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SLAVE



SLAVE #8

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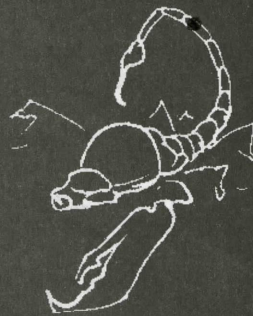
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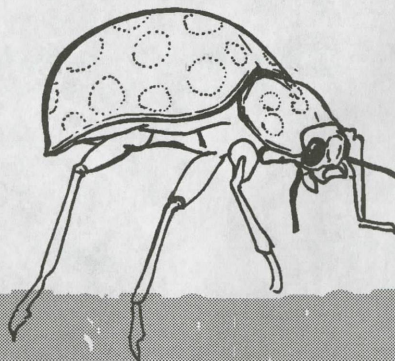
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They were creative and active. They cared about things. They didn't in-fight. At least, not the way my other friends had. Spending time with those people was such a happy time. I never felt like the odd man out.

And those friendships have lasted. I still see those people every day and I care very much about them. But, one by one, the thing that drew me to them in the first place, their desire to move the fun out of the bars and into the back yards, has gone away. I can count the number of people who are still straight-edge on one hand. And, god, that makes me sad. The change is not hard to figure out. As people get older, the demands on their time and energy are increased, responsibilities are increased. The work that goes into gathering a group together to think of some fun to have, begins to pale beside the work that goes into paying the bills. And with the extra work comes a new set of relationships. Most co-workers don't have ethical objections to "partying" on the weekend. Soon that viewpoint starts to seem more normal than the other. Eventually, getting out of the house and relating to new people becomes a proposition available only on their terms, and soon, the ideals we had as young punks start to seem less important and more unreasonable.

At this point, my early college friends and my late college punk friends are indistinguishable in most ways. The punks have cooler record collections and better stories of things they were doing five years ago, but, the weekends are starting to look the same. The hardest part, beyond feeling like you no longer relate to your closest friends, is the feeling that you were just tricking yourself by believing there ever was another way to enjoy a social life. For me, the straight-edge element of the Greensboro punk community always felt like a peer pressure-free zone. And that in the free zone, people had chosen the same things I had. It was a good feeling to know that your story and your feelings were not so different from these other people's. But, in retrospect, you have to conclude that drug-free scenes are as full of pressure to conform as any other. Something about that hurts worse than anything else.

Regardless of how many people give up the ideal, there is still a lot to be said for punk twenty- and thirty- somethings holding on to straight-edge. Nothing about the meathead, xxxl sweatshirt sXe scene ever rose beyond fashion. Discarding all the trappings of that scene, sober lives are valuable, logical things. Most punks out of school are workers. Although, alcohol and tobacco are often celebrated as a working class traditions, a better argument could be made that they are destructive habits pimped on the working class by marketing forces and manufacturers. Write to *Slave* the next time you see a cigarette ad featuring a Fortune 500 CEO or a commercial showing a judge dancing with a beer and some swimsuit models after a long day on the bench. Is any product pitched so relentlessly as a great way to unwind after a long day on the job as beer?

Also, consider the number of health issues that arise from drug abuse. While you're thinking of that, notice how many of those things have been turned into romantic notions in our society. The most famous entertainers of all time are the ones who've died of their addictions. Once someone told me that pot would never kill you, but you stood a pretty good chance of becoming a loser. I think the truth of that sentiment is apparent even to those who are inclined to dismiss straight-edge altogether. Drugs and booze, not just pot, have a tendency to suck the imaginations right out of people. I'm told by years and years of popular culture, that drugs expand the creative processes of the mind and improve the quality of imagination, but I've never seen that in practice. What I have seen is that, when a case of Papst or a trip to the

pub are not options, the pursuit of amusement or expression is a harder but more rewarding process. When people have to think of shit to do, they tend to think of some good shit.

If punk is a community made up of outcast groups, then punk is a coat you tend to shed as you grow out of your life as an outcast and into your life as one of the guys at the job or one of the girls at the sportsbar. I was rather more inclined to believe that punk was a repudiation of the things in the average American life that we believed were degrading, or harmful, or outdated. The life of the modern American drug and alcohol user/abuser is all of those things. The disappearance of the drug-free lifestyle among adult punks makes us seem like the community of rejects slowly being reabsorbed into the mass culture, rather than the alternative to that culture. Is that what we wanted? Was straight-edge just a way to indentify ourselves as being outside of the majority of society? We're too adjusted for it now?

My love goes out to Greensboro. Although we worry each other sometimes, the heart is still there. I still feel lucky to have you. No, I won't go out to the bar with you. But, you're always welcome in the back yard.

Zachary Mull

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One morning last November I opened an e-mail at work to find a strange proposition offering a highly-valued continuing education credit (something all teachers need to keep their licenses active) in exchange for attendance at "three-day Marine basic training" in Paris Island, SC. The announcement promised all teachers in attendance a "real life, hands-on" basic training experience and the chance to fire M-16 semi-automatic rifles. Seduced by images of teachers trained and armed as riflemen by the US Government, and a twisted desire to suffer through drill sergeants and push-ups as depicted in films like *Full Metal Jacket*, I contacted my principal and enlisted that day. Whether it was a desire for a perverse form of role-playing, or a chance to get the inside scoop on how the military breaks and molds America's youth, I knew it would be a trip worth the experience.

Exactly what teachers were supposed to gain from this so-called workshop was an absolute mystery. I assumed the program would demonstrate how much you could elicit from a person who is under your absolute authority. Since most teachers and administrators try to run their classes this way, a skill-share on effectively breaking down the adolescent psyche is always a handy addition to any educator's classroom management tactics.

On December 3, the local North Carolina piedmont-area Marine recruiter drove four Guilford County teachers, including me, to Raleigh, NC to catch our flight to Paris Island, SC via Louisville, KY. All 50 states participate in this program on an annual basis, and two states are always teamed together to make for a larger crowd. The Marine recruiters from North Carolina and Kentucky managed to convince 60 lucky teachers to participate in this year's workshop. The group was 50% ex-Marines who returning to Paris Island to relive their glory days (men), 40% wives of Marines who wanted to get a taste of the action their husbands saw in their youths, 7% people who needed the



excuse to take a few days off work, a principal from western North Carolina who wanted to confirm her suspicion that all Marines are just as fucked up as her ex-husband, and one punk rock teacher with a self-loathing desire to be yelled at and forced to run laps until subscribing to the idea that killing brown people really is in the best interest of every American.

During this workshop, all 60 teachers and their recruiters, were put up in nice hotels for at least two nights. Most teachers were also given an extra night in Raleigh or Louisville. Each day we received three free meals, including a fancy steak or seafood dinner. Being the lone vegan (or vegetarian, for that matter), I was given special treatment for dinner, a dry baked potato and a skimpy pile of iceberg lettuce that was supposed to pass as a salad. Usually I ate an apple or an orange for breakfast and lunch. Our fee transportation was flights to and from South Carolina via military jet. On the ground, buses moved us around Paris Island, between distances we could have easily walked. Our group was given 200-300 rounds of ammo to exhaust on the firing range, and group photos distributed in diploma-worthy protective folders to commemorate the whole experience. Fuel, food, and lodging alone must have cost close to \$10,000, and if you multiply that number by 25, you have an estimate of the money put into this program on a yearly basis. Remember this example the next time you're discussing how poorly the US government chooses to spend tax dollars. And for what?

The Marines want teachers to use their influence to convince students to enlist instead of going (directly) to college. The hope is that this program will butter up participants just enough to do that, and based on the money put into it, sadly, it must be working. My dad was in the Air Force, two of my cousins are in the Marines, and several of my students went into the military after graduation. I understand the benefits that come from joining the military, and recognize that the military has actually improved the lives of some people. However, it was clear during my trip to Paris Island that the kids who may need this most are not encouraged or wanted by the US Marines. An introductory slideshow, the only part of the trip that felt like a workshop, spelled out which students are targeted as US Marines, and which are not. Recruiters do not want kids who have drug or legal problems; they want high school graduates only, and discourage those who opted for a GED. They want kids that are smart enough for college, but not smart enough for scholarships, kids that stuck through four years of high school, kids who feel like they can't afford a college education without US Government help. As the Marines see it, they are competing with college recruiters and must meet a quota of two or three new recruits, per recruiter, per month. I've heard stories from students and teachers that describe recruiters telling kids that they won't make it in college; they aren't good enough to try for financial aid packages; the military is their only hope for success. These kids had other options and knew it, but the recruiters manipulated the facts to make the students feel like the military was their only choice. Of course, many kids see right through the recruiter, but will trust a teacher who they see every day. That's where the US Marine Educator Workshop steps in and exploits those trusting relationships; relationships that can be bought at the price of a few days off work, a few rounds of ammo, and a couple of steak dinners. These are the people who are teaching children.

The access granted to recruiters goes far beyond this, as Bush's "No Child Left Behind Act" requires high schools to provide phone numbers, addresses, and other personal information about their students, or else face financial penalty. Unless a particular district enlightens its community, this information sharing goes on largely without the consent of students or their parents. Movements are in place across the country to pressure school districts to create a way for parents to opt-out of this program so schools do not have to share information or face financial consequences.

Local recruiters set up in the cafeteria at my school almost once a week, always with a table full of beautifully designed pamphlets and brochures hyping the military. Recruits use the schools to build their own relationships. They target students with phone calls and visits are made to student's homes until they agree to join or tell the military off. In an environment that should be politically neutral, I have never seen Vietnam or Gulf War veterans invited to showcase the downsides of war. I have never seen any promotion of critical thinking and analysis of the darker sides of military enlistment, yet the military recruiters come back, like clock-work, week after week.

The final day in Paris Island, the recruiter from Louisville approached me, as I sat eating my non-existent vegan breakfast. He singled me out as the one hardest to win over. He asked if I would return to North Carolina and encourage my students to enlist. I gave him a pleasant "hell no" and listened as he detailed his past "experiments with vegetarianism and peace rallies." And he finishes his anecdote, "But look at me now!" I told him that I was old enough and smart enough not to fall for his recruiter bullshit, and he said he just wanted me to be aware of "the other options that are out there." Granted, I look more like a kid than any of my coworkers, but I'm certainly not going to be won over to the military with the same rhetoric this guy uses on 15-year-old kids. The Louisville recruiter deserves props for identifying me as the one who would return from Paris Island intent on finding ways to turn my experience into an anti-military statement. At some point, he referred to me as a hippie, and it then became clear that the only way to save myself from a life of smelling of dirt and eating magic mushrooms would be to join the US Marine Corps.

The excitement from my conversation with the Louisville recruiter pushed me over the edge, and that afternoon I decided to ask questions that would demonstrate to the other teachers that at least one amongst their ranks wasn't going to swallow the military rhetoric hook, line and sinker. I asked pilots how they felt about dropping bombs on targets that were blips on a screen, and if they were ever trained to deal with the issues of killing others. I pointed out that recruiters never address these serious topics with targeted students, or raise questions about the psychological impact of life in the military before allowing new recruits to sign away their future. One Marine went along with my line of questioning and helped make my case as he detailed the first time he was told that his job as a Marine was to "do what he was told," and to "kill people for our country." A few teachers said they appreciated my comments, while the recruiters gave me an all-day stink-eye until our departure that evening. I'm thinking of returning next year.

*A previous version of this article was submitted to HeartattaCk for their education issue.

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BOOK REVIEWS



A Drink with Shane MacGowan, Victoria Clarke and Shane MacGowan, (Grove Press, 2001)

Reading this book could be likened to the first time your parents disappointed you. The format is a series of interviews with Shane MacGowan of legendary punky Irish folk thrashers, the Pogues, conducted by wife Victoria Clarke. As a huge Pogues fan, I thought that the potential this book held was limitless. MacGowan has led an extraordinary life and is, once you cut through the muddled haze of alcohol and who knows what else, an extremely intelligent and poetic man. Like many of MacGowan's evenings out on the town, result of this book was left lying flat on its face, kissing a piss-soaked gutter.

Each chapter covers a particular subject or a different period in MacGowan's life. "Stage direction" proceeds each chapter and is supposed to set the tone of the discussion that follows. Instead, it is fairly apparent through these stage directions that Clarke, and often MacGowan, are enamored with the idea of either being married to, or, in fact being, an underground icon. The stage direction format is also fitting because it makes it obvious that MacGowan at times makes outrageous and unbelievable statements simply because the conversation is being recorded for posterity. There is much talk throughout the book regarding MacGowan's humility and down-to-earth qualities that fly in the face of the book's format. The interviews are at times tedious as MacGowan becomes boastful, bordering on arrogant, and incoherently rambles about everything under the sun.

There are a few shining moments which almost make bearable the drudgery of wading through this transcription of a mildly interesting conversation between a perpetually arguing middle-aged couple. In the beginning of chapter seven we become acquainted with MacGowan's knowledge of Irish history, culture, and politics. This is the MacGowan we know from reading and rereading Pogues lyrics. This is the MacGowan we want to listen to. Unfortunately these moments are few and far between. They reappear in discussions on Irish literature, Brendan Behan, and MacGowan's philosophy of uplifting Irish music and culture through the Pogues. Other notable features of MacGowan's story are guest appearances by the likes of Van Morrison, Sid Vicious, and John Lydon. Beyond these brief few pages this book is painful to read.

Had the idea of editing crossed Clarke's mind? The whole project would have been much stronger for it. Perhaps this would have been better as an edited ongoing series of interviews with MacGowan in *Punk Planet* or even *Alternative Press*. There is no doubt that Shane MacGowan and the Pogues remain one of the greatest bands on the fringes of punk and folk. This book, however, will never be the contribution to Irish folk or punk rock that *Rum, Sodomy and the Lash* was. (Dave Coker)

Jumping the Line, William Herrick (AK Press, 2002)

It is an understatement to say I was relieved to thumb *Jumping the Line's* final page and put it down for good. It was a tense read, at times embarrassing and awkward, others inspiring and insightful, and finally shameful and confusing.

William Herrick, born a Jewish red diaper baby, writes with a self-deprecating honesty that is only rivaled by his irreverent sense of irony and rabid anti-communism. It is a combination that walks a literary tight rope, at times falling victim to the tragic plunge.

While not entirely in chronological order, *Jumping the Line* begins with touching sketches of Herrick's family and home life interspersed with personal and political histories and future outcomes set against a backdrop of ongoing social commentary. The first few chapters establish this story telling pattern and it is followed to the end. Although it generally works well, sometimes periods in Herrick's life cross over and details of what, who, and where become confusing. While this can be frustrating it also serves as an interesting metaphor for how we all perceive our own personal histories. Luckily enough for both Herrick and the reader, there is a mountain of experiences and history to be confused. This man has probably forgotten more about his life than most people will ever experience. Detailed in *Jumping the Line* are Herrick's stories of living in a communist co-op, working as Orson Welles' personal assistant, time spent in the furriers and stenographers union, and working on a communal farm. The experience that permeates the entire book though is Herrick's time spent in Spain fighting against fascism in the Abraham Lincoln brigade.

Herrick's insight regarding the struggle in Spain is a brutal combination of tragedy and hope, treachery and inspiration. With great detail Herrick disparages not only the general Stalinist line on Spain at the time but the everyday workings of the Soviet army at the ground level. Readers with a more in-depth knowledge of the factions and lines in Spain will find Herrick making the same anarchist argument of the last 60 odd years that Stalin never wanted a revolution in Spain and, in fact,

Soviet forces played a counter-revolutionary role. For most readers of AK Press material, those assumptions are probably forgone conclusions, yet Herrick sights specific incidents of Soviet incompetence, lies and propaganda, and outright murder of genuine revolutionary forces. If, in fact, these indictments are true, then the Soviet betrayal of Spain would be one of the worst tragedies in revolutionary history. While it's hard to take on Herrick's first-hand accounts of Spain, his integrity (which up to the final third of the book was one of the stand-out features), is called into question as he details his decision to testify for the House Un-American Activities Committee about his time in Spain with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. It feels like the proverbial knife in the heart and is worth pointing out that while Herrick viewed his testimony as way to expose the treachery of Soviet leadership, it was US imperialism that won the day and used him, not the other way around.


While *Jumping the Line* is no *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, it is still a worthwhile contribution to the mountain of books on the experiences of Spain. At this point few lefties are changing their minds as to who held the correct line, the anarchists and assorted socialists or the Soviets. *Jumping the Line* offers more ammo for the backers of the CNT-FAI and the POUM and some serious things to consider for the orthodox old left. (Dave Coker)

You Can't Win, Jack Black (AK Press/Nabat, 2000)

A truly great autobiography should always leave you with more questions than it answers. Facts about a person's life, where they lived, who they knew, and jobs they held, can be documented, but more essential questions, who they are, and why they do what they do, remain mysterious. A person, especially one as emotionally complex as Jack Black, defies description in many ways. The self-analysis style of the autobiography is even more suspect. How one presents oneself to the public says very much about the individual.

Here's what we know, and what is confirmed by Black in his book. John Black was born in the 1870's and raised by his father. At the age of sixteen, he ran away from home and adopted the lifestyle and vocation of the "yegg," or traveling thief. In his 30 years on the road, he became an expert cat burglar and safecracker, an opium addict and con man. He spent time in everyone of California's prisons, choosing San Quentin for his last stretch saying, "I'd like to go over there and see what that place (is) like." The book ends in the mid-1920's with Black, a reformed man, making his way in the "above-ground" world under the sponsorship of powerful San Francisco newspapermen.

You Can't Win is an account of the 30 years spent "un-



hardcore literacy project slave

derground," in prisons and hop joints, and on trains. The reformed Jack Black of 1925 looks back on those years with a captivating mixture of excitement, pride, and deep regret. The excitement of those times is remains close to Black, even in his later years. He tells stories of narrow escapes and violent breaks with a passion that must, in some way, reflect the energy he put into living those adventures.

Black keeps it light for the most part. The harrowing aspects of his life, and there must have been many, are generally avoided. This is a man who knows from experience that life rarely rewards a complainer. Black prefers to deal with the (mostly) successful adventures and the colorful characters of his past. Much of the book is devoted to Black's friends and companions. Their nicknames are charming: Salt Chunk Mary, Foot-and-a-Half George, Soldier Johnnie, and the Sanctimonious Kid. Each of them prove, in his or her own way, to be honorable and loyal friends to Black. Black, writing for the readers of the time, under the supervision of professional journalists, crafts a romance of the road. William Burroughs was so taken with it he provided an introduction to the book, to acknowledge his debt.

The Nabat Press new edition of the book includes Burroughs' introduction, an additional essay by Black, and an afterword. The afterword attempts to fill some of the holes that Jack Black left in his story. For example, Black presents his addiction to opium as a tiresome habit, like cracking knuckles or biting fingernails. At his most desperate moment of addiction, *You Can't Win* jumps ahead many years to the time of Black's recovery from the habit. The afterword suggests our hero did many not-so-heroic things not only in this time, but after as well, in San Francisco's newspaper wars. Black's gentle glossing over of his misdeeds, ultimately, makes him a more compelling and endearing character. The author's dignity becomes the book's heart.

No one know exactly what happened to Jack Black. Ten years after the publication of his book he simply disappeared. One possible fate is suggested by the afterword. Black told friends that if life ever became too much for him, he'd simply sink himself in New York Harbor. His book's title seems true still. (Zachary Mull)



ZINE REVIEWS

Clamor #20 (PO Box 1225, Bowling Green, OH 43402, \$4.50)

Not just another periodical born out of zine culture, *Clamor* is a bi-monthly publication that is greatly concerned with educating its readers. Easily one of the best magazines you'll find on corporate newstands, *Clamor* tackles politics and culture in the same way you'd expect from larger publications like *Mother Jones* or *Utne Reader*, while remaining true to its roots in the independent music and publishing communities. *Clamor* appeals to white, (post) punk, intellectuals but has certainly moved beyond the range of "preaching to the choir" through thoughtful and diverse journalism and wide distribution. While not totally accessible to everyone (see their letters section), it seems to be continuously working on this balancing act in favor of a less typical demographic. In terms of content, we can only hope that *Slave* will someday be as challenging and informative. In terms of design, *Clamor* has finally developed an aesthetic that complements the quality of their writing. Until now, their visuals were below par, which was more than disappointing considering the brilliance of their written content. Having broken their *Z Magazine* curse, however, each issue has been looking better. Every issue of *Clamor* takes on a theme that is explored through a diverse range of topics, always with much success. Issue #20 (May/June 2003), is the food issue, and includes articles about fair trade coffee imports, the beef industry targeting young women, and the politics of a natural food co-op's boycott on Israeli food, just to name a few. Hands down, *Clamor* is well worth your investment in a subscription. (John Rash)

Friction Magazine #1 (www.frictionmagazine.com, \$7)

Published by the editors of one of the best zines you'll find on the web. *Friction* #1 covers the same diverse range of material found on their web zine, including fiction, politics, culture, music, and art. In print, *Friction* is formatted like a small book with a full color, thick-stock cover and bound spine. The content is primarily longer fiction pieces and articles broken up by a series of short musician interviews, titled "Not Your Average Rock (Star)". This series of interviews offers something short to digest while skimming the pages of *Friction*, but also gives insight into the personal politics of folks who are otherwise known for their music. Other content includes several fiction pieces, including "Hell is Only Temporary" about a temp job in hell, an interview with Joe Strummer, and "Life in the Trash Lane," about Mexican families who salvage trash from landfills for income. *Friction* is a top-notch publication on-line and in print, so do yourself a favor and check out a publication that can be relied upon for a beautifully designed, entertaining, and informative read. (John Rash)

Law of Inertia #13 (61 E. 8th St. #125, New York, NY 10003, \$4.95)

Now living on the stands of corporate bookstores nationwide, *Law of Inertia* recently made the jump from being a thick, black-and-white zine to full-color, glossy, stripped-down periodical. Visually, this transition is obviously problematic for the designer, who has never before had the full palette at his fingertips. Otherwise nicely designed, *Law of Inertia's* use of color is not creatively or cohesively executed, and their appearance has drastically suffered. The new manifestation of *Law of Inertia* contains about one third of the former content, leaving a mere flicker of its previous self. The focus on big-named ("buzz worthy"?) indie, emo, punk, and hardcore bands feels like a tactic spawned from a desire to sell more magazines. It's disappointing that publisher Ross Siegel has dropped the ball on the chance to expose less heard underground or independent artists. (To Ross' credit, the *Law of Inertia* record label almost exclusively takes on unsigned or unheard artists). Full of one-page snippets and short interviews, this magazine constantly falls short of the solid piece with substance. Unfortunately, the content rarely goes beyond what one would find by simply visiting the artist's Web site. Beyond music, *Law of Inertia* is peppered with pop-culture pieces on video games and 80s retro-cult films, which are just as lacking. In its former state, *Law of Inertia* always had potential to be a great zine, but that's the thing with potential ... it opens just as many paths to failure as it does success. (John Rash)

www.deepfrybonanza.com

Deep Fry Bonanza (DFB) is a music-focused web zine with the most talented review staff I've encountered in cyberspace. Daniel and his crew seem to understand how terribly written most reviews are, and rebut with informed and accurate descriptions of each album they feature. DFB builds its analysis through critique of design, lyrical content, and an educated understanding of the artist's history and musical sub-genre. What's more impressive is its active attempt to focus on musicians that aren't already receiving hype or buzz from the large independent music media pool. Even if you can't agree with DFB's idea of what's good and bad, you will leave with an excellent idea of how each album or band actually sounds (the most important favor a reviewer can give their readers). DFB updates with two new music reviews and blogs from each staff member daily. This personal appeal combined with reliable updates makes DFB an addictive daily web stop for anyone interested in new music. (John Rash)



Between Resistance and Community: The Long Island D.I.Y. Punk Scene Joe Carroll / Ben Holtzman, VHS, 2002 (Traffic Violation, Box 772, East Setauket, NY 11733)

This documentary offers a glimpse into the hardcore community and music scene of Long Island, NY circa 2001. *Between Resistance and Community* exposes Long Island as being not unlike any other healthy hardcore community, which makes this film fun, but not crucial. Scenesters, band members, and show-goers discuss the finer points of house shows, Food Not Bombs, and d.i.y. ethics with a passion we have all felt during our involvement in the scene. It's nice to see the Long Island kids are continuing the same community-based activities that make punk meaningful and worthwhile. If anything, this documentary connects people involved in hardcore worldwide by enacting the lives we all live and the ideas we all share through a cast of characters not unlike the kids in your local scene. This film serves as a reminder of how magic it was to create your own show spaces, book your own tours, and start your own midnight kickball leagues at the strip-mall parking lot. The Long Island kids speak as if these ideas are new, and have never been tried before. Although passionate, this becomes problematic for anyone who actual lives, or has lived, the same lifestyle as the kids in this film (a majority of the film's audience, I'm sure). If you were ever excited about your scene, you've heard these same rants before, if not delivered them yourself. *Between Resistance and Community* might be eye-opening to fringe ("punk") sub-culture kids who have never really been active in their scene, but will ultimately fail due to its inability to excite or educate punks who are already out there making a difference. (John Rash)

Lightning Bolt: The Power of Salad Peter Glantz / Nick Noe, DVD, 2002 (Load, P.O. Box 35, Providence, RI 02901)

The Power of Salad documents Providence, RI art-core, noise duo Lightning Bolt playing shows in 19 different cities across the US during a summer tour in 2001. Select songs from each city are spliced with interviews, verbal reflections, and typical tour antics. Lightning Bolt is a band some people might not understand or find accessible on a recording, but their driving rhythms and melodic noise never fails to capture the crowd in a live setting. Thus, a live DVD of Lightning Bolt shows is a logical release for this particular outfit. Each show featured here documents hot and sticky summer crowds pushing and pulling for

space to dance, sometimes in rooms barely large enough to contain the band's stack of speakers, pedals, and P.A. equipment. If nothing else, *The Power of Salad* makes Lightning Bolt look like the most fun band you will ever see live. This film seems to go on and on, and is hard to finish in one sitting, especially with cartoons, an animated video, and a Lightning Bolt practice included as bonus features. The arrangement doesn't call for chronological viewing, however, so it's easy to come back to this disc and pick it up from any given chapter. In terms of quantity, you really get your money's worth, and the sound and video quality are also well above average. If you're not familiar with Lightning Bolt, attending their show is the best place to start, however, *The Power of Salad* is a close runner-up. (John Rash)

Michigan Fest 2002, DVD, 2003 (Bifocal Media, P.O. Box 50106, Raleigh, NC 27650)

Fests are boring. The reasons are limitless. A DVD documenting a fest would seem even more boring, but in this case, it's not. For those who don't know, Bifocal Media is the leading label/video maker in the indie world. On their new release, they make the Michigan Fest look really exciting. Each band's performance is shot from multiple camera angles using amazing gear. All of the bands look amazing and the sound is great (soundboard quality). In between each band, Bifocal interviews bands or people attending the fest, which underscores what indie music and this fest is about. Some of the banter is better than the performances, and the transition from one scene to the next is brilliant. The bands featured on this DVD are !!!, Milemarker, Hot Snakes, Owls, Death Cab for Cutie, Crooked Fingers, Oxes, and Rye Coalition to name a few. After seeing the DVD, I want to check out some of these bands and their records. Bifocal Media have lots of goodies coming out on DVD. I can't wait to see their next release. (wbs)

FILM

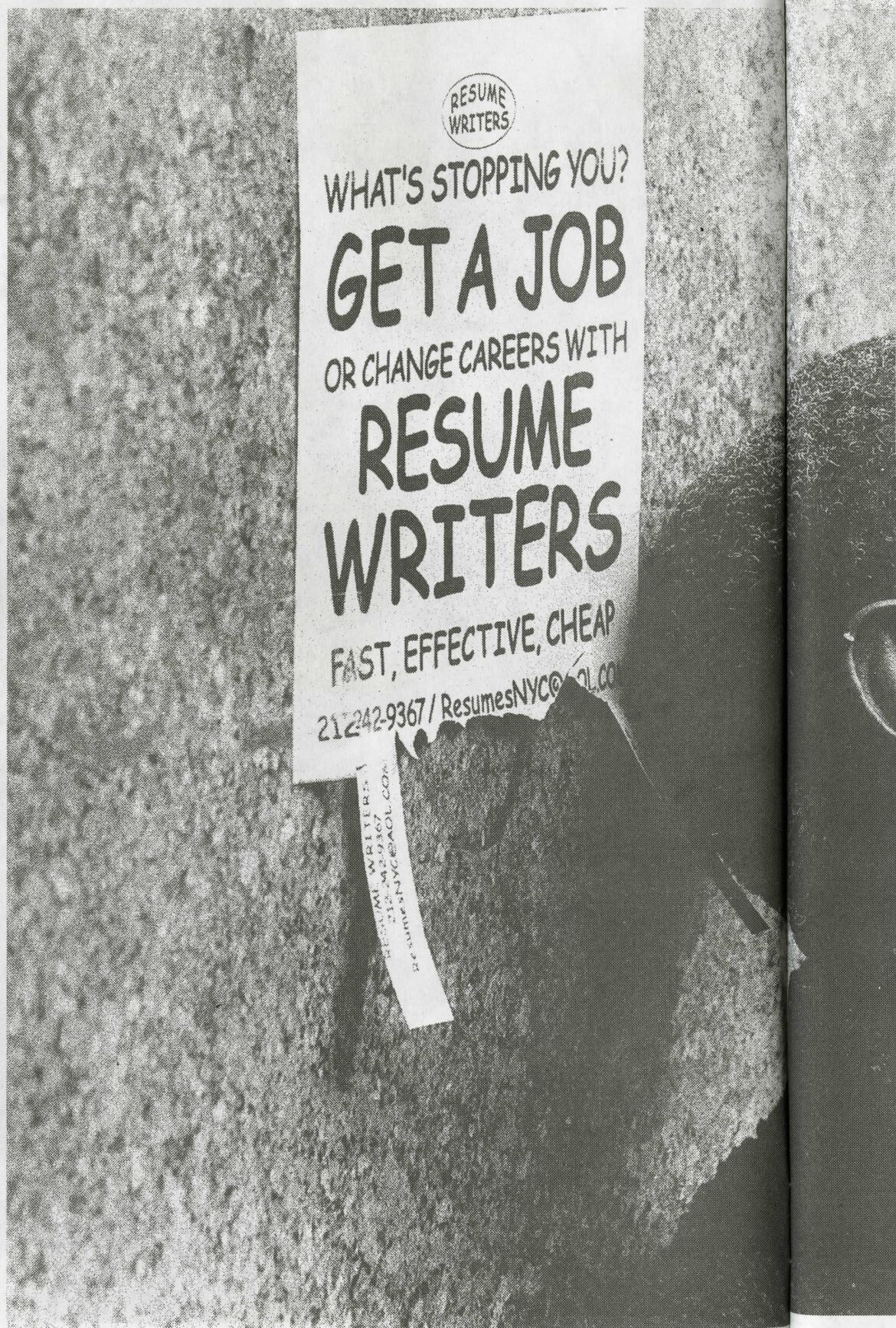
A black and white photograph of a man's face, split vertically. The left side shows him with his eyes closed, holding a cigarette in his mouth, with the word 'BOOGIE' and 'BOOGIE' with dice icons overlaid. The right side shows him with his eyes open, looking directly at the camera, with the word 'ELVIS' on his chin and '12345' in the bottom right corner.

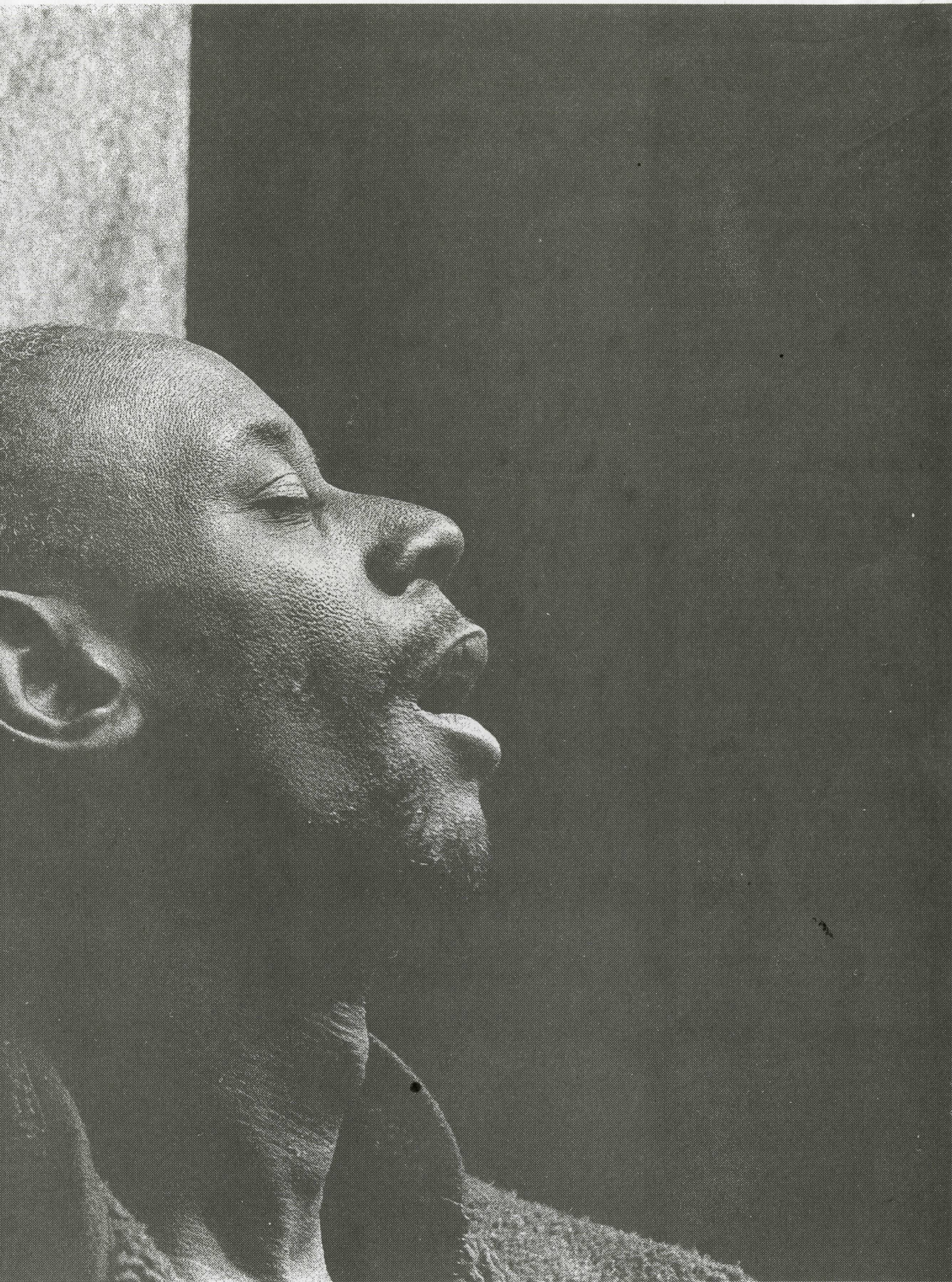
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How long have you been taking photos, and when did you start to consider your pictures "art," or of a quality that you wanted to share them with others?

I've been doing the streets for almost 10 years now. I'm trying not to consider my work as art. I'm just observing and trying to present life as it is, full of shit. At least for most of us, it is far from what the media is trying to portray. You are always subjective when it comes to your own work. There is no way you can really know if what you did is good or not until you show it to others. I'm not talking about agents, galleries, or people from the industry. They are all about making money. I am talking about regular people, like the people I shoot. I've been sending my work around for a few years, and it has been awarded many times. But maybe the best thing I've done is ARTCOUP.com, a sort of photo journal I started in March, 2002.

I think the distinction you made between the people who are making money off of art and the people who are actually in your photographs is important. You said ARTCOUP is your favorite venue for your work, and there's certainly something nice about being able to display in a space that's free and easily accessible to people all over the world. Is it important for your viewers to be people like those you shoot, who may never walk into a gallery or an art opening? Or does your work also have something to say to the agents and "high-art" industry people? Agents and galleries are also very important, although I am positive it is possible to make money without selling out. I'm not sure what the definition of visual art is, but the closest thing to it might be something that

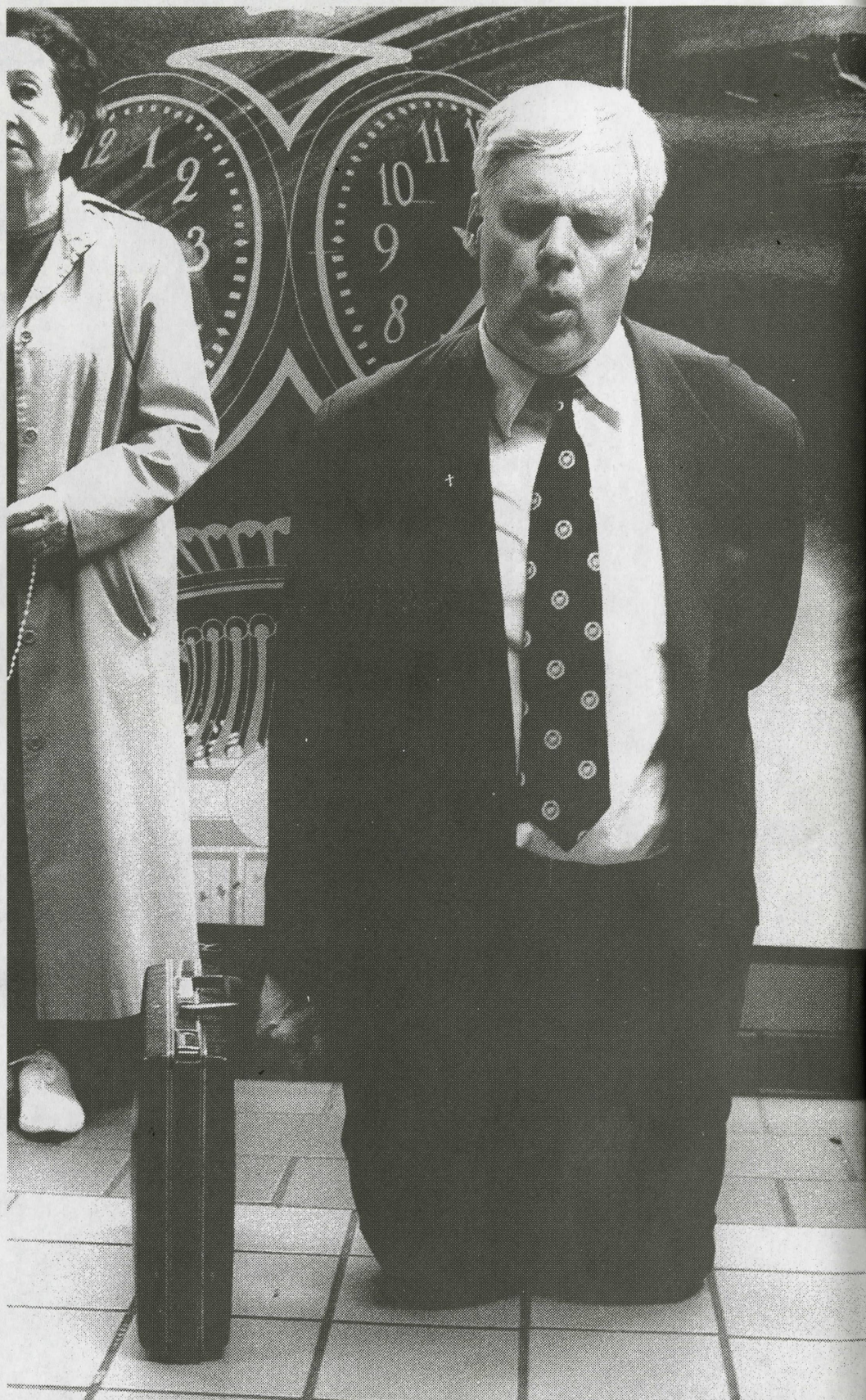




hits you hard, and you're not sure why. It's something that's strong enough without the need of explanation or does not need an art critic telling you that this is good. *High art*, how I hate that expression. Art that's larger than life. Nothing is larger than life. The Internet really did a good thing; there is a sort of a Communism on the web. Everything is accessible to everybody, and the word spreads much faster than before. ARTCOUP is definitely my favorite venue for displaying my photos because there is no pressure. I do it whenever I feel like it, and I decide what photos to use myself.

The world of art critics and established galleries breeds the "high art" mentality. However, plenty of folks run small venues, public art spaces, or have projects similar to ARTCOUP. Is there a way to work with those "high art" people without joining their ranks? In NY is there a lot of pressure to become part of that society?

You're right, they really breed that mentality, and it's a shame. Most artists will just go with the flow because it's easier, and it will bring money faster. But this is your only life, why would you waste it doing something you don't like? For money? That's nonsense. I collaborate with other artists in web/graphic design and photo fields, and I do web design to support my photography. There are plenty of extremely talented people out there in both fields. Even more now, since economy is going down, people do less commercial stuff and more personal projects. But I don't go to the galleries much. The so-called art we produce is something from the inside, our frustration that we try to purge somehow.



It is interesting to think of the web as a venue for personal and expressive media, and not just something that's used for advertising. What caught my attention about ARTCOUP is that it doesn't seem to be specifically designed for self-promotional purposes.

I'm not sure if I agree with this one. ARTCOUP is, in fact, a self-promotional project. Of course, the difference is that I don't promote myself in a way to please agents, galleries, or big brother. I'm doing my best not to care about that. If they like my stuff cool or if they don't, I'll keep doing it anyway. Life too often feels like a big fat lie. In my opinion, art should be an outlet, a way to escape. Sometimes I think I do photography because I'm a coward, because reality hurts too much. When you're behind the camera, you're an observer with no emotions, just instincts. ARTCOUP is out there so I can share what I do with people and expose my vision of the world. But it is also a tool to promote myself. Most public things artists do are in one shape or form self-promotional, regardless of what they say.

Do you ever involve yourself with public art that's not in the digital realm? Or have you seen any guerilla street-art that takes an approach similar to your own?

Last time I read a book was three years ago, not to talk about writing. I'm not sure if I can use a pen anymore. I'm totally addicted to the web, checking E-mail every minute, responding, and searching on Google. I'm sick of it. I have never collaborated with any street artists, although a friend of mine from Argentina, Dos Ojos, gave me a good idea. He will take a shot of something, or someone, then make photocopies and stick them in the place where he took the shot, leaving his e-mail address for feedback.

I'll do that when the weather improves. My favorite guerilla street artist is De La Vega. He does chalk graffiti on sidewalks, here in New York. It's great stuff.

You say you feel devoid of emotion while shooting. Your work is very much about emotion and the human qualities that make us all feel for one another. How do you think this exchange of emotion for instinct influences your ability to capture your subjects and their emotions?

I think that lack of emotions allows me to capture the moment, the emotion, or the situation without spoiling it. Without interfering too much, it allows me to capture everything the way it was meant to be. Of course, you can never eliminate the personal touch 100%. I'm trying to limit it to the technical side, angle, depth of field, and leaving the situation intact. But sometimes you just lose it. If you're shooting clashes with the cops and you're among the protestors, of course, you'll be subjective and it will affect your shots. I've never had problems with cops. I guess if you treat them with respect they'll be ok.

We've talked about your role in the art world in general, and your shooting technique, but we haven't explored your subjects. Why do you shoot people and street scenes? What's appealing about these subjects to you, or to a broader audience?

You can put me in front of the most beautiful landscape, and I just don't see it. I have tried and it doesn't work. You know, sometimes people tell you, "If your photography don't sell, you should try with some nice landscapes." So, I tried, and it was a disaster. I just don't feel that stuff. I'm a city kid, I grew up on the street, I feel good on the street, I feel the pulse of the street, and my "subjects" can sense that I feel that way and they usually trust me. Although, I usually shoot first, then ask. That way I at least get some shots. There are some really interesting characters out on the streets, especially here in New York.


There are millions of small, insignificant, untold stories. People that just couldn't or wouldn't do it anymore. People that just felt there was no hope for them. I guess that hopelessness is what I'm trying to capture.

What elements have brought these people to these solemn emotions? Do you feel this "hopelessness" paints a grim picture of our society at large?

Unfortunately I'm sure it does, the society is sick to the bone. People are totally lost, alienated, depressed, brainwashed. The ship is sinking, and I guess the whole process just got accelerated in the past 10 years, with Internet/hi-tech/media revolution. Maybe that's the whole reason why Internet was even *given* to the people. As we all know, it started as a military communication system. Brainwashed people are easier to control; they're more susceptible to the lies they're constantly fed. Media makes me feel I'm living in a Nazi mental institution.

So what do you see as the solution to the brainwashing of society by the media? Do you feel like you're part of the problem because you use this media as a venue for your art?

Frankly, I don't think there's a solution. 99% of the population is too weak, and simply wants to trust the media's lies. It's easier that way. Imagine if somebody starts to think and dig, and figures out everything he based his life on was a lie. That could be pretty tough. It's easier to just go with the flow. Media plays a key role in the formation of the New World Order, or the plan to put the world under a dictatorship of One World Government, which is unfolding before our eyes. I know it sounds like a conspiracy theory and I guess that's exactly what it is. I don't think I'm a part of the problem, I'm just observing the world without trying to impose my opinion or to influence anybody. I'm just telling the truth, and I wish more people would do so.

 boo@deadbydesign.com



SCREEN PRINT




Set up


THING

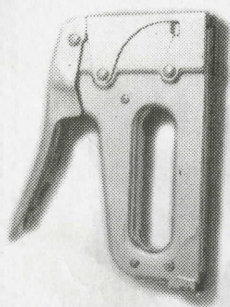
HOW TO DO IT YOURSELF

Words and photos: John Rash



If there ever were a *Slave Greatest Hits*, or a reprint collection of some kind, the only thing we know for sure would be included is this article from *Slave Number Two*. Several times a year we get letters or e-mails requesting this issue, specifically for the screen printing how-to it contains. The problem is the issue has been out-of-print for a couple of years now. At first, we thought it would be enough to post on our web-site, but then it occurred to us that, if people find it as useful as they say they do (and why would we doubt them?), we should probably reprint it in the magazine. Plus, it allows us to update the piece with a few new pieces of information. And so, here it is, our "Free Bird."





Now that your band has a name and two-and-a-half songs, undoubtedly, you're ready to make T-shirts. Screen-printing is a useful technique for producing multiple copies of any design onto clothing, canvas, paper, and many other mediums. The following step-by-step printing instructions may not be the most professional process of screening an image, yet has been proven simple and cost-efficient. Use this guide as a starter, for screening single color images. From there, you can work towards more complex projects in the future.

Part One: PREPARATIONS

Placing an image onto a silkscreen can be done through any number of methods, yet, for this article, we will focus on using a light and heat sensitive **photo emulsion** to "burn" your image onto the screen. Photo emulsion allows an artist to use photographic images in their design, and also provides durability for use time and time again. The starting point, obviously, is to create your design. Remember, the end product is a one-color print, therefore your design should not include unscreened* graytones. You can make a design by using India ink, cutouts, black and white collage, or even placing natural items such as leaves directly onto the screen. The idea is to prepare a positive image on a transparent background, which will block light from specific areas of your screen. Making a **transparency** on a photocopier is the easiest way to create a positive image from a drawing, photograph, etc. Because the final product will be a one-color interpretation of your image, choosing a complex design for your first screen is probably not a good idea. Starting simple and working towards complexity is a good track to follow. When transferring your image to a transparent background, simply take the design to a copy shop and ask them to transfer it onto a transparency. You should always have two transparencies made, as we will later discuss how this helps to better your finished image. One transparency should cost you about one dollar.

Part Two: BUILDING A SCREEN

First, you must have the materials to build a **frame**. Your frame should be flat on all sides, and have enough depth to create a bowl effect once **screen mesh** is stretched over one side. Art supply stores usually stock frames made specifically for screen-printing. Screen mesh, or the "silk," can be purchased separately. You will need enough mesh to fully cover one side of the frame, plus an extra inch of material over each edge. Mesh material comes in different mesh sizes, and you may need to ask what you are getting if you are unsure. The next step is to stretch the screen over the frame using a **staple gun**. A very specific process must be followed (the same process you would use to stretch a canvas), to ensure you create a nice

tight screen. Your first staple should start in the center of the outside edge of your frame (you can start on any side). Next, do your second staple on the bar that runs parallel to the first, while pulling the mesh as tight as possible. Now, turn your frame 90 degrees and place another staple in the center of this bar, again pulling the mesh tight. And finally, staple the mesh in the middle of the last side, leaving you with one staple in the middle of each bar on your frame. Repeat this process, gradually moving from the middle of your frame to the outside corners, always turning the frame and ensuring the mesh remains extremely tight. Sometimes, it is helpful to have a friend pull the mesh while you staple, but it is not essential. To test the tightness of the screen, run your finger along the edges of the mesh close to the frame. Once stretched, your screen should have a consistent flat surface, containing no wrinkles or weak edges. To add support and protection to the finished screen, put strong tape (duct, masking, packing) over the stapled edges of the screen. Take time with this entire process, as the extra effort will make for a long lasting screen.

Part Three: PHOTO EMULSION

You should now have a tightly stretched screen. The next step is to coat your screen with a photo emulsion mixture that will render it sensitive to heat and light. You can purchase a kit of photo emulsion chemicals that includes emulsion and **sensitizer**. It is important that you have both, because they will only become active when mixed together. Use a **clean container** for mixing your solution, but not something you would want to eat or drink out of later. You will also need a **spoon**, a **stirring utensil**, and an **old driver's license** for spreading the solution across the mesh. Using the spoon, mix four parts emulsion (the blue substance which has the consistency of glue) and one part sensitizer (yellow and watery). Stir mixture until it is bright green, and fully combined. The new chemical is now active (heat and light sensitive) and should be stored in a closed opaque container. If stored in the refrigerator the chemical will last up to two weeks, or 24 hours at room temperature. You should now coat the surface of the screen by pouring a bead of the emulsion mixture on the flat side of the screen. You can spread the bead evenly and thinly across the mesh with the driver's license. Work to achieve an even coating on both sides of the screen. To find pinholes and empty patches, hold your screen to the light. Be sure you filled any of these places before allowing the emulsion to dry. Return any excess solution to the mixing container.

**Screening a photographic or grayscale image means translating the image into a series of small dots, like how the photos appear in newspapers or in Slave. This can be done in graphics programs on a computer or on some photocopying machines.*



In an area away from light (closet, drawer, under a box) allow your screen to dry. Place the screen horizontally, flat-side-up, so the screen doesn't touch the floor. The maximum time you should allow your screen to dry before burning is six hours at room temperature. Usually a screen will be ready 2-3 hours after coating with emulsion. A screen is dry if it no longer looks wet and is not tacky to the touch. Once the screen is coated with emulsion, it must remain in a light-tight (completely dark) area until it is ready to be exposed.

Part Four: EXPOSING

Before you remove the dry screen from the dark, be sure to prepare all materials needed for this part of the process. Most importantly, you will need a strong light source for exposing the image. I recommend using an **ECA Photoflood** bulb for a good exposure. BBA Photoflood (250 watt) bulbs also work using the same exposure time and placement above screen (described later). These bulbs can be found at any camera supply store, and are commonly used for lighting in photography. The bulb should be placed inside a device for reflecting the light evenly. Metal reflectors can be purchased at the hardware store, or you can simply use an old pie plate. The bulb should hang, centered, twelve inches above your screen. You must also prepare your transparencies before exposing the screen. Both transparencies should be stapled together, perfectly aligning the image. This will eliminate inconsistencies in the photocopy and make for a darker positive image. Now place the screen below the bulb (twelve inches), with the transparency on top. If the flat side of your screen is down the transparency should appear the way you want it to appear when printed.

Once all of these elements are in place, expose the screen for ten minutes. Place the screen on a dark surface, such as a black sheet of paper, while exposing. This exposure time applies to a screen that is no less than 8" and no more than 16" in any direction, if you change any of these variables (screen size, bulb wattage, etc) you will need to adjust the height of the bulb and/or the exposure time. A screen with a larger surface will require the bulb to hang higher above the frame, and the higher the bulb the longer the exposure time.

After exposing for ten minutes you must wash the unexposed parts out of the screen. The objective is completely wash away all areas that were black on the transparency. These areas should now appear as the color of the original mesh. A powerful **sink sprayer** or shower works perfectly for blasting the emulsion out of these areas. If you have trouble getting emulsion out of a detailed area, rub the screen with a **cotton swab** and try blasting again. This process should take no more than 5-10 minutes.

Part Five: PRINTING

You should allow the screen to dry completely before starting the printing process. Many options can be explored in terms of how and what you print. A **printing press** is a very useful tool that provides the printer with a stationary surface positioned in exact same location below the screen for each new print. A printing press is a simple construction consisting of a flat printing base mounted with hinges for attaching the screen. Building a press is another article in itself, but if you use your imagination and crafting skills you can easily construct something that fits your specific needs. Of course, it is possible to place the screen on the printable surface manually. If you're not careful, though, this method can get messy and produce more botched prints. However, you should always expect some botched prints.

Before you begin printing, check the screen for pinholes and imperfections by holding it up to the light. You can patch these problems with **masking tape** before each screening session, or for a more permanent fix, paint the holes with **screen filler**. You also want to tape around the edges of your screen to prevent bleeding between the wooden frame pieces and the mesh. When taping the screen, be sure to tape on the flat surface or bottom of the screen. After taping, place the material, onto which you would like to print the image, on the press or a smooth, flat surface. Next, spoon out a bead, or line, of **ink**** across the end of the screen nearest to you. You will need a **squeegee** to push the ink through the mesh. A squeegee is a flat piece of wood or plastic with rubber on the end. Using your squeegee, apply an even blanket of ink across the mesh, with the screen lifted away from your cloth or paper. This is called a flood stroke and will help keep your screen evenly saturated. Once the screen is flooded, you can place the screen on the printable material and pull the ink across the image. Be sure to cross the entire image with the squeegee, even if it requires several strokes. Your strokes (including the flood stroke) should be easy and smooth, while holding the squeegee at a 45-degree angle. Next, lift the screen, remove your print, and give another flood stroke. Having a **kick-leg**, or prop, attached to the side of the frame will elevate the screen while it is not in use. Repeat this process for each print. Experimenting on scrap paper is a great way to get an idea of how much pressure to use. Newspaper is a cheap and easy material to use for test printing. Drawing guidelines (**registration marks**) along the edges of your frame and base (such as a center point) is really useful when lining up your image, especially when making multi-color prints. If you are screening T-shirts, most new shirts have a crease in the center that serves as a great reference line. If this is not the case, you can use the tag to find the center. These steps, when provisions are made for trial and error, should allow anyone to crank out beautiful prints in no time.

****Different materials call for different types of ink. For cloth you want to use textile ink, for papers use acrylic. Both are water-based.**



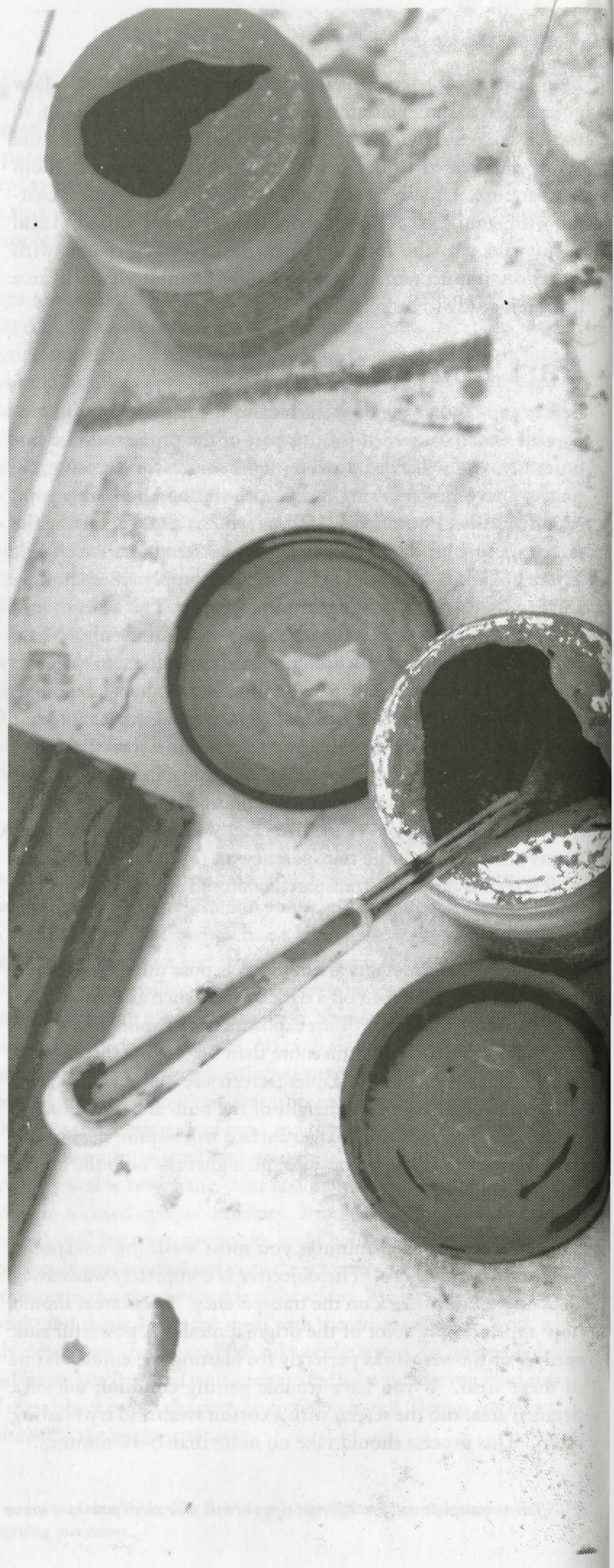
Part Six: REUSING THE SCREEN

After each printing session you want to thoroughly wash the excess ink out of the screen. Do not allow ink to dry in the mesh. It is also a good idea to remove the tape from the surface of the mesh after each use. Your screen will last for a long time if you take these precautions and treat your screen with care. Once you decide that you are finished with a particular design, you can strip the emulsion away from the mesh and start fresh. **Screen stripping solution** is available at the art supply store, but it is cheaper and just as effective to use a mixture of **bleach** and water. Two parts cold water and one part household bleach applied to both sides of the screen will dissolve hardened emulsion. This mixture should sit on the screen for 10-15 minutes, before rinsing with hot water. You will need to repeat this process until the emulsion is completely removed from the surface of your screen. Some areas may seem tougher than others and require more attention. **Rubbing alcohol**, applied with a cotton swab, will remove excess emulsion residue. *Of course, you can simply stretch new mesh material onto the frame and start over from there.

Part Seven: SCREENING ONTO FABRIC

Don't waste time or money going to the store to buy T-shirts, even if they seem reasonably priced. T-shirt factories, distributors, and outlets have good quality **irregular shirts** available for discount prices. Irregular shirts are factory rejects that didn't make the cut for one reason or another. Honestly, I have never found flaws in the irregular shirts I've bought. There are different grades of rejects, sometimes called "seconds". Most clothing or specialty T-shirt stores can provide you with the name of local distributors, factories, or outlets where you can buy irregulars. It is also possible to mail order irregulars, or even regular quality shirts, in bulk, but you will have to pay for shipping. If you are totally unconcerned with the quality of the shirts, thrift stores are good places to get an assortment of styles and colors at super cheap prices. The thrift store can also be a nice alternative to fabric stores when looking for patch-making material. When screening onto cloth it is important that you use the correct type of ink. Ink comes in water and plastic based forms. Plastic-based inks are considered higher quality, but require special equipment for the heat-setting process. To heat-set a water-based **textile ink**, simply place a clean sheet of paper over the image (after it has dried), and **iron** the shirt/patch for a minute or two. You may also consider putting the entire batch of shirts in the dryer for 10 minutes, just to ensure that they have been properly set.

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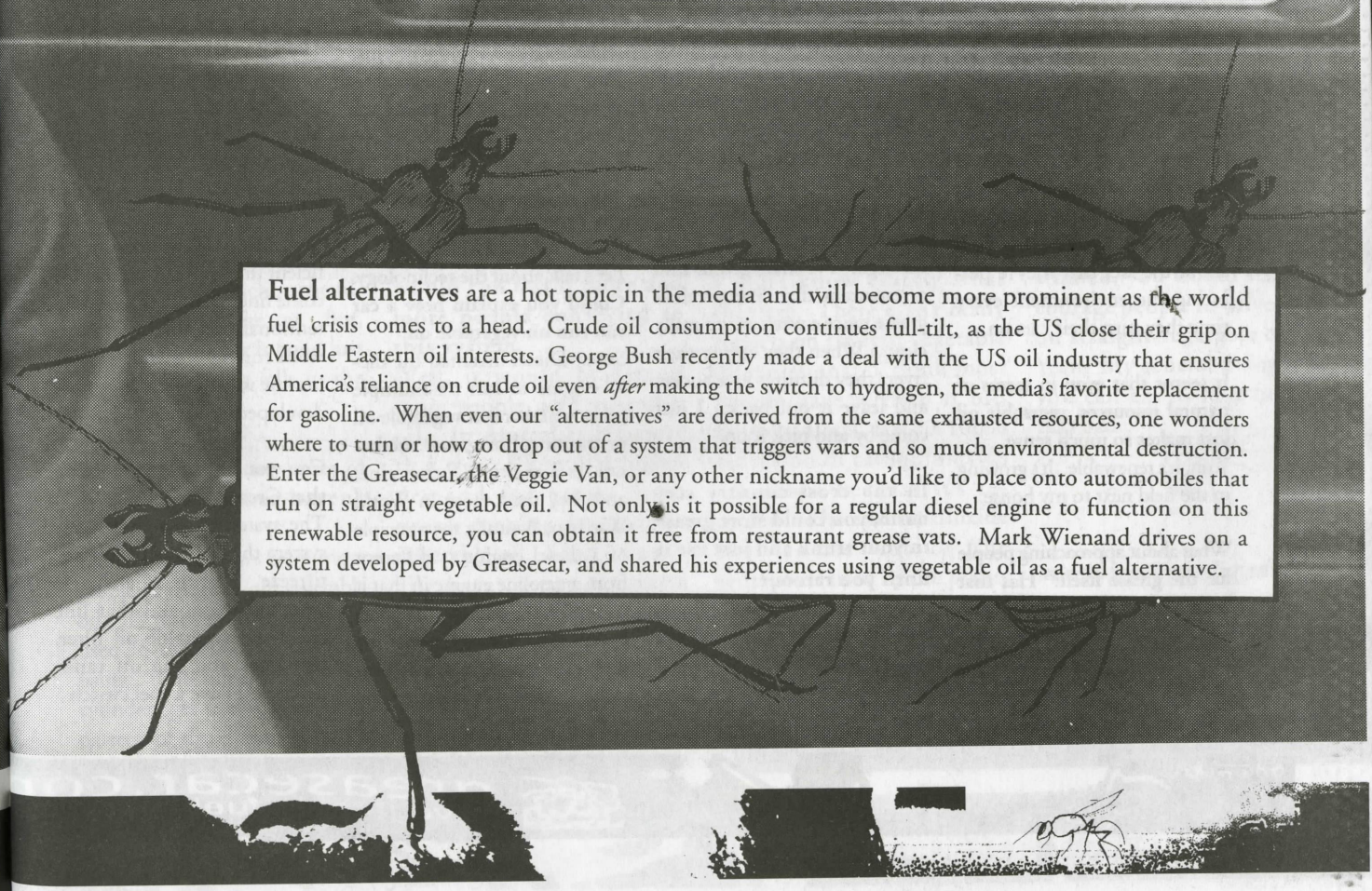


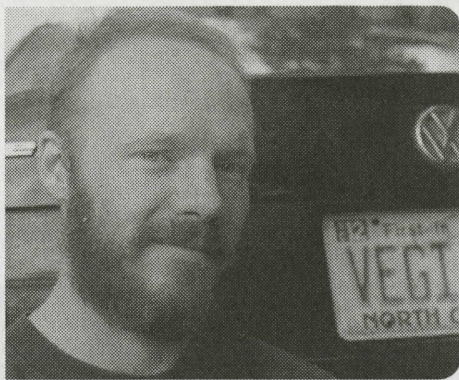
VEGGIE FUEL

An interview with **Mark Wienand** on behalf of www.greasecar.com
Interview and photos: John Rash
Illustration: Jason Hicks



Fuel alternatives are a hot topic in the media and will become more prominent as the world fuel crisis comes to a head. Crude oil consumption continues full-tilt, as the US close their grip on Middle Eastern oil interests. George Bush recently made a deal with the US oil industry that ensures America's reliance on crude oil even *after* making the switch to hydrogen, the media's favorite replacement for gasoline. When even our "alternatives" are derived from the same exhausted resources, one wonders where to turn or how to drop out of a system that triggers wars and so much environmental destruction. Enter the Greasecar, the Veggie Van, or any other nickname you'd like to place onto automobiles that run on straight vegetable oil. Not only is it possible for a regular diesel engine to function on this renewable resource, you can obtain it free from restaurant grease vats. Mark Wienand drives on a system developed by Greasecar, and shared his experiences using vegetable oil as a fuel alternative.





What is your personal experience with vegetable oil powered vehicles?

I know I first saw you on the interstate, smoking past me in a car with vegetable powered signs on it.

Most people think it's a joke and don't even ask me about it. It's very rare that someone actually stops and asks, "Does that car really run on vegetable oil?" Maybe they think I'm a vegetarian or that I'm really into fried food or something. I've never had a negative response. Most people think it's cool, mainly because it's free. People don't think about the fact that they're polluting the environment every time they turn their cars on.

It seems that even in terms of natural resources, vegetable oil just makes so much sense.

Yeah, it's renewable. It's growing in the field next to my house.

What about approaching people for the grease itself? Has that been a tedious process for you? Usually people are really open. I've only been turned down once or twice. And that's because most

restaurants have a contract with a grease recycler. This is another interesting fact: the grease that I don't pick up to use goes into animal food and cosmetics. You're either putting on your face

or feeding it to your pets. But, most people say, "Take whatever you want. That's fine." Usually, they look at me funny when I ask and I have to assure them it's real.

Have you developed any relationships with places that give you grease?

Yeah, that's the easiest thing. I drove across the country last year and we stopped at Chinese joints mainly. They have a lot of oil, and it's usually fairly clean. Occasionally, there's a language barrier. But, it's fine. I think we only took it once without asking, at an Arby's. You can use just about any grease. It just depends on how much work you want to put into it. How much nastiness you want to go through. I've managed to find a restaurant that changes their grease twice a week, so it's really clean. When they empty their fryers they dump it in a bucket and leave it out back. I just come by and pick it up.

In the cross-country scenario, you could store grease in your trunk and just use it until you ran out.

There were only a few occasions where we found a huge amount of fresh oil and we were exhilarated. I have five or six, five-

gallon jugs in my trunk so we could get 36 gallons of grease.

What's the fuel efficiency like when driving on grease?

I've found that I get about 10% less miles per gallon than I do off of diesel fuel. In my car I get 50 miles to the gallon on the highway with diesel and 45 with the oil. So it's still considerably better than 98% of gas cars. That's why Europe is switching over to diesel for their cars. The technology is there to make it much more efficient and the technology is there to make it much cleaner. In Europe they make all kinds of little diesels. There's a Yugo that gets almost 100 miles to the gallon on a little three-cylinder diesel engine. I would love to have one of those.

Are you worried that you car might break down before it should using the vegetable oil?

The technology is sound, and technically, it should work just fine. So, I figure it's worth it to me to try it even if my car breaks down at 200,000 miles rather than 300,000 or 400,000 miles. I haven't had any problems at all yet.

Let's talk about the technology. Could you explain how a car can run on vegetable oil?

Sure. Diesel invented the diesel engine to run on multiple fuels, whether it is vegetable oil or motor oil or gas or methanol, as a multiple fuel engine, and they used those in World War Two. Basically, the principle of a diesel engine is different from a gasoline engine in that it uses pressure to heat the combustion chamber up so that the fuel will explode. So the compression ratio in a diesel engine

is, like, 20 to 1. It compresses 20 units of air down to one, which superheats it to something like 1200 degrees. The flash point of vegetable oil, which is when it ignites, is around 600 degrees. So the temperature of the combustion chamber is well above where vegetable oil would ignite. Anyone who's worked in a Chinese restaurant will be familiar with grease fires. That's basically the principle. It gets hot enough in there, that grease will burn. The only other thing you have to do is thin it out. Vegetable oil is too thick to go through the fuel injectors. What I have in my car is a system that heats the vegetable oil up and, as it gets hotter, the viscosity drops and it thins out enough to go through the injectors. I think my tank stays at somewhere around 120 degrees and at that temperature the viscosity of vegetable oil is not that much thicker than diesel fuel.

Have car companies made it less possible to do this as time has gone on?

Yeah. There are some tractors from around 1920, 1910 that you could just dump vegetable oil right into the gas tank. But, as engines have become more efficient the spray pattern has become finer. I don't think it's intentional that made cars that won't run on vegetable oil. It's just the way the technology has developed.

Can you explain the system that Grease Car sells?

The system is a separate fuel system that is heated using antifreeze. You tie in a line to your antifreeze and that line heats the vegetable oil filter, the lines and the oil tank. Then you have a fuel switch

that switches back and forth between the diesel fuel and the vegetable oil.

So, you actually need diesel fuel to run the car?

I turn it on diesel and let the antifreeze heat up. When it reaches a certain temperature, I switch it over to vegetable oil.

How long does that take?

During the summer you could let it run for two minutes and switch it over. But, the winter you probably want to let it run for 10 minutes.

Did you install the system yourself or did you have to go to a mechanic?

I drove up to Massachusetts and had someone help me install the first one. It's not that hard to do if you know anything at all about cars.

Do you have to pre-filter the vegetable oil before you put it in your car?

Yeah, most definitely. The filters that I use are fine enough in the pre-filtering process that I've driven about 18,000 miles in this car and I haven't have to change the fuel system yet. So, I think the pre-filtering system gets out just as much as the filtering system in the car. But, the filter in the car is good just in case something falls in the tank or whatever.

Do you know of any cases of cars like this that haven't worked as well?

Old cars sometimes have more problems with straight vegetable oil. It's just that they've gotten used to the fuel that they are using. The injectors and the cylinders get used to the spray pattern of diesel fuel. I had a 1985 Jetta and I drove it for

probably 15,000 miles on vegetable oil and then it started crapping out on me. I don't know how much of it had to do with the vegetable oil and how much of it had to do with the car. It probably had 300,000 miles on it. I don't know. The speedometer was broken. I've spoken to other people who've said the same thing. Older cars don't do as well.

What's the longest you know of someone driving a car with this kind of system?

I don't know. There's a competitor company out in California. I think he's had a car go 100,000 miles.

You said you get oil used from restaurants. If someone didn't have this connection, could they just buy vegetable oil at the grocery store?

A quart of vegetable oil cost between \$2-\$4 as opposed to \$1.50 for diesel fuel. It's cost-prohibitive to do it on new vegetable oil.

What is the long-term goal? It seems that the free vegetable oil resources would run out if more and more people converted to this system.

Well, it would be nice if more people used vegetable oil. In Australia, it's more that way. There is a higher demand for grease from people running their cars on vegetable oil. So, they actually have to pay for waste grease, whereas here I can get it for free. In the long run, I think, there are ways we could produce more vegetable oil, if there was a demand for it. We could cer-

tainly up the amount of oil producing crops like soybeans and corn. Also there is a type of algae that produces like 50% of its body weight in vegetable oil.

I was think one possible long-term use could be public transit. Cities could pick up grease like trash or recycling and run the city's bus system on it.

Oh yeah. That's a great idea. Some cities are running buses on blends of bio-diesel fuel, which is a fuel made out of methanol and vegetable oil. The National Soybean Board is primary group lobbying Capital Hill to create tax incentives for using bio-diesel fuel. But the limit is that you can only get a tax write-off for using virgin soybeans and not from waste grease. There are some politics involved there. But, it is encouraging to me that several city bus systems are using blends. It's a start. You can buy bio-diesel at the pump in Europe in a lot of places.

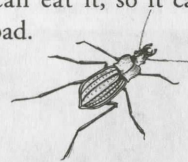
What are the emissions like from the vegetable oil?

I don't know exactly what they are. There aren't many reports on straight vegetable oil emissions. I think most people have written it off. For bio-diesel, it's 70-100% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions because it's recycled. The carbon dioxide that comes out of the tailpipes is used by the plants

that make the oil. Most of the most harmful emissions are reduced or eliminated. There's a book by Joshua Tickell called *From the Fryer to the Fuel Tank*. They drove a little Winnebago, stopping and making bio-diesel along the way. They're real pioneers. They have a video of how to make your own bio-diesel fuel. You can make bio-diesel in a cheap home process, and with bio-diesel, you don't have to do anything to the car. You can just put it straight in the tank. The only problem is when it gets really cold in congeals so you have to mix it with regular diesel during the winter. Since converting my car I haven't made bio-diesel. It's not as important to me since I'm running on vegetable oil anyway. But, my ultimate goal is to find or make bio-diesel that I can run in my gas tank, so that I never have to use diesel fuel to ignite the vegetable oil. For me, running the car on straight vegetable oil is easier, because I don't have to make the bio-diesel. It's more convenient.

Even though it hasn't been studied, you would still encourage people to drive a car on straight vegetable oil?

Yeah. My general thought is, you can eat it, so it can't be that bad.



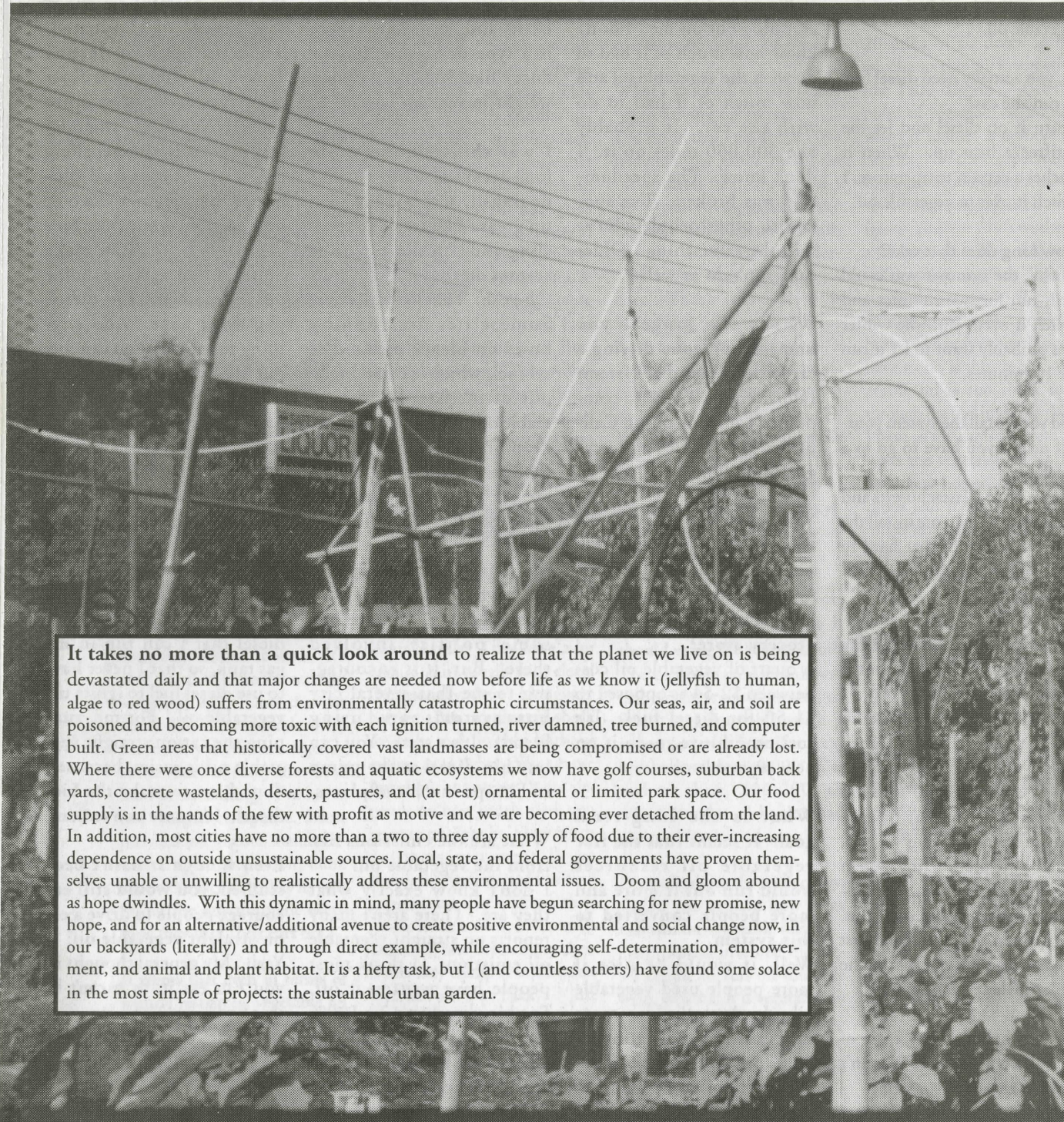
mweinand@pfeiffer.edu

www.greasecar.com

www.greastation.com

www.biodiesel.org





It takes no more than a quick look around to realize that the planet we live on is being devastated daily and that major changes are needed now before life as we know it (jellyfish to human, algae to red wood) suffers from environmentally catastrophic circumstances. Our seas, air, and soil are poisoned and becoming more toxic with each ignition turned, river damned, tree burned, and computer built. Green areas that historically covered vast landmasses are being compromised or are already lost. Where there were once diverse forests and aquatic ecosystems we now have golf courses, suburban back yards, concrete wastelands, deserts, pastures, and (at best) ornamental or limited park space. Our food supply is in the hands of the few with profit as motive and we are becoming ever detached from the land. In addition, most cities have no more than a two to three day supply of food due to their ever-increasing dependence on outside unsustainable sources. Local, state, and federal governments have proven themselves unable or unwilling to realistically address these environmental issues. Doom and gloom abound as hope dwindles. With this dynamic in mind, many people have begun searching for new promise, new hope, and for an alternative/additional avenue to create positive environmental and social change now, in our backyards (literally) and through direct example, while encouraging self-determination, empowerment, and animal and plant habitat. It is a hefty task, but I (and countless others) have found some solace in the most simple of projects: the sustainable urban garden.



Words: Chris Newsom

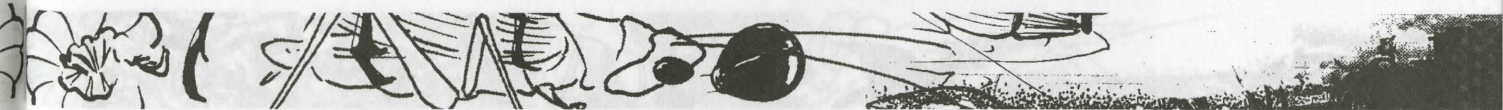
Photos: Meredith Coll, Chris Newsom



EST AVE

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DIRT UNDER MY NAILS





The organic city garden

is life in an otherwise dying or dead environment. It brings me joy and connects me to the earth and to my community. It provides food and helps to turn a small piece of an otherwise urban landscape (100 yards from a toxic railway yard) into something primal, wild, and organic. It is a rare, under-appreciated, and often overlooked example of life in a dying world.

Gardening is an opportunity for folks (the working and oppressed majority of the world) to begin reclaiming a basic facet of their survival, and in doing so to take back some control. It is a chance to create our own visions of what should go on around us and to us and our fellow plant and animal species. In the process, we are giving back to the earth and rebuilding some of what has been sacrificed to capitalism, corporate globalization, and illegitimate ideas of progress.

There is a substantial amount of literature out there on sustainable gardening and I encourage you to check it out. However, there are a couple of major points that will be common in most texts or presentations on the subject (especially those that deal with permaculture). It is best to keep in mind that just getting started is more important than anything you may read in a book, and the best teacher (especially to your specific bio-region or neighborhood) is the trial and error that you face and others have seen first hand. The most basic and useful of these points for initial creation of your garden are (in my opinion and experience) the compost pile and the sheet mulching technique. If these two processes are done well, many other vari-

ables, like beneficial insects and soil and plant health, will be met on at least an elementary level.

COMPOSTING

The compost pile is the heart of any sustainable garden. It is the life source that will enrich the plants you grow and is a prime example of a natural relationship that we should attempt to recreate and reproduce in our daily lives and communities. Dead end, one-way, single-use products and systems surround us. The compost pile is the rare occurrence of the circle of life completed. What we do not eat and employ the first time around is put back into the living system to be reused in a higher form to grow additional food or amend depleted soils. The numbers can be staggering, but it is easy to look around in any food store, warehouse, or home and picture what potential is lost by sending organic waste to landfills (not to mention human waste).

An easy formula for composting is to use one part wet or green material (table scraps, lawn clippings, etc.) to three parts dry material. I often use wheat straw or leaf matter. These materials should be applied in alternating layers while ensuring a proper balance between the dry and wet, and reducing the chances of the pile becoming compacted, with limited airflow. Air exposure to the pile is very important as you are trying to create an optimum environment for microbial life (fungi and bacteria); specifically aerobic bacteria, which needs air to prosper. Anaerobic bacteria which does not need air will also work in your bin, but will do so at a slower pace and may lead to the unappealing smells that are often wrongly ascribed to healthy compost systems. Also keep in mind that diversity of materials is key for a healthy end product.

The three essential ingredients, aside from what you will be adding, are water, oxygen, and the animal and bacterial variables. My preferred compost bin is composed of four pallets attached together into a square.

Smaller or larger bins will work just as well if space is limited or extensive. I suggest that you place the bin in a fairly shaded area to reduce the chances of the pile drying out (you can always water the pile by hand if needed) and begin with a dry coarse layer to facilitate drainage. The pile should remain moist but not soggy. If you want to speed up the process you may turn the pile every few weeks with a pitchfork or your hands to expose more of the pile to the air. Too much turning will cool the pile and slow decomposition. For those without yards or available space, I suggest the practice of vermiculture. I have friends in large cities that maintain excellent compost boxes under their kitchen sinks by using red worms in this process instead of the more traditional bins described above. To jump-start decomposition, it is helpful to add worms and a small amount of compost (from a friend's



aged pile or garden center) to inoculate your bin with beneficial life forms and bacteria that may otherwise take some time to inhabit your specific set up. Keep in mind what you are trying to do is mimic what nature does all around us (on the forest floor, for example). Any plant matter is useable, but avoid very oily food scraps, large amounts of flour and breads, and very fibrous or woody plants. All animal material is best left out (eggs, meat, cheese, etc.) as it attracts unwanted pests and runs a high risk of contamination if the pile does not become very active (and hot through thermophilic composting) for an extended period of time. Finished compost should be moist and dark with little to no visible signs of intact matter and should have an earthy pleasant smell. Compost is best applied to the garden two months before planting and can be worked into the top three to four inches of soil with a tool or by hand or may be applied directly to the garden surface and covered with mulch.



SHEET MULCHING

The basic premise of sheet mulching is creating or building a growing medium from the ground (or extreme case; rock, concrete or sand) up, allowing the grower to work with even the most lacking conditions. As is the case with most successful gardening techniques, sheet mulching seeks to mimic a preexisting natural process. Traditional gardens involve tilling, digging, and hoeing an area to be left bare until planting time. Sheet mulching takes into account that in nature every environment (except desert) assures that soil is never left exposed and vulnerable to damage. This use of mulch mimics the forest floor and its cycle of leaves gathering, decaying, and nourishing healthy plant undergrowth.

Sheet mulching may be labor intensive to set up, but in the long run will save sweat,



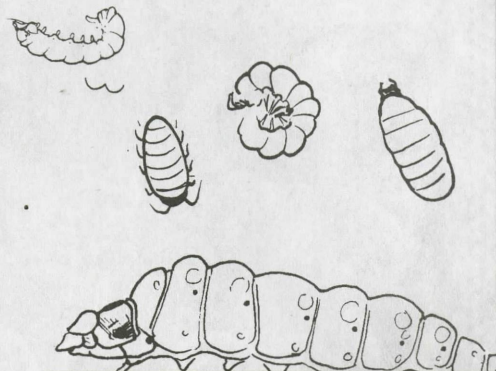
time, and shovel work. Supplies you will need include: equal parts dry (brown) and wet (green) organic matter, a little topsoil (if available), compost, bordering materials, and any other natural fertilizers or clean decaying material you can find. The proportions will be relative to the size of the garden you wish to create, but a good rule is that you can never have too much to work with as any additional material can be added later or can be composted. To start, I recommend that you first section off the area or areas you wish to work with. Keep in mind that this layering process works best when deepest, so you should look for borders that range up to twelve inches high. In my garden, I use a variety of materials but lean heaviest on tree stumps, bricks, and other natural (salvaged) items. Any shape will do, but keep in mind that you will want to be able to reach the center of your bed from several angles to easily work the plants and soil.

Set your borders and cut all plant growth that may be within this confined space as low as you can. With each layer we are trying to build up healthy material to feed and hold our plants, as well as create a situation that will minimize weed or unwanted growth and hold moisture. Also, water generously before each section is applied. After clearing the ground, apply newspaper or cardboard to smother any weeds that may survive the cutting. This is your base. From this point, work to layer alternating sets of green and brown matter with compost and soil added more sparingly. Layer width may vary but try for a range of one to three inches, because there will be considerable sink going on as things break down and work together. Try to keep the sheets loose and non-compacted with room for air circulation and root growth. Build this up to your border's top edge and cover the entire garden in loose straw or other

brown cover, then soak thoroughly. The bed can now be directly sown or planted. Over time, sheet mulching naturally breaks down and thins out requiring added layers after a few seasons. An application

of compost and additional top mulch cover at this time will help raise and thicken the bed and add nutrients. When the bed thins, you will also notice the subsoil (that lies under where you've built) gradually loosening and becoming healthy and full with worm activity. At all times avoid standing or otherwise compacting your bed (especially when wet) to prevent hardened, unhealthy soil.

Though only two of a score of urban gardening techniques, these are a starting place for the new grower. Keep in mind that the sustainable garden, if done properly, will improve with time, and your knowledge of natural systems will increase with each season. Also remember that it is best to have your garden close to your living space in order to watch, learn, and appreciate daily the natural processes and contributions made to plant and animal habitat, ecological sustainability, and empowerment through food production. Get out and grow.



Definitions

Vermiculture: Composting technique that employs red worms in a controlled space to break down matter. Generally in limited settings, producing highly beneficial compost.

Permaculture: "...philosophy of working with, rather than against nature, or thoughtful protracted and thoughtful observation, rather than protracted and thoughtless action; of looking at systems in all their functions rather than asking only one yield of them; of allowing systems to demonstrate their own evolution." Bill Mollison, 1990


Humanure: End result of human wastes after thorough and intensive thermophilic (or heat intensive) composting.

FURTHER READING:

Introduction to Permaculture by Bill Mollison
The Humanure Handbook by Joseph Jenkins
One Acre and Security
www.permaculture.org
www.cityfarmer.org
www.permacultureactivist.net



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Images of PROTEST

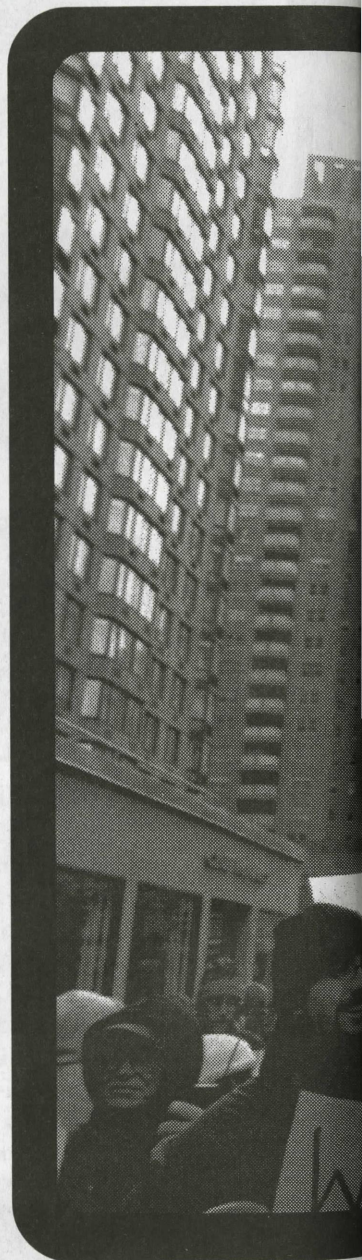
Words and photo: John Rash
Photo: September 30, 2001, Washington, DC

Global activists' fervor for political change has been boiling over in the past few years. Starting with the W.T.O. protests in Seattle, November 30, 1999 ("The Battle in Seattle") and carrying through George Bush's wars on terrorism and Iraq, people worldwide are standing up in record numbers to speak out against injustices and faulty political systems. Risking arrest, injury, and sometimes their careers, activists are putting themselves on the line for what they believe. The international activist circuit has become more closely knit, as people are traveling across oceans to take part in larger demonstration or organizing simultaneous events on targeted days worldwide. Protest is equally joyous as it can be trying, especially in times of heightened police response and brutality. This piece is a focus on recent anti-war demonstrations through photography. These images are of the people who work for a better future, the events that have caught the attention of passersby and the mainstream media alike, and speak to the celebration and suffering of organized demonstration.

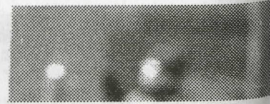


Photos: Boogie

February 15, 2003

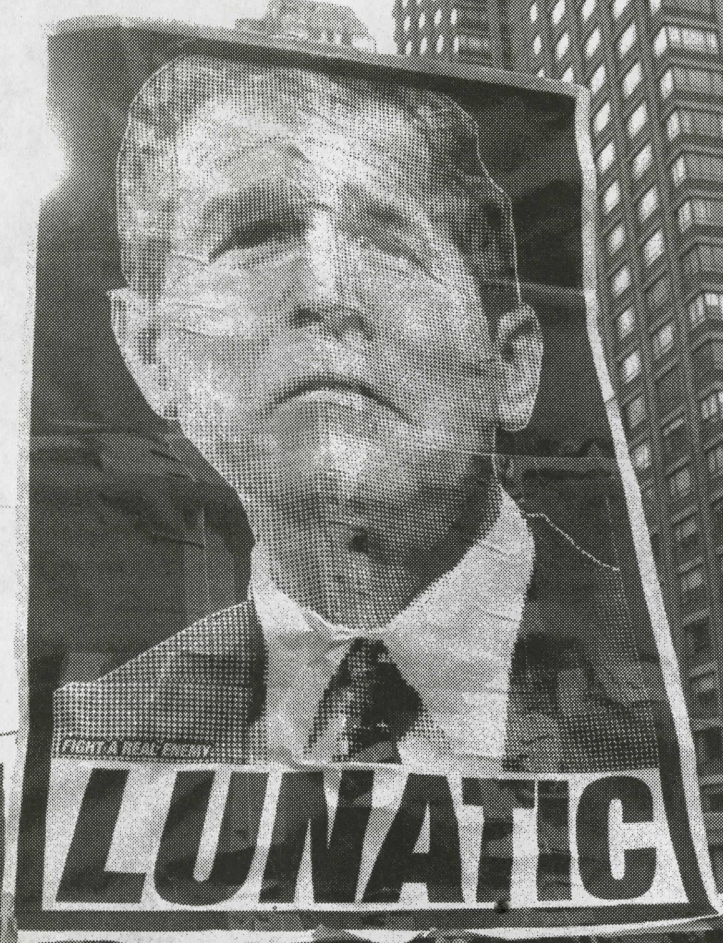


STAFF



NEW YORK CITY

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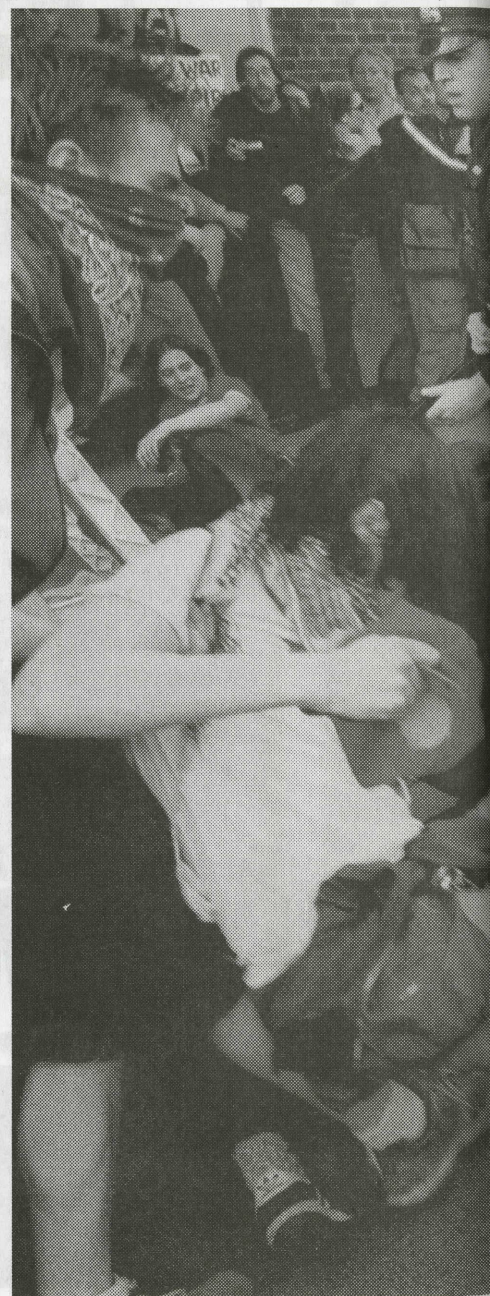
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March 22, 2003

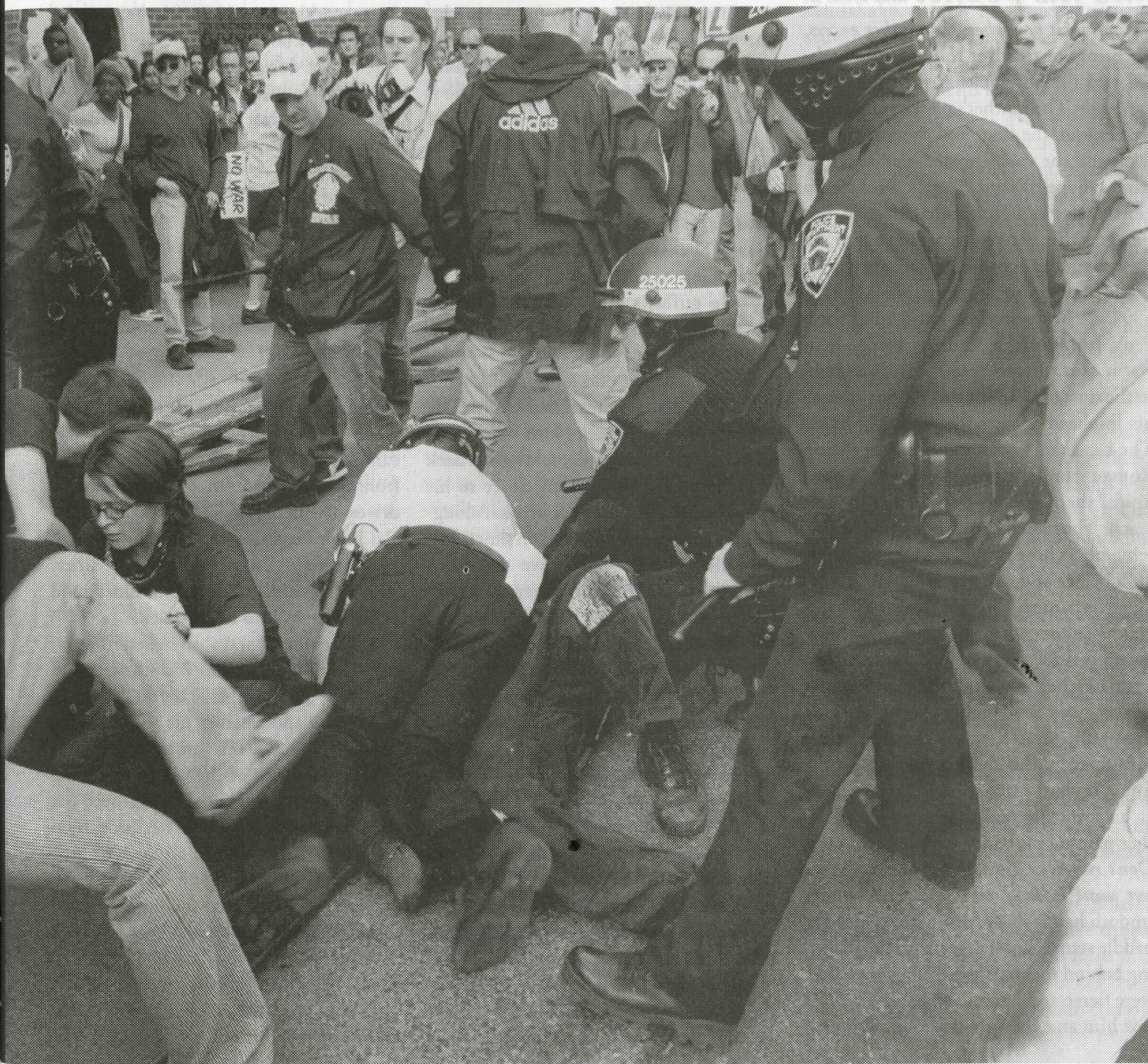
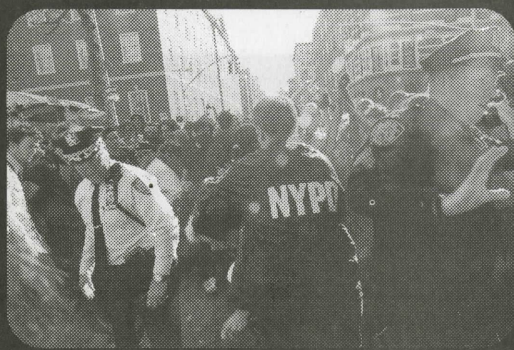
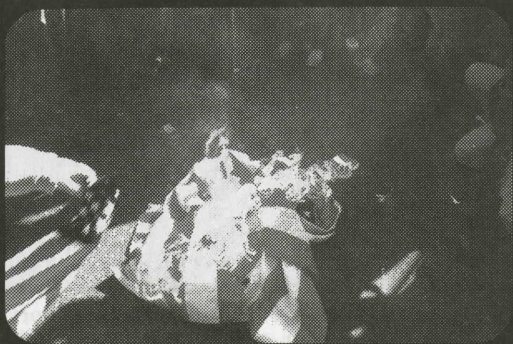


Photos: Boogie



NEW YORK CITY





FICTION FICTION

The father reaches into his pocket *and looks at*

the youngest boy when the mother enters. He brings out a silver roll of antacid tablets and the boy looks at them like they are candy. The mother's plastic mules clatter between the floor and the pads of her heels and she wears frosted-glass earrings in the shape of fruit. Her buttocks grab gently at the black gabardine of her pants. She moves from ashtray to trashcan, from counter to cabinet, as if she is performing and tired.

The boy's brothers call to her for a Pepsi from outside and she brings it in warm cans, throws it to them. Breathing in the dust of dead moths, the boy presses his forehead against the window screen. The brothers, Oscar and Pete, are slicing Roman candles neatly open with a penknife, their dented Pepsi's within easy reach. They are twins. The youngest boy remembers how mustard made his hands look bright and rotten.

His name is Leon and he runs his fingers just under the satiny edges of his blanket to feel the scratch. It is cocoa brown with heathered yellow threads weaving across every few inches. Sometimes he moves the scratch across the skin above his upper lip, his mouth starting for the finger it won't catch. He stopped sucking at his knuckles and thumb when his father painted his hands with hot mustard. *Don't rub your eyes. And hold your hands out until it dries, like this.* The father's smooth hands flopped and hung in a dog paddle stance, his orange plaid shirt straining behind them. The eyes above the shirt were fierce and Leon drew back. The eyes saw him and they grew soft and sad.

When Leon's grandmother comes to visit she never stays longer than forty-five minutes. But now she must stay for two weeks. She has had surgery on her knee and her body is big. She lives alone and cannot risk a fall. She sits at the table as if she is making a short visit, chewing primly on a dry sliver of gum. Her pantyhose are dark and the dye in her hair shines blue-black.

"Come here, Leon." A stiff cardigan sweater cages her form and makes it square. She wants to see the mole on his nose. "Get that blanket off your face."

He guffaws and pretends to shoo her with his arms, but drops the blanket onto his feet.

"Come closer and let me see."

Her voice is clear and even. The mother throws ice cubes into two glasses and kicks the fallen refrigerator grille back into place. The boy inches closer to his grandmother, dragging the blanket alongside his small steps. Blue cotton shorts balloon around him. They have tiny hammers, saws, and measuring tapes printed all over them. He reaches her knees but will not touch her. She rubs her thumb over his nose and makes him jump back.

"Why are you pushing my nose?" he demands, covering his face with both hands. He is glad his wrists hide his mouth at the corners, where saliva has bubbled out.

The mother laughs. "Leon, you are so sensitive!" She returns to the round teak table and the iced glasses sit, untouched, on the daisy-papered counter.

Leon's eyes fill. The grandmother bends forward in her seat and catches him by the bicep. She pulls him hard against the side of her great linen thigh, pressed oblong by the slatted chair. His tears have

spilled onto the hem of her dress. Short pink fingernails frame his eyes and cheeks as she tilts his face upward. She lets the water sparkle around his eyelashes and slip down to his jaw.

"It's a *beauty* mark!" she exclaims. "Perfectly round and black."

Leon places a peeling fingertip at the end of his nose, searching the air, then landing.

The mother rises and slings the cold, sweaty glasses into the sink. The orange one breaks and spits past her eye, nearly slicing her temple. Half of the father's face peers in from the sand-colored living room and she rolls her eyes away from him.

The grandmother rides in the back seat when Leon is driven to His Stars day camp. She will not sit with an airbag in front of her. The mother shimmies as she drives. She dances to oldies and commercial jingles and does not watch the road. Her tires flirt in and out of the lines. Through the seat the grandmother's good knee burrows into Leon's back.

The music stays on when the car stops. Leon unbuckles his seatbelt and opens the door. He grabs his duck-shaped lunch tote and steadies his shoes on the sparkly asphalt. His mother rhumbas around the front of the car lip-synching *Sherry Bay yay bee* and peering over her small sunglasses. She puts her mouth on Leon's, still moving it along with the words. Her breath is apple-sweet and she places her hand on the small of his back, dipping him as she kisses.

"You should not kiss your son like that." The grandmother worries thick, long rolls into the skin of her forehead and peers out the half-open window.

SERENITY PRAYER

Kelly Alden Cunningham

The mother's lips become still. Her skirt hangs crooked around her waist and the fabric licks at her thighs. She presses her mouth, satiny and wet, over Leon's lips and most of the skin below his nose.

"Bye, sugar." She snickers, her nose touching his. "Don't forget your sweet blanky." She reaches in the car and tosses the blanket onto his head. He leaves it there until the door slams. When he pulls it down around his shoulders he sees his grandmother staring at him from the window. She is biting furiously at her nails.

If he falls down, he pretends like he didn't. Doesn't unbottle his cloudy stare, or reach to those who stick out their hands. He falls down a lot. His shoes are too big and his mind wanders. The shiny black pebbles in the creek behind his house, his father's smooth and musty shootrees. He feels his soft brown hair curving like fruit peelings over the tops of his ears. It is hair long enough for a wrinkled nose from Miss Dot, the head counselor; long enough to hide the pointy crests of his ears.

He works nimbly with paints, finishing his fake stained glass Serenity Prayer while the other children still labor, tongues out, scrubbing the hairs from their brushes. He is pleased with the colors before they are baked onto the praying hands and blocky letters. He has painted the shirt cuffs so that they fade from blue to white and he wonders if he can keep the gift a secret until Christmas.

"Leon, are you finished?" Mister Tracy has a red fringe of hair that switches across his forehead like a broom. Leon nods. "You are completely finished, you cleaned and dried your brush."

"Mm-hm."

Mister Tracy sighs and scrambles his pen point across the clipboard with a dotting and scraping rhythm that comforts Leon.

"Okay, you can go to chapel. Here's your quarter." He pinches open a purple leather change purse and consults his clipboard before dropping the coin into Leon's palm. "Your mom needs to pack you some more quarters. You only have one left." Mister Tracy wipes his hand on his shorts, then places it on Leon's shoulder. "Can I trust you to tell her, or do I need to put a note in your box?"

Leon squints and scratches behind his knee with the cold rubber toe of his sneaker. He remembers two weeks ago, when she came to camp in the middle of the day to bring him his forgotten lunch. She did not see he was eating a lunch Mister Tracy had bought him, did not see him wince when she hooted like an owl and cradled him in her arms. She spun round and round, holding him loosely until he threw up macaroni salad on the cement floor. She touched the edge of the white puddle with her shoe and wrinkled her nose. *Gross!* After she left Leon sat in front of his vomit as if to hide it and would not look at anyone.

Leon reaches for Mister Tracy's red pen, chuckling casually. "Here, I'll just write it on my hand."

Mister Tracy snaps the pen closed and holds it to his chest. "Leon, that is not a good idea. Ink can soak through your skin and get into your blood. It will make you sick." He lifts his clipboard papers to the last page and begins to dash off a note. He stops writing and looks at Leon, whose face is rigid. "Are you okay?"

Leon shrugs.

"Leon, I didn't mean to hurt your

feelings. I just don't want you to be sick. I'm sorry I yelled, okay? I was being selfish." He sticks his hand down for a handshake, which Leon accepts awkwardly, smiling, with amazement flashing in his eyes.

Leon shuffles his feet quickly over the wide gravel path lined with brown juniper trees and scorching patches of sky. He drops his quarter, picks it up, and drops it again. It is dusty and he puts it in his mouth, sucks off the dull powdering. He thinks of the big purple-and-red glass windows and the blue velvet pew cushions. He farts and giggles at the squeaky noise, at the thought of farting before going into the church, with nobody knowing what he just did.

Saturdays there is no day camp. Leon stays at home and hovers around his brothers. They are now splitting bottle rockets and have small jars full of white powder. Oscar soon grows tired of Leon's unblinking eyes. He and Pete pick Leon up and throw him down on the front lawn, then march back to the driveway in their matching red swim shorts. The drying grass warms Leon through his clothes and the gaps in his teeth are soon stuffed full with clover stems. There was no clean underwear in his drawer, so he wears none at all. The neighbor across the street greets guests who are limping from their cars, dazed by the heat. The neighbor wears a thin green T-shirt that shows his nipples and the donut hole of his bellybutton.

"You stay away from that house, that...family, Leon." His mother drops onto a large flagstone beside his head and poses by leaning over on one elbow. Her straight, white smile is frosted with creamy fuchsia and haloed indistinctly by trees.

The smile stretches and parts, laughs at the man's red holey nose and neckless wife who is fatter than he is. "They have a c-u- See those fancy cars? They think he's Moses, or Jesus, or something. His daughter hates it. She pushed him out a window. That's why those bushes are smashed in that one spot." She grabs Leon's middle with wiggling fingers, but he is not ticklish and he curls his torso in irritation. She gets up and checks the mailbox.

When she glides back over him with a ruffled fan of envelopes in her hand, she speaks gaily. "I'll tell you what that is when you're seven, the c-u-l...oh, never mind." She pauses, then turns on him with her grin at its widest and her eyes tight and hollow. "Can you believe she tried to push him out a window? Now you wouldn't do that to me, would you?" Tongue drooping out sideways, she mimics a fall with a graceful sweep of her body. Dropping envelopes on the grass, she holds the stooping posture and expression of ghastly surprise until she disappears through the front door. Leon knows the bush is splintered and brown because it is sick. Men with thin electric saws tore through it just the day before. Leon looks at the man's only daughter playing in her front yard. She is six years old, same as Leon, but small and bony. He cannot imagine this girl pushing her large father out of a window.

"You are crazy, I've decided." The grandmother holds her sandals in her lap.

The mother laughs so hard she coughs. "Jo, you are a card. Too much!"

"Talk real, dammit. I'm telling you—I'm not telling a joke!"

Leon bangs his tooth against the

sticky white door when his grandmother shouts, but the two women do not hear him, and he doesn't pull away from his watching place.

"Pam, you sit down and talk to me."

The mother walks around the table, and drops jauntily into a chair. "So let's chat!" She balances her elbow on the table and rests her chin in her hand.

"No, not chat. I am going to tell you something, ask you something. You look at me and tell me the truth."

The mother nods brightly. Her eyelashes are tinted violet.

"What's going on? You always laugh. Can you always be happy? You say things...that don't mean anything, and you're always dancing like a—" She waves her papery-skinned arms and the flesh wobbles like it's coming off the bone.

The mother throws back her head and grins. She moves her arms like she is dancing a hula. "I *love* to dance!"

The grandmother clutches the edge of the table. "Pam, you weren't always like this, not even close! When I met you—when Paul brought you over—and you wore the green dress from that pattern I told you about over the phone, and you pretended that horrible ambrosia salad was good, and you made me that painting. I knew *you* were a bright, sweet girl. Now what are you? I just don't know."

A hummingbird flies toward the glass of the new pull-in window and both women watch absently as it bobs and flits.

"You told me about your mother and your dad dying at that mill, about your little bitty sister with the brain problem, and you said you wanted a new mama. I thought it was kind of...up front, but I said okay." Her thick yellow nails click against the blue rhinestone

brooch over her heart. "But now I'm getting to feel like I don't want a daughter like that. No job, your twins outside cutting up firecrackers all day, you treating Leon more like a husband than you treat Paul. Do you see Leon? He's in a dream all the time. I heard a woman in the grocery call him retarded. He is smart, his brain is more than fine, and even you know that. But look how he acts because there is nothing real for him...to rest on. He's always tripping, grinning so sad and silly, and you—you just dance. Like I said, maybe you're a crazy woman."

The mother bites thoughtfully at her pinkie. She does not smile, but her mouth is a natural and serene curve. Her straight hair is golden-pink. She looks into the grandmother's face; the wrinkles are powdered and smooth. The skin around the mother's eyes is spotted, and the lids slide down slowly.

"Maybe I am."

Sirens and whispers spear the air and the father sweats meanly. Oscar and Pete look away from a burned black pit in the driveway. Four feet wide and knee-deep in the middle, it still smokes and stinks.

"Take 'em away, I don't care what you do." The father has a skinny tree-trunk neck. He looks at his wife, then spits beside the scorched front tire of his Buick. She is prancing half-heartedly around the hole. In the moon-washed cement the hole looks like a staged and crafted dental cavity, constructed for a movie about a giant mouth. Her eyes seep. Her teeth scrape limply together while she whisper-sings. The grandmother is huddled and still on the front steps. The father opens and closes his hand inside the pocket of his cotton

Florida Drive is the coolest street in the neighborhood. Puffy-chested oaks and rattling magnolias line the road like contestants in a beauty pageant, their boyfriends and cousins clustered in every yard to watch. Bradford pear trees stink gently and shadow the grass beneath them. A small square of mostly blue-stained glass glints from an upstairs window at Leon's house during the day, the sun coasting across its surface.

Leon watches from a window above. He has chewed the edge of his blanket to stringy pulp. A dark and fast-growing puddle of pee surrounds Oscar's stockinged feet. The neighbors are clustered in several terrycloth bunches anchored by flip-flops and suede moccasin slippers. He turns from the scene and looks at his bed, the soft and cool folds of the sheets, the shallow indentation his head has made in the pillow. He is glad she is gone from his room.

He had awakened to find her tugging at his toes.

"Your father left the garage door open." Her body looked like a floating, iridescent pillar and shadows stretched wide and thin around her eyes.

Leon gazed at his own bare shoulder as she glided around the small bed and kneeled at his side. Moonlight coated the fine hair of her arms with blue ether.

"Leon, what if someone gets in? What if they come in through the garage?" Her cheeks were wide and she chattered her teeth clumsily. She picked up Leon's blanket and laid it across his bare chest. His eyes smarted. "Leon..." She leaned against the side of the mattress, her breasts squashed in half by its edge. The chattering of her teeth stopped. Her fingers slid under his head and she lifted it from the pillow, her seashell mouth sagging open and turned down at the corners.

Leon shut his eyes tight against her looming face with its half-lidded eyes. Her breath was hot on his face. He pictured the circle-cut eaves of the house and imagined the taste of clover until she dropped his head and reared back on her heels in silence. She could not kiss him.

The crashing of dropped elephants and the whiteness of a huge fire shook and lit up his room. The mother inched backward through the door, blinking in confusion. Creamy smoke bloomed through his cracked window and masked her exit. Leon swung his legs over the side of the bed, heading toward the window to see what had happened.

The father thumps up the carpeted stairs and reaches Leon's room. The door bears six hand-painted cards, one for each birthday, water colored carefully by the mother. A midnight carnival scene, dancing bananas with pompadours, three boys floating and waving in puffy space suits.

Leon is on the floor, his eyes wide open. Bed sheets form a pool beneath him and he is bare of covers. He has thrown his brown blanket on the floor. The father treads to the window and stares at the scene below, which is still slithering with people. Oscar and Pete chase through the yard, one intermittently tackling the other and peppering him with audible slaps. The mother floats around and between the small thickets of neighbors. The crown of her head is round and tiny, like the head of a child. She stubs her toe and squeals, attracting a mixture of stares and turned backs. Bending her knee, she tucks her bloodied toe inside the long nightgown she wears and hops slowly on one foot.

The father rushes to Leon. He lies down behind him and pulls the boy to his chest and belly.

"Dad?" Leon asks politely.
"Yes?"

Leon doesn't answer but turns over. He clings to the father's bathrobe and shivers. The father folds the boy into his arms and rocks him brusquely. While he is rocked, Leon imagines his own hands creasing and folding white crepe paper around the small glass Serenity Prayer. His grandmother is leaving soon and he will put it in her oiled leather bag. Slowly he and his father fall still. They sleep through the night on the floor.

Florida Drive is the coolest street in the neighborhood. Puffy-chested oaks and rattling magnolias line the road like contestants in a beauty pageant, their boyfriends and cousins clustered in every yard to watch. Bradford pear trees stink gently and shadow the grass beneath them. A small square of mostly blue-stained glass glints from an upstairs window at Leon's house during the day, the sun coasting across its surface.

The girl who lives across the street is teaching Leon to braid her hair, bright auburn that sails down to her hipbones. Leon's grandmother, who has decided to stay longer, calls her Funny Pie and laughs loudly with her. The girl and Leon sit side by side, their backs to the large plywood patch that lies across the driveway. Leon catches on quickly and the girl pats his arm. She has been told that his mother is in the hospital and it puts him at ease for her to know. Leon's father appears pushing the lawn mower. He grins and pretends to rush at them. Leon and the girl scream and run, laughing, toward the creek at the back of the house. She is faster than Leon and he watches the gleaming comet tail of plaits and loose hair soaring behind her.



—but I am still breathing.

Words: Rhea Derose-Weiss

Illustration: Erika Kymia Nawabi

In the interaction of any two objects, the change in the momentum of one of the objects is equal to the negative of the change in the momentum of the other. —Law of Conservation of Momentum; derivation from Newton's Laws

We are in continuous motion, our two hearts jumping in time with every bump of the road, driving through the summer in your Ford truck with no A/C and the windows rolled down. We ride with the arm seat up so I can sit closer, put my arms around you, kiss your neck; to which you reply *yes, yes*.

In New Orleans the thick night air sinks into our skin as we sink into the rickety hostel bed, the sweat sliding down our collarbones, stomachs, sides, pooling where our bodies form new dimensions in the lamplight on the wall. At the jazz bar in the French Quarter we sit for a moment and drink each other in. In the next bar the walls are full of angels and we talk about the nature of attraction, of old loves. When I come back from the bathroom you tell me how beautiful I am. *Sometimes it hits me*, you say. *I can't believe someone like you is just out there, walking around*.

In Texas the truck hits tire tread on the road and breaks down. We walk silently down the highway in the gathering night to find a pay phone. The tall, dry grasses on either side of us are tinged with the last bits of red-orange light. They whisper of alligators.

In Austin we stay with your aunt and uncle. They let us have the guest room, sleep in the same bed. We have been together almost a year—not quite married, but bordering on respectable.

On the edge of Texas, we camp. The mountains here are rocky and naked alien formations—not the 'purple mountain majesties' of North Carolina, but a different animal altogether. We set up our tent, eat ramen, drink wine. A deer wanders by like an apparition in the dusk. The stars actually twinkle in the eerie desert landscape, and some of them slip from their corners of the sky: tears on the black face of night. We talk again of old loves. We are examining our separate pasts, their separateness itself an alien phenomenon. *It's weird to think about you with other guys*, you say. *That they came and went. That they didn't stick around*.

The first boy I loved did not love me back. It was my first year of college, in our third month together. I blurted the words hastily into the space between us on the bed, in my dorm room where we lay, in the midst of conversation. The boy smiled, grew red in the face, flustered. *Thank you*, he said.

July 23rd: my birthday. We spend it in Flagstaff, Arizona, the town where I was born. I lead you in and out of memories, coffee shops and second hand stores, across train tracks, up and down old familiar streets. You buy me shoes. At telephone poles you linger over "For Rent" fliers; for a moment we let ourselves wonder what it would be like if we stayed here. What it would be

like if we stayed together. We spend the rest of the gray-ing afternoon in the movie theater. At the seedy downtown motel we have 6:00 sex in the glow of the TV screen, then go out for dinner. It is our one-year anniversary.

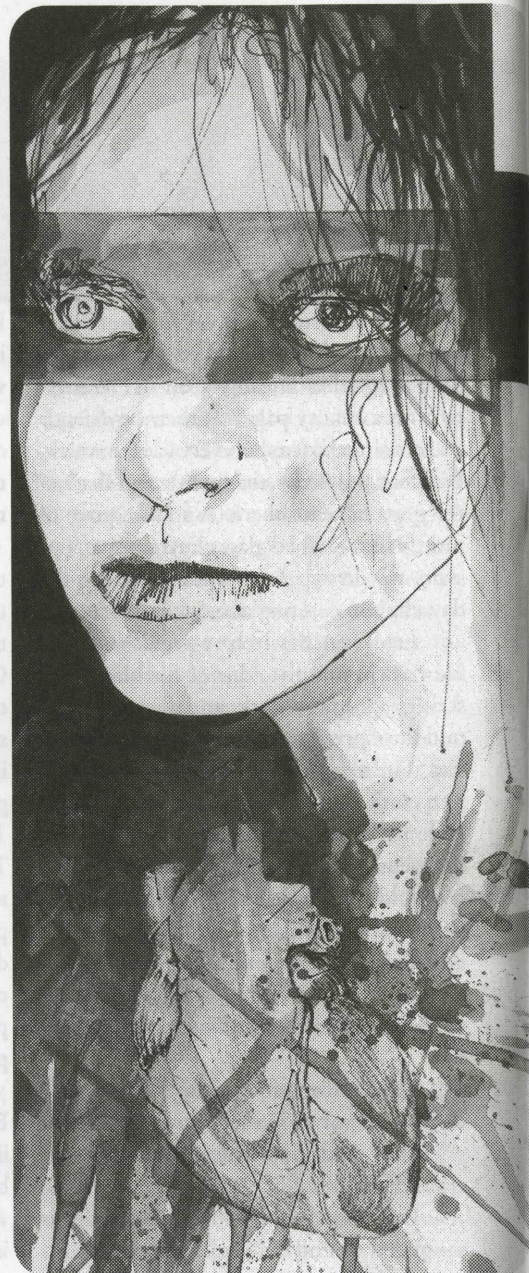
Up the coast of California through mist and wild-flowers and the ocean winding blue and distant to our left. We have almost reached our destination.

For months before this trip I cried, in different rooms, in darkness and light, with you and without. My mouth tightened easily, my skin flinched at the littlest things. You, on the other hand, took it in stride. *Why can't you stay here?* I asked. *I have to do it*, you said. Something about independence, testing your boundaries. Something about knowing you could be alone.

Santa Cruz: a little beach town with a boardwalk and a university. We arrive in late afternoon, and although I have been excited all day about this arrival, I'm suddenly hollow. We are here: now what?

We stay in Oakland with your friends. April and Reggie. He is 28; she is 21. They have their own apartment, although they are moving in a week, ironically enough, to the mountain town

in North Carolina where we came from. They want to be somewhere quieter, less crowded. Somewhere in the country. They want to settle down. For almost a week we are here in this apartment, dodging moving boxes and piles of junk, worrying about money and where we are going to go next and what is going to happen after that. Reggie calls April "Hon." They finish each other's stories. They weigh things to-



suffocate

gether and put them in shipping boxes. I watch them with jealous, melting eyes.

We ride the subway into San Francisco, walk blocks and blocks, not quite knowing where we are. We have dinner on Haight Street and when we come out the world is full of mist, the wetness of falling night. On the bus back to the station a woman with long brown hair and gold crosses in her ears holds a one-sided conversation: *I'm meeting a friend. I don't know his fucking name. I smoked crack with him last week. I'm meeting him and we're going to smoke crack now.* She wants so badly to believe she's not alone that she tells it to a bus full of strangers, again and again and again.

Back in Santa Cruz: we are halfway through a pitcher of beer in the hip all-night diner, slightly drunk. The argument is about gas money and travel routes, about which way I want to go and which way you want to go, it is about having been together 24 hours a day for three weeks and wearing at each other's nerves and loving each other too much. We storm off down different streets but I find you no more than two blocks later, and we sit on a sidewalk bench in the desertion of downtown at four A.M.: yelling, angry, confused. Eventually we wind down—our tones less grating, our bodies a little closer. *For a minute there I thought you were going to break up with me, you say, and my heart stopped. For a minute there I wanted to, I say.* But the next minute I am crying and holding you as tight as I can saying, *I don't know what I'm going to do without you.*

We stay in Santa Cruz for a few days while you look for somewhere to live: sleep in the

truck, cook soup on our camp stove in the park, feed the ducks. I feel stuck. As soon as you find a house to come back to we are in the car, heading northwest.

We stop again in San Francisco. The hostel we check into is shabby and bland, with sinks in each room but communal baths. The bed is rusted iron, and on the wall inside the door-less closet, in black ink, is a letter written by a past guest. *Leslie, it says, I can't do this anymore. I love you but I am tired of never having enough money, of this life. I can't take care of you and you're better off without me. Look in the bedside table drawer for the rest of this letter.* I imagine this scene, a slender teenage boy in ragged, oversized clothes, a naked and tangle-haired girl still asleep, maybe pregnant, in the bed. What did she do when she awoke?

We are back in San Francisco to meet traveling friends from home. By the time we track them down it is night, and the four of us end up in what feels like a speakeasy: small and dark with stacks of martini glasses gleaming from behind the bar, the bartender sharply dressed with slicked-back hair, and the air filled with the drunken laughter of cat-eye hipsters, the illicit plumes of cigarette smoke—a blatant disregard for California law. We order whiskey sours, procure an ashtray, and sit in a circular booth. In the corner a DJ spins Frank Sinatra records and taking your hand, I ask you to dance.

The next day we are driving again, up up up through bright cool air and mountains.

In Olympia we drink Black and Tans made with Guinness and Bull Ice. You have friends here. We go out for coffee every morning. The sun is always shining. We walk around town like there's not a care in the world.

In Seattle the guys throw fish in the marketplace. We peruse the anarchist bookstore, perch on curbs to people-watch, sample garlic jelly.

On the Washington shore we get drunk with your friends who are now my friends, too. We sit silly in the sand and you reminisce about when we first met, the first time our hands touched and the amazing energy and that's when you knew. I tell you I have to pee. *Go down and pee where the sea meets the sand like Pablo Neruda said.* And I don't know what the hell you're talking about but I march right down to the edge of the water.

In Portland we get married at the Church of Elvis. We honeymoon at a gay bar across the street where goldfish swim beneath the counter.

On the floor in the airport we are huddled in each other's arms behind an advertisement and this is the first time I have seen you cry. You want to leave—I *can't do this*—but I implore you—*stay, stay*—make you wait until the very last minute of emptying chairs, the final boarding call, our salted, swimming kiss. And then I am hanging in the air, my emotions on hold; suspended in time.

Once home, time drags on without you. I try to speed it up in the whirl of someone else's arms, but your ragged voice pulls me back. You have found yourself more alone than you can handle. You write me a letter, cite your insomnia, quote Milan Kundera:

There is a secret bond between slowness and memory, between speed and forgetting. Consider this utterly commonplace situation: a man is walking down the street. At a certain moment, he tries to recall something, but the recollection escapes him. Auto-

matically, he slows down. Meanwhile, a person who wants to forget a disagreeable incident he has just lived through starts unconsciously to speed up his pace, as if he were trying to distance himself from a thing still too close to him in time.

You convince me to give up the other's arms, accept the slow spin of this dull ache.

I fly to you for fall break, writing erotic poems on the plane. In your tiny room we climb into bed, bodies bleeding shyly together, sliding from each article of clothing to get closer, closer. I marvel at your strange, familiar beauty. My body has lost your dimensions—to remember is sweet, rough. Afterwards I cry and cry. I cannot get you close enough.

It has been three months since I first left you in California. Tonight you call me and suddenly you are someone I don't know—voice hollow, words cold. You are seeing someone else. *I'm confused, you say, I feel numb.* Has your mind detached like my body once did, preparing for its good-bye? You are calm in the face of my hysterical pleadings, my bewildered accusations; your emotions have blurred to four A.M. darkness of downtown desertion. Streetlights twinkle distantly like desert stars, and some slip from the sky—tears on the black face of night. *For a minute there I thought you were going to break up with me, I say, waiting. But you don't answer, and my arms, not long enough to reach you now, hang dumbly at my sides.*

Your silence stretches, becomes the empty blocks, the darkened windows, the broken shadows of buildings and dreams.

It is my heart that has stopped—



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hopelessness



EST. 1971

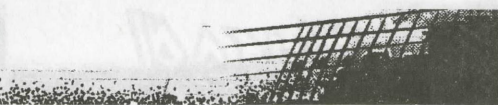




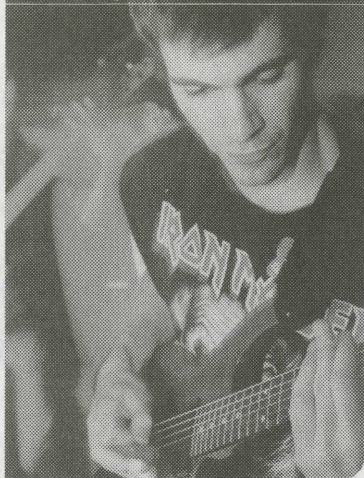
between the buried and me

Interview and photos: John Rash

North Carolina hasn't seen such an abundance of new musicians, venues, and enthusiastic show-goers in years. It truly is an exciting time to be into music in the Tar Heel State. At the head of NC's blossoming hardcore scene, Between the Buried and Me never fail to awe show-goers with their technical and dynamic set. Borrowing from aggressive genres across the board, BTBAM's self-titled debut (see the review in this issue) offers a stockpile of riffs and ever-changing dynamics. Comprised of former members of Prayer For Cleansing and Undying, it's no surprise these guys take themselves very seriously as musicians and will undoubtedly make impressive albums for years to come.



BTBAM



Your music

tends to jump around in terms of style and dynamics, and I'm curious how the lyrics may influence these changes. Do you write lyrics that specifically influence these dynamics?

(Tommy) The vocals are added in last, and the music is always written first. So it's just whatever sounds best.

(Paul) We all contribute to writing the music, and that's where we get the diversity.

Has it always been a band effort to never write choruses or repeating parts? Are you just poking fun at your listeners?

(P) No, that goes back to the diversity. I think the fact is that we listen to so many different types of music. We all listen to different types of music and it gets jumbled together and there's really no time for us to repeat parts and still get it all out. We just like to get it out and move on to the next thing.

Is this a conscious objection to pop music or traditional ideas about composition?

(P) No, not at all. That's just how we all write and our songs just end up being that way.

Your music really seems like you're making a stockpile of riffs and the only difference I can see from one song to the next, or a reason for breaks, is to change lyrical topics.

(P) Each song definitely sticks to its own musical themes. You can always hear within each song certain notes that repeat. We try to make everything as smooth as possible while maintaining those changing dynamics.

Don't you think it makes it hard for people who are new to your music to digest everything that's going on? When you repeat parts, or have choruses, it's very easy to have a feel for what's coming up. In the context of a song it seems okay to reject that, but as an album it could be a bit much.

(P) It's true that our music is less catchy and may be limited to a specific listening audience, but this is the music we like. We all listen to Dillinger, Cryptopsy, and a lot of mellow stuff that all seems to find its way into what we're doing.

Your first album was on a Lifeforce, which is a European label. What are the advantages and disadvantages of being an American band on a European label?

(P) He was pretty much the only guy that was willing to

put it out!

(T) No, he's been a great guy.

(P) As far as distribution goes, our album went through all the same channels that any American label would use.

(T) Most of our response comes from the United States, but we have had contact from kids in Australia and other places that I never thought our music would reach.

(Jason) We play shows and reach and audience here, while our label and record help us to reach a totally different audience over there.

In the liner notes you did something a bit unusual and printed a disclaimer that the lyrics are the opinion of the individual author and not necessarily the opinion of everyone in the band. Why this choice to distance certain members from the words being said in your music?

(T) First off, because different people wrote lyrics for different songs. Now I mostly do it, but Paul did two songs and Jason did one song on that album.

(P) But mainly the reason we wrote the disclaimer is because our drummer was Christian, and he didn't really relate to a lot of the lyrics that have atheist undertones.

I assume "Arsonist" was a big point of debate.

(T) That song was a big reason for the disclaimer, not only for our old drummer but also for our listeners. But you're right, "Arsonist" is the only song that I really felt like could possibly offend anybody.

(J) But not really, because it's done in a way that couldn't possibly offend anyone.

(T) It's true. I've gotten so much positive feedback from kids writing my e-mail address. Lots of Christian kids have sent messages in support, or agreeing with me. They say that they're Christian, and it sucks that I'm not Christian. They seem to tag that on at the end.

Do you ever feel like those kids are trying to convert you?

(T) I had that happen, but I've been more surprised at the acceptance of it.

(P) Again, it is presented in a way that makes it harder to find people who will disagree. I mean, who's going to write in and say, "What do you mean hating gay people is wrong? Hating gay people rules!"

Do you see the christcore movement as a legitimate part of the hardcore scene?

(P) It's a totally separate thing. It's an entirely different world.

(T) The majority of those kids don't support all of the bands, and mainly stick to the bands that have the same religious views.

(P) We've gotten sucked into playing shows at churches, and we wouldn't really know prior to getting there. The kids there bought our stuff and then found out that we weren't Christian and would literally return it. They would demand their money back because they just don't want to support it.

There's a Christian exclusive club in Greensboro that has a lot of hardcore shows. I walk by there sometimes and see tons of kids who look like my friends, yet I've never seen them at any shows I've attended, ever.



(P) It's not even that they come out of the woodwork, they just attend their own shows and it's sort of a separate scene.

Another trend in hardcore is the misogynistic Glassjaw-style lyrics that deal with the bitterness of failed romance. I'm curious if you think there's a place for this type of anger in break up songs? Is this a valid emotion, and if so why?

(T) I can't stand relationship songs period. That's something I'll probably never write about.

(P) I agree; it's kind of goofy.

(J) I think if it's presenting a misogynistic view that's different than a break up song, or about being hurt in a relationship.

It seems like that's how a lot of bands frame it.

(P) How can you even start to sympathize with someone who writes like that? Saying, "I want to kill you, but I'm sad you left me."

(T) It's just an easy way for an emo kid to yell.

(P) It's their way of straddling the line between evil and emo.

(J) I just think it's dumb.

You guys are not a political band, and only occasionally have songs like "Arsonist" with, at best, a bit of controversy in the lyrics. This is pretty symptomatic of the metalcore/hardcore scene. Do you feel like there are any bands left in your scene that have anything to say?

(T) I think in hardcore, right now, it's just about image. It's more akin to the mainstream and what's important becomes

how cool you look or act on stage and how many chicks you can fuck each night.

(P) I think it's all been said before. As far as topics that relate to the hardcore scene, there have already been so many bands that have done it.

But don't you think that's a perspective from someone who's been in the scene a long time and is probably just jaded? You feel like you've heard it before, so you may not think it's important, but there's always new kids who haven't.

(P) I think we try to write meaningful lyrics but not have an agenda. We don't feel like we have to justify being in a band with any sort of agenda.

It's almost like the idea of politics versus image has been replaced with a concern for art over image. Of course some bands see the image as art.

(T) I think music was second hand and now a lot bands prefer to concentrate on the music over the lyrics.

(J) But that doesn't mean that all bands who aren't outwardly political write songs that are devoid of meaning. The songs are about issues, and are not concerned with changing the world.

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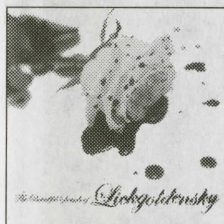
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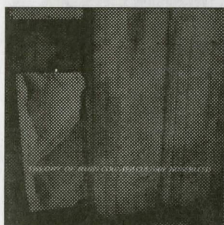
You can tell whether a person plays or not by the way he carries the instrument, whether it means something to him or not.

Then the way they talk and act. If they act too hip, you know they can't play shit.

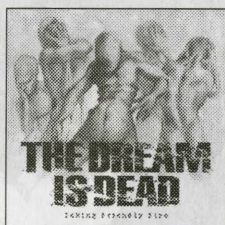
- Miles Davis



The Beautiful Sounds Of...
LICKGOLDENSKY CD (vinyl soon)



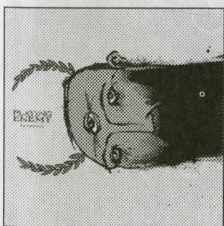
THEORY OF RUIN
Counter-Culture Nosebleed CD/LP



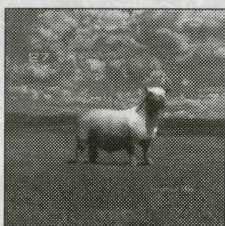
THE DREAM IS DEAD
Taking Friendly Fire MCD (vinyl soon)



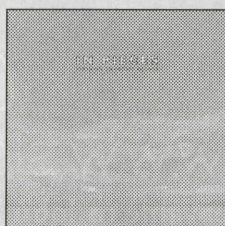
KEN MODE
Mongrel CD (vinyl soon)



PLAYING ENEMY
Ephemera CDEP (vinyl soon)



27
Animal Life Ltd. Picture Disc LP



IN PIECES
Learning To Accept Silence
CD/Ltd. Picture Disc LP



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Catalog Summer/Fall 2003

UWHARRIA

"Fury In The Foothills" CD Uwharria's tree-hugging lyrics (songs about Dung Beetles, Woodpeckers, and Jaguars) may not be what you expect once you hear their Accused influenced thrashy sound. Ex-members of Oi Polloi, Blownapart Bastards, and FaceDownInShit. Specially packaged using as little paper or plastic as possible, while still maintaining Slave's quality graphics standards. \$6 ppd usa \$8 world.

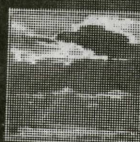
Wholesale \$4 usa, \$6 world.

DEAD THINGS



"..because sometimes you just want to ride your bike to the show" CD Dead Things say-punk rock is folk music, and never will you find a more righteous example. This band's East-Bay meets dirty south sound is unique, while reminiscent of Dillinger Four w/ simultaneous male/female vocals.

\$8 ppd usa \$10 world. Wholesale \$6 usa, \$8 world.



piedmont charisma

s/t CD Asheville's punk-wave machine, Piedmont Charisma keep a punk edge that won't be found on any other hipster-retro disc being shoved down your dance-wave throats. For fans of Wire, Talking Heads, Gang of Four, Devo.

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The Crimson Spectre play thrashy hardcore inspired by leftist politics and ghoulish imagery. This demo features early versions of many songs that will appear on their album on Magic Bullet later this year. DEMO CDR. \$3ppd usa \$4 world

KILARA

"Southern Fried-Metal" CD Dirty southern metal with a dose of Richmond punk/hardcore. Members of Page 99, City of Caterpillar, Avail, and Alabama Thunder Pussy (...what a terrible name). \$6 ppd usa \$8 world. Wholesale \$4 usa, \$6 world.

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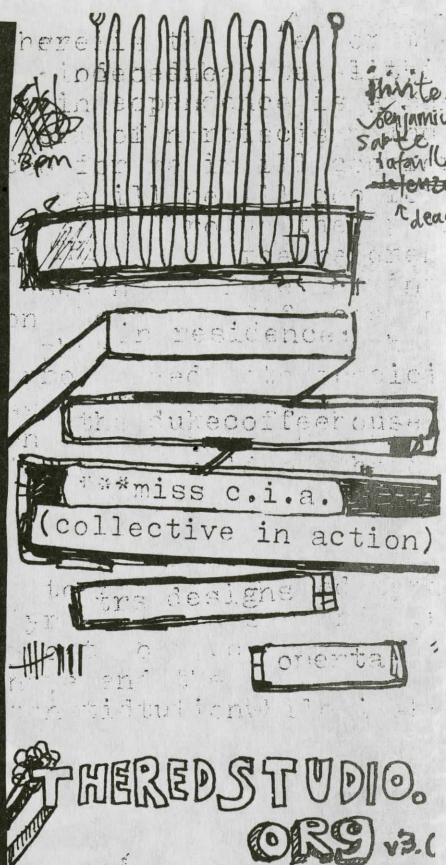


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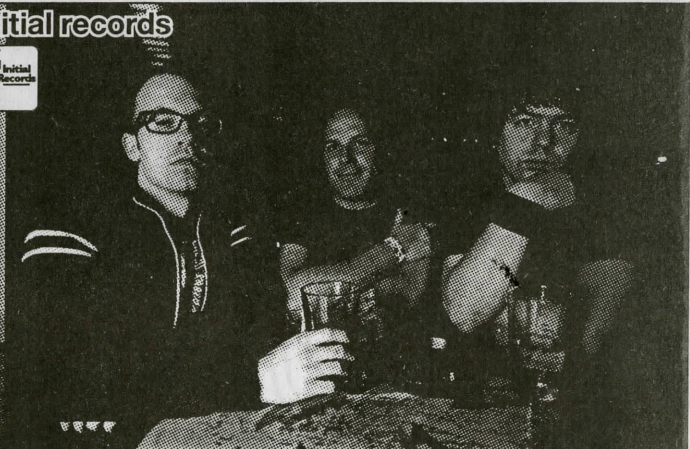
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UFB's follow up to *Open Up And Say Awesome*, featuring six brand new songs that showcase a darker side of their power pop sound and a remix of "Inside Me, Inside You" from *Open Up*. Includes enhanced portion with two UFB music videos and two additional remixes. **In Stores May 13, 2003**

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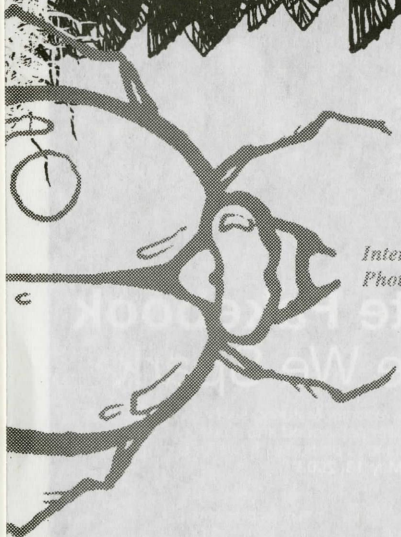


Uwharria

Interview: John Rash

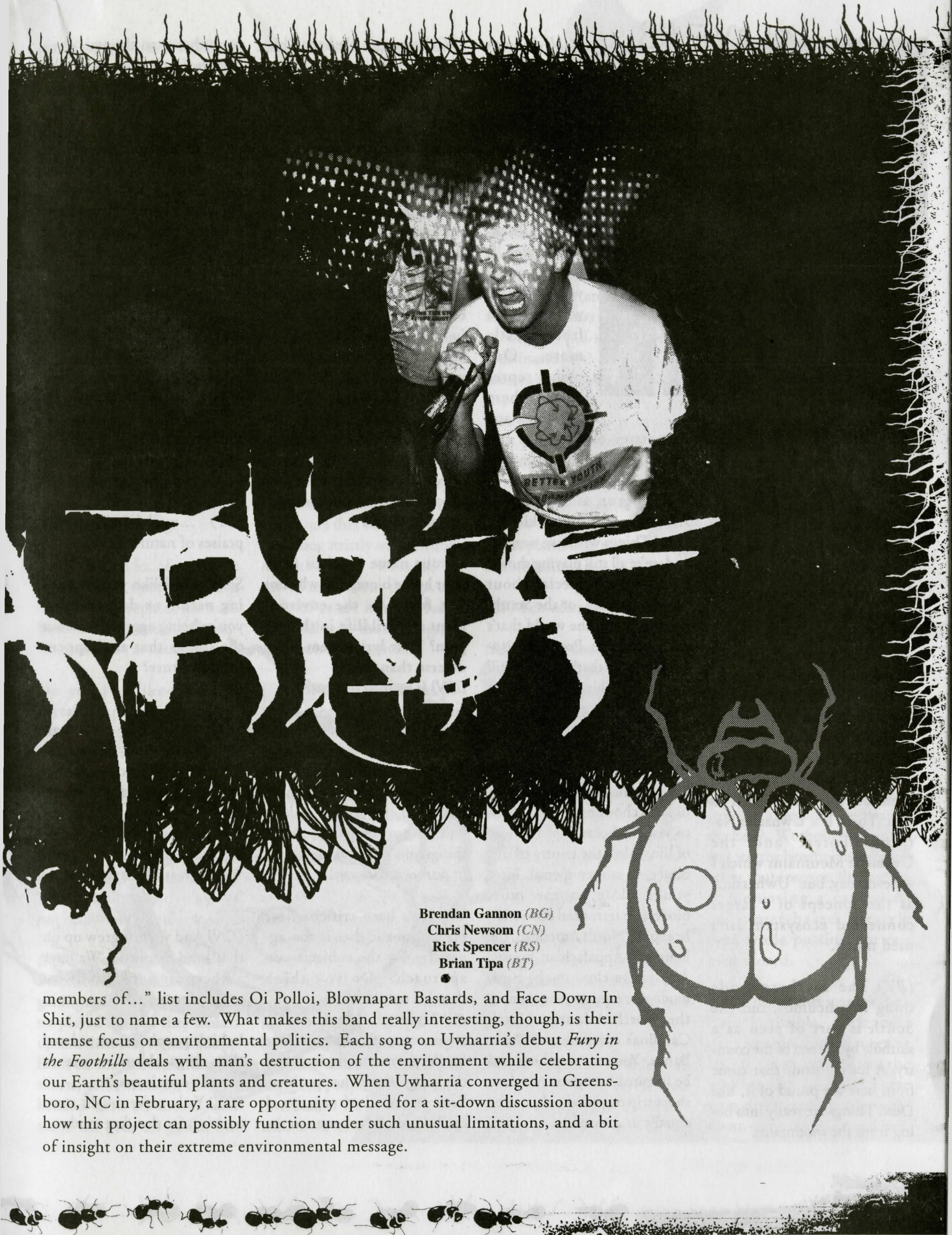
Photos: Christina Fuentes, Meredith Coll, John Rash

Uwharria is a band that barely exists, at least in the way most people start and maintain musical projects. With members living on different sides of the Atlantic and scattered across the Eastern U.S., it's hard to imagine how this group finds time to function. Still, in the past year, Uwharria managed to record and release a full-length album, play a month's worth of shows (see the live CD included in this issue), and put the wheels in motion for future projects. Uwharria's ability to maintain dedication to this project must stem from their experiences over the past decade in other established hardcore outfits. Their impressive "ex-



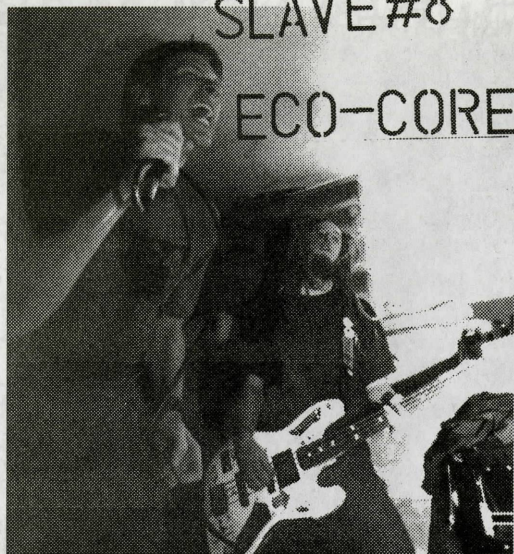
STAVE





Brendan Gannon (BG)
Chris Newsom (CN)
Rick Spencer (RS)
Brian Tipa (BT)

members of..." list includes Oi Polloi, Blownapart Bastards, and Face Down In Shit, just to name a few. What makes this band really interesting, though, is their intense focus on environmental politics. Each song on Uwharria's debut *Fury in the Foothills* deals with man's destruction of the environment while celebrating our Earth's beautiful plants and creatures. When Uwharria converged in Greensboro, NC in February, a rare opportunity opened for a sit-down discussion about how this project can possibly function under such unusual limitations, and a bit of insight on their extreme environmental message.



People probably

don't know, so I want to start by asking what is Uwharria and why that the name of your band?

(RS) Uwharria is the bioregion we live in, in central North Carolina. It's not a name that's used very often, but we're trying to bring it back. We formed the band as sort of an expression of the activism we were doing, and wanted to tie in a sense of regionalism to it as well. There is a Uwharrie National Forest and the Uwharrie Mountains which I see everyday, but "Uwharria," as the concept of a larger connected ecosystem isn't used much.

(BT) The southern pride thing is ridiculous, but the South is sort of seen as a shithole by the rest of the country. A lot of bands that come from here are proud of it, like Dead Things are really into being from the mountains.

(CN) I don't know if Southern pride would be the best moniker for it. Regionalism, maybe. It's kind of a reaction to living in a backwoods area. It might make you defend where you're from a little more. Our name represents where our hearts are.

Our state's one scene. I can meet most kids my age and they'll remember shows in Wilmington and shows in Asheville. I met the kids in Dead Things when we were 16 and we're all still playing shows. That's what's special about North Carolina, or the South, or anyplace in the world that's a smaller scene. People are isolated. Maybe that's why I'm still involved in this stuff. If I were from a bigger scene, it wouldn't have been as special to me.

(RS) The reason we choose to live here, or the reason some of us keep choosing to come back to visit, is because of the way of life. Also, the nature in this bioregion is very special. Here you're close to the most biodiverse terrestrial ecosystem in eastern North America, the Southern Appalachian forests. And you're close to the most biodiverse aquatic ecosystem in the North Atlantic, North Carolina's coastline and Outer Banks. You can stay here and be inspired by nature or take a short trip on either side and be equally as amazed.

(BG) Years ago, Nathan, Chris and I used to volunteer a lot on an organic farm named Uwharrie Farms in Asheboro, NC. I once joked about getting a band together called Uwharria, and having our first album named "All-Farm All-Star." You can get pretty loopy working hard on the farm in the middle of the summer. Anyhow, what always inspired me about this farm was the couple that owned it, Larry and Judy. Their simple approach to life and their commitment to walking lightly on the planet made me feel pretty silly as a whiney, ideologically-driven punk rocker and activist. Since working on the farm, I've aspired to get to that deeper level of commitment to and connection with earth.

If your name is taken from your home bioregion, why not just focus on the environment and wildlife in this region? Your lyrics seem more diverse than that.

(CN) It seemed too narrow.

(RS) Also, we've been all over the world, as individuals, and we've seen a lot of wonderful things that inspire us. It's hard to limit it, but I'd say at least half of our songs are about things you can find right here in our own backyards.

You have been criticized for playing music that is too aggressive for the subjects you approach. Do you think there's a conflict?

(CN) A lot of the stuff we sing about comes from a great love for the environment, but all of the songs aren't that positive. Some are kind of negative. I don't know how better to ex-

press that than through some high volume distortion and speed. Plus we haven't mastered the fiddle too well yet.

(RS) We've talked about doing some more traditional styles of music and some of the members actually play that sort of music in other bands. We just play music that we like and have subject material we like. At times, it does seem kind of funny screaming about flowers and stuff.

(BT) We thought the whole beauty of it was having a raging thrash band that instead of singing about...

(CN) ...death and war...

(BT) ...we'd be singin' the praises of nature.

So you feel like you're praising nature or do you think you're being aggressive about the things that are happening to nature?

(BT) Both.

(RS) We try to keep a balance, because a lot of people sing about the destruction that's going on in the world and we definitely recognize that and fight against it. At the same time, we recognize what's great about the outside world.

(CN) And we just grew up on that kind of music. We have all been in punk bands for over a decade.

I think people expect a band that sings about nature to sound a certain way.

(CN) Yeah, we've caught some criticism for that, but we then



thought it was out of left field. They thought we should be more upbeat or something.

(RS) I think it's kind of unique to talk about what we talk about and play the music we play. From the music, you expect it to be about blood and guts.

There was even a letter in HeartattaCk when you first started, where the kid wrote and described you all as "old and straight looking." Do you think you've been labeled as something outside what people expect from the very beginning?

(BT) That's a pretty funny criticism and highly immature that you would freak out on what people were wearing.

(RS) I think a lot of punks are no different than their own criticism of people at the mall. Punk is just as much of a uniform and just as conformist.

Do you feel like there are certain expectations? After that letter, did you feel like there would be kids at your shows just to see the "straight" guys?

(BT) It was just fuel to the fire. Instead of dressing up with hawks, we're gonna be even freakier and wear some football helmets really stupid shit that's not really very punk.

(RS) Somebody commented at a recent show that the kids were getting really pissed out before we played because they looked up and there was some dude up front on the mic with runny nose, some scrawny, old, bald-headed dork on drums, and some tall geek on guitar, but

then they said we parted their hair with our full-on intense thrash onslaught.

You are a very focused band as far as your politics. Most bands are not that streamlined yet most activist groups are. How does this reflect or conflict with the diverse ideologies of the individual members of Uwharria, or even society at large.

(CN) I think we're all over the board in a lot of ways, but we decided from the get-go to focus on issues dealing with plants and animals specifically. Like we talked about earlier, we've seen the war and gloom and doom done for decades and we wanted to do something different. We've almost had arguments about misanthropism or class issues that would come up in dealing strictly with environmental issues. We're all involved in different things, and most of us are in other bands that deal with those things, or are involved in activism.

(RS) We do have different political ideas, though they are pretty similar, but all of us have the same basic idea about humans' place in nature. I would almost say that as a band we're apolitical, but I think that's sort of the point. We talk about what's good out there and we talk about the destructive factors. We don't necessarily place the blame at specific individuals or corporations so much as people in general and their basic lifestyles.

(BT) If you sing about how beautiful a woodpecker is and mention that they don't exist anymore people can use their own brains. We let people draw their own conclusions rather

than putting out five albums talking about the evil multinationals.

(RS) It's not like we're chumps and we're trying to cop out and not give kids information or fail to acknowledge the causes of the problems. We've all worked for environmental nonprofits. We all used to work for an organization called EarthCulture that Brendan and I founded about eight years ago. A few of us worked full-time fighting multinationals, doing direct actions, meeting with corporate and government leaders. We were really fighting on the front lines, putting our bodies on the line, and putting all of our time into it. So, it's not like we're just hippies. Well, we are, but it's not like we're just singing about plants and trees with no action behind it.

(BT) Eco-offense!

(RS) We sing about what we do because we feel like these are the most critical issues the world is facing. Humans are just one of the millions of species on Earth. Over a hundred of these species becomes extinct everyday, often at the hands of humans. How can we think boy/girl love problems or even human political problems are the most pressing issues to address in our music?

Do you offer examples of indigenous cultures or alternative ways of living that are not this industrialized way you just pointed out?

(RS) We don't really have any songs about that. We definitely recognize that a person who makes a quarter of a million dollars a year and lives in the

United States has more of an impact than an indigenous person in Southeast Asia. We believe in voluntarily simplistic lifestyles that have less impact on the world. We do talk about alternative building supplies and resource conservation and things like that.

I'm just wondering if people will pick up on that distinction when you guys talk about humans doing this and that. Will people realize you're talking about the people with whom you're in closer contact rather than those people who are maybe doing things a little better?

(BT) The audience that's buying our CD are not the people who are living a righteous lifestyles out in the rainforest as their ancestors did, it's usually someone that's part of the consumerist society.

(RS) We recognize the oxymoron that is putting out a CD. We're talking about consumption reduction and living an earth-friendly lifestyle, but we're producing something that is made with petrochemicals. While we do use recycled paper and minimize packaging, it still has a negative impact on the Earth. We thought about it, and feel the benefit it brings will offset that impact. But we are perpetuating a capitalist, consumer-based lifestyle even while putting out our own record.

(BG) I sometimes wonder if it's really justifiable. Rick and I once went to this big meeting about mahogany at the Smithsonian in DC. There were government, non-government, environmental and tim-



ber industry representatives there from all over North and South America. The meeting centered around standards for the sustainable harvesting of mahogany. At one point, a cynical participant stood up and asserted that when it comes to rainforest woods, there really is not such thing as sustainable and that the discussion was essentially moot. Sometimes I feel this way about putting out CDs, like there is no net gain; resource consumption is resource consumption and that's it.

Do you feel like having such an extreme, almost militant pro-environment stance will alienate people in your audience?

(RS) Everyone doesn't catch on, and we have some people who disagree with us. We're in this to inspire activists and kids who haven't really thought about this kind of stuff before, to go out and save the world. I remember back when I was spending 50-70 hours a week doing environmental activism that the one thing that kept me going and excited me was getting the chance to go out and be a part of nature. Even something as simple as seeing a turkey vulture floating through the air was enough to recharge me to keep up the fight.

(CN) We're trying to inspire people by giving them a greater appreciation of what's out there. That may, in itself bolster folks to want to defend it.

(BT) It seems like the beauty of the lyrics is that they don't assume the listener is an idiot. It's not saying, "Hey, go out and fuck up a bulldozer," it's saying, "Hey, look at what's worth defending."

(CN) I hope our lyrics have always gotten that across. I know I've been in bands and other folks have been in bands that had very hateful lyrics because we were pissed off. I mean, there's a lot to be pissed off about. But it's kind of a relief to be in a band that's trying to be more...

(BT) ...positive.

(CN) Yeah, positive. "Black Howler," may be one of our darker songs, and it's also the most evil musically. If there's anything that I thought we were trying to do, it's to be more positive and get people to gain that appreciation and look at the sky or see what's growin' in their backyard. Maybe they connect things on their own and want to do something about the folks and things that are fucking that up for them.

So, that's what you want people to take away from Uwharria?

(BT) If there's one thing people should go away with at our show it's a fucking whiplash neck because they've been banging their heads so much.

(CN) Thrash neck. Appreciation for shitting in the backyard and tubing down a river. We all tube together. Tubing is far more important than thrashing. A band that tubes together...

It seems like there are moments that are self-loathing in the lyrics.

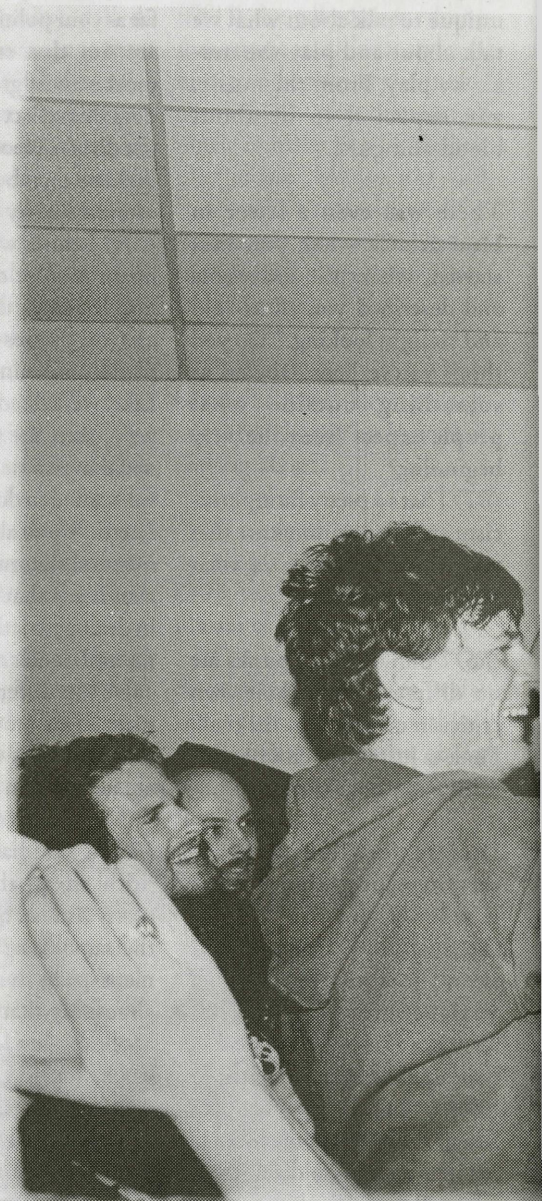
(RS) We talked about differences of opinion, and that's really my stance.

I'm completely misanthropic. I think that humans are destructive as a species. There are some that are less destructive than others, but we all do things that are harmful. I do stuff everyday, like eating food I didn't grow, flushing a toilet, turning on the lights, that I'm not proud of or keeps me up at night feeling guilty. Other people in the band don't necessarily think that or maybe to a lesser extent. But the self-loathing that comes with being an inherently destructive creature is evident in our lyrics.

(CN) We're evenly split about what level of misanthropic ideology we are going to put out there. I don't think our lyrics even deal with that.

(RS) Well, there's a song about how getting eaten by jaguars is a good thing.

(CN) I know that Rick thinks that, which is totally valid and I understand. I've even been kind of offended by some issues. We've kind of bummed each other out.



(BT) We were trying to come up with a rigid band ideology about who was guilty for the destruction of nature. But when we got into the details, we differed. Not all five of us could agree about whether it is humanity at



large, the rich, the white people, or the Americans.

(RS) We all know there is a certain segment of our popu-

people we need to completely obliterate. We could tear the whole system down. Eventually, there must be a total restructuring and rethinking

(CN) Humanure.

(RS) Yeah, even something as simple as how you choose to dispose of your own feces is an

grain. Period. Ultimately, it's up to us. I've always felt like that. Several years ago, I had my feelings reinforced, when Brendan and I met with the

Vice-President of Thomasville Furniture and he said, "You might be right, but as long as people still buy rainforest woods, we'll keep selling them. If you can convince them otherwise, great! We'll change our operations."

That's pretty interesting. I think it's good that you admit that difference in ideology because we sometimes expect bands to have one brain or ideology. In most bands, there's just one lyricist and the other people might be in it more for the music. It's good for people to realize that bands aren't necessarily one cohesive unit. A lot of times, there might be one dude who's in it just for the music and one dude who may be involved just for the political message. It's a nice distinction to see people who aren't trying to say, "This is our ideology. If you're in this band, you're going

lation that is more destructive and makes political and economic decisions which effect the plight of the rest of the earth's species, so we don't differ in that respect. We could point our fingers at the multinationals and the people behind them and say those are the

that is drastically different from the mindset we have now. But we also need to turn the finger on ourselves and say we all have the power to change things, whether it be consumer decisions, what we eat or wear, how we travel, or whatever.

incredibly important environmental and political decision. I want to empower people. If we don't buy mahogany guitars and furniture and caskets, we save part of the Amazon rainforest. Period. If we stop eating meat, we save untold amounts of water, forests, and

to be straight-edge, or vegan, or this or that."

(CN) That may be why we are specific lyrically. We've all known each other a long time, some people for around 15 years. We all come from different backgrounds, have seen different things, and have



SLAVE #8

ECO-CORE

don't know, so I want to start by asking what is Uwharria and why that the name of your band?

(BT) ... things.
this ... we're close,
Some ... people who aren't,
... didn't maintain relationships
with each other.

a 40 hour a week job and you go nuts when you get to play."

don't mean to shit on younger folks, but it's true.

(BT) Old timers!

(CN) Old fart thrash. We kind of play up that image, but it's what we get pegged, so it's our way to laugh about it.

(RS) We have to be enthusiastic about our own music because people haven't played that kind of junk in

In the grand scheme of things, you guys aren't that old, but in the punk rock world, you really are.

(BT) In the US, we are.

(BT) Cecile, from France, said something interesting. She said in Europe, there are a bunch of old time punk rockers that live in squats and are completely separated from the rest of the world. Not

the establishment and one foot in the activist or punk world.

Punks in the US look at Europe as the model and consider folks over here sell-outs because they have integrated themselves into society. I guess the belief is that they lose something. Yet, if punk and hard-core are important to you for a good part of your life, even

if you aren't sporting dreadlocks and anarchy patches, some of that has got to stay with you and bleed through.

(BT) It's unhealthy to stay in your own little bubble preaching

to the choir. Tomorrow, I'm going into Rick's class to

make a presentation on "The Power of Protest Music." I'm singing some Woody Guthrie and Phil Ochs songs, and some really hard-hitting songs like "Victor Jara of Chile," and some union songs. These are kids who would never be exposed to that kind of stuff if Rick wasn't in there teaching them. It reminds me of this preacher here in town who was part of the Black Power movement years ago. When he became a minister, he was criticized for that, although the activity he was doing was completely subversive.

(RS) I don't think we're preaching to the choir at all with our music, and certainly not in our daily lives, which is more important. Not to judge people, but we go to shows and see how kids are totally oblivious to the things we talk about. Before the show, they ask us if we want to go with



20 years and no one likes it but us.

Do you date yourselves by the style of music you play?

(BT) Nah, because that shit's modern too.

(RS) I don't know about that, but it is almost new to a lot of kids. I mean we play a show and they're like, "What the...? I've never heard anything like that." If they listen to the stuff we listen to, it maybe doesn't sound so original.

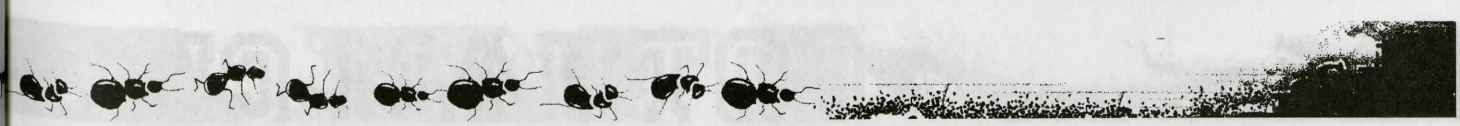
(CN) We just have to hide our record collections so they won't know our tricks!

to dis them, but they're in this punk rock world and a lot of them don't come in contact with the outside world. She said coming here, the people were ten times more subversive in their lifestyle because the punks are integrated into the community and they have their finger on the pulse of what's going on. Like when Rash gets his students to come and watch his band spit blood at night. That's something that's pretty cool about being a semi-old punk rocker, having one foot in

them to Burger King.

Uwharria would like to urge people to check out organizations like Rainforest Action Network, Heartwood, Sea Shepherd, Rainforest Relief, and Dogwood Alliance, and look into ideas like permaculture, alternative building supplies, composting, and veganism as an ecological choice. People should be out there making a difference, whether it's through civil disobedience, education, or reducing their consumption of paper, plastics, electricity, etc.

uwharria@slavemagazine.com



different things we care about. We are all on the same page about an intense love for the natural world. That's our strength, so that's what we focus on. Plus, Rick writes good-ass lyrics about dung beetles.

(BT) When you think about the five people, our disagreements are so ridiculously minimal compared to what we're all into. It is all very homogenous.

(CN) We are all opinionated.

(RS) I think that's a good thing. Like you said, John, a lot of bands may be one vegan straight-edge dude singing, a guitarist who's all about the rock, a bass player who eats Whoppers, and a drummer who is in the bathroom shooting heroin. We all care about and are active on the issues we sing about.

(BT) We are all vegan.

(RS) Yeah, we're all vegan, old-timer, straight-edge, activist dudes.

(BT) So we can afford to disagree a bit about specifics.

(RS) We all do care, so it's sometimes a hassle getting everyone to agree. No one's apathetic at all.

(CN) We're all like best friends, so we can talk about things. We argue because we're close, but maybe people who aren't, couldn't maintain relationships with each other.

The way you go about presenting those ideas seems to

have a formula. Your lyrics talk about specific plants and animals. Was that done just for this album? Do you plan to move on, or is that just the way you write lyrics?

(RS) I tried to write lyrics that had absolutely nothing to do with humans. I wanted lyrics that weren't even from a human standpoint. We've got a song that's written from the point of view of a raindrop, because we're hippies. It was difficult and it's still my idea, but it's not gonna work out that way. We'll have future songs about individual species. We will have future songs about environmental issues. I write about things I care about. I write songs about things I've seen in the natural world and have been extremely inspired by.

Another interesting thing about Uwharria is the fact that you guys are scattered across the globe, which is not a normal way for a band to function. This is not something that happened after the fact. When you started this band you knew this was the situation you were getting into. How does that work?

(BT) I would say that was one of the main motivators for this band. We were all in the same town for a limited time and we booked some studio time.

How much time was that?

(RS) Alright, here's the story... You ready for the story? In the Spring of 1999, I e-mailed some of my best friends about starting a band that's totally brutal musically, totally righteous politically, only sings about nature, rides bikes to all shows, doesn't play a show

unless it's powered by the sun, that won't play shows unless there's an action planned in conjunction, and no one smiled on stage because they were so serious about what they were doing and saying. The band, basically, would be an activist organization in itself. Seriously, that's what I wanted to do. Nathan and Brendan had an idea a few years earlier for a band called Uwharria that was all about organic farming. So we sort of merged the two ideas. We wrote some songs and recorded a 15 song CD in only eight practices, but those eight practices took two years. It's not the ideal way to do things, but it's the people we love.

(BT) We all owned the same COC record that we ripped off.

(CN) It was easy because we didn't have to rewrite the songs.

Do you guys have plans for future Uwharria projects?

(CN) Because we see each other so seldomly, we have to plan things out for the next year. We plan on recording in the next year, but Nathan lives in Pittsburgh and Tipa in Scotland.

(RS) Nathan's moving back in the next couple of months, and we're trying to get Tipa to come back, but I guess he doesn't really care about us.

(CN) I think the reason our band has worked is because we pack it all in. People are at their own places in our lives, so with us being apart,

we are so into it that we pack it in like crazy. I mean Brendan has a child and Richard's a teacher and a cross-country coach with kids runnin' around in the woods and shit. I work two jobs, so it's kinda crazy. So, I'm sure if we did live together, we'd still be limited, just by being older dudes who work for a living.

(RS) We're not in college or even high school where we have unlimited free time, so it's harder.

It's true. You don't hear about many hardcore bands what start when they individual members already have "real" jobs and put food on the table, especially if they have kids. How do can these bands find time to practice, play shows, and tour, just to get their name out there?

(CN) We make it work. We'd all be hangin' out anyway. It gives us an excuse to see each other more. Every time we play, I know me and Nathan are all, "Man, it sucks. I just want to thrash for a living." We have such a good time.

(RS) We have more fun just when we practice than most bands do when they play. We dance around, jump off stuff, sing George Thoroughgood songs, and act goofy as crap even when we practice.

(BT) It's a special occasion.

(CN) Nathan said, "You work a 40 hour a week job and you go nuts when you get to play."



don't mean to shit on younger folks, but it's true.

(BT) Old timers!

(CN) Old fart thrash. We kind of play up that image, but it's what we get pegged, so it's our way to laugh about it.

(RS) We have to be enthusiastic about our own music because people haven't played that kind of junk in

In the grand scheme of things, you guys aren't that old, but in the punk rock world, you really are.

(BT) In the US, we are.

(BT) Cecile, from France, said something interesting. She said in Europe, there are a bunch of old time punk rockers that live in squats and are completely separated from the rest of the world. Not

the establishment and one foot in the activist or punk world.

Punks in the US look at Europe as the model and consider folks over here sell-outs because they have integrated themselves into society. I guess the belief is that they lose something. Yet, if punk and hard-core are important to you for a good part of your life, even

if you are not sporting dreadlocks and anarchy patches, some of that has got to stay with you and bleed through.

(BT) It's unhealthy to stay in your own little bubble preaching

to the choir. Tomorrow, I'm going into Rick's class to

make a presentation on "The Power of Protest Music." I'm singing some Woody Guthrie and Phil Ochs songs, and some really hard-hitting songs like "Victor Jara of Chile," and some union songs. These are kids who would never be exposed to that kind of stuff if Rick wasn't in there teaching them. It reminds me of this preacher here in town who was part of the Black Power movement years ago. When he became a minister, he was criticized for that, although the activity he was doing was completely subversive.

(RS) I don't think we're preaching to the choir at all with our music, and certainly not in our daily lives, which is more important. Not to judge people, but we go to shows and see how kids are totally oblivious to the things we talk about. Before the show, they ask us if we want to go with



20 years and no one likes it but us.

Do you date yourselves by the style of music you play?

(BT) Nah, because that shit's modern too.

(RS) I don't know about that, but it is almost new to a lot of kids. I mean we play a show and they're like, "What the...? I've never heard anything like that." If they listen to the stuff we listen to, it maybe doesn't sound so original.

(CN) We just have to hide our record collections so they won't know our tricks!

to dis them, but they're in this punk rock world and a lot of them don't come in contact with the outside world. She said coming here, the people were ten times more subversive in their lifestyle because the punks are integrated into the community and they have their finger on the pulse of what's going on. Like when Rash gets his students to come and watch his band spit blood at night. That's something that's pretty cool about being a semi-old punk rocker, having one foot in

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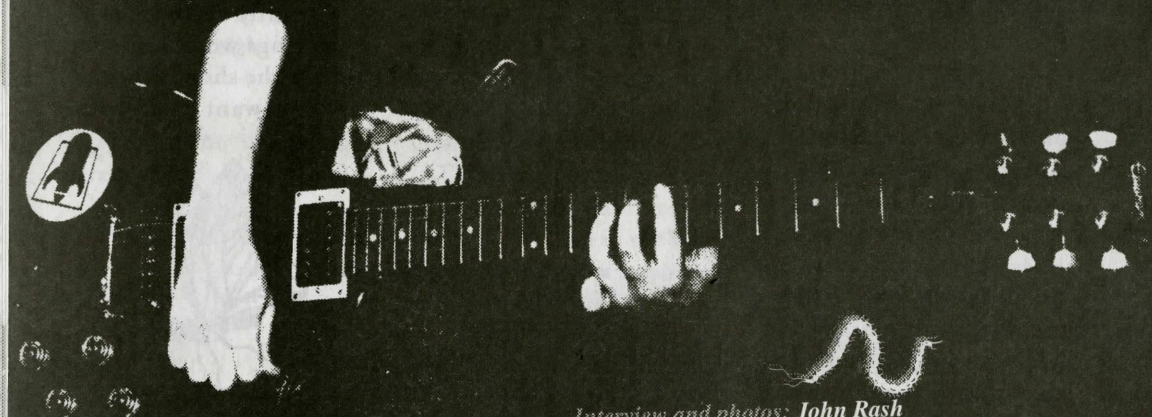
them to Burger King.

Uwharria would like to urge people to check out organizations like Rainforest Action Network, Heartwood, Sea Shepherd, Rainforest Relief, and Dogwood Alliance, and look into ideas like permaculture, alternative building supplies, composting, and veganism as an ecological choice. People should be out there making a difference, whether it's through civil disobedience, education, or reducing their consumption of paper, plastics, electricity, etc.



The members of Brooklyn, NY's Most Precious Blood (MPB) have been active in the hardcore scene for much of the past decade. Formerly in Indecision, the key members of this outfit have been reinventing themselves since day one. Vocalist Tom Sheehan was recently replaced with Rob Fusco from One King Down, yet it's unlikely that long-time fans will fret, as they have become accustomed to line-up changes. *Nothing in Vain*, Most Precious Blood's 2001 debut, employed visual and lyrical themes of suicide to build a cohesive and artistically solid album. As the world anticipates their next release, M.P.B. have been hitting the road on major bills with A.F.I., Biohazard, Bane, and Terror. On stage, M.P.B. play with passion and energy while guitarist Rachel Rosen sets an example that shames the scene for not being more inclusive for women. This particular interview was conducted with Justin Brannan, who, along with Rachel, has been driving this machine since it's inception.

MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD



Interview and photos: John Rash
Illustration: Clif Banner

THE STAVE

GOTHAM CITY

Can the world really be-

lieve that Most Precious Blood is an entirely different band than Indecision? With shared members, songs, and a name taken from Indecision history, that's a really big stretch. Even if there are new songs, new albums, and new people in the band, Most Precious Blood is Indecision. All may be a different band than the Descendents, but everyone knows that the All were once called the Descendents and the core fan-base is the same. That said, what lead to the demise of Indecision that caused this "new band," Most Precious Blood to form, and what are the key differences, besides the line up?

(Justin) You ask what would it take to break us up sounds like an implication that this has become the Justin Brannan Experience or something like that, which I disagree with. I think that because of the line-up changes with Indecision being blurred into the history of this band, it confuses things. Indecision only had one line-up change and that was replacing Tom with Artie on vocals in 1998. We finally decided to break up because everyone was starting to go their separate ways and we were banging our heads into walls. Hardcore wasn't nearly as big then as it is now, so touring was rough, especially doing it nine months at a time. We didn't move on to singer number three or start replacing other band members; we just decided to stop and do something new. That's how Most Precious Blood

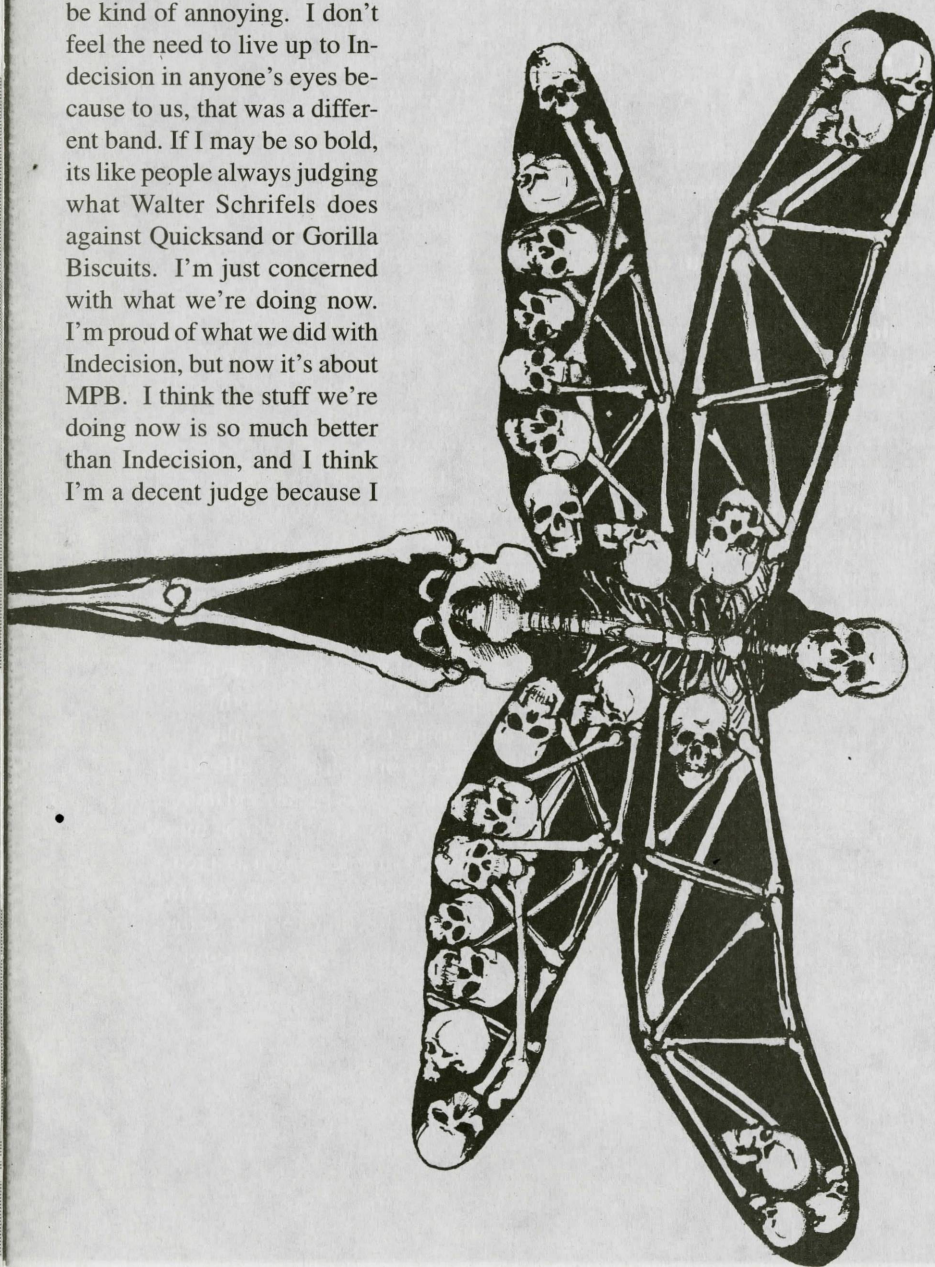
was born. The only thing that would make us call it quits would be that we're not having fun anymore, it would have to be a collective thing. I can't just give up playing music for any one person. I write most of the music and lyrics and never felt like losing a singer was something that should stop a band. A lot of people assume the singer is Axl Rose and he does everything for the band. Tom's contribution (and later Artie's —most of the lyrics on "Release the Cure" were written by Artie) to the bands was obviously undeniable but because I wrote most of the stuff, I never saw a problem with carrying on with a new vocalist. To this day, a lot of people think we are up there playing someone else's songs and singing someone else's music. When we replaced Tom with Artie in Indecision, we only played the songs that I wrote, and the same will go for Most Precious Blood. I never had the ego to take credit for lyrics in our CDs, but when you have kids saying, "It's not gonna be the same," it makes me regret not taking credit for the songs I wrote. Kids would be surprised how many bands all write the songs and everyone contributes, it's not just the singer. I think the Descendents/All analogy is pretty right on. We're not interested in having the world believe that Most Precious Blood is an entirely different band. It would be dumb for us to do so because the core members are still here. Since I write most of the stuff and Rachel and I design all the merchandise, the aesthetics of both bands are obviously going to be very similar. The biggest difference is in the music itself. MPB is more stripped down, less metal, and there's more melody. We wanted MPB to be more straightforward and stripped down as a reaction to all these bands now that are way too concerned with solos and being scary. Hardcore is not about sweeping arpeggios, not to us, at least.



What expectations or responsibilities have been put on MPB as the "ex-Indecision" band? What are the expectations of a band that has been around and established as long as you have?

No matter how you slice it or try to dodge it, everyone has expectations once they know you from another band. Its very flattering but it can also be kind of annoying. I don't feel the need to live up to Indecision in anyone's eyes because to us, that was a different band. If I may be so bold, its like people always judging what Walter Schrifels does against Quicksand or Gorilla Biscuits. I'm just concerned with what we're doing now. I'm proud of what we did with Indecision, but now it's about MPB. I think the stuff we're doing now is so much better than Indecision, and I think I'm a decent judge because I

wrote all of it, past, present and future. Indecision broke up and I still had more ideas, so we started MPB. I don't think kids who aren't in bands really understand that fever just to play and write music and perform and tour. So many kids will see a band who's been around for years and say, "Why don't they just give it up." A lot of times its not that easy, to just give it up, you still want to create music and you still have that energy. It's cool to have the "ex-member" thing because it helps get a new band off the ground, but in the end it becomes sort of an albatross. If someone didn't like Indecision they may not even give us a chance, whereas if someone loved Indecision they might automatically be into it



What traditions or expectations go along with being a hardcore band from New York City?

Nothing means more to us than New York City, we're proud of it. NYC is definitely unique. There are so many different things going on here with hardcore. People assume NYC is all about tough guys, brass knuckles, kids getting stabbed at shows, and that whole scene. People write off bands from NYC because they just assume we're Neanderthals. That happen to Indecision all the time, and it still happens now. You roll in from NYC, they expect to see gold teeth, bad tattoos, and bullet wounds. Sometimes we give them what they want, but out of fun. New York hardcore has been romanticized over the years. The bands who are worshipped now, maybe 100 kids came to their shows at CBGB's back in the day. Over time, tales are spun and everything is exaggerated as this romantic thing. We are humbled and flattered to even be a sentence in the history books with bands like the CroMags, Sick of It All, and Agnostic Front. NYC is also unique because bands who are hyped up as the hot bands in hardcore, no one cares about here. A show that would have hundreds of kids in another state, you'll only get 100 kids at CBGB's. Kids here are in their own worlds. It's not uncommon for a show at CBGB's to be practically empty until the headliner goes on, especially if that band is

NYHC



from NYC. You'll have a bill that in most places would be a huge show from top to bottom, but here kids just don't care as much. They like what they like and that's it, it's a very insular thing. It's hard to be accepted into it. With Indecision we just kept playing and playing and more of our friends kept coming out. The next thing we knew, the "right people" were approaching us. Now, I look around at the handful of friends I have left from those years and we're turning into the older dudes in the scene, going on 10 years. Being from NYC there is a definite style that's expected of you. We have always tried to take the intensity and ferocity of bands like AF and Sick of It All and combine it with the aesthetics and politics of bands like Born Against, Lifesblood, and Citizens Arrest. When Indecision came out talking about atheism, no one was really doing that, except maybe Nausea. Bands like Chokehold and Earth Crisis were known for preaching vegan/vegetarianism and animal rights, but there were no bands like that coming out of NYC. Cro-Mags and Shelter were preaching Krishna, and, of course, Youth of Today, Judge, Gorilla Biscuits, back in the day, but when Indecision came out in the mid-90s, there was no band like that in NYC. We were like the West Coast hardcore-minded band from Brooklyn, NY. We were copying from the Cro-Mags and Sick of It All just as much as we were copying ideas from Unbroken, Undertow and Outspoken. I remember having blazing arguments with

Maximum Rock n Roll and *Punk Planet* and all those posh, negative space, farsty zines because they totally wrote us off. Being from Brooklyn is like even more of an albatross. Brooklyn means Biohazard, Life of Agony, and Type O Negative. Those three bands we all grew up listening to and loving. No one could imagine a hardcore band like us coming from here, for some reason. We actually had shit to say and a head on our shoulders, and that wasn't allowed because people had been writing off bands from Brooklyn for years. Not to mention that our drummer at the time liked basketball, so he's got a basketball jersey on, and now we're a thug band. I just wonder if the mid-80s will always be the glory days, or if 20 years from now kids will look back at the mid-90s? It's hard to tell because you know in Youth of Today/Gorilla Biscuits heyday people were talking about the mid-70s like those were the glory days. •

I really like your analysis of the New York scene politics, but I don't think this is exclusive to NYC. Small towns are always much less jaded and excited to see any show. In the city, you have a world of options in your backyard and tons of shows happening every month, and you get picky really quickly.

As far as city kids being more jaded, you're right, that's just how it is, and you do see it everywhere. We've even seen it in Europe. When American hardcore bands first

started going over there it was such a new thing. Europe was like this uncharted territory where kids just loved music and treated every band that came over like they were the biggest and best band in the world. Over time, more and more bands have toured Europe and it became less special. Since Europe was just bombarded with "NYHC" bands they got jaded, too. We definitely saw it. The first time Indecision went to Europe was in 1996, and it was insane. Over the next few years, like anywhere else, you start looking for those familiar faces and a lot of them are gone, especially in the bigger cities. Kids fall off and fall out just like anywhere else. For a while you could pick up a flyer for certain clubs in Germany and you'd think you were looking at a CBGBs flyer because there were so many U.S. bands, day after day. It was total bombardment. Kids got spoiled. We decided to go play places like Spain and Portugal, or Croatia and Austria, where bands never went, and it was awesome. We love playing NYC and all the big cities, but when you roll into a VFW hall in North Dakota that you always have a surprisingly good show because kids are starved for music and shows. We made a point to play every state, and I think all we have left is Hawaii. Indecision even rocked South Dakota.

So what is your relationship with these historically important NYC bands?

It's crazy how over the years you just get to know these people. I remember having the ad for *One Voice* on my bedroom wall, and its got AF standing in the shadows, looking hard. I remember it said something about Roger being out of jail, and it was scary. The next thing I know Roger is producing a record for Indecision and we're eating plantains and talking about Siouxsie and the Banshees. Roger is probably the biggest Siouxsie fan in NYC, after me, that is. Vinne Stigma calls me every Christmas and says he some guy from Macys and they're looking for someone to play Santa last minute. Every year he calls Hoya from Madball and does the same routine, its great. Sick of It All, a band who changed my whole life when I was 12, now we're like brothers. I admit, sometimes I pinch myself. These are absolute legends that I grew up going to see, and thinking of them as totally untouchable people. Even though all these people are my friends now, it's very humbling because these people are larger than life.

As a band from NYC, what is your response to 9/11 and how that relates to the war in Iraq?

I was on the Brooklyn Bridge on September 11th. I saw the whole thing happen with my own eyes and I'll never forget it. Immediately you want revenge. That's the human reaction. It really hit home, and for the first time terrorism was real, and it was right here in front of our eyes. I still find myself speeding through tunnels and over bridges because



you never know when something will happen. I am amazed, and of course relieved, that nothing has happened since the U.S. took over Iraq. Everyone here was bracing themselves for September 11th, part two, thanks to the war. Having this happen in our backyard definitely gives us a different perspective. We all knew at least one person who died. I used to work temp jobs in the towers. But as much as I wanted Osama's head on a stick, I also realized that that would solve nothing. Just like the war in Iraq. When the war is over, it doesn't mean anything. It's never over. You can never stop terrorism and fanatics. Osama and Hussein just become figureheads. September 11th woke everyone up for a hot minute, and we realized that we are not invincible. Before September 11th, I assumed, like most people, that you couldn't just fly a commercial airline a few hundred feet above the NYC skyline. I don't exactly know what I assumed would happen if you tried to, but I just assumed that it was not possible. We ruled by fear, and on that Tuesday morning they called our bluff. We were so cocky, and we let them in through the front door. My father worked three or four blocks away at City Hall and he said it was like a Godzilla movie. People just running for their lives from this huge dust cloud, no idea which way or how far these towers were going to topple. Just like our parents remember where they were when they heard the news about JFK or Mar-

tin Luther King Jr., we will remember where we were on September 11th. September 11th left many second-guessing their fashionable anti-American sentiment and for others it was merely an inevitable sign of the times. A month later when the U.S. started dropping bombs on Afghanistan, we realized it was only the beginning. It was now obvious, unlike in Hollywood, there wasn't going to be a beginning, middle, and resolution in two and a half hours. Bruce Willis and Will Smith couldn't save us this time. The war with Iraq has a lot to do with Bush Jr. exploiting September 11th. Had September 11th not happened, I seriously doubt Bush Jr. would've picked a fight with Hussein. These faceless, nameless people attacked our country and he had nothing to show for it. No one was made an example of, so he started a war. He needed to hang someone for morale.

What would you like to see changed about the political climate in America today?

Like most people, I have the same party line, I wish we could handle our own problems and let the rest of the world fend for themselves. However, I realize this is a naïve solution, and it's easier said than done. There is no way the U.S. can maintain its position as this international superpower if we just let the rest of the world fend for themselves. We still have people here living on the streets, addicted to drugs, dying from diseases because they can't afford treatment,

and kids who can't read. We should work on some of these issues before we worry about liberating anyone else. Now, the intentions have changed. The U.S. intervention in World War II was justified. It's not quite as cut and dried this time around. We're not really concerned with liberating the Iraqi people. Today I heard Syria is next. Is liberate the code word for decimate? We go in, decimate their country, and then we pay to rebuild the very buildings we destroyed. It doesn't make sense. I aim all of this at the politicians, not the troops. The soldiers are there because it's their job. Whether they dreamed of being in the Armed Forces or they just needed money for college, they fight the wars that the people in D.C. send them to fight. They are the sacrificial instruments. If September 11th hadn't happened, we would not be attacking Iraq and looking to "liberate" the people. It's a diversion for morale. We can't track down Osama so let's go finish a few wars we started 12 years ago. *Rent Wag the Dog*, that's a prophecy.

There are no hardcore bands out there right now who have an analysis. What has contributed to killing the era of hardcore where bands had something to say about the world other than songs of failed romance and violence?

I really don't know. It's very, very rare to find a hardcore band talking about politics now. Us included, but we never really did. Indecision did the *Release the Cure* al-

bum and that was probably the most political thing we ever did. We attacked the U.S. health care system and we touched on a few conspiracy theories dealing with the cures for diseases. Our point was that the cures for AIDS, or cancer may exist, but they aren't released because there's too much money to be made in the treatment for these diseases. An absolute cure would put a lot of people out of work and close a lot of hospitals. Even with that record you said in *Slave* that we were paranoid maniacs and we should call our next record *Green Men from Mars Ate My Baby*. We make comments in interviews, but we don't really write songs about it. America was at war with Iraq and I don't think we said anything about it on stage, at all. We don't really see the stage as a soapbox, and to be honest, most kids at shows are apathetic to all of it. If we were up on stage spewing political rhetoric no one would get it, or care. That's not a cop out, because we all do care. Every night on our last tour, after the shows our eyes were locked on CNN, mouths agape. We'd all discuss it and how we felt about it, but we never felt the need to talk about it on stage. We have friends who are over there, and we have friends who died on September 11th. We did a big benefit show in NYC a month after, so we are involved, just more passively. A lot of bands just have these catch phrases and buzz words that they veil as deep political statements. They get up



on stage, scream their catch phrases, make a few blanket political statements, and wave their flags and that will be that. That's shallow, and I'd rather just discuss it with people if they come up to us. Over the years hardcore/punk has become more of a refuge for 14-year-olds that hate their rich parents, rather than a place for people with radical political views or ideas. Hardcore as a whole is so different now, it's become watered down and safe. Of course, there's still basement shows and bands that don't give a fuck about Soundscan and Hot Topic, pie charts, and target markets. These bands keep things important and threatening, but as a whole, it's just not what it was. Ten years ago, you couldn't go to a show without seeing someone with a table about animal rights with a little TV and VCR showing vivisection and midnight raids at furriers. When you walk into Hot Topic you don't see that anywhere. Us older bros have to realize not everyone was introduced and indoctrinated into this stuff like we were. All of us late 20-somethings know the deal, and we are all atheist, vegan/vegetarian, and straightedge. The 13-year-olds who keep this thing go-


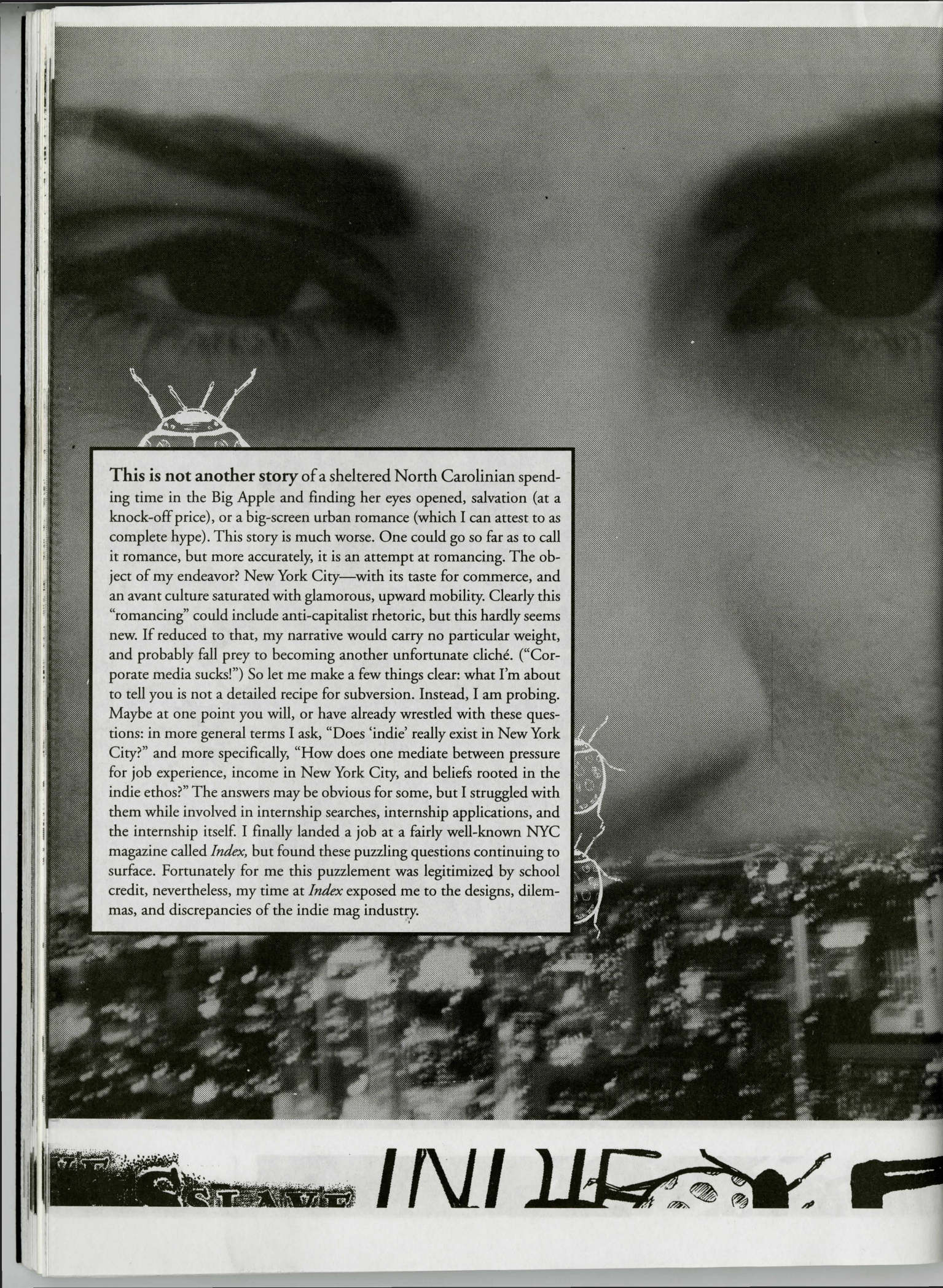
ing have no idea about most of this stuff. Without the radical bands of the past, we wouldn't have what we have now. Now all the jocks you hated in high school are next to you moshing at Warped Tour. Do you think they really give a fuck about North and South Korea or the Gaza strip or healthcare in the U.S.? I think bands would rather write songs about topics they are more familiar with, and the same goes for people buying the records. People are more familiar with having their hearts broken than being sent off to war.

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**Downtown &
Brooklyn via
8 Av Loop**

TOT

ASTROTOWN
FIRST IN
THE U.S.A.
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This is not another story of a sheltered North Carolinian spending time in the Big Apple and finding her eyes opened, salvation (at a knock-off price), or a big-screen urban romance (which I can attest to as complete hype). This story is much worse. One could go so far as to call it romance, but more accurately, it is an attempt at romancing. The object of my endeavor? New York City—with its taste for commerce, and an avant culture saturated with glamorous, upward mobility. Clearly this “romancing” could include anti-capitalist rhetoric, but this hardly seems new. If reduced to that, my narrative would carry no particular weight, and probably fall prey to becoming another unfortunate cliché. (“Corporate media sucks!”) So let me make a few things clear: what I’m about to tell you is not a detailed recipe for subversion. Instead, I am probing. Maybe at one point you will, or have already wrestled with these questions: in more general terms I ask, “Does ‘indie’ really exist in New York City?” and more specifically, “How does one mediate between pressure for job experience, income in New York City, and beliefs rooted in the indie ethos?” The answers may be obvious for some, but I struggled with them while involved in internship searches, internship applications, and the internship itself. I finally landed a job at a fairly well-known NYC magazine called *Index*, but found these puzzling questions continuing to surface. Fortunately for me this puzzlement was legitimized by school credit, nevertheless, my time at *Index* exposed me to the designs, dilemmas, and discrepancies of the indie mag industry.

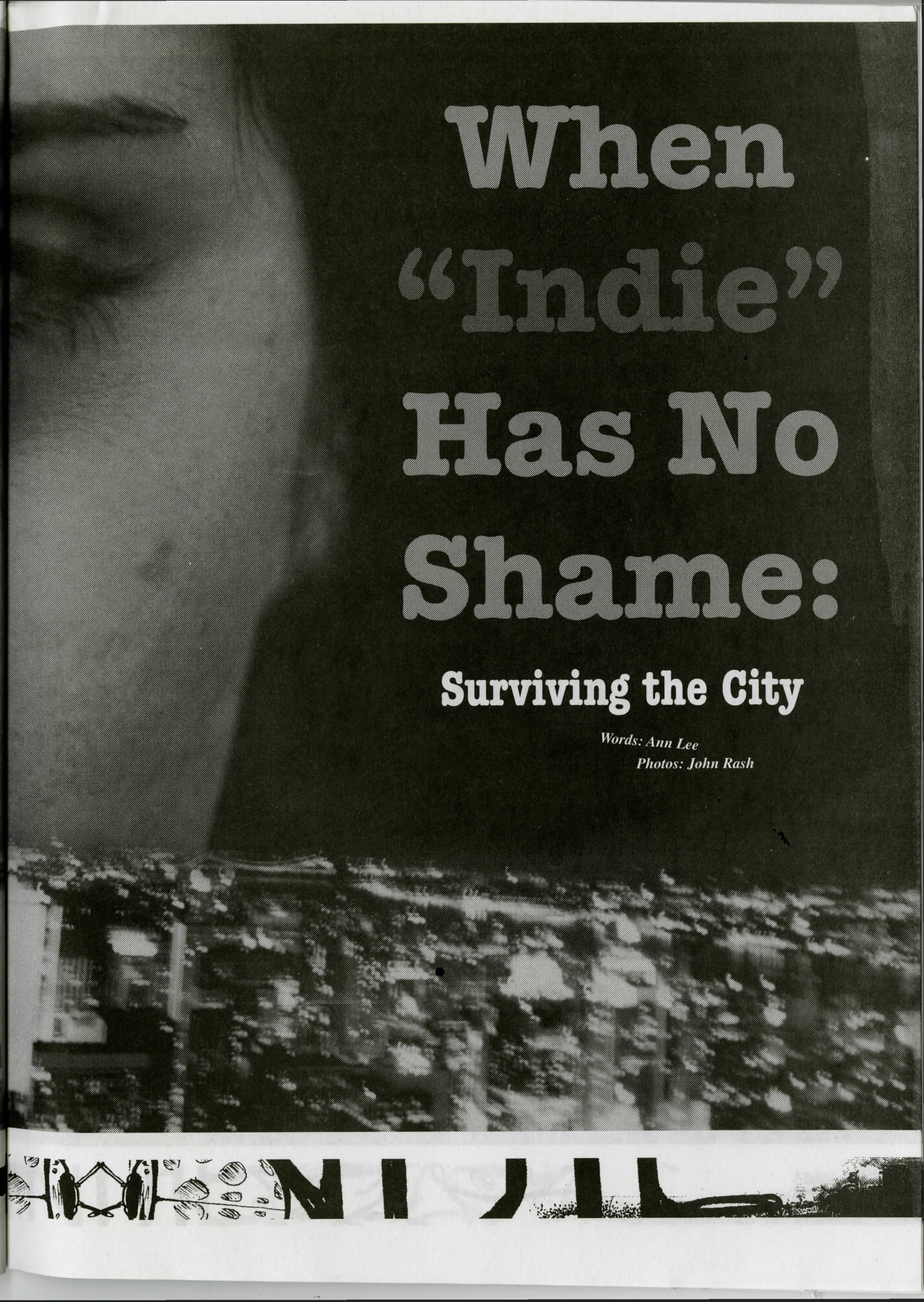


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STAVE

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WE





When “Indie” Has No Shame:

Surviving the City

Words: Ann Lee

Photos: John Rash



I fell in love with *Index*

back in February 2001, with the issue that featured Brian Eno, Naomi Klein, Slava (the first Russian to be granted US sanctuary for his sexual orientation), and almost the entire roster of bands I was spinning at that time. Another wave of feverish love for *Index* swept in when I discovered (the goddess) Bjork on the cover of the following issue. My friend Viva Cohen, whom I consider to have impeccable taste, is also a huge fan. He let me greedily feast on other *Index* back issues. I was awed. The photography was gorgeous; it was not self-indulgent like in so many other magazines. It revealed something, it seemed, that could not have been expressed otherwise. If it was ever gaudy, it was uniquely gaudy. Photography was not the medium to advertise for Gucci's latest cardigan.

Index is independently published, but funded by its founder, the artist Peter Halley. This past semester he commuted between the studio and Yale, where he is the Director of Graduate Studies in Painting. I did not see him often, and rarely talked to him. Ariana Speyer, our senior editor, was my supervisor while Zoe Bruns, Marcelo Gomes, and Chris Hayes were my sub-supervisors. *Index* is split into two parts—the “Studio” side where the four of us resided, and the “Index” side where Ariana, our publisher, and two Advertising execs. I tended to cater to the needs of my sub-supervisors while the other intern, Ella, worked on the Index side. It just ended up this way after I appropriated the vacant desk on the Studio side during Week One. Problems that arose usually were derivative of one of two things: a lack of communication caused by the studio space being somewhat atomized, and Peter. He could be slightly neurotic and control freakish but then again, he could just have easily been continuing a long tradition of world-famous male painters. All I would say is that on the days he was in, the atmosphere was significantly more sullen and grave than those when he was not.

Index has nearly 3,000 subscribers, I think. Artistic integrity tends to take a priority over huge subscribership, so a lot of the revenue is generated by ads. I mused over the fact that everyone at *Index* is an artist, even the advertising kids. They are artists that happen to be good at publishing, good with numbers, good at selling. *Index* seemed involved in both underground circles and the more frou-frou New York art scene. Our regular writers, photographers, and close friends include Thurston Moore of Sonic Youth, Ian Svenonius of the Make-up and Nation of Ulysses, the writer prodigies Emma Forrest and J.T. Leroy, Juergen Teller, Wolfgang Tillmans, David and Amy Sedaris, Kate and Jack Spade, and others. But enough name dropping.

As an intern, my routine tasks included the following: taking out the trash, washing the dishes, putting bags in the trash cans, making coffee, restocking the refrigerator, delivering the mail, stamping mail, sealing mail, opening mail, writing addresses, harassing people on the first floor for a mailroom key to retrieve the mail because someone lost our key, signing for deliveries, wrapping presents, giving back rubs, fixing computers, getting print outs, delivering packages, making phone calls, running errands, paying Peter's parking tickets because he regularly parked in front of fire hydrants, getting petty cash, depositing large amounts of money, ordering supplies, picking up packages, filing receipts, unclogging the sink, and research.

These weren't so bad when balanced with my not-so-routine tasks or with the unexpected: being sent to see whether David Bowie was playing in the rehearsal space across the street (he was); EATING ALL OF THE FREE FOOD; drinking free drinks; obtaining free toilet paper, free glossy paper, free stationery, free copies, free stamps, free advance promo CDs of bands I love, free magazines, FREE INTERNET, free time to finish up homework; and delivering packages to people I adore like

Richard Kern and Lou Reed. Getting insider information on Chelsea. Meeting an *Index* stalker. Venting to Junior, my favorite elevator man. Seeing what it was like being an advertising intern for a day: this involved calling up competitor magazines and trying to snag their media kits by pretending to be an owner of a certain shoe company in SoHo. Picking out clothes for Jena Malone's (*Dangerous Lives of Altar Boys*, *Donnie Darko*) photo shoot. Free pizza Fridays.

I also got a small, but significant stipend. I say “significant” because almost all internships I know of in New York are unpaid. If you are ever looking to intern, take note: *it is common knowledge that internships are the new form of exploited labor.*

Now that I've given you an elemental break down an internships pros/cons, the following is the general course my weeks took. Week One to around Week Eight consisted of the more difficult of the routine tasks. I'm not sure if this was to “break me in”, though I did, from all those errands, quickly acquire a solid knowledge of Manhattan's streets. I also gained an affinity for all of the postal workers, the concierges, the elevator men, the doormen, the trash takers, the dishwashers, and above all, the messengers. Naturally, internships at pop culture magazines are tricky. You seem either lost mediating the orders sent from (invisible) corporate bigwigs and your desire to feel significant, or you are placed right in the hub of a smaller, indie magazine struggling to keep alive, and subject to becoming overworked and underpaid. But towards the end of the year, since all of us were undergoing rabid multi-tasking, we all felt the pressure. High(er) paid advertising execs empathized with (and really depended on) lowly interns. But even the “lowly interns” became lost vocally. We all talked shit during breaks. We laughed at magazines with dress codes.

Being shy and an untypical New Yorker, it took me awhile to feel comfortable with my surroundings. And here I might add one discovery—*being loud is currency*. Not loud, loud of course, but you know what they say, Warhol hit it first with his personality even before he made it with soup cans. This is something I just couldn't do.

One should also know that the academic and pop magazine worlds aren't exactly tied, so don't expect it to be. I didn't meet a single magazine writer who majored in journalism. When it comes down to it, contrary to an idealistic writer's dream (and this applies to musicians, as well), I also learned that New York is *not* the environment in which I'd start a magazine. Some thrive in competitive environments sure, and perhaps one day I'd like to return with already published magazines in hand. But climbing the media ladder is not just a phrase limited to places like *Spin*, *Vogue*, *In Style*, etc., it amalgamates most anything in NYC that's made an industry—things designated "indie" included. It's a maddening jungle, and maybe I'm just not cut out for that kind of slapping around. But as my friend Alex suggests—you don't need to use a shotgun to kill a fly. DC's Revolution Summer seems relevant here—if you don't like the way it is being done, get up and do it differently. *Sound too easy?*

At the end of the semester, I had to write a paper for Duke summarizing my enlightening (because they assumed it would be) experience. If I did not write something, I would not receive credit. The paper was pass/fail. In my concluding paragraphs, I wrote:

"Now I am coming into the eighth page. This is usually the point where many fellow Duke girls realize that there is not much more to say. But there is. There always is, especially for a paper that is graded on a pass/fail basis. We (I) think, 'I could either tell a story

about my boss, or explain the cartography of our office.'

Last week we were out of our assorted garbage bags. We only had the enormous black kind, with yellow drawstrings. Since we (the interns) had no other choice, we proceeded to use them throughout the office. An hour later, Peter walked in the studio, slammed down his medium-sized trashcan on Zoe's desk, and yelled, "These are not the right bags!! I want the blue recycling bags in this can." She relayed this message to me, and I politely told her that we were out of the blue bags. Naturally she understood, and we were both puzzled as to why Peter had suddenly become Mr. Environut—before, no one had ever adhered to recycling even when we did use the blue bags. So she told Peter that we were out of the blue bags. He was not satisfied. I hated seeing Zoe chewed out for such a trivial matter, so I visited the local dumpster. I found a blue recycling bag, emptied the contents and returned to put it in Peter's trash can. This is a story about my boss.

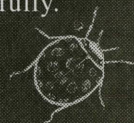
Any insights or summations? Clearly one:

Duke wants to know if I learned, as if the intern-world is some sort of privileged place for learning. Maybe it is, but when I think about the work I've done or the work many of my fellow students have done in other magazines, I realize what a *goofy* paradigm internships are.

Did I learn? Of course I learned! What am I, a lump?"

Obviously, the magazines that blatantly fulfill what the former *Rolling Stones* editor would call, "numbers" or "newsstand sales" become subject visual, and ideological banality. Even though I may like a lot of Eminem's music, when he came out with the *Slim Shady LP*, lo and behold, every magazine had him on its cover, and relayed the same story. And when Britney Spears was listed as one of the Greatest Women in Rock and Roll, I couldn't help but wonder what this information was filtered through, or whose opinion it represented (of course Joan Jett's website is a little less apologetic). This, you probably wouldn't disagree with (though I'm sure I'm inviting more accusatory e-mails from a certain Interscope rep). So while my time at NYC didn't really challenge these views, it definitely colored them. Little did I know, for example, how tense and drug-motored the working atmosphere of certain major fashion mags could be, or how crucial "networking" was to even smaller magazines like *Index*. I'm not sure if this would fall under some people's definitions of "punk" (insert the Sonic Youth debate), but I'm sure it will open the door for more talk than I can often stomach.

I'd like to conclude by saying, a great deal rests on what you are looking for. If you want to work for an indie magazine, be specific. There is no cookie-cutter path toward creating alternative media, sometimes, testing out your own methods from scratch may be more effective than mimicking someone else's. If media giants and "professionals" (or in my case, professors) tell you that you have to do it a certain way, remember: it's rough sailing *but DIY is possible on any terrain* and there are plenty of people doing it successfully.



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Put yourself

in the shoes he was wearing back in the mid-70s. You and some of your buddies start a rock-and-roll band. It's not all that great at first, strictly for kicks. Your friends think your band is great, mostly because they're always drunk at your shows. But soon, word starts getting out about your band after you've secured some mob-brawling-in-pubs fame. It becomes clear to you that you need to plan and organize. Your first step is to assign Shoes-McGill-and-Buddy-Hotrod-rock-and-roll-revival type nicknames to your bandmates and logically, to yourself. But you don't want the scope of your new identity to only include record sleeves and fliers. Your best friend tries to call you 'Woody' because he thinks that's your name, because that's what he's called you since he's known you, and because that's what everyone else calls you, too. He called you that earlier in the week, and it seemed to work just fine. But now you ignore him until he reconsiders and reluctantly tries, "I mean...can I have a swig off your beer there, uh...Joe." There's a lot of correcting to do: "That's Joe." "It's Joe, not Woody." "Please don't call me Woody anymore. No, it's not a joke. My name's Joe." What an upsetting and confusing exchange for everyone. But still, you forge ahead with your new name, and wait for your acquaintances to sort it out, even though it takes months. Because if you're Joe when you're walking on people's heads while manufacturing a bunch of barely recognizable guitar chords on stage, then you'll be Joe when

you're eating a bowl of fucking soup as well. That's the way it has to be, if you're going to do it right, if it's going to mean a damn thing to anybody. This is all pretty unfortunate thinking, which is why you're lucky that Bernie Rhodes gets you to join a new band that will write your new name into punk rock history.

According to one exhaustive 500+ page account of the Clash that I suckered myself into reading a couple of years ago, Woody Mellor (real name: John Mellor) told his friends and bandmates to start calling him Joe Strummer around February 1975. This new name said that as far as guitar playing went, all he was good for was strumming chords. Just your average Joe Strummer. He wanted everyone to know in advance that he sucked. And later on when people would see him play, they would see that he was right, but they'd also see that it really didn't matter. Two generations of crappy no-talent punk bands later, and kids are still trying to pull off this same maneuver with little to no success.

When you're younger, you start to pick your heroes. People who are smarter, funnier, better looking, braver, nobler, luckier, more skillfully dressed, and more prone to win or lose than you. Then, you get older, and the achievements of the people around you that you have witnessed first hand, like successfully owning a pet or making it to work on time every day without a hangover and your clothes on backwards, begin to seem braver and more incredible than those of your favorite rock stars and political figures. You start

to discard the pedestals your heroes are standing on and question their real-world validity ("Who do you think would be more likely to work 3rd shift at UPS: David Lee Roth or Sammy Hagar?") and see your heroes as just people (Answer: Hagar, but he still sucks). I guess there really are no heroes, you tell yourself. No one's ideal. No one's infallible. Even the greatest person has the capacity to be a dick head. Some people just get well known, sometimes because they're really bad and sometimes because they're really good, but usually because they are both. Once you get to this point, you find that you have whittled your collection of heroes down to a list of folks that you just like a whole lot, for better or for worse. That's how I feel about Joe Strummer. The dude was nuts, off his goddamn rocker, and maybe even a bit of a poser. But he was a poser with a big heart. That's what I call bravery.

I first saw *Westway to the World* a few years ago. It's funny to see the Ghosts of The Clash Future. Paul Simonon, the one who was smashing his guitar on the cover of *London Calling*, whose contribution to the band had been soft-spoken artist/clueless bass player with the good looks now appeared serene and detached from the Clash and all of its trimmings. He gently offered his version of what he thought might have happened while he was in the Clash, take it or leave it, he wasn't too concerned either way. Mick, who was responsible for most of the songwriting, a substantial portion of the showboating, and virtually all of the glam punk

archetype outfits taken to an embarrassing extreme (leopard skin overcoats, white berets), now much more agreeable and a lot more bald. He came off as mostly proud of his achievements, of the music and the band itself, although maybe a little ashamed of his past behavior. Topper had become a shrinky-dink version of his Clash-era self, in all likelihood due to his over-enthusiastic drug use. He bobbed and stuttered like a fuzzy-headed baby bird who was too weak to do anything but sit in the nest chirping/chain-smoking like crazy for its mom to get back and shove a worm down its throat. Then, there was Joe. Ol' Joe. Crazy fucking Joe. The other three members lounged back in their chairs, unassumingly emerging from the black backdrop, a leg crossed over the knee, a hand to the chin, compacting their words carefully. But Joe was hunched right up into the camera lens, so close that you could just about read the label on his Member's Only jacket. And he told the Clash story with a paranoid intensity that one might encounter at a candlelit meeting between KGB agents in an underground bunker in 1958, and used the word "Stalinist" with remarkable frequency. Yet, it was the Joe sections of the documentary that had me the most riveted. His narratives were like a little rubber super ball that when you throw it down, you think it's going to



bounce straight back up so you can catch it, but instead it hits some subtle unpredictable angle, totally defies your bounce calculations and nails someone in

the back. Every word out of Joe Strummer's mouth was hilarious, charming, intellectual, surprising, and utterly from the gut, just like when he sang.

And when he sang, well, shit. Strummer's blood-

and-puke singing style conjured up the likes of Shane McGowan, Bruce Springsteen, a resident in an old folk's home and Chunk from *The Goonies*. Growling, cracking, yelling. Other times urgently quiet. All in one sentence. His lyrics brought out his bitter wit, his imagination and his entrenched

can hear it for yourself. That song may be an easy target for the political hard-liners, but there's a whole lot more to that song than its politics.

Back in the late 70s and early 80s when the Clash were at the height of their popularity, the band, especially Joe, came under fire about the sincerity of their political ideals just about every week in the *NME*. Not that the other members of the Clash didn't contribute to the political posturing of the band, but the bulk of the political impetus behind the band came from Strummer's get-off-yer-ass-and-grab-a-brick lyrics. The magazines and the fans interrogated Joe on his middle-class upbringing, his boarding school education, his father with the MBE, his posh apartment, the whole bit. There's a whole slew of theories that people have come up with trying to bring the man down: Joe Strummer was a hypocrite, he was put up to writing political lyrics because their manager Bernie Rhodes told him to or that Joe was capitalizing on the Sandanistas and the race riots because he knew the punks would buy it, hook, line, and sinker.

anger with himself and the world, even though at times, when you listen to him, it's hard to understand his message, much less discern the English language. Sometimes his lyrics start to describe the desperate, bizarre, back alley netherworld from which he thinks he came, and the deeper, darker fight that he fought. And always with just enough of a story told. Listen to "Straight to Hell" and you

Something that I hate starts to happen when you buy into these theories: the songs that once stopped you dead in your tracks lose their ability to issue the same kick in the teeth that you once sought out and enjoyed. You're like, "What does this rich kid from wherever know about Spanish bombs in Andalusia? How can I even take this shit seriously from a person who has no idea what he's talking about and doesn't even follow his own advice?"

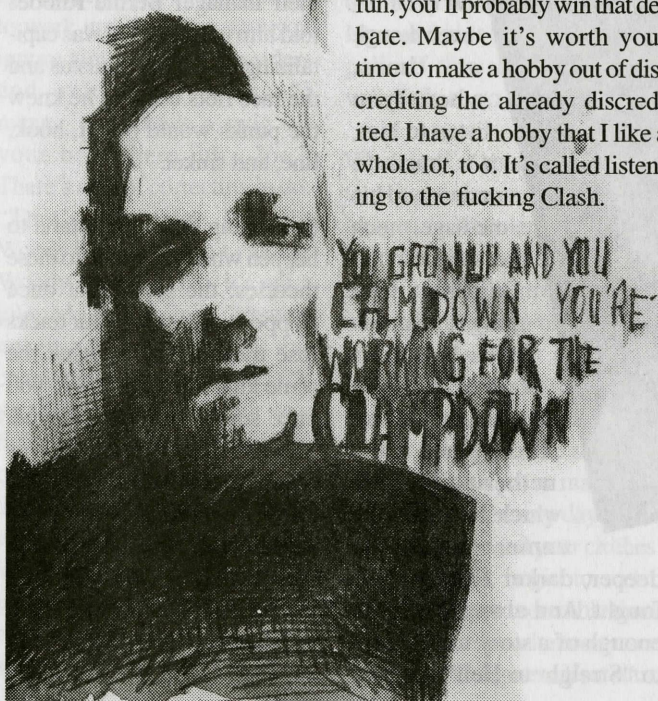
this one's for STRUMMER

Words and illustrations: Lisa Sussman



You know what just happened to you? You just got jaded. You're experiencing the reason that punk rockers have few role models to look up to that are over the age of 30. Someone who hasn't let their co-workers, their jaded punk rock friends or their anarchist pamphlet collection shame them into exiling their unfounded, embarrassing, hopeful, punk rock numbnut idiot selves.

There are plenty of people out there, including the author of that book I mentioned earlier, who have made it a pastime to scrutinize the true street-credibility of punk legends. They've done it to Ian MacKaye. They've done it to Jello Biafra. And it's nothing new for Joe Strummer. Some might say that Joe Strummer's political lyrics came across at times as adolescent, and at other times informed and insightful. Sometimes he lived in accordance to what he laid out in his music, but most of the time, he didn't.



He never claimed to be a guerilla in Central America or a political activist whose car was getting bombed by the FBI. I don't know why punk rock kids get their nuts off by proving that folks who have made a name for themselves don't deserve it. What's the big deal? Joe Strummer was just a singer for a punk rock band that happened to have a massive influence on a lot of the punk music that was created in its wake. Millions of people around the world tune in to MTV once a week to watch Ozzy walk on his treadmill and yell at animals with indiscriminate bowels. Pretty horrible, but are you gonna tell me that Black Sabbath sucks now? Well, if so, then you're wrong and you know it. But anyway. I like to think that Joe sincerely believed in what he was singing about and felt the force behind his lyrics. If you want to pull out your obscure timelines, your propaganda and your punk-as-shit pie charts to contest the political validity of his music, then have fun, you'll probably win that debate. Maybe it's worth your time to make a hobby out of discrediting the already discredited. I have a hobby that I like a whole lot, too. It's called listening to the fucking Clash.

It's been a couple days now since I found out about Joe Strummer's death by heart attack at age 50. Strangely enough, it was my mom who broke the news to me. We were driving around doing Christmas shopping. My mom likes to listen to this radio station that comes out of Spindale that I would attach the label "Adult Alternative" to. Suddenly, the black clouds of local roots-based rock cleared as "Rock the Casbah" came on, and I started to like the station for a second. "Oh yeah, they've been playing his stuff all day since he died," said my mom.

"What? Who died?"

"Strum...Stroller...Strumber..."

"Joe Strummer??"

"Oh yeah, that's it, I think."

And there I was, totally floored and confused over the alleged death of Joe Strummer while driving around in my mother's minivan in Charlotte, NC. Throughout the day, they played "Train in Vain", "London Calling", "and "Lost in the Supermarket." Slowly, shock gave way to sadness.

What hurts most now is to see clips of the Clash performing live. "What's My Name," "The Clampdown," "Clash City Rockers," "Death or Glory," "London Calling," "Janie Jones," "Lightning Strikes." Mick Jones, Paul Simonon and Joe Strummer shotgunning across the stage like tornadoes, swinging like Tarzans, the sharpest-looking Tarzans you'd ever seen: sputtering, reeling, unleashing cracks of thunder over the crowd. Not much you can say, except that it must have been something to have been there. It's heart-breaking to have missed it.

Joe was a dad and a husband by the time that he died. He'd only recently gotten back into making music for public consumption in the last few years. His life probably only distantly resembled what it had been around the time of the Clash, but in recent interviews and video clips, he still sounded exactly the same. Totally insane. Minus the mohawk, the screen-printed neckties, the army fatigues, and maybe even the guitar, and Joe still seemed just as, if not more, ready to jump into a bullring and take a shot at something new. Everything that he did seemed to say, "Maybe it means something, maybe it doesn't, but do something about it either way. Don't just fucking sit there. Live, live, live. Your life could be cut short tomorrow."

The thing that I love about Joe Strummer is that although older and wiser, yet still nuts, he had escaped becoming a jaded old motherfucker. He maintained that the things that matter the most come from instinct not intellect. That sounds pretty right on to me. Meaning if it feels right, if it inspires you, then do it scraping your fingernails on the blackboard, chewing on tin foil, running up the down escalator, barefoot on gravel, knife in the heart, and telling everyone you know to call you your new name that you made up for yourself because you're going to play punk rock from now on. Do it the hard way, because nothing worthwhile comes easy.

Thanks for the advice, Joe. We'll miss you.



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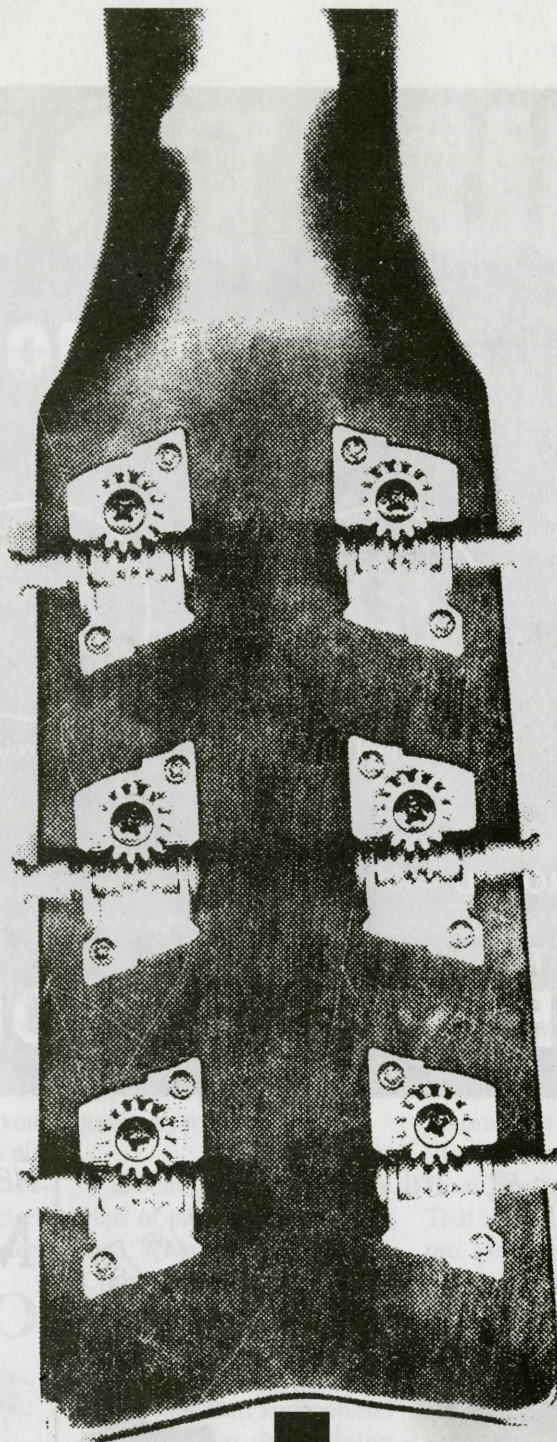
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music

REVIEWS

31Knots *A Word is Also a Picture of a Word* (54°40' or Fight!) Most math rockers I know are super intelligent meta-humans, and it seems 31Knots are no exception. The album is tight. It is a perfect co-existence of math instrumentation and epic prog lyrics. Every song is individual but works with the others to form one unified art piece. This could arguably be one of the top math albums of all time. (us)

Five's Continuum Research Project *The Hemophiliac Dream* (Totuga)

A very good-looking noise project on Totuga. Very moody, very thought out. The title means "four dimensional spaces, of which the dimensions are length, breadth, thickness, and time." Ambient, sparse, and scratchy. Disturbing in its tones. Sensations of up and down. Sounds of electronics, lost, howling, sick, and scary. Only three tracks on this disc and it's sixty minutes long. Wow. (nh)

Affront *You'd Make A Good Looking Corpse* (Commode)

Do you like Dag Nasty? Do you like the Gorilla Biscuits? Well, I'm sure Affront do. This is seven songs of melodic hardcore designed for pile-ons and finger pointing with lyrics somewhat similar to American Nightmare. The major problem with this record is that the first song, "Romance is Dead," is leaps and bounds above anything else on this EP. If the whole EP were as good

as this song, I'd have given this an overwhelmingly positive review. As it stands, this record is just another average hardcore record and I'm left feeling that the band is capable of doing so much more. I wouldn't suggest you buy this album, but if melodic hardcore is your thing, Affront is a band you should keep an eye on. (jp)

All Night *All Night* (Teepee)

If this were 1975, All Night would be rock gods. They would be touring with ZZ Top, the James Gang, or the Allman Brothers. People would be wearing All Night iron-on decals saying "they don't call us All Night for nothing." If this were a Cameron Crowe movie, All Night could be Stillwater. However, this isn't 1975 or a Cameron Crowe movie. It's 2003, and All Night is the best rock band in the country and no one knows it yet. Their style of playing is over-the-top high-octane guitar riffage that will remind anyone hat rock 'n' roll is supposed to be about. If you are a fan of the bands above, then you'll love All Night. They are a non-stop rock machine that leaves little in its trail except broken beer bottles and guitars. All Night will rip you a new asshole. (wbs)

aLUnared *Slmzk!* (Action Driver)

aLUnared are four Canadians from Vancouver, BC and can be described as an electro-punk band. The music of aLUnared touches on goth, industrial, punk and new wave with electronic

samples and sequencers. I wouldn't blame you for thinking such a listening experience could be a complete nightmare. Yes, at moments they do sound like an 80s British shoegazing goth band and at other times they sound like a 90s pretentious American industrial outfit. However, like the title (*Slmzk!* Pronounced: soul music) of this latest album promises, there are definitely moments of pure soul going on here. There are also some great catchy pop moments on this album, interspersed between the haunting keyboards, distorted vocals, and sequenced drum machines. The songs on *Slmzk!* are occasionally angry, occasionally spooky, and occasionally tortured but often very beautiful. (pl)

American Tragedy *As I Lay Dying* (Pluto)

As I Lay Dying is tight heavy metal driven hardcore, with overtones that seem to be inspired by Swedish hardcore. The recording is heavily produced but poorly mixed. The lay out is crisp, bright, and abstract much like a Catharsis record. The lyrics sing of sadness, betrayal, and wishing for and end but with a slight positive edge. Fans of Undying should check this out. (nh)

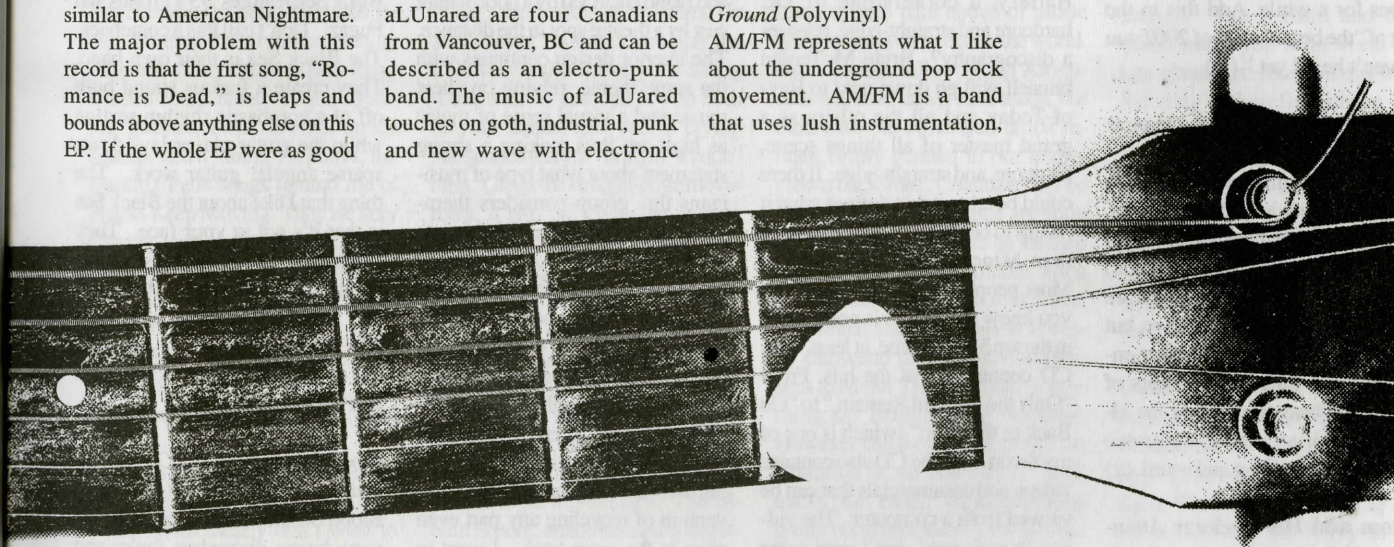
AM/FM *The Sky is the New Ground* (Polyvinyl)

AM/FM represents what I like about the underground pop rock movement. AM/FM is a band that uses lush instrumentation,

but not in a bland way. Their arrangements focus on the unique guitar playing and vocal styling of Brian Sokel (ex-Franklin). I found each track to be uplifting and moving while not being too poppy or corny. (wbs)

Anodyne *The Outer Dark* (Escape Artist)

From Merriam-Webster's new Collegiate Dictionary: Anodyne: *adjective*: Latin *anodynos*, from Greek *anOdynos*, from *a-* + *odynE* pain 1: serving to assuage pain 2: not likely to offend or arouse tensions, innocuous. It's pretty clichéd to start any type of review with a quote from a dictionary. If you look at their Web site, they quote the dictionary, too. Anodyne do not live up to their name. This music is painful, excruciating, spiked, and caustic. Just a total fucking terror. You can't say fuck enough. It's the only articulate way to describe this album. It consists of hard, screaming fucking 'core with whip-cracking breakdowns that make every muscle in your back cringe in anticipation for the impact. If you can imagine the band Converge getting hit by a truck carrying nuclear waste to Yucca Mountain on a curved desert road, that's close to what it sounds like. You should buy it, own it. (jg)





Apart From the Projector *Lover's Knot EP* (Action Driver)

Lover's Knot features four emo rock songs with kooky titles like "You Destroyed Your Own Shark, Champ" and "Statement Indicating Hello." Their packaging is a straight rip on the late-90s Jade Tree design aesthetic. It would be easy to dismiss this record for lack of originality, but their hearts seem to be in the right place. (zm)

Army of Ponch *So Many You Could Never Win* (No Idea)

I don't think I've ever heard a bad band from Gainesville, Florida. While that's not to say that every band the city produces is as good as Against Me!, (old) Hot Water Music, and Less Than Jake, but never have I heard a band that was not at least pretty good. Army of Ponch is no exception. Playing a type of music that sounds like a cross between old Engine Down and Twelve Hour Turn, Army of Ponch does a beautiful job at borrowing from different styles of music to come up with a sound that is distinctively its own. "Those Old Hurts" with its mix of screamed vocals and more melodic singing is sure to be a fixture of my mix tapes for a while. Add this to the list of "the best records of 2002 you haven't heard yet." (jp)

Astudyinher *Dialogic* (Honest in Secret)

Lovely. Dynamic ambient song structures with an indie rock vibe. This album is really out there. Both male and female (mostly female) vocals collide well. The songs are very dragged out and repetitive, but this quality only makes it more enjoyable and interesting. Hints of drum and bass throughout the album give it an almost electronic vibe, very interesting and weird. (tr)

Atom and His Package *Attention! Blah Blah blah.* (Hopeless)

This guy just gets better and better.

And more and more proud of Philadelphia. The artwork on this disk reminds me of Men's Recovery Project's artwork, with a brighter more fluorescent layout. Very bizarre and intricate ink drawings. This time around he does a cover song by Raddon (from Florida). His lyrics tackle issues such as marrying your grandmother, and living out of boxes. I would have to say this album is the feel-good techno punk album of the millennium. Just in time for the summer. (nh)

Avail *Front Porch Stories, Richmond Virginia* (Fat Wreck Chords)

After all these years and records, this Richmond-based band is back with a new album and they are still going strong. The art for *Front Porch Stories* is very personal with the cover featuring a painting of two bums passing a bottle and a cut and paste insert with photos of the band and old Avail flyers. The lyrics are political, reminiscent, or focus on life in general. I was surprised to see that music companies now sponsor Avail, but I am happy for them all the same. Avail's urgent, in-your-face, melodic pop punk takes obvious influence from blues and rock, pulling off a nice folk heaviness. (nh)

Battery *Final Fury: 1990-1997* (Soulforce)

Battery, a cornerstone of DC hardcore and straight-edge, releases a discography? Brian McTernan himself will go down next to Ray-of-Today and all the others as a grand master of all things scene, hardcore, and straight-edge. If there could be a band that defines what it means to be DC Straight-edge more than Minor Threat, it's Battery. Most people know this already, so you know this album is going to be in the top 50 of all time, at least. This CD contains all of the hits. From "Only the Diehard Remain," to "Go Back to the Gym" (which is one of my favorites). The CD also contains videos and commercials that can be viewed from a computer. The videos, though good, don't even come close to the nuclear energy of their

live shows. The metallic audio from a cheap camcorder microphone, etc. The two straight-edge "Partnership for a Drug-Free America" commercials are pretty lame, despite appearances by a Porcell and Mr. Cappo. I'm not ready to see what a completely drug-free America would look like. It would probably be a nation full of people like Jack Torrence (you know, from *The Shining*), only instead of axes and screaming for "Danny," we'd be holding macro-brewed coffee in disposable cups screaming for Britney. So, I'm just not ready to endorse that yet. But if Battery wants to, then go right ahead, it still doesn't detract from this album. The pictures and the introduction get you about as amped for the music as you can get aside from going to a show. If you don't already own this, you should. It should be considered required listening. "Do you Believe?" shouts Battery, I BELIEVE! (jg)

Between The Buried And Me *Between the Buried and Me* (Lifeforce)

Despite the obvious death, black, hardcore, and thrash metal influences in their sound, primary props go out to this Raleigh, NC outfit for choosing artwork that doesn't borrow from clichéd hardcore or metal aesthetics. This disc comes packaged with a cover photo of an empty theatre stage featuring a music stand and piano encircled by a pool of light cast by a theatre spot in the distance. The interior design continues with the same theme, relying on sheet music and a visual sense of music as high art, thus making a strong statement about what type of musicians this group considers themselves to be. I can really appreciate a band that avoids convention by trying something different with their visuals, and the same thoughts are easily applied when describing this band's sound. A single BTBAM song contains enough parts and transitions to build an entire album for most groups, and still they refuse to fall into the simplest musical convention of recycling any part even once in the same track. I want to believe BTBAM are spitting in the

face of pop with this ultimate denial of repetition and traditional composition, yet, somehow, I think they just instinctively believe that this is how to write a good song. It's almost as if this album is meant to document and stockpile every awesome riff the band could muster, yet somehow it works, beautifully. BTBAM test a diverse range of aggressive genres and often take advantage of their rare ability to execute indie/emo influenced melodic parts. During these moments, really nice singing swells over the music to contrasts with vocalist Tommy Rodger's Mike Patton-esque range of screaming and growling. All too often, hardcore bands attempt dynamics such as this and fail miserably (Poison the Well, for example). There really is a lot to hear on this album, and if anything, that is its main flaw. Perhaps there are only so many notes a listener's ear can take in one sitting, as argued against Mozart in the film *Amadeus*. Even if that is true, this is the best metal album of 2002 and it deserves enough listens to gain the endurance to absorb it all. (jr)

The Black Sea *The Black Sea* (Lovitt)

The Black Sea is here to destroy you. That's it. I would like to leave my review at that, but I know it would annoy some people. The Black Sea features 2/3's Frodus and Fugazi. Don't call this a comeback. The Black Sea is their own band. They create a furious sound built off of a bombastic rhythm section while the guitar player lays down sparse angular guitar work. The thing that I like about the Black Sea is that it's not in your face. They take the time to let each instrument breathe. In other words, the Black Sea is not Oysterhead where it's pure fucking chaos. If you are a fan of the last Frodus record, then you'll enjoy this. (wbs)

Blood Brothers *March On Electric Children* (Three One G)

Blood Brothers are a mind fuck. It's very chaotic, discordant, funky, and spazzy. It makes you want to

dance. However, it doesn't make sense. If you listen to the record, you understand that the Blood Brothers write in-your-face fucked-up songs with insane lyrics. When they write songs, they must think, "how can we fuck this great riff up?" Hey, it works for the guys. If you are a fan of music that's high-energy spazzy punk, then jump all over this. (wbs)

Breaker Breaker *Out of Sight* (Martyr)

The final six tracks of fast pissed off hardcore from this California band. They do a more than decent job of standing out above a lot of similar sounding stuff that has been cropping up lately. If you like No Warning, or the scores of bands that scores of bands like No Warning try to sound like, then you should look into this band. The disc itself is one of those new fangled part clear part not MCD jobs and it looks pretty fucking cool. The downfall of this release is that they did not print the lyrics to any of the songs in the liner notes. Last release or not, that's just dirty pool where I come from. (cg)

The Burning Paris *And By December You Will Know Where Your Heart Truly Lies* (Magic Bullet)

Yes, this release is on Magic Bullet, but they (the Burning Paris) are not a crazy chaotic punk/thrash band that everyone expects from this label. Burning Paris offer something different. They chose to play long-winded songs based around soothing guitars, bass, drums, space sounds, and a violin. At points, the Burning Paris songs remind me of Sharks Keep Moving. They are very moving, long, and dynamic. I would recommend this release for anyone who likes lushy spaced out jams. However, don't expect loud protruding vocals. The Burning Paris keep you guessing if the singer is singing, whispering, or moaning. (wbs)

Caesura *More Specific Less Pacific* (54 40' or Fight)

Some bands clearly don't want to have a singer, but at the same time, don't want to be instrumental either.

June of 44 was the classic case. Their vocals hurt a lot of otherwise good songs. Caesura has a similar problem. I can imagine them thinking, "Somebody has to sing, so let's just wash the vocals out with distortion and hope it sounds okay." Mostly it doesn't, though. The few songs where the vocals sound clear and thought-out, like "the Curse of Courses," are the better for it. All the in-between moments are pretty nice. Caesura is a beefy band, with great musical ideas. The long instrumental passages of songs are almost worth having the whole record for. (zm)

The Cassettes *The Cassettes* (Lovitt)

On this recording, the Cassettes were made up of people from Frodus and Dead Meadow. The Cassettes play a noisy style of poppy rock 'n' roll. I guess you can say they were influenced by the garage rock movement of years past. However, they add a noisy indie edge to it that makes it very interesting. They are not some shitty revival rock band that mainstream music lovers are falling in love with these days. At least check out this band for their artwork. It's very fun. (wbs)

Champion *Count Our Numbers* (Bridge Nine)

You get this album and think, "That's the fucking lamest name for a band ever," but after you play the CD, you wake up in your living room with fat tattooed X's on both of your hands, and you're crying ink-stained tears of "bringin' it back" bliss. Given the straight-edge movement, it was only a matter of time before some asshole came up with a band and called themselves "Champion". But, let's not digress. Because this album is so good, you could file it between Judge's *Bringin' It Down* and Youth of Today's *We're Not in This Alone*. Champion sounds like a combination of Chain of Strength, Insted, and Outspoken circa *A Light in the Dark*. This album is pure, unadulterated straight-edge posi-core without sounding as outdated, pointless, and hollow as

their name implies. It feels sincere, like that time when you got your first tattoo, when it really meant something. It's a great album, as smooth sounding as hardcore can be, and as true as straight-edge will ever profess to be. Champion scream the words that got most of us into hardcore music for the first place "Join the voices building in this room, The only person that will kill it for you is you..." OK dude, I'm screamin' along with you, but it's getting fucking hot in this XXX-large Champion hoodie. (jg)

City of Caterpillar *City of Caterpillar* (Level Plane)

Another way to pronounce City of Caterpillar is FUBR (fucked up beyond repair). They are a brutal punk band that plays with as much urgency and chaos as Angel Hair. Each song is relentless and magical at the same time. They will pull you in with chaos and let you breathe for a second with their slowed down quiet jams. Unlike most bands in this genre, their sound translates well on record. Kudos to the band to take the time and energy to create a fantastic record and cover art. If you have a chance to see this band live, do. They will inspire you. (wbs)

Coalition *Coalition* (Shing)

It's not everyday that kids in the U.S. stand up and take notice of music going on anywhere else in the world. On occasion, fellow North Americans will filter down via Canada, but otherwise our American heads remain firmly planted in our home-grown backside. Coalition may be just the band to turn a little attention to Europe and put Poland on the map for well-crafted, fast hardcore. Each song on this disc sounds a bit different, which allows Coalition to easily transcend the generic comparisons to Minor Threat, Ignite, or anything on Bridge Nine Records. However catchy this album can be, Coalition is no pop band. Still, tracks like "Dzien" include backing group vocal melodies that will make any AFI fan's eyes water. What's more, they keep it real and sing in

their native Polish tongue. This surprisingly great disc should serve as an example of what great music is out there if you just put in a bit of research and try seeking out bands that aren't readily available at your local record store. (jr)

Combat Wounded Veteran Duck *Down for the Torso* (No Ideal)

The cover of this album looks exactly how the music sounds. It's so full of contrasting colors and shapes, it could make even the most stable epileptic go grand-mal. I thought that was a big pink cock on the liner notes until I turned it sideways and noticed it was actually just a squid (don't make fun of me yet, I'm still convinced that next to the squid are little pink sperms...seriously, look at it). If Screech from *Saved by the Bell* could design record covers, this is what he would come up with. And reading the lyrics is as easy as shitting silver after a ten day fast. Their first album *I Know a Girl Who Develops Crime Scene Photos* was a great album, total fucking aural stabbing. But on this release, the first track loses you in the first two minutes and 53 seconds of drum-beat and build (the fucking build is longer than three average CWV songs). The second and third tracks make you want to eat broken glass, just like you did while listening to their first album. But that last song? It's Steven Hawking with a sex-change reading Dennis Hopper's diary entry for August 16th, 1982. All while the members of the band learn to sample slot-machine sounds with a Casio brand "rap-master" keyboard. Fuck techno, and fuck CWV's attempt at whatever-the-fuck-that-shit-is-called on that last track. Release the album, call it *Here's the Spectacular Music You Love Without that Fucking Shit on the End of It, Sorry to Everyone We Ever Knew Including Our Parents*. (jg)

Bifocal Media: P.O. Box 50106, Raleigh, NC 27650, **Bridge Nine:** P.O. Box 990052, Boston, MA 02199-0052, **Broken Rekids:** P.O. Box 460402, San Francisco CA 94146-0402, **Carrot Top:** 935 W. Chestnut Suite 1115 Chicago, IL 60622, **Cloudbox:** no address given, **Commode:** P.O. Box 34101, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T3C 3W2,



The Control *The Forgotten E.P.* (Go-Kart)

Melodic screamed hardcore along the lines of Holding On, Reach the Sky, Stay Gold, and Faded Grey. This is the Control's third release, and their first on Go-Kart. It's similar to their previous attempts, and just as good, or perhaps even better. I really like that there are bands out there that are keeping this vein of hardcore alive, the "old school" sound. It's great to hear new bands that push the envelope of this genre. I think it takes a serious artist to keep up a sound that is so simple in construction and turn it into an emotionally driven ragefest while still sounding original and interesting. The only problem with this release is that there aren't more songs on it. Thank you, the Control. (jg)

Crestfallen *Streaks of Terror* (Magic Bullet)

Somewhere, between the instrumental "Biting Your Tongue Off" and the cover of Violence's "Eternal Nightmare," Crestfallen found a miraculous way to save this CD from being a coaster. Thrash-n-bash drumming, screeching vocals, and predictable chord changes plague this band's first five songs. However, when the waves of sound crash into your ears on "Biting," the tide genuinely changes. The best parts of this CD are two-fold: the gut-wrenching lyrics, painstakingly delivered and the interesting drum patterns. "Disappearing Act" is the type of song that makes good things inevitable for this band. Starting out as an aggressive tirade against the evils of the world, the band slips into a more mellow section. It is during this mellow section, specifically at the 2:01 mark, when the drummer starts a pattern of eighth note triplets on the snare, eight notes on the hi-hat and the bass drum on

1 (and) 3 +. An amazingly creative part as it lays a foundation for the guitars and bass to build upon. A cover of Violence's "Eternal Nightmare" brings the CD to a stunning conclusion. (ph)

Crimson Sweet *Lin' In Strut* (On/On Switch)

Not being a big fan of things retro, especially Ramones-inspired bands, but, surprisingly, I enjoyed this album. I love when an album title perfectly sums up its contents, as this trio from New York certainly does strut. This is straight-up, stripped down, instant punk 'n' roll with nothing fancy going on but back to basics garage rock at its best. Yes, they sound like the Ramones in places, but the vocals of Polly Watson ensure that they stand the above other Ramones clones. *Lin' In Strut* conjures up images of being a punk in late 70s/early 80s New York. Crimson Sweet are at their best when driving full speed ahead, as the more down tempo tunes tend to drone on, feeling a bit uninspired. If you need some tunes to help pick yourself out of the gutter, songs like the opener "Hello New York" and "I Want To Live" will help put the retro snarl back on your punk rock face. (pl)

Dead Things ...*Because Sometimes You Just Want To Ride Your Bike To The Show* (Slave)

Quasi-political, somewhat satirical, and defiantly honest best describe Dead Things. This CD is exactly what I want to listen to. I have heard a little hype about this band, and am very happy to say now that it was true. I have long since lost touch with any sort of fast/snotty/power pop punk, but this album totally reminds me of the gems that once came out of the East Bay; energetic, fun, and, rockin'. Sharing the singing duties among three folks, lyrically, Dead Things deal with typical punk dilemmas (unwanted couch surfers, scene positivism, riding bikes etc.). What makes this band special is their territorial pride of the Southland, and more explicitly, North Carolina, the

land of sweet tea, grits, and swimming holes (as mentioned in "Dirty South," the album's eighth track). A must for fans of Dillinger 4, Crimpshrine, or anything on those early Bay-area classic records that made you feel good about being alive. (spc)

Death Of Marat *All Eyes Open* (Stickfigure)

It's a freezing cold autumn evening, a few days before Halloween, and *All Eyes Open* is a more fitting soundtrack now than it was a month ago, when summer just refused to surrender. This album sounds like it was recorded in a dungeon, producing a combination of a post-hardcore and an almost goth influenced sound. Unfortunately, Death of Marat tend to dwell on the worst feature of both genres, that being repetition and monotony. While some bands can pull off a repetitious and minimalist hypnotic sound (Baltimore's Lungfish springs to mind), this album is difficult to listen to the whole way through. Then again, if you want to explore the sick and twisted nether regions of your mind on a late October evening *All Eyes Open* might just be your ticket. (pl)

Del Cielo/Sin Desires Marie 7" (Ed Walters)

Del Cielo open up this split with a fragile little indie pop number that deals with emotional discomfort in the scene and among friends in general (this one being Richmond, VA). This seems easy enough to relate to, but it lacked substance. This same song has taken so many forms throughout the many years of punk rock that it doesn't quite feel real. Probably should have stayed a diary entry on the four-track. Sin Desires Marie really makes the EP work. They've got this great Erase Errata-styled angularity (but some could call danceability), but not so standoffish. It is played tightly and has very nice vocal layering going on. Great song. Keep your ears to the ground for them. (ks)

The Disaster *Black and White and Red All Over EP* (Endwell)

Walking the line between fast hardcore and melodic punk, leaning towards the hardcore side, The Disaster have stepped up with a challenge for those sad about losing Kid Dynamite to fall in love with this sub-genre again. Cultivating that rare ability to appeal to crossover audiences within the scene, this NY outfit is so damn good at writing catchy, aggressive bursts of anger and energy you can't help singing along or pumping your fist(s) in the air. "Not Just a Women's Issue" is lyrically reminiscent of Avail's "Model" addressing the fashion and cosmetics industries for selling "a thinner, better looking image of you." What's strange about this song is the inclusion of a male perspective, which is an interesting and valid point, but, still, a weak argument when compared to the body image expectations women endure. "Do You Have Any Business Here" is much more questionable as it essentially asks why cops bother harassing kids and "making trophy wives feel safe" in rich neighborhoods when there are bad neighborhoods out there that need more law enforcement. The problem, obviously, is not that these neighborhoods, where "real trouble...rears its ugly head," need more cops, but perhaps a better standard of living, less racist cops firing bullets and cracking skulls, and some assistance other than more authoritarian rule. Residents of these impoverished areas will tell you a stronger police presence seldom means more safety, and they'd probably prefer the cops stay in the rich folk's 'hoods. It is nice, however, to see a band in this fast-hardcore genre writing about issues other than failed romance and suicide. Let's hope their lyrics continue in this direction, just with a little more thought next time. Still, *Black and White and Red All Over* is a strong effort from a band you'll hear much more about in the years to come. (jr)

Conquer the World: P.O. Box 40282, Redford, MI 48240, Deathwish: 10 Lothrop Street, Beverly MA 01915, Deep Elm: P.O. Box 36939, Charlotte, NC 28236, Ed Walters: 2416 S.Warnock St., Philadelphia, PA 19148, Endwell: 228

Disband/Kudzu Wish *At the Scene of the Accident* (Ernest Jennings)

You see a band in a basement a handful of times and you think you get a pretty good sense of where they're coming from. Not so with Disband. You won't know what they're up to until you hear this split. Up to this point, I had always thought of Disband as a good to fucking good indie band from a state with a lot of good to fucking good indie bands but, the first track of this split alone is enough to dispel any preconceptions I might have had. The vocal arrangements (not usually a top priority on a rock song) are just beautiful. The studio clearly brings out the best in Disband. Kudzu Wish, on the other hand, are more at home live. Live, these songs have a meandering intensity. Maybe they should have included some canned audience whoos after their on-a-dime dead stops. Here, the songs sound weirdly out of context. Where's the sweat? Where are the nipple rings? Still, this is a pretty great record. Both sides. (zm)

Disband *In Small Rooms* (Ernest Jennings)

In Small Rooms is the culmination of six years of work for Disband. Seen as a whole it is a strong piece, but broken down into its individual songs, the true quality of the work shows. From the panning duet vocals of the first track to the trilling guitar lines nine songs later, Disband's knack for songwriting shines. The melodies are catchy and the lyrics are great. The guitars work together, but rarely at the same thing. Vocal parts burst in and out. The drums are all muscle. Those of us that have been following Disband through house shows and bars have our faith rewarded. *In Small Rooms* is a winner. (zm)

Los Dryheavos *Los Dryheavos* (Pandacide)

I was really excited to see a band in the *Slave* stacks that was supposedly Spanish/English punk rock. According to themselves, Los Dryheavos are "setting an all-

time low standard in rock and roll...and failing to meet it". They pretty much summed it up with that statement. Some of the songs sound like a 33 being played on a 45 speed. Their sound is like a sixteenth-rate Rancid, or maybe Mustard Plug on the day the horns died. The Spanish song lyrics ("No Soy Pocho" is the only one I could decipher) are hard to hear because the vocals are poorly mixed; I don't understand why Los Dryheavos didn't make an album entirely in Spanish. Instead, they choose to have cliché "punk" song titles like "Drink to Get Fucked Up" and "Born Too Loose". *NO ME GUSTA la musica del Los Dryheavos*. (ts)

Enforsaken *Embraced by Misery* (LifeForce)

Imagine the members of Killswitch Engage (including their previous singer, Jesse Leach) sitting down for a Thanksgiving meal and eating portions Iron Maiden, Megadeth, Bloodbath, Soilwork, Shadows Fall, and Unearth with a little Carcass (specifically Carcass's *Incar-nated Solvent Abuse*). Eight to twelve hours later, they would all shit the members of Enforsaken. A heapin' helpin' of metal, done up Euro-Swede style, but shrink wrapped with a bean bag of American "do-not-eat" unoriginality. The metal is tight, occasionally fast, and the breakdowns can hit you when your not lookin' but the rambling metal solos and the "deeper and deeper we shall go into the well of darkness..." lyrics are stale, stale, stale...blah. Some people may like this album for all the reasons that I thought it sucked ass; it is well-choreographed metal. It's pure metal, but more like the metal that you would find after you melted a Keystone Light beer can in a high school campfire, rather than the cold, hard, bitter

razor metal that stabs and pins your very soul to a pentagrammed floor. One parting note: If you're starting a metal band, and your gonna play hard and fast, and your gonna have skulls and flames and smoke and shit on your album, don't fucking make a Web site where you proudly proclaim that your favorite food is "Count Chocula" or "Yummy Gourmet Chicken," it insults true Satanists and metalheads. It also embarrasses you. (jg)

Examination of The... *We Are the Architects of Desire* (Forge Again)

"Love me not. I'll cut your mouth. Your succulent lips. Your rosy cheeks. This is my aside. My vision of lust. I lust for you. Your exquisite lips not from above. Pink with fury. Fire in your lap." This is how the first track of this 10-song CD reads. These lyrics coupled with many others of suppressed anguish and lust give these guys the blueprints for their "architecture of desire" and self-loathing. Set to the extremely intense, sometimes noisy music familiar with the likes of Dillinger Escape Plan and throat shredding vocal styles of Coalesce, this album is representative of the popular trend in hardcore today. Intense, but nothing inspiring. (spc)

Everafter *Fading Into Bright* (Tribunal)

Everafter are the backing music for MTV spring break coverage, or this summer's newest teen romance movie. Blink-182 helped define this role for contemporary so-called "emo" (a.k.a. pop punk) bands, and Everafter could easily continue this tradition with their more pop than punk take on this exhausted genre. *Fading Into Bright* has potential, but somehow the soulless production, or a perhaps a desire to remain flat and FM friendly, keep this album just shy of attention grab-

bing. Ashley Smith's vocal delivery is sung sweetly and is plenty hooky, but somehow the band forgot to rock and drops the chance to let their instruments stand up and complement her vocals with chutzpah of their own. Punk and hardcore bands are supposed to rock, right? But then again, I'm not sure Everafter consider themselves either. The packaging is even more of a disappointment, as it is built around tired images of train yards and sunsets. These regurgitated images are expected to stand alone, and fail even more desperately due to bad colors and unintentionally out of focus photography on the outside panels, boring typography and poor design/layout. Everafter is a young band, so let's hope they learn to take some chances and strive for something more original and gutsy with their next release. (jr)

Face Tomorrow *For Who You Are* (Reflections)

This is tried and tested angst-ridden emocore. There is not really much more room for mid-nineties sounding bands who are influenced by Sunny Day Real Estate or The Get Up Kids, especially since *At the Drive In* turned that genre into something much more interesting. However, these Netherlanders are good at what they do, yet they have simply missed the boat. Face Tomorrow sound too American, as they could easily set themselves above the rest by singing in Dutch or allowing their culture to influence their sound and lyrics a bit more. If Morrissey singing for Tool sounds like your cup of tea, then you might want to give this a listen. On a side note, the cover art, which is a beautiful painting of a demented angel bleeding out of one eye, is well worth the price of the CD. (pl)



Fall Silent *Drunken Violence* (Revelation)

This album is bound to piss some people off beginning with its album art, but no one ever said this band made music to make friends. This hardcore five-piece delivers a well-blended album of punk speed and metal breakdowns. Vocalist Levi Watson yells retaliating against a corporate society, which easily turns into hardcore chants. Early punk lyrical content was nearly the same and *Drunken Violence* proves that, while the genre may have altered a bit, the cause has not. On "The First Seven Inches Club," Watson emotes scene frustration by stating "Fuck you scenesters, CD reviewers, violent dancers, everyone." The song shows anger that anything genre-related is even called a "scene." It questions people's views by asking why do people have to look a certain way, act a certain way, and acquire certain values to be accepted. Is this neo-scene really anti-mainstream or just a micro-version of the society that punk originated rebelling against? What has happened? These songs give a smack in the face to anyone who is blind to this issue as well as others. Fall Silent proves the fight for social issues will not end despite punk's commercial success. Like it or not, this album is a prime example of how true modern punk has evolved in new forms and will never be silenced. (df)

Final Plan/My Luck *Closed Casket Secrets* (Thorpe)

Final Plan gives up four tracks of moshy, angry hardcore. Excuse me, very moshy, very angry hardcore. Amidst their pummeling breakdowns, crew chants, and circle pittery they also manage some pretty quirky parts that somehow fit right in. I can't say for sure that the production on the

My Luck half of this record sucks, but it certainly sounds that way compared to Final Plan's. The five songs aren't too far removed from their splitmate's, just a little bit less polished. They're rawer and thrashier, which I can appreciate, but the vocals just never seem to fit right and the songs themselves don't seem flow as well. My Luck isn't totally bad, but they would have done better releasing this on their own instead of on a split with a tighter band with a better production. The art for this release has a cool horror B-movie feel to it that makes me want to listen to the Misfits. If straight-up tough guy hardcore is just too tough for you and NY hardcore is too thrashy and old, but you want a happy medium, give one or both of these bands a shot. (cg)

The First Step *Open Hearts and Clear Minds* (Livewire)

This shit is friggin' sweet 1988 NYC Hardcore from a 2003 NC band! Reminded me of DYS in the first minute. I later realized they do a DYS cover. This looks and sounds like all of my favorite hardcore records, complete with posi lyrics, breakdown mosh parts, youth crew dudes in Bold shirts pointin' at somethin' on the ceiling, and lyrics about unity. This CD won't change the world or even hardcore, but it is ragin'. One song about non-violence was pretty insightful and original. Otherwise, you've heard this before. Worth checking out for a burst of energy and an overall good feeling. My only criticism is that without the six live songs at the end (versions of the others), there would only be about 17 minutes of music. (rs)

The Flying Luttenbachers *Retrospektiv IV* (Ug Explode)

While trying to pigeonhole a band into a genre is often futile or misleading at best, trying to label Chicago's the Flying Luttenbachers is one of the best things about them. Here are a few

that might be appropriate: avant-garde, punk jazz, extreme metal, spazz jazz, death jazz, extreme-core or brutal prog rock. You could also rearrange any of these combinations and you would find something that resembles such madness on this CD. This is not to say you should not check this band out. On the contrary, the Flying Luttenbachers demand your attention. *Retrospektiv IV* is a collection of "songs" recorded between 1996 and 2000 by group of over eight musicians led by the enigmatic drummer, Weasel Walter. Walter, offers all manner of non-explanations to his music but none better than he is taking music to the utmost extreme. This is suicidal improvisation. Nihilistic, but liberating. Arguably, such music, like surrealism or dada, exposes the stuffy confines of contemporary culture and society as a whole. When listening to this album bear in mind that we often watch very disturbing films and read very troubling books but we rarely embrace music that is "difficult" to listen to. Music like any other art form, should not be burdened with stimulating enjoyable, "uplifting" or "positive" responses. Curious as to just where some guitars, drums, a cello, and saxophone can take you? According to the Flying Luttenbachers, this is just the beginning. (pl)

The Forms *Icarus* EP (Three Spheres)

Some serious dollars were spent making this EP. The packaging is really beautiful, with some really nice photography. It was recorded by Steve Albini and mastered by John Golden, so of course it sounds incredible. This is also an enhanced CD, with some flash animation games (basically you just zoom in on parts of the photography from the CD booklet) and some fiction short stories. Unfortunately, the music part of this package doesn't hold up. The band isn't bad, just uninteresting. The sounds fall somewhere

between Faraquet and Sunny Day Real Estate, but without the heart. It was like cooking a meal, but getting a little too spice crazy, with everything tasteless in the end. Oh well. (ks)

Forstella Ford *Quietus* (Three Spheres)

I'd never heard Forstella Ford before, so I didn't have a good frame of reference, but I am very impressed. Forstella Ford is an interesting mix of hard, screaming, and aggressive sounds, quiet interludes, and up to three different people singing simultaneously. At first, this seems chaotic and random, but that's not quite an accurate description. Despite the very different styles and sounds within each track, they are well meshed with each component complimenting the next. Guitar screeching rages for a minute, almost Fugazi-ish, and then split off into distorted melody and hardcore chomp, and the vocals range from quiet to screaming. Forstella Ford has its own sound, and it's a really good sound. I definitely want to check out some of their earlier work. (jg)

Frodus *R4D10-4C71V17Y* (Magic Bullet)

I think Frodus are supposed to be concept band, like the Nation of Ulysses, but I am not so sure what the concept is. It is apparent from the album cover that they are interested in conspiracy theories and I read an interview that says they are heavily influenced by the books *1984* and *Brave New World*. Along with the hyperactive hardcore that they play, these influences could make for a very interesting band. *R4dio-4ac7vity* is labeled as "archived lived radio broadcasts 1995-1998," therefore some of the sound quality is a bit sketchy and there is occasional commentary. Unfortunately, the commentary is neither scathingly political nor is it ironic, it just gets in the way. Musically, this is high energy hardcore but lacks any variations and breath-

ing space that might keep things interesting. I have heard that their album *Conglomerate* is very good, so maybe that would be a better place to check Frodus out than this album of scraps. (pl)

Fury Resurrection (Jade Tree)

Fury is a fucking punk rock onslaught. Rarely will they give you a chance to breathe. For those who don't know, Fury was from DC and played in the late 80s. Their musical style sounds like late 80s hardcore mixed with some thrash (start pumping your fists now). Members of the band went on to reign in the DC scene in such bands as Circus Lupus and Monorchid. (wbs)

Garlic Heads *Garlic Heads* (self-released)

Uninteresting release from Japan's Garlic Heads. A garage band, getting together on a Friday night with nothing better to do would be able to put together songs more interesting than this release. A few swigs of Jack Daniels would generate better lyrics than "Let's go now!! Pretty baby/ Love you/ Are you ready/ Come on/ Feel so good/ Spin around/ Tailspin go!" from "AfroJet." This is a pitiful release. The only morsel of interesting music is the syncopated accents on "Bite." The drums are slightly creative, but the mundane guitar riff negates any progress the band makes towards making a meaningful contribution to the music world. (ph)

Good Clean Fun *Positively Positive 1997-2001* (Equal Vision)

GCF play positive hardcore in the footsteps of Gorilla Biscuits and every other late 1980s youth-crew outfit, but appropriately so. Like the spirit of 1988 resurrected to mock its bastard adolescent child, this discography takes contemporary hardcore nuances and makes them seem ridiculous while keeping a posi, vegan, and straight-edge attitude. Scene in-

jokes are rampant on this release, from the subtlest musical or lyrical references to completely obvious social critique of hardcore lifestyle politics. Everyone from Earth Crisis to the Refused get stabbed with lyrics poking good humored fun at veganism, sexism/gender roles, internet relationships, emo, punk, activists, posi-core, hard-line, aging in the scene, selling out, straight edge, crews, tough guys, and a long grocery list of other in-scene social observations. Self-critique is an important character trait, and Good Clean Fun have been laughing at themselves for five years solid. Although, *Positively Positive* is a collection of all the work the band has recorded to date, including two exclusive tracks, they are still active and plan to tour and release more albums in the future. If you follow the outline provided in "I Can't Wait" the band is just where they should be: "...Two thousand and two, we'll sell our discography to you. Two thousand and three, we'll sit back and we'll count our money. Two thousand and four, two words: Reunion tour." It's all too true, and it's all so funny. (jr)

Golden Apollo Stars (National Record Label/Thrill Jockey)

Can there be such a thing as an "indie rock supergroup?" I guess this is as close as it gets. Golden features members of Palace, Make-up, Trans-Am, Royal Trux, and Mars Volta. This must be their outlet for more "light-hearted" music. Their lyrics are self-referential, for example. The music calls back to the 1970s jazz funk fusion era mixed with the grooving rhythm section parts of classic rock. They pull it off with some convincing results. *Apollo Stars* is half hour well-spent. Why do these guys bother with their day job bands? The only misstep here is the packaging. How will people know this is good if it is packaged with dumb little kid-style art? (zm)

The Graves *Love Love Love* (Film Guerrero)

Low fidelity folk-pop records are rarely this nice. To begin with, the recording, while shaggy and warm, doesn't sound like its meant to make a statement. The songs are low-key and pretty, with nice arrangements and instrumentation. The reoccurring horns add a lot. This would probably become a big favorite among fans of Little Wing (one of Little Wing's members makes an appearance). The element I like best, however, is the beautiful cover art. A shot of a peacock surrounded by tree and skyscapes. Excellent. (zm)

Grabass *Charlestons/Billy Reese Peters Split* (No Idea)

Both of these bands are from Gainesville, Florida. Both of these bands probably drink more than your average high school football team. That's where the similarities end. Grabass Charlestons seem to be the more polished of the two bands, playing high-energy punk rock very similar in scope to Dillinger Four (with maybe a tiny bit of The Business style street punk thrown in for good measure). Billy Reese Peters sound like a sloppy hybrid of two other bands on No Idea Records, Unitas, and Hot Water Music. While these bands both sound pretty darn good recorded, these are probably the types of bands that thrive playing shows in sweaty basements and crowded VFW halls. (jp)

Gregor Samsa *Gregor Samsa* (Iodine)

Be still your beating hearts, this isn't some European singer-songwriter guy influenced solely by Bright Eyes and Elliott Smith. Instead, this is atmospheric, experimental rock similar in style to Godspeed You Black Emperor, Pinback, and Denali. Clocking in at three songs in eighteen minutes, Gregor Samsa are talented enough musically to ensure that

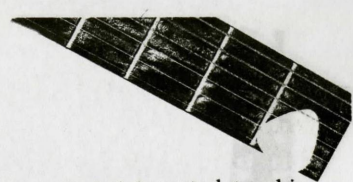
you are not tempted to skip through a song out of boredom. First lulling the listener into a feeling of calm and tranquility through repetition, almost to the point where it could be described as sleepy, only to build up with stunning bursts of energy, this record succeeds where so many others have failed. This is the kind of music that would make the perfect soundtrack home from an early morning walk or a drive home from a show when your ears are ringing and a little sore. My only complaint is that the minimalist artwork includes no lyrics. (jp)

Half Visconte *Was It Fear* (Sunset Alliance)

All of the press material sent with this album and on their Web site focuses on the fact that Half Visconte all live in different towns. What this emphasis on geography is supposed to tell us about the band is hard to figure out. *Was It Fear* is at least up to the standard for beefy indie rock. This falls in between the moody side of DC postpunk and the midwestern gallop of bands like June of 44 and Shellac. (zm)

Heaven Shall Burn *Whatever it May Take* (Lifeforce)

This German five piece take their music seriously. This is their fourth release in three years, and this is by far the most mature to date. Heaven Shall Burn play a typical style of European metal-core, but the production and skills of the band put them on top of this scene. The packaging is the most memorable part of this CD. You can't go wrong with an all silver digipack. The musicians are very tight and deliver their songs well. *Whatever it May Take* is a solid release, from a solid band. (tr)



Forge Again: 2109 N. Kenmore Apt. 11, Chicago, IL 60614, **Go-Kart:** P.O. Box 20, Prince St. Station, New York, NY 10012, **Hanged Hero:** P.O. Box 99, Scranton, SC 29591, **Hellcat:** no address given, **Honest in Secret:** P.O. Box 610, Toledo, OH 43697, **Hopeless:** P.O. Box 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409-7495,



The Hidden Chord *As the Captain & His Entourage* (Level Plane)

Artwork can make or break a recording. Or in some cases, it can make you want to review a release. The artwork looks fun and interesting, which is what the Hidden Chord sounds like. They use funky rhythms, minimal angular guitar parts, and a unique vocal styling to create something special. Maybe it's the vocals, but they sound like a really funky version of the Van Pelt. (wbs)

The Hope Conspiracy *Endnote* (Equal Vision)

This is the second full length from these ex-members of Harvest and Piecemeal. Musically it's comparable *Progression Through Unlearning*-era Snapcase. THC's demo on Life Recordings a few years back was top notch, straightforward metallic hardcore and I had really high hopes for this band, but they seem to have lost more and more focus with each subsequent release. It's well-produced, and their increasing popularity is evidence that somebody (or thousands of somebodies) think that what they're doing is great. For those people, this record is very much an extension of their last one, which is what seemed to gain them much of their current success. On the plus side for me, the opening bassline of the song "Distant" reminds me a lot of a slowed down version of "Making the Bombs" by The Circle Jerks, and that can never be a bad thing. The layout is a grainy assortment of images that have a photo of a television image quality to them, the most prominent image being an extreme close up of Michael Douglas' bespectacled face from the film *Falling Down*. Upon reading the lyrics, this image is certainly a fit-

ting one, as it could have just as well been that character who penned them (there's even a sample from the film in the fourth song "Fallen"). Nine out of the eleven songs explicitly mention violence (killing, stabbing, shooting, being killed, being stabbed, and/or being shot) and not in that Al Sharpton/Stop the Violence sort of way. Countering the ambiguously angry and vengeful lyrics is an ambiguously accusatory and omnipotent essay-type-thing that is directed at *you* and how *you* are a very choosy person, demanding and exacting in your personal demands and very particular in your choice of partner. You are self-sufficient and as a result of this overbearing nature you find it difficult to establish any depth of deep physical or mental involvement with members of the opposite sex. So if you fit that description, then I guess this record is for you. (cg)

Hopesfall *The Satellite Years* (Trustkill)

Let me start by saying that I am a simple man, and this is anything but a simple man's record. This is a record for people who like to stay up late, have outfits instead of clothes, and enjoy the challenge of juggling friendships with people who don't necessarily like one another. The layout and design of this reminds me of *Cocoon*, you know the movie where Steve Gutenberg and Don Amiche learn how to live forever from a bunch of aliens. Hopesfall have been riding the emo-core wave for a few years, and now that it has reached tsunami status, the band is enjoying quite a bit of attention. They've gone through some member changes since their last full length, most notable is the reduced role of the big J.C. I always thought their strongest parts were the cleaner emo stuff, their metalcore stuff always ended up being kind of peripheral and took away from the

stronger more melodic parts. This record kind of falls in that same trap. If you liked this band before, love *Cocoon*, or your lifestyle resembles the above description then pick this up. (cg)

Hot Water Music *Caution* (Epitaph)

As good as *Caution* is, long time Hot Water Music fans will have to deal with the shock of finding that their favorite Florida-based melodic pop-punkers have lost their melancholy. This has overwhelmingly been the defining characteristic of HWM's sound for as long as the world has known their music. *Caution* certainly still holds true to many staples that fans have grown to expect: the art is still beautifully built around SINC paintings, the band can still write the fuck out of a melodic punk song, and that bass player always manages to steal the listener's attention track after track. The essential elements are still there, but somehow the energy on this album is almost...happy. So much so, in fact, that at first listen you may be apt to write off Hot Water Music as deciding to go the route of Saves the Day or The Get Up Kids (you know, "emo") in an attempt to find a more trendy audience. Upon inspection, however, you will find that HWM, somehow, have been rejuvenated and recorded their best effort since *Forever and Counting*. HWM seems to stride over the aforementioned bands due to their guts-and-gravel vocals and rhythm driven songs. Those who have followed this group for years may find tracks like "One Step to Slip" and "Alright for Now" a bit more familiar, but honestly this album has saved HWM from falling into the same tired routine so many bands walk after getting comfortable with their own sound. If only we could tap into whatever inspired this album and heavily dose all of the musicians that continue to make the same album year after year. (jr)

Icons of Filth *Nostradamus* (Go-Kart)

Wow, back from the dead, now in a jewel case and a slick color cover. These are the same peace punks from the Crass era. I can hear the same vocals from the old records, but these 13 songs are very youthful, with a sort of pogo/pop feel. Not as dark as their days on Crass Records, when they played lo-fi garage style punk like the Subhumans. They still are expressing their political views, and showing artistic ability. Now on an American label, they're still playing sing-along punk tunes on this solid record. (nh)

I Farm *Two Collected Works* (Traffic Violation)

This is the band's full length *Sincerely, Robots and 7* "Speaking Russian with I Farm" released on one shiny piece of plastic. This is one of the most frustrating records I've heard lately. I really wanted to love this record. Really, I did. With song titles like "If We Can't Police Ourselves then I Guess We Need Police," "Fighting is Emo," and "If Vans Could Run on Clichés" to go along with some well-written, political lyrics these guys have a lot going for them. Then, the music comes in. I'm not saying that the music is bad. Sounding kind of like a screamier version of Plow United with metal parts thrown in liberally, I Farm have put together 20 pretty good songs in just a little over half an hour. The frustrating part is that their songs are only pretty good, which simply isn't good enough for repeated listening. (jp)

Inventing Edward *We've Met an Impasse* (By Midnight We'll be Naked) (Substandard)

Don't let this band fool you. They have a singer. *We've Met an Impasse* begins very softly, moodily, and minimally to create a textured environment of a Wyoming landscape (big skies, mountains, tumble weeds, etc). Most of the music reminds me of a film score.

After a couple of minutes of noodling around, eventually, a female will sing or a male will read poetry over the soft textured music (June of 44 comes to mind. Members of this band must own a few Slint, the Mercury Program, and/or Godspeed You Black Emperor records, because their songwriting reflects it. (wbs)

Drew Isleib *Sounds Through the Wall* (Ernest Jennings)

Thirteen home recordings of so-so to okay songs. The urge to home-record songs like these kills them nine times out of ten. Let's face it, Drew Isleib is not going to challenge Bob Dylan as a songwriter, so why not grab a few friends to rock through these as a band? The one-man band approach almost always suffers from a lack of dynamism and energy, and this record is no exception. Problem number two, Drew Isleib is no Prince when it comes to musical accomplishment. Doesn't everybody know at least one person who can play to the shit out of a piano? Drew, call that person. The honesty of a plunked out piano line might be in the spirit of things, but what's the point if it all sounds wimpy and overdubbed? (zm)

Joshua *Singing To Your Subconscious* (Immigrant Sun)

This entire album has a solid homogenous style of slowed-paced mellow rock. Guitarist/vocalist Dan Coutant sounds like a quiet kid in middle school study hall with a high pitched, slightly nasal voice that beautifully expresses his mind. The music makes you bob your head a little like a person on anti-depressants that finally found his lost medication (not completely excited but kind of getting there). It would make good background music to driving around and running errands. Just don't get too depressed and run yourself off the road. (df)

Kerbloki *Kerbloki* (Bifocal Media)
Where's my beer? Oh yeah, I put it on top of this album after I endured its wretchedness. Will someone please make this rap/rock phase

get the hell out of Dodge? Kerbloki like to blurt out, "Whatcha gonna do?!" at any given time on any given track of this CD. There are really good bands out there that never get to record, or if they do they never get discovered. Mindless shit like Kerbloki somehow manages to force itself on humanity. I'm sure that this album was made on a weekend when some dudes crowded around some badass drum machine and busted out all the rhyming words they could think of, accompanied by intense lyrical syllables. It's not good, it's not funny. Kerbloki makes me question freedom of speech. (ts)

Kenji *Demonstrations 02* (Kenji)
First off, this band gets a hell yeah for using (presumably) stolen DVD cases from Blockbuster for the packaging. This limited CD-R release features an assortment of recordings from 2000-02. The opening tracks are live recordings and the first starts off with some angular Last of the Juanitas-inspired mischief, then settles into some jarring yet melodic rock. As they tear through these songs the busy guitar work and the dry throated screaming fondly recalls Drive like Jehu and perhaps some earlier Dead and Gone. Sounds like they are a great live band, the performance is solid. The song styles bounce around a little, but it feels like band democracy at work. An interesting release, keep it up. Hopefully a label will pick this band up soon, and convince them to come to the East Coast. (ks)

Kill Devil Hills *36 Minute Struggle* (Honest in Secret)

Going into this, I must begin by saying if your band name is Kill Devil Hills, then your asses better be from eastern North Carolina, not Tennessee. I feel let down by this record. Musically and lyrically this sound very early 1990s, emotive, build-up and release, semi-fast, rocking hardcore. Not a bad thing by any means, but the production seems very raw and the music sloppy, traits

that I tend to no longer find appealing. Maybe I simply feel that this stuff is a bit dated (or maybe I am) and that I have somewhere in the neighborhood of 30 records that sound very similar this, who knows, but this CD is not for me. I am sure that KDH are great live, so go see them if you miss days of Ebullition hardcore. (spc)

The Killing Tree *The Romance Of Helen Trent* (One Day Savior)

This Chicago-based act features Tim McCrith from Rise Against as guitarist/vocalist. Most of the songs on the album are introduced with eerie samples of an early 1900s soap opera radio show. McCrith's screaming heavy rock rumbles technically linked to breakdowns compete against voice and harmonized unity shouts. Metal elements routinely erupt breaking the hardcore basis giving the epitome of metalcore. The intense sound is only strengthened with lyrics such as "Shut and pay attention" and "Don't surrender, never give up your life." Survival doesn't come without a fight, and this is the soundtrack. (df)

Knives Out *Heartburn* (Deathwish)

This CD is not even 10 minutes long. If this CD sells for more than \$5, you are being ripped off. That said, it may be the best \$5 you can spend. Vocalist Nicholas Hans, guitarists Joshua Agran and Jeffrey Ziga, along with drummer Brandon Wallace, turn in a performance that begs the question: would this band be worth hearing on a longer release? The answer: yes. The Fugazi-ish "Love Lost on Lies" is interesting while the eulogy for a friend in "Pins 'n' Needles" is heartfelt. Not sure why this band chose only to put out a CD of only ten minutes. How easily I could have enjoyed twelve songs in this vein. (ph)

Kudzu Wish *Reverse Hurricane* (Ernest Jennings)

Kudzu Wish's first full-length is about as catchy as a record can get

without slipping into pop. They have a great handle on how to balance humor and substance in their lyrics. For example, "We've Got Big Hands," the second, and most insistently memorable, track on the record features both this critique of American supremacy, "Death and war are what we have coming to us. The price we pay for greed and hubris," followed closely by this one, "We've got big fat hands and we're holding onto big fat sticks and we don't speak softly anymore. We're talking really fucking loud." *Reverse Hurricane* finds the band focusing its powers, both lyrically and musically, and in its recording technique, the chief weakness of their last release. The result is tough, confident album from an increasingly impressive band. Bold in its steps, exciting in its promise, *Reverse Hurricane* is great rock record. (zm)

Landscape *Positive Punk Power* (Scenepolice)

This is a hardcore record, but it really doesn't feel like it. From the cover that suggests a new wave band to the 20-page lyric booklet and song explanations (in English and their native German) commonly found in political punk records, these guys seem to be trying to project the image of everything they're not. What they are, however, is infinitely better than any hardcore band I've heard lately. The main strength of this album is the way the vocalist screams words that just beg to be listened to. Whether he's singing "I will always fall with what I seek but I still have my answer; love the balance, love the truth, love to be not, let me live just by you" or something I can not understand in German, it is hard not to be taken with his sincerity. Combined with pummeling bass and a drummer that sounds like he's possessed to keep the beat, this record is astoundingly good. Use your money to support a truly great overseas hardcore band playing music that matters. (jp)

Wilmington DE 19810, **Kenji**: P.O. Box 3441, Ventura CA 93006, **KFLR**: P.O. Box 331, Ware Shoals, P.O. Box 641122, San Francisco, CA 94164-1122, **One Day Savior**: P.O. Box 372, Williston Park, NY 11596, **Pandacide**: P.O. Box 2774, Petaluma, CA 94952, **Per Koro**: Postfach 102514, 28025 Bremen, Germany,



Last Year's Diary *Snapshots 7"* (Scenepolice)

The A side of this seven inch is one six-minute song that sounds like something that'd be on Deep Elm, if not for the slight country twinge. While that is meant to be the centerpiece of the seven inch, the real highlight of this is "Feels Good to Be at Home," the last song on this record. While Last Year's Diary certainly aren't doing anything new, they throw in enough little touches (like the harmonica solo at the end of "Feels Good to Be at Home") to ensure that this release stands out. (jp)

Latterman *Turn Up the Punk, We'll Be Singing* (Traffic Violation)

Wow, this is bringing back some memories. Anyone remember Assfactor 4? Perhaps mix them up with some J Church and there you have it. These kids play super positive fast paced songs about living and dealing with living and uniting for no other reason than to make it work another day. This is the kind of band that gives a disillusioned high school kid a reason to believe in something. They have a good time, and what the hell is wrong with that? (ks)

Liar's Academy *Trading My Life* (Equal Vision)

Trading My Life is a new four song EP from this Baltimore four piece. Members of Liar's Academy have been involved with the renowned bands Strike Anywhere and Cross My Heart, if that means anything to you. These four songs boil down to generic inoffensive and frankly, featureless, poppy punk. You can hear this type of thing on the radio all the time and with the right publicity, there is no doubt this band could find their way into the bedrooms of tormented teenagers anywhere. Sure, these songs are melodic and sure they are heartfelt but also so bland

and so run of the mill. Song titles such as "Trading My Life," and "Chainsmoke the Night Away," and lyrics asking "is anybody out there" and "I'll take this emptiness and shove it in your face," should give you a good idea if this is something you are interested in. If you liked Jawbreaker but hate Jets to Brazil, stay away. (pl)

Light the Fuse and Run *All Your Base Are Belong To Us* (Exotic Fever)

This is a hardcore band from, I'm guessing, Richmond, VA. They seem to have a very urgent message to deliver to the listener(s). The singer half yells/half speaks a sarcastic, harsh critique of the world around him. After reading his lyrics, I feel like I have read an issue of *Adbusters* magazine. A certain paranoid awareness descends upon me, and I realize things are truly fucked, but I also feel somewhat hopeless and in no better position than when I started. The guitar work is very nice, a regular riff-orama, but the constant changes become excessive after a while, as do the samples and in-between song filler. The rhythm section is tight, and tries to keep it all together, but overall, *All Your Base...* is a choppy, cut-n-paste feeling sort of album. I do have this sneaking suspicion that this band's true strength lies in its live performance, so try to check them out if they come to your town. (ks)

Little Cat Little Cat (Pandacide) Devon Rumrill is Little Cat. Or maybe Little Cat is Devon Rumrill? Either way, Little Cat is lo-fi electronic music that is fun to listen to while playing your favorite Commodore 64 or Atari 2600 games. No joke. This isn't your run-of-the-mill glitzy-glam rave dance electronica done on a Mac. Most of these recordings were done initially on a Casio keyboard, overdubbed on a four-track and

then recorded on a VCR. Sometimes you even hear a nice analog kind of quality. This 20-track, one hour listening experience might rival the awesome all-Nintendo music show I recently heard on a college radio station. (us)

The Lot Six Animals (Espo)

I have heard this band being compared to the likes of Modest Mouse, Built To Spill, Archer's of Loaf, and even the Pixies. Those are some pretty serious indie hard-hitters. However, The Lot Six just about hold their own among such established company. This could be described as hardcore with heavy indie influence, meaning lots of time and tempo changes drawing from one part emo and another part chaos. *Animals* should appeal to a diverse range of listeners, because as a variety of genres are explored. Some country-inspired tunes seem out of place, but offer breathing space between dueling-guitar madness. If you are growing bored of Les Savy Fav or At The Drive In, *Animals* will certainly quench your thirst for spastic indie sounds that are pushing punk into new territory. (pl)

The Ladderback *Trigger Themes* (Bifocal Media)

I like the title of this album, because it suggests documentation of an imminent explosion. That is exactly what good hardcore should do, and the Ladderback are very tight, emotive hardcore. While *Trigger Themes* is the first I have heard from the Ladderback, listening to this album has completely renewed my interest in hardcore. My only complaint, however, is their use of keyboards. Hardcore bands should be encouraged to experiment with other instruments, but the keyboard on this album is used like a Norwegian black metal band might use them, haunting but cheesy comes to mind. In consolation, this is not

a reason not to check out this album and the use of the trumpet works really well. These songs balance on an edge of savage brutality and sincere beauty that I would love to hear performed live. (pl)

Latterman *Turn Up the Punk, We'll Be Singing* (Traffic Violation)

Wow, this is bringing back some memories. Anyone remember Assfactor 4? Perhaps mix them up with some J Church and there you have it. These kids play super positive fast paced songs about living and dealing with living and uniting for no other reason than to make it work another day. This is the kind of band that gives a disillusioned high school kid a reason to believe in something. They have a good time and what the hell is wrong with that? (ks)

Lickgoldensky *The Beautiful Sounds Of* (Escape Artist)

This is caustic, metallic-acid hardcore. You know that sound of a welding torch? That sound when the oxygen is too high, before you've adjusted it for cutting? That's what Alex's vocals sound like. His voice is a straight up caustic, harsh, hissing noise, similar to Jake Bannon, only with a little more pronunciation and inflection. Lickgoldensky contains members of Turmoil, namely Jamie Getz on guitar, but there is less Turmoil influence here than on previous releases. This album is quick-paced, with more technical change-ups than chugga-chugga. This music must be played loud to get the full effect of the guitars, as they border on tolerable to completely overwhelming, in a really great way. The packaging for this album is great. The cover has a picture of a bloody, yellow rose. Lickgoldensky's songs are about vague subjects, and you begin to think that maybe they just used the words in some Dada-ist fash-

ion. The lyric's meaning does not seem as important as the combination of words said together, which forms a unique aural message. But, that's pretty esoteric. Pick this one up if you haven't already. Even if you hate the music, the name is fun to say. "Lickgoldensky" Don't pause, say it quickly... "Lickgoldensky." (jg)

Man Without Plan Get Right (Immigrant Sun)

Intelligent punk rock is hard to find nowadays. Man Without Plan falls into the same category as the Vandal, mainly because, with each listen, a new element is uncovered. Like Shrek and his onion layers, Man Without Plan is a multi-pronged fork, attacking their material with urgency and interesting changes. Guitarist/vocalist Barclay Mitchell is at his best when he is singing, as he does in parts of "Bent Crude Future" and "Just Deserts," not when he is screeching like any other punk or hardcore band vocalist as he does in "How to Scream." Already, the band is ahead of the pack. "Onomatopeons" is an epic track for only having a 2:19 run-time. Drummer Jared Shavelson, who has since been replaced by Patrick Amuso, joins Mitchell on multiple stops, changes, and twists. This would be a great band to check out live. (ph)

Marion Marion (KFLR)

Drummers should sing. While they are singing they should be flipping the fuck out, hitting everything on their drumkits. If the drummer does his job correctly, then the guitarist and the bassist should feel free to play really fast, complicated parts. This collective spaz action should then be packaged in a lovely dark red sleeve, with gold lettering. Marion manages to do all of this, thus hitting 100%. Solid, spaz-core, bugshit rock. A beaut. (zm)

Matt Pond PA *The Nature of Maps* (Polyvinyl)

Matt Pond PA has been described as chamber pop. I'm not sure if I agree with that, however Matt Pond PA is a fabulous band that uses unique song structures and lush melodies. Each song builds upon acoustic guitars, cellos, bass, drums, and magical vocals that create a smooth and unrelenting beauty. (wbs)

Maximillian Colby *Discography* (Lovitt)

For some people, their generation was influenced by the Beatles, Elvis, Run-DMC, the Allman Brothers, etc. Maximillian Colby influenced my generation. After their records started coming out, I remember everybody trying to rip them off. Local bands would jam on their songs before they played, while others attempted to steal their parts or song formula: writing long songs built around mood and textures while still having great punk energy. In the end, Max. Colby came out like a cross between Slint and Heroin. It was brutal and beautiful at the same time. This CD combines everything they ever did. From basement tapes to compilation tracks to split LPs, it's here. (wbs)

Melt-Banana 666 6" (Level Plane)

This record is ridiculous. If you are a record collector, art collector, or nerd then you should feel obliged to get this. Otherwise here is what you have: three songs, six minutes, six inches, and I don't know six bucks? The six minutes of music on this are insanely good. Melt-Banana rips, playing their break-neck brand of techno/jazz infused spastic hardcore that is not comparable to any band that comes to mind, the closest being Ruins, but still, this is not even close. If you have never heard this band I would highly

recommend getting on the ball. It's not for everyone, but for those brave enough to venture out into obscurity, you will love it. (spc)

The Minus Tide *The Rock Autopsy Has Begun* (Action Driver)

This one is a rager. The guitars are wicked thick, fast and aggressive. The singer spills his angry online diary guts. They've been studying from the old school textbook of metal and succeed in part in invoking the ancient spirits of Iron Maiden and Helloween, but mix it up with some predictable hardcore breakdown karate kick parts. If it is nonstop metalcore meltdown you're looking for, then you may just find it here. If this band's next album features keyboards, a string section, and chain mail, then I'll be at their show ready for the WALL OF DEATH. (ks)

The Miracle of 86 *The Miracle of 86* (Immigrant Sun)

The Miracle of 86 play something that sounds like Mineral songs set to an early Get Up Kids tempo. They do it pretty well, and stick to the same formula for most of the record. Occasionally, they venture into a poppier, sappier Goo Goo Dolls-esque sound, a definite no-no for any band. This is a re-release that originally came out in 2000 on Fadeaway Records, so if you like this band don't be fooled into buying this twice, unless you really really like this band and you've got money to burn. The production is good, the songs are catchy, and the band looks very friendly judging by the pictures in the liner notes. (cg)

The Miracle of 86 *Kevin Kolankowski* (Immigrant Sun)

The sad thing about Kevin Kolankowski is that the songs would be good if they were just a little shorter. This album has

a soft, clean, and simple pop sound, complete with a sexy, raspy male voice. Unfortunately, it just feels sluggish and overdrawn. There is one good song, track 6, which has no name. This stays consistent with the stripped down sound, but is tight, short, and manages to encompass the whole decade of 90s indie rock. Let's hope their next effort will produce more winners like that one. (us)

Milemarker *Satanic Versus* (Jade Tree)

Sometime in the last four years, probably while they were feverishly devising ways to convince us that they aren't really a rock 'n' roll band, Milemarker managed to become a pretty good rock 'n' roll band. (The sound you hear is Al Burian spit-taking wine and cheese across the room in horror.) *Satanic Versus*, then, must be intended as a reminder that Milemarker remains committed to alienating and stupefying its fans. With this EP we get five new songs, one re-recording, three videos and the raw tracks for remixing new versions. Two of the songs are home recordings made with ProTools technology, thus lots of bleeps and bloops and buried robot voices. Two others are Albini productions. These also have vocals that sound as if they were recorded rectally. Milemarker really is a great rock band. The Albini songs are monstrous and beautiful. The ProTools songs are compelling as well. The only stinker in the lot is the ironic dance track at the beginning. You also get great videos of three fantastic live performances. What I want to know now is, what can we do to make sure that their next record isn't a damn installation piece or white noise collage or something equally ridiculous and obnoxious? (zm)

naissance: P.O. Box 66146, Greensboro, NC 27403, **Revelation:** P.O. Box 5232, Huntington Beach CA 92615-5232, **Scenepolice:** Humboldtstrasse 15, 53115 Bonn, Germany, **Sciflyer:** 729 Central Ave. #203, Alameda, CA 94501, **Shing:** no address given, **Soulforce:** M.L.P. Apartado De Correos, 28080 Madrid, Spain,



The Natchez Shakers *Shaker Hymns No. 2* (Thorp)

The Natchez Shakers mere existence signals a small yet notable shift in the punk underground. Bands influenced by traditional Irish music and country are beginning crawl out from under their rocks. I would venture to suggest bands like this have always been around but for some reason, possibly the recent success of Flogging Molly, there seems to be a renewed interest in the fire the Pogues originally lit under punks digging traditional music. Not only do I absolutely love this sub-genre but also its wider acceptance indicates there is room for other influences to creep into and hopefully energize the stuffy closet of punk. Maybe we'll see punk polk, punk corrillo, punk gypsy tunes. While the Natchez Shakers are certainly no Pogues or Flogging Molly, they hold their own and what's more, they hold potential. I can see an album or two down the road, when the entire band gains greater mastery over their instruments, where the Shakers border on brilliant. You can't go wrong with a stand up bass, accordion, and banjo (among others.) With that said, I'd like to see the Shakers take a bit more time on layout ideas. The insert booklet is a boring compilation of band pictures and wasted space. What about the lyrics? While the Natchez Shakers may not currently be the best representation of punk-influenced Irish music they're still a decent place to start. Keep up the good work. (dc)

The Naysayer *Heaven, Hell, or Houston* (Carrot Top)

The Naysayer feature Cynthia Nelson and Tara Jane O'Neil of Retsin along with Anna Padgett. Their style of music can be described as indie folk, which is not to be confused with folk thrash.

Each song offers an interesting take on the genre with each song being somewhat uplifting and Southern sounding. For this indie folk rock, Naysayer is brilliant. They use delicate harmonies and great guitar playing to create an onslaught of beauty. (wbs)

Nekromantix *Return of the Loving Dead* (Hellcat)

From the gloomy depths of a Royal Danish Naval submarine Kim Nekroman emerged from the darkness in 1989 to form Denmark's premiere psychobilly band. Since then the Nekromantix have been building a ghastly following clear across the globe from Spain to Japan. After nearly 15 years of slapping a coffin shaped stand-up bass and sporting ridiculously large pompadours the Nekromantix finally offer up a slab of 13 songs readily accessible to kids here in the States. If you're a fan of psychobilly, *Return of the Loving Dead* is as good as it gets. For those out there that aren't familiar with the genre, imagine a bubbling cauldron slowly simmering up an (un)healthy dose of rockabilly groove mixed with punk sensibilities and a liberal dash of Halloween aesthetics. Still confused? If Dr. Frankenstein reanimated the corpses of the Stray Cats the resulting mayhem would be the Nekromantix. Fans of Tiger Army will no doubt love this. (dc)

Nymb *The Breathing Out Vapors Single* (Forge Again)

As little respect as the emo sound gets in 2003, it's worth remembering that any trend, regardless of how worn-out, has its leading lights. Nymb did a wonderful job mining the emo vein. The first two songs on this release, "Breathing Out Vapors" and "(inhaling fumes)" are two of the best examples of the emo sound done well. None of the self-pity or melodrama that has come to represent the genre is present here. What is left is emotional, yes, but

also charming and enjoyable. Nymb has broken up since this release, which is a shame. But, they've left good records for us to remember them by. (zm)

Owen *No Good for No One Now* (Polyvinyl)

Owen is the creation of Mike Kinsella (American Football). However, on this release it's just Mike displaying how good of a songwriter he is and how many instruments he can play. After listening to both Owen records, it's amazing how for some people, Mike is known to be just the drummer of Joan of Arc, Owls, and Cap'n Jazz. He should be known for his songwriting and playing abilities. If you are a fan of mellow angular guitar playing in a quiet folky style, then you'll love this record. (wbs)

Pele *Enemies* (Polyvinyl)

I knew I wanted to review this CD as soon as I saw the artwork. Unlike most bands, Pele took the time and energy to create/find great drawings to represent the band. I must say that the cover art is amazing. Pele's music, like the artwork, is good. It's instrumental rock that moves between funky rhythms and jazzy improvisations. Don't let the fact that Pele is an instrumental band scare you. They don't travel down the Slint/Tortoise road of rock. (wbs)

La Pieta *Summer* (self-released)

The cover of this album could make the potential listener into think that this is some sort of Kraftwerk tribute, but this is not the case at all. This is a lo-fi, sad-yet-smiley, wallflower kind of album. Ida comes to mind while listening to this, but this group is not nearly as resourceful with their minimalistic approach to pop music. They just kind of plod along with their jangly janglies, nowhere to go, no time soon train of thought with Mates of State-esque, sweet girl/boy vocal harmonies hopping on for the ride. It certainly has charm, but it is

also quite boring. Sounds like they enjoy it, though. (ks)

Plain White T's *Stop* (Fearless)

Overtly riding on the coattails of the highly commercial success of emo-pop units Saves The Day, Jimmy Eat World, and Dashboard Confessional comes the Plane White T's. This second-rate boy band plays simple, straight-forward music destined to touch the hearts of high school students everywhere by inciting teen angst on the tribulations of oppressive parents, girls, parents of girls etc. The ideal formula for today's market, yes? Buy this if you enjoy the aforementioned bands, if you are a 15-year-old girl or if you are interested in picking up 15-year-old girls, otherwise, be content with what M2 is feeding you. (spc)

The Player Piano *The Player Piano* (Sunset Alliance)

The Player Piano works the same midtempo instrumental territory as Tristeza or Sonna, but without the same level of sonic complexity as either band. In some ways this actually works to their advantage. The bulk of the record is vocal-less indie rock. The Player Piano manages to infuse it with a certain humble charm. The few tracks with vocals don't detract from the seemingly effortless good nature of the rest. In addition, the packaging is lovely. Heavy cardboard covers, with cool, but simple design. There's even a modest Spinal Tap joke on the cover. (zm)

Pitch Black *Pitch Black* (Revelation Records)

With the Nerve Agents leaving Revelation for what they must have considered the greener pastures of Hellcat Records, Revelation needed a band with spooky fonts and jack-o'-lantern art to complete their roster. They found their culprits in the form of Pitch Black. With a sound that is slightly reminiscent of Man Afraid and Bread and Circuits

and an aesthetic much like AFI or the Nerve Agents, Pitch Black offer up their Revelation debut with little enthusiasm. This is like a collage from a high school art class that shows just the bare minimum of potential. There are a few rocking moments but they're few and far between. These guys are simply missing that element that makes punk bands stand out in the crowd. (dc)

The Quick Fix Novel Weapons EP (Ernest Jennings)

Five guys from New Jersey have put out a pretty impressive four song EP. The group is called the Quick Fix, and they're the closest (yet farthest) thing I've heard to Slint in a long time. I checked out their Web site, and apparently they're pretty well-known on their beat. "Choking Down the Change" is probably my favorite song due to the lyric "what do we owe to our name?" I like that kind of dark, honest, inquisitional sentiment. It's so hard to find that in any of swill that's being blown out of speakers today. (ts)

Rainer Maria Ears Ring (Polyvinyl)

When Rainer Maria exploded onto the scene, they played great dissonant pop. It seemed as if the beauty of the band was under the discordant melancholy bliss. That has all changed. Rainer Maria of today plays a more straightforward style of pop rock that you hear on the radio. On this EP, they've dropped the discordant parts and harmonies for a leaner sound that focuses on pop formula song structure. (wbs)

Reaching Forward Burning The Lies (Bridge Nine)

Reaching Forward play fast pos hardcore that proves that the Dutch really aren't afraid to get down with some fuckin' windmills. The resurgence of releases from Bridge Nine has produced some awesome records in the last couple of years, and while this can't touch Carry On or Ameri-

can Nightmare, it's still a solid effort and comparable in terms of style. Lyrically, they drop the suicidal brooding of some of their labelmates and go for the more traditional genre-typical themes: staying true, fallen friendships, etc. "Day by day it's growing stronger, can't hold me back any longer." Good midtempo dance parts, clear production, and sincere but generic lyrics make this worth a listen, but not the best of the recent crop in this genre. If you're a metal guy or gal and you're looking to sample something with stronger hardcore roots, or you're a bonafide posman and you haven't blown your whole paycheck on old T-shirts and Air Jordans, then this record is well worth picking up. The liner notes also has a cool collage of old fliers. (cg)

Reaching Forward Complete Discography 1998-2000 (Martyr)

This a mish-mash of some seven inches, an old full length, and a live set. The production isn't quite up to par with their newest stuff, but it isn't bad and it's has a lot of energy. Like any discography, it's convenient for big fans of the band and helpful since it might be hard to find some of this stuff these days. With the exception of a few of the live tracks, there aren't multiple versions of the same song (Government Issue, I'm looking at you). The live set also includes covers by Manliftingbanner, Side by Side, and Sham 69. (cg)

Sadie Mae Demo 2003 (4Weeksdeep)

This band has great potential. Tech sounding, breakdown riddled metal. It's an inferno of frantic blast beats that are chopped off like John Wayne Bobbit by a brutal quarter-time breakdown jud-judjudjudjud, jud-judjudjudjud. So good. Mixed in are interludes of scathing vocals muted behind passive guitar rhythms that lull you into a false sense of security. All of this is

wrapped conveniently into four and a half minute tracks. The last track "103 Stab Wounds and a Room Full of Useless Begging" was my favorite, though the other two are worth it as well. The demo does sound a bit unpolished, and the first song especially needs some cleaning up. Musically it sounds like a bit of Dillinger Escape Plan, Radiation 4, and mixed with a lot of the Red Chord. The singer has a great voice and can dive from higher pitched screams to death metal grinds at the same speed as the guitarist transitions from those finger-smashing breakdowns to Hope and Suicide-like rock. The sounds are chaotic in places and the transitions don't flow like more established tech bands, but overall, it was a great demo. Keep an eye out for this band; I'd love to hear what they could do with a bigger recording budget. (jg)

Slow Jets Good Morning, Stars (Morphius)

This Maryland trio is vaguely reminiscent of Guided by Voices releases (post *Do The Collapse*), crossed with a bit of the Glands and the Olivia Tremor Control. Slow Jets is a pop rock band. *Good Morning, Stars* is a 13-track gem from both a sleeper band and label. The twangy, lo-fi guitar and feedback brings on the GBV comparison, while the lyrics and harmonies (equipped with plenty o' tambourine) are associated with the Glands and the Olivia Tremor Control. The sure-fire winners on this album are "Margaret Square", "Heartbreak For Socialites", and "To The Lighthouse". (ts)

Songs for Emma Red Lies and Black Rhymes (Broken Rekids)

It is unfortunate that bands with great lyrics and better politics sometimes don't possess the rock to match. *Songs for Emma* happens to be one of those bands. The basic sound could be likened to the Strike or, dare I even sug-

gest it, the Clash. There is a departure which at times borders on indie rock, the kind of which we North Carolinians are so accustomed to or plagued with, depending on who you ask. This album is certainly worth the listen and I could even see myself eventually really liking it save for one obstacle, the vocals. I just can't help thinking about Tom Waits. It's too much of a distraction. (dc)

Spaceheads Low Pressure (Merge)

In the early 90s Bristol in the southwest of England was center stage for a Trip-Hop explosion. "Trip-Hop" (an unfortunate label for such a diverse genre of music) was the inevitable result of British kids mixing up the wide variety of electronic music coming out of the clubs and rave scene at the time, with a heavy dose of hip-hop and dub. It is a sound scape that has been described as "instrumental hip-hop, chill out music," and "dance music you can't dance to," or a introspective, head-nodding, ambient music, that was a more intelligent alternative to the high-paced fervor of other electronic genres. The Spaceheads are a great example of how limitless this type of music is. They are made up of two musicians who produce a wide variety of sounds with the use of trumpets, loops, samples, and percussion. Andy Diagram is an accomplished jazz trumpeter who uses harmonizers and echo loops to form the unique sound of Spaceheads. This is a mostly down-tempo, very atmospheric and yes, spacey, recording. It is appropriate that there are references to the weather in the song titles of *Low Pressure*. *Low Pressure* could not be a better soundtrack for rise and fall, coming and going of the storm systems that can make the UK such a bleak, yet awe-inspiring place to be. (pl)

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Sworn In *Sworn In* EP (Bridge Nine)

It's nice to know hardcore bands can still be hardcore without taking influence from At the Gates, or other Swedish death heavies. Bridge Nine is the label at the head of the modern old-school revival, and surprisingly they have a real knack for finding bands that mix loud, fast '88 influence with contemporary melodic hardcore sounds and punk hooks. Sure, you can thank Kid Dynamite and American Nightmare (a.k.a. Give Up the Ghost) for making this style so damn appealing, but don't discredit Sworn In for being imitation. In fact, KD and AN were both new (but slightly different) takes on the same old style, while Sworn In happen to be the strongest band on a label that specializes in just that. This EP is beautifully packaged with high contrast, black and white photography of a woman who has taken her life via scissor-incision to the throat with the words "Thank you for the lies" carved into her lifeless arm (which delivers a single red rose). In this era of misogynistic, Glassjaw-style lyrics it's easy to interpret these images as murder by the hand of a scorned lover, usually from the vocalist's perspective. However, Sworn In walks this line thinly, with songs of rage and destruction that is sometimes suicidal and other times threatening. This package directly builds its imagery from at least two songs found on this EP, "I Killed Midnight" and "The Turn On." Both are songs of heartbreak with lyrics such as, "I slit my throat the last time I spoke was a 'thanks for everything' not a 'hope you choke'," and "to all the girls I've loved good-bye, and thank you for the lies." This release looks and sounds fantastic, drives along at a fast pace, and offers plenty of ops for crowd pleasing shout-along choruses. The vocal delivery is tough enough to make every hook catchy, but not poppy. Lyrically, this may be a little dramatic for some folk's

taste, but musically it's so fully of energy you can't help but love it. (jr)

Tiger Army *Early Years* EP (Hellcat)

More than anything, this EP was released for the diehard Tiger Army fans out there that just want to hear it all. Apparently, *Temptation*, the first Tiger Army EP was going for pretty outrageous prices on ebay and the band decided to release the material at a reasonable price. One of strengths of the *Early Years* is that stand-up bass figures more prominently in the mix. It's such an amazing sounding instrument and really is one of the few things that distinguishes Tiger Army, and most other psychobilly bands, from being just a punk band with a penchant for rockabilly. Unfortunately, in more contemporary releases it seems to be drowned by guitar but here it's loud, proud, and right in the front. One of the weaknesses is the lack of something that really is unamenable. You could maybe call it balls, or guts, or oomph, or ass. Suffice it to say there is just something missing here. It doesn't rage into the night, it doesn't make you nod your head or tap your foot. For the discriminating record purchaser out there interested in Tiger Army this isn't the place to start but for all those psychobillys lurking around in their creepers and pompadours this will be an indispensable addition to your collection. (dc)

Tracker *Ames* (Film Guerrero)

This album should be very popular among those who enjoy Mojave 3, Geoff Farina/Karate and other forms of lo-fi indie-analog rock. Often ambient, sometimes dreamy, this album sounds as though it was captured on recording equipment found in your grandmother's basement as you were deciding what a drive through the desert at night should sound like. Taking this imagery and coupling it with neat song writing, the final product is impressive. Recommended for pacifying coffee shop patrons, driving through wastelands, or headphone rocking. Get this and tell your friends. (spc)

Under a Dying Sun *Under and Dying Sun* (Substandard)

Berkley's Under a Dying Sun aren't breaking any new ground, but they are using formulas that constitute emo-core exceptionally well. This is very melodic hardcore that verges on indie-rock with the mandatory apolitical personal lyrics. It is easy to write about such bands from a jaded standpoint but Under a Dying Sun, take such a convincing nostalgic trip back the early 90s emo, it is hard not to get sucked into the music. They do it better than the dozens of bands that came before them. Tender introspective moments between absolute furies of raw emotion. If you're sitting in your bedroom banging your head against the wall, mourning a failed relationship, then you are probably occupying the same space as this album. Go ahead, indulge yourself. (pl)

Uwharria *Fury In The Foothills* (Slave)

The first song starts with some hiking in the woods noises, and I'm waiting for the hawk to come and pull off someone's head when... BAM! The music comes out of nowhere flying at you with the combined fury and emotion of Bad Brains met with the speed, political motivation, and fun of R.A.M.B.O. and Tear It Up. Uwharria are fast paced thrashy hardcore mixed with some melody and slowed down, occasional elements of sludge. This CD could maybe use a little more bass end. I've always been a sucker for heavy low end, and it could really benefit and complement the sound this album currently has. Uwharria is a Bioregion in North Carolina, in addition to being the name of this band. As you might expect then, the lyrics are about the environment and the preservation of said environment. The lyrics are well-written, positive, and poetic. Each song is like some pseudo-haiku talking about the intricacies of nature. Luckily, the songs are sung without all the alienating hate that helped to make Earth Crisis really popular for that one year. A great release from this band, I

highly recommend picking up a copy. *On a side note:* I happened to go to Philadelphia this last week, and I had a chance to go to the Relapse Records store. I was expecting bloody leather gauntlets and some scorching grind, but you know what I heard playing there? That's right, Uwharria. I talked to the girl that was working the counter, and she said people are digging it in the store. (jg)

Valient Thorr *We Come From the Morning Star* (Cloudbox)

I really wish I knew whether these guys were kidding. From the inside band pictures where they members pose for incredibly cheesy photos in a supermarket with, presumably, their favorite products (one member with Cookie Crisp, another with tampons) to the almost concept-album like lyrics about a boy and a wizard it is kind of hard to figure out if these songs are tongue in cheek or not. The incredibly pointless, sometimes incoherent, song introductions makes me think they don't take themselves too seriously. The music is decent, sounding somewhat like some crazed amalgamation of your neighborhood bar band, the Vindictives, the more serious aspects of Tenacious D, and the Butthole Surfers, but this is more notable for the novelty aspect of it than for the music. This is the kind of thing that you'd put on for your friends to listen to just so you can hear them say, "What the hell is THIS?" I cannot imagine how anyone could have this on regular rotation. (jp)

The Velvet Teen *Immortality* (Pandacide)

This 7" gets points for being such a nice picture disc. The coloring and shapes remind me of the covers from the later series of Ramona Quimby books by Beverly Cleary; both sides have drawings of The Velvet Teen, two members have wings. Musically, this group is pretty solid. Side A's "Stay With Me" reminds me of that 70s classic "Never Gonna Fall In Love Again" by Eric Carmen, but it's mainly because of the lead

singer's soft, nasal voice. The Velvet Teen covers "No One Will Ever Love You" by Magnetic Fields (double props for that). That's a song that probably shouldn't be replicated, but it's not every day that that band is covered so I guess it's alright; especially since they didn't destroy it. A decent 7" to be played 33rpm. (ts)

VU Electric Birds (Action Driver)

VU (pronounced "voo") deliver a very original six-song ep. Indie rock mixed with electronic and ambient themes makes this album really stand out. The songs flow into one another to create one long soothing song. The simple black and silver packaging is very appropriate. Fans of slow, thought provoking indie rock will enjoy this. Great album. (tr)

Wafflehouse Olympia (Forge Again)

You can call this "screamo", but it really doesn't fall quite so easily in to that category. The song structures are highly complex. The lead singer has an out of control vibrato in his voice that sounds Sleater-Kinney inspired, with a gender reversal coupled with various screams and grunts in the background. The songs stutter, swell, fall, whine, rejoice, harmonize, but never stop. Guitars chug, then arpeggiate, then twinkle, then rrrrr!. In the middle of all this madness they've found space for a violin on a track and they claim to have put Banjo on another, but I never heard. Surely the laser eye of the CD player is getting tired by now. Too much information, but interesting. (ks)

The Warren Commission *Tricked By Cleverness* (Espo)

Long ago indie rock lost the war against the more esoteric forms of the genre. By the late 90s, indie rock was pretty much either jazz/math style, emo-lite

style, twee pop style or retro-rock style. But, before that, indie bands sounded like the Warren Commission. And that was a good thing. Good songs, fast tempos, and jangly guitars are still a powerful combination when done well. The Warren Commission does a fine job of playing indie rock on this record. (zm)

When Dreams Die *My Proud-est Invention to Date...* (Ides of March)

These guys know how to keep someone on their toes. Chaotic hardcore combined with interesting song structures, When Dreams Die has recorded a quality record. Fans of old Cave In, Coalesce, or anything fast and noisy will enjoy this. This New York five piece have decided to keep the listener wanting more when only recording three songs on this disc. The comic book style layout is very interesting but nothing new or original. The layout is a little dry and could be thickened up, but overall this is a great CD. (tr)

Witchcraft By A Picture *Witchcraft By a Picture* EP (Magic Bullet)

Like the Locust but more listenable, WBAP are spastic and in your face but manage to nail down enough hooks to keep your fist pumping. Keyboard melodies dance along like a funeral organ as distorted vocals fight with guitars for the loudest and most rockin' spot above an aggressive wall of chaos. This band would feel pretty comfortable with the likes most bands on GSL or 90s Canada-core such as One Eyed God Prophecy, yet they are carving out a creepy version of chaotic hardcore that's all their own. Brilliantly, this disc comes packaged as a ouija board, complete with fold-out board and navigation piece. What's disappointing is that this disc is so short on music while full of such great ideas. The gimmicky design is not nearly the

only interesting thing here, yet it's a shame the band wasted such an ingenious package on their EP instead of holding it for their album. Now, the world waits to see how this group can possibly outdo themselves and live up to the promise of such an incredible debut release. (jr)

V/A Early Summer Campfire Songs (Montreal United)

This CD started off innocently enough with good quality songs turned in by ska-kings, turned sensitive balladeers Dan Potthast (of Mu330) and Mike Park (of the Chinkees and Skankin' Pickle). After that, this compilation took a drastic turn downward from "Pretty good idea for a novelty compilation" to "I'm sure getting mauled by a pit bull is more fun than this" audio torture. I'm sure whoever put together this compilation loves it enormously, but I don't see how any other educated music consumer could. While the songs are your typical, "Saves the Day's acoustic EP is the best acoustic music ever," there's a guy on here called Phil The Tremolo King who's song is nothing like the rest of the tripe on the CD. With its jazzy piano playing and saxophones, Phil's tune is sort of loungey and sounds like something that your grandparents would play after Lawrence Welk. If you like spending money on things that give you pleasure, don't buy this album. (jp)

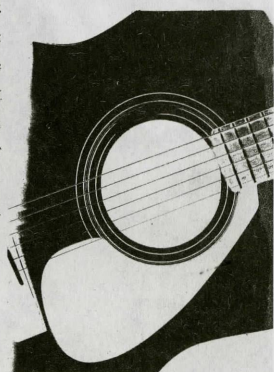
V/A A Testament to Broken Walls (Backroad)

The raison d'être for this compilation is to present Christian and non-or anti-Christian bands together in order to bury the hatchet between the two sides of a never-ending debate in the punk and hardcore world. A short essay in the liner notes offers criticisms on both sides. The essay makes some good points and some bad ones, but I was pleased to see that at least this fella was trying to say *something* with this release. I don't think I've bought a compilation since Lookout's PunkUSA, so I don't know what the standard practice is these days, but some lyrics would have been nice, and comps should have contact info for the bands, always. The bands themselves are fairly chaotic and very metal. End This Day, Circle of Dead Children, Fighting Academy, and the band that just won't go away, Zao, offer up some tunes with about 13 other bands. Highlights include Maraf Akate taking the stop-start to almost ridiculous extremes, and Fed by Ravens, who sound like Refused meets Uranium 9-Volt. The production varies from band to band and I don't know if the songs were recorded specifically for this comp or if they are from other releases. (cg)

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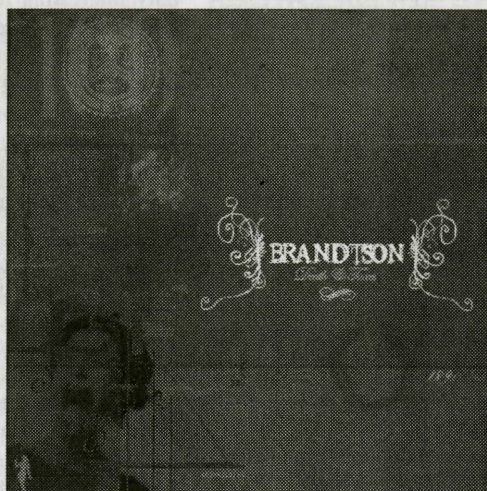


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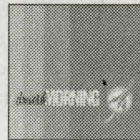


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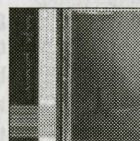


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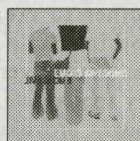
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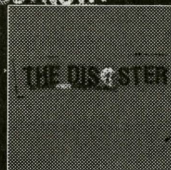
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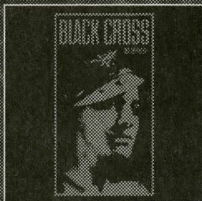
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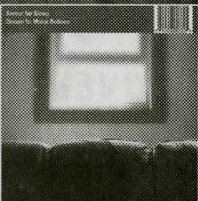
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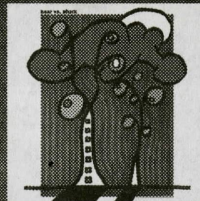
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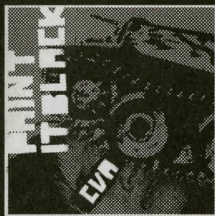


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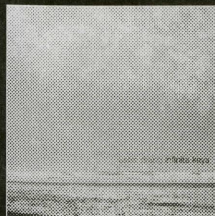
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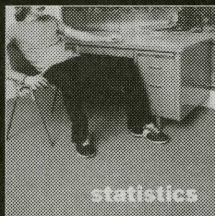
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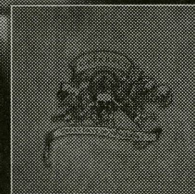
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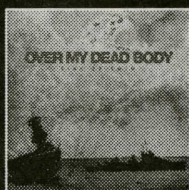
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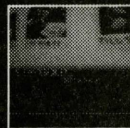
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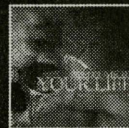
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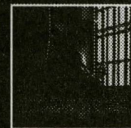
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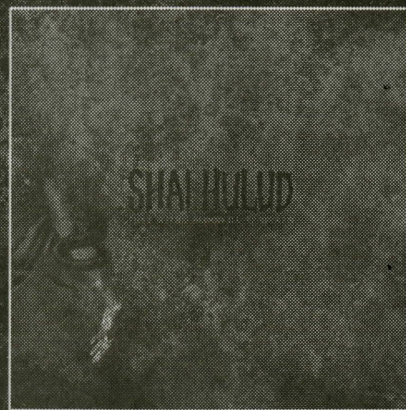




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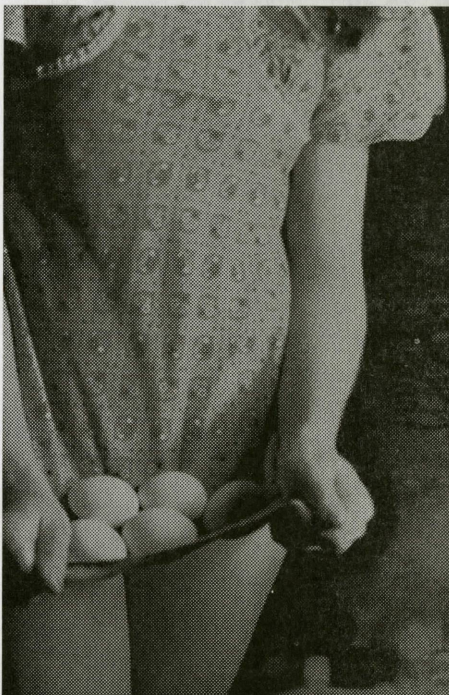


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My great grandfather lived on this farm, grew
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Scraped enough to live, raised eleven kids.
Now they say this farm will be torn
Rust Belt vacationers gotta get to Myrtle
Beach. Build a highway for them to reach
Running through this land. DOT's head's in
the sand- sucking the South like a leech
Once they reach their destination- a 16 story
high rise vacation
Destroy the dunes- Sea turtles, lagoons. Never
knowing their ramifications

CHESTNUTS

The ghosts of them chestnuts
My granddaddy felled 80 years ago
Haunt these woods with a vengeance
Their voices hushed and low
From the creekbed and over Silas Ridge
He dragged 'em out with a team of mules
Those 400 year old giants
Took all day to cut with primitive tools
But you'll never see those chestnuts
Rise and block out the summer light
They've all been ripped by the sawmill
Or wiped out by chestnut blight

APPALACHIAN SKULLCAP

I love Carolina wildflowers
A vital part of our ecosystems
Some endangered,
some quite common.
I love them, everyone
Appalachian Skullcap, pitcher plant,
oconee bells, trout lily and bloodroot
Jack in the pulpit, venus fly trap,
bastard toadflax and may apple
Roan Mountain bluet, dwarf iris,
pink ladyslipper and turtlehead
Dutchman's breeches, passionflower,
spiderwort, wild ginger and ginseng, too

RED OAK ACORNS

A black bear eating red oak acorns
Southern flying squirrel eating red oak acorns
This spectacular tree grows
from red oak acorns
But the timber company
wants red oak lumber
What gives you the right
To cut these trees down?
Where will the animals go
When there's no red oaks around?

SUN BLEACHED BONES

I see him stalking from around
the cove
I don't run or put up a fight
Jaguar rips me limb from limb
A beautiful way to die
Jaguar! Jaguar!
Come and eat me! (x4)
My flesh dangles from his teeth
And blood darkens the creek
Life exits with the wind
Vultures and ants pick off the rest

IVORY BILLED WOOD- PECKER

En la selva de Cuba
I know that she's still there
Campephilus principalis
Cuts elusively through the air
Males' crest bright red
Females' jet black
Nesting in a cypress tree
This animal's coming back.
Just six left in '68
Florida, Bayou, Cuba?
But I know they cling to life
A bird more noble than a human.

BALD EAGLES

I can't tell you what it
means to me
No chance of putting
it into words
My chest pounds—
my skin tingles
As I gaze upon these noble birds
Bald eagles were once annihilated
Nearly vanished from the earth
I stand trembling and speechless
Watching another one's birth
Only 6,000 in the world
And I've just seen two
Give another one life
Proving this species isn't through
DDT pushed them
toward extinction
But in the US it's been banned
So now we produce this poison
And ship it to other lands
Migrating birds don't
know borders
So what's in Guatemalan streams?
Will pesticides and fragmentation
Strangle raptors' survival dreams?

BLACK HOWLER

Black Howler, can you hear me?
(Black Howler!)

Can you see the tears that I've wept?
(Black Howler!)

Your pain flows through my body
(Black Howler!)

Black Howler can you hear me?
(Black Howler!)

Despite your haunting screams, the
saws still cut the trees
Take mahogany and rosewood for
American guitars and toilet seats
Inhale with such pain- screams hoarse
with disdain
Do your territorial cries mean nothing
to the bloodthirsty and insane?
You reclusive brilliant creature with
humanlike features
Travelling with your family rarely leaving
the rainforest canopy
Today your child reached out to me
only six feet away
Mama your baby's tiny gentle hand
expressed more than words can say

RED WOLF

What can be said about an ecosystem
That can't support a small mammalian
predator?
Does it mean the Smokies are dead
(No!)

But the ain't what they once were.
When endemic species fail to thrive
When native trees wither and die
When the red wolf starves to death
Have the Smokies breathed their last
breath (No!)?

Before European colonization, red
wolves roamed throughout North
Carolina-along with elk, Passenger
pigeons, Carolina parakeets, and possibly
bison. Almost slaughtered to the
point of extinction by the 1970s, there
were believed to be fewer than two
dozen red wolves in the world! As part
of a captive breeding program, they
have now been reintroduced into the
Great Smokey Mountains National
Park and the Alligator National Wildlife
Refuge (at the North Carolina
coast). Those at the coast have
thrived, but the wolves in the Smokies
have struggled to survive.

Recorded with one microphone on a mini-disc recorder on 2/22/03 at Gate City Noise, Greensboro, NC and 2/23/03 at Go! Studios, Carrboro, NC by Andrew Dudek.

Mastered by Chad Clark at Silver Sonya Mastering, Inner Ear Studios 2701 South Oakland Street, Arlington, VA 22206

Photo: Rita Badamenti

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*Studio versions of all songs previously released on *Fury in the Foothills* (Slave)



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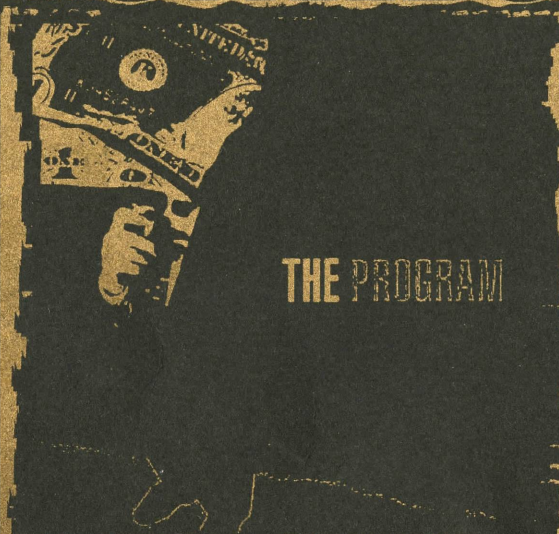
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