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It is currently a magazine, website, book, and record publisher providing the highest quality content possible in a culture that is often misunderstood, misrepresented, and exploited.

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OFF WITH THEIR HEADS PLAYING AT FEST 10, G-VILLE, FL
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ENDLESS SUPPLY OF
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Posi-Todd

I decided it was high time to make an invisible friend a couple months back. I'd never had one growing up. It was a new experience. Since I've been pretty grumpy lately, I named my invisible friend "Posi-Todd." Positive Todd.

Posi-Todd told me a month ago, "Hey buddy, it's beautiful outside today. Get some sun and trim your trees. You like using reciprocating saws on ladders." Posi-Todd was right. It was fun. I hummed along to Bad Brains. I got my PMA. *Pos-i-tive mental att-it-tude*. I trimmed branches—this time not whacking my face with a tree branch while standing on my neighbor's swayback-roofed storage shed. I got lumberjack-cocky and correctly called the direction the larger stumps would fall. It was go-go time for Posi-Todd.

Two weeks later, eighty-five-mile-an-hour winds howled through Highland Park. Jeff Proctor, a longtime member of the Razorcake family, had moved to our fair town-within-a-city the night before. He moved into a five-unit townhouse. In the middle of the night he felt a rumble. Being a Californian, he surmised it was an earthquake and, being so, there was nothing he could do. He fell back asleep.

Unbeknownst to Jeff at the time, Jeff's neighbor on the far side of the townhouse was outside on his balcony, phoning in to report that the winds had ignited a palm tree. Another tree's branch had severed a hot line, which was draping the palm. As he was on the phone, he heard an earthquake-type roar. An immense, overgrown oak uprooted and tumbled towards him. He jumped from his balcony to his neighbors'. The tree smashed his apartment open, crushing and hollowing it out like a dropped, raw egg. The tree compacted a car on the street; spider-webbed the windshield, made the metal look like crinkled tin foil.

At Razorcake HQ, the power went out. Winds howled. Mary Clare asked, "Did you hear that?" It sounded like branches whipping

around. I replied, "There's nothing I can do. We'll take a look in the morning. It sounds dangerous out there."

Jeff got up the next morning, showered, brushed, and got in his car to go to work. He looked in his rear-view mirror. An immense, felled oak blocked his path. He got out of his car and inspected the power lines spaghetttied among the broken branches, realized he wasn't going to make it to work, and walked over to Razorcake HQ, currently devoid of electricity.

"Hey Jeff," Posi-Todd said. "What's up?" Posi-Todd then made some horrible, well-intentioned coffee by crushing beans with a mortar and pestle, just like he imagined cowboys do. Jeff asked to see if he could get a ride to a doctor's appointment, see if I could help with moving a chest of drawers.

"Let me look around first." I walked the perimeter of HQ. One large branch from our neighbor's gum tree fell into an absolutely empty spot in the back yard. Shit was blown all over the place, but my jeans were still on the clothesline. I looked at the inconveniences. They were so very far from tragedies. "Yeah, man. I'll take you. There's no way we're going to get power back today," Posi-Todd replied.

Instead of saying zine-typical things like "this issue is late because..." Posi-Todd did a lot of non-electrical things. Changed his truck's oil. Tuned up his bike. Hand-sawed the neighbor's branch in his yard into small pieces. Helped Mary Clare re-secure the bamboo fencing, called in a humongous load of free mulch from one of the landscape companies chipping fallen trees, and started wheel barrowing it to the back.

The power was out for two full days. Our town is eerie without traffic and street lights, without the electric hums and beeps and alarms of modern life.

After the power came back on, we got back to the business at hand: Making a zine without excuse. We've got the power to do it and that's something to never take for granted.

—Todd Taylor

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—George Orwell
Down and Out in Paris and London

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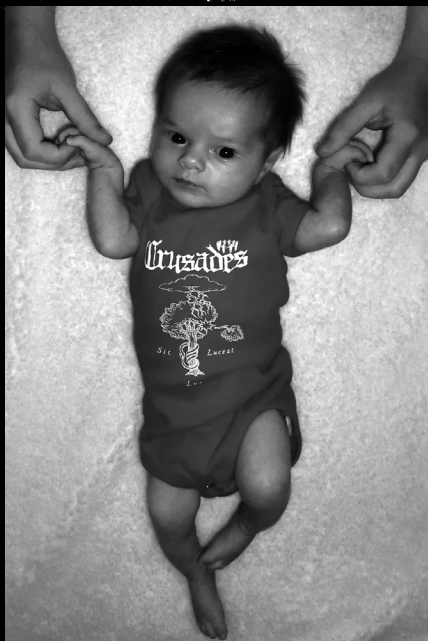
This issue is dedicated to memories of Solomon Burke, Chalmers Johnson, and Václav Havel

**Audrey Evangeline
Williams**

**Born November 21st,
2011 to Dave Williams
and Jessica Gilmore**

**Likes: Late nights,
band onesies,
and drinking until
vomiting.**

**Dislikes: Sleeping
adults, unsoiled
clothing, and regular
bathing.**



THANK YOU: Put "Neighborhood Brats" in a search engine and a cornucopia of delicious-looking bratwursts pops up. Thanks internet. Thanks Martin Sorrondéguy for taking the picture; Finger that unexpected nine bucks in your pocket thanks to Brad Beshaw for his illo. in Sean's column; Bukowski on a cheese bender thanks to Jackie Rustad for her illo. in Jim's column; It was exactly 12:51 when the Minutemen first played Vancouver. Look at Mike Watt's watch, thanks to Bev Davies for her photo in Nardwuar's column; String. Antler helmet. Tiny, tinny phone speaker. Revolution now thanks to Bill Pintel for his illo. in Norb's column; Craig had an extra chicken head laying around for the mock-up of this one. Just sayin'. Thanks to Craig Horky for his Rhythm Chicken illo.; Have the autism awareness folks cornered the market on illustrations of jigsaw puzzle pieces? Hmmm. Ramones! thanks to Marcos Siref for his illo. in Dale's column; Would it bum you out to know that the Snakepit/Kiyoshi rumble's just in good fun? They really do take baths together. Long, luxurious baths; The steam off the coffee is a montage collector thanks to Steve Larder for his illo. in Amy's column; Ducks and tractors. Drugs and a Stalin'd emo zine. Ducks and tractors thanks to Megan Pants, El Diablo, Rachel Murray, and Patrick Houdek for the Slow Death interview and photos; Leave your underpants in the pool. You can always find another pair thanks to Chris Peigler, Lauren Measure, and Ivy Lovell for the White Lung interview, layout, and photos; Surprisingly, we've never just scribbled the shit out of a layout—but we've taken apart a record player before and scanned it—thanks to Sara Reeble, Martin Sorrondéguy, and Danny Martin for the Neighborhood Brats photos and illo.; Do you like it? Yes or no. Describe it. Would you buy it yourself? On the surface, reviewing is a piece of cake thanks to: Keith Rosson, Chris Peigler, Kurt Morris, Ryan Leach, Joe Evans III, Jimmy Alvarado, Chris Mason, Sal Lucci, Ian Wise, Kristen K., The Lord Kveldulfr, Art Ettinger, Paul J. Comeau, Juan Espinosa, Matt Average, Vincent, Candice Tobin, Sean Koepenick, Billups Allen, Adrian Salas, Rene Navarro, Ty Stranglehold, Chris Terry, Norb, Craven Rock, Jake Shut, Mike Frame, MP Johnson, Mark Twistworthy, Justin George, Ryan Horky, Steve Hart, and Dave Brainwreck; DIT—Do It Together—is more apt, but it just doesn't have the resonant ring of DIY. All these people crossed our threshold and helped us for-real-in-person and/or digitally over the past two months: Candice Tobin, Kari Hamanaka, Chris Baxter, Adrian Salas, Derek Whipple, John Barlog, Tatiana Bliss, Jeff Proctor, Toby Tober, Marty Ploy, Adrian Chi, Vincent, Matt Braun, Jennifer Federico, Danny Segura, Marcos Siref, Chris Shireman, Adam Bowers, Joe Dana, Christine Hazlet, El Diablo, Designated Dale, Josh Rosa, Joshua Ian Robles, Juan Espinosa, Ever Velazquez, Gary Hornberger, Katie Hornberger, Mary-Clare Stevens, Christina Zamora, Aaron Kovacs, Cesar Macias, Julia Smut, and Donna Ramone.

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COLUMNS

- 6 Sean Carswell *A Monkey to Ride the Dog*
- 10 Jim Ruland *Lazy Mick*
- 13 Mitch Clem *My Stupid Life*
- 14 Nardwuar The Human Serviette *Who Are You?*
- 16 Rev. Nørb *Power Pop Pølice*
- 19 Liz Prince *I Don't Want to Grow Up*
- 20 Rhythm Chicken *Dinghole Reports*
- 22 Designated Dale *I'm Against It*
- 24 Ben Snakepit *Snakepit*
- 25 Kiyoshi Nakazawa *Won Ton Not Now*
- 26 Dan Monick *Photo Page*
- 27 Adrian Chi *Bite the Cactus*
- 28 Amy Adoyzie *Monster of Fun*
- 31 Shanty Cheryl *Photo Page*
- 33 Art Fuentes *Chico Simio*

FEATURES

- 34 *Slow Death* by Megan Pants
- 46 *White Lung* by Chris Peigler
- 54 *Neighborhood Brats* by Todd Taylor
- 68 *Straight Arrows* by Ryan Leach

FAVORITES AND REVIEWS

- 76 Top 5s *Sixty-six years of Lemmy...*
- 78 Record *I don't know if it's intentionally recorded in shit-fi...*
- 104 Zine *Wary of soft-rock clock punchers?...*
- 109 Book *A memoir of a bad-assed punk lady who isn't an unholy fuckface whining for deferred glory and overdue royalties...*



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A MONKEY TO RIDE THE DOG

SEAN CARSWELL

“Time has a way of turning tragedy into comedy.”

Celebrate the Ugly Things

They were the kind of coworkers who become funny in retrospect. Time has a way of turning tragedy into comedy. Though there was nothing tragic here. No one's greatest virtue led to his downfall. It was quieter than that, somewhere between time turning a pain in the ass into a modest chuckle and something more.

By the end of the summer, only three of us were left on the crew: Tweaker Bob, Aaron, and me. Tweaker Bob was the lead carpenter. In theory, we were supposed to do what he said, but he gave no instructions. He spent most of the day in the cab of his truck, flipping through three identical sets of blueprints for three identical tract houses in a row, all of which he was supposed to be working on. Now and then, a wave of inspiration would crash over Tweaker Bob and he'd jump

Bob what else I knew: if you encounter three assholes in a day, they're probably not the assholes.

As you may have guessed, Tweaker Bob was not his birth name. The guy was six feet tall, weighed around 135 pounds, and had teenage acne on his forty-year-old face. His teeth were beginning to rot from the outside in. He stayed awake for days at a time, then sometimes passed out in the cab of his truck in front of the job.

Bossman Bob was Tweaker Bob's brother-in-law. He was somehow convinced that Tweaker Bob was *not* on crystal meth.

Seventeen years later, these guys are back on my mind. I'm teaching a British Lit class. The assigned reading for today includes a Wikipedia page on John

out when, before I can answer, six or seven other students say variations of, “Yes. Didn't you know that?” despite the fact that I have told no one in this class that I used to be a carpenter. This has happened before. I calmly redirect the class back to Milton's role in the English Civil War. For the third time that class period, I stifle the urge to make a joke about Milton's official title under Cromwell: Secretary of Foreign Tongues.

A student named Aaron asking me about being a carpenter is not what caused Tweaker Bob and the other Aaron to rise to the surface of my thoughts. The nine dollars I found in the pocket of my jeans this morning did.

Now, the carpenter I worked with wasn't really named Aaron. I changed

Here was Bossman Bob's problem with me: I was a college boy. Worse than that, a graduate student.

out of his truck. I'm not embellishing here. He'd literally set his work boots onto the running board of his old Ford and launch himself out of the truck. He'd run to the bed, grab a saw and an extension cord, run to one of the houses, work furiously for ten or fifteen minutes, stop as suddenly as he started, and run back to his truck. He'd spend the next few hours there, studying the blueprints.

That wasn't all Tweaker Bob did. Sometimes, he got in fights with total strangers in the Circle K parking lot. To hear Tweaker Bob tell it, the fight was always the stranger's fault. It was always unavoidable. I didn't point out to Tweaker Bob that fights in Circle K parking lots are almost always avoidable. In fact, most people avoid them for their entire lives. I didn't tell Tweaker

Milton. We're discussing the benefits and shortcomings of Wikipedia. None of this has anything to do with Tweaker Bob and Aaron. Their lives don't translate into encyclopedic knowledge.

One of my students, whose name is also Aaron, asks, “Did you used to be a carpenter?”

This may seem like a non sequitur, but I know exactly what has happened. Someone pointed out to him that there is a Wikipedia page about me. He's switched over from Milton to Carswell, and now he's checking to see how valid the information is. Whenever students ask me about being a carpenter or ask me how to pronounce my wife's name, I know they've looked me up on Wikipedia. It's not really a problem. I'm not even creeped

his name for this story. Not to protect the carpenter Aaron. I'm not protecting anyone in the past here. Tweaker Bob's name was really Bob and his brother-in-law, who was also our boss, was also named Bob. I'm really named Carswell. But I changed Aaron's name because I didn't want to call out my student, who really does share a name with my old coworker. So I thought about an equally white, middle-class-sounding name that would, hopefully, give you a sense of the ease and privilege the carpenter Aaron grew up in: that two story mini-mansion in east Flagstaff with multiple motorcycles in the garage and three expensive cars in the driveway, plus Aaron's top-of-the-line Chevy Silverado 4X4. This work was a summer job for Aaron, something that his parents made

him get to keep busy between semesters at Coconino Community College.

In some ways, Aaron was worse than Tweaker Bob. Violent and erratic as Tweaker Bob was, he usually stayed in his truck. The work he did when he left it was punch-list stuff, and he did a good job in his fifteen-minute flurries of activity. So he wasn't helpful, but he wasn't a problem. Aaron was a problem. Nearly everything he built had to be torn down and rebuilt correctly. Nearly every cut he made was too short, and there's no way to cut a board longer. I had to find ways to keep Aaron busy with jobs even he couldn't fuck up. This was tough.

My favorite thing about Aaron: his tattoos. He'd made his own tattoo gun and started practicing on himself. He drew a Yosemite Sam on his left pectoral. The left half of Sam's body was a full inch longer than the right half. You could only tell it was Yosemite Sam after Aaron told you so. He'd also made three attempts at the Tasmanian Devil. After drawing three blurred triangles—all of which Aaron claimed were the Tasmanian Devil's tornado legs—Aaron gave up because it hurt too much.

Even though I've now moved comfortably into middle-class life, even though I have a job with a salary and a pension, even though I live in an actual house now with my own actual washing machine and dryer, even though I could easily afford to buy several pairs of jeans, I still have only three pairs and I still wear them six or seven times between washings. That nine dollars—a five and four ones—lingers in my right front pocket. I walk through the halls of the university where I work, hands in pockets, feeling the soft bills rubbing gently against my fingertips.

Like I said, everyone else on the crew had quit but Aaron, Tweaker Bob, and me. Aaron wouldn't quit because he didn't know enough to know things were fucked. There wasn't a question of Tweaker Bob quitting. He was the reason the rest of the crew fled, and he couldn't flee from himself. I needed one more week. After one more week, I'd have enough money to float by until the next semester started. Once that happened, I could go back to being a graduate assistant—the lowest form of teacher in a university, but an easier job than building tract houses for Bossman Bob and his tweaker brother-in-law. Only thing was, we were way behind schedule on these three tract houses. Someone had to get fired. I had a feeling it was gonna be me.

Here was Bossman Bob's problem with me: I was a college boy. Worse than that, a graduate student. At least Aaron had the decency to be a community college student, and one who was years into working on a degree that he'd obviously never get. But I was taking post-graduate classes and teaching undergraduate ones. How could I be a carpenter, too?

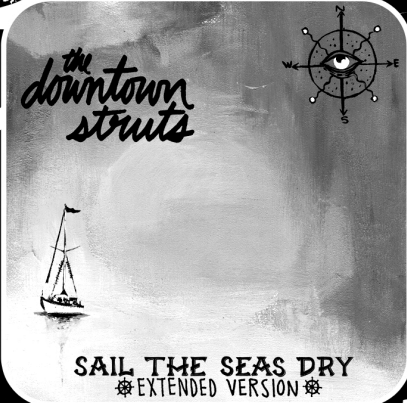
As far as Bossman Bob was concerned, I couldn't. Everything had to be my fault.



BRAD BESHAW

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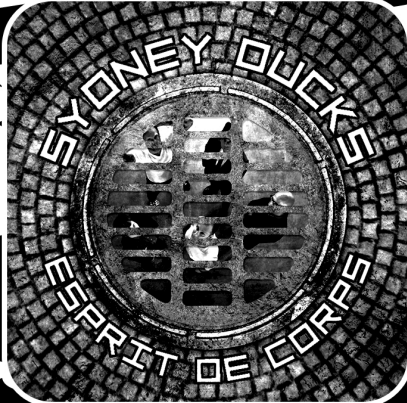
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Lunch time that Friday came and went, and it was still just me, Aaron, and Tweaker Bob on the job. Aaron had smoked a little weed during lunch. When the break ended, he joined Tweaker Bob in the cab of the truck. I strapped on my tool belt and got to work. I'd stacked plywood and two-by-sixes against the garage eave. I brought my saw up to the half-finished roof and built the valley connecting the roof to the garage. I made all my own cuts while standing between the trusses. It was

corded and packed away tools, Bossman Bob said to me, "We have to talk."

"What's up?" I asked, though I knew. "Well." Bossman Bob looked west across the prairie at the fading evening sun. "I'm gonna have to let you go." He started to explain why, but I didn't stick around to listen. No point in that.

Now, I can see why it's tough for someone to imagine I was a carpenter once. When I was young and tan and blond and

earlier and explained the situation and tried to get on a different crew or something. I could've done more than just working silently and waiting for the axe to fall. So I didn't blame anyone but myself. I made my mistakes and took the consequences and that was that, as far as I was concerned.

But I needed that nine-dollar check. It was under Bossman Bob's hand and he wasn't giving it up. Finally, I feigned a punch toward Bossman Bob. I had no

Part of me wanted to turn off the ignition, to get out and do what every working class man in America dreams of: fight my boss.

a precarious way of working and things moved slowly by necessity, but I liked having the time to work alone. I was in my early twenties then and had already spent nearly a decade working construction during summers and school breaks, even for a couple of years after getting my bachelor's degree. Framing houses was comfortable to me, fulfilling.

The wind howled across the northern Arizona prairie. I kept one eye on the road to the west. As long as Bossman Bob's truck didn't come rolling up this way, I'd get my week. If I could just make it to two o'clock, Tweaker Bob would fold up the blueprints, holler out that he was going to pick up our paychecks, and split. I'd be safe.

Only Bossman Bob did show up. He brought his whole other crew with him. They spread out across the three houses, seven strong, working to finish these suckers off.

Aaron and Tweaker Bob teamed up on some living room walls. They were suddenly a tornado of activity. Bossman Bob sent two carpenters up to finish my work in the valley. He had me to build interior walls. All simple and easy. Everyone worked in teams of two but me. No one said anything to me. I could feel the target on my forehead. I kept an eye out for daylight. If we could just stretch this sucker to sunset. Every extra hour I could clock in before that bomb dropped would mean another nine dollars of groceries to get me through the summer's end.

Saws whirred and hammers pounded until seven-thirty that evening. The houses weren't finished by then, but they were close. While everyone else rolled up extension

carrying around over two hundred pounds of muscle from a heavy-lifting job and fat from lunches of Circle K hotdogs, it was easy to tell what I did for a living. Now, I've dropped at least thirty of those extra pounds. I iron my work shirts. I eat a lot of vegetables. Unless you catch a glimpse of the scars on the backs of my hands or the sunspots lingering on my skin, it's hard to tell I was anything but a guy who got paid to talk about John Milton's role in the English Civil War.

A week after getting fired, I went back to the jobsite to get my final paycheck. Bossman Bob met me at his truck and gave me the check. It was nine dollars short. I needed that nine dollars. I had two weeks left before the start of classes, three weeks before my first grad assistant pay came in, and only about thirty-five dollars left over. Rent and bills were paid. I could get by. Money had been this tight before. I knew how to eat on twelve bucks a week. Still, nine dollars meant something.

In the week that I'd been gone, Tweaker Bob and Aaron had done no work. Bossman Bob was starting to see his mistake in firing me—the last guy who was actually working on the crew. He wanted me to explain the situation. I said, "This check is nine dollars short." Bossman Bob asked more questions. I tapped his checkbook. "Nine dollars."

Bob wrote the check, but he wouldn't stop grilling me. I wasn't about to say anything to get Tweaker Bob and Aaron fired. I had nothing against them. They weren't to blame. I was. I could've defended myself before I got canned. I could've called Bossman Bob up weeks

intention of hitting him. I just didn't know what else to do. Bob flinched, lifting his hand off the check. I grabbed it and headed toward my truck.

I was in the driver's seat with the engine running before Bossman Bob recovered and started yelling at me. Part of me wanted to turn off the ignition, to get out and do what every working class man in America dreams of: fight my boss. The rest of me knew, though, that I needed to get to the bank before he changed his mind about these checks.

Back here in the present tense, I know I can keep that nine dollars in my jeans indefinitely. Maybe not the same nine dollars in the same pair of jeans, but a never-ending nine dollars forever in excess of anything I need. It can serve as a talisman against a time when, if I'd found an extra nine dollars in my jeans, I'd have to spend it. If not on food or some other necessity, I'd have to buy beer or weed or something to help me escape the world where nine dollars meant so much to me.

Now, that money can be a gift to the young carpenter living inside me. Others may need Wikipedia to see him. I always know he's there.

—Sean Carswell



LAZY MICK

JIM RULAND

“Men who drink in bars look without searching, seek but never find.”

Bars & Their People: A Love Story

Men who go to bars. Men who go to bars to drink. Men who go to bars to meet women. Men who go to bars to watch sports. That's pretty much it. That covers all the bases. There are people people and TV people and sports people and miscellaneous deviants who like sex and drugs and rock'n'roll. But in the end they are men. Men with just one or two things on their mind at a time.

Like cheese. Men like cheese. Cheese on crackers. Cheese on meat. Cheese stuffed inside of things. Cheese blanketing burritos so big and fluffy you could lay your head down on them. Archipelagos of cheese on maps made out of tortilla chips. Sounds delicious, doesn't it? Cheese inside of fried cocoons of pretty much anything. Batter. Jalapenos. Human kidneys. Why not? It's got cheese in it. Shredded cheese. Melted cheese. The cheesier the cheese, the better. It doesn't even have to be real cheese. Men aren't particular. Women (we'll get to you in a minute) if you want to know what kind of man you've taken a fancy to, study his preferences for cheese.

Why cheese? Because there isn't a cheese on earth that doesn't go well with beer. If beer is our national social lubricant, cheese is its glue. The glue that binds this country together, one plate of nachos at a time.

Beer. Pints of stout. Bottles of ales. Pails of pilsner. Loads of lager. It's all the same. Mass produced or artfully arranged, it's just a slow way to get loaded. The men sit at the bar until their bellies are swollen with swill. Sometimes they play darts. Mostly they sit and look at the women. They look at their telephones. They look at the television. They look at the pool game not in progress. These are all things to look at while not looking at the women. Everyone knows this.

Some men drink to be companionable. Some men drink to find courage. Some men drink to be more like men they would like to be. Men who drink in bars look without searching, seek but never find. Men who drink in bars are men who linger, which is a way of loitering on an ass getting fatter and fatter under the low-wattage light of a high-definition television that's broadcasting

scores they only wish they could pretend they didn't already know.

Why is it always this way? The answers are in their past, but it's easier to blame women. Women who go to bars. Women who go to bars to drink. Women who go to bars to work. Women who go to bars to be watched by men.

You've seen them. Women who smoke. Women who smoke their own cigarettes. Women who only smoke other people's. Women who haven't bought a pack since Clinton was president. If she smokes, she fucks. Your father told you that in a bar on St. Patrick's Day. A truth no woman will ever admit to, and no man will ever win in an argument. Knowledge isn't dangerous. It's how one chooses to divulge it that gets you in hot water.

Women who go to bars looking for a piece of ass. Women who find what they are looking for. Women who find more than what they are looking for. Like love. Like a disease. Like an unemployable musician with a fondness for cheese.

Women who wear boots in the summer. Women who wear shorts in the winter. Women who wear whatever the fuck they want to wear it and look amazing doing it. Fat women. Skinny women. Women who know how to work it. Women who smell nice. Women with unusual hair. Women who can say, "Here I am" without ever uttering a word. Women who are so baffling they are a mystery unto themselves.

Women who drink wine. Women who drink liqueur. Women who drink spirits. Women who mix spirits and liqueur with fruit juices. Women who drink shots. Women who get you shitfaced. Women who never seem to get shitfaced, no matter how many shots they drink. More bafflement. More mystery. Mostly of the male variety. Their natural state.

For obvious reasons, none of these women like beer.

Women who like bars. Women who don't. Women who like sports. Women who aren't. Women who could practice shooting pool eighty hours a week and never learn how to hold a stick. Women who know all kinds of tricks with all kinds of sticks and wouldn't you like to know? Don't get me wrong, there are plenty of women of virtue out there, but none of them are here tonight.

Women who drink too much in bars. Their amazing flaws. Their complicated bra straps. Their cheap underwear. Their peculiar moles, curling along their clavicles like fish hooks. Their irregular teeth. Their expensive makeup and painful shoes. Their frayed denim skirts. Their dirty knee socks. Their outdated cell phones. Their discomfiting laugh and almost-but-quite-not deal-breaking thighs. Their long line of not quite ex-boyfriends, booze-fueled krakens, waiting to be unleashed. There are never enough women who like to drink in bars in the bar.

And then there are the women who work in bars. They are pretty. They are sane. Or they were once pretty. Or they were once sane. They have problems, but they aren't pitiful. Like their clientele. But they are outnumbered by women who work in bars who hang out in bars when they're not working. Women who drink in bars whether they're working or not. Women who flirt with the men who drink in bars. Women who do more than flirt. These are women who enjoy complicating things. These are women who are always trying to turn men and women into something else.

Like couples.

It never works. See them standing outside the sports bars. Watch them in the Irish pub's parking lot. Observe the way they stamp out their cigarettes on the stucco wall behind the dive bar's back door. Study the way they speak to each other. Women talking. Men listening. Smoking furiously. She will say, "Keep your voice down." He will say, "Don't cry." But it's no use. They are drowning. Drowning in drinks. Drowning in words. Drowning in sadness they can sense and are afraid will become a permanent condition.



JACKIE RUSTED

If beer is our national social lubricant, cheese is its glue.

She is a college student. Was a college student. Hopes to be a college student again. But she doesn't know what to study, what classes to take. She doesn't get college because she doesn't know what she is for. It's so much different than the bar. She shows up for work and there are dozens of men waiting for her. She prefers to be studied than to study.

He is a wearer of baseball caps. Someone who wears the same piece of clothing on his head every day, yet it never occurs to him to wash it. He is a sports center seer. He is rich in opinions poached from pundits, a wealth of useless knowledge. Knowledge being relative. Ditto uselessness. But a bigot is a bigot. He is the kind of person who thinks about sex all day. How he can get it, whom he can get it from, but seldom if ever ventures beyond that moment. In this way, sex is a place he visits like a tourist, and the people he has sex with are foreigners, even though they're just like him.

They have virtually nothing in common. She is short and he is tall. Or she is heavysset and he unnaturally slim. Or the other way around. Neither one has any money, though one always has more than the other. All they have is the bar and the drinks they drink there. One of them came out here to save something. The other wants to put it out of its misery. Neither is sure if it's worth the trouble. And now they are both going down.

She was trying to tell him that her grandmother is sick and he nodded while scraping with a fork the hardened cheese that fused the last nacho to the plate. He didn't offer his sympathies or condolences. But ask him who is a dark horse for MVP this year and he'll talk his ding-dong off.

She is the same way with ex-boyfriends. Or her roommate's. Or her mom's. She is an expert and not being able to keep these boyfriends in the past where they belong. She is a proficient shit talker. An instigator of cheap drama, which

she mistakes for affection. Drama being a prerequisite for love. That she sees it every day doesn't make it any cheaper.

But the sex is good. They think. They've never tried it sober, except the morning after, when they are still half in the bag. It's nice. At least he thinks so. She prefers their late night sex when they slam into each other like trains that have been intentionally routed onto the same track. Not a mistake, but pointless entertainment with a price tag that will present itself when the carnage is over.

Now they are two people standing in the cold outside a bar and sooner or later they will have to go back inside. For more drinks, more television, more cheerless cheer. The air is cold. The fog is creeping in. The cheese is congealing in their arteries. The beer is bladder bound. The bar beckons. They've resolved nothing. There is no other place to go.

—Jim Ruland

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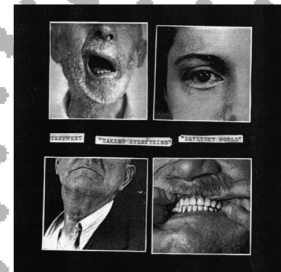
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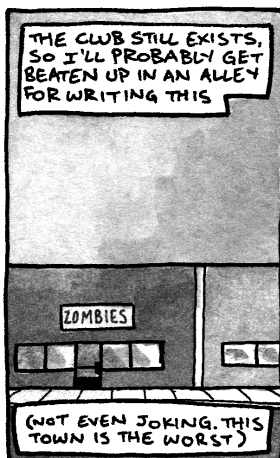


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WHO ARE YOU?

“Let the
freak
flag fly.”

Nardwuar vs. Mike Watt

The Human Serviette

Nardwuar: Who are you?

Mike: I'm Mike Watt. I'm a bass player from San Pedro, California.

Nardwuar: Welcome, to the Nardwuar the Human Serviette Radio Show here on CiTR in Vancouver, BC, Canada!

Mike: Thanks for having me aboard, Nardwuar. Serviette? Are you some kind of napkin?

Nardwuar: Yes, I'm the “Human Serviette,” to help “serve the youth”!

Mike: Okay. [laughs]

Nardwuar: Do you know much about the 1960s garage rock scene in San Pedro? There was a band called The Grapes Of Wrath from San Pedro who had a song on one of those *Garage Punk Unknowns* comps called “Cuz It Was Her.” Have you ever heard of them?

Mike: No, but that's very interesting. I was only ten when I got there in '68, so I was sorta out of touch. I got into playing music when I met D. Boon, when I was thirteen years old, so 1971. First gig we went to was T. Rex and by that time the club scene that the garage bands had come out of had all gone. It was all arena rock.

Nardwuar: And you are Mike Watt. And who else is in your band these days?

Mike: The band you are going to see is the Missingmen. And the guitarist is Tom Watson from Manhattan Beach, California. And Raul Morales, the drummer, is from the 1990s San Pedro punk scene.

Nardwuar: And how did you meet Raul? Because he played in the amazing Leeches from San Pedro!

Mike: Ah, that's right. They kinda have links to garage rock on the music side, too. That's when I first saw Raul, standing up, playing drums with a garbage sack over his head.

Nardwuar: Mike, what is a not tour? A lot of bands will fly to a city and do a couple gigs. Then fly home. Is that a tour?

Mike: That ain't a tour. That ain't a tour. That's a couple gigs, like you said. A tour is a mission, you know, it's a journey. It has a beginning, middle, and an end. It's got a life of its own. It's not just leaving your path for a little bit.

Nardwuar: On July 6th, 1984 you came to Vancouver to play the Waterfront Cabaret with The Minutemen.

Mike: That's right. That's the first time we played Canada.

Nardwuar: And I've seen some pictures that

local Vancouver photographer Bev Davies took of that particular gig.

Mike: Wow, I've never seen pictures of that, but we were very excited. We thought it was quite an honor, you know, to play True North. **Nardwuar:** In one of the pictures, there's a picture of D. Boon and on D. Boon's shirt there are some slogans. It says “Fight using your balls” and...

Mike: Oh, yeah. He had me write that. [laughs] That's my writing! [laughs] Oh, I remember that. Is it a green shirt?

Nardwuar: It's a black and white photo. It looks like a grey work shirt, sort of. I dunno.

Mike: Yeah, it was kinda a work shirt. Yeah, I remember he had me write that. [laughs] Oh, wow!

Nardwuar: And there was also written on it: “People's Victory in El Salvador.”

Mike: That's right. That's right. I remember that clear as a bell. I don't remember him wearing it at that show. That show was a little murky for me. I remember there was a Canadian band with us. I think they were called The Bill Of Rights or something.

Nardwuar: You got it exactly! That is amazing you can remember that! The Bill Of Rights from Vancouver, BC, Canada! The slogans on the shirts, how long were they on D. Boon's shirt? Was that only for the Vancouver gig?

Mike: No, he had me first write them on at a club called the Anti-Club in Hollywood.

Nardwuar: Does your “Boat” still have a Canadian yak sticker on it?

Mike: [laughs] Yeah. [laughs] There's a yak on each side. [laughs] How do you know this? [laughs] You're right, you're right.

Nardwuar: Did you ever get a call back from Kelley Blue Book to thank you for upping the value of the Ford Econoline van?

Mike: [laughs] They had me do something [laughs] Yeah, That's a trip. I said, “Sure I will talk about it.” I love 'em.

Nardwuar: I think you really did up the value. You did a really convincing job!

Mike: [laughs] I was just speaking, you know. I wasn't trying to speak as a shill you understand, I just like touring in these things.

Nardwuar: Mike, when you were showing your own Ford Econoline van, did you say you had a safe in your van?

Mike: [laughs] I might have said that.

Nardwuar: What would you recommend to

bands? Are you saying a safe is the best way to do it?

Mike: Ah, yeah. Probably better than a sack! [laughs]

Nardwuar: In Seattle, Washington they have an exhibit at the Experience Music Project called, “Nirvana: Taking Punk to the Masses.” In the book that comes with it, it says that you gave Donna Dresch of Team Dresch a bass “bridge”?

Mike: Yeah I did. She was playing bass for the Screaming Trees at that time. I took them on their first two tours. But I know about Team Dresch, Chainsaw Records; they put out Sleater-Kinney. She was like one of the first riot grrrl people I met. She was also playing for Dinosaur a little bit.

Nardwuar: Who else have you given bass parts too?

Mike: [laughs] You ask some difficult questions. [laughs] Umm, who have I given bass parts to? [laughs] I know who I gave some bass parts to! Kira from Black Flag. I gave her some.

Nardwuar: Mike, in *We Jam Econo* the filmmakers talk to a Chris Morris, who was from the *Hollywood Reporter*. Did you ever get into any of those magazines when you were in the Minutemen? Did you ever get into the *Hollywood Reporter*? Did you ever get into *Circus*?

Mike: [laughs] I know we got into *Creem* because Richard Meltzer set me up. Well, I “sent” him up. Playing card. Like an ace of clubs or something. Ace of spades. And sure enough, he put a review in *Creem Magazine*, which was pretty big time for us. He called it “scientist rock.” I didn't really read *Circus* or *Hollywood Reporter* so much, but I know Chris Morris. He also wrote for *Billboard*. He wrote for a lot of different things. The punk scene had a lot of trippy people. It was a small scene in the old days.

Nardwuar: When you played with bands like Fear, was there a lot of spitting? When did the spitting happen? When you were headlining a gig, or when you were opening a gig, or all the time?

Mike: There was a lot of spitting when we played with Black Flag in Europe. Also cups of piss. And bags of shit. And puke. Even used rubbers. That was weird. [laughs] That was weird.

Nardwuar: How did you know that they were used rubbers?



Mike Watt July 6, 1994, Waterfront Cabaret, Vancouver, BC, Canada, Photo by Bev Davies

A tour is a mission, you know, it's a journey.

It has a beginning, middle, and an end. It's got a life of its own.

Mike: Oh, because they were sticking on me. It was in Vienna. The lights all went off, all the power went off, and when they came back on, they were sticking on me and hanging on me.

Nardwuar: Tell me about the movie *Sir Drone*.

Mike: [laughs] I love it! My best friend Raymond Pettibon made that movie. It has me and Mike Kelley in it. We play a punk band in the '70s.

Nardwuar: What was the first movie you were in, Mike?

Mike: *Weatherman '69*. Another Raymond Pettibon movie with Kim and Thurston from the Sonic Youth.

Nardwuar: Did you ever meet Captain Beefheart at all?

Mike: No, but I spoke to him on the phone once. It was a call-in thing on the radio. Just like this. Somebody was talking to him on the radio. It was a couple years after he stopped doing music and was doing painting. And I called up. I was the last caller and I got to ask him about *Strictly Personal*, this album

he did where you opened it up and it was so scary. These hats that they were wearing. So I asked him about those hats. And he said, "Yeah, those were scary, but they were just lying around. And there was no big reason behind it." So I did get to speak with him. I got to see him play, too. He was a huge influence on D. Boon.

Nardwuar: It's incredible, Mike Watt. You got to speak to Captain Beefheart. You're playing in The Stooges now, and you also had Bernie Worrell (a founding member of Parliament-Funkadelic) on one of your records! Bernie Worrell!

Mike: Yeah, he was bitchin'! He twirled his dentures for me! In his mouth!

Nardwuar: How hard is it to get a hold of Bernie Worrell?

Mike: It was a coincidence. I was in the studio the same time he was and I just asked him, "Would you do 'Maggot Brain' with me and J. Mascis?" But, get this. A young man who I did some country and western versions of Black Flag songs with is now jamming

with them now! And he asked me if I would like to maybe collaborate again with Mr. Worrell. Look, Nardwuar, it is a trip about these things happening to me. I can't believe they do. I really can't. But I try my hardest and I try to be sincere about it. My basic thing is everybody has something to teach me. So let the freak flag fly.

Nardwuar: Well thanks very much, Mike. Anything else you want to add to the people out there at all?

Mike: Nardwuar, you're very beautiful for having me aboard and asking me these intense things.

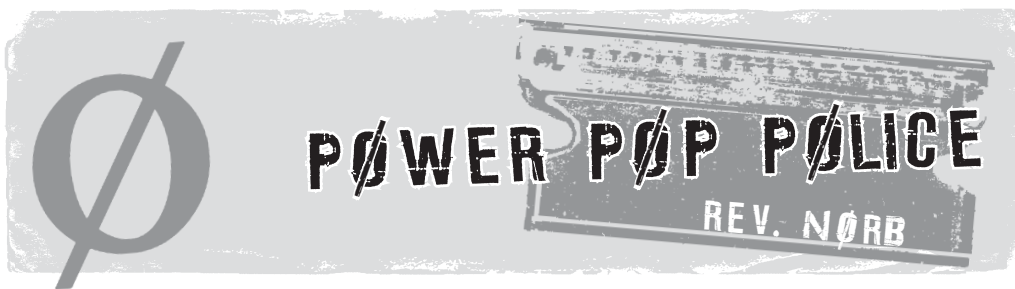
Nardwuar: Well, thanks so much Mike. Keep on rawkin' in the free world...

Mike: I'm trying...

Nardwuar: ...and doot doola doot doo ...

Mike: Doot doo!

To hear this interview visit www.nardwuar.com



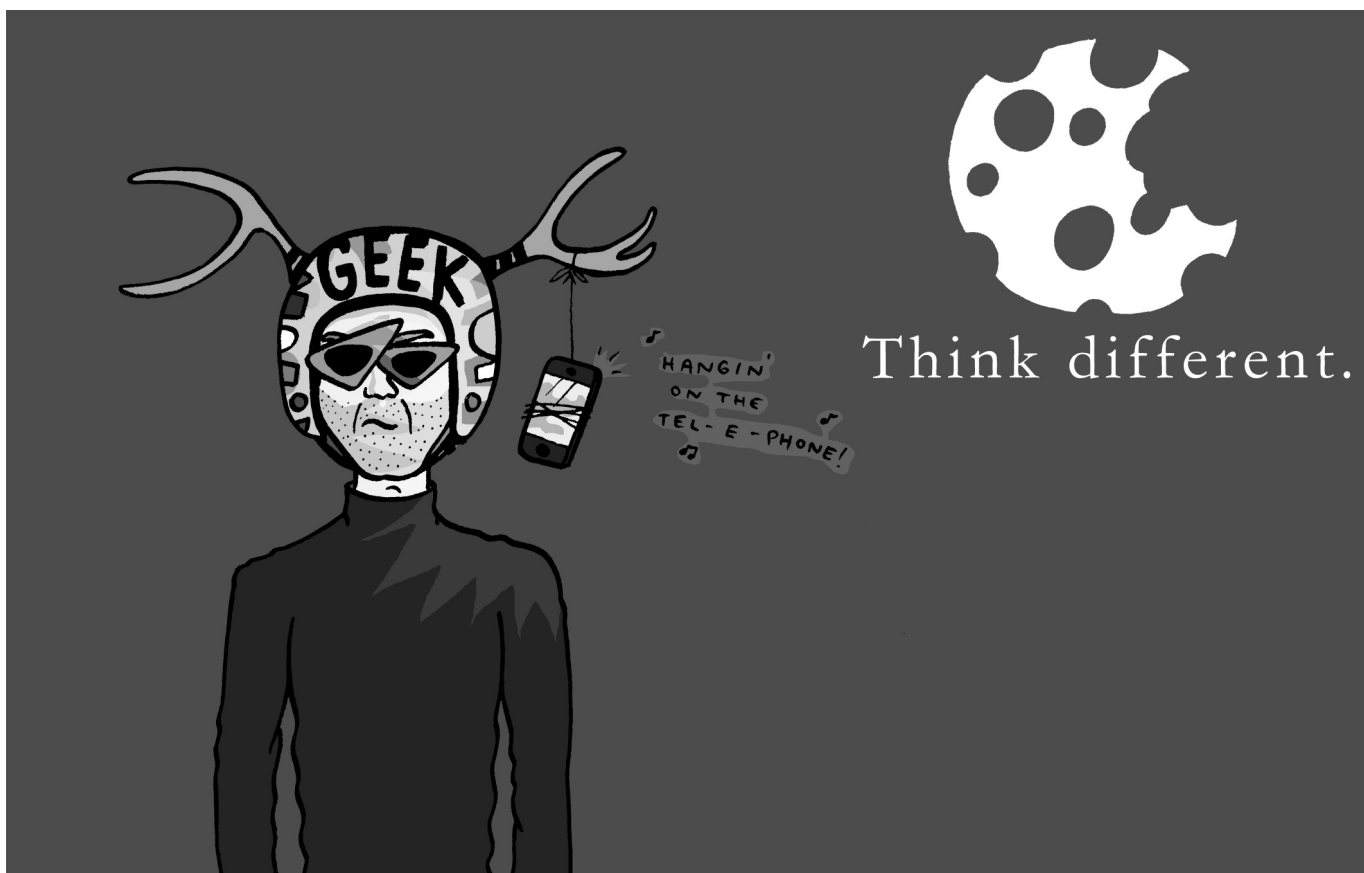
“The lunatic cocoon of my own useless idiosyncrasies.”

REDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT: ONE MAN'S MORTIFYIN' DESCENT INTO AUDIO-CULTURAL RETARDATION

So. I'm still largely unemployed. I work two nights a week. *I still can't believe a video game company would fire the guy who pitched a Rhythm Chicken™ game for the Wii! The guy who said we should ditch our Metalocalypse™ license with Cartoon Network® and just make our game into a Mentors game! The guy who boldly claimed he could get Biafra to sign off on JELLO BIAFRA: AGENT OF S.M.U.S.H.! I'm clearly a fucking game design genius; it's not my fault no one ever listened to my million-dollar suggestions! Therefore, i did what any largely unemployed person would do, were they in my unenviable shoes: I didn't write a book, i didn't start a band—I bought a phone. A zany one. It has a touch screen so i can flick things this way and that and check how many people like my daily updates on various popular types of social media, and check in on Foursquare© when I'm at Taco Bell® ((I freely admit that this whole Foursquare bit—this “checking in” when i arrive at certain places, so other people can know i am at said places—is, honestly, about as far afield from what I want out of life as a pomegranate-and-ear-candle enema. However, i allow this über-retarded application to remain on my phone simply because a man in my position should surely be the titular mayor of at least one Taco Bell®, and I, friends and neighbors, am now THE MAYOR OF TACO BELL® #5044!!! [[eagle-eyed fans might recall that, on the first Boris the Sprinkler album, i vowed to never again dine at Taco Bell® #5044—and NOW I'm the fucking MAYOR of the joint! Ain't i some pumpkins!]] As mayor, i think i will leverage the power of my office to pitch them on the Rhythm Chicken Burrito™ with Mentors™ Sauce and see where that gets me. Our slogan: “*You Won't Have to Bend Up to Smell THESE Anal Vapors!*”)) Anyway, i put a bunch of music on my phone. I recommend doing this. My ringtone is “Hanging on the Telephone” by the Nerves, because, you know, the song starts with a telephone ringing. It's real “meta” and shit. My alarm is “Tommy Gun” by the Clash. You gotta admit, that's a pretty good fuckin' alarm. **THANK YOU SANDY PEARLMAN! I HATE YOU MORE THAN EVER NOW!** The editor of this magazine is staunchly anti-cell phone. I can't say i blame him. Cell phones are acutely fucking aggravating tracking devices which allow people whom I don't want to know where I*

am to know where I am, unless I'm at Taco Bell®, in which case I enjoy making my global positioning a matter of public record. Our editor also laments the fact that cell phones contribute to a breakdown in social communication. This is very true. I also don't care. I'm not a naturally social person anyway; having a fancy cell phone allows me to withdraw even further into the lunatic cocoon of my own useless idiosyncrasies. Plus, i mean, not to be a dick about it or anything, but if you can't engage my attention better than some bullshit on my phone, WHY WOULD I WANT TO TALK TO YOU IN THE FIRST PLACE? But, anyway, enough about you. This is all about me, and my ongoing transition from Overworked to Underemployed. Being a man given to great deals of introspection, upon my revised employment status, I thought long and hard about what my next move should be. *Do i move? Do i look for another job in the field? Do i attempt a career change? Do i just piss around and work on the various projects i didn't have time for when i was working sixty hours a week?* What, exactly, are the appropriate actions for my situation, and how do i go about taking them? I thought about this long and hard (“long and hard” being a recurring theme in my thought processes, i assure you)), at which point in time, it was determined that the appropriate actions for a person in my situation—carefully culled from a wide group of potential interests, activities, and vocational plans of attack—would be as follows: 1) Collect unemployment; 2) Buy a phone; 3) Get stoned and walk around and listen to music on the phone. Now, faithful reader, i gild no lily in saying that i am sure you can immediately appreciate the careful thought and excruciating planning that went into selecting this course of action for my future. Out of all possible life paths available to me, the one that seemed the most obviously bountiful was the one that dictated that I should spend my days smoking pot, walking the two miles down to the Ghet-O-Mart™, buying a cut-rate bag of off-brand beef jerky, and walking back home again. WHILE ROCKING OUT. Now, i can imagine what you're thinking: “*But Rev. Nørð! We've all seen these ridiculous TV commercials, pandering to the Now Generation of Now™, where some young urban hipster is walking down the street with his headphones plugged*

into his cell phone—the manhole covers throb as would lusty subwoofers! The building lights act as LED meters to augment his throbbing urban rapture! Surely, you cannot be so devoid of hip—so beaten down by life—so bitter about being fired from a job in which you had stockpiled 400 hours of sick leave ((that really pissed me off. I never called in sick in five years. I never felt i was really sick enough that I needed to miss work, and Jello Biafra: Agent of S.M.U.S.H. surely ain't gonna design itself))—that you would advocate a quasi-lifestyle based around walking around town like an Allen Iverson motherfucker; listening to vapid popular music on headphones connected to your socially-irresponsible cellular telephone???” And, in this, you are correct: I do NOT endorse walking around town with a pair of headphones on like an Allen Iverson motherfucker, listening to vapid popular music on my cellular telephone. I reject the public use of headphones utterly. I do, however, COMPLETELY endorse walking around town like a toner-using loner, listening to UNPOPULAR music thru the Tart-N-Tiny™-sized speaker on your cellular telephone. THIS, my dubious friends, is WHERE IT'S AT. I will state, for the permanent record—a record that will follow me all through my life—that, as of 1:54 AM CST, 12.02.11, WALKING AROUND TOWN PLAYING MUSIC THROUGH THE TINY LITTLE SPEAKER IN YOUR CELL PHONE IS COOL. I mean, shit—give me one valid reason why it's not. GIVE ME ONE VALID REASON WHY WALKING AROUND TOWN WITH YOUR PHONE IN YOUR SHIRT POCKET, BLASTING ((to the best of your phone's limited abilities)) COOL SHIT IS NOT COOL. Ha! *You cannot!* You cannot, because it is INHERENT in the very FABRIC of rock'n'roll that HAVING A SMALL, CRAPPY SOUNDING DEVICE about your person that causes ROCK'N'ROLL, OR LOCAL EQUIVALENT, to be BEAMED INTO YOUR LOCAL PHYSICAL SPHERE OF INFLUENCE is COOL, daddy-o, and YOU KNOW IT! I mean, everybody retroactively thinks AM radio ((when they used to play music on AM radio, as opposed to fat conservative fucks yammering 24/7)) was, at one point, “cool”—thus, what is a cell phone, but a modern day fancy-ass version of the redoubtable AM radio? IT'S THE



BILL PINKEL

TINNY CRAP IS THE SOUND OF THE FUTURE, AND THE FUTURE IS NOW!!!

CONTEMPORARY EQUIVALENT OF THE VERY SAME TRANSISTOR RADIO OF WHICH VAN MORRISON SPAKE WHEN HE DETAILED HIS TRIP DOWN THE OLD MINE IN THE SONG “BROWN EYED GIRL,” WHICH IS SURELY BEYOND REPROACH! To headphone is lame; to blast that sonofabitching Tart-N-Tiny™ for all its worth is DEE-FUCKIN’-VINE! I walk through neighborhoods cranking ((well...all right. There is no “crank” on my phone. There is, at maximum, a pleasurable clatter)) The Proof’s “It’s Safe” album, imagining that I leave trails of festive pink and green triangles behind me! I contaminate entire city blocks with the purple and black spew of the Barreracudas! I aim my phone’s tiny speaker at squirrels and blast rays of pure “Ca Plane Pour Moi” at them when they misbehave! The cell phone speaker is NOW, daddy! IT’S THE NOW SOUND OF TODAY’S NEW YOUTH OF NOWSVILLE!!! As a result, kick drums are obsolete ((and bass is barely hanging in there by force of will!!!) Furthermore—relative to crappy cell phone acoustics—the greatest guitarist of all time, ever, is, by a large margin, Shane White of the Infections/Rip Offs/Tight Fits. It’s not even close. Shane

White wrote some really shitty songs, but this guy was over a decade ahead of the curve, acoustically. THIS TILTING BASTION OF BRILLIANCE PLAYS LIKE HE ALWAYS KNEW HIS LEADS WOULD BE SOMEDAY PLAYED AND APPRECIATED OVER A SPEAKER THE SIZE OF A TART-N-TINY®! He also plays like he blew one or two fingers off fucking around with fireworks. It’s part of his charm. Shane White is clearly the ace guitarist of the cell phone generation. God help us all ((by comparison, The Aints’ “Ascension” album just sounds like three bees trying to fuck eight pennies and a nickel in my pocket)). Another questionable visionary who was ten-plus years ahead of his time was Timbo from Mutant Pop Records. Timbo peed his pants with joy when CD-R burners were invented, and spent the last years of his label hawking home-burned CD-EPs. He insisted that “six or seven” songs was the proper length for a release in these attention-challenged times. I insisted that the only area in which the CD format excelled was in compilations of twenty to thirty songs, with fifty minute running times. I was right. He was wrong, and went out of business shortly thereafter. Six or seven or eight songs is a stupid

allotment of tuneage for a compact disc, but it is a PERFECT allotment of songs for a cell phone. I’ve found that most albums—even good ones—can be condensed to four-to-eight songs when ya put ‘em on your phone. I cut down the first Ramones album to eight songs. I kinda miss “Today Your Love, Tomorrow the World,” but the condensed nature of the proceedings seems well-suited to the format. Therefore, to summarize, here’s where I’m at: FUCK WORK, FUCK LOW END, FUCK HEADPHONES, FUCK TABLETS AND KINDLES®, FUCK EBAY™, FUCK EVERYTHING OF VALUE, FUCK OCCUPYING SHIT, JUST PUT SHIT ON YOUR PHONE AND WALK AROUND PLAYING IT AS LOUD AS YOUR STUPID PHONE WILL GO. All art must now be evaluated in terms of how well it sounds on an itty-bitty phone speaker. TINNY CRAP IS THE SOUND OF THE FUTURE, AND THE FUTURE IS NOW!!! Won’t you join me in my newfound quest to destroy fidelity as we know it?

Love,
Norb

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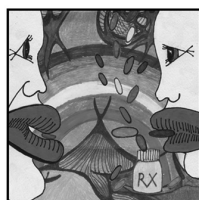


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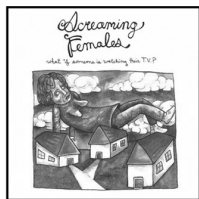
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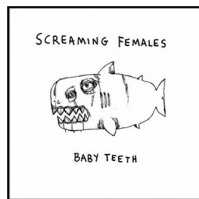
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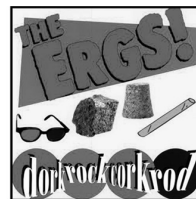
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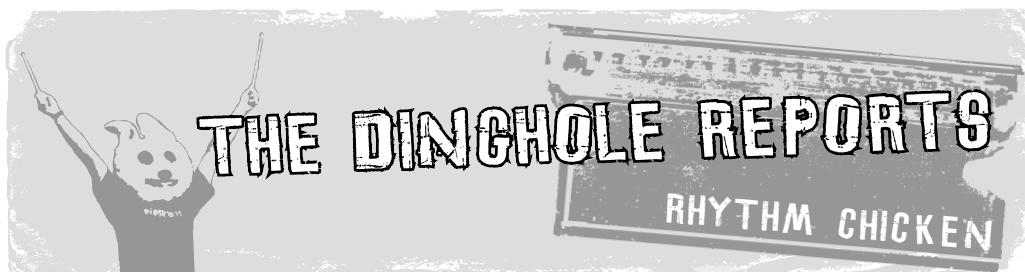


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**“Ten months
of ruckus-
abstinence.”**

Exercise the Poultry Demon!

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

I am typing this from my bed in the attic. It's a double bed with two quilts. I'm too cheap to keep the heat at a comfortable level up here. Aside from the space heater, there really is no heat up here other than what drifts up from the soup shop downstairs. I usually don't plug in the space heater till it gets really cold out, like down in the twenties or something. Looking around my attic home I see tons of boxes of my belongings piled up around the bed, mostly unopened. At the other end of the room is my little office space with a desk and filing cabinet. There are also plenty of large boxes of paper products for the business: napkins, toilet paper, to-go containers. Then there's my rusty, dirty old chickenkit, piled up on top of the boxes, waiting for the next bout of ruckus.

(Ruckus? RUCKUS? So has there BEEN any ruckus??? - F.F.)

Patience, Funyuns! So, if you remember from my last column, I was dangerously teetering on the brink of becoming UNPUNK. I haven't been to a punk show in years. I haven't bought any new music in a long time. I've passed up opportunities to see *good* bands down in Green Bay, just to get a good night's sleep for each day of work up here. I haven't rolled out any new ruckus since last January. That's ten months of ruckus-abstinence. Ten months deeper into the pit of unpunkness. This time I even passed on a chance to play with Channel 3 down in Titledown. Things were looking pretty bleak. Is the Rhythm Chicken even relevant to modern day punk rock?

[I'm sure all it takes is one big episode of ruckus and you'll be back to your old punk rock self again.— Dr. S.]

(Yeah, ROLL OUT THE RUCKUS! - F.F.)

Well, there certainly were many missed opportunities for all-out ruckus in the last ten months. Three regular parade appearances were missed. Plenty of usual Door County festivals were missed. Even that blasted Kid Rock show on the streets of Green Bay, which could've been gloriously fouled by a dirty display from yours truly, came and went with no ruckus. This was a dry spell unlike any other for our hero.

(Was? Does that mean there WAS some ruckus? Was the dry spell broken? - F.F.)

Unfortunately, this new business of mine has really monopolized much (if not all) of my time. I wake up every day, go downstairs, and run the soup shop all day. I then limp back upstairs and go to bed. It's not the best existence, but for now it's all I've got. The good news is that the shop is doing surprisingly well. I've more than broken even in my first six months of business and even have a comfortable little nest egg squirreled away to help get me through the winter. I had a feeling the business would do *well enough*, but I'm genuinely surprised with how many people come out for my soup. The only tradeoff for my level of success is the lack of ruckus.

Then came the “end of the season.” In late October, the number of tourists up here begins to decrease rapidly. Each weekend's numbers got lower and lower. I'm still serving up hot and tasty goodness to the locals, but the throngs of tourists have almost disappeared. This may not look too good in the books, but the sudden aspect of having a little free time is surely welcome! And then my friend's wedding was just around the corner. It was time to act. It was time to dust off the chickenkit. It was time to dance the old dance and exercise the poultry demon! Reveal the long-eared beast from deep within! LET RUCKUS BE REBORN!

[(AMEN, BROTHER! - F.F & Dr. S.)]

Dinghole Report #122: Dead Chicken in the

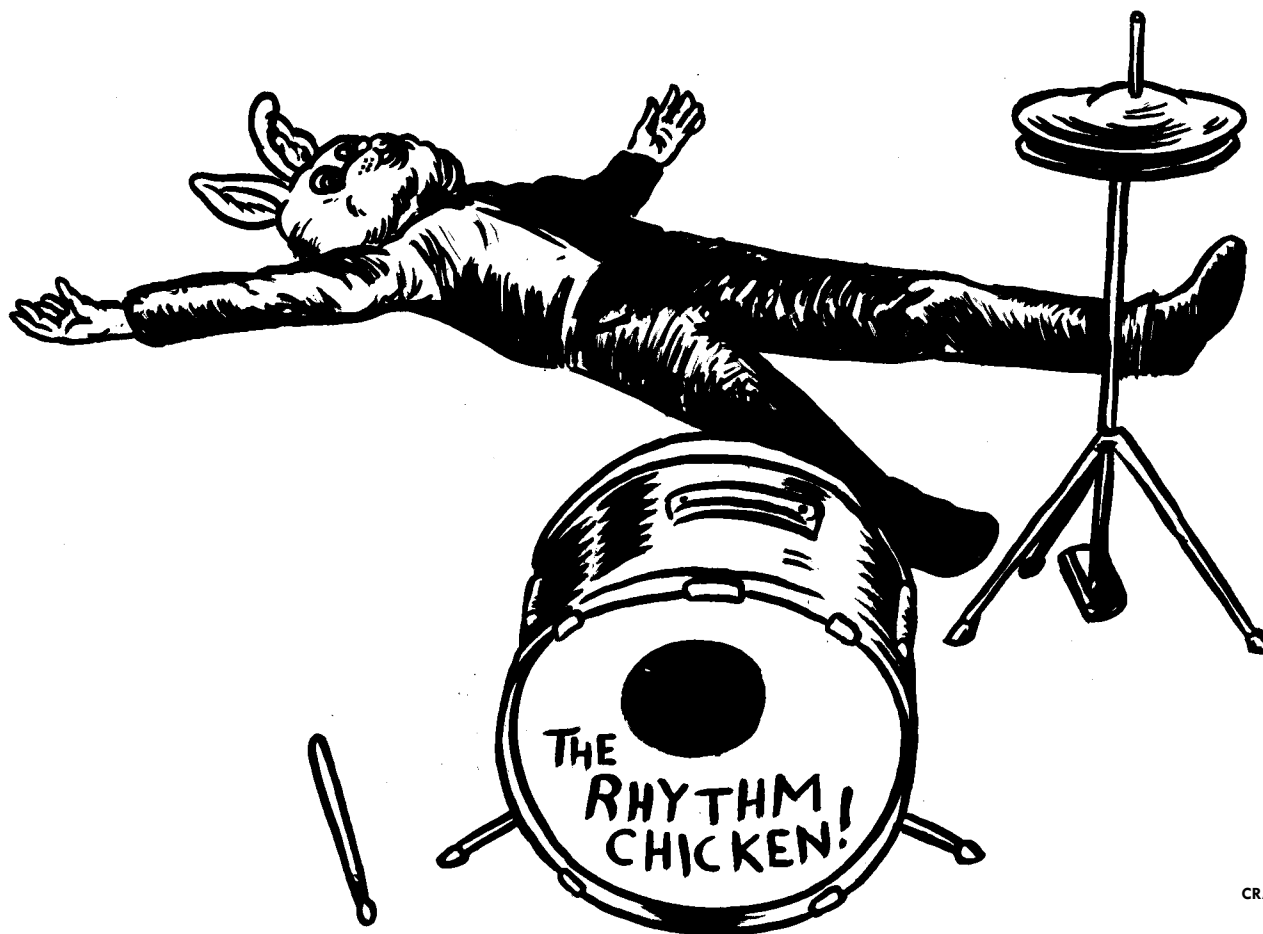
Streets of Fish Creek!

(Rhythm Chicken sighting # First One in a Long Time!)

So my friend Jason and I were in the same graduating class from Green Bay East High School. Some years after graduating, he became a traveling guitar tech for various touring acts. It seemed he was always on the road and I wouldn't see him for many years at a time. I would only catch word of whatever famous act he was on the road with, then get back to my burger-flipping and mass beer consumption. Then this summer he stopped in at my new establishment with Megan, his fiancé, and announced their upcoming marriage. Both of them being vegetarians, fell in love with my house soup, the Bohemian Potato Chowder. A few weeks later they stopped in again and requested my soup be served at their wedding! I was all too happy to be part of their celebration, especially since their wedding was going to be *up here* in Door County!

It was the first Saturday in November, and my family was gathering near Green Bay in Krakow, WI for our early Thanksgiving feast. My retired parents are now snowbirds, fleeing off to Florida each winter, so we have to move it up a few weeks. My mom's Thanksgiving dinner was amazing, as usual, and I stuffed myself silly. I was painfully full and could barely walk out to my Rooster Roller, much less fit in the rolling ratttrap! It was a two-hour drive up to Fish Creek, the town hosting Jason and Megan's wedding. I texted Scott, another friend at the wedding, to let him know the Chicken was in transport. He was at the ready, poised to alert the celebrants of the outdoor ruckus soon to be had! After ten long dry months, you could *taste* the ruckus in the still night air!

Simply by fate, there was an open parking spot directly across from the wedding reception. I parked my Rooster Roller and reached to the back seat for a can of Blatz. I enjoyed the twelve ounces of delicious liquid courage while texting Scott one last time, giving him the five-minute warning. Then I raced into action, pulling my weapons of mass-ruckus from the trunk and setting



CRAIG HORKY

Sometimes the only way to stop a runaway train is to simply let it crash!

them up directly outside the front door of the wedding reception. Already I could see Scott peeking out the door, ready to swing it open and let the thunder be heard! I knocked back the last of my Blatz and pulled on the Chickenhead. Ten months was too long. It was time for RUCKUS!

Fish Creek is a quiet and quaint little town in the off-season, but on this evening quiet it was not! Scott threw the door open just as I started my thunderous opening drum roll. THE RETURN OF RUCKUS WAS UPON US! Wedding folks all stormed outside as the thunder rolled on! I halted and raised the ol' chicken wings skyward. As the last echoes of thunder died out in the night sky, the crowd excitedly cheered, heralding the oncoming ruckus! I pounded and pounded and pounded out some of the most riotous rhythms to date! Chicken ears bounced about wildly as the drumsticks

furiously beat upon the skins! The ruckus came as easily as falling off a horse or a wagon! The ruckus echoed and echoed about the little town! With each break in the audio onslaught the wedding goers cheered louder and louder! The dry spell was OVER!

[(HURRAY!!! - F.F. & Dr. S.)]

The runaway train of ruckus was getting way out of control. Sometimes the only way to stop a runaway train is to simply *let it crash!* The all-out ruckus was getting to be too much for my limited frame and I had to opt for the crash. At the peak of chaos, I steered the train into itself and the ruckus imploded! Like a spirit channel for Keith Moon, I flailed about while drums and cymbals crashed away in various directions. The drumming in tongues was completed when the spirit of ruckus left my aching body and I fell onto the

pavement, sweaty and lifeless. The crowd roared! I remained lifeless. Camera flashes went off. I remained lifeless. Eventually, the crowd quieted and filed back indoors. I remained lifeless. Eventually, I hobbled up onto my feet and hopped away behind the nearest car to regroup.

Another old Green Bay friend came to my *rescue* with a mason jar full of moonshine. The rest of the evening was filled with dancing, drinking, laughter, and extreme merriment. The dry spell was over. Jason and Megan are now happily married. I woke up at six AM on the couch in the lobby rather hungover. It was time to get back to Ephraim, time to heat up the day's soup.

—Rhythm Chicken
rhythmchicken@hotmail.com



“Stop and think about how many bands were formed by pure chance.”

Jigs'n'Jags

Tower Records was one of the biggest record store chains in the states (and beyond) where you could find a pretty good amount of releases from their hefty magazine and book stand that used to carry *Flipside*, the old magazine that a few of us Razorcrakers here used to work/write for. It was kind of like Amoeba Records here in L.A. without all the used treasures (but nowhere near Amoeba's stellar DVD aisles). There was a Tower in Anaheim, just spitting distance across from Knott's Berry Farm, located on Beach Boulevard (the same Beach Boulevard that so many have come to recognize from the infamous compilation that Posh Boy put out in 1979). I remember tooling around inside this particular store one afternoon years ago, flipping through CDs, when I heard a pair of kids who looked around ten or eleven years old get into a heated debate that went something like this:

Kid #1 (holding the latest Green Day disc, *Dookie*, in kid #2's face): “Dude, *this* is the band that the Ramones sound like!”

Kid #2: “Dude, I'm *tellin'* you, my older brother listens to punk rock. He told me that the Ramones have been around longer and are even older than Green Day!”

Kid #1: “But the Ramones sound just like ‘em! They're just tryin' to be like Green Day!”

And that's the exact moment when the needle in my head dragged across the record. Cringe. That'll be about enough of this. Funny thing is, I honestly wasn't at all angry with Kid #1's confusion. I walked over, hoping to shed some light on the subject for this poor kid's MTV-soaked brain that had been misled somewhere along the way. I was also waiting to see if the two little heathens were about to tell me to “fuck off and mind your own business, old man!” (When you're ten or eleven, a twenty-four-year-old is considered an old man.)

Me: “What's happening, little rockers?”

Kid #2: “He's trying to tell me that Green Day was first and that the Ramones were just a band after ‘em that's trying to rip ‘em off!”

Me, looking at kid #1: “You really believe that?”

Kid #1: “Well, the Ramones sound just like Green Day, don't they?”

Me: “Bring that CD and come over here, real quick.”

The kids were being cool—as they were curious—so we walked over to the “R” section, and I find a copy of *All the Stuff (And More) Volume 1*, which includes the first two Ramones records and some non-LP tracks. Flipping the disc over, I pointed out the copyright date of the original recording of the first Ramones rekkid to Kid #1.

Me, being as polite as I can: “What year does that say right there, homie?”

Kid #1: “1976...whoa! They are really *that* old?”

Me, starting to chuckle: “Yeah, absolutely.”

Kid #2: “See? I *told* you! My brother was right! This man knows what he's talking about!”

“This man.” Heh.

They started to rib on one another, and then asked me one of the most-asked questions the Ramones heard their entire career when it came to them being compared to other bands: “How come the Ramones aren't as big as Green Day?” I drew a deep breath and told them that that's one hell of a good question and that the Ramones have influenced a ginourmous amount of bands over the years, including Green Day, who are very big fans. After a few minutes of talking with ‘em, they thanked (!) me and split outta the store, saying they were going to go to Kid #2's house “to listen to his older brother's records and check out the Ramones some more.” I went back to flipping through discs, smiling, hoping that Kid #2's older brother would soon be taking the two young'uns to their first Ramones gig.

I sometimes wonder every now and then if those two kids I bumped into over eighteen years ago have since carried the torch and have turned some others on to some of the loudest, most fun rock'n'roll that we feature in these newsprint pages you're turning here, or if they went as far as starting bands that countless folks have grown to love. You

never know. That's the beauty of the great number of little jigs'n'jags along the way in life—you really never know where the seemingly insignificant happenings might lead you.

For instance, stop and think about how many bands were formed by pure chance through people moving around all over the country. Would X have ever happened if John and Exene hadn't moved out west from Illinois and eventually crossed paths, going on to record one of the greatest punk rock debut LPs, ever? Would The Controllers have ever got around to pressing their first two seminal 7"s if Johnny Stingray and Kidd Spike stayed in Michigan, opting not to move out to SoCal to become the first band to rent a rehearsal/crash space at the Masque in Hollywood?

The Zeros could have very well been another blistering garage band left by the wayside had they not travelled tirelessly up and down that 5 freeway from Chula Vista to L.A. Simple life decisions. Decisions that have an end result in capturing kick-ass, two- to three-minute aural snapshots of time, pressed right into the grooves of vinyl records. Weird, right? What if the Dead Boys didn't wagon train it out of the Cleveland area to NYC? There's a very good possibility that Sire would have never got ‘em on the roster and released *Young Loud and Snotty*. And The Runaways would have petered out pretty quickly had Joan Jett not bounced around from her native outskirts of Philly, out to Maryland, and eventually ended up here in Los Angeles in her teens (and she's done tremendously well since then to boot).

Artists influencing one another have played a key role time and time again through the decades of rock'n'roll. One of my favorite guitarists/singers from the golden era is, without a doubt, Mr. Chuck Berry. Since his early days signing and recording for Chess Records, Berry went on to influence a shit ton of guitarists, even to this very day. Hell, even The Beatles as well as The Rolling Stones started very



MARCOS SIREF

You never know. That's the beauty of the great number of little jigs'n'jags along the way in life.

early on as bands that did a lion's share of Chuck Berry covers during their sets. Johnny Thunders was a huge disciple of The Berry Faith, reflected in his work with the New York Dolls, as well as The Heartbreakers. All the members of the Ramones were big Dolls fans in their pre-Ramone days, and once they got the ball rolling, Chuck's rhythmic, driving force could be heard in their records. Berry's guitar pimp hand was strong, and its back catalog still commands to this day.

Another heavy influence on a lot of the first wave of punk bands was The Stooges. The pulsating feedback and the hook-laden, beautifully disruptive sonic blaze that Iggy and his band of not-so-merry men carved out screamed in the ears of the hippies that the flowers in their hair were dead. Oddly

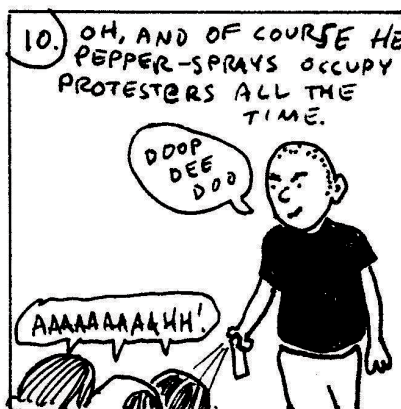
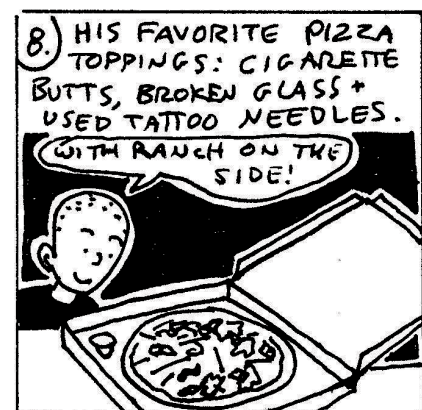
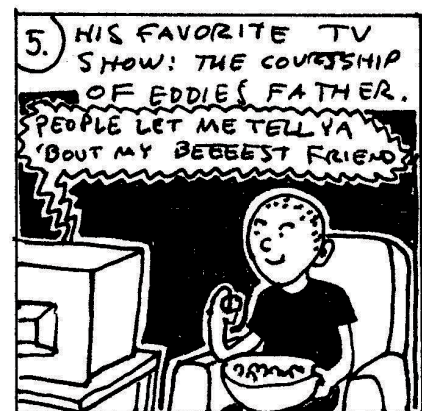
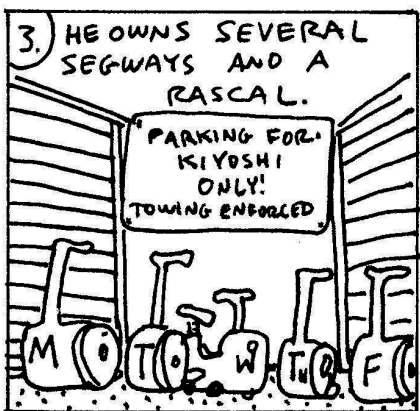
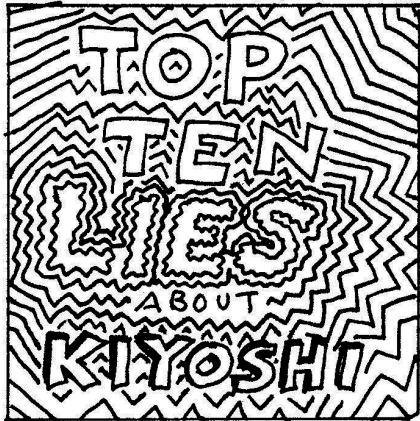
enough, Iggy cites The Doors' frontman Jim Morrison as one of his own earliest influences when he saw them perform back when he was in high school. He said he loved the way Morrison could keep an entire room in the palm of his hand, and that he, too, wanted to exert that power with a band of his own. The Stooges were born, kicking and screaming their way onto stages worldwide.

There's a definite line between "being influenced" and "being a leech." Without starting a shit-flinging contest and/or naming names, there have been a fair number of bands over the years that have glommed onto whatever trending teat they could/can suckle dry for their own personal gain, tossing aside any effort to get up off their dicks and do their

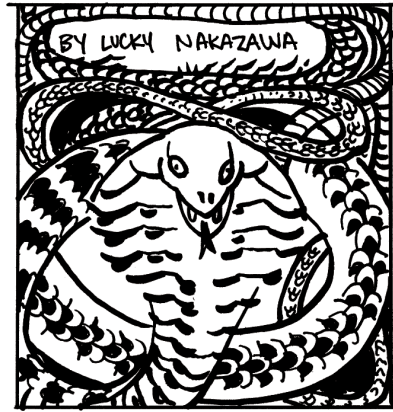
own thing (figuratively speaking—some female bands are guilty of this shit, too). To these bands: I really do hope you enjoy the ill-gotten fruits from the tree your neighbor has so diligently planted, simply for others to enjoy. I hope you fucking choke to death on the seeds of your own deceit. To the bands that continue to be influenced, yet process it so they can create and share their personal hybrid of the rock with the rest of the world: Thank you so very much. Keep on keepin' on.

I'm Against It,
—Designated Dale
designateddale@yahoo.com

MY FIFTIETH(!) COLUMN FOR RAZORCAKE BY BEN SNAKEPIT



BEN SNAKEPIT SUCKS — LADY GAGA

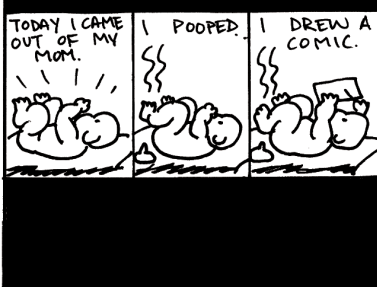


Snakepit is OK but Drunken Master is the greatest zine of all time! — Kanye West

EVERYBODY KNOWS AND LOVES BEN SNAKEPIT'S COMIC DIARY, A THREE PANEL DAILY STRIP DOCUMENTING THE TRUE EVENTS OF HIS LIFE.



BEN HAS BEEN DOING THIS AUTO-BIOGRAPHICAL COMIC SINCE HE WAS BORN.



BEN ALSO PLAYS IN MANY BANDS THE MOST FAMOUS BEING THE EPONYMOUS TITLED 'SNAKEPIT.'

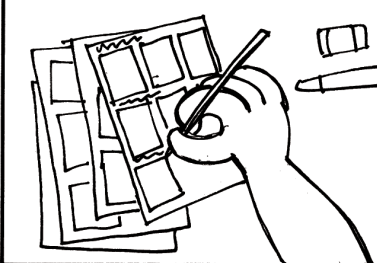


I WANT TO PLAY FOOTBALL (WITH BEN SNAKEPIT'S HEAD) — THE BEATLES

WHEN HE'S NOT TOURING THE WORLD WITH HIS PLATINUM SELLING BAND 'SNAKEPIT' HE CATCHES UP WITH HIS COMIC DIARY DEADLINES.



HIS SCHEDULE IS SO DEMANDING THAT ONCE HE CATCHES UP DRAWING THE DAYS PAST, HE THEN HAS TO WRITE AND DRAW THE DAYS THAT HAVEN'T EVEN HAPPENED YET.



THEY SAY HIS COMICS FROM THE FUTURE ALWAYS COME TRUE.



WHY DON'T YOU GUYS JUST SLEEP TOGETHER AND GET IT OVER WITH? — PET SHOP BOYS

MANY PEOPLE THINK BEN AND I DON'T GET ALONG OR THAT WE ARE RIVALS. NOT TRUE. THIS IS GOING TO BE THE LAST COMIC I DRAW THAT MAKES A FOOL OF HIM.

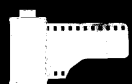


LIFE IS SHORT. I DON'T HAVE TIME TO HATE. I'M GOING TO BURY THE HATCHET.



THIS COMIC IS DEDICATED TO BEN SNAKEPIT. LET'S STOP THE HATING AND START THE HEALING.





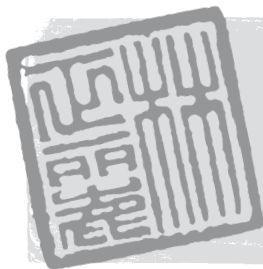
Dan Monick's Photo Page

Together 4Ever, Downtown LA, August 3, 2011

BITE THE CACTUS WITH NO REGRETS

BY ADRIAN CHI





MONSTER OF FUN

AMY ADOYZIE

**"Yeah, I said it.
Evolution of love.
Deal with it."**

Eighteen Things

Now that I am solidly in my early adulthood, having spent an entire year into my thirties, I'm starting to learn quite a few things about the goings-on and such that is life. I humbly present to you *Eighteen Things I Know about Life*.

1. The people who raised you don't know everything.

There are plenty of kids who know this, and I was aware of it to an extent. I knew that my parents would never understand why it was so insanely important that I collect every toy in a Happy Meal series, nor could they fully conceive why it was imperative that they spend fifty dollars on a B.U.M. Equipment sweatshirt so that I wouldn't feel like a complete leper in junior high school. I had an inkling then that there were things my folks could not comprehend, but I still had faith that they knew the fundamental truths of life and would be able to impart them upon me when the time was right.

That never happened. As I grew into my own person, filling into my own shoes and earning the almost indiscernible lines in my face, I came to realize that my parents don't have all the big answers and have made large, looming mistakes. I was in my mid-twenties when this sunk in, when I had an epiphany that my folks live a lot of their life in fear—which wasn't an answer to me.

2. Raising children is a very simple way to find purpose.

Firstly, I must clarify to all parent-folk that I don't mean parenting is simple. The act of parenting is a definitive way to instill purpose in one's life. The mildly wayward need only to procreate, to have a life to whom they are beholden, to stop themselves in the middle of whatever muddled life they are leading, and to suddenly have a devotion. It is instant-purpose-for-life-type shit. It is simple, terrifying, self-centered, and courageous.

3. Entitlement is like [insert your guilty pleasure]. It's good in moderation and somewhat necessary.

I find that I constantly have to remind myself to have expectations and standards to live by. It speaks volumes for those of us who have not had much—be it healthcare, fair pay, or whatever it is that you need. When

we receive an iota of it, we cling to it without thinking about whether we deserve more.

It may be baffling, but to have someone tell you that you need more of a sense of entitlement is a reminder that we need not settle for crumbs when we deserve a few slices. Just be careful after you've gotten your slices. Think about whether you need the whole loaf. (Damn, is that my lack of entitlement speaking again? Maybe I do deserve the whole fucking loaf! [Ugh.])

4. Don't drink orange juice after you've brushed your teeth.

5. Learning the origin of words always makes you feel exponentially more intelligent than you did in the minutes before you learned the origin of the word.

For example, I finally figured out why the cover for your comforter is called a duvet. Duvet is French for down, like a goose down comforter! (And yes, you should always have a duvet cover for your down comforter. And no, it's not bougie to have a down comforter, it's essential in the wintertime. [And yes, I know, you're reading a punk rock fanzine and you're thinking, "Why is this woman writing about com-fucking-forters?" Because punks sleep too and we like to be comfortable, duh!])

6. Sometimes we need to be proactive about the things we care about. Just mere tolerance isn't enough.

This is about speaking up, rather than passively letting things happen or not happen.

7. It's a bit of a mindfuck to think that there are so many different types of jobs out there that have not yet been invented.

When I was a kid, I could not ever have conceived I would grow up to work on the internet (you know, the inner netting of men's swim trunks). It's odd to think that some of the jobs that kids think of when they say, "When I grow up, I wanna be..." could be obsolete by the time they're adults. I guess this is evolution and this is how we know we are growing as a society—by making dream jobs extinct.

8. Dream jobs are overrated.

9. Clutter can be an external environmental manifestation of your life.

Organizing your stuff will help you organize the rest of your life. I learned this when I watched an episode of *Oprah* in the late '90s and it's one of the most useful things I've learned from television. I learned that and how to make small pizzas using English muffins, spaghetti sauce, and strips of American cheese.

10. Credit cards and good credit.

There's this false idea being perpetuated (probably by the credit card companies) that one of the ways someone can create good credit is to always carry a balance. It's total bullshit. Always pay off your balance every month. Cut your credit card in half if you can't do what the previous sentence said. Use a credit card for convenience, not as a way to borrow money for an insane interest rate. You'll thank me later when you've used your excellent credit score to score a loan, to fund your independent film about slow-moving zombies who ruin people's lives by stealing their identities rather than eating their brains. When you receive the Macarthur genius award for your insightful film exploring the undead human condition you funded with your immaculate credit, you'll thank me.

11. Sometimes you just wanna fuck, and then you end up falling in love.

Fucking is totally normal and healthy and everyone should fuck as much or as little as they want so long as all parties involved are consenting, safe, and respectful. Sometimes it's just a physical thing and then you're over it. But if you go into it not expecting much, it's a beautiful thing to feel the evolution of fucking to an expression of love. Yeah, I said it. Evolution of love. Deal with it.

12. It's dangerous to keep your lip balm right next to your glue stick.

13. Wheel of Fortune is the best game show on American television.

This is a game anyone can play. I've seen immigrants on this show, folks who are sometimes asked to repeat the letter they're calling out because Pat can't understand their pronunciation, and I've seen these folks win. The game itself is equal parts luck and skill,



STEVE LARDER

1. The people who raised you don't know everything.

rife with bankruptcy and lost turns and also big surprises like a trip to Fiji or a \$5,000 gift certificate to your neighborhood big-box hardware store.

In the end, even if you don't solve a single puzzle, they still send you home with \$1,000, just for showing up and trying. Hot damn if that ain't the American dream.

14. We're supposed to get our vision checked annually and our eyes dilated every other year.

I got my eyes dilated for the first time just this week and it made me feel like an anime character with big black pupils for the whole night. I felt like a douche in the grocery store, strutting down the cereal aisle with my shades on, looking like I was some kind of produce-section hipster.

Oh, and the dilation thingy is supposed to help the eye doctor check to see if there are any tears or holes in your eyeball, so I guess it's helpful in that way too.

15. Dog shit is karma for your shoes.

Folks who don't pick up their dog's shit will step in someone else's dog's shit. This is the most salient thing I know about karma.

16. Coffee makes everything better.

Even if you don't drink coffee, you interact with folks who do and who are more likely to be pleasant to you because they do not feel like they're about to keel over just from being alive without caffeine.

17. I will always be confounded by people who are registered Republicans who are not working to protect their massive wealth (because they do not have massive wealth).

I guess I'll just never understand working-class folks and/or people of color who vote Republican in this day and age. Like, seriously?

18. Have you heard that über-condescending quote, "Youth is wasted on the young"?

It's true.

—Amy Adoyzie

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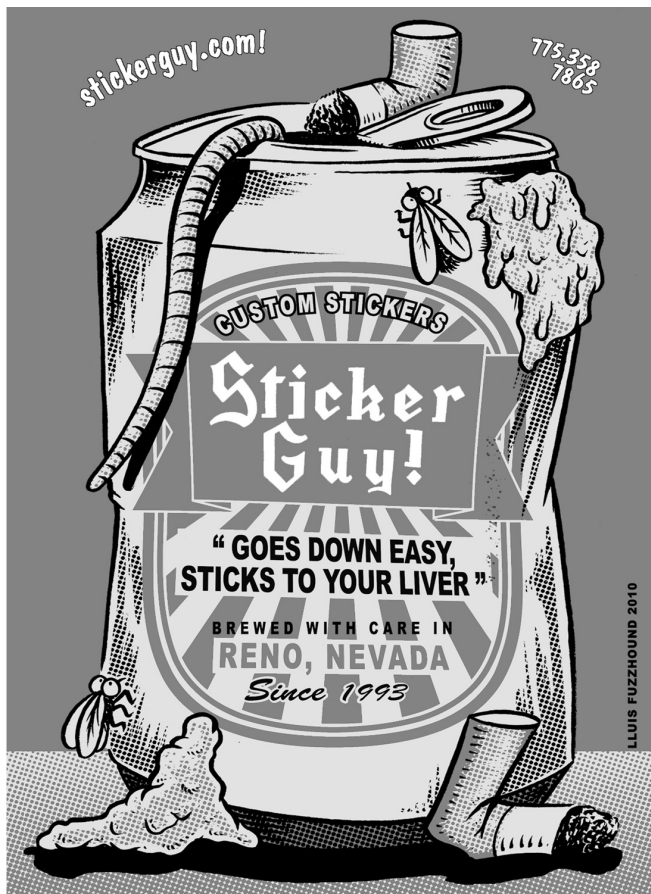
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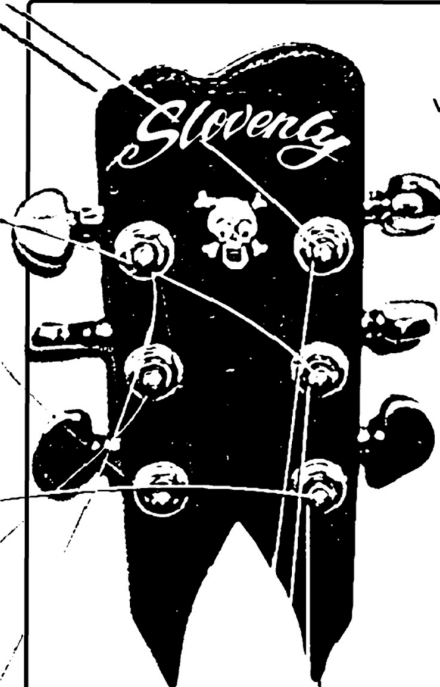
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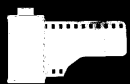
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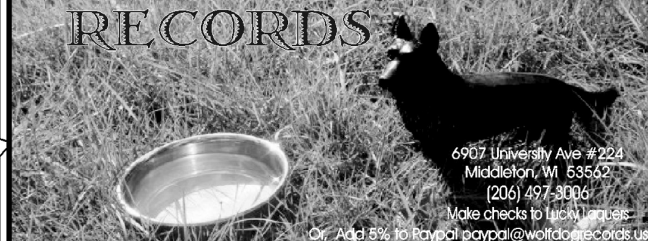
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This LP is newly re-mastered by John Golden Mastering. The songs sound, for maybe the first time, how the band hoped they would have in the first place and contains every song recorded (15 in all, including one not on the Plan-It-Ex CD) along with original zine from Aaron Cometbus expanded to 20 pages and new artwork for the back-cover and labels.

This was a short lived, great band. If you like THIS BIKE IS A PIPE BOMB or bands like PINHEAD GUNPOWDER or ASTID OTO, you will like this. It is a great mix of people and music.



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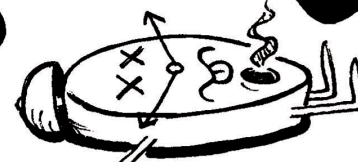
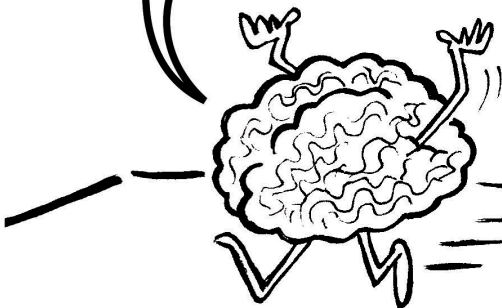
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BEST OF THEM...OR I
GUESS "WASTE" IS A
BETTER WORD...SAME
THING, YES?



I'M OUTTA
HERE!



SOMETIMES I
THINK I MAY HAVE
A PROBLEM...



the slow death



EL DIABLO



I rarely trust first impressions. The things that have truly resonated and stayed with me are those I've given a chance to grow, sink in, and marinate over time. On first listens, I have hated Dillinger Four and dozens of other bands I can't imagine my life without. The first time I heard anything Jesse Thorson was involved in was when I got a Pretty Boy Thorson & The Falling Angels 7" for review. I said there wasn't any magic, but by the time *Ain't It Funny...* came out months later, I knew all the words to "I Know I Said I Love You but I Guess I Don't" because that 7" kept ending up on the turntable. I was pretty hooked for something with no magic.

Since then, The Falling Angels broke up, the Slow Death started, The Falling Angels got back together, and both The Li'l Happiness and The Legendary San Diego Chargers started (we get to that in the interview) with Jesse still at the core. A lot of who is playing depends on who is available, and I wasn't even sure who I'd be sitting down to interview.

Hell, I'm still not even sure I know now. I'll let them tell it....

Interview by Megan Pants
Photos by Rachel Murray, Patrick Houdek,
and El Diablo
Layout by Daryl

The Slow Death (this incarnation) is:
Dave Strait: left-handed guitar, vocals
Jesse Thorson: lead vocals, bass
Johnny C: left-handed guitar, vocals
Mike Erg: drums, vocals

Megan: So why is Dave a dick, whom everyone hates?

[laughter abounds]

Dave: I think I know who that question came from.

Megan: I came up with it on my own!

Dave: I would like to refute that. I am not a dick and everyone loves me.

Johnny: What about Shitty Dave?

Dave: Shitty Dave doesn't exist anymore.

Megan: Who is Shitty Dave?

Dave: It's a conspiracy by my roommates to destroy my public image.

Jesse: To destroy your what?

Dave: My public image.

Jesse: Didn't know you had one.

Dave: Yeah.

Mike: It doesn't matter. Once the anti-Dave machine gets built, Dave's all gone.

Megan: So why do you catch so much flack?

Slow Death came out of Falling Angels when people moved away—but now that they all co-exist, what do you think the difference is?

Jesse: Well, there's not much difference except in my own head.

Johnny: We all live in parallel universes.

Jesse: It's true. Dan from Pretty Boy, moved to Portland.

Megan: Oregon.

Jesse: Oregon, yeah... to live with his high school sweetheart, if you will. They got back together and that didn't work, so he moved back to Minneapolis. Casey moved to Brooklyn to be with a girl. That apparently has stopped working as well, but he's staying in Brooklyn because he bought a bunch of pinball tables.

Megan: Pinball tickets?

Jesse: Tables. He puts them in bars and gets to play pinball for free and make a bunch of money. It's much smarter than being in a touring DIY band.

Megan: Does he have Circus Voltaire?

Jesse: I don't know, but I can ask.

Johnny: What is it?

Megan: The best pinball game *ever*. It's amazing.

Jesse: I'm more into that [mimics hitting a punching bag].

Dave: Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robots?

Jesse: No! It's pinball! It's called

going to do just one reunion show. Then we got so drunk that we couldn't remember it, so we decided to do another reunion show, and that was so much fun that we decided to write a record this fall. So, that's the difference between the Slow Death and Pretty Boy Thorson And The Falling Angels.

As far as Li'l Happiness goes...Johnny's part right on this one. I was going to record something for The Legendary San Diego Chargers and Paddy (Costello, Arrivals, Dillinger Four) has since joined the Chargers, so it was going to be me, Dave, Paddy, and Brad (from Rivethead, Dear Landlord, and Gateway District). Brad was going to write songs, Paddy was going to write songs, and I was going to write songs and then go and record them. It got to be about a week before and nobody had written any songs. We couldn't get out of the studio time. We had to record a Slow Death split 7" with Snakes, so I just took two songs I wasn't using for anything else—and since Paddy was already in the studio, playing bass—we couldn't really call it the Falling Angels because if Mutant (Dave)'s not there, it would make him feel bad. Maybe.

Dave: I would've felt really bad.

Jesse: Dave would've been crestfallen. I just used a big word. Crestfallen. And Annie, according to her, she *is* Li'l Happiness, and that's none of my business, so, yeah, I guess she is.

Nobody wants to be young in the middle of nowhere.

Dave: Because I'm easily the nicest and best person in the band.

Jesse: That's true. I'm the best, but you can take nicest.

Johnny: Dave's a decent human being...

Megan: ...so he must be shat upon!

Dave: It balances everything out.

Megan: Were you originally going to be called Pretty Boy Thorson And The Incredibly Handsome Cowboys?

Jesse: That is true, yes. It was just going to be a band for one show and then for one record. When we figured we were going to do the record, we needed a name, so it was Pretty Boy Thorson And The Incredibly Handsome Cowboys because that seemed really funny. Then Dan Johnson, who plays in Pretty Boy, went to go make a Myspace (page), and it wouldn't fit on Myspace. All that fit on Myspace was Pretty Boy Thorson And The Incredibly Handsome Cow...even funnier! Dan said no. He called me and I—just really quickly—said, "I don't know. The Falling Angels?" And that's that.

Megan: What is the difference between the Falling Angels, Li'l Happiness, and Slow Death, not just in general—because I know

something Tavern.

Megan: No...it's something Pub. Circus Voltaire has this evil Ringmaster. His head has a moving magnet on top. He comes up and ridicules you—and the magnet's on a random release—so it just hucks the ball in a random direction and it's really challenging and fun. It's great.

Jesse: Champion Pub!

Megan: Yes!

Jesse: I love it because you shoot the ball at the guy and if you hit him enough times, you knock him out... anyway...

Johnny: From my perspective, on being on the outside, but in one of the bands, I think it has the most to do with the style of the music being played. Certain songs that Jesse writes fit in for us and some of the other songs fit the other bands.

Jesse: Sort of. I started Slow Death because there was no more Pretty Boy Thorson.

Mike: Well, Slow Death was originally going to be more of a punk band, right?

Jesse: Yeah. I was going to do something different and not do Pretty Boy stuff at all anymore. Then Dan moved back, so we were

Megan: Is she your li'l happiness?

Jesse: Awww.

Dave: Goddamn!

Jesse: Yes, she is.

Megan: Why are Belle & Sebastian *not* your favorite straight edge hardcore band?

Jesse: Well...I'd never heard Belle & Sebastian until Ian Graham (from Cheap Girls) played me their cover of a Belle & Sebastian song while we were playing Yahtzee...not doing anything else....

[Laughter abounds yet again!]

Dave: Are they all straight edge?

Megan: Strained?

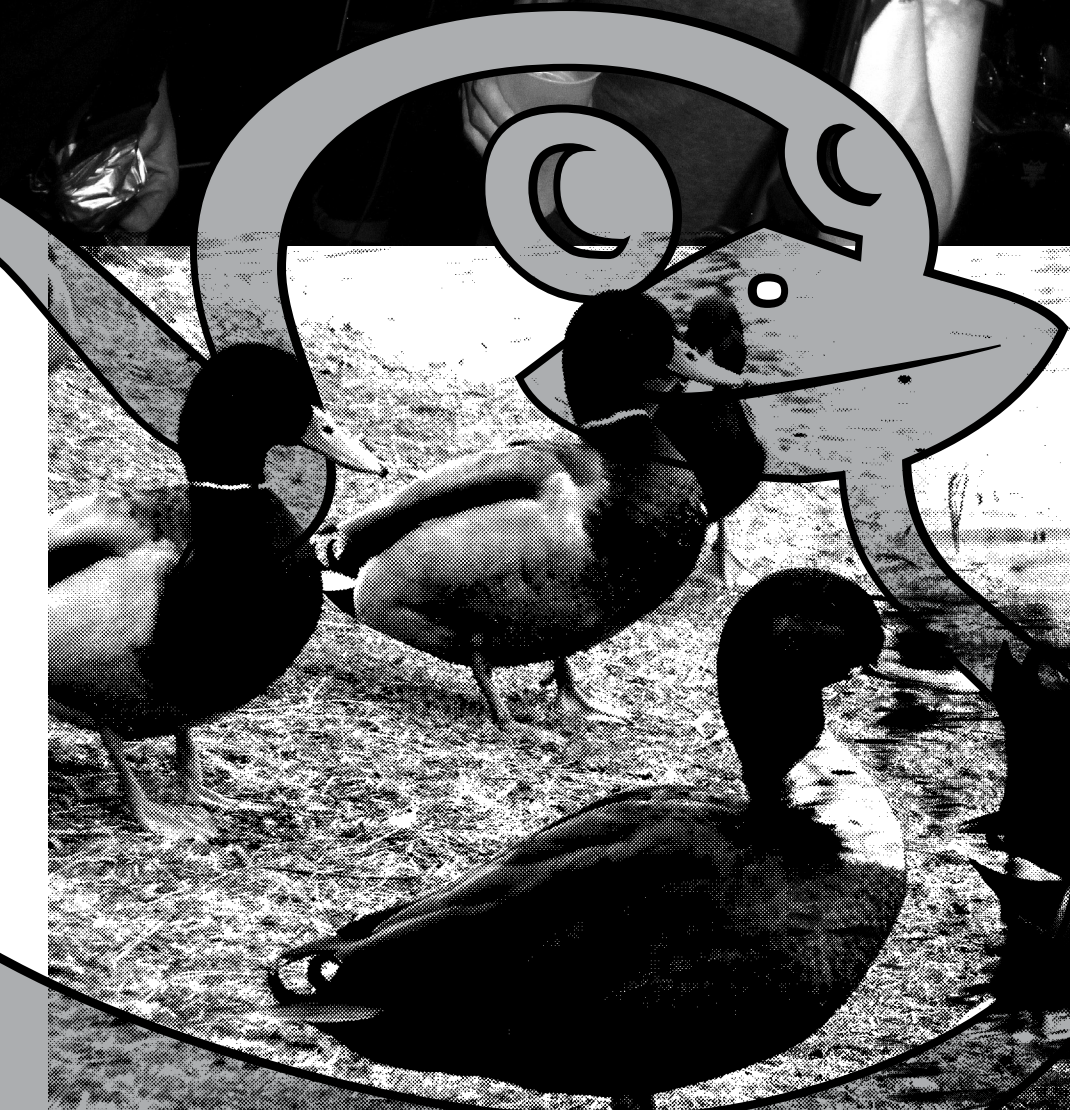
Dave: Straight edge. Aren't there like nine people in that band?

Megan: I don't know. I don't really know about them. I was asking because on the *Turnstile 7"*, it's written in the dead wax, but then scratched out.

Jesse: Oh! I know now! The pressing plant screwed up. They were pressing our 7" and the Tigermilks' record (which are all Belle & Sebastian covers, if I've heard correctly) at the same time. Tigermilks' probably says something dumb about us.



RACHEL MURRAY



Dave: I did not know about that.

Mike: Yeah, I had no idea.

Megan: For the record, it's really hard to read something that's been scratched out of the dead wax. [To Johnny] Why are you Johnny Cellular?

Johnny: Aw, geez. When I was a teenager, I had a job working at a computer store. I had a mohawk and a cell phone, because I needed it for my job, so everyone called me Johnny Cellhawk. Then, when I shaved the mohawk when I was eighteen...

Jesse: Why'd you shave the mohawk?

Johnny: Because I couldn't make the points combine through my bald spot...so when I voluntarily shaved the mohawk, everyone just started calling me Johnny Cellular and Johnny just stuck from there.

Megan: Whose sister made out with someone in Bon Jovi?

Mike: Me. Did you ask me this in The Ergs! interview?

Megan: I did not. I went back and reread it to make sure.

Mike: That's what I remember hearing. The memories are gone.

Jesse: Isn't your brother named Cheese Man?

to anymore. The first time we went on tour, it was a total disaster. The guy who originally played bass got a job rolling burritos at Burrito Loco, the worst burrito shop in Minnesota.

Megan: And that's saying a lot.

Jesse: He had a girlfriend at the time and she wanted him to have a job real bad, so he quit the day before we went on tour, so I had to learn all the bass parts. I don't know what that has to do with anything or why I started with that, but we went on tour: just me, Dan, Casey, and Casey's dog. We went to Louisville, where our show was going to be, and the girl who set it up seemed all professional when we talked to her. We went to the bar where our show was supposed to be and the guys all, "Well no, we ain't havin' no shows down here." Apparently, she'd had this full stack metal band play this bar, which was roughly the size of this room [we're sitting in a room the size of a large restaurant booth]. We went over to a different bar and she made all these flyers that still had the wrong bar on it and then she made us—we'd already made new flyers ourselves and hung them up in the town—and she made us go outside with these handbills that had the wrong place on them. Then we played and she didn't pay us anything.

Johnny: I should look into that. Nah, it's a Cuban name and there's a lot of Cubans in Florida, so.... It's Cuban and Filipino. Not sure how that happened.

Jesse: Well, when a man and a woman love each other, they want to express that love physically.

Megan: Jesse, were you ever vegan for a month, and did you make a zine during that time?

Jesse: I was vegan for two years. I was not a very good vegan. I didn't cheat on being a vegan; I just would eat shit that's not good for you. I'd look and find all the bone char and all that ridiculous nonsense too, but I actually got fatter. I was a terrible vegan... and no, I've never made a zine in my life.

Johnny: You liar!

Dave: I've got some copies at home.

Jesse: It was another guy named Jesse Thorson.

Megan: There's a lot of guys named Jesse Thorson.

Jesse: Yeah there are. There's a race car driver, there's a guy who plays... I don't know... this is from Googling my own name.

Megan: There's a kid who makes videos of him and his friend acting out video games.

Mike: I want to be that guy.

Jesse: There's another guy who plays

I'm totally lazy and I think that I enunciate pretty well.

I was tongue-tied until I was thirteen.

Mike: My step-brother.

Jesse: That is also interesting.

Mike: When I was a young six year-old, my dad recorded the demos for *Slippery when Wet*.

Megan: You are my eight year-old hero.

Mike: That was actually the first time I saw cocaine.

Jesse: Tell me about it because I've never seen cocaine. I don't do drugs.

Dave: What's it look like?

Mike: I didn't understand why there was white powder all over all of the music stands. Apparently...at my dad's urging, apparently?... they kissed each other. This was a long time ago, though.

Megan: Whoah. How much older than you was she?

Mike: She was probably sixteen or seventeen.

Jesse: That's better. Better than eleven.

Mike: Hopefully this doesn't ever get printed anywhere.

Dave: I can't imagine why you would think it might.

Megan: Who is Red Vinyl Productions and why can they eat a bag of shit?

Jesse: That's so long ago! They don't have

She was just weird and awful. I'm sure she's a really nice lady. It was just the worst thing that had happened to us at that point.

Dave: Little did we know... it was not really that bad of a gig.

Megan: Dave, are you from Cambridge?

Dave: Yeah, Cambridge, Minnesota.

Megan: Do you know what its claim to fame is?

Mike: Dave Strait?

Dave: It's probably the dirtiest spot in the state with our sewage treatment plant.

Megan: Not even close.

Dave: A lot of Swedes moved there to grow potatoes in sand.

Megan: It has the highest percent of Swedish-Americans in America. I can't believe you got that!

Jesse: That's why it's the worst!

Dave: I never knew that growing up. I just read that a few months ago.

Megan: Johnny, are you related to a Bertha Tamayo?

Johnny: No, why?

Megan: She's also from Florida and won the lottery in '89.

drums... I read a lot about how he proposed to his wife on the internet. There's so many stories. He kind of seems like a douchebag.

Dave: You're the only Mikey Erg, right?

Mike: Let's hope.

Megan: So what was the zine about?

Jesse: Nothing.

Megan: Your feelings?

Jesse: Yeah, maybe my feelings.

Mike: You broke him!

Jesse: We've all done dumb shit. I've done way dumber shit than that zine.

Megan: Such as?

Jesse: I even had a goofy Spock haircut at times. There's a lot of shit. It was a bad period.

Mike: Be you own Jesse!

Jesse: Yeah, be my own Jesse. You can ask Brad the next time you interview whatever band he's in next. Please, don't ask Brad.

Megan: Was the zine just a one-off or were there multiple issues? What was it called?

Jesse: I'm... not going... to tell... you?

Dave: I actually don't even know what it was called.

Jesse: I plead the fifth!



EL DIABLO

Johnny: We had a shotgunning beer competition that night.

Megan: Did anyone win?

Johnny: No one ever wins those.





PATRICK HOEDEK

Megan: Was the *Turnstile 7"* the first time you ever printed lyrics?

Jesse: Yes.

Megan: Why did you choose not to, and then why did you change from that?

Jesse: Two reasons: I'm totally lazy and I think that I enunciate pretty well. I was tongue-tied until I was thirteen. I could only stick my tongue out about a quarter of an inch, so my mom always made sure that when I talked I enunciated all of my words correctly. I figure I yell so loud that you can hear what I'm saying on the record. It's probably not all that important, but Dave, here, said we should and we did. I still think it's a dumb idea.

Mike: They're in the demo too.

Megan: What is the worst time that you've ever been drawn on with markers? This is mostly directed at Dave.

Dave: Well, we'd had quite the night, the night before. Was that the night we got party mohawks?

Jesse: Everyone got mohawks! They got *leeetle tiiny* ones [indicating Dave and Johnny].

Dave: We took an *Out Come the Wolves* picture, but you couldn't really tell what it was supposed to be.

Jesse: Then Dave passed out and we drew all kinds of stuff all over him: dick across his hand....

Dave: Swastika on my elbow?

Jesse: It was on the back of your arm.

Dave: No one said anything about it.

Jesse: Well, no one remembered. If you're drunk enough to be drawing weird and offensive shit on your friend, and you're in your thirties, you're probably too drunk to remember that you did that sort of thing.

Johnny: We had a shotgunning beer competition that night.

Megan: Did anyone win?

Johnny: No one ever wins those.

Mike: Everybody won!

Johnny: ...or everybody wins.

Dave: I always lose and have to shotgun another one. So, we went shopping at a supermarket that mainly specialized in lots of ethnic food.

Johnny: It was a Hispanic supermarket.

Dave: They had a lot of stuff, so I'm walking around looking at stuff...with a swastika on my arm.

Jesse: And a freshly shaven mohawk.

Dave: And I don't think anyone remembered that it was there.

Jesse: No, Casey saw it when you got back.

Dave: I got back and yawned. He was driving, saw it... "Oh shit!"

Megan: How many vans have you had?

Jesse: Aw, geez. Me, personally, I've had four in my entire life. The bands have gone through four.

Megan: Did you ever tour in a Cadillac?

Jesse: We toured in my Cadillac twice: once as the Legendary San Diego Chargers and once as Pretty Boy on the way down to Fest.

Dave: We toured in my car, but that was just him (Jesse) playing and I drove, so I didn't have any of my shit.

Jesse: That was easily the best tour. If I could've had a trained monkey instead of Dave, it would have been *the best* tour.

Dave: We tried renting a car.

Jesse: We did that twice: a minivan.

Dave: And that fucking Jeep.

Jesse: Oh yeah, we did rent a Jeep to drive out to Ian's party.

Johnny: In the dead of winter. It had no insulation anywhere. There were icicles forming on the roof.

Jesse: I didn't mind. I was sitting up front. Plus, I'm of hearty Midwestern stock.

Megan: You lived at the Alamo House [a now-defunct punk house in Minneapolis], right?

Jesse: Me and Dave.

Megan: What is the worst thing about living in a punk house?

Jesse: Living in a punk house.

Dave: The bathroom.

Jesse: I didn't think it was that bad.

Dave: No, the next day.

Jesse: Yeah, I would say shitty people destroying your house.



EL DIABLO

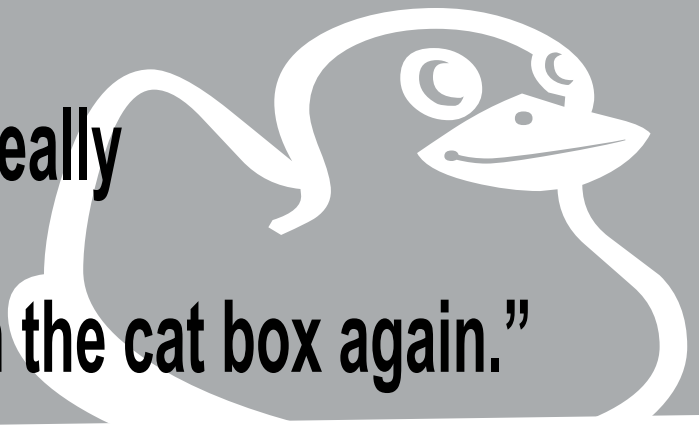


RACHEL MURRAY



Jesse: Sometimes, it didn't really matter what I did.

"Oh, hey, Jesse's peeing in the cat box again."



Dave: People ruining your shit and stealing your food.

Jesse: We also used to get *Playboy* delivered to the house.

Megan: Wasn't that from a previous tenant?

Jesse: Yeah, but it got sent there all the time. Someone was so upset that there was a basketful of *Razorcakes*, *Playboys*, and *Maxims*.

Dave: The reading library.

Jesse: They got real mad at boobs. They ripped all the magazines up, which would have been fine, but they shoved them into the toilet in the top tank and in the bowl. Keep in mind, these were people who are at our house to see a show, not people that we kidnapped and forced to sit in our bathroom and look at what we had to read. They took somebody's shaving cream and wrote "sex slave" on the wall. I'm not entirely sure what they were going for with that. I have a general idea, but don't necessarily agree. They just fucked up the bathroom to prove a point.

Megan: The stories I'd heard was that it happened multiple times. Someone would clean it up, then it would happen again.

Jesse: Yeah. You don't *have* to go see shitty bands at our house at all. You can totally rip up *Playboys* and throw them away; just don't shove them in the toilet.

Dave: They weren't ours. They (the issues of *Playboy*) just kept showing up. I guess we could have looked into it and cancelled it.

Jesse: And the jokes are terrible! If you read them to a roomful of people, they'll throw shit at you.

Megan: It's a wordy magazine. It's not a *Hustler*.

Dave: "20 Questions"

Megan: Hell, Vonnegut wrote for them.

Mike: "The *Playboy* Interview" was always good.

Megan: So, then what was the best thing about living in a punk house?

Dave: Making all those connections and meeting all those people really helped when we first started the band and went on tour.

Jesse: I would say the best thing about living in a punk house was that I was really miserable. I wanted to kill myself, so I was drinking, but nobody minded because everybody else was just as drunk. They were just more happy than I was. Sometimes. It didn't really matter what I did. "Oh, hey, Jesse's peeing in the cat box again."

Dave: It feels like a pretty productive way to spend a portion of your life. Now it's a refinished, nice house.

Mike: It's unrecognizable.

Jesse: They put windows in and made bedrooms downstairs, where all the black mold used to be. Probably swept most of the cat shit out of there.

Megan: Most?

Jesse: Yeah. You'll never get all of it. Not in a million years. It's too nice for us to live in anymore, but when me and Dave reach retirement age, we're going to move back in.

Dave: We're going to start a punk house again.

Megan: Punk retirement? So thirty? Thirty-five?

Jesse: No, sixty-five. When we hit thirty-five, we're going to break up the band and never talk to each other again for thirty years. I don't see any other way, really. I wish I did.

Megan: Did you grow up closer to Canada than you did to Minneapolis?

Jesse: It was probably about the same. I lived in a town called Knife River, which was not a town, but a river with about thirty-five houses, a smoked fish house, and a general store. And a marina! It was such a small town that we moved into the house that we remodeled and lived in the whole time we were there in 1984. When I graduated from high school in 1994, we were still referred to as "the new people." Very rural. It was terrible, but now I'd really like to live there.

Megan: That's what I'm going through. I grew up about thirty miles from the closest store, and now I love going back there and wonder why I don't live there now. At the time, though, it was terrible.

Jesse: Nobody wants to be young in the middle of nowhere. "Man, I want to live in the city in some shitty house with all my dumb friends!" A few years of that and you're like, "Fuck! I wished I lived in the country, alone."

Megan: How did you get to Minneapolis?

Jesse: My folks got divorced when I was one...two? I should know that, shouldn't I?

Dave: Yeah.

Jesse: My dad has always lived in the same house since 1976, on the north side of Minneapolis in the ghetto, so once every couple of months I'd be down there. But mostly, I took a Greyhound bus.

Megan: Mike, what's the biggest fight you ever got into about The Beatles?

Mike: I got into a fight—well a mild argument until my dad kind of made it escalate—with the drummer, Bernard "Pretty" Purdie, who played on *every* hit single of the '50s and '60s, basically. He would bring signs to the recording session: "You wanted the best?

You got the best! Bernard 'Pretty' Purdie." And set them up in front of the drums. Total fucking whacko. My dad hired him to play a session at the studio.

He proceeds to—as I walked in—"This is my son, Mike. He doesn't believe you played on The Beatles records." There's this story that he, Purdie, always said that Ringo was such a terrible drummer that Capitol hired him to play over The Beatles' records because Ringo sucked so badly that they needed—I grew up listening to The Beatles. I've read almost every book about The Beatles that you could read, and never once read anything mentioning him, and then realized that if Capitol paid him, then that would mean that the British versions would have different drums from the American ones. There was a whole bunch of stuff that didn't make sense about that. So, he was like, "Oh, you don't believe that?" "No. It's not true." "Well they don't write about it in the books." "Yeah, but it doesn't make logical sense that you could have. Those records were done on one track. You can't take the drums out and overdub them. It wasn't possible." He just kind of got into an argument with me. What am I going to do? I'm not going to tell you that you didn't play on all of these records. I just don't believe you.

Dave: How old were you?

Mike: This was not long ago. I was twenty-one or something. A couple of years later I read that he played over the songs they recorded in Germany before they were The Beatles, when they were backing Tony Sheridan, so he was covering over Pete Best's drums. But, I didn't find that out until later. I didn't get to use that as a point. I was like, "Thanks, Dad. I really didn't need to offend one of the best drummers of all time."

Dave: You should start bringing one of those signs with you everywhere.

Mike: "You wanted the best? You hired the best."

Megan: But who is the best?

Mike: Me!

Jesse: I'm pretty good.

Megan: It's Gene Krupa. That's the answer

Mike: "That's like telling Gene Krupa not to go boom boom ba ba ba."

Jesse: "Lousy beatniks."

Megan: You seem to focus on a lot of things that are broken, so...what's the last thing you fixed?

Jesse: The sink at me and Annie's house *and* before I left, I nailed a nail back into the floor.

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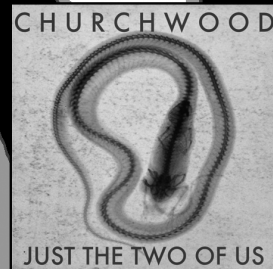
Puro Peto Punk Rock de San Anto.

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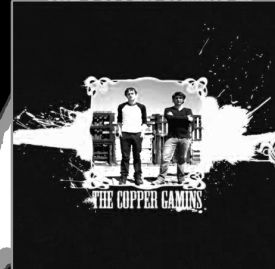
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Dave: Mike fixed the cymbal stand. We tried to fix the van, but that didn't work out.

Jesse: No! The last thing we fixed... we had a shorted out sparkplug wire. We totally fixed it! It was all burnt out and weird. The van didn't blow up or nuthin'. We fixed the wire.

Dave: I put a tape gun back together at my shitty warehouse job.

Megan: You work at a music warehouse, right?

Dave: I have, literally, the least important job.

Megan: Do they do live shows there?

Dave: Not anymore. The stores used to do shows. The warehouse never had shows.

Jesse: They won't let him be at the store.

Dave: No more customer service for me. It was never punk shows, either.

Megan: I read the rules to play there.

Dave: They also don't update the website. It also says we have locations around the Twin Cities that we don't.

Megan: It was saying if people were disrupted by the music, then they would turn you off. It was, pretty much, that you were there to be background music.

Dave: I wanted Pretty Boy Thorson to play there, but the rules are: you can't be loud, you can't swear, and you can't be disruptive.

Jesse: And that's one, two, and three.

Megan: Have you started writing songs about ducks?

Jesse: Songs about ducks?

Megan: When Kat (Naden, from Strait A's, God Damn Doo Wop Band) interviewed you, she'd asked you if you got to be happy or content, particularly in regards to having a lady in your life—which you do now—if you'd be able to write sad bastard music. You said you thought you might write about ducks.

Jesse: Well, no songs about ducks, but it is kind of hard. I do have a duck tattoo, but that was before that. So, no songs about ducks, but the next Slow Death record... there's not going to be any songs about girls on it. At all. And, possibly no songs about drinking.

Mike: I don't know if I want to be in this band any more.

Jesse: I don't know what the hell the songs are going to be about.

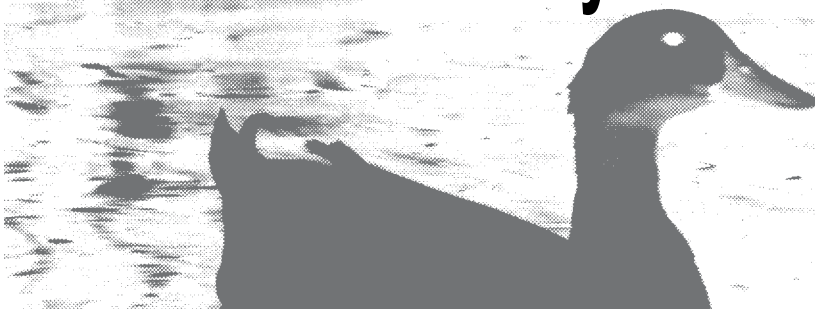
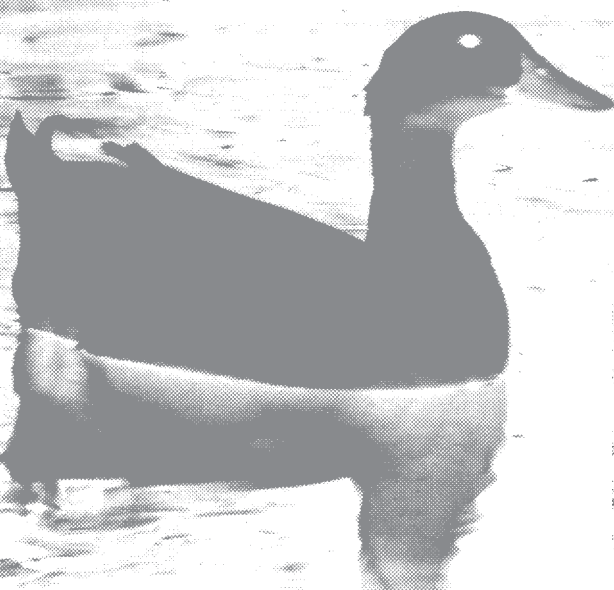
Johnny: Ducks!



PATRICK HOUDEK

Jesse: I've never made
a zine in my life.

Johnny: You liar!



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Jesse: It is harder. It's really easy to write songs about being miserable when you're miserable.

Johnny: As long as I'm around, Jesse'll always be miserable.

Jesse: That's true. He is the worst.

Megan: Do you have a Rambo tattoo?

Jesse: I do have a Rambo tattoo. I was very intoxicated in San Diego and J Wang from Dan Padilla really wanted an Alamo House tattoo. I informed him that only people who lived at the Alamo House had Alamo House tattoos. He said, "Well, I *practically* lived there." He was there for a day and a half. But he insisted and I gave in and gave him an Alamo House tattoo. After it, he was all, "Jesse, I'm gonna give you a Rambo tattoo." "Dude, I don't really like Rambo." "C'mon, it'll be cool." So J Wang... he'd never done a tattoo before and he was *wasted*. He was just pounding at my back with this horribly dull needle we found in his wife's sewing kit. He had to do it like seven times, just beating my back with this needle. It's all spread out and wide and super ugly, but I really like it.

Megan: Does it just say "Rambo"?

Jesse: It's a couple of sights. You can see it on the Dan Padilla split. It's a couple of gun sights and says "Rambo."

Dave: This seems like a pretty cool bar [it does not], just take your shirt off.

Jesse: I get in trouble a lot for taking my shirt off, so I'm not going to do that.

Mike: Oh!

Megan: Have you actually gotten into trouble for that?

Jesse: There's a lot of bars that don't want you to do that. There's a lot of churches that don't want you to do that. People are uncool everywhere.

Megan: What do you think of the newer Muppet movies?

Jesse: Fucking terrible!

Megan: Why?

Johnny: I actually yelled at a guy the other day because he said he liked *Muppet Treasure Island*.

Jesse: Yeah, Johnny took it way too far. "I can't believe it!" Dude, people are retarded. There's people out there buying

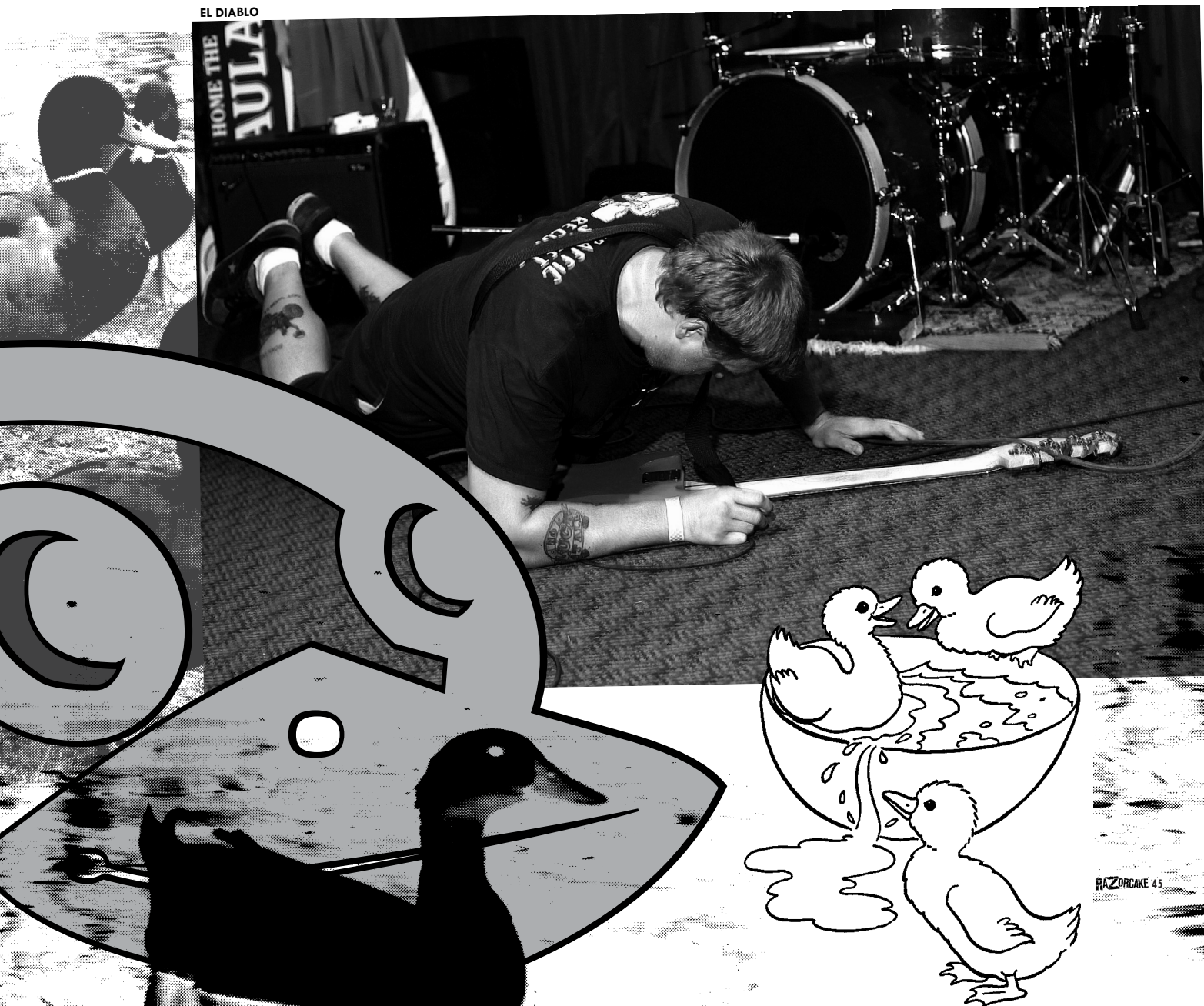
Banner Pilot records. They're super good: the greatest band of our generation, hands-down. The new Muppet movies suck. Everything past *Muppets Take Manhattan* or *The Great Muppet Caper* or the original one just... I don't want to watch a Muppets version of *A Christmas Carol*. I want to watch a story written by Jim Henson (note: Henson did not actually write the first three movies, either). I think the new one could be good. I had hopes for *Muppets in Space*; fucking train wreck of a movie. "Hey! Let's make Gonzo the lead character." Gonzo's the worst!

Johnny: Gonzo's my favorite!

Jesse: Of course it is because you're an idiot. Fozzie Bear is clearly the best of them and that's who most movies should be about. Of course you identify with Gonzo! Everyone hates him... just like you.



EL DIABLO



HAZORCAKE 45

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As one of the oldest Razorcake writers (I'm forty-eight but not for much longer), I recognize my biases. When I'm seeking out new bands, I gravitate toward the ones that remind me of the earlier style of punk rock I fell in love with in the early '80s. The first thing I noticed about White Lung was—instead of constant power chord guitar—their guitarist played a lot of single note riffs. That style leaves a lot more open space for the drums, bass, and singer to be more distinct. There were quite a few bands that sounded this way in the late '70s and early '80s when punk rock was so new that people hadn't started inventing punk subgenres. If White Lung didn't have good songs and if the singer wasn't convincing, then they would just be resurrecting an old sound and nothing more. Fortunately, they are as good—if not better—than any band from the late '70s/early '80s that mined this same style. Their music gives off a familiar vibe but it never sounds dated and it completely sucks me in.

After obsessing over their second 7", I quickly tracked down their first one, *Local Garbage*. I played this one just as much. So many bands nowadays seem to come and go so quickly, I was afraid they would break up and we'd never hear any more out of them. They are from Vancouver, so my chances of ever seeing them live looked pretty slim. When I found out they lost their signature guitar player, Natasha, I remember thinking, "What a loss that is" and wondering what they would sound like with someone different. In 2010, I got to hear the new guitar player Kenny. He takes that single-note, post punk style and somehow revs it up. He brings it to a whole other level that I can't even comprehend. He's White Lung's rocket launcher.

Last year also saw the release of the first White Lung LP, *It's the Evil* on Deranged Records. In June 2011, they played my town, Charlotte, NC. I managed to gather them around my tape recorder on the street in front of the house they were playing that night. The show was fantastic. If you haven't checked out the tour video White Lung posted on YouTube with their Vancouver tour buddies Nu Sensae, seek it out. The wild abandon and fun spirit on display in that video are key elements in a band's chemistry that can take a punk rock band up a few notches. It can mean the difference between a band you like and one you love.

Interview by Chris Peigler

Photos by Ivy Lovell • ivylovell.com

Layout by Lauren Measure



LUNG



Chris: Tell me how White Lung got together.

Mish: It started in 2006 with the three of us. Kenny wasn't in the band yet. We had another girl playing guitar. I met Anne Marie and we wanted to start a band together. I already knew Grady, so we did. And then a year or two years ago, our guitar player Natasha left. Kenny came and played with us and now he's in the band.

Chris: What year did Kenny join?

Mish: End of 2009. I've said this before: I don't consider our band being real until he joined because we didn't fucking do anything. We made one 7" and didn't go anywhere. It wasn't like a real thing until he joined.

Chris: I'm impressed because last summer you did a big tour, right?

Mish: In the summer we did two separate ones.

Chris: And you didn't break up. That's

great! A lot of bands do a big tour and then come back home and hate each other.

Kenny: There's still some left of this tour, so we'll see what happens.

Mish: It's like being married to three people.

Chris: There's a video on YouTube called "White Lung Fight."

Mish: I was really drunk and I was trying to get them to do a photo which ended up being the ugliest photo in the world. This guy we know (Dave) had this thing set up and Anne Marie didn't want to do it and I was just screaming at them. It's a really embarrassing video.

Chris: I was reading something about your practice space that you used to have—or may still have—that it isn't very healthy.

Grady: A rat ran out once when we were playing a song and died on the floor.

Mish: We were playing the song "Rat," too. It was funny. It's this space on Abbott Street in Vancouver and it's been around for a really long time and is very cheap. It's got a good turnover of bands, but there's lots of black mold and it's just gross. But what space isn't gross? That's kind of the nature of it, I think, because I'm not going to pay six hundred dollars a month for a practice space. You may as well live there then.

Chris: What do you do when you're not playing in White Lung?

Kenny: What do I do with my time? That's kind of a mystery.

Chris: You don't have to answer.

Kenny: Take classes. Nothing too exciting. I don't have a double life outside of this one.

Mish: We all have day jobs... Well, not all

It's just nice to have a space where it's completely acceptable to act like a maniac, to be a maniac, and to be angry and people actually applaud it instead of telling you to shut up.



of us! One of us has been cruising on the EI train for about a year.

Chris: What is EI?

Mish: That's unemployment. What do you call it in the states?

Kenny: Welfare.

Anne Marie: It's not welfare.

Mish: We don't have that in Canada. I do freelance writing. I work for a few magazines and I also work shitty jobs like serving and doing coffee shop crap. I hate it. Touring is great but I don't think people realize what an investment it is. It's a lot of work. That's why it's nice when things go your way. When they don't go your way you go, "What the fuck am I doing with my life? I wish I was married and had babies and was normal."

Chris: I was looking over your lyric sheets to see if those would generate any ideas for questions and you don't have that many lyric sheets. There's not one on your album and there's no lyric sheet on the *Amy Whiteout* single.

Mish: We did an interview in Toronto and Nardwuar interviewed us and asked the same question. I don't really like to write the lyrics out, but if you ask me I'll tell you what the song's about.

Chris: The point I was trying to make is in the song "Therapy" where you sing "We'll marry into total shit." I love that line and it made me think of it when you mentioned the idea of being married and having kids.

Mish: I wrote that song for my friend Chad. He's one of my best buddies. I just imagine us both marrying really crappy people and regretting it, but I don't know. I like that line, too. Thanks!

Chris: In one of the interviews I read with you there was a quote where you said that if you didn't do this band, you would spaz out even more than normal.

Mish: Not me. I've got a lot of unnecessary aggression that's not for any reason, I guess.

Chris: Isn't that one of the requirements for being a singer in a punk rock band?

Mish: Yeah, I know. I don't know. When did I say that? It is true, though. It's just nice to have a space where it's completely acceptable to act like a maniac, to be a maniac, and to be angry and people actually applaud it instead of telling you to shut up or not act that way, because everyone gets angry and you have to hold it in and that sucks. It's stupid. So, rather than hurt other people I'd rather just scream at a crowd and throw myself around.

Chris: ...and sell merch afterwards?

Mish: Exactly.

Chris: It's a win-win.

Mish: Make a little dime here and there.

Chris: What do your families think of White Lung?

Anne Marie: My parents haven't heard us.

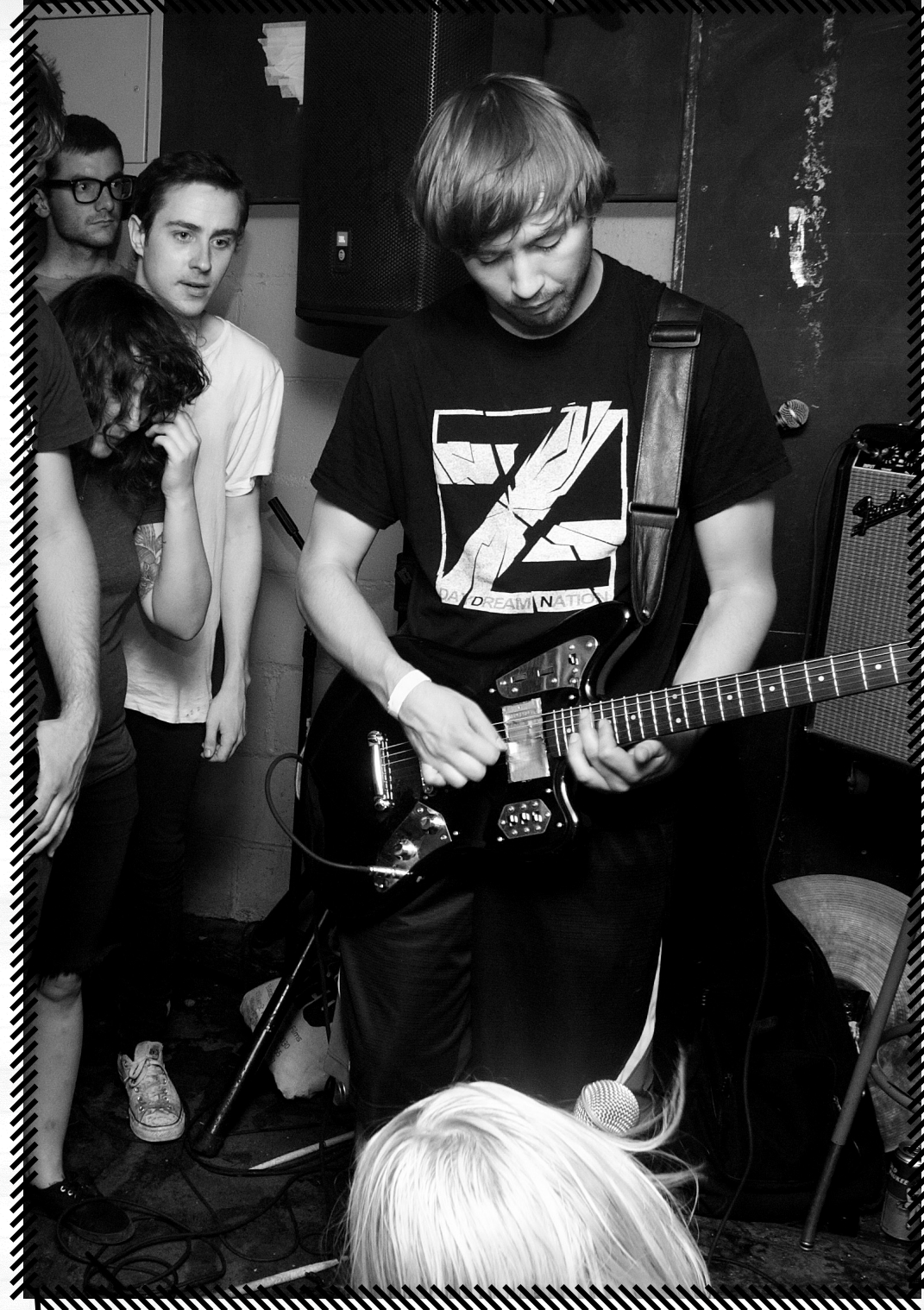
Grady: My dad likes it.

Anne Marie: My sister really likes it. They're very supportive, though.

Mish: Kenny, what do your parents think?

Anne Marie: Have they heard us?

Grady: They think we're horrible influences.



Kenny: They probably think it's some unnecessary distraction to me doing math or something.

Grady: Don't they listen to it?

Kenny: I don't know. They'd probably be even more shocked and appalled if they saw what it was really like... sleeping in a garbage can.

Chris: Do you get questions like, "When are you going to make some money?"

Mish: My dad asks me that every single day.

Anne Marie: When I say, "We got a hundred dollars," they ask "Each?"

Mish: My mom came to one of our shows. She got mad at me for drinking a beer on

stage. She said, "You should have been drinking water." My dad likes to come. He's come to two of our shows. He gets really drunk and has a fun time. He's funny. All of our families are relatively supportive. If they weren't, we wouldn't be doing this. But we're grown adults so it's not like they can tell us what to do.

Chris: Did I read that Kenny's a little younger than the rest of the band?

Mish: Kenny's twenty two. I'm twenty five. Anne Marie and Grady are thirty and thirty one.

Chris: What's next on White Lung's agenda?

Mish: We have to finish this tour and make

it out alive. Then when we get home, we won't talk to each other for a month or so. Well, no, that's not true. We have to go to Montana for a festival in August. We have to write a new album so that's going to be our plan over the winter.

Kenny: That's if we get back to Vancouver. I'm still not convinced that I won't die or go to jail.

Mish: We have to write a new album, which is top priority and perfect to do in the winter because there's really nothing else to do in Vancouver. It will be miserable.

Kenny: None of us are any good at cross-country skiing or snowboarding.

Mish: After that, some small tours and maybe go on a longer tour in the spring. Who knows?

Chris: What's the scene in Vancouver like, music-wise?

Mish: There are lots of good bands. I feel like a little while ago it was a little better because a lot of bands have dispersed or broken up. There's always good music coming out of Vancouver. I feel that in the last five years it's been really amazing. They're all putting out albums, too. It's not just people playing. Everyone's documenting their work, which is really good.

Chris: I read an interview with White Lung where you were asked about the worst place you had played on your last tour and the answer you gave was South Carolina.

**I'm still not convinced that
I won't die or go to jail.**

Mish: That wasn't the last tour. South Carolina was the worst because we showed up and there was no one there. We were the only girls who were there, the three of us.

Anne Marie: The other people were the bands who were there and there were six touring bands.

Grady: And they were all in their underwear!
Mish: They were all in their underwear and we found out that the reason that there was no one there is that a girl had been raped there a couple of years ago so people were hesitant to go to this venue.

Grady: The women's bathroom was actually blocked off.

Mish: It was in a little churchy, kind of community place. We were touring with Pollution and we just ditched out on the show because it was weird.

Grady: The kid who put it on was really cool.
Mish: I don't like playing in Seattle. I really like all our friends there, but I always feel like it's not fun. Actually, our last show in Seattle on this tour was pretty good.

Mish: But South Carolina was the worst.

Chris: I've had some rough shows in South Carolina.

Mish: It just seems like a weird place, but it seems like that a lot in places in the South where we go and we think, "Are there actually going to be people here who want to see us?" We had fun in New Orleans and we always have fun in Florida. I guess we're technically still in the South now. Are we?

Grady: Where does the South end?

Kenny: Washington DC.

Mish: I never want to say anything too bad about a place because it will come back and bite me in the ass, especially if it's in print, right? (intones promoter voice) "Oh, you don't like playing here? Well, we'll never fucking set up a show for you again."

Chris: At Razorcake we send you a transcript before we publish.

Mish: Really? That's so against the rules of journalism. I never do that when I'm writing. People ask if they can see it and I say no because they're only going to change everything and all of the work I did is gone. We did this article for Beat Route and he





Daniel has all of these amazing characters that he does and he was doing them last night. It's good for morale.

sent us the entire article as though we were to edit it and I thought, "Do you want us to write the perfect article about ourselves?"

Kenny: I wish we had asked to take the exclamation marks out.

Mish: I hate exclamation points. They make you sound like you're cheerleading when you're talking. It's so weird. There's no point to them. Exclamation points are for Facebook and Twitter, not for real print.

Chris: I like to get bands to tell me stories about things that happen on tour.

Grady: [to the rest of the band] Has anything good or funny happened so far? In the first week of tour, our van crapped out. Andrea's (from Nü Sensae) cabinet had to have the speaker replaced.

Mish: But the guy who was fixing it, who was he a roadie for? He was saying "I'm the sound tech for Motörhead."

Grady: Motörhead, Dr. Dre...

Chris: Do you guys have problems with bands from Vancouver who aren't really

from the punk scene, but they've heard of your band and have an attitude about it? You were talking about the guy who was boasting that he was a roadie for Motörhead. Do you get that type of attitude from some of these professional musician types who may have read about your band somewhere?

Grady: Maybe behind our backs but I don't think we'd know.

Kenny: I don't think anyone really cares about us.

Mish: Maybe behind our backs and who cares? Fucking talk shit all you want.

Chris: I know that last summer Nü Sensae toured separately from you guys.

Mish: They went with the Shearing Pinks from Vancouver as well. We've toured with them before and this time we thought we've got to do this all together because it will be really fun. But poor Daniel from Nü Sensae was touring with Hunx And His Punx and Shannon And The Clams a

month prior to this, so when this is over he will have been on tour for over three months, almost four.

Grady: He's developing multiple personalities, several alter egos.

Mish: Yeah. Last night he decided he didn't want to sleep, so no one could sleep. So he was running around the house screaming. Daniel has all of these amazing characters that he does and he was doing them last night. It's good for morale. It keeps morale up pretty high.

Chris: I like the promotional tour video both bands made.

Mish: That's just Nü Sensae and White Lung having fun together. We filmed it at Andrea's art studio and we went down the street to this bar so that we could drink some shots. I ran into my little sister there and she's never in East Vancouver and she was so drunk. When she saw me she started laughing so hard that she started crying. She's crying and drunk out of her

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The entire night was a disaster.
I was being harassed by a cop
in my underwear soaking wet...

mind. I wish we'd put that in the video. That was a fun video to make. We just got drunk and danced. Kenny's dancing is the best part about the video. Kenny's a really good dancer. Now in Nü Sensae, Daniel's the best dancer.

Chris: Daniel was wearing the Mr. Peanut costume?

Mish: Yeah. I was wearing the alien outfit. There was so much great footage. We should have put more of that. We were fake fucking each other for a really long time.

Kenny: There was also different positions. I thought that should have been the whole video, personally.

Grady: Perv.

Kenny: Going back to your previous question. That's what I do when I'm not in this band.

Chris: You're a sexual deviant when you're not in this band? When you're in this band, you stop being a sexual deviant? You put it on pause?

Kenny: Yeah.

Mish: We try to make tour videos all the time so that we can remember what goes on, but it's hard to film good stuff. The other night, Anne Marie and I got in this amazing fight. It was so good. In Florida we all went swimming and we were so drunk. I guess Daniel was pretending to fuck me like he does all the time and Anne Marie threw me against the wall. I don't remember this happening.

Kenny: I saw the whole thing and after Mish got assaulted she got up and started choking Anne Marie. She called her "stupid bitch" and slapped her across the face. The entire night was a disaster. I was being harassed by a cop in my underwear soaking wet...

Chris: The cop was in your underwear?

Kenny: Yeah.

Grady: These guys all disappeared when

the cop showed up. I came out of the bathroom and everyone was gone.

Mish: We were in a pool swimming after our show.

Grady: Then the cop drives up and starts interrogating me.

Anne Marie [to Grady]: Who you thought was hot.

Kenny: I just thought he was a jerk and he wasn't good looking.

Mish: He was a jerk and he wasn't good looking at all. Gainesville's so fun. You have to let loose in Gainesville. Anne Marie in the pool with no glasses on. It's crazy. Lost your undies, second time around.

Anne Marie: I left them at the pool.

NEIGHBORHOOD BRATS



Jenny Angelillo—singer



Kirk Podell—drums

I'm sorry to say that I'm not going to
change anyone's life or change anyone's
mind or make them think...

I don't want to sound like anyone's dad right now, but I'd hate to subscribe to any one form of punk. Oh, I've heard the lament "There's not enough politics in punk now" or "I remember when punk meant something."

Here's how I see it. It's stick-and-poke simple.

If the people making the music believe in what they're doing, chances are higher that they're making music that's a reflection of their interests. And hopefully yours. Done right, that excitement, that conviction, that *e-lec-tricity* will come through in the music. That's the hope. An increase in your quality of life, one song at a time. Otherwise, the hippies, fraternities, and law enforcement officials win. Sometimes, you just want the chainsaw to come through the front door and be scared shitless when you drop the needle on a record. Sometimes, you don't want to read a book in lyrics sheet form. Sometimes, you just want to be shaken and slapped around by invited, speaker-shaking violence. Sometimes, you want your brain to stay in its cage across the room while you pickle the spare one sloshing around in your skull.

So if a band's strength is wiggling around on the ground, not thinkin', but rockin'... If a band's got more than a couple of very involved puke stories and is happy with having a good time, why not fuck around on their slip'n'slide for an evening so the

ever-increasing weight of the world doesn't break your collarbone, doesn't scoliosis your spine?

The flipside of that coin are bands "meaning something" and running on empty—or being disingenuous. They suffer from the because-that's-what-we-are—the "we're serious"—band syndrome. It results in a "Hey, man, you know anything that rhymes with Darfur?" type-debacle. And it presents a "Hmmm, if I do raise my fist when they ask for it, without questioning their authority to ask me to do that, what'll happen?" philosophical dilemma.

Some situations require that you take your pants off and shrug.

There's plenty of room in my punk universe for both the über-serious, thought-provoking, higher-minded and the über-retarded, thinking's for squares, let's get wrecked forms of punk. Some days, you want rebellion. Some days, you just don't give a shit.

Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you San Francisco's Neighborhood Brats. You can deal with the heavy stuff tomorrow. These folks'll get you through tonight.

Interview & Layout | Todd Taylor
Photos | Sara Reeble and Martin Sorrondeguy
Illustration | Danny Martin

...It's just fun.



Jasmine Watson—bass



George Rager—guitar

D. MARTIN (11)



SARA REEBLE

Jenny: I've been slinging panties all day. My last two customers were two wasted, sleazy, older Italian men who not only bought stuff for their wives but also their girlfriends. They wanted to know where in San Francisco to go to pick up on girls. Good times.

[Jenny, Jasmine, and Kirk situate themselves around a phone put on speaker.]

Todd: You sound like robots.

Jenny: You didn't know that about this band? It's actually just me and three robots that I created... I've got these really long acrylic nails so they feel like bowling balls on my fingers. [to the dog] Stop licking me. They make me do all sorts of crazy things. I text people in Swedish...

Todd: Not to leave Jasmine and Kirk out of this for a bit, but Jenny catch me up to speed on what happened after the Orphans ended in 2006.

If I wasn't in a band, especially in this band singing, I would go on a killing spree.

Jenny: The Orphans ended. I moved to San Francisco. I played in that one band.

Todd: Highschool?

Jenny: Wow. [surprised] I played bass in Highschool: the band. It's actually the first time I'd been in a band with other girls, which was weird. In the Orphans, I was used to conversations about what bottles are the best to pee in if you're driving and stuff like that. Instead, we talked about hair products and shit. So, I played bass in Highschool and that imploded. Then The Orphans played a reunion. That was fun-ny. Funny. [to Kirk] Were you there?

Kirk: I was there, yeah. That's when Wade gave me a bag of carpet cleaner and I tried to snort it. [laughter]

Jenny: Some things never change.

Kirk: He stopped me right before I did it, though.

Jenny: I'm sure you've put worse in your head in your life. But, then again, who hasn't? Oh, Wade gives people all sorts of stuff to watch them try it.

Todd: He's pretty charming when it comes to drugs.

Jenny: He's the Casanova, Don Juan of drug use. I love him to death. I still can't believe he's alive sometimes. Knock on wood. At this point, I don't think he's human anymore. Perfectly preserved from these substances... And then I saw George at a Spits show and I knew George from L.A. We had lived a couple blocks away from each other in Long Beach, but I kind of met him—not really—but I kind of remember him. It was very vague. He was like, "What are you doing? Are you playing music?" And I'm like, "No. I'm retired. I'm never playing in a band again. I'm finished. I'm done." But he coaxed me out of retirement and we did a band called Roofie And The Nightstalker. That ended just over a year ago. Our last show was August 1, 2010. It was the Cardiac Arrest and Neocons show. I have the flyer. I found it the other day. Not so long after, we started playing together.

Todd: Jasmine and Kirk, you're also in the Neo Cons together?

Jasmine and Kirk: Yes we are.

Todd: So how do you all know one another? Just from being in San Francisco?

Jasmine: I worked with Marc of the Neo Cons, so I met Jason through Marc and Kirk came into the picture later.

Kirk: I met Jason at some show and I went up to him: "That's a really good, cool shirt." I was trying to make a conversation on punk. He was like, "Oh, well, we're looking for a drummer." It sounded like some retarded Killed By Death thing. That's right up my alley. I love stupid punk. I can do this. In one practice, I felt, "Wow, this is the dumbest band ever and this is going to be so much fun." And then I met Jasmine at the second practice. And I met George—this is so lame—via Facebook. "You have so and so's friends." "Oh, he knows this dude? Oh, he plays in Jenny's band?" And I knew Jenny. I thought he was really tough. He looked like he could beat my ass. "Why don't I just message this guy?" We started talking.

Jenny: George was like, "Who's this 'Kurt Podell dude from L.A.'?" I'm all, "I dunno. Just some kid." [to Kirk] I've known you since you were fifteen, which is frightening. It makes me feel so fuckin' old.

Kirk: My third punk show ever was The Cheats, The Orphans, The Stitches, and JFA at the Knitting Factory and Wade was skateboarding in the parking lot. I also used to work at the Mayfair Market on Franklin and Bronson and I used to bag Johnny Witmer's (Stitches) groceries. He used to call me Bagboy for three years. He didn't even know my name.

Jenny: That sounds about right. He has a habit of calling people creative names. So, I met Kirk when he was fifteen and it's sad that I somehow feel responsible for him

now. I met Jasmine at the Last Roofie And The Nightstalker show...

Kirk: It was the first Neo Cons show.

Jenny: It was that same Cardiac Arrest, Ecoli, and Neocons show. It happened to be our last show but we didn't know it was our last show. I met Jasmine briefly. I think I met her for real maybe a couple weeks after. And George was like, "She wants to play bass."

Jasmine: He asked me to play bass...

Jenny: ...in whatever we were going to be, which was the Brats.

Todd: Hooray. So, all of you have come through Southern California, or are from Southern California?

Kirk: I'm from Silverlake and have lived in Los Feliz/Silverlake.

Jasmine: I was born in Torrance, raised in Redondo Beach. When I moved out, I went to Long Beach.

Jenny: I moved to L.A. when I was eighteen, so I kind of grew up there. From eighteen to twenty-seven... but I was born in Omaha, Nebraska.

Kirk: Jesus, Pizza Hut, and Mountain Dew.

Jenny: It's actually, Jesus, Dairy Queen, and we had Shasta.

Todd: The 99 Cent Store soda.

The Kmart soda. So, before we get into this next bit, I just want to say that there are absolutely no interviews of the Neighborhood Brats on the internet. There's nothing of any sort of depth or length. So, the following "facts" I found out about you on mainly social media sites may be completely wrong.

Kirk: There's some good rumors out there.

Jenny: It's fine. You can totally make shit up about us.

Kirk: Are there rumors about the Brats?

Jenny: What did you find out?

Todd: "'I've never seen the mall this busy before,' said Jenny Angelillo, manager of clothier Betsey Johnson... And even if people aren't buying here, they're still spending money and that's what the economy needs."

Jenny: Are you serious, Todd? You got that somewhere?

Todd: It's on the internet. Angelillo is an easy name to track on the internet.

Jenny: There are a handful of Angelillos in the world and I'm related to all of them.

Todd: I even found stuff about your dad, Vito.

Jenny: Uh hmm. He's dead. That's the number one most important thing. He's dead. [laughs] What? You found shit about my dad? He hasn't been dead this entire time? That asshole. You're not really dead? That would be so my dad, though. He'd be all, "Joke's on you, motherfucker." That's funny because I haven't worked for Betsey Johnson in six years. I haven't worked in a mall since 2002. I still work retail.



SARA REEBLE



MARTIN SORRONDEGUY

Todd: So where are you working now?
Jenny: I work at Agent Provocateur. Fancy panties.
Kirk: Nine hundred dollar fuckin' panties. It's ridiculous.
Jenny: Pretty much.
Todd: Alright Jasmine, here I have that you're a Whole Foods employee.
Jasmine: I am and I have been since 2003.
Todd: And you did transfer from a Southern California store to another one?
Jasmine: Yes. I went from the Whole Foods in Redondo Beach, to the one in Torrance and now up here in San Francisco.
Todd: In 2004, did you do any show promoting at the Smell?

I feel like everyone has this hidden agenda here and no one's here for fun. I'm going to get my ass handed to me for saying that.

Jasmine: You're getting this from Justin Moyer. He was in touring bands. I didn't necessarily promote at the Smell, but I'm friends with Jim. So, occasionally, I would set up shows for friends of mine from out of town. Specifically, Antelope from DC. I helped them a couple times.
Todd: Oh, right. They're on Dischord.
Jasmine: Yeah.
Todd: I don't know Jim, but he lives a couple blocks over from me. My friend Daryl pointed him out to me a couple weeks back as we cut through a park.

Jasmine: He's a good guy.
Todd: Can you guys verify that George is a director at KTVU?
Kirk: I know that he goes to Oakland every morning, but he's got a burner cell phone. He's got like a Boost phone; he's always, "Where you at?"
Jenny: We're convinced that George is just in a really dark room playing Super Mario Brothers for eight hours. Or watches the KOFY *Saturday Night Dance Party* for five hours, then goes home.
Todd: Kirk, you're an actor. Is that correct? [laughter]
Kirk: Uhh, I come from actors. I was doing weird little commercials and I did this punk soap called *Oblivion* in L.A.
Todd: You were Dexter Gordon.
Kirk: I was Dexter Gordon. But I guessed I moved up here and kind of ruined it for them. They kind of got bummed out. I think they're going to try to kill me off next season. Brian Waters might try to kill me.
Jenny: That's my favorite part about that whole thing is that Brian Waters is your brother? Your uncle?
Kirk: He's like my mentor. They want me to play a rude boy, but I'm wearing a Stalin shirt through half the shit, so there's a lot of mixed messages.
Todd: Sounds like they need a consistent stereotype to follow... So, with those answers in mind, why are you doing this band and why are you doing this band now?
Kirk: Because I feel that there's really a lack of solid punk rock in the Bay. Everyone's on some other agenda of doing something completely out of the norm. Why isn't there a band just playing fast, fun riffs with lyrics that don't have to pertain to anything special? I just want to play in a fun band instead of, "Oh, we're going to play a post-op, pre-op punk fundraiser." Why don't you just play a fuckin' show and have some fun and pogo around and stuff? I feel like everyone has this hidden agenda here and no one's here for fun. I'm going to get my ass handed to me for saying that.
Jenny: Whatever. Fuck it.
Kirk: That's the reason I think we're doing this. That's why I like doing this band. A fun punk band that's just a punk band. There's no veil.
Jenny: Here's me getting my ass handed to me: It's a lot different here in San Francisco. Whoah! [dog scampers away] All of a sudden, somebody is sucking on my toes.
Kirk: For the record, her dog looks like Tom Sizemore.
Jenny: He's like the son of Ernest Borgnine and Tom Sizemore... It's

different than L.A. here. It's not like it's bad, It's just different. I felt like, again, in L.A., it was fine to just write retarded songs about eating pizza and sharks who wear sunglasses or sharks who turn into zombies and things like that. And we just wanted to do something fun like that. I'm sorry to say that I'm not going to change anyone's life or change anyone's mind or make them think. It's just fun.

Why am I doing this band? I'll give you the answer that I think I gave in an interview ten years ago. I don't know what else to do. I do a lot of things okay. So-so. But this is what I do the best and I don't want to toot my own horn. If I wasn't in a band, especially in this band singing, I would go on a killing spree. It's my favorite thing to do out of all the dumb things that I do. I'd be bored otherwise. Punk is fun.

Jasmine: I'm going to piggyback off of that. I do it because it's fun and I love playing music and I love punk. I think another thing that's great about this band is we all get along so well. Having all lived down in L.A., we all have that dorky, fun vibe. I like the music we play, so it's pretty simple.

Kirk: A lot of bands are on the darker side here; synths and riffs. I'm really obsessed with guitar-driven, Adolescents-style punk. I think George really encompasses it. Surfy, but not kissing Huntington Beach's ass style of punk rock.

Todd: Why I kept on coming back to your self-titled EP is that it's really focused. There's purity to it that I really enjoy. It's easy to listen to over and over again, too.

Kirk: This is punk. Fuck you, Todd. [laughter]

Jenny: I feel like a lot of bands right now are trying to be so fucking weird or be so political or they're trying to make too many statements at once. It doesn't have to be like this. It can and people like it, but, for us, it's not really about that.

Todd: You have to be honest to yourself. So some people who do that stuff, they do it really well.

Kirk: I'm a progressive person. My music is what keeps me sane. Drum beats.

Jasmine: There are a lot of things that I feel strongly about, but—at the same time—I'm not the type to impose that on other people...I'm vegan and straight edge. I'm in a band with meat-eating drinkers. And I'm fine with that. I have a good time and I enjoy them, you know?



Todd: A band playing is one thing. You, as an individual is another thing. So, are any of you using your schooling in your day-to-day jobs at all? Jenny, you graduated Otis in 2004.

Jenny: Wow! [laughter] When you just said that, I was thinking, "When did I go to art school?" The other day at work, I couldn't even remember how old I was. Did you look at my file?

Todd: Nope.

Jenny: I went to art school. I got a graphic design degree. I got a master's degree in photography. I went to beauty school two years ago. Do I use that every day? Hmm, not so much. I curled my

my Master's right now. It's a really tough curriculum up here because there's not a lot to work with. There were more in L.A., surprisingly. I studied for a while in New York, which was really informative. I'd like to learn more about Chicago, but it's a totally different scene to me. It's foreign, but I'll get ahead. Maybe my Ph.D.

Jenny: Did you ever work at Damianos?

Kirk: I worked at Enzo's and I worked at Hard Times before it. Hard Times on Hyperion. That was the first solid food I ever ate.

Jenny: That pizza?

Kirk: Yeah. It's my alma mater. I donate every year. Actually, I'm on the board of trustees, as well.

Jenny: Excellent.

[laughter]

Jenny: Have you ever gone into Damianos when it's light in there? It's always pitch black in there and it scares me. I never want to go in there if it's light in there.

Kirk: You're supposed to go there at four in the morning.

Jenny: You're supposed to be verbally abused by Mr. Pizza.

Kirk: Richard Horowitz.

Jenny: I would see him rip people a new asshole on a weekly basis.

Kirk: One time he told a guy, "What? You don't like sausage? What are you? Gay?"

Jasmine: Oh my god.

Todd: So, how about you, Jasmine?

Jasmine: Well, I have an associate's degree in Transfer Studies. When I went to school, I didn't have a particular major in mind. I was just like, "I like learning. I'm going to take four semesters of French and a bunch of history classes and a bunch of psychology classes, and an anthropology class. So, essentially, after going to school at El Camino College for long enough, they were like, "Hey, by the way; you can get your degree." I was like, "Oh, cool." Now, after considering the things that I'm good at and the things that I care about, I think that veterinary technology is a really good idea. I'm taking the prerequisites for veterinary technology at Foothill College now. So I'm not using my degree in any way, but working at Whole Foods in the body care and health section, I have learned a lot about vitamins and body care. [laughter]

Kirk: Which is super good on tour because I'm like, "Arrggh. Why did I wrestle those girls in a basement in Cleveland and put all that shit in my face?" Jasmine's like, "Oh, well take two of these." And I'm fine the next day.

Jenny: Jasmine's like our little witch doctor on tour. I'm like, "I have anxiety." She's all, "Take these pills." I'm all, "Am I going to get fucked up?" She's like,

"No. They're herbal." I'm all, "Okay."

Todd: What's the fun in that?

Jenny: "Ohh. Herbal Xanax? Why can't you be just a real pharmacist? I want real Xanax, not hippie Xanax."

Todd: "You mean this shit's actually going to be good for me? Goddamn it." So, Kirk, why did you have to work an Epitaph/Fat show?

Kirk: It was actually a Fat Wreck Chords/Epitaph night at this bar I work at on Sundays. These two dudes named Tony and Brady. They don't even DJ. They sit with their fucking Ipod. I just want to call it snowboard rock. They come out and talk about how sick that Pulley song was and they'd go and play Pennywise and NOFX again. Millencolin. Seriously, I have to work that from ten to two in the morning. And hate it. I would rather be finger fucked by KD Lang. Yeah. I work at a bar called Pop's in the Mission. It's like where every shithead congregates, if you sell drugs or ride a bike without brakes. And I have to fucking serve you.

Jenny: If you have a beard and you're wearing flannel and a hat with a flipped-up bill. If you have one pant leg rolled up, which I thought was from LL Cool J, but, apparently, it has something to do with not getting your pant stuck in your chain. I never learned how to ride a bike, so I have no idea. Bike culture so baffles me.

Todd: What's the worst scenario with puke that you've had to deal with, personally?

Jenny: Ah, let me tell you about a band I was in called the Orphans. Oh, wait, is this supposed to be from our band?

Todd: No, just in life.

Jenny: So I was in this band called the Orphans. [laughter] We were actually driving to San Francisco to play a show at Molotov's. A daytime show. And Wade was just being Wade the entire way up, just doing his thing. I'm like, "Dude, you've got to pace yourself."

Todd: "No."

Jenny: So we get to San Francisco. It's a Sunday afternoon show. It's one of those rare days in San Francisco where it's actually hot so everyone smells. But everyone in the bar extra-super smells 'cause it's Molotov's. Wade decides that he's hungry and he wants Memphis Minnie's, which is a barbecue place. I'm like, "Dude, don't go too crazy. We've got to play real soon." He's like, "I'm fine." I'm like, "Just have a snack." I'm like his mom. I spent the entire six years of the Orphans being everyone's mom.

In L.A., it was fine to just write retarded songs about eating pizza and sharks who wear sunglasses or sharks who turn into zombies and things like that.

hair this morning. Do I use my school on a day-to-day basis? Nah, man. I sell panties. A monkey could do my job. It's not rocket science.

Kirk: Hold on. A really hot monkey.

Jenny: Once in awhile, they'll let me wrap something. I put it in a bag and pull off a really good bow and I think, "Art school paid off. Thirty-six thousand dollars later."

Todd: Kirk, you graduated from the University of Pizza? [laughter]

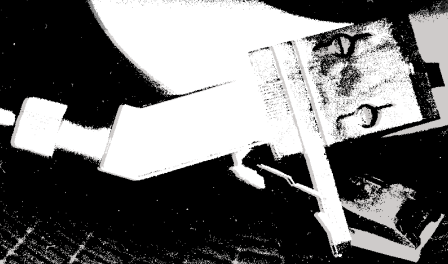
Kirk: I sure did. I'm actually going for



SARA REEBLE



MARTIN SORRONDEGUY



Todd: "You don't want to cramp up."

Jenny: Exactly. "Forty-five minutes before you go back into the water." So I go back to check on him and he's got a full, gigantic plate of barbeque. "Dude, this is bad." He immediately walks across to Molotov's and straps on his bass and we start playing. And I'm like, "Oh, god, this is bad." It's hot. It smells. Also, he has a broken arm. Maybe like three songs in, I kind of see him turn green and start dry heaving, so I'm, "Oh, god. I know what's coming next." He's projectile vomited before on stage, so I just stepped to the side. Sure enough, it was almost like in the movies, where he had a fake puke hose. It literally looked like somebody turned a hose on. He sprayed everybody in the bar with vomit. I saw it coming and I stepped out of the way. Everyone's bummed

I was used to conversations about what bottles are the best to pee in if you're driving and stuff like that.

because they're covered with puke. They had puke in their dreads and stuff.

As a footnote to the story, a couple songs after the puke, he manages—my old friend Alessandro, who was in that band the Grabbies—somehow broke a bottle and cut Wade's finger open. He hit an artery. So it's like a samurai movie. Again, like a hose. Squirted blood all over everybody. Vomit and blood all over everyone.

Todd: That's awesome. I'm so glad I wasn't there.

Jenny: Everyone was fucked. I'm all, "You know what? You wanted some punk rock." And I remember afterward, Wade

just going, "Do you have a band-aid or something?" I'm like, "We need CSI-like, crime scene mop-up shit. We need a gallon of bleach, a tourniquet, and some super glue. That's my worst vomit story ever."

Kirk: I just don't really puke. I puked once on our tour. I'm not a puker. I can't burp, either. I'm the king of gas, though.

Todd: Jenny, that wasn't actually the puke story I was thinking of because I think we were hanging out one time and Johnny puked right into your purse.

Jenny: Oh my god. That's another good barf story.

Todd: I was sitting at the bar next to you and I remember him just slumping the whole time and then you got really mad at him because he puked all inside of your purse.

Jenny: That's right! I forgot about that. [laughter] Why am I always the one with the puke story? That was at Zen Sushi.

Todd: You're right.

Jenny: I remember that Bruce Roehrs was there. And there was some band playing from the East Coast.

Kirk: Templars.

Todd: Yes.

Jenny: We were sitting there, talking, having a conversation, and everything was fine and Johnny just leaned over and puked in my purse and all over my lap.

Todd: [laughing] I'm sorry.

Jenny: Awesome.

Todd: "Thanks awesome boyfriend."

Jenny: Way to excuse yourself and go to the bathroom like a normal person. "Oh, my girlfriend's purse is good." Yeah. I wish we had a Neighborhood Brats puke story.

Kirk: I woke up with a bum puking outside my window, in Michigan. After George kneed the frat boy in the face. George put a frat guy on his ass in two punches. It was pretty rad. He called Jasmine "bitch," so then George knocked him out.

Jasmine: He called women, in general, "bitches." We were like, "That's not how we talk about people." He didn't stop.

Kirk: But then, the whole night, I started calling women "bitches" and nothing happened.

Jenny: And all of this happened when I was sleeping. This was in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Kirk was like, "Oh, we're going to stay at my friend's house. He made a really nice bed for you. It's really comfortable and you'll have a nice sleep." At this point in my rock'n'roll career, I'm like an old lady." I was burnt out. I was not a happy camper that night. I just wanted to play the show, hang out for a second, find a shower, then find a bed and go to sleep. Maybe some coconut water. Maybe a snack.

So, I go to this dude's room and it's like

every college boy I ever made out with in the dorms. Sheets that have never been washed or changed.

Jasmine: Piles of dirty laundry.

Jenny: Tissues crumpled up everywhere. One kind-of pillow stashed in a corner. It was pretty disgusting. I pulled my sleep mask over my hoodie and left my boots on. On a cum-stained bed. I thought, "If I even take my pants off, I may get pregnant." Yeah. So there's a bonus cum stain story for you.

Kirk: We were also told that there'd be a party there and it seriously looked like when they opened a hotel in *Revenge of the Nerds II*. It was insane. Seven punks roll up in this bus and just took this party over. I asked this girl for a sip of her whiskey then I stole the bottle back into the bus. She cried and walked away. [laughter]

Todd: Jasmine, what does "she cranberried" mean?

Jasmine: It's actually a reference to a Joan Of Arc song off one of their first 7"s, from the song "Trial at Orleans."

It essentially means "She blushed" and I have a tendency to have really red cheeks and I blush really easily. I'm the innocent one.

Kirk: That's such a nice answer. She's blushing right now. She's totally cranberry-ing right now.

Todd: Kirk, what's Kirka Sherpa?

Kirk: I think my dad called me that. It just kind of stuck. I've been using it for a DJ name recently. I'm not good with nicknames. People are always like, Kirk The Jerk. It doesn't work. Kirkle Jerk is a pretty good one. Kirka Sherpa. I dunno. I'm like a sherpa on the mountain of douchebaggery.

Jenny: We totally DJ'd with Jane Wiedlin the other night. Kirk was awesome. It was me and Kirk and Marc from Neo Cons DJing. Someone was like, "Jane Wiedlin's here." I'm all, "Fuck you. No, she's not. 'Cause if she was, I'm going to totally shit my pants right now." And they're like, "No. That's her over there." I'm like, "Holy fucking shit. Oh my god. We have to play the Go-Go's right now."

Kirk: We played the Go-Go's and she came over. [in high voice] "Oh, can I look through your records?" Right after that, I put on Fear and the Germs.

Jenny: She's awesome. She's a maniac. She's like, "Let's dance."

Kirk: She started a little slam pit to Generation X.

Jenny: We took a picture with her and the first thing she said was, "My titties are

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big. Hee hee!" The funny thing is that the entire night, she was trying to hook me up with Marc, who's my boyfriend, and she goes to Marc and says, "If you want to get a girl, you should get her to dance with you." And Marc's all [shrugging] "Okay." She's all, "Watch this!" and she's swinging Marc around. "She's already my girlfriend, but I'll let you do this because you're Jane Wiedlin and it's funny."

Todd: And it's like Elven magic... Okay, I have a short, two-question quiz. Name the previous band of one of the members of the Neighborhood Brats by this self-description: "Bum puking in alley."
[long pause]

Jenny: Do I use
my school on a
day-to-day
basis? Nah, man.
I sell panties.
A monkey could
do my job.
It's not
rocket science.

Kirk: Hold on.
A really hot
monkey.

Kirk: Is it Ashtray Babies?

Todd: No.

Jenny: Fix My Head?

Todd: No. But you're on the right track.

Jenny: What other bands was George in?

Kirk: Was it the Twerps?

Todd: No.

Jenny: Wait. It was that band he was in

with Ryan from Long Beach.

Todd: Kill Nine Nine.

All: Ohh!

[Jenny makes duck quacking sound.]

Todd: The person who I'm going to refer to, you have to be quiet so the other people can answer the question. Whose dad was the first American comedian ever to perform in South Africa?

Jasmine: Rick Podell from rickpodell.com, the father of Kirk Podell, punk on tour from San Francisco.

Todd: Ding ding! You are correct.

All: Yay!

Todd: Bonus round. What television show was Kirk's dad on for an entire year?

Jenny: *Bosom Buddies*?

Todd: Think daytime soap.

Jenny: Don't tell me.

Jasmine: Is it *Days of Our Lives*?

Todd: It is, Jasmine. You are correct.

Kirk: My mom was on that, too.

Jenny: Was that how they met?

Kirk: No. They met at the Improv. She was a hostess. He was a comedian. Later, she found out that he's not funny at all.
[laughter]

Jenny: Have you been to rickpodell.com? I think you should check it out.

Todd: Oh, I did. I enjoyed it immensely. That's some great shit.

Jenny: [to Kirk] Didn't Rick Podell tell you when he first met me that I had "a nice rack"?

Todd: And classy.

Kirk: He also said, "She needs a man."

Jenny: Awesome.

Todd: Are you sure you didn't sell Kirk's dad panties today? Sounds like those guys.

Jenny: I did not, unless he was in disguise and using an Italian accent.

Kirk: He's an actor. [in Italian accent] Dominic DiCoco.

Todd: Have you ever regretted the placement of a tattoo? You like the design and everything; you just wish you didn't put it in a certain place. I'm also thinking along the line of working in the service industry.

Kirk: I have Mickey Mouse as Adolf Hitler on my forearm. I'm not joking. I kinda wish I placed that a little better.

Jenny: If you're going to get a picture of Mickey Mouse sieg heiling with a swazi, it should definitely be on your forearm.

Kirk: I'm also black and Jewish, if that clarifies any sketchiness.

Todd: So, you're the Sammy Davis Jr. of the Neighborhood Brats?

Kirk: I am. Kunta Horowitz.

Jenny: Wow.

Kirk: I just really wanted a Dickies-inspired tattoo. But it didn't look as sketchy. Craig over at American Electric in Silverlake drew a swastika and then said oops in a shitty English accent, so then I had a serious Hitler Mickey Mouse on my

forearm... punk rock!

Todd: There are so many different options with *Stukas over Disneyland*...

Kirk: I've had people come up to me during tour: "Hey, it's Hitler Mickey Mouse Guy." Do you want to hug or kick my ass?

Jenny: I like how you're in Wade's cell phone as "Kirk Black Jew."

Kirk: Yeah, that's true.

Jenny: And Wade's fiancée was going through his phone to get addresses and numbers for people and she's all, "Kirk Black Jew. A Black Jew? Really? Is that who you want the wedding invite addressed to?" And Wade was, "Absolutely."

Todd: I want that to be on the envelope when they send it to him.

Jenny: Oh, it totally will... I regret tattoo placement every day because people just want to talk to me, like the weird Italian guys tonight. "Tell me the stories behind your tattoos." I used to tell people that I got them in prison. It's called getting "sick tat"ted. "Sick tat, bro." "Cool ink."

Todd: Oh, no.

Jasmine: I'm the only weirdo in the band who does not have any tattoos, and at this point, I don't know if I ever will. I

made it to twenty-nine with no tattoos; probably not going to happen. Except for—I have this silly idea. If I become a vet tech, I can get the Cat Flag tattoo with "fix me" text, but even that probably won't happen.

Jenny: I can get it for you. I'll find some empty blank space for you. Put it in there.

Todd: Jasmine, I highly recommend that you don't get one.

Jasmine: I just joke about it. I like making cat-related punk tattoos. Like Void crosses in kitties and it says "Meow Rules." I just like incorporating my love of kitties and punk.

Todd: Jenny, you alluded to this at the very beginning. Parents. Did they help you out and were cool to you when you were growing up, or was it just bad news?

Jenny: Whoah. We just went to therapy, huh? Were my parents cool to me growing up?

Jasmine: With the music thing.

Jenny: Yeah, yeah. My dad wasn't really around. My mom was pretty supportive. I was always in bands in high school. I remember one time we tried to have band practice at the house. We set up in my basement. We got half way through the first song and my mom said, "Absolutely not." She made us leave. But she'd let me leave the house in whatever weird, fucked-up outfit I had on and whatever weird haircut that I had given myself. I grew up in Nebraska. We were trying to be punk but

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we really didn't have a lot of resources, so we just ended up looking like clowns. A retard version of punk rock. Seriously. We were buying clothes at the Army Navy surplus store. I used to dye my hair with Kool Aid.

Todd: Awesome.

Jenny: It would melt all over your face.

Todd: When you get sweaty.

Jasmine: Yeah, my parents were pretty supportive, as well. Actually, when I first got a job, I bought drums. It was the first major purchase I made. My dad lofted my bed so I could have my drums in my bedroom and practice at home. That was

is more important to me. They let me go to shows and play music at home. Yeah, it's been awesome.

Jenny: Jasmine's parents—we played this show at a punk house in Long Beach—it was totally crazy—Jasmine's teeny-tiny mom was hanging out. In it to win it.

Jasmine: We were still breaking down after playing with The Authorities and she just happened to be by the merch table and started selling merch for us. "How much is the LP, Jasmine?" She's great.

Kirk: My parents were super-supportive. My dad let us have practice at the house. I kind of took advantage of my parents, letting me get into punk. I'd have people sleep over. Nine kids in my room after a punk show. I lived in the basement. I remember watching *Decline of Western Civilization* in the living room and my mom would be like, "Why are they spitting? I just don't like the spitting." [laughter] They were always down with it. I really wanted a jean vest, so I stole my mom's jacket and cut it up. Got in trouble with that. I played one of my first shows at Top Fuel.

Kirk: Right across the street from Guitar Center. My mom cooked us spaghetti and meatballs, then she drove us to the show. It was pretty rad. They're Hollywood parents. I think they'd be happier if I was a gay writer.

Todd: This'll be a close second.

Kirk: [in higher voice] Who knows?

Todd: What's one record that you wish you had heard a lot earlier that would have saved you a lot of grief in the long run with punk rock?

Kirk: There is so much that I discovered later that I wish I would have found earlier.

Todd: Some bands and records are creepers. You'll hear their name. "Yeah, I'll listen to that later."

Kirk: I definitely didn't get into Mission Of Burma. I think I had tickets to go see them at All Tomorrow's Parties and I regret not going to see that live and not understanding that band. I understand it now. I think it's amazing. It's such tough fuckin' shit and I just didn't get that at fifteen or sixteen.

Todd: It's not obvious. It's not bashing you over the head with a message, slogan, or agenda. But it's such powerful music that's been around for thirty years. There's a really good documentary about Mission Of Burma: *Not a Photograph*.

Jasmine: In high school, I'd listen to super-obvious punk, from the '70s and '80s. Dangerhouse stuff, Black Flag, Buzzcocks. Stuff like that. All the while, I could have seen Slant Six play... or even Quix*o*tic. Get at me, Christina Billotte.

Jenny: I'm thinking of all the bands from when I was in high school and college when I worked for KXLU. Things that I just overlooked because I was like, "Man, that's not punk. I know what punk is and that's not punk." As I get older—and this is going to sound super corny—I realized fucking Adam Ant; so good.

Jasmine: We realize now, thirty years later, what Darby Crash realized.

Todd: I dig *Kings of the Wild Frontier*. Absolutely.

Jenny: When I was in high school, "Oh, that's new wave bullshit." Adam & The Ants, Bow Wow Wow. It's mainstream, poppy music, but I get the discourse and I get where these people came from, that whole new romantic thing coming out of punk. I just poo poed it. The Stranglers. Love them.

Kirk: That's another band I overlooked.

Jenny: I was all, "What's with all the weird organs?"

Kirk: I've now realized later that I find Public Image way more punk than the Sex Pistols. Tough. Tight.

Jasmine: It seems so silly, looking back.

Todd: When you get older in punk rock, you realize how socialized you are with music. Close friends. What the punks you looked up to at your school were listening to, or whatever—especially in small towns. There weren't a lot of other people to bounce stuff off of. But then, if you just like music in general, it opens up. I remember the division that happened with my friends between the end of Minor Threat and the beginning of Fugazi. A lot of people I hung out with didn't even recognize Fugazi. "Dead after Minor Threat." So, I'm glad I made that leap.

Jenny: It's fucked, because when I was in high school and I was so narrow-minded about everything else, but I was like, "fucking love *Thirteen Songs!*" The tape would keep breaking in my car. That and Operation Ivy, *Energy*. Living kinda isolated in Omaha, we had to order from Sessions catalogs and from 99X in New York. We didn't have all of these resources... I just thought of another one that I recently discovered: Japan. Basically, Duran Duran stole everything from Japan.

Kirk: It's been around since 600 BC.

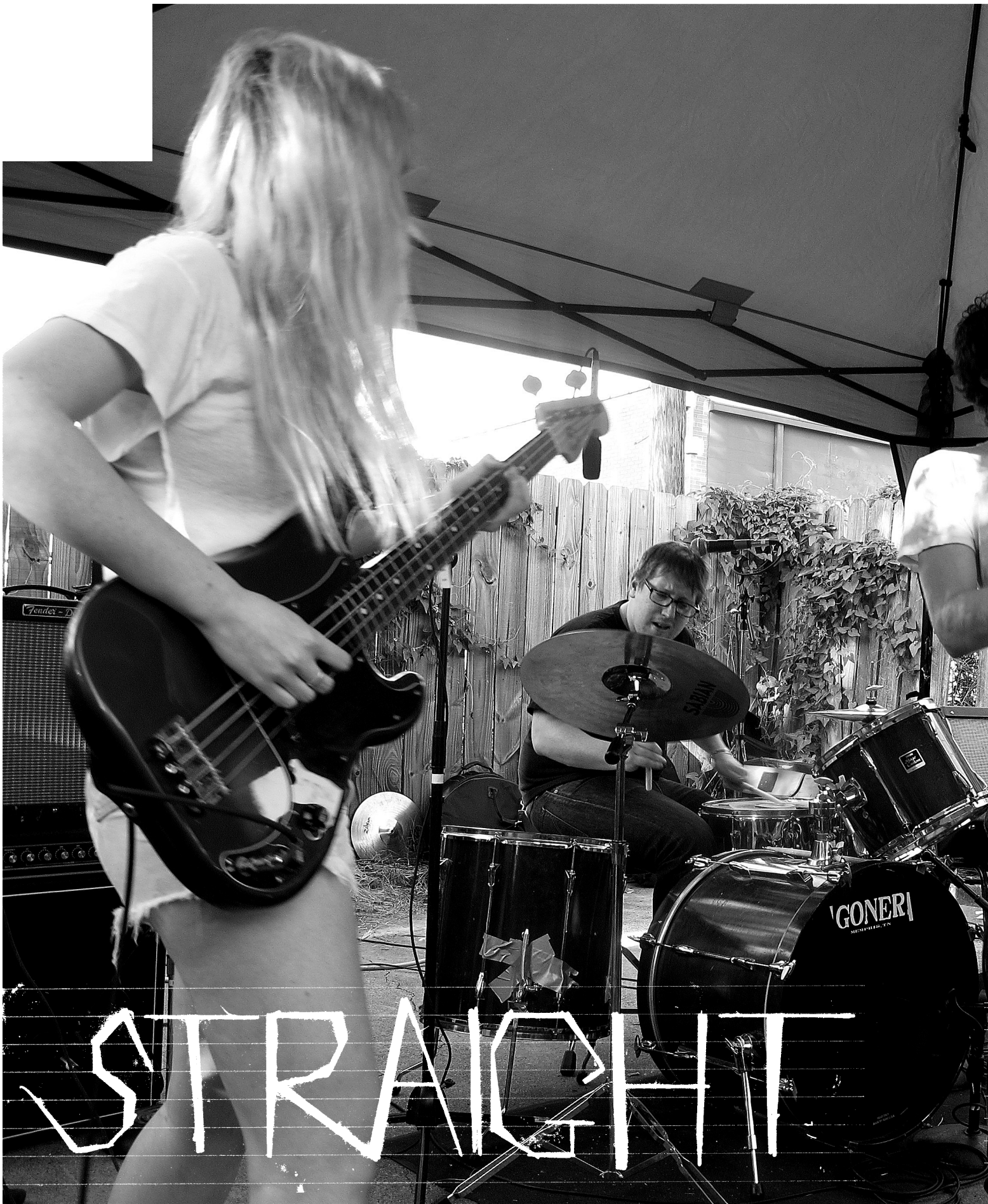
Jenny: The band, not the country. [laughter]



RAZORCAKE 67

We were trying to be punk but we really didn't have a lot of resources, so we just ended up looking like clowns.

awesome. He also bought me a guitar as a graduation gift, so my dad definitely helped me with getting the ball rolling. My mom has also been very supportive doing the music thing: "Oh, you're so unique. Just do what you want to do." I feel the stereotype is, "Don't you want to get married and have kids?" My mom's totally okay with the fact that music and touring





The Australian underground music scene is thriving, and Sydney's Straight Arrows are right in the thick of it. When not writing songs, Straight Arrows head honcho Owen Penglis is recording fellow Aussies like Dead Farmers or releasing records through his Juvenile label. It was through Juvenile that Straight Arrows put out its first single, "Something Happens."

"Something Happens" is the best 7" I've heard in a long time; it's an anti-rock single in nearly the same way *Philosophy of the World* and *Like Flies on Sherbet* are anti-rock albums—seminal works on the outer margins of rock'n'roll. Bands may pawn recordings off as "unrestrained," but "Something Happens" is truly a raw gem. Of course, the single was self-recorded and the music played by untrained musicians—just check guitarist Alex Grigg's epic solo on the A side. If rock'n'roll is supposed to be visceral (most of it isn't), then Straight Arrows is the embodiment of it, much as an unsigned Cannibal And The Headhunters was in the mid '60s, The Shaggs was throughout its career, and Alex Chilton was during his late '70s heyday. There's a level of honesty and an organic quality to "Something Happens" that is lacking in nearly all rock records released today.

Straight Arrows released its first full length, *It's Happening*, last year. It was a larger batch of great psychedelic-tinged songs, displaying some inevitable "musical development." Hopefully, you were lucky enough to catch Straight Arrows on its recent tour through America (September 2011), highlighted by a slot at Gonerfest 8. If isn't obvious enough, I can't speak highly enough of the band.

A revenge band.

Interview/photos++Ryan Leach
Photos++Renate Winter
Layout++Todd Taylor

Vocals/guitar++Owen Penglis
Guitar/vocals++Alex "Big Al" Grigg
Bass/vocals++Angela Bermuda
Drums/vocals++Adam Williams

RAZORCAKE 69



Ryan: How did Straight Arrows get together? I know you (Owen) played in Angela's band Circle Pit.

Owen: Straight Arrows formed before Circle Pit. Alex and I played together in a band when we were eighteen. We played one show. We met up later on. The two bands Alex and I were playing in—I was in Holy Soul and Alex was in Red Riders—opened up a new venue in Sydney.

Alex: That's the night Adam got stabbed.

Ryan: You were stabbed, Adam?

Adam: Yeah. On the night they just mentioned. I was on my way home from the show.

Ryan: Was it bad?

Angela: He has a scar. Show them. [Adam proceeds to show us the scar on his stomach.]

Alex: How cool is that?

Ryan: That is cool.

Alex: The guy who stabbed him got two years in prison.

Ryan: Was the guy trying to mug you?

Adam: No. He was just crazy.

Owen: He thought you were Irish.

Adam: No. He was Irish and thought I was English, which I am.

Ryan: Did you have a glimpse of mortality?

Adam: Yeah. He stabbed me and then ran away. Next thing I know I'm in the hospital.

Owen: We felt sorry for him so we put him in the band. [laughs]

Alex: We actually didn't know Adam at that point. We met him later on. One day, Owen mentioned he wanted to start a band.

Owen: A revenge band.

Alex: Owen has been kicked out of every band that he has been in.

Adam: He was even kicked out of Circle Pit.

Angela: Owen wasn't even in Circle Pit! Our drummer couldn't come to America. He has a criminal record. That's why Owen drummed for us on our tour of the States.

Ryan: Owen gets in bands through technicalities.

Alex: He's a session musician. [laughs]

Ryan: Owen, you were primarily playing drums in bands before Straight Arrows, correct?

Owen: Yeah. I just decided to pick up the guitar for Straight Arrows. I played guitar only once in a shit band before. The name of the band is not worth mentioning.

Alex: Because he was kicked out of it! Owen started Straight Arrows because it's a band he can't get kicked out of.

Owen: Straight Arrows formed at the end of 2006. I wanted to start a band that was better than the other ones that I had been thrown out of.

Ryan: I read that you guys had your first residency at a gay bar called The Newtown Hotel in Sydney.

Alex: Our first shows were at The Newtown.

Owen: We couldn't get any shows. A female friend of ours went to The Newtown Hotel. The upstairs of the place had all this S&M stuff. She asked if she could book the place for shows. The owner told her that The Newtown was available for gay-only events. She responded: "I love muff." The owner said, "Okay. You can book it." [laughs]

Alex: On the bottom floor there was a drag show constantly going. Upstairs, they would play this intense gay porno on television. There's a good photo of Owen playing and in the background there's a dude sucking another dude off on the screen.

Adam: There were heaps of boner art as well.

Alex: It was pretty fun.

Owen: I didn't think we were going to be a real band at that point.

Alex: In the beginning, Straight Arrows was just an excuse to have fun and get as drunk as possible. It was meant to fail.

Adam: But Owen writes good songs, I reckon.

Alex: We actually were surprised to find out that things were turning out well: "These songs are actually good." Two or three years ago we did shows in Australia with Thee Oh Sees and Eddy Current Suppression Ring. It was after those shows that I thought to myself, "Hey, we're an okay band."

Ryan: You guys were surprising yourselves.

Alex: It was not just a joke band anymore.

Ryan: Did you start Juvenile Records as a way to get Straight Arrows 7"s out, Owen?

Owen: Yeah. Around that time my girlfriend dumped me, so I had a bunch of time on my hands. My friend Julia (Wilson) and I talked about starting up a record label. She had some previous record label experience.

Ryan: Juvenile has done really well. You released a Black Lips single. That sold out. Same for your first Straight Arrows 7" ("Can't Count"/"Something Happens"). That's hard to do.

Owen: One hundred percent hit records! Julia is the stability of the label. Distribution in Australia is pretty easy. There are only about eight stores in the country that sell 7"s.

Ryan: There seems to be a really good infrastructure built up for underground music in Australia. There are some great labels: Rice Is Nice, RIP Society, and Aarght! Records. Without that kind of support, projects tend to die on the vine. And so much good music has been coming out of Australia lately.

Angela: RIP Society!

Owen: We're all friends.

Ryan: You've recorded a lot of Sydney bands as well, Owen.

Owen: I recorded some of the Dead Farmers' record (*Go Home*).

Ryan: With Mikey Young of Eddy Current Suppression Ring.

Owen: Yeah. I recorded a couple versions of it. Mikey mixed a couple of versions. That record was recorded about seven times. I also recorded Dead Farmers' first 7" at their parents' house.

Alex: Owen has pretty much recorded everyone in that scene. Mikey as well.

Owen: Through recording The Straight Arrows' first single, I learned how to use a four-track recorder. People were asking me if the 7" was supposed to sound the way that it does. And, if so, could I record them. [laughs]

Ryan: Some instruments aren't audible. Noise of an unknown origin appears on the tape.

Alex: We sent our first single to FBI, which is a Sydney community radio station. They told us, "I think our copy is broken." We told them, "We don't think your copy is broken, but we'll send you another one anyway!"

Ryan: Sydney and Melbourne are producing some great music. As an outsider looking in, can you tell me about the two scenes?

Owen: There's a connection. As far as Australia goes, there are basically three major cities to play in: Sydney, Brisbane, and Melbourne. Between Sydney and Brisbane, it's about twelve hours.

Ryan: And about ten between Sydney and Melbourne.

Adam: There are hardly any places to play in between.

Owen: There are just a few little party towns in between.

Alex: We usually play in Newcastle. Everyone seems to know each other and is supportive. Each scene has its own vibe. Sydney is a really hard city to get anything done in. It's a city full of rich people. It's difficult to organize events for anything that's a bit underground, but that's what makes the Sydney scene so great. People have to work so hard to accomplish things, or figure out weird ways to make events happen—like booking a gay bar for shows. People find a way in Sydney, whereas in Melbourne there's more of an infrastructure and support for underground music—which is great, but things aren't as random.

Angela: I think being a little geographically isolated can help you be creative. You're not working in a cultural hub.

Ryan: There are fewer outside expectations of what you're supposed to do or what your band is supposed to sound like.

Angela: Yeah, but Sydney can be frustrating. Like when I've booked shows and no one came.

Ryan: I found that isolationist aspect to be generally true in New Zealand. You find

It was meant to fail.

interesting Chris Knox-like figures working in the provincial areas.

Alex: That's particularly true in Sydney.

Adam: You're actually supporting the people who are around in Sydney.

Owen: With Straight Arrows, we really didn't care. We didn't have the typical bullshit to worry about, like getting proper shows or putting a record out immediately.



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Vacation- "The Do Shit" TAPE
Tenement- "The Blind Wink" TAPE
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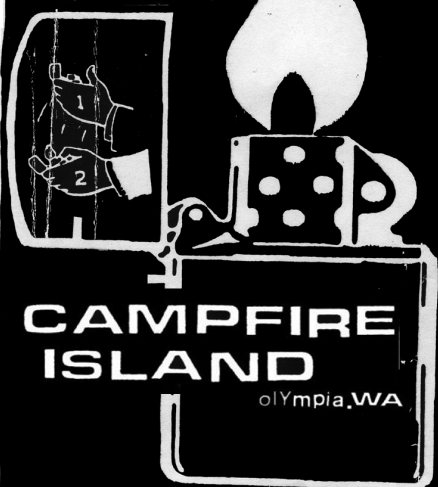
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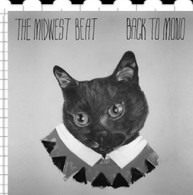
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Ryan: Being from the States, I can tell you that the Eddy Current Suppression Ring album on Goner (*Primary Colours*) really brought a lot of U.S. attention to Australian music. The last time I heard of an Australian scene that vibrant was probably in the early to middle '80s.

Adam: Yeah, right.

Angela: The Scientists and stuff like that?

Ryan: And Nick Cave. Larry Hardy from In The Red was really excited about a lot of the bands from Australia. UV Race later signed to In The Red and all of your friends in bands seem to be touring the States right now. Did Australia feel a similar effect from the success of Eddy Current?

Alex: Eddy Current had a big impact in Australia. *Primary Colours* was a popular album. Eddy Current was even nominated for an ARIA Award, which is more or less Australia's version of the Grammys. They were sort of on the outskirts of the mainstream.

Owen: Eddy Current helped bring Thee Oh Sees out to Australia. Through playing those early shows with Eddy Current, Thee Oh Sees are now able to tour Australia on their own. We were on that tour as well, and it helped us out too.

Ryan: Angela and Owen, you were touring America in Circle Pit when *It's Happening* came out last year. Was that your first real exposure to America?

Owen: Middle America is a fucking weird place.

Angela: We got pulled over in Idaho.

Owen: The cops pulled around the car. We had just bought this fifty bag. Circle Pit's bassist Al (Haddock) pulled it out and asked, "What do I do with this?" We weren't sure: "Eat it?" Al stuffed it in his mouth and ate it. They had dogs sniffing the car but they didn't find anything. We got to this party later on...

Ryan: And he's just tripping!

Owen: He's just lying there on the kitchen floor and the bag never came out!

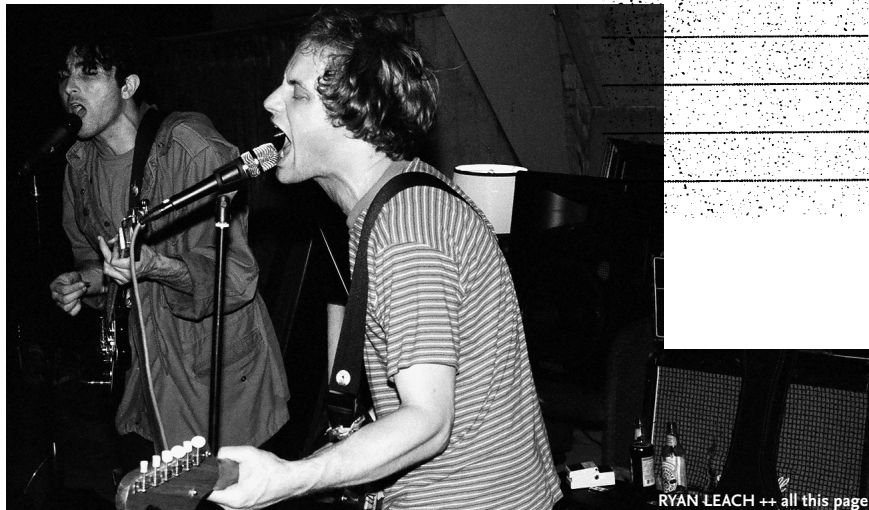
Angela: When Al was eating it, I thought he was going to kill himself.

Adam: Thankfully, he didn't suffocate.

Ryan: Adam, you didn't know how to play drums before you joined Straight Arrows?

Adam: I had a drum kit but I didn't know how to play it. I used to play guitar in bands. A drummer friend went overseas and left his

FUCK YOU, DALE



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drum kit over at my place. I set it up and was just mucking about on it. Then Owen started Straight Arrows.

Ryan: What was the learning curve like?

Adam: I'd ask Owen, "How does this song go?" And he'd show me: "Like this!"

Alex: When we were recording *It's Happening*, Owen brought like six brand new songs for us to record on the last day—tracks we had never heard. We had to get it all right.

Adam: All good songs, though.

Alex: They were some of the best songs on the album.

Owen: The delay was all part of my master plan.

Adam: It was hard. I'm not the most accomplished drummer. It might take a while for me to get the parts right.

Angela: I'm not the most accomplished bassist, either.

Ryan: Your bass playing is pretty solid on *It's Happening*. You're actually playing bass lines as opposed to root eighth notes, which a lot of bassists just fall back on.

Adam: At our show last weekend, people said to me that Angela is a great bass player.

Angela: But Owen told me what bass parts to play! [laughs] I did change them a bit, though.

Adam: Owen's a megalomaniac.

Owen: The plan for the next album is to record it twice. The first time sober, the second time drunk, and then we'll see which one is better.

Alex: We realized that when we don't rehearse, we play one hundred times better. It's like we can only remember the songs once—so it better be at the show.

Ryan: Everyone is on their toes because they don't know where the changes are.

Angela: There's no danger when you're too tight.

Owen: You have to pay attention to one another when you don't practice because you don't know what's going to happen.

Alex: It's nice when you're kind of fumbling your way through things. It's more instinctual.

Ryan: Bruce Saltmarsh (formerly of '68 Comeback) has been really helping the Australian scene through his Easter Bilby distro here in the States. How did you hook up with him?

Owen: Through the shows James Arthur played in Australia a couple years back. We played with James and Bruce was drumming for him. He e-mailed me about selling our stuff in the States.

Alex: He's been great.

Ryan: How did you guys hook up a slot on Gonerfest 8 and a government grant for your U.S. tour?

Owen: We just got an e-mail from Bruce and Eric (Friedl) asking us to play.

Ryan: Something of a no-brainer.

Alex: Sure. But then we had to ask them how much they could offer: "I don't know if you can afford us!" [laughs] No. We were just hoping to sleep on their floor!

Ryan: Did you hit up an arts council for the grant?



Adam: There were heaps of boner art as well.

Alex: It was pretty fun.

Alex: Yeah. The Australian Council for the Arts.

Owen: We applied for three grants. One of them we got. It was through International Pathways. I waited to the last moment. I figured if we got the money, it was worth it: pretty good pay for a few days worth of work. I looked at a friend's paperwork for a grant they received, just to see how they did it.

Alex: You can get a lawyer to write one for you.

Ryan: That's usually how it's done in the States.

Alex: They take ten percent of the grant if you get it, but you can get up to \$20,000. Owen wanted to write it himself.

Owen: I got an e-mail from this lawyer that Eddy Current used for their grant. She told me that I didn't have enough time to write one up. I thought, "Oh, shit." She was cool, though, and told me I could give her a call and pick up some tips. The other thing is if you don't get the grant, you still have to pay the lawyer a thousand bucks.

Alex: That's what made me think: if the lawyers don't think there's enough time, then we won't get it. Certainly it wasn't worth taking the risk to pass it off to a lawyer.

Adam: I reckon we did a pretty good job of it.

Alex: Obviously we're amazing grant writers. [laughs] We can sell our grant-writing knowledge to others.

Ryan: Owen can really promote himself: "I'll record your album and get you a grant!"

Alex: And put it out on his label.

Ryan: Do you have any releases coming out soon?

Owen: We have a cassette tape called *Hits from the Zong* out now. We got the name from this incident in Provo, Utah. It was the day Al from Circle Pit ate the weed. We asked these kids if they had a pipe or something. They said, "No. We've got a zong." I asked them, "You mean a bong?" They said, "No. It's a zong." It was a bong, shaped like the letter "Z." [laughs] *Hits from the Zong* is a collection of our old singles that are sold out and demos. Weird shit that we recorded. There's a Dicks cover on it ("Kill from the Heart"). We're going to do a 7" on HoZac and then an album, I think.

Alex: You'll be stoked on the new material. I'm going to do a whole lot of finger tapping and guitar shredding.

Ryan: I predict that in the next two years, you'll develop tinnitus and carpal tunnel, Alex, in your quest to out-shred Yngwie Malmsteen.

Alex: [laughs] That's right.

TOP FIVES

RAZORCAKE

Adam It's Alive

Top 5 Records of 2011... That We Didn't Release

- House Boat, *The Thorns of Life* LP
- Lipstick Homicide / Billy Raygun, Split 12"
- Slow Death, *Born Ugly Got Worse* LP
- Underground Railroad To Candyland, *Knows Your Sins* LP
- Vacation Bible School, *Ruined the Scene* LP

Adam Bowers

- Future Virgins, *Western Problems*
- Iron Chic, *Not Like This*
- Honest Arrow EP
- Owen, *Ghost Town*
- The Enablers, *To Thine Own Ruin Be True*

Adrian Salas

Favorite Songs of 2011

- (In No Particular Order)
5. Fucked Up, "Queen of Hearts"
 4. World/Inferno Friendship Society, "The Politics of Passing Out"
 3. The Babies, "Run Me Over"
 2. Wax Idols, "Gold Sneakers"
 1. Weekend, "Hazel"
- Honorable Mention: Terry Malts, "Something About You" and Cold Showers, "I Don't Mind"

Art Ettinger

- The Connie Dungs, *Young, Dumb and Full of Dung* CD
- Sharp Objects, Self-titled LP
- Kim Phuc, *Copsucker* LP
- Screeching Weasel, *Carnival of Schadenfreude* 12"EP
- Amoebas, Self-titled LP

Ben Snakepit

Five Best Things I Got in the Mail (Or in the Email) Since the Last Issue

- Low Culture demo
- Tenement, *Napalm Dream*
- Too Many Daves, *Weekend at Dave's*
- Dude Jams, *How to Abuse Everything*
- Angry Snowmans, *What We Do Is Festive*

Bill Pinkel

- True Stereo 7"
- Steve Adamyk Band, *Forever Won't Wait* LP
- The Spits, *V* LP
- Night Birds, *The Other Side of Darkness* LP
- Pregnancy Scares, Demo 2011

Billups Allen

Top 5 Band Theme Songs: D.C. Edition

1. Minor Threat's "Minor Threat"
2. Marginal Man's "Marginal Man"
3. Artificial Peace's "Artificial Peace"
4. Teen Idles' "Teen Idles"
5. Government Issue's "G.I."

Candice Tobin

1. Occupy Greendale
2. Crusades, *The Sun Is Down and the Night Is Riding In* LP
3. The Bombay Sweets, Demo
4. Underground Railroad To Candyland, *Bird Roughts* LP
5. Pink Razors, *Scene Suicide* LP

Chad Williams

- No Problem, *And Now This* LP
- Night Birds, *The Other Side of Darkness* LP
- The reformed Hookers live in San Francisco.
- None More Black covering "Damage Inc." at Fest!
- Mastodon, *The Hunter* LP

Chris Mason

1. Night Birds, *The Other Side of Darkness* LP
2. Shoppers, *Silver Year* LP
3. The Men, *Leave Home* LP
4. Steve Adamyk Band, *Forever Won't Wait* LP
5. Vacation, Self-titled LP

Chris Terry

1. Something Fierce, *Don't Be So Cruel* LP
2. Underground Railroad To Candyland, live
3. Kurt Vile, *Smoke Ring for My Halo* LP
4. *RVA Magazine's* "Strange Daze: 1980-89" Richmond hardcore playlist and photobook.
5. youngpioneersflyers.tumblr.com

Christina Zamora

Top 5 Bands I'm Way into Right Now

1. Shimmering Stars
2. Best Coast
3. Be My Doppelganger
4. Lipstick Homicide
5. Peach Kelli Pop

Craven Rock

1. Release of Gina Siciliano's four part comic, *Summertime* in book form.
2. Release of the first print issue of Seattle literary journal, *Monarch Review*.
3. Shabazz Palaces, *Black Up* CD
4. We Are The Augustines, *Book of James* CD
5. Steelhorse, Slatwall, Explemente! at a house

Daryl Gussin

- Steve Adamyk Band, *Forever Won't Wait* LP
- Wreck Of The Zephyr, *For Helen* LP
- Arrivals / Arteries, Split 7"
- Cheeto Champ, *Gets the Giggles* CD
- Triple tie with Slow Death, *Born Ugly Got Worse* CD, Diarrhea Planet, *Loose Jewels* CD, and Sonic Avenues, *Television Youth* CD

Designated Dale

1. Pu\$\$y Cow, Charm Machine, and Harry & The Hendersons 11.15.11 at The Redwood downtown L.A. Thanks for having us along, Señor Dana!
2. Charm Machine and Hands Like Bricks 11.28.11 at 72 North in Pasadena, CA. Thanks to Hovik for making this happen. Kyle and the rest of HLB kill it! See them now.
3. The Angry Snowmans and The Junk 12.2.11 at Alex's in Long Beach, CA. These Snowmans are the best thing to happen to Christmas since the movie, *A Christmas Story*. Fuck. Yeah.
4. AC/DC's *If You Want Blood (You've Got It)* from their still-scorching *Highway to Hell* rekkid. Quite possibly the most near-perfect rock'n'roll song ever written. Have I said this before? Tough shit, I may even put it in my Top Fives list indefinitely. Suck it.
5. Lemmy turning sixty-six years young this past December 24th and continuing to keep it real. Godspeed, Lem!

Daniel Segura

1. Against Me!, *The Eternal Cowboy*
2. Something Fierce, *Don't Be So Cruel*
3. Park Circle (R.I.P. Chiz) Feat. Casey Veggies, "Black Gold"
4. Stranger Kids, Self-titled
5. Choking Victim, *No Gods, No Managers*

Ever a.k.a. The Girl About Town

1. Melt Banana and Retox at The Echoplex
2. Shonen Knife at The Echo
3. Alice Bag in-store at Dr. Strange Records
4. GZA, *Liquid Swords*
5. Turkish Techno, Rumspringer, The Manix, and Dead To Me at VLHS

Jake Shut

1. The Occupy Movement bringing class issues to mainstream political discourse in the U.S.
2. Black Skies, *On the Wings of Time*
3. Ty Segall, *Singles 2007-2010*
4. Banner Pilot, *Heart Beats Pacific*
5. Free breakfast tacos every Wednesday morning at my new job

Jennifer Federico

Top 5 Records I Listened to after the Ramming Speed Show on Saturday

- Slayer, *Reign in Blood*
- Voivod, *Killing Technology*
- Vio-lence, *Eternal Nightmare*
- Metallica, *Garage Days*
- Suicidal Tendencies, Self-titled

Joe Dana

1. Dead To Me, Rumspringer, the Manix, Turkish Techno at VLHS
2. The Atom Age, RVIVR at VLHS
3. Joyce Manor, Lemuria at Nomad Gallery
4. Horror Squad. Killing it anywhere and everywhere they've been playing lately.
5. Countless awesome bands at the Redwood last month: Dudes Night, Inazuma, Angry Snowmans, Hands Like Bricks, the Mormons, French Exit, White Night, the Manix, Harry & The Hendersons, and Charm Machine.

Joe Evans III

- Black Wine, *Summer of Indifference* LP
- Cheeto Champ, *Gets the Giggles* CD

VLHS

- Street Eaters, *Rusty Eyes and Hydrocarbons* LP
- The Maxies, *Going Clubbin' 7"*
- Uh Oh/Off-Days, *Split 7"*

Juan Espinosa

- Spazz, *La Revancha* LP re-press
- Crazy Spirit, *I'm Dead 7"*
- Das Racist, *Relax* LP
- Peach Kelli Pop and Salsa Chips, live at Burger Records
- Culture Kids cassette

Keith Rosson

- Pine Hill Haints, *Evening Star* cassette
- Future Virgins, *Western Problems* LP
- Gateway District, live and *Perfect's Gonna Fail* LP
- Holding On To Sound, *The Tempest 7"*
- And this issue's award for Moldy-Oldie That I'm Just Now Getting Around to Listening To and Is Totally Wrecking Me: Crucifix, *Dehumanization* CD

Ken Dirtnap

- Chosen Few, *The Joke's On Us 12"*
- Barreracudas, *Nocturnal Missions 7"*
- Portland Mutant Party, *Volume 1 7"*
- Therapists, *Hate Sweats* LP
- Sharp Objects LP

Kurt Morris

1. Ida, *I Know about You*
2. James Bond movies
3. *The Muppets* (movie)
4. Notorious B.I.G., *Ready to Die*
5. *Spray Paint the Walls*, by Stevie Chick (book)

Liz Prince

- Top 5 Things That I'm Doing Right Now*
1. Listening to Tenement's *Napalm Dream*
 2. Eating cookie butter out of the jar
 3. Drawing album art for *Masked Intruder*
 4. Reading through the entire EC Horror collection
 5. The Insanity Workout with Shaun T

Mark Twistworthy

1. Heavy Times, *Jacker* LP
2. Flesh Lights / Naw Dude, split 7"
3. Spank Rock, *Everything Is Boring & Everyone Is a Fucking Liar* CD
4. Torche / Part Chimp, *Split 12"*
5. True Sons Of Thunder, *Spoonful of Seedy Dudes* LP

Marty Ploy

- Top 5 Albums of 2011*
- Future Virgins, *Western Problems*

- Crusades, *The Sun Is Down And The Night Is Riding In*
- The Credentials, *Goocher*
- Fucked Up, *David Comes to Life*
- Turkish Techno, *Past Due*

Matt Average

- Self-Interest, *Blooming* EP
- Brain Tumors, Self-titled EP
- Red Pens, Self-titled 7"
- Germ Attack, *Fear of the Unknown* LP
- Teenage Moods, *Mood Ring* LP

Mike Frame

1. Suedehead, all three EPs and live
2. Simon Stokes, *Heathen Angels*
3. Wild Flag, Self-titled
4. Slow Death, *Born Ugly Got Worse*
5. Izzy Stradlin and The Ju Ju Hounds

Naked Rob, The Thrash Attack, SFC

1. Anywhere, *Pyramid Mirrors 7"* (prog-punk)
2. The Monsters, *Pop Up Yours* CD (Swiss r'n'r trash)
3. Archons, *Punish the Stars* LP (SD heaviness)
4. The Grannies, *For Those about to Forget to Rock* LP (SF r'n'r)
5. Vultures United, *To Live and Die in Gainesville 7"* (OC hardcore/punk)

Nardwuar the Human Serviette

- *Equalizing X Distort* Zine (Absolutely the best punk rock zine (and radio show) ever from Canada!)
- *Violence Girl*, by Alice Bag (book)
- Real Estate, live
- *Trouble at the Camera Club* (Book with amazing pics from the early days of the Toronto punk scene '76-'80.)
- Titan Blood EP (Ripping, catchy-as-hell punk from Texas.)

Nighthawk

1. The Cardinals winning the 2011 World Series!
2. King Friday, *Everything Is Not Okay* LP
3. Too Many Daves, *Dawn of the Daves 7"*
4. Dude Jams, *How to Abuse Everything* LP
5. Sexy Crimes, live at Fest

Rev. Nørh

- Barreracudas, *Nocturnal Missions* LP
- Manic Depressives/0:30 Second Flash, split 12"
- Ramma Lamma, *Gimmie Gimmie Gimmie 7"*
- Ramma Lamma, *Little Runaway 7"*
- Alicja-Pop, *I Play the Fool 7"*

Paul Comeau

1. Big Eyes, *Hard Life* LP
2. Iron Hand, *Liquid Assets 7"*
3. Oil Tanker, *The Shadow of Greed* LP
4. Short Walk, *Don't Be One* cassette
5. Weak Teeth, *What a Plague You Are* LP

Rene Navarro

1. Cheeto Champ, *Gets the Giggles* CD
2. Waco Fuck, *Paranoia Is Total Awareness* CD
3. Bio Crisis, *Outlaw Bastards*, Jauria, and Los Dolares, live in TJ
4. Swingin Utters, *A Juvenile Product of the Working Class* LP
5. Wits End, Self-titled 7"

Replay Dave

- Top 5 Records to Endure a Floridian Winter*
- Cutman, *Universal Laws*
 - Post Teens, Self-titled 7"
 - The Measure [SA], *My Heart and the Real World* LP
 - The Bomb, *The Challenger 11"*
 - Black Train Jack, *No Reward* LP

Ronnie Sullivan

- Five Songs I Listened to a Lot in 2011*
1. Washed Out, "Feel It All Around"
 2. The Volt Per Octaves, "Science"
 3. The Growlers, "Graveyard's Full"
 4. The Gravy Street, "This We Know"
 5. Tycho, "Coastal Brake"

Ryan Horky

1. Brand New, *Your Favorite Weapon* LP
2. Worriers, *Past Lives 7"*
3. Master, Self-titled LP
4. Banner Pilot, *Heart Beats Pacific* LP
5. *The Muppets* Soundtrack

Sal Lucci

1. Norton Records 25th Anniversary Party
2. Mark Sultan 7"
3. Ding Dongs 7"
4. Gaye Blades, Self-titled LP
5. Crisis Hotlines, *Don't Wanna Go (To No Jail) 7"*

Samantha Beerhouse

- Blind Willie Johnson, Self-titled
- Something Fierce, *Don't Be So Cruel*
- Iron Chic, *Not Like This*
- Frank Turner, *England Keep My Bones*
- Olu Dara, *From Natchez to New York*

Sean Koeppenick

- Bands That Need to Tour the U.S. in 2012*
1. Chelsea
 2. UK Subs
 3. Girlschool
 4. Cock Sparrer
 5. Anti-Nowhere League

Steve Hart

1. Khrinj reunion show on Maui
2. Eve, *Homeless in San Francisco* (book)
3. Ghoul, *Transmission Zero*
4. Amebix, *Sonic Mass*
5. Jamie Kilstein, *Libel, Slander, and Sedition*

Steve Larder

1. Raising Holy Sparks, *Beyond the Unnamed Bay*
2. Crowd Control, Self-titled 7"
3. In12 Club Benefit Compilation
4. Acid Mothers Temple, *The Ripper at the Heaven's Gates of Dark*
5. Royal Headache LP

Toby Tober

- Top 5 Movies I Have Enjoyed Recently*
1. Terri
 2. *Hot Coffee* (doc)
 3. Drive
 4. *50/50*
 5. *The 11th Day* (doc)

Todd Taylor

- Slow Death, *Born Ugly Got Worse* LP
- Diarrhea Planet, *Loose Jewels* CD
- Pine Hill Haints, *Evening Star* LP and *Welcome to the Midnight Opry* LP
- Tenement, "Taking Everything" b/w "Daylight World" 7"
- Spits, *V* LP
- Waxahatchee, *American Weekend* LP
- Total Control, *Henge Beat* LP

Ty Stranglehold

- Top 5 X Bands*
1. X (US)
 2. X (Australia)
 3. X-Ray Spex
 4. XTC
 5. Xaxaxa

Vincent Battillana

- Arctic Flowers, *Reveries* LP
- Lost Tribe LP
- Sopors 7"
- Vanna Inget, *Allvar* LP
- Wet Bags 7"



1984: *Why Not?:* LP

This reissue of a very campy 1987 Polish new wave demo comes with a cool foldout lyric sheet / poster of the band. They look like a punker Duran Duran and sound about the same. 1984 was a very important group in the history of Polish punk and there's an undeniable charm to the sheer silliness of it all. From what I can tell, this release is an attempt to restore a recording previously only available as a self-released demo cassette. Major props go out to Pasażer and Underground Reality for trying to preserve historic Polish punk. I'm putting the poster up on my wall until someone asks if it's Duran Duran. —Art Ettinger (Underground Factory, xfactoryx.blogspot.com /Pasażer, pasazer.pl)

ABSUM:

To Whom It May Consume: 7" EP

Everything I said about this band when I reviewed their demo still applies. Absum play hardcore with blazing fast riffs, brief spots of guitar wankery, and epic amounts of crew vocals. The three songs from the demo appear here, plus two more, "No Escape," and "Buried Alive." Of the two new songs, "No Escape," is my favorite. The driving guitars and crash accents get you pumped before the vocals even come in, and when they do, you have no choice but to sing along. The guitar wankery here is great, rivaling the title track "To Whom It May Consume," which was my favorite track from the demo. If there's one complaint to make about this 7", it's that it's over too quickly. LP soon please? —Paul J. Comeau (Absum, absumCT@yahoo.com)

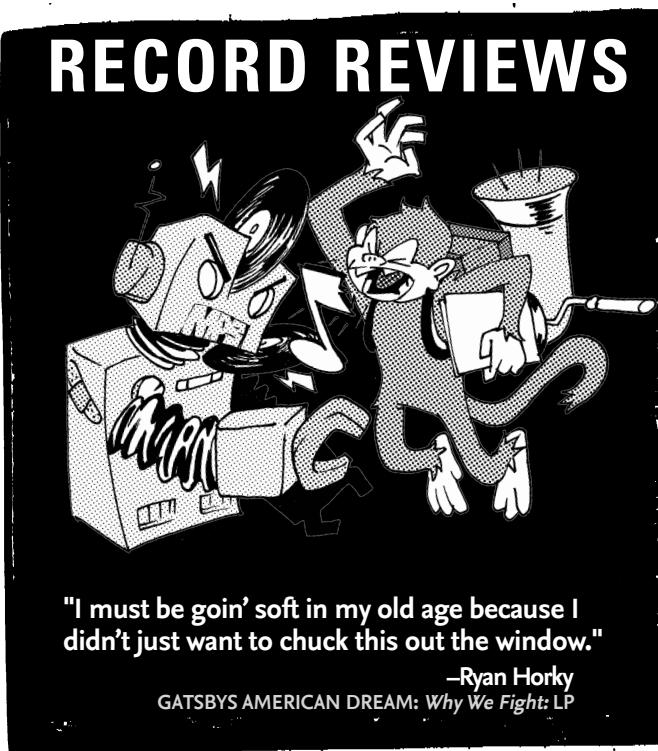
ACID BABY JESUS: *Self-titled:* CD

These Greek noisemongers thank Davila 666, and I reckon that and the underwater photography on the cover are pretty good places to start. You get simple, yet effective, psych-freakout rock, heavy on the rumble 'n' reverb, with perhaps a bit headier doses of Vitamin L than their Puerto Rican pals have heretofore evinced. Play it loud while your party attendees are peaking and watch them clear out in a mad rush. —Jimmy Alvarado (Slovenly, slovenly.com)

ADAM FINCHLER:

Hair Gimmicks of Apathy: CDEP

Formerly of Rubber Molding, Finchler delivers his latest acoustic project of six new tracks. Showcasing his different facets, each song differs from its predecessor. With "Elvis Thermometer" and "Freaky Painting," Adam's brand of quirky narrative is both laugh-out-loud and introspective, reminding me of They Might Be Giants. "I Love the



Woods" veers off into a wistful lap steel solo while the intimate acoustic strumming of "President Coolidge" sounds like it could have been recorded in his bedroom. Where some singer/song writers fall into repetitive song structures and maudlin lyrics, Adam deftly avoids these pitfalls. And I love the album title! Recommended. —Kristen K. (Self-released, adamfinchler@gmail.com)

ALEX CUERVO: *Hallo Mein Name Ist:* 7"

Back when Lux Interior left this Earth, I was upset and my friend Adam consoled me by informing me that at least we still have the Hex Dispensers. I had heard the name, but had no idea that my life was about to change. That band proceeded to take over my being. They instantly shot to the top of my go-to music list. A while later, HD front man Alex Cuervo put out a solo 7" that was also amazingly creepy. Well, here is another solo slab and it's a nice addition to the catalog. Two off-kilter songs that sound so perfect with that odd feeling that something is amiss in the background. Catchy yet menacing. This man can do no wrong in my books! —Ty Stranglehold (Red Lounge, redloungerecords.com)

ALICJA-POP: *"I Play the Fool" b/w "Water Death":* 7"

Incredible 7" from legendary Memphian Alicja Trout. Alicja-

Pop is her power-pop outlet—sort of removed from her darker Lost Sounds/Black Sunday work. "I Play the Fool" has hints of the Rich Kids and The Breeders. B side, "Water Death," is amazing. Alicja's vocals and Ramones-inspired rhythm and lead guitar lines (Walter Lure) are supported by a great drum machine track and Theremin-sounding synth. Alicja continues to put out the greatest records with regularity. I've heard Billy Childish referred to as a "cultural treasure" of Great Britain. If that's true, Alicja's likely our best response. Recommended! —Ryan Leach (Certified PR, certifiedprrecords.com)

AMISTAD, THE / NEW BRUISES: *Split:* 7"

I'm really digging All In Vinyl's series of U.K./American splits. They're totally carrying on the Snuffy Smiles tradition (you know, just with a different country involved). The Amistad: Shit yeah. Catchy-as-hell punk rock from the U.K. Definitely in the same league as their fellow countrymen like Dauntless Elite and Bangers. A couple side notes: 1.) the guitar tone on these recordings is perfect and 2.) "If you find some answers, you've got 140 characters" —totally made me look up how many characters you get in a tweet, and lo and behold the answer is 140. New Bruises:

One of my major complaints with a lot of "gruff" punk is that a lot of bands, try as they might, aren't nearly catchy or interesting enough that I find myself humming their songs when alone. New Bruises is one of the bands that I've never really had that problem with. Solid stuff! Good split. —Chris Mason (All In Vinyl, allinvinyl.com)

AMOEBAS: *Self-titled:* 12" EP

One of the supreme difficulties of being a record reviewer is having seen these waves roll in before in sets. It's far from the first time you've surveyed these waves, seen the gales, know how it'll break, where the kooks'll cluster. You're not as in a hurry to suit up and run into the ocean when the yellow flag with the black dot in the middle is flappin'. So, in attempts to not become Ye Olde Jaded Fuckie, I took my New Beach Alliance time with Amoebas. I took my paperback out, sat on the sand, took naps, got an unexpected sunburn with crisp lines as the Amoebas played over the public announcement speaker. All this metaphor is to say that there's a definite line in the sand between bands worth listening to and bands that are just, "Blah, whatever." The Amoebas are a Michigan band that enjoys the Stitches and the Carbonas in equal measure. It took a few spins to figure, "Yep. They know how to structure a song and how to ride a wave, instead of sneer and expect people to clap at their limited abilities and obscure vinyl collection." Good stuff. —Todd (Modern Action / Gimme)

AMPERE: *Like Shadows:* CD/LP

I used to listen to screamo a lot back in the late '90s and early '00s and loved it, but thought that stuff akin to Hot Cross and pg. 99 had seen its day. Little did I know that Will, the guitarist from Orchid, has been blazing away since 2002 with Ampere. Where have I been? Then again, it's taken Ampere nine years to come out with their first full length of fifteen songs, clocking in at thirteen minutes. I understand the interest in brevity, but I usually prefer my screamy hardcore a bit lengthier. That being said, I think that if my life was going to end in some glorious, severe manner, I'd like this to be the soundtrack. This is the sound of the world collapsing, caving in on itself; this is the sound of everything you love going to shit; this is the sound of desperation, of intense hemorrhaging, of nervous breakdowns. Imagine an English-speaking version of Japan's Envy with much shorter songs and only their full-on blasts of intensity. Former screamo fans—come out of the woodwork and get this! —Kurt Morris (No Idea)

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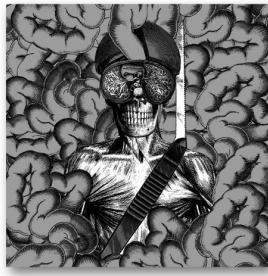
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ANDREW JACKSON JIHAD:**Knife Man: CD**

Getting this in the mail was a strange experience. It took me back to my first Razorcake summer, to seeing these guys live in L.A., buying an EP, and submitting it in my first batch of reviews. I spent a week listening to all my AJJ material before opening this. In other words, I was able to put it into a sort of context as a definite fan. They slow down the tempo here and, while on some songs like "Reign on Me," it takes them to a perfect place; on others they just get stuck somewhere in the middle. There's a strange grey area in between folk music and straightforward rock songs where a few of these tracks reside. It's also kind of long. The track "Sad Song (Intermission)," sounds so much like Bright Eyes it just blows my mind, though I must note I'm only referring to the actual recorded versions. Live, it's a whole different experience, as AJJ mostly tour as a duo and take the songs back to their bare bones, for better or worse. To be quite honest, I didn't really dig the production on this. It's one thing to have a well-produced album with a full rock band instead of the usual acoustics (*Can't Maintain*) and quite another to have one with songs that seem to reach for REM greatness via over-instrumentation and constant sound clips (this one). There are gems here, but there is also coal, which has never been the case with this band, as far as I'm concerned, so I am a bit bummed. —Rene Navarro (Asian Man)

ANTISEPTIC:**Skate Punk Drunk Core: CD**

It's all there in the title of this record, just what you think a record called that would sound like. This is an Indonesian band that has been around since 1990 with a release on a U.S. label. Pretty solid, and if you are inclined toward the majority of 625 releases, you will probably dig this a lot. —Mike Frame (P.I.G.)

ARGUMENT 5.45: Atavism: CD

Heavy modern hardcore, all the way from Moscow. They definitely have listened to a lot of '90s bands like Integrity, Acme, Starkweather, and the rest. The music is more metal than punk: the song structures are complex, time changes galore, crushing wall of guitar, and a vocalist who sounds like he's in constant agony. This is not my favorite style of music, but they do a good job of it, and, unlike a lot of current bands of this genre, Argument 5.45 never stray into that shitty emo sing-songy stuff. They keep the music direct and pummeling. This disc is limited to 250 copies, housed in a tin with cards for lyric sheets, adorned with some awesome artwork from Seryozha "Milkpack" Parshakov. —M.Avrq (OSK, oskrecords.com)

ARRIVALS, THE / THE ARTERIES:**Split: 7"**

The Arrivals are one of the best bands in the entire world. They make music so good you can cry to it and, when the song ends, you have a smile on your face.

Sometimes I forget how weird they are, but then they do something really weird and it's pure magic. If you're not familiar with this band, don't start here. Get your hands on any—and all—of their full-lengths. Doing a split 7" with the Arrivals is a ballsy move, but The Arteries bring it with their two songs. A little more of the EpiFat sound than I'm used to, but it's heartfelt and energetic. Mandatory tracks from both bands. Hunt this one down. —Daryl (All In Vinyl)

ASTRAL: Forever After: CD

Remember dream-pop? These kids sure do, and they've been doing their homework. All the touchstones can be heard in their sound—Cocteau, My Bloody Valentine, Ride, etc.—and in the case of the opener, "Narcissus," it sounds like they ain't above nicking a little of the structure from U2's "New Year's Day." The backline production might be just a wee bit to crisp 'n' clean on occasion when put against the howling guitar, but the strong songwriting is there and it's clear they love what they're doin'. —Jimmy Alvarado (Vibraphone, vibraphonerecords.com)

AVERSIONS, THE:**Nocturnal Ghosts: 12"EP**

These Canadian boys launch their latest batch of U.K.-flavored punk with six new tracks and a booklet with gorgeous, desolate watercolor paintings accompanying each song. Guitar riffs both taut and spindly plus Touchstone's nasal cry remind

me a tad of Bauhaus or Sex Gang Children. This is exemplified in my favorite track, "With Elegance," where the vocals bear a shade of Peter Murphy. Here they vacillate from minimalist Joy Division chords to the effervescent thrash of The Damned. If you miss that elusive goth/punk sound of the early '80s, you best pick this up. Recommended. —Kristen K. (Die In Style)

BANNER PILOT: Heart Beats Pacific: CD

I have a lot of respect for Banner Pilot. I'm a big fan of *Resignation Day*. They were fuckin' great when I saw them live. They're melodic Midwestern punk that's sharing the expansive post-Rivethread legacy of bands like Dear Landlord. But, I can't recommend this record. It totally fuckin' pains me. Nick's voice is Autotuned to death. It sounds like it's a robot programmed to empty a fourteen-year-old-girl's bank account. (Basically, there's my definition of modern pop music.) And Nick's voice is—Bad Religion-style—boosted on the top of the entire mix. I so don't want to be a dick, but it gets more confusing. The dudes in the room are dudes who I also admire. The mixer, Jacques Wait, recorded a lion's share of The Sovietettes. The masterer, Dave Gardner, has worked with John Reis, D4, and Lifter Puller. I just wonder where the Midwestern rust is. Where the broken glass is. Where the frozen windshield and so-cold-the-engine-barely cranks-over is. Where the sound of desperation-to-



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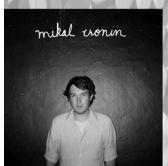
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match-the-lyrics-and-live-execution is. Where's the Steinbeck-in-sound? It's not in the mix, and I've got to assume that this record's not made with folks like me in mind. Not to be selfish, but that's a bummer... the instruments are recorded exceptionally well. Fuck, it feels like I'm sending hate mail to myself with this review. —Todd (Fat)

BANNER PILOT: *Heart Beats Pacific: LP*

You know how life's problems and life's habits can seem a burden? A routine to get through while hoping for something else? You can get lost and found in such struggles. Banner Pilot has that rare ability to give the dramas of life meaning, like a great American novel unfolding on a daily basis. It fills the mundane with meaning, it restores a sense of pride and grandeur in everyday people struggles. Springsteen comes to mind, not musically, but in his ability to write something epic within a three minute-plus rock song that touches the heart of modern life. For me, Banner Pilot take up such efforts, presenting them in the form of Midwest punk gems, full of drive, emotion and tied to a clear sense of time and space, but instantly relatable. Just as we all got a sense of New Jersey thanks to Springsteen, Nick Johnson's lyrics and the band's grounding in the area's punk sound instantly convey an understanding of Minneapolis life. The songs not only convey the immediate themes of love lost and love found, of searching for something more, of hope, it paints a portrait of the place. These portraits don't just set a scene; they

provide contrast to the human emotions at play. It elevates them—as in a world of cold snow and neon signs—they're the only things that are real, that have life. Making what seems everyday, vital; what seems normal, important for living; important as it is the only thing that really matters. Like all Banner Pilot albums, it is emotive, and, in a way, fist-pumpingly defiant. Defiant, not in the sense of an outward rebellion, but of perseverance, of keeping going even when everything seems bleak. At least these are the emotions that it stirs in me. It has that amazing quality of making one feel not so alone in this world. It's that spark that you try and hold on to for dear life, that forms bonds of fandom and love for the music, no matter where we are in the world. Amazing. —Justin George (Fat Wreck Chords)

BARRERACUDAS, THE: *Nocturnal Missions: CD*

Sometimes I think I must've accidentally stepped into some alternate reality and ended up here, where peanut butter prices are going through the roof, three-fourths of honey being sold isn't really honey (hell, nearly every goddamned thing we eat at this point is prefabricated or fucked with in some way to make it inevitably worse for us than it would've been if they'd just left well enough alone), Lady Gaga has a viable music career, and these guys aren't the toast of the friggin' town. A pitch-perfect blend of glam, punk, power pop, and rock here, like if Cheap Trick had actually hailed from New York, or Paul Collins

and Peter Case had been the Ramones' musical brain trust, with a resulting sound stuffed like a goose's liver with wicked catchy hooks, humor, and sly nods to the Misfits and the New York Dolls. This hasn't left my player in days, and, frankly, I don't see that changing any time soon. "Girl" not becoming a bona fide hit would further serve as proof this ain't the version of reality I belong in, so if that don't happen I guess I'm gonna hafta rest comfortable in the fact that in some alternate universe Lady Gaga cleans their flatware for a living. —Jimmy Alvarado (Douché Master)

BIG KIDS: *Phone Home: LP*

Emo punk recorded live. The mix is very rough around the edges, and I wasn't really feeling it. While the stream of consciousness lyrics are top quality, particularly the hilarious "I Am a Romantic Comedy Dude," I found the music itself uninteresting by the second listen. —Paul J. Comeau (Protagonist)

BILL SKINS FIFTH WILL PUNCH YOU RIGHT IN THE FACE / ABSENT MINDS / DESTROY NATE ALLEN / DANGER DEATH RAY: *Split: 7"*

A four-way split 7" by a quartet of Portland bands. Besides delivering a name that is entirely too long, Bill Skins Fifth Will Punch You Right In the Face brings forth a pleasant and fun '60s-sounding keyboard-driven number with no lyrics other than skateboard and other less comprehensible yelling. Absent Minds' song at the end of the first side, "Homeless," starts off with a

sorta hardcore bass line, but moves into unexceptional crusty melodic punk. The leadoff tune on the B-side by Destroy Nate Allen is raggedy folk punk with just male and female vocals backed by acoustic guitar that gets old quick even though it's a fairly brief number. They saved the best for last with a rather fine song by Danger Death Ray. The wonderfully titled, "Zombies Even Eat My Nightmares" is also sort of in a folk punk vein, this time backed up by a full band as well as a prominence of doo-wop influences. —Jake Shut (NXNW)

BLACK FACE: *"I Want to Kill You" b/w "Monster": 7"*

A show of hands: who likes Chuck Dukowski-era Black Flag? Okay, now... who likes Chuck Dukowski-era Black Flag post *Damaged*? What's that, you say? "Chuck didn't play on any of those records, you fuck!" That's true. But he was still a part of the band behind the scenes as a tour manager and SST Records employee. In fact, if you look carefully on the songwriting credits to *My War* and *Slip It In*, you'll notice he actually co-wrote some of those songs as well as performed them live with the Flag prior to Kira taking over the reins. Through SST, Chuck became friends with Eugene Robinson from Oxbow (whose debut album was released by SST). Some decades later, Chuck pitches the idea to Eugene of recording some songs he had intended for Black Flag but decided to keep for himself and that's why this record now exists. "I Want to Kill You" sounds like it could easily

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have made it as a Flag song on *Slip It In*, though it lacks any of Greg Ginn's feedback-soaked power chords in favor of single note fretboard gymnastics and is carried by Dukowski's signature bass thumping. Sadly, "Monster" strays far away from any Black Flag influence and instead sounds like something that Chuck would write for the Chuck Dukowski Sextet (i.e. free form, jazz-influenced, um, music). Those of you who read this far after I mentioned *My War* will surely enjoy side A and possibly side B if you're more cultured than I am. And if you think I'm overcasting Mr. Dukowski's musical credibility by endlessly mentioning Black Flag, you should know that Black Flag's logo borrows directly from the classic Black Flag logo font and even name drops them on the description. More records are in the works and, if anything, it's good to see Chuck is still "in the van," so to speak. —Juan Espinosa (Hydra Head)

BLACK HOLE OF CALCUTTA: **Self-titled: LP**

Interesting mix of hardcore punk with some powerviolence and crust. At times, I hear Capitalist Casualties, and then other times they sound like a crust band with the semi-metallic breakdowns and scalded-throat vocals. I prefer the speedier, straight-ahead approach, as on the songs like "Parasites." There's a lot more urgency in the vocal delivery, and there's time where he sounds like his voice might crack, or he's about to collapse, and that only adds to the tension. The song

"Lie" is a total ripper that reminds me of bands like Coke Bust. Fast and faster is how it's structured. There's some good stuff on here. —M.Avr (Sacred Plague, sacredplague.com)

BLOODCOCKS UK: Self-titled: CD
Simplistic punk rock from Las Vegas. With song titles like "Tokyo Pop Shot," "Godzilla Go-Go," and "Cunt Cunt," you can pretty much figure out what yer gonna get with this. —Jimmy Alvarado (Bloodcocks UK, bloodcocksuk.com)

BOMB, THE: Challenger: 11"

Four new songs, plus live-in the studio alternate versions of some old Bomb favorites. Of the new stuff, I like "Hey World" and the title track the best. Vic Bondi from AOF guests on a song here. But this is the sound of a locked-in band that can run circles around the current crop of bands out there that are trying to rise to the top. The Bomb keeps threatening that this is their last record. I hope not 'cause this is red hot punk rock with mucho attitude. Essential. —Sean Koepenick (No Idea)

BOMBAY SWEETS, THE: Self-titled: CD
Can't say I remember much about what Selby Tigers sounded like, but this band includes a member. The sound is sorta mid-fi garage rock with a tiny smidge of maybe rockabilly and a lotta flamenco-steeped surf guitar. The result is simultaneously toe-tappin' and laid back, giving off a good vibe, smarter and markedly more sophisticated than much of the stuff it'll likely get lumped

in with. —Jimmy Alvarado (The Bombay Sweets, thebombaysweets.blogspot.com)

BRAIN TUMORS: Self-titled: EP

One of the more interesting hardcore records I've heard recently. Brain Tumors can thrash it up with the best of them with blazing tempos and a crushing attack, such as "Improper Execute" and "Self Server." But there's some other stuff going on in their sound as well, and this is what helps them stand out. For instance, the song "Shadow People" shows a more tuneful approach to their sound. It's pretty unexpected after listening to the first side, where the songs are a barrage of speed and sound. But that song really grabs your attention because it's contrasting to everything else. There's a bit of darkness in the music. The song structure is a bit more complex while still retaining the hardcore sound with its high-tension pacing. Then there's the opening to "Rules of Abuse" that has a sort of power pop riff, though distorted and more punchy before they kick into the speedier side of things. —M.Avr (Pass Judgement, passjudgementrecords.com)

BRASS CASKETS / COLD SNAP: Split: 7"

The opener on the Brass Caskets side is a slow, metal-tinged hardcore track. The riffs are down tuned and heavy, but the guitar sticks to interesting chord structures that make the riffs a lot more unique and memorable. Political, Orwellian lyrics and samples make up

the ideas conveyed on both their songs. Cold Snap are a little bit of an odd fit, as their sound is a little more on the Level Plane style screamo side. The riffs are bleak and haunting, but the songs are still legitimately heavy, and the structures hold up really well. I don't typically spring for splits featuring two bands I don't know anything about, so this was a nice surprise to find in my review pile this month. —Ian Wise (Redscroll)

BRASSKNUCKLE BOYS: **Appalachian Bastard: CD**

This CD is a rerelease of the first two Brassknuckle Boys albums, *American Bastard* and *Appalachian Industry*, along with two hot previously unreleased tracks. They're probably the greatest band from Kentucky since the Connie Dungs and have been playing straightforward street punk since the late 1990s. I'd prefer fancy new vinyl reissues of these albums, but this CD is very well put together. As was the case with Patriot, Brassknuckle Boys' lyrics are way more positive than you'd expect. They are super good at delivering the goods when it comes to accessible, catchy punk. Color me immature, but I'll take this over contemporary, multi-layered bands any day. —Art Ettinger (Fighting Poor, brassknuckleboys.org)

BREED, THE: Crossroads: CD

I can tell this Czech band likes bands that I like, I just think they like the bands I like in eras I don't like them. Does that make sense? The Breed sounds a bit like DRI



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and a lot like Discharge, but in their metal years. I kind of like the chanted gang vocals, but can't get past the Metal Zone guitar tones and double bass. Pass. —Chris Mason (Papagajuv Hlasatel, phr.cz)

BRIDGE AND TUNNEL: Rebuilding Year: CD

There are some nice melodic, spacey stuff in this album, with rough post punk peeking out around the edges. But goddamn man, the first song is nearly six minutes long! The album has a tendency to lapse into quietness for too long as it marches toward a slow build that doesn't feel quite earned. There are chunks and moments of songs I really love, but, as a whole, this album doesn't come together. —Candice (No Idea)

BUFFALO BANGERS: "Granite Grandma" b/w "Blockader": 7"

This 7" is really weird but really, really good. Somehow Buffalo Bangers seem to navigate a ton of subgenres in the matter of minutes. While both songs are pretty dark and quirky, "Granite Grandma" sounds like Siouxsie Sioux backed by Joy Division, while Side B sounds like a Patti Smith spoken word piece set to a great melody, quickly turns into this weird chant, and ends up sounding like Kathleen Hannah fronting Beat Happening. But, really, I wish this was longer; my hand is getting sore from flipping this over and over again and again. —Chris Mason (Buffalo Bangers)

BURNING ITCH: Self-titled: LP

Frantic punk rock from this band. The tuneful and urgent delivery topped with a good guitar sound reminds me of early '80s So Cal punk. Check the solo in "Dead End Street" for an example. "Brains Fall Out" reminds me of Plain Wrap quite a bit. Except for "You Should Fucking Die," they never tip the scales into speedy territory, choosing to keep it mid tempo, with a lot of dynamic time changes and a constant, rocking beat that keeps you on your toes and banging your head in a non-hesh sense. I find myself really liking "Say It Again." Not only is the song memorable as hell, but the subject matter easily relatable. —M.Avrq (Tic Tac Totally, tictactotally.com)

CAT PARTY / LA CORDE: Rik L Rik: 7" EP

A four-song split 7" with two bands from Southern California contributing a song on each side. The A side consists of two Negative Trend covers—hence the title of this release—with both being well executed, although the out-of-tune backing vocals on La Corde's version of "Atomic Lawn" sort of detracts from their offering. The B side features an original song by each of the bands that have a sound consistent with the Rik L Rik theme. Both are well-written post punk with a very dark early '80s sound and gothy-sounding vocals. No dis to the late Rik L Rik, but I actually liked both of these bands original compositions better than the covers. Overall, a successful split 7". —Jake Shut (Resurrection, getresurrected.com)

CHAOS UK: Self-titled: LP

Nice reissue of Chaos UK's first album, originally released on Riot City in 1983. You get colored vinyl, an informative insert that includes a brief history courtesy of Wikipedia, a discography, a reprint from *Blown to Bits* zine from 1983, and some flyer art. I haven't followed these guys too close over the years, but this album and their split with Extreme Noise Terror are worthy additions to your collection. The music is fast and noisy no-frills hardcore punk that has inspired more than a few bands, past and present, held in high regard from around the world. Favorite song on here is "The End Is Nigh," that mixes some goth in their style with the brooding bass line and slow tempo, similar to Part 1 and Rudimentary Peni. Songs like "Farmyard" are still corny and too long, but the rest holds up, Can't believe it's nearly thirty years since this originally came out. —M.Avrq (Papagajuv Hlasatel, phr.cz)

CHEETO CHAMP: Gets the Giggles: CD

I left my copy of this CD in my friend's car and was so sad, but the internet, as much as I complain about it, does have its uses. Cheetochamp.bandcamp.com. Hit it up and you can listen to this as many times as you like before you put those five bucks in the mail just to read the lyrics and see the cool stamp. This is some really fun punk rock noise that makes me want to frolic in a living room circle pit. I really liked Adrian's vocal range, as well as the energetic backing vocals. The best song on here

is "Up to You," which is so fucking great I can barely deal with it. It's as beautiful as any song on X's *Under the Big Black Sun*. —Rene Navarro (Lauren / Bite The Cactus)

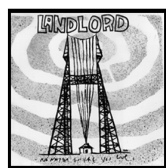
CHEMICAL THREAT: System Error: CD

Thirty years ago, I would've dismissed this as fairly by-the-numbers U.K. punk stuff. These days, however, their sound, and obvious attention to the current state of the world, is a bit more uncommon than it once was, so this comes as a bit of fresh air when put against the piles of their peers who spend their time making hollow shouts at rebelling against an amorphous systems and getting drunk. While the recording quality is still pretty rough, it is definitely an improvement over the last release I remember hearing by 'em, which I guess you could say is progress. —Jimmy Alvarado (Chemical Threat)

CIRIL: Sick Surreal: LP

Wow, this band is weird. Yikes. On side one of the LP, I can't help but think of Jello's vocals in "Meathook up My Rectum"—era Tumor Circus, backed by an oft mid-tempo, sometimes-quirky, sometimes-menacing rock band. Dense music that's occasionally bordering on psychedelic—or at least really, really odd—and utterly convincing. Actually, yeah, couch this one between Tumor Circus and the Butthole Surfers around the time *Psychic*, *Powerless...* came out. And yet, side two is even gloomier and doomier and sounds almost like an

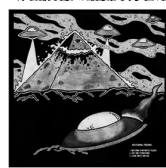
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entirely different band, complete with male-female vocals and a markedly different recording quality? Who the hell are these people? What is going on here? I was ready to write these guys off as just another grind band, judging from the horrible cover art, but they're much more than that. I mean, I don't entirely know *what* they are, but *Sick Surreal* is certainly an odd, captivating listen. The title is absolutely spot-on. This is fever-dream punk. —Keith Rosson (Know)

CITIZEN USELESS: *Don't Die for Lies*: CD

A quick glance at this album's cover art had me excited for what I assumed would be a hilarious, dopey U.S. release with corny lyrics. But instead it's an earnest, amazing, terrific release from Jakarta, Indonesia! The lyrical content ranges from serious political diatribes like "I Hate Americans" and "Day of the Dead," to prototypical teen anthems like "Assole-ium." It's heavily influenced by 1990s street punk, but with a freshness as if Citizen Useless invented that style. The globalization of punk began almost right at its inception, but there still aren't too many releases from even densely populated countries like Indonesia making it to stateside shelves. Fortunately, this fine CD can be found easily and it's a must for fans of hearty, basic fare. How much is a round-trip flight to Indonesia to see these guys live? It's \$1,475 as of this writing. I guess I'm sticking to the recordings for now. —Art Ettinger (Self-released, mspace.com/citizenuseless)

CITIZENS PATROL: *2006-2011*: CD

Wow, the members of this Netherlands band have been quite the busy bees, cranking out oodles of white-hot thrash-o-rama for all the sweaty little boys to run around in circles to. Sounding like they dipped from the same well as Out Cold and added a dash of early Attitude Adjustment to give things a slightly different feel, they start off in overdrive and don't let up until the first third of the ninth song, taking a few seconds to inhale and then letting fly again. Also like the fact that the lyrics (or what I can make out of 'em) aren't afraid to be topical, either. Forty-nine studio tracks pulled from various LPs, EPs, splits 'n' demos, plus a full set tacked onto the end. Tight, fast, well executed, catchy and prolific. Not too shabby for a five year run, and from the looks of it, they're still goin' strong. —Jimmy Alvarado (Shield)

CITY MOUSE: *Self-titled*: 7"

As soon as I dropped the needle, I loved this record in a totally different way than I expected. Let me take a step back. I love Danzig. I have since old times. I'm still coming down from the high of the two Danzig Legacy shows I went to in October. So when I saw this record, I knew I was going to love it for novelty value. The front cover is the Danzig skull modified with mouse ears. The back cover is a photo of three adorable little kids reenacting the blood-drenched Samhain *Initium* cover. I didn't really want to listen to the record. Figured the music couldn't outdo the cover. Holy

shit was I wrong. The vocals come from that inexplicable—but totally human—crossroads between desperation, confusion, power, and anger. The music follows suit. Lyrically, there's a great journey that takes place from the A-side to the B-side. The record opens with a catchy love song and ends with a very thoughtful examination of the reasons for writing those types of songs. The conclusion: "When I can't find no reason, I just find the rhyme." —MP Johnson (It's Alive)

CLOAK OX, THE: *Prisen*: CDEP

Fairly middling alt-rock. Kinda reminds me of that weird period when people were paying more than a hundred dollars for "grunge" Pendletons and bands were trading in their screamers for more nuanced vocalists to go with them walls o' Marshalls and lattes. The music here's more or less okay for what it is, but—and I freely admit that it could be the final mix, or my stereo or some other variable over which the band themselves had no control at all—the "clean" quality of the vocals cause them to stand out in ways that detract from any "edge" the band might be able to muster. —Jimmy Alvarado (Totally Gross National Product)

COMBOMATIX / WHITE FANGS:

Split: 7"

Combomatix: As a person who nearly majored in French, I actively sought good French music. Do you know how rare it is that I hear French music that I like? It's rare, very rare. If I had looked

at the back cover before putting this on, I would have realized that it was French; but I didn't because of the drawings of bullshit like a semi-truck and dream catcher on the front. Anyhow, I thought I was listening to the rad-as-fuck garage rock songs on here, and I was thinking that this band was from some middle of nowhere place in the Midwest—some place devoid of all things to do besides rock out at home. Spastic yet controlled jams. Tight! White Fangs: Another pretty awesome garage rock band—this time from Belgium! Bluesy in their approach compared to the zany Combomatix, but still great. —Vincent (Frantic City, franticcyy.free.fr)

COMPANY: *Die on This Island*: 12" EP

It's not every day a band manages to match their message with an exemplary delivery, but this Portland foursome with former members of Drunken Boat, do. Folks who appreciate Dillinger Four and Minor Threat ought to take note. With thick, meaty, chord-driven post-punk, "70 MPH" transitions half way through from brash, balls-out punk to finish on a haunting whine. When I heard "Bobby Dell," an incredibly personal message to a parent with gut-twisting vocals, I knew this release would be in my regular rotation. This is one of the best records I've heard all year with progressive guitar hooks that take hold and won't let go. Well written and executed; my only gripe is that it's only six songs. I'm on pins for a full length. Recommended. —Kristen K. (Bulkhead, bulkheadrecords.com)



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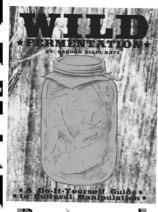
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COMPLAINTS: *No Action: 7"EP*

Another challenge of not being a "record reviewer in the abstract"—like being behind the digital curtain and protected by the irony-and-diction-laden formula of "rock journalism"—is that I tend to actually know not only the people in the band, but the person who mastered the record (Dave Eck), the bands musicians were in before they were in this band (Radio Reelers, Swingin' Utters, Western Addiction), and, shit, I've even seen the bands live that they cover (Slaughter And The Dogs). All of this is the opposite of name dropping. It's just from close listening to records and being an actual, contributing member of a community, not commerce. That's it. I don't want to be a dick and I don't want to be dishonest. The Complaints are continually getting better. My two cents is that I still want more thud and crunch because what I hear is simple punk rock'n'roll. And if we've ever learned anything from Motörhead is that it doesn't have to be flashy or prancy poetry, it just has to feel like you're on a freight train about to run off the tracks. More danger, please. —Todd (Modern Action)

CORMANS, THEE: *Halloween Record with Sound Effects: LP*

The first time I listened to this album, I loved it. Horror-themed instrumentals with surf and R&B elements. It made me think of early Man... Or Astroman? and Impala. The packaging is sweet—heavy cardboard stock and a special slip

cover. Subsequent listenings, however, are making me hate it. The low end is practically non-existent and when you can hear the bass and drums, it sounds too trebly. I had to check the sleeve to make sure Kevin Army wasn't involved (he recorded a lot of late 1980s/early 1990s East Bay bands, mostly for Lookout! Records. Most of his recordings sound like shit—too compressed and trebly.) I don't know if it's intentionally recorded in shit-fi but goddamnit, what idiot mixed these recordings? And the band approved this? I think The Mummies cared more about the sound of their records than Thee Cormans do. —Sal Lucci (In The Red)

CRAFT: *Void: CD*

I like metal. It's one of my favorite genres. When I first started listening to non-mainstream music in middle school, it was the first style I tapped into. I like thrash, grind, speed—just about every subgenre there is. But through it all, there has been one type I have not been able to get into and that is the type that Craft plays: black metal. I've tried listening to Burzum, Mayhem, and Gorgoroth, but have never been able to identify. I often find their music isn't fast or extreme enough—there is a lack of brutality—and the vocals all seem to sound alike from band to band. And don't get me started on the lyrics. Anti-Christian verses and satanic imagery is interesting when done well, but much of the genre can become a parody of itself. That being said, Craft follows many of these same parameters: Cookie

Monster vocals that try and sound evil, in addition to poor lyrics ("My mind screams to me like a black metal record in dissonant accord"). However, one place where Craft seems to best some of their comrades is in regards to musicianship and the songs created on *Void*. While the mix seems to lack consistency, what is played is powerful and has some edge in its delivery. Too often, black metal comes across as one of the weakest subgenres within metal, but Craft seem capable of throwing in some hard riffs and the accompanying guitar solos fit appropriately. Obviously, *Void* isn't my thing but if you want to check out something different in black metal, perhaps this might be up your alley? —Kurt Morris (Southern Lord)

CUBICLE:

The Severance Package: CD-R

A nice bit of hardcore here more in the early L.A. punk sense rather than the modern template that immediately comes to mind. There's a bit more intelligence and sophistication to the delivery than four-chord thrash-orama, and though I think the cover of the Circle Jerks only deprives the band of showcasing another original, what's here is quite good. —Jimmy Alvarado (Cubicle, cubicleband.com)

CULTURE KIDS: *Self-titled: 7"EP*

There's something charming about guitar tones that sound like knives zinging over whetstones. Same goes for vocals that sound like strangulation. Same goes for "I call bullshit! Beer-battered-

bullshit!" lyrics. Who knew JFA's *Blatant Localism* EP wouldn't flat spot after all these years? With skate-infused thrash punk the devils are in the details, and, for some reason, the illustration on the insert bugs me. Think Suicidal Tendencies-ish skull. Think Schmidt Stick—rails (I'm surprised there's not a lapper) with an ankle-biter tip. But there aren't any front trucks on the deck at all. Maybe so the band's name could fit on the graphics. That's weird. I like this record. I'm predisposed to. It's the stuff I loved when I was thirteen years old. No surprises, just shredding. Ditch skating prior to the ascendancy of street, when Rodney Mullen wore day-glo. —Todd (Self-released)

CUM STAIN: *Hurry Up and Kill Yourself...: LP*

This record contains a nice selection of three chord punk'n'roll. I'm usually turned off by graphic names, but I saw Cum Stain last year and they delivered in a big way. The record delivers as well, although it is inexplicably designed to look like a Crass spoof. I don't get the joke, but maybe I am missing something. I can't tell if the lyrics are as extreme as the album title. The opening song, "Bachelor's Life," moves at the pace of poppier Nobunny, and is consequently one of the only songs where the lyrics aren't lost in the reverb. The song is a nice list of things that make up the lexicon of the lone punk dude, including loads of masturbation references. I can't fully make out the lyrics to "Broke

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My Dick.” but I can imagine that it is pretty clear. Still, none of it seems like anti-P.C. shtick. The whole package comes across as sincere, off-the-cuff punkitude. The band is off the rails on a good, fun thing. The record speeds up and slows down and rocks and rolls. It’s a keeper. –Billups Allen (Burger)

CYCLOPS: Self-titled: EP

Looking at the front cover, I was anticipating some shitty stab at punk from some half-assed band. Then I flip it over to the back and see Tina “Boom Boom” Lucchesi from the Trashwomen is on drums. Okay, I could very well be wrong about this band. I can be a prick at times. It’s known to happen. Put the needle down on the record, and hear the opening shouts of “Cyclops” set to a rapid and furious beat that borders on thrash, but they reign it in just a bit and throw in some noise to keep it more punk than bunk. Then they kick into “Fire” and I’m on my feet waving my hands in the air, moving around the room repeating “Oh, fuck yeah!!!” The song that sunk its hooks deep into me has to be “I Have One Eye”; the hammering tempo and to-the-point delivery is primo. Then the follow up “Cyclops Island” has a nice dirty swagger to send you off in a haze. Punk rock for miscreants and eternal juvenile delinquents. –M.Avrq (Johnny Cat / Portland Mutant Party)

CYMEON X:

Free Your Mind, Free Your Body: LP

This deluxe reissue of a classic early Polish straight edge record is a true

labor of love. Glossy packaging and a giant fold-out lyric sheet house the green and black marble vinyl. The foldout lyric sheet includes a rough English translation of the lyrics and a list of all thirty-five of the live shows Cymeon X played when they were an active band from 1992-1994. Polish hardcore of this time period has its own vibe difficult to put a finger on, but it’s somewhat reminiscent of U.S. “youth crew” material, only with a darker, gloomier edge. Get it? Edge? In any event, this is a very cool way to check out a classic, influential Polish band. –Art Ettinger (Pasażer, pasazer.pl)

DEATH BY STEAMSHIP:

S.S. Endurance: LP

You know, I’m not really that impressed by what’s going on right now in Seattle punk, as far as bands go. Seattle is where I live and I’m not being negative, just honest. I’ve got plenty of other things to keep me busy, so if a good band wants to come my way, well, good for me. That’s just what happened when I got this Death By Steamship record in the mail to review. Death By Steamship play a sort of jazzy, post-hardcore that goes from jaggedly-meandering to a more straightforward punk. The album starts out with “Digital Relay,” a timely, punk-as-fuck song about how technology is making us ignorant, detached from our environments, and stupid. One could not ask for a better written and timelier song, at a time when even the punks can’t resist Big Brother Facebook. The ebbing to pounding style of the

band really draws the listener in. The vocals, I feel I must mention, are quite similar to Murder City Devils, and that might not serve them well, being that they’re from Seattle and all. But Jason’s vocals are only similar in cadence and vigor. They lack the grandiosity and theatrical goofiness of M.C.D. Otherwise, they sound quite different, and I would, actually, recommend Death By Steamship if you want a more empowering alternative than the Situationist-jerking-off-to-a noir-film, bad-boy-fantasy style of Murder City Devils. (I like them, too, but c’mon.) Anyway, besides the vocals, D.B.S don’t have any other similarities to those Seattle darlings. They represent a life some of us actually live, the stress of not knowing where the next paycheck is coming from and the small pleasure of being drunk on the bus or wandering the streets tripping balls. This is sincere and relevant shit and, hopefully, they’ll be the next show that I go to, that is, if I’m not too busy scrambling for my next paycheck or wandering the streets tripping balls. –Craven Rock (Whoa! Boat, whoaboatrecords.com)

DECLINE, THE:

Are You Gonna Eat That?: CD

Definitely not The Decline that was on Hostage Records back in 1999. Definitely named after the NOFX song. Yup. –Ty Stranglehold (Pee)

DING DONGS, THE: 7"

Featuring Mark “BBQ” Sultan and Bloodshot Bill. I’m not sure whether

to call this a “side project,” since both Sultan and Bloodshot Bill are involved in so many bands/projects at once, with each other, with friends. Wonderfully incestuous! Four partyin’ rock’n’roll and rockabilly (without getting silly) tunes. I like this better than The Ding Dongs debut LP from last year on Norton. I also like this better than Bloodshot Bill’s project with Sultan’s co-conspirator King Khan (Tandoori Knights). Definitely worth your purchase. –Sal Lucci (Sultan, marksultan.com)

DURBAN POISON:

No Time for Sleep: CDEP

DURBAN POISON:

Stereophonic Tonic: CD

DURBAN POISON: Lost in Space: CD
No frills, true blue, dyed in the wool NY punk rock’n’roll, and you get it in frigg’n spades across these three discs. On one end you have no shortage of love for the Dolls, whose trashy glam-punk swagger is in full evidence on every song on demo-sounding *No Time for Sleep* and subsequently encoded into the DNA of *Stereophonic Tonic*. Every song on the latter is packed with hip-shaking sleaze, including an ace cover of the Marvelettes’ “Too Many Fish in the Sea.” Swinging the pendulum the other way, *Lost in Space* is neck-deep in Ramones leather and power chords. Though their cover of brudder Joey’s now-classic “Merry Christmas (I Don’t Want to Fight Tonight)” doesn’t fare quite as well in the translation as the Marvelettes, the lion’s share of tuneage here is quite the bee’s knees. The total

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mind-fuck of all o' this, though, is it appears these cats ain't even from anywhere near Queens—they hail from Victoria, British Columbia, which sits nearly 5,000 miles from New York. —Jimmy Alvarado (Shake!)

EMPTY HEADS: *Get Real Dumb: 7"*

This came with absolutely no information on the band except that it's limited to three hundred copies. The A side of this record is dirty, poppy, catchy garage punk. The Mean Jeans or Goner Records bands spring to mind immediately. The B side, "Josie" side sells it for me, though. The sound is more aggressive but still pop sensible. It has a raw vibe. The drums and overall tone remind me a lot of an old Chiswick Records LP that probably shouldn't be named. —Ian Wise (Fatal Seizure)

EVENS, THE: *2 Songs: 7"*

It's been a few years since we've heard anything from The Evens, the project of Ian MacKaye and Amy Farina. It's kind of understandable: Ian and Amy had a child together, not to mention Ian is Ian and has a hundred and one things on his plate, including doing interviews with idiots like me. So what will we find now that they've released their first new music since 2006? The two songs served up here are a welcome tease. The music still follows the same general style: Ian plays his baritone guitar, Amy plays the drums, and both sing. Amy takes the lead on the A side, "Warble Factor," and her vocals sound as powerful and soulful as any other

Evens material. The B-side, "Timothy Wright," has Ian setting a gentle tone with his voice. There's certainly no angry yelling here. The song is catchy and an enjoyable listen with Ian's jangly guitar ever-present. While I truly hope there will be further material from The Evens, *2 Songs* is a very satisfying listen in itself and, despite the hiatus, it shows a band that is just as interesting as ever. —Kurt Morris (Dischord)

FISHBONE: *Crazy Glue: CDEP*

Fishbone are a goddamned punk/funk/ska institution in Los Angeles, one that any underground music fan past the age of twenty-five worth his weight in bondage belts knows well to respect. Outsiders in all the best respects, these cats have been taking heed of their own muse for more than three decades and have laid down a body of ass-shaking, stage-diving, moon-stomping gloriousness that should be (if it ain't already) the envy of damned near every band daring to think of dipping their toes into any shallowest corners of the pond in which they do the backstroke. The seven songs presented here are a bit of a crash course in what Fishbone do so well—one Caribbean-inflected jam, a few funky workouts, and a couple of metal-tinged thrashers to get the kiddies worked up. Time will tell if anything here has the staying power of classics like "Lyn' Ass Bitch," "One Planet People," or "Party at Ground Zero," but rest assured you'll have a helluva time getting' down while waiting to find out. —Jimmy Alvarado (DC Jam, dcjamrecords.com)

FLESH LIGHTS: *Muscle Pop: LP*

Amy just told me what a flesh light is. I didn't know. You can look it up yourself, but the short answer is it is something you masturbate with. There are acceptable, sterile pictures on Wiki. I'm sure there are more graphic pictures available if you're game. On vinyl, it means good rocking. This is a solid trio from Austin complete with songs about girls, drugs, and rock'n'roll. Snotty vocals are always the preferred delivery system for lyrics about unrequited love: the type of lyrics that never go out of style when they are done well. The band lights a fire using three-chord verses, short guitar solos, and back up vocals, creating the trifecta for my attention. No bad moments. Awesome. —Billups Allen (Twistworthy)

FUCK DETECTOR: *Self-titled: 7"*

Fargo, North Dakota's Fuck Detector drop seven tracks of crunchy, ravaging Ginn-inspired hardcore on this 45. Any sane person would know right off the bat that this is terrible music, but for fans of terrible music, these are a pretty fabulous batch of tunes. Their basement hardcore approach could be the exact middle ground between other local flavors Quest For Fire and Holy Shit! And containing ex-members of Gumbi only increases that likelihood. Tonight's low in Fargo is 11°F, but Fuck Detector's blood is still boiling. —Daryl (Dumb Choice, dumbchoice@gmail.com)

GATSBYS AMERICAN DREAM:

Why We Fight: LP

This is a reissue the first Gatsbys American Dream record from 2002. All profits apparently go to benefit the charity Water.org. (I think they work to provide clean drinking water to third world countries or something like that.) I may be mistaken, but I think this is the first time this album has seen a vinyl release. I always thought Gatsbys American Dream was one of those New Found Glory-type pop punk bands that sprouted up around the turn of the century and made life unbearable for all of us for awhile there. The (very) tiny amount of research I did in order to review this has led me to believe that they grew out of that style and got more "challenging," though I didn't actually listen to any of their other records to confirm this. This record is basically really slick pop punk with a few musical twists and turns thrown in. I must be goin' soft in my old age because I didn't just want to chuck this out the window. Some of the songs are okay. I don't think I'm ever gonna throw it on the turntable again, but if you were a fan and always wanted this on vinyl, here you go. The gatefold packaging is really nice and the clear/splatter LP looks great. The money goes to a good cause, too. —Ryan Horky (Overdue Collection Agency, overduecollection.com)

GAYE BLADES, THE: *Self-titled: LP*

Gentleman Jesse plus a Black Lip and two other dudes whose names I don't

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recognize. Overall, the album sounds like Gentleman Jesse fronting a cleaner (in sound, not lyrical content) Black Lips. This is a good thing. Songs about heartbreak ("Pretty Boy" and "Don't Get Married") and despair ("We Are Only Gunna Die"). Part of me really wishes "I Wanna Join the James Gang" was about Joe Walsh's pre-Eagles band, but I don't know why. —Sal Lucci (Norton)

GERM ATTACK:

Fear of the Unknown: LP

GERM ATTACK: *Lockdown: 7" flexi*

I'm hearing/reading from various sources that this is the final record from these guys. Too bad, I suppose. I thought they were pretty damn good, and had a few more worthy releases in them. This record is no different than anything they've done before, but it's still worth getting, and, if anything, this album only underscores how great they were at what they were doing: early '80s punk rock U.K. (via present day Quebec) style like what you would here from labels like Riot City and Clay. The music is charged full of energy, the delivery is urgent and confident, and they blast from song to song without much pause. "Demented Killer" is a rager with its racing tempo, and the bass running just underneath the guitar, but not too far down to disappear. "Face the Reaper" is a bona fide classic. I use that word sparingly, but I can promise you will hear people talk about this song in years to come. So f'n good! It's one of the songs that I immediately replay as soon as it's over.

Most of the songs on the second side are ragers that go for broke the whole way through. Crank this up and get caught in the whirlwind of songs like "Dead or Alive," the insane "Crown Attorney," and "Poisonous Lifestyle." The when the record is over, start the process over again. Love this record! One of my top ten for 2011. Then there's the flexi 7" that comes with this. Two songs. The title track is an intense ripper that has a relentless delivery and one that sears into your memory. Then they close out with "Is This Really Hell?"—a bit longer than the first song—but still a crusher. The guitar solos are pretty cool, and add to the urgency. Comes with a massive poster as well. —M.Avrq (Loud Punk, loudpunk.com)

GOD MODE: *Self-titled: Cassette*

Late '80s-style hardcore with a heavy straight-edge influence: guitar sound, breakdowns, gang choruses, and lyrics that look inward. This isn't bad, but it's not entirely "need to hear it again" stuff. That's not to say there's not potential here. If they shorten some songs, crank the guitar up in the mix, hone in on making more of a punch, and stray a bit from the formula, then they could be a force to reckon with. If you like bands of the past like Mouthpiece, Turning Point, Chain Of Strength, and the like, then you may want to check these guys out. —M.Avrq (God Mode, godmodeny@gmail.com)

GRUBERGER BROTHERS, THE: *Greetings from Reading, PA: LP*

...it's always interesting to note how the advent of punk rock stoked the boilers of not just the folks who heard the Ramones or Sex Pistols or Damned for the first time, flipped their lid, cut their hair, bought a guitar and a leather jacket and chucked their Emerson, Lake & Palmer records into the back part of the closet, but also how it aligned with the workaday schmucks who were, due to their preexisting mutation, already attempting to bash out their own solutions to the thorny quadrophonic equations ROCK had become ((e.g., the Dictators)). The Gruberger Brothers published their own zines which predated punk rock ((and its attendant zine culture)) in the early 70's, as well as being in the quasi-legendary ((meaning I've heard of them before)) O. Rex, and the legitimately legendary Afrika Korps. This album covers their various musical escapades from 1978-80, and, not surprisingly, not unlike the prime constituents of the Gulcher/Gizmo/Panic proto-punk axis ((with whom they are aligned)), they are making ROCK which comes out PUNK because THEY FEEL THE RAWK BUT THE RAWK DOES NOT FEEL THEM BACK so fuck it. More often than not, things come out sounding like a sort of amateur hour Dictators ((roll THAT concept around on your tongue for a while!))—e.g., "Here Come the Pussies," "Rock & Roll Is Better Than Music," "Die Donna Die"—with occasional spasms of the sublime ((“Chain Saw”)) and drips of

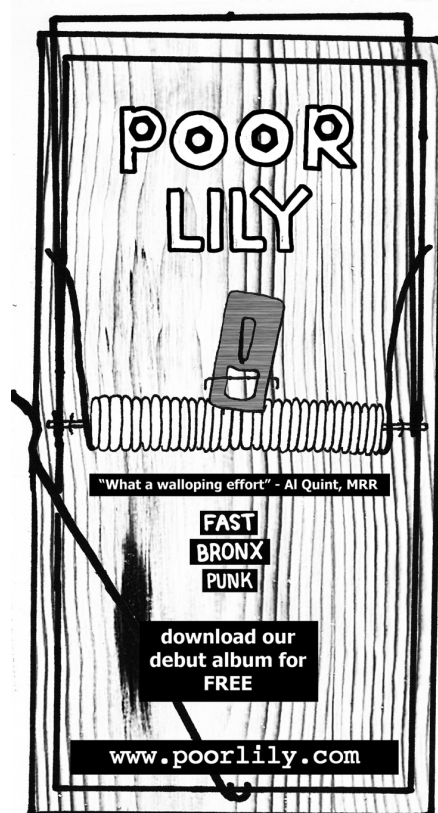
the legitimately retarded ((“Dance Fool Dance”)) for good measure. I cannot, in good conscience, say whether or not owning this record can save your soul; this unsurety clearly opens the door for the concept of Salvation Via Gruberger Brothers to exist as a mathematical possibility. None can ask fairer than that. **BEST SONG:** “Hotel Madness” **BEST SONG TITLE:** “Die Donna Die” **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** I’ve been to Reading and I’ve seen that pagoda on the cover. Weird town. —Rev. Norb (Rerun)

HATEWAVES: *The Tombs: 5"*

Five inches, seven songs, 45 rpm. That's the selling point. Brilliantly crafted tongue-in-cheek lyrics with perfectly curated samples over heavy-as-hell grind with biting, memorable riffs. The production is crisp, which fits nicely for this particular brand of chaos. "Swans Tickets" and "Rotten Apple" are the best and most appropriately paired grind songs I've heard so far this year. Get this immediately, you will laugh out loud and beat up your neighbors in one breath. —Ian Wise (A389)

HEAVY TIMES: *Jacker: CD*

"The Urinals" is my knee-jerk reaction here, and I really don't think it's that far off the mark—deep-in-the-garage, fuzzed out, echo chambered sound and some seriously brittle-sounding guitar are well in evidence here. There's more to 'em, though, much more—shades of Wipers, assorted garage rockers, and maybe even whispers of Joy Division



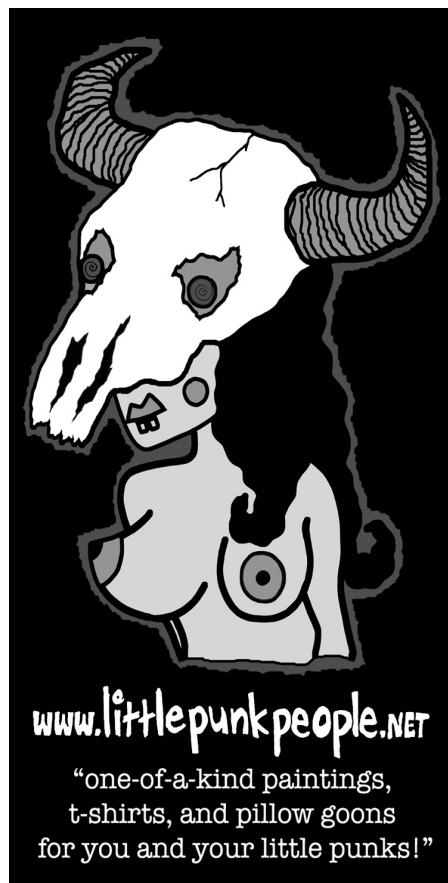
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float in and out. In the end, though, all that dissecting 'n' sub-categorizing doesn't diminish in the least that this is one bad-ass muhfuggin' record. —Jimmy Alvarado (HoZac, hozacrecords.com)

HORACE PINKER:
Local State Inertia: CD

Hot off the presses, the long-running Chicago outfit comes back fierce with this kick ass platter-o-rock. Prickly guitar, soaring harmonies, and passionate songs about the world's ills make this one a no-brainer. "Charms and Pills," "Catch 22," and "The Damage Done" are stand-outs here for me. The packaging is slick, too. I was a bit perplexed about the cryptic "47" message listed inside. BPM? Average age of the band members? Nope—the old hidden track trick! Expertly produced by Mass Giorgini, it's a real sonic treat to listen to real loud. Now if these dudes would only tour outside of Illinois, I would be very happy. —Sean Koepenick (Arctic Rodeo)

INFERNAL NAMES, THE: Self-titled: CD
If I didn't know better, I'd think this was some long-lost early '80s hardcore demo tape that never got released and had been unearthed by one of those labels that do that sorta thing. You know, the good stuff, before it got all rigid and there were too many rules. (Although, who am I kidding—I love that later stuff, too.) Nine ragers that blow by in about eighteen minutes with just enough changes and different parts to keep you interested but not enough to suggest that too much

thought went into them. I imagine firing up the bong and deciding who's making the beer run (and searching for that beer money in the couch) are more important to The Infernal Names than practicing. As it should be with music like this. Good shit. —Ryan Horky (Scumbros)

IRON HAND: Liquid Assets: 7" EP

Featuring former and current members of more great bands than you can count on both hands, Iron Hand is a band that just oozes talent. They play a brand of crushingly heavy and face pummeling crust/d-beat that rivals the best of any bands in either of those genres. Side A of this 7", the title track, "Liquid Assets," is my favorite of their songs. The driving riffs get you head banging even while sitting down, and the blazing leads and backing vocals take the intensity up even higher. Side B features two tracks, the original track "An Ode to No One," and a cover of synth punks The Screamers "122 Hours of Fear." The original offers more of the band's quality riffage, but the real gem on this side is the cover. Replacing the synths of the original Screamers tune with guitars, Iron Hand takes an already raging song to a new level of fury. If crust or d-beat is your thing, this 7" demands your attention. —Paul J. Comeau (Safety Meeting, ironhandcrushesall@gmail.com)

JAMES ARTHUR'S MANHUNT:
"It's Working": 7"

James Arthur's discography is impressive, to say the least. Dude

has worked with Jeffrey Evans, Jay Reatard and Alicja Trout, Darin Lin Wood, Steve Pallow, etc. His self-titled debut album (released on Australian label Aarght! a couple years back) absolutely ruled. This 7" is no different: idiosyncratic sound effects—spooky as hell—with James' great, heavily phased guitar lines on top. The single track is split between the two sides. Don't know what else to tell you except that whenever Mr. Arthur releases a record, I always buy it immediately. —Ryan Leach (In The Red)

JOE JACK TALCUM:
Home Recordings 1984-1990: LP

I am unfamiliar with the oeuvre of this bold songwriterly cossack, but, during the fifty percent of the record when I can actually distinguish the vocals from the acoustic guitar and other miscellaneous sounds, he kinda sounds like a folknik Jad Fair with a snitch of Daniel Johnston on the side—two similarly-aligned studs of the era. During the times when it just sounds like vaguely audible mumbling underneath some kinda acoustic guitar freakout in my left ear and a guy beating on a beer bottle non-stop in my right ear, he reminds me of just how unlistenable those Eugene Chadbourne records were back then, and why did anyone buy them in the first place? Joe Jack appears to be attempting to make some kind of broadly political statement in "Get a Car!", but I don't really know what it is and I don't think he does, either, so screw it. Counterintuitively,

records like these are great for purposes of pizza delivery—you kinda lock yourself in the car with it and one of you eventually comes out alive. Oh, wait, Joe Jack doesn't have a car yet. Well, he knows what I mean. **BEST SONG:** "Stranger Gold" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Hey Lolly" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** My first cassette player loaded cassettes in a manner generally considered to be upside down, and, to this day, I can't tell which side is rewind unless I look at the cassette upside down. —Rev. Nörb (HBBTM)

KEPI GHOUULIE: I Bleed Rock'n'Roll: CD

If there is a true believer in the power of rock'n'roll, it is Kepi. He is like a punk John the Baptist, proselytizing for the likes of Lemmy, Johnny Thunders, Chuck Berry, and Joey Ramone. Having seen him live—both with the Groovie Ghoulies and in various solo incarnations—his shows can almost start to feel like some kind of punk rock revival. Things start on his newest with "Rock'n'Roll Shark" the album's pounding, minimalist, mission statement. It is the pop punk "New Day Rising." Since Kepi's Ghoulies days, he has stretched his wings ever so slightly musically and started incorporating things like acoustics and actual guitar leads. The song "I Bleed Rock'n'Roll" probably has more non-rhythm guitar work than any two Ghoulies albums put together. For the most part, though, he still keeps things pretty simple. Most of the songs follow a speeded-up Chuck

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Berry template, and lyrically deal with two things: love and rock'n'roll. My personal pick is the sort of interlude in the middle of the album, where things slow down for the thirty second acoustic "Unfigureoutable" and extremely direct but endearing "I Just Wanted You to Know." My theory with Kepi is that he is like Social Distortion: despite adhering to a certain sound, he really has noticeably changed overtime, even if a fan's favorite album will probably always be the first one they picked up (in my case, *Fun in the Dark*). Kepi has never released an album I've disliked and this is no exception, especially if it gives him a reason to tour with a full band in the near future. Just like the song "Rock'n'Roll Shark" says, "I gotta keep movin', I gotta keep swimmin', I gotta keep winnin'." —Adrian (Asian Man)

LEATHERFACE: Viva La Arthouse: CD
"At a time when everything was evergreen, evergreen and seemingly ideal/the nights turning into the days and we didn't notice the change... and not a day goes by, that I don't spare you a thought/not a day goes by..." I strongly remember Frankie Stubbs repeatedly belting out that last line the first time I saw them. Seeing this song performed live locked me in for twelve or so years of listening to Leatherface. It's a reflection on lost love, thick with feeling, yet spare and somehow lacking sentimentality. I had no clue who Leatherface was before that show, but I knew I was seeing something special.

And "Not a Day" remains my favorite song. There's much to be said about Frankie Stubbs' often-imitated throat-shredding vocals over the fast, thick walls of the band's heavy melody. As well, as Stubbs' odd, ever-recognizable, indescribable, guitar sound, the way the riffs drop in over the thundering force of the songs. If you're listening to these songs alone, they take you further inside yourself, introspective, yet relieving. If you're listening to these same songs at a show, the crowd turns into a united force singing along, with arms around strangers as if you knew them your whole life. There's a reason for this. It's because Leatherface has tapped into something so intrinsic to struggle and life that the songs work like a medicine over weary and battered souls. Their songs don't offer hope, not as a band-aid, nor in the almost fundamentalist catchphrase way that you'll hear the word today. They don't offer hope at all. They are hope. A constantly relevant hope, because they continue to write songs that hit you where you are. *"I lived here last summer we could smell the drains/While we watched the stinking flies eat what they could find/Well it was all so nice a peasant in paradise/And we will remember this we got burned and never realized,"* go the lyrics to "Peasant in Paradise." When I hear this, I think of an angry man living in some slum, lashing out about the state of his existence. Later on the album is Stubbs belting out *"We don't make bargains and don't deal with markets/ and I want the moon."* It's a steadfast,

unflinching statement of individuality and earnestness that makes any youth crew or oi song seem temporal and insulting. Leatherface is not glassy-eyed positivity, nor are they nihilistic. They are always sharply and often sadly, realistic. They're irritable and pissy, but also warm and embracing. Their songs don't tell you it how it is; they are *with you* about how it is. Hope is just a feeling and one that passes—like happiness or love—replaced with a season of despair and self-doubt, or as they put it "days and days of sour grapes." Leatherface's songs aren't marches or anthems, nor do they wallow in the mire. It is the pure piss and bile of what it is to live in these times, or in any time. But they have just as much a deep appreciation for small pleasures and fleeting love. Leatherface will always be relevant because they cut through the bullshit to the very core of resistance. They cover every part of life and give us, if not the hope, the strength to hunker down for a long, dirty struggle. —Craven Rock (No Idea)

LIQUOR STORE: Yeah Buddy: CD
 The forty-seven-point-five minutes of music contained herein has led me to contemplate what Mick Farren & The Deviants might have sounded like had they been heavily influenced by Sloppy Seconds. This, in turn, prompted me to contemplate time travel as regards bands, and reminded me how important it is, when time traveling, to plug your ears when you arrive, so you don't hear anything cool that you might track back to your own time as an influence,

and thereby alter the course of history. I'm with 'em thru the first seven songs or so, but when they get into the six-minute-song territory, then i start to imagine what it would be like if Rock Bottom & The Spys and I Love Rich influenced The Quick, and i can only conclude that, somehow, this must have happened, and the course of history has therefore been altered without my awareness—so i clearly need to take along better earplugs when time traveling. **BEST SONG:** "Banned from the Block," as it's the most rollicking, and rollickingness is often given short shrift in modern music appreciation. **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Showdown at Wookie Lake," although if it's supposed to be "Wookiee" like in Star Wars, then they forgot the second "e." Or possibly the first. **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** The topless porno model who adorns the disc's cover and graphic has had her eyes manually blacked out by some ((presumably litigation-adverse)) Sharpie™-wielding artisan, but you can still see images of the un-sunglassed cover online. Crazy! —Rev. Nørb (Almost Ready)

LKN / KNIFE THE SYMPHONY: Split: LP
 LKN says *"These songs are all (save but one) insta-sketches... So that's the story of this record, all a bunch of insta-sketches, not worked out, worked over, or punched-in, etc. just the bare bones the seed of an idea, a page in artist's sketchbook..."* What a fucking pretentious asshole! Who fucking does that? Why would you admit such

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a thing? Is it because they think they shit gold or are they making excuses for putting out a crappy record? Never mind all that, you say. "What does it sound like?" It sounds like a music school snob wanking... fuck it! It sounds like a crappy record put out by someone who thinks they shit gold. But that's only half the record, Knife The Symphony plays the other side and they play post rock. Or is post hardcore? Or math rock? It all blends together in my mind because I'm from Louisville, Kentucky, which is one of the towns that helped pioneer this sort of sound. It was into this type of stuff back then when it was fresh and I was more open to new things and wanted music that sounded unique and challenging. At this point in time, this kind of music isn't unique or challenging; it's boring and forgettable and I'm old and just want to rock! There's an interesting time change for you. —Craven Rock (Phratry)

LOW PLACES:

Spiritual Treatment: 12" EP

There seems to be a buzz building for this band, though I think it's premature. Having seen them live and listening to this record, I think they have what it takes, but aren't quite there yet. Musically, they're on the heavy and noisy side of things. The instrumental, "Opfer," is a slow, dirgey hulk of sound: repetitive riffs that border on hypnotic, with distortion bleeding in and out of every crack. The first half of "Controlled Chaos" is a ripper, then they lose it on the second when they go

for the slower, punishing side. What they really should have stayed clear of was covering Neanderthal's "Crawl." It lacks the low end and venom of the original. Low Places are at their strongest playing their originals and when they go for the speedier side, as that's where their music has more power and a near-painful punch. —M.Avrq (A389, a389records.com)

LUCA BRASI: Extended Family: CD

Named after a character in the first *Godfather* flick (or a cool deli in Hoboken—just kidding), these dudes are from the wilds of Tasmania, Australia. Gritty, angular punk with intelligible lyrics. Holy shit, what a rarity these days. Well thought out arrangements and memorable songs make this one stand out. Make your own conclusions about what these guys have been listening to, but give it a fair shake. Loudest thing to come out of Tasmania since that devil dude. Look for the "Daiquiri" version of this record when they tour your town. Nice shot out of the gate, boys. —Sean Koepenick (Broken Bones)

MARK SPARKLES, THE:

Butterflies and Death: LP

You could take just about any one of these songs and put it on one of the old Very Small Records LP compilations and it would fit in flawlessly. Now, that might not be a good thing, as a lot of those records had a lot of stuff on them that I didn't like, but that's what I think when I hear this. This LP offers ten songs of '90s-influenced female/male vocalled

pop punk, fully embracing the DIY aesthetic with home screened covers and amateurish-sounding (for lack of a better word) yet quite earnest songs. —Mark Twistworthy (Abandon Hope, abandonhoperecords@gmail.com)

MARK SULTAN: Whatever I Want: LP

MARK SULTAN: Whenever I Want: LP

Accentuated by Mark Sultan's incredibly soulful voice, these two simultaneously released records contain some of the best songs you're bound to hear this year. Sultan's music is timeless. He pulls from Sun rockabillys, Stax/Atlantic soul singers (LaVern Baker), gospel singers (Sister Rosetta Tharpe), and hardcore punk. His knowledge of music is vast. What makes Mark such an effective artist is that he refuses to self-consciously pigeonhole himself into any scene. The titles of these records aren't misnomers: Sultan's the real deal. *Whatever I Want* and *Whenever I Want* were recorded by Mark with the aid of his Montreal friends over the past year. The caliber of songwriting is flooring. Like the late Gene Clark, Mark jumps from genre to genre. But whereas Clark took a whole album to develop a style, Sultan takes on several genres on just one side of vinyl. That's not to say that Mark's songwriting has the intuitiveness or inventiveness of Clark's (it doesn't), but I place his work in the same league. Certainly Doc Pomus would've appreciated Mark. Praise aside, with these releases a few things are becoming more apparent. Mark Sultan hasn't come any closer to working with a full band.

Sure, Sultan's pals Choyce and Annie Sexareeno make a few appearances. But in terms of having a regular group to help with song development, Mark has elected to go through the process largely on his own. I can't say this is entirely fruitful; most of *Whatever I Want's* best moments come when Mark works with outside help: check Matteo Bordin's great bass lines on "Calloused Hands" or Choyce's James Burton-inspired solo on "Blood on Your Hands." (Choyce is one hell of a guitar player.) Mark Sultan is apparently only able to work with In The Red Records—at least for any sustained period of time. (*Whatever I Want* includes a juvenile dig in the liner notes at perceived enemies.) I think this works to his benefit. I have a lot of faith in In The Red, so much so that I've never listened to a post-ITR Jay Reatard or Black Lips record. The amount of artistic freedom Sultan receives from Larry Hardy is something he must value. Nevertheless, I'm at a point now where I'm getting a little frustrated with Mark's albums. Again, they're amazing. But it's on a track like "Livin' My Life"—with its cleaner production and fuller arrangement—that we get a glimpse of what a full band can do with one of Sultan's songs. A whole album recorded in that environment would likely reveal Mark's work at its best. I have a lot of faith in Sultan. And I'm still waiting for that well-rounded record that'll completely destroy everything else and turn everyone into Mark Sultan fans (which they should be already). —Ryan Leach (In The Red)


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MAXIES, THE: *Going Clubbin': 7"*

Ridiculous concept band, complete with costumes and a polar bear? Check. Over the top, fairly inappropriate jokes, involving "The Clap" and baby seal clubbing (which I can only hope is a dual reference to one of my favorite Brain Fellow moments on SNL)? Check. And songs that hold the whole thing together, by being equally fun and rocking? Check. Give me something fun like this over any boring "serious" band any day. —Joe Evans III (It's Alive)

MAXINES, THE: *Self-titled: 7"EP*

Remember the first time you huffed glue with paint? That fuzzy oval of silver around your mouth and nose from the bag? Before the severe brain damage? Yeah. Good times in the garage. That's where the Maxines come in with their hollow-body-sounding, ragged-crunchy, fuzzed-out, Cramped-up-funfest. Billy Childish and Hasil Adkins nod and twitch and milkshake and Hunch in approval. Gritty Patsy Cline twists out a cigarette with the heel of her shoe and dudes are biting their palms. Two piece. Featuring Matt Murillo of the Jewws (*Razorcake* #11) and a lady who graduated college and didn't get all loadie on aerosols. Put out by the folks who were at the tip of the Tranzmitors rocket. Top that. Nice. —Todd (La-Ti-Da, info@latidatrecords.com, latidatrecords.com)

MEAN JEANS / HOLLYWOOD: *Split: 7"*

Mean Jeans: Continually remind me of kids at school who did everything to

look like they didn't give a fuck, didn't pay attention, clowning all the time, but, in reality, were some of the smartest people in the room. Although they'd never admit it when anybody else was around. So if they're painted by others with the Keystone Kops, Bug Bunny, Ramones tri-colored brush, that's fine, but that's just the brightly lit side of the portrait. Another great song because being this dumb and this catchy is much harder than it looks, even if you're sitting in the front row. Hollywood: Perhaps "I Prefer Drugs" isn't the best introduction to them. It could go either way. It could go in a Midnight Evils direction with balls so big that their scrotes have calluses on 'em. It could go in a, "Wow, that schtick became a noose" direction of Nashville Pussy. Too small of a dose to make a prognosis. Cover features the weird-lookin' dude from *The Room*. —Todd (Big Neck)

MNMNTS: *The Good Life: LP*

This is a German band with English singing; it's on the modern hardcore tip with appealing screamed and raspy vocals. MNMNTS is certainly dark and cerebral with discordant post punk influences and somewhat challenging songwriting alternating between mid- and rapid tempos. However, they manage to muster a catchy chorus now and again and the complexity never gets overbearing and off putting. Recommended to those with bands like Gallows, Converge, and Botch in their record collections. —Jake Shut (Adagio830, adagio830.de)

MONSTERS, THE: *Pop Up Yours!: CD*

There's something about this particular Lightning Beat Man project that makes it especially dear to my blackened little heart. Is it the name? The over-the-top mix of punk-garage-freakout-mondo-gloriously-fucked-upness? Dunno. Likely all of the above. What I do know is that when a tune like "Blow Um Mau Mau," which, not coincidentally, is the sum total of the lyrics as well as the title, comes along, I reflexively crank the stereo up loud enough that people two states over are covering their ears. Theirs is a special brand of rockin' ass-kickery that transcends stereotypes and pigeonholes and demands your full attention. —Jimmy Alvarado (Voodoo Rhythm, voodooorhythm.com)

MOTORJOKE: *1983-1993: 2 x CD*

Know dick about these kids, and this is one of those instances where the internets ain't any help at all, so here's what I can glean from the piddling amount of info that accompanies this: They were from Sweden, they had a fondness for the rock's darker corners, and this is a compilation of assorted EP, LP, and demo recordings dropped onto tape at various points during the decade identified in the title. The hands-down best stuff here are the tracks from their first release, the *Pinnen Rullar Till Peking* EP—five tunes of dark-tinged punk/hardcore that immediately sets the band up with their own voice and apart from the more standard/rote thrash-orama that ruled the roost when it was

originally released in 1985. From there, though, it's a bit of a mixed bag. On the one hand, their explorations in what I guess would now be called "goth" musical memes shows a band willing to push themselves a bit and experiment in sandboxes outside the one they first stepped in. On the other hand, their opting to marry those experiments to a more conventional "rock" sound puts a damper on what might've been some seriously interesting sounds with a bit more abrasiveness and left-turns into wholly uncharted territories. I dunno if five brilliant tunes out of twenty-six are worth the hunt and the green, especially if one manages to find a copy of that first EP all by its lonesome at a respectable price, but good tunes they remain, and hell, maybe the next punter that picks this up'll appreciate their later goth-rock stylings a bit more. —Jimmy Alvarado (Massproduktion)

NAM JUNE PSYCHE:

The Archive Volume I: Cassette

This seems pretty high concept, with a release based on a tour based on recording noise and other stuff (I think there's one track that's mostly a rubber band?). It comes in a DVD case with a poster and zine. If you have some sort of tiny Etsy/indie boutique, this is probably for you. —Joe Evans III (Self-released)

NATURAL CHILD: *1971: Cassette*

The Stooges is one of the blasphemy bands that other bands should never be compared to, but elements of Natural Child include a reliable slab of

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JUSTIN CARPERKINS

Detroit-style proto punk complete with jingle bells and overdriven bass. When they slow down, the songs become mellow Southern rock noddies with vocals reaching into the Rob Tynes stratosphere. Just the stratosphere. Don't go getting a big head about it. Fans of Goner bands or MCS should definitely check it out. Especially the format. This album should be enjoyed on cassette. Pick it up and save it for an overnight drive into the deep South. If you have an old car, drive it. If you do drugs, do them. —Billups Allen (Burger)

NIGHTMARE BOYZZ: "Say What You Mean" b/w "Backyard Coffins": 7"

What is it with the DIY South lately? True Stereo has me self-doubting that I actually have missed out on some good '70s stoner rock and Nightmare Boyzz have me appreciating a band that appreciates The Beach Boys. There's definitely a lot more mixed in; this 7" is both sunshine and the little bits of dust that look like gold as they flit from shadow to light. Or the curling smoke of a stubbed-out cigarette in an ashtray made from a flipped-over, old piston. In no hurry, almost casual. Repurposed and serving a new purpose. A very listenable two songer. —Todd (Arkam)

OBN IIIS: The One and Only: LP

Since I snagged this from the box, it has been on fairly consistent rotation in my dark dwelling. When I'm out in the sunlight, it has received more than its fair share of play on the iPod (this comes with a download card). Not

familiar with their back catalog just yet. Working on it, though. What you get here is some damn good punk rock that draws from the Stooges, Heartbreakers, and Radio Birdman (especially on "New Innocence"). The opener, "If the Shit Fits" runs a bit long, but after that, nothing to complain about. How can you not like songs like "Can't Wait for You to Shut Up"? These are the kinds of songs that make punk great: attitude, and a total "fuck it" approach. But the song that really grabs me is "New Dark Age," which brings to mind early Iggy Pop solo material. It has that great guitar sound that slinks in the darkness, revealing itself in flashes, and the vocal delivery is right on. This song could have gone on for another ten minutes and I wouldn't complain. —M.Avrq (Tic Tac Totally, tictactotally.com)

OGRESSA: Warts and All: CD

This is perhaps the most stoner rock-looking and -sounding record of all time. There is no way a person could look at or hear this band and have any doubt about what they were getting. Sometimes you can judge a book by its cover and be right. Heavy riffs and killer guitar tone, huge drums, great rock vocals—this is some great stoner rock. Riff rock. Desert rock. Whatever term you wanna use, Ogressa does it just right. Scott Reeder from Kyuss even turns up on a few tunes. This is just great and well done for anyone with a massive amount of Man's Ruin Records. —Mike Frame (Dalis Llama, dalisllamarecords.com)

OILTANKER: The Shadow of Greed: LP

All the raw fury Oiltanker brings to their live performance has been captured by this studio recording. From their powerful riffs and furious leads, to thundering drums and growling vocals, the result is first-rate crust in all its gritty glory. Finding highlights on such a good album is tough, but a few that stand out are: "Who's in Control," with its driving riffs and repeated chorus; "Blight," and "By Death or By Force," for some of my favorite riffs; and "Ignorant Bastards," for its sick leads. If you're a fan of crust, this album is a no-brainer. —Paul J. Comeau (No Funeral, oiltankercrust@hotmail.com)

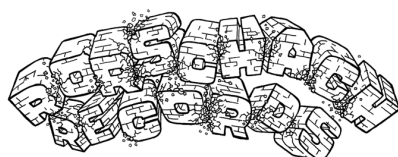
ONIONS, THE: "Alien Astronaut" b/w "Till the End of the Night": 7"

...I like head onion/onion head Brad X ((you might remember him from such movies as *Last Sons of Krypton* and *The Smuts*)). He's kind of an abrasive fuck, but he lives his life solely for purposes of getting wasted and creating rock 'n' roll, and that is a noble state of being, as far as I can tell. "Alien Astronaut" sounds like Crime doing a post-first-two-albums UK Subs cover; "Till the End of the Night" is a smashy cock-rock number about how Brad likes to drink beer, smoke weed, and drink shots. Nice sleeve. I think I'll wear it on Halloween and scare the neighbor kids. BEST SONG: "Alien Astronaut" BEST SONG TITLE: "Alien Astronaut" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: This

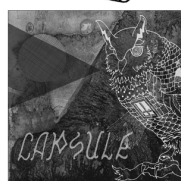
record is on colored vinyl, but I would be hard-pressed to state what exactly color it is. —Rev. Norb (Certified PR)

PACIFICS, THE: Play Favourites: 7" EP

A self-described ((or, more correctly, liner-note-described)) "beat" group from Dublin's fair city, one'd expect this bunch to sound more or less like a different flavor of the Kaisers, which, I suppose, they do—though the playing and the sonic frequencies and the repertoire and the what-not are more evocative of either a more-solid Statics or Thee Headcoats minus Billy Childish, for whatever that's worth. I'm not against any of this, nor am I opposed to an EP consisting of entirely cover songs, but the songs they chose to record ((("You Can't Judge a Book By Its Cover" by Bo Diddley, "Lucille" by Little Richard, "Baby It's You" by the Beatles and "I'm Talking about You" by Chuck Berry)) are just so common and basic that there isn't a lot to whole-hog excite me here. It's kinda like if someone released an EP of 70's punk covers, and it wasn't anything more imaginative than "Blitzkrieg Bop," "God Save the Queen," "New Rose" and "Teenage Kicks." I'm gonna need to see what else these guys got under the hood before they challenge my Atlantics album to a battle of the bands. BEST SONG: They're really all kinda 'bout the same, but I've always liked "Baby It's You" so I'm going to make that surely-unpopular choice. BEST SONG TITLE: "Lucille" because of all the L's. FANTASTIC AMAZING



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TRIVIA FACT: Band misspells “its” as “it’s” in the title of “You Can’t Judge a Book By Its Cover,” but correctly spells “it’s” as “it’s” in “Baby It’s You.” —Rev. Nørb (Bachelor)

PAPER FLEET: *Prairie Fires of the Great West: 7”*

A two-song 7” by a four-piece band from New York that comes packaged with a nifty four-page comic book and includes a download coupon to get both tracks on the record, along with five bonus tracks I didn’t have time to review. The first song in the record is a bouncy and fun little number entitled “Out West,” which is some lighthearted melodic punk tinged with garage rock. However, to quote Public Enemy, the B Side wins again and again with a tune entitled “Plane Crash,” being stylistically similar, but more energetic and powerful than the lead track. —Jake Shut (Ottomen, ottomen.com)

PEER PRECIOUS: *Bless This Mess: LP* Think Fifteen, Crimpshrine, J.Church. Think of people swarming over the band as they play, crawling over frothy waves of shaken beer to grab the mic. But as the guy whose seen the bands they’re influenced by (perhaps knowingly or unknowingly), I hope for the following. 1.) That they would let the songs breathe. It’s a lesson to be learned from the Carrie Nations’ *Be Still*. Because if someone new to the band isn’t rapt in the content of the lyrics, most of the songs, well, they really blend into one another into a

solid chunk. “Roomies” is in the right direction with the long instrumental part before the same-singing-voice-mid-tempo-of-most-of-the-record sound that follows. 2.) Really learn your songs before recording them. I’m, by no means, an audiophile or looking for pro-dudes, but there are several songs that sound unintentionally shaky and falling-out-of-tune (which is fine live, but vinyl’s as close to “forever” as I can conceive). The charm of DIY punk is that—although rough—its intention is crystal clear. (Think cutoff shorts. The edges—no matter how raggedy-assed—don’t matter half as much as the length.) 3.) The good and bad news is that the most instantly memorable song on the record is a Crimpshrine cover. The definite upside is that there’s a ton of room for improvement and there are flashes of much stronger music possible at their fingertips. Shit, man. Sorry I’m not a cheerleader on this one; it’s just that I’ve seen variations of this band hundreds of times over the past twenty years. And they’re the band that’s opening up for the band I’m waiting to see. —Todd (Anti-Civ, anticivrecords@yahoo.com / Dirt Cult)

PINE HILL HAINTS, THE: *Welcome to the Midnight Opry: LP*
PINE HILL HAINTS, THE: *The Evening Star: LP*

The future and past are filled with ghosts. Ghosts of memory. Ghosts of potential. The Pine Hill Haints somehow interconnect and harvest those two ghosts like sheets made out

of smoke. To call them “old timey” music is a disservice because, although they play traditional music amplified, there’s no fuzzy mittens of nostalgia in their music, no regression to a time that exists as mere fable. One of the largest issues I have with new music is the motherfucking robots—with their bloodless computer brains, microchips, software, social programming digitized—making it. The Haints have the ability to continually remind me that all music’s worth listening to is based on the human heart. The valves. The pumping. The thrum in your ears. The pulse at the wrist. The thud, thud, thud, that it you listen to it closely, that if you listen to it for long periods of time, you can swear that you see a simple beat twining above you into this thing called a soul. In my book, music that does that is rare. *Welcome to the Midnight Opry* is a full-length of new songs. *The Evening Star* is a collection of previously released songs and it’s nice to have them all in the same basket. —Todd (Opry, K, krees.com / Evening Star, Black Owl Radio)

PINE HILL HAINTS: *The Evening Star: Cassette*

Here is another banjo-shredding release from folk punk/bluegrass favorites, The Haints. This limited edition cassette with an awesome silk screened cover is comprised of new tracks and rare 7” releases, but don’t stress, the LP version is widely available. Recorded in 2007, the same year as *Ghost Dance*, this could almost be an extension of those jangly banjo rhythms and numinous ballads.

“Black Casket,” their latest single, is also thrown into the mix. While this isn’t anything new from The Haints’ repertoire, it goes to show: if it ain’t broke... Makes me wish I could carry my boom box around like in the ‘80s blasting fiddle tunes. For those who love a good ghost story, here’s something to warm your bones. Recommended. —Kristen K. (45RPM, calimuchonet.net)

PIZZA HI FIVE / INFERNAL STRONGHOLD: *Split: 7”*

Pizza Hi Five: Eight songs of precise, brutal grindcore with some pretty goddamn hilarious lyrics. Part of “Neglegent DJ” (sic) goes, “Dude what is this shit you’re playing? Please put on some grind tunes. It’s the least that you could do. Could you do that shit for me? I need blast beats in my ears.” Or my personal favorite, the end of “Extreme Make Over,” regarding the fallacies of the cosmetic surgery industry: “Surgery’s your only hope. Did not work. Still ugly. You’d look better with your face ripped off.” You charmers, you. Infernal Stronghold: Lots of double bass, muted guitar, and growled vocals—this is some wire-tight, apocalyptic thrash with some serious metal flourishes. Nowhere near my preferred genre, but these two bands seem like a good pairing. —Keith Rosson (Sit & Spin)

POWERBLESSINGS: *Self-titled: 7”* I don’t know if it’s intentional or not, but this band really has a Jesus Lizard vibe going on. And, hey, that’s A-okay with me! This four-song 7” features angular

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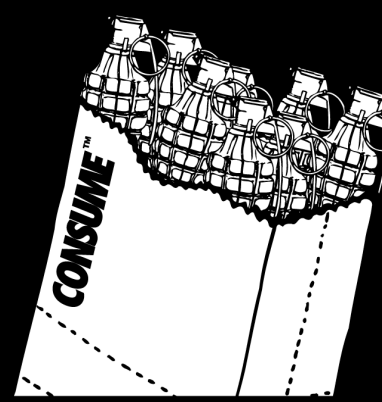
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guitar riffs and driving drums with snotty shouted vocals that somehow remind me of a cross between David Yow and Chad Malone (from Brother Inferior). Good stuff that's warranted repeated listens. —Chris Mason (Manhattan Chemical and Electric, manhattanchemicalandelectric.bigcartel.com)

PRETTY BOY THORSON AND 'LIL HAPPINESS: "I Can't Get High" b/w "Keep on Waiting": 7"

Why do I keep flashing back to episodes of *Simon and Simon*? Is this 7" what'd be playing on the jukebox of a biker bar in my eight-year-old mind? Does it sound like a brown and orange Power Wagon slowly solving a mystery? Is this fair to Jesse and the dialed-in MPLS band he's rodeo'd into this little spinner? "Really, dude, you're comparing our band to a show that wasn't as good as *Hardcastle and McCormick* or *Cagney and Lacey*? C'mon." The B-side of my copy of this record is warped, but the A-side plays just fine. That doesn't happen very often. There's something heavy-work-pant, pretzels-make-beer fancy about Jesse Thorson-helmed bands that makes the songs both go down real easy and worth listening to repeatedly... on the jukebox... of an eight-year-old kid's mind... Just put it on an MP3 player or something. —Todd (ADD, addrees.com)

PROTESTANT: Stalemate: 10"

Great follow-up to their *Judgments* LP. In fact, I'm of the opinion the material on here surpasses the previous. They

definitely fall into the realm of bands like Tragedy and Artimus Pyle (more towards the latter end of the spectrum with the heavy and crushing, rawer style). It's a sound that has been done to death, but when a band is good, it doesn't matter. They breathe much-needed life into the genre and pretty much make it their own. Not to mention it seems like they really believe in what they're singing, instead of hiding behind opaque lyrics and playing to the masses. There are the crushers, like the opener "Nothing Left," which stays close to form, but it's when they start to break out and add melody and more texture is when they stand strongest, especially on the last two songs, "Regrets" and "Swindle." Pairing the two contrasting styles—the harsh and melodic—really brings the power of the music out, highlighting the heaviness, darkness, and sheer drive of the music. The changeup in "Misplaced" is a good example. The song whips you around for the majority of the time, then they switch up into a catchier riff that gets more melodic as the seconds tick by. Then you have a song like "Corners" that has guitar work that reminds me a bit of Iron Maiden, and it's an awesome song. This record has you stopping whatever it is your doing and makes you just listen. Fuggin' great! —M.Avr (Halo Of Flies, halooffliesrecords.com)

PRUMYSLOVA SMRT / RAPSDOD: Split: 7"

The Cthulu-inspired tentacled monstrosity on the cover pointed

me in the right direction: this one's chock full of dark, metal-influenced hardcore. Rapsdod's got oodles of those little metallic guitar dives peppered in between yelped vocals, with the second song relying heavily on gang vocals; it's somewhere between crust and metallic youth crew stuff, which actually sounds better than it reads here. Prumyslova Smrt is significantly crustier and doom-heavy, with a drummer that clearly adores his double-bass pedal. Think Armistice or the harsher moments in the Awakening discography. Both bands sing in Czech with English translations, with "fuck you all" apparently reading as the same in both. —Keith Rosson (PH)

RALPH CARNEY'S SERIOUS JASS PROJECT: Seriously: CD

Ralph Carney is a multi-instrumentalist who's been associated with bands in what seems like damned near every corner of the new wave—B-52s, The Waitresses, They Might Be Giants, Talking Heads, Jonathan Richman, and the list goes on. As the band's name and the title suggest, this is jazz, specifically along the lines of small-group, ragtime-derived early swing (hence the "jass" spelling, I'm guessing). The lion's share of stuff here are run-throughs of standards (like "Echoes of Harlem," "You Took Advantage of Me," and "I Wish I Were Twins"), and they handily do them justice—solid musicianship, choice soloing, and a sense of respect not so bogged down with reverence

that no room is left for some playful bounce. If traditional jazz is yer chosen poison, this'll go down nicely. —Jimmy Alvarado (Smog Veil)

RAMMA LAMMA: "Gimme Gimme Gimme" b/w "Rock'n'Roll Lady": 7"

...Ramma Lamma are my favorite Wisconsin band right now, although that could be a matter of damning them with faint praise at this juncture. They answer the age old ((okay, day old)) question of what it would be like if a less-annoying Suzi Quatro fronted a three-piece version of Slade and played Mud covers, or Cichlids covers, or something deep like that, as well as the question of what would happen if someone spelled "Rama Lama" with extra M's. They continue their jaunty strut to bang-shang-a-lang-gri-la by creating that rarest of fowls, a Christmas 45 THAT DOESN'T SUCK. Unless you bothered listening closely to the lyrics, as so many young people do, you wouldn't really know it was a Christmas 45, and that's the kind of sugar cookies Santa likes. The A-side chorus of "*Christmas time is a time for givin', so give me everything you got / don't bother givin' me nothin' baby, unless you're gonna spend the night*" manages to completely fit the whole "Christmas" bit into Ramma Lamma's standard agenda of Rockin', and...and Lovin', and...and...Rockin' some more, instead of the other way around—fitting the Rock Agenda into the Christmas paradigm—and that is exactly As It Should Be. The synth



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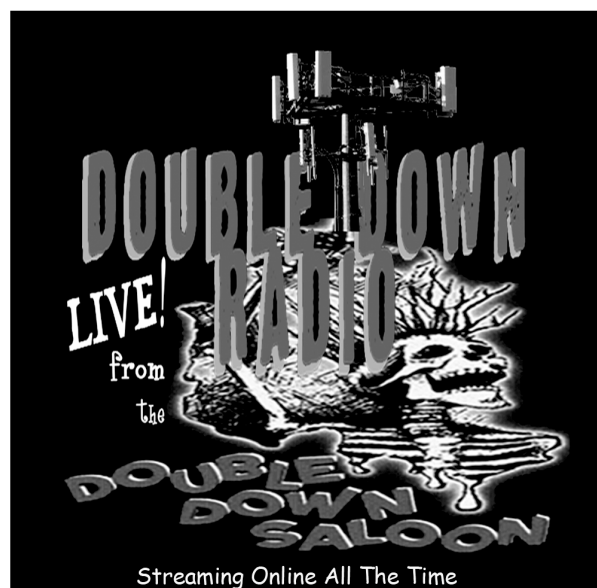
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interlude is properly unexpected, and the real or imagined sleigh bells add a respectful dollop of surrendering without giving oneself away. The b-side is a little more heavy-handed in its Christmassyness, but they have the good sense to steal the riff to "Gudbuy T'Jane" so it's all good. Throw in a sugarplum fairy or two and we'll call it a deal! BEST SONG: "Gimme Gimme Gimme Gimme" BEST SONG TITLE: "Gimme Gimme Gimme Gimme" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: I recorded one Christmas song about twenty years ago, which was called "Gimme Stuff." In light of recent events, I should have called it "Gimme Gimme Gimme Gimme Stuff." —Rev. Nørb (Certified PR)

REACTORS: "It's Not Important" b/w "Cold Eyes": 7"

I can never keep my Reactors straight; luckily, Rerun Records has taken care of that for me by informing me that this is a reissue of the 1980 45 by the Austin band of said nomenclature. I dunno. The a-side sounds kind of like a bad song on the first Plugz album crossed with a bad song on the first Wipers album, and the B-side is a less-ambitious reduction of same. There was always something about the intersection of this kind of vaguely pompous, art-punk type vocal style with the generally underproduced/underexecuted reality of early 80's punk records that always put me off, and it still kinda does, though not quite to the same extent. ((waves hand, Jedi-Mind-Trick style)) *These*

aren't the Reactors you're looking for. I guess these weren't the Reactors I was looking for. BEST SONG: "Cold Eyes" BEST SONG TITLE: "It's Not Important" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: The updated sleeve replaces the old mailing address with a website, but the website font does not match the rest of the type, which will certainly confuse the authorities thirty years from now. —Rev. Nørb (Rerun)

RKL: *Greatest Hits*: CD

RKL was one of those bands who managed to transcend Mystic Records' notoriously shitty recording quality and release at great hardcore 45, *It's a Beautiful Feeling*, at a time when the genre was getting to a point of generic ridiculousness, especially in the case of Mystic's output at the time. Oddly enough, though I really dug that release and saw them at least once or twice back then, I never paid much attention past that. Outside of my go-to "I spent a helluva lotta time drunk as a muh-fuh back then" excuse, I've got no explanation why. I know they kinda popped things up after a bit and influenced peers like NOFX as a result, and that might actually go-to reason number two, but prior to this, I can't think of a song of theirs past 1987 or so I've heard. No matter. This is, for the most part, a rock-solid live "hardcore" set recorded in West Berlin in 1988. The band is pretty much on-point—and it's pretty goddamned impressive hearing just how proficient they were on their instruments—the sound quality is right

off the board, so it's purty sounding for all you audio fascists, plus there's an unlisted plethora of what sounds like their later poppier stuff I'm guessing is heretofore unreleased, and the booklet identifies a link where you can watch footage of the band from around the time the live stuff was recorded. —Jimmy Alvarado (Destiny, destiny-tourbooking.com)

RULETA RUSA:

"La Ley" b/w "Psoriasis": 7"

Spanish-speaking band singing about bad cops and bad dandruff (as a metaphor for fucked medical care). The singer is convincingly spitty and bristling. The guitars are rock but crash instead of long-stroke wank the fretboard. If it wasn't recorded and mastered so well, this could be slipped on in an early *Killed by Death* and few would be any the wiser. Sounds the equivalent to a stick-and-poke tattoo, a well-worn leather jacket, and mottled teeth. On point and achieving exactly what they're going for. Strong. —Todd (Modern Action)

SANOV1: *Delikatesy*: CD

This Czech band will whip you into a frenzy when playing four-chord, '82-style metallic punk. I wish they did that more because the rest of the CD sounds like a ham-handed Faith No More with Cryptkeeper on the mic. —Chris Terry (Papagajuv Hlasatel, PHR.com)

SCREAMING FEMALES: *Baby Teeth*: LP

Originally self-released by the band in 2006, *Baby Teeth* returns to print

thanks to Screaming Females' label Don Giovanni. The Females' first full-length is laden with the noodly guitar riffs and bass lines that made us all fans of theirs to begin with. Returning to this album in a fresh vinyl update is a lot like rekindling a relationship with an old flame and finding the sparks are still there. —Paul J. Comeau (Don Giovanni, screamingfemales@gmail.com)

SEX CULT: *Errand Boy*: EP

With a name like Sex Cult, you get my attention. Then there's the retro minimal punk cover art of the diagonal black and grey lines printed on a paper sleeve. So far, so good. Get home and put the record on the turntable, and I'm hit with some lo-fi punk rock that has a psychedelic side. The guitar has a tinny sound (think Swell Maps), but it works here and doesn't hinder the power. Just check out the squalling sounds they get out of it on "Start to Wonder," which is a mid-tempo plodder that goes out in to the outer realms and back again. The title track is a catchy burst. "Sid Visions" rises out of the heat with a nice cruising speed and a delivery with some attitude and urgency. It's my favorite cut on here. I anticipate there's more to follow? One for your want list. —M.Avrq (Goner, goner-records.com)

SHARP BALLOONS: "Evening News": 7"

Raw punk rock here. As amateurish as Kleenex and Catholic Discipline. "Evening News" was recorded at someone's house. The music doesn't hide it. Fucking brutal as hell. And

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impressive. Then again, it's on Goner, so what did you expect? —Ryan Leach (Goner, goner-records.com)

SHORT WALK: *Don't Be One: Cassette*

I'm going to either burn out the cassette player in my car or get a massive speeding ticket for how often and how hard I rock out to this tape while I'm driving. Short Walk plays face-ripping fastcore/powerviolence with lots of blast beats and the occasional brief slow and heavy breakdown. There are twelve songs on this tape with hilarious names like "Retail Retard," and "I'm Boring, Fuck You." Each track is a screaming onslaught of guitars and drums, all clocking in at under forty-five seconds, and there's not a dud among them. My only disappointment with this tape was a lack of lyric sheets so I could scream along. — Paul J. Comeau (Short Walk, playfastcore@gmail.com, shortwalk.bandcamp.com)

SLOW DEATH, THE:

Born Ugly Got Worse: LP

Premature death's a funny thing, especially if it's exaggerated. So, Pretty Boy Thorson And The Falling Angels didn't actually die. A couple of them went off into relationship cocoons that transformed into butterflies that flew back to Minneapolis. But in that pupal stage of becoming pretty in other states, Jesse Thorson was busy gettin' himself a little lady, took up a deep interest in ducks and tractors, and formed a new band. "So, Todd 'you still make that little zine?' Taylor, what you're saying

is that Jesse Thorson is now in two bands?" No. He's in four. "Well, what's the difference?" Does it really matter? Actually. A bit. Flip the cards over one after another: Jesse dances in this band since he isn't tethered by a guitar. Saw him throw up twice in one day—two sets five or six hours apart. Meat. Potatoes. Homemade pizza. Your drugs are mine. Midwest. Bad decisions as rusted crowns. Large bellies as fulcrum points to not passing out. Happy misery. Miserable happiness. Now, debuting 'lil happiness. Long drives on questionable tires. Mikey Erg. Harpoons of self-doubt. Paddy Costello. Johnny Cellphone. Dave Strait. Super. Group. Of dudes. Cock Sparrer as American, country-fringed, and snow-tough. Or Johnny Cougar playing Defiance songs. And really great enunciation. This isn't a diss: this record's like an invisible electric dog fence. I've been hearing Jesse sing these songs for years—you can see the well-worn tracks in the lawn—but it's always a pleasure to watch him catch those frisbees, bring them back, then pee on your leg for your time. Guess what? Excellent record. PS: I'm offering ten dollars for anyone to send me a copy of Jesse's emo zine that he's Stalinized. —Todd (Kiss Of Death)

SPITS: THE:

Self-titled — but I'm calling it Five: CD

Well, I think it's time to say it. The Spits are—whatever generation this is—Ramones. They simultaneously make the same record over and over again. But that's a fuckin' lie. Because

there's always some new mutation radioactively lurking from under the bed or zip-zap lightning bolting from an airborne creature's eye with each self-titled record. They've taken back the alleys. They're now in the water supply and spray painting dongs on the top of Mt. Shasta. Like mold culture spreading, changing colors, and sprouting hair on the forgotten last slice of pizza rattling around in the box, the Spits have harnessed the power of readymade-made-dangerous. All you—as the listener—have to do is decide to chomp on down instead of throwing The Spits away like an empty box. Pupils dilate. Motor skills slacken. Craving for glue increases. Durable punk for these weird-ass times. Who knew The Spits would have such legs, be so prolific, be some of the last men on earth? Great radiation-mutant rock. —Todd (In The Red, intheredrecords.com)

SPOONBOY: *The Papas: CD*

There's apparently a zine that accompanies this with lyrics 'n' assorted tales, but I wasn't privy to it, so based solely on the music, yer gettin' quasi-angry poppy/punk/indie stuff here. While the nasal vocal delivery kinda wears thin and the songs start to blend into one another after a while, Mr. Boy knows his way around a hook and lyrics, and in smaller, more digestible bites, the tunes would make for worthwhile radio listening, assuming of course the radio was still worth listening to in the first place. —Jimmy Alvarado (Discount Horse, discount-horse.com)

STEVE ADAMYK BAND:

Forever Won't Wait: LP

It's not always a good thing to have your band compared to the Marked Men, because well...it's the MARKED MEN! Side by side with the average punk band, you might as well be comparing stains in the carpet to holographic alien hieroglyphics. There's a pretty high bar. But The Steve Adamyk Band aren't an average punk band. Utilizing the same pent-up energy and harmonic elements, they follow a similar path giving equal credence to power pop, garage punk, and poppy punk rock. Once again, Ottawa attacks with a barrage of absolutely killer choruses, yet this time they send in the finisher disguised as a crucial Dickies' cover. If you haven't checked this band out due to the international shipping rates, here's your chance; and it's worth taking. —Daryl (Dirtnap)

TEENAGE MOODS: *Mood Ring: LP*

Excellent! After hearing their self-titled 7" from a year back, I was hoping they would put out more music. This does not disappoint. If you like the single, you'll like this. If you haven't heard Teenage Moods yet, then you need to. Stylistically along the lines of late-'80s, early-'90s indie noise pop. There's distortion with melody. The comparison to Vaselines still stands, then there's some stuff like Dinosaur Jr, and Pixies buried in the music, but these guys inject enough of their own personality into the sound. The guitars are, at times, jangly, then abrasive and distorted, then there's the bass that is right up there in the mix,



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which gives the songs more lift. I can not get "Yellow War" out of my head to save my life. But the songs that I really like are "Our Little Dirt" (great song!), "World Bouquet," and "No Place for a Tiger." Quality listening. —M.Avrq (25 Diamonds, 25diamonds.blogspot.com)

TENEMENT: *Blink Wink*: LP

How does a band that put out a near-perfect record last summer (*Napalm Dream*) go back and top it? By going down to the basement and banging out more great songs—that's how. Amos handles most of the instruments on this bad boy. Longtime bassist Jesse Ponkamo only plays bass on two songs, but adds piano and percussion here and there. "Medical Curiosity" may throw some fans for a loop, but it kind of has an "Androgynous" feel to it. Certainly, Amos and Westerberg have about the same skill level on keys! I predict "Senile" will be a great sing-a-long live: "we're building bridges/just to jump right off." "Lost Love Star Lust" features a cool guitar riff that I think Robert Pollard may try to rip off. I think you get the point here. *Blind Wink* is the best thing to come out of Milwaukee since *Happy Days* (pre-Ted McGinley, of course). —Sean Koepenick (Dead Broke)

TERRIBLE FEELINGS: *Tied Up*: 7"

Another excellent record from this band. This picks up where their *Impending Doom* single left off, though instead of songs about death, what you have here is one of denial, insecurity, and what appears to be complicated emotions.

Both songs are strong and the kind that deserve repeated listens. Manuela has a great voice that displays a lot of power and emotion without resorting to shouting or screaming. Somewhat like Kat Arthur from Legal Weapon. The guitar work creates the mood and underscores the emotion in the words, with a rhythm section that adds the fire. "No Meaning" is a song that I wished lasted forever. —M.Avrq (THH, crko-thh.blogspot.com)

THULSA DOOM: *1998-2000: 10"*

Wow, I was hooked on the first listen. Thulsa Doom was a crusty East Coast hardcore band akin to the Profits or a more straight-forward Anti-Product. This discography 10" gathers their lone EP, a split with Distraught, and two unreleased songs. Judging from the fliers included, they played some great shows, with everyone from the Subhumans and Vice Squad to Aus-Rotten and the Varukers. While I don't know why their material is being gathered now, over a decade after their demise, I'm not complaining. This stuff is great: authentic, well-executed and dirty punk shit. It's concise, rapid-fire, energetic as hell and, for the most part, timeless. Might be more in line with *Maximumrocknroll's* readership, who knows, but this one really should appeal to folks beyond the scope of this particular time period. Definitely worth seeking out. —Keith Rosson (Sit & Spin)

TOO MANY DAVES: *Dawn of the Daves*: 7"

With this EP you don't get the cleverness as found on the first 2 7"s, but the

overall insanity has definitely increased, which makes for an interesting listen. With a sound that's more akin to good New Bomb Turks than any of the members' other bands, you really get a chance to dissect the tracks on an individual basis. The opening track "I Drink Everywhere" sets an appropriate mindset for the overall tone of this record. The closing track "Sweet Home America" definitely takes it up a notch, layering delusional, patriotic talk radio over wailing guitar solos. And the four tracks in between offer varying levels of quality, but through it all you still get the 'Daves: belligerent, unapologetic punk that there's no point in arguing with because they're not listening to you. It's just pure, uncut tunnel vision, but they happen to be pointed in the right direction. Too Many Daves is an anthropology major's thesis waiting to happen. —Daryl (ADD / Eager Beaver / No Shy Of The DIY)

TRAP THEM: *Darker Handcraft*: LP

On *Darker Handcraft*, Trap Them fuses the heaviest and most intense elements of hardcore, crust, metal, and grind into a full-on sonic assault. The riffs in every song are dark and brooding, with hooks that get stuck in your head. The furious beats of the drums hold everything together. Part of what makes Trap Them cranks like a well-oiled machine is the intense amount of musicianship they bring to each song. There's more technical musicianship in one Trap Them song than many bands bring to entire albums. Riding these crushing waves

of sound is the primal banshee screams of vocalist Ryan McKenney, one of the most epic of front men. His throat-ripping vocals and sharp, witty lyrics complete the band. *Darker Handcraft* is easily one of the best albums that came out in 2011, and you owe it to yourself to check it out. —Paul J. Comeau (Prosthetic, trapthem@gmail.com)

TRAUMA HARNES: *Trauma Demolition*: Cassette

I couldn't get the cassette to work (and I reviewed two others this time around, so I don't think the problem's on my end). But, I saw that it's on their Bandcamp site for free and I am nice, so I listened to it there (if this is all just a big scheme to drive people to their Bandcamp site through blank tapes, it's genius). It's a quick listen that kind of sounds like an electro post punk Connie Dungs, or like if there was a Servotron-like project fronted by Brandon from the Connie Dungs. —Joe Evans III (Dingle)

TRIAC: *Always Meant to Hurt You*: 7"

Baltimore has been known for producing angry, ugly bands that seem to take conventional styles and then boil them down to nothing and throw the reduction on an unsuspecting audience. Triac uphold the attitude with four grindcore ragers. Fast—but never sacrificing heavy for speed—and absolutely pissed. The songs are heavy akin to bands like Hatred Surge, but with a snotty approach and allowing for other influences to creep up, like the death-y atonal riffs



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in "Seedsower." Insanely chaotic, yet tedious in execution, this is killer violence. —Ian Wise (A389)

UH OH / OFF-DAYS: Split: 7"

Uh Oh: I've seen this band before. I dig 'em. My biggest problem in songwriting is that I get in my head too quickly. I feel like Uh Oh doesn't have that problem, by just saying "Fuck it. Just keep going, and will figure it out." Hopefully that doesn't come off as a dig, because it means the end product sounds like a pop punk version of Black Flag or Dick Army. Off-Days: I have not seen this band before. Ironically or fittingly, I'd say they sound a lot like Uh Oh (this is my first experience with them, though I can tell there there's Milwaukee connections), except maybe a little more slow, focused, and you can hear more of the lady vocals. Solid split all around. —Joe Evans III (HS!BF)

UNLEARN: Self-titled: LP

In the hands of a writer with a better knowledge of crust, this would be the place where the review says, "If you like (insert litany of Cold War-era Eastern European bands with lots of Ks in their names here), then you need this." But, all I can tell you is that this is raw and crusty and possibly D-beat and on Dreamsicle-colored wax and that the guitars are so distorted that they're practically three-dimensional. When I put this on, I found myself running up and down the hall of my apartment like Indiana Jones being chased by a gigantic, rolling boulder

of caustic, life-threatening punk. Hot damn. —Chris Terry (Deranged)

UZBEKS: Goggles & Flipflops: LP

First off, if you see a record with a cover this cool, you should just fucking buy it and not be poking around some fanzine for a review of it. I'm actually kind of pissed you're reading this far, actually. But, since you're up, I'm obliged to muse about things like how there's a certain indescribable subliminal vibe to this record that suggests it might be sort of a pink, yellow, baby blue, and green Israeli 3-D Hypno Coin version of the first Flesh Eaters album, maybe, but, as things progressed, I was thinking that the irregular song constructions and the general physics of the music were more at sort of a funkless NoMeansNo, for whatever that's worth ((and i do indeed have a blue book value in mind)). I think the main problem here is that the music doesn't seem to mean much without the lyric sheet, and the lyrics are so Spartan—usually just a few lines per song—that I'm pretty much dying of boredom trying to read along. Still a keeper, just because of the cool packaging. Yes, i am that shallow, thanks. **BEST SONG:** "The Satanic Bible" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "ElectroMan" **FANTASTICAMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** I have, to date, owned three copies of the Electro-Man "Invasion from Outer Space" coloring book, based on the exploits of a superhero whom, to my knowledge, exists nowhere else but that coloring book. —Rev. Nørþ (That Lux Good/Dingleberry/Party Garage/Twin Toe/Urban Decay/Subwix)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Box of Sand: CD

If you're a regular peruser of Razorcake and its review section, a lot of the bands making an appearance here—like Shang-a-Lang, Too Many Daves, Unfun, Rations, and Abolitionist, f'rinstance—will sound familiar. They, and many more crank out poppy indie-punk of various shades, hues, and sizes. Gotta say while this stuff ain't always my cup o' poison, there is much here to be diggin' and diggin' hard. —Jimmy Alvarado (Lost Cat)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Traveling with George: 2 x CD

A few L.A. veterans making appearances here—like the Gears, RF7, and Symbol Six—alongside more recent hellraisers like the Livingstons, Sperometers, Puke For Breakfast, TV Eye (who again are mind-blowingly kick ass, but I digress), Standard And Poor, American Jihad, and tons of others, enough in all to fill two discs with punk rockin' of all kinds of hues and shades. As can be expected, there is a clunker to be found here and there, but, for the most part, this ain't shabby at all—diverse enough to keep things flowing nicely, yet very much on the "rock" side of the punk fence. —Jimmy Alvarado (Scare America, mspace. com/scareamericarecords)

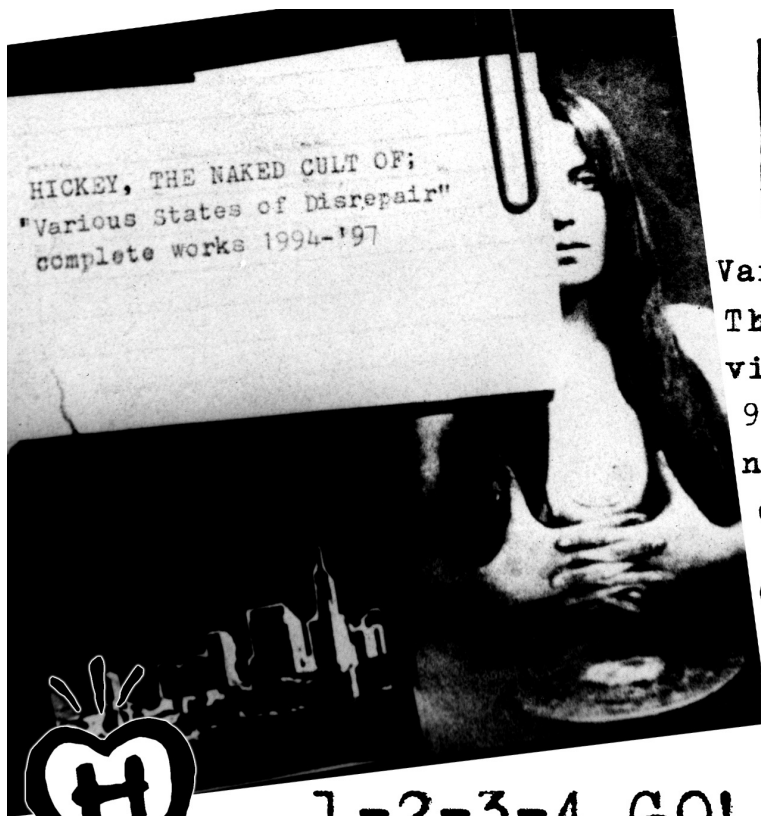
VARIOUS ARTISTS: UDC 4 Way Split: LP

Four current Alabama musical outfits come together for an intriguing taste of some weird ass shit that's currently going down in the region. The outer

edges of each side are occupied by elder acts—Rise Up Howling Werewolf and The Baker Street Irregulars—while the middles contain Shining Path (who are technically not allowed to be a band by the state of Alabama, because they painted black face on a Confederate statue!) and Walker Yancey. Musically, it varies from rootsy folksiness to psych punkness. This record is an endearing multi-generational snapshot of four bands that are keeping DIY well and alive in the non-stop state of Alabama. Totally legit. —Daryl (UDC Audio)

VIBRATORS, THE: Under the Radar: LP

I don't really understand what the point of being the Vibrators is if you're not gonna mostly just zip through a buncha short songs and call it an album. I mean, on that first Vibrators album ((bought it two years after its release in 1979 when i was a high school freshman and it was already a cut-out)), five songs were under two minutes. "Yeah Yeah Yeah" was 1:19 – shorter than any Ramones song at that juncture. And, while any Vibrators record anyone really "needs" was released when i was still in 7th or 8th grade, they still, more or less, sound like, you know, *The Vibrators*—same vocals, same drums, same bass. Apart from a little doodling around in the early '80s, they really haven't shown any great interest in reinventing their sound to any significant degree ((okay, ANY degree, period)) – so why was "Pure Mania" great, and anything post-"V2" so , i dunno, forgettable? My admittedly-oversimplified answer to my



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own obviously oversimplified question is that yer average Vibrators song just doesn't have enough going on in it to keep anyone's attention for a minute or a half or two minutes. They just aren't that absorbing. Instead of just zipping from "Wrecked on You" to "I Need a Slave" to "Bad Time," BAM-BAM-BAM, this album just kinda saunters along in stocking feet. *YOUR DOD-ROTTED RELAXED PACE WREAKS HAVOC WITH THE PURITY OF MY MANIA, I TELL YOU!* "Diluted Mania" might be a more appropriate title. Since i kinda liked the packaging, i tried a last-ditch attempt to make myself like this record by accompanying it on the bongos. Tragically, this had little effect on overall listener satisfaction. Alas. BEST SONG: "Nightmare Town" i guess. BEST SONG TITLE: "DNA Robot" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: I don't believe Knox is with the band anymore, so there goes the "same vocals, same bass" aspect of things. Also, the font used on this album cover is called Alba and the band is sponsored by Guitar Cellar®. —Rev. Nørþ (Papagájúv Hlasetel)

VIDEO: *Leather Leather*: LP

This features folks from Wiccans and Wax Museums, and there are similarities here, but Video is its own beast really. "In Control" has a repetitive beat that hammers against your head, and it's so good you don't mind the pain. In fact, you find yourself pulling the stylus off and putting it back on the song for another listen, cranking the stereo louder and louder each time. These songs are

catchier than SARS, but without the side effects. It's punk that bludgeons without loud guitars. Instead, they choose to use percussion to drive their point home and the guitars are there for texture, mood, and to fill in the empty spaces. I like how the bass creates a tension in "Eyes" and the guitar comes in towards the end with some jagged sounds that slice and squeal. Then they follow up with the near-hypnotic "I Am the Sum." Repeated listens may have you saying "Yes master," and next thing you know the record is glued to your turntable. The opening riff to "Teenage Death" brings to mind La Peste's "Better Off Dead," but then they kick into something more hyper. They have some new wave-ish aspects, such as displayed in the title track, but they don't sing dumbshit, radio-friendly songs or lean heavy on synthesizers. This is punk rock, pure and simple. And that's what makes this so fucking awesome. —M.Avrø (Play Pinball, playpinballrecords.com)

VIVISICK / TROPIEZO: Split: EP

I heard a Tropiezo song on a recent Punk Rock Record Party podcast and was pretty impressed. Immediately grabbed this when I was flipping through the bins at the Razorcake HQ knowing I was going to dig this like a muh'fu'uh. I would imagine most people who are apt to get this record are going to grab it for Japan's Vivisick. Haven't listened to them in a number of years, so it's nice to catch up. They crank out 625 style thrash, meaning it's more playful and fun instead of serious and angry. There's a sort of

anthemic feel to their songs that, for some reason, remind me of the music in the TV show Ultraman, especially the opener "Kaleidoscope." Tropiezo continue along the same lines in the 625 style thrash, but then they throw in a Crudos influence for more intensity. Instead of being fast, fast, fast, Tropiezo switch tempos here and there for more impact. Plus it helps the songs stick with you longer. The change ups in "Dando Vuelta (Hacia El Lado)" are great, and make this song the stand out of the record. The opener is a burner, but when they shift down for "Machistofeles" is when they really show their power. The drum breaks are a nice touch. There's some crazy riffs in "Te Pregunto..." especially the bass lines. If you're a fan of Crudos, then you should check out Tropiezo. —M.Avrø (IFB, ifbrecords.com)

WACO FUCK:

Paranoia Is Total Awareness: CD

This is some thrashy ass hardcore punk, right smack dab in the vein of DS13 and Pulling Teeth. I liked it so much I wanted to hear more and checked out their Myspace page, because I think Myspace is rad. They haven't checked their page in months, but it was still cool to see all the old fliers for these guys. They played a lot of good punk shows in San Diego, none of which I was fortunate enough to attend. Looks like I completely missed the boat, even though I always knew I'd like this band. Their album title has become my anthem. It makes me feel a bit more normal about the fact that I constantly bite my lips and occasionally

forget to breathe. I'm merely a parrot that's finally realized this world is not a home. It's a fucking cage. —Rene Navarro (Life's A Rape)

WAX IDOLS: *No Future*: CD

This is some end of the year top five material right here. Wax Idols—and specifically main songwriter/singer/multi-instrumentalist Hether Fortune—traffic in garage punk that has an appreciation for ferocious power pop melodies. There are hints of the Pointed Sticks, The Vivian Girls, The Slits, and Jay Reatard in evidence throughout and it makes for a potent mixture. Album opener "Dead like You" impressively squeezes a couple of scrappy ear worm hooks in, while building up the tension in the chorus from hypnotically languid to satisfyingly shattering. The gem is "Gold Sneakers." It's a thing of rare beauty. This song is a glorious bit of concise power pop perfection like the Ramones' "She's the One" or the Undertones' "Here Comes the Summer." The hand-clap abetted, sunny catchiness of the song is something that is deceptively simple, yet only adds to its primal joyousness. In addition to the succinct numbers on here (including a cover of the masters of succinct, Wire), there are several tunes where the band meditatively stretches out things a bit, such as "Human Condition" and "Grey Area." If "Gold Sneakers" is the song for the sunny weekend at the beach, then the deliberately paced "Bad Future" is what happens when you're stuck in traffic trying to get to a shitty job the following Monday. All in

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all, this album and the band's preceding *All Too Human* single have been near the top of the rotation lately, and some of the most rewarding listens to pick up this year. Grab them. —Adrian (Hozac, hozarecords@gmail.com)

WAX MUSEUMS:

Zoo Full of Ramones: LP

Wondering how and why I missed picking up this stuff when it was originally released as singles and EPs. Won't die wondering though, since it's all collected here, not to mention the inclusion of three unreleased tracks ("Livin' in the Eyeball," "Let's Get Dumb," and "Slime"). I is sto-ho-ked! Wax Museums played/play garagey punk that mixes up some Metal Urbain with Ramones to make for an interesting and adrenalized listen. It's noisy, recorded lo-fi and dirty, and not out to make any grand, profound statement. Fun without being wimpy or precious. I can't help think my shitty existence is somehow a tidbit better for hearing songs like "Billy's Room," "Stop... Don't Stop," "Jakoff Rat," "Catacombs," "Worm," and "X-Ray My Brain." Punk fuckin' rawk! —M.Avrq (Tic Tac Totally, tictactotally.com)

WEAK TEETH:

What a Plague You Are: LP

While their output of releases is small, Weak Teeth have shown a dramatic evolution as a band. That evolution hits its pinnacle on their debut LP, with an album that feels like the mature release of a band that has finally found their sound. Leaving behind their early d-

beat vibe, Weak Teeth have embraced a sound that is simultaneously more melodic and more dissonant and noisy than past efforts. There is a strong vibe of early '00s bands like Modern Life Is War, but Weak Teeth never sound like a clone of those bands. This is melodic and noisy hardcore with catchy riffs and strong hooks, complemented by tight and technical drums, and excellent lead and backing vocals. Add to this the smart, sarcastic, and perhaps a bit cynical lyrics by vocalist/bassist Mike Pagano, and the result is a superb hardcore record. —Paul J. Comeau (Tor Johnson, weakteeth@gmail.com)

WHITE MURDER: Self-titled: 7"

Solid 7" featuring ex-members of Neon King Kong (Mike D'Amico) and Red Onions (Paul Gonzalez, currently fronting Death Hymn Number 9). Two ladies (Hannah "HB" Blumenfeld and Mary Animal) up front with the mics. Guitarist Reuben Kalban brings an Andy Gill-like minimalist approach to guitar. Should appeal to fans of '78-'81 punk/post punk (think Kleenex and the Au Pairs). Recommended. —Ryan Leach (Tru-Vow)

WITS END: Self-titled: 7"

Loud, hard, and fast. To many, that is the formula for punk, and for many punk bands, it's a great equation. Wits End manage to break the mold, providing four songs which are undeniably punk and hardcore, while not being hardcore punk. It's very heavy on the bass lines, emotional vocal delivery, and sparse

lyrics, which leave you reaching for conclusions which aren't there. I really dig how this is recorded. It sounds just muffled and distant enough to make you really listen and pick up the heavy, urgent vibe. These guys are from Oslo, Norway, which might be why this music is so fitting for these cold and windy nights. Something you might want to cuddle up with if you want to grind your teeth until you drift off. —Rene Navarro (Adagio 830)

WRECK OF THE ZEPHYR:

For Helen: LP

Housed in a one hundred percent handmade, twelve page, hard cover book, this release is a monumental statement against all that is bullshit about every so-called "independent" scene within the confines of the often great city of Los Angeles. A city that has so much, yet it seems like so little good makes its way out. Wreck Of The Zephyr are an absolutely breathtaking band, building concepts and ideals on blurring, vertigo-inducing shredding, and a drummer in the back that never seems to tire. Whether it's considered indie, or punk; it's undeniably DIY to its deepest, darkest core. Without a doubt, one of the most overlooked L.A. bands, in my opinion. —Daryl (Pass The Fist)

YOUNG GOVERNOR:

Where It's Quiet: 10" EP

I'm glad fifteen-year-old me isn't listening to this me because, the fifteen-year-old me was a punk fascist. Since it's Young Governor (cover of *Razorcake* #63),

I'm going to let this record settle long after this review is written. Here's why. Havana 3 AM. The Brigade. Any music video put out by a one-time punk band that featured people who looked like they were extras in *Beyond Thunderdome*, but were heavy on the fluorescents and feathers. The hair metal, Joe Wood TSOL. There is a time in almost every band and musicians' arc where you, as a fan, have to seriously decide stuff like: "Am I willing to follow them... to this? Am I ready for post-_____ (fill in the blank) adult if I keep listening? I hate electric-sounding-clicky-tambourine-y things and synthesizers." Some bands proved absolutely worthless beyond lawsuits, copyright infringement, and fan confusion. (The TSOL debacle.) It's partially prickly because what we ask and expect of musicians can often be contradictory: "Don't change too much. That's scary. Don't release the same record again and again. That's boring." So, as the fifteen-year-old me has already snapped this record over his knee and is attempting to light the now-toothy vinyl on fire, the thirty-nine-year-old me is just hoping that the electro poppy "Dancing with a Friend" is not Ben's final direction. Because we all know that the first several Clash records are the monuments and Big Audio Dynamite is the shadow. Harsh. And some times you gotta get other stuff out of your system. Really like the three other songs, for sure. —Todd (12XU, 12xu.net)

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to bands and labels that were reviewed either in this issue
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- **Adagio 830**, Marchlewski Strasse 107, 10243 Berlin, Germany
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"I will always defend
the torch bearers of
today rather than
succumb to
hero worship
of dinosaurs."

—Juan Espinosa
NIGHT OF THE FANDOM #3

AWESOME FUTURE: STORIES OF VICTORIOUS ACTION,

\$4-\$6, 5 1/2" x 7", 64 pgs.

One of the great democratic principles of zines is that anyone can do one. You don't need permission, capital, or validation to draw or write something, steal/pay for some copies, and get it out there. That said, some infrastructure has been built, and businesses like Microcosm have the resources and "customer" base to distribute art, literature, ideas, etc. on a much wider scale than Alex Q. Zinemaker does in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Which is their business—it's not my place to tell them who to publish. But in this instance, I am dumbfounded. All those resources and they published this? It's not that it's that bad—okay, maybe it is—but that what it accomplishes is, uh, telling you how useful neti pots are, how squatting to shit is natural and good for you, how one time the author saw a bear (it was scary), another time he found a piano (it was fun), and that if you don't want babies and have a penis, you can get a vasectomy. So, I knew most of this stuff already. I learned it over the course of my life in similarly mundane and uneventful ways, just not all at once and stapled together. I know there are people out there who have not encountered all these ideas, who, theoretically, might, for the first time, in these comics. Who gives a shit? I don't mean to invalidate the ideas in this. They are good ideas. It's their weight class that's the problem—I feel like I just watched an HBO broadcast of the world turtle-racing championships, looking for a knockout. —Dave Brainwreck (Microcosm Publishing, 222 S Rogers St., Bloomington, IN 47404)

DON'T TREAD ON ME! #48,

\$1 or trade, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 24 pgs.

A humor zine from Richmond. Here are the humor stats: I smiled once, in the first essay, where editor-in-chief Ratso talks about not wanting his drug-filled past to make him "that guy." You know, that guy who always brags about his debaucheries. I did not laugh for the next twenty-two pages, or smile, or even want to keep reading, really, except for the article on "El Duce," the guy who claimed Courtney Love tried to hire him to kill Kurt, and the article on lock-picking, a skill I had been thinking about how I wanted to learn earlier that day. This zine might offend you, but it does not give a fuck. That's not why I didn't like it. I didn't like it because it did not meet my low standard of amusement. There are, however, those who it won't offend, and on top of that, who will also find it hilarious. I can tell you who they are if you want. They are listed on the inside cover, under "staff": Ratso, Penny Lane, Barry Oberman, Howie Hugh. I get the feeling those are all one person. If I did not call your name, you're free to go, and may read something else if you'd so prefer. —Dave Brainwreck (Don't Tread on ME!, 1128 West Grace St. #2, Richmond, VA 23220)

DUDES MAGAZINE #18, \$5,

8 1/2 x 11", offset, 74 pgs.

Hey, did you ever wish there was a magazine that catered to people whose motto is "Shirts are for work"? Or maybe you just want to see pictures of friends tea-bagging each other. Well, look no further, my half-drunk friend. This issue's draw is a well done interview with the heavily underrated Sloppy Seconds as well as a chat with Ian Graham of Cheap Girls. Much like every

other issue of this mag that I've come across, most of the articles are written by our pal Nighthawk with the rest contributed by his "staff." For the most part, there are several great reads in here, including Doug Sea's hilarious story about drinking his own piss, Nighthawk's ongoing adventures with "Tree Man" from previous issues, Dr. E.W.'s explanation about how in China "fucking awesome" somehow translates to "cow pussy," and Rev. Nørb's simple idea for killing time at an office job: type in the name of a random girl in a Google search and see which name yields the "filthiest" results (Nørb, "Sasha," you're welcome.) However, what's not "bitch" this issue is J-Man's story about his trek to Memphis in which he pretty much says that he's afraid of black people: "We would look around and maybe see four other white people on the street. When you go to a window to buy beer and look inside the clubs, you don't see any black people. If I was in St. Louis and found myself in this situation, I would be on my merry way before the gunfire and robberies started." So only black people own guns, eh? That's classy, J-Man. Just for that, you're on notice *Dudes Magazine*! —Juan Espinosa (3872-A Connecticut St., St. Louis, MI 63116)

FASHIONABLE ACTIVISM, #1

& #2, \$3, 8 1/2" x 11", 20 pgs.

Always glad to see more hardcore punk music zines in the world. *Fashionable Activism* is, for sure, in my permanent collection. The layout is cut and paste, but not overcrowded or confusing. The musical coverage is of bands I find interesting, but the thing I like most about this zine is Kevin's attitude and how he puts it through in his writing. I found

myself laughing at a lot of things he'd say in reviews and some of the questions he'd ask the bands. The bands are either caught off guard or they have uncomfortable reactions. The question he posed to Death Domain is classic: "Why are the chicks in synth bands so fucking lusty? Are they 'freaks in the sheets'?" Who is the hottest coldwave babe of all time?" People need to know this stuff! The first issue has interviews with No Class, and Mauser, as well as show reviews (the write up on the Abused show is worth the read), photos scattered throughout, and then some reviews of music and zines. Then the second issue interviews Shaved Women, The Men, Hipster Piss Party, and Death Domain. All rounded off with a bunch of reviews and photos. —M.Avr (Kevin McCaughey, 2140 W. Crystal St 3R, Chicago, IL 60622, fashionableactivism@gmail.com)

FURY, THE, #19, \$3,

7" x 8 1/2", 32 pgs.

Awesome, a new issue of *The Fury*! Definitely one of my favorite zines out there. The writing is top notch and Mark is one of the few people in zinedom who does cut and paste in a tasteful and artistic way. This issue is more on the personal side of things, but I don't mind, as this is not some *Cometbus* knockoff: thoughts on returning back home after extended time away, and how everything has changed, a piece on Providence, RI, Jim Groce, and how things have changed in the realm of punk/hardcore/whatever with the Fireside Bowl as the backdrop. A lot of insight and things to ponder. What's put forth is universal to anyone who is alive at all today. —M.Avr (Mark Novotony, 414 E 13th Ave, Columbus, OH 43201)

HEY HEY LONESOME, \$6,
5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 63 pgs.

Yes...recently I gave in and bought my ticket for the Roberto Bolaño show, a spectacle that has the literary world buzzing and posthumous writings of his being published with the regularity of serial comics. I read some of his shorter novels and stories, and by the time I downed the 600 pages of *The Savage Detectives*, I'd had my fill. But now I get the smug satisfaction that comes from being right, because I knew then that one day soon I would have to read the American

INSIDE ARTZINE #15, \$?,
10" x 15", offset, color, 44 pgs.

I can't say I've ever seen anything quite like this in print. Various artists' pieces are on display in this fine quality artzine. While each artist is unique, a number of the pieces remind me of what might happen if the artwork of Jake Bannon (Deathwish Records, Converge) and Guillermo del Toro's film, *Pan's Labyrinth*, violently fucked each other. There are a number of drawings and photographs of just weird...things. I'm not entirely sure what is going on in many of these photos, but

Joyce Manor, Autistic Youth, Not Shy Of The DIY Records), reviews (records, zines), and essays on Embrace, Melbourne, and more general punk stuff. Not everything in here spoke to me and, occasionally, I had to check myself against skimming, but if they're all this well-done, I would want a stack of these lying out at my house. Chances are, I could always pick one up and find something that engaged me. —Dave Brainwreck (PO Box 284, Maylands, WA 6931, Australia, jerkstorehq@gmail.com)

animals of fiction! Let's hear what the napkin has to say!" feel of so many obviously self-involved experiments. The magic that Mike pulls is that he just seems like an ordinary dude with an ordinary traveling suitcase. He unsnaps that case, opens it up, and something extraordinary happens. Fiction and non-fiction intermingle. Proxy separations, invented hundreds of years ago—that were devised for certain clusters of words and approaches to words—unravel. *Learning to Surf* unwinds then intertwines the processes of record reviewing, metafiction,

"So, I knew most of this stuff already. I learned it over the course of my life in similarly mundane and uneventful ways, just not all at once and stapled together."

—Dave Brainwreck

AWESOME FUTURE: STORIES OF VICTORIOUS ACTION

hipster rip-off of that novel. I was curious—what will it look like? Will it pander to our short attention spans or faithfully rip off the novel's enormity? Adam Gnade's new novella gives me the best idea yet. It's short, yet is told from the perspectives of virtually every character, like *Savage Detectives*, and no bones are made about the Bolaño influence. He didn't do such a bad job of it—the writing is fine—but he plods along with the uncertainty of someone who knows they're dealing with stolen goods. The story concerns a group of Southern Californian teenagers (who, annoyingly, talk, think, and process things like a writer in his late twenties) all on their way to the same party. They do drugs (yawn), fuck or want to fuck each other (yawn), and steal cars for the thrill of it (huh—what—oh, yawn). Sometimes they don't get along, sometimes they feel kinship with one another, and sometimes they have little revelations. Something dramatic happens near the end. Like most times I've ended up at a party I didn't really know anything about beforehand, I wanted to leave. —Dave Brainwreck (adamgnade.com)

the quality of the paper stock and the glossy pages can't be cheap. They serve to bring out the sharp look of a lot of these pieces, not to mention the range of colors they contain. If you want to see some extreme art along with some poems, short stories, interviews, and reviews of books of cutting edge art, then check out *Inside*. As my mom might say, it's certainly unique. —Kurt Morris (Inside Artzine, PO Box 2266, D-54212 Trier, Germany)

JERK STORE #9, \$?,
5 1/2" x 8", 32 pgs.

This Australian zine seems to me the pop punk equivalent to Florida's mighty hardcore zine *Seven Inches to Freedom*. Similarities include: the quality of writing; assured, skillful layout (although this one seems much more photoshopped—whatever, I don't care); emphatically DIY values; appreciation for the past/excitement for the present; and general aesthetic. This is high praise—I can't think of a music zine today, discounting the Father (MRR), Son (Razorcake), and Holy Ghost (*Give Me Back*, and maybe literally. RIP?) as good as *SITF*. The content here is pretty standard stuff: interviews (Too Many Daves, The Hungups,

LEARNING TO SURF, \$3,
5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied,
color cover, 53 pgs.

Mike Faloon has been writing about punk rock for a long time, so it's only natural that he'd eventually write a zine about enjoying punk rock as you get older. This is a collection of pieces all revolving around that concept: journals of taking longer periods of time to really analyze records alongside adult responsibilities, some of Mike's trademark "(band) versus (band)" discussions, as well as examples of how you don't necessarily need to grow beyond something, as opposed to just figuring out how to adapt. It's refreshingly honest and an interesting read. (Trivia note: I was at the comedy show in question, where I accidentally swallowed most of a fake mustache.) —Joe Evans III (Mike Faloon, PO Box 469, Patterson, NY 12563)

LEARNING TO SURF, \$3,
5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied,
color cover, 53 pgs.

Mike Faloon is one of my favorite contemporary writers. One of his talents is his ability to bend, twist, fade, pull, overlap, and manipulate how to write. And not in a dillhole, "Look! I'm making ironic balloon

and memoir into a Navy-tight, spliced rope. Family man Mike intermingles the echoes of walking down railroad tracks with his daughter and invests it with images of the Arrivals' "Simple Pleasures in America." In the title piece, Mike weighs his longtime interaction with Superchunk's music and compares and contrasts it with his early flirting with Eric Clapton. (Let's put it this way: *Rolling Stone* lies about music and Mike's learning to jog.) The story is not only a sonic comparison, but a life-as-business comparison and a story about the acquisition of personal taste. Tired of the websites pedaling audio transfat? Wary of soft-rock clock punchers? Hunt down *Learning to Surf* and seek out Mike Faloon's writing. —Todd (PO Box 469, Patterson, NY 12563, gogometric@yahoo.com)

NIGHT OF THE FANDOM #3,
7" x 8 1/2", offset, 44 pgs.

A very well constructed fanzine which features a new interview with Tesco Vee (Meatmen) and John Brannon (Negative Approach, Laughing Hyenas), a dissection of Bruce Springsteen's catalog (sorry, folks, but if you're a fan of the Boss, I can't relate), some short stories, and even a compilation CD which is

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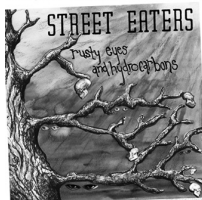
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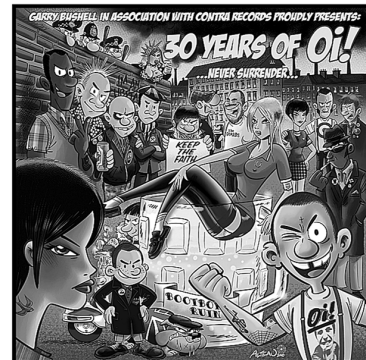
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enclosed in a pocket on the back cover (neat!). Also featured is a re-printed column from 1983 named "The Punk Revolt" which highlights the Detroit punk scene and also interviews John Brannon. Reading the newer interview with Brannon and Vee, it's interesting (but not surprising) to see that both of them are stuck in their '80s cocoon in which nothing "dangerous" or

getting rid of their glossy cover, it's all newsprint and in a unique size. (Thankfully, for those not interested in the finger smudging, the zine is also available at their website in a PDF format.) This issue starts with a very good story about forming a union at Jimmy Johns in Minneapolis and then runs through the usual cycle of letters, columns, interviews, and reviews. I had

handwriting and the illustrations. This *Rum Lad* follows Steve around on a tour of the western United States. Thirty shows in twenty-four days: basements, bookstores, kook-houses, fans, dogs, infoshops, and chunka-chunka metal dudes with chains and Metallica boxer shorts. Englishman Steve does a deft job of not romanticizing the process of traveling the "I had no idea

TNS PUNK & SKA FANZINE #12, offset, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 32 pgs. *TNS* is published by Manchester ska/punk label That's Not Skanking. They cover their scene with an infectious passion, smashing the stereotype of ska fans as out-of-step, apolitical dorks. Along with the standard label news, scene reports, interviews and reviews, there are thoughtful articles on Arab

"He didn't do such a bad job of it—the writing is fine—but he plods along with the uncertainty of someone who knows they're dealing with stolen goods."

—Dave Brainwreck
HEY HEY LONESOME

powerful exists after the days they were involved. And that's my problem with guys like this: the only time they feel inclined to become involved in punk again is when their bank account funds are in danger of becoming insufficient. I will always defend the torch bearers of today rather than succumb to hero worship of dinosaurs who can only say "Well, you know, back in my day..." If Tesco Vee can only reference the Suicide Machines as a band he's excited to be working with these days, then it's plain to see which side of the coin he's on. —Juan Espinosa (Lovecraft Press, no address)

PASAZER #27, color, 8 1/8" x 11 1/2", 140 pgs. Slick, Polish-language magazine featuring write-ups on or interviews with El Banda, Wlochaty and some classic U.S. punks like Jello Biafra and Social Distortion. I can't read a word of this magazine, but am pleased to report that the sampler CD of European punk speaks the international language of Circle Pit. —Chris Terry (PO Box 42, 39-201 Debica 3, Poland)

PROFANE EXISTENCE #62, \$2, 10" x 15", newsprint, 20 pgs. *Profane Existence* certainly gives *Maximum Rocknroll* a run for their money in the newsprint-on-the-fingers category. Since

no idea who any of the bands were they interviewed (Resist, Asta Kask, Colera, and Napalm Raid), nor did I know any of the bands whose albums were reviewed, with the exception of Doom. However, I found the columns to be interesting—it's always intriguing to hear what others in the punk community are doing. In this issue, there are talks about a dog dying, growing older (here's to being forty and punk!), living off the grid, and bumming around the country. With zines like *MRR* and *Profane Existence*, the columns are the main reason I read them. The opportunity to learn new things from individuals always keeps me entertained and engaged. In that sense, this zine is pretty cool, but I'm certainly not their target demographic in regards to the music covered. —Kurt Morris (Profane Existence, PO Box 196, Mountain View, CA 94042)

RUM LAD #5, email for price, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 50 pgs. A much more effective review would just be a reprint of several pages of *Rum Lad* because I have a hard time explaining how outrageously illustrated and detailed Steve Larder's zines are. They're more precise and evocative than many graphic novels. What's also amazing is how fluid and un-boxy the transitions are between the

how large it is"—ness of America with its long drives and broken booking promises. Nor is Steve being a whinebaby, secretly addicted to comfort. He works between the poles of sleep-and nutritious-food-deprived frustration and the ebullience of a shared, pure experience. This is zinecraft in its highest form and I can't recommend this enough. —Todd (Steve Larder, Somerset House, Cherry Holt Lane, Sutterton, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE20 2HU, UK; stevelarder.co.uk; rumladzine@gmail.com)

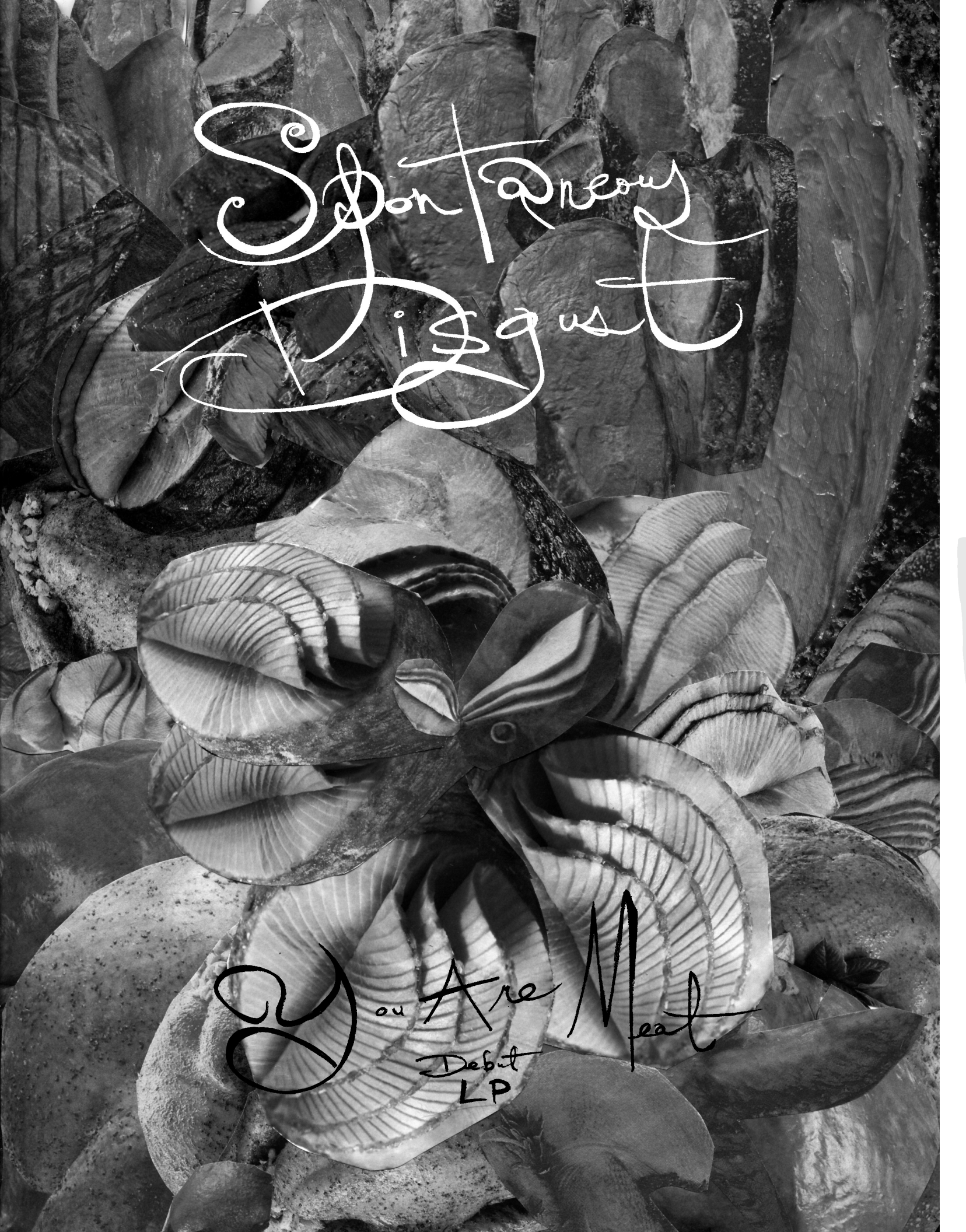
STOWAWAYS, THE #1, \$1, 8 1/2" x 11", copied, 8 pgs. The first issue of this full-size zine from Yorba Linda, California has show reviews, a tour journal with a member of the band Tiny Lungs, an interview with The Henry Clay People, and record reviews. I don't know anything about The Henry Clay People, but found the interview to be engaging and informative, which is saying a lot for the first issue of a zine. The layout is typical cut and paste. On the whole, it's nothing spectacular but it reminded me a lot of my first zine I did half a lifetime ago (but with no Christian content), which made it endearing. And for a buck, you really can't argue. —Kurt Morris (The Stowaways, 5082 Wendover Rd., Yorba Linda, CA 92886)

Spring and squatting. This is Operation Ivy, not Mustard Plug. —Chris Terry (17 Heywood Rd., Prestwich, Manchester M25 1FB, United Kingdom)

WE LIVE IN A VAN, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 19 pgs. *We Live in a Van* is basically a tour diary. I toured quite a lot when I was younger and could relate to the optimistic energy heading out to parts unknown, to rock out friends and strangers. Of course, that optimism starts to fade with long drives and rough sleepovers peppered with bouts of hunger and irritation. The last few days of any tour are the worst, even if you're not having that much fun. There's something weird about the camaraderie on the road that is addictive. *We Live in a Van* describes life on the road and observations from inside the van while they hurtle down the road. It's a quick read, but gives a glimpse into a road-dogs' life. —Steve Hart (Cmarena@gmail.com)

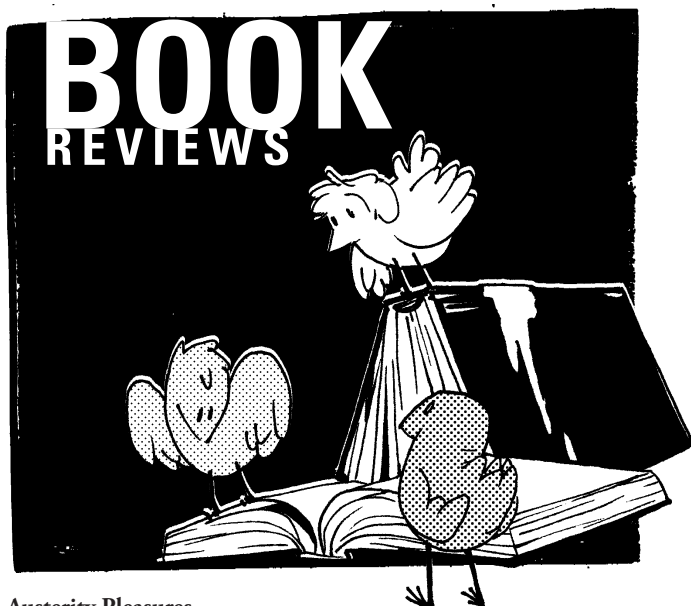


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Spontaneous Disgust

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Austerity Pleasures

By James Payne

This book of poetry had its moments. It was usually with the shorter poems. Take, for instance, “A Bedtime Prayer,” which goes like this: “I want to click on/on a link/that will take me/ to a place/I don’t/hate.” Then there were times when I had no fucking clue what Payne was shooting for, like the times when

Rad Dad: Dispatches from the Frontiers of Fatherhood

Edited by Tomas Moniz and Jeremy Adam Smith, 193 pgs.

I’m a father of four kids. The youngest is nine and the oldest is twenty-one. None of them are mine, biologically. I became the father of the youngest three children when the youngest was three years old. I found fatherhood overwhelming at first. None of the kids came with an instruction manual and I was scared that I would pass on some of the less-desirable traits that my father passed on to me. In other words, I didn’t want to be an asshole.

The coolest aspect of reading *Rad Dad* is knowing that I’m not the only one who wants to raise children in a safe environment and continue to retain our “radness.” *Rad Dad* is a collection of accounts from a variety of fathers from all spectrums of life. Every chapter is a good read, even if I couldn’t relate exactly to every situation. Most importantly, *Rad Dad* is written by a group of fathers who also don’t want to be assholes.

I’ve kept *Rad Dad* with me during the long Thanksgiving weekend, pulling it out when I had a chance. It was fun to read while the kids played in the ocean, screaming at each other, while throwing handfuls of sand. I felt connected to something bigger, like a secret society. If you’re a father, or a father-to-be, treat yourself to a great book. —Steve Hart (PM Press, PO Box 23912, Oakland, CA 94623)

Rad Dad: Dispatches from the Frontiers of Fatherhood

Edited by Tomas Moniz and Jeremy Adam Smith, 193 pgs.

I am not a dad and have no intention of ever becoming one, so, in one sense, I am probably not the target audience of this book, nor am I perhaps the best person to review it. That being said, I still enjoyed *Rad Dad*. Edited by the author of the zine, *Rad Dad*, and the blogger of “Daddy Dialectic,” these pieces (whose contributors include a wide

“Most importantly, *Rad Dad* is written by a group of fathers who also don’t want to be assholes.”

—Steve Hart

Rad Dad: Dispatches from the Frontiers of Fatherhood

he uses the fuck out of parenthesis and punctuation for reasons beyond my comprehension. There was some stuff about how to appropriately read Sartre while eating ice cream. That was okay. Overall, I didn’t get it, but it was still pretty good for poetry. I’m just not the audience for this stuff. —Craven Rock (Monster House Press, monsterhousepress.com)

Encyclopedia of Doris, The

By Cindy Crabb, 322 pgs.

The Encyclopedia of Doris is a collection of stories, essays, and interviews, collected from the zine, *Doris*, and put into alphabetical order, hence the title: *Encyclopedia*.

I had just finished reading *Vicious Red Relic, Love* by Anna Joy Springer and was totally shocked to read the first entry in *Doris* about Anna. That is not a coincidence, either, because the writing in *Doris* is so strong and the voice so clear. In many ways, these two books are companions to each other. *Doris* is laid out like zine entries, so there are a variety of fonts and different-looking pages, but this goes far beyond layout. The text is really enjoyable to read.

I’m a total sucker for a good interview and the interviews in *Doris* are really well done. There is a certain boldness to include interviews of yourself that were for other zines, but the insight they provide to the writing strengthen the encyclopedia. Maybe more books should contain interviews with their authors.

If you like well-written zines that cover all sorts of topics, from anarchy to sex, fishing to social ecology, or high school to quitting drinking, this one’s for you. Highly recommended. —Steve Hart (Doris Press c/o Cindy Crabb, PO Box 29, Athens, OH, 45701)

array of men) delve into the idea of how to raise your child with a counter-cultural viewpoint. In other words, if you’re an activist or punk rocker or some kind of “outsider,” how do you make your child aware of those ideas in a society that can seem very sexist, racist, and/or homophobic? How does the father pass on those attributes that made them into who they are, as well as made them aware of their own hegemony, as men? I find this topic interesting, especially as I get older and see more punk rockers having children. So many punk rock fans fall out of the scene as they leave their twenties and think they have to adjust their lives in a more “adult” manner. *Rad Dad* is seeking to show dads that they can still retain their punk rock values and be dads, too.

The book is broken down into essays in various categories that include: Birth, Babies and Toddlers; Childhood; Tweens and Teens; and Politics of Parenting: Gender, Race, Allies, Visions. Finally, there is a section of interviews with various individuals including Ian MacKaye, Jeff Chang (author of *Can’t Stop Won’t Stop: A History of the Hip Hop Generation*), Ta-Nehisi Coates (writer for *The Atlantic*), author Steve Almond, and others. The Q&A between the editors and these individuals is fluid and insightful, and for those who aren’t parents it is also the most accessible portion of the book. The short essays that precede those interviews cover a range of topics including war, gender, sexuality, feminism, and patriarchy.

Just to be clear, though, this is not a self-help parenting book for men. This is a book of experiences fathers have had and, often times, there isn’t a happy resolution to the problems the dads are facing. As the subtitle says, these are “dispatches from the frontiers of fatherhood.” There are arguments and frustrations and, sometimes, the dads say, “I don’t know all the answers.” But I suppose, for

many dads, that might bring some comfort knowing that they're not alone in their challenges. —Kurt Morris (PM Press, PO Box 23912, Oakland, CA 94623 / Microcosm Publishing, 636 SE 11th Ave., Portland, OR 97214)

Spray Paint the Walls

By Stevie Chick, 403 pgs.

The almighty Black Flag...what can you say? The Flag, if not *the* favorite, is certainly in my top three favorite bands ever. And I don't shun any of their stuff, either. In fact, I celebrate their entire catalog: I love everything from *The First Four Years* to *In My Head* (including the B-side of *My War*)—all of it. I find an emotional and mental connection with their lyrics and the alienation they displayed. The insanity of Keith Morris' vocals, the intensity and anguish of Henry Rollins' growls, all displayed through great musicianship, especially Greg Ginn's amazing guitar work. It's some of the most creative guitar playing I've ever heard, especially as it relates to hardcore punk.

That all being said, *Spray Paint the Walls* has a lot to live up to and, for the most part, it succeeds. It follows a chronological history of the band. Each of the chapters takes the title of a Black Flag song and starts with a quote from one of the members of Black Flag or someone associated with them. The details can be impressive. While I'm not a scholar on the band, I did consider myself someone who was fairly knowledgeable of them. But even I learned a lot. I learned about the background of many of the members: where they were raised, what their family life was like, how they got into playing their instrument, and how they got into punk. It was interesting and helped me come to a better grasp of how Black Flag was shaped. There was also a lot of context provided for lyrics. For example, I learned that "Room 13" was the number of the room that Greg Ginn's girlfriend lived in at the time the song was written. I learned that the Strand mentioned in "Wasted" is a path near the ocean in Hermosa Beach, and that "My War" is about Greg Ginn.

Author Stevie Chick did a fine job of compiling a lot of various sources into a generally fluid narrative, including interviews with band members, roadies, friends of the band, and those who worked at SST (Black Flag's record label) to describe the motivations of individuals in the band. He accurately described the sound of Black Flag better than just about anyone else I've read and he did so without leaning on clichés, silly metaphors, blanket generalizations, or putting in his two cents when he easily could have done so. His decision to include a number of black and white photos of Black Flag in the middle of the book is a superb idea. They capture the intensity and energy of the band live, as well as showing some of their more casual side away from the stage.

I certainly found the book engaging and hard to put down, but there were numerous problems, although none of them fatal. Primarily, while I understand it may be near impossible to get it to happen, the lack of quotations from Ginn and Rollins (beyond sporadic interviews they've provided in the past and material pulled from Rollins' *Get in the Van*) left a lot unsaid. While *Get in the Van* is incredibly helpful, even Rollins has admitted he left a lot out of the book. Furthermore, *Spray Paint the Walls* had many of the band members making harsh accusations against Ginn. While they all acknowledged his superior skills and tough work ethic, they also pointed out a number of personality flaws that drove members out of Black Flag. Ginn may have been the propellant for the brilliance of the Flag, but, according to many in the band's circle, he was also the reason for its ultimate demise. An inability to hear Ginn's side of the story left the book with a big hole that needed filled.

Due to their superfluous nature, there were a number of portions of the book I skimmed or passed over entirely. At times, Chick segued into a history of Southern California punk, or, more specifically, on bands such as Redd Kross or the Minutemen. A chapter was flowing well and—in the midst of providing some context to Black Flag or a member of the band—someone not directly part of the Black Flag camp was mentioned and their history was given. It was not integral to the story that the reader be aware of how, say, Steven McDonald from Redd Kross got involved

in punk. There were multiple times when Chick provided history of loosely affiliated individuals and it broke severely with the fluidity of the narrative. If someone such as McDonald had some thoughts to share about Black Flag, great, but there was no need for anything more than identifying who he was in the scene.

Chick's writing struggled at making a decision as to whether he was writing a biography of Black Flag or if he'd rather have written a history of Southern California punk. While some might argue that the two must be told together, based on the material written about Black Flag alone, Chick seemed quite capable of creating an all-encompassing picture of the band on its own without including the SoCal hardcore scene material.

While the interviews for the book were key, many of the interviews were comprised of long blocks of quotations that ran over the course of many paragraphs. It was occasionally confusing as to who was speaking, as their commentary might run a page or more. Further editing of these blocks (any fan of punk knows Mike Watt and Keith Morris are rambler) would have been helpful in seeking out the most essential material about the band. These interviews were often cited using footnotes, but in a very sporadic manner. While the notation can be helpful, Chick should have either done the footnotes fully or not used them at all.

This wasn't the most comprehensive biography of Black Flag (I know it's not Chick's fault, but without Ginn and Rollins chipping in, things will never feel entirely complete). If you read *Spray Paint the Walls* along with Rollins' *Get in the Van* and the chapter on Black Flag from Michael Azerrad's *Our Band Could Be Your Life*, however, you'll get about the most well-rounded picture you can hope for of one of the best punk bands in history. All complaints aside (hey, I'm a critic and a huge Black Flag fan—you can't expect me not to nit pick), *Spray Paint the Walls* is essential in filling a large piece of the story of Black Flag heretofore not compiled in one place. —Kurt Morris (PM Press, PO Box 23912, Oakland, CA 94623)

Ua Mau Ke Ea: Sovereignty Endures: An Overview of the Political and Legal History of the Hawaiian Islands

By David Keanu Sai, 156 pgs.

Ua Mau Ke Ea isn't your everyday book that you'll find reviewed in *Razorcake*, because it's more of a textbook than it is a non-fiction book. In fact, this could be included in classroom situations to discuss the historical events that led to the so-called overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom. I say "so-called" because the Kingdom hasn't been technically overthrown and still exists to present day. I imagine that this is a difficult historical fact that is hard to understand for most people, but this book is designed to clarify or unwrap some of the mysteries behind the political overthrow of *Hawai'i nei*. It begins with the unification of the Hawaiian Islands under Kamehameha I and the formation of Hawaiian law, including its treaties with foreign nations such as England.

The second part describes the revolt by Hawaiian nationals, Sanford B. Dole and Lorrin Thurston, two of the more infamous characters in the revolt. (I use the word Hawaiian "national" to show that there were *haole* (non-ethnic Hawaiians) who were subjects of the Hawaiian Kingdom.)

Part three describes the seizure of the Hawaiian Islands by the United States and the subsequent annexation (including the U.S. Senate secret session to seize Hawai'i). Lastly, the book delves into the occupation and the efforts for sovereignty.

The author of *Ua Mau Ke Ea* is a controversial figure and I would be remiss to not include this fact. However, I do believe the book transcends any controversy about the author and is well-researched with the case for a sovereign Nation of Hawai'i laid out quite clearly. —Steve Hart (Pu'a Foundation, 2331 Seaview Ave., Honolulu, HI 96822)

Vicious Red Relic, Love, The

By Anna Joy Springer, 199 pgs.

It's rare to find a book that can carve out a place in my subconscious and affect my dreams. Anna Joy Springer's *The Vicious Red Relic, Love* is one of those rare gems. When I asked Anna if I could review the book, she cautioned me with, "It's

really sad,” and it is indeed sad, but not depressing. It is terribly sad, though. For the next four nights, I was haunted by the imagery in the book, like it had come to life. I can’t remember the last time that happened.

Vicious Red Relic, Love, is laid out in an interesting way. On one page there are diary entries or notes from a lined notebook and then the next page will contain quasi religious tracts from Enron Scabbard or pictures of a tinfoil elephant. The most engaging story is the back and forth between two women, one named [Gil], who, we find out later, is HIV positive and who hasn’t confessed this to the other. This story really hit home

lived amongst the punk swarms in the Canterbury Apartments and partied in the Masque. When The Bags got crumpled up and tossed aside as a band, she continued on—both with her schooling and continuing to play music in the harder-to-find Castration Squad, the wonderful Las Tres, Stay At Home Bomb, and Cholita.

There are many joys in this book. One of them is how vulnerable and candid Alice is with the reader. She conveys being awkward, gawky, and unsure in ways that many people reading *Razorcake* can relate to. And with images such as, “*I defiantly wore my women’s-size clear plastic raincoat and go-go boots*

“Ginn may have been the propellant for the brilliance of the Flag, but, according to many in the band’s circle, he was also the reason for its ultimate demise.”

—Kurt Morris
Spray Paint the Walls

for me when the mental acrobatics of what “exotic dancers” go through were described. I had a couple of friends who worked downtown San Francisco, but I had no idea what they must have gone through.

Because the layout was non-linear, I went through *Vicious Red* and found and read the stories that were to and from [Gil]. I continued reading the book, reading only the pages that pertained to the plotline that I was following. One of the stories was a retelling of the Sumerian epic poem of Gilgamesh, which is another story of friendship. I’m not sure if the author intended for the book to be read one story at a time, but I was discovering secret rooms—each mini-story fed each other. Each mini-story had a surprise and I felt that I could follow the story better if I read it all at one time. Once I had completed reading in this fashion, I re-read the entire book. Perhaps this is why the book implanted itself so deeply in my dreams.

The Vicious Red Relic, Love, explores sexuality and feminism. It tackles the terribleness of molestation and death, and is probably the most punk rock thing I’ve ever read in my entire life. Utterly devastating. Thank you, Anna. —Steve Hart (Jaded Ibis Press, jadedibisproductions.com)

Violence Girl: East L.A. Rage to Hollywood Stage:

A Chicana Punk Story

By Alice Bag

If I were mayor—or at least a director of the Parks and Rec.—I’d erect a statue of Alice at her choice of park. I see Alice as one of the patron saints of L.A.’s first wave of punk rock, a woman who is right in so many ways, who has lived and played hard, and who still has a healthy attitude towards music. Beyond that, she’s just a nice person and that comes across in these pages. Many weirdo-cruiser first-wavers, it’s best to think twice about inviting them inside your home.

That’s the hook of the book. It’s a memoir of a bad-assed punk lady who isn’t an unholy fuckface whining for deferred glory and overdue royalties. Here’s a lady who’s both living and telling a unique, compelling story.

Violence Girl is the birth-to-becoming-a-teacher saga of Alice growing up in tough, poor surroundings in East Los Angeles, her infatuation of music at an early age—and Elton John in particular—into the formation of a band that many punks know her from: The Bags. She was front row and center stage with the emergence of punk rock on Southern California shores. Not only was she a lead singer of an undeniably influential band, she

to grade school and cultivated my own isolation like a rare and beautiful flower,” it’s easy to both visualize and sympathize with little Alice.

As a fellow music geek who often relates more confidently to vinyl spinning on a platter than during any sort of job interview or larger party, Alice writes about music fandom engagingly, affectionately, and accurately: “*Audiophilia in a teenage mind can take some odd turns. The more I listened to music and got to know musicians through their songs, interviews and articles in music magazines, the more I fell in love with them. And by love, I mean that crazy, obsessive infatuation that passes for love in young adulthood.*” The picture of Alice in her specially-asked-for Elton John specs, jaunty scarf, and parted-in-the-middle, feathered hair cut is priceless. She looks so proud. It’s awesome.

Another dimension of the book I appreciate is the near-constant pragmatism that comes from being poor. I’m not talking “we all wore paper sacks as underpants and ate dirt” stuff, but the conscientious balance between having fun and working to cover one’s bills, of looking at community education when private’s too expensive. Of respecting other people’s property because you value what little you have. Alice displays this in some very subtle ways. Again, it involves Elton John: “*There was only thing I could take without damaging Elton’s beautiful limo, so I ducked down and started unscrewing a tire valve cap... Once I’d loosened the cap, I clutched it tightly, as though it was a diamond ring and not a piece of hard black rubber.*” She has a great way of twisting themes together in ways that are artistic, light handed, and vivid.

But the book is truly larger than just punk. It’s about family. Very little is obvious on the surface. It’s about complicated human nature. It’s about recognizing this in obscure ways: “*Through this seemingly vapid sport of lucha libre, I learned to understand the concept of duality at an early age. It was the same kind of duality that I experienced when I realized I both loved and hated my father; that a rudo—a villain—could also be a good guy.*” The main character of the autobiography, aside from Alice, is her father. Her father is a man who ruthlessly beat his wife, who dragged her through the streets by her hair, bloody. Her father is also a man who adored his daughter and promised her the moon, who loved her unconditionally. Alice is a better person than I. I’ve cut family ties and never again talked to someone blood-related for how they treated another family member. Although Alice never condoned her father’s treatment of her mother, she held on to him. Years later, when Alice is well out of the house and her father was too ill to work full time, she observed something

“There are many joys in this book. One of them is how vulnerable and candid Alice is with the reader. She conveys being awkward, gawky, and unsure in ways that many people reading *Razorcake* can relate to.”

—Todd Taylor

Violence Girl: East L.A. Rage to Hollywood Stage: A Chicana Punk Story

unexpected. “It was strange to think that a man who had a history of wife-beating has such a positive reaction to the new, self-sufficient woman my mother had become. He began asking her opinion about work and household finances, and even went to the market with her just as a social thing.” To see that her father wasn’t a pure monster takes an unbelievable amount of courage.

At the end of the book, the reader is taken full circle, simultaneously lapping back to the beginning but with the residual—and again subtle—patina incurred from living an examined life. It’s set when Alice is a teacher in inner-city Los Angeles: “The trees in the kindergarten yard looked the same as before my father died. Only the leaves would change, some would die and fall off, but they’d always be replaced by new ones. Everything had changed in my world, and yet the world looked exactly the same.”

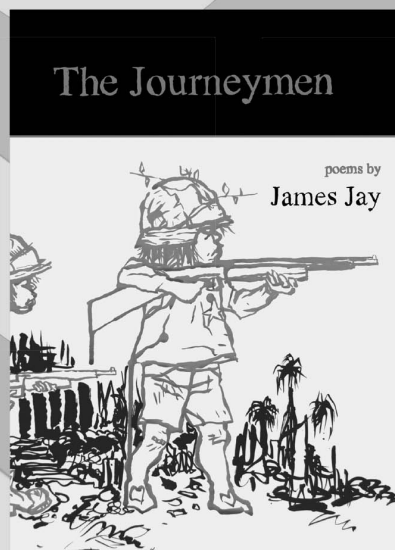
In the end, I have two teeny tiny question marks hovering next to *Violence Girl*. First, there’s no need for all of the chapters to be

super-short, with most clocking in at three pages or less. Perhaps this is an effect from converting pixels to paper (Alice’s “Diary of a Bad Housewife” blog is dynamite), or fearing that most punk readers are 1-2-3-4-go!-ers and don’t have the attention span. I think certain topics and stories deserved a longer, un-chunked treatment. Secondly, the book ends like the end of a whip, covering a good lump of years in a quick snap. The editor in me suggests using all that extra white space taken up by the short chapters and adding twenty pages of content to get the full-to-now Alice story. But maybe that’s just me. Alice is interesting. I want to hear her whole story all the way through. Like, why’d she turn down a meal with Oprah?

Highly recommended. —Todd (Feral House, 1240 W Sims Way #124 Port Townsend, WA 98368, feralhouse.com, info@feralhouse.com)

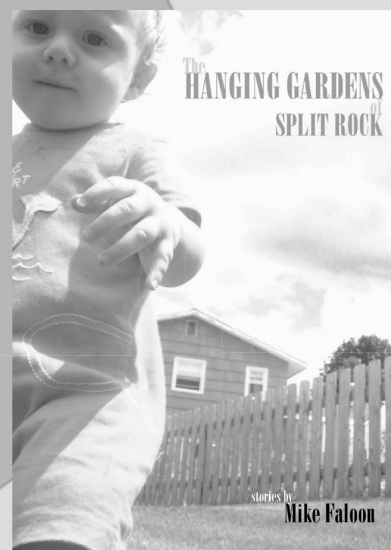


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