are there always rough people in the pit at Pennywise gigs?

**Fletcher:** Since day one.

**Nardwuar:** It has always been rough in the pits.

**Fletcher:** Since the first backyard party, always rough in the pits. Just the manly man pits, y'know what I mean? Everyone's just out there to have a good time but a couple of people are kinda mean.

**Nardwuar:** If you could choose another audience, would you?

**Fletcher:** No. Maybe the one I would like to substitute in case of an illness or something would be Pantera's audience.

**Nardwuar:** And what are they like?

**Fletcher:** Like Pennywise, but with longer hair.

**Nardwuar:** Now, what do you think about the audiences that have jumped bands? Like there are audiences that were into the metal bands. For instance, I know a girl that went from Poison to...

**Fletcher:** Pennywise.

**Nardwuar:** Yeah, a girl went from Poison to Pennywise. Have you picked up any metal fans? Or talked to your fans about that?

**Fletcher:** I think the majority of them wouldn't want us to know they were into a band like Poison, so they keep it on the down-low. Every once in a while we can squeak it out of them. But I mean Poison to Pennywise to Limp Bizkit to Good Charlotte to... I don't know. They're always jumping ship.

**Nardwuar:** Fletcher of Pennywise, did you steal your logo from Volkswagen and then modify it slightly?

**Fletcher:** Um, no. I think it was a combination of thievery from Wasted Youth's logo, y'know, the "Y" and the "W" and uh, *The Saint*. Didn't *The Saint*, that old TV show, have some kind of logo of that sort? Uh, I don't know. Our drummer made it up, so I kinda just went with the flow. But the combining the two letters is pretty cool. Dead Kennedys and Wasted Youth and shit like that.

**Nardwuar:** Fletcher, lastly here, Rancid finally signed to a major label. What's your take on this? The most asked question of Warped 2003.

**Fletcher:** Well, apparently they haven't signed yet. That's what the press release says. What is my take on it? Any time a band that I like and listen to that has come up on their own on an independent label and done things their way and for themselves goes to a major label, it definitely upsets me. I mean, everyone's free to do what they want to do and I'm not gonna bag on anybody, especially Rancid, for going to a major label. In this day and age it seems like everyone's going to a

major label. But, uh, y'know, I won't say that I agree with it wholeheartedly. I mean, Epitaph's been good to us and I told Brett (Gurewitz, Epitaph's owner) the other day "When you see us on a major label, you'll be going to my funeral because I'll be dead." So, if I'm ever on a major label then you can have permission to come and shoot me.

**Nardwuar:** Thank you very much Fletcher of the rock'n'roll band Pennywise...

**Fletcher:** Wise.

**Nardwuar:** Fletcher of Pennywise. Last, last, lastly here, what is the furthest you've ever projectile vomited?

**Fletcher:** I'd say probably like, maybe five feet.

**Nardwuar:** That's pretty impressive.

**Fletcher:** It's pretty good; it's pretty good. But I mean I've seen people do it... well, five feet, that's pretty far. Yeah, I'd say about five feet. I've got a picture of one of my buddies going about seven feet straight out like one of those snakes that comes out of a can. It's pretty tight.

**Nardwuar:** Now, is there anything you should drink to have that effect?

**Fletcher:** I've never really kept track of what I put down before it came up. I don't know, I just... I guess, whatever. I would assume something carbonated like beer bongs and maybe some Mexican food would probably help get it out pretty fast. The fire hydrant effect. My chick doesn't dig it when I come home, and get that working in the bathroom. At all.

**Nardwuar:** Fletcher of Pennywise, anything else you wanna add to the people out there at all?

**Fletcher:** I don't know. I mean, I could plug our new record but who really cares? They're gonna see it in the advertisement anyway. Y'know, punk rock is a good thing when it's punk rock, but when it's not, move on.

**Nardwuar:** And ask Fletcher how to play punk rock.

**Fletcher:** That's what I'm talkin' 'bout, right here. [Holds up the "Ask me how to play punk rock" button Nardwuar gave him] If you have any doubts or any questions let me know. I'll hook you up.

**Nardwuar:** Thanks much Fletcher and doot doola doot doo...

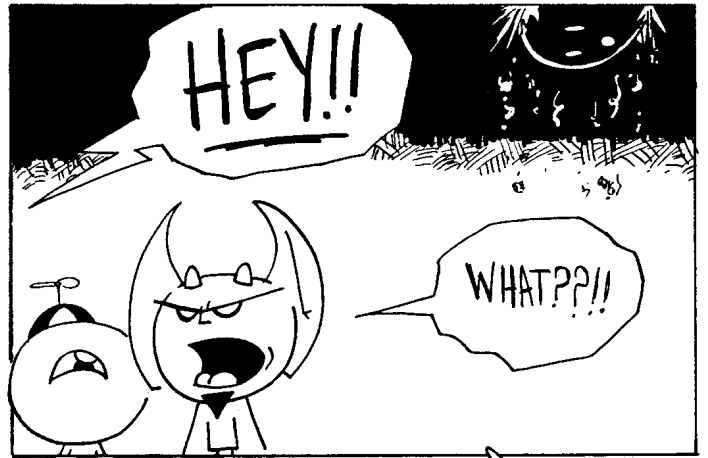
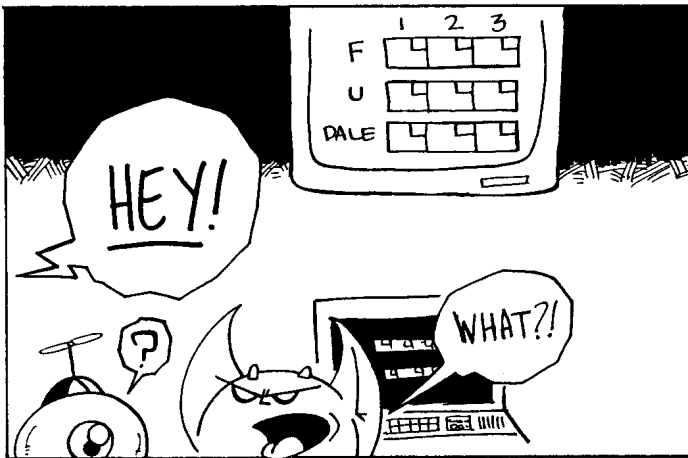
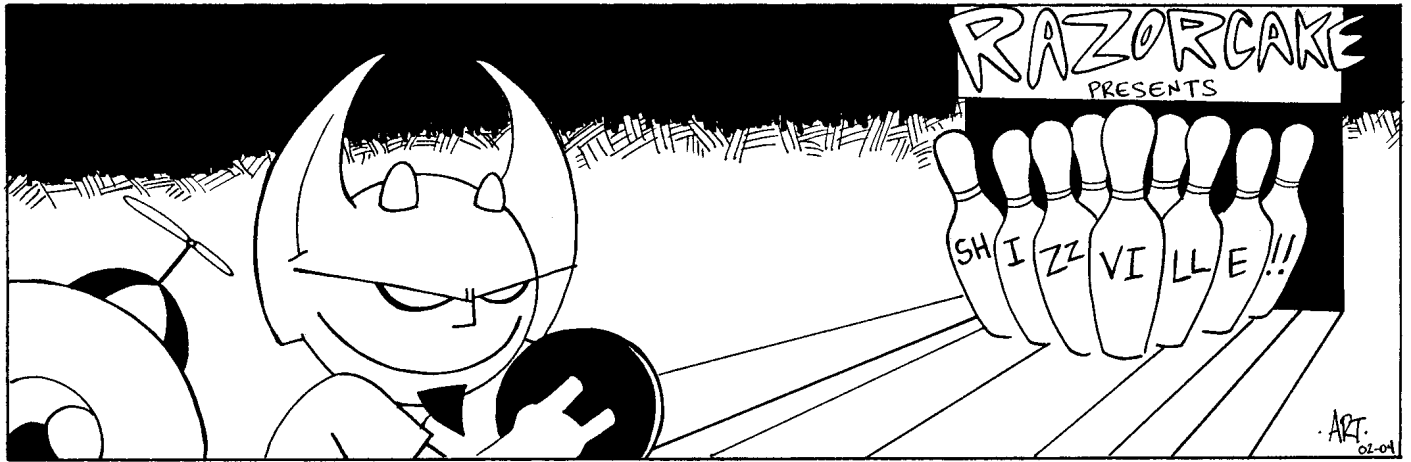
**Fletcher:** Doot doo!

—Nardwuar

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IF YOU COULD REALLY POWER A MOTOR VEHICLE WITH AOL, WOULDN' T  
IT JUST GO BACKWARDS, CRASH, AND THEN CHARGE YOU DOUBLE?

HEY HEY I AM THE MONKEES!!! YOU KNOW I LOVE TO PLEASE!!! A MANUFACTURED IMAGE!!! WITH NO PHIL-OS-O-PHIES!!! YOU SAY YOU LOVE MY STORY!!! ALTHOUGH THERE ISN'T ONE!!! THAT MEANS THAT THERE ARE MANY!!! THAT WAY THERE IS MORE FUN!!! HEY HEY I AM THE MONKEES!!! I'VE SAID IT ALL BEFORE!!! THE MONEY'S IN, I'M MADE OF TIN, I'M HERE TO GIVE YOU MORE!!! THE MONEY'S IN, I'M MADE OF TIN, I'M HERE TO GIVE YOU MORE!!! THE MONEY'S IN, I'M MADE OF TIN, I'M HERE TO GIVE YOU.

Disclaimer: 1) I am not, in fact, the Monkees; 2) You have not, in fact, said you loved my story; 3) I am not, in fact, made out of tin, as tin is by no means bendy enough to accommodate my perpetually distending frame; and 4) the money is not, in fact, in. HOW-EVER! The VOTES are, in fact, in – and both people who returned Their Official Rev. Nørb Drinking Referendum Ballot voted that I, REVEREND NØRB, should SUCKLE THE SWEET SWEET BREAST CIDER OF THE ETERNAL PABST™-TEAT TO MY GRINCHLY HEART'S CONTENT!!! The people have spoken! The vox have popped! The cat's out of the bag! The Pandora's out of the box! The moose is loose! The bear's in the air! The deer's in the beer! The chicken's in the breadpan pickin' out dough! From this point forward (actually slightly retroactive to... uh... about six months ago), i, Rev. Nørb, am off the wagon for good, or until someone forgets! Just remember: I'm doin' it for the kids! Born and unborn! And, both potential permutations of the "advice column" now duly attempted (that is to say, both advice "pitcher" and "catcher," if i may speak in the salty argot of the homosexual infielder), i hereby, with one rap of my mighty Croquet Mallet For The Promotion of Vice and Prevention of Virtue™ (expounded upon at greater length in another publication), declare the "advice column" experiment HEREBY ABANDONED WITH ALL DUE UNCEREMONY!!! I mean, let's face it – you people asked dumb questions and i gave even dumber answers! Phooey on yooney, Chewy! I go to the grave hoarding my copious gifts of practical knowledge! My fish stick pizza recipe? LOST TO YOU FOREVER, O UNBELIEVER! My can't miss stock tips? RESERVED FOR MY OWN UNSEEMLY PROFITEERING! You killed the goose that laid the golden Wonka Bar! You paved paradise and put up a parking lot, then stole the keeshka from the place of business directly abutting said lot, drove off in a big yellow taxi and wrote a folk song about it! You ushered in the fall of the house of Usher! I don't even know what i'm saying any more, but i KNOW YOU'RE GUILTY! Therefore, from this point forward ("going forward" as my boss would say. I'm always like "as opposed to what other direction?" Going backward? Going sideways? Going kitty-corner?), i am scuttling the existing format of this column and replacing it with Nardwuar-like interviews of mainstreamish demi-celebrities. Therefore, without further Freddy Adu, let us proceed with all appropriate pomp and foofarah to...

REV. NØRB vs. MARCUS HAISLIP

(Marcus Haislip, second year forward for the Milwaukee Bucks, was interviewed by Rev. Nørb on December 6th, 2003, outside section 203 at the Bradley Center in Milwaukee)

**Rev. Nørb:** So, Marcus, since your last name is "Haislip," and your uniform is purple, do people ever call you "Purple Hais?"

**Marcus Haislip:** No.

**Rev. Nørb:** Well, all righty then!  
(end interview)

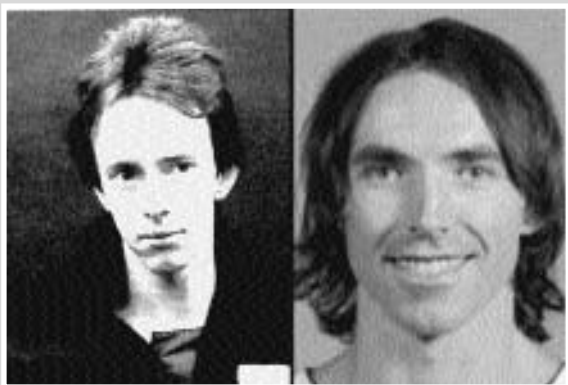
...wow! Fabulous! Probing! Insightful! Unexpectedly relevant! A new Golden Age of Nørb-Columnage is surely upon us! Actually, i think i gotta get a videocamera (well, i mean, i HAVE a video-camera, but i've never used it for anything other than home porn. You'd be surprised in a most crestfallingly negative fashion at how long the camera can just be pointing at one person's painted-toe-nailed foot before one realizes that HEY! I'M NOT GETTING ANY OF THIS! and readjusts it), these guys don't seem to get up for the print media any more (case in point: in a similar in-depth conversation with Bucks shooting guard Michael Redd, the emerging superstar responded "probly rob a bank or something" when asked what he'd do if he found himself invisible for a day. Were this conversation on camera, however, i am certain that his answer would have been "give thanks to God for my invisibility"). And, since i am paid by the word here, i seem to have now found myself with a shortfall of several pages, and THAT is no way for a new glorious age of goldenosity to begin! Therefore, while i wait for the next Rev. Nørb Celebrity Interview to be arranged for me by the Canadian government (okay... i admit: Marcus Haislip isn't really a celebrity. But he IS tall), i will be forced to the scoundrel's last resort of padding my Celebrity Interview out with random acts of rantitude. So be it! Rant Mode Enabled! Therefore, let the record show that 1) "The Tim Version" is the fucking stupidest band name ever, not only due to its inherently being the fucking stupidest band name ever, but because the live version of "Can't Hardly Wait" off 1984's *The Shit Hits the Fans* cassette was LONG held to be the one "true" version of the song, and who or whom are they to say otherwise? 2) The Libertines are the fucking gayest band ever. This band is gayer than cell phones. This band is gayer than the people who TALK on cell phones are, if that can be believed! Shares of FM Knives stock are plummeting precipitously for them actually stating on the public record that they believe this band is Other Than Shit! To set things straight, THIS BAND IS NOT OTHER THAN SHIT!!! The Libertines' *Up the Bracket* album is so godawfully blatant in its not-other-than-shit-itude that it should be forced to wear an ankle monitor and give its parole officer 48 hours notice if it ever wants to leave Darryl Strawberry's apartment! The FM Knives coolness points (which i know they're always worried sick about) are plunging like the altimeter in a Bugs Bunny piloted aircraft whose screaming nosedive is only

REV. NØRB



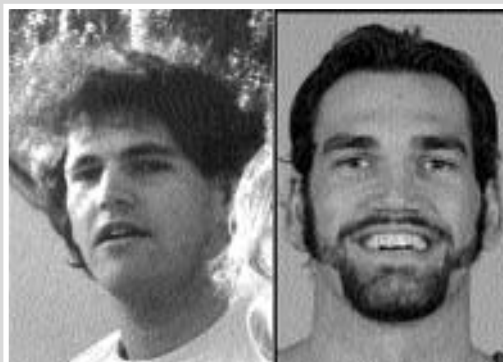
averted by the last-second application of air brakes or the plane's timely depletion of its fuel supplies! And i'm not feeling so good myself! How could they steer me so wrongly??? They seemed like such nice fellows! I bought the Libertines album because i noticed they had a song called "What a Waster," and in 2002 i found a "what a waster" button stuck in the ceiling of my band's dressing room in Southampton, England, and, thinking it was just some cute li'l ol' limey thing, affixed it to my white leather jacket (where it resides, to this day [which i suddenly find quite troubling, to say the least]), having NO IDEA it was a song by a band so HOPELESSLY AND UTTERLY GAY (although "What a Waster" is perhaps their best song). I mean, this band gets into the "doon-doon-doon, doon-doon-da-doon-da-doon-da" thing ON THE FIRST SONG! AND ON THE SECOND SONG!! MAYBE ON THE THIRD SONG, TOO, I'M TOO TRAUMATIZED TO

on second thought... let's spare ourselves the fell embarrassment of bringing up the momentarily daft collapses of our states' respective franchises this season, and take some comfort in the fact that the quality of play in the NFL<sup>TMTMTM</sup> has been devalued so utterly in recent years that it's nigh on impossible for long-tenured football fans such as ourselves to watch the twenty weeks of unrelenting mediocrity that the NFL<sup>TMTMTM</sup> has become ("parity" is what they call it - i think they actually mean "parody") and actually find ourselves giving half a crap about who wins the Super Bowl<sup>TMTMTMTMTMTM</sup> in the end (in point of fact, it shouldn't even be called the "Super Bowl" any more. It should be, like, the "Bat Bowl," or the "Spider-Bowl," or maybe the "Shazam Bowl"). Mediocre Team X beat Mediocre Team Y! Oh, Happy Day! Nope, don't care to comment on the Stupor Bowl at all... but, now that i think about it, i don't really feel like ranting any more either,



**SEPARATED AT BIRTH? #1 (ABOVE)**  
**TOPPER HEADON, THE CLASH (LEFT)**  
**STEVE NASH, DALLAS MAVERICKS (RIGHT)**

**SEPARATED AT BIRTH? #2 (BELOW)**  
**BILL STEVENSON, ALL (LEFT)**  
**SCOT POLLARD, INDIANA PACERS (RIGHT)**



REMEMBER!!! But YEAH, i bought it 'cause they had a song named after my button (i flatly refuse to entertain the possibility that my keen li'l button is named after their lame song [wait, i just said that song was actually kind of okay, didn't i? ...i am obviously caught in some manner of gross oversimplification, if not flat-out fabrication. Well FUCK YOU! I know Marcus Haislip! He's got Mad Ups! Really Mad Ups! Fumingly pissed-off Ups! His Ups are so Mad, they make Hedwig's Inch seem quite content by comparison!!!) - but i wouldn't have LOOKED at it and found out it had a song named after my button HAD THE FM KNIVES NOT TALKED UP SAID BAND IN THE FIRST PLACE!!! Fuck, at times like these i wish i had a wife and kid, so i could toss this fucking CD in the same place we'd keep the kid's shit-packed diapers. BE AFRAID! BE VERY VERY AFRAID! 3) And, since you brought up the Replacements, let's set one thing straight: As of 11:46 PM CST 2.1.04, red wine SUCKS. White wine does not. Pink wine is only to be consumed with Sour Dots<sup>TM</sup> gumdrops, preferably in the large, theatre-sized box. Green wine is to be mixed with Red Bull<sup>TM</sup> before serving. No other colors of wine are recognized by Rev. Nørb, Box Wine and Boone's Farm<sup>TM</sup> Snob. But, i mean, "Red Red Wine on Sunday?" "I didn't come here to fight, just as long as it ain't white?" Another case of Minnesotans having their Peter Vella<sup>TM</sup> Easy-Pour Spouts<sup>TM</sup> screwed on backwards!!! There is WHITE WINE, there is GUMDROP EATIN' WINE, there is OPAQUE GREEN WINE, and THAT IS ALL THE WINE THAT THERE IS!!! EVERYTHING ELSE SHOULD BE TURNED BACK INTO THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD AT ONCE!!! And, since i brought up Minnesota, 4) LET'S TALK A LITTLE FOOTBALL, MOOZAIRFOOKAIRS!!! Er...

because i'm using up all my good Hate that should, by rights, be saved for the record reviews... yet, my desire to take the rectal temperature of the nation on this, the Butt End of Super<sup>TM</sup> Bowl<sup>TMTMTM</sup> Sunday<sup>TMTMTM</sup>, continues unabated to the quarterback! Therefore! While i'm waiting for the guys down in Media Relations to confirm my interview with Leonard Nimoy's Head, let's take it to the top-of-the-hour station ID with...

REV. NØRB vs.  
 THE COMMERCIALS of SUPER<sup>TM</sup> BOWL<sup>TMTMTM</sup> XXXVI-II<sup>TMTMTM</sup>

(note: because i, like you, hate the Super<sup>TM</sup> Bowl<sup>TMTMTM</sup> Pregame<sup>TMTMTM</sup> Show<sup>TMTMTMTMTM</sup> even more than i hate the Super<sup>TMTMTMTMTMTM</sup> Bowl<sup>TMTMTMTMTMTMTM</sup> itself, i shall only concern myself with the commercials occurring between opening kickoff and before the final gun. I mean, hey, if you can't pay the full 2.25 million to get your message to me, fuck ya!)

COMMERCIAL #1: Some doofus with a sweater around his neck shows some reg'lar joe in a down vest how he has trained his dog to fetch him a bottle of Bud Light<sup>TM</sup> on command. The doofus in the down vest then shows the doofus with the sweater how he has trained his dog to bite guys with sweaters around their necks in the crotch, causing them to fling their beer into the air in shock and horror, where it can be easily grabbed by reg'lar joes in down vests. QUESTIONS: 1) isn't the guy in the down vest just the same type of guy who would've had the sweater tied around his neck back when being a sweater-around-the-neck prick was "cool?" I mean, now that the sweater-around-the-neck prick is

REV. NØRB

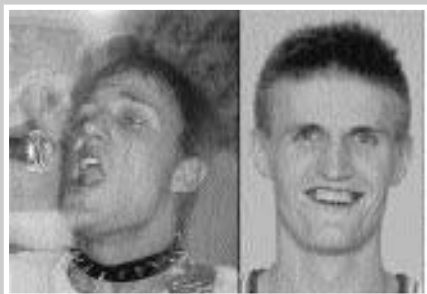
just a mythic archetype, does the guy in the down vest think he's cool just because he knows enough not to wear a sweater around his neck? 2) And who the fuck wants a beer that has been handled and jostled by some sweater wearing prick anyway? If this guy was so cool and tough, why didn't he own a really big dog that could just drag the whole fucking cooler of Bud Light™ over to him? Fuck, if i owned a dog, i'd make sure it was a hardy, devoted Rin Tin Tin™ type who would, at my command, go racing for miles over field and stream to fetch me a cold bottle of Pabst™. What kinda dog brings its master light beer anyway? COMMERCIAL #2: "Jenkins," a drooling, shirt-and-tie-clad "Alien"-like alien wearing a cardboard mask depicting a human face, sits behind a desk, where two fellow employees confront him with their suspicions of his blatant alien-ness and his presumed mission of studying our species. Jenkins' only words are a seemingly pre-recorded message, "Why don't we use FedEx™?" The boss walks in and states a great need for shipping. Jenkins suggests they use FedEx™. The boss praises Jenkins for his insight, and tells the other two employees to get to work. QUESTIONS: Why wouldn't Jenkins suggest Planet Express™? COMMERCIAL #3: Bears break into a cabin, and, upon raiding the refrigerator, find a complete and utter absence of Pepsi™ products. Disguising themselves as Alaskans, they forge a check and use a stolen ID to procure a case of Pepsi™ from a local merchant. QUESTIONS: Wow, who besides me thought this was gonna be a lot funnier than it's already turning out to be? COMMERCIAL #4: A guy stands there and talks about the ample merits of the Schick™ Quattro™. The power of four! QUESTIONS: 1) Who the fuck cares? 2) Who would name a razor after the shrill, shrimp chick who gave the world "Can the Can?" 3) Two-thirds of the way thru this guy's impassioned spiel, why doesn't Sam the Sham or reasonable facsimile come running across the stage in a turban, waving his arms and screaming "UNO! DOS! ONE, TWO, SCHICK™ QUATTRO!!!"? 4) Speaking of the power of four, has anybody here ever had sex with three girls at once? I haven't. It seems like such a logistical nightmare that i'm kind of at a loss to understand how one even plans such an affair. COMMERCIAL #5: A bunch of experimental gearheads use AOL 9.0 to power their motorcycle, as they've heard it "makes things go faster." The folly of their ways leaves the driver in a neck brace. QUESTIONS: If you could really power a motor vehicle with AOL, wouldn't it just go backwards, crash, and then charge you double? COMMERCIAL #6: Van Helsing has come to a foreign land, to battle enemies who are legendary: Frankenstein, Dracula, the Wolfman! May 7th, 2004! QUESTIONS: How many of those undead ghouls Van Helsing is fighting are the real Michael Jackson, and how many are just CGI duplicates? COMMERCIAL #7: Cedric the Entertainer purchases a massage. On his way to the Massage Room, he is distracted by a fridge full of Bud Light™ in what turns out to be the Bikini Wax room, not the Massage Room. QUESTIONS: 1) Wouldn't there be better beer in the massage-getting room than in the bikini wax room anyway? It's hard to believe people going in to have their crotches de-haired have a mo' pow'ful thirst than the sweaty bastards questing massage. 2) Am i to believe some people DON'T enjoy young ladies ripping their pubic hair out by the roots? COMMERCIAL #8: *Survivor All-Stars* premieres after the Super Bowl! QUESTIONS: Has anybody ever watched this fucking show, even fucking once? COMMERCIAL #9: Miscellaneous Trojans, including Bruce Banner and, i believe, the brother from *Malcolm In The Middle* who's always away from home, swear oaths and do battle and such in *Troy*, a Wolfgang Petersen film. Opens May 14th. This film is not yet rated! QUESTIONS: 1) If you cross a Trojan with the Trojan Horse, do you get Catherine the Great? 2) If so, can i watch? COMMERCIAL #10: Various befuddled individuals turn to their Willie Nelson Advice Doll™ for tax advice and make improper financial decisions that the wisdom of H&R Block™ would have wisely counseled against. During a bench clearing brawl, Don Zimmer asks his Willie

Nelson Advice Doll™ if he should "give this kid a shellackin'?" Willie informs him to "bring it on!" QUESTIONS: How the fuck did Bud Selig NOT fix Game 7 of the fucking NLCS this year??? We had the Chicago Cubs seemingly ascendant in the NLCS, we had the Red Sox v. Yankees in the ALCS, everybody in the FUCKING WORLD would have been watching a Cubs-Red Sox or Cubs-Yankees World Series (i was pulling for Cubs-Yankees myself), ALL THAT HAD TO HAPPEN was for the Florida Marlins, WHOM NOBODY, NOT EVEN THEIR OWN FANS, cares about, to NOT WIN Game 7. Major League Baseball would have been set for a fucking GENERATION simply on the strength of a Cubs/Boston or Cubs/NY series... AN ENTIRE GENERATION IS STANDING AT THE BRINK OF RENEWED INTEREST IN THE SPORT... dependent on the ONE little teensy matter of the Marlins not eliminating the Cubs... and Bud Selig, who could single-handedly save baseball with a nudge and a wink and a couple secret handshakes and clandestine payoffs, can't get the job done. Can't save the Cubs from their own stupid selves and their own dork fans. I mean, ISN'T IT HIS JOB to do things like this, for the good of the sport??? CONTRACT THYSELF, FOUL NIMROD! Actually, ya know why Selig didn't fix game 7? Well, think about it: Whom did the Chicago Cubs acquire from the Pittsburgh Pirates in mid-season? Randall Simon! And what is Randall Simon's greatest claim to fame? HE WAS THE GUY WHO BASHED THE BREWERS' ITALIAN SAUSAGE IN THE HEAD!!! By not rigging Game 7 to ensure a Cubs victory, Bud Selig was sending a message to all of baseball – and that message was DO NOT IN ANY WAY, SHAPE, OR FORM TORMENT THE MILWAUKEE BREWERS ORGANIZATION!!! THAT PRIVILEGE IS RESERVED FOR THE SELIG FAMILY AND THE SELIG FAMILY ALONE!!! In any event, fuck Pedro Martinez, too. He laid hands upon the regal personage of The Zim! UNCLEAR! UNCLEAR! COMMERCIAL #11: Pigeons and elephants flee from the advance of the Chevy Aveo™, the "Mighty Mouse" of automobiles. Four basketball players find that the Aveo™ only looks small on the outside, and appear hobbit-sized when we glimpse them seated in the car's interior. QUESTIONS: 1) Will the Shriner be part of the standard package, or do we pay extra for him? COMMERCIAL #12: Adam Sandler and some chick do some shit. QUESTIONS: Wouldn't it suck to have peaked with "Lunch Lady Land?" COMMERCIAL #13: An irate head coach berates a seemingly unaffected official during a game. At home, we see him similarly expressionless as he is further berated by his wife. QUESTIONS: If this is supposed to make me wanna drink Budweiser™, shouldn't the guy be sucking down Bud longnecks while people are yelling at him? I mean, i don't understand it: The head coach yells at him, and he just stands there. His wife yells at him, and he just sits there. How is watching this poor schmuck get screamed at by people supposed to increase my beer consumption? WAIT! I SPOKE TOO SOON! I FIND I NEED A BEER IMMEDIATELY! COMMERCIAL #14: To the strains of some Limey techno-pop number that goes "I dig you... do you dig me?" that is either custom-made for this commercial or that i am completely unfamiliar with, a young whippersnapper and an old, corporate coot travel independently to the meeting point of the coot's office for the whippersnapper's Monster.com-induced job interview. QUESTIONS: 1) Does anyone really get hired off of Monster.com? Getting a job off that site always struck me as having about the same possibility as getting a date from personal ads does. All the same, though, i think the old corporate coot is making a big mistake: It is ME, REV. NØRB, who should be getting that swanky job, and the corner cubicle! But no! The job will probably go to that drooling brown-noser Jenkins! Fuck Jenkins! Sir, are we made of money here? We can't afford goddamn FedEx™! Did the Trojans FedEx™ the Trojan Horse? NO! They sent it Media Mail! We can take a valuable lesson from their electronically-tested frugality! From their helmet-mounted scrub brushes! From their deft and unrelenting I CAN'T



BELIEVE I SAT AROUND ALL WEEK THINKING I WOULD WRITE A COLUMN CRITIQUING THE COMMERCIALS DURING THE SUPER BOWL, and then NOT ONLY did the GAME SUCK TOTALLY, but THE COMMERCIALS WERE SO STUPID I CAN'T EVEN WRING A COLUMN'S WORTH OF MATERIAL OUT OF THEM! Fuckers! You're ruining my act! I AM A POWERFUL AND INFLUENTIAL TV COMMERCIAL CRITIC!!! I HAVE MY FINGERS ON THE PULSEBEAT OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY!!! (i've always thought i would make a good ad agency man. Kind of a cross between Darren Stevens and Danny Fields. I want to apply for a bunch of jobs as an ad executive, get a bunch of interviews lined up, wear a suit or whatever, maybe don my lavender Hush Puppies™ – put forth at least the vague appearance of legitimacy, and commune with various suits. Presumably, one needs to bring samples of one's work to interviews of this nature, so, after bullshitting with the head executive dude, he'd be like "well, son, let's see what you got" and, from a very respectable black leather portfolio i'd pull out meticulously mounted ad campaign specimens – for marital aids. The only copy would be "DILDOS – BUY ONE AND STICK IT UP YOUR CUNT TONIGHT!!!" and i'd present it to the guy with

Disney would know a little bit about being "on ice," huh? COMMERCIAL #18: Mike Ditka explains how football rocks and is tough, and baseball is gay and pokey, and how football is all about Levitra™, and baseball could use Levitra™, and then throws a football through a tire swing. QUESTIONS: 1) Not to put too fine a point on it, but WHAT THE FUCKING FUCK IS LEVITRA???? 2) And if it's a drug, what makes him so goddamn sure that Barry Bonds isn't on it already? 3) And if the football through the tire is some sort of vaguely blatant Rauschenbergian penetration metaphor, are we supposed to infer that Levitra™ is some sort of ejaculation drug, some sort of pooping drug, or some sort of accuracy-enhancing drug? 4) What the fuck was up with the Ricky Watters thing, anyway? COMMERCIAL #19: CSI is America's best-watched show. QUESTIONS: Couldn't sell this slot either, huh? COMMERCIAL #20: A donkey finally realizes his life's dream of becoming a Budweiser™ Clydesdale. QUESTIONS: Why did anyone at Budweiser™ think that the animal urine/Bud connection in my brain needed any manner of reinforcing? COMMERCIAL #21: *The Alamo* becomes the movie event of the year. QUESTIONS: What's the Alamo, again? I forgot. COMMERCIAL #22: A poorly-enunciating chick and a number of similarly



SEPARATED AT BIRTH? #3 (ABOVE)  
ANDY JUNK, THE FRAGMENTS (LEFT)  
ANDREI KIRI LENKO, UTAH JAZZ (RIGHT)



SEPARATED AT BIRTH? #4 (RIGHT)  
MICK TUCKER, THE SWEET (LEFT)  
COURTNEY CLARK, THE TEARS (RIGHT)

a totally straight face, make a pitch, explain in dead seriousness why i thought it would be an effective advertising campaign, answer the guy's various questions in complete earnestness, and essentially really do my best to convince him that i should work there, based on no other factors than my sample ad campaign of "DILDOS – BUY ONE AND STICK IT UP YOUR CUNT TONIGHT!!!" What would be the odds that i would get a job? I think i bet the over on that one. COMMERCIAL #15: *Everybody Loves Raymond* is America™'s best-watched comedy. QUESTIONS: Couldn't sell the slot, huh? COMMERCIAL #16: During a very important parade, a kilt-wearing bagpiper has gone missing. He turns up standing over a subway grate a la Marilyn, allowing the steam to blow his kilt up as he oohs and aahs with pleasure. A small child witnesses this and informs his father, "That's just wrong, Dad." His father covers the boy's eyes. The sensation experienced by the AWOL bagpiper is likened to that of consuming a Sierra Mist™. QUESTIONS: "DILDOS – BUY ONE AND STICK IT UP YOUR CUNT TONIGHT!!!" doesn't look so stupid NOW, does it??? COMMERCIAL #17: There's some Disney movie about the 1980 US hockey team. QUESTIONS: 1) Who could forget how the nation came together to back our hockey team in 1980? I mean, that's almost as unforgettable as the other groups we were backing in 1980 – the Taliban and Saddam Hussein's Iraqi government! 2) I guess it stands to reason Walt

motley humans, with a vaguely Green Day-ish rendition of "I Fought the Law" in the background, states that she (and, presumably, the others in the commercial) was one of the people prosecuted for downloading music off the internet. She then raises a Pepsi™, and informs us that, starting tomorrow, she (and, presumably, the others in the commercial) are going to be downloading music for free again, and there's NOTHING ANYONE CAN DO ABOUT IT! She removes the cap from her Pepsi™, and reveals a token good for one free download from iTunes™. QUESTIONS: I'm only up to the 13:05 mark of the second quarter, but does anybody mind if i just stop now?

DILDOS – BUY ONE AND...oh, never mind... Fuck it. I realize now that i cannot host a proper column without the hordes of input i get from your tortured and noble souls. As of whatever the fuck time it is right now, i hereby declare this column BACK to being an advice column! Please continue to deluge me under teeming mounds of inquisitive correspondence at POB 1173, Green Bay WI 54305 USA Earth, or nrevorb@greenbaynet.com. I also respond well to telepathy.

Love,  
-Nørb

REV. NØRB



## *Just then, the Rhythm Chicken bursts in wearing only a jock strap and cowboy hat!*

### **The Dinghole Reports**

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

(Hey kids! It's me, Francis Funyuns! When we last left our hero he had just returned to America and was having some trouble adapting to our whimsical, carefree ways. Had eleven unemployed months in Poland really changed him that much? Now we fear that his ruckus is waning and he's grasping at straws. Embracing this newfound appreciation of this "stampede" and the unavoidable lack of Rhythm Chicken performances, how can we sit by and let this superhero fade into obscurity? Things are looking bleak in Chickenland, my friends. — F.F.)

[Indeed. Now that he is living back in Milwaukee we can at least keep a better eye on him. Today, Francis and I are looking about his new nest for any clues that may assist us in determining exactly what has been squelching the Chicken's ruckus. — Dr. S.]

— Just then, the Rhythm Chicken bursts in wearing only a jock strap and cowboy hat! —

Well, well, well! If it isn't ol' Sicnarf and Funyuns! Starting my column without me again, eh? Oh, please don't let me stop you. Continue rummaging through my things! Don't be surprised when you stumble upon my Gary Coleman/Robin Williams location and cross-reference documentation and studies. And don't think that my disdain for Big Bird has faded one bit. I'm still determined to prove that he was born and not hatched, squeezed out Snuffy's dinghole no less!

(Hello, Chicken! We weren't really snooping around, honest! It's just that your Dinghole Report was due a few days ago so Sean and Todd sent us over here to see what was the hold up. — F.F.)

Well, I just returned from a three-day retreat to my woodshed up-north. Thirteen degrees below zero in Sister Bay, WI and with my woodshed's space-heater it was a balmy forty-five degrees inside! I feel sorry for those who never get to experience having their boogers freeze. Oh how I've missed Wisconsin! Ruckus Thomas even had a Rhythm Chicken cake baked for me. Between that, the garlic-stuffed olives, and the jar of Nutella, the Hen and I managed to survive. But now we are back in Milwaukee and it's back to work. Us Polish immigrants work hard, some fifty or sixty hours a week. However, when I'm not slinging Italian consumables together or constructing ham radio speakers, much of my time has been spent doing intense research. Please enter my office here in the rear, heh, heh.

— Funyuns and Sicnarf are led into a back room littered with newspaper clippings, maps, piles of video cassettes, and a few oddball antiques of electronical giz-whackery. —

[Wow, Mr. Chicken! It looks like someone has been burning a little midnight oil here. Gary Coleman sightings... Robin Williams artifacts... Big Bird footage... What is WITH all this hooshwash? — Dr. S.]

(Yeah, and what's with all these maps of Indiana? — F.F.)

I have put in many sleepless nights in my quest for the truth. Only by relentlessly putting my beak to the grindstone have I been able to uncover the relationship between these three slick-slacks. My intelligence sources have provided me with indisputable evidence linking Arnold, Mork, and that fat, yellow-feathered fuck! They are surely up to some unsavory hooshwash, and for this I will not stand!

[Whoa, settle down there Chicken. Maybe the Milwaukee Brewers being put up for sale has you a little off-kilter? Are you still harboring ill

feelings from that whole Rally Rabbit episode? — Dr. S.]

Oh, I've done extensive research on him as well! I have not yet been able to tie him into the web of evil the other three have been weaving, but I have my suspicions and, rest assured, he is being monitored. That blue-haired evildoer can't take a corporate crap without my lackeys sniffing close behind! However, as for the other three, I have uncovered irrefutable data detailing their alliance and their secret plans of creating a heavily guarded base of operations right in America's armpit, INDIANA!

(“GASP!!!” — F.F.)

Yes, this is a new world we live in, where evil may lurk behind every refinery. The Boilermakers are indeed agents of anti-ruckus! I have discovered a distinct pattern in the scheduled airings of *Diff'rent Strokes*, *Mork & Mindy*, and *Sesame Street*. This can be no coincidence! They have been operating amongst us for some time now, hiding their coded correspondence within all this new “Atkins diet” literature. Does it not seem strange to any of you Americans that our society has become way too saturated with this Atkins hooshwash? IT'S EVERYWHERE!!! I have returned to an America hell-bent on “counting carbs” and eating their bratwurst WITHOUT THE BUN! It has taken me many long nights, but I do believe I have cracked their code and can now monitor their communications. So, it can also be seen as no coincidence that the estranged Dr. Atkins has mysteriously passed away soon after his medium became the channel of terror for our evil trio. As I speak, our secret troops from the ruckus militia are amassing on the borders of Indiana. Illinois has allowed us free access to their Indiana border, as has Michigan. Those states who do not side with us will have to face the truth sooner or later, our truth. Indiana has long been allowed to exist in its state of evil limbo and

hi-jinkery! This is no police action. This is no rescue attempt. I, THE RHYTHM CHICKEN, HEREBY DO DECLARE A GENUINE STATE OF WAR AGAINST THE STATE OF INDIANA! Wisconsin is now at war with Indiana! Wisconsin has ALWAYS been at war with Indiana! The “liveration” of our Wisconsin residents trapped within Indiana's borders has already begun!

— The Rhythm Chicken then tosses his cowboy hat across the room as he begins galloping about his nest in a wild stampede! —

[Ok, OK! Settle down there! Whoooah now, Chicken! Surely, you don't think you can actually perpetuate such a battle. America will not tolerate this deterioration of the Union right in the heartland! I mean, sure, Florida could be given to Cuba or Luxembourg and no one would raise a stink, but Indiana is part of the cherished MIDWEST! Has someone slipped some kryptonite into your birdseed, or maybe some Miller Lite into your Pabst? — Dr. S.]

Fellow Americans, I know I speak for all of you when I say that we must rid our great nation of this evil wasteland known as Indiana. Their bowling scores alone are insulting enough! Now that we have this proof, this metaphorical smoking gun (not to mention a recently found ACTUAL smoking gun!) it is our duty to rid ourselves of this lame limb, this eleventh finger, this diseased appendage. Special treatment may be allowed in the handling of Sloppy Seconds; otherwise few will be spared. Let the world know that us ruckus-raising Wisconsinites will no longer turn away from evil. We will come face to face with Gary Coleman, Robin Williams, AND Big Bird! Don't be so surprised when Indianapolis buys the Brewers and the Rally Rabbit becomes their new Uncle Sam! Fellow Americans who are not Wisconsinites, I feel for you and your unfortunate place of birth.



I ask of you to please do your part. Ask not what Wisconsin can do for you! BURN ALL THE ATKINS DIET LITERATURE YOU COME IN CONTACT WITH! DENOUNCE CARB COUNTING IN ALL ITS FORMS! Indiana is a clever weasel, but with our muzzling ruckus we can overcome this unchecked evil in our midst!

(Believe me, Chicken! I hate Indiana as much as the next Wisconsinite, but we cannot wage war on a state based on your misinterpretation of the TV schedule and disillusioned code breaking! I really think you should drop this obsessive fanatical campaign and just relax and enjoy some Pabst with us more often! Everyone at the Cactus Club has been asking where you've been. Look at those dark circles around your eyes! Your beak is barely hanging off of your face! You've become a pale and ruckus-free clone of yourself! – F.F.)

[He's right, Mr. Chicken. This is even scarier than your Rally Rabbit period. What has happened to you? When was the last time you even TOUCHED your drums? We should have never let you go on that lazy-ass vacation to Poland. Just LOOK what you've become! Do you even have a Dinghole Report for us today, or are you going to pull out another bottom-of-the-barrel archive and try to live off of your past? – Dr. S.]

**Dinghole Report #34: Ruckus Rock on Chic-a-go-go!**  
(Rhythm Chicken sighting #80 berzillion)

It was a blizzardy December Saturday morning a few years back when I threw the Chickenkit into my car, loaded up on early morning ruckus-juice (ok, coffee), and braved Interstate 94 West (which actually goes south) down to the windy city. Mike Finch, my Chicago booking agent, really came through for me with this high-profile gig, a spot on the "Chic-a-go-go" punk rock TV dance party show! Jake Roctober, the same mastermind behind Uno-a-go-go, the one-man-band festival, brings this little gem to Chicago's cable access airwaves (wires?) every week. Somehow, Mike managed to book me on the Christmas show, so I wore my EMF shirt. I waited around in the studio watching the show being recorded with little children dancing around to different underground

music clips and various in-house music guests playing air guitar and lip-syncing to their own pre-recorded music. It was like Chicago's own punk rock *American Bandstand*! There was a clip where all the dancers would take turns dancing in front of a blue screen. I stood in line and had my turn to shake my tail feathers for the camera. This small taste of the Chicken spurred the kids' interest in my presence. A few clips and segments later, my time slot had come. My drums were thrown together in the middle of the stage and all the kids and various Chicago scenesters were poised around me. When the "on air" light came on, Mike Finch got to introduce me to the camera as "The Rhythm Chicken, all the way from Wisconsin!" I started pounding out my rhythms. My ears bounced about as I pounded the skins and I soon noticed that the kids and scenesters were dancing wildly around me! I paused and raised my wings momentarily, met with exuberant cheers from the dancers. I then gave them another dose of my chaos. I pounded out a completely random attack of wild "Bobby Brady" drumming, completely unstructured wild-ass and most nondanceable slop rock! It wasn't until I saw the taped footage later that I could enjoy seeing the dancers trying their hardest to dance to the completely disjointed drumbeats that ended in one last big kaboom before I raised my wings once more. They jerked and twitched, unsure where the drumming was going, but they soon cheered and clapped as the time slot

soon ended. The show's host ran over in her elf suit for a quick interview. She asked me a few questions about Chicago food and whatnot, but all of her questions were met with my clucking and the giggles of the children around me. It didn't last too long, but it stirred up enough ruckus to gain me a spot in Jake's Uno-a-go-go show the following year. The children steered

clear of me for my remaining time in the studio. As you can see, my ruckus is most untame!

{Rhythm Chicken...you're fired.  
– Todd and Sean}

?????!!!!!!!



–The Rhythm Chicken

rhythmchicken@hotmail.com  
www.rhythmchicken.com

RHYTHM CHICKEN





The price of dreams is going up. And I bought them – again.

## Sea Monkeys

I was around seven when I saw them on the back of an *Archie* comic book: Sea Monkeys. It was in the middle of a blizzard in Philly. They called off school for three days in a row and I sat in my room with nothing but a waist-high stack of comics. The snow had walled up the door and walkway to our house, and mounded up past the edge of the downstairs windows. Just miles of white silence outside.

The snow was so deep you couldn't go outside to play or go sledding – your sled would just sink into the snow so you sat there in a tall, icy hole. My parents were embroiled in what would be a long, bitter divorce, so there was nothing but time. There was nothing to do but talk on the phone and read, and the world in the comics was better than the one inside the house, outside my room. I dove headfirst into the giant stack.

On the back of one of the thin, newsprint books were the little pink Sea Monkeys. Sea people, really. They had faces and eyes. Wide smiling mouths. Arms and legs. Heads shaped like crowns and little scales all over their rounded bodies. They rode seahorses like bucking broncos in an underwater, glittering rodeo and were having, quite frankly, a hell of a party. I wanted to play with the little monkey-people. I wanted to join the party.

The ads I saw claimed, "Own a bowlful of happiness," and "More fun than a zoo full of chattering, howling jungle monkeys." Whee! Yeah! Fun was on its way.

I had waited for something like this. Over the last year I had stashed away nickels and dimes, and traded up for dollar bills when there were enough of them. I didn't know what I was saving for, but knew something would come. I had \$3.85. The Sea Monkeys were only \$1.25 plus fifty cents for shipping. I took the dollar bill and wrapped it up in a plain piece of notebook paper. Then wrapped up three quarters in a separate piece and placed it, along with the order form, in an envelope. On the front, I wrote the Sea Monkeys' mailing address, and I stuck a half dozen stamps.

Even though there was three feet of snow outside, I knew the mailman would still drive by, in his square truck with chains on the tires. I put on several layers of clothing and pushed my way outside towards the mailbox at the end of the driveway. Each step swallowed my leg in snow, soaking my little Levis with icy water, but I had a greater purpose. Placing the envelope in the gray mailbox on the corner felt like mailing off destiny. Soon things would change. It didn't matter about the fighting and the cold air and the cold hearts and the boredom. Happiness would soon arrive in a package of microscopic, under-

water fun and a tiny aquarium. It didn't matter that life sucked. The Sea Monkeys would come.

And finally, one day, they came.

When you're seven, there is nothing like that feeling when the postman arrives with a brown, cardboard package for you with your name and address on it. I sliced open the box so fast I cut my finger and didn't care about the little drips of blood, seeping down the cardboard. Inside was the cute little aquarium, with red top and bottom with the Sea Monkey logo embossed on it. One of the clear, plastic sides had a magnifying circle on it, so you could more easily see the tiny Monkeys. Inside the aquarium were three little envelopes: one filled with water purifier to prepare the monkeys, one filled with "Plasma," a peach-colored powder – the Sea Monkey eggs, and then there was an envelope filled with greenish-brown food for them, along with a set of instructions. The instructions said to simply fill the aquarium with water, put the purifier and then the peach powder inside, along with some of the food.

I put water and purifier junk in the aquarium. I shook the peach powder inside, gently. I put some of the food in. And waited. The instructions said it would take a few hours for the eggs to hatch, so I didn't expect much at first. The hours passed and nothing seemed to



happen. I looked close – as close as I had ever looked at anything – and couldn't see the hatchlings. I wondered if I had accidentally killed them. Maybe I shook the powder too hard. Maybe more Plasma? I agonized over that for a while, and tried to distract myself while I waited.

By the end of the day, I saw some movement. There were these little fluttering brine shrimp swimming around the bowl. This must be the Sea Monkeys' food, I thought. By nightfall, there were lots of these shrimp, but no Sea Monkeys. I waited some more.

Watching the shrimp in the bowl for a while, they started to look like snowflakes swirling, falling. I looked past them out the window at the snow that still lingered on the ground in sparse, white clumps on the otherwise dead grass. Then it dawned on me. These weren't the food. These *were* the Sea Monkeys. That's all there was.

After that, I started to question things. Whatever it was I was looking for, I wouldn't find the answer so soon. It certainly wasn't something you could buy. Not from a fancy picture on the back of a magazine. I discovered something else, very different from a magic idea – a little bit of truth about life. Not all promises were real.

Some Sea Monkey entrepreneur has long since retired on his \$1.25 plus fifty cents for shipping. He was in the business of selling dreams. And what a moneymaker that is. He knew kids would spend everything they had to buy them. And adults will buy them, too.

You can see people selling dreams every-

where. On the street corner, religious fanatics sell salvation, with their hand-drawn Jesus signs. On TV, the president sells safety by blowing a third-world country into oblivion, as though this will forever stop guns and bombs and terror, when we all really know those things will never be stopped. The advertisements in magazines or infomercials – companies selling pills or creams that will make you lose weight in thirty days, when the only way you're going to become slim is by eating good foods and going to the damn gym. But wouldn't it be nice to just take a pill? We still buy the dream.

On my first day at work, a sales-type job, my boss told me about a girl who used to work for him who took home a thousand dollars a day. He claimed she only had to work one or two days a week, instead of the usual five, because she worked so hard and made so much. A thousand dollars a day. Now during my time working there, no one I've seen at the business has come close to those numbers in one day. We all still work our four or five days a week, and we are all still working hard. But still it keeps you wondering and thinking that it may be possible. And that keeps many people coming in day after day without feeling dejected about having to come in at all. My boss knows the value in selling a dream. Because a thousand dollars a day doesn't just buy a few nice things, it changes the quality of your life. It's a Sea Monkey ad.

A few blocks up from my apartment is a street lined with restaurants and stores. Walking down it the other day, I saw a toy store with a package of Sea Monkeys sitting in the window.

I stopped and stared at the small, red tipped aquarium and wanted to buy them again so badly just so I could remember what it still felt like to dream.

I went into the store to discover that they now cost \$5.95, three times what they once were. The price of dreams is going up. And I bought them – again. I bought them to remember what I used to feel, and also to remember what I've since learned. They are nothing more than a few shrimps in an aquarium, but if you look real hard and use lots of imagination, they are little genies in a plastic bottle. If nothing else, they are good for thinking of the things you wish or wished for. And when you're not dreaming, they make really cheap pets.

–Ayn Imperato

*END NOTE: Sea Monkeys, I discovered, were developed in 1957 by a man named Harold von Braunhut, who was a novelty gift entrepreneur owning 195 patents for various curiosities, including X-Ray Spex, Invisible Goldfish (with the promise that they will never be seen!), and Crazy Crabs. Since the original kits in the '60s and '70s, other items have been developed, such as watches containing a tiny shrimp-filled bowl, t-shirts, posters, as well as computerized "virtual" Monkeys, all generating more revenue for the infamous entrepreneur. Von Braunhut was later found to be involved in "some of the most extreme racist and anti-Semitic organizations in the country," despite the fact that von Braunhut was, in actuality, Jewish himself. Since their conception in the late 1950s, billions of Sea Monkeys, both real and virtual, have been sold.*

AYN IMPERATO

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DESIGNATED DALE

## I'M AGAINST IT

As with most celebrities who reside out here in the greater L.A. area, it seems that when they get a hankerin' for testing their limits with the law, it's usually done in an unconventional fashion. O.J. Simpson, who proved himself quite handy with a blade, had his vehicle chase/parade on the freeways out here that one wild summer, and he

they never really have since this all went down.

Police records show that when the officers arrived at his house on the night in question, Spector was standing over near Clarkson's body with his hands in his pockets. When he wouldn't show his hands, the police resorted to using an electric Taser gun to place him in cus-

lawyer, friend and ally to the wealthy who get themselves into some serious hot water (more like scalding, if you will, on a criminal level). You might remember Bobby Shapiro's services when he helped out O.J. Simpson with that little sticky situation of murdering a coupla people, one being his ex-wife. 'Member? You 'member! That

Anyhow, after nine whole months later, it finally happens: Phil's charged with murder on November 20, 2003. Phil then decides in early February to ditch Shapiro and his services (should've been him to begin with, instead of Lana Clarkson) and have famed defense attorney Leslie Abramson take his murder case over. To

## Music good. Murder bad.

ended up holing up for a while on his property in Brentwood before the fuzz collared his smug, murdering ass. Had that been me or any other low-profile jerk, the last thing viewed through my eyes would've been the powder flash of a policeman's riotgun while the lead spray from the barrel made a nice part down the middle of my face and/or body. Ah, to contain enough wealth to buy yourself a suspended or scott-free sentencing. Must be nice, that is, if you can live with yourself, right O.J.? But there's been yet even more criminal shenanigans happening in L.A. lately.

Let's back up to a little over a year ago. February 3, to be exact. This was the night that Phil Spector was charged with putting a bullet in B-movie/bit-part actress Lana Clarkson's head (through her mouth, to be exact). I'd like to state right here as you're reading this that I've been quite the fan of Spector's work for some time. In my own opinion, he was one of rock'n'roll's greatest producers, if not *the* best. Phil possessed equal amounts of unsurpassed passion, talent, and vision. But, with that said, you can't (and shouldn't try to) admire anyone on a personal level solely on their achievements. Why? Because it's downright silly, being that some of the biggest geniuses in history were some of the biggest fucking assholes as people. So, when I heard this story drop last year, I got that "Please tell me you didn't do something as stupid as this, you dumbass!" feeling in my gut. But unfortunately, up to this point in the case, things aren't looking all that favorable for our boy Phil. In fact,

today. Hey, Phil, a lil' bit of advice: you ain't Rodney fucking King AND you're sixty-three years old, man. Just do what the nice LAPD officer instructs you to do next time, if there ever is a next time, god forbid. Besides being his stubborn bastard self with the police – something he's constantly known for doing with everyone – ol' Philly is also quoted on the same police records for saying some ridiculously stoopid shit.

Spector talked to his chauffeur that night, telling him, "I think I killed somebody." The chauffeur, identified only as Souza, told the cops arriving at the scene that he came to the mansion's back door after hearing a boom and saw Clarkson, her face bloody, seated in a chair. Incidentally, Souza's the guy who called 911. Wonder if Souza's still employed under Spector, Inc.? Yes, this shit's actually on police record, folks.

Inside the house, blood was found on a door handle, a stairway railing, and a man's coat in a dressing room upstairs. A bloody rag was on a bathroom floor near the entrance of the house. Oh yeah – speaking of the entrance of the house – Clarkson's body was found in a pool of blood near the entrance with a revolver under her leg. Bits of her teeth (blown out from the bullet's impact) were scattered like marbles across the floor. A fucked up scene, indeed, wouldn't you agree? Although arrested on suspicion of murder that same evening, Spector got released on a million dollar bond just hours later.

Now, can you guess who legally came to Spector's defense? That's right: Robert Shapiro –

fucking shit receptacle Shapiro is as guilty as O.J., as far as I'm concerned. Before the report was published, he issued a statement declaring Spector's innocence. "We have assembled a team of scientific experts which is among the most respected and prestigious in the world," Shapiro said. "Based on this team's findings of this horrible human event, any jury will conclude that Phil Spector is not guilty." Whatever. Kind of like O.J. and his "ongoing investigation" to find out who offed his wife and her man-pal. You know something, you shitbirds: you may have insulted the system, but don't insult the people's intelligence. People like me don't like it, you jerks.

Spector was also booked with personally using a handgun in commission of a crime, an enhancement that could add more time to a sentence if he is convicted. That's not just a whopper. That's a Whopper w/ cheese, bee-yotch! Over the summer months to follow, Spector wasn't only part of an über-lame interview with *Esquire* magazine that has him flapping his trap on how Clarkson's death was possibly a suicide, but he goes one pissed-off, tyrannical step further. Phil then starts to badmouth Shapiro to the press – from how he didn't get this case nipped in the bud to how he didn't even cut him a deal on the legal fees! Can you friggin' imagine this guy?! Spector actually considered Shapiro "a friend as well as a colleague." That's funny, 'cause I've always considered Shapiro's face something to wipe my ass with, even though that smarmy mug of his isn't even worthy of getting near the general area of my shitter.

refresh any memories out there, Abramson was the lawyer who became famous for her role in the murder trial of brothers Lyle and Erik Menendez. Yeah, those Menendezes. Abramson, 60, said she had been phasing out her defense practice, ready to look towards retirement, when she was contacted by Spector. Here's where she stuffs a wrinkled-up, old foot in her mouth by exemplifying what I was talking about earlier about admiring anyone on a personal level solely on their achievements: "I was about to hang it up when I got the call. No other defendant would get me to give up my freedom. No other defendant was someone I considered an idol, an icon, and the definition of cool." Well, pardon me, Ms. President of the Legal Eagles Phil Spector Fan Club, but I have a question. When did the fact that someone you considered an idol, an icon, or the definition of cool designate your personal legal services? And what's the deal with "no other defendant would get you to give up your freedom?" What about the real innocent people that need your services? Oh, shit, I'm sorry. You're a defense attorney. D'oh.

Look, I absolutely love Spector's production work as much as the next hopeless music nut, but that don't mean that the guy hasn't got some serious issues and I that I'm gonna come running to his aid when he decides to start acting like Jesse James. Fuck that. Take responsibility for your doings or prepare to pay the price. And that doesn't mean to literally pay your way out of it with a simp like Abramson. Phil's track record of

being a bi-polar prima donna and having a gun handy speaks for itself. In 1977 at the Whisky-A-Go-Go in Hollywood Spector meets the Ramones for the first time to discuss the possibility of working with them on one of their upcoming LPs. (You knew there had to be the six degrees of the Ramones in here, didn't you?) What's the first words outta the charmer's mouth to the band? "My bodyguards wanna fight your bodyguards," he blurts out, wearing a cape and those unmistakable shades, sorta like some smarly Hollywood vampire. But he did go on to say that he liked the band and that he's available to make a great album, if they chose to do so with him. Joey Ramone, being a huge fan of Spector's work, was more than ecstatic to work with the music legend on the soon-to-be fifth Ramones' LP, *End of the Century* (1980).

As soon as work got started on the record at Spector's Gold Star Studios in L.A., Phil was up to his usual freakishness, keeping the band hanging around for ridiculously long periods of time. There were the tedious playbacks in the studio, like the supposed hours of playback of the opening guitar chord of the song "Rock'n'Roll

High School." There was the sitting around his house, waiting for Spector to make his "entrance," and then after an hour or so of doing so, Phil would sit at his piano, singing and tinkering the keys, almost like he was expecting everyone to sit there and listen. According to Joey: "If anyone in the band wanted to leave, he'd disappear. Then he'd come back and he'd want to show you his terrarium or some of the hideous-looking things he had in there. The night had to belong to Phil, just like the studio does. It was just too weird. One time I opened a closet door in his kitchen and this St. Bernard jumped out of the dark. It was locked in, just hangin' out in there."

Most artists who worked with Phil said that he always demanded an explanation as to why anyone wanted or had to leave his place. Man, can you say CREEPY? During the *End of the Century* sessions, which usually took place at night, the Ramones were up early in the mornings to be on call for the filming of *Rock'n'Roll High School*, the band's big screen debut. The days got longer and longer, and for Dee Dee, things were quickly coming to a head with the unbearable schedule of multi-

tasking a movie and LP. Joey goes on: "Dee Dee was goin' through his own period, he had his own demons. And L.A. is the kind of place you can get into trouble, especially if there's a lot of waiting around. Phil would run down the songs like a couple hundred times before he'd even do one take; he was listening for something. We were used to goin' in and knockin' 'em out in one take. We like it to be spontaneous. You like to capture that. It takes us like a month to record an album. But with Phil, this album took forever. It was like a crazy Chinese water torture and Dee Dee started crackin' up." Then it happened one night. The inevitable explosion between a drunken Spector and a "chemically enhanced" Dee Dee, who was supposedly provoking Phil. The story goes, according to Joey: "He held a gun to Dee Dee's head. Dee Dee was kinda fucked up on Quaaludes or something and he told Phil he was gonna kill him. I guess Phil felt he had only one way to respond."

If this ordeal was true to detail or not, listen to what Larry Levine (Spector's long-time studio engineer) had to say about the sessions and his second heart attack: "The Ramones, Jesus, that was a terrible

experience. It was a contributing factor to my heart attack. The night before it happened, Phil and I had gone around. He wasn't doing any work. He was drinking and he was procrastinating and we couldn't get any work done. The Ramones were in the studio, they were there all night and he wouldn't focus. He'd sit there in a stupor. It was really that bad." I'd like to know just what the hell kind of salary Spector paid Levine over the years. I mean, to have to sit and work in a studio in the thick of that crap going on, let alone have it drive you to heart failure. And this is just the Ramones sessions: the tip of the iceberg of god-knows-what-else went on with other artists who worked with Phil. Mad genius, yes. That neighbor or babysitter you can count on? No thank you.

It's looking rather grim as to what's gonna happen with Mr. Spector, but remember that this is Los Angeles, so don't choke on your own spit if you happen to catch Phil and O.J. playing golf together anytime soon. Music good. Murder bad.

I'm Against It  
**-Designated Dale**  
[<DesignatedDale@aol.com>](mailto:DesignatedDale@aol.com)



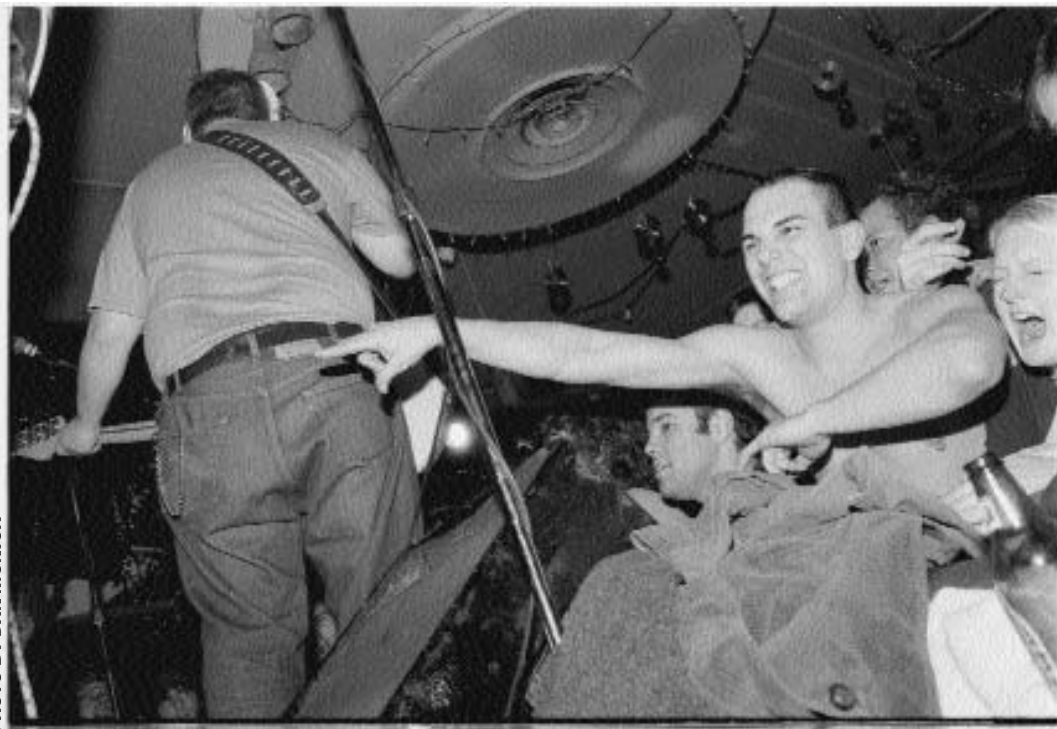


**RICH MACKIN**

# THE TWISTED BALLOON

**IT SEEMED THAT THE ONE - IF NOT ONLY - THING WE HAD IN COMMON WAS OUR TENDENCY TO WEAR THE SAME PANTS FOR DAYS ON END.**

PHOTO BY DAN MONICK



**F**uck the punk community. There, I said it. I mean, sure, a few months ago, I said I was trying not to use the word “fuck” to describe anything except actual fucking, but who cares, punk is all about rebellion and hypocrisy, isn’t it? I’ll talk more about hypocrisy in a moment, but right now, let me elaborate on the punk community. First of all, for the most part, punk is a concept at best and scene at worst, and it really isn’t as much of a community as many people convince themselves that it is.

For one thing, a community is something that has a whole culture to it – a culture, not a subculture. A subculture is just that, and a music or fashion scene is no more autonomous than a set of slang is a different language. While, indeed, a few pockets exist where there are punk families with punk parents and punk kids, for the most part punk is viewed as a youth activity. Those who are over thirty or so better have some scenester cred from being a performer, organizer or writer, or else they are the weird old people who get funny looks. I find it intriguing how many punk kids go on about how they

will never grow out of punk, dress socially normal, and such, yet look down on those of earlier generations who are living their todays as today’s youth plan their tomorrows. For another thing, as cool as DIY is, much of it, when you come down to it, still requires mainstream corporate culture.

Don’t believe me? Well, while your band might have recorded on a 4 track in your basement and pressed the CDs on your own label, you had to buy that 4 track from someone, and you had to buy that CD player from someone. I bet that this equipment wasn’t handmade from all natural components by someone you know by name. Writing, editing, printing, stapling my own zine for years is pretty DIY, but I still rely on a corporate copy machine and paper made by a company. (The one exception to this is a zine Ben Snakepit wrote in his own blood on homemade paper, but I think my point is still valid.) This isn’t to say that DIY zines and small labels aren’t awesome and worth supporting, just that even Dischord records isn’t completely detached from the “system.” None of us are; none of us will be. And

that’s not just a fact. It’s not the end of the world, either.

But to go back to how the punk community is not really a community, let’s consider the diverse and/or eclectic and/or completely unrelated genres that all can be described as punk. I mean, to some, Fugazi is a punk band, to others, Good Charlotte is a punk band. Siouxsie and the Banshees was at one point a punk band, as was Corrosion of Conformity. GG Allin was a hero to many punks, as is Ray Cappo. Crass and Skrewdriver were both punk bands with political lyrics, and as much as you might disapprove with one or another’s views, liking or agreeing with something is not the factor that makes it punk. So what the heck is punk really? If punk is not about fashion, why is fashion such an important part of punk? Why can the term “punk fashion” even be coined and come to mind to mean certain things, even in a magazine published by a bunch of people who few passers-by would say “looked” punk? But if punk is about fashion, why are so many of the great punk bands so unfashionable? And I don’t mean counter fashion by

looking rebellious (in a specific way that conforms to a standard of rebellion, of course). When I went to see the Circle Jerks when I was fifteen, the four guys we all paid to see wore t-shirts and jeans and looked like they spent little to no time on hairstyles of any sort.

Once I was at a party, and there were hardcore kids in hooded sweatshirts, a few hands displaying Xs; mohawked spike leather kids; Carhartt with patches wearing dreadlocked all in black crusty kids; rockabilly kinda looking kids; thrift store and chunky glasses hipster types; people like me who don’t care about fashion and so wind up dressing like everyone else we know who doesn’t care about fashion... and it hit me that we all could be called punk, but we all looked different. We had political beliefs ranging from conservative patriotic types to militantly apathetic types to radical anarchists. We listened to music that all could be called punk but sounded completely diverse. (Much the way that Sabbath is heavy metal, Slayer is heavy metal, and Motley Crue is heavy metal or how Johnny Cash and Garth Brooks are both country.)

So, what was the unifier that somehow made us all punk? Matt Coweatman held the answer once the question was asked.

"None of us changed our pants."

Indeed. It seemed that the one – if not only – thing we had in common was our tendency to wear the same pants for days on end. For a few of us, for months on end. (In fact, I think I donned the jeans I am wearing now two weeks ago, and save for showers and bedtime, have been wearing the same pair.) Now, some of us take the pants off daily, wash, change underwear and put them back on. Some of us have no more morning ritual than physically getting up and perhaps looking around to see where we are, but the more I thought about it, the more I realized that all the punks I knew had this tendency. It's not an exact science. We did change on occasion. Some of us wear dresses and skirts and kilts, but when we did wear pants, we wore the hell out of them. I'm not saying that a poll of a punk show will yield 100% admittance to repeat pantal wearing, but the trend should arise significantly.

So there you have it. The unity of the punk scene is in our pants.

This got me started thinking about pants in the larger cultural scale. It's funny. I think everyone I know wears pants. Yet, when people I know stopped wearing chain wallets or took out their nose rings because "everyone" sported that look, they meant "everyone" in an exaggerated, figurative sense. But literally everyone I know wears pants. Furthermore, they were alarmed because they identified themselves as rebels who couldn't do what "everyone" was doing. Yet, I don't see too many nonconformists rejecting pants wearing as a statement of rebellion. The closest thing to this is no pants day every May (May 7 this year, check out <http://www.nopantsday.com> for more info) but you can guess, without even looking at the site, the level of seriousness involved.

So, since everyone I know wears pants, but there is nothing about pants that is inherent in human nature, I started thinking about the numerous points that can be made about pants wearing. The first one came up when I was talking about the nature of oppressive societies. You see, the more a society is oppressive, the more forms of oppression will come up. Kalahari bushpeople have some division of labor, but no class system, no sexism, and no ethnic or racist oppression. Without discussing current messes, America, for the most part, was run by wealthy, light-skinned people who used some dark-skinned people for slaves or cheap

labor, other dark-skinned people for target practice. Women had less rights than men. Workers had less rights than bosses. Another good example of this is in the English rule in the time of *Braveheart* – the white male king looks down upon women, homosexuals, the lower classes, and finds ways to be racist to other white people. The English have been oppressing the Irish and Scottish for ages. More on *Braveheart* later. The point being that I was talking about how Western society has traditionally been oppressive.

Someone read this and noted that not only Western society is oppressive. This took me by surprise, because my point wasn't to say; "Only Western society is oppressive." But "Pretty much all of Western society is oppressive, and I want to be as general as possible without saying all humanity is oppressive, because that's not the case." This made me fully understand a problem inherent with language. People will filter what you say with what they expect you to say, and what they have been trained to hear.

For instance, I can say, "I am Rich Mackin." You likely read that to mean that I am Rich Mackin, and nobody else is. But if I say, "I am wearing pants," you clearly wouldn't assume I am the only wearer of pants. For that matter, we might think someone is insane if they were to say, "I am God" because, at least in our culture, we imply God to be one person, so if that person thinks they are God, you assume they mean, "I am God, and you are not." In India, this might be met with the same significance of saying, "I am wearing pants." "Big deal," the listener would say, "We all are." Alan Watts postulates that the whole problem with Christianity is that Christ said he was God, and his followers misinterpreted what Watt's feels is, "Hey, I am God, because we all are," wrongly and thought, "Oh, so this Jesus guy is God, meaning nobody else is."

To beat this horse even further and randomly, if I were to say, "Black people wear baggy pants and gold chains," you might consider that a racist stereotype, because you assume I mean all black people do this, or only black people do this. But a statement like, "Black people wear pants," would be met with something along the lines of, "Duh, people of all races wear pants." This made me start thinking about how this discrepancy in the use of language allows for stereotypes and miscommunication. When I earlier said that the "English have been oppressing the Irish and Scottish for ages," I meant

that the ruling section of that group which represents the English. But this sentence, grammatically, could also infer that all English people do this, which is not the case. But it shows what a big distance there is in the translation between the writer and reader, the speaker and listener.

Okay, so back to *Braveheart*. I have used that film a few times to note the idea of a society that has many forms of oppression, especially the white on white ethnic oppression. But something else also surfaced when I started thinking about English people oppressing the Scots. And yes, this also has to do with pants.

Groups that wear pants oppress those that don't.

Think about it. Men historically have oppressed women. Men wear pants. Women, until recently, didn't. The pant-wearing English oppressed the kilt-wearing Scottish. Pant-wearing Europeans oppressed peoples who wore loincloths, saris, sarongs, grass skirts, gourds... Naked people don't wear anything, pants or otherwise, and have been historically persecuted into putting some pants on or hiding in segregated beaches and colonies.

I don't think this is decided. I don't see the source of all oppression in the world to be the wearing of pants. Maybe it's the way red cars get more tickets – people who like to drive fast like to drive red

cars. Maybe it's a complex series of cause and effect relationships resulting to a fact like how no war has been fought by two nations that have McDonald's in them. (This is explored in detail in Thomas Friedman's *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*). Maybe it's just a coincidence that shows that just because something is factually or technically accurate doesn't make it a logical theory. An observation can be correct without understanding the cause and effect relationship of what you are observing. But, it's something to think about.

Oh, and about the punk community, the radical community, the activist community – well, all the people in these communities wear pants. But then again, so do non-punks, non-radicals, and non-activists. We're all part of a bigger community. If you don't address that, and consider that the people who live around you, who put together your CD player, sell the paper your zines are printed on, and stitch your pants together are part of that community too, you don't care about your community. Call a scene whatever you want, but if it's about exclusion and not inclusion. It's a clique, not a community.

–Rich Mackin

RICH MACKIN







JIM RULAND

# LAZY MICK

VINCENT'S MADNESS WAS PERSONAL AND PRIVATE. ALTHOUGH THE BETRAYAL OF THE FRANK FAMILY BY AN UNKNOWN AGENT MUST HAVE FELT PERSONAL, ANNE WAS DESTROYED BY A PARTICULARLY VIRULENT PUBLIC MADNESS.

## SANCTUARIES

A few summers ago I went to Amsterdam for all the usual reasons. I thought the highlight of my trip would be sitting in the Old Sailor Bar, sipping stout while high on hash, watching English football hooligans work up the nerve to proposition the prostitutes behind the glass on the other side of the alley. What I didn't expect was to be swept up in two of the city's most popular tourist destinations: the Anne Frank House and the Vincent van Gogh Museum.

Ironically, Anne's house is easy to miss. Like the other canal-side houses on Prinsengracht, the Anne Frank House is tall and narrow, more deep than wide. The museum has expanded since it opened in 1960. A new structure has been added to the offices and warehouse that sheltered the secret annex where Anne and seven others hid from July 6, 1942, through August 5, 1944. It is not an ostentatious building. Extensive renovations have camouflaged the museum's façade. The result is subtle and innocuous. If it weren't for tourists queued outside the entrance, I might not have realized it was there at all.

To reach the annex, one has to navigate the reconstructed rooms where Otto Frank worked as a buyer and seller of spices. The visitor moves through dreary offices and storerooms, past rows of empty desks and stacks of tins used for measuring the spices that were ground on the premises. At the secret entrance to the annex proper, the movable bookcase is left propped open and the effect is reminiscent of a haunted house, a scene from a Nancy Drew novel. Ascending the tight, narrow staircase, the wealth of information about Mr. Frank's business I have just absorbed strikes me as irrelevant. The creaking stairs tell as much as the plaques and typed note cards in the display cases. Unlike most famous homes that have been converted into museums with their roped-off rooms like a precious full-scale diorama, the visitor's experience at the Anne Frank house is intimate and intense. Eight people hid here for over two years. These are the rooms.

No space appears more lived in than Anne's bedroom, which she shared, first with her sister Margot and then with Fritz Pfefferman, a middle-aged dentist who had gone into hiding with the Franks. It is very much a child's room. The museum's curators have taken great pains to

A dressing gown hangs from a hook. A piece of flimsy fabric is draped over a chair. A replica of Anne's journal sits on the desk. The soft light from the desk lamp suggests a writer at work. It is a room that is always awaiting Anne, but Anne, of course, is never coming back.

The Anne Frank House is the second most popular tourist attraction in Amsterdam; the Vincent van Gogh Museum is the first. The museum was at the top of my list of things to do in Amsterdam, and it was a crushing disappointment. Standing before van Gogh's "Sunflowers," I felt as if someone was playing a trick on me. I didn't see the specialness of the art on display, even though I wanted to. Looking at the painting, I felt I understood it entirely. No weird symbolism to grasp. No half-formed figures to pretend to understand. Growing up on a farm, Vincent was no stranger to sunflowers, and yes, these were indeed sunflowers, but they didn't strike me as a particularly competent depiction. Look at all the paint he used. It looks like he smeared it on with a trowel. Clearly, he wants it to be more complicated than it is.

In the bookstore I bought a short biography of Vincent van Gogh, complete with a treatise of his works. I took the book to the Hard Rock Café. The rain had abated; the sun had come out, glinting brightly in the puddles on the sidewalk. I ordered a Heineken and read about Vincent taking up with prostitutes, drinking absinthe, roaming the streets of Paris with a pistol in his pocket. No question about it, he was a crazy motherfucker. I turned the page and spied a photo of a composition called "The Bedroom," and my head started to spin. It depicts a small, close room in the south of France. The room, or rather Vincent's representation of it, bore an eerie similarity to Anne's bedroom in the annex. I hauled out a post card I'd purchased at the Anne Frank Museum and compared the two rooms. I was floored by the similarities.

While the actual rooms were separated by over sixty years and nearly 800 miles, the two representations — one a reconstruction, the other a visual composition — have been brought together in Amsterdam and are separated by a brisk walk across the city. There is something uncanny about the similarities between these two rooms. I was struck by the arrangement of the furniture, the identical perspective, the strange yellow light behind the green windows — even the lines in the floorboards run a parallel track. Though the two are not usually associated together, if Anne is Amsterdam's best known daughter, Vincent is the city's favorite son.

The thing about Vincent van Gogh is we are fascinated with him for all the right reasons: his violent outbursts, the savage self-immolation and, ultimately, his spectacular suicide, which was foretold in his last work in oils, "Crows in the Wheatfield." His notoriety outshines his most well known work; his creations are forever fixed in his Promethean shadow. Perhaps it's all those self-portraits. Maybe Kirk Douglas's portrayal in *Lust For Life* has something to do with it, giving birth to the myth of Vincent as a brooding Romantic, a misanthropic genius, the protean Beat who cared more about ideals than filthy lucre.

In 1888 Vincent fled to Arles where he rented rooms in the now famous Yellow House at 2 Lamartine Place. He went to work on new projects remarkable for their bold use of color. Both "Sunflowers" and "The Bedroom" are from this period. This is Vincent's description of the latter:

*This time it's just simply my bedroom, only here color is to do everything, and giving by its simplification a grander style to things, is to be suggestive here of rest or of sleep in general. In a word, to look at the picture ought to rest the brain or rather the imagination.*

A study of these near identical rooms leads the viewer's eye to the pictures Anne pasted on the wall above her bed and writing desk, and those that decorate the walls of Vincent's painting. The photos Anne glued to the wall are still there, preserved behind glass. The Canadian film star Deanna Durbin seems to have been a favorite. Words from Anne's famous diary provides an indication of her motive:

*Our little room looked very bare at first with nothing on the walls; but thanks to Daddy who had brought my picture postcards and film-star collection on beforehand, and with the aid of paste pot and brush I have transformed the walls into one gigantic picture. This makes it look much more cheerful. (July 11, 1942)*

Anne's description would have delighted Vincent. His walls were decorated with his own work, among them portraits of the poet Eugène Boch and the soldier Paul-Eugène Milliet. It is pleasing to think that if Anne had seen Vincent's bedroom, she would have recognized the room for what it was — a place of refuge, a sanctuary.

*The Diary of Anne Frank* is something of a misnomer. Anne's diary is really a series of letters addressed to an imaginary friend named Kitty, her sister, if you will, of the imagination. Vincent's letters to his brother possess the intimacy of a diary and some take them as a form of autobiography. "I can write no differently than I do," he told his brother. Both Vincent and Anne

JIM RULAND

embellished descriptions of their day-to-day existence with elaborate and involved accounts of their work and what it meant to them.

Although it is folly to imagine Anne was familiar with Vincent's "The Bedroom," it is not only likely, but highly probable the men and women of the Anne Frank House who have preserved Anne's room knew the work well – even if they were not altogether aware of it. It is impossible to leave the museum without feeling manipulated. On August 4, 1944, the SD (German Security Service) arrested the eight people in hiding and took them away to the SD-prison on Euterpestraat. The Franks were given a few minutes to grab what they could and they would have turned the rooms over assembling those things they thought they might need in the dark days to come. It is probably best not to dwell on this painful moment. Certainly, the SD would have rummaged through the rooms in search of clues that would lead them to other Amsterdam Jews in hiding. To present the room as if Anne might step through the door after having brushed her teeth and kissed her parents good night is to participate in the same type of evocative fantasy that we ascribe to film, television and the stage. The Anne Frank house is very much a set, an orchestrated reconstruction intended to evoke a specific type of emotion in those who set foot in it. The room is not the room, we must remember, but a terrifyingly poignant replication.

There are three versions of "The Bedroom." When the original was damaged, Theo advised Vincent to make a copy before having the original restored. Vincent followed his brother's advice and produced a second version, which is now displayed at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris (he also created a third, though much smaller, version for his sister and mother). The copy differed in many not-so-subtle ways from the original. The lines are skewed, the window frames bulge as if from some terrible pressure, the framed compositions on the wall hang precariously, as if they might pitch themselves onto the floor. The room itself seems tilted. There is a reason for this. At the time when Vincent was making the copy, he was cut off both physically and mentally from the place that had once been a symbol of rest and refuge. It was now a place that existed only on his troubled canvas, in his restless imagination.

If indeed it was rest Vincent was seeking, he did not find it in Arles. His declining health, the many charms of the night cafés, the strain of the strong southern sun were too much for him. His relationships, namely with Gauguin, who was staying with him at the Yellow House, suffered.



**THERE IS SOMETHING UNCANNY ABOUT THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THESE TWO ROOMS. I WAS STRUCK BY THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE FURNITURE, THE IDENTICAL PERSPECTIVE, THE STRANGE YELLOW LIGHT BEHIND THE GREEN WINDOWS - EVEN THE LINES IN THE FLOORBOARDS RUN A PARALLEL TRACK.**

Gauguin's portrait of Vincent at work behind his easel reveals a man on the brink of collapse. After a quarrel with his friend on December 23, 1888, Vincent had his much-romanticized mishap with the shaving razor. He went to a brothel and presented a piece of his ear to a prostitute with the following instructions: "Guard this object carefully." Vincent had just received word that his brother had gotten engaged, and he feared his additional financial responsibilities would prohibit Theo from supporting him. It was, he surmised correctly, the beginning of the end.

Upon Vincent's return from the hospital he wrote the following to his brother: "When I saw

my canvases again after my illness the one that seemed best to me was the 'Bedroom.'" It is interesting that a scene Vincent had painted to lighten his mood brought him the greatest satisfaction, even though the painting was deeply flawed from a technical point of view.

After a series of late-night excesses, Vincent had a second attack and he was taken to the hospital convinced that someone was trying to poison him. The people of Arles petitioned for him to be confined. He was removed to a hospital at Saint-Remy where he tried to kill himself by eating paint. July 27, 1890, he shot himself in the chest and died two days later. In the last line of his last letter to Theo, found with his body in a wheat field, he asks: "What's the use?"

Vincent's madness was personal and private. Although the betrayal of the Frank family by an unknown agent must have felt personal, Anne was destroyed by a particularly virulent public madness. In September of 1944, Anne was deported to Auschwitz and sent to Bergen-Belsen. Cut off from anyone she'd ever known, she believed she alone had survived. Under the impression that her entire family had died in the camps, Anne lost hope and died of typhus in March of 1945, a few short weeks before Bergen-Belsen was liberated. She was a prisoner to the very end.

Both rooms are presented to the viewer from the same perspective. Each has a pair of doors positioned in opposite corners, suggesting the rooms were intended to be passed through, not occupied for long periods of time. Whatever refuge the occupants of these rooms may have found, it was bound to be temporary and fleeting, a brief respite from the madness swirling all about them. Both rooms are empty, sanctuaries no more.

Though both Vincent and Anne viewed their sanctuaries as prisons, it is in these rooms they created the masterpieces that forged their legacies. Here Anne composed her famous diary, which her father edited and published posthumously. Vincent's work at the Yellow House, with its bold use of color, forever changed the painter's palette and the public's taste. At the intersection of art and history, their sanctuaries are preserved not so their art may endure – both Vincent and Anne are strangely ubiquitous – but to remind us of the tenacity of the human spirit in the face of inexorable grief, sadness, and evil. These rooms tell us that sometimes the only thing that makes life bearable is a picture of a friend, a postcard from a place we'd like visit some day in the not-to-distant future.

–Jim Ruland

JIM RULAND



# SQUEEZE MY HORN

**MOVE OVER FLAMING CARROT, WE'VE GOT A NEW BRAND OF SUPER HERO.**

GARY HORNBERGER

Well, it's the first column of the New Year and things are going on just as usual. The strike in the grocery biz is still in a stalemate but the time off has given me the opportunity to get many things accomplished around all the homes of my family. I'll try to give all of you a brief update on the goings on with the strike. As of four weeks ago (the last time I was at the store), the grand total of picketers had decreased from 122 to 49. It seems I'm not the only person disgusted with the strike. At this point, I don't know if I can go back; I like working where I can take a break when I need to and can go to the bathroom without asking permission. It also came to my attention that my boss is telling everyone that when and if people come back to work that he has a list of names and that he's going to ride those people so hard that they're going to want to quit. Think I want to go back to a person like that? And we get along with each other. Seems the union is starting to give in; the papers claim they accepted a couple of the companies' proposals on certain items. Looks like we're going to get a shitty contract.

I also read where some guy thinks that breaking the unions

would be the best thing, because then the workers could bargain for their own wages and benefits. How absurd is that? Could you see people asking for a living wage at the stores? They would laugh them out the door. "Hi, I'm looking for a job here at Wal-Mart or McDonalds or any other low-paying job, and I want 40 hours a week at \$10 an hour." When they stopped laughing long enough, they would have security rolling you out into the parking lot. There's an economic stimulus.

I've got to say that you don't necessarily need money to have fun. I've been reading all my Green Lantern comics from the '60s, doing housework, and gardening. On Thursdays, one can get into several museums in LA for free, and I'm doing things that I was either too tired or just didn't have time to do before. Now, don't get me wrong. I want to go back to work sometime soon, but while I have the time, I'm having some fun.

Of course I still have my gripes with society. For instance, why is it that at night and early in the morning, people let their dogs out to wreak havoc in my yard? The other night we came home to this huskie covering up after taking a shit in our yard. You know, that thing they

do that rips up the lawn. Anyway, after all that he goes over and rubs up against this sweet pea bush and snaps the roots. Now I have this big, barren spot next to the house. It's not the dog's fault, really. It's the owner's, because if the dog was in its backyard where it was supposed to be, everyone would be happy. I'm not. And there's this other dog, an Akita, that shits in my yard, and when I yell at it, it actually charges the fence, which means it's an aggressive animal. What if there was no fence between us, or there was an elderly or young person walking? This dog could do some damage. Why would a person take a chance letting a dog out? I guess it's all part of home ownership. Well, enough of my problems, let's get on with the comics because I've been reading a ton.

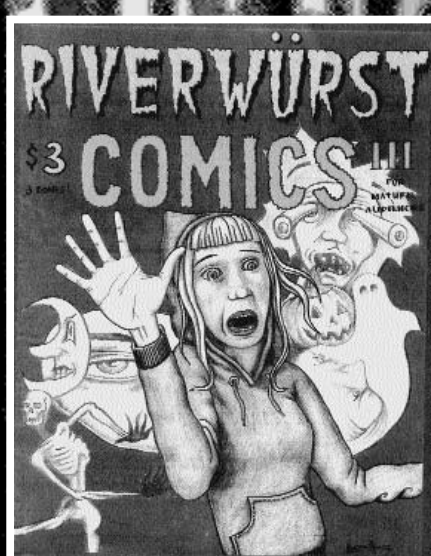
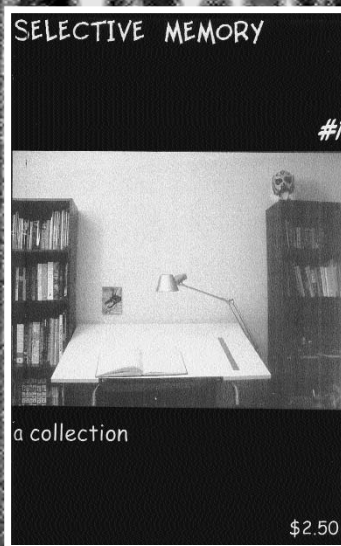
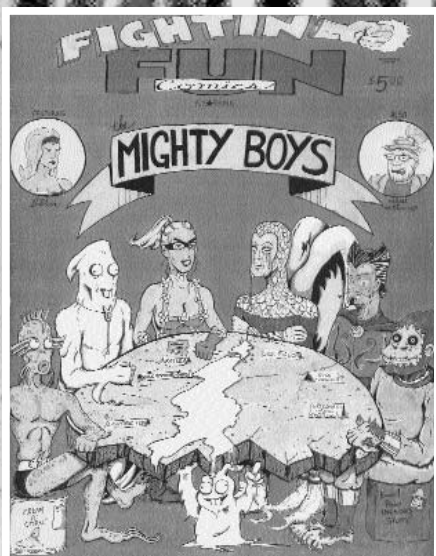
## FIGHTING FUN COMICS #1

by Socha and Pickesimer, \$5 U.S. Move over Flaming Carrot, we've got a new brand of super hero. I don't know why, but I like comics that make a mockery of superheroes. At first glance, I thought that this was just another rip-off. They take six characters, make them goofy or sickly and together they're a superhero group. It's the

Justice League all fucked up. There's Sick Pigeon (Hawkman), Sock Sorcerer (Doctor Fate), Buck-Toothed Ghost (The Spectre), Lighting Fish (Aquaman), Spatula (far-fetched Wonder Woman), and Astronaut Urine Gorilla (?). They all get thrown back in time and meet up with historical figures who end up being copies because the real figures were swiped by the villain and raised to be bad. I'll give you two as a tease: Eli Whitney is a cotton hulk and Ben Franklin is a little creep who has a kite and key crotch belt that shoots out lightning bolts. Come on, it's funny, hence the name *Fighting Fun Comics*. Comics that teach history at the same time. You just can't beat it. So anyway, there's the big good-versus-evil thing going on which leads to the big fight, which in turn leads to comic #2. I can only hope #2 has the punch that #1 has, because I'm gonna be looking for it. (Superheroes In Traction, 1407 Marlowe Ave, Apt. 2, Lakewood, OH 44107, tictoc77@hotmail.com)

## SELECTIVE MEMORY

by Jason Neuman, \$2.50 U.S. Selective is right! This starts off as odd, turns hilarious, goes to ridiculous, gets funny again, and then



gets soft. I guess you can say this guy has it all, and well, I guess it is a collection of works, but to tell the truth, if it was just the "Whizdumb" part, I could read it forever. They are just one panel, but they're funny. Here, I'll give you one. "As a professional, Michael remembered the first rule in mime assassination, always use a silencer." What? You say that's not funny? Well, there's plenty more panels. Go ahead and pick one. Now the problem is the gears go from forward to reverse when we are presented with the adventures of Spliff and Binger, who are basically Jay and Verbose Bob (as opposed to Silent Bob). All these two do is Cheech and Chong-style comedy, and you can only laugh at a pothead

wrong to ask from a comic that I should get what's going on in it the first time I read it? I think not! I understand that herpes or the feelings of sexual understandings are delicate, but shouldn't writing about it be decisive? With that said, I can only say that I didn't get much from this comic other than people are ignorant to social informalities. That's as PC as I can get.

### CYRIL IN THE FALSE LANDS

by Jason Nueman

Cyril the little dead boy and I have had many adventures. You see, I've read probably all of his adventures and this is the latest. This is one of the simplest comics I get, but it really is fun. Cyril goes to these strange and far out places and

thing redeeming is that the drawings have a *Mad Magazine* look to them, but that's it. If piss and blood is your thing, I'll send you my copies because I'm certainly not interested in the ones I've got.

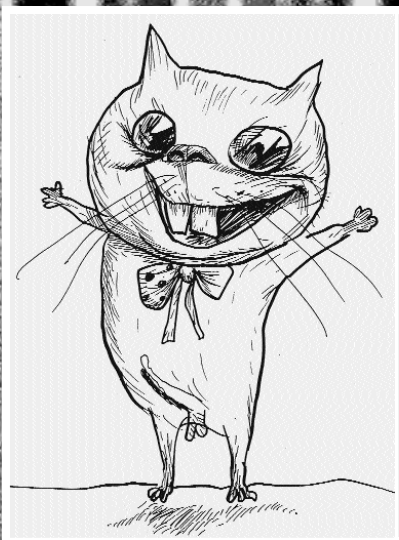
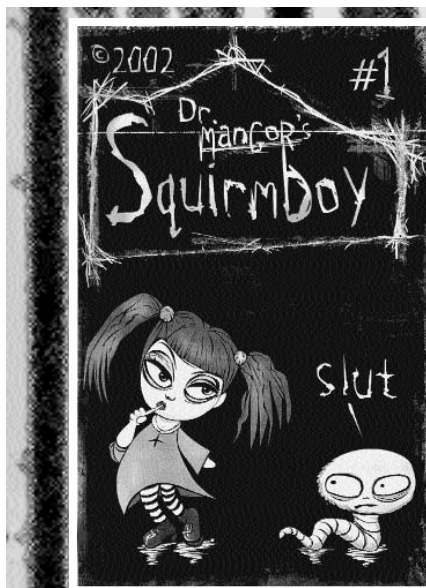
(www.fantagraphics.com, www.johnnyr.com)

### GRISTLE #3

compiled by Sean Stepanoff

This is some pretty bizarre stuff. At first glance I was thinking it was sick, sexual crap, but it's just a collection of graphic art, and while some of it is sexual, some is funny and some is stunning. I really like the first page with this Alice in Wonderland-looking cat with a hard on, even if he does get mashed on the very last page. The real title

the summation is "yeah, they're fuckin' stupid..." Now, if I told you the whole story you wouldn't read the mag. It seems even the devil can't help being tossed out of hell when he lies to his thirteen wives, in "Hell to Pay." I also like "Belly Button Blues," where a young girl returns months after a piercing to ask about concerns of an infection. When the proprietor asks to see the spot, he starts asking frantic questions about her physical state. When he has her all pent up with fear, he says it will all clear up with some hydrogen peroxide in a few days. Yes, *Riverwurst Comics* is a collection of some pretty funny stuff. It's *Mad Magazine* on Halloween. (Riverwurst, PO Box 511553, Milwaukee, WI 53203)



for so long. Then we travel to "missing my chick" love poems, which have no point in being in there. Once again, we are swung around with "The Mother of Invention," a combination of the Joe Atlas comic and the monkey from 2001. I like this book. I'd love it if the soft love poems were gone but you can't always win in comic collections. (Neumie Productions, neumie77@aol.com)

### MURPHY'S HERPES

by Kahla Lichti, \$0.25

Egg shells, egg shells. I've been told before that I'm a little rash in my assessments of comics and that I don't have any heart, so let's see how many eggs I break with one. I understand that comics are to me a form of either something to make you laugh (*The Tick*), or made-up fantastic heroism (*Green Lantern*). Now if you're going to use it as a release for or an instrument for enlightenment, do so in a readable and lighthearted manner. This comic is very hard to read and in some places I just don't get it. Is it

meets up with these Tim Burton-type creatures. This time, Cyril, in his never-ending quest to find Candyland, gets lost in an evil opposite world where he meets up and is imprisoned by his evil opposite. A kind of yin and yang thing. He finds a new friend and some new powers in this, which should make for some cool new stories. Now, I know Cyril is a dead boy, but I'm really starting to warm up to him. (www.cafeshops.com/neumie, neumie77@aol.com)

### ANGRY YOUTH COMICS #5

by Johnny Ryan, \$2.95 U.S., \$4.45 Can.

I have in my possession #1-5 of this rag and I can honestly say I don't like any of them. They're a little over the top for me, a little too monkey shit, zit pus, and hairy fat guy for me. They basically revolve around stories of the angry Loady and his get-rich, fuck-everyone, I'm-a-lazy-son-of-a-bitch-and-I'm-staying-at-your-place schemes. Taste-testing dildos at the dildo factory is just not funny. The only

should be *The Sexual Appetite for the Sick and Twisted*. Some of the art is very detailed and all of it is graphic. Twenty years ago, this book would have been highly controversial, but plain and simple, it's art. All of the scenes are intensely detailed and deliver a punch of WOW. I've got to say if you're a holy roller you're not gonna like this stuff, but if your mind is open and you can see art as a medium on paper, then you're going to jump out of your skin to get a copy of *Gristle 3*. (Sean Stepanoff, 4671 Hollywood Blvd, Apt#10, LA, CA 90027)

### RIVERWURST COMICS #3

\$3.00 U.S.

Halloween on acid is what this is. It's a collection of stories about monsters and mayhem, geeks and creeps, and stories of decapitation and nightmares. There's some funny shit in these pages. It's one of the best collections I've read. My favorite is one titled "The Grays" and it's about two aliens summing up the problems of mankind, and

### DR. MANGOR'S SQUIRRMBOY #1

by Mangor

Well, I'm not real sure what Squirrmboy is but a little girl who was hungry and contemplating suicide found him in a jar. Squirrmboy is this worm-like creature with a big, round head and a barfly's wit. It's crude and indulges in all of life's secret pleasures. Suzi is a little goth girl and has a very small part in the entire goings on. It's not really a story, but a collection of shorts of the mischief that Squirrmboy can get into. I'm riding the fence on this one; hopefully it will turn into a story in the near future, and I can give you a definite yea or nay. Apparently, this title is in animation on kranioclast.com if you want to take a peek. Perhaps more will be known about the little fellow in the jar. As for right now, the pulp is lacking in any real info. (mangor@kranioclast.com)

—Gary Hornberger

GARY HORNBERGER



RAZORCAKE 23





## SWINGING DOOR CONVERSATIONS

I'D RATHER TAKE MY CHANCES WITH THE OLD GUYS THAN PAY FIFTEEN BUCKS TO HAVE MY HAIR CUT IN A TEENY-BOP MALL BY SOME DEPRESSING MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN WHO GOES BY THE NAME BUMPY.

### THE BARBER SHOP

I've always been a sucker for the old style barbershops. I don't know how to put it; there's just something about the places that I love. It really doesn't have anything to do with the quality of haircut either. Sometimes I'll walk into one and I get the feeling I've suddenly stepped back in time, back to an era when the simple art of just sitting around and telling a story meant something. I don't really ask for much out of this life. Just give me an old barbershop on hot Saturday afternoon and I'm pretty happy.

Now don't get me wrong; I'm not necessarily preaching the glory glory hallelujah of all the old barbershops because, believe me, I've been to a few that I probably wished I'd never set foot in. Take for instance the time I saw a boy of five be given a mullet cut and a duck tale, on his free will mind you, as his camouflage-toting father watched the news and said, "Hey guys, do you know why there's no A-Rabs in *Star Wars*?" Blank stares all around. "It's because they're not in the fuuu-uture!"

Yeah, let's give it up for modern man. I mean, you never know what you're going to get, but personally, I'd rather take my chances with the old guys than pay fifteen bucks to have my hair cut in a teeny-bop mall by some depressing middle-aged woman who goes by the name Bumpy.

Anyway, the other day I looked at myself in the mirror and thought, it's time, man. You're starting to look like one of those terrorists on the infamous, most-wanted Iraqi deck of cards. Since I'd just recently moved to New Orleans I had no idea where to go. After about an hour of driving in what seemed like an endless maze of winding streets (if you've ever spent any amount of time trying to navigate the city outside the French Quarter, you know what I'm talking about), I lucked out on a place over on Oak Street. I saw the blue-white-red spinning rod and a sign that read "The Family Barber Shop." Well, all right.

There were three other men waiting in chairs in a small room. There was one chair and one hunched over, bald barber cutting another old-timer's hair. A few flags were stapled to the walls, but besides that the place was pretty plain.

"Say, Bud, I came by here Wednesday and you weren't around," said the guy getting his hair cut.

"Oh yuh, closed on Wednesdays now. Gradually working ma' way towards closing the shop. Next it'll be just Fridays and Saturdays. Yuh' know."

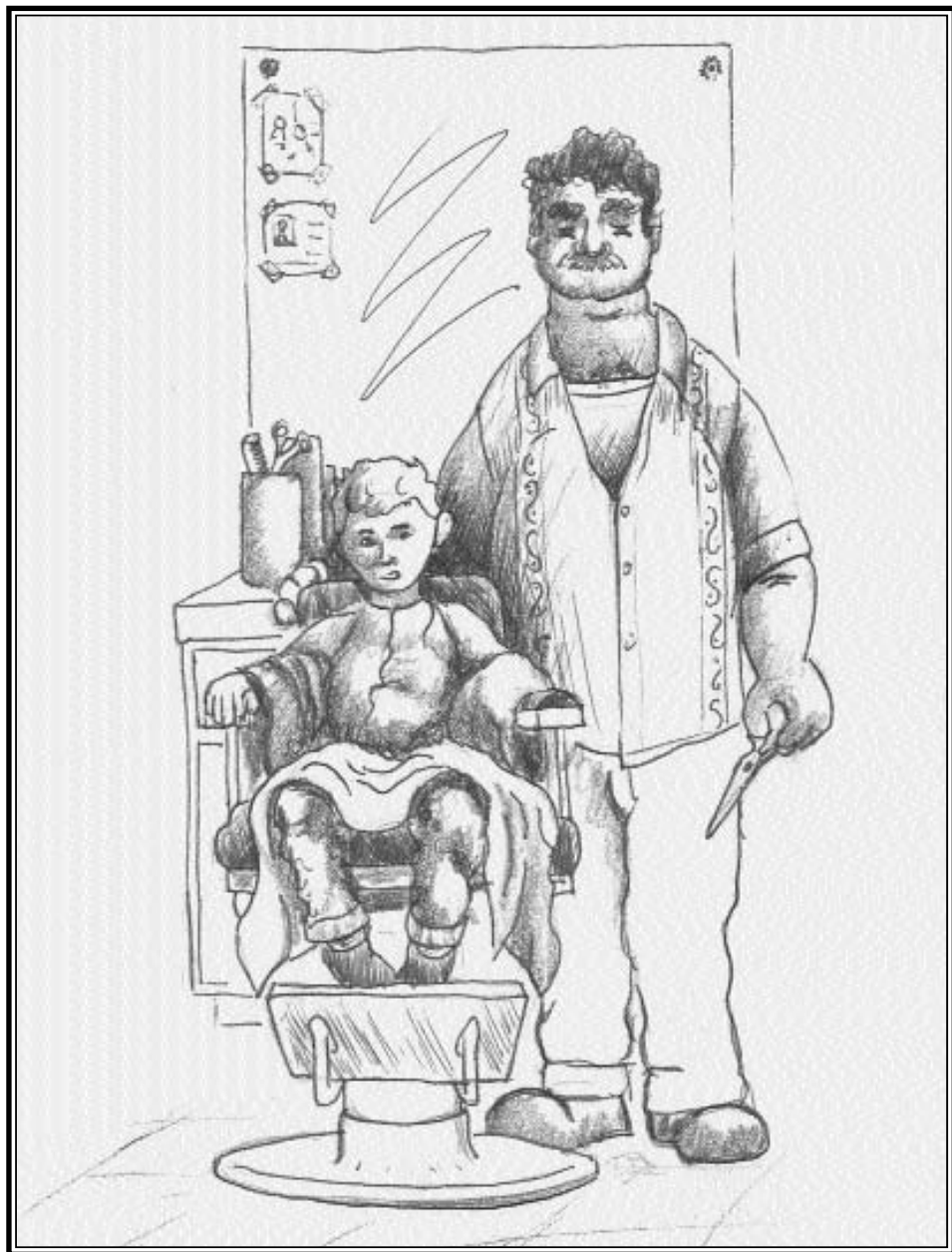
Bud had one of those deep Southern drawls, the kind you're more likely to come across in the

small towns of Mississippi. His eyes were big and round and the wrinkled skin sagged down onto his cheeks. Each time he talked you could see his leathery skin flab around. Slowly he trimmed the man's hair, occasionally glancing up at the television that was showing the latest turmoil in the world.

"That girl not around no more?" asked the man in the chair.

"Nah, she jus' up and left. I don't understand it. Not a word. Just starting to work out too. I was giving her forty percent of what the shop would take in. Hell, on the real slow days I jus' gave it all to her. Her momma's been calling up asking if I seen her. She says the girl don't wan' nothin' to do with her now. I'd understand if she had some problem, if she'd a let me know, but to

ILLUSTRATION BY TOM WRENN



just up and leave, I can't understand that. I don't know if it's drugs or drinking or what."

"Yeah, that's a shame Bud, she seemed like she was going to work out all right."

"Ah, I'm getting' too ol' for this."

About an hour and half later, Bud called me up to the chair. I'd just been sitting there going through the *Time* magazines and watching the lazy flies move about. A lot of people probably wouldn't wait around that long just for a damn haircut, but down here, you just kind of deal with it. Life moves along at a slower pace than it does in other parts of the world. I figure, we're all going to die either way, so what's the rush?

"How ya' wahn' it," Bud asked me.

"Just short, but not too short, not a crewcut or nothing," I said.

Bud started to work away at my hair with a buzzer and through the mirror noticed me staring up at a framed Army certificate hanging on the wall.

"That's from when I was in the Pacific Islands. I was twenty. I remember every single name of the eight other guys in my brigade. Jimmy, Frank, Leonard, Ray, Joe, Bobby, Dave, Eddie. You know, a lot of them didn't make it out alive. Lotta' times I didn't think I would either. Leonard was only eighteen. He was just a kid. Not a day goes by I don't think about those other guys."

Bud trimmed the hair hanging over my ears, every now and then stopping and staring off into blank space, as if the thought was too much for him. I couldn't even begin to understand what it must have been like for him to see all

those guys die so young.

"I got back when I was twenty-two and four year's latah' I bought this shop. Eighty now. That's a hell of a long time."

Eighty minus twenty-six. Holy shit! I nearly jumped out of my chair and gave myself an unwanted mohawk. Fifty-four years! For someone like myself whose longest stint of employment with the same company to date is a year, fifty-four seems unfathomable. I mean, just think of all those heads of hair.

"I wish I could tell some of those guys that died so young that hey, at least you didn't have to see yourself go bald." Bud let out a quiet laugh and tapped the top of his pale-skinned head.

"My wife was always convinced she was gonna' die young," said Bud. "Her mother died pretty young, well, fifty-two, had a heart attack, and my wife didn't think she would make it past sixty. And now you oughta' see her. She's seventy-eight. Just went to the doctor for her check up. Doc ran all the tests on her heart and said she's as clean as a whistle. Well, the way I figure, it ain't really up to us. The guy up there," Bud pointed his scissors towards the ceiling, "decides how long we stay or go."

I don't put much stock in religion, but the simple way Bud put it seemed to make sense.

Sitting in the chair in front of me was an old, frail man. I guessed he was probably close to ninety. He was all bones and his shirt and pants were three sizes too large. He looked like he was about to drown in those clothes. His eyes were squinted as he tried to read a magazine. For some reason I couldn't stop staring at

his foot. He had these sandals on and wasn't wearing any socks. All of these purple, varicose veins shooting every which way and running up under his pants. As Bud cleaned up the back of my hair, I just sat there thinking about the mystery of age, how the body wilts away.

Eventually, Bud pulled away the apron and said, "How's that?"

I glanced quickly at myself through the mirror, and to be honest, the cut was a little lopsided and I looked like I now had a pompadour, but I didn't say anything. I got up out of the chair and paid Bud the eight bucks and left him a couple dollars for a tip. The frail old man attempted to get up without his cane but he fell back into the wall. Bud and I each took an arm and walked him over to the chair and boosted him up. As I was making my way for the door, Bud said, "Hey, what you say, Larry?"

"Hey Bud."

"How goes it?"

"It goes. You hear about Frank Jippers?"

"Nah."

"Had a stroke just last week. Got out of the hospital yesterday. All paralyzed on the left part of his body. He's in a wheelchair now."

"Ah, that's too bad. So you wahn' it the same Larry?"

"Yeah, Bud, same as always," said Frank, brushing his hand through what little hair he had left.

I walked out into the New Orleans afternoon as the buzzer drowned out the voices of the two old men. I just stood under that crazy sun and smiled, thinking, the simple story of life, that's where it's at.

—Seth Swaaley



SETH SWAALEY

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TITO

# NOM DE PLUME

***I'm not sure if this is common knowledge or not, but the toilet on a tour bus is very high on the list of things you don't want to stick your face in.***

I am typing these words from the famed 9:30 Club in Washington, DC. And, although this isn't the same building that was at the center of the famed DC hardcore revolution of the late '70s and early '80s, the name remains the same and a huge part of me wants to believe that this is the same place where the singer of SOA grabbed the mic before his band ripped into their first song and said, "Minor Threat has just been banned from the 9:30 Club. Guess who the fuck is next." Coincidentally, the man who made that statement almost twenty-five years ago is speaking at Lisner Auditorium on the George Washington University campus. It's not the first time we've been in the same place at the same time.

In the summer of 2001, I was, quite unfortunately, on the Warped Tour. I was having a terrible time (as, hopefully, anyone could understand) and it seemed that my only saving grace was the short time that I was able to spend with my friend Heather.

I can't remember what city we were in but it must have been Cincinnati or Chicago or Buffalo or Pittsburgh because the next day was a day off in Cleveland. I foolishly took advantage of having the next day off by getting completely obliterated with Heather. The next morning I woke up in my bunk with a mean ol' hangover. And I was in the worst possible place to have a hangover – the top bunk on a bus. When the bus wasn't swaying back and forth like a boat, I was being thrown off of my mattress from the bumpy highway we were on.

It didn't take too long before all the swaying and shaking and jostling got the best of me and it was very apparent that I was going to be sick. I'm not sure if this is common knowledge or not, but the toilet on a tour bus is very high on the list of things you don't want to stick your face in. But I had no choice (okay, looking back, I guess I could have used a trash bag, but it seemed like the only option at the time). So, for the next

hour or so, before we got to our hotel in Cleveland, I split my time between my swaying bunk and that god-awful toilet. Times were tough.

After checking into the hotel, I made a beeline to my room and curled up in bed while everyone else made plans to go to the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame or the Indians game. I slept off the hangover for the next six hours or so. Sometime

five minutes to collect myself when I heard that voice. A voice that I've been hearing bark the angst-ridden soundtrack to my adolescence for many, many years. I looked up and froze as I had one of the very few star struck moments in my life. Oh my god, Henry Rollins is waiting for the elevator. (The next day, in Cleveland, was to be the Rollins Band's first day of the tour.)



in the early evening I woke up and felt hungry for the first time that day. I knew this was a good sign that my hangover had subsided. My next mission was to eat and hope that I could hold down whatever I put into my stomach.

I made my way down to the lobby in hopes of finding food. The hotel restaurant was my first option but I wasn't in the mood for overpriced baked potatoes and clam chowder out of a can. I walked for about a block in either direction from the hotel entrance but it looked like there was nothing in sight. Downtown Cleveland on a Sunday night just wasn't providing me with what I needed.

I went back inside the hotel lobby feeling somewhat defeated. Did I want to spend money on a cab just so I could fetch my dinner? No. That wasn't going to happen. I figured that I would just have to bite the bullet and walk however far I needed to go in order to find food. I sat on a couch in the lobby for about

Once I became unfrozen from the shock of being in the same room as Mr. Garfield (nay, Rollins), I looked around the lobby to see if anyone had noticed me staring at him. Then I realized that I had to do something. I couldn't let this opportunity slip by. I didn't know what I needed to do but I knew that I had to act fast. That elevator door was going to open soon and Henry was going to slip through my little fingers. So I did the first thing that came to mind. I stood up, walked toward the three middle aged gentlemen (he was with two members of his band) and stood next to them. I was going to ride an elevator with Henry Rollins.

The doors opened and the four of us entered the elevator. I was staying on the fourth floor. Henry pushed the button for the sixth, so I pushed floor eight. I wasn't going to cheat myself out of two floors with the man.

I stared at him the entire ride, the whole time debating with

myself whether or not I should say anything to him. Do I tell him how much I defend his name when the "Who's your favorite Black Flag singer" debate pops up? (Come on. Really, now. I know that 90% of the world will always name one of the first three singers, but let's face it – Henry was the right man at the right time. Sure, Dez had "American Waste" and "Clocked In" but he sounded like he had rocks in his throat. Ron "Chavo" Reyes just didn't have enough catalog under his belt and, besides, the dude pretty much disappeared after his stint with the Flag. Keith Morris was great and laid the groundwork for everyone else, but Henry was the man on *Damaged* and *My War*. He was the one belting out the angst on those two almost perfect albums [Well, side one of *My War* at least. Sometimes I think I'm the only person around that actually likes side two]. Of course. What came after *Slip It In* is subject to debate but, hey, I got four words for you: *Damaged* and *My War*.) No. Of course not. Do I tell him how much I love the Henrietta Collins and the Wifebeating Childhaters album? No. Anyone who brings up old and obscure releases to the person who made them can only come off as someone who is reaching to sound like they are cool enough to know about old and obscure releases.

By the time I had decided not to say anything, the elevator was slowing down for its stop on the sixth floor. As the doors were opening Henry joked about how annoyed he was with the lack of food options in the area. "I guess we'll order another pizza."

They got off on the sixth floor and I continued the ride up to the eighth. When I returned to my room I decided that I, too, would be ordering a pizza. I was still a bit numb from the whole experience. Deep down inside I felt like I was sharing a pizza with Henry Rollins.

And that's my story.

–Tito

hatemyjob31@aol.com





SEAN CARSWELL

## A MONKEY TO RIDE THE DOG

### WE'RE ALL PART OF THIS GODDAMN MONEY MACHINE

A few months after my first book came out, I was hanging out at a Christmas party in my hometown. Cindy, a woman who I'd gone to elementary school with, was there. She and I chatted. By "chatted," I mean that Cindy hit on me relentlessly and I made excuses as to why I had to walk across the room and away from her. Cindy kept catching back up to me. I kept trying to explain to her that a.) I really *did* have a girlfriend and b.) even if I didn't, I wouldn't be interested in hooking up with Cindy. Sometime during the night, someone had told her that I'd just published *Drinks for the Little Guy*. She asked me where she could buy a copy. I told her that a local independent bookstore, House of Books, had a bunch of copies in stock. I gave her directions to House of Books. Then, I made up another excuse and walked away.

A few nights later, I was at another party and I ran into Cindy again. It was better this time because my girlfriend was with me and she gave Cindy enough dirty looks to keep the conversation short. During the short conversation, Cindy told me that she'd gone to Barnes & Noble to look for my book, but they didn't carry it. She said, "The guy there told me that they would carry it if you just brought them some."

I told Cindy again that House of Books had a bunch of copies. Cindy told me that she couldn't find the House of Books.

Now, for those of you who have never been to my hometown, Merritt Island, I'll explain something. It's an island off the coast of Florida. It's three miles wide at its widest and it's forty miles long. State Road 3 runs right through the middle of the island for most of the forty miles. The party where we both were on the first night was in a house along State Road 3; the party where we both were on the second night was in a house along State Road 3. The driveway of Cindy's house butted up to State Road 3. House of Books was on State Road 3. Basically, for her to get from her house to the bookstore, she had to drive to the end of her driveway, take a right, drive straight for a while, and, when she saw the huge sign that said, "House of Books," turn there. There were always plenty of available parking spaces. It couldn't have been easier. She wouldn't even need to change lanes – just take a right, drive a while, and take a right. I'd even given her directions.

Barnes & Noble, on the other hand, was in a very congested strip mall, and this was Christmas time. I should add, too, that the very congested strip mall was several turns away from Cindy's house. Still, I figured that I could give Cindy the benefit of the doubt. Maybe she'd been in the strip mall anyway – going to the Hooters or something – and just ducked into the Barnes & Noble to see if they had my book. I asked her this. She told me, no, that she'd gone there specifically to look for my book. I scratched my head.

It's an example of something that I spend a lot of time wondering about, which is this: why are Americans so fascinated with big chain stores? It's like when I'm walking to the Razorcake PO box and I see people eating at Taco Bell, even though a rad burrito joint, La Estrella, is directly across the street. La Estrella is cheaper than Taco Bell, and the food they serve is healthier. And La Estrella serves real Mexican food made by people who were most likely born in Mexico, as opposed to Taco Bell, which serves fake Mexican food developed in a laboratory somewhere in the US. I don't understand it. Wal-Mart is another big mystery to me, too. I mean, I understand that, occasionally, there's some stuff that you need and you just can't get anywhere but Wal-Mart. But I don't understand why some people actually *enjoy* doing their shopping in what amounts to a warehouse, and they like buying crap that'll break in a week. It boggles my mind.

But really, when I think about it, I don't care if people eat at Taco Bell. I've eaten there. It sucks. I hope I never get stuck eating there again, but you're welcome to eat there all you want. And as for Wal-Mart, I know that they are huge union breakers and get most of their stuff from sweatshops, and the quality of the stuff that they sell reflects the slave labor that

made it. Still, if you want to shop there, go ahead. I couldn't stop you if I tried. And I may not understand America's love affair with big chains, but as long as I don't have to deal with the big chains, I'm more or less fine with the fact that they exist and that most Americans prefer them. But there is something about big national chain bookstores – and people like Cindy's refusal to shop anywhere else – that really gets under my skin.

I'm not going to try to convince you to stop shopping at a big chain bookstore like Barnes & Noble. Hell, we sell *Razorcake* there, so it would be hypocritical for me to call for a boycott. I'm just going to tell you why they bug me and give you something to think about.

Shortly after the episode with Cindy played out, Barnes & Noble in Merritt Island did pick up *Drinks*. They put a couple of copies in the fiction section. A few people I know – one of whom was my dad – would go into the store and put the book on the New Releases table in the front of the store. Within a day or an hour, though, the books would go right back onto the shelf in the fiction section. I remember talking to my dad about it and he said, "I don't understand why they don't just leave it on that table. You're a local author. They'd sell a bunch of copies of your book."

But I do understand why they always removed it from the New Releases table. It's because it costs literally thousands of dollars to get a book on that table in the front of a Barnes & Noble store. I looked into it. For me (as the publisher) to get my book on the front table of a Barnes & Noble store, it would cost me about four thousand dollars. That would get my book one week on the front tables of the 275 largest Barnes & Noble stores in the US. (They currently have over six hundred stores in the US.) Understand, though, that prices vary depending on the publisher and the distributor, and the four thousand dollar price that I got was a ballpark figure quoted to me by a distributor. And he quoted me that price over three years ago.

Now let me clear up something real quickly. I wouldn't pay any amount of money to put my book on the front table of any store. My beef isn't with the four thousand dollars, because I wouldn't pay four dollars for it. My beef is with the paying for placement. I think that the books on display should be the ones that the people who work in the bookstore like. That way, the folks who work there have a reason to read. They end up knowing more about books, and their recommendations can be conversation starters. Also, if the employees choose which books to display, each store has its own personality. People who shop there can get introduced to new and exciting writers and to cool people who also love to read. But big chain bookstores, and Barnes & Noble in particular, don't work that way.

Basically, the whole bookstore is more or less for rent. If you want your book displayed with the cover facing out, there's a price for that. If you want to be mentioned in the little publications that Barnes & Noble puts out, the little free booklets that recommend new authors and titles, you have to pay for that. And it's the same with magazines. We have a distributor that sells *Razorcake* to Barnes & Noble, and that distributor gave me a price list for the various places in the store. Prices vary from \$12,000 a month to have your magazine displayed by the cash register to \$3,500 to have the magazine featured in the rack at the end of an aisle with the full cover showing. There are rates to place the magazine in a rack with similar magazines, near the cash register. There's a rate to have it in a free-standing "magazine stepladder" near the front of the store. There's a price for a "Front Shelf Feature" and a "Power Column" and a "Magazine/Book Cross Promotion." All of the prices are thousands of dollars for a couple of weeks or a month, and the displays are in all six-hundred-plus Barnes & Noble stores. Sometimes, your distributor can work out a deal where you only have to pay a few hundred dollars to have your full cover displayed in a magazine rack for a couple of weeks or a month, depending on who your distributor is and how many stores you want to display your magazine in.

The only place where Barnes & Noble doesn't charge you to have your book in their stores is if your book is on the shelves with only the



spine visible. The only place where they don't charge you for your magazines is if it's in the magazine rack with only the top of the magazine visible. And, remember, they still get forty percent of the cover price of every book they sell, and about that percentage for every magazine they sell. That's a lot of money. That's part of the reason why they're the biggest bookseller in the US, and that's part of the reason why they bug me.

I don't mean to pick on only Barnes & Noble here. Most of the chain bookstores do it. They're smaller chains, though, and have to charge less. For example, you can pay two grand a month for placement near the cash register at B. Dalton; or \$2,300 to get near the cash register at Hastings (unless it's Christmas time, when it's \$3,450); or seven grand at Borders; or between five and eight grand at Waldenbooks (depending on whether

\$2.35 million dollars to the group to settle the case. Now, I don't know what these private business practices were, and I don't want to get into all the particulars of the case here. I do know that independent bookstores have been steadily losing money over the past decade, while Barnes & Noble has gotten huge and has had to be stopped from making some other very illegal moves towards gaining a monopoly – like trying to buy the largest book and magazine distributor in the US, Ingram Book Group. I also know that Amazon.com runs Borders's online bookstore, though I don't know what that means about a partnership between the two companies. It's all pretty vague and secretive, but any time you have something that has this many earmarks of a monopoly – especially if it relates to books – you should be a little bit worried.

## The way they act is a good way to run a business. It's just a bad way to run a society.

you want to be on the top, middle, or bottom pocket; it gets gradually less expensive as you go down). All of these chains have placement deals for your books, too.

There are other problems with the chain bookstores beyond this. For instance, they do all of their ordering through a regional buyer who bases his orders largely on factors like the advertising budget of various titles. So if you want your local Barnes & Noble to carry a specific book by an independent press that doesn't spend a lot of money on advertising, you have to convince the manager of your local store to convince the buyer who orders for your local store to carry the book. Chances are, they'll order a single copy for you, but the store will rarely carry multiple copies, no matter how convincing you are. And I can tell you this from my own personal experiences dealing with Barnes & Noble: when the employee at the Merritt Island Barnes & Noble told Cindy that they'd carry my book if I just brought in some copies, he was lying.

Regardless, since all the ordering is done through a regional manager, all the Barnes & Nobles in your area have essentially the same books. If you're looking for a book and your local store doesn't have it, it usually doesn't do you any good to go to the Barnes & Noble in the next town over because the same person did the ordering for both stores. Compare this to, say, 33 1/3 Bookstore in Los Angeles, where Frank, the owner, does his own ordering. First off, he will carry multiple copies of a book if you ask him to (and if he likes the book). Not only that, but if you go into his store often enough, he'll know what you like because he'll know you personally. He may think about you when he orders other books. The next time you go into the store, Frank probably will say to you, "You've got to check this out." And he'll base his recommendation on what he knows about you personally instead of basing it on what book has the highest advertising budget.

Another problem with these chain bookstores is that Barnes & Noble and Borders combined have a near monopoly on the bookselling industry in the United States. Barnes & Noble also owns B. Dalton, Doubleday, and Scribners. Borders is owned by the Borders Group, which also owns Waldenbooks (incidentally, the Borders Group is owned by K Mart). In 1998, a group of independent bookstores sued Borders and Barnes & Noble for violating anti-trust laws. The independent bookstores claimed that the majors were using their size and power to hold secret meetings with publishers that would allow the big chain bookstores to get special deals not available to independents and thereby run independents out of business. (This practice is illegal according to the Robinson-Patman Act of 1936.) Exactly what those deals were never came to light because, in 2000, Borders and Barnes & Noble settled out of court rather than allowing their private business practices to become public. They each paid



More and more – as TV, radio, and newspapers are all merging into a few large conglomerations in the US – independently published books are becoming the most reliable source of information about politics and social issues. So, when two big chain bookstores are running all of the independent bookstores out of town, and the chain bookstores tend to ignore independent publishers, there's cause for concern. As long as independent bookstores like Powell's in Portland and Quimby's in Chicago and 33 1/3 in LA exist, independent publishers do have hope. And there are enough good independent bookstores in major US cities to keep small publishers alive. The real problem lies outside the borders of major US cities. It lies in places like Merritt Island, where, if you drive down State Road 3, you won't find House of Books anymore, because Barnes & Noble (and people like Cindy, who won't shop anywhere else) ran them out of business.

But I don't want to focus on these points too much. Like I said, I'm not calling for a boycott of Barnes & Noble or chain bookstores or anything like that. Objectively speaking, Barnes & Noble isn't really that bad. They have encouraged a lot more people to read. They do carry a lot of books. And even if most of

those books are empty, pulp novels or self-help drivel or books on how the political left has ruined America, there are enough books in stock so that you can still find something good to read. Fifteen years ago, it was really hard to find Jim Thompson novels anywhere. Now I can walk into any Barnes & Noble and pick one up. They carry all my favorite old crime novelists: Raymond Chandler, Dashiell Hammett, and even the two good novels that Elmore Leonard wrote. I got my copy of *A People's History of the United States* at a Barnes & Noble. They stock all the classics. All of my favorite Beat writers, from Kerouac to Gary Snyder to Gregory Corso, are on the shelves of just about any Barnes & Noble. I can say the same thing about the second largest bookstore chain, Borders. So they're not without their good points.

Waldenbooks and Books-A-Million are probably worse, just because their selection focuses so strongly on mass market paperbacks and books that are completely devoid of any kind of complex thought. But that's my personal bias.

My point, though, is that chain bookstores aren't completely evil. Really, they're not evil at all. They're just greedy. Some of their practices are illegal, sure, but if the point of a corporation is to make as much money as possible, they are sticking to the point. I'll concede that. The way they act is a good way to run a business. It's just a bad way to run a society. That's what I want you to think about the next time you have a choice between buying a book or magazine at an independent store or buying one at a big chain store. Because the greed of the big chains takes us forever closer to having a culture that's sold to us instead of having a culture that we create ourselves. And that is evil.

–Sean Carswell

SEAN CARSWELL

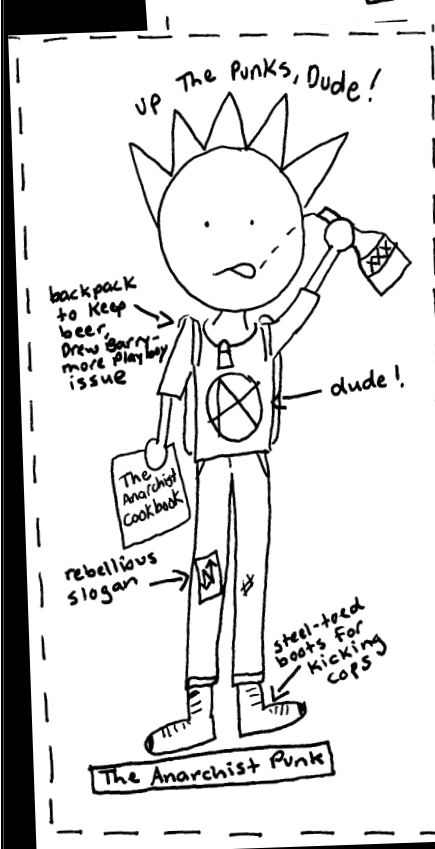
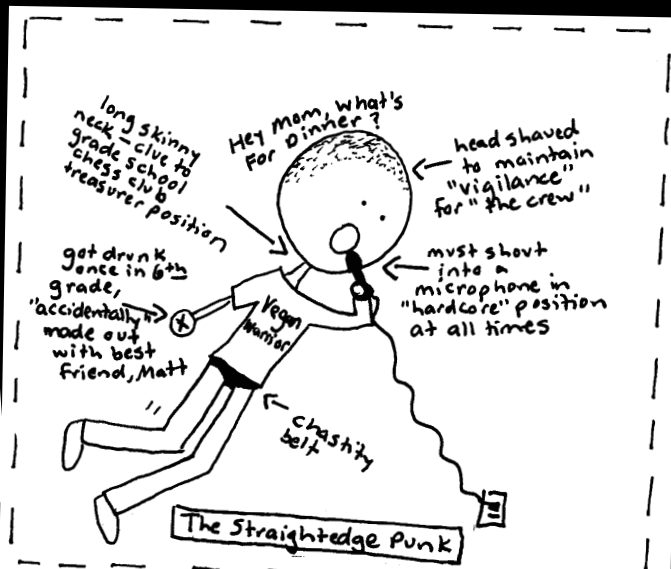
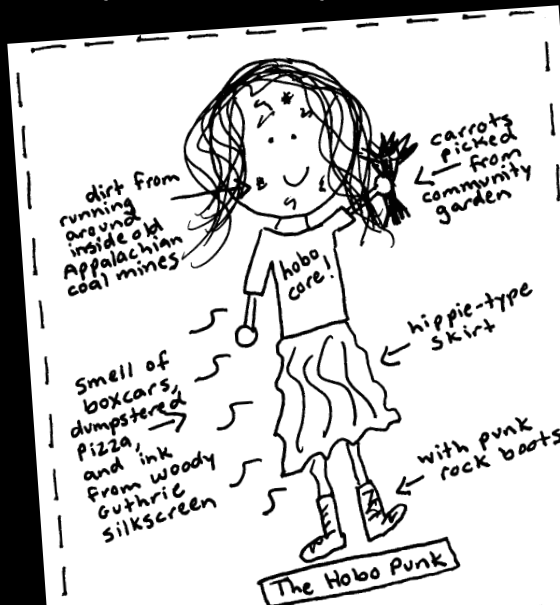




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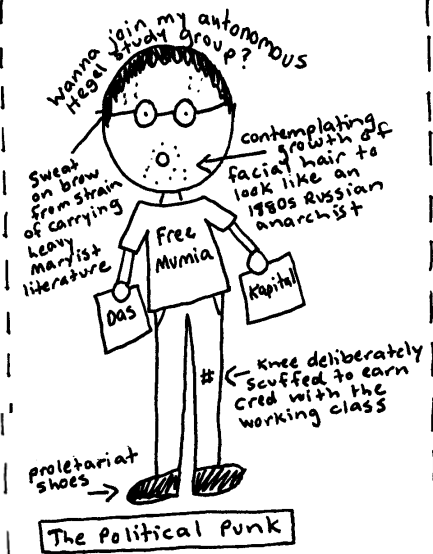
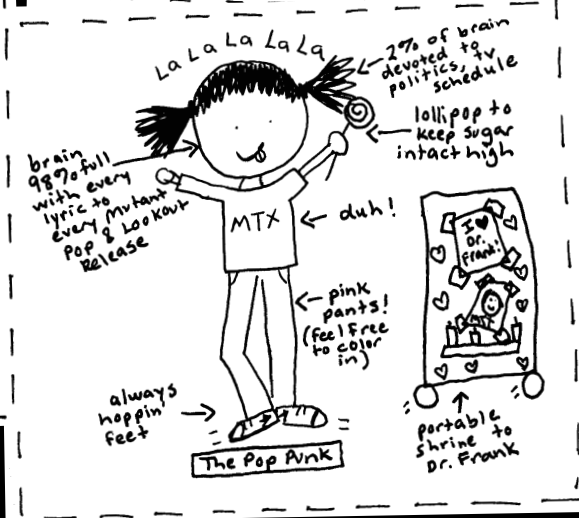
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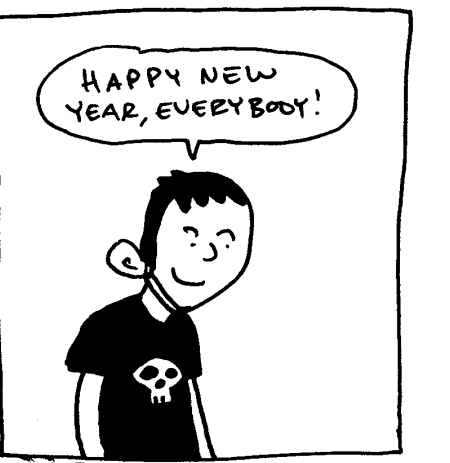
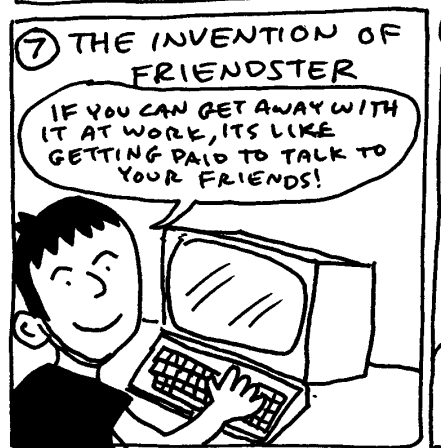
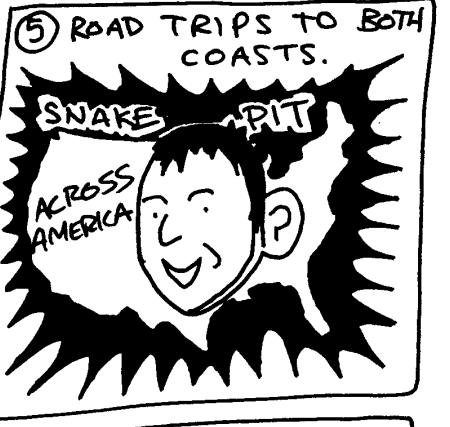
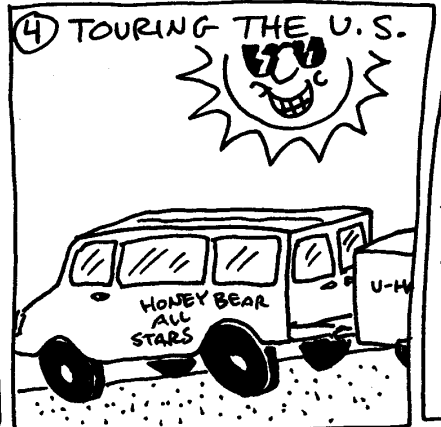
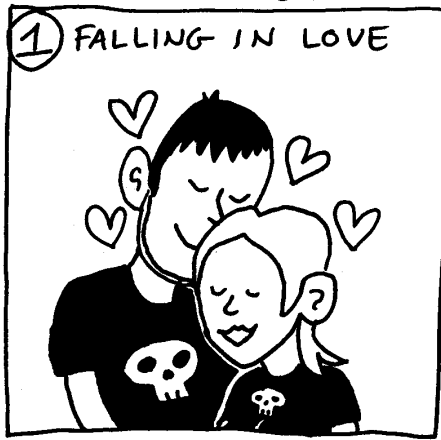
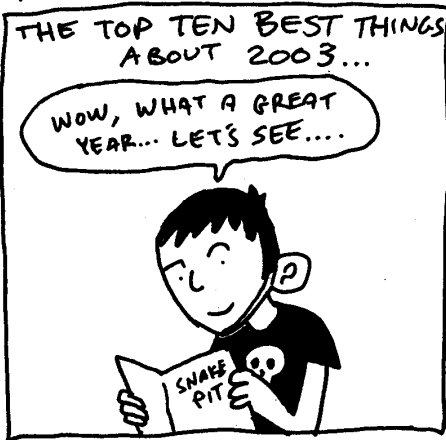
I AM REALLY MAKING FUN OF MYSELF. WHAT ELSE IS NEW?



Attention everyone! Since my computer was stolen over Christmas break (Attention to thief: you owe me \$1,600.), I must change course! This time around, it's an all-stupid-drawings column, poking some fun at my favorite topic - punks! Take no offense, you silly hardcore boy or girl. As a cross between the intellectual punk, the pop punk and the hobo punk, I am really making fun of myself. What else is new? Anyway, collect all five punk rock trading cards... uh, right now! -Maddy

P.S. If you're gonna write to me, email first: cerealcore@hotmail.com. My address will have changed by the time you read this. I'm moving back to the Midwest in three days. Punk!





# Chrystaei Branchaw's Photo Page

**I tried to  
get one of  
him  
sitting on  
my face,  
but he  
stole my  
glasses!**

**Insane  
show!**

**New Bomb  
Turks  
"one-time-only  
special  
reunion  
show,"  
January 23,  
2004 at  
Dante's in  
Portland,  
OR.**





# J. CHURCH JAPAN TOUR 2003

BY BEN SNAKEPIT



fast-driving American. Just as we were about to get on the bus, Massa told us that the bus ride would be sixteen hours! Holy shit! I looked on with dread as the bus pulled up, actually looking **SMALLER** than a Greyhound. Fuck. Sixteen hours.

I climbed onto the bus to discover a paradise. Instead of the greyhound-style two rows of two seats, there were three separate rows of one seat each, with a little walkway between each row. I sat down in my seat; it was like a little cockpit. There was a blanket, pillow, sleep mask, ear plugs, and headphones, all waiting for me. The seat had a radio built into the arm. There was even a little pair of slippers to wear to the bathroom. Wow. The seat reclined all the way back, so I could lie down and stretch all the way out. The bathroom was downstairs, right next to the free coffee and tea. As I fell asleep, the attendant came and pulled curtains around each individual seat. I slept like a baby.

We arrived the next morning in Fukuoka, met at the bus station by Yoichi Eimori of Snuffly Smile

building that houses the club and loaded in. There wasn't really much to load in, though, because at Japanese punk shows everybody shares the same equipment. After a really long soundcheck, we walked around the corner to a record store. It was tiny and cramped and dirty, just like an American punk record store. Then we checked out this gigantic four-story comic book store. Fuck yes! Japan rules! After eating some *inari* (bean curd and rice wrapped in seaweed. The literal translation is testicles) we headed back to the club. The show was pretty good; there were four bands. The short-fast-loud-core band Arelights was first, followed by the Clash-y Practice, and Pear of the West. After the show we hung out back at Tosh's place and ate noodles and drank the tiniest little six-pack of Asahi beer I'd ever seen, prompting me to make the world's smallest beeramyd. It looked like this tour was gonna be fun.

## DAY TWO

We woke up pretty early to make the long drive to Matsuyama. We took two separate vans and the drive was really pretty and scenic through the Japanese countryside. We arrived at the tiny, but extremely hip, Jett Rockbar where we did a quick soundcheck before heading out to the shopping arcade. Every city we went to had one; it was a big semi-outdoor mall that stretched on for eight or nine city blocks. It was pretty crazy: cars could drive through it and lots of people sped by on bikes. The mall was stocked with huge video game arcades, toy and record stores, and 100 yen stores (sort of like those "Everything's \$1" stores we have in America). We headed back to the club just in time to catch the first band, Drift Age. Up next were the Minority Blues Band. They would be doing the rest of the tour with us, and are old friends of J Church (the previous lineup of J Church had done a split 7" with them). They played an extremely tight set of Snuff/Leatherface style punk. Practice also played. After the show we headed to the grocery store to get some food (I was slowly starting to realize that I wasn't going to dig Japanese food very much) and a short drive to Yumi's house, where we passed out pretty quickly, worn out from the long day of driving and rocking out.



MINORITY BLUES BAND IN NAGOYA

## DAY ONE

After a pretty brutal, thirteen-hour flight, we arrived Narita Airport in Tokyo, and immediately jumped onto a train. We rode the train for about an hour across Tokyo, where we met up with Massa (guitarist for the Urchin) and Kaori (guitarist for The Happening). They gave us our bus tickets to Fukuoka, way on the other side of the country. I looked at my little map of Japan and it looked like the distance was about 300 miles or so, so I figured it would be a five or six hour bus ride. I had no idea that Japan doesn't really have a lot of big highways. I was just thinking like a big, dumb,

Records. He was the tour's promoter and manager. He took us to Tosh's house (bass player for Practice) to shower up and eat. The shower was crazy; it was a whole little room with a tiny bathtub in it, with this space age digital faucet where you type in the temperature you want the water to be. Again, thinking like an American, I forgot that Japan uses Centigrade instead of Fahrenheit and burned myself. Doh! Pretty soon it was time to head over to the club for soundcheck. This tour was run on a pretty tight schedule. Japanese efficiency. We pulled up to the fantastic, crazy-looking

## DAY THREE

We woke up early again and hopped in the van to drive to Tokushima. We had to take a ferry to get there, and arrived at a sleepy little fishing village an hour before the ferry was to depart. After another weird meal at the Japanese equivalent of a Denny's, we drove onto the ferry. The ride would be about an hour, and the boat had lots of cool places to hang out and peep the beautiful scenery of the mountains and the sea. On the ferry, I finally came face to face with a traditional Japanese toilet – basically a hole in the floor with a rail to hold onto as you squat down over the hole and poop.

Ummm, no thanks. The ferry pulled in and we drove a bit more before finally reaching Tokushima, a little city tucked into the mountains. It sort of reminded me of Roanoke, Virginia. We loaded into the cool little club called Tokushima Jitterbug. After a quick soundcheck of the club's incredible sound system (what's the deal? All the clubs in Japan have these incredible PAs, with kickass sound engineers), we headed out for a little shopping and wrestling with more alien food. David and Chris are both vegan, so they had an extra hard time finding stuff to eat. Back at the club we saw Hushpuppy, Hamk, Practice, and Minority Blues Band. Hanging out in the backstage room, Tosh and I drank some beers together and talked in very basic English about our favorite bands. "I love J Church!" he said as he played the bassline to one of our songs. Shit, he knew it better than me. That night, when we played that song, I handed the bass to Tosh and let him rock out on it. We had a great time and the show was a huge success. After the show, we drove to the crash pad where we drank sake and listened to badass Japanese grindcore bands. We drank and partied long into the night, and I passed out on the floor with a bunch of cool Japanese punk rockers.

#### DAY FOUR

Up and at 'em! We hit the road early for Kyoto, hangovers slowly fading. The twisty, windy mountain roads didn't help my stomach much as I struggled to keep down some weird deep fried mashed potatoes and rice wrapped in seaweed. We made it to Kyoto pretty early so we could check out the incredible Buddhist temple perched on top of a snowy mountain with a breathtaking view of the city. The temple was one of the most beautiful places I have ever seen. Kyoto, as a whole, is an older city, with more traditional Japanese architecture and less western influence. We drove up to the club, a little bar called East, tucked into the basement of the "Hotel Sexus," which is exactly what you think it is. The show was great, with a fun little mosh pit and everything. As I watched the extremely badass I Excuse, Practice, and Minority Blues Band, I chatted it up with my friend Bianca, an East Bay transplant who speaks fluent English and Japanese. She explained a few Japanese customs to me (for instance, Christmas in Japan is more like Valentine's day; you eat a cake with your boyfriend/girlfriend) and translated the captions for that day's *Snakepit* comic into Japanese for me. After the show and a tearful farewell to our new friends in Practice, who had to drive back to Fukuoka (30,000 yen in tolls, that's roughly three hundred dollars!), we grabbed some food and headed to I Excuse's house to sleep. It was really cold, and for some reason most Japanese houses don't have central heat. Bianca said they do it to stay tough. That's weird. A house with a heated electronic toilet seat and a space age kitchen doesn't have heat. We shivered ourselves to sleep.

#### DAY FIVE

As we began our relatively short drive to Nagoya, it was already snowing. By the time we reached the city, it was coming down in flurries and everything was covered in a few inches of snow. Having lived in Texas the past few years, I'd forgotten what snow was like, how pretty it was, and also how much it sucked to drive in. The traffic was at a dead standstill for a while, but we made it to Nagoya safe and sound. We headed to a really awesome little record store called Answer. It was very well stocked with lots of collectable punk records – at pretty fair prices – from all over the world. I scored an S.O.B. record for 2000 yen. The record store was a part of a cool little record store mall in the basement of a parking deck. There was a more trendy pop style store, the hardcore paradise, Answer, and a small reggae dub store. We all found cool records and headed over to the show. The club, KD Japon, was a teeny, tiny, little place built underneath an elevated train track. As we rocked out to the sweet sounds of I Excuse, Minority Blues Band, and Navel, the tiny club got more and more packed. By the time we played it was almost impossible to move, until a cool, old guy started drunkenly half slam-dancing, half falling down drunk, rocking out. He fell on the PA head and broke it. He fell on



J. CHURCH IN TOKYO



THE URCHIN IN TOKYO



J. CHURCH BACKSTAGE IN TOKYO

David's guitar and unplugged it. He was a whirlwind of old, drunk, party-hard mother-fucker. It was fun. The show ended fairly early. (All the punk shows in Japan are like that. They start around 7:00 P.M. and are over usually by 10:00 P.M., another advantage of all bands using the same equipment.) So we decided to drive overnight to Tokyo to avoid the snow and to take advantage of the tolls being free after midnight. We all crammed into one tiny van and drove six

## DAY SEVEN

We got up really early for a long, cramped ride to Sendai. By now we'd become pretty close friends with the Minority Blues Band, having spent so many hours in such a small space together. We hung out and talked in broken English about music and movies and our jobs and our lives. We tried to encourage them to come to the US so we can tour with them and hang out some more. As we pulled into town, we

we went to a restaurant to treat our gracious tour hosts, Yoichi, Spalding, Yumi, and Georgie to a nice dinner complete with a couple of bottles of wine. With a toast of "Kampai!" (Japanese for "Cheers!") we resolved to try to tour together again soon, wherever in the world it might be. After dinner we moseyed over to the club, 24 West, for soundcheck. The vibe in the air was really great; it was the last night of tour and everyone was looking forward to celebrat-



EVERYONE PARTYING  
IN TOKUSHIMA

BEN AND SPALDING  
OF THE  
MINORITY BLUES BAND



hours into the cold night, and finally pulled into a friend's house in Yokohama (just outside of Tokyo). We arrived to the bizarre scene of six or seven Japanese punk rockers hanging out, drinking and partying at six in the morning, rocking out to The Village People. For real. Confused, I fell into a deep sleep.

## DAY SIX

We slept in really late and took our sweet time to nearby Tokyo, where we loaded into the club, Red Cloth, and did a quick soundcheck. We met back up with Kaori, who made some yummy pasta and garlic bread for everyone. After the meal we checked out the incredible city of Tokyo. It was amazing, like it was right out of *Blade Runner*. Giant TV screens ten stories high, street vendors, cool shops, and more people than I've ever seen in one place in my life. New York, San Francisco, Chicago... these places have nothing on Tokyo in terms of sheer urban-ness. It was truly, truly awesome. We checked out an incredibly huge record store, one of a chain called Disk Union. It had genres arranged by floors, like a floor of punk and a floor of heavy metal. I scored some old Balzac records. They told me that Japanese punks don't really like Balzac, and it's mostly younger kids who are into them. I guess they're like the AFI of Japan. I still can't help but love their shameless Misfits worship. We headed back to the club just in time to catch the Happening, the Urchin, and Minority Blues Band. The club was really cool, and the tightly packed crowd went totally crazy. We hung out for a bit after the show. While Lance did a fanzine interview, the rest of us took off for Yoichi's house, where we had some tofu and rice and drifted off to sleep.

stopped at a little restaurant for some udon noodles. I was starting to get more used to the food, but it was still pretty weird. One of the coolest things about Japan is the weird-ass names they come up with for food. Chocolate candy called "asse," a sports drink called "pocari sweat," a juicy drink called "fruits party." We enjoyed our noodles and headed over to the club, Birdland. It had obviously been a mainstay of punk rock in Sendai for many years, as I saw stickers and graffiti from lots of American punk bands, like Dillinger Four, Sean Na Na, the Exploder, and Braid, to name a few. It was a cool little club that reminded me of the now-defunct Burnt Ramen in Richmond, California. The graffiti there was awesome, my favorite slogan being, "Make mention of vegan." After a quick soundcheck, we ran across the street to the shopping arcade, where we bought some souvenirs and Christmas gifts for our friends back home. In the shopping arcade we saw a "No War in Iraq" demonstration march by, escorted by the police. It got me thinking: I hadn't seen more than two cops the whole time I'd been in Japan, and neither of them had guns. And strangely, I felt much safer than I would have felt in America. I guess that's what it's like when you don't live in a police state with a terror alert of orange. America is stupid. Back at the show we watched Starter, Deeds Not Words, and Minority Blues Band. The crowd was crazy that night, with a raging pit and some stagedivers. A kid knocked the microphone into Lance's face and chipped his tooth. Fucking punk rock! After the show we drove out to the crash pad and watched a Who video as we fell asleep.

## DAY EIGHT

The drive back down to Yokohama flew by, thanks to finally having some good luck with traffic, and once we pulled into town

ing. After a very relaxed soundcheck, we headed out for a little last-minute record shopping before the show. On the way back I met the sole homeless person saw in Japan. I gave him a hundred yen and we made it back just in time to catch Raisemind, Three Minute Movie, Zerofast, and Minority Blues Band. The show was a triumphant end to a fantastic tour, and the crowd reacted accordingly. The show, and the tour, was a total success! As soon as the last band finished, it was time to party! The club cleared off the stage and set up some tables on the dance floor. We sat down and they brought a little keg of beer to each table, with a little stand to hold it on and a spout built into the side. We drank and drank. Meanwhile, they brought us all kinds of food. It was great. We hung out and took pictures and had a really great time celebrating the end of a great tour. We said goodbye to our new friends in Minority Blues Band and headed home to Yoichi's to pass out.

## DAY NINE

Our adventure was over and it was finally time to head back home. After one last quick visit to the awesomest toy store I've ever been to, we jumped on a train for the airport. The journey home was pretty uneventful, with the exception of David throwing up in line for customs, after eating what was apparently not a vegan airline meal. He had to hold the puke in his mouth until one of us noticed and handed him a bag to spit it into. A few hours later, we were back in the land of fat people, SUVs, and Toby Keith. It was the coolest trip I've ever been on. Thanks a million to all the great people I met in Japan, especially the kids in Minority Blues Band and Yoichi from Snuffy Smile.



One uninitiated virgin might wonder exactly how a classy group like Texas Mafia found themselves in a scene full of rowdy, depraved juiceheads and hopeless harlots who frequent collapsing clubs and the dark recesses of our own deflated egos. But take a closer look/listen and you'll understand that debauchery can take an especially comfortable residence in a more elegant brand of decadence. Picture yourself in a tuxedo or evening gown looking completely desirable yet alone and stone-faced, while your only company is the very thought that compels you to stare for hours; hypnotized into a martini you just paid a small fortune for, because tomorrow you might be dead; slowly becoming the same thought that possesses you to smash it against the wall. No one can figure out if your hysterics are laughter or weeping as they drag you out by your ankles.

Texas Mafia are the wailing soundtrack to such a moment; pitting themes of violence and heartache against the most beautiful and intense (and yes, very sad) soundscapes. But you couldn't call them goth, even though they're evocative of its glory days – ringing influences of Crime and The City Solution, Virgin Prunes, and maybe The Dirty Three.

One must realize that they're coming from a place no contemporary, Hot Topic/Marilyn Manson devotee could readily recognize. It's a place more hard to

swallow; more unapologetic and disturbed, yet well-versed and disciplined by their own weird will. You could even call them straight-jacket neo-classical and not feel lame about it. Some bands inspire non-stop ass-shaking. Texas Mafia on the other hand, simply hypnotize and erect goose bumps. Especially when violinista Julie Carpenter growls, "Wish I never laid eyes on you...." Sophisticated as a funeral, but luckily for us, also accessible as sneakers.

**Kat:** What would you do with a last-minute day off from work and a \$100 dollar bill?

**Julie:** I think I'd go to this Korean spa I found about where you can get a helluva massage for a hundred bucks.

**Danny:** I don't do anything, really. I'm unemployed, so I'd probably pay my rent on time for once.

**Todd:** I'd probably go buy DVDs.

**Angelique:** My judgment on that right now would be really distorted since I just moved and I'm in, like, bathroom furniture mode. I was also thinking that I really need a bass cabinet.

**Todd:** Let me take that back. I really need cymbals.

**Angelique:** But now that I've moved I can't really...

**Todd:** ...and sticks...

**Kat:** Did you used to live in this house, too?

**Angelique:** Yeah, yeah. This was my house.

**Julie:** She (Angelique) was the den mother.

Now I am. I live with all boys. [Eight, to be exact.] I feel like the scout mother.

**Kat:** What were your goals when you started this band, and have they changed at all since then?

**Todd:** (laughs) Were there goals?

**Danny:** I don't think about the future.

**Angelique:** Julie and I started this band because we wanted to do our own thing. We both play in other bands [Todd and Angelique with The Hangmen and Julie with WACO]. But I think the sound of the band has kind of changed.

**Gabe:** How so?

**Angelique:** In the beginning I think we were more focused on Danny Elfman and Nick Cave, and it's kind of spread out a little bit. More interests.

**Kat:** (to Julie) How long have you been playing violin?

**Julie:** I started when I was seven, and for a long while it was the only thing I did. Learning to play guitar and sing – this is the first band I've ever done that.

**Angelique:** It started off where she was just playing violin. We don't have that now.

**Julie:** It's more fun because it's hard for me. Violin is somewhat not fun anymore because it's not a challenge – it just falls out of you. (Laughing) I like the stress and the trauma.

**Kat:** You like falling apart before each show...

**Todd:** At every show.

**Julie:** Yeah, yeah! It's what I do best.

# Texas mafia



Interview by Kat Jetson and Gabriel Hart Intro by Gabriel Hart

Danny: keys Julie: vocals, violin, guitar

Todd: drums Angelique: vocals, bass



**Kat:** So you find guitar harder than violin?

**Julie:** No, I think just because I started (playing guitar) later. Anything you learn as a kid is easier. And it's a totally different tuning. It's not like it transfers instantly.

**Kat:** Is this band the same line-up as Dick Army? You were called Dick Army before, right?

**Julie:** That was almost us. This guy named Dustin played guitar and upright bass, but he had too many other musical commitments that paid.

**Gabe:** Why the name change?

**Julie:** Actually, we got into legal troubles with another band with the same name. They had it longer than us, so we said fine.

**Gabe:** Texas Mafia's much better.

**Kat:** You weren't all heartbroken? No sentimental ties?

**Julie:** Nah. And it coincided with losing the guitar player, so it was kind of appropriate to change the name. The band kind of changed, anyhow.

**Gabe:** You both [Todd and Angelique] are in The Hangmen. Are there any ill feelings? Like, do you spend more time on one side?

**Todd:** Ah, no. Everyone's been really cool about it.

**Gabe:** (to Julie) You play with a lot of other people, too.

**Julie:** Yeah, and actually I played on the new Hangmen record. It's pretty friendly.

**Angelique:** Danny has his band, too.

**Kat:** (to Julie) And you toured with Love recently.

**Julie:** It was such a good experience and it's lead to paying gigs that finance what I want to do. It's amazing! And it's amazing to watch a performer like him from behind and watch what goes into making something like that. It's epic to watch.

**Kat:** How did you get that gig?

**Julie:** Jennifer who books at Spaceland is in WACO with me and she knows the guitar player in Love right now. They told me they were looking for string players and that I should call. He (Arthur Lee) called and said, "You're in WACO; you must be great."

**Kat:** That's so random.

**Julie:** Very random. I was so excited when I called, but I totally didn't think they were going to... they didn't even audition me. They just said okay.

**Kat:** Have you ever toured outside the country?

**Julie:** I haven't, but Angelique and Todd have with The Hangmen.

**Kat:** Do you find that audience is totally different? Not so much different from LA, but from an American audience?

**Todd:** I think they're more enthusiastic. They love the rock and roll. But I'm speaking more from a Hangmen point of view. This band hasn't been outside of the country. But yeah, Germany, Spain... they really got out of hand.

**Kat:** Yes, and Germans love David Hasselhoff.

**Todd:** Another question for the ages.

**Angelique:** They know so much, too. About music and stuff.

**Kat:** Do you think being an LA band influences your music in any way?

**Danny:** I don't think LA has a sound, so I can't really say. It's kind of like a mish-mash of crap.

**Gabe:** Or maybe influences the lyrics or something?

**Julie:** Not at all. I think in Denton, Texas, where me and Angelique came from, there is a really unique musical scene. There were so many original and interesting bands where nothing was exactly the same, but it all had something in common.

**Angelique:** It was small, so there was definitely more of a concentrated... I mean, there's just so much out here.

**Julie:** Everybody knew each other, everybody played in each other's band.... It was a very incestuous scene. And it was a friendly scene. There was competition, but it was friendly competition. Whereas here I get the feeling, with the exception of a few bands, that there's just a lot of... shitty-ness and competitiveness. It's unnecessary. And I think we would all be better if everyone were more supportive of each other instead of trying to beat the hell out of each other.

**Gabe:** Have you personally had any particular experiences that you're willing to divulge?

**Todd:** I can't really be too objective of that because I'm from here. It's always been that way so I don't know the difference.

**Danny:** You kind of end up being oblivious to the transplant drama. But I think people come to LA looking for this sense of glamour and when they don't find it they just turn bitter.

**Angelique:** Overall I don't think it affects us because we're not trying to... Like *NME* said, "This is, and will always remain, underground."

**Julie:** We take that as a compliment.

**Kat:** Do you have any online addictions?

**Todd:** Gretsch. I like to look at the jazz kits. 18" bass drums with no extra holes. Classic, vintage Gretsch.

**Kat:** Drummers love their drums. They love being the drummer, and are so passionate about it.

**Todd:** There's a weird Zen about doing it.

**Danny:** They're actually the ones working. They're up there sweating.

**Todd:** I don't know what it is. It's like that space between zero and one. You constantly have a chance to make it more exact the next time. It's just an amazing thing.

**Angelique:** [laughing] I don't even know how to get on the internet.

**Julie:** I don't like to look at stuff I can't afford. It just makes me feel bad.

**Gabe:** The song that's always fascinated me, it's this really dark song of yours called "Ice Cream Sandwich." What's that song about, if you care to go into it.

**Angelique:** It starts off where I'm sitting at a Laundromat watching a kid and then it kind of goes into suicide and love and all that.

**Todd:** Short. But sweet.

**Kat:** And it's such a happy name for a song.

**Angelique:** Well, the first words are "Eating an ice cream sandwich."

**Kat:** Your CD opens with a song called "The Assassin," which is an instrumental. I'm wondering, do you go into it knowing that you want to want an instrumental, or do you realize that maybe there are no lyrics that can do that song justice?

**Julie:** I wasn't and generally I don't really think anything when I start writing a song. It just comes out the way it wants to be. There's a certain way it is. That, or I just can't think of any lyrics.

**Kat:** I love it when you can say something without any words. So how did you come up with a name for it then?

**Julie:** Actually, my friend Jason, who aspires to be a director, was talking about what the video should look like. His idea was an assassin and this very slow, sorta film noir chase through some abandoned building. And at the end there's these three really hard drum hits and you shoot him.

**Gabe:** That's awesome!

**Angelique:** There's this other instrumental that we play where people say they imagine this or that, so it's kind of like you're not putting words to something and people can conjure up their own things.

**Kat:** Have you seen anyone wearing a Texas Mafia t-shirt?

**Angelique:** I went to a stoner rock show - Nebula - and there was a stoner guy wearing a Texas Mafia shirt.

**Todd:** We cater to all.

**Julie:** Yeah, for some reason guys with really long hair seem to like us.

**Danny:** Remember that one guy at The Scene who wouldn't stop talking about Quiet Riot and stuff?

**Julie:** We get really weird fans whenever we play The Scene.

**Kat:** I saw the lead singer from Quiet Riot coming out of a Ralph's in Van Nuys and he had really bad hair extensions.

**Todd:** Are there any really good hair extensions?

**Danny:** You know, some people can do it well.

**Kat:** Well, not him because he had no hair in the '80s.

**Gabe:** They were probably plugs.

**Julie:** Like the Barbie plugs.

**Kat:** Totally random Teen Beat question... Have you ever belonged to a fan club or anything like that?

**Todd:** We all shake our heads no.

**Julie:** I have people I admire, but I'm not one of those people who knows a lot about their favorite bands or whatever. I'd rather not know anything about them and keep the music separate because sometimes you find out people are dicks or sometimes you know too much.

**Todd:** Celebrity kills art. It really does.

**Julie:** I'd rather take things at face value.

**Danny:** I was obsessed with The Smiths for a long time. I wasn't in the fan club but I contributed to the fanzine.



**Gabe:** Did you ever go to any of the Morrissey conventions or anything?

**Todd:** He has conventions?! Right next to Star Trek?

**Kat:** Oh yeah! There's even a tribute band called Sweet and Tender Hooligans.

**Danny:** It's one thing to be a cover band, but then they try to do their own songs trying to sound like them.

**Angelique:** I was in a Pixies cover band.

**Kat:** What was the name?

**Angelique:** A Superhero Named Tony. We did it last minute because we always talked about doing one.

**Kat:** That's a really good name for it.

**Angelique:** It was our drummer's idea. We wanted to call it Erotic Vulture.

**Gabe:** The Pixies are playing in April, aren't they?

**Angelique:** I heard they were going to go on tour with Love and Rockets.

**Kat:** I heard it was opening for Red Hot Chili Peppers, unfortunately.



**Everyone in unison:** Ewww!

**Danny:** Scary.

**Gabe:** When I was twelve, I had tickets to go see the Cure, the Pixies, and Love and Rockets, all playing one show, and fuckin' no one would give me a ride.

**All:** Awww!

**Todd:** Not even with tickets?

**Gabe:** It's hard to pull that shit off when you're twelve.

**Todd:** Yeah.

**Gabe:** What's the biggest misconception you've heard about your band?

**Angelique:** I'm a catering chef and we were at this big party for this like, Daytime Emmy winners or whatever, and this really flashy dressed guy walks in and says, "I saw one of Roland Bolan's bands, Dick Army. I saw them the other night."

**Todd:** (to Angelique) You were in one of his bands?

**Angelique:** Well, that CD we were handing out that Roland produced.

**Julie:** He recorded it for us. He had a Pro Tools set up.

**Angelique:** It was just funny that this guy was going off on how great Dick Army was. I was like, "Yeah, that's my band." And he was like, "Oh, really?"

**Kat:** Do you have cliché stories of record people coming up to you after a show or whatever and making promises of fame and

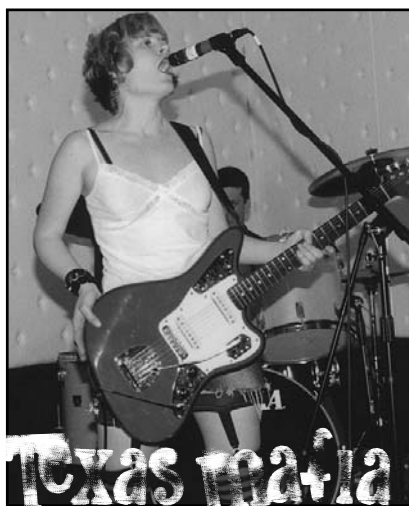
fortune?

**Julie:** [laughing] We don't get approached by anybody. They run the hell away from instrumentals.

**Angelique:** There was that one guy who was like, "I want you to write a song for a horror movie. Big budget. Fox. Television. Horror movie."

**Julie:** I work as kind of a gopher at a record label so I see from the inside the way everything works. I'd be perfectly happy to get a good independent label who'd be willing to let us put out what we wanted and not have someone tell me that I need to get a haircut or lose some weight. I don't want to fucking hear it.

**Angelique:** Friends of mine were at the Bigfoot Lodge and someone was asking them what bands he should book and they



said Texas Mafia, and the guy said, "They're not a big enough band." And then someone else said, "Yeah, they don't promote themselves."

**Julie:** We're not schmoozers.

**Danny:** You don't have to schmooze. You just have to sit outside a club at 2:00 A.M., freezing your ass off and handing out flyers. It's not fun.

**Julie:** I don't think that even works. I think you have to go out a lot and you have to talk to people and those are two things that, unless I'm playing a show, I'm not really doing.

**Danny:** Tell the story about the notes you see at work.

**Julie:** On a Jon Spencer Blues Explosion CD there was some really asinine comment like, "Sounds good, but not radio friendly." They ascertain that Jon Spencer is not radio friendly.

**Kat:** Is he supposed to be?

**Todd:** They missed the boat on that one.

**Julie:** Yeah, that's why I'm not slipping demos under anybody's door. If that's not radio friendly, we're sure not.

**Danny:** Or one said something like, "Really cute, eighteen-year-old twins," or whatever. They're really scary.

**Kat:** That's sad that all of your passion and creativity could be summed up on a Post-It.

**Danny:** You don't even get a complete sentence.

**Kat:** Do you find that you perform better with a couple of drinks before a show or none at all?

**Angelique:** We think we do. I haven't done completely drunk, though.

**Julie:** Me and Ange have a ritual. We always do a tequila shot and a Corona.

**Angelique:** Maybe we should try whiskey.

**Julie:** Good for the voice...

**Kat:** New ritual, maybe?

**Julie:** But if you go changing the ritual, everything will change.

**Gabe:** Are there any themes that keep showing up in your songs?

**Danny:** Murder.

**Angelique:** It's a mixture of love and suicide.

**Gabe:** Is playing music for you all a cathartic experience, or is it very cut and dry?



**Todd:** Oh no, it couldn't be like that!

**Angelique:** It's cathartic, but the thing is that I don't realize it until I play. I don't think of it that way, but then I realize it is that way.

**Todd:** You can always kind of tell who's dedicated to craft and who isn't. It's just a matter of fine-tuning the way you do it.

**Julie:** I don't notice so much when we play all of the time, but when we don't play for awhile I feel really tense. All the things I'm used to getting out all of the time start building up and I start feeling horrible until we start practicing and playing again.

**Kat:** Do you have any interesting *Recycler* (LA classified paper) stories? It doesn't necessarily have to be with this band, just amusing "Looking for singer, blah, blah, blah" stuff.

**Todd:** I have one, actually. I placed an ad, something to the effect of, "I'm eight feet tall, 400 lbs., and have terminal acne. Join my band." And a guy called me up and was like, "Are you really eight feet tall?"



Rivethead has been around for three and a half years and no one, absolutely no one, had interviewed them before. This is a breakdown. I could fill pages, in really tiny type, of bands that don't deserve to be interviewed, ever. Some of them are named in this interview. This is a fundamental breakdown. Where's the adventure in discovering new bands? Do people who run music magazines have ears of their own? I know it's hard to find diamonds in the dog shit, and the music hype machine is at its most sophisticated, but Christ, during the mid-to-late '90s, a band that played pop punk, no matter how awful, would get some ink. The world's a much different place in the beginning of the 2000s. Pop punk is considered a touch of the plague. Hell, even the labels that became famous and made a mint off of it have moved on in different directions. But just because there were so many shitass bands clogging the drains with insipid whoah ohhs while pitifully trying to pickpocket the Ramones' jackets, does that mean the whole genre is like a used rubber on a dirty sidewalk: to be avoided at all costs? The answer is no.

Rivethead prove the exception. Hard, terse, melodic, smarter and

funnier than most, and infinitely humble, they play like they've got a pair. They play music that doesn't sound like a eulogy to past greats. They play without disgrace or thinking, "Dude, if we just put a little more rock in the mix, maybe we'll get signed."

**Todd:** Explain how the Rivethead street team is devised.

[the band seems blind-sided by the question]

**Zach:** I guess I don't know what you mean.

**Paddy:** You know you've been around at three o'clock in the morning, spray painting Rivethead.

**Nate:** The idea is that the typical pop punk band has a street team where they recruit people to hawk their sweatshirts and stuff. Our idea is we have people on the street who spare change or mug people and the

change they get – they can keep some of it – they send us some of it and we keep it.

**Paddy:** To give them a t-shirt?

**Nate:** To give them a t-shirt.

**Paddy:** How much have you made so far?

**Nate:** Not a dime, but this can change.

**Todd:** This is an open solicitation.

**Nate:** The basic idea is for people to spare change and give us some money and that's the street team.

**Todd:** What's the involvement with Josie and the Pussycats with you guys?

**Paddy:** What isn't?

**Zach:** Josie and the Pussycats are an integral part of our whole operation.

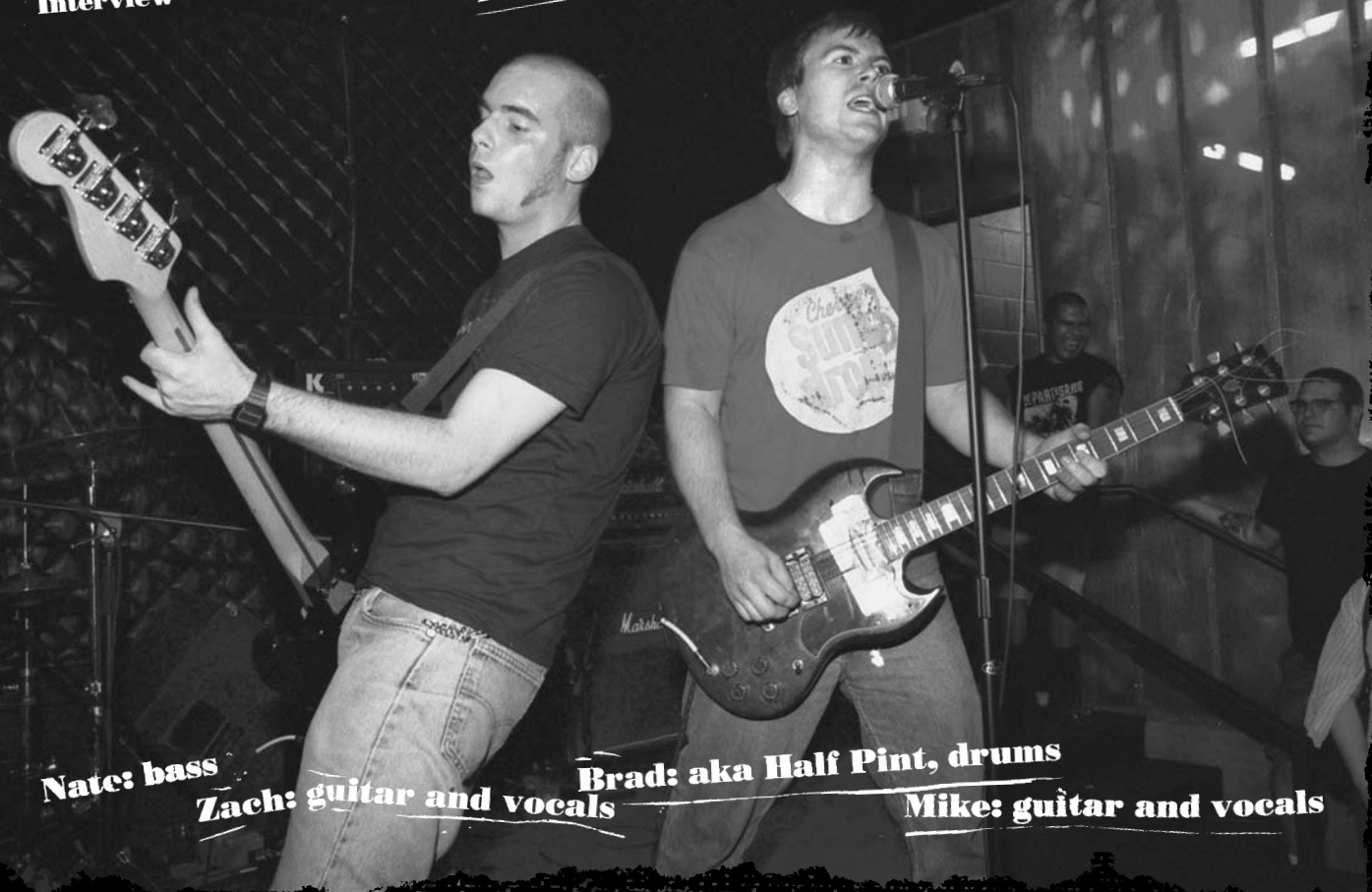
**Todd:** You've seen the movie around twenty-three times. Is that correct?

**Zach:** I've seen it somewhere around that amount of times. I've seen it a lot. I own it.

**Todd:** Why?

# RIVETHEAD

Interview by Todd Taylor and Paddy Costello



**Nate:** bass

**Zach:** guitar and vocals

**Brad:** aka Half Pint, drums

**Mike:** guitar and vocals

**Zach:** It's just really funny and the sound-track kicks ass.

**Todd:** Are the girls cute?

**Zach:** Rachael Leigh Cooke? Are you fuckin' kidding me?

**Paddy:** I heard that she's the new Jamie Lee Curtis, though. That she was born with a penis.

**Todd:** Who has a studio in their house?

**Zach:** Mike, actually. He's not here. He got a bunch of equipment from this guy, who we're all friends with, who used to be in a bunch of bands here. This guy, Spitball. He's gone away for awhile.

**Todd:** Oh, the guy who got busted for meth?

**Zach:** Yeah. He gave all of his equipment to Mike and Mike just kind of took the ball from him.

**Paddy:** It was also more like Mike had the initiative. The city told Spitball, "We're taking everything in your house," and Mike realized he had twenty-four hours to get everything out, so he was the one guy who was, "Fuck all of you. I'm taking that shit."

**Todd:** What ever happened to your 2002 European tour?

**Zach:** Oh, it was awesome, man. We went fuckin' everywhere, like Germany.

**Brad:** Skokie, Illinois.

**Zach:** It was just Germany and Illinois.

**Paddy:** "Dude, we went to Germany and Canada."

**Zach:** "Mike booked it when he was high. I don't know."

**Todd:** No, seriously, what happened to the tour?

**Zach:** What tour? Where?

**Todd:** You were planning to go on a 2002 European tour?

**Nate:** Where did you hear about that? Our website, too?

**Todd:** No, Sean Carswell (co-Razorcake dude) told me.

**Paddy:** See, the funny thing, is what I'm guessing, is what you have to understand is that Todd actually researches his interviews, so you guys have probably been getting wasted, talking crazy shit, and you don't even remember.

**Zach:** We can't even pull off a US tour. We can't even tour Minneapolis.

**Brad:** Yeah, I went to Europe and rode bike around. Maybe he's talking about that. I don't know.

**Paddy:** Yeah, you toured Europe. How did you get along with The Apers?

**Brad:** Those fuckers wouldn't give me a place to sleep to fuckin' save my life. I had to sleep on a rooftop in the rain because of those bastards.

**Todd:** Why's that?

**Brad:** I was at their show, too, right? I went to see them Rotterdam. I was at this show, and I'm talking to them and kind of trying to avoid namedropping. "I know Todd (Congelli). You guys did a split with his band. The Raging Hormones split with Toys That Kill." I asked them, "Hey, do you know of any place to stay? I'm travel-

ling around, sleeping on this roof in this park." They're like, "Oh yeah, man, I'm homeless." "You live in this town. You're not homeless."

**Todd:** You can't be homeless with all that equipment, you know.

**Paddy:** They're famous over there, too.

**Brad:** They're huge.

**Paddy:** That makes me hate them because you're my favorite person in the world. Especially in Rotterdam. Their economy is out of this world. Fuck them. Even their rain is expensive. You probably even have to pay to get rained on.

**Todd:** Explain belt fighting.

**Brad:** It's this new thing that we're trying to start. Taking punk rock to a new level. The violence of people punching each other in the pit, that's kind of boring. After the show, in the alley, with belts and no shirts. Belt fights. It just makes sense. I'd love to belt fight an emo band.

**Paddy:** They'd have white belts. You'd see them coming.

**Brad:** They'd be at such a disadvantage.

**Paddy:** Do you think it's worth more points to get somebody right in the face or to knock the cigarette out?

**Brad:** I think the cigarette because that's accuracy. That's fuckin' technique. Anybody can hit you in the face.

**Todd:** What's the next step in psychological terrorism against The Juliana Theory? Let's cover stuff that you've actually done, so we can get this on record.

**Paddy:** Let's also cover what they did.

**Zach:** The whole story goes – we were on tour with Dillinger Four last fall and we were playing in Tallahassee at this lame-ass, college place. They got on stage. They played last and they were just fucking horrible.

**Todd:** Explain horrible.

**Nate:** They looked like the singer of Creed, but emo.

**Zach:** You can't get any worse than that.

**Paddy:** It really was.

**Zach:** They got up and started playing and this fuckin' asshole was on stage, flipping his long hair to the girls. It just sucked. Everything about it was so phony and so shitty. Me and a friend of mine, Maddy, who lives down in Florida, we were a little buzzed and we decided that we would get up on stage and dance, 'cause it was fuckin' boring. I would think they'd want that type of thing. But they didn't. I pulled down my pants and the next thing I knew I was basically on the ground, sprawled. This dude kicked me in the ass and shoved me down and I wanted to go into their rack of pedals because they had this insane equipment, but I missed by a long shot. We got escorted off by their goons. That was pretty great.

**Brad:** At that same show, our friend Joe, who goes on tour with us, it's on the DVD that he made, he's going up to their merch table and they were standing with a camera a little ways away and video taping this. He'd go up with a beer in his hand, be

pointing at shirts, dropping it, and spilling it all over their merchandise. He did it like seven times. He'd knock it over. The guy would pick it up and be like, "Get it together."

**Nate:** "You take Visa, right?" "No, dude." Then he just walked out.

**Zach:** So that happened. As soon as we got escorted out, we were just outside, smoking, and we hear, coming through the door, on the PA, the singer on the microphone, "I'll be fuckin' waiting for you outside, mother-fucker." The drummer was practically in tears that we'd ruined their show. It was ridiculous. They were done and they went outside. I saw them. "Did you need to talk to me about anything?" It didn't really go anywhere from there. They wanted me to go on their tour bus and hang out. I was like, "We can definitely hang out in your tour bus." I wanted that black eye so fucking bad for the rest of the tour. I would kill for that. I did not give a shit how much of an ass whooping I took.

**Todd:** They have a tour bus? Are they big?

**Nate:** They're pretty big, actually.

**Paddy:** No they're not.

**Nate:** Really?

**Paddy:** They got signed and there's anticipation of them being big. But let me put it to this way. They were just dumb enough to be the kind of people who would actually play the type of place that I would actually say is cool in Tallahassee and insist on headlining on a bill that is obviously making sense within itself. They are so retarded that people stuck around when they headlined, just to heckle them. Not even to check them out to give them a chance, but, literally, when they're setting up their equipment, there's already people who have stuck around for the extra ten minutes just to yell at them and make fun of them. I'm sure they think they're big. I'm sure their foxy girlfriends who are yuppies somewhere think they're big.

**Zach:** It ended with kind of an argument. Me practically begging to go on their bus, willing to take them up on their offer. As soon as I was about to get on, Billy from Dillinger Four came up behind me. "Oh, dude, so we're going to go check out the bus?" He's a big, fuckin' dude. The guy hightailed it into the bus, shut the door, and we didn't see hide nor hair of them for the rest of the night.

**Paddy:** I think you're also changing the story a little bit. You were also pretty eager to get a couple punches in, too. I was standing right there. I also remember Zach and Billy insisting on them autographing their asses. That's where the whole thing started.

**Brad:** They were handing out autographs.

**Zach:** That was the whole thing. We were interrupting their autograph session. That was another thing they were pissed off about. That was pretty great.

**Todd:** Nate, what is your anti-drug?

**Nate:** Heroin. It keeps me off the other drugs.

**Todd:** Explain the whole anti-drug thing.

**Nate:** Well, basically, the government got a bunch of money to do a campaign to deter kids from drugs and they call it the anti-drug. They had ideas such as tennis. If you play tennis, you won't smoke crack. I tried. I played tennis for awhile and I still wanted to do drugs. It didn't work.

**Zach:** Particularly crack.

**Nate:** Crack especially. So, I smoked crack, I played tennis, and my tennis game was pretty off. It didn't work.

**Todd:** So, how does a band, collectively, go to Dubuque, Iowa, and find a drinking goat?

**Nate:** It was great.

**Zach:** That was a complete accident.

**Brad:** We didn't even have a show in Dubuque.

**Zach:** That was supposed to be the end of the tour. Then we played with Hot Carl, who are from there. We played with them in Iowa City and they asked, "Would you guys be interested in playing a show tomorrow night in our hometown?" "Is there a show?" They're like, "No. But we can set one up." We're like, "Why the hell not?" So we show up. It was incredible. We played in this shitty garage on this farm and there was a beer-drinking goat. There was a crazy fuckin' dude in a Spider Man costume dancing everywhere. It was a great show on an hour's notice. He called everyone he knew and there were a hundred kids packed in this tiny garage. It was great.

**Brad:** And the guy who he got the goat from, he won it in a bet. He had to streak in front of a thousand people and he won a goat and sixteen dollars. It was something ridiculous like that. The goat got attacked by a dog a day before we were there, so part of its head was bloody and messed up. But the goat wouldn't drink anything else. You could go up to it and give it water or coffee. It would shy away. But beer, it would guzzle a can in a couple seconds and try to eat the can.

**Zach:** You've got to make the goat eat the can. That's a rule.

**Brad:** He would eat cigarettes and spit out the filter.

**Paddy:** Let me get this straight. This is Spider Man's goat?

**Brad:** Yeah. I don't remember his real name.

**Paddy:** Who could ever think that Iowa could be so cosmopolitan?

**Zach:** That was a great goat.

**Brad:** He came to a kind of tragic end. The last time we were in Dubuque, we were like, "Where's Sammy the Goat?" "Well, I don't know. He died. He got killed and we're not sure if it was from the drinking or the fact that somebody spray painted him." They're thinking, I want a pink goat. Or something. The guy had three new goats, apparently, so I don't know what state

they're in right now. They're probably building up their tolerance right now.

**Paddy:** Suddenly, I want to tour Iowa.

**Todd:** Is today the worst day of your life?

**Brad:** Actually, no. I haven't had a job in months.

**Zach:** I didn't go to work today and I also didn't show up on Friday when I was supposed to. It's a shitty fucking pizza parlor in Minneapolis and I don't recommend it.

**Paddy:** Is the drummer from Onward To Mayhem still your manager?

**Zach:** He's not my manager.

**Todd:** So, what was the worst day of your life?

**Brad:** Probably the first day I got a job. It was at Toys R Us.

**Zach:** Your first job was at Toys R Us?

**Brad:** I delivered newspapers and shit before that, which was also terrible. In the middle of winter, I'd get chased around by dogs and stuff. The Toys R Us job was horrible. It was during the Christmas season, so

**I wanted that black eye  
so fucking bad for the  
rest of the tour. Zach**

all these people came in asking for specific toys. I quit during the Christmas season because some lady came up and began asking about Power Wheels. I was like, "Fuck this. I don't know anything about Power Wheels. I can't fake it anymore. I don't know." You had to wear this ridiculous smock.

**Paddy:** I'm actually very curious to know what was Nate Gangelhoff's worst day of his life.

**Nate:** Hmm. It was probably a job. I was probably working at a blowgun factory. Oh, yeah, shit.

**Paddy:** I don't even know if you should tell the anecdote that goes along with that. That should just be in big letters as the quote. Was this when you were living in Bolivia?

**Nate:** It the western suburbs of Minneapolis, in Long Lake. I needed a job. I was in high school. I needed some quick money and I heard about the blowgun factory. Why not? The thing they said was you get paid per blowgun. The people working there were like cyborgs. They could make blowguns really fast. Six hundred bucks a week. I said, "Okay, that's good money." I make them pretty slow. I'm making ten bucks a week and it wasn't as good. The first day I realize I'm making blowguns for a dollar an hour.

**Zach:** How many blowguns could you probably turn out in an hour?

**Nate:** I'd say two. You have a piece of the pipe and another piece of the pipe and you

put them together and you put a baggie of the dart things in a big bag. I'd do it, but man, I'd think, "This sucks. I'm making no money. I'm making blowguns."

**Paddy:** Where the fuck do you buy a blowgun? Is there that big of a market? Where is there a Tribesmen R Us? "Hey man, deer hunting season's starting on Friday. Better get to the blowgun shop."

**Zach:** Were they real blowguns or toy blowguns?

**Nate:** They're real blowguns. It was, like, Blowguns Are We or something. The dude who owned the company, his license plate said "BLOWGUN." I said, "Man, fuck you, man. You're getting rich off me." So, the last day of work, I took a blowgun, walked outside, boom, boom, boom, boom, shot his tires out. "Fuck you. I'm making seven cents an hour." So that was the worst day of my life, ever, to date.

**Paddy:** Let's just cut to the chase. What's the importance of the movie *Office Space* and why does everybody have to see it?

**Zach:** Holy shit, dude. That movie sums us up as a band... except we don't work in offices and that's kind of what the movie's about. So, hell yeah.

**Paddy:** I've always told all of my friends from out of town, I've been like, "It's not just a sample on their record. For these guys, it's their religion."

**Todd:** Nate, you tried to break into a shopping mall once?

**Nate:** I was fourteen. I went to a mall and we were hanging out, trying to steal shit. I realized we saw that the grate, door thing for the mall was opened slightly, so we thought, "We'll come back tonight, break in, and steal some" - it was a hobby store - "model planes and sell them to kids or something."

**Paddy:** "Hey man, wanna buy a plane? I could hook you up with a Jeep, man."

**Nate:** There's an audience somewhere. I don't know. But we figured we'd come back that night because it's too obvious in the middle of the day. We came back in the middle of the night and came back there and it turned out that it actually was locked, so we started going at it with a stick we found in the driveway. We actually broke in. We ran in. My friend was a little too excited and he threw open the door. The alarm went off. We had to run out and we were hiding in the golf course next door. Basically, we ran home the whole way from the suburban cops and we got nothing out of it. That was my experience with robbing a mall. I guess I'd recommend it, but we fell short.

**Paddy:** You've got to keep trying.

**Nate:** I'll try again soon.

**Todd:** Who left your merch box under the van?

**Nate:** That was Nick, our old guitar player. We were kind of drinking. I don't know what happened. Basically, we were driving and we heard a crunching noise. "What the fuck is that? Dude, stop the car right now."

Don't move." We stop and look out and the records were kinda crushed, but the thing was we still sold them. They were still sellable. Little do the people know – tire tracks on their record.

**Paddy:** "Screen printed, man."

**Brad:** "We fuckin' ran over every one of them individually."

**Todd:** So, what's been the big holdup with releasing stuff? You've been a band for three and a half years, is that correct?

**Nate:** We take our time, man.

**Todd:** You have seven songs on vinyl – one track on the *No Hold Back, All Attack* comp. So that's, on average, roughly one song every six months.

**Zach:** That's a lot better than we do in real life. We're slow with the writing process. I'm pretty picky about what we even play live.

**Brad:** It's got a lot to do with different people being out of town at different times. I'm not in Minneapolis that much. I'm here, on average, seven months out of the year.

**Paddy:** Even when you're here, you're not really here. I've seen you more than enough times with a beer bottle in you hand and you don't even know who I am.

**Todd:** Name an influence you can't deny that is in your music.

**Zach:** Screeching Weasel.

**Nate:** Pinhead Gunpowder... Dee-Lite.

**Zach:** Shit, I don't know, man. Simple Plan.

**Nate:** Bowling For Soup. It's kind of sad that it's come to the point where it's third generation Blink 182, where they're ripping off New Found Glory. They're ripping off a song – their hit single is this song for a community college in Minneapolis.

**Zach:** That National American University tune. "One day, one night. Saturday's all right. My mom's just fine."

**Nate:** And their hit single is that song.

**Zach:** And they don't live here. What the fuck?

**Paddy:** Actually, it's funny because you bring up what I always find interesting with you guys. If I put you guys in anything, the first thing I would bring up would be Crimpshrine, Screeching Weasel, but I've realized in the last couple years that it's a hard time bringing that up. It conjures up different connotations because for the better part of the '90s, there were shitty bands who were lumped with that but they didn't actually sound like that.

**Zach:** It's really shitty when someone says your band sounds like Screeching Weasel and The Queers. Even if you do, it's a shitty thing to say.

**Paddy:** What do you think you guys picked up from that that was so right

that literally thousands of bands through the '90s somehow picked up on but somehow picked up all the wrong aspects?

**Zach:** You can't base your band around a song like "Totally." It's a good song, but fuckin'-a, dude. There's so much more to pop punk, and particularly Screeching Weasel.

**Brad:** For me growing up, I loved all that pop punk shit. I'd go through *MRR* and read their reviews and stuff would say "Screeching Weasel, Queers," and generally, back then, I would buy it. Then I'd be like, "What the fuck is this? This sounds like the Parasites." Lyrically, especially. It seemed like people were associating Screeching Weasel with a sound more than something other than that. For me, I was always more into The Vindictives and Screeching Weasel than The Queers. I liked The Queers musically and I grew up liking them, but Screeching Weasel and

The Vindictives, actually did something for me. Their lyrics are good.

**Nate:** Bowling For Soup, the result is so bad.

**Zach:** "I want to be sedated. All I wanted was to see her naked."

**Brad:** I'll fuckin' belt fight them any fuckin' day.

**Nate:** But that's what they take out of it. I'm assuming that they grew up on Screeching Weasel and The Queers, the same bands we did, and the result that pop culture gets is these hit singles that are bad and generic.

**Todd:** So, what did you guys pull out of it that other people are unable to? I'll admit, the first time I listened to your 7", I was like, "Ah, that's pretty good." But sitting down and listening to it over and over again, it got addictive.

**Nate:** Screeching Weasel, at least lyrically, take "It's All in My Head" vs. "Totally." There's a certain dark, cool side to their songs.

**Brad:** I've always liked songs that somehow, in a way, document a certain thing in a period of time where the person writing it lives in. That's why I love Woody Guthrie. That's why I like folk music. That's what I think punk rock should be. Even hardcore bands, they'll write about political things in some other country that really doesn't relate to them and that's fine and good and some bands pull it off, but I really like stuff that's very specific to their place and time. I think Minneapolis is really fortunate with a lot of bands that pull that off. I didn't like hardcore at all when I heard Man Against and they, along with Born Against, made me realize that there's actually something to a lot of these hardcore bands. It's not something I was into originally, musically, but then I got really into it. I think a lot of people bought the Born Against/Screeching Weasel split and they either liked Born Against or they liked Screeching Weasel, but, for me, it was a brilliant idea. I like both bands. It made sense.

**Todd:** What is "Never Three on a Match"?

**Brad:** The song title is just a dumb thing that comes from an old navy, sailor thing. When they're on a ship, you could light a match to light a cigarette. You could light two cigarettes with it, but if you light three, you were in danger of being seen from the flame.

**Paddy:** I actually grew up with that, too. I remember when I was a kid, that was bad luck.





**Brad:** It became a bad luck thing based on that.

**Todd:** How is Rivethead's sound different than the previous venture some of you were in, Sounds of Corpses Rotting?

**Nate:** I don't know. It's like shitty versus less shitty. Out of high school, it was fun. My relatives would always ask, "So, you graduated. What are you doing?" I can't say "I'm in Sounds of Corpses Rotting," so I would say, "I'm doing nothing."

**Brad:** Basically, we wanted to do a band that pretty much sounded like Crimpshrine at the time, but we tried to cover "Summertime" in that same band and didn't ever get through it once.

**Todd:** Have you guys ever run into any interpretation problems such as, "I'm a rivethead. I'm into gothic industrial music"?

**Nate:** On our message board, on our website, people come on and say, "You guys don't know that rivethead means industrial. You stupid punks. We're into groove industrial. You're not." I didn't realize. When we started, we called ourselves Rumblefish, and we heard there was already a band named that, so we changed it to avoid that becoming a problem. Now, there's apparently – I didn't know this – if you're into industrial music, you're a rivethead.

**Zach:** And we just named it after the book by Ben Hamper. We didn't even know that was a thing. Some jerkoff band from Texas, this industrial groove band, has trademarked the name, so everywhere their name is, it's Rivethead™.

**Brad:** I'd like to see a thing on the industrial message board of a bunch of GM factory workers. "What the fuck are you calling yourself a rivethead for? We actually do this

eight hours a day, motherfucker."

**Paddy:** You can't give a name to your own subculture. That's bullshit. It's like giving yourself a nickname. "Hey guys, call me King Groovie."

**Todd:** How much train hopping do you guys really do?

**Brad:** For awhile, I was doing it really regularly. I pretty much moved out of where I was living and traveled all over Canada on the Canadian Lowline from St. Paul, up to Winnipeg, over to Vancouver, stopping at places in between. For awhile, that was what I was doing. Now, I do it now and then. Right now, I live in my van. I don't live anywhere in Minneapolis. Recently, I was out west. When I was on the West Coast, I rode from Portland down to Oakland. I don't do it quite as much as I used to. I tend to go from living in a house to not living in a house every couple months. Generally, I'll ride trains somewhere.

**Zach:** It's pretty much the same with me. I haven't been doing it as much lately. A couple summers ago, I went from Miami, Florida, to Portland, Oregon. It was a crazy summer. It took up my entire summer. It took me everywhere. It was fucking incredible. Last summer, I went to Milwaukee for breakfast.

**Todd:** Explain Theta Beta Potata.

**Nate:** Our friend, Dave, I went to high school with. He was living in Iowa and was going to school for film, and he lived in a house that did shows. Obviously, it was a take off of frat houses: Theta Beta Potata. It's rad. They still do shows there. It was really fun.

**Brad:** It was basically a bunch of punk kids, living in a house, doing shows, surrounded by frat kids. "Fuck them. We're starting our own frat that's going to rule and throw punk shows." And they pulled it off. They actually had the letters. They had the theta, beta, and potato-shaped thing and the university came by and made them take it down. "You're not a frat. You can't do that."

**Todd:** What is the FETC?

**Brad:** It's Freight Edge Train Core. Me and my friend Steve were traveling across Canada and you'd see the straight edge hardcore thing, the X. That didn't really apply to us because we drank a lot. We decided to start our own things that we could write on trains.

**Todd:** Who is Lawrence Miles and why did he get shot in the back?

**Brad:** He's a kid in Minneapolis. I think he was fourteen at the time. He was playing around with a BB gun and the cops came up and pointed guns at him. He had his back turned to them and didn't understand what was happening because he was scared and he was a kid. So he ran away and they shot him in the back.

**Zach:** That same cop, Charlie Storley, this piece of shit, shot another cop while he was laying on the ground. The cop had been doing an undercover job and was sitting in his car. He got shot in the chest by some

random dude. He got out, radioed for help, and was lying on the ground. This fuck, Charlie Storley, came up and shot him.

**Nate:** He shot Lawrence Miles – this was a few years ago – got a promotion since then, shot a cop in the back and is still a cop with paid absence.

**Zach:** The cop who got shot was Asian. Ever since, there has been a big backlash in the local police department against Asians because he's speaking out about it. He was a normal cop. He wasn't a nice guy or anything, but he's speaking out against how he was treated. They're doing a lot of things to discredit him. On the local news coverage they said that there were rumors that he shot himself so he could avoid going away for the military. It's tragic. The police force isn't going to hang themselves.

**Paddy:** Not to get all weird or anything, but you guys are looking at it from a very liberal point of view, dude. It's pretty hard to shoot a kid in the back. [laughter] It may sound easy. I remember the first time Half Pint shot a kid in the back, they were crying for a week.

**Todd:** Name three things that if you put together, makes you think of Rivethead as a band for you. I'm not even talking sound-wise.

**Zach:** When I think of Rivethead, I think of this old house that me and Brad used to live at, this punk house in southeast Minneapolis. It was in college town. We'd have shows in the basement all the time and they were just really crazy. It was a really good period of my life, having Rivethead shows there all the time made it a lot better. It was a ridiculous house. Me and Brad built bedrooms in the basement out of plywood. We suckered the people who lived there into letting us live there for fifty bucks a month, which we, most of the time, didn't have.

**Brad:** The jobs I have – I work in the Target Center in Minneapolis – I have to work a Bette Midler concert or something, and run wine coolers up all night. After that, I like doing something that makes sense to me, be around people that make sense to me. I've always been somewhat involved in the punk rock scene and it just made sense to be in a band.

**Nate:** I work a stupid office job, four days a week. I get done, I can go play a show or practice. It's therapeutic. It's a better way to spend my time.

**Todd:** It's your anti-drug.

**Nate:** That is my anti-drug... but I still do drugs.



# TREASON

## AND REPUBLICAN POLITICS

ARTICLE BY CHRIS PEPUS  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY KEITH ROSSON

Whether or not you've heard of Ann Coulter, you've probably had her arguments recited to you at some point. Coulter has become the top right-wing guru, providing talking points for conservatives everywhere, and turning up on Fox and MSNBC to preach to adoring talk show hosts. After the September 11 attacks, she garnered national attention by recommending that America invade the Middle East and force Muslims to convert to Christianity. In 2002, she made it to the top of the bestseller lists with her book *Slander*, which charged liberals with systematically lying about conservatives. Last summer, Coulter followed *Slander* with *Treason*, in which she accused everyone to the left of the Republican Party of being traitors. Like its predecessor, *Treason* sold well and drew considerable fire. However, critics of the book have concentrated more on Coulter's attempt to rehabilitate Joe McCarthy than on the specifics of foreign and military policy. With the November elections upcoming and the Iraq War dragging on more than nine months after President Bush's declaration of victory, Republicans' political interests depend more than ever on branding their opponents dangerous on foreign policy issues. So let's finally settle the claims of the book that is the unofficial 2004 Republican Platform.

Harry Truman is one of Coulter's favorite targets: she labels him a traitor for firing General Douglas MacArthur and rejecting



his plan to widen the Korean War. Coulter describes the dispute between the two men this way: "Truman believed MacArthur's crossing of the Yalu River had unnecessarily antagonized the peace-loving Chinese Communists and dragged them into the Korean War."<sup>1</sup> It would have been at least somewhat antagonistic to cross the Yalu, since that would have meant invading China. Coulter has confused the Yalu River (which separates China and North Korea) with the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel (which then separated North and South Korea) – a pretty fundamental error, and one that shows just how little she and her editors know about the Korean War. Even after correcting the geographical mistake, Coulter's statement is still false: Truman authorized American troops to cross the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.

Coulter also neglects to mention that MacArthur had been spectacularly wrong about China from the beginning. Just six weeks before the Chinese launched a massive attack against U.N. forces, MacArthur had assured Truman that there was "very little" chance China would do so.<sup>2</sup> Coulter likewise fails to note that after MacArthur was dismissed, he explained that he had planned to drop between 30 and 50 nuclear bombs on northeastern China and to blanket the border area with radioactive cobalt.<sup>3</sup> If she is so sure that MacArthur's policy was superior to Truman's, then why suppress the fact that MacArthur's policy included nuclear war? What would have been the long-term effects of massive radiation on the area's inhabitants, including U.S. servicemen in Korea? Also, how does Coulter think Josef Stalin would have reacted to seeing his most important ally nuked, with at least part of the fallout landing in Soviet territory? Is she aware that the Soviets also possessed nuclear weapons in 1951?

Of course, Korea attracts less interest from conservative myth-makers than Vietnam, because the widespread protests against the latter war offer rightists a chance to blame protestors for the defeat. However, even a cursory look at the Vietnam conflict tells another story. The U.S. committed massive resources – over 500,000 troops on the ground at one point and more bombs than were dropped in World War II – in an unsuccessful attempt to prop up the South Vietnamese government. Doesn't that prove that the South Vietnamese state was never a viable entity from the start? Coulter ducks the question, regarding it as self-evident that Kennedy and Johnson lost the war by failing to be aggressive enough.

In trying to advance her case, Coulter makes what she can out of the war's sideshows. For instance, this is how she describes the CIA-backed military overthrow of South Vietnamese dictator Ngo Dinh Diem in 1963: "In the middle of a war, Kennedy dispatched the CIA to help assassinate our ally."<sup>4</sup> When a conservative objects to a right-wing military coup against a civilian ruler, you know



something's up. The truth is that Diem and his uniformed successors were equally corrupt and unpopular, and so the coup changed nothing. But Coulter's case hinges on the war being easily winnable, and so she has to find phony turning points wherever she can. Of course, had Kennedy vetoed the coup, Coulter would now be castigating him for being too scared to pull the trigger on a weak leader and replace him with competent military men.

Coulter's rants are not even governed by claims she made earlier. At one point, she describes the Vietnam situation early in Kennedy's presidency: "When the U.S. could have easily won, Kennedy refused to order an invasion of the North." A few pages later, she salutes Eisenhower's policy of restraint toward Vietnam. "President Eisenhower provided economic and military aid to South Vietnam. But he also said he could not 'conceive of a greater tragedy for America than to get heavily involved.'"<sup>5</sup> So which is it? Was the Vietnam War a cakewalk botched by Democrats or was it, as Eisenhower said, a tragic error to go to war in Vietnam at all?

The doubletalk continues when Coulter describes Nixon's Vietnam policy:

[Nixon] withdrew more than half a million troops from Vietnam, leaving a trim twenty-thousand-troop force behind. He cut spending on the war by over 80 percent... Nixon kept the Communist North Vietnamese at bay and protected freedom in South Vietnam by relentlessly bombing the North.<sup>6</sup>

ing that Ho Chi Minh's party would win the upcoming vote, Diem cancelled the elections and declared himself head of the new Republic of South Vietnam. The U.S. supported the move.<sup>7</sup> It was Eisenhower and Diem, not the commies, who banned the elections. It is simply laughable for conservatives to pretend that we were fighting for democracy by propping up the South Vietnamese dictatorship, or that we could have won the war by invading North Vietnam, or even that any vital American interest was at stake in Southeast Asia.

For all its distortions of the record in the cases of Korea and Vietnam, the most ridiculous account in *Treason* may be its discussion of President Reagan's abortive deployment of Marines to Lebanon in 1983-4. That intervention would appear to offer a textbook case of a President committing U.S. troops carelessly and then pulling them out when things got tough – something Coulter insists that only Democrats do. However, she is sure that the fiasco was not Reagan's fault: "Lebanon was a Democrat policy," she writes. After an October 1983 truck bomb killed 241 Marines in their barracks, "Democrats in Congress set to work drafting a joint resolution demanding that Reagan pull the Marines out of Beirut." In the rest of her book, Ronald Reagan is portrayed as possessing near-superhuman powers, but in this case, the mere threat of a joint resolution by Democrats (who did not even control both houses of Congress) is enough to make him reverse course and also to free him from responsibility for his own policy. A few paragraphs later,

## WHEN A CONSERVATIVE OBJECTS TO A RIGHTWING MILITARY COUP AGAINST A CIVILIAN RULER, YOU KNOW SOMETHING'S UP.

He "kept the Communist North Vietnamese at bay"? What happened to victory? Why didn't Nixon just invade North Vietnam and give the commies what for? The answer of course is that after the Korean War, American presidents of both parties were wary of invading a communist country that neighbored China. None of them wanted to risk another ground war against the Chinese, especially after China exploded its first nuclear bomb in 1964.

More fundamentally, it is a lie that we were protecting freedom or democracy in South Vietnam. Rather, we were simply supporting one dictator against another. Neither Diem nor the parade of military rulers who followed him represented democratic rule: Diem cancelled the only free, nationwide elections ever scheduled in Vietnam, and did so with U.S. government approval. The 1954 Geneva Accords, which secured French withdrawal from Indochina, mandated that internationally supervised elections take place in 1956. In the meantime, neither the government of the independent northern part of the country nor that of the French-controlled southern part was to permit foreign bases or sign military alliances. The Eisenhower administration declined to sign the accords, but promised to allow them to be carried out, and also pledged to "refrain from the threat or the use of force." However, in September 1954 – just two months after the Geneva agreements – the U.S. signed a military alliance with the French-appointed South Vietnamese government. In 1955, fear-



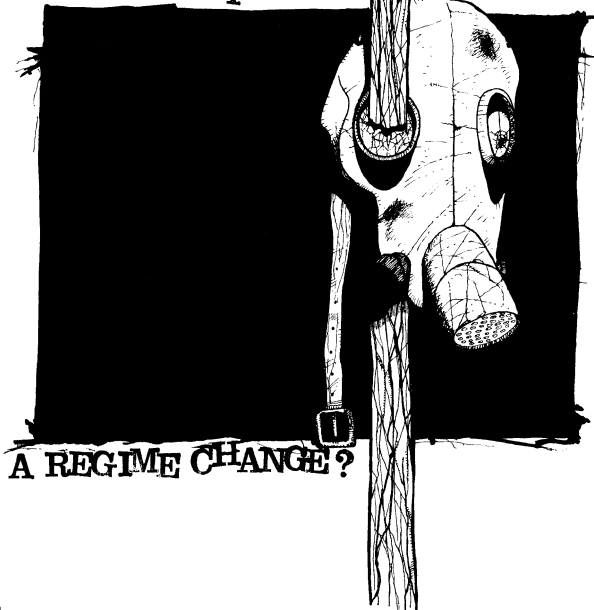
Coulter seems to have realized how pathetic that excuse is, and tries another on for size. "Reagan had bigger fish to fry in the 1980s. He invaded Grenada."<sup>8</sup> Reagan's invasion of that tiny Caribbean island might look like a "big fish" operation compared to, say, an invasion of Club Med. However, it looks miniscule compared to the problems of the Middle East.

Our biggest Middle Eastern problem today – the ongoing war in Iraq – may provide the ultimate riposte to Coulter's claim that Republicans are both more sensible and more effective in their use of military force. The Bush

administration plan for a post-Saddam Iraq seems to have counted on Iraqis forgetting all religious and ethnic differences and accepting with joy both a long-term American occupation and a government handpicked by U.S. authorities. Though such sanguine predictions have been contradicted by events, and though the current collection of anti-American rebels has proven more lethal than Saddam's armies, Bush and his advisors refuse to accept that a long guerrilla war is underway.

Moving to the home front, it is interesting that in compiling her list of traitors, Coulter seems to have forgotten right-wingers' affection for homegrown terrorists and subversives from the Branch Davidians to the various militia movements. That may be because Coulter is one of the right-wingers who expressed affection for those groups. She also ignores Republicans'

HEY, DID  
SOMEBODY ORDER



A REGIME CHANGE?

failure to respond to the unprecedented act of terrorism against the United States committed by Chile's dictatorship in September 1976, when agents of that regime murdered Chilean dissident Orlando Letelier and an American citizen with a car bomb in Washington, D.C. Orchestrating the murder was the head of Chile's secret police, Manuel Contreras Sepúlveda, who (according to CIA documents released in 2000) was a CIA asset, paid by that organization.<sup>9</sup> Contreras's boss, the dictator Augusto Pinochet, had seized power in a coup directed by the Nixon administration in 1973.

In the wake of the D.C. bombing, the Ford administration, which included Dick Cheney as Chief of Staff, failed to take action against the Chilean government for that attack on American lives and American sovereignty. In 1995, with Pinochet no longer in charge in Chile, Contreras went to prison for his various crimes, including the murder of Letelier. But his terrorism against the United States has attracted little interest from American politicians, least of all the Republicans who claim to be the best protectors of our nation. Nor have Coulter or any other Republican "warriors against terror" seen fit to call for an investigation into Pinochet's involvement in the attack, despite the fact that Contreras maintains that he never took any actions without explicit orders from Pinochet himself.<sup>10</sup>

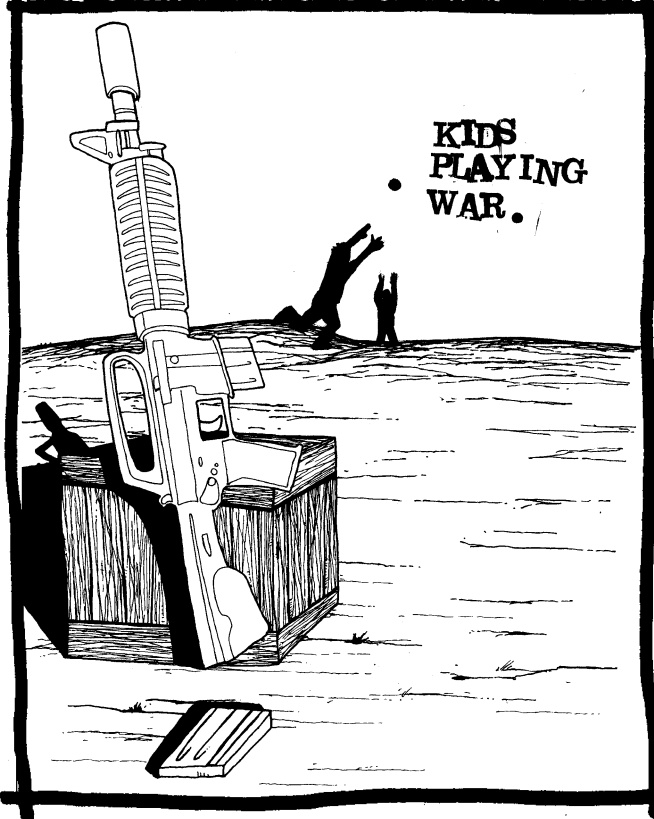
As fraudulent as any of Coulter's claims is the pose of fake populism that she adopts throughout the book. With repeated references to brie and tuxedos, she tries to portray Democratic officeholders as over-privileged elitists, as if the latter group didn't include Ivy Leaguer Ann Coulter, and as if Republican economic policy had any objective besides increasing the fabulous wealth and power of such people. Coulter's goal in crying "treason" is to distract Americans from the economic damage caused by Bush administration giveaways to the rich. Her elitism also causes her to omit key facts about America's wars, such as the fact that Vietnam-era draft boards targeted working-class men, and specifically marked them for combat infantry duty once inducted.<sup>11</sup> Though the draft is no more, the ranks of the military remain filled primarily with working-class recruits, and that fact goes a long way toward explaining the enthusiasm of well-to-do conservatives like Bush and Coulter for dubious military ventures like the current Iraq war. It's not their people getting killed.



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LIKE THE ILLUSTRATIONS? EMAIL KEITHROSSON@HOTMAIL.COM



# TYRADES

INTERVIEW BY PETITE PAQUET  
PICTURES BY TODD TAYLOR

Even in the spotlight that Jenna sets in front of them, creating its blinding light and deep shadows, the natural sweetness she exudes is not hidden. It's more of a sweetly exotic kind of tough-girl persona and not the clichéd evil tough girl. Her voice, snotty with a biting pitch, pours out as she jumps and bobs from side to side, eyes rolling back into her head. Her shoulders pop back and forth as her feet follow her arms, jerking upward. It makes you wonder if she can see you, or if the lights are there more to assuage her stage fright, once again playing up, in my mind, the idea that she's a cute angry girl, in a very innocent way, nonetheless capable of taking an eye out of anyone who should question her motives or grab her business.

Mostly a side profile is what you see of Jim, rocking frantically like a psychiatric patient. The coil of his guitar cord catches his leg every now and then and he stumbles so gracefully that you're not sure if it was intentional or not. The aforementioned light catches his face and elongates his already prominent facial features. Casting shadows that make him look daunting and not hearing anything from him except "1-2-3-4" increases the tension of his stage character. He plops his guitar around on his hip as his hands move so fast they look slow, or maybe it's the other way around.

Robert, on the other hand, is the unruly one. Jumping off his amp, bumping his head on the ceiling, kicking stuff over, and occasionally stopping to spit backup vocals into a microphone. Constant movement obscures his face, and the lights make him look like something you'd see out of the corner of your eye that would be gone once you turned around. The bass is not so much an instrument in his hands and more of a weapon of choice, although he does play with some skill. The moustaché he wears reminds me of Hitler or some evil villain you'd see in an old cartoon tying a woman to a railroad track.

In the back sits Frank, with thick black-framed prescription glasses, pale white skin, and chapped lips. (On this particular night, and the following he was really sick, which probably accentuated these qualities.) His white shirt is soaked with sweat and you can see his skin, hot and pink, through it. His glasses are wet from the sweat that dripped from his hair and his eyes pinch tightly together to keep the sweat from his forehead out.

Keep in mind this is only my impression of their live show. Recorded, they are just as driving and impulsive as their frantic live shows. Offstage, the Tyrades are humble, sort of self-beating, and really funny.

**Petite:** I'm sorry we have to do it in here. I'm sure you guys have spent enough time in here. (In the Tyrades' tour van.)

**Robert:** I'm just pissed he's in my freakin' seat. [Points to my boyfriend, Richie, sitting in the driver's seat.]

**Petite:** First thing I want to know, 'cause I haven't been able to figure this out, where exactly are you guys from?

**Jenna:** We live in Chicago, but originally I'm from Buffalo. Jim's from Buffalo.

**Robert:** We started in Buffalo. I moved to Buffalo and we started in Buffalo. Frank is from Atlanta. I'm from Atlanta as well, but that's way too confusing.

**Jim:** We're from Chicago!

**Robert:** We're all from Chicago; all of us live in Chicago.

**Petite:** You'll have to forgive me 'cause I didn't research you guys very well.

**Jenna:** Get out!

**Robert:** What research is there to do? It'd be like: "I heard two of your shitty singles."

**Jim:** Yeah. "I did some research and you guys suck."

**Petite:** What did you guys have planned for this tour?

**Robert:** You mean like where are we going or what bad times are we going to have? We're going the rest of the (west) coast and

then back home and we already hit the east coast. Then we're doing Europe in spring.

**Petite:** You guys have been together for a while now. How long has it been?

**Jim:** Well, it's kind of weird because when we started out in Buffalo we were a band for less than a year. Then there was a year break when we decided we were going to move to Chicago. Robert moved back to Atlanta to earn money and we left our drummer in Buffalo. Then we moved to Chicago and Jenna didn't like it so she moved back and then we really didn't know what we were going to do. Then we got Frank to move up. So, during that period there was a whole year where we weren't playing. We weren't a band. So, we've only been this line up and playing in Chicago for about a year. In my mind we've only been a band for a year but, in total, we've been a band for three years. But all the stuff we played in Buffalo, we don't play anymore. Buffalo was almost like training camp. It was where we learned how to play, even though it doesn't really seem like we really figured it out.

**Petite:** Did all of you guys grow up together?

**Robert:** No. Actually, none of us grew up together. We've all met within the last five years.

**Petite:** Was it like someone wanted to start a band and you all sort of met up?

**Jim:** I was in the Baseball Furies and at one point I played in the Blow Tops as well. We went on this real crappy southern tour and I met Robert. Robert really wasn't doing anything and he wanted to start a band, so I convinced him to move up to Buffalo just to start a band. At that point, he had never played an instrument. He was just learning while I played bass for the Furies. It was easy for me to learn guitar when someone else didn't know what they were doing 'cause he was just concentrating on what he was doing and not saying to me, "God, you suck." We just kind of got together. Robert met Jenna and convinced her to join the band.

**Robert:** We found a drummer that was kind of insane.

**Jim:** Yeah, in Buffalo. Then, in that year break, Robert moved back to Atlanta and that's when he met Frank and convinced him to come and ruin his life.

**Robert:** Frank and I actually grew up in the same place but we never knew each other until three summers ago.

**Petite:** What made you guys decide to get the band back together after such a long time apart?



**Robert:** Well, we intended to move to Chicago and keep the band going. Things started going weird and it just happened that when we were deciding whether or not to keep the band, everyone decided to move back to Chicago and Frank decided to move up. It all clicked at the same time.

**Jim:** During that year I just kept writing songs and Robert became a better bass player, so the songs were more interesting, as far as different stuff like bass lines. I thought the songs were just better songs. There was definitely a desire on my part to be really positive, even though things were really shitty. I knew the songs were good and that it'd be a waste if I'd spent a whole year stockpiling these songs.

**Robert:** We didn't really want to give up on it.

**Jim:** The songs were fun to play and were so much better than the stuff we had written in Buffalo.

**Petite:** What's it been like for you, Jenna, being a female singer? There's a lot of stereotypes and bullshit...

**Jenna:** Yeah, I ran into that a lot at first but now it's at a point where we're playing with bands that don't do that and our friends are at the shows. I don't feel that people who come to the show fit me into anything. It really sucked at the beginning, though 'cause...

**Petite:** They were expecting you to show your tits or something.

**Jenna:** Yeah.

**Jim:** Yeah, it's definitely not just eye candy. We're a band and there's equal input.

**Petite:** What have been some of the best bands you guys have played with? You guys have been on several tours.

**Robert:** Yeah, this is our third big one.

**Jim:** Yeah, there's so many good bands. I liked the Marked Men. In Chicago, there's a lot of good bands that I won't mention 'cause it'll be a problem if I forget someone. The Marked Men are my favorite out-of-town band.

**Robert:** There's a lot of bands that we're friends with that we really have a lot of fun playing with. We did a lot of shows with the Black Lips and they were tons of fun. It's always fun to play with the other retards that are around.

**Jim:** Sweet JAP, they're a lot of fun.

**Robert:** Yeah, they're super fun. We just played with them on this tour. Interesting bands like the Spits...

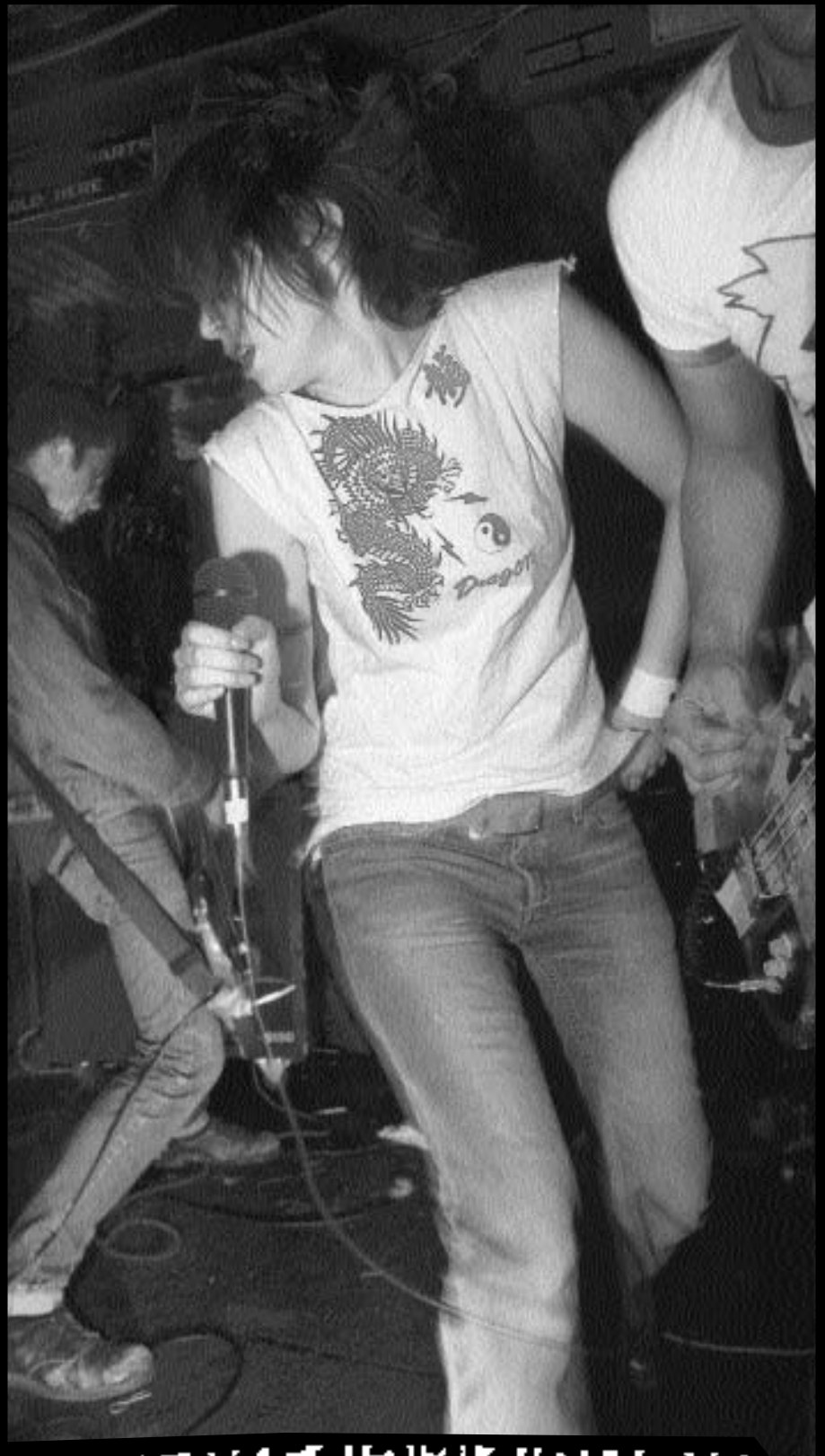
**Jim:** The Mystery Girls were a lot of fun.

**Petite:** So what's the scene like in Chicago?

**Robert:** It's actually really good. It was really poor when we moved there but it's gotten really good. It's getting a little bit weird but there's a lot of good bands.

**Petite:** How so? How is it getting weird?

**Robert:** Well, bands are getting a little bit bigger. When we first moved there they were all just starting and now some are getting bigger and starting to break away



IT'S LIKE H2434 SUCK  
AT REVOLUTIONS  
PER MINUTE

from the scene. Not too much, but everyone's trying to do their own thing. The bands are getting better, though.

**Jim:** Yeah, everyone's really helpful with each other. They really look out for each other. I agree with Robert. In my mind, scenes go in cycles and this a really good part of the cycle. All the bands are young, they look out for each other, and it's really exciting because everyone's in it together. But sometimes, as bands record, it draws them away.

**Robert:** At first we were all playing together, then they started getting offered stuff and being more selective about their shows.

**Jim:** There gets to be a little bit of a competition for shows.

necessarily how much we can get paid, 'cause we don't make shit.

**Robert:** It's also important that different people see us as much as possible.

**Jim:** Yeah. In that case, we could've stayed in Buffalo and played to the same 200 people at every show.

**Robert:** You want us to name bands?

**Jim:** Well, I don't want to forget anyone.

**Petite:** Fuck it. If there's good bands, name them so people can get a head's up. I'd at least like to know.

**Jim:** My favorite Chicago band is the Functional Blackouts. They're really good, like the Pagans meet the Germs but real catchy. We play with them a lot. By far,

pursue that. We want to play to other people and we want to play to kids who are active. I'd rather play to a kid in a basement who's going to be excited about seeing something new than to someone in their late twenties who's just going to drink a beer and the show's just something that's going on.

**Robert:** Yeah, like they don't care that it's Texas Terri who's just playing bad covers.

**Jim:** We definitely pursue those kinds of options. When some says, "Hey you guys are cool. I do this or that." I think, "Wow, that sounds fun." There's a definite good scene in Chicago in this area called Pilsen. It's mostly Mexican and they have all these crazy hardcore shows and we get invited to play them.



**Petite:** Is that something you guys stay away from? Not being picky or pretentious?

**Jim:** I guess. We're picky, but at the same time we'll play a party in someone's basement if we think it's the fun thing to do. We just played a mustache party in a guy's basement.

**Petite:** What's that?

**Jim:** Everyone had to have a mustache to be at the party.

**Robert:** And we'll play basement shows 'cause it's a good thing for us to do.

**Jim:** We're picky, in a way, of what we do but not based on whether it's a career move or how much we're going to get paid. Picky, as in we're only going to play once a month so people don't get sick of us. We want it to be the best time we can have, not

though, there's a lot of really good Chicago bands. Our scene encompasses a lot of different sounds. A lot of people in our scene are older, like twenty-five and up. The Ponys are really good; they're going to be on In The Red. The Hot Machines, a band called VD that are good, a band called the Dirges who've got a Baseball Fury in the band and Ross from the Brides, the Worst, and an all-girl band called the Manhandlers.

**Robert:** There's a lot of bands and everyone will hear them.

**Jim:** For some reason, hardcore kids like us as well and we get invited to play a lot of hardcore shows, which those other bands in our scene don't get asked to play.

**Petite:** Why do you think that happens?

**Jim:** I think the other bands are a little too garagey and more of "a thing." Also, we

they have these weird spaces they find where they do shows.

**Jim:** And the kids are really cool and very active.

**Robert:** We played with a cool Mexican hardcore band.

**Jim:** There's a lot of scenes and we're lucky we've branched out to a couple of them. It's nice playing to people you don't know. I always think it's kind of weird when I see someone with a Tyrades pin who I don't know. I almost want to be like, "Who are you? Let's be friends," Or like, "What's wrong with you? Is that my friend's jacket? Did you steal that?"

**Frank:** "What mistakes have you made in life?"

**Petite:** How's the transition been for you, Frank, moving from Atlanta to Chicago?

**Frank:** Chicago's fun. Atlanta's great and there's a great scene down there. There's a lot of great bands, but Chicago's great, too. The weather in Chicago is god-awful! I could never ever get used to that shit! There's so much snow. It's like Sweden! It's ridiculous.

**Jim:** It's not that bad!

**Robert:** I don't even know how Sweden is, though.

**Frank:** It's probably not half as bad as Chicago.

**Petite:** Well, it doesn't snow in the south, right?

**Frank:** It snows like once a year.

**Jim:** They close everything and people have panic attacks for, like, an inch of snow.

**Frank:** Well, since it doesn't

**Jim:** Oh, you were there?

**Petite:** Do you remember the guys rolling around on the floor and the girl who set the trash can on fire?

**Robert:** That's the only thing I ever mention about that show. There were only five people there and for no reason this girl sets a trash can on fire!

**Petite:** I was standing next to you guys while she's pulling the trashcan out and then she got these little bags with a candle and threw them in there. You guys were laughing and I looked over at you and shrugged my shoulders. They wanted to fight Greg Lowery afterwards (the Zodiac Killers played that show too). If you remember, my friend grabbed the mic from Greg and he got mad and stopped the song.

**Jim:** Well, I'd think we're more arty than new wave. I've seen reviews that say we're new wave. We're not a new wave band at all. We're trying to make a twist on something that is more arty than new wave. There's little weird parts that aren't by-the-numbers punk rock.

**Jenna:** It's different listening to the record and seeing a live show.

**Robert:** The record's a little more straightforward.

**Jim:** The record's in tune!

**Petite:** I have a confession to make! I reviewed your "Detonation" single.

**Robert:** You're the one who talked shit about it!

**Petite:** Yeah. No, no I didn't! I didn't talk shit. I actually really, really liked it, but I

## IT'S ALWAYS FUN TO PLAY WITH THE OTHER RETARDS

happen often, the city and the state don't know

how to deal with it well, so schools get closed if there's a quarter-inch of snow on the ground. Whereas in Chicago, there's a foot of snow on the ground and you have to pretend that it's not there. You have to drive around, walk to the store, and do all this shit and act like it's not there.

**Robert:** Basically, Frankie loves it.

**Jim:** He's really happy about the move.

**Frank:** Thrilled.

**Petite:** So you guys just came out with an album.

**Robert:** We're not on tour because of it. We needed to tour and the record came out back in September. It helps to have the record with us on tour, money-wise. We have an LP, three singles, and some compilation stuff, with more singles coming out.

**Jim:** The record's on Broken Rekids out of San Francisco.

**Petite:** What's it like?

**Robert:** The record? It's like orange or blue.

**Petite:** I mean, what does it sound like?

**Jim:** It's like, paa-ur-paa-urm-crap-crap.

**Frank:** It's like 1-2-3-4-SUCK! At 45 revolutions per minute, or wait, 33.

**Jim:** Well, at 45 it's like [read fast] 1-2-3-4-SUCK!

**Petite:** Like the Chipmunks?

**Jim:** Yeah, but not that good. Not with that much talent.

**Robert:** Kind of if like the chubby Chipmunk, Theodore, had a solo project. Yeah, well, the record is out and it's not selling as well as we'd hoped. But hey, what the heck.

**Petite:** You guys said you sucked tonight but I'm sorry, you didn't suck. I blame the crowd.

**Robert:** It wasn't great.

**Petite:** I've seen you guys once before. Do you guys remember the last time you played here in LA at Johnny Fox's?

I met Greg a couple months later and told him it was my friend. I was laughing about it and he was not amused.

**Robert:** It was funny... I mean, that trashcan. That was definitely fucking around and being stupid.

**Jim:** I didn't even understand it. I just thought, "I can't believe this is my life. What's happened to me?" The Orphans are from here and there still wasn't anyone there. They got kicked out of the bar, though.

**Robert:** Well, they came back in. They had to just to bring the bar capacity to twelve. LA has been an interesting place for us. We either play to twelve people or with twelve bands.

**Petite:** You guys really don't sound like anything I can definitively put my finger on. Why do you that is?

**Jim:** I think we all kind of like similar things but we all have our own tastes, too.

**Robert:** We have different backgrounds in terms of stuff but it works out.

**Jim:** A lot of the stuff I try to write is punk rock but I want it to be interesting at the same point. I would almost like to be in an art rock band but like I can't do that 'cause I don't have enough talent and I don't really understand what they're doing. I don't think people in art rock bands do either, for that matter. So it's kind of like my attempt at writing art rock songs, which I can't do, so it just comes out as punk rock songs with these stupid parts that are just kind of different, I guess.

**Robert:** We use the punk idea 'cause we're all sort of retarded and we'll always have that element. But then we try to make it more than we really are and that's when we come out with what we have. It always stays simple, though.

**Petite:** I wouldn't think of you as arty. Do you guys think that?

mentioned something about Jenna's vocals. I was thinking about this about six months after I wrote it and I haven't written another record review 'cause I was so disappointed that I said it without really thinking.

**Robert:** What'd you say?

**Petite:** I said that her vocals sounded like she was trying to sound like she had a British accent.

**Jim:** Oh, yeah, yeah.

**Jenna:** Oh yeah, I remember that.

**Petite:** Then one day I was listening to it in the car and I was like, "What the fuck was I thinking? Now I have to interview them in a couple weeks and I'm going to feel like such a dickwad. I hope they don't put two and two together."

**Jim:** I read that review.

**Robert:** I did, too.

**Jim:** I was like, "That person's a fucking jerk! If I ever see them, I'm gonna kill 'em."

**Petite:** I did the same thing with an Exploding Hearts single.

**Robert:** You should see our record reviews.

**Jim:** Yeah, they're pretty bad.

**Petite:** You guys review?

**Robert:** Yeah. Jim, Frank, and me.

**Jim:** I'm horrible. I say the word "great" three times in every review. I'm like: "This record's great. The record cover's great. The drumming's great."

**Robert:** I actually don't even talk about the record. Like, if they have a shitty name, I'll talk about that and branch out off of that. Frank always has a cool catchphrase at the end of each one

**Jim:** Like, "I didn't do it."

**Robert:** Or "Check, please."

**Jim:** Yeah, Frank, after we sucked tonight, you should've been like, "Check, please!"

**Frank:** Class dismissed.

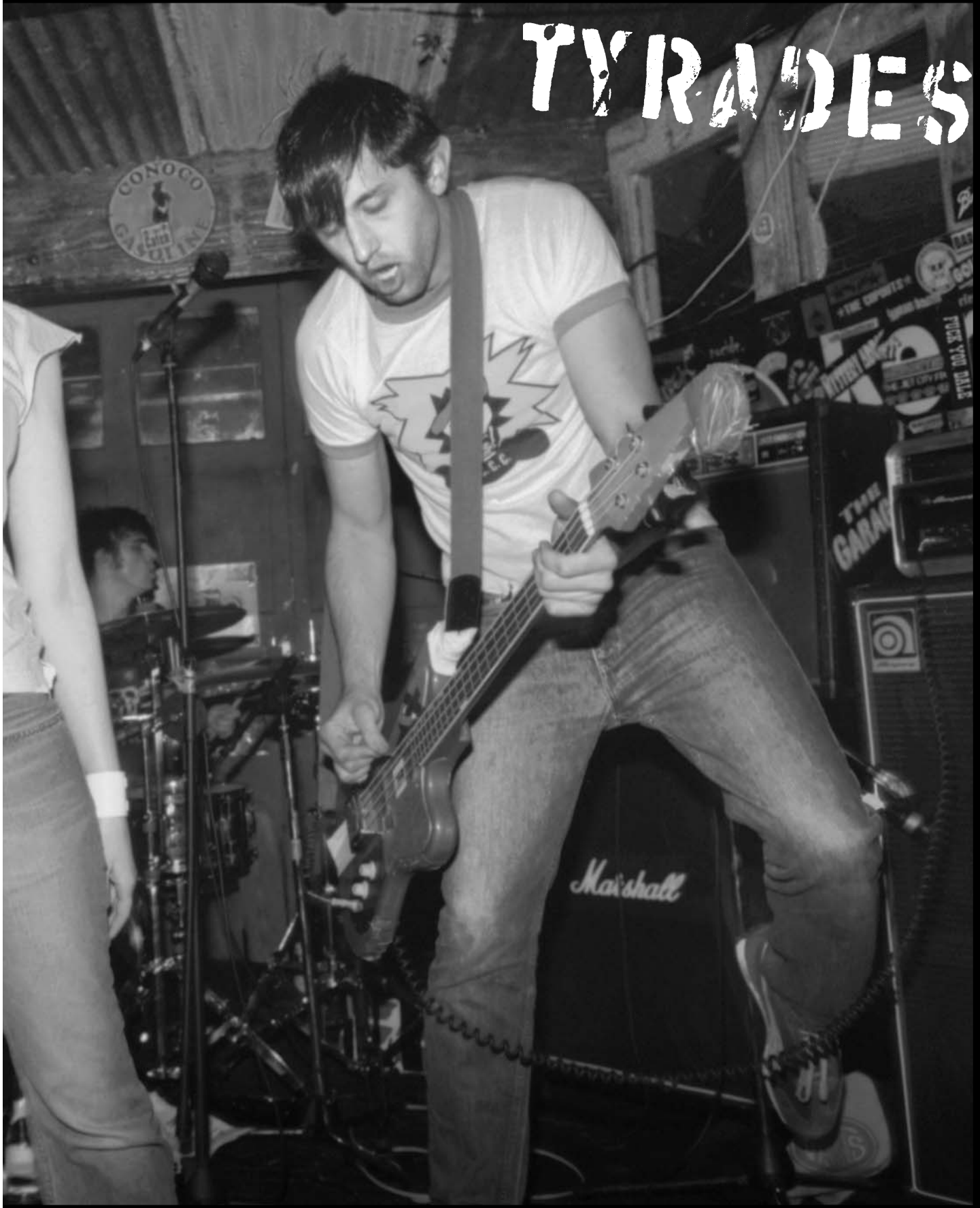


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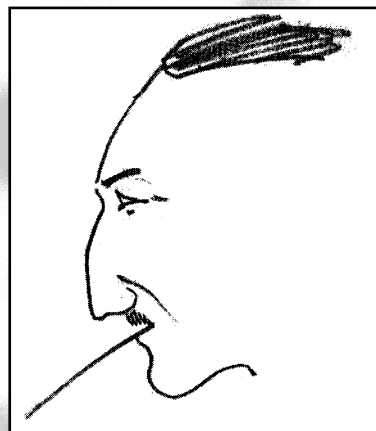
# TYRADES





# GEORGE SELDES: MUCKRAKER EXTRAORDINAIRE

ARTICLE BY JEFF FOX



George Seldes was born in 1890. He grew up on a farm in the small rural town of Alliance, New Jersey. His father had fled the pogroms of Tsarist Russia and settled in New Jersey with 40 other immigrant families. He tried to unite the farmers and create a Utopian agricultural community. However, a lack of cooperation amongst the farmers caused the Utopia to fail. Seldes's father was forced to move to Philadelphia and open a pharmacy to earn a living.

Seldes and his younger brother Gilbert stayed on the family farm, where they were raised by various family members, including their grandfather (one of the few educated men in the colony) and their grandmother, who was totally illiterate.

He was encouraged by his father to avoid reading juvenile books and to instead put together a library of literature. "All the world's civilization is to be found between the covers of books," he would say.

In the summer, George and Gilbert would spend a few weeks with their father at his pharmacy in the city. It was here that George had his first encounter with newspaper reporters.

Seldes described his father as a libertarian, an idealist, a freethinker, a Deist, a Utopian, a Single Taxer, and a worshipper of Thoreau and Emerson and also "a joiner of all noble causes." One of those noble causes was an organization called The Friends of Russian Freedom, which advocated the overthrow of the Russian Tsar. When there was a failed Russian uprising in 1905, reporters came to the pharmacy to get the "local angle" from the elder Seldes. He told the reporters that he believed the struggle for freedom in Russia would continue and that The Friends of Russian Freedom were as dedicated as ever. The men raced to the telephones and called in the story.

"A country boy of fifteen, I had imagined reporters creating masterpieces and brilliantly improving upon everything that came to their attention," said Seldes. He listened in amazement as the reporters actually quoted his father verbatim. Then they went on to describe a laundry fire that had taken place in their neighborhood earlier in the day.

When the evening papers arrived, the local laundry fire was on the front page, complete with a photo and a headline. The failed Russian revolution was on page three. Seldes learned a lesson about the news that day. As a newspaper owner would later remind him – a dog fight down the street is bigger news than 3,000 Chinese drowned in a typhoon.



Seldes relocated to Pittsburgh with his family. His father bought an existing neighborhood pharmacy whose owner promised him hefty profits every day. On the first morning of business, sure enough, there was a line of customers standing outside the front door at 6 A.M. Each man had his money in hand and pointed at a drawer that supposedly contained bicarbonate of soda. Seldes's father opened the drawer and was mortified to find prepared envelopes marked "Heroin 50¢" and "Cocaine \$1." He chased the men out of the store and told them not to come back. Unfortunately, the pharmacy was widely known as a dope joint, so there was no other business.

Legitimate customers avoided the store.

Business slowly picked up as Seldes's father explained to local doctors that the pharmacy had changed ownership. In time, the pharmacy became a meeting place for local doctors and intellectuals interested in social change. Seldes's father corresponded with Leo Tolstoy and Russian anarchist Peter Kropotkin. Guests at the Seldes house included the writer Maksim Gorki. Emma Goldman was reviled in her time for her revolutionary and radical ideas (such as allowing women to vote and teaching them about birth control). When no hotel in Pittsburgh would give her a room, she was welcome in the Seldes's apartment.

In 1909, Seldes got his first job at a newspaper, working as an apprentice at the *Pittsburgh Leader*. He submitted a story about the son of a local department store owner. The man was on trial, accused of raping the salesgirls who worked in his father's department store, most of whom kept quiet for fear of being fired. His city editor told him to make a carbon copy of the story. The copy was sent to the newspaper's business department. The paper didn't run the story, but a few days later, the department store doubled its advertising for the Sunday edition and the rate for the ad had apparently gone up as well.

When Seldes went to report on the divorce hearing of Andrew Mellon, a member of one of Pittsburgh's richest families, he was surprised that he was the only reporter in the courtroom. He later found out that no paper in the city would mention the trial at all.

Frustrated by the suppression of the news, Seldes gave the story for free to newspapers and news services outside of the area. One out-of-town newspaper shipped their edition containing the Mellon divorce story to Pittsburgh. The papers were reportedly confiscated by police and in some cases, newsboys were clubbed.

Seldes was working at the *Post*, while his brother Gilbert was attending Harvard on a scholarship. George and Gilbert were now living in very different worlds. College was deemed unnecessary for most people in those days. If you were smart, you didn't need college. You could make a living

without it. It was only for fops and sons of the idle rich. The reporters in Seldes's office shared that attitude. They squabbled over free tickets to baseball games, fights, vaudeville and burlesque. Comp tickets to legitimate theater went unclaimed, except by Seldes. Anything highbrow or related to art and culture was laughed at.

"If there was a college graduate among my hundred or more fellow reporters, he kept his sin a secret," wrote Seldes.

Gilbert insisted that George would be an "ignoramus" all of his life unless he went to college. George didn't agree. "I told him that he could learn more about human beings, more about the 'world,' more about all human life, in fact, in three weeks in Magistrate John J. Kirby's Central

ingly harmless story that would change the course of his life. The manager of a traveling theater troupe had skipped town with the company's money. The actors had been thrown out of their hotel because they couldn't pay for their rooms. Their possessions were seized and the troupe was arrested.

At the court hearing, Seldes became smitten with one of the actresses. She said her name was Peggy and all she had were the clothes on her back. She had no money, nowhere to stay and the hotel had all of her belongings. Seldes gave her the money to get her property back and the two got an apartment together a few days later. He proposed marriage to her, but Peggy said she was already married, although she claimed

on Washington Square. Its owner had abruptly left town to avoid being arrested for getting his girlfriend an abortion. Writers, artists, poets and radicals all helped themselves to the house, with the owner's blessing. Seldes found himself in the social and intellectual epicenter for the bohemians of the Village. There was drinking, dancing, discussions and poetry readings most nights of the week.

"On my very first day in bohemia, and thereafter almost daily," he wrote, "I heard the older inhabitants sing their dirge, 'The Village isn't what it used to be,' 'The great days are gone.' They blamed the disaster on newspaper publicity, the influx of outlanders...What and when the great days had been I never learned.

## THE PAPER DIDN'T RUN THE STORY, BUT A FEW DAYS LATER, THE DEPARTMENT STORE DOUBLED ITS ADVERTISING FOR THE SUNDAY EDITION AND THE RATE FOR THE AD HAD APPARENTLY GONE UP AS WELL.

Police Station courtroom. There every morning the riffraff of the city, mostly prostitutes, drunks, derelicts, and a few muggers, appeared and heard the usual charges made by policemen, and 'Judge' Kirby's sentence: 'ten or ten' for first offenders, meaning a ten-dollar fine or ten days in the workhouse, or 'thirty or thirty' for habitual offenders."

The two struck a deal. George got Gilbert a job working at a paper in Pittsburgh for the summer and George would take a year off and take some classes at Harvard. George was accepted into a class taught by Charles Townsend Copeland, whose students would include writers such as Heywood Broun, T. S. Eliot, and Walter Lippman. Copeland's class only accepted about 25 students out of the hundreds that applied.

Other members of the class turned in sensitive intellectual think pieces for their assignments. However, Copeland had instructed the students to write about what they knew, so Seldes turned in a story called "The Black Cossacks." It was about the black shirt-clad private police forces that were owned by the coal and iron companies in western Pennsylvania. The rogue police were employed to "break strikes and heads," sometimes killing striking workers. They ruled several counties in western Pennsylvania and were rarely arrested for their crimes.

"The Black Cossacks" was based on a news event full of blood and violence," wrote Seldes, "But Copey liked it. He liked it so much that one day, after talking to his class about 'Harvard esthetes who take three bites to a cherry,' he read one of their contributions, an ecstasy over a sunset, and then 'The Black Cossacks.'"

Seldes got an "A" in the class, but after a year at Harvard, he returned to Pittsburgh and picked up his career as a reporter.

One day, he was sent to cover a seem-



(above) American journalist expelled from Italy by Benito Mussolini. Seldes is at the bottom right. (facing page) George Seldes in 1914.

she and her husband were divorcing.

When Seldes became the night editor of his paper, he worked from 5 P.M. until 6 A.M. and didn't see Peggy very much. A few months into their relationship, he found that a drawer in the kitchen was packed with cash. He often referred to reporting as "one of the oldest professions," but he suspected Peggy was actually practicing the oldest profession while he was at work. He confronted her and she admitted it was true.

Heartbroken, he went to the bank, emptied his account and left town for New York City.

In Manhattan, he stayed with a cousin who showed him around the city and helped him find work. The two of them lucked into living quarters in a fancy house

"But it was amusing sixty years later to read in *The New Yorker* Richard Harris's report that "a decade ago (1966) Greenwich Village was Greenwich Village. It was a relatively small area, and it was a polyglot community, to be sure, with artists and intellectuals..." Each generation, each age, mourns the preceding one, apparently."

The news of his good fortune apparently spread and one day Peggy showed up on his doorstep, crying and asking his forgiveness. He took her back and things seemed to go well - for a while. Then one day, right in front of Seldes, a well-off writer asked Peggy if she'd like to go away with him for a few weeks on vacation. She nonchalantly packed her suitcase and left with him.

Seldes left for Europe, figuring that would be the one place Peggy could not follow him. (Because of the World War, Allied Europe was closed to everyone except diplomats and reporters.) In his 1987 retrospective book *Witness To A Century*, Seldes wrote, "I now find it ironic that what I thought was a 'romantic' episode could have such strange results. Were it not for Peggy Keith I would probably have remained in Pittsburgh the rest of my life and not had most of the adventures that make up this book."

He joined the U.S. Army as a part of its press corps. The war correspondents of other armies were given the rank of Captain, but most of the American reporters said although they didn't object to saluting superiors, they didn't want to be saluted by enlisted men. "We did not want the poor doughboys, the fighting men, a number of whom would certainly lose their lives in a few days or a few weeks, to be saluting us, journalists, men who did not know one end of a rifle from another and could not even fire a revolver," he wrote.



Impressed by the spirit of the doughboys singing merrily in the face of death, Seldes tried to write about it. "I thought this episode was humor for the Homeric gods," he said, "I thought it the grandest thing I ever could write about the spirit of our men. Nothing during the war had so stirred me..."

"So the next day I did my best to draw this picture of heroic soldiers going back to the trenches singing ironically, 'I didn't raise my boy to be a soldier,' and laughing as they marched. I thought it grand wartime stuff."

When he turned in the story, the Army censor said it was "damned pacifist propaganda... Yes, I know it is true, but it doesn't matter. You can't print that..."

**SELDES WOULD LATER ADVISE, "DO NOT COMPETE... FOR THE SAME SMALL INTELLECTUAL MINORITY – THERE ARE MILLIONS OF INTELLIGENT PERSONS WHO ARE NOT AFRAID OF THE WORD 'TRUTH' AND WHO WILL RECOGNIZE IT EVEN WHEN PRINTED ON CHEAP PAPER AND WITHOUT PICTURES."**

After spending time attached to a U.S. division in battle, a cease fire order was called for November 11th, 1918 at 11 A.M. Seldes watched in disbelief as the American artillery let loose a massive assault just three hours before the cease fire: "[The infantry attack], despite dugouts and helmets and withdrawals, undoubtedly added hundreds of dead and thousands of wounded to the twenty million or more casualties of World War I... The bewildered enemy was forced to reply, and so the killing continued."

When the fighting finally stopped, soldiers on both sides walked out of their trenches and stood in the middle of the bloody battlefield, shaking hands and swapping souvenirs with their enemies. "For a five-cent chocolate bar you could get a Luger pistol," wrote Seldes, "It was apparent that few, if any, thought of the millions dead, the hundreds of thousands of men blown to pieces, the many more millions wounded, the pain and suffering on a scale previously unknown in history." Standing in the eerily silent battlefield, Seldes and his fellow reporters shook hands and promised to dedicate the rest of their lives to telling the truth about the war.

The four men broke Armistice regulations and drove into enemy territory to find out the truth about the condition of Germany and its people. While making arrangements to get to Berlin, one of the reporters casually mentioned to a German official that they would like to interview Field Marshal Von Hindenburg. Incredibly, they were told that it could be arranged.

"It was almost as amazing as the Armistice itself," wrote Seldes, "To call on and interview the leader of the enemy, the second best-hated man in the world then, the General whose men were killing our men, the apotheosis of German frightfulness, the incarnation of that which six days before was all the evil in the world – such a thought was beyond our khaki-clad minds."

The reporters met with the Hindenburg in Frankfurt. The stout General greeted the men courteously. However, he told them he would not answer any political questions, noting, "I am a soldier." Seldes wanted to know what had won the war for the Allies, but he wanted to pose the question as diplomatically as possible, for fear of offending the General. With the help of an interpreter, he asked what *ended the stalemate*. A lengthy explanation followed.

Hindenburg answered that the American infantry had ended the stalemate. He said Germany could not have won the war after 1917. They might have taken Paris, but the failure of world food crops and a British food blockade had crippled the entire country of Germany, which was

"There was no more to ask."

Seldes and the other reporters were arrested by the Army for going into Germany. They were threatened with court martial and execution. The French premier George Clemenceau supposedly lobbied strongly for their public execution by firing squad. The Army said they would not court martial the men as long as they never ran the story.

Seldes later suggested that his post-war interview with Hindenburg, if released to the press, would have become worldwide news and an indisputable part of the historical record. He felt that public knowledge of the Field Marshal's confession could have countered the *Dolchstoss*, one of Nazism's foundations. (*Dolchstoss* was the idea that



(above) Seldes surveying the ruins during the Spanish Civil War.  
(facing page) Field Marshall Paul von Hindenburg.

Germany had lost World War I because of a "stab in the back" from German civilians, Socialists, Communists and Jews – not because of anything that happened on the battlefield.)

Further proof that the suppression of news affected world politics is the case of the Spanish Civil War. Seldes claimed that the Spanish Civil War was not a civil war at all. He would know, because he was there – in the midst of it as a reporter. According to Seldes, every reporter on assignment in Spain could tell that this "civil war" was nothing more than a dress rehearsal by the German and Italian armies – gearing up for another world war.

Although that was the story reporters were handing in to their editors, that story never made it to press. The Spanish Republic was redbaited in the press. Seldes says William Randolph Hearst ordered that the forces of the Spanish Republic should be referred to in his papers as "reds." He also ordered that Francisco Franco's forces should be referred to as "nationalists," even though their troops were supplied by Mussolini and Hitler. Franco was championed in the American press for ridding Spain of these supposed Communists.

If it seems unbelievable that American newspapers would have supported fascists like Franco (not to mention Mussolini and Hitler), bear in mind that before World War II, fascist and anti-Semitic attitudes in the U.S. were tolerated and accepted more than they are today. And Hearst's affinity for the Nazis was no secret. He actually printed articles written by Hitler's right-hand man, Herman Goering. Many American corporations were eager to do business with these fascist countries. The American press had even applauded Hitler and Mussolini for bringing economic stability back to their countries.

Seldes felt that if the war in Spain had been fairly reported, there would have been more support for the Spanish Republic from

gripped by widespread famine. When the American infantry attacked, always with fresh troops, all Germany had to counter with were the same weary soldiers. This was when he knew the war was lost.

There was a moment of silence, then Hindenburg said, "Mein armes Vaterland, mein armes Vaterland," and began to weep.

"Hindenburg bowed his head and tears flooded his pale, watery eyes," wrote Seldes, "His huge bulk was shaken. He wept for his 'poor fatherland.'"

"We sat and wondered over so much emotion in a military leader supposedly devoid of sentiment and sentimentality.

"Thus the interview terminated... A fallen Colossus. A broken Superman. Blood and iron suddenly tears and clay.

democratic nations and the fascists would not have taken power in Europe so easily. He felt this could have delayed or even prevented the start of World War II.

**S**eldes grew tired of writing headlines. He realized that the truth would always suffer if he had to answer to an editor at a major paper. "Although no one worked on an assembly line," he wrote, "we were still hired hands – and brains – directed by an owner, following orders, no one a free agent. And so always one could hear the younger and less sophisticated who had not yet surrendered to the world, talking over beer and bourbon about some day owning a small newspaper, or a grass-roots weekly, or being part owner, or at least a contributor to some sort of publication that would tell the truth.

"Everyone spoke of 'the chance of a lifetime,' but for all except a very few it never came. Age, routine, the pleasures of the press club, a lot of liquor, marriage, and hostages to fortune trapped the vast majority..."

"I read the sage of Walden's most generally accepted truism: 'The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.' ...I was determined to never be a member of the silent desperate majority."

Seldes and a few friends came up with the idea of publishing a simple, four-page newsletter. They would print overlooked news, straight, with no bias – just the facts. In 1940, *In Fact* was founded. The belief was that the American public did not need to be sheltered from the facts. Seldes believed in the words of Abraham Lincoln when he said, "I am a firm believer in the people. If given the truth, they can be depended upon to meet any national crisis. The great point is to bring them the real facts."

Seldes would later advise, "Do not compete... for the same small intellectual minority – there are millions of intelligent persons who are not afraid of the word 'truth' and who will recognize it even when printed on cheap paper and without pictures."

Reporters, frustrated by the suppression of news by their editors, fed unprinted news items to *In Fact*, just as Seldes had done when he was a reporter in Pittsburgh. By the time the fifth issue of *In Fact* was out, Seldes was flooded with tips and suppressed news items from reporters all over the country. He had enough tips to fill 20 pages every week.

But some of Seldes's best sources were not leaked news items or inside information, they were matters of public record, such as the Congressional Record. Seldes said, "This windblown daily publication of the United States government consists almost entirely of buncombe, larded with reactionary propaganda. It is the most boring publication in the world. And yet, the hours of boredom are almost always rewarded by news items of great value, and

sometimes sensational importance."

Another rich source of story leads was the Federal Trade Commission. This governmental agency published reports and filed charges against companies with dangerous products and false advertising. Like the Congressional Record, this FTC information was not a "scoop." The FTC's findings had been provided to newspapers. They simply chose not to report them, most likely for fear of offending their advertisers.

Seldes defended the newsworthiness of his consumer fraud stories by saying, "Because of the silence of the press the public is robbed... by the makers of bad

### **THERE WAS A MOMENT OF SILENCE, THEN HINDENBURG SAID, "MEIN ARMES VATERLAND, MEIN ARMES VATERLAND," AND BEGAN TO WEEP.**



food, bad drugs, and bad cosmetics; and it is cheated by false advertising and its health is menaced as well as its pocketbook. From the cradle to the grave...

"To defend the general welfare, merely to report the news of general welfare interest, is to make enemies of big and little business and all the advertising agencies; in other words, to bite the hand that feeds you. And so long as newspapers live on money from sources outside their readers, so long will they be on the side of that money."

Although we like to believe that no one knew about the dangers of smoking until the 1960s, this is not the case. The scientific evidence had been widely available for decades before it was generally reported by the mainstream press. In January of 1941, *In Fact* ran a cover story about a Johns

Hopkins study linking cigarette smoking to increased health risks and premature death. *In Fact* was the only press outside of scientific journals that ran all the facts of the study. Out of eight daily newspapers in New York City, only two ran anything about the study at all, amounting to only a few paragraphs in each paper.

Again, the Johns Hopkins study was not a secret. The findings had been sent to every paper in America by three press services.

*In Fact's* position on the subject of tobacco was decades ahead of its time. In an era when cigarettes were collected and sent to soldiers as a part of the war effort and cigarettes were given to starving Europeans as a part of the Marshall plan, Seldes asked, "How can they justify more promotion in the news of a product, that when used as directed, kills its consumer?"

**T**he reason for the suppression of the story seems clear. At the time, a huge portion of newspaper and magazine ad revenues came from tobacco companies. The four big cigarette brands spent what would be the equivalent of over \$550,000,000 in today's dollars on advertising. In some cases, it was written into advertising contracts that the publication must never write anything damaging about tobacco.

Seldes said, "The tobacco advertisers share with... automobile advertisers first place in spending money in newspapers and magazines. This is without a doubt the reason the press suppressed the story. The press is therefore part of a system spreading poison throughout our country."

*In Fact* had many secret supporters, many of whom worked for the very newspapers Seldes was criticizing. High-ranking editors and staffers for Hearst and Scripps-Howard newspapers regularly contributed news items to *In Fact* because they did not approve of the political policies of their bosses. *In Fact* also got assistance from sources deep within the government. The director of public relations for the Department Of Justice fed news items to *In Fact*. Supporters of *In Fact* included Harry Truman (who was one of its first subscribers), Vice President Henry Wallace and Eleanor Roosevelt. Senators, Representatives and Supreme Court justices also subscribed.

**I**n addition to having loyal friends and readers, *In Fact* naturally developed powerful enemies. One year, *In Fact* received complaints from many of its subscribers. They said that their letter carriers were warning them to cancel their subscriptions because the Federal Bureau of Investigation was watching them. One subscriber said there was a man stationed at his local post office whose only job was to monitor which customers received certain publications, including *In Fact*.

Seldes sent a letter about the complaints to FBI head J. Edgar Hoover.

Oddly enough, Seldes and Hoover had been corresponding in a cordial, yet adversarial manner for five years. (It had started when Seldes sent a letter to Hoover, telling him about a fascist crackpot who was making threats on the President's life.) Hoover assured Seldes that the FBI was not interested in monitoring the mail of *In Fact* or keeping a list of its subscribers.

One day, through some strange turn of events, Seldes received an envelope from his local post office branch. Inside was a letter from the postmaster to the local FBI field office. It listed all the mail received by Seldes's wife, who was the managing editor of *In Fact*. He never found out if he got the letter by accident or if he had been tipped off by someone at the post office. Nevertheless, he made a copy of the letter and sent it to Hoover as solid evidence that the FBI was monitoring *In Fact*'s mail. There was no reply and Hoover never wrote to him again.

His insistence on printing just the facts ultimately caused *In Fact* to be attacked from the Left as well as the Right. He would print the truth about suppressed or false news regardless of what nation or faction it made look bad. "From the day *In Fact* was founded," wrote Seldes, "I refused to cooperate with either Left or Right. I quit all organizations except the Democratic Party (Connecticut) and the American Civil Liberties Union."

The Right attacked him with red-baiting. The reasoning went like this: anyone Left is a Communist and Communists are enemies of the United States. Therefore Seldes must be a Communist and an enemy of the United States. They cited *In Fact* editorials that were written by Seldes's ex-partner as proof that *In Fact* was a Communist paper.

Seldes was pro-labor and his fight to print the truth frequently put him at odds with the Right, but he had plenty of scorn for the Left as well. He was no more fond of Leftist radicalism than he was of Rightist reactionism. He was definitely not a Communist sympathizer, much less a card-carrying Communist. He had actually been expelled from the Soviet Union in 1922 for sneaking news to the outside world past Soviet censors.

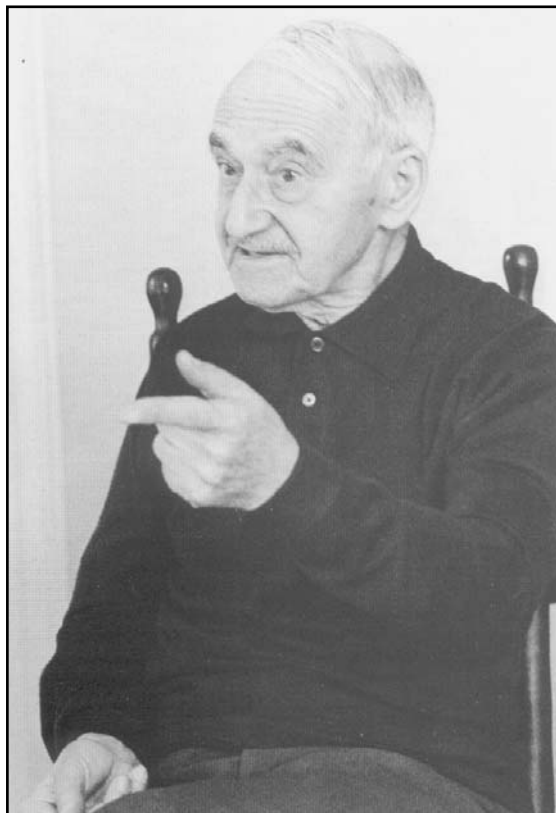
Nevertheless, some columnists went so far as to report that a Russian agent stopped by Seldes's office to pay his salary every week. It was a total lie, but he was powerless to counter the slander against himself with a lawsuit. The cost of launching a slander suit was prohibitive. His lawyer said that even if he won, he would never see any money from the settlement.

Readers encouraged him to do some redbaiting of his own to prove that he was not a Communist. He refused. "An attack

has been made against me on the negative charge that I myself have done no redbaiting. There will be no baiting in *In Fact*, red or otherwise."

American Communists boycotted *In Fact* when Seldes said that Communist North Korea was clearly the aggressor in the Korean War. They were mad that he would not follow the party line. He replied to the boycott by saying, "I am not a Communist. I do not follow the Communist Party line. I do not know what the phrase means. I follow no line but my own."

**"YOUR ENEMIES, THE REACTIONARIES, ARE IN POWER IN THE PRESS, IN POLITICS, EVERYWHERE. THE VOICES AGAINST REACTION ARE FEW AND SMALL."**



(above) George Seldes at age 97.

Ironically, the Communist boycott aided the Right's attempts to destroy *In Fact*. The combination of the two attacks caused the circulation of *In Fact* to dwindle down to 56,000 from its peak of 176,000. *In Fact* barely managed to stay in business in the end. It survived its last two years on the revenue brought in by selling copies of Seldes's books.

In May of 1950, Seldes desperately pleaded with his readers not to abandon the publication: "We have been attacked from both Right and Left; we have been attacked for 'following the Communist line' and we have been attacked by the Communists for not doing so.

"This is to be expected when you let the facts speak for themselves..."

"But no one has ever challenged our statement that we print the facts (and fairly) and that we stand ready – as the standard press does not, to print corrections and keep the record straight (and honest)..."

"Your enemies, the reactionaries, are in power in the press, in politics, everywhere. The voices against reaction are few and small. You must decide now that you want this publication to continue in this fight against reaction..."

It was too late. The damage had already been done. Publication of *In Fact* ceased in October of 1950.

"The idea of reaching a million Americans, my goal for my newsletter, now collapsed entirely," wrote Seldes.

After decades of criticizing the press, not surprisingly, Seldes found himself unable to find much work as a newspaper writer. He wrote for a few independent newspapers, but his book publishers had dropped him one by one. He released a few more books with independent publishers through the years, but they were basically ignored by the book sections of most newspapers.

Fortunately for Seldes, he lived a very long life. As he told one reporter, "Living longer is the best revenge."

When he reached the age of 90, the press suddenly became interested in him again. He said, "I cannot explain this change of heart except to say: if you can make it to the magical age of 90, all your sins are forgiven."

He was honored with headlines reading, "Seldes at 90; They Don't Give Pulitzers For That Kind of Criticism," "Muckraker Honored at 91" and "George Seldes At 94: A Panorama of World History."

The accolades came because he had outlived his enemies, but sadly, he also outlived his wife and all of his friends. In his book *Tell the Truth and Run*, he said, "The middle of the road is a crowded place (and many on it are crushed by the cars of Juggernaut, radicalism and reaction, pushing inevitably to the Right and the Left).

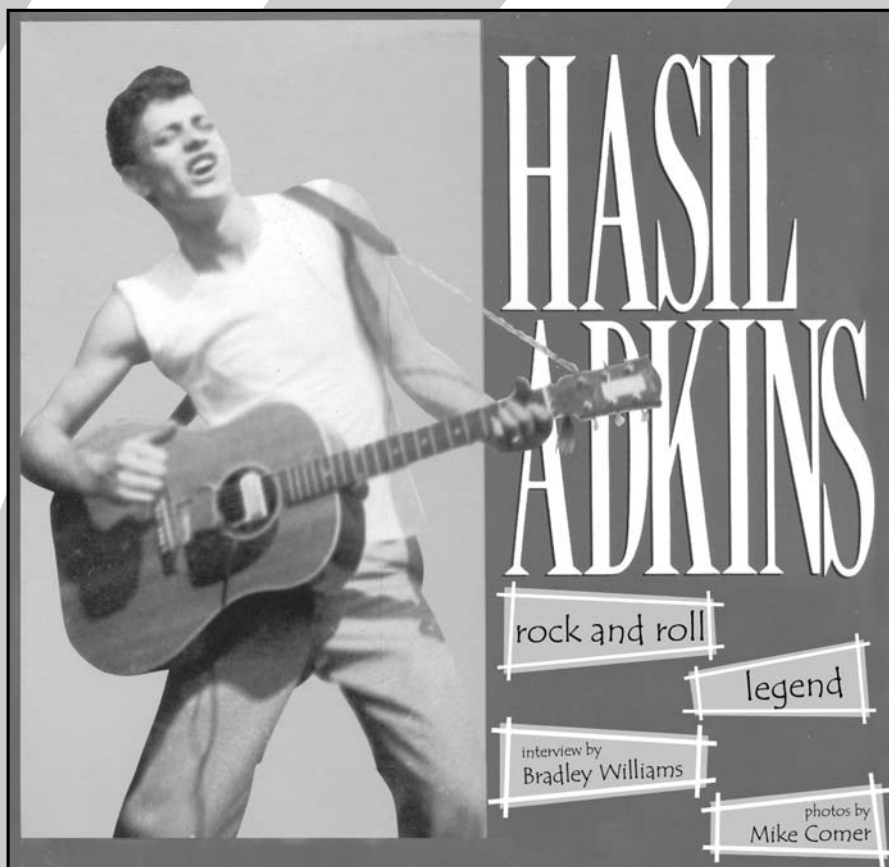
During all these years of work and talk I had had a fine contempt for the frightening majority which traveled the middle of the road. I had thought of myself as one of the non-conformists along the less-traveled and rather lonely individual path of my choosing."

He died in 1995 at the age of 104.

In 1996, a feature-length documentary about Seldes was released. *Tell the Truth and Run: George Seldes and the American Press* was nominated for an Academy Award. In the documentary, Seldes attests, "I assure you that life with a purpose is the only way to live... Nothing can stop the march of an informed people."







Water trickles down from the rocks along the side of the road. We haven't passed anyone except a few boys riding four wheelers. We're high up in the mountains of West Virginia. We could well be on our way to go camping or for some hunting, but we're not. We're looking to find a man who some say is one of the greatest known, living country singers. Not only is he a great country singer but one of the greatest and most well known one man bands ever. Period. This man has the power to bend things into shapes that most people have never thought to exist. Crooked rock'n'roll. That stuff which flows out of us and we don't know where or why and that don't matter as much as the fact that it's here, and it don't look right. It don't fit with what everyone else is doing. It's got its own blood and sometimes it don't look of this world.

We're still driving down the road. In my lap is a piece of paper, and on it is a phone number. The name of town the town is Madison. The number is for Mr. Hasil Adkins. We have no address.

About eight months prior to this I was at work. I had access to a computer that was hooked up to the internet. I was bored and somehow got the idea to start emailing people who I felt sure would never write me back. Hasil Adkins was one person on that list. The way it went was that I wrote, not to Hasil, but to a gentleman named Jim Trocci, Hasil's manager. I didn't get a response for about five months. Jim

emailed me. Two weeks later, I was on a plane to the east coast where I was to meet up with my friend, Matt, and drive over and into the hills of West Virginia. All of it in search of a man who now is even more of a mystery of complexities and ideas than he was before I sat down on the bench in his living room.

The road runs along the tops and the edges of the mountains for hours. The air is clean. The sky is clear. It is the start of fall and the forest is all yellow, red, and green. It goes like this for a while until the road winds down to the base of the mountains. The road runs alongside a small creek and a conveyer belt used for hauling coal which is ripped from the mountains. Coal for the electricity to read at night by. We pass through small communities. The thought that the rest of the country doesn't even know this place exists and the lives here go unheard pass through my mind. This area and other places like it are only whispers in our minds. The road follows the creek bed. The conveyer belt runs. After a while I start to notice the train tracks. They run together through the hills and through towns, which after each name is the word "unincorporated." Not really a town? Maybe. We roll on.

I had written to Jim and asked for an address. Jim wrote back saying that an address wouldn't do us much good, that it was best to drive into Madison, call Hasil up and then he'd "guide" us from there. I thought about what a bunch of bullshit that sounded like and then, at the same time, it

didn't seem like such bullshit. That was laid to rest by the time we pulled up to the Go Mart in Madison. I got out, went over to the pay phone, and made the call.

Hasil picked up on the other end, "Hello."

"Hello, Mr. Adkins?" I said.

"This is him."

"Mr. Adkins, this is Bradley. We've talked a few times and now I'm over in Madison."

"You in Madison?"

"Yes sir. We needed to get directions to your place."

"Well, you need to head back about ten miles until you come to a sign that read 'Bull Creek.' When you see that there'll be this wide spot where the truck turn around. Just pull over there and ask somebody. They'll put you right on top of me."

"Just ask somebody?"

"They'll put you right on top of me."

"Is there a store or something?"

"No. Just ask somebody."

"Is there a house?"

"There should be somebody there."

"And they'll know where to find you?"

"They always seem to."

"We'll see you shortly."

We drove back down the road until we came across a sign bearing the name "Bull Creek." Half the sign was spray painted over. There was a wide spot in the road but nothing more. We pulled off on the side of the road and looked around. On up the creek bed there was someone fishing. We started to drive down the dirt road. Eventually, we saw a broke-down bus, a house with numerous spray painted signs, and polka-dot van. That had to be the place. It took us a few more minutes until we found the driveway.

As we pulled up to the house, about four dogs ran out from under a trailer and started barking. We got out.

"Mr. Adkins," I hollered.

"Hush it," came a voice from inside the trailer, apparently meant to quiet the dogs. "Come on in," said the voice again.

The dogs retreated to under the trailer. I pushed the screen door aside. The room was filled with smoke, and it shone in the rays of sunlight that came through the window. Sitting in a chair with a cigarette in one hand and a beer in the other was Hasil.

We said our how do you do's and then I asked him if he we could start the interview. I took out my tape recorder. He looked at it and said, "What's that for?"

"To record us talking," I told him.

"No. No. You a writer ain't you? Then get out your pen and paper and start writin'."

It was over, I thought, and as I reached for my pen and paper Hasil started laughing.

"Oh. I told you you could record me, didn't I? Just no video cameras."

I looked up at him. He was smiling. I knew he'd been fucking with us. He took a long pull off his Budweiser and followed it up with a cigarette.

**Hasil:** I been working over here at the Opry. I want you to hear some of this what I been working on. Playing everything myself. I ain't gonna but try to play twelve to twenty instruments all by myself at the same time.

**Bradley:** Twelve to twenty?

**Hasil:** Doing pretty good with it. I ain't got 'em all in here. Got a big rack. Got to put 'em on where I can get to 'em and blow 'em and all this and that and everything. I run a test on 'em and see what they sound like. Pretty good.

**Bradley:** That's pretty hard. I've seen a guy, he sat down with a guitar and he had a bass below it. He played bass with his feet, but all he had was strings.

**Hasil:** I play a piano, organ, and stuff with your elbows. Get it in the right place.

**Bradley:** What got you started doing the one man band?

**Hasil:** Couldn't find nobody to play with me. That's why I started.

**Bradley:** You just couldn't find nobody? There wasn't nobody around?

**Hasil:** Oh yeah, there was good dancin' bands. Crazy one-two-three-four beat, six beat, and twelve beat and all that – I can do that – that didn't do anything for me. I didn't like to play thataway – the way they played. They all in a time beat an' all that.

**Bradley:** You can play about twenty instruments at once?

**Hasil:** I'm going to. Twelve to twenty. That's a lot of instruments. I mean, they're different things – they're not the same, you know, instrument. Ah, it'll come out pretty good. I'm rigging this up were I can play it all.

**Bradley:** I've seen some photos of you with some different names.

**Hasil:** Do what now?

**Bradley:** Sometimes you have a different name on the front of your drum. It's always been "Hasil Adkins," but sometimes it's been, "Hasil Adkins and His One Man Band," or "Hasil Adkins and His Happy Guitar." What all names have you gone by in the past?

**Hasil:** Same thing, my name, but I had "The Lone One" on my drums. We're trying to get a western out of that – The Lone One. I traveled by myself for years and years. You know, just me all by myself, puttin' on shows and stuff. It's always been a one man band. Just writings on the drum and stuff like that, different wordings.

**Bradley:** So, when you were touring like that with yourself, would you just pack up the car and go?

**Hasil:** I used to. I don't do that no more. I sang all over the place, home to home, house to house, and joint to joint. You know, just any place you can get to sing.

**Bradley:** Where all have you been? All over the US? Europe?

**Hasil:** Oh, you name it. Any place you can think of. All over Canada and the United States. I used to play here in the '50s and '60s, all these clubs up and down these rivers in and around the territories.

Wyoming County, Boone County, Raleigh County, Logan County, day and night, about fifteen, twenty years of that. This was a long time ago. It went over good. We had some good times.

**Bradley:** How long you been playing as a one man band?

**Hasil:** When I started at six years old, I was playing on a milk can. You didn't see no guitars back in here then. One old fella had one. He wouldn't let nobody fool with it. He had a Gibson D-45. I'd like to have that Gibson. Hell, man, you can sell that and get a lot of money off it.

**Bradley:** You started playing on a milk can?

**Hasil:** Yeah, well, a baking powder can. You know what that is? It's got a brass whisk up in there. They used to have it where you had to put it in. Now they mix it all up. Milk can and a baking powder can, four or five lard buckets, a ten-quart water bucket, and a washtub. It just keep coming up till I got a hold of a guitar. 'Cause you didn't see no guitars on this whole big territory here.

**Bradley:** Did you make instruments out of them cans or were you beating on them like drums?

**Hasil:** I made them. I made a lot of things. All kinds of contraptions and things to beat on and play on, and pick on. Turned out pretty good.

**Bradley:** Did you ever play the washtub bass?

**Hasil:** You like them?

**Bradley:** Yeah, they'll wear you out.

**Hasil:** Them jugs is pretty good where you go [act-ing like he's blowing into a jug] doot doot doot, you know, play the bass on them jugs, like they put moonshine in? They done a lot of that back in here, too. I made that guitar. See that bottom picture, that lower picture, right there? [points to a picture on the wall]

**Bradley:** I've seen that photo before. I thought it looked homemade. You still got it?

**Hasil:** No.

**Bradley:** What happened to it?

**Hasil:** I traded it off years ago. I don't even know who I traded it to now.

**Bradley:** Got any more around that you made?

**Hasil:** Nuh uh. I just made that one and quit. Don't make 'em. I've got a lot I broke up and every-thing, trying to put on shows.

**Bradley:** How many

songs you think you've written so far?

**Hasil:** I've got over 7,000 already, and I'm getting ready to start up again. Once I get my horn up, I'm gonna try to put down another 2,000 more. [Hasil laughs to himself.]

**Bradley:** How many records have you put out now? You've been putting them out for the past – what would you say – fifty years?

**Hasil:** First one come out in 1961. A 45. "She's Mine" b/w "Chicken Walk," and I had about sixteen 45s. I don't know how many it is now. I lost count of it.

**Bradley:** Did you ever play with Merle Haggard or Waylon, any of them?

**Hasil:** No, no. I've played with Kentucky Slim. You ever heard of him? He was real big. I played with him some, and a lot of others. Pretty big bands, some of them.

**Bradley:** What was the first song you learned to play?

**Hasil:** "Mule Skinner Blues," Bill Monroe's songs, Roy Acuff, old Jimmy Rodgers, "T for Texas." They used to have a lot of blues singers, but you didn't hear too much blues in this part of the country. If you had the radio you could get 'em coming out of Nashville, WLAC. They was on that for years. Way up in the '50s, then Chuck Wey come along and they went out. There's stations and all, but they don't play no more rock or nothing. It's all religious music.



Let me show you something. What do you think of this? [Hasil reaches over beside his chair and picks up a plastic turtle. He presses a button. Music starts to play from the turtle's plastic shell, and its arms, head, and tail start to move. The song is something like, "You got to slow down/you're moving too fast/you've got to slow down and let the moment last/you're working too hard/you know it's true/you got to slow down and make time for you." Words of wisdom from a plastic turtle. He sat the turtle on the floor and it walked a little, then paused to sing the lyrics, then it would start to walk again.] Boy, who ever made this, its tail, head, feet everything moves. Somebody's done a lot of work on that.

**Bradley:** I've seen the singing bass, singing

**Hasil:** Well, that Slop, I made that for drunks, 'cause I played so much in the joints. It used to be beer joints. There wasn't no clubs up in here at all. They'd come in thinkin' they could dance and just fallin' every whichaway. I said, "I'll fix them up." Yeah, it is. That's the reason I made that Slop, so you could just go left or right or fall down or anything you ran into. Hell, they liked it, so that's the only thing that counts.

**Bradley:** How about the Hunch? How'd that come about?

**Hasil:** Well, years ago I had two girls with me all the time, back in the '50s. That was before they started any of this titty doings, and they were good dancers. I already had the songs made up. They said, "Haze, let's

**Hasil:** He looks like a robot, don't he? He's got that phone hanging down in the front.

**Bradley:** He's got a drum machine that he runs with it, too, I think.

**Hasil:** He's got them push buttons on the floor.

**Bradley:** He's got some crazy stuff that I don't understand, but there's a band up in Portland, Oregon, I think, and they call themselves the Hunches.

**Hasil:** Yeah, yeah, I heard about them, but I ain't seen them yet. Jim was telling me about them. He said they put on a pretty good show, too. He seen them out there in Georgia when they came through there. You like them Straightjackets?

**Bradley:** Los Straightjackets?

**Hasil:** Yeah, they gonna be in Minnesota

## Heck, when you don't know what you're doing, you're liable to come out with anything.

deers, and singing turkeys, but I ain't seen one of these. Where'd you pick it up at?

**Hasil:** My girlfriend sent it to me, from Minnesota. Everybody likes that thing and I do, too. I got them fish. I got all kind of talkin' things, singing things, and walking things.

**Bradley:** I've never seen that one, though.

**Hasil:** It's something else, ain't it? They done a lot of work on that, man. Everything on that moves. There's a lot of figuring out to get that thing to do all that.

**Bradley:** You've got a lot of stuff around in here.

**Hasil:** I lost all my stuff out there in my house, the Hasil Motel, everything in it. I had it loaded. See that picture, at the bottom over there, over top that Harley Davidson stereo over there? That was my room, but the whole house was thataway. Looked like you throwed it in there.

**Bradley:** What happened to it all?

**Hasil:** It all ruind on me. I moved out and the thing went to leaking and all that, and it all... well, I didn't have time to get it all out.

**Bradley:** Did there come a storm or something?

**Hasil:** No, the house was getting old and went to leaking and all that. Over the years, it just kept leaking and leaking and ruind it all.

**Bradley:** My friend Megan wanted me to ask you if you still got women fighting to sit next to you?

**Hasil:** Yeah. That's the reason I hide out around here. I don't get out.

**Bradley:** You know most all these people up and down through here?

**Hasil:** Yeah, I know 'em all, yeah. It don't pay to get out sometimes. They too crazy. Them women will run you crazy, I tell you. They will if you don't watch 'em.

**Bradley:** I try but they get to me sometimes. What about the Slop and the Hunch? (two dances Hasil pioneered)

go with you and do it." I said okay. So I took them along and people just went wild. They could really do it. I tell you I ain't seen nobody dance the way they could dance. They was good at it.

**Bradley:** What's it mean, the Hunch? I've heard things, but I want to hear it for real.

**Hasil:** Don't feel bad. That judge over at Charlotte, big judge, he didn't know what it was. My lawyer had to tell him. He said, "Can you believe he didn't? He's eighty or eighty-two years old and said he don't even know what the Hunch is." He said, "Oh, the secretary had to go tell him what it was."

**Bradley:** What about younger bands? You got a Bob Log III picture on the wall.

**Hasil:** I met him in LA. We played at that record shop. I can't think of the name of it, but it's a big record shop. He opened up for us when we was up there putting on shows, and playing that record shop and everything.

**Bradley:** Was it Amoeba?

**Hasil:** I don't know. I can't remember. I been through so much, man. It's hard to remember anything. It was a big record shop, though, a real big one. We had a ball there. That's were I met him at. I'd heard about him, but that's where I met him.

**Bradley:** He's good, huh?

**Hasil:** He smoke that pot like it's going out of style. I said, "You smoke up?" He said, "Yeah, buddy." Have you met him?

**Bradley:** Through some friends of mine, the Immortal Lee County Killers. They played with him in LA and I met him.

**Hasil:** You met Bob Log? What'd you think of him?

**Bradley:** Well, I'd never seen him play before and my buddy JR says, "Bradley, this is Bob. Bob, this is Bradley," and I said, "Pleased to meet you," and then I walked around front and he came out on stage in a jump suit with a motorcycle helmet on, and started out all boom boom boom boom boom...

sometime this coming week. My girlfriend said, "Yeah, they told me where they gonna be up there." They're friends of mine. They're crazy with what they do. I've seen them on TV a lot. They're on the late shows a pretty good bit.

**Bradley:** You ever been on TV?

**Hasil:** Uh huh. Yeah, different channels, different disks, I couldn't tell you what all.

**Bradley:** I haven't seen it but I've been told about a video.

**Hasil:** *The Wild World of Hasil Adkins*, they call it. People like to hear it, they do. Everybody that's seen it said, "I liked that."

**Bradley:** I was in LA and I tried to find it. You'd figure you could get it in LA.

**Hasil:** It's on the market. It's pretty wild, but it's pretty good.

**Bradley:** When I talked to you on the phone a while back, you said you been working. What all you been working on?

**Hasil:** Everything. I'm a mechanic a lot. I worked on a lot of cars, but it's too hard. I'm getting up in years. I work on them sometimes, just not too much. I'm mostly working on this big room with a twelve to twenty piece band. Buddy, that's a full-time job trying to figure out how to play it all and that's all at the same time.

**Bradley:** You want anything from the store?

**Hasil:** You could get about a twelve pack of beer, Budweiser. That don't make me feel too bad. Sometimes it don't. When you go out, go down the road, right down there on your right. It ain't too far down.

**Bradley:** My buddy one time told me that Budweiser stood for "Because U Deserve What Every Individual Should Enjoy Regularly." Budweiser.

**Hasil:** This is about the best beer you can get. Everybody drinks it.

**Bradley:** My friend Megan said that in that video you was jumping on a car for percussion, and she wanted to know how you found out that a car made the perfect per-

cussion instrument.

**Hasil:** I just done it. I mean, they was a-filmin' and what, and I just done it, and they filmed it. They filmed a lot of stuff. But they didn't use it. They got enough to come out with all kinds of videos. It ain't but about thirty minutes long, that video. They should have made it at least an hour, forty-five minutes anyway. But they just made it thirty minutes.

**Bradley:** Why'd they make it so short?

**Hasil:** Don't ask me. I don't know. They had a lot of good shots they should have put in it, but they didn't put 'em in it.

**Bradley:** Another thing Megan wanted me to ask was if you know that band Social Distortion.

**Hasil:** What now?

**Bradley:** The band called Social Distortion.

**Hasil:** I've heard of them, but there's so many of 'em out there it's hard for me to remember all of 'em, too. I've heard of 'em, yeah.

**Bradley:** Well, the cover for your album *Peanut Butter Rock 'n' Roll*, they did a cover for this album called *Somewhere Between Heaven and Hell*. Have you seen it? (The covers are very similar.)

**Hasil:** They come out with so many. I ain't seen it. I bet this is one you ain't seen. [Hasil goes to the back of the trailer and brings out an LP.] *She Said* is the name of that one.

**Bradley:** How old were you when they took those pictures?

**Hasil:** I was twenty-three.

**Bradley:** How old are you now?

**Hasil:** I was sixty, seventy years old when that one came out.

**Bradley:** All these photos were right out here in the yard?

**Hasil:** Yeah, right out there in front of the house.

**Bradley:** How long you been in this house?

**Hasil:** I've been here since '47. That's a few years ago, ain't it?

**Bradley:** Yeah. You're hidden here.

When we came up to the spot in the road to turn off, we couldn't see you. Most people wouldn't know you were here.

**Hasil:** I know.

**Bradley:** So what happened with the other people that you played with? You just didn't like the beats they was playing?

**Hasil:** Well, they were playing the same pattern. It's the same patterns ever since the world began, I guess. I can play that. If I had tapes, I'd show you. But that didn't do anything for me. I wanted to just go when I got ready. It just never done anything for me. If I have to do that, I ain't interested in playing. I just want to sit down and play. You know, just go through with it. I don't want to fool around with one-two-three-four-five-six-eight-ten beats, just go when you get ready and go with it. It's working, too. It's catching on.

They couldn't even write lead sheets to my music. They tried it that way, way back in the early sixties. Them people in Hollywood, they done that on a lot, and they said, "We have to put it in a beat." They don't know. There's so many beats in it. I believe if they knew what they were doing they could do something with it, but they couldn't. They couldn't do nothing. They say, "We can't do anything with it. We can't write what you're putting down, but we can write it in patterns." That old same patterns they got out. That's the reason people said, "They'll never computerize your music." I said, "I know. Every song come out is different." They start working with them computers, they gonna waste their life. They said, "They can't computer-



ize your music. I'm sick of computerized music. I love your kind of music. You just play what comes on your mind and go with it." If they could, they'd computerize it, but they cain't. They already tried it – they cain't.

**Bradley:** It defies technology. It kicks it back.

**Hasil:** It's just what I started with. I just went to playing. What it is, I just want to do what I want to do. You start playing with a band, you have to wait till they come in, tang-tang-tang and all that junk. I say, "Well, you're too slow for me, man, and you're doing that fast." They said, "You won't get nobody to play with you 'cause you're moving too fast." I said, "That's what you think. I can play with myself." Let me play you some of these, what we're working on getting out, me and Jim. He

started his own company. It's what he should have done a long time ago. [Hasil gets up and pulls a tape from many lying about the table. The songs are "Tell Me Why" and "You're My Blue Star."] What do you think about that? You think it might have a chance nowadays? It should. See what you think about this blues here. [Puts in another tape.] They done a good job on it. They missed it but added a dub.

**Hasil:** Here's my girlfriend, see what you think of her. She wrote this song about me. I told her I'm gonna put her to work. Just wait till I get the one woman band going. She said, "You wouldn't do me like that." I said, "Yeah, I am."

**Bradley:** What's her name?

**Hasil:** Amy. Crazy Amy. See what you think of this. [Hasil gets up and puts in another tape. Music starts up. Crazy Amy is rockin' on the radio. Matt's still gone to the store to get beer. When he walks in his eyes are wide.] That's pretty good for hadn't ever seen me. She's seen my movies and heard my records and stuff. She wrote me a letter and sent that to me. That's how we got to know each other. She sent me a tape of it.

**Bradley:** She send you that turtle, too?

**Hasil:** Yeah, later on she did. To tell me to slow down. I said, "What do you mean, 'slow down'?" [to Matt] Have you ever seen one of these? [Hasil starts up the turtle that plays and crawls across the floor.] Some people thinks it's real. Somebody done a lot of work on that thing right there, to make everything work. Head, legs, tail, everything moves. Turtles don't go fast, anyway.

**Bradley:** You do a lot of your recording in here?

**Hasil:** Got that four track over there. You ever seen a Harley Davidson stereo. I got the whole outfit. Radio, TV, everything. You ever seen them?

**Bradley:** Nuh uh. This is like a museum in here.

**Hasil:** That's what everybody says. You ought to of seen my house before

it all went down out there. It was loaded. I lost all that. I had everything. You see that thing hanging on the door? [Points to some sort of zombie mask that hangs on the wall.] There's one in the back hallway. He's the same way. He watches. Look at his eyeballs, the way he's got them rolled. He's got an eye on you. [Meanwhile, the musical turtle is playing its fourth round of "Slow Down."]

**Bradley:** You had some paintings that you used to do?

**Hasil:** Huh, do what now?

**Bradley:** You used to do some painting with spray paint?

**Hasil:** Yeah. Polka dotted car, there, in that movie.

**Bradley:** What got you into that?

**Hasil:** I'm gonna polka dot that limosine. Jim's. He said, "Polka dot it. I



don't care. It's going anyway." I said, "Alright, I will." We gonna make it loud going down the country. Can paint it. "What they're in, you can't miss them. You can see 'em coming for miles." I just love my polka dots. You know Jimmy Rodgers, way back in the '20s and '30s? He was the one who made a song about that. He's got some songs out. He's got that "Polka Dot Blues." That used to be famous way back then. Then here it come back in again, then it went back out. Shirts and pants was all polka dotted. Loud, man. Can see you coming for miles with the polka dots. [Hasil gets up and grabs another tape.] This song's about Clinton. I was testing. See what you think about mine. This is just about two or three more pieces. I'm gonna play twelve or twenty, but see what you think of this. "Clinton Blues." Working on the blues sound. We're gonna campaign, too, out there. [laughter]

**Bradley:** Hasil for president. [The music starts up. For those of you who haven't heard this song, it's Hasil Adkins on drums, guitar, vocals and saxophone all at the same time.] How were you doing that? Playing a saxophone while you're playing the guitar?

**Hasil:** Yeah, and I was whistling. I'm gonna play about twelve instruments. Twelve to twenty. I'm rigging them up in the back room. I've got to rig them up across there where I can get to them.

**Bradley:** Can we take a look at the set-up you got? You got them all rigged up?

**Hasil:** No, no. I'm rigging them back there. I've got to tape them and tie them on and everything so they won't come off. See what you think about some of this blues stuff.

**Bradley:** When was that one recorded, the one just now, "Clinton Blues"?

**Hasil:** Back in the back room there.

**Bradley:** How long ago?

**Hasil:** It ain't been too long. [Another song starts up on the tape deck.]

**Bradley:** How many guitars you got here?

**Hasil:** I've had about eighty-something all together. Broke about seventy something, trying to put on a show.

**Bradley:** What's up with the pickup on this one? Did you make it yourself?

**Hasil:** Yeah, all of them. That guitar there, I bought that in Baltimore. They just made twenty-five hundred. That's the reason I don't want to tear it up. I laid it down. Five or ten people said, "Do you see that he laid the guitar down?" They didn't know what to think. They ain't ever seen me.

**Bradley:** That's a pretty

guitar.

**Hasil:** It's made pretty, ain't it? Whoever designed that, I think they done a good job on it. It's a good guitar too, it is. [Hasil puts in the song, "Play With Your Play Pretty."]

**Bradley:** Why do you write songs about peanut butter?

**Hasil:** The kids love to eat peanut butter. I got a lot of songs about peanut butter. Everybody likes that peanut butter. [Starts talking about a song that's playing.] I done that in Baltimore, about that girl Amy. She spent fifty thousand dollars calling me. I said, "Give me that money, man. Quit calling, just holler at me." I get to rockin', then I slow it down. They said, "I don't know what to think." I waited about two months before I called her. I said, "I didn't know whether to call you or not. You might be crazier than I am. I had to figure it out." She said, "I didn't think you'd ever call me." I said, "Oh yeah, I got around to it." I had to study it a long time. [A harmonica blasts in the background. It's a sad song and we're downing Budweiser.]

**Bradley:** So when's this new record coming out?

**Hasil:** Pretty soon. We're working on one. Me and Jim is trying to get one.

**Bradley:** Where is Jim?

**Hasil:** North Georgia. He likes my music. That's what it is. He does. He loves it. He's tickled to death. Every show I've played, he's counting every one.

**Bradley:** Really?

**Hasil:** Yeah, he's counting every one. [At this point, there's lots of background noise coming from Hasil's tape deck.] "Who Took Your Clothes Off?" See what you

think of this. [The music starts in.] This is live. This is the show where I made it up. They said, "What do you do, make 'em up on the spot?" I said, "Yeah." [The song goes on and it gets to a part where Hasil is doing the voice of the girl trying to explain to her man why she isn't wearing clothes.] That's when she been hanging out all night and wants to come back. She's running around naked and come back here wantin' to go back inside and I said, "Get out!" She must have been pretty drunk or something.

**Bradley:** That really happen?

**Hasil:** Yeah. How you like my guitar? [It's at a part in the song where Hasil is doing the guitar solo with his mouth. Hasil sings a new guitar part over the stereo. Then another song starts off.]

**Hasil:** Here we go. Some of these songs are messed up. Listen at the words to it. I had to do this buddy with a baseball bat. I ain't kidding. Them ballplayers like this. [Hasil starts singing in his own voice.] "I don't tell them of the nights I cried without you. I say just someone I used to know." [He starts singing a duet with himself in a woman's voice.] "Your lies don't tell them how lost I am without you. I'll say it's just someone I used to know." [Sings in his own voice.] "Now, honey, this last time you left on your own. I want to tell you this. Next time you come back I'm taking this baseball bat. And you're gonna leave on your own, 'cause I'm gonna run you off with this baseball bat. You won't come back no more. And you won't have to worry about this baseball bat. You don't know. I'll run you out the door, hollerin' and a-screamin', sayin', "Hey, he's trying to kill me with the baseball bat." So please, honey, don't come back no more. I can't stand it. It's just about to run me nuts. Plum insane. [Mouths out the guitar parts and the tape cuts off in the middle of the ending, and goes into "Do the Scalp."]

**Bradley:** How do you do the scalp?

**Hasil:** Take your cap an' wack you head.

**Bradley:** What's your dogs' names?

**Hasil:** Spot, Molly, Puppy, and Rat.

**Bradley:** Is Rat the little white one?

**Hasil:** He is a rat, sure. If Rat could beat you to death, he will. He's worth three hundred dollars. But I wouldn't give you a dime for him. You have to pamper him. I say, "You don't get pampered here. I'll get a club on you. You straighten up."

**Bradley:** When we pulled up, he tried to jump through the window.

**Hasil:** Oh, you know how high they can jump? They can jump as high as your shoulder. They can. That sucker can jump. He's part rabbit. Them rabbits are hard to catch. He's fast.

**Bradley:** A rabbit dog. [There's another song playing. It's got a guy playing fiddle with Hasil.]

**Hasil:** Listen to that fellow there. That fellow trying to play that fiddle with me. He's good on that fiddle, but he said, "If you show me the song, I can help you." I said "I'm making it up myself."



Let's go with it. We doing it this way." He said, "I ain't ever done this before."

**Bradley:** Mr. Adkins, is there any way I could get you to play me a song? I ain't ever seen you play. I've just heard you on records and stuff.

**Hasil:** No. Have you seen this album any place?

**Matt:** No, no.

**Hasil:** It's off the market. Come out in England with that. They done a good job on that. A real good job. You lay that sucker down any whichways, you can see it when you walk in the shop. I think they done the best job on that than what they did on any album I got out. I got all kinds of them out but I think that's the best one they done. I

thirty years old now and he'll be dead before I see him. I said, "You'll be dead before you're forty, drinking like that." I mean, buddy, it's like this. [Hasil sizes out a cup with his hands.] Big 'ol cups. He's worse than Hank Williams drinking. And Jack Daniel's, he loves it. I said, "Oh, I got sick on that. I can't look at it no more." I can't drink no liquor. I was drinking five fifths and four liters in twenty-four hours. Of vodka. That vodka will kill you, too. I talked to the doctor. He said, "Don't you know you could get sick?" I said, "Why do you think I'm in here?" He said, "You can't do that!" I said, "I'm trying." Drink beer or wine or something – anything. I ain't drunk no vodka in over two years now.

what I could get out of it today."

**Bradley:** Did you get to talk to her?

**Hasil:** Yeah. She tried to sell me one of them records. I said, "I ain't got no money." I didn't have none. I said, "We're out here trying to win everything we can to get by." Eating hamburger, hotdogs, anything we can eat.

**Bradley:** What did she say to that?

**Hasil:** She didn't say nothing. She knew how it was 'cause she was hungry, too, over there, trying to get someplace. I was on that same label. They never did get nothing out. [pauses] We never did get the tape to them is what it was. We tried to, but we could never get nothing cut. A recording, man, you had to go miles and miles here before

## I'm mostly working on this big room with a twelve to twenty piece band. Buddy, that's a full-time job trying to figure out how to play it all and that's all at the same time.

sold all mine and had a time trying to get that one. My girlfriend had to get that. She said, "I'll get you one." You have to buy them off people. You can't buy them off the market.

**Bradley:** This is the only one you got?

**Hasil:** That's the only one I got.

**Bradley:** I just got *The Lonesome Sounds of Hasil Adkins*. It's got the drum on the cover.

**Hasil:** You got *Drinking My Life Away*?

**Bradley:** No, I don't.

**Hasil:** It's a CD. People likes that one, they do. I like that one, too. That one there's got some good ones on it. "DPA Up on the Moon." [In a high voice] "I like peanut butter too." That's how it goes. They come out with that back in '85, kept it on the market until '92, then took it off. The contract went out. They're getting ready to come out with it again. That's been a long time ago.

**Bradley:** That's been about 10 years. The same people gonna put it out again?

**Hasil:** Nuh uh. You remember the man named Sting? He's the one that designed that. Out of London, England. He's the one that designed that, laid it out. I think he done an awful good job on it.

**Bradley:** Was it one of the guys in Sting's band that did it?

**Hasil:** Yeah, Sting. The band Sting. They made all kinds of money. They made all kinds of hits.

**Bradley:** One of the albums I've got, *Moon Over Madison*, sort of reminds me of Hank Williams, Sr. Did you ever get to see him play?

**Hasil:** Who, Hank Williams?

**Bradley:** Yeah.

**Hasil:** No. Got close but I never got to see him, though. Hank III, I know him. He's a big fan of mine. [He points to an autographed Hank III picture on his wall. Hasil's walls are full of autographed photos and records. It seems strange that this man would be the one asking for an autograph.] We were gonna try to tour some together. He's tourin' all over the country. Buddy, if he don't drink that Jack Daniel's, man. He's

**Bradley:** Congratulations.

**Hasil:** That vodka will kill you. My girlfriend stopped that. She said, "No more vodka." I said, "Is that right?"

**Bradley:** So she sent you that turtle to tell you to slow down? Is that why she sent you the turtle?

**Hasil:** Yeah. [laughter] From Minnesota. Out in that cold country. I said, "Well, it gets cold here, but not like it does up there." Man, it gets cold up there. She said it was real pretty today, though. She said, "Oh, it's been warm," and this and that. "I went and washed the car."

**Bradley:** Yeah, last night it got in the '50s. Coldest I've seen it in a while. I don't get cold in LA.

**Hasil:** I know. I know.

**Bradley:** It stays too sunny.

**Hasil:** I was out there in 1956. LA. I almost walked out there. Well, I didn't walk out there. I almost walked back. [laughter] On that desert I almost burnt up – Arizona and Los Angeles, all through out the territory – trying to get a break.

**Bradley:** Were you playing out there?

**Hasil:** Yeah, we took all them. This fella, he was helping me. He was twenty-nine and I wasn't old enough. And he said, "Well, the man wouldn't let us in." The man said, "I don't care what you got. Ain't either one of you old enough to get into this club." This fella that was helping me said, "I know I am. I'm 29!" We didn't get in. The man said, "I don't care if you're fifty-nine. You ain't gettin' in here 'cause you ain't old enough." The ones we did get in, they had contests for who was the best and all that. We took all them, every one we could get in. We win every one of them. He said, "They got a big one going on here. If we get in, we'll win it." I met Pasty Cline at that Town Hall Party. There's that dance party they had on TV. I was on it. I didn't have no money to buy no record with. She was selling them 45s of "Walking after Midnight." That's before it become a big hit. I said, "Boy, if I'd had the money to buy that, just think of

you could find a studio or anything.

**Matt:** What was the closest one from here?

**Hasil:** Lexington, Kentucky, and that's a pretty good ways from here, you know. Back then it was.

**Bradley:** Have most of your recordings been done here?

**Hasil:** Most of them, yeah. Oh, I've done them all over the country now, but way back, most of them were done here. I've had a lot of people say, "I like all them, man. You go a way back. They were raw, and, man, I like that raw sound you got." I cut them on a tape recorder, most of them. I had a wall recorder. Boy, you get that stuff in a tangle and it's just like a string of your hair. It gets to tangling up and then it goes into a whole ball. And I get a ball that big around [sizes it with his hands], about that high, and on each side of the reels, you know – rolling up – get it tangled so you couldn't use it, and that was it. You'd have to throw it away. Boy, it was clear as a bell, to be that far back. If I had them now, I'd play you some. Way back in '48, '48 and '50 and '55 and '60 and '57, '58, all through them years.

This album that's coming out with them girls behind it, the title of it is *I Dreamed of My Amy Last Night*. I played it on the piano and I said, "Oh, I'm gonna sing it on the guitar now." [Hasil gets up and puts another tape on.] Watch this. [What follows is the most bizarre version of "I Walk the Line" anyone's ever heard, followed by ten minutes of shouting and trebly guitar lines while we work on the case of Budweiser.]

**Bradley:** How much land you got around here?

**Hasil:** Twelve acres.

**Bradley:** What's the listing of the songs we just listened to?

**Hasil:** "Baseball Bat," "Leigh Anne Baby." I've done got lost myself. I have to back off and get the first one.

**Bradley:** "Coco the Dog?"

**Hasil:** "Coco the Dog." Yeah. "9-1-1 Bubble Gum."

**Bradley:** "9-1-1 Bubble Gum!" [laughter]

**Hasil:** “Sad Old Rose,” “The Girl of Minnesota.”

**Bradley:** “Crazy Amy!”

**Hasil:** Yeah, “Got a Girl in Minnesota Gonna Teach Me How to Hunch that Thing.” Gonna teach me, I got a girl in Minnesota, anyway.

**Bradley:** “Got a Girl in Minnesota Gonna Teach Me How to Hunch” or “Got a Girl in Minnesota?”

**Hasil:** “Gonna Teach Me How to Hunch That Thing.”

**Bradley:** “Hunch That Thing.”

**Hasil:** That’s what she thinks. [to Matt] Did you hear her (Crazy Amy) sing?

**Matt:** When I was getting out of the car, I was like, “Man, this trailer is rockin’” [laughter]

**Bradley:** Is your name pronounced “Hazel” or “Hasssel”?

**Hasil:** “Hasssel.” They never could get it right. They called me everything. That’s alright. I don’t care, as long as they pay me. That’s one way to look at it, ain’t it?

**Bradley:** You got a middle name?

**Hasil:** No. They put that Haze in it. I didn’t even do that. The record company did that ‘cause they said they can’t say “Hasssel” so they have to say something else. Put “Haze.”

**Bradley:** “Haze” ain’t nowhere close to “Hasssel.”

**Hasil:** Yeah, “Haze.”

**Bradley:** “Axle” is closer to “Hasssel.” What do you like to eat normally? What’s your favorite food?

**Hasil:** Meat. Any kind of meat. I eat a lot of meat, oh, yeah.

**Bradley:** Chicken, *Poultry in Motion*...

**Hasil:** Chicken, beef, hawg, pork.

**Bradley:** You get some deer around here, some venison?

**Hasil:** Oh yeah, I like that too. This place is full of deer – it is. It didn’t used to be that way. When I was a kid, there wasn’t none. We keep ‘em all killed out. [laughter] You’d see one every now and then. Everybody was happy.

**Matt:** People around here mostly coal miners?

**Hasil:** Well, they got every which way now, but it used to be just coal miners and timber. You know how much they used to pay a day?

**Bradley and Matt:** Nuh uh.

**Hasil:** A dollar a day, cutting timber. You go back up in them woods, cutting it down, skimming it up, and sliding it out, ‘cause you didn’t have nothing to pull it with. If we’d had a horse, we’d have killed him, ‘cause he takes off and run off and leaves us. So you had to take them J-hooks and things, twist them where they get hung up and go on down the mountain till they get to the bottom. Then they took the horses and pulled them on into the sawmill. A dollar a day. Lot of money, wasn’t it? It was, way back then, though. Then they got up to two dollars a day, they did. I used to work for fifty cents an hour, four dollars a day. Buddy, I was glad to get it, too. There was a

bunch you could buy with it. You just spend and spend.

**Bradley:** So you did some logging?

**Hasil:** I have, I’ve cut some. I didn’t do too much of that. You’ll get killed. Them trees will kill you fast, jumping back and breaking off. You got to be fast as lightning. There’s a lot of people killed with it. Cutting them down, then they kick back, and splinter, and break off, run up to you. And if they went the wrong way when you were cutting them, you got to gauge ‘em which way to go. A lot of times they’d have vines in the tops to hold them and jerk ‘em around. And if they didn’t go thataway, you had to run and get out of the way of it. You had to go this way, thataway, and watch which way you’s going.

And them mines, oohhh. Back then, them mines about that high [Measures out about a foot and a half with his hands]. My daddy worked in ‘em, about that high. You had to crawl, take a shovel, and load the coal on a buggy. The buggy was flat, but it was a big buggy.

You had to lay down on your belly or your back one to work. You couldn’t straighten up. You had eight or twelve hours of loading coal on your belly. You could turn on your side a little bit to throw the coal in the bucket with them them ol’ big double-shovels, that long and that wide [he measures it out with his hands]. They held that much coal, buddy. That was heavy to lift that off, layin’ down on your belly or back or something. But you had to put it in the buggy ‘cause it didn’t count if you didn’t get it in it. Hard work.

You had to load by the ton. You got paid by the ton. Some days, you got a dollar a ton. That took a lot of coal to run a ton. If you load ten or twelve tons a day, you done a good job. To make that much money, you had to be fast and hard. Moving work is what it was. Too much work in it. You didn’t want to go in no mines if you could help it. That’s what my daddy told me. I said, “I ain’t going in no mines.” I been in ‘em.

Fooled around with ‘em and I said, “I ain’t fooling with that.” You go miles back up in that mountain, buddy, and you got all that mountain weights comin’ down on you, poppin’ and crackin’ when they’re takin’ that coal out. I said, “I can get outside and make somethin’.” [laughter] I ain’t gonna fool with that. It is scary back in one of them. Man, that top cracks, and you see it’s coming down, you know the weight coming down and they got to get the posts and things back up to catch it before it comes all the way down, and it’s a-givin’ and takin’ that coal out. And every time you take it out – that top – you can see it give, and crack and bang. It cracks like a shotgun going off. Loud, man. Some people went in and said, “I’m getting out of here. I ain’t foolin’ with this, man, everything’s crackin’ around me.” [laughter]

One fella quit. He said, “I quit.” He was young; he said, “I ain’t foolin’ with no more mines.” He said, “My nerves won’t stand it.” That slate falls, it’s that thing, it won’t hurt you. You know it’ll just bust up over your head and fall down, but you got that rock a-comin’ behind it. He worked two days and said, “I quit. That’s it.” So many people gettin’ killed takin’ that coal out. Well, you take all that mountain – they was down to the bottom – and all that mountain and all that weight was on top of you. It didn’t take long to get rid of you. It come quick when it comes, like lightning. They got a lot safer now. Back then, they didn’t have nothin’. They got the coal out, but it was slow.

**Bradley:** We saw a bunch of the belts that run the coal as we were coming in.

**Hasil:** Did I tell you about them movies a-comin’ out?

**Bradley:** No.

**Hasil:** You’ve got to see these. *Die You Zombie Bastards*. Got naked girls. Got pretty girls in it. It was made all over the country. It’s wild, it is. People seen the previews of it. It’s coming this fall. *Tear It Up*. It’s got everything: devils and all that. Everything, Jerry Lee Lewis, and they’re



tearing up everything, breaking up everything, and it's a wild movie, a documentary about the rockabilly music. It's real good. I've seen some of it. It's the best document they've ever made about rockabilly music. Scotty Moore, they got him in it, talking about playing for Elvis, and about that "Mystery Train," and hittin' all them notes. He said, "I don't know. We didn't mean it. We just done it. We was just playin'." And he hit them licks on that guitar. The way he tells it, though, he said, "No, no. It wasn't made up. It's just pickin' and singin' and we just played and just happened to hit them licks." Made a missed lick, but he made a right lick. That's what made Elvis, it was. Scotty Moore did, well, all of them together with Bill Black and all of 'em. They didn't know what they were doing. Johnny (Burnette) said, "We didn't know what we were doing. He just quit singin' and we just went to playin'." That's pretty good for it to

makes you happy. It is going to be a good movie, it is. He ought to sell a lot of that one.

They had to come to get me with "She Said" and "Mystery Train" and all them and I sang them out there on the porch. Playing out on that back porch – it was in pretty good shape then – I threw the guitar down and that camera man, he said "Boy, do it again right quick." He couldn't catch it quick enough. He said, "Well, I caught some of it. I didn't know what he was going to do." I said, "Now you're getting right. You're gettin' right." [laughter]

**Bradley:** You ever made a video to a song?

**Hasil:** Yeah, yeah. I got all kinds of videos if I had time I'd show you, but it'd take too long.

**Bradley:** That's all right. You know, I did see this one documentary about this guy named Jessco White.

**Hasil:** Yeah. He lives about fifteen, twenty

cable up there. Two times a week. I didn't think they played that, but the kids, these little... two, three, four, five, eight, up to about twelve or fourteen-year-old kids, she said they played it and they'll dance it. Slappin' they're hands and stuff. I got a video of it from up there. Vampires and everything, you know, dancing with them kids and all. It's a pretty good show they got going. And they got one in Chicago the same way. Only it ain't vampires. It just all fun for the kids.

(Long pause. I didn't know what to think about the vampires. Plus I've had about five or six beers and we've had tape rolling for right at two hours.)

**Bradley:** I still... I still... I want to hear you play a song.

**Hasil:** (quietly) I don't fool with it. I mean...

**Bradley:** Awh, all right. I won't push you on it.

**Hasil:** (brightening up) I could sing you one

**Bradley: How many guitars you got here?**

**Hasil: I've had about eighty-something all together. Broke about seventy something, trying to put on a show.**



come out thataway. They said, "We tried to go back over it, but couldn't do no good with it. We just had to do it the first time and go with it." "That's Alright Mama" and "Mystery Train," and I don't know how many, but they just done it. They done a pretty good job for not knowing what they were doing. I said, "Well, shoot. I've got to try something that I don't know what I'm doing." [laughter]

Heck, when you don't know what you're doing, you're liable to come out with anything. [laughter] Well, they played on cardboard boxes and everything – they did – you know, beatin' on 'em. They said, "Well, rockabilly, the music, just makes you feel good." Well, you just get the cardboard box, and they was showing all that in the video, and they beat on 'em with their hands, and spoons, and everything they could just to beat on it. All them old players now say, "Oh, it just makes you feel so good." It

minutes from here. Something like that. He's in Athens, Georgia tonight.

**Bradley:** Jessco is?

**Hasil:** Yeah.

**Bradley:** Is it just him dancing?

**Hasil:** Huh? Yeah, yeah, dancing. Two shows. One in Atlanta and one in Athens. Last night he was in Atlanta and tonight he's gonna be in Athens where Jim lives. They're going out to see him.

**Matt:** So you said you were on TV with Patsy Cline?

**Hasil:** Yeah *Town Hall Party* in LA. (*Town Hall Party* was California's largest country music barn dance, running from early 1952 until early 1961. The show was broadcast every Saturday night from a theatre made up to look like an old barn in Compton, a suburb of Los Angeles.)

**Matt:** Were you on TV any other times?

**Hasil:** Oh yeah, oh yeah. I've been on it a lot. Have you see it up in New York? It's on

on the guitar, though, I mean just the guitar, if you want.

**Bradley:** Would you mind?

**Hasil:** This is a good guitar here.

(Starts to strum. With the tape rolling, Hasil leans towards the tape. And starts to play "When the Leaves Start to Fall." The song rolls along low and sad, and at the end it picks up to triple time and ends with Hasil scat guitar lines. Something like ticky ticky ticky tock. Cheers, laughter, and "thank you's" follow.) Get 'em all dancing slow then speed it up on 'em. They said, "Boy, I like the way you do." I said, "Good. I'm glad of it."

**Bradley:** I'm gonna step to the bathroom real quick. That was good, Mr. Adkins. That was good.

(*The second half of this interview will run in the next issue of Razorcake.*)



# Dan Monick's Photo Page

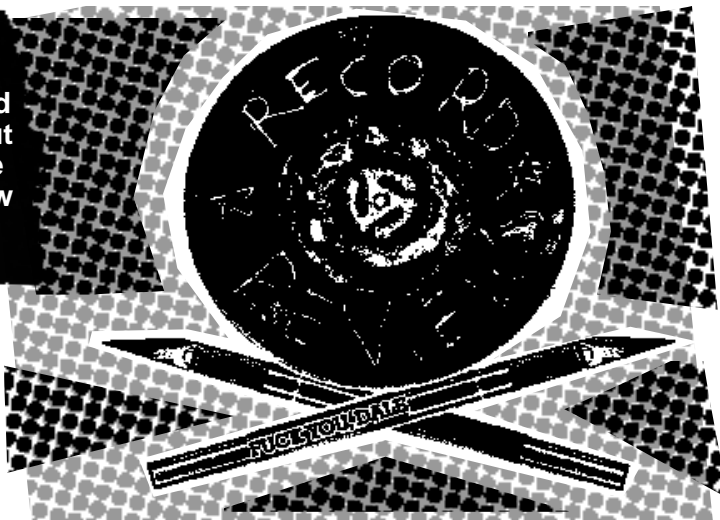
*This was the second to  
last night of Juvee...*

*The last thing I heard  
her say to him was...*



*"Why you  
gotta keep  
actin' like  
you're from  
Connecticut?"*

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 screamotic hardcore for kids who dye their hair black. No, darker. Blacker than that. No, dude, I mean fucking black.  
—Puckett

#### 999: *Concrete*: CD

Lemme start off with a big caveat: I have never liked this album. I bought a copy for fifty cents back when it first came out and felt I was ripped off. Why, you ask? Can't really come up with one outside of personal taste. Granted, they do a serviceable version of "Little Red Riding Hood," but the '80s pop feel prevalent on the disc just never blew up my skirt in the right ways. Being the open-minded fellow I am, I decided to give it another go. The verdict: still don't like it, although not as venomously as before. The pop vibe still leaves me with an icky feeling, but I can better hear the sound that 999 had mined to better effect on previous efforts than I could two decades ago, which raises its level up to tolerable for these ears. The B-sides added to this reissue, namely "Scandal in the City" and the two live tracks, make it that much more listenable. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

#### A STATIC LULLABY: ...*And Don't Forget to Breathe*: CD

There are two other albums I know of that start with "... And" and both of them are better than this screamotic hardcore for kids who dye their hair black. No, darker. Blacker than that. No, dude, I mean fucking black.  
—Puckett (Ferret)

#### AARITILA:

##### ...*Ja Kaikki Kuitenkin Paattyy Kuolemaan!*: CD

I'm going on a mini tirade now. It's going to be real quick. I wish more kids would seek out bands from around the world. If they did, even more bands would come here to tour. Okay, I'm finished. Now I have two copies of this CD. I received the Finnish pressing of this CD that was released by 1000dB Records about six months ago from a good friend there who sings background vocals on this recording. Interestingly, Hardcore Holocaust released it here in the States. I think they are great for doing this because I believe they truly stand behind their releases, not worrying if they are going to be big sellers. You can see they love the Finnish punk. Awhile ago they put out the Viimeinen Kolonna CD. Did you buy one? Or was the Casualties CD the preferred purchase? Even more interesting is that I have a review copy in my box. I'm glad to see that more extreme punk labels are giving this mag try. I can't tell you how much bad emo and alternative rock I get to review. Oops, I went on another tirade! Back to this release. I've been listening to this for a while now. It's a good, angry release that is not overly fast and fits into a Discharge niche. It's got a heavy bass and haiku-like lyrics, which are sung in Finnish. The guitars were recorded well and come off powerful. The drums hold down the background with an even pounding. Even though I don't understand a lick of what's being said, anger

crosses all communication lines. From start to finish, it feels like you are being dragged behind a car holding your breath. Collector nerd note: this release has a greener tint in the artwork. The Finnish one is more yellow.  
—Donofthedeath (Hardcore Holocaust)

#### ALEXISONFIRE:

##### Self-titled: CD

For every Black Cross, Give Up the Ghost, or Fairweather record that Equal Vision releases, there's at least one album by a band like Armor For Sleep or Alexisonfire (which is to say that for every interesting, experimental, and artistically challenging record, you get one incredibly commercial release which offers no surprises and nothing new). Like bands such as Waterdown and the rest of the screamo hordes, one vocalist screams as if he wanted to be in Morbid Angel; the other sings in sweet, angelic tones. Like most bands of this ilk, the musicianship is passable to good; that's rarely the problem. The problem is that the actual music begins at pop-punk with the sweet melodies to get the chicks in and then tries to add a tougher edge so that, you know, the dudes will like it, sounding like every other band with dyed black hair and bangs, ear plugs, and star tattoos in the process. In that respect, this album offers something for everyone who will be listening to the next big trend in two years. However, by nearly every measure that I can use to gauge a good — or even decent — album, this doesn't even begin to register.  
—Puckett (Equal Vision)

#### ALLI WITH AN I: *I Learned By Watching You*: CD

Wow, these guys sound as tough as their name! They're almost as hardcore as the Get Up Kids! —Potsi (Law of Inertia)

#### ALPHA CONTROL GROUP C /PHOTON BAND: *Split 7"*

This 7" comes with a copy of *Chumpire* #166, which is a tiny zine with quick reviews of shows. The Alpha Control Group C sounds like a lost late-'80s band. Photon Band sounds like a lost

late-'70s band, both painless but also okay to be lost. —Speedway Randy (Chumpire)

#### ALREADY DEAD:

##### *This Was Never Yours*: CD

By-the-numbers metallic hardcore, never deviating from a well-established template and never stepping outside of the box. Kinda sad when you're listening to supposed "radical" music and you realize that Barry Manilow took more chances. —Jimmy Alvarado (High Fidelity)

#### AMERICA IS WAITING:

##### *In the Lines*: CDEP

If I kept listening to emo, I would stop having to take sleeping pills.  
—Donofthedeath (Die Die Diamond)

#### ANNALISE/GUNMOLL:

##### *Split 7"*

I'm at a bit of a loss here, so I'm going to flat-out steal Maddy's compare-a-band-to-a-brand-of-breakfast-cereal reviewing technique: As cereal goes, this 7 inch is a five bean salad. Maybe fine when you're at a post-bris party with a bunch of your elderly blue-haired relatives, but nothing you'd want to encounter when you're sitting down to a big brimmin' bowl of Capt Crunch with Crunch Berries. As is often times the case with this sensitive stuff, it's not totally without merit. Overall it's a bit like lukewarm Hot Water Music. Musically it moves around and has some energy to it. But it shoots itself in the foot over and over again with its irksome self-consciousness posturing. Gravel up your voice all you want boys, you're not fooling anyone — not even your friends, who are too nice to tell you to quit writing songs to assuage your stupid girlfriends. Urgh. Oh, and this was two bands? I couldn't really tell. —Aphid Peewit (No Idea)

#### ANTELOPE: Self-titled: CDEP

...And that, ladies and gentlemen, was four minutes of my life I could've better spent doing something constructive, like gouging my eyes out with a soup ladle. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dischord)

#### ANY LAST WORDS:

##### Self-titled 7"

Eight songs of all thrash, no flash from this Twin Cities band. Any Last Words mine the same territory as other bands on Havoc Records like Vitamin X and Tear It Up, mixed with some youth crew-y bits here and there. It's certainly nothing to scoff at, but it wouldn't hurt for these guys to throw a monkey-wrench into their thrash-thrash-thrash formula. —Josh (Havoc)

#### ARCADE INFERNO/

##### THE ROGUE SET:

##### *Tonight, St. Pete Burns*: CD

When this came in, I thought it was a DVD since it was in a DVD case. I think some grindcore band did the same thing a couple of years ago, and when somebody tried to convince me that it was a brilliant idea, I responded by pointing and laughing. So this isn't a DVD, it's a regular old CD. Both bands are treading on the same ground as the Jack Palance Band and American Steel, and while I wouldn't exactly call that "hallowed ground," it's definitely not a bad thing in my book. And I've said this about fifteen times already, but hand-screened covers are pretty cool. Worthy of repeated listens. —Josh (Network of Friends)

#### A-SIDES: *Going Gone: 7"*

Holy crap, the Monkees' less musically-proficient brothers have released a single! Alert Rodney Bingenheimer while the rest of us run for cover! —Jimmy Alvarado (Prison Jazz, no address)

#### ASSERT:

##### *Riotous Assembly*: CD

Basic hardcore with some faster-than-lights drumming, just-gargled-with-bleach vocals and political lyrics which state the obvious in ways that are as subtle as a hammer. It's not bad, but it doesn't do much for me.  
—Puckett (Malt Soda)

#### AT THE SPINE:

##### *The Curriculum Is Never Neutral*: CD

What seems to dominate college radio but never leaves. This is probably some critic's favorite, but it leaves this listener bored. —Donofthedeath (Global Seepej)

#### ATLANTIC MANOR, THE: *Failing by the Second*: CDEP

This failed the second any sound was produced. There was already a last Warren Zevon record.  
—Donofthedeath (Do Too)

#### ATTIC TED: *The Bastardized Country Carnival*: CD

Bizarro sideshow freak rock'n'roll belched forth from the bowels of Tejas. Someone was a fan of Touch & Go's mid-'80s releases, and it shows. —Jimmy Alvarado (Pecan Crazy)

#### AUSGEBOMBT:

##### *Hellbomber*: CD

Speed metal with anti-war lyrics played by what looks to be guys who take their fashion cues from the old hardcore-turned-metal band Genocide. Not all that bad, but it ain't exactly memorable, either. —Jimmy Alvarado (Hardcore Holocaust)

#### AVSKUM: *Punkista*: CD

Some grade-A fjordcore here from this long-running band, perhaps a little more reliant on the Discharge influence than is healthy, but damn if they ain't got the



best bits of the sound down pat, right down to the haiku-like anti-capitalist, anti-US government lyrics.

—Jimmy Alvarado (Prank)

#### BAR FEEDERS, THE: 50

##### *Ways To Leave Your Liver: CD*

...i enjoyed this disc for the first ten minutes or so, probably because it's been a long time since i listened to any bad late '80s punk records and found myself briefly nostalgic for that sound. And, while i can't say i'm completely immune to the charms of the Gaza-Strippers-sing-McCrackins-songs-arranged-by-Zeke-isms of, say, "Chinese Chicken" ("Chinese Chicken! In My Hair! Chinese Chicken! With Fred Astaire! Chinese Chicken! Laughing Gas! Chinese Chicken! Diaper Rash!"), it has been my observation throughout the years that bands which play three-four-five-minute-long thrash songs with all manner of stops and starts and diversions and lunacy and such, generally, in their hearts of hearts, would rather be playing some form of music other than punk rock, but have been playing punk rock (or that which makes use of the sonic external form of punk rock) for so long that they are either physically or psychologically unable to divest themselves from it. And i'm not saying that's necessarily the case with the Bar Feeders, but it certainly wouldn't surprise me any to find out that at least one of them secretly wishes he was in a band with a gong. Cool for a while, but about halfway through the five-and-a-half-minute-long thrash song about the Droid Party, i was really hoping that the band, decked out in Stormtrooper gear, would pull up to my house in a commandeered land speeder, kick in my door and vomit heavily into my CD player, rendering it at least temporarily inoperable and thusly freeing me from the remainder of my reviewly functions — but if YOU really wanna sit thru songs like "Free Beer For The Bar Feeders" on your own time, don't relent on my account. **BEST SONG:** "Chinese Chicken" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Satan Sells Sea Shells by the Seashore" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** The song entitled "G.U.I." makes no mention of the Graphical User Interface!

—Rev. Nørh (A.D.D.)

#### BAR FEEDERS, THE: 50

##### *Ways to Leave Your Liver: CD*

First thing I thought when I dropped this puppy in the player was that they sounded like a rawer version of the Offspring. Goofy song titles and with goofy lyrics shows that these guys are having more fun than you. —Donofthedeath (A.D.D.)

#### BILL BONDSMEN:

##### *Good Evening This Is: CD*

Mid-tempo tuneage from a band big on that early '80s Midwest hardcore sound. Seeing as these are "unmixed/unmastered" versions of the songs, there's more than a few rough edges to the proceedings, most notably a dire need for the levels to be raised up, but if they manage to squeeze a good mix out, this could be very, very good when it's finished. —Jimmy Alvarado (4TG Music Terrorism Conspiracy)

#### BITCHIN'/

##### *ONION FLAVORED RINGS:*

##### *Yeehaw Junction: Split 7"*

I admire Bitchin's defiance and quest for understanding — strident female voices, roughed-up instruments, and fists up in the air in the name of community. Their three songs are straight shots, covering

long bike rides and hard battles still being fought. They also seem to be recorded rougher and tumblier than their full length. The jaggedness suits them well. Onion Flavored Rings are extremely poppy and sweet, but not saccharine. That's a tough line to balance. They pull from the same jug of lyrical spirits as This Bike Is a Pipe Bomb, while sounding nothing like them. The songs are about depression, being unattractive, and going to a shitty job for a shitty wage. That gives the enterprise weight, but there's a lot of jangle and peppiness in the beats, which make you think you're hearing songs about sunshine instead of cancer. Comes in way-cool silkscreen cartoon cover. —Todd (No Idea)

#### BLACK JETTS, THE:

##### *Bleed Me: CD*

Take one part MC5, one part Dead Boys, add a dash of '60s trash rock, and you get this. While it ain't anywhere near the vicinity of crucial listening, they do make a nice enough racket to make their way into your next party's soundtrack. —Jimmy Alvarado (Deadbeat)

#### BLACK KEYS, THE:

##### *The Moan: CDEP*

Bluesy southern-fried rock, not punk. Not bad for Fat Possum fans (although not on that label). Hey, I just got done working eighteen-hour days for two weeks. My verbiage output is low and that tired description seems to fit juuuust right. —Speedway Randy (Alive)

#### BLACKLIST:

##### *Times Are Changing: CD*

This deserves a sigh as an initial reaction and not in any good way. Trite lyrics about politics. Claims that the band doesn't want to live in someone else's time (1977, 1969). The music is so rudimentary that it makes the Ramones sound technically accomplished (and speaking of the Ramones, I'm more interested in the reissues series than I am in this album). To say that there's nothing here is to assign too much credit to this run-of-the-mill punk rock revival because nothing is the opposite of something — antimatter at least causes a reaction. This falls squarely in the middle of something and nothing in a nether realm where ambivalence and indifference are the order of the day and this doesn't warrant one more word. —Puckett (Dead Mic)

#### BLOODY LOVELIES, THE:

##### *Some Truth and a Little Money: CD*

I don't know what's worse, the music (a bad take on the worst bits of Tom Petty and ELO) or the fact that they thought *Razorcake* was a good mag to send their wares to. Maybe they inadvertently mailed it here instead of some "hip" dentist's office. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.TheBloodyLovelies.com)

#### BLOWN TO BITS:

##### *Fuck American Xenophobia: 7"*

Speedy, tight political hardcore that's thankfully spare on the metal influence. This bad boy's a keeper. —Jimmy Alvarado (Blown to Bits)

#### BOBBYTEENS, THE: *Cruisin' for a Bruisin': CD*

Boy, Maddy's gonna be mad at me for not passing this CD along to her. It's Lucky Charms, all the way. Female-fronted pop punk in the vein of Nikki and the Corvettes and, well, shit, all the bands that have tried to be the Bobbyteens. This is what the Donnas

# RAZORCAKE

Vinyl: Bad for the environment,  
good for the soul.

THESE ARE THE  
TOP 7"s SINCE  
THE LAST MAG.

### Underground Medicine Mailorder, Connecticut

1. **Deadly Weapons**, *You're So Selfish* (Rapid Pulse)
2. **Functional Blackouts**, *1-900-Get-Inside* (Goodbye Boozy)
3. **Flakes**, *Talk About You* (Dollar)
4. **Diskords**, *Pink Palace* (Dirtnap)
5. **MOTO**, *Spiral Slouch* (Shit Sandwich)
6. **Kidnappers**, *Spanish Girls* (Zaxxon Virile Action)
7. **Deadly Weapons**, *Backstabber* (Lipstick)
8. **The Lids**, *Too Late* (Die Slaughterhouse)
9. **Clocks**, *Time Is on My Side +5* (Shake Your Archives)
10. **Clorox Girls**, *Baby* (Jonny Cat)

### Know Crap Mailorder, Oregon

1. **Dirtbombs**, *Pray for Pills* (Corduoy)
2. **Exploding Hearts**, *Modern Kicks* (Pelado)
3. **Flip-Tops/Gloryholes**, split (Jonny Cat)
4. **Various Artists**, *København i Ruiner 2x7"* (Kick-n-Punch)
5. **MOTO**, *Spiral Slouch* (Shit Sandwich)
6. **The Blacks/The Persuaders**, split (Rockin' Bones)
7. **Dennis Most & the Instigators**, *Wire My Jaw* (Bad Attitude)
8. **I Excuse/Manifesto Jukebox**, split (Combat Rock Industry)
9. **The Diskords**, *Pink Palace* (Dirtnap)
10. **Leftovers**, *Cigarettes & Alcohol* (Dropkick)

### Disgruntled Mailorder, California

1. **BellRays**, *Lion's Den b/w Behind The Gun* (Vital Gesture)
2. **Red Onions**, *Live Wire* (Revenge)
3. **The Bags**, *Disco's Dead* (Artifex)
4. **The Orphans**, *Nobody's Fool* (Malo)
5. **Nipple Erectors**, *So Pissed Off* (Erector)
6. **Tokyo Knives**, *Young Punk Saturday Night* (Boogaloosa)
7. **Briefs**, *The Joy of Killing* (Lollipop)
8. **JFA/Faction**, split (Spontaneous Combustion)
9. **The Fitts**, *Self-titled* (Big Neck)
10. **The Ponys**, *Wicked City* (Big Neck)

would sound like if they had any talent. This is what a generation of leather-jacketed tough punk rock girls have wanted to sound like, and with good reason. It's definitely worth picking up. —Sean (Estrus)

**BONECRUSHER:**  
***The Good Life: CDEP***

It looks like Ray ain't singin' for 'em anymore, and they sound more like yer average skinhead band than ever. Ain't my cup o' tea, but it ain't bad for what it is, I guess. —Jimmy Alvarado (Class War)

**BONECRUSHER:**  
***The Good Life: CDEP***

Bonecrusher's always been about fighting the good fight. On first listen, without paying attention to the lyrics, it'd be easy to dismiss them as a bunch of thugs who have a reputation for beating up people who come to their shows and rip out the occasional light fixture from a club's ceiling. Surprisingly, a good number of their songs are about the nobility of work, the power of unions, and standing on your own two feet. Their previous CD on Hostage, *Working for a Living*, was tougher than the back of a stone mason and rougher than the calluses on a carpenter's hands. All of the basic elements are here in *The Good Life*, but I can't help but think something's missing. Fire? Direct intimidation? Fear of instant teeth loss? It's definitely a decent CD, but it doesn't have me ready to spring out of the way and seek a safe haven when I pop it in the player like their earlier efforts did. Can't quite put my finger on it. —Todd (Class War)

**BREAKING PANGAEA:**  
***Phoenix: CD***

Oh, sweet merciful fucking Christ on the cross. These shoegazing indie-emo fucks are one step removed from The Get Up Kids (that step would be the very slight crunchy modern emo-core edge) and I don't mean that in any of the good ways. If you think there are actually good things that statement could mean, you are likely reading the wrong magazine and should renew your subscription to *Spin* or *Rolling Stone* forthwith. —Puckett (Equal Vision)

**BRIEFS, LES:**  
***The Joy of Killing: 7"***

This French release is the least Briefs-sounding Briefs record I've ever heard, mostly because it's all covers and the Briefs' Adverts bounce is replaced, mainly by razor blades and hard stares. But, fuck it, I like the Killed By Death obscure feel it emits. They start off with "Kill the Hippies" by The Casualties (just joking, although they have a song of the same title), by one of Dangerhouse's jewels, the Deadbeats (and if I remember right, the original version featured Geza X who produced and engineered some great Dead Kennedys and Germs stuff.) Then they slip on The Panics' socks with "I Wanna Kill My Mom." The Panics claim — and they haven't yet been disputed — as being Indiana's first high school punk rock band. Flip it over and there's a straight-up charge through the Angry Samoans' "Todd Killings" and an equally "yup, that kinda sounds like the original" take on the Damned's "Born to Kill." "Kill" is the last track, originally unchained by Alberto Y Lost Trios Paranoias (a strange band that was a very British hybrid of Monty Python-type comedy and the new-wavey Cock

Sparrer) comes out like Vom (pre-Angry Samoans). Not an essential release, but fun nonetheless. —Todd (Lollipop)

**BROKEN BOTTLES:**  
***Drinking in the Rain b/w Lose Every Battle: CD-Single***

I don't know, doesn't "single" imply the band has at least one good song? Odious faux Social Distortion music (as if the original item hasn't wreaked enough horror on my ears over the course of the last decade) made all the more odious-er by the snare constantly being behind the beat (or merely appearing that way owing to not-particularly-cunningly applied drum mic echo) and wannabe Johnny Rotten-clone vocals (note: Using "wannabe" AND "clone" is not redundant in this case, I am merely trying to express how the singer sounds like he wants to be a Johnny Rotten clone, but is failing at even that modest goal). This completely fails to take back the alley. **BEST SONG:** They both sound the same, except one has cloudburst effects. **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Drinking in the Rain," because it's SOOOO Morrissey. **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** This Augmented CD Single also contains the video for "Drinking in the Rain." I didn't watch it or anything, but, on the credits for the video portion, they spell camera as "camara." —Rev. Nørh (TKO)

**BROKEN BOTTLES:**  
***In the Bottles: CD***

With the increased exposure of being on TKO, I've got the feeling that Broken Bottles will get a bunch of new fans and a bunch of razzing (see Nørh's review). Having interviewed the guys and hung out with them a couple of times, I can vouch that Jes isn't trying to impress anyone, and isn't faking the lunacy. Sure, he sounds a lot like Mike Ness and the band sounds a lot like classic Social Distortion, but I like them a lot regardless. It's like they found an extra book of songs that were slated for *Mommy's Little Monster* (albeit a little more campy), which were lost in a fire or a flood or mudslide or something. Also, Southern Orange County punk is one of the last full-fledged bastions of punk rock that never went away after the beachhead was declared in the late '70s. So I can also understand that berets a la D.I. throw folks for a loop, but it's what these guys wear, day in and day out (and Travis is one of the nicest guys you're bound to meet). Selfishly, since I have all of their singles, I've already heard a little less than half of the songs on *In the Bottles*, but there are some great new tracks on here, too. "Pink Swastika" is quintessential Broken Bottles — funny and strange (it's about a homosexual nazi and the conflict that such a person might face) and "Blondie" buzzes right through, like a bullet from 1982. My only beef is that it's a pretty bad idea to cover "The Letter" (previously covered by fucking Joe Cocker) at all, but to put it in the middle of the CD makes for awkward sprints to the CD player to hit skip. Regardless, this is a nice introduction of the band to the rest of the world outside of Southern California. —Todd (TKO)

**CAREER SUICIDE:**  
***Reach for the Sars: 7"***

What the hell's the deal with these melodic hardcore bands from Canada? First it was Fucked Up, and now this band. Neato guitar trickery kind of like the Adolescents, a lesson or two learned from Kid Dynamite, and the whole

thing reeks of a heavy Freeze influence. Another top-notch release from Deranged. —Josh (Deranged)

**CATHOLIC BOYS: *Psychic Voodoo Mind Control: CD***

Raucous trash punk in the same vein as the Shrinkers and the Gloryholes, but with a charm all their own. Label dude Todd says it's his favorite release and, not taking into account it's the only release I've heard from his label, I'm inclined to agree with him, 'cause there ain't no denyin' this is some good stuff. —Jimmy Alvarado (Trick Knee)

**CHALLENGER: *Give the People What They Want in Lethal Doses: CD***

Dave Laney and Al Burian of Milemarker drop the didactic delivery of said band and go straight for the punk rock jugular. *Give the People...* is filled with sonic relics from the past: one can hear the strains of Killing Joke, Shellac, Archers Of Loaf, Pegboy, Seaweed, and Bluetip buried in this Monorchid-meets-Jawbreaker outfit of anthemic, emotional post punk. It might come as a surprise to Milemarker fans but to those who were familiar with Laney and Burian's pre-Milemarker bands, Griver and Hellbender respectively, it's the record you've been waiting for them to make. And by god, it's a keeper. —Greg Barbera (Jade Tree)

**CHOP SAKIS:**  
***Ghost Town Crowd: CD***

Melodic, fast, crunchy, with lots of yellin' and hootin' and hollerin'! This may help out a small, but important sliver of you; this reminds me of the second coming of Scared of Chaka's *Masonic Youth*, a hellfire of an LP. It's over-amped garage hooked to hardcore tempos — overdriven, precise in its sloppiness — with that type of zipper-down swagger that the New Bomb Turks were famous for. I have no fuckin' idea what they're slur-singing about and I don't care a lick. Amped-up, hand-in-fire good times that'll get jaded punk rockers jumping and stumbling around like hyperactive cheerleaders with their shoelaces untied. The world needs more bands like this. Excellent stuff put out by the on-long-sabbatical, Joey, who was responsible for releases of both early Good Riddance and the Motards. The band includes members of the Riverboat Gamblers, the Marked Men, and Kris Pierce, an awesome dude and ex-bassist of Tiltwheel. —Todd (Little Deputy)

**CHUCK MAIDEN:**  
***Morris Road: CD***

Our buddy Chuck Maiden sounds quite a bit like the Wallflowers, kind of like how cow poop smells quite a bit like horse poop. —Potsi (Lorne Street)

**CLAIRMEL:**  
***A Letter to Friends: CD***

I was first introduced to Clairmel through the HWM split; Hot Water Music always kicks my ass. Clairmel quickly set about doing the same thing. I won't pretend to tell you that this is unique; if you're a fan of Gainesville punk rock, you have likely heard this or something very similar before (likewise, I won't claim that Clairmel is from Gainesville; I honestly don't know where they're from). The difference between this collection of previously unreleased tracks and most of the shit (and I do mean shit) that I review is that whereas most of the shit is impassioned

with little to no effect because it sounds like a bunch of art students in the middle of nowhere trying to create something to further ostracize themselves from their surroundings, this sounds like impassioned people trying to connect with their surroundings. To put it a different way, a lot of the albums I get sound like they were made by outcasts in high school who decided to intentionally be weirder so that they could pretend to be cool; this album, in the analogy, would have been made by the people who simply didn't give a shit about cliques or trends and wanted to sit in their garage and make music that they and their friends could enjoy, music that would provide a sanctuary and a place where bonds between people could strengthen, if only for a little while. I freely admit that I was biased in favor of Clairmel when I got this; I'm more biased in their favor now. —Puckett (No Idea)

**CLOROX GIRLS, THE:**  
***Self-titled: LP***

In a perfect world, Dangerhouse Records never would have gone out of business some twenty years ago. Or that Robbie Fields, without the threat of violence or a lawsuit, would actually pay the bands that help keep Posh Boy in business. The Clorox Girls — I'm assuming, named after the song from Red Cross' first self-titled 12" EP — would have fit perfectly in with either label. They actually owe more than a passing blush to that version of Red Cross, too (whose members were to go on to Black Flag, Bad Religion, and Redd Kross). This LP has captured the overall feeling of a really cool attitude that punk still seems so full of possibility and fun, even though things look like shit and so many people claim that all the intellectual property's already been gentrified for arenas or strip-mined of any value. The songs on this LP are both wide-eyed and tough. Arty flourishes are kept it check by the fact that the songs rock all the way through, even when they slow down. The haiku-like, borderline paranoid lyrics provide a nice amount of traction to the bounce. Much more realized than their 7", which I liked a lot, too. —Todd (Smartguy)

**COCKSPARRER:**  
***Back Home: CD***

All the hits, recorded live before an enthusiastic hometown crowd. Personally, I would've preferred an album's worth of new tunes, but a collection of classics performed live is decidedly better than no Cocksparrer whatsoever, I reckon. Sound quality's great, performance is good. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

**COLBOM:**  
***Famous Last Words: 7"***

Decent enough mid-tempo punk with well-written lyrics. Nice of 'em to include little explanations for each song, too. —Jimmy Alvarado (No Idea)

**CONSAFOS: *Such Is the Way of Things: CDEP***

So mellow and peaceful that I forgot I shit my pants. —Donofthead (Greyday)

**COUNTERATTACK:**  
***Step Aside: CD***

Stereotypical, uninspiring American oi stuff, meaning it pretty much blows. Included is their contribution to what is apparently becoming the mandatory post-9/11

pro-USA anthem genre, in this case a ditty called "Let's Roll." Thanks, but if I want mindless flag waving, I'll turn on the evening news. -Jimmy Alvarado (Reality Clash)

**COUNTLESS SHADOWS/UNTIL THE FALL: Split CD**  
 Countless Shadows: A heavy metal band fronted by a guy who likes to scream a lot. My, how original. Until the Fall: A little better, but the fact that they are reminiscent of Excel ain't exactly a plus. -Jimmy Alvarado (High Fidelity)

**CROSSTOPS:**  
**Truck and Disorderly: CD**  
 Being an ironic version of a crappy bar band still makes you a crappy bar band. -Speedway Randy (Malt Soda)

**CRUMBS, THE: Last Exit: CD**  
 It's not that I was disappointed with the last album by The Crumbs. I just wasn't impressed. They'd always had a cool Eddie Cochran/The Saints rock-'n'-roll sound to them, and the last album had too many bar rock leanings for my taste. *Last Exit* fixes that problem. The rock-'n'-roll is cool again. There's a lot of Johnny Thunders influence in this, sure, but there's more. It's like they picked up the last Beltones record and remembered the days when The Crumbs and the Beltones and Hudson were tearing a new asshole into Florida punk rock, and they revived some of that originality and excitement with this new album. I, for one, am happy to hear it. -Sean (TKO)

**DAMAGE DEPOSIT:**  
**Straight to the Bottom: 7"**  
 Laced-up-tight pugilistic hardcore that

covers lyrical topics like Lynyrd Skynyrd, ninjas, puppies, and testicle punches, all stewed in the rather serious gravy of socio-political consciousness. But in a good way; if Damage Deposit comes across as anything, it's that they're utterly sincere. These guys, unlike a band like For the Worse, are not likely to ever be caught singing hardcore odes to their toilet. I might be going out on a limb here, but I think they sound a little bit like Good Clean Fun at times - maybe a little faster and, of course, with frowny-face tattoos instead of smiley-face ones. Musically, it's tight and confrontational traditional hardcore and, for me, with hardcore it's not really who does something "new" with it (because that too often turns into emo or metal), it's just who breathes fucking fire back through its veins and gets it stomping and raging again like the pissed-off brute that it is. Damage Deposit does that. If you're at all familiar with Felix Havoc then this is probably exactly like the sort of band that you'd expect him to be in. Top notch. -Aphid Peewit (Havoc)

**DARYL:**  
**Uneven Surfaces: CDEP**  
 The "degrees" between Quicksand and Morrissey is - it makes me queasy to admit - fewer than the traditional six. That's too close for comfort in my book. The number of degrees needed to get from Morrissey to Daryl is fractional. From Daryl to U2, probably less. And before I puke all over my computer keyboard - which I can't afford to replace since I refuse to write and record ass-kissing college-radio-friendly pabulum like Daryl - I'll mention that I have a personal bias involved here that has no justifiable reason being

here. But the human mind is, if anything, leaky and prone to contamination. Whether you like it or not, I used to work for a fire-breathing wretch of a human-like greed robot who went by the name "Daryl." I have never been exposed to such a vile soul-sucking vampire as that dreadful misfire of DNA, so the name Daryl just totally ruins an otherwise mediocre disc for me. Not horrible, just tepid. I think I've had girlfriends who would eat this shit up. -Aphid Peewit (Idol)

**DEAD HEROES:**  
**I Hate This Life: 7"**  
 This is a pretty good skinhead band without the sing-a-long anthems that can be very annoying. The vocalist sounds like they pulled him from the Confederacy of Scum (Jeff Clayton, Phil "Whiskey Rebel" Irwin, et al). This put a funny picture in my head of a redneck singing along with some skins. But when you think about it, they aren't really too much different. The skins wear those plaid button-up shirts while the redneck wears plaid button-up flannel shirts. The skin also wears suspenders; the redneck, overalls. Of course, they both wear boots. The only difference is the hair. I enjoyed these three songs and felt all warm and fuzzy inside thinking of the harmony going on between two subcultures. -Toby (Headache)

**DEAD KENNEDYS, THE:**  
**Live at the Deaf Club: CD**  
 I'm no one, but I'm still uneasy with the fact that the Dead Kennedys are touring without Jello Biafra. It's not that I believe one side over the other, either. It's just kinda ironic that accounting books split up a band that

spent so much time rallying against capitalism and the machine. And I like bands playing under a moniker having as many original performers as possible. That's just my bias. Anyhow, this is a cool, well-recorded artifact - a full set from 1979 in San Francisco, the Dead Kennedys playing their last night as a five-piece. Jello's French frog falsetto leads the charge and one of the most respected (and rightfully so) hardcore bands of all time plows through an inventive set. As time goes on, it sort of amazes me that, at one time, this band was one of the fastest going. Now they'd be considered mid-paced. They seemed to blister my brain the first time I ever laid ears on them. Going back, I notice such a strong surf influence that, quizzically, seemed to have eluded me completely when I was younger. Now, I realize what accomplished musicians they were and how they worked as a cohesive whole (say what you will, I just didn't hold on to my Klaus Fluoride solo albums). As a footnote, this includes a previously unreleased Dead Kennedy's song, "Gaslight." The song's nothing to go ga-ga over and has the feel of an extra scene on a DVD that really doesn't leave an impression. The disco version of "Kill the Poor" is pretty sweet, though. Overall, not bad at all, and if you have all their studio albums and are on the hunt for something new, this'll fit the bill nicely. -Todd (Manifesto)

**DEAD ONES:**  
**Rock 'Em Sock 'Em: CD**  
 This manages to remind me of all the good things about '80s punk rock without sounding like a rehash, which is always special. It also reminds me of another band that I can't quite put my

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finger on. Vaguely Zero Boys, maybe? No matter. "3rd World USA" is a classic tune, though, no matter how you look at it. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dead Ones)

#### DEADSURE: *From Your Head to Your Sacrum*: CD

This is one o' them "tough call" discs for me. While the fact that it's loud doesn't hurt, and there's no denying they're proficient at what they do, the artiness of their sound veers a tad too close to emuland for me. Gonna hafta pass on this 'un. —Jimmy Alvarado (No Idea)

#### DECEASED: *Rotten to the Core*: CD

At first I thought it was one of those wacky punk-o-rama CDs, with all the hullabaloo hits of my high school punk years highlighted. Instead, it's a typical hardcore band doing lame versions of some of my — and everybody else's, even the cheerleaders — favorites. Avoid. —Speedway Randy (Malt Soda)

#### DESA: *Demonstrates Birth*: CDEP

Average pop punk band with emo overtones. I was more excited wiping my cat's ass after a stinky shit in the litter box. —Donofthedeath (Substandard)

#### DESCENDENTS: *'Merican*: CDEP

I am not worthy! Here is a release that is as comforting as a familiar blanket, your favorite beer, or masturbating. It's a four song EP that include two songs from the upcoming (or by the time you read this, the new) full length, *Cool to Be You*. These four songs are just not enough! I want more! Gimme, gimme, gimme! It's good to see the band was able to pull

Milo out of the lab where he was doing experiments on vegetables to grace us again with some fine tuneage. If you were to ask me about favorite bands, the Descendents are one of them. I'm pretty sure *Milo Goes to College* is one of the first ten punk records I ever bought when I was in junior high and that was a long time ago. They are also one of the few bands that I try to have a complete collection. There are only a few things missing that I am not willing to spend big bucks on. But I know I have every single full length. Now back to this here release. For a quick description of this EP, I would say that it is a combination of *Enjoy!* and the *All* LP. Also, I truly believe from this teaser that the songs are going to be even better than the songs from *Everything Sucks*. That's saying a lot because I believe they haven't put out a bad release to date. To show how much I like this and how much of a music junkie I am, I'm going out next week and shell out some bucks so I can get the vinyl copy. I'm such a geek! —Donofthedeath (Fat)

#### DESCENDENTS: *'Merican*: CDEP

Long has my love affair been with the rock that the Descendents bring, roughly since 1982 or so, when they were one of the staple bands on Rodney B's radio show. I have personally turned hundreds of people, including my wife, onto their perfect blend of tough as nails hardcore and sappy, lovey dovey pop, a sound that has since been co-opted, corrupted and perverted by the corporate music conglomerates and can currently be heard being profaned by Blink 182, Bowling for Soup and hordes of other lesser bands. The efforts of these lesser bands have thoroughly soured me on a

punk sub-niche I once held sacred, yet a new Descendents disc can still make me wanna bounce off the walls while singing mushy love shit at the top of my lungs. Hypocrisy, you say? P'shaw, says I. Aside from the fact that the Descendents virtually invented the pop-punk style currently polluting the airwaves (taking no so subtle cues from predecessors like the Buzzcocks and the Last), they have managed over the years to retain the one thing those that have followed lack: a feeling of honest sincerity. From the first note, you know they ain't following some formula while trying to chase the fame train; this is the REAL THING. A lot of effort and work is put into what they do and it shows. Even through their weakest efforts (the *All* album they did right before Milo went back to college, for example, was spotty at best), one can sense the level of commitment they have to the music they play. The four listed tunes (and bonus tune tacked onto the last track) on *'Merican* bookend nicely with the tuneage found on the band's previous effort, 1996's *Everything Sucks*. The years of playing incessantly as All (sans Milo) has honed them into one mean machine, able to break your heart with the vocals, slice up the remains with the buzzsaw guitars, and pound whatever's left into oblivion with a rock-solid backbeat. Best thing of all is that this is just a tease to get the kids lathered up in impatient anticipation for the upcoming full-length due out in a month or so. Although seven years is quite a long time for any junkie to get his fix (and please, guys, take pity on us poor saps and drop these bombs with a little more frequency), the wait was well worth it. Neither recommended nor considered mandatory listening, this is essential in

ways only previously reserved for things like air and water. —Jimmy Alvarado (Fat)

#### DESPITE ALL THIS...: *Self-titled*: CD

Black and white picture of a leafless tree on cover. That usually means one thing to me and Megan Pants agreed. Emo. Megan actually said that nine times out of ten, that's usually the case. But what you get here is what I classify as a garage emo/punk band that should have waited another year to go into the studio because the music just doesn't sound tight to me and the songs haven't fully grown. The vocals need a harmonizer or some serious Pro Tools work on them. But hey, it's self-released. So in their minds it's probably justified that I have to listen to it. —Donofthedeath (Despite All This...)

DEXATEENS: *Self-titled*: CD  
Tim Kerr-produced trash rock. This is pretty strong musically, but the whiney, wimpy quality of the singer's voice just left me limp. —Jimmy Alvarado (Estrus)

#### DOWN AND AWAY/ *SMALLTOWN*: Split 7"

For every fifteen bonehead/rethead oi/streetpunk bands, there's usually a couple that aren't embarrassing to listen to in mixed company, who go beyond the "we're from the streets and we like to drink" cul-de-sac of musical inspiration. The Brassknuckle Boys, The GC5, Wednesday Night Heroes, and The Boils come immediately to mind. I'm going to have to add Sweden's Down and Away to that list. (Smalltown's already on it.) As with hardcore, the challenge in oi isn't in stretching its boundaries, but reinvesting in its

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authenticity, updating its membership, and playing songs that aren't merely to be played over the gravesites of dead greats, but something that sounds like a buzzsaw cutting down the house of history. Down and Away's songs are on par with the top terrace of bands currently playing this style. Smalltown could be poised for a breakout. It's been ages since I thought that early Stiff Little Fingers could be toppled on its own terms and Smalltown's creeping up to the greatness of "Alternative Ulster." Their cut on this split, "Changes," just puts one more poker chip on the top of the pile I'm hoarding to bet they'll be a lot of people's favorite band in the upcoming year. Flawless track. -Todd (Broken Bones)

#### DRESDEN 45:

##### **Paradise Lost (Expanded): CD**

This band passed under the radar for me during the late '80s. It was a weird period for me in regards to punk. My alcohol intake was at an all-time high and I had stopped reading zines. I bought punk records randomly and at a high risk of buying something bad. I didn't know who was important or not, but I was not completely out. The first thought I had when I saw this CD in the review bin? "German." Wrong. I look on the back and see that this band was from Texas. What the heck, I'll bring it home and check it out. What's it going to hurt? The first thought I have when the CD starts is that these guys sound Nardcore meets East Coast hardcore. A mix between Ill Repute and RKL infused with the Crumbsuckers and Ludichrist. You can hear the crossover sound laced all over the songs, which was rampant at the time. Double bass drums and the guitar solos. As they pro-

gressed, the rock/metal element took hold more. There is even a song with some rap. This exemplifies my memory of what punk became late in that decade. Sort of a confused patchwork of influences. I'm not trying to dismiss this at all, because I truly am enjoying listening to this. My band at the time went through the same progression and never really has focused on one sound. This hits close to home. I believe this a discography of sorts. It's kind of cool that it gives me a second chance to hear a band I have never heard. -Donofthedeath (Arclight)

##### **EAST BAY CHASERS: It Came From the East Bay: 7"**

Loud but pretty nondescript punk rock. Pretty much forgot what it sounded like as soon as it was over. -Jimmy Alvarado (Five and Dime)

##### **EASTERN YOUTH: What Can You See from Your Place: CD**

Edgy, angular, post-prefix-core from Japan (and sung in Japanese). It has an emo breakdown edge to it and would probably sound really pretty to people who like their emo to have a delicate feel about with something resembling singing, with appropriate cracking as the vocalist begins to strive for registers which are beyond his range. It's an odd and interesting fusion - there's a definite influence of Japanese pop and traditional music here, particularly in the vocal expression, but the music seems to stem pretty solidly from the DC scene in the middle of the 1990's. Regardless, a few interesting stylistic deviances or variances from an already shitty genre norm aren't enough to make a good album. -Puckett (Five One, Inc.)

##### **ENDS, THE: New Rome: 7"**

The Ends are one of my favorite new bands, but I don't think this is my favorite single by them. Perhaps I'm crazy, but the recording on the a-side is a tad too hot for my liking. It's almost like someone's subliminally crinkling aluminum foil in the background. It's not crackly, but it sounds tinny and it's hard to crank the volume up on. The title track plays it really close to the Stitches' "Brain's on Vacation," especially in the mid-tempos and vocal delivery (snot, whine, sneer, and if a striped shirt could make a sound). I like it when The Ends eviscerate while admiring bands of the past, like when they covered Eater and Elvis Costello. "Saw It Coming," the b-side, is better, and does just that - conjures up some of the ghosts of the past while offering a row of freshly poured shots. "Saw It Coming" has got the elbowroom, swagger, and bounce that shows how good the Ends can be. Still, a 50/50 7" from this band is definitely not a throw-away and is better than ninety-eight percent of the stuff out there. -Todd (Dirtnap)

##### **ENDSTAND:**

##### **Hit And Run: CDEP**

Fancy photo of some obscure landscape, pretty butterfly behind the band's name, fancy cursive font for the title... hmm... smells a lot like an emo CD to me. As I got ready to jam pencils in my ears again, this band turned out to be hardcore. Well, melodic hardcore, that is, kinda like Thrice with a singer that sounds like Roger Miret from Agnostic Front. Didn't really do anything for me besides make me sigh in relief that I didn't have to sit through

another emo CD. If this is your thing and you can ignore the terrible packaging, check them out. -Toby (Combat Rock)

##### **ERROR: Self-titled: CD**

Funny, I liked 'em more a decade ago, when they had completely different members, lived in Germany, and were called Atari Teenage Riot. -Jimmy Alvarado (Epitaph)

##### **ESTER DRANG:**

##### **Infinite Keys: CD**

Softer music in the vein of Radiohead's *The Bends*. Think lots of pianos, high-pitched crooning. For a very long time, I bought damn near any Jade Tree release without question, simply because it was on Jade Tree. I trusted the label to provide more interesting fare like Cap'n Jazz, Lifetime, Trial By Fire, Kid Dynamite, Strike Anywhere, etc. (conveniently forgetting the Promise Ring discs). This album basically ended that for me. It's not that it's a bad record (I actually bought a copy before this showed up in the mail), it's just that I finally got around to noticing that Jade Tree releases records which just don't interest me as much. -Puckett (Jade Tree)

##### **ESTROGENOCIDE:**

##### **Self-titled: CD**

I don't know much about the electronic music that I just dub techno, but I know that this is awful. Sounds like they broke out the casio and pushed the sample techno beat and growled the vocals a bit to sound spooky. Lyrics like, "OJ's wife was cheating/ So she must suffer/ It is better to kill her/ Than it is to fuck her." No thanks. -Megan (M.H.)

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## EVAPORATORS, THE: *Ripple Rock*: CD

AT LAST IT CAN BE TOLD: I, Rev. Nørb, am partially of French-Canadian extraction!!! It's true! My great-great-great-great-great-great-great grandmother was one of Les Filles du Roi – "The Daughters of The King" – one of around 700 swingin' young ladies shipped out from France in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century to what is now Quebec – essentially the French government's attempt at keeping the colonists of Nouveau Francais down on the farm by trucking them over a few boatloads of brides, owing to the complete and utter scarcity of Quebecian poontang in the 1600s (rendering 17<sup>th</sup> Century Quebec essentially identical to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Wisconsin, i might wish to add). So, yup, i come clean: My great-great-great-great-great-great-great grandmother was a mail-order bride for some horny French-Canadian fur trapper. Now, you're saying, gee, Rev. Nørb, that's all well and good, but exactly how does your far-flung ethnic heritage have a god damn thing to do with the latest release from Nardwuar The American Original & Company? Glad you asked that, sir. You see, The Filles du Roi program was enacted under Louis XIV. Louis Quatorze, of course, had a song named after him recorded by Bow Wow Wow. Malcolm McLaren was Bow Wow Wow's manager. Malcolm McLaren also managed the Sex Pistols. The Sex Pistols are in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame (i THINK they're in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame – but if they haven't been inducted, i know for a fact that some of the original lyrics for the songs on *Never Mind the Bollocks* are on display

in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, so that counts). The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame is in Cleveland. Joe Siegel & Jerry Shuster were from Cleveland, and they invented Superman™. Jerry Seinfeld is such a big fan of Superman™ that, as i understand it, some manner of Superman™-image is visible in each and every episode of *Seinfeld* ever made. Who played George Costanza's father on *Seinfeld*? Jerry Seinfeld's dad! And who was Jerry Seinfeld's dad recently in an AOL™ commercial with? That's right! Snoop Dogg! And, on track 18 of *Ripple Rock*, who is caught in the act of absconding with Nardwuar's Richard Pryor album? THAT'S RIGHT!!! SNOOP DOGGITY DOGG!!! So, as you can plainly see, Nardwuar and i are practically cousins! OUR GREAT-GREAT-GREAT-GREAT-GREAT-GREAT-GREAT-GREAT-GREAT-GREAT-GRANDPA JEROME TOLD ME TO TELL YOU TO BUY THIS IMMEDIATELY!!! My side of the family doesn't go to the reunions any more, though, on account of we got pissed the Anglos wouldn't admit the Rougeau Brothers were greater athletes than Iron Mike Sharpe. BEST SONG: I know it's a cover, but who here cannot ask themselves this question and not come up with "Barney Rubble Is My Double?" BEST SONG TITLE: "I Say That on Purpose to Bug You (But Not Intentionally)" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Also available on 8-track! –Rev. Nørb (Alternative Tentacles)

## EXFORK: *A Cure for the Disease Called Man*: 10"

This is noisy hardcore with borderline cookie monster vocals – but on the good side of that vocal border. It's a

perfect soundtrack for a fucked up day. Musically, the band is tight, tense, and always on the verge of an explosion. It's not what I normally listen to, but I like it. I don't know if this will help anyone, but Exfork sounds like how I hoped The Locust would sound like when I first heard about The Locust. –Sean (Geykido Comet)

## FALL-OUTS, THE: *Summertime*: CD

There's no way this is the same Fall-Outs that I remember. Their old records, *Here I Come* and *Sleep*, were pretty good. Kinda garage, kinda pop, heavily '60s-influenced. Maybe they weren't exactly a rock sensation sweeping the nation, but they definitely had their moments. If anything cool happened on this album, I slept right through it. Who thought it would be a good idea to be artsy, anyway? –Josh (Estrus)

## FIFTH HOUR HERO: *Scattered Sentences*: LP

This is so damn good! French Canadians writing catchy, Discount-punk songs about the two great punk rock themes – love and politics! *Je l'aime!* I think I have finally found a record that can tear me away from my compulsive Onion Flavored Rings obsession! This is Cinnamon Toast Crunch – bouncy music you can rock out to while arguing about anarchism! –Maddy (No Idea)

## FIND HIM AND KILL HIM: *Cut Them to Pieces*: CD

You know those shows where a band unknown to you burst out with their first song and catch your attention? They then fuck it all up by going on

some political rant, which explains their next song, but the rant is longer than the song itself. And this continues for every song. Usually young. Mostly hardcore. Rarely profound. Enter Find Him And Kill Him. They include the rants after each song's lyrics in the liner notes. One includes the following gem, "Every couple of years, various sub-genres of punk achieve some modicum of mainstream success." First of all, you can't achieve "some modicum" (literally "some a little") of success, you can achieve a modicum, but that's another story. My point of contention is in that they believe their statement to be true. Other than pop-punk (one sub-genre, one extended time frame), what facets of punk have become successful to even a small degree within mainstream society? The majority of the album falls into the same pattern of presenting a pretty weak argument for whatever it is that they're against in a particular song. As for the music: pretty generic hardcore. –Megan (Happy Couples Never Last)

## FLAT STANLEY: *Analbum Cover*: CD

This sounds like one o' them bands from the mid-'80s that used to play hardcore and decided to experiment with their sound by introducing pop elements to the mix, like Marginal Man, *After the Fact*-era MIA, or TSOL right after Joe Wood joined the band. It ain't bad, but this sounds a just wee bit dated. –Jimmy Alvarado (Amp)

## FOR THE WORSE: *Couldn't Give Two Shits About the Kids*: CD

As I write this, the various Cthulhu-like arms of the Great American Media

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Conglomerate Monster are tripping over each other with the happy “news” that this day is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a certain mop-topped British muzak quartet performing on the Ed Sullivan Show. Being the keen sensor that I am, I detect that this warmed-over bit of nostalgic flotsam is dressed up as “news” in the hopes that sheep people cradled in the arms of the Media Monster will feel compelled – by some dim, flickering pang of sentimentality and/or a need to keep-up-with-the-Jonestowners – to rush out to the nearest Superstore and max out their credit cards on the mind-numbing array of products carrying this particular band’s brand name. Just a guess. I, for one, am not all a-titter over this marketing ploy disguised as news. Through the years, the constant barrage of pro-mop-top muzak/propaganda has forced me to detest everything they’ve become and most of what they stood for and to become so callous that I have been known to take a malicious, if juvenile, delight in the Meatmen’s anti-mop-top song “One Down, Three to Go.” (By the way, has Tesco changed it to “Two Down...” now?) In fact, to celebrate my profound disinterest in this happy day and that painfully played-out band, I will shut off my TV and radio and will steer clear of any “news” papers and will, instead, put For the Worse into my CD player over and over again. I will wallow in the pig-licious vocals that are a cross between Blaine from the Accused and Sam Kinison. I will drink heartily of the bloody lowbrow prassler lyrics and toothless hate spew. And I will happily let the meat-stomping street punk crunch of the music render any remaining mop-top vestiges in my brain into an easily-flushable intestinal soup like the one in the toilet bowl on the cover of this disc. –Aphid Peewit (Rodent Popsicle)

#### **FOR THE WORSE:** *Couldn't Give Two Shits About the Kids:* CD

Post-Negative Approach hardcore not unlike bands like Out Cold, although these guys seem more fixated on wrestling than the aforementioned band and are more reminiscent of a non-metal Crumbsuckers than Negative Approach. –Jimmy Alvarado (Rodent Popsicle)

**FREEZE, THE:** *Land of the Lost and Rabid Reaction:* CD  
Doctor Strange does the dirty work by putting together the first two Freeze full-lengths and tacks on alternate versions of *Guilty Face* EP for twenty-seven cuts of quintessential Massachusetts punk rock. I love the Freeze. Only three of the tracks scrape the three-minute mark. They never got over-exposed (because Cliff Hanger’s out of his tree [he’ll show you pictures of his bent wang without much asking] and they didn’t tour far and wide that much), but have stayed just this side of accessible, right next to the hump of obscurity. What’s not to like? Buzzsaw guitars, full-blown paranoia, lots of songs about killings and mental instability, walls of sound, the melody of musical bullets whizzing by, and the primal noise that’s neck-and-neck with other often overlooked but cherished greats, like Flag of Democracy. The Freeze set the standard for speed and melody, just this side of full-blown thrash. Mandatory punk listening that’s much more cost effective than paying hundreds on ebay for their first single. –Todd (Doctor Strange)

**FRENEMIES: Friendship:** CD  
There’s a sticker on this CD that calls this “New solo project from famed Oxes drummer Chris Freeland. A strange brew of hip-hop, punk and post-pop!!!” If anybody can clue me in as to what post-pop is, I’m all ears. And “oxes” isn’t a word. –Potsi (no label or address or anything, but hey, it’s a new solo project from famed Oxes drummer Chris Freeland!)

#### **FROM MONUMENT TO MASSES:** *The Impossible Leap in One Hundred Single Steps:* CD

Medio-core. It’s angular, edgy, dissonant, sometimes melodic – hell, it’s even downright pretty at times (“The Quiet Before”). It seems political; the liner notes contain about as many slogans as a Manic Street Preachers album. It features samples from news broadcasts (about the attack on the World Trade Center, from George W. Bush) and movies (including *Pump up the Volume*) which seem to offer a critique of the existing power structures and policies in place today, but mostly it’s just musical meandering with little effect and, honestly, why the fuck does a band which is as musically articulate and talented as this need to create a pastiche of samples to convey political intent or speech? There’s not much difference between this and prog rock, although this does have more in common with At The Drive-In than Yes. –Puckett (Dim Mak)

#### **FRONT, THE:** Self-titled: CD

If Pat Benatar was young again and morphed into Brody from the Distillers and played in a punk’n’roll band, this is what I would picture. –Donofthead (The Front)

#### **FUCK YEAHS, THE:** Self-titled 7”

Pop hardcore that’s nicely dented and sparking, like a muffler about to drop out of rusted-out Malibu, driving by a chemical plant that’s very vapors probably cause cancer and definitely cause stupidity. It’s “they had to have been kicked in the womb” punk. As with the Vindictives (instead of taking cues from the Beach Boys, they’re cribbing Pegboy and Effigies), The Fuck Yeahs leave an effect not unlike an over-the-counter medicine overdoses. Short songs, mood swings, and volatility. Beyond the huffing Testors “til your eyes bleed, living-with-your-mom-and-digging-it, shit-your-pants-and-smile flags they’re flying, this 7” is all welded and riveted together incredibly strong, like it was overseen by greater Midwestern forces of snow banks and subzero temperature. Takashi from Sweet JAP’s in it, too. (And, for some reason when listening to this band, I just realized if you add more letters to his name, it becomes Tak(e) A Shi(t).) Highly recommended. –Todd (Learning Curve)

#### **FUCKED UP:** *Dance of Death:* 7”

This is no fill-by-numbers, easy-to-shatter Shrinky Dink punk. I’d put Fucked Up on current hardcore’s top shelf with Out Cold. The excellence is in the inobvious details. The basic elements are there for any hardcore band to pick up on. Yes, they’ve got seething hatred, the type that oozed out of Negative Approach like a toxic sweat. But then they go and do something unexpected

like add handclaps. In the same song. And it works. Instead of rifling through the song as fast as possible in a blur, they play equally as fast as they play catchy. No easy feat. They’ve also nailed the tightly wrought and well-articulated rage of early Articles of Faith, where you can hear that they’ve got anger, not only with their limbs when they’re bashing their instruments, but with their brains, which is an important distinction. (It’s the distinction between being a malcontented misfit and a methead, really.) The title song is in the first person, from the perspective of Death’s own house band (where they continually bring the house down and kill themselves), which is a pretty fuckin’ cool twist. Incredibly recommended. –Todd (Deranged)

#### **FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS,** *THE:* Self-titled: LP

Crazy, noisy, zingy shit out of Chicago that seems to be forever detonating miniature nuclear bombs in hidden pockets of the vinyl. The guitar sounds like it’s powered by a metal blade attached to a blender and the vocalist seems like he’s in a perpetual state of strangulation with feet skittering to get traction back on the top of the chair in order to loosen the noose. Nice. I’d put this in league with the Tyrades – for pure shoelace-holding-it-together wreck-the-place-fantastic gumption – and the Lost Sounds for the ability to make a form of garage music that’s otherworldly, atmospheric, and simultaneously caustic and catchy. –Todd (Criminal I.Q.)

#### **GAMMA RAYS/HIGH SCHOOL HELLCATS:** *Split Personality:* Split CD

This is apparently a girls vs. guys split and the girls kicked the guy’s asses on this one. Both bands are pop punk and sound like many other bands that I would be able to name right now if I wasn’t high. The Gamma Rays are the males and they just seem to be a bit too slow to really get my attention. The High School Hellcats are just the right tempo and a little bit snotty as well. There is no contest here. –Toby (Beatville)

#### **GIRLUSH FIGURE:** *Rotten to the Core:* CD

This runs along the lines of very early Hole, although more Babes in Toyland in their delivery, right down to the handwritten lyric sheet. –Jimmy Alvarado (Rodent Popsicle)

#### **GOD AWFULS, THE:** *Next Stop Armageddon:* CD

Was kinda wary of this based on the name of the band and their poseur’s fashion sense. Their music, a mix of hardcore and chanty punk rock, is occasionally a little more “professional punk” than is comfortable for these ears, but, their lyrics are pretty well written, their hearts seem to be in the right place, and the song about the NRA was really good on all levels. In short, I’ve definitely heard much, much worse. –Jimmy Alvarado (Kung Fu)

#### **GOGOGO AIRHEART:** Self-titled: CD

Fuck genres. This is as much Fela Anikulapo Kuti as it is James Chance, and as much Negativland as it is Wire or Gang Of Four. In my estimation, the key to this reissue is understanding that it’s a playful record – it explores and stretches musical boundaries, combining

seemingly disparate sounds and styles to excellent, if a bit confusing at first, effect. It’s funky and danceable; it has a beat and even I can move my feet to it. –Puckett (GSL)

#### **GRABASS CHARLESTONS:** *The Greatest Story Ever Hula’d:* CD

Sounds more or less like a punk-basement version of the first Rites of Spring album (which, now that I think about it, is the only Rites of Spring album) (and which is curious, as one would have previously assumed that the Rites of Spring album was its own punk-basement version), with a few scattered punk-basement Hüsker Junior (“Hüsker Jü?”)-isms as some manner of yeomanly garnish. And, while there are a couple of cool lyrical moments here and there (“Breaking bottles in the streets/til the coppers bring the heats,” from “Youth”), overall things are pretty much in that same muddled and cryptic “i-am-working-out-some-emotional-issues-here” vein as latter-period Connie Dungs, but minus the precision elements that occasionally led me to give Brandon Dung the benefit of the doubt that he was actually singing about something of relevance. The occasional lapses into the merely trite (“Suicide at \$8 an Hour” – like every 20-year-old mop jockey in the world hasn’t written this song in their head at one point in time [except for those of us who were 20 year old mop jockeys in the Reagan era, in which case the song was called “Suicide at \$4 an Hour”]) don’t affect things much either way. I dunno. When I listen to punk rock, I’m looking for a tribal war-whoop so mighty that the forces of my oppression, including but not limited to the mundanity of my daily existence, are rendered, at least for a time, inert. This CD is more like an annex of additional mundanity. What, I re-boot from this disc in case my existing mundanity files crash? BEST SONG: “Youth” BEST SONG TITLE: “Beer Exile” FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Appearing on the cover of *Razorcake* is no guarantee your album won’t be routed to a fucking prick like myself for review! –Rev. Nørb (No Idea)

#### **GREAT REDNECK HOPE,** *THE: ‘Splosion!:* CD

First of all, this disc has some of the best song titles I’ve ever seen. Honestly, how the fuck can you overlook songs with titles like “They Say The People Elect The Government They Deserve, But I Don’t Remember Knife-Raping Any Retarded Nuns”? Sure, it falls along the lines of more chaotic hardcore like Men’s Recovery Project, The Locust, The Blood Brothers, Melt-Banana and even some death metal at times, but the more I listen to this, the more it grows on me. Sure, maybe they’re trying to be extreme, but isn’t that a better option than, as so many other bands seem to strive for, sucking? At least this elicits some reaction other than boredom. And, quite honestly, it’s really pretty fucking good. –Puckett (Thinker Thought)

#### **HARUM SCARUM:** *The Last Light:* LP

It’s been awhile since I listened to their last LP, *Suppose We Try*. That was a great record! That was enough for me to send out some cash when I got an email about a new release. I thought they had broken up since I hadn’t really heard anything about the band in a while. I had **RAZORCAKE 87**

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read that the band members were playing in other bands and doing other things. Just like the last record, this record is amazing. This recording has a straight-forward sound that is moody and sad while maintaining a feeling of anxiety. The music is adventurous and creates a dark atmosphere. Lyrics of despair and anger connect the ambience of the dirge. More personal insight of the injustices of the world are pinpointed. I love that this sounds so progressive yet the music still propels forward with a sense of urgency. It sounds that the time away was well spent to create a record that is uniquely theirs while staying away from the formula that is followed by so many other bands. Musically challenging and thought-provoking. There are two things on my wish list from this band: I hope they come down to LA and grace us with their presence, and I also hope more recordings are coming down the pipeline. —Donofthedeat (Partners in Crime)

**HELLBLOCK 6:  
Burnin' Doom: CD**

Dude, drawings of severed fingers are cool. Satan rocks. How come your singer doesn't squeal like he got a nut ripped from his body by a demonic rottweiler, like King Diamond does? That's, like, a total bummer, man. —Jimmy Alvarado (World Eater)

**HENRY FIAT'S OPEN SORE:  
The Parallel Universe of...: CD**

There's something wonderfully intrusive about HFOS. Most bands that pretend to be dangerous just don't have that intangible it. These guys do. Whenever I try to describe them I almost always — no, wait, *always* — wind up painting a picture similar to that of a toppled over short bus spilling out with whooping hebephrenics wearing their underpants on their heads and running naked into a Lutheran potluck picnic and smearing themselves with potato salad and defecating on bibles, etc, etc. Good, sturdy, dangerous fun. And the amazing thing is that this lovable quality comes across on record. Overall, *Parallel Universe* has a slightly less sociopathic Ramones-ish flavor to it than the full-on criminal lunacy of *Idiotia Hyperactiva* or *Adulterer-Oriented Rock*, but the unusually bent teeth of genuine twistedness are still sticking out of the mangy gums of this thing and even at low volume they still will chomp a Gary Coleman-sized divot out of your Lutheran ass. —Aphid Peewit (Coldfront)

**HEROS & ZEROS:  
Wake-Up Call: CD**

Interesting band from Holland whose singer sounds like Degz from Oi Polloi backed by a German street punk band with horns. The songs are straightforward and come off basic in sound. The guitars, bass, and drums are bland. What catches my attention is the strong vocal delivery and the accenting of the songs with the horns. Otherwise, I would have pulled this off the player at the first song. —Donofthedeat (Mad Butcher)

**HIDE YOUR DAUGHTERS:  
Twisted and Distorted  
Gender Relations 101: CD**

Canadian noise rock for rolling around on the floor in broken glass and cigarette ashes after your girlfriend fucks your best friend. It's got a very AmRep kinda feel, and lord knows we don't find enough bands like that around these days. Would fit nicely on a triple bill between sets by the Cutthroats 9 and

Shallow, North Dakota. No need to beat your head against the wall, folks, just turn on Hide Your Daughters and let 'em do it for you. —Greg Barbera (No List)

**HITCHHIKERS, THE:  
Demo: CD**

Ex-Bleeder/Humper Mitch Cartwright has been out and about with this new band of his for some time now and I gotta admit, it's actually pretty fucking cool to see him fronting his band, The Hitchhikers. Included in the fold is Steve "Stingy Brim" Spills (ex-Neurotones) and Eric (also an ex-Bleeder) on guitars. Pimp-slapping the kit is Marty (ex-He's Dead Jim) and ya got Mitch pulling vocal duties while workin' the bass guitar. How do they sound? Think of The Humpers showing The Supersuckers how it's done, and with this demo, there's some really cruisin' rock and roll that thuds the back of yer ribcage, leaving a faint, sickening feeling in the pit of the stomach, unlike getting kicked in the nerts. Yep, it's that good, fuckface, so save yourself the drunken, fist-swinging arguments amongst you and your dumb-ass friends and visit their website. As of now, their full-length has yet to come out, but logging onto their site will give you a chance to hear these tunes for yourself. Your animal porn site's not going anywhere, so what's your excuse? Just do it, you sick fuck. —Designated Dale (www.thehitchhikers.com)

**HOLY MOUNTAIN:  
Your Face in Decline: 7" EP**  
Loud, disjointed rhythms to keep things interesting, one pissed off singer... this is some pretty good hardcore. —Jimmy Alvarado (No Idea)

**HONOR SYSTEM, THE:  
Rise and Run: CD**  
A mixture of college rock and emo that turned me off like smelling my own diarrhea. —Donofthedeat (Grey Flight)

**HOT CROSS: Cryonics: CD**  
This blend of screamo hardcore is dissonant and angular with a slight metallic influence. It also makes me search for something which grabs my ears because there's nothing that accomplishes that here. —Puckett (Level Plane)

**IN MEDIAS RES:  
The Adequate Seven Inch: 7"**  
Four inspired songs searching for the Dischord sound but not getting there, especially with the awkward drum solo and the keyboard outro. —Speedway Randy (2 Keys)

**INVENTING EDWARD:  
We've Met an Impasse (By  
Midnight We'll Be Naked): CD**

I've been struggling with this album for several months now. It sounds like college rock from the 1980s and 1990s updated for a new decade which has no use for it, blending emo, art rock, perhaps a touch of prog...you get the drift. There's a fair degree of impressive musicianship here (particularly the drumming and the soaring vocals), but these noodly guitars drive me batshit. It's almost all notes — played slowly. As such, this is pretty much incapable of rocking by any definition, no matter how loose, of that word. Despite listening to this thing at least a dozen times, I still have absolutely no reaction to it. However my gut feeling is that most readers of this magazine (and by most I mean all but one or two) will have no use for it at all. —Puckett (Substandard)

**J CHURCH: *Palestine*: CD**

I first heard J Church around the time of *Prophylaxis* and *Quetzalcoatli*; I kept up with the band for several albums and then we parted ways because the songs didn't seem to mean as much to me anymore. They were catchy but I just lost my appreciation for the band somewhere along the way. As far as *Palestine* goes, it reminds me of what could have happened if Bob Mould had reverted to music reminiscent *New Day Rising* or *Flip Your Wig* for his first solo effort. The songs have hooks and they're relatively catchy, but the effort just seems like more of the same. If you're a J Church fan, you will likely already own this. If you aren't, there's no reason to start here (try *The Precession of Simulacra* as a different entry point). —Puckett (Honey Bear)

**KILLER DREAMER: *Survival Guns b/w Pterodactyl 2*: 7"**

Beer-in-bag, dirty zombie action rock via San Pedro, CA. One song's about a dinosaur bird plucking a friend off the street, then blood dripping from the sky. These two songs fit nicely, somewhere between the Bananas' knack for making songs that rock hard and sweet yet remain fuzzy and gritty and the Fleshes' superhuman ability to trailer hitch old-fashioned rock hooks onto new, not-quite-definable wingnut weirdness. Live, they boom the hell out of a living room. Recommended. —Todd (Kapow)

**LEATHERFACE:*****Discography Part 2, Rare and Unreleased*: LP**

As the title would suggest, this has some hard or impossible to find Leatherface

songs on it, including the amazing "Hops and Barley." The first side of this record has early stuff from a split 7" with Wat Tyler, the *Eagle 7"*, and the *Beerpig 7"*. All great stuff. All songs that prove what an amazing band Leatherface really is. The second side has a cover of "I Can't Help Falling," which I think is an Elvis song, a cover of a Damned song, the piano ballad "Shipyards" (the song that I always skip when I listen to *The Last CD* by Leatherface, but it's harder to skip over it on this record), an acoustic version of "In My Life" and a couple of good songs that get lost in between the last four that I mentioned. To be honest, I usually only listen to Side A of this. If you're already a Leatherface fan, I recommend this. If you just want to check this band out and see why we praise them so highly here in *Razorcake*, pick up *Dog Disco* first. —Sean (Deranged)

**LEATHERFACE: *Dog Disco*: CD**

Among Leatherface fans, it's pretty much universally agreed on that *Mush* is their best album, and with good reason. Not only did that album find new ways to pile-drive the listener with every spin, it seemed like the records that followed were much more subdued, more focused on writing songs than actively poking you in the brain. That's not to say that they were bad, because they weren't, and your life would be greatly enriched by owning records like *Minx* and *Horsebox*. To be perfectly honest, the first week or so that we had this, I was just glad that Leatherface was still a band and that they weren't embarrassing themselves. After about ten listens, they got me in their musical drop toe hold

and slowly pulled me under. I'm having to restrain myself from listening to it more than a couple of times a day, and all the other records that I usually listen to seem to have lost their luster. If I claimed to be anything less than totally amazed, I'd be a goddamn liar. I can't imagine that a better record is going to come out this year. —Josh (BYO)

**M.O.T.O. (MASTERS OF THE OBVIOUS): *Kill M.O.T.O.*: CD**

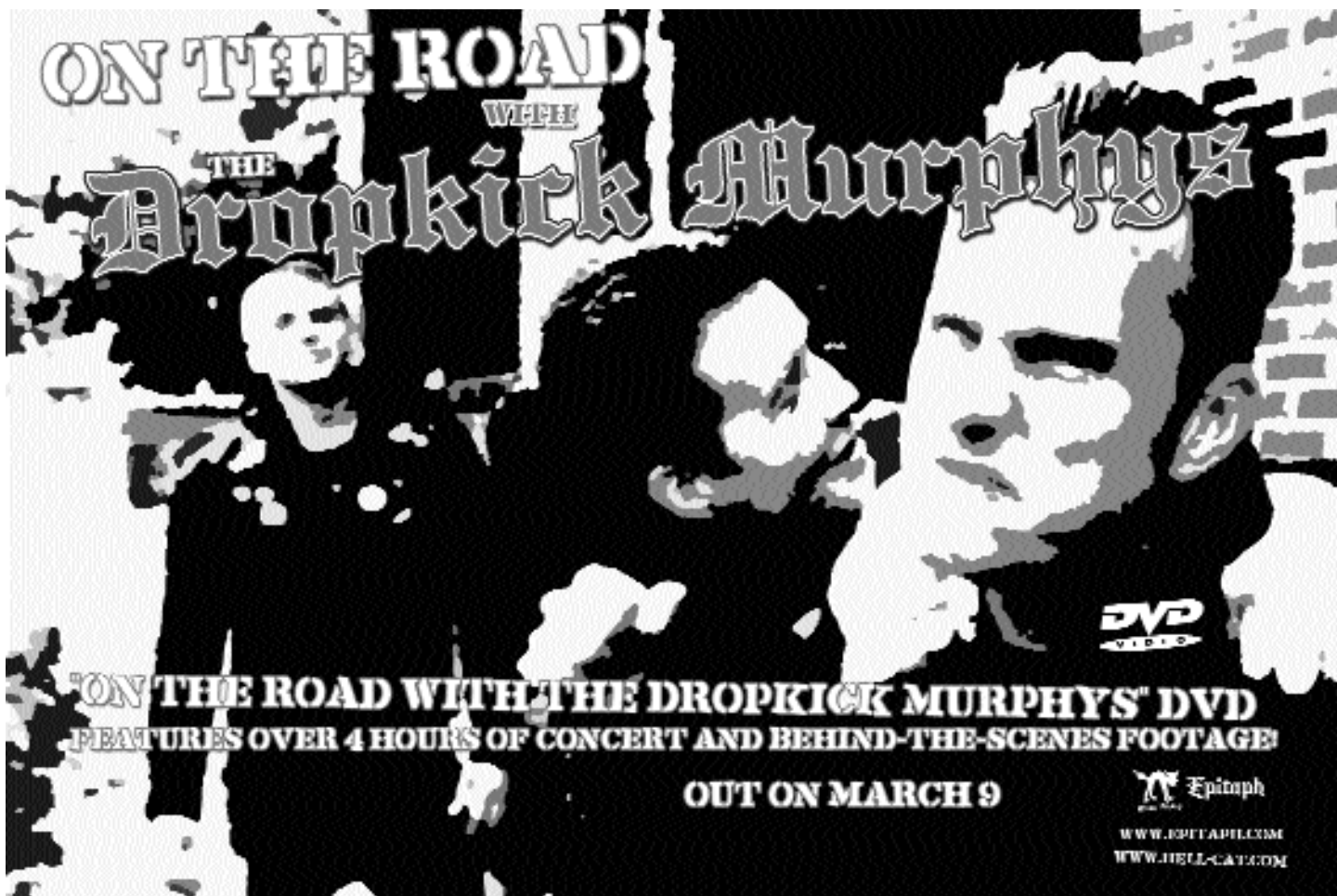
The true mark of off-kilter pop music with punk intentions is that it'll implant the seed and before you catch yourself, you'll be screaming the dumbest shit at the top of your lungs or at the most inappropriate times. Just listen to "I Hate My Fucking Job" and not have the notes leap into your brain like hantavirus. Masters of the Obvious take a brave ear — if you've never heard of them before — and the requirement that you've got a sense of humor about song structures. *Kill M.O.T.O.*'s equal parts guy-on-cardboard-asking-for-change (the last song, in particular), the on-par brilliance that people claim the Beach Boys have (I still haven't been convinced of Brian Wilson's contribution to music), a sweaty leather jacket, and balls as big as King Kong's. Hits are plentiful on this one, but out of the seventeen tracks, my favorites have to be "The Chicks Can Tell," ("I'm chucking off photons, neutrons, hard ons/ the chicks can tell.") the aforementioned "I Hate My Fucking Job," and "We Are the Rats." All are on par with the best of M.O.T.O., "Crystallize My Penis" included. M.O.T.O. does a great job of reminding us that senses of humor are as invaluable as beer and air. —Todd (Criminal I.Q.)

**M.O.T.O.: *Spiral Slouch*: 7"**

M.O.T.O.'s been around long enough to be long-forgotten if they were a mere parody or joke band (they've been around since about 1981 and if you see the *Bolt* LP in the racks, it's a keeper). Sure, they're goofy as hell and do-a-blood-test-to-see-if-they're-legally-retarded, but their blend of pop sensibilities slapped and dashed against many a punk rock always makes me smile. Sweet fuck, "Wind It Out" reminds me of Cat Stevens and I'm singing along to it. I don't know if I should put the gun to my head or shoot it up in the air in jubilation. —Todd (Shit Sandwich)

**MDC:*****Now More than Ever*: CD**

Man, you know you're getting old when MDC has a "greatest hits" package out. Saw this band many a time back when I was young, bald and mad at the world (which means I'm somehow in a different place now that I'm mad at the world, old and destined to go bald), and while they always struck me as a little too uptight in the early days, they were never dull to watch. Their records were always an event, though, 'cause not only did you get what at the time was some of the most punishing and musically complex hardcore (seem to remember that their guitarist was a major jazz hound, and it showed), you also got some heady reading in the liner notes, with all kinds of information about how the US government was keeping itself busy in other countries and how the police were here to protect the elite's assets from being defiled by the riff raff that most of us common folks are, and recommended reading if you wanted to know more. Somewhere around the late





'80s, though, they kinda dropped off the radar screen, and I lost track of 'em, although I did hear that some o' the boys got pinched by the pigs and were spending some time locked up and "on vacation," as they call it in the 'hood, and saw that Dave was still releasing product now and then with a different lineup. So, this is the first time I've actually heard some o' this stuff and I've gotta say, some of the newer stuff sharing the, uh, grooves (do CDs even HAVE grooves?) here with the early classics aren't too shabby in their own right. Many of the newer tunes show Dave's wry sense of humor coming to the forefront more often than in the early days, as evidenced in his sendoffs to two of punk's most reviled figures, Ronald Reagan and Skrewdriver's Ian Stuart (the title of the latter, "Nazis Shouldn't Drive," caused me to laugh out loud). If you're looking for the "best" of MDC, all's you need is their first album, the *More Dead Cops* LP (which compiles all their early EPs), and *Smoke Signals* (if two albums worth of MDC just ain't enough). If you're interested in catching up to where the band are these days musically, this is the perfect place to start while waiting for the next release to hit the shelves. —Jimmy Alvarado (Beer City)

**MEZKLAH:**  
**Spider Monkey: CD**

Hoo doggie, my buddy Donofthedeath is gonna shit blue Twinkies when he hears this bad boy. Two — count 'em — two guys, one on vocals and one on guitar (with the help of a drum machine), unleash one mutha of a mélange of hip hop, dub, ragamuffin, trance, funk, Cuban son, psychedelia — hell, damn near every style that has

made the rounds through the underground, all served up with a healthy dose of punk rock "love us, hate us, but you ain't gonna ignore us" attitude. Mind you, they ain't mining the above musical styles by settling on one style for one song and then another the next. Au contraire, these guys are not only smooshing all these styles together into one raucous gumbo of sound on nearly EVERY TRACK, they are making it work: soaring guitars layered on top of Cuban piano forms fueled by the staccato of reggae, with some mighty fine, often bilingual, lyrics served up inna dancehall style, all of it slathered over a drum 'n' bass backbeat. This is some very creative, very heady stuff that works on a variety of levels, which is a polite way of saying yes, the booty can be shook quite nicely to it, but you just might find yourself thinking, too, if you don't watch out. This is easily my pick of the issue and, quite possibly, of 2003. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.mezklah.com)

**MIKE TOSCHI:**  
**Mock Democracy: CD**

Oh, dear lord, no! Whispery, breathy vocals over repetitive guitar, sometimes with oboe! —Megan (Global Seepej)

**MINDS, THE: Plastic Girls: CD**

Equidistant from the Briefs (using patented bounce technology) and the Epoxies (keyboards, but with a dude singing), but on a triangle's corner all by themselves, I've played *Plastic Girls* upwards of fifty times since it arrived in the mail. Instead of the sheen wearing off, and reaching for *Hit after Hit* to get my Briefs fix, I find myself getting addicted to the Minds. The

twelve songs fit nicely together, there's an overwhelming TV Smith lock-'n'-load feel to all the songs (they also cover the Adverts' "My Place") that give them substance, weight, and blast where some of the more new wavey-inclined bands rely on lazier look-at-me, I'm-touching-the-keys-and-looking-sexy isms. What helps tie it all down is the fact that Cera Bella Palsy's keyboard finds a way to wind through every song, and not merely as a garnish, but as the circulatory system to many of the tunes. Excellent stuff. Not as derivative as the first listen may lead you to believe. Smash! Smash! Smash! —Todd (Dirtnap)

**MINORITY BLUES BAND:**

**Grab the Fire**  
**Swinging in the Rain: CD**

Rule number one: Japanese punk rockers play their instruments better than American punk rockers. Rule number two: everything Snuffy Smile records releases is fucking awesome. Rule number three: well, it's not so much a rule, but pick up this album already. If you like Leatherface, Hüsker Dü, and the Replacements, you won't be disappointed. And, yes, I realize that Leatherface, Hüsker Dü, and the Replacements don't have that much in common with each other, but Minority Blues Band has a lot in common with all three. —Sean (Snuffy Smile)

**MONSTER X:**  
**Indoctrination: CD**

I remember seeing the name thrown around in the late '90s in zines. Never ever listened to them or bought anything. Here is another discography that takes care of all of my shopping needs. A mixture of power violence and grind-

core that reminds me of Lack of Interest. I guess I should be more excited, but right now the cookie monster vocals are not doing it for me. —Donofthedeath (Hater of God)

**MOTORCYCLE PROM**  
**DATES, THE/**  
**THE SHUTUPS: Split: CD**

Prom Dates: pretty standard rock/punk band. Terrible cover of the Ramones' "Bop 'til You Drop." Shutups: More of the same, although their cover of Motorhead's "R.A.M.O.N.E.S." was better than the other band's cover. While neither band is particularly lousy, they aren't exactly pee-in-the-pants exciting, either. —Jimmy Alvarado (Motorcycle Prom Dates)

**MR. CALIFORNIA AND**  
**THE STATE POLICE:**

**Untitled: 7"**

Dumb as a bucket of cold pud, ineptly recorded, booger-eating-simple lo-fi synth-punk sprinkled with little bits of Gibby Haynes, the Crucifucks, and plenty of whirling intestinal synthesizer floowumps. Kinda funny, kinda stupid, totally charming. —Aphid Peewit (Armpit Toast)

**MRS. DOMINIC: I Can't**  
**Behave Myself: CDEP**

Above average, mid-tempo punk that is too paint-by-numbers. The songs are good but they could have been written by a million other bands. Nothing jumps out that sets them apart from the pack. —Donofthedeath (Damn Good)

**MUSTAPHAMOND:**  
**Self-titled: 7"**

This is textbook Tourette's-core. Six or seven seconds of light, happy-skipping

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lollipop music suddenly has the wiggly blue organs ripped out of it by a screaming, bug-eyed fiend with a scythe dripping with blood and clumps of blubber and then it falls like a feather back into cuddly unicorns and dancing marshmallows for maybe twenty seconds or so and then the smiles explode into a nightmare of stringy cadavers flying through the sky, tangling in trees and after about a minute the focus suddenly softens to the Snuggles bear giggling like a child in a pile of fluffy clean laundry. Note to the band: they now have drugs for stuff like this. I can only imagine that abrupt emotion eruptions like this must make for awkward moments at the pottery wheel in your Advanced Pottery class. Or is it all merely the simple joy of clicking the little button that switches between the clean and dirty channels on your amps? (By the way, is Korn responsible for this?) I don't know if this is one-legged screampcore or just amped-up mawkish emo, but if you're fond of herky-jerky emotion bungee jumps, this bilge is for you. —Aphid Peewit (Grey Sky)

#### MUTE THE SILENCE: Self-titled: 7"

Greek punk rock. Since it traveled so far to get reviewed, I wish there were more positive things to say about it. The intro sounds like Yanni. The name is as dumb as calling your band Volumate the Noise. Silence is already mute. The rest sounds like serious-minded NOFX mixed with Strung Out and Lagwagon with the vocals at a higher register. They have to reel back the metal stylings and the drummer knows monkey beats, but little else. I really wanted to give the Greeks a chance, but this was painfully mediocre pop punk, like one in a legion that were around in 1996. Greece: I like their baklava, but they can keep this band. Sorry. —Todd (www.mutethesilence.com)

#### NEIL PERRY: Lineage: 2xCD

You're probably asking yourself the same question I did when I got this: how did the world ever get along without a Neil Perry double CD? Sounds like their sweaters are chafing. —Potsi (Level-Plane)

**NEW YORK VAULTS: self-titled: CDEP and CD single**  
Between both of these CDs you get six tracks of New York rock'n'roll that sounds like they could be the lost tapes of the Dolls/Ace Frehley sessions. Some pretty good stuff, but there are so many bands treading this same ground these days that, ultimately, they're about as unique as a band influenced by the Rolling Stones. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.thenyvaults.com)

#### NO BALANCE: Lights On: CD

Poppy emo-punk about girls and the usual subjects (you know... like, life. And stuff.) from Greece. There's nothing really noteworthy about this record — nothing hugely special, but it's melodic and for some inexplicable reason, I feel an odd sort of affection for it. Maybe it's because I can hear the sound of

four people doing the only thing they know how to do in the best way they can do it (which is sincere) in a form which is all too frequently dominated by the latest bandwagoneers. —Puckett (Librarian)

#### NO CASH:

##### Run Your Pockets: CD

Run-of-the-mill anarcho-hardcore with a tad more pop in the tunes than is usual. A lot of the song intros are drawn out considerably longer than is good for 'em, too. —Jimmy Alvarado (Morphius)

#### NORTH OF AMERICA: Brothers, Sisters: CD

It's getting tough for me to care whether I've described this or that emo band as embodying this, that, or the other quality. It's getting harder for me to care that so and so said such and such about a record; usually they're wrong and their comments mark them as an idiot to boot. With that noted, this record — and the rest of the records like it that I've reviewed lately — will likely define the sound of college rock in the nothings. Before you react by arguing that I couldn't possibly know what I'm talking about, I'm well-versed in post-core, having listened to and sold more of the seminal works in this vein. However, I would rather have opened that vein up and let every last bit of creative blood drain out, but that's an impractical solution for such a geographically dispersed scene. Much like R.E.M., New Order, The Jesus and Mary Chain, and Depeche Mode created an entire style of music which could be dismissed with two derisive words (which could also be desperately held on to as a shred of identity by people who had nothing else going for them besides fucked up haircuts and worse fashion sense — much like most fans of emo, as it turns out), bands like North Of America will in turn provide stupid fucking shit-talking assholes with ammunition to ignore and deride otherwise good music just because it happens to be surrounded by whatever the fuck this dissonant, angular noise is and other bands that sound just like them. Someday, we'll look back on this and it will all seem funny. Until then, I'll sell this, buy another six pack and listen to Gunmoll while I wait for them to start playing mid-sized venues to bros of frat boys. —Puckett (Level Plane)

#### ODDBALLS: Oddballs'

**Shit Explosion '94-'99: CD**  
Please tell me this is some kind of fucked up prank. More three-chord (if that many) trash rawk for fans of whatever garage band is the most recent flavor of the week. I would say that there's nothing here, but that's giving this godawful piece of shit far more credit than it deserves. —Puckett (Scene Police)

#### OI POLLOI: Carson?: 7"

What else could make my punk life better than knowing that Oi Polloi has put out another release? I had to hear about it from a friend in another country asking me to get him a copy. He is better informed than I. Here are three anarcho-punk anthems that are sung in their native

Gaelic language. Apparently only one percent of the population of Scotland still speak the language. That is a shame, looking from the outside. The Gaelic language sounds forceful when used alongside punk. It also helps that the band is intense and passionate. This band, to me, has always been protesting and alerting many people to topics that should be addressed. I have always appreciated this band for their lyrical content and the ferocity of their music. From the translations of the lyrics, they are angry and speaking out about the problems of Scotland that most people do not hear about. I, for one, have heard nothing in the news presented by the North American media. But the DIY network comes through again to make light of things that I wouldn't have learned through mainstream channels. If you liked the last record, *Fuaim Catha*, this release is even heavier. The production, across the board, is near perfection. As usual, I was not disappointed. One of my all-time favorite long-running bands. —Donofthedeath (Nikt Nic Nie Wie)

#### ON THE MIGHT OF PRINCES: Sirens: CD

It reminds me of what might occur if Thursday and Cursive collaborated. If that sounds appealing, you should stop reading now because this album is unimaginative, uninspiring, and almost completely uninteresting. Stop. Start. Scream. Croon. Melody. Mosh. Yawn. Go play drums on your chest and stare at your shoes some more. Find something to yearn over and don't come back until you've either fought your way out of a paper bag or moved past the same stupid fucking trend that's drowning the creativity of all the other bands like you. —Puckett (Revelation)

#### ONE REASON:

**All Rivers Run South; All Roads Lead Home: CD**  
I picked this up only because it's on Plan-It-X, and they're the label that introduced me to Against Me! and This Bike Is a Pipe Bomb. One Reason is kinda what you hope for out of this label — there's a tinge of Woodie Guthrie, an attitude of Joe Hill, and enough rock'n'roll to keep you interested. This band is wedged so well between Hot Water Music and Against Me! that you'd expect No Idea to put out this album, but that's not to say it's too derivative. One Reason definitely are hashing out their own sound, and the female vocals on these are flat-out tough. The high point is "Rest Stop," a dazzling, intelligent song about stopping at the Trail of Tears Rest Stop in Illinois ("do you really have to commemorate 500 years of oppression with a building full of human waste?"). The low point is the Bruce Springsteen cover. In between the highs and lows is a lot of good shit. —Sean (Plan-It-X)

#### ORPHANS, THE:

**Everybody Loves You When You're Dead: CD**  
Rock and roll is at a weird place right now. It's kind of disheartening to know that there are bands out there that cite Led Zeppelin and Nirvana as major influences. I don't

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get it. Those bands sucked the first time, so why would I want to hear some hipster fop in vintage jeans regurgitate some half-assed ripoff? I don't know. All I know is that this Orphans album will kick you in the dick and you'll ask for seconds. Rock and roll hasn't sounded this vital in a long time. It kind of sounds like an old Dangerhouse punk band like the Avengers spliced in with the whoopass-o-rama of the Motards, but mostly it just sounds like the Orphans. Blood, sweat, and barbecue vomit, all rolled up in one neat little package. —Josh (Unity Squad)

**PAPERBACKS, THE:**  
***An Episode of Sparrows*: CD**

The first song — all gentle, lilting emo melodies (think Buffalo Tom without guts) and crooning — has a chorus of “I suffer this like a dream.” Me too, dude, me too. —Puckett (Pshaw!)

**PARADISE ISLAND:**  
***Get Up*: CDEP**

This EP is short — like seven minutes short. In that sense, it's more than three times better than a male stereotype. In the sense of the music that's on it, I'd prefer to hear more. Erase Errata's Jenny Hoyston put three highly interesting songs on this, ranging from Black Dice noise to old roots and blues-inflected guitars, filled with murmured vocals and sounding like the Young People have at least one comrade in updating older musical styles. Sure, it requires an appreciation of the noisier forms of indie (liking Erase Errata might make for a good starting point), but there's a fair bit here to like. —Puckett (Dim Mak)

**PEARLENE:**  
***Murder Blues and Prayer*: CD**

Combine garage rockers like the Count Five with the Rolling Stones and update it through the Cramps and the Crypt catalog and you'd get... well, pretty much everything like this and the White Stripes and all these other fucking bands that attempt some recidivist, reductionist version of two-chord neo-trash rawk. This was tired when the Oblivians and Guitar Wolf and the rest of the Crypt and Estrus catalogs did it. After this album, it's so exhausted that it's practically (and hopefully) dead on its feet. —Puckett (Dim Mak)

**POPULAR SHAPES/THE INTELLIGENCE: Split 7"**

The Popular Shapes: These guys are starting to grow on me and I think the lower dosage of only two songs serves as a bit of an inoculation to their full-length. You know how the Tasmanian Devil, when he's moving really quickly, his body is just swirls with the occasional limb poking out? That's what the Popular Shapes sound like to me. They seem to spin songs so quickly and in such a tight circle that it's sometimes hard to hear what's really going on. I can easily imagine them great live — if they're the whirlwind counterpart to these two cuts — sharing the stage with The Tyrades. The Intelligence: Very Dieter-rock and Teutonic-sounding. Fronted by an android-voiced dude and framed by iceberg-y and cold knife guitars, metronomic drumming, and jutting angularity, it's a wee bit too arty and a wee not as rocking for my tastes. “Cold Calling” reminds me of the song on the *Repo Man* soundtrack, the one that kept on repeating “Pablo Picasso was never called an asshole,” just not as catchy. —Todd (Dirtnap)

**PSYCHO 78:**  
***Old School Pride*: CD**

Normally, I stand by my reviews 100%. But I'm not sure about this one. You see, last night I got drunk at a friend's cabin and, somewhere in the blurry wee morning hours, I tottered off and fell into one of the nearby beds. When I awoke, I discovered that I had been sleeping in a queen-sized mouse litter box. There were little dark brown cigars lying about everywhere; on top of the blanket, between the sheets and, best of all, on the pillow that had been cradling my big soggy head for several hours. It may be psychosomatic, but right now I'm not sure I can feel my lower extremities. I'm almost sure that Hanta virus is now pooping out its own poisonous little cigars into my kidneys and brain right now. I'm probably a goner. But delirious as I might be, the review must go on. So here we go: Um, this band has got a retro band name and a ghoulish blood-dripping font and a skull that's on fire — all of which, one would assume, is a sort of homage to the Misfits (back before they sported the egregious devilock/male-pattern baldness look and kicked out lame, mouseshit awful music.) So that's cool by me. But this doesn't really sound like the Misfits. Musically, the title pretty much sums it up: old school and proud of it. First time around I thought it sounded a bit workman-like, but now — with hanta virus lobbing molotov cocktails into my poor grey mush — it has a nice pissy urgent bounce to it. Does it sound like a slightly less meaty Sick Of It All or am I hallucinating? Fuck, I don't know. Whatever, I like it. If I can somehow manage to push the Grim Reaper down the stairs and I'm not in a pine box in a few days, I'm gonna kick back and enjoy this thing properly. —Aphid Peewit (psychoseventyeight@hotmail.com)

**PUTDOWNS, THE:**  
***No Worse Off*: CD**

These guys sound a lot like Scared of Chaka. So much so that every time I play this, my wife asks me, “Is this Scared of Chaka?” No, it's not, but they do have one former member of the Motards and they do cover Scared of Chaka's “Frozen Out” and they do bring all the melodies and rock and fuzz that I hope for in an album, and they are getting as many spins in my CD player as a new Scared of Chaka album would — which, in case you don't know, is a lot. —Sean (Mortville)

**RADIO REELERS, THE:**  
***Shakin' at the Party*: CD**

Out of respect for this band, I won't compare them to, or even mention, the bass player's old band. The Radio Reelers play rock and roll stuff that sounds pretty much like the Devil Dogs. They're certainly good at sounding like the Devil Dogs, but the songs never really explode out of your speakers like songs by superior rock and roll bands. It's kind of just the same thing over and over. It sounds like they're more concerned with playing rock and roll than with plugging in their instruments and whooping your ass. Ah, fuck it, just buy a *Weird Lovemakers* album. —Josh (Dead Beat)

**RED ONIONS, THE:**  
***Self-titled 7"***

This record sounds kind of like the Flash Express if the Flash Express didn't suck and spent a lot of time smoking weed and listening to *Funhouse*. The problem

is, the Red Onions don't really sound like this live, except for the smoking weed part. They'd probably benefit from better production, because this record is so muddy that the energy doesn't really come across. Five bucks says their next record is a winner, though. —Josh (Revenge, never a bad idea to put your address somewhere on the record)

### REDSKARE, THE: *Eight Pieces of Summer*: CD

This is not The Red Skare that released two albums on Troubleman (and I have to say that I wish it were because I might have actually liked that). To understand this record, think of the Mighty Mighty Bosstones' Dicky Barrett fronting a mediocre (at their best) college rock band, playing music from 1992. If that sounds unappealing, I've done my job. —Puckett (Teenage Rampage)

### RESTARTS, THE: *System Error*: CD

Straight-up, no-bullshit punk rock from a ten-year-old power trio out of England that owes more than a bit to early DOA, which isn't bad at all. Their lyrics are right in line with their English anarcho brethren — especially The Subhumans and Oi Polloi — making explicit warnings about genetic tinkering, overpopulation, and the dehumanization of work for a faceless company. They bring several flourishes of their own — along with heaps of conviction, venom, and catchiness — to make the entire CD an enjoyable listen all the way through. *System Error*'s simple, yet very effective. If you're so inclined, there's an interview with them up on our website, too. They're touring the US. —Todd (Active)

**RIPPERS, THE:** *No Mört*: CD  
A Spanish band here serving up some rippin' (pun intended) punk rock, raw and leaning toward the hardcore side of the fence without tumbling over into that camp. The unnecessary cover of "I Wanna Be Your Dog" notwithstanding, these guys make a mean racket. Recommended. —Jimmy Alvarado (H)

### RIVETHEAD: *The Cheap Wine of Youth*: 12" EP

This issue's cover band, and this bad boy is part of the reason. I'll admit it right here, I love pop punk, from Stiff Little Fingers and the Buzzcocks to *Love Songs for the Retarded*-era Queens and I celebrate a good portion of the Screeching Weasel catalog, but I have to concede that I was hearing few worthy torchbearers or upgrades in the 2000s. (Joe King, what's the title of your next song? "Fuck fuck cunt fuck fuck fuck?" The well is dry. Go fish.) Rivethead not only have the irresistible melodies and the smart-as-a-baton-across-the-mouth lyrics while not taking themselves too seriously, they've got an ace in the hole. They sound relevant, like they're actually struggling and fucking up in the world at large, not just complaining that Wednesday's deli tray wasn't supposed to have olives with pimientos or such minutia-laden crap a lot of pop punk has bottomed out in. I've had a head start on this EP. The band gave me a burn of it about six months ago and it's been on constant play ever since. Recommendations don't come any higher from me. (Thumbs up to Recess, too, for pressing this on the more expensive, often overlooked, but clearly superior 12" 45 format.) —Todd (Recess)

### ROCKET SUMMER, THE: *Calendar Days*: CD

Hi, Bryan Avary. Why did you present yourself as a band when you are the sole person? Nice pictures of you with your B.C. Rich Warlock. How did you make it sound so happy? Just wanted to say that your songs are sweet and touching. Made me want to go out and play hopscotch. —Donofthedeath (Militia Group)

### ROTGUT: *El Borracho*: CD

Straight-up pissed off punk rock, the kind of CD that the uninvited guest at a frat party slaps on the host's stereo and proceeds to fuck the living room up beyond repair with his size 12s. Music to violently monkeyshine to, if you will. Rotgut would've been the support band on tour with the early years of Agnostic Front or Murphy's Law. Some of you out there might even remember a few of the members here: Their frontman, David Cooperstein, busted out vox with the SoCal outfit, Last Round Up, and drummer Suzy Homewrecker laid the beat for such bands as Hollywood Hate and about a million others. Way worth your time, so get your own copy of this before I unexpectedly show up to your next party and introduce my size 12s. —Designated Dale (Rotgut contact: (562) 639-6822)

### ROUSTABOUTS, THE: *The Only One*: CD

First of all, this is relatively straight-forward, well-done, melodic and competent street punk. Sure, maybe a handful of bands have an edge on these guys, but the shouted choruses and ringing, anthemic chords carry the songs well enough that it should appeal to any fan of Bombshell Rocks, The GC5, etc. In

short, this is solid enough to own and enjoy several times on its own merits (i.e., I'd keep it regardless). However, compared to the other shit I've sat through for this issue, this might as well be *Strong Reaction* for my money. —Puckett (Haunted Town)

### RYMODEE/ GHOST MICE: *Split*: CD

Rymodee: First of all, I love This Bitch Is A Pipe Bomb. So, my expectations were pretty high, and I was let down at first listen. I get really excited about new sneakers, probably because I buy a new pair on average about once every two years. I get them home and smile every time I walk into my room and see them practically shining next to my pair of old faithfuls. Then I put them on for the first real time, not just around the apartment, but for the whole day. Something just feels wrong. They're shiny and have soles fully intact, but they just don't feel right. I usually won't wear them again for a couple of days, but I keep going back because I know that with a little time they'll fit just right. That's what happened with Rymodee for me. I knew there was something to this, I just had to get to that perfect spot with it. Redemption came in the form of some cramming before a final and a loud group in the library apparently studying for their Petty Shit and Hair Tips 101 class. This was the only CD I had, so I listened to it eight times in a row. Somewhere around the sixth listen I felt the last of the sole break in and felt it fit perfectly around me. More folk and bluegrass influence than TBIAPB, and no catchy pop hints either, but for quiet-time listening it doesn't get much better than this for me lately. Ghost Mice: Definitely decent,



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but I'm not as sold as I am on the Rymodee tracks, but, hell, they have a saw playing on some tracks. —Megan (Friends and Relatives)

**SCARRED, THE: Demo: CD**  
Mid-tempo, mid-'80s sounding OC punk rock, coming off like a cross between MIA and Shattered Faith. You get four tracks here, all of which could've easily garnered airplay on Rodney B.'s radio show back in the day. Don't be surprised if Hostage doesn't latch onto 'em and a single follows in short order. Recommended. —Jimmy Alvarado (The Scarred)

**SEROTONIN: Future Anterior: CD**  
When is this trend going to end! Emo must die! —Donofthedeat (Bifocal Media)

**SEVERED HEAD OF STATE: Anathema Devise: CD**  
I really don't know much about this band other than I have purchased a few of their releases for a friend in Finland. I never did listen to them before I mailed them off. So for quick research, I saw on the Ebullition Records site that the singer Jack runs Mind Control Records, bassist Kelly is from Detestation, guitarist Todd is from His Hero is Gone, and Chris the drummer is from Meadowlark. I do have records by Detestation and His Hero is Gone. I don't think I have anything that's on Mind Control, and I've never heard of Meadowlark. During my first listen of this band, I feel like there are equal parts of HHIG and Detestation that are brought over to make you feel like you are experiencing the apocalypse. The guitars are over-driven and dark and the bass has a distorted edge while remaining bottom heavy. Add elements of the Scandinavian D-Beat sound and some metal riffing to the mix and that is what I hear. The vocals are delivered with a fierce growl that is slightly behind the mix. The drums bang in a way that makes the music seem like a full-throttle blast of energy firing towards your ear. To get me interested in any new band, I have to actually feel the music to even pay attention. When songs seem like they are played without passion, I lose interest real quick. The band plays with an intensity that backs up the lyrics with a vengeance. I paid close attention to this one. Now here is another band to put on the shopping list. —Donofthedeat (Hardcore Holocaust)

**SEXIST PRISON: 7"**  
I had such high hopes for this one. What, with the illustration the size of the insert of a cock and balls with "SEXXIST PZZN #1" on it and clear vinyl with bad drawings I seriously thought I had a winner here. How wrong I was. Synthesized samples (though the notes say "no samples ever") and echo-y vocals. —Megan (Omnibus)

**SHOCK + THE SILENCERS: Self-titled: CD**  
With some of the very early punk on the west coast of America, you'd almost swear that LA was a suburb of London. English accents abounded, so did Clashisms and Sex Pistol-ity. But the endearing fact was that Los Angeles sucked so fucking bad and there was plenty of original material to pluck up from the rubble. Here are sixteen prime tracks that further plot out how feral and widespread punk was in '78. It's great to have an economical CD of one of the at-

the-time-well-known and not-so-lucky original Hollywood punk rock bands. The first nine tracks are by Shock. Four of the tunes come from two singles (made incredibly sought after by Killed By Death). The standout, which could stand toe-to-toe with any punk anthem, is "This Generation's On Vacation." After a lineup change, they became the Silencers, and the biggest change is that Kat takes the mic. She's got the fire, clarity, and conviction on parallel of The Avengers' Penelope Houston. The Silencers never released anything on vinyl when they were a band (although I'm sure some European vinyl hound label has gotten around to it), and that's a damn shame. If you're interested in the deeper history of LA punk, that goes beyond the usual suspects and is really fun to listen to, this one's a complete gem. Highly, highly recommended. —Todd (Wankin' Stiphs)

**SHOWOFFS, THE: Noma Beach: 7"**  
The music here is fast, energetic punk that reminds me of The Motards. I only wish the singer was the same. This is a good 7", but the singer is just a little too monotonous. A snotty vocalist would fit this band well; however, this guy just yells along at the same pitch throughout all four songs. It's kinda like he is reading the lyrics for one of the first times as he sings and is just yelling them out without knowing when to add a little emotion or inflection in his voice. I could karaoke this album better than him. Just a little added passion and dynamics in the vocals would do wonders for this band. —Toby (Noma Beach)

**SKATOONS, THE: Einmal Ska Und Zurück: CD**  
Now that I have gotten over my '90s pummeling of ska bands from all over the world, I can now stomach the genre with more frequency. Here is one release that is incredible. Not knowing a lick of German, I can still appreciate this one. First thing that crossed my mind was the songwriting style of Die Toten Hosen and Wizo with the ska elements of Less than Jake mixed with the Specials. Extremely catchy songs that make the head bob. I felt the happy energy right off the bat and was sold quickly. Eight dudes from Hamburg found the correct formula and ran with it! —Donofthedeat (Mad Butcher)

**SKIMMER: Still: CD**  
Here is one of my favorite UK pop punk bands. They have the magic of writing great melodies like Snuff. Infectious and fun without having to use blown-out production. I love the raw recording sound that this band and label uses. Makes it sound genuine, unlike a lot of bands in this genre that try so hard to be radio-friendly. A band that sounds like they enjoy and believe in what they are playing. So far, every release that I have heard from this band has been enjoyable, this included. I wonder now how I would feel seeing them live? —Donofthedeat (Crackle!)

**SKULLS, THE/ TEXAS THIEVES: Split 7"**  
...i'm really not sure if this is THE Skulls (he said, accentuating the phrase one way) or The SKULLS (he said, accentuating it another), or even some completely different The Skulls (accentuating it yet another way, yet barely accentuating it at all), but whatever kind of Skulls it is I want, I will say that it's refreshing to put on a punk rock record

and actually have it sound like punk rock for once. That said, if this The Skulls (accentuated the third, most non-committal way) is, in fact, THE Skulls (accentuated the first way), then the fact that "Can Punk Rock Pay The Bills?" comes off as little more than an American version of the Gonads or something (which, I guess, is about right) and the cover of the Randoms "Let's Get Rid of New York" (hey, didn't someone already try that?) comes off as pandering unimaginativism might lead me to muse aloud how maybe, apart from the meteoroid hit and whatnot, the dinosaurs actually maybe mighta died out because they were kind of stupid and outdated. On the obverse, the Texas Thieves give me "Abandoned Cars," which I think I liked better when it was called "The Prisoner" and performed by DOA, and "Dying of Stress," which strikes me as something similar to what my friends might have been listening to in 1984. If this is some manner of competition, I guess I vote for the Skulls. If this is supposed to be some manner of life-affirming necessity, I think I'd rather have my life affirmed by receiving an additional Twinkie™ instead. BEST SONG: The Skulls, "Can Punk Rock Pay the Bills?" BEST SONG TITLE: "Let's Get Rid of New York" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Just two nights ago I was talking with someone about the time The SKULLS (accentuated the second way) stayed over at our house, and Charley Pip was wearing my full-face motorcycle helmet and smoking pot, and he'd lift up the face shield, take a huge hit of weed, put down the shield, then exhale the pot vapors back into the helmet, and we were all just rolling around on the floor watching this guy stand there grinning thru the huge clouds of pot smoke that hung trapped between his face and the plexiglass face shield. Maybe you hadda be there. —Rev. Nørb (Dr. Strange) P.S. Yo, Doc Strange! Some *Barricaded Suspects* CD's s'il vous the fuck plait! Merci!

**SLEAZIES, THE: Trite Ditties and Meaningless Crap: CD**  
Well, whatever vile activities this trio has engaged in during their presumably amazingly outrageous comings and goings might be, thumbing their collective nostrils at the Truth-in-Advertising laws is not one of them. The Sleazies sleaze through a collection of rapid-fire odes to heroin, truck bombs, glue sandwiches and Aretha Franklin (unfortunately, not all in the same song), with occasional subtle but nuts-on production flourishes (e.g. the harmony vocals during the chorus of "Gonna Operate on Myself") that lead me to believe that either they know a bit more than they let on or that the guy running the studio that day was kind of smart. The four outstanding tracks are the aforementioned "Gonna Operate on Myself" — similar to, but superior than, the title track of the Rubber City Rebels' 2003 *Pierce My Brain* reunion album; the befouled Joel Reader-era MTX-isms of "Runaway Joni"; the pretty-much-what-you-think-it-is-Teenage-Knockouts-isms of "Hot Lunch"; and "I Wanna Fuck Your Mom" — a song so amazingly fantastically perfectly stupid in every regard that it renders all other "I Wanna Fuck Your Mom" songs — of which there are no small supply — completely inert in their non-amazingly non-fantastically imperfect stupidity. I give this one thumb and part of a penis up! BEST SONG: "Runaway Joni" BEST SONG TITLE:

"Glue Sandwich," and I'm sure they know it. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: CD booklet depicts the band's bare hinders, in full color yet! The band's spokesperson at MTV™ later apologized on behalf of the band for the "wardrobe malfunction." —Rev. Nørb (Pelado)

**SMALL BROWN BIKE: Nail Yourself to the Ground: CDEP / The River Bed: CD**  
*Nail Yourself to the Ground* sounds like the Bike of old; all churning, pounding, pulverizing guitars interspersed with moments of musical tenderness. However, my favorite song on this EP — purely due to the steel guitar (and I'm a sucker for steel guitar; if you put a steel guitar on a record, the redneck hairs on my neck rise, I pop open a can of PBR and am predisposed to consider it more highly as a result) — is "So I Fall." Sure, it's emo as hell, but the steel guitar is really pretty and there ain't much else to say about that. *The River Bed* is much the same, but without the steel guitar. In this respect, Small Brown Bike was one of the most dependable and reliable bands recording, exploring and stretching musical boundaries enough to make each successive record interesting enough to warrant extended listening, yet familiar enough to ensure that they'd never get a "What the fuck is this shit?" review (sorry Greil, had to go for the crib). And yes, I used the past tense since the mighty Bike has called it a day. While these two releases aren't their best work (*Dead Reckoning* still holds that spot), both of them are still works that most bands would give a nut or two to create. —Puckett (No Idea / Lookout!)

**SMALLTOWN: Years, Months: 7"**  
It's always a gamble to steal from pockets of the dead, especially their songs. And although Stiff Little Fingers aren't technically dead, Smalltown pull off an original track, "Years, Months" which Jake Burns would give five years of his own life to record. Urgent, catchy, street punk/oi that's more than a stiff breeze wafting through a field of propped-up corpses. Smalltown are tweaking and reanimating a genre that gets much more lip service than creative sparks, and my ears are happier for it. One of Smalltown's feet is firmly rooted in tradition, and one foot's not afraid to kick past idols square in the ass. The b-side "When the Oil Runs Out," a Newtown Neurotics cover, proves this beyond a doubt. Great stuff. —Todd (Deranged)

**SMOGTOWN: All Wiped Out: CDEP**  
Ahh, motherfuckin' Smogtown, stalwarts of the New Beach Alliance. Is it true that *All Wiped Out* won't be their swan song, that it wasn't just a CD to crank, like summons for a dance to bring their acid rain of notes to melt that frown off my face and remind me of the good times? Will the Fuhrers of the New Wave resurrect themselves and not succumb to their own personal Bodie 601s? There are rumors afoot that by the time this magazine hits the stands that the wheels will be back on the Gross Polluter and Smogtown will be back playing audio radiation live. Hope so. *All Wiped Out's* got everything that made Smogtown the Southern California punk band to beat — songs about crazy bag ladies, bricks to the face, and the weeds in Western punk culture growing up through the concrete **RAZORCAKE 95**

that wants it all to be smooth and does its best to weigh it down to look the same. Smogtown's in fine form on these eight songs, flexing a throttle that can blast a hardcore beach tune then pull back with "Squares," quite possibly their prettiest and catchiest song to date. —Todd (TKO)

#### **SOULSIDE:**

**Less Deep Inside Keeps:** CD  
Mid-'80s DC punk was a strange beast. Sandwiched between the descent of what is now called hardCore, popularized by Minor Threat, Government Issue and others, and the ascent of the proto-emo scene kick-started by Rites of Spring and Embrace, a lot of bands coming out of the area at the time seemed hell-bent on broadening their horizons a bit, resulting in considerable experimentation. What often resulted was a sound firmly rooted in the past, yet paving the way for what was soon to follow, a sound exemplified by the output of bands like Marginal Man, Second Wind and, later, Soulside. Recently reissued by Dischord, Soulside's 1987 debut screams with Minor Threat influence, particularly that band's 1983 *Out of Step* EP, but there's also a slew of other influences at work, resulting in numerous mid-tempo rock tunes and acoustic guitars, not to mention considerably less screaming than their hardcore forebears employed and considerably more balls put into their efforts than most of their present-day descendants employ. While some of the songs here are not exactly jaw-dropping good Soulside were indeed a good band that weren't afraid to indulge some creativity between stage dives. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dischord)

#### **SPECIAL GOODNESS, THE:** **LandAirSea:** CD

...you know it's a sad commentary on the times when i, the reviewer, have mentally written my review ("the most senselessly misnomered band since the Tragically Hip") before i've even taken the disc out of the jewelbox; it's even sadder when, forty minutes later, i've sat thru the whole disc and nothing has changed. Therefore, for the record, here is my review, in its entirety: The most senselessly misnomered band since the Tragically Hip. Thank you. BEST SONG: "You Know I'd Like..." BEST SONG TITLE: "Whatever's Going On" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: I've never listened to either Rocket from the Crypt or Weezer, and, after this album, i do not intend to alter that behavior. —Rev. Nørð (Epitaph)

#### **SPEEDEALER:** *Bleed:* CD

More of this band's sonic bombast, twelve tracks in all, alternating between the stoner sludge along the lines of High On Fire, and the full-throttle assault ala Zeke. They remain one of the few bands out there doing this stuff that are worth a piss. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.deadteenagerrecords.com)

#### **SPITS, THE:** **Self-titled:** CDEP

While maybe not as immediately satisfying as its two predecessors, the boys' third self-titled CD is chock full of the same thick-headed brilliance we have come to love, and they still sound like the Ramones' autistic cousins, which is a plus no matter how you slice it. I can think of no better way to start the new year than by blasting this bad boy with astonishing frequency. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dirtnap)

#### **STAKEOUT, THE:** **On the Run:** CD

From Finland, featuring a couple of members from Selfish. This reminds me of BGK, the first Suicidal Tendencies record, DS-13, and Amdt Petersen's Arme. Mid-'80s punk rock that is straightforward, no bullshit, and a kick in the ass. With all the bands trying to capture the American sound of that period, the international community has it nailed down pat. —Donofthedeat (Deranged)

#### **START, THE:** **Death Via Satellite:** CDEP

I was so ready to write this off, but my interest was raised as soon as I started hearing what was coming out the speakers. Hard-driving, melodic rock mixed with some synth energy, topped off with female vocals that are similar to Gwen Stefani, like No Doubt meeting up with Concrete Blonde and adding some Cure influences to push the envelope and developing a little darker, almost gothic atmosphere in the music. The songs have a hard-driving beat with textures of keyboards that are not campy but add atmosphere. They take the experimental parts of '80s new wave but incorporate it with the right mix of modern rock. The vocal harmonies are the hook that catches the fish. Multi-layered and dreamy. A great beginning that hopefully will bear much more fruit down the road. Only thing that bugs me is on the enhanced video. Why have the bass player be portrayed by a female when the bassist listed on this recording is male? —Donofthedeat (Nitro)

#### **STATE CONTROL:** **No Escape:** CD

There's eight originals and a Discharge cover here, that is musically alright, but their whole "I ain't gonna change, gonna be punk 'til I die" stance just rings hollow. It all comes off as pretty meaningless shouting and defiant posturing, which is only amplified by trite lyrics that seem to avoid addressing any specific current events, of which there are many to bitch about. The result is sure to get the parrot punks pumping their fists in the air, but it really ain't all that far off from the output of such hard-hitting "punk" groups as A New Found Glory and Good Charlotte, is it? Look, kiddies, the days of "calling myself a punk and having a funny haircut is a potent symbol of rebellion in itself" ended long before Avril started sporting studded belts and posh New York boutiques started hawking Black Flag shirts to the clueless bourgeoisie. If you're gonna co-opt all the accoutrements of the "political" bands of yore, either take a stance for (or against) specific current events or give your instruments to someone who'll put them to better use. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rodent Popsicle)

#### **STATE PATROL:** **No Escape:** CD

Metal-y thudwumping hardcore from these Jehovah's Witnesses from the Church of Discharge. They remind me of one of my favorite bands from days of yore: the Murderers — except without the human snot sprinkler called Bob Murderer. Here's an example of where it'd be cool to have something akin to that rubber bulb thing with a snout that's used to suck the snot out of a baby's head — but one that works in reverse, pumping snot into something. If I were lucky enough to have such a handy gizmo, I think I'd give State Patrol a

squirt or two. But that's really a minor quibble. This is crunchy, spleen-bruising fun, even without the mucus coating. —Aphid Peewit (Rodent Popsicle)

#### **STATISTICS:** **Leave Your Name:** CD

What's left to say about "mullet" haircuts anymore and what's left to say about "emo" anymore? They're both tragically bad exercises in compromise and like a mouse in a Chicken McNugget suit, they both have been passed out of the exit chute of the cultural rear-end of this American Society of ours. Bring on the next bad idea. —Aphid Peewit (Jade Tree)

**STATISTICS: Self-titled:** CD  
Really, disgustingly, ass-rockingly, I can't believe I just heard that, better-than-it-has-any-right-to-be awesome. Combining new wave, blip-and-twitter and drone-core, pop hooks that go off like a neutron bomb, understated croons that sound more like breathy shoe-gaze from the 1990s and introspective lyrics fit for late-night sessions of wondering why life isn't better than it is, this EP blows the doors off of... well, pretty much everything else I've reviewed for a long time. The songs describe a yearning for something else, carving dreams of better times out of musings about claymation being replaced by computer graphics and wanting to be on TV. They are nothing less than great. —Puckett (Jade Tree)

#### **STEREO TOTAL:** **Musique Automatique:** CD

If Plastic Bertrand had recently formed up a team with Taco to attempt to revive the New Romantic scene of the early 1980s to kick the hell out of the nine-assed nu-metal monkey demon, you might well wind up with this collection of lilting electronic pop songs about love, dancing, radio and fleeting infatuations. It's catchy, vaguely silly, and alternately Teutonic and Gallic. It is wholly enjoyable and fun. —Puckett (Kill Rock Stars)

**STERLING: self-titled:** CD  
I typically like File 13 releases, but this avant-garde instrumental work seems pointlessly experimental. In some ways, the jangly melodies can seem soothing, but in most it's just noisy post-core musical meandering with little effect. I was looking forward to hearing this; now I'm looking forward to removing it from my CD player. —Puckett (File 13)

**STREETWALKIN'**  
**CHEETAHS, THE:**  
**Greetings from Gainesville:** CD  
I bet these guys would poop where they stand if there was a sale at the Leopard Print Emporium. —Potsi (Triple X)

**SUBHUMANS:**  
**Live in a Dive:** CD  
Back in the '80s, I truly didn't appreciate this band, although I loved Dick's band afterwards, Culture Shock. My favorite song by the Subhumans is "Rats." Just my luck, that song is not included. Over the years, I have grown to really appreciate these songs. When I saw them last year, I truly enjoyed them more than when I saw them in the '80s. No punk band past or present sounds like them. They are a unique band. Dick is a wordsmith. I really shouldn't have to describe this. Twenty-six songs from their vast catalog of material that should please just about every fan. For a new person, this is a great starting point to

get a sample, then go out and buy the originals if you are impressed. Today's generation of punks are very fortunate to have this legendary band get back together and to have the chance to see them in a live setting. We are also fortunate that they get their own *Live in a Dive* from Fat. It's been so hit and miss in the case of this series for me, but I am not in the majority opinion. Also, for being a live recording, this is really good. That's saying a lot. I really do not care for live recordings. The background noise bugs the shit out of me. This release should stay in circulation as long as the label stays afloat. The band is important and you should be listening to them. —Donofthedeat (Fat)

**SUPERHOPPER: Does This Sound Exciting Yet?** CD  
To answer the title: No! —Donofthedeat (Guilt Ridden Pop)

**THESE ARMS ARE**  
**SNAKES: Self-titled:** CDEP  
I don't care what bands these people were previously in; all this EP tells me is that they left that band too soon or shouldn't have been playing music in the first place. It's the same old fucking droning post-core emo bullshit that I've been wading through for half a dozen discs now. I've said it before and I'll say it again — as long as labels put out records like this, reviewers like me will make money selling them. —Puckett (Jade Tree)

**THOSE UNKNOWN:**  
**Scrap:** CD  
This is a compilation of previously unreleased or unavailable songs from one of the best street punk bands of the '90s. If you are a fan of the Swingin' Utters, The GC5, The Beltones, The Brassknuckle Boys, and The Hudson Falcons, you will no doubt enjoy this band. This isn't their best CD available (out of three total), but it's still fucking great anyway. Must-have for fans of this short-lived band. —Toby (TKO)

**TODAY I WAIT: Timelines:** CD  
I was so ready to hear another emo record. This thing was crying out emo. The name, artwork, and title were leading me to believe that this was more emo. I was thrown for a loop and bombarded with some metalcore ("hard-core" for you kids). The guitars screamed some heavy riffage as the double bass drums galloped along. The vocals screamed out of the speakers. I was taken aback. The only letdown was the cover of "Bullet," which, if you didn't know, was originally done by the Misfits. It just didn't feel like the song was appropriate for their musical stylings. Only one minus with many plusses. —Donofthedeat (Friction)

**TOXIC NARCOTIC:**  
**Shoot People, Not Dope:** CD  
One of Massachusetts' finest bands serves up five more blasts of rambunctious hardcore coupled with lyrics that are topical and take unapologetic stances against drugs, humans, and crappy punk bands. They even toss some reggae into "Cockroaches" to keep the punters on their toes. If hardcore's your bag, these guys are consistently on the money. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rodent Popsicle)

**TOYS THAT KILL: Flies: 7"**  
At this point, it's hard not being a cheerleader for Toys That Kill. They've more than proved themselves with every



release, having cracked an unsuspecting part of my brain like an egg. They now seem to have set up a pup tent in where ever the fuck music gets impressed in my gray matter, reserved just for them. They're wildly catchy, but in a way that's as odd as it's now comforting. It's like they're super-secret fisherman re-inventing a hook, hunched over a microscope, tying the line with an intricate knot so it won't break and it's almost impossible to untie. But that probably does you little good. What's odd is how, at different times, I hear completely different influences, and those influences all seem like distant echoes instead of forever being the shadow of previous bands. They've got the Mediterranean, ethereal feel of Savage Republic, but via the revving of a Buzzcocks motor. They cover Wire, but in the way I'd think Turbonegro would approach it. They could be called pop punk and you'd be right, but you'd be more wrong. See? Not much of a help. Get *Control the Sun*, *The Citizen Abortion*, and their split with the Fleshies if you don't already, then supplement your diet with this in a hurry, since it's a limited release. Four songs. -Todd (Asian Man)

**TREGENZA: Self-titled: CD**  
Riders of the new wave of post-emo art crap, they come along and assault the ears with yet another sub-sub-sub genre sure to inspire widespread hate. -Jimmy Alvarado (www.tregonzamusical.net)

**TRENCHMOUTH: More Motion: CD**

Considering that I've liked some stuff on Thick, I saved this for last so that I'd finish this reviewing session with a good experience. I should have quit while I was ahead. Combining post-core and funk might have sounded good in theory, but this disc just collects more stuff from records that you really didn't need in the first place. -Puckett (Thick)

**TSAR: Straight b/w The Creature in Disguise: 7"**

Dear Dale Meiners wannabes: No. You are NOT "Glam." I know this because I LIKE "Glam." "Glam" is what happened in England in 1973. "Glam" is Sweet and Slade and Mud and T. Rex and the relevant portions of Bowie and Gary Glitter and Alvin the fuck Stardust. "Glam" is not some dork rock band that puts on a silver shirt and star-shaped sunglasses (or whatever it is that you do) and stencils their names on their amplifiers' grille cloth (or whatever it is that you do) and adopts some manner of fey posture (or whatever it is that you do) and thinks that constitutes the be-all and end-all of their Glamitude. Sure, you can don some Glamular trifles and inject your rock with some manner of neo-Glamistic veneer, but can you produce a half-dozen boys in matching French cut t-shirts dancing with each other on stage while you lip-synch your way thru "Tiger Feet"? Can you punctuate every snare hit of "My Coo Ca Choo" with a studded leather punch thrown directly at the camera lens (later to be

ripped off lock stock 'n' barrel by no less a musickal loominary than Billy Idol)? Can you rip thru "Blockbuster" with a World War I German army helmet tilted precariously on your cranium? DAMMIT, MAN! I am not one of the measly Glam-haters you generally deal with, to whom your self-professed Glamness is some matter of grave import! I am a Glam-LIKER, to whom your weak and unimpressive overtures at Glamism come across as properly weak and unimpressive! DAMMIT A SECOND TIME, MAN! When I hear "Glam" I wanna hear some Chapman and Chinn!!! Some Glitter and Leander!!! Some Noddy and Holder!!! For Christ's sakes, even some Alice and some Cooper would be acceptable!!! But YOU... you're nothing more than... than... than the Floorlords' "Electrified Wet Mud Wall" single! If you worthless pukes would like to see how to do what it is you're so blatantly incapable of doing, please consult the Lee Harvey Oswald Band section of your local prerecorded music emporium! I bet goddamn Marc Bolan never wore a pair of pants so baggy people could see the waistband of his underwear! GLAM RULES! TSAR TSUCKS! BEST SONG: "Straight" BEST SONG TITLE: n/a FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Band's big shot press release, to underscore the fact that they are, in fact, big shots, and do everything with an eyeball on quality, spells band leader Jeff Whalen's last name as "Waylon." OOOOH, I'M SO FUCKING IMPRESSED!!! Fuck off. Die. LESS CONTENTIOUS FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: "Tsar," "Czar," and "Kaiser" are all derived from the Roman title of "Caesar." -Rev. Nørð (Birdman)

**TURTLEHEAD: Bleeding Hearts and Burnouts: CD**

I used to love these guys back in the late '90s! They were one of the few melodicore bands that really stood out for me that I can still listen to from that period. I thought they had disappeared! I'm not sure what they have released since they put out the *I Preferred Their Earlier Stuff* CD, which, I believe, was 1998. I sure would like to know if they released anything between that CD and the current one that I'm listening to. I think that the original singer and drummer remain. The song style is the same; they still play the extremely catchy melodic punk that they were known for. Not straying too far from their personal formula is comforting and immediately made it an enjoyable listen. The singer's voice is in a higher tone range than I remembered. I thought it was a new singer. He's also more forceful and aggressive. Good to see that they are still around. Yippee! -Donofthedeat (Leatherback)

**ULTIMATE FAKEBOOK: Before We Spark: CD**

Gee, thanks guys. No, really! We needed more falsettos in emo. We needed to hear the same three chords again. We needed more bullshit excuses for rock power. We needed more vocalists who sound

distraught... especially if they're backed up by more boring cock rock. We really needed more bullshit and you crammed forty pounds in a twenty-pound sack. Time to hit the back forty and put this to more effective use than making my ears bleed. -Puckett (Initial)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS:**

**Against Police Injustice: CD**  
A benefit compilation to help defray the legal costs incurred by a guy wrongly accused (and subsequently acquitted) of offing a pig, although his only apparent "real" crime was being black in the wrong place at the wrong time. Good tracks abound here from the likes of Conflict, Against Me!, Born/Dead, MDC, Bouncing Souls, Leftover Crack, and a bunch of others. -Jimmy Alvarado (www.ahmadnelson.com)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS:**

**Begin Live Transmission/ Radio CPR: CD**

Although I'm not quite sure, I believe this is a benefit of sorts for a low-power community radio station based in the DC area. It serves as a sampler of the sort of programming they provide, too, which seems to be a wildly eclectic mix of hip hop, punk, R&B, acoustic and the indescribable, interspersed with political discourse both regional and international, resulting in a vibe that seems to come off like a cross between the Pacifica Radio Network and a college radio station. The vast majority of the bands here, including El Guapo, the Vertebrates, 1905, Optimistic Tribe, Pasha, Crucial Defect, Mchetres, Short Stack, Pigeons, and the excellent Afi (not to be confused with AFI), to name but a few, reside in the communities served by the radio station, so it also acts as a showcase for local talent, and the interview snippets with community activists and local mariachis, while far too short here, indicate that their hearts are in the right place. While I can't say I was blown away by all of the music contained, I am mightily impressed with their message and the diversity of ground covered here and would no doubt have every stereo I own glued to the station if I lived within frequency range. -Jimmy Alvarado (Dischord)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS: Delta Masters: CD**

The Heroine Sheiks, Rube Waddell, Los Mescaleros, Boxcar Satan, Immortal Lee County Killers, the Crack Pipes and others render virtually unrecognizable blues classics by Son House, Charley Patton, Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Bukka White and more. Their renditions are strange, and some of them go waaay out there, but all also have this oddly traditional feel and almost a sense of reverence to 'em. Too bad Top Jimmy didn't live long enough to add his two cents to this project, 'cause, judging from his last album, he would've had a field day joining in this fray. -Jimmy Alvarado (www.dogfingers.com)

"SOMETIMES IN the Night, during drowsiness, I PLEASANTLY the DEATH hanging over me AS AN immediate distance between my BREATH AND the RECORDS in a PRECARIOUS balance OVER my head. SOMETIMES I feel like SUFFOCATING BY PILES of RECORDS IMPLODING OVER my EARS and MELTING down. THIS makes me STUCK in UNWAVERING PLEASURE of SWEET ENDLESS GROOVE... g+... MORE... MORE... MORE... (Gloria)!"

Mr. Z.

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**VARIOUS ARTISTS:**  
**Greaseball Melodrama: CD**

Sixteen different tracks by sixteen different bands, all compiled by Eric Davidson of the New Bomb Turks. You should know what to expect... kick ass rock'n'roll. This doesn't disappoint. There are sixteen bands on here I have never heard of before and I will definitely try to find more material from a handful of them (that's the great thing about compilations). The bands are Rock'n'Roll Soldiers, Gypsy Witch, Baseball Furies, The Cuts, Lost Kids, Chargers Street Gang, The High Beams, Scat Rag Boosters, Geraldine, The Diverters, The Hunches, Mystery Girls, Exxon Valdez, Colombian Neckties, The Blowtops, and The Goddamn Gentlemen. Okay, not every band kicks ass, but you wouldn't have to push the skip button more than a few times on this one. -Toby (Gearhead)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS:**  
**Hangover Heartattack - A Tribute to Poison Idea: CD**

Well if you just can't help yourself and you find you just have to put a tribute record out, go whole hog, which is just what the people responsible for this Poison Idea tribute have done. Sure, the covers are great (thanks to Rat Bastards, Ratos de Porao, Agrotoxico, Paintbox, Kill Your Idols, Calibre 12 and a bunch of others), but the love directed at the band is really evident in the thick-ass booklet that accompanies this, which includes pictures, old interviews, Jerry A.'s 1991 tour diary, and personal reminiscences on why this band was so important. Slagging this off as another pointless tribute would be like shooting fish in a barrel, but it's so obvious that those who put this together have their hearts in the right place. You can't help but feel great respect for 'em, 'cause it's patently obvious they're fans more than anything else. Recommended. -Jimmy Alvarado (Havoc)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS: Hardcore from the Early Days: CD**

Twenty-five tracks of obscure-but-spot-on early Northeast American hardcore, released by an Australian label. Those of you who can't get enough of Killed By Death-style punk will plunge right in. First up is Connecticut's Target Cells' *Cerebral Hemorrhage* demo from 1982, of which about twenty-five were originally sold via *Maximumrock'n'roll's* mailorder. It's a little rudimentary and not as exciting as the Circle Jerks, who they cover, but it's forceful and gets the job done. The White Pigs (1982-1997) flirt with crossover, and, thankfully, never take the plunge in. There's only one big question mark hanging over the band, and I'll leave it up to you, the reader, to make the call: "Saying things that are on my mind/hating spics in the unemployment line." Last up is my favorite band of the three, Chronic Disorder (1983-1992), who seem more discordant, spastic, unique, and revved up, like a hyperactive Dils (they've got a political sensibility) cross-spiced with the Angry Samoans (they've got a lot of snot). Not a bad split at all. Definitely a labor of love. -Todd (Coldsweat)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS:**  
**Maybe Chicago: CD**

If you're paying attention to the right types of punk rock, you may have come to this conclusion: punk rock is once again regional. The interweb's fine for

getting info, there are improvements in interstate communication, but there are definitely bands that are huge in their hometowns who make considerably less impact the further they travel away. I think this is a good thing. It gives local scenes time to grow and mature, for weird cross pollinations, and an umbrella of sound to develop. It also forces folks who love music to once again be vigilant seekers instead of wincing as some of their heroes desecrate themselves by providing songs for cleaning products commercials. I'll place *Maybe Chicago* in a contemporary league with Seattle's *Dirtmap Across the Northwest*, Southern California's *Hostage's Tower 13 and Hostage Situation*, Minneapolis' *No Hold Back... All Attack!!*, and Gainesville's *The Shape of Flakes to Come!* No, you're probably not going to like every track on here, but it'll give you a definite flavor and a barometer of what's coming out of Chicago's garagey underbelly in the near future. The only caveat is that the recordings are uneven. Some of the songs seem to be on a stereo that's walking away from you at times, but that's also part of the charm. My personal favorites on this: The Hot Machines, Baseball Furies, Tyrades, The Ponys, and Functional Blackouts. A valiant effort. -Todd (Postmersh /Criminal I.Q.)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS:**  
**No Thanks! The 70's Punk Rebellion: CD box set**

The folks over at Rhino did it again with this four-disc library of essential '70s punk listening pleasure. The included 100+ page book itself houses some seriously bad ass reading in the sense that it talks about each song and band in the box set's listed order, not to mention the complete info listings of each song listed in the back. And the band pictures... tons and tons of wonderful band pictures! Included on the discs are some NYC band staples like the New York Dolls, Ramones, Cramps, Blondie, Dictators, and Talking Heads, not to mention Ohio transplants the Dead Boys (who, after relocating to NYC, were to be managed by the owner of CBGB's, Hilly Cristal). The golden state of California shines here, too, with Black Flag (Keith-era), X, The Weirdos, The Avengers, Fear, The Dickies, Dead Kennedys, Germs, The Dils, Runaways, and that other Ohio transplant band, the almighty Devo. A great selection of what the UK had to offer back then turns up here with the likes of The Damned, The Clash, The Jam, Elvis Costello & The Attractions, The Rezillos, Generation X, Buzzcocks, and a neat-o, edgier version of "The Wait" from The Pretenders (including yet another Ohio native, Chrissie Hynde). With the 100 songs total in this collection, there's bound to be some voice-raising concern as to why this band or that band didn't get included. All I can say is go make your own damn box set, cocks. I do have to give props to a few bands that should've been included, even if they are all LA choices: The Controllers, The Skulls, The Zeros, The Gears, and The Plugz. But, to be fair, I'll also add that it was refreshingly cool to find Aussie legends The Saints, as well as Stiff Little Fingers from Ireland included in this set, too. For those of you who are waiting in line to suck John Lydon's dick, you can all go home, 'cause you ain't gonna find any Sex Pistols here. Why? It seems that it wasn't a personal choice with Rhino that the

Pistols didn't get their spot on here. Word has it that Lydon was being his usual twatish self about the whole song licensing situation. Pretty fucking small for a guy who toured in a chartered bus last summer and held concerts with his other Sex Pistol wash-ups at big venues like the Greek Theatre in LA. Christ. I know it's wrong, but I keep saying to myself, "Why couldn't it have been him instead of Strummer?" That's just life, I suppose, so go figure. Then go grab this box. -Designated Dale (Rhino)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS:**  
**The Rock Horror Punk Rock Show: CD**

Opening with Me First and the Gimme Gimmes is a good idea, but it's pretty much downhill from there. Or so I thought. -Megan (Springman)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS:**  
**Untitled: CD**

It was a grand idea for this record label to provide me with a list of bands to avoid in the future, but it's really not a bad idea to include stuff like, oh, say, the title of your album when sending it in for review. -Potsi (Say Ten)

**VENA CAVA:**  
**So Evolved, Inhuman: CD**

Wow, this is really good. Sort of like Jawbreaker-ish pop punk with male and female vocals. It took a couple of listens to grab me, but once it did, I was hooked. My only real complaint would be that they don't sound very confident in themselves, but I can definitely see this band moving past that on their next album. And the cover of "We're Desperate" was not the best decision in the world. But still, this is pretty highly recommended. -Josh (Don't Quit Your Day Job)

**VINDICTIVES, THE:**  
**Muzak for Robots: CD**

This really is muzak. No, really. -Sean (Teat Productions)

**WEIGHT, THE: Ships: 7"**

Mellow hippie shit for patchouli huffers. -Jimmy Alvarado (Sabot Productions)

**WESTERN ADDICTION:**  
**Remember to Dismember: 7"**

I miss Dick Army, the tragically overlooked NYC trashy pop/hardcore unit that could spin a melody into a tight tornado while spilling out some truly insightful lyrics. (Get *Unsafe at Any Speed* if you see it in a bin.) Although not quite as fast as Dick Army, Western Addiction's singer yells and shouts, but in a melodic way that's basically used as another rhythmic instrument (which I like). Fortunately, they also have the same knacks which keep Dick Army on a constant rotational cycle through my CD player: rough melodies, nice lyrical twists ("without rhyme or treason," "stark raving glad"), and instruments that all play towards a bigger whole. Nice. My only question? Is "apparating" a real word? -Todd (Fat)

**WHISKEY & CO.:**  
**Self-titled: CD**

For the past twenty years, pop music with a southern accent has been posing as "country music" and has given country a bad name. Now, here comes Whiskey & Co. to change all that. This album goes back to what I love about country - the remorse of a fucked up life, the pain of the working class, the

way a banjo or violin can sound in the hands of someone who knows how to play it, the beauty of an open chord, and that steady, comforting drum beat that thumps along at about the speed of my pulse or the bumps on the road while I'm driving away from the city. My only caveat about this album is that the singer will remind you of a countrified Natalie Merchant. You'll get over that after a couple of listens, though. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: one of the members of this band used to be in Asshole Parade. Go figure. -Sean (No Idea)

**WILLOWZ: Self-titled: CD**

As might have been apparent over the course of the last few issues, I was, for a time, more or less completely obsessed with this band and their almost unfathomable ability to sound like The Great Lost 1981 Posh Boy™ Records band. I found myself breaking the contents of their first single down into a host of brief, intra-song sonic events, and running a mental Google™ search on each tiny song fragment, in the attempts to ID the origin of every beat pattern, every chord progression, every note and sonic idiosyncrasy that transported me back to, I dunno, junior year of high school or whatever, when me and my posse (of two) would sit around my parents' living room after school, spinning whatever mysterious new 45s I had mailordered that week and reading *Flipside*, occasionally consulting a road atlas to find out where exotic-sounding places like "Upland" and "Cerritos" were. Buuuuutt... just like with all those bands whose singles we dug in 1981, the at-least-somewhat awaited album, as always, fails to meet the (admittedly lofty) expectations projected upon it by myself, the consumer (who, naturally, is always a bit disappointed when he doesn't hit his best-case-scenario projection of an album composed of about twelve a-sides) (and one cool cover). The "a-side" of the album (or diskly equivalent) is still pretty cool, like some manner of Red(d) C(K)ross Xerox™ from an era of the band that never actually existed; the "b-side" gets flat-out weird with a ballad seemingly crooned with three guitar picks under the singer's tongue, a female-bassist-sung slop-fest, a psych-out number not terribly unlike The Craig's "I Must Be Mad," and "End Song," the dumbest album-ending "Gloria" rip-off since "Seven Toes." I dunno. I guess we can still go out, but I'm not stalking you any more. BEST SONG: "Meet Your Demise" BEST SONG TITLE: I used to like "Equation #6," but now I think I like "Meet Your Demise." It's so much more swashbuckling. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Special Thanks: Robbie Fields, Andre Duguay, Madeline Follin McKenna, and the Willowz Street Team! -Rev. Nørð (Dionysus)

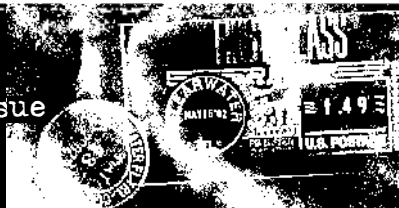
**ZENO TORNADO AND THE BONEY GOOGLE BROTHERS: Self-titled: CD**

The cover describes this as "dirty dope infected bluegrass hillbilly hobo XXX country music," and that pretty much sums things up nicely, although I'd be inclined to add "brilliant" to the description as well. Imagine Andy Griffith as a doped up porn hound and you ain't far off. -Jimmy Alvarado (www.voodooorhythm.com)



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**AD INFINITUM**, #8, free, 44 pgs. While I am probably going to stick with Noam Chomsky and *Multinational Monitor*, it's good to see what people in your backyard are saying about politics.

—Speedway Randy  
(www.aimmag.com)

**AVOW**, #17, \$2, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied, 28 pgs. Based on the artwork alone, I would highly recommend this, but luckily it goes beyond cool looking drawings. It's a bunch of short stories about the author's daily life; it's kind of like a personal zine, only *Avow* isn't crappy like *Ration* or something. Instead of whining or trying to emulate Morrissey, Keith just writes simple stories about stuff like standing up to a schoolyard bully, going to a lame party, and eating glass to impress a girl. He doesn't try to make people think he's really articulate or poetic or anything, he just writes. It's the kind of unassuming writing that you get sucked into. And I know I already said this, but there are lots of cool drawings thrown in between the cool stories. —Josh (Keith Rosson, 20 NW 16th Ave. #306, Portland, OR 97209)

**BARRACUDA**, #18, \$3.50, 8 1/2 x 11, 48 pgs. I don't want to sound like I'm blowing smoke up publisher Jeff Fox's ass, but *Barracuda's* science is tight. The layout looks great, the writing is excellent, and there's something else that I'm forgetting... Oh, yeah. There's pictures of scantily clad ladies, which is definitely not a bad thing. This issue's got a story about winning sixteen dollars in a drunken spelling bee, a trip to Ben Franklin's grave, tips on making an oversized beer cozy, and a great article about Antarctic explorer Ernest Shackleton that made for some fine toilet-time reading. A wise purchase. —Josh (PO Box 291873, LA, CA 90029)

**BIG TAKEOVER**, #53, \$4.95, 320 pgs. Aging punk rocker meets the new indie parade, where some of those same idols are anyway. Huge intros and in-need-of-editing conversational interviews make me wonder why the editor isn't in the band photos. The two histories of seminal band The Bags by Alice and Pat Bag is worth the cover price. —Speedway Randy (249 Eldridge St #14, NY, NY, 10002)

**BLACK VELVET**, #37, \$6, 8 1/2 x 11 3/4, glossy, stapled, 40 pgs. With thirty-seven issues under their belt, *Black Velvet* head mistress Shari Black Velvet (natch!) covers a wide range of punk and metal that

spans the years. This issue has ska-core band Less Than Jake but also includes Bon Jovi's European tour, LA Guns and Silverchair, as well as The Ataris, The Movielife, The All-American Rejects and just about every other whiny faux emo "The" band. So there's lots of insight but unduly dripping in a bad-hairspray day: like the bands they cover, you'll find plenty of attitude and enthusiasm but little substance. The British answer to *RIP*, complete with the Back Page Babe (this issue features Midtown's Rob Hitt sporting a cheesy devil lock). Take it for what it is and you'll enjoy it. —Greg Barbera (Shari Black Velvet, 336 Birchfield Road, Webheath Reddich, Worcs B974NG, England)

**CHINMUSIC**, #6, \$4, 8 1/2 x 11, 52 pp., glossy cover, two nicely-spaced staples. Less interview and more article-oriented than i recall the last issue being: interviews include (but are not limited to) the Weirdos, Rubber City Rebels, and Marlins pitcher Tim Spooneybarger; the Murderer's Row of columnists includes (but also is not limited to) Mike "Zisk" Faloon, Tim "Dagger" Hinely, and Ben "FIND A TV" Weasel. And, since Weasel tagged *Field of Dreams* as the worst baseball movie ever, and co-columnist Johnny Van Passenheim, however, rated it above the Mendoza Line as far as baseball films go (anyone not familiar with the term "Mendoza Line" is likely reading about the wrong zine), i'll stick my unsolicited two bits into the fray and state that i'm not really sure about *Field of Dreams* either way, because i've never seen the whole thing, but i'd say i saw about 60% at Miller Park last summer, because i was coming back up from Chicago one Sunday, and noticed that my filled Amoco™ C'mon Back Club card was good for a ticket to the Brewers-Pirates game that afternoon, and i know a place to park for free on the street about a mile or so from the stadium, then you gotta walk down some railroad tracks and cut through the Veteran's Hospital grounds and ANYWAY i got a four-pack of Milwaukee's Best™ Ice beer at a convenience store just off the tracks, and figured whatever i couldn't suck down on the way there i'd pitch by the side of the tracks and pick up on the way back to my car, but then i remembered how sometimes during Amoco™ C'mon Back Club games (five fill-ups of eight gallons or more at any participating Amoco™ dealer and YOU shall receive a FREE Terrace Reserved seat! Offer good while supplies last!), if you get there kinda late, they claim all the free tickets are "gone" (offer good while

supplies last!) and only offer you some lame "upgrade," so i stuck one of my two remaining cans of beer in my pocket, and another down my pants — JUST IN CASE — and, yup, as i reached the ticket window, lo and behold, no more Amoco™ C'mon Back Club card tickets are available to me, Al Franken. But yet, i have my two remaining beers (not to mention a bit of a chilly willy), and they pump the Bob Uecker/Jim Powell radio play-by-play of the game out of stadium-mounted speakers to the great outdoors, and if one positions oneself in front of the correct glass-paneled wall of the stadium, one can see through the concourse, thru the outfield bleachers, and have a pretty good line of sight of pitcher, batter, and catcher, crowd traffic permitting. It's like some manner of elegant 21st-Century taxpayer-funded knothole. So anyway, i got my own beer to drink, i got Bob and Jim calling the game for me, i can see the pitcher, catcher, batter, umpire and maybe the third baseman if i wiggle around just right — i'm actually having a better time watching the game from outside than i would have were i in the stadium. Eventually, however, some kindly guy on the inside who had a spare ticket motioned me over to the turnstile, and i was granted access to the game proper. After the conclusion of the game, for whatever reason, the Milwaukee Brewers Organization invited us all to stick around for *Field of Dreams* on the Jumbotron™, and i watched about the first hour or so, then surrendered to the call of the wild, returning home, where i made a lovely supper out of a bag of Jack Links™ Carne Seca Beef Jerky and a six-pack of Bud Ice™, eventually waking up Monday morning on the living room floor, awash in a large, aromatic puddle of regurgitated Jack Links™ Carne Seca Beef Jerky and a six-pack of Bud Ice™. *Field of Dreams* may fare no better than a one-off September callup, but i'll give it a .201 for tenacity. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: The logo in the lower-right-hand corner of the cover is a clever takeoff of the post-1922 Bauhaus logo. Extra bases for that one!

—Rev. Nørb  
(PO Box 225029, SF, CA 94122)

**COMIXVILLE**, #8, 50 cent (just like the rapper), 5 1/2 x 4 1/4. If you're looking for some cool comic books that probably won't be made into crappy movies any time soon but don't know where to begin, *Comixville* is the way to go. It's mostly one-page samples of some pretty rad-looking comics along with contact information for each one. This issue's also got an

interview with *Razorcake*'s very own Ben Snakepit. Be forewarned, though: you'll most likely be ordering quite a few comic books if you read this. —Josh (Comixville, PO Box 697, Portland, OR 97207)

**COMPLETE CONTROL**, #11, \$2, 7 x 8 1/2, xeroxed, 28 pgs. A nice "tour journal" zine from the depths of a midwestern punk band's (Operation: Cliff Clavin) 1997 tour of punk rock America. Real good old school zine feel (8th generation xeroxed look, chubby fonts, unstapled), and it's that uniform look which lends to a reading experience far from unique but as interesting and as relevant as anything you can read in *Our Band Could Be Your Life*. (How 'bout that last sentence?) Interludes with a pre-Queens Of The Stoneage Nick Oliveri and his band Mondo Generator, Inquisition and Scared Of Chaka pepper the dog days of life on the road. Smells like Richmond. Rightfully so, as Greg's currently a columnist at *Slug & Lettuce*. —Greg Barbera (Greg, PO Box 5021, Richmond, VA 23220)

**CULTOR SORE**, #15, \$2, 5 1/2 x 8, 48 pgs. All forty-eight pages of this zine are pretty packed with writing. That's not always a good sign, but in this

case, it is. The layout is interesting and varied enough to keep all this stuff from turning into one big headache. The stories are pretty good, and it seems like most of them were either descriptions of their towns or travel stories, although the best one was about a stubborn grandfather. Hand-screened covers are a nice touch, too. —Josh (Cultore Sore, PO Box 68711, Virginia Beach, VA 23471)

**CUT IT OUT, BABY!**, \$1, 5 1/2 x 4 1/4, 16 pgs. With a lot of the stuff we get for review here, it seems like we're just a name on some PR person's list. Everything is just so impersonal and product-driven, so for me, this is like a breath of fresh air. It's just a couple of funny stories, and the whole thing is driven by enthusiasm. What more could you ask for? The first story is about riding bikes around Richmond looking for dumpstered doughnuts, dumpstered movies behind Blockbuster Video, and weed. No pretensions, just a story about having fun with your friends. The second story is about a bunch of small-town kids having their treehouse torn down by neighborhood bullies. It didn't really strike me as that funny until the last paragraph, which ends with the kiss-off, "We cried a lot that day, or

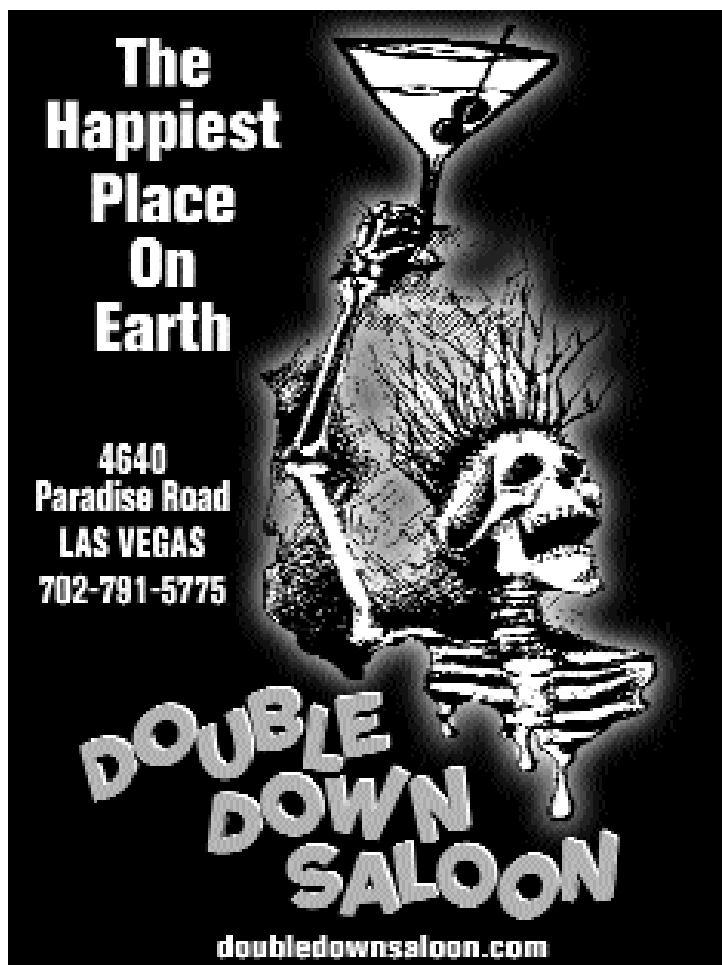
maybe we just played street hockey, something like that." Nice. —Josh (1012 Rhoads Hall, 710 W. Franklin St., Richmond, VA 23220)

**DISTORTED RIFFS AND CIRCLE PITS**, #1, 5 1/2 x 8, 36 pgs. Parts of this read like a Canadian scene report. That's okay, since that seems to be the intention here. I thought this was a pretty cool read since most of the bands mentioned are of the basement show persuasion like This Is My Fist and Queerwulf, and those are bands that I love. Aesthetically, it's put together very well for a first issue, and if you'd like to brush up on some scruffy DIY bands, pick this up. —Josh (Distorted Riffs and Circle Pits, PO Box 21530, 1850 Commercial Dr, Vancouver, British Columbia, V5L 5G2, Canada)

**FAT CITY**, #7, \$4.50, 8 1/2 x 11, glossy cover, 80 pgs. When I first laid eyes on the cover of this zine, I got my hopes up. A topless women named "Dr. Dot" is pictured cupping her inviting breasts while she stares out at you with a come-hither look. As my testicular tingle finally subsided and I was able to divert my gaze from all the skin on the cover, I noticed that there's a piece inside on GG Allin and I started to think (and hope)

that *Fat City* might be a smutty little zine along the lines of *Horizontal Action* or maybe even *Probe*. I've always thought that punk and nudity go great together. But no such luck. All the eye candy is right there on the front cover. The GG article was pretty good but most of the rest of the mag is slickly uninteresting. And even Dr. Dot's friendly cleavage could not win me back after I stumbled upon the Van's Warped Tour trading cards toward the back of the zine. —Aphid Peewit (Fat City, PO Box 120196, Boston, MA 02112)

**GENETIC DISORDER**, #17, \$3, 6 x 9, 80 pages Fairly short but amusing zine that I'm sure most of you are familiar with. This issue includes (albeit a reprint from issue #14) a hilarious copy of a pamphlet that was passed out in some lecture for parents to teach them about the various youth subcultures their children might be involved with. They break it down into Mods, New Wave, New Romantics, Punks, Soul, Heavy Metalists, Rockers, Stoners, and Black Metalists. They talk about the fashion, of course, but the funniest thing is the choice of and level of drug use amongst each group. Also, in the zine are some articles on the Menendez killings, a break-

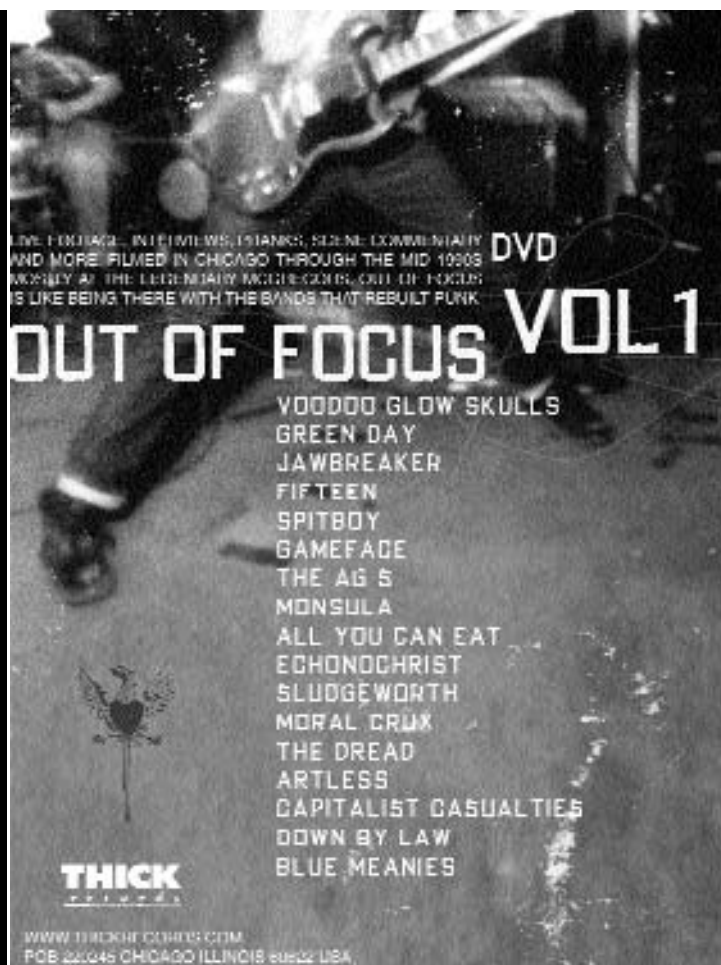


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down of fifteen San Diego shootings in the past year, a drunken journey to the *Horizontal Action's* Rock'n'Roll Blackout, and an interview with The Coachwhips. The funniest things in this issue are the answers given to a NCADD pamphlet titled "What Are The Signs of Alcoholism?" Twenty-six questions and answers that made me laugh out loud. There are also music and zine reviews. All this and a 3-D front and back cover complete with 3D glasses. -Toby (PO Box 15237 San Diego, CA 92175)

**GENETIC DISORDER**, #17, \$3, 6 x 9, 84 pgs., glossy cover in somewhat dysfunctional 3-D  
I haven't seen one of these since about issue #14, "The Satan Issue," which was a big bathroom favorite at my old apartment for quite some time. Sometime between then and now, Larry lost his job and (presumably as a result?) cut the dimensions down to what we might've called "digest sized" a few decades ago. I have no problem with that, but what kinda bugs me is that, information-density-wise, this lid is noticeably light. About 25% of the pages are dedicated to advertising; the reprinting of an ironically humorous brochure on "Youth Sub Cultures" - which, mind you, had already been reprinted in its entirety in issue #14 - starts on page 11 and doesn't end 'til page 29; and it takes Larry from page 56 thru page 65 to write cocky answers to a brief alcoholism self-test. It's still funny as shit, but for three bucks, I found this kind of a swift read. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Hey, I own that Coachwhips album! -Rev. Nørb (PO Box 15237, San Diego CA 92175)

**MODEST PROPOSAL**, #3, \$3, 8½ x 11, 64 pgs.  
This zine concerns itself with "counterculture comedy" and, therefore, has many breezy little interviews with comedians - all which heap even more attention on these professional attention hogs. This makes me a little queasy, because I've always felt like comics are akin to body builders or maybe even the girl-monster in the movie *She Freak*. Like 'roid-pumped body builders, comics have focused in on one particular component of their being (in this case, their funny muscles) and exercised the living shit out of them until they are an over-inflated, lop-sided, cartoony exaggeration of a human being. She Freaks, if you will, all because of a desperate, debilitating addiction to attention. As usual, I haven't actually crunched the numbers or have pie graphs to support this outlandish claim, but I contend that, like certain microbes that show up

in or on a corpse around the time of rigor mortis, more and more comics appear on the horizon as a society teeters ever closer to heat death. And this country is swimming in comedians right now. I'll even go as far as to don my Oswald Spengler bald-head wig and state emphatically that this Western Civilization of ours that is entertained by sequined pedophiles, self-absorbed hip-hoppers, former Mousketeers and steroid comics, probably deserves a swift and ghastly demise. But I digress. There's some funny stuff in here as well as some stuff trying too hard to be funny. And a couple of interviews with two Arizona-based emo bands. Anyway, if you're dying to pay even more attention to people like Dave Attell and Zach Galifianakis than you already have, this zine's for you. -Aphid Peewit (Modest Proposal, PO Box 3211, Tempe, AZ 85280)

**MR. PEEBODY'S SOILED TROUSERS AND OTHER DELIGHTS**, #18, \$2, 40 pgs.  
I'm just picking this issue up at #18, so it's a little unfair to comment on the everyday diary of the editor while living in Hollywood with the largest PO box number I've ever heard of. In the intro, he explains that this will be the last issue in that format. -Speedway Randy (Jay, PO Box 931333, LA, CA 90093)

**NO. 13**, #8, \$2, 16 pgs.  
A zine by Boston punks for Boston punks. Look for it in Boston. -Speedway Randy (FN, PO Box 1299, Boston, MA, 02130)

**PAPING**, #9, \$5, 5½ x 4, 32 pgs.  
This is fucking awesome. The whole thing is hand-screened on construction paper and bound with string. That in itself is an unbelievable amount of effort, but these drawings are amazingly detailed. As far as content, it's a story about a teacher who forgets to lock up his bike and it gets stolen as a result. He enlists the help of his students and... well, I don't want to ruin the story for you. All I can say is that I'm blown away by how cool this looks. -Josh (Paping, PO Box 128, 45 E. 7th St., New York, NY 10003)

**READ**, #23, \$3, 8½ x 11, glossy cover, 100 pgs.  
No one really likes to come right out and say it, but I will: zines are kind of like seed art; as much as you admire the zinester's gumption to put it all together, the actual meat and potatoes of the zine itself usually sucks. Happily, that is not the case here. This is the "conspiracy issue" and it's packed with smart-ass stuff on Freemasons, Iron

Maiden and time travel, so-called "reality TV," and weapons of mass destruction. I especially enjoyed A.L. Van Deerlin's funny and spot-on skewering of the blowhards and snobs of Alcoholics Anonymous. There are also plenty of CD, movie, book and zine reviews. I don't know if the previous issues were as good as this, but I'm looking forward to issue #24. -Aphid Peewit (PO Box 3437, Astoria, NY 11103)

**RIDE ON**, #7, \$2, 5½ x 8½, xeroxed, 32 pgs.  
Jim Straub's personal zine focuses on his travels abroad (Mexico City, Uruguay, Chile, Bolivia) and state-side (Philly, Richmond) and the insights and experiences he's gained by doing such feats. Reads like a Trustafarian's journal at times; at others, a next-generation *On the Road*. He's clearly done his homework when cross-referencing (re: the tangent from Bolivia on the history of the Spaniards' "occupation" and the meaning of the town of Potosi's statues of Bacchus or a bi-racial background thesis on Richmond alternating between the city's famous - and not-so-famous - white and black heroes) and digs deeper to craft a sentence than most journal-style zines. Overall it sheds light to the modern day twentysomething activist punk set while still managing to be full of decent travel writing a la Bill Bryson. But you're going to really have to want to read about this kind of stuff to plow through thirty-two pages and not lose interest several times. Great reading for the powder room. -Greg Barbera (Jim Straub, 2112 Rose Ave., Richmond, VA, 23222)

**ROCKBOTTOM**, #20, free, 8½ x 11, xeroxed and stapled  
A Central Pennsylvania-based zine which focuses mainly on rock - rock like my wife likes; rock like Kix. For girls who like their skirts short and tight and their drinks strong; for guys who still have hair, use product and wear faded jeans; and for those who yearn for the last two. I flashed back to '84 several times while reading *Rockbottom* and hallucinated about life in '91 - when Fields of the Nephilim and Wrathchild America ruled the land. Weird slice-of-life insight interviews of butch lesbo-fronted rock band Crunch Mob (as editor Marcy Miller so eloquently states: "YOU GUYS RULE!!"), Carolina stage-hand AJ "Wild" White ("SHARE W/ US WHAT YOU WANT, HON!!!!"), and Wayne Klinger's *Quintessence Metal* webzine and more (live reviews, CD reviews and zine reviews). *Rockbottom* reminds me heavily of my college days in Baltimore... back to the days of Tommy & The Love Tribe at

Hammerjack's and Monkeyspeak at frat parties in Towson. The good old days when I was a Judge-listening freak and fell in love with a Slayer-listening lady. Outdated but inspired. -Greg Barbera (Marcy Miller, 12706 Pleasant Ridge Rd., Harrisonville, PA, 17228)

**ROCTOBER**, #37, \$4, 8½ x 11, 86 pgs., newsprint  
I'd heard a lot about *Roctober* for a while, so I was pretty intrigued when I saw it in the review pile. While it is a good magazine, I can't say that it lives up to the name. There's not really too much focus on, you know, "rock." There's super-long articles about soul musician Joe Tex and the musical projects of Alvin & the Chipmunks. I'm not saying that those are bad, because they're good articles, and thorough. I'd definitely rather read about the Chipmunks' *Sing with the Children* LP than what some kid in New Mexico thinks about his friend's crust band. But c'mon... it's called *Roctober*. I was expecting Thin Lizzy centerfolds and a very pro-Rory Gallagher slant to the writing. All told, there's a great piece about the All Sports Band done by Mike Faloon of *Go Metric!*, and the record reviews are some of the funniest I've ever read. And who knew that Raymond Burr appeared on a Smokey the Bear record? Recommended. -Josh (Roctober, 1507 E 53rd St. #617, Chicago, IL 60615)

**UNDERWORLD CRAWL**, #1, \$2, 5½ x 8½, printed, 32 pgs.  
Insane. Fucking insane. This is the stuff zine collectors yearn for. *Underworld Crawl* is one man's foray into the doldrums of shit jobs and the odd characters that infiltrate them written with Hubert Selby, Jr.-like flair. Gloriously sordid tales of Nazi Human Resource Directors who win the lawsuits to fire them only to stay employed but hated, and crazy jazz head uncles to stories of fucking orgies - all soaked in booze! Stiff drinks and a punch-your-boss-in-the-face salute to this zine. -Greg Barbera (R. Lee, PO Box 1421, Oshkosh, WI, 54903)

**WHY NOT?**, #8, \$1, 5½ x 8½, xeroxed, 32 pgs.  
Why? Personal zine with most pages consisting of xeroxed copies of badly hand-printed pieces on solitude, gifts, and fake gay accents by a girl who goes by JemuelThePoet. Like a page from the script of *My So-Called Life*, this zine smells like teen spirit. -Greg Barbera (Jen Gardner, PO Box 1234, Berkeley, CA, 94701)



### Michigan Fest, DVD

Live footage from a three-day music festival held in the not too distant past, featuring one song each from Arab On Radar, !!!, Vaz, Crush Kill Destroy, Dillinger Four, Isis, Coalesce, The Arrivals, Haymarket Riot, Rye Coalition, Small Brown Bike, Milemarker, and others. All the technical stuff (sound, lighting, etc.) is quite good, multiple cameras are used, amusing interviews are peppered in between the performances. I really liked the diversity of the bands presented here, and was impressed by a few I would never be caught dead with on my stereo (don't ask, 'cause I ain't gonna tell you). While I did have a problem with the "hard-core" end of the punk spectrum being represented by bad metal bands and the lack of more "traditional" punk fare here (what, the Spits couldn't be coaxed to participate or anything?), and the occasional "college music showcase" vibe of the proceedings, it was a nice watch in an *Urgh!* sorta way, where you may not dig all of what's going down but the sheer volume and diversity of what you get to wade through is refreshing. —Jimmy Alvarado (Bifocal Media, PO Box 50106, Raleigh, NC 27650-0106)

### Minor Threat: DC Space, Buff Hall, 9:30 Club, DVD

A DVD reissue of what was originally the *Minor Threat Live* video, which consisted of a live set recorded at the 9:30 Club on 6/23/83, with additional footage from two other shows dated 12/17/80 and 11/20/82, respectively, and an interview with Ian rounding things out. The video and sound quality vary, with the 9:30 Club stuff being the best in that respect, but all have their charms, like watching Ian sing to a pretty amped crowd while sporting a rather large lump on his noggin incurred in an accident just before the show. Although the splice and dice presentation of the interview (all the questions spliced together, followed by all of his answers spliced together) was a bit annoying, all the hits can be found here, the energetic performances are a helluva lotta fun to watch, and the long, detailed intros before each performance are very informative and provide some perspective for those who weren't there. In short, essential viewing. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dischord, 3819 Beecher Street NW, Washington, DC 20007)

### No Means No & the Hanson Brothers: Would We Be... Live?, DVD

There are some great bands still kicking around these days, but very few of them are just as, well, HUGE as No Means No are live. They really are a sight to behold. On the stage, these guys come off like musical giants — tight, heavy and weird giants. And on this DVD, you get a taste of what that is like — twenty songs by this fiery power trio. Best of all, these guys are living proof that musicians don't have to put their guts out to pasture and go all Westerberg just because they turn thirty-five. In fact, it can be said, without hyperbole, that these three salt and pepper-haired Canucks bring more heat live than a dump truck full of the most preening, Mountain Dew-swilling, spiky-haired-dad-hater punques the suburbs have to offer.

The second band on this video is the Hanson Brothers, which feature No Means No drummer John Wright on the mic (as his alter-ego Johnny Hanson) and No Means No guitarist Tom Holliston (on the six-string as Tommy Hanson). The band's name is an homage to the three scene-stealing, "differently-abled" brothers from the 1977 hockey movie *Slapshot*. ("They're fuckin' horrible lookin'. What did the old man trade for these assholes, a used puck bag?") The Hanson Brothers are also a great band, full of big rock styling. Their tunes are much more straightforward, four-on-the-floor punk than the staccato, stop on a dime songs of No Means No, but they also really know how to bring it live. Most of their songs are about hockey and beer, but their appeal will not be lost on you if you're not into these two things — for some unfathomable reason.


This DVD is really fun to watch and is exceptionally well-produced, but No Means No are one of the best bands you'll ever see live. They are the Grand Canyon of punk. Pictures will never do them justice. So, it's hard to say that this video captures all the verve of being there. But that is a really a failing of ALL live videos, not this one in particular. In fact, the folks at Punkervision deserve full marks for producing such a high-quality live video with a limited amount of equipment and crew at their disposal. Their videos are shot on four separate hand-held cameras, with no communication between the operators. The audio is recorded with a mix of the live board feed and area mics. All four video feeds are synched up with the audio later and cut together. Punkervision, like punk music itself, gets great results from being a model of efficiency, relying more on pluck and raw talent than fluff and frills. —Jeff Fox (Punkervision)



### Vandals: Live at the House of Blues, DVD

Back in the early 1980s, a small, relatively obscure South Bay punk band called the Vandals developed a word-of-mouth reputation by trashing the houses of parties they played. Not long after that, they released an amusing EP of silly tunes poking fun at nearly everything in reach, from dropping LSD at Disneyland to friends-turned-legends to punk's political stances. One of those tunes, parodying the punks vs. urban cowboy wars then raging at Costa Mesa's Cuckoo's Nest, became a regional hit and earned the band their fifteen minutes of fame. After their first full-length earned them another hit, they summarily sacked their lead singer and brought in another less flamboyant front man to fill his shoes. Fast forward to 2004, wherein the Vandals have effectively laid waste to the laws of physics and have upset the space/time continuum by somehow managing to increase their fan base by producing suckier and suckier music. The only member left from the original band is the drummer (who is now the bass player), the band has jumped from one subgenre to the next over the years, first chasing cow-punk until they realized there was no money to be found at that well, and now raking in the dough as a cheap NOFX knockoff. Presented here is what one assumes to be a recent performance at the House of Blues, wherein the band crank out tune after tune of bland, faceless, frat boy rock to the assembled poseurs and Avril Lavigne clones looking to earn some punk cred at school by seeing a "real" punk band. The only "oldie" showcased here is a thorough butchering of the Simpletones' "I Have a Date," which leads one to think that it might just be a good thing that Snickers is dead, because someone no doubt deserves a good smack down for what is done to that tune. To put things more succinctly, the Vandals are living proof that you should never, under any circumstances, let the drummer call the shots. As if the DVD wasn't punishment enough, included is a bonus CD of the performance with which you can soil your stereo just as badly as you did your DVD player. It also means you get two targets for your next skeet shooting session, which is about the only decent thing one can do with such utter wastes of plastic. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.kungfurecords.com)





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**Amped: Notes From a Go-Nowhere Punk Band**  
by Jon Resh, 160 pgs.

The fact that most music-related “tell-all” books are so full of nauseating self-importance that they’re hard to enjoy should probably be common knowledge to anyone who has ever read one. No matter how much of a historical footnote the band is (*American Hardcore* author Steven Blush was in No Trend), you usually end up with page after page of “look how great and important we were.” I’ve read more than one book claiming that the Doors were the godfathers of LA punk rock without explaining why, and it’s impossible to read anything about X without the writer blowing his load proclaiming the far and wide influence that band had over music without naming a single band that shows such an influence. Having said that, it’s quite a breath of fresh air to read a book that starts off one chapter with, “The sound I make when ‘singing’ could be mistaken for a lion puking into a megaphone.”

Jon Resh has no delusions about the historical importance (or lack thereof) of his band Spoke, a staple of the early ‘90s central Florida punk scene and one of the first bands to be released by No Idea Records. If anything, he may be a little too critical of himself and his bandmates, but that’s neither here nor there. Despite having never heard a note of Spoke’s music, I thought *Amped* was really entertaining and interesting, filled with a true passion for DIY punk rock that is often missing from punk rock memoirs. Whether he’s talking about a tour of Florida with Radon (oddly enough, one of my favorite bands) or the tight-knit crowd at the now-defunct Hardback Café in Gainesville, it’s always about the music and how the music made him feel like he was a part of something. Instead of saying, “One time we played a show with Quicksand. That’s how good we were,” he shares an anecdote about the show, how he and his bandmates decided that it would be a good idea to set up the drumset at the opposite end of the club. When that idea goes horribly wrong, they just kind of shrug and laugh it off.

The book also shows the fine line between punk bands that love the music and bands that are trying to use punk as a jumping off point for mainstream success. One of the best parts of the book is when Spoke was booked to play a show with Nuisance and Seven Year Bitch. He recalls the promoter and the guys in Nuisance as being nothing but cool, but that Seven Year Bitch “spoke to us with a vague condescension specific to ‘bands on the rise.’” Among other things, he goes on to say that their manager kept name-dropping people involved with all those crappy grunge bands from the early ‘90s. At the end of the show when it was time to pay the bands, Seven Year Bitch complained about how the promoter ripping them off, despite the fact that it was a Wednesday night show and only about two hundred people showed up. The promoter had paid them all the door money and then paid money out of his own pocket to meet their guarantee. When they pressed him for more money, he threw his wallet at them and said, “Here. That’s all I have. Now go buy your heroin.” It was a perfect example of wannabe rock stars taking advantage of honest, hard-working people in the punk scene.

As far as aesthetics go, Jon Resh must be some kind of graphic genius. The cover looks awesome, the layout looks pretty nifty; basically, this book is a nice piece of eye candy. On top of this being a great book about a band that did everything just for the hell of it, it’s dirt cheap, too, so I can’t think of a higher recommendation. —Josh (\$4.50 from Viper Press, PO Box 3394, Chicago, IL 60690-3394)

**AntiSeen: Destructo Maximus**

Compiled and edited by Jeff Clayton, Leslie Goldman, and Larry Kay, 268 pgs.

Good lord, this may be the highest quality book by and for a band I’ve ever laid eyes on. I’ll be honest. I’m not a huge fan AntiSeen’s entire catalog, but my hat’s off in total respect for what they and Steel Cage have been able to put together. Actually, I found myself being more of an admirer the more I read about them. Being a publisher and an admirer of archives myself, it’s easy to marvel at not only the faux-leather, silver-embossed cover and the heavy gloss paper, but the sheer volume of pictures and information that covers this band’s first twenty years. The layout itself must have taken the better part of half a year. What’s further amazing is the packrat diversity of what’s inside. Not only are there literally hundreds of pictures of the band, from every lineup (I bet most people don’t realize that AntiSeen had a black bassist for a spell), there are an almost uncountable number of reviews, interviews (many complete reprints), and newspaper clippings. (Like a scan of the certificate that they won the 1988 *Creative Loafing* “Best Stage Presence/ Appearance,” 1994’s certificate for their lead singer, Jeff Clayton, “Best Person to be Mascot for the Panthers,” and an article on Jeff’s close and loving relationship with his mom.) Wrapping it all together are complete lyrics to all the songs they ever wrote, a complete discography, and a long list of bands that have covered them. Awesome, in the original sense of the word. A very high bar for other bands to aspire to if they’re ever thinking about releasing a retrospective of their lives. —Todd (\$25, Steel Cage Books, PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125; <www.steelcagerecords.com>)

**The Enemy’s Within**

by Jimmy Reject, 120 pages

There are all kinds of punks. Crusty punks, pop punks, straight edge punks, political punks, drunk punks, silly punks, nazi punks, skinhead punks, metal punks and more! This is a book about one kind of punk—the “fuck-the-world-let’s-get-drunk-and-talk-about-killing-everyone” punk!

Jimmy Reject, ex-member of the amazing Dimestore Haloes, has collected a number of his writings, including an autobiography of sorts (previously published as the zine *Down in Flames*), and put them together in book form. This book looks back on his “fuck-the-world-let’s-get-drunk-and-talk-about-killing-everyone” years!

In the “Down in Flames” section, Jimmy tells crazy stories – about peeing on Donny the Punk, having a threesome with a guy and a girl, doing a lot of drugs, meeting Mykel Board, and more. But these are not your average fucked-up-on-drugs stories. As the author’s bio reveals, Jimmy was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia about eight years ago. Most of these stories center on delusions, hallucinations and fantasies – written in a style that’s sometimes over-the-top, but more often just plain easy to read. And, unlike so many books that look back on the author’s mental illness, this one does not attempt to be reflective. It just tells it like it was, in first person, as it unfolded. This is the kind of book you can’t put down, regardless, because the stories are just so odd.

For example, there’s the delusional fantasies (“I was convinced that I was Satan, that dark adversary crevice that lurked beneath the benevolent light that shone on all God’s creatures; the spiritual antithesis of everything. And I had already sent a disciple roaring into the flames of Hell.”); there’s the overflowing anger (“I wanted to punch him in the face until his nose exploded in raw, red blood. I wanted to kick him in the nads until they turned blue. But most of all I wanted to hack him with an axe until his intestines were exposed then smother his body in road salt.”); there’s the frequent G.G. Allin references (“I suffered an innate rage expressed only by the likes of G.G. Allin.”); there’s the flirtation with anything as long as it pisses people off (“[The record] was searing, grinding, dissonant noise, marked by lyrics about a kid who stabbed himself in the stomach, a gang of nun rapists and aliens with swastika tattoos coming to earth looking for Jesus Christ. My kind of shit.”); and then there’s the emotional connection with rejection (“Greetings we are the people you never talked to in high school and we’ve been waiting for you.”).

Yes, this is one creepy book. But, even though I couldn’t relate to almost anything Jimmy writes about (my delusions mostly concern Sour Patch Kids and Lucky Charms), I read it all in one sitting. And although one of the stories, “Sequin Blue,” isn’t that great (it’s basically Jimmy’s autobiography twisted around with a 50-year-old teacher as the main character), I’m going to be handing this around to friends for quite some time.

After all, how often does a book come along with the sentence “Then I knew that in fact all songs were written about me, all in celebration of how I’d ascend to rid the world of Christ’s congealing influence”? —Maddy (Jimmy Reject c/o Blueboy Productions, PO Box 710041, Quincy, MA 02171)

## Foster Care

by Ann Raber, 222 pgs.

Coming-of-age novel about latchkey/juvi kids who like to play with fire. It's set in the late '80s. One of 'em finds salvation/damnation in foster care – and through the songs of Screeching Weasel. It paints a picture of adolescent life not unlike Matt Dillon's cult film *Over the Edge*, only it's a decade later (but the clothes and haircuts are just as bad). The writing is really good as author Ann Raber touches on some important themes (alienation, desperation) as well as dishing out a believable male protagonist, but the whole set up and delivery of the tome is disjointed as hell. It reads like a Robert Altman novel; it jumps from past to present in the blink of an eye, making it problematic to follow the story line at times. A good example of why writers need editors but nonetheless an excellent first attempt. Nobody should ever be faulted for writing a novel. Nobody. But you will get called out on the cheese. Yes, you will. I mean, when she writes about towns like Fuckfaceville and shopping at the C-mart, she only reminds me that I'm reading fiction. If you can get past the sappy first layer of clichés and peel back the skin on this onion of a novel, then you might enjoy it. It might bring tears to your eyes. And yes, punky, that last line was a double entendre. –Greg Barbera (Post-Traumatic Press, PO Box 408021, Chicago, IL 60640)

## Full Spectrum Disorder: The Military in the New American Century

By Stan Goff, 192 pgs.

This is an odd little book by an odd little man. Here's how I think you would make a "Stan Goff," if you were so-inclined to do so:

take Ollie North and drill a peephole into his head – a la Jeff Dahmer – and then insert a straw and suck out most of the inert reptilian spongy stuff. Next, pour in two parts essence of Noam Chomsky and one part Essence of Johnny Rotten and add a pinch of Ilya Prigogine and shake well. Suffice it to say, Stan Goff is as exotic as a blue-footed booby; a career military man who is as politically radical as Jello Biafra – but at once, more professorial and more vulgar.

*Full Spectrum Disorder* is, on the surface, a sort of travelogue detailing Goff's various military travails in places like Haiti, Vietnam, Korea, and Somalia, but it is also a scathing critique of U.S. global hegemony and what Goff calls "white supremacist patriarchal capitalism." On a deeper level it is also a fascinating study of chaos theory, epistemology, and entropy as it pertains to the U.S. Military. This book is multi-layered and not easily pigeon holed. As Goff says himself in the introduction: "I don't want to write a book that 'proves' itself. I want to write a book that shakes up people's thinking, and if it provokes debates or even attacks, so be it. I don't even mind being proven wrong, if that's what happens. If the book were meant to support some overarching conclusion, it would be different, more confined within a genre. It's not that kind of frog."

It warms the cockles of this old ticker to see someone who's endured the full battery of U.S. Army brainwashing indoctrination systems only to turn like a rabid pitbull and latch onto the spindly legs of Power Clowns like Donald Rumsfeld and G.W. Bush ("the spoiled preppy frat-fuck"). And he is almost as vicious with his take on what he terms the "ovine American public" whose heads "have been softened by a diet

of info-kibble and *Survivor*." Goff writes: "American culture is a sheep culture – long on talk about individualism, but even longer on absolute conformity. Most still believe that individuality is based on which model car you like best – commodity identity..." Lefties and Neocons alike do not escape Goff's keen critical eye.

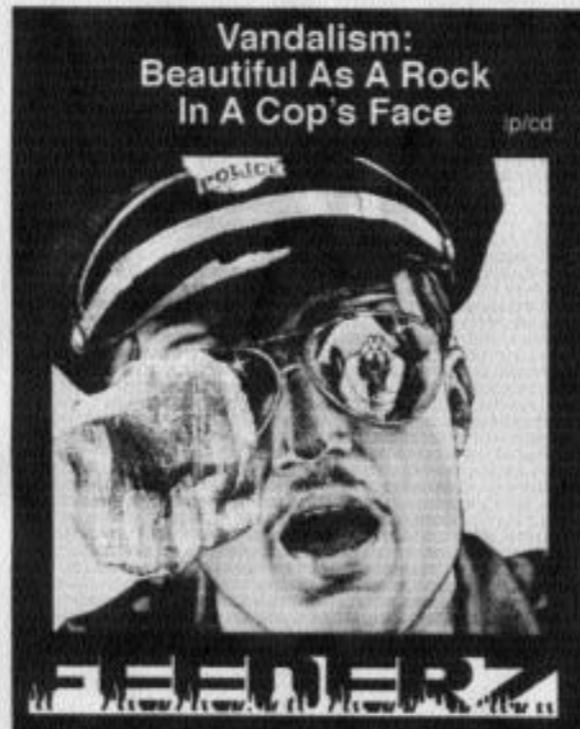
Goff certainly succeeded in shaking up my thinking and for that, I thank him. Watching the military equivalent of a ghastly multi-car pile up where human bodies are smeared like lipstick across the road is bound to shake a person up – and there are plenty of body bags in the pages of this book. And while *Full Spectrum Disorder* is rambling in spots and occasionally trips up civilians like myself with clunky military shibboleths, it is well written and powerfully presented. Maybe this isn't much coming from me, but this is quite possibly the single most intelligent exegesis on the American politico-militaristic dung pie that I've ever had the good fortune to step in.

*Full Spectrum Disorder* is certainly an impassioned call-to-arms, but it is ultimately a powerful treatise on just how utterly fucking disorderly war and politics – and life – really are – no matter how you try to spin it. This book is, indeed, like its author, "a different kind of frog." Stan Goff is one military "expert" you'll never see mouthing off on CNN. –Aphid Peewit (Soft Skull Press, 71 Bond Street, Brooklyn, NY 11217)

## The Politics of Anti-Semitism

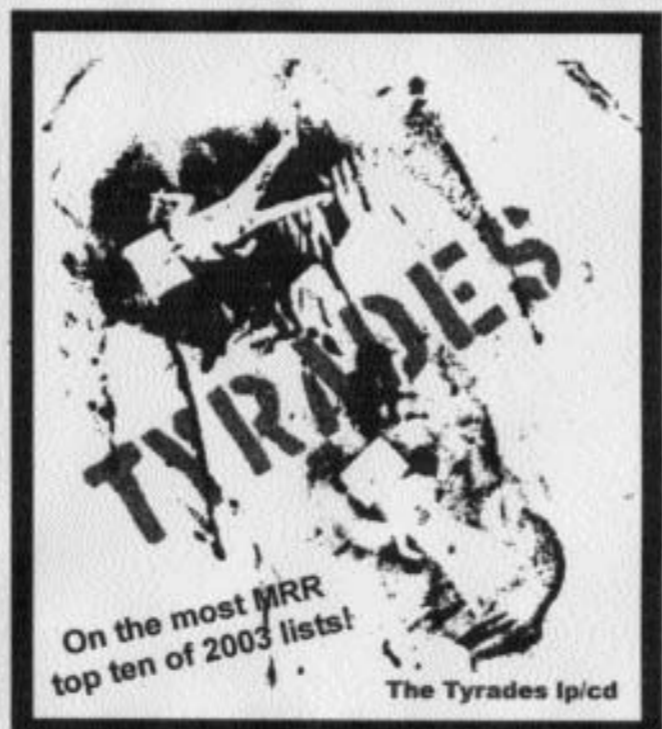
edited by Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair, 178 pages

A few years ago, during a trip back to my old college town, I saw signs everywhere saying,



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"Fight Anti-Semitism in Our Community!" and "Anti-Semitism Cannot Be Tolerated!" in stores, restaurants, and bus stops. I didn't know what they were referring to, and figured this was yet another example of someone being stupid and thinking that spray painting a swastika was cool.

But then I got a call from my friend Maria, asking if I wanted to go to protest the anti-Semitism protest. I was confused – until she explained that the "anti-Semitic" graffiti the signs referred to was actually pro-Palestinian graffiti. Stuff like "Free Palestine" and "End the Terrorist Israeli State." So, out of curiosity, I went. About twenty people gathered in a small park to listen to speeches and condemn this "anti-Semitic hate crime." I was surprised. How could these seemingly reasonable people equate criticism of one country's government with criticism of a major, global religion?

Since then, I've seen many more examples of this sort of logic. As support for the Palestinians grows (helped, in part, by Ariel Sharon's ridiculous tactics, including building a wall to separate Palestinians from Israelis), cries of anti-Semitism are increasing. Some conservative Jewish organizations are warning that we are witnessing a shocking increase in anti-Semitism, and have equated it to the beginnings of Hitler's Germany.

*The Politics of Anti-Semitism*, a new collection of essays by CounterPunch editors Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair, looks critically at this "rise of anti-Semitism" and disputes the idea that the current levels of anti-Semitism are dangerously high. The book features over a dozen activists, historians and writ-

ers, including historian Norman Finkelstein (who has gained much notoriety for his controversial and fascinating book *The Holocaust Industry*), journalist Robert Fisk, and the recently deceased intellectual and pro-Palestinian activist Edward Said.

The book comes at an important time. As Uri Avnery writes in his essay "Manufacturing Anti-Semitism," "For many years, Israel enjoyed the sympathy of most people. It was seen as the state of the Holocaust survivors, a small and courageous country defending itself against the repeated assaults of murderous Arabs. Slowly, this image has been replaced by another: a cruel, brutal and colonizing state, oppressing a small and helpless people. The persecuted has become the persecutor, David has turned into Goliath."

This is a fascinating and important subject – and one that most activists are afraid to touch. Said's essay "Dignity, Solidarity and The Penal Colony" is the sort of straightforward yet polemic writing readers of Said would expect, and stands out as the best essay in the collection. He disputes the popularly held notion that both sides of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict are equally to blame, and are engaged in a never-ending "cycle of violence." He writes, "Once in awhile, we ought to pause and declare indignantly that there is only one side with an army and a country: the other is a stateless, dispossessed population without rights or any present way of securing them." Although Said condemns suicide bombing as a tactic that "does much more harm than good," he refuses to equate the tactics of the two sides.

However, other essays seem intent on dis-

proving anti-Semitism by going too far in the other direction, repeating myths about Jewish involvement in 9/11, dismissing or downplaying the Holocaust, and arguing that anti-Semitism in the Arab world exists just because of Israel. In Michael Neumann's essay "What is Anti-Semitism?" he writes, "I think we should almost never take anti-Semitism seriously, and maybe we should have some fun with it. I think it is particularly unimportant to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, except perhaps as a diversion from the real issues." He further downplays the anti-Semitism prevalent in the Arab world, writing, "Undoubtedly there is genuine anti-Semitism in the Arab world: the distribution of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, the myths about stealing the blood of gentile babies. This is utterly inexcusable. So was your failure to answer Aunt Bee's last letter."

The other essays meander somewhere between these two, discussing everything from death threats the actor John Malkovich made to a prominent journalist covering the conflict to the history of U.S. involvement in Israel.

This issue desperately needs to be addressed in the American Left. Unfortunately, although *The Politics of Anti-Semitism* includes some gems, it also meanders around the topic, overstating some points and downplaying others – like the Arab responsibility for a great deal of anti-Semitism. If you're obsessed with this issue, I'd check out this book. Otherwise, pick up some books by Edward Said or Norman Finkelstein instead. –Maddy (CounterPunch/AK Press, 674-A 23rd St., Oakland, CA 94612)







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