SUBURBAN VOICE



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HOLDING ON
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20TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE



GENUINE



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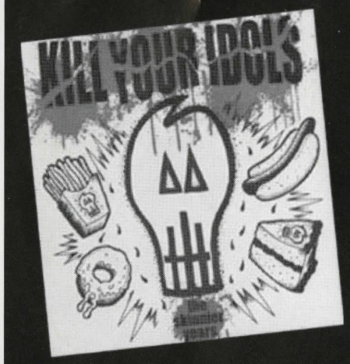

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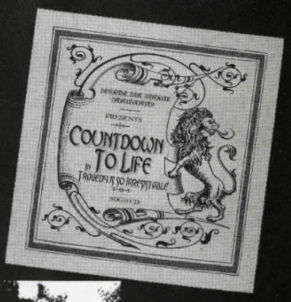

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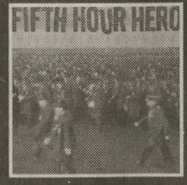

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PO BOX 2746
LYNN, MA 01903-2746
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Phone: 978-532-7705 (no fax!)
E-mail:
suburbanvoice@earthlink.net

STREET ADDRESS (For UPS/Fed Ex/etc. ONLY... otherwise, please send all packages to the PO Box):
18 Sherwood Ave., Peabody, MA 01960

DISGRUNTLED EDITOR
(and all writing and photos, except where indicated)
Al Quint

CONTRIBUTORS/STAFF:
Anna
Mike Chumpchange
Steve Davis
David DelValle
Joan Donovan
Tigger Lunney
Pat Lynch
Chris Minicucci
Chris P.
Ryan Poortenga
Greg Pratt
Ellen Quint
Mike Ramek
Steev Riccardo
Jason Schreurs
Snotty Scotty
Bob Suren

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RIP:
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SO YOU WANNA SEND SOMETHING FOR REVIEW?

OK, we always want to hear new stuff here, but please pay attention to our guidelines... SV covers mainly hardcore, punk and garage rock (or punk 'n roll or whatever the appropriate term is). Loud stuff. Not soft pap. Reissue releases of the above are also welcome for review—anything from the 50s to now, if it has that raw, energetic spirit. Metal, post-punk/noise, pop-punk, stoner rock, metal-core, oi and other eclectic styles are covered on an increasingly limited and selective basis. If you're still wondering whether to send your music, all I can suggest is reading the review section and getting an idea of what we like here. It shouldn't be hard to figure out.

Here are styles of music we *don't* write about: ska, "nu metal," electronica and, especially, the music currently known as emo. I also, for the most part, don't generally review any christian or so-called "spiritual" music. People can follow whatever belief system they want but I don't wish to promote music of that nature in this 'zine. I'm also not interested in reviewing bands that forward a patriotic/jingoistic point of view. Once again, you have the right to your opinion(s) but I want NOTHING to do with bands that have that sort of agenda.

We do the best we can, but not everything we get will be reviewed. CD's, LP's, 7", videos, DVD and music or politically-oriented 'zines and books are all welcome for review.

...VERY IMPORTANT...
WE DO NOT REVIEW ADVANCE OR PROMO-TYPE PACKAGES!!

Read that line again. This is becoming a growing problem as more labels resort to these types of packages. Even independent/DIY people are sending these abominations, at times. Well, pay attention—the completed album (either CD or LP) MUST be sent to get a review; Artwork and lyrics are elements I consider in reviews—I can't review something if I don't have the complete package. I want to review what's going to be available to the general public. With punk and hardcore, it's more than just the music... why review something without all of the elements in tact? If you don't want to send something twice, just send the completed album. Advances are put in a separate section from the regular review pile and usually end up getting ignored.

The only cassettes that will be reviewed must be cassette-only releases—if they're available on LP or CD and you send cassette, it won't be reviewed. CD-R demo releases are cool, as well.

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I do deal directly with stores and smaller distros but there's a 5 copy minimum and I require payment up front for new accounts. You can pre-pay to avoid COD charges. E-mail or write for wholesale rates.

ADVERTISING INFO

As of now, I don't have an ad deadline or street date for the next issue. If you're a regular advertiser, you'll be notified well in advance, by e-mail or postcard, of the deadline, ad specs and price info. At that point, you'll be able to reserve ad space. If you're not a regular advertiser, contact me and I'll add you to the list.

Please DO NOT send any ad copy until the deadline has been set. Since my publishing schedule is erratic, that prevents out-of-date ads from running.

Thanks for everyone's support and patience...

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All prices are postpaid in US. Canadian and overseas prices are also listed. Sorry about the expensive airmail rates, but I do offer the option of surface mail which is slower, but more reasonably priced. I've also dropped a few prices, so look closely.

All orders must include payment—no C.O.D.'s. All previous mail-order lists and special offers are void. Always list alternates when ordering as quantities are limited on some of these items...

FANZINES

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SV #43—SOLD OUT

SV #42—Subhumans, Boils, Final Conflict, Special Duties, Dropkick Murphys, Ducky Boys, Fit For Abuse, Pinkerton Thugs, The Trouble, Unseen, 30 Seconds Over Tokyo plus a 7" EP featuring The Trouble, Fit For Abuse and Pinkerton Thugs. 132 pages—**$4.00 ppd/$5.00 Canada/$6.00 overseas surface/$8.00 overseas air**

SV #41—15th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE—Anti-Flag, UK Subs, Business, Defiance, Suspects, Dicks, Sweetbelly Freakdown, Ensign plus a CD featuring 33 (mostly) rare/out of print/tough to get songs by such bands as Youth Brigade, Proletariat, FU's, Jerry's Kids, Ensign, Halfoff, Offenders, Instigators, Avail, Raw Deal, Psycho, Stretch Marks, COC, MDC and a lot more. 73 minutes long and the zine is 148 pages—**$4.00 ppd/$5.00 Canada/$6.00 overseas surface/$8.00 overseas air (Quantities limited!! List alternates)**

SV #40—Showcase Showdown, Misfits, NOFX, Violent Society, MDC, ADZ, Electric Frankenstein, Fluf, Wretched Ones, New Sweet Breath, Ben Weasel, Chixdiggit!, Rutles, plus a 7" EP with Violent Society, Halflings, Everready and New Sweet Breath—132 pages—**$4.00 ppd/$5.00 Canada/$6.00 overseas surface/$8.00 overseas air**

SV #39-Blanks 77, Propagandhi, Strife, Doc Hopper, Lifetime, Parasites, No Use For A Name, Sicko, Girls Against Boys, Tub, Churn (ex-Proletariat) plus a 7" with Jon Cougar Concentration Camp, Tub and Fed-Up. 116 pages—**$4.00 ppd/$5.00 Canada/$6.00 overseas surface/$8.00 overseas air**

CD'S AND RECORDS

VARIOUS-No Sleep For Hardcore—22 track CD compilation that came with issue #45. The zines are gone but I have some CD's left over. Includes such bands as Limp Wrist, Tear It Up, Punch In The Face, Dillinger Four, Vitamin X, Balance of Terror, F-Minus, John Brown's Army, A-Team, Molotov Cocktail, Four Letter Word, Self Defense, XFilesX, Straight To Hell and Word Salad. Many of the songs are exclusive, demo or obscure. Cheap!—**$1.00 ppd US/$2.00 ppd Canada/$3.00 overseas surface/$4.00 overseas air**

VARIOUS-Suburban Voice 15th Anniversary Compilation—I'm going to be running out of issue #41 pretty soon and will still have some of the CD comps available. My first CD—a lot of these songs were out of print at the time. Some have been reissued, some haven't but, with 33 songs, how can you go wrong? Material from the 80s and 90s from such bands as Proletariat, COC, Jerry's Kids, MDC, Stretch Marks, FU's, Moving Targets, Offenders, Instigators, Raw Deal, Halfoff, Showcase Showdown, Adrenalin OD, 9 Shocks Terror and Avail—**$1.00 ppd US/$2.00 ppd Canada/$3.00 overseas surface/$4.00 overseas air.**

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NEWLY REPACKAGED: SUBURBAN VOICE 7" COLLECTION-I've taken what used to be the "Cheapie collection," added another 7" to make it 5 records and also made a new cover, but kept the price the same in the US. I did have to raise the price to Canada and overseas because of the weight, but it's still a good deal. 7"s come from issues #28, 29, 30, 33-4 and 36 (the zines are sold out but I had 7"s left over) and you get 15 songs by 12 bands. Here's the track listing: AMERICAN STANDARD-Blood & Miles; BRUISERS-Live For Now; CRAWLPAPPY-Neighborhood; CRUCIAL YOUTH-Scarred For Life; DALTONIC-Hard; HAYWIRE-Latest God/Fiend Without A Face; HORACE PINKER-One To Two; LEFT INSANE-Granite Master/E Power; SHEER TERROR-I Need Lunch; SINKHOLE-Filler; SHATTERED SILENCE-One Life To Live/Limitations; VERBAL ASSAULT-What Do You Do?—**$4.00 ppd US/$5.00 Canada/ $7.00 overseas surface/$10.00 overseas air**

BOSTON HARDCORE '91 EP-The same 7" that came with the now out-of-print issue #31-Sam Black Church (an early demo version of "Formaldehead"), Wrecking Crew ("Ignorance Obeyed") and Said & Done ("College Boy"). Homemade sleeve-**$2.00 ppd US & Canada/$3.00 overseas surface/$5.00 overseas air**

ISOLATED-Punk Rock Tribute 7" EP-Al (SV), Tim (Up Front, Eidolon, V.Card) and Scott (Said & Done, Eidolon, V.Card) cover the Adolescents ("Kids of the Black Hole"), Subhumans ("No") and Minor Threat ("Guilty Of Being White") on this AIDS benefit record-**$2.00 ppd US & Canada/$3.00 overseas surface/$5.00 overseas air**

SAID & DONE-4 song EP—Found a few more copies of this 1991 7", but these are the last of them. Emo (in the traditional, DC way) styled hardcore, featuring future members of V.Card and Eggs—**$3.00 ppd US & Canada/$4.00 overseas surface/$5.00 overseas air**

THIRD DEGREE-Opium-4 song double 7"-Mid-tempo and melodic hardcore, at a low price--**$2.00 ppd US & Canada/$3.00 overseas surface/$5.00 overseas air**

THIS 'N THAT

Welcome to the new issue of *Suburban Voice*. If you want the details as to why it took 19 months to get this issue out, proceed directly to my column for all the sad details. Otherwise, I'll try to bring you up to date on things around here, in terms of the "scene" (whatever that term means these days—or what scene you're talking about, for that matter) and a few of my various projects.

First, I'd like to welcome some new writers to *SV*—Tigger Lunney has come on board as both a columnist and record reviewer. He lived in Boston, until recently, and has temporarily relocated to Pensacola, FL. He played in the High Steppin' Nickel Kids during his time here and I have to say I miss having him around. Joan Donovan also did a column for this issue and I hope it'll be a regular thing. She's the vocalist in Raise The Curtain and was also in And I Can't Wait. She also helped out on *Moshtrogen* 'zine. Mike Snoonian (aka Mike Chumpchange) returns as a record reviewer. Mike Ramek, longtime *SV* reviewer, makes his debut as a columnist this time, as well. My wife Ellen also contributes a column this time out. Bob Suren, the proprietor of Sound Idea and Burrito Records and vocalist for Murder-Suicide Pact, contributes one record review in this issue and you'll hopefully see more of his work starting next issue.

Second, there's no letters section in this issue. I wanted to run one but I didn't have the space and, also, except for an e-mail from an old friend about the Joe Strummer/Mick Jones reunion just before Strummer's death, I haven't gotten any "letters to the editor" in over a year. I did get some positive feedback about my column about the events of 9/11 in the last issue. One letter came from Boka of Ratos De Porao that took great exception to Leo Wiltshire's letter in the last issue that justified US retaliation for those events and ended with "God bless the United States of America!!!!!!" I had my say, following that letter, and Boka had this to say (note: since English is not his primary language, I cleaned up his grammar a bit):

"...the letter from your friend about the things that happened to the US last September is totally disgusting, disinformed and he talks exactly like Bush on TV. So I can see that the propaganda that TV and media made about the innocence of the US is working out. US is the bully of the world and I do not agree that US is a free country, democratic or that the people got choices. What kind of choices do you have? Drink Coke or Pepsi? Wear Adidas or Nike? Warped tour or Ozz fest ? Racist or minority? Working hard just to survive or be homeless? Vote (as they attempt us to think that we will make the difference voting) or not vote? Hell no! Lies, lies and lies, that's how the American culture (if it exists) was built.

And then a fuckin maniac like Bin Laden didn't accept it and created, together with a lot of different people that terrorist thing. I didn't approve of anything that happened. I hate Taliban and the way that Afghanistan treats the people, but I think that the main question from the American people to the authorities should be:'Why did that thing happen? Why do we have enemies?"

That's most of what Boka wrote... and, as always, it's interesting to get a non-US perspective on things (Boka is from Brazil). Anyway, that was the best of the few letters I did get and I'm actually a bit surprised I didn't get letters challenging my point of view. Either people agree with what I said or didn't even read what I wrote. Who knows... but I always welcome feedback on the columns or anything else in *SV* for that matter. Or anything that you care to share with the readers. The e-mail and regular mail address are on the opposite page.

As for what's going on locally, we had the opening and quick closing of a DIY space, Regeneration, during September, 2002. Tigger and Joan both write about it in their columns and I touch on it in the live review section. The original space was on the top floor of an industrial building on the Roxbury/ Dorchester line, right off the highway and accessible by public transportation. It had a good PA, a lounge area with a zine library and it generated a great deal of excitement. I tried to get involved a bit and was flattered when Sue, one of the organizers, asked me to construct a Boston punk timeline with flyers and other memorabilia on the wall leading into the space. It was a lot of fun putting that together, even though I never got a chance to finish it.

I know that Sue, Paul and Ross are still trying to find another space—I haven't spoken with them about it in awhile but I do hope it comes to fruition because, as always, it's something we REALLY need here. Sure, there are still available spaces to rent out. While the basement of the Berwick is no longer a show space, there have been DIY shows at the Elks' lodge in Cambridge, the Davis VFW in Somerville and there's also the occasional basement/house show. But something permanent would be preferable, of course. Sure, some of the clubs still do all-ages shows but I find them less-appealing, even with the recent smoking ban at clubs in Boston and the pending ban in Cambridge. I'd still rather watch bands in more intimate spaces without barriers, backstage areas, etc. I realize that's not always feasible for bigger-drawing bands but it's my preference, at this point. DIY shows are the best.

But things are healthy—anyone who says there aren't any exciting bands anymore isn't paying attention. And I'm not talking about the hyped, bigger-name bands, although some of those bands are pretty good. Cut The Shit, Suicide File, Bones Brigade, Sleeper Cell, Solitary Neglect, R'N'R, The Prowl and Mental are all solid bands that have evolved in the past few years, both live and on record. The A-Team and Close Call have taken things to a higher level. Toxic Narcotic and the Unseen sound as good as ever, on their recent albums. I'm anxious to hear upcoming stuff from Think I Care, So Be It, Dragnet and The Rites (with members from NJ and Boston). Admittedly, this is just a small slice of what's going on in Boston and I don't pay as much attention to the more indy/ screamo bands or pop/punk or metal-core or street punk, these days but in my chosen corner of the universe, things are hopping.

To answer some of the frequently-asked-questions, I don't know when I'll be doing the next issue or even the next *SV* comp. I've stopped setting timetables. If you're interested in advertising in the 'zine, drop me an e-mail or letter and I'll make sure you're updated on the deadlines. It'll come out when it comes out. There still isn't an *SV* website and, while that's something I still want to do, I have no idea when it will happen. Yes, I'm probably going to write a book. It's not going to be any sort of authoritative history of hardcore, either locally or nationally, but more of a personalized account, where I get to write down all those stories I've been telling for years—not sure if anyone cares to read them or not but a few people have said they'd like to see it in print, so what the hell. At the very least, it'll make some of my old interviews available again. By the way, a lot of old *SV* interviews can also be found on the excellent "Kill From The Heart" website at http://homepages.nyu.edu/ ~cch223/mainpage.html.

I think that brings everything up to date, except to mention that I'm still dong *Sonic Overload* on Allston-Brighton Free Radio. I've switched to Monday afternoons, 4-6 PM eastern time. It can be heard on 1670 AM in Boston and on the web at www.abfreeradio.org, although our webcast has been problematic the past few months and I'm not sure if/when it will be 100% functional, again. It's been very frustrating, to be honest--we need to raise funds to upgrade and repair our equipment. If you want to financially support the station, please check the website on how to do that. When the webcast is working, the shows also get archived for a week and you can listen to them anytime during the week. I have an e-mail list for playlists/updates—if you want to be added to the list, let me know.

Thanks for reading this far... hope you like the new issue...





The bathroom and stage at Regeneration. A space that came and went all-too-quickly.

I've got a (big) mouth that speaks...
by AL

I've saved writing this column for the very last minute. I didn't want it to be hopelessly out-of-date by the time this issue finally saw print which, as you may have noticed, took even longer than usual. Congratulate me—this is now the record for the longest stretch between issues. 19 months from early December, 2001 and early July, 2003, which is when this thing SHOULD be out, barring printer problems (I've gone back to the company I used from issues #22-35 and I have my fingers crossed) or other unforeseen disasters/crises. That's too long. I'll take the blame for it—sure, I've had things to deal with in my personal life over the past couple of years and haven't always felt the motivation to work on getting this issue done. Last summer [2002] was the hottest in years and, quite frankly, it was too damn uncomfortable to get work done, a lot of the time. Then in September, my father suffered a stroke and was in a few hospitals and a nursing home until early December and has lived at home since then, but he requires someone to be with him around the clock. During the day, that responsibility largely falls on his girlfriend's shoulders—something that certain individuals in the family don't always appreciate as much as they should but for which I'm grateful. He has health aides staying with him overnight. My dad is largely confined to a wheelchair, has no use of his left hand, cognitive issues and can only walk a short distance with the aid of a walker. Plus there have been complications since then—he developed pain in his lower back and it turned out to be a fracture. He was hospitalized again for nearly a month and now has to wear a brace that's a turtle-like shell. So I've had to deal with some of the care—not as much as my sister, who has handled most of this situation (setting up the care, doing his bills, etc...) and, well, let's just say we still don't get along that well. Not at all. Oh sure, she's somewhat civil to me and we can communicate, to an extent, but there have been some rather nasty interactions, as well. I usually avoid contact with her as much as possible but, given the circumstances with my dad, it's meant that I've had to interact with her much more, lately, and get involved with helping out. She couldn't be any more different than me. And she has never supported or acknowledged anything I've done nor accepted any choices in my life, be it concerning employment or my life partner.

I don't mind doing this—even though his present physical state has exacerbated the worst elements of his personality or even taking into consideration that I never had that close a relationship with him. Much like my sister, my dad has also been quite dismissive of my path in life. And believe me, there are times when I question what the fuck I'm doing. Like every day! But growing up in what looked like, on the outside, a tranquil middle-class lifestyle, almost felt like a constant game of three against one—my parents and my sister against me. No wonder I got into punk rock! Remember, this was the time when being into punk was akin to putting a sign on your back that said "reject" or "misfit." Refusing to fit in. Not wanting to do what you're told. I guess I've hung onto that attitude ever since then and, when interacting with these people, it definitely brings out the worst in me and brings out a reactionary response. It's funny—I generally try to be nice and accommodating with people but, if you cross me, if you're condescending, if you don't accept me the way I am, faults (and there are plenty of them) and all, then you can fuck right off.

I scribbled down some thoughts during the aftermath of a particularly heated discussion with my sister and repeat them here verbatim—consider these next few lines a rant: *"I REALLY don't want to explain myself to you anymore. Your lack of support and condescension just fuels my rage and provides more inspiration to NEVER BE LIKE YOU!!!"* There were a few more lines, too, but you get the idea. And, glancing back at some older columns I've written over the years, I've expressed almost, word for word, the same sentiments at times. I guess some things never change. Yeah, it's an immature outburst, similar to my blow-ups while a teenager and it's incredible how I can regress back into that state, on occasion. Thank goodness for those who accept me the way I am—my wife Ellen, who I love more than ever, my mother-in-law, who treats me like a son and the few individuals who I consider close friends. I'd be lost without these people.

As much as there are times when I'd like to completely wash my hands of the whole situation with my father, I suppose there's a nagging sense of responsibility. He did provide for me materially, after all, if not in any way emotionally. But when I was hitting "crunch" time for this issue, it was the same old shit—my sister refusing to validate the importance of my finishing this work under a self-imposed deadline that I've had to delay many times already. She's resentful because I don't work a "real" job at the moment, while she and her husband are struggling to provide for themselves and their two kids. As I said to her, those are the choices you make. I realize that she's dealing with a tough situation but I always wonder, in the back of my mind, if I was in a similar predicament, would she be there for me? I have serious doubts. It's a cynical outlook but well-honed over four decades of familial misery. Not one time has she shown the slightest interest in my passions, my interests but, instead, constantly degraded them.

Enough of this heavy personal trauma. I've had more than enough of that shit over the past few years, what with my best friend getting killed on 9/11/01—which I'm still not over, even though my sister said to me last year that it's time to "move on." Compassionate, eh? I spend way too much time on the internet, I spend too much time watching baseball games. I just didn't feel like doing it for awhile, with everything else going on.

But I never seriously considered jacking in doing the zine—it crossed my mind but I'm not ready to pull the trigger. It was a daunting task, with the backlog of interviews, the pile of CD's and records staring me in the face but, one day during the winter, I sat where I'm sitting now and got down to serious work on the zine. As long as I continue to publish this zine, I hope I won't get into such a rut again. I'm feeling reinvigorated the last few months—even as the family situation continues to be a problem and stress-inducing, this provides a release. People have been very kind with their comments about this zine and it's appreciated. Listening to music that hits me right in the gut, seeing bands that do the same thing—that's why I keep coming back, as imperfect as it still can be.

So this is the 20th anniversary issue... of course, like the last two milestone issues, it's late, by about 10 months. Oh well—nobody's perfect. I didn't do any sort of retrospective this time because I'm going to save that for a book I hope to be working on pretty soon. I'm going to compile my thoughts, ideas and reminiscences into some cogent body of work, along with a sampling of interviews and other zine content over the past two decades. I have no fucking idea when this is going to be published—or by who. A publisher has expressed interest but I haven't talked to him about it for awhile. Who knows if the offer is still open... I've been so busy trying to finish this issue that I haven't even sent him an email about it. But, one way or another, even if it takes awhile, I'm going to try to finish that project. And get another issue out well before another 19 months passes.

This is also the first issue to appear without either a 7" or CD since issue #27. Part of the reason was finances—the other was I didn't want to deal with the process of putting a comp together, in addition to putting together this issue. We'll soon find out if people like *SV* for the zine or it's just something that's wrapped around a CD they want. I liked putting together those comps—I've always been a fan of mix tapes and looked as those discs as a mix tape I'd want to listen to over and over. There might be another comp at some point but, as of now, I don't have a set plan...

*****

"I could never be that angry"—overheard during Born/Dead and Phalanx show, 6/9/03

That quote serves as a pretty good lead-in for the next part of this column. I smiled at the person who said that, someone I know by sight but I forget his name, at the moment. It doesn't really matter, anyway, because I'd rather it remain anonymous. The guy said it while the vocalist for Phalanx was screaming out the words during their set, with what could best be described as pure, larynx-shredding rage. Phalanx, a hardcore band from Seattle, have lyrics that take strong issue with today's state of affairs—their album begins with the sound of stormclouds, an air raid siren and George W. Bush offering rationale why "our cause is just," while we go off to war and the songs on this LP proceed to pointedly comment on US military policy, the crackdown on dissent and other pressing issues.

Damn right they're angry. I often feel the same way when even catching a momentary glimpse of what passes for "news" on US television and radio—and that includes all those rightward-tilting chat shows on Fox, MSNBC, CNN, et al. Dissent is seldom heard and, when it is, it's often marginalized. So I don't mind when hardcore bands use their music as a forum of dissent. In fact, I welcome it. It's sure as hell better than so-called punk or hardcore bands flying the stars 'n stripes of corruption on stage. Or saying we need to "support our troops," like I saw on the back of a t-shirt of a member of a local "punk" band who shall remain nameless (and who will not be receiving any coverage in this zine). So I appreciate such bands as Severed Head Of State, Trag-

edy, Born/Dead, Holding On, Scarred For Life, Dillinger Four, Suicide File, Born Dead Icons, Diallo, World Burns To Death, Scott Baio Army and countless others (this is just a list off the top of my head) who are writing songs that question what's going on. I can imagine the reaction they'd get from the knuckledraggers who want to deport the Dixie Chicks. In my admittedly prejudicial view, punk and hardcore are supposed to be anti-authoritarian—for one thing, railing against oppressive government—and I would readily describe the current political climate as increasingly-oppressive. Not as oppressive, say, as in other countries but does that mean we allow our liberties to be eroded by such craziness as the Patriot act? Creeping fascism, nothing. It's a raging cesspool eroding the Constitution.

It's true that some of the ideas are presented in black and white and, in reality, there are shades of gray. Yes, I'm being bombastic and it reflects feelings of frustration and, yes, *anger*. It's also true that, sometimes, there's a tendency to not have the in-depth knowledge to back up the statements and it's just mouthing what's heard elsewhere. I suppose I can fall into that trap, as well, but something just seems so wrong about all of this. When people cover every available surface with flags and yellow ribbons with an in-your-face zeal. When "pro-America" rallies are held in my hometown, which I've become convinced suffers from a very low cumulative IQ. When those who question the actions in which the current administration are engaged are branded as disloyal or un-American. Quite frankly, I don't care if anyone thinks I'm disloyal or un-American. I wear that perception as a badge of pride (much like my George Dubya "Not My President" button that I wear on my jacket—thanks for sending it Vanessa!).

America is a scary place right now. Very fucking scary. Awash in the worst sort of blindered nationalism that I've ever seen in my life. A revisiting of the McCarthy era. Perhaps there's not a "blacklist," per se, but there's a chilling effect towards dissidents—or at least some very effective propaganda to that effect. Janeane Garofalo has a sitcom mysteriously cancelled before one episode even airs. Sean Penn can't get a significant acting job. Phil Donahue's show is yanked off MSNBC, even though he had decent ratings for that station, while they hire a blatant racist and homophobe named Michael Savage and another right-wing ex-congressman, Joe Scarborough, aiming even lower than the execrable Fox News Network. We're in the grip of a fascistic "president" who wasn't even elected and an administration hell-bent on imposing their will on the rest of the world, an iron fist on "enemies" both overseas and here at home. Those enemies are basically anyone who isn't white, wealthy, heterosexual or dissents from the prevailing mood of über-nationalism.

I really hope all that talk of a strong undercurrent of dissent is true but it wasn't reflected in the mid-term elections. It's true there seems to be more activism and awareness of these issues but, in the meantime, the Republipukes now control both houses of Congress and it will be that much easier for their radical agenda to be forwarded—an insane military budget, while ill-advised tax cuts, which largely benefit the wealthy, get passed. And, of course, those cuts get passed down to the local level. Cities and towns can't balance their budgets and fire and school budgets end up getting cut. It gave me pause when I was driving through Lynn a few weeks ago and saw two firehouses that had been shut down due to budget cuts. I wonder if these tax-cut groupies will feel the same way when a fire engine can't get to their house quickly enough in the unfortunate instance it catches fire, due to the fact it had to come from the other side of town. And what kind of chance do the kids who go to public schools have when there are fewer teachers, fewer supplies and they're up against the lunacy of high-stakes testing such as the MCAS, which will cause more dropouts in more-depressed areas.

This same Congress passed a measure to outlaw third trimester abortions—aka "partial birth abortions" but I won't use the terminology of the anti-abortion crowd. And a lot of them aren't exactly gay-friendly, either. One of the Senate leaders, the religious extremist Rick Santorum from Pennsylvania, had this to say to the Associated Press about a pending Supreme Court dealing with overturning sodomy laws in Texas: "If the Supreme Court says that you have the right to consensual (gay) sex within your home, then you have the right to bigamy, you have the right to polygamy, you have the right to incest, you have the right to adultery. You have the right to anything." Pretty outrageous, in my view, and while there were calls for him to resign his leadership post and protests from some quarters, the story had a short run and quickly faded from view. Meanwhile, Bush continues his attempts to chip away at the wall between church and state with his "faith-based" initiatives, to give public funds to religious organizations, a violation of the First Amendment.

Or how about the White House removing any references to climate change caused by human activity in an Environmental Protection Agency report—information that would prove to be detrimental to the administration's buddies in big oil? This is just the latest episode in obscuring facts about global warming. And EPA head Christie Whitman has had enough—she's decided to resign, which I'm sure suits the administration just fine, since they'll probably replace her with someone willing to "play ball" and not piss off the big oil interests.

Really, I could go on and on and fill many pages but those are news items that have caught my attention lately. To say nothing of this immoral war on Iraq, ostensibly to find weapons of mass destruction, which still haven't been found. And one of the architects of said war, deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, even admitted that the intent wasn't necessarily to find the weapons of mass destruction, but more of a "bureaucratic decision," during an interview with *Vanity Fair* in their July 2003 issue.

A June 3, 2003 column by Robert Scheer in the left-wing magazine *The Nation* has this to say:

> "Paul Wolfowitz, one of the general's top civilian bosses in the Pentagon and a key proponent of invading Iraq, certainly seems unconcerned with the implications of making arguments for war based on convenience rather than facts. In a *Vanity Fair* interview released last week, the neoconservative Wolfowitz said, "The truth is that for reasons that have a lot to do with the US government bureaucracy, we settled on the one issue that everyone could agree on, which was weapons of mass destruction, as the core reason."
>
> He listed two others: to fight terrorism and Hussein's criminal treatment of the Iraqi people. However, Wolfowitz dismissed the last reason, saying "the third one, by itself is a reason to help the Iraqis but it is not a reason to put American kids' lives at risk, certainly not on the scale [that] we did it."
>
> Of course, the marketing of policy "spin" is an established, albeit unfortunate, part of politics. However, it is unacceptable to misinform your troops going into battle or mislead your citizens about why you are putting their sons and daughters in harm's way.

Scheer's piece also includes this observation: "For Wolfowitz and friends, the 9/11 attacks were almost a gift, an opportunity to play God. 'If you had to pick the 10 most important foreign policy things for the United States over the last 100 years, [Sept. 11] would surely rank in the top 10 if not No. 1,' he told *Vanity Fair*."

An excuse, in other words, to put an aggressive foreign policy in place. Yes, that's *The Nation*'s bias and my own bias showing through but it doesn't take a genius to see through the fog and realize that the administration is fishing for justification for these actions. And they had it handed to them on 9/11.

An excuse, essentially, to go in there, decimate the country's infrastructure, murder many innocent civilians and secure the country for all those big contracts to be awarded, such as with Halliburton, Vice President Cheney's former company. In my view, this isn't about freeing the Iraqi people. It's about empire-building, flexing our muscle and making another country safe for corporate plunder. It's about control of a region. And, yes, you damned well better believe it's about oil. The museums may have been sacked after the "fall" of Saddam but the oil fields were secure.

Time will tell if the Iraqi people are truly "free," or under the thumb of another brutal regime, only one more friendly to the US. Just like the brutal regimes the US has supported in Latin America, Africa, Indonesia, etc... To say nothing of our trade partners in China, which is also an incredibly totalitarian, repressive nation. And where's Saddam, anyway? Or Osama bin Laden, for that matter? No one seems to know.

Was the war worth fighting? Let's hear it straight from the troops' mouths. This is a snippet from a June 19 story by Bob Graham in the *Evening Standard*, a London newspaper:

> "On whether the war was one worth fighting, Sgt [John] Meadows said: "I don't care about Iraq one way or the other. I couldn't care less. [Saddam] could still be in power and, to me, it wasn't worth leaving my family for; for getting shot at and almost dying two or three times, there's nothing worth that to me." Even though no Iraqis were involved, and there is no proof Saddam was behind it, the attack on the World Trade Center provides Cpl [Michael] Richardson and many others with the justification for invading Iraq.
>
> "There's a picture of the World Trade Center hanging up by my bed and I keep one in my Kevlar [flak jacket]. Every time I feel sorry for these people I look at that. I think, 'They hit us at home and, now, it's our turn.' I don't want to say payback but, you know, it's pretty much payback."

Let's take a step back and ponder that for one second—no proven link (yet) between the 9/11 attacks and Iraq, but Cpl. Richardson uses these attacks as justification for what he describes "payback." Brainwashing? War fatigue? Or a clear-headed opinion? In all honesty, I was ready to write about why I refuse to "support the troops" with that kind of mindset. I still have mixed feelings, even after reading the various

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posts on a political message board where I first read the *Standard* story. One point of view was that we should lay the blame on the polticians—they're the real villains; that many of these soldiers come from disadvantaged backgrounds and don't have any other options. But some of these soldiers do seem like bullying jocks or frat boys. The type of person who will, say, join the police force and take great pleasure in throwing their weight around. In any case, I'm not a big fan of the military and don't view them as any more heroic than, say, a teacher or a social worker. If anything, I have more respect for the latter occupations.

Ultimately, in the twisted US media circus, a lot of these stories don't get nearly as much coverage as Martha Stewart's indictment or the release of Hillary Clinton's book, which led to another round of frothing-at-the-mouth Clinton bashing. Not that I hold either Bill or Hillary Clinton in very high regard—that administration was pretty damned conservative, itself, but not as radically right-wing as what we have right now. But the Democrats better grow a spine and start fighting back and presenting *some* kind of opposition, instead of trying to be Republican-lite, or we're going to have four more years of this bullshit and the effect on the country will last long after that.

If that person I mentioned at the start of this section doesn't ever think he could be that angry, it might be because he's not thinking about these things or accepts them the way they are. I don't know if that's the case but how can one *not* be even a bit angry? It's time for people to snap out of that kind of complacency because, like it or not, these issues do ultimately affect all of us....

*****

Before I end this column, I'd like to write a bit about Joe Strummer, who passed away on December 22, 2002. I never met Strummer, never interviewed him, but was fortunate enough to see the Clash play three times (wish it had been more), on their first tour in February, 1979, at the Harvard Square Theater, again in 1982 at the Cape Cod Coliseum and one final time in '84 or so, with the "Clash-lite" lineup that didn't include Mick Jones—that was at the Worcester Centrum and, despite the reshuffled lineup, I remember it being pretty good. I also saw the Mescaleros one time a few years ago and, while it didn't have the magic of the Clash, it was still great to hear those old songs again and Joe still had the fire in his eyes. That first show, though—what a life-changer. I wrote at length about that show and my coming of age experiences listening to the Clash in issue #44 so I won't repeat it hear except to reiterate that it's still the best show I've ever attended. Probably because it was the first large-scale show I saw and it was loud and overpowering and made my head spin, even from the balcony.

Whatever musical transgressions they committed later on, whatever one thought about the conflict between their expressed idealism, radicalism or what-have-you and the fact that they played in mainstream rock venues and recorded for a large label—I really don't care. This is music that affected me and touched me profoundly. Sure, hardcore had more of a direct impact, later on. It was more of a personal thing but, before that, the Clash were a constant and remain one to this day.

And Joe did still help causes he believed in. A month before his death, he played a benefit show with the Mescaleros to benefit a fireman's union that had been fighting for an increase in wages and went on strike in November 2002 for ten days. At this show, he reunited with Mick Jones for the encore—the first time they'd played together in two decades. One of the only friends I ever made in college, George Binette, helped organize this show and got to witness this event. He sent me an email about this reunion and it made me quite envious. He also published a short book about it, "The Last Night London Burned" (see review section), following Strummer's untimely death.

As I said, I never met Strummer, didn't know him but, after hearing about these sorts of deeds and hearing first-hand accounts about various friends and acquaintances' interactions with the man, I've long concluded that he was one of the "good ones." And he'll be sorely missed. RIP, Joe...

Queen Of The Faux-Pas

by Anna

Sometimes I find myself thinking about people who have played bit parts in the soap opera that is my life. They each went on to star in their own respective spin-off series, but I haven't kept up with those dramas.

What follows are true stories, with the names changed to protect the innocent and the not-so innocent alike.

Gabe

A decade ago, in my hometown, there was this brief period in which it was popular, among a select few teenagers, to flirt with neo-Nazi ideology and imagery. A guy named Gabe told me that he had been the originator of this trend. He was older, in his early 20s I believe, and he took a lot of kids under his wing; they regarded him as a guru of sorts. Soon, there were small roving groups of skinhead kids sporting swastikas and terrorizing us at our local hole-in-the-wall all-ages club, the Soul Kitchen. Mostly they were all talk, but they started enough fights that they were eventually banned from the premises. Then they'd just walk back and forth outside, probably trying to look intimidating. Well, they did, to me anyway; probably to a lot of people.

On a Monday, Gabe renounced the lifestyle and the racism of the selfsame motley crew that he had assembled. He claimed not to hold neo-Nazi beliefs any longer; besides, he said, "my best friend is black." In a conversation with an erstwhile friend of mine named Mick, Gabe mentioned his desire to meet girls, since he had suddenly found himself friendless, with no social circle. Mick, in all his brilliance, gave Gabe my phone number. He called at 11 p.m. on Tuesday. Luckily, my parents turned off the phones when they went to bed; otherwise the call would have awakened everyone. Gabe left a message, and I thought he was a Gabe I knew from school. Though I couldn't remember ever giving that Gabe my phone number, I called back. This was on Wednesday.

The guy was not bright. When I called him, the first thing he said to me, after I identified myself, was, "Hey, what's up?" as if we'd talked before — and I still thought he was the Gabe I knew from school. But I finally figured out that he was a whole 'nother Gabe, with no help from him, and I asked him who he was and how he got my number.

Then he told me that he used to be a neo-Nazi skinhead, but that was all in the past. I wasn't too freaked out about that until I asked him, "Oh, how long ago did you quit being a neo-Nazi?"

He answered, "On Monday." This was cause for alarm, but I humored him nevertheless. We talked about mutual acquaintances — he had dated this hippie chick in my math class, for instance. He talked about how all the neo-Nazi skinhead kids had "worshipped" him, and how now they all wanted to kick his ass for leaving them. He talked about wanting to start a band; he played drums. He kept bugging me to let him "jam" with my band. "We can be like the Breeders — all chicks with a guy drummer!" he enthused. I steadfastly refused, however.

Quite frankly, he was a painfully boring conversationalist. I never called him, but he called me a few times thereafter. Once he phoned while stoned on marijuana, and we had the most frustratingly inane "conversation" of my life. He was talking really slowly, babbling about nothing in particular. It was then that I learned how torturous it is for a sober person to attempt conversation with someone who was intoxicated.

Another time he called me and insisted that I listen to him play the drums. For five minutes I endured his mechanical, soulless drumming, sitting there impatiently on the other end, breathing into the receiver and staring at my ceiling.

He kept pestering me to tell him where I lived. I refused to divulge such information, but he wouldn't take no for an answer. Insistently, he refused to desist from his diligent prodding. "At least tell me what street you live on," he demanded.

Fed up with his cajoling, I finally just lied: "The name of my street begins with the letter Z."

This seemed to appease him; he became convinced that he knew which street I was talking about, and, knowingly, he said, "Ah, I know where that is."

He wanted to meet in person. I was being very noncommittal, not having the guts to reject him outright, even though I wanted to. Someone pointed him out to me once at a show; he was standing in the doorway all alone with his hands in his pockets, watching the band play. He was a big guy, and his hair was still only a few millimeters long. He came alone and he left alone. I felt kind of sorry for him.

Finally he stopped calling me. Through the proverbial grapevine, I heard that he relapsed and started hanging out with the neo-Nazis again.

I was pissed at Mick for giving him my phone number without my permission.

Gene

He was one of perhaps three neo-Nazis at my school; they would all huddle together at lunch, simultaneously shunning and being shunned. It was rumored that his parents were Jewish. He even confirmed this rumor when a classmate asked him about it pointblank. But a friend of mine says that his family went to the same Catholic church as hers. So who knows.

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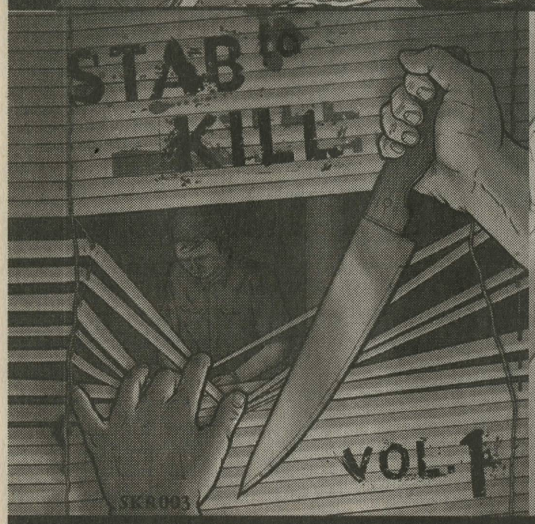

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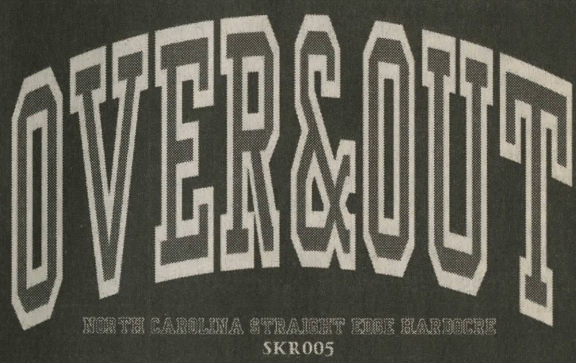

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During our junior year, Gene and I were enrolled in the same first-period photography class. I would keep my distance, but he'd still manage to disgust me from afar. I could overhear him talking about having sex with his girlfriend, in a way that I thought was totally disrespectful to her. She and I had been friends the year before; she was a sweet, quiet girl, but then she got involved with him, allowing her identity to be subsumed by his. The way he'd talk about her, like she was just some dumb fuck toy, would sicken me.

I wrote an article for the school paper about the aforementioned local neo-Nazi skinhead trend. As it was an opinion piece, and not a news story, I talked about how stupid I thought they were. The cartoonist drew a dumb caricature to accompany the article; the guy in the drawing bore an uncanny resemblance to Gene. Really, that only made things harder for me, as it made it that much easier for Gene to interpret the article as a personal attack.

The next day in photo class was when the trouble started. Gene was slandering me and my article to anyone who would listen, but always within earshot of me. It was so obvious that he wanted to make his opinion known to me, but he never directly confronted me about it.

Shortly thereafter, however, he started confronting me in other ways, namely through death threats. I never took them too seriously, but they were pretty unsettling nonetheless. He'd describe in graphic detail which strategies he'd use to bring about my demise. One scenario that still sticks in my mind involved him hanging me upside-down from a tree and then letting a bunch of girls beat me with baseball bats as if I were a piñata. I considered it harassment, and it upset me to have to start my days off being regaled with such fantasies. The only reason I wasn't afraid that he'd carry them out is because he didn't have a very large group of "colleagues" at our school. Just one other neo-Nazi guy and his twin sister.

I also heard, again through the proverbial grapevine, that Gene's parents had seen my article about neo-Nazi youth. In the piece, I had described the typical garb favored by neo-Nazi skinheads, and apparently this had enlightened their clueless asses about their son's fascist dabblings. Their solution to the problem was to buy him a fancy car stereo, in order to bribe him into removing the red shoelaces from his Docs. Strangely enough, Gene's mindset didn't seem to change with his shoelaces.

Senior year, Gene either dropped out or was expelled. I could never find out for sure which fate was his. I haven't heard about him since.

Max

When I was 15, I left a stack of the first issue of my zine in a small used-record store; soon I was contacted by a guy named Max who lived a couple of towns over. I started corresponding with him through the mails, and soon we got together to hang out. He was really smart and articulate, with an extremely dry sense of humor. He was also very scrawny, with thick glasses and a bad complexion.

In the late summer of 1994, the neo-Nazi skinheads were allowed entrance into the Soul Kitchen for the last time. A popular hardcore punk ensemble was headlining, and Mick's band was one of the opening acts. The other opening band was called Sterile Emotion; I'd never heard of them but they were good — a noise band with an insane vocalist who'd crash into audience members and fling himself onto the concrete floor.

After the headliners had played two or three songs, a bunch of neo-Nazis started beating up Sterile Emotion's singer, Martin, calling him a faggot. The band stopped playing and the lights came on. The headlining band's vocalist yelled into the microphone, "Fuckers, you're so fucking stupid, you fuck everything up for everybody." I watched as maybe three neo-Nazis clobbered Martin; Gene was pummeling him. I saw Martin's face covered with his own blood. Despite the fact that the venue was packed nearly to capacity, no one intervened. The only person who had the courage to do *anything* was Max; he stood a few feet away from the melee, scrawny body and all, yelling at them to stop. Given his stature, even a verbal confrontation must have been pretty gutsy on his part.

Finally the fight ended and the skinheads were ejected from the premises. The band played on, but after that violent episode, everyone only half-heartedly bopped around to the music. About 30 minutes after the fight, a couple of cops entered the building; people actually crowded around the blood on the floor to hide it from the police, afraid it could be an impetus to close down the area's only all-ages club. It turns out that the cops were only there to complain to the owner about some kids who were skateboarding outside. They left a minute or two later. The show ended early.

Max's journey into manhood was also a journey into cocky arrogance. He started having sex, he started attending community college, he became the lead singer of a band, and suddenly he wasn't the acne-scarred, comic-book-reading dork that I had become so fond of. Gradually, my phone calls to him were never returned, and I lost track of him. I missed him regardless of the turn for the worse that his personality had taken.

A few years later, when I was 20, my friend's band was playing a show at some flash-in-the-pan venue called the Crater. She told me that one of the other bands on the bill was called Mike Hunt and the Private Dicks. I groaned upon hearing such a dreadful name, and was in total awe that anyone would actually give his or her band such a god-awful moniker. Then she told me who the Private Dicks' singer was — Max. That was just disappointing! The Max I had known possessed a rich and sophisticated sense of humor, one that would never allow a band to be cursed with such a juvenile appellation.

Before the show, I was standing outside, against the wall; I looked over at the sidewalk and I saw him. We made eye contact, and he recognized me and ambled on over. Confidently but presumptuously, he said, "So, you're here to see my band?"

I played dumb; "You have a band?"

He seemed offended by my ignorance: "Uh, *yeah*! You mean you didn't come to see us?"

I told him that I was there to see my friend's band. Continuing to play dumb, I asked, "So, what's your band's name?"

He answered, "Mike Hunt and the Private Dicks."

I groaned and yelled at him, "That is the *stupidest* band name I've *ever* heard! I can't *believe* you named your band that!" He, on the other hand, was astounded that I failed to appreciate the humor inherent in such ostensibly witty wordplay. Then he suddenly had to leave to take care of some band business.

He had changed; not just in superficial ways, like his wearing of a leather jacket and his smoking of a cigarette, which stood in stark contrast to his straight-edge practices of some years prior. The way he carried himself was radically different; instead of thinking of himself as scrawny, he was now lanky, which is really the same thing only with cooler connotations. He seemed genuinely full of himself; I could not detect even a hint of the irony that would have been present when I had known him best. But I still would have liked to have hung out with him, to have caught up on the years we hadn't been in touch. But the cops came and shut the show down, confiscating the money as "evidence" so no one could get refunds. Everyone fled the scene, and I never got to say goodbye to him.

Life is like that, though. People weave in and out of it, and you so rarely get closure.

Anna can be reached via e-mail at *lakoff_vs_chomsky_deathmatch@hotmail.com*

PLAIN ENGLISH
BY CHRIS P.

OK, after some more adult writing, it's time for a rant. Why? Because I said so! And by now I've got a lot on my mind, so bear with me if you'd be so kind.

First of all, this explosion of "reality" TV shows has just ***GOT*** to go! Preferably down the tubes to the cesspit in which it belongs. As if this were not bad enough, the fact that we have this rot making the wasteland known as network TV even worse to endure, all the particulars of the vapid and empty-headed people who appear on these programs are all over the trashy, glossy celebrity gossip magazines that my (otherwise level-headed) wife picks up every week at the supermarket.

OK, don't get me wrong, Trista Rehn is indeed cute, and she does have a (mainstream-approved) nice body, and all that. But has it occurred to people yet in the mainstream that she is nothing more than an attention-seeking airhead? And that Evan "Joe Millionaire" Marriott is a complete ignoramus? Neither of these folks has anything valid to say, for crying out loud. Having to listen to Evan Marriott mumble about his feelings about the women he was dating on that show is almost as bad as watching Ozzy Osbourne slur and shuffle his way through another episode of "The Osbournes". Difference is, at least I can laugh at Ozzy because he's actually rather funny, in his pathetic manner. But I want to strangle both of his ultra-spoiled spawn in a big bad way. Painfully and quickly so I won't have to endure their whiny faux-British accents anymore. These brats grew up privileged, with anything they wanted right at their fingertips, not wanting for anything at all, not knowing hardship or any real losses. And they have the nerve to think that their lives are *so* hard because Mommy and Daddy Osbourne are attempting to be parents and lay down the law (too late in their lives)? Pshaw! To hell with 'em, I say.

"Survivor Vol. Whatever"—*enough already*! Who cares about a bunch of whiny yupcake types stuck out in the middle of nowhere

whining about how awful it is to be where they are? QUIT IT!

"American Idol"...the public gets to participate in the choosing of the next Britney Aguilera and the newest faceless teen pop boy band hacks. We get to see just how uninspired the public can be in watching this program by helping vote in people who are just that willing to embody the dream of plastic pop stardom by emulating the constructs known as pop stars. At least judge Simon Cowell, in his sarcastic and grumpy British fashion, tells it like it is and shoots from the hip in telling most of these people that they SUCK. Unlike the other judges, who sugarcoat and play nice, at least he gets my respect for not playing the ass-kissing game as much as they do and for being as brutally honest as he is. Otherwise the already overcrowded pop music scene would be even more crowded with wannabes and talentless puppets even worse than the wannabes and talentless puppets there already.

Assailing the ears of the public with their (record-company-bought and paid-for) constant radio airplay ought to constitute a violation of the Geneva Convention, to paraphrase something a friend of mine said recently regarding pop stars like Celine Dion. Us fans of real music with heart and soul and feeling ought to rise up and return the favor with the classic Ramones tune, "We Want The Airwaves", as our war cry. But with communications giant Clear Channel crowding the smaller stations out as the major shopping mall chains crowd out the small mom & pop stores who can't compete with them, it's not much, to be perfectly cynical a moment. The major corporations, as we well know by now, don't give a wet slap about anyone who doesn't like their prepackaged formats of pop pap being shoved down their throat 24-7. Therefore, why should they listen to us at all? They don't have to and they won't, and all the ideals in the world will not stop them from corralling all the radio markets so that they can own it all and force their ways upon us in the grand American tradition known as manifest destiny.

"Married By America": So much for the thrill of choosing your own mate for yourself, by your own standards. Oh, no, now it has to be done by the (m)asses of America by the universal standard of who looks prettiest and best together. They try to gussy it up by firing (stupid) questions regarding (outdated) morality and such at the meat, I mean, contestants, but it all amounts to, yet again, a beauty contest. Standards are far too relative a thing to marginalize like this!

I suppose you could say that, right now, I've had a bellyful of so-called American culture/Americana, especially in light of the fact that Dubya got his way and had his little war in Iraq. This resurgence of Americana is no more than a way to make us all feel *so good* about being American, and being (supposedly) totally free unlike those poor individuals around the world who are not a "democratic" nation as we are. Yes, and pigs will fly tomorrow, and Lucifer will start trying on parkas. Oh, and I have some really prime swampland to sell you, too. For dirt money, I promise.

It became more and more obvious over time that the real instigators of this war were Herr Rumsfeld and Herr Ashcroft. Dubya was and still is just standing there blinded by the press spotlights and rattling off propaganda to make us feel good—I think he's long since realized that this is not really his show. He's just the figurehead, he doesn't have to make sense or even to really do anything aside from look good and say the right thing at the right time. My father calls him Der Fuhrer, as he is totally against this whole war business. A not altogether uncommon thing for someone his age, most would be surprised to find out; he is appalled by what he has discovered about this war (I meant to say "Operation Iraqi Freedom," really I did) and its ramifications in his independent research. Such as the fact that this may well kill our diplomatic relations with most other countries around the world dead, if it hasn't already, in the long run. We may not be worried about this now, but if a time comes when we need to petition any of those countries who spoke out against the war for aid in any given situation, it may be a rude shock if they say no to us and leave us hanging And this is only one of many things we ought to worry about.

Are we, perhaps, going to go to war with Syria (one of our allies in the original Gulf War) next for not supporting us this time around? And, for that matter, all of a sudden harboring chemical weapons of their own and also harboring Iraqi refugees? Since when did those two things happen, is my question? Or perhaps are we going to bomb the hell out of France for their especially vocal opposition to the war since the beginning? After all, the French are supposedly arming the Iraqi Republican Guard behind our back, rumor has it, along with Russia and China. And they are, Heaven forbid, trashing American-based businesses such as McDonald's, the American leader of the wave towards homogenizing cuisine worldwide. Not that the latter revelation breaks my heart, because I hate McDonald's like anybody with sense about the food they eat, and will not eat anything of theirs unless the circumstance is truly dire. Please pardon a slight digression here onto this subject, just for a moment.

You may not be able to sample the local cuisine of any given country you're in for much longer without expending a lot of unnecessary effort. Because by god, you're gonna get a Big Mac no matter what, isn't that just grand, seems to be McDonalds' attitude. I seem to recall as well that several McD's were also trashed and vandalized in India last year due to the Hindus' venerating cows as animals of the gods and as such not to be eaten or killed. Myself, I rather like and prefer the idea of going to, say, Thailand or Malaysia and eating what the locals eat as opposed to McDonald's. When I was in Scotland on my honeymoon, for example, I had the pleasure of eating haggis for the first time and enjoying it thoroughly more than I thought I would. Which is to say that I went into the experience with an open mind and ended up loving it, keeping in mind the fact I knew exactly what it was. No, you don't want to know what goes into haggis if you don't already know that little detail!

This wave towards homogenization disturbs me, because all it goes to show is just how complacent and closed-minded most American travelers are in their eating habits. And it edges out the native cuisine of other countries, adding insult to injury given how many foreign countries have already become very Westernized and their younger generations are leaving their own culture behind in favor of the hodgepodge we call culture in America. Let's keep in mind the obvious fact that young people will leave their countries for economic reasons as well, which is perfectly valid. The previous thing bothers me, though, because I like to think that the world can still be a place where all kinds of cultures and outlooks can exist. But not in the eyes of the great slobbering beast that is America, fixing its blurred and filmy stare onto all the other countries in the world with the aim of converting all to its ways. And it makes me sad to think that we Americans, as a people, simply just don't care most of the time about other peoples' culture and traditions, since we are so obsessed with our own in our myopic fashion.

And, to dovetail back into the previous subject, it led to certain people in America boycotting French imports in an unintelligent and juvenile manner on a grassroots level to "show support for the war". How ridiculous can you get? At my workplace, we sell quite a few French products and thankfully this movement doesn't seem to have affected our sales very much. My point is, why will boycotting these products show any support for anything other than closed-minded stupidity AKA homogeneity? I realize that this probably goes against what many punk types think as far as their boycotting (insert American product of choice here—whatever's in to boycott this week or month, I guess, will do), but boycotting certain American products is for the most part a more valid protest, I think, given how many injustices and human rights violations we commit in the making of these products. Many if not most of which are made offshore in foreign countries anyway, so how can we call them "American-made"? It bears mentioning, too, that the French are not innocent in their trashing of American businesses. While I can see that extreme conditions demand extreme responses, it also makes them look almost as immature as we are acting. Let the record show that, for my part I will not buy Nike shoes or clothes (off shore sweatshops), Arizona or Snapple drinks, and Domino's pizza (all of three of whom are conservative companies that support the lunatic Xian pro-life movement).

Boycotting French imports only makes us look foolish given how all the French are doing is voicing their opinion and backing it up with action that is no more so than us refusing to buy their products. Are we so petty that we have to resort to this to show how we are as a country and a people? I guess so. I recently had to deal with an imbecile at my workplace who wanted NO FRENCH PRODUCTS AT ALL and made that excruciatingly clear all the time I was assisting him with about every other remark he made on the matter. I conveniently neglected to mention to him that one of the products I sold him was Canadian (Whoops! How rotten of me!), and that he probably will not want me serving him again, since on my father's side, one of my great-grandfathers was a French Canadian lumberjack. A very tall, brawny hulk of a man whose idea of fun was wrestling with his fellow hefty lumberjacks, he was, and he probably would have gone up to this nitwit and broken him in half. Or at the very least given him a very large piece of his mind regarding the issue. Fortunately for the dullard in question, Monsieur Pineo has been deceased since 1960.

Oh, yes, the French *would* be speaking German as their national language right now if we had not saved them in World War II. But if *they* had not assisted *us* in a little nothing event called...oh yes, the Revolutionary War in the 18th

century, we would still be speaking with British accents. And we would still be a British colony, still dependent upon the British monarchy for everything, without the same "God-given" rights that we take for granted today to protect us. Were it not for these cheese-eating wine aficionados with their (very American, now that I think of it—we *do* steal from the best, after all) arrogance, this might very likely have been the case. And the Revolutionary War is important in that it marked the founding of our country as a distinct entity in and of itself, separate from the Crown. A little something that the flag-wavers and saber-rattlers need to remember a moment before they continue bashing France so mindlessly.

So what can I do in this current cultural/social (void) climate? As of now I am keeping my big loud Irish mouth shut, a daunting task at any time, and simply letting matters play themselves out. And I will live my life for me, the best way I can live it. I will let the American people be just what they're being. Which is blinded and foolish and numb to anything except what they want for themselves and their ever-increasing broods of squealing spoiled brats. Who will probably be even more clueless and uncaring than their parents are right now. I'll leave it at that. It's all I can do anyway, and all I care to do right about now.

E-mail: korpusangelikus@hotmail.com

RANDOM DOUBTS & SHOUT-OUTS

by Tigger

Goddamn, I got so much trouble on my mind. It make it hard to write a column when you've run 10 topics into the ground in writing and about 100 into the ground in your head. So much has happened since the last issue of Suburban Voice—which I punked out of writing a column for because I didn't want to write about the whole September 11th thing, because what the fuck was I going to add to an already fucked up situation?—and I've been struggling with finding a way to contain it all, to find some common thread, that connects it.

Since the last issue I've half-assedly started a dozen columns for SV, none of which are at all relevant any more. I wrote the "why the fuck doesn't this town have a stable DIY venue?" column. I wrote the "Some of my friends use the word 'jaded' too much" column, which was as much a dig on plenty of people I didn't know as it was my friends, ranging from 22-42, who threw "jaded" around like it was heading for the clearance racks at the K-Mart in South Bay shopping center. (For my friends, nothing personal.) I also wrote the "Hooray to DIY venues" column, the "Boo to Boston fire inspectors" column, the "playing small towns can fucking rule" column that was all about "The Nickel Kids go Nuts and Slow-Burn a Break-up" tour of such hotbeds as Muskegon, MI and Appleton, WI, where the kids will invite you to go skinny dipping and make you feel sexy in 110 degree weather with no clothes on. And yeah—playing small towns does fucking rule, and coming back from that to immediately start working on Regeneration with a whole shitload of people I'd only known "around" made ol' Beantown more loveable than it had been for the 3 years I'd lived there at the time. If for no other reason, it amazed me (and still does) that people who could have had every chance to play the "jaded" card or the "too fucking cool" card fucking threw down and made something happen. Nobody should take that for granted, especially folks who haven't spent much time outside of New England—Regeneration was one of the best run, best put together large-scale DIY venues in the country, run by people who were on the ball in a big way, in one of the hardest towns in the country to find commercial space and run a club, and I count myself lucky to have worked there and played there and drank on the secret roof clubhouse where we all held scene meetings about the rest of you.

But in long form all that shit was completely out of date, and that's pretty much the trick with me writing columns—I'm not a subject-of-the-month (or 18) kind of guy so I have to wait until Al is REALLY publishing and then slap around old and new ideas like a ball of yarn and eventually, if I'm lucky, something that ties it all together comes tumbling out. It's a pain in the ass that is native to us short-attention span folk. Next issue, I'm gonna do a fucking Mad Lib instead, instead of writing some crap that's going to end up like some half-assed piece of personal writing. Bear with me.

Early in 2003 I said fuck it and quit my job. I had a good excuse—my partner, Aly, was looking for a good internship for school, I was fried as shit, waking up with nightmares every day, hating every second of teaching, with no club to volunteer at and no band to play in and generally no way to blow off steam in any of the ways that I love blowing off steam. I'd just gotten back from Thrashfest and a full week of Midwest-style eating (too much) and Midwest-style drinking (way too much) and Midwest-style thinking (an odd combination of too much and not at all, at least for me). I put in my notice and we packed up our shit and I rode couches for a month and Aly and I—ably aided by Jeff Dies Screaming, our roommate Ex-Straight-Edge Will, and our friend Jon the Realtor—packed our shit up, left half of it in storage, and drove from Boston to Pensacola, Florida, by way of Aly's parents' house, my parents' house, one Denny's, some hipster bar in Columbus, OH, one snowstorm, and a long as shit drive through Alabama. I swore I wouldn't teach again because it drove me too crazy—on top of the kids being crazy there was too much play-acting, too much acting like a "good teacher" and then running to my van to smoke and pull my shirt off and go home to drink a beer or six and forget about my day. No matter how sad I felt my last day—when all the crazy kids who spent every day yelling at me actually got upset and complained they'd never have another teacher like me—it was time to go. My time paying Boston rent was done.

So here I am in sunny Pensacola, another new place, and the same lesson I learned in 1999 when I left Minneapolis for Boston, I'm learning all over again. I'm sick of learning the same lessons all the time, but there it is: the face of our "scene" is totally different from place to place. Unlike the punks in this country who wander a lot, by freight train, thumb, or shitty old vans, it's been a long time since I did any wandering—frankly, for me, touring and getting a contained, constructed view of the particular craziness of a town's scene is my preferred method. You get to see a 100% romantic vision of a town, with (hopefully) very little of the crap. But going to a new place and living there is always the same for me—you always see the shitty stuff first, and digging in and finding the good stuff takes forever.

Since I've been in Pensacola I've had some ridiculous issues with some folks here, I've fixed those issues with some of those same folks, I've been drunk a lot, and hell, I've even taken the time to almost get run over by a truck full of Fundamentalist preachers. But mostly, I've been doing a lot of thinking about this whole punk rock thing, and the endless series of growing pains that our scene or community or what-fucking-ever you want to call it at this point consistently seems to go through. What kills me, really, is that it's the same complaints, the same shit-talking, the same old stories I've been hearing for years: the music isn't tough enough, the music isn't pushing enough boundaries, the music doesn't sound like 1977, the bands aren't DIY enough, somebody isn't political enough, somebody's too political, punk just isn't vibrant anymore, why aren't there any good hardcore bands, etc, etc, etc, and I'm here to fucking say, as many people have said before me: punks of America, grow the fuck up.

That's right, kids, and this is where that common thread I mentioned before comes together: grow the fuck up, and do it fucking quick. "Grow Up" doesn't mean leaving your ideals behind. It doesn't mean, as one of my fellow columnists advocated last issue, giving up punk music because it doesn't mean anything anymore. What it does mean is that we've tried the age-old method of accepting and rejecting shit by our narrow-minded standards for close to 30 years now, and when we live in a world where a cartoonish version of our scene has become an inherent part of pop culture and you can honestly say that the majority of people who are members of our community weren't even fucking alive when Return of the Jedi came out, let alone London Calling, then it's time to stop stupidly holding onto the old ways of thinking.

Every 3 years or so, somebody comes along and says, stop trying to pretend it's 1977. I'm boringly unoriginal in that statement, but I'm not trying to say that now. I'm trying to say that endless cycles of reactionary thinking only opens our scene up to attacks from the outside. Punk/hardcore has become just another commodity, some might argue. Who cares? So's breathing. Our world is too big and too established to continually define ourselves by what we're not. We're the ones who reward dumb bands for being DIY hardcore and then bitch about them 5 years later when they pull into our town in tour buses with a lot of fucking attitude and a major label contract. At this point, trying to identify ourselves musically by the most obscure or politically by the most extreme or socially by the smallest, most limited community only means that we're creating an ideal based in cynicism and jadedness: everything and everybody, ultimately, is going to end up sucking, anyhow, so why take the time to give a shit about where anyone else is coming from? That kind of cynicism only works if you want to play the victim instead of stepping up and actually trying to change something. If the stupid skate-punk band comes to town with Hot Topic gear and thongs with their name printed across the front, it's you're fucking fault—you let them have it while you were too busy eating dumpstered bagels and

being too prematurely jaded to care. And I love decent dumpstered bagels.

A friend of mine recently observed that more than ever, it seems like shows and just hanging out is full of people who feel like they're owed something. Somehow, in between giggling as Mark McCoy and Martin Crudos duke it out in the letters section of MRR or some other music zine that you swear you don't read because your existence is so much more than that, what have you done that is of any use to anyone else beside what's three feet in front of your face? We purport to be self-reliant but at the same time, like that nervous first-time suburban panhandler in front of the show, we're pretty much just mooching off our friends. But that's all crap now—the current politics of our America have pretty much put paid to mooching off our friends. Ask yourself: what is your contribution? Doing It Yourself and Doing It For Yourself aren't the same thing. Not the same thing at all.

So what's the solution? It goes back to what it always goes back to. We play in bands. We put on shows. We write zines. We hang out and get drunk. We hang out and don't get drunk. It's not those things that we need to be rejecting in the name of whatever the kids do things in the name of these days—art? Anarchy? Whatever. Instead, we need to understand that all those things, whether we believe that they're our personal expression or not, affect others, and should be intended to affect others. It's not about us. It never really was. It's about what we create having a lasting, positive effect that carries over. If we don't do it, someone else will, and obviously, they have, by taking the most ridiculous parts of our image and sound and turning it into pop culture. As our scene gets bigger we need to create bigger spaces for more people while still retaining our ethics—not pissing about how somehow it got too big, and then going home and thinking about maybe writing a zine about it for your friends to read.

None of this is particularly original. Hell, I'm not the most original guy. But originality is pretty overrated, especially when we are all apparently so dumb that we didn't learn the lesson the first 100 times it came up. Punk/hardcore has always walked the fine line between independence and elitism that characterizes how we grow up. But it's time to get over it.

METAL HEART
by Greg Pratt

I haven't heard the new Dokken album yet.

I'm sure I will, though. My budding career as a metal journalist enables (or forces) me to hear all the latest albums by bands such as Dokken. Which is fine by me; Don Dokken and George Lynch are obviously playing music for all the right reasons (money is obviously not a factor, nor is fame at this point), and they always had such kick-ass melodies in their choruses. The chorus to the ultra-catchy Dokken tune "Dream Warriors" is actually one of rock's finest moments; the accompanying video featured the band hanging out with (and giving nightmares to, if you can believe it!!) Freddy Krueger. Call them what you will, but I'll take them over phony retro punk crud or keyboard-laced hip hardcore petrifaction any day of the fucking week.

Having said that, one does have to pause for a moment and think about how Dokken feel today. The world has left them behind; like the drummer for Warrant, they probably spent time after their moments of glory (Warrant = Cherry Pie LP, Dokken = Uh, Dream Warriors 12" EP) working horrible menial jobs like packing videos into boxes. And, if you have any heart at all, you have to feel sorry for them. They are artists, playing music they love, and the world sends them to pack porn and sell smokes to kids once their albums stop making money. However, a lot of these bands are now, as Ratt once said, back for more. They probably make less money than the average band playing basement shows and undoubtedly suffer more ridicule than any of us will ever know, just for wanting to rock.

This train of thought usually leaves me feeling very depressed. Most people would consider a post-modernist noise band "high art" and Dokken a joke. I'm sure more people enjoy The Black Halos than they would a real rock band. There is no justice.

Warrior Soul was a really, really good band. Nuclear Assault continue to inspire me more than any political crust band. Accept and Suicidal Tendencies always pick me up when I feel worn out from life. Yet, where are these people today? Well, Udo Dirkschneider is still putting out consistently great, if not rather redundant, albums, but the rest of the lot have faded into obscurity, selling crack or working the door at the Whiskey-A-Go-Go.

There is no justice; the true artists of our time are unemployed and rejected from most of society. Many years ago, the singer from the band Odin basically declares he will kill himself if his band does not succeed in the incredible movie The Decline Of Western Civilization Part II: The Metal Years; they did not succeed. I hope that young man didn't go through with his insane suicide pact, because I really feel his life has more worth than most of those whom I encounter on a daily basis. He's the artist, making art that he knew was a one-way ticket to nowhere (after a brief stop in a jacuzzi with a bunch of naked strangers), but it meant his life to him. Could any of us match the strength of our convictions with that nameless, forgotten, hopefully-not-dead singer of Odin?

There is a certain despicable faction of our generation of slime that like to actually go out of their way to make fun of these people; joke retro T-shirt stores (which should all be firebombed, tonight) now sell Ozzy Osbourne, AC/DC, Van Halen and Black Sabbath shirts, among many more. At first, I was excited at the possibility of finally owning a Sabbath Vol. 4 shirt, but then I realized that the idea of buying a shirt at a store like this is to laugh at what is on the shirt; these people think Sabbath is a... JOKE? Well, the age of irony and all the accompanying Gen Xers can immediately go firebomb their own faces, because this is no laughing matter.

I will get the opportunity to interview Dokken, to coincide with the release of their new album. I will probably pass, because it seems to me like I won't have the words to say to these people. Not unlike trying to console someone who just lost a family member, I'm just not good at it. I want Dokken to succeed, and shove their platinum record award for Long Way Home in our younger generations smirking, post-modernist, ironic slacker faces. It probably won't happen though. I would like to tell George Lynch or Don Dokken how much I actually admire them for doing what they want to do, regardless of the financial and social costs; something that few of us could honestly claim to do. Maybe I will (and if I do, it will be reprinted here), maybe I won't.

But, know this: more meaningful art came out of L.A. in the eighties and nineties than could ever come out of a hipster post-hardcore scene in San Francisco. I've looked both straight in the eye, and that is the obvious conclusion. But the faux-artists are wrapped up in a layer of glazed irony and black hair dye, thus awarding them the title of genuine musicians, while John Connelly sits with his head in his hands, wondering what the hell happened, childhood dreams of playing rock music shattered. There is no justice.

E-mail: demento@islandnet.com

Songs of Retribution
by Joan Donovan

I started off the school year by dropping out of school and working my ass off to pay rent. It was a dirty job walking dogs and biking around JP. Usually I'd spend my nights slumped over a couch somewhere sleeping. One such fine day I ran into a good friend and old bandmate, Jeff. He said that Ross and Sue and Paul had finally found a space to dump all that benefit money into. I was excited, almost, giddy at the thought of an all ages show space in my city. Later in the month there were volunteer days at the space to paint it and put up soundproofing. I didn't get to go for the first few weeks as I was working at least 6 days a week. My dedication to the scene wasn't as big of a priority as feeding my cat. The space was called Regeneration. I first entered Regeneration on a cool fall night when a show was booked there prematurely. Before the place was even ready for kids to come in, before the sound system was set up, before the zine library was intact, before everything, RAMBO played there. Kyle said the show was killer, but I don't really know. I didn't stick around for any of the bands because I had to get up at 6:30 AM to walk a dog or 10.

This was the beginning. Soon after, I had caught the "Regeneration buzz" and had to help out. I gathered up everyone I knew, every single night and headed over to paint walls and floors and clear debris from all the crevices. It was amazing. Sue, Ross, Ryan and Paul's dedication was the biggest motivation for me. Here were some kids who put their names and financial security on the line for "the scene." I am always floored when someone's unwavering commitment flies in the face of financial and social ruin. After all, if this place didn't work out I know a line of kids who would crucify them via the internet moments after the fallout.

The week before the first scheduled show was 'do or die' time. Many nights I'd ride my bike straight from work to Regeneration to lend my hands and hope. Every night I'd work along side different kids, all in the name of community. The respect and admiration I gained for this Boston "scene" was immense. Although, truth be told, it had it's downside. Some of the volunteers were more burden than help, sitting on couches and painting insignificant spots and claiming them

as their own. Everyday when I got there and saw Sue, Ross, Paul, Ryan, Al Quint, Jimmy Flynn, Tigger, Brammy, Eric Yu, and countless others, I knew what was happening. The kids who had to invest time in punk rock were there. The kids who had to book shows, the kids who had to play in bands were always slaving away. They deserve pats on the back for contributing. They gave Regeneration a good start. The night before the first show, Sue and I went through hundreds of zines and put them in different boxes by category. Paul, Ross and Ryan worked on the PA. 3 AM rolled around and we called it quits. There was always a little bit of time to finish tomorrow. I went to work at 8 AM the next day. Completely drained. It was a beautiful day and I couldn't want to get back to Regeneration and help out. I got there about 3 PM and answered phones and sorted more zines while others tried to get the PA off the ground and on the stage. Things, although hectic, were going rather well.

Bands began showing up as well as kids, a lot of kids! Things were exciting. It felt like being on the verge of a cliff, if all went well and the wind didn't blow, you'd be safe, but if one thing went wrong, one subtle nudge would lead to disaster. (maybe I was just really overtired) Brammy and I were doing on stage security. Sue was at the door, Ross and Paul were in the crowd and Ryan was behind the soundboard. Jimmy and Tigger were outside showing people where to park. Everything seemed to hopeful.

The first band went on and everything sounded amazing. I'm not really one for street punk but State Control really got things going off on the right foot. Dancing was minimal but something was in the air. Maybe it was the smell of success? The next band to play was Cut The Shit and they are one of those "blistering" thrash bands that feature ex members of... a lot of bands. I was completely happy. Kids were dancing I was watching, standing guard so to speak, but I forgot to keep my own guard up. I swear it's at the oddest times that kids take shots at me. I was so unsuspecting and taken back at what happened. Cut The Shit dedicated a song to me, and I know my reputation supercedes anything I've really ever said or done, but I knew it was a huge fuck you. I was really just awestruck. So I sat there and I took it. I watched people point and laugh at me while this kid with a microphone told me how he wishes I was dead. After all that work and after all those sleepless nights building a "community space" I was cast out. So much for my admiration and respect for the Boston "scene." So much for community and feeling like I belonged to something. So much for hope, right? The show went on, to tell you the truth I can't even remember who played. I spent most of the night sorting things out with the singer of Cut The Shit and the "wronged parties" involved. I lost faith in a lot of things that night.

I don't mean to get pessimistic, but the whole point of this column is alienation. If you think you're doing the right thing, there will always be someone there to cut you down. The city soon shut down Regeneration after the fourth official show, and all the internet rumors began. " They squandered the money." "They should have known better." "That'll teach them to ever try to do anything DIY again." "They charged too much anyway." "It was all scenester bullshit." The list of excuses I saw from people who had never been a part of it or went there was astronomical. Truth be told, Sue, Ross and Paul are still looking for a space to re-open in. They are paying the bills with their own money. They never failed, because they are trying again. No one gets my respect until I see him or her overcome obstacles and try to make things a better place for everyone. It's a shame that all I'll ever really remember about Regeneration, being open to the kids, is alienation and Tigger's naked ass. Oh holy hell, what a shame. I keep the memories of painting and cleaning those floors with friends in my heart. Those memories are more valuable to me than any record I've ever owned. There is community out there, and there are people trying to destroy it. That's life right? Self-righteous songs of retribution get you no where in the end. Community is what you surround yourself with. Your words will always be twisted and no one will know the real you. hardcore and high school. Escape and alienate. I guess, they go hand in hand.

As a disclaimer: my teeth are only a little crooked due to the fact that I was once kicked in the face on New Years. But no one can really even tell, so I'm not really even sure why "my song" is called "Crooked Teeth," seeing as I never even had to get braces.

E-mail:
complaintsaboutpunkshows@hotmail.com

LOUD & PROUD

by JASON SCHREURS

We've gathered at a pub tonight to engage in a heavy metal ritual. Not that we're drinking goat's blood or anything — hell, none of us even has long hair. No, instead I'm playing a game of heavy metal trivia with three longtime members of the metal scene in Victoria, BC, Canada.

"Who had a hit in 1984 with `Metal Health?'"

"Aaah, that's an easy one... Quiet Riot."

Jamie Fulton, Bram Harvey, Greg Pratt and myself all range in age from 25-35, and we all started listening to metal in elementary school. While other kids were singing along to Raffi, we were cutting our teeth on AC/DC, Iron Maiden, Judas Priest and Black Sabbath. Pratt, proud trivia game owner and self-proclaimed "metal nerd," tops us all—he played Quiet Riot's "Love's a Bitch" at show & tell in Grade One. "Life just hasn't been the same since," he says with a sly grin.

With a small but dedicated metal scene, we agree that while scenesters are very supportive of each other, Victoria (like most mid-sized cities) needs more bands, promoters and venues. The average local metal show draws about 75 headbangers, and popular touring acts like Cryptopsy and Nevermore can draw 200-plus, so there's no lack of metal fans. The much-pigeonholed heavy metal fan base is actually a wide cross-section of age, gender and appearance; the aggression (and volume) attracts all walks of life, including students, parents and professionals. But one thing ties them together — they are true 'til death when it comes to heavy sounds.

"Those that truly love the genre never lose interest due to the extreme nature of the music," says Fulton, manager and metal buyer at Lyle's Place, the Victoria record store with the best metal selection. "It's not something you 'grow out of'; it's a form of music that requires as much talent to play at a professional level as any other genre out there."

Over the last two decades, the laid-back Fulton has used his undying enthusiasm and endless array of metal knowledge to introduce many metalheads to their new faith. Looking for a walking metal encyclopedia? Look no further than Fulton. In fact, one of his longtime converts is Bram Harvey. By day he's a clean-cut gardener, but he spends the dark hours singing for one of Victoria's most prolific metal bands, Meatlocker Seven. Harvey walked into Lyle's Place 18 years ago and, upon Fulton's recommendation, bought a cassette by German thrash band Destruction. "It changed my life," says Harvey, with no trace of sarcasm. His eyes opened to a whole new realm of underground bands and heavy metal became a huge part of him — he was transformed into a defender of the faith.

A Metal Heart Is Hard to Tear Apart

Like most North American cities, metal has always had a strong following in Victoria, and people like Pratt have been integral. Host of University of Victoria radio station CFUV's "Riot in the Dungeons" for the past 11 years and a metal writer for Exclaim! Magazine, Brave Words and Bloody Knuckles and others (including this very 'zine!), Pratt spends his waking hours sifting through the latest heavy releases.

His radio show has a steady stream of listeners from all different walks of life, some of whom don't have a lot of entertainment options. "Riot in the Dungeons" has received letters from almost every prison in the area, including the local Wilkinson Jail and Clallam Bay Correction Center in Washington State. A recent letter from a Clallam inmate thanks Pratt for "enriching our otherwise bleak lives here," and includes a lengthy list of requests from the many prisoners who tune in every Sunday.

"Only metal could really provide people in that situation a constant source of energy and hope," says Pratt. "These are the people who are truly outcasts from society, and metal has always spoken to the outcasts."

Sporting short hair and glasses, the unassuming Pratt hardly fits the cliched image of a headbanger. He chooses aggressive, intense sounds for the same reasons he watches horror movies — to recapture the memories of his youth, or just to unwind after a long day of classes at the local college. "It gets out the pent-up emotions of life," he says.

"There's nothing like a good album that rips through your speakers, grabs you by the throat and doesn't let you go for 45 minutes," agrees Fulton with a glimmer in his eye.

Keepin' Up with the Osbournes

Not since the late '80s — when Motley Crue, AC/DC and Guns 'N' Roses ruled the hard rock charts — has metal enjoyed such mainstream popularity as it does today. True metal, like Iron Maiden and Black Sabbath, has once again invaded North American culture. Ozzfest, helmed by metal legend Ozzy Osbourne, hit the summer festival circuit like a crazy train in 1996 and went off the rails as last year's highest grossing tour; with The Osbournes, Ozzy and family have a hit TV show and the Ozzman even cometh before the Queen at her last Jubilee. It's quite the vindication for a one-time public enemy (who

can forget the bat head incident?), but Ozzy's newfound popularity is a surreal turn of events for longtime fans.

The current rise of metal has a lot to do with nu-metal's dominance over hard rock. Nu-metal bands like Linkin Park and Limp Bizkit (an unholy combo of radio-friendly guitar riffing and white boy rap pap)—whose mere mention puts true metal fans into a permanent cringe—have been name-dropping their metal influences at every opportunity, and turning their amps up to 11 with often embarrassing results.

Despite the hype of the metal machine, metal scene veterans aren't anticipating a whole lot of change. "The scene exists regardless of that kind of stuff happening," says Fulton, "but it certainly doesn't detract from it either." Other than a few unfortunate bands trying to mirror the mainstream or a few new faces at the shows, the metal scene continues to speak to those who supported it through the lean years. "I don't think because someone sits and watches The Osbournes that they are going to come out to our show," notes Harvey, "but it's good for the scene all-around. It can't hurt."

Our heavy metal conversation keeps us in the pub well past closing time. The waitress keeps glancing over at us nervously; she probably thinks we are part of some weird cult. And maybe we are.

Between trading picks of our favorite recent metal CDs and telling stories about our first metal concert (Fulton: Scorpions/Iron Maiden, 1982; me: Motley Crue, 1985), we decide to move the conversation outside, where it continues for another half-hour. Harvey and Fulton are still chatting about metal as Pratt and I wander off, also still chatting about metal.

On the walk home, I get Black Sabbath's "Tomorrow's Dream" stuck in my head and can't stop thinking about what Fulton said when I asked him why metal fans are so die-hard.

"It's in the blood," he said. Somehow, I don't think he was talking about the goat.

Catch the heavy metal radio show "Riot in the Dungeons" every Sunday from 9-10 p.m. PST on CFUV 101.9 FM by listening online at cfuv.uvic.ca

The Other Manhattan
by Mike Ramek

Some time ago, I found myself at the doorstep of the Bowery Mission. A bit apprehensive, I had headed steadily down Third Avenue to the Bowery earlier that morning with the intent of volunteering my services to the residents of that archaic brick building. In the heart of that neighborhood that still, amid the urban renewal, showed remnants of weathered five-dollar-a-day flophouses and nondescript rehab facilities, I found a second home of sorts.

I was an English major, a decent but undeniably ambiguous academic pursuit. I felt that in volunteering my services to the Mission I would be, in some way, making purposeful use of my academic background. It was with this mindset that I entered the doors of that venerable establishment, and discovered another world entirely from that which I had become accustomed to in the heart of New York City.

At the Mission empathy and an understanding of the plight of the countless homeless and addicted is voiced with so genuine an intent as to be almost shocking. In the heart of a sprawling, frenetically paced urban center, where learned apathy and unthinking indifference towards those relegated to wander the streets is an unfortunate fact of life, those who would otherwise be utterly abandoned truly have a home within the confines of this center. Those who had known the cruelest trappings of poverty, addiction, and loneliness on the streets of this town have, above all else, a chance to truly start over within the walls of the Mission. In the face of all the immeasurably bleak and troubled facets of urban poverty, this center provides a distinct warmth and promise that I have been proud to take part in. It is a very old establishment (well over one hundred years old), and despite some recent renovations, its age is visible throughout its weathered rooms and halls.

I continue to teach reading comprehension and basic writing skills at the Mission on a one-on-one basis. Over the course of my teaching at the Bowery Mission, I have become acquainted with immigrants and natives all struggling to improve, both in their respective area of study and in their general outlook. Many of the residents involved with the career services department are intent on obtaining their GED by passing the equivalency exam and pursuing a career. I have met an unusually diverse array of people (some of those I have helped have been immigrants from Africa, Peru, and Colombia) who, despite the harrowing hardships of their collective pasts, are bound by a single premise that is the driving force embedded in heart of this institution: hope.

In the midst of a fast-paced society where few seem able to slow down and help others who may be less fortunate than themselves, the overwhelming spirit of hope that pervades the Mission serves, in some small part, to counter the despair beyond its aging brick walls. The opportunity to contribute to the hope and optimism felt by others has proven incredibly rewarding.

The Bowery Mission is an anomaly in that it is a wholly selfless entity. Its sole function is to aid those disadvantaged by economic conditions, addiction, violence, and age. The notion of monetary gain or profit is not a focal point of its existence.

Dulled and stifled by the loneliness and solitude that seems unique to an urban setting (particularly New York), I found my own sort of solace within those walls. The opportunity to contribute, even in my limited capacity, to that establishment, instilled in me a profound sense of satisfaction that I never imagined possible. I felt part of something larger than myself, a contributor to a greater community. In this way, I benefited greatly from the interactions I was privy to there just as I was able to offer my help. My weekly routine was infused with an added meaning and significance that served to counter an otherwise mundane work schedule.

As I have mentioned before, I was drawn to the Mission because the concept of a selfless organization, one that strove simply for the betterment of its community above all else, casting financial and social concerns aside, was particularly fascinating to me. Previous experiences with volunteerism had fallen far short of the mark. For instance, a Lower East Side food distribution collective I had volunteered to be a part of proved marred by the very insular elitism and cliquishness it professed to abhor. Though I had signed up to help, I felt alienated by the haughty and unwelcoming posturing of many of the organizers and participants therein, and it became apparent to me that the (limited) distribution of food to the homeless that that group attempted to facilitate was secondary to showing up, hanging out, socializing and acting "punk".

In contrast to this decidedly negative experience and several similar episodes, the Mission has proven the fulfillment of that altruistic ideal that I had come to believe existed largely as an abstract concept. No organization has so exemplified the basic tenets of the selfless institution as the Bowery Mission has in my mind. That is not to say, of course, that there are not many other institutions that are as effective and as giving as it is.

There is certainly nothing unique about my story. My contributions are by no means exceptional. In writing of my experiences at the Bowery Mission, my intent has been merely to illustrate the extent to which so seemingly minor a task as bi-weekly tutoring, helping others, can also have a profoundly beneficial impact on one's mindset and well being. My world view has been irrevocably impacted for the better by the time I have spent tutoring and speaking to the residents of the Mission. Past feelings of cynicism and futility I had sometimes felt as a byproduct of urban living subsided considerably when in the company of those who seemed genuinely enthusiastic about the Mission and the work they were able to accomplish there.

I am sure that many people reading this column actively devote time and energy toward similar efforts. For those people, I hope this column has done some small justice to the sense of fulfillment and enjoyment you no doubt feel in the course your efforts. For those that are not actively involved in tutoring or mentoring, I hope that this may encourage you to volunteer. There are undoubtedly many other institutions in your area that function much as the Bowery Mission does, and I strongly encourage you to seek them out, and contribute what you can.

Notes on Graduation
by Ellen Quint

For those of you who have not seen me much the last few years, I have been busy with graduate school, internships and term papers. I decided to go to graduate school when I neared my 40's. After four years of obstacles, long days and little sleep, I now have a master of social work degree at age 43.

It was not easy to go back to college at this point in my life. When I was an undergraduate student, I remember a graduate student saying, "Don't wait until you are 30 to go to school. It is too hard." My first class was undergraduate statistics, and I walked around campus – thinking what am I doing here? My classmates were mostly 19 or 20. I became friendly with two of the "older" students, ages 27 and 35. Together we studied, went to the math lab and passed the class. I once asked one of the younger students if he studied for the test. He replied, "well, someone bought a keg of beer for the dorm." I got an "A", wrote my essay and was accepted to graduate school.

One of the challenges was the computer. I attended Lesley College from 1977-1981. I typed

my papers on an electric typewriter with no "spellcheck." I only had one computer class where we learned to do a computer program for the new ATM machines.

My first graduate school all-nighter occurred during my first term paper. At 11 pm, I realized that I was typing in single-space. I had challenges with headings, page numbers and charts. Now I can make a wonderful chart in Word – thanks to my research partner, insert little boxes into surveys and make family trees (genograms) with Clarisworks. Thanks, Al, for the emergency computer help! I also now can analyze data for research papers, using SPSS.

Besides the computer skills and textbook knowledge, I learned so much from my professors, classmates and internship co-workers. Some of my classmates were the same age. Some had long careers in social services. Others were new to the field of human services. We survived papers, tests and the year-long research project! I did two internships in non-profit social agencies. I wish I could share some of the stories and struggles of my internship clients. I can't – because of confidentiality, but I learned from all of them.

So now it is time to catch up with my life—spend time with the people I care about, paint, go on vacation, sit in the sun, garden and read novels. Then I have to deal with the piles of term papers, articles and textbooks from the past four years!

Thanks to all those who helped along the way.

The opinions expressed are those of each individual columnist...

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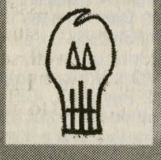

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PRINTED MATTER

Here we go again... a selection of zines, books, etc.. received over the past year plus and far from complete. Sorry about that.. just so you know, I'm not really interested in reviewing poetry, comics, fiction or "personal" type zines. As for books, music-oriented are preferable—not a big fiction reader, here, although there are some exceptions. Publishing is a thankless task and I do have an appreciation for those who make the effort.

KEY:
X = Xeroxed
O = Offset/Printed
D = Digest-sized
N = Newsprint
G = Glossy cover

ZINE REVIEWS

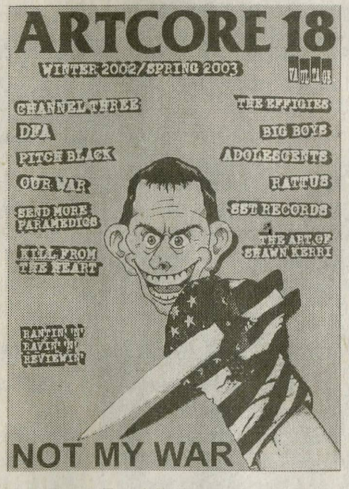
ADDICTION TO DISEASE #2 (2142a Topsail Road, Conception Bay South, Newfoundland A1W 4A4, CANADA, xar15x@yahoo.com, X, 28 pg., price?) Interviews with Bones Brigade, A-Team, One Up and Our War, so the emphasis is obviously on hardcore. Done cut and paste style, with a photo collage in the centerfold and some record/demo reviews at the end. This also comes with a cassette comp that includes smoking tracks by all the bands interviewed in this issue.



ALARM PRESS #11-13 (PO Box 200069, Boston, MA 02120, www.alarmpress.com, alarmpress@mindspring.com, OG, 84, 108 pg., $3 ppd for 11 & 12, $4.99 for 13) Increasingly glossy-looking and continuing to genre-jump between indy rock, emo, punk and hip-hop. Some elaborate artwork from Mitch O'Connell in #12—some in full color. Can't say I'm enamored of many of the acts covered—Saves the Day, Piebald, Milemarker, Thursday, Cancer Conspiracy, et al—veering into musical areas I have little interest, but some of the interviews (though not all) do scratch beneath the surface. There's one with the Bouncing Souls that reveals a political conscience, for one thing. And there is an underlying progressive attitude that comes out in the columns and non-musical articles. #11 has an interview with media critic/commentator Robert McChesney, for instance. #13 interviews cartoonist David Rees, the man behind the subversive "Get Your War On" comic strip.

AMP #1-9 (PO Box 1070, Martinez, CA 94553, www.ampmagazine.com, brett@ampmagazine.com, OGN, 80 pg., free in Cali., 99¢ outside) New 'zine co-edited by Brett Mathews from *Hit List*, along with a few partners—not sure about subscription info but this is being distributed as a regional zine in California and 99¢ on newsstands, elsewhere, on a bi-monthly basis.. Mainly a punk emphasis, both mainstream and more underground featuring Ben Weasel, Ian MacKaye, Dag Nasty, Channel 3, Anti-Flag & Bouncing Souls (interviewing each other), Kill Your Idols, AFI, D4, Avail, No Warning, Fat Mike (a rare interview), Atarais (blech), Modern Life Is War and others in these first several issues, plus there are reviews and opinion columns—Jesse Luscious' is particularly entertaining and Russ Rankin also makes good points (I also contribute a column). There's an article about mainstream media's coverage of straight-edge, particularly a "20/20" piece a few years ago, along with perceptions from a few straight-edge folks (and one of 'em, John LaCroix, isn't even edge anymore). If the idea is to bring underground and semi-underground rock to a wider audience in a non-pretentious format, they're off to a good start, although I'm not that enamored of the "punk news" section, which is just a listing of press releases, essentially. And putting as bad a band as the Ataris on the cover scores demerits. And there's not much in the way of really raw, underground stuff, at least yet.

ARTCORE #16-19 (1 Aberdulais Road, Gabalfa, Cardiff CF14 2 PH, Wales, UK, O, 28-36 pg., $3 ppd) I love this zine. One foot in the present, one in the past, as Welly and crew include interviews with current day hardcore acts and also have a "Vaultage" section, which provides essays and discographies on classic bands from the past. The print is still tiny but a tad more readable in these issues. #16 talks to the Freeze, Welt, F-Minus, Strike Anywhere and others and has features about the Dead Boys, Really Red (underrated!), Reagan Youth and the Posh Boy label. #17 features Tear It Up, Out Cold, Last In Line and author Steve Blush ("American Hardcore") plus articles on the Accüsed, Devo, Radio Birdman and artist Mad Marc Rude, who just passed away in the last year or so. #18 continues the impressive string, featuring Our War, DFA, CH3, Chris and Jeff from the Kill From the Heart website and, in "Vaultage," assessments of Rattus, Big Boys, Effigies and the Adolescents. Finally, #19 has a takeoff on



"Let Them Eat Jellybeans" for both the cover and centerfold ("let them eat democracy!"). Content-wise, Vaultage features histories of X-Claim Records, the Subhumans (Canada), Avengers, Offenders and Th'Inbred plus Epoxies, End on End and Epoxies. Welly is unafraid to probe and provoke both in his writing and interview questions.

ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER #12 (PO Box 8240, Tampa, FL 33674, www.addwreckedkids.com, addzine@gte.net, OGN, 68 pg., $4.95) The "Ask The Mullet" column is back, and so is the CD sampler, which focuses on Florida bands—not a lot of which is unreleased and it's hit and miss but there are some solid tracks from the likes of Against All Authority, Tim Version, Beltones and the Jackie Papers. Quite a bit of chaff, unfortunately. Interviews this time w/Murder Suicide Pact (underrated band!), Strike Anywhere, Good Riddance, HWM and the Razorcake 'zine guys, plus a piece on capsule toys from Japan. The short interviews with DRI, Fear and DI seem like a lost opportunity, though—come on, there's HISTORY there.

BIG TAKEOVER #49-52 (249 Eldridge St., #14, NY, NY 10002, www.bigtakeover.com, jrabid@bigtakeover.com, OG, 200+ pg., $4.95 ppd/$18 for 4 issues) What can I say that hasn't been stated in other reviews? Still in my top five of zines, providing days, weeks, shit, MONTHS of quality reading and the list of acts/artists interviewed is always impressive. Add to that a well-written record review section and interesting editorial columns and it's tough to beat. Not too many zines are going to have the Soft Boys, Radio Birdman, Iggy (not your standard mainstream rock piece), James Williamson from the Stooges (holy shit!), Mission of Burma, Slaughter and The Dogs, David Thomas of Pere Ubu, Barry Tashian from Barry & The Remains, Mark Perry of ATV, That's just a partial list, too. As I've also said before, I don't always share Jack's passion for certain bands and think he's a little close-minded about any hardcore post-82 that isn't Bad Religion but, man, this is just so great, year after year. Jack Rabid is one of the few rock writers who really knows his shit and is still as in love with music now as when he was a kid. #52 just showed up in time to get reviewed in this issue and it includes Alice and Pat from the Bags, James Chance (Contortions), TV Smith (Adverts), Monty Python's Eric Idle and an article on French punk band The Dogs. I haven't been able to put it down since I got it. Can't say that about too many zines.

BOOK OF LETTERS #16-17 (1735 SE Morrison, #1, Portland, OR 97214, www.richmackin.org, richmackin@richmackin.org, XD, 40 pg., $3 ppd) Rich strikes again, peppering corporate types and even the pResident himself in #16 with letters about whatever is on his mind. My favorite in this issue is a brief one to McDonald's: "Dear McDonald's: You have built a McDonald's in my neighborhood. Please remove it." Succinct, to the point and, of course, Mickey D's didn't respond but Dubya actually did, defending his economic plan (I imagine it's a form letter but it seemed oh-so-personal, anyway). Keeping those PR flacks on their toes and entertaining the rest of us.

BOSTON PUNK FLYERS '96 to '02 (FNS Publishing, PO Box 1299, Boston, MA 02130, www.geocities.com/spatt77, fns_publishing@msn.com, ON, 32 pg) Just what it says, along with some comics of "Paul The Punker" (Patrick aka Spatt also publishes comic books with the misadventures of that character). It's cool to reminisce but if Patrick was at those shows, maybe some personal observations accompanying the flyers would have added something to the presentation.

CHANGE ZINE #12 (PO Box 416, Mamaroneck, NY 10543, change666@aol.com, ON, $2 ppd) Three years between issues and this could be the last one. Say it ain't so, Patrick. There's a chip on the shoulder attitude here. Patrick has shit on his mind and delivers it with a caustic voice, but also with a sense of humor about it all. He's hit 30 years old but still loves hardcore and trumpets it in a piece called "Hardcore Is Back"and I concur with his assessment it's still strong. On the other hand, he's not too happy about getting his nose broken at a show. This issue, there are entertaining interviews with Chaka Malik (Burn), Sammy Siegler (Youth of Today, Civ, etc..), Lars from Uppercut, Max Ward and Pete from In My Eyes. And, of course, writing about basketball, though not as much as in the past—although, in the interviews, the subjects are often pictured with a ball and the topic comes up. This zine has heart and character, both rare commodities.

CHORD #19 (PO Box 63524, Philadelphia, PA 19147, www.chordmagazine.com, toodhype@aol.com, $4.95, OG, 68 pg) Glossy mag, at this point and Saves The Day on the cover—ugh! The interviews are kept fairly short, including Reggie and the Full Effect, H20, Bad Luck 13 Extravaganza (of which publisher Met is or was a member), God Forbid, Mike Patton (Faith No More, etc) and a porn actress. Also comes with a CD sampler, which seems to have disappeared in the recesses of my office but includes such bands as All Else Failed, Most Precious Blood, Sworn Vengeance and others. I didn't find much here that grabbed my interest.

CUT THE TENSION #4-4.5 (147 East Baltimore Pike, Clifton Heights, PA 19018, www.cutthetension.com, O, 64 pg., $3.50 ppd) That price is for #4. Issue 4.5 is a half-size mini zine and free, so either send postage for that one or ask for it with the other, I suppose. Either way, these are worth picking up. A classic hardcore, cut 'n paste style layout, lots of solid photography and interviews with stalwarts of the 'core, including Striking Distance, Carry On, Holding On, No Justice, Final Plan, etc..

EQUALIZING-X-DISTORT (CIUT, 91 St. George St., Toronto, ON M5S 2E8 CANADA, www.ciut.fm, equalizingxdistort@ciut.fm, X, 8-14 pg, postage?) I get this monthly newsletter because I contributed to CIUT, the station that hosts the radio show that shares the name with this publication and the page count and content is expanding with recent issues. A cool show with a kickass playlist and live in-studio performances and this zine reflects that. Reviews, show listings and inteviews with both local and out of town bands which, lately, have included the First Day, Class Assassins, RAMBO, No Time Left, Raving Mojos (early Toronto punk band), DS-13, Head Hits Concrete, War Squad and DFA. In recent issues, there have been some archival interviews, as well, with DRI (coming off kind of arrogant during the "Crossover" period) and Negazione.

FRACTURE #21 (PO Box 623, Cardiff CF3 4ZA, Wales, UK, www.seanchai.dircon.co.uk, fracturezine@hotmail.com, OGN, 116 pg., $3 ppd or $40 air/$20 surface for10 issues) I get this zine from time to time (it's a bi-monthly publication) and it's a good one. Standard interview/column/review format but there are some other features—quick-take interviews with offbeat questions and a history of 1980s UK zines by Welly from *Artcore*/Four Letter Word. The more-standard Q&A sessions are with Tear It Up, Twelve Hour Turn, Sworn In, Strike Anywhere and the people behind the B-Core Disc label and Leeds record shop Out of Step.

GAGNAUGAD #2 (Birkir Vidarsson, Hverafold 21, 112 Reykjavik, ICELAND, gagnaugadhc@yahoo.com, XD, 28 pg., price?) The first zine I've ever gotten from Iceland and I can't really understand it because it's in the native language. Well, there's no missing the "fuck homophobia" legend at the bottom of one page and,

scanning through the record reviews, it's obvious they love a wide variety of punk and hardcore. Also includes zine reviews, local news and an interview with Sworn In and the one English piece is a conspiratorial rant from Jacob David, whose work seems to be everywhere lately.

GAME OF THE ARSEHOLES #5 (9 Fenwick Rd., Whippany, NJ 07981, X, 24 pg., $2 ppd) Stuart's biggest issue, as he documents his trip to Japan and gives a rundown on what he calls "Japanese Raw Crust" (Disclose, Framtid, Gloom, etc) and noisier, more chaotic punk (Gai, Kuro, Confuse), plus there are live and record reviews, including a live review of a Gauze/Paintbox show by his friend Jonas. Japanese punk and hardcore have a certain aura about it and this issue attempts to delve into that mystique.

GET UP AND GO #1-2 (Mike Frame, PO Box 638, Seattle, WA 98122, X, 16-18 pg., $1.50 + postage) On the primitive-side visually, with xeroxed pages and a cut and paste layout but, in his first two issues, Mike Frame has interviews with Out Cold, Limpwrist, Nine Shocks Terror, Vitamin X, Gord from Deranged Records and Al from Suburban Voice (who's a real dick, I hear), so the man has definitely got good taste, except in the latter instance, of course. Mike also expounds his passion for hardcore in his opinion columns and this zine certainly represents an expression of that passion.

THE GHENT DECONTROL #1 (H. Consciencestraat 55, 8301 Hiest, BELGIUM, bartttheflex@hotmail.com, X, 4 pg., postage) Four-page cut 'n paste zine dedicated to hardcore and featuring an interview with Suicide File and various thoughts on musical and non-musical issues from Bart.

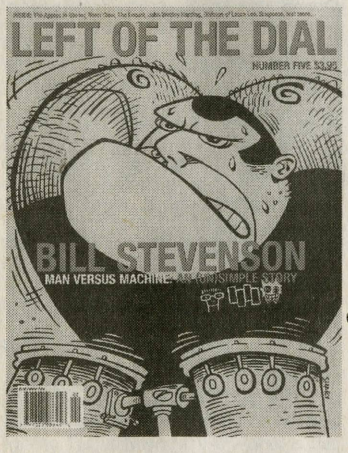
HAZARDOUS WASTE #1 (Matt Smith, 210 Dewey St., Apt. 3, Worcester, MA 01610, msmith@clarku.edu, X, 4 pg., stamp) This guy used to do a mini-zine called *Girl Problems* but decided to start fresh with a new name. There's an article about his love for mix tapes, including suggestions for theme-oriented tapes, his thoughts on clubs vs. DIY shows and some record reviews.

HEARTATTACK #33-37 (PO Box 848, Goleta, CA 93116, www.ebullition.com, heartattack@ebullition.com, ON, 88, 64 pg., $1.50 ppd) The most recent editions of this now-quarterly zine and they seem to be featuring more interviews than in the past, although the layout still emphasizes words over graphics or fancy photos. In other words, this ain't no photo zine. #35 is one of the thickest HaC issues I recall seeing and is a "punks over 30" theme issue, featuring contributions from Felix Havoc, Nate Wilson, Matt Average, plus interviews with Pushead, Submission Hold, Pezz and a few more. Kent McClard also announced in this issue that he's splitting from the zine, is going to stop releasing records on Ebullition and, essentially, taking a sabattical. More power to him—he's earned it. #36 has a chat with RAMBO, while #37 features Yage and is the smallest of recent issues. As always, there are plenty of columns and reviews. In fact, one could argue that the ideas put forth in the columns and, to a certain extent, the letters, are the "heart" of HaC (sorry). Because, at the core, punk is a belief system, subject to widely divergent interpretation, of course, and I don't always concur with every contributor, but it does challenge and stimulate.

IT'S ALIVE #20 (PO Box 6326, Oxnard, CA 93031-6326, itsalive@hotmail.com, O, 40 pg., $2 ppd) Another photo/flyer 'zine by Fred, mixing the past and present (with Bl'ast getting a four-page spread in the middle) and defiantly cut and paste. There's more soul in this decidedly DIY effort than all the glossy rags combined.

JERSEY BEAT #71. 73 (418 Gregory Ave., Weehawken, NJ 07087, www.jerseybeat.com, Jim@jerseybeat.com, OG, 100+pg., $3 ppd) 20th anniversary issue for Jim—he has to be as crazy as I am to stick with this thankless trade as long as he has but Mr. Testa continues to be an enthusiastic music supporter and tireless zinester after all these years. Cutting a wide area of musical coverage—everything from punk and hardcore to indy rock and quieter stuff. In other words, he's not as closed-minded as I am. Interviews with American Nightmare, Outsmarting Simon, Headwound, Daniel Rey (Shrapnel, Ramones' producer), Greyscale and others. Tons of reviews, both in column format and at the back of the book and Jim himself takes a pointed swipe at Steve Blush's "American Hardcore." #72 seems to be missing (or maybe I never got it) so on to #73... interviews with the Milwuakees, Swimmies, Retisonic and a funny editorial on the overhyped Strokes.

LEFT OF THE DIAL #1-5 (1438 W. Alabama, #4, Houston, TX 77006, leftofthedialmag@hotmail.com, OG, 80-112 pg., $3.95) This is one of the best new zines to come along in awhile. Publisher David Ensminger isn't new to the zine trade, although this is apparently his first effort since his teenage hardcore years and those years are reflected in the "Flashbacks" section, where he prints vintage interviews he did with Verbal Assault, SNFU, Soulside and Youth of Today. Very eclectic in its coverage but the interviews are in-depth and exhaustive and the layout creatively done. It's a good looking zine AND it reads well. The interviews in these first five issues include Ian MacKaye, Circle Jerks, TSOL, The Dils (!), Channel 3, John Stabb from Government Issue, Hot Snakes, Blaine from the Fartz/Accused, Bill Stevenson (All/Descendents/Black Flag), The Oath, White Flag, cartoonist/artist/musician Brian Walsby, Tommy Ramone, Easy Action, the Dictators and even the loser who publishes this zine you're reading (he must have had space to fill). Chris Mars is not only interviewed in #3, the ex-Replacements' drummer did the cover painting. In #2, Biscuit from the Big Boys provides a history of Texas punk. Style and substance.



LOLLIPOP #60-61 (PO Box 441493, Boston, MA 02144, www.lollipop.com, OG, 80 pg., $4.95) Slick and glossy local mag now celebrating their tenth anniversary and each issue now includes a CD-ROM that has MP3's and interactive data about the bands, which I suppose is helpful if you want to sample different bands (and I'm sure the labels pay for the privelege). Reviews, brief interviews/features covering a wide area of music and "culture" and not too many acts I'd want gracing the pages of, say, this zine. For what it's worth, the last two issues have included the Donnas, Cave-In, Strapping Young Lad and System Of A Down. I will say their lampooning of promo photos is humorous.

LOST CAUSE #5 (35 Lawton Ct., San Ramon, CA 94583, trash_mys@yahoo.com, X, 32 pg., $3 ppd) Interviews w/AFI, Panic, Fracas, Converge and Scissorhands, reviews, live pix and a column from scene fixture Sammy the Mick. The first shoutout is to god and there's a reference to the "good lord" in a review of Figure Four, so Jeremy is apparently a fan of famous fictional characters as well as hardcore.

MASS MOVEMENT #12-14 (12 West Street, Aberkenfig, Bridgend, CF32 9BB, South Wales, UK, massmovement@currantbun.com, XDG, 120 pg., $4 ppd) MM has gotten so big, #12 and 13 were put out in two volumes, each and now #14 has three volumes, including a thrash metal special that features Anthrax and Nuclear Assault, to name a few. Columns (including appearances by Clif Hanger and Blaine from the Fartz), reviews and interviews—DRI, Bad Religion, Channel 3, Cryptic Slaughter, Napalm Death, JFA, Broken Bones, Stalag 13 and Snuff. #12 also has a sort of celebrity death match take on who would be "King of the Scene," if various scene icons faced off—hard to explain here but it's funny. Cool zine and I'd say that even if I didn't write for it.

MAXIMUM ROCK 'N ROLL (PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146-0760, maximumrnr@mindpsring.com, 100+ pg., $3) One of my buddies at *MRR* wants to know why I haven't been including them in the zine section and he's absolutely right. This 20 year stalwart has really turned itself around, the last few years. Maybe it's just my own tastes turning back to underground punk and hardcore but that's taken a front seat here, especially since Mike Thorn became one of the coordinators. Yeah, some of the record reviews do leave a bit to be desired and no one's going to agree with everything here, but from the interviews to columns to political articles, I still consider *MRR* an essential read and have never missed an issue. In recent months, such bands as Spazm 151, the Fartz, Amdi Petersen's Arme, Dillinger Four and Scholastic Deth have been heard from. By the way, they've also revived MRR radio (listen at www.byofl.org/maximum/radio) and another photo zine is also in the works. My fingers end up with ink stains and it's worth the extra investment in hand soap.

MOSHTROGEN (67 Oak Cliff Rd., Newton, MA 02460, www.geocities.com/moshoclock, moshtrogensisterhood@yahoo.com, XD, 92 pg, price?) A resource zine, of sorts, from Moshtrogen, which can best be described as a female-positive collective that emerged in the Boston punk scene. Articles on show booking, self-defense, women's body images, tampons and vaginal health, birth controls, even a guitar lesson and a few intensely personal tales of rape, which takes courage to write about. Without sounding condescending or paternalistic, I'm glad Moshtrogen exists—I'll never know firsthand what it's like to be a woman in this society or within the punk realm, which often suffers from the same misogyny and sexism as the so-called real world—but these are voices that should be heard.

MUDDLE #19 (PO Box 189, Northport, NY 11768, www.muddle.com, ron@muddle.com, OGN, 140 pg., $3) *Muddle* still covers a lot of music I could give a rat's ass about—Superdrag, Converge, Rufus Wainwright, Christiansen, Jay Farrar (Uncle Tupelo, Son Volt) and some of these interviews don't get beneath the surface, anyway. On the other hand, how many zines have an interview with actor Kumar Pallama (Rushmore, Royal Tenenbaums) and put him on the cover? And there's a lengthy talk with Mission of Burma, making this issue worthwhile by itself, followed by an unintentionally humorous interview with Kerry King from Slayer—not too articulate a chap, but since he's in FUCKING Slayer, he doesn't have to be, right?

NORTH EAST PUNK FLYERS and **NO. 13 #1-2** (FNS Publishing, PO Box 1299, Boston, MA 02130, www.geocities.com/FNSBoston, FNS_Publishing@msn.com, $3 ppd for the flyers zine, 50¢ for #13) Pat Clement has a small-press mini-empire, with these two zines and his ongoing "Paul The Punker" comic books. #13 is an attempt to create a monthly local zine to serve the Boston punk community and includes reviews, show listings, and interviews—the Blue Bloods, Kermit's Finger and Guts are featured in the first few issues. The flyer 'zine features an assortment of handbills over the past two de-



cades, plus essays by Jim Martin (from Broken and an artist who has designed flyers, record covers, etc), Winston Smith and the clown writing this review. No order or context given—I'm in favor of organizing them a bit better but they definitely stir up memories.

PUNK SHOCKER #10 (PO Box ITA, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE99 ITA, ENGLAND, XGD, 32 pg., £1) The centerpiece is a lengthy, yet entertaining interview with Mensi from the Angelic Upstarts, plus record and zine reviews and a short assessment of the Germs' musical legacy.

QUICKDUMMIES #16 (6810 Bellaire Dr., New Orleans, LA 70124, Qdzine@yahoo.com, www.geocities.com/qdzine, 96 pg., ON, $3 ppd) Lots of text, not a lot of pictures, but there's plenty to read... interviews w/Vitamin X, Defiance, Jon from DeadAlive Records (I need to interview more labels and behind-the-scenes people) and the folks behind Clamor Magazine. Flyer artist Bill Heintz displays his work and accompanies them with auto-critiques and reminiscences. Reviews and columns—and some of these opinions are blunt and pointed, particularly Robb, who really rips on Eyehategod and their moronic audience.

RAPID FIRE #22 (3497 Theodore Roosevelt Hwy, Bolton, VT 05676, X, 32 pg., $2) Once again, Paul extols his passion for hardcore and motorcycles—in fact, he details the motorcycle tours he took during 2001 (yeah, I'm late with this review), as well as rock events, which run the rather wide spectrum from Hatebreed to Lil' Kim to David Crosby. Shit, even for free, I wouldn't go see that washed-up hippie.

RAZORCAKE #5-14 (PO Box 4219, LA, CA 90042, www.razorcake.com, OGN,

100 pg., $3 ppd/$15 year) As I've noted before, this bi-monthly publication rose from the ashes of *Flipside* but has a much more readable layout and sticks mainly to punk rock (I share a wide definition of that term with these guys). The interviews are the centerpiece and occasionally reach outside the realm of bands. They're also done in-depth and don't come across as those assembly-line, always the same question interviews one sees in many zines. #6 includes a sit-down with historian Howard Zinn, for instance, while #7 has an article on cool LA college station KXLU. On the other hand, I strongly urge you to skip over the interview with yours truly in #7 (ha!). #10 features a quest to find out who the "real" Emma Goldman was, getting beyond mere iconography, and takes Sean Carswell on a journey to an archive of her papers and work in Berkeley. Other recent subjects include Strike Anywhere, Toys That Kill, DS-13, Dillinger Four, Adolescents, the Adicts, GC5, Skulls, Arrivals and Out Cold (who don't get interviewed all that much). #12 has an East LA family punk tree (cool) and a tribute to Joe Strummer. The one and only Nardwuar talks to Jello Biafra, Mac from Echo and the Bunnymen, the Damned and even Michael Moore, with one interview done in '96 and one more recently. #14 includes Avail, the Stitches and an in-depth investigative piece on whether Martin Luther King was assassinated by the CIA. Well written columns by Sean, Rich Mackin and others, along with the obligatory review sections. An entertaining, as well as informative read.

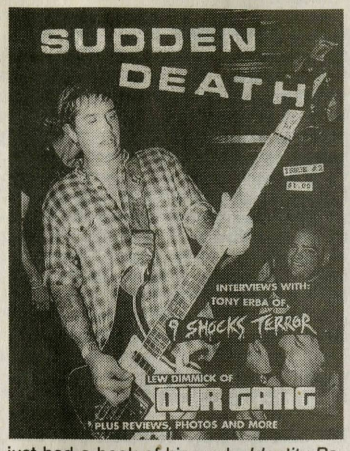
REASON TO BELIEVE #4-6 (145-149 Cardigan Rd., Leeds LS6 1LJ, ENGLAND, info@rtbzine.org, ON, 80 pg., $3 ppd) Attention RTB: please stop rolling up my zine like a poster 'cause it takes forever to unfold and I want to be able to read it right away. That's an alternative way of saying I enjoy this self-described "DIY hardcore punk zine" from the UK. Music and beyond, as they not only interview the likes of Seein' Red, Dumbstruck, HHH and Sin Dios, but there are articles on squatting around the world, scene reports from such far-flung places as Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Australia and such practical items as energy-saving tips at home and in your car. #4 also features an interview with the mysterious people behind Guerillavision who make guerilla-style films/videos with a decidedly activist/instigatory bent, such as one about the "battle in Seattle." Issues #5 and 6 feature varying opinions on DIY distribution—where it's been and where it's going.

THE RIGHT PATH #13 (244 Rutgers, Rochester, NY 14607, trp14607@yahoo.com, www.enterprisehardcore.com, ON, 48 pg., price?) Hardcore zine with the standard column/interview/review format and, in this issue, featuring American Nightmare, Reach The Sky and Building On Fire, plus a piece on Josh's roadtrips to the Gainesville Fest, PosiNumbers and the Hardcore Superbowl. He's up-front with his opinions and a pretty good interviewer.

RIOT 77 #3 (31 Saint Patricks Park, Clondalkin, Dublin 22, IRELAND, riot77magazine@hotmail.com, O, 52 pg., $4 ppd) Pretty cool zine here, with interviews of Stiff Little Fingers, GBH, Babes In Toyland, Propagandhi, Bluetip, plus live and record reviews, including an extended piece on an unauthorized Rollins biogaraphy book.

RUN AGROUND-#2 (Dave Varno, 36 Forbes St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130, XD, 40 pg., $2) An assortment of writings, both fiction and non-fiction, about everything from the Boston Marathon to religion to job searching to a bike accident to a trip journal. There's also a short interview about zine-making with Dan from Punk Planet and yours truly. Reviews of books, records and contrasting good and evil with The Simpsons. Observations from an alienated individual.

SCANNER #12-13 (6, Chatsworth Drive, Rushmere Park, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP4 5XA, ENGLAND, Scanzine@aol.com, XD, 84 pg., $2) Cool half-sized zine with small print, but worth the effort. Interviews in these issues w/Newtown Neurotics (there's something you don't see everyday), D4, Toys That Kill (and Todd also talks about his Recess label), The Tone, and photographer Kristofer Pasanen, who



just had a book of his work, *Identity Parade* published (see book reviews),Avail, Winston Smith, Exene, some douche bag named Quint (and this guy asked some great questions, I have to admit) plus columns and reviews. There's also an assessment of the Rodney King case, ten years later, in #12. Just packed.

SIT HOME AND ROT #1 (12 Harwood St., N. Andover, MA 01845, hardtimes75@hotmail.com, X, 44 pg., price?) Michael "The Rat" Dolloff publishes this zine, that features interviews with Matt Summers, about his new band The Noise and Down But Not Out, plus Dolloff writes about his roadtrip to Canada to see No Warning and Hatebreed. And yours truly writes (poorly of course) about ancient Boston HC history.

SKYSCRAPER #10 (PO Box 4432, Boulder, CO 80306, www.skyscrapermagazine.com, skyscraperzine@hotmail.com, OG, 164 pg., $5 ppd) another mammoth issue and a stylistic hodgepodge, including interviews with Iggy Pop, Le Tigre, Fat Day, Lost Kids, as well as a four page review of the Strokes' album—what's the fucking point? A bit more interesting are the reissues column and articles on Rough Trade records and OMD's "Dazzle Ships" album, although I would hesitate to call the latter a masterpiece. Glossy stock and pro-style layout and, along with it, there's a certain amount of pretentiousness, maybe more than I noticed before.

SLUG & LETTUCE #70-75 (PO Box 26632, Richmond, VA 23261-6632, ONT, 20 pg., 60¢ ppd) Keeping the DIY banner flying high after more than 15 years of doing a zine.As always, this quarterly newspaper-foldout zine is a collection of columns, music, book and zine reviews and assorted information. P as in "punk, the attitude, not the music," to quote the Pist from long ago and it applies to columnists' lives, whether its parenting, eating and living healthy or affecting change on a local or wider scale. And, at the core, it's about the music that provides the inspiration for these passions. Christine seems to have an ongoing ambivalence about the whole venture but, like this writer, all it often takes is to come back in contact with what one loves to rekindle that passion all over again.

STRAIGHT SOB #4 (Mike Schake, 63 Highland Rd., Hackettstown, NJ 07840, forceforchange@yahoo.com, XD, 36 pg., price?) Got this zine handed to me at Thrashfest and Mike writes about both music and political stuff, from a personal perspective, such as his encounter, first-hand, with police brutality at the World Bank protests in DC. He balances his anti-capitalist beliefs with the realization that he is also a privileged inhabitant of the "first world," but that doesn't mean he can't speak out on these issues and, in these times, that's not always a popular thing, as it is. Includes an interview with Lithuanian band Bora and Matt Ball, the founder of Vegan Outreach.

SUDDEN DEATH #1-2 (63 Brewster Ave., Apt. B, Winthrop, MA 02152, intro_bust@hotmail.com, X, 24 pg., $1) Cut and paste zine by Chris "Cooch" from Close Call and it's kind of a throwback (in a good way), both visually and due to the fact that there are interviews with Slapshot and Scott from Deep Wound and the Outpatients in #1. In the second issue, Tony Erba is on the cover and, inside, is a hilarious, rambling interview with the man from 9 Shocks Terror, Face Value, GSMF, etc.. There's also an interview with Lew from semi-obscure NYHC band Our Gang. Lots of photos interspersed, throughout.

TAIL SPINS #34 (PO Box 1860, Evanston, IL 60204, tailspinsmagazine@yahoo.com, OGN, 100 pg., $4 ppd) *Tail Spins* doesn't come out quite as often as it did—then again, neither does my zine—but it's a pretty cool read when it does. First of all, they've got an interview with the Pretty Things' Dick Taylor (fuck yeah!), who was also the original bassist for the Rolling Stones. There's also a humorous article about protesting the ultra-lame "Real World" show while it was in Chicago. From the amusing to the serious and bizarre, there's a transcript of Jim Jones' final speech in Jonestown, a report on a day spent in a cadaver lab (cue up The Pagans' "She's A Cadaver And I Gotta Have Her") and a section that attempts to put the events of 9/11 and after in some kind of perspective. Back to musical concerns, there are interviews with Jerry from the Misfits, a former member of the Gits, Small Brown Bike and Rev. Horton Heat.



TOWN OF HARDCORE #3-5 (1458 Reynolds Ave., Burlington, ON L7M-3B7 CANADA, X, 16-24 pg., $2 ppd) Published by Steve from Our War and hardcore as FUCK! No mamby-pamby music, but dealing strictly with the core and done in old-school cut 'n paste style. The first three issues are out of print, which is a shame because #2 had a Neos interview. #3 featured No Warning, who discuss the controversy about their alleged involvement with the infamous Final Solution demo, along with Think I Care. #4 features Ebro from Punch In The Face, Mental and, from the archives, Brotherhood and Raw Deal (Anthony Communale was/is a Republican? Lame!). Also includes live and record reviews and some re-prints of Pushead's rather colorful reviews from the 80s. #5, hot off the press, is the biggest one yet and has interviews with Terror, So Be It, The State (!!), a reprint of an old Underdog interview and the usual reviews, plus a rant about the state of hardcore (or, more accurately, what's a "cancer" that's killing it). There was also a two-sided issue #2.5 available, with an interview of Criminally Insane and a vintage one with Agnostic Front, where they don't come off too well—Roger refers to Tim Yohannan as a "fucking communist faggot." Communist? Probably. But gay? Not true!

TRUST #92-99 (Dolf Hermannstädter, Postfach 11 07 62, 28207 Bremen, GERMANY, www.trust-zine.de, dolf@is-bremen.de, O, 64 pg., 2 euros) Bi-monthly German language zine that, as usual, covers a wide swath of underground and not-so-underground music. Actually, there's not that much underground punk or hardcore, at least in the features. I wish I could read the language, though, 'cause there's still a fair amount of stuff in here that interests me—although #96's list of bands isn't quite as awe-inspiring—Garrison? Gomez? Erase Errata? No thanks.. A few reviews do appear in English, anyway. Among the noteworthy bands in recent editions: Radio 4, Sonic Youth, Dillinger Four, Girls Vs. Boys, DRI, Mike Watt, Bosstones, NoMeansNo and author Arthur Nersesian ("The Fuck Up"). #95 also has a history of skateboarding.

URBAN GUERRILLA #13 (Jay, PMB #419, 1442A Walnut St., Berkeley, CA 94709, O, 64 pg., $2 ppd) Another zine received just before going to press and the first issue in a long time. Glad Jay's kept it going. In this issue, he provides a history of the zine, plus there are opinion columns, reviews, a photo travelogue of a trip to France, photos from a 1984 show with Fang and Reagan Youth, a Born/Dead tour diary, interview with a punk artist/videographyer named "Anarchy Al" and Consume, a new band with Jay from Disrupt and State Of Fear.

VERBICIDE #5-8 (Scissor Press, PO Box 206512, New Haven, CT 06520, www.scissorpress.com, jackson@scissorpress.com, OGN, 84 pg., $3.95) Combination music/literary zine, including fiction, along with interviews, reviews, etc... #5 has a solid Ian MacKaye interview, a short story by Ray Bradbury (!) and a lengthy piece on Enron. In #6, they chat with Henry Rollins and also interview Lee Ranaldo from Sonic Youth and Angels In The Architecture. There's also an essay on setting up appearances with third-party candidates, namely Ralph Nader and Harry Browne, during the 2000 election. #7 includes Al from the Dropkicks, Jesse Michaels (Oplvy/Common Rider), coverage of anti-war protests and a story from Sonic Youth's Lee Ranaldo. #8 includes an article on gutsy boxer (from Lowell!) Micky Ward, interviews w/the Bangs, Flogging Molly, Transplants (all kind of overhyped bands) and an interview with author Tim O'Brien, who brings his experience from the Vietnam War era (he went there, unlike, say pResident Bush) to his writing.

WONKA VISION #17-18 (PO Box 63642, Philadelphia, PA 19147, wustinwonka@yahoo.com, www.wonvisiononline.com, OG, 92 pg., $3.95 or 6 issues/$10) There are a few more issues since these two, but I haven't seen them. These guys tend to cover a lot of hipster indy rock and punk/hardcore that I'm not all that interested in—Saves the Day, Ultimate Fakebook, Tiger Army, AFI, Atom & His Package, No Motiv, Rocky Votolato— and the interviews tend

to be on the short side, but not always. But there's a sense of humor underlying it all, as well. #17, the 80s issue, has a "where are they now" roundup of the casts from "Ferris Bueller" and "Willy Wonka And The Chocolate Factory" (makes sense, eh?), but I still think popular culture, taken as a whole, really sucked ass in that decade. On a more serious note, the World Economic Forum is analyzed in #18 and there are some thoughtful columns, as well. Certainly a wide range of coverage.

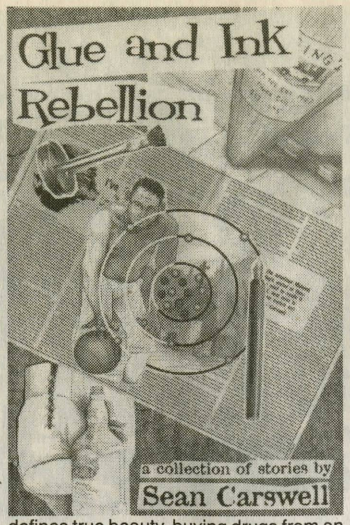
ZINE GUIDE #5 (PO Box 5467, Evanston, IL 60204, zineguide@interaccess.com, OGN, 152 pg., $6 ppd) The latest edition of this guide to zines (duh!). In addition to the listings, there's cross-referencing of subjects, people and bands, polls and answers from various zine publishers about what's involved in producing and circulating their respective publications. There are also listings of resources for zinesters—printing companies, distributors and the like. Definitely something to keep on the reference shelf over my desk. I use it a lot. Issue #6 is also now available, although I don't have it, yet.

ZONKED #6 (50 Hollingsbury Rise, Brighton BN1 7HJ, ENGLAND, pete@zonked138.freeserve.co.uk, XD, 64 pg., price?) Another mega-crammed digest zine from the UK—seems to be a popular format in that country and this issue features Brezhnev, East Bay Ray from the DK's, Hellacopters, Aerobitch, reviews, opinion columns and a piece on a trip to Japan by one of Pete's mates.

BOOK REVIEWS

COMPRESSION by Martin Crisis (Mass Movement, 12 West Street, Aberkenfig, Bridgend, CF32 9BB, South Wales, UK, massmovement@currantbun.com, 112 pg., softcover) A short novel about a big-time punk rock star named Michael Flanagan confronting his past and present and pondering his future on the occasion of his tenth high school reunion. He returns home with his bandmate/classmate Elliot for the first time in a decade and, early on, a flashback reveals an incident that weighs heavily on his mind—the murder of a supposedly crazy old man who lived in a cave near the beach by one of his mates. The murder gets covered up and it becomes something for all those present to carry with them into the present. There's also the matter of his unrequited love for another classmate who has become an adult film star. These issues are confronted as Flanagan interacts with these old friends and compatriots for the first time since he left home—some interesting plot twists and turns along the way. As well as an awakening of sorts for the main character.

GLUE AND INK REBELLION by Sean Carswell (Gorsky Press, PO Box 320504, Cocoa Beach, FL 32932, www.gorskypress.com, 127 pg., softcover, $12) Sean is one of the co-editors of *Razorcake* 'zine and this is his second book. A collection of 14 short stories where he willfully blurs the line between fiction and non-fiction. But even where it's a fictional account, there's no doubt that it comes from something either he or someone close to him has experienced. A world of booze, couch surfing, go-nowhere jobs, go-nowhere relationships and, of course, punk rock. Stories about being stuck in an off the beaten path town ("Nowhere, Alabama") with a broken-down truck and using it as an opportunity to view life in a place that has largely been bypassed and wonder whether it would be someplace he'd want to live. A tale about boxing matches in the snow, another about a brawl at a punk club, contemplating what



defines true beauty, buying drugs from an alleged holy roller and so much more. Sean knows how to tell a story and make it compelling—a working class sensibility but the ability to express it in vivid, gritty fashion.

HOSTILE CITY OR BUST by Phil Irwin (Steel Cage Books, PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA www.steelcagerecords.com, 106 pg., softcover, $12) Irwin also goes under the name The Whiskey Rebel, plays in the band Rancid Vat and was a writer for *Hit List* before its untimely demise. This is his second book, telling the tale of his cross-country move, with wife Marla and son Elvis, from Portland, OR to Philadelphia aka Hostile City. Sometimes, he tells you more than you want to know, especially regarding his bodily functions, but this is a humorous story and, of course, there are obstacles along the way—crappy hotels with pools full of obnoxious children, a van hauling a trailer that he can't get over 55 mph and a near nervous breakdown at Mt. Rushmore Park, after the nightmare of attempting to drive that vehicle up a steep incline to the park. Confronting the derision of his so-called friends over this move and triumphing in the end—or do they? Phil soon finds a new set of problems when he gets to the "Hostile City," but things eventually work themselves out. Considering the amount of booze Phil seems to consume along the way, it's even more amazing that he was able to pull it off but I suppose you build up a resistance to it after awhile. A quick read and I enjoyed his vivid, no bullshit way with words.

IDENTITY PARADE by Kristofer Pasanen (The 5th Columnist, kpasanen@uiah.fi, www.uiah.fi/~kpasanen, 160 pg., hardcover) A nice hardcover photo book by this gentleman from Sweden, who currently resides in Finland. Kristofer intersperses the visual with the written word, offering his thoughts and impressions as he puts together a scrapbook of his time devoted to documenting the punk, hardcore and emo scenes in his home country and on some roadtrips. Not the straight-forward, band jumping in the air photos—that's something he says that he tends to eschew—in fact, some are purposely out of focus or utilize extreme close-ups or odd lighting. I actually tend to prefer photos that present a bold image but Kristofer obviously has something different in mind. He also states that "I might not share the same ideals as some of the bands in this book, I don't even like a lot of them..." In fact, he's very particular about what he likes and quite critical about bands that mimic "oldschool this, oldschool that." Unflinchingly honest and visually grabbing. (this book is also distributed in the US by Havoc, PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408, www.havocrex.com)

THE LAST NIGHT LONDON BURNED by George Binette (Ethical Threads, 64 pg., softcover, available through Paypal) George is an old college pal of mine and has lived in England for the past two decades. He's also a passionate Clash fan—I remember he was the first person in our dorm to get the import copy of "Sandinista" and we spent two full evenings drinking and digesting that sprawling work. This short booklet was published to commemorate the life of Joe Strummer and the "last night" is in reference to his show with the Mescaleros that served as a benefit for the Fire Brigades Union, who have been involved in a fight for living wages. That show ended up being a reunion of Strummer and his former Clash-mate Mick Jones for the first time in 20 years. There are essays and reminiscences about Strummer's life and career, as well as the show itself, accompanied by full-color photographs from the show and vintage Clash shots. A nice memento.

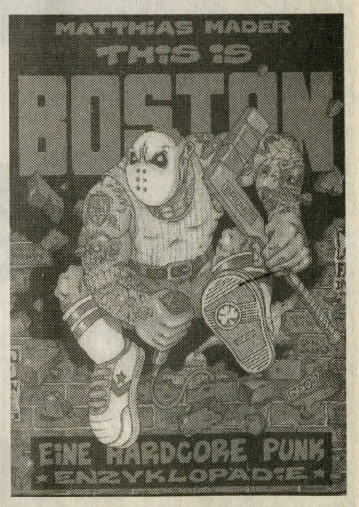
LEXICON DEVIL by Brendan Mullen with Don Bolles and Adam Parfrey (Feral House, PO Box 13067, LA, CA 90013, www.feralhouse.com, info@feralhouse.com, 294 pg., softcover, $16.95) An oral history of the brief life of Germs' vocalist Darby Crash, told by friends, bandmates and other characters who populated the early LA punk scene, which serves as a backdrop for this ultimately tragic tale. It's a story of a near-brilliant, manipulative young man with delusions of power as well as tremendous insecurities and fears—the main dilemma was Darby's inability to come to terms with being a closeted gay man. A vivid, debaucherous demimonde and experienced in a drugged-out, alcohol-fueled haze. For Darby, punk was his community, his family as fellow Germ Don Bolles notes. The stories create quite a vivid tapestry. Appended with lyrics and a complete discography. A fascinating, if sad glimpse into this doomed punk icon.

PUNK IS A FOUR LETTER WORD by Ben Weasel (Hope and Nonthings, PO Box 148010, Chicago, IL 60614, www.hopeandnonthings.com, 176 pg., softcover, $12.00) Ben's second book—the first was a fictional work called *Like Hell*. This time, Weasel compiles various columns and writings from *MRR*, *Hit List* and a few other outlets, as well as some fresh material. Honest, direct and funny-as-hell, whether puncturing the sacred cows of the rock 'n roll business, detailing the miseries of the shit jobs he's worked over the years, telling the tale of running away from home or providing a "how to" guide about the ins-and-outs of being in a band (i.e. ways not to get screwed). There's certainly a maturation process and an increasingly self-examining/self-deprecatory bent to his writing. Call him an asshole or shit-stirrer but you know in your heart he was usually right about stuff. My favorite pieces are his detailing of accompanying Jawbreaker when they opened for Nirvana—yeah, shooting fish in a barrel but he captures the lunacy of life in the VIP section, with the appropriate laminated pass. There's also a poignant tribute to departed *MRR* guru Tim Yohannan that's the best essay I've read on his sad passing. Acerbic and humorous.

STIFF JAW by Philip Knowles (12780 E. 220 St., Atkinson, IL 61235, 124 pg., $10 ppd) This is a self-published comic by Knowles... a stiff jaw is a protective device, so to speak, the face that the protagonist puts on so he doesn't have to talk with people... and the story told within this vividly-drawn comic explains why he keeps the stiff jaw—yes, a boy meets girl story within the punk subculture and expressing all the doubts and insecurities that come with such interactions. The artwork is black and white, coarse, yet detailed, with an ugly, seemy ambiance... (I'm no expert on this stuff). I'm not a real afficionado of the comic format but this was an entertaining read and it's apparent a lot of work went into the drawing.

THIS IS BOSTON... NOT NEW YORK by Matthias Mader (I.P. Verlag Jeske, Mader GbR, DGZ-Ring 7, 13086 Berlin, GERMANY, www.ip-verlag.de, pages@ip-verlag.de, 176 pg., softcover, German) Yep, an encyclopedia of Boston punk and hardcore put out in Germany and in that language, featuring an A-Z selection of bands spanning the 70s to present, along with discography information, band line-ups, photos, etc... There are also interviews with Curtis from Taang, Al Barr from the Dropkicks, John Sox of the FU's, Clif from the Freeze, Dave Smalley and yours truly (more disclosure: I contributed some information and photos for this book). It looks great and is something overdue—I only wish there was an English language version because I can't understand much of what's in here. But well-known and more obscure bands are covered.

UP YOURS! A Guide To UK Punk, New Wave and Early Post Punk by Vernon Joynson (I.P. Verlag Jeske, Mader GbR, DGZ-Ring 7, 13086 Berlin, GERMANY, www.ip-verlag.de, pages@ip-verlag.de, 552 pg, softcover) Bathroom reading for weeks, and I mean that in the best way... although the sheer bulk of this book may sink into your leg if you're not careful... and that's more than you need to know about that. An A-Z encyclopedia that covers both the well-known bands and many who only did one 7" and disappeared within the time frame of '77 to '86. While there are some omissions here and there and some factual errors, it's still a nicely-put together volume. The more "important" artists—Clash, Pistols, Stranglers, Fall, etc.. are given more in-depth treatment. Unlike the Trouser Press Record guides, this book covers more of the underground bands, especially in the UK-82 and street punk realms. Band bios, discographies and some critical assessment is included. The appendices include discographies by label and the center part of the book features full-color reproductions of LP and 7" sleeves. Still, sometimes I wonder how carefully certain bands were researched—Discharge's "Grave New World" could hardly be called speed metal, for instance, and the lineup wasn't constant throughout. Slaughter and the Dog's "Bite Back" included Ed "Banger" Garrity on vocals, not Wayne Barrett. OK, I'm nitpicking a bit but, being something of a reference guide nerd, it's my job to make those observations. A good book for the reference shelf and, once again, those trips to the bog, as they say in Britain.



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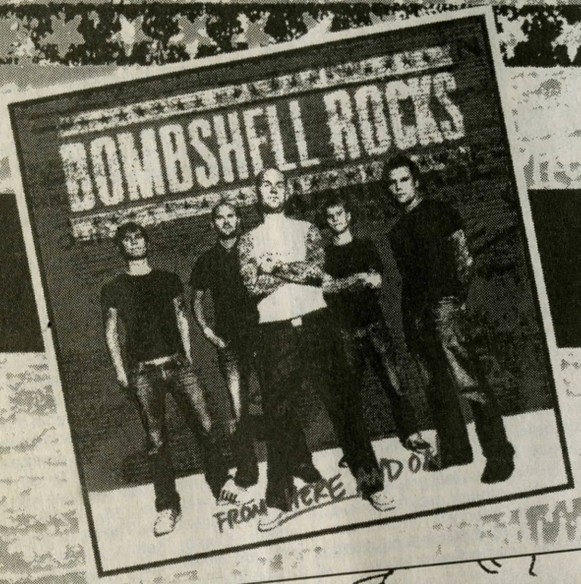

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GET IN THE PIT!

Yeah, there's about a five month gap between where the live reviews in the last issue end and the beginning of this segment. Does anyone really want to read about shows from over a year and a half ago? Or even a year ago? I decided to start with last year's Chicago fest... but, in early 2002, I did see some killer shows—among them, reunions of the Pist and Mission of Burma, both of which were excellent and a reaffirmation of each band's greatness in their own way. There was a crazy, wild show at Hampshire College with Last In Line and others. Rather eventful, with the expected fire, smokebombs and a disposable douche sprayed on DJ from LIL. In the wake of the tragedy at the Station in Warwick, RI, that type of wanton behavior does give one pause but we weren't thinking that way, at the time. And it did make it a rather memorable show, although LIL doesn't need pyro to make their shows memorable.

Venues continue to be a problem—the quick demise of Regeneration and the Pond and the seeming disappearance of the Berwick (except for the artsy-fartsy shows upstairs), as well as the come and go nature of basement and college spaces have necessitated scrambling but I think the scene will survive. It always has...

MAY 2002

The first weekend of the month, I went out to Chicago with my pal/*SV* compatriot Pat Lynch for Chicago Fest 2.5 and made a pretty decent time of it, catching two other shows and getting in the requisite record shopping, sightseeing and indulging in some genuine Chicago pizza, although I'm convinced there's still better deep-dish to be found the next time I visit. We definitely covered a lot more ground than I did last year, so it felt like a more-complete trip. The only damper on the weekend was losing my camera, so there are no pix from the fest or the **Tiltwheel** show we saw the day before. Luckily, as you can see on this page, I did get some shots from an excellent show at a small art space called The Odum. This gig featured **Total Fury**, **Regress**, **Punch In The Face**, **14 or Fight** and **Los Jodidos**. Los Jodidos' fast hardcore punk has some promise but still needs a bit of tightening, live. No such problem for 14 or Fight, with the ex-vocalist for MK Ultra. Raging, powerful and fast. That continued for Punch In The Face—I was psyched to see these guys after being highly impressed with their demo and there was no disappointing. Ebro successfully makes the transition from drummer to frontman in this band and they've got the old-school hardcore sound down perfectly. Regress really *are* old-school, with Joe from Life Sentence, Anthony from Rites of the Accused and a guitarist from Hoover making up this three-piece and they play blindingly-fast hardcore. It didn't get much of a response but did kick ass. Finally, one of the most-entertaining hardcore bands out there, Total Fury, were back with a vengeance. Flirting with chaos but so overpowering and bringing out such a frenzied response that it doesn't really matter. As I've said before, the language barrier means nothing because the band and audience become one.

The next night, it was over to the Fireside Bowl—and,yes, it really is a bowling alley. It's also kind of a dump, to be honest, and the no in/outs rule sucks ass. Not too many people there to see the aforementioned Tiltwheel or **The Tim Version**, but I'm glad we made the effort. Both bands play in a melodic vein that draws obvious inspiration from Leatherface, Jawbreaker, et al, although Tim Version draw from the same pool as, say, Hot Water Music. This is pop music on the ragged edge and each band do it justice in the live setting, especially Tiltwheel, who I've enjoyed for years but this is the first time I've managed to see them play live. We didn't stick around too long for **The Mushuganas**, whose cocky hard-rock quickly got tiresome. Seem to recall these guys being a not-bad punk band some years back, too. Ah well.. it was time for dinner, anyway.

Back to the Fireside for the actual fest itself and much more packed than the day before, with people coming in from around the country and overseas and, in addition to the music, there was the mini-mall of distros attracting attention, as well. Not as much to get excited about as last year but there was still a lot to blow your cash on, especially with Felix Havoc in the house. Speaking of Felix, he informed me that the show the day before this one in Minneapolis was one of the best he'd ever seen, which made me feel like a sap for missing it. Especially since this show didn't feature Nine Shocks Terror or Tear It Up. Still, hard to be disappointed with a lineup that included Total Fury, **Vitamin X**, **Amdi Petersen's Armé**, **Caustic Christ**, **Def Choice** and **Reaccion**. The latter band, with Carlos (ex-Sin Orden) as one of the vocalists, played politically-charged hardcore punk that isn't quite as potent as his other band, yet, but was fairly hard-hitting. Def Choice were probably the best I've seen them to date. Caustic Christ, a last-minute addition, are one of the off-shoot bands from Aus-Rotten, with that band's guitarist Eric on vocals and he's an attention-grabbing frontman. Pummelling hardcore punk that caused some grousing from a few of the hardcore purists standing near me but they bridge the gap and there shouldn't be such a gap to begin with. Angry, aggressive music with a raw vibrance. That's what it should be all about. Their cover of Naked Rayguns's "Rat Patrol" was a nice surprise. Amdi Petersen's Armé, from Denmark, were perhaps the best band of the day. For one thing, they've got fucking *presence*, especially their vocalist Peter and their influences run deeper than the Dischord catalog or Negative Approach. A lot of west coast influences creep and, to prove the point, they did a rendition of Flipper's "Sacrifice," very fitting during this period of war. There's a minimalism to their sound, a getting to the basics and it works. Vitamin X were finishing their tour and a little haggard-sounding but still plenty energetic. Finally, Total Fury won more converts with another frenzied onslaught. The stage crew had their hands full with the flying bodies but it never got too out of control. Total Fury sure as hell bring the excitement back to hardcore and make it fun. I'm willing to believe no one went home feeling cheated.

Next week at the Berwick, it was the Boston debut of **The Oath** and it was a sonic torture-fest but I mean that in a positive sense. The feedback never ends with these guys and the songs turn into a cacophonous din, but they do give it an effort. Mark McCoy is confrontational and in-your-face and it was surprising that the audience remained basically immobile. Too cool to dance? The band seemed a bit put off by the reception, in fact. **Wolves**, with some ex-members of Orchid, were a pleasant surprise. Urgent, yet melodic hardcore and gripping in its delivery. Continuing to work backwards, **Ampere** played some intense screamo-style hardcore and were decent. **Advocate** were much better than I remember them being in Providence a few months before. Some blistering hardcore. **Brains In Danger**, an instrumental trio, were completely out of place on this bill. Lethargic, trippy drone rock and a grand total of two compositions but even that was too lengthy.

Amdi Petersen's Armé invaded the Berwick the following week and, after a false start due to a broken string, quickly got it together for a potent set. Without a stage, there was added intimacy and immediacy, as well. This time, in addition to the Flipper song, they also did "Avis" by early 80s Danish punk band City X. Only two 7"s to their name, so far, and the second one wasn't even out in time for this show, but already making plenty of noise in the US. Deservedly-so. **Straight To Hell** began the evening with another solid set of speedy hardcore. **Think I Care** got what looked like the biggest response of the night with some mighty-pissed hardcore. Antisocial as fuck. I missed a few songs of **Born Dead Icons** and, while not as throttling as at a basement show in JP a month or so before, still plenty raging. A thick, ominous wall of sound.

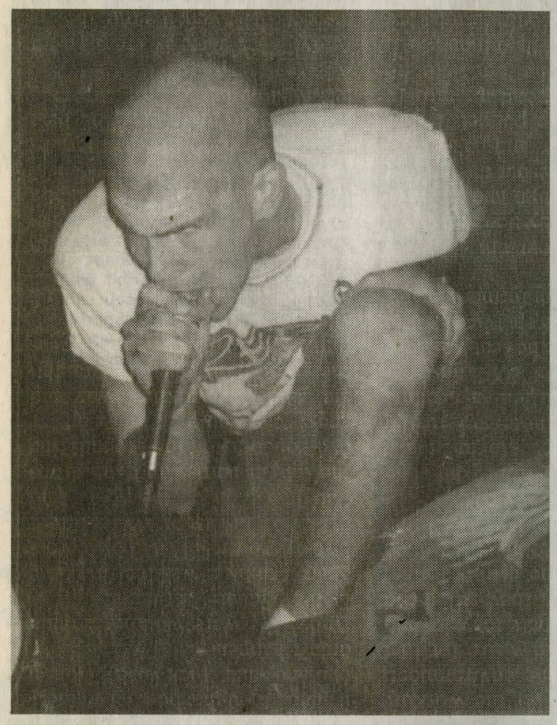
Melee played their last show at the Amory Street basement in JP and it's a shame they've called it quits. But, to repeat what Craig said after the show, they went out the right way. People jumping around and having a blast, musical tightness be damned, although they sounded more "on" than in recent memory, no doubt considering the circumstances. They even almost nailed "We're Gonna Fight." Almost. What made Melee was the way they brought a punk rock attitude or mentality to old-school punk. This wasn't some macho boys club, but more inclusive. **Living Under Lies** have former Talk Is Poison guitarist Grant in the lineup and a former Boston resident named Dave plays bass, as well. Not quite what I expected—the lyrical content is intensely political, and Rico spends a lot of time explaining things between songs but, instead of thrash or crust, these guys play heavier music. More along the lines of Rorschach, although the last song considerably sped things up. Not really a style I'm as into, although it holds one's attention. **And I Can't Wait** were starting their two week tour with Bob Barker Youth (who I managed to miss again—sorry guys!) and this was the best set I've seen them play—they continue to embrace more of a straight-ahead hardcore sound.

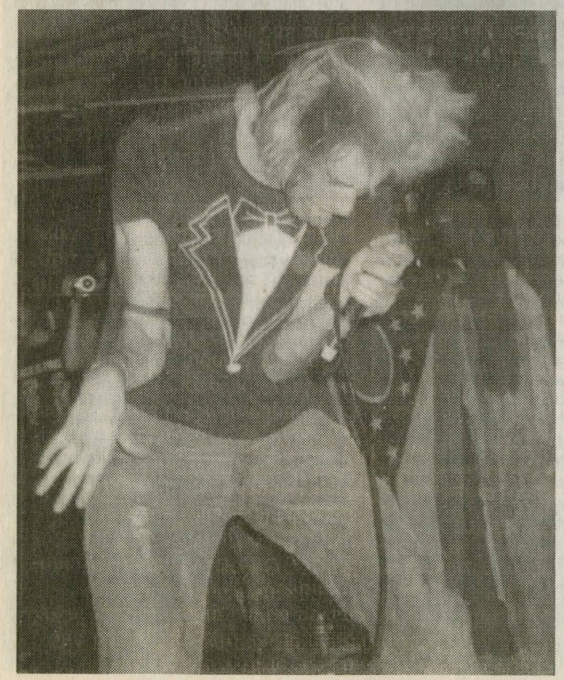
The next night, a five band extravaganza at the Berwick. It started later than planned (of course!) but got off to a good start with the raw hardcore of **Police Beat**, from the ever-burgeoning New Bedford scene. Speaking of New Bedford, **XFilesX** have turned into a fucking kick-ass live band. I hadn't seen them in a year and Brendan is a monster, contorting his body and lurching at the crowd, while they lay down the boiling-over, double-speed hardcore. **Self Defense** continued the rage, although they didn't get the respose I felt they deserved. Next up were **The Rites**—a side band for members of Tear It Up and Down In Flames—well, the guitarist, Paul, is a TIU alumni—and with Tear It Up's drummer Matt Wechter on vocals. All that pent-up anger came out from the first chord, as Matt charged into the crowd, swung from the pipes and quickly drew blood from his chin shortly after they began. His vocals are in a lower-register than his backups in TIU, but it's not far-removed, in a musical sense. Fast, blistering and pissed-off hardcore. **Down In Flames** continued the tumultous barrage. Finally, **Think I Care** didn't quite have it together as other times in recent memory... and it was the end of a long night, as well.

Threats are another old UK (or, more precisely, Scottish) band making a go of it again and one that was I less-familiar with than other bands of that era, although I'd heard a few songs on various comps and, of course, had heard the Casualties' cover of their "Underground Army." After being disappointed with some other across-the-pond retreads, these guys were a totally pleasant surprise. The two-guitar lineup gave them a nice full sound and they were really into it. Fast, catchy punk with strong singalong choruses and even some new material that makes the grade. **The Krays** dished out some energetic punk of their own and showed unpredictable taste in cover versions by playing the Ruts' "Babylon's Burning" and Toxic Reasons'









"No Pity," from the latter band's underrated "Kill By Remote Control" album. **Toxic Narcotic** have finally solidified their lineup and played to kill, mixing up old and new and sounding as belligerent as ever, which is exactly how one *wants* them to sound.

JUNE 2002

A couple of kick-ass shows on back-to-back nights at the Berwick... **Last In Line** played their first Boston area show in quite awhile and didn't disappoint. New drummer Shaun proves to be an able replacement for Josh. We were treated to a guest vocal turn by Chris "Cooch" Minicucci for a Negative Approach cover and the audience responded with a hearty "Colin Powell" chant... I have to admit there's some resemblence. Sorry, Chris! **Mental** got the show off to a furious pace. **Invasion**, with Jesse Standhard on vocals and members of other local bands, played some tough-sounding hardcore but were on the sloppy side. **The Snobs**, the band of middle schoolers from Texas, were kind of disappointing. Their records have been excellent, in a ripping, old-school vein, but they couldn't really pull it off, live. Yeah, but they're kids, right? Well, Gang Green were maybe a year older when they blew the Dead Kennedys off the stage in 1982, so it *can* be done. **Close Call** followed with a hammering set that got one of the best responses of the night.

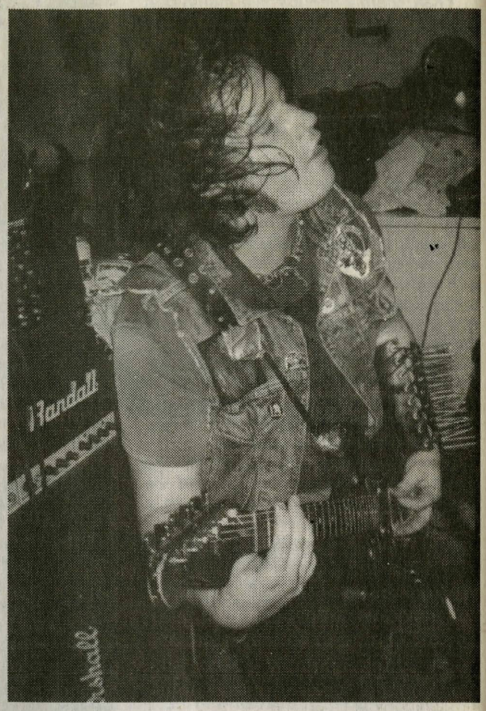
The next evening, it was time for the Boston debut of **Epileptic Terror Attack**, all the way from Sweden and with Christoffer (138) of DS-13 on bass. So fuckin' tight and laying out a potent thrash attack. **Def Choice** were touring with ETA for awhile and also played a strong set, although they didn't get much of a response. **XFilesX** and **Bones Brigade** also kept the energy level high and, after the Brigade, **Cut The Shit** made their debut—the band includes Andrew from Bones Brigade, Tom from Cops & Robbers and Paul from the Rites/ex-Tear It Up. Only about a five minute set but making an impression. Raging fast hardcore punk.

I've reached the conclusion I'm never going to see Allergic To Whores... they cancelled yet ANOTHER local appearance (at the Hideaway) but **Toxic Narcotic** made up for it with the best set I've seen them play in quite some time. When they're on, they're ON and, as mentioned before, this is the best lineup since Ben was in the band and Bill spent a lot of time lavishing praise on Sam's overpowering drumming. **The Profits** had their multi-media punk rock presentation and sound as pissed-off as ever, but they're laughing all the way to the apocalypse. **Big Bubba** played some noisy thrash and weren't any great shakes. I think they were better when I saw them about two years ago. **A Global Threat**, who I hadn't seen for awhile, bashed out decent punk.

JULY 2002

Another night on the punk rock oldies circuit, courtesy of **The Rezillos**, who were doing the last date of their first-ever US tour and some 24 years after breaking up the first time. And, while I'd like to say it was a delirious and triumphant show, it fell a little short of that... Four of the five members were originals, at least, with only one ringer, on bass—paging William Mysterious. Eugene Reynolds has put on a few pounds and the voice isn't quite what it was, but Fay Fife has taken good care of herself and can still belt it out convincingly and has the moves to match. Sure, it was fun, kitschy and self-deprecating, but not quite the all-out punk blast one would have wanted. Everything sounded on the slow side and there was no "Somebody's Gonna Get Their Head Kicked In," an obscure cover that the Rezillos really made their own on their 1978 album. **The Briefs**, who look as though they've been transplanted from the late 70s, once again upstaged the original article (it was the Damned last fall) and ripped out short, catchy punk/new wave blasts one after another. Contrived, but they know it and they rock.

Out Cold made a rare jaunt into Boston and they seldom disappoint, especially with their current lineup. Blistering hardcore punk done with business-like efficiency and Mark even spoke between two songs—usually, the only words he'll say are "We're Out Cold" at the beginning and end of the set and I think I even saw a smile escape from his face at one point. Uncompromising and single-minded, about as pure a distillation of back-to-roots hardcore as you'll hear. And they still don't get the acclaim they deserve. They were well-complemented by the **A-Team** who packed a wallop (and Jon Clark is quite the menacing frontman) and ditto for the crossover hardcore of Saskatchewan band **DFA** and Western Massholes **Red Reaction**, who don't appear around these parts often enough. But there





Left (top to bottom): Craig (MELEE) at one of their last shows, Amory St. house; Brendan (XFILESX) at the Berwick; Steve (NINE SHOCKS TERROR) at the Pond
Right (top to bottom): Ryan (MUNICIPAL WASTE) at a basement show in Allston; Jerry (POISON IDEA) at the Pond

wasn't much enthusiasm shown for any of these bands through the night and DFA, in particular, deserved a bit warmer a reception.

Balance of Terror were playing their last pair of shows, in NYC and Brooklyn, and I opted for a road trip to see the former at ABC No-Rio. Nothing funereal about the show, although this isn't a chipper bunch to begin with. You get the feeling they're lost in a world they didn't ask to be part of and this is their therapy and I'm sure it'll carry over to any future musical projects. Non-stop aggression with passion and drama and worth the trip. **Municipal Waste** also made it worth the trip—more of the crossover angle and these guys play it to the hilt, spiked armbands, vintage t-shirts, scraggly hair and all. There's a wit and sense of humor about it—some of it ludicrous, such as the series of songs that pay tribute to Kurt Russell—and the Waste find a near-perfect balance between ultra-fast hardcore and the metal. **Voetsek**, with Athena from the Dread on bass and an imposing vocalist in Ami, played in a thrash/grind vein. Sometimes threatening to fly apart but made up for by Ami's intense presence. I saw both Voetsek and Municipal Waste again the next night at a house show in Allston and they were even better than in NYC. This show also marked the Boston debut of **Hellnation**, the three-piece terror unit from Kentucky. So fast, so fucking TIGHT and one wonders how Al can beat the drums so effectively while contributing his forceful vocals. **Brody's Militia** also utilize speed to a good effect and, although their bass-player was MIA, apparently too inebriated to play, the three remaining Militiamen managed to pull it off and any band that covers Antiseen's "Fuck All Y'all" has a place in my heart—to say nothing that their name is a tribute to the late, great wrestler Bruiser Brody. A thick guitar tone punctuating their hardcore punk attack. A pair of bands from California completed the six band, all out-of-town lineup—**Christian Reich**, with a thorny male/female vocal tandem and crust-tinged style and **Black Box**, playing in a fast hardcore vein, split a set and were both pretty good. I was afraid this show was going to be overcrowded and unbearably hot, but that wasn't the case and it ended up being a fun time, although I was basically toast by the end due to all the weekend's activities.

O'Brien's is your rock dive archetype—a no-frills, seedy establishment in the heart of Allston Rock City. I try to avoid going to shows in this area as much as I can, having had my fill of drunken rocker types many years ago but, what the hell, when Tony Erba's in town, I'll be there and he was back with his compatriots in **Stepsister**, who dished out the rock 'n roll justice with in-your-face abandon. Songs that move 'n groove like a motherfucker. **Crash and Burn** followed with a less-inspiring set than usual, although "Kill A Punk For Rock 'n Roll" always gets it going. The newer songs seem a bit more conventional, without as much of the punk influence. **GC5**, on tour with Stepsister, played an enjoyable set of hard-driving melodic punk with equal nods to the Clash and Social D. Gruff and endearing. The only downer was getting there too late to see Out Cold, but the traffic into the city was a nightmare.

The month ended on a raging note, with the return of **Fit For Abuse**, the underrated hardcore band from Central Mass with Dropkick Murphys' drummer Matt Kelly on vocals and their appearances are few and far between due to Matt's busy touring schedule. Matt was joined by his Dropkicks bandmate James Lynch on guitar, along with Pat and Joe and it was a striking dose of early 80s-inspired hardcore played in front of an appreciative audience. As with many drummers-turned-frontmen, Matt takes advantage of opportunity to get the rage out of his system. Speaking of rage, there was no shortage of it for either **Think I Care** or **XFilesX**, both of whom sounded punishing, nor the pounding sounds of **Suicide File**. **My Revenge**, down from Burlington, VT and starting their tour, were impressive, a LOT better than the only previous time I saw them, in WMass about a year ago. Spencer has a confrontational, intimidating presence and they smackdown some no-bullshit hardcore. Goddamn, it was hot in that room but the discomfort was made tolerable by the non-stop hardcore mania.

AUGUST 2002

Speaking of hot shows, I could barely breathe at a show on the second floor of the Harvard Advocate, but what a cool space—hardcore amidst the needle's eye of higher education and in a stately, tweedy setting. **And I Can't Wait** and **Bob Barker Youth** were playing their last shows and it was an enjoyable blast as each played with reckless adrenalin and the room turned into one sweaty throng. **The Kid Eternal**, with their emo/screamo/whatever it's called, weren't quite as enticing. It was too hot to watch **Earth Died Screaming** for very long, although I like their anvil-hard sound and Ross entertained the people getting air outside by playing his guitar out the window. Very considerate of him.

The heat continued unabated into that weekend but that wasn't going to stop me from seeing **Poison Idea**'s first area shows in a dozen years, all-ages in the afternoon and 18 plus at night. Not many shows get me excited anymore and this one was almost as anticipated as the Pist reunion in January... maybe more because this is one of my all-time favorite bands. The current lineup is Jerry, Tom (Pig Champion) and three newer recruits. The verdict? A tad disappointing—occasionally sloppy, particularly the nighttime show, where Jerry was babbling incomprehensibly a good chunk of the time, sets on the short side and they didn't play a damn thing off "Pick Your King." On the other hand, this is still Poison Idea we're talking about and it was a thrill to hear "The Temple," "Lifestyles," "Made To Be Broken" and "Just To Get Away" played by the men who wrote them. A presence-of-gods aura, in a way.

Actually, the day's REAL event was "surprise" set by **Slapshot**. I put surprise in quotations because it was the worst-kept secret in town, although the club's booker and show's promoter apparently were the only ones who didn't know Slappy were playing—it was set up with **Kill Your Idols**, who had met Slapshot in Europe and let them use their gear. Just 7 songs but it brought out as frenzied a response as one ever sees these days—not an unhappy face in the room. Their first show in the area in about five years and it's been even longer since they played in either Boston or Cambridge. Anyway, people were primed for it. Even Choke, who was somewhat grouchy before the set, seemed overwhelmed by the reaction. They started a little tentatively but quickly hit their groove and it was a non-stop tandem of greatest hits—"Chip On My Shoulder," "You're No Friend Of Mine," "Back On The Map" and "Hang Up Your Boots."

Speaking of Kill Your Idols, not enough people stuck around to see them play after Slapshot and that's a shame because they're such a good band with a great blend of styles. Andy wasn't happy with their afternoon set—he said the night show was a lot better but, unfortunately, I only caught two songs—and I could see they were getting a better reaction. Well, whatever he thought, they still kicked ass during the first set. **Toxic Narcotic** raged as usual, although I only caught the whole first set and a little of the second one. **Provoked**, from Minneapolis, dished out some nasty crust-core with an effective rawness.

Up to the KofC Hall in Lawrence for a decent hardcore show in a huge space. **Some Kind Of Hate** play fairly standard tough-sounding hardcore. Some presence but not mind-blowing yet. **Embrace Today**'s hard-edged 'core also didn't make that strong an impression. **Terror**, a buzz band of the moment, with ex-members of Carry On and Buried Alive, mix up the speed and heavy mosh and do so with an intense effect. **Over My Dead Body** were excellent—fast, catchy youth-oriented hardcore with a positive vibe. **Suicide File** ended the evening with another strong showing.

Ahh, vacation... of course, Ellen and I pick the hottest week of the summer for a roadtrip that took up through NY state, Pennsylvania and Maryland. We stayed in a dump of a hotel on the outskirts of Baltimore, having to share the pool with some truly obnoxious kids. On the plus side, I got to Reptilian Records, which is a very cool store and Camden Yards, which puts Fenway Park to shame. We also saw a pretty damn good hardcore show just outside of DC (and not far, it turns out, from where some of the sniper shootings would happen a few months later). The show was at a very cool space called Joe's Movement Emporium, an alternative arts/dance space and, best of all IT WAS AIR CONDITIONED! And they had water!! Thank you, hardcore gods. **Striking Distance** were the headlining band and they slammed out the bile-filled hardcore starting with "Hated." I love that song. Also of note on this multi-band bill was the Black Flag/B'last-inspired attack of **Annihilation Time**, who are fronted by Fred Hammer from *It's Alive* 'zine.I've been corresponding with Fred since the 80s and it was a pleasure to finally meet him and Willona Sloan from longtime DC zine *Scorpion*. The rest of the bands played variations of youthful hardcore and each had their moments—**Desperate Measures**, **The First Step**, **Diehard Youth** (who share members with Annihilation Time) and **One Up**.

York, Maine is only about an hour and a quarter from my house, not a bad trip to see a great band like **RAMBO**. Shit, I would've driven twice that distance and I'm glad I got a chance to see them, after missing their Boston show a few nights before. The kids up there are a bit off the wall and that's in a good way. They brought cardboard swords and other weaponry and there was even a cardboard Anarchy Moose which, sadly, barely lasted through the Philly thrash-masters' first song. Wheelbarrow races and lots of circle pits. Tough, raging hardcore but without the musclehead quotient. **Pinko and The Action Boys** played some unhinged hardcore punk of their own. The other bands were hit and miss (and, unfortunately, I lost my scribblings so I can't remember much about them—sorry!), although **Break It Up** had their butt-kicking moments.

The month ended with a not-so-great show featuring **Youth Brigade**, **Beltones** and **Pistol Grip** at the International Community Church in Brighton. Wretched sound, plus the Unseen and Oxymoron both cancelled. The bands weren't that bad but it was hard to hear them in the din. The Brigade plowed through a career-spanning retrospective and brought out a strong response for "Sink With California," of course. The Beltones have the streetwise/SLF-inspired sound down pretty well. Pistol Grip's album was pretty good but the substandard sound didn't carry the songs well, here.

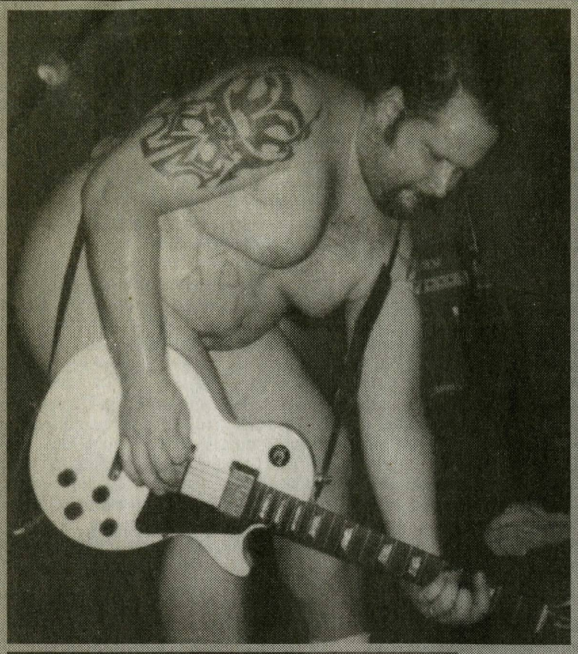
SEPTEMBER 2002

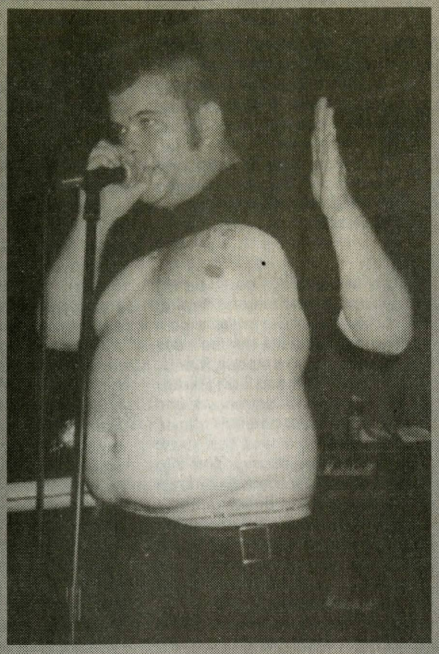
A great and crappy month—great because there were some excellent shows, including at the long-anticipated Regeneration space which, unfortunately, opened and then closed in its Mass Ave. location in Dorchester after a mere five shows (a new space is being sought, as I write this). That's where the crappy comes in. What was going to be the best thing to happen to Boston punk in years dealt a serious setback, due to fire and building code violations. What a great space, too, with a stage, decent PA and a back room to lounge around while perusing selections from the zine library. The Pond also ceased doing all-ages shows due to licensing issues and, at the least, there probably won't be any more all-ages shows there, if rock shows, period. And it was the month my dad suffered a stroke, which has little to do with live rock reviews, except for the fact that I found out after getting home from the **Dillinger Four** show reviewed below.

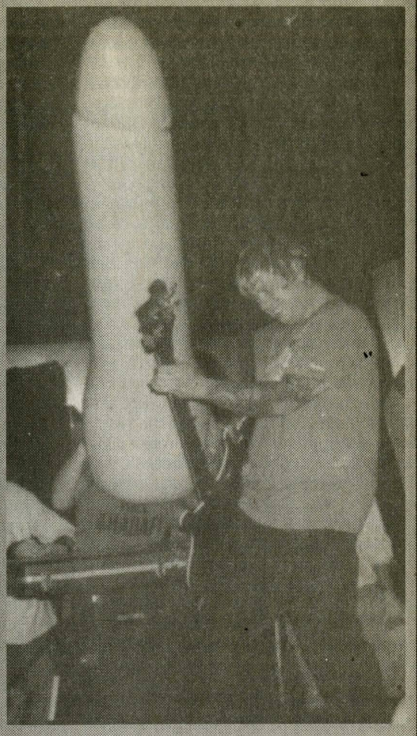
So let's get to those shows—a Labor Day weekend blowout at the Pond brought together a diverse lineup of **UK Subs**, **Toxic Narcotic**, **Virulent Strain**, **9 Shocks Terror**, **Tear It Up** and **The Rites**. Not bad, huh? If it sounds like two different shows cobbled together, that's pretty much what it was and it made for a diverse audience. I love cross-pollinating, myself, because it's ALL punk rock, after all. Matt from the Rites was hobbled by an ankle cast but that didn't slow his movement all THAT much as the band ripped through their hard/fast songs. Tear It Up followed with one of the better sets I've seen them play up here. Same for the always-entertaining 9 Shocks, who won new fans with a pulverizing performance. No fireworks, nothing worse than people swinging from the crossbars a bit, but spectacle isn't always required when the band can lay it down as well as these guys. Following 9 Shocks, more than a few people, myself included, needed to recharge the 'ol batteries so I missed Virulent Strain while chowing down at Bread and Circus. I returned to see TN bludgeon everyone into submission and they even brought back Ben to play the bagpipes for "Paddy's Leather Britches." The Subs were a tad disappointing—no Nicky Garratt or Alvin Gibbs but, rather, Charlie Harper's current UK lineup and it sounded a little sluggish. Still, the set list wasn't always predictable—including "You Don't Belong" and a bunch of songs from their first two albums. Give Charlie credit for being, quite possibly, the world's oldest punk rocker and that's meant as a compliment.

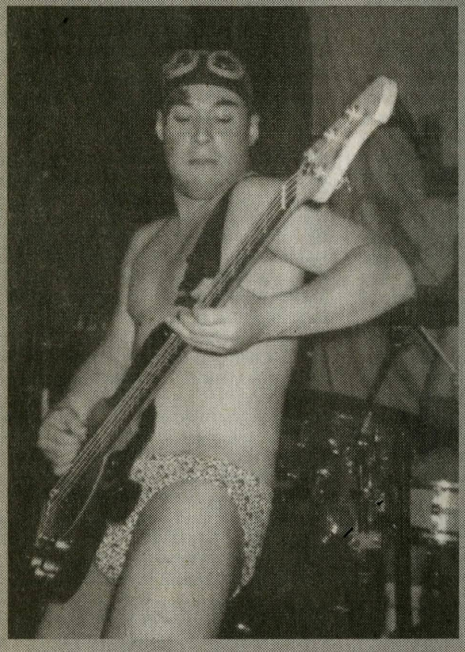
So the first "official" show at Regeneration featured a varied lineup of **The Riffs**, **Fit For Abuse**, **Clit 45**, **Cut The Shit** and **State Control**. You had your punk and your hardcore punk. State Control favor a UK '82 sound that isn't quite together yet. Cut The Shit blasted out the short, pissed-off songs and Andrew performed with his arm in a sling, due to a broken collarbone from a skating accident. Clit 45 followed with some decent, throttling punk. Fit For Abuse raged, as always, and stole the show. Ripping and intense and it brought out the best response of the night. The Riffs play a combination of Dolls/Pistols' punk, rooted in classic rock 'n roll stylings and with all the right stage moves. I still think the vocals are this band's weak point but it rocked fairly convincingly.

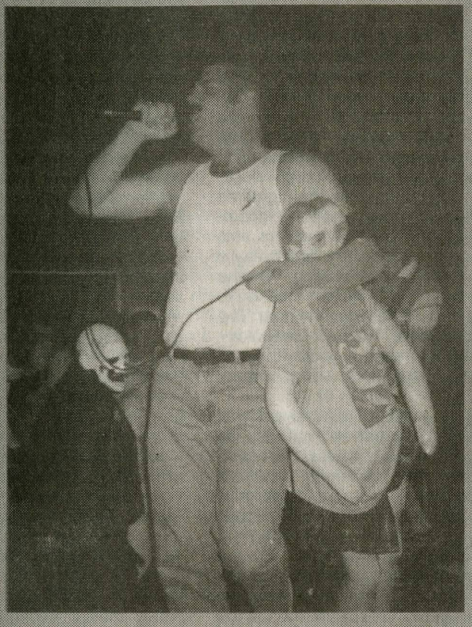
A few nights later, back at Regen for Dillinger Four, along with **The Explosion**, **High Steppin' Nickel Kids**, **Toys That Kill** and **Rivethead**. D4 were a lot better than at Mass Art earlier this year—everything audible and, in addition to the always-great tunes, Paddy's future as a stand-up comic seems assured. Rivethead opened with some fair to middling melodic punk. Toys That Kill had their good and not-so-good points. A bit more on the cutesy side than I appreciate these days, although they balance it with spitball obnoxiousness, as well. The Nickel Kids, of course, got naked and it was also the best set I've seen them do so far. Melodic but energetic and their cover of Fugazi's "Smallpox Champion" is a good choice. The Explosion came out and rocked hard but I got the feeling that there was a wide chasm between those who loved it and those who loathed it. The stage moves can be a bit much after awhile but I do still like the band's catchy songs.



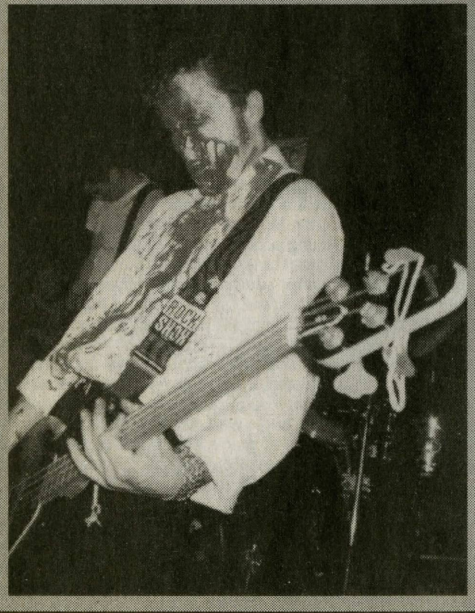


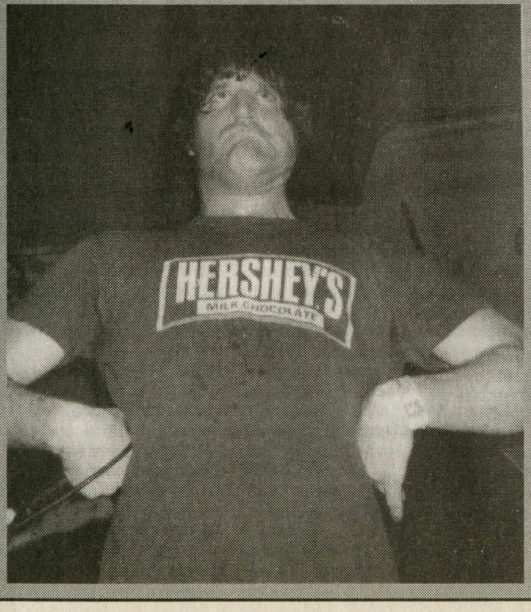




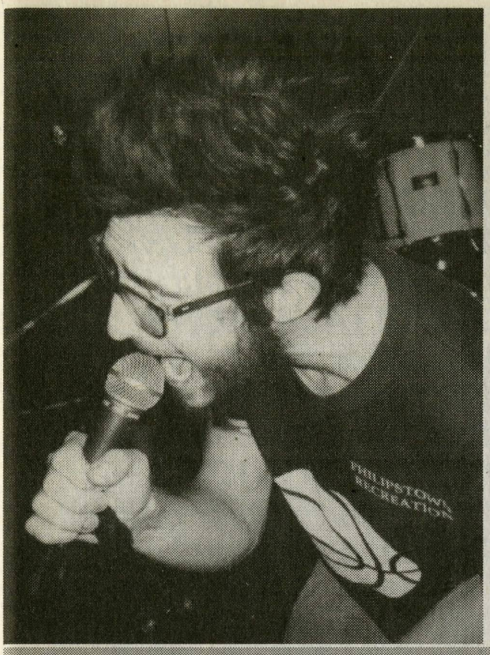
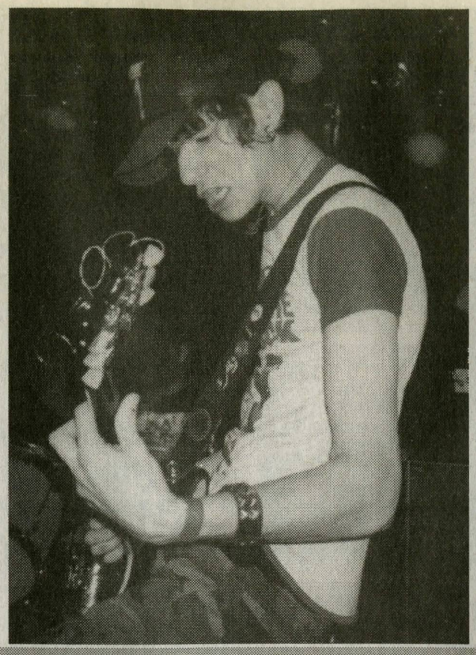
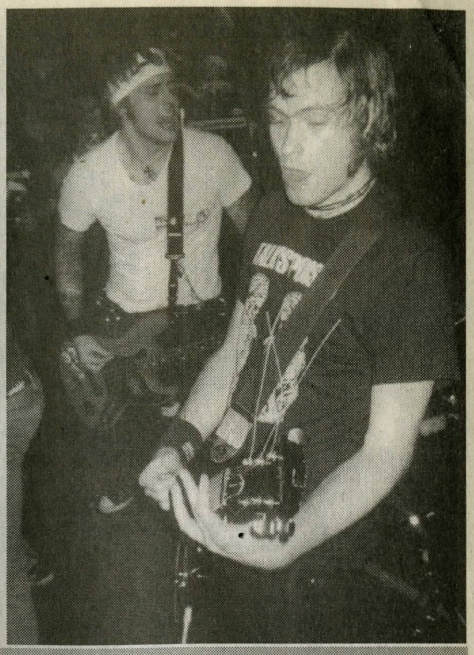








Top row: Tigger (HIGH STEPPIN' NICKEL KIDS) and Paddy (DILLINGER FOUR) show some skin; Tony (NINE SHOCKS TERROR) about to get bopped by Captain Pecker the Party Wrecker at the WMass Halloween show.
Middle row: Greg Louganis and Freddie Mercury of the 'AIDS' Team (as played by Brian and Jon) at the WMass show; INEPSY at MassArt
Bottom row: Mikey (LAST IN LINE) at the WMass show; Eric (NEW BOMB TURKS) strikes a pose at the Middle East

Left to right: BOOKS LIE at Boston University; DAMAGE DEPOSIT and DS-13 (playing their last show) at Thrash Fest 4, Minneapolis

The following Friday (the 13th!), it was time for a hardcore-oriented bill at Regen, featuring **Think I Care**, **XFilesX**, **Reaching Forward**, **RNR**, **Mental** and **So Be It**, who played a brief set during the middle of the show and sound quite a bit like Think I Care, with a physical, confrontational frontman. Reaching Forward, from Holland, were the one out of town band (WAAAY out of town!) and their fast, straight-edge hardcore seemed fairly par for the course, live. Not bad but kind of predictable. XFilesX, on the other hand, sounded positively sick and Brendan donned a hockey mask for the occasion (remember the date!). Think I Care, RNR and Mental also played well. RNR, in particular, are turning into a strong band, mixing mid-tempo hardcore and more straight-forward rock, accompanied by Joe Shumsky's angry vocals.

I was wondering if there would be any problems with the **Templars** show at Regen the next night but no worries—a pretty laid-back atmosphere, in fact. Unfortunately, this turned out to be the last show there it seems almost a cruel joke that **Splodgenessabounds** turned out to be the last act to perform there. I only lasted a few songs but that's all I could take of the long-in-the-tooth, not-so-funny punk. The Templars have zero stage presence—Carl might be one of the most rigid frontmen out there—but the songs are taut, tuneful oi-oriented punk, even if I don't buy into all of the lyrics. **The Boils** roared through their set with a voracious energy, the best band of the evening. I only caught a few minutes of **Tommy and The Terrors**, but their rough-hewn street punk sounded pretty good.

So, the following weekend, a show that was supposed to happen at Regen had to be moved to the Berwick. Yep, back to the hot, clammy confines for what turned out to be a pretty good show with **Tear It Up**, **Close Call**, **RNR**, **Shot Dead** and **Cut The Shit**. Nothing out of the ordinary but enough volume from all bands to keep everyone happy. This was my first time seeing Shot Dead who need to get a little tighter, live, but I like their aggressive hardcore sound.

OCTOBER 2002

A New Enemy is a band with Andy from Tear It Up on bass, but they're quite different-sounding. A fast, melodic hardcore style more akin to Dag Nasty and played with spirit and tunecraft. I got to see them play two sets in a few hours, first at House Of Suffering, along with **Cut The Shit**, who got the room moving quickly and Andrew ended up landing on his noggin and opened up a good-sized gash and **Hard Times**, who were a bit too metal for my tastes. Over at Mass Art, **Phobia** were the main attraction and I thought there would be a bigger turnout. I always like seeing grindcore bands live over listening to their records and this veteran band have the tightness and presence to keep it interesting. **Toxic Narcotic** sounded loud and belligerent and Bill was pretty hammered. **The Profits** provided their usual political punk attack.

I hadn't been to a show at Boston Univeristy's George Sherman Union since sometime in the early 80s. In fact, in the very room where I saw **Against Me** and **Books Lie**, I got to see Jeffrey Lee Pierce fall down flat drunk when he was singing with the Gun Club. Actually, I don't have too many pleasant memories of BU, so let's move on. Books Lie have switched vocalists again and Jeremy fits in well with their jolting sound. Hyper, jagged hardcore meets post-punk and presented with in-your-face verve. I wasn't as enamored of Against Me. I can appreciate their above-average lyrics but not the folk-meets-punk sound. Goddamn, they're happy-sounding. And I'm all for being happy, but I'm happier when being assaulted by more volume and anger.

First time I've been upstairs at the Middle East in quite a spell—oh, how I don't miss all those drunk folks but there was no way I was missing what was going to be the last area appearance by the **New Bomb Turks**. A decade of destruction but it's over for the boys from Ohio. Not the greatest show I've ever seen them play—nothing could really compare with the first time I saw them play in this same room or early '95 downstairs but, man, they still put on a rockin' steamroller of a show. Just great slam-bang punk rock with few peers in the past decade. Eric still cavorts, grimaces, poses, shoves the mic down his pants, grabs hats and eyeglasses off people (well, MY eyeglasses) and acts like the guy with the lampshade on his head at the party but you also know he's probably smarter than 95% of the people in the room and is poking fun at everyone. They missed a few favorites but I won't complain. My first time seeing **The Spitzz** in about a year and a half and, they have a new drummer and continue to move towards more of a straight-ahead rock 'n roll sound, with dips into surf and straight punk (covering the Saints' "Demolition Girl"). But no "Blonde and Pretty," my favorite of the four songs they've released. Oh well.

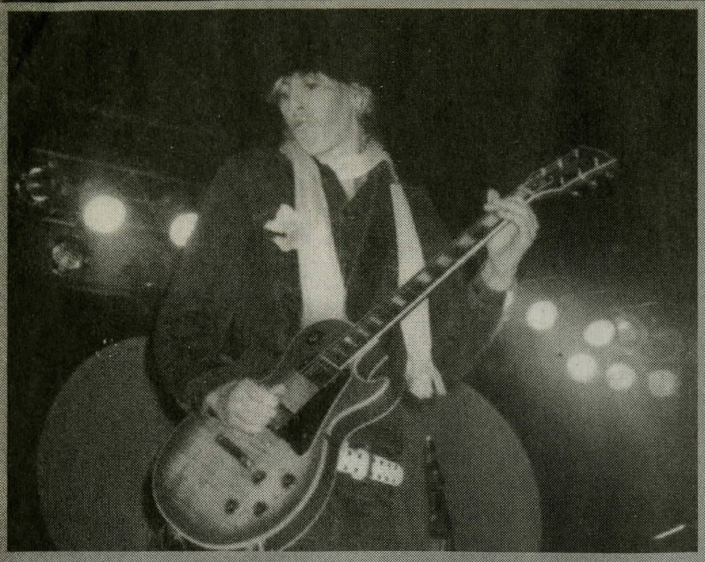
Time for the infamous Halloween Massacre show in Western Mass and this was the first one I've had the pleasure of attending. I've heard the stories about these shows getting out of control but that didn't happen here, at the Cornerstone in Springfield. Instead, it was a room full of rather creative costumes, including some of the bands, and one particularly memorable prop, namely Captain Pecker the Party Wrecker, a six foot inflatable, uh, you know and it made its appearance during **9 Shocks Terror**'s set, when Tony Erba got bopped on the head by said item and it then became a dance floor weapon before its untimely demise. Once again, no fireworks or smokebombs to detract from 9 Shocks' hardcore blaze, although there was a quick, nasty wrasslin' match at the end of their set that I missed, unfortunately. The only smoke came from the fog machine that got a good amount of use from the side of the stage during the night.

From the beginning, **Cut The Shit** came out in white shirts and ties and each had a letter on their shirt that spelled out S-H-I-T and they wore masks of their drummer Tom, stating "We're the Tom Gatton Band." Smokin' hardcore, as usual. Same for **The Prowl**, who were a last-minute fill-in for To Hell and Back (Nate and Jim from Devoid of Faith's new band), whose van broke down en route to the show, which meant that **Last In Line** didn't have the records for their record release show. No costumes for **Red Reaction** and I've seen them play better sets but their bruising hardcore sounded OK. **The A-Team** win the most-creatively dressed costume award for, this night, they were the AIDS Team. Freddie Mercury on vocals, Arthur Ashe on guitar, Greg Louganis (head gash and all) on bass and Magic Johnson on drums. Jon Clark in a white wife-beater t-shirt, fake mustache and half mike stand was worth the trip by itself (this was "Live AID" era Queen). And Eazy-E even made an appearance during their set. No Queen covers (drat!), but their own raging hardcore songs, which is more than enough. 9 Shocks were next, since they had to get off to Providence for another show and then came one of the best-ever sets I've seen from **Tear It Up**. They were just ON and really fed off the crowd's energy. **Out Cold** played a hard and fast set, as always and then Last In Line capped off the evening, also in costume. Mikey spewed fake blood, DJ looked like a deranged scientist and Deuce kept unravelling from his mummy threads. They played three Misfits' covers, bookending their own blazing compositions. Yeah, this was definitely a memorable experience.

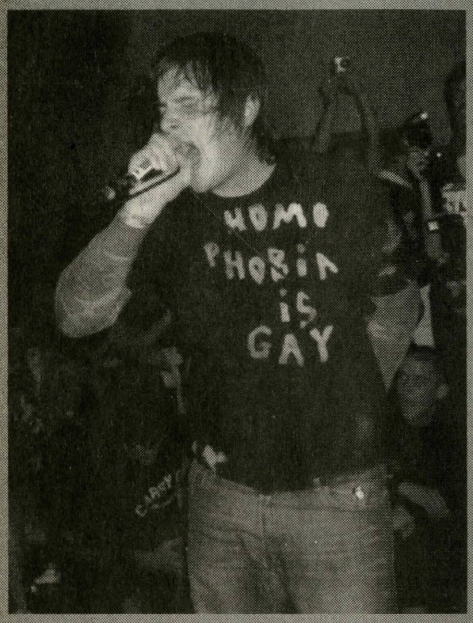
NOVEMBER 2002

Cold, miserable November—short days, steel-gray skies, Thanksgiving (I'm not much of a holiday guy), etc... nope, can't say I like the month that much. But the shows I saw were another matter. House Of Suffering has been remodeled a bit, although it was still jam-packed for the **High Steppin' Nickel Kids**' last bash. Yeah, bash is the right term as they pushed it to the limit and were even more well-lubed than usual. Heart-punching pop/punk music equal parts geek, debauchery and pure punk heart. And more nudity, of course. I finally got to see **Thumbs Up** before their move to Philly and enjoyed their thorny, ranty hardcore punk. Same for **Go For The Throat**, who mix in some decent melody lines with the 'core. **None More Black** feature Jay from Kid Dynamite on vocals and the equation slips more towards the pop side, though it's still energetic. Some good tunes emerging from the fray.

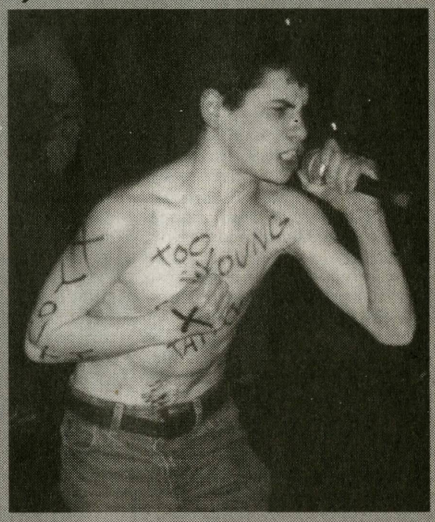
After last-minute venue changes and lots of uncertainty, Mass Art was procured for the Boston debut of **Selfish**, the long-time Finnish hardcore band whose sound, these days, has more of a pronounced Japanese influence, although one can hear Scandanavian elements, as well. I guess, anyway—I'm not as much of an expert on all the nuances of foreign hardcore; I just know they play loud and fast and wish they could have played more than 25 minutes, including a break in the middle of the set when the PA had to be repaired. The lack of time can partially be placed at the young feet of the dreadful teenage quirk-pop band, **Ed and The Refrigerators**. A twee, lightweight two-piece who were very much out of place on this bill and went on for about 45 minutes. Then it took awhile for **Inepsy** to set up but this Montreal band played in an appealingly crusty vein. A bit of Discharge, some

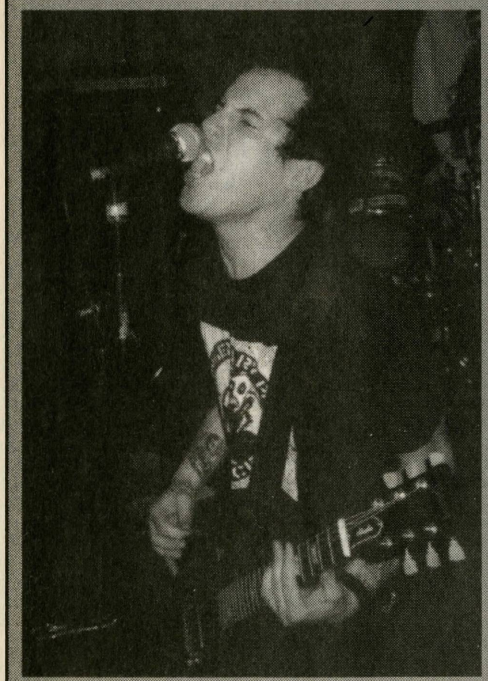


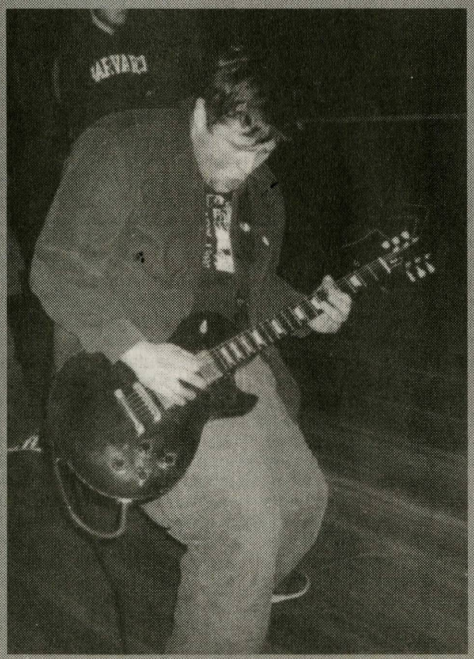
Top left: TURBONEGRO at the Webster Theater, Hartford, CT; Middle row: Wes (AMERICAN NIGHTMARE aka GIVE UP THE GHOST) at the ICC, Brighton; Andy (THE HORROR) at the Waterbury VFW, Waterbury, CT; Jeff (YOUTH ATTACK) at WPI, Worcester, MA Bottom row: Will (BORN/DEAD) at the Cambridge Elks; MATTO (JOHN BROWN'S ARMY) at WPI; Suspiria (LES BATON ROUGE) at the Linwood













Swedish hardcore, add Motorhead and even a few Tom G. Warrior "oofs" and they've got a down 'n dirty sound. Maybe a little slow at times but it was good and loud. As were **Dropdead**. Bob cuts an imposing figure, swinging around a mike stand with a heavy metal base and the mike itself and the floor cleared quickly, except for a few brave souls. Fast and ravenous and they have the hardware to make your ears ring. **Channel 3**, another last-minute addition, may also have been a little out of place on this bill and, once again, it was a short set by necessity, due to the curfew, but it was cool to hear their classic, old-school SoCal punk sound. Makes me wish, in retrospect, I'd gone to see them over at the Choppin' Block, where I heard they played a longer and much better set later that night but, alas, this old guy headed home for the comfort of his bed.

DECEMBER 2002

Sputnik's is a tough-to-find Russian social club of sorts on Salem's Pickering Wharf. This tourist area isn't where you'd expect to go for a hardcore show but here I was for **The Rites**, **Cut The Shit**, **Shot Dead** and **Fightin' Popes**. Not too lively a crowd, although the pit got going a bit during the latter two bands. The Popes were a fairly sloppy-sounding hardcore band. Shot Dead picked up the pace with some hard-edged 'core. Cut The Shit and The Rites both raged with their typically fierce abandon. Almost as great as the show was the sub-10 minute drive each way, although I was accompanied part of the way home with a Salem police cruiser following me to see if I broke some obscure traffic law—unfortunately for them, I didn't. Take that, pigs.

Ellen thought I was nuts to drive all the way to Waterbury, CT and back in one day to see **The Horror**, especially since I was on the verge of getting sick and did, indeed, I did spend a good chunk of the weekend following this Thursday night show recovering and unable to make the Horror's show with Out Cold and others in Lowell. So who exactly is this band who I risked my health to see? Why it's the remnants of the Voorhees, with a new vocalist and they were worth the long drive to the show at the Waterbury VFW. Blistering, pissed hardcore punk with yowling vocals and some pretty damn catchy songs. **Tear It Up** also kicked it out in ferocious style, as did **XFilesX**, who were a late arrival and ended up playing last. I wasn't that enamored with the disjointed hardcore from **Stabyouintheheadandeatyourfaceoff**.

Friends and relatives questioned my sanity about flying to Minneapolis for Thrash Fest 4. Go to Minneapolis at the end of December? Well, let me tell 'ya… it was warmer there than in Boston and there wasn't any snow on the ground, yet. Positively balmy, compared to the winter we've had here. Pat and I were only there less than 48 hours and my biggest regret was that we didn't get to go to the legendary Extreme Noise record store but we did make it over to the Triple Rock, the bar owned by Erik from Dillinger Four and the jukebox is as great as advertised. An interesting journey to get there, with six people squeezed into an economy car and most of 'em, myself included, rather calorically challenged—but I appreciate fellow SV scribe Tigger Lunney's hospitality. The show itself was held at the Profile Music Center, which is a rental hall near the University of Minneapolis. Tight quarters, with over 600 people turning out, and maneuvering through the hallway to look at records could be a task, but no problems—one big happy slam pit of all punk and hardcore tribes. Even the cancellations from 9 Shocks Terror, Spazm-151 and Caustic Christ didn't ruin things although, with those bands, this might have been one of the greatest shows ever. As it turned out, it was still a memorable show, one of my favorites of 2002. I got there a bit late and missed the first band (and neglected to catch their name) so **Any Last Words** were the first band I saw. Tough, modern hardcore that shows some promise. Felix Havoc's new band **Damage Deposit** were next. Decked out in sartorial splendor—Felix with a pith helmet, the guitarist in a New Kids On The Block t-shirt and a croquet set in front of the drums but it wasn't used, as far as I could tell. Fast, ripping hardcore with a manic delivery. I only caught a bit of **Path Of Destruction** (I went off to interview Martin from **Limp Wrist** at that point), but liked their raw, crusty sound. Or what I heard of it. The show really got uncorked with **Holding On**, who continue to amaze me every time I see them play live. They did both the Descendents and Man Afraid covers, as well as their own bile-filled originals. Blazing and angry. **Tear It Up**'s set was on a level with the Halloween show in WMass—no, it was even better than that. Pure power unleashed and getting a strong response. **Limp Wrist** followed with quite a spectacle—Martin in drag, Andrew wearing interesting red briefs and Paul in a cheerleader outfit. The intro tape was purportedly a phone message from "Dr. Laura" threatening legal action for the band's "Limp Wrist vs. Dr. Laura," which the band dutifully kicked into. Raging and blazing hardcore destined to ignite many circle pits and while Martin talked a lot more between songs than the other times I've seen Limp Wrist, it was also pretty damn funny, in a decidedly perverse fashion. Finally, **DS-13** made their swan-song, coming over from Sweden for one final blast and I'm glad I got a chance to see this wrecking crew another time. I missed them on their 2001 tour due to the events of 9/11 and looked at this a chance for closure. They didn't disappoint, opening with "Anarchy In The UK" and following it with the blistering "Lie." Over 20 songs and it was a non-stop tirade. It ended in a tumult of overturned drums and bodies flying every which way. I'm glad I was there. Really fucking glad.

JANUARY 2003

I didn't venture out for a show until almost the end of the month and the only pair of gigs I caught were back to back on a Friday and Saturday night. At Worcester Polytechnic Institute, there was the sonic decimation of **John Brown's Army**. Loud and punishing, with fast, aggressive riffs and harsh vocals. A wall of sound. JBA feature two former members of Devoid Of Faith (Nate and Matt) and this is the band closest in sound to DOF's legacy. Just brutal. **Youth Attack**'s members can't be a day over 16 and their vocalist looks about 12 but they're an entertaining hardcore punk band. Full of pent-up youthful rage. **The Blackout**'s heavier hardcore wasn't all that enticing. **Close Call** ended the show with a brief, yet energetic showing. Brace and My Revenge were supposed to play but the former had to bow out when their drummer quit and My Revenge somehow got lost in transit. Oh well.

The International Community Church was mobbed for show that included **Suicide File**, **Striking Distance**, **Stop and Think**, **Mental** and **Think I Care**. There was also a semi-surprise set from the band formerly known as **American Nightmare**, who were breaking in their new drummer Alex Garcia-Rivera (Kingpin, Shelter, a zillion other bands) and played tracks from their first few EP's before "retiring" them. This was the first time I'd seen them in over a year and a half and their blazing set hit me right between the eyes. Throttling and intense—hyped or not, these guys are a damn good live band. Frayed and damaged-sounding but rooted in straight-forward hardcore. It was Suicide File's record release party and they also pulled out all the stops. No lack of intensity for Striking Distance, either. Stop and Think were playing what is apparently their final show and it was bruising, if a bit uneven. Mental and Think I Care also continue to impress in the live setting. As I said, it was hot and stifling and sold out long before the first note was struck.

FEBRUARY 2003

Winter doldrums and another somewhat quiet month for shows, although the shitty weather meant I wasn't going to get out that much, anyway. A foot of snow did fall on us the day of the **Caustic Christ**, **Corpus Christie**, **Profits**, **Cut The Shit** and **The Point** show at the Cambridge Elks but it had thankfully stopped by early evening and the abandoned roads meant a relatively easy drive in town. A nice reward after an afternoon spent clearing off my driveway. The Point have Ross from Melee and Earth Died Screaming on vocals and guitar and they play more of a melodic, straight-ahead punk sound. Quite a bit different from his other bands and not bad. Cut The Shit were blazing as usual. The Profits bashed out the usual scrappy political punk. Corpus Christie, from Pittsburgh, weren't all that great. UK-inspired hardcore punk that also sounded a little like the Lunachicks (this is an all-woman band, as well) but not particularly memorable. Caustic Christ, on the other hand, concluded the evening with a hammering onslaught and they finished with guitarist Bill Chamberlain taking over the vocals for their cover of NA's "Can't Tell No One." A full-on attack, a good way to chase away the winter blues, at least for a bit.

So, three weeks later, I finally get my ass to another show and it's back at the same Elks' hall for **A-Team**, **Close Call**, **Tommy & The Terrors**, **Shot Dead** and **Bones Brigade**. Actually, it was a short-handed Close Call, as Brian's wife was expecting their first child [born soon after—a son named Gabe], so Chris Cooch switched to guitar and they enlisted Jimmy from the A-Team on bass and they somehow pulled it off. Mixing originals and a few covers for good measure and not bad at all. Bones Brigade hammered out the metallic skate punk with energy and aggression. Shot Dead had an off night, as everything seemed off, especially the drumming. I guess no one could hear each other. Tommy and The Terrors caught me by surprise, with a kick-ass array of street punk and hardcore. The A-Team laid waste with their in-your-face hardcore attack. Slapshot meets NYHC and with a bellicose attitude.

MARCH 2003

Back to the intimate confines of the House of Suffering. I didn't stick around to see the August Spies' reunion nor Earth Died Screaming, but did get to see **Solitary Neglect**, from the Lowell area, for the first time and this is a damn good band. Coming on like a cross between Out Cold and Discharge, with a ripping hardcore punk sound. **Dial M For Murder** were short a guitarist but they had an interesting approach—driving punk but more intricate moments, as well. Thorny and unpredictable and with a confrontational vocalist. **17th Class**, from Rochester, NY, played fast hardcore that threatened to fly apart but the devil-may-care sound was appealing.

As I've stated on other occasions, I like alternate venues and the Billerica Boys and Girls club certainly fits that description. It reminded me of the shows at the Franklin Community Center. Walls festooned with children's drawings, pool tables and foosball available for use and there was even a pick-up basketball game in the gym between sets—and I hope no one documented this game because it was a case of the gang that couldn't shoot straight, yours truly included and the world doesn't need to see my pathetic attempts to get up and down the court without keeling over, either. Anyway, a small room and some fucking loud bands, starting with **Solitary Neglect**, who were just as ripping as the week before in Brighton. **Sangre De Los Puercos**, from NYC and with former Balance of Terror vocalist Ned and Todd from Distraught (among other bands), were loud and a bit disjointed-sounding. A buzzing morass of sound that found its footing for the last few songs. I hadn't seen **Diallo** in over a year and this Connecticut band have turned into a raging unit. One can hear the dark, ominous sound of, say, His Hero Is Gone, and they add a speedy Scandinavian influence. Buck, Mick and Matt share the vocals it's a full-throttle blitz. Finally, the thrash gods of Richmond, **Municipal Waste**, returned to Mass. to fuck us all up and, despite the fact they couldn't use their fog machine for most of the set, it didn't lessen the impact. Fast, tight, completely raging and there were plenty of circle pits in that small space. Bringing back the halcyon days of crossover, complete with Iron Maiden and DRI patches and Kreator t-shirts. A formidable destructo crew.

The return of the Apocalypse Dudes… the Denim Demons… of course, I'm talking about the one and only **Turbonegro**. Hartford, CT was that the closest their tour with **Queens of the Stone Age** was coming to the home-base, so it was into the reliable 'ol Toyota for a roadtrip to the Webster Theater in what has to be one of the most BORING cities in America, but that's a topic for discussion at another time. Let's talk about the rock. They came out to the opening strains of "The Age Of Pamparius" and proceeded to lay down the classic rock 'n roll gauntlet for about three quarters of an hour. You've got to give vocalist Hank Von Helvete credit for having the bravery to bare his good-sized torso but the man has the presence to pull it off. Highlights? "Don't Say Motherfucker, Motherfucker," preceded by Hank's comments about how much he loves dolphins; "Get It On," a letter-perfect merger of Alice Cooper's "Eighteen" and the Ramones' "I Just Wanna Have Something To Do"; the call 'n response from the audience for "I Got Erection." Tongue very well in cheek and well over the heads of a good chunk of the mainstream rock audience—apparently, some of the 'dudes' in this crowd didn't appreciate the mock homoeroticism all that much. Or appreciate the pure majesty of volume and hooks that define Turbonegro. That's their fucking problem, not mine. Only disappointments? No "Good Head" and no encore but this was still well worth the trip. As for the Queens, they were pretty good, although I'm not quite sure I'm in sync with the level of audience devotion they received. A definite "haze" to their sound, almost dreamlike in texture, but punctuated by some hammering fuzzed-out riffs—they do create a good ebb and flow. The Sabbath and Zeppelin nods are in there, but it's a more cerebral approach, for want of a better term. Mark Lanegan (ex-Screaming Trees) sang with them for about half a dozen songs and his subdued vocals meshed well, even with his staute-like (non)-presence.

A few days later, there was a show at WPI with **Close Call** (who have Nick Branigan back on drums), **A-Team**, **The Prowl**, **Punch In The Face**, **Three Fifteen** and **Sick and Tired**. S&T bashed out some scalding thrash-core, while Three Fifteen have more of a late 80s DC-inspired hardcore sound. Punch In The Face were hampered by constant equipment difficulties of every type imaginable and that effected the momentum a great deal. Too bad, because I really enjoy this band's old school sound. The Prowl kicked ass, as usual, and Mikey was quite animated and laid his body on the line with some acrobatic moves. The A-Team and Close Call were also typically throttling.



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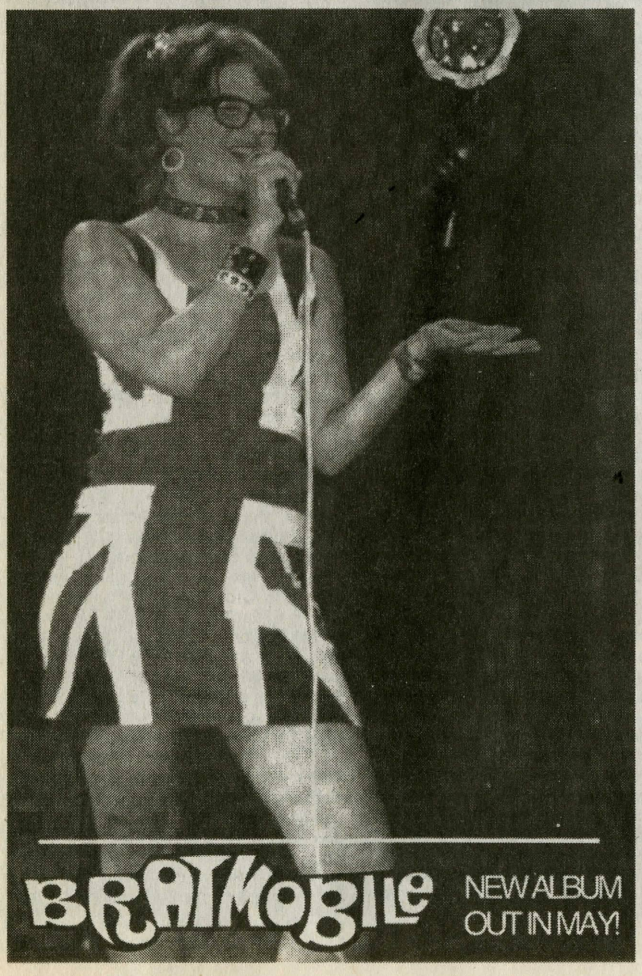

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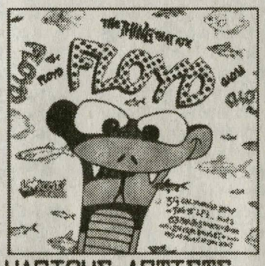

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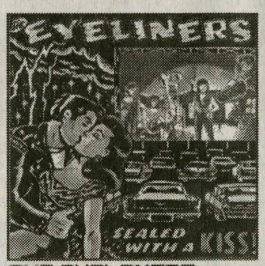

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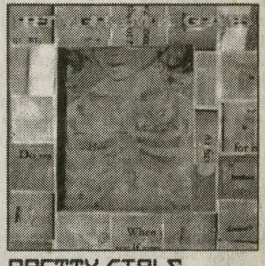

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APRIL 2003

Electric Frankenstein were upstaged by Portugal's **Les Baton Rouge** at the Linwood. LBR have a captivating front person in Suspiria Franklin, who pucuates her words with piercing eyes and wild gestures. A gnash of punk, post-punk and garage with energy to spare. This was EF's first appearance in Boston in about six years and the first time I'd seen them with original vocalist Steve Miller, also doubling on lead guitar. Loud, back to basics rock 'n roll but not the most energizing set selection (not enough old shit for my liking) and kind of sluggish. Disappointing but what was worse was finding a ticket on my car for parking in a zone where there's a restriction after midnight, Friday mornings—all those years of going to shows in town and that's the first time it's ever happened. Oh well.

Didn't make it to another show until almost the end of the month, when **Cut The Shit**, **Last Words** and **Sleeper Cell** played at the Amory Street basement space in JP. Huasipungo cancelled at the last minute, unfortunately. Fat Day also played but CTS' set raised so much dust off the floor, I decided to call it a night. Yeah, a dust storm or is it a circle storm? Whatever it was, CTS continue to impress with their ripping hardcore punk. Last Words weren't all that enticing, playing in a heavier, HHIG/Tragedy-inspired realm, although not really packing the dynamics of those bands. Sleeper Cell, a band with Balance of Terror drummer Jeff Walker on guitar, ex-FYA bassist Rob Burnett and Self-Defense guitarist Spencer on vocals, were pretty damn kick-ass. Their first show and it came across like a combination of BOT and Raw Power, which isn't bad at all. Full-on aggression in short doses.

MAY 2003

Once again, didn't get to a lot of shows... not that I didn't want to but some shows conflicted with my radio show. Now that I've changed it to Monday afternoons, that shouldn't be a problem anymore. Anyway, the two shows I saw were within two days of each other. At the Arts Haus at Tufts University, **Kylesa** brought in enough gear to fill a room 50 times the size. This room is basically the living room a dormitory, so you can imagine the effect. Crushing, punishing and heavier than fuck. Yeah, pretty damn metal but the band's intensity really makes an impact, especially in such a small space. So loud that the cops showed up after their set and Blacken The Skies didn't get to play. **Solitary Neglect** ripped out another solid, fast-paced set. **Sirens** (formerly The Point) played their tuneful punk. **LifeOutOfBalance** played herky-jerky screamo with a somber undertow that didn't really leave a strong impression, live, but their demo is pretty good.

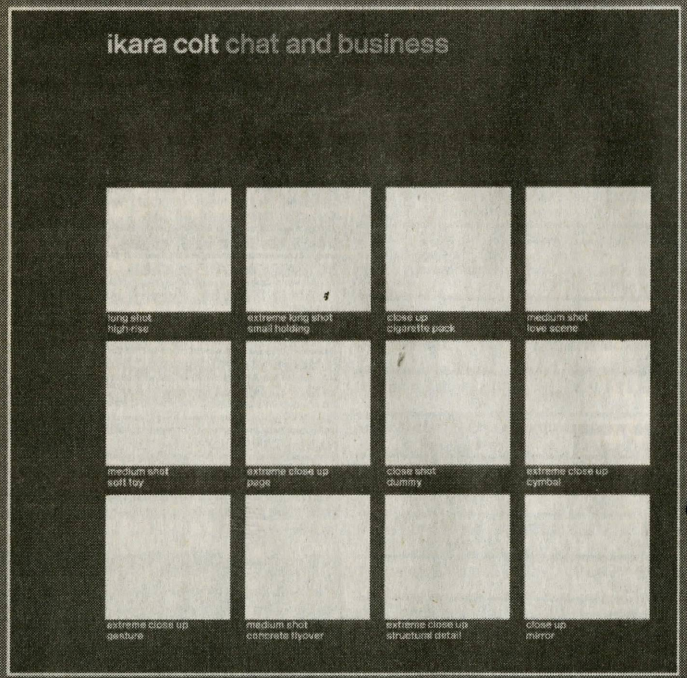
I'm going to love the new smoking ban at clubs in Boston. Yeah, I'm a strong civil libertarian but I'm also tired of coming home from shows smelling like smoke and having it fuck up my sinuses. Anyway, at the smoke-free Paradise, it was the return of **the Dictators** and on the somewhat lackluster side. Not awful, just not as good as in the past. Down to a four-piece, with the departure of Top Ten and this is a band that most certainly needs a second guitar, at least in the live setting. Handsome Dick Manitoba was his typically ingratiating self, engaging in banter about the NY/Boston rivalry (although someone from the audience actually started the exchange) and it was cool to hear the rarely-played "Teengenerate" and "Cars and Girls," but the omission of "Science Gone Too Far" and "Next Big Thing" was disappointing—I would have much rather heard those songs than the mediocre Wild Kingdom selections, such as "Speedball."

JUNE 2003

There's been a bit of buzz about **Modern Life Is War** and I'd have to say it's on the money. Despite mainly inaudible vocals during their set at Exit 23 in Haverhill and Jeff's movements somewhat restricted due to a short mike cord, these guys play a crushing, yet melodic style of hardcore. Sweeping riffs and every ounce of emotion poured into the performance. While it's a heavy, modern sound, ala American Nightmare or Suicide File, I also hear a smidgen of Tragedy's influence in there, albeit without the crusty side of that band. Definitely looking forward to seeing them again. **Holding On** also had the same problems with vocals being lost in the din but they ripped out a furious set, as usual—short but satisfying. Not as satisfying is the heavy, beatdown core of **Guns Up**. A bit more metal than I like these days, although the Cro-Mags' cover was OK.

An intimate gathering at WHRB, the Harvard radio station—tucked on a nice tree-lined street in Cambridge. All local bands, except for **Def Choice**, who were touring with Get It Away (and sharing members) but things kind of fell apart for the latter band before they got to Boston. Def Choice kicked out their fast hardcore punk coupled with a wise-assed sense of humor and some of the songs have some *killer* breakdowns, although it wasn't always that tight. As for the other bands, **Esponsayo** are an emo band, with brittle, floating guitar lines, although there are bits that sound somewhat like Slint. A few jarring moments but not that interesting, otherwise. **Major Danger**, with Matt and Melissa from And I Can't Wait, played scrappy hardcore punk that kind of fell apart on the faster parts. Speaking of And I Can't Wait, that band's vocalist Joan has teamed up with Morgan from the Nickel Kids (playing through both a guitar and bass amp) and Jaimie from Bob Barker Youth on drums in **Raise The Curtain** and they favor a loud sound with bludgeoning riffs and Joan's throat-rending vocals. Pretty fuckin' heavy. As were **Earth Died Screaming**, who do the stoner metal thing with a bit of a crust influence, although the last song took a melodic turn and I thought for sure it was a cover of some obscure hair metal song but it turned out to be an original.

Man, what a smokin' show at the Elks on the 9th—**R'N'R**, **Phalanx**, **Born/Dead**, **Bones Brigade** and **Sleeper Cell**. Whew—different styles of hardcore and one wishes that the various tribes would watch the other bands that don't fit into their fashion category or what have you. Stupid Boston hardcore factions—they're STUPID, to paraphrase Mo Vaughn. Anyway, Sleeper Cell were breaking in new drummer Chris Strunk but they still sounded pretty powerful. This was Bones Brigade's CD release show and it was a rockin' tour-de-force of thrash and crossover metal chops that do get excessive but they can flat-out play. Born/Dead followed with some ripping political hardcore punk. A raw, aggressive three-piece. Phalanx have a heavier, crustier sound but also bring the velocity and Brian's vocals go from gutteral to shrieking in short order. Finally, R'N'R were up against a curfew and only got to play 4-5 songs (and no "I've Had It") but they rocked furiously—even their so-called 'ballad' won't be confused with any hair-metal anthem or emo garbage. All business, no bullshit.



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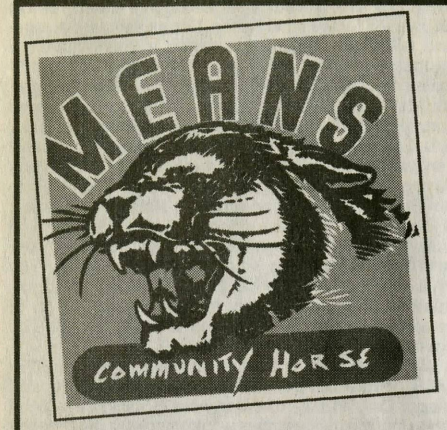

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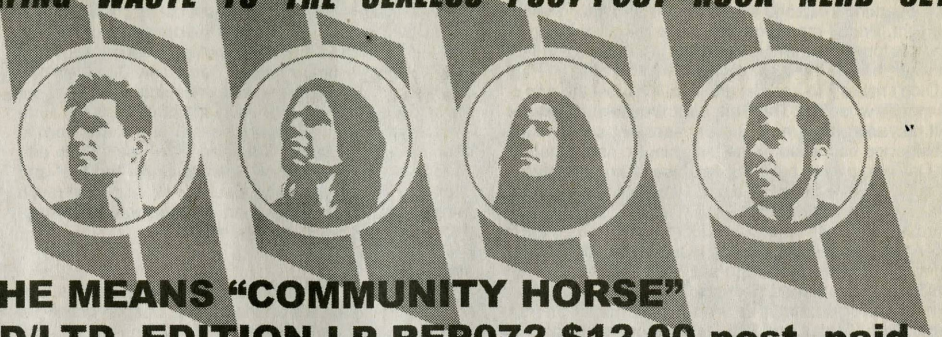

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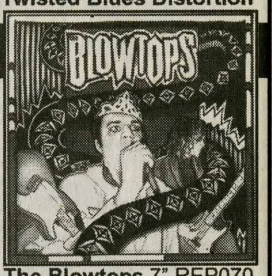

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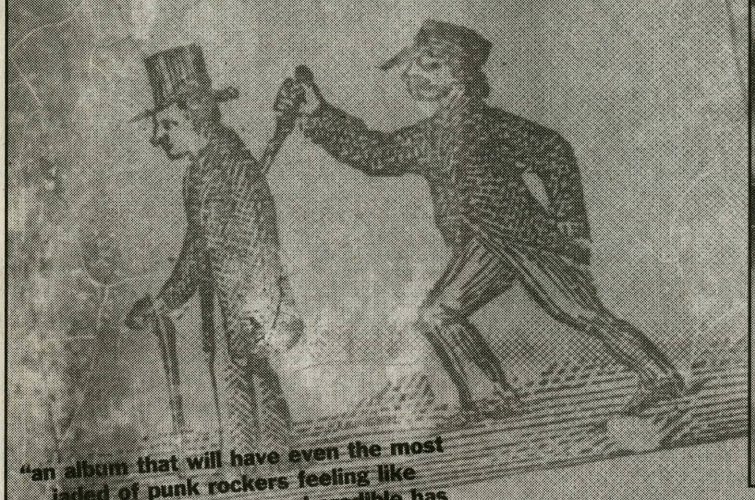

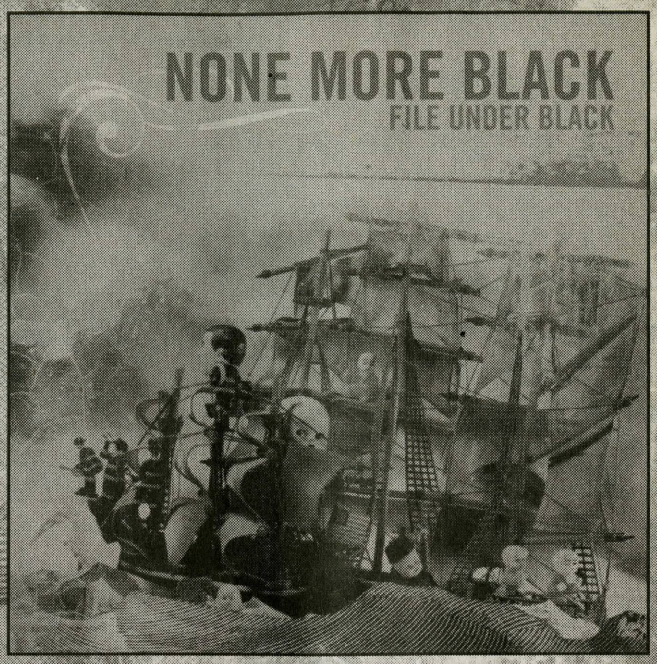

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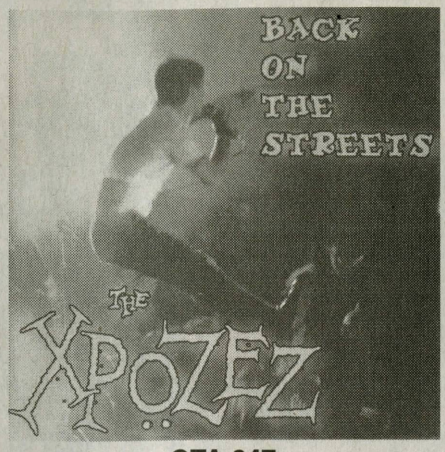

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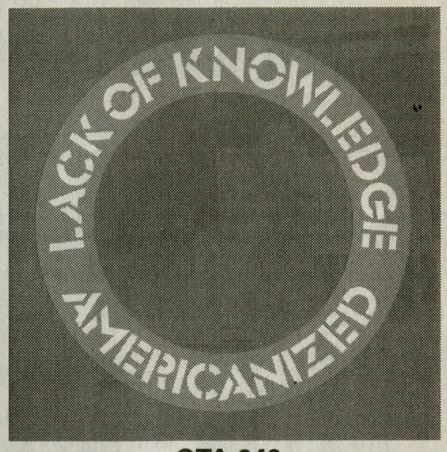

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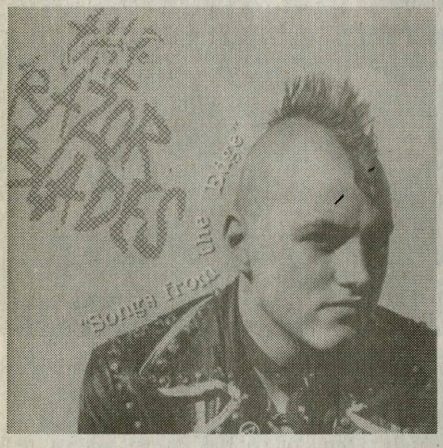
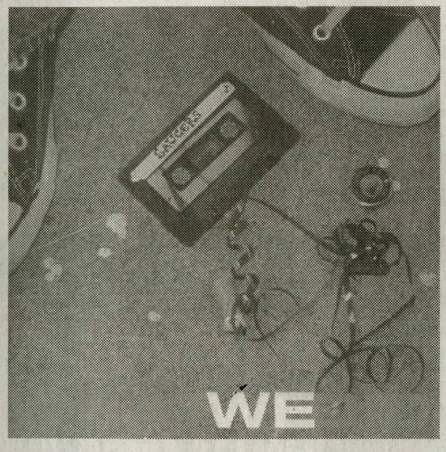
Featuring two members of the Buzzcocks, this early Crass Records label group combined an interesting blend of Joy Division meets '77 punk pop hooks and intelligent though understated anarcho politics.Included on this CD is everything not found on the Crass label including a newer 2000 Southern Studios session plus tracks recorded from '78 through '85. (glue huffers)



GTA 051
THE RAZOR BLADES
"Songs From The Edge" CD

Early 80's hardcore thrash from Denmark which includes their ultra rare "Plastic Messiah" 7" EP, '83 split ep tracks,'82 demo and live tracks from Huset '83. This is raw primal European hardcore featuring numerous tracks that even the most die-hard collectors have not heard.(losers)



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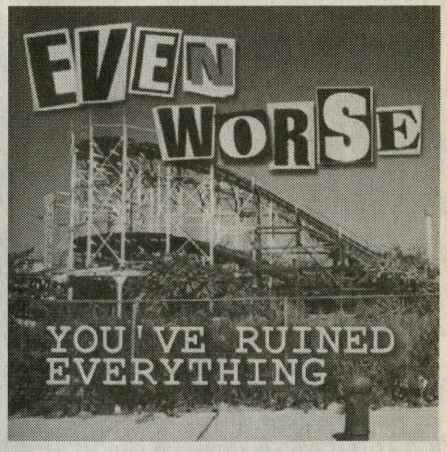
Featuring ex-Rocket From The Tombs member Craig Bell, this late 70's Connecticut group recorded some excellent proto punk of their own. On this CD you will hear material ranging from nihilistic rockers all the way to more 60's influenced garage numbers and quieter Velvets inspired tracks, many of which were never issued until now after being recorded between '78 to '80. (hasbeens)



GTA 052
EVEN WORSE
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'82 unreleased LP sessions originally recorded for Bad Brains Records plus a full live set recorded at Max's Kansas City Club '81.This is the sound of the first generation of New York City hardcore bands long before the music industry goobers attempted to comodify it. (glue huffers)

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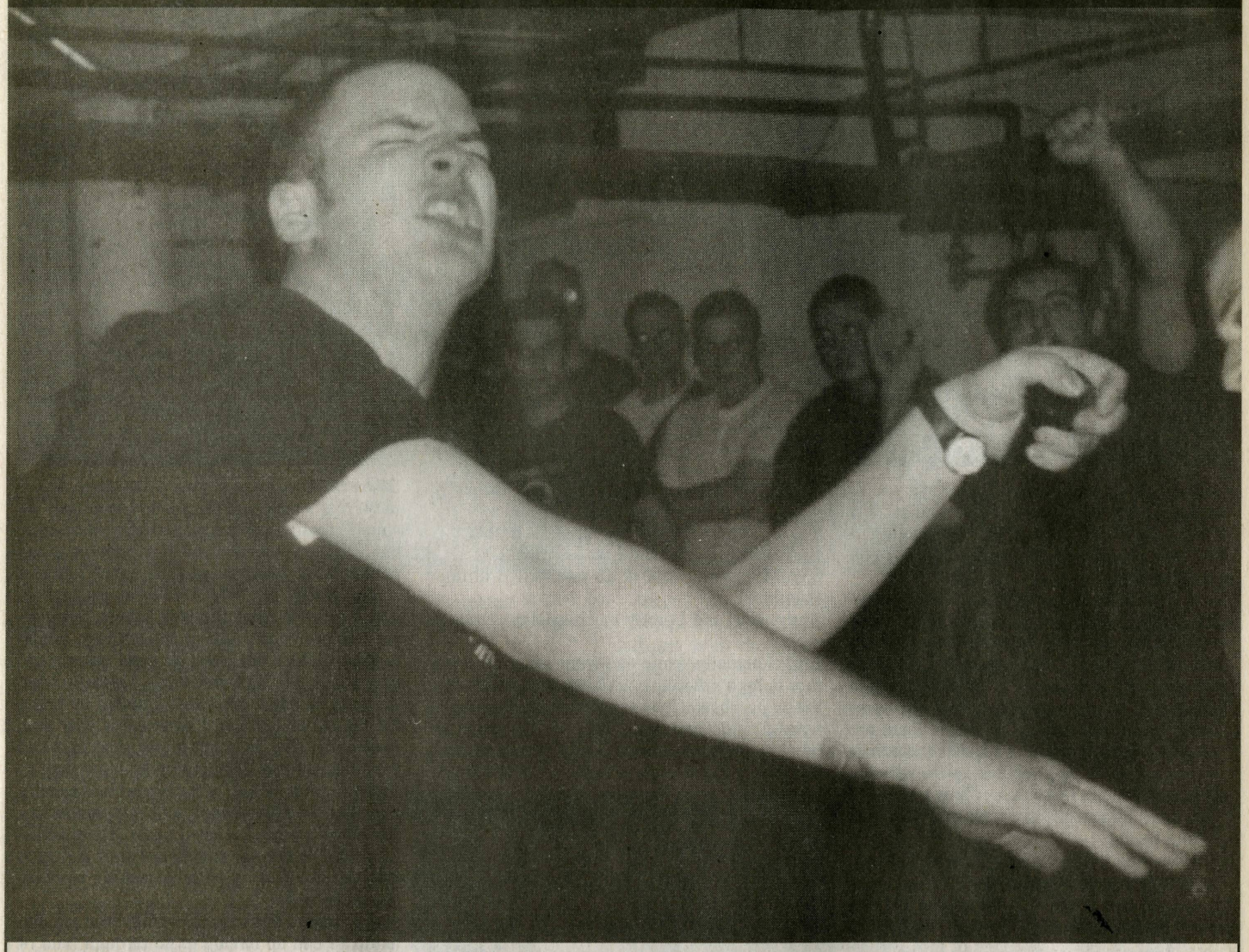
HOLDING ON



Holding On are a crushing hardcore punk band from Minneapolis. As good as their records have been, steadily improving with each release (the most recent one is "Question What You Live For" on Bridge Nine), the band's live show is where they really show their combination of speed, crunch and intensity. Pete Ayres (guitar), Sean Lipinski (bass) and Karl Hensel (drums) throttle their instruments (OK, Karl bashes his, but you get the idea, while Andy Hart lets out the words with rage and angst. The interview was done in two parts—the main part in the spring of '02 at an Au Bon Pain in Cambridge, MA and I then did some follow-up questions via e-mail. These guys are always touring and are a must-see band when they hit your neck of the woods. Before the Bridge Nine release, they had a previous full-length album, "Just Another Day," a split 7" with Coalition on Martyr Records and some earlier 7", split and demo releases that were compiled onto one CD. They also appear on the 3 LP compilation album, "No Hold Back, All Attack."

SV: Let's get a brief history of the band. I know you started out as the bass-player, Andy, and you had another singer.

Andy: We started out in 1999. Me and my friend Derek wanted to start a hardcore band in Minneapolis. We found Pete and Karl and Derek sang for about 8 months and then he quit because he had too many other things going on his life, I guess (laughs). Lot of drama. He's kind of flaky. Good guy but flaky. It turned out that I ended up doing vocals and, after a little while, we found Sean. He used to play drums in the Real Enemy. That's where we are today.

SV: I was listening to the disc with the old EP's and "Just Another Day" and I noticed a slight change in your sound. You started out with what I guess you could describe as being youth crew-ish but you seem to have gone for more of a pissed-off hardcore sound and I definitely noticed that with the new songs you played last night. It sounds much more aggressive, much more angry-sounding.

Andy: I think one of the big changes was definitely when Derek quit the band. At first, we didn't think it was going to be a big change, be a big deal but it turned out that after we got going, it seemed like we were in two different places when we wrote lyrics.

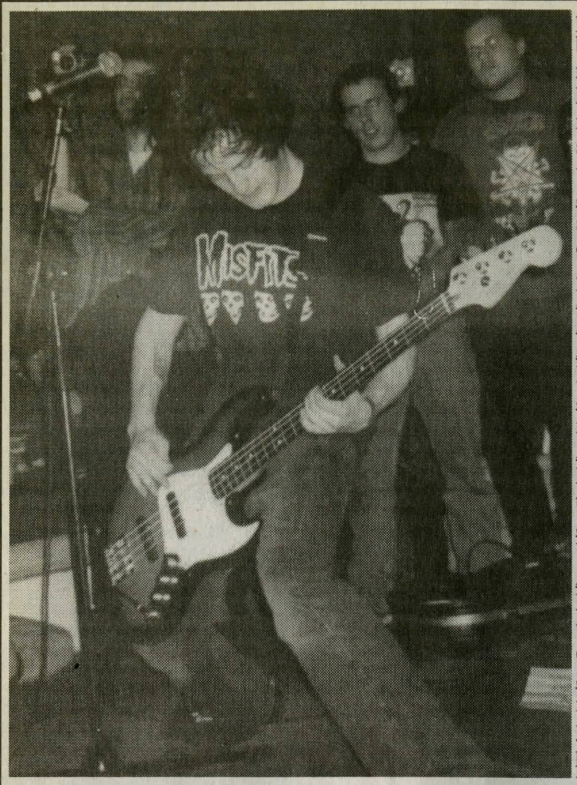
Pete: It was like Derek wanted to be more positive, more youth crew oriented even though he wasn't really a posi kind of guy (laughter).

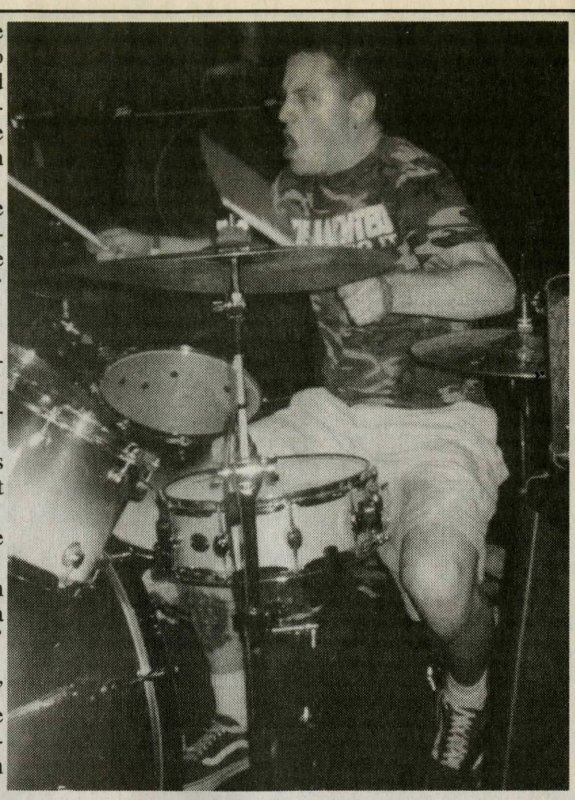
Andy: He's a pretty negative person.

Pete: But when Andy started singing, it wasn't like we're going to become all pissed off. I think the lyrics became more realistic.

Andy: It's venting, if I'm mad about something, but I try to keep some hope in there. I don't want to be like 'I hate everything, everything sucks,' but I guess it all depends on the mood I'm in.

SV: It seems to be based on the crap you're





dealing with in your day to day life and you're venting. There was one song in particular, "Just Another Day," where you talk about living in the "9 to 5 trap." OK, so what's this job you hate so much?

Andy: I work for the county and I sit there behind a desk all day, bored, pushing papers around. They pay me a lot and it's an easy job and I get full benefits and they let me take time off whenever I want, so there are advantages to the job but, at the same time, I'm just completely miserable and all the people there are completely miserable. They're stuck there their whole lives and I just see that stuff everyday and I can't stand it. I don't know how I've made it this long. I know it's my problem. I can quit anytime I want…

SV: How long have you been there for?

Andy: It's been like three years.

SV: I spent two years in banking. I would say get out before it drives you nuts.

Andy: Yeah, someday. It's kind of nice for everything that I do right now. Not worrying if they're going to fire me when I go on tour.

SV: What department is it?

Andy: Taxpayer services. People file mortgages.

SV: Speaking of the government, you've had a pro wrestler as your governor [Jesse Ventura—he's since left office]

Andy: He's a complete idiot. At first, it was kind of fun and a bit of a novelty and it was kind of nice having someone who was pretty outspoken and just kind of said what they thought but, after awhile, it just comes out that he's an idiot. He's so thin-skinned. He'll sit there and trash everything else and then someone takes a shot at him or someone makes a good point and he goes, 'interview's over. I'm outta here.'

Karl: He was just recently blasting the media for questioning him, because that's unpatriotic to question a leader's decisions. When he came into office, he said he'd never raise taxes but now that the state went from a $2 billion surplus to a huge deficit since he became governor, he wants to raise taxes, which he said he'd never do. And he's saying that in a time of war, he shouldn't be questioned on what he can do.

SV: Seems like a lot of people say that. Saying it's unpatriotic to question things to have any sort of dissent.

Pete: Yeah.

Karl: It's ridiculous.

Andy: It's completely ridiculous.

SV: Minnesota's an interesting state.

Andy: Yeah, everyone always has something to say about that.

Sean: About Prince and Jesse Ventura.

Andy: 'Oh, Prince is from Minnesota… you've got a wrestler for a governor.' (laughs)

SV: On "Heard It All Before," is that coming from where you're tired of trying to explain why hardcore is such an important part of your life?

Karl: I actually wrote that one and, basically, yeah.

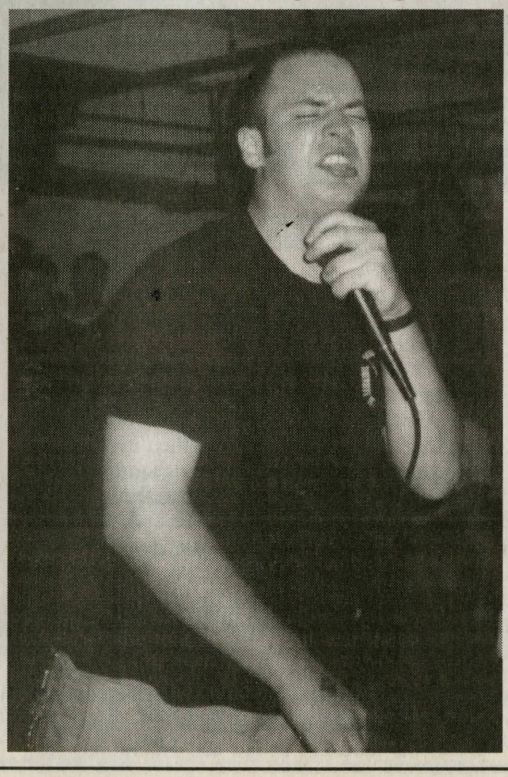
SV: The drummer writes songs? Holy shit…

Karl: I write music and I write lyrics.

SV: My god… this is an unusual drummer (laughter).

Andy: Karl and I pretty much split the lyrics, it seems.

Karl: I actually wrote that song when I was senior in high school, so it's kind of an older song but it just basically came from the fact that I wanted to do one thing, because I was in this band at the time when I was a senior in high school and I still wanted to go to college but, at the same time, I was having a hard time deciding if that's what I really wanted to do and we weren't really that serious at that point in time but I just got sick and tired of explaining to my parents what I was doing with myself and just stupid things, like why I want to get tattoos, why I want to dress the way I dress. My parents are even pretty liberal about things, which is kind of hard for them to even understand why I was like this. But that's basically what the song is about. In a way, it ended up being for the better because I stayed this way and, eventually, they're going to get used to it and they ended up understanding it. Now they're really supportive but, at the time, I had a pretty hard time in high school with my parents understanding what I wanted to do. Them wanting me to be the star athlete and such and such this, but it ended up with everything working out in the end.



Andy: Yeah. I think that most kids who are into hardcore end up having to go through kind of stuff. I always had my parents go, "when are you stop going to shows and wasting your money on this." You ever get that?

SV: Yeah, from my wife! [not true!] My father. Actually, my mom was very supportive when I started the zine. She was a substitute teacher and used to sell my zine when she taught.

Andy: Yeah, even my parents are supportive. They're like, "as long as you're happy, do whatever you want." But, at the same time, they're, like, "aren't you almost done with this?"

SV: There was a discussion on a message board about how old is too old to still be involved in hardcore and that issue kind of went through my mind when I was reading the lyrics to that song.

Sean: I don't think you can ever be too old. If you're 50, so what?

Andy: You can't really put an age on anything.

Sean: What did you answer?

SV: I just said [attempts a poor Ian MacKaye imitation] 'it's not how old I am, it's the way I

feel.' (laughter) Nah, I thought about that and I just said, basically, as long as it's still something that's fun for me. As long as it's something I still enjoy, someplace I still feel comfortable and welcome, I'll keep going.

Karl: It's cool to see older people in the scene.

Pete: 'Cause we don't have that in Minneapolis.

Karl: Except Felix.

SV: You know what's really funny is Bob Mould, speaking of Minneapolis legends, is the same age as me and he's "retired" from playing loud guitar rock. He said something about it being pathetic. That kind of annoyed me a little bit.

Andy: Yeah I saw that. He's coming through. He's playing two shows in Minneapolis and it's all electronic stuff.

SV: That's part of the maturation process?

Andy: I guess so. I saw a picture him today and he looks completely different. His head's not so round anymore.

SV: He lost weight and he's bald. That's why he looks different.

Andy: It didn't even look like him.

SV: The thing is, people will say they're in it for life, but a lot of people do fade away.

Karl: I was thinking about that earlier today.

Andy: I'm 23 years old and I feel like an old guy at shows. It's sad. I've seen so many people come in and leave, already.

Sean: In Minneapolis there's, what, four or five people in their late 20s or older that are still going to shows? Just a few people. I don't know. It's pretty weak.

Andy: It is really cool to see a lot of young kids getting into it.

Sean: It's good to have the tradition, too. That's what keeps the younger kids involved is older people.

Karl: Setting an example.

SV: You guys are playing a show tonight with Steve Blush, the author of *American Hardcore*. I'd like to get your thoughts on that.

Sean: It would have been a great book without all the stuff that he wrote. Just the interviews and the pictures and stuff. But the stuff he wrote was ridiculous.

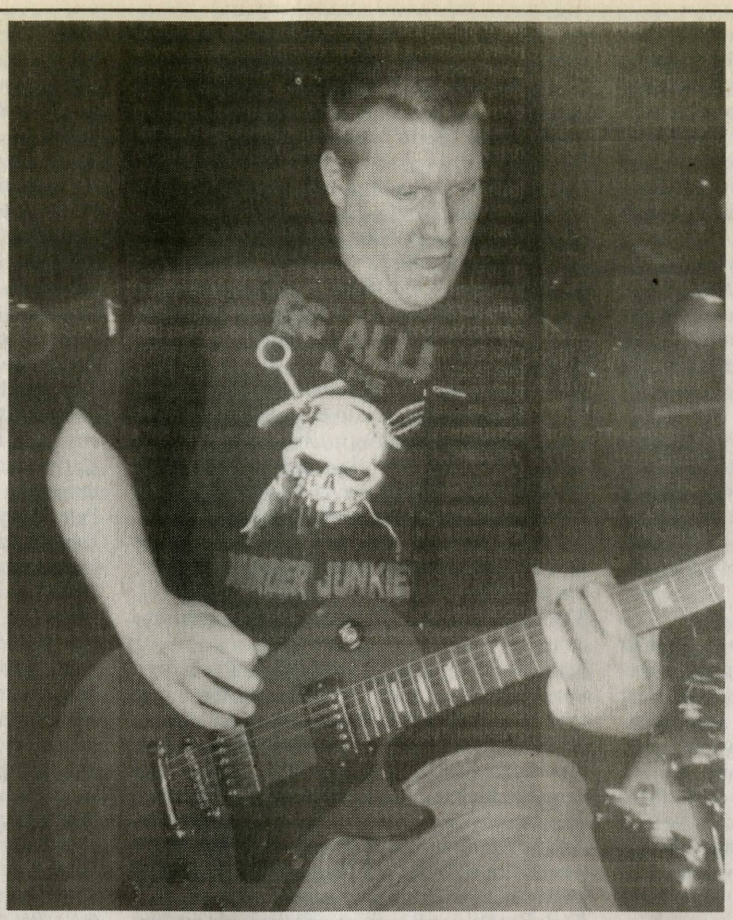
Karl: He starts it out by saying I'm not going to have a biased opinion towards anything. I want this to be a straight historical reference and he comes right out totally bagging on everything that was straight-edge.

SV: He writes for *High Times*. What did you expect?

Karl: The stories were good.

Andy: It was an entertaining book.

Sean: But he put in shit like, "I got a blow job from some broad in



a bathroom." (laughter) What's the reason for having it in a book like that?

SV: I don't know. But I'm sure there are a lot of hardcore bands that were icons who might have gotten blow jobs in bathrooms.

Pete: But for the author of some book to put that in. It's totally irrelevant to the rest of the book.

Karl: And for anyone to say with a straight face that hardcore died in '86 and that it's an irrelevant musical style is just an idiot. Just stupid.

SV: I think his whole point was that it's just repeating itself at this point. I think that was the gist of it. That you guys should find your own style of music to do.

Andy: It's all over guys!

Pete: Rock 'n roll's been going for what? 50 or 60 years or more?

SV: Yeah. And you always hear about how rock's dead or how some certain bands are going to come along and save rock 'n roll. It doesn't need to be saved. It's been here all along.

Andy: Yeah. It's always here.

Pete: We're going to beat him up tonight (laughter).

SV: Is "The Forgotten Ones" about anyone in particular?

Andy: That was around the time of the election. It's just basically about how the Democrats and the Republicans, everyone's just pretty much running towards the center and there's no voice for the left anywhere in politics.

Karl: With the Republicans, you know they're going to screw you over. You know they're bending over for corporations. You know what they're doing. They're not going to hide it, for the most part. And with the Democrats, it's always kind of bothered me where they say they're for the working man, we're for the environment, we're for this and we're for that and, for the most part, they are but, at the same time, they still bend over for the same corporations. You're supposed to be represented by these people but, at the same time, they don't really care.

SV: There's a guy from your state who I do have respect for and that's Paul Wellstone [note: tragically, Wellstone was killed in a plane crash in the fall of 2002, just before the election. The seat was subsequently won by Republican Norm Coleman, defeating former Senator Walter Mondale]

Karl: The thing about him is George Bush has personally donated to his opponent's campaign and he's going to be in Minnesota three times before the election and he's going to be Bush's little puppet. Every corporation is spending money against Wellstone because he doesn't take any of their money. All of his campaign contributions are from people and some of it comes from corporations, but environmental groups and stuff like that. He's a great guy.

SV: Hasn't Norm Coleman lost elections, before?

Karl: He was the mayor of St. Paul. He started out a Democrat and he changed to be a Republican so he could run for governor. He lost to Ventura and now he's running for Senate. He's frightening.

SV: Alright, this is something I took off the website. So Sean, the government pays you $200 to shave your balls? (laughter)

Andy: First of all, the website? The person who runs our website has disappeared and it hasn't been updated for a year.

Sean: He's my best friend and I haven't even talked to him in six months.

Andy: One day, he just disappeared. So that bio of Sean was true about a year ago.

Sean: Hey, he asked me! Yes, I do shave my balls. I got laid off and that was what I got from unemployment was $200 a week. That was only for a couple of months. Yeah, that's about it (laughter)

SV: I didn't mean to put you on the spot.

Sean: I still do shave my balls. But I have a job, I think. I called my friend the other day who I work with back at home and he says I've been fired but I'm not sure. I'll find out when I get home.

SV: And what's this I heard that you got solicited by a prostitute last night, near the Berwick?

Sean: Last night, Pete comes up to me and says, "hey Sean, if we pay for a prostitute, will you do it" and I thought about it for a second and said, 'fuck yeah!' Nah, it didn't happen.

Andy: We were walking around Dudley Square last night.

Sean: I think it was the first time I've ever been solicited by a prostitute so I was pretty excited. (laughter) I'm on the phone and she's right across and she drops two condoms on the ground. She goes, "can you pick those up for me" and I'm walking away and she goes, "you guys are straight, right?" Ah, whatever, but it was kind of exciting.

SV: Dudley Square? I don't think I'd take my chances.

Andy: We had to walk through there to get to the Dunkin Donuts from the Berwick. It was kind of a necessary evil.

SV: So tell me, changing the subject, is Extreme Noise the best record store in the US?

All: Yes!

Andy: That place is great, in all respects. The way it's run, the selection.

Karl: The reason I like it so much is because they have so many people doing the ordering so you have one guy who does the Revelation and all the hardcore orders, they have one guys who does indy rock so, regardless of what kind of sub-genre you're into, you're going to find something there for yourself. Everytime I go in there, I buy something. There's always something there.

Andy: It's all volunteer-run. It's a big collective so they manage to keep the prices down. It's moved from three [locations] and now it's in its best location and the selection has gotten so much better there. The one downfall is that all the volunteers get first crack at the records that come in.

SV: Hey, those are the perks of working in a record store. There's got to be some reward for dealing with the public all the time. While we're talking about Minneapolis, a lot of your songs talk about unity and all that stuff, but is it a divided scene? Are there lots of little subscenes and cliques?

Sean: Definitely.

Andy: When I first got into it, it was great. It was kind of small, everything was pretty tight-knit, so everyone would go to all the different shows. You'd have Dillinger Four, Disembodied and the Promise Ring playing shows there and all kinds of people would come out. It's kind of weird talking about bands from there because I don't think too many bands have gotten recognition throughout the United States but we had great bands from every genre and they would all play together and everybody would go to every show.

Sean: This was like five or six years ago.

Andy: Then I don't know what happened. Everything kind of went downhill after that. It seems like everyone got into their own little thing, their own little niche and now it's really divided. Unless we're playing with some metalcore hardcore band, there's not going to be any hardcore kids coming to see us in Minneapolis.

Sean: Metalcore is definitely the big thing in Minneapolis.

SV: Isn't there a big crustcore scene there, too?

Sean: That kind of died down.

SV: Does Dillinger Four appeal to a wide audience in Minneapolis?

Karl: I still love that band a lot but sometimes it's weird because my first basement show was a Dillinger Four/Man Afraid show.

Andy: Same here.

Karl: And it was just awesome because I was in 8th grade at the time and to be able to see a band you thought was amazing in a basement was even better. And now they play their record release show at First Avenue, which is the big club in Minneapolis and there were 1500 people there. All the press loves 'em, they won three awards for Minnesota band of the year and, sometimes, it's just kind of weird.

SV: Yeah. I mean, I talk to those guys and they're amused by it.

Karl: The thing about it is they haven't changed at all. As big as they've gotten, all the things they've gotten to do, like tour Japan with Green Day and all that, they're the same guys. A long time ago, they used to appeal to crusties and hardcore kids and now it seems more like mall kids.

Andy: There are a lot of kids in Minneapolis where the only underground punk band they know about is Dillinger Four.

Karl: But they still have an unbelievable amount of respect from everybody. They're the one band from the '94, '95, '96 boom that Minneapolis had of a tons of bands that never got out. The Strike kind of did but I'd say Dillinger Four was the one band that just stayed around and really went somewhere. Which is cool to see. They're the one success story in Minneapolis.

SV: So you guys got Felix to write a song with you ["Unite Already"]. Tell me how that happened.

Andy: Derek, our old singer, used to work with him at Extreme Noise on Sundays and, one day, Felix came in with these lyrics for him and he was, like, "yeah, I wrote these lyrics but they're too cheesy for my band, so they won't let me use them, so here, you can have them." So, Derek..

Karl: ...being lazy...

Andy: He grabbed them and, at first, he was kind of reluctant and then, after awhile, he was like, "I like 'em" and I just think he didn't have any lyrics for a song we were going in to record.

Karl: It was like Song #6 about unity or something like that (laughter).

Pete: They worked out pretty good.

Karl: It was just kind of funny because a lot of people thought it was a joke. "Felix didn't write those lyrics." Yes he did. He really wrote those lyrics.

SV: You read those lyrics and it seems like he's talking about the same shit.... He's an older guy, like me, and we've been talking about the same problems for 20 years in the scene, with racism and fighting and all that crap. Is there much in the way of racist crap there?

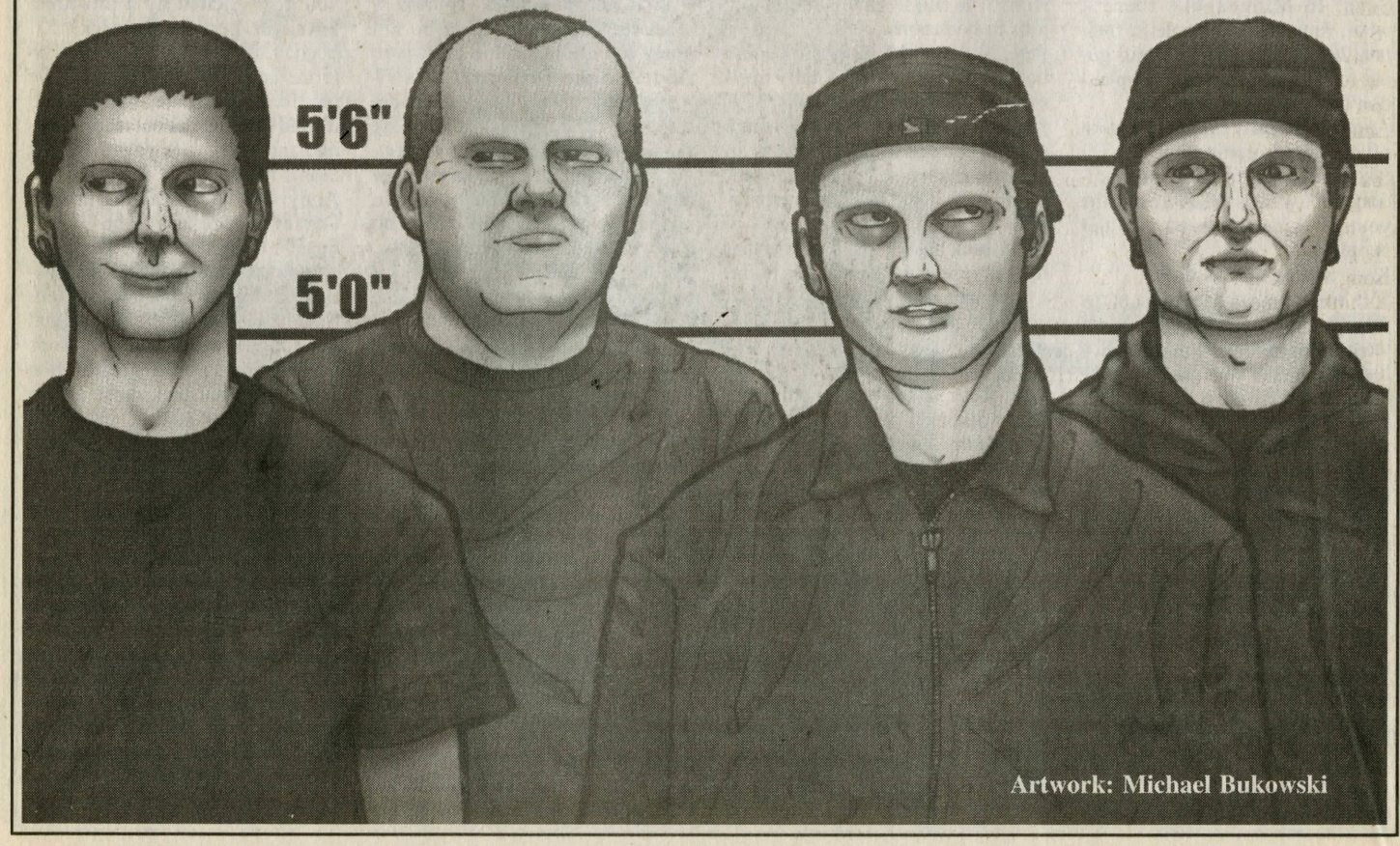
Andy: There was a problem. There were a bunch of nazis around but it was before I was ever around.

Sean: You don't see them anymore.

Andy: You cross over to St. Paul. They're on the other side of the river. We're from Minneapolis.

SV: What's the difference between Minneapolis and St. Paul? I've never asked this to anyone before.

Sean: St. Paul's weak (laughter). Minneapolis



Artwork: Michael Bukowski

hates St. Paul. There's nothing really there.
Andy: It's more working class. Minneapolis has more of the entertainment and more of the glitz.
Pete: You don't hang out in St. Paul. I don't know anyone who does. St. Paul seems to be more of just your standard midwest town and Minneapolis is a little bit more cultured, you might say.
Karl: Another reason why it's good to have old people in the scene is they can tell you all the stories about all the nazis who used to come around to shows. It kinds of keeps things in perspective. You can say there's not racism in Minneapolis or St. Paul but, yesterday, Matt [from Tear It Up] was talking about all those nazis who came to their [Haverhill] show. You hear they're still around.
SV: You hear people telling you stories like this. Do you think some of the younger kids sometimes take things for granted?
Karl: Yeah. I've never had to deal with it, but I know it still exists…

*****

MORE QUESTIONS:
SV: So what's been going on in the last year since we did the interview? You obviously have a new album out and did a split 7"…We also talked about day jobs, particularly Andy... Has anything changed since then?
Karl: The new album came out on Bridge 9. Since then, Andy got married, both Andy and Pete moved, Sean quit Hot Topic, and got a better job at the Vans store. I'm about to graduate. IT's been a long time. We've just been trying our best to balance being broke, having money to pay bills, and touring. I guess one big change is that the midwest scene is starting to get really strong. More bands are starting to surface, like Modern Life is War, and hardcore shows (not metal-hardcore shows) are starting to draw lots of different kids. It's really an awesome thing.
SV: "The Greatest Trick The Devil Ever Played" is different from your other songs—whereas many of your songs deal with more personal issues, this one is quite pointed in its sentiments about flag-waving, etc... Why not elaborate on that song.. And has there been any backlash about having such a message? Post-9/11, have you noticed more flag-waving or right-leaning ideology in the hardcore scene?
Karl: I think this song is a politically-motivated song, but I think it's personal at the same time. I think it's more of a reaction to what I FELT was going to happen because that song was written right around the time we declared war on "Terrorism" and the USA PATRIOT act was past. I'm so excited that the fact I wrote those words, and based on that bill, I am now in the CIA computer. As are you Al...sorry. I could see more and more people just relinquishing their own thoughts, ignoring the real issues, and in exchange, they put an American flag sticker in the corner of their SUV. The media has been tricked, the politicians have all been tricked. We're believing our own self-fulfilling prophecy that the world is full of terrorists and we should eradicate them, and our policy is going to act as such. However, no one questions why they'd want to attack us in the first place, and when they do, it's because they're "jealous" of how amazing our country is. People have gone to a fourth-grade rationale on a national level, it seems, and only the Daily Show, the Onion, and Bill Moyers are noticing it. Even Joe Lieberman is saying that Bush has gone soft on homeland security!! He's a democrat (by funding) but even the people I once thought were rational opposition have caved and are playing the same game now. I don't think there's been a backlash at all. Within the hardcore scene, I've actually had people come up to us and say thanks for those lyrics. It's happened quite a few times. I think people know what's happening is fucked up, and I'm glad that bands like Suicide File and Dillinger Four are also writing songs communicating these ideas to kids. I think some segments of hardcore have always had an ideological/nationalistic stance. I think if someone can back that up and describe why they believe that without sounding ignorant, then great. But "Try burning this one, you asshole French" is not really a defense for hating everyone who doesn't love "Freedom" like we do.
SV: Who/what is "Invasion of the Assholes" directed at?
Karl: That song is directed at the safe, boring, pre-packaged garbage being forced down people's throats as "punk" music today. In the mid 90's you had bands like Green Day, Rancid, and Bad Religion being hailed as the "big" punk bands exploding at the time. They came from somewhere, though. Bands like Good Charlotte/New Found Glory/ Dashboard, whatever, are disgusting and bland. Dashboard Confessional should NEVER, under ANY circumstance EVER, be mentioned in the same sentence ending with "...is like seeing the Clash at their prime." EVER. Good Charlotte is NOT like seeing the Ramones. I've read these (the first in AP and the other in Spin...I work down the hall from a Barnes and Noble) and it's offensive and disgusting. These people can call themselves whatever they want, but don't come to our scene scraping for credibility. [Amen to that!!-SV]
SV: Karl, I remember you told me that you'd worked for Wellstone.. I imagine his death had a profound effect on you... and then Norm Coleman got elected, after all. Any thoughts on that? Or the new governor who replaced Jesse?
Karl: The Wellstone thing was devastating. IT was so long ago, though. Paul Wellstone was an amazing, admirable, conscientious human being. He was a rare voice of reason and not a typical politician, and our government is missing a strong, strong voice. I got the opportunity to meet him a few times, and I feel so fortunate for that. Norm Coleman and Tim Pawlenty, the new governor, do in fact have their heads up their asses. I don't think the world cares about Minnesota politics, so I won't go far. I will say this, though: Cutting health care, education funding, and local government assistance (Boys and Girls clubs, libraries, etc.) and NOT blaming this on the welfare checks cut for the rich to the tune of millions of dollars do not equate RESPONSIBLE government…

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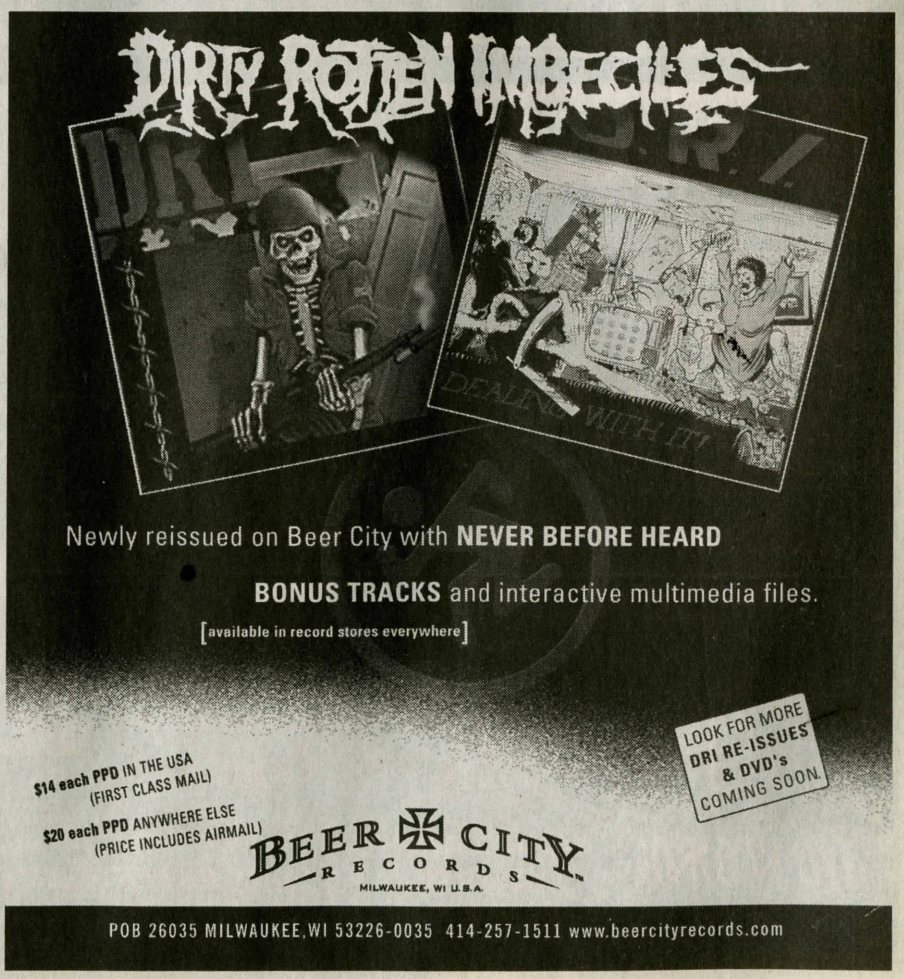

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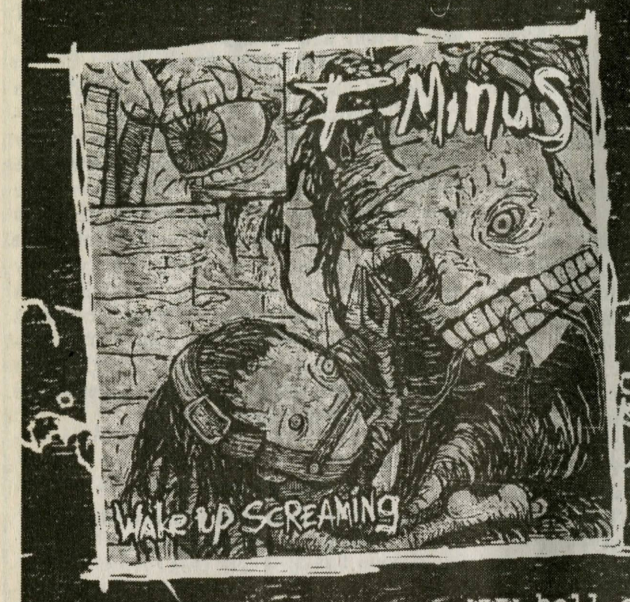

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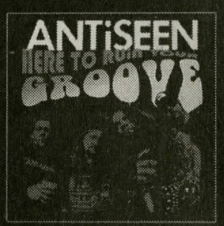

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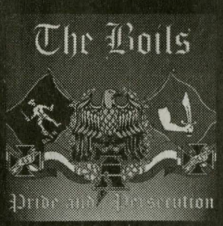

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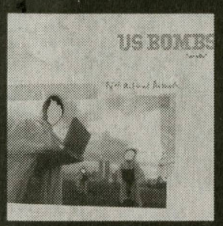

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CUT THE SHIT

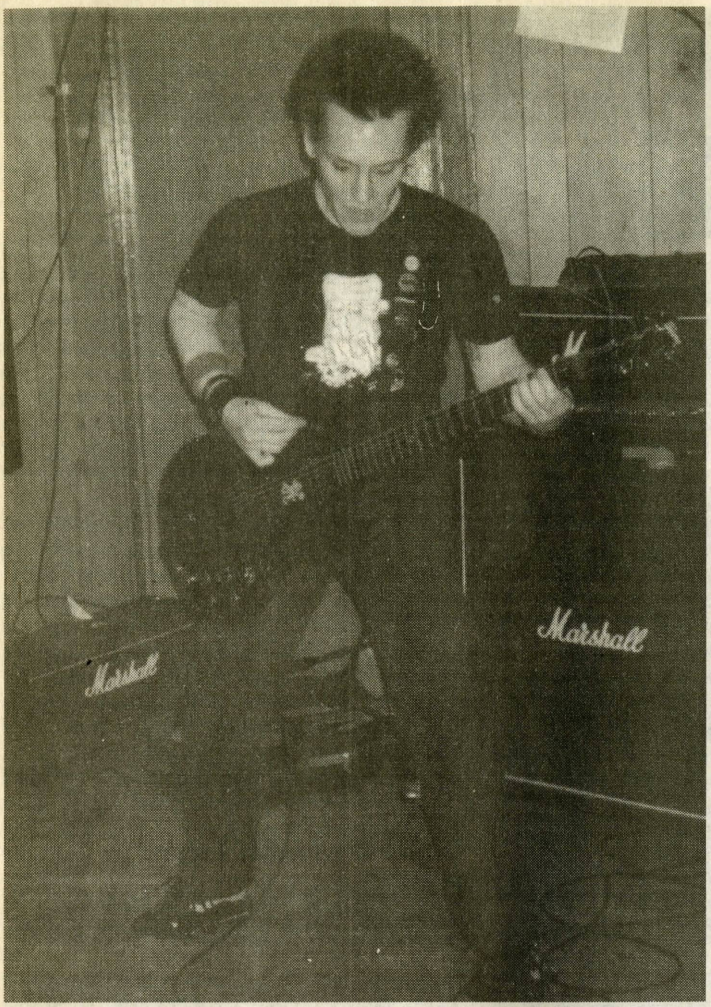
Cut The Shit are a hardcore punk band from Boston with former and current members of such bands as Tear It Up, Bones Brigade, Pinkerton Thugs, The Prowl, Cops and Robbers and the Rites. They came together sometime during early 2002 and play fast, raging thrash with angry, pissed-off lyrics that deal with personal frustration and also make wider observations about this crazy fucked-up world in which we all exist. They've released a demo, the "Bored To Death" 7" EP on Gloom Records and have a one-sided 7" due out by the time you read this. They've also recorded an 18 song album called "Harmed and Dangerous" due for release this summer on Gloom and it's as raging as anything they've done to date.

The members of Cut The Shit are Andrew (vocals), Paul (guitar), Erick (bass) and Tom (drums). I interviewed them at their apartment on Quint Ave. (my favorite street!) in Brighton, MA on March 5, 2003...

SV: So what's this you were telling me a few minutes ago about the Cut The Shit karaoke record you're going to be doing?
Tom: This was thought of tonight.
Paul: Best record ever, probably. We want to just go and record a bunch of our favorite songs. Michael Jackson and whatever else.
Tom: 50 Cent. Ludacris.
Andrew: My vote is that we actually do the DVD of that so we can witness the carnage.



SV: OK, now I'll ask the REAL first question. Just give me a history of the band. How you guys got together. I know most of you guys have been in lots of other bands.
Erick: Andrew and I wanted to start a band for awhile.
Tom: Yeah, actually the three of us were playing around with the idea of starting a band—me, Erick and Andrew.
Andrew: We didn't have a songwriter. Initially, the plan was to have Erick sing and I was going to try to play bass again but I met Paul right before he moved up here for school and when he came up, he played me a tape of some songs for a band he wanted to start and they were way too complicated for my liking to be played on the bass so it was suggested that we talk to Tom and Erick and then Paul, Tom and I got together and jammed one night and made a tape and had Erick come back two weeks later.
Paul: I guess I moved up here [from New Jersey] with the notion of starting a band in the back of my head. It wasn't a real priority or anything. It's just when I moved up here, I found myself with lots of free time. School keeps me pretty busy but not playing in a band for the first time in probably three years gave me this enormous amount of nothing to do, so it became more of a demand. I realized how insane I would be if I didn't have anything to do with my free time. Tom was one of the only people I knew when I moved up here so, naturally, he was the first person I started playing with. The first priority of this band is friendship, I would say. It's really important that we all get along really well because there have been situations in the past, I'm sure from everybody being in other bands, where there's always that one member who's on the outs and I hate that. I think a band should be like a family or like a street crew. To be the people you hang out with every day and that's why this band is so much fun for me.
SV: I started seeing your stickers around, it seems, long before you started playing out. I think the first time I saw the sticker was in the bathroom at Burrito Max. (everyone laughs) Did the band actually exist more as a concept before there was an actual band?
Tom: No. That's Paul being in art school.
Paul: Yeah, exactly.
Tom: We had started practicing at that point but I think Paul went a little crazy with them. He likes doing a lot of design. He does all the design for our records. He had a vision and he made the stickers up and, wherever he went, he had them and I was guilty, too. All of us. We went down to New York once, too and we plastered the Lower East Side.
SV: I was taking a piss in the bathroom in Burrito Max and I see the sticker over the toilet and go, 'Cut The Shit. Who is this band?'
Andrew: That was great. Before we even played, we had all these kids pissed off on all these internet message boards.
Tom: Yeah. It was such a big joke because we were, like, let's see what attention we can get with the stickers.
SV: I remember Gary from the Dicks told me, when I interviewed him, that they made up flyers for Dicks shows that didn't exist and the band didn't really exist, except in his mind, but he eventually put the band together. So I was thinking it was a situation like that.
Paul: Yeah, same as the Sex Pistols, even. They had flyers up on public transportation. You'd see



"The Queen Is Dead" logos but, again, friendship and boredom. Nothing to do, so I designed these stickers and it's weird—like Andrew's saying, everybody took it to heart. Everyone assumed the stickers were attacking them. It was just a joke, a good time. We weren't trying to single people out.

SV: Speaking of Burrito Max, Bones Brigade [Andrew's other band] have a song called "Burrito Max Fucking Rules." To those people who aren't from Boston, why don't you try to explain the importance of Burrito Max to the Boston scene.

Tom: I don't know... for awhile, it's been the staple. I always liked the food. Everyone always disagrees with me on it. The thing is, nowadays, I don't like it as much as I used to. Before, we knew all the kids that worked there. Everyone did. They would know us and it wasn't so much that we got free food or anything, but sometimes we did, but everyone there used to be real cool and that's the main reason why I liked hanging out there so much.

Andrew: Plus it was right across from the Rat so we'd go to shows there and eat there after.

Paul: I think it's important for people who are not from Boston to know that it's good college food. Not necessarily good Mexican food.

Tom: It's Tex-Mex. It's not Mexican. I tell everyone it's not Mexican. But, recently, it's gone downhill a lot and we don't really know many people there and I actually have a lot of people there who are out to get me. Who purposely screw up my burrito but that's another story. I don't want to get into that.

SV: Yeah. Some of them might read this and make it even worse.

Tom: That's alright. I haven't been there often. I've kind of stopped going.

SV: What happened to Cops and Robbers, Tom?

Tom: Uhh... like Paul was saying, everyone had to be friends in the band and anyone that knew any of us or looked at us knew we were completely different people. I was a straight-edge person, Micah was the singer/songwriter, folksinger, Jaye's the partier and Josh had his own thing (laughter). They're all nice dudes. I like all of them, I was good friends with them but I think, after awhile, we definitely got on each other's nerves. When we were on the road with Last In Line, it was cool to hang out but once we started doing things by ourselves, we were not really getting along too well. Everyone kind of wanted to take a break and was definitely for it. I wanted to come back but I don't see us ever playing again, really. We might do a reunion show, but who knows? I still look fondly back on the band.

SV: This one's for Andrew. You also sing for Bones Brigade, as I mentioned. Does this band provide a different outlet for you than Bones Brigade?

Andrew: Yeah. I think Cut The Shit is more of a reflection of the type of music that I listen to. Paul and I work on writing songs together, a lot. Blake [Bones Brigade's guitarist] has a lot of different influences. I think he's an amazing songwriter and I love playing all his songs but they're very different. That's always been about having fun and goofing around with my friends and this is more driven by angst.

Paul: More personal.

Andrew: Yeah. It's easier for me to get pissed in songs about how things aren't working out than about skateboarding with my friends.

SV: Does Blake write the lyrics in that band?

Andrew: We co-wrote a lot of them.

SV: One of your songs is called "Burn The Dance Clubs." Considering that there was just that tragic fire at the Station in Rhode Island [where almost 100 people got killed at a Great White show], are you going to retire it?

Erick: Oh, shoot, I never even thought about that.

Paul: I think we'll have to explain it a little more. I don't think we're going to stop playing it.

Erick: That wasn't a dance club, it was a rock club. It wasn't a rave night or whatever.

Paul: You can say we don't endorse the burning of people... simply the venue (laughter).

Tom: Very good call.

SV: It seems as though those places survive and prosper while there's no place for all-ages punk and hardcore shows here in Boston. It's still an ongoing problem.

Paul: I think it always will be, unfortunately.

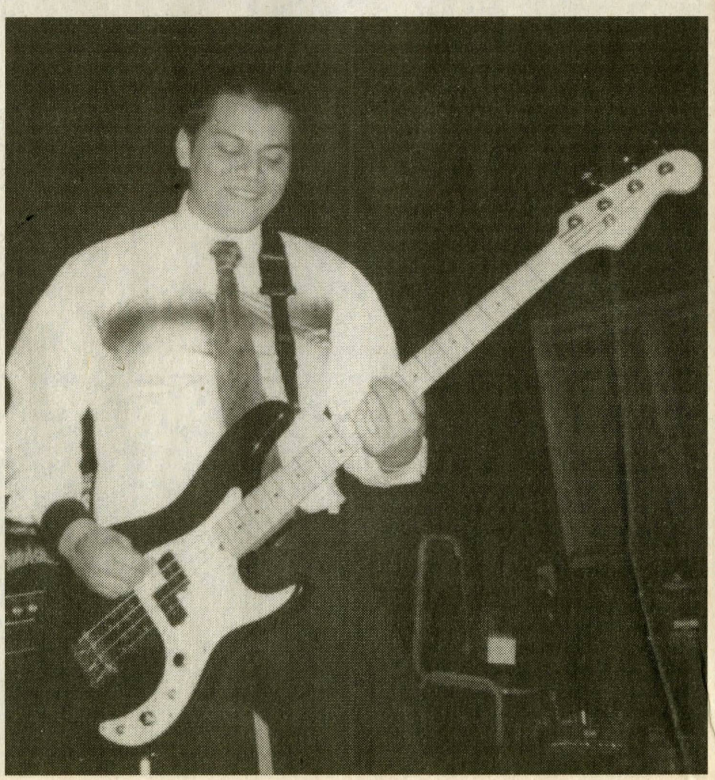
SV: Any thoughts about the local Boston scene, lately? Venues are definitely a problem.

Paul: It's just unfortunate for every scene. It's always one or the other. There are lots of scenes that will have tons of clubs and then not a single good opening band. I think there's tons of great bands coming out of Boston right now and there's not a single place for any one of them to play. It's so unfortunate. I wish we could balance it out someway. In Jersey, right now, there aren't too many bands but there's a couple of places to play. Too bad we can't shift bands and venues.

Tom: It seems like there's always at least a couple of places that have been kind of a staple, like the Rat, when I started going to shows. But it seems like Boston doesn't have a stable place that's all ages. Even a hall that can be rented out often.

SV: Yeah. We had the Berwick Institute for awhile, but even that dried up.

Erick: Regeneration was a glimmer of hope [all-ages DIY space that opened and closed within a few weeks].





Tom: Yeah, I was so psyched because, the first few shows there, it got back to that whole everyone going to the shows regardless of who it was. A punk rock band will play, everyone would show up. A hardcore band, everyone would show up.

Andrew: That was a great feeling.

Tom: That was kind of the way The Rat was, sort of, at one point. All the kids would show up, regardless, just because it was a cool place to hang out.

Paul: I definitely admire scenes like Minneapolis… every time that Tear It Up had ever played there, we had always gotten such an enormous response and there were kids with mohawks, kids with shaved heads, youth crew kids would be there. It was like every kid who was remotely involved with punk or hardcore would come out for a show. That's awesome. And when Regeneration opened up, that's kind of the feeling I got. This is going to be great. It sucks it was so short-lived.

Tom: There's so many new punk kids, these days, especially with punk being in the mainstream so much. You go out to the suburbs and even the town where I grew up where there were no punk kids, I see punk kids littering the malls and at Newbury Comics and they really don't have anywhere to go or any bands and they're listening to the bands that we were into years ago and have since broken up, because there's no new punk bands. Or they don't know, because there's no club. They don't know enough about the bands or the scene. They have to know friends who are going to college in the city.

SV: A few minutes ago, you were talking about how the lyrics in this band are more personal and angst-ridden. A lot of the songs do seem to deal with boredom, loneliness, life's frustrations. So, is life really that bad?

Paul: Yeah, kind of. I think it has a lot to do when I was moving up here and not really knowing many people. I spent a lot of the time just sitting around in my room. This is my way of working out what I feel.

Andrew: It's a lot easier for me to sit down and write a song about when I'm feeling frustrated. When I'm feeling psyched and content and happy, I don't feel like I need to work things out. Whereas, when things aren't working out, it's very obvious I need to do something. It's kind of like a catharsis for me to put it on paper. Figure out how to deal with it.

Tom: I think it gets back to Boston. How there's nothing to do. Everything closes early, there's no more places for us to hang out. Burrito Max is it.

Paul: Yeah, and that's where "Burn The Dance Clubs" came from, too. When I moved up here, you meet people, or at least the kids who go to my school [School Of Museum of Fine Arts], which I'm not saying are real punk or hardcore kids and they'd be like, "oh, come to the dance club and we'll have a good time. It's punk and hardcore night" and I'm just 100% not interested in that at all. I'd rather just sit around in my room. We've gotten a little bit of an attack about that. There was a kid who wrote a whole article in his zine about how he's been to dance clubs and he doesn't feel it's necessary to write songs against them. They can co-exist with hardcore and not have any sort of a burden against him but, under that logic, why write a song about anything? There are lots of things that are mildly OK, in my opinion, that don't necessarily piss me off completely but you've got to write a song about something (laughter).

SV: Speaking of being frustrated in Boston, there's a song that deals specifically with that, "The Party's Over." I get the distinct impression you're not much of a fan of Mayor [Tom] Menino, who's a popular mayor with some people.

Tom: Yeah, that got written around our first show. Right after it. Our debut show got shut down.

SV: Where was this?

Tom: The X-Haus [basement space on Mission Hill in Boston].

SV: Oh, you guys were playing the show where the X-Haus got busted and it was on the news?

Andrew: Yeah. That's what the whole song is about. We made these flyers and went around and posted them up.

Tom: Everywhere, by the way.

Andrew: [shows me the flyer] You can see the baby holding its own head, with the Dischord bars on its face.

Erick: Our local newspaper put it on its front page.

Andrew: People ripped down the flyers and sent them into the mayor's office and then he sent in a team of cops and evicted everybody from the house and shut down shows there, so that was just my reaction to that.

Paul: The media really blew it out of proportion. They made it out to seem like these kids were the next Fight Club. They were stealing electricity and this and that and they made a mountain out of an anthill. They just kept blowing it out of proportion and every newspaper had an article about it and one of them happened to be called "The Party's Over," which is why we named the song that.

SV: On "Take Back Your Life," it talks about being "under attack" and "scare tactics." Do you think those messages, like the orange alert we were just under recently have permanently damaged the American psyche or are people sensible enough perhaps not to buy into that?

Erick: Hopefully, people aren't that stupid.





Paul: I think there are some serious threats to safety in the world right now but you've got to draw the line, somewhere. There are people on the news who are, like, "I don't think you should go outside. It's an orange alert." I think they try and play into it a lot more than it really is.

Tom: The media sensationalizes everything.

Andrew: They're totally paying their bills off of sensationalizing.

Tom: Look at all the coverage they gave to that snowstorm [when New England got two feet in mid-February]. I don't think I could get any other news.

SV: The whole fucking day, that's all it was. Snowstorm coverage.

Tom: It's like, I know it's snowing outside. Get on with the regular shows.

Paul: Even the day they announced it was orange alert. Andrew and I were in our room and they had the whole hour and half block of news where it entirely revolved around the fact that now our alert level has gone from yellow to orange. It was every other story. They kept going back to it. It's just feeding it. And every time they would chop up another little piece of information and get you biting your nails and watching the commercials and holding on for more information.

Andrew: More pop-ups on the TV screen, like a permanent orange bar.

SV: I know. I was flipping by Fox News and, in the corner with the logo and time, they had what alert we're on today. Unbelievable. How about the so-called war on terror? It seems as though some people are willing to sacrifice their civil liberties for more security.

Andrew: I think it's important try to strike a balance. You can't endanger people's lives but, like Paul said, you have to draw the line somewhere.

Tom: I think the government's always wanted to pry more in our lives and they never had any justification to do it. Now, with the September 11th attacks, the general public are like, "yeah, it's a good idea." It's scary to think that, if you're getting on a plane, it'll hit a building but, on the other hand, not everyone in the world is a terrorist and you don't want the government on your tail just because…

SV: Just because you visit certain internet sites or belong to a certain organization…

Tom: Yeah, if you do something a little different. It's like McCarthyism again.

SV: Exactly. It just seems like the government is using it as an excuse, the 9/11 attacks, to crack down on civil liberties, to put in effect what they had been planning beforehand and now they really have the opportunity to do it.

Tom: Yeah. I've even heard mentions of the national ID card…

Erick: It all comes back to the media, again. They're scaring us into signing away every possible right that we have. Look how bad it's gotten. Now we have to do all this to fix it and everyone's, like, "Oh, OK, do whatever you want, government." Now there's no stopping them.

Tom: Same thing with the war going on now.

Erick: Yeah, we're bullying every other country to join us.

Tom: Not only that. It's like a lot of people are for it and it's because of all the stuff you see on TV. I don't know whether to believe it or not. You see all these stories about what they're doing over there and they're hiding terrorists and blah-blah-blah. You don't know what to believe.

SV: I'm pretty skeptical, particularly with mainstream news. I think they're acting as a propaganda arm of the government these days. Maybe I'm being cynical, but that's pretty much my take.

Erick: The government has a big hand in what they can say. They can censor anything. What pictures they can show.

Tom: I think you take everything with a grain of salt. Sometimes, I feel like I'm being way too political and way too into this but, on the other hand, you've got to put it in perspective. I don't think you should jump on everything and go, "the government is out to get us." But there are definitely some sketchy things going on.

SV: You have to keep aware of what's happening, because it's starting to have an effect on people.

Tom: Yeah, and it's like the world, I was reading in the news today, is divided. Half the countries want to go to war and the other half don't want to.

Erick: It seems like there's more pro-war coverage on the news.

Tom: Even the anti-French sentiment. I think it's kind of silly. Just because they're not taking a strong stance on the war, then everyone in America hates them and there's jokes on TV shows about the French. Not that I'm hugely pro-French but it's weird. All of a sudden, everyone hates the French.

Erick: There's even businesses around here saying they're not French fries, they're Freedom fries!

SV: I heard about that. It was in one of the Carolinas. And some members of Congress have been talking about passing legislation to restrict imports from France and subject them to more stringent regulations. It's just stupidity.

Paul: Yeah, it's completely insane. And it's irrelevant.

SV: I mean, it might be true that some French people do look down on Americans. But some Americans' reaction to this is just stupid.

Andrew: That aside, as a country, they do have a right to disagree with us.

Paul: It's just painting the picture that if they don't agree with us, they're automatically the bad guy. And, on behalf of Dead Stop, they're not french fries, they're Belgian fries (laughter). When those dudes were over here and we went to get some French fries, they freaked out. So if you meet someone from Belgium, don't tell them they're French fries.

SV: Well, Belgium's on the US shitlist too, 'cause I guess they don't support this war. You won't be able to eat Belgian waffles, pretty soon.

Erick: Freedom waffles!

SV: "Crooked Teeth" talks about people "policing others actions." It comes across as being directed at one person. Was that the intent? Or is it something more universal?

Tom: It can be applied to anyone. Someone always knows someone like that.

Andrew: That song was written with the intent of being about one person but it can definitely easily apply to other situations. It's about people who feel they have the need to run other people's lives and tell them what to do.

Tom: And pre-judge people. We saw that when we were in Richmond.

SV: I was going to bring that up, actually. You guys did a tour with The Prowl and ran into some difficulty in Richmond.

Tom: Just a little bit. It's the same thing and I think it stems from people up here. They were passing out flyers about the Prowl [regarding the violent imagery on their 7" sleeve, which some regarded as misogynist or accepting of violence towards women]. I think everyone has their own opinion on it and I, personally, respect everyone's opinion but I think a lot of people didn't look into it and didn't investigate what their record was about. So we got

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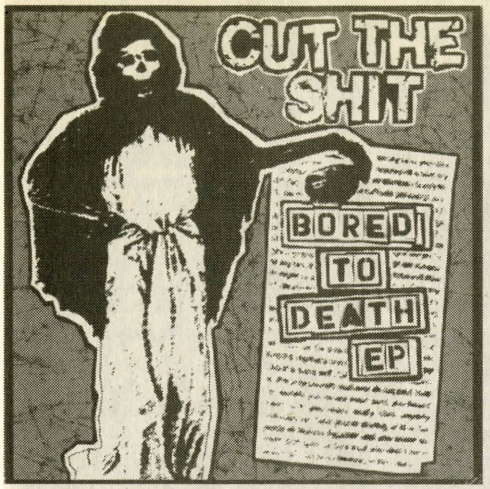


to Richmond and we got a tire slashed and we felt like no one came in to talk to them. When we were in Nashville, one of the people we were staying with came up to us and asked them about what their record was about and she got an explanation. I think more people could have done that. It's the same sort of thing. People telling each other "that's not right." We're in a punk, hardcore scene.

Paul: We're all here for the same reason.

Tom: Free-thinking.

Paul: There's no need for all this separation.

Andrew: Communication is good.

SV: Where did the photo for the demo come from? And I remember one of you telling me that you thought you were going to get in trouble for it.

Paul: The cover photo is of a pro skater. His name's Corey Duffel. I was just looking for the most lewd, horrible photo I could find. I was looking through *Thrasher* and there he was. He's known for being the new punk skater. He wears Ramones shirts every day and leather jackets while he skates. It's very much a gimmick but the photo was ridiculous. He had a toilet seat over his head and he's giving the middle finger. The shock value was overwhelming. It was just a funny image and that's what we went with.

Andrew: I think the reason I said that we were going to get in trouble was because, after we issued the demo, we found out that he said some rather questionable things in an interview and got blacklisted from the world of skateboarding for a year or so.

SV: What kind of questionable things?

Paul: He was just trash-talking other skaters for race or other reasons. Not cool at all. It definitely happened after we had used it.

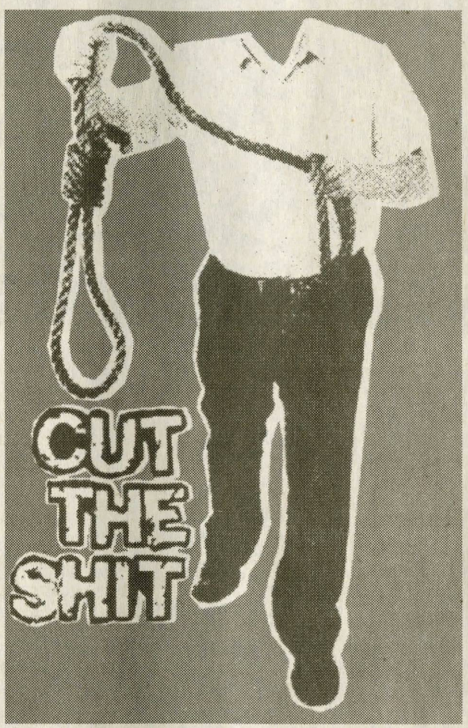
Tom: We sold out of those. You can still download it off our website, without the cover. But it's one of Paul's fancy photoshop, art school things. (laughter) It should be noted the artwork for our first 7" was done before we recorded it, except for the song titles.

SV: Since we were just talking about a skater, what do you think about the commercialization of skateboarding? I don't know a lot about it but Tony Hawk was on the Simpsons and it seems to be getting quite mainstream.

Paul: It has its positives and its negatives. I think it helps a lot of the skaters out. The ones who are getting actual cash for it. Because skateboarding, as an industry, has never produced the money for the skaters and now, for once, that actually might be changing. I think that they work hard, they're good at what they do. They deserve to get paid. I just saw Eric Costin on "MTV Cribs" when I was home, watching TV at my girlfriend's apartment and his house is ridiculous. The guy is making money off of skateboarding and I think that's great. He's doing what he loves and getting paid so, in that aspect, it's good. I started skateboarding when I was 7 and when I was that young, it was all about the image of skateboarding. I think very much, today, that's even more of the point of skateboarding. Commercialism is taken into so much that it's all about flashy logos and embroidered sweatshirts. There's definitely cash to be made. There's tons of little kids getting into it now from the Tony Hawk pro skater video games.

SV: I know. My 7 year old nephew plays that game.

Paul: Both my cousins skateboard now because of that video game. I can't say that it's the best way for kids to get into skateboarding but at least it's exposing new people to skateboarding. It's a good sport. I definitely support it. I'd rather



have them skateboarding than being in gangs. One kid lives in Queens so there's lots of other terrible things he could be doing.

Andrew: I just think it gives kids the wrong impression. I've been at skate parks and met kids who are 8 years old and, being 21, I'm one of the older guys in skateboarding. They ask me "are you pro?" and I say I'm not nearly at that level, then they say, "well, what do you do?" "I work and I go to school" and they're like, "oh well… I guess that I'm going to go to college if I can't get sponsored." I think that sucks that that's their motivation. When I got into skating, there was no prospect of making any money or having any friends. It was just a release for me and it's so much fun.

SV: Well, it's like playing music. It depends on your motivation. What you want to get out of it. Some people are doing it as an outlet to express themselves creatively and some people are looking to get paid. They want to sign to a big label or get endorsements or all that and I think that's kind of cheesy. The whole fucking Warped tour. You've got the skating and the bad music and I want nothing to do with that shit.

Tom: Pop/punk and some of the more polished hardcore bands are definitely raking in the big dough and, I can't speak for anyone, but whenever I've been in a band, it's always just been for the fun of it.

Andrew: I think with skateboarding and with punk rock, more watered-down punk rock, it's getting more recognition. People are going to get what they want out of it. If they want to buy into it and get the sappy, watered-down version, then that's what they're going to do but there's always going to be people who are in it for the right reasons. Life will just kind of push you in that direction. If you want to meet real people, then you'll know real people.

Paul: Exactly. I mean, I got into punk rock through bands like Minor Threat and stuff like that but the first punk bands that I was hearing about was stuff like on Fat Wreck Chords and I wasn't satisfied with it, so I looked further. I had the desire to know more about it and, therefore, I went for something besides its surface value. And I think that kids who have the same interest are going to do that, regardless of what's handed to them. The same goes for skateboarding. There's going to be so many kids who are flash-in-the-pan with the skateboarding. So many kids will buy a skateboard and try and learn how to kick-flip or whatever their favorite trick is in Tony Hawk and not be able to do it and just stop skating. But, for some kids, that might be an outlet for them to learn about skateboarding and really get involved with it. Like I said, there's pros and cons for both.

Tom: I know kids who got into punk through skateboarding magazines, reading reviews. I don't skate but I just know people and I think that's kind of cool. That's kind of a crossover.

Paul: Yeah, when I was a kid, you'd subscribe to *Thrasher* and you'd get a free copy of Rancid or something and that was the open door. That's how you kind of got involved.

Andrew: The first skate videos I saw had Bad Brains and Suicidal and then I went out and bought those records. It makes perfect sense. It goes hand in hand for me…

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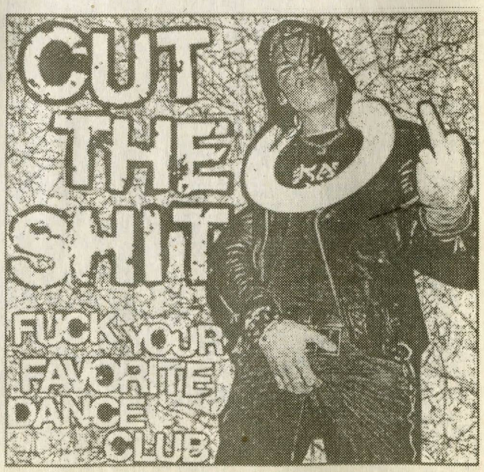

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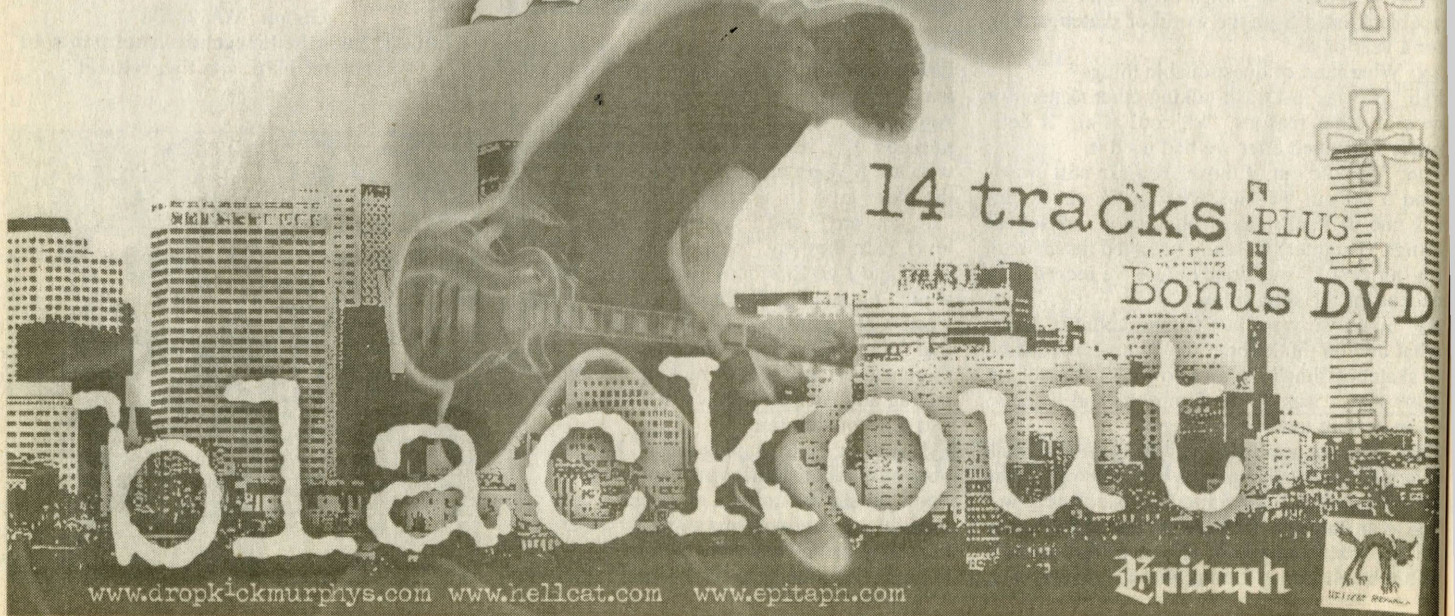

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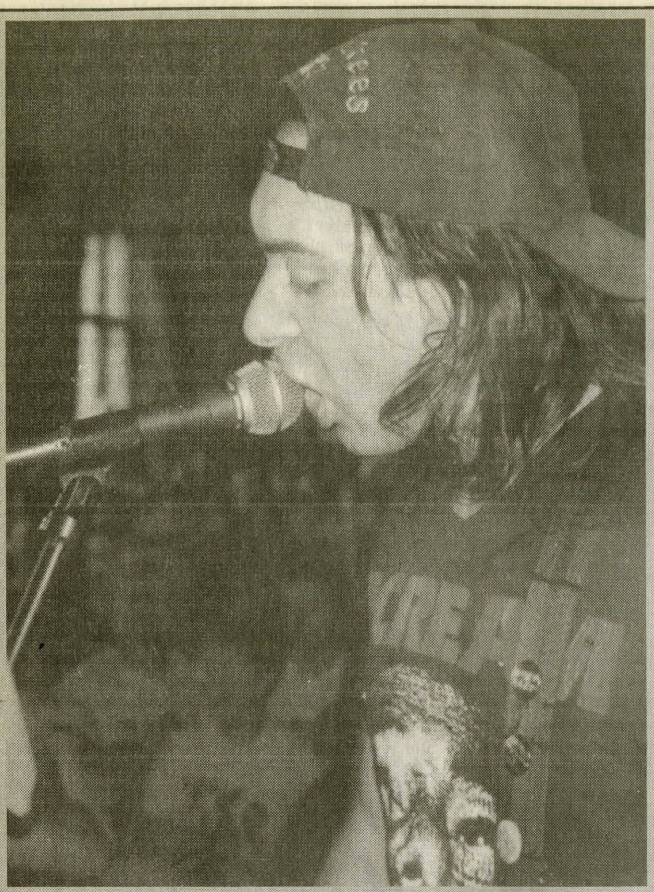
Epitaph

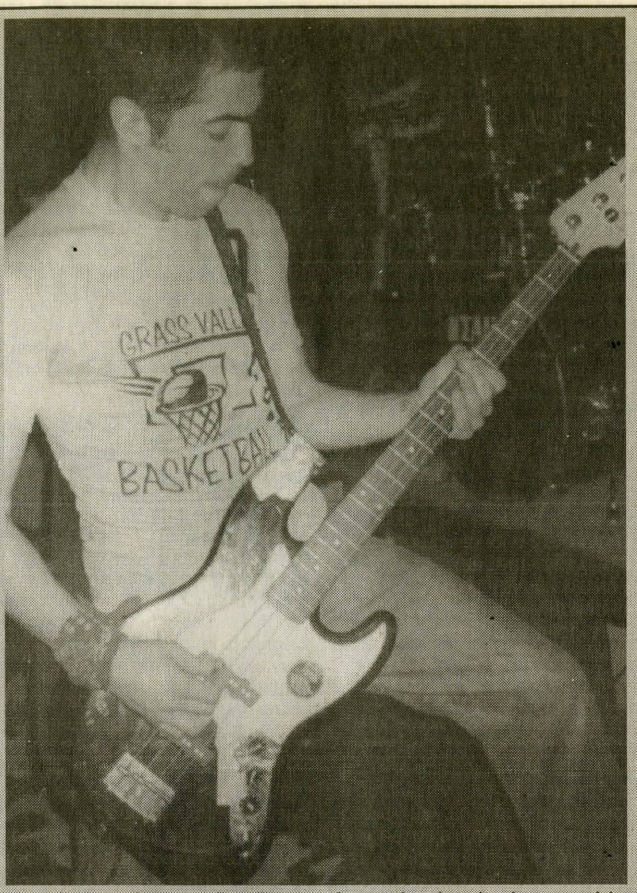
Vitamin X are four guys with diverse backgrounds playing some spirited hardcore punk. A straight-edge band, but without the finger-pointing, judgmental trappings of many bands playing that style. In fact, as you'll read, Vitamin X are in favor of drug legalization. Their lyrics also embrace a forward-thinking political ideology. Vitamin X are based in Amsterdam, although only Marc (guitar) is a Dutch native. Marko (vocals) originally comes from Serbia, Alex (bass) is from Russia and Paolo (drums) is Italian. They've done two full US tours, in 2001 and 2002 and plan to return in 2004. In the meantime, a Brazilian tour is in the works for this year. Marko is also the vocalist for an oi/street punk-style band, Heros and Zeros, who have released a 7" and have also recorded a full-length. As for Vitamin X, they have several 7" releases (due to come out on a compilation CD at some point) and two albums, "See Thru Their Lies" and "Down The Drain." This interview was conducted in the spring of 2002 (yeah, a long-ass time ago) on my back deck. An intense soccer game involving the members of Vitamin X, Def Choice and yours truly followed—Europe vs. the US and the Europeans kicked the Americans' asses, of course. I knew that would happen so I played for the European side, reclaiming my eastern European roots. Hey, you think I'd play for a losing team?

After transcribing this lengthy interview, I followed up with a few more questions that Marc answered via e-mail...



VITAMIN X





SV: Why don't you give me a history of the band. When did you start? And I know you've had some lineup changes.

Marc: We started at the end of '96 with me on drums, Marko on vocals and a guitarist, with three persons. Then we got a bass-player and a drummer and I switched to guitar. From that, it went really fast. After four months, we recorded a compilation song and we did a lot of shows and after that, we recorded our first 7" in late '97. From that lineup, only me and Marko are still in the band. Alex entered the band when?

Alex: February of '99.

Marc: But we already knew Alex for a long time. His band Soberesponse, we did a split demo.

Alex: Yeah, we were two bands from Amsterdam and good friends.

Marko: We were always hanging around together and going to shows and doing things together.

Alex: I'd known them since like their second or third practice.

Marko: We released two 7"s, "Straight Edge Crew," with that lineup, like Marc said already, "Once Upon A Time," with Marc playing guitar and bass.

Marc: At the same time!

SV: Ooh... what a talent!

Marko: And right after the second 7", we did the our European tour. We went to Sweden, Finland, Denmark and, then after that, our other guitarist, Eric, quit. Then, very quick after that, Alex joined the band and we started changing our sound.

SV: I was going to ask you about that, because you guys definitely had more of a youth crew sound and it's evolved into a faster, angrier hardcore sound.

Marko: Yeah... well, I don't know. Eric was a songwriter and he was really more into this kind of stuff. Me and Marc were always pushing him to go faster but our drummer at that time couldn't play really fast.

Marc: He'd never drummed before in his life. He started drumming when he was playing with us. But after that, he got better. He played on "See Thru Their Lies," the LP.

Marko: Believe it or not, at least 40% of the songs from "See Thru Their Lies" were written at the time that "Straight Edge Crew" was written. But he just couldn't play them and we were just waiting til the moment where we were actually ready to.

Marc: It was really hard to find good drummers because we wanted to have somebody who was straight-edge. We started out as a joke band. That's why the name is Vitamin X. But, after a few months, it got more serious. We kept the name but maybe it would have been better if we'd taken some other name. We always get shit for the name, but fuck that.

SV: Why do people give you shit about it?

Marc: Because they say it's the stupidest name.

Marko: It is stupid. It's the most ridiculous generic straight-edge name.

Marc: But we did that on purpose.

Marko: "Straight Edge Crew" was the first 7". How far can you go?

SV: One cliché after another.

Marc: It's cliché but we never had any hardline lyrics whatsoever. We also had political lyrics, also on the first 7".

SV: It seems like the politics have come out a lot more over the last few years, though.

Marc: Yes.

Marko: Definitely.

SV: You're a straight-edge band but in your lyrics you've also talked about how straight-edge is a place where there's not much tolerance. Where straight-edge people get really militant and that's obviously not what you guys are about.

Marko: No. I mean, I was always saying being straight-edge or drug free doesn't make anyone a better person. Straight-edge, in my opinion, is just a part of the punk movement and taking, also, messages, politics, attitude and everything. In my opinion, the separation between punk and straight-edge started in the late 80s. The whole idea behind Vitamin X from my side and from Marc's side was bring straight-edge and punk back, bring fun, some irony and politics together and make one thing. In the beginning, like I said, we played with a lot of straight-edge, youth crew bands.

Marc: We got a lot of shit back then because they said we were not straight-edge enough. We were sort of banned because we weren't straight-edge enough. I had long hair, our old guitarist had these big sideburns. He was looking like a hippie, Marko looked like a skinhead.

Alex: Marc's girlfriend smokes and drinks, so that was not straight edge enough.

Marko: We didn't really fit in this idea of straight-edge when we started, like in '96, '97. It was looking too punk for all these kids. We were playing with all these bands but somehow we didn't really fit in the scene, perfectly.

Marc: But the funny thing is that now, the same people that used to come up to me and say you guys are not straight-edge enough, they say why the hell are you still straight-edge? Grow up!

SV: You guys haven't changed... they have!

Marc: Exactly.

Alex: Well, we have also changed.

Marko: The idea is there. The same idea with which we started the band, from the beginning, nothing's changed about that. We've grown up, that's a fact, and all the things that have happened—tours, shows, learning from other bands, from experiences—but we're still the same, basically.

SV: Let's talk about your first US tour. Was that the first time you guys had been in the country at all?

Marc: It was the first time we'd toured in the US and, for me and the drummer, it was the first time in the US. Alex and Marko had been here already.

SV: Did you play with a lot of straight-edge bands in the US? If so, how did they react to you?

Marc: No, not really. We played with Life's Halt, Tear It Up, What Happens Next.

Marko: We did play with bands like Over My Dead Body.

Alex: I think the only place we played where there was really youth-crew, straight-edge stuff was Posi Numbers [in Pennsylvania]. I had the idea that we didn't completely fit in there.

Marc: It was a cool festival.

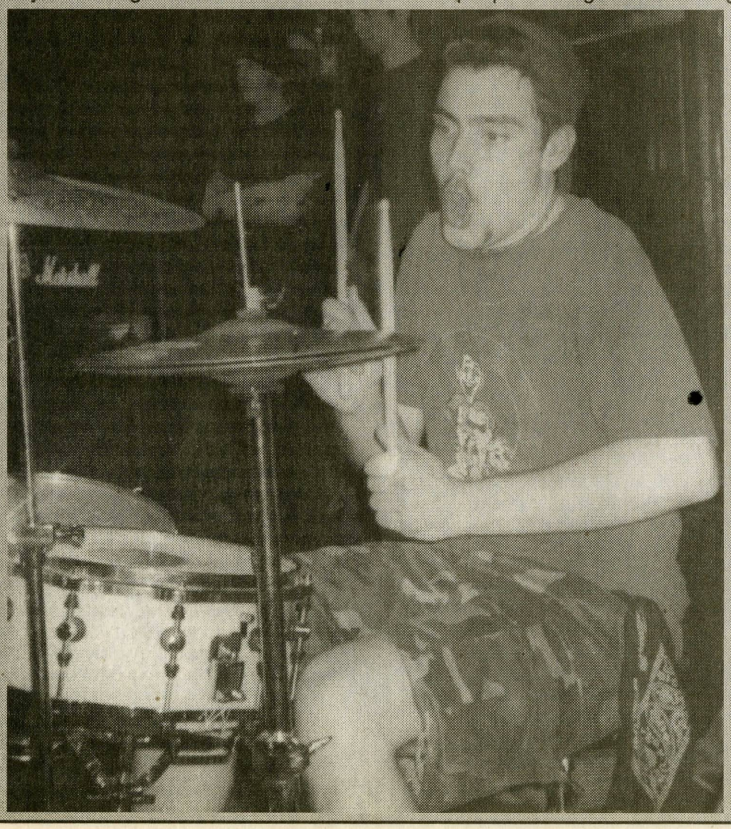
Alex: It was a cool fest, but I thought the Chicago Fest was way better than that. I liked the bands more. It was more hardcore punk.

Marc: The tour last year [2001], we didn't expect anything, so we looked at it sort of like a vacation. We were expecting to lose a lot of money. We don't know any European bands, except for DS-13, that went over to the States before. We only knew about Mainstrike and they only did like 10 shows and they lost a lot of money. Their tour was a disaster. So we thought, OK, we're just going to take a vacation there, we're going to lose money.

Marko: Have a good time.

Marc: Yeah... and play. But it turned

out the other way. We didn't make any money but we also didn't lose money.
Alex: And it was really lots of fun. We saw so many good bands, we played so many good shows, met so many nice people. It was one of the best experiences in my life.
SV: Marc, I remember you had a video camera with you on that tour and you were talking about doing a documentary of it. Did anything happen with that?
Marc: We were all involved in that.
Marko: We're working on that. I started working with it. I want to do it really DIY. So I bought all the computer programs and video cards and I'm trying to learn by myself how to do editing and I started but it's really long...
Marc: We have like 40 hours to edit.
Marko: And we're getting more because I still keep recording. I was so busy with writing songs for this new LP and arranging this tour and some other things that we could not make it now but it's going to happen somewhere in the future for sure.
Marc: It's going to be all the bands we played with.
Marko: Not only that. It's going to be a documentary about the worldwide hardcore punk scene and how it's connected and how it's all working and the different types of people you meet on the way.
Alex: It's also going to show the scene at that moment. We taped a lot of bands and we also did a lot of interviews.
Marko: Different experiences.
Marc: We took Life's Halt eating and stuff like that.
SV: Life's Halt eating? Wow, that's exciting!
Marc: That's going to be the main subject.
SV: Life's Halt eating is going to be the main subject? Well, that's definitely something different.
Marko: We wanted to do something original.
Marc: You're really going to want to watch how they're eating. Especially Ernie.
Marko: It's a really thrash style of eating. (laughs)
SV: Another thing that makes you different from other some straight-edge bands is I remember you said that you're straight-edge but also in favor of drug legalization.
Marc: We're from Amsterdam and everyone knows that drugs are pretty-much legalized there, especially soft drugs. I grew up with drugs being legal. I don't know if it's a well-known fact, but the number of drug addicts in the Netherlands is the lowest in the world. That's because drugs are legal there. Children, if they grow up with drugs being legal, they're not tempted or curious to find out what it's like. The second thing is that, in the Netherlands, you don't have pushers and dealers coming up to you to sell their stuff because you can get it in shops. So there's nobody coming up to you and selling it in schoolyards or in clubs.
Alex: The third thing is you have quality control because the coffee shops get control for how good their marijuana is. Here, in the streets, you can buy some junk and get sick and you can die. There, it almost doesn't happen because it's all controlled.
Marc: I mean, I'm not in favor of drugs...
SV: Right, but in this country you've got the so-called drug war which is a gigantic propaganda effort and pretty much an attempt to criminalize an entire group of people.
Marko: Right.
Alex: I think one of the most important reasons to be for the legalization of drugs is that the money they use on the war on drugs, what they're doing in Colombia now is just bombing half of Colombia, spraying all kinds of pesticides and people there get fucked over and don't eat. The only reason the US is doing it is because US corporations need to get to Colombia to broaden the market and be able to get stuff from there really cheap. And the money that is spent on drug wars we think should be spent on education.
Marc: I'm not in favor of using drugs. Personally, I don't want to use drugs but I'm totally in favor of drugs being legal.
SV: You're saying you don't think it should be a criminal offense.
Marc: No, not at all.
Alex: I'm in favor of everybody using whatever they want. I just don't want to use it.
Marko: In some countries, people are sitting in jail for years for having two or three grams of marijuana.
Alex: There are a bunch of insane laws. For example, what George Bush is trying to push through on abortion.
Marc: I heard that in the south, it is forbidden to give head. I mean, what kind of law is that?
SV: You touched on US business interests in Colombia and that kind of touches on globalization, which is another topic your lyrics touch on. I have a couple of questions about that. I've heard from overseas people I've spoken with that a lot of European countries are starting to imitate the United States in terms of their economic policies, going for more of a neo-liberal model than in the past. Is that the case in Holland?
Alex: I think that is true. I think it's been going on since the second World War. The economic system that we have in Holland isn't that much different from the States. There is still production for profit and not for people's needs. In that way, it's a very neo-liberal economy and I think it's been getting much worse. On the other side, we had Seattle in the States and Genoa in Italy. I was actually there and that was amazing to see that a lot of people who against that sort of thing can come together and let their views be heard by millions and millions of people.
SV: Yeah. There seems to be a very strong anti-globalization movement in Europe. In the US, I think it's catching on a bit but I think it's still a relatively small thing compared to overseas. At least that's my perception.
Alex: Mmm, I don't know. I think Seattle can be considered the start of this and that's why I think it might be, in some ways, bigger here. It's hard to say because, after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, it made things much harder.
SV: Yeah, and that PATRIOT act went through and they're starting to infiltrate and put more groups under surveillance now.
Alex: The thing is, some of the groups which you say are part of anti-globalization—actually, I think anti-globalization is the wrong name for it...
SV: Anti-corporate globalization.
Alex: That's a better name, I think.
SV: Yeah, and the media tries to say they're anti-globalization. Of course, the media tries to present the protesters as terrorists.
Alex: The same is happening in Europe, where you're really getting criminalized. Like they want to make a whole new European police force that's going to focus on that. Actually, a week before we left for this tour, there was a protest in Barcelona, which got together half a million people. That's probably one of the biggest protests since the Vietnam War [of course, there have been larger protests, worldwide, to oppose the possible US war Iraq since then—Al].
SV: Which got hardly any coverage in the mainstream US press but I heard about it in the alternative press.
Marc: Economically, I think you can compare the US and Europe and also Japan and other countries but, socially, you cannot compare them







at all. You can compare them at some points but not in a broader perspective. It's totally different.

SV: Well, socially, I think the US is more puritanical, much more socially conservative than Europe.

Marc: The Democratic party here—at least it's my opinion—would be considered and analyzed as right-wing. And the Democratic party here is left wing.

SV: That's what people say but, in reality, it hasn't been like that for a long time. Clinton got elected running on a much more right-leaning platform which, unfortunately, may be the only way a Democrat can get elected in this country. If a left-wing Democrat ran in this country, they'd probably have a hard time getting elected given the mood of people, especially after 9/11. It's gotten even worse.

Alex: Yeah. I think the US government has used 9/11 in a very smart way to…

SV: Put their agenda in action.

Alex: Exactly. What did Bush say? He was going to put another $300 billion extra into defense?

SV: I think it was $48 billion but it's still a lot of money.

Alex: Yeah. It's an insane amount of money. If Bush says he's there for people and helping people, how about children in the third world, who are dying and UN research says that you only need $40 billion to provide everyone in the world with food and shelter for a year. And Bush is going to put $48 billion to make bombs. He asked one of these researchers to make a plan for nuclear attacks on 7 countries? That's insane. A nuclear attack would mean complete destruction of the whole world.

SV: I don't even believe he got elected. I think that was bullshit. But, assuming for one second that he got elected, who paid to get him elected? The defense industry and the oil industry.

Alex: Exactly. The people he has in his [cabinet]. If you look at the list, they're all corporate. Exxon and Shell.

SV: Enron! I mean, the Democrats are in their pockets, too, but the Republicans are more blatant about it. Marko, last night you said some stuff against the war [in Afghanistan] during the show and you also told me that you're a little bit nervous about being too outspoken about saying stuff on this tour. Why don't you talk about that.

Marko: Maybe because I have a little bit of a big mouth (laughter)

Marc: Tell him the story about the thrift store.

Marko: We were in a thrift store three or four days ago and there was this old woman, she came to me and she said to me, "I remember you. You were my worst nightmare," and I was, like, "probably. I'm a terrorist" and she starts walking behind me and going, "Yeah, you're a terrorist."

SV: She said you were a terrorist?

? (one of the non-band members): She said he was in her nightmare.

SV: She just walks up to you and says you're in her nightmares?

Marko: Yeah, and I said, "I'm terrorizing you, probably. I'm a terrorist. I'm certain to destroy Jesus Christ," because I saw this big cross. She came up to me like three times and said, "you're not going to destroy Jesus Christ. You tried once but you didn't succeed." And then she asked "do you have a green card" and I said, "yeah, I have a red card, actually." Then Anton came up to me right away because maybe she was going to call the police.

Marc: Anton told him "get out of here, now."

Marko: So I just ran out. I was so confused because, in Europe, something like this, we'd laugh about it.

SV: Yeah, but right now…

Marko: So I ran out of this place. I went right through this American flag and I had this bad feeling.

SV: Where was this?

?: Binghamton.

Marko: I mean, it's very obvious what I think about September. I come from a country being bombed by NATO. I come from Serbia, originally. I know what's going on in the world. First of all, what happened on the 11th of September, it's a reaction on everything that the American government ever did and are doing in the world.

SV: That doesn't mean you condone it, but you have to put it in perspective.

Marko: Exactly. But what the American government is doing now is to try to show that somebody has something really against the American people. It's not that.

SV: "Why do they hate us?"

Marko: Exactly. Somebody hates the American government because they're pushing their nose in every business, in every country in this world. If bin Laden did it or his organization. It's not proven. All these so-called video tapes that they're finding in the destroyed buildings, it all proves.. I can make this in a video.

SV: It's just giving them an excuse to go there and bomb the fuck out of whoever they want.

Marko: Yeah, exactly.

Marc: I don't agree with this. I know for sure that bin Laden did this.

Marko: OK, whatever, it doesn't matter who did it.

Marc: I think he did it.

Alex: That's exactly what Bush wants you to think. I think the point is not who did it, but why did it happen?

Marko: That happened as a reaction.

Alex: I think we have to say it's a completely wrong thing to do. Look at the anti-globalization movement. I would call it an anti-capitalist movement. It was really getting bigger, getting on a roll and the attacks on the 11th of September really set us way back.

SV: A lot of people who were involved in those movements are now afraid to be involved. With all the extreme patriotism.

Marko: Yeah, the government's now using that. The fact is that what happened on September 11th, it doesn't matter who did it. It's a reaction to something that the US has been doing for years.

Alex: It doesn't have to bomb the poorest country in the world. It's not going make people like the United States. It's not going to stop terrorists. It's only going to make more terrorists. They breed on desperation. They don't breed on hope. So if you bomb a country and somebody comes up to you and says I'm against the country that is bombing you, it is very logical that you say I'm also against the country because they're bombing my house. I'm not going to be supporting people who are bombing my house. The bombing of Afghanistan is completely wrong.

Marko: Any of this bombing campaign, it's all bullshit.

Alex: Iraq was bombed because of oil and Afghanistan is most surely bombed [because of that]. There was a really good documentary I saw called "9.11" from the New York Indy Media Center. It's really good. It shows a lot of interviews and a lot of economists who were actually telling them how it works. How you have the Caspian Sea and the oil around that and the pipelines are supposed to go through Afghanistan.

Marko: You know where else it's supposed to go? Through Serbia. And that's exactly all the countries who have been involved in all these conflicts and been bombed and destroyed in like the last 11 years.

Alex: I mean, that's pretty much what the world economy runs on. Oil.

SV: "Verbal Abuse" talks about the tolerance of racist and sexist jokes in the punk scene. At times, there does seem to be an almost anti-PC backlash. I hate that term PC, but you know what I'm talking about. Is that type of stuff tolerated in Europe, at all? Does it happen—people make stupid jokes and then go, "Oh, I'm just kidding."

Marko: Yeah. It's definitely happening. It was especially about the so-called straight-edge, youth crew kind of bands. What I mentioned yesterday at the show. Bands put out any messages where they're only focused on their own little stories about unity and pride and things like that. Songs about who stabbed who in the back. And how this crew is stronger than that crew. Things like that. All this macho attitude. It brought on all this homophobic and bad sexist attitude in the scene. On the other side, you also have, in Europe at least, this extreme PC. What we're trying to find is not even a balance but just be human. You don't need to belong to any extreme left wing organization or extreme anarchist organization.

SV: Common sense!

Marko: Exactly. I mean, everybody is supposed to be equal in this society, any society and everybody has the right to choose their own sexuality.

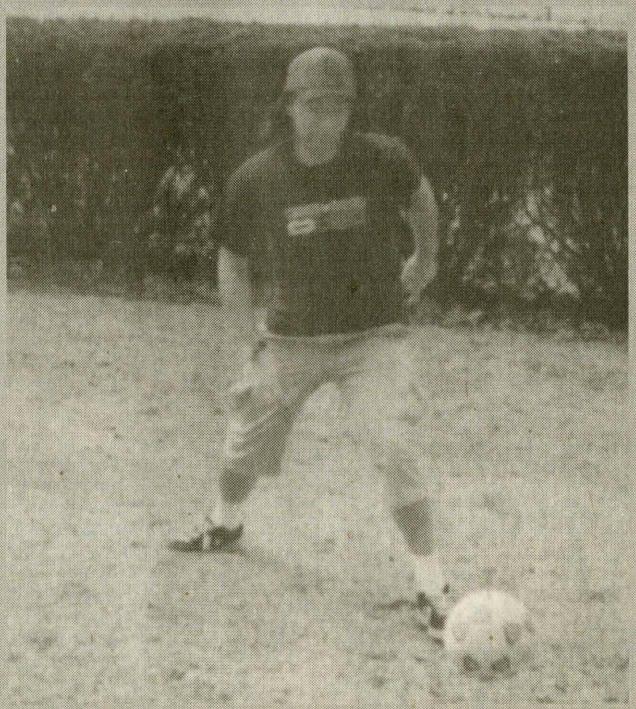
Marc: But yesterday, at the show, you had a lot of girls up front and that was really cool.

SV: And that doesn't always happen a lot in Boston, either.

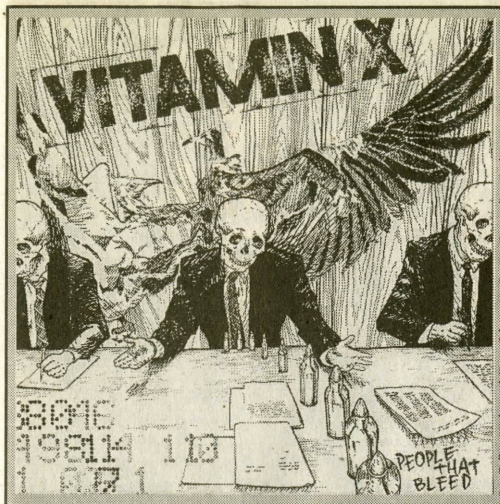
Alex: I heard this thing about Moshtrogen. We have a lot of respect for that. Somebody should have started it a way [before].

SV: Creating a safe space for women to be involved as much as the men and that doesn't happen enough, in hardcore.

Alex: Also, in Europe, the situation



Marc demonstrates his soccer prowess!



with girls and women in the hardcore scene is pretty bad. There aren't so many of them.

Marc: And if there are, these macho guys just push themselves up front.

Marko: These girls were tough. They were tougher than most of the guys!

Marc: They pushed most of the guys away and it was really cool.

SV: So let's talk about some of the ideas you're trying to put across on the newest album ["Down The Drain"]

Marko: One of the lyrics that I was mentioning yesterday was, for example, about the refugee problem in the world. I came in '93 from Serbia as a refugee. Alex came in '94 from Russia and people don't realize... especially, nowadays, it's very popular to talk against refugees, even in Holland, which is a very liberal and open country. People don't realize that people are escaping not only because of economic situations and, even if it is, so what? People escape because of war situation, poverty and many other reasons and they've been thrown in asylum camps and they're waiting for years and years. Sometimes, they're waiting for 5 or 6 years and they've been sent back to their own countries. People just don't realize the situation—they're just sitting and waiting. You can't go out from the country, you can't go visit anybody in your old country.

Alex: You have to be at your place everyday to get a stamp on your card.

Marko: And people are freaking out from this kind of thing. If you're calling this a kind of humanitarian help for all these refugees, it's bullshit. 'Cause I know so many people who just freak, who go crazy.

Marc: There are a lot of suicides.

Alex: I stayed for one and a half years in a refugee camp. I was a kid. I was only 13 years old. I could amuse myself with doing nothing, just going outside and playing with a ball. My parents, I'm sure they've got some bad problems in their head now. The thing is people always say stuff against refugees. One part is racism. The other part is they just don't get it. People don't run away from the country because they want to. You don't leave all your family and your friends and your whole environment where you grew up in to go to some other country to live off that country's money. That's what they say now in Holland, is that all the refugees are coming here trying to steal our money.

SV: It's the same in the US. There's a tremendous amount of prejudice against immigrants.

Alex: Exactly. Even if they are doing that, the western countries are so rich because, during colonialization, all the wealth was in the third world and it got shipped over here. We had slavery. Lots of people died because of that. That's why the western world is rich.

Marko: The western world is still exploiting third world countries. That's why they're so rich.

Alex: So you can't expect people in third world countries to say it's OK, just exploit us.

Marko: Bring us more Nike factories that we're going to work in.

Alex: Where we'll work for 50 cents a day and it's OK. Those people have brains as well and they're going to come and get it and I think it's their right to come and get it because it's there. They produced the wealth for the western world.

Marko: And the western brain. A lot of the people don't understand that because the media represented it another way. If they could just think, a little bit. For example, Holland, the history, the colonists and everything. It's very obvious what's going on. How Holland, for example, had the biggest production of diamonds.

Marc: I will say something else about the lyrics on the new album. We started writing more political lyrics on "See Thru Their Lies" and "People That Bleed" also had a lot of political lyrics but now, on the new album, there's more of a balance between political and, also, some personal and social lyrics. These are personal lyrics that deal with how to live in a society where you cannot escape the society you live in. So the society expects you to work, go to school, have a car, have a wife, and how can you escape this situation? There's almost no escaping it. There are four or five songs dealing with that subject.

Marko: These is one of those frustrations which you get when you realize you're getting older.

SV: People getting conditioned to believe that's the way they're supposed to live their lives.

Marko: Yeah, exactly. And you're feeling everyday, in your daily life, this pressure.

Marc: I really like playing music and touring and stuff but it's almost impossible to do it, because you have to work. This situation is something that really bothers me.

SV: I mean, you do have to survive in this life.

Marc: You have to survive so you have to go with the system.

Marko: Compromise yourself with the system.

SV: It's very tough to balance your ideals with the reality of life, sometimes.

Marc: Some people, they commit suicide, some people, they just adjust. They drop out totally from hardcore punk, they didn't listen to it, at all, anymore. I don't know. I mean, in Europe, there are some older people who are still into it.

SV: You've got a great band from your country who are older guys... Seein' Red. I get the impression they're still really inspired by it.

Marc: Yeah, they are. Sure. I mean, I think we're not going to break up that soon.

Marko: Yeah, we want to do "How We Rock" (laughter)

SV: Break up before you do that! We don't need Vitamin X, the metal years.

Marc: We're not going to do "How We Rock" but we're going to go on progressing. People are accusing us of jumping on this thrash bandwagon. We were already playing this thrash style in '99.

Alex: If you look at the second single, there's a picture with Marc and the other bassist wearing bandanas.

Marc: I'm wearing a DRI shirt and a bandana and that was in '98.

SV: Cred! (everyone gives a round of applause)

Marc: Now we have this drummer from Italy who's growing this mustache. We told him he could only be with us if he looks like a thrash guy.

SV: He's wearing a Thrasher sweatshirt today, so he's all set.

Marc: He's looking like '85, Attitude Adjustment thrash...



*****

AND A FEW MORE QUESTIONS:

SV: What have you guys been doing for the last year?

Marc: Writing new songs, partying, playing shows, arranging the Brazilian tour, working, studying, etc. The US tour—which was great by the way—lasted 47 shows, after that we took some time off, occasionally playing some shows. Then in October 2002 we did England/Ireland/Scotland-tour, a Scandanavian tour in November (played at DS-13/ETA's last show), and a European tour in december. Our last LP "Down The Drain" is doing really well. Probably because of that we're getting more and more requests for interviews, t-shirts and other stuff which is also taking a lot of our time. But ofcourse we're really happy with that!!

SV: I imagine you're really excited about going to Brazil.

Marc: We're thrilled! I'm sure it will be a great experience. We're also planning to come back to the States, probably March/April 2004. And we'll have a new release out by then..So watch out for that. And before I forget:I don't think I ever told you how we got in contact with Boka (from Ratos de Porao) who is organizing our Brazil tour. Well, like one year ago we got an email from him. He said he heard us on the Suburban Voice comp ("Political Prisoners"). He had never heard of us before! Since then the ball started rolling, hé put out our CD, and now we're going to Brazil..So we also have to thank you!

VITAMIN X
Marko c/o VX, Rustenburgerstraat 302 (1)
1073 GM Amsterdam
NETHERLANDS
E-mail: xvitaminx@yahoo.com
Website: www.geocities.com/vitaminxhc





BALANCE OF TERROR

The first interview I did for this issue, way back in December of 2001. And, since then, Balance of Terror have broken up, after releasing one of the best albums of 2002, "A Better Tomorrow." But I'm going to run it, anyway, because Balance of Terror were one of my favorite bands in recent years and, while they were just starting to get a bit more notice before their demise, I still feel they're underrated. They were also a band with a lot to say and I think that comes across well, in this interview. A four-piece powerhouse based in NYC, although three of the members come from different states and, since their demise, one member has moved to Austin and one to Boston.

In addition to the LP (on the Paralogy label), Balance of Terror also released a 7" and split with Straight To Hell—both on Partners In Crime and they also appeared on the last *Suburban Voice* CD comp and "Decide On Change" compilation LP on Mountain. This interview was done just a few months after the 9/11 terror attacks, so those events were still fresh-in-mind and it was interesting to get a perspective from a band who lived in close proximity to those events.

Chris and Jeff are also the people behind the Kill From The Heart website, which is grown tremendously since we did this interview—a resource/library that documents punk and hardcore bands from the US and around the Globe. It's packed with band bios, discographies, photos, etc, a constantly-expanding work in progress. Check it out at http://homepages.nyu.edu/~cch223/mainpage.html.

The interview was conducted on the campus of Tufts University and all four members—Stan (guitar/vocals), Chris (guitar), Bryan (bass) and Jeff (drums/vocals) were present...

SV: Why don't you give me a brief history of the band. I know you had a singer named Ned for awhile.

Jeff: We started playing in '99 and we had all put up flyers met each other that way and we got a few different bass-players. Never permanent and tried out two different singers.

Chris: Ned was in the band in early 2000 and we played our first five shows with him and he left the band at the end of the summer of 2000 and Stan and Jeff took over the vocals.

SV: I think you'd told me that most of you are from other places besides NY, aren't you?

Bryan: I'm the one native.

Stan: I'm from Memphis.

Jeff: We were all in New York for various reasons, looking to start a band. I was there for school and Chris was there for school so we just ended up putting up flyers and finding each other over a long spread of time. Searching for people that wanted to play hardcore in New York, which was harder than I thought it was going to be.

SV: Yeah, it doesn't seem as though there are a lot of DIY-style hardcore bands from New York. I was talking about this with someone and they mentioned you guys and they couldn't really think of anything else.

Jeff: It's a hard place to be in a band because space is just so expensive and so rare in the city. I mean, for the first two years, we really went along at a snails pace just practicing and paying by the hour. Also, just the fact that ABC No-Rio is one of the only places to do DIY shows in New York and it's under so much stress being in such a gentrified area, so I think it's just really hard for people to get things together there.

SV: So that area is getting gentrified? I haven't been down there for a few years.

Jeff: Yeah. Everything is different.

SV: Everything has changed? Even in just two years?

Jeff: Yeah. Well, I started going there four or five years ago and almost everything on the block is different now.

SV: Where are you from originally, Jeff?

Jeff: I'm originally from New Jersey and I went to a prep school in Massachusetts.

SV: Where did you go?



Jeff: (laughs) Do I have to say this on record? It was the Groton School. A small conservative boarding school in the middle of fucking nowhere and I was the punk there and I was in a band that played once or twice in Boston and then when I went to college in New York, I wanted to start something more serious because I figured I'd find more like-minded people.

SV: What was the name of your old band?

Jeff: Quaranteen. Spelled T-E-E-N. We kind of knew we had a short life expectancy.

SV: Where did you play?

Jeff: We played at the Middle East once with Stratford Mercenaries and we played once in Mission Hill.

SV: How about you, Chris?

Chris: I grew up outside of Boston. In Lincoln. I went to high school in Concord and I just came to New York about three or four years ago, finishing up school, there. I went to the Lincoln public schools until 8th grade and I went to Concord Academy for high school.

SV: Concord Academy actually has kind of a reputation for being a punk rock school from years back. Gerard Cosloy from Matador Records went to school there. So you were saying ABC has been under a lot of pressure.

Chris: It's just the whole city is so packed together. It's like anything you do, like trying to play a show, you're going to get trouble from the neighbors or something like that so it's hard to find spaces to practice and spaces to get together for shows.

SV: OK, next question. Have your viewpoints changed at all since 9/11? I wanted to get your thoughts on that and didn't one of you guys tell me you actually saw it happen? What went through your mind?

Bryan: Yeah. I don't even know. Pretty scary thing but, no, I don't think my viewpoints have changed very much since that. I mean, it's a tragedy that happened and shouldn't have happened.

Chris: I was biking to work across the Williamsburg Bridge and I saw the second plane hit the tower. I saw the smoke coming out. I couldn't really figure out what it was. I thought it was a fire or something. I looked up and it was the hugest fireball I've ever seen. Actually, I was wondering if it was a terrorist attack when I saw the smoke and then when I saw the second explosion, I thought that's what it must have been. And there were people doing construction on the bridge and as soon as the second plane hit, I saw them yelling to one another, 'get off the bridge, get off the bridge.' The thought went through my mind that there was a bomb on the bridge. So I just biked as fast as I could to get off the bridge. I can't really describe it. It was really surreal. I saw it but I couldn't really believe that it was happening.

SV: That's a term that a lot of people were using, including myself. It's such a surreal quality. It's impossible to comprehend it all at once.

Jeff: Yeah, I mean I actually slept through the whole thing. I woke up and went to the roof of my building after someone called and woke me up and it was already gone. For the next few weeks, I don't think anything made any sense, in any kind of context, at least for me. I felt like I was talking about it all the time and talking about it again and again and not getting any closer to having a grasp on it. It was only after like a month had passed that I feel like I can fit it into any kind of context. I did question everything that I've claimed to hold true for so long and I think, only now that the whole city is coming back to normal or at least outside of that immediate area that I can really put things in perspective and try and sort out what really is going on.

SV: What are things like in the city, now, a few months afterwards?

Stan: Things are pretty much back to normal, unfortunately.

SV: Everyone's being rotten to each other again? (laughter)

Stan: Yeah. I mean, they're telling you to go shopping and do these things and that's the best way to keep America going and it's just pretty funny.

Jeff: We've got another Republican mayor coming up [Michael Bloomberg]

SV: Yeah, that's weird. That guy pretty much bought the mayoralty. And wasn't there a schism between the two democrats, Green and Ferrer? There was a pretty nasty campaign between those two?

Jeff: Yeah. Essentially, I think a lot of Bloomberg's victory came not just from the fact that he spent more money on his campaign than any other mayoral candidate has ever spent but also the fact that a lot of Democrats were totally waging an all out war on Green as the candidate and it just really split the party enough that he could just sort of slide in there. Along with [the fact that] Giuliani's become our national hero and everything has just become bizarre. In a way, the city is more scary now because people seem so willing to forget everything that happened during Giuliani's reign.

Stan: He really didn't do anything that any normal person would do in that situation. I mean, he's the mayor. He has to do these things. Granted, he was in this but any person would have done that. It doesn't make him a hero to me.

SV: I mean, from a PR standpoint, he handled it very well. A hell of a lot better than Bush, I think.

Jeff: That's one thing I kept saying as I was watching the news which, of course, everyone was doing constantly for awhile, was that Bush makes Giuliani look like a genius. He was at least somebody that could speak coherently and not pause every five seconds. He was just going through what anyone would do in that situation. He was crying at his friends' funerals and trying to do his job and I don't think that should make up for the way he's done his job in the past. But because people are so desperate for some kind of stability, now, all of a sudden he's emerged as something completely different that the way he was being seen before that. It's sad because I think it definitely helped us get another four years of Republicans in the mayor's office.

SV: All the restrictive policies on civil liberties, which Giuliani really did. It's just so interesting to hear people willing to cede their civil liberties because "we're at war!" People are willing to shred the Constitution and the people in power are more than willing to do that to achieve their ends.

Jeff: And even just on the level of talking about having a DIY scene or any kind of arts community in New York, the fact that Giuliani really just pushes for this massive real estate boom and huge commercial development all through the Lower East Side and anywhere, basically, that he can get away with it. I mean, that's one of the reasons that ABC is under so much pressure and just any kind of independent, passionate art that's going on in that whole area.

SV: Yeah, I mean there was that whole controversy with the museum in Brooklyn, with the elephant dung on some Catholic iconography or whatever it was?

Jeff: Yeah, it was the madonna with the elephant dung.

Stan: All of his artwork used dung, it wasn't just that specific one.

SV: The nightlife in New York has been under siege. How many clubs have been shut down? Like Coney Island High.

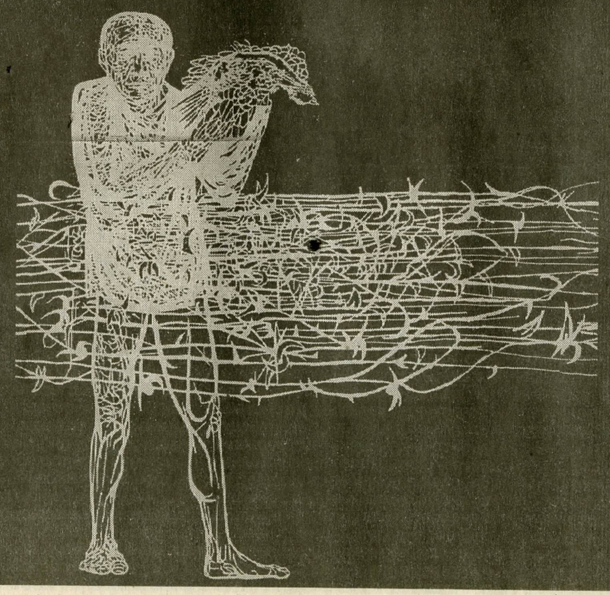
Bryan: The laws from the 20s that he brought back.

SV: It's interesting in the punk or hardcore communities, you were saying people assess where they stand or whatever and you even hear people you thought were progressive-minded starting to fly the flag, saying we've got to back the troops, all that shit.

Stan: It's really strange. People are just going 180 about what they've been saying for years. I don't understand that. One thing happens and they just completely change how they feel about everything.

SV: You have to wonder if they ever believed it that strongly, to begin with.

Stan: Yeah.



Chris: Well, I think right when it happened, about 60% of Americans supported the war and maybe about 2 or 3 weeks after a lot of the stuff on TV and everybody talking about it, it switched to about 90%. You don't see any alternative viewpoint besides pro-war.

SV: No, not in the mainstream press. You're right.

Chris: I mean, I think a lot of it is not due to what happened. It's due to...

Bryan: ...propaganda.

Stan: I think people within our scene need to be a bit more educated and think about things and not accept... I mean, supposedly we look past the mainstream propaganda but I don't see everyone doing that.

Jeff: And especially something like that, where you just want to know what's going on. I mean, I was sitting there a few miles away from it watching TV to find out what was going on. They had the whole area sealed off when I went to the city. It was weird. It was just quiet and you had to show ID to get into that area.

Stan: There's a whole media blackout. The whole censorship thing that's in effect right now. They're only told little bits of what they want us to do. Which is common but I think it's even moreso right now.

SV: During the Gulf War is where they really started to manage the information more.

Jeff: I think they realized they really messed up the way they handled covering Vietnam and I think that the way the TV coverage went in Vietnam helped the anti-war movement and that didn't go unnoticed by the people that control the media and I think, since the Gulf War, it's been a really tight operation. It's been a non-stop propaganda machine. The things that you see that are most intelligent on TV speaking about the war tend to be things that are comedy shows or something where they can let something slip by because it's some kind of joke or some kind of celebrity.

SV: But even there they get in trouble sometimes.

Jeff: Right. Even something like "Politically Incorrect." They can't even have any kind of dissenting opinion.

Stan: Pretty much every large corporation has a hand in profiting from the war. At least through production.

SV: Right. I mean, who owns the networks? NBC are owned by General Electric, who are weapons manufacturers.

Stan: Right. So I can really understand how someone who has been so adamantly anti-war can sort of fall into this trap. I think everyone feels you have to do something. I mean, you're walking through your city and you're smelling this horrible smell. It's really horrifying and you think that something must be done and then you look around for what your options are and you're not being presented with any options. There's just one kind of option and that's retribution through military action and the government is being offered as this one thing you can turn to for an answer and it's really easy to do it without even realizing you're doing it because it's so completely blanket.

SV: I'd heard you guys were having difficulty getting your mail delivered because of your name?

Stan: Yeah. I woke up one morning to hear the mail lady talking about terrorism to another person and she had gotten something addressed to us from Connecticut and we still don't know who it was because it said 'terror' on it and she sent it back. Which just makes really scared to think that's the mentality of people. So I got up and chased her down the street and I was, like, "what was it?" She's, like, "it was a package made out to Balance of Terror and I'm not going to be delivering anything I don't know what it is. It might be anthrax or whatever" and I explained to her it was a band and she said she sent it back, she didn't know where it came from. So we still don't know what it was.

SV: I suppose it gives you an inkling

of what Anthrax are going through right now.

Stan: Yeah, I heard they've got people writing on their website complaining about their name and they've had that name for 20 years.

Jeff: That's the other side of the sensationalism. Not only do people accept what's going on but they crave a piece of the drama for themselves. It's not even just in New York but people are looking for some angle of how this relates to their lives and they're kind of overreacting in really stupid ways. That's just one example. I mean, it's kind of a minor example. But obviously the hate crimes are more ridiculous and horrible examples of how people are taking this and exploiting it as a way to make their lives seem more exciting.

from the Communist era and from earlier days and it sort of had a cohesiveness to it that we liked.

SV: There's a song on there called "1908." Is there any significance to that date, at all?

Stan: Yeah. Most of my family was in the textile industry and that was the year the factory was built that four generations of my family worked at. The larger point, though, is the line on the backs of the working poor. How everything is carried by them or by us in the world, in society.

SV: I find it interesting you picked a date from the early 20th century because you probably draw some parallels to what's going on in the early 21st century in terms of how workers are totally getting fucked over.

Jeff: And there's a new song we're

sumption rather than production, I think. That's my theory for the evening. (laughs)

SV: Where did the quote on the insert come from? "The society that abolishes every adventure makes its own abolition the only possible adventure."

Jeff: That's from the Situationists in France. It's been recycled by many different people in groups over the years and I think it's just something that's always relevant to anyone who's struggling for change in a society where, to be heard on a large scale, you have to somehow pad the pockets or back up the prevailing ideology of the people in power. As long as anything fun that we can do is going against the rules, then everything fun we can do is a way of trying to overthrow an oppressive system.

major label [not anymore!], they're just talking down to people, essentially. But what their records do is serve as advertisements for a company. It's a way of making money for a corporation and, no matter what they may say about spreading messages through their concerts, essentially they're advertising records when they play and I like to think that DIY, people see it and they see something that they can do and that's a way of making messages accessible to people. Like the Big Boys said, "Now, go start your own band." That's pretty much the idea of punk to me.

Stan: And as far as looking different or acting different and crazy, kids that listen to Slipknot or whatever, they think they're dressing different and they feel like they're different from so-





SV: Who drew the art on the 7"?

Jeff: Where did we steal it from?

SV: Alright, where did you steal it from?

Jeff: I stole that art and then adapted it from a book of anarchist art. I believe it was a Russian cartoonist that drew a picture. It's of a journalist in Russia that was killed, I believe, by a czarist regime. It's a book that you can't check out of the library so I don't really remember exactly the whole context of it but, basically, it was someone who had been murdered to be silenced by the state for speaking out on anarchist causes and we just thought it was a gripping image and so we took it and kind of played with it and used it for the cover. And, also, some of the art from inside is from Russian propaganda cartoons, both

working on that sort of takes that from the Industrial Revolution issues of alienation of labor and things getting to the point where classes are so stratified to where it's getting to be, now. Classes are stratified over continents. We have whole classes of people that live in third world countries that are making products for us that basically work in prisons and, even in this country, the whole system of outsourcing labor and temp labor. It's just the way of alienating you from your work to such an extreme level that you're basically just a total automaton. People say things have changed since the Industrial Revolution, capitalism is different but it's really kind of the same process. It's just getting even more and more blown out of proportion and now it's just more focused on con-

SV: You can even carry it down to DIY aesthetics. Here's a new question that comes into play. During your rant or whatever the string was broken (during their set), talking about DIY ethics and how the most "political" band on MTV isn't doing anything to change things. What did you say, exactly?

Jeff: My sort of spiel with that is, for me, DIY is the most important factor of being a punk because it's the thing that really speaks to people the loudest. You can say anything you want, you can dress anyway you want and you play music as radical or crazy as you want but if you're not doing it in a way that's accessible to people, then you're not really giving them anything to work with. Rage Against The Machine, who are obviously the biggest political/popular band who are on a

ciety or outcasts but it's just wasted energy because that's all they're ever know, unless they look further. And I'm not saying punk is the definite answer and you have to look further than punk, too, but it's a good stepping stone. But those kids will say, "yeah, I remember when I went to concerts and I had red hair, but now I have this job and that was then." They need to be educated and maybe go further than that.

SV: You can also get people who said, "I went to see Kill The Man or I went to see From Ashes Rise, but that was in my punk rock days."

Stan: Right. It's time to go to work. You know.. whatever.

Jeff: I remember reading something in a zine where someone wrote, as a criticism of punk, that people can stay

engaged in MTV and mainstream culture for their whole lives while most people that are still in punk when they're older are just people that do zines or bands and, for me, that's the proof of why punk is better. 'Cause unless you're creating, unless you're communicating with people, then you can't really sustain that involvement and that's a community that really, I think, thrives on real interaction with people rather than just, "oh, I'm a consumer. I can easily be a consumer my whole life."

SV: That's the ideal, anyway, and that's what I hope people take away from it, as well. But let's face it—even at DIY punk or hardcore shows, there's still plenty of consumption, consuming. People bringing distros and records and, sometimes, people



are more interested in looking through the records than watching the bands. They just want to consume. They want to buy their limited-editions or whatever.

Stan: They want to buy t-shirts and not records, also.

SV: They want to buy that stuff instead of zines!! (laughter)

Jeff: Obviously, I think I'm talking about an ideal and it's something that I believe in and it's something that's going to be compromised at every angle and that's why I say DIY because I think, as soon as you start getting into putting out collectible records and playing only the shows where there's going to be a cool band or going only to the shows where there's going to be a cool band, you're straying from what the definition of what DIY is to me. In that sense, it is like a true ideal.

SV: Tell me about the Kill From The Heart website. How you guys got the idea to do that and I kind of had a related question to that. I did write this question before I looked at the site a little more today but it says how you're not doing this site to idolize the past but do you think people tend to romanticize the past too much?

Jeff: First of all, it's good to say it's Chris and I, and it's mostly been Chris who's been putting a lot of work into the site and it's not a band operation and I don't think everyone here feels the same way about using the internet as a tool. But, as far as I'm concerned, it's a way of stopping people from having to go to eBay to pay $30 to read an interview with a band they like from 1982. Which probably isn't going to teach them a whole lot but it's just kind of nice to be able to read. So I saw it as a way of, even if it's not the perfect medium for punk, that it's at least a way of freeing up some information from the fucking collector mentality that really is a threat. I think the biggest threat to DIY is the notion of turning it into some kind of ultra-rare commodity. So that's where the motivation for the website comes from for me.

SV: I think it's a great thing. I'm totally flattered you guys have put some of my work up there [from SV] because that's always been the idea. I want people to be able to get this information. I don't care how it gets out there. I think it's totally cool. But you said that some people in the band don't like that. [looking at Stan] Oh, yeah, that's right. You've played in all those bands who hate technology. You're a bunch of fucking luddites! (laughter)

Stan: I'll take that as a compliment. I'll just say that I think the medium is the message. If you're going to use computers at all, then that's it for me. You have to think about the different uses of technology and whatever little things we do with it, it serves a grander scale to the use of computers [??-tape was a bit garbled here—but Stan said it was 'too much to get into']

Chris: I think there's an upside and a downside to it. I started putting it on the web rather than doing it in a zine just because it would have access to more people and you could put a much larger amount of information on there and it would be there for awhile rather than getting it out to a few hundred or a few thousand people. I think there's a downside to it. I sometimes lament the amount of time I that I spent just sitting in front of the screen working on it. I mean, I do get enjoyment from it but sometimes I feel I should be getting outside more, listening to records.

SV: I know the feeling!

Jeff: I mean, I don't think it's going to change the world or it's going to be the most meaningful thing either of us do in our lives. I think it's more of an archive as opposed to a zine, which I think is more of a living active thing. I don't see the internet as a tool for real vital communication but it is a tool for moving information and my side of it is, while I distrust technology and I definitely recognize the context in which technology is created, I've also seen technology used in a way that really reaches people faster than they could ever be reached without it.

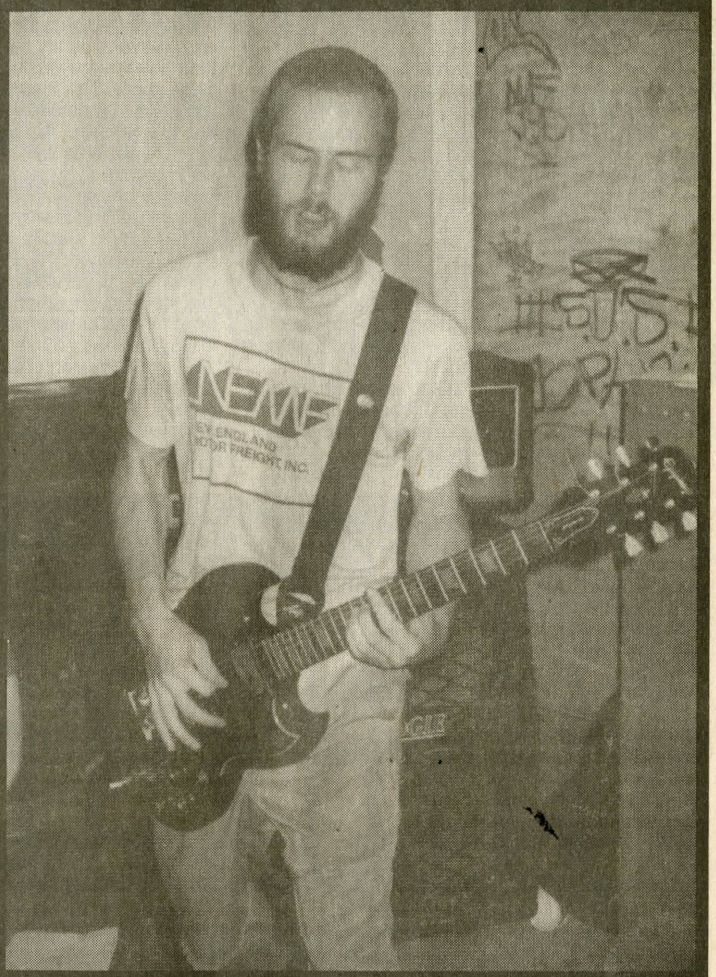
Stan: Just remember that computers are an elitist tool. Only certain people can afford it.

SV: I know. There's definitely a class issue involved there.

Jeff: The example I was going to give is not actually a computer, so much, but after Seattle, which, I actually, was going through a period where I was completely detached from activism at that point... I saw a video that people had made through the Independent Media Center. It literally couldn't have been more than a week and a half after that happened.

Stan: But you could have went there and been involved in it, yourself.

Jeff: But I didn't know. I was so completely detached.



Stan: You have to have known that was going on.

Jeff: But honestly, I didn't have the money or time to take off from school to go out to Seattle.

Stan: I'm sure you could have afforded a plane ticket out there. I mean, I have friends who can barely afford to live who went to that.

Jeff: All I was going to say was that it was something that I was pretty apathetic towards and I never would have gotten engaged in it because I had other things that were completely preoccupying me. I spent $5 to the Charas Community Center in the Lower East Side, which is a wonderful place that's accessible to everyone in the neighborhood, and I saw this really well put-together, pretty high-tech video that really just got me

engaged in a way that I couldn't have been, going through my day-to-day school life and that really changed my mind about using the masters' tools against them to some extent. As long as you're vigilant about not blindly accepting things, I think that you can use them in ways that are subversive.

SV: I think it's a great source of information. I mean, once this shit happened on the 11th, I immediately started going to Independent Media Center and some other alternative sites and, yeah, you've got to consider their biases, as well, but it's a way to gather information and try to get different perspectives than what you see in the mainstream media. Obviously, even with the internet, you've got to think outside the box. You've got to get away from AOL's homepage or Yahoo's homepage and seek things out, yourself. It's definitely useful for gathering information.

Stan: As long as you take things from all different places. You just have to remember it's mostly entertainment, as far as what the internet's used for.

SV: It's a big shopping mall.

Jeff: Yeah, selling.

Stan: That's basically what it is.

Jeff: And that's why the internet is going to change soon. Because it's not a really good tool for selling things and they're going to make it one, whether we like it or not.

Stan: And it's coming under scrutiny right now. They're going to be able to look at everything, look at your emails. Not that they already can't but they're going to have written laws that say they can look at anything they want.

SV: With the PATRIOT act that just passed, it makes it easier for them to snoop on the internet. Check people's emails out and shit like that.

Jeff: They've been doing it anyway but now it's just official. And now everyone's gung-ho and supporting it, which is really scary.

SV: The other thing you talked about during the set was about how a friend of yours got killed in Indonesia and how the media doesn't always cover the whole story or cover certain stories.

Jeff: It's something that I care about and that was the impetus for it. It was just a friend of a friend. It was a band we had toured with and they were all worried about him at the time. He was missing. And I happened to find out on a website that was run by a human rights organization that he had been killed and I looked through Reuters and Associated Press, trying to find more information about it, and there was just nothing. It's just so frustrating to be pulling up all these articles about UN workers who have been killed in Indonesia, around the same time, and nothing about this man who had been doing the same kind of work, just not through a US-sanctioned organization. It was more grass-roots. He was someone that was more involved in the area and was an Indonesian, himself. But the song is just more of a general take on the idea that if you look at the papers, even the most fair-minded, objective newspaper and objectivity is this high and mighty value that Americans like to shove down people's throats, it's like, there's no objectivity there. Even the most liberal paper or what people perceive as a liberal paper is going to be reporting about things that, in the end, serve to justify their position in the world and their advertisers' position in the world.

SV: Exactly. That's what drives it.

Jeff: And that's the big, hilarious lie about the American media is that we have a free media and other countries' are controlled by the government. Well, we're controlled by the advertisers that spend money in those papers and it's not good people, mostly, that are making those advertisements.

SV: And there's more consolidation than ever, too.

Stan: I also think that it's only when you're the right person, as far as victims. If an American dies, you'll see the name. But there are large amounts of people from other countries who are just faceless, nameless. Or if they do use their names, they'll be misspelled. They don't really investigate it that much because it doesn't matter because they're not from here.

Jeff: Well, that's what they always say about news articles. How many Americans were killed?

SV: I know. That's what always happens.

Stan: Well, what about the other people that died, too?

Jeff: That's why the song is called "Untold Stories." It's certainly more relevant than ever. We're hearing about the horrible atrocity committed in New York City and not about horrible atrocities committed elsewhere that wouldn't make one or the other look justified but would give us a context to understand how the cycle of violence just keeps going and going...

BALANCE OF TERROR are fucking dead. But you can e-mail Jeff at xjwalkx@yahoo.com

Contact address until September 2003:
Jeff Walker
1254 Commonwealth Ave., #16
Boston, MA 02134

Here's what they've been up to since their split, according to Jeff:

"Chris, Stan and I did a band with Sarah from Something In The Water called Surrender. It's kind of peace punk I guess. We were only around a few months but we have an 8 song demo. Stan moved to austin and has two new bands, one is a melodic hardcore band; the other is more peace punk. Bryan is doing a band with some people including Chris Prorock and Dominic from Sangre De Los Puercos [Wreckage]. This kid from Boston called the Gipper (Sean) plays lead guitar and from what I've heard they're pretty great, kind of like Swedish HC crossed with "Feel The Darkness." I'm playing guitar in a band up here [Sleeper Cell] that Spencer from Self Defense is singing for. [they've recorded a demo and it's definitely worth checking out—see review section—AL] Chris has a band in NY called Insurrection. Also, Ned is still playing with Sangre..."



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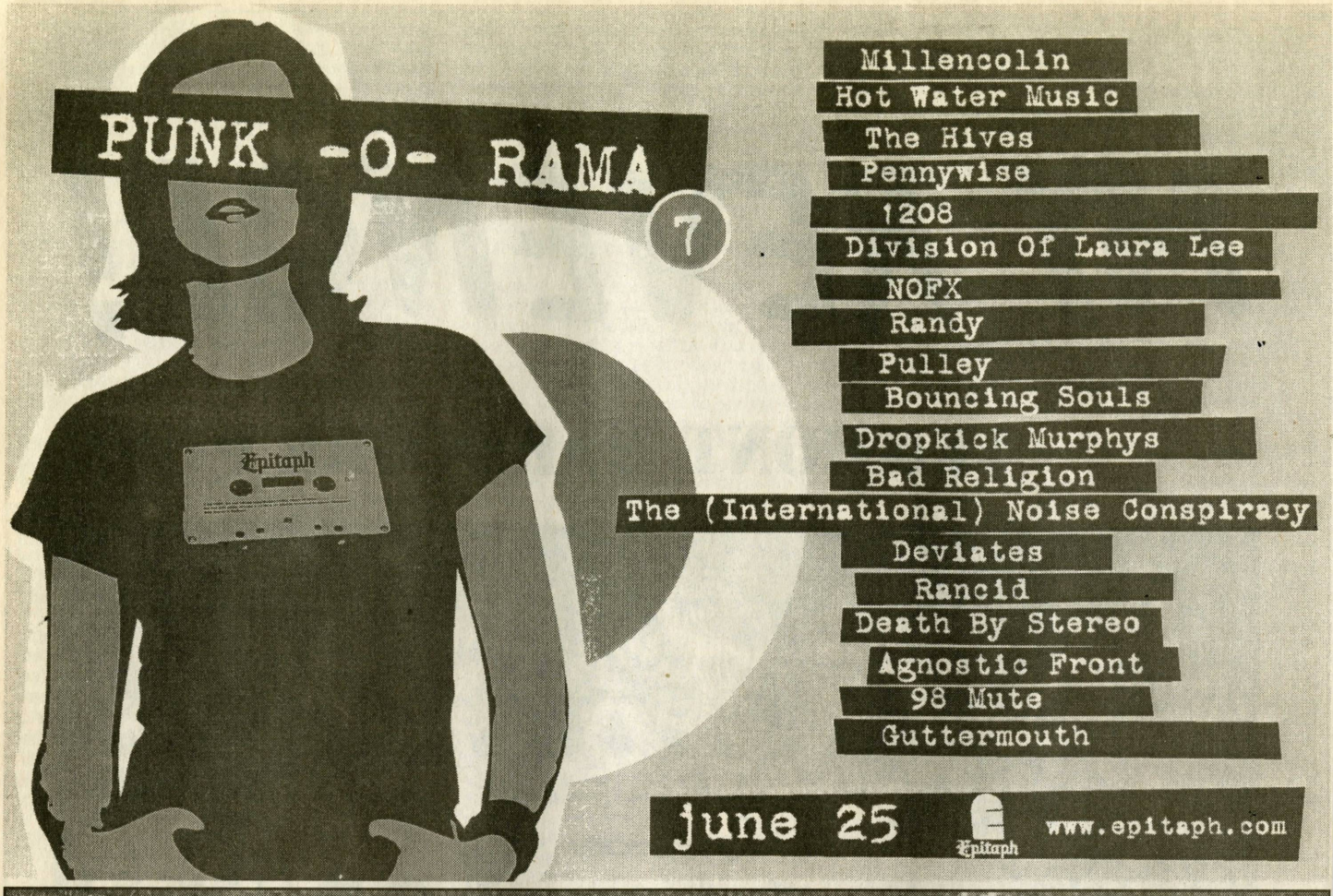
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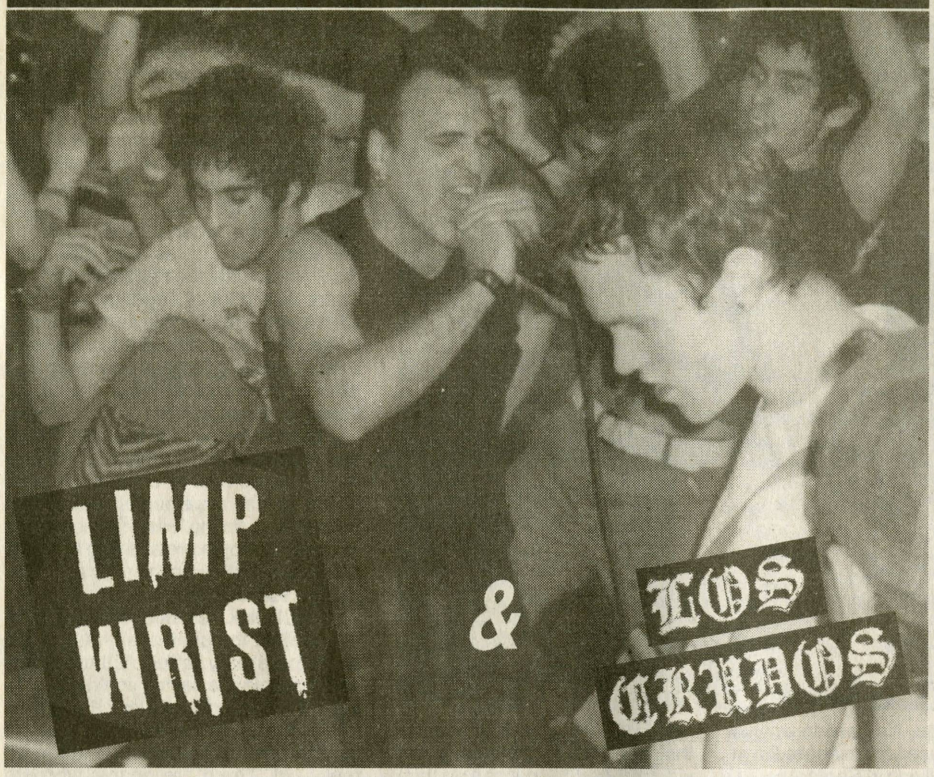


I interviewed Martin Sorrondeguy at the Thrashfest in Minneapolis in late December, 2002. Martin is best-known as the vocalist of both Los Crudos and Limp Wrist. Thrashfest turned out to be Limp Wrist's final show. Martin didn't specify why the band called it quits, but they were one of the more provocative acts in the past few years—proudly straight-edge (most of them, at least), openly gay (well, three-quarters of them, anyway) and quite in-your-face about it, from the band's graphics on records and t-shirts to their lyrics to Martin's on-stage antics, such as coming out in drag for that final show. Definitely quite a good level of subversion going on here—given that the hardcore scene, like "real life," has its share of homophobia and other prejudices, it was refreshing to see a band willing to brazenly confront these regressive impulses. Of course, it didn't hurt that these guys played damn near perfect full-on hardcore punk. The band—in addition to Martin, including Mark (guitar), Andrew (bass) and Paul (drums)—released a demo, 7" EP and LP and also appeared on the Leguna Armada (Martin's label) compilation "Histeria" and the *SV* CD comp "No Sleep For Hardcore." Crudos were also an important band—from Chicago and one of the first Latino hardcore bands to break through on a national level. I still get the urge to spin "Illegal Y Que," about so-called 'illegal' immigrants every time I hear about another racist attack on undocumented immigrants.

But I didn't want to just talk about Martin's musical projects. He has quite an interesting background—a photographer, a filmmaker, even a break-dancer back in the early 80s. We touched on his other interests and passions and it turned out to be an interesting conversation...

SV: Where are you from originally?
Martin: Uruguay. I was born in Montevideo, the capital. I was brought to the states when I was two years old, raised in Chicago. Lived there all my life and two years ago moved to Santa Ana, California.
SV: What made you decide to move to California?
Martin: My boyfriend.
SV: That's always a good reason!
Martin: Yeah. 'Cause I had met him when I was making that video and was traveling back and forth. We were seeing each other like that—long distance for a year and a half and something had to give. It was either one of us moved or it was over. So I was done with school and I made the move.
SV: Everyone always asks me this about my wife so I'll ask you this about your boyfriend. Does he share your passion for punk rock?
Martin: No, he doesn't. He likes punk that's sung by women but he's not a big punkhead. He's likes so many different types of things and he thinks a lot of it is just a bunch of fucking noise. He calls a lot of it total jock shit. He just starts criticizing it. But he knows I'm a total fucking maniac for it. He's really cool about it. He has his limits. I definitely don't talk punk with him.
SV: You can't play it all the time around him?
Martin: I play it a lot but it's not the only thing. It's kind of hard because I have so many people visit me and bands come and stuff and he knows I'm really passionate about it, so he's really respectful of that but he has his limits.
SV: So, growing up in Chicago, how did you discover punk rock?
Martin: It's a weird story. My cousins were punks in New York and that's the first time I ever heard of punk, when I was a kid. I was really young but they had the first of the punk records—the Sex Pistols, Clash—the real basic stuff and that's the first time I ever heard of punk, at their house. I didn't get into it, really, until later on. I got tired of what was going on around me at the time and just started getting more and more into punk. I started going to shows and discovering a lot of stuff.
SV: You were also a break-dancer, I just found out recently.
Martin: Yes, I was Kid Ice of the Floor Masters and we were on Donahue and a Mr. T made for TV movie. Ha ha ha... it was a crazy time. Donahue was fun. We were on with Kurtis Blow he sang "The Breaks" and we were on with two New York pop lockers who later became UTFO, who did the whole "Roxanne Roxanne" thing. It is kinda crazy. Ha ha...
SV: Was Crudos your first band?
Martin: Yeah, that was the first band.
SV: Why don't you tell me how that happened.
Martin: I had been in Chicago going to shows for years and I was always just a participant. I would always be in the crowd and everything and I was just really into it. At some point, I thought it would be the coolest thing to do a band and it never actually happened until we started Los Crudos. I found a couple of guys who were from the area and had a band going and said 'I have this idea. You guys want to try this out?' and they were all into it and that's kind of how that started, as Crudos. But I think it was out of boredom and desperation and wanting to do something that I finally got a band going.
SV: Was this the first Latino punk band in Chicago?
Martin: In Chicago? Well, there was one band before us who sang a song in Spanish and that was Dead Steel Mill, which you probably have heard of.
SV: Yes.
Martin: They had an excellent song on a Chicago comp that Underdog Records did and it's the song "Estados Unidos Me Manda A La Chingada" and it's a fucking great song. I was really stoked that they would do it. So, out of Chicago, that was the first thing and then we were full-on.
SV: I've read elsewhere that you grew up in the Pilson neighborhood. Why don't you tell me about that area?
Martin: Pilson is predominantly an immigrant population, the majority from Mexico. It's a great neighborhood. It's just really kind of dense. There's a lot of stuff happening. A lot of artists, a lot of really cool stuff and a lot of really shitty stuff. When you have a poor immigrant community like Pilson, you have a lot of the social problems that come along with just being poor. So you have a nice chunk of that and then the people who are really creative and want to do something different and you have a nice chunk of that, too. You just find where you want to be.
SV: Did your neighborhood embrace Crudos when you got started?
Martin: Actually, yeah. A lot of people were really into it, so it was kind of cool. Honestly, when we started, we just thought it was going to be its neighborhood band but it was very cool because we were doing a lot of stuff—there were a lot of artists and people around in the neighborhood and there were a lot of groups that were trying to do social work and really cool stuff and we just started teaming up with them and doing projects. It was kind of neat. So people embraced us—punk and non[-punk].
SV: That's often been one of the knocks on punk—is that it's just preaching to the converted and playing to a certain audience and I like it when bands try to reach out to the larger community.
Martin: Right. I mean, punk easily ghettoizes itself. We're all in ghettoes. Whether it's that kind of a ghetto or a different kind of ghetto, we do that and we're just as guilty. I think we really have more advantages than other people do and I think we have more sense than to just constantly and only keep amongst ourselves and it's not a bad thing. I think people think they don't ever want to step outside of that and I think it's a good thing to step outside of it.
SV: A lot of the time, it's perceived as a preserve of middle class white kids, so you guys were definitely doing something different by being a Latino band and also singing in Spanish. I was curious if, during the years Crudos were together, did you ever meet with resistance from folks or get questioned for doing it that way?
Martin: I think a little bit. I think there was a little bit of resistance but I don't know how much of it was really... I mean, there was reactions to us and sometimes it was negative, depending on where we were, but it wasn't going to alter what we were doing. We extremely believed in what we were about so we just did it. And if people liked it, they did and if they didn't, it was alright, too.
SV: When was it that you came out as a gay man? When you were in Crudos?
Martin: Yeah, it was. I'd say it was probably close to mid-point through and it was a slow process for me. It took awhile. I think the last city I came out was in

Chicago. I came out everywhere else on a tour and the last place was Chicago and, with Chicago being home, it was like coming out to my family at the show there. 'Cause there were so many people that I'd known for so many years and I was really hesitant because of fear. I was afraid of how people would react and I think I got to the point where I said 'fuck it.' It's going to happen.

SV: I was curious about the reaction that you got not only from the punk community but also from your own family. I know it's kind of a stereotype but the Latino community has a reputation for being a rather macho culture. My perception is there's a lot of homophobia.

Martin: Right. You know, in the punk scene, people jumped up on stage and hugged me. A lot of friends were really supportive. There were a few comments here and there about… 'oh, you know, I don't like Los Crudos anymore. Martin started with the fag shit' and it was, like, you obviously don't know what you're talking about because I held it in for a long time and you came to see us before that and there was nothing wrong.

SV: It's the same fucking band.

Martin: Exactly. So, I mean, really, if you're going to see a band and lay down those expectations on a band, maybe you shouldn't even be a fan of it. Maybe this is not the band for you. That was happening but I think my family's reaction was a little rough at first. My mom was really confused. She didn't know where it came from because she didn't see it. I don't know—maybe that's just based on generalizations of what a gay person is supposed to be like and all that. Her concept was you're born that way, you just don't become that way and when did you all of a sudden become this way? She thought it was some outside influence that was making me that way. I think it was just her way of trying to deal with it and take it all in. It *is* tough, especially when you never had a sign of it, I guess.

SV: So you were able to keep it hidden from them for some time.

Martin: Yeah, for awhile. I mean, she basically was the one who called me out on it. It was kind of interesting because I had this thing going with the guy from down the block so it came out where one of the neighbors had heard things and [she asked] what's going on with you and this guy and I denied it, I denied it and the third time around I was, like, fuck it, and I let it out.

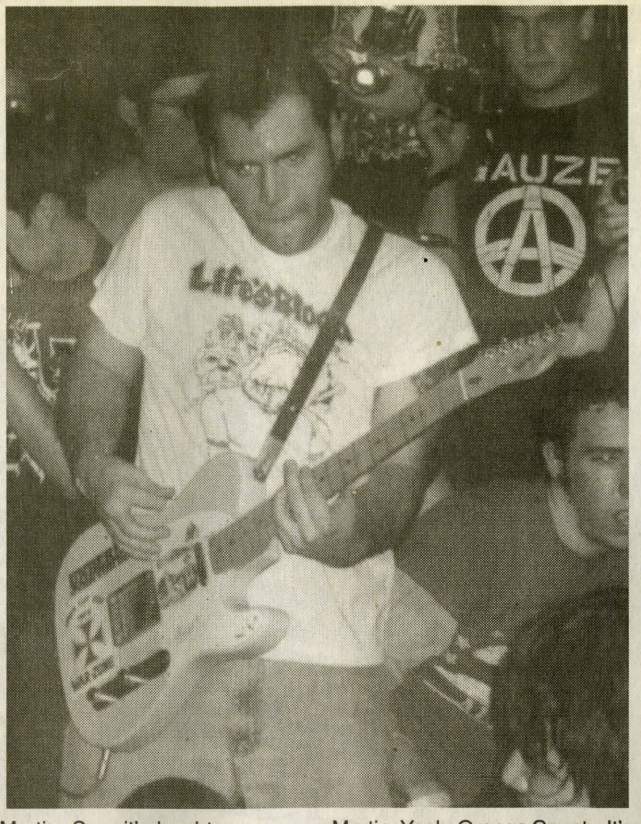
SV: I have some questions about some Limp Wrist songs that perhaps tie into this. Are "Secrets" and "Relatives Got Nerve" based on your own personal experience?

Martin: No, they're a little more general. I never really played on a sports team, I didn't really get A's in high school so I think it's more general. [laughs] I wasn't really on the honor roll maybe until the very end.

SV: Now you've got a master's degree.

Martin: Yeah, so who gives a shit. [laughs]

SV: Post-9/11, there seems to be an increase in racism and xenophobia and we really seem to be heading on a bad path in this country in terms of scapegoating people who have different skin colors or religious beliefs, all that. I was just wondering if you were increasingly coming into contact with those kinds of mentalities?



Martin: See, it's hard to answer that because I think where I'm at, right now, living in Santa Ana…

SV: But they did pass Prop. 187 out there (taking rights away from undocumented immigrants).

Martin: Yeah but when you look at the actual population in Santa Ana, where it's 96% Latin American.

SV: That's in Suburban LA?

Martin: Yeah, Orange County. It's the part of Orange County that wasn't there. I know people think Orange County is very white and very conservative. Santa Ana is the absolute opposite.

SV: They elected a Latino congresswoman, Loretta Sanchez [a Democrat, albeit a quite conservative Democrat]



Martin: Yeah. Well, that's Southern California for you. You're in between LA and Mexico, so what do you expect? I mean, that was historically really a part of Mexico at one point. It's like the borders moved and people were always there. I think people are shocked. I talk to a lot of punks who come over from other countries and they've just been, like, 'what is going on here? I don't even feel like I'm in the US.' That was like how it was in my neighborhood in Chicago and it's the same thing in Santa Ana. As far as 9/11, I don't know. It's really tough. I know, in the beginning, when things happened and went down, it was really sketchy. I didn't know what the hell was going on. There was a lot of flag-waving everywhere and you had this sentiment that things were not really cool and there were a lot of unsettling feelings between many different people. I don't know what's happening everywhere now.

SV: Even in the punk scene, you had all this reactionary thought, like 'let's go bomb the fuck out of 'em and get rid of all the fucking towelheads' and all that bullshit and, on the "Histeria" comp you wrote that people are afraid to be vocal about how fucked-up things are.

Martin: Yeah. I mean, even in situations like that, I think we saw a really ugly side even within the punk scene and that's where I was really baffled. All these years, when people are saying you're preaching to the converted, it's like, are you really? Is it really sinking in? And when you get the heart of the fucking matter, it's really not. There are people who are within this music scene that are not listening to what's happening. They're not challenging themselves. And when something happens like that—we saw some really ugly shit.

SV: A knee-jerk reaction.

Martin: Yeah! It's really sad. It's just another one of those convincing things where I just go, 'there's work to be done everywhere.'

SV: That's why I love when bands speak out about it and go, 'what are we all about, here?' OK, this happened and it was terrible but you have to put things in perspective and, also, is this really going to change your beliefs the easily?

Martin: Yeah. I think we lose sight easily sometimes. Something just sets something off and it seems like the ideals just go right out the door. It's really strange. It's disheartening, sometimes, because it comes, sometimes, from people you least expect it from.

SV: Tell me about the documentary you did. I haven't seen it, but wasn't it a history of Latino punk?

Martin: What is was, basically, was looking at the Latino scene in the US and primarily focusing on the 90s when Los Crudos and Youth Against and Huasipungo and all those bands were around and looking at that and saying what was this about? It got a little historical. There's a little segment that gets into East LA and talks about some of the old LA scene. I did an interview with Alice Bag and Theresa from the Brat and people like that. But the main focus was on the 90s and it looked at that old scene as an influence sort of and then also looking at the Latin American scene as being an important factor that ties, rootswise, politically and things like that. Things that just sprouted here and why all these bands started singing in Span-



ish and doing stuff. That's what the documentary is about. Why we were doing what we were doing. It was a part of my thesis for school. There's nothing better than doing a project on something you're really passionate about so I just ended up doing it on that. It's a half-hour documentary.

SV: How did Limp Wrist come together?

Martin: Limp Wrist came together over phone conversations with the guitarist Mark. He disclosed to me at one point that he was gay and I had already been out. We just talked about stuff and thought it would be great if there was a queer band that was really hardcore. There's queer bands, but so much of it was pop. Pop-punk or pop rock or alternative or indy or whatever and we were, like, where's the fucking hardcore? I respect those bands but I also feel like it's not really talking to us. We wanted to form something that was hitting it where we really wanted it to be hit. It was playing the music that we loved, with a little more aggression and we did it. We said let's do this band.

SV: The thing I like about it is, with that style of hardcore, some of those kids are quite homophobic so I almost look at it like beating them at their own game, a little bit.

Martin: Yeah (laughs). The funny thing is there's a lot of homophobia in that scene but who the fuck is going to tell us we're not legit? You know what I mean? For me, it's like a reclamation. It's like we're taking things back. We're saying this is us, whether you like it or not. The thing with hardcore—and this is where I become critical of the hardcore scene—is a lot of hardcore kids, they want to wave the hardcore banner but they lose sight of the fact that, to be hardcore, you have to be punk.

SV: Yes, yes! No shit!

Martin: That's where the fucking root came from. You have to be punk and we're fucking punks. That's where it came from and that's how I see myself. I've been straight-edge for a long time. I was always a punk. There wasn't a straight-edge metal scene yet when I was straight-edge.

SV: Straight-edge came out of the hardcore punk scene. And, somewhere along the way, it got turned into this rigid, jockish thing…

Martin: Well, when you look where a lot of people came into it from, that's their reference point. It was already way off the punk thing. If that's where they're coming in on things and that's their perspective, then they're not going to know. They're not going to recognize. I mean, I've heard hardcore kids criticize punk and it's like, what do you mean?

SV: Well, as far back as the early 80s, Al from SSD would criticize punk. He'd say, 'punk says nothing to me. We have nothing in common with them' but then guys like Ian MacKaye and the Negative Approach guys—they were all into British punk. Sham 69 and all that stuff. They had a punk influence. But in Boston, where I'm from, a lot of those kids grew up on heavy metal.

Martin: Yeah, well I mean, anybody who really considers them hardcore would know the root is punk and you've got to be a punk. I mean, if not, what are you? You're just like the fucking jocks in high school. It's the same shit. What really sets you aside? I mean, you could be a Limp Bizkit fan or whatever. What's really setting you aside? And what it is is that element. It's the main ingredient is punk. You know it, I know it, a couple people do and there are people who don't.

SV: Have you met with any sort of homophobic reactions at shows? I saw you play a pair of shows back to back in Boston and then in Western Mass. the next day. The Boston show was great—you came out dressed in semi-drag. In Western Mass., you weren't nearly as in-your-face and, yet—maybe it's me—but I sensed some discomfort in that room.

Martin: I think so. Well, you know, that was a show where I made a lot of really funny comments. Like I did say that this is one of the best homocore shows we've ever played and I dedicated the song to all the guys standing in the back with their arms crossed and I said shit like that. I remember it pretty well. Maybe they were set off by what we were saying. Just the fact that it's not cool, if you're really tough, to mosh or dance to a band that's about that. Whatever… we do what we do. We did it and I thought it was a pretty humorous show. We enjoyed the fact that when we weren't playing and all the other bands played, how these boys were tackling each other, rolling on each other. I mean, that was like dry-humping porn for us. (laughter). It really was. I mean we were watching boys, we were teaming up boys that kept on going after the same guy, constantly and, it was like, should we give them the van keys and let them use it for awhile? Because they may need to take care of something. We laughed at it. We thought it was funny. It was a good show, good bands and stuff, but there was some funny stuff going on.

SV: They're crazy out there, anyway. I've seen some really goofy stuff at shows out there. Anyway, you have an excerpt from an internet post in your lyric book taking issue with picturing queer sex and about the time your album came out, there were a number of discussions on message boards talking about how you were flaunting or forcing your sexuality on people, how you're trying pick up underage kids. I think they were damn near calling you pedophiles.

Martin: Oh really? That's funny because I don't like younger people. I like older people so I don't know where they got them from. I think where they're getting that from are misinterpretations. We joke around



a lot but there's never anything referring to pedophilia and I think that's a way of trying to write it off and get away with it. That's another way of demonizing somebody. Then they do that with everybody for other reasons, too. I mean, that's what happening right now, relating it back to the whole war thing. They're demonizing a group of people and it's just a way of saying, 'I'm not like that, I'm different, I'm apart from that,' and the same thing with not dealing with the issue at hand. It's like homophobia—you don't want to deal with it, what do you do? You demonize them. It's an ongoing thing. People do it all the time. So it's bullshit—I don't like younger people. I'm not attracted to younger people. So fuck it. I don't know where they get it from. The other thing about that is they're afraid. I think they're really afraid to face certain things. I think that's what Limp Wrist does. We're out in everybody's face. We're out and it's uncomfortable for them and I think that's the beauty of it. Let them be a little uncomfortable.

SV: The people that get it are going to get it and say this is so cool. You're using subversion, to a certain extent. I think that's what I like about it the most. And the people who are going to be annoyed and pissed off, you're accomplishing exactly what you're setting out to do.

Martin: Exactly.

SV: And, hopefully, they may eventually confront these fears. How optimistic are you about that, though?

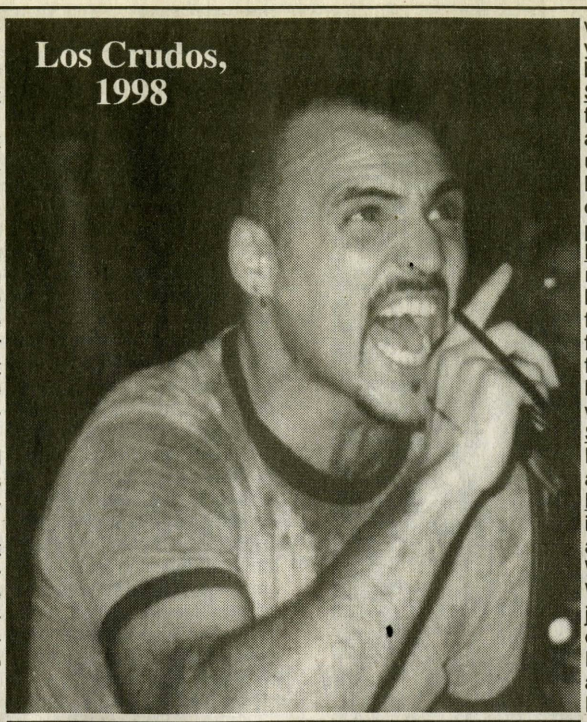
Martin: I could never really know what ends up happening with people. It's too hard to say. But I know if you're going to be in the room with us and we're playing, it's going to be dealt. We're going to dish it. Whether you like it or not or whether you're ready to deal, it's there. I don't know how people will walk away or what they'll say afterwards. I could never know. We can only hope.

SV: I guess there's a little bit of pissing back and forth in the pages of MRR between you and Mark McCoy from the Oath. Mark made a comment about Limp Wrist that said, "an idea that's gimmicky and lacks resonance." And you responded back in the new issue [and McCoy then replied in kind in a subsequent issue]. I'll play devil's advocate a bit and ask this—doesn't something like Limp Wrist have a limited shelf life? Isn't it kind of gimmicky to a certain extent?

Martin: Let me just take the first part on, about it being even brought up via Mark. If somebody feels if we're gimmicky and we lack resonance and, in his case, if that's really how you feel, that's fine. If that's how you perceive the band. It's sort of like a performance for me and I do things with the performance and I like to inject certain things with it and what we're about, right? But I also feel like, in Mark's case, he's criticized us and my criticism of that is I respect that, but, why have you asked us to do things with you? And that's the problem I have. Not that he's said that. It's fine, if he really felt that way but why are we on a compilation that you're putting out? Why did he want to do a whole US tour with us? He wanted to do a split LP with us and, when we said no, I feel like, all of a sudden, this stuff came out and that's where my issue is with the whole thing. You can think we suck—I don't fucking care—but the fact is you're saying we suck after we said we're not going to do something with you. That's where I have a problem. I don't want to do the same things all the time. I'm going try to do things and present it in a different way if I can. So if somebody perceives that as gimmicky, well then fine. Do your thing.

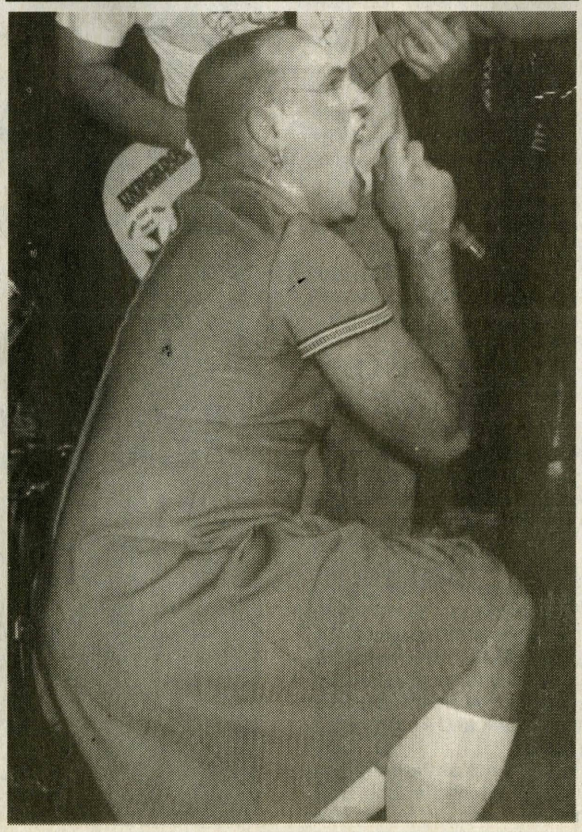
SV: You're doing it to make a point.

Martin: Yeah, and if you want do your thing, you do it your way and we'll doing things our way and that's it. You don't have to like it. And if you think you do a shitty job at it, then do a better one.



Los Crudos, 1998

"We're out and it's uncomfortable for them and I think that's the beauty of it"



SV: On "Punk Ass Queers," you say "won't wed for the church and state," which leads me to ask what's your opinion on gay marriage or civil unions? Shouldn't gay couples have the same legal protections as so-called 'straight' couples... for the purposes of health insurance, pensions, etc...?

Martin: I totally believe we should have the same rights. I am not too into the idea of marriage because it is too straight a concept for me but for those who do want to have unions and so forth I think they should. A union is a union. I feel if the state can recognize two 16 year old kids having a union why can't two adult men, women or transgendered do the same?

SV: So you've been doing this for a long time. How do you maintain your enthusiasm for punk and hardcore after so long?

Martin: You know what? I don't know. I'm really into new stuff. I've always been really intrigued and excited about what's going to come up next. What new people are going to bring to the table. What somebody old is going to do new? I'm just always waiting for that. But not just waiting on the sidelines. I want to get in on it, too. And I think where a lot of my enthusiasm is. I'm really into to just new things. I'm into this music. I've always been. You know.. it's just a part of you.

SV: I know—when I first met you, you were talking to me about the most obscure Boston punk bands and I thought it was incredible—how does this guy know about all those bands?

Martin: Ever since I got into it, it was just like a whole new world for me and I wanted to learn as I could about it and I did a lot of my own research and I like bands from all over the world. I'm not scene-specific. I'm really into the earliest to now. I'm fascinated on how things developed, like how that scene happened, people who were involved in it, bands who were really out there. I like to know about that stuff. I think it's a really important part of this culture. It's been very important on a social level, on a subculture level, on a cultural level. Those are things that are important to me. It fascinates me. Ever since I was a kid—my cousins were punks and I was fascinated by that and I said one day I'm going to be that. I want to be a punk. The politics is another thing. There's always something to be set off by. This is the easiest way for me to vent when I'm really upset about something. This is the way I know how. This and sometimes in my artwork or my photography. That's what I do.

SV: Tell me more about your artwork and photography. Is that what you got your masters in?

Martin: It is. It's a master of fine arts and I do a little bit of everything. Video, photography, stuff like that.

SV: Did the artwork come before the punk rock or was it something you developed later on?

Martin: I've been doing photography since I was young. My parents gave me a Polaroid when I was 8 or 9. I just did stuff. Then, right out of high school, they gave me a camera and I started taking classes and I've been doing it since the 80s. Taking photos and stuff. I just kept on. I've always done it. A lot of people don't know I do photography. They find out usually later on.

SV: I'll admit I found out when I was doing some research for this interview. I didn't know that, before.

Martin: I used to have a really weird thing about mixing things up and letting people know about this and about that. I always tended to keep everything in these different compartments and just recently started letting people in on other things about me. I don't know why. It may have been something that came from a long time ago,

where I felt it was so different, so separate but I've let up on that.

SV: You can't just do one thing all the time. You've got to have other interests. I mean, I love music more than anything in the world, but if I didn't have other interests, it'd get dull after awhile.

Martin: Right, absolutely. I agree. Anything can get dull after awhile.

SV: In the Leguna Armada interview in MRR, you criticized the lack of creativity in hardcore, especially with packaging and recycling artwork. But couldn't that apply to hardcore in general? That it's all been done before? I mean, the bands at this show today aren't exactly breaking new ground. They all, to a certain extent, echo what's gone on in the past although they're doing something, to me at least, exciting with it. Everything's rehashed, essentially.

Martin: Yeah, but I think when I said that, what I was, more than anything talking about is... I've noticed a lot of record covers and flyers that use old photos of old bands. Why not use photos of your band? Why use the same artwork that was done in '81, '82, '83. Why don't you do something just a little different?

SV: That's what you're SUPPOSED to do on a hardcore record!

Martin: Yeah, and I think that makes things boring. I think I'm a little bored by that. I believe in what you're doing so why aren't you believing in yourself? If I'm coming to your show, just believe in what you are. You don't have to prove to me that you're just so down with '82. I don't fucking care. I don't want to see the same photos of the old punk icons. We don't need to do that. They didn't do it. So why are you going to do it?

SV: I mean, even the Oath record, with the booklet that had transgender photography or whatever it was, it's not really my thing but I respect it, in a way, because it was something different. It was trying to provoke thought. Usually, with a punk or hardcore record, you'll see the same graphics, the same type of layout. Pictures of people pointing their fingers with X's on their hands. This was totally different.

Martin: Yeah and I respect when people do things differently. I mean, like opening records sometimes, it's almost like just the same...

SV: You know what you're going to see.

Martin: You know what you're going to see and when somebody steps away from that, it's really refreshing.

SV: The lyrics are rehashed a lot of the time, as well. Just before I left for this trip, I got a couple of straight-edge hardcore records and I knew I was going to see lyrics about being stabbed in the back or you turned your back on me and I opened up the lyric sheet and there it was.

Martin: Totally. And I think that's where I was coming from with it. If people really believed in themselves, they would really do things a little differently. It's like, the musical style, there's not too much you can do, I'm sure there's going to be somebody that blows my mind, at some point, but at least visually, there's not a pattern or there shouldn't be.

SV: Do your own thing! I think people are sometimes afraid to try something different because they think people won't accept them and sometimes, if a band deviates from the accepted formula, some people might be turned off by it.

Martin: Right. And I think people should deviate from the formula. I think it's awesome. It's great having a record that looks nothing like what you expect a hardcore record to be and it fucking kicks your ass. It's like, where did that come from? It's amazing.

SV: You were also recently in another band, Tragatelo?

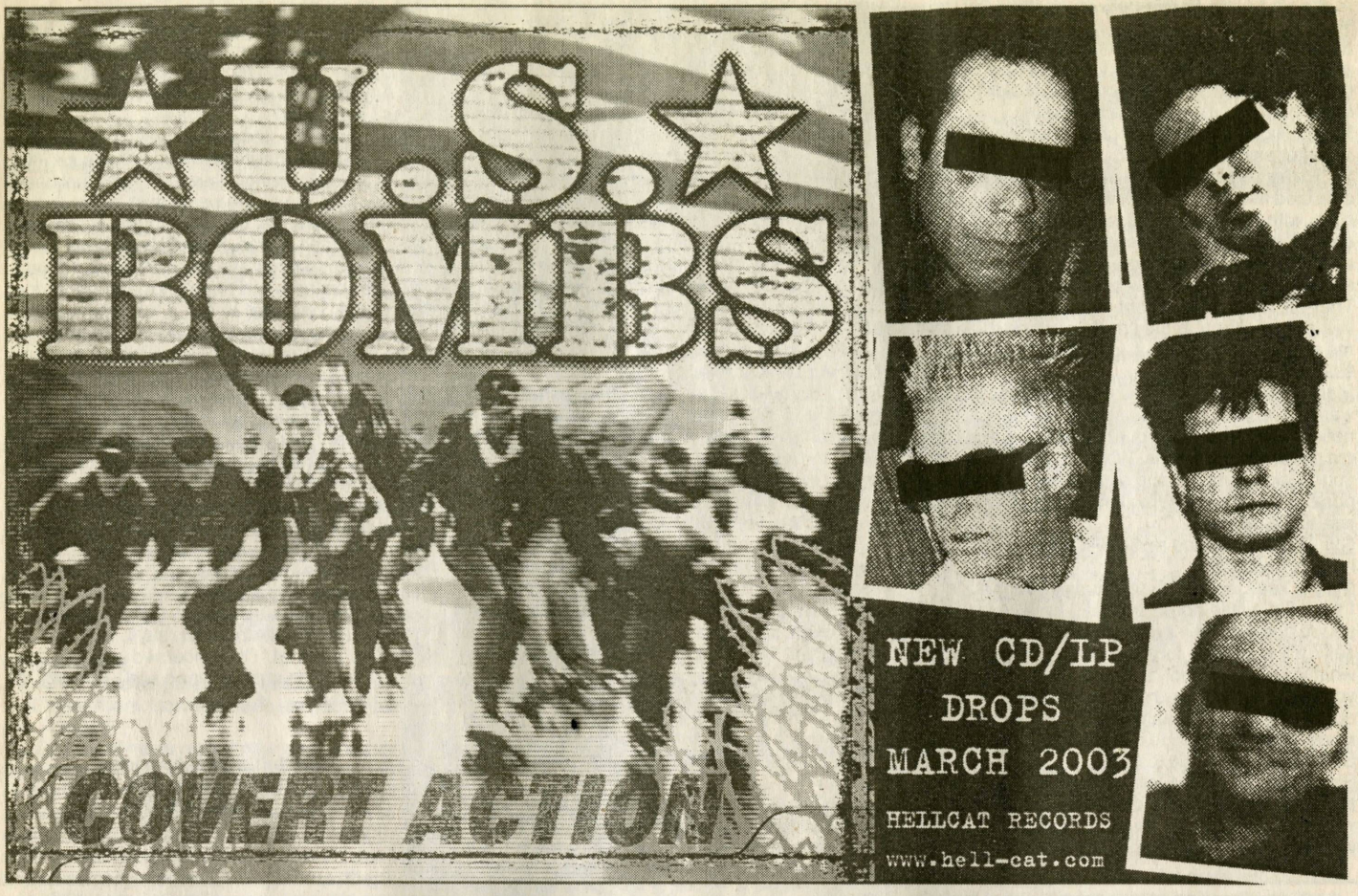
Martin: Yeah. The band stopped but we have a 12 inch coming out really soon *[it's out--see review-AL]*. I played drums in that band. Felix from Life's Halt played bass. Mike from Esperanza played guitar and Lina from Subsistencia sang. It's a little project that we started in LA awhile back and we just stopped playing recently.

SV: Anything else you're working on musically, besides Limp Wrist?

Martin: I want to start some more stuff. I want to start something that plays a little more regularly in the LA area. I think there's seriously a lot that needs to really be done on the west coast, particularly in southern California. I think if Crudos would have been from the LA area, it would have been unreal how crazy it could have been. There's so much that goes on there and there's not enough—I don't know what you want to call it but I think there's work to be done and I would like to do a band that does stuff. Really kind of focusing on southern California. Because I know, in my area, there's tons of kids I see who, it's evident, they're into punk—it may not be the punk that I'm into but there's something there. They know a handful of bands and it ends there. They're young and they look fucking bored and there's nothing happening. And I think people need to tap into that and get kids to be more aware of what's happening and get them involved in something. Because, southern California, especially where I'm at, is not very youth friendly, in the sense that there are not many places that young people can go to and hang out at. I'm not one of these adults who sits there and says, 'fuck the kids, fuck this, fuck that.' I'm concerned with that and I would love to do another band and just really stir up some stuff...

Martin/Leguna Armada
1010 ½ Riverine Ave.
Santa Ana, CA 92701

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Another interview done awhile back, with a brief followup by e-mail. RAMBO, an acronym for Revolution Anarchy Mosh Bike Overthrow, are a Philadelphia band who combine music with theatrics and use it as a vehicle for activism and agitation. Utilizing props, as well as powerchords and the audience gets into the act. At their show in Maine last summer, after which this interview was conducted, people brought cardboard swords and jousted. There was even a large cardboard anarchy moose that barely lasted into the first song. I've seen video footage where the members descended from a cardboard helicopter and down a rope ladder. RAMBO count among their ranks an artist/designer, Michael Bukowski, whose work on various record covers is ubiquitous, lately. Sonically, RAMBO play a combination of double-speed thrash and heavier, NY-style mosh—only without the macho trappings. As crazy as their shows get, it's far-removed from the testosterone-fests one usually associates with the "hard" stuff. And it's a lot of fun—RAMBO take a stand but have a self-deprecating sense of humor. After all, why can't anarchy be fun? They've released a demo, an album, "Wall Of Death The System," on 625, a split 7" with Crucial Unit on Ed Walters and a split with Caustic Christ on Sweden's Busted Heads label.

The members of RAMBO are Todd Hoffman (drums), Tony Pointless (vocals), Bull (bass), John Robinson (guitar), Andy Wheeler (guitar) and Mike Bukowski (design, artwork)...

SV: Let's go back to the beginning. How did RAMBO get started? And you've had some lineup changes since I last saw you [in April 2001].

Tony: I guess in the summer of '99, Andy and our old drummer Jeremy were playing music together and Andy and I had been talking about doing a band so I sang for those guys and we originally got this kid Jay, who used to be the singer for Kid Dynamite, to play bass and then Kid Dynamite was too busy, so we got Beau, who used to play bass for Kill The Man [Who Questions] and rejoined them as a guitar player to play bass for us. We did a demo and just weekend shows and then, one day, I saw John and I made a joke that involved him playing a song where we make fun of an individual person and he would help us...

John: Is this cryptic enough?

Tony: So I'm like, if we do this song, will you play it, and he's, like, sure. And I was like, hey, why don't you be our second guitar player and he's, like, OK.

John: Then I kept bothering him to do it because I had just quit the band I was in and I was real bored not doing a band so I kept harassing Tony.

Tony: That's when we really kind of got going. We played our first show, without John, in December of '99 and then in November of 2000, we played out with John and that was the first show we also had theatrics at. Mike, who's our artist, that was the first show he actually contributed to, live. He did our artwork and lyric sheets and stuff but he was wearing a Zao shirt and he initiated an argument with us and everybody thought we were just arguing with a random kid and then...

John: I stabbed him.

Tony: Yeah. John's initiation into the band was he had to take him out so John stabbed him with his bayonet and his shirt was strategically cut and had a blood-pack. So that was our first show with theatrics and it was the first show with John and I really feel like that was where we really started.

John: I'm in two other bands with Todd so when Jeremy left the band, he was just the guy to ask.

SV: What other bands are you guys in?

John: One's called Virginia Black Lung. I play bass in that band. And another band called Fighting Dogs that we're just doing. We haven't played yet. Then Bull joined 'cause he lived around the corner and we've known him for a long time.

Tony: Beau wasn't really quitting but we scheduled our tour around his school and he couldn't go and he's, like, "just go without me and get someone else and maybe I can do stuff later or maybe not," and we asked Bull to do it and we all had so much fun and we kept bugging Bull to stay and he did. We love Beau but he's just in a different place right now. Although he joined [The Curse] playing bass and bought his own bass equipment after, which he never did for us. He never had bass equipment for us but we love Beau and the Curse rules. That's a long enough answer.

SV: What made you decide to use theatrics or did it just happen naturally?

John: Part of it was that Philly, at the time that we started doing it and before that had a really incredible problem with violence. Crazy. It was really, really bad at the point where people wouldn't even go to shows in the first place because there was a good shot you were going to get beat up. So I think part of it was that we knew we were playing kind of heavy music that might attract a lot of knuckleheads so we figured that by being as silly as possible, it might detract them. Making them the butt of the joke.

SV: Piss them off so much that wouldn't come, anyway.

John: Right.

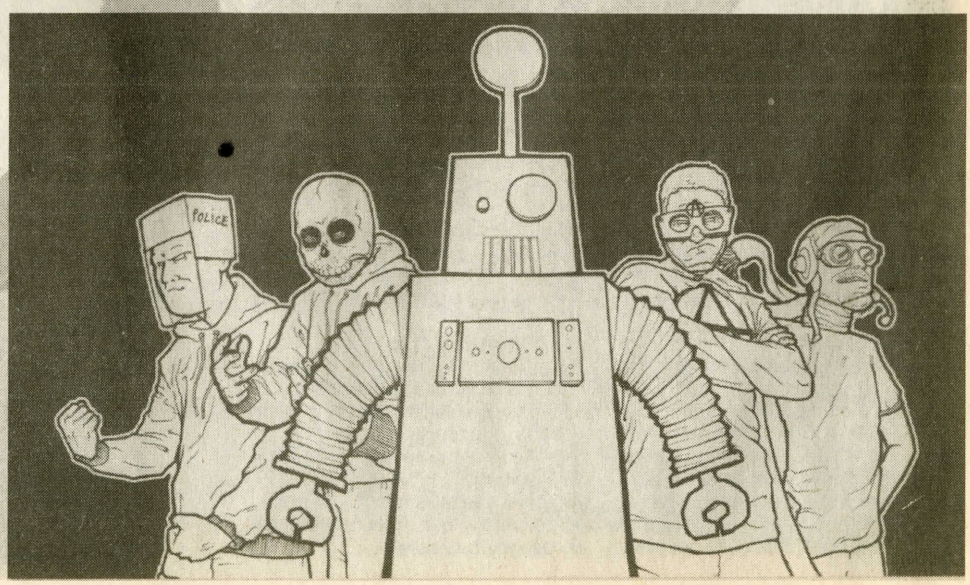
SV: That was the vibe I got the first time I saw you. You're poking fun at all the tough-guy hardcore. I mean, you played a Judge cover last time but you're not exactly a tough-guy band.

John: What are you saying? (laughter)

Tony: We all arm-wrestled today.

John: And it's a political band, first and foremost, and by bringing humor into it, I think it shows that activism and politics don't have to be boring. That's our intention, anyway. I don't know if people necessarily take that away from it but I hope they do. We like to have fun. We're also pretty goofy.

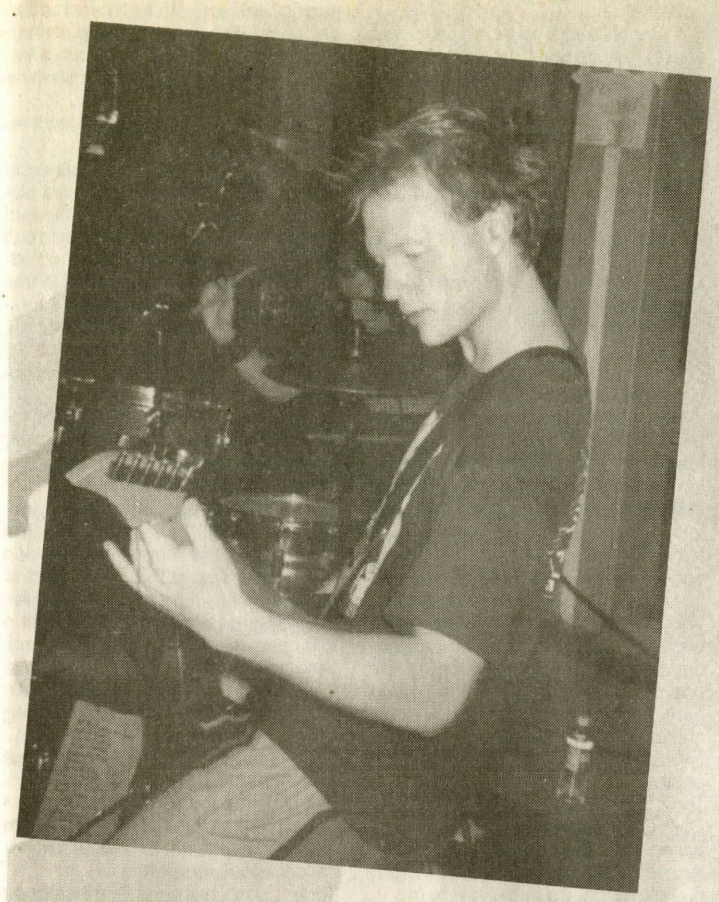
John: Yes.





Bull: Trying to attract people maybe by a slightly different means. Get people interested in activism.
SV: Is it a tough time to be an activist, post-9/11?
Tony: Definitely. A friend of ours who we wrote a song about just had charges reinstated from the Republican convention and when they were reinstated, he openly mentioned that, post-9/11, securing the country. It almost retroactively affected court cases pending and whatnot.
Bull: The things like the PATRIOT act being put into effect and the Freedom of Information Act being taken out of effect. The language in them is very broad and can be used be harass and intimidate almost any type of activist group or environmental group or whatever.
John: I think it'll play out more in the next couple years, once there are a lot more mass actions taking place. I think you'll see the hammer coming down a little bit harder at those because there's less of a tolerance on the side of the police. I think there already is.
Bull: All the things they've been getting away with for years, behind our backs, are now legal for them to do. Like all the harassment, intimidation, beating people up, evidence gathering, spying on people.
SV: And of course the Philadelphia police have a reputation for being one of the worst forces in the country.
Bull: Yes they do. We're number one.
SV: Some of your lyrics talk about taking direct action. What do you think is more effective? Direct action or educating people or does each have its own place?
John: I would say that each definitely has its own place. Obviously, you're not going to really get much done without education and learning but there's also an inevitability of acting on it, if you want to get anything really done. There's theory and there's practice and you have to balance the two and if you go too far over to one extreme, you're not really going to accomplish anything.
Bull: I mean, that's the balance. Different people prefer different tactics and we've got to try and work together with that so we can accomplish whatever it is we're looking to accomplish.
Tony: Explain what we're trying to accomplish in two sentences.
SV: You can take more than two sentences if you want.
Todd: Do what you want to when you want to.
Tony: I was making that "Triple X" quote.
SV: I haven't seen it.
Todd: We got free passes.
Tony: I'm a bike messenger and I deliver various things and one of them is movie passes and we take them sometimes.
John: Tony takes them ALL the time.
Tony: Actually, a lot of places I deliver to give them to me. But the villains in "Triple X" are a group called Anarchy 99.
John: It's really funny.
Tony: So anarchism is now villainized in the mainstream. So while they're co-opting our fashion sense and quoting Vandals' songs.
SV: The anarchist gang quotes Vandals' songs?!
Tony: They're talking to Vin Diesel...
John: And trying to explain their whole philosophy, basically.
Todd: It can be summed up in a Vandals song.
SV: Wait... "Anarchy Burger, hold the government?"
Todd: In the whole canon of anarchist lyrics in punk bands in the fucking whole planet, some dillweeds from Dreamworks could only find some Vandals lyrics.
John: That's what a Google search accomplishes.
SV: And it's 20 years old, too. Granted, that's the good Vandals stuff compared to the shit they've done since then, but still...
Tony: If they'd at least said, like, Sex Pistols or something.
Todd: Or go to Crass.
SV: Yeah, Crass, Conflict. You've got a lot of bands they could have chosen from.
Tony: I mean, the Vandals are definitely not as well known as many other bands that are full-on anarchists so it makes no sense. At least they could have said Dead Kennedys or something.
SV: The Vandals are a pretty astute band. Maybe they worked it out so they got mentioned in the movie so it would give them more notoriety.
John: You never know. Although I think the Vandals are the least problem with that movie (laughter).
SV: Speaking of movies, all of a sudden you've got all these war movies again, all these pro-military movies. It's been a pretty bad summer for movies.
Tony: Well, the government asked Hollywood to step up the production of war movies. Obviously, it takes a year or more to make a movie and have it come out so you couldn't really say they made movies, specifically, but the ones that they had in production that were war-themed, they asked them to speed it up so they can come out earlier. I'm sure they asked them to make new ones, as well. Although, my father loves war movies and we went to see "Pearl Harbor" together and, asked we walked out, he was, like, "what did you think?" I'm like, we're definitely going to get in a war, soon and we did, so I'm kind of convinced (chuckles) that they knew it was coming because, if you've ever seen "Pearl Harbor," it's such weird propaganda that I left with a really eerie feeling. I said we're definitely going to be at war within a year. And we're going to get another one within a month.
SV: How do you guys feel about some of these conspiracy theories floating around the events of 9/11. I know there's a French author who thinks the whole thing is basically a huge conspiracy propagated by the US government.
Bull: I don't really devote too much time to conspiracy theories myself but I'm sure that there's probably some truth behind some of them. A lot of times, they seem to be pretty out there. I mean, clearly the Masons are behind September 11th, but I don't want to talk about that (laughter).
Todd: I'm kind of into the conspiracy theory side of things a lot of the time—not from a literal perspective but I think, a lot of the times, these theories are more of a metaphor for the idea that there's stuff on the surface that we're seeing with people in power and how they're running things and then, underneath the surface, there's some re-





ally weird shit going on that we just don't understand behind back doors and I think those ideas do kind of hold true and—it comes off as a bunch of kooks most of the time—but I think it's the idea that there are decisions made for us by people that we didn't choose to make for us and just the idea that we're not really in control. Somebody else is behind all this and we generally aren't looking for numerology and Egyptian runes and stuff like that (laughter). Most of the time, our conspiracies generally are based on more like economic systems and class systems and racial injustices and things like that and that's what we see driving a lot of this stuff but I think there is something to it. If there's an undercurrent of conspiracy theories rising up, I kind of think that's a good thing because it means that the people in power are suspect and the people are beginning not to trust. I hope it strays away from the UFO crop circle side of things and goes more realistic but I think there is something to that. I'd like to boost that sentiment and head it in a more realistic direction.

Tony: I disagree because I think that conspiracy theories make it seem that there's this, like, illuminati of insidious people, like a Dr. Evil scenario [imitates Dr. Evil from "Austin Powers"], when I think that, a lot of the stuff, we actually are in control and that these are the byproducts of government and there are faults, there are problems that are inherent to government. And that is not really insidious people, it is when you elevate people to power and give them these privileges, then they can take advantage of them. I don't really think they're evil in the actions they do. They're self-motivated but, as an anarchist—and I think the four of us are a lot cooler than George W—I put up the thought that maybe if you put us in that power, we would also be corrupted by it and be just as evil because we would be self-serving. It's the same. And I feel like these institutions need to be destroyed because a conspiracy theory would make it seem, like, once the *bad* people are exposed, then it'll be fine. No—it'll always be a problem.

John: I think, also, there's also a potential for conspiracy theories to become the face of activism in the mainstream public and it makes it much easier to write off activism and radical politics, in general.

Bull: Yeah. It's a good way to make us all look like wingnuts. But, I mean, the thought of a shadow government totally would seem like a crazy conspiracy theory but it's been admitted to. It's insane that something like that exists.

John: Todd and I have our theory—we've talked about it in the car ride from DC to Philly—that everything's way, way worse than the conspiracy theories make them but we'll never find out. I think they're way weirder than everyone can imagine.

SV: To get to the very core of your beliefs, is anarchism anything practical or realistic that will be achieved, do you think? Or is it just something you're more idealistic about?

Todd: We're living it now and we're trying to put these practices, daily, into our lives. It's not always successful.

Bull: It's within a capitalist system.

John: Who's to say when capitalism will tumble. I think it's going to be a long time.

SV: I think it's going to be a really fucking long time.

John: It doesn't really affect how I view my own politics, necessarily, just because I live my life the way I see fit.

Bull: We live by our anarchist ideals within a capitalist society and fight for what we believe in, within that society, also.

Tony: The freedom lies in the struggle. Anarchy is never going to exist. There's never going to be a state. There will always be a few people pushing around some other people somewhere. You find it within the struggle. It's something that you strive for. People want something stagnant and static and tangible and that's not ever going to happen and we have to accept that. You have to want it in your heart and keep trying for it and be vigilant forever. It's never just going to happen. The state's not going to be overturned and everybody's going to be happy. You're going to have to fight for it every day of your life. It'll be better but the struggle will never end.

SV: On "Smack The State," you wrote about how when Stalag 13 got shut down, you went on a "night of rage" and talked about "random acts of vandalism is my revenge on the system." But don't actions such as these reduce you to the assholes' level?

Tony: Hell no.

Bull: We're not pacifists.

Tony: Yeah, we are *not* pacifists. Certain people woke up the next day wondering why someone was mad at them and that's positive.

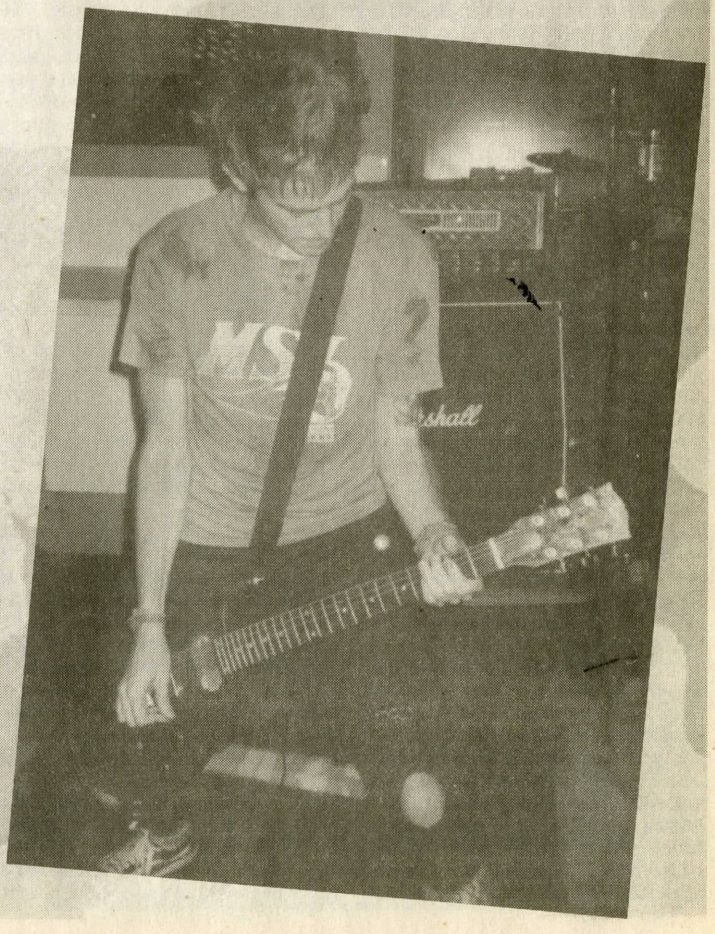
SV: OK—I'm just playing devil's advocate, a little bit here because I've definitely had the urge to do this shit, myself and my wife gets mad even when I do little things like s[illegible] cars with certain bumper [illegible] (laughter). That's my little protes[illegible] she says, "what does that acc[illegible]plish?" Except, ultimately, to make y[illegible] feel a little better, what does it accomplish. It's going to get them pissed off.

Tony: So? Making yourself feel better is something that's worth in itself. Empowering yourself is always a positive thing, even if it's doing something pretty petty. But small antagonism can snowball. It made me feel better. I'm not the best at security culture. Security culture is where you keep things on the DL and I'm notoriously bad at that. I could never be in the ELF [Earth Liberation Front] or something going out and doing ridiculously-crazy things.

Bull: A lot of times, people involved in direct action work together in very tight groups. Affinity groups, where they have to know the people very closely and know not to blab about some crazy shit that they did because that's how you get busted.

Tony: But sometimes, things can be symbolic and I think part of post-September 11th is that you're not going to be able to get away with stuff. Symbolic acts are going to be too dangerous to do, anymore, either where you intentionally get arrested or you do something and you're, like, "well, come arrest me." I mean, if I did anything really serious that night, I would not have written about it, openly. I smashed a window of the DA's office that night. And it was written about in the paper, like someone broke the window and they had no idea why. I should have written a note on the brick.

John: It's not that property destruction





is always valid or pacifism is always valid. Both strategies have their place.

SV: Tony, I remember when I saw you guys the last time, you told a story about how you got arrested for dumpster diving or something like that. That was a pretty funny story—why don't you tell it again.

Tony: There was a dumpster in suburban New Jersey, right outside of Philadelphia, where they would throw out not even necessarily expired but Fresh Samantha and other bottled juices that were about to be expired and it was a very prolific dumpster that people have been going to forever. I never went before and I was just meeting a friend who was meeting a friend and they wanted to go. I didn't think anything of it. Two of the people that we went with went above and beyond—shit, speaking of security culture—well, fuck it, they got me arrested. They stole stuff out of the back of a truck and they didn't say they were doing that. I thought we were just dumpster diving. They went off on their own, they made it seem like they were talking, they got hit out of fucking truck, we all got arrested for burglary and theft. I mean, people do stupid stuff so I'm not that mad at them but I spent the night in jail and missed one of our best shows ever.

John: We had rented a van for the weekend to play Providence and Boston and I showed up at the house to leave and was, like, let's get in the van and go. "Uh, you mean, you didn't hear?" So they told me Tony was in jail. We went over there, to the Camden Jail. We were outside for a couple of hours trying to bail him out and trying to figure out the last name of our friend Paul, who we all just called Sweatpants Paul. None of us knew his last name so I was making phone calls to people who made phone calls and so on and so on, trying to find out his last name. Then we had spent all this money on the van. We just couldn't afford not to do it and the Kill The Man were with us, too, and half of the guys had already left so we decided that we had to play the Providence show so Beau sang and I played bass and it ended up being really, really funny. It was good. And we picked up Tony the next day at the bus station and we played Boston.

Tony: I mean, I love my friends, even though they did something very irresponsible. The people who did get me arrested helped to get me out, but so did RAMBO. They put up money. So two different groups of my friends came up with the same amount of money to get me out and my father came. My parents didn't put up a dime but my father came because, even though I had my ID on me, the police said I didn't because they're just dump. They're seriously idiots. And you need ID to get out and I didn't have my ID so my father had to come with my birth certificate. So I get out and there's a care package for me—a bus ticket to Boston, 10 bucks…

SV: New suit? (laughter)

Tony: Yeah, sleeveless. (more laughter) And my father and uncle took me to eat and they told stories about how they got arrested. It was cool.

SV: What happened, ultimately? Did they drop the charges?

Tony: It got down to trespassing and I had a $500 fine. But I spent like $1500 on a lawyer.

Bull: We've gotten way more than $500 worth of juice from there, though, so it balances out.

SV: Alright, here's your chance to vent about christian hardcore. You seem to have a real problem with it. And I'm with you, by the way.

Tony: When RAMBO first started, I didn't know how to write songs so I wrote one song about christian hardcore and it ended up being three, because it was too long. And I guess some of our artwork is a little over the top.

SV: Yeah, I definitely liked the gladiator scene in the booklet where you're killing all the kids wearing christian hardcore t-shirts.

Tony: Yeah, and the *Heartattack* interview does a little bit of that because a kid wrote a letter about that and I wrote a response to it. Punk isn't for everybody and I hate the whole, like, it's the lumpen-malcontents of the world. It's bullshit. I mean, everybody has their ideas of punk but I think I'm of a mindset that's shared by a lot of people and we want to preserve that. We can't just accept everybody with all beliefs. We don't let nazis in our scene—well, we *try* not to. We address homophobia when we can and sexism. I think one of the most important beliefs in punk is anarchism and, if not anarchism, at least anti-authoritarianism.

SV: Some kind of progressive viewpoint.

Tony: Yeah.

Bull: Oppressive ideologies are not acceptable and I think that's sexism, racism, homophobia, classism, organized religion. It's all bullshit to me.

Tony: Christianity is the status-quo. Punk's a counterculture. It's inherently not part of punk and I feel like it's almost an outright attack. I feel like they're proselytizing our scene and they're co-opting it.

Bull: Just like the krishnas.

Todd: I was going to tie it into that because a lot of us have been around for awhile and we were around in '94, '95 when that whole krishna infiltration occurred.

SV: Actually, it started a lot earlier than that, in the 80s.

Todd: We got infiltrated by a cult in the first place and we sit back and talk about how we're boggled by the fact that punk rock got taken over by a cult for a couple of years. How the fuck did that happen? And we have this sense of history to it and now it's coming full circle, yet again. It's like a larger, more-organized religion.

Bull: More accepted by the mainstream.

Todd: And, also, this form of christianity, within hardcore, it's a very conservative, right-wing version.

SV: Evangelical christianity.

Todd: It's anti-abortion rights, anti-queer friendly type stuff. It's the fucked-up, shitty mainstream version of christianity and this is the kind of stuff we're reacting to or we've seen this happen before. We're not letting it happen again. We're taking a stand. We know how far this shit goes. We had fucking chanting at shows ten years ago. I don't want to have fucking hymns at shows, now. (laughter)

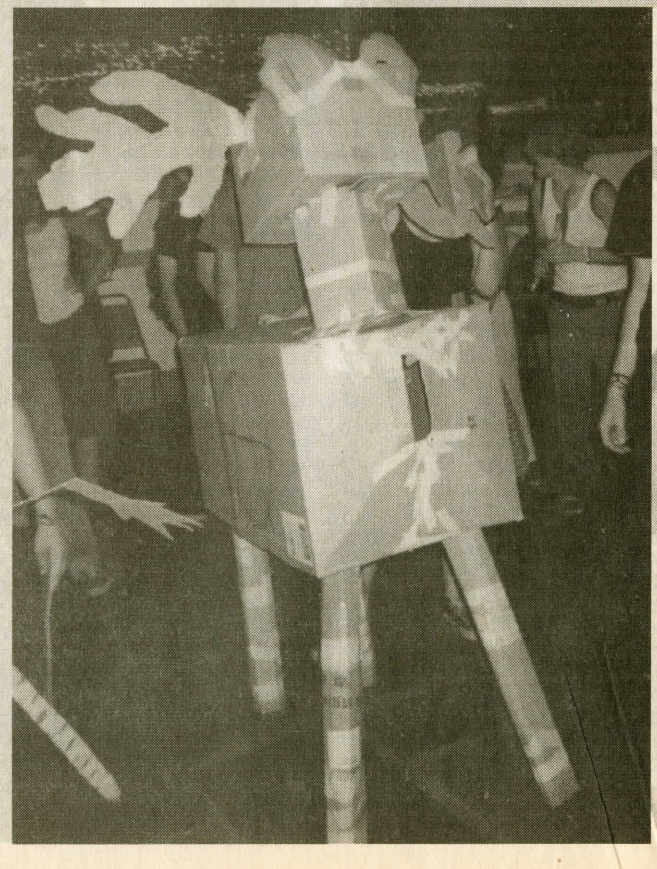
John: You know you like the first 108 record, though.

SV: I like the first Cro-Mags record, I like some Bad Brains' records, so I'm a fucking hypocrite. Everyone's hypocritical about something.

Tony: I don't own any Bad Brains or Cro-Mags records. But I even feel weird about liking Amebix, because they're pagan.

Bull: Pagans are slightly more acceptable.

Tony: Yeah but I mean, like, even if it isn't really a religion, it's not something



really like… if they don't really believe in a higher supreme power pulling the strings, I guess it's OK. But I seriously contemplate that. "Oh, shit, I like Amebix…

[we flip the tape over and the guys are talking about seeing "Dancing Jesus" in Providence]

John: At the cemetery there. Have you heard of that? It's like this Jesus statue and he's really oddly posed. The arms are outstretched but because of the way the light shines on him, if you pull your car up at certain angles…

Bull: It's like he's moving his arms around.

John: Obviously, it's just an optical illusion. We all know that and none of us are seeing things.

Todd: But at two in the morning, with six people in a van, screaming at the top of their lungs, it's nuts.

John: It's terrifying. It's so fun. Keep that on the low-low, though. They don't want a cavalcade of cars going to some cemetery.

SV: I thought of another question when I was reading something over dinner tonight. It was in [the now-defunct] *Hit List* magazine and Larry Livermore's column. His column tends to tilt a little to the right, lately. Let me find the quote that I thought would piss you guys off. [I flip through the article] "I wish I could more respectful. I wish I could see the so-called anti-capitalism/anti-globalization movement as something more than useful idiots providing cover for feral crusties and neo-barbarians." (laughter) He also talks about the "rigid, unforgiving dogmatism of St. Paul or the Pope," but wonders if it's a good idea to replace it with Noam Chomsky's secular equivalent. [he also refers to Chomsky's "turgid moanings"—obviously not a fan]

John: I mean, obviously, I think the way that guy writes often is just meant to get a rise. If he wants to waste his time taking potshots and doing that, that's cool but he's just making these generalizations that he doesn't really back up. He just says them. I'm not going to deny that there are people like that around.

SV: I do know there are people who take anything that Chomsky or Howard Zinn says at face value. There's a certain knee-jerk reaction, sometimes.

John: And like we were saying before about conspiracy theories, like wackos becoming the main face of activism and there are people like that.

SV: And the media will hype that up.

John: Sure. So that's cool to rag on that but activism isn't like that, as a whole, and if he wants to go that route and just make excluding statements, go ahead.

Bull: I think, in the last few years, the anarchist movement and the activist movements have gained a lot



of popularity within the youth subcultures, like punk rock and hip-hop and such and a lot of white middle class kids have gotten involved with it, a lot more so. Anarchism had been a lot more working class movement in the past but I think that is something that we need to work on, as a movement, is to try and get it back to its roots and involve the people who are really oppressed. There's nothing wrong with attracting middle class people. It's good to get them involved and active in any type of social change issues.

SV: There's probably a certain amount of dilettantism involved, there.

Bull: Yeah, but we need to focus on who's really being oppressed.

John: Yeah, I mean, there are critiques that we all have of the activist community in general. But you can just dismiss it, as he does, or you can try to work to make it better and more effective because it's something that you care about.

Tony: I *am* a neo-barbarian, though…

*****

A FEW MORE QUESTIONS WITH TONY:

SV: How did the tour of Europe go? You did 7 weeks, didn't you?

Tony: The tour went really well. We did indeed do 7 weeks, we went to 18 countries, as far east as Poland, to Portugal and up to Finland all the way up to the Arctic Circle. And everywhere in between. Kids were building funny props all over. There were tanks, bombers, ninjas, robots, etc… It ruled. We played with many awesome bands and met tons of rad people.

SV: What were things like over there, regarding this seemingly inevitable US war with Iraq. Did you talk about it a lot with people? Witness any of the anti-war activism? Is there a stronger movement over there than you've seen in the US?

Tony: We did talk with a lot of people about the war, but everyone was of course against it. We unfortunately were on our way to the Arctic Circle show in Finland and couldn't make the protests. There were anti-war graffiti and flyers and banners all over Europe. We had "no war" written in the dirt on our van—that was our meager statement. There does seem to be a stronger anarchist movement over there but the anti-war movement in America seems just as strong and it was really inspiring to come home.

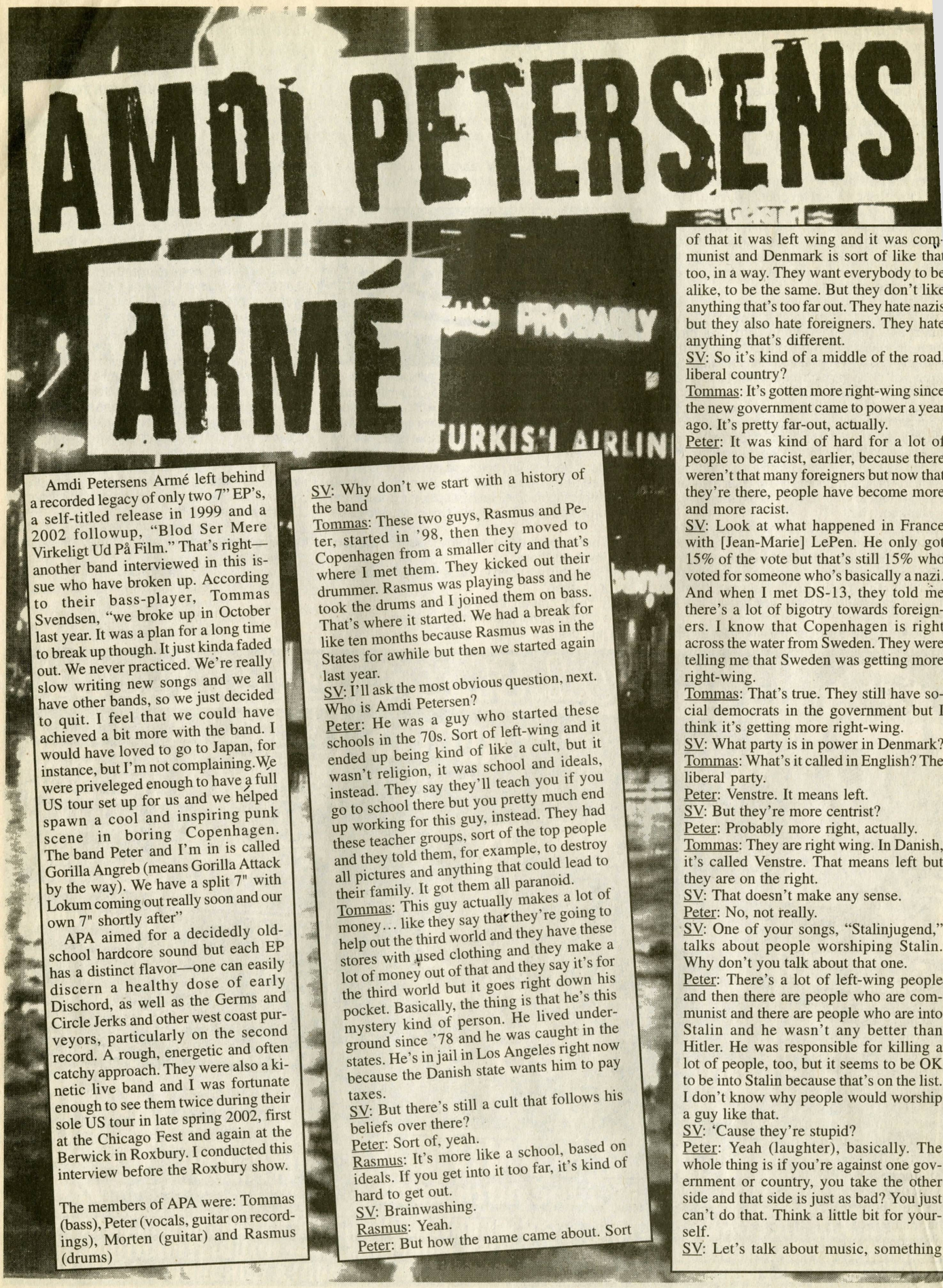
SV: Any hassles, either coming or going from the US or during the tour?

Tony: We had nothing but smooth sailing. I attribute it to the sweater I was wearing; I totally looked completely normal…

RAMBO
5023 Cedar Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19143
e-mail: tpointless@aol.com or wheel41215@aol.com



AMDI PETERSENS ARMÉ



Amdi Petersens Armé left behind a recorded legacy of only two 7" EP's, a self-titled release in 1999 and a 2002 followup, "Blod Ser Mere Virkeligt Ud På Film." That's right—another band interviewed in this issue who have broken up. According to their bass-player, Tommas Svendsen, "we broke up in October last year. It was a plan for a long time to break up though. It just kinda faded out. We never practiced. We're really slow writing new songs and we all have other bands, so we just decided to quit. I feel that we could have achieved a bit more with the band. I would have loved to go to Japan, for instance, but I'm not complaining. We were priveleged enough to have a full US tour set up for us and we helped spawn a cool and inspiring punk scene in boring Copenhagen. The band Peter and I'm in is called Gorilla Angreb (means Gorilla Attack by the way). We have a split 7" with Lokum coming out really soon and our own 7" shortly after"

APA aimed for a decidedly old-school hardcore sound but each EP has a distinct flavor—one can easily discern a healthy dose of early Dischord, as well as the Germs and Circle Jerks and other west coast purveyors, particularly on the second record. A rough, energetic and often catchy approach. They were also a kinetic live band and I was fortunate enough to see them twice during their sole US tour in late spring 2002, first at the Chicago Fest and again at the Berwick in Roxbury. I conducted this interview before the Roxbury show.

The members of APA were: Tommas (bass), Peter (vocals, guitar on recordings), Morten (guitar) and Rasmus (drums)

SV: Why don't we start with a history of the band

Tommas: These two guys, Rasmus and Peter, started in '98, then they moved to Copenhagen from a smaller city and that's where I met them. They kicked out their drummer. Rasmus was playing bass and he took the drums and I joined them on bass. That's where it started. We had a break for like ten months because Rasmus was in the States for awhile but then we started again last year.

SV: I'll ask the most obvious question, next. Who is Amdi Petersen?

Peter: He was a guy who started these schools in the 70s. Sort of left-wing and it ended up being kind of like a cult, but it wasn't religion, it was school and ideals, instead. They say they'll teach you if you go to school there but you pretty much end up working for this guy, instead. They had these teacher groups, sort of the top people and they told them, for example, to destroy all pictures and anything that could lead to their family. It got them all paranoid.

Tommas: This guy actually makes a lot of money… like they say that they're going to help out the third world and they have these stores with used clothing and they make a lot of money out of that and they say it's for the third world but it goes right down his pocket. Basically, the thing is that he's this mystery kind of person. He lived underground since '78 and he was caught in the states. He's in jail in Los Angeles right now because the Danish state wants him to pay taxes.

SV: But there's still a cult that follows his beliefs over there?

Peter: Sort of, yeah.

Rasmus: It's more like a school, based on ideals. If you get into it too far, it's kind of hard to get out.

SV: Brainwashing.

Rasmus: Yeah.

Peter: But how the name came about. Sort of that it was left wing and it was communist and Denmark is sort of like that too, in a way. They want everybody to be alike, to be the same. But they don't like anything that's too far out. They hate nazis but they also hate foreigners. They hate anything that's different.

SV: So it's kind of a middle of the road, liberal country?

Tommas: It's gotten more right-wing since the new government came to power a year ago. It's pretty far-out, actually.

Peter: It was kind of hard for a lot of people to be racist, earlier, because there weren't that many foreigners but now that they're there, people have become more and more racist.

SV: Look at what happened in France with [Jean-Marie] LePen. He only got 15% of the vote but that's still 15% who voted for someone who's basically a nazi. And when I met DS-13, they told me there's a lot of bigotry towards foreigners. I know that Copenhagen is right across the water from Sweden. They were telling me that Sweden was getting more right-wing.

Tommas: That's true. They still have social democrats in the government but I think it's getting more right-wing.

SV: What party is in power in Denmark?

Tommas: What's it called in English? The liberal party.

Peter: Venstre. It means left.

SV: But they're more centrist?

Peter: Probably more right, actually.

Tommas: They are right wing. In Danish, it's called Venstre. That means left but they are on the right.

SV: That doesn't make any sense.

Peter: No, not really.

SV: One of your songs, "Stalinjugend," talks about people worshiping Stalin. Why don't you talk about that one.

Peter: There's a lot of left-wing people and then there are people who are communist and there are people who are into Stalin and he wasn't any better than Hitler. He was responsible for killing a lot of people, too, but it seems to be OK to be into Stalin because that's on the list. I don't know why people would worship a guy like that.

SV: 'Cause they're stupid?

Peter: Yeah (laughter), basically. The whole thing is if you're against one government or country, you take the other side and that side is just as bad? You just can't do that. Think a little bit for yourself.

SV: Let's talk about music, something

more fun. A friend of mine was talking to one of you guys and he says that one of you said you only listen to older hardcore. You don't listen to much new stuff. Is that true or not?

Peter: Pretty much for most of us.

Tommas: I listen to all kinds of music. If it's good, I like it. I don't care if it's from '82 or 2000. I think there are a lot of good bands today. Not as many as there used to be. Not that I experienced that but there are some good bands now that I'm into.

Peter: I grew up in a small town in Denmark. Newbon, which means Newcastle.

SV: How far is that from Copenhagen?

Peter: Now, we've got the bridge. It's like an hour and fifteen minutes but in Denmark, that's a long way to travel. We don't travel that far, usually. But I didn't really know any new punk stuff. It was just all the old stuff I got introduced to.

SV: How did you get introduced to the old stuff?

Peter: From friends. They had a tape and I went to America for awhile, too. I was a foreign exchange student. I met some friends there and they had a bunch of tapes and I got introduced to Black Flag, Dead Kennedys and all that.

SV: Where were you an exchange student?

Peter: Silver City, New Mexico.

SV: That's kind of the middle of nowhere, too.

Peter: It is. It's a pretty cool place. I kind of liked it. If it was up to me, I would probably go to California, because that's what you hear about but I'm glad I got to New Mexico. I don't know if I would ever get there if it wasn't because of that. I really like it now.

SV: I'm trying to think, over the years, of bands from Denmark, and the only one I can think of is the Electric Deads. That was years ago. Who were some of the other old bands from Denmark?

Peter: Sods.

Tommas: City X. Enola Gay. A lot of good stuff, actually, but they didn't really release that many records compared to Sweden, for instance. They had a huge scene and released tons of records. In Denmark, there were only 20 or 30 good punk or hardcore records. Actually, the Sods are still playing. They changed the name to Sort Sol, which means black sun and they're still playing. They're a big rock band now. They're really crappy now.

Peter: They did have a bunch of good records, I think. But they changed it into more avant-garde, weird music.

Rasmus: The bands that are around are way more exciting than the old ones, I think. I think the bands that are around Denmark now are some of the most exciting things that are happening anywhere in the world. Bands like Lokum, No Hope For The Kids, stuff like that. It's way better than the old stuff but nobody knows of that stuff because they haven't released anything.

Peter: It's good, but I don't know if it's better. Some of it is. But, back then, it was new.

SV: Do you think people worship the past too much, sometimes?

Peter: Yeah, I think so. I think we do, too.

Morten: The big mistake in new hardcore is that many old hardcore bands just wanted to play music and the only thing that they could play and wanted to play was something totally new. Very raw and very exciting kind of music and, nowadays, when people start a hardcore band, I think often it's just because they hear those old hardcore bands. They think, oh, that's cool, let's play like them. The old hardcore bands didn't think 'let's play like them.' They started something new. I miss that a lot in new hardcore and new DIY music, people [changing] it in some way. There's a lot of bands who say, "oh, they sound like Void or Minor Threat or something," but there's no bands that sound like Big Boys, Minutemen, Flipper.

SV: Well, the Big Boys did a little bit of everything.

Morten: Yeah, exactly. But, nowadays, they only want to play hardcore.

SV: You're right. A lot of the bands back then had many different influences. You talked about the Big Boys. Even the Minutemen were considered a hardcore band. Black Flag. You guys played a Flipper song the other day ["Sacrifice"]. There's a band that really didn't fit in.

Rasmus: That's why we chose to play that Flipper song. Because everybody always wants bands to play Minor Threat or Black Flag. That's what they always yell for.

SV: It's actually a very good song to play right now, considering the war situation, too.

Peter: Yeah. I think it's true that people worship the past too much. I think we do too but I just don't really like many of the new bands that are around. Like he said, they're not that exciting. You can't really hear melodies. Most bands are really afraid to play a slow song, all the way through. They might play a slow part but they'll definitely speed it up. The old stuff, I like it more but I wish I would hear something new that wasn't too influenced by the old stuff that I liked.

SV: It's kind of tough because a lot of it has all been done before, unless you want to get too artsy or pretentious.

Morten: Yeah, but I don't think there's anything wrong with playing something that sounds like something from the 80s. But many bands back then didn't set out to play hardcore. They set out to play to express themselves. And with all the anger they had, the only thing they could play was hardcore. Now you set out to play hardcore and I'm not sure that's the right thing to do if you want to express yourself.

SV: The thing is, even back then, after a short time, bands did start copying each other and just played one set style.

Peter: Yeah but the good thing is they're the bands I listen to (laughs).

SV: There were a lot of bands that weren't so great. I was around then and there were a lot of bands that just copied and weren't that exciting. There's always been a limited number of good bands, no matter what the era. OK, here's another question. Tell me about "De Hjernedødes Nat" ("Night Of The Brain Dead"). It talks about seeing a lot of drunk people on Friday night. Is there a lot of alcohol and drug abuse in Denmark?

Peter: It's not really a question about whether or not you're going to start drinking. You just do it because that's part of your culture. People will think you're kind of weird if you don't drink. All three of us didn't drink for awhile but it's not a straight-edge song or anything. It just gets to be too



Photos: Chris Minicucci

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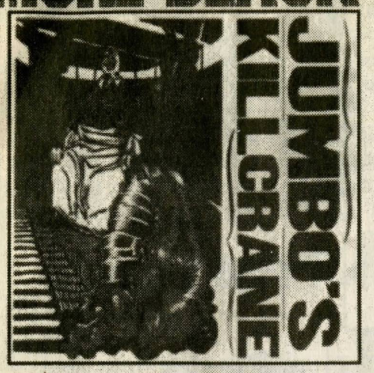

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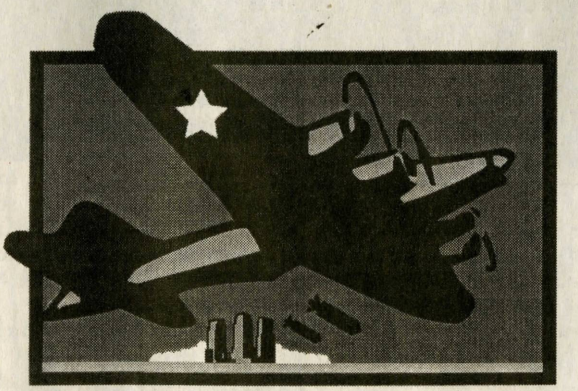

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SV: You were mentioning a little while ago that the shows here are a little different. You're used to playing in squats with people drinking and, here, the shows are earlier.

Tommas: Yeah, it's a lot different than we're used to because shows in Europe, or most of them, are in squats and they start really late, like the first band at 10 or 11, so normally, when the show is over, it's like 2 or 3 in the morning. Here, it's not unusual that the whole show is done at 10 o'clock and then you have time to hang out afterwards. I think that's pretty cool, actually. But I like it also in Europe because, mostly, there are bars and people can buy beer. There are just people hanging out for that, also. Sometimes, that's good, because then they will get to see the bands but sometimes it's bad because they just hang in the bar and don't see the bands.

Peter: I think it's pretty nice that people here come for the shows. I don't mind if people drink at shows but I think it's nice that they come to see the bands, not because it's some cheap place to buy beer.

SV: You've only done two 7"s. Are you ever going to do an album? [obviously, this was before I knew they were going to break up]

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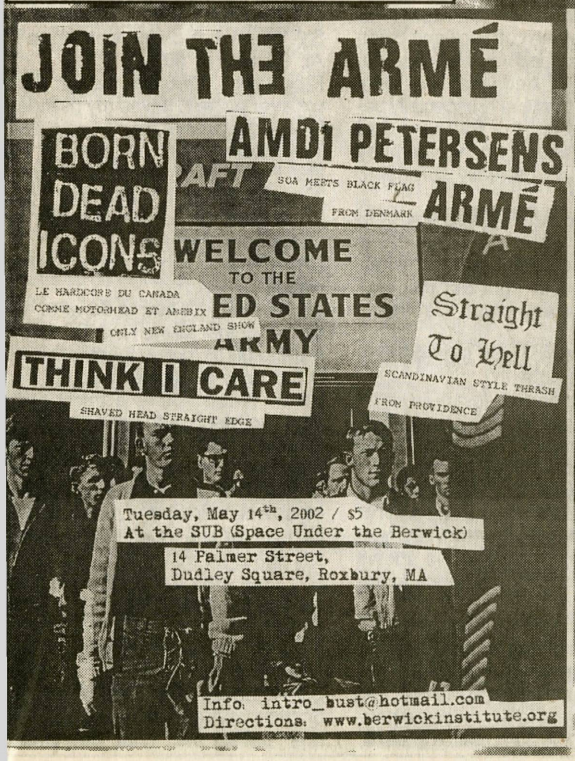

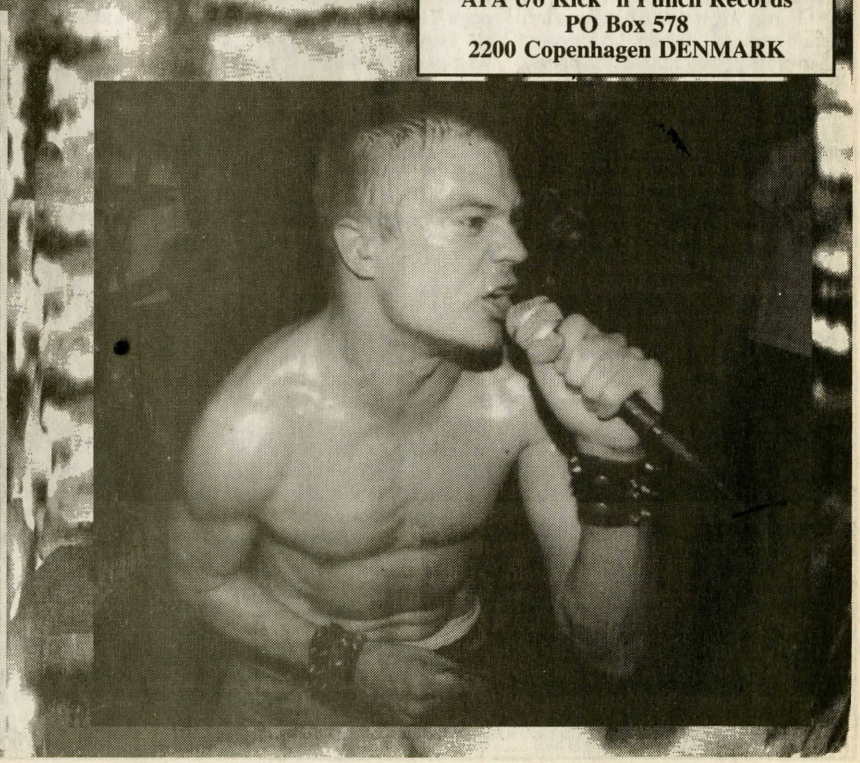

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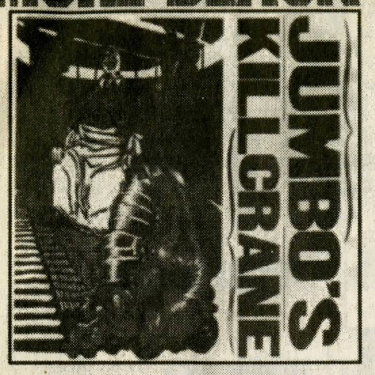

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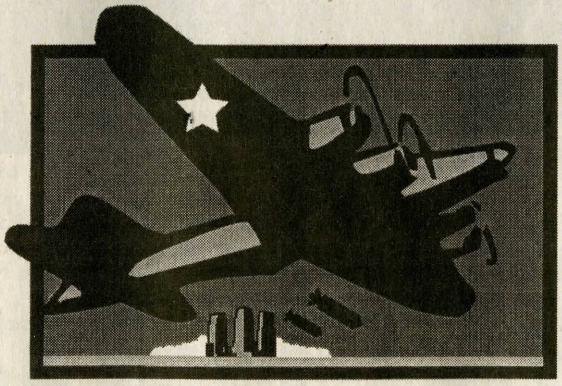

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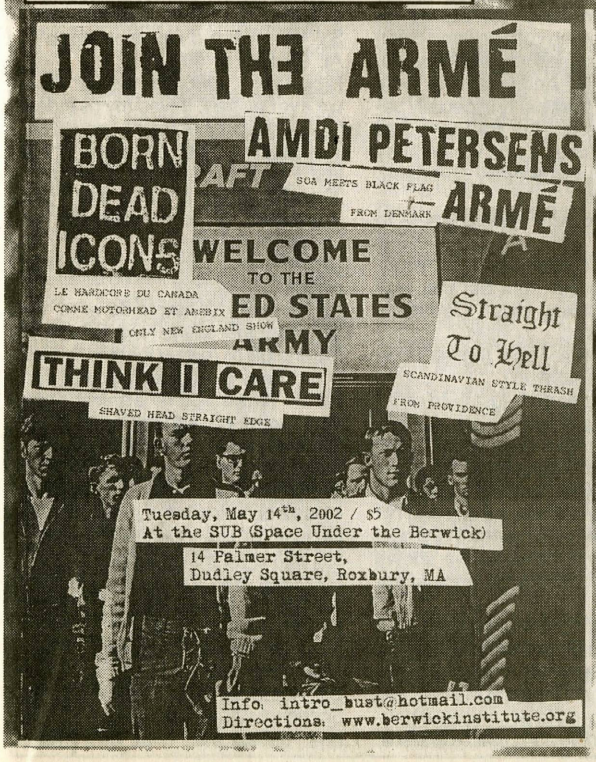




THE PIST



The Pist have appeared in these pages before—I did a short interview with them after their show at the Middle East in 1995 and that appeared in *SV* #38. At the time, I wasn't all that familiar with their music, even though they'd been around for a few years at that point. My introduction was through Lookout Records' "Punk USA" anthology and the song "Threat." The Pist had a bruising street punk meets hardcore sound that immediately connected on that song and their "Ideas Are Bulletproof" album, which I got that day. Unfortunately, being late to the party, so to speak, that was the only time I saw them before their break-up in 1996. Since then, the members have kept busy. Vocalist Al Ouimet has a solo project called God's Left Hand, that's quite a bit more experimental than what he's done before (website: http://www.thepist.com/godslefthand). Guitarist Bill Chamberlain currently plays in the two bands that spun-off from Aus-Rotten, Behind Enemy Lines and Caustic Christ. Drummer Brian Marshall was the vocalist for the Pac-Men until they split up last year. Only bassist Rick Abbott seems to be musically idle, at the moment.

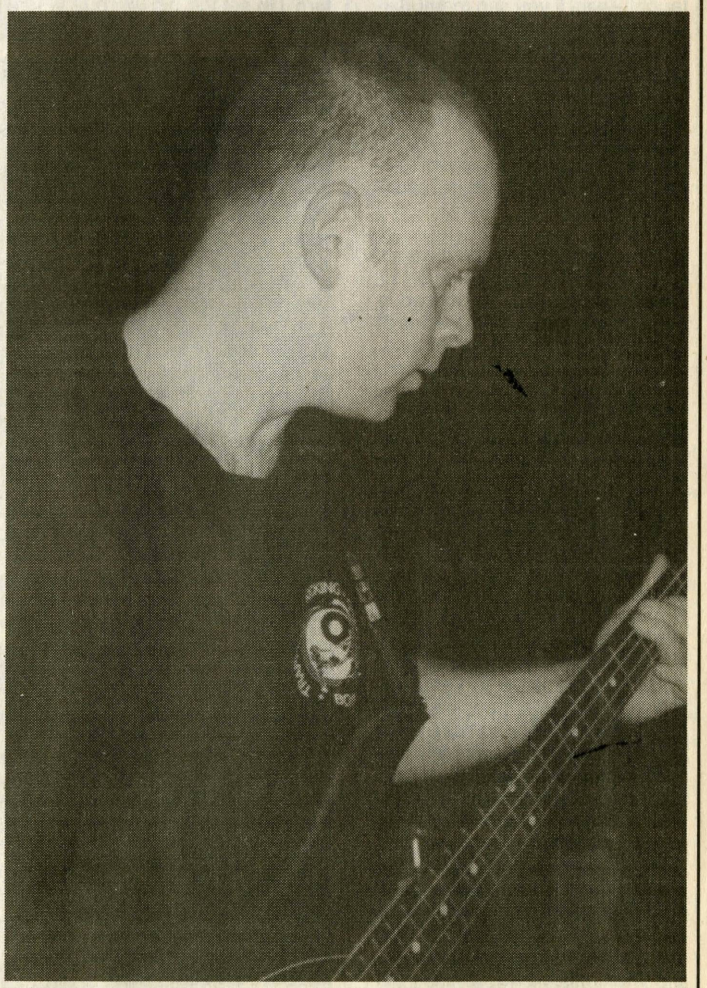
Anyway, with the closing of the mainstay New Haven, CT venue, the Tune Inn in January of 2002, the Pist decided to return for what turned out to be a pair of shows to pay tribute to the club and give people an opportunity to see them again. And it was a bona-fide event. I saw the first night and, while there were a few glitches here and there (and I was told the second show, the next day, ran more smoothly on all accounts) but, man, how fucking great to hear such songs as "Great American Sportsman," "Threat," "Textbook Salvation" and, hell yeah, "We're The Pist" again. It also provided the opportunity to do a more in-depth interview with the guys, in the dressing room at the Tune Inn before their set. While the Unseen wailed away, we talked for nearly three quarters of an hour—not only about the Pist but also about wider issues and there are some diverging opinions on those concerns, as you'll read.

There's been a double LP/CD anthology of out of print, demo and live material in the works for a few years, now, but it still hasn't been released, as of this writing. Bill claims that its release is imminent. The vinyl will include a few more tracks than the CD. They also recorded the reunion shows and there could eventually be a live album from that. Bill also mentioned a number of unfinished demos for what would have been a second album, but there weren't any vocals recorded for it. The process for getting this stuff has been slower than me finishing SV—in other words, glacial!

SV: So the first question is the most obvious one. Why are there so damn many state troopers hiding in speed traps in Connecticut?
Al: We need the money for the taxes.
SV: Yeah! Isn't the state in really dire financial straits right now, anyway?
Al: The city where I live is in real bad shape.
SV: Where do you live?
Al: Waterbury. You may have read about us recently in the news about our mayor and some like 9 year old...
SV: Your pedophile mayor?
Bill: I heard about that even in Pittsburgh.
Al: Everybody heard about it everywhere.
SV: I've always been curious, everytime I drive through Waterbury, about that giant cross on the hill and it says "Holy Land."
Al: "Holy Land." Built in 1968. This guy was part of a religious pilgrimage to build a miniature version of Jerusalem and Bethlehem and all the sites where Jesus lived and visited. It's all in miniature in cement and all the odds and ends, like cars and stuff, all thrown together. But it closed down in 1974 and it's just been a wasteland ever since. There's all kinds of junkies that sleep up there inside the caves and stuff. It's crazy.
SV: OK, let's get to the real questions. Bill, I remember you mentioned to me the possibility of doing a reunion awhile ago but what made you guys decide to do it? Is it strictly because of the Tune Inn closing or was it something you'd talked about for awhile.
Bill: Well, we had talked about it but we could never quite get it together. Everybody didn't want to do it at the same time. I had wanted to do it and I'd talked to Brian and he'd wanted to do it and Al had wanted to do it and Rick had wanted to do it but it just didn't seem right to everybody, I guess.
Al: Right. There was never a real reason why we *should* do it other than, hell, let's get together and play and have a good time but that didn't seem like enough. This time, it was kind of... we started out here at Tune Inn playing and we used to practice here when we didn't have a place to practice. Fernando used to let us in at night and practice. Brian got his car stolen outside (laughter) one night when we were practicing. So, yeah, it's kind of like a farewell to Tune Inn and the whole scene revolving around this place.
Brian: It just felt right. I just say, yeah, this is what I want to do and never gave it a full thought. I said yeah, let's do it.
Al: I was really surprised when I asked you because Fernando called me. He asked me and I said I can't speak for everybody, let me call Rick and Brian and I talked you and you were just like, "yeah, I'll do it." And I was like "holy shit!" I couldn't believe it, especially because you've got the Pac-Men and everything going on and you're busy with that and I was really surprised.
[Rick walks in]
SV: OK, Rick, why did you agree to do it?
Rick: Well, it's been asked for years and it was never right but this was right. It's a fucking blast. 'Cause it's fun.
SV: Why is the Tune Inn shutting down? Is the lease up?
Al: I think Fernando is just tired of living his life totally for this place. Most people don't realize how hard Fernando works at keeping this place running and what he does. He literally lives this place 24 hours a day and I'm sure he makes less money than most of the kids who come to the shows here and bitch about the price at the door.
Bill: You hear bands complain about not getting paid here when 25 people came and Fernando has to pay out more than what he took at the door just to cover the people who worked here that night. People don't realize that shit. They just talk shit about Fernando.
SV: A lot of people, to be honest, have talked shit about him to me. I've had bands tell me that.
Bill: I mean, he's a businessman. But he loves the scene. This is how he makes his living. He's going to make money.
Al: Yeah. It's like a bunch of kids coming to where you work and bitching about the way you do your job. This is how he makes his living and some people don't understand that, sometimes, you have to charge a little more at the door just to actually make a little bit to pay your rent every month. He's always been cool with us. He used to always let us do six hour punk shows, as long as he had enough money to open the door and pay a couple of people who were working here, then he was cool with that.
Bill: I'd love to have you go ask Fernando how much money he's made off of the shows I've booked at the Tune Inn and I've booked a lot of shows here. Fernando never made any money. This is probably the first show that I've ever been involved with that he's making money. OK, the Pist record release party, he did really well at, too but, besides that... maybe the Conflict show. He might have made some money then.
Brian: A show like this, he could have charged a lot of money and gotten away with it. But it's an $8 show.
SV: It looks like he has his hands full because every time I came to the Tune Inn, which is sporadically, it seems like this area gets more gentrified. I see the fancy restaurants around the corner and I just wonder how much of a hassle he's had because of the development, here.
Bill: He's had a huge hassle because of that. He's had all kinds of problems with the police and the city and people just doing anything to get him out of here. They don't like this place. The rest of the fancy restaurants and shit, they don't want this place here.
SV: When did you guys break up?
Al: '96. May of '96.
Rick: May 5, 1996 was the last show we ever played. It was my birthday. That's the only reason I know that. The last two or three songs of the last Pist show, I didn't even play. 'Cause I broke a string and I just stood there. So I didn't even play the last couple of songs.
SV: Why did you break up in the first place?
Al: I think it just had to do with.. we were together all the time. Brian and me and Bill all moved together, which is probably a mistake if you're in a band. When you're around each other so much, something's bound to happen sooner or later. There were personal differences, we were kind of going different ways musically and it was a combination of a lot of things. I kind of felt like we were at a standstill with what we were doing.
SV: That was the time punk was starting to really break on a mainstream level and weren't there rumors of labels sniffing around you guys, too?
Bill: Actually, I think it was about two or three days after we broke up, Epitaph called me. That was pretty



funny. I just laughed at them.
Al: We always heard second or third hand that labels were asking about us, but never directly. We never got a lot of offers from people.
SV: I've heard from different people that the punk scene's dying out in Connecticut, although I think the turnout tonight kind of disproves that, a bit. Any observations on that at all?
Brian: I don't think that's true. I know a lot of bands who play around here, we have a lot of good shows and, actually, the shows have grown in numbers in the last two years. Two years ago, when the Pac-Men first started playing, there were 30-40 people at a show at the Newtown Teen Center. Over time, it's grown to where we have like 200 people at our show. It's between 100 and 150 average. It's definitely more than it was. And there are a couple of new places that have started doing shows, like the Waterbury VFW and a couple of basement places.
SV: This is going to leave a void, though.
Brian: I think it will but there are other places opening up. It came down but it's going back up.
Bill: It's always running in cycles. I did shows two weeks apart right before I left. At one show, there were 350 people and at the other show, there were like 75 people and that was Life's Halt and Kill Your Idols. It was just weird. The bands playing the show where there were 350 people were nowhere near as good as the bands who played the show with 75 people.
SV: I know what some of you have done since the Pist split up. Bill, I know you did Broken and React, then Aus-Rotten for a bit and now you're in both Behind Enemy Lines and Caustic Christ. And you did a project with Jim Martin?
Bill: It's called Scarred.
SV: Al, you were in East Coast Panic?
Al: Yeah, I did East Coast Panic. There was another band called Peelangoo. It was me, Jen and Ken from East Coast Panic and Gerry from 100 Demons. It was kind of a short-lived band. It was a project, almost. We played a bunch of shows around here and set an expiration date and stopped playing. I was in the Baltimore Footstompers with Jim Martin. Other than being in a couple of cover bands... I did a Black Flag tribute band and a Misfits tribute band with Brian and Rick and that was pretty fun.
Brian: Halloween 2000.
Al: Halloween 2000. We practiced for three months almost every night and then we played two shows. It was pretty cool. Full costumes. Right now, I built a studio in my basement and I'm just writing music on my own right now. It's all over the place. It's all kinds of different styles. I'm going to do something with it, eventually. Form it into a band, but not until I'm done writing everything.
SV: Did you do anything between the Pist and the Pac-Men, Brian?
Brian: Yeah, I was in East Coast Panic for a little while, drumming. Besides that, me and Al did a cable access show, which rocked. And I do a cable access show with one of the guys from the Pac-Men, too, Jerry.
SV: What is it? A music show?
Brian: Usually music. We goof around. I can't talk about what I've done in the last couple of years without talking about cable access because that's where it's at.
Al: It's been a major part.
Brian: How long did that last? Like two years?
Al: One year exactly.
SV: That's awesome. I do community radio and it's the same thing. It's just something I love doing.
Brian: Just to be able to get hardcore or cool music out there on TV. To be able to turn on your TV and it's DOA or something.
SV: How about you, Rick?
Rick: Musically, I played guitar in East Coast Panic for awhile and then I was in 138 with Al and Brian. We ruled. Pretty much, that's it. I go to a show every now and then and watch the Discover channel. Drive a truck around and put out fires.
SV: Are you a fireman?
Rick: No, I drive a delivery truck but, on a rare occasion, I do stop and put out roadside fires.
Al: I saw him do it one day. I pulled up to a traffic light and saw a fire on the side of the road. I drove to the next intersection and I looked again and I saw a truck stopped and Rick getting out with a fire extinguisher and putting it out. That was pretty good.
SV: I have some questions about some lyrics that I didn't ask you the first time we did an interview. As a former retail worker, I always appreciated "The Customer Is Always Right." Which one of you guys worked in retail? 'Cause I know it had to come from first-hand experience.
Al: I worked in a gas station for a long time. I worked in convenience stores. The whole "Clerks" thing going on. I mean, anyone who's ever done it knows it sucks but it's a necessary job. Someone's got to sell shit to people. Otherwise, no one gets anything.
SV: OK... on "Black and Blue Collar," there's a line that says, "blue collar pride is a fucking shame."
Al: Well, I just think there are a lot of people stuck in these shitty jobs that are physically demanding and they don't get paid a lot of money but they're proud to be...
SV: Working class!
Al: Yeah. Almost like selling yourself short. I mean, I work a blue collar job but I know I could do better than that. I'd like to think that, hopefully, little by little, I'm working my way out of it and trying to achieve something better.
SV: You've built your studio, for instance.
Al: Yeah. I was going to school at night a little bit and learning a trade. It's a different kind of thing. Something I enjoy doing.
SV: What's your day job right now?



Al: Right now, I work for a paint company. I manufacture industrial coatings. You can't get much more blue collar than that, I guess. Unless I worked in a factory. Or drove a truck. Are you proud of it?
Rick: Yes, extremely. (pauses) No... it sucks! (laughter)
Al: It sucks that you've got to get up at what time tomorrow morning?
Rick: 5:00. It pays your bills and all of that. It's the same thing for pretty much everybody who works.
Brian: I don't have a blue collar job, I think. I work in the health field. I work in a group home for people who are mentally retarded.
SV: My wife does that too. It's definitely blue collar work. That's tough work. It's considered professional but you and I both know it's grunt work and it's hard.
Brian: It's tough. You have to have a lot of patience and be very understanding. It's very rewarding if you can do it.
SV: "Textbook Salvation" seems kind of prescient, given all the attention being paid to education reform right now. Any thoughts on that? I get the impression from those lyrics that you almost look at education as a form of brainwashing.
Al: I'm not saying every school is this way, because there are a lot of good teachers in schools and there are a lot of good schools but a lot of what you're taught when you're young—at least the way I was taught—was if you can memorize something and repeat it, you'll do fine. There was no real emphasis on understanding concepts. It was more, like, here it is, now say it back and if you can do that, you're going to go far in life.
SV: And that's what's happening—it's all repetition and drilling. Teaching to the test.
Al: Right.
SV: So, any thoughts about what's going on in the world since 9/11? And another thing I've noticed is there seems to be an embracing of patriotism even in the punk scene.
Bill: I've noticed this in Pittsburgh, a little bit. At one of our shows, people were yelling patriotic things and, you know... there's good people in this country but, sometimes, our government does really fucked up shit and our people suffer for it. I think that's what happened with the World Trade Center, because of some of our country's policies. Don't get me wrong—it's not right to fly a plane into the World Trade Center. That's more evil than anything we've ever done. But we have to keep our noses out of other people's business, as well. That's something we have to do and our government has to do. None of us want to go and take another country's oil and gas. We have no interest in this other country monetarily and for profits. A lot of it comes down to the way this system is a capitalist system and it's all about greed and money and the way you step on the little guy and anything to get ahead.
SV: That's a good way to justify the huge military budget.
Bill: Right. That's all my opinion.
Rick: That's a really good question. I've never been a flag waver but I also have feelings now that I've never had before. I'm not this big war guy, where I think that's the answer to everything but, when this first happened, I was at your (Al's) house and we were talking about that. Even in the Persian Gulf, I thought that was wrong for the United States to be there but, in this case... I don't even know how to put it into words. I'm not pro-war but, in this instance, there's really no alternative. You have to do something. But it's going to be fucked up. This has been the first time where I actually.. If it means one innocent person dying over there for an innocent person to live here.. I was actually alright with that, in a way. And I've never felt that way. So it's a fucked up situation. This was the first time where I was like, "people need to die." There's no other choice, really. At Wesleyan, where they were protesting... you have the right to do that.
SV: Some people actually don't think you have the right to do that, since it's during 'wartime,' and I think that's unfortunate.
Rick: But people are saying we have to teach tolerance, which I agree with, but you're not going to teach tolerance to somebody who would just as soon kill you.
SV: But does it accomplish anything by going over there and decimating that country [Afghanistan, at the time] and killing thousands of innocent people?
Rick: It's not going to stop terrorism but they're not going to fucking do it again.
SV: You think so? They were crazy enough to fly into the fucking World Trade Center.
Rick: I don't know. I don't have some great words worked out for the answer to this and that but I don't think it's wrong for us to go over there and do what we're doing.
Al: I think I'm maybe halfway between Bill and Rick's opinions. I feel that, if things were done differently in the past, this wouldn't have happened but it has happened. Going over there and blowing everything up is probably not the right answer. I don't have a better answer right now. If you put me in charge of the country, I wouldn't know what the hell to do. If I really knew more about it... I always feel like we don't know really what's going on behind the scenes and we're not informed enough. Maybe it's my fault I'm not informing myself, enough.
SV: First of all, the media, the mainstream press, at least, doesn't really want the truth to get out about what's going on. They don't want people to know about the civilians being killed, because that hurts the propaganda effort.
Al: Right, right. And the other types of press—independent press and leftist press bend it towards their way, also. So you've got to kind of take everything into consideration.
SV: Even something like the BBC is reporting more than you'll hear in the US media and that's a fairly reputable source. Do you have anything to say about this, Brian?
Brian: Yeah. You can't just say there's no alternative. The only way you can say that is if you assume that everything you hear from the media is true, which we know isn't true. I don't think we can say America is less wrong than they are, so let's go over there and do what we have to do. There's no easy answer. I definitely don't have it.
Al: Does anybody in the room think nothing should have been done, mili-





tarily?
Rick: No.
Bill: I just think that if we'd stayed out of people's business to start with, it probably wouldn't have happened. And I have no answer for this. I think Al said something about it... these people who are the liberal people here are just as warped as the right wing people. You don't know who the hell to believe. All this stuff coming, all this bullshit coming from all different sides. People from our generation haven't ever been through this before. There's been small things here and there.
Rick: It's like a video game. You sit on the couch watching TV, eating dinner, watching a video game. That's what it was, in the media. Because I know people who were right there and could have very easily died. People who ran from the scene and had shit flying by them. Just because I knew somebody doesn't mean you have to go kill somebody, but there's no easy answer. To sum it up in a fucked-up way, and I remember telling you this, people need to fucking die. There's no other way.
Brian: You know that's what's going to happen and it sucks... [tape reaches end of side... when it resumes, we were talking about the increase in super-patriotism] The outrageous patriotism in the country—you can't say anything, now. It's ridiculous. I hate that. I can't stand it.
SV: I wrote abut that in my last issue and I have to admit I was shocked that I didn't get any hate mail about it. Maybe they're not just paying attention but, the thing is, even in the punk scene, you hear sentiments along the lines of, "if you disagree with what the government's doing in this instance, get the fuck out."
Rick: I'm not a big flag-waver or Joe Patriot. I still have the same beliefs I did before but I also have new beliefs. Sitting there watching the planes going into the building. And another plane crashed into the ground and killed a lot of people and another plane crashed into the Pentagon. I'm not even saying people NEEEED to die. I don't mean it to be like that but, watching that, I had thoughts. It's different. You started to say our generation is removed from any war other than the Persian Gulf. We were all born at the tail end of Vietnam.
Bill: I remember Vietnam. I remember seeing the kill count on the news every night.
Rick: We've all had comfortable lives.. other than shit that we've done to ourselves. We all eat, we all have a place to live and I'm not saying that justifies going and killing people so we can keep that but we're a nation of pansies. We are. It's the god's honest truth. We've all lived comfortable enough lives where we could have dissent and we could realize what's wrong with the government and how it should be, ideally, and everything but it's also because of the way that I think. We're so afraid to hurt anybody's feelings, no matter what, and what everybody thinks about them and that's what it came to. We are partly responsible for what happened because we let so much go. The government reacts to shit that they shouldn't and then they let a lot of shit go and it just gets all fucked up and this is what it came to. Especially in this scene. I'm not saying I want to go out and beat somebody up because I disagree with them but everybody is so...
SV: You're trying to talk about "PC" without using the word.
Rick: Well, yeah. You can't do anything to hurt anybody's feelings and I'm not even saying I want to go out to attack this or that.
Bill: I wouldn't say we're all pansies but we're all very comfortable, but he said. And that's how these corporations want us. This country and our good friends, like Europe and Canada [well, that may not be true anymore—Al], they're all fat, too, and they're all happy. Let's decimate the rest of the world and we'll just crush these people, take all their money—maybe I'm exaggerating a little bit—but we don't experience what these other countries experience. We don't have that hardship. Because we don't see it, we don't understand it.
SV: The powers that be don't want people to think too much.
Bill: That's right.
SV: Because if people realized what was really going on in the world, there would be a revolt.
Bill: Like they say, a revolt is only three meals away. Go without a meal three times and people in this country are going to be fucking PISSED!
SV: Pist!!
Rick: That's why the money from this show is buying me a gun. I've got all my food and water put away. I've already got my 14 day waiting period. I'm buying a big gun!
Brian: I just wanted to say I think it's dangerous... A) Rick talking the most, B) taking away from freedoms, where they pass laws with this overzealous, "oh shit, the terrorists, here they come" kind of attitude where people don't have the right to protest. That's just wrong. Everyone should have a right to protest and it shouldn't be taken away. Everything lately has been, "well what about 9/11?" That doesn't mean you can change the laws and take away rights and freedoms. Unfortunately, that's what's going to happen. That's the one thing that's really dangerous about it.
SV: You hear polls where people seem to be willing to give up some of their constitutional rights for more security.
Brian: Yeah, that's messed up.
Rick: I'm not down with just being randomly pulled over and having my car ripped apart. I'm not down with shit like that.
Brian: Don't worry so much about the PC people. I worry more about stuff like that. Me and Chris were just talking on the way up about the guy who's been arrested as a traitor, the American Taliban [John Walker Linde] Everyone's asking for his head. If they're going to shoot him, they might as well shoot somebody like me or all my friends.
SV: You could be next.
Rick: I would kill him. I would fucking kill him. Dude, I'm glad this is only two shows (laughter)
SV: See, this is why these guys broke up in the first place. Now we're getting to the truth here. Alright, let's ask a question that has nothing to do with politics. You're all over 30, except for Brian. Does it feel strange growing older in the punk scene, playing to people who are often a lot younger than you? I mean, this is the question people always ask me. How do you keep your enthusiasm after so long? I mean, Bill, you've told me you've been around this music since the late 70s.
Bill: I was out of it for awhile when I was really heavily into drugs but, like the Casualties say, it's a way of life (laughter). I couldn't imagine not being involved in the punk scene. Even if I was 75. Nobody's going to stop me from doing it. A lot of people seem to enjoy when I play music and I have a really good time and I get to get my aggressions out. And I get to work with people like Al and Brian. Al's written the best lyrics of any band I've been in. Why would I want to deprive myself of this? I couldn't live without it.
SV: That's cool, because so many people grow out of it, grow away from it. Maybe they take some of the mentality with them, but it ends up being a certain stage of their life and sometimes I wonder the same thing. Why am I still doing this? Shouldn't I move on with my life and I always end up going, fuck no, this is what makes me happy.
Bill: Yeah. I mean, I could see myself not playing in bands at some point. But I still want to be involved in the scene, somehow, someway. Even just going to see shows.
Brian: I'm 25 now and I have the same outlook I had when I was 17. You can say that's naïve or that's not growing up or it's supposed to be a phase and you should be done with it, but I don't think that way. I think it's a great outlook. A great way to live. I think it's all about optimism, basically. I could have grown up and said, fuck it, I give up, but I feel kind of like this is not giving up. This is living my life the way I want to.
Al: I just turned 32 and I've consider myself punk or whatever since I first heard the music when I was 12 years old and I think I'll always consider myself that as long as I live. My feelings haven't changed. They've mutated into different things but it's always having the feeling that you don't fit in somewhere. You're in a room full of people and you feel like you're alone. That's how I've always felt and I think that's how I'm always going to feel. I go back and forth with punk music. I've always loved it. I don't know if I always want to play it. I want to try other things, which is one of the main reasons I got into punk in the first place. Because I was tired of listening to the same stuff over and over again. So I go in phases where I'm tired of listening to punk over and over again. So I'll listen to something else for awhile. I'll try playing something else for awhile. I always want to grow, one way or another, whether it's with punk music or not but I'm always going to have that attitude and that's what's important to me is the punk attitude. Like the Wrecks said, "punk is an attitude..."

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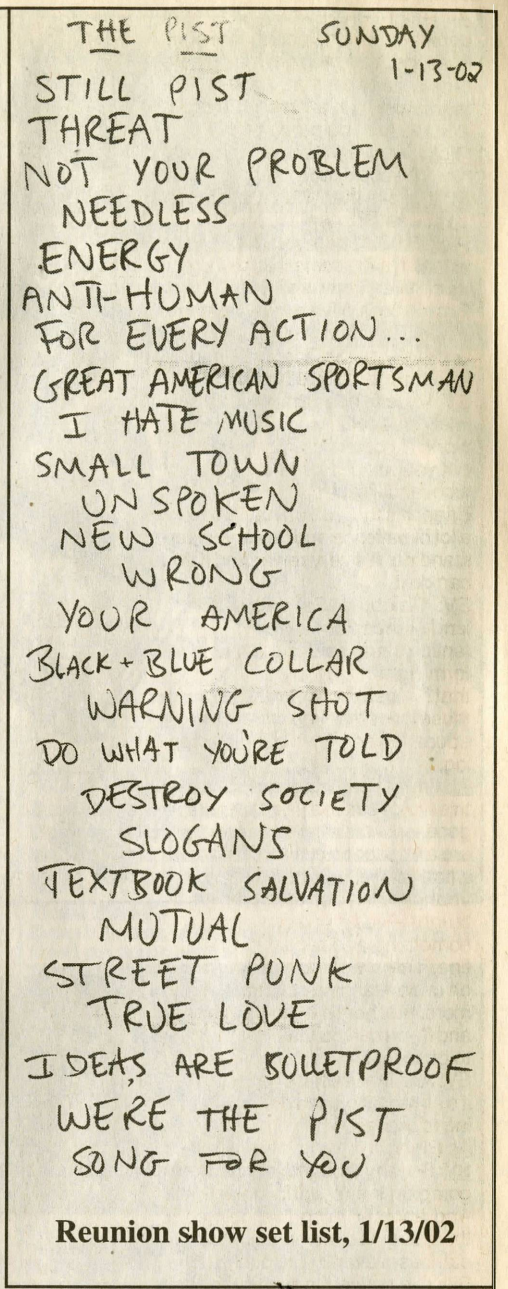
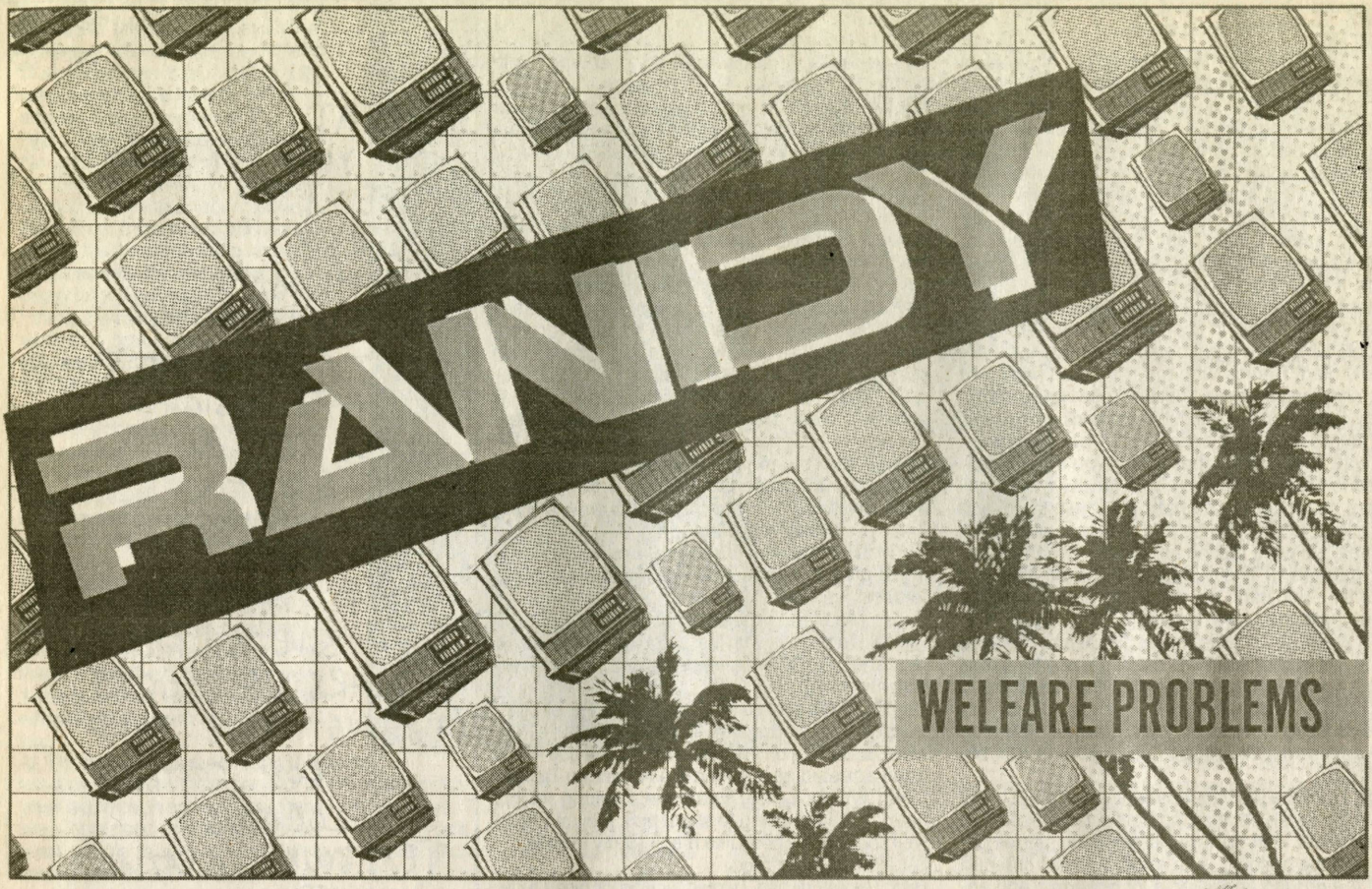


Reunion show set list, 1/13/02



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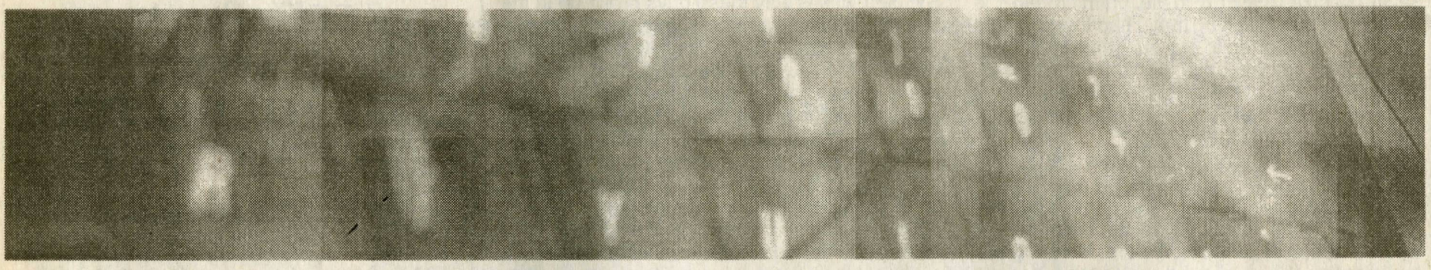



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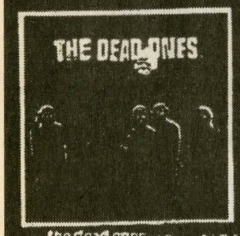

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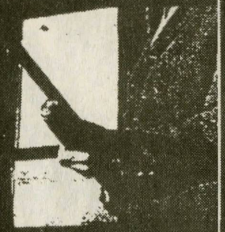

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A.18-Forever After Nothing (Victory)

Amendment 18's new album has a combination of different hardcore styles, from bruising speed to heavy groove to some Black Flag-ish careen. Isaac barks out the vocals with passion and fire and the attack is focused and aggressive, particularly for "Three Times Said," "Things I Don't Believe" and "Scars Upon Scars." There's enough punk to go with the rock, here, and that overcomes the chug factor. (346 N. Justine St., Suite 504, Chicago, IL 60607)

ADICTS-Rise and Shine (Captain Oi)

I adore the Adicts but this is a mediocre effort. Monkey doesn't even sound like himself anymore, his vocal strength sounding diminished and it's a collection of songs largely devoid of energy. Where's the snap? The ribald spirit? Granted, it's better than some of the band's real travesties, such as "Fifth Overture," and a few songs, such as "Swat Her," "Black Sheep" and "I'm So Cool" get the toes tapping. But that doesn't make up for the kitschy music hall numbers, ballads, dance fluff or watered-down pop. (PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 8QA, ENGLAND)

ADZ-American Steel (Steel Cage)

The rock and the roll from these west coast veterans, with the requisite punk attitude. What else would you expect from a band that involves Tony Reflex (aka Tony Adolescent) and Bruce Duff, who logged time with Jeff Dahl, Cheetah Chrome, et al. Loud, but also catchy, particularly for the title track, "Dr. Rat and Dan The Bowl" and the flat-out rocking "Vertigo." The opening licks of "Kiss My Fist" get things started with attitudinal bad-assery. Meant to be cranked. (PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125)

AFTERLIFE-Enter The Dragon (Crucial Response)

Spain's Afterlife procure a six song bout of melodic youth crew with a strong degree of energetic, spirited drive on this EP. A reliance upon that highly structured formula of old, circumvented by a modest array of harmonic hooks recalls vestiges of a "Fast Cars"-era Fastbreak sound at times, though a slightly heftier NYHC-esque assault graces the effort at intervals, as well. This is an invariably solid recording, offering notable vitality to a time tested approach through the creative usage of layered change-ups, and a skillful array of builds, breakdowns, and shout-alongs. A strong symmetry between incensed straight edge structural schematics and melody is forged here. (Kaiserfeld 98, 46047 Oberhausen, GERMANY) *(Mike Ramek)*

AGAINST ME-Against Me Is Reinventing Axl Rose (No Idea)

Against Me hail from the diverse and talented musical scene of Gainesville, and do not disappoint. The band does throw the listener a curveball though, in the form of stripped down, acoustic sing-along punk anthems. With the singer screaming, singing and crooning like Sam McPheeters on speed over the sloppy and heartfelt campfire hardcore songs, this is something new and exciting, played from the heart, and with excellent lyrics to boot. This disc can simultaneously make you weep, laugh and start a revolution. No complaints, a rare thing indeed. (PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604) *(Greg)*

AGAINST ME-The Disco Before The Breakdown (No Idea, EP)

The kids are going nuts for Against Me—well, some of the kids, anyway. And the appeal eludes me. Folksy, singy-songy punk and only the title track really grabs my ear, although the horns are out of place. "Tonight We're Going To Give It 35%" just sounds overwrought with angst and "Beginning In An Ending" is a wretched acoustic piece. But there are lots of insecure, sensitive college and post-collegiate folks who will eat this right up and that's their prerogative but I'm staying away. (PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604)

A GLOBAL THREAT-Here We Are (Punk Core)/ What The Fuck Will Change (Punk Core)

More hard-driving punk from AGT for their latest album, "Here We Are." The lyrics show some maturity and the band—a three-piece on this recording—hammer out the fast-paced sounds. Bruising and aggressive, with the standard early 80s UK influences, though given a shot of hardcore adrenalin, particularly for "Living Dead" and "DF." "What The Fuck" is a reissue of their first album and including two previously-unreleased songs. The lineup on this disc included Mark Unseen sharing vocals with Bryan and the sound is closer to the Unseen. Mostly hard and fast, although "Live For Now" takes a more melodic, trad-punk turn. (PO Box 916, Middle Village, NY 11953)

A LIFE ONCE LOST-The Fourth Plague: Flies (Robodog, EP)

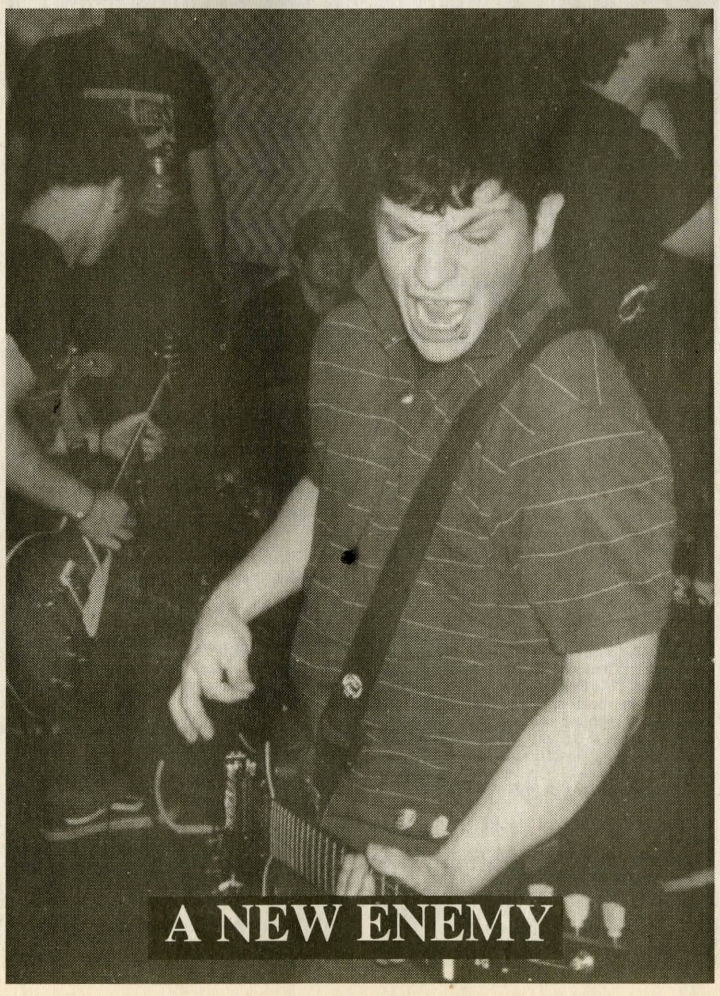
Don't let that icky title and cover art scare you away, because A Life Once Lost are a new contender in the underground grindcore scene. Where they're from, I don't know, because bands only put website addresses in their albums now (completely alienating those who can't afford computers, but, I digress), but ALOL have appeared out of nowhere with quite a bang on this 12-minute EP. The disc has an overall quality about it that puts it up to Hydra Head or Relapse standards, with excellent artwork, layout and production (slightly muddy, but it still sounds great). The music itself would also fit in fine on either of the above labels. ALOL combine swirling, buzzing mindfucking riffs with off-tempo beats, creating a sound that brings to mind heavy-heavyweights such as The Dillinger Escape Plan and Pig Destroyer. The Pig Destroyer reference also applies to the great lyrics, which are sparse, poetic and completely disturbed. All in all, one great, progressive and disorienting release, although I'm glad it wasn't longer than 12 minutes. The human psyche can only take so much. (PO Box 738, Freehold, NJ 07728/vinyl available on Deathwish, 10 Lothrop St., Beverly, MA 01915) *(Greg)*

ALLERGIC TO WHORES-The Lipstick Murders (Sound Pollution)/Life Through Death's Eyes (Rodent Popsicle)/1331 Chaos Before Death (Dark Front, EP)
ALLERGIC TO WHORES/MCCARTHY COMMISSION-Split (Rodent Popsicle)

ATW's "Shadows In The Killing Field" was one of the best records of 2001 and, since then, they've been pretty prolific, with an album, two mini-albums and split. Moving in a somewhat more gothic direction, for want of a better term. A darker ambiance, both musically and lyrically. For "The Lipstick Murders," piano is used to doomy effect on a few songs, but the emphasis is still on buzz-bomb aggressiveness... still, the mid-tempo "Four Floored Room" shows a different side of the band, as well as "Muckworm." The adrenalin is in full-effect for the rant 'n rage of "Die!!!" and "Attack." The handclaps are a nice touch for "A Casket Beneath." Raw, unvarnished hardcore punk. There's a rough-sounding 17 minute live set included as a bonus track and it whets the appetite to see these guys in that setting. On the split, they continue in a similar vein, with the almost screamo-like "Buried Alive" balanced out by the throttling brevity of "Erase." But they're upstaged a bit by Pittsburgh hardcore punk band the McCarthy Commission. Heck, I almost spelled their hometown Pissed-burg and that's a good description of their sound. Pointed lyrics and a blistering attack, particularly for "Off To War" and "Hate Is Not A Family Value." Other songs deal with the NRA, the Christian Coalition and rape. Nothing lightweight, by any stretch. "Life Through Death's Eyes" is a 9 song effort, once again balancing full-out blasts with moodier, somewhat heavier moments. "At The Heels Of Our Heart's Demise" and "Death's Grip" rage with the fervor of old. Finally, "1331 Chaos Before Death" is the band's latest release, a 7 song EP that once again blends the aggro with the more somber stuff and isn't always as enthralling, although "Dead Man's Noos," "Where They End Where I Begin" and the opening "Walker Lake" hit hard. (Sound Pollution: PO Box 17742, Covington, KY 41017/Rodent Popsicle: PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134/Dark Front: PO Box 291, St. Charles, MO 63302-0291)

ALL IS SUFFERING-The Past: Vindictive Sadisms Of Petty Bureaucrats (Crucial Blast)

Pretty caustic stuff here from Maryland's All Is Suffering, who give us material spanning the years 1991 to 2001 on this hopefully-not-too-seriously-titled disc. The band has an underground crust sensibility to them, but play a more ravaging black metal-influenced grindcore of sorts, not without a hardcore feel to the vocals and overall production sound and vibe. Whatever you wanna call it, it's pretty damn good, taking the brutality of black metal but leaving the elves and gnomes behind; having the energy of crust punk without the relentless fromage; and possessing the intensity of bands like His Hero Is Gone or Nasum. It meanders a bit at times, but that's probably due to the discography-esque nature of this particular release. A band to watch out for. (PO Box 364, Hagerstown, Maryland, 21741) *(Greg)*



ALL OR NOTHING HC-Search For The Strength (On The Rag)

West coast style hardcore punk with an early 80s influence and featuring forceful vocals by Renae Bryant that range from lower to higher registers, along with a speedy, aggressive guitar-driven sound. Lyrics that deal with the intensely personal, such as rape, as well as more worldly concerns—"La Maestra" is about teaching bilingual education and standing up against racist initiatives that attempt to eliminate it under the guise of "reform" (like here in Massachusetts, I'm embarrassed to say). Comes with a mini-zine/lyric booklet that explains each song. Not bad. (PO Box 251, Norco, CA 92860-0251)

AMOEBA (RAFTBOY)-Bad Fuggum From The Mysterium (Smog Veil)

Smog Veil does it again! These are excellent-quality studio and live recordings from a short-lived mid-90's band consisting of ex-Electric Eels and Styrenes members and it's miles better than I expected. The new studio originals are as powerful, manic and twisted as you'd hope and the live set is heavy on Electric Eels songs plus a Love cover AND Mike Hudson joining the band to rip through "Eyes Of Satan" and "Not Now, No Way" at the end!!! Does it sound like a bunch of middle-aged ex-rockers trying to re-capture past glory? FUCK NO—GET IT!!! (316 California Ave., #207, Reno, NV 89509) *(Ryan)*

A NEW ENEMY (Panic Attack)

Surging, melodic combination of Rites of Spring and Dag Nasty, with a modern hardcore flourish. This New Jersey band have Andy from Tear It Up on guitar and DJ from Let It Burn on bass (since the recording, DJ has left and Andy has shifted to bass) and they definitely mine emotional terrain, here, but do it with burn and drive. Haggard, up-all-night vocals and, even if the lyrics are kind of journal entry-esque, it's made up for with the band's full-on attack. (PO Box 1469, Pleasant Beach, NJ 08742)

AND I CAN'T WAIT/BOB BARKER YOUTH-Split (self-released)

Split LP on colored vinyl and with hand-painted sleeves from two defunct Mass. bands. AICW played aggressive youth-crew influenced hardcore with some screamo/heavier parts to it. BBY came from more of a grind direction, although the final track is a dirge that fades into chaotic noise. (www.geocities.com/andicantwait)

ANGELIC UPSTARTS-Sons Of Spartacus (Captain Oi)

Definitely the sound of a middle-aged punk band. I mean, look at those portly physiques, lines in the face and receding hairlines. But Mensi Mensforth's politics are as radical (i.e. leftist) as ever, from the album's title to the sentiments expressed on "Stop The City," "Anti-Nazi" or the union song "Bandiera Rossa." Musically, it's a bit on the tepid side, unforuntately. Melodic and ringing, yet not all that powerful, although the boys sound fired-up for the aforementioned "Stop The City," "Don't Get Old (In Tony's Britain)" and "Tally Ho Ginger." Just don't expect "Teenage Warning." (PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 8QA, ENGLAND/North American release on Insurgence Records, 2 Bloor St. W, Suite 100-184, Toronto, ON M4W 3E2, CANADA)

ANNIHILATION TIME (It's Alive, CD/DeadAlive, 12")

Long-time zinester Fred Hammer from *It's Alive* zine is the vocalist in this powerhouse of a band [or was... he's since been replaced]. A decided Black Flag (as well as Bl'ast) influence, from the Raymond Pettibon artwork to the music that fuses mind-bending punk with a mid-tempo, hard rocking jones and Fred's vocals do bear a slight resemblence to Mr. Rollins, without turning into a parody. Accompanied by some muscular riffing and a solid backbeat. (It's Alive: PO Box 6326, Oxnard, CA 93031/DeadAlive: PO Box 42593, Philadelphia, PA 19101)

ANTI-FLAG-Mobilize (A-F)
BOUNCING SOULS/ANTI-FLAG-BYO Split Series, Volume IV (BYO)

"Mobilize" is a half live, half studio and we need the political conscience of Anti-Flag now more than ever. AF are a well-oiled punk rock machine at this point—much more polished-sounding, not as many of the rough-edges, but it can still pack a punch, particularly "911 For Peace" and "NBC (No Blood-Thirsty Corporations"). Touching all the "correct" political bases—pro-choice, against the prison-industrial complex, corporate domination and, of course, our warmon-

gering foreign policy, but, you know what? More power to 'em! The live tracks run through the band's history, save the really early years—only "Die For The Government" comes from the first full-length and, of course, it's quite poignant in this day and age. The disc comes with a bonus sampler of bands on the A-F label—Virus Nine, The Code, Unseen, Methadones and others, plus a few songs from friends' bands and a couple of solo songs by Justin from AF. Anti-Flag are also paired with the Bouncing Souls on another in the BYO split series and I'm not quite as enamored. The Souls' poppy/punk hasn't really interested me for a long time, although there are some disarming hooks here and there and they do a good job with Cock Sparrer's We're Coming Back" and AF's "That's Youth." Anti-Flag's material isn't particularly strong this time out, either—the lyrical pointedness remains but it's starting to sound like well-tread ground and without as much of the grit. Their cover of the Buzzcocks' "Ever Fallen In Love" pales in comparison to their version of "Orgasm Addict" from some years ago. (A-F: PO Box 71266, Pittsburgh, PA 15213/BYO: PO Box 67609, LA, CA 90067)

ANTI-MANIAX-As Long As People Think (Household Name)

Anti-Maniax have a forward-looking lyrical agenda and combine it with a combination of hardcore, pop/punk and ska that is sometimes on the lightweight side. While occasionally veering into lightweight territory (a little too much pop), there's also anger that rises to the surface, specifically for the back-to-back tandem of "Who's War Is It" and "Operation Anthill" (clever Oplvy lick towards the end of that one) and it's not easily written off. I have a mixed reaction but this album has slowly grown on me. (PO Box 12286, London SW9 6FE, ENGLAND)

ANTISEEN-Screamin' Bloody Live (TKO)

In all their hellraisin', double-barrelled glory, here's an hour of live Antiseen recorded from two west-coast dates during the summer of 2001. Just what you'd expect—Jeff's glass-gargling vocals, guitar on full-blaze and a beefy rhythm section to accompany it... along with the redneck baggage and, as I've opined before, I'm getting less enamored of the rightward tilt on a song such as "Melting Pot" and the thought that the estate of racist piece-of-shit Ian Stuart will even collect a pence in royalties for their cover of Skrewdriver's "I Don't Like You" is also kind of sickening. Hey, but Antiseen have never made any apologies and continue to blast away with no quarter. Just about every crucial Antiseen song is included—"Stormtrooper," "Hammerhead," "Fuck All Y'All" and a new tune, "Ten Pounds Of Shit In A Five Pound Bag," which conjures up an even lovelier image than Jeff's bloodied washboard on the back cover (by the way, it's not an original idea—the Spudmonsters had a song with the same title on their 1993 "Stop The Madness" album but it's a different tune). One can't say Antiseen haven't given their blood and sweat for their music. (3126 W. Cary St., #303, Richmond, VA 23221)

ARGY BARGY-Song From The Streets (Captain Oi)

Tuneful street punk with super-gruff vocals from Jon Richards and brash production that gives it the 'ol knuckle-to-jaw quality. These are to be considered assets and the band sound vibrant, throughout. The lyrics sometimes veer a little to the right—the call for vigilantism on "We Know Where You Live," for instance—but there's also a well-founded wariness to be found, no doubt coming from life's experiences. (PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 8QA, ENGLAND)

ARMY OF PONCH-So Many You Could Never Win (No Idea)

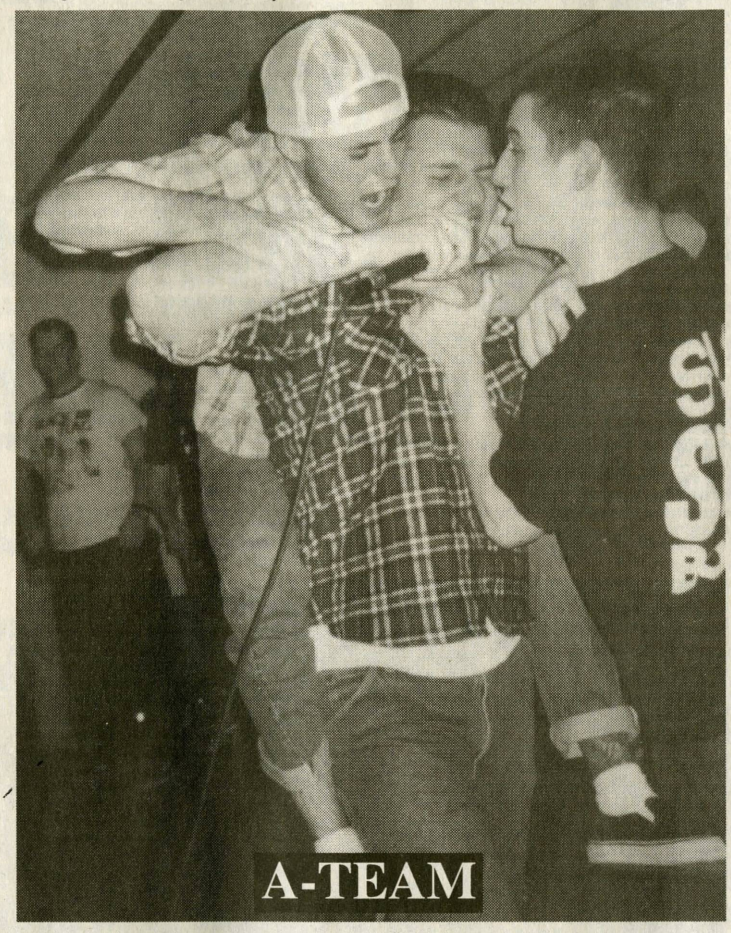
The debut full-length by Florida's Army of Ponch is an infectious emo hardcore record with mucho hooks and heartfelt cacophony. All of these No Idea hardcore bands sound alike, so it's entirely plausible members of Army of Ponch have done time in previous like-minded, like-sounding Florida bands. Or perhaps it's just a case of musical osmosis for younger members of this tightly knit scene. Regardless, "So Many You Could Never Win" is yet another gem of melody/intensity from one of the strongest hardcore scenes in the world. True, this kind of pour-your-guts-out-core always comes with an expiration date attached to it, and like fellow Floridian emo hardcore acts I Hate Myself, Twelve Hour Turn and True North, the shelf life on Army of Ponch is probably no more than a couple years. But it's a damn fine couple years at that. (PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL, 32804) *(Jason)*

ARRIVALS-Exsenator Orange (Thick)

A LOT better than I recall their last album being. The Arrivals arrive—sorry, couldn't resist—with loud, boisterous and goddamn fucking catchy songs. Rooted in that Chicago beefy pop/punk tradition. Gruff vocals accompanied by strong, hook-laden songs. Big guitars, walloping drums. Naked Raygun did it, Bloodsport did it and they took a page from the Buzzcocks and SLF, themselves. The Arrivals don't mimic what came before but use it as a launching pad and I can also hear some of the fractured, skewed pop of Mission of Burma in there, as well. No skimping on the power, either, particularly for "Born With A Broken Heart" and "Just Another Union Song." Meanwhile, there's no missing the pure pop impact of "Design" or "Analee." (PO Box 220245, Chicago, IL 60622)

AS HOPE DIES-Birthplace and Burial Site (Undecided, EP)

If there's one thing I hate (besides bands with three words in their name that don'tusespaces; vague, red metalcore cover art; stupid sounding drum triggers; 70-minute goth metal albums that are even remotely influenced by Tolkein; and people who worship Strapping Young Lad) it's when good metalcore gets ruined by relentless, boring, screamed vocals. As Hope Dies (thanks for putting the spaces in there guys; too bad about the cover art) crank out some fairly impressive tunes here, showing a nice mix of crushing hardcore and melodic sensibilities, even throwing in some decent clean singing to keep things fresh. Too bad there's some guy screaming with that ineffective, raspy, patented metalcore voice throughout the whole damn thing. Slightly distracting, not too powerful sounding and completely takes away from what could have been an above average EP. (10695 Lake Oak Way, Boca Raton, FL 33498) *(Greg)*



ASSAULT (HG Fact)

New stuff by the Japanese attack crew known as Assault--six songs, five of 'em delivered at top speed and featuring bludgeoning riffs and gut-grab vocals. "The End Of Silence" is a seven and a half minute metal epic that drones on a little long but they rebound nicely for the last couple of tracks. There's a US tour in the early summer that's not hitting Boston and I'm rather disappointed. (105 Nakano Shinbashi-M, Yayoi-cho 2-7-15, Nakano, Tokyo, JAPAN 164-0013)

ASSERT-Insurrection Rocks (Three Days Dead)

A winning blend of mosh-inducing NYHC-style riffage, warp speed, blast beat-driven Infest-esque inclinations, and a fair dose of melody fuse with gruff, socio-political lyricism to produce a wholly unique release from England's Assert. Tempo shifts and thick rhythmic grooves abound, as this band delves into such topics as the woes of animal testing, the importance of self expression, dead end toil in the workplace, and solidarity with relentless shattering intensity. A seamless melding of a surprisingly varied array of styles and influences into these succinct bursts of rupturing sound produces a powerful, endearing aural release. (PO Box 70, Caerphilly, CF83-1WN, ENGLAND) *(Mike Ramek)*

ASTRID OTO (No Idea)

Another in the endless string of Aaron Cometbus bands/projects and, while musically solid, there's a major flaw—the miserable offkey, ranting style of Cindy. Her pipes (or lack thereof) otherwise ruin the tuneful and punchy punk music laid down here and the sharply observational lyrics, mainly penned by Aaron. She takes a breather on "Slumlord Speedball" and it's, by far, the best song on the album. It's really a shame because, with a better vocalist, this would have been much more listenable. (PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL, 32804)

ATARIS-So Long, Astoria (Columbia)

Wimpy, slick pop/punk emo, all bright and chirpy. Lou Giordano is, indeed, an excellent engineer so it's a good-sounding recording but this is just feckless ear candy. No burn, just yearning boy/girl shit. The new wave synth for "Radio #2" just adds insult to injury. This is just bubblegum for the Warped set. Their indy records were better and, believe me, that isn't saying much.

A-TEAM-A Is For Asshole (Stab & Kill)

A is for asshole and it's also for ass-kicking, which is a perfect description for the A-Team's first album, which is also the first release for Stab & Kill. Pissed-sounding hardcore incorporating both muscular thrash and heavier styles. Jon Clark's vocals make him sound like the bastard offspring of Choke and Slapshot could certainly be counted among this band's influences. A sense of hardcore's history but with a modern approach and, also, a hint of metal that really comes to the fore on the lead breaks for their cover of Poison Idea's "Punish Me" and "Give My Retards To Broadway." Lyrics about life's changes and pressures, as well as an obsession with horror movies. Pulling no punches and, despite the claim of having an "armor of apathy," it's obvious the words and music are fueled by both rage and passion. (PO Box 52084, Boston, MA 02205)

ATOM & HIS PACKAGE-Attention Blah Blah Blah (Hopeless)

Probably the best disc I've heard by Atom, with some hearty guitar to go along with the rhythm machine/synth, yet it still screams novelty act, smart lyrics aside. Actually, Atom gets dead serious for "The Palestinians Are Not The Same Thing As The Rebel Assiance, Jackass," talking about how people simplify a very complex issue and it's accompanied by a fired-up, punky sound. The more twee-sounding ditties are less appealing. (PO Box 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409-7445)

ATROCIOUS MADNESS-Total Control (Wicked Witch)

Noisy distorted thrash mania. Atrocious Madness' full-blast attack is layered under shards of feedback and presented with as raw an ambiance as possible. Paying tribute to both the musical and production sensibilities (?) of such Japanese forebears as Confuse. It's definitely not easy listening. It's a wild, crazy mess yet there's something enticing about this sound. Lyrics that comment vociferously on current events and I'm grateful for the lyric sheet because Frank's howling vocals aren't that easily heard in this cacophony. (PO Box 3835, 1001 AD Amsterdam, NETHERLANDS)

AUDIO KOLLAPS-Ultima Radio (Epistrophy)

Well, it's kinda getting a bit stale, but when it's done right, grindy crust-core still sounds good. Audio Kollaps do a perfectly adequate job of it, with those two-chord riffs and fast/even faster! beats all over the place, vague political lyrics and funny jackets and hairstyles all over the place. If anything, they veer towards the grindier side of things, opting for a nice, full, bass-led production sound that would appeal just as much to a metalhead as it would to a crust punker. But man, 45 minutes of this is a mistake; they're the kind of band that would sound good on a compilation, but after a few songs, what's the point? (PO Box 312, 30003 Hannover GERMANY) *(Greg)*

AVAIL-Front Porch Stories (Fat)

Another collection of heartfelt, melodic hardcore, about on the same level as "One Wrench." As with that album, there's not one song I keep going back to and, overall, it seems a bit more polished-sounding. Actually, I take part of that back—"Verses" packs in the hooks and goes through some subtle mood shifts without losing its way and there's a knockout guitar line about halfway through. The production does bring out the band's strengths—the muscular guitar sound, pumping rhythm and Tim's expressive vocals. Avail remain a vital-sounding band. (PO Box 193690, SF, CA 94119-3690)

AWKWARD THOUGHT-Ruin A Good Time (Thorp)

First new album in a couple of years for this Long Island band and only vocalist John Franko and drummer Alex Charpentier remain from the lineup on the last full-length (there was an EP in between but it's not in my possession). Not a big change soundwise—hard-edged New York-style hardcore with bruising riffs and some classic punk inspiration, as well. Lyrics are up front and pointed, particularly for "Take Your Music And Shove It" and "Lead The Way," which critiques mindless patriotism. John Franko's vocal delivery has a limited range but is forceful, complemented by the twin-guitar barrage. (PO Box 6786, Toledo, OH 43612/Released in Europe on I Scream, Broekstraat 10, 1730 Kobblegem, BELGIUM)

BAD MACHINE-Rip Your Heart (Dead Beat)

Basic rock 'n roll with a punk influence from Finland and they've definitely got the Deetroit influence in the same way that Radio Birdman did or earlier Hellacopters. The songs are loud and kept to a reasonable length. A streamlined sounding machine, at that and, while it isn't driving me into fits of delirium, it meets the minimum daily rock requirement. Or something like that. (PO Box 283, LA, CA 90078)

BAD VIBES-Hate Your Everything (Steel Cage)

Hard, fast punk rock 'n roll with a pissed-off attitude. What is it about Philly? Despite the Brotherly Love moniker, the city has a rep for having even nastier sports fans than in Boston and I could see these guys sitting in the bleachers, pelting the Philly Phanatic with beer bottles. Not a positive nuance to be found but it rocks like a son-of-a-bitch and the buzzing, burning guitars make me take notice every time. Gavin's vocals are of the throat-rippin' angry variety and the sound is raw and immediate. No excess, no bullshit, just rage. (PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125)

BALANCE OF TERROR-A Better Tomorrow (Paralogy)

It sucks these guys broke up... it SUCKS, I tell you but at least Balance of Terror put out some excellent records before splitting. One of the best bands of the last few years and this is some fast, intense hardcore punk that doesn't let up for a second. Angry, anguished vocals from Stan and Jeff that echo frustration at a hopeless, messed-

up world—feeling "rejected" and "abused," as they say on "Surrender," but clinging to a defiant sense of individuality and trying to work through it, even if there's not a lot to be cheerful about. Power and rage in succinct doses—yet with some almost-melodic guitar lines. (PO Box 14253, Albany, NY 12212)

BAND OF FELONS-Drown My Sorrows, Drink My Dreams (Go For Broke, EP)

Bruising, yet catchy street punk punctuated by bright riffs and burly lead and backing vocals. Too bad the Rat ain't around anymore, 'cause these guys would've been a good fit at that place on one of those mid-90s bills there. Then they would've retired to the upstairs bar and knocked a few back. In any case, I like the hearty "fuck you" on "No Place Like Home"—in fact, I like this whole EP. (PO Box 38, South Amboy, NJ 08879)

BANGS-Call and Response (Kill Rock Stars)

Six songs of very strong straightforward and rocking punk. Thick sound with occasional Bratmobile-soundalike one-note girl vocals but overall it's simple, catchy and fun—the world needs more bands like this. (120 NE State Ave #418, Olympia, WA 98501) *(Ryan)*

BEAUTYS-The First Seven Inches Are Always The Hardest (Diaphragm)

Short, quick, kinda sloppy, and most definitely poppy ditties representing a body of work spanning the last seven years. Each and every song, while quite simple, has at least one little quirk that falls into the "Wish I'd thought of that" column. Smart enough to make one feel like they are better off keeping the radio unplugged and dumb enough to remind us why we all got into this shit in the first place. (PO Box 10388, Columbus, OH 43201) *(David)*

BEDFORD-Spaceships, Sex and Jealousy: The Singles 1995-2000 (Microcosm)

I like this stuff, because I love corny, badly produced pop-punk that sounds like it was recorded in 1991. Totally fun, a little sloppy, crappy amps, dorks who probably have silly tattoos. Reminds me of Sicko, or Sinkhole, if that doesn't date me too much. Totally fucking wussy-dork jump around goofy punk. Awesome. I bet these guys are hell of a lot of fun to see live, or were, since this is a collection of 7" recordings released post-breakup. Why do I get all the broken-up band singles collections? (PO Box 14332, Portland, OR 97293) *(Tigger)*

BEERZONE-British Streetpunk (Captain Oi)

This is actually an anthology by these punk wiseacres—including their first album and various 7" tracks. Catchy music with a tipsy sense of humor, in the same vein as the Test Tubes, etc... They twist the Undertones' "Jimmy Jimmy" into "Gazza Gazza" and, in addition to loving the suds, offer commentary on Viagra, Jerry Springer, golddiggers and others. Enjoyable. (PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 8QA, ENGLAND)

BEHIND ENEMY LINES-Know Your Enemy (Tribal War)

With Behind Enemy Lines, the enemy is all that oppresses humankind—gestapo-like cops, right-wing, warmongering politicians, global trade organizations, assassins trained by the School of Americas, homophobic holy-rollers, etc. Dave Trenga, formerly of Aus-Rotten, has a lot on his mind and expresses those sentiments with vehement anger. The lineup also includes one of the drummers from his former band and, on guitar, the ubiquitous Bill Chamberlain, who provides his usual six-string thunder. Fusing the power of React, one of Bill's former bands, with the scampering rage of Aus-Rotten and it's a full-on attack from start to finish. This is actually a superior effort to the last couple of Aus-Rotten LP's. Railing against a fucked-up world and in an effective fashion. (1951 W. Burnside, #1936, Portland, OR 97209)

BELTONES-Cheap Trinkets (TKO)

More scruff-punk from this Florida four-piece. Pub rock meets early SLF and Bill McFadden does his damndest to conjure up a tandem of Jake Burns and Frankie Stubbs in their early years—gruff vocals buffed with sandpaper and personal lyrics exposing a heart that's probably been wounded many times. Fans of straight-ahead, no bullshit punk will enjoy this. (3126 W. Cary St., #303, Richmond, VA 23221)

JELLO BIAFRA-Machine Gun In The Clown's Hand (Alternative Tentacles, 3 CD)

Synopsize a three CD spoken word collection in a few sentences? A difficult chore. Jello is equally bemused and frightened by the current state of affairs and things have clearly gotten worse since that tragic date of 9/11/01. It's a starting point of his critique of the current Bush (mis-)administration, asking, along the way, just how the hell did we get in this mess, anyway? Florida's electoral shenanigans certainly had a lot to do with it—especially the difficulty many African-Americans had even getting to the polls, but he also points the finger at Gore himself, saying, in essence, he would have been just as bad (I don't know about that, myself, but I'm no Gore fan, either). He also discusses the evils of corporate globalization, states that "grassroots resistance can work" and once again urges people to "become the media," not only through independent publications, broadcasting and webcasting, but also by just discussing it one on one with people. In addition to the extensive discussion of the so-called war on terrorism, Jello also alleges that Brandon Cruz, current vocalist for the Jello-less DK's compared him to Osama bin Laden and that their drummer, Peligro, dedicated "Holiday In Cambodia" to the troops in Afghanistan. If that's indeed true, how the once-reputable have become a complete farce. Yeah, he's bombastic, egotistical and a little goes a long way—but, as always, the purpose is to engage thought and dialogue and encourage people to not only keep an eye on things but act, as well. (PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141)

BIG MIDNIGHT-Everything For The First Time (Alive)

All aboard The Strokes' coattails—next stop: The Big Time! Singer kinda sounds like Iggy, the music sounds like Stones covers performed by musical eunuchs who have been playing in alternative rock cover bands for the last seven years. Somebody let me know when it's cool to like calculatedly-messy haircuts and ugly thrift store gear cuz I'll never figure it out on my own. Not horrible, merely forgettable. (PO Box 7112 Burbank, CA 91510) *(Ryan)*

BILLY JOE WANGHEAD-What Would Judas Deal? (RAFR)

Straight-up energetic rocknroll mixed with occasional surf guitar action and done with a sense of humor which includes a cover version of "Freebird" that employs a Theramin. Sounds like they'd be a blast live but the I'd appreciate the album more if they went with their weirdo tendencies and decided to careen completely over the edge musically next time. Of course it might be hard to get a show in Oklahoma City if they got TOO insane but nobody ever said being great was easy. Good job this time around, though. (11054 Ventura Blvd. #205, Studio City, CA 91604) *(Ryan)*

BITCHIN'-The Night Life, The Tight Style (No Idea)

You'd think that the novelty of female-led bands would have worn off long ago, and such ensembles would no longer feel the need to call attention to their chromosomal status through the use of such clever band names as "Bitchin'." And you'd be wrong, apparently. For those of you interested in more than just the ostensible gender-related novelty of this band, you will recognize the energetic, tightly interlocking musical output produced by these three skilled musicians. Over loud spurts of guitar and frenetically paced palm mutes, bassist Caroline Paquita and guitarist Samantha Jones both emote with rock-and-roll snarls through their snotty punk sneers, trading off vocals and occasionally harmonizing with one another. Underlying the toughness and cranked-up distortion is an upbeat pop sensibility that relies on melody above all else. Ultimately, however, it all runs together, with not much to distinguish one piece from another. Each song seems to be crafted from the same prototype, and the harmonizing gets very predictable after a while. While the music was satisfactory, it did not strike me as being terribly special either. The only song that stood out from the others was the album's finale, "Smokestacks," an acoustic piece that, while not as edgy as the rest of the band's repertoire, was defined by a very earnest and emotional delivery. The passionate vocals were reminiscent of the Geraldine Fibbers' Carla Bozulich, and the guitar playing was deft and a bit more complex than usual, breaking away from the structure of the other songs. It may not be the punk-infused wall of noise that you're looking for, but, for me at least, the album ended on a high point. (PO Box 14636, Gainesville FL 32604) *(Anna)*

BLACK CAT MUSIC-Hands In The Estuary, Torso In The Lake (Lookout)

I was torn when I pulled this disc out. On one hand, the guys in this band were in some pretty good East Bay bands (The Criminals, The Receivers). On the other hand, the name (a traditional blues reference done a million times before) was a turn-off—"Hey dude, you gonna go to the Black Cat Music show???" Does that really sound right?—and I'm disheartened to find that "Modern Mood Punk" is the new bullshit punk subgenre du jour. Lookout!'s press junta drops names like Nick Cave and Alice Cooper. Pretty generic comparisons. Definitely in the Murder City Devils vein, but more bluesy—if there is one blatant (punk) comparison it's the Laughing Hyenas (John Brannon, ex- Negative Approach), who remain one of my favorite 90's bands. Just plain not super-original. Track 2 features a blatant Sabbath-style guitar break, for example, and in each song there's a moment where it sounds almost exactly like a song I've heard before, although from an impressively varied set of influences, including a bit of Brit-pop. Really good if you're into this "Modern Mood Punk" thing the kids are all talking about, but there's far better starting points if you ain't. (3264 Adeline St., Berkeley, CA 94703) *(Tigger)*

BLACK EYES (Dischord)

As per usual, Dischord has released an amazing album. Featuring 2 drummers, 2 bassists and a guitarist, Black Eyes create a dense driving sound and the staccato guitar riffs mixed in with all the noise just adds to the fun. This was produced by Ian MacKaye and engineered by genius Dischord legend Don Zientara. This CD shows how great this label is, absolutely unafraid to put out all types of music..as long as it has soul. This experimental band at times brings to mind Mission of Burma, as they are just so twisted and loud. Black Eyes started in mid '01, so they're a rather new band, which is hard to believe. They sound as if they've played together forever, as these sounds just mesh and play off each other so brilliantly. This is a great band. (3819 Beecher St. NW, Washington, DC 20007) *(Steve)*

BLACK CROSS (WIDOWS)-Art Offensive (Equal Vision)/Stops A Beating Heart (Initial, EP)

Nervy hardcore by this Louisville band with members of By The Grace of God, Automatic and other bands. It's good to hear 'em hammering out the powerchords and doing it in a creative fashion. It's also good to hear Rob Pennington's agitated vocals again (echoes of Vic Bondi) and, as with his former band, he's still got plenty on his mind about the fucked-up state of the world. Powerful and dramatic and played at full-tilt intensity but not your typical mosh-it-up fodder—one can hear Jehu-damaged shards and post-punkish guitar licks here and there and those elements come into bolder relief for "Art Offensive." J. Robbins' production really brings out the band's strengths. Peter Searcy, formerly of Louisville legends Squirrel Bait, makes an appearance on the intense "Gift To The Sea." The band changed its name from Black Widows to Black Cross in between the release of the "Beating Heart" EP and full length album. (Initial: PO Box 17131, Louisville, KY 40217/Equal Vision: PO Box 14, Hudson, NY 12534)

BLACK HAND-War Monger (Chainsaw Safety)

Very cool artwork done by Away from Voivod and the Black Hand, who also come from Quebec, dish out some intense metal with political lyrics. Those words offer a harsh assessment of American military might, as well as the Israeli/Palestinian conflict (the title "Shit Treaty of Zion" should give you a pretty fair indication of where they stand on that one). Radwan has a raspy, gutteral vocal style and the band lay out a hard-hitting sound that draws from 80s thrash metal, along with some Scandanavian hardcore influences, as well—at least to my ears. (PO Box 260318, Bellerose, NY 11426-0318)

BLACK LIPS (Bomp)

Garage fans can feel free to go nuts but these by-the-book two-chord distorto-vocalized twang-n-thumpers are just the same-old same-old to these ears. Give me something I haven't heard a billion times since 1995, please. I'm surprised Bomp is putting out generic crud like this—hey Greg, if you want to renounce quality control, how about you at least put out some generic powerpop instead? (PO Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510) *(Ryan)*

BLACKWALL HITCH-Last Days Never Last (self-released)

CD that comes in a DVD case, with a lyric booklet. Which means it'll end up in odds 'n ends part of my CD collection 'cause it won't fit on the shelf, but that's OK—it's worth the trouble. Feisty hardcore punk by this Milwaukee band and the opening track, "Milwaukee Burning," is the standout. Rough and energetic. (3222 South 23rd St., Milwaukee, WI 53215)

BLASTMAT-Theme For A Dying World (Pain and Loathing)/1984 (Blastmat Productions)
SANITY ASSASSINS-O Melhor Da (Rotten)

Blastmat is a band of Connecticut vets and more or less formed from the ashes of the Sanity Assassins... that means basic values punk and hardcore with a harder rocking side and mixing up both UK and US influences. The lyrics take strong issue with religious dogma on a number of songs and, staying ever topical, there's the "Taliban Fight Song." Two albums out already, with the first featuring 11 studio tracks and the second with 7 new songs and three from the first album recorded live and they're off to a good start, here. Speaking of the Assassins, "O Mehlor Da" is a 17 track album on a Brazilian label and features the raw, scrappy punk the band had plied for years. "Anal Sex" presses the tasteless envelope quite a bit but these guys have always had an element of snottiness and sarcasm in their sound. (PO Box 380152, East Hartford, CT 06138-0152)

BLIND SOCIETY-Contrary To Popular Belief (Blackout)

Raging hardcore punk—a bit muddy-sounding production wise—but the anger gets right up in your face, regardless. Two vocalists barking out the venom, accompanied by a raw, guitar-fueled attack. Blind Society seem to have gotten more aggressive-sounding since their debut album and that's fine with me. (931 Madison St., Hoboken, NJ 07030)

BLOOD BROTHERS-Burn, Piano Island, Burn (Artist Direct/BMG)

The Blood Brothers must be injected with coffee that's even stronger than the blend I drink—they've got the heebee-geebees. Spastic, abrasive rock that can be artsy and aggressive, with howling vocals and off-the-wall lyrics that are sarcastic and oblique. There's a charged rush but it seems a tad precious or pretentious, at times. Think Faith No More crossed with the Locust. Something like that. This album, their major label debut, isn't always quite as in-your-face as the earlier records, either. And the song lengths are way up, as well. Still a love/hate affair with intermittently explosive moments.

BLOOD RED-Hostage (Initial)

The gifted, rich writing of Tom Corrigan, one time vocalist of the now defunct Long Island hardcore outfit Silent Majority, pervades the lyrical output of his new endeavor entitled Blood Red. As before, merciless, harrowing snapshots of suburban life and familial disarray are poignantly captured with poetic zest. The musical counterpart to these excursions into loneliness and insecurity mark a distinct deviation from the epic, sprawling exercises in tonal intricacy of Silent Majority. It's a decidedly darker, bleaker, thinner sound permeating the output here. Gone are the thick, massive anthems of the SM-era, replaced here by sparse, downtrodden arrangements that recall a blend of early '80s U2/Replacements inclinations and a token tinge of straight forward hardcore punk, as well. The uniformly sorrowful, often acoustic-laced sound is largely executed with considerable skill, though at sluggish, overly sappy intervals it drags a bit. There is much promise embedded in these dirge-esque laments, and the future will likely yield good things. (PO Box 17131, Louisville, KY 40217) *(Mike Ramek)*

BLOODY SODS-Get Outta My Head (Madskull)

Remaining uncompromising in their full-throttle punk attack. The Bloody Sods sound as pissed as ever and don't care who knows it. Fast, rumbling songs with venom and aggression. Not all that thrilled with the SOD cover, but at least it's their "unity" song, "United Forces." No pretty music here. Dutch label but the band come from Georgia and have been at this kind of mayhem for quite awhile. (PO Box 57159, 1040 BB Amsterdam HOLLAND)

BLOWBACK-Remember Oneself (HG Fact, EP)

Another four songs by the Japanese band Blowback, merging hard rock with the hardcore throttle and, while I don't like it quite as much as their previous album, it still rocks with a good amount of muscle and fury. Larynx-shredding vocals and a full-tilt sound definitely work in their favor. (105 Nakano Shinbashi-M, Yayoi-cho 2-7-15, Nakano, Tokyo, JAPAN 164-0013)

BLUE ROSE LIAR-When Shadows Swallow Shadows (CD-EP)

Three-fifths of this band are former members of Boiling Man, including vocalist Todd Rogers, and Blue Rose Liar continue in the direction that band was pursuing towards the end of its tenure. Moody, melodic post-hardcore hitting a medium-paced groove and, while Todd's vocals still convey the workings of a haunted, tortured soul, the musical results aren't always that electrifying. (PO Box 669, New Haven, CT 06503)

BOILS-Pride and Persecution (TKO)/The Ripping Waters EP (Thorp)

"Pride And Persecution" actually came out on Cyclone Records, originally, but, after endless delays, it's now reissued on TKO, possibly by the time you read this. A reshuffled lineup since the Boils' last full-length, "World Poison," as only Greg remains but the band's urgent sound hasn't changed that much. A mix of streetwise punk and hardcore with a defiant attitude. Not mindless oi-oi-oi music but played with an aggressive slant. By the way, "The Dead Skin" very cleverly nicks the guitar line from GBH's "Limpwristed." Stirring and catchy. "The Ripping Waters EP" features four new studio songs and a live version of "Assas-

sin" that originally led off their "World Poison" album. Not quite as striking (something in the production?) as "Pride and Persecution," yet maintaining their hallmark sound, even adding some reggae for "Hearts Of Fire." (TKO: 3126 W. Cary St., #303, Richmond, VA 23221)/Thorp: PO Box 6786, Toledo, OH 43612)

BOMBSHELL ROCKS-From Here and On (Burning Heart/Epitaph)

Kind of a weak effort for these guys. They may be called Bombshell Rocks but the latter part of their name isn't always as applicable. Taken as a whole, "From Here and On" sounds like a watered-down effort. Melodic west coast hardcore meets street punk and the old charge does emerge for "Begging For Mercy" and "Untitled," which sounds a bit like the Crack's "Don't You Ever Let Me Down." Yet, overall, it's too polished, too slick and doesn't always have the energetic urgency of their earlier albums. (2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026)

VIC BONDI/ARTICLES OF FAITH-Fortunate Son (Alternative Tentacles, EP)

A split EP, of sorts—two new recordings by Vic, done in a power-trio format, and two from his former band, Articles of Faith. Musically, the new songs are somewhat similar to what Bondi did with the underrated Alloy in the early 90s—heavier trappings but melodic at the core and some Helmet-ized riffing. "Hardball" shows that Vic hasn't lost his lyrical fastball when it comes to critiquing the fucked-up state of affairs. "Fortunate Son" is the CCR classic and given a re-tooling—a different key and sounding almost funereal. Timely lyrical matter but not a complete success. The AOF songs are raging, although "Buy This War," once again, is the inferior-sounding remix. "American Dreams" sounds as vital as it did almost two decades ago. There are two volumes of AOF material that have been reissued on AT and they're well-worth checking out. (PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141)

BONES BRIGADE-I Hate Myself When I'm Not Skateboarding (Fight Fire With Fire)

OK, so in the time it's taken me to get this zine together, Bones Brigade gave me a demo, 7" and now this CD to review. The demo review didn't make it in, but I liked it… the 7" was pretty good [see that section]. This CD is *really* good. Bones Brigade keep getting better and this is a hot combination of old-school thrashy hardcore and crossover. Blake loves to tap the frets and play the leads and, even if a little over the top, the Brigade come in on the hardcore side of things. That's apparent from the opening blast of "Thrashin' USA," as well as their cover of Minor Threat's "No Reason." Lots of songs about skating, of course, there are also songs about coming to terms with growing up, losing friends and keeping the hardcore scene fun. Wailing shit. (PO Box 254, Stuyvesant Falls, NY 12174)

BOOKS LIE-Weep (Coalition)

Re-shuffled lineup from their first album, with Adam on drums (he was the vocalist on the first album) and Eric Owens taking over the mike (and he's since been replaced by Jeremy) but the musical assault remains as formidable. Some more experimentation, with three instrumental passages, two of 'em using a hip-hop style beat and one with a distorted acoustic sound. The rest of the time, they offer a versatile, hard-hitting sound that, once again, doesn't lend itself to easy description but merges post-punk, hardcore and math rock, along with lyrics that can be somewhat oblique—which may be why explanations are offered in the back of the book. But it's not too hard to figure out the gentrification theme of "Honkified Nightmare" or the affirmation of punk expressed on "The Death Of An American Badass," although the latter is always subject to self-evalation (i.e. why the fuck am I still here?). Books Lie strike a chord and in an innovative fashion. (Newtonstraat 212, 2562 KW Den Haag, NETHERLANDS)

BORN/DEAD-Our Darkest Fears Now Haunt Us (Prank)

Fold-out Crass-style sleeve, images of Bush on the front—yep, these guys definitely have a lot on their minds about the state of the world and it comes out both lyrically and in Born/Dead's trigger-finger hardcore punk. Even better than their 7" and that was one of my favorites in 2002. Fast, aggressive sounds that fit in well with the likes of Deathreat, World Burns To Death, etc… Hot riffs and an abundance of rage. Bonus points for the "Full Metal Jacket" sample. Yeah, it's not that uncommon but I don't get tired of hearing it—nor this style of hardcore. (PO Box 410892, SF, CA 94141)

BORN DEAD ICONS-Ruins (Feral Ward)

Rumbling and dark music from the Montreal iconoclasts. As always, a cross-pollination of Motörhead (the vocals, especially) and Amebix. The Icons aren't really speed merchants, instead playing at a medium-paced clip (although there are a few songs that pick up the pace) but they have a powerful and haunting sound and our friends to the north have plenty to say about the current state of affairs—warfare, nationalism, cold-hearted bureaucracies—these lead to the "ruins." (feralward@hotmail.com)

BOTTOM LINE-No One's Safe (Stab & Kill EP)

Bringing back the heavy, mid-tempo NYHC style ala Killing Time. Loud, in-your-face production, playing and sentiments... in fact, it's almost a bit of a caricature on "Standing Eight": *"if you cross me and play pussy you're gonna get fucked."* I like Underdog's "Say It To My Face" for ass-kicking songs a little better but these guys do have a bruising sound. (PO Box 52084, Boston, MA 02205)

BOTTLES AND SKULLS-Amped The Fuck Up (Sickroom)/Born In A Black Light (Sickroom)

A cool Bay Area band who cross-pollinate punk, hardcore and driving rock 'n roll with a dark twist. Not relying solely on power-chords, although that's the main thrust, but the guitar lines also slash and shimmer in spots. "Born In A Black Light" is the latest entry by this increasingly-impressive band. Vocals that teeter on the edge of sanity and burning riffs lead the way into your consciousness. "Party Crasher" adds some creepy organ lines, while the energy boils over for the likes of "Rip Off The Sheets" and "I Dissect Humans." Nothing one-dimensional about these guys, as



they echo the classic early 80s punk school while adding their own personalilty into the mix. "Amped The Fuck Up" is a reissue of an earlier EP, with 11 bonus live tracks to go with the 7 studio cuts. "The Inside" is a cascading, high-octane hellride with some kickass bass runs. "Fight" has a bouncier, garage-honed sound. (PO Box 47830, Chicago, IL 60647)

BRAINOIL (Life Is Abuse)

Heavier than fuck—this Bay Area band include past members of Destroy, Ojo Rojo and Grimple—this trio do the bulldozer, thick molten slab take on metal and it's quite crushing. Lumbering but not languid—there's a groove buried in there somewhere, under the riff carnage and howling vocals and when they pick up the pace, such as with "Wielding Strength," nothing will stand in the path of fury. (PO Box 20524, Oakland, CA 94620)

BRATMOBILE-Girls Get Busy (Lookout)

Saw this band last year and was pretty impressed having never heard them before and this album doesn't let me down. Garage and surf-influenced pop with great production and energy—the guitar sound and playing, in particular, is unique and very cool. My only complaint would be the rather monotone vocal style of the singer but in the context of these songs it works well so it's not as obnoxious as it might be if the music wasn't so strong. Lyrics retain the girl-positive aspects of their grrrl roots without being ridiculous or over-the-top in any way. Recommended. (3264 Adeline St., Berkeley, CA 94703) *(Ryan)*

BREAD AND WATER-Bread and Water (Burrito, LP)/Everything So Far (self-released)

The first longplayer for this Texas band—politically-conscious hardcore punk balancing harshness and melody, along the lines



of Antiproduct—there's an early 80s UK crust influence, as well as female/male vocal tradeoffs (although Amie handles the majority of vocals). There's an evolution in sound, with more acoustic passages, but it's done without diluting the impact. Powerful music and message. "Everything So Far" is a CD put out by the band and it includes their new full-length album and four 7"s/splits that came before. A good way to catch up. (Burrito: PO Box 3204, Brandon, FL 33509/Bread & Water: PO Box 595264, Dallas, TX 75359-5264)

BREAKER BREAKER-Out Of Service (Martyr, EP)

Such a sedate beach scene on the cover and the disc starts with the soothing sound of gulls crowing or chirping or whatever they do, then WHAM! Breaker Breaker rudely interrupt the solitude with some blazing hardcore. A posthumous release (hence the title) from this short-lived west coast band and an improvement over their first EP on Bridge Nine. Angry vocals, guitar riffs that aim for the jugular and mixing speed, crunch and rage. (PO Box 955, Harriman, NY 10926)

BREZHNEV-WWW.BULLSHIT/CONTROL (D-Fens)

High powered punk rock and this Dutch band have been at it since sometime in the late 80s. A good mixture of early 80s UK punk, along with hardcore and some hard rock—there's a distinctive AC/DC riff audible in one song. They can't stand the monarchy, computer geeks or faux-working class assholes but Brezhnev's love for aggressive, no bullshit is obvious from the opening chords. (PMB 275, 8 Amlajack Blvd., Newnan, GA 30265)

BRIEFS-Off The Charts (Dirtnap)

The Briefs are cool—no doubt about it. So cool that I won't even mention one of these guys' previous employment in mid-90s grunge band Green Apple Quick Step (oops!). Their second album is another catchy, delirious collection of new wavish punk, pop and garage all fondued up and done in short blasts. "We Americans" has a nyah-nyah taunting quality and a tagline that switches from "god bless the good 'ol USA" to "god bless the FUCKED-UP USA," talking about how we Americans don't read or write and do what we like, and it's accompanied by an irresistable melody-line. "Ouch Ouch Ouch," "22nd Century Man" and "(Looking Through) Gary Glitter's Eyes" play up the pogo punch, nicely and the latter confirms my feelings that these guys have a decided Adverts influence. (PO Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111)

BRIGGS-Numbers (Disaster)

Hearty, rootsy punk—the Briggs touch on the Clash-inspired sound of Rancid, take a Dropkicksy turn for "3rd World War" and even kick up some speedy near-hardcore for "Head Shrink, Dead Shrink." No bullshit—blending punk energy and melody and, even if there's a sense of *déjà vu*, there are some pretty good songs here. (PO Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510)

BULEMICS-Soundtrack To The Apocalypse (Steel Cage)

One of the better bunch of rock 'n roll bad boys out there. Texasses with fired-up riffs melding Dead Boys' style punk and hard rock, along with the occasional burst of speed and, if the apocalypse is imminent, these songs make it sound almost inviting. I've started to get a little burnt out on the RAWK stuff, of late, and prefer bands that bring more of a punk angle to the party and the Bulemics do just that. (PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125)

BURN YOUR BRIDGES (Deep Six)

Wailing hardcore by this two-piece band that consists of Chris from Spazz and Bob from Lack Of Interest. Some grind but it's mainly high-speed thrash, accompanied by sarcastic, biting lyrics. Jaded? Maybe—kind of a 'you goddamn kids' mentality, here—connecting dots between people who need uniforms, whether it's a cop or a businessman or a punk rocker, for that matter. Calling the hypocrites and extremists and holier-than-thou assholes on their shit and proudly wearing the badge of "washed up has-been," proclaiming to play by no one's rules or please anyone except themselves. Maybe these guys are old and bitter but BYB's walloping sound shows that their hearts are certainly still into making some ripping noise.

BURST-Conquest: Writhe (Prank)

When every band and their dog are trying to squeeze as many different maniacal riffs, rapid tempo changes, and confusing time signatures into their compositions, it's so refreshing to hear the straight-ahead power of Burst. Hardcore at their roots, these Swedes also employ the tasty power metal riffs and deathgrind grunts of their native land. These heavier elements are akin to God Forbid and Shadows Fall, but the steamhammer pace on "Conquest: Writhe" is closer to fellow countrymen Raised Fist. "Misconception" is but one example of a simple idea taken to the extreme, with a hell of a wallop, stomping ass on anybody clogging the metalcore arteries with too much, too fast. The vocals of Linus Jagerskog veer away from the screech of so many bad singers who were never taught projection and let their vocal chords suffer the consequences. No, Jagerskog knows how to sing from the belly, not the throat, creating a lower guttural roar, complimented nicely by some death metal grunts and high pitched shrieks in the background. "Decomposed," a noise remix by Merzbow, is listed as the last track, but leads into an unlisted bonus song that puts Unsane to shame. (PO Box 419892, SF, CA 94141-9892) *(Jason)*

BUZZCOCKS (Merge)

Wasn't sure what to expect after the disappointing "Modern," where the 'Cocks added way too much electronica to their sound. Maybe the guys realized they should get back to what they do best, because this self-titled album is easily their best since "Trade Test Transmissions." In fact, it's even better than that album. Brimming with loud, cascading guitars, gigantic hooks and heart-on-sleeve vocals. A definite return to form and with some sly nods to their past—"Lester Sands" has echoes of the wonderful "Nothing Left" from "Love Bites," while the "Lipstick" riff appears for a second for "Useless." I only hear one sequencer this time, on "Certain Move," and it doesn't ruin the pop vibe, at all. These songs rock with authority—hardly the sound of a band on the downside. (PO Box 1235, Chapel Hill, NC 27514)

CALVARY-Outnumbered Is Outflanked (Council)

It's not meant as an insult when I say these guys remind me of Rites of Spring and One Last Wish. It's obvious the moment Matthias Weeks opens his mouth and one thinks immediately of a certain Mr. Picciotto. But Calvary play with a subtler touch and a wider scope. Infectious, melodious songs driven along by a solid rhythm section (Jeff Rice and Dave Song, both of whom also currently play in Punch In The Face) and stirring guitar chords. Matt's vocals are the centerpoint—emotional and expressive without being overwrought. "Torrential" is anthemic and, if you listen closely, you can hear them nick a guitar line from Cheap Trick's "Hello There." Potent and emotional, yet it's a quieter storm. (PO Box 220691, Chicago, IL 60622)

CAPITOL CITY DUSTERS-Rock Creek (Dischord)

That unmistakable sound of Washington, DC hits immediately on The Dusters' Rock Creek and the first chords of "Superimposed." Whether the Capitol City prefix is added to their name or not, The Dusters still reek of DC's musical inventiveness and social conscience. Similar to Alex MacKaye's The Warmers and singer/guitarist Alex Bourgeois' former band, Severin, The Dusters emit a stripped down set of songs that are impressive in texture and power. Tempo is the key to these songs. The herky-jerky time signatures are done to perfection while the more melodic songs are astounding in their basic beauty. For those who know Fugazi in and out, but are unfamiliar with equally influential DC bands like Lungfish, Gray Matter, Ignition and the Holy Rollers, The Capitol City Dusters are a history lesson and a glimpse at the future all wrapped in one. (3819 Beecher St. NW, Washington, DC 20007) *(Jason)*

CATHETERS-Static Delusions And Stone-Still Days (Sub Pop)

Fiery rock 'n roll music—loud, semi-hooky and rambunctious. Very much a ROCK animal but still sprightly-sounding enough of the time, except for the more lethargic "The Door Shuts Quickly" and "Bleary Haze." Cranked-up nicely for "What Have They Done To You," "Build A Home" and "Been There Before." Big riffs and a punky attitude and that still works for me. (PO Box 20645, Seattle, WA 98102)

CAUGHT RED HANDED (Caught Red)

Peppy west coast hardcore punk—the speedy delivery had me wondering if this was going to be a Zeke-style band but there's none of the rock 'n roll trappings. Speed and burn, perhaps a bit samey-sounding after awhile but it kicks ass and the lyrics are both angry and humorous—"nazi skinheads, suck my cock," for instance, on "Cause In Effect." "FYAAGTH!" translates to "Fuck you all and go to hell." Now there's a sentiment I can get behind—well, sometimes, anyway. (1608 NE 195th St., Seattle, WA 98155)

CHAINS-On Top Of Things (Get Hip)

Straight outta Quebec comes this quintet who've apparently made it their mission to revive the sounds of watered-down mid-60's British white-boy blues. This sounds like every teenage band that must have formed after hearing "England's Newest Hit Makers" for the first time. No real energy or creativity, just parroting what they like—who needs to hear this FORTY YEARS after the fact? (PO Box 666 Canonsburg, PA 15317) *(Ryan)*

CHANNEL 3-CH3 (Dr. Strange)

Back for another go-round, with Mike and Kimm joined by a new bassist and drummer and, while it's closer in spirit to their earlier stuff than their execrable mid-80s releases, it's not in the league of their first EP or "Fear Of Life." Social D-ized punk with a rock 'n roll center and the occasional countryish undertow (though no pedal steel). The Clash also echoes through some of these tunes. Fairly energetic yet it doesn't completely blow me away. (PO Box 1058, Alta Loma, CA 90701)

CHANTICLEAR (Overlook)

Local pop/punk band with a scrappy sound, which lifts it above the realm of the mundane, ever so slightly. Kind of reminiscent of the loud 'n tuneful bands that populated Boston in the 80s—Stranglehold, et al, and adding a dose of hardcore for a few songs. Unaffected and catchy. (www.suckrock.com/overlook.html)

CHARMS-Charmed, I'm Sure (Twisted Rico)

Surprisingly good. This Boston band hits the nail on the head with their tasteful use of Farfisa organ—most bands either drown out the guitar with it or only dabble with it but the production here is perfect. Music is out of the Lyres/Cynics school of well-written 60's garage rock/pop but with female vocals and harmonies straight outta 1980 powerpop that lighten the overall feel compared to the snarl of those two classic bands. It might actually be closer to The Smithereens occasionally. Not to say the songs are as good as any of those bands, but they're on the right track, at least. Nice job outta The Charms. (1112 Boylston St., PMB 314, Boston, MA 02215) *(Ryan)*

CHE-Chapter 127 (G7 Welcoming Committee)

Brutal album name (I think I saw someone use that, oh, eight years ago), but aside from that, this is another above-average release from the stellar G7 label, who pride themselves on only releasing music by bands that are politically aware; truly commendable in this day and age of fashion. Actually, Che isn't quite up to the label's standards, with a huge amount of cheese in some of the lyrics and easy grooves. The music is heavily influenced by classic Vancouver band Sparkmaker; thick, chunky and groove-laden, with vocals that are really, really loud in the mix. The lyrics are, for the most part, excellent and they all deal with important social and political issues. The tunes reel you in and get the cranium bangin', but it's sort of a reluctant bang, because some of the grooves are a bit red-faced and song names like "United States of Generica" may be relevant and thought-provoking, but they could use a bit more depth. With some time on their side, Che will be a force to be reckoned with. (PO Box 27006, 360 Main Street Concourse, Winnipeg, MB R3C 4T3, CANADA) *(Greg)*

CHEATER SLICKS-Yer Last Record (In The Red)

Alternating between mid-tempo garage pounders and several outstanding moodier quiet numbers (with acoustic guitar, even), Cheater Slicks says goodbye after kicking around for well over a decade with a terrific record that doesn't sound like anyone but them. A definite standout among the masses in this genre proving again that there's no substitute for experience. (PO Box 50777, LA, CA 90050) *(Ryan)*

CHERRY THIRTEEN-Guilty As Sin (Twenty Stone Blatt/Devil Doll)

Steve Miller from Electric Frankenstein plays guitar and sings in this band and it's not radically different from his more well-known aggregation. Except that this album is a bit more consistent than any EF album in recent memory. No bullshit classic rock 'n roll with a punk twist and Miller's soulful snarl. The bad-ass lyrics might make one wince a bit ("Hey mutha fucka, I could sure use a blow," which is followed by some porn-movie moaning). Sure, it's a case of arrested development and a conservative musical niche but they keep the guitars loud and there's only a couple of slow ones. Might as well crank it up. (PO Box 30727, Long Beach, CA 90853)

NOAM CHOMSKY-The New War On Terrorism: Fact and Fiction (Alternative Tentacles/AK Press)

If there was one thing I was eager to hear after 9/11, it was how notorious political analyst Noam Chomsky would handle talking about the situation. This hour-long spoken word disc captures his first lecture after the attack, which occurred about a month later, and of course he pulls no punches. Here he looks at some of the ways the United States could avoid the risk of future terrorist attacks ("There is one easy way to do that...stop participating in it"), and some history as to why people in other countries do not hold the United States in too high of a regard. As always, it's an overflow of information, delivered in his usual alienating and dry fashion, but hang in there; he makes a joke near the end of the disc! As with anything Chomsky does, it's highly recommended. (PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141) *(Greg)*

WARD CHURCHILL-Pacifism and Pathology In The American Left (AK Press/Alt. Tentacles)

Anyone who has read American Indian Studies professor and activist Ward Churchill's "Pacifism as Pathology" will be very interested to hear this spoken word disc. Recorded just over a month after 9/11, "Pacifism and Pathology in the American Left" captures Churchill in a cantankerous mood (is he ever anything but?) and includes a lengthy and sometimes heated debate with a group of SF anarchists at the AK Press Warehouse. At times, Churchill lets his emotions get the best of him, including a preposterous section where he pretty much says the victims in the Twin Towers' higher floors deserved what they got. It's a real stretch to make a point about the power of direct action to disassemble the US corporate structure. It's during Churchill's short speech section where he has the most effect; explaining how petitions, rallies and marches don't amount to a hill of beans on a global scale as the US murders thousands of people a day in nations they have no business being in. Churchill has a commanding, almost frightening voice that drives into your brain and makes your heart beat a little faster. One thing's for sure; he'll get your attention. (PO Box 419092, SF, CA, 94141-9092) *(Jason)*

THE CINCH (Dirtnap, EP)

Garage pop with some tough-sounding female harmonies and the music also exudes a toughness along with a melodic core. "French Maid" picks up the pace and leaves the strongest impression, with vigorous guitar chords and a tambourine-inflected backbeat accompanying the voices. Hope they hang on to the rough edges. (PO Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111)

CIVIL DEFENSE (Striving For Togetherness, EP)

Ripping hardcore with two vocalists—one of whom is Josh Gagne (Intent To Injure) and, after being missing in action for awhile, they've gotten back together, although these songs were recorded a few years ago. Nothing held back, just energy and adrenalin and time hasn't tempered their rage one bit. (M. Heinisch, Schlossparkstr. 5, 95145 Oberkotzau, GERMANY)

CLAIRMEL-A Letter To Friends (No Idea)

For years now, Florida's Clairmel have been riding a constant wave of underachievement. A Letter To Friends is a fine continuation of that tradition, offering forth 11 tracks of the same slacker take on Jawbreaker-esque punk the band has become known for. Although they occasionally approach melodic perfection, they also tinker around with enough sloppiness and intentional dissonance to prevent the listener from getting too attached to the songs. You gotta respect 'em, but I just can't listen to them on a regular basis. And I've been trying, for about seven years now, and I probably will keep trying, because there's something incredibly endearing about Clairmel's devil-may-care approach to heartfelt punk. (PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604) *(Greg)*

CLASS ASSASSINS-State Of Emergency (TKO)

Sturdy, class-conscious (of course) street punk by this Canadian band. Mid-tempo songs with a trad-punk ring, rich in resonant guitar chords and solid harmonies. Their bass-player Dave used to play in Direct Action way back in the day and there are other old school bands on the collective resume—Chronic Submission and Problem Children are two more that I remember. So these guys have the roots and play with a good amount of skill and confidence.(3126 W. Cary St., #303, Richmond, VA 23221)

CLOCKED IN-Tied To The Mast (Radical)

A pretty standard conglomeration of straight ahead late '80s style HC burn, and a smattering of melody-infused hooks yields a middling listen. At times drawing from both a medium/fast concoction of forthright four chord changeup-laden NYHC schematics, and a slight Avail-esque penchant for harmonic propensities amid the din, the songs here don't break any new ground stylistically, nor do they tackle their blend of aggression and hooks with an especially noteworthy verve that would serve to set them apart from the legions of like minded outfits. A fair display of gravel-coated ire and discontent, and a slight singalong slant ultimately fall short of the mark. (77 Bleecker St., #C2-21, NY, NY 10012) *(Mike Ramek)*

CLONE DEFECTS-Blood On Jupiter (Tom Perkins Entertainment/Superior Sounds)/ Shapes Of Venus (In The Red)

It took awhile for the Defects' debut album, "Blood On Jupiter" to come out (much like this zine!). Bad-ass rock 'n rollers from Michigan and, if they're a product of their environment, who's going to complain about it. Actually, there are a number of strains running through their sound—Stones-ish rock and their disciples (Dolls, Real Kids), a hint of Iggy, particularly for the bitter ballad "Precious Libra" and slash 'n burn punk. The latter is well in evidence for "Cheetah Eyes" (from their previous 7"), "Cheap Livin'" and the unhinged "Eyeballs Poppin'," with crazed electric-piano plonking in one channel and Timmy Vulgar's attitudinal vocals in the other. Place yourself between the speakers and the effect is head-spinning. Played with a chip on the shoulder and malice in the heart—a winning combination. "Shapes Of Venus" is the recently-released followup and comes across as a more straight ahead-sounding rock effort., although Timmy's vocals convey the same arrogance, but can also sound vulnerable on the more melodic title track or "Take Your Love Back." The sound remains quite rough around the edges. "Plastic Stuff" and "Low Fashion Lovers" provide cheap rock 'n roll thrills. "Dear John," on the other hand, is a bluesy instrumental ballad and more of a wind-down than brain-bashing conclusion. Taken as a whole, though, the Defects are an intriguing bunch. (Tom Perkins: PO Box 970936, Ypsilanti, MI 48197/In The Red: PO Box 50777, LA, CA 90050)

CLUSTERFUX-Thrash Mongrel (Rodent Popsicle)

This Denver band straddle the line between crusty thrash and crossover, right down to their metal-looking logo. Nasty-sounding male/female vocals, blazing riffage and played hard and fast, for the most part, although they get in a heavier mode for "A Toast" and part of "Pictures When You Pee." "Sign Of The Times" isn't the Cro-Mags' song but, rather, an indictment of how fucked-up things have gotten in this godforsaken land. Loud and ripping. (PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134)

ALEXANDER COCKBURN-Beating The Devil (AK Press/Alt. Tentacles)

Cockburn is a British writer and the subtitle of this disc mentions "incendiary rants." Cockburn isn't exactly a ranter but does present some ideas that would likely prove irksome to the flag-waving patriots who refuse to contextualize what happened on 9/11/01. Cockburn doesn't condone the actions, but talks about how Bin Laden was bolstered by the CIA, how the US has long supported oppressive regimes in other countries and points to Madeline Albright's statement to CBS' Lesley Stahl condoning the sanctions against Iraq that have led to the deaths of thousands of children—which is incendiary and could have provided motivation for the attacks, in tandem with the terrorists' religious extremism. He also covers the drug war, voter irregularities and disenfranchisement, inexplicable bi-partisan support for Bush's cabinet appointments, including the execrable John Ashcroft and Gail Norton, so-called liberals' disdain for more extreme expressions of dissent during the Seattle protests and corporate consolidation, particularly in the food industry. He spares neither Democrats nor Republicans—Bill Clinton gets lambasted for not pardoning Leonard Peltier, but doing so for Marc Rich, the corporate criminal whose wife contributed to his campaign. Cockburn isn't the most dynamic speaker in the world and I'd probably rather read his column in *The Nation* or on his Counterpunch website but I do admire his progressive point of view. Much more than that turncoat Christopher "Snitch" Hitchens, who has become a cheerleader for US military action. (PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141-9092)

COCKNEY REJECTS-Out Of The Gutter (Captain Oi)

Back for another round and their first album of all-new material in many years. The Rejects dish out mainly mid-tempo street punk, along with a few more rock 'n roll/metal sounding songs (don't forget that they morphed from snotty street punks into metal merchants the first time around) and the final song is a melodic, almost alt-rock song "Snide." One of those rockers, "Collar Felt Blues," is one of the more memorable songs on here. Not as rousing as back in the day, though more than listenable. (PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 8QA, ENGLAND)

COLUMBIAN NECKTIES-Why Change Your Moves (Sounds of Subterrania)

I'd heard a few songs by these guys on Ross' show on WMBR and they really kicked my ass, so I took a chance and ordered both of their import LP's. This is the latest by these Danish garage/punk/rock 'n roll maniacs and it's highly recommended. Reminds me of the New Bomb Turks, to an extent, although these guys are a tad more influenced by classic hard rock (they cover AC/DC's "Riff Raff") and the lyrics aim straight at the groin more often than not. Not much subtlety with "Hot Butt Love" or "Tits 'n Ass," in other words. But the Neckties rock like crazy—songs that MOVE like a motherfuckin' freight train. Guitar riffs to kill for. This LP and its predecessor, "Abrance!" are two of the better albums I've heard, lately, from this end of the punk rock spectrum. (PO Box 10 36 62, 34036 Kassel, GERMANY)

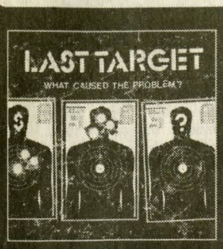
COMBATWOUNDEDVETERAN-Duck Down For The Torso (No Idea, EP)

A fucked-up EP but most of it in a good way—I don't dig the computer-generated narrative with synthetic accompaniment for the concluding "Founded Space" but they careen through some heavy math rock meets screamo-hardcore on the first three songs, hitting it out of the park for the jolting, nervy "15 Minutes On A Forklift." (PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604)

COMET GAIN-Réalistes (Kill Rock Stars)

Dull indie rock from the UK that never really takes off. Elements of garage, surf and psychedelia creep into the mangled mix, but only help to confuse matters and jumble up the listen. Comet Gain's songs are not badly done. It's probable that fans of lo-fi pop will enjoy Realistes!, but this record will not appeal to fans outside that realm. If nothing else, it is the only opportunity to see ex-members of Huggy Bear (guitarist/keyboardist Jon Slade) and Morrissey (drummer/producer Woodie Taylor) involved in the same record. Even Kathleen Hanna's guest vocals on "Ripped-Up Suit!" are soggy and uninspired. (PMB 418, 120 NE State Ave., Olympia, WA 98501) *(Jason)*

MOMMA SAID KNOCK YOU OUT !!!



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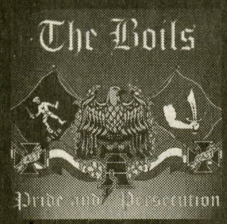

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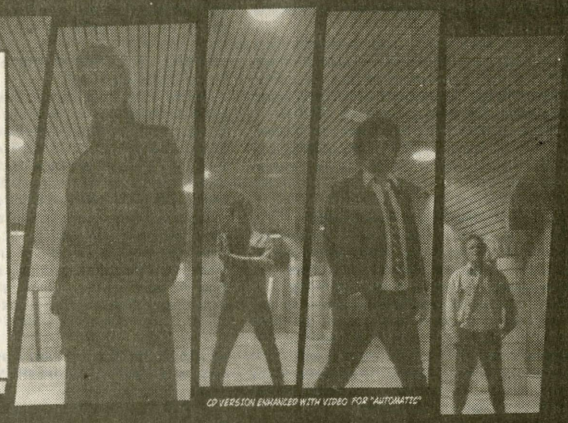

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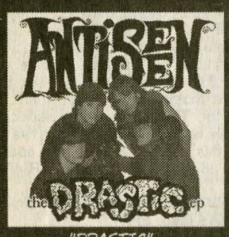

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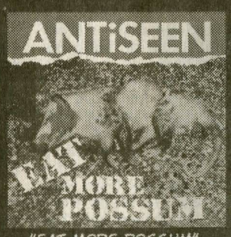

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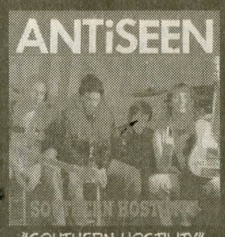

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CONSUMED-Pistols At Dawn (BYO)

Aaaagh, it's totally catchy tough-sounding mad type shit. It's no different than a lot of BYO bands. It's everything that I love to hack on—unchallenging lyrics, metal-dude riffs, gratuitous palm-mute triplets that I can't do, average songwriting, totally predictable. The even have guitar harmonies. If you have guitar harmonies and you aren't called Thin Lizzy or Slayer I hate you. So why the fuck do I like this so much right now while listening to it? Maybe because the combination of all that shit on this CD ends up being like a movie you really enjoy in the theater and then can't remember the plot to 3 hours later. (PO Box 67609, LA, CA 90067) *(Tigger)*

CONTRAVENE-A Call To Action (Tribal War)

Contravene owe a huge debt to Crass, Conflict, et al., for their fusing of politics and punk aesthetics. Their music merges stretches of sinister melodies with distorted power chords and heavy-metal squeals, which serves as both a backdrop and an accentuation for androgynous male/female screaming that could peel paint off of any wall within a five-mile radius – and maybe even neuter a nearby cat or two. They make very pointed critiques of their scene in "Conviction," condemning the hypocrisy exhibited by many of their peers. It is an important message, one that should not be lost amid the frantically paced thrashing. To make sure the point is driven home, two vocalists simultaneously recite key lyrics in a monotone over a cascading melodic backdrop, a tactic that is used often in the seven songs on this album. "Desperation," an examination of the hypersexualization of women by the media, has some nice harmonizing interspersed between raspy screaming and guitar flourishes. I'm uncomfortable with their simplistic characterization of sex work as something that is apparently never freely chosen by its workers, who apparently all lack the mental capacity to make their own decisions about what is best for them. I understand Contravene's opposition to the exploitative aspects of the sex industry, but wish they would give the women involved some credit, instead of assuming that they are all victims condemned to a life of humiliation and degradation. "In Darkness" opens with some almost-folksy harmonizing, which ascends to an impassioned plea for everyone to "rise up together .., dismantle their system." Their political and social targets really aren't a surprise, given the genre, and the cover art is resplendent with images of revolutionaries who, coincidentally, all share the same taste in clothing and hairstyles--and are all white, or could at least pass for it. It's funny how some peace-punks seem to like their revolutions led solely by those who share their taste in music. The homogeneity of the art, politics and music left a bitter taste in my mouth, but Contravene will surely be enjoyed by fans of the genre, and appreciated by those of similar political persuasions. Musically, they are a tight unit, boasting strong vocals and lyrics that at times tend toward sloganeering, despite their generally intelligent rendering. (1951 Burnside, #1936, Portland, OR 97209) *(Anna)*

THE CONTROL-The Forgotten EP (Go Kart)

Hot new EP by the Control—four fast-paced hardcore songs with hints of melody, particularly for the title track and "December 21st." There's also a new version of "Head and Shoulders" from their first album and its straight-ahead fury is as potent as ever. Kevin imbues his vocals with passion and pain, especially for the suicide-themed "To My Love." An underrated band. (PO Box 20, Prince Street Station, NY, NY 10012)

COUNT ME OUT-Permanent (Indecision)

Pouring every ounce of passion into the music. That's what one hears on Count Me Out's second album. Vocals flow out with a desperate intensity and the songs are hammered home with power, crunch and melody. A striking sound that doesn't come across as derivative. A sense of drama that lacks pretense and remaining true to its hardcore inspiration. (PO Box 6052, Garden Grove, CA 92846)

CRAMPS-Fiends Of Dope Island (Vengeance)

The Cramps return, on their own label, with the same sleazy, fired-up primal rock 'n roll they've always dished out… this is also the best record they've done in quite some time. Seems like a reclaiming of the roots, to an extent. Fuzzy guitars that aim low, lyrics that aim even lower and done with leering perfection by Lux—think of him as that perverted uncle that comes around every so often. "Wrong Way Ticket" is a hot rails rave-up, while "Hang Up," a Wailers cover, is a garage-honed gem, all chords and menace. Refusing to age gracefully. (www.vengeancerecords.com)

CRANKED UP! (Creep)

First disc from this Philly band, following a demo under their original name Cranked Up Really High and four of the tracks are re-done from the demo. Pat from Violent Society is the vocalist and it's more of a traditional punk sound. Bright guitars and catchy riffs, punctuated by Pat's raspy vocals. "Jaded" rings up the hooks nicely, while "Don't Need Your Culture" and "Left Wing Scum" (not directed at left-wingers but how Pat wears that tag as a badge of honor when given to him by nazi morons) take a quicker-paced route. Solid punk rock. (PMB 220, 252 East Market St., West Chester, PA 19382)

CRASH AND BURN-Sick Again (Traktor 7)

Fired-up, pumped-up rock 'n roll, no bullshit, all volume. Crash and Burn were born to boogie and prove that out with "Crazy And Stupid," "Gettin' All Bad Lieutenant," "Graveyard Shift," etc… The punk roots aren't quite as obvious as on the first EP, unless you count attitude, and that's here in quantity. Bill Brown maintains the soulful grit and also expands his vocal range, here. Heavy, but the songs also move like a motherfucker. (1100 Cambridge St., Cambridge, MA 02139)

CRAW-Bodies For Strontium (Hydra Head)

This Cleveland band is totally awesome…the first song is just a total jam-out for five minutes until the vocals kick in. Wailing drums & bass and metal guitars bring to mind the bastard love child of Mission of Burma and Phantom Tollbooth. Craw have been around for about 12 years and it sounds like it—they're tight as fuck. Beats and rhythms shift on a dime with each song consisting of many changes. According to the band's bio they don't tour anymore, so it's our loss. I don't go out too much, but I would most definitely get off my lazy ass and go out if they ever change their minds and come to LA. (PO Box 990248, Boston, MA 02199) *(Steve)*

CRETIN 66-Demolition Safari (Steel Cage)

Bawdy, loud 'n proud rock 'n roll from KC. The opening song is called "Bang Yer Fuckin' Head" and, along with the purloined riffs that they admit to, it's a call for the freedom to smoke weed in peace. Know what? I never touch the stuff but if some bad-ass longhairs want to partake, who the fuck am I or anyone else to ruin their fun. These ain't no mindless hippies, though—while they call their music "freedom rock" and extoll the virtues of ZZ Top, those Cramps and Ramones' shirts they sport are telling, as well. The guitars are LOUD, baby, in a Joe Young (Antiseen) way, just how way you want 'em and the Cretins mix 'n match punk, metal and garage into a spirited romp. (PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125)

CRIMSON SWEET-Livin' In Strut (On/On Switch)

Engaging album by this NYC three-piece who have been around awhile but are just now releasing their first full-length. New-wavish punk in stripped-down form and some solid melodies emerge from the songs, particularly "Still Glistening," with a pop meets early Wire sound. Same for the repetitive "Airport Novel." Polly Watson has a voice that ranges from vulnerable to tough-as-fuck and her guitar lines add both power and color, backed up with a punchy backbeat. Way better than any recently overhyped Noo Yawk band I prefer not to mention. Yeah yeah yeah…. (780 Post St., #54, SF, CA 94109)

CRIPPLES-Dirty Head (Dirtnap)

The new wave onslaught from the Pacific Northwest continues. These guys are a little more synth-happy and it can be simultaneously abrasive and charming. The Cripples still sound human, with the expressive vocals and pop song leanings. These people also come across as though they're having a grand old time crafting these tunes—there's a roughness, a certain amount of anarchic chaos that bubbles to the surface, frequently, along with disarming hooks. Yet, the whole thing begins to grate on my nerves after awhile. I'm of a split mind, on this one, and not sure if it can be reconciled. Depends on whether you're in the mood or not, I suppose. (PO Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98115)

CRIPPLERS-One More For The Bad Guys (Dionysus)

Utterly non-descript punk/rocknroll crap. It looks like they're from Missouri so there's probably not another band doing this shit within 300 miles, but that doesn't make me appreciate it any more. They even cover Fang and The Nips, which just makes me think they're another bunch of ex-punk rockers playing rocknroll to get bar shows. Skip it. (PO Box 1975, Burbank, CA 91507) *(Ryan)*

CROWD-Punk You (Unity Squad)

Talk about old school… the Crowd's history goes back to the late 70s beach punk scene and they've still got it, for the most part. While the poppy quotient takes over on occasion and Jim Decker's nasally vocals are a mixed blessing, there's still a basic punk attitude. Tautly melodic riffs and presented with an economical sound. "Surf Ghetto" cribs a nice Buzzcocks via Naked Raygun guitar coda and connects with a nervy surge. Let's hear it for the old-timers. (PO Box 1325, Huntington Beach, CA 92647)

CRUDE-Immortality (Deranged)

A compilation of material by this Japanese hardcore band and it's an absolute scorcher. Crude incorporate all the elements of the contemporary sound from that country—piledriving guitar and bass riffs, harsh vocals and a thunderous sound that embraces thrash and metallic flourishes. Maiden-esque lead guitar lines over a roughshod-riding attack. Feel the motherfucking fury. (PO Box 543, Stn. P, Toronto, ON M5S-2T1, CANADA)

C*NTS-La La La (Disturbing)

The Cunts (say it loud) have been around two decades, give or take, playing a combination of garage, punk and psychedelia. While the tongue is planted firmly in cheek, they've never really had the all-out fuzz explosion that I tend to favor with bands playing these styles. You'd think a song like "You're A Real Motherf*cker" would be a heat-seeking missile, but it turns out to be slightly less over-the-top than advertised. Some toe-tappers here ("Action Girls," the bluesy "Swimming Pool Filled With Trash") but mainly hitting a middle ground. (3238 S. Racine, Chicago, IL 60608)

CURLUPANDDIE-We May Be Through With The Past (Status, EP)

Raging scream-core and I can most definitely relate to the title of the first song: "I Hate Almost Every Person I Come In Contact With." Especially after just coming back from a local take-out place and listening to the inane conversations of some of the wastes-of-human-space that were there at the same time. The last track is more electronic/experimental and not that intriguing but, otherwise, it's an intense blast. (PO Box 1300, Thousand Oaks, CA 91358)

THE CURSE (Hell Bent, EP)

Seems to be a surge of bands in Philly who have a fast, melodic sound while maintaining a furious hardcore ambiance and the Curse can be counted in that group. Haggard vocals, beefy guitars but with a warmly tuneful quality. The closing "Rankers and Rotters" turns it up a notch more. (PO Box 1529, Point Pleasant Beach, CA 08742)

CURSED-One (Deathwish)

They don't really want to dwell on it, but how can we not mention that amongst the ranks of Cursed are folks who used to play in Canadian hardcore crushers The Swarm and Left For Dead? Impossible. We have to mention it. So, if you like those bands you'll dig the Cursed, but if you like things more on the metal side of things, don't turn away just yet, as Cursed offer up enough bassed out sonic heaviness to keep fans of newer Entombed or a healthy chunk of the Relapse Records roster happy. One is a really blistering release, power through brevity with a scant 11 tracks, but after having yer head kicked in for half an hour or so, you don't need much more. The beauty lies in the production, which just drives the whole thing home like a sledgehammer. Aggressive, honest, pissed off, heavy. Great stuff. (10 Lothrop St., Beverly, MA 01915) *(Greg)*

CYNICS-Living Is The Best Revenge (Get Hip)

A new Cynics' album? Like hearing from an old friend after too long a time. With all this talk of the "garage revival," the Cynics have been mining the 60s motherlode since the 1980s and remain one of the best purveyors of said sound. The new Cynics longplayer, produced by the ubiquitous Tim Kerr, covers all the stylistic bases from the fuzzy blasts of "Turn Me Loose" (with some hot harp tooting), "The Tone," "I Got Time" and a cover of the Electric Prunes' "You've Never Had It Better" to the more melodic "Marianne," "Let Me Know" and "She Lives (In A Time Of Her Own)," the latter an old 13th Floor Elevators' song. There's even an extended pyschedelic workout, bookended by jangly pop, for "Shine." Granted, the production is on the clean side and it doesn't electrify the brain in the same manner as their first three albums (which you should definitely hear if you even put up the pretense of being a garage fan), but this is still a killer effort from this veteran band. They choose their cover material well and their own songs remain super-catchy. (PO Box 666, Canonsburg, PA 15317)

DAG NASTY-Minority of One (Revelation)

The reunion of what many would consider the consummate lineup of Dag Nasty proves that they are still one of the finest punk rock bands ever to come from America. Dave Smalley, Brian Baker, Colin Sears and Roger Marbury essentially made only two records together prior to this one. The debut and now legendary "Can I Say" and 1992's "Four on the Floor", which despite being made on a limited schedule yielded some pretty strong material. With this much talked about new album entitled "Minority of One", you get an all out punk rock record made by some of the best in the business. Smalley is undeniably close to being unsurpassed at what he does which is sing with punk rock emotion and attitude. Baker is now so good it's scary. If you didn't believe it before this from his past work with Dag Nasty, Minor Threat, and even Junkyard or perhaps with his current band Bad Religion, then this record will convince you. The guitar work on "Minority Of One" is nothing less than stellar. Then there is the remarkable rhythm section of Sears and Marbury who you would think have been playing together all along. From the opening moments of the lead track "Ghosts" it is obvious Dag Nasty took this opportunity to work together very seriously and made a brilliant record. Every song has merit from the title track to eighties-ish "Bottle this", the radio ready "Broken Days, to the electrifying "Incinerate". They even throw a hidden cover version of Generation X's "100 Punks" at the end of the recording for good measure. Some might say you should leave things alone once there are over, but seriously how cool would it be to see this band play a live show? (PO Box 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615) *(Steev)*

JEFF DAHL-Street Fighting Reptile (Steel Cage)

On a new label with his 21st solo release, Jeff Dahl dabbles with interesting new production techniques and thankfully throws some more uptempo tracks on this one. Still flying the flag of glammy, trashy rock and roll, to be sure, but bluesier tracks like "Halo Moon", with its dead-on mimicry of the country/blues bass tone, show new ideas on the songwriting front as well as the production end. "Destination Blackout", sporting cool "STP Not LSD" era Samoans style riffage, is quite fine as well. Most uptempo release in a while, containing lots of poppy backing vox. Hardly a disappointment for those who crave rock without all that silly image crap. (PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125) *(David)*

DAMAGE CONTROL-Can't Keep Us Down (Crucial Response, EP)

Sweeping heart-on-sleeve, X-on-hand straight-edge hardcore with the requisite blowtorch guitars, earnest vocals and backups and a fast pace. Nothing you haven't heard many times before and, while there's not much to distinguish Damage Control from a myriad of other bands, they play the style well. (Kaiserfeld 98, 46047 Oberhausen, GERMANY)

DARKEST HOUR-Hidden Hands Of A Sadist Nation (Victory)

These guys play metal the RIGHT way. Harmonic guitar trills, heavy as fuck but not tuned to drop-down bowel moving level. And the lyrics display a progressive heart, particularly for "The Patriot Virus," which rumbles over the terrain like one of those overpriced tanks the US government spends its money on instead of something that will actually HELP people. The closing 12+ minute instrumental "Veritas, Aequitas" does push the pretentiousness envelope and the other tracks are on the lengthy side, as well (not one song is under four minutes) but, if you have the patience, Darkest Hour rock pretty fucking furiously. (346 N. Justine, Suite 504, Chicago, IL 60607)

DATSUNS (V2)

Rock and roll music with a high cheese factor, whether it's intentional or not but, man, it's good cheese! The Datsuns, like their fellow New Zealanders the D4, are bringing on the riffage with a strut in their gait and a snarl on the face. Any song called "MF From Hell" damn well better live up to the billing and that song certainly delivers on the promise. Organ is utilized well on some of these songs and, in tandem with a cowbell for "At Your Touch," it takes me back to my Deep Purple-loving adolescence. The Datsuns flog the hell out of their roots but manage to, once again, reach through the denim that encases my rock 'n roll soul.

DAYCARE SWINDLERS-Heathen Radio (Go-Kart)

Fast hardcore punk, coming on like a rougher Pennywise, both musically and vocally, which means I like 'em better than that band. A balance of speed and melody. Even with a sense of sameness setting in, the hit and run nature of the material keeps things lively. (PO Box 20, Prince St. Station, NY, NY 10012)

DEADBODIESEVERYWHERE-Buy A Bullet, Rent A Gun (Intolerant Messiah)

First of all, a caveat that this disc is only the length of a 7" is needed, so don't be paying too much for it. That aside (and might I add, a ten-minute CD is awesome in this age of over-indulgence!), this five-song rager from now-defunct power violence/grindcore mercenaries Deadbodieseverywhere is a great listen, a real bass-heavy, pissed off, sonically crushing and lyrically devastating attack on everything. Fans of Slap-A-Ham bands will love this EP, but then again, it's not like DBE were totally unheard of in their time, so fans of the genre already know about

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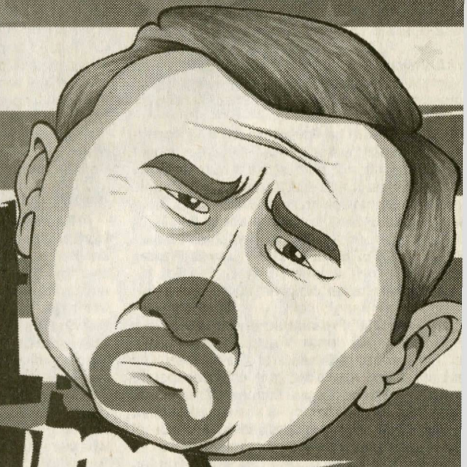

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DEAD MAN'S CHOIR-Out With The Train (Know)

If you can't get enough of that bad-ass Thunders/Dolls-inspired rock 'n roll, Dead Man's Choir fit the bill. It's not hard to figure out the band's influences, in other words—they even use the same font for the song titles as the Dolls did on their first album—but they play it to the hilt and, most important, the songs are both catchy and pack a nice kick to the rear. No ballads, no extraneous elements, just loud, proud and with attitude, baby. Yeah, I'm a sucker for this stuff. (PO Box 90579, Long Beach, CA 90809)

DEAD ONES (Gloom)

After two 7" EPs, the Dead Ones unleash an album and it's a fucking scorcher. Johan favors an agonized howl for his vocals—an unholy relative to Dan from Die Kreuzen and Martin from Limpwrist. No bullshit hardcore punctuated by raw aggression that's both fast and catchy and really hits it out of the park for the slower "Drifted To Extinction." Yeah, it's circle pit time on that one. A decidedly American hardcore slant and pushing it over the top. Just to add a curveball, the final song is a cover of the Sonics' "Witch," another band who featured a crazed-sounding frontman named Gerry Roslie and I think even 'ol Gerry would be jumping under the bed when hearing the sound that comes from Johan's frayed pipes. (PO Box 14253, Albany, NY 12212)

DEAD PEDESTRIANS-In The Streets (Rodent Popsicle)

"This one goes out to every motherfucker in my hometown that I can't fucking stand." That's the closing salutation on the Dead Pedestrians' album and it fits the mood. Middle-finger hardcore punk somewhere between Blood for Blood and Toxic Narcotic. Bile-filled musical and lyrical fodder, with such uplifting titles as "Fuck You," "We Don't Need You," "We Don't Care" and the anti-work "Work." Bruising riffs, not much use for melody and roughly-produced—in other words, a sound that matches the sentiment. Harsh and unrelenting. (PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134)

DEAD SERIOUS-It's What You Can't See (Thorp)

The full-length followup to Dead Serious' split with Diehard Youth and the chip-on-shoulder attitude remains steadfast throughout—the opening lyric is "FUCK YOU" and it's delivered with a hearty hardcore kick. A tough, fast style with mean-sounding breakdowns. Nothing new under the sun but there's something about the way these guys play it—Tear It Up asked where the anger went. Dead Serious have the answer. (PO Box 6786, Toledo, OH 43612)

DEAD WRONG-Hellbomb (Stillborn, EP)

Seven songs and they've got the right idea, some of the time. Late 80s/early 90s NY-inspired hardcore kicking up some solid thrash and mosh parts, although it's a little more metallic than I like, occasionally. But after not thinking too much of them live, this EP was better than expected. There's a fluidity in their style that prevents any sort of stasis from setting in. (PO Box 3019, New Haven, CT 06515)

DEATH BY STEREO-Into The Valley Of Death (Epitaph)

DBS seem to get increasingly overwrought-sounding with each album. There's some provocative visual and lyrical imagery and great song titles—"I Wouldn't Piss In Your Ear If Your Brain Was On Fire" is a favorite. Yet this amalgam of west coast hardcore and gothic heavy metal, topped off by Efrem Schulz's melodramatic vocals seems like a case of sonic overkill. Technically-precise, well-produced and passionate in delivery but it still leaves me cold. (2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026)

DEATH OF MARAT-All Eyes Open (Stickfigure)

Stickfigure is a pretty consistent label; they can usually be counted on to release albums that sound unique. Death of Marat definitely fits the criteria, offering forth a sort of whiney, echo-laden, Olympia-bound indie rock. However, there's more to it than that, with a droning and hypnotic quality that brings to mind some older new wave bands. I hate to use a quote from a bio (I hate reading bios, I hate people who write bios, I hate the paper that's wasted on bios), but this one sums up DoM perfectly: "Unwound covers Joy Division." Not bad, and if that sounds like something that will turn your crank, then DoM will probably satisfy. A smart playing time of 27 minutes helps, so does the nice minimalist packaging. Not bad at all. I find it amusing that they have a booking agent and a publicist. Hey, the publicist is Peter Bottomley, of Skyscraper mag! Hi Peter! Don't work too hard! (PO Box 55462, Atlanta, GA 30308) *(Greg)*

DEATH OR GLORY (Crucial Response, EP)

These guys don't sound anything like the Clash, despite their moniker. What they *do* sound are mighty pissed off and agitated. No love in the lyrics—filled with pure hate, to quote Poison Idea and the music reflects it. Tough-sounding hardcore that alternates between mid-tempo stomp mode and thrash. Not exactly poetry but I have to admit I like this kind of sound and any EP that starts with the line "fuck the world" gets off on the right foot in my little world. (Kaiserfeld 98, 46047 Oberhausen, GERMANY)

DEATH THREAT-For God & Government (Triple Crown)

I've been distinguishing between this band and the Deathreat from Portland, lauding the latter and not having too high an opinion of this CT hardcore band but this album kind of caught me by surprise. There's definitely the tough-guy strut on some songs, with the bad-ass breakdowns and guitars tuned down slightly but there's also some raw, aggressive hardcore in a classic NY vein. They come straight out of the starting gate with the 1-2 punch of the title track and "Spit It Out." Packing the rage and Aaron's vocals don't have the cartoonish, caveman timbre you usually get with this style. (331 W. 57th St., PMB 472, NY, NY 10019)



DEATHREAT-Consider It War (Partners In Crime)

Speaking of Deathreat, here's their first new album in awhile and it's a scorcher, as usual. Their first missive since this country fell under post-9/11 fascism and the corrosive lyrics match the music's blistering intensity. There are politically-oriented lyrics but many songs also deal with issues of getting older and feeling the strains of day-to-day existence. The drudgery of the work world, failing to meet people's "expectations" etc. But, ultimately, refusing to give in, stating that it's "My Life, My Choice." Fast and aggressive—I don't know if you'd call it D-beat or Japanese or Scandinavian influenced but I hear elements of all those styles. It's just loud and kick-ass and Billy's vocals are full-throated and full of rage. And I don't feel shortchanged one bit by disc's brevity—just means I can once again drop the needle at the beginning of side one that more quickly. And again and again. (6250 NE 6th Ave., Portland, OR 97211)

DEERHOOF-Reveille (Kill Rock Stars)

This CD is OK. It seems they've opened for Sonic Youth, Nels Cline and so I was interested. Some cool improv noise but, overall, this was disappointing. Some of this seems contrived and weird in a predictable way, yet a few songs are pure fucking godhead. The drumming is great throughout and it's what ultimately saves this CD from being completely mediocre. The vocals are pretty annoying—"oh so cutesy"—and it detracts a lot from my listening pleasure. I guess some people might find them charming or moody or whatever but when the vocals kick in I'm just bummed. Some really cool keyboards save some of the songs as well, and I know this isn't going to be the worst CD I've ever heard. I think it would be better if it was an instrumental album. You get the picture. (120 NE State Ave, PMB 418, Olympia, WA 98501) *(Steve)*

DEFIANCE-Out Of The Ashes (Punk Core)

Back with a vengeance and a revamped lineup but the basic sound remains the same. Defiance vary between speedy blasts and more Pistols-inspired punk rock fodder with a rock 'n roll kick. Great cover choice in Demob's "No Room For You," which I always thought was an overlooked classic from the early 80s UK punk era. Lyrically, they do still like to drop the f-bomb and remain as cynical about the state of affairs as ever, right from the outset with "Terrorist Attack." And "Into The Dust" talks about those who become cannon fodder for our government-sanctioned conflicts and end up being used and tossed aside, an endless cycle that, unfortunately, we seem headed towards once again. Yet, the boys maintain some optimism with the concluding "It's Too Late," stating *"tomorrow is another day."* And it's never too late to get your ass pogoing to these timeless punk sounds. (PO Box 916, Middle Village, NY 11953)

DEMINER-Woes and So's (Johann's Face)

From Chicago and it definitely sounds like the beefy-yet-melodic punk that's long been a Windy City hallmark, although there are emo-ish shadings. But it never veers into whiny territory, thankfully, with a loud guitar sound. Vocalist/bassist Miguel Barron used to play in Horace Pinker and it's not far removed from his former band. (PO Box 479164, Chicago, IL 60647)

DEMONS-Stockholm Slump (Gearhead)

Scandanavian rock is a big deal, of course, and some of it boils down to unironic cock rock but the Demons haven't forgotten the punk roots. That's what makes them more palatable. There's an Eric Davidson (New Bomb Turks) drawl in Matthias' vocals and the music has that same gritty flavor. Buzzing guitar chords, a pure rock 'n roll heart and, if the greaser look seems a bit contrived, well, *what* look doesn't have some contrivance to it? Even when they slow it down or get a little more melodic, it still sounds bad-ass. (PO Box 421219, SF, CA 94142)

DESTRUCTION MADE SIMPLE-Terror Stricken Youth (A-F)

Melodic political hardcore from the west coast. Destruction Made Simple feature breakneck tempos, busy bass-runs and stinging guitar, accompanied by socially-conscious lyrics. Definitely energetic, although a sense of sameness does set in after awhile. Think of Anti-Flag with more of a speedy west coast sound and grittier vocals and you'd be on the right path. (PO Box 71266, Pittsburgh, PA 15213)

DEVOID OF FAITH/VOORHEES-Network Of Friends 5 (Coalition/Gloom)

First time on CD for this throttling split from a few years back (it's also been re-pressed on vinyl and with new cover art for both) and what a pairing. Raging hardcore by each party. One of my great regrets of recent years was never getting to see Devoid of Faith play live. Colossal guitar riffs, rumbling bass and harsh vocals combine for a stellar attack, some of the best material of their career. "Forge Ahead" starts with a clever musical quote of Agnostic Front's "With Time" before unleashing the speed. Voorhees raw hardcore attack doesn't provide any letdown, either. Mainly played with speedy rage, but "Heavily Salted Drinking Water" slows it to a more anthemic-pace. All burn, all the time. (Coalition: Newtonstraat 212, 2562 KW Den Haag, NETHERLANDS/Gloom: PO Box 14253, Albany, NY 12212)

DFA-Destined For Assimilation (Ugly Pop)

Viva crossover! Lightning fast, flailing riffs power this band's all-out thrash assault. DFA come in on the hardcore side of the fence, without the wanky lead guitar. Intelligent lyrics—dealing with such topics as gang mentalities, the medical industry and trying to avoid social conditioning (the latter on the title track), although "Under The Inflence" takes a very dim view about losing friends to romantic relationships and, well, it's not always that bad. Full-tilt from start to finish. (2 Bloor St. W., Suite 100 Box 477, Toronto, ON M4W 3E2, CANADA)

DICTATORS-DFFD (Dictators Media)

The first all-new Dictators' album in over 20 years and it's loud, brash, obnoxious and humorous—NYC to the core and Handsome Dick Manitoba is one of the few Yankees' fans I can put up with. Hard rock with pop instincts and wise-assed lyrics, although not on the level of their original trio of albums, especially "Go Girl Crazy," which should be in your collection or I don't even want to know you, bub. Better than the Manitoba's Wild Kingdom album, though, which hasn't aged well. "Burn, Baby, Burn!!," "I Am Right" and "The Savage Beat" show they can still rock. (PO Box 220-330, Brooklyn, NY 11222)

DIEHARD YOUTH-Without The Kids We Would Be Dead (Thorp)

There's a christian undercurrent with these boys, but this album doesn't have any overtly religious content, unless one considers the bizarre soundclip at the end, talking about angels and such, or the line about there being "a million more prayers today" on "9-11 Wake Up Call." Otherwise, it's pretty typical hardcore, mixing up speed and mosh with a positive attitude, along with melodic riffs here and there. As on their split with Dead Serious, the drumming is a bit monorhythmic on the faster tempos. (PO Box 6786, Toledo, OH 43612)

DILLINGER FOUR-Situationist Comedy (Fat)

It's D4... it's better than most records you'll hear this year... you're a fool if you don't get this album RIGHT NOW. I guess I'd better write a longer review than that. Can't take the lazy way out. While "Versus God" was a strong effort, there was something missing and I haven't listened to it nearly as much as the god-like "Midwestern Songs" or their singles collection, "This Shit Is Geniums." "Situationist Comedy" is getting a lot of play around here and, with each listen, burrows its way a little further into my subconscious. They've got the muse back on full—the clever song titles, the smart lyrics that mean something, dammit, and Paddy's voice is heard much more than on the last album. Charging, engaging punk with mile-wide hooks, along with clever twists and turns, such as Paddy's breakdown at the conclusion of "D4—Putting The "F" Back in "Art," which ends with an abrupt needle-scrape and charges headlong into "All Rise For The Rational Anthem." D4 have the sort of lyrics that make one pound their fist on whatever surface is available and go, "they know EXACTLY what's going on in this fucked-up world," whether about screwing workers ("Fired-Side Chat," "A Floater Left With Pleasure In The Executive Washroom") or eroding liberties ("file under "ADULT URBAN CONTEMPORARY"). As always, though, it's a personalized, observational approach that doesn't bash you over the skull with hackneyed rhetoric and the sound is celebratory, instead of angry. This shit certainly IS genius—or damned close to it. (PO Box 193690, SF, CA 94119-3690)

DIOS HASTIO-Cervix Inferno (Where's Your Anger)

A compilation of demos and rarities spanning the past decade by this band from Peru. Manic thrash and grind, but there's also occasionally an undercurrent of melody in the guitar playing, along with some Slayer-like squalls, as well. This is counteracted by the harsh vocals and racing tempo. Sometimes, it sounds on the verge of flying apart but there are some moments of inspired aggro here. (PO Box 471, Allston, MA 02134)



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DIRT BIKE ANNIE-It Ain't Easy Bein' Single (Dirtnap)

An odds 'n sods comp of 41 ep and comp tracks plus a shitload of covers and unreleased stuff. They were from NYC but it sounds like pure East Bay-meets-early Screeching Weasel action to me. Consistently fun and definitely better than most bands who get described using the words "pop" and "punk." (PO Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111) *(Ryan)*

DIRTY POWER (Dead Teenager)

Well, the stoner rock thing is losing momentum, but I guess no one told Dirty Power that, as the band does a great job of bringin' back the '70s on the 11 songs featured on their self-titled album. The Jack Endino production definitely helps too, bringing out the booming, grooving and smoking that all retro stoner rock needs to succeed. And unlike a lot of their peers, Dirty Power do indeed succeed here. The question is if anyone needs to hear another album that sounds like this; while there's no doubt Dirty Power would be a great time live, shelling out money for stuff like this is a bit sketchy at this point. But hey, if yer Fu Manchu and KISS albums are worn out, might as well give this a spin, it won't leave anyone too disappointed. Verdict: great band, dying genre. (PO Box 470153, SF, CA 94147-0153) *(Greg)*

DISCHARGE (Sanctuary)

Anyone expecting the name of Discharge to be dragged through the mire had better guess again (actually, that happened with "Grave New World," but that's another story). This self-titled album, the first recording to feature Bones on guitar since '82 and with Tezz back on drums for the first time since 1980, is a firebomb from start to end. A speed metal/hardcore hybrid and Cal sounds like himself again. It's Cal, not Kelvin, and the vocals are projected from the gut, not the 'nads. No falsetto, not even that in-between vocal style he attempted on "Massacre Divine." Musically, this is probably a bit closer to Broken Bones than Bones-era Discharge but the wanky desires are reined-in and it's a lean attack. 10 songs, along with 2 remixes, which seem like padding but that's the only quibble. No, it's not "Hear Nothing" or "Why" but these guys acquit themselves quite well and are still capable of teaching the youngsters a few tricks.

DISCONTENT (Disaster)

No complex formula—just loud rock 'n roll with a punk kick and gruff vocals. Discontent do it the right way, with tasty riffs that wrap up all the classic influences in surging style. Karl's sandpapery timbre reminds me a bit of Scot from Ed Gein's Car, a band 99% of you aren't familiar with but, trust me, it's true. This is no bullshit three chord fodder and I'm always a sucker for it, recycled Johnny Thunders/Angus Young guitar lines and all. (PO Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510)

DISCIPLINE-Love Thy Neighbor (Too Damn Hype)/Rejects of Society (Captain Oi)

Dutch street punks with a fairly potent attack—reminiscent of older Bruisers, though without the rockabilly inflection, but sharing a similar penchant for gut-level rock 'n roll and working class sentiments. "Fuck You Anyway" makes a fairly cogent statement of purpose. Poets they ain't and couldn't they have picked a better Social D song to cover besides "Prison Bound"? Still, Discipline's full-bodied guitar sound definitely helps, here. "Rejects" is a compilaton featuring tracks from this album, two previous longplayers and a few EP's—and I like their Misfits and Business covers better than the Social D one. A good intro. (Too Damn Hype: PO Box 15793, Philadelphia, PA 19103/Captain Oi: PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 8QA, ENGLAND)

DISORDER-We're Still Here (HG Fact)

The old school cider punks are, indeed, still around and sounding just as raw and loud as ever. Buzzsaw guitar and rumbling bass plow ahead, along with sarcastic, yet poignant lyrics. These words are bellowed out effectively by Taf, who's the longest-standing member of this band, having joined around '82 or so. Not sure why they included two versions of "Kamikaze" but, heck, it's a good song so why not. Some bands do stick around too long and, while Disorder's sound may be easily placed in a certain time context, it still makes a damn good racket. (105 Nakano Shinbashi-M, Yayoi-cho 2-7-15, Nakano, Tokyo, JAPAN 164-0013)

THE DISTRACTION-Calling All Radios (Dirtnap, CD/Radio Blast, LP)

Cool throwback punk rock with a hint of new wave., yet it sounds contemporary. Phlegmy/nerdy vocals and simple, catchy ditties with nerve and hooks. The Distraction come across like one of those snotty '77 era bands who got their inspiration from British punk and then Americanized it—hence, the Clashy guitar ring on "Rock and Roll" or Buzzcocksian trills for "From The Side." Everything old is new? I don't care as long as the songs hit me in the gut like this. (Dirtnap: PO Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111/Radio Blast: Hildegardstr. 13, 44809 Bochum, GERMANY)

DIVISION OF LAURA LEE-Black City (Burning Heart/Epitaph)

Schizophrenic, to a degree. When Division of Laura Lee play a taut, nervy brand of new wavish/punk, it connects with a deliriously-rockin' economy. But they also go off in more of a techno/moody/trance-like direction on occasion, echoing the wretched MadChester sound (OK, not quite THAT bad but veering towards it) and it's much less appealing. Sure, bands shouldn't be one-dimensional but it definitely makes this longplayer inconsistent. When they're on, they're REALLY on, though. (2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026)

DOA-Win The Battle (Sudden Death)
DOA/THOR-Are U Ready (Scratch/Sudden Death/ThorToen)

If I'm not mistaken, "Win The Battle" is the first time Randy Rampage has appeared on a DOA record since "Hardcore '81" and, while this isn't close to the level of that masterpiece, "Win The Battle" does manage to win me over in the end. Somewhat. The lyrical mettle that balances wise-assed north of the border humor with a strong political message remains in tact and I love the way they do a bluesy piss-take of "Fuck You" before kicking into the real thing. And being a classic rock fiend, I also enjoyed their version of ZZ Top's "La Grange." A few remakes here—"Lumberjack City" and "Dead Men Tell No Tales," along with the timely "Just Say No To The WTO" and "Warmonger." Sometimes, I wish Joey and co. would just go back to the devil-may-care punk instead of the more straight-ahead rock 'n roll presented here but it's better than some of DOA's less-enticing mid-80s albums. The split with Thor is their entry into the "stadium rock" sweepstakes, as the title track by DOA is being played at Vancouver Canucks' games, or so says the press sheet. Well, it beats "Rock 'n Roll Part II"! A mix of new and old by both artists. Thor is best described as one part bodybuilder, one part cartoon character and all metal-head, best executed on "Rock The City." Plenty of hockey-themed stuff here and some rousing songs. But not all that essential. (Moscrop PO Box 43001, Burnaby, BC CANADA V5G 3H0)

DOG-Luddite Revolution (Love Earth Music)

Music or noise? That's a subjective assessment and I'm basically opting for the latter. Muffled soundscapes with howls, manipulated rhythms, occasional guitar and no real songs to speak of. Just pieces that run from a few seconds to twelve minutes. Ambient industrial? The sound of a nightmare? A bit outside my realm. Probably outside a lot of people's realm, at that. (7726 Lilac Ln., Santa Susana, CA 93063)

DOUGLASS KINGS-3 Bucks (Posing Toad)

Jesus. Two-man instant college kegger soundtrack. Think Barenaked Ladies-type wordplay with the wussiest guitar sound I've heard in eons..."AND THE GUYS IN WHITE BASEBALL CAPS GO WILD!!!" The elaborate press release for this five-song, 11-minute piece-of-shit completely fucking staggers me. Hey label dork, if you've got that much money to burn, how about you just eliminate the middleman and cut me a check for wasting my time with this bullshit? On second thought, now that I see you're comparing these guys to "Husker Du, The Clash, 80's DC hardcore (??!!) and Elvis Costello" I assume you don't have any extra money as you must spend it all on very hard drugs. I just listened to "Flex Your Head" a couple of hours ago and if I EVER confuse Douglass Kings with VOID, I'll not only eat my own ass but yours as well. (PO Box 577509, Chicago, IL 60618) *(Ryan)*

DOWN BY LAW-Punkrockdays: The Best Of DBL (Epitaph)

It's hard to believe that Down By Law have been making records for almost 12 years but its true. Dave Smalley, who started the band as an outlet for new material following his departure from All, has endured numerous lineup changes and persevered. This twenty song, two video compilation features eleven different musicians who have played in Down by Law with the exception of a guest guitar contribution from Brian Baker. If you are a fan you probably own one or all of DBL's five releases which would mean you are familiar with these songs. Still as a fan you are going to want to own this collection for the reason you would want any of your favorites bands collection CD's: the novelty, the liner notes, and the packaging. If that's your motivation you will not be disappointed. On the other hand if you do not own any of the bands CD's, this is a great place to start as well. With gems from each of their records including covers of The Outlets' "Best Friends", The Proclaimers' "500 Miles", and Big Country's "In a Big Country" as a bonus track, this is a good way to find out what you have been missing. What is most interesting about this collection is that all the songs that appear were chosen by the fans of the band in a poll taken on the Down by Law website. (2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026) *(Steev)*

DOWN IN FLAMES (Six Two Five)/Three Seven Inches On One CD (Gloom)

Down In Flames' first full-length album actually clocks in under 20 minutes and doesn't waste any time establishing its intent—skull-smashing hardcore played with speed and brutality, flowing from double-speed outbursts to circle-pit inducing breakdowns. It does go by in rapid-fire fashion and, if there's any room for improvement, it might not be a bad idea to let at least some of the songs develop some momentum. Still, this youthful band don't hold back either musically or lyrically—straight-forward and honest sentiments—"Naïve and Proud," as they proclaim on one of the songs from the 7"s CD, which includes their splits with Tear It Up and the Gatecrashers, as well as their own "Start The Fucking Fire" EP. Same method of attack—piledriving thrash with little chance to catch your breath—no gaps between songs, most of the time. Youthful anger and intensity unleashed. Incidentally, the CD of the self-titled album includes a live set recorded at CB's. (Six Two Five: PO Box 423413, SF, CA 94142-3413/Gloom: PO Box 14253, Albany, NY 12212)

DROPDEAD/TOTALITÄR-Split (Prank, EP)

You know this rages, wails and stomps all over your face. Dropdead release their first new material in awhile—half a dozen full-throttle hardcore songs. Totalitär, from Sweden, have three rippers of their own in more of a rat-a-tat crusty thrash vein. All burn, non-stop. (PO Box 410892, SF, CA 94141)

DROPKICK MURPHYS-Blackout (Hellcat)

A little more straight-forward sounding, this time out, and that's for the better. I'll always like their earlier records better but this turned out to be better than expected. There are still the Irish folk ballads and some tracks that sound blatantly poppy, but there are also some rousing gems—"Worker's Song" and, best of all, "Gonna Be A Blackout Tonight." On the latter, the Dropkicks take some Woody Guthrie lyrics written in the 40s and turn it into a punk rock ass-kicker—their best song in quite some time. Songs about working, songs about drinking and a fight anthem for their beloved Boston Bruins. Includes a bonus DVD with two live songs, a video for "Gonna Be A Blackout Tonight" and a trailer for the upcoming live DVD. (2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026)

DS-13-No One Will Thank You When You Are Dead (Deranged)

DS-13 are fukking dead, sad to say, although a final show is scheduled in Minneapolis in late December—which means, given my publishing schedule, lately, they're probably history. What do they leave behind? Quite a bit. Sonic devastation and destruction, wild circle pits and lots of good times. Full-throttle hardcore punk that gets back to the basics. Ferocious songs played with precision and power and not afraid to take the piss. Sure, there's a message but it's also meant to be fun. On this disc, you'll find their various 7" releases, compilation tracks and a few unreleased songs, as well as a 20 minute live set. These guys were the real deal and will definitely be missed. (PO Box 543, Stn. P, Toronto, ON M5S-2T1, CANADA)

DUDOOS-Specium Sommer (Sound Pollution)

No Hellnation influences here—this is complete Ramones/Dickies-esque Japanese insanity. The lyrics switch back and forth from Japanese, English and German in almost every song! Occasional crazy happy keyboards pop up to make you want to jump around the room. I dunno, honestly this isn't mindblowing musically to me but if you still listen to your Queers records then you really oughta check out this amazingly fresh take on a very tired genre. Kudos to Ken Sound Pollution for stepping outside the usual stylistic boundaries of his label to release this, too. (PO Box 17742, Covington, KY 41017) *(Ryan)*

DUMPSTER JUNKIES-Psychopathic Thoughts (Rodent Popsicle)

File under hate music.. what I mean by that is the Dumpster Junkies are fed up with their fucked-up lives, living it at the "Bottom of the Shitpile," as one song states. Broken-hearted, abused, shat upon and this is their way of working it out. Punishing hardcore punk with a bit of metal fury—akin to Toxic Narcotic or Blood For Blood and the final song, "On Your Knees," is a defacto tribute to power metal. Most of the time, though, it's a fast, bludgeoning tumult. (PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134)

DWARVES-How To Make Friends and Influence People (Reptilian)

I'd never let these lowlives in my house but their records are always welcome—"How To Make Friends" consists mainly of re-recordings of their 'greatest hits,' plus a new song or two and a pornographic spoken word piece set to a surfy musical setting. While it's a somewhat cheap ploy, there's still a nasty, guilty-pleasure thrill to such songs as "Let's Fuck," "Drugstore," "Astro Boy," "Dominator" and their all-time gem, "Fuck You Up And Get High." It would've been the complete experience with "Back Seat Of My Car" or "Skin-Poppin' Slut," but you can't have everything. Raw, fast punk, along with more tuneful moments, such as "Anybody Out There" or "Saturday Night." Perverse and rockin' like fuck. (403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231)

EAST BAY CHASERS-Johnny Is A Junky (Cheetah's/Rats, EP)

Never got the Chasers' debut album but I'd heard a few songs here and there and enjoyed their punk rock 'n roll sound. Five songs that follow the blueprint here. A good dose of Thunders, from the riff-nick for "New Enemy" ("Chinese Rocks") to "One Track Mind," which is *not* a Heartbreakers' cover but about the same topic. Punk attitude, some hard rock leanings but kept raw. (Cheetah's: PO Box 4442, Berekeley, CA 94704/Rats: PO Box 5619, Berkeley, CA 94705)

EDISON ROCKET TRAIN-Yes! Yes!! Yes!!! (Steel Cage)

Damn. For lack of a better description, let me now state that this sounds to me like George Thorogood in the best possible sense. Their name is apt because this album is a sonic rocket train of deep, raspy vocals spitting out words on top of a KILLER guitar sound just blasting like a juggernaut backed by maracas, tambourine and a drummer trying to keep up plus the occasional sax attack. You know why this is better than every bunch of fucking current haircut garage band dopes? Cuz it sounds like Bo Diddley instead of all the bands that tried to rip off Bo Diddley a decade later. Now I'm even gonna mention that it was recorded by Wharton Tiers and Jon Spencer plays on a couple songs so maybe you sorry-ass hipster ingrates will deign to check out something you haven't read about in Alternative Press yet. This album is cool as hell—The End. (PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125) *(Ryan)*

EFFECTION-Soundtrack To A Moment (Adeline)

Wow, okay, don't let this gem pass you by because THIS is a dose of pure 1979 powerpop goodness updated for 2003. I mean I hear The Knack, The Beat, Joe Jackson, Elvis Costello—every heavy hitter from that era recycled and rebuilt with fresh hands and voices into something so out-of-step with all the mediocrity that masquerades under the title of "pop" these days that it can't help but win. The only current band I would compare this to would be Yesterday's Kids (and THAT is a comparison I never thought I'd make with anyone) but this is even a bit more energetic and less "rock" in some ways. OUTSTANDING ALBUM! (5245 College Avenue #318, Oakland, CA 94618) *(Ryan)*

ELVIS McMAN-Punch In A Kiss (Asbestos)

Some nifty (*nifty?* Yeah!) punk rock from Connecticut. Three-chord '77 and garage influences and Erin Miller's vocals drip with bratty, sarcastic authority. Her intent is stated from the outset with the sensitively-titled "Bite Me" and it's reinforced with a brash, scrappy sound punctuated by raw guitar and some hearty "whooahs." Retro-sounding? Sure, but it's played with a hearty spirit and the songs are loud and catchy. (41 Bridgeport Ave., Shelton, CT 06484)

EMBRACE TODAY-F.Y.I.E. (Life)

Unusually incensed straight edge hardcore that remains well within the confines of its preset parameters, yet offers somewhat dubious forays into murky thug-core territory as well. Though by no means a distinctly metal-core outfit, Embrace Today can't seem to quite shake those stylistic undertones from their system. The results, though fast paced and far from technical, offer a bit too much of a bland, repetitive tough guy edge to prove especially captivating or invigorating. Dogmatic belched cries of betrayal and deceit surface throughout in predictable fashion, as the unremarkable chugging musical counterpart plods on. This is a mediocre endeavor, offering more contrived ire and e-chord machismo than aural ingenuity and might. (43 Essex St., Marlboro, MA 01752) *(Mike Ramek)*

ENDLESS STRUGGLE-Till The End (A-F)

A new album from these Salt Lake City spiky punx and they've got the oi meets UK-82 style punk sound down pretty well. Punchy and energetic, played with genuine affection. Been done before, of course, but that doesn't mean it's still not enjoyable. One dumb song, though—"Payback," about the 9/11 attacks, which starts with a sound clip from that drunk NYC cop who said

Osama could kiss his "royal Irish ass" and the lyrics echo the simple-minded sentiments that were a part of the American landscape after those tragic events, with the rejoinder "can't take away our freedom, can't take away our pride." Um, the US government sure as fuck has done a pretty good job at taking away A LOT of freedom with such bullshit as the PATRIOT act. What a typical American mentality, dressed in punk clothing. In any case, that point aside, an enjoyable effort. (PO Box 71266, Pittsburgh, PA 15213)

EPOXIES (Dirtnap)

The Epoxies are huge. I get this in my mailbox and then a week later everyone I know with any interest in old punk culture is mentioning them. Why, you wonder? Because these kids dress like the Avengers (the band, not the comic OR the British TV show) except more wacky new-wavy and make as disgustingly authentic new-wave as is humanly possible in 2002. Musically, there's not a modern take on anything on the entire record. Instead, it's incredibly catchy new-wave pop (think "Kids In America" keyboard stuff). I'll be honest, I had to put it down for a while and come back to it—it just doesn't seem like enough to sustain a whole album for pure listening, but Lord, what a dance party this could make. (PO Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111) *(Tigger)*

EVEN IN BLACKOUTS-Myths & Imaginary Magicians (Hope and Nonthings)

Sometimes first impressions can be so deceiving. Upon initial perusal, nothing seemed less attractive than an acoustic band from Chicago who covered songs by Screeching Weasel and Operation Ivy (not to mention Yaz's '80s hit "Only You"). Well, surprise, surprise, but Even in Blackouts really rock. The band is comprised of three acoustic guitarists, an acoustic bass player, vocalist and drummer. Their songs are obviously based on the pop-punk forerunners they pay tribute to on this disc, but the mellow string work and strong vocals (Lizzie's voice is a dead ringer for Tilt's Cinder Block) push this album into the realm of ultra-inspiring. It's an impressive listen from a CD that was destined for a hasty toss in the delete bin. Fans of punk or folk (or both) couldn't do better than Even in Blackouts. (PO Box 148010, Chicago, IL 60614) *(Jason)*

EXPLODING HEARTS-Guitar Romantic (Dirtnap)

Unabashed power-poppers—the Hearts aren't just skinny tie guys. Instead, they merge the spirit of '79 with older roots—one can hear a little glam bounce in their sound, especially for "Thorns In Roses" and "Still Crazy." And while there's nothing here that's as tasty as the perfection of their 7" "Making Teenage Faces" (and a few tracks get more twee/bubblgummy than I can handle), the Hearts throw out enough hooks to puncture the crustiest of hearts. (PO Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111)

FACADE BURNED BLACK (Amendment, EP)

3 songs and two sound collage "interludes." Hammering, dramatic scream-core with howling vocals and a visceral, precise instrumental attack. Heavy and careening. (580 Nansemond Cres., Portsmouth,VA 23707)

FALL SILENT-Drunken Violence (Revelation)

This is iron-forged power metal all the way—speed metal, in fact, taking those 80s thrash merchants (Exodus, etc) and upping the ante a bit, with a decided hardcore punk attitude. One plus is Levi can actually sing—gruff but in a higher register, as opposed to the caveman/regurgitative style that has become a hallmark of metal in recent years. The lyrics are intelligent and cutting, such as "The First Seven Inch Club," which takes on scenesters, violent assholes and CD reviewers (HEY... wait just a minute, here!). Plus, they cover "Barracuda," which is the best goddamned Heart song ever. Heavy... fucking heavy. (PO Box 5292, Huntington Beach, CA 92615)

FARTZ-Injustice (Alternative Tentacles)

Anyone who says old bands shouldn't get back together should listen to the new Fartz album and then tell me if that opinion holds weight. Raging hardcore punk punctuated, as always, by Blaine Cook's maniacal vocals and aggressive playing throughout. A crossover hardcore-meets-metal sound but keeping a raw emphasis—in other words, don't confuse it with any modern metalcore garbage. It's obvious there's a lot on the collective mind here, with such titles as "Rich White American," "God Fearing Christians," "Injustice" and "What Do You Stand For," although I'd have a better idea if they'd printed the goddamn lyrics! The collage style artwork is striking and includes some familiar faces, such as Bush, Cheney, even Boston's disgraced, pedophile-condoning Cardinal Bernard Law. It's an ugly time and this type of pissed-off music is more-than-welcome. (PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141-9092)

FAST ACTIN' FUSES-Sayonara (Rodent Popsicle)

The members of the Fuses have been around the block, a bit, with members having played in such bands as Suckerpunch, Wrecking Crew, Bastard Squad and a few others I've forgotten, no doubt. The punk inspiration is still there but the Fuses revel in the badass rock 'n roll attitude. Vocalist Lovely Kevin Darling goes so far to say he's a "bad motherfucker" on "Party's Over." Loud, pumped-up riffs and pretty damn catchy, even if you can see every lick coming from a mile away. But "Teenage Blood," "Cocaine Samurai" and "Leg Show" provide some cheap thrills along the way. Since this album came out, Kevin and bassist John Darga have left, but the Fuses have a new lineup. (PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134)

FASTS (Sound Pollution)

Yeah, they're fast, alright. And funny... and furious... unhinged hardcore from Japan with nutso vocals, inhuman velocity but not completely going off the tracks. Mix-mastered thrash, punk and metal for your listening pleasure and some interesting permutations of the English language. Great titles: "I Just Feel Like Rock," "We Bust Master" and "Police Is Police" (gotta have an anti-cop song!). Not fitting any set mold but just making the sparks fly. (PO Box 17742, Covington, KY 41017)

FATE 2 HATE-Iron Fist (Insurgence)

Hardcore for a beatdown, with chugging riffs and faster parts, although it's mainly the strutting, mid-tempo style with beefy guitar riffs and stentorian vocals. Very NYHC-influenced. Kind of a shame that the music is so uninteresting, because the lyrics express some quite progressive sentiments about economic and political injustices. (2 Bloor St., W, Suite 100-184, Toronto, ON M4W 3E2)

FEEDERZ-Vandalism: Beautiful As A Rock In A Cop's Face (Broken)

If anyone thinks Frank Discussion has mellowed with age or modified his outspokenly nihilistic viewpoints, think again. Not with songs titled "Aborted Jesus," "Why Don't You Just Die" or "Off The Pigs." Nope—not one bit. Advocating shoplifting, music downloads and generally fucking shit up. Not sure if I agree 100% of all of Frank's ideas but he certainly gets the neurons firing and knows how to push buttons. Thorny punk with a stripped down sound. A vigorousness in the arranging akin to Really Red and the Minutemen, without sounding exactly like either of those bands. The EZ-listening instrumental version of the infamous "Jesus Entering From The Rear" wraps everything up nicely. If nicely even *belongs* in a Feederz review. (PO Box 460402, SF, CA 94146-0402)

FIELDS OF FIRE-Kill The Flock (Bockhorn, EP)

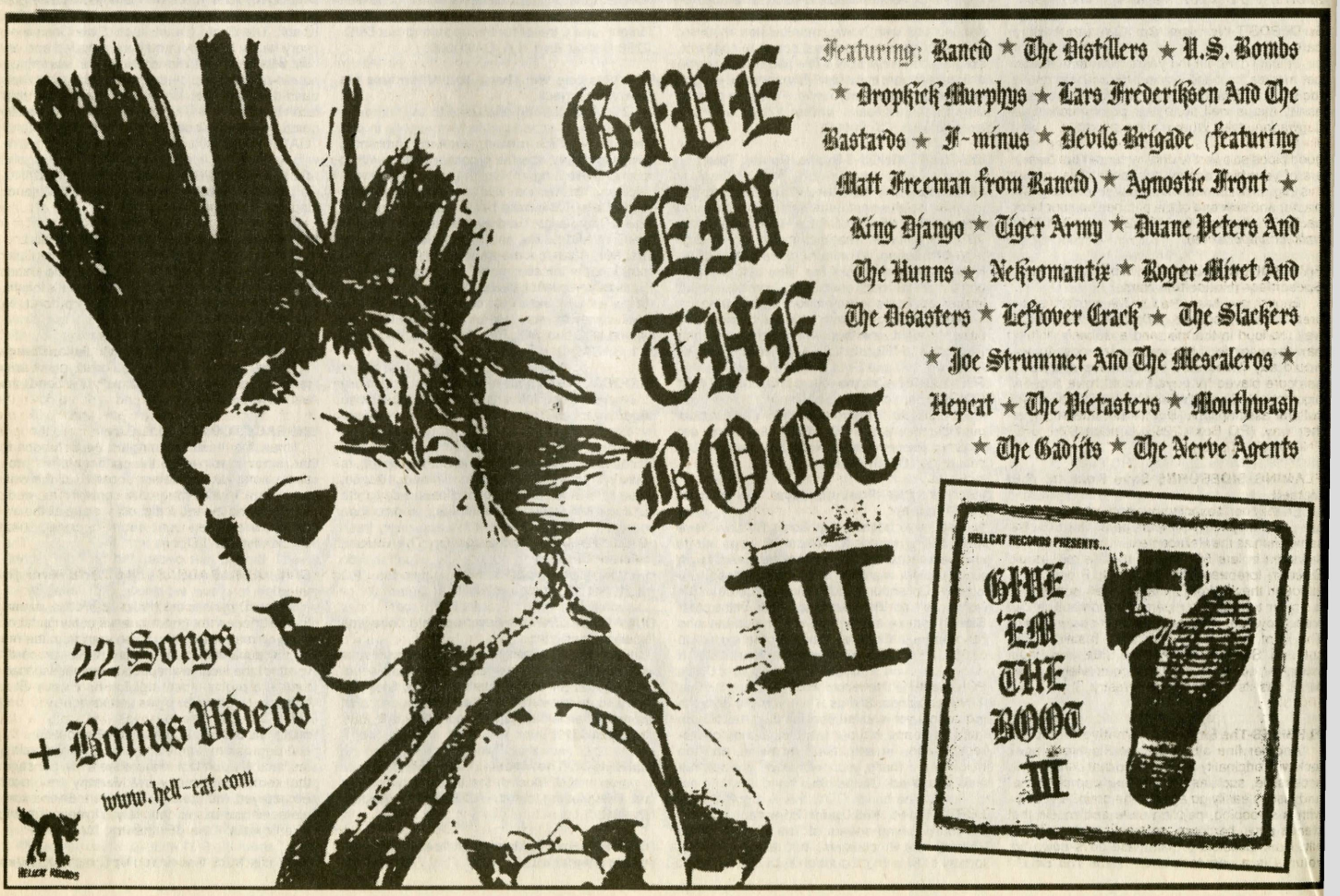
A tweaking of the sound away from youth crew hardcore and embracing more of the angry, early SoCal hardcore punk style. Fields of Fire really come into their own on this EP. There's a darker, more aggressive intent here and Ben's vocals are more expressive than in the past. They cover the Germs' "What We Do Is Secret" and, if that band is bringing them inspiration, I think it's great (at least in a musical sense!). Ominous bass-lines and slashing guitars punctuate the band's potent assault. (PO Box 10238, Bockhorn, CA 90213)

FIFTH HOUR HERO-Scattered Sentences (No Idea)

Sorry, just can't get into this band's emo/pop at all... yeah, they sound earnest and there's a warm guitar sound on some of these songs (while others float into pure wimpiness) but those vocals and harmonies—treacle city. I try to imagine the songs in my mind with someone like Chuck Ragan singing and it would work better but not in this format. (PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604)

FIFTH HOUR HERO/GUNMOLL-Split (No Idea)

Here's how I see FHH: If you were to catch them as an opening act one night upstairs at the Middle East or TT's, there'd be a group of eight kids pushed towards to the front, finger pointing in time to every breakdown and tempo change and hanging on every lyric while dancing like no one was watching them and busting out goofy grins because seeing them will be the best half hour of their month. The rest of us would see the band as a serviceable pop punk outfit very much in the vein of a Discount or New Found Glory. Actually the more I listen to this the more I can't shake the Discount comparison. It's kind of spooky. Squeaky-clean guitar lines with all the breakdowns in the right spots and trading off male and female vocals with that "haven't I heard this guy somewhere before" feeling that leaves no real lasting imprint the second their side is done. Basically FHH play the kind of music you'd put on a mix tape for your new girlfriend into Blink 182 or Sum 41 just to show her this "DIY" stuff isn't all screaming kids tripping over themselves while



trained chimps bang on guitars. Gunmoll, on the other hand, are your soundtrack when you catch the above girl in bed with your best friend. Surging powerful bass lines and cranked up to eleven guitars belt out music that grabs your attention from the start and keeps it for repeated listens. On top of all this are the strained banshee wails of a voice struggling to come out on top, wondering all the while how he ended up at the end of the bar while everyone moves two seats away as he mutters tales of woe over multiple Jack and Cokes. Comparisons to the mighty Jawbreaker and Hüsker Dü are inevitable, as those were two power trios that specialized in tunes of heartache and loss. But on this release, comparisons to early Replacements are more appropriate as Mike Hale's vocals seem to be channeling the tired, world weary strains of Paul Westerberg with every line. Essential listening. (PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604) *(mikechumpchange)*

FIGHTING CHANCE-Thus Hope Fades (Insurgence)

This band's vocalist Bullseye has one of those super-gruff, bulldog-sounding voices and, musically, Fighting Chance combine old-school street punk ala the Bruisers with faster hardcore influences and vehemently class-conscious lyrics. "Silence Is Murder" takes a successful reggae turn. Direct, both musically and lyrically, although the vocals almost approach caricature. (2 Bloor St., W, Suite 100-184, Toronto, ON M4W 3E2 CANADA)

FINAL PLAN/MY LUCK-Closed Casket Secrets (Thorp)

Two bands playing some angst-ridden hardcore. Both Final Plan (from Texas) and My Luck (from Ohio) mix heaviness and speed, along with tortured-sounding vocals. My Luck also introduce a hint of melody into the proceedings and, with a bit less of the chug effect than Final Plan, they're my pick here. (PO Box 6786, Toledo, OH 43612)

FIRST STEP-Open Hearts and Clear Minds (LiveWire)

Positively positive and the First Step mean it. Sweeping youth crew hardcore with every powerchord, chanted backup vocal and mosh part executed with precision. Don't take that as a dis because this North Carolina unit do get the blood pumping. Five new songs, the tracks from their demo EP and half a dozen live songs recorded at CB's. (PO Box 007, Mendham, NJ 07945)

5¢ DEPOSIT-We Have Your Daughter! (Radical)

I think I'm about ten years older than the target market the band's going for(and it's not just the short bus on the front giving it away) but that aside, this is well done pop punk much in the Lagwagon style. What makes or breaks a band like this Is the vocals, and this guy has some pretty good pipes so if you're drinking under the bleachers of your high school right now while reading this rag, pick up this CD, throw it on the ghetto blaster and sew one of the patches on your backpack. (77 Bleecker St., #C2-21, NY, NY 10012) *(mikechumpchange)*

FIVE KNUCKLE-Lost For Words, Far From Speechless (Household Name)

English pop-hardcore with the occasional ska break? Over-produced, calculated, yelly vocals way too loud in the mix, and absolutely nothing new to say or do. If this was an American band, I would say it sounded like aimless-white-boy-hardcore played by guys I would have hated in high school. Since it's British, I won't make such cultural assumptions. But it's not interesting either way. (PO Box 12286, London SW9 6FE, ENGLAND) *(Tigger)*

FLAMING SIDEBURNS-Save Rock 'n' Roll (Jetset)

Er, they don't exactly save rock 'n roll but there are some inspiring moments here. Cut from the same cloth as the Hellacopters, meaning they find salvation in late 60s Detroit rock 'n roll, as did Swedish forebears Union Carbide Productions, although they're from Finland. A few songs take a slower turn that hampers the momentum, but these boys get it right for the butt-shakin' "Blow The Roof," "World Domination," "Testify" (a live cut) and "Street Survivor." If the Sideburns had a raunchier, edgier sound, I'd be completely hooked but it has its moments. (67 Vestry St., NY, NY 10013)

FLESHIES-The Sicilian (Alternative Tentacles)

Another fine album by the Fleshies—punk rock with originality and a sound that can be both accessible, such as the off-kilter pop of "Rosa" and just as easily go against the grain. A vocalist with a swooping, cajoling stule and music that blends punk, hardcore, pop and rock 'n roll. Really, it's impossible to nail these guys down but volume is a constant and "There Will Be No Apocalypse," "You're All Doomed" and "Desperate, Middle Aged Woman" pile on the powerchords. Slashin' and burnin'. (PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141-9092)

FLOOR (No Idea)

All I know is when I first put this CD on and turned up the volume on the headphones, the first few notes scared the bejesus out of me. Apparently this is the first release from Floor in about seven years. This is a release that tips its cap to the alternative style that was beginning part of the nineties, which makes sense for a band that cut its teeth during this era. There's a heavy influence of the sludgey, E-string tuned way down dirge that the Melvins made their calling card combined with big fat Soundgarden-esqe guitar riffs played with a deliberate, methodical pace. The album hits its peaks on tracks such "Twink" and "Assassin," where the guitars slow to a crawl, and they're churning out some of the best over the top and bombastic stoner rock riffs this side of the 1970's. This would be a great record to toss on after coming back a tired and worn out mess from the latest thrash show, because this makes me want to lay back in the easy chair, throw two fingers up and bang my head 'til I drift off to slumber. Good stuff. (PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604) *(mikechumpchange)*

F-MINUS-Wake Up Screaming (Hellcat)
F-MINUS/CRACK ROCK STEADY SEVEN-Baby Jesus, Sliced Up In The Manger (Hell Bent)

A new full-length by F-Minus, finally, and it's another ripper, but there are a few changes. First, bassist/vocalist Jen Johnson has left, replaced by Joe Steinbrick, and the vocals are split between Brad and Erica. Steve Albini handled the engineering and, thankfully, there's not the thud-like production, here. A few songs do opt for a heavier, noisier sound—inspired, in fact, by some of Albini's own musical acts ("Mother of Suffering, "Paid To Listen") and top the previously unheard-of three minute mark. But it's mainly hard and fast and "Wake Up Screaming" explores the lunacy of inevitable warmongering. F-Minus sound as harsh and pissed-off as ever. The last track, "Barking Dog," is a collaboration with Gabba from Chaos UK and brings the album to a scalding conclusion. The split with Crack Rock Steady Seven, released awhile back, features 5 songs from each band and is also pretty damn impressive. F-Minus' songs come from a 2000 session and include an earlier take of "Forced Identity" and their cover of Middle Class' "Love Is Just A Tool" that appeared on the last *SV* CD. Crack Rock Steady Seven include members of Choking Victim and Leftover Crack and offer the same anti-authoritarian punk as those bands, along with a ska kick here and there. One of the five tracks is actually an intro with samples from "The A-Team," but they make up for lost time with the scalding balance. A defiant approach and effective. (Hellcat: (2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026/Hell Bent: PO Box 1529, Pt. Pleasant Beach, NJ 08742)

FM KNIVES-Useless and Modern (Broken)

Yeah, yeah, yeah! A brash 'n catchy punk rock sound. I can hear bits of the Adverts and other '77 punk purveyors and some pub rock and garage blended in. A band from Sacramento that includes ex-members of Los Huevos and the legendary Lil' Bunnies but this is a poppier sounding combo. Brightly strummed guitars, a whipsnap backbeat and vocals that sound a bit nervous, a bit nerdy but ooze with cool. Nothing useless here. (PO Box 460402, SF, CA 94146-0402)

FORGOTTEN-Control Me (BYO)/Out Of Print (BYO)

"Control Me" is good, but not great, melodic punk by this veteran Bay Area band. For some reason, these songs, while toe-tapping and catchy, don't really light a fire under my ass in the same way as their early discs did. There's not as much ferocity as I seem to recall. Vintage punk rock 'n roll and country—the latter for "Our Response," which flies the patriotic flag a bit more than I like, though not on a Toby Keith/knucklehead level. Far better is the "Out Of Print" disc, previously released in Europe as "The Singles Collection" and collecting some of this band's best material, such as "Class Separation." Stirring, catchy and lively, with rough-hewn arrangements and hearty singalongs. (PO Box 67609, LA, CA 90067)

FORTUNATO (Neverwork, EP)

Electro/acoustic emo-ish rock with a fairly driving sound, yet it's kind of reminding me of some late 80s bands that pushed things in a softer direction and the somewhat offkey vocals don't help, either. (distr. by Chunksaah, PO Box 974, New Brunswick, NJ 08903)

FORWARD-Fucked Up!! (HG Fact)

Yeah, they sound fucked up or at least their vocalist Ishiya, does. Make that deranged—a throaty howl from the pit of the gut and accompanied with a skull-bashing hardcore punk/metal/rock 'n roll tandem. Melody lines pop up in unexpected places but the main emphasis is on hot-fueled destruction. Forward fucking rock—plain and simple. Another fine release by this band. (Nakano Shinbashi-M 105, Yayoi-cho 2-7-15, Nakano, Tokyo, JAPAN 164-0013)

FOUR (Paco Garden)

Irresponsible reviewer alert: I listened to this record, and I'm pretty sure I gave it a righteously fucking amazing review. I even remember comparing it to East Bay stuff at its prime. (Funny aside—when I was 19, in 1994, drinking underage at the Uptown Bar in Minneapolis, one of the Amphetamine Reptile guys went on a drunken bar rant about how "the only good thing to come out of the East Bay was East Bay Ray." I wonder if he feels the same way in light of the recent DK reunion.) I swear it was like a trip straight back to my disgruntled punk childhood. It was scummy sounding but catchy, rocking, witty, everything. Then my computer crashed, erasing the review, so I decided to come back to the CD later rather than try to recreate the review from memory. Now I have lost the CD in my house somewhere. Fuck. Buy it, then burn me a copy and send it to me so I can listen to it again and again. (PO Box 18455, Denver, CO 80218-0455) *(Tigger)*

4-SQUARES-Steve's Hamper (Quincy Shanks)

Damn good album by this veteran band—the 4-Squares are in the solid tradition of midwest bands who bring a striking melodicism to their punk sound and there's also a good amount of the fired-up emo-core of a band such as Fuel. "Fanatic" has a Ruts-ish skank in the guitar. Restless, impassioned vocals and a stinging compositional style that's played for keeps. I even dig the oddball pop displayed on the title track. (PO Box 3055, St. Charles, IL 60174)

FROM SAFETY TO WHERE-Irreversible Trend (Radical)

The summer school art project CD cover and brutal band name are pretty much unforgivable, so From Safety to Where (ugh) has to be damn good to overcome those huge obstacles. Guess what? They're not quite there. It's too bad, without the demo quality feel surrounding the look of this CD, these DC emo rockers might have been able to squeeze by on their ability to ape Fugazi, Rites of Spring and other Dischord staples. They obviously know something about good musicianship, as noted by the Joy Division bass lines and Sonic Youth guitar swirling. A sense of youthful exuberance swings both ways on Irreversible Trend; when the songs get peppy and bouncy, they work, when they get too peppy and bouncy, youth turns against them and they sound like whiny, pimply teenagers. Juveniles rarely play good music; just ask Old Skull. (77 Bleecker St., #C2-21, NY, NY 10012) *(Jason)*

FRUSTRATORS-Achtung Jackass (Adeline)

I first heard this band on a Adeline Records comp. Their song, "Trout," is excellent and really rocking, incredibly well-written catchy new-wave (The Cars) rock stuff. Unfortunately, it's not on this CD forwards, but they are happy to put it on BACKWARDS. Ha, funny. After looking at the website, it seems like these guys—who are all pretty experienced, "made" punk rockers in the East Bay—are ALL about being funny. Not that that's a bad thing. Most of this CD is OK—well written, catchy—but overall it's significantly less interesting than that one song. The standout is a cover of "My Best Friend's Girl." (Again, the Cars.) The only honestly bad song is "Pirate Song." I'm not so into the obvious references to pirates in ye olde punk rock. Sorry, hipsters. Other things you might want to know: guys in this band are in Waterdog, Violent Anal Death (originally from New England) and Green Day. I'd probably just go out and buy the Adeline comp, which features great bands like Dillinger Four, The Thumbs, One Man Army and Lifter Puller and call it a day. (5337 College Ave., #318, Oakland, CA 94611) *(Tigger)*

GALLERY OF MITES-Bugs On The Bluefish (Meteor City)

Long-haired rock 'n rollers playing the loud stuff. Not all fuzzed-out, so one can't really call this stoner rock, whatever that term means these days. It's a more organic, expansive, groove-laden sound but still quite rocking. How could it not be with ten people involved, including five guitarists (although they all play together on only one song)? Alumni and current members from Monster Magnet and an appearance by original Kyuss vocalist John Garcia. Tasty. (PO Box 40322, Albuquerque, NM 87196)

GARRISON-The Model (Iodine, EP)

Fans of Garrison's last full-length, Be a Criminal (Revelation), will be a little taken aback by the subdued nature of their new EP. The five songs on The Model take a slightly less rockin' path than anything from their last album, opting for a more mainstream, Jimmy Eat World-ish feel. The Garrison hooks are still loud and clear, front and center, but these songs have a little more resonance and introspection. They do get a little wimpy at times, but, hey, there's nothing wrong with that if you're in the right mood. (1085 Commonwealth Ave., PMB 318, Boston, MA 02218) *(Jason)*

GASOLINE-Take It To The People (Estrus)

Damn, this is NOT what I expected. Sounds like these three Japanese guys have been listening to Blue Cheer along with 60's R&B—you got crazy loud Tim Kerr production and rocking, rolling, screaming upbeat blues/rnr tunes with bass lines all over the place and seemingly random guitar wah's thrown into the mix. A bit of a mixed-bag, but it's all pretty intense and did I happen to mention LOUD? Excellent party soundtrack once everyone's lit cuz you can't understand what the guy is yelling but the psychotic guitars translate well into any language (well, except French). CD includes four bonus tracks from an earlier 7". (PO Box 2125, Bellingham, WA 98227) *(Ryan)*

GBH-Ha Ha (Go Kart)

Wish I could tell you that GBH have made an album to rival their earliest material but that ain't the case. Not a terrible album but not very exciting, either. Mid-tempo punk, more in-line with their mid-period albums, only a tad more melodic and downplaying any metallic inclinations. "Crush 'Em" has an almost rootsy, heartland rock underpinning. Far from the hell-raising on "No Surivors," "I Am The Hunted," "Sick Boy," etc… There's something almost sedate-sounding about it. You'd probably be better off getting the new reissue of "City Baby Attacked By Rats" to see what the big deal was, in the first place. (PO Box 20, Prince St. Station, Prince St. Station, NY, NY 10012)

GC5-Never Bet The Devil Your Head (Cosa Nostra/Thick)

Working man's punk rock—heartfelt, heartland fodder akin to older Swingin' Utters or the Bruisers. That means there's a rasp in the vocals, lyrics that are both poetic and direct and songs that expose a sentimental rock 'n roll heart—maybe a bit *too* sentimental for "When All Else Fails" or "Lies and Prophecies" but damn if they don't hit the mark for "Broken Bones and Death Trips," "Doghouse" and "Straight Outta Luck." (409 N. Wolcott, Chicago, IL 60622)

GEE STRINGS-Arrest Me (Dead Beat)

Two guys and two gals from Germany playing punky rock 'n roll with a hint of trashy glam that takes awhile to pick up steam or distinguish itself, aside from "Drank A Lot," and then along comes "On Standby" and it all clicks. Catchy and irresistable with a wicked hook and searing guitar line. They keep it going with "Same Old Stew" and a solid version of the Avengers' "Thin White Line" (there's also a Runaways' cover). By the end, you'll have been rocked. (PO Box 283, LA, CA 90078)

GENERATORS-From Rust To Ruin (TKO)

Odds and sods deal from this very TKO sounding unit. Alternate versions of a bunch of tunes as well as comp appearances. Anthemic fist in the air singalongs abound. Masters of their craft, which doesn't often extend beyond emulating older, anthemic, fist in the air singalong bands. Great big guitar sound and dammit, that's the way to go. (3126 W. Cary St. 303 Richmond, VA 23221) *(David)*

GHOULIES-Communication (Rockstar/Beluga)

Some fired-up shit, here. Loud, aggressive hardcore/punk/rock 'n roll. Usually, the bands that embrace these trappings tend to dumb down the lyrics to ditties about cars 'n girls and the like but the Ghoulies, from Sweden, are a more thoughtful crew than that. Opening up the notebook for the world to explore personal doubts and conflicts, along with worldlier concerns, all the while laying down the hammer with a potent three-chord attack. Speaker shredding, cranked up all the way and I can't get enough of it. (Box 8158, 10420 Stockholm, SWEDEN)

GIVE US BARABBAS-Luke 23:18 (Ever Reviled)

A punk rock opera? Well, there's a running theme through the first sequence of songs, about a young man who gets, uh, entered from the rear by the apparition of Jesus and then suffers the wrath of the local townspeople. Needless to say, there's a problem with religion here, as well as other regressive ideologies and it's done with both satire and dead seriousness. Musically, a dramatic mix of punk and hardcore, sometimes fast and aggressive, sometimes more melodic along the lines of Zoundz and there are a few passages that reminded me of early Mercury Rev, a bit. Sometimes, the concept is better than the sonic elements but this is definitely original-sounding. (PO Box 1904, New Brunswick, NJ 08901)

GLORYHOLES-Knock You Up (Empty US)/Want

A Divorce (Dirtnap)

Talk about a literal album cover—"Knock You Up" has three women with child sitting at a bar—and don't they know it's not a good idea to smoke or drink when you're pregnant? Anyway, let's get to the Gloryholes, who've put together a nicely rockin' longplayer. Vocalist Doug White used to ply his wares in the Sinister Six, a band that got a good amount of play around here about a decade ago and the Gloryholes have a similar muse—revved up garage punk that's true to the roots but isn't a completely retro trip, Bo Diddley licks on "This Is All There Is" be damned. They can be soulful, as with "Against The Wall" or flat-out rocking, such as "Big Fuckin' Rock Machine" (natch), "Chosen Few" or "Screamer." Righteous shit. "Want A Divorce" is their second album already—do I detect a theme? Does the divorce follow the ill-advised marriage due to the soon-to-be-born children on the first cover? I don't know but it continues in a similar vein, stretching it out for "A Collision of Time, Space and Sound," while every other song, save one, clocks in under three minutes. Not quite as rough 'n raw as "Knocked Up"—I don't get the same thrill-ride and it seems a tad cleaner-sounding, but you still get your rock 'n roll's worth. (Empty: PO Box 12034, Seattle, WA 98012/Dirtnap: PO Box PO Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111)

GO! FOR THE THROAT-Here And Now (Uprising)

Bare-knuckled hardcore punk throttle. Go! For The Throat don't waste much time with intros, interludes or anything of the sort. There's a good balance of thrash, breakdowns, metallic touches and melodic singalongs but the overall ambiance is reflected in the band's name. And, to show old school hometown pride, hall-of-fame Philadelphia A's manager Connie Mack is namechecked on "Played Like A Broken Record" and I'd be willing to bet that hasn't happened in any other hardcore song. Observations about their hometown, both inside and outside the punk scene—they're not too enamored of "vampire punks," for instance ("You're Not Welcome Here"). Hit and run hardcore for short attention spans. (PO Box 490, Laguna Beach, CA 92652)

GODSTOMPER-Hell's Grim Tyrant (Enterruption)

What can I say?? This is fucking great!! Bass, drums and vocals only, with the bassist doing the, um, "vocals." Tons of short, wailing blasts with distorted bass and shredding vocals. Songs played as fast as humanly fucking possible... 8,000 BPM or something.This is an absolutely brilliant CD, both musically and lyrically. They basically shout a "fuck you" to all of the stupid ideologies that have splintered and all but ruined the punk scene across this country. These guys rock all the way, pummelling my head and brain with distorted rage. The drumming sounds like Keith Moon on crack or something, accompanied by brutal unintelligible wailing for vocals. "Hell's Grim Tyrant" was recorded 2 years ago, so let's just hope they have something new coming out. (PO Box 884626, SF, CA 94188-4626) *(Steve)*

GOIN' PLACES-Girl Songwriting 101 (Coldfront)

Much better than the Queers/MTX stuff I'm sure they're influenced by (Joe Queer makes a guest vocal appearance if you care), but still, you got 14 songs about girls, most of which actually have the word "girl" in the title. I may be from Wisconsin, but this is too fuckin cheesy for my musical palette. (PO Box 8345, Berkeley, CA 94707) *(Ryan)*

GOOD RIDDANCE-Bound By Ties Of Blood and Affection (Fat)
GOOD RIDDANCE/KILL YOUR IDOLS-Split (Jade Tree, CD/Bridge Nine 7")

Good Riddance, as always, have plenty on the lyrical plate, presenting it from a personalized perspective but clearly angry with the state of (dis)union. Accessible, tuneful punk but there's a grit and power that often bubbles from beneath. And "Paean To The Enlightenment" has a sturdy riff along the lines of Rocket From The Crypt. Don't miss the hidden public service message at the end—it'll make you proud to be an American. The split with KYI features good material from each band. Good Riddance balance their melodic side with a more pissed-off political punk angle, the latter coming out full-throttle for "Strickland vs. Washington." "Chesterfield King and Propagandhi" from Kill Your Idols has nothing to do with either Jawbreaker or the Prop-sters but, instead, is a hard-hitting bit of personal hardcore. Not the happiest lot, lyrically, and seeking exorcism through their music and it succeeds, as usual. Maybe not their greatest-ever material but still packing a tuneful burn. (Fat: PO Box 193690, SF, CA 94119-3690/ Jade Tree: 2310 Kennwynn Rd., Wilmington, DE 19810/Bridge Nine: PO Box 990052, Boston, MA 02199-0052)

GOONS-Live At The Black Cat (Squirrel Heart)

Recorded in early '01 and catching this DC based punk band in fine form. Scrappy street-style punk that combines early 80s UK and a hint of US hardcore and also features the unique vocals of Serge. There are four unreleased songs here, including the ripping "Nation In Distress," as well as old favorites like "White Tide," "GI Bill" and "Hey You." Includes two video clips from the show and a photo gallery. Now, where's the new studio album, already? (PO Box 5871, Arlington, VA 22205)

GORE GORE GIRLS-Up All Night (Get Hip)

In 1995, I listened to nothing but hardcore and garage rock. OK, *mostly* hardcore and garage rock. Seven years later, it seems like both genres desperately need a return to the raw energy that made them great. Hardcore is getting it. Garage rock is just getting commodified. The Gore Gore Girls sure aren't saving it yet. There's definitely a strong girl-group revival thing going on. This stuff



is fun but for a "lo-fi" recording is sure as hell lacks grit and for a "Detroit Soul" record, it sure doesn't make me want to wiggle very much. Give me Thee Headcoatees or The Bellrays any day. (PO Box 666, Canonsburg, PA 15317) *(Tigger)*

GRABASS CHARLESTONS/BILLY REESE PETERS-Split (No Idea)

Not sure why they have a second run-through of the entire CD (tracks 15-28) unless they think it's so good, you'll want to hear it twice. In any case, I don't mind hearing the Grabass Charlestons more than one time... heartfelt pop/punk in the same vein as Dillinger Four, although with some rootsy rock in the equation. Restless and catchy songs. Billy Reese Peters are also poppy, though a little folksier-sounding, although they throw in a cover of Cheap Trick's "Hello There." "November Spawned A Shithead" juices up the energy level. Both bands have something to offer. (PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL, 32804)

GRANNIES-Taste The Walker (Dead Teenager)

Alternating between 60's rave-up hipshakers, mid 70's stoner-esque riffs (which unfortunately tread too close to tough guy moshy stuff), and the obligatory Supersuckers influence, the Grannies pull off an unbalanced mix of styles. Ocassionally inspired, but the metal doesn't fit. A great recording and perfect mix definitely keep this from being generic. Great GBH cover, as well. (PO Box 470153, SF, CA 94147-0153) *(David)*

GUTS-Say Goodbye To Fun (Spider Life, EP)

Punk and power-pop with a fair amount of buzz and hooks. Ex-members of the Queers and Nobodys, so that should give you a pretty good idea of where they're coming from. Short and sweet. (PO Box 265, Portsmouth, NH 03801)

GUTTERMOUTH-Gusto (Epitaph)

Complete garbage—Guttermouth's smarmy, leering lyrics were actually something I could tolerate—PC conscience be damned—when they were playing a combination of snotty Angry Samoans/Dayglo Abortions' style punk. Yeah, "Just A Fuck" and "Asshole" were obnoxious but they kicked ass. Not the case here—cheesy pop/punk, oldies style rock and lounge music and everything seems really forced. Kind of the same way the Vandals are long over the hill. I'm sure all those Blink-ered fans will dig it, which is why I'm not interested. (2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026)

HACKSAW-Turned Up Way Down (Deranged)

Loud rock 'n roll, straight, no chaser, to quote Miles. A pronounced AC/DC leaning in their riffing—the coda on "Blood From A Stone" momentarily references "Bad Boy Boogie." Drawlin' vocals, punchy arrangements and with a punky kick to keep things from getting plodding. The sort of music that doesn't require deep analysis—just makes you wanna boogie. (PO Box 543, Stn. P, Toronto, ON M5S-2T1, CANADA)

HATEBREED-Perseverance (Universal)

Only this band's second full-length and it's a synthesis of pure metal and hardcore anger. Not exactly a style I love but there are songs here that make a convincing argument, particularly "Final Prayer," which nails the fucked-up nature of the world today with succinct sentiments and is fused to a potent speed metal attack. Kerry King from Slayer adds some signature licks, as well. Song lengths are kept economical and Jamey Jasta bellows out the harsh words with anger in his heart. Some heavy shit.

HAYMAKER (Deranged)

Subtlety? Isn't in Haymaker's universe, at least their musical or lyrical universe. Expressing their rage at the world in no uncertain terms and unleashing a torrent of bile-filled hardcore. Speed and heaviness in short, succinct emanations and without letting up for one second. Jeff's bellowing vocals are reminiscent of Ron from Brotherhood (or think of wrestling icon the Ultimate Warrior, if he sang for a hardcore band. Pushead did the artwork, with a nasty-looking skeletal character apparently about to feast on an eyeball. Visceral artwork to match the visceral musical contents. (PO Box 543, Stn. P, Toronto, ON M5S 2T1, CANADA)

HEADACHES-Cavities From Candyland (self-released)

Late 70's Chicago punk/pop band reunites with positive results. This actually sounds like a lot of British mod revival music from that era so if you're down with that sound then you'll definitely want to get down with this. Good stuff! (5601 N. Sheridan Rd., Unit 11-C, Chicago, IL 60660) *(Ryan)*

HELLACOPTERS-High Visibility (Gearhead)/ Cream Of The Crap! (Gearhead)

"High Visibility" was released in the band's native Sweden in 2000 and is just now getting a US issue. This album kicks off with one of the best 'Copters songs I've heard, "Hopeless Case Of A Kid In Denial." Perfect in every sense, from the Who-ish guitar and drum flourishes to lead guitar that conjures up Sonic's Rendezvous Band (by the way, this band's cover of SRB's "City Slang" is worth tracking down) to the irresistable chorus. Unfortunately, it's not sustained throughout the record. The Hellacopters rock 'n roll retro trip always had a fair amount of nod 'n wink cheekiness but some of these songs just don't rock that hard and one also wonders if they've left the irony by the wayside. Who knows, but when "You're Too Good (To Me Baby)" makes me think of Skynyrd's "That Smell," something's not right. They rebound nicely for "Truckloads of Nothin'" and "Hurtin' Time" and "Sometimes I Don't Know" exhibits a good amount of firepower, as well. And it's still fun to have the nostalgia neurons engaged in another game of "spot the riff." Just don't expect anything nearly on the level of "Supershitty To The Max." "Cream Of The Crap!" is a better bet for those who like the less-polished Hellacopters sound, as it compiles tracks for out of print and rare 7"s and splits... and this is only the first volume. "Tilt City" attacks full-tilt, while "Makes It Alright" cleverly rips off Spencer Davis' "Gimme Some Lovin'." I might not like the title "Killing Allan" for obvious reasons (although I spell my full name differently) but that's one hard-assed riff. And while the covers of "Gimme Shelter," "The Creeps" and "I Got A Right" are a tad perfunctory, they're still decent and the guys absolutely *nail* the Victims' "Television Addict"—obscure Aussie punk covers are a cool thing. Catch up with the odds and ends without having to spend the grocery or rent money. (PO Box 42129, SF, CA 94142)

HELLBLOCK6-Burnin' Down (Worldeater)

Punks playing stoner rock? Stoners playing punk? Well, this album tends to stay on the heavier tip but "Nothin' To Do," "Limepit" and "Fuck Off" certainly pick up the pace, wah-wah mayhem and all and these are the most-appealing moments. The constants are thick slabs of guitar and stentorian caveman-like vocals from the drummer, Antman. The slower songs drag a bit. Loud. (www.worldeaterrecords.com)

HELLNATION-Dynamite Up Your Ass (Sound Pollution)/Thrash Wave (Sound Pollution)

Two eruptions of ULTRACORE. That's what I deem Hellnation to represent. Inhumanly fast without becoming grind and not messing around with any epic song lengths. "Dynamite Up Your Ass" is the band's latest release and it's a fuckin' scorcher. Thrashing forward to the apocalypse and Al's electrodes-on-the-genitals wail is as impressive as his drumming—doing 'em both at the same is incredible and this is one tight band. Lyrics from something of a grumpy old man, you goddamn kids don't know shit perspective but "Best Behavior" also lashes out at the mindless patriotism that now infests this hellish nation (sorry). I don't usually go for such relentlessly chaotic fodder but damn if Hellnation don't have it nailed. "Thrash Wave" is a collection of EP's and splits released from '97 to the present and includes the all-covers "Thrash Or Die" EP, released in Japan and featuring blistering takes on songs by the Comes, Lip Cream, Outo and others. Once again, all speed and scorch but slowing the tempo a little when the spirit moves them and I'll bet it gets the dance floor moving. (PO Box 17742, Covington, KY 41017)

HELLRIDE-Troublemaker + 2 (Scooch Pooch)

Rockin' with their cocks out... that's what these manly Norwegians do, here. Down 'n dirty, fired-up rock 'n roll infused with punk adrenalin, especially the appropriately-titled "Get Down." Every cheap move in the book and I'm PT Barnum's best customer for it. This recording includes a six song EP from 1999 and two later

tracks. Hopefully, their follow-up album, "Making Out With Fire," will see a US release. (5850 W. 3rd St., #209, LA, CA 90036)

HENRY FIAT'S OPEN SORE-Adulterer Oriented Rock (Coldfront/Sin City)/Idiotia Hyperactiva (Coldfront/Sin City)

HFOS are a down 'n dirty (emphasis on the dirty) combination of ragtag garage punk and hardcore speed. It's crude. It's primitive. Yet, in a sick way, it's almost catchy. Until now, this Swedish band's records have been difficult to come by, so Brett from Coldfront is performing a valuable service with these two releases. "Adulterer Oriented Rock" is an anthology of just about everything they've done since '97, while "Idiotia" is their album from a few years ago. This is definitely music for short attention spans, with most songs topping out at a minute or less. Nasty shit, too, with such titles as "Shut Up, You're Fucked," "Girls Have No Testicles," "Fuck Jesus, Jesus Fuck," "Does It Look Like I Give A Fuck" et al. You get the idea. Hard-burning shit but one catches diverse influences here and there—I can hear some 70s era US scum punk, such as Crime, Pagans or the Electric Eels, albeit with 50,000 volts charged through it and blasted off the launch ramp. Eclectic, but not esoteric. It still aims straight for the groin and makes direct impact. (PO Box 8345, Berkeley, CA 94707)

HIGH BEAMS-Hallucination (Dead Beat)

Another spin-off from the Mullens, this one with vocalist/guitarist Matt Mayo and down-the-middle rock 'n roll. Pub rock meets a strong Dolls' inflection, along with the occasional rootsier touch. "Tell Somebody" sounds like one of Radio Birdman's more subdued songs. Tasty, yet not overpowering. It seems a bit too well-mannered, in fact, but the songs have a sturdy determination, particularly "Defend Me" and "Hallucination." (PO Box 283, LA, CA 90078)

JIM HIGHTOWER-The People Are Revolting (in the very best sense of the word) (Alternative Tentacles)

Homespun populism by this eminently-likeable Texan. Hightower (and Molly Ivins, for that matter) are the antithesis of a certain other Texas resident who got installed into the Presidency a few years ago. Recorded during 2001 and there's an introduction from the late, great Senator Paul Wellstone, one of the few 'good ones' to serve in political office in recent memory, whose life was tragically cut short by a plane crash during 2002. Hightower is plain-spoken and funny, good with a phrase—such as when he says there are "too many 5 watt bulbs sitting in 100 watt sockets," to characterize the dimness of many of those in power. He believes in "agitation," saying that's what America is all about and urges it on a grassroots level. Hightower discusses the pitfalls of the current corporate state and how the average person gets screwed and does so in non-dogmatic, common-sensical fashion. There are also 7 of his two minute syndicated commentaries and more stations need to run those segments but, in this era of corporate media consolidation, that's highly unlikely. So he's going around the country and "agitating" on a smaller scale. (PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141)

HIMSA-Death Is Infinite (Revelation, EP)

A departure from the out and out chaos of their previous endeavor, the latest from Himsa finds the band embracing what are comparatively straightforward, but similarly crazed tendencies on their latest EP, following a drastic lineup shift in which onetime vocalist Christian Schmitt was replaced by newcomer John Pettibone. A vocal scheme that is more barked than screeched thunders over a melding of chunkier metal riffage, 80s thrash-style riff sprawl, and an all encompassing start and stop metalcore structure. The frenzied rhythm shifts, and hessian experimentation of the band's previous full length "Ground Breaking Ceremony" are largely absent from this recording, replaced by a far more streamlined metallic formula this time around. Gripping, and fast paced nonetheless, though hardly as stylistically unique as their previous endeavor, this is a solid, more reserved follow up to earlier work. (PO Box 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615) *(Mike Ramek)*

HIRETSUKAN-Invasive//Exotic (G7 Welcoming Committee)

Screamin' hardcore with banshee vocals and heavy riffage tempered with melody. Does that make sense? When I say melody, it ain't pop swill but sudden turns in mood, both from the voice and guitars. Anyway, the lyrics are sometimes oblique, sometimes quite direct in their message, as with "Lender Of The Last," which offers a pointed commentary on our economic environment without resorting to clichés. Not really a style I'm that enamored with, but it has both heart and heat. And I liked the cover of Metallica's "Creeping Death" and hope Lars and the other fuckers from that once-respectable band don't get a dime in royalties, either. (PO Box 27006, 360 Main Street Concourse, Winnipeg, MB R3C 4T3, CANADA)

HOLDING ON-Question What You Live For (Bridge Nine)

To say that Holding On sound pissed-off when they play is an understatement. More accurately, Andy's vocals are set on KILL. The best-produced effort to date for this Minneapolis band, boiling over with speed and power. I can see the huge circle pit for the breakdown on "Fate Comes Crashing" and there's even a hint of melody there. "The Greatest Trick The Devil Ever Played" (another recording of which appeared on their split with Coalition) is a potent vendetta against the increasing security state and mindless patriotism post 9/11 and also rocks up a storm. This is modern hardcore but with nods to the past and delivered with an authoritative resonance. (PO Box 990052, Boston, MA 02109)

A distinctly slick production scheme catapults these tight bursts of melodic, metallic flair into an above par category of elaborate mayhem. Infused with notable harmonic resonance and a fast paced spirit of '88-style shout-along sensibility, the full length endeavor from The Hope Conspiracy maintains a fairly interesting equilibrium between melodic underpinnings and a methodical, unabashedly technical delivery. The key to The Hope Conspiracy's appeal on this record is their dogged rhythmic prowess, demonstrated at noteworthy intervals, particularly on songs such as the hammering, propulsive "Fallen", which successfully fuses stunted harmony with anthemic aural tumult, and builds to a shattering crescendo. The output here is surely their strongest yet. (PO Box 14, Hudson, NY 12534) *(Mike Ramek)*

HOPELESS DREGS OF HUMANITY-Revolutionary Rock Apocalypse (Ever Reviled)



HOLIER THAN THOU?-The Hating Of The Guts (Six Weeks)

Burn, baby, burn... or is it watch it burn? Actually, while Holier Than Thou? Have a decided crossover sound, there's not much metal wank and their vocalist DR sounds more like John Connelly from Nuclear Assault, anyway (in case you missed the Dr. Know reference). These guys have the sound nailed—hot riffing with an economical approach, a controlled kind of rage but it's lethal with its fast, full-on sound. The CD includes remixed versions of the tracks from their 7", as well, which I'm grateful for, since my 7" sounded kind of fucked up. One ass-kicking effort, here. (225 Lincoln Ave., Cotati, CA 94931)

HOLLYWOOD HATE-Product Of Our Environment (TKO)

Scotty Wikins, late of Verbal Abuse and Electric Frankenstein, resurfaces in this band and it's a pretty solid combination of slam-bang punk, hardcore and rock 'n roll. Suzy Homewrecker (Owens), formerly with Snap-Her and Total Chaos, is the drummer and the other members have been around the block a bit, as well. Loud and scorching songs with an abundance of energy and 'tude. A tried and true west coast sound and it still hits the spot. (3126 W. Cary St., #303, Richmond, VA 23221)

HOPE CONSPIRACY-Endnote (Equal Vision)

The Dregs have some rather unpopular ideas to share with you—well, unpopular to the majority of sheep-like USA-USA-USA simpletons. That's a burning flag on the cover of the CD and some burning ideas contained within, but delivered with an agreeable, tuneful punk thrust. Crimpshrine and older Anti-Flag are a couple of musical touchpoints that come to mind but something tells me you won't see these guys playing to the mall-rats at Warped. Busy bass lines dart in and out between the warm guitar chords and there's a ragtag spirit throughout. Using sarcasm to get the point across, such as the gleeful "Let's Bomb The Shit Out Of Our Problem," "Columbine Shuffle" or "Smoke A Cigar From Monica Lewinski's Snatch." "December 9th, 1981," meanwhile, refers to the date when Mumia Abu-Jamal allegedly killed Philadelphia cop Daniel Faulkner and takes on a slightly more serious tone. Making their point without sounding like humor-challenged ideologues. (PO Box 1904, New Brunswick, NJ 08903-1904)

THE HORROR-First Blood (Chainsaw Safety, EP)

This band is, essentially, the final lineup for Voorhees, with Andy Bryant taking over on vocals and they've come up with a rampaging vinyl debut. Varying between double-speed blasts and more reasonably-paced hardcore, while Andy barks out the words in a high, rabid dog timbre. Lyrics exuding cynicism and skepticism, as well as a good amount of sarcasm about a number of topics. There's even a song here ("Let's Get Regional") urging people to hang on to their regional accents and, as the proud possessor of a Mass accent, it's a point of pride, even in the face of derision from outsiders. "Fuck The Romans" hits hard, with a catchy arrangement and that also goes for the aforementioned "Let's Get Regional." Definitely draws some blood, metaphorically speaking, of course. (PO Box 260318, Bellerose, NY 11426)

HORROR SHOW-Our Design (Deathwish)

Plying the core—over-the-top vocals, riffs with speed 'n chug. Basically, this is fairly typical-sounding stuff but not bad. Such tracks as "Inconsiderate Me," "Seconds To South" and "Broken Record" bristle with speed and energy. (10 Lothrop St., Beverly, MA 01915)

HORRORS-Vent (In The Red)

I saw these dopes last year and they were out-of-tune the whole fucking set and I thought the songs sucked besides. On this album I just don't dig the ham-fisted bashing of what is supposedly to be a heartfelt form of music (blues). If you wanna make noise then make noise but if you wanna write serious, soulful music, don't smother it under a pile of dirt—let it out to breathe so I can actually feel it! The songs are generally okay, the production is loud and noisy but I don't think it works with everything they're trying to do here—tailor the production to the individual songs and you might really have something. Still, it makes me think better of them after that crappy live show. (PO Box 50777, LA, CA 90050) *(Ryan)*

HOT WATER MUSIC-Caution (Epitaph)

After the largely-disappointing "A Flight and A Crash," I didn't really have high hopes for HWM's latest opus. A very-produced sound. Accessible. Not great, compared to their best efforts, but I can't dismiss it out of hand, either. The songs still have a fair amount of volume and strong melody lines that Chuck and Jason wrap their voices around. Yeah, I'm still a sucker for a hook and a song like "Trusty Chords" certainly lives up to the title. Yet I'm kind of missing the old rawness a bit. (2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026)

HUMUNGUS-I Hate Mother Fucking Cops + A Reason To Care (Beer City)

The lastest musical endeavor for the raspy-voiced Nicki Sicki (Verbal Abuse, Sick Pleasure) and this disc combines the brand new "Cops" album with the previous "Reason." The title track of the former immediately indicates tremendous displeasure with the men in blue and Nicki has damn good reason, considering he's been in and out of the slammer for many years. Anyway, for "Cops," Humungus' lineup includes legendary guitarist Cheetah Chrome from the Dead Boys and the band hit hard with a tandem of old-school punk, hardcore and rock 'n roll. High energy music throughout. (PO Box 26035, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0035)

HUNCHES-Yes. No. Shut It. (In The Red)

This came highly recommended to me but ultimately it's a case of some great, energetic and unique rocknroll being reduced to soundalike dullness by the production or lack thereof. Garage fans can jump on this immediately but I'm keeping my fingers crossed and waiting for the next one. (PO Box 50777, LA, CA 90050) *(Ryan)*

HYBRID MUTANTS-2 On The Table (LEM)

Their bio proudly states that they've had some appearances on Dwarves and Misfits tribute comps, and that makes sense, because they do play the same brand of Ramones-on-massive-amounts-of-cocaine-and-pissed-as-hell style punk. This is not to say that any of these songs even approach the level of greatness that any of the aforementioned bands achieved. In fact, the record didn't really leave too much of an impression on me one way or the other. There's a handful of good songs that could have been released as an EP, and a lot of songs that are really not very good, but also not that bad either. I think that they just need to get into a better studio or to have their record mastered better, or some shit like that because the sound just isn't beefy enough for my tastes, and the snare drum sounds like a bucket. I also think that with two guitars, they could be doing some more interesting arrangements, but that's their business, not mine. Good effort, but not anything monumental. (PO Box 3052, Summerville, NC 29484) *(Snotty Scotty)*

ICONS OF FILTH-Nostradamnedus (Go Kart)

Veteran UK anarcho band returns with a pretty damn good album. In all honesty, the Icons were a band whose name I knew but had never heard much of their music. Straight-forward lyrics dealing with societal issues (and these songs were recorded a month before the events of 9/11, so I imagine the next installment should be quite interesting) and the music has a surprising west

coast hardcore flavor to it to go along with the thorny punk sound. "Fast and Loose," while still making a statement about world overpopulation, just flat out rocks. "Plastic Wrap," meanwhile, rides a GBH/Blitz guitar coda to strong effect. Powerful and engaging. (PO Box 20, Prince St. Station, NY, NY 10012)

I DEFY-First Strike! (Reflections, EP)

I defy you not to start moshing it up when hearing this disc. Ha ha ha... surging hardcore from Germany with sweeping, catchy riffs and plenty of power. Coming at you non-stop with yelping vocals, burning guitars and fast-paced drumming. Includes a cover of DRI's "I Don't Need Society" and that's as worthwhile a credo now as in 1983. (Spoorwegstraat 117, 6828 AP Arnhem, NETHERLANDS)

IKARA COLT-Chat and Business (Epitaph)/Basic Instructions EP (Epitaph)

Another band that comes from out of the blue—or otherwise unknown—and blindsides the senses. Ikara Colt are one of the better new(ish) UK bands I've heard in awhile. Coldplay? Radiohead? Forget it, man. Here's the edgy stuff. Driving, moody math/post-punkish rock, if you want to pigeonhole it. Paul Resende has a subtle, yet expressive vocal style that accompanies the sound, instead of dominating it. Echoing the Fall and Joy Division, the latter especially on the synth-laden "At The Lodge" and "may b 1 day," but with more of a ferocious, rock-at-all-costs pulse. Watch out for the piledriving hidden track at the end. Completely kick-ass, but from a different direction than I usually apply that term. "Basic Instructions" is a new five song EP and picks up where the album left off, balancing straight-ahead, hard-edged material with more experimentation, such as the remixed "may b 1 day #2." "Panic" jars the senses nicely. (2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026)

IN CONTROL-The Truth Hurts (Indecision)/Breaking The Curse (Six Weeks)

The latest from Oxnard's In Control runs the gamut from brusing hardcore to songs that go in more of a melodic direction ("Sixteen Years," "Once Upon A Town"). They've got heavier trappings but throw in enough fast-paced material to keep it lively, particularly for the title track, "Know-It-All," "Shrouded In Rhetoric" and "Give Me Some Reality." A good effort, overall. "Breaking The Curse" features a scary looking picture of In Control's singer Ryan on the cover, eyes demonically crossed. As for the contents on the disc, it's actually earlier material from the band, taken from a previous 7" and demo and dishing out the peppy hardcore. Maybe coming from more of a youth crew style on these tracks (although there's a cover of Stalag 13's "Sometime"), with stirring guitars, gang-style backing vocals and plenty of burn. "Until It's Gone" reminds me a bit of Verbal Assault. Energetic stuff. (Indecision: (PO Box 6052, Garden Grove, CA 92846/Six Weeks: 225 Lincoln Ave., Cotati, CA 94931)

IN DK-Kill Whitey! (Go Kart)

The other spinoff band from Choking Victim, with Skwert and Ezra (although Alec and Stza from Leftover Crack and CV contribute here) and more of a straight-ahead punk rock sound. A few songs ("East Coast Rising," "Moonwalk Mafia") that embrace the 'ol skank but it's mainly poppy-sounding with an abundance of whoooahs on the choruses. Lyrics about societal decay, especially with a local angle about their Lower East Side environs, though looking globally for "Sunday Bombs" and "Rallying Point," set to a punk sea chanty melody. Not as manic-sounding, raw or off the wall sounding but played with heart and—if I can use such an out-of-date, lame term—gusto. (PO Box 20, Prince St. Station, NY, NY 10012)

IN DYING DAYS-Life As A Balancing Act (One Day Savior)

Good metalcore seems about as probable at this point as decent goth metal, or a tasteful Red Hot Chili Peppers single, but I'll be damned if Montreal's In Dying Days don't deliver the goods here. Of course, it only makes sense that a band that comes from the same region as Voivod, Cryptopsy, Kataklysm and new metal monsters Martyr could play a genre that's gone totally stale and spice it up. There's a great fist-pounding vibe pushing this one along, an unleashing of emotions not usually found so sincerely in this sort of thing (again, see Quebec's resume for metal bands with odd amounts of humanity). The songs are more hardcore than metal, recalling Swedish kings Raised Fist or new titans Within Reach, with that speedy, crunchy melodic riffing countering the heavy, powerful, yet more generic, metal sounds. Another Swedish reference, the Gothenburg sound (At The Gates, In Flames) also rears its head here. What makes In Dying Days so powerful is Mike's vocals; not the usual lame-o metalcore screaming, this guy has a deeper yowl to him, and when he throws in his speaking parts, it brings the level of intensity up yet another notch, in a way that Burn also utilized on their bizarre new EP. After a couple listens, one realizes this has more in common with the aforementioned Swedish duo of jaw-droppers than any metalcore band, because this is powerful and emotional hardcore, delivered with a metal edge. I ain't talking Gerri Miller here either. Uh, get it? (PO Box 372, Williston Park, NY 11596) *(Greg)*

INFEST-No Man's Slave (Draw Blank/Deep Six)

Godfuckindamn... this blows most of what I've heard lately out of the water. Music recorded in '95, vocals in 2000 and finally out now and an overpowering hardcore explosion. Ultra-fast, ultra-tight, ultra-ripping. The guitar and bass tone are set on kill, as are Joe's vocals. It's pure overdrive, with a few slow-downs, until they reach the intense-as-fuck, heart-stopping dirge "In My Way"—or is it "My World My Way." The titles on the back of the jacket don't always match those on the lyric sheet. But minutiaie such as that don't matter a whole lot when your brain cells are being reshuffled. Do I really need to tell you that you MUST own this record? I didn't think so. (PO Box 6911, Burbank, CA 91510-6911)

INFLUENTS-Some Of The Young (Adeline)

A friend of mine turned me on to some early recordings by this band last year and I loved them but unfortunately the horrific Petty/Westerberg influence has diluted this album to the point where most of it sounds like it could provide theme music for sitcoms about well-dressed 20-somethings living in New York City. I also don't remember the singer sounding so much like Billie Joe—this album has taken me past mere disappointment and into acute aggravation. (5245 College Avenue #318, Oakland, CA 94618) *(Ryan)*

INHUMAN-Black Reign EP (RPP)/Rebellion (Exit/Go Kart)

The two latest recordings by this NYHC powerhouse and it's got all the hallmarks of their environs. Bruising riffs, rage-packed vocals, heavier elements. Only vocalist Mike Inhuman (aka Scondotto) remains from the lineup on "Rebellion" but "Black Reign" doesn't represent a major departure in sound. Maybe a little more melodic, particularly for "Killing Me," but the emphasis remains on a style originated by the likes of Sick Of It All, Judge, Killing Time, etc... Iron-forged riffs, aggressive drumming, etc... Five studio tracks and so-so sounding live versions of two older songs. "Rebellion" is a crushing longplayer from start to finish—released in 1999, but Exit ceased to function as a label and it's now distributed by Go Kart. (M. Scondotto, 181 12th St., Apt. #1R, Brooklyn, NY 11215)

INSULT TO INJURY-Realm Of Indifference (NGS)

A surprising yet incredibly proficient amalgam of time honored late '80s Rest In Pieces/Breakdown-esque NYHC fuses with a rhythmic crunch similar to the likes of early '90s Madball, and a winning blend of that same band's earlier speed addled blur of blast-beat driven damage. Chicago's Insult To Injury unleash a pummeling on-a-dime tempo-shifting ordeal that encompasses the essence of a bygone era of hardcore, fusing massive, bulky riff sprawl with a manic, volcanic blur of aggression. A pleasant surprise, especially in light of the legions of down tuned E chord tough guy metal bands all too prevalent today. Despite a few dull moments where the band slips a bit too far into the stale, 'new school' chugga-chugg mire, this record generally serves to alleviate the intrinsic mediocrity of mosh metal. It accomplishes this by infusing a classic shout along/breakdown-laden formula with an unflinching penchant for stylistic creativity, offering an often staggering array of fret ripping chord progressions and creative vocal belches amid the speed shifting wallop. A largely rousing endeavor, encapsulating a plethora of gratifying sounds and structural approaches within its mighty bludgeoning. (PO Box 334, Westmont, IL 60559) *(Mike Ramek)*

INTENSITY-The Ruins Of Our Future (Deranged)

Killer hardcore, another stirring batch of material for this Swedish band. Speed, fury and drama, along with the occasional hint of melody but Intensity keep it in overdrive all the time. Not slavish to one style—one hears the potent assault of the Partners In Crime label bands (His Hero, Deathreat, etc...) more than in the past, moving away from their somewhat youth crew-sounding origins. All that matters is it rages and there's substance on the lyrical plate, taking issue with class divisions, the price of development and racism, the latter most-pointedly on "RPFD," where Rodrigo mentions feeling discriminated against even in the so-called open-minded hardcore scene. A multi-lingual effort, with songs sung in English, Swedish and Spanish. Complete burn. (PO Box 543, Stn. P, Toronto, ON M5S-2T1, CANADA)

INTERNATIONAL NOISE CONSPIRACY-Bigger Cages, Longer Chains (Burning Heart, EP)

Politics in your face, coupled with more of the soulful rock this band is known for. Actually, while it's obvious where they're coming from ideologically, the lyrics don't rely on slogans. The title track is a holdover from their last album, along with five new songs. Seems a tad more accessible than in the past, but T(I)NC were never really noisemongers to begin with, despite their name. Yeah, it's gimmicky and a bit cheesy, but the message does remain potent. The bonus features are the real attraction—a collection of their music videos and a clip of Noam Chomsky, as well. (2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026)

IRONBOSS-Rides Again (Reptilian)

This is a hard rock and roll band that obviously takes a great deal of pride in the fact that they happen to be from Maryland. They claim influences as diverse as Thin Lizzy and AC/DC on one end and Ignition and Soulside on the other with Dag Nasty and Iron Maiden balanced in the middle. To me, I really don't see any of those influences on any of their sleeves, although they obviously come from the Rose Tattoo school of basic primal stripped down hard rock with a whole lot of amplifiers cranked up to eleven. They really sound like their own thing, and the singer has a great voice which reminds me of both the singer from Paw and Tim Sult of Clutch (must be the MD accent) at different times. Unfortunately, their song "Eco-Freak" kind of pisses me off. Wow, it's so cool and irreverent to wanna burn fossil fuels in order to show off what a big cock you have with your muscle car. Greg Ginn said something cool about AC/DC having their heads chopped off but still rocking hard and being a good band because of it. I'd say the same thing might apply to Ironboss unless they have more of a sense of humor than I'm giving them credit for. Of course, with lyrics like "Mother had, mother raised 'em, mother fed 'em, mother fuck 'em," what the hell am I supposed to think? Fuck, it's still great rock and roll. (403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231) *(Snotty Scotty)*

J CHURCH-Palestine (Honey Bear)

I haven't listened to J Church in years. I used to love J Church when they put out raw, inspired catchy punk like many other bands that also put out raw, inspired catchy punk. It's been a long time since I paid much attention to them and, honestly, had sort of thought they had broken up. But here's a collection of demos that are being released as a benefit for Lance Hahn, their guitarist, who basically had all his personal and label (Honey Bear) possessions destroyed when his apartment complex burned down. These demos are surprisingly slow and alterna-rock. It's weird hearing a punk band I used to like a lot playing (as Lance admits) Neil Young inspired country alt-rock recorded at a time when they were considering major labels. Some people might call that "playing with convention," but what they're doing now seems pretty damn conventional to anyone who's every heard a Son Volt record. Not very good and not very well recorded, but the sense I get it that the record is for dedicated fans and people who like benefit records. (1730 E. Oltorf, #135, Austin, TX 78741) *(Tigger)*

JESUSEATER (Deathwish, EP)/Step Inside My Deathray (Deathwish)

Shawn Brown just keeps on going—a musical resume going back over 15 years, starting with Dag Nasty and Swiz. Jesuseater are a mid-tempo, heavier-sounding unit. In fact, I'd call it grunge-inspired, if that term is still admissible in the reviewer's glossary of terms. Thick, distorted guitar riffs bringing back long-submerged memories of early Soundgarden, Nirvana or Tad and Shawn's instantly-recognizable vocals remain an invaluable asset. In fact, that's what makes it palatable. There's a warmth of guitar tone and a wider variety of influences that emerge on the longplayer, "Step Inside My Deathray." More echoes of the DC hardcore roots emerge, particularly for "Miles" and the suicide themed "Who Keeps Stealing The Bricks," although the gait remains in the medium range. (10 Lothrop St., Beverly, MA 01915)

JOHN BROWN'S ARMY-Who Fucked The Culture Up? (Gloom)

12 inches of mayhem from JBA, one of Nate Wilson's post-Devoid of Faith vehicles and this one is closest to a traditonal hardcore punk sound, albeit underpinned by a wall of feedback that creates the transition from one song to the next. But the bellicose grunt-o-rama vocals and speedy arrangements are the main ingredients here. Opening with a sample from the Who's "Baba O'Riley" (the synthesizer loop) and then the aggro kicks in and the first words uttered from Nate's mouth are "anger felt deep inside" and one doesn't doubt it for a second. Some interesting lyrics. "Thought... What's That" is a thoughtful critique of so-called think-for-yourself individuals whose behavior runs contrary to what they preach. There's also a ravenous cover of Gang Green's "Kill A Commie" leading into a cacophonous piece called "Dandy" (named after their recording engineer Will "Dandy" Killingsworth?) Culture? Who needs culture. Give me this kind of noise, anytime. (PO Box 14253, Albany, NY 12212)

JOHN WAYNE'S SEVERED HEAD (self-released)

The band's moniker definitely gets 'em off on the right foot with me—so do such titles as "Jesus Didn't Have A Mohawk" and "2 Towers & Too Many Flags." Aggressive hardcore punk with striking riffs and hoarse vocals barking out the angry sentiments. Just boiling rage and the acoustic break on "Today Is A Good Bay" is a cool touch. (681 Rathburn Rd., Oswego, NY 13126)

JUMBO'S KILLCRANE-Carnaval De Carne (Crucial Blast)

Offering up six songs in 25 minutes, Jumbo's Killcrane have achieved some pretty kick-ass sonic heaviness with this mini-album/glorified EP/thankfully short release. Harnessing a sound that brings to mind Unsane or earlier Helmet but upping the intensity levels a notch towards a more metal crunch, Jumbo's Killcrane (bad, forgettable name) surprise the listener here, what with the band name, album name and cover art all seeming fairly light-hearted. But be ready for a pummeling, a distorted and ravaging underground antisocial thundering of a sound, one that would make the folks at AmRep and Relapse Records equally proud. (PO Box 364, Hagerstown, MD 21741) *(Greg)*

KERMIT'S FINGER-Jacques JonBenet Bombshell (Poorest Quality)

Obnoxious spitball punk. Real socially-retarded stuff, such as "Love Song For A Dead Child," about JonBenet Ramsey. Now that's sick. So I have to congratulate them because, let's face it, punk rock needs to get its sense of humor and perversity back. Basic wham-bam stuff, with rudimentary arrangements that get by on spirit over skill. Rude 'n crude. (PO Box 458, Boston, MA 02129)

KILL PILL-Outside These City Walls (Uprising, EP)

Nervy garage/revolution rock ala Int'l Noise Conspiracy, along with an echo of mid to late 80s Dischord. The Kill Pill rock it up and expound leftist lyrics without apology. "Feed My Flame Starve The Game" is the most straight-ahead sounding song and the best one here. Decent. (PO Box 490, Laguna Beach, CA 92652)

KILLS-Keep On Your Mean Side (Rough Trade)

Huh. This is somewhere between drum machine-indie rock and garage rock-lite. Nothing that grabs me, it's really no better than background music for hip record stores to play. Oh yeah, half of this band is Alison from Discount who appears to have transformed herself into some sort of art damaged junkie chick—how's that workin out for ya? (PO Box 357, London SE19 1AD ENGLAND) *(Ryan)*

KILL YOUR IDOLS-Live At CBGB's July 30th 2000 (Creep)

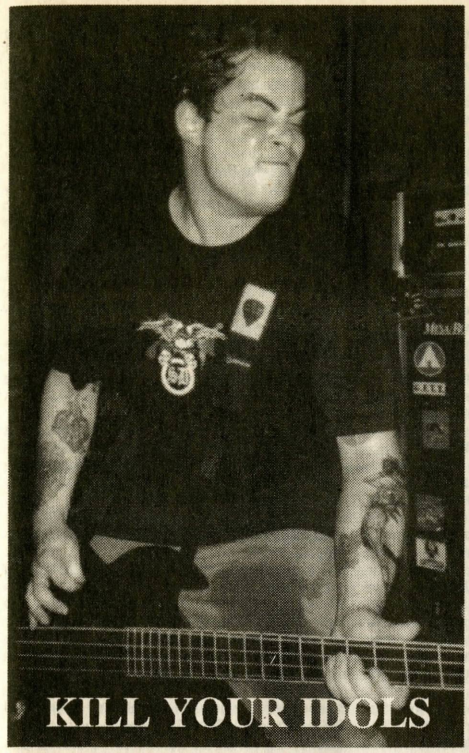
Out after innumerable delays and a limited pressing. Kill Your Idols don't always get the acclaim they deserve and this is a spirited set played in front of a hometown audience. Hardcore punk that skimps on neither the aggressiveness or the melody and it's a nice compendium of their history, along with a cover of Sheer Terror's "Here To Stay." "Falling," "Can't Take My Pride" and "What I've Become" really stick in your head. Decent-enough sound quality—CB's has one of the best sound systems of any club in the country and they got a decent mix. (PMB 220, 252 E. Market St., West Chester, PA 19382)

KINGS OF NUTHIN'-Fight Songs (Disaster)

I saw this Boston band completely tear shit up at the Green Bay Rockabilly Fest this past summer (they covered Stiff Little Fingers for fuck's sake!!!) and couldn't wait to hear this album and it doesn't disappoint one bit. Loud, crazy instant rocknroll party—basically this is like a punk rock version of the Brian Setzer Orchestra on speed. HIGHEST RECOMMENDATION for this album AND their live show—can't wait to see them again! (PO Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510) *(Ryan)*

KISMET HC-Our Message Is Of Anger... Our Voices Are Of Pain (Vivify)

Political hardcore punk that embodies hard-driving and more melodic elements, along with both male and female vocals. Urgent and energetic, if occasionally sounding a little disjointed on the faster segments and there's a potent message about domestic violence, consumption, warmongering and punk scene politics. A defiantly DIY attitude and not easily compared to anyone else. (434 Werrington Rd., Bucknall, Stoke-On-Trent, ST2 9AB ENGLAND)



KITTY LITTLE-Nice Noise (Peterwalkee, EP)
Five more songs by this Albany trio (they also have a 7" out) and with Matto from John Brown's Army. Quite a bit different from the loud hardcore he usually plays—this is unabashed power-pop/indy rock along the lines of Superchunk, Sebadoh, et al. Occasionally a little more sugary than I like, but "Stop Talking" has a killer hook. (PO Box 14794, Albany, NY 12212)

KNIVES OUT-Heartburn (Deathwish, EP)
Powerful, dramatic hardcore—an urgent, mid-tempo fray with strong melodic underpinnings. "Broken Night" rides a gigantic guitar hook, coupled with Nick's edge-of-sanity vocals—murder on the mind, in a literal sense, when he states *"have you ever killed for fun? No, I'd like to try someday."* There's a heaviness here, but it keeps moving, keeps attacking. A striking debut. (10 Lothrop St., Beverly, MA 01915)

KNOW YOUR ENEMY (Crucial Response, EP)
Creepy cover artwork, with a gaggle of nasty looking guys bearing brain-surgery scars, courtesy of RAMBO artist Mike Bukowski, and on the disc, full-on hardcore bristling with speed and crunch. Not groundbreaking but energetic and with some wicked mosh parts. (Kaisersfeld 98, 46047, Oberhausen, GERMANY)

KOSHER-Self Control (BYO)
I originally received this as a demo CD from the band in early 2001 and it was a keeper then and remains so. BYO have released it with different artwork but it's the same recording—rousing, loud, catchy pop/punk in a decidedly Dillinger Four vein, and that's a pretty high compliment around here. "Bored In America" is a ringing anthem. Other songs have the combination of drive and hooks, as well. Personalized lyrics that deal with the boredom and tedium of middle american existence, drowning their sorrows but also trying to come up with solutions, as well. (PO Box 67609, LA, CA 90067)

KRAYS-A Time For Action (TKO)
My kind of punk album—played with urgency, not too slow or plodding and with catchy riffs. The Krays have it nailed on their latest album (their third, I believe). Although they're New Yorkers, there's more of a west coast-inspired sound, akin to Youth Brigade or a grittier-sounding Pennywise. Not pop, but charging and anthemic with strong singalongs. They cover "No Pity" from Toxic Reasons' highly-underrated "Kill By Remote Control," as well. No compromise, no bullshit, just loud and spirited. (3126 W. Cary St., #303, Richmond, VA 23221)

KRIGSHOT-Örebro-Mangel (Sound Pollution)
24 more blistering songs by Krigshot—hard and fast, though slowing it down to a more reasonable pace on occasion. It's not the standard Dis-worship, either. Krigshot's songs have a rawer, frenetic, double-speed sound, topped off by howling vocals. Swedish lyrics but the translations indicate they've got plenty on their mind—global, local and personal and the mid-tempo "Krigshetsare" concerns our own "beloved" pResident Bush… when are American bands going to get on the stick with the anti-Bush songs, already? There's some musical growth evident without any dilution in intensity. Blasting through the muck. (PO Box 17742, Covington, KY 41017)

KUNG FU KILLERS-Game Of Death (TKO, EP)
The obviously-fictitious names on the back cover had me laughing… Lo Maniac, General Tzo What and, on drums, Hung Lo, but further investigation (the press sheet) reveals they're hardcore veterans based in New Jersey and Mr. Lo, in all likelihood, is Rob Sexton from Slap of Reality. Anyway, a pretty cool EP, with an older hardcore influence, but it's also melodic—the first pair of songs brought latter-period Faith to mind and "Wasting Time" takes a poppier turn. While their cover of the Misfits' "I Turned Into A Martian" is a bit out of the range of vocalist Yung Maniac (hah), that's a minor complaint. Good hardcore punk. (3126 W. Cary St., #303, Richmond, VA 23221)

KYLESA (Prank)
It's on Prank, and it's got Pushead art, so you pretty much get the idea about what it's gonna sound like right off the bat. And, yes, it's the mid-era Neurosis crusty apocalyptic depresso-core once again, done to perfection by Damad and now resurrected by the similar-sounding Kylesa. And hey, no complaints here, besides the predictability factor, but when music sounds this cool, who cares? Not as oppressively heavy as later-era Neurosis (oh how these bands must get tired of seeing that name in all their reviews, and for that, I apologize), and filled with less distortion, more experimental melodies and subdued parts... hmm, wait, I'm still talking about Neurosis. Uh, sorry. OK, well, if said band is just too damn long for you to ever take in, this short album from Kylesa will totally satisfy. Great Pushead art, too. (PO Box 410892, SF, CA 94141-0892) *(Greg)*

LAB RATS-Start Thinking (Risk/New Disorder)
A young band from the Bay Area (members are 15-17 years old) playing semi melodic-hardcore punk with ranting vocals and the occasional metallic guitar lick. A little sloppy around the edges but made up for with a fiery delivery. Intelligent lyrics, such as "One Way," about how schools are trying to ban the teaching of evolution. Take that, christian punks! (115 Bartlett St., SF, CA 94110)

LAMONT-Thunder Boogie (Traktor 7)
Thunder boogie, huh? I had already scribbled down "boogie" before realizing that it was part of the title of this album and this power trio live up to the billing. Big 'ol 70s inspired riffs and a sound that moves 'yer butt. No sludge or lethargy for these guys, just the rock. Cowbell and all on the mighty title track and "Vegas" and "Hot Wire" also kick it quite effectively. (1100 Cambridge St., Cambridge, MA 02139)

LASTDAYNOHUMANVOICE-0640.4-50 55 DE4 87 –9.2223 (HG Fact)
This is a very heavy duty release. Thelastdaynohumanvoice incorporate blazing blast-beats ala Phobia or Cattle Decapitation..but the Floyd like samples are a bit different. There are trippy intros and weird noise too, but all revolving around a cauldron of blistering heavy stuff. They utilize dual vocalists: one shrill and piercing and the other a demonic growl from hell. The drums get buried on a couple songs during some of the more frenzied moments, but then on other songs the rumbling double bass drums sound just like joyous thunder! There's no bass, just 2 guitars, but with the overall denseness of the sound with the samples and all you don't even notice at all. This CD is like a long nice trip in the sense that I felt completely drained afterwards… but in a most satisfied way. An amazing CD. (Nakano Shinbashi-M 105, Yayoi-cho 2-7-15, Nakano, Tokyo, JAPAN 164-0013) *(Steve)*

LAST HOPE (Stab & Kill)
Some really good hardcore by this Swedish band. Fast, sweeping and catchy and packing all the ferocity one desires. Chugging riffs, without any metal or sloggishness—the breakdowns keep the pace moving and the vocals are equal parts grit and emotion. Sound-wise, the roots are in late 80s US hardcore and some of this also reminds me of earlier Ensign material, but remains contemporary-sounding. That's some creepy artwork, as well, depicting a birth. (63 Rawson Rd., Apt. 2, Quincy, MA 02170)

LATTERMAN-Turn Up The Punk, We'll Be Singing (Traffic Violation)
Even on the first listen, this record fit me like my favorite pair of corduroys with the ass that's faded from to many repeated wearing. Upbeat and melodic punk rock without much in the vein of Operation Cliff Clavin or fellow neighbors in Long Island the Insurgent. I love catchy music that doesn't have the overly-polished finish that bigger labels stick on bands that should know better. Even though there's nothing in here that's going to win "Innovative Band of the Year" award, the songwriting is so damn catchy it more than makes up for it. Standard thematic nature for a band of this sort..Singing about the bonds of friendship and the ties that keep one bound to the scene. This is a band I'd like to catch live in a basement. (PO Box 772, East Seatucket, NY 11733) *(mikechumpchange)*

TED LEO & THE PHARMACISTS-Hearts of Oak (Lookout)
Precious pop music for trendy hipsters and, with Leo's recent profile in *Rolling Stone*, I'm sure this will be his mainstream breakthrough. Or semi-mainstream. Whatever. The quavering vocals quickly grate and, even with echoes of early Elvis Costello and Joe Jackson on a few songs, there's something all-too irritating about these songs. While we're on the topic of Mr. Leo, DeadAlive Records recently reissued some of his early work with Citizens Arrest on "A Light In The Distance" and that's definitely worth your time. (3264 Adeline St., Berkeley, CA 94703)

LES BATON ROUGE-Chloe Yurth (Elevator, EP)
Six song follow-up to their "Women Non-Stop" album and Supsiria Franklyn is a formidable vocalist—cooing, screaming and cajoling. When I saw them live, they did a Bikini Kill cover and there are some musical similarities. Thorny punk with garage and post-punk elements and connecting on the straight-ahead "Chloe Yurtz" and "Somersault." "Parish Priest," which features just harmonizing vocals and guitar, isn't as intriguing. (PO Box 628, Bronxville, NY 10708)

LET IT BURN-Here's To Goodbyes (Coalition)
No, here's to hellos… Hello to Let It Burn and their shit-hot album. Three former members of Full Speed Ahead (and their bassist, Will, also plays in Suicide Party) and it's a boiling-over combination of surging hardcore and garage/punk/rock 'n roll. You read that right. A lot of adrenalin-charged moments but the album starts with a butt-shakin' rhythm and spirited tambourine bashing for the title track, "Here's To Goodbyes." They also cover Elton John's "Saturday Night's Alright For Fighting," which was always my favorite song by the British piano pounder (c'mon, you expected me to say "Your Song"?). The production is lively and in-your-face, with an abundance of burn in the guitar and bass riffs. DJ Values' vocals are impassioned and emotional without being whiny, even while in a higher register. Not stuck in one genre ghetto, all high energy and kicking ass from start to finish. (Newtonstraat 212, 2562 KW Den Haag, NETHERLANDS)

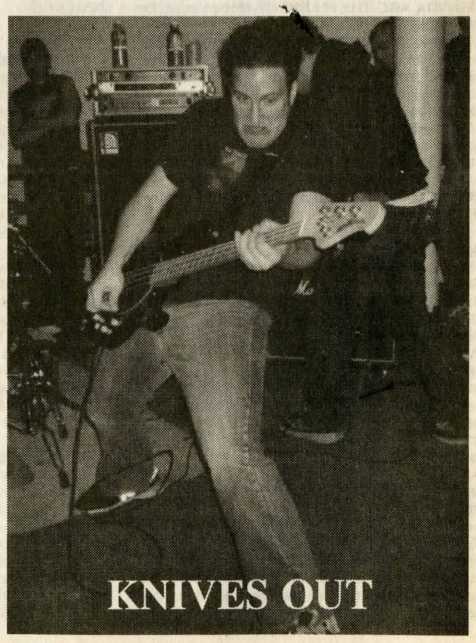
LIBERTINES-Up The Bracket (Rough Trade)
A much-hyped UK band, produced by the Clash's Mick Jones. And even though I was intrigued by Jonesy's involvement, it doesn't quite justify the buzz. One can't help thinking of the Strokes, with the bouncy, poppy compositions, although Libertine are more reminiscent of the Wonder Stuff (anyone remember them?) and, looking further back, one can hear some Kinks-ish echoes, as well. In their favor, the influences aren't excessively obvious but, save for the deliriously catchy "Up The Bracket," the songs don't really connect with any kind of authority or resonance.

LIGHTNING BOLT-Wonderful Rainbow (Load)
This crazed Providence two piece completely blew me away. Just absolutely maniacal rhythms that repeat 1000 times..with totally distorted vocals. HC, metal, noise, just ALL sounds blasting out of my puny, terrorized speakers. Both the drummer and bassist must've lost all of their liquids recording this disc…it's THAT raging! Complete with free-form jazz beats and bass then degenerating into pulverizing punk or something. The next song will be a 3 minute space rock jam that just sounds so beautiful. The last track "dual in the deep" starts off like the Swan, and then rumbles off into rage-core. Bless the beasts and children! (PO Box 35, Providence, RI 02901) *(Steve)*

LIMP WRIST (Leguna Armada)
The great thing about Limp Wrist is not only are they invading the uptight, often sexually-repressed hardcore scene by being openly gay and goddamn proud of it but they also beat the fuckers at their own game—a smoking, hard-hitting hardcore sound connecting with brief, furious blasts. Played with precision and it's often downright catchy, as well. The message boards were flaming (sorry) with derision about this band's message when the album came out (sorry again). I mean, if you take a title like "We Started This Band To Get Dates" at face value, I'd argue you're severely irony-challenged. That's the point—it's subversion in the pit and using sarcasm and humor as much as anger. The intro to "Limp Wrist vs. Dr. Laura" is classic—"we are livid… that's right, girl!" before kicking into a powerful diatribe against this homophobic/puritanical radio charlatan. Some songs from their demo, such as "I Love Hardcore Boys/I Love Boys Hardcore," "Limp Wrist" and "This Ain't No Cross On My Hand," are reprised and sound as potent as ever. The booklet does include some gay sexual imagery and also has an essay by a Dutch queer who is still trying to get up the nerve to come out and information on gay support groups around the country. Pissing off the homophobes is a beautiful thing, providing support and encouragement for gay people in the hardcore scene is also laudable and the completely ripping music here makes it even better. (1010 ½ Riverine Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92701)

LO-LITE-Sidekicks (Slovenly)
Dutch two-piece doing the stripped-down slide guitar blues sludge rock thing. You know that thing, right? This is good because it's got good loud production without any hint of fake lo-fi crapola, and the guitar player is talented-enough to keep it interesting even to a dope like me who officially burned out on most of this shit three years ago. I think they have a decided advantage in doing this in a country where brown leather and Confederate flags probably aren't yet equated with down n' dirty rocknroll. This is good stuff—check it out. (PO Box 204, Reno, NV 89504) *(Ryan)*

LOOKING FOR AN ANSWER (Distortion)
Harsh grindcore played at warp speed by this band from Spain



and pretty tight though, as mentioned many times in this space, it's not really a style I'm devoted to. Low-tuned guitar and two vocalists, one of 'em with a low register growl and the other sounding as though his balls have been immersed in scalding water. The lyrics are in Spanish, but the emanations are so indecipherable that one can't tell the difference, anyway. The songs that fall into more of a thrash region hold my attention. (Box 6294, SE 40060 Gothenburg, SWEDEN)

LOST SOUNDS-Black-Wave (Empty US)/Rat's Brains and Microchips (Empty US)

Safe to say there aren't that many bands out there that sound similar to Lost Sounds. It's partially due to my slow publishing schedule, but this band have released two full-length albums in quick succession. Initally, it took awhile for the whole Lost Sounds thing to sink in—and it happened when hearing one of these songs, "Don't Turn Around" (from "Black-Wave") on the radio. What a haunting gem—a sublime hook with a dramatic climax. Lost Sounds are a clattering hodgepodge of punk, psych, prog, garage and new wave. "Black-Wave" is a good description, because it's from a darker region. The electronics have a crudity of sound. No sweet little blips like you hear with all those Weezer soundalikes and it's not from the pretentious spock-rock realm, either. "Plastic Skin" and "I'm Not Me" take a more aggressive turn, while "Lost and Found" is moodier and melodic, though there's an almost thrash-like segment in the chorus. The opening to "Die Pax" comes straight from something on Devo's "Duty Now For The Future." Quite creative. I'm not quite as enamored with "Rat's Brains," mainly because nothing has really sunk the hook into the subconscious, but the elements remain in place. Loud and clattering, but also with icy tunefulness. (PO Box 12034, Seattle, WA 98102)

LUDICRA-Hollow Psalms (Life Is Abuse)

The big eye-catcher about Ludicra is the fact that bassist Ross Sewage (say it out loud, get it?) also plays in gore-grind gods Impaled. Hollow Psalms is no blood 'n' guts orgy though. Instead, the band play a bastard hybrid of raw black metal and epic doom metal. It works too, kicking ass over most of today's frilly and fluffy black metal by keeping things real sounding: no keyboards, no goofy drum triggers, just dark, grim and speedy. But as a nice counterpoint to the speed, the band throws in a good amount of slower, morose doom metal. This works well, as it avoids the intense boredom most full-time doom bands inflict on their listeners after 50 minutes of slug-paced depression. It's a good combo, but it's pretty extreme mood music, and I don't really know what that mood is. Try late at night for best results. (PO Box 20524, Oakland, CA 94620) *(Greg)*

MAD PARADE-Bombs and the Bible (Dr. Strange)

As vital-sounding as ever—Mad Parade create charging, anthemic punk with melody and power. Billy Ledges remains a confident-sounding vocalist and the twin guitars burn and ring. A perfect merger of '77 UK spirit with early 80s SoCal aggressiveness. And they rock-up the Boomtown Rats' "I Don't Like Mondays" very well. Glad to still have 'em around. (PO Box 1058, Alta Loma, CA 91701)

MANDA AND THE MARBLES-More Seduction (Go-Kart)

Wow, this is great—very strong female vocals on top of terrific punky (WORST. ADJECTIVE. EVER.) pop with huge production. Seriously, if there was any justice in the world this band would be where the Donnas are... but since there isn't any justice, just be glad that at least you found out about this album. (PO Box 20, Prince St. Station, NY, NY 10012) *(Ryan)*

MANIC HISPANIC-Mijo Goes To Jr. College (BYO)

As far as novelty acts go, these guys are pretty entertaining—adding a *cholo* twist to punk and hardcore sounds, kind of a Latino Me First and the Gimme Gimmes... maybe not as many inspiring moments as the first two installments but "Code Brown" (aka "Code Blue" by TSOL) is quite memorable. So is "Big Heinas" (GBH's "Big Women"), "The INS Took My Novia Away" (Ramones' "KKK Took My Baby Away") and "I Want To Be A Cholo," a re-working of the Vandals' "Urban Struggle." Other bands that get lampooned include the Dickies, Misfits, Damned and Sham 69. Escuche esto, amigos. (PO Box 67609, LA, CA 90067)

MARTINETS-New Stories For Men (Scooch Pooch)

The Martinets return with some genuinely heartfelt stuff. Pretty at times and possessing a finely-tuned sense of poppy chord changes. Considering the amount of comparisons to the Replacements and the fact that there is a Billy Childish cover on this CD, one would hope the Martinets eventually adopt the wreckless abandon of the aforementioned artists, let go, and rock the hell out. The chops truly are there and the recording is almost raw. All this needs is a little more beer or a real bad day at work and we would have that which the Real Kids possess: catchy rock tunes that angry, high strung people can unwind to. Well written and moody, but shy of hitting as hard as it should. Unless of course we are dealing with people who want to open for the Goo Goo Dolls next year, but I hope that's not the case. (5850 W. 3rd St., #209, LA, CA 90036) *(David)*

MEANS-Community Horse (Reptilian)

Nightmare rock, in that the vocals have a just-woke-up-from-a-nightmare quality. Music that sneaks and snakes along and then unleashes the fury, such as on "Summer Breeze," which is about as far as you can get from the Seals and Crofts song of the same name. The closing "Mai Mai" is equally aggressive. Post-punk, garage and noise blended into a fiery permutation. (403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231)

MEET THE VIRUS (Know)

West coast band with Kirsten Patches (ex-Naked Aggression) on vocals and, as with her former band, the lyrics have a pointed agenda—detailing the ills of rampant capitalism and, on "Justify," warmongering. Musically, it's a hard-edged punk sound influenced by the Avengers and Legal Weapon, along with a some melodic, as well as harder-rocking touches—uneven in spots but on the right track. (PO Box 90579, Long Beach, CA 90809)

DAN MELCHIOR'S BROKE REVUE-Bitterness, Spite, Rage and Scorn (In The Red)

More great, loud-ass garage action with a twisted, creative edge and killer production that takes them instantly to the top of the heap for this whole genre. (PO Box 50777, LA, CA 90050) *(Ryan)*

MEXICAN CHEERLEADER (Government Music/Hewhocorrupts)

Punk with melody yet not your typical pop/punk. Beefy riffs that plow the hooks into your brain with brute force instead of sweetness. Mexican Cheerleader are from Chicago and share in that city's tradition of muscular, tuneful music weaned on the Buzzcocks, Naked Raygun and Pegboy without being derivative and adding a hearty dose of rock 'n roll. A catchy, hard-driving sound. (PO Box 268162, Chicago, IL 60626-6162)

THEE MICHELLE GUN ELEPHANT-Rodeo Tandem Beat Specter (Alive)

Just exuding cool—bluesy, garagey rock 'n roll from a Japanese band. If one complaint could be made, it's that the songs tend to be on the lengthy side—the opening shuffle "Citroën No Kodoku" is nearly six minutes long and tends to get a tad repetitive. Still, as the album progresses, it gets increasingly fierce. "Turkey" nicely kicks out a garage-honed jam for all you motherfuckers (sorry), followed by the equally-potent "Break Hazuerta Oreno Shinzou" (swear I heard Yusuke Chiba singing something about a suit and tie, but it turns out he's singing in his native tongue). TMGE don't fit the mold of the typical revivalists—there's a cross-pollination of influences—one can hear some artsier touches to go with the rock 'n roll. Strong effort. (PO Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510)

MICO-Outside The Unbearable Grows (G7 Welcoming Committee)

Now here's something special: out of the ashes of pseudo-legendary Canuck punk band/BMX gang Red Fisher arises Calgary's Mico. "Outside the Unbearable Grows" is the band's debut, and what a wonderful release it is; something about the clangy, room-y production and the triple guitar attack (no, it doesn't sound like Skynyrd, or Maiden) really hits home here, with the band sculpting instantly memorable melodic punk songs that have an ear for melody but no shortage of air-guitar worthy energy. Fans of The Weakerthans will love Mico's approach to politics through their personal and poetic lyrics, and damned if the drum sound here doesn't echo Ian Blurton's production sound on the Weakerthan's last album. The wonderful pictures spread throughout the lyric sheet make for good eye candy while one digests this refreshing album chock full of emotion, hooks and inspiration. (PO Box 27006, 360 Main Street Concourse, Winnipeg, MB R3C 4T3, CANADA) *(Greg)*

MIDNIGHT CREEPS-Doomed From The Get Go (Rodent Popsicle)

Nasty-ass rock 'n roll by this Providence band that hits you right between—well, take a guess! Jenny Hurricane growls, cajoles and taunts with a nasty set of pipes and words to match, stating "I'm A Cunt" with strutting bravado. A muscular, garage-meets-punk-meets-hard rock sound and pulling zero punches. "All For One and Fuck 'em All," indeed. (PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134)

MIKE V & THE RATS (Indecision, EP)

Skating legend Mike Vallely tries his tonsils as frontman for this band and it works out quite well. Boiling hardcore punk with a strong Black Flag jones and Mike's intonation is a bit like Mr. Rollins'. Mid-to-fast paced compositions with plenty of energy and aggression, particularly for "Never Give Up" and "The Stand." Despite the burn, the message is largely positive and self-affirming. (PO Box 6052, Garden Grove, CA 92846)

MILKMAN-Is This Punk Enough For You? (Kangaroo)

Relentless hardcore punk/thrash from Holland and, to answer their question, it's definitely punk enough for me. Not much deviation in formula—a fast tempo with tight musicianship and angry-sounding vocals, one right after the other with no delays. They rock out a bit on the Ramones' tribute, "The Count 'Tofore." Really, this doesn't require further analysis—loud and fast. (Middenweg 13, 1098 AA Amsterdam, NETHERLANDS)

MILLIGRAM-This Is Class War (Traktor7)

This is fucking loud! Milligram merge heavy-duty, fuzzed-out thunder metal, hardcore and post-punk noise into a venomous concoction. Towards the end, the songs go into a slower, heavier groove but, along the way, there are obliterative moments coming on like a tandem of Jesus Lizard and Helmet ("+2 Charisma," and it's a cover by early 90s Beantown band LaGritona) or the Stooges meet Kyuss ("I Know, I'm Sorry"). Jonah Jenkins has both the grit and range to match up with the cacophony created by the guitar, bass and drums and the songs are mainly brief and overpowering. (1100 Cambridge St., Cambridge, MA 02139)

MILLOY-Belt-Up (Crackle, EP)

This band's rather tiny (thank God) press sheet compares them to Jawbreaker, Samiam and Leatherface. Never in my many years of reading press sheets (which are, as a rule, no matter how cool the label, shitty and pandering) have I read such an accurate assessment—imagine in your head "melodic punk" and you got it. So accurate that the first time I listened, I wrote the band off. That was, in afterthought, a mistake—this stuff is excellent, catchy, driving, and like lots of good British melodic punk, sincerely unfashionable (all hooded sweatshirts here). Yes, I'm Gangsta MC Quint's go-to guy on the melodic punk stuff, but it doesn't matter here. There's actually some weaker stuff by the above mentioned bands that this rules over. This is really worthwhile. Fuck yeah Milloy. (PO Box 7, Otley, LS21 1YB, ENGLAND) *(Tigger)*

MILWAUKEES-This Is A Stickup (Does Everyone Stare?)

New Jersey's Milwaukees might have just made the first great rock record of this decade. There's no bullshit or strings attached to This Is a Stickup; only solid, emotional rock that could be filed with ease alongside the classic albums of the post-punk era. Play this and The Replacement's "Let It Be" or Nirvana's "Nevermind" back to back and The Milwaukees will fit in seamlessly. No shit. There's 11 songs of pure rock here with excellent lyrics and an understated beauty that 99 percent of band never attain. The best thing about "This Is a Stickup" is they don't try to do too much; instead they let nature take its course and the music pours out, untainted by thinking about things too much. It's a jam room where nobody says, "Hey, let's sound like so-and-so," or, "How about we stick a [insert genre name] riff in here?" They just let it flow and it works wonders. (PO Box 1006, Edison, NJ, 08818) *(Jason)*

MIND FLAYER-Take Your Skin Off (Bulb)

Imagine if aliens arrived with a drum kit and a synthesizer, dropped 50 hits of microdot and decided to make music. That might approximate this disc. Tribal pounding, distorto-vocals, complete with muddy background burps and gurgles. Almost as if Eno and Devo circa '78 got together. This is a fabulously twisted CD, with lots of instrumentals that just go on and on and on until insanity sets in. Some songs are just basically drum solos with weird distorted vocals in the background meandering about. These guys are smart enough to dispose of stupid things like song structure and the like. Instead they choose to destroy the mind from within—the way it should be done. (4609 Hunt Rd., Adrian, MI 49221) *(Steve)*

MINOR DISTURBANCE-Don't Tell Me What Is Right (Run and Hide)

Enjoyably snotty punk rock by this band—includes covers by the Dead Boys, Misfits and Angry Samoans to show off the roots (if somewhat predictably) but they've got a rough-hewn sound infused with speed and devil-may-care attitude, as well as some truly inspirational lyrics. Here's one example: "I drink, I drink, I drink and drink and drink/I fall down, I fall down, I get back up, I fall down, I fall down." That's some real poetry there. And some of 'em have mustaches—we need more mustaches in punk. OK, maybe not, but Minor Disturbance's loud, proud sound makes it easy to overlook any perceived fashion faux-pas. (PO Box 35094, Philadelphia, PA 19128)

THE MISS-No Radio (Morphius)

Post-punk is a highly misused term, even by this writer but when I hear the phrase, I think of such bands as Gang of Four or Wire, who played busy rhythms off angular guitar lines—a smart, economical sound. The Miss come from that muse and bring in more contemporary influences, as well. The songs are built on a sturdy rhythmic base and there's space and slash in the guitar playing, along with nervous-sounding vocals. Abrasive but seductively gripping, as well and with a sharply-energetic focus. "Question & Answer Session" is a knockout, while "Reflex" has a brooding Mission Of Burma-meets-Wire vibe, adding some single note piano into the mix, followed by the super-catchy "Thin Black Line." This was always the kind of so-called indy-rock I could go for—challenging but not wandering off into cloying artsiness or insufferable angst. (PO Box 13474, Baltimore, MD 21203)

MODERN LIFE IS WAR-My Love, My Way (Martyr)

A sound to bulldoze the senses. MLIW have a full-bodied, wide-scope hardcore approach, with the sweep and drama of American Nightmare and Suicide File—emotional, but not emo. Powerful riffs and a melodic undertow, along with vocals that come straight from the soul and seek to drive away the demons. Not really a speedy bunch, except for the vitriolic "Yesterday's Trash." This is heavy hardcore but with warmth and deeply-buried hooks. (PO Box 955, Harriman, NY 10926-0955)

MODERN MACHINES/FRAGMENTS-Split (New Disorder)

Not a straight split—instead, you hear two Machines songs and then two by the Fragments, with six in all by each unit. Melodic pop/punk with heart by these two Wisconsin bands. The Machines come in on the sweeter side of the pop equation, while the Fragments favor the burn/buzz a little more, but that's not a strict delineation—I do keep going back to the manic thrill of the Fragments' "Burn This Place Down." Anyone into a brash, rough-around-the-edges pop sound will like both of these bands. (115 Bartlett St., SF, CA 94110)

MOLOTOV COCKTAIL-Once Upon A Time In America (Eastern Threat)

Finally, a second album for this NYC punk band. Molotov Cocktail have been around quite a few years but only have a handful of releases and this one was worth the wait. The rougher production brings out the rawness and the songs are fast and catchy. As their name would indicate, Molotov Cocktail don't pull their punches, either musically or lyrically—and if it's the "same old story" (to quote one of their song titles), where one is frustrated with a dishonest government, a conformist society or even the lameness of indy rock, it still needs to be said. Middle-finger-raised, hard-hitting pure punk. (150 E. 2nd St., #1A, NY, NY 10009)

MONDO TOPLESS-Go Fast! (Get Hip)

Sounds like an over-the-top version of The Forty-Fives or even The Lyres. Bopping, organ-driven 60's-influenced rocknroll cranked to 10 in both volume and fun—good stuff! (PO Box 666, Canonsburg, PA 15317) *(Ryan)*

MONSTERS-I See Dead People (Voodoo Rhythm)

Raw fucking garage punk, along with a few excursions into surf and instrumental territory. The Monsters have the fuzz guitar attack that grabs your attention, along with some primal, throat-ripping vocals and two drummers. No newcomers, either. This is the sixth album for this Swiss band and they don't sound as though they're mellowing with age. Not one bit. The title track is 100% pure, in-your-face raunch—the way it should be. (Jurastrasse 15, 3013 Bern, SWITZERLAND)

MOONEY SUZUKI-Electric Sweat (Columbia)

Their second album got scooped up by a major label, they're in a couple of commercials (I forget the product)—yep, Mooney Suzuki are moving up in the rock 'n roll pecking order but "Electric Sweat" is nowhere nearly as good as their debut album, "People Get Ready." A tandem of garage, pop and R&B with a retro ambiance, right down to the old-school Columbia Records label on the disc. There are blatant nods to the MC5, Who and a pretty bad soul ballad ("The Broken Heart"). On paper, that doesn't sound bad but it doesn't have the ferocity of their debut. Everything seems

more mannered, safer-sounding and the acoustic rhythm tracks on some songs diminish the energy, as well. A letdown.

MOORAT FINGERS-Punk (As In Prison) (Radio Blast)
Masked men playing vicious garage punk—a '77 spirit and rock 'n roll heart. Strong imagery on the cover, semi-nudity on the tray and the music matches the provocative attitude. A nasty, aggressive sound but also tuneful at times and the guitarist who goes by the name Blitzkrieg isn't afraid to put in some surf licks, here and there, with the scorch. Love the cheesy siren guitar effects on "A-Boy" and the likes of "I Don't Know," "Mange Mon Merde" (aka "Eat My Shit") and "Bug Detector" rock like no one's business. It takes a warped sense of genius (?) to come up with a title such as "Hump My Blade." This is the band's second album and includes bonus tracks from a previous 10" and 7" release. (Hildegardstr. 13, 44809 Bochum, GERMANY)

MORAL CRUX-Pop Culture Assassins (Panic Button)
The old iron fist in velvet glove approach—Moral Crux's music is poppy/melodic punk with sweet-sounding vocals and harmonies but one quick listen to the words coming from the voice of James Farris and it's obvious this veteran band (two decades!) still have plenty on their minds. Pointed and political, taking on the "New War Generation" and other purveyors of evil. The sax on "Television Citizen" made me think of the Members. On the first few listens, I though it sounded a bit too polished for such an angry message but the hooks eventually found their mark. (3264 Adeline St., Berkeley, CA 94703)

MOTÖRHEAD-Hammered (Sanctuary/Metal-Is)
Not really in the top tier of Motörhead releases but, of course, I'd still rather hear Lemmy and boys than 99% of what they call heavy music these days. One does hear a little bit of nu-metal in "Kill The World" and "No Remorse," but it's done Motörhead-style and there's not as much of the speed rush as in the past, as the band stick to a mainly medium tempo. "Red Raw" and "Brave New World" pick up the pace and the latter offers some incisive lyrics about the fucked-up state of the world, even with the hackneyed title. Hey, you want fuckin' poetry? Listen to the Promise Ring. Includes the Triple H theme song, "The Game" and a live version of "Overnight Sensation" as bonuses and it's ironic that the former probably brought the band their greatest US success, since it's hardly one of Motörhead's best songs. What it comes down to is even an average Motörhead album is something worth hearing and there's still no compromise in what they do.

MOTORMAGS-Simple Made Easy (self-released)
Loud, proud rock 'n roll from Rhode Island—the country-flavored "No One No Where No How," complete with banjo, is kind of a strange interlude but, otherwise, it's straight-forward, bad-assed rifforama. Raspy vocals, loud guitars and lurid lyrics—these ain't the boys next door. Well, it could be the boys next door if your neighbors have loud, debaucherous parties 'til 4 AM. But it's tough to miss the intent with "Sucky Pig F*ck," complete with insolent little AC/DC guitar trills and a solid boogie punch. (www.motormagsrock.com)

MR. CALIFORNIA AND THE STATE POLICE-I'm Gonna Kick You In The Head (Proud To Be Idiot)
This is the solo project of one Terry Ryan and it's a complete fucking masterpiece. 52 punk rawk songs that are ALL classics. If this CD came out in '79-80 this band would've as big as the Clash or Ramones… I mean it.!! Recorded at home on an 8-track, it's an intimate journey through Mr. California's demented, fucked-up mind. I mean, with 52 songs, by the time I'd finished listening, I was drained and completely insane. Of course, I was also very very happy. I liked the weird keyboards on a few songs a lot too. I really liked the distorted bass and sceamed, pissed–off vocals. The lyrics are funny, great, and brilliant….satanic devil vocals are always a nice touch too. All in all this is one of the best CD's of the year. (PO Box 410325, SF, CA 94141) *(Steve)*

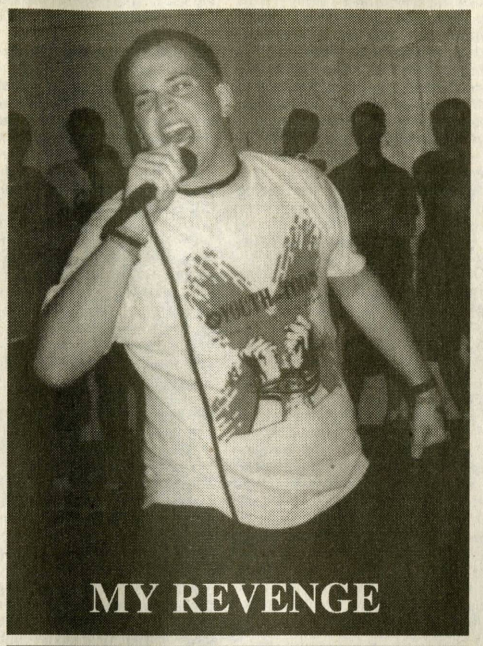
MR. CALIFORNIA & G.X. JUPITTER (Peer Pressure Zombie)
When I was handed this record, I was informed it's "complete noise." That's an accurate description—chaotic soundscapes that sound like a demonically-possessed jackhammer crew working away outside your window at 7 in the morning. The real industrial music, in other words—actually, music? Like I was told, noise! (PO Box 410325, SF, CA 94141-0325)

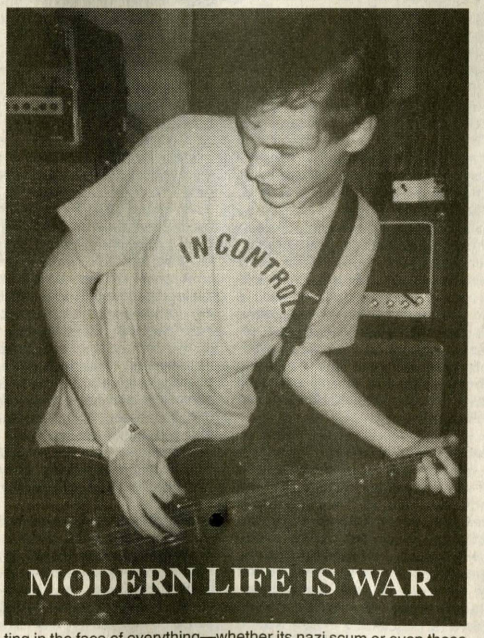
MUCH THE SAME-Quitters Never Win (A-F)
Much the same is right—much the same as many melodic hardcore bands one hears. They're from Chicago, but Much The Same sound quite a bit like No Use For A Name et al. And there's no doubt at least one of 'em love Iron Maiden, with some of the guitar trills floating in and out. Nothing wrong with Maiden, but I'd reather hear it in the crunching context, not this sped-up poppy swill. Pretty damn saccharine and slick, with personal-type lyrics. Also, I noticed that their vocalist Gunner thanks "God for making all this possible." I didn't know the supreme being was working in A&R at A-F Records… (PO Box 71266, Pittsburgh, PA 15213)

MUKEKA DI RATO-Acabar Com Voce (Sound Pollution)
Some crazy hardcore punk from Brazil… the English translation of the lyrics indicate they've got a warped, semi-ironic sense of humor and detect a good amount of absurdity in what's going on around them and what they see on TV. Occasionally veering into generic grind, but there's also some convincing thrash, old-style punk, even a bit of dub reggae and lots of whoopin' and hollerin' adding to the off-the-rails atmosphere. (PO Box 17742, Covington, KY 41017)

MUNICIPAL WASTE-Waste 'Em All (Six Weeks)
CRUCIAL UNIT/MUNICIPAL WASTE-Split (Six Weeks)
"Waste 'Em All" is Municipal Waste's artistic triumph, the first recording that's really come close to capturing their live ferocity. An affinity for metal or crossover or whatever you want to call it but it's within the realm of hardcore punk. The bastard offspring of DRI and Nuclear Assault, right down to the band's logo and cartoonish cover painting (is that bad-ass creation related to O.D. from Sacred Reich?). They dish out economical thrash ragers with blistering tightness, as well as a wise-assed sense of humor. There's a horror movie ambiance but, if you look closely, you'll find a fairly cogent anti-authoritarian message, as well. The split came out quite awhile ago and Crucial Unit come up with their best material to date. It's a pleasure to read lyrics that are intelligent, as well as humorous and self-deprecating. They cover a lot of territory, from the uselessness of 5 inch records to assaults on food buffets to kicking ass at scrabble to the more serious concerns of expensive health care and pro-life reactionaries. But the winner for best song title is "I Scream, You Scream, We All Scream For No Screamo" and it's a merciless thrash attack that will stamp out all that's pretentious. The Waste sound a tad disjointed on these tracks, but the rage factor is high, throughout. It's all in good fun and meant to kick your ass. (225 Lincoln Ave., Cotati, CA 94931)

MURDERED COP-The Grinding Poverty (Distortion, EP)
The classic Swedish hardcore sound—rumbling guitars and bass, hard-hitting drums, anguished vocals and an apocalyptic ambiance. Powerchords played at stun volume and tempo and spitting in the face of everything—whether its nazi scum or even those who preach "peace, love, equality," stating "there's a dead world waiting." Not too cheery but Murdered Cop are determined to rage away, until the final annihilation. (Box 6294, SE 40060, Gothenburg, SWEDEN)





MUSTANG-Free Style (DeadAlive)
How about some rock 'n roll overdrive? That's what you'll get with this Japanese band's latest opus. We're talking bulldozer basslines, raucous guitar screech, appropriate use of cowbell (not always easy to pull off but it works here) and crazed vocals. That seems to be the current mode for Japanese bands—rock, metal and slam-bang hardcore punk melded together into a big, ass-whomping sound. "Soul & Fighting," which closes the first side, goes on a speed-bombing power attack. One minor distraction: there are gaps between the songs and it disrupts the flow fron one to the next (mastering error?) but it doesn't hurt Mustang's pulverizing momentum that much. (PO Box 42593, Philadelphia, PA 19101)

MY REVENGE-Both Feet Over The Line (Breakaway/Element)
My Revenge sound mighty, mighty pissed-off or, to be more precise, vocalist Spencer Crispe sure does. Barking out the words with drill-instructor authority and laying out strong opinions on straight-edge, skating, fashion, passionless music and, at the core, unable to "relate to the status quo." Tough-sounding hardcore with a combination of speed and heaviness—there's an early to mid-80s NYHC influence, along with some moshy breakdowns, which aren't as appealing but, overall, the lean, mean attack gets the job done. Humorous cover art by Last In Line's Mikey Flynn, depicting all kinds of horrible things happening to kids wearing Saves The Day, Boy Sets Fire and Get Up Kids shirts—yeah, it's childish and I don't actually advocate violence against those people but, man, enough's enough already! (23144 Cleveland, Dearborn, MI 48124)

MY SO-CALLED BAND-Always Something There To Destroy Me (Suicide Watch)
I liked this band's last album but this is a major leap forward from that one. It's a modern update on the early Posh Boy sound and I FUCKING LOVE IT—think Shattered Faith, Channel Three, The Crowd etc. Yeah, NOBODY writes this kind of upbeat catchy punk anymore except, apparently, My So-Called Band! And no watered-down mainstream pop-punk/Fat/Epitaph influences to be found here—this shit is straight-up rocking, probably because at least one of the songwriters has been active in the punk scene for almost 20 years and that's why they pull older influences. Great job, Chris, but I STILL think you deserve a better band name! (PO Box 9599, Charlotte, NC 28299) *(Ryan)*

NAKATOMI PLAZA-Private Property (Immigrant Sun)
Nakatomi Plaza are from New York, but without the benefit of liner notes it would be easy to peg them as a Florida band. An essence of Hot Water Music and the always-shifting crop of screamier No Idea bands is more than evident on *Private Property*. Between songs like the melodic "Bike Rock Revolution" and spastic "Consider This a Hostile Takeover," they deliver a fairly impressive range of emotional hardcore. And while they often side with the poppier sounds, these songs have lots of chaotic moments as well. Poetic lyrics and soft-spoken vocals, interspersed with those of the screaming chipmunk variety, push Nakatomi Plaza into a more respectable category than the glut of screamier emo bands with zilch for range. (PO 150711, Brooklyn, NY 11215) *(Jason)*

NASHVILLE PUSSY-Say Something Nasty (Artemis)
Get on the rock train with the Pussy, once again. As with the previous "High As Hell," it's not quite as inspired as the punkier debut but these guys/gals know a good AC/DC riff when they hear one, adding a southern twist without turning into the fucking Allman Brothers. Lean and mean and Blaine Cartwright's raspy redneck cadence sounds flat-out badass. Needless to say, the lyrics often aim below the belt, most-obviously on "Keep on Fuckin." As always, some truly-inspired song titles—"Gonna Hitchhike Down To Cincinnati and Kick The Shit Outta Your Drunk Daddy"and "You Give Drugs A Bad Name." The sense of humor never lurks far from the surface, but the love for the real 70s rock is genuine, right down to the Rick Derringer cover ("Rock 'n Roll Hoochie Coo") and stealing Nazareth's logo. I'd like to hear their version of "Razamanaz." (130 Fifth Ave., NY, NY 10011)

NEB!-Elk (self-released)
I've often lamented the loss of aggro in indy rock and Neb! are bringing it back. Reminiscent of such heavy-hitters as Crain or Shellac, with some Sonic Youth guitar swirl, but no fucking artisness. In other words, they like to rock and rock goddamned hard, particularly on the opening track "Vag," as well as "Polygamist" and "Hang Dog." The concluding "I Beseech You" does stretch it out past seven minutes but it's a mainly economical approach. An aural smackdown. (3010 4th Ave., Seattle, WA 98119)

NEON HUNK-Smarmymob (Load)
What an amazing release—brilliant casio and drums wailing like some frigging alien torture machine. Totally grooving beats and rhythms and then just wailing, piercing sounds from the casio/synth. Neon Hunk is from Milwaukee and made up of 2 guys named Mothmaster and Mossmaster. They create all the sounds and it sounds like a psychotic alien invasion. "Shock and Awe" this you motherfuckers!!!! I 'd love to have Rummy and Bushy tied up and play this shit until their motherfucking heads explode. THAT'S how great this CD is! Sometimes it floats along softly, and other times it's 200 BPM and just smoking. The songs just pierce the skull; the sounds of some outerspace nightmare. (PO Box 35, Providence, RI 02901) *(Steve)*

NEW BOMB TURKS-The Night Before The Day After The Earth Stood Still (Gearhead)
A change of labels and a good Turks' album but not quite the raging return I've been hoping for. I have a high level of expectations for this band—especially since they had two of the best goddamn albums of the 90s, those being "Destroy Oh-Boy" and "Information Highway Revisited," both of which were the perfect distillation of four decades of bad-boy rock 'n roll, punk and garage mixed into an off-the-rails combination. These days, it's not as crazed-sounding, although Eric Davidson's vocals maintain the wiseacre spirit. It's more of a pure rock 'n roll approach—the Stones impulse remains close to the surface, particularly for "Constance Keane." "Hassle Street" and "Grifted" do manage to raise holy-hell, back to back, and the sax on the latter is unhinged-sounding. To put things in perspective, the Turks remain one of the best bands at what they do and seeing them live is always a liberating experience. This one just doesn't always push the envelope quite far enough. I'm still recommending it, though. (PO Box 421219, SF, CA 94142)

NEW CHRISTS-We Got This! (Smog Veil)
Fronted by Radio Birdman vocalist Rob Younger, the Christs

play journeyman, Detroit-inspired rock 'n roll. Problem is they don't always sound all that energized. An even keel, a mainly medium-tempo with tasty guitar and clockwork arranging, along with Younger's world-weary vocals. The opening, title track gets things started with some buzzing riffage but the New Christs don't push it much further than that. Also, at over an hour and 15 songs, it's something of an endurance test. (316 California Ave., #207, Reno, NV 89509)

NEXT BEST THING-Those That Time Takes (Amendment)

Wasn't it Refused who said "can I scream?" Next Best Thing take that statement literally—or at least their vocalist Ryan, does, although he allows some croons to sneak in between his angst-filled howls. Heavy chug hardcore meets screamo, with hammering riffs and more melodic passages and, while impassioned, it still doesn't create any sort of cathartic connection with this listener. But I hope it's good therapy for them to work out the inner demons exposed in the lyrics. (580 Nansemond Cres., Portsmouth, VA 23707)

NIFTERS-Riding Shotgun (Scooch Pooch)

Another Scandanavian band respectin' the rock—in its wah-wah pumping, guitar cranked glory. Tried and true riffs, a bad-ass mentality (though not coming across as malodorous louts), just plying the volume. Pretty basic and predictable but the songs are fairly catchy and infused with a shot of punk adrenalin. Nothing wrong with that. "Fucked Up" comes on like a locomotive on fire. (5850 W. 3rd St., Suite 209, LA, CA 90036)

NINETEEN-Tearing Me Apart (Dark Front)

Slam-bang hardcore punk and this CD actually has three albums worth of material, with little overlap—17 new songs and 25 more from two sessions in early 2000 and 2001—those feature the band in a bit more of an embryonic state and aren't always too tight. The newer songs show Nineteen evolving into a ripping little band. Describe it? Loud, fast and agitated, but also tuneful, with blowtorch guitar, scampering drums and nimble bass-lines. Some of it sounds like older Avail on a speed jag. Ranty, raspy vocals and lyrics that express a decided alienation from middle america and all its flaws but admitting, at the same time, that while they scream "I don't need society," the truth is "I need you and you need me/we're the population, the next generation." There's definitely a positive spirit along with the anger. (PO Box 291, St. Charles, MO 63302)

NO CHOICE-Dry River Fishing (Newest Industry)

Often, when bands mount a "comeback," the results are often less-than-inspiring. No Choice, a Welsh band who were around in the early 80s (and had releases on Riot City and Rot Records) might sound better now than they did then. Impassioned, yet melodic political punk and Gagz has an agreeable voice to express these sentiments. There's a drive and heart on such songs as "Dry River Fishing," "The Prize" and the opener, "If Logic's First (We're Coming Second)," starting with a rather ironic George Dubya quote about how "nobody likes war in America" and how "we're a peaceful nation," and then the stinging musical and lyrical treatise kicks in. A certain similarity to Leatherface, although No Choice have been around longer, of course. Incidentally, Grand Theft Audio have released a CD of No Choice's older material, but you'll have to go to the reissue section to get the details. (Unit 100, 61 Wellfield Rd., Cardiff,
CF 24 3DG, UK)

NOFX-The War On Errorism (Fat)

Somewhere along the way, NOFX decided to be more up-front with the political/social commentary (although this isn't the first time they've spoken their minds on topical concerns). As explained in the liner notes, it was brought on with disgust over the 2000 presidential election, which they describe as "pretty much the biggest scandal in US history" and I can't say I disagree. Such songs as "Franco Un-American," "Idiots Are Taking Over" and "American Errorist" let out those ideas in no uncertain terms, while the guys dish out their west coast hardcore, pop and ska tandem, albeit a bit more energetically than of late. I might point out that lamenting punk becoming safe and the barricades separating band from audience seems a bit hollow considering the fact that they only seem to do the Warped Tour in recent years but, hey, that's just me. I think there's still a punk rock heart there and the wistful ode to the old school on "We Got Two Jealous Agains" and "13 Stitches" indicate a certain amount of longing. The CD-ROM portion is worth checking out, including two video clips (one live) and a trailer for a documentary about the stolen election, "Unprecedented," that certainly re-kindled my anger about the current state of affairs. (PO Box 193690, SF, CA 94119-3690)

NO GOOD HEROES-Radio Rebelde (Insurgence)

Pretty decent punk in an older Swingin' Utters/SLF vein—and, instead of the Celtic influence that the former have embraced, the Heroes opt for a reggae lilt some of the songs here, most-successfully for "Dub Terrain." Flying the working class flag and from the progressive side of the tracks. This Cincinnati band have called it quits since this album was released. (2 Bloor St., W, Suite 100-184, Toronto, ON M4W 3E2, CANADA)

NORTH OF AMERICA-The Sepultura (Version City/Level Plane)

When listening to North of America, it's obvious there's two overwhelming qualities to their hometown of Halifax, Nova Scotia. It's cold and it's boring. So, the four men who composed The Sepultura probably spent a lot time locked in their basement, working on inventive, exciting, skillful songs with more ideas in one piece than many bands can muster in their whole career. That's not to say this is confusion-core, most of these songs are relatively simplistic, but have the capacity to build upon their basic ideas until the breaking point. The Sepultura is more of a cohesive piece of music than a bunch of non-related parts, and, with six songs in under 30 minutes, this is about as enthralling as angular post-punk gets these days. Thankfully, they accomplish this without a hint of attitude or pretentiousness, and get bonus points for naming their album after Brazil's best metal band, or so I'll keep telling myself. I'll also tell myself North of America wear their natural hair colors and maybe even bow down to their alter upon that premise. (PO Box 280, NY, NY 10276) *(Jason)*

NORTH SIDE KINGS-A Family Affair (Thorp)

A decent array of formidable tempo shifts and melodic proclivities add emphasis to a brutal, distinctly late '80s NYHC-singed approach on the sophomore effort from the North Side Kings. As before, the band thankfully opts for a stripped down, visceral albeit often harmonic approach to their hardcore, presenting far more of a fast paced pummeling than a sludgy metal-core thwomp (though they do succumb to those latter tendencies occasionally). Also as before, a slight Sheer Terror-esque sensibility surfaces at varied intervals here, adding a vicious vitality to the bare bones drive. While simplistic lyrical salvos of anger, revenge and crew solidarity herein prove a bit flimsy at times, an undercurrent of humor, and an unwavering straight ahead anthemic sensibility insures an endeavor that is largely listenable and mostly fun nonetheless. (PO Box 6786, Toledo, OH 43612) *(Mike Ramek)*

NO WARNING-III Blood (Bridge Nine)

A bruiser of a record. On what is undoubtedly one of Bridge Nine's finest releases to date, Canadian braves No Warning offer a twelve song tumult of NYHC-oriented groove-laden brutality, recalling seminal Breakdown, Outburst, and "Set It Off"-era Madball material with considerable skill. Oozing from every number is an impassioned rage that catapults this record along, as howls of disgust courtesy of vocalist Ben Cook are delivered with unnerving gravel throated precision. Incensed tempo-shifting mayhem is highlighted by the dual axe slinging of guitarists Jordan Posner and Matt Delong, while a layered production scheme, captured with stripped down clarity by Dean Baltulonis at Atomic Studios in Brooklyn, effectively resurrects that guttural street-wise vibe. Unique to this endeavor is a string of formidable anthems that are distinct and diverse, offering an unusual variance to the overall structure of the aptly titled *III Blood*. This is a strong achievement from this up and coming outfit, well worth your while. (PO Box 990052, Boston, MA 02199) *(Mike Ramek)*

THE NOW (Robotic Empire, EP)

This foray into piercing, angular bedlam recalls a host of wiry early '90s Lovvit records-era hardcore bands. Start-and-stop clamor, and a driving, rhythmic percussion scheme engenders the network of massive changeups and excellent tempo-shifts herein. Punctuated by a screeched, gravel charred vocal delivery and enshrouded in a chaotic riff haze that incorporates equal parts hessian murk and harmonic resonance, this effort succeeds in elaborating upon that distinctive stripped down format, offering a noteworthy degree of imagination and creativity so often lacking in like-minded efforts. Caustic mayhem. (12001 Aintree Ln. Reston, VA 20191) *(Mike Ramek)*

NUMBSKULL-The Great Brain Bake-Off (Smog Veil)

Holy SHIT!!! This sounds like old Couch Flambeau but more outta control and fucked-up with occasional freaky Hawkwind sound effects going on—like someone just brought this album back from 1984 in a time machine. Looks like they're from Cleveland and continue that city's fine tradition of wacked-out idiot savants conjuring up amazing noise in their basements. This is classic punk obnoxiousness and insanity outside of any current scene or style and I LOVE IT!!! (316 California Ave., #207, Reno, NV 89509) *(Ryan)*

DAS OATH (Coalition)

The same record as their tour EP… well, with a few, uh, minor changes. No Madball cover and some rather provocative artwork. In fact, the artwork got 'em in trouble with Ebullition, who wouldn't carry it without an explanation and the Oath decided against that plan of action. The artwork in question? Transgender porn, basically, including some rather blatant oral expressions, if you know what I mean. Such a tempest in a teapot, although I imagine some bluenose somewhere might have been offended by it. In any case, it's hard to tell where one song ends and another begins. A wailing cacophony of speed and ferocity punctuated by Mark McCoy's yowling vocals and plenty of feedback. (Newtonstraat 212, 2562 KW Den Haag, NETHERLANDS)

OFF MINOR-The Heat Death Of The Universe (Clean Plate)

Another example of something that sounds really, really good in theory, but put into practice just sounds like a big ol' headache. But I can't really say much bad about Off Minor, this talented triptych of fellas proving they can play the hell out of their instruments on the thankfully short album/EP at hand. They manage to combine raging, raw lo-fi power violence/hardcore/grind with an experimental, almost jazzy, free-form vibe that really blows the mind, when it's not aggravating the hell out of it. It's just too many changes, too much to process, it's all too much noise (this, coming from a Nuclear Death fan). Kudos go out to the band and to Clean Plate for supporting them, but can anyone actually sit back and listen to this? Genius is never appreciated in its time, I suppose. (PO Box 9461, N. Amherst, MA 01059) *(Greg)*

ON THE MIGHT OF PRINCES-Where You Are and Where You Want To Be (Traffic Violation)

Prepositional capitalization annoyances aside, this disc from OtMoP (sigh...) is a decent effort. The band plays a classic kind of screamy and rocking emocore, but adds a heaping dose of progression to the party, in the form of lengthy songs with tons of different parts in them. The treble-heavy production and overabundance of parts that don't have much in the way of hooks just leads to the disc becoming a garble of high-pitched screams though; 48 minutes of music that is honest and unique but just doesn't reel the listener in. Their next album could be a winner with a thicker production and a bit more focus. (PO Box 772, East Setauket, NY 11733) *(Greg)*

ON THE RISE-Burning Inside (I Scream)

The debut from this up and coming NYHC outfit offers a refreshing lack of the metal-core posturing, and overt tough guy bravado that has so flagrantly marred a sizeable contingent of the modern NYC scene. An amalgam of adept, layered melodic riff schemes adds saccharine appeal to a powerful, fluctuating scheme of Breakdown-esque grooves, and a solid smattering of youth crew-era structural flair. Seamless builds, breaks, and shout-alongs are punctuated by often gritty, layered riff slinging, and a succinct structural cohesion effectively sets this band apart from the legions of sound-alike outfits. Mercifully straying from even the slightest vestige of the 'emo/indie' bug that has plagued an alarming portion of the hardcore scene as of late, the band unwaveringly sticks to its guns, offering their surprisingly intricate harmonic inclinations as an extension, and not a focal point, of their rhythmic, fast paced, and often brutal structure. Further elaboration on the lyrical and musical foundation developed here should herald a promising future for this outfit. (Broekstraat 10, 1730 Kobblegem, BELGIUM) *(Mike Ramek)*

ONE MAN ARMY-Rumors and Headlines (BYO)

Ehh… with each album, One Man Army's music gets more streamlined and, for want of a better term, sentimental-sounding. Punk with a traditionalist bent—their Clash records are well-worn, no doubt, although that's just part of the sound. Emphasizing the hooks and harmonies but not overpowering enough. Something I can listen to but it doesn't smack me in the gut, either. Well-played, anyway. (PO Box 67609, LA, CA 90067)

OPUS DEAD-Perros De Presa (Opus Dead)

Spanish band that plays fast thrash, with crossover speed metal flourishes. Musically, it's pretty kick-ass although the flat vocal delivery doesn't match the music's fury. I want to hear anger and rage, especially with the strong message of the lyrics. But, as a whole, Opus Dead have a ripping sound. (distr. by Where's Your Anger, PO Box 471, Allston, MA 02134)

ORDER-Taep'o-Dong (HG Fact)

Japanese band playing a decidedly British-influenced style of punk. Leather, studded and bristly-sounding ala Exploited, Oxymoron, etc. Pretty straight-forward approach but I'll always have a soft spot for this sort of thing. (105 Nakano Shinbashi-M, Yayoi-cho 2-7-15, Nakano, Tokyo, JAPAN 164-0013)

ORGANIC-The Life and Times of Sal Sagev (Microcosm)

It is not punk to misspell the word "we're" as "were." Losing that hyphen doesn't make a lick of fucking sense. So when you tell us in your liner notes that "were not dead yet" I get confused as all shit. That said, this is fucking good scrubby pop-punk with old Jeff Ott vocals (except more on key) and some great, catchy little pop songs. The lyrics are sharp, and spelling errors aside, the insert is zine-style cut and paste but cool looking, rather than played-out. It reminds me of a few bands I've had shitloads of fun playing in myself. Definitely a keeper—there's something sort of humble but sharp about this band that grabs me. Maybe it's being from Las Vegas. Thumbs up. (PO Box 14332, Portland, OR 97293) *(Tigger)*

OUR WAR-You're Not Now (Deranged)

Say this much for Our War—you know EXACTLY where they stand when it comes to straight-edge and how they feel about those who have 'sold it out,' such as former edge icon Dan O'Mahony, who comes in for a solid drubbing on "Dan O." That's right—straight-edge in your fucking face and, if it's a bit over-the-top, this is a completely smokin' hardcore album (pun sort of unintended). And it's not only edge-breakers that get under their skin—they don't have a lot of patience with scene status-seekers, christian hardcore or tough-guy assholes. Fast, hammering compositions with stirring mosh parts and Steve Wiltse's agitated howl. Angry and passionate. (PO Box 543, Stn. P, Toronto, ON M5S-2T1, CANADA)

OUT COLD/VOORHEES-Split (Thorp)

Previously-released in the UK on Blackfish Records and completely ripping, of course. This is the raw, fast hardcore you'd expect from each band and it's a more-than-compatible pairing as both Out Cold and Voorhees stick to what they know best—blazing guitars and rip-throat vocals barking out the anguished sentiments. If you haven't heard these bands by now, where the fuck have you been? (PO Box 6786, Toledo, OH 43612)

PAINTBOX-Cry Of The Sheeps (HG Fact, EP)

Three songs and the title track is a rather odd ditty—starting with a poppy riff that's reminiscent of the Guess Who's "Laughing" (!), only in a much rougher framework and Mune's gutteral 'n crazed vocals ain't exactly soothing. A collision of pop, metal and hardcore and, while it's a jumble, I ended up liking it after a few listenings. It's definitely different. No reservations about the two remaining ragers, with "Big Ant" maintaining the melodic emphasis a bit and the final, Japanese-titled song, a furious loud/fast explosion. (Nakano Shinbashi-M 105, Yayoi-cho 2-7-15, Nakano, Tokyo, JAPAN 164-0013)

PANIC (Bridge Nine, EP)

Storming out of the gates and not letting up until the end… although there's a lull before the cover of Unbroken's "Fall On Proverb." Panic's songs convey anger and passion—riffs that combine powerchords, melody and noise, varying between bristling speed and mid-tempo breakdowns, while Gibby spits out the words in a nettled cadence. And, for all the rage, there's a communal message expressed for "Our Choice Is Made," which acts as a counterbalance for some of the other lyrics here. Power-packed hardcore. (PO Box 990052, Boston, MA 02199)

PANIC [UK]-When Monsters Move (Crackle)

Pop/punk with some Ramones or Weaselish touches but they also introduce keyboards on some songs. Not breaking a lot of new ground, but the hooks are tough to deny, particularly for "Stupid Music Played By Idiots." (PO Box 7, Otley LS21 1YB, ENGLAND)

PANTHERS-Let's Get Serious (Dim Mak, EP)

Fired-up rock 'n roll with nervy impulses—the vocals don't exude cock rock bravado but a jittery cadence. I imagine there's an affinity with the MC5's White Panthers in the revolutionary terminology and vibe that they present. Actually, it's that Detroit sound strained through moody post-punk and, even if there's a slight air of contrivance here, Panthers have a fairly original and edgy sound. (PO Box 348, Hollywood, CA 90078)

PARKINSONS-A Long Way To Nowhere (Elevator)

Former members of Portugeuse band 77 and the Tedio Boys, relocated to London and it's a wild, raving excursion through the dark side of the garage. Guitar that has twang and sting, atti-

tude-soaked vocals and accompanied by a solid backbeat. "Scientists" provides an extended rave-up, while things are stated more succinctly and energetically for "Too Many Shut Ups," "Hate Machien" and "Angel In The Dark." 8 studio songs, one live, and quite cool. (PO Box 628, Bronxville, NY 10708)

PATARENI (Epistrophy)

Man, this is some painful stuff. Maybe it's these boring seven and eight minute songs Patareni throw in with their shorter, and better, grindcore blasters that make this a tough listen. Hmm, maybe it is, after all, long songs that go nowhere and offer the listener nothing never did work that well, did they? I just can't get a grasp on this stuff, all I can figure out is that it's pretty lo-fi, underground grind/hardcore for the most part. There's some kinda weird humor going on here as well. I dunno, too long, unfocused, boring and alienating to care too much about either way. (PO Box 312, 30003 Hannover, GERMANY) *(Greg)*

THE PATTERN-Real Feelness (Lookout)

Chris Appelgren (Lookout honcho, former Pee-Chee) is the squawker in this band and, if the Pee-Chees championed a rough, garage-honed sound, the Pattern keep those elements in a more polished-sounding package. They opened for the Hives on a recent tour and I could see this album appealing to a wider audience, but I won't hold it against them. Taut, catchy rock 'n roll with hip-shakin' soul and strong hooks—those qualities are readily-evident for "Fragile Awareness," "Happy Sarong" and "Let's Get Important." (I'm less-enamored for the acoustic closer, "Rangefinder," which flat out doesn't work.) And Chris' high-timbred, nasally whine is an antidote to the RAWKMAN vocal style. It has a certain attitude and panache. As do the band. (3264 Adeline St., Berkeley, CA 94703)

PELICAN (HydraHead, EP)

Very cool release here, the instrumental outfit Pelican giving us four lengthy songs of droning and atmospheric hard rock that would appeal to fans of, let's say, Godflesh and Radiohead alike. Well, that's pushing it a bit, as this is pretty abrasive stuff, but the whole gamut of musical expression is honestly explored here, from groovy melodies to crashing mosh-pit friendly post-hardcore. The band toys with repetitions of sound, but still manages to create songs that are linear and that build to some sort of climax which is always just out of reach, frustratingly and wonderfully. I mean, what in the fucking hell is Pelican? They're totally in a world of their own (one which is beautifully devoid of lead singers), playing music that knows no boundaries (I mean that), and although it can get a bit boring in its repetitious nature, when one is in the right mood this shit is for real. (PO Box 990248, Boston, MA 02199) *(Greg)*

DUANE PETERS AND THE HUNNS-Wayward Bantams (Disaster)

I honestly have to say that I don't get this record at all. What's the point? Duane Peters has made some kick ass music with the US Bombs and some of the early Hunns stuff was pretty good but nothing stood out for me on this CD at all. I have had it for several weeks now and about once a week I give it a listen and the only thing I feel is a funny taste in my mouth about the September 11th references—maybe it was too soon after the fact to commit your reflections on the matter to CD, because it came off as pretty poorly thought-out. Other than that, this shit doesn't move me at all. It just lacks any heart, which the whole "working-class/streetpunk/oi" pretty much depends on—I thought the whole point was to write what you know and to make music that reflects your reality. This record just seems like Duane's having an identity crisis. How Corey "Nashville Pussy" Parks is going to fit into this mix as their new bass player/eye candy, I have no fucking clue—maybe the next record will be really rock n' roll. Or something. (PO Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510) *(Tigger)*

PHALANX (Aborted Society/No Options)

Pulverizing crust-core by this Seattle band. These guys also have a strongly political message—"Disenagage" starts with the great satan GW Bush and leads into an excoriation of US military policy. The second side starts with a quiet piano/acoustic intro that sets the mood before it's shattered by volume and the killing commences. Brian's vocals go from low-register rumbles to throat-shredding emanations and the beefy two-guitar attack lays waste to all in its path. Heavy and powerful. (1221 28th St., Oakland, CA 94608)

PHOBIA-Grind Your Fucking Head In (Deep Six)

Pure, unadulterated thrash 'n grind and Phobia are damn good at it. It's not out of control speed, but tight and precise. Shane McLachlan has a voice that goes from gutteral tremors to wailing shrieks and back again. Guitar lines that flail like Slayer on warp speed, including some whammy squalls. Don't miss the bonus track—an acoustic folk song—for another side of Phobia. (PO Box 6911, Burbank, CA 91510)

PIGNATION-Devastating Life Scheme (Deep Six, EP)

Along with this Polish band's blasting grindcore/metal, there's a running series of interludes from what sounds like a parody of an instructional record, detailing all the different uses of the word "fuck," accompanied by light classical music. In some ways, that's more interesting than the music presented here—and hysterically funny, as well—but Pignation's bruising sound does hold your attention. Tight and angry-sounding and there are times when a sentiment such as "I Hate You All" definitely hits the spot. (PO Box 6911, Burbank, CA 91510-6911)

PIPEDOWN-Enemies Of Progress (A-F)

Boy oh boy are these guys mad. Wow, are they pissed—it sounds like the singer is going through puberty again. Musically, they play a blend of Pennywise-style/old SoCal punk and angrier, hardcore punk stuff, although they're obviously still really into metal. (Somewhere in here they rip a riff from "Battery" by Metallica.) Unfortunately, they made the mistake of getting Andy Ernst to record their record. Andy Ernst makes everything



sound clicky just like Korn—you know, no low end in the bass, very clean overdriven guitars. It pretty much dooms this record to a very specific, slick sound that an engineer with a little bit of imagination wouldn't have stuck them with. It's irritating as hell and the songwriting isn't nearly strong enough to get past it. Needless to say, this CD will not be in my A pile next to Anthem Eighty-Eight. Not even going to be in my B pile next to Heckle. On the positive side, these guys seem pretty sincere about their politics—as sincere as any AF band—and spend a lot of space in their liner notes listing interesting web sites and books ranging from the obvious to the obscure. Better than thanking every band they ever played with, although they also list an endorsement by a clothing company (which I instinctively think is lame). I think I might like this better if the production wasn't so boring and I was 16, but it's not bad if you love revolution and your skateboard (not always in that order). (PO Box 71266, Pittsburgh, PA 15213) *(Tigger)*

PIRANHAS-Erotic Grit Movies (In The Red)/Piranhas (On/On Switch)

The Piranhas have been making a heady noise for a few years, although they haven't released that much material until now—just a few singles and a 12" EP and I've got 'em and liked 'em all. Well, here's some of the old stuff, courtesy of a self-titled release from On/On Switch and, finally, a long-player for this spirited unit. "Erotic Grit Movies" is a statement of rough, raw rock with jagged guitar, creepy organ and unhinged, psychotic vocals. A fusion of garage and more eclectic inspiration from some 70s era art-punk progenitors, such as the Electric Eels. These aren't little catchy verse/chorus/verse ditties but an eruption of sonic spray paint that makes a bloody mess and racket, yet still comes together into a coherent vision. On the self-titled disc, you find their debut 7" and 12", both previously unleashed on the Tom Perkins label. The earlier stuff is a tad more accessible-sounding, following more of a straight-forward structure, but still sound goddanged crazy. The untitled bonus track, basically a free-form excursion, isn't any great shakes and you have to get the vinyl for "Mind Control," but these songs hit hard, especially "Redundant," "Hard To Do" and "Dangerline." Piranhas mania is here! (In The Red: PO Box 50777, LA,CA 90050/ On/On Switch: 780 Post Street, SF, CA 94109)

PISTOL GRIP-Another Round (BYO)

Enjoyable melodic punk—bright tunes with a hearty sound and taking a reggae-flavored turn for "The Rebels Are Dead." Personal observations as well as more socially-oriented: "Another Face To Hate" talks about the folly of warmongering brought on by "revenge served hot" and leaving "a bad taste," while "Empty Shells" was obviously inspired by the Columbine incident. A workman-like trad punk approach. (PO Box 67609, LA, CA 90067)

PITCH BLACK (Revelation)

Best release on Rev in quite awhile—spooky hardcore punk mixing up faster and slower speeds. Keyboards add some atmosphere, instead of dominating and it's almost like a cross-pollination of "Dance With Me" and "Beneath The Shadows"-era TSOL, though with a harder edge. While the lyrics have a gothic tinge, it's still punk rock and the guitars blast that point home, along with Kevin Cross' raspy vocals. These guys caught my ear on their split with the Enemies and continue to do so with this full-length debut. "The Wrath," "Doctor's Orders" and "Undefeated" kick up a formidable ruckus. (PO Box 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615)

PLAN A PROJECT (Go-Kart)

Spirited punk, as usual, for this veteran NJ band. Definitely taking a page from Rancid, with the acrobatic bass-runs, anthemic riffs and hearty singalongs. And while the production is solid, it's not so clean as to neuter everything. An upbeat sound but the lyrics take on serious concerns of racism, police abuse, etc… there's also a hidden bonus track, a cover of Oplvy's "Bombshell." (PO Box 20, Prince St. Station, NY, NY 10012)

PLANES MISTAKEN FOR STARS-Spearheading The Sin Movement (No Idea, EP)

Another three-songer from the Paul Bunyans of hardcore. The hirsute mountain men from Denver just can't put together a full album, or find a decent production sound. Still, they play with more emotion and disregard than almost any band emo hardcore band out there right now. As their live show will attest, Planes are the kind of band who scare you when they play live. It's not a "look at us roll around on the floor" falsity, it's actually more of a "don't fuck with us, we're from the mountains," serial killer vibe. But, damn, these production values only get dirtier and dirtier. If they keep it up, the emotional hardcore they crank out is going to depreciate into unlistenable noise. For the time being, they tread an exciting line between messy and brilliant. (PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL, 32804) *(Jason)*

PORNSTORE JANITOR-Porn Again (Scooch Pooch)

A naked nun on the cover (except for her headgear—after all, how *else* would I know it was a nun) and one could probably make the case they've got a bit of arrested development regarding feminism. So you have to take this band's attitude with a huge grain of salt, much the same way one does with the Dwarves, with whom this Portland, OR band have some musical commonalities. Punk, hardcore and rock 'n roll with a gleeful, take it or leave it, fuck-you attitude. Obnoxious, but I'd be lying if I said I didn't like this band's slam-bam style. (5850 W. 3rd. St., #209, LA, CA 90036)

PREMONITIONS OF WAR-The True Face Of Panic (Goodfellow)

Raging stuff here from Premonitions of War, who dish out seven songs of heavy, hardcore/metal that ain't metalcore, thankfully, and ain't much else either, really. It's heavy, aggressive, more metal than hardcore and could find itself at home nicely on Relapse records. The vocals are powerful, the production meaty and crushing, the art and lyrics all great. The tunes do some blasting, but spend a lot of time in sludge turf, and a nice middle ground is usually agreed upon, with which Premonitions of War have no problem decimating the listener with this smart version of modern underground metal. Hard to pigeonhole, which is good, and totally pummeling, which is good as well. (762 Upper James St., Suite 275, Hamilton, ON L9C 3A2 CANADA) *(Greg)*

PRESSURE-Anthem (Uprising, EP)

A band that consists of Sean Muttaqi (ex-Vegan Reich), Chuck Treece (McRad, Underdog, etc…) and Ray Rodriquez. Upbeat, energetic punk with melody and drive and a reggae underpinning—they do a punked-up version of Peter Tosh's "Bumbaclot." Revolution-style sentiments—that term factors quite a bit in the lyrics but these guys make it sound joyful, instead of angry. Pretty good. (PO Box 490, Laguna Beach, CA 92652)

PRESSURE POINT-To Be Continued (GMM)

Sacto bootboys' latest, blasting out the defiant, class-conscious street punk with a burst of hardcore speed, on occasion. "Links On The Chain" is a Phil Ochs union song and is given a brass-knuckle treatment, here—I wouldn't cross any picket line these guys were on. (PO Box 15234, Atlanta, GA 30333)

PRETTY GIRLS MAKE GRAVES-Good Health (Lookout)

When I reviewed Pretty Girls Make Graves' debut EP, I said they would either go more screamy hardcore with time, or go the route of so many other hair-perm freak bands, add a keyboard player and some tighter jeans. Well, they've done neither, really, on their debut full-length, "Good Health." The results are interesting, if not slightly underwhelming, with these Seattle folks showing more of a wanton eye for Olympian outfits like Bikini Kill and Sleater-Kinney, without abandoning the rock and roll that made key members' previous bands (like Killsadie and the Murder City Devils) so successful. Andrea Zollo's vocals have improved, and although her patented Area 51 scream is in hiding here, her sung vocals don't sound weak and awkward like they did on the EP. That band name is still an anvil around their necks, but Pretty Girls Make Graves get points galore for not travelling the road easier taken. (3264 Adeline St., Berkeley, CA 94703) *(Jason)*

PREVENT FALLS-A Newer More Shattered You (Equal Vision)

A bit better than the standard indie emo-rock fare sweeping through the hardcore scene, the EVR debut from Prevent Falls showcases an application of dark, moody riff schemes, and some fairly jumpy tempo shifts to the token head bopping fray. Hooks abound, and a relatively distinct, comparatively surly approach to the sing-along bounce showcased on this recording are nevertheless spoiled by the token college-whine that undauntedly surfaces… that semi-nasal, clean-cut croon that is immeasurably grating to these ears, and which is certainly prevalent enough in this day and age to be rendered cliché at this juncture. The output of Prevent Falls, and so many of this band's seemingly innumerable denim-clad contemporaries, ultimately succumb to the same lackluster pose and stylistic tendencies that seem to wholly dominate, and tarnish this mop-topped rock-out "movement." (PO Box 14, Hudson, NY 12534) *(Mike Ramek)*

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THE PROMISE-Believer (Indecision)

Hot on the heels of a promising, albeit terse, EP on Deathwish records, upstate New York's The Promise unveil a full length endeavor that far supercedes their earlier output in terms of both presentation and stylistic drive. Where first this veteran cast seemed to focus on brooding, mid-tempo metal-tinged dirges, a robust infusion of both searing melodic undertones and gritty speed on this new outing provides a much welcomed elaboration on what was already a formidable musical approach. Blazing, shout along anthems, and an excellent knack for both crushing riff carnage and intricate yet harmonic gloom ridden fret rending pervade this work. Unique to this outfit is a lyrical scheme that, from top to bottom, focuses exclusively on the band's view of both the hardcore scene and the concept of straight edge, which this unit doggedly embraces. Tried and true criticisms of scene cliquishness, flagrant materialism, hollow rhetoric touting, empty sloganeering, insincerity, and disillusionment are voiced with so forceful and compelling a delivery as to be surprisingly vital, even in light of innumerable like minded rants over the years. It is especially gratifying to see a group of people who have been involved in hardcore for a lengthy span of time offer a novel, wholly sincere musical excursion that ultimately proves more powerful and fresh than much of what a newer generation has had to offer as of late. This is very good record throughout, highly recommended. (PO Box 6052, Garden Grove, CA 92846) *(Mike Ramek)*

PSYCHOTIC REACTION-Last Train To Nowhere (PsychoBubblegum)

This CT band had an enjoyable 7" awhile back and here's the full-length. Loud, tuneful songs with one foot in '77 traditionalism and one in the speedier early 80s UK sound. The former is represented by the likes of "Empty Bottles" (very Pistols-ish) and "Blame Yourself," while they quicken the tempo for "Riot," "Fight This War" and "Rat Race." Defiant sentiments, often with a bottle in one hand, but making some coherent points, as well. "Blame Yourself" goes after music-as-boogeyman theory where certain people lay blame for society's ills on what people listen to. I liked this. Up the fuckin' punks! (PO Box 381, West Haven, CT 06516)

PUFFBALL-The Super Commando (Gearhead)/ Solid State (Eight Track) (Dead Beat, EP)

Two new Puffball releases and they're both revved up and ready. Never been any secret about what band Puffball have been plundering for years and that would be the one that features Mr. Lemmy. You can also add Zeke or older Supersuckers to the mix (and I knew that without referring to the press sheet, lest you accuse me of plagarism), as well. Hell, "Midnight Frolics" on "Solid State" even comes across like a sped-up "1970." The people who just wanna rock 'n roll, immerse themselves in dragstrip imagery and live for little else—well, that and getting trashed, most likely. It's a genre, it's a gimmick but, when one gets right down to the musical goods, Puffball got 'em. I may like a clean-living lifestyle, these days, but there's nothing wrong with the down 'n dirty, raunchy mayhem that Puffball slam out. Oh lord, do they slam it out. All this Scandi-rock talk and Puffball don't get nearly enough acclaim. (Gearhead: PO Box 421219, SF, CA 94142/Dead Beat: PO Box 283, LA, CA 90078)

PULSES (Dirtnap)

There seems to be a plethora of new wave-style bands in the northwest, right now. The Pulses are a little different, though. A wiry, angular sound relying on guitar, bass and drums and with poppy touches that bury some deep hooks. "You're Still Young" has an aching chorus riff to kill for. The leadoff song, "Make The Right Choice," makes an immediately bold statement with some Gang of Four jolts and a beat that goes through the floor. Sharp minimalism with an edgy kick. (PO Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111)

PUPILS (Dischord)

Comprised of 2 guys from Lungfish, this band reminds me at times of the great Toiling Midgets.... cool strummed guitars and nice singing. A lot of these songs are slow, trippy and very pretty. Very sparse arrangements—mostly guitars, vocals, and minimal percussion. "Lamb With Human Hands" sounds like it could've been a Sonic Youth outtake with weird buzzing sounds throughout the melody of the song. The last song "Go To Gone" reminds me of Billy Bragg on a good and pissed-off day. Moody and intense, proving that you CAN wail without being just loud. Dischord once again has come up with a winner. I hope to see more from these guys. Brilliant! (3819 Beecher St. NW, Washington, DC 20007) *(Steve)*

Q AND NOT U-Different Damage (Dischord)

DC's Q And Not U deliver a unique but comfortably familiar sound, covering a fair amount of musical ground on their second full-length effort. Starting the album off is "Soft Pyramids," with drums and guitar harmonics providing a delicate backdrop for syllabic singing. Rhythm is initially stressed over melody, though as the track progresses it takes a sudden turn into a melodic, jazzy territory. It's the kind of inventive songwriting that furrows the listener's brow even as she dances along to the song's unrelenting beat. The strength of the disc's opening is continued in the second track, "So Many Animal Calls." Gang of Four are immediately brought to mind by the loping melody and the restrained aggression of the vocals (one even detects a phony London accent!). The chiming guitars compliment the song's static rhythms and bursts of cacophony. Gof4's spirit is conjured up in many of the album's other tracks as well, including "Black Plastic Bag" and "Everybody Ruins." The former is a frenetically paced piece propelled by percussive, scratchy guitar work and tormented vocals. "Everybody Ruins" is a rollicking number that keeps your chin bobbing up and down frantically until the jarring end, the suddenness of which nearly rips your head off of your neck. "Air Conditions" is one of the album's several sullen but pretty mid-tempo pieces, with guitars playing off of the percussion, the bass providing melodic flourishes. In "This Are Flashes," the guitarist mutes his instrument's fury, allowing it to claw its way free over the course of the song, which is marked by layered vocals and anguished sing-shouting. Sometimes the songs veer out of control, falling completely apart, only to be quickly rebuilt. All in all, the 12 tracks on this album are stimulating and experimental without being pompous or indulgent. It definitely belongs in the record collection of any Dischord fan looking for something a little unconventional. (3819 Beecher St., Washington CD 20007-1802) *(Anna)*

QUARTERHORSE-I Was On Fire For You (Radio Is Down)

With a sound firmly rooted in Amphetamine Reptile noise rock, The Quarterhorse manage to pummel, beat and routinely smother the listener with a bass-heavy, distorted, mid-to-slow tempo aural assault on I Was On Fire For You. Sounds good enough, but in practice this is pretty boring stuff, unfortunately. The fault really lies in the genre at hand, which can be brilliant when mixed with a dose of catchy song writing, case in point being The Unsane. But when it just kinda drones on like this does, you gotta be a sucker for punishment or just a huge, huge, huge Melvins fan to make it to the end of this CD (which is way too long). Give 'em time, though, as The Quarterhorse certainly know what they're doing. But for now, just nudge me when it's over, please. (PMB 1436, 120 State Ave. NE, Olympia, WA 98501) *(Greg)*

QUEERS-Pleasant Screams (Lookout)

New Queers albums just aren't that exciting, anymore—"Pleasant Screams" is certainly pleasant and listenable and has some good songs but, overall, this isn't the Queers album that will be the first to come off the shelf, not when "Love Songs For The Retarded" or "Grow Up" are sitting there. Just like I'd rather play any of the first four Ramones albums than what came after. Still, I end up liking it, anyway. The first two songs bring a chuckle with their obnoxiousness—"Get A Life & Live It" and "See You Later Fuckface," which have sweet hooks and spitball lyrics. "Homo" ends up being pro-gay, insensitive title be damned. While the Donovan cover ("You Just Gotta Blow My Mind") with Gretchen Holtz (ex-Smears) singing isn't that hot, there's really not a long wrong, here. Tuneful punk from a muse weaned on the Ramones and radio pop—keeping it simple. (3264 Adeline St., Berkeley, CA 94703)

RADIO 4-Gotham! (Gern Blandsten)

Radio 4's second album adds more dub, reggae and electronic influences to their wiry (pun intended) post-punk sound which also includes a healthy amount of influence from Gang of Four and PIL. The opening bass/synth line comes directly from a song off "Metal Box," in fact. When the songs are played in a more straight-forward style, they're more interesting, such as the taut, hooky "Red Lights" or closing blast of "New Disco," which adds some thorny distortion to the mix. Somehow, with all the dance beats and experimentalism, Radio 4 manage to avoid sounding robotic (due to expressive vocals) or pretentious. No easy feat. And the guitar and bass lines cut through with authority.(PO Box 356, River Edge, NJ 07661)

RAISED FIST-Dedication (Burning Heart/Epitaph)

Raised Fist have moved from their pure hardcore roots to a much more metal-oriented approach, in recent years. It seems as though fellow Swedish metal merchants Entombed have had something of an influence on Raised Fist over their last few records. Definitely aggressive and in-your-face, particularly when played at a throat-grabbing clip, but what's with the somber, Metallica-like touches for "Another Day"? Hit and miss but, even with the low-tuned guitar sound, Raised Fist remain more palatable than much of what passes for metal these days. It's still fairly raw-sounding. (2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026)

RAMALLAH-But A Whimper (Bridge Nine, EP)

The latest endeavor from White Trash Rob of the formidable Blood For Blood is entitled "Ramallah", and serves as a loose concept album of sorts, delving into the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, and using that ongoing, ever escalating tragic feud as a metaphorical impetus for a bleak analysis of the human condition. In referencing the aforementioned conflict, the lyrical pull here, despite what the effort's title and artistic layout might suggest, doesn't overtly take sides, and instead focuses simply on the horror inherent in the escalating violence that is a byproduct of the trouble in that region and beyond. To be sure, it is an interesting enough concept, but the musical counterpart falls a bit short of the mark. The production, courtesy of Kurt Ballou of Converge fame, is quite good. Rife with haunting, noise-laden soundscapes and shrill, unearthly banshee cries (courtesy of Jacob Bannon), an ominous feel is effectively evoked. The actual guitar work and percussion, however, being an amalgam of mediocre mid-'80s thrash riffing and lethargic rhythms, come off as flat and unexceptional, proving fairly repetitive and bland. While an unusual infusion of melodic vocal work on the part of White Trash Rob alleviates some of these musical drawbacks at times, the output is marred by a combination of the aforementioned factors, and the results prove mostly unremarkable, despite a novel underlying concept. Records (PO Box 990052, Boston, MA 02199) *(Mike Ramek)*

RAMBO-Wall Of Death The System (Six Two Five)

RAMBO is actually an acronym for Revolution Anarchy Mosh Bike Overthrow and the songs on this album definitely play up the mosh part, along with some steaming hardcore punk. It's a schtick but there's a strong message as well—taking on the pigs (their hometown of Philadelphia has one of the more notorious police forces in the country), people who harrass bicyclists and so-called christian hardcore—got to love such titles as "Jesus' Middle Initial Does Not Stand For Hardcore" or "No Circle Pits In Heaven." It also helps that Rambo have a quick-strike hardcore attack (pun partially intended), as well. Taking a page from both early and late 80s hardcore but without the jock-like mentality, which is pretty damn refreshing. A few blast-beats here and there, which aren't as appealing, but I defy you not to fuck shit up in your living room during some of the mighty breakdowns on this album. (PO Box 423413, SF, CA 94142-3413)

RANDY-Cheater (G7 Welcoming Committee, EP)/Welfare Problems (Burning Heart/Epitaph)

"Cheater" features 3 new songs, 3 from previous releases and, as in the past, Randy present a subversive, anti-authoritarian message with irresistable, classic rock 'n roll. Driving, bouncy 60s garage and rock 'n roll meets the spirit of '77 and makes it sound new. "Welfare Problems" is the full-length follow-up and includes "Cheater" but not the other two new songs. A rockin' poppin' tour-de-force and blending the political with the personal. "A Man In Uniform" is about as catchy an anti-cop song as you're likely to hear, with a hand-clapping groove. "Devilish" is taut and frenzied. With the ascent of the Hives to music stardom (sort of), will this be the next Swedish band to "break." I don't really care, to tell you the truth—too busy shakin' myself silly, here. (G7: PO Box 27006, C-360 Main St., Winnipeg, MB R3C 4T3, CANADA/Epitaph: 2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026)

RATOS DE PORÃO-Onisciente Coletivo (Alternative Tentacles)

A new full-length for RDP and maybe a little more metal than they've been sounding the past few records but still boiling over with hardcore rage. That's the case with the opening track "Terror Declardo," a kind of "chickens coming home to roost" commentary about the US and terrorism. A harsh assessment but not without merit. This is a brutallizing synthesis of aggressive hardcore and wank-free speed metal, along with some odd elements, such as the female backing vocals and handclaps for "Engrenagem" or the hip-hop meets metal damage for "Onisciente Coletivo," which isn't as awful as you'd think but not exactly the breathtaking conclusion you'd hope for. Producer Alex Newport (ex-Fudge Tunnel and Nailbomb, his project with Max of Sepultura) probably has at least something to do with the heavier feel this time around. The end effect is still an aural steamrolling. (PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141-9092)

RAVONETTES-Whip It On (Columbia)

A male/female duo that will likely conjure up images of the White Stripes, although there's no drumming—Sune Rose Wagner plays guitar and Sharin Foo bass and they're accompanied by a rhythm machine. They're also from Denmark, whose musical exports have previously included King Diamond, the Electric Deads and Amdi Petersen's Arme, none of whom they sound like, either. Minimalist garage/pop that reminds me of Jesus and Mary Chain to an extent. The vocals are soothing and the sound occasionally chaotic. Love the way they harmonize "fuuuuuck you" for "Cops On Our Tail." The slow and bluesy "Bowels of the Beast," on the other hand, comes off lethargically. Momentarily interesting but not leaving a strong impression.

RAW POWER-Still Screaming (After 20 Years) (Six Weeks)

Sadly, the final album with Raw Power guitarist Guiseppe, who passed away during 2002... Raw Power have returned to a thrashy hardcore punk sound in recent years and, while mainly energetic, it's not close to their brilliant early releases. The rhythms sound a bit stiff and monorhythmic, like the timing is off. Also, their cover of Nirvana's great "Territorial Pissings" comes across half-hearted. They get it right for "Traitor," "United" and "Fucking Pub," but when put up against "Fuck Authority," there's no comparison. (225 Lincoln Ave., Cotati, CA 94931)

RC5-American Rock 'n' Roll (Twenty Stone Blatt/Devil Doll)

There may be a lot of things about this country I have problems with but good 'ol slam-bang American rock 'n' roll, as the RC5 call it, ain't one of 'em. That means a melting pot of garage, punk and classic rock. Nothing new or exceedingly original but it's always down to whether the songs hit you in the gut and these guys do the trick. RC is Robb Clarke and he's been playing this sort of music for years, formerly with Zipgun and this band continues in a similar vein. Sandpapery vocals accompanied by boisterous riffing. Ten years after the hype on Seattle, bands from that city still have something to offer. (PO Box 30727, Long Beach, CA 90853)

REACHING FORWARD-Burning The Lies (Bridge Nine)/Complete Discography (Martyr)

Modern straight-edge hardcore... impassioned vocals, lyrics that let you know exactly where they stand—not only about being substance-free, but also about racism, oppression, fashion and other societal pitfalls. Set to a surging, mainly fast-paced soundtrack with blistering guitars and a solid rhythmic foundation. It's also more tightly-executed than on their last album. On target. Speaking of that last album, "For The Cause" (which was still pretty good, by the way), it's been given a US issue, along with the band's other releases on the "discography" CD and there are also 8 bonus live tracks. Some of the earliest material had a bit more a DRI double-speed drive and they also pay homage to their Dutch forebears Mainstrike by covering that band's "Donkey Shot." (Bridge Nine: PO Box 990052, Boston, MA 02199-0052/Martyr: PO Box 955, Harriman, NY 10926-0955)

REACT/SPAZM 151-Split (13th Floor)

It took quite some time for this split to come out—since then, React have broken up and Spazm 151 released their excellent album. Still, this is one smokin' split. React combine politically-oriented lyrics (although "James 1:51" deals with self-absorbed rock stars) with a throttling hardcore sound and the five songs here are among the best they've committed to vinyl. Hammering, Swedish-inspired hardcore and it's a thick, ominous roar. Spazm kick it out no-less intensely. If you don't know the deal with these guys by now, Spazm 151 are from Texas and take a page from 80s US hardcore. Dexterous playing, such as the boogie/jazzbo intro for "Skeleton Key" and some feisty guitar work on "Capricious Minds." Pure anger harnessed into an over-the-top sound and "Smart Bomb" is sadly prescient in the current US foreign policy environment. A blazing record and a provocative cover that visualizes some of the lyrical sentiments.(PO Box 1502, New Haven, CT 06506)

REAL MCKENZIES-Oot & Aboot (Honest Don's)

Punk/pop dressed up with a tartan and dancing a jig. The Real McKenzies' music has that semi-gimmick going for it, complete with a bagpipe player, kind of a Scottish tribute-paying counterpart to the Dropkicks' Irish inspiration. Not that dissimilar, either. My opinion hasn't changed since their first album—it's pleasant-enough to listen to but if the vocals/harmonies weren't so smooth and the sound was a bit rougher around the edges, I'd find it more palatable. Maybe. And the acoustic folk singalong "Dance Around The Whisky" doesn't do much for me, either. (PO Box 192027, SF, CA 94119)

REASONSEVEN (Smog Veil)

Oh man, Smog Veil has definitely hit the quality-control wall. Here's one bad band who sound like three different bad bands with boring rock, ludicrous ska and cringe-inducing funk combined

in one easy-to-dispose-of package with a stupid band name to help keep you away in the first place. Thanks, fellas! (316 California Ave., #207, Reno, NV 89509) *(Ryan)*

RED CARD (Useless Chords)
A three-piece from NYC but two of the members are Bosnian natives. This an original-sounding effort. Nervy, edgy and haunting. A gnarl of sound that embraces punk, post-punk and moodier touches—one can even hear bits of Sonic Youth or Slint, but there's a propulsive rhythm. A jarring urgency heard on the likes of "Self Laugh" and "No Pasaran," while "Fatefully Deceitful" and "Had Enough," even with an acoustic rhythm guitar, rides a tense dynamic. A lot at work here and gripping, throughout. (206 Scholes St., #16, Brooklyn, NY 11206)

RED CHORD-Fused Together In Revolving Doors (Robotic Empire)
The opening track on this debut CD from The Red Chord is an enormous fist to the face of all who claim post-Dillinger progressive hardcore/metal is history, and the remaining eight songs all follow through impressively. Indeed, such bands as Light Is the Language and Curlupanddie are keeping the fires of this underground chaotic sound burning and The Red Chord are upping the ante a bit with this incredibly pissed-off sounding album. The music is just a barrage of bulldozed sounds, from chaotic grindcore to punishing slower hardcore, all the while avoiding stagnation or any sign of fromage. The production is huge and heavy; the lyrics are passable, even above average; the playing time is pleasantly brief, all of which adds up to a great listen. It has to be said that this in no way approaches The Dillinger Escape Plan, but that is to be expected. What this does do is completely annihilate the listener in a way not heard enough in underground hardcore and metal, putting The Red Chord up there with some of the elites of the scene; not bad at all for a debut release. (PO Box 738, Freehold, NJ 07728) *(Greg)*

RED REACTION-Welcome To The Warzone (Coalition)
CD issue of their album reviewed in *SV* #45, adding on three raw-sounding bonus tracks and the 51 seconds of "Sawing Through The Bodies" will bowl you over. Angry hardcore with a harder-rocking edge and worth checking out in any format. (Newtonstraat 212, 2562 KW Den Haag, NETHERLANDS)

RELIGIOUS WAR-Cracked System (Hardcore Holocaust/Mind Control)
Blazing hardcore from this Portland band. Overdriven riffage with a Scandinavian/metallic sound and a howling rasp braying out the words. "Forced Ideals" comes on with the intensity of Anti-Cimex. It rocks, it plunders, it bulldozes everything in its path. Apparently, this is to be the band's dying gasp. Angry and aggressive, a sound for the times. (PO Box 26742, Richmond, VA 23261)

RESONARS-Lunar Kit (Get Hip)
Terrific modern take on shaking, shimmering 1966 UK pop. This Tucson band nails the sound with just a bit of overdrive to kick it into outer space. These songs are all originals but you'd be hard-pressed to believe it upon first listen. Outstanding! (PO Box 666, Canonsburg, PA 15317) *(Ryan)*

REVENGE THERAPY (Amendment, EP)
Ravaging, intense hardcore that explodes into bursts of thrash and heavier segments, even adding some tuneful "whoahs" for "Bad Receiver." Lyrically, coming from the depths of personal conflict and given a sound airing, here. There's an acoustic folk/oi pisstake (?!) for a bonus track. (580 Nansemond Cres., Portsmouth, VA 23717)

RIFFS- Dead End Dream (TKO)/Death or Glory (TKO)/Underground Kicks (TKO)
A Riffs triple play—or another example of bands working faster than this author! The Riffs are proud to be punk, leather jackets, studs 'n all, but, on their second album, "Dead End Dream," the Riffs' sound remains rooted in classic '77 era punk and earlier—the Pistols, Dolls and Dead Boys are the source material and the Riffs channel those influences effectively. The vocals remain a slight weak point—Tony conveys the attitude but the range is a little limited. Still, the song lengths are more economical than on their debut, "Underground Kicks," and that's a step in the right direction. For "Death or Glory," the Riffs embrace a tad more of the glam roots and add piano and acoustic guitar more liberally, while keeping the classic punk trappings. Not always successful—the balladesque "H-Eye On Me" is hampered by the weak vocals and the occasional country flourish ala Social D ill-advised but they continue to plow ahead. Speaking of that first album, "Underground Kicks," TKO have reissued it and it remains a decent, if plodding effort (see complete review in *SV* #45) (3126 W. Cary St., #303, Richmond, VA 23221)

RITCHIE WHITES-Snitches Get Stitches (TKO)
A Texas band but they remind me of such midwest stalwarts as Naked Raygun or Pegboy—the "whoah-oh-oh" vocals and bright, melodic punk meets rock 'n roll sound. Lyrics that have a bit more of a poetic muse than is typical for this genre, as well. No muss, no fluff, just volume and hooks. (3126 W. Cary St., #303, Richmond, VA 23221)

RIVER CITY REBELS-No Good No Time No Pride (Victory)
I'm still not entirely-enamored with the Rebels' poppy punk w/ horns approach—not that it can't work (see Rocket From The Crypt) but they are an endearingly scrappy bunch and the song "US Crush" definitely made me take notice—a rougher approach and such ballsy lyrical snippets as *"Fuck your US pride/you were born into it"* and *"Capitalize on a US flag/Think they made a buck?/Struck it rich on the red, white and blue/Consumers oh how they buy/Money from death marketing luck."* EXACTLY!! Gotta give credit where it's deserved, even if I wish they had more of a stripped-down, ass-kicking sound. (346 N. Justine St., Suite 504, Chicago, IL 60607)

ROTTEN APPLES-Real-Tuff (Durable Plastic) (Empty US)
In a little more than 20 minutes, the Rotten Apples spurt out 10 songs, all of which nicely balance melody and noise, anger and optimism. The songs' authors filter savvy pop sensibilities though a punk sieve, and Dejha's throaty vocals lend a strong presence, never diluting the band's loud, high-energy music that is both tuneful and tough. Her voice recalls Joan Jett without being a pale imitation thereof, and, along with the other vocalists, at times brings to mind the harmonies of '60s girl groups. Lyrical themes range from road rage to the angst arising from sexual relations to the superficiality found in a consumer culture. Each track is pleasantly hook-laden, propelled by bursting guitars and potent vocalizing, punctuated by poppy backing vocals. Amid the screaming voices and the power chords, however, there are some laughably awful lyrics ("I am one of the noticeable ones/ Notice me!" from "Noticeable One" and "You shouldn't drive/ You're retarded" from "Road Rage"). Despite those failed poetic attempts, I still can't completely write this band off. Worth checking out – it's nothing earth-shatteringly profound or original, but after repeated listenings it grew on me a bit, keeping my toes tapping and my head nodding. (PO Box 12034, Seattle WA 98102) *(Anna)*

RUBBER CITY REBELS-Pierce My Brain (Smog Veil)
Original Rebels Rod Firestone and Buzz Clic are back with two new recruits to take on the twenty-first century. Grizzled punk veterans who still know how to wield a power-chord and a punchline. These guys started in Akron, Ohio in the mid-70s, where they did a split with the Bizarros, moved to LA and put out a killer single, "Young and Dumb" and a less-successful self-titled album on Capitol before splitting. Anyway, it's a pretty solid return, with catchy, fired-up riffs drawing from both snotty punk and basic, no-bullshit rock 'n roll—they cover the Music Machine and Status Quo. The title track, "I Don't Wanna Be A Punk No More and "Pinhead" provide cheap, dumb fun with buzzing guitars and sarcastic-sounding vocals. "Your Warlord Is A Pussy" was allegedly co-written by a



friend of theirs who was from Buffalo but returned to his homeland of Afghanistan, where he became a warlord and this song is a taunt at other warlords, according to the notes in the press kit. It may be true but it could also be some Dictators-like 'work,' as well. Like the 'Tators, the Rebels are back to show the young'uns how to age (dis)gracefully. (316 California Ave., #207, Reno, NV 89509)

RUINERS-How's That Grab Ya? (Disaster)
Weird. Detroit band produced by Collins/Diamond but instead of the typical Motor City greasy rnr workout, we get a throwback to something that reminds me of late 70's LA punk with a real sense-of-humor, taste for perversion and creative streak that's sorely lacking these days. It's like if The Weirdos and Devo had kids together in 1978 and abandoned them in Detroit to get raised by laid-off auto workers who sniff glue while watching porno. You get a smorgasboard of punk, new wave and rocknroll that's topped with talented vocals and judging from the pictures, a bombastic live show. Yeah... weird but GOOD weird! (PO Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510) *(Ryan)*

RUNNER-The Goods (Sick Room)
Muscle/math rock with that broad-shouldered midwest sound, drawing from the old AmRep tradition, along with a jolt of Jesus Lizard and Shellac. Hammering rhythms, snaky and slashing guitar and antisocial-sounding vocals. A whiff of familiarity about this one and it's about time the red meat-eating rockers made their presence felt again. Mmmm… beefy! (PO Box 47830, Chicago, IL 60647)

RUNNING LIKE THIEVES-Same Time Next Year (LiveWire, EP)
Tepid melodic hardcore, with that token 'emotive' edge carved into the straightforward and ultimately uninteresting structural pull here. A decent array of melodies and sing-alongs meld with fairly stalwart hardcore schematics, but little vitality seems to be found within this mediocre six song ordeal. Ultimately, the infusion of saccharine hooks and angular musicianship falls flat and fails to tantalize, as that almost clichéd, trite croon-and-shout formula does little to enliven the unremarkable atmosphere created on this record. (PO Box 007, Mendham, NJ 07945) *(Mike Ramek)*

SAHARA HOTNIGHTS-Jennie Bomb (Jetset)/C'mon Lets Pretend (Jetset)
All-woman band from Sweden balancing a bad-ass punk rock 'n roll approach with poppy, harmony-laden influences and it's more polished than gritty. There are some peppy, semi-aggressive songs, such as "Alright Alright (Here's My Fist Where's The Fight)," "Out Of The System," "No Big Deal" and "Keep Up The Speed," yet it doesn't really push things as far as I'd like. It almost seems mannered or polite, in a way, especially with the vocal harmonies. Listenable, yet not connecting full force. It's still a lot better than their debut album from '99, "C'mon Let's Pretend," which isn't nearly as rocking. Instead, it's a gooey pop sound with dabblings in moody post punk, kind of like a lighter Pixies and Bangles mixed together. Not too enticing. (67 Vestry St., NY, NY 10013)

JUSTIN SANE-Life, Love, and the Pursuit Of Justice (A-F)
Anti-Flag singer and guitarist Justin Sane finally gets down to the basics here on his first solo release; it's just Justin playing guitar and singing here, with amazing results. When he's on, he's up there with the best of the political folk/rock singers. Only occasionally do his nasal-whine vocals show up and annoy a little, but for the most part this is stripped down and sincere music that even your parents could take seriously. It's not acoustic, just a wonderfully warm sounding electric guitar that provides the sonics here, with an occasional unplugged moment sliding in. While this won't "encourage political discourse," as the bio would like us to believe, it is one of the most sincere and heartfelt displays of the personal poetics of life and the positive politics of punk that I've seen this side of Canucks The Weakerthans or the Greg MacPherson Band. This sort of thing is essential for mix tapes for your conservative friends; it's time to realize your mom won't listen to Propagandhi or Discharge, but she will listen to this, making this one hell of a effective weapon, as well as a completely satisfying release. (PO Box 71266, Pittsburgh, PA 15213) *(Greg)*

SCALENE-Grafting From Instantaneous and Fragmental Fulfillment (HG Fact)
Ya, that's great, almost as clever as The End's last album title, or the song titles from the latest ...and Oceans disc. Ah well, that's the worst thing this cool disc has got going for it. Hailing from Japan, Scalene play that unique style of (pardon me now) post-emo/hardcore/metalcore, uh, mathcore that really only seems to come from Japan. Damned if it doesn't sound good though, fueled by honesty and passion, unlike lots of their Western counterparts. I mean, there's a difference between picking up the latest Eulogy records release and checking out a band like Scalene. Contemporaries don't really exist, but we'll bring up the mighty Botch as a slight sonic reference point, but really only with those patented metalcore guitar squealies. Otherwise, Scalene is on a plane of their own, bashing out a mix of melodic and abrasive hardcore that alternates between heavy and quiet, delivered with a good raw production sound. After all that praise, I must say that while this is good, it's not up to the next level of greatness, due to songs that run on a bit, a general monotony within the diversity (understand?) and occasionally annoying vocals. Still, miles above what North America pumps out as metalcore.(Nakano Shinbashi-M 105, Yayoi-cho 2-7-15, Nakano, Tokyo, JAPAN 164-0013) *(Greg)*

SCOTT BAIO ARMY/LINE OF DESCENT-Split (Paco Garden)
Two hardcore bands with their own styles—SBA play ultra-fast thrash, with some kick-ass breakdowns, interspersing samples between the songs (my favorite is the one from "The Rutles") and their lyrical ground includes a rather negative viewpoint on religion, nationalism, unrealistic body images, as well as an ode to DIY skateboarding. Tight and potent. Line of Descent come from a darker, heavier region, more in line with the likes of His Hero or Tragedy. Soul-wrenching vocals and dramatic turns in the arrangements—while staying speedy and lively. (PO Box 18455, Denver, CO 80218-0455)

SELFISH-Burning Sensation (HG Fact)/Cry For Love, Cry For Death—The EP's (DeadAlive)
Feel the rampage—I was thinking Selfish were another current-day Japanese hardcore band but it turns out they're from Finland and have been around a long time. In fact, I reviewed their split with Liberate a few years ago. Chalk it up to faulty memory. Makes no fuckin' difference where they're from, 'cause this album wails. Rabid vocals and a sound that mixes piledriving riffage with a bit of the 'ol metal. "Matter Of Trust" even has an almost chiming guitar signature on the intro. Songs that just keep coming at you. Colorful cover and booklet artwork. Speaking of those older releases, DeadAlive have pulled together songs from Selfish's 7" EP and comp appearances ca. '97-99 and it's just as good as "Burning Sensation." Once again, it's an outburst of hardcore aggression with the metal licks and, trust me, it blazes, harmonic riffs 'n all. (HG Fact: Nakano Shinbashi-M 105, Yayoi-cho 2-7-15, Nakano, Tokyo, JAPAN 164-0013/DeadAlive: PO Box 42593, Philadelphia, PA 19101)

THE SET UP-And We Call It Decay (Action Driver)
Man this is the best thing Al sent me. At times this is totally crazy and chaotic hardcore in the vein of (dare I say it) the mighty Born Against and Rorschach. But at the same time they're able to stop what they're doing on a dime and crank out massive building rhythms, ala old Fuel or ealry Hot Water Music that enhance the tone of this album perfectly. The dynamics of this record are just short of amazing. The dual vocals are delivered with passion as they struggle to come out over one another. I look at is as if one voice is the external voice-what's being said to the addressee of each song. (Incidentally this sounds a lot like the singer of Kid Dynamite without the melodies). The second voices the internal one, bubbling over with conflicting emotions and trying to bring out the anger and frustration boiling over underneath the surface. It works. Along with contemporaries True North and Army of Ponch, the Setup is a good representation of the new face of hardcore. Highly recommended. (PO Box 610, Toledo, OH 43697) *(mikechumpchange)*

SEVEN DAYS OF SAMSARA-Never Stop Attacking (Harmless)

"Never Stop Attacking" collects a 7", three split 7"'s and a split 12" from this Milwaukee band. Seven Days of Samsara do a pretty good job of the chaotic hardcore thing, creating a real flurry of noise here, occasionally approaching something heavy, but for the most part riding a sound current reminiscent of mid '90s emo, the kind of cool, chaotic and cathartic noise that Ebullition Records was once dishing out. It doesn't really sound incredibly viable now though, and for the most part, this band just sounds like they're about to fall apart at the seams. Those weak, dog-like, screamed vocals aren't doing anybody any favors, either. (1218 W. Hood, Apt. 2, Chicago, IL 60660) *(Greg)*

SEVERED HEAD OF STATE-Anathema Device (Hardcore Holocaust)

A scathing rebuke of religion punctuates SHOS' lastest hardcore missive. A little heavier-sounding, as some of the Tragedy influence seeps in, to an extent, ("Dust To Dust" is almost *melodic*) yet it maintains its crust-core aggression. Blazing riffs and Jack's always-cantankerous vocal stylings make for an ear-melting onslaught. (PO Box 26742, Richmond, VA 23261)

SEX SEX SEX-Like Crows on the Slaughterhouse Fence (NDN)

Apparently, this Swedish punk band has been around since the mid-80s but your humble scribe had no idea. And, despite the AFI-type horror graphics on the cover, Sex Sex Sex have little in common with that band, at least musically. Upbeat, catchy and rough punk rock, throwing in some garage and rock 'n roll touches, along with the ghouls 'n goblins imagery. The CD includes a generous amount of bonus material, as well. (PO Box 131471, The Woodlands, TX 77393-1471)

SHAKEDOWNS-Move (VMS/Morphius)

Eh, it's rocknroll with some good riffs but the singer's voice isn't doing it for me and the whole thing is too 70's-schticky with the brown and yellow album cover and cool-guys-in-shades picture poses. Funny how they've got a song called "Are You A Rocker Or Not?" which I agree with, but these dopes are so obviously bandwagon hoppers that it ain't funny. Looks like I'm still waiting for the first great rocknroll band to come outta DC., but I'm not holding my breath. (PO Box 13474, Baltimore, MD 21203) *(Ryan)*

SHAKIN' NASTIES-Better Than Television (Radio Blast)

West coast band who wouldn't be outta place on Rip Off Records. They've got that rough 'n tumble, yet fuggin' catchy garage/punk rock 'n roll sound. '77 era, dosed in the Stones by way of the Real Kids and doing a nice job on the Troggs' "From Home." They'll have you asking "Who Are The Gladbeck Girls?" while rocking your socks off with jabbing guitar chords and a wicked backbeat. Same goes for the other nine songs here. (Hildegardstr. 13, 44809 Bochum, GERMANY)

SHANK-Coded Messages In Slowed Down Songs (Six Two Five/Deep Six)

Hammer-smash sounds from Scotland—heavy, brutal and blindingly-fast, on that border between thrash and grind, along with indecipherable vocals. Makes me appreciate the lyric sheet all that much more—to be honest, they could be screaming about ice cream and I wouldn't know the difference. The words reveal a band unafraid to puncture certain articles of faith—taking issue with liberal guilt, animal.rights zealots and, in general, anyone who acts hypocritically. There's an interesting Scottish history lesson that accompanies "Isthmus of Darien." Still, to be honest, this is a bit more grindy than I would like, but will strike a chord with you blastbeatheads. (PO Box 422413, SF, CA 94142-3413)

SHARK ATTACK-Discography (Reflections)

Pretty deluxe package for a band that existed less than a year but Shark Attack certainly made a fair amount of noise during their brief tenure. Ripping old-school hardcore boiling over with rage, punctuated by Matt Summers' bile-filled vocals. This disc includes the band's 7", the "Feeding Frenzy" demo and live material recorded at CB's—good performance, so-so sound. To paraphrase one of their songs, in your fucking face. (Spoorwegstraat 117, 6828 AP Arnhem, NETHERLANDS)

SHOCKWAVE-Omega Supreme (Triple Crown)

Beatdown mosh rife with Transformers allusions. A complete, definitive retrospective of the hefty, dancefloor battering output of this Hatebreed-esque impact unit. Rhythmic, shout-along infused tonal damage that is, to its credit, rap-core free. Pulsing metal grooves, and a never ending supply of double bass pedal driven damage spans this compilation, which encompasses the band's "Autohate" LP, "Dominicon" EP, "Warpath" 7", and demo-era work. Largely mid-tempo chuggachugg rumblers infused with traces of 80s thrash lick fodder, as well as mammoth builds and breaks at every turn. Fans of the mid-to-late 90s metalcore style (and it certainly needs no introduction at this point) should take note. Tough as nails. (331 W.57th St. PMB 473, NY,NY 10019) *(Mike Ramek)*

SHONBEN-1999 (Newest Industry)

Complete recordings for a short-lived UK band. Emotional pop somewhere between REM and Mega City Four. Some of the songs do have a sting in the guitar lines and strong hooks, yet it's definitely on the mellow side, particularly for "Nursery Rhymes" and "Keep A Secret." Has more depth than a lot of music in this style, yet it's still not really my thing. (Unit 100, 61 Wellfield Rd., Cardiff, CF24 3DG, UK)

SHOVELFIGHT-Sink The Fucker (Running Dog Capitalist)

Ugh. Sub-demo quality spazz-punk with unforgivable vocal strains and awkward, trodding song tempos. This is kids-in-the-basement, jamming-with-your-buddies style punk/hardcore that should remain (by law) in the small town it was conceived. The lyrics and CD booklet show the band cares about more than music (they'll need more with this sound), but that's about the only redeeming factor here. Skim the lyrics and CD booklet, sure, but good luck getting through the tuneage. (PO Box 18753, Asheville, NC 28814) *(Jason)*



SICK OF IT ALL-Live In A Dive (Fat)

SOIA's second live record, but the first in almost ten years and a pretty good career overview, going back to the beginning with "My Life," "Clobberin' Time," "Injustice System" and "Friends Like You." Bellicose New Yorkers (then again, aren't *all* New Yorkers bellicose? sorry... couldn't resist) but with a self-deprecating sense of humor—Lou's stage banter is humorous. I'm not really a fan of live albums anymore and SOIA's heavier songs aren't quite as convincing—visions of spin-kicks pop in my head, but this is still good for what it is. And they've got some memorable songs, "StepDown" and the songs mentioned above in particular. (PO Box 193690, SF, CA 94119-3690)

SIGN OFFS (Disaster)

A smokin' debut by these Ohio youngsters—the average age is apparently around 18 and they play like seasoned veterans. A loud, catchy mix of punk, rock 'n roll and poppy elements, boisterous throughout and laying on the hooks. Sim's snotty croon is reminiscent of Eric from the New Bomb Turks, though not as over-the-top, and the Sign Offs share a similar knowledge of what's good about the history of rock with that band. They also add some of Cheap Trick's classic smarts, without the saccharine. Stinging guitar lines you won't be able to get out of your head—"Real Side," "Sickness," "Run" and "Gotta Get Out" all hit with a dizzying combination of power and melody. Even with some songs topping the four and five minute mark, the momentum seldom flags. Anyone who bemoans how real rock 'n roll is dead needs to have this album played for them, at the appropriate volume, which is goddamn fucking LOUD. Spread the gospel. (PO Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510)

SIGHTINGS (Load)

A spectacular CD. Sightings, who hail from NYC, are a crazed band who obviously relish in making completely dissonant music for the masses. A lo-fi delight in my opinion. The noise and drums becoming a roar and the screaming, distorted vocals are just SO pissed off! Some of the guitar sounds remind me of Phantom Tollbooth's first release, which is a good thing. Actually the lo-fi quality doesen't do some of this justice, but then again it adds to the overall appeal at the same time. I guess that's the beauty of this CD—it gives it a very dark and demonic qualit—a very otherworldly HC sound. The last song "Waiting At The Steakhouse" is a perfect ending for this disc. Pure fucking distorted insanity. Load Records has put out some amazing stuff. Check them out! (PO Box 35, Providence, RI 02901) *(Steve)*

SINCE BY MAN-We Sing The Body Electric (Revelation)

Ya, there's a certain sassiness here, and the Nation of Ulysses send-off has to go (they even cop "A Kid Who Tells on Another Kid Is a Dead Kid" as a song title), but Since By Man manage to eke out a strong album of Refused-style hardcore. The sounds of bands like Killsadie and The Blood Brothers rear their ugly little mop-heads on occasion, but not enough to rustle too many feathers for those who prefer more (ahem) serious music (like Mindfunk, for example). Mainly, this Milwaukee five-piece deliver a jazzed-up skronk akin to Converge with a lisp. There's little to no staying power but, for the time being, it's a heck of a sexy ride. Watch for a puffy, fur-brimmed coat in my near future... or not. (PO Box 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615-5232) *(Jason)*

SIXER-Beautiful Trash (BYO)

Great big guitars drive this brash collection of sing along tunes which romanticize the whole busted knuckles and heartbreak scene. The disc's Mike Ness-ian tendencies don't always reach past the images set by the originator. The honest lyrics and fine playing lead me to believe the band is capable of more than trying to be like Social Distortion. Personal opinions aside, the band indeed pulls off their intended sound with spirit to spare. (PO Box 67609, LA, CA 90067) *(David)*

SKITSYSTEM-Enkel Resa Till Rännstenen (Havoc)

I believe this is the first US release for Swedish destructo unit Skitsystem, who have been laying out "brutal pain, death and hate" for 7 years, to paraphrase their lyric sheet. The sound of obliteration, densely arranged with thick guitar and bass chords, clambering drums hammering out a savage rhythm and anguished vocals. Politically-oriented lyrics that discuss economic globalization, gender issues, police abuse and a reduction of assistance for mentally ill individuals, which has led to an increase in the homeless population. I remember the DS-13 guys telling me that Sweden was moving towards a neo-liberal/social Darwinism that echoes the US model and Skitsystem reinforce those sentiments. A fast-paced wall of sound that delivers the rage. (PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408)

SKULLS-Therapy For The Shy (Dr. Strange)

Comeback of the year? Maybe—this early LA punk band return or, more accurately, vocalist Billy Bones has a new batch of recruits, a mix of grizzled vets and a freshfaced newcomer on guitar. Slam-bang punk with a rock 'n roll attitude and brash catchiness, from the opening salutation of "Kill Me Kill Me Kill." Timeless west coast punk—a striking backbeat and loud guitar chords. A classic sound and this proves that old punks don't have to mellow with age. (PO Box 1058, Alta Loma, CA 91701)

SLAPSHOT-Greatest Hits, Slashes and Crosschecks (Bridge Nine)

Previously-released in Europe, these are re-recordings of 20 older Slapshot songs and two new tracks, "Crossover Sucks" and "Shoot Charlton Heston," which shows that Choke still has a strong opinion about stuff and isn't afraid to share it. Old Man Kelly, as an old friend of mine used to call him. "Heston" is better on paper than in execution, to be honest, but they stick to a loud/fast/kickass route. A pretty good selection of songs and including such favorites as "No Friend Of Mine," "Back On The Map," "Chip On My Shoulder," "I've Had Enough" and "Straight Edge In Your Face," as well as offerings from their 90s releases "16 Valve Hate," "Old Tyme Hardcore" and even one from "Unconsciousness" (but nothing from "Blast Furnace," which may not be a bad omission). Sometimes, the arrangements are a bit simplified and the drumming a tad mono-rhythmic but, with Choke bellowing out the words and everything nice and loud, Slapshot are back to give you another bash across the skull. Glad to have 'em back. The enhnaced portion includes some flyers and four live songs. (PO Box 990052, Boston, MA 02199)

SLAUGHTER AND THE DOGS-A Dog Day Afternoon (TKO)

Live recordings from NYC and SF, during their '02 tour. A bit slower than back in the day—this is particularly true for "Boston Babies" and "Cranked Up Really High," which don't generate the sparks of old, but are played in more of a mid-tempo rock 'n roll vein. SATD never made any secret of their leanings, as it was—there are covers of the Velvets and Dolls, here. Punk meets rock 'n roll, a mix of oldies, some songs from their recent album and even one from the "Bite Back" album by Slaughter ("Hell In New York"). Listenable, although I would urge newcomers to go straight for "Do It Dog Style" to catch the band at its best. (3126 W. Cary St., #303, Richmond, VA 23221)

SLOW JETS-Good Morning, Stars (Morphius)

If I were a lazy record reviewer, I'd say something, well, lazy—something along the lines of, "If Wire seduced the Beatles, so many years ago, and the resultant bastard love child had a quickie with Guided by Voices in a dingy basement, Slow Jets might be the surprisingly well-adjusted musical equivalent of all that hanky-panky." But I'm not a lazy record reviewer, so I would never stoop to writing such silly sentences. "Good Morning, Stars," at its core, is a solid, guitar-driven pop record. The churning guitars on "Instant Losers" serve as a potent introduction to this strong collection of songs. Slow Jets' music is generally upbeat and in the major key, with the occasional tempo change thrown in. One of the disc's better tracks, "Slipping Out from Snares," is propelled by frenetic verses and accentuated by keyboards and vocal harmonizing. Despite the brisk pace, the singer betrays a vulnerability, which leaks out from between the aural cracks. This song bleeds right into the next one, "Elephant Traps," and one can barely distinguish where one track ends and the other begins. "Elephant Traps" really sounds like the grand, life-affirming finale to "Slipping Out from Snares." One of the most musically interesting songs is "Animally Yours," a bass-driven melody with jangling guitars, slightly sinister harmonizing and counterpoints, and organ accents. "Heartbreak for Socialites" initially exhibits a more straight-forward rock-and-roll sensibility, before it dives back into the band's signature pop sound. Tucked amid an albumful of fast-paced, danceable songs, however, is "Snares Coda," which is relatively slow with a somber mood—I guess that would make it the record's token ballad. It's over before you know it, and then it's back to business. Personally speaking, Slow Jets aren't my cup of tea; one could analogize that, while this is my tepid herbal tea, it could be somebody else's lip-smacking good glass of ice tea, replete with a big colorful straw resting inside. (PO Box 13474, Baltimore MD 21203) *(Anna)*

SMALL BROWN BIKE-Nail Yourself To The Ground (No Idea, EP)

There seems to be a decline with each subsequent SBB release and this may be the nadir. Emo/pop without nearly as much buzz as in the beginning. Swirl and emote and it gets even worse for the acoustic/countryish "So I Fall." I suppose if you're still heartbroken over the breakup of the Get Up Kids, these may be your saviors but I'm an atheist when it comes to this style of music. (PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604)

SOLACE-13 (Meteor City)
Another solid release from a label to watch out for in 2003, MeteorCity. Well, a label to watch out for if you're into stoner rock, post-Sabbath doom metal or fuzzed-out seventies rock, that is. And man, do Solace deliver the goods here on 13, their second full-length. The history doesn't stop there though: two of these hooligans used to play in Godspeed (only really known for an appearance on the first Nativity In Black compilation). Solace play a great mix of all of the above MeteorCity styles: from good time fuzz rock, to more depressive doom metal (was that the riff from 'Wicked World' I heard in there?), with a whole lot of doobie-smokin' goodness in there as well. And you pretty much have to be high to make it through this opus, as 65 minutes of this kinda stuff is pretty hard to swallow sober, as good as it is. Chalk another one up for rock and roll, defiant in the face of trends, common sense and financial smarts. (PO Box 40322, Albuquerque, NM 87196) *(Greg)*

SOLEDAD BROTHERS-Steal Your Soul and Dare Your Spirit To Move (Estrus)
I saw these guys recently and they really left no particular impression on me but this album is another animal altogether. This is a tour-de-force of American roots music done with love and using a wide variety of instruments and guest players on the various songs. You got Delta blues, R&B, blues rock and all the variations of black music that white boys can play with guitars and drums. Here's the thing, though—I'm not interested in stylistic purity or studio prowess—I'm interested in getting my head bobbing and toe tapping and nothing on this album did that because I think they were so concerned with re-creating all these old sounds that they never bothered to find their OWN sound. You can do a lot on a record, but the live show don't lie and these guys just don't do it for me. (PO Box 2125, Bellingham, WA 98227)*(Ryan)*

SONGS FOR EMMA-Red Lies and Black Rhymes (Broken)
Much like his songs, the ragged vocals of Tommy Strange are filled with human emotion that cannot be ignored. Strange's (ex-Strawman) vocals have sandpaper grit to them, putting him in the same territory as Frankie Stubbs (Leatherface) or Chad, the guy who used to sing in The Strike. Songs for Emma actually have a lot in common with the latter band, including personally political lyrics and a ska/reggae influence. Emma also features Mike Millett, the ex-guitar player from A.P.P.L.E., and Craig O'Hara, who fronted the dreadful Character Builder and wrote "The Philosophy of Punk." The strength on Red Lies and Black Rhymes lies not in the band's musical prowess or abundance of catchy songs, but in Strange's ability to tell deeply affecting stories about our world. It's refreshing to know exactly what he is talking about in his lyrics, and that these songs are based on current political and social happenings. This makes Songs for Emma all the more effective in delivering important messages. (PO Box 460402, SF, CA 94146-0402) *(Jason)*

SPEEDBALL BABY-The Blackout (In The Red)
The album cover makes this look like the band is The Blackout and the album is called Speedball Baby so please note this stupid fact when searching for it. Well we've got a real musical potpourri here—country, rockabilly, soulful stuff, smooth lounge shit. Sounds like three different bands on one album. But this is less a bland traditional rundown of styles (i.e. Soledad Brothers) than an off-the-wall experimentally crazy musical ride, so if you want variety—you got it. Guest musicians include James Chance, Mick Collins and Jon Spencer so I guess I must like it enough to mention that so you'll actually think it's acceptably cool enough to purchase. (PO Box 50777, LA,CA 90050) *(Ryan)*

SPITS (Slovenly)
Hell, I love the Spits. Snotty new wave punk, once again, stripped down, obnoxious and the songs zip 'n zing with an infectiousness you can't ignore. A mesh of guitars, bass, drums, cheesy keyboards and fuck-you timbred vocals. 25 years after all this punk stuff really got going (hell, longer than that, now), a song like "She Don't Kare" can still induce fits of pogoing, to say nothing of "Rat Face," "Spit Me Out," "Take Back The Alley," etc etc… Geniuses or assholes? My money is a bit of both and that's a sure-fire winning combination. (PO Box 204, Reno, NV 89504)

STALEMATE (Stillborn)
It's refreshing to hear emotional hardcore that doesn't sound forced these days, and Stalemate do a great job of wearing their heart on their sleeves and dishing out some good tunes as well. The music is as heavy as it is melodic and memorable, and the lyrics are inspiring and don't sound contrived at all. The screamy vocals are sort of annoying, but the more melodic singing sounds great. This one will bring the listener back to a time when "emo" was a term that had some meaning to it. Not groundbreaking, not even above average, just very well done and sincere expression; what more can anyone ask for sometimes? (PO Box 3019, New Haven, CT 06515) *(Greg)*

STAR STRANGLED BASTARDS-Whose War Is It? (Go-Kart)
Political hardcore punk band from the west coast—inspired by the UK-82 sound the same way that older Total Chaos, Defiance, etc. were, only without the oi/street punk influences. No lyric sheet, but it's not too tough to figure out these guys don't like a lot of what they see going on these days, starting with the totalitarian nightmare of "War Crimes," "System of Greed," "American Dream" and the anti-religion "Die." Rough, loud and pissed sounding, just the way I like it. (PO Box 20, Prince St. Station, NY, NY 10012)

STEP SISTER-Autopilot Stuck On Get Down! (Smog Veil)
This disc was reviewed in the last issue but it's since been issued on Smog Veil and it's this Cleveland rock crew's best longplayer to date (and likely the last, since the band have splintered). No bullshit rock 'n roll given a punk infusion, punctuated by big riffs, Tom Dark's gritty vocals and the songs careen with a devil-may-care energy level. "Burn Baby Burn," "Make Your Move" and "Pay The Price" will all rock your world. (316 California Ave., #207, Reno, NV 89509)



STITCHES-Twelve Imaginary Inches (TKO)
A new album, finally. It's been years. The Stitches are a punk rock machine—that's punk in the traditional sense, with nods to all the correct sources of inspiration, be it the Pistols, Ramones or Dolls and, yet, they forge their own ground. Bright 'n catchy guitar riffs, vocals that are both innocent and snotty-sounding (simultaneously!) and it's all fiercely rockin', especially "Electroshock Carol," "Heartache" (some cool drill-like synth sounds) and the tough-edged "Automatic." Just enough of a trashy aesthetic, without going overboard. How 'ya like that, punk? I do.. I do… (3126 W. Cary St., #303, Richmond, VA 23221)

STIVS (ACME)
This band was known as the Reaction at the time this album was recorded but a sticker informs the listener that the band are now known as the Stivs. I like the old name better but I also like this album quite a bit. Hopped-up punk, rock 'n roll and hardcore—a steaming tandem of Zeke, Ramones and even Out Cold, particularly for the first song, "Horror On Highway 95." Short, hard-hitting songs with buzz and burn

STRAIGHT EDGE MY ASS-Loaded Packed and Fucking Done (Distortion)
This Swedish band's name probably won't win them friends with the X-hand crowd but if some people take issue, that's their problem. This is a fucking wrecking machine. Skitsystem bassist Alex is the vocalist here and he varies between harsh, gutteral emanations and the occasional croon. The sound is low-tuned and crushing hardcore-meets-metal. Heavy and rumbling and getting into Sabbath-like terrain for "Can You Feel It." But this ain't no stoner rock. It's more like a booze and amphetamine-fueled jag. Recorded in '98 and just now seeing the light of day. Be thankful. (PO Box 6294, SE-400 60 Gothenburg, SWEDEN)

STRAP-ONS-Geeking Dream (World Label Cooperative)
Obnoxious three chord punk rock. The singer just wants to club his left brain into submission with a little drinky-winky, and one can hardly blame him. Take the fine chops of the Humpers, early Queers, and '79 LA. fuckups and then remove any semblance of competent musicianship. The atonal vox (Rodney Anonymous with the flu) could use some work. 25 tracks = 25 ways to say "Fuck You." (PO Box 8241, Norfolk, VA 23503) *(David)*

STRIKING DISTANCE-The Fuse Is Lit (Bridge Nine)/The Bleeding Starts Here (Reflections)
Feel the rage. No, make that feel the *motherfucking* rage. "The Fuse Is Lit" features six new studio tracks by this DC hardcore powerhouse, plus a live set recorded at CBGB's, where vocalist Dave Byrd advises audience members to come up and punch him in the face—the set includes their anthem "Hated" and a cover of Void's "My Rules." The new material is a full-throttle combination of speed and floor-punching breakdowns, as usual. "Send In The Clones" really brings it, with a locomotive riff. Direct and without pretense. "The Bleeding Starts Here" combines their first 7", demos for half a dozen songs from their album and studio versions of "My Rules" and Minor Threat's "Small Man Big Mouth." Same operating procedure—aggressive, modern hardcore that mixes the speed and mosh. (Bridge Nine: PO Box 990052, Boston, MA 02199-0052/ Reflections: Spoorwegstraat 117, 6828 AP Arnhem, NETHERLANDS)

STRONG INTENTION-Extermination Vision (Coalition)
Ultra-fast, as always—Strong Intention continue to bash out an intense hardcore racket, riding that grind/thrash line. Relentless, with hostile-sounding vocals from both Zac and Adam (along with Rick Ta Life on a few songs) accompanied by blazing guitars and clamorous drumming. Sometimes, I wish they were a little more song-oriented—it's possible to be both raging *and* catchy but this 14 song/15 minute performance does make its loud point rather effectively. (Newtonstraat 212, 2562 KW Den Haag, NETHERLANDS)

STRUCTURE OF LIES/MISERY INDEX-Split (Deep Six)
Grinding death metal sounds from both bands. Harsh vocals, flailing riffs and lightning-fast drumming. Structure of Lies are the more eeeevil sounding of the pair, for what that's worth. Technical and precise but not much in the way of memorable songs. (PO Box 6911, Burbank, CA 91510)

SUGAR DADDIE-Hell Or High Water (Thorp)
Sheesh, this is just terrible—imagine a low-timbred vocalist who makes Antiseen's Jeff Clayton sound like a soprano and a turgid sound that's part Clutch, part tough-guy mosh metal, part bad-ass rawk. Doesn't sound too great, does it? When the vocalist (no names listed on the disc) attempts a hip-hop delivery ("Chummin For Love"), it gets even worse. (PO Box 6786, Toledo, OH 43612)

SUICIDE FILE (Indecision, EP)/Twilight (Indecision)
Powerful hardcore from this relatively new Boston band, with former No Reply vocalist Dave Weinberg and ex-members of Hope Conspiracy. Filled with rage, especially from a lyrical standpoint, but there's also melodic warmth to go with the powerchords, and the lyrics are as likely to explore the human condition as they are more wordly concerns. I'm actually grasping at a way to describe this—one can hear a variety of different hardcore and rock influences and they mesh seamlessly into an attention-grabbing sound. That's true for both the EP and their new mini-LP (I guess that's what you call it—9 songs in about 18 minutes). A hard-rocking pulse with force and depth and outspoken sentiments that increasingly come to the fore: "Ashcroft" is a nice companion piece to "Kissinger" on the debut, going after one of the spokes of the true "axis of evil." (PO Box 6052, Garden Grove, CA 92846)

SUICIDE NOTE-You're Not Looking So Good (Ferret)
For more metal-sounding stuff or screamo or whatever, this is pretty damn good. Savage and intense, particularly on the faster-paced songs, although the slower songs incorporate a disarming melodic penchant into the tension-packed fray—some very strange harmonies here and there. "Black Cat" and "Automatic Death Sentence" go straight for the throat, while the instrumental "Segue To The Sun" obliterates all in its path. Coming on like a heavier version of Failure (anyone remember them?), occasionally. (47 Wayne St., #3, Jersey City, NJ 07302)

SUPERBEES-High Volume (Acetate)
60s and 70s-inspred fodder caught in an unironic realm between garage fuzz and more straight-ahead soulful rock territory. The opening song, "Really Wanna Know," has the right idea with a swaggering, insolent riff and lively arrangement, but there are also songs that slow the pace and lose the punk edge. A bit more slash 'n burn and I'd be ready to embrace this a bit more readily. On the right track at least some of the time. (2020 Broadway, 2nd Floor, Santa Monica, CA 90404)

SUPERCHINCHILLARESCUEMISSION/TIM VERSION-Go Halves On A Bastard (ADD)
Never mind the oddball band names, especially Superchinchilla et al, 'cause each of these bands play melodic punk that sounds far from watered-down. Bright and aggressive, while ramming home the hooks. SCRM (a useful shortening) have more of a hardcore pulse in their sound and the tunes keep coming at you. The Tim Version sound equally-potent, maybe more than I gave them credit for in the past. The songs here sound hammering, while remaining accessible. Booze seems to provide the fuel for both bands, judging by the cover drawing and lyrics. Yep, we've got some genuine barstool philosophers here who don't let it interfere with their high-charged muse. But even if you drink nothing stronger than Gatorade, there's still some riveting music to grab hold of. (PO Box 8240, Tampa, FL 33674)

SWINDLE-This Is Not A Test (Slow Gun)
Haven't heard a peep from Swindle in awhile and I'm glad to see they're still around. A San Diego band dishing out some urgent music. Plenty of burn and adrenalin that straddles the line between punk and hardcore. Observational lyrics about personal as well as global concerns, stating it succinctly on "It's All Wrong"—a collection of catchphrases such as "read my lips," "protect and serve," "the few, the proud, semper fi"—accepted and seldom questioned enough. Daniel from Over My Dead Body does vocals on a few songs. (www.slowgunrecords.com)

SWINGIN' UTTERS-Dead Flowers, Bottles, Bluegrass and Bones (Fat)
Not the complete return to glory, as advertised, although better than the last couple of albums. "No Pariah" gets things started with a rousing punk rush and that's also the case for "Don't Ask Why" and "Elation." The Utters, down to a four piece with the departure of guitarist Max Huber, don't clutter the sound with excessive instruments on most of the songs, although there are still forays into rootsier territory, as they've been doing for awhile, and the galloping beat is decidedly from those influences. Half a comeback? I'll take it, but I do miss the days of "Teenage Genocide" and "Windspitting Punk." (PO Box 193690, SF, CA 94119-3690)

BERT SWITZER-1977-2002 (self-released)
Switzer is a Boston-based drummer and this disc collects various musical projects he's done over the last quarter century—everything from the free jazz workouts he currently plays to the pop of Joe Rainbow to the King Crimson-inspired prog rock of Monster Island (with Henry Kaiser) to the Velvets/Stooges/Modern Lovers-hued punk of the Destroyed, which provide the most-interesting moments, although some of the songs are played at a tepid, mournful crawl. Still, I would love to have seen the show where they opened for the J. Geils Band, as Bert mentions in the liner notes.

Sound quality is definitely an issue, as channels drop in and out. These are home-made recordings and crudely-recorded live material. Widely uneven. (www.bertswitzer.com)

TEAR IT UP-Nothing To Nothing (DeadAlive)/ The December 2000 Session (Coalition)

At the start of Public Enemy's "Prophets Of Rage," there's a soundclip that says "you're quite hostile." Young and pissed off. Tear It Up certainly express a lot of hostility through their music and lyrics. Most of the sentiments are of an intesely personal variety—friendships and relationships gone south, obnoxious frat boys and it's put forth as directly as possible. A lot of pain and misery and the reply is to become "Fortified." "I Don't Need To Be Saved," one of the catchier songs on the album, is about religion and how they want nothing to do with it. Tear It Up have grown musically—it's still mainly fast and raging but there's also a bit of an evolution—there's a killer transition between "From Nothing To Nothing," which is a tirade accompanied by repetitive riff akin to the intro of Black Flag's "No More" and the anthemic "Close My Eyes And Hope For The Worst." Speaking of Black Flag, "No One Gets In" is a blatant rewrite of "Spray Paint The Walls." Gotta give 'em credit for audacity, I suppose. "Frat Boys" throws in some hot guitar licks and opening song "Don't Call Me Tonight" is a high-powered juggernaut. After the cathartic conclusion of "It's The End," complete with gunshot, there's an epilogue—a cover of Rose Tattoo's "Nice Boys Don't Play Rock 'n Roll" that doesn't quite capture the essence of the original but provides a bit of levity after all the catharsis. Riveting hardcore that pulls in a variety of influences. The "December" CD is a quick way to catch up on three more of the band's releases, including the ultra-limited "Zero To Suicidal" EP on Uncle Slam, along with their split LP with ETA and split 7" with Fast Times. What more can I add? Full-on and punishing and these songs are far from throwaways. There's even a protest song about fast-lane transponders and a raging cover of SOA's "Girl Problems." Glad that the "Zero To Suicidal" songs are available again because they're smokin'. (DeadAlive: PO Box 42593, Philadelphia, PA 19101/Coalition: Newtonstraat 212, 2562 KW Den Haag, NETHERLANDS)

TEARS (Trick Knee Productions)

There's a killer garage scene in Wisconsin and here's the latest entry—two young men and women bashing out some cool sounds. The punk leanings are in there, but the Tears reach back further to the source and without the pretentiuosness or archness of so many of the overrated bands playing in this vein. "Fast Cars" and "Don't Care About Nothin'" and "Never Alone" are down 'n dirty, attitudinal rockers. "I Know It's Hard" takes a poppier turn, not the most-satisfying conclusion but, the rest of the time, the Tears rock in a delirious, can't-sit-still fashion. Past/present members of the Take Offs, Strong Come Ons and Catholic Boys (who have a smokin' 7" out on Kryptonite) (PO Box 12714, Green Bay, WI 54307-2714)

TEEN CTHULHU-Ride The Blade (Life Is Abuse)

Gory suicidal imagery and gory music—well, if music can be gory. Black metal and grind with gothic keyboards and hammering instrumentation, accompanied by anguished vocals and darkly themed, of course. In case you missed the intent on the cover, there's also a song called "I'm Going To Fucking Kill Myself." More than likely a bit tongue in cheek, but I won't spoil their fun. Intense but not really something I'm that into, musically. (PO Box 20524, Oakland, CA 94620)

TERROR-The Lowest Of The Low (Bridge Nine)

Scott Vogel, formerly of Buried Alive, teams up with Todd Jones from Carry On in this new band and it's a full-scorch hardcore blitz. A brief blitz, with 9 songs, but they have a riveting fusion of go-for-the-throat speed and bruising heaviness, while Scott barks out the words with angry conviction. Set the controls for kill. (PO Box 990052, Boston, MA 02199)

THERE WERE WIRES (Iodine)

For once in my lengthy term at Schreurs review central, a band manages to include a bonus live set on their CD without pissing me off with horrible sound and repeated songs ad nauseam. There Were Wires end their self-titled, nine-song disc with a live set from local college radio station WERS. It's an impassioned, powerful set from a band that must have been bouncing off the studio walls. The album songs are even better, combining the metallic chaos of Deadguy and Botch with the epic emotion of Yage or You and I. "Bigger and Better Things" even provides an acoustic send-off that shows the melody these songs have hidden deep beneath the hellish sounds. Okay, the lyrics are only one step above notebook-scrawled, bus trip meanderings, but, hey, sometimes simplicity can be refreshing, and it certainly is here. When singer Jaime Mason belches a blood curdle of, "We're all so fake," he sounds anything but. Besides, the focus here is not on the literary relevance of the lyrics, but on the screaming and the noise, both of which are available in abundance. (1085 Commonwealth Ave., PMB 318, Boston, MA 02215) *(Jason)*

THOSE PEABODYS-Unite Tonight (Tiger Style)

70s-forged hard rock—not the heavy, doomy sludge sound but tinting those riffs with a bluesier, semi-boogie sound ala Three Man Army (who? Never mind) or Thin Lizzy. There's also something of a Bowie affectation on the vocals and it leans towards his harder rocking side, albeit without the glam or melodrama. Just hard rock, no more or less. I wish it had a bit more "oomph" but it does bring back semi-pleasant adolescent memories, where rock 'n roll was one of my only pleasures and refuges from my fucking family. (401 Broadway 26th Floor, NY, NY 10013)

THOUGHT RIOT-Shattered Mirror Syndrome (A-F)

It's thoughtful, for sure, but something is a little overbaked and melodramatic with Though Riot's thumping, melodic hardcore—imagine Davey Havoc from AFI singing for Good Riddance. Surging songs and vocals that commandingly soar over everything, along with lyrics that take on both the political and personal. Good ingredients but it doesn't quite ram me in the gut the way it should. But if you like the two bands mentioned earlier, you might want to check it out. (PO Box 71266, Pittsburgh, PA 15213)

TOMMY & THE TERRORS-13 The Hard Way (Rodent Popsicle)

Bare-knuckled street punk by these Boston hooligans. The Terrors have steadily improved with time and this is a solid longplayer. No bullshit, just gruff vocals and straight-ahead songs with a Boston punk meets Cock Sparrer influence and even including a fight song for their beloved New England Revolution soccer team. The appeal of soccer still eludes me but not the songs on this album. (PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134)

TONSILS (Tarantulas, 12" EP)

Sam and Dave—no, not the guys who did "Soul Man," but two members of the Explosion have a side project. They explore pop, reggae and rootsy territory with a rough-hewn, hook-filled sound, particularly for "Hey Mrs. Grey" and "Disaster." Nice packaging, with a painted cover and full-color poster insert.

TO SEE YOU BROKEN-A Thief, A Poet, An Enemy (Excursion)

Al, would you be upset if I took this opportunity to write about my cat Vinnie instead of this disc? Because I think he's much more entertaining than this poorly executed Submission Hold knock off (and don't get me wrong, this in NO way shape or form approaches the skill, passion or appreciation for the aforementioned SH.) Totally by the numbers hardcore, with much too much chugga chugging and music designed to get the mutton heads to finger point and stomp around ala awful early 90's NYHC. The only point of interest is the operatic styling of vocals on a couple of tracks and even that is so out of place it just dismisses the attempt as laughable. Pass. (PO Box 20224, Seattle, WA 98102) *(mikechumpchange)*

TOTAL FURY-13 Songs (Gloom)

US pressing of the LP this Japanese band had on tour with them last year (and has been kind of tough to get since). Consider your ears blessed, because what we have here is some stirring early 80s-inspired hardcore. Yeah, they steal from the Minor Threat songbook but it's well-done pilferage. Incidentally, there are 14 songs, not 13. "Anticipation" isn't listed on the cover and "Decade" isn't on the lyric sheet. Not that you really care about such things while basking in the band's kick-ass sound. (PO Box 14253, Albany, NY 12212)

TOTALT JÄVLA MÖRKER-Det Ofrivilliga Lidandets Maskineri (Distortion)

The band's name loosely translates to Total Fucking Darkness, I think (my Swedish translation program said "damned" for the middle word) and total fucking aggro describes the band's sound more than adequately. Loud, raw, doomy hardcore punk played at a fast clip. TJM have the Swede-core trappings but also add bone-crushing heaviness and some ultra-fast moments, as well. Lyrics that explore issues of class, oppression, political ideology and even file-sharing (TJM are definitely in favor of the latter). Accompanied by a powerful soundtrack. (Box 6294, SE 40060, Gothenburg, SWEDEN)

TOXIC NARCOTIC-We're All Doomed (Go Kart)

Pure hate? Yeah, that would sum up Toxic Narcotic's second full-length album. About as far from posi-core as one can get but, underneath it all, they express pride in sticking it out as long as they have, stating on "Talk Is Poison Idea" (great title, by the way), *"will we ever stop? I don't think so."* If we're all doomed, Toxic Narcotic are going to make a hell of a lot of noise while it happens. A blistering tandem of piledriving hardcore, punk and heaviness and all's not right in TN's worldview—overrun with pollution, an omnipresent nuclear threat and, most of all, people—the cause of all these ills, of course. The solution would be the obliteration of the human race and starting from scratch. An apocalyptic, extreme vision but there's a lot of truth in what's gone wrong. "People Suck" doesn't appear on this album, but that's an overriding sentiment. "Asshole," on the other hand, is reprised, here, in all its antisocial glory. TN sound tighter and more raging than ever, especially with drummer Sam Jodrey back in the fold. Relentless? Negative? Both true, but it provides a powerful release and strikes a visceral chord. For real. (PO Box 20, Prince St. Station, Prince Street Station, NY, NY 10012)



TOY DOLLS-Covered In Toy Dolls (Captain Oi)

Oh my fucking god. Toy Dolls confuse the fuck out of me and I love them for that. This is punk with a healthy dose of Ritalin and brain damage. I don't know if I have the space here to explain Toy Dolls. They're snotty and British. They've been around forever. They're really good at playing their instruments and they're all insane and they write punk songs and cover classical pieces really fast. They like recording farts. They inspire other fucked up bands like Schlong. For all intents and purposes, this is a collection of covers, from "Wipeout" to "Livin' La Vida Loca"—with kazoos! The country fan in me says their version of "Devil Went Down To Georgia" is the best thing on this CD. My only hope is that some kid will buy this thinking it's a straightforward old British punk re-release (like most Captain Oi!) and then will sit at home crying with confusion while his parents wonder who's destroying Mozart on CD. (PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 8QA, ENGLAND) *(Tigger)*

TOYS THAT KILL-Control The Sun (Recess)

A pop/punk tour-de-force and it ain't really pop/punk the way y'all think of it, these days. Bright tunes with energy and strong hooks, allowing a more adventurous side to sneak in. Above all, Toys That Kill are a smart band and unafraid to take the piss, even on themselves—"Something In This Earth" rides a mantra-like crest, repeating the line "I'm still looking for something in this earth," while also admitting that 'these words are mediocre.' The lyric sheet is on newspaper and there's kind of a concept, here—the lyrics for each song are preceded by a news story or comment about this wacky world—the weird items one finds in a national news wrap-up—someone shooting up a restaurant because he couldn't get curly fries or a story about the CIA training cats to be spies in the 1960s. Sometimes the songs touch on the subject matter, sometimes not, but it once again showcases Toys That Kill's bemusement with all this craziness—and perhaps disgust, as well. (PO Box 1666, San Pedro, CA 90733)

TRAGATELO (Leguna Armada)

A posthumous LP from this LA band, who included members of Life's Halt, Subsistencia, Esperanza and Limp Wrist (Martin, on drums here) in their ranks. Taken from two sessions and it's some spirited hardcore punk, sung *en espanol.* A definite old-school flavor, rough and catchy-sounding, particularly on their theme song "Tragatelo," which loosely translates to "shove it" in Spanish. Lina's vocals convey anger and rage and the lyrical sentiments reflect that—"No Habra Silencio" talks about how people get taken advantage of because they can't speak the 'native' language—unable to learn because of the restrictions on bilingual education and the like. The hand-screened cover art is striking, as well. 1010 ½ Riverine Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92701)

TRAGEDY-Vengeance (Tragedy)

Dark, intense, pulverizing—Tragedy's second album took a few listens to sink in and it's not something to listen to if you're feeling particularly suicidal but, if you're outraged at how fucked-up the world continues to be, this is a good soundtrack for it. The vocals are harsh, the music heavy, whether at a slow or fast clip and the effect is haunting. The vinyl is the format to get, with a heavy stock cover and glossy full-sized lyric book that explores the inhumanity of so much of what surrounds us all and comes to the conclusion that it's time to resist, fight back, not take shit lying down. A scream from the soul. (2336 N. Killingsworth, Portland, OR 97217)

TRAMPS (Broken)

The first thing that pops out here is that Ayn Tramp's voice is really, really good. She's got a great rock'n'roll voice, which is something that's been sorely lacking in the endless supply of girl-singer rock n' roll bands I've heard lately. (Browse these pages for some other reviews.) She's also a pretty good garage guitar player, as well. This is fast, catchy, and rockin' (no g needed.) The rhythm section (Telemundo and Glen Livid) are straight-forward and tight. There's not a lot original about the music or the packaging—do I have to mention the sacred heart logo or the ubiquitous Lucky Strikes ashtray and crushed Bud can pictures?—but this is definitely a cut above most

music in this style. (PO Box 460402, SF, CA 94146-0402) *(Tigger)*

TRAPDOOR FUCKING EXIT (No Idea)

Intense music with a Drive Like Jehu-ish sense of drama. Guitar chords keep building up and the vocals are on the edge of rationality (?). It sometimes hits a lull or seems a tad dragged out ("Short Ends"), but there are some hammering sounds here, particularly on the opening pair of songs, "Run Idiot Run" and "Choking On Teeth." Darkly compelling. (PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604)

TRIAL BY FIRE-Ringing In The Dawn (Jade Tree)

Impassioned melodic hardcore coming on like a mix of Avail and Kid Dynamite. In fact, at first, I was wondering if the vocalist was the guy from the latter band, but that's not the case. Trial By Fire definitely have poppy inclinations and it's an emotion-packed sound but the tempos are mainly quick, it's not whiny-sounding and the double-barrelled guitar sound has crunch. Not hard to take at all. (2310 Kennwynn Rd., Wilmington, DE 19810)

TRIGGERS-Shoot Your Mouth Off (Dirtnap)

Scorchin'-hot punk by this Portland band... lead vocalist Candy has a ranting, nails-across-the-chalkboard style but it's slowly growing on me and, truth be told, the brattiness matches well with the Triggers' hearty powerchord attack. A raw, energetic late 70s/early 80s west coast punk sound that hits hard and fast. (PO Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111)

TURBONEGRO-Scandinavian Leather (Epitaph)

The return of Turbonegro and it's a triumphant one. I'll admit it took awhile for "Scandinavian Leather" to sink in... it was the same with "Apocalypse Dudes" and, while this album isn't quite on the level of that one, it's hardly a paltry effort. Once again, Turbonegro act as channel and twist their influences, processing the best elements of cheesy 70s rock 'n roll and, if anything, the nods are a bit subtler in the past, but one can clearly hear the likes of Alice Cooper, Cheap Trick and Kiss floating through the notes and chords. Polished and produced-sounding, starting with the opening instrumental that merges moody piano, synth, acoustic and electric guitar with some Morricone vocal "hoo-hahs." Flat-out rocking on the likes of "Turbonegro Must Be Destroyed," "Train of Flesh" and "Drenched In Blood," while "Fuck The World" adds some 'Kashmir'-like strings. Wide-screen rock 'n roll, yet not straying from its catchy essence. (2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026)

TWELVE HOUR TURN-Perfect Progress, Perfect Destruction (No Idea)

Their first album left no real impression on me at all. It just seemed to sound like 600 other screamo punk bands that were all the rage. I don't know what happened, either my tastes have changed or 12 Hour used the first record as a warmup because this full-length is damn near perfect. Born out of the region it hails from, this album benefits greatly from an infusion of the finest elements of urgent guitar bending southern rock, often coming of as what Neil Young and Crazy Horse would have played if they had been weaned on Rites of Spring and the like. 12 Hour Turn play with intense passion and energy but never feel the need to rush through each track amount There's also huge traces of mid-eighties "revolution summer" style DC Hardcore, especially in the vocal styling. I keep tossing EMBRACE around in my head with each listen. (PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604) *(mikechumpchange)*

UK SUBS-Universal (Captain Oi)
UK SUBS/NATIONAL RAZOR FDIC-Gruesome Twosome Vol. 1 (Morphius/VMS)

Two new Subs' releases, with "Universal" being the band's latest full-length and they've hardly run out of gas. It's the Subs' 25th anniversary album. Charlie Harper approaches his 60th birthday with no noticeable reduction in vocal strength or punk spirit. And the lyrics reveal a progressive social conscience. Not the band's "classic" lineup, as Charlie is joined by guitarist Alan Campbell (who's been with him for awhile), bassist Simon Rankin and drummer Jason Dulldrums. Loud punk rock, occasionally getting melodic, but there are songs that harken back to the glory days. "Papers Lie" has an abundance of fire in the belly. The split with National Razor features the Harper/Garratt/Gibbs lineup. Not in their upper echelon of material, though not bad either, particularly the rough 'n ready "Reclaim The Street" and "Go Home." Their cover of Thunderclap Newman's "Something In The Air," done reggae style, isn't that great and there's a pointless dub version, as well. National Razor are an American punk band but have a traditionalist UK-leaning style. Tough and melodic—could be a US counterpart to Bombshell Rocks and bands of that ilk. (Captain Oi: PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 8QA, ENGLAND/Morphius: PO Box 13474, Baltimore, MD 21203)

UNCURBED-Punks On Parole (Sound Pollution)/Chords For Freedom (Sound Pollution)

Back for another barrage—two of 'em, in fact. The Uncurbed, as they're calling themselves these days (or maybe they always did and I wasn't paying attention) lay down the hardcore gauntlet on both these releases. Rumbling rhythms, two scorching guitars and two agitated vocalists spitting out the words of venom. I don't even have to mention the band's obvious influences but they kill at both fast and medium tempo, the latter of which gives the rhythm section an opportunity to create a tank-like ambiance. Anti-authoritarian lyrics and also offering personal observations on life's struggles that exposes a certain amount of vulnerability, believe it or not. Of course, the sheer volume provides a potent shield from these conflicted emotions. Can't get enough of this stuff. "Punks On Parole" is their most recent studio album released in 2002 and "Chords For Freedom" is an 8 song mini-album, originally recorded in 1999 and just now getting a US release. Dam—these guys kick motherfucking ass. (PO Box 17742, Covington, KY 41017)

UNSEEN-Explode (BYO)

Continuing to merge the line between punk and hardcore. The Unseen, together nearly a decade, continue to blast out urgent, aggressive and semi-tuneful music, all of it loud. They're not going emo, they're not going metal, but sticking to their guns. Still looking at the world with a cynical eye but many of these songs deal with personal, coming-of-age issues, as well. The GO! on "Your Failure Is My Revenge" made me think of that track on the Misfits' "Earth AD" that had the same exclamation. One change is the addition of a drummer, Pat Melzard, on several tracks—these are the songs that Mark sings on. Otherwise, another hard-hitting album by these veteran Boston punks. (PO Box 67609, LA, CA 90067)

UNSILENT REIGN-Strangers Amongst Ourselves (Too Damn Hype)

Tedious metal-core. Overflowing with screamy, angst-filled vocals, chug riffing, double-pedal drumming and, while technically-proficient, that doesn't add up to anything interesting. One step removed from nu-metal, essentially. Also, what's with those harmony vocals? Sounds like offkey gregorian monks or something. (PO Box 63524, Philadelphia, PA 19147)

UPPERCUT-A Luta Continua (I Scream)

Uppercut? Wait a minute... did another old NYHC band get back together? Nope, that's not the case, at all. This is a Dutch band playing aggressive hardcore with speed, as well as hooks and even a nod to street punk on the final song, "Counterattack." There's a Kid Dynamite influence, although it's not as abashedly poppy as that band. They also go for the double-speed attack for "Current And Ex Members Of." Played with heart and fury... and I think it's better than the old Uppercut, too, which may be sacriligeous to some of you but that's just too bad. (Broekstraat 10, 1730 Kobbegem, BELGIUM)

US BOMBS-Lost In America/Live 2001 (Disaster)/Covert Action (Hellcat)

"Lost In America" is *very* live, at that and Duane Peters is certainly a live wire. This is punk rock and it's not always pretty. It wasn't meant to be safe or sanitized, as the liner notes state and, having seen the US Bombs a few times, I'd have to say this is a band that delivers on that promise, with a ragtag, underdog spirit and catchy tunes. The gunslinger, rebellious attitude of the Clash and Social D, along with an inimitable vocal style courtesy of the one and only Duane, who adds some gutteral panache. A pretty solid 17 track retrospective recorded at a number of dates and, a few technical glitches aside, the Bombs' energy and presence carry them through. The new album, "Covert Action," is a bit of letdown, however. The lineup is revamped (Curt Gove from LES Stitches is in on guitar). The traditional punk ring remains, as does Peters' unique vocal stylings, but it doesn't seem to always have the punch of old. I'm not saying the album is awful—just not on the level of what came before. "Lab Rats" does hit the mark. (Disaster: PO Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510/Hellcat: 2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026)

USELESS ID-No Vactation From The World (Kung Fu)

Listless, wimpy pop/punk by an Israeli band that sure ain't no Dir Yassin. I only bring up the latter because they make Useless ID's thank-you list. Breezy harmonies, ear-friendly melodies and no songs about the strife in their homeland, concentrating instead on forlorn ditties about being in and out of love. Fine, that's their prerogative but it's the musical equivalent of soggy oatmeal. Soft and mushy and the moog synth makes it even worse. (PO Box 30809, Hollywood, CA 90038)

VACANCIES-Gutpunch (Smog Veil)

Punk rock 'n roll, baby, and from the opening yowl, it's not too difficult to detect the Iggy inflection in the vocals. These Clevelanders (is that the right nomenclature?) throw in more pop hooks and harmonies than other bad-ass units but it doesn't dilute the impact. Nope, not one iota. Big guitars, high-energy arrangements and a scowl on the face. "Get Love," "Gutpunch" and opening track "Head-Case" all lay down the law with feisty authority. (316 California Ave., #207, Reno, NV 89509)

VAE VICTIS-Ugly Reflection (Back The Draft)

Vae Victis had apparently been around for awhile, five years to be exact and through a shifting lineup, before breaking up in 2001. A heavy sound featuring punishing riffs, howling vocals and a doomy atmosphere. A few similarities to His Hero Is Gone, especially on the faster compositions, which I prefer. They do hammer out the drama, though. Vocalist/guitarist Jensen Ward has also played in the grindy Iron Lung and heavier Artimus Pyle and if you're fond of the latter, you'd probably enjoy this album. ($7 ppd, Joshua Carman, 1526 Josephine St., Berkeley, CA 94703)

LOS VATICANOS-Nerone 666 (Thought Crime)

Thrash and grind with dramatic, nightmarish guitar lines and an almost spazzcore style of arranging, but there are also more melodic moments. I can hear echoes of Die Kreuzen in some of the riffs and there's a good amount of complexity, along with lyrics that excoriate politicians, lawyers and the church, which no doubt has a dominant influence over their native Rome. Somewhat hit and miss but not the standard noisy grindcore mess, either. (Thomas Franke, Boxhagenerstr. 22, Berlin, GERMANY)

VERY METAL-Hit and Run (Beer City)

Coming into their own big-time here, but they broke up during 2002, so that'll be it for these guys, most likely. Very Metal have a hot-fueled combination of punk, hardcore, metal and rock 'n roll. A smorgasboard of high-energy sounds, from the speedy adrenalin of "Living A Lie," "Hit and Run," "Losing My Mind" and "Sicko Creep" to the rawk of "Worthless" and "Cheap Shot." Pat Munster's vocals have a little of the Rollins timbre but 'ol Hank hasn't attached his tonsils to anything this musically riveting in many years nor sounded as pissed off. And a few of the basslines conjure up Lemmy and that's not to be sneered at. A full-throttle musical wrecking machine. (PO Box 26035, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0035)

VEXATION (Love Earth Music)

They sound mighty vexed... irritated and agitated, if you will or even "Fucking Irate," as one song is titled. Rabid hardcore with a smidgen of death metal and howling vocals from two pairs of tortured tonsils. With such titles as "Ignorance of Faith" and "Sodomizing Christ," something tells me they have big issues with religion, as well. Occasionally a little mono-rhythmic in the drumming but there's something to the band's unfettered aggressivness. (7726 Lilac Ln., Santa Susana, CA 93063)

VICTIMS-Neverendinglasting (DeadAlive)

Punishing Swedish hardcore—Victims unleash hell with an arsenal of blazing guitars, thunder-plow bass, hammer-smash drumming and harsh vocals. If that sounds devastating, that's an accurate description. Like their countrymen Wolfbrigade, Uncurbed, Acursed, et al, Victims cross-pollinate Discharge-inspired three-chord fury with heavier stylings, yet don't veer into metaldom. OK, they do a bit for the intro of "Människa, Maskin," but then it kicks into overdrive. Blows all that wimpy crap right out of the water. (PO Box 42593, Philadelphia, PA 19101)

SONNY VINCENT-The Good The Bad The Ugly (Acetate)

Sonny's been around the block and his voice carries more than two decades of gritty punk rock experience. For his latest album, he has a core band of Captain Sensible from the Damned and Scott Asheton from the Stooges. Not a bad start but he's also joined by guests on each song, including Brother Wayne Kramer, Brian James, Greg Ginn, Derwood (Generation X) and members of Television, Voidoids, Sonic Youth, Streetwalkin' Cheetahs, Heartbreakers, Weirdos, etc... A Detroit-inspired tinge to the music and rocking out furiously for "My Guitar," "Crazy Ride," "Yesterday's News" and "Animal Farmers." A few songs go in different directions—jazzy for "Down The Drain," country-ish on "Flower" but Sonny is at his best when he lets it rip with the six strings. (2020 Broadway, 2nd Floor, Santa Monica, CA 90404)

VIRUS NINE-What Are You Afraid Of? (A-F)

Hearty-sounding punk punctuated by tough, yet melodic riffing and heart-on-sleeve lyrics. Virus Nine would have gone nicely on a bill at the Rat before its demise. Expressing a working class sentiment but also refusing to fly the flag ("I'm not patriotic, I won't die for my country") and with a handle on how the underclass are essentially screwed in this country. It's not a deeply intellectual take but certainly perceptive—anyone who still abides by the so-called American dream is being delusional. But let's stick to the music. Upbeat and energetic songs with a classic punk style. (PO Box 71266, Pittsburgh, PA 15213)

THE VIRUS-Nowhere To Hide (Punk Core)

Another dose of high energy punk rock. The Virus are one of the better bands playing the early 80s UK-derived style, with a loud, burning approach—speedy tirades, along with more melodic, mid-tempo rousers punctuated by Blitz-ish guitar lines. "Heroes" and "No One Can Save You" have anthem stamped all over 'em, while "So Long" and "Already Dead" offer a burst of adrenalin. No surprises but what did you expect? An orchestral suite? This is punk. (PO Box 916, Middle Island, NY 11953)

VITAMIN X-Down The Drain (Havoc/Underestimated)

23 more songs by this multi-national band, based in Amsterdam. Unabashed old-school hardcore with double-speed adrenalin, as well as some pure rock 'n roll in the guitar leads—after all, I've seen these guys cover "Sweet Home Alabama." Lyrics deal with both broad societal issues, as well as more personal concerns, exemplified by "I Need Some Space" and "What I Do." "Disorder" is about last year's shut-down Chicago fest. Maybe not quite as mesmerizing as "See Through Their Lies," but there's no compromise in Vitamin X's full-on hardcore. (Havoc: PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408/Underestimated: PO Box 13274, Chicago, IL 60613)

VOICES FORMING WEAPONS (One Leaf)

A posthumous release taken from a pair of demos recorded by this Mass. band in 2000. Melodic and, yes, emotional hardcore, but not to be confused with the shit that they call emo, these days. Instead, drawing on the obligatory mid to late 80s DC influences, as well as early Hot Water Music, to an extent. Martin's vocals are gutteral and the songs pack surging, stinging riffs. Guitarist Eric Yu, who remixed the recordings and released this album, has gone on to play in Glory Fades and R'N'R. (104 Bonny Lane, North Andover, MA 01845)

WANTED DEAD-Repercussions (Chunksaah)

Fuck you, fuck you, fuck you—it's a MANTRA, man, and Wanted Dead do their damndest to live up to it. Antisocial west coast punk with the anger and danger born 'n bred in the early 80s. An off-kilter vocalist and rough/fast compositions that won't give anyone that warm and fuzzy feeling. Don't know what they're doing playing such a lame thing as Warped, as the press sheet mentions, but the thought of those teeny-punks being scared shitless by some real punk does make me smile. (PO Box 974, New Brunswick, NJ 08903)

WASTEOID-Total Pukeoid (Intolerant Messiah)

One nasty, crazy-sounding LP. Throttling grindcore with tortured vocals (low and high), electro-jolt guitar and bass, hyper drumming. There's almost a free jazz chaos, although the songs are structured. An exorcism set to music? Or just violent regurgitation? Hey, it IS pressed on vinyl that looks a little like puke. For the grinders out there. (PO Box 6162, San Mateo, CA 94403)

WATCH IT BURN/TILTWHEEL-Twice The Dose (ADD, EP)

Let's get Watch It Burn out of the way.. quickly. Wimpy emo-pop that soars into the ether without leaving any impact whatsover. As for Tiltwheel, they're one of the best bands playing that loud, melodic punk stuff although these three songs aren't really among their best but the wamth in guitar tone and well-embedded hooks do serve them well. And Davey Quinn is one of the only lyricists who writes from that deeply personal perspective and doesn't make you want to throttle him. But at 7+ minutes, "Kids Enthralled By Fish, Erie, PA" stretches things beyond the limit, especially with the plodding tempo. (PO Box 8240, Tampa, FL 33674)

BEN WEASEL-Fidatevi (Panic Button/Lookout)

Imagine if Walt Whitman was weaned on the Ramones and took to celebrating 3 chord pop music instead of becoming the voice of American Romanticism and you have a dead on idea of what this one's all about. It looks like the now Gentle Ben has done a lot of soul searching and self-evaluation and has put the results on a shiny

platter for our aural evaluation. And I have to say that the results are just fine thank you very much. The hooks on this one are the catchiest since "My Brain Hurts" and whatever other changes Mr. Weasel has made in his life, his knack for writing catchy, upbeat pop punk anthems has not been hindered in the slightest. The tunes are short, to the point and definitely made for the singalong, and I find it impossible not to throw this on during many an insomniac night and dance around the bedroom in my jammies. (3264 Adeline St., Berkeley, CA 94703) *(mikechumpchange)*

WEEDEATER-Sixteen Tons (Cruicial Blast)

Sixteen megatons of heaviness. Monstrous, fuzzy guitar chords, thudding drums and, yeah, I guess you could call it stoner-rock. "Woe's Me" takes a dark, acoustic blues turn and it's a rather frightening ambiance. One gets the feeling that the narrator could snap at any second. Occasionally getting lethargic but the heavily groovin' "Lines" show what this band is capable of. Bassist/vocalist Dixie Collins is a former member of Buzzoven. (PO Box 364, Hagerstown, MD 21741)

WELCOME TO YOUR LIFE-There Is No Turning Back (Indecision)

Though there is timeless appeal to the technical melodic brutality that such bands as At The Gates and In Flames wielded at their best, there is a certain tendency in the hardcore scene of late to emulate this harmonic metallic approach in a decidedly diluted form, mimicking the technical proficiency, but showcasing an absolute lack of the ingenuity and creativity that was once displayed by the progenitors of this style. Welcome To Your Life is unfortunately a band that fits this aforementioned mold perfectly. Maiden-esque fretboard dueling, low, surly mid-tempo chugging, and coarse growls pervade the musical makeup here, and though a prominent melodic sensibility surfaces within the barrage of sound, there is little that ultimately proves especially memorable within the smattering of hooks embedded in this bland abrasive framework. The atmospheric feel elicited here is especially stale, and little unique or especially vital ground is covered within the confines of these plod-along numbers. So similar are these pounding hessian anthems to one another that they ultimately seem to blend into a monotonous blur of high end wails, and low, murky rumbling, with little deviation into other styles or tempos. One can't help but feel that it has all been done before, and with far more skill. (PO Box 6052, Garden Grove, CA 92846) *(Mike Ramek)*

WHAT FEEDS THE FIRE-Set Me Free (Stillborn)

Sweeping hardcore with melodic guitar trills and barked-yet-earnest vocals and gang backups. A fast, modern style in a similar vein as Ensign and anyone into that band's older material should enjoy this. I could live without the acoustic guitar that introduces "Burn," though. And the heavier parts don't do much for me, either. (PO Box 3019, New Haven, CT 06515)

WHISKEY REBELS (GMM)

Fairly kickass street-punk from Sacramento—the Rebels infuse a lot of speed and adrenalin into their "hey-hey-hey" punctuated songs and Big Chuck rasps out the words with gritty determination. Needless to say, there are songs about drinking, fighting and hanging out with the boys, as well as a good amount of skepticism towards a society and government that they view as an oppressor. But they stick to an upbeat, highly tuneful sound throughout. (PO Box 15234, Atlanta, GA 30333)

WITHOUT SYSTEM-What Will Be Will Be (HG Fact, EP)

Despite the title, there aren't any covers of "Que Sera Sera" to be found. Just some piledriving Japanese hardcore. I'm not an expert on the different strands of hardcore from that country, but Without System mix the crazed thrash of the early exponents (especially on "Endless Drive") with the bombastic, over-the-top melodrama of this day and age and the vocals have a higher timbre than one hears in other bands. Flailing riffs and drumming and set on stun. (Nakano Shinbashi-M 105, Yayoi-cho 2-7-15, Nakano, Tokyo, JAPAN 164-0013)

WOLFBRIGADE-Progression/Regression (Farewell)

Wolfpack have changed their name to Wolfbrigade but not much else has changed—this Swedish band continue to have a bulldozer-like hardcore onslaught. A formidable sound, a sonic tidal wave with big sharp pointy teeth, to mix metaphors and quote from Monty Python. Not strictly a d-beat concoction, as one hears elements of metal and even a smidgen of melody on "Välfärds Land." Nothing soothing about Micke's gutteral vocals or the twin guitar pillage. The vinyl is an eye-catching picture disc and it doesn't diminish the sound quality, thankfully. (distr. in US by Havoc, PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408)

WOLVES-art.culture.work (Coalition)

Rock music with intellectual inclinations or a manifesto, as it were, can sometimes be a dodgy enterprise. Thankfully, Wolves' music is as gripping as their ideas are challenging—and I'm not even going to attempt an in-depth explanation of the latter, except to note that they certainly have disillusionment with all aspects of "life-as-usual." Former members of Orchid and more musically-accessible than that band. A heady tandem of hardcore, screamo and Slint-ish math rock and coming up with some haunting, powerful sounds. No song-titles, just numbered tracts, along with experimental interludes and, if all this sounds somewhat pretentious, such thoughts disappear once hearing the band's hard-hitting attack. (Newtonstraat 212, 2562 KW Den Haag, NETHERLANDS)

WORLD BURNS TO DEATH-The Sucking Of The Missile Cock (Hardcore Holocaust)

Over-the-top, punishing hardcore punk, the way it was meant to be played and expressing the type of sentiments we need to hear now more than ever. This album deals with the aftermath of the events of 9/11, more specifically the US reponse and, along with it, the increased militarization and propaganda efforts that even reach the punk scene. The latter is the topic of the title track and there's no missing the point: *"Punks wrapped up in flags, I'd like to wrap you up in body bags... when did this patriotic pox start infecting OUR punk rock?"* A strong message and it doesn't hurt that the album will blow a fucking hole in your skull. I liked their 7" but this is even better—a rampaging thrash attack, slowing it down on occasion for dramatic effect and Jack's vocals are clearer and less-distorted—I guess he really wants the words to be heard. And the cover art, featuring George Dubya with an missile where the pecker goes, is also quite provocative. The CD version includes tracks from their two 7" EP's and some unreleased material. (PO Box 26742, Richmond, VA 23261)

WORLD/INFERNO FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY-Just The Best Party (Gern Blandsten)

Just your average everyday soul/klezmer/ska/gospel/punk group—one can hear all those styles mixed together in this big band. And I still can't embrace it. I've heard about the provocative live shows with fire, destruction, mayhem, fights with other bands, etc... and from such a well-groomed collection of people, no less. The W/IFS are a smart, sarcastic/caustic band, lyrically but their music doesn't move me in any way. (PO Box 356, River Edge, NJ 07661)

WORTHLESS UNITED-A Nation Under (Now Or Never)

Here we have more Rancid-alike punk from Jersey's Worthless United; this full-length album underwhelming me with its tendency to slip into mainstream-ized Clash knock-offs. The "I Am Nothing" EP rocked from start to finish (okay, it was only 10 minutes long), but "A Nation Under" crumbles beneath its pompous and bloated power ballads and recycled pop-punk riffs. Kudos once again to their blue-collar lyrics, but it's a tough album to wade through. Too bad. (150 Bay St. Suite 806, Jersey City, NJ, 07302) *(Jason)*

Y/MY OWN LIES-Tough Guys Save The World... To Death! (Thought Crime/Flowerviolence)

Raging hardcore/grind by two bands from Germany. Very tight and not veering into anything too non-musical or without structure. Y's best moments come with the opening tirade, "Nicht Hoch Genung" and their cover of Bastard's "Dear Cops," which expresses a universal theme. They are a tight, riveting powerhouse of a band. Same for My Own Lies, who lay out some convincing high-speed fodder. Ultra-fast hardcore with precise execution and not letting up from one end of the disc to the other. They also do a cool cover, a Beastie Boys' hardcore song "Tough Guy." (Thomas Franke, Boxhagener Str. 22, 10245 Berlin, GERMANY)

YESTERDAY'S KIDS-Can't Hear Nothin' (Panic Button)

These guys possess a greater capacity for truly memorable melodies than practically anyone you could name today—I think the fact that their influences are based as much (or more, at this point) in groups like the Replacements and Beatles as Green Day makes their songwriting just eons above and beyond other young bands. Terrific harmonies, hooks that burn themselves into your brain on first listen and tons of creativity and talent within the boundaries of a three-piece rock band. I should also mention that the production really adds a lot with the extra percussion, keys, strings, handclaps etc—it sounds pretty damn big and provides a lot of ear candy. Anyway, these songs don't really sound like any other current band I could name so considering the fact that we're basically talking about straight-ahead catchy three-minute guitar songs, then I guess that would be the ultimate compliment. GET THIS NOW. (3264 Adeline St., Berkeley, CA 94703) *(Ryan)*

YOUNG WASTENERS (Kick 'n Punch)

Not the same old shit—certain friends and acquaintances have been singing the praises of this Danish band for awhile and I'm glad I paid attention. A rough-hewn, catchy punk sound rooted heavily in early west coast punk, with cajoling, melodramatic vocals by Willy Viagra (cute) and jabbing guitar chords. The opening one/two punch, the instrumental "Wasteners March" leading into the taut, hook-filled title track sets the stage. It really doesn't sound like anything else I can think of, at the moment, although there are some obvious touchpoints, such as the Circle Jerks and Adolescents, but these guys put their own personality all over it. Worth tracking down. (PO Box 578, 2200 Copenhagen N, DENMARK)

YOUTH ENRAGE (Six Two Five, EP)

Here's a quickie—spasmatic hardcore/grind with screamier elements and ultra-tight throughout. Pretty technical stuff, along with a dose of the unexpected, such as the harmonica on "Ideal." Definitely on the crazy side, although their theme song "Youth Enrage" is almost conventional-sounding. There's also 20 minutes of live video footage included on the disc.(PO Box 423413, SF, CA 94142)

ZEKE-Live and Uncensored (Dead Teenager)

Zeke's last stand? Not a bad way to go out. The band called it quits last year [although they recently did a tour, so who knows] and leave behind this album with 8 unreleased songs (from sessions for their last two albums) plus a ton of live material. Gear-shifting betweeen high speed tirades and songs where they stretch their harder-rocking muscle. "Devils' Island" (not the Megadeth song) and "Season Of The Witch" (not the Donovan song, either) are typical of the band in go-for-the-throat mode, while "Ramirez" gets down to serious rockin'. The live material is mainly decent-sounding, although the 11 minutes of bonus material sound as though it came from an audience tape. Hellions that I'd never let in my house, with their "Don't Give A Fuck" serving as a song title and credo of sorts, but they paved a path packed with rock 'n roll landmines over the past decade. (PO Box 470153, SF, CA 94147-0153)

HOWARD ZINN-Artists In A Time Of War (AK Press/Alternative Tentacles)

America's history professor... if only "A People's History of the United States" were required reading for all high school seniors, this country might not be so messed up—or ignorant. Zinn discusses the tradition of artists—authors, poets, playwrights, musicians—expressing themselves during wartime, often against a prevailing sentiment of jingoism and patriotic fervor. Of course, this has happened in recent times with the Dixie Chicks and Michael Moore—and look how the shit hit the fan! Zinn traces the arts relationship to wartime through American history, including during the Spanish-American War, with Mark Twain, WWII, with Eugene O'Neil and through the Vietnam era. Zinn's speech, recorded almost a month after the 9/11/01 terror attacks (at Mass College of Art), would probably be viewed as treasonous in some quarters. And that denigration would probably come from many of the chicken-hawks who never served in the military, unlike Zinn who, himself, is a WWII veteran and has come to believe there is no such thing as a "good war." If only rational voices such as Zinn's were heard more in the mainstream media. But don't count on it. (PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141-9092)•

DIE ZORROS-History of Rock Vol. 7 (Voodoo Rhythm)

This shiny silver platter full of twisted genius has left such an impression on me that I'm breaking one of my cardinal rules of reviewing and letting their press sheet say what I can't put into words: "Puke party with Long Drinks and very, very cheap girls...they are having 140% no respect to this great songs...covering as simple and stupid as possible...a sure hit for every party that is already over...Get Buzzed Drink More and Dance to the Sound of Die Zorros!!!!!!!" For every 100 bands that have done surf/garage in the last ten years, you get a pure gem like this—looks like we've gotta go to Der Schweiz to find inspirational in this tired, played-out genre! Great packaging, great concept, great songs, great production and some actual talent despite what they say about themselves. Let's hear it for surf songs with German titles and covers of Led Zeppelin, Gene Vincent, Fats Domino and EUROPE!!! Fuck yeah, fuck yeah... (Jurastrasse 15, 3013 Bern SWITZERLAND) *(Ryan)*

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INSURGENCE RECORDS

COMPILATIONS

ABSENCE OF SANITY-Rat Town Records Comp. II (Rat Town)

I don't have too many positive things to say about the south but many of these bands do have something going for them (only Ohio's Legbone are from the Union). Bands that mix and match punk, metal and hardcore into different permutations. Reeb, Tanked and Load do it with a good dose of rock 'n roll fury, while Harsh break out some heavier moves and Weedeater opt for the stoner route, in case you couldn't tell. Dulac Swade have a hint of Black Flag darkness, with a southern twist. A reliance on volume? Fine with me. (PO Box 50803, Jax Beach, FL 32240)

ADDICTED TO OI! (Captain Oi)

A new compilation from this label that usually specializes in reissues and I'd have to say the young-guns fare better than the old-timers, to an extent. Well, Klasse Kriminale have been around awhile and they have one of the best songs here, the kick-ass "Take Your Boots," but they're mere babes compared to the Cockney Rejects, Slaughter and the Dogs, The Business, Gonads, Last Resort and Menace but those bands sound rather tepid here. There are exceptions—Special Duties, who still have an abundance of spit and vinegar, Red Alert, whose track won't make you forget "In Britain," but it's snappy and catchy, as is the song by the Blood Brothers, with Mensi from the Upstarts joining Cast Iron Smith and the rest of Red Alert's current lineup. Resistance 77, Discipline and Beerzone also provide some lively fodder. (PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 8QA, ENGLAND)

BLACK ON BLACK: A TRIBUTE TO BLACK FLAG (Initial)

I have to admit I was skeptical about yet another tribute, especially for Black Flag but the bands included on this comp (taken from a series of 7" releases) pummel these songs into loud, damaged submission. American Nothing (aka Nightmare) start it off with a torrid "Depression." Converge alternate between brooding heaviness and jackhammer intensity for "Annhiliate This Week." Dillinger Escape Plan merge both "Damaged 1" and "Damaged II." Planes Mistaken For Stars do a good job with "Police Story" and "Wasted." Coalesce turn "Jealous Again" in a sledgehammer nightmare. I never did hear the major label tribute to Black Flag but reports weren't good. At least the bands involved here have a clue about the essence of the band. (PO Box 17131, Louisville, KY 40217)

BULB SINGLES #1 (Bulb)

Twenty eight songs, six bands, a lot of distorted, pissed of people. Dig it! Bulb Records, another brilliant label from Michigan has just found a new fan. Between this disc and the Mindflayer CD, they're the Load Recs of the Midwest. In other words this is where our money should be spent. Fuck BMG! The first band, Couch, sound like demented noise mongers, sampled shit and lots of beautifully over-amped guitars, screams. Sort of like late 80's Boredoms. They're just the bomb. Next up is Prehensile Monkeytailed Skink. And they sound a bit more "musical." They have actual songs and all complete with tortured vocals abd wailing drums. And then their next song called "I Love You" is a ballad emerging from all the chaos..or does it?!? Cornelius Gomez is next and he's on Crack. His stuff is just insane, with wailing vocals and fucked up songs. Hey wait! This guys HAS to be in one of these other bands. The Monarchs are old R'n R style. Sort of the Lyres sounded 20+ years ago. A nice warm sound and cool songs. Really a cool band. Bullet in The Head are more spacy and distant. Lots of noise and metal pounding. Very grating, in a good way that is. Shriek are last and they have some resemblances to vintage Boredoms as well. Very twisted and good. These guys are all obviously insane. All in all a brilliant compilation of Bulb's bands. Check it out. (4609 Hunt Rd., Adrian, MI 49221) *(Steve)*

CHEESE BORGER'S PIE & EARS VOLUME 2 (Smog Veil)

This is a comp featuring about a million Cleveland bands, mostly of the punk RAWK variety that Cleveland does so well, from the last 20 years. The only modern band I was really familiar with was Stepsister (Tony Erba/Nine Shocks) and their track is pretty rocking. The comp also features the Styrenes, AK-47's, Generics, Kneecappers, New Salem Witch Hunters, etc. Haven't heard of these bands? Fine, but don't they just sound so fucking rock and roll? Sure, this record has a couple points where it started to run together, but honestly, it's a good little education into the Cleveland scene. Regional comps should be just that, starter kits for record collectors and dorks like me. (316 California Ave., #207, Reno, NV 89509) *(Tigger)*

CLASS PRIDE WORLD WIDE 2 (Insurgence)

An international collection of punk, oi, street music, etc... including a live cut by the Angelic Upstarts. Somewhat scattershot and there are definitely some bands here who follow a well-tread mold, but only a few real clunkers. Nogood Heroes come on like old Swingin' Utters or SLF. Social Combat sound tough 'n mean in an early 4-Skins vein. The Class Assassins have a ringingly melodic sound. And none of 'em come on like lyrical boneheads, which is a plus. (2 Bloor St. W., Suite 100-184, Toronto, ON M4W 3E2, CANADA)

CLEPUNK.COMP (Smog Veil)

Not that great a collection—24 bands here and running the gamut from punk to hardcore to pop to oi to ska to funk. The band I'm most-familiar with is Allergic To Whores, who rip it up ferociously on their two tracks, but they're from the band's last album. Dexter Chumley Attack play some spirited thrash and the Standing 69s have a credible garage punk sound on their track, but that's about all I'd even remotely want to hear again. By the way, Saucebox's "Sacrifice" serves up some truly knuckleheaded flag-waving patriotic lyrics—hopefully, now that we're involved in all these foreign conflicts, the members will enlist and we won't have to hear from them again. (316 California Ave., #207, Reno, NV 89509)

COMMERCIAL: TRAFFIC VIOLATION SAMPLER 2002 (Traffic Violation)

Punk, hardcore, pop, emo, screamo—covering all the bases and, even if I'm not enamored of the lethargy of On The Might Of Princes or speedy pop/punk from Splurge, that's made up for with the urgency of such bands as Contra, the Insurgent and Jan Crux. All these bands do share a penchant of speaking from the heart and melody is often at the core. (PO Box 772, East Seatucket, NY 11733)

CONCRETE WAVES (Disaster)

Three bands and all of 'em skating enthusiasts—I already knew that about JFA, who were one of the inventors of skate punk and it's interesting how Brian's gravelly voice is similar to Dicky from the Bosstones. Driving punk, along with more melodic tendencies. The Worthless are a snotty, obnoxious punk band and "Worm" is a winner, though the puerile misogyny expressed on "Toxic Shock" and "Yeah Baby" really makes me wonder about these guys. Blue Collar Special fuse pop and punk with a fair amount of scrappiness, though it does veer a little close to that sanitized West Coast style I've grown tired of... (PO Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510)

DECIDE ON CHANGE (Mountain)

A benefit compilation for the NYC More Gardens Collection which, according to the info that came with the record, "fights to keep community gardens and other public space in the hands of the community." The Mountain Collective have put together a good collection of bands here—definitely on the raw, aggressive end of the hardcore punk spectrum—Straight To Hell, Balance of Terror, Melee, Esperanza, Self Defense, Totalitär, Diallo, Something In The Water, Scholastic Deth and a few more. Many of these bands, unfortunately, have broken up—seems as though the hardcore punk scene is, as always, in a state of flux, and in this group are some bands that I think have made a big contribution in recent years. Comes with a booklet that has info on the bands and a piece that explains more about the beneficiaries. (PO Box 220320, Brooklyn, NY 11222)

DEFIANCE MUSIC BASTARD SYSTEM: GET THEE TO A NUNNERY (Schizophrenic)

An older Schizo comp and an eclectic, international assortment of bands—ravaging hardcore by DS-13, Havaistys (Finland), Freaks Banglin Bay and the Hyper Hindu Squatters, a Japanese band who adds a few artsy touches to their old-school 'core. 9 Curve have a nasty crossover streak. The Mormons, Steve Peffer from Nine Shocks Terror's former band, contribute some noisy, obnoxious punk that's something of an acquired taste. The Knockups play in a nervier rock 'n roll vein. Not all savory—the death metal of Black Mass Of Absu, electronic experimentation from Demona and Kokosha Glava's ska don't do a lot for me and a few of the hardcore bands veer aren't always that distinctive (Huono Olo) but definitely some worthwhile material. (50 Fielding Cres., Hamilton, ON L8V 2P5, CANADA)

DIRTNAP ACROSS THE NORTHWEST (Dirtnap)

Dirtnap is one of my favorite labels of late—specializing in stripped-down punk, garage, new wave, etc. Unlike most crud that comes in the mail, when I see Dirtnap on the return address, it goes to the top of the listening pile. Loud, nervy music that often rocks up a storm and also goes against the grain. Pesky and obnoxious but getting into your head. Not every song here is an unequivocal success and I'm a tad disappointed with the Pulses' song (their album is a knockout), plus the Spits' song is a hip-hop piss-take. On the other hand, can't wait to hear more from Shanghai Junk, who come on like the New Bomb Turks. Solid ass-kickers are contributed by Lopez, Midnight Thunder Express, the Diskords (who all look about 16), the Triggers and the ever-reliable Briefs. All of the songs are previously-unreleased—which is kind of an anomaly in the glut of comps, these days. (PO Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111)

ESTRUS DOUBLE DYNAMITE SAMPLER (Estrus)

A few songs from 7"s and one unreleased Immortal Lee County Killers song but, otherwise, it's label sampler time. All rock 'n roll and it seems as though many of these bands are running a soulful vibe through their music, as well. Tim Kerr's imprint can be heard all over the place, from his new project with Poison 13/Lord High Fixers' compatriot The Total Soundgroup Direct Action Committee to new material with the Monkeywrench (featuring members of Mudhoney) to his production on other songs. Vibrant, raw and raucous... not as much of the garage revivalism and, sometimes, I miss that a bit, but there's no denying the pure energy of such bands as Gasoline, Federation X, Fatal Flying Guilloteens or the Fireballs of Freedom. And while the surfy Man Or Astro-Man? or rootsy Gas Huffer don't tickle the fancy quite as much as in the past, there's more than enough to pique your interest, especially with the lowball price. (PO Box 2125, Bellingham, WA 98227)

A FISTFUL OF ROCK 'N ROLL VOLUME 9 (Devil Doll)

I somehow missed volume 8, but what are you gonna do? 25 more bands who refuse to believe rock is dead, including a vintage song by the Gargoyles from the early 90s or so and in a similar bitter-acoustic vein as "Gimme Danger" off "Raw Power." There's not a lot that makes me go completely out of my head but the bands keep the powerchords coming, whether it's the Kiss tribute of the Hellacopters, the garage-honed Rockets or the one and only New Bomb Turks plying their delirious garage/punk/rock 'n roll. Don't dig the cock rocky stuff quite as much but when it's got that punk edge, it remains palatable. The continuing essay series explores the early 80s punk and hardcore (r)evolution. (PO Box 30727, Long Beach, CA 90853)

FIGHTING MUSIC 2 (Deathwish)

A collective sampler of recent releases from Bridge Nine, Deathwish, Indecision and Thorp. So the emphasis is hardcore, of course, although a lot of it is forged in wrought-iron metal and that's not quite as appealing to me. Bleeding Through, Throwdown, Scars Of Tomorrow, Blinding Light and A Life Once Lost fall into that style. On the other hand, there's some raging hardcore from the likes of Striking Distance, Panic, Horror Show, Over My Dead Body, Suicide File, Knives Out, My Luck and others. Most of the good stuff is towards the end of the disc, so perseverance was rewarded, in this case. (10 Lothrop St., Beverly, MA 01915)

GEARHEAD RECORDS SMASH-UP DERBY (Gearhead)

Punk, garage and power-pop are this label's specialty and they've done releases by some pretty big-deal bands—the Hives and Hellacopters, namely, and they're both here. A label sampler with three unreleased songs, none of which are that special—disappointingly, the New Bomb Turks' cover of 60s garage obscuros the Painted Ship's "And She Said Yes" (also covered by the Cynics) isn't that inspiring, nor are the Hypnomen, but the Demons fare better. The previously-released tracks feature some inspiring material from the garagey Sewergrooves, Pattern, Maggots, cool beat music by the Dukes of Hamburg and solid rock from Puffball, Flaming Sideburns and the 'Copters. (PO Box 421219, SF, CA 94142)

GO-KART VS. THE CORPORATE GIANT 3 (Go-Kart)

Widely-divergent sampler of bands, as Go-Kart has been an eclectic label and some of the songs are either unreleased or from yet-to-be-released albums. Naturally, I'm attracted to the harder-hitting punk and hardcore bands such as Toxic Narcotic, Varukers, I Farm, Sick On The Bus, INDK, Two Man Advantage, 46 Short and Icons of Filth, less-so to the poppier Capture The Flag, Guff, Hellbenders, Pseudo Heroes and Manda and the Marbles. GBH sound somewhat toothless on "Punk Rock Ambulance," from their disappointing recent album. Revolution Summer bring twos sides of the coin together, as they have burning energy but also annoyingly emo tendencies. The band to watch here is Star Spangled Bastards, who end the disc with some completely walloping punk and I'm anxious to hear more. (PO Box 20, NY, NY 10012)

HIGH ENERGY HIGH VOLTAGE (Sound Pollution)

As a Sound Pollution sticker on my record cabinet states, "never mind the melody" and you won't find much melody on these 50 tracks, except perhaps for the Dudoos' goofy Toy Dolls-inspired punk and perhaps Flag Of Democracy, where the tunefulness is wrapped in warp-speed hardcore. Nothing that wasn't previously-released but a decimating overview of thrash, grind and hardcore from around the planet, including the likes of Spazz, Uncurbed, Meanwhile, Asstück, Y, Allergic To Whores, 9 Shocks Terror, the Gaia, Hellnation, Exclaim and a lot more. Louder 'n fuck. (PO Box 17742, Covington, KY 41017)

HISTERIA (Leguna Armada)

Man, what a smokin' compilation—a dazzling hardcore punk lineup from the US and overseas... how does this sound: Life's Halt, Seein' Red, Limp Wrist, E-150, Esperanza, DS-13, Deathreat, Sin Orden and Melee. A few of the bands' tracks have shown up on their CD anthologies (E-150, Deathreat) but this is vinyl, baby, and I can see sparks coming from the needle. Fast, blazing music by all parties involved, although Sin Orden (who have since split up) have a neat hip-hop intro for "Pro-Choice." It's impossible to list highlights... for once, the expression "it's all good" is applicable. Man, if Limp Wrist's "The Ode" doesn't have you wanting to mosh, check the 'ol pulse. Comes with a newspaper-style booklet that has an anti-war essay by Martin and some cool band photos. (1010 ½ Riverine Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92701)

HOPELESS RECORDS' 50TH RELEASE (Hopeless, dbl. CD)
HOPELESSLY DEVOTED TO YOU VOL. 4 (Hopeless)

Hopeless Records took an on-line poll and asked people to name their favorite songs from all their different releases (excluding compilations) and here are the results. While the Samiam cut, "Dull," is one of the weaker songs I've heard from this band and I can live without pretty much *any* song by the weak-kneed pop punksters Weston or Digger, ska boys Mustard Plug or the emo-ish The Story So Far, there's a pretty good selection otherwise. The masses nail it by picking Dillinger Four's "Doublewhiskeycokeonice," for instance. Guttermouth gets the double disc off to a riotous start with their cover of the Exploited's "Sid Vicious Is Innocent." Among the other gems not to overlook are the Queers' "Little Rich Working Class Oi-Boy," the stinging melodic punk from Funeral Oration, Against All Authority's raging "24 Hour Roadside Resistance" and the up 'n coming Selby Tigers' pair of tracks. Even the peurile Nobodys provide some punk rock fun, though "Best Damn Tits (I've Ever Seen)" brings their rather unhealthy obsession with bosoms (to quote Terry Thomas from "It's A Mad Mad... World") into bold relief—oof, sorry about that. Not a bad label roundup. "Devoted" is the label's latest cheapie sampler, with a smattering of unreleased songs, but the only one that really grabbed my ear was Against All Authority's "Out A Luck." Samiam's song is tuneful, but the band ain't what they used to be. Common Rider's reggae groove is underwhelming, compared to the band's last EP and they really scrape it for the pop/punk meets metal of Avenged Sevenfold and Thrice, the sub-Bosstones' mediocrity of Mustard Plug and Jeff Ott's weak singer-songwriter attempt. Good tracks by the Selby Tigers and Scared Of Chaka can be found on their most-recent releases, so you should seek them out. But this comp is far from essential. (PO Box 7495, Van Nuys, CA 94109-7495)

HOW WE ROCK (Burning Heart)

Sampling of the so-called rock revolution, with bands from around the globe and there's only one unreleased song, a fairly average offering by the Supersuckers. Still, these bands have a diversity of styles, from the garage-bred ass-whoopin' of Randy and the New Bomb Turks to the bluesy, ZZ Top-ish Danko Jones to the big hook revue of Rocket From The Crypt to the Motörhead-worshipping Puffball the the near-hardcore of Zeke. Turbonegro bring irony and a knowing wink to their unabashed 70s rock tribute. Some good bands are represented by less-inspired material, such as the Hellacopters, Electric Frankenstein and Donnas (whose luster is wearing off quickly). All 19 bands wield big guitars and know how to rock, as they say. But a few more rarities would have been nice, since many of these bands have hard-to-get songs. (2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026)

IRON CITY PUNK 3 (Brave New Records)
A little bit of everything here—and most of it worth hearing and kicking butt. The heavier 'core from Gun Spiking isn't that appealing, but that can't be said for the pissed-off sounds from Aus-Rotten, Aufstand, Enemies of Yinz, Deviants, Caustic Christ, Behind Enemy Lines (the latter two bands are spin-offs from Aus-Rotten), the more street-punk sounding Ultimatics, rough 'n tumble Submachine, BGA and Corpus Christie. Anti-Flag contribute a pair of songs that don't have the studio sheen of recent efforts. There's a vintage song by Half Life from 1987, recorded live on the radio. Pittsburgh has a rep for being a blue-collar city and there's a workmanlike, non-pretentious craft to these bands. Nothing fancy, at all, as these bands bulldoze through their songs. (406 South Craig St. Pittsburgh, PA 15213)

LOOKOUT FREAKOUT 3 (Lookout)
Another label sampler and, as is par for the course, pretty uneven as Lookout has expanded its roster to include some artists I don't find particularly appealing—the electronic Communique, the extremely overrated Ted Leo and Pretty Girls Make Graves or the twee Oranges Band. American Steel have gone sharply downhill, as well. On the plus side, there's nervy rock from the Pattern, the Enemy, the Cost, decent punk from Moral Crux, MTX, Smugglers and an oldie from Complete Disorder. Half a dozen of the songs are unreleased but only the Smugglers' song really did anything for me. (3264 Adeline St., Berkeley, CA 94703)

MURDEROUS GRIND ATTACK (625)
Japanese and US bands doing their damndest to raise holy hell. Grindcore is defined by ultra-fast drumming—blast-beats, if you will, and ear-piercing shrieks and grunts for vocals. There are nuances, I'm sure, and some of these bands introduce jazzy and weirder elements, such as the Dillinger Escape Plan-meets-grind of Parade of the Lifeless or the death metal leanings of Bathtub Shitter. Some of the genre's heaviest hitters are here—Phobia, Godstomper and Unholy Grave. Ultimately, though, I prefer thrash or fastcore or whatever it's called. Pushing it to the extreme becomes numbing, after awhile, and it starts to run together. I realize there are people who can't get enough of the 'ol grindcore. Have fun. (PO Box 423413, SF, CA 94142-3413)

NO HOLD BACK... ALL ATTACK!!! (3 LP)
Three record comp documenting the Minneapolis "Hardcorepunkrock&roll" scene, as it's described and, with 54 tracks/artists, it covers a wide swath. Sure, there are some misses—the overwrought metal of Enamor, a few of the more emo-sounding bands but, as a whole, there's plenty to recommend. Some better-known bands make an appearance—Dillinger Four, Holding On, Calloused (covering the Gits), Misery, the punk-as-fuck Onward To Mayhem, and Felix Havoc's new band, Damage Deposit, are here with their memorable "Video Games and The Simpsons Are Killing Hardcore." Underrated garage punks Sweet JAP, the trad-punk Scamps and The Framed, the wise-assed Plate-O-Shrimp (from a sight gag in "Repo Man") and hardcore punk by El Punkeke & The Aliens also caught my ear. The whole thing starts off with a rap version of Code 13's "Give The Kids What They Want" by 1-2-Go! Crew. As I said, quite diverse. (Havoc, PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408)

THE PHILADELPHIA SOUND (Chunksaah)
Four bands, two songs apiece and definitely a striking sound—aggressive, frayed, intense and occasionally tuneful hardcore punk from all these bands, here. Actually, Knives Out follow a slightly heavier muse but the above descriptions are applicable for Paint It Black (ex-Kid Dynamite people), the Curse and Go! For The Throat. Over way too quickly and there aren't too many anthologies I can say that about, these days. (PO Box 974, New Brunswick, NJ 08903)

POINT BREAK VOLUME 1 (Sidecho)
Overwrought? Yeah, that fits the bill here. This is the forged-in-iron, metal and metal-core side of the spectrum. No punk rock to be found. American Nothing (aka Nightmare), Stretch Arm Strong and Ensign come closest to a traditional hardcore influence but, as with most of the songs here, everything's previously released. The straight metal bands—In Flames and Shadows Fall, in particular, are the most appealing, but most of this collection is a snooze. By the way, there are also some prominent god-rock acts here (Zao, Living Sacrifice, Stretch Arm Strong), so I had the remote handy because I don't require a spiritual awakening. Actually, the net result of most of the music here was quite the OPPOSITE of an awakening. Zzzzz... (7923 Warner Ave., Suite K, Huntington Beach, CA 92647)

POP FOR CHARITY (Doubleplusgood)
Yes, it's a benefit compilation for charities in the Minneapolis area but, except for Dillinger Four's cover of Motörhead's "No Voices In The Sky," there's very little here that you'll want to hear. A tepid collection of downtempo indy rock, acoustic music, hip-hop and ambient. After D4, there are three heavy-sounding songs by the Spiveys, Dames and Beautiful Mothers and those are listenable but that's about it. Unless you're a D4 completist, there's no reason to get this... just wait for "This Shit Is Genius, Vol. 2," anyway. (PO Box 18721, Minneapolis, MN 55418)

POSSESSED TO SKATE Volume Two (625, 10")
Two US bands—Scholastic Deth and Life Set Struggle and two from overseas, ETA (Sweden) and Breakfast (Japan). Raging hardcore punk from all parties involved. All of 'em are loud and fast, with differing nuances, whether it's the early 80s stylings of ETA, Scholastic Deth's ultra-fast thrash or Breakfast's quirkier impulses. Life Set Struggle, from Michigan, also impress with their hard-hitting sound. Of course, this being a skate comp, many songs deal with harrassment and keeping board-riding DIY.

PRISONS ON FIRE (AK Press/Alt. Tentacles)
And again, we have another inspiring and educational spoken word disc from the effervescent team of AK Press and Alternative Tentacles Records. Also, again, we have recorded narratives from those who were there during an important time in the history of the United States. There was once a time when the concept of prison-activism was a non-entity. In the late 1960s, as the FBI cracked down on a burgeoning black radical movement, an increasingly radical American Indian Movement, and a now-legendary but in most circles, less radical anti-war movement, they soon had to face a new problem unlike any that the powers that be in the United States had ever faced: an all-out rebellion in the prison system. This disc examines the growth of prison-rights activism from within prison walls, prison strikes, civil disobedience on the inside, and the full-scale rebellion at Attica. If nothing else, it's worth owning a copy of the recording of L.D. Barkley reading aloud the Attica Manifesto, which sends chills down my spine. Barkley, along with far too many others, was murdered during the violent retaking of the prison. Most observers of the affair are in agreement that Governor Nelson Rockefeller could have easily negotiated a non-violent end to the affair. The first half of the disc is both a tribute to the legacy and a biography of the life of George Jackson, a pioneering prison activist who was killed at the infamous San Quentin Prison (an incident of martyrdom which forged greater solidarity between prisoners across the country) during a massive uprising throughout the brutal California prison system (when smiling Ronnie Reagan was governor). You'll learn about the Soledad Brothers, Jonathan Jackson's raid upon the Marin County courthouse with assault rifles and satchel charges, the connection between the Black Panthers and the prison movement, and hear from such radical celebrities as Angela Davis, William Kunstler, and even actor and singer Harry Belafonte. This is definitely something to pop into the stereo the next time you take a road trip to a direct action or protest. Educate yer ass! (PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141-9092) *(Snotty Scotty)*

PUNCH DRUNK IV (TKO)
If anything, these bands all carry a tune—punk rock but with a respect for rock 'n roll tradition and melody. That's particularly true for the likes of Electric Frankenstein, Bad Luck Charms, Limecell and the Forgotten. Some good shit, here—Bottles & Skulls rampaging "War Machine," Antiseen's buzzsaw take on the Ramones' "Today Your Love" careening into "Stormtrooper," the gritty garage punk of RPG, the always-nervy Smogtown and a stirring cut by the Generators. And about half was only on vinyl before or unreleased. (3126 W. Cary St., #303, Richmond, VA 23221)

PUNK ROCK VOL. 2 (206)
Sounds like the prototypical mid-90s pop/punk compilation release, although this one features five bands doing multiple songs. The Throw Downs are the most aggressive of the bunch, with speedy, yet melodic songs. Their overdriven sound differentiates them from the other bands here. Monkey Pirates, from Japan, have some burn in their sound but not enough to make me curious to hear more. Shift-D are the worst of the bunch, with lengthy, wimpy songs and one even has weepy violin on it. Blech. Darling Daizy (from Norway) and Bigwheel are two sides of a similar generic coin. (8314 Greenwood Ave., PMB 102, Seattle, WA 98103)

RAMONES FOREVER: AN INTERNATIONAL TRIBUTE (Radical)
Maybe I'm sick of tributes, maybe I'm tired of hearing Ramones' tribute but this is just awful. Granted, the bands aren't all doing carbon-copy punk versions but this hodgpodge of electronica, reggae, techno, pop and punk ain't that happening. About half the bands are Belgian, which is where this comp was originally released and there ain't a lot I'd want to hear a second time—not christian punks the Huntingtons, not really Marky Ramone, who does a serviceable "I Don't Wanna Grow Up," certainly not the techno-shite of JMXW's "I Don't Wanna Walk Around With You." OK, the frog-voiced Ramon Da Silva's version of "53rd and 3rd" is kind of funny, as is Neven's electronic "I Wanna Be Sedated," but the novelty runs out quickly. One more question: Where's Plastic Bertrand? Huh? Huh? Belgium's original punk rocker should have been consulted. Big pass. (77 Bleecker St., NY, NY 10012)

REALITY PART #4 (Deep Six)
Got this in the same package as the Infest album and it's another comp of extreme sounds—thrash, grind, industrial and metal in various permutations. There's diversity but not much that really appeals, here—among the highlights are ravenous thrash from Haymaker, 324, Low Threat Profile (Infest and Lack of Interest members), Ruido and Dudman. (PO Box 6911, Burbank, CA 91510)

REJECTED VOLUME III (Rejected)
There's a minister of some sort on the cover but nothing religious inside... well, unless you consider punk rock a religious experience of sorts. I'm not sure if the material here quite reaches that level of nirvana but it's a solid sampler from this Irish label, including a few unreleased songs. Any comp with Oi Polloi, UK Subs, the Dickies and Leatherface is off to a good start, plus there's some agitated punk by the likes of the Restarts, Pink Turds In Space, Bleeding Rectum and others, a solid Ruts' cover from Skint ("Backbiter") and Stomach sounding a bit like the aforementioned Leatherface on their song. I'm not quite as enamored of Blood or Whiskey's trad Irish music and they have three songs here. (PO Box 6591, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, IRELAND)

REVELATION 100 (Revelation)
Collection of rarities and unreleased tracks and, unfortunately, not as good as it could have been. For one thing, there's not enough of the 'core and some bands aren't well-represented—especially Gorilla Biscuits, with an awful track from their first demo that doesn't even hint at the powerhouse they'd become or an aurally deficient live song by Side By Side. Judge's song comes from the Chung King session, which has been booted by Lost and Found. Youth Of Today offer an outtake from their final 7" and it's a hardcore version of a *Partridge Family* song! Not bad, actually, nor is the more melodic song by Shades Apart nor an alternate "Dine Alone" by Quicksand. Slipknot's frenetic hardcore song is OK, as well. But Ignite sound like fucking Pearl Jam on their song, there's slick emo/pop/core from Garrison, Sense Field, Movielife and By A Thread and the metallic Himsa, Shai Halud and Will Haven aren't that interesting. Opportunity lost. (PO Box 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615)

SAMPLE THIS, TOO (BYO)
Collecting some recent releases and upcoming ones, as well—although, given my slow publishing schedule, some of the 'new' shit may be back catalog by the time this review sees daylight. Except for some tepid material by Sixer and One Man Army (who used to be a lot better), a good overview from this 20 year-old label. Stirring punk from the Unseen, Kosher, Forgotten, Pistol Grip, Manifesto Jukebox and the Beltones, who definitely *do* sound more than a bit like SLF. Shawn Stern's voice has taken on a gruffer dimension for the new Youth Brigade song and there's still something there. Manic Hispanic check in with "Lupe I'm Free," which sounds mysteriously like the Damned's "Melody-Lee." Anti-Flag's "No Borders No Nations" won't make you forget "Die For The Government," but it's OK and features a vocal turn from Chris (not sure if it's Head or #2). Some quality material here. (PO Box 67609, LA, CA 90067)

SIGNIFICANTLY LIVE (Significant)
Not too pleasant a stroll down memory lane—it just reinforces that the 1990-95 time frame documented here was a pretty weak era for hardcore and its offshoots, as bands moved into heavier and/or more melodic directions. It also doesn't help that the live performances here, recorded at four different venues, suffer from mainly substandard sound quality—on the Supertouch track, all you can really hear are vocals and drums. You'd never know Swiz were the great band they were by the sluggish take of "Sunstroke." Ignite's contribution, "Call On My Brothers," is equally dismal. Few of the bands come out unscathed, with the possible exceptions of American Standard and Shudder To Think, who hadn't devolved into the ultra-quirky and strange unit they'd become. Nope, it hasn't aged well—not Face Value's metal-core (featuring Tony Erba briefly *rapping* to a degree), the ludicrous fantasy metal of Into Another, with lyrics about walking along the bottom of the ocean or the watered-down pop of Junction. Even with the bands that have a semi-"legendary" status such as Four Walls Falling, Black Train Jack, Farside, Edgewise or Admiral—it makes one wonder what the big deal was and that has as much to do with the mediocre musical contents as the poor recording quality. Hindsight has shown there were some good bands in that time frame that I undervalued at the time—Born Against, Econochrist, Disrupt, Dropdead and the Pist immediately come to mind—but this is a clear example of a core gone soft. (PO Box 642, Indian Rocks Beach, FL 33785)

STAB TO KILL VOL. 1 (Stab and Kill)
Some rather graphic artwork by Mike Bukowski (RAMBO) and the music on the disc is also quite murderous in intent... most of the bands are from Massachusetts and represents a pretty solid cross-section of the local scene, from the raging hardcore of Fit For Abuse, the A-Team, Say Goodbye, Close Call and Think I Care to the more rockin' Prowl and R'N'R and street punk of Tommy and The Terrors. Bottom Line and Knife Fight provide some stirring 'core, as well, while the Smut Peddlers introduce some obnoxious garage punk 'n roll. (PO Box 52084, Boston, MA 02205)

TOMORROW WILL BE WORSE VOL. 3 (Sound Pollution)
The latest installment has a hammering selection of bands from the US and Japan, bookended by two bands who have a history going back two decades—Flag Of Democracy, who have been around the whole time, as far as I know, and the Fartz, who re-formed a few years ago. FOD fuse their high-speed hardcore with loony-tune verve and a thrown-against-the-wall tunefulness. The Fartz sound as pissed as ever. In between, the bands tend to opt for a noisy and rambunctious style—not always that successfully, such as Idol Punch, but then you have a band such as Vivisick, who continue to impress with their blitzkrieg thrash attack. Brody's Militia keep the fidelity low, themselves, but blast away with ravenous intent. Struck, from Japan, also keep it hard and fast. A ripping assortment. (PO Box 17742, Covington, KY 41017)

WAY TOO MUCH TIME (Overlook)
A compilation of Mass. bands playing mainly poppy/melodic/emo-style punk, although Zippo Raid are a bit more obnoxious than the rest. Hot Water Music and Avail seem to have inspired many of these bands, which include Missionshifter, Boxingwater, Chanticleer and Inner Truth. No real hardcore stuff, in other words. Espontaneo's "Us and Them" is particularly buzzing and catchy but little else really knocked my socks off. (www.suckrock.com/overlook.html)

WE'RE A HAPPY FAMILY-A TRIBUTE TO THE RAMONES (Columbia)
Much like seeing Broooce Springsteen and Little Steven sing "London Calling" at the Grammy Awards, something's not right hearing the likes of Kiss, Garbage or Eddie Vedder cover the Ramones. This is a wretched collection, top to bottom, a fine example of corporate rock dilettantism. I'd like to beat on that brat Bono's head for his mannered vocal, which is beyond laughable. So is Rob Zombie's "Blitzkrieg Bop" (stick to Nugent and Kiss covers, buddy). Of course, so-called punk is represented by Green Day, Rancid and the Offspring, who do serviceable but so-what versions of "Outsider," "Sheena" and "I Wanna Be Sedated," respectively. Zeke's two cuts would have been better if they hadn't been mere backup to the overwrought Eddie Vedder, but they probably wouldn't have been here, otherwise. The Pretenders are an embarassment, at this point, as are Metallica. And who the fuck are Pete Yorn and Rooney? I do like Tom Waits' reinterpretation of "Return of Jackie and Judy" with a minimalist, bluesy flavor and Garbage do an adequate "I Just Wanna Have Something To Do." But I'll stick to the original versions, thank you.

YOUR SCENE SUCKS (Go-Kart)
Not too bad a comp, with bands from all over the place and a wide variety of hardcore, punk, metal, pop, etc. The Curse caught me by surprise with an intense, yet melodic sound. Heads Vs. Breakers do a nice Kid Dynamite-inspired sound. Downpour provide a potent metal-core song. Books Lie pack on the power, as do the Control, Toxic Narcotic ("People Suck," baby!), Tear It Up, Let It Burn, Kill Your Idols, Missing 23rd, Most Precious Blood et al. Not all perfect, which is par for the course with these things—Rise Against don't do a thing for me, for instance, with their melodramatic sound. Stampin' Ground overdo it with the double-bass drums. Yet there really is something to appeal to everyone (into hardcore, that is) here. (PO Box 20, Prince Street Station, NY, NY 10012)

REISSUES

ADICTS-Sound of Music/Smart Alex/Fifth Overture/Twenty-Seven (all Captain Oi)

Four Adicts reissues and two of 'em are good, two of 'em ain't so good. "Sound Of Music," from '82, is the band's second best album, in my opinion, not far behind "Songs of Praise." A fun blend of punk and pop hookcraft, with such killers as "Let's Go," "My Baby Got Run Over By A Steamroller," "Easy Way Out," "How Sad" (complete with circus music intro) and the kitschy "Chinese Takeaway." Energetic and catchy as all-hell. Includes three bonus tracks. "Smart Alex" came three years later and isn't nearly as good. The rough punky edges are smoothed off for more of a straight-forward pop sound and there are some ill-advised forays into dancier (for want of a better term) regions. The wit remains and it's not a complete disaster, with the enjoyable title track and "Crazy." "The Odd Couple," a b-side entry, upstages most of the album material, harkening back to their earlier sound and the "ADX Medley" is kind of cool, as well. But this is more cabaret than punk, at times. "Fifth Overture" is even worse. A toothless pop album dominated by cheesy keyboards and dancefloor production. When a song titled "She's A Rocker" doesn't even come close to rocking, you know you're in trouble. Only "Who Spilt My Beer," one of the bonus tracks, has any hint of the band's old sound and it still sounds a tad watered-down. "Twenty-Seven," which came out in '92, is a semi-return to form. The keyboards are gone and the Adicts once again increase the punk quotient to their pop. Cheeky, more energetic and worth a listen. (PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 8QA, ENGLAND)

ADOLF & THE PISS ARTISTS-March Of The Piss Artists (Retch)

A collection of earlier singles, demos and live material. Potent and catchy street punk getting its inspiration from both sides of the ocean, although the British musical influence tends to be the dominant characteristic. Blistering guitars, pealing lead lines that bring Blitz and the Partisans to mind and forged ahead with a solid rhythmic kick, whether it's mid-tempo pogo mode or something speedier. Rougher than their subsequent album and with some song overlap but that doesn't make it less-enjoyable. Chet Knight's gruff, heart-on-sleeve vocals make a perfect fit. Gritty, bullshit-free anthems giving a loud airing. (49 Rose Crescent, Woodvale, Southport, Merseyside PR8 3RZ, ENGLAND)

AGITATED-Go Blue, Go Die (Smog Veil)

Cleveland obscuros—I actually have one of the cassette comps that this band appeared on, but that's because I'm an old fart. Kick-ass, pissed-off teenage hardcore that holds its own. Hard, fast riffs pealing off some noise-damaged squalls, accompanied by angry vocals. Sure, there were tons of band doing such a thing all across the US during those halcyon days of '82-'83 and it still sounds good to these ears because there was something fresh about it—a legitimate expression of raw energy. A nice addition to the early US hardcore archive. And they did a rip-roarin' version of the Stooges' "I Got A Right" long before it became trendy. (316 California Ave., #207, Reno, NV 89509)

ANGELIC UPSTARTS-Teenage Warning/We Gotta Get Out Of This Place/Still From The Heart (Captain Oi)

The first, second and fourth Upstarts' studio albums ("Two Million Voices," number 3, was reissued a few years ago) and the tandem of "Teenage Warning" and "We Gotta Get Out" are the Upstarts' shining moments. No doubt they were under the wing of Sham's Jimmy Pursey, who produced "Teenage Warning." Working class punk rock with plaintive, straight-forward lyrics and catchy arrangements. "I'm An Upstart," "The Young Ones," "Teenage Warning," "Police Oppression," "Never 'Ad Nothin," "Shotgun Solution" and the rollicking "Ronnie," with some fine piano playing and reminiscent of Sham on "The Game"—these are all great tunes. On the other hand, I'm not quite so sure I'd show any sympathy or compassion towards Rudolf Hess, the nazi war criminal and subject of "Lonely Man Of Spandau." Odd, considering their anti-fascist leanings. "Teenage Warning" includes the original 7" of "Liddle Towers" and "Police Oppression" as a bonus, while "We Gotta Get Out" tacks on a couple of b-sides. "Still From The Heart," on the other hand, is an ill-advised expansion of their sound. The lyrics remain potent but are wrapped in cheesy arrangements. No punch, no oomph, except for a handful of songs. The Upstarts were attempting to get more accessible or poppy or whatever and it just doesn't work. Not as wide-ranging as, say, the Clash's "Sandinista"—I bring that up because "Wasted" and "I Stand Accused" sound a little like the Clash from that period. "Cry Wolf" is the punkiest of the songs, best heard on the demo bonus track version here. Interestingly, I saw the Upstarts about a month after this album came out and that show was much higher-energy than the songs on this record would indicate—I remember a local DJ that I knew, who liked "Still From The Heart," being a tad disappointed they played little or nothing from that album. After finally hearing it for the first time nearly two decades later, I can't say I share his sentiments. In any case, stick with the first two albums. (PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 8QA, ENGLAND)

ANTI-NOWHERE LEAGUE-Animal! The Very Best Of (Anagram)

Covering both old and newer League stuff and, thankfully, only a few songs from their wretched new wave-ish years ("Out On The Wasteland," "On The Waterfront," "Crime"). All the scurrilous punk anthems are included, as you'd expect—"I Hate People," "Woman" (greatest wedding song ever?), "Streets Of London" and, of course, "So What" leading it all off. The six latter-day tunes mark a return to a punkier sound and, while not in the league (heh-heh) of the original classics, aren't bad in a sub-Pistols sort of way. If you already have "We Are The League" or the "Punk Singles and Rarities" anthologies, this is somewhat dispensible. At their best, the ANWL came across as tongue-in-cheek punk miscreants and made a pretty memorable racket at times. Still do, apparently, at those retro-fests and such. (Unit 17, 1st Floor, Elysium Gate West, 126-128 New King's Road, London SW6 4LZ, ENGLAND)

ANTIPRODUCT-The EP's of AP (Tribal War)

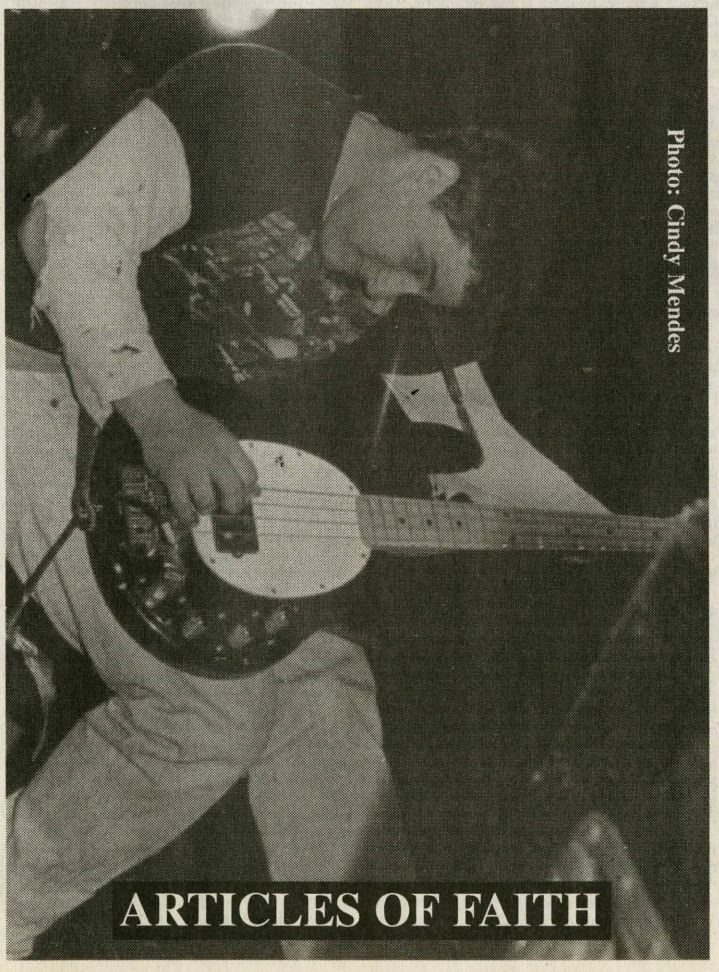
The crustier years? Simplistic term but Antiproduct's earlier material was cut from that cloth—or, to be more polite, activist and politically-oriented punk. Agitated male and female vocals and music played at an aggressive and fast-paced clip. This disc collects their first two 7" EP's their previously-unreleased third EP, along with songs that appeard on compilations. Perhaps painting in broad black/white strokes but, being an alienated, cynical bastard about the state of the world, myself, it does stike a chord... let's face facts, here: warmongering is fucked up, so is police abuse, sweatshop labor, corporate greed, etc. As to whether political punk will spur any sort of social upheaval is always subject to debate but it's important to make people aware of these issues, as long as they're handled in a cogent manner. And, from a purely musical standpoint, it provides a potent rush. After all, if I can't circle pit, I don't want to be part of any revolution. (1951 West Burnside #1936, Portland, OR 97209)

ANTISCHISM (Prank)

Political hardcore punk. A lengthy discography release, filling the disc to about the maximum length and it's a rampaging ride, for the most part. This includes songs from various 7" releases, a few demo tracks and their half of a split LP with Subvert. Antischism dished out the angry, fast stuff but also added melody and gloomier-sounding elements. The melodic bass-lines and signal-call guitar for the intro of "Slaughter," for instance, sounds almost post-punkish and they certainly took quite a bit from the UK anarchist bands, as well. But it's mainly a scalding attack, with agitated male/female vocals. Even with the occasional lapse into plodding territory, Antischism made a bold statement in the early 90s. (PO Box 410892, SF, CA 94141)

ANTISEEN-Southern Hostility/Eat More Possum/Drastic + EP Royalty/ Honour Among Thieves/Noise For The Sake Of Noise/Here To Ruin Your Groove (TKO)

TKO begins its "Vault of Antiseen" series with these releases and it's pure-bred ass-kickin', redneck punk rock. "Hostility" and "Possum" are their 1991 and '92 albums, respectively and were reissued a few years back as a two-fer on the now-defunct Man's Ruin label. "Southern Hostility" presents the boys in one pissed-off sounding mood... the liner notes talk about recording it in a damp, humid basement during a southern summer and murder is certainly in the air. Pure buzz and kill and, yeah, they ain't exactly PC. That's a fucking understatement but goddamn if Antiseen don't make one heady barrel of noise, here. The aggro continues for "Possum," containing the bona-fide anthem, "Fuck All Y'all." There's also their tribute to "Cactus Jack," the nasty "Stormtrooper" and "Glad I Am The Way I Am." Getting somewhat bluesier on a few songs, as well. The "Drastic/EP Royalty" combines their first two 7" discs from the mid-80s. Even back then, Jeff Clayton growled like an unhinged wildman, although he was attempting to sing a little more conventionally, and the sound was furious, starting with the aptly-titled "Queen City Stomp." Raw guitar on stun volume and a defiant attitude. "Honour Among Thieves" is the latest installment and may be my favorite of the bunch. This is the most punk-sounding of the bunch, their first album, recorded between '84 and '86 but not released until 1988. There's a re-done version of "Queen City Stomp," "Hammerhead," with some hysterical falsetto backing vocals and the grind-it-out "Absent Minded." So raw, so loud, so furious and goddanged catchy. I'd forgotten how good this LP was. I'd also forgotten how kick-ass "Noise For The Sake Of Noise," originally released in Australia, was, even with the somber Dylan cover. A nasty buzz from the opening chords of "On Your Knees," "Wifebeater" and "Burnin' Money." Rounded out by some live tracks (not so great sounding) and a few demos. "Here To Ruin Your Groove" is a mid-90s album and includes between-song narratives, a bit of bluegrass ("Billy The Kid"), a Lynyrd Skynyrd cover ("Needle and the Spoon"), an Alice Cooper cover ("Sick Things," with Michael Bruce from Alice's band on guitar) and more ornery ass-kickers, such as "Ugly American," "Spare Change" and a re-done "Fuck All Y'all." More of a "produced" effort and, while it's not on the top of my Antiseen playlist, this is far from crap. (3126 W. Cary St., #303, Richmond, VA 23221)



ARTICLES OF FAITH-Complete Vol.1/Complete Vol. 2 (Alternative Tentacles)

Finally! All of this Chicago hardcore band's vinyl releases and a few obscurities on two discs. AOF were a very special band to this writer—they echoed the horrors of the Reagan-era 80s in their impassioned compositions. It spoke to me—this was how I felt. Anger at what was going on societally and in my own life, trying to work through those first few post-collegiate years when I was in the employ of Multideath Banking Corporation. Greed, selfishness, the threat of war—in essence, social darwinism and sabre-rattling at its worst and things haven't changed all that much, have they? In fact, once could argue the '00s are a revival of that mindset. Blistering songs but also melodic and with diverse influences—reggae-ish skank for "I Got Mine," "In This Jungle" and "False Security" and, with their final album, "In This Life," an increasingly-melodic bent. I'm still drawn mainly to the earlier stuff—a high-powered distillation of rage and fury. Their first full-length, "Give Thanks," started with Vic Bondi's primal scream on the title track and I can tell you that I woke up feeling like doing just that every morning at that point, as the alarm clock rang "Five O'Clock" (OK, it was 7:00, but you get the idea). The hard/fast aesthetic was there, but with three guitars churning and a complexity in arranging, AOF differentiated themselves from the hardcore hordes in a musical sense and the lyrics were an equally strong point, conveying the anger in an intelligent fashion. With "In This Life," the lyrics got introspective, acoustic guitar was featured more in the mix and folksier influences game increasingly into play, yet it still rages, in a way. But "I Got Mine" and "Give Thanks" are still the benchmarks. Incidentally, Vic updates "What We Want Is Free" and "In This Life" with 2002 recordings, accompanied only by guitar—can't say it adds much, to be honest. One other minor beef—I still prefer the original mix of the 7" material to the early 90s re-mixes featured here—too much echo on the vocals but, that aside, this is an indispensible collection. And Vic's liner notes about the schisms, successes and failures of the 80s Chicago scene and his own band are also interesting. (PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141-9092)

BATTERY-Final Fury 1990-1997 (Soulforce)

Urgent crew-core from this DC band fronted by Brian McTernan, who has turned the knobs for innumerable bands at his Salad Days studio. Battery are at their best when sticking to a sweeping, faster-paced style and the lyrics strike home, particularly the anti tough-guy "Go Back To The Gym." They do offer a fairly credible Judge-meets-metal take for "Unwound," on the heavier tip. The CD-ROM portion includes live footage, a video clip for one song, photos and a pair of somewhat cheesy sXe commercials that have the "partnership for a drug free America" legend at the end—good grief, I hope that's not for real because, while I believe in being substance-free, I'm also tired of this bullshit drug war and that office has created a tiresome indoctrination/propaganda campaign and is a waste of taxpayers' money, especially recent ads that equate drug use with terrorism. Anyway, that point made, this is a solid wrapup of Battery's output. Taken from their '94 and '96 albums and other releases—they're not really specified here. (Apartado De Correos 18199, 28080 Madrid, SPAIN)

BHOPAL STIFFS-(1985-1989) (Harmless)

A couple of future members of Pegboy—Larry Damore and Steve Saylors—played in this Chicago band and the Stiffs weren't quite up to the

level of that band, although there's some worthwhile material on this 28 track anthology. Includes their 12" EP, 7", demo tracks and some fair-to-middling sounding live material. The Stiffs had the melodic underpinnings of their Chicago brethren Naked Raygun and shared some affection for post-punk, judging by some of the guitar lines, but they also had more of a hardcore punk influence, as well. That comes out on such songs as "Born Again," "I Came For You," "I Don't Care," etc... Adequate at that style, though not exceptional. Pegboy was definitely a step up after the Stiff's demise. (1218 W. Hood Ave., Apt. 2, Chicago, IL 60660)

BIG BOYS-Wreck Collection (Gern Blandsten)

An expanded reissue of this 1988 collection of rarities, demos and live stuff by the one and only Big Boys. In all the years of doing SV, there are few bands who I ever found as likeable or down-to-earth as people and their live show in 1983 at the Club in Cambridge still sticks in my memory. Stylistic gymnasts, playing punk, hardcore, pop, post-punk and funk, in various permutations. The extra material includes more rarities from miscellaneous 7"s and compilations, live stuff and even a few practice demos. The bulk came from 8 track demos recorded during sessions for "Fun Fun Fun" and "Lullabies" and a number of these songs didn't get released elsewhere. Highlights? An instrumental take of the gorgeous "Sound On Sound," the urgency of "Shut Up," "Brick Wall" and "I'm Sorry," the strong hooks for "Manipulation," the punk/funk "Funk Off" (without horns on this take), "History" and "Ambivalence." If you haven't heard the Big Boys before, you might want to start with "The Fat Elvis" and "The Skinny Elvis" discography compilations but this nicely completes the reissue trilogy for this incredible band. Extra points for the booklet that includes details on the recordings, two short essays on the band, lyrics, art-work from Biscuit and other folks and photos. (PO Box 356, River Edge, NJ 07661)

LES BLACK'S AMAZING PINK HOLES-Breakfast With The Holes (Smog Veil)

I actually own this original album from 1985 (okay, I stole it from a college radio station) but I never listen to it because it's not very good. Funny punk that's not particularly great lyrically or musically—judging by the liner notes they seemed to be more of a live experience (chugging strawberry shakes to puke pink onstage), but I can't really recommend this or justify why it deserves a CD reissue with extra tracks. (316 California Ave., #207, Reno, NV 89509) *(Ryan)*

BORN AGAINST-Patriotic Battle Hymns (Kill Rock Stars)/The Rebel Sound Of Shit & Failure (Kill Rock Stars)

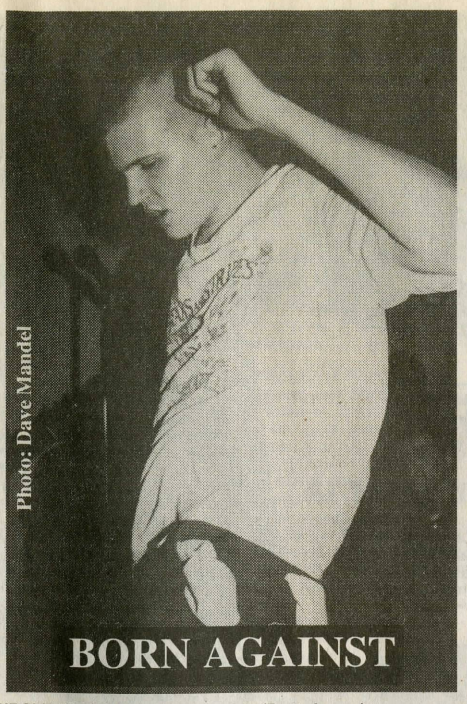
Not only are Born Against fucking dead (and have been for a decade) but so is Vermiform Records, apparently, and these discs, which serve as a complete discography, have been reissued on Kill Rock Stars. While I saw these guys a few times and thought them to be an intense live band, I also undervalued them. In the time-frame where everything was getting co-opted, Born Against stuck to a fiercely DIY aesthetic and also commented vociferously on the afflictions of religion, patriotism, sexism and other all-american pursuits. Born Against also pushed hardcore in a different direction—loud and aggressive, but also heavy, lurching and cataclysmic, where the spirit moved them. Sometimes, it sputters more than inspires but they positively nailed it for the likes of "Jock Gestapo," "Mount The Pavement," "Resist Control" (a Lifesblood song that Born Against improve on—45 seconds of raw, catchy perfection) and the hammering "Well Fed Fuck," which grinds your skull into the pavement with malicious gleefulness and hammers home a mantra of "Are you a good team player/Remember the boss is your best friend/Kill your head" and the effect is punishing and has hopefully inspired some creative office sabotage over the years. That song appears on both discs, one in a demo version on "Rebel Sound," but I prefer the album version. "Patriotic Battle Hymns" includes their full-length and 10" EP, while "Rebel Sound" is a collection of EP and compilation tracks. Provocative and inspirational. (120 NE State, PMB 418, Olympia, WA 98501)

STEVE CABALLERO-Bandology Vol. 1 (Sessions)

Skateboarding legend Steve Caballero, a true originator in both vert and street styles of skating since the age of 12, offers a comprehensive overview of his own varied musical projects that complemented decades spent at the forefront of the skate scene. This compilation begins with seminal skate-core progenitors The Faction, who utilized a bare-bones straight forward trouncing that at its earliest stages was very much akin to JFA in terms of lyrical focus and stylistic drive. The first four songs here highlight varied areas of that band's career, spanning the years 1982-85. Undoubtedly Caballero's strongest project, the stripped down ripping of The Faction at their prime (and even in their later, more melodic mid-tempo format) fares far better than the collective output of the three later outfits featured here. As Caballero's considerable skill on a skateboard increased exponentially over the mid-eighties and early-nineties, it would seem that his musical tastes plummeted. Odd Man Out, Caballero's second band (circa 1987-89) were a bland new wave/punk/goth hybrid, complete with a thick, diluted proliferation of synth-based musicianship and absolutely awful 'modern rock' crooning. Shovelhead and Soda, the last two bands highlighted on this compilation, depart somewhat from the aforementioned formula, being principally influenced by bland 'alternative rock' and diluted pop-punk, respectively. Much in the tradition of Spinal Tap, Caballero's post-Faction material showcases a willingness to ape the very worst aspects of popular music and culture in each respective era covered. The results are difficult to take, on the whole. Let this not detract, however, from the otherwise stellar legacy of one of skateboarding's greatest innovators. (60 Old El Pueblo Rd., Scotts Valley, CA 95066) *(Mike Ramek)*

CHAINSAW-No (Since 1991) (Six Weeks)

Anthology of releases for a blazing Japanese hardcore band. Completely throttling and obliterative in a familiar, yet always-effective sound. Bellowing, gutteral vocals, lethal riffing and a combination of burning speed and metallic flash, along with some more rumbling rock 'n roll moments. Their cover of the Anti Nowhere League's "So What" lays waste to Metallica's. (225 Lincoln Ave., Cotati, CA 94931)



CIRCLE JERKS-Wild In The Streets (Porterhouse)

"Group Sex" is one of the greatest debut albums, ever... this 1982 followup by the Circle Jerks' didn't strike me as being nearly as good back then and that's still the case, now. Not a complete failure but the songs here don't have the seamless, ultra-catchy flow of the first album. The wit and sarcasm remain the same and they nail it for the title track, which is actually a cover of a Garland Jeffreys song that the Jerks made their own in the same way that the Dickies did with "Nights In White Satin." The medley of Paul Revere & The Raiders' "Lust Like Me" and Jackie DeShannon's "Put A Little Love In Your Heart" brings a chuckle, although it would be perfected on the subsequent album's "Golden Shower Of Hits." So what's wrong? The songs aren't as memorable, overall. It seems a bit more formulaic. That's what it boils down to, although there are some standouts—"Trapped," "Stars & Stripes" and "Defamation Innuendo," one of the most on-target rock critic *critiques* I've heard. The CD-ROM portion includes a video clip for "Wasted," photos, flyers and extra audio, including unreleased demos and live material... The band's first three albums, this one included, are worth hearing, but always start with "Group Sex." (PO Box 3597, Hollywood, CA 90078)

CITIZENS ARREST-A Light In The Distance '88-'90 (DeadAlive)

It's certainly off in the distance and I'm grateful, in hindsight, I got to see this band play once, with Verbal Assault and American Standard—I kind of panned their live show while raving about AS, but did give the 7" a positive review. Still, Citizens Arrest are another band I didn't appreciate as much as I should have, at the time, and greatly regret missing the DIY resurrection that surrounded ABC No-Rio. This LP compiles that 7" EP and also includes comp tracks, some live-on-radio cuts and their first demo, with original vocalist Ted Leo (currently playing a much poppier style of music). Blazing hardcore with an unfettered rawness that took inspiration from the early 80s bands, along with heavier elements, but without the macho bluster of the tougher New York hardcore scene from that time-frame. Listening to these tracks, they sound refreshingly contemporary—it's safe to say some there are bands around today who have taken a cue from these guys. The live material falls apart and the demo is the band in an embryonic period, but there's something to be said for a purity of vision and why not present the whole history "warts and all." Holding up very well. (PO Box 97, Caldwell, NJ 07006)

CLASH-The Essential Clash (Epic, 2CD)

I imagine this anthology is coming out due to the Clash being inducted into the RnR Hall O'Fame and it also becomes an epitaph for the late, great Joe Strummer. The only new wrinkle is the inclusion of "This Is England" from the abysmal "Cut The Crap" album, which isn't necessarily a bonus. Otherwise, there's nothing rare or unreleased but it's prime stuff that spans their career... from "White Riot" to "Bankrobber" to "Straight To Hell," the Clash covered a lot of territory and expanded their sound as time progressed, sometimes going too far over the cliff. I mean, these guys weren't cut out to play dance music, to be honest and some of the selections from "Sandinista" are questionable. I wish they'd made room for "Death Or Glory" from "London Calling," "The Call Up" or "Washington Bullets" from "Sandinista" or "Armagideon Time" and left off the likes of "The Street Parade" or "Ghetto Defendant." It's still the Clash and most of this is worth hearing but it's basically Clash for dabblers.

COCKNOOSE-Badmen, Butchers and Bleeders (TKO)

One hundred percent badass punk rock 'n roll, motherfuckers, and these boys were playing it at a time when it was quite unstylish. But you should know that the classic sounds NEVER go out of style, for the true blue amongst us. This here be a reissue of Cocknoose's first album, with bonus tracks, some of 'em hidden away at the end of the disc. Raw power chords, fueled by booze, wrasslin', blood and guts and you best rock out or get out of the way. (3126 W. Cary St., #303, Richmond, VA 23221)

COCK SPARRER-Running Riot In '84/Live and Loud (Taang)

Two-fer, with Sparrer's second studio album and a live album recorded in '87. "RRI84" is a somewhat mediocre effort, compared to their incredible debut album, "Shock Troops." Poppier and subdued-sounding, although still catchy in spots, particularly for "The Sun Says." The live recording, on the other hand, makes it worthwhile as Sparrer roar through all their classic songs, plus a cover of the Clash's "White Riot," in front of a rowdy, appreciate gathering. (706 Pismo Ct., San Diego, CA 92109)

CONDEMNED TO DEATH-You Can't Kill A Vatrat (Grand Theft Audio)

Anthology for kind of a lost band from the early 80s Bay Area scene, mainly due to the fact that their shit has been unavailable for so long... C2D were part of the community centered around the Vats, an abandoned brewery building that spawned quite the active DIY punk community—home to MDC, Dicks, DRI and others. Starting out as a raw, angry hardcore punk band with plenty of energy and bile, as featured on their demo and 7" tracks. Speedy and razor-sharp. Eventually, original vocalist Eddie Morgan left and the three musicians took over the vocals for the "Diary Of A Love Monster" LP, joined for two songs by future Verbal Abuse vocalist Scott Wilkins. Moving in a slightly harder-rocking direction but the lyrics were absurd and sarcastic—pissing all over the heshers on "Hair Spray Randy" and "Bang Your Maiden Head." The disc concludes with some raging live material recorded by the original lineup in 1983. The usual quality GTA packaging and musical content. (501 W. Glenoaks Blvd., PMB 313, Glendale, CA 91202)

CONVERGE-Unloved and Weeded Out (Deathwish)

OK, points off right away for using a title that an old Relapse Records band called Candiru once used for an album of theirs, but that minor annoyance aside (and, I know, no one else gives a flying fuck about that, I know, I know), this collection of Converge rarities will no doubt please fans hungry for more metalcore action. Talk about a band that's come a long way, what with their last album "Jane Doe" being an absolute powerhouse of true chaos. Now here we can look at some old demos, a couple live tracks and a few compilation cuts, songs from split releases, etc. Don't fret, the production sounds very consistent throughout, which is always a concern with odds n' sods releases like this one. "Unloved and Weeded Out" just proves that they've been damn good since the get-go, it just took a while to get to brilliant status. The clean singing just sounds grating though. Damn solid release for what it is. (10 Lothrop St., Beverly, MA 01915) *(Greg)*

DAYGLO ABORTIONS-Feed Us A Fetus (Beer City)

These Canadian hosers sure were offensive—and more power to 'em. I still smile when I see the dedication to Tipper Gore—"play it loud, Douchebag." "Fetus" is a reissue of their 1985 album, which itself inlcuded new (at the time) recordings, as well as the tracks from their 1981 album "Out Of The Womb" (when they were called Dayglow Abortions). Their best material, a dose of obnoxious, rip-snortin' punk with snotty vocals and unafraid to add a few metal licks where necessary. The tandem of "Scared of People" and "Black Sabbath," as in "acting like Black Sabbath," still amazes, the former for it's inventive percussion—one of the only hardcore songs I can recall with woodblock—and the latter for the Cretin's dead-on imitation of Ozzy and Iommi-esque lead break. Not much patience for "Religious Bumfucks," some perverse whoa-oh-ohs for "I Killed Mommy With My Automatic" and a love song to a canine, "My Girl," which sure ain't the Temptations' song. Of course, all the obnoxiousness in the world doesn't matter if it isn't funny, which these guys are, and the songs sting and careen with buzzsaw intent. Pretty fuckin' classic, at this point. (PO Box 26035, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0035)

DEADGUY-Work Ethic (Blackout, EP)

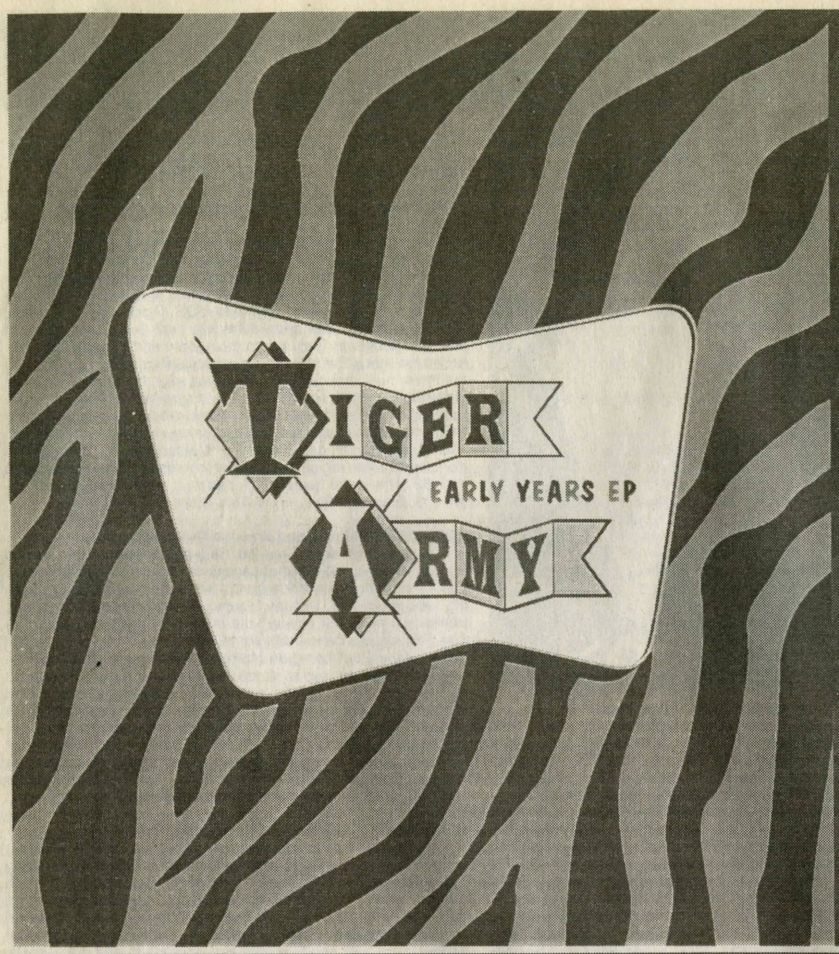
The first two Deadguy EP's on one CD, available again. It's a sound that kills. Bloodthirsty emanations of savagery, both from Tim Singer's howling vocals and the lurching, heavy sound. Building on their hardcore backgrounds, adding inspiration from noisier units (Scratch Acid, Big Black, Helmet) and moving it towards the edge of sanity. Deadguy may not quite affect me the same way they did in '95,' but it does grab one's attention. (931 Madison St., Hoboken, NJ 07030)

DESTROY-Discography (Havoc)

I prefer Felix Havoc's two subsequent bands (Code 13, Damage Deposit) but these guys did shake things up during the early 90s. Dark, aggressive thrash/grindcore with some heavier impulses and these 48 tracks lay down quite a wanton legacy. Includes a previously-unreleased cover of Crucifix's "See Through Their Lies," plus tracks from their LP, various 7"s and compilatons. When Destroy sticks to a more reasonable thrash pace, it works the best, such as for the overpowering "Misery." Harsh vocals (and Felix is joined by Manduke for about half the material), meat-cleaver guitars and assault 'n battery drumming. Inspired by the likes of Napalm Death, ENT and older US hardcore, along with the obligatory Scandinavian influences. (PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408)

DILS-Dils Dils Dils (Bacchus Archives/Dionysus)

The Dils' studio discography has been reissued in a haphazard manner—but this disc makes a good companion piece for "Class War," which came out awhile back. "Dils Dils Dils" includes the band's second and third 7"s, an early demo and live material from '78 and '79 of varying sound quality, though including a number of songs that never made it to record. While embracing the punk trappings of the day and evoking a socialist pose (who knows how serious they were about it), the Dils were rootsy rockers at heart and later material reveals those leanings and the Kinman brothers would fully embrace it later on with Rank & File. They were also obviously in love with the 60s rock sound they grew up with, The Who in particular, evidenced on the early '77 demo song "Blow Up." "Class War" is still a memorable snot-punk anthem, while "Sound Of The Rain" and "Red Rockers" both have solid hooks. The live material includes covers of the Zeros' "Wimp" and the Velvets' "What Goes On," given an extended workout. Sometimes hit and miss but some good stuff to be found. (PO Box 1975,



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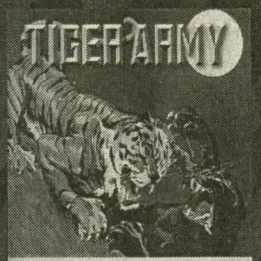

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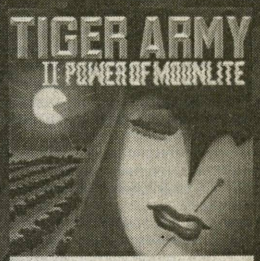

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DISCHARGE-Decontrol: The Singles (Castle/Sanctuary, dbl. CD)

Anthologizing some of the greatest hardcore punk music of all time—Discharge remain a prime inspiration for countless bands who followed in their wake and this double-disc anthology takes in it chronological order from the raw origins to the more metallic (and slightly less-savory) direction of the post-Bones period. Including not only the tracks from their singles and 12" singles but the "Why" mini-LP, which is just slightly behind "Hear Nothing See Nothing Say Nothing" for the band's supreme triumph. A hot, furious attack, whether in full-blitz or medium speed. I won't get into the nuances of what constitutes the D-beat and what doesn't but Discharge did mix things up here, while never straying from an aggressive mode. Bleak lyrical matter, echoing the Thatcher era and all the nuclear sabre rattling—a time that's being repeated, sadly. So many great songs, here—"Decontrol," "Realities Of War," "Visions of War," "Ain't No Feeble Bastard," "Always Restrictions." Even some of the hard rock songs, such as "In Defence of Our Future" or "The More I See" have a certain visceral charm, but the band certainly lost momentum after Bones left in late '82. My only complaint is, once again, they've once again included the inferior remixes of the "Never Again" and "State Violence State Control" EP's, with too much echo on the instruments and vocals—the original mixes are WAY more powerful but remain available only on the original vinyl—so, if you ever see those, get them immediately. Still, this is about as complete as it gets.

DOA-Hardcore '81 (Sudden Death)

As I said in my review for the reissue of "Something Better Change" in the last issue, that album and this 1981 followup are my favorite DOA releases by far. Glad to see this back in print, with its original mix. The hardcore moniker fits, in that DOA had been touring the west coast and had certainly picked up the energy and aggression of those bands and it became a part of their own furious punk rock mix, starting with "DOA" and careening thorugh the final song, "Waiting For You." Along the way are many songs that remain staples of DOA's legacy: "Fucked Up Baby" (later re-done as "Fucked Up Ronnie"), "Unknown," with some jaunty piano lines, "Smash The State" and a scorching cover of "Communication Breakdown." The CD also adds the Peel sessions EP from '84, "Don't Turn Yer Back," which isn't quite as memorable, although "General Strike" remains a decent song. But nothing can beat the Shithead/Rampage/Biscuits/Gregg lineup that appears on "Hardcore '81." Sounds as great now as it did 20+ years ago. (Cascades PO Box #43001, Burnaby, BC CANADA V5G 3H0)

DRI-The Dirty Rotten CD (Beer City)/Dealing With It (Beer City)

Two vital reissues from DRI... easily the best music they ever recorded. "The Dirty Rotten" CD includes the first DRI EP, which was originally released on a 7" (with 22 songs!) and then an LP, plus the "Violent Pacification" EP, various demos, comp tracks and live material, plus interview snippets from a radio show. And live video footage from CB's in '84, although that's not that visually appealing. A walloping hardcore package. You want fast? These guys were fast! Double-speed hardcore punk yet memorable songs often emerged from the fray, starting with "I Don't Need Society," "Reaganomics," "War Crimes," "Couch Slouch" and the epic (almost 3 minutes!) "Violent Pacification." Railing against a variety of irritants—parents, cops, working and, on a larger scale, the military and an oppressive government and, sadly, things ain't changed that much. "Dealing With It" represented a sonic progression, production-wise, plus they were "crossing over" by adding a little more metal into the mix, such as with "Nursing Home Blues." Includes a smoking re-recording of "I Don't Need Society," the ravaging tandem of the ever-timely "Stupid Stupid War" and "Counter Attack" and more takes of "Couch Slouch" and "Reaganomics." Plus one of their dads makes an appearance for "Mad Man." The bonuses on this disc are a pair of songs from the "Cottage Cheese From The Lips Of Death" compilation LP, rare demos and some rough mixes. There's also an interview segment from a cable access show with a host who possesses an ill-advised mullet/fu-manchu combination. Yeesh. The quintessential DRI right here. (PO Box 26035, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0035)

DROPDEAD-Discography 1991-1993 (Armageddon)

It was the early 90s... grunge was huge, Nirvana became the new rock gods and this zine was caught up in that whole thing. Meanwhile, down in Providence, Dropdead were playing some absolutely ripping hardcore punk. Ultra-fast, bordering between thrash and grind (before the term really existed), influenced by both Scandinavian hardcore and older US bands like DRI and Siege (of course!). Outspoken lyrics about animal rights and human atrocities, delivered in short, intense bursts. This disc includes early 7"s, splits, comp tracks and a few unreleased songs. Thankfully, Dropdead are still around, completely kicking ass after more than a decade and I could kick myself for not paying more attention to this band a lot earlier than I did. (PO Box 56, Providence, RI 02901)

DRUNK INJUNS-From Where The Sun Now Stands I Will Fight No More, Forever (Alternative Tentacles)

Mysterious band who, as it turns out, were most of the members of Los Olvidados and their sound was pretty original—part Joy Division angst-rock, especially vocally, coupled with aggressive west coast hardcore. These songs come from demos and a few compilations and there are also a few songs by an Injuns' offshoot, Ancestors. Powerful and dramatic, without becoming overwrought. (PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141)

EDGEWISE-Complete Discography (Thorp)

An enveloping rhythmic crunch and gravel charred vocal delivery propels this comprehensive discography from Edgewise along with considerable force. With single-minded resolve, this now defunct incarnation bludgeons their way through a smattering of fast paced metal-singed hardcore, a strong display of groove-oriented craftsmanship adding emphasis to a formula that is as uncompromisingly bruising as it is forthright. Hulking, no-frills tumult proves the integral aural component here, crammed with a sizeable and effective array of massive builds and breakdowns, but thankfully devoid of the echoing 'emotive' inclinations so pervasive today in bands of this ilk. A solid display of dark, propulsive ire. (PO Box 6786 Toledo, OH 43612) *(Mike Ramek)*

EMBRACE (Dischord)

Remastered version, with two unreleased tracks—alternate versions of "Money" and "Dance of Days." Emo? What the fuck is emo? All I can say is Embrace had a style, a sound that hasn't been repeated or duplicated ad infinitum. For those who need to be filled in, Embrace were around from '85 to '86 and included Ian MacKaye and three members from the Faith and this band sounded nothing like its predecessors. Incredibly melodic and subtle but also intense and this album (taken from two recording sessions) features one of Ian's best-ever vocal performances—from wistful to pissed-off to sarcastic. His *"I hear your mommy call—woo-hoo-hoo-hoo"* on "No More Pain" is priceless... so are the anguished howls that end that song and the little *"selfish motherfuckers"* aside on "Money." Vulnerable, cracking, HUMAN! The songs ring in your brain—tricky little hooks that grab hold and refuse to let go. A work of beauty, passion and intelligence that also has a sublime musical wallop. (3819 Beecher St. NW, Washington, DC 20007)

EVEN WORSE-You've Ruined Everything (Grand Theft Audio)

Early 80s NY punk band whose drummer, Jack Rabid, is best-known for his incredible zine *The Big Takeover*. They had tracks on the "New York Thrash" compilation and a live Mystic records comp with this lineup, but the bulk of material here is unreleased. Half live, half done in the studio and a good mesh of aggressive, west coast-inspired punk and maybe a hint of goth (in a similar fashion as early 45 Grave), along with the speed of the embryonic NYC hardcore scene. In any case, it's got a dark ambiance but there's also an air of snotty punk attitude, as well as a self-deprecating sense of humor. Rebecca's between-song banter on the live tracks reveal the latter element, in particular. Raw and entertaining. (501 W. Glenoaks Blvd., PMB 313, Glendale, CA 91202)

FACTION-Collection 1982-1985 (Beer City)

Originally released in the mid-90s and now Beer City has licensed it... making sense since the Beer City folks manufacture skateboards and the Faction were one of the early skate-punk bands, with board legend Steve Caballero in their ranks. The only change is with the booklet and they've left off the lyrics, but included the listing of every show they played, although with the semi-stupid "Tongue Like A Battering Ram" leading things off, maybe that wasn't such a bad idea (good song, kind of obnoxious lyrics). Sarcastic, insolent punks who played a decent blend of tuneful hardcore, punk and threw in the occasional metal lick (guitarist Adam "Bomb" Segal later logged time in some cheesy metal acts) and this disc includes everything, as far as I can tell, plus a few live songs, as well. "Yesterday Is Gone," "Bullets Are Faster Than Words" and "Lets Go Get Cokes" all hold up well, fueled by an energetic approach. (PO Box 26035, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0035)

FEEDERZ-Ever Feel Like Killing Your Boss?(Broken)/Teachers In Space (Broken)

The first two albums from this infamous group, the brainchild of the one and only Frank Discussion. A radical anti-authoritarianism (suspicious of any political bent) set to some pretty damn unique music. Frank has a voice that leaps up and down, an abrasive yelp/growl and his guitar sound is combination of surf, jitter and slash. "Boss" is the stronger of the pair, starting with the seductive cover of Olivia Go-To-The John's "Have You Never Been Mellow" that takes some liberty with the lyrics. More of a straight-ahead punk sound, though with the Feederz' own twist—sometimes catchy, sometimes jolting, always subversive from "Burn Warehouse Burn" to "Jesus" (aks "Jesus Entering From The Rear") to "Dead Bodies." And, yes, it still has the sandpaper cover. "Teachers" is a tad more experimental, with spoken word passages and some great borrowing from other sources, namely the Howard Beale speech from "Network" about being "as mad as hell" and not taking it anymore and the "clock song" that the Boston Pops did. Tucked inside a cover image of the Challenger explosion (hence the title) and with a bonus video of their infamous 1987 show at Gilman where Frank came out bedecked with a dead cat and dog. This is a band where descriptions in words don't suffice—you really need to experience it yourself and it'll challenge you on many levels. (PO Box 460402, SF, CA 94146-0402)



FREE BEER-The Only Beer That Matter (Alternative Tentacles)

Skateboarding and beer, huh? Could be a very dangerous combination. In any case, Free Beer were an early 80s Bay Area punk band, appearing the first MRR comp. A combination of west coast influences, although they occasionally branch beyond that. "Machine Gun Etiquette"-era Damned comes to mind for the instrumental "Tuna Epic." "Premature Enlistment," which was the track on the compilation, remains resonant in its anti-military message. "Disaster" takes a loonier punk route. 11 studio tracks, plus four done live, including their interpretation of the Go-Gos' "We've Got The Beat," which they mold into "We Are Free Beer." Not an overpowering band, with a melodic emphasis, but there's an aggressive undertow. (PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141-9092)

FURY-Resurrection (Jade Tree, EP)

A spinoff, of sorts, from Swiz that was recorded in 1989—three of that band's members, with Shawn Brown on bass and, on vocals, Chris Thomson from Ignition and, later on, Monorchid, Skull Control and others. Blistering hardcore taking a page from Swiz, but a lot rougher. The title track, in fact, appeared on that band's "Hell Yes I Cheated." Chris rants in an unhinged fashion and the guys kicked up a feisty ruckus, especially for "Circle Of Lies" and "Psycho." An obscure bit of HarDCore history given a worthwhile unearthing. (2310 Kennwynn Rd., Wilmington, DE 19810)

FU'S-Kill For Christ (Taang)/My America (Taang)

FINALLY! The first two FU's albums are reissued. While "My America" doesn't include any bonus material, "Kill For Christ" has the tracks from "Boston Not LA," "Unsafe At Any Speed," "The Master Tape" and their first demo, recorded as a three piece in 1981. While the FU's were part of the first wave of Boston hardcore, they clearly had snottier punk influences, especially on the demo tracks, and the sarcastic lyrics were already well in place. "Kill For Christ" is a classic, caustic and energetic throughout, a kinetic speed bomb on "Civil Defense," "Me Generation," "T Sux" and "FU," slowing it down to a dirge for the anti-war "Die For God," and creating a circle storm for "Daisy Chain," a well-aimed diatribe against Boston's corporate rock establishment (still applicable, I'm afraid). "My America" builds on the strengths of "Kill For Christ," although the playing is more confident and in more of a purely hardcore vein. Despite the controversy (mostly outside of Boston) over the title track, the FU's were not simple-minded patriotic rednecks but, instead, intended to challenge those who accepted ANY ideology at face value—stating at the outset on "What You Pay For" that you shouldn't look to anyone, including the FU's, for the answers to life's problems. "Boston's Finest" may be one of the best anti-cop songs that the early Boston scene yielded, with its incredible breakdown about 2/3 of the way through. Topped off with a cover of Grand Funk's "We're An American Band," and "My America" holds up quite well.

GBH-Leather, Bristles, Studs and Acne/City Baby Attacked By Rats/City Baby's Revenge/Midnight Madness and Beyond/No Need To Panic! (Captain Oi)

The first four GBH albums and their debut EP are reissued by the Cap'n, along with appropriate bonus tracks. "Leather, Bristles Studs and Acne" was originally a 12" EP and was subsequently appended to include later singles. Making a splash with from the outset with Colin Abrahall's hearty "GO!" that leads off "Race Against Time." A raw distillation of punk fury and balancing a sick sense of humor ("no remorse.. screw the corpse" on "Necrophilia") to headier matter with "No Survivors" and "Generals." The CD has the same tracks as the appended version, with the inclusion of the "No Surivors" and "Sick Boy" singles. "City Baby Attacked By Rats" remains the band's defining full-length album by far. A piledriving combination of punk, rock 'n roll and hard rock flash. A devil-may-care spirit throughout, done in a mostly high-octane fashion. "Time Bomb," "Sick Boy," "I Am The Hunted," "Gunned Down," "Prayer Of A Realist" and the wham-bam "Bellend Bop" hit with a delirious attack. You don't get a chance to catch your breath. A more potent jolt than caffeine and it's been my house-cleaning album for years, when I need some musical inspiration to get my ass in gear to take on the task at hand. Sure, one could take issue with some of their less than feminist-friendly lyrics ("Slut," "Big Women") and I offer no excuses or explanations. But this album still completely kicks ass. The bonus tracks are exactly the same as on "Leather," which may seem redundant, but considering the high quality, I won't complain.

"City Baby's Revenge" isn't quite up to that level—the songs aren't as consistently-satisfying. A bit of a harder-rocking emphasis, along with more melodic guitar moves for opening track "Diplomatic Immunity." "Womb With A View" is even dumber that the two aforementioned diatribes and their take on the Stooges' "I Feel Alright" isn't as manic as the Damned (who, of course, were a big influence on this band). Bonus tracks come from three 7"s, including the decent "Give Me Fire" and "Catch 23" and less-savory "Do What You Do." A decent album, though it pales in comparison to "Attacked By Rats."

"Midnight Madness" and "No Need To Panic" actually are more consistently-satisfying than "Revenge," with a full-bodied, if sometimes cavernous sound. Jock Blyth's guitar is a combination of metallic glow, melodic nuance and punk burn and Ross Lomas' versatile bass plays an increasingly rumbling role. They were definitely in a crossover realm, but maintaining the wise-assed wit. The best tracks here come from the "Oh No It's GBH Again" EP, added to "Midnight Madness"—four hard-rocking tunes. "Panic" continues in a similar vein, adding bits of dialogue and sound effects, as well as pointed political commentary for "Gunning For The President." Storming from the outset with "Transylvanian Per-

fume." The four-song "Wot A Bargin" EP is the bonus on this release. I hadn't listened to the latter two albums in quite some time and, while "Attacked By Rats" and "Leather" still remain the essential GBH canon, both "Madness" and "Panic" ended up being better than remembered. (PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 8QA, ENGLAND)

GENERATION X-Anthology (Chrysalis, 3CD)

3 disc set for the late 70s UK punk band that, of course, spawned the career of Billy Idol. As much as Billy's solo career has been a pathetic caricature, Gen X were a pretty cool band but, being the contrary bastard that I am, I think this could have been done a lot better. They should have included more info on where each song came from. How about a discography? And the inclusion of some of their killer b-sides, such as "No No No" or "This Heat," would have been nice. This set features one disc of "greatest hits," including a pair of unreleased cover versions—Led Zep's "Rock 'n Roll" and "The Hunter," popularized by Free and other 60s and 70s hard rock bands. Essentially an expanded version of their "Perfect Hits" anthology. I think that "Running With The Boss Sound," which led off their second album, "Valley of The Dolls," is a glaring omission (could live without the weak-sounding "Prime Of Kenny Silvers," for instance) but there's an irresistably catchy quality to "Your Generation," "Wild Youth," "Ready Steady Go," or even "Dancing By Myself." "Youth Youth Youth" dazzles with explosive firepower. Pop, rock 'n roll and hard rock seamlessly meshing. The second disc is their "unreleased" third album with the original lineup—it came out on Empty Records in Germany a few years back and this version adjusts the running order, adds one more unreleased song and an interview with bassist Tony James. After "Valley" flirted with hard rock, this album signaled a return to a poppier sound and, while not always electrifying, there are some decent moments. The third disc is a live set from '78 and not always that incendiary-sounding, at least at the outset, although momentum picks up by sets' end. But Derwood Andrews' guitar sproadically sounds brittle and/or out of tune. Not always enough slashing power.

GOOD CLEAN FUN-Positively Positive 1997-2002 (Equal Vision)

They WEREN'T kidding on "I Can't Wait": "Two Thousand Two, we'll sell our discography to you." Here it is, GCF's "Greatest Hits," taken from their various releases, plus a comp track and one unreleased song, the posi-piano opener, "Anthem of Positivity." Some folks have really laid into this band the last few years and I almost wonder, in retrospect, if it was a prefabricated bill of goods sold to the gullible, but they do lay out some catchy posi-core and some of it remains humorous—the Gorilla Biscuits piss-take for "On The Streets," the hardline rap-metal parody "In Defense Of All Life" and the Refused sendup "WWZD." (PO Box 14, Hudson, NY 12534)

GOVERNMENT ISSUE-Complete History Volume Two (Dr. Strange, dbl. CD)/Strange Wine/Live At CBGB August 30, 1987 (Dr. Strange)

Part deux of the GI's anthology, including their final two studio albums, "You" and "Crash" on one CD and the double LP "Finale" live recording on the second, itself taken from a live radio set in California and a performance at NYC's Ritz, both from 1988. The second disc includes the "Strange Wine" EP that came out in '89 and featured a few re-recordings of earlier song, as well as a smokin' live set from CB's. That set is basically a career retrospective and, even if it almost sounds as though they're poking fun at their legacy a bit and were probably quite jaded with the hardcore scene at that point, the playing and set list are seamless. Getting to the "Complete History" discs, Government Issue, the seminal DC hardcore band, had moved into an increasingly-melodic realm by the time "You" came out in 1987. The first album to feature the muscular rhythm section of J. Robbins and Pete Moffett and, while one can still hear the band's HarDCore roots in such songs as "Beyond," "Wish" (with a sitar solo!) or "Better Than TV" on the subsequent "Crash," the GI's were forging a sound influenced more by, say, the Damned's "Black Album" or "Machine Gun Etiquette" than Minor Threat. Organ spices up the sound and John Stabb continued his evolution as a vocalist—more crooning and vulnerable, though still with the hint of sarcasm that comes out much more blatantly on the live disc (in fact, it sometimes borders on obnoxious). And Tom Lyle had become a multi-faceted guitarist, fusing volume with warmth of tone—a psychedelic-punk-metal hybrid that echoed in the band's creative arranging. I hadn't listened to these albums for quite some time and wasn't sure how they'd hold up, given my affection in recent years for the crazier hardcore of my youth over bands' moves into more accessible terrain but these albums still have the magic—"You" more than "Crash," but the songs remain memorable and resonant. Big buzzing riffs and one-of-a-kind vocals that may have not been tough-enough for the youth crew elements but maintain their power. No lyric sheet but the liner notes point out that many tunes deal with a particularly painful relationship for Stabb and "Hole In The Scene" laments a gaping hole "where the brain used to be," an accurate assessment of certain muscleheaded elements at that point.

The live material delves back further into the catalog—no "Sheer Terror," but such classics as "Blending In," "Understand," "It Begins Now" and "Mad At Myself" appear, along with several songs from the two recent efforts. There are also two completely unreleased songs done live at the conclusion—so-so sound quality, but of collector's interest and continuing in the tuneful direction.

A strong companion piece to the other Government Issue anthology and if more rock on college radio in the mid to late 80s had been this energetic, things would have been a lot more tolerable. (PO Box 7000-117, Alta Loma, CA 91701)

GRIMPLE (Prank)

Early 90s Bay Area hardcore punk and this reissue includes their "Up Your Ass" LP, a 7" and a demo. Raw, ragtag songs with a snotty, yet melodic delivery—think Choking Victim without the ska and (in the latter's cast) the Satanic trappings. It's sad that "Bushanomics" is as much a song for 2002 as it was in 1992 but that's the way it is. There's an appealing recklessness and roughness and, oh yeah, lots of heart. If I'd heard this album when it came out, I might have been drawn band to the punk underground earlier than I was and avoided a few years of forgettable alt-rock. Such is life! (PO Box 410892, SF, CA 94141)

HATED YOUTH/ROACH MOTEL-Don't Fuck With Florida! (Burrito)

Two 80s era Florida hardcore bands (both of whom recently played reunion sets at Burrito Fest and I wish I'd been there). Hated Youth previously had a 7" EP and this is a 19 track unreleased recording from '84. Double-speed thrash along the lines of DRI, along with some rock 'n roll touches ("Take The Baby And Run") and absurd/sarcastic lyrics. Roach Motel's side is live, recorded in Miami in '83, and they also incorporated a wise-assed sense of humor into their lyrics. Loud, drunken and a little sloppy—sound quality is fair to middling. Obnoxious in a good way, but I like their studio recordings better. (PO Box 3204, Brandon, FL 33509)

HEART ATTACK-The Last War 1980-84 (Broken)

Young, loud and snotty wasn't only a Dead Boys' album, it was a valid description of this NYC punk band. Three quarters of the originial lineup were 12 and 13 when they started Heart Attack in 1980, along with older friend Jack Flanagan (later with the Mob) and they dished out some tough and raw sounds, yet it was pretty accomplished considering their age. Mixing up thrash with older punk inspiration—"You" has echoes of the Adverts, for instance. But it got louder and faster as time progressed. Heart Attack had a vivacious energy and sarcastic, obnoxious lyrics, even dealing in a bit of Nietzschean philosophy ("God Is Dead"). A period piece, for sure, but there's something to be said for unabashed enthusiasm. Guitarist/vocalist Jesse Malin still plays music to this day, most noteably with D-Generation in recent years. (PO Box 460402, SF, CA 94146-0402)

HIVES-Barely Legal (Gearhead)

Frantic, fast paced fun and one can hardly ask for more. The Hives debut dates back a few years but remains a wholly effective exercise in skeleton shaking good times. The pure adrenalin of Motorhead and Lazy Cowgirls but you just KNOW these kids have studied their Sly and the Family Stone records as well. I never thought I would hear someone rival Eric Davidson's (New Bomb Turks) lyrics but goshdarnit it has been done. Renew your vows with rock and roll by scoring this one. (PO Box 421219, SF, CA 94142) *(David)*

HOOTON3CAR (Crackle, 2CD)

First of all, it's a complete (2 CD!!!) discography, which means Hooton3car must be worth something, right? This is a Crackle release, so it's that melodic punk sound—some songwriting/arranging that I'm beginning to think of as uniquely British, similar to Leatherface, although not quite enough for me. Hooton3Car are more straightforward than Crackle stuff I like, definitely more straight-up accessible pop-punk. The vocals are a little on the smooth side for me, the songs a bit catchier with less edge. So it's not my favorite Crackle release. But it's still pretty good, but it didn't excite me the way Milloy did or a lot of other bands like this. 2 CDs is a lot to get through if it's the first time you heard a band. (PO Box 7, Otley LS21 1YB, ENGLAND) *(Tigger)*

I HATE YOU-Discography 1995/1998 (Deathwish, Inc.)

Everything but the proverbial kitchen sink here—the band's records, rough-sounding demos and live material and, while hit and miss, this Philly straight-edge band had their moments. "Cram," which is repeated several times, quickly offers their manifesto: *"fuck your drugs—cram it up your ass."* That's called getting right to the point. Fast hardcore with some metal leanings and there's a fucked-up dirge, "Breaking Glass," that pushes the envelope—and one's patience, to an extent. A couple of these guys are now in Knives Out, who are a more-interesting band and their EP (reviewed in this section) is well-worth hearing. (432 Morris Ave., Providence, RI 02906)

IGGY & THE STOOGES-Wild Love (Bomp)

Rehearsal sessions from the post-"Raw Power" era. If the Stooges are regarded as a groundbreaking band, these recordings reveal how traditional they actually were—working out on blues-based originals and covers by Dylan, Diddley and Skip James. Unfortunately, it's more like sitting in on a jam session and it gets meandering quite a bit of the time. While Iggy's vocal ad-libs reveal a perverse near-brilliance, it's not enough to make one want to hear these recordings more than once or twice. "Mellow Down Easy," a brief piece, picks up the pace and "Wild Love" is a passable rocker but it's still strictly an archival curiosity. (PO Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510)

JESUS AND THE GOSPELFUCKERS/AGENT ORANGE-Couldn't Care Less (Kangaroo)

Infamous hardcore punk from Holland—essentially, the same band with a few personnel shifts and these recordings are a sort of holy grail to afficionados of foreign hardcore. Damn fucking kick-ass, with a raw, aggressive sound and provocative in the song-title/lyrics department. "Your Mother Sucks Cocks In Hell" is one title that isn't easily forgotten but it's not just shock-value—this raging track lives up to the billing, as does "Factory," "KKK" and "Nothing." As they admit in the liner notes, Discharge was influential in their sound, but it's inspiration and not a clone factor. About those liner notes—a wild, crazy story and time hasn't tempered the bad attitude, with disparaging references to political punks and "squad [squat] faggots." Brilliant—one might think the outlook would have, uh, evolved by now. Ultimately, though, it doesn't detract from the blazing thrillride provided by these tracks. (Middenweg 13, 1098 AA Amsterdam, NETHERLANDS)

JFA-We Know You Suck (Alternative Tentacles)

JFA's early recordings and still the best stuff they ever did. This compiles the "Blatant Localism" 7", "Valley Of The Yakes" LP and a passel of live and rare recordings. Young, snotty skate punks, one of the first bands to proudly fly that label, but more musically diverse than that moniker would indicate. These guys were equally at home playing three chord punk rants, surf instrumentals, covers of War's "Low Rider" and "Linus and Lucy" from the Charlie Brown TV series and even one song that has the instrumental dexterity of the Minutemen ("Little Big Man"). They could shred it, like the agitated brats they were, with the likes of "Preppy," "Kick You," "We Know You Suck" and "I Don't Like You," but then you notice the innovative guitar lines and shadings and versatile bass-playing. Not your average three chord band, by any stretch. (PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141-9092)

JUSTICE LEAGUE-1983-1988 (Mendit)

Complete anthology, plus some live material from Justice League. Some of the music here hasn't held up particularly well, as they tried to bridge youth crew hardcore with more melodic leanings and had decidedly crossed over into indy rock territory by the time of their demise. And there's a bit more acoustic guitar than I'd like to hear coming from a hardcore band. But there was still passion and youthful verve to be found, especially for the first 7" and "Shattered Dreams" LP. "Chain Of Strength," of course, provided the moniker for one post-Justice League band. "Style" and "Time To Stop" are a good back-to-back tandem of Cali skate punk. The live material catches them in an early, undistinguished phase and it's interesting to track their constant evolution over the years, even if it was inconsistent. (PO Box 1096, NY, NY 10003)

KATASTROFIALUE-Tuskatakuu '94-'98 (Crucial Blast)

Some hardcore from Finland, recorded in the mid-to-late 90s, in case you weren't paying attention to the title. Ravaging stuff, with raw, crusty thrash sound and rabid vocals. Packaged in a DVD case and including a lyric booklet. Throttling and aggressive, with the later material having superior sound quality and a tighter attack. (PO Box 364, Hagerstown, MD 21741-0364)

KILL YOUR IDOLS-The Skinnier Years (Vicious Circle, 10")

Kill Your Idols certainly deserve credit for embracing a classic hardcore sound at a time when it was far-from-fashionable, circa '95-97... this disc features a pair of tracks from their first recording session, originally slated for a compilation on the ill-fated Bitter Sweet label, their demo tape which was recorded live at CB's and studio material from early '97, most of which ended up on a split 7" with the Fisticuffs. While the old-school inspiration is obvious, KYI add their own personality, throwing in some catchier elements and they continue to be a top-notch band to this day. And they were already pretty damn good in the 'skinnier' years, as this record proves. (PO Box 4621, Richmond, VA 23220)

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE-Americanized (Grand Theft Audio)

Nothing Americanized about Lack Of Knowledge's music—a UK band to the core, both by pedigree and musical influence. Lack Of Knowledge drew on the melodic, yet socially-conscious music of Zoundz or Crass, with whom they had a working relationship—in fact, drummer Phil Barker later played in Stratford Mercenaries' with Crass' Steve Ignorant; both Barker and guitarist Tony Barber are in the current incarnation of the Buzzcocks. There was also a moodier post-punk undertow, ala Joy Division or even, dare I say, early Simple Minds. The songs, which were all written from the late 70s to mid 80s, span recording sessions from that period and there's also a session from 2000. The newer recordings exude a confidence and musical mettle only hinted at earlier. While occasionally plodding, there's a bracing power to such songs as "Creatures Of God," "Terminal World," "The Fog" and "A Prayer And A Bomb." Lower-register, mannered vocals, once again atypical for a typical 'punk' band. Self-deprecating liner notes tell the whole story, although there's no mention about the reunion recordings. (501 W. Glenoaks Blvd., PMB 313, Glendale, CA 91202)

LEYTON BUZZARDS-The Punk Collection (Captain Oi)

Kind of a flat-sounding band—the Buzzards mixed pub rock, glam, reggae, pop and punk in varying permutations. The beginning of "Youthanasia" clips from Bowie's "Moonage Daydream," for instance, while "British Justice" has the rock-reggae sound of the Members or early Police. "Land Of The Free" is a little punkier in intent, albeit with a strong melody line. Pleasant, yet lightweight. (PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 8QA, ENGLAND)

MC5-Motor City Is Burning (Trojan/Sanctuary)

Yeah, the MC5 are one of the highest energy bands of all time and they're released some incendiary live recordings but "Motor City Is Burning" isn't really one of them. Hard to fault the song selection, with "Jams," "Shakin' Street," "Come Together," "Human Being Lawnmower," although the slower blues jams get a tad tedious and this is hardly the best take of "Black To Comm" they've ever committed to tape. Vague recording details, as well—no dates listed. Sound-wise, it's above bootleg quality, though hardly pristine. Can't really call this essential, except for completists.

MILLIONS OF DEAD COPS-Now More Than Ever (Beer City)

Same MDC anthology that was reviewed in *SV#45*, re-released on Beer City, adding one song ("Missile Destroyed Civilization") and with a more elaborate insert that includes the lyrics. I'll stick with my opinion that the best MDC disc is the one that has the first album and "More Dead Cops" single anthology on one CD but, with 31 songs, it's a generous amount of political hardcore punk that embraces other musical forms, as well—strains of pop, country and rock 'n roll. And the message is often delivered with a good amount of subversive humor, though one can't miss the point of "Dead Cops" or "Multi Death Corporations." Dave Dictor continues to be an inspiring character. (PO Box 26035, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0035)

MINOR THREAT-First Demo Tape (Dischord, EP)

After being widely circulated as a bootleg for many years (I own a 7" boot and a split boot with Youth Brigade demos, the latter of which also needs a legit release), Dischord puts out the Minor Threat demo on CD. Includes six songs that were re-recorded for the "Filler" EP, plus "Stand Up" and "Guilty of Being White." Hardcore punk in its purest form. What more needs to be written? (3819 Beecher St., NW, Washington, DC 20007)

MISERY-The Early Years (Crimes Against Humanity/Havoc)

Crust punk notables Misery, pride and glory of the Minneapolis crust scene, finally get due respect on digital format with The Early Years. A collection of their first batch of vinyl releases, these 23 songs run the gamut of crust punk—from early Discharge punk noise blasts, to mam-

moth riffmania metal, with that unmistakable crust production. Perhaps non-production is the correct terminology in this muddy sea of sandpaper drums and buried six feet under guitars, although, to be fair, a much-needed transfusion of production values rescues the last half of this collection. As far as crust punk goes, Misery are respected amongst the best in the gutter, alongside Aus Rotten and His Hero Is Gone. What they suffer from in a samey, somewhat tuneless drone, they more than make up for in spittle, anger and venom. It's a shame Misery couldn't include a full lyric sheet, if not to confirm their obvious anti-capitalist leanings, instead opting for reproductions of their vinyl cover art (with their obvious anti-capitalist leanings). A must for fans of crust, or for those wanting to add a little extra Misery to their lives. (PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408) *(Jason)*

MUNG-Off The Mark (A 7 Year Boil) (Rodent Popsicle)

Mung were never the most fashionable band in Boston and didn't fit in with all the little subcliques...if anything, they had more in common with the veteran bands who combined a love of melodic punk, hardcore and rock 'n roll that could be traced back to such bands as the Outlets or Stranglehold. In fact, one of Mung's drummers, Walter Gustafson, played with the Outlets (and just about every other band in Boston, it seems). Mung weren't really part of the all-ages scene, although they did play some of those shows. High energy music with lyrical smarts and strong hooks, especially for "Fatty," "Red Light" and "Eye For An Eye." They also came on full-blast for the likes of "Jaded," "Violent Actions" and "Daily News." Anyway, this is a collection of material from their "Vow Of Poverty" EP, compilation appearances and a whole bunch of unreleased material, all of it recorded between '93 and '98. Give this highly underrated band a listen. (PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134)

NAUSEA-The Punk Terrorist Anthology Vol. 1 (Black Noise)

An hour-plus crust attack from the late 80s/early 90s, anthologizing this NYC band's output from that period, including most of the songs that appeared on the "Extinction" album. A powerful blend of Discharge-style thrash and heavier, gloomier-sounding material taking inspiration from such obvious touchpoints as Amebix and Killing Joke, to an extent. Rabid vocals from both Al and Amy that matched the outrage of the doomsday lyrical imagery. Makes me wish I'd been listening to Nausea more than some of those Sub Pop bands from that time-frame and one can feel their influence to this day, in any of a number of bands that have male/female vocal tradeoffs and an aggressive hardcore sound. Includes an intricate video clip for "Cybergod." (PO Box 1784, Costa Mesa, CA 92626)

NEW CREATURES-Penelope Flowers + Live At Stache's (Smog Veil)/Media Brainwash (Smog Veil)

More Ohio damage from the Smog Veil vaults...Media Brainwash was recorded by three high school kids in '84 (two of which went on to play in Guided By Voices) and instead of the all-out teenage thrash assault I was expecting, it's catchy mid-tempo punk rock with some rocknroll leanings—pretty decent. Penelope Flowers is essentially the same band half-studio, half-live several years later doing late-60s rock with melodic psychedelic touches plus some of their earlier songs on the live stuff. Nothing too special on either of these—hopefully Smog Veil isn't scraping the bottom of the barrel for old tapes now. (316 California Ave., #207, Reno, NV 89509) *(Ryan)*

NIHILISTICS (Mad At The World)

These guys epitomized sounding angry and pissed off. The Nihilistics' first album, from 1983, pulls no musical or lyrical punches. The label name is perfect because they were, indeed, mad at the world. Hated their jobs. Hated the cops. Hated the politicians. Hated big business. And they harnessed those sentiments to a blunt hardcore punk attack. No catchy thrash, but ruthless permutations that refused to be anthemic, although that could happen on occasion, such as with "Welfare For The Rich," starting with a "Taps" guitar signature and then Ron Rancid bellows "YOU FUCKING BASTARD" with all the conviction he can muster. Guitar squeals and squalls create a dissonant array of sounds, anchored by bass that sometimes play counter-melody lines and the drumming is often a simple martial beat. Yeah, it's ugly, just like life. The original booket, with lyrics, disturbing photos and essays where they explain their intent, are included—admitting their negativity but hoping something positive can come out of it. One could argue we're still waiting but this is good musical therapy, at least. (PO Box 20227, Tompkins Square Station, NY, NY 10009)

999-The Biggest Tour In Sport/The Biggest Prize In Sport (Captain Oi)

Actually, the order should be reversed, since the live EP ("Tour," of course) came after the studio album. In any case, the presentation on "Biggest Prize" is poppier and a bit leaner-sounding than on their first two albums, especially compared to how they were as a live act. There was also a raw, kinetic energy to those earlier recordings, as muddy-sounding as they could be, on occasion. But it's still a largely-enjoyable merging of punk and pop, particularly for the revved-up "English Wipe Out," "Boys In The Gang" and "Inside Out," which is a virtual rewrite of "I'm Not Your Steppin' Stone" (in fact, a band once combined the two songs into one but damned if I can remember who, right now). The live songs include their biggest "hit," "Homicide," along with "Emergency," "Feelin' Alright With The Crew" and "Emergency" from the earlier days, plus two songs featured on the album. Three single tracks round out the disc. "Biggest Prize" was their last halfway decent studio album, since the weak, watered-down "Concrete" came afterward. (PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 8QA, ENGLAND)

9 SHOCKS TERROR-Zen And The Art Of Beating Your Ass (Havoc)

Reissued with a new cover and remixed and, after comparing the two versions, this is a much hotter, louder mix. And considering that the album has been mighty tough to find lately, Felix deserves a punk rock Nobel prize or something like that for making it readily available, again. The



band's razor-sharp ferocity is brought into bold, jagged relief. You might cut yourself if you get too close to the speakers. What the hell, though—it's a risk worth taking. Just a killer hardcore album—the fast ones rampage with a merciless combination of Japanese hardcore and American thrash and, when they slow it down, the power remains intense. The songs that bookend side one—"Not A Fucking Anthem" and "Get Hookers" (the song's original title, but it was listed as "Pissing And Moaning In The Key Of D-Minor" on the first pressing). Anyone who insists hardcore is dead or redundant or "over" (like a certain Mr. Blush) needs to have this blasted at them full force. It took 30 seconds of seeing this band live to make me a believer again and this album reinforces that devotion to the shrine of the 'core. The CD version goes a step further, not only including the album but also their assorted 7"s, splits and comp appearances. That's right, a near-complete discography (excepting "Paying Ohmage" and the limited live album) and it's a rage-fest, including earlier versions of "Yeti Smasher," "Prozac Logic," the ripping "Mobile Terror Unit" and even their cover of Hawkwind's "Brainstorm" that appeared on the (now out of print) second SV comp. All it's here and it's guaranteed to beat your ass. (PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408)

NO CHOICE-Try And You Might (Grand Theft Audio)

Welsh band who released a 7" on Riot City and a few comp tracks but little else—this disc includes most of those songs plus two demos and a 1992 session when some of the members reconvened as S.A.N.D. Not as fired-up sounding as some of the other UK '82 bands—this is a decidedly more melodic approach and the lyrics also exude intelligence and not just merely mindless sloganeering. But there's a grittiness and toughness in the arranging, especially on the '84 demo songs that lead off this release. The earlier material sounds a tad more tentative but the S.A.N.D. songs show that the muse hadn't faded one bit. No Choice are back together and have released a new album, "Dry River Fishing," that's well-worth checking out. (501 W. Glenoaks Blvd., PMB 313, Glendale, CA 91202)

NOFX-45 or 46 Songs That Weren't Good Enough To Go On Our Other Records (Fat, dbl. CD)

Well, that's not *exactly* true. I'm particularly fond of the second disc, here, which includes their back-to-the-core EP's, "Surfer" and "Fuck The Kids," although they left a song off each to be a complete pain in the ass. Still, that's going to get more play around here than any NOFX longplayer in recent memory. Disc one collects b-sides, rarities and outtakes and is an enjoyable, if uneven, hodgepodge of smart-assed melodic punk. Their cover of OMD's "Electricity" is very cool and the last track, the uncredited "Thalidomide Child," is taken from their '84 demo—when they were an obnoxious teenage hardcore band and, if Mike is embarrassed about those days, it sounds pretty damn ripping. So there. A well-annotated collage-style booklet completes the package and I love how they sneak in some left-wing/anti-Bush points of view, even urging listeners to buy Michael Moore's new book. (PO Box 193690, SF, CA 94119-3690)

OFFBEATS-Dumb Looks Still Free (Smog Veil)

Smog Veil continues its documentation of the 80s-era Ohio punk and hardcore scene with an anthology from this Cleveland band. The Offbeats started as a snotty loud 'n fast band, albeit with a hint of melody and that became more pronounced by the time their 1985-86 recording period came around. Still a punk attitude but increasingly veering towards what one might call indy rock, although quirky as fuck. Ain't no power pop, in other words and indy rock was still a label that didn't require embarrassment. They also had an absurdist (or is it immature?) sense of humor, as well. Obscure stuff, as many of these tracks are previously unreleased, including demos of songs that appeared on their album on Relativity Records, "Evolution Of The Stickman," which I still have sitting upstairs on the 'ol shelf. They also squeezed out a pair of 7" EP's before the album and those songs are also here. "In A Rush," indeed. Nothing that's easily classified. (316 California Ave., #207, Reno, NV 89509)

LOS OLVIDADOS-Listen To This (Alternative Tentacles)

This is a lost classic—I have no doubt these guys would have made a lot of noise beyond the Bay Area if this album or any album by them had been released during their early to mid-80s heyday. My only previous exposure to Los Olvidados was the excellent "Pay Salvation," from the "Not So Quiet On The Western Front" comp and I know they were on another comp or two but that was it. Anyway, here's a band that took inspiration from '77 punk on both sides of the pond—a little Dead Boys there ("So Dull" is similar to that band's "High Tension Wire"), a little Clash there and with an early 80s California punk twist. Heck, they even sneak in some pure rock 'n roll—"Assassin Of Youth" quotes a little from "Won't Get Fooled Again." Mike Fox pulls an impressive array of sounds from his axe—down 'n dirty rock, melodic lines and punk gnash all in one. Tough, catchy and genre-crossing—it was all punk rock back then and this holds its own to a lot of the great California punk albums from that time. (PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141-9092)

PANDEMONIUM-Sex, Drugs, Stocks And An Old Man Talking To Himself (Coalition, dbl. CD)

Wild hardcore from the 80s-era Dutch band and they got more frenetic-sounding as time passed. Pandemonium's earlier material was in the straight-ahead Discharge-inspired mold but they increased the speed quotient and found their own sound as time progressed. Sometimes, it seems like a whirlwind blur but the rawness definitely catches my ear and some songs really stand out—"Wir Fahren Gegen Nazis" and "Mit Schwarzer Fahne/Demonstrate," in particular. Disc one includes their '82 demo, a comp track, their first LP and two EP's. The second disc is taken from a 1986 live album and also includes two live songs on video, although you can't see the band too well. (Newtonstraat 212, 2562 KW Den Haag, NETHERLANDS)

PETER & THE TEST TUBE BABIES-The Mating Sounds Of South American Frogs/Loud Blaring Punk Rock/Soberphobia/Supermodels/Schwein Lake Live/Alien Pubduction (Captain Oi)

More reissues from Peter and the lads... "Mating Sounds" was their first studio album, from '83, and is hit and miss, but enjoyable. "The Jinx," "Wimpeez" (about the hamburger chain), "Blown Out Again" and "Zombie Creeping Flesh" are keepers but it's safe to skip over the disco piss-take "Pissed Punks." "Loud Blaring Punk Rock" is better. It was originally released under the premise it consisted of early demos by the band but it turns out to be a ruse—it was actually recorded in a marathon session sometime in '84 and is ruder, cruder and more obnoxious. It also hits the mark quite a bit more. Perhaps writing a cheery song called "Breast Cancer" goes too far but that doesn't mean I didn't laugh. Rougher, less-produced and a whole lot of fun, particularly for "Beat Up The Mods," "Vicars" and "Child Molester." Tasteless? Yeah... so what? "Soberphobia," which was released in '86, is one of the band's weaker efforts. The humor remains but the music is another matter altogether—wretched 80s drum production turns it into dance fluff a lot of the time and the punk energy is largely neutered. There's no getting around the softness of "Louise Wouldn't Like It" or the ballad, "All About Love." I didn't like this album on its first release, in the 80s on Profile, nor its '95 reissue on We Bite and that's still the case. It's as though they were going for a more commercial sound and it falls flat. Only the three live cuts tacked on the end have any signs of life. "Supermodels," on the other hand, is much better. From the mid-90s and it's a loud and spirited punk rock outing. Pete's voice seems gruffer and it's a return to the roots. Guitars blazing and tunes catchy. The lyrics actually show a tremendous amount of venom towards social climbers and the upwardly mobile, while stating that they still love the booze 'n birds, although the bad luck in the latter department seems to continue. The best of the batch here is the live record, also from the mid-90s and featuring golden oldies, a Gary Glitter song ("I'm The Leader Of The Gang") and selections from "Supermodels." Loud, proud and great fun, although I didn't need to see them in ballerina tutus on the insert. "Alien Pubduction" (from the late 90s) is another enjoyable effort, with the memorable "I'm Getting Pissed For Christmas" and the Pistols-ish ring of "The Troublemakers" standing out, although there are a few sluggish-sounding tracks that slow the momentum a tad. (PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 8QA, ENGLAND)

PROCLAMATION-Let The Truth Be Told (Life Sentence)

Complete anthology for this Boston area straight-edge band, including unreleased songs and demo tracks and one can easily trace the evolution from a heavy, veering-on-metal hardcore sound to a fast, manic onslaught. One thing that never changed was the straight-forward nature of the lyrics—proudly straight-edge and definitely down on those whose abuses cause harm to others. Belief in standing up for ones principles and that never wavered. Along the way, with the endless lineup shifts, Proclamation got better and better and, listening their ass-kicking longplayer, "Taken By Force," I think I might have underrated these guys. Proclamation broke up a few years ago and leave behind an in-your-face legacy. (PO Box 342, Cottage Grove, MN 55016)

RADON-We Bare All (No Idea)

Single and comp tracks, but the bulk is made up of live material. This Florida band had a poppy/punk sound with some impressive influences—



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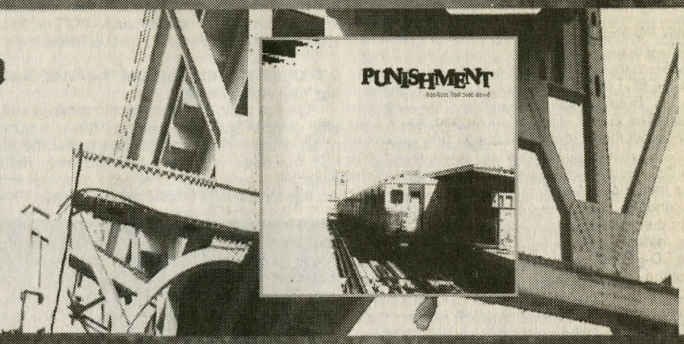

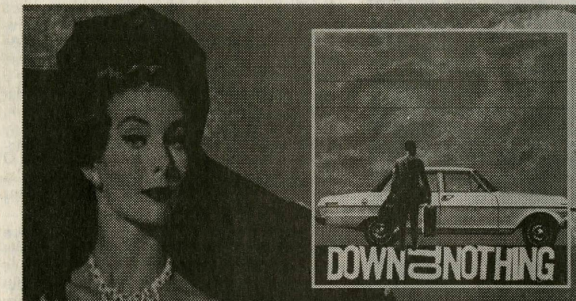

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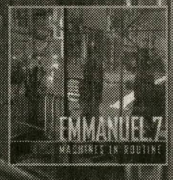

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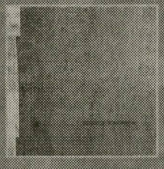

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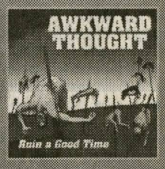

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Hüsker Dü (and I guessed that before hearing their cover of "Divide and Conquer"), older Replacements and it's given a solid thrashing. Jangly/jarring guitar chords and whomping hooks. It sounds frayed and rough around the edges and the energy level makes up for the sonic deficiencies of the live material, to an extent.

RANCID VAT-The Cheesesteak Years (Steel Cage)

The last thing you wanna do whilst operating a bulldozer is drop acid. Well, if you ain't heard Rancid Vat, they are that fingernails on a chalkboard sound while finding out your beloved cat just died. Always brutal. A sample of their very interesting period while calling Philly home base. At times remaining the noisy even for noise band they always were, and at other times working the rock n roll juggernaut angle. Never afraid to make absolutely no sense, Rancid Vat once again score with their "horrible noise," to quote Sinatra. Oh, the humanity. (PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125) *(David)*

RAW POWER-You Are The Victim (Soulforce)

The original,ultra-rare Raw Power album from 1983—many of these songs would later appear on the BCT demo (reissued on Grand Theft Audio as "Burning The Factory") and on "Screams From The Gutter" with the expanded, five piece lineup but this is rough and brutallizing hardcore punk. Guissepe's leads weren't as metal-forged as Davide, who joined the band later on, so this is a more basic sound. Fast and hard-hitting and secondary vocalist Silvio's shrieks are completely throat shredding. The sound quality is so-so but the material blasts throught the deficiencies. On the CD-ROM part, there's live and rehearsal video footage, a photo gallery, zine interviews, flyers, etc. If you've never heard anything by these guys, wake the fuck up, already! (Apartado De Correos 18199, 28080 Madrid, SPAIN)

RAZOR BLADES-Songs From The Edge (Grand Theft Audio)

A Danish hardcore band from the early 80s who improved quite a bit over the course of about a year and a half. The early material, captured on a live studio demo, is non-dinstinguished thrash but, by the time they got around to recording the tracks for a 1983 split EP and the 1984 "Plastic Messiah" EP, the Razor Blades had turned into quite a kickass unit—fast, aggressive compositions, but also taking a post-punkish turn for "Another Utopian Dream." I'd argue that fellow Danes Amdi Petersens Armé might have been influenced by these guys, to an extent. Gnarled, knotty guitar chords that jab like barbed wire and equally jagged-sounding vocals. (501 W. Glenoaks Blvd., PMB 313, Glendale, CA 91202)

REVILLOS-Attack! (Captain Oi)

The Revillos were the successors to the Rezillos or, more accurately, the band that Fay Fife and Eugene Reynolds formed after the Rezillos' demise. "Attack" is a sorta-reissue of their ultra-rare second album, as they've cobbled together a "definitive" edition for a variety of sources. The Revillos were more up-front about the 60s roots than their predecessors, keeping the trashy kitsch but largely dispensing with the giddy punk slash and delving more into pop, soul and girl group sounds. The album gets off to a good start with the nervy sounds of "Snatzmobile" with some synthy whirl that could've been on a Sweet record and "Hip City," "Bongo Brain" and "Mad From Birth To Death" have a giddy, bouncy resonance, but it doesn't drive me out of my skull, either. "Midnight" is a lame ballad and the version of "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town" just plain saccharine. I'll stick with "Can't Stand The Rezillos." (PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 8QA, ENGLAND)

RF7-All You Can Eat Volume II (Grand Theft Audio)

Not quite as awe-inspiring as Volume I, which contained RF7's most-ripping hardcore punk but there's still a good amount of decent stuff here. Taken from their 90s releases and earlier songs spanning '79 to '85, much of it unreleased or ultra-rare and it's actually the newer material that's superior. Buzzsaw punk punctuated by Felix's sandpaper-rough vocals and Nick's inventive guitar playing, along with jaundiced lyrics shaped by life's experiences. The very early tracks sound tentative, in more of a surf-punk vein, while the three unreleased mid-80s song take a melodic turn, with "After The Fall" borrowing a bit from Richard Hell's "Blank Generation." Quite a bit in fact. Never fitting an easy mold. (501 W. Glenoaks Blvd., PMB 313, Glendale, CA 91202)

RIPCORD-Hardcore (Epistrophy)/More Songs About (Epistrophy)

Two discs that wrap up this UK hardcore band's history. Ripcord may have been a British unit but they had a pronounced US hardcore influence and merged it with the wreckless abandon of Discharge and some of the "crossover" bands, although there wasn't any wankery. Best of all worlds—rumbling bass-lines, thick guitar chords and agitated vocals from Buzzy and, later, Steve. Ripcord had the speed but didn't cross over into grind, which makes it more to my liking. Just loud and fast, although they could get heavier and brooding, such as with "Kiss Of Death."

ROCKET FROM THE TOMBS-The Day The Earth Met The... (Smog Veil)

Finally, a legit release for this Cleveland band, though a good chunk of this material has been on the tape-trading circuit for years and there was also a bootleg LP in the early 90s. For those in need of historical info, RFTT included future members of the Dead Boys and Pere Ubu—Gene O'Connor aka Cheetah Chrome, David Thomas aka Crocus Behemoth, Johnny "Blitz" Madansky, as well as Peter Laughner, a visionary songwriter who was dead well before his 30th birthday. The material comes from a rehearsal demo and two live performances, all of it recorded in 1975. That's right—1975, which of course means they were creating punk rock before it officially existed. At a time when yours truly was listening to the Nuge, Aerosmith and Sweet. The band's own inspiration came most obviously from Iggy & The Stooges and the Velvet Underground, both of whom they cover here. A gnarled, yet often melodic collision of sounds—pure rock 'n roll but also an artsier, more abstract sensibility. Included are the original versions of "Final Solution," "Sonic Reducer," "Down In Flames," a garage-ish take of "Life Stinks," "Never Gonna Kill Myself Again," which later became the Dead Boys' "Caught With The Meat In Your Mouth" and a subdued-sounding "Ain't It Fun." Definitely some fired-up moments, particularly "Down In Flames," though the bluesy vamp of "Transfusion" isn't all that exciting. The essay in the booklet tells the Rocket story, with anecdotes from some of the participants. A long overdue compilation. (316 California Ave., #207, Reno, NV 89509)

RORSCHACH-Live In Italy 6/18/92 (Gern Blandsten)

In retrospect, these guys were pretty groundbreaking and, after hearing their crazy cover of Black Flag's "My War," I guess I had never picked up on how much that band's heavier period influenced Rorschach. Lurching riffs that often explode into fits of speed-driven rage, topped off by Charles Maggio's wailing vocals. Good sound quality for a live recording—no witty banter, just the rock. (PO Box 356, Gern Blandsten, NJ 07661)

RUTS-In A Rut (Taang)

Another Ruts release means I get another chance to extol the greatness of this incredible UK band. Bridging the '77 and early 80s UK punk era with a stirring blend of bashing punk, reggae and dub rhythms and melodic flourishes. Balancing Malcolm Owen's gruff vocals with dexterous, versatile musicianship and a bagful of memorable song. This is a rarities collection, featuring studio sessions from before their first album "The Crack" and two of the cuts, "In A Rut" and "H-Eyes" ended up on their first single. There are also early versions of "Babylon's Burning," "Something That I Said, "Savage Circle," "Society" and a few others, plus the otherwise unreleased "Stepping Bondage" (which did appear on a 7" in the mid-80s). Somewhat tentative-sounding compared to the later versions but still more than worthwhile. "Something That I Said" remains their definitive collection but this is a good companion piece. Everyone needs some Ruts in their collection. (706 Pismo Ct., San Diego, CA 92109)

SAUCERS-What We Did (Grand Theft Audio)

Connecticut band that included ex-Rocket From The Tombs' bassist Craig Bell and future members of Dumptruck and Miracle Legion (two pretty crappy bands) in its lineup. Psychedelic/garage/pop/new wave rock through its various incarnations—not really that hard-driving, but one can hear some fairly tasty 60s influences on occasion. Their take of RFTT's (and later Pere Ubu's) "Final Solution" takes more a Velvets-y turn but can't touch the better-known version(s). "Frustration" builds up a decent head of steam on two different takes by two of the lineups (there were three lineups during the band's brief two year history from '78 to '80) here, as does "I Didn't Get It." But this doesn't provide the charge of the best music from the period—seems somewhat watered-down. (501 W. Glenoaks Blvd., PMB 313, Glendale, CA 91202)

SCAPEGOATS-Life's Pasted On My Eyes (Grand Theft Audio)

Remember that Stains' song "Sick and Crazy"? Well, that would fit the Scapegoats. Nervous, jittery, slashing hardcore punk with some musical similarities to Fear but, instead of the blowhard humor, it's a darker lyrical vision. Pretty damn obscure, as their previously-released output was relegated to the "Not So Quiet On The Western Front" comp and another cassette comp. Soave Loco (love the name) has a deranged vocal style and the music creates a whirlwind gnarl. Songs from three different recording sessions and a live session, all of it recorded in '81 and '82. (501 W. Glenoaks Blvd., PMB 313, Glendale, CA 91202)

SHAM 69-The Adventures Of Hersham Boys (Castle/Sanctuary)

Another repackaging of Sham's third album and it also includes the superb "If The Kids Are United" single, one of their most-enduring anthems, five live cuts of earlier material, accompanied by boisterous audience participation and the embarrassing 8-minute extended version of "Borstal Breakout," complete with cheesy synthesizer. Sham were attempting to expand beyond their pure punk origins, here, with added keyboards and even a hardpsichord solo (which sounds out of place) for the otherwise-pounding rocker, "Lost On Highway 45." Ballads were never Sham's strong suit and "Fly Dark Angel" reinforces that opinion, though they do an adequate version of the Yardbirds' "You're A Better Man Than I." "Questions and Answers" is a different take from the single, excising the spooky organ intro, but remaining a solid stomper. "Hersham Boys" is also a fun and sprited romp. Still, the piano tends to dilute the impact of some of the rockers and one misses the simple, straight-forward nature of their first two albums ("Tell Us The Truth," "That's Life")—"The Game," which followed this album, actually marked a return to form. A good album and essential for Sham fans, but not their best.

SILLIES-America's Most Wanton (Scooch Pooch)

Real hit and miss collection from this 70s era Detroit band. A variety of styles, most-effective on the crankin' punk rock of "Break Loose" and "Heavy Breathing" and the rock 'n rollin' "Sex For The Handicapped," which is reminiscent of the Move. Other songs have influences ranging from Iggy, Lou and Alice (the latter for "Love You To Death"), while it gets cheesy for "Fresh Flesh," which has some Jeff Beck-like guitar lines—and I don't mean Yardbirds-era Beck but his fusion stuff. Not always as wanton as I'd prefer. (5850 W. 3rd St., #209, LA, CA 90036)

SLAPSHOT-Back On The Map (Taang, EP)

Taang has reissued "BOTM" and "Step On It" (which wasn't sent for review) as single CD's... not sure why, since they were packaged on one CD, before, but here's the band's first EP. While the production suffered somewhat from that cavernous mid to late 80s sound, these songs are timeless, especially the title track and "Chip On My Shoulder." The "Same Mistake" 7" is included as a bonus and that features the hilarious "Might Makes Right." (706 Pismo Ct., San Diego, CA 92109)

SLAUGHTER & THE DOGS-We Don't Care (Castle/Sanctuary, dbl. CD)

If they don't care, I don't either. Actually, I do care about SATD but this mostly-live double CD is really only for the die-hards. First off, it doesn't include a version of their best-known song, "Cranked Up Really High." What you do get is serviceable pub/punk/rock 'n roll that has its catchy moments but is better-experienced on the studio versions. Speaking of which, there are a smattering of studio demos that sound as though they're from more recent-vintage and feature a drum machine accompanying the good-timey rock 'n roll—lame! There's also a 20 or so-minute interview with Mick Rossi and his recollections about the early punk days. "Do It Dog Style" and "The Singles Collection" will do 'ya fine.

SLOPPY SECONDS-Destroyed (Coldfront)

The Indy pop/punkers' first full-length, from 1989 and once again available, including four extra tracks. This may not grab me the way it used to but it's still enjoyable. Along with the Queers and Screeching Weasel, Sloppy Seconds were taking the Ramones' songbook and adding their own twisted personality to the mix. Songs for the fuck-ups, the losers and the hopeless done with more than hint of obnoxious humor, starting with "I Don't Wanna Be A Homosexual" which, despite its title, doesn't have one iota of homophobia and has a killer chorus, to boot. Same for "If I Had A Woman," "So Fucked Up" (their anthem) and their cover of "Leavin' On A Jet Plane." Super-snotty vocals and super-catchy tunes—still a stirring combination. (PO Box 8345, Berkeley, CA 94707)

STALAG 13-In Control (Dr. Strange)

Nardcore in your face. Fast, ripping hardcore punk with a hint of metal and Stalag had it cold. Catchy and energetic, particularly the lead-off track, "Conditioned," which was covered by Holier Than Thou on their album. This reissue includes the 9 songs from the original 1984 LP, a live song (kind of rough quality) and three more songs from '83 with a different lineup and more of a raw, high speed approach. One of those tracks, "Selfish," I remember from the "We Got Power" compilation. (PO Box 1058, Alta Loma, CA 90701)

THREATS-Demos & Rarities (Dr. Strange)

The Threats have re-formed in the past few years and Dr. Strange, while releasing their new album, has also put out this compilation of their 7" and 12" EP's and a bunch of unreleased demos spanning '79-'82. Only a few of those songs are exclusive to those demos (in other words, there's a lot of repeated tracks) but this is rough, energetic UK punk that fits in well with the revivalism or second wave or whatever you want to call it that went on at that point. A sound of defiance against Thatcherism, unemployment, warmongering, etc and finding solace in their "Underground Army." (PO Box 1058, Alta Loma, CA 90701)

TIGER ARMY-Early Years EP (Hellcat, EP)

Their first three song EP and three bonus tracks from '96-'97. Fusing rockabilly with a punk attitude, hence covers of both Gene Vincent and the Misfits ("American Nightmare," the original of which had a rockabilly flavor, anyway). If the rootsy thing does it for you, this disc will be a godsend. Tiger Army have it nailed. (2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026)

TOXIC REASONS-Independence (Beer City)

Toxic Reasons' shining moment is given a legit reissue—their first full-length, released in '82, the only one with original vocalist Ed Pittman, whose Brit-inflected growl gave the songs a gritty edge. Rousing, anthemic punk with some nods to hardcore and taking on the political issues of the time and it's a sad fact that malodorous US foreign policy, mindless patriotism and police abuse are still a part of our societal landscape. Still, there's a joyous quality to the likes of "War Hero," "Rally 'Round The Flag, Boys" and "Noise Boys." "Ghost Town" remains a striking song, a loping, somber reggae-tinged ballad that has an intense payoff, although I still prefer the 7" version and wish this disc had their two earlier singles as bonus tracks. But this is a piece of midwestern punk history that stands up remarkably well after two decades. (PO Box 26035, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0035)

TOY DOLLS-Bare Faced Cheek/Ten Years Of Toys/Wakey Wakey/Fat Bob's Feet/Absurd-Ditties/Orcastrated/One More Megabyte/Anniversary Anthems (Captain Oi)

A deluge of Toy Dolls' reissues to tickle the 'ol funny-bone. An appreciation for British humor and pop culture always helps but even if some of the references sail over yanks' heads, it's also hard to resist the Doll's sunny, melodic punk. A comic troupe using music as their device, the mastermind of one Michael "Olga" Algar. And they sneak in bits from the British music hall tradition, rootsy rock 'n roll (covering Chuck Berry) and some classical piss-takes. Unless it's classical by wave of Brian May from Queen, who always had these pretensions, himself. You can definitely hear some of that in Olga's guitar lines. There's a wise-assed, childish quality about it all, of course. Arrested development but also quite clever. "Absurd-Ditties" is my favorite one, here, with the irressistable "I'm A Telly Addict!," "Sod The Neighbors" and "Drooling Banjos" (sic). "Bare Face Cheek" has a rather rude cover drawing and is upbeat from start to finish, with such memorable tunes as "Yul Brynner Was A Skinhead" and "Neville Is A Nerd." "We Quit The Cavalry," from "Fat Bob's Feet," uses a different tack for what's essentially an anti-military message. That's about as political as these goobers ever get. "Orcastrated" and "One More Megabyte" carry the legacy through the 90s. The former isn't quite as memorable, with an obsession about British soap operas and not as much sting, but the Dolls' regain their footing for a goofy, yet catchy "Megabyte." Although the thought of any royalties going to that reactionary scumbag Charlie Daniels for their cover of "The Devil Went Down To Scunthope" (sic) is kind of irksome. Finally, "Anniversary Anthems" is the latest installment, from 2000, and isn't quite as memorable as "Megabyte." Still, "Dorkamania" hits the target and "Livin' La Vida Loca" is both cringe-inducing and humorous. All of these discs have something fun to offer. Wicked melodies that stick in your brain and backup vocals that remind me of the Gumbies from Monty Python. And a deceptively high musical skill level. (PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 8QA, ENGLAND)

TRACKS-Brakes On You (Blue Door/2-Tough, EP)

Tracks were an early Boston punk band who released one tough-to-find 7" in 1977, the gritty "Brakes On You"/"Bombs Away," which I paid way too much for on eBay a few years ago (actually, it wasn't THAT much and I have no regrets about it). Anyway, this CD-R inlcudes those two songs and three previously-unreleased songs, all recorded live at the Club in Cambridge. Lorry Doll's vocals are gruff and bad-ass sounding and the

band gnashed out a sound rooted equally in punk and timeless rock 'n roll—"Bombs Away" has a definite Ramones flavor, while other songs borrow from early Lou Reed (and, yes, the Velvets) but rough it up a bit. Tracks sounded a bit more raw than some of the other bands from that period and that's a plus. Incidentally, there's an extensive website that tells the band's interesting story at www.lorrydoll.com and that's where you can get info about this disc, as well. (29 Virginia Ave., Cateret, NJ 07008)

JACK TRAGIC & THE UNFORTUNATES-Coming Down Like A Hammer (Bacchus Archives/Dionysus)

"I Kill Hippies" is a minor New England punk classic and it's here, along with another 15 songs by this 80s Connecticut scumbag punk band. Raw, unapologetically insensitive lyrically (at least they left off "Homo Parade" but "Man's World" is pretty regressive) and it'll worm its way into your grizzled heart. Sound quality is occasionally spotty but the energy bursts through. "Hippies" has a dark, sinister sound and that's the approach Jack and the boys took. "Shell Shock Joe" is a nasty ripper about a returning vet. A strong Dead Boys influence and also touched by hardcore, though not in a speedy sense. Rough and unrepentant. (PO Box 1975, Burbank, CA 91507)

TRANSPLANTS-Vegetable Stew (Rave Up)

I taped several songs by this local band (these guys were from the suburban area as yours truly, the North Shore) from shows on Salem State College's radio station during the summer of 1980—the tapes have lost much of their fidelity over the years so this album turns out to be a pleasant surprise. Recorded in the late 70s, on a four-track at two different sessions and it's a combination of three chord punk and more bar-band rock 'n roll, but still kicking ass. Three cover songs recorded live, including the Haunted's classic "1-2-5" show off more of a garagey side. "Suicidal Tendencies" and "In The End" have a minimalist, straight-forward energy that stands up well after two decades. (Via Montecuccoli 13, 00176 Roma, ITALY)

TRENCHMOUTH-More Motion: A Collection (Thick)

It's safe to say that during their decade run (1988-1997) Trenchmouth didn't have many contemporaries (Rhode Island's Six Finger Satellite was one of few). Not quite a DC band [actually, they were based in Chicago, but vocalist Damon Locks was a DC native-AL], Trenchmouth weren't able to find a home on the DC-only Dischord Records, where their angular, disjointed post-punk probably belonged. Instead, the band ended up on the ill-fated Skene! label, released three full lengths, and remained in almost complete obscurity for 10 years. Still, they managed to play in 34 US states, most of Canada and parts of Europe (to what sized crowds is unknown). Their relationship with Dischord and groundbreaking DC bands like Circus Lupus, Nation of Ulysses and Fugazi always made a lot of sense, considering the nature of their music, but there was something stranger, something punker, going on with Trenchmouth. Equal parts feedback, rant/rave and robot dance, the band confused and confounded all who lent an ear to their bizarre sounds. It's cool to see "More Motion" as a document to this, um, interesting band, but it's love it or hate it all the way. Never compromising, even the songs included from their most memorable album, 1994's Trenchmouth vs. the Light of the Sun, are the experimental and least listenable of that session. Like I said, Trenchmouth were a whacked-out bunch of individuals, right to the bitter end. (PO Box 220245, Chicago, IL 60622) *(Jason)*

TRUMAN'S WATER-The Singles 1992-1997 (No Sides)

This is an amazing collection of this great bands stuff from '92-'97. Kevin & Rick Branstatter are the leaders of this band and some other folks join these guys on a sonic romp through the mind. At times sounding like a vintage garage band, and other times totally doing some totally freakout freeform jazz with saxophones blaring. I could use the Pavement/ Neil Young comparison, but there's a lot more going on here. This has just the most fantastic droning guitars... and then it changes into blazing punk rock. This great collection is now available for one of the great bands of the 90's. (PO Box 257491, Chicago, IL 60625) *(Steve)*

TURBONEGRO-Ass Cobra (Burning Heart/Epitaph)/Apocalypse Dudes (Burning Heart/Epitaph)

Two damn fine reissues, here, from the Norwegian rock gods. Turbonegro's stature seems to have grown exponentially in the last few years and their return is being treated as a second coming for those who missed the boat in the first place or were late to the party, as is the case, here. "Apocalpyse Dudes" was my initial introduction to the band and it stands as a colossal rock triumph. Purloining the rock 'n roll heritage, with not-so-subtle, sly nods to Alice Cooper, AC/DC, the Dictators, The Ramones and Cheap Trick all within the first few songs. They get out the artillery for the likes of "Don't Call Me Motherfucker, Motherfucker," "Prince Of The Rodeo" and the unforgettable "Good Head." "Ass Cobra" dates back to '95 and is more of a punk rock effort, but there's no skimping on the rock 'n roll part of the equation. It's also my favorite album by these guys—boisterous, catchy songs with lewd, lurid lyrical subject matter and well-chosen Lewd (makes sense, right?) and Rude Kids' covers. I defy you not to feel some sort of perverse gleefulness while listening to "Midnight NAMBLA," "I Got Erection" or "Sailor Man." Leading off with the appropriately-titled "A Dazzling Display Of Talent" and featuring a memorable monologue before "Imorgen Skal Eg Daue," this is a rip-roaring longplayer. Both discs include live (from a 2002 show) and conceptual videos. Rejoice! (2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026)

TURBO AC'S-Damnation Overdrive (Blackout)

Clean, unmemorable rocknroll from NYC. The style really reminds me of The Heartdrops but with worse production and worse songs. This is apparently a reissue of their first album from '96—christ, you can't find ANY current music worth putting out? Gimme a fuckin break. (931 Madison Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030) *(Ryan)*

UNDEAD-First, Worst and Curse (Grand Theft Audio)

Not the Bobby Steele post-Misfits band, but a SF band with a firm rooting in the Dolls-ish slop-punk sound, the three chord joys of the Ramones and their own horror twist. Sid Terror sings in a deadpan cadence and, in addition to songs about vampires, "breakfast cereal deviants" and cyborgs, there are also protests against overzealous cops and cable television—gotta keep it topical. Including a pair of 7"s and an LP, spanning from '77 to '80 and the Undead gradually found their own identity—a gnarled, dark-hued sound. (501 W. Glenoaks Blvd., PMB 313, Glendale, CA 91202)

THEE UNDERTAKERS-Crucify Me (Grand Theft Audio)

A completely unreleased album and an earlier demo from this late 70s/early 80s East LA band—once again, Brian's archival work rescues some quality music from obscurity. Three-chord punch but with melody and gritty lyrics that reflected their surroundings and some songs take a Latin turn. But it's the punk stuff that you'll remember.

UNIT PRIDE-Then and Now (Mankind)

Late 80s youth crew hardcore with Eric Ozenne (later with the Nerve Agents) on vocals and this disc includes their 7" EP tracks and an earlier demo, both recorded in 1988. Fast and urgent, owing a strong debt to Youth of Today et al with sweeping riffs, scampering drums, mosh parts and positive lyrics. Decent, although the demo tracks sound rough. (PO Box 265, Bellflower, CA 90707)

UNSEEN-Complete Singles Collection 1994-2000 (Punk Core)

Finally, such classics as "Choke's Dead, You're Next" and "Hitler Was A Vampire" are back in print. Aren't you excited? The Unseen have certainly improved dramatically over the years and, in the beginning, went through some growing pains both musically and lyrically. Typical of a teenage suburban punk band but it was made up for with raw energy and you can hear the increasing sophistication in playing and arranging over the years. Includes all their singles and splits, some of them pretty rare at this point, plus two unreleased songs from '94 and '95. Aggressive middle-finger punk rock. (PO Box 916, Middle Island, NY 11953)

VARIOUS-Barricaded Suspects (Dr. Strange)
VARIOUS-4 Old Toxic Shock EP's (Dr. Strange)

"Barricaded Suspects" was originally released on Toxic Shock in 1983 and it's quite an eclectic anthology. Not your garden variety hardcore punk comp by any stretch, as some of these bands stretch the boundaries into artsy new wave, skewed punk and even some knockout indy pop. The latter comes courtesy of Vision/Decay, with "Insomnia," and this was their sole released song, as far as I know (although I have a demo, as well). As good a post-Burma pop tune as you'll hear. The Dull's "I Hate The Motorcyclist" is one of those annoyingly dumb punk ditties you can't get out of your head. Rev. Norb's early band, Suburban Mutilation, are here with some extremely low-fi hardcore. Mad Parade hit home with the catchy "Real Horrorshow" and the Romulans, Knockabouts, Roach Motel and Decry provide some decent hardcore. On the other hand, BIU don't exactly build on Western Mass' hardcore legacy and there's nothing particularly memorable about Hue and Cry's synth drone or the Zimbo Chimps' odd emanations. And I still find Septic Death something of an acquired taste. Four tracks from a later sampler 7" are included and it does provide an interesting peek at some off-the-beaten-track bands. One more complaint—the booklet reproduction for the CD insert is hardly legible. The "4 Old" etc CD is another reissue of early to mid-80s stuff by that label and, once again, doesn't follow neat lines regarding what's punk or not. The Massacre Guys, with Stefan and Karl from Descendents/All, are the closest to conventional hardcore punk, as do Manson Youth and Peace Corpse flirt with it on the spirited "Jocko Macho." Peace Corpse's other songs have a dark, gloomier sound and feature Bill from Toxic Shock's nasally vocals. Moslem Birth, a predecessor to that band, offer a humorous piss-take on LA's goth punk scene. Red Tide used hardcore as a starting point but also flirted with quirkier and more rock 'n roll elements, not always successfully. There are also some sonic deficiencies with the mastering on a few songs but, once again, there are some worthwhile nuggets here. (PO Box 1058, Alta Loma, CA 91701)

VARIOUS-The Bosse Sound (Bacchus Archives/Dionysus)

Obscure Swedish bands from '79 to '86 and running a stylistic gamut, although many of these bands look to the UK for inspiration—Socialgrupp, Pöbel Möbel, Anti-Hund Mina and Zeb & The Fast Ones, in particular. Järntvätt take things in a more tuneful direction, while Total Muzak have a darker punk sound and the Meat Eaters dish out some thrashy hardcore. Only the artsy Baader-Meinhof really necessitated a grab for the remote. No liner notes or much in the way of info but you can find out about the early Swedish scene at www.b-sound.com. A cool sound. (PO Box 1975, Burbank, CA 91507)

VARIOUS-First Strike (BCT/Schizophrenic/Enterruption)

A CD reissue of another BCT compilation, this one featuring 10 US hardcore bands circa 1983. A few fall into the realm of forgettable/generic (Poison Center, Cultural Breakthrough, the noisy Mr. Epp) but that's more than balanced out by the underrated Clitboys, who lead things off with the ever-timely "Time For Another War," Vatican Commandos, with techno guru Moby on guitar (!), the snotty-sounding Eat The Rich, Skoundrelz and some early stuff from the Accused, recorded before Blaine was the vocalist. I'm especially glad to see some Clitboys' music back in circulation—someone should do a legit reissue of their 7". (Schizophrenic: 17 W. 4th St., Hamilotn, ON L9C 3M2, CANADA/BCT: PO Box 16205, San Diego, CA 92116/Enterruption: PO Box 884626, SF, CA 94188-4626)

VARIOUS-Hardcore Amerika (BCT/Schizoprhenic/Enterruption)

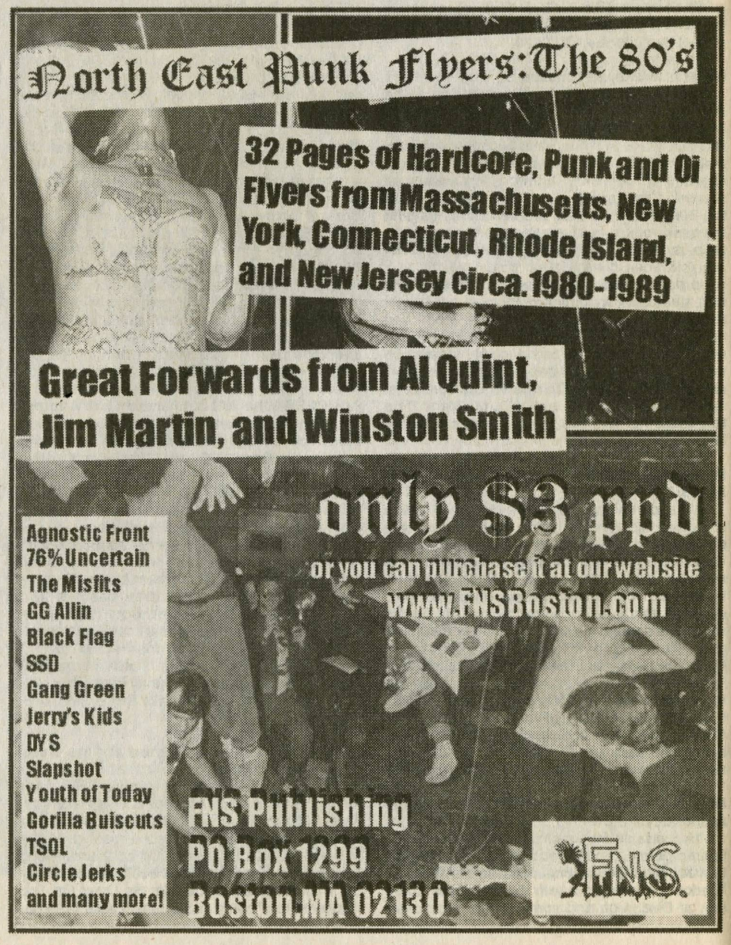
Another volume in the BCT (Bad Compilation/Borderless Countries Tapes) series. This comp is taken from two cassettes released in 1983 and 1984 and features bands exclusively from the US. It takes awhile to get to the good stuff, as Love Canal (better heard elsewhere)and Suburban Decay (featuring members of Death Of Samantha and Gaunt) are pretty wretched. No Response are moderately better, although the sound is still pretty horrendous. As for what I like, Deranged Diction, with future memebers of Pearl Jam and Green River, have a raw, more Flipper-ish punk sound on some songs, along with the buzz-core. Psycho were an underrated thrash-punk band during the mid-80s and these tracks, recorded with their best vocalist, Joe Glassman, are taken from a radio broadcast. The Accelerators rip out some snotty 'core. White Flag and Detention bring an absurdist mentality to their bare-bones punk and the latter's classic "Dead Rock 'n Rollers" is included. Just like most cassette comps back in the day, it's got its share of patchy material but I'm still getting nostalgic here. No booklet but if you go to www.enterruption.com, info on some of the bands is provided. (BCT: PO Box 16205, San Diego, CA 92116/Schizophrenic: 50 Fielding Cres., Hamilton, ON CANADA L8V 2P5/Enterruption: PO Box 884626, SF, CA 94188-4626)

VARIOUS-Killed By Hardcore 3 (bootleg)

US and foreign hardcore, some of it quite obscure and not 100% prime but, still, you get your money's worth. I don't understand why Die Kreuzen's first EP keeps getting booted, since the songs are readily available on CD but that's a vinyl fetishist for you, I suppose. Anyway, the scorch factor is high and there are true rarities by the likes of Gauze, Gas and Systematic Death, from Japan, local boys Deep Wound and the infamous Vile, Finnish stalwarts Appendix, obscure New Jersey bands No Thanks and The Worst (whose "Loud and Fast" is one of the best songs here), underrated Norwegian bands Svart Framtid and Bannlyst and California rippers the Patriots. Sarcastic, but informative liner notes and adequate sound quality. The well hasn't run dry, yet.

VARIOUS-Killed By Finnish Hardcore (bootleg)

A quick, easy intro to early to mid-80s Finnish



'core and a lot of this stands up remarkably well. It certainly inspired me to check out other releases by some of the bands here, particularly Kohu-63, who a trad-punk meets hardcore sound, and the rampaging Destrucktions. The big hitters, such as Riistetyt, Appendix, Rattus, Lama, Kaaos, Terveet Kadet, etc, are represented here but there are more obscure bands, as well. Not a monochromatic sound, either—although it was mainly hard and fast music, there are some variations. What are you waiting for? Seek out your friendly distro and seek out the reissues from some of these aforementioned bands.

VARIOUS-Live From The Masque (Bacchus Archives/Dionysus)

I just got through reading the oral history of early LA punk, *We Got The Neutron Bomb*, and this disc, recorded live over two nights in early 1978 at this legendary space could be an audio companion piece, in a way, bringing those spirited sounds to life. In fact, the book's co-author and Masque founder, Brendan Mullen, wrote the liner notes. Some of these performances have been released before on Flipside and Year One Records and this single disc gets it down to the essence, although there are some glaring omissions (Dils, Controllers, Screamers, to name a few, mainly due to licensing issues). While the Alleycats might have been better-represented than by the so-so "One More Chance," the energy level seldom flags, otherwise. Raw tracks by the Bags, Skulls, Germs, Weirdos, more tuneful fodder by the Eyes (with future members of the Go-Gos and X) and the Dickies and the unique craziness of Black Randy. A snapshot into LA's embryonic demimonde.

VARIOUS-Senza Tregua: Granducato Hardcore 1983 (BCT/Enterruption/Schizophrenic)

Another BCT reissue, with six bands from Italy, led off by the amazing Cheetah Chrome Motherfuckers. Each of these bands share an unpredictable, edge-of-sanity approach to hardcore punk. Depraved-vocals and a raw kineticism that doesn't fit into a set formula. I Refuse It take an artsier route. Stato Di Poliza merge the hardcore attack with some post-punk flourishes, as do Putrid Fever. Wardogs, Traumatic and Juggernaut round things out nicely. A sense of newness, of anger harnessed into provocative music. (Enterruption: PO Box 884646, SF, CA 94188-4626)

VARIOUS-Shielded By Death Vol. 1: Busted At The Lit/Shielded By Death Vol. 2: Guillotined At The Hangar (Bacchus Archives/Dionysus)

Keith Grave has pulled together two anthologies of late 70s/early 80s bands, some obscure, some better known, from Connecticut and Western Massachusetts. "Volume 1" is an expanded version of an LP originally released on Incognito Records, with a few changes but 27 songs in all and it gets off to a good start with the garage rock Malarians and The Reducers' pub rock/pop-punk gem "No Ambition." The Pajama Slave Dancers' warped wit emerges for "Defreeze Walt Disney." Wrestling goons the Foreign Objects' "Lose Some Weight" is an enterainingly-sarcastic punk rock ditty. Dee Stroy The Band, Da Stupids, Regular Joes, Chronic Disorder and Jack Tragic & The Unfortunates also fall into the punk or hardcore camp, although a few of these tracks aren't as up to snuff. Nor is the lightweight 60s jangle pop of the Not Quite or wavish weirdness of Bourgeois Disease. And they left off the White Pigs kick-ass "Victims" from the LP version. But this "Killed By Death" type package does have enough of the goodies to make it worthwhile.

"Volume 2" is also hit and miss, but there are a few killers here—more glorious pop/punk of the Reducers (the flip of the single featured on Vol. 1), snotty KBD style emanations from Peer Pressure, more solid punk by Chronic Disorder, 8th Route Army and, once again, the crazed Jack Tragic and the Unfortunates, with their lost classic "I Kill Hippies." The Outpatients did get some notice back in the day but, being from WMass, were often given short-shrift compared to the higher profile Boston bands. Some of the new wavier and pop material isn't as enticing and the sound quality is often warts 'n all, but it proves there was something going on in that stretch between Boston and NYC. (PO Box 1975, Burbank, CA 91507)

VARIOUS-Six Weeks Omnibus (Six Weeks)

Two mid-90s compilations of Japanese bands (an 8" vinyl EP and 8" flexi) combined on this CD and some bands with distinct hardcore punk styles, mainly on the loud/fast end of the spectrum. Zone, the Gaia and Senseless Apocalypse have a more or less traditional Japanese hardcore sound. Beyond Description come on in a similar attack mode as Siege. One Size Fits All favor a crazed sound. Some bands have a grind-core tumult (Slight Slappers, Jack With Killer, No Think). A mixed bag but all of it high energy. (225 Lincoln Ave., Cotati, CA 94931)

VARIOUS-The Thing That Ate Floyd (Lookout, dbl. CD)

Out of print forever, this double-CD anthology is a document (of sorts) of the late 80s Gilman scene, for want of a better description… I'd imagine most, if not all of these California bands played at that venue and there's an element of fun involved with most of the parties. That's the spirit—not much rage or anger but an organic, DIY ambiance. Cantankerous punk by Corrupted Morals, Complete Disorder and Nuisance, pop delights from Crimpshrine, Cringer, Sweet Baby, Cringer and a kickass song by Operation Ivy. Neighborhood Watch indulge in a bit of noo-wave, complete with cheesy keyboards. Not all 34 tracks are a triumph (the funk-weenie Relief Society, for instance), but there's enough of the good shit to hold your interest. (3264 Adeline St., Berkeley, CA 94703)

VARIOUS-Twenty Years of Dischord (Dischord, 3 CD)



The long-awaited Dischord box set, a few years in the making and they did it right. What a thing of beauty—including a 132 page booklet, with a band-by-band breakdown and introductory essay by Henry Rollins, plus three CD's, including one of unreleased and rare material, along with six video clips. All of it for $25, in keeping with Dischord's long-standing tradition of giving the consumer value. That third disc is a treasure trove, including such mind-blowing bands as Void, SOA, Faith, Minor Threat, Government Issue, Fugazi and Marginal Man. Most of these obscurities come from the label's early, hardcore era and, while rough in spots, we're talking history, here, with outtakes from such incredible albums as "Faith/Void" and "Still Screaming," a Sham inspired song by the short-lived Rozzlyn Rangers (members of Minor Threat and Iron Cross) and a pisstake dub, live and rehearsal song (the unreleased "Understand") from Minor Threat. The video portion includes footage by Void, Deadline, SOA, Teen Idles, Marginal Man and the Faith—some of it's rough but, once again, what a historical document. One hopes the label would consider a full DVD release with some of these performances, if they could pull it off. As for the other discs, all 50 bands who have recorded for the label at one time or another are represented. There's not a tremendous amount of compelling material from the past decade—making up the bulk of the second disc--with too much uninspiring rock fodder. Some bands are ill-represented by their selections (the Warmers, Jawbox and Hoover, for instance), Still, such bands as Bluetip, the hypnotic Lungfish, Slant 6 and Circus Lupus keep up the label's edgy reputation, to an extent. And Fugazi, of course, remain vital after a decade and a half. The first disc, on the other hand, is all killer, no filler, except for a spotty Happy Go Licky song. The hardcore punk that Dischord built its reputation and continues to inspire every new generation discovering it for the first time. And it's not just the early 80s hardcore that's an attraction—Embrace, Rites of Spring and Gray Matter renewed the label nicely in the middle part of the decade and Three, Shudder To Think, Soulside and Ignition pushed the so-called Dischord sound in other directions while maintaining an energetic integrity. In all candor, a new Dischord record was a cause for anticipation and celebration 'back in the day,' and while that's not always the case, anymore, this anthology was certainly anticipated for a long time and it lives up to the promise. Dischord's integrity. Congratulations to Ian, Jeff and their loyal crew for hanging in there for so long—their persistence has certainly given this writer no small amount of inspiration. I'd also like to thank them for being so supportive towards this 'zine over the years, as well. (3819 Beecher St. NW, Washington, DC 20007)

VARIOUS-Very Best Of Punk and Disorderly (Anagram, dbl. CD)

Comping the early 80s UK scene, again… along with token Yanks Channel 3 and the Dead Kennedys. Tracks from the three "P&D" anthologies, plus other songs from the Anagram catalog. Pretty much every major band from that period, except perhaps for Discharge and the Exploited, are represented. A good selection but the mastering job leaves a lot to be desired, as there's a lot of tape hiss. A bit more care cold have gone into the sonic aspects, although everything is well annotated. A variety of bands, from the goofy Peter & The Test Tube Babies to the melodic Newtown Neurotics, Chron Gen and Angelic Upstarts to the more aggressive Chaos UK, Disorder, Partisans and Insane. ATV, the Drones and Suburban Studs provide a glimpse back to the '77 era. A good overview of the period but not essential if you've already got a good collection from this period. (Unit 17, 1st Floor, Elysium Gate West, 126-128 New King's Road, London SW6 4LZ, ENGLAND)

VERBAL ABUSE-Just An American Band (Beer City)

Verbal Assault's first—and best—album from 1983, the only one to feature vocalist Nicki Sicki. Transplanted from Texas to San Francisco, living in the legendary Vats space and playing some fast, hyper hardcore punk. Pissed-off and raging but also with a perverse sense of humor. But when Nicki bellows "I Hate You," you get the feeling he means it. Lyrics that express a gritty, on-the-skids urban realism that the band was living first-hand. This reissue also adds a live set from 1984, with some later songs that hinted at their move to a more metallic direction. A few drop-outs and a little disjointed in spots but I still wish I'd been there. "Just An American Band" seems to be an underrated album from that time-frame and has been hard to come by, so kudos to Beer City for making it available again.

VERBAL ASSAULT-Volume One: The Masses and Learn (Mendit)

First in the reissue series for Rhode Island hardcore band Verbal Assault and including their "Masses" demo and "Learn" 12" EP on CD for the first time. Upbeat hardcore punk with a strong 7 Seconds meets DC hardcore influence and, if it hasn't dated as well as their triumphant "Trial" album, there's still a lot of energy and heart in these performances. "The Masses" is taken from a radio recording and the sound quality is fair to middling but "What Do You Do," "Real Life" and "Shallow Graves" pack a lot of energy. "Learn" had them stretching out the arrangements a bit, as the instrumental skill and songwriting improved. The booklet includes lyrics and reminiscences about the old Rhode Island hardcore scene, with which this writer was well-acquainted and it was tight-knit but also welcoming. This disc definitely takes me back to the days of the old Living Room and Blue Pelican club. (PO Box 1096, NY, NY 10003)

WARDS-Greatest Hits (self-released)

Actually, a complete discography from this Vermont punk band, who are still playing out more than 20 years later. Snotty, obnoxious and tongue-in-cheek, mixing both old-school punk and some hardcore stylings. There's a timeless quality to such songs as "Weapon Factory," "6 O'Clock" and "Alka Seltzer," with the memorable refrain "plop plop fizz fizz.. Alka-Selter tastes like shit." OK, it doesn't rhyme perfectly but it's the thought that counts. (3497 Theodore Roosevelt Hwy, Bolton, VT 05676)

WHITE FLAG-T Is For Twenty (Soundflat)

Anthology for these SoCal weisenheimers—the Apple Records label parody is appropriate since White Flag have never been shy about embracing the pop and rock music they grew up listening to—whether it was the Fab Four or the Jam (they do "In The City" in Spanish), Kate Bush, Blue Oyster Cult or Cheap Trick. In the earlier days, they also had more of a hardcore punk sound but it was quite tongue-in-cheek. Hit and miss—the cover of Bush's "Wuthering Heights" really stretches things but there are some inspired moments, here. (Bahnstr. 40, 42781 Haan, GERMANY)

XPOZEZ-Back On The Streets (Grand Theft Audio)

Early band from the early 80s for Andy Turner (aka Tez), later with the much-underrated Instigators. Xpozez encompassed a variety of punk styles—basic three chord stuff and elements of the early 80s UK revival (Partisans, etc), but also adding the anarcho-punk influence of the Subhumans et al. That's evident on a song like "Factory Fodder" or "Set Me Free," with its nimble bass line. Good straight-forward punk and Andy's liner notes are vivid in their recollections. (501 W. Glenoaks Blvd., PMB 313, Glendale, CA 91202)

X-RAY SPEX-The Anthology (Castle/Sanctuary, 2CD)

This now becomes the definitive collection of X-Ray Spex material, since it includes the entire "Germ-Free Adolescents" album, plus singles and b-sides, alternate takes and a second CD of live performances from the Roxy in '77 and three songs from their mid-90s reunion album. Truth be told, all the extras are a nice bonus but the live stuff is rough-sounding and of mainly historical interest, the reunion songs are nothing special and the rough mixes don't sound radically different except, of course, for those done instrumentally. Still, that leaves one of the better albums from the original punk era. X-Ray Spex had plenty going for them—razor-sharp guitar-riffs to KILL for—plus the added dimension of saxophone that no punk or post-punk band ever utilized more perfectly (the only bands that come close are RFTC or early Psych Furs) and, at the center, the unhinged trilling of Poly Styrene, who also contributed sharp lyrics about plastic consumer society and delivered those words in an instantly-identifiable manner. Thumping, catchy songs that still stick in the brain some 25 years (!) later. The liner notes are hard to read and only give some bare-bones data on the band but, still, if you don't have at least *some* X-Ray Spex in their collection, you're just not cool!

7" RECORDS

A GLOBAL THREAT-Earache/Pass The Time (Rodent Popsicle)

AGT continue to put out solid punk and infuse some hardcore speed into the sound, especially for "Earache," "Get In The Coffin" and "Pass The Time." "Social Quarantine" has some catchy guitar licks and a tough mid-tempo attack. One minor beef—a too-prominent drum pedal in the mix. (PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134)

AMDI PETERSENS ARME-Blod Ser Mere Virkelict Ud Pa Film (Havoc)

A second record, finally, by this fine Danish hardcore army, er, *armé*. There's more of an early 80s west coast sound, this time, mixed into their own manic vision. After the instrumental buildup for "Hardcore Del II," there's a Circle Jerks-inspired turn for "Bagfra." The title track rides a chugging engine-like riff, ending with a Greg Ginn squeal. Not one word of English, not even a translation, but slam-bang hardcore punk always smashes any such barriers, anyway. Or it *should* at least. Wound up tight and let loose. (PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408)

ANFO-La Sangre De Latinoamerica Lucha Y Resiste (Where's Your Anger)

A compilation of five songs by this Peruvian hardcore band, spanning '98 to '02 and some ripping stuff. The earlier material has a pretty heavy Discharge bent and, while that remains an influence, they've broadened the sound somewhat. "Latinoamerica Resiste" and "Sin Salida" go right for the throat. (PO Box 471, Boston, MA 02134)

ANGER IN MOTION-Reverends and Rednecks (Kangaroo)

From the archives, a 1990 recording by this Australian band and it's some double-speed hardcore thrash at a time when that sound was far from fashionable. "The Real Thing" starts with a somber intro but, otherwise, it's pure speed and rage. (Middenweg 13, 1098 AA Amsterdam, HOLLAND)

ANODYNE/DEFCON 4-Split (Ammonia)
ANODYNE/KEELHAUL-Split (Chainsaw Safety)

Metal, metal and more metal. Anodyne have the techno/death/destructo sound—heavy, yet experimental, particularly on their track on the Keelhaul split, which starts out brutal and then floats into the ether. They also have fast, hammering parts ala Dillinger Escape Plan. Defcon 4 are a Boston band who play short, lurching songs with a good amount of sonic damage. Keelhaul have a brooding, pounding sound on their track, coming on like Shellac crossed with the Melvins. (Ammonia: 103 Calumet St., #2, Roxbury, MA 02120/Chainsaw Safety: PO Box 260318, Bellerose, NY 11426)

ARMED WITH INTELLIGENCE/YOUNG ONES-Garbage Picking Youth (Punks Before Profits)

Armed With Intelligence play fast hardcore punk in an old-school vein and with male/female vocal tradeoffs. The Young Ones also have two vocalists and have a bit more melody but also sound ultra-raw. Both bands have lyrical stances that are to be respected, especially regarding gender issues and homophobia. Rough around the edges but each band has its moments. (99 Custer St., Buffalo, NY 14214)

ARTIMUS PYLE (Prank)

Harsh sounds from the band named after the Lynyrd Skynyrd drummer and the redneck boys, who have their own new hit called "Red White and Blue" most certainly would NOT approve of Artimus Pyle's thoughts on 'proud Americans' that are expressed on "Crippled Heroes." Speed-driven bursts and heavier, psyched-damaging emanations. (PO Box 410892, SF, CA 94141-0892)

ASS-END OFFEND-Becoming Our Destruction (Poisoned Candy)
ASS-END OFFEND/ANTI-DIFRANCOS-My Imperialist Hard-On Is Bigger Than Yours (Poisoned Candy)

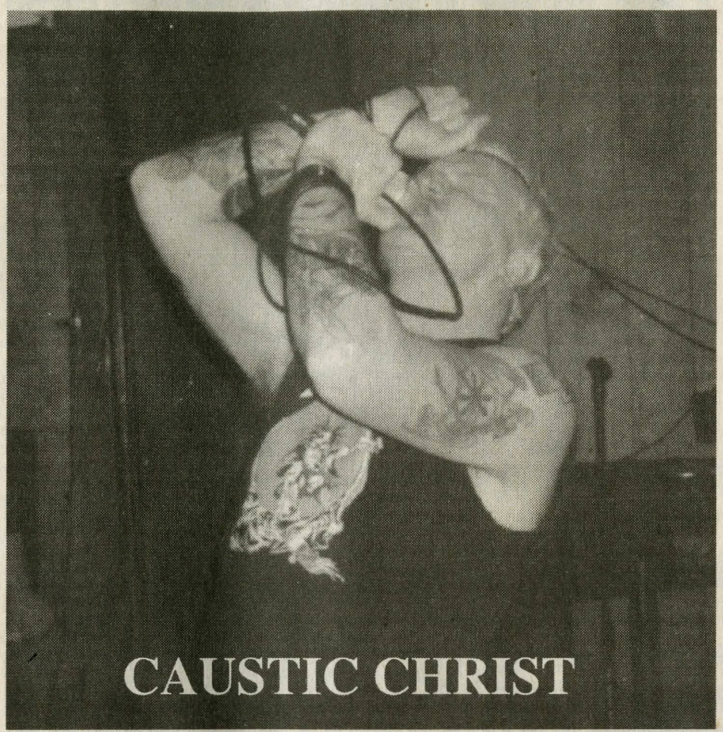
DIY hardcore punk from Montana—Ass-End Offend play in a raging, yet moody vein, where the words are spat out with venom and it's a mix of speed and more haunting elements. I can hear echoes of early Die Kreuzen in there. The Anti-Defrancos, on their side of the split with AEO, slam out fast, snotty thrash. Feisty, although the drummer sometimes relies too much on the snare slam. By the way, cool packaging for both records, with hand-screened art on cardboard sleeves. (PO Box 9263, Missoula, MT 59807)

A-TEAM-Clusterfuck (Painkiller)

Six more songs from the Thrashford wrecking machine known as the A-Team... in fact, the Thrashford house is pictured right on the sleeve. Kudos to voicing what I've thought for years—that parents need to keep their babies quiet when in restaurants, etc.. and Jon states it well on "Control Your Baby." Bellicose hardcore punk with harder-rocking influences and these guys are on top of their game, at this point. (8 Burney St., #1, Roxbury, MA 02120)

THE ATTACK-Mental Health (Dispossessed)

An excellent 7"—the Attack have what one could call an 'old school' sound but it's much more than that. Fast-paced, catchy hardcore that has elements of Minor Threat and Gorilla Biscuits, along with vocals that crack with emotion and passion. "My Work Here Is Done" has a fucking knockout hook. Lyrics that deal with life's day to day frustrations, as well as sexism and gentrification but the central theme is depression and "the feeling of going slowly insane," as vocalist Jeff Kraft puts it in his essay in the lyric booklet. Even with the weighty subject matter, there's still a feeling of uplift that one gets from true DIY-style hardcore punk. (4819 Autry Ave., Long Beach, CA 90808)



AUTHORITY ABUSE/KAKISTROCRACY-Split (Anthem For Doomed Youth)

The Authority Abuse tracks have sub-standard sound (mastering problem?) but still manage to kick ass. A raw hardcore attack with speed and crossover elements. Kakistrocracy's side has superior production and a crustier punk sound. The pair of songs favor semi-metallic buildups and blasts of speed. "All Wrong" is a cover by early 90s Portland punx Resist. (PO Box 345, Sherman, IL 62684)

AVOIDED-Writing On The Wall (HG Fact)

This is kind of ridiculous—power pop with crooned vocals. I'm getting unattractive images of karaoke bars. Ultra-wimpy sounding and I'm both fascinated and revulsed at the same time. But, to create an awful pun, it's easily avoided. (105 Nakano Shinbashi M, 2-7-15 Yayoi-Cho, Nakano, Tokyo, 164-0013, JAPAN)

BARSE-Council Estate (Rapid Pulse)

Tough '77 inspired punk that matches the roughness of Billy Childish with a slight Buzzcocks guitar sound. Three songs begging for another spin and punctuated with lots of English-accented 'fucks' in the lyrics. *Whatchoo fuckin' know?* I know what I still like. (PO Box 5075, Milford, CT 06460)

BLASTONECROSIS (Evil Robenchi)

Harsh political hardcore sounding on the verge of flying apart and larynx shredding vocals by Mandy and one of her male accomplices. One might call this crusty-sounding, although "Technological Nightmare" adds a melodic bridge. Not quite doing it for me, yet, although not awful, either. (1625 Grant St., Salem, OR 97303)

BLOOD SPIT NIGHTS-Ghoulish Reminders (Whisper In Darkness)

Kudos to Rob Coons from *MRR* telling me about this band—I immediately snagged three of their 7"s, including this one, their most-recent effort. From Portland, OR, including at least one former member of Defiance, playing raw hardcore punk with acid-scalded vocals and a punishing sound with both Japanese and Swedish hardcore influences. Ripping. (PO Box 40113, Portland, OR 97240-0113)

BLOWTOPS-Surgeon's Hands + 2 (Reptilian)

Ugly scum-rock sounding stuff. A hammering beat, riffs that hang in the air and sinister ambiance, yet it doesn't really capture the imagination. The cover of Big Black's "Deep Six" is OK but I'd rather hear the real thing. (403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231)

BOMB BUILDER-Drop The Big One EP (Constant Pain/Crucial)

A couple of former Gordon Solie Motherfuckers in this band, Wedge and Shawn, and playing loud/fast hardcore punk, as you'd expect. Buzzsaw guitar, rabid vocals from Thuggy Bearbomb (interesting moniker) and encompassing their love for Finnish and Japanese hardcore,with covers of Terveet Kadet and Systematic Death. Damn right it kicks ass. (48 Camino Alto, Millbrae, CA 94030)

BONECRUSHER-For Your Freedom (77 RPM)

I didn't think it was possible, but Raybo's vocals have gotten *more* gruff. Gut-level punk rock with a rock 'n roll heart. In other words, you can echoes of both SLF and AC/DC. I'm a little leery of the "freedom ain't free" line and "Star-Spangled Banner" coda that ends "Freedom," but the songs have a rough 'n ready catchiness. (PO Box 9186, Glendale, CA 91226)

BONES BRIGADE-Blatant Rip-Off EP (Belief Crisis)

It's called "Blatant Rip-Off" because the cover I have is a tribute to JFA's "Blatant Localism" EP. Yeah, there are songs about skating and, in a real throwback to the 80s, an anti-Reagan song ("Sleepwalkin' Through The 80s"). Musically, a ripping combination of fast hardcore punk and a good amount of speed metal, particularly in Blake's guitar playing—hell, his *nom-de-rock* is Charlton Hessian. If "Rat Pack" doesn't induce the urge to start shredding, I don't know what will. (PO Box 35374, Brighton, MA 02135)

BORN/DEAD (No Options)

Fuck yeah... raw and powerful hardcore punk—angry vocals, razor-sharp guitars and some provocative imagery on the cover and inserts, especially the one with George W. Bush and a nazi backdrop. Comes right out and grabs you in various sensitive areas. The middle section of "24 Hostages" has me doing a circle pit in my den. ($3.50 ppd, Aaron Jones, 1221 28th St., Oakland, CA 94608)

BOTTLES & SKULLS-I Am No One, He Is No One (TKO)
BOTTLES & SKULLS/400 BLOWS-Split (Cheetah's)

Bottles and Skulls are an unhinged hardcore punk band with a scuzzy East Bay flavor. "War Machine" is the anthem here, a rampaging track with distorted vocals by Alpha, who goes into an off-the-wall "blah-blah-blah" acapella bit towards the end. "California Greenback" maintains the speed, while "My Rifle" is has a herky-jerky arrangement. Their split with 400 Blows shows the band's rock 'n roll side without losing the impact and "Party Crasher" adds some spooky keyboards. 400 Blows aren't quite as interesting—a bass-less trio (vocals, guitars and drums) playing technical-sounding metalcore with low fidelity. Not too scintillating. (3126 W. Cary St., #303, Richmond, VA 23221)

BOXED IN (Crime Scene)

OK, lines like *"the world's going down the toilet like a big lump of shit"* aren't exactly leaving much to the imagination but deny that it's not true. In any case, this grizzled UK band, with former members of Doom, Generic, Ebola and others, stick to a fast, high-powered sound and the lyrics correctly point out the fucked-up nature of modern-day society, going so far as to point out that "TWAT" is an acronym for "the war on terrorism." Thundering guitar, bass and drums accompany the harsh sentiments. ($6 ppd, Box 13, 82 Colston Street, Bristol, BS1 5BB, ENGLAND)

BRIEFS-Ain't It The Truth/DISTRACTION-My Way (Radio Blast)

The Briefs' song is on their new album, the Distraction's isn't, but they're both solid tunes. New wavy punk by the former, more of a snotty rock 'n roll sound by the latter and the hooks come quickly. (Hidegardstr. 13, 44809 Bochum, GERMANY)

BÜMBKLÅÅTT (Slaves To Darkness)

Not some Swedish band, despite the umlauts and whatever they call the accent over the a's, but hailing from the San Diego area. A brutal band at that, with a high-powered hardcore assault punctuated by menacing vocals from all four of 'em and blazing riffs. Some somber passages interspersed with the speed-driven fury and rage-filled lyrics that match the music's mood. (PO Box 34695, San Diego, CA 92163)

BURY THE LIVING-Bathed In Blood And Climbing Over The Dead (Kangaroo)

"If you don't agree with something we say on this record thats ok coz youre fucking wrong" *(sic)*. Bury The Living make that statement on the back cover of this 7" and I'm sure the flag-waving, right-wing reactionaries will definitely have a bone to pick with such songs as "Your Colors May Not Run But I'll Bet They Fucking Burn" and "Made With Pride," which posits *"did you ever wonder why they hate us?"* As for musical statements, some throttling hardcore played with aggression and able to shift from thrash to brooding heaviness to a finger-snapping beat (on "Many Years Before"), along with the requisite harsh vocals. (Middenweg 13, 1098 AA Amsterdam, HOLLAND)

BUZZY (HG Fact)

Aggressive post-punk with jagged guitars and throttling bass-lines, along with a rock 'n roll undertow. Not the typical Japanese hardcore sound, by any means. Interesting stuff. (105 Nakano Shinbashi M, 2-7-15 Yayoi-Cho, Nakano, Tokyo, 164-0013, JAPAN)

CAREER SUICIDE (Kangaroo)

Hardcore punk with a sound straight out of 1983—east coast style, to be specific—and that isn't a complaint. Stripped-down guitar riffs, snotty vocals, a fast tempo and it's pretty damned catchy, especially the punky sounding "Jonzo's Leaking Radiation." Along with Amdi Petersens Arme and Punch In The Face, these record-collector types from Toronto understand the essence of this style. (Middenweg 13, 1098 AA Amsterdam, HOLLAND)

CARPENTER ANT-Never Stop Skating (Union City/Double Decker)

Medium tempo hardcore punk with some metallic squeals in the guitar playing. I actually expected Carpenter Ant to be more of a thrash band but they're effective at their chosen sound. Lead vocalist Carnage (that's the name on the sleeve) pours out the throat-ripping bile and the production has an inherent rawness. Tumultuous, both musically and lyrically. (doubledecker @postmark.net)

CARRION-Beggar/Witness Your Birth (McCarthyism)

A heavy rock sound on this pair of songs and it seems a bit dragged-out. Instrumental muscu-

larity but the groove doesn't really go anywhere. (7209 25th Ave, Hyattsville, MD 20783-2752)

CAST ASIDE-Overcome (Malfunction)
Wes growls the words like he has a gigantic chip on his shoulder and Cast Aside play some tough, bruising hardcore with middle finger pointed skyward. Thrash and crunchier, metal-core bits, in the same spirit as Blood For Blood (although these guys are sXe) and, with an opening salvo of "Die you motherfucker," the sentiment is stated up-front and in no uncertain terms. (14030 Walney Village Ct., Chantily, VA 20151)

CAUSTIC CHRIST (Havoc)
CAUSTIC CHRIST/INTENSE YOUTH-Caustic Youth (Behold The Youthquake)
Ripping hardcore punk by this Pittsburgh band, one of two units to emerge from the demise of Aus-Rotten. Caustic Christ features Eric on vocals and he proves himself to be credible in that role, with an agitated cadence and, on guitar, it's Bill Chamberlain, who has plied his wares in too many bands to list here. A raw, aggressive sound and the lyrics take a largely personal, venomous turn on both their self-titled release. The split has one track, "Of A Greater God," that critiques religion, as well as a cover of "Under The Knife" by Halflife. Can't wait to hear more from this band. Intense Youth play in a harsh, fast vein and pack their songs with plenty of bile. Somewhat monorhythmic on the faster parts. (Havoc: PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408/Behold The Youthquake: PO Box 10223, Pittsburgh, PA 15232)

CHAINSAW-Just Need It (Even Worse)
Two songs taken from two different Chainsaw releases and it's maximum bulldoze-core. A Japanese band with throaty vocals and an instrumental attack that fits their name—loud guitar and bass, accompanied by hammering drumming. Six Weeks also put out an anthology of tracks covering the past ten years for this blitzkrieg unit. (c/o Saenredamstr. 44-2, 1072CH Amsterdam, NETHERLANDS)

CIVIL DUTY-Shit N Piss EP (Violent Reaction)
Middle-finger, mad at the world punk. Loud and fast and very opinionated—in other words, you can't miss the point of "Fuck The GOP" and "Dead, White & Blew." Those songs were recorded before 9/11 and we need to hear those sentiments now more than ever—"where the fuck has liberty gone," indeed. Not groundbreaking but making its point. ($4 ppd to Ron Ramirez, PO Box 902, Artesia, CA 90702-0902)

CLANCY 6/VINCENT PRICE'S ORPHAN POWERED DEATH MACHINE-Split (McCarthyism)
Harsh, inaccessible sounds from both bands—Clancy 6 seem to have undergone a de-evolution process from their previous releases. Hammering, noisy grind/screamo that misses the mark, which wasn't the case on the CD reviewed in the last issue. VPOPDM, despite their colorful moniker, aren't appealing, either. Torture-chamber grind/lurch emanations, interspersed with somber passages. No thanks. (7209 25th Ave., Hyattsville, MD 20783-2752)

CLOSE CALL-Someone Talked (Gloom)
Close Call have emerged as an excellent band over the past few years, toughening up their sound quite a bit. They show some late 80s/early 90s hardcore roots (Eye For An Eye, Burn, etc...) but have also added more of a fast hardcore influence, as well. "From Within," an earlier version of which appeared on an *SV* compilation, comes storming out of the gates. The mid-tempo "Never A Friend" is a hybrid of Slapshot and late 80s DC hardcore. Very good. (PO Box 14253, Albany, NY 12212)

LOS COBARADOS-Hot as A Bitch On 45 (Straight Outta C-Town Muzique)
Punk rock 'n rollers with some lesbian action on the sleeve and loud riffs up their sleeve, although not quite as crazed as I'd like. Kind of a garage punk meets UK streetpunk sound and the winner here is the brilliantly-titled "Take Your Dreadlock Outta My Drink." (Torsten Hildebrand, Lessingstr. 12, 09130 Chemnitz, GERMANY)

COMMON INTEREST-As We Decay (Room 101)
Ravenous hardcore punk with larynx-shredding vocals and a rough, fast-paced sound that also goes through some somber twists and turns. A good level of intensity. (PO Box 1004, Windsor, CT 06095)

CONCLUSION (HG Fact)
More Japanese hardcore with the usual trappings—overdriven bass and guitar, barked out vocals and plenty of velocity, except on the more mid-tempo opening track (all titles are in their native language). Quite wailing, thank you. (105 Nakano Shinbashi M, 2-7-15 Yayoi-Cho, Nakano, Tokyo, 164-0013, JAPAN)

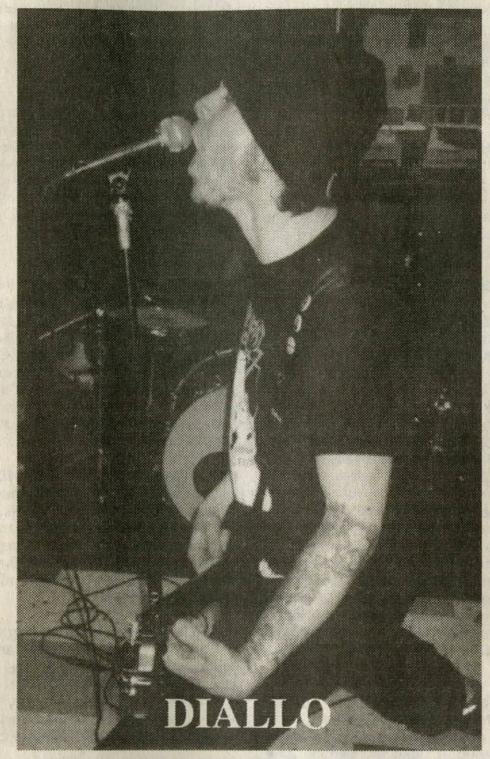
NIKKI CORVETTE-Love Me/What's On My Mind (Rapid Pulse)
Unabashed power-pop by Ms. Corvette, whose history goes back to the late 70s with the Corvettes. Two catchy songs—"Love Me" has a jangly twelve string guitar while the flip is a little punkier sounding. Pure bubblegum but done right. (PO Box 5075, Milford, CT 06460)

CUT THE SHIT-Bored To Death (Gloom)
Cut The Shit are one of the more promising new hardcore bands in Boston, with a lineup that includes past and present members of Bones Brigade, Cops and Robbers and Tear It Up. 10 songs and one goes quickly into another—I wondered if they recorded each side in one take but Andrew, the band's vocalist, said that wasn't the case ("we're not THAT talented!"). Fast, ripping songs with catchy riffs and some cool breakdowns. A good amount of rage in the lyrics, expressed towards fashion victims, danceclubs and Boston Mayor Tom "Mumbles" Menino and his minions for police harrassment of kids, but also urging people not to live their lives in fear on "Take Back Your Life." A mini army of angry youth? I think that describes it. (PO Box 14253, Albany, NY 12212)

CYNICS-Turn Me Loose/You've Never Had It Better (Get Hip)/ Doin' Me In/Last Day (Get Hip)
A pair of singles by the longtime Pittsburgh garage greats... three of these tracks appear on their new album, with "Doin' Me In" (a cover from a 60s era Pitt. band Gonn) the one exclusive track here. That record shows the Cynics' more melodic side, although there's still a tough undercurrent, while "Turn Me Loose" and "You've Never Had It Better" (an obscure Electric Prunes' song) turns up the fuzz quotient, nicely. Glad to hear this band, once again. (PO Box 666, Canonsburg, PA 15317)

CZOLGOSZ-Saipan (Rodent Popsicle)
Anarchist punks with outspoken lyrics and, as usual, they mix straight-ahead punk with more adventurous impulses. Some post-punk impulses show up on the title track (an anti-sweatshop song) and "Do As We Please." Includes a live version of "Pro-Life Is Terrorism" which I think I'll blast the next time I see a nimrod with one of those "It's a child, not a choice" bumper stickers. (PO Box 1143, Boston, MA 02134)

DAMAGE DEPOSIT (Havoc)
Previously-released as a demo and pressed on vinyl. Minneapolis thrashers with Felix Havoc on vocals and certainly in-line with the kind of hardcore that Felix has been championing in recent years—"Municipal Noise Ordinance" sounds a bit like Tear It Up, for instance. Speedy outbursts with some tough-sounding mosh parts, particularly on "Last Exit." Expounding the DIY philosophy, urging kids to get away from the TV and computer and create some-



thing ("Video Games and The Simpsons Are Destroying Hardcore") and taking issue with regressive attitudes within the hardcore scene ("That's Not Core Dude"). Not a bad debut, at all. (PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408)

DAY OF THE DEAD (Goodwill)
Surging hardcore with vocals that scream out every ounce of emotion. Sweeping songs with a strong lyrical point of view, especially when it comes to flag-waving nationalism or militarism. "Ego Therapy Relief," meanwhile, takes on macho chest-beating in the hardcore scene. From Portugal. (Dario Adamic, CP 15319, 00143, Roma Laurentino, ITALY)

DEADFALL (Controlled By Plague)
The Bay Area seems to be spawning some rough, kick-ass hardcore punk bands, lately, and Deadfall fall into that category. Loose around the edges and the drumming is occasionally stiff-sounding but I like the band's raw, angry sound, particularly on the opening song "Meathead." (PO Box 22641, SF, CA 94122)

DEADITES/HELLIONS-Split (Center Of The World)
Deadites proffer a traditional garage punk sound, complete with organ and along with horror-type lyrics. Not bad but I like the harder-driving Hellions better. Kick-ass rockin' rollin' punk rock with a bad fuckin' attitude. (1760 Gross Rd., Dallas, TX 75228)

DEADLOCK FREQUENCY-Saints & Sinners EP (Seven Lucky)
Hardcore with a sense of drama. Impassioned vocals, stinging guitar and the melodic bass-lines. Getting somewhat experimental for the extended percussion workout on "End Of The Line." The more direct "Shattered Supremacy" works the best. Some early 90s DIY hardcore stylings (Born Against, etc) in the mix. (PO Box 9546, Denver, CO 80209)

DEAD ONES (Gloom)
Maybe it's the fact they're from Sweden, but the Dead Ones remind me a bit of DS-13, in that they take a distinctly American-ized approach to their hardcore. Raw, but catchy compositions with lots of adrenalin and cool breakdowns. Thrash thrash thrash. Unexpected: the synth on "LFDY." (PO Box 14253, Albany, NY 12212)

DEAD STOP (Wolfpack)
Another one of my favorite 7"s of late—actually, I've had this on a CD-R for awhile and was playing that quite a bit, as well. A Belgian band with a classic hardcore sound—pretty much everything I like in one package. Aggressive, yet catchy with an old-school influence, played with precision and energy. One debit for gratuitous use of the word "fag" on "Dead Stop." Come on, boys, that's just dumb. (www.reflexdistribution.com)

DEATHBAG (Hemhorraging Loudness/Get The Axe)
Raw, thrashy hardcore punk—occasionally, the tightness falters, but the anger and aggression carry them through nicely. Songs about the futility of modern existence and working one's self to death and the concluding track is the middle-finger assault of Raw Power's "Fuck Authority." Nice fold-out six panel sleeve with a provocative collage on one side. (Get The Axe: PO Box 3019, Oswego, NY 13126/Hemorrhaging Loudness: 19 Beech St., Ilion, NY 13357)

DEATH THREAT/OVER MY DEAD BODY-Split (Bridge Nine)
Death Threat, while still having elements of the tuff-guy sound, are a bit more palatable than in the past, with less of the mosh strut and more bruising speed in their sound. OMDB continue to favor more of an uptempo posi-core sound and throw in a curveball with a cool cover of Reagan Youth's "No Class." (PO Box 990052, Boston, MA 02199-0052)

DEF CHOICE (Underestimated)
Fast and raging hardcore—blazing speed, cool breakdowns and thoughtful lyrics about all those wonderful aspects of american "culture." A serious message but not taking themselves too seriously—they even claim Born Against "said it better" than they could on "Handguns & TV Dinners." Heartfelt, youthful rage. (PO Box 13274, Chicago, IL 60613)

DEFIANT TRESPASS-Where There Is Hope, There Can Always Be Revolution (Sick Of Talk)
Political punk with an energetic sound and outspoken lyrics. Quite a bit on the 'ol lyrical plate, in fact—songs about the International Monetary Fund, warmongering and consumerism. Serious themes, delivered with a spirited thrust. As much as I like for bands to have a stance, with the info to back it up, it helps if it also kicks ass. (PO Box 9723, Reno, NV 89507)

DESPERATE MEASURES-It's On Your Hands (Youngblood)
Pretty good straight-edge/youth crew hardcore. A definite tip of the baseball cap to the early Rev bands with sweeping riffs, big breakdowns, gruff vocals and plenty of backups on the choruses. (217 W. Main St., Ephrata, PA 17522)

DIALLO-Diallo (Test Pattern)/Diagram Of A Scam (Yellow Dog)
Diallo have already broken up but leave behind a couple of scorching 7"s, with another split on the way posthumously, or so I recall hearing. Dark, heavy thrash/crust with thick riffs that hang over the atmosphere like a hopelessly overcast day and, sonically, a mix of Scandinavian hardcore and the doomy sound popularized by His Hero Is Gone et al. "Diagram Of A Scam" is a vinyl pressing of their demo and has a double-speed thrash sound on a few songs. The self-titled EP showed Diallo really starting to come into their own—making their demise that much more regrettable. (PO Box 551, Simsbury, CT 06070)

DISGRUNTLED NATION-Beaded Marauder (Poisoned Candy)
Out of the ashes of Humpy, who put out some pretty ripping stuff in the 90s. This 7" is actually a few years old but showed up with the other releases on this label and it's some raging, old-school hardcore. Don't expect much in the way of fidelity but expect blistering riffs and angry vocals.

DISIDENCIA (Thought Crime)
Dissident and defiant hardcore from Uruguay. Paulo's high-pitched yelping vocals bring to mind another Uruguayan native, Martin Crudo. Fast songs with catchy guitar lines, approaching a west coast style on a few songs but there's also an early 80s old-school pulse, especially for "PFT," which stands for "Property, Family and Tradition" and those are value systems to which Disidencia refuse to submit. (Boxhagener Str. 22, 10245 Berlin, GERMANY)

DSB-Pure Cultivation (Kangaroo)/Battle Into Invisible Zone (Kangaroo)
The two latest EP's by Japanese band DSB are now available on Kangaroo. "Pure Cultivation" is over-the-top and throttling, up to the level of earlier material. Overwhelming with power and aggro. "Battle Into The Invisible Zone" isn't quite as great as that and shows a bit more tuneful, hard-rocking emphasis, yet still has plenty of burn to get by. (Middenweg 13, 1098 AA Amsterdam, NETHERLANDS)

DUMBSTRUCK/Y-Split (Thought Crime)
DUMBSTRUCK-If It Ain't Broke, Don't Fix It EP (Deranged)
Dumbstruck have shuffled their lineup a bit (Baz is out, Jim has switched to guitar) but it's still pulverizing hardcore. A little rougher-sounding and not as hot as the two previous records, but still worthwhile. Y dish out their typical thrash/grind and, as usual, I like it better when the tempo is a little more reasonable, although it's tightly-executed. Speaking of older Dumbstruck, Deranged have reissued their first 7", adding a Poison Idea cover from another compilation 7" ("Pure Hate," my favorite PI song, if you care). Blazing fast hardcore punk that blasts a hole in the wall. You definitely need this. (Thought Crime: Thomas Franke, Boxhagener Str. 22, 10245 Berlin, GERMANY/Deranged: PO Box 543, Stn. P, Toronto, ON M5S-2T1, CANADA)

DYSTROPHY-Nice Kids (Crucial)
Nice kids, nasty sound—grindin' skatecore heavy on the snare and rabid vocals and the ultra-speed sometimes hurts the tight-

ness. The more straight-forward thrash of "Palomas" comes across better. (48 Camino Alto, Millbrae, CA 94030)

ETA-We Are The Attack (Deranged)
Latest 7" for these Swedish skate/thrash/hardcore punk people. Short, fast, catchy songs with a stripped-down style and the straight, to-the-point approach works like a charm. Sorry to hear about their breakup. (PO Box 543, Stn. P, Toronto, ON M5S-2T1, CANADA)

ETAE (Cries Of Pain)
These modern-day Japanese hardcore bands sure love to use that metallic lead guitar, don't they? But along with trills comes overdrive and ETAE play in that fashion on these four songs, recorded in 2000. Hitting hard and fast. (PO Box 1004, Windsor, CT 06095)

FAR FROM BREAKING-Made My Choice (Third Party)
Straight edge hardcore with a sweeping, energetic sound and Jason Tarpey's vocals sound kind of like Pete from In My Eyes. A standard, well-worn sound but these guys play it the right way, at a heart-racing pace. (21 Nancy Lane, Amherst, NY 14228)

4AM FATALITY-The Aggro-vated EP (Villain)
Omar Villain (Trucker Crank) takes the mike in this pissed-off sounding hardcore band. Gruff vocals and an aggressive, thrashy sound. A fatalistic worldview, stating on "Darkest History" that terrorism has always been with us.

FIRE DOWN BELOW (Ed Walters)
Screamy hardcore with iron-forged riffs and two vocalists who howl their guts out. Not something I always want to listen to on record, although they were pretty intense when I saw them live. This EP is better than the previous demo I heard. And I like the charred-looking sleeve. (2416 S. Warnock St., Philadelphia, PA 19148)

FUCKED UP-No Pasaran/Circling The Drain (Deranged)/Police (Deranged)
You wouldn't expect a band with this name to be even just the slightest bit mellow, to paraphrase a right-wing rock icon I refuse to acknowledge by name, and Fucked Up are definitely far from mellow. "Circling The Drain" is a mid-tempo hardcore stomper while "No Pasaran" picks up the pace and offers a history lesson about autonomous living (i.e. anarchy) during the time of the Spanish Civil War and hopes it can happen again. I don't necessarily find that a feasible option but let's hear it for the dreamers. And let's hear it for Fucked Up who get even better on their second 7". "Police" is an anti-cop diatribe, of course, but it's an absolutely *smokin'* one. So much so that there are two versions of it on this 7" and the second one is called "Old Bill" but it's the same song. The other song, "Fuck You Municipal Pricks," takes on so-called public servants (and they name names) who act like plain old fascists, and does so in a harder, faster style. These guys sound PISSED. (PO Box 543, Stn. P, Toronto, ON M5S-2T1, CANADA)

GATE CRASHERS/IDOL PUNCH-Split (Moshstache)
The Crashers rip it up with four furious songs here, including a cover of semi-obscure DC band Beaver's "Georgetown Sucks." No breaks, just thrash. On the flip are three tracks from Japanese zanies Idol Punch and they play some ultra-fast hardcore with wild twists and turns and the instrumental skill is impressive. Some of the better material I've heard from these guys. (652 Evelyn Ave., East Meadow, NY 11554)

GIANT HAYSTACKS-How We Lost The War (Mistake)
This Bay Area three-piece also have a demo out and, while the title track on here is incredible, the other songs don't always have the kineticism of that CD-R. I'm still recommending it, though. A strong Minutemen influence with strong instrumentation and sung vocals. (PO Box 22971, Oakland, CA 94609)

GIVE UP (Peterwalkee)
Intense hardcore from this Albany band. The vocals sound almost inhuman or possessed by some unknown entity and this band bash out some solid dark-hued thrash. "Just Another Adult" is about losing friends to so-called maturity and, having seen certain friends become deadly dull as they settle into their "adult" lives, it's an on-target sentiment. Short, blistering songs. (PO Box 14794, Albany, NY 12212)

GLORY FADES-Love, Expulsion, Revolution (One Leaf)
Short-lived Boston area band that split up when vocalist Ken Ramsey decided to move to the Czech Republic. Our loss, since these guys played aggressive, yet melodic hardcore with intelligent, passionate lyrics. On the other hand, various members have gone on to be in some damn good bands, such as Sleeper Cell and RNR.

GRAFTON (Derailleur/Diaphragm)
Riff rockarolla with a southern drawl and too lethargic sounding to be that exciting. They'd probably be at home in Allston Rock City here in Boston and that's not meant as a compliment. Where's the fuckin' boogie? (PO box 10388, Columbus, OH 43201)

GREAT CLEARING OFF-Within This Inch, We Are Free (Cheap Art)
GREAT CLEARING OFF/SOUND OF FAILURE-Sea Of Steel Vol. 2 (Ed Walters)
Two bands from Philly who both have a powerful hardcore sound. The Great Clearing Off play in a surging, stinging vein, with the explosive "Take Back Your Life" on "Within This Inch" working as a statement of purpose. Pouring out the emotion and blending some melody into the attack. One can even hear some metal riffs on "Lovesong" on the split with The Sound Of Failure. That disc is the second installment in the "Sea of Steel" series (RAMBO/Crucial Unit was the first), intended to promote bike riding. TSOF has Joe Gough (from the final lineup of Kill The Man Who Questions) on guitar and vocals and their two song have a ferocious sound that hammers away with speed and heaviness, while Joe emits anguished vocals. As with the first "Sea Of Steel" release, the record is accompanied by a small booklet that includes essays and info on biking. (Cheap Art: PO Box 2101, Philadelphia, PA 19103/Ed Walters: 2416 S.Warnock St., Philadelphia, PA 19148)

HARD FEELINGS-Soul Party (Gearhead)
Garageified takes on songs by Nathaniel Mayer ("Leave Me Alone") and Solomon Burke ("Home In Your Heart"). I'm familiar with Burke, not so much with Mayer but these guys take the songs and make a three chord racket out of 'em. Not bad. (PO Box 421219, SF, CA 94142)

HAWG JAW/FACE FIRST-Split (Riotous Assembly)
Hawg Jaw fill their side with one song, "Beneath Buried," that stretches out in a heavy, almost stoner-like direction, with a few speedy moments. Face First offer five hard/fast songs and I'd give 'em a thumbs up, except for the absolutely moronic lyrics to "Sparechange," which literally and figuratively pisses all over homeless people. Who wrote that one? Some of the republican politicians from their area? (PO Box 16396, Portland, OR 97292)

HAYMAKER-Fuck America (Deranged)
Not one ounce of subtletly—either in their opinion of the country that sits south of Haymaker's Canadian border nor in the bruising musical attack. In addition to the title track, there's a cover of Anthrax's "Caught In A Mosh" and three more originals that attack without let-up. With the low-tuned guitars, this makes the ground shake. (PO Box 543, Stn. P, Toronto, ON M5S-2T1, CANADA)

HEAD HITS CONCRETE-Hope, Fear and the Terror of Dreams (Intolerant Messiah)
Not wasting a moment of time since the release of their split 10" with My Mind's Mine, Winnipeg's Head Hits Concrete have delivered ten more punishing grind-influenced hardcore tunes on this blistering 7" EP. These songs, produced by Propagandhi's Chris Hannah, are the band's most volatile yet, showcasing an even more reckless and crazed sound than the 10" or their debut 7". At times the guitar hysterics border on mathcore, but for the most part this is raw, sincere grind. The lyrics, as always, focus on social and political topics in a down-to-earth way that helps give HHC a personal and human touch. Like fellow Winnipeg-ers Malefaction, HHC continue to pummel the hell out of both hardcore kids and grindcore fans. Let's see a full-length! (PO Box 6162, San Mateo CA, 94403) *(Greg)*

HEARTWORK (Cadmium Sick)
Overdriven Japanese hardcore—raging guitar and bass riffs power this band's sound. Four songs, two with Japanese titles and one of the English titles seems to lose something in the translation ("Anything Dry"). But the music speaks volumes and renders language barriers insignificant. (PO Box 35934, Brighton, MA 02135)

HEROS & ZEROS (Mad Butcher)
Marko from Vitamin X is the vocalist in this Dutch street punk band, a definite change of pace from his other band. They have a trumpet player and I can't say it always add much to the sound, but the guitar is nice and loud and the songs have a good amount of energy to keep things interesting.

HIGH STEPPIN' NICKEL KIDS-Is It Wrong To Imagine The Impossible? (Revolutionary Plastics)
The Nickel Kids, who broke up last fall, had a tendency to try to squeeze as many musical and lyrical ideas into each song as possible but, at the core, these guys came up with some stirring, melodic punk. "Scratch And Win" isn't only about people pissing away money on lottery tickets in search of the "American dream," but questions that dream and mindset itself and, after seeing all the spent tickets in front of Cal's News in Lynn, I guess I'm not the only searching for the sad story behind those tickets. (27 Mansfield St., Allston, MA 02134)

HOLDING ON/COALITION-Split (Martyr)
Holding On rip out three songs, two of which aren't on their new album and the one that is, "The Greatest Trick The Devil Ever Played," is a scathing critique of mindless patriotism. Coalition also play in a modern hardcore vein, interspersing heaviness with speed. "Forgotten" is a little more melodic. (PO Box 955, Harriman, NY 10926-0955)

HOOKERS-God Made Me The Raven/Rock Bottom (Get Hip)
Two fired-up rock tunes, with the b-side being a UFO cover and they crammed all 7+ minutes of it on one side. It's a serviceable rendition but "Shoot Shoot" is a better UFO song. "God Made Me The Raven" careens with pure attitude. The Hookers have been around the block and can still stoke the decibels. (PO Box 666, Canonsburg, PA 15317)

HOUSE ON FIRE (1-2-3-4 Go!)
Released as both a CD demo (with one extra song) and on 7" vinyl... cool Florida rock with two former members of the underrated Panthro UK United 13 and Discount. Punk with both a hard rocking and melodic edge, along with gruff vocals by Alex. The final song, "Bomb On The Plane," is a pounding scorcher. (420 Wall St., #206, Seattle, WA 98121)

IDIOT HUMANS (Smog Veil)
Dark-hued Clevo punk from the mid 80s with future members of Shadow of Fear (who I actually saw in Cambridge, once), Laughing Hyenas and the Guns. Raw, electro-static guitar and a mid-tempo kick for "Depressed in Green" and "Not You." "Elderly Dead" is a dragged-out dirge and not quite as enticing. Two out of three ain't nothing to sneer at and these songs are previously unreleased. (316 California Ave., #207, Reno, NV 89509)

INFESTATION OF ASS/HEWHOCORRUPTS-Never Corner A Mitchell (Rescued From Life)
Two grind bands from Illinois, although IOA mix in some more straight-forward thrash, while Hewhocorrupts get a tad more experimental with some hip-hop style beats at the end. Neither leaves that strong an impression. (196 Fairfield, Elmhurst, IL 60126)

IN MY EYES-Live In Philly (Significant)
In My Eyes were a pretty damn good band, live as well as on record, but this EP doesn't really capture it. The playing is OK but not always tight and the sound quality is only fair to middling. More a fan's keepsake than anything else. (PO Box 642, Indian Rocks Beach, FL 33785)

INVERSIONS-Domestic Disturbance (Rapid Pulse)
Rough 'n ready punk rock 'n roll. I'm a little dubious about the domestic violence theme on side one ("you better shut your mouth... I'm gonna knock you out." Hope it's just for shock value sake. That question aside, good and snotty. (PO Box 5075, Milford, CT 06460)

JOHN BROWN'S ARMY/REAGAN SS-Split (Gloom)
Both of these bands play what could be loosely-termed old-school hardcore, though JBA have a few more contemprary elements in their sound. Reagan SS, meanwhile, take particular inspiration from early 80s Boston hardcore. The vocalist is Matt Average (*Engine* and other zines) and, while a little loose-sounding, they get by on pure aggro. As they say on "Make It Fast," *"I want my music loud and fast/that's the way it's supposed to be played."* Ah-fuckin'-men. (PO Box 14253, Albany, NY 12212)

KILL CRUSH DESTROY (17cm)
I think they got their name from an old "Lost In Space" episode—the one where the robot has to go into battle against a bigger, meaner robot whose favorite expression is "crush... kill... destroy!" Well, in any case, this NJ band play fast, angry 'n anguished hardcore punk with lyrics exploring personal regions. Well-channelled ferocity. (PO Box 563, Lakehurst, NJ 08733)

KILL THE MAN WHO QUESTIONS/DEL CIELO-Split EP (Ed Walters)
KTMWQ go out with a blast—three fiery songs that hammer away with relentless power. I'm really going to miss these guys. Del Cielo, an all-female trio from the DC area, are a much different proposition. Moody and melodic indy rock with fluttering vocals and intense, personal lyrics. Not a sound that really grabs me. (2416 S.Warnock St., Philadelphia, PA 19148)

KITTY LITTLE (Peterwalkee)
Geeky power-pop that has a disarming charm to it, all the time coming across as a tad skewed in a Pixies-like way. The vocals sound-like someone's been sucking on helium balloons, a bit. I kind of like this. (PO Box 14794, Albany, NY 12212)

KNOCK DOWN (Youngblood)
The breakdowns on this EP are so TOUGH sounding they make me want to start punching holes in the wall and start headwalking on whatever's handy. That's not meant in any sarcastic fashion, either. "What's Left," especially, elicits a physical reaction. Pummelling hardcore with an old-school spirit (think early YOT) and a confrontational attitude. (217 W. Main St., Ephrata, PA 17522)

KONTORTION-Breed Into Nothing (Room 101)
Eeevil sounding thrash/grind, mixing in double-speed and blast tempos, high/low vocal howlings and raging riffs. Has a raw, DIY quality and cool anti-authoritarian lyrics, yet sometimes gets too fast for its own good. (PO Box 1004, Windsor, CT 06095)

KOWALSKIS/LULABELLES-Fresh and Sweet (Thunderbaby)
Two female-fronted bands (and both bands have other women in their ranks)—tuneful punk, with the Kowalskis having a poppier style and the Lulabelles a little more three-chord burn, although it's also in a melodic vein—and I'm more enthralled with their side, although the Kowalski's "Depression Overdrive" is pretty good. (Hasselsstr. 120, 40599 Düseldorf, GERMANY)

LAST IN LINE (Gloom)
First new Last In Line release in over two years, only 6 songs but I'll fucking take ANYTHING from this great band. Boiling-over hardcore and, while the sound has evolved a bit from the LP, every song here goes straight for the jugular. But you notice little things like Mikey's bass runs on "Congested" that add dramatic effect. "Deadline" steamrolls everything in its path. As always, Last In Line's lineup has been unstable and guitarist Deuce Stauffer left the band for awhile in late 2002 but he's returned. Let's hope they keep it going. (PO Box 14253, Albany, NY 12212)

LAST TARGET-What Caused The Problem?/God's Gamble (TKO)
A new band for Ryoko from Thug Murder and two bright, catchy punk tunes. Both of these songs are pretty polished-sounding, yet boisterous, particularly "What Caused The Problem?" (3126 W. Cary St., #303, Richmond, VA 23221)

LAUKAUS-Mikä on tuolla? EP (Distort)
A Japanese band playing Finnish-style hardcore, although I hear some American influences in there, as well. Well, the titles are in Finnish, anyway. However you want to break it down, the songs are aggressive and semi-catchy and these guys have an appealingly rough-hewn, old-school sound. (PO Box 3400, Wallinigton, NJ 07057)

LEFT WITH NOTHING-Wishing In Reverse (Excursion)
Soul-screaming heaviness, along the lines of Kiss It Goodbye or Deadguy. That means anguished vocals, bludgeoning, yet frayed guitar chords and a lumbering tempo. Can't say this approach really makes a connection with these ears. Two former members of Trial. (PO Box 20224, Seattle, WA 98102)

LET IT BURN-Hello Good Friend (Coalition)
Three new songs by Let It Burn, one of which is a cover of David Bowie's "Hang On To Yourself," from his classic "Ziggy Stardust" album and these guys do it handclappin' justice. On their own songs, a blend of fired-up rock 'n roll and hardcore with an emotional surge. I like this band a lot. (Newtonstraat 212, 2562 KW Den Haag, NETHERLANDS)

LIM-Snutas (Know)
Angry-sounding Swedish hardcore. A harsh, dirty sound and done at a rumbling, fast pace. Even though there's a sense of familiarity, here, I'd rather hear this than some watered-down shit, that's for sure. (PO Box 90579, Long Beach, CA 90809)

LOCAL OAFS/MUSIC/NINJA-Essen Sie Punk? (Strandad Sjöbuse)
LOCAL OAFS/DYKE HARD-Mortal Combat (Cage Match)
Low-fi garage punk by all three of these bands.

The Local Oafs have a high obnoxiousness sound and come across musically like a more trebly-sounding (!) Henry Fiat's Open Sore. Dyke Hard come up with some provocative song titles, such as "I Just Want To Choke You With My Cunt" and keep the chords to a minimum. Finally, Music/Ninja play in a more measured, bluesier vein but it remains very raw-sounding. As much as I love the raw garage style, all these bands push the limits of listenability. (Local Oafs: http://localoafs.cjb.net)

MASS SEPARATION-Tak Mau Lagi (Meconium)

It still astounds me that punk/hardcore exists in various styles all over the world. Here is Mass Separation, a thrashy crust band from Malaysia. Can you dumb Americans even find Malaysia on a map? I am pretty sure our fake "president" can't. Nonetheless, there is a small but frenetic scene in the Pacific Rim. Being a punk in a relatively poor, secluded nation like Malaysia has to be much harder than it is in the US, Canada or Europe. The recording is thin; the insert says this was recorded live to tape. Consequently, the record sounds like a band practice tape. The overall volume is low, yet, the instruments are distinguishable. It is a listenable record—even an enjoyable record, but don't expect the prodution standards you'd find on a Havoc or Tribal War release. These Malaysian folks simply do not have the resources of large, popular, American labels. They worked within their means and the result is very admirable. All that being said, the music is fairly generic thrashy crust (or crusty thrash?) but done with tons of sincerity and a little something my grandpa calls "oomph." The vocals are in English—broken English to be more exact, but reveal a good bit of thought. I am particularly taken by the lyrics to, "Solidarity Bullshit." Here is a smattering, language errors intact: "What turns punk to be like this?/Scene only kept for most hyped bands/hardcore kids like another Star Wars gang/First pressings on that E-bay/Are we still one community?/Or now just drunk with commodities?" At times, those are my thoughts exactly. Check out this band and all foreign hardcore/punk you can get your hands on. (distr. by Where's Your Anger, PO Box 471, Allston, MA 02134) *(Bob)*

MELEE-One Way Dead End (Leguna Armada)

The best release yet for Melee… Craig's vocals are in a gruffer register than in the past and it fits well with the band's classic thrash attack. A swarming guitar sound that brings back memories of vintage Boston HC, along with a progressive lyrical viewpoint that also has its fair share of anger and rage. It's a shame they've broken up. (1010 ½ Riverine Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92701)

MENTAL (Lockin Out)

A Boston hardcore band that's been quickly building up a pretty solid live rep and this isn't a bad vinyl debut at all. In a heavier/crunchy vein, although there are some speedier parts. Bellicose vocals, loud guitar and solid drumming designed to bring the mosh. (91 Gordon St., #20, Brighton, MA 02135)

MILES BETWEEN US (Blatherskyte)

Straight-edge hardcore with a sweeping, melodic sound. Played with the passion of the true believer, from an intensely personal angle. Does that spell Y-O-U-T-H C-R-E-W? To a degree—I'm hearing Gorilla Biscuits guitar flourishes in a tougher framework. Fair to middling, overall. (PO Box 40088, Rochester, NY 14604)

MODERN LIFE IS WAR (Modern Life Is War)

The debut for MLIW—3 songs of intense hardcore, a bit more straight-forward than their album, although still in a mid-tempo, melodic-meets-heavy style. "Fakes Like You" hints at what would follow. My copy was originally released by the band but it's now available on Lifeline Records and worth hearing. (Lifeline Records, PO Box 692, Midlothian, IL 60445)

MOMENT OF YOUTH (Parts Unknown)
SHITFIT/MOMENT OF YOUTH-Split EP (Malfunction)

Both of these bands are from DC and play pissed-off hardcore. Moment Of Youth show some improvement from their demo. Mid-to-fast tempo songs, relying a bit too much on the monrhythmic on-beat but some pounding songs on both their solo EP and the split, the latter of which includes a cover of the DC Youth Brigade's "Last Word." Shitfit live up to their name with a vocalist who sputters out the words of rage with staccato outbursts. A muscular sound varying from fast to more lurching and really hitting the mark on "Waste Of Time," which rides a cool bass-line. An appealing element of psychosis, here. (Parts Unknown: PO Box 4835, Toms River, NJ 08754/Malfunction: www.malfunctionrecords. com)

DENNIS MOST & THE INSTIGATORS-Wire My Jaw (Bad Attitude)

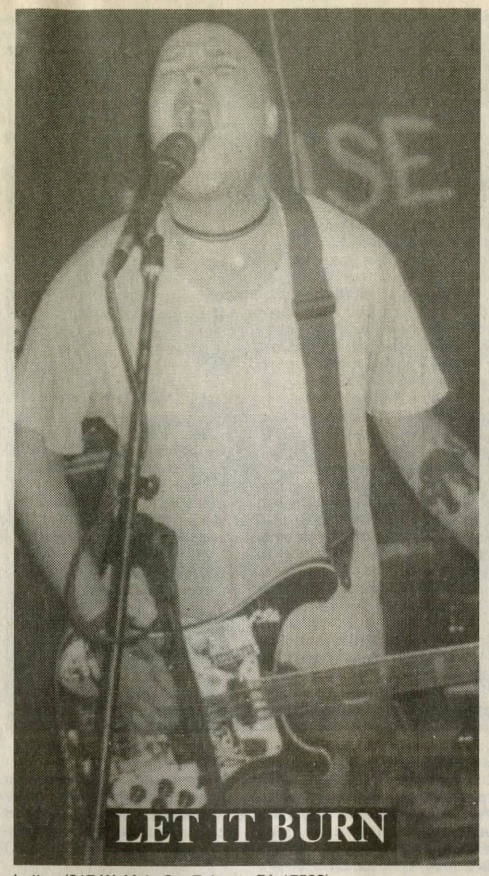
Most has been kicking around since the mid-70s, first with AudioLove and with the Instigators off and on since '78. New recordings by this veteran, with help from Keith Grave (White Pigs, Blastmat, Sanity Assassins), Jeff Roncalli (Pajama Slave Dancers) and Peter Poulos, who played with him in AudioLove. There's also an anthology CD on Dionysus that includes these four songs, one more new track and material from '78 to '90 which will be reviewed next issue. A mix of punk and hard-edged rock 'n roll with grit and volume. "Tough Break" is the most fired-up sounding song here. (www.bad-attitude-records.com)

MUNICIPAL WASTE-Tango & Thrash/BAD ACID TRIP-Hamster Ball People Of Earth (Amendment)

Municipal Waste's side is a tribute to Kurt Russell movies and they apply their thrash/crossover stylings to songs about Backdraft, Captain Ron and Tango & Cash. Pretty dman brilliant. On the other hand, I've never found Bad Acid Trip's grindcore sound that appealing and their songs here don't change my opinion. Blast-beats, grunted and shrieked vocals and, while the operatic vocals on one song are humorous, that's not enough. (580 Nansemond Cres., Portsmouth, VA 23707)

MY LUCK-Is Frozen (Youngblood)

Earnest-sounding hardcore, a bit heavier than the standard youth crew sound, but in that vicinity. Clif barks out the vocals with angst-filled passion and this Texas band has a hyper-paced sound. OK, although I think their songs on the Final Plan split are a little



better. (217 W. Main St., Ephrata, PA 17522)

NADS-Saigon Hooker (Gearhead)

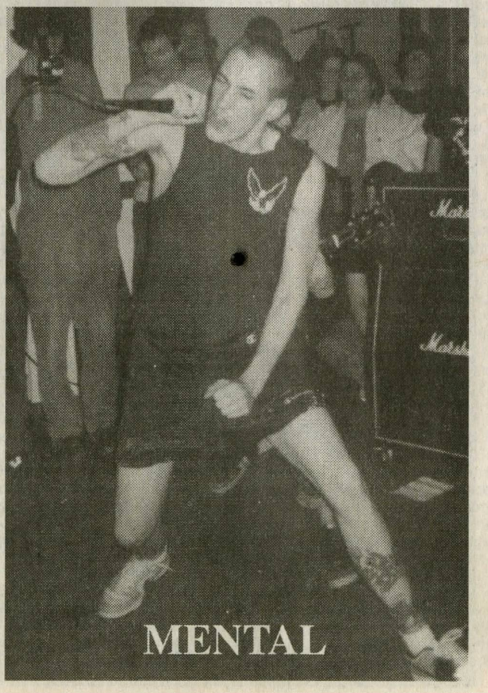
3 tracks of so-so garage punk rock 'n roll. Loud 'n proud, though not really firing out the sparks—the title cut does have a Stooges-derived strut. "New Set Of Nuts" is a little on the sluggish side, then "Sons Of The Sonic Solution" picks up the pace and is the strongest song here. More songs like that one and I might be curious to hear more. (PO Box 421219, SF, CA 94142)

NEW GRANADA (Leguna Armada)

Emotion-packed hardcore with a raw guitar sound and intense vocals. That gritted-teeth delivery and the melody-meets-aggro sound reminds me a bit of Swiz; although there's a rougher ambiance, here. Pretty damn good. (1010 ½ Riverine Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92701)

NITZ (Reptilian)

Says on their press sheet that the Nitz toured with Zeke and, even if I hadn't read that, I would have said that the Nitz's whambam fast punk owes a debt to that band. Hardcore velocity and a



DGAF (that's don't-give-a-fuck) attitude. All burn, baby. (403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231)

OIL-Better Get It In Your Soul (Peterwalkee)

A reissue of Oil's 1999 12" EP on a 7". Stirring, melodic hardcore with rougher production quality than on their "Definition Delta" album, for which these songs were re-recorded. That album was excellent, but I like hearing these more gut-level sounding takes. (PO Box 14794, Albany, NY 12212)

ONE RIVER-A Breathing Will (Revive)

Picked this up on the suggestion of a friend and I'm glad I heeded his advice—raging hardcore punk from Japan. Acid-encrusted vocals and a trebly, fast paced attack and a positive outlook, though not in a cheesy way. A decidedly American-leaning sound, but with the crazed elements of their native land. (30 Nakajima-Cho, Momoyama-Cho, Fushimi-Ku, Kyoto, 612-8005, JAPAN)

OPUS DEAD/TROPIEZO-Split (Opus Dead)

Opus Dead are from Spain, Tropiezo from Puerto Rico and both play some spirited political hardcore. As with their album, Opus Dead's vocals are a bit flat-sounding but the sound is hearty and energetic. Tropiezo have two thrash rippers and one slower song with some metallic trills. (distr. by Where's Your Anger, PO Box 471, Boston, MA 02134)

OUR WAR-Traditions Demo (Deranged)

The final gasp for this Toronto hardcore band—initially released as a demo and now on vinyl, limited to 500 copies. Boiling over with anger and rage. Upper-register, rabid dog vocals by Steve and featuring bruising, hard-hitting riffs. And, as always, lyrics that pull absolutely no punches and they revel in that attitude. (PO Box 543, Stn. P, Toronto, ON M5S-2T1, CANADA)

PATH OF DESTRUCTION-1:00 AM (Havoc)

Blurring the line between crust punk and hardcore. Pignose howls as if someone threw acid in his face and the band favor a raw, axe-busting attack. "Silence Is Golden" starts with a shimmery guitar signature and is a tad more melodic but still scalding. Pure rage. (PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408)

PEOPLE'S WAR-Making Enemies EP (Coalition)

Political hardcore played with harsh, fierce abandon. Howling vocals, blazing guitars and rampaging drums that make a visceral racket. A very different southern voice (they're from Memphis), as the songs deal with a legacy of lynching, poverty in the shadows of Graceland and abusive child care that often leads to death. Given a pissed-off musical airing. (Newtonstraat 212, 2562 KW Den Haag, NETHERLANDS)

PITCH BLACK (Cheetah's)

Two of the three songs are on the LP… not sure if they're the same versions but these were some of the standouts on said longplayer, particularly "Undefeated." Dark-hued, stinging hardcore punk by a west coast band—shades of TSOL. (PO Box 4442, Berkeley, CA 94704)

PLAN OF ATTACK (Silent Architect)

Ripping, pissed off hardcore. The frustrations of living in a crap town and life's daily miseries come out through the music and lyrics, starting with "Watch It Burn" (as in wanting to burn one's hometown). Aggressive musically, with a hint of mid-80s NYHC and wank-free crossover. Bill Smiles' vocals sound appropriately angry, the antithesis of his last name. (distr. by Lifeline Records, PO Box 692, Midlothian, IL 60445)

PROFITS-Propaganda Machine (Propaganda Machine/Rodent Popsicle)

The lastest from the Profits features their rough, fast punk with strong political sentiments. "Fight War" sounds like a peace rally chant and, in fact, is interrupted by a speech from Boston city councilor Chuck Turner (one of the only truly decent politicians in that city) at an anti-war rally. Not subtle but this isn't a time for subtlety. (PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134)

THE PROWL-What Are You Doing? (Gloom)

Hard-hitting punk by this Western Mass. band fronted by Last In Line bassist Mikey Flynn. A definite early 80s Cali punk meets east coast hardcore flavor, with a darker edge both musically and lyrically. There was some controversy over the cover to this record, due to the rape and murder theme on the front and back cover drawing and, yeah, seeing a woman gutted on the back cover is pretty disgusting. The band and artist claim that it was inspired by the song "Maniac," which is named after an infamous slasher flick. Questionable taste, I guess, but definitely a throttling band. (PO Box 14253, Albany, NY 12212)

THE PUBLIC/SEE YOU IN HELL-Split

Howling hardcore from the former Czechoslovakia—The Public come from Slovakia and See You In Hell are from the Czech Republic. The Public have a thrash/grind sound, with some Scandinavian influences while See You In Hell have a slightly more straight-forward speed attack (although there's still some grind) and they're the stronger of the two bands here. Nicely packaged in a cardboard sleeve and with a booklet and over 20 labels have joined together to release and distribute this record. (distr. by Where's Your Anger, PO Box 471, Boston, MA 02134)

PUNCH IN THE FACE (Leguna Armada)

Finally some vinyl for PITF, who had my favorite demo of 2001. Some of those songs are repeated, lots of Simpsons' references remain and the musical references remain pure early Poison Idea. Some have groused about the guitar sound but I think it has plenty of bite and Ebro's no-nonsense vocals convey the disgust at those who act all self-righteous or forget that hardcore is meant for the outcasts. As one song title proudly states, cut the shit, start the pit! A second 7" will be out by the time you read this. (1010 ½ Riverine Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92701)

RAMBO/CRUCIAL UNIT-Sea Of Steel Vol. 1 (Ed Walters)

The first installment of a 7" series promoting bike riding (something I need to do more!) and two heavy hitting bands. RAMBO balance crushing heaviness with blinding speed and make the poignant statement "All The Assholes Are Heroes Now." I would say that's very true in the good 'ol USA, now. Crucial Unit also play at a rapid pace and the vocals are banshee-like. A strong message laced with humor and great titles, as always—"Chinese Restaurant Mosh Pit," for instance. Includes a booklet with essays on bicycling and DIY bike repair. (2416 South Warnock St., Philadelphia, PA 19148)

RAMMER-Monstroyer/Black Between The Stars (Deranged)
A metal band mixing thrash and some Euro influences—rough, gutteral vocals and solid riffing. "Black Between The Stars" picks up the pace and is the better of the two tracks here. (PO Box 543, Stn. P, Toronto, ON M5S-2T1, CANADA)

REASON OF INSANITY/OTOPHOBIA-Split (Burrito)
Older recordings by both bands—in fact, one of Otophobia's songs, "Blue Polyester," appeared on an SV comp under a different title (as well as on a "Short Fast and Loud" comp CD). Both bands play thrashy hardcore with some crossover elements. ROI are a little looser-sounding but both hammer away with aggressive intent. (PO Box 3204, Brandon, FL 33509)

RED REACTION (Coalition)
RED REACTION/LIFE SET STRUGGLE-Split (Solution)
Red Reaction's latest is a 5 song EP that features pissed-off hardcore shifting easily from mid-tempo boil to speed and with chip-on-shoulder vocals. They also exhibit a heavier side with "Take Me To Hell," which rather blatantly purloins the opening to Sabbath's "War Pigs," but that's not a bad riff to borrow. The split, with Life Set Struggle came out last year and both bands really step it up. Red Reaction play to kill, as usual, while Life Set Struggle keep things pumping on their side with a speedy attack and including a cover of the Necros' "Police Brutality." An old-school fervor without sounding dated. After all, good hardcore is timeless. (Coalition: Newtonstraat 212, 2562 KW Den Haag, NETHERLANDS/Solution: 192 South Rd., Somers, CT 06071)

REAGAN SS-Hail The New Dawn (Six Two Five)
Following their split with JBA, Reagan SS return with a pretty ripping EP. Raw, angry hardcore punk in succinct doses. The sputtering guitar squeals for "Net Pay" are pretty damn cool. As with the split, some of the ultra-fast parts sound disjointed but there are other times where these guys positively nail it. And kudos to the sentiments on "Stand Apart," which calls people on using homophobic/sexist language in the hardcore scene. Unfortunately, these guys split up recently. (PO Box 423413, SF, CA 94142)

RIISTETYT-Tervetuloa Kuolema (Havoc)
A new Riistetyt record and I was wondering what to expect—after all, Riistetyt did become the less-savory Holy Dolls and moved away from their throttling Finnish thrash attack. Well, no worries. All kill, all the time. Blazing riffs, fast drumming and yowling vocals in their original style. Hell yeah. (PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408)

RITES-Your Last Rites EP (DeadAlive)
Past and present members of Tear It Up and Down In Flames (RIP), with Matt Wechter on vocals. Not sounding that dissimilar to the other two bands. It's a rampaging thrash attack with some fist-pumping breakdowns and pissed-off vocals from Matt, who howls in a lower register than with Tear It Up (where he's the drummer and back-up vocalist). 7 songs and no time to catch your breath. (PO Box 42593, Philadelphia, PA 19101)

R'N'R-I've Had It/Your Rules (DeadAlive)
Originally released on Cadmium Sick and DeadAlive have re-pressed the debut 7" by this promising MassHole band. After a piss-take rock 'n roll intro for "I've Had It," R'N'R get down to business with a throttling midtempo hardcore sound. Even better than their demo, expanded to a 5 piece lineup, and vocalist Joe Shumsky unleashes the frustrations and demons from within. (PO Box 42593, Philadelphia, PA 19101)

SANGRE DE LOS PUERCOS-They Lie We Die (Cries Of Pain)
With a lineup that includes former members of Distraught and Balance of Terror, one would expect a pretty raging sound and that's the case. Raw thrash and crust, quite rough-sounding and with political lyrics. If they get a little bit tighter, they could turn into a hot band. (PO Box 1004, Windsor, CT 06095)

SAVIORS-Ruby Gloom/Recipe For Disaster (Rapid Pulse)
Dimitri Monroe has been flying the flag for punk rock 'n roll for years, both as a writer and in various bands. The Saviors serve up two loud, glammy rockers. Decent hooks and energy, although "Ruby Gloom" plods on a little long. (PO Box 5075, Milford, CT 06460)

SAY GOODBYE-Anti-Social EP (Western Front)
Especially raw, unbridled and caustic hardcore punk is the formula with which upcoming Massachusetts mainstays Say Goodbye pummel through a clamorous blur of mangled riff shards and articulate tirades. Condemnations of war, vapid club culture, and faux hardcore trends are voiced in a manner that is wholly forthright and honest, complemented by an absolutely seething aural fray that invokes memories of early SST-era cacophony. This relentless debut is a sure sign of good things to come from Say Goodbye in the near future. (www.westernxfront.com) *(Mike Ramek)*

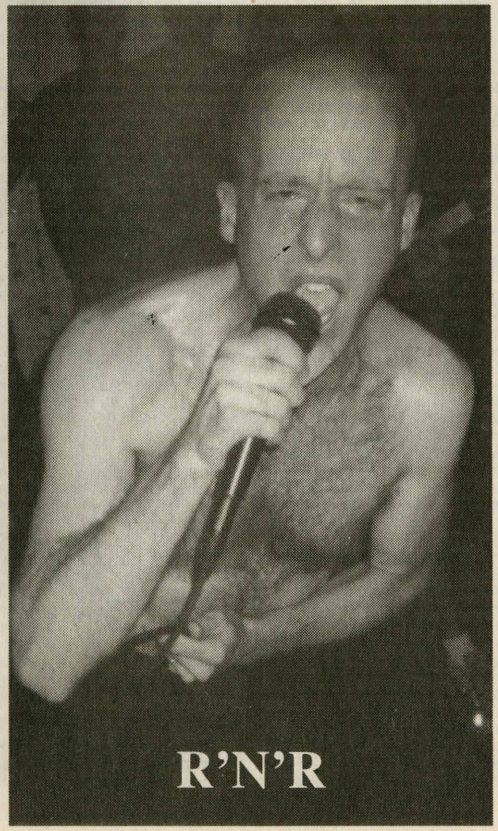
SCARE TACTIC (Solomon Method)
Blazing old-school hardcore with raw production to give it that vintage feel, although there are some heavier elements that keep it from being mere period-piece tribute. Still, early Boston hardcore plays a big part in their sound. Angry, confrontational lyrics that match the music's ferocity. Ripping stuff. (516 Park Cres., Pickering, ON L1W 2C9, CANADA)



SCARRED (Room 101)
Who is that masked band? Well, I don't really see the harm in revealing the fact that Jim from Broken and Bill from Caustic Christ/Pist/Broken etc... are two of 'em. Bill described it as "very loud and very Swedish" and there's certainly a strong Scandanavian HC influence. Raw, noisy and throttling hardcore with tons of distortion. (PO Box 1004, Windsor, CT 06095)

SCARRED FOR LIFE-Is This The Price Of Freedom? (Despotic)
If the right-wing morons who have been chastising the Dixie Chicks for their anti-Bush statements saw the cover image or lyrics for this record, they'd *really* have something to whine about. Songs of protest against the current state of affairs and delivered with a ravaging onslaught. Scarred For Life have been around for awhile (and their guitarist Clyde played in the Pig Children in the 80s!) and they continue to dish out the hard/fast thrashy hardcore with a Discharge-meets-crust influence. (PO Box 832, Long Beach, CA 90801)

SCHOLASTIC DETH-Revenge Of The Nerds (Six Two Five)/Killed By School (Six Two Five)



Max Ward steps out from behind the drumkit to man the mike in this proud "nerd core" band. This is actually the band's second and third 7" releases and they've already broken up. Killed by school, indeed, as one of 'em headed off to grad school in Chicago. "Nerds" features fast-paced and catchy hardcore and Max's vocals are the anthithesis of tough-guy bravado—high pitched but forceful. "Book Attack" lauds the wonders of reading and that's a movement I can wholeheartedly endorse. "Killed By School" is awash in feedback and just as ripping and, yes, there are more songs about literary topics but also a tip of the hat to Heresy, an anti-message board diatribe and even a song about wanderlust. Coming on like a cross between Infest and Deep Wound. Hit and run. (PO Box 423413, SF, CA 94142-3413)

JOHN SCHOOLEY AND HIS ONE MAN BAND (Voodoo Rhythm)
Texan who was once in the Revelators and this is some mighty fine garage/roots rock/blues done by one guy, in case you weren't paying attention. Fuck the White Stripes, this is the real shit and he covers two songs associated with the Yardbirds, "Good Morning Little Schoolgirl" and "I Wish You Would," in addition to two of his own songs.

SCOTT BAIO ARMY-Join The Army (Selfish Fucker/Bad People)
The cover parody of Suicidal's "Join The Army," with Mr. Baio's mug superimposed, is pretty damn cool. This band's hyper-fast hardcore, while a bit sloppy in spots, also has its moments. Thrashing/grinding mayhem interspersed with goofy samples (one comes from "Repo Man") and starting with the "Charles In Charge" theme, which necessitated moving the needle. Myke yowls like he's just had a pot of hot water thrown in his face and the observational lyrics about idiotic classmates, vapid TV culture, the bullshit two party system and militant edge-people are pretty much on target. (PO Box 480931, Denver, CO 80248-0931)

SELF DEFENSE-Shooting Punk Terror (Uncle Slam)
Self Defense have really come into their own as a band, lately, with this disc and their split with XFilesX (see review below). Raging fast hardcore punk with intelligent lyrics. This is also one of more nicely-packaged records I've seen lately, with a fold-out, screened sleeve featuring artwork by Ernie (ex-Life's Halt vocalist, Uncle Slam honcho) and a fold-out lyric poster. (Band: PO Box 211, Somers, NY 10589)

SERVICE ANXIETY-The Persistent Inversion Of Solutions By Protective Powers (Deadceo)
A collision of hardcore punk and spastic, jazzy influences and with a decidedly anti-capitalist/anti-fascist bent, to simplify things. The spirit of the Minutemen given a 50,000 watt jolt. The gatefold, heavy stock sleeve is also quite the aesthetic statement. Definitely some originality, here. (PO Box 906, Chicago, IL 60690)

17th CLASS-Will Eat Your Children's Brains! (Punks Before Profit)
Raw hardcore punk with raspy vocals and, if the drumming sounds a little one-dimensional at times, these guys get by with a bulldozing sound and an excellent cover choice in Sick Pleasure's "3 Seconds Of Pleasure." A fun live band, as well. (99 Custer St., Buffalo, NY 14214)

SHUT THE FUCK UP-Miserable Existence (Third World)
I actually had Shut The Fuck Up on my short list of names for my next band but this Bay Area band beat me to it. But this is such a ripping EP that I don't feel badly about it. Angry, raging hardcore punk from the first chord of "Flat-Out-Fucked." Rabid-dog vocals that would give Blaine from the Fartz a run for his money and a twin guitar attack set on stun. (1558 Howard St., SF, CA 94103)

SILVER TONGUED DEVIL-We Are The Road Crew/Have A Drink On Me (Rat)/Motorcycle Boy/End Of My Rope/Kick Out The Jams (Über Alles)
Two limited releases for the Pittsburgh rock machine. Bellicose vocals that sound like Jeff Clayton's northern cousin and big, huge riffs. Three of these songs are covers (Motörhead, AC/DC and MC5), done with precision, if not offering any new wrinkles. "End Of My Rope," one of their originals, is a complete ass-kicker. The packaging for the Rat disc is amazing—a gatefold sleeve and ultra-thick vinyl. (www.silvertongueddevil.com)

SLEAZIES-Gonna Operate On Myself/Airpockets In My Brain (Rapid Pulse)
Two snappy punk tunes—'77 meets rock 'n roll. "Airpockets," in particular, has an instantly-memorable chorus. The hooks and the attitude to make you pay attention. (PO Box 5075, Milford, CT 06460)

SMACKDOWN (Coalition)
Wrestling is real... everything else is fake. So Smackdown claim on their lyric sheet and the WWF (hey—fuck this WWE shit) audio between songs sets the table before someone gets smashed through it. A Swedish band who lay their own smackdown with a tirade of high-speed thrash similar in musical spirit to the first Oath EP. Harsh and aggressive. (Newtonstraat 212, 2562 KW Den Haag, NETHERLANDS)

SNOBS-Control (My War)
This band of Texas teenagers have already called it quits. While they weren't that great live, their two records kicked ass. "Control" picks up where the debut left off—angry, raw early 80s style hardcore played with all the youthful energy they can summon. Naturally, the subject matter reflects their passions—once again, skating, ditching school and, of course, the inevitable runins with authority figures. Better get this because it disappears. (36 Kings Circle, Malvern, PA 19355)

SOME GIRLS-The Rains (Deathwish)
A project involving Wes from American Nightmare and Rob from Over My Dead Body and it's pretty fucking raging. This one-sided 7" features fast, frenetic hardcore with howling vocals and

blistering, damaged-sounding arrangements. (10 Lothrop St., Beverly, MA 01915)

SOME KIND OF HATE (Bridge Nine)

Named after a Misfits' song but it's more a state of mind than any sort of musical tribute to that band. Pissed-off hardcore punk with adrenalin and aggressiveness. A NYHC influence, to be sure, especially for "Old Habits Die Hard," but not much chugga-chugga. Instead, the songs are raw and hard-hitting. (PO Box 990052, Boston, MA 02199-0052)

SPAZM 151-Sworn To Fun, Loyal To None (Center Of The World)

Reissue of Spazm's first EP, recorded in '97 and you need to get it… right fucking now. Over-the-top hardcore that destroys all in its path with blistering riffs and angry vocals. Crossover hardcore punk with an old-school ferocity. As they say on the record, "it's fucking Spazm time!" (1760 Gross Rd, Dallas, TX 75228)

SPITTING TEETH-Don't Believe The Hype! (Havoc)

Second 7" by these thrashers—still a little one-dimensional in spots but they play with an appealing wrecklessness (spelling intentional). Early 80s influences and really nailing it on "Selfish Bastard" and the damn-near-anthemic "Hell To Pay." Circle pit, here I come. (PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408)

SPITZZ-Take Me To The Hospital/Get Kicked (Tario)

Not quite as good as their first single—a surf-meets-garage punk a-side with tons of flange on the guitar and a mid-tempo punk rouser on the flip. Neither track really leaves a lasting impression. (PO Box 581, Cambridge, MA 02238-0581)

STEP FORWARD LOOK WEST (Dupage Collective)

First off, what a package—heavy cardboard stock, screened cover and fold-out lyric insert and, on the vinyl, some harsh, hammering hardcore that incorporates thrash and more intensely emotional sounds. The closing line is "I could really give a shit about anything" but the howling vocals indicate otherwise. It's frustration with what life throws at you and the fuckheads that cross your path and if those aren't universal themes, I don't know what are. (174 Sheffield Rd., Glen Ellyn, IL 60137)

STEPSISTER/STREETWALKIN' CHEETAHS-Keepin' It In The Family EP (Smog Veil)

It's all about the rock with this pair of bands and they'll keep your booty movin'. Stepsister boogie it up for "Down In The Dirt" and hit a mid-tempo groove for the brilliantly-titled "(You Ain't Worth) The Foam In My Piss," penned by the one 'n only Tony Erba. The Cheetahs' songs are from a radio broadcast and show 'em in peak rockin' form for both "Mama Train" and "Future Lost," both of which come from their last album. (316 California Ave., #207, Reno, NV 89509)

STOOL SAMPLE/SCHITZ-Baptism In Jism (Defacation Nation)

Mean, nasty, anti-social hardcore punk and neither of these bands give a fuck. Stool Sample have been around the block and do a better job of it, at this point. I imagine I'm better off not seeing the lyrics to the Schitz' "Sumissive Festering Cock" or "Motherfucker." Not for the squeamish but afficionados of such redneck wrecking crews as Antiseen might appreciate this. (4290 Bells Ferry Rd., Suite #106, Kennesaw, GA 30144)

STRAIGHT TO HELL (DeadAlive)
STRAIGHT TO HELL/BALANCE OF TERROR-Split (Partners In Crime)

Straight To Hell, from RI, have switched their lineup around since the track that appeared on the last SV CD and Aaron Ulcer is now the vocalist. These two records were recorded at the same session and feature raw, raging hardcore punk at a speedy clip. Buzzsaw bass and guitar lines, rampaging drumming and Aaron's agitated vocals. Not too cheerful an outlook, even going so far as to say "Why Should We Stop The War?," since the human race has long passed the point of no return, as it is. Other songs touch on government surveillance, cops and wage slavery. Balance Of Terror's side of the split isn't quite up to the level of their album but the fast-paced hardcore still connects and serves as a fitting epitaph to this underrated NYC band. (DeadAlive: PO Box 42593, Philadelphia, PA 19101)/Partners In Crime: 4507 N. Gantenbein, Portland, OR 97217)

STINKPIPE (Opposite)

Tough to pigeonhole—a herky-jerky, loud indy rock/punk sound that might have fit in on AmRep, especially "Acne" and "Chicken Farmer." "Punker Joe" and "Mother Knuckles" have more of a straight-ahead punk attack, while "Kill Me" takes a melodic turn. The insert has a funny tale about a fucked-up show in Braintree with AC where (surprise!) there was riot. (Sean Doyle, PO Box 116, Pembroke, MA 02359)

STRUNG UP (Kangaroo)

Man, this is a complete scorcher. A Bay Area thrash band with a huge motherfucking bug up their ass about religion, cops, rich kids and working a shitty job. A great title for "I'd Rather Be Smashing Christianity" and this bare-knuckled hardcore sound smashing everything around it. Please tour. (Middenweg 13, 1098 AA Amsterdam, NETHERLANDS)

SWAMP RATS-Psycho/Louie Louie (Get Hip)

Yeah, two covers, including the perennial "Louie Louie" that they drag out to three and a half minutes. Lots of fuzz and a trebly sound but I don't quite see the point. (PO Box 666, Canonsburg, PA 15317)

TETSU-ARREY-Rocket/Core (HG Fact)

More hard-rock sounding than I recall. A pair of mid-tempo riffers, here, with the prototypical over-the-top vocals. Not bad, but I like this band's more hardcore-sounding offerings. (105 Nakano Shinbashi M, 2-7-15 Yayoi-Cho, Nakano, Tokyo, 164-0013, JAPAN)

THIS COMPUTER KILLS (Sedition)

Four nervy songs—hardcore, math rock and screamo coalescing into an emotional outpouring, yet remaining melodic. Not easily pigeonholed and, while the vocals are of the glass-gargling variety, the angst never gets oppressive. They also stick to a lively tempo, instead of the swaying emo groove. Interesting. (PO Box 19821, Denver, CO 80218-0921)

THREE FIFTEEN-The Heart Stops Beating (Solution: Stab It)

A hardcore sound that's not easily pigeonholed—urgent and youthful, yet also packing a melodic, emo-core punch. Joe's vocals yo-yo up and down the scale but come from the gut. Youth of Today jamming with Rites of Spring? It's late and I'm running out of adjectives. But these guys are definitely onto something. (74 Dodge Ave., Pittsfield, MA 01201)

THUMBS UP-Building An Army (Rodent Popsicle)

An angry-sounding hardcore band with bruising mid-tempo heaviness and some faster elements. Vocals that have a raspy bray and, the best song here, "Rejuvenation," is a reclamation of hardcore pride. Fair to middling, overall. (PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134)

TO HELL AND BACK-Messed Up/American Taliban (Coalition)

A Devoid of Faith reunion, of sorts, but a different sound—more rock 'n roll, but Jim's vocals are as bellicose as ever, the lyrics remain pointed and the songs have a dose of punk energy. Sounds like someone's been listening to a lot of Scandinavian rock 'n roll, but these guys sound more raw. (Newtonstraat 212, 2562 KW Den Haag, NETHERLANDS)

TOMMY & THE TERRORS-On The Run (TKO)

Three songs that don't appear on the new album. Street-level punk with the Boston workingman's ambiance—and some rather murderous lyrics on the title track. Gut-level and tuneful, a longtime Boston tradition going back to such bands as Last Stand or Stranglehold, although these guys have more of the US oi influence. (3126 W. Cary St., #303, Richmond, VA 23221)

TOSHIRO MIFUNE (Deep Six)

A noisy terror attack from Boston's outlying suburbs. Ultra-fast hardcore and more damaged-sounding aspects with jolting, sudden tempo shifts. Tightly executed and intricate as hell, along with some offbeat titles and lyrical imagery but, as is usually the case with bands playing in this realm, more aural spectacle than memorable songs. (PO Box 6911, Burbank, CA 91510-6911)

TOTAL FURY-Committed To The Core (Youth Attack)

Tour 7" and not nearly as great as their LP. Still, not bad at all. Rougher-sounding and with more of an early Boston hardcore feel than the Dischord worship one found on the album. There's a dirge-like instrumental but the remainder is fast and furious. The English lyrics are clumsy but the message of global hardcore communalism on the title track is inspiring and one can see that in practice every time they play, language barrier be damned. (PO Box 126321, San Diego, CA 92112-6321)

TOXIC NARCOTIC-Had It Coming (Rodent Popsicle)

Bill wasn't kidding about playing reggae at some point—"Cockroach" goes the skank route before kicking out the thrash. The b-side, "War Song 2K"," leaves out the reggae for an undiluted dose of angry hardcore. (PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134)

VÄKIVALTAA!-Eläma On Painajaista EP

This is allegedly a "lost" Finnish hardcore band from the mid-80s but if you read the liner notes, especially about a moose accident on the way to a reunion gig in '87, it makes one think. Maybe, just maybe, this is some kind of ruse. Or not. In any case, it completely rages and if you're into the Finnish stuff, this fits the bill. (timmyva3@hotmail.com)

VARIOUS-Counter Culture (Coalition)

Four kickass bands from around the globe—the Swarm (RIP), End 32 from Indonesia, DS-13 and Slang, who might be one of the more underrated Japanese bands. Raging hardcore punk by all the bands and the package comes with a booklet of lyrics and essays. This is a benefit comp for a grassroots organization in Indonesia and a refugee camp in Bali. Trying to bring the global hardcore community closer together. Whether that's some utopian ideal, this is still a potent disc. (Newtonstraat 212, 2562 KW Den Haag, NETHERLANDS)

VARIOUS-Destroy All Borders (Belief Crisis)

International hardcore compilation featuring some raging stuff from Melee, Fuerza X (Guatemala), Crude BE (Germany) and Face Up To It (France). Less-inspiring is the grind-grunt of Mass Separation (Malaysia) and the low-fi thrash from Estilhaco (Brazil). But it does accomplish the premise of smashing the international barriers, so to speak, which is important in this era of rampant nativism. (distr. by Where's Your Anger, PO Box 471, Allston, MA 02134)

VARIOUS-Kangaroo Records: Loved By Few… Hated By Most (Kangaroo)

I guess I'm one of the few that love 'em, for the no bullshit hardcore punk this label puts out. A comp with bands from around the globe and all of 'em sharing a play loud and sound pissed aesthetic. Vintage sounds by Anger In Motion and Jesus and the Gospelfuckers and more contemporary offerings by Crispus Attucks, Milkman, AVO, Something In The Water, Bury The Living (with the best title here, "Kenneth Lay's Heart On A Plate," about the ex-Enron chief), Brezhnev and a few more. A DJ's nightmare, with no space between tracks, but a delight for fans of real hardcore. But one thing that does stick in my craw, a bit, are the sexist and homophobic lyrics from Jesus & the Gospelfuckers and AVO, respectively. (Middenweg 13, 1098 AA Amsterdam, NETHERLANDS)

VARIOUS-Power Of Ten (Excursion/1-2-3-4 Go!!!)

Ten Seattle area bands and a mixed lot—Himsa and the Entropy Project have the metallic bludgeon sound and it's not really my thing. Positively Negative and Spitting Teeth's high-speed thrash are both a little tinny on the drum sound but energetic. Staygold mix posi-core and melody. Left With Nothing feature crunch and speed. Overall, not always that amazing. (PO Box 20224, Seattle, WA 98102)

VINCENTS/IGNITERS-Split (Diaphragm)

The Vincents play heavy, punishing rock—big, scary riffs and all rock 'n roll and one of the songs takes a nice shot at "George W." Echoes of Jesus Lizard in this band's sound. I'm all for more anti-Bush songs. The Igniters come from a different muse—Bowie and T-Rex influences strained through minimalist pop for "The Hot Crasher," while "A Kiss From My Ass" is a distorto-boogie rocker. Nothing wrong with that. (PO Box 10388, Columbus, OH 43201)

VIRGINIA BLACK LUNG (Coalition)

Fast-as-fuck hardcore/grind that didn't do a lot for me when I saw them play with Severed Head of State last summer but this 7" isn't bad. Thank goodness for lyric sheets, because the vocals are howled out with incomprhensible diction but they offer a pointed, jaundiced view of domestic and global issues. Comes with a booklet of essays about gentrification, the situation in Iraq and technology. Harsh and intense. (Newtonstraat 212, 2562 KW Den Haag, NETHERLANDS)

WAVES-The Vagrancy of the Hell (Human Stench)

Japanese band incorporating hardcore speed, some metal and melodic underpinnings—those are the hallmarks of contemporary Japanese hardcore and that's the blueprint that WAVES follows. Not quite as overpowering as other bands playing this sound—Mustang, for instance—but still decent. (14 McKinley Terrace, Pittsfield, MA 01202)

WHAT FEEDS THE FIRE-Set Me Free (Anchor)

Modern hardcore with both heaviness and speed—sometimes, those swelling, chug-laden buildups sound lumbering, then they'll add a dose of velocity. "Live Or Die" is pure burn and the best of the four songs here. (PO Box 154, 3495 Cambie Street, Vancouver, BC V5Z 4R3 CANADA)

WHEELBITE (Malfunction)

They're skaters but this isn't really what you'd think of as skate punk. Wheelbite play in more of a loud/fast, pissed-off vein, with some heavier touches, particularly for "Our Sin." A few songs get into grindier territory (not skateboard grinding but grindcore). Lyrics that don't take themselves too seriously, along with some interesting soundbites. That's one ugly motherfucker on the cover drawing, too. (14030 Walney Village Court, Chantilly, VA 20151)

WITCH HUNT(Get The Axe/Hemmhoraging Loudness)

Harsh, speed-driven hardcore with screamy elements and howling vocal tradeoffs among all three members. And the lyrics spare no quarter, whether dealing with the oppression of women here and overseas or the sick revenge of post-9/11 warmongering. An assaultive tandem. (Get The Axe: PO Box 3019, Oswego, NY 13126/Hemorrhaging Loudness: 19 Beech St., Ilion, NY 13357)

WORLD BURNS TO DEATH-Human Meat… Tossed To The Dogs Of War (Prank)

A new band with Jack Control (Severed Head of State) and one of the guys from Spazm-151. Jack sounds even more venomous and rabid, here, his vocals given a distorted finish and accompanied by a thunderous, doomy, Scandanavian-influenced hardcore attack and songs railing against the tyranny of power. There is an excessive amount of surface noise on the vinyl but that's my only complaint. Pure burn. (PO Box 410892, SF, CA 94141-0892)

WORN THIN (Malfunction)

A DC band with a surging, sometimes melodic hardcore sound. A stirring combination of blistering speed and mid-tempo drive topped off with impassioned vocals. I might take issue with the love it or leave it sentiments expressed on "In Pieces," regarding those who have issues with this country (*"always scream how you hate this place/it's so fucked up and it's got to change/you've done nothing but run your mouth/if it's so bad get the fuck out"*). That seems a tad simplistic—but revolutionary rhetoric can be equally simplistic, in all fairness. Anyway, that's only a minor criticism and this is a kick-ass 7". (14030 Walney Village Court, Chantilly, VA 20151)

XFILESX-Beaten Straight EP (My Trust)
XFILESX/SELF DEFENSE-Nowhere To Run Nowhere To Hide (Room101)

Yeah, they're taking the sXe militancy to an extreme but, I'll tell you, this southern Mass. band can fuck shit up and have only gotten better over time. Fast, rampaging hardcore with a wise-assed sense of humor. Creative song titles, as usual, such as "Please Break Up Before You Embarrass Us All" and "Take Off Your Pants And Varsity Jacket," the latter of which exudes pride in being a sloppy dresser. I'm down with that! The split with the kick-ass Self Defense is also well worth your time, as XFX continue to confront and hammer out the aggressive 'core, even threatening to kill those who give negative reviews to the record on "Review This, Fucker." I think I'm safe—for now, at least. Self Defense's side features their strongest material to date, particularly lead-off track "Thinkers Block." There's also a cover of Raw Power's righteous "Fuck Authority" and "The Unbearable Whiteness Of Being," which takes strong issue with mall culture, going so far as to state, "bring me the head of Thomas Kincade" and seeing how that pop-schlock "artist" copyrighted the term 'painting with light' or something like that, it'd be a start. (PO Box 274, New Paltz, NY 12561)

YOUTH ATTACK (Soviet State/Cadmium Sick)

A band with the 'youth' appellation that deserve it—these guys are all well under 18. Vehemently straight-edge and bagging on those peers that sellout ("15 And You Lack"), stating proudly "Being straight-edge makes me better than you." Rough, fast hardcore punk that has a lot of spirit, slowing it down for the mosh-kill on "VOE." (PO Box 35934, Brighton, MA 02135)

YOUTH RIOT-Burn Glendora To The Ground (Captain Wiley)

Pissed as fuck hardcore punk… the youth will rise up. Even with the violent overtones to "Hammer Of Sledge" (*"If I find out you break the EDGE/I'm gonna break your knees with a hammer of sledge"*) the Riot still rail against the tough-guy crap for "Asshole In The Pit," staking a claim for *"angry punk for the fucking nerds."* And they have a pretty upbeat, catchy sound. A rough-hewn mix of posi-core and punk—and probably more fucks per square second heard on any 7" since No Justice. (PO Box 95, Los Alamitos, CA 90720)

DEMOS & CD-R'S

THE AFTERMATH (tape)
Vocals in a league with Satan—well, they're quite gutteral and come from the same subhuman realm as the dude from United Mutation many years ago. This band is also from DC and play a feisty crossover/hardcore style. Heavy in spots but also raw and fast. (PO Box 80112 NE, Washington, DC 20018)

AMMUNITION-Demo 2002 (tape)
Straight-forward hardcore with bruising riffs, speed and mosh parts, along with personal lyrics. A real east coast style, which makes sense, since they're from Virginia Beach. On the right path, if not real distinctive, yet. (weve_got_it@hotmail.com)

BLACK EYES CLUB (CD-R)
Sound quality ain't the best but this is a completely ripping demo. Raw, buzzing guitar, hoarse vocals and played at a blinding clip. I think these guys spend too much time watching TV because there's a protest song about the Solid Gold dancers and they compare their lives to a TV sitcom. Whatever the Club rail about, it's delivered with some blazing hardcore. (363 East 18th St., Hamilton, ON L9A 4P7, CANADA)

BRACE-2002 Demo (CD-R)
Three more songs of fast, melodic hardcore by this DC band that picks up where the 7" left off. Emotional, without the whine. Stirring stuff. (Brace_DC@hotmail.com)

BREAD & ROSES-Hearts Can Starve As Well As Bodies (CD-R)
Two former High Steppin'Nickel Kids and, as with that band, the mind is always going a mile a minute and there's a strong message. An intellectual dissertation set to music equally inspired by folk and labor songs as by punk. Sometimes, that works better on paper than musically, although I did like their rendition of "And The Band Played Waltzing Matilda," which the Pogues covered some years back. (22 Mansfield St., Allston, MA 02134)

CITZENS UNREST (tape)
Scrappy hardcore punk that blurs genres and that's fine with me. The speed of hardcore, some metal licks and a punk attitude. (citizensunrest@hotmail.com, www.geocities.com/citizensunrest)

DEATHSQUAD (tape)
Mark Telfian and Nate Wilson, who have played in a ton of ripping bands (Limp Wrist, Devoid Of Faith, Oath, JBA, Eucharist, etc) team up in this band, so the fact that it's completely raging should come as no surprise. Four blistering songs with harsh vocals and played with raw intensity. Powerful shit. (PO Box 14253, Albany, NY 12212)

DECONTROL-If The Price Is Right (Product Of The System, CD-R)
I think they're now called US Decontrol, because someone threatened to sue 'em over their name. Anyway, pure punk rock along the lines of Virus, Unseen et al… the type of band that would be a natural on Punk-Core or Charged. Poltical sentiments and aggressive arranging. (3554 Messersmith Rd., Seven Valleys, PA 17360, http//go.to/decontrol)

EARTH DIED SCREAMING-Demo(lition) (tape)
Chaotic hardcore that mixes in death metal, grind and thrash. You don't get the visual impact of Jeff Bramhall's fire-breathing here, but the band have a fiery attack, at least. Dark and heavy. (massacore666@yahoo.com)

GET KILLED (CD-R)
Raw hardcore punk with somewhat low fidelity—mainly fast and ripping, with a Scandinavian-meets-US hardcore influence. I'd like to hear what they could sound like with a better recording. Creative packaging—a hand-screened foldout sleeve on heavy cardboard stock. (getkilled@lycos.com)

GIANT HAYSTACKS-At Last… The Lifestyle You've Earned (CD-R)
Some influences that you don't hear with every band, these days—the Minutemen and Mission of Burma, two name two obvious ones. Jabbing/scraping guitar and a propulsive rhythm, as well as pointed lyrics and Giant Haystacks elaborate on some of those ideas and offer some other observations in the accompnaying lyric booklet/zine. They've also got a 7" out with songs that weren't on this demo and that's worth checking out, as well. (PO Box 22971, Oakland, CA 94609)

GLACIER-Crawling, Crushing (tape)
Thud-metal with lo-fi recording quality. Akin to the Melvins, in that they're trying to be heavy as fuck, but it's not that exciting. Ryan Poortenga does put in an intense vocal performance for "Bedtime Story." (1041 Dousman St., Green Bay, WI 54303)

GRIM REAPER-7 Song Demo (Thought Crime, tape)
An offshoot from the band Y and, as you might expect, some harsh and abrasive hardcore. Howling vocals, burning riffs and a speedy tempo, but not as grind-sounding. Lyrics about gentrification, cops and hypocrites who pay lip service to issues without living up to what they preach. (Thomas Franke, Boxhagenerstr. 22, 10245 Berlin, GERMANY)

GULF WAR SYNDROME (tape)
Straight-ahead hardcore punk and the vocals sound as though they're coming through a $10 Radio Shack micorophone—the effect is low-fi, although the recording quality for the instruments isn't as rough. Pretty basic, at this point, but not terrible, either. And I like the opening sample—it's from one of those reactionary (i.e. pro-war) 1960s records, this one by Victor Lundberg, which was called "An Open Letter To My Son." (3 Clearview Ave., Bethel, CT 06801)

HONG KONG BLONDE-Skulls (CD-R)
Crazed-sounding crossover hardcore. Hot 'n speedy riffmongering and roaring along with lethal energy. The singer reminds me a bit of Jerry from Poison Idea and these guys have some similarities to that band, as well, albeit with the speed metal influence. Trust me—it rips. Can't wait to hear more. (P. Ticivonic, 8-4967 Main St., Vancouver, BC CANADA V5W 2R2

I ADAPT-Why Not Make Today Legendary (CD-R)
Icelandic band who won't make you think of Bjork and, for that, you should be thankful. Screaming hardcore with crunch, speed and melody—definitely an emotional outpouring and most interesting when let it all rip, such as with "Celebrate" and "No Lifers." Birkir Vidarsson, Hverafold 21, 112 Reykjavik, ICELAND, I_Adapt_HC@yahoo.com)

IN THE RED (CD-R)
Fast and sweeping hardcore, with burn and anger and including Clevo (Ten Yard Fight, Stop & Think) on bass. Buildups and breakdowns in the right spots and played with precision. (6602 Merrick, Troy, MI 48098)

KNIFE FIGHT (tape)
One of the better demos I've heard lately. A hard-hitting west coast band who play powerful, catchy hardcore. Drawing on older NYHC, but with modern production values and it's over way too quickly. Includes a cover of the Nihilistics' "Black Sheep." Anger unleashed. (5515 Canoga Ave., Apt. 127, Woodland Hills, CA 91367, knife_fight@hotmail.com)

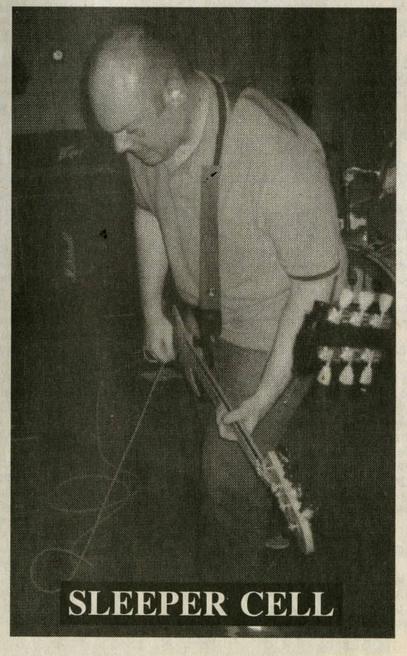
LAST BURNING EMBERS-Distress Call (Reg Dunlap Recordings, CD-R)
First off, naming your label after the lead character in "Slap Shot" is fucking cool, in my book. And this three piece from NYC, with *Big Takeover* honcho Jack Rabid on drums, have their merits, as well. If Rabid's involved, chances are the sound is going to lean towards something British and be tuneful and that's the case here. Melodic, but not wispy as the three songs here exude a lively sound. Guitar lines sounding like a hybrid of the Buzzcocks and Chameleons, while not being slavishly derivative of either. Pop music with substance. (249 Eldridge St., #14, NY, NY 10002; www.lastburningembers.com)

LIFE OUT OF BALANCE (CD-R)
Challenging, cascading and emotional—howling vocals and guitars that flow from brittle to angular. Not always a style that really captures my imagination but there's some heartfelt intensity, here. (lifeoutofbalance@hotmail.com)

MINDLESS REBELLION-Dole St. Disorder EP (CD-R)
Hearty middle-finger punk rock, starting with the diatribe against America On-line ("AOL") and I have to say I completely agree. Joe gruffly barks out the vocals and sentiments, accompanied by a rough, energetic spiky punk attack with an early 80s UK inspiration. (http://www.angelfire.com/rebellion/mindless)

MOTÖRHOME (CD-R)
You have to be pretty brazen to appropriate Motörhead's logo, have a vocalist who sings in a lower register (though not the complete croakin' style of Sir Lemmy) and these guys pull it off. Kick-ass boogie rock imbued with some punk energy. (501 Serra Dr., #3, SF, CA 94080, motorhomerocks@hotmail.com)

OLD SARUM (CD-R)
The remnants of Bob Barker Youth and playing scalding, ripping hardcore with larynx-shredding vocals and political lyrics. "Revolution Without The Middleman" breaks into a protest singalong chant about halfway through. Over the top, yet tight… the lyric sheet is screened on cloth, which is pretty damn cool. (jaimiekingkobrarecording@hotmail.com)



ONxALERT (CD-R)
Buffalo band with members of Project Grizzly and No Time Left. Kick-ass hardcore punk with anger and agression, as well as some intelligent, timely lyrics. "Oil Stains The Stars Black" deals with the sickness of wars fought for oil (sound familiar?), while "Mending 500 Years of Broken Trust" talks about this country's own history of ethnic cleansing, from a personal point of view. (21 Nancy Lane, Amherst, NY 14228, projectgrizzly716@hotmail.com)

ONE UP-Demo 2002 (CD-R)
Youthful straight-edge hardcore with all the sound's hallmarks—sweeping, chugging riffs and string scrapes, urgent vocals and hearty backups. While there's nothing particularly unique about it, this is still a pretty good demo. (Donny Mutt, 147 East Baltimore Pike, Clifton Hgts, PA 19018)

OPERATION DEATHKILL (CD-R)
These guys don't seem to like anyone, given the drawing of the dude on the cover with a bomb in one hand and an extended middle finger and such titles as "Sick Of You" and "You Don't Own Me." Raw, speedy hardcore punk with the requisite amount of bile and, if they do a better-sounding recording, I'd be curious to hear more. (xdeathkillx@hotmail.com, deathkill.cjb.net)

OUT OF VOGUE (tape)
If they named themselves after the Middle Class song, I'm very impressed and the contents of this six song demo aren't that bad, either. Hardcore that doesn't leave out the punk elements and has the rawness of the former and the snotty attitude of the latter. Lyrics cover everything from "fashion victims" to earthquakes to the new McCarthy era. (4819 Autry St., Long Beach, CA 90808)

PAINT IT BLACK (CD)
Dan Yemin (Lifetime/Kid Dynamite) is the vocalist in this band and it's a hard-driving sound more aggressive and not as melodic as his former bands.And there's nothing wrong with that, at all. Dan's vocals convey rage with effectiv conviction and the songs hit dead-on. All four of these songs are on their upcoming album on Jade Tree. (PO Box 15123, Philadelphia, PA 19130)

POLICE BEAT-Demo 2002 (tape)
Angry hardcore with an early 80s NYHC influence, along with heavier breakdowns. Good-sounding recording for something done on a four track and Police Beat have a tough, economical sound. (xshaneofstrengthx@hotmail.com)

PUT TO SHAME-War, Punk & Plaid (CD-R)
Upbeat hardcore that sounds like a cross between older Guttermouth and SNFU, with ironic lyrics and a rough-hewn, almost catchy sound. Enjoyable stuff. (PO Box 75021, Millcroft Postal Outlet, Burlington, ON L7L 2C4, CANADA)

RACE TO DIE-Rock Together, Skate Together (CD-R)
Tony from Municipal Waste gave me a copy of this demo and I'm damn glad he did. These guys from Amish country in Pennsylvania are all about skating, although there are songs about the destruction of the old growth forests and fighting wars for oil. Mixing up thrash and heavier/crossover influences and doing it quite well. (Bruce Ewell, 836 2nd St., Lancaster, PA 17603)

REACCIÓN (tape)
Chicago band playing fast hardcore punk with male/female vocals and the guy is Carlos from Sin Orden. Raw and frenetic with lyrics in both Spanish and English that touch on social and political issues with a progressive bent. (PO Box 5027, Chicago, IL 60680)

RED TAPE-Constructivism (CD-R)
These guys had a pretty decent album on New Age a few years back and this newer 7 song demo is also pretty choice. Not easily categorized—different elements of punk and hardcore, some of it harsh, some more melodic or nervy. "Casualties," a strong anti-war/jingoism song starts with aggressive thrash and hits a heavy, tuneful bridge. A few of the songs sound like a cross between early Naked Raygun and Black Flag. A lack of predictability. (PO Box 19135, Sacramento, CA 95819)

SBV (tape)
Fast hardcore reminiscent of early 7 Seconds and Uniform Choice, in spots, but more pissed-off sounding. Not a slick-sounding recording, by any stretch, but there's enough burn and youthful enthusiasm here to make me interested in hearing more. And I give a thumbs up to their calorically-challenged empowerment song, "Flab is Fab." If they make shirts in XXL, they'll really be my friends. (4419 Louisiana St., #3, San Diego, CA 92116)

SHELL SHOCK-Demo 2002 (CD-R)
Kind of an older NYHC sound here. Metal-free, fast hardcore with some decent breakdowns and a chip-on-shoulder delivery. Drumming falters a little but that's the only real criticism. ($2, Scott Horton, 11 Covert St., Montrose, NY 10548)

SHOOT TO KILL (tape)
Four tracks of aggressive hardcore by this Western Mass. band. Speed and a few heavier breakdowns in a NYHC vein but not turning into mosh metal or anything. New EP due this summer. (xShootToKillx@aol.com)

SHOT DEAD (CD-R)
These guys have had a few demos floating around and have recorded a full-length, due for release one of these days. The latest has three songs from the upcoming album—pissed hardcore punk with double-speed drumming, as well as heavy riffing. (Jimmy Flynn, 170 Davis St., Quincy, MA 02171)

SICK AND TIRED (tape)
Scorching hardcore from WMass… hyper-fast drumming, buzzing riffs and head-about-to-burst vocals. Unleashing the aggro. (anarchyviolence@aol.com)

SIRENS (CD-R)
Formerly known as the Point, this poppy band features Ross Noyes on guitar and vocals and this band represents a departure from the more aggressive hardcore he's played with Classaction, Melee and Earth Died Screaming. Understated, catchy songs in a Fifteen/Crimpshrine vein and rough around the edges. Good start. (rossnoyes@yahoo.com)

SLEEPER CELL-7 Songs With Mike Drumming (tape)
A ripping demo by a new Boston band with people from Self-Defense, Balance of Terror and FYA. Hardcore punk in a similar vein as Balance of Terror, although with some double-speed thrash and some of it also reminds me of Raw Power, a bit. The lyrics explore both personal issues, as well as scene politics (Crimethinc. takes a pretty good hit on "Crimethinc. Again") and more global concerns. Damn good start for these guys. (1254 Commonwealth Ave, #16, Allston, MA 02134)

SOURCE AND ROOT (tape)
Shifting from moody, somber passages to screamo intensity to speedy hardcore tirades, sometimes in the same song. Twin vocals that bray out the rage and not sticking to a set formula, although some of the songs are on the lengthy side. (something_profound@hotmail.com)

STOCKHOLM SYNDROME-Deathfuckers (tape)
Completely raging hardcore punk—raw, fast and pissed-off and offering some scathing lyrical commentary about life in SF, the punk scene and coming to terms with one's own plight, but ultimately "happy to be alive." Once again, the Bay Area spawns a damn hot band and I hope there's more on the way. (PO Box 1011, Burlingame, CA 94011)

STRANGERS-Going To Deaf (CD-R)
Two members of Last In Line, Deuce and Mikey, are the moving forces behind this band. In more of a rock 'n roll style, sometimes punk influenced, sometimes more 70s-derived and with enough rawness to keep it interesting. (TheStrangers @comcast.net)

TALK HARD-Stab Harder (CD-R)
Wise-assed hardcore punk, alternating between blinding speed and mosh breakdowns, starting with a sample of ex-Indiana coach Bob Knight on an obscenity-laced tirade. Clever song titles, such as "Rage Against The Avril Lavigne," "Take This Blowjob and Shove It" and "I Don't Like You Because You Are Black," which is an anti-black vinyl song. Kind of like early XFilesX. (http://www.likanomen.com/talkhard)

THREATENER-Follow The Blood Trail (tape)
Blink and you might miss it—hammering, double-speed hardcore punk, dishing out 5 songs in just a few minutes. Hoarse vocals, blistering guitar and pretty damn tight. (mpriesjr@mich.edu)

TWISTS-Your Turn, Doctor (CD-R)
Fairly basic three and four chord ditties set the background for an amusing musing of that which upsets us when we haven't yet hit the latter teen years. Which is all well and good. Someday ya gotta wake up and see that TV sucks and people do, too. Vocals are very similar to those of Ping Pong from the now defunct Showcase Showdown, which makes sense considering the geographical location of both bands (Massachusetts). Not quite out the emulation phase, but the ambition must be respected. (680 Hapgood St., Athol, MA 01331) *(David)*

UNCOMFORTABLES-The Über Samurai EP + 1 (CD-R)
Eclectic Western Mass. band playing driving punk, a moody pop song ala My Bloody Valentine, even a Buddy Holly-esque tune. That MBV-style song, "It's My Fault Again," is actually the best thing here. The rest is somewhat pedestrian. (jroncalli@attbi.com)

VARIOUS-Banned In Nagoya (Depression, tape)
Six bands from Japan playing varying styles of hardcore but all are pretty energetic, especially the raging thrash of Linkage, District's rougher, furious attack and the more posi-core sounds of One Line. (Hiroyuki Karaki, Nishimido Yoututuji-5, Hagiwara Ichinomiya, Aichi 491-0365 JAPAN)

VARIOUS-CD-RGMBK (____, tape)
Eclectic cassette comp of bands from Wisconsin and it's too bad that sound quality is cruddy on so much of it because there are some excellent bands here—cool garage punk by the Mystery Girls and Strong Come Ons, enjoyable pop from Yesterday's Kids, fun punk by Modern Machines, Leghounds, etc.. even Boris The Sprinkler make an appearance, although it's a demo outtake. And, while the people who compiled it extol the virtues of the cassette, I do find CD-R's more convenient for these types of releases, since it runs an hour. But I'm just a whiner. (618 N. Ashland Ave., Green Bay, WI 54303)

VENAL I.V. (Poisoned Candy, CD-R)
A two-piece from Missoula, MT (I think that's where Steve Albini is originally from as well), blasting out intense hardcore/grind with political lyrics. "State of Alert vs. School Of Americas" laments how Rollins' old band name has been "dragged through the mud," so there's certainly some creativity. I think I'd like to hear these songs fleshed out with a bass-player but this will appeal to those who like an ultra-raw sound. (PO box 9263, Missoula, MT 59807)

WAR SQUAD-Aaaahhh!!! (tape)
Note to people putting out demos—use decent quality tapes that don't have drop-outs. That quibble aside, this is a fun demo. Ranty hardcore punk with an old-school fervor but not taking itself too seroiusly, even when attacking such notable targets as John Ashcroft ("Ashcroft, You Bastard"). Brazen enough to appropriate DYS' "Wolfpack" for their own "War Squad" and there are also covers of 7 Seconds and SOA. Even a piss-take oi song and, after that song ends, my tape goes into Blitz's "Razors In The Night." Nice segue. (867 Bridle Lane, Webster, NY 14580)

WE MUST BURN-And We Burn (tape)
Kick-ass demo by this Japanese band. Masaki's vocals could strip paint off the walls—his raspy timbre makes one wonder if Blaine from the Fartz/Accüsed has some unaccounted-for children out there. Speedy, aggressive hardcore punk, although "Not Parts" throws in some slower Black Flag damage, particularly on the guitar line. Burn? Sure as fuck does! (1-90-2-1001 JYO-JYO chou, KASUGAI City, AICHi pref, JAPAN 486-0833, wemustburn@hotmail.com)

VIDEO & DVD

ADICTS-Joker In The Pack (Cherry Red, DVD)
The Adicts at their peak, live in '82 and '83. Two full sets and the hits just keep coming—"Viva La Revolution," "Straightjacket," "Steamroller," "Numbers," "Joker In The Pack," "Let's Go," etc… Fun and catchy punk and the guys look as though they're having a blast on stage. No dour expressions, except from the bouncers who really get into it with some of the patrons during the '82 set at Blackpool—and what's with the fucking bowties, anyway? They look like boxing referees. Hmm… on second thought. Nothing fancy about the footage—both are single-camera shots but who needs bells and whistles when the music sounds this good. (Unit 17, 1st Floor, Elysium Gate West, 126-128 New King's Road, London SW6 4LZ, ENGLAND)

BAD RELIGION-The Riot (MVD, DVD)
Actually, most of the footage here comes from a 1988 show at Devonshire Downs, around the time of the "Suffer" album and it's an amateur shot, but the band play with purpose and it includes a good cross-section of Bad Religion material up to that point. The actual riot was at a show Bad Religion didn't even get to play, held at a theater in North Hollywood. The fire marshals shut it down and bottles started flying, glass doors and the ticket booth got smashed up and the fire dept. and cops showed up. Richard White catches all this on his trusty video camera. Something more voyeuristic than anything else but compenesated for by the '88 footage. There are also a few "remixes" of songs with multiple camera angles and effects. (PO Box 280, Oaks, PA 19456)

***BETWEEN RESISTANCE & COMMUNITY: The Long Island Do-It-Yourself Punk Scene* (Walkor Productions, video)**
An inspiring 45 minute documentary. In the middle of strip-mall, white middle class suburbia, there's a burgeoning DIY punk scene. Bristling against the mundane, conditioned existence of that environment (very similar to my background), keeping it to the grass roots level and attempting to create a true alternative. That includes shows in basements and houses, making your own CD's and selling them on a sliding scale of $3-5 and touring on a shoestring. Where the mother of the kids putting on the show feeds everyone afterward. Making it more than a music scene, by feeding the less fortunate through Food Not Bombs or even having midnight kickball games in the parking lot of a Tower Records, where all the people who were picked last in high school can play without the supervision of asshole gym teachers (once again, I relate). The participants are aware of their privelege, aware of the fact it's mainly white, straight and male but they still feel like outsiders and I imagine that's the appeal of punk or hardcore to many people watching along. There's also something of a controversy with one of the bands, On The Might Of Princes, who during the course of the documentary shooting, ponder whether to sign with Revelation Records and whether that constitutes "selling out." Balancing ideals with the reality of paying the rent and paying off the debt from having their van crap out on them while on tour. There's also tour footage with Latterman and The Insurgent. The latter band have a run-in with some rather vicious cops in Green Bay when a house show gets shut down and it's partially captured on video-tape. Sure, there's some naïve idealism in there but let's hear it for the idealists! As good a punk documentary as I've seen. (64 Pleasant St., Huntington, NY 11743, www.walklor.com)

BLOOD BROTHERS-Jungle Rules Live (Artist Direct/BMG, DVD)
The ascent of the Blood Brothers to major label status is kind of mind-boggling. There's nothing accessible about this twin-vocal/three instrument screamo/hardcore band. Hyper-yelp vocals and aggressive, hammering instrumentation that, while forceful in the live setting, doesn't really yield much in the way of memorable songs. Maybe that's the point—it's the spectacle we're watching—but I still don't quite get it. Anyway, a half-hour, multi-camera live set from a teen center in Washington state (with lots of eye-hurting quick cuts), plus three audio tracks and a photo gallery. They certainly do put on a manic show.

BOUNCING SOULS-Do You Remember (Chunksaah, DVD)
This is a two DVD set but I only got sent the first DVD—and discovered this fact too close to press time to do much about it—the second disc includes a live set and music videos and it might have been nice to see the entire thing. Kind of like reading a book and having the last few chapters left out. Anyway, the disc I *did* get includes a nearly two hour "Behind The Music" style documentary, only without the annoying narrator, presenting the band's entire story—from shitty high school bands, through their bad funk era (self-assessment: "we sucked") to their evolution towards a pop/punk style. There's footage of the "punk houses" they inhabited, including one with a skate ramp in the living room and they tell the story of an indoor golf game and throwing an old toilet out of a bedroom window. This was the era of the New Brunswick punk houses and its burgeoning DIY community. Just like "Behind the Music," there are various travails, such as periods of homelessness, where they lived in a futon shop, Brian's difficulties with alcohol and their drummer Shal's apparent meltdown that left to him being replaced in 2000, after more than a decade together. But of course they triumph over it all. It does seem like an extended family, a tight-knit group who can't seem to exist without each other. Whatever one thinks of the Souls' music (I don't really listen to them as much, anymore), it's an interesting story. At least what I saw of it. (PO Box 974, New Brunswick, NJ 08903)

CHAMELEONS-Live At The Gallery Club & The Hacienda, Manchester (Cherry Red, DVD)
I'm a sucker for the Chameleons' shimmery pop sound. Recorded in the early to mid-80s (the "Gallery" shot is from '82, the Hacienda is undated), these two different, multi-camera performances capture an underrated band. Mark Burgess has a warm, emotional vocal style and accompanies it with propulsive bass-lines. Atomospheric, glistening, stinging guitar lines and a powerful beat create gorgeous music with a pulse, even with their shy stage demeanor. I hadn't heard these songs in years and they came back immediately—the hooks are that strong. Two solid sets. (Unit 17, 1st Floor, Elysium Gate West, 126-128 New King's Road, London SW6 4LZ, ENGLAND)

NOAM CHOMSKY-Distorted Morality (Silent Films/Epitaph)
While he doesn't often show up in the mainstream media, Noam Chomsky certainly has a higher profile than ever, drawing standing room only crowds for his lectures, along with a plethora of books, audio recordings and now this DVD, recorded at Harvard in early 2002. The topic is the so-called war on terrorism and Chomsky discusses not only present events but gives a history of terrorism in which the US has had involvement, such as Latin America and the Middle East. He notes that it only counts as terrorism when someone attacks "us," not the other way around. That, in essence, there's something hypocritical about it. The talk does tend to be a bit rambling and not completely focused but the underlying theme isn't difficult to discern, even with Chomsky's ironic delivery. There's also a question and answer segment taken from this talk and another one at MIT. You don't actually get to hear the question but, instead, each question shows on the screen, followed by Chomsky's response. This segment is actually more animated, as Chomsky offers observations on the current administration's post 9/11 foreign policy and the use of propaganda (he draws paralells between Bush's speeches and Hitler's, in terms of verbiage), but does conclude that there's more awareness and dissent now than at the outset of the Vietnam era—protest in that era was repressed for a long period and took several years to evolve. He also claims that, by world's standards, we don't face the same sort of repression. No matter how slight or how much it's tempered by the current reality, in Chomsky, one still senses some optimism. (2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026)

CLASH-The Essential Clash (Epic)
An excellent representation of the Clash. Sure, people tend to turn the Clash into icons or romanticize about their importance but I'm willing to grant them pretty lofty status, uneven recording history and all. This collection of promo clips and live footage includes some smoking performances, particularly the early tandem of "1977," "White Riot" and "London's Burning." Aggressive and angry… quite a counterpoint to playing before a zillion people at Shea Stadium, opening for the Who in 1982 and there are two clips from that set, as well. "Rock The Casbah," which got tons of MTV play is here, along with the less frequently-seen "London Calling," "Bankrobber" "Call Up" and "Tommy Gun," among others. There's also a brief interview clip where the interviewer comes across like a dismissive twit and even an unreleased black and white, silent movie that Joe wrote and directed, "Hell W10." The latter is a gangster epic, with the Clash and various friends and associates in other roles—it has title cards like back in the silent era and the soundtrack is taken from their entire history. At last, there's a place where all those offbeat tracks from "Sandinista" and "Combat Rock" have a place. Rough and grainy but definitely having camp value. One could always wish there was even more live stuff—a complete set from their prime, for instance, but maybe that will be rectified, someday.

DANZIG-Archive De La Morte (MVD, DVD)
See Glenn scowl. See him kick dirt. See him punch a mirror. See him protected by a phalanx of yellow-shirted security goons while on stage. See Chuck Biscuits play drums goddamned fucking better than just about anyone you can think of. See some unintentionally hilarious moments. OK, that last comment was a cheap shot but, really, some of these videos do reach the realms of wannabe rock god parody. A collection of 7 different Danzig songs, some with different takes that are either unedited or uncensored, such as the S&M motif for "It's Coming Down" (by far the best song here—a crunching Zep-like anthem) or the boob-baring for "How The Gods Kill." But besides "It's Coming Down," "Dirty Black Summer" and "Mother," the songs aren't that great—it's the crooning Glenn for the ballads "How The Gods Kill" and "Sistinas" and a loping blues on "Bodies." Sometimes, it's better with the sound off. Know what I mean? (PO Box 280, Oaks, PA 19456)

***DESPERATE TEENAGE LOVEDOLLS* (We Got Power Films/Eclectic, DVD)**
An extremely low-budget cult film from 1984, shot on Super 8 by Dave Markey, who also played in the bands Sin 34 and Painted Willie and featuring his compatriots from "We Got Power" fanzine, the McDonald brothers from Redd Kross, Dez from Black Flag and Tracy Lea from Redd Kross, among others. The bittersweet tale of the Lovedolls, telling the tale of their rise and fall through the LA rock 'n roll demimonde. Of course, there's the requisite sex, drugs, even murder to go along with the rock 'n roll, as well as an appreciation for 70s trash culture. Main character Kitty Carry-All (played by Jennifer Schwartz) gets her name from Cindy Brady's doll in the *Brady Bunch*. The film itself runs about 45 minutes, plus there are outtakes, director's commentary, reminiscences from Markey, trailers and a Redd Kross video for the song "Desperate Teenage Lovedolls." Don't expect cinematic brilliance but it's a humorous film. Good soundtrack, by the way, including Sin 34, Nip Drivers, the Bags and Redd Kross, of course. We Got Power also plan a DVD of the sequel, "Lovedolls Superstar," sometime this year. (PO Box 280, Oaks, PA 19456)

EXTREME NOISE TERROR-From One Extreme To Another (Cherry Red, DVD)
Extreme? They ain't kidding. Hammering thrash with two gutteral vocalists. In all honesty, they sometimes sound on the verge of coming apart in the live setting, but it's certainly a visceral clamor. Taken from an '89 set in London and appended with a pretty idiotic interview segment. But it's a good pro shot that will appeal to the band's fans. (Unit 17, 1st Floor, Elysium Gate

West, 126-128 New King's Road, London SW6 4LZ, ENGLAND)

SHANE MACGOWAN-If I Should Fall From Grace (MVD, DVD)
A long-form documentary about MacGowan, tracing his years in the Nips and Pogues, as well as afterward. Includes interviews with Shane, his former bandmate Phil Chevron, his girlfriend Victoria Clarke, Nick Cave, his parents and others. There are live and video performances, including "Dirty Old Town," "Fairytale of New York" and even the Nips' "Gabrielle." MacGowan is a complex character and the ravages of his hard-drinking lifestyle are well in evidence. His interviews are often difficult to decipher—there's still a functioning brain in there but it's something of a task for the thoughts to emerge. There's also been a vocal deterioration, as well. I was never a huge Pogues' fan but this is a compelling story—also kind of sad, in a way. (PO Box 280, Oaks, PA 19456)

MEST-The Show Must Go Off (Kung Fu, DVD)
Corporate pop/punk (they record for Madonna's label, for chrissake) at a corporate club, namely the House of Blues. Blah… yeah, the singer has spiky hair and say "fuck" a lot, but this is safe swill for clueless Warped patrons. Even all the "bonus" features, like 5-way split screens, commentary, et al can't make up for Mest's ultra-lame music. (PO Box 38009, Hollywood, CA 90038)

METEORS-Video Nasty/Live At The Hellfire Club (Cherry Red, DVD)
Two programs—"Video Nasty" includes live stuff from '87 and '88 and some clips, including a kick-ass cover of the Stranglers' "Go Buddy Go." I'm not really an afficionado of psychobilly, as they call it, but the Meteors make it more than palatable. No stand-up fiddle, but dexterous electric bass and a whomping backbeat that accompanies P. Paul Fenech's spit-drenched vocals and guitar slinging. He also adds some acerbic commentary between songs, as well. The "Hellfire" material is from '83 and equally butt-kicking. There's also a clip of more recent vintage for "Slow Down" and Fenech refuses to age gracefully—heavier-set, balding, but still wielding a mean guitar. (Unit 17, 1st Floor, Elysium Gate West, 126-128 New King's Road, London SW6 4LZ, ENGLAND)

ONE MAN ARMY-The Show Must Go Off (Kung Fu, DVD)
Tuneful street punk caught live at the Troubador in LA. This San Francisco three-piece play competently (their drummer Chip Hanna is excellent) but it's not always that electrifying, especially the more recent material, as it gets increasingly rootsy-sounding. But, from a visual standpoint, it's well put-together. Extras include band commentary—I like how they make fun of a wannabe backup singer on "Bootlegger's Son," who is also all-too-visible throughout most of the show, plus backstage footage, which isn't anything to get excited about and a photo gallery. (PO Box 38009, Hollywood, CA 90038)

PETER & THE TEST TUBE BABIES-Cattle and Bum + Live In Manchester 1983 (Cherry Red, DVD)
Another two-fer from Cherry Red—"Cattle and Bum" collects live footage and odds and ends from the early 80s to early 90s, plus there's a full live set from '83, when the band were arguably in their prime. All the favorites are here—"Banned From The Pubs," "The Jinx," "Elvis Is Dead," "Maniac," "Transvestite," "Up Yer Bum," etc… The '83 shoot is multi-camera and the band plays well. "Cattle and Bum" has footage of varying quality, both visually and in terms of song selection, but it's mainly choice stuff. You can see Peter's ill-advised longer hair and beard look, as well as his ever-expanding gut from all those years in the pub, no doubt. Make sure you watch the closing credits to "Cattle and Bum"—Pythonesque cleverness. (Unit 17, 1st Floor, Elysium Gate West, 126-128 New King's Road, London SW6 4LZ, ENGLAND)

SLAUGHTER & THE DOGS-Cranked Up Really High (Cherry Red, DVD)
Live '96 reunion at Holidays In The Sun and a lot livelier-sounding than the recent live CD that came out. This was the first time S&TD had played in over 15 years and the band seem energized, especially vocalist Wayne Barrett. Interview segments with Barrett are interspersed throughout the set, as he details record company woes, offers his opinion on the punk bands that followed, talks about feeling like an outsider since they were from Manchester and shunned by the London crowd and gives his thoughts on whether HITS just amounts to some sort of nostalgia. These guys always were more rock 'n roll than punk, anyway, covering songs by the Velvets, New York Dolls and their own compositions had a pub-meets-glam-meets-hard rock flavor. A stirring performance although Wayne's thick Mancunian accent is a bit difficult to get through, at times. All the hits, of course—"Cranked Up Really High," "Bootboys," "Boston Babies," "Victims of the Vampire," etc… (Unit 17, 1st Floor, Elysium Gate West, 126-128 New King's Road, London SW6 4LZ, ENGLAND)

JOHNNY THUNDERS & THE HEARTBREAKERS-Dead Or Alive (Cherry Red, DVD)
Watching Johnny Thunders through the interviews and backstage banter and even on stage makes a convincing argument to never take drugs. Even though he claims he was clean at the time (1984), while swigging on a Heineken, the years had clearly taken their toll. Mostly live footage from a Heartbreakers' reunion tour, along with a few flashbacks to '77. A hit and miss set list but the songs from "LAMF" have that insolent, bad-ass rock 'n roll charm, as does the Dolls' "Personality Crisis." Less appealing is the solo acoustic segment and lyrically sketchy "Just Because I'm White." (Unit 17, 1st Floor, Elysium Gate West, 126-128 New King's Road, London SW6 4LZ, ENGLAND)

TSOL-Live From OC (MVD, DVD)
Live in 1991 with the original lineup… one camera, not the highest-quality but, damn, it's fucking TSOL! And Jack looks tantalizing in some rather skimpy lingerie, all the time denying that he doesn't sleep with guys—well, except one time. Includes all the crucial songs from the band's early years and, truth be told, they're not always that tight, either, but the rambunctiousness partially makes up for it. So it's definitely a historical curiosity more than a high-grade visual document. There's a bonus of three songs from a 2000 performance and it's light years ahead of the '91 footage in terms of aesthetics and performance… not as reckless, perhaps, but the band sound powerful and at peak form. One wishes the film-maker, Richard White, had included the whole set. (PO Box 280, Oaks, PA 19456)

VANDALS-Sweatin' To The Oldies (Kung Fu, DVD)
I can't say I've liked much of anything the Vandals have done since their first full-length album, "When In Rome," and that was almost 20 years ago. Two DVD's—the first is a documentary, centered around a live performance done sometime in the early 90s and including a lot of songs from those early years, which makes it somewhat more appealing, even though they included that awful song from "Grease." I'll give 'em this much credit—as much as Warren is an id with a guitar, as smarmy and obnoxious as they act, these guys can play their asses off, especially drummer Josh Freese. "Urban Struggle," "Mohawk Town," "Lady Killer" and "HB Hotel" still bring a laugh. Best moment—when some hirusite guy stays on the stage a little too long, Dave goes "get a haircut and get off the stage." The bonus disc includes songs they've sold to commercial interests (bleh), a video access show where Joe interviews the Sugarcubes (quite silly) and some extra live material. (PO Box 30809, Hollywood, CA 90038)

VARIOUS-Automatic Magnetic (Bifocal Media, DVD)
A video, er, DVD magazine featuring live musical performances, interviews with the bands, as well as features on a couple of filmmakers and even one of their short films. The bands mostly fall into the realm of indy rock I don't find that interesting, these days—math-rock provocateurs Milemarker and The Convocation Of (although the latter have a funny tour anecdote about being hassled by federal agents), the new wavish Faint and hip-hop parodists Kerbloki aren't bands I'd probably seek out that much, but Superchunk still sound fine after all these years and Party of Helicopters have a fairly thorny sound. There's also a humorous bit with a guy showing off his Iron Maiden collection. Randall Bobbitt's short film shows some craft and has a cruel twist. A good flow to everything. (PO Box 50106, Raleigh, NC 27650-0106, www.bifocalmedia.com)

VARIOUS-CBGB: Punk From The Bowery (MVD, DVD)
Live performances recorded over the past few years and including some goddamned heavy hitters—Poison Idea, Agnostic Front, Varukers, Madball, Cro-Mags, Chaos UK, Vibrators, Molotov Cocktail, Harley's War (with Darryl from Bad Brains on bass) and, from the NY Thrash reunion shows, Adrenalin OD (hilarious), Kraut and Even Worse. The camera work adds some odd grainy effects from time to time and there's the occasional dropout but there are some smoking performances here. There's also a half-hour tour of the club presented by owner Hilly Kristal, who speaks in a monotone and occasionally loses his place but tells some humorous anecdotes about various punk luminaries. (PO Box 280, Oaks, PA 19456)

VARIOUS-Punk-O-Rama: The Videos, Volume 1 (Epitaph, DVD)
A collection of clips spanning throughout the label's history and sort of a de-facto greatest hits, as it includes Rancid, the Offspring, Pennywise and NOFX. Refused's "New Noise" is attention-grabbing and Division of Laura Lee's "Need To Get Some" has a humorous bit with the band in stuffed-animal costumes playing the instruments. The Descendents' "I'm The One" has a sperm bank (complete with skateboarding sperm) theme. Hot Water Music's "Paper Thin" is also quite elaborate. Dropkick Murphys have a pair of clips with each lineup and "Barroom Hero" reminds me of how great they were in the early days, although "The Gauntlet" isn't bad, either. Includes quite a few bonus segments—live footage from Bad Religion and Bouncing Souls, a short documentary on the making of Pennywise's "Fuck Authority" video (which is a standout on the disc) and a 40 minute documentary on the label, itself. Some of the more twee pop/punk isn't always palatable but, with a DVD, that's what remotes are for! (2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026)

WESLEY WILLIS-The Daddy Of Rock 'n Roll (MVD, DVD)
A documentary about this unique character from Chicago. Willis is an artist and musical performer. He's also a diagnosed schizophrenic, battling with three demons that he says have inhabited his world since 1989, the aftermath of a robbery attempt. His wanders the streets and haunts record stores, selling his multitude of CD's (he's also had releases on larger indy and major labels). The lyrics are whatever pops into his head, whether it's about certain rock performers, riding the buses or observing animals having sex—these are dutifully typed out and laminated at the local Kinko store. He even purchases books on animals so he can write bestiality songs. He performs either accompanied by a programmable keyboard or with his bombastic heavy metal band, the Wesley Willis Fiasco. It's a fascinating story. Stilll, I've always wondered whether it's a case of exploitation, a sick joke at someone's expense but it seems as though Wesley does have a support group of people who care about him. In addition to the documentary, there's a camcorder shoot of a Fiasco show in LA and various outtakes. (PO Box 280, Oaks, PA 19456)



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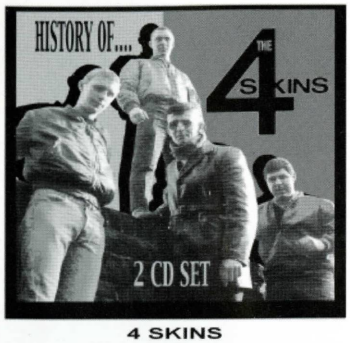

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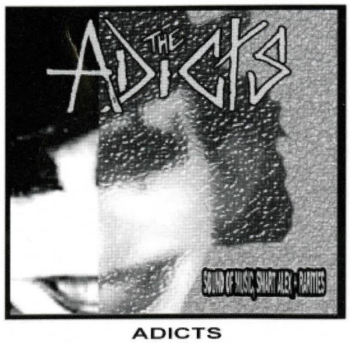

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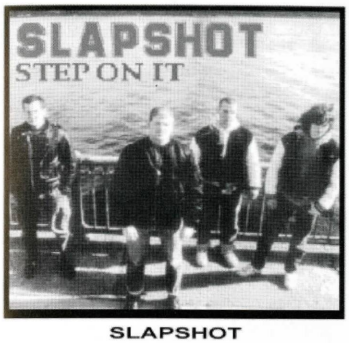

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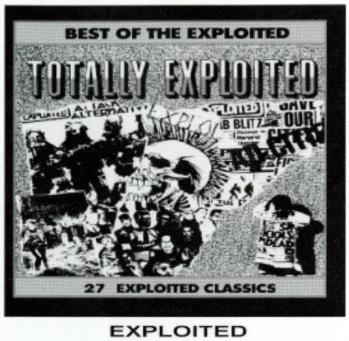

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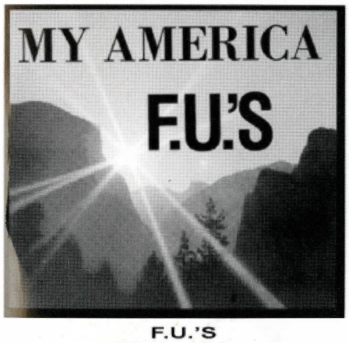

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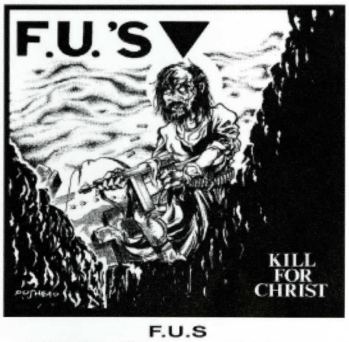

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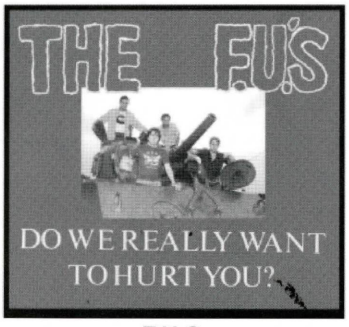

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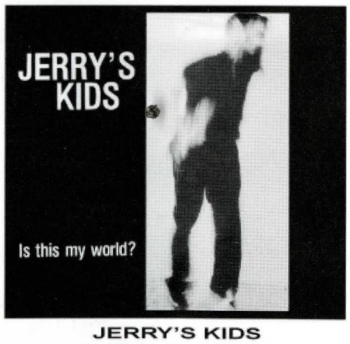

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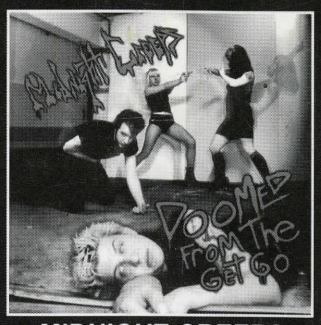

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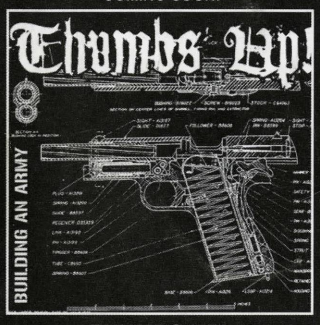


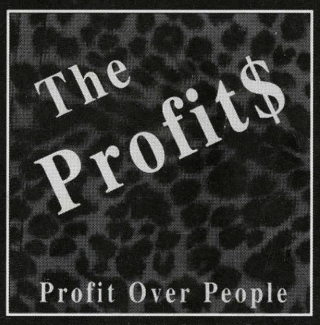
THUMBS UP!
"BUILDING AN ARMY" 7" EP
GREAT NEW BAND IN THE VEIN OF EARLY BOSTON AND DC HARDCORE !



ALLERGIC TO WHORES
"LIFE THROUGH DEATHS EYES" CD
LONG AWAITED NEW FULL LENGTH FROM THIS CLEVELAND BASED HC/ PUNK BAND!



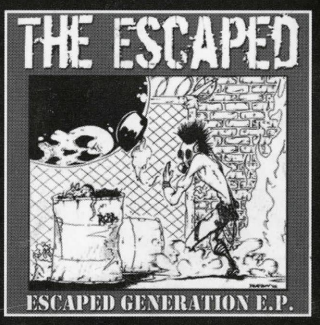
CLUSTERFUX
THRASH MONGREL CD
FULL LENGTH CD FROM DENVERS' FINEST THRASH / PUNX!



THE PROFITS
"PROFIT OVER PEOPLE" CD
DUAL VOX POLITICAL PUNK ROCK FROM BOSTON !



CRASH AND BURN s/t CD
9 SONG DEBUT FULL LENGTH BOSTON PUNK ROCK & ROLL!
PRODUCED BY DON FURY!



THE ESCAPED
ESCAPED GENERATION CDEP
8 SONG DEBUT FROM THESE PDX PUNX ! INCLUDES CD ROM VIDEO!



MOURNINGSIDE
SOME SECRETS ARE BETTER LEFT...CDEP
NEW 6 SONG CDEP FROM THIS HORROR INFLUENCED BOSTON HARDCORE BAND.



BOSTON MASSACRE CD 1
TN / UNSEEN - A GLOBAL THREAT
THE STATISTICS - A POOR EXCUSE
FOUR 7" EPs ON ONE CD!



THE BOSTON MASSACRE 2
TN / GLOBAL THREAT-THE PROFITS
TOMMY & THE TERRORS-LOST CAUSE. FOUR EPs ON ONE CD!

ALSO AVAILABLE ON RODENT POPSICLE !

TOMMY & THE TERRORS "OUTBOUND" 7"
TOXIC NARCOTIC / A GLOBAL THREAT SPLIT 7"
TOXIC NARCOTIC / THE UNSEEN SPLIT 7"
TOXIC NARCOTIC "HAD IT COMING" 7"
A GLOBAL THREAT "IN THE RED" 7"
THE PROFITS "DYING FOR DOLLARS" 7"
THE PROFITS "PROPAGHANDA MACHINE" 7"
FAST ACTIN' FUSES "SAYONARA" CD
MUNG "A 7 YEAR BIOL" CD
ALLERGIC TO WHORES/ McCARTHY COMMISSION SPLIT CD
VIRULENT STRAIN "TORTURE TOOLS" CD
DEAD PEDESTRIANS "IN THE STREETS" CD

Rodent Popsicle Records
P.O.Box 1143 Allston,MA 02134
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