

JOURNALISTIC PROPOSITIONS FOR THE SWINGIN' MALCONTENT

RAZZORCAKE

Sweet J.A.P.

NiCoLe PaNTeR

THE BAR FEEDERS

WEIRDOS

BEV DAVIES

No idea RECORDS

FLY



18
\$3⁰⁰

His eyes looked like eggs, with the yolks broken open, with bits of blood pulsing through them. Before he even opened up his grease stained tennis bag, I knew that there was nothing I'd want to buy from him. He unzipped the bag. Inside, there were ten or fifteen carburetors. Obviously freshly stolen, the rubber fuel lines cut raggedly and gas leaking out.

"No. I'm just looking for foot pegs."

"Man, you could really help me out. Sure you don't want an upgrade? There's some nice ones in here."

There were some very expensive pieces of metal, highly polished, winking at me. I could almost hear the death threats their previous owners' bellowed into empty parking lots.

"No. I just need foot pegs."

"Well, you better act quick. These ain't gonna last." Eyes darting, the shaky man walked off.

Months earlier, I had made the mistake of purchasing a "complete, I swear" motorcycle in four large milk crates, plus a rolling frame. I was on a parts hunt. The lady I was dating at the time, her brother – well, he wasn't in the gang, but he knew all the brothers – was a great mechanic. I wouldn't have been buzzered inside that pentagon of trailer homes, literally welded together so there was a large interior area, if it wasn't for someone else vouching for me.

Truly obscure motorcycle parts, spanning sixty years of production, hung everywhere like big game trophies. Instead of rhino heads, there were Vincent gas tanks, full wheel skirts to Indians, stuff I'd only seen in museums and coffee table books.

The man I was there to see looked like one of the bad guys from Mad Max, but in retirement. Sleeves of bled-out tattoos, fingers that looked like they'd been burned, flash frozen, then etched with grease. His skin looked like leather thrown out the back of a truck,

picked off the road, and sewn back on. If he didn't move with such authority, it'd've been easy to mistake him as broken.

His voice caught me off guard. It was soft, resonant. "What're you looking for?"

"Foot pegs." I didn't have to give him the make and model. He knew from the connecting bolt I held out.

"Got 'em. Don't haggle with me. You got the cash?" I placed the money in his hand.

"That's what I like. Cash can't bounce. Follow me."

We weaved through dusty corridors, the halls strategically mined with Doberman shit. To the untrained eye, the place looked in shambles. No care was taken to preserve the carpet. Inside-facing windows were smashed out. He bent down, opened a drawer with a yank, and pulled out two footpegs. "They don't make these any more. You're lucky. This is the last pair I got." I was relieved. I'd been looking for the pegs for three months.

We talked some more about my troubles and challenges with the bike. Maybe it was because I listened and didn't brag or trouble him with money, but I talked to Wendel for about an hour and a half. He'd been involved with bikes since he'd returned from Vietnam. He liked them better than most human beings.

Then he showed me his bike. It was gorgeous. It wasn't a shiny, flashy, chrome-heavy lawyer bike, it was a bike you could tell was almost hand-crafted, that every part fit perfectly after years of refinement. It started on first kick. It blapped to life then purred. That image of homeless-looking Wendel, an outcast to most of society, smiling broadly and propped next to an immaculate bike has stuck with me all these years.

Make the best thing that you can. Let that thing – be it music, a motorbike, a magazine, a bookstore – do all the roaring for you. And never, ever, apologize of how good it looks and sounds if you made with your own two hands from the ground up.

–Todd

AD DEADLINE FOR ISSUE #19

February 1st, 2004

AD DEADLINE FOR ISSUE #20

April 1st, 2004 (no joke)

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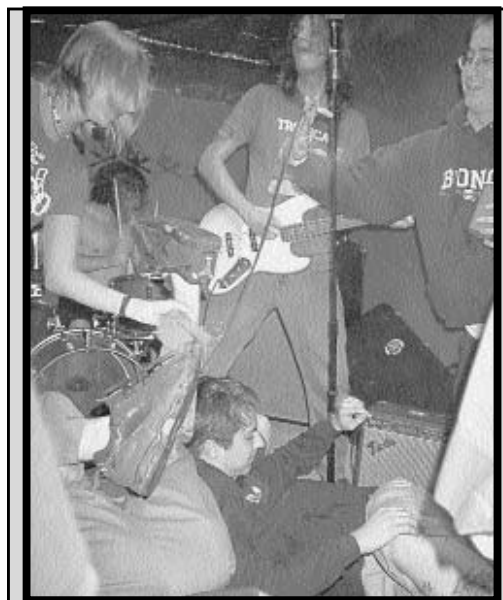
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Thank you list: Receiving crazy answering machine messages thanks to Julia Smut for her cover help. Leaving crazy answering machine messages thanks to Nørb for designing the cover. Let me get some people to start working so I can sit here and draw thanks to Art Fuentes and Dan Monick for last-minute help with graphics. How can somebody possibly draw that detailed with a ballpoint pen thanks to Rob Ruelas for illustrating Designated Dale's column. Fuck you, Dale. Sorry about taking a picture of you in a Jack Daniel's shirt while you were drunk and then printing said picture in a magazine thanks to Scott Carswell. Gargling with gasoline, piss, and thumbtacks thanks to Gavin O'Neill for the Bar Feeders interview. Taking pictures of other pictures thanks to Speedway Randy for his Nicole Panter interview. Two Nina Hagen references in one issue thanks to Heela Naqshband for her Fly interview. Just padding your resume thanks to Aphid Peewit, Donofthedeat, Greg Barbera, Mike Beer, Wanda Sprag, Cuss Baxter, Toby Tober, Jimmy Alvarado, and Miss Namella J. Kim for their reviews of miscellaneous entertainment media.



The Y and a pileup at a sobriety checkpoint in a tiny garage.



Issue #18, February/March 2004

“Losin’ braincells fast and I think my liver’s crackin’”

—From the song “O.O.C. in the U.S.A.” by the Y

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NARDWUAR **WHO ARE YOU?**



DOA

NARDWUAR THE HUMAN SERVIETTE VS. BEV DAVIES

Bev Davies is a fabulous photographer from Vancouver BC, Canada who has amassed an amazing amount of incredibly cool pictures over the years. All the photos that accompany this column were taken by Bev Davies.

Nardwuar: Who are you?

Bev Davies: Bev Davies.

Nardwuar: Bev, you have some of your photos here today. What are we looking at right now?

Bev Davies: We're looking at a really early arrangement of D.O.A., with Joe and Randy and Dave Gregg when he started playing with them, and we're at the back door of The Smilin' Buddha.

Nardwuar: The legendary Smilin' Buddha punk club in Vancouver, BC, Canada.

Bev Davies: The one and only Smilin' Buddha. Now I took an entire roll of this film, only one roll of pictures of them, and it took the whole roll to get everybody to have a cigarette and everybody to light their cigarette and Chuck to take the paper bag that he always carried around with all his belongings in it and put it out of the

started posing I said, "Okay, that's it. I got what I want" and I left.

Nardwuar: What's interesting about this photo, Bev, is you can still actually go to The Smilin' Buddha and stand in the alley – although the club is boarded up – you can still stand in the alley behind and look at graffiti.

Bev Davies: Yeah, we did that didn't we? We found one piece of graffiti from The Scissors still there on the wall across the alleyway.

Nardwuar: Now Bev, you've taken quite a few photos of D.O.A. over the years and you actually ventured with them on a few adventures and one of the places you went with them was England and here we have a photo from England that you took.

Bev Davies: Yeah, this is from the Lyceum when Annabella from Bow Wow Wow was playing. This is also the same place that D.O.A. played, one of the places they played while they were there, and they played with The Anti-Nowhere League and The Dead Kennedys and D.O.A.

Nardwuar: And in this pic, you see, it's quite interesting because there's some dancers in the

background and Annabella is wearing some very expensive clothing, right?

Bev Davies: Yeah, it was probably not that expensive at the time. It's made by Vivian Westwood; it's part of her "pirate" look. But, um, it would be really valuable now and the dancers who she had with her on the stage never made it to the Vancouver concert, so it was nice to see the show over there the way it was meant to be before we saw it at The Commodore Ballroom in Vancouver.

Nardwuar: What do you remember about the performance of Bow Wow Wow that night?

Bev Davies: Well [laughs], I remember going there with D.O.A. and I remember that there was one member of D.O.A. who evidently was quite high on acid, though I didn't know it at the time but I heard about it afterwards. People kept coming up to him and saying, "Oh, I love the gear you have on" and he didn't know what it meant. He just, like, didn't know what that expression meant in England. Anyway, it was a good trip over there. I think we were gone twelve days and they played several gigs all over the place and this is one of the ones we got into free.

Nardwuar: And Annabella of Bow Wow Wow, of course, has many connections to Adam Ant or Adam Ant's band we should say, and here's a picture of Adam and his Ants.

Bev Davies: Yeah, it's a picture of Adam Ant that I took on the first tour when he came to North America on the *Kings of the Wild Frontier* Tour, and this was taken in San Francisco. I went to a press conference in San Francisco and then went to the concert after that on the same night, I think, and it was at the California Hall in San Francisco.

Nardwuar: And you can see Marco to the left

the street from them and Black Flag came out with these stickers and handed them out to people at The Whisky and on the street in front of the Adam Ant show that said "Black Flag Kills Ants On Contact."

Nardwuar: And speaking of Brits, we have another Brit here, Billy Idol, Bev Davies!

Bev Davies: Yeah, this is a picture of Billy Idol. He was a particular favorite of mine at the time. He never took, you know... [pauses] What do I want to say?

Nardwuar: Well, you want to say you like the way he smelled. He smelled very interesting!

the general population, which would be, like, when he came here he did a live interview with (Vancouver radio station) CFOX because his music was actually being played on CFOX. If he'd focused on the punk days with that, they probably wouldn't have played him in those days.

Nardwuar: And he said some naughty words on CFOX, didn't he?

Bev Davies: Yes, the silly interviewer that was interviewing him at the time, and I was sitting in there taking pictures of him, said "Billy, you've been on tour for eight or nine months now. What



JOE ST RUMMER

there, right? His guitarist, who's huge nowadays, was he huge then?

Bev Davies: He was pretty mean looking. I hear he was quite nice, but he had this presence on stage like you shouldn't mess around with him. Adam Ant was very, very, very small.

Nardwuar: And what a getup he had, eh? He looked amazing!

Bev Davies: Yeah, and also you can't really see it in this picture but there's two drummers. Two entire drum kits set up on the stage and Chuck Biscuits said to me that night – he was drummer for D.O.A. – that the reason that Adam Ant had two drummers on the stage instead of one was that they didn't have him drumming for them.

Nardwuar: Now wasn't there some special Adam Ant sticker that you were always talking about, Bev?

Bev Davies: "Black Flag Kills Ants On Contact," that one?

Nardwuar: Yes!

Bev Davies: Yeah, I was trying to find that today and I couldn't find it, but that was from Los Angeles. The next concert date they did after the California one, they flew down to Los Angeles and played two nights there. D.O.A. happened to be playing at The Whisky-A-Go-Go just down

Bev Davies: [Loud groan] He smelled. I flew to Kamloops, BC to see his show in Kamloops when he played. He played here at the University of BC and went to Kamloops and they let me photograph the entire show in the pit, which is what I hadn't done here. I'd only done the first three songs and by doing the whole show I started to notice that even though I was looking through the camera, and I was zooming, and I couldn't tell how far away he was, I could still smell his leather pants! They got worse and worse as the show went on. There was a distinct odor as he came near the edge of the stage.

Nardwuar: And there's a few other Billy Idol tidbits aren't there, Bev? Like you told me, he never has anybody in his band who's taller than him, is that true?

Bev Davies: Yeah, that's true. I think that's sort of like Prince isn't it? He doesn't want anybody taller. It must be hard for these short men to find people who are even shorter than they are. He's quite short.

Nardwuar: Did he talk about any of his "punkisms" when you were with him?

Bev Davies: No, he didn't talk about that. I think he was trying to sell most of his music to

would you attribute your stamina to?" He said, "I have sex a lot!" and the interviewer just about swallowed his face. Evidently the place to have been at the time was in the program director's office. He was jumping on his desk and yelling and screaming going, "You can't say that on live CFOX radio!" Which, of course, he'd already said it.

Nardwuar: Bev Davies, we have a picture here that you took of Duran Duran, when they weren't as popular?

Bev Davies: Yeah, this is from The Commodore and they weren't a really huge band at that time, July 27, 1982. They were playing the same night as some other groups were playing so I went down to the soundcheck in the afternoon and took some photographs and noticed that they were drawing. Some of them had this tape out and they were measuring, very carefully, this strange shape on the floor of The Commodore Ballroom in masking tape. So I couldn't resist. After a while I went over and said, "What is that that you're doing there?" And they had just that day been made the opening act for Blondie on the North American tour and that was the amount of stage that they were going to be allowed to use for all of their

equipment and their whole show.

Nardwuar: And that same night another band was playing in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, right Bev Davies?

Bev Davies: Yeah, Girlschool. We're looking at a picture of Girlschool now. I particularly like just the concept of them being a heavy metal all-women's band. I really like their music, um...

Nardwuar: They had their mic placed the same way that Lemmy had his mic?

Bev Davies: Yeah, evidently the lead singer of Girlschool was Lemmy's girlfriend. She used the microphone in the same position he did, where it sort of hung down from the ceiling except there's no ceiling in The Coliseum. So I was photographing them backstage, and mentioned that I'd been down to see Duran Duran in the afternoon and they said "Duran Duran, they're in town?!" And they jumped in some car and headed down there and evidently partied most of the night away in Vancouver with Duran Duran.

Nardwuar: Who would've thought, Duran Duran vs. Girlschool?

Bev Davies: I know, I know, but you know they're both from England, both in Vancouver, all of them.

Nardwuar: Right now, another British band and, of course, you didn't only take pictures of British bands did you Bev Davies?

Bev Davies: No, I took a lot of pictures of Vancouver bands and a lot of pictures of other bands.

Nardwuar: And this particular picture I just totally love. It's a very early Iron Maiden pic and it's a picture of a miniature Eddie. I love it. Please explain this, Bev Davies.

Bev Davies: Well, it seemed to be every time that I saw Iron Maiden, Eddie got larger and larger.

Nardwuar: Eddie is their mascot.

Bev Davies: Yeah, Eddie. So probably the last time I saw them, they would have a huge Eddie. But this is just a guy onstage with an Eddie mask. So it seems to me that this is a

really early Iron Maiden one, at least with Bruce Dickinson singing. I never saw them before he was the singer.

Nardwuar: Yes, I guess I meant this is a low budget Eddie. Like early, low budget, Bruce Dickinson-era Iron Maiden.

Bev Davies: Yeah, I think they were all a little bit low budget at that time. But they did get larger and larger and everyone waited to see how big Eddie was going to get. I told you something today that you didn't know about Bruce Dickinson.

Nardwuar: Yes, please, tell me about that.

Bev Davies: Yeah, I read in the paper that he's a pilot for an airline that flies from England to North Africa on tours and he takes people on their two week vacation or whatever. He's just a pilot and he comes on the air and says, "I'd like to welcome you aboard. I'm your pilot, Bruce Dickinson," and then evidently quite often people wander up and say, "Is that the Bruce Dickinson who used to sing for Iron Maiden and he's in that band?" And he is.

Nardwuar: Here's another great rock'n'roll band of the metal persuasion, Blackie Lawless of W.A.S.P.

Bev Davies: Yeah, this is amazing. He's standing there in a lot of leather and things hanging off of him. But I think the important thing in this picture is that he was drinking blood out of a skull on the stage.

Nardwuar: And you can see the blood dripping down his chin there, and you can also look down and see what I think are buttless chaps.

Bev Davies: I can't imagine that I would have missed photographing the buttless chaps but it does look like that.

Nardwuar: And he's drinking the blood from a skull.

Bev Davies: Yeah, and it's one of those times that black and white, you just have to imagine what it would look like in full color.

Nardwuar: Right over here, Bev Davies, we have the complete opposite of Blackie Lawless of W.A.S.P. We have Joe Strummer at, where, the US festival?

Bev Davies: In San Bernardino, yes. It's at a backstage press conference that they called - I can't exactly remember why they called it. They were the headlining band on the first night of the US festival and as you can see not all of them are involved in talking to the media but there are a lot of media out there.

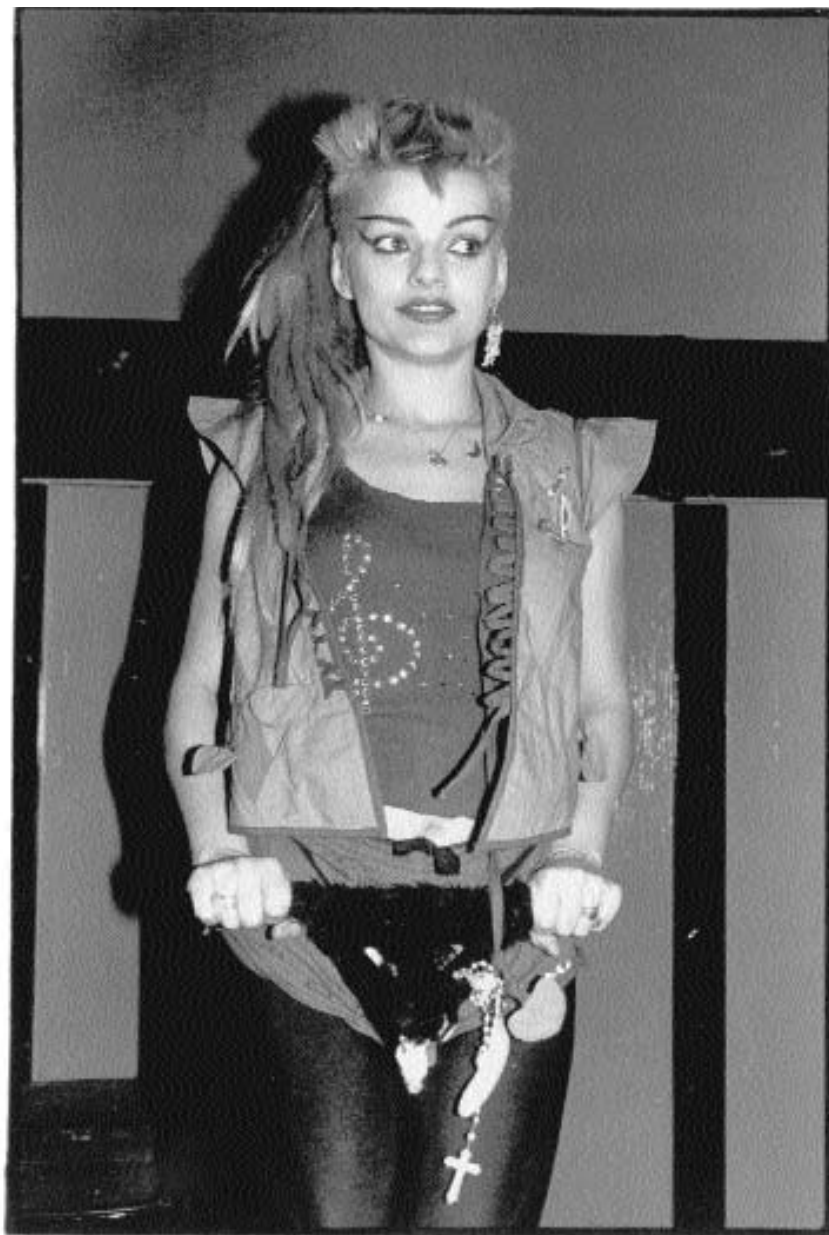
Nardwuar: And that was one hell of a gig, wasn't it? There was Van Halen, there was Motley Crue, and Bev Davies was there right?

Bev Davies: Yes I was. I seem to have a pass that said "Ben Davis" from the *Georgia Starlight*. Now I figured it was just a typo, and it didn't get me everywhere that I thought I should be able to go. It wasn't until right near the end that someone said, "I know the *Georgia Starlight*," and it evidently was some newspaper in Georgia. Some poor sap probably had a "Bev Davies *Georgia Straight*" pass on him, and he was being pushed into backstage areas and he didn't know why he was there to take photographs. I don't know. Or maybe it was just a typo error that somebody printed wrong on the pass.

Nardwuar: Did you have any trouble getting backstage though? Was his pass able to get you backstage?

Bev Davies: Backstage was really weird. There was an island that was called Press Island. I called the weekend "Fear and Loathing on Press Island." It was 120 degrees everywhere and it wasn't in Vancouver before I flew down, so I wore lots of black and fur-lined boots but it was really, really hot in California. I remember one of the people from The Clash's crew said to me that the last time they looked there were twenty-three different backstage passes that got you into the backstage area. I met two guys who had big round gold dots on their passes. I said, "What are those?" They said, "They get us anywhere we want; they're all access." I said "Where did you get those from?" They said, "We

NINA HAGEN



drove into San Bernardino and went into a craft store and bought the dots." And they got to go anywhere they wanted. There was an island with Wozniak on it. There was a special viewing area where his family and friends from Apple got to sit. There were 400,000 people out in the audience at the height of the "heavy metal day" and David Bowie headlined the third night. **Nardwuar:** And A Flock Of Seagulls also played.

Bev Davies: Did they?

Nardwuar: Yes, they did.

Bev Davies: I don't remember that. I remember U2.

Nardwuar: You took a photo of them.

Bev Davies: I took a photo of A Flock of Seagulls?

Nardwuar: At the US festival.

Bev Davies: Yeah, I got the t-shirt. I was going to cross out the names of all the bands that didn't let me photograph them. But now it's all drifted away and I don't remember which ones did and which ones didn't. The Clash were very good in those days. The only band that mattered they'd say.

Nardwuar: Here is a picture of the second best band in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada – you might almost say the best band from Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada – The Subhumans.

Bev Davies: Yeah, another band that really matters. When you were saying the second best band, you were quoting me because of course D.O.A. was my first, best band. There wasn't a moment when you watched a band like The Subhumans or a band like D.O.A. that it wasn't total joy watching this band, listening to their music, watching them entertain. Totally entertaining, wonderful musicians. Good songs. It's got a good beat and you can dance to it, isn't that what they used to say on *American Bandstand*?

Nardwuar: Do you have any favorite memories of The Subhumans at all?

Bev Davies: Just their music. I love their music. There isn't anyone else who quite sounds like them.

Nardwuar: Any particular song?

Bev Davies: What was the name of that song they didn't write...

Nardwuar: "Screwed Up."

Bev Davies: "Screwed Up."

Nardwuar: By Menace.

Bev Davies: There we go. Great song by them. And then there was all those ones that XTC said to Steve Macklam (manager of the Pointed Sticks and Diana Krall), "I don't know what's wrong with all the bands in Vancouver but if they really wanted to be famous they wouldn't do songs like 'Fuck You' and 'Thirteen' and all those other bands that used obscene words in their songs."

Nardwuar: That's when you met with some British guys, right? Like some British music execs were saying that the Vancouver bands have all these swear words and why are they doing this if they want to be famous?

Bev Davies: No, it was the guys from XTC. The band XTC were saying that. They were saying "Why would they (The Subhumans) want to write a song called 'Slave to My Dick' if they wanted to be famous? That's not going to be on *The Hit Parade*." But it was on ours when we went to those music things. The Subhumans couldn't get through a concert without playing "Slave to My Dick."

Nardwuar: And now we have another photo here. What are we seeing in this particular photo, Bev Davies, photographer extraordinaire?

Bev Davies: It's a picture from Little Mountain Sound and we have January 1980 on it. Bob Rock was doing engineering for Art Bergman and Art Bergman was in a band called The K-Tels, which may have had their name changed to The Young Canadians by that date, it seems to me. And the manager Gerry Barad.

Nardwuar: Who Terry McBride of Nettwerk Records

doesn't quite remember as the manager of The Young Canadians, but there's some proof right there.

Bev Davies: Yeah I know, I was listening to your show when Terry was saying "No, he never managed anybody." He was also known as Pino Rogeletti and the IUDs, Gerry Barad was. He had a band.

Nardwuar: And that's why a lot of the Vancouver punk bands sounded so great, it was Bob Rock, wasn't it? I mean, I hate to give him props, you know now being with the Metallica *St. Anger* thing, but he really did a kick-ass job with those Vancouver punk bands like The Young Canadians, eh?

Bev Davies: Yep, and The Payola\$, and of course he was in The Payola\$ himself. It was a good recording studio that people used and they used it in the off-time – which to bands at the time, two and three in the morning seemed like the off-time – to these musicians it was the perfect time to be going in there at inexpensive prices.

Nardwuar: Little Mountain has now turned into The Factory in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, where The New Pornographers have recorded.

Bev Davies: Yeah, I've heard a lot about them lately. They've been doing quite well. They were on *Late Night with David Letterman* or something like that.

Nardwuar: They were indeed. Vancouver kids make good. And right here Bev Davies, we have a picture of a Vancouver venue. We saw a Vancouver recording studio there, now a Vancouver venue. What's happening here Bev Davies?

Bev Davies: Killing Joke. Killing Joke played the Luv-A-Fair. Now the Luv-A-Fair was one of those dance clubs that sprung up in the mid-'80s and may have even gone back earlier into the '70s but they played dance music, they played recorded music, and I refused to go. Not that I can't dance, I can dance sometimes, but I would rather spend the evening seeing the Subhumans

SUBHUMANS



NARDWUAR THE HUMAN SERVETTE

play or going to a D.O.A. gig or going to any local bands or going to bands from other parts of the world and they're standing up there and they're actually playing. And then Killing Joke booked at this place and I didn't have a choice, I mean I just had to see them. It was a band that I never thought would tour to Vancouver and they were gonna play the Luv-A-Fair that I had never gone to. And so this is a photograph of the inside which I found shocking, with the disco balls and all the lights and things like that.

Bev Davies: t h e r e
w e r e c o n c e r t s
t h a t i t w a s a
p r i v i l e g e t o b e a t
a n d t h e r e w e r e
o t h e r c o n c e r t s...

Nardwuar: W h e r e
y o u ' l l n e v e r g e t
y o u r t i m e b a c k.

me right away and he asked how I was and what was wrong. Then I felt a bit embarrassed by drawing attention to myself but went on and photographed and got out of there. And then I went to the concert that night and I was sitting down at the side for the opening band and still had the nose bleed, sitting with a wad of kleenex going, "When is this gonna end, when is this gonna end? I've tried everything. I've tried ice. I've tried everything." And then he came out on the stage. I took a deep breath and the nosebleed

then any place that was well kept wouldn't let a lot of these bands play there, or it wouldn't be well kept.

Nardwuar: So, Bev Davies, just an update, what are you doing today? What are you doing these days?

Bev Davies: I'm showing you these photographs.

Nardwuar: And you work across the street from that Alien Sex Fiend gig.

Bev Davies: Yeah, I work across the street. I



GIRLSCHOOL

Nardwuar: A huge disco ball there?

Bev Davies: Gigantic, gigantic disco ball. And they had flashing lights and all that kind of stuff.

Nardwuar: And Killing Joke put on a good show too!

Bev Davies: They did, they were very good. They're Killing Joke. And they mentioned to me, they said if you want to, if you really enjoy seeing the show you might want to come to Iceland and see us with the Icelandic Philharmonic Orchestra in two months. I went, "Oh that's nice. I don't think I'll be going to Iceland," but I'm sure it was good over there with the Icelandic Philharmonic Orchestra.

Nardwuar: The Luv-A-Fair is now gone, but the floor of the Luv-A-Fair and the stools of the Luv-A-Fair are now at the Cobalt Hotel on Main Street, Vancouver, in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, Bev.

Bev Davies: They have a new floor at the Cobalt?

Nardwuar: Yes they do, the floor from the Luv-A-Fair.

Bev Davies: Oh wow. I wonder if my feet would stick to it like the old floor at the Cobalt. Soaked with beer!

Nardwuar: Here's a picture of a man at a venue in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada with a sprung dance floor. It's...

Bev Davies: Captain Beefheart. This is at the Commodore. We don't have a date on this but it's interesting because I photographed Captain Beefheart at his hotel, at the hotel that's next to St. Paul's Hospital in the afternoon. And I kept putting off going down there because I had a nosebleed and it wouldn't stop bleeding. Finally I thought, "I'm doing it, I'm doing the photographs of him and I'm doing the concert tonight and I'm going to go." So I went down there and he (Beefheart) was evidently very concerned when I came in. He noticed

was gone, and then I walked up and took his photograph. And then later on, after the show one of the people who worked for him came out and found me and said, "You know, before he walked out on the stage you were the last person he talked about." He said, "I hope that woman with the nosebleed is okay and that it's gone now." And I thought that was the moment that I took a breath and it was gone. Miracles do happen.

Nardwuar: And that kind of symbolizes Captain Beefheart as well, going the extra distance.

Bev Davies: Yeah. I mean, there were concerts that it was a privilege to be at and there were other concerts...

Nardwuar: Where you'll never get your time back.

Bev Davies: I never will get that time back, you know, just before I'm going to pass away when I go, "Excuse me, I spent many, many hours at concerts where I didn't like the music, can I have that time back?" And they will say, "Nope, not getting it back." But it was a privilege to be at a lot of these concerts.

Nardwuar: Here's a photo of Alien Sex Fiend.

Bev Davies: Yeah, it's actually quite an amazing photograph. I don't know how long it took them to set up this cobwebby thing behind them there. What I find interesting now is that I work across the road from where this was taken, which is the old Waterfront Club in Vancouver. I walk by every day on my way to work and think, "I saw bands there. I remember that place. I remember this concert."

Nardwuar: Like Black Flag played there, the Minutemen played there.

Bev Davies: The Bill Of Rights played there, lots of local bands. It was a strange small place with the dressing rooms down in the basement and giant rats. I think it wasn't well kept. But

work for the (British Columbia) Provincial Government as a welfare worker.

Nardwuar: But all these photos are catalogued and being displayed. Thank you for spending time with me, Nardwuar The Human Serviette, and letting us go into your vaults, Bev Davies.

Bev Davies: Thank you, Nardwuar, for the interest.

Nardwuar: But before we go, a picture of...

Bev Davies: Nina Hagen. We were looking at this and it looks like it's a backstage photo, not an onstage photo of her, which it could be. And she seems to be holding some sort of fox's head, sort of seductively at the front of herself there. What I remember about concerts like this is, again, it was a joy to be at them. The night before she played, Judas Priest played at the Coliseum in Vancouver and the people on the stage and a lot of people in the audience were dressed in a lot of black leather, but not a tremendous number. And then when I walked into the Commodore, I didn't get there early, and the show was going on. The entire audience looked like Judas Priest. It looked like the entire band had cloned themselves and come to the concert as their fans. They were in black leather with studs and belts and things like that.

Nardwuar: Well thanks for your time, Bev Davies. Anything you want to add to the people out there at all?

Bev Davies: No, I don't think so, other than stay tuned for the next installment.

Nardwuar: Thanks very much. Keep on rockin' in the free world, and doot doola doot doo...

Bev Davies: Click click.

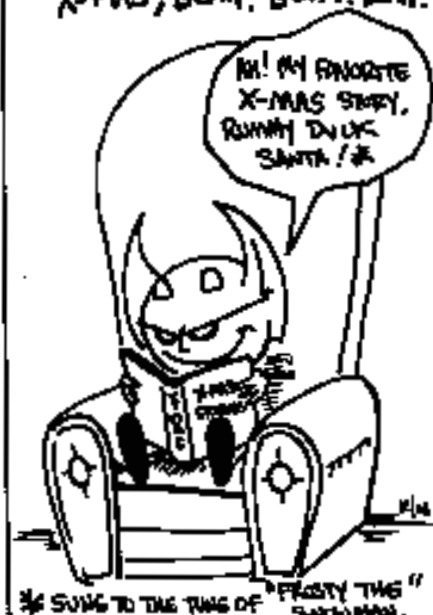
—Nardwuar the Human Serviette

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SHIZZVILLE

IT WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE
X-MAS, BLAH! BLAH! BLAH!



Runny duck santa, was a drunk & spiteful dude,
with his stinky clothes and a runny nose, and his
eyes all red from booze.
Runny duck santa, was a sober duck they
say, but he lost his dough buying nidgets, now
now he drinks his life away.



There must have been some beer left in
that old rabbit can they found, for when
they placed it in his hand, down he chugged
that shizz right down.
Oh, runny duck santa, was as drunk as he
could be, cuz the children say he began to
sweat as he sprayed his boots with pee.



NEXT TIME GET
SOME REAL LIQUOR,
YA PUNKS!



Run, gin and vodka, run, gin and vodka
Look at runny gin
run, gin and vodka, run, gin and vodka
He's passed out in the snow.
Oh, runny duck santa, had to hurry off
again, so he flipped the bird, sayin'
took ya turds, n be back when you have gin.



MONEY

LAZY MICK

**WHEN THE JUDGE ASKS, "DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ELSE TO ADD?"
THERE IS ONLY ONE CORRECT RESPONSE: "NO THANK YOU, YOUR HONOR."**

INFERIOR COURT

FLYING SAUCERS OVER EL SEGUNDO

Have you driven down the 105 toward the beach and, while passing over La Cienega just before the freeway turns into Imperial Highway, noticed a towering structure with a glass front and what looks like a flying saucer parked on the roof? It's more noticeable at night when the building is illuminated from within and you can see the stairwells behind the glass like some kind of industrial diorama, and the saucer sports antennae with blinking lights so low-flying aircraft don't crash into it. I always wondered what it was. It sits in the no man's land between the Northrop-Grumman complex off Aviation and

the Raytheon buildings north of Imperial. I received a summons in the mail to appear at superior court in the airport courthouse on La Cienega south of Inglewood and east of El Segundo and I suspected I finally had an answer.

A few weeks earlier I'd been pulled over in Inglewood for driving with an expired registration sticker on my license plate. The cop had me cold on the registration - I'd had my head up my ass and didn't notice my registration was up for renewal and I hadn't received a notice in the mail. I was going to get a ticket, a fix or repair notice if I was lucky. But then there was the matter of my driver's license, which was a bit complicated in the sense that I didn't really have one. I can explain.

A few years back I got pulled over after seeing the Swingin' Utters at the Whisky. I'd drunk an entire bottle of Brennan's Irish whiskey and was not thinking too clearly when I left the parking lot and turned left instead of right on Sunset and couldn't find a decent place to turn around so I said "fuck it" and decided to go to a bar deep in the Valley for reasons that aren't altogether obvious since it was well past one and there was no way I was going to make last call. When I got to the bar and confronted the folly of my ways, I turned around, got back on the 405, and while attempting to change a tape cassette the flashing red and blue lights lit up the interior of my truck like a crime scene, which, in a sense, it was about to become.

The cops gave me the field sobriety test and a breath-a-lizer and after going through the motions they told me I'd blown a .183 - well over twice the legal limit. They were taking me in.

**"GOT NO MONEY, NO CAR,
SURE AS HELL AIN'T GOT
NO DRIVER'S LICENSE."**

I spent the night on a rack in the Van Nuys pokey and in the morning watched one of the Rocky movies and part of a pro football game. (I remember the Raiders were playing and they were heavy favorites among the drunk tank population.) I was released at around 11:00 and I took a cab to my truck, which, amazingly enough, was still sitting on the side of the road and hadn't been towed. I was late for my date at the bar that afternoon, but I kept the wristband as proof that I'd had a difficult night. Nothing impresses a lady more than a man with souvenirs from the Van Nuys Municipal Court attached to his body.

Long story short: I shelled out a couple grand, lost my court case, but won the battle with the DMV and my license wasn't suspended, even though I had no California license to suspend. I went to drunk school and did everything I needed to do to get my license "reinstated." By all that's right and holy the cops should have taken my Arizona license but they didn't, mainly because I called them "sir" and played the veteran card to the hilt. (If you think this doesn't make a difference you're wrong. The way the officer writes up the arrest report means everything to the lawyers.) I'd been driving on an Arizona license ever since I arrived in LA four years prior and never traded it in even though there's this law that say you're supposed to get a California license within the first two weeks after you move here. It was a hassle I didn't need, so I kept the Arizona license and went on with my life.

Johnny of the Swingin' Utters
Photo by Dan Monick



MONEY

WHITE BOY INGLEWOOD BLUES

Flash forward three years to Crenshaw Boulevard around the corner from Dinah's – the home of the best fried chicken in all of Los Angeles – on La Cienega where a very angry black cop is seriously pissed off at me because I'm driving on a suspended license. Before he ran my numbers through the system he'd asked me if he was going to find anything. I told him no, of course, and after my 502 popped up he was furious I'd lied to him. What was I supposed to do? Tell him everything? Do his job for him? Suck his dick? He wrote me a ticket and told me he couldn't pull my car (Pull my car? Who did this guy think he was? Easy E?) without issuing a warning.

"So," he said, and I could see this coming like it was a big-ass Snoopy in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade, "consider yourself warned."

"Whatever, dickhead," I replied telepathically.

But Officer Easy wasn't done with me yet.

"If I see you on the street," he snarled, "I'm going to run you in."

You're probably thinking I'm making this up, but I swear every word is true. He had every right to pull me over. My registration had expired and the state is hurting for cash. The tickets he writes today buys the bullets he'll need tomorrow. But I couldn't understand why he was so pissed off at me. Maybe he didn't like seeing white people in a mostly black neighborhood. His lines were corny, but his anger was unmistakable. Officer Easy must have TiVo-ed a season's worth of *Starsky & Hutch* episodes. I thanked him for his time ("Did I mention I was in the service?") and drove away.

The following week I took care of my registration, paid off an old ticket, and got an honest-to-god California driver's license after seven years in the state. The cashier at the Culver City Courthouse told me I was good to go and I put the incident behind me. Then I got the summons. I had to go see the man.

THE WHEEL IN THE SKY KEEPS ON TURNING; THE WHEELS OF JUSTICE DO NOT.

If you're thinking about spending the day in court after you've spent the better part of four days doing things you ought not to be doing and not getting any sleep while doing them, my advice to you is this: don't.

The court date was on a Tuesday that coincided with a trip to Vegas I'd planned. Instead of taking two days off, I took three. I worried about the wisdom of scheduling a visit to the judge after what was shaping up to be a binge weekend in Vegas with a bunch of desperate married guys from Virginia, but I was confident my trip to the airport courthouse would be a matter of showing some flunky my license and I'd be on my way. I was wrong.

I can't really say I woke up Tuesday morning feeling my best. I'm not even sure I can say I woke up. After crashing on the plane ride back to LA Monday night, I was feeling pretty jacked up and alert. I tried to sleep, but it didn't come until around 3:30 or 4:00 and I woke up every twenty minutes or so, convinced I'd overslept. I gave up around 5:00 and walked to AM/PM to get a paper and some coffee.

A few weeks earlier I'd read about how the LAPD were organizing stings so that when people who showed up for court in their cars and got

their licenses taken away, they'd follow them out of the courthouse parking lot and pull them over again on the way home, which is equal parts heartless and efficient. I took a cab.

The airport courthouse is a really nice building (and it better be since it cost \$70 million to build). It's ten-stories high and in spite of all the reinforced concrete it looks shiny and new. The entrance hallway on the ground floor actually looks like a hall of justice, which is precisely what it is. You go through the metal detector and take an elevator up to whatever floor you need to go to. The first thing you do is go to the third floor where the information office is located and consult the dot matrix (!) list that tells you where your case is being heard. There are no signs that tell you to do this, but it's pretty easy to distinguish the people who work in the courthouse from those who don't, and those who have been there before from those who haven't. Then you wait. And wait. And wait. And then you wait some more. Whoever said "the wheels of justice turn slow" was obviously a Los Angeles County civil servant.

IF YOU GOT BAD NEWS, YOU WANNA KICK THEM BLUES

Around this time I started to freak out a little bit. The coffee was wearing off fast. I felt really, really tired, but my heartbeat was racing like crazy. My body was confused by these competing sensations – like dropping acid at an emo show – gearing up for something that wasn't happening. My hands were jittery and my nerves were shot. My body felt overheated, and stayed on the verge of breaking into a full-on sweat all morning long. I hadn't eaten in days. I needed a bowl of albondigas and a 12-hour nap in the worst way.

I faked normalcy by talking with the prettiest girl in the courthouse. She was petite, well proportioned, and had exotic-looking features that were hard to place. She could have been from Fiji or South Gate. It was hard to tell. She wore a tight pink sweater and a white blouse with oversized cuffs and collar. She was easily the best-dressed person waiting to get inside the courtroom. She seemed really nervous and was grateful for the small talk. I felt bad that she had to stand in this hallway filled with bad, shiftless men. When the bailiff opened the door, we wished each other good luck and went inside.

The courthouse was pretty much what I expected, but I was surprised by the number of desks set up between the judge's bench and the gallery where the alleged fuck-ups sat. The bailiff sat on the right side of the room; the Spanish language facilitator sat on the left. Up front was the woman who processed public defender requests, and to the right assistant district attorneys sorted through stacks of cases. To the left there is a gallery window where the people in custody get to sit when their case is being heard.

For some reason my paperwork got mixed in with the cases in the public defender file, and because I didn't figure this out until it was almost lunchtime, I spent the entire morning session doing nothing but watching and waiting.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ABOUT SUPERIOR COURT AND THE PEOPLE WHO INHABIT IT

• If you're going to get really angry at the bailiff, to the point of raising your voice so that the judge has to tell you to calm down, it's prob-

ably not a good idea to get so calm that you fall asleep and start snoring five minutes later.

• When the judge asks, "Do you have anything else to add?" There is only one correct response: "No thank you, your honor."

• If you think there's a chance you might have violated your parole and you might not be coming home, don't bring your three daughters to the courthouse with you, especially when none of them are old enough to drive and will start bawling the second they figure out daddy's not coming home.

• If you are put into custody following your arrest for shoplifting a CD at Best Buy, be prepared to get laughed at by all the homeboys in the gallery, and while you're retreating into the shanty of your very public stupidity and shame, you might want to re-evaluate the life decisions that led to you actually having to serve time for petty theft. This is what Bail Bondsmen are for, you dipshit.

• The public defender chick looked like she'd burned out on civil service during the Clinton years, and she was only in her late 20s.

• The busiest of the ADA's had all the marks of an alcoholic: flordid face, bloodshot eyes, and big-ass gut on a pipsqueak legs.

• The food at the cafeteria was the best cafeteria food I've had since the dining hall on Chicken Filet Thursday at Radford University. Oven roasted turkey with dressing, gravy and a spinach salad. However, keep in mind that the court breaks for 90 minutes and the strip bar around the corner on Imperial has a pretty decent buffet.

THE BLACK WIDOW OF BELLFLOWER

By some quirk of fate, my new friend, pretty in pink, was the first case on the docket after lunch. I was slated to go second, so I was sitting up front trying to look eager and alert, but I was also more than a little eager to learn what this hot little Latina from Bellflower had done to end up in superior court. I guessed she bounced a check at a nail salon or something to that effect and waited to hear the charge.

"Assault with a firearm."

I couldn't believe my ears. Even the homeboys in the back were stunned.

My session with the ADA was short and sweet. She was so grateful that I had my shit together and had actually renewed my registration, procured a license and managed to remember to bring both pieces of paperwork to the courthouse that she knocked my driving on a suspended license charge down to driving without a valid license. (It's still a misdemeanor, not an infraction, but a less costly one.) My time before the judge was a matter of course. (Yes, your honor. No, your honor. Three bags full, your honor.)

I went to the clerk and stood in line to pay my fee. After another 45-minute wait I was on my way. I called a cab and waited outside. The Black Widow of Bellflower exited the courthouse. The first thing she did was remove the clip that kept her hair in a tight, perfect ponytail, and he hair came down in a black, silky wave. She looked over and smiled at me. It took a surprisingly long time for me to come to my senses: there is no such thing as a piece of ass worth getting shot for. I punched a few buttons on my cell, and pretended to talk on the phone.

–Money





May 13, 1978, Jimmy Buffett: Fuck "Margaritaville." Fuck "parrotheads."

"Live from New York – it's Saturday night!" This opening line from one of America's funniest sketch comedy shows quickly became familiar with me growing up as a kid in the '70s, as it did for millions of other viewers after it first hit televisions nationwide in 1975. If I was able to keep my eyes open late enough during those Saturday nights of TV years past, I'd always keep my fingers crossed in hopes that *Saturday Night Live* would show a new episode of "The Mr. Bill Show." Some of you might remember Mr. Bill – that little colorful man made of Play-Doh who'd get killed every which way possible at the end of each episode, either by Mr. Hand, Sluggo, or sometimes both. Mr. Bill's dog, Spot, would always get his inevitable share of violence, too.

Anyway, besides my yearning to see Mr. Bill on *SNL*, I'd always hope in vain that my childhood r'n'r gods, KISS, would be the musical guests to perform on the show, too. Week after week, years later and to this very day, KISS has yet to be introduced to rock the NBC studios audience in NYC where *SNL* has been filmed for some twenty-eight years now, which is kinda strange being that KISS hails from the big apple, as well. I've always remembered this as a kid growing up with that show. And lately, it's caused quite a bit of thinking on my part of who's been a musical guest on *SNL* and which musical guests have never been given the opportunity to covet a slice of this late night Saturday tradition. After digging around a bit, I stumbled upon the complete list of hosts and musical guests on the official *SNL* site (<http://www.saturday-night-live.com/sn/guestsbyseason.html> for those of you who want to fully check it out). Not to my surprise, the outnumbered buoys of shining rock and roll justice are bobbing amongst the schools of shitfish squirming through the stink-ridden sea that's splattered all over this list of musical guests.

Hint alert. Do you get the feeling that I'm not too fucking keen on this list? Hot dog, we have a wiener. Yeah, I'm not backing a lot of the choices of "musical guests" that *SNL* has showcased over the years. And I'd like to share some of the choices that have caused my AFS to substantially flare up upon discovery of this list. Incidentally, AFS, or Art Fuentes Syndrome, is a rare medical condition that causes one to break out in punches when confronted with very unpleasant entertainment situations, especially music. AFS is believed to have bred itself into existence somewhere in the Southern California area over the last thirty years or so. Anyhow, what follows are some of the biggest culprits who're aggravating my AFS as well as which musical guests should've been on

to take their place.

May 13, 1978, Jimmy Buffett: Fuck "Margaritaville." Fuck "parrotheads." Give me Jonathan Richman, with or without his Modern Lovers.

November 11, 1978 and April 12, 1980, The Grateful Dead: If I have to explain this one to any of you reading this, this world of ours is in more trouble than I expected. The remedy, besides an insane barrage of bullets? The Dead Boys would've filled in the void quite nicely, especially since *SNL* cast member John Belushi was a pal and fan of the 'Boys. Belushi even sat in on drums when the Dead Boys had the Blitz Benefit at CBGB (hospital bill fund-raiser for Dead Boy drummer Johnny Blitz who had gotten stabbed up rather severely).

December 20, 1980, *The Pirates of Penzance*: What in the name of spandexed smanliness was that? If people wanted a Broadway show, they could've taken one in minutes away from the NBC studios at any one of the great performing theatres NYC has to offer. *The Pirates of Penzance* – shit the bed! Who booked that particular episode of *SNL*? Lorne Michaels (*SNL* head honcho) – if you happen to be reading this by some remote chance, please get in touch or email me to reassure my feelings that someone got slapped and/or kicked for booking that whopper (read: boner) of a musical guest. You could've had the debut year of one of England's finest on that episode, The Psychedelic Furs.

November 12, 1983, Mick Fleetwood's Zoo and Lindsey Buckingham: If there's anything more vomit-inducing than ipecac or Fleetwood Mac, it's a "project" involving two of the band's former members. The cure for this strain of nausea should've been X. At least they know how to rock an acoustic number the right way when called upon. And even though Exene can be catty onstage at times, I'm betting dollars to donuts that she'd take Stevie Nicks down in an alley brawl.

November 5, 1988 and December 8, 1990, Edie Brickell & New Bohemians: Who in their right mind decided on Pee-Pee Trickle as a music guest? Wavy Fucking Gravy? And up his hippy ass, too, by the way. The counter-attack to this terrible travesty should've been handed to The Plasmatics or even Wendy O. Williams. When was the last time you saw Pee-Pee crash a bus, smash a television, or chainsaw a guitar at one of her love-ins? That's right. You didn't. And Wendy rocked the hell out her audiences while Pee-Pee performs nothing short of a Quaalude squared. Yawn.

April 20, 1991, Michael Bolton: As with the Grateful Dead, this one's a definite no-brainer. If

explanation for this "artist" need be, I'm sending over a rabid pack of winged monkeys straight to where you live, and I'll tell you, they've been plenty unemployed and pissed since their *Wizard of Oz* gig. Don't make me unleash this ugly primate fury, okay? The dude they should've had singing to keep the studio audience from dozing off to Bolton's grunting and wheezing? The Godfather, aka, Iggy Pop, thank you very much. Not only would there be no dozing off, but folks in the audience would be ready to kick some ass after taking in a set of the Igster.

October 10, 1992, Spin Doctors: No. Bad. Very bad, not to mention wrong. To paraphrase Rodney Dangerfield from his film, *Easy Money*: "Hey, Spin Doctors, why don't you and the Dave Matthews Band put your heads together and make an ass outta yourself?" The Sit 'N Spins should've been replaced with Dramarama, one of the few truly original rock and roll bands that the '80s ever produced, period, god bless 'em.

January 15, 1994, Counting Crows: See above Spin Doctors explanation, and if the same physical science will allow it, then the first three-headed ass will exist in this world. The right line-up who could've usurped Count My Cornrows? Big Drill Car would've done the job and then some, my friends. And the dreadlocked bassist who played in BDC (Bob Thomson) more than proved that he could get his rock on like a supernatural s.o.b. on the four-stringed mofo, unlike the singer from the Cornrows who would stand and flail his nappy dreadnubs all around like Corky from *Life Goes On* about to go on his first date. What a smanhandler.

February 19, 1994, Crash Test Dummies: Maybe they really should've used these dummies in a real crash test, 'cause it would have offered up way overdue space for God's gift to rock and roll down San Diego way (that's right – you heard me), Rocket From The Crypt.

April 16, 1994, Pearl Jam: This one is in a disgrace category all by itself, and I'll tell you why. *SNL* was and still is filmed in NYC. And NYC was home to one of the greatest rock'n'roll bands to ever make such a huge impression on their imitators to follow – the Ramones. To this day, I'm *still* scratching my head as to why the Ramones never got the invite to be a musical guest. They've always seemed like the natural choice to me, and I'm sure that I'm not the only one who feels this way. Fucking injustice, pure and simple. Explanations, anyone?

April 15, 1995, April 20, 1996, and February 24, 2001, Dave Matthews Band: As homeboy Mark Pananides up in Santa Barbara once said: "Will somebody please do something about the Dave Matthews Band?" The band who should've been the guest and could've done

something about this was Motorhead. But, like the Ramones, it's too obvious a choice to get some quality musical guests on your show. Need I go on about the r'n'r greatness that is Motorhead? I thought so.

September 30, 1995, Blues Traveler: Blues Traveler? Why not have just booked the real deal, Canned Heat? Oh, shit, sorry. Canned Heat had split up many years back. I forgot that this was 1995 and that Blues Traveler was trying to fly low under the radar and re-introduce 'em as themselves. My bad.

October 28, 1995 and October 24, 1998, Alanis Morissette: No – anyone but this foo-foo popstar who alla sudden is a “pissed-off womyn rocker.” Joan Jett would've filled this guest slot perfectly 'cause she has and always will rock your cock off (don't care if you're female, she'll find a way to do it). Alanis Whoresette – what the hell were they thinking?!

December 16, 1995 and November 23,

1996, Bush: With abominations like Bush dragging the name of rock through the mud, no one in their right mind at that show could've thought to get D Generation on to wow the audience? The power of rock compels you! For shame.

January 20, 1996, Tori Amos: Did anyone then or now really care what Tearing Anus has to warble about? Exactly. The whiplashing power-chords of L7 would've proved a beautiful thing this particular episode.

April 13, 1996, Rage Against The Machine: Go rage against your mom, cuz this ain't metal. And this just ain't right. The only metal outfit (and I use the term “metal” here to the truest, purest form, unlike what's classified as metal these days) who is more than justified to take the SNL stage is Slayer, and I'd really like to know as to why Slayer hasn't been offered the guest slot on SNL yet. Like I said, this just ain't right.

April 12, 1997, Spice Girls: Put instruments in front of these Spice Girls and prepare to be disappointed. But put The Lunachicks up on the

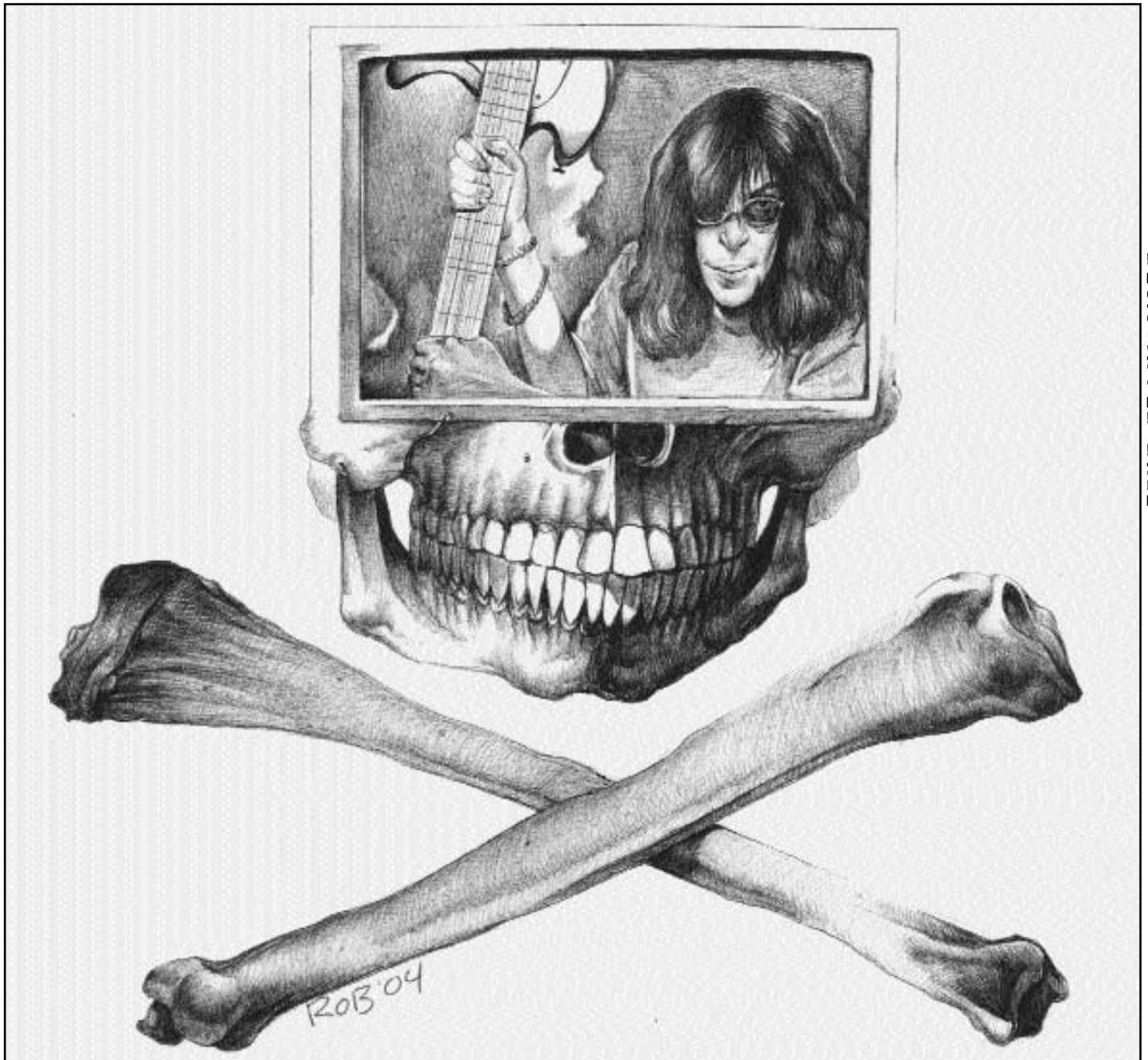
SNL stage and prepare to get yer rock on. This one was a terrible oversight – should've made it happen.

December 6, 1997, Metallica: This one is rather sad, because they would've been their own best replacement on the show had it been a SNL episode from the years of Metallica's first three records. Better late than never? Not in this case. And Lars Ulrich still needs to shut his fucking mouth (two words, Lars – Dave Lombardo. Now sit down).

December 13, 1997, Hanson: Don't even make me go here. Your buddy's bar band stuck in the '70s would've been an even better fitting slot replacement for this offering of ass.

March 14, 1998 and May 15, 1999, Backstreet Boys: I had always thought that SNL was geared toward the adult market. When did it fucking turn into *Tiger Beat Magazine*? Should've brought in The Candy Snatchers. Pure, undiluted power onstage and these boys bleed for their love of r'n'r. The Snatchers

ILLUSTRATION BY ROB RUELAS



DESIGNATED DALE

would've made more funny characters in the skits, as well, not to mention showing the regular cast members what real partying is all about.

January 8, 2000, Blink 182: If *SNL* wanted to get it right on this particular episode, all they had to do was pick up the phone and call the Descendents. Milo would've been more than happy to rally up with the troops once more to ass-out the stubborn shit stain in everyone's ears that is Blink 182.

March 11, 2000, 'N Sync: See above expla-

kitty. Wrong. Very wrong.

November 17, 2001, Creed: Why do people do stupid things? Like book piles of ass like this to perform on *SNL*? Makes no sense to me. What does make sense is booking one of the best original bands to come along in years, Throw Rag, and they would've knocked the NBC studio's socks off had they got the slot instead of the ass-assity-assness that is Creed.

January 19, 2002, The Strokes: Good gawd! ? How dare you having an act like The Pickle

to book a band that tries in vain to resemble the early '80s Social Distortion, then maybe you should've booked Social Distortion, not that the Good Harlots even have 1/1000th of talent that Social D possess anyway, 'cause they most certainly do not and never will. I'm not ruling out that if the Good Harlots and Ataris put their heads together, we'd have yet another ass.

Now, in all fairness, I have to say that *SNL* has had some pretty damn good musical guests over the years, some that have even been on

Hanson: Don't even make me go here. Your buddy's bar band stuck in the '70s would've been an even better fitting slot replacement for this offering of ass.

nation of the Backseat Boys, but insert musical guest The Lazy Cowgirls, a band that has more than earned itself a spot on that show. Here's hoping they won't go unnoticed and land themselves a slot.

March 10, 2001, Don Henley: Anything remotely linked to The Eagles gets fired on the spot (with exception to Joe Walsh's track, "In the City", only because it was used in the 1979 film, *The Warriors*). Don Henley was in The Eagles, so according to the Torrez, he's fired. Shane MacGowan (famed leader of The Pogues) should've bumped Don Smanley from the guest slot this episode.

April 7, 2001, Coldplay: You know that things are terribly off-center in this world when a "band" like Coldplaywithyourselves get a *SNL* slot when an outstanding group such as Toys That Kill continue to get cat litter kicked in their faces from the paws of the big corporate

Stokers on when a band such as The Hives beats them down to ground with a brick, musically speaking. And The Hives would more than likely whip the Sausage Stokers' asses in a gang fight, as well.

April 6, 2002, Jimmy Eat World: This one is almost too embarrassing to talk about. Jimmy Eat World. Eat this, fuckers. How in the hell can a show like *SNL* pour this ass chowder into the homes of millions of viewers when they could've had the nutritious, power-packed rock stylings of the Dillinger Four rumbling television sets across the nation? It boggles the mind, I tell you.

February 8, 2003, The Dixie Chicks: The word "sickening" isn't even a fitting description for this musical mishap. There were two simple words to replace this disgrace - Johnny Cash (R.I.P.). No explanation needed for that one.

April 5, 2003, Good Charlotte: If you want

more than a couple of times. Some of my personal faves: Elvis Costello and the Attractions (Costello has also been on solo), The Kinks, Devo, Talking Heads, Blondie (also appeared solo as Debbie Harry), David Bowie, The Specials, Cheap Trick, Fear (who'd been caught on occasion partying with pal John Belushi), The Clash, Stray Cats, Madness, The Cult, The Replacements (Paul Westerberg also appeared solo seven years later), Los Lobos, The Pogues, Rollins Band, and Beck. With any bit of luck, I can only hope as I did when I was a Mr. Bill-jonesing kid that my list of personal faves will grow with the seasons of *SNL* to come. I ain't gonna hold my breath, though, that's for sure.

I'm Against It.

-Designated Dale
DesignatedDale@aol.com



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THE DINGHOLE REPORTS

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

— Sicnarf and Funyuns are sitting at their ham radio in Funyuns' Milwaukee home, gulping Pabst and trying to tune in the Rhythm Chicken from Poland when they are both startled by a loud thunderous knocking at the door.—

(I'll get that, Doctor. You sit here and keep trying to get the Chicken in on that radio. — F.F.)

[Sicnarf calling Chicken. Come in Chicken. Sicnarf calling Chicken.

Yes, I'm home one month early. I was really shooting for the full-year vacation, but I guess I had to settle for the 11-month one instead. Being home for my mother hen's full Thanksgiving Day spread had a little to do with it as well. Actually, I've been stateside for a week now. Damn, that word sounds pretty lame till you actually use it in proper context. So, anyway, I am now back in the home nesting area. I believe we pulled off one hell of a stunt, the 11-month vacation in Poland and other various Eastern Europe odd spots. I myself have been unemployed for 13 months now and let me tell you, IT FEELS NICE! I would highly recommend

highway. Poland's average car is more like an indoor go-kart. The SUV's and Hummers looked like giant mutants as they roared past us. We headed straight for the Bayview Family Restaurant (a.k.a. the Copper Penny, the kitchen of which once hosted a 3 AM Chicken gig!). There we thoroughly enjoyed a heaping American greasy-spoon plateful of eggs, hash browns, and sausage, a true down home American delicacy not to be found in Poland.

[Mr. Chicken, we are still not quite sure what you've been doing in Poland for the last year. Maybe now you can explain yourself a little bet-

[Gesundheit! — Dr. S.]

(Okay, Chicken. You're the Rhythm Chicken. Tell us about the RUCKUS! — F.F.)

To tell the truth, the only Chicken gigs in the last year were around Mannertag in Germany. I never even played a single note in Poland. In a way, I have utterly failed in my mission to bring ruckus to the Poles. I guess you could say that I took a vacation from being the Rhythm Chicken. Even modern day superheroes need a break now and then. Then again, the ruckus had at Mannertag was grand enough to sustain my chaos urges

I brought along my bartender Jim as a safety measure. Never travel without your bartender!

Come in Chicken. — Dr. S.]

{Nanoo-nanoo..... Shaz-bot! — Robin Williams from ham radio!}

— Just as Funyuns opens the door, a large LEVETATING EGG hovers into the room! —

(What the cluck? I can't believe it! No! It can't be! — F.F.)

[Sicnarf calling Chicken. Come in Orson. — Dr. S.]

— Then the large hovering egg lowers to the floor and..... hatches. Two wings rise out of its interior, each holding a drumstick, eclipsing a blinding light. —

I HAVE RETURNED! I am the Rhythm Chicken! Behold my liver-bruising presence! Drink of this Pabst; it is my blood! My foreign assignment is complete! I am once again one with Wisconsin! Bathe me in beer! Bring me gold, frankincense, and myrrh! I will also accept Pabst, Blatz, and Schlitz! Present me with the key to the state! Countrymen, lend me your beers!

{Hey, that sounds like MY egg! Who stole my egg? — R.W.}

[(RHYTHM CHICKEN!!! HEY!!! YOU'RE HOME!!! — F.F. & Dr. S.)]

the 13 months of being unemployed to anyone who can pull it off.

(Chicken! I can't believe you're home! My liver is doing back-flips! I wish I had a red carpet to roll out, but I CAN offer you this Pabst! — F.F.)

Pabst accepted! — gulp, gulp, gulp, gulp, gulp..... smack, AAAH! — THAT'S WISCONSIN!!!

[Mr. Chicken! Welcome home! How was your trip? — Dr. S.]

Well, it sure was one hellish day of flights and airports. Krakow to Vienna to Washington DC to Chicago. Then the drive north and the glorious crossing of the state line into Wisconsin. You know, we've seen over 50 different castles all over Eastern Europe, but none looked as dazzling and regal as the Mars Cheese Castle just within the Wisconsin border!

(So, you say you've been back for a week. What's the first thing you did when you got back, and what's up with that egg you rode in on? — F.F.)

Oh, this? I stole it from Robin Williams, or more correctly, Mork. After arriving in Chicago we had offerings of Pabst thrown down our throats while being whisked up to Milwaukee's south side. We marveled at all the huge cars on the

ter. — Dr. S.]

I wanted to move to Poland. I learned the basics of the Polish language. I moved to Poland. My Hen came with me. We lived in Krakow, Poland for 11 months. Rent and food in Poland is dirt-cheap. Imagine, if you will, an 11-month vacation in a foreign land where you can live for peanuts. Imagine having all the free time to catch up on all the reading and writing that usually gets postponed because of work. We enjoyed 11 months of catching up on years of lost sleep! We would eat a late breakfast and then walk all over the city taking in all sorts of odd sights, museums, strange street-vendors, centuries-old architecture, decades-old commie architecture, an endless array of oddball items for sale everywhere, etc... The old Russian junk available at the Polish flea markets was always interesting! Every two or three weeks we would get the itch to get out of town and travel to the strangest corners of Poland and Eastern Europe. We saw Zakopane, Rzeszow, Lancut, Przemysl, Gdansk, Wroclaw, Prague, Slovakia, Budapest, Austria, Dresden, Frohburg, Zamosc, Warsaw, Kazimierz Dolny, Lublin, Malbork, Gdansk, Sopot, Gdynia, Hel, Cieszyn, Wadowice, Oswiecim, Denmark, Norway, and even Szczeczeszyn!

for a whole year. I guess you could say that the whole yearlong stay in Poland was all just to help facilitate the Chicken's appearance at Mannertag.

(So you never even gave the Poles one chaotic note of ruckus, even after you distributed your warning poster? I think the Chicken is growing old and weak. — F.F.)

[Nonetheless, Mr. Chicken, you surely must have some interesting tales to share. — Dr. S.]

There isn't too much to tell, really. I've been on vacation. The major differences I care to bring up between America and Poland deal mostly with food. One thing I'll really miss is the neighborhood produce stands. Fresh potatoes, beets, carrots, peppers, mushrooms, onions, parsnips, cabbage, strawberries, raspberries, leeks, cucumbers, etc... all from the friendly little shack around the corner and about one tenth the price of shopping in America. The one veggie I couldn't get there was sweet potatoes. I will also miss my little closet/kitchen in our cement cubbyhole apartment. It had a crappy old Polish oven (two temp settings: on and off!) and stove top, an ancient beat up sink, a tiny countertop, and the crappy old Russian-made refrigerator that would only fit out in the hallway. It was like cooking

while camping. Grocery shopping was another interesting challenge! There was no brown sugar, but about 12 different types of flour! There was no plain yellow French's salad mustard, but about 20 different types of flavored mustard, along with about 10 different types of ketchup (picante, Mexican, sweet, Italian, etc...). I liked how bread was sold unbagged, the loaf sitting on the shelf. There was always a knife there so you could cut yourself a half-loaf if you wished. Most of the groceries were basic raw materials, making most of your home cooking "from scratch" by necessity. Soon after returning to America, I entered a few American grocery stores and was almost sickened by how everything here is pre-made, pre-processed, over-processed, and

Heino and lesser-known Freddie Quinn! Freddie Quinn is an odd German guy who sings a few cheesy American country-music folk classics with a German accent. Oh yeah, it's that bad (that good!). My favorite discovery from the John Peel show would have to be the Marked Men, blazing raw rock & roll that's ruckus-like in nature and Rhythm Chicken approved! Other than these exceptions, I was quite sheltered from new music for the year. I spent many hours reading and listening to old Roy Rogers. This may have caused my mental instability and questionable embracing of the sometimes-formidable force of "stampede." Please forgive my previous rants dealing with said "stampede." However, I do still hold the Fleet Farm Calendar as a major resource for

few raised eyebrows when I introduced him to my Minneapolis friends as my bartender Jim. Priorities! Having a good friend on the inside at First Avenue (major Minny rock venue) got us special treatment (free entry and loads of drink tickets!) for an R.L. Burnside and T Model Ford blues show. Many of Minneapolis' older generation rock royalty were out that night. We were more interested in our drink tickets and the old drunken man swearing on stage with his guitar. The second the sold-out show was over I took advantage of the thick crowds pouring out the door and set up my stage on the sidewalk outside.

I let loose with the rhythm rock and my ears swayed violently to the ruckus. A crowd instantly formed around me and my little circus of

always delivers the ruckus!

[I hate to say it, Mr. Chicken, but I'm afraid you're not exactly delivering ruckus-quality reports these days. I could always submit another Dunghole Report to help you out. — Dr. S.]

(Face it, Chicken! You're living in the past! We need new ruckus! Poland has really softened you up. I've heard rumors that the folks at Razorcake HQ are thinking of replacing your column with the writings of Gary Coleman. — F.F.)

NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO
OO!!!!!! Listen here, you slick-slacks! Your sacrilegious hoosh-wash shall be your demise! Beware, America, I am once again



RHYTHM CHICKEN

how all the packaging is grossly cutting-edge, flashy, and "in your face." *Terminator 3* Spaghetti-O's, Eminem sugared breakfast cereal, *Who Wants to be a Millionaire* Fruit Juice, *Survivor* Fruit Roll-Ups, Microwavable Operation: Iraqi Freedom Soup Packets, etc... I guess these are things an American wouldn't really notice as being odd until you live in a place where the limited groceries have names like rice, bread, flour, and milk.

Wow, I'm sure this is boring everyone to tears. Okay, I'll cover our punk rock experiences. Krakow didn't have the busiest schedule of punk shows. We were able to see two shows in Krakow the whole year. On our first trip to Prague we saw two shows in two nights (Enon and Mars Volta). Otherwise, our only channel for new music was John Peel's weekly show on the BBC and the very appreciated CDs that Todd at Razorcake would send us. The only CDs I've actually purchased in the last year were by Prague's local group called Sunshine, a group I would highly recommend. I also acquired a score of CDs by Germany's favorite

day-to-day fact-finding and aesthetic fulfillment.

(What's going on here Chicken? You're sounding, dare I say, DOMESTICATED! What did Poland do to you? This is sounding more like *Martha Stuart Living* or *Better Homes and Gardens*! You ARE the Rhythm Chicken. These ARE the Dinghole Reports! Now, WHERE'S THE RUCKUS? Please don't leave the floor open for another one of Sicnarf's Dunghole Reports! — F.F.)

[Oh, I've got plenty more Dunghole Reports if you wish... — Dr. S.]

Dinghole Report #33: A Drunken Dancing Hüsker Chicken! (Rhythm Chicken sighting #way back when)

About four years ago I was still living in my northern Wisconsin woodshed and embarked on one of the many Twin City Chicken tours. I brought along my bartender Jim as a safety measure. Never travel without your bartender! It caused a

chaos. The drunk show-goers cheered and yelled, fully appreciating the added bonus they were receiving that night. Many were dancing around in front of me, while others tossed numerous dollar bills into my bass drum! I was all caught up in the moment, scorching the corner of First and 7th with my cop-escaping shindig. It wasn't until later that my Minneapolis friend Steve informed me of exactly what happened during my show. I guess there were a few drunkards dancing around, and there was one homeless-looking fellow who kept trying to grab money out of my bass drum until Steve scolded him. Then, a very drunk Grant Hart (Minneapolis rock legend Hüsker Chicken himself!) was doing a staggering wild-ass drunken dance of approval in front of my kit! I ended up making about \$25 in tips for that night's 10-minute show. Two weeks prior, while I was playing on the exact same spot, a member of L7 was doing a sort of "grind-dance" on my bass drum. Be it wooing the celebrities or riling up the local drunks, the Rhythm Chicken

among you! I am re-energizing for a counter-strike! With my instruments of mass ruckus once again at hand I will crush all in my way! I will deliver a STAMPEDE OF RUCKUS!!!

— The Rhythm Chicken crawls back into his egg and flies out the door in disgust! —

[Well, Funyuns, he's back. I just don't think he's the same. Maybe I should step in next issue? — Dr. S.]

(I'd give him one more chance to whoop up some new ruckus, otherwise it's out with the old, my friend. — F.F.)

— The ham radio comes to life once again. —

{Shaz-bot! I want my egg! — R.W.}

— Sicnarf and Funyuns flip off the radio and head out to the Cactus Club for some Pabst. —

—Rhythm Chicken
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THE TWISTED BALLOON

SO, EVERYONE HATES CLOWNS, WHO ARE PEOPLE WHO DRESS IN FUNNY COSTUMES TO ENTERTAIN, WHILE EVERYONE LOVES PIRATES, WHO ARE PEOPLE WHO COMMIT CRIMES.

PIRATES VS. CLOWNS

Jef Taylor¹ was riding next to me in the Critical Mass ride a few Halloweens ago and said to me, "You know Rich, your transition from clown to pirate has been so gradual, I barely noticed it until just now."

Indeed, I have certainly been dressing up as those two icons a lot in recent years, and I have been noticing some interesting things about the nature of people in our society as a result. These were reiterated this last Halloween, when a lazy Rich Mackin recycled his pirate costume. I was in the company of my special lady friend Mary, who was dressed as a clown. Clown and pirate. Pirate and clown. The reactions were predictable. Almost everyone would gleefully shout "Ahoy!" and "Yarr!" or even "Walk the plank!" upon seeing me in pirate garb. A few would even tell a pirate joke, 90% of which involved puns on the "arr" sound made by pirates and the sea captain on *The Simpsons*: "Why did the pirate take a vacation? To get a little Arrrrr and Arrrrr!" "What do impatient pirates say on a long voyage? Arrrrrrrr we there yet?" A few would include "How much does it cost a pirate to pierce his ears? A Buck-an-ear!"²

Ironically, for all the jokes told to and about pirates, nobody wants to be funny with a clown. In fact, in my experience, the only people who seem to like clowns are those who have an ironic love of clowns for the scary clown factor. (I have even had people refuse to buy some of my early zines for fear of the clown logo I use.) Sean Tejaratchi, in *Crap Hound*³ issue 4 (the "Clowns, Devils and Bait" issue), notes that, despite talking to everyone he knew about clowns for six months in order to compile the thousand or so pictures used in his zine, "*not a single person expressed to (him) a positive opinion of clowns.*" He adds, "Someone should tell these fuckers that a deathly white mask and exaggerated, blood-red features are not the express route to a child's heart."

Think about these two themes in pop culture. Johnny Depp in a certain Disney film is a hero even if the bad guys are also pirates. Yellowbeard, for all his evil deeds, was a protagonist. *The Pirates of Penzance*? Come on! But clown movies? *Shakes the Clown*? Pennywise from *It*? Wouldn't a movie called *Klowns from Outer Space* have an IMPLIED Killer if it wasn't part of the title?

So, everyone hates clowns, who are people who dress in funny costumes to entertain, while everyone loves pirates, who are people who commit crimes. Furthermore, pirates are people who devoted their lives to crime, while clowns

that a person plays, not a real person.⁴ Historically, clowns have existed in some form in almost every society. Many tribal cultures have the trickster figure, and often the shaman has elements of clown. "Pirates are simply an ongoing breed of robbers and killers."⁵ And while some argue about the specifics of the term, pirates have existed as long as there have been boats. And while they no longer dress as the costumes inspired by the "golden age of piracy"⁶ suggest, there are still pirates now. "Some suggest that piracy and terrorism are terms that might as well be merged."⁷

Actually, since I opened up the can of worms of definition, let's discuss what piracy is. Article 15 of the Geneva Convention (1958) would tell you that "Piracy is 1) Any illegal acts

of violence, terrorism, or any act of predation committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or private aircraft. 2) Any act of voluntary participation in the operation of a ship or an aircraft with knowledge of facts making it a pirate ship or aircraft..." Often, piracy is synonymous with stealing or crime in general (software piracy, pirate radio, etc) while some uses make it any form of waterborne crime – usually referring to raiding a ship. This definition would thus include Vikings and others as pirates (thus putting a damper on Maddy Tight Pants' *Razorcake* column from a few issues back, if I recall it correctly). However, some refer to piracy specifically to sea robbery and related crimes by those who chose the pirate lifestyle and its anarchistic belief system. This



definition would exclude Vikings, as they were only part-time sea robbers.

To define a few other related terms, a “privateer” is a ship, or crewmember of such a ship, that is given an official okay by a government to attack enemies, or possibly just non-allies, of that government. Sometimes, privateers were commissioned to hunt pirates. Sometimes privateers became pirates. Of course, it’s worth considering what the philosophic difference really is between “sanctioned” looting and self-initiated looting. A “buccaneer” is a pirate that operated in the Caribbean around the seventeenth century. The name derives from the French word “boucaner” which means to smoke-dry or cure meat, and refers to the cooking process of the Arawak tribespeople, picked up by settlers and pirates who ate the various animals found on the islands of that region.

Of course, the Arawaks are usually best known for being the people who were unfortunate enough to be the friendly Indians who our good friend Chris Columbus stumbled into on his misguided attempt to sneak up on India. Chris is mentioned a lot in books about piracy – I mean, technically, if we are going to define pirate as a guy on a boat who rapes, murders and/or steals, Columbus has enough pillaging, looting and bloodshed under his belt to match Captain Hook any day.⁸ It would seem that Columbus really helped set the stage for piracy: were it not for his “discovering” the new world, perhaps there would not be the European conquest that set up the gold, slave and other trade

routes which allowed for piracy to be such a lucrative profession. Huge boats with vast amounts of valuables in the middle of nowhere sailed with small, tired crews. European capitalist types were ready to exploit whatever resources they could find and in doing so, presented a new resource for the anarcho-capitalist pirates to exploit.⁹

Some pirate groups in the golden age drew up charters or codes of conduct. Typical points of order were the sharing of booty – usually that the crew all got the same share of the loot, with specialized personnel (navigator, carpenter, etc.) getting slightly more, and the captain getting perhaps a share and a half. Those who first spied the target vessel or showed bravery might have a special reward set in the code. Rules of discipline for the crew would be set down, and these punishments were often more fair than in other aspects of society of the time. Of course, fairness and consistency only applied to discipline between pirates; captives were often another story. Still, some charters went so far as to cite punishments for “meddling” with a “prudent” woman without her consent. One of the worst punishments was marooning, stranding the offender on a deserted island with no food or water, but often a gun and one shot’s worth for the eventual suicide.¹⁰ Other charters involved restitution for serious wounds, such as loss of eye or limb (pirates may have been the first to have medical insurance); voting systems for decisions or new leadership; and rules for musicians. Indeed, musicians were important to

pirates, both for entertainment and to create battle music for attacks.

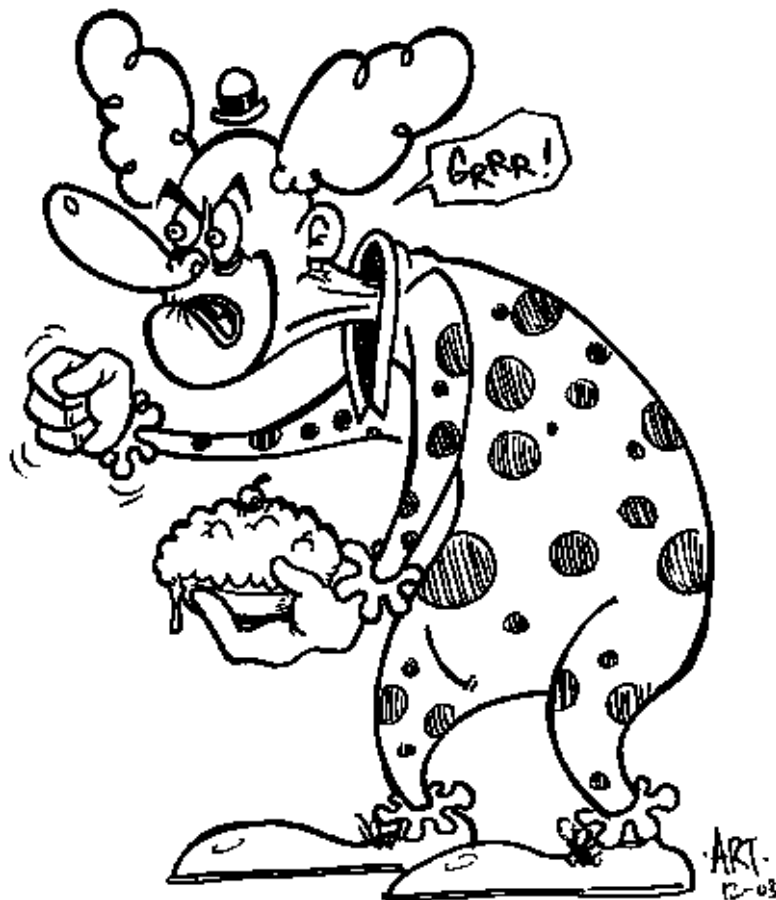
Indeed, a pirate attack was not just about one group hoping to defeat another in battle; it was an exercise in terror. Today, a pirate’s weapon is speed – an armed group taking a vessel by surprise and making off before anyone knows what to do. In the golden age, the pirate’s greatest asset was fear. Pirate attacks were rarely about fighting skill – the idea was to get a crew to surrender without a fight by scaring them into submission. This is one reason that pirates flew flags with skulls and related imagery – the skull and crossbones was indeed popular, as was any combination of skeletons, swords, devils, bleeding hearts and hourglasses – a symbol that time is up. Celebrated pirate Anne Bonny would concoct horrible visuals such as slaughtering animals to coat the ship in their blood and enact heinous set-ups, terrifying her victims. Edward Teach, better known as Blackbeard, was known for lighting slow burning wicks and placing them in braids in his beard and hair, so his head – already scary for his intense eyes and huge beard atop a big, heavily armed man – was surrounded and followed by clouds of smoke. Pirates also used weapons such as early forms of grenades¹¹ which not only exploded, but had smoke bomb and stink bomb varieties.

The idea was not to defeat the crew, but to get them to submit. Alone in the middle of the sea, plundering could be a long, thorough event. Sometimes, pirates would take days getting every last useful object from their victims.

One form of pirate terror that seems to be more fiction than fact is walking the plank. Real life pirates had no more desire to make someone walk the plank than real life spies kill each other the way James Bond’s enemies do. It merely makes a nice, drawn-out device for art and literature and provides a chance for escape. Sometimes captives were left unharmed since it was the loot that was desired and hurting people just brought more authorities and problems. Other pirates killed their victims outright. Taking time out to make someone walk the plank was time better spent ransacking the ship. The pirates who did want to torture people could think of far more sadistic ways than an extended jump into the water.

Other pirate misconceptions include the overly romantic notion that pirates were completely democratic. Indeed, how pirates worked their subculture was far more democratic than the bulk of society, but like the Ancient Greeks, their democracy only included those who they considered equal. While there were many black pirates, freed slaves and otherwise, captured slaves were more likely to be considered part of the loot. In fact, pirate loot consisted of far more things that would make for a fictional haul of gold and jewels. Consider that pirates plundered all they could. They often wound up looting ships filled with supplies, food, and textiles. If the pirates couldn’t use it themselves, they sold it to someone who could. While buried treasure was not unheard of, pirates more likely spent their takings outright on supplies, alcohol and women, often gambling away what remained. Pirates usually had a live fast, die young attitude.

Finally, I should note the use of the word “ship.” Today, we tend to think of a ship as any big boat. But in the golden age of pirates, a ship technically referred to specific forms of sailing vessels with at least three masts with square





SQUEEZE MY HORN

WHY IS THIS HAPPENING? BECAUSE WE ARE FAT, LAZY, UNINFORMED, AND OPINIONATED AMERICANS?

As I left last issue, I was preparing for the possible strike in the grocery industry; well, what was a possibility is now reality, as you probably all know. Yes, because of me, getting groceries is now more difficult. It feels like I've been doing nothing for the last two months, but to be truthful, I've been picketing. It's both humbling and humiliating. Chaos is running rampant on the picket line. Granted, I don't see many professional picketers, but I would think that the union would have been better prepared for this, so let me tell you what this is really all about. Plain and simple, it's about Wal-Mart – you know, the company with the happy face price tags – but what they don't show you on the face are the horns or the blood that drips from a perfect set of fangs. The stores can talk all about health care costs and that we get paid higher than others, but when it comes right down to it, Wal-Mart is slated to enter the grocery biz in this state in 2004 and the

stores that make thirty to forty billion in profits are in fear of a company that makes hundreds of billions. I can see their concern.

The *LA Times* ran front-page articles from Sunday, Nov. 23 through Tuesday, Nov. 25 describing how Wal-Mart is spreading like a plague through the nation, and how they fuck people in other countries. The articles were very informative and, at the same time, very scary for the American worker. Now here's my confusion on this: don't Wal-Mart and K-Mart sell relatively the same crap, yet one reaps large profits annually and the other is fighting to stay afloat? I also read where a shirt at Wal-Mart costs pennies to manufacture in some far-away land and sells for \$8.99 or so on the rack. I thought that items at Wal-Mart were discounts. It sure doesn't seem like a discount to me. A shirt from, say, France, that costs a hundred dollars to make and I could get my hands on for sixty dollars, now that is a bargain. And that shirt from Wal-Mart that was

cranked out in less than a minute will last me how long until it becomes frayed faded and filled with holes? I thought so!

When I was a kid, the joy of going shopping (and usually it was for toys) was that shops were specialty shops. I remember the toy stores in the open-air malls that were more like Santa's workshop than the area next to automobiles, but that's a thing of the past. I've heard that Wal-Mart is the leading seller of toys, dog food and several other items, so that means that we no longer need Toy R Us, or Petco, and so on? Let's do away with malls and all go shop under one roof and stand in hundred-yard long lines. Woo hoo! Why is this happening? Because we are fat, lazy, uninformed, and opinionated Americans? Rumor has it that the union credit card, which the UFCW (the union of United Food and Commercial Workers) tries to ram down our throats, when researchers looked at where purchases were made, a high in percentage

occurred at Wal-Marts, Sam's Club, and Costco. That's right, union people are lazy, too.

Now enough on Wal-Mart and onto the grocery strike. In the first couple of weeks everyone was gung-ho, but now in the eighth week, we're all going for the throat. The handouts from the union for us to give to the customers have gone from informative to just plain nasty. I picked one up the other day and it was the definition of a scab and a rally flyer that listed the cold hearted deeds an old manger was doing to picketers at his store, such as trying to tow their cars, and several other flyers no longer addressing the issues. Unfortunately, the UFCW has not explained to the public all that the strike is about, mainly because most of the people I've talked with think it's only about medical benefits. So here's the rest. First off, those of us who make \$17.90 an hour (most are part time, twenty-four hours a week, do the math) will be grandfathered or two-tiered, meaning anyone pro-

GARY HORNBERGER



moted after will only max out at \$15 an hour and will take eight years to get there. From our point of view, we will be under the microscope for the rest of our careers and there will be conflict between the two classes.

Next on the list is the unlimited use of outside vendors for stocking, which begs the questions, why would they need clerks to stock shelves? They also want to go to prepackaged meats, which does away with the meat cutters. The box help would also be given broader duties, which would cut into the clerk's areas. Night premi-

ents. To that, I say that a year prior the union told us to save money and prepare, and they just didn't listen. I don't care if interest rates were down, there is no reason why – if you're getting a steady check for working – you should take money that is there for people who are fighting for your wage when you return! We also have our fair share of hypocrites who sit and tell customers about the eroding middle class and how it will affect sons and daughters, yet when alone in the back, say how the company can do whatever it likes to future generations just as long as they keep the

tomers who came out of the store. All in all, this process of labor has sickened me; first because my fucking company is so greedy they put me out here, and second because the union is so suck ass in communication. Maybe I should take the advice of passing motorist and get a fucking job.

THE WANDERING EYE

\$6.00 US, by Donald King

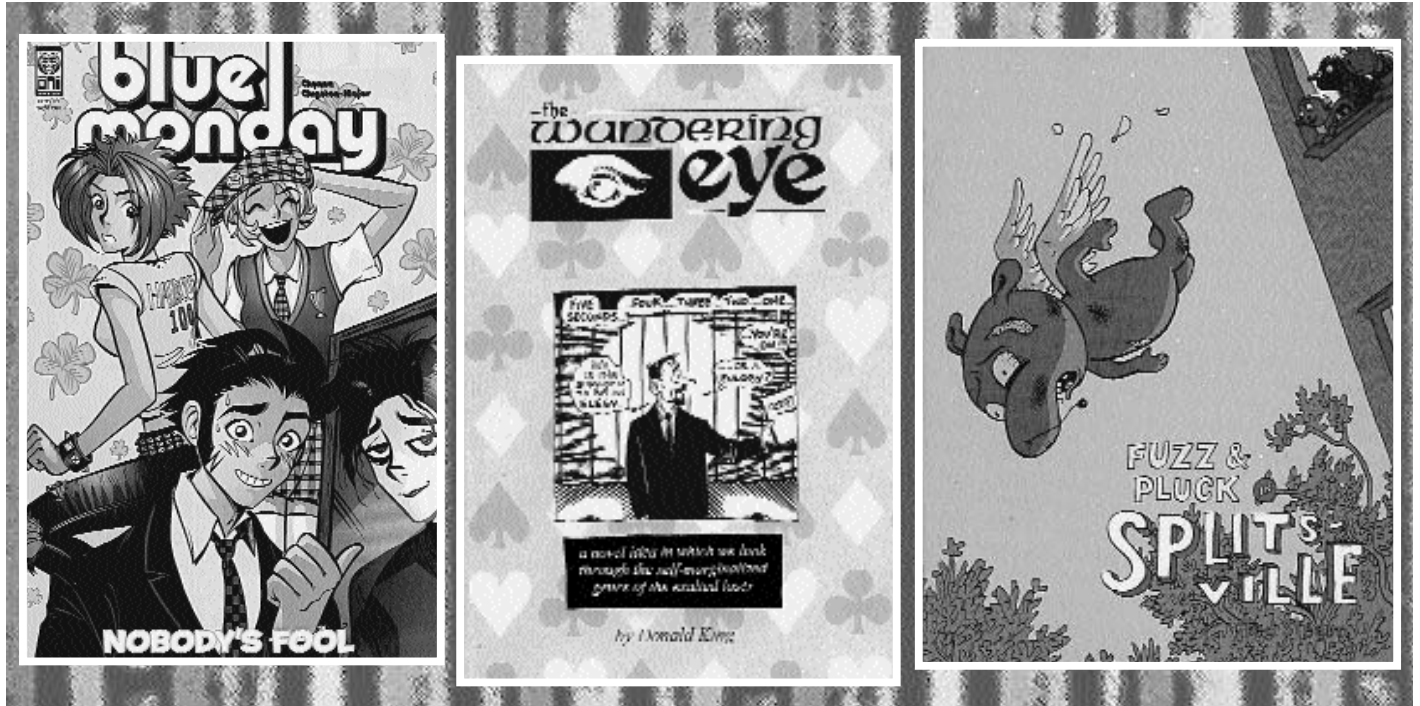
Comics, oh, thank god how comics are getting me through the strike and this one is great. *The Wandering Eye* is dark humor at its best. It's the story of a guy trying to

but then again, a ribbon bookmark and an autograph (just kidding) easily sway me. (Donald King, 1942 Como Lake Ave., PO Box 64565, Coquitlam, BC V3J 7V7 Canada; donaldking42yahoo.com)

THE HEART STAR

\$1.50 US, by Christoph Meyer

It is amazing how a short story simply drawn can have such a wonderful effect on a reader. This is a delightful story of a lost love in a lost spirit with a dash of superstition. In the story we read of a soul lost to suicide because of a lost love. Due to a local town's tradi-



ums and Sunday pay are to be cut out also – you know, the time you would be most likely to be in church or by yourself and robbed. Basically, they want to edge out the high paying workers and weaken the union's bargaining power.

So it's not just about the medical that we are fighting for and agreed to pay (just not the absurd amounts), it's about getting edged out of the higher wage earnings. Lastly, let me say one thing about picketing: it sucks! Here's how it goes picket 20 hrs.: \$125, 30 hrs.: \$200, and 40 hrs.: \$300. Some people panicked and bailed to work at Stater Bros. because they needed the help. This was fine until we discovered just recently that these people are also picking up 20 hr. picket checks, which has brought about some good verbal sparring among those of us who feel this is wrong because we're out on the line for our jobs and a way of life, not just for the money. Some of their arguments were that they were raising families or they were single par-

pension as it is.

By no means am I the poster boy for picketing. I'm visual and somewhat educated on the facts, but I know my limitations. I'm confrontational so I take myself away from the areas where this might happen, because at this stage, those who support us do and those who don't want a pound of flesh. For instance, the other morning there were several of us in front of the door and as the few customers who shop came in and out, two in our group became caustic to several customers, even calling one woman a fat bitch and calling another man a loser. The union does not want this to take place and neither does the company, because when we all go back to work those customers will either cause trouble in the store or will simply not shop there. We were given a flyer on how to go about dealing with customers and it was to greet and be courteous, which I find to be a lost paper because when the union had their rally at the store, they booed cus-

tighten lug nuts with a screwdriver. It's a love story for losers or guys who are just oblivious to what's going on until it's too late. It seems our main character spends the night at a friend's house after a wedding and wakes up the next morning next to his bud's hot daughter (love story). The only problem is the bud deals drugs, which our main dude does not know about (oblivion). After lying all this out, the main character catches on, but it is too late. People get killed, framed, and the guy loses the girl. Seems like a routine story, right? Not so, for our writer has put a new twist on comics: after the story ends all the vague or hidden spots are cleared in a second part of the book. It's really cool. Things are seen from other points of view and things that may seem trivial at first now better explain the story. It's like writing something, being unhappy because you forgot some things, and then being able to rewrite it by just adding those things in the second rendition. I really liked this book,

tions, the head of a suicide is buried and the body is incinerated because the soul can only rest in peace if the head is buried without the broken heart. It seems though that this is not true because the heart still burns, so the mind and the heart cannot separately deduce the trouble and we follow the spirit on its wanderings. Until the spirit could figure the two needed to be together it wandered. Not until it combined the two could it finally achieve peace. Well, as the story goes, this eventually does happen, and with this the story of the heart star in the night sky is born. This is one of those feel good stories even if it is about a suicide because it allows all who are troubled to eventually find peace. (Christoph Meyer, PO Box 106, Danville, OH 43014)

FUZZ & PLUCK in SPLITSVILLE 1, 2, 3

\$4.95 US, by Ted Stearn

What can I say about a rooster and a teddy bear? No **RAZORCAKE** 23

really, what? I don't know if this is good cop/bad cop or just an unholy alliance. This is a strange series of books. We find the unlikely duo working at Lardy's (yes, it's a fast food joint) and the rooster is the bad employee and the teddy bear is the good one. I guess its called *Splitsville* because while the bear is out on a delivery, the rooster gets fired and winds up in the professional animal-fighting ring. Meanwhile, the bear gets ripped up by a dog and imprisoned in a little girl's room with other toys who free him so he can escape and be found by a crazy guy trying to make money running a ferry service next to a bridge. Funny at times, bizarre all the rest. The best point in all of this is when the other toys rip off a duck's wings to sew onto the bear so he can fly out the window. Weird is all I can use to describe these books, but let me just say there's four books and I only received three. I still want to find out what happens to these misfits, so I guess I have some bizarre love for misfits. Enough said. (Fantagraphics Books, 7563 Lake City Way NE Seattle, WA 98115; sharonted@mindspring.com)

BLUE MONDAY

\$2.95 US, \$4.50 Canada

Okay, I thought this was going to

suck because it was drawn in that Japanese anime, Pokeman, big-eyed, turned-up nose way, but I'll be honest: the stories are funny. See, there's this group of high school kids who just like to party and we follow them around in their nutty adventures. Sounds like *Archie Comics*, right? These kids, though, are a little more up to date. I'm just going to say this about the first story: any chick who gets so drunk that she ends up partying with a lawn gnome convention who she thinks are leprechauns is all right by me. The second story is about some musically maladjusted guy who has his little death rock joke backfire on him. Have I spiced things up enough for you? If so, go get your own copy. Hell, this one isn't even mine. (Oni Press Inc., 6336 SE Milwaukie Ave. PMB 30, Portland, OR 97202; www.blumondaycomics.com)

KIDEGO

\$2.50 US

I'm sitting on the fence with this one and I could go either way. Kidego is this motorcycle-riding, cop-killing, Indian-looking, rock-and-roll-playing, world-saving guy, and everyone is out to get him. It's kind of a futuristic *Terminator* meets *The Warriors*. It's sort of bubblegum in the fact

that there is too much that's "cool" and "dangerous," but the story line keeps one guessing and wanting more. I'll see if I can find the rest of the series and get back to you all on it. (Assassin Comics, PO Box 418, Hicksville, NY 11802-0418; www.assassincomics.com)

TINY GIANTS

\$15.00 US, by Nate Powell

This book scared the shit out of me. Maybe because I read it on a cold night in the middle of the week when nobody was home, but this book is dark, bleak, and horrifying. Now this is not to say it's bad – I just don't go for this kind of thing and what can I say when Frank Miller gives his seal of approval to it. It is visually haunting, but it's as dark as a night on the backside of Pluto. The many stories contained within can disturb the disturbed and I'm not even going to attempt to describe them, honestly, because in some of them, I'm just fucking lost. It really is a book that looks cool and you want to read it but you only do it once. Visually, this book is a find, but as a mental stimulant, be careful what you wish for. (Soft Skull Press, 71Bond St, Brooklyn NY 11217; www.softskull.com)

HUZZAH!

\$1.00 US, by Britton Walters

Huzzah is a collection of laugh-out-loud stupid humor. The longest of the bunch is the misadventures of Stinky the Elf, a guy who reads comics, plays with action figures, and hallucinates after eating months-old Chinese food. Then he becomes a superhero who takes on the evil crab shack villain. I told you it was stupid humor. I really like "Walking the Dog": it's dog humor for those of us who own dogs. Then there's Justin Tyme, the irresponsible time traveler who could correct wrongs but is just not up to it. There's Earl, "the kid with a sandwich for a head," who is constantly being chased around the yard by a couple of crows, and many other stories to laugh your ass off at. Another great thing – remember the ads in comics for gags and gifts, or the Charles Atlas kick-sand-in-your-face – well, he does his own funny take on those, too. So if funny stupid humor is your thing, then this is the stupid little comic for you. (Nerfect Comics, PO Box 1778, North Riverside, IL 60546; mailbox@nerfect.com)

–Gary Hornberger



A MONKEY TO RIDE THE DOG

EVEN QUITTING TIME COULDN'T MAKE ME HAPPY TO HEAR LED ZEPPELIN AGAIN.

FRAMING INVASION

Barney pulled into John Reese Ford and I knew we were all gonna end up in jail.

It was my fault. Stu sat in the middle of the bench seat, between Barney and me. His hands were on the dash board and he rocked back and forth, saying, "Let's do this! Let's do this!" We were all pretty drunk.

Barney said, "Sean, you take Stu and cover the north side of the lot. Steven and I will take the south side. You know what to do."

I did. Barney, Stu, and I jumped out of the cab of the truck, Steven jumped out of the bed. We split up into groups of two, just like Barney told us to.

I walked up to the first car salesman I saw. I walked slow, cool, like I might buy a car that night. A Ford. A John Reese Ford. I tried to sell my walk, even with my stagger and my blood-shot eyes and the sawdust in my greasy hair. Even with Stu stumbling along two steps behind me. I walked right up to that car salesman. He smiled as if to say something, but before a word could slip out of his mouth, I screamed at him, "Bar!Ney's!Crew!"

This stunned the salesman. He got that unmistakable look like he didn't know whether to shit or go blind. I yelled it again, "Bar!Ney's!Crew! You need a house?! We build houses! A dollar thirty-three a square foot!"

I didn't have to look behind me to know that, as soon as I paused, Stu would yell, "A dollar thirty-three a square foot!"

Our timing was on. We'd practiced this a long time. I never thought we'd put all of our practice into play, but there's a time for everything and now was our time. I yelled out, "You want gables?!"

Stu yelled, "We build 'em!"

I yelled, "Vaulted ceilings?!"

Stu: "We vault 'em!"

Me: "Custom homes?!"

Stu: "We throw 'em up!"

Me: "Crappy homes!"

Stu: "We tear 'em down!"

Me: "Bar!Ney's!Crew!"

Stu, about to pop a vessel: "We build houses strong!"

"Strong!"

"Strong!"

By now I could feel all the blood in my face. My throat was ripped dry in that way it gets after a dozen beers and a lot of yelling. The smallest bubble of spit balanced on the stubby little salesman's forehead. He still hadn't shit or gone blind. He hadn't done anything but stare at Stu and me, trying to figure this scenario into his reality. As soon as we paused

from our screaming, the salesman turned and ran for the offices of John Reese Ford.

I looked around the car lot for another salesman to yell at. Barney and Steven had cornered another salesman over by the Expeditions and yelled the same bit at him. All the other salesman had sought shelter under the overhang in front of the offices. I turned to Stu and said, "I'll take 'em all on."

"Fuckin' A," Stu said, and we headed over to the line of car salesman. Two drunk carpenters ready to battle an army of white starched shirts and suspenders and slacks. All the combovers in the world couldn't save them. I started running. Stu followed. As soon as I got within shouting distance, I started yelling, "Bar!Ney's!Crew! Bar!Ney's!Crew!"

Through the window, I saw a receptionist eyeing me and dialing a phone. I hoped she was calling John Reese. That guy was our nemesis even if he didn't know us. He was the one we were after. His salesmen were just the soldiers we had to fight through. I kept my eye on the receptionist and a brief moment of clarity hit me and I knew she was calling the cops and I realized how ridiculous the whole situation was, but I still kept screaming, "We build houses strong! Strong! Strong!"

Like I said, the attack was my fault, but Barney was our leader and Barney led us into it. We were, after all, Barney's crew. He was the guy who hired rag-tag drunks like me and Stu and made carpenters out of us. Before working for Barney, I'd kicked around on probably a dozen or so framing crews. We mostly built track homes, the same four floorplans over and over, and each guy on the crew worked his own spot like an assembly line. Over the course of the years, I'd worked each spot on the assembly line, from laying out the plates to drying in the roof to building soffits and arches and vaults. I never considered myself a carpenter, or even a framer. It was just something I did.

Then I started working for Barney.

Barney loved being a framing carpenter. He loved everything about it. He loved the dew that settled on the stack of two-by-fours in the morning. He loved the smell of a skillsaw burning through yellow pine when he cut the tails off trusses. He loved his twenty-eight ounce waffle-head, hatched-backed hammer and the way it could sink a nail in two hits: set and drive. He loved the way the shadow of his tool belt looked on the rest of his shadow when he stood on a roof and looked down to the ground. He loved the sun and the sweat and the sawdust in his lungs. And his love was infectious. From the first day I worked for Barney, I realized that he was more than building a house, he was sculpt-

ing a work of art out of wood and nails and Tyvek. It was impossible to understand this and not participate in the sculpture. It was like we were building Michelangelo's "David," and the last thing I wanted to do was tack on a sixth toe.

So I stuck it out with Barney. I learned a lot about building a house. Carpentry stopped being what I did and became what I was. I even started to enjoy it. My only knock was the radio.

Barney loved classic rock, and classic rock torments me. We'd listen to the radio all day, and every day, it played the same songs and the same commercials. I don't even think they had a DJ. I think it was just one, twenty-four-hour-long recording. When you heard, "Dust in the Wind," it meant lunch time was ten minutes away. Led Zeppelin's "Rock and Roll" meant that we were five minutes from quitting time. Even quitting time couldn't make me happy to hear Led Zeppelin again.

I started to obsess on the radio. I felt like listening to these songs was the same as watching a clock, counting down the minutes and hours of my days with each familiar drum beat, with each played out guitar solo. These songs were a way of slipping into a time warp, where weeks blended into years so mindlessly that you didn't even notice that your life had slid into a meaningless void.

At times, I wanted to bust open that fucking radio. I read Barney's blueprint on life instead, though. I took something that I couldn't avoid and made it my own. I started singing along to all the songs, only adding my own words. It was benign at first. Since we worked with a guy named Stu, I started by changing every "you" to "Stu." So when U2 would sing, "All I want is you," I'd sing "All I want is Stu." When the Stones came on, I sang, "Stu can't always get what he wants." When Bachman Turner Overdrive's one hit song played, I'd sing "S-S-S-Stu ain't seen n-n-n-nothing yet," complete with stutter. And so on. Classic rock was full of Stus.

From there, I built up my repertoire. I turned "Addicted to Love" into "A Dickhead to Rub." The Boss's "Hungry Heart" became Stu's "Rumbly Fart." There was really no end to it. I even made fun of bands I liked, like the Clash, by changing "Should I stay or should I go?" into "Should I frame or should I smoke?" I always made sure to dedicate that one to our hippie laborer, Steven, who was always stinking up the portajohn, and he wasn't shitting in there.

Actually, it was with the help of Steven that I got Barney and Stu to turn off the classic rock station. Since Steven wouldn't ever cut his hair, I changed "Stairway to Heaven" to "Hairway to Steven." The home of classic rock played that song so many times during the work week that,

one Friday it came on and, without my prompting, Stu started singing, "There's a framer who knows/ to go to the portajohn to smoke/ and we call him the Hairway to Steven."

Barney was working with Stu at the time. He listened to Stu, singing along to my words without any irony or any hint of kidding around, and Barney got so damn mad that he switched over to a country station.

The next few days weren't as bad for me. I didn't like country any more than classic rock, but at least I didn't know the words to the songs. I hadn't heard them every time I'd walked out onto a construction site over the past ten years. So they were easier to ignore. That's when John Reese became our nemesis.

was a block long. No one ever said anything about it.

Second, we finished the job. We got paid. Cash. We did what carpenters do when they get paid cash. We got drunk. We started at a dive bar with four dollar pitchers. When the bartender cut us off, we went to a strip club. Not the small town Cocoa Beach strip club that we were used to, but the fancy Orlando strip club where the dancers have been in porno mags and you get free popcorn at your table. We all had a little extra dough, what with the drive time money and all, and we were all feeling good. Then, the unimaginable happened. A pause between songs. The dancers cleared the stage. The DJ said nothing. A voice exploded out of the stereo,

So I jumped out of the truck and scared the hell out of one salesman and raced over to the line up of the rest of the salesmen and yelled at them. Stu followed me. By the time we finished our second round of "We build houses strong! Strong! Strong!" Barney and Steven were behind us. Barney was ranting again, but this time, he was making sense.

"I want to see John Reese," Barney screamed. "I want to see that motherfucker. I'm here to collect rent. I want rent for the space your fucking commercials take up in my mind. Every day, I labor through your yelling and screaming and I want to get paid for my labor..."

The faces on the car salesmen had gone back to normal. The surprise seemed to have worn



Even though the songs were different, the commercials were the same on the country station. The same company owned the classic rock station and the country one. The same companies advertised on both. And the biggest offender was John Reese Ford. He pulled one of those tricks where he kicked the volume up on the mix of his commercial, so whenever it came on, it was like someone turned up the radio. And he pulled the dreaded dual-announcers screaming at each other through the whole commercial: "John!Reese!Ford! You need a car?! We'll sell you a car! F150s! We got 'em!" And so on.

Now that I didn't have Rush and Queen to torment me, the John Reese Ford commercial bugged me even more. So I made it my own. What the hell? I started my whole, "Bar!Ney's!Crew!" rant. It helped pass the time. It made the day more pleasant. The yelling was cathartic. It made Barney feel good, too.

Then, two things happened.

First, Barney got hired to frame a house in Orlando. It was fifty miles from where we lived, but the homeowner insisted Barney frame his house. Barney made sure we got paid for our drive time and for our gas, and he hiked up the price, but he took the job. Every morning and every night for two weeks, the four of us piled into Barney's truck – Barney, Stu and me up front in the cab, Steven riding bulldog – and we drove past John Reese Ford. The car dealership

but it wasn't singing and it wasn't telling us to tip our entertainers. It was screaming, "John!Reese!Ford!"

I'd never heard of a commercial in a strip club. I was flabbergasted. No one else in the club seemed to react. Cocktail waitresses served drinks, businessmen negotiated lap dances, dancers fastened their tops back on. No one seemed surprised. Then, I looked back at the crew, and those guys were livid. Even Steven, who was stoned enough to have smoked away all his anger.

"This won't stand," Barney said. "This won't stand. I paid to get in here. Didn't I pay to get in here? It's one thing when this goddamn fucking commercial is on the radio. I didn't pay for the radio. But I paid to get into this motherfucker." Barney stood up and grabbed the bowl of popcorn off the table. "Drink up, boys," he said. "We gotta go collect some rent." Stu, Steven, and I slammed the rest of our four-dollar beers. Barney hurled the popcorn bowl at the DJ and walked out the door. The rest of his crew followed him, holding back the bouncers.

Barney ranted and raved on the way to John Reese Ford. He didn't make a whole lot of sense. I knew what we were gonna do, though, and I was willing to do it. What the hell? We were a crew. A crew follows the lead. That's what a crew does.

off. Now Barney was bringing them back to concepts they understood, as in, he wants money. Don't give anyone any money. We're car salesmen. Money is what we take. Not what we give.

Not one of those salesmen seemed to show any understanding about what Barney was talking about. But I understood. And Stu understood. And Steven understood.

It didn't matter that, in ten minutes, the cops would show up and arrest all four of us. It didn't matter that we'd have to sleep in a holding cell. It didn't matter that, the next morning, the judge would fine us a hundred and fifty bucks each for public drunkenness, and the little bit we'd gotten ahead with our paychecks would suddenly become the little bit we'd gotten behind. None of it mattered.

I watched Barney rant and rave. I listened to him explain to the representatives of John Reese Ford that of course it was absurd for us to come by where they work and yell at them, but it was just as absurd for them to do the same to us, through the radio. I listened to everything Barney said and suddenly things sounded good. Things weren't so familiar. Time wasn't slipping into a warp, weeks wouldn't blend into years so mindlessly that I wouldn't even notice my life sliding into a void. Fuck no. I was a carpenter. I had my lead. I had my crew. And all the yelling back felt fucking good.

–Sean Carswell

SEAN CARSWELL



RAZORCAKE 27



SWINGING DOOR CONVERSATIONS

"SO I WAS PEEING AND AT FIRST EVERYTHING SEEMED NORMAL. THEN, ALL OF A SUDDEN, THIS BIG GUSH OF BLOOD COMES POURING OUT OF MY DICK..."

SUNDAYS AT LEO'S

"Hey John, the usual?"

"No, just give me a cranberry juice," said Big John.

I was a little surprised since, in the three months I'd been working at Leo's, Big John had always ordered cherry brandy. He was a pretty heavy drinker.

I poured him a glass of cranberry juice and placed it next to the napkin full of bread-crumbs that he always saved for his birds at home.

Big John was in his late seventies. He came in every Sunday at eleven in the morning always dressed in the same black suit. Hunched over, he was about six-two, and he had to weigh at least two-fifty. His head was enormous. It looked like a watermelon. His cheeks and eyes were all baggy and puffed out from the years of drinking.

"You wouldn't believe what happened to me last night," said Big John.

"Oh yeah, what's that?"

"Well, before I went to bed, I went into the bathroom." Big John paused for a few seconds, poured some of the cranberry juice down his mouth and laughed aloud, displaying a big mouth full of jagged teeth and cavities. "So I was peeing and at first everything seemed normal. Then, all of a sudden, this big gush of blood comes pouring out of my dick. I mean it was enough blood to fill that catsup bottle over there. Hah! I couldn't believe it. I've never seen anything like that. All that blood floating around in the toilet. I tell you, it was dis-gusting."

"Did you call the hospital?"

"You're damn right I called the hospital! Jesus Roy! I lost about a pint of blood! The ambulance came and they took me to the emergency room. They had all these tubes going into my arms. Amazing!"

"Damn, John."

"The doctor says I'll be all right though. It was just a little hemorrhage. They gave me all kinds of drugs. Now I feel like a drug pusher. A drug pusher! As long as I stay away from the booze I'll be fine."

"Yeah, that's a probably a good idea."

Big John lowered his eyes into the Sunday newspaper and I walked back to the end of the bar and straightened up the bottles in the cooler.

About a half-hour later Jack walked in. Jack was another one of the Sunday, suit-wearing old-timers. I guessed Jack to be somewhere in his sixties. He always wore a blue suit with a black top hat



PHOTO BY DAN MONICK
completely different world out there.

I noticed Jack had a deck of cards in front of him and was shuffling them.

"Hey, Roy, come over here and shuffle this deck a couple of times."

Jack had done his card tricks for me a handful of times. I didn't mind though. They were pretty amazing and I still had no clue as to how he pulled them off.

I shuffled the cards about four times and then put them down on the bar. Jack had me cut the deck and then he shuffled them once.

"Here he goes again with those damn card tricks," grumbled Big John.

Jack got up from his stool and walked over to the far side of the bar.

"Now I'm going to call out each card as you flip it over. There's no way I can see the cards from where I am."

"All right," I said.

Jack yelled out for the Four of Clubs. I turned the card over

that had a red feather tucked into the ribbon.

Jack sat down a few stools over from Big John and I put a mug of Budweiser down in front of him.

"Hey Jack," I said.

"Hey Roy," said Jack. "Hey, how goes it John?"

"Ugh," mumbled Big John, not looking up from the paper.

Jack was a retired card dealer. He did fifteen years in Vegas and then twenty up in Atlantic City. He also had a penchant for always passing out at the bar. The strangest part about it was that it only happened when he was on his fourth beer. All of the sudden, you'd look over and he'd have his face flat on the bar, his mustache right in the spilled beer, snoring away. I'd usually let him sleep for a couple of minutes and then I'd bang my fist down on the bar and say, "Wake up Jack! This ain't a hotel!" Every once in a while there'd be a few people in the bar and they'd laugh and then Jack would open his eyes, lift his head, and in one fluid

motion, he'd grab the glass of beer and resume drinking.

"Roy, get John a drink for me," said Jack.

"I'm not drinking!" screamed Big John.

"What's wrong John, you going soft?" goaded Jack as he winked at me.

"Why you... I'm sick of your talking, Jack. You know, you never know when to shut up!" yelled Big John. His eyes looked like they were going to pop right out of that huge head of his. He turned towards the window and covered himself up with the newspaper.

"Oh, come on John..."

"Just shut up, Jack!"

Jack looked at me and shrugged his shoulders. I thought about filling him in on the whole blood incident, but I figured it really wasn't any of my business.

I walked back to my stool in the corner and looked out the window. Families all dressed up were coming back from church. People were jogging and walking their dogs. It seemed like a

and it was the Four. He then called out for the King of Hearts. I turned the card over. Sure enough, it was the King. There was Jack smiling, standing over by the bathroom yelling out, "Eight of Diamonds... Queen of Spades... Six of Hearts."

I must have gone through about twenty cards and he was right on every single time.

Jack walked back to his stool and shuffled the deck. I tried to watch his hands closely for any strange movements, but I didn't notice anything. He had me shuffle the cards again and cut the deck.

This time, he had the trick worked out so that every time I pulled four cards in a row they'd come out as a straight. The whole deck of cards came out straights.

"So, you were a card shark or a card dealer?" I laughed.

Jack smiled, drank down his beer, and said slyly, "Dealer."

"Well, if I ever make it out to Vegas I think I'll stick to the slots."

Roger, a Korean War vet who owned a refrigerator repair shop had walked in half way through the trick. "I knew this guy who was a card shark out in Vegas. He got caught so many times that he started dressing like a woman just to disguise himself. Even got away with it for about a year before they found out."

Big John waved me over. "Roy, get me a brandy."

"You sure John?" I asked.

"Damn it, one drink isn't going to kill me."

I figured he was right. Besides, you get to that age with that kind of liver and really, what difference does it make?

"Say, I've got a trivia question for you," said Big John.

"All right, shoot," I said.

"How does a baseball team with no men on base hit a grand slam?"

I thought about it for a minute but I couldn't think of the answer. "I don't know, John."

"It's a girl's baseball team. You get it? It's all girls on base. It's true. I saw it once when I was a kid. Up in Pennsylvania. Oh man, haha, a girl's baseball team."

"Yeah, that's a good one John."

I heard something that sounded like a cat choking on a hairball. I looked over and Jack was slumped down on the bar, passed out. Big John shook his head and said, "Just look at him."

Despite the awful sound coming out of his nose, Jack looked so peaceful, like a little baby almost. I motioned to slam my fist down on the bar, but at the last minute I held back. I figured I'd just let him stay like that for a while.

-Seth Swaaley





REV. NØRB

LOVE, NØRB

I mean, what's the only thing worse than your friends dying?
NOT GETTING ANY PUSSY!

MY YEAR BEATS YOUR LIFE:

Reflections on the Continual and Amazing Cluelessness of Rolling Stone

...but first, what the fuck kind of world do we live in where The Cat in the Hat is Mike Meyers and not Mike Lucas? I mean, isn't The Cat in the Hat supposed to be tall and funny and roguishly erudite and such? Mike Meyers is more like Uncle Fester dressed up as Pepe Le Pew for Halloween than he is the Cat in the Hat! It's an outrage! A travesty! The Midwinter Jicker, come early this year! And how much nuts does it take for someone to be the Cat in the Hat now that Dr. Seuss isn't around to tell you you suck if, indeed, you suck, which, indeed, you do? Few! Fuck you, Mike Meyers! You wouldn't even make a good Wubble-Chap! You couldn't even portray the Obsk satisfactorily! Next time you try out for a role in Seussian Theatre, go for something more your speed, like Yertle the Turtle, or the A Pair of Pale Green Pants with Nobody Inside Them! Bleah! And who or whom do i blame for this sorry state of Damaging Disharmony?? *Rolling Stone*! And by what odious means have they effected their sinister plan? Tampering with the Time-Stream! And for why should i find just cause to accuse them of such a strictly verboten action? Because they made the Clash *London Calling* album come out in January 1980. Why this is a problem is because it always used to have been released in November 1979. I mean, i was a dork-ass fourteen-year-old kid living in some godforsaken mill town in the Hinterlands (actually, i kind of still am, just 2+ decades more decrepit), and even i saw the damn thing in the record store in the mall around Thanksgiving that year, so i know it used to have come out then. But now it doesn't! Now it came out two months later. *Rolling Stone* #937, cover dated December 11th, 2003, p. 90 (let the record show that *Rolling Stone* is another of the free magazine subscriptions i got when i cashed in my [and my bandmates] frequent flier miles earlier in the year), stateth the following regarding *London Calling*: Recorded in 1979 in London, which was then wrenched by surging unemployment and drug addiction, and released in America in January 1980, the dawn of an uncertain decade, *London Calling* is nineteen songs of apocalypse fueled by an unbending faith in rock and roll to beat back the darkness. Rest assured, we'll go over that whole tract with a red Sharpie™ a little later in the program; for the immediate now – if, in fact, we are actually in The Now right now and not like in the Two Months From Now (i am unsure to what extent *Rolling Stone*'s tamperings have undermined the temporal hygiene of the time stream) – we must need only concern ourselves with the part that says “released in America in January 1980.” AH HA! GUILTY BY YOUR OWN ADMISSION! FOIST ON YOUR OWN ORGANICALLY GROWN HEMP PETARD! They have rearranged Time As We Knew It, and the resultant domino effect has somehow thrust us into a vile parallel universe where Mike Meyers is the Cat in the Hat instead of Sir Dance-A-Lot. Thanks a HEAP, assholes! Anyway, it's a dangnably queer thing that *Rolling Stone* should say that *London Calling* was released in 1980. And it's a DAMNably queer thing – verging on being a DAAAAAAAAMNably queer thing, which is like a half-step queerer than that – when ya take into consideration that the one single thing i associate most strongly with *Rolling Stone* (other than that Dr. Hook [or was it Dr. John?] song, and me beating off all over the pictures of Brittany a few months ago without reading one word of the magazine) is their readers voting *London Calling* as the “Album of the Decade” – FOR THE EIGHTIES. And THAT is memorable because not only did ME and GOD and EVERYONE ELSE (who doesn't read *Rolling Stone*) know the album wasn't released in the '80s, but, in the very issue they published the poll results, *Rolling Stone* ADMITTED the album was released in late 1979! I mean, i can tell you exactly where i was when i read it: I was stand-

ing in line at Mills Fleet Farm™ buying tires for my '88 Escort, i saw Joe and Mick on the cover, flipped through it while i was waiting, found the poll results, laughed my ass off at the obviously delicious humor of it all, and SPECIFICALLY LOOKED TO SEE if there were any asterisk-type disclaimers explaining that their readers' Best Album of the Eighties was actually released one decade prior, WHICH THERE, IN FACT, WAS. If any of us had any copies of *Rolling Stone*, we could look it up (don't look at me; i usually just jerk off on 'em and toss 'em out unread); suffice to say i see no reason why you shouldn't take me at my word for this. Presumably, some time between *London Calling* being named album of the '80s (i assume that was 1990, but i don't really keep maintenance records on my vehicles) and now, *Rolling Stone* stepped off the metal path and crushed the butterfly, thusly making a complete and utter shambles of the time stream (want proof? As if Mike Lucas not being the Cat in the Hat isn't enough, if November 1979 is now January 1980, then as i write this, it's already the last day of January, and i'm almost two months late for my deadline. More amazingly, you already have this magazine in your hands as i write this, and therefore will have read the next line before i have even written it [for purposes of record, said next line will be “By Heliopolis, how can I protect great Ra from these night demons when I'm burdened with a mortal stowaway?”]. Needless to say, that's a hell of a thing), and i find such monkeyshines reprehensible, though i do support time travel in a general sense. Now, at this juncture, one might do well to wonder exactly what i, Rev. Nørb, plan to do in order to counter this malarkey and thereby heal the time stream, bring back the real Cat in the Hat, et cetera, et cetera. Good question. My plan is this: Get revenge. I'm not exactly sure how that will heal the time stream, but, as an American, i know that's how things work around here. The Method of Vengeance Extraction will be just, fair, and equitable, as that's always one's most ultimately effective and respected course of Vengeance Extraction (well, that and dog turds in flaming paper bags on the front porch): I haven't written a year's end Top Ten column in years. I think i quit around 1998, simply for want of ten good albums that year (and the next year, and the next). Over the last few years, though i've never exposed them publicly, i've MADE top ten lists – simply because every January my friend Timm hosts a Top Ten party, which requires all in attendance to yield a top ten list from the previous year, and he's usually got a pretty good food spread there so what the fuck do i care if i pad my list out with a bunch of so-so albums and/or records i haven't heard yet but “sound like they might be good?” A week or so ago, i found myself looking forward (wait... or is it backward now?) to Timm's party with unusually great anticipation: This year, my Top Ten is actually gonna KICK fucking ASS. I mean, my Top Ten list ALWAYS kicks ass on everybody else's Top Ten lists, but this year it's not gonna be by default because everybody else always votes for the Strokes or Interpol or whoever; this year there actually ARE ten good albums to list. MY TOP TEN LIST IS GONNA KICK ASS ON EVERYBODY ELSE'S TOP TEN LIST BY A WIDE MARGIN. It will cover the spread, and then some. I'm sure of it. Fuck, i'll Broadway Joe guarantee it! I'll back it up! I'll offer double-their-money-back if not completely satisfied! Ninety days same as cash! I'll get me one o' them newfangled burn-the-CD-thingies and make people completely unlicensed sampler CDs of songs from the albums on my list, which they will be forced to bring home with them and listen to under threat of a brisk drubbing! MY TOP TEN RULES THE EARTH, or, at the very least, TIMM'S BASEMENT!!! Hooray for Hazel! Now, moving right along, the reason i came across the evidence of time tampering this week (apart from looking for photos i could beat off on to make the magazine's imminent discarding more amusement-infused) was that the latest *Rolling Stone* i received featured the cover story “THE 500 GREATEST ALBUMS OF ALL TIME,” which i found briefly interesting simply

REV. NØRB

"MR. STRUMMER, IS THERE ANY TRUTH TO THE RUMOR THAT THE TIME STREAM HAS RECENTLY BEEN MANIPULATED BY EVIL FORCES FROM THE 21ST CENTURY?"

JOE: "THAT'S JUST MONTGOMERY CLIFT, HONEY."



JOE: "THAT'S JUST MONTGOMERY CLIFT, HONEY."



V.

uinely asinine. WE TAKE OUR JOBS MOST SERIOUSLY, AT THE FISHER (pfift) NUT (pfift, pfift) FAC-TO-REE!!! Plus, i mean, if my Top Ten of 2003 can't beat their Top Ten of all time in a fair fight, fuck 'em. Send their mooching asses back to the School O' Rock, C.O.D.! I mean, i know that i, Rev. Nørb, am generally beyond reproach in matters such as these, but i want to make it clear i am not playing favorites, nor am i sending My Boys out against the Washington Generals of Rock or anything. That said, i fail to see how the Beatles managed to not get pelted with rocks and garbage after releasing this sprawling collection of pointless bullshit. I mean, people complain endlessly about *Sgt. Pepper* fucking up rawk (more on that later), i really think it was this meandering double-disc cowpie that did it. Yeah, *Sgt. Pepper* might have dressed rawk up in silly, expensive clothes and paraded it thru an art museum during mid-morning tea; the *White Album* sent it over to your house at 10 AM on a Saturday morning, unshaven, to sit on your sofa in dirty whitey-tighties and fart copiously all afternoon. And people loved it! People actually LISTEN to this and LIKE it! Shirley Manson of Garbage was getting finger-fucked (or so she claims) the first time she heard it; people were even GETTING IT ON to this crap! Yeah, there are a handful of good songs on here, but it's about 75% total fucking bullshit, absolute jive, three delusional musicians and a disgruntled drummer offering up trivial and pointless half-baked ideas claimed to be "songs." "Wild Honey Pie"? "The Continuing Story of Bungalow Bill"? "Happiness Is A Warm Gun"? "I'm So Tired"? "Blackbird"? "Piggies"? "Rocky Raccoon"? You don't need a launderette, you can take 'em to the vet (but more on that later)! Not to put too fine a point on it, but these songs SUUUUUUUUUUUUCK! They suuuuuuuuu-uuck BAAAAAAAAAAAAADDDDD!!! I don't know what the fuck they were thinking. Actually, i do: "well, it doozn't really mattah much WOT we record then, doozit? They're gonna looov it anyway, **RAZORCAKE 31**

REV. NORR

roight?" And, sad thing is, THEY WERE RIGHT. To me, this record approaches *Metal Machine Music* in terms of sheer rawk uselessness – it's like it wanders off after the first song and never finds its way back to Space Camp, and i have no fricking idea, as a Rawk fan AND as a Beatles fan, how people continue to be impressed with such a limp-ass barrelful of pseudo-tunes (this is made all the more confounding by how little love the band's GOOD 1967-and-out output gets [*Magical Mystery Tour* and the four "real" songs off of *Yellow Submarine*] – i mean, *Magical Mystery Tour* is easily one of their best albums, if not THE best, and the *White Album* is third-worst [ahead of only the similarly heinous *Abbey Road* and the dissimilarly heinous *Let It Be*], and *Magical Mystery Tour* ain't even on the list! Chee!). I mean, if you took the four Beatles songs that were new to the *Yellow Submarine* soundtrack, you could probably get the six or seven good tracks off of here you'd need to compile one real good album from the combined source materials, but, as it stands, the *White Album* is FUCKING BULLSHIT. Unfortunately, even pretending that "Back in the USSR," "Birthday" and "Helter Skelter" aren't really on this album (they are) because i was first exposed to them on the *Rock & Roll Music* double album comp, that still leaves the amazingly great "Everybody's Got Something to Hide Except Me and My Monkey" (i had always assumed the "monkey" in question was heroin – "the deeper you go, the higher you fly" and all that – until i read somewhere that John said the "monkey" was Yoko. I am NOT going there), which tragically manages to kick ass on the entire Spits album, although i have nothing but respect and misplaced admiration for any drummer that would play eighth notes on his hi-hat for the duration of an entire fucking CD of idiot savant rock, heavy on the idiot, and "1989" kicks ass on "Revolution 9," and you can tell John i said so. WINNER: Beatles, The (1 point). SCORE AFTER FIRST ROUND: *Rolling Stone* 1, Nørb 0.

#9) BOB DYLAN: *Blonde on Blonde* (Columbia) v. MINDS, THE: *Plastic Girls* (Dirtnap)

METHOD OF COMBAT: Trial by Imaginary Hit Singles

Okay, and march me to The Wall on this one too: I like Bob Dylan. I think every single thing he did in 1965 was pure genius. Sue me. Some of the pre-electric folk stuff was cool; a lot of it was pretty forgettable. Ah, but when that boy discovered e-lec-tricity, it was surely the best thing to happen to calendar year 1965 A.D. with the possible exception of myself. The first e-lec-tro-fied Dylan album, *Bringing It All Back Home*, is absolutely one of the best albums, ever (#31, if *Rolling Stone* can be trusted) (which, as evinced earlier, they cannot be), and is suffused with a manic energy and a devastating looniness that i have often attempted to emulate, mainly unsuccessfully. The follow-up, *Highway 61 Revisited*, is an unquestioned (well, lightly questioned) masterpiece (hey, it was on Togar's bonfire in *Rock & Roll High School*. Fuck you if you don't like it). If the Bob Dylan period i am most worshipful of can be described in terms of my choosing, my parameters are simply "1965." If said era is required to be described using nothing but commonly-held Dylan Landmarks as terminology, i say "post-electric, pre-motorcycle crash" – the main difference between the two being the inclusion of 1966's *Blonde on Blonde* in the latter. I dunno. *Blonde on Blonde* kinda sucks. Like the *White Album*, it was originally a two-record set (begging the obvious subtopic of why *Rolling Stone* is so queer for these bloated double albums? Maybe the perennially-overrated *The Kinks Are the Village Green Preservation Society* album would've earned a higher mark than #255 if Ray Davies would have padded it out with an album's worth of him sitting on my couch, unshaven, in dirty whitey-tighties, farting copiously all afternoon), and if *Bringing It All Back Home* was the crazy kid who just got his driver's license doing Cheerios™ up and down the street at 2 AM and *Highway 61 Revisited* was That Same Kid methodically cruising across the city in a precision-tuned muscle car a few months later, *Blonde on Blonde* is the kid, now jaded and bored, sniffing drainpipes and reciting the alphabet (whoops, wrong album) in the back of a limo. I have no idea why these people, or anyone, think these double albums are a good thing. All that happens is that the artists lose all sense of conciseness and quality control, and delude themselves into thinking they're in a particularly productive period in their careers ("Hey! Wow! I've got a double album's worth of material in me!" Uh, NO, hotshot, you merely convinced yourself the world has interest in your table scraps). As opposed the neo-Seussian zaniness of *Bringing It All Back Home* and the masterful cruise of *Highway 61 Revisited*, *Blonde on Blonde* sounds all undisciplined and lax and dragged out. Worse, the resultant sauntering pace magnifies every irritating vocal idiosyncrasy tenfold: "SOOOOOOner... or LAAAAAAAter... WHUUUUUUHHH-ne of us must knOOOOOOOWWWWWWWW..." I mean, think what thou

wilt, given a brisk enough pace and an energetic enough delivery, Dylan's voice ain't any worse than Joey Ramone's. Drag shit out, and he sounds as dumb as Joey did when he sang those slow, mopey ballads. Even on the rare occasions he sees fit to attempt harvesting some of the good ol' Dylan bile ("he really has a lotta gall / to be so useless and all"), it all sounds so relaxed he comes across like he's faking it. Hey! He's not really angry!! I want my money back! (*Rolling Stone* makes mention of the album's "manic brilliance" and "tightly wound tension." Yeah. And fucking GOLF is gonna be in the X-Games™ this year) Amid the muck and mire and wheezing and Nashville studio musician schlock (and let's not even mention the 11-minute-plus love song that ends the album, "Sad Eyed Lady of the Lowlands" – my CD starts ticking and flipping out about three minutes into it, never before have i welcomed a manufacturing defect with such unbottomed gusto) stands two unquestionably great songs: "I Want You" and "Absolutely Sweet Marie," and a couple okay b-side type numbers, "Leopard Skin Pillbox Hat" and the Yardbirdsian "Obviously 5 Believers" ("Visions of Johanna" and "Stuck Inside of Mobile with the Memphis Blues Again" having been ruined by being pointlessly in excess of seven minutes each), which is about what The Minds bring to the table: Two great songs ("Smash Smash Smash" and "Open the Door") and a couple of second-tier demi-hits ("Don't Touch" and "Sex Vamp"). What's interesting here (kinda) is that the Dylan tracks that don't cut it don't cut it because they don't sound much like the tracks that do cut it; the Minds non-contenders simply sound like inferior versions of their better songs (The Minds themselves sounding like a cross between The Briefs, Jr., and The Epoxies, Jr. – if The Briefs and The Epoxies and The Spits and The Exploding Hearts were some manner of Pacific Northwest Punk/Wave Justice League, The Minds are charter members of the Teen Titans... which is okay, but does point toward the imminent arrival of the Pacific Northwest Punk/Wave Power Pack, the Pacific Northwest Punk/Wave Legion of Substitute Heroes, etc.). Further, "Smash Smash Smash" is obviously the band's "Neat Neat Neat," yet "Hot" – located side one, track one – might be a fair live set opener, but is too jerk-offy to be legitimately considered their "New Rose." HOW DARE YOU KIDS COME OVER HERE WITHOUT A "NEW ROSE?" Thinker, what were you thinking? Bring us a "New Rose," immediately! (further, what was the band thinking or not thinking vis-a-vis the title track? Surely a band like The Minds must be aware of The Diodes, who did a similar, but superior song of identical title some twenty years ago) (unless, of course, someone in The Minds works at *Rolling Stone*, in which case that Diodes record is not scheduled for release til January 2004). So, anyway, since each album is more or less two great 45s buttressed by material that's more... i dunno... buttressy... i'm gonna pretend that this round consists of The Minds imaginary "Smash Smash Smash" b/w "Don't Touch" and "Open the Door" (surely the band's "I Just Can't Be Happy Today" and begging the question of do you think their "I Just Can't Be Happy Today" ate their "New Rose?") b/w "Sex Vamp" 45s vs. Bob Dylan's imaginary "I Want You" (which actually was a single) b/w "Obviously 5 Believers" and "Absolutely Sweet Marie" b/w "Leopard Skin Pillbox Hat" 45s. Verdict? Well, "I Want You" does contain one of the most implausibly beautiful lines Dylan (or anyone) ever wheezed, "now the dancing chiiiiild, in his Chiiineese suuuuuuut / I laaaughed at him, i took his fluuuuuuute / I know I wasn't very cuuuuuute to him, was I?", but the Minds 45s would have cooler sleeves. Even. WINNER: Tie game! SCORE AFTER SECOND ROUND: *Rolling Stone* still 1, Nørb still 0.

#8) CLASH, THE: *London Calling* (Epic) v. M.O.T.O.: *Kill M.O.T.O.* (Criminal IQ)

METHOD OF COMBAT: Trial By One-To-One Correspondence

Another fucking double album. Three-for-three! *RS* claims this album was "produced with no-surrender energy." Yeah. Sure. This album sounded and continues to sound so flat and dead and thin that it would likely capitulate to fucking FRANCE if push came to shove. Anyway, here we go. Each track straight up against its counterpart. Start. "London Calling" v. "All Set" – tie. "Brand New Cadillac" v. "Dance Dance Dance Dance Dance to the Radio" – "Dance Dance Dance Dance Dance to the Radio." "Brand New Cadillac" is overrated. It sounds better than it is just because the rest of that album is so f'n woozy. "Jimmy Jazz" v. "The Chicks Can Tell" – "The Chicks Can Tell." Come on, the guy just got laid and "the chicks can tell!" That's genius. "Hateful" v. "Choking on the Edge of Love" – "Hateful," that's a pretty good song. "Rudie Can't Fail" v. "Breaking Up Is the Hardest Thing" – "Rudie Can't Fail." But if Brian Wilson wrote "Breaking Up Is the Hardest Thing," it'd be hailed as a work of tortured genius. "Spanish Bombs" v. "Choking on Your Insides"

– tie. “The Right Profile” v. “Get Away from the Cops” – “The Right Profile.” That’s just Montgomery Clift, honey! “Lost in the Supermarket” v. “We Are the Rats” – tie. I’m sure that in a few years “Lost in the Supermarket” will emerge as the superior song, but that is not completely self-evident right now so fuck it. “Clampdown” v. “I Hate My Fucking Job” – “Clampdown,” but isn’t it ironic how these tracks line up? (my boss actually came into my room when i was playing “I Hate My Fucking Job” – i think i got a raise not long thereafter!) “The Guns of Brixton” v. “He Said Ouch (excerpt)” – wait. “He Said Ouch” is not a real song, it’s like five seconds of studio gab. I will pit this one against “Train in Vain,” the bonus cut. Therefore, the match-up is “The Guns of Brixton” v. “Never Been to Me in a Riot,” and the winner is “Never Been to Me in a Riot.” Fuck yes. “Never Been to Me in a Riot” kicks at “The Guns of Brixton”’s front door, and it comes out with its hands on its head! “Wrong ‘Em Boyo” v. “I Am a Bomb” – “I Am a Bomb.” Genius. “I am a bomb til i think of something better to do.” “Death Or Glory” v. “Left Handed Guitar” – “Death Or Glory.” All of the four little demo jobbies on the M.O.T.O. album, except the last one, are pretty stupid, and devalue the album as a whole, i think. “Koka Kola” v. “I Won’t Give It Up Untill You’re Mine” – believe it or don’t, “I Won’t Give It Up Untill You’re Mine.” “Koka Kola” just sounds pancake-thin and spastic when matched up against the mighty dual Warlocks of M.O.T.O.!!! “The Card Cheat” v. “Laying On a Slab of Stone” – “The Card Cheat.” “Lover’s Rock” v. “I Think We’ve Got the Sound” – “I Think We’ve Got the Sound.” You don’t need much of a sound to top “Lover’s Rock.” “Four Horsemen” v. “Where’s My Money At?” – “Where’s My Money At?” Billy Childish meets “White Light White Heat!” Bonus Track: “Train in Vain” v. “He Said Ouch (excerpt)” – “Train in Vain.” I kind of like that song. OKAY! TALLY! Clash 7, M.O.T.O. 7, three ties. Dead even. Huh. Wait, the Clash still have “I’m Not Down” and “Revolution Rock” left! Those songs suck. I dock them some non-negative fraction of a point. M.O.T.O. wins!!! WINNER: M.O.T.O. (3 points) SCORE AFTER THIRD ROUND: Nørb 3, *Rolling Stone* 1.

#7) ROLLING STONES, THE: *Exile on Main Street* (Virgin) v. ZODIAC KILLERS: *Society’s Offenders* (Rip Off) METHOD OF COMBAT: Trial by Simultaneous Multi-Platform Performance

Well, since i got the Stones thing on CD (hey, guess what? It’s a double album, too!) and the Zodiac Killers thing on vinyl, i figured the best thing to do was to put both on at the same time, and, using the magic of the remote control, flip back and forth between ‘em. It was neck and neck for a while – it was funny to hear “Rip This Joint” – a song i’ve always appreciated as a fast, simple, uptempo rock ‘n’ roll number – dragging on and on whilst the Zodiac Killers whirled furiously through about three songs in the same time – but, eventually, the Zodiac Killers were unable to continuously muster the near-lethal energy levels required to repel the occasional genius of the Stones. Plus they kinda ripped off “I Think My Baby Is a Communist” by the Briefs in “My Boyfriend Is a Masochist,” and TOTALLY ripped off the Strike with “Danger Danger!” For shame! The Stones album’s got about seven good songs out of eighteen; the best two Stones albums – the first one and the second one, in that order – didn’t make the Top 500 list at all. Wow, what a surprise. WINNER: Rolling

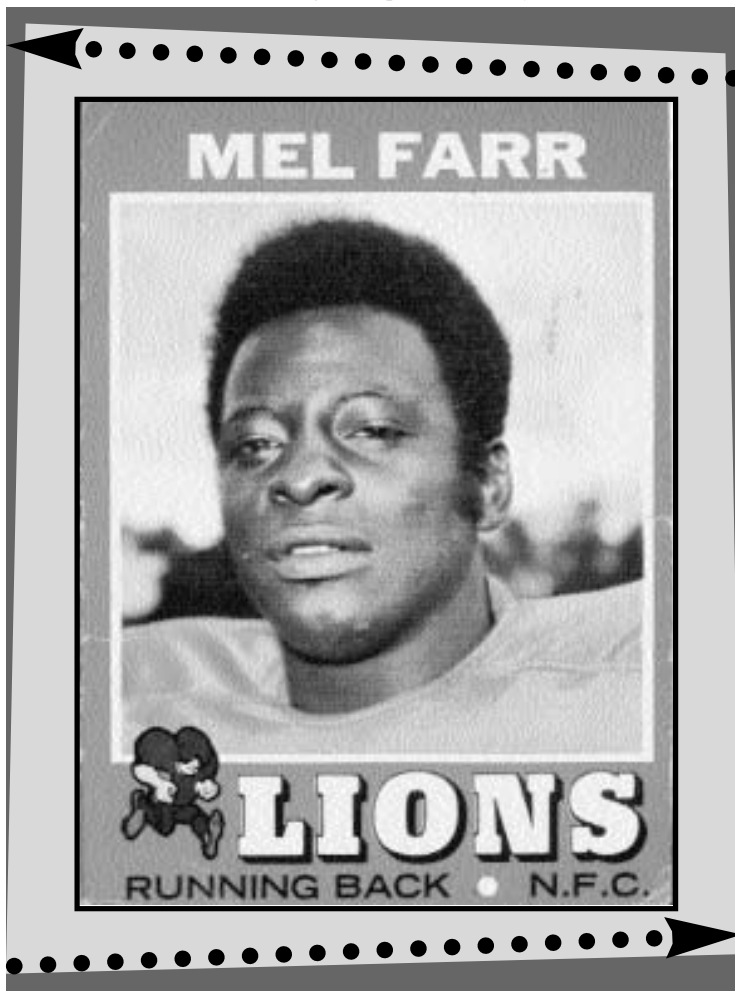
Stones, The (4 points). SCORE AFTER FOUR ROUNDS: *Rolling Stone* 5, Nørb 3.

#6) MARVIN GAYE: *What’s Going On* (Motown) v. MARKED MEN, THE: self-titled (Rip Off) METHOD OF COMBAT: Trial by Football Card

Recorded in 1970, Marvin Gaye’s *What’s Going On* is one of the two RS top ten albums i don’t own, and, needless to say, i ain’t rightly about to go plunk down my hard-earned American bread for something on their fucking say-so. I tried to track down a copy to borrow – my friend Jeff has one, somewhere, but he proved unable to locate same within my required time-frame – so, in the interests of full disclosure, let the record show that not only have i never owned this record, i’ve never even HEARD it. Be that trifling bit of airy persiflage as it may, i will state, with all the misplaced conviction and two-bit hubris that i am allowed, by law, to muster, that i am shit-certain that the Marked Men and their ceaseless, spring-wound, rapid fire, more-melodic-aspects-of-the-Dils styled assault would have minimal trouble mopping up the floor with Sir Marvin. However, in the interests of giving The People a show trial, representing Mr. Gaye will be my 1971 Topps football card of Mel Farr, the Detroit Lions running back who was drinking beer with Marvin Gaye the day he came up with the title *What’s Going On* (let the record show that 1971 – first grade – was the first year i started buying football cards, and i had not only the 1971 Mel Farr, but also the card of St. Louis Cardinals cornerback Miller Farr, Mel’s brother. Just thought you’d like to know). Now, in 1970, when *What’s Going On* was recorded, Mel did rush for a respectable 4.3 yards per carry, with nine touchdowns. He was the 7th leading rusher in the NFC in 1970, but remember, the NFC only had 13 teams back then, so that’s solid but not noteworthy. He rushed for 717 yards that year, which – apart from being my house number, therefore exactly 3000 less than Graceland’s house number, therefore exactly 18,000 less than the capacity at the Bradley Center for Bucks games – when extrapolated from the 14-game season they played back then to today’s 16-game season, is still only 819 yards. Adequate, but certainly not a Marked Men type performance. WINNER: Marked Men, The (5 points). SCORE AFTER FIVE ROUNDS: Nørb 8, *Rolling Stone* 5.

#5) BEATLES, THE: *Rubber Soul* (EMI) v. BLOODY HOLLIES, THE: *Fire at Will* (Sympathy) METHOD OF COMBAT: Trial by Smug Rationalization

The Bloody Hollies “Tired of This Shit” is pretty close to the best song i’ve heard all year; the funny thing is that it’s a shameless rip off of “People Who Died” by the Jim Carroll Band – except instead of the lyrics being a big laundry list of people who DIED! DIED! (and, you know, while we were out, Warren Spahn – who led the Milwaukee Braves to the city’s only World Series title and was the winningest left-handed pitcher of all time – Tony Canadeo, one of only four Packers to have their jersey numbers retired – and Hawk of the Road Warriors, the greatest wrestling tag-team of all time – all died. Creepy year, man, i’m tellin’ ya), the lyrics are a big laundry list of chicks who won’t put out for him. WHICH IS GENIUS. I mean, what’s the only thing worse than your friends dying? NOT GETTING ANY PUSSY! (well, that and sitting thru the *White Album* again) The song is a two-minute blast of “Workin’ on Tiffany on



REV. NØRB

the telephone / lets me spend my money but won't let me take her home" type couplets of woe, punctuated with the occasional "Somethin' better give, or I'm bound to throw a fit, I'm TIRED OF THIS SHIT! TIRED OF THIS SHIT!" The night i got this CD (ugly cover art compared to the LP, but AH! Auto repeat!) i think i played "Tired of This Shit" for, quite literally, 90 minutes in a row, at head-crushing volume, after midnight (this is why everyone needs to own a house). If anyone is familiar with Ultraman – the evil Superman™ type from the Crime Syndicate of Earth-3 in Justice League of America (1st series) Nos. 29 & 30 – you will doubtless recall that every time Ultraman was exposed to Kryptonite, far from being adversely affected, he gained a new superpower. I have always felt that truly great rock'n'roll songs were my Ultraman's Kryptonite: On exposure, i am IMBUEd with a NEW and TERRIFIC SUPERPOWER that i can use to ward off my oppressors, and HUMBLE and DESTROY my enemies! "Tired of This Shit" is like a huge, Hoppity-Hop™-sized Kryptonite rock in my Ultraman crack pipe. I RULE EARTH-3, MOTHERFUCKERS!!! Forty-five times in a row i listened to that song, and i'm still not sick of it. Fucking genius. However, the only other songs on the album i was initially impressed with were "Swing," a violent, twangy thrasher (imagine the White Stripes but kicking ass) that will certainly do for suicide by hanging what "Lights Out" did for self-inflicted blindness, and "Emergency Shutdown," where the bass and drums pound out one note for about three minutes whilst the bee-zerk singer rants and raves and goes apeshit on his Telecaster. I eventually warmed up to the remainder of the material: Hey! It's Nashville Pussy with ties!!! "Downtown Revolver" is such a viciously convincing song about packing heat that i'd be scared shitless to perform it if i did not, in fact, come equipped with a loaded firearm. Aaaaaaaand... unfortunately, it's all for naught, because they go up against the fourth-best Beatles album of all time. I prefer the US version of *Rubber Soul* to the UK version (which is what today's CDs are and what i'm using here is), simply because "I've Just Seen a Face" was such a perfect opening track and now it's not even on the album (i think it's on "Help!") (the US and UK differed in how they paid royalties on their records – in the US it was per song, in the UK, per record – therefore it was in the interests of the American labels to put as few songs as they could get away with on each album, and in the interests of the British labels to put as many on as they could, leading to all manner of Trans-Atlantic variance et al). Doesn't really matter. Every song is good on *Rubber Soul*, though there are no real rockers to be found. The band starts to push the envelope a wee bit regarding allowable studio sounds and diversity of influence, but it's all still rooted in a traditional pop context, for better or for worse. I assume no one really wishes for me to continue this discussion. WINNER: Beatles, The (6 points). SCORE AFTER SIX ROUNDS: *Rolling Stone* 11, Nørb 8.

#4) BOB DYLAN: *Highway 61 Revisited* (Columbia) v. LEG HOUNDS, THE: *Ready to Go!* (Bulge)

METHOD OF COMBAT: Trial by No Contest

Okay, Earth – bitch all you want about favoritism on my part putting a record on my own label at #4 on the year, but the fact of the matter is that the Leg Hounds fucking ROCK and ROLL, jack! They are a fucking great band, they have their shit together, and they rock. They are not re-inventing the wheel. But they ARE rolling around quite successfully using wheels of prior invention! I still think the second one – *Date Your Daughters* – is my favorite (something about pop genius and what-not), but everybody else thinks this one is the best one, and who am i to argue (other than the lunthead that fucked the cover up by not clicking the little "Process Separation" box on the 100M/100Y red i used [or, more correctly, TRIED to use] on the cover)? The production on the stereo tracks is amazing (especially when one takes into consideration that all three albums were recorded at the same time!). I can't say enough about this band. So fuck it! Buy their records, don't buy their records, i don't give a fuck – i got my copy, who the hell cares if you get yours or not? Unfortunately for Sheboygan's finest, their magnum opus goes up against the best album on either top ten, *Highway 61 Revisited* (yeah, if i was REALLY playing favorites, i'd have them slotted at #6 where they'd only hafta tangle with my Mel Farr football card). My ex-roommate/bandmate Jamie always swore by this album in the '80s, but i sorta thought there were too many dirgey songs on it at the time, though i always loved "Like a Rolling Stone" and "Tombstone Blues." I stand corrected by the buggy-whip of history: The album's a fuggin' masterpiece, stem to stern. This is the kind of album that makes ya feel like you're a wet washcloth that somebody wrung out and tossed into the middle of the street in heavy traffic after you're done listening to it. I keep a mental list of everyone who's ever interrupted my listening enjoyment, if right word "enjoyment" be, of

RAZORCAKE 34 the album-ending epic "Desolation Row." Eventually, i will

hunt them all down and KILL THEM. Have a nice day. WINNER: Bob Dylan (7 points). SCORE AFTER SEVEN ROUNDS: *Rolling Stone* 18, Nørb 8.

#3) BEATLES, THE: *Revolver* (EMI) v. SOFT BOYS, THE: *Nextdoorland* (Matador)

METHOD OF COMBAT: Trial by Seniority

Yes, i realize that, after making a big stink about *London Calling* being released in 1979, i'm including a Soft Boys album released in 2002 in my 2003 Top Ten list. I can get away with this for a number of reasons, not the least of which is 1. Top Ten lists are, by their very nature, not as rigidly restricted an institution as are, say, oh, i don't know, calling something "The Album of the Decade!" or things of that sort. They are not legally binding. Top Ten lists have to contend with a variety of real-world issues, including deadlines, oversights, publishing delays, etc., and, while the highest level of practical accuracy should always be strived (striven?) for, Top Ten lists in no way should be seen as perfectly accurate representations of the calendar year which they represent. Or, to put it another way, i had to have this Top Ten list done in November, so go fuck yourself, dickshine. In any event, the Soft Boys got kind of a tough draw here – *Revolver* is the third-best album by my second-favorite band; *Nextdoorland* is fantastic, but the fact of the matter is that songs like "She Said She Said" are the perfection which a band like the Soft Boys, aged and experienced as they are, can only chase after. In many respects, *Nextdoorland* – better than the mildly overrated *Underwater Moonlight* in this reporter's mumbled opinion – works better as an album than does *Revolver* – the songs flow together well, the mood (?) evoked (??) by the work (???) remains at a pretty constant level of subdued insistence (arbitrarily large amount of question marks) (you know... it's kind of like if you have a hard-on, and you know if you touch your cock one more time, in any way, shape, or form, you're gonna spurt all over your Brittany pix – but you never touch it, and maintain that equilibrium of tension all the way thru the album – yeah, that's kind of it. I think.), and i can't think of one noteworthy imperfection herein. This would be awesome make-out music, but i have yet to find a test specimen to do the lab work with me on that particular conjecture. *Revolver* is a great album, granted, but no one, even at this late hour, seems willing to point out how poorly the Lennon and McCartney songs mesh together. I mean, even to the casual listener, it's pretty obvious that there is next to no collaboration on the songs credited to "Lennon-McCartney" – John's songs are edgy rockers and psychedelic flipouts; Paul's songs are dry, stiff, but well-crafted radio hits. People wet themselves with ga-ga juice over *Revolver*, but i have yet to read one Rock Critic or Analogous Tastemaker's comment on the tactical absurdity of having songs like "Here, There and Everywhere," "Good Day Sunshine" and "Got to Get You into My Life" on the same album as "Taxman" and "She Said She Said" and "Tomorrow Never Knows." I mean, John's songs and George's songs fit together fine; Paul's songs are blatantly and proactively square. I like some of 'em, but... i dunno. This record is quite a bit more haphazardly slung together than i see acknowledged. And the KICKER is that the original US version of *Revolver* omitted THREE John songs, "I'm Only Sleeping," "Dr. Robert" and "And Your Bird Can Sing" – which means that, back in 1966, the record that, according to *Rolling Stone*, "made it thrillingly clear that what we now think of as 'the Sixties' was fully – and irreversibly – under way" contained a whopping TWO John Lennon compositions. Six Pauls, three Georges, two Johns. Right. Viva la fucking Rev-a-LOO-see-OWWWNNNNN, muzairfookair! The original US version of *Revolver* blows. Fuck you. On a related note, i think that "Unprotected Love" by the Soft Boys is about being on the receiving end of condom-less butt-sex. WAITER! WINNER: Beatles, The (8 points). SCORE AFTER EIGHT ROUNDS: *Rolling Stone* 26, Nørb 8.

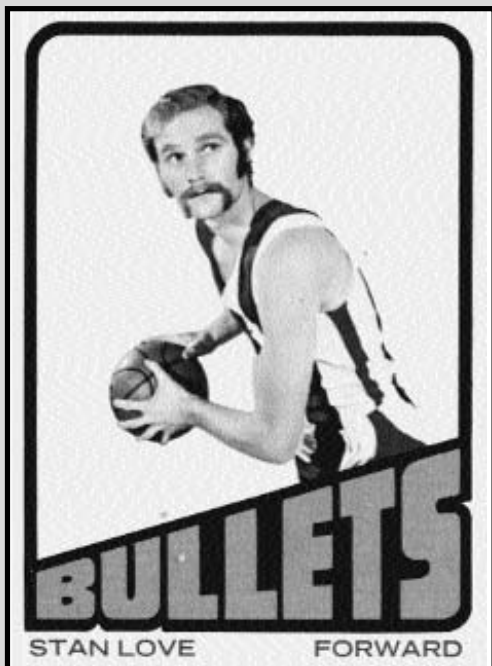
#2) BEACH BOYS, THE: *Pet Sounds* (Capitol) v. EXPLODING HEARTS, THE: *Guitar Romantic* (Screaming Apple)

METHOD OF COMBAT: Trial by Common Fucking Sense

Okay, i don't think i expressed myself particularly well last issue. In point of fact, i think my column was particularly poorly written (especially my musings on Wesley, the other chap's Wesley piece was so well done i felt a bit embarrassed to have my scatterbrained musings on public record, and i didn't really even tell the stories very well). So that there is no misunderstanding, let me encapsulate my dealings with the Exploding Hearts album: 1. I bought it. 2. I played it. 3. I thought i liked it, until 4. They started going "doon-doon-doon, da doon, doon-da-doon-da-doon-da," which i hate, and have always considered one of the last refuges for scoundrels, and was 5. the basis of my entire argument on why the Strokes sucked: They went "doon-doon-doon, da doon, doon-da-doon-da-doon-

da,” so then 6. i couldn’t listen to the album a second time, because what if they went “doon-doon-doon, da doon, doon-da-doon-da-doon-da” and didn’t suck? I’d be screwed! But then 7. Three members died in a tragic van accident, so then 8. i REALLY couldn’t listen to the album again, because what good could come from me going “a HA! I TOLD you they sucked because they went ‘doon-doon-doon, da doon, doon-da-doon-da-doon-da!’” in such circumstances? Well, anyway, i eventually got brave enough that i listened to the album a second time. I, quite frankly, was somewhat relieved to find that it struck me as “kinda gay.” Unfortunately (for me), i taped it on the same tape as the Little Killers album, so i wound up listening to it over and over again by default, eventually deciding the record was fucking classic brilliant tragic genius, utterly amazing in its adroit yet practical amazingness. I’m still working out some issues/loop-holes regarding the “doon-doon-doon, da doon, doon-da-doon-da-doon-da” conundrum (to say nothing of the 2002 date very visibly present on

band”)]! Christ, if my kid was ever responsible for an album this unlistenable, i’d probably beat his ass too! Under no circumstances should Brian Wilson have ever attempted to concoct a song more lyrically deep than “Good Vibrations” or “Wendy!” Miniature golf and Hondas in the hills, yes. Verachi sandals too, yes. Plumbing the depths of soulful sensitivity? Take some drugs and go swimming, loser. This shit is like the Simpletones gone emo, a complete and utter aberration (but picture all the Simpletones, porked up past the 300 lb. mark, lying on the same bed together in matching Napoleon suits, with their hands in their coats. That’s kinda mitigatingly funny, isn’t it?). If i could rate *Pet Sounds*, i’d give it the same rating my old bandmate Gary once gave to his guitar playing in an interview: “On a scale of one to ten, about a negative three.” WINNER: Exploding Hearts, The 9 points). SCORE AFTER NINE ROUNDS: *Rolling Stone* 26, Nørb 17.



STAN'S BROTHER, MIKE, SINGS WITH A ROCK-N-ROLL GROUP.

CAREER PRO STATISTICS						
	G	FG	FT	REB	PTS	AVG
71-72 Baltimore NBA	74	242	103	338	587	7.9
Career Totals	74	242	103	338	587	7.9

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MINIATURE GOLF AND HONDAS IN THE HILLS, YES.
VERACHI SANDALS TOO, YES.
PLUMBING THE DEPTHS OF SOULFUL SENSITIVITY?
TAKE SOME DRUGS AND GO SWIMMING, LOSER.

the cover), but, ultimately, “doon-doon-doon, da doon, doon-da-doon-da-doon-da” don’t mean squat, since the record is only paired up against *Pet Sounds*, an unlistenable piece of shit that’s a lot closer to being the second-WORST album of all time than it is the second-best one. *Pet Sounds* is godawful. Horrible. Useless (this is the other album i never owned; the closest i ever came to *Pet Sounds* ownership prior to this CD burn i requested from my friend Erik was when Maddy dubbed me a cassette copy. Nice gesture. You’re both out of your fucking minds for liking this. Can i tape anything for you? How about thirty-five minutes of a large dog shitting in an empty swimming pool? You may enjoy it, given your, uh, tastes). It starts with the overblown lame-ola of “Wouldn’t It Be Nice,” and manages – amazingly – to get continually worse from there. That song sucks utterly. The main gist of the song is “wouldn’t it be nice...if/when one day we could/can fuck?” That is not an acceptable stance for the protagonist of any worthy song to take. “Won’t it be nice... when one day we DO fuck?” is fine. “Wouldn’t It Be Nice?” is not. And things manage to head even further south of Nadirs-ville promptly thereafter! Write this down, if anyone is still reading: BRIAN WILSON IS A FUCKING MORON. A fucking MO-RON!!! Musical genius, yes. Producer, yes. Lyrically, the guy is a fucking dimbulb. He should have never – NEVER – tried to write lyrics any less shit-simple shallow than his bread ‘n’ butter offerings like “Surfin’ Safari” or “California Girls” or “Little Deuce Coupe.” The guy does NOT have the mental horsepower to transcend that. I’m sorry. Him am doofus! These songs sound like they were written by a ten-year-old, and i do NOT mean that as a compliment. I’d rather clothespin my Mel Farr football card to some kid’s bike spokes and listen to THAT than this haughty parade of worthless horseshit (actually, for effect, i’d use my 1972-73 Stan Love basketball card instead [caption on back of card: “Stan’s brother, Mike, sings for a rock-n-roll

#1) BEATLES, THE: *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* v. LITTLE KILLERS, THE: self-titled (Crypt)
METHOD OF COMBAT: TRIAL BY MARIJUANA!!!
Damn. I could not have planned for a more dramatic finish if i had, in fact, planned for one. If the Little Killers win, Nørb wins 27 to 26. If the Little Killers lose, Nørb gets fucking routed, 36-17. Geez. I am going to look pretty fucking stupid losing to *Rolling Stone* 36-17. Eeesh. Well. Hmm. Let’s see: On the one hand, we have the sixth or seventh or eighth best album by my second favorite band of all time (*Magical Mystery Tour*, *Revolver*, *Rubber Soul*, *Hard Day’s Night* and the first one are definitely better than *Sgt. Pepper*. *Help!* and *For Sale* may or may not be better than it; *With the Beatles* likely is worse. *Abbey Road*, *Let It Be* and the *White Album* are pieces of shit). On the other hand, we have the debut album by the Little Killers, allegedly “The best garage punk band in the USA!” Fuck that. “The best garage punk band in the WORLD!”, as far as this wayward Martian can tell. Sara is my new Bass Idol. I was sick of having Sammy from Teengenerate and Blacksnake from the Spaceshits being my Bass Idols. They kept walking on water. Sara just goes “DENG-DENG-DENG-DENG-DENG-DENG-DENG!” at brain-cracking volume. I can do that! I don’t think i’ll ever be able to look as cold as she always appears to be while she’s playing, but i can go “DENG-DENG-DENG-DENG-DENG-DENG-DENG-DENG-DENG!” at brain-cracking volume (especially now that i traded in the guitar i bought right before i barfed myself at my class reunion for a pummeled Peavey™ T-40 bass – the only stringed instrument heavier than George Tabb’s Peavey™ T-60 guitar, by definition!). Life is good... except that... uh... all the chips, as it were, are riding on the Little Killers v. Beatles conflagration. And, uh... i know i always say that *Sgt. Pepper* sucks, but, uh... it doesn’t really suck as much as i say it sucks. It kinda just sucks in comparison. RAZORCAKE 35

I mean, it's nowhere near as good as the two albums which preceded it – *Rubber Soul* and *Revolver* – and it's nowhere near as good as the album which came after it – *Magical Mystery Tour* – but, i mean, it's still kinda good, i guess. I'm totally into the last four songs: "Lovely Rita," "Good Morning," "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (Reprise)" and "A Day in the Life." And i like how it starts with "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" and such. I guess i kinda like "With a Little Help from My Friends," too. I'm not sure why. But that Little Killers album does rock totally, at least the first side, so, you know, half-totally. The second side is a bit weaker, except for "How Do You Do It?", which might be the best track on the album... but, i mean, there are three way-above-and-beyond-the-call-of-duty classics on here ("How Do You Do It?" "Happy" and their version of the Rascals "Come On Up"), and four other garden variety classics... that's seven killer songs out of twelve... that's pretty good, isn't it? Can't i win with that hand? I mean, yeah, you gotta ask yourself, "gosh, self! How much staying power do you really expect such

are both better songs than the second song? HEY! WHAT WAS THAT? I heard something. I heard something between the songs. NOT THE LITTLE MAN WHO LIVES IN THE 6.5-DIMENSIONAL DWARF TWIN UNIVERSE COMING TO KILL ME or anything, something on the record. I heard something between "With a Little Help from My Friends" and "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds." It was weird. Really big. Huge. Weird. Alien, almost. It was like i heard it, but i didn't hear it – which is probably among the reasons why i can't remember what it sounded like. Goddammit. Goddammit, i know – i KNOW – that this song is better than the last song. But it seems worse. Somehow. The album is, clearly, in damage control mode as of song #3, "Lucy in the Sky." But, yet, "Lucy in the Sky" > "With a Little Help from My Friends!" THE TRIAL BY MARIJUANA IS VERY CHALLENGING! PRAY YOU NEVER GET CALLED FOR JURY DUTY! Why do people have such a hang-up about this album anyway? The "concept?" What the fuck is the concept? Jamie used to say that the concept behind Side One is "life is an illusion," and

MIKE MEYERS IS MORE LIKE UNCLE FESTER DRESSED UP AS PEPE LE PEW FOR HALLOWEEN THAN HE IS THE CAT IN THE HAT! IT'S AN OUTRAGE! A TRAVESTY! THE MIDWINTER JICKER, COME EARLY THIS YEAR!

a primal and immediate band such as the Little Killers to maintain throughout the years? You never really dug *Sgt. Pepper* like you were supposed to, but you never wound up digging it any less since you bought it at age 12, so, i mean, a somewhat underperforming Beatles product could still quite easily scrape together the moxie to eradicate the heretoday-gone-tomorrow thrills of a 'right here, right now motherfucker!' unit like the Little Killers, whose product's appeal is apt to have a relatively short half-life, yes? The old standbys of yesterday more often than not prevail over the Hotshots Of The Moment, yes?" Well... er... um... yes. BUT ENOUGH LOFTY THOUGHT! THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO SETTLE A BLOOD FEUD OF THIS NATURE! Ladies and gentlemen, i give to me... TRIAL BY MARIJUANA!!! (gasp! shriek! Beatles album hits turntable! This is IT, true believer!!!) (sounds of illicit combustion, et al) AHHH. "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band." I love this song. The Little Killers have chances of slim and none against this. Just the... the beat is so great, and the guitars sound so cool... the crowd noise is keen as well. The crowd noise makes the song, kind of. Yeah. This is trouble. This album starts great and ends great, they just fuck around too much in the middle or something... i mean, "Fixing a Hole?" "When I'm Sixty-Four?" "Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite?" If this music hall twaddle turned up on a record that said "HERMAN'S HERMITS" across the front instead of "THE BEATLES," no one would pay it no more nevermind than fucking "My Old Friend Dutch" or "Lemons and Limes." I mean, how is that "GREATEST ALBUM OF ALL TIME" material??? I fail to understand this. The album does finish strong, though... i almost invariably find myself repeating the last four tracks after side two ends. The first song and the last four rule. I guess the rest is damage control or something. Wait. I slouch corrected. "With a Little Help From My Friends," the second song, isn't damage control mode material yet. I think i said that already. THE TRIAL BY MARIJUANA IS INFALLIBLE AND WILL REPEAT ITSELF WHEN NECESSARY!!! The third song is definitely damage control material, though. What the hell IS the third song? "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds?" That's certainly a better song than "With a Little Help from My Friends." What's after that? "Getting Better?" That's a better song than "With a Little Help from My Friends" too. Wait. This makes no sense. Why does this album go into damage control mode after the second song, when the third and fourth songs are clearly superior to the second song? Am i totally off my rocker on this? Does it actually not go into damage control mode until after the fourth song, then? If it doesn't go into damage control mode until after the fourth song, that means i like the first four and last four songs, and The Little Killers are pretty much toast. Aren't they? Four great songs on each end, with a twaddle middle. That's not a bad day's work. I mean, the third and fourth songs are clearly better than the second song, and i already said i liked the second song, so that's got to mean that i like the third and fourth songs as well. You know, the math is there. But, yet, i have never once perceived this record as a First-Four-Songs-Are-Good album, only as a First-One-Or-Two-Songs-Are-Good album. How the hell does that work? This is a matter of most compelling mystery! How can a record be a First-Two-

the concept behind Side Two is "the necessity of that illusion." I think that fucker just failed the Trial By Marijuana, because that remains one of the stupidest things i've ever heard in my life. The concept is just, like... fuck... let me reference this. Gimme that *Rolling Stone*, helper chimp! Yeah, shit... the "concept"... the almighty fuckin' CONCEPT is "an imaginary concert by a fictional band, played by the Beatles." Well, GODDAMMIT, that's what i ALWAYS thought the concept was! They were, like, "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," and they were playing to a crowd, and then their singer, Billy Shears, came out and... and... and... I HEARD IT AGAIN. Did you hear it? I heard it. I HEARD IT! I HEARD IT! Smack dab between "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" and "Getting Better!" I HEARD IT. A GIGANTIC, ROARING, VAST... SILENCE!!! A GAPING VOID OF... SILENCE!!! ZERO SCREAMING DECIBELS OF COMPLETE AND UTTER... SILENCE!!! There is nothing – NOTHING – between "Lucy in the Sky" and "Getting Better!" No sound. Ray-ray-ray-ray-radio silence. Dead air. Long seconds containing nothing but the vaguely sublimated hiss of analog tape transfer! This is the exact same huge, hunkering NOTHING i heard between "With a Little Help from My Friends" and "Lucy in the Sky!" There is nothing – NOTHING – no sound at all – between tracks two and three. There is no sound between tracks three and four. Between four and five. Between five and six. Between six and seven. (After track seven, the album is supposed to get flipped over, so that's a no-call) Silence between tracks eight and nine. Silence between tracks nine and ten. Cavernous blocks of nada!!! Unspiced slabs of empty set jerky!!! SEA OF HOLES, MOTHERFUCKER!!! After TWENTY-SIX YEARS OF OWNING THIS ALBUM, I FINALLY FIGURED OUT WHY IT SUCKS: Where's your fucking concept CONCEPT, maaaaaan? Your fucking concept – your fucking concept achieved with WAX FIGURES and ARTSY COLLAGES and COSTUMES and ORCHESTRAS and A RECORDING BUDGET A JILLION TIMES LARGER THAN ANY PROJECT THAT HAD GONE BEFORE – the fucking CONCEPT that "elevated" rawk to the f'n GLORIOUS heights championed by *Rolling Stone*, et al – dude, your CONCEPT lasted all of TWO MINUTES AND TEN SECONDS (returning for a whopping 1:18 during the reprise of the "Sgt. Pepper" theme). YOU SPENT ALL THIS FUCKING MONEY FOSTERING A "CONCEPT" THAT YOU DIDN'T BOTHER TO EXTEND PAST THE FIRST EIGHT SECONDS OF THE SECOND SONG! After "With a Little Help from My Friends," where is Billy? Where is the Sarge? What happened to the crowd? LISTEN TO THE VAST, GAPING OCEANS OF BLANKNESS BETWEEN ALL THE TRACKS EXCEPT THE FIRST TWO AND THE LAST FOUR!!! There is NOTHING THERE!!! The shit between the songs is supposed to be a BIG DEAL, and there is NOTHING whatsoever between the majority of them other than complete and utter NEGLECT and FAMINE and VACUUM!!! THAT is why i always liked the first two songs, even though the third and fourth songs were better than the second song: The second song is still connected to the CONCEPT, DUDE, through the "BILLLL... LEEEEEEEE... SHEEEEEAAAAARRRRS!" thing. The third and fourth songs are just random islands of bullshit. The first time i heard this album, it seemed so full of lofty potential, like it

REV. NORB

Thank you and good night.
Love, Nørb



SHIFTLESS WHEN IDLE

I AM INCAPABLE OF DOING ANYTHING THAT ISN'T EITHER STUPID, RIDICULOUS OR BOTH.

By the time you read this, you're probably busy checking out the latest *Family Circle* magazine, trying to figure out your New Year's Resolutions: quit smoking, lose weight, find a husband, make the perfect casserole and become, you know, more spiritual. So, in the interests of making *Razorcake* a more accessible, Tupperware-ad based magazine, I am offering... My Ten New Year's Resolutions!

1. Listen to the Onion Flavored Rings album as many times as humanly possible! Why, you ask? Oh, I don't know, it's just the best album since Dillinger Four's *Midwestern Songs of the America*, not that that's a big deal or nothin'! With lyrics like, "Logic seems so fundamental, like it must be most of what is nature. But if you apply it to an atom, it just falls apart." And you can dance to it! In your room! Like an idiot! Which I am! So, you see, it's perfect. Anyway, onward to the mathematic calculations. Currently, I listen to this album at least four times a day, which, if I am able to keep up the pace, would mean that I will listen to the album 1,460 times in one year! Add the appropriate silly dancing per song, and what you get is complete and total happiness – for a year! See how easy this is?

2. Eat at least two square pizzas a week from Milwaukee's finest pizza place, The Pizza Shuttle. Living in New York City for so long, I've been a victim of the dreaded THIN CRUST PIZZA! Nyet! Midwesterners know better, for how are we to survive a cold Wisconsin winter without good, thick pizza dough? To put it simply, we would die. So, two square pizzas a week, preferably just cheese, although my sister has a fascist appreciation for pineapple, which poses no slight danger.

3. Leave New York City and move back to Wisconsin! This one is really easy, because my lease expires at the end of January and I have a Welcome Back to Wisconsin dance party to attend. What does this mean for you, the reader? No more columns filled with complaining about money and people wearing high heels. More columns about beer, being stupid, and hanging out at Loose Stools, Milwaukee's only punk rock speakeasy!

4. Graduate! Yep, if all goes well, I will have a Master's degree in both Journalism and French history by May. Sounds boring, right? Right, except that I am incapable of doing anything that isn't either stupid, ridiculous or both. So I'm writing my graduate thesis on French **RAZORCAKE** 38 and Indian War re-enactors. My



sister and I will be traveling around the US, dressed as French women from the 1760s, picking up similarly-dressed (read: ridiculous) people, and re-enacting battles alongside "les sauvages." Yes, this will be (at least) one *Razorcake* column! Or just a new zine: *Tight Corsets: A Descent into Madness*.

5. Read at least half of the 500 or so books I have accumulated since starting grad school, including 1919 by John dos Passos, a history of Maritime workers in the United States, and (after years of staring at it on my shelf) *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*. Punk!

6. Tour both the Miller and Sprecher Root Beer factories, located in (where else?) Milwaukee,



Wisconsin! My mom lives approximately twenty blocks from Miller Valley (yes, such a place does exist), home to the brewery that made Milwaukee, uh, famous. When you drive through the "Valley," you go under a huge clock hanging over the road that reads "It's Miller Time!" Punk! Although I've visited the brewery many times, I was always underage, and therefore given no free beer. Lame! Fortunately, I'll be able to drink freely (d'oh!) this time around. And the Sprecher factory, although lacking its own "valley," gives out free samples in a room covered in "Bavarian murals." I am intrigued!

7. Learn (more) Russian! After a year of Russian, my skills are seriously lacking. (See last issue's discussion of Ukrainian bar talk.) By the end of the year, I hope to be able to explain in Russian 1.) why I don't want to make out with you, a sleazy Russian man; 2.) why I like Trotsky more than Lenin; 3.) why the Lillington's *Shit Out of Luck* is a great album. Kakaya pacuss! (What filth!)

8. Drink more! Living in New York City, where a rum and coke sets you back at least five bucks, and where studying the history of work in France has left little time for pleasure, I have at times gone more than three weeks without drinking even a sip of an alcoholic beverage! In no time at all, Ian McKaye is gonna call me asking if I wanna hang out! For shame! It's time to make some changes! It's time to get to know the thrill of drinking so much vodka that I end up screaming along to Black Flag songs until I pass out! At least once a week!

9. Organize and carry out the much-banded about idea of shopping cart bike races in the street! My friend Nate and I had talked about this a long time ago, but it never happened. We even had teams picked out! The premise? Easy enough to figure out – you tie a shopping cart on the back of a bike. One person in the cart, one person on the bike. Several teams. A race to the finish. The prize? Dignity!

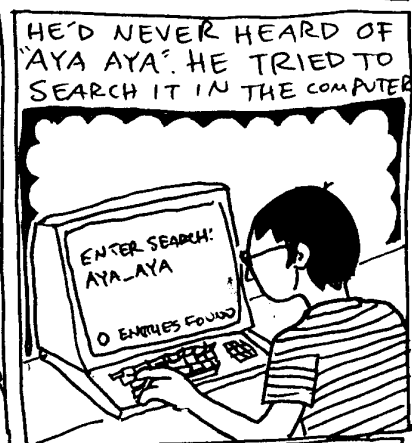
10. Install *Rivethead* author Ben Hamper as the head of the AFL-CIO and make John Sweeney work in a GM plant.

Happy holidays!
–Maddy



P.S. If you write to me anytime after January 30, email me first to get my new Midwest address: cerealcore@hotmail.com.

MY SECOND COLUMN FOR RAZORCAKE BY BEN SNAKE PIT



THE BAR FEEDERS



Interview by Gavin O'Neill Photos by Todd Taylor

I've known the guys in the Bar Feeders for over fifteen years. We grew up and down together in San Francisco. In an ironic twist of fate, I got sober the same day they started the band almost ten years ago: the same day they launched into an unprecedented punk rock celebration of the joys of carousing that has taken them through twenty tours, fifteen comp appearances, three singles and two full length albums. Make no mistake, The Bar Feeders do pay tribute to booze in their songs, detailing the highs and lows of a youth spent in bars and backyards across the world. But if this were all the band were about, I would have graduated from their schtick when I graduated

from my last day in rehab. For me, their songs have always been about great stories. Jimmy, Trey and Cecil are rancoteurs, first and foremost, and it is their ability to convey their experience, and that of their friends and fans, which has led them to rise above their peers in the Bay Area's punk scene. Also, they are completely strange. Their music constantly surprises from song to song, album to album. They are like John Cage meets the Replacements meets Bad Religion meets No Means No. On the eve of their third full length release, *50 Ways to Leave Your Liver*, out now on Attention Deficit Disorder, I thought it would be a good time to look back on a decade spent in the clubs: a punk life.

Gavin: The new album is called *50 Ways to Leave Your Liver*. A lot of people are calling it a departure. Why do you think this is?

Trey: It's a little different. It's pretty diverse.

Jimmy: Like fermenting yeast, we're constantly oozing and modulating. We have influences all over the map. There's no need to stick to a formula. Plus, when you've been flailing away for this long you have to change things up to keep it fresh.

Trey: The original idea was to try to make each song sound like a different band and release it as a mock comp. We were gonna call it *Legends in Their Own Minds: A Tribute to the Bar Feeders*. We had all these fake band names like Anal Ventriloquist and Sly and the Family Jewels. As it turned out, the songs just came out sounding different so the diversity was actually unintentional. Some people will probably complain, but who wants to listen to a record where each song sounds like the one before it?

Jimmy: I don't feel like it's too much of a departure. We're a hardcore band making hardcore records. So what if some parts sound like Ween or REM?

Gavin: What's your favorite song on the new record?

Trey: Weird question. I don't know.

Cecil: "Dogbarf."

Jimmy: "Chainsaw." It's the true story of an unbelievably psychotic crew of mob guys in New York City. They were part of the Gotti gang and rubbed out more people than the Beasties wrote rhymes. Plus the music is total Bar Feeders.

Gavin: How about your least favorite?

Cecil: You're not cool anymore. Just letting you know. What kind of a question is that?

Jimmy: "Hot Monkey Love." Stupid, fast, and sloppy.

Trey: Also pure Bar Feeders.

Gavin: Pretty self-deprecating for a band that's been together almost ten years. What's kept you making music together when so many other bands fade out after two or three years?

Cecil: Alcohol.

Jimmy: Boredom, depression, lack of identity.

Trey: We've been together long enough that there's no reason to break up anymore. Now we just take six months or a year off when we need it.

Jimmy: We haven't enjoyed enough success to get fat-headed and cocky and obnoxious about it. We like the music, remain semi-productive and don't take the whole thing deathly serious. And it does stroke our fragile egos to be in a band that some people like.

Trey: Plus, there's a lot of free beer that comes with being in this band. If that well were to dry up it would be pretty devastating. We were friends long before this band and we still basically live together. For a

few years we all lived in our practice space. That's probably how we acquired most of our local fan base. After every show we would invite everyone back to the studio. We'd try to have a keg waiting. It was like a free after-show party. Or we would get a keg for practice and call everyone we knew and tell them to pass it on. BOOM! Practice becomes a free show with free beer. We don't live there anymore but we still manage to have fun.

Jimmy: Basically we all get along well enough to keep going. We're friends.

Gavin: Okay. Next question is a doozy. Alcohol: Friend or foe?

Cecil: Alcohol!

Trey: On a good day, best friend. On a bad day, chief nemesis.

Jimmy: Liquor is a fine companion whatever your endeavor. Mowing the lawn, moonwalking, shaving, standing in line at the bank, testifying in court, counterfeiting Guess Jeans, even sleeping. Plus it can clean your wounds and make you think you're cooler than you actually are.

Trey: Last year a woman in Denmark was teaching a class to teenagers about alcohol and used our song lyrics in her curriculum. She put her students in touch with Jimmy who wrote a manifesto for them that probably best describes our relationship with alcohol. The whole thing is documented on our website. Jimmy did a hell of a job on it. He came up with positive reasons for drinking that I didn't even know I had. I've been meaning to thank him for that. Thank you, Jimmy.

Gavin: Well, San Francisco is a drinking town and you guys have survived the death of at least three major scenes there. Do you feel like a part of anything that's happening there now?

Cecil: We have our fingers pointed at the guy who has his finger on the guy who has his finger in the guy who is taking the pulse of the SF scene.

Jimmy: The only thing happening in SF right now is that punk rock is clinging precariously to the edge of a cliff. There are hardly any places to play and definitely no "home base." Still, bands exist and make their own little scenes and refuse to let it all die. We're a part of the "FUCK OFF, YOU CAN'T KILL US" scene.

Trey: But venues are starting to pop up again. After the mid-nineties when so many bands and warehouses disappeared it got pretty fuckin' dismal. It was great scene for a few years. People like Scott Alcoholocaust going all-out booking shows, and helping to bring bands together. There were a half-dozen warehouses doing shows. Kids could come and everyone could drink without spending a fortune. You could go out seven nights a week and see four or five bands. Squat, Hickey, Fuckface, The Faggz, The Idiots, Human Beans. There were so many good bands at that time. Lot's of out-of-town bands, too. Then all the dot com shit happened and a jillion status-seeking wannabe yuppies arrived and decided that SF was too loud and dirty. The city filled up with people who were all about money and looked down their noses at the punk who's serving them their lattes. They were moving into working class neighborhoods that had birthed and nurtured the bands. They called the cops all the time and got a lot of the venues shut down. But those fuckers got what they deserved. The money machine went kaput and now they're the ones serving lattes.

Bands and venues are starting to reappear. We still have brother bands here for sure. Fleshes, Bottles and Skulls, Strychnine, The Crosstops. It's not exactly the same but it's a good time again. I don't think it's good to try to repeat the past anyway. This isn't a nostalgia trip for us. We'd rather move forward.

Gavin: That's funny. I was just going to ask about the b-sides and rarities collection that's in the works. What's up with that?

Jimmy: Someone should put that out. It's a collection of 7"s and rare crap and it's pretty cool but we can't afford to do it right now.

Trey: It's got an acapella remix of an acapella song. There's twenty-something songs on it. A lot of stuff we still play

live.

Jimmy: Anyone out there wants to do it, there's a big lollipop in it for them.

Gavin: Your songs have always been populated with the freaks of San Francisco. Bright and unstable figures seem to gravitate toward the band and find tribute, sometimes unflattering, in your songs. *50 Ways* tells a few of these characters' stories. Who are these people?

Trey: Thanks for noticing. It seems like every record review we ever get says that every song is about booze. But when I go back and listen to the songs, they're actually about the people who drink the booze.

Jimmy: The freaks in question are friends, associates and drinking buds.

Gavin: Alcohol: Friend or foe?

Trey: On a good day, best friend. On a bad day, chief nemesis.



Some made the news, some bought us brews. All have something freaky to say.

Trey: Sometimes it's people we love. Sometimes not. Sometimes the songs are about us and we rag on ourselves way more than we do on anyone else. But we're not vindictive people and we don't like to fight. Chances are, if you get shat upon in one of our songs, you did something to deserve it.

Gavin: Speaking of fights, is it true that the Muppets threatened to sue you?

Jimmy: [Too afraid to answer.]

Trey: It's true. A few years ago we did a video using Muppets in place of ourselves. They were cool. They had our tattoos and everything. The Jim Henson Company saw it and sent us all cease-and-desist orders and said that if we didn't recall the video and stop using it, they would sue for copyright infringement, so we complied. We're all Sesame Street kids. Jim Henson and the Muppets didn't just teach us how to read. They taught us about cooperation.

Cecil: It was a set up. I think we were snitched on by a disgruntled DP who worked on the shoot.

Gavin: Okay, back to music. New wave: friend or foe? I know Cecil is a big Morrissey fan.

Trey: I have no insight into Cecil's obsession with Morrissey.

Cecil: I love new wave. Whenever I listen to a Morrissey album, and I have them all, I'm instantly compelled to strip naked and squirm around in a pile of used needles and have heavy, pointed objects driven through my nuts. Or sometimes I just lay back and daydream about gargling with gasoline, piss and thumbtacks.

Jimmy: Most punks over thirty have new wave records stashed somewhere in mom's attic. Adam and the Ants and Devo still make me drool.

Gavin: Has punk rock been good to you?

Cecil: Fuck yeah!

Trey: I can't remember but I think so.

Jimmy: Sure. What better excuse to extend your adolescence to ridiculous extremes and drink 'til you can't see?

Gavin: What's the best place to play in SF?

Cecil: 16th and Mission BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit station).

Trey: El Rio. Hands down.

Jimmy: El Rio, because it's preserved all the craziness of the last ten years.

Gavin: How about the worst place?

Jimmy: Munky's Unkle in SOMA (South of Market, an area in San Francisco).

Cecil: I'm instantly compelled to strip naked and squirm around in a pile of used needles and have heavy, pointed objects driven through my nuts.



They're total buttheads. They only serve Zima and Heineken and it's like eight bucks to use the bathroom which smells like a raccoon's ass. There's a shooting range next door and the walls are flimsy. Plus, they have all these coked-up security guards who strip search you at random intervals all night. Sheeesh.

Gavin: What's the best place to drink?

Cecil: It starts with a Z.

Jimmy: Zeitgeist. It's better than rubber chickens and whipped cream.

Trey: Are we pretending that we're in a fantasyland where there's a BAD place to drink?

Gavin: Worst place to drink?

Trey: Any place with no booze. Mormon church maybe?

Cecil: In the car.

Jimmy: The worst place to drink is the murky inner depths of Cecil's ass.

Gavin: What's the funniest Bar Feeders story your girlfriend doesn't know about?

Trey: I think my girlfriend is fucking psychic so either she already knows or it will come to her as I'm thinking about it. Let's move on.

Jimmy: A jealous dog once ate the ass out of my jeans while I slept in a strange bed. I didn't realize it until I was walking down the street later and felt a chill on my bum. Luckily I had a flannel and tied it around my waist, concealing the cheeks. The dog got the last laugh.

Gavin: Thinking back on your long and illustrious career, you guys have hit the highs and felt the lows. Tell the kids some

of them.

Trey: Shit. There's been a lot. And there have been way more highs because things usually work out. I mean, we went to Argentina and got totally screwed by a band that was supposed to take us on this big tour. Once we got off the plane they wouldn't even take our calls. We were completely abandoned. But then this other guy, Lucas, rescued us and booked us a bunch of shows with his band and put us up for three weeks. His friend loaned us his boat and we went sailing on the Mar del Playa at midnight and drank cheap wine in the middle of the sea. So it worked out. That was definitely a high.

The last show of a European tour got raided by a hundred East German riot police who hog-tied and beat the shit out of almost everybody there, including Cecil.

That was a low. But three weeks earlier we were drunk, standing in a field at dawn after a show a couple hundred miles outside of Prague and wound up surrounded by dozens of cows. We started feeding them beer. They all got excited and started mooing and followed us around until the beer ran out. I mean, I wouldn't have predicted that happening even five minutes before it did. That was a cool moment. So things tend to balance out. You just have to put yourself out there and the highs will happen. You usually can't see the lows coming.

Cecil: When you wake up in someone's back yard under a walnut tree, wondering what town you're in, feeling like your mouth is filled with epoxy resin, you've made it.

Gavin: Last question. What or who is an influence that people might be surprised you have? Musical or otherwise.

Cecil: Johan Sebastian Bach. I studied classical violin for eight years.

Jimmy: I'm influenced by my dog Batgirl. She's a superhero. She's always glad to see me and pushes me to succeed. She's the only living being I would handle feces for.

Trey: I have to say Jimmy and Cecil. They're the ones I drink with and they're the ones who make me laugh until I wanna piss my pants.

Don't be a dumb drunk. Be a smart drunk and pick up the new album from The Bar Feeders. You just may be in one of our songs.

FORMER germs' MANAGER NICOLE PANTER

Three films that helped us survive puberty in small Western towns: *Suburbia*, *Repo Man* and the first *Decline of the Western Civilization*. Getting into punk rock late (we were only 10 in 1980, how would we know that metal is just bad punk rock?), after many watershed bands had broken up, the films helped capture a time and place vital to our own make-it-up-from-the-coasts culture.

One of the main figures in *Decline* was Nicole Panter, the manager of the legendary Germs, interviewed in a mysterious location, she got across the desperation and glory of the punk scene as good as any book, photo or lyric has. We interviewed her over 20 years later about Darby, Gary Panter and Pee Wee Herman, and to dispel some myths.



Interview by Speedway Randy and Todd Taylor

Randy: When did you move to LA?

Nicole Panter: I left Palm Springs when I was fourteen. When you're a kid, you can't see past where you are at that moment. Later you see depression is finite, being broke is finite. I was acting out against a horrible childhood as a bohemian weirdo in a small Republican town. Palm Springs wasn't the gay paradise it is now – its karma is really biting it in the ass.

Randy: What did you do then?

Nicole: I graduated high school at fourteen. You could do that back then with a certain amount of credits. I had been in Quaker school for years and got a great primary school education. Then I was sent to public school and what should have been sixth grade became ninth grade. I was three years younger than everybody and I hated it. So I found a loophole: as long as I got enough credits I could get out of there. I went to school from 7:00 in the morning to 4:30 in the afternoon and took a class every night at the local junior college for high school credit. Within a year and a half I was out of there. My parents were so obsessed with each other that they hardly even noticed I was gone. (laughs)

Me and some friends would hitchhike into LA to go to concerts. I went to the Bowie Diamond Dogs show at the Universal Amphitheater. And I later found out that many many other first generation

LA punks I knew later were at that show.

I got into UCLA, my grades and SATs were really high. I powered through UCLA in a couple of years in anthropology, not any big thing. Then I moved to Marin County, lived in a cabin in the woods. I cleaned houses and got food stamps and hitchhiked all over the place.

An underground scene started to happen up there, but there wasn't really a name for it. Mabuhay Gardens was a Philipino nightclub and they were starting to have shows one day a week. This drag queen named Mary Monday was hosting them. That was fun, but the Bay Area was still really hippie and I heard things were really interesting down here so I came back. I got an apartment on Beachwood for \$75 a month. And a job at a gallery in Beverly Hills – not paintings, it a 1970s art novelty gallery. In the meantime I hooked up with the punk rock crowd. I'd seen a *Slash* magazine and become friends with Claude Bessy (Kickboy Face) and Philomena. They were like my punk parents.

Todd: So is it true your Dad created the Philly Cheesesteak?

Nicole: He was my stepfather. I thought he was my father until I was eighteen, then I found out the truth. He was called Pat, the King of Steaks. He was like Jake La Motta in *Raging Bull* – a mean, brutal

Italian man who got lucky. My mother married him when I was six months old. She was a teenager when she had me and was 37 years younger than him. I never met my real father. I don't look like the rest of my family – I'm blue-eyed and they're all brown-eyed. He was sent over here from Italy at the turn of the century. He had a hot dog cart on the South side of Philadelphia. One day he got some steak ends, fried them up with onions and put them on a bun. Then he added cheese – this was going to be his lunch, but a customer said, "I'll have one of those." It did well during the depression.

Todd: You became the manager of The Germs by sitting outside a club and meeting Darby Crash?

Nicole: Outside The Music Machine, which is here on Pico. I don't remember whose show. My little historic exchange with Darby is pretty well documented. "Hey Nicole, buy me a beer." "Oh go fuck yourself. What do I look like, your servant?" "Do you want to manage us?" I was like, "Sure, I don't know how to do that. I'll give it a whirl." I didn't have the confidence in myself, thanks to Pat the King of Steaks, to think I could be an artist. But I knew I could do business and I knew I could organize them and bring some discipline into the equation. At that point, the Germs couldn't

get shows because their fans would trash the place every time they played.

Randy: So you were their first manager?

Nicole: Yes. The guy who put out their first record claims to have been their manager. But that's news to me – the first time I heard that was maybe five years ago. Darby certainly never mentioned them ever being managed by anyone.

Todd: What were your duties as manager?

Nicole: Partially being the authority figure, saying you guys have to do this now. If you practice I can get you shows. I was getting them an enormous amount of money for the time – \$1000 per show. I set up the publishing company, which is still operational and paying out money to Pat and to Darby's heirs. I did the deal with Slash. I am the one who came up with 'GI,' I remember the moment. It was initially a fake band name so I could get gigs from clubowners who'd been burned by their fans. If I went to a club and said The Germs want to play here, they would say, "The last time they played they tore a toilet out of the men's room. Cost me a fortune to fix it." I said I was going to tell clubowners I was representing a band with a following called GI. Darby asked what it stood for. And Germs Incognito just popped out of my mouth, and because it worked on a couple of different levels, it stuck. It was a great prank. The best

elements about early punk are the pranks. That's what got lost when the beach punks, the thrash kids, came in. For me it was about the humor, what kind of sly joke was being pulled off.

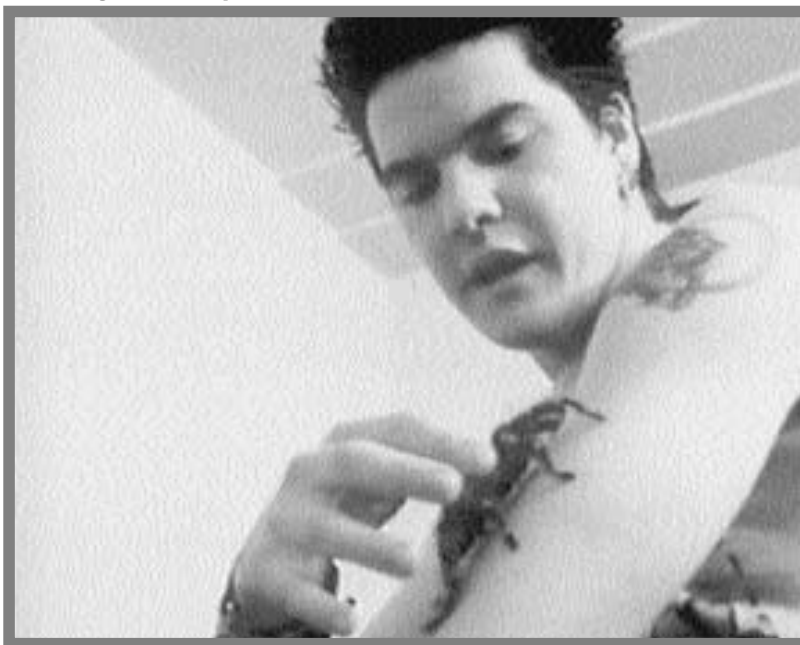
Todd: What other kinds of pranks would The Germs do? Now everything is so deified people aren't sure what to laugh at.

Nicole: The Germs weren't great pranksters, but what's generally lost in translation is that the entire first generation was imbued with this sly humor. What people think existed is not even a facsimile. This was a band that every other band in town hated. Hated them. Because they knew if they came to the gig the fans would break things. A lot of other bands were very serious about what they were doing. They knew The Germs wouldn't practice. Darby would do the peanut-butter and

broken glass thing when all else failed. "I'm glad we played our two songs!" He smeared peanut butter all over himself because Iggy Pop did it. When they couldn't play they resorted to smoke and mirrors. Even looking at the film *Decline*, which is hard to do because that's not the Darby I remember, that wasn't all the time. I told him to not get too fucked up when they were filming the shows, because it's on film.

In terms of deification, it's the same way people my age, although I'm not one of them, deified the Beats. Jack Kerouac was a

Darby and his spider, from *The Decline of Western Civilization*



fat, Republican drunk. He wasn't the "coolest guy ever." To deadheads, Jerry Garcia was God. No, he was a chubby heroin addict who had some inspired musical moments. The Germs didn't end up evolving. They never quite moved away from that early reputation of being a bunch of pests who no one took seriously because they didn't take their music that seriously.

What's happened in the interim has been sort of shocking to me. It's because we got one good record out and the movie. Then Darby died. It might as well be written in stone.

Todd: Can you tell us how Darby died and if you could foresee it happening?

Nicole: Darby's death was a suicide, not an accidental overdose as has been misreported. When Darby died, in December, I had quit the band the

prior April. He went to England, I'm not quite sure what happened there. He came and visited me when he got back; we were still friends. He understood why I quit. It had stopped being fun. Also, my husband at the time was a very timid kind of guy and he would freak out because the gigs were rowdy and dangerous and I was right in the middle of it. One of the last shows at the Whisky there was a kid in the audience who started a fire. One of the bouncers came down the stairs and across the stage. Pat raised his guitar to hit the bouncer. I jumped in the middle and yelled at Pat. My husband was at the show and later he said I had to quit or else. I was like, you know, you're right. (laughs) That was a really bad moment. Why am I trying to protect a kid and a bouncer? So I quit. I was also getting bored with it. The band wasn't progressing and I didn't want to be a band manager.

Randy: It wasn't exactly like a job.

Nicole: No. It was like having a bunch of really badly behaved children. Plus Darby and Pat and Lorna really disliked Don Bolles, which was quite difficult to work around. Not that I had (or have) any affection for Don Bolles but it was just a

pain in the ass because the guy was the drummer. It got to the point where it seemed he was continually, intentionally trying to bait Darby. Everything he did pushed Darby's buttons, and annoyed the hell out of the rest of us and it was just unpleasant.

So Darby showed up at my door after going to England. He looked like Robert DeNiro in *Taxi Driver*, in this khaki army jacket even though it was warm out, with this huge mohawk and Adam Ant paint on his face. I was like, what is going on? He had a big picture button of himself and he was on roller skates. (laughs). He skated through two rooms and stopped himself on the back door and said, "Whoa, I'm not too good on these things."

We didn't talk about anything important. He talked about Adam Ant a lot. "No no, it's not what you think, it's

okay.” I said, “Darby – ‘Ant Music for Ant People?’” (laughs) That’s not what we’re about. I think he had a crush on Adam, but who knows? At this point, I didn’t even know he was gay. Darby’s sex life wasn’t something that interested me in any way, shape or form. I’d been with Gary Panter for years, and before him I was with Johnny Stingray of the Controllers. It never occurred to me to ask about it, to gossip about it. There was a clique of teenage girls who followed Darby around like a little flock of

the company which produced the record and the movie. This guy named Jerry Weintraub, who had been partners with Frank Sinatra, owned the rights. Many years later when Slash put the anthology out they wanted to know who held the rights to them, but the songs had been taped over or something. Years after that, when I was teaching at CalArts, Julie Weintraub, who is the adopted daughter of the guy who owned the rights, was one of my students and I explained the situation to her and she tried to help find them, but they were gone.

Including, basically, Pat’s guitar falling apart. (laughs) I knew there was no way to convince the metal band to lend us their guitar. It was over. I started to cry. Pat grabbed me by the shoulders and shouted, “It’s not my fault!” I said “I know, I’m not blaming you.” And I ran out into the Chinatown night, crying. Pat ran after me crying, “That’s why I hate girls. They cry! They cry!” We go back into the club and the executives are gone; they’re history.

Then they call two weeks later and say they realized it was bad luck, and they’re really interested in the band, is there some-

Every once in a while, I’ll get a call from a fucked up kid and I’ll say, “Look, Darby fucked up – he killed himself and his enemies are writing the history of his life. Do you want that to happen to you?”

geese. I’m sure they all knew every nuance of his personal life, but that wasn’t something I cared about. The Adam Ant thing might have signalled something to me, because it sure wasn’t about the music! (laughs)

Todd: On the business side of it, if The Germs were such an unwieldy band live, how did they get on the soundtrack of the film *Cruising*?

Nicole: William Friedkin, the director, had his ear to the ground about what was happening. Have you seen the movie? It’s pretty hardcore, and he wanted the most hardcore band. It was amazing. The Germs ended up working with Jack Nietszche, who was the engineer on all of Phil Spector’s “wall of sound” stuff, like the Crystals, the Ronettes. He was in huge legal trouble at the time. He had this girlfriend who had been Neil Young’s girlfriend, and the mother of one of Young’s children. They had this sick relationship, she tried to leave him, and he put a gun up her snatch and threatened her. She called the cops and he was charged with rape. This was at the apex of his legal troubles when *Cruising* happened. We were sitting in the room with this guy. The band knew he was a major player in the record industry and they knew about the gun thing. So, we’re sitting there, too shy to say anything and to break the ice. Jack goes, “Does anyone here have any Percodan?” Then one of us asked him about the publicity he was getting at that moment and he said, “Well, you know, any publicity is good publicity.”

We recorded a bunch of songs. We had no rights to those songs and we knew that going in. They could do whatever they wanted. They used maybe two of the five songs we recorded in the movie. The other three went into a vault at Management 3,



Darby and Michelle, from *Decline*

We were also approached by John Peters to be the punk band in a Robbie Benson movie – which we wanted terribly! It would have been money to buy new equipment. Peters was a huge producer; he had been Barbara Striesand’s hairdresser. The line producer called me up. I don’t know how he got my number. He asked when The Germs were playing. They were interested in using them for the movie. They would make \$5000. Amps, guitars, maybe they’ll actually learn how to play!

So we convinced a heavy metal band, a hair band, that was doing a gig at the Hong Kong Cafe, to let us go on before them, unannounced. These executives would be there. Only a few Germs fans knew about it because it would have been a disaster. But there, of course, are the few most faithful, the most pogoing-est ones right up in front. So, the Germs take the stage, and within fifteen seconds every kind of clusterfuck you can imagine happens.

thing you can do? So I tried to get a show at the Masque. They said they could do a July 4th party. So we have this thing and the executives come again. The Germs are playing and within fifteen seconds someone starts letting off firecrackers in this low ceiling basement club. I don’t know if these executives were on drugs or what, but they were standing in the middle of it totally pogoing, totally into it. I thought, oh my God, we got the gig. (laughs) The show was over; the band was at its chaotic best. The executives shake my hand, tell me we’ve got it and in my mind, I’m spending the money – I’m thinking new amps, new guitars, new everything.

Two weeks pass and I don’t hear from the main executive. Three weeks pass. I call and he says, “Oh, I’m sorry. I meant to call you. John Peters and Paul Jabara, this disco king producer, want to play the punk band. They thought it was so cool what you guys were doing that they want to have a go at it.” It was horrible.

Randy: And now tickets to see X are \$35.

Nicole: Oh, please. X is the Sha Na Na of my generation. (laughs)

Todd: I have a “ten year old” rule. If you don’t write or perform a song that is less than ten years old, you are a revival band. Even if you’re always having a last show.

Nicole: The Sex Pistols, too. What the fuck? Of all the people in the international punk scene, Johnny Lydon seemed to be the one with some kind of integrity about what he did. Like, we’re not going to go back there. His wife is an heiress to a huge fortune. I guess at some point I’ll do a tell-all book and be a big sellout. Why not?

Randy: Did people forget about

The Germs or was it a legend that just endured?

Nicole: I was unaware for a really long time that anyone even knew who The Germs were outside of L.A. I went on tour with the Gun Club in England in the late '80s and there was a kid in the audience. I was sitting at the merchandise table, and he looked like he could've been Darby Crash. "The Germs will never die" was written on his jacket. I grabbed him and talked to him. I came back to this country in the early '90s, I didn't know what kids were looking like or listening to. Slash put out their anthology and asked me to write something. I wrote about the kid in England.

When I got back from living abroad, Alison Anders contacted me and did about ten hours of an interview with me. She wrote a script about Darby and sent it to me. I hated it. It did not resemble anything I'd experienced. It was more like hippies in punk clothes. I wrote her a letter that was probably way too harsh. She actually thanked me for being as frank as I was. Then the project got dropped, and that fell apart. She at one point said to me, "What do you think of Madonna playing you?" Which of course I loved, I thought it was hilarious. Then they fell out. I think Tarantino was involved in discussions with her at some point. This is when they were doing *Four Rooms* together.

Then Brendan Mullen and, rest in peace, Rik L Rik of Negative Trend were gonna write a script. I wasn't going to cooperate because I don't like Brendan. But Rik called and begged me to talk to them. I adored Rik so I did. As I answered the questions in a way Brendan didn't like, he began turning red and sputtering. He had an ace in the hole – Darby's mother had signed her rights to him and her version of events is way different than everybody else's. At the time the spin was starting. She said she sewed the band's punk uniforms for them. My memory is sneaking into Darby's house with her buried behind a wall of stuff. It was a bag lady's shopping cart in an apartment. There was definitely some kind of thing going on in there. She would scream, "Are you drunk, you little bastard?!" We'd go into Darby's room and shut the door. Brendan knew he had to keep her good will. At this point I'm telling the story about sneaking into the house and he starts to scream at me, (in Irish accent) "Well, she was a single mother doing the best she could!" Rik put his hand on Brendan's arm and said, "Let her tell her story." That was about ten years ago. Then Brendan and Rik fell out.

Then this guy named Roger was trumping himself as a director and aligned himself with Brendan. Then they split up and Roger went on to write a script with Michelle Baer, who was in *Decline* with Darby in the kitchen, one of the original Darby-ette girls. She was always a good friend of mine but we had lost touch. We talked about the script. It was badly written



Nicole Panter as the manager of the Germs (above) and now (below).



and I told her if one of my students handed it in to me I would flunk them. Aside from the fact that it didn't capture anything that was the world as we knew it.

I look back at Darby with much fondness and regret. Darby's suicide was one of the most terrible things that happened to me in my life. I missed the signals totally. I was too involved in my own life. The larger

ramifications, and this is one of the reasons I don't talk to a lot of people about The Germs, and when I do I don't push the myth that's being pushed now. I try to debunk the deification thing – I'm haunted by the possibility that Darby's suicide may have pushed who knows how many unhappy kids to make the decision to commit suicide. I know it has happened. I don't believe that Kurt Cobain committed suicide because Darby Crash did. But I do believe that Darby's suicide might have made the idea a little more palatable to him. I suspect that's probably the case for hundreds of other unhappy kids. I don't think you have to whitewash the universe but certain things like teenage suicide shouldn't be glorified. Every once in a while, I'll get a call from a fucked up kid and I'll say, "Look, Darby fucked up – he killed himself and his enemies are writing the history of his life. Do you want that to happen to you?" That Feral House book, I'm sure has him rolling over in his grave. He couldn't stand Don Bolles and that's whose name is on the cover as author.

Todd: I can understand being happy about something in your past. But the thing that gets me is that attitude of, not only is what we did cool, but you can never recreate it. Why not do your own thing?

Nicole: There's a really weird adrenaline charge knowing that you're treading on unbroken ground. When I say to someone, "Why are you so interested in this? Go out and make your own subculture," it has more to do with that. There is no cooler thing than knowing, "What I'm doing now hasn't been done before." I guess to a certain extent rap is the last thing that has done that. The media is a virus. We had this really amazing moment right before MTV. Like now, if there's a funnel cloud in 29 Palms, within ten minutes, Newschopper 2 and everything else is there. It's the same culturally, too; the slightest little buzz about something and it is like white on rice. So there's not really an opportunity, unless it's some kid in Dubuque somewhere...

Todd: (raises hand) I've been to Dubuque. That's out. (laughs)

Nicole: For me, "go find your thing" is not like "this was mine," it's, "look, there is nothing that will get you higher than knowing you are doing something that no one has done yet."

In 1993, I was hired to teach at CalArts. I had been writing short stories. The first day I taught this fiction class called FTWDIY about writing short stories and self-publishing. Punk writing

– short and to the point. Sixty people showed up for the first class. I gave my spiel about what the class is going to be. I asked if there were any questions. After a few moments someone asked, “Yeah, what was Darby Crash like?” Then I knew that all those kids were there for that. They were all kids, some of whom were babes in arms when Darby died. It was the movie and the record.

Todd: What did the blue circle signify?

Nicole: It was a simple design. Darby used to liken it to the swastika. He liked to say things to outrage people. All of his little girlfriends who used to follow him around were Jewish girls from the Valley, so any type of anti-Semitism he has been accused of is bullshit. He did say, “Hitler had a good design. It was simple and memorable.”

The record cover was inspired by Pablo Records, a jazz label, which was putting out really simple and beautiful covers. I wanted the Germs cover to confound expectations. Everyone expected some crude punky handdrawn thing. My idea was it to be like a jazz record, simple and elegant on the outside, loud and raw on the inside.

Todd: Whatever happened to Lorna Doom? I know she migrated to New York.

Nicole: She, like me and Pat, didn’t want to talk about things for a long time. My ex-husband and I used to go to New York for art stuff. There was a big party and Lorna and Gary, her boyfriend, showed up. She was going to beauty school at the time. She had parrots she was keeping; both she and Pat loved parrots. Gary was another Riverside runaway and somehow he and Lorna ended up as a couple. He was fourteen when he showed up at our doorstep. He pursued her for years. Lorna had a big scandalous affair with John Doe right in the middle of X’s popularity. She was the one “White Girl” is about. She was kinda wrecked after that. After Darby died, she and Gary hooked up. Gary was the bass player in Joan Jett’s band. He’s now a carpenter in Pennsylvania, and she stayed in New York. She’s an artist/photographer and she comes out here in the winter when it gets cold.

Randy: Are there any books about that era that you do like?

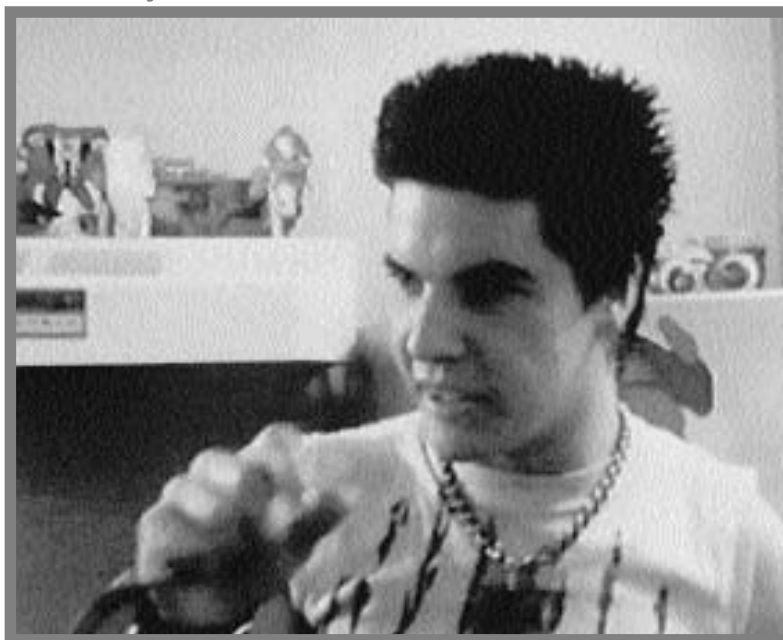
Nicole: *Fucked Up and Photocopied* is great. I like *Please Kill Me* a lot. *California Hardcore*. I like *England’s*

Dreaming. A decent L.A. punk book hasn’t been written yet. Everyone who’s tried has had an agenda that didn’t serve the subject well.

Randy: Did you want to talk about Gary Panter?

Nicole: He was part of the disco cocaine crowd before I met him. He was ten years older than me, and he’d grown up in a small town in Texas. He was a freak and a genius, and he drew compulsively. I never really understand why his career didn’t take off

Darby Crash, from *The Decline of Western Civilization*



like it should have. He was a groundbreaker. As always happens with the person who was the innovator, it’s the people who pick up the flag get the big bucks for it.

I met him through the Soap Plant. I was working there and Gary did these t-shirts I really liked. There was an art opening and I saw this geeky guy and for some reason I just knew I would marry that guy. (laughs) I walked up and took his glasses off and kissed him. I said, “You don’t know me but I’m gonna marry you.” And the rest is sort of miserable history. (Laughs) I’m not a good housewife. Too much pressure.

Todd: How did you become a “cool consultant” on *Pee Wee’s Playhouse*? What does that entail?

Nicole: I ended up contributing to the writing. I created the character I played in it, Susan. I actually wore the dress that Fayette from The Cockettes wore and then Tomata Du Plenty (of The Screamers) wore in a drag act in Seattle. Trudy wore the dress in all the punk pictures, do you know

her? The *Flipside* cover girl. She gave it to me to wear in the Pee Wee show. Of course I’ve lost it since. Too bad, there was so much history in that frock.

The Pee Wee show was conceived by this girl Dawna Kaufman, who was an aspiring producer at that point. She was hanging around the comedy scene, she wanted to do variety shows. She found Paul Reubens doing his Pee Wee Herman character for five minutes between scene

changes at the Groundling Theater. She was another one who really had her ear to the ground and knew Gary Panter was a talented artist. She asked him to do a poster for the Pee Wee show. Gary and I had just done a fashion feature for New West. I got my favorite punk friends in all their great, creative punk clothes. Trudy was wearing this see through thing with nothing underneath. These little Hassidic boys were hanging around the edges of the shoot saying, “Hey Lady, are you a prostitute?” (laughs) We took pictures for a cut and paste thing and I wrote some text, what to wear when the neutron bomb goes off. Dawna had seen this piece of writing and I got in on the show. I

created the Susan character and the writers were the actors. Then we got the HBO thing. It was really great because a lot of really talented people were involved. We were all supposed to share equally in the profits. Everybody got screwed except Pee Wee. He had been quietly going to lawyers while the rest of us were doing things on a handshake. Dawna Kaufman should have been a wealthy woman today and she’s not.

Todd: What’s ironic is his Hollywood star says Pee Wee Herman – not Paul Reubens.

Nicole: And that was his battle cry: “I can do other things, I’m not just Pee Wee.” But when presented with the opportunity he always fell back on Pee Wee.

Nicole Panter is the author of two books, *Mr. Right On and Other Stories* (Incommunicado) and *Unnatural Disasters: Recent Writings from the Golden State* (Incommunicado). She teaches writing at Cal Arts and the American Film Institute.





Interview by Todd Taylor &
Paddy Costello
All pictures by Todd



WE'RE GOING TO SHOW YOU HOW GOOD WE'RE PLAYING, BUT NOT IN A DICK WAY.

I know jack shit about kung-fu, except what I've seen on video and that I really liked the Thundercats when I was growing up. Sweet J.A.P. are the musical equivalent of Bruce Lee made out of five components, that when they get challenged or pissed off, combine forces, raise hell, and enforce musical justice. Sweet J.A.P.'s mission? Smashing the genre line between hardcore and garage. Sho's vocals zip, careen, and rattle around like a bunch of pissed off bees in a glass jar. Hideo and Takashi's guitars sound like stapled-together cats being hurtled through a bundle of barbed wire at fantastic speeds. Not merely flashing swords with no impact, Ben's bass and Yuichiro's drums give the songs a wide stance that rivets them to the ground while maintaining that precious balance. Acres of strength in every blow. Put the animal-machine all together and the sum is not just pure meaty mass with quick feet, but over half the punches, you never see coming. They crash, roil, serrate and virtually chew the listener's ears with equal doses of melody and chaos.

Live, they up the ante even more. Oh my. Have you ever imagined that loud music was, literally, a disease that could be transferred via shock waves off of the speakers? From the first note, Sweet J.A.P. is a full-on hurricane of limbs and lunges, with brief smiles between songs. And it's not that synchronized ballerina, "look, I don't have a guitar cord so I can pirouette" stuff either. It's being possessed, reclaiming designer rock by breaking furniture over the backs of dilettantes, and stating, in no uncertain terms, "your ass has just been served back to you as a hat."

RAZORCAKE 50

Sho: Vocals
Takashi: Guitar
Hideo: Guitar
Yuichiro: Drums
Ben "Tsutomu": Bass

Todd: Why did you guys come to Minneapolis and not stay in Japan?

Hideo: The main reason was that we all came here because of school.

Todd: Individually, what did you guys do for school?

Hideo: I came here for high school first, then went to art school. Oil painting and print making.

Todd: Are you involved with your album's artwork?

Hideo: No. I say "good," "bad," or "change this."

Todd: More of an art director.

Takashi: I came here for studying biology. I'm in the process of getting a degree in it.

Sho: I studied art. Photography.

Todd: Are those your photos – of the microphone in the mist on the cover of *Virgin Vibe*?

Sho: Yes, and of the chair.

Paddy: You're still in school, aren't you?

Sho: Yes. But I'm taking a long break.

Todd: What was it about punk rock that made you want to start a band in America, because I don't think any of you were involved with punk rock prior to coming to America. Is that true?

Sho: I wasn't.

Todd: Was it the timing for it? Meeting like-minded people?

Sho: I think it was more timing.

Takashi: Timing and the fact that we love listening to punk rock.

Sho: Like, at that time, we were listening to high-energy music and Hideo was listening to garage rock. We were all friends. Why don't we do it?

Todd: What about Do-It-Yourself culture do you like? Why do you put out your own stuff out and go with a reputable, smaller label like Big Neck?

Hideo: In Japan, everything's so hard. But here, you have options. You can do it yourself. You can make a record if nobody wants to put out your stuff.

Todd: So, who runs Nice and Neat Records?

Hideo: I do.

Todd: And you started Nice and Neat because of the band you were in before, Real Estate Fraud?

Hideo: Yes. It's doing okay. We aren't making money, but we're breaking even.

Paddy: It almost seems like you're one of the patron saints of the Twin Cities. Everybody knows Hideo. You're one of those checkpoint guys, for getting a show or a record distributed. That's why it seems like you jumped in with both feet into DIY America.

Todd: I have a philosophical question. What do you think has affected Japanese culture more – Godzilla or the fact that America bombed you with nuclear weapons?

Hideo: Both. Godzilla was Japanese hi-tech at that time. At the same time, after the bomb, everyone had to work hard and make it back. And that's how the Japanese economy built up.

Todd: Were anybody in your immediate family involved in those bombings?

All: No.

Todd: Is it true that since the nuclear bombings, that Japan is one of the foremost nations supporting a nuclear weapons ban?

Sho: Right now, that issue is a big deal. They tried to change the Constitution against war for a long time. But now, they're like, "Maybe we should change it."

Paddy: Wasn't that one of the outcomes of World War II, that there couldn't be an offensive Japanese army – solely defensive – which has got to set a mindset in time?

Hideo: We have a self-defensive army, but now it's a big thing. If North Korea attacks Japan, we can defend ourselves and not attack back. So, that's why I think they're talking about an offensive army in Japan.

Paddy: Would any of that affect any of you?

Hideo: They don't do a draft.

Paddy: I just didn't know. I've met punks from Israel who are basically on the run because if they were found out, they would have to go back and be in the army for two years.

Todd: What is one Japanese saying that you really like but it hasn't been translated into American very well?

Takashi: In English, "There is no medicine for stupid people." Is there a saying in the US? I think that's very great. [laughter]

Todd: What was the hardest transition of coming to America and living here? What was the one thing you weren't prepared for?

Sho: I think we all still deal with it. Communication problems. When I speak English, when I speak Japanese, it's a little different. I'm still having to struggle with that. I think a lot of international people have that trouble, too. I didn't prepare or know about that.

Takashi: Same thing. If I say something in English, I'm basically making a miscommunication to people. I always try to avoid that: miscommunication.

Todd: Is that why you guys don't have any song lyrics in your liner notes?

Sho: I started singing when I was twenty-five and I didn't have any experience. And then I just had a hard time making lyrics. Sixty percent of the time I have lyrics. [laughter]

Todd: Do you change your lyrics a lot?

Sho: No, I don't.

Todd: How much do you switch up, singing in Japanese and English?

Sho: Mainly, English. Maybe, now, I'm thinking half Japanese, half English. That's how I feel most comfortable.

Todd: Do you follow current Japanese

punk rock at all, like Electric Eel Shock, The Urchin, or Screaming Fat Rat?

Hideo: Takashi and I do.

Paddy: You guys just did a show with Electric Eel Shock a month ago.

Todd: Did the drummer still only wear his sock?

Hideo: [laughter] Yes. We played with them in New York. It was funny. It was on a cold night, in the dark, and he was sewing



up his sock by himself on a corner.

Paddy: I have noticed, specifically in Minneapolis, literally since you guys have been a band, there have been a lot more Japanese bands coming through town. I think you guys, single-handedly, have put Das Boot in the American vernacular. I don't think very many people would know who they were, at all. Is that something that just kind of happens? Do Japanese bands tend to get in touch with you or is that something you actively try to foster?

Hideo: We try to. That's how we did the

split 7" with Das Boot. We contacted them. I kind of knew them before. I'm putting out another split with the Sovietettes (see issue #16's cover) and the Havenot's, another Japanese band. I knew Havenot's by contacting them.

Todd: In what ways is Minneapolis like Japan?

Takashi: Segregated.

Paddy: That's crazy, because I always viewed Japan as being not very segregated at all, but that's also from a fat, stupid honkey perspective. I've been there three weeks out of my entire life.

Takashi: Japan is an island. Minnesota is kind of an island, too. It's far away from many other big cities.

Hideo: And we both like drinking beer.

Paddy: And how.

Todd: What is the largest sacrifice you made to be in this band? Did you have to give anything up or did you have extra time and you wanted to do something new?

Hideo: Takashi and I, we are happy to spend time on the band. For Sho, it was half band, half school. Now, we are making him spend more time on the band.

Paddy: Sho, you just moved back from New York. How was that, in general?

Sho: I didn't like New York much. It's all MTV. I think the mayor, Giuliani, did a great job way too much and it's so safe everywhere, so girls can walk down the street at five in the morning, no problem. So, it's safe and it's good, but at the same time, they lost a lot of subcultures. I didn't find many sub-cultural things going on.

Paddy: That's funny because you said that like a true New Yorker. Honestly, half of my family lives in New York City and that's exactly what they complain about. It took away what New York is. It's safe for tourists now, sure, but it's not New York anymore.

Sho: Everybody's Brittney Spears. Even hipsters there, they have a lot of money. It's so different from here and I like here better.

Paddy: As foreign as Minneapolis is to Japan, would you say New York is as foreign to Minneapolis? In some ways, do you feel like you've been to three different countries?

Sho: Structurally, New York looks like Tokyo, but inside it's different. Tokyo has subculture and a lot of crazy stuff going on. New York, I didn't see much.

Todd: Does the whiskey

scream anything else besides "Drink Me! Drink Me!"? (Whiskey Screaming Drink Me Drink Me is the name of the band that all but one member of Sweet J.A.P. are in.)

Hideo: "Puke me. Puke me." [laughter]

Todd: Have you guys ever been accused of being racist? If people don't know you're Japanese, and you say the word "Jap," people may take offense to that.

Hideo: It's never happened to me.

Paddy: Actually, I'd like to clear up one thing. I don't know if you guys have noticed since you've been here, but "Jap" here is a derogatory term. If you said, "I was hanging around with my Jap friends," that's derogatory. But I noticed in Japan, when I looked through sections of record bins, there would

be the "Jap Pop" sections, there'd be the "Jap Hardcore." Sometimes it would be abbreviated to save space, but sometimes it seems that that's just a common phrase. "Jap." If I referred to you as, "My Jap friend," would you find that offensive?

Hideo: No. It's probably a little bit of a racist word in English. We didn't grow up with English words, so it's just another English word for me.

Paddy: It's just so weird. I could never get it straight. It blew my mind because everything over there that I saw was "Jap" something. I found that when I came back, talking to people about "Japcore," every now and then, I'd see someone kind of make a face like what I said was totally offensive,

but I was using the phrase that I got from over there. It was force of habit.

Hideo: The Japanese people are racist, if you didn't know.

Paddy: [joking] Oh, I'm on to you.

Todd: Have any of you read Haruki Murakami?

All: No.

Todd: Dang. He's a great author.

Takashi: He's a very popular author in the United States.

Sho: A lot of photo teachers here tell students, "Read Haruki Murakami."

Paddy: Really? For photography?

Sho: I think how he describes things.

Todd: He's extremely imagistic.

Sho: He helps visual artists, in a way.

Paddy: Are there any bands or authors, in Japan, that are the staples, everybody knows them, and you're surprised that over here, people just don't know who they are?

Hideo: Music-wise, many bands don't release anything outside of Japan. It's hard.

Paddy: I was just thinking of an ironic twist that could very well happen after these tours that you guys are doing. Obviously, at least from a lot of people I know, you guys are definitely – I hate the term – but a buzz band. It's a really good record and now you're going out on tour. I think your live show is really the clincher. I'm just wondering if it's going to weird you out if one day you wake up and you are actually a popular band in America but nobody in Japan knows who you are.

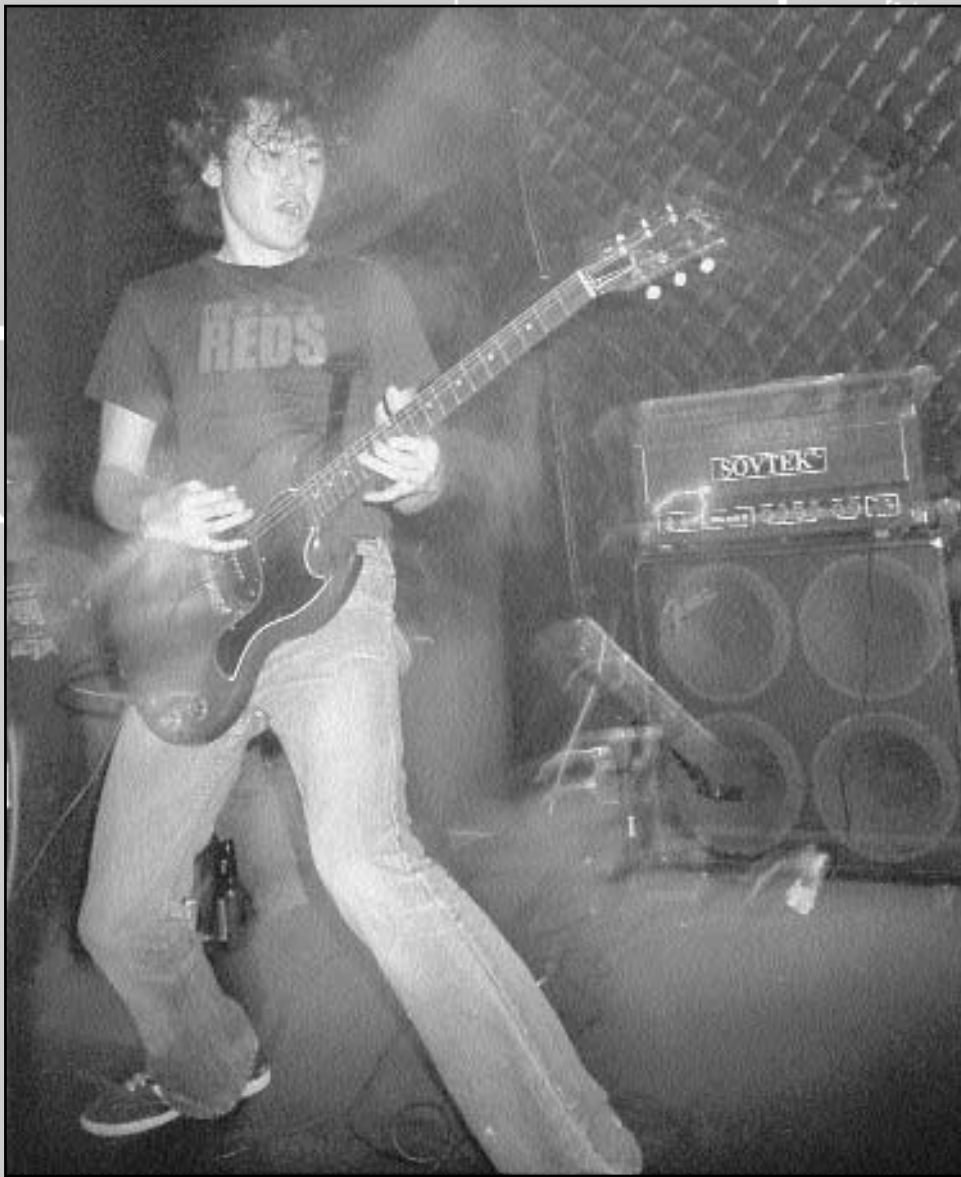
Hideo: Usually, anything that gets big in the US will get big in Japan.

Sho: If we were to become big here, I think people would find out.

Paddy: I've thought of that before, and I've actually seen the opposite. I've noticed that if you're really big in America, you can get at least known in Japan and also Europe, but if you're even just shy of really big in America – if you're just kind of popular or well-known – it kind of doesn't mean shit in Japan. I know, one time, when Dillinger Four were going over there, Avail was coming two months later and people were asking us who Avail was and it was really weird because it was very definitely already a point, even if you didn't like Avail, everyone in the States knew, vaguely, what they sounded like. And they are huge. Balzac is my big example to bring up. I love Balzac but I found out about them when I was over there and when we came back, I found out they're playing stadiums and selling tennis shoes with their names on them. They're literally nothing here. I'd be surprised if they sell a thousand copies of anything here.

What I'm asking here is, where's the dark secret? Who are those bands from Japan that you guys have in mind when you're playing from Japan that people might not know here? You just told me about the Jet Boys. I went out and bought a couple of singles and said, "Man, this is fucking great. I see a little bit of Sweet J.A.P." It's not like you guys sound like them, but I can see a kind of an influence. Is





there anything else like that?

Hideo: King Brother. They have a full length out in the US. They're good. Havenot's. Live, they're great. Firestarter. If you're a geek, people like it. Teengenerate's new band.

Paddy: Teengenerate, actually, were probably the biggest that I've known of as far as garage bands from Japan. When they were around, everybody in America knew who they were.

Hideo: The funny thing in Japan – they were not that big when they were around. Now, they broke up, so people know about them.

Paddy: I've noticed that with Melt Banana. They're huge here, but when I've been to Japan, I've seen their name on flyers and they'll be a middle band on six band show, but they come here and they're headlining a 1,500 person capacity club in Manhattan. That's fucking nuts. But, uh, there's no question in that.

Sho: I think the subculture is very deep in Japan. There's a lot of layers of subculture. So, maybe Melt Banana is really hip or good for certain people, but for certain sub-

culture people, they don't listen to Melt Banana and listen to some different noise band.

Paddy: It seems like Japanese culture is very respectful and proper and that's the kind of thing some people may think I'm kind of bigoted saying, but I'm speaking, specifically, of being in Japan. I've never had an altercation or a confrontational situation with people. Even in certain things when there should be, well, when I was walking around naked on the sidewalk. Everybody acted like they didn't know what was going on.

I've noticed that about the subcultures, too. I met one girl in Tokyo who was really into performance art and that was her scene. It seemed like it was underground to a point of almost acting like what you were doing was illegal. I've always wondered about the culture in Japan. It always seemed very proper to me, the kind of proper that America couldn't even pull off if we tried because we're, essentially, a country full of white trash. Is that pretty true? Japan seems almost reserved, in a weird way, repressed, almost. I'll see the people waiting to get

into a show, and they're very proper, but the minute the music starts, they'll go fucking ape shit. They're all over each other's heads, going bananas, and swinging from the rafters. Was it like that for you guys? In some ways, you guys have that now. If somebody met you guys twenty minutes before you played, they would think you guys would get up and play some sort of art rock, because you're almost dignified in the way you are, but when you play, you're absolutely ape shit and it's obviously genuine. It's not like you guys have an act.

Hideo: Japanese parents are more strict. "You can do this, you cannot do that" type of thing. If you do the same thing here, they might call it child abuse. In Japan, parents can hit kids. School teachers used to be able to hit kids.

Paddy: Do they still do that?

Hideo: No.

Paddy: But when you guys went to school, you could still get hit by your teachers?

Sho: All the time. [laughter]

Paddy: And all three of you were?

All: Yes.

Hideo: In school, we have to clean our classroom. If you skip cleaning and the teacher finds you... [makes the sound of a cracking ruler]

Todd: What do your parents do?

Takashi: My dad is a roofer.

Sho: My dad runs a timber company. Buying trees from market. Making trees into lumber.

Hideo: When they get married, they'll have a nice house. [laughter]

Sho: Totally.

Hideo: My dad used to direct TV shows and now he produces them. He directed one of the *Ultraman* shows.

Todd: Name a childhood game you played in Japan that isn't in America.

Takashi: You decide that one person is the devil.

Sho: And the devil tries to catch you. *Onigokko*.

Paddy: What does that literally translate to?

Sho: "Pretend like you're a fake devil."

Todd: Sho, do you have a stinking throat?

Sho: What's that?

Todd: It's a quote I found. Someone said that you had a "stinking throat" – how you sing. Maybe because you sing really raspy?

Sho: Especially before the recording. I practiced so much and my voice got really, really screwed up.

Todd: What is a "Virgin Vibe"?

Takashi: It was our first album, so we thought, okay, "virgin." And then "vibe" – no longer virgin.

Hideo: Then we thought of babies coming up. [laughter]

Todd: This is something brand new to me and I know nothing about it, but do you know anything about tentacle pornography: sex with an octopus? It's Japanese. Frank Discussion and the Feederz had mentioned it.

Sho: That could happen in Japan. Sure. There's no line.

Paddy: To open it up – because in my opinion – England and Japan are the two craziest countries I’ve seen personally, as far as fetishes. What’s the craziest fetish you know of from Japan?

Takashi: Smelling used underwear. That’s crazy to me. But if I think of people’s desire or your ego, why don’t you look for it forever? Of course, there is line of being a human being or not. We can’t cross the line. Japanese people don’t do that. I don’t know why.

Todd: What is the most spectacular thing that Japan has for sale in a vending machine?

Hideo: Don’t they have one with underwear in a vending machine?

Paddy: I saw one of the underpants vending machines and it blew my fucking mind. But, I was about to say the canned coffee, though. Dude, Japan, I would live there anytime, just for that. It’s the best coffee in the world and it’s in a can for fifty cents.

Todd: You guys are very active on stage. What’s the worst injury you’ve sustained when playing?

Sho: I think I was on Hideo one time and I did a total back breaker onto the stage, hitting my head.

Takashi: Sho hit me in the head super bad.

Sho: The microphone got stuck into the crowd, so I was trying to yank it back, and they pulled me. They let go, and the microphone hit his head.

Takashi: I don’t remember it so well. [laughter]

Hideo: I don’t get hurt, myself, but I remember hitting Ben (bassist) in the face with my guitar neck.

Paddy: I just want to point out, for the record, that it’s funny you say that because I’d like to say that I’ve seen Hideo hit Ben with his guitar neck about ten times. I’ll always remember the one: you and Ben will be like Darth Vader and Luke Skywalker with the light sabers to each other. I love that you bring up the *one* time you did and I’ve seen at least ten.

Todd: Ben, the bassist, is the only American in the band, correct?

Hideo: Yes.

Todd: But his name is different on the record. Tsutomu.

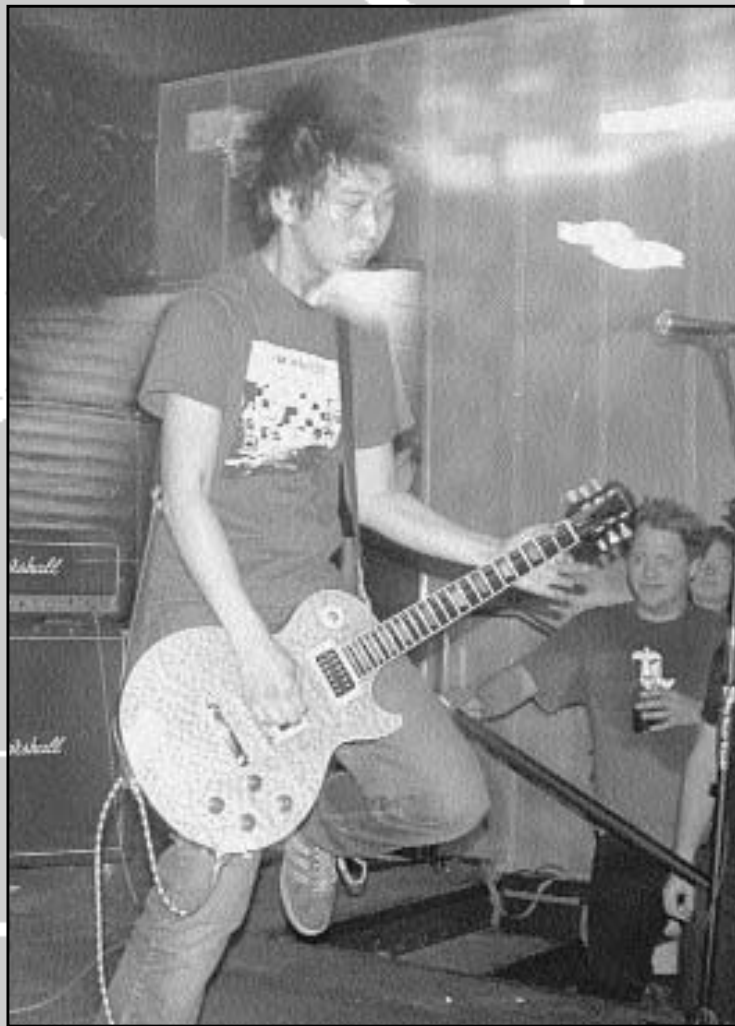
Takashi: Yes. His name, on the record, basically means “diligent.”

Sho: That’s what we tell him. He’ll never know the truth. [laughter]

Todd: If you could crash three bands together to make Sweet J.A.P., what three bands are you putting in your head to make the sounds that you make?

Paddy: I wanted to bring up something like that too, because the thing that’s weird is

that you guys are starting to get put in the garage scene in the States. I’ve noticed the way people write about you. You tend to be listed as garage and rock’n’roll. The reason I liked you guys originally was when I described you to people: “I can’t really tell if they’re a garage band or a hardcore band.” They’re both at the same time. Obviously, there’ve been bands who have tried – and have done – exactly that. Smash Your Face from Japan. But you guys don’t seem like you’re anything like that. I’ve always wondered what type of band you



guys thought you were.

Takashi: I feel like I’m in the band Inside Out, and I’m playing guitar with Dag Nasty, with Teengenerate. That’s in my head. That’s the starting point.

Paddy: Inside Out, from LA, on Revelation Records?

Takashi: Yeah.

Paddy: Crazy. Wow.

Takashi: But, then I will do my way.

Sho: We always have a different type of music, I think. I don’t listen to punk music much, personally. I listen to and like David Bowie and Bikini Kill. When I’m on the stage, I think I think of those kinds of bands, but always Teengenerate is somewhere in my head. The rest of the band thinks of Sweet J.A.P. in a different way.

Always, when we make something, we can’t make regular garage rock. We make some weird mixture of wild things.

Hideo: We all like Teengenerate, but we don’t want to be another band like Teengenerate. There’s one in Japan already.

Todd: Since the beginning, when you formed in the beginning of 2000 as a band, have you conscientiously changed anything about it? Sweet J.A.P. doesn’t sound very much like Real Estate Fraud.

Hideo: Live-wise, we’ve always done the same thing. When we started, I was the only one writing music, but now everybody puts their stuff in together. I think it makes more variety, too.

Paddy: As aggro as you are live, you collectively are one of the most genuinely nice bands – and that’s not just coming from me, that’s from friends of mine from out of state that have met you. Ever since I was a kid, I’ve appreciated this one quote from Iggy Pop. He’s talking about how you kinda have to actually spite the crowd and remember that nobody cares what you’re doing because it gets you in a train of mind where you’re going to act a way and be a certain way that’s going to make a good show. When you guys are playing live, very specifically you three, and even though Hideo says he doesn’t get hurt – I’ve more than a few times seen him go out into the crowd and go off and not be especially concerned of where his guitar may end up. I know this is a hard question to answer. I know, for me, when I play live, I’m nervous. I always am and the only way I can get over that is to almost get into an “us versus them” mindset. Onstage, you almost seem appreciative, but that’s only in between songs. But then the minute you start playing, you go absolutely, fucking apeshit and “people will pay.”

Sho: We never decided to do it, but it happened for some reason.

Hideo: As a band, we have so much energy, and we’re so happy on the stage. We think we’re good, so we’re going to show you how good we’re playing, but not in a dick way.

Takashi: I can get a natural high. It’s euphoric. Playing music excites.

Sho: I don’t like seeing a band who isn’t feeling the music.

Hideo: At the same time, I don’t like seeing a band who pretends that they’re into it but they’re not.





no idea records

Interview and photos by
Sean Carswell



A lot of interviews are done with punk rock bands, but not nearly enough attention is paid to the people behind the scenes: the folks who set up shows, run DIY record stores, set up infoshops, put out zines, review records, and run record labels. These folks are the frame that holds the punk rock car together; they're the gears that keep it running. By reading interviews with them, we can also glean some practical knowledge. We can get a hint to help us answer the question: how can I get involved in this scene?

So, doing my part to remedy this situation, I hunted down Var and Jennifer, the two people who run one of my favorite record labels, No Idea Records. No Idea has been around as either a zine, a record label, or both for over fifteen years. They've put out the first albums by big-name bands like Hot Water Music, Less Than Jake, and Against Me. They've supported some of my favorite lesser-known bands like Radon, Panthro UK United 13, the Grabass Charlestons, and Bitchin'. They also run one of the most reliable, well-stocked mail orders in the punk rock world. On my last trip to Florida, I drove up to Gainesville, to a weird old brick building that used to be lawyers' offices and now houses No Idea HQ, and I talked to Var and Jennifer (when we could pull her away from her work) about how they manage to hold it all together and keep my ears happy.

Sean: No Idea started out as a zine. Tell me a little bit about that.

Var: The first issue came out in December of 1985. It started as a half-size zine. We made most of the copies in a graphic arts class in high school. Like most fanzines, it just got cobbled together.

Basically, the starting point for me being involved in any do-it-yourself type stuff came from meeting a couple of people in high school, maybe ninth grade. This one kid, Ken Coffelt, had done a bunch of photocopied magazines that were twenty-four or thirty pages. A lot of it was comics. He'd actually gotten local stores to take out ads for fifteen or twenty bucks a piece. The ads

were more than paid to make the copies and pass them out for free. It was such a staggering concept for me as a fourteen year-old kid. I thought, wait a minute. Kids can do this? I always assumed that, to do any kind of magazine, periodical, fanzine, record, anything, you had to be a big company with big distribution. When I saw young kids doing it themselves, it was pretty revolutionary. Late one night, I decided I wanted to do one of these. I just wanted to be part of something. So Ken and I worked on it for most of 1985 with a couple of friends of ours. A graphic arts teacher caught wind of what we were up to. He let us come in after hours and use the equipment. We learned how to burn plates and run offset press. To be honest, I flunked

out of the graphic arts class. I learned so much that year, but I wasn't a good book learner. But it was a very strange, good year. And from there, we just kept doing the zine.

In the second issue, we started interviewing bands. We didn't have much of a filter. If a band was playing in town, we thought they must be a band worth talking to. In the first few issues, we interviewed some pretty rotten bands, but also some really good ones. There were also people who had been involved in the Gainesville scene long before us who were really excited to see new people wanting to do stuff. They were very encouraging. They gave us a lot of advice and a lot of help.

So yeah, the zine was started by myself and Ken. Ken was really an integral part of it for the first three years. As we got out of high school and went on to other things, he drifted away from it.

Sean: When did you make the move from a zine to a record label?

Var: The sixth issue we did came with a seven inch from a local band called Doldrum. That was really the beginning of it. I found out that it wasn't really that expensive to something small and on your own. I realized through asking other labels about what it would cost to put something out. I didn't have much money. Still, the idea of putting out a seven inch wasn't as extreme and forbidding as I thought. At the time, I think it was something like, if I could come up with five hundred bucks, I could put out a record. I didn't have five hundred bucks, but that was within reason. I could conceive of it. It's not five million dollars or five hundred thousand dollars. I realized that labels can be just people doing it on their own. So there were all these bands from here that we really liked, but nobody had put out a piece of vinyl in seven years. I think Roach Motel was the last one in maybe '84 or '85. There were a lot of bands that recorded demos and put out tapes, but nothing really beyond that. So we decided to put out a record with a zine – because I'd heard of a couple of other zines that had done it – so we got our favorite local band at the time, actually the most popular punk rock band in Gainesville at the time, and we put it out. It worked out really well. It seemed like more people bought the zine because it came with something. And more people found out about the band than would've otherwise. So we kept doing that over the next few issues.

Right around '90, '91, that's when the kids who'd moved to Gainesville to go to college were actually my peers, age-wise. I really felt like I was part of something around that period, rather than being always a little bit on the outside. I was a lot more involved because my friends were the people starting these bands. For me, it was a re-awakening of the scene. That's really when I just had to start putting out more records. My friends were making these amazing recordings, and they were in bands that I really liked. The spirit was right. It felt urgent. So we did it. A lot of these records, we'd make three hundred, then we'd make two hundred more. That's one of the big misnomers about Radon's first seven inch. People are like, "It was pressed eight or nine times." Yeah, it was, but a lot of those pressings were two or three hundred a piece. Even a record like that, we only made maybe three thousand copies of. Probably less.

Sean: How many of those early records are still in print?

Var: Radon's really the only one. The Spoke one actually is on a CD, a collection CD. A lot of the stuff is still available, but not on the original record.

But around that time, that was really the turning point. I was working a job and taking all the money from that to do a zine and do a label. And as there was more and more activity locally, there just came a point

So I was asking myself, "Will I have a career working for someone else, and not really have that go anywhere Or do I say, 'Fuck it,' step out on my own, and see what I can do?"



where one overtook the other. There was never a direct intention to stop doing the zine. Once the first Less Than Jake and Hot Water Music CDs came out in '96, things really changed. It came to a point where, the final zine I did, it was two years late. It just felt done. Prior to that, every time I did a zine, there were a couple of interviews that we got done at the last minute and couldn't fit into the zine and they'd be a set up for the next issue. But when I did that final one, I had a no extra interviews sitting around. Not a whole lot of ads that we owed people. It was just a really good point to step away from it.

Also, at this point, I wasn't as interested. I didn't really read fanzines' band interviews anymore. When I was younger, I'd get *Maximum* or *Flipside* or any local

fanzine and I'd just pore through it, read everything, read reviews, look for new music. At a point, I realized that I wasn't doing that anymore. I think partially because a lot of zines are kinda crappy. It's a lot worse now where everyone will interview the same bands that you don't care about. So I just felt like I didn't really read that many band interviews and I didn't have the spark to come up with questions to ask bands.

As far as writing reviews, it came to a point where I was down at Jennifer's apartment in Tampa, trying to write record reviews and I actually had stacks of CDs. I played a little bit of each CD and put it in a stack. I had a stack of pop punk. I had a stack of ska punk. I had a stack of tough-guy, metal-y hardcore. I had a stack of spiky haired punk. And there would be the more interesting stuff or stuff that really kicked ass. So I went back and reviewed all the stuff that I liked or that interested me, and then I still had these stacks, literally fifty CDs high, that may have been really good in their own right but they're all about the same caliber, and how do you pick one? Every now and then, one would jump out at you. But then you'd have these well-recorded, well-written, well-sung tough guy metal or whatever, and you could write the same review for fifty records. That's when I stepped away.

And other people, like Al Quint of *Suburban Voice*, that guy can review a record. I could not do that anymore. I have a lot of respect for people who do reviews regularly. It's such a nightmare.

I've always had it in my head that I'd do a magazine again. People always ask me, "Hey, when are you gonna do another one?" Aaron Cometbus, he's always on a crusade to get people to do zines again, especially if they've done them before. He's always like, "Why don't you do another one?" I stop and think, when am I gonna have two thousand hours worth of time to do a new zine? Realistically, you can't take five hours a week or an hour a day and do a zine. It would literally take me five hours to do one page. Just doing the layout and photocopying stuff and tweaking. But once you put your heart and soul into something like that, you won't leave it until it's perfect. And the thought of doing a hundred-page zine makes my head explode. Like *Razorcake*, I couldn't even conceive of doing something like that.

Sean: Jennifer, how did you get involved in No Idea?

Jennifer: I was working in a record store down in Tampa. I had been friendly with Var for several years, since I was buying No Idea stuff for the store, but we had never actually met in person until 1995. Then, one autumn day in 1996, he made me an offer: "If you move to Gainesville, I'll give you a job." Intrigued by

the exciting prospect of long hours of work for no pay, I said goodbye to my job of six years and packed myself and my little dog off to Gainesville.

Sean: I know, as a record label, you do a lot to document the Gainesville scene, somewhat like what Dischord does with the Washington, DC scene. Do you guys ever get compared to Dischord?

Var: It's definitely a flattering thought. Actually, when Fugazi played down here, Ian walked up to me after the show, and he mentioned a parallel between Dischord and us. I can't remember exactly what he said. Something to the effect that we're kinda doing what he's doing. But Dischord is a label that I've looked up to for a really long time. They put out a lot of good stuff. They're also one of the most open labels, as far as giving advice to people and extending their knowledge and their experience. There were others. Rabid Cat, early on, was really like that. They were the first ones who gave me costs for making a seven inch. And, shit, they haven't been a label for how long? Fourteen years, maybe?

But, without really trying, I guess we're documenting the local Gainesville goings on. It would be really unfair to say that Gainesville music is represented by No Idea. We put out some of the music from here. We definitely don't put out all of it. There are a lot of bands around here that could loosely be defined as punk rock that I've never even seen. There's just so much going on all the time, that we can't do all of it. Our whole criteria is basically just putting out records by our friends and music that really moves us.

We do as much as we can. Sometimes we do more than that, but there's no way we could do everything. Going back, maybe four years ago, we had a couple of years where we barely got any sleep. We were stressed out all the time. There was one year when we put out twenty-seven records in one year, and some of those were multi-format. Eight of them were LP and CD. If you put out an LP and CD at the same time, it's like two projects. So that was almost like putting out thirty-five records in a year. It was ridiculous. Ever since then, we try to do a little less every year. But part of the inspiration for all that work was probably from feeling like so many bands from here in the eighties never left anything behind. So I felt like I had to get out everything that means anything to me.

Sean: Is it true that you traded Less Than Jake merchandise for a life-sized Darth Maul figure?

Var: Yeah, it is. It started out as a joke because I kinda wanted one of those things. They were a store premium for some chain that wasn't around here. They put them up

in their stores and had a con-

test where you could win them. But in Florida, you could only win Jar Jar Binks. And who the hell wants a six-foot Jar Jar? A friend of mine lived in Kansas, where you could win the Darth Mauls, and he hooked me up with the coupons to win the thing. I filled out a couple hundred of them. I, of course, didn't end up winning one. So I put it on my list of things that I would trade stuff for. I posted on the web saying, basically, "If anybody out there is a rabid Less Than Jake fan and has one of these



...you take a spoon and some nails and throw them in a blender and turn it on and say, "This is what music sounds like."

things and wants to trade for some weird records, get ahold of me." I had records that, if you were the ultimate Less Than Jake fan, they would make your day. Like, rare colored vinyl and test pressings of records that were cut wrong, so instead of two songs on one side of the seven inch, there was one song on each side, and it never got pressed that way. All ultimate collector nerd stuff. And this one kid from England got ahold of me. My general experience has been, the more rabid someone is, the more likely they are to completely flake. I really wouldn't put much energy into the most aggressive people because I figure that they're the ones who are probably thirteen, and they don't really get the fact that they're wasting my time. At first, I told him what I had. And I realized, he didn't actually have one. He was intending to buy one and somehow get it to me. And I realized that he wasn't super young. He was

old enough to know better. He called me up one day and said, "Hey, I found one. It's in Pennsylvania." The guy bought it from someone in the States, and had that person ship it to us. I thought it was all a big joke, but the guy came through. So I found as much stuff as I could find that he would freak out over. I luckily had a lot of the stuff he was looking for, but more than that, I had a bunch of really weird stuff that only me and a couple of people in the band had. He was really happy about it. I was, too. It was such a ridiculous concept that I had to follow through with it.

Jennifer: The dog is terrified of it. He would circle it and growl and back up. He thought it was some kind of vicious person.

Var: When it showed up, I was out running some errands. They stuck Darth Maul in an alcove right by my office. I came back with some bags in my hands and walked by it and saw it through the corner of my eyes. My heart started racing and I almost dropped the bags. I literally sunk to the ground. I thought some dude had broken in.

Sean: Var, would you give up your career in the record business for a career in aquariums?

Var: Actually, I'm kinda burnt on the whole aquarium thing because there was one thing I wasn't really prepared for. You have fish die periodically, and that's just part of having aquariums. But I've had a couple of waves in the last year where one fish dies, two days later, another fish dies. I'd treat the aquarium, talk to people about it, get advice, do everything I could. But twenty fish died out of one aquarium.

Jennifer: And if you ask the people at places that sell fish and aquariums what to do about it, they'll say, "I don't know. Sometimes fish just die." You can't really do anything about it.

[Reply Dave from the Grabass Charlestons and from the No Idea mail-room walks in at this point.]

Sean: Since Dave is here, I'm gonna ask the toughest question that you'll have to face this year. There's a *Simpsons* episode where part of the plot is that actor Troy McClure had been banned from Hollywood because he had a weird sexual attraction to fish. In that same episode, he says, "You may know me from movies like *The Greatest Story Ever Hula'd*." Now, you've put out a Grabass Charlestons album called *The Greatest Story Ever Hula'd* and you have all of these aquariums around the No Idea offices. What's the connection?

Var: I see where you're going with this one, and that's a nearly impossible connection of two things that would never occur to me. Dave?

Replay Dave: The fish attraction is all above the equator. Don't even worry about it.

Jennifer: I remember that episode. Troy

McClure marries Selma. But I don't remember him saying that. I think it's just been a long time since I saw that.

Sean: I just saw it last week. It happened to be right around the time when I was writing out the questions for this interview.

Var: I really wish I had something snappy to say about that question, but I can't think of anything better than the question itself.

Sean: Well, here's a question that you used to ask when you interviewed people: if aliens landed in your backyard, how would you describe your music to them without actually playing the music?

Var: Oh, man. I'm getting it turned around on me. There's two ways to take this question. You can either take it as a serious question or you can take it as an I'm-gonna-go-along-with-it-as-an-actual-scenario question. And I'm trying not to just recycle some phantom memory of how somebody else answered this question. Part of me would want to say something really jack-ass like, "Lambada." Or, "Country and Western." Beyond that, I think the fall back is always the demonstration, like you take a pot and a pan and just start hitting it, or you take a spoon and some nails

and throw them in a blender and turn it on and say, "This is what music sounds like." But the best solution would be to take the alien to hang out with Aaron Lay (singer for Billy Reese Peters) and get him shit-faced and playing horseshoes. That would get him somewhat closer to what our music is all about, without actually playing him the music, of course. That, or get a whole lot of opium, cook it up, and pour it on him. Or the thing that I've never actually done but I've thought about doing – this would be harder to pull off – but you cut your hair right before you go to a show. And you take your shirt off and take vaseline and smear it on your torso and give yourself a haircut. Then, put your shirt back on and go to a show and take your shirt back off. Make sure it's an older, more aggro show. A hardcore band. Then, anyone who touches you all night would get vaseline and hair stuck to them. Especially in a circle pit. If you could somehow take the alien and get him soused and get the whole hair thing happening. Then you find the alien who had the opium poured all over him and point to the other alien and say, "There you go."

Sean: Here's another old No Idea fanzine question: what would you do if you had ten

thousand dollars in the bank?

Var: Probably spend it paying bills, because that's what I usually when I do when I have ten thousand dollars in the bank. If I personally had ten thousand dollars in the bank, I'd probably have to do something responsible like replace the rotting siding on my house. Something very adult and not at all fun. But if you want to know why that particular question is relevant to me, I could tell you.

I've only worked three jobs in my whole life. I worked at a college newspaper

There's nothing better than when your friend's band pops in and says, "We just recorded something new." And you put it on and it's the best thing you've heard in a long time.



down the street. This was back before they had desktop computers. So I learned how to do cut-and-paste really well. Entire articles would be just a big strip. You'd have to cut it and paste it in place. If there were any misspellings, you'd have to get a knife and cut and move letters around. So I was pretty good with an exacto knife. I did that for three years. Then, I moved on to a silkscreen shop, and I did the graphics there. It was really hands-on, a lot of cut-and-paste.

Anyway, somewhere along the lines, around 1989, 1990, I'd ask that question a lot, and everybody in a band would say they'd fix their van, buy a van, fix their equipment, record and put out a record. For an underground band, ten thousand bucks is an album and a van. And it seemed like such a massive amount of money to me. I couldn't even conceive of it. Then, I asked the question of Fugazi, and Ian said, "I have ten thousand dollars in the bank." He went on to explain that he'd been saving it for years and years and he uses it to fund various projects and, if his band needed to go on tour, he'd take some money from it and replace it at the end of the tour. He used it as a resource. It kept things going. And

nobody had ever said that before.

I thought about it more, and that became a goal. I thought, if I ever had ten thousand dollars, I would quit my job and have enough money to live for a year without working. I figured that I could put out four zines that year and two seven inches outside of the zines. Things could really take off. By the end of the year, I might be flat-ass broke and have to go to a job again. But maybe, if I was lucky, I could go back and get just a part-time job and keep doing my thing. So I kept saving my money and,

after four years of working at the silkscreen shop, I had nine thousand and change in the bank. That savings came from the time I was fifteen until the time I was twenty-four. I'd just been really tight with money and saved and saved. So I called bullshit on myself, like, "I always said I'd do this if I had this much money." And that's basically what I did.

Coincidentally, other pressures were coming in. Working full-time meant that I didn't have enough energy to do the zine. So I was asking myself, "Will I have a career working for

someone else, and not really have that go anywhere? Or do I say, 'Fuck it,' step out on my own, and see what I can do?" And that was really one of the most difficult decisions I've ever made, but it was also one of the best. It's been about nine years, now, and I haven't had to get any other job besides No Idea. I never thought I'd be able to keep it going this long. So that's why that particular question is relevant to me.

Now, I'm thinking, a hundred thousand dollars or a million dollars, I could really do something with that. But ten thousand dollars now, if you do an LP/CD release and take out a bunch of ads, it's gone. If you look at the accounting statements at the end of the year, you'd be amazed at how much money goes through us. We won't have any, but there are points where we're like, "How does a million dollars go through our hands? Where did it go? I don't remember seeing this money." That's how it is for anybody who's been doing a label for a while. You spend a lot of money, and there's not much left over. It's crazy. It's something that's unique for punk rock, because who else would put in ten dollars to make back twenty cents? Nobody in a normal business model would

do that. It's even worse if you're doing a fanzine and you factor the time you put into it. There's never anything to take back out. It's like you make two cents an hour.

Sean: So why do you put so much time into it?

Var: I guess because I don't know any better. No, honestly, the real answer is that I've always been somebody who's fairly creative, in the sense that, I'm agitated and bored and restless unless I'm doing something artistic. So, by doing a zine with friends, there was a form of expression. And by learning to take photos, there was more expression. And learning to develop your photos in a darkroom. You're learning things hands-on, learning from doing. That became a big creative outlet. Then, with records, I started doing all the layouts for the records I put out. Well, ninety percent of them. So that's my creative outlet. If I didn't do the layouts for the records, I wouldn't be doing this. It would be boring. Also, there's the fact that I really, really like the music. I enjoy putting something into this and getting something out of it.

There's nothing better than when your friend's band pops in and says, "We just recorded something new." And you put it on and it's the best thing you've heard in a long time. Plenty of the records we put out, it's been that. I've felt like, this record is so amazing that people have to hear it. In some cases, lots of people did. In other cases, five hundred people heard it. But it's always worth it in one way or another.

Sean: Along those lines, why do you think that Radon isn't in the pantheon of punk's greatest bands?

Var: In some senses, they are. People in bands, people who do zines, people who do things in punk rock know who Radon is and like and appreciate them. There are a lot of bands like that. There are a lot of bands that people who do zines love, but the bands never really branch out. The key point with Radon is that, even though they existed for over a decade – and may still exist, who knows? – they never played a show outside of Florida. And, for the last six or seven years of their existence, they played "final" shows every six months or so. They're really not very active. If Radon, in 1991 or 1992, had done a US tour, it's very possible that that trickle down effect that happened with Crimpshine and Operation Ivy could've happened with Radon. Even though those bands don't sound anything like Radon, I think there was a similar spirit. Musically, there's something about Radon that just slaps you. I can still put on a Radon record and go, "Damn, there is something there." And even though all the recordings of Radon were scratchy and weird, so were all the Crimpshine record-

ings or the Operation Ivy recordings. I think Radon could've been as big as either of those bands, but they didn't tour at the time when they could've. I think that's the biggest reason. But, at the time, there wasn't that much of a precedent of bands from Gainesville getting out and touring and getting big. Now, it's expected that, if you're a band, your dreams or goals are to put some songs together, then you record, then you put something out, then you tour, then you tour again. Your idea of what's possible

Sean: Is it true that you traded Less Than Jake merchandise for a life-sized Darth Maul figure?

Var: Yeah, it is... It was such a ridiculous concept that I had to follow through with it.



now has gone up. It used to be that, if you were in a band, you played some shows, you practiced, and that's about it. Maybe you recorded a demo tape on a four-track. Maybe you had that dream in your head to put out a record. Right around the nineties, more people started realizing: me and the four people in the band can save our money from shows and record for two-hundred dollars and put out our seven inch. And that raised the bar. Then a few bands toured a lot, and that raised the bar. But when Radon was active, there wasn't much locally to compare it to.

Sean: Is there really one lost Radon album?

Var: There is, kind of. In '99, finally all the members of the band were living in Gainesville and they played some shows. Then Brent moved to Colorado. Dave, who

played guitar and sang, and Bill, the drummer, still lived here and they got a new bass player. But it was just Dave songs because there was no Brent to sing the Brent songs. Over the period of a year or more, they went into the studio a few times and recorded two or four songs at a time. Some of the songs would be old songs that never got recorded and some were new songs. And each time they did that, each session sounded different. One session would be really glossy with a lot of guitars, then the next session they would turn up the distortion and be more direct. So it wasn't really an album, as such. It could've been, but it was really just these chunks of songs. One idea I had was to put out a bunch of seven inches so each session is its own piece, then maybe put out a CD later. But the other thing is that the recordings were never actually finished. Some of them never had a final mix and some of them they didn't finish recording all the parts. If they were to go in and remix it all, you could probably have a pretty decent record. I'm not sure why that never happened.

Sean: What about the Dillinger Four album that No Idea is supposed to put out? Is that ever gonna happen?

Var: That's one that I have to put on the band. Ask the band. For the first three years, it was kinda funny, but... It was supposed to come out before the Fat album did. But I even told them, "Look, I want to do an album with you and I believe you'll come through for me, but you gotta do the Fat album first." At this point, I don't know if they're still thinking that they're really gonna do it. As of eight months ago, they were still talking about it in interviews. I hope it is the next thing they do. I've always wanted to put out a Dillinger Four record, even before they put out their first album.

Sean: Why do you think No Idea has survived and done well when so many other record labels haven't?

Jennifer: Because Var's so goddamn stubborn. And so am I. We're both really tenacious about things. Even if stuff gets weird or bands break up or things aren't exactly going smoothly, we're both like, I'm just gonna barrel through this and get past it and that's just how it is.

Var: Yeah, it's our obstinance. And Jennifer and I are really close and we fuel each other. There are different points when one or the other of us might get down on things and the other will just happen to have the right motivation.

Jennifer: Anything that you really care about and work on all the time can be really gratifying and really frustrating. There are points when it's totally driving me crazy and I can't stand it, but then I think, I would rather be doing this than anything else.





INTERVIEW BY HEELA NAQSHBAND &
TODD TAYLOR
PHOTO BY TODD TAYLOR
ARTWORK BY FLY

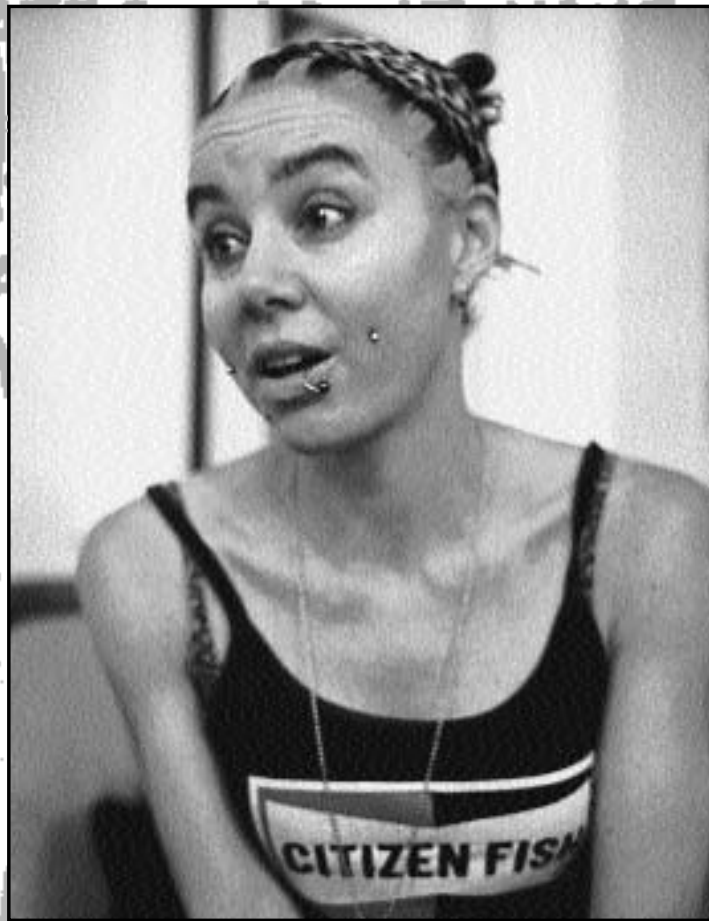
FLY: noun, verb, adjective. And you don't even know the half of it... My now-husband and I met Fly a few years ago while she was opening for the Primate Freedom Tour with Aus Rotten and Anti-Product. She went on stage as Zero Content and did this crazy spoken-word barrage while Corey from Aus Rotten played bass. Her words were biting sarcasm, yet super funny, and we knew we had to talk to her after the set. We later came to find out that her witty on-stage presence was just Fly attempting to say everything while saying nothing at all. We also learned that Fly is a highly prolific artist with over fifteen years of DIY ingenuity under her studded belt who dwells in the squats of Manhattan's Lower East Side (with an occasional stay in the warm, sunny winters of California).

Over the years, she has self-published tons of zines as well as contributed to many others, including *Slug and Lettuce* and *World War III*. Her comic-style artwork has graced the covers of such punk staples as *MRR* and *BYOFL*, not to mention the layout of the most recent King Missile III album. As if that wasn't enough, she has also toured the world while playing bass in the band God is My Co-Pilot. Just thinking about all of the projects she's been involved in is unbelievable!

We'd hung out a couple of times during the past few years and she has been generous enough to hand over original artwork and vocals for some compilations our label has released. When Fly asked if she could stay with us while promoting her latest book *PEOPS! (CHRON!ICRIOTS!PA!SM!)* was her first), we were more than happy to oblige. *PEOPS!* isn't your average coffee-table book (then again, nothing about Fly can be considered "average"), but a collection of portraits and stories of the numerous people she has encountered both in the art and punk scenes and her personal life. Fly feels that everyone has a story to tell, and she wants to hear ALL of them. I don't think I've ever met anyone with the sincere interest and energy of this woman. Hopefully, this interview, after one of Fly's "Peop Shows" (accompanied by Oakland's production terrorists, Killer Banshees) will give a bit more insight on this amazing story-teller and friend. The interview took place at 33-1/3 Bookstore in LA.

Heela: First off, what is a PEOP?

Fly: What is a PEOP? When you say it like that, "PEOP" is a noun. I prefer to think of it as a verb – as in PEOPing. Let me start off by talking about what the PEOPs project is. PEOPs is a collection of portraits of people and their stories, and the stories are based on the conversation that we have while I'm PEOPing them. See, that's where PEOP is a verb. The reason I say that it's a verb is because I don't want it to be a passive thing. It's an active thing, you know? It's conversations with people and getting to know them as individuals. And that's what the PEOPs project is about – a collection of histories, histories that aren't recognized by the mainstream media. A lot of the people who are in the book are people who are activists or artists – people whose histories aren't really repre-



sented in the mainstream culture. It's like their opinions are so-called "alternative," you know?

I feel like I'm rambling on and on and not making any point whatsoever, which is funny, because a lot of the people who I have PEOPed – they feel that way too. After I PEOP them, they say "Oh! I didn't make any sense! I was just rambling along!" They feel very self-conscious about what they said. But to me, the conversation we had was very significant. To them, it can seem mundane because this is how they live, they're so used to it that it doesn't seem special to them at all. But to someone who knows nothing about what they do, it can be a really incredible thing.

Heela: Yeah, totally! Now, do you remember who your first PEOP was?

Fly: I don't actually because the project evolved very gradually. But if you look at the *PEOP* zine, it's Craig from God is My Co-Pilot and we're on a plane on our way to Europe when we were opening for Fugazi and we were really late for the sound check. Fugazi was also late to the show and the problem was we were supposed to use their amps and their drum set, so we had neither.

Heela: Oh no!

Fly: Yeah, so we all just plugged into the PA direct and we were playing this set with no amps and Michael went out and found an oil drum and used that for the drums, and it was the most insanely punk rock show I've ever played in my life. It felt like the sound was coming to me from a tunnel. Let's see. One of my earliest ones was of Amanda, who is also in the *PEOP* book. This is a drawing of her when she was living in Germany.

Heela: Have you ever been denied a PEOP?

Fly: I haven't been denied a PEOP but sometimes people will just keep putting me off and putting me off and putting me off. Some of these people I will chase after.

Heela: I see. So is there someone dead or alive who you would just absolutely love to PEOP?

Fly: Someone dead or alive? There's a million people I wanna PEOP! Seriously, there's so many! One person who is dead that I'd love to PEOP is my dad. I really miss my dad. He died fifteen

years ago. I'd just love for him to see what I'm doing now. He'd be so proud of me. My dad was a huge influence on me when I was a kid... his artwork was a huge influence. He was in the navy and he did these drawings of really hung-over cartoon guys and I was *so* impressed by this. I remember these two big black-and-white framed, very simple drawings that my dad did. It's art. It's framed up in our house and my Dad did that! That was one of many influences that compelled me to draw as a kid. I'd love to PEOP all kinds of people though. Pretty much everyone I meet. And of course, some rock stars I'd love to PEOP. I'd love to PEOP Nina Hagen. The reason I'm saying that is because Jen from Resist and Exist was here earlier and she had the Nina Hagen shirt on.

Heela: How was your book tour different than touring with God is My Co-Pilot?

Fly: It's different because it's all about me. Well, it's not all about me. The Killer Banshees are involved and the book's about a whole bunch of other people, but this is my tour. And that's very intimidating. It's kinda nice to ride along in someone else's tour and when no one shows up, then you don't personally suck, it's just the band. [laughter] But if I'm doing a tour, it's me: my tour, come to my show, and if no one shows up, you take it really personally. It makes a difference that way. Another difference is I don't have to play music. I always loved touring with God is My Co-Pilot, but I never felt at home playing music. I had some really bad experiences with music as a kid, with music teachers who were insane, with music teachers who had heart attacks and fell on top of me. So as a kid, I didn't ever want to play music. I wanted to play outside. Then when I started playing bass with God is My Co-Pilot, I loved playing in the band and I had fun with them, but I just never really felt like a musician. It's not my calling. I'm a visual artist; that's what I feel at home with. In that way, I feel more like myself on this tour, because it's my stuff.

Todd: Going off that, for people who don't know your comics, what would be the biggest recurring themes?

Fly: I've done a lot of comics with squatting issues. I've done a lot of comics about being female and dealing with growing up female in this world. I do a comic called *Zero Content* about a stupid punk rock guy who had his mohawk stolen and then he found out they stole his brain too! I'm on the twenty-seventh episode of the adventures of Stew Pitt – he's the hero. And he's on this quest to find his brain, but in the meantime, he's forgotten about that and has gotten involved in activism and all this other weird stuff. I also have another character called K-9, and her strips are about different points in her life when trying to deal with certain things like losing her virginity. There's three parts of the story – starting from when she was five or six until about nine and the three different ways she lost her virginity in the course of those years. Those comics are kind of intense and people always have an extreme reaction to

POET BUCKY SINISTER



ACTIVIST GAGE



WILLIE NELSON



them. Other K-9 comics are about how her mom is having an affair and how she deals with that. Then her mom goes crazy and how she deals with that.

Todd: How did you get hooked up with Chris from *Slug and Lettuce*? She's been using your art for a long time.

Fly: Yeah, I met Chris in New York City 'cause she was involved in the whole punk scene and ABC No Rio, and when I first got to New York, I lived at ABC No Rio for six months. I was there for the first matinee punk shows, and Chris got involved in the hardcore collective there and she was doing her zine. And I had this great idea for this comic called *Zero Content* starring Stew Pitt, and so it just became a regular thing. It was supposed to be a comic that I could just do and not care how it looked, so it was supposed to encourage me to develop a whole new style of drawing really fast, because unfortunately the way I draw, even now, takes me a long time. 1995 was the first time *Zero Content* showed up in *Slug and Lettuce*.

Todd: Who would you consider your contemporaries? Would you align yourself more with comic book artist Joe Sacco (*Safe Area Gorazde*, *Palestine*) or Art Spiegelman (*Maus*) or do you align yourself, even conceptually, not even in the same group as them?

Fly: I would feel a little self-conscious to even align myself with Art Spiegelman or Joe Sacco because I have a really great admiration for their work. I was looking at Art Spiegelman's work when I was in school and was incredibly inspired by it. It was one of the reasons why I wanted to come to New York. I thought he was incredible, very innovative. Joe Sacco is a really great journalist. I wouldn't want to align myself with him because I don't feel my work has such a seriousness and journalistic skill. I think if I have to align myself, I'd say I'm part of the World War Three collective. All those folks – Seth Tobocman, Peter Kuper, Sabrina Jones – there's a whole bunch of artists, I'm sort of a part of that gang.

Todd: Was *PEOPs* your first leap into putting dialogue behind a picture?

Fly: Doing art that had words, I've always done that. Ever since I was a kid, I found words extremely intriguing and I love to read and I loved comics when I was a kid. When I went to art school, they don't teach you comics as a high art. They kind of frown on that kind of thing. So I was becoming a – not really an art snob, I was more like an art-punk. I really loved the comics that were in *RAW*, but in a lot of ways they were very deconstructed. They were more on the experimental side of dealing with art-comics. Gary Panter was doing amazing stuff! I used to do drawings that just had words. I've been doing this since I could write.

One funny story is when I was a little kid – like I said I was intrigued with words – and I remember I found this word one day in this book and I found this piece of paper in a book and it had this word on it,

and I thought, "Well, that's an interesting word. I'd never seen that before!" So I wrote this word down, made circles around it and made a little picture. A beautiful little picture. And so then I went and showed my mom this word and I said: "What does this mean?" And I thought I would be congratulated on finding a new word and doing such a beautiful picture and my mom was shocked. She said "Where did you find this word? Where did you get this? Where did you see this?" I said it was written in the book. It was in my dad's handwriting and, of course, the word was "fuck." [laughter] I didn't get congratulated or praised at all. I ended up getting my dad in trouble. It just turned into this whole nightmare. The one lesson I learned from that was the power of words. I learned that, whoa, this word can get such a reaction. It hard-wired into my head at that point. There are certain words that are taboo and that's why words became so important to me.

Todd: If you could illustrate the cover of any science fiction book, what would it be and why?

Fly: I think I would veer more toward a Philip K. Dick book. I really like his stuff. I think that the psycho-fiction quality of his work resonates in me. And the whole idea of: "is this really happening or is this person completely schizophrenic?" - I grew up with my mom being schizophrenic and so I feel this connection with the paranoia that emanates from his books.

Todd: What would be some elements that you have intentionally hidden in your art and when people look at it the tenth time say, "Oh, I never saw that before."

Fly: I don't really hide stuff. I don't need to.

Todd: But sometimes you have so many details... like the San Francisco *Guardian* cover. I realized the music symbol was a hammer and sickle. At first glance you don't realize that.

Fly: Was it? Oh yeah, 'cause it was the Russian thing! That's right! Yeah, yeah, yeah. Thanks for reminding me. [laughter]

Todd: Do you intentionally give the careful watcher extra little things in your drawings?

Fly: Do I do it intentionally? Oh yeah. I always try to do things to make people look harder and see, because people look at things, but they don't really see. Back when I was doing a lot of writing, I had this project where I would do slogans. I would take everyday slogans and phrases and rewrite them to have different meaning. Like the phrase "God Forbid," I did it in three lines, like: God For Bid, as in, for the highest bidder. And instead of "Sex Sells," I would write "Sex Smells." And it's amazing how people would react to them. Some would not even see what they actually said or they would get really disturbed.

I used to work at a paper, like a weekly tabloid kind of thing, and I would sneak into the office at night, 'cause as art director I would have the keys, and I would write hundreds of these and print them out on their own 8 x 11 paper and then I would walk back to where I would live, poster the whole way. I was doing this for months along this whole street and people were getting really disturbed and started wondering who was doing it. I would put "God For Bid" on churches [laughter] wanting people to really look and see. There is too much information for your brain to take in and people just gloss it all over. It's important not to become complacent or apathetic.

Just like when we were talking at the beginning about PEOPs and how I want it to be an active thing. My getting involved in DIY culture and squatting, I really want to be an active part of the world. I don't want to be a passive element. That's really important to me. And trying to communicate this to people. A lot of people in

this country don't understand how they can become an active element. Everybody knows that our government and our system are completely fucked up, but they don't understand that they do have the power to change it. It's all about opening your eyes and seeing what's going on, and not glossing over. It seems like too much is being glossed over. It's like, "Oh, we're gonna go bomb Iraq? Okay, alright. Support the troops. Wave the flag." Too much is getting glossed over. I don't think putting little things into my drawings is gonna make people open their eyes and say, "Stop the war!" but it's... [laughter] I can't think of what it is...

Todd: Well, it's personal methods of resistance. The most important thing, for myself, is for me to realize that I'm not glossing things over, and that you take your own time and your own life and go, okay, I have to stop, listen, penetrate one thing and even that will open other doors for us.

Fly: Right. And another thing is that people should learn how to use their imaginations, too. I think it's a major problem in the schools right now that all arts funding is being cut because the country seems to be suffering a huge lack of imagination. If you can't imagine a better world, you won't be able to live in a better world.

Todd: Or describe it.

Fly: You have to be able to imagine what your life can be like, and then you can make it happen. But if you're not taught how to use your imagination, just how to accept structures and how to memorize facts, then you're not gonna learn how to develop or create your own personal reality. Teaching people to suppress their imagination makes for great soldiers and flag wavers, but it doesn't make for much happiness.

Todd: Okay, well, I have one question on the converse of that. Has your work ever been actively censored? Have you looked at something that you got printed and found they had taken something out of it?

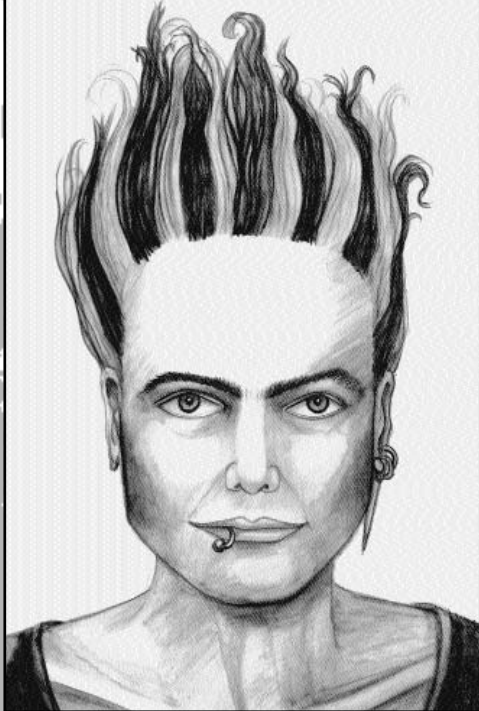
Fly: Well, not really because usually my work is published in underground publications who are looking for the kind of work that I do. I've had situations where I've had to revise illustrations, but it's not really a censorship thing, it's more just being more accurate to what's going on. There's some situations where, if you're putting something in a magazine that's supposed to be going out to the general public, they might not want you to put shit, fuck, piss, pussy, asshole, etc. and have a comic about getting your tits yanked off and ass pulled off at Canadian Customs. But I wouldn't call that censorship, but rather consideration of audience.

Oh wait, I was forced to take down a show I did in a café, because the woman who owned the shop was Jewish and I had a swastika in one of my drawings. I mean, I wasn't supporting Nazis. It was a drawing of the New York Stock Exchange and the swastika was on the clock, so it was more like how the clock is the fascist state and controlling us. It was symbolic. It had nothing to do with supporting Nazism, absolutely not. But she was offended by the fact that there was a swastika in the drawing, period. And so I took it down, it was no big deal. Just a little café show.

Todd: And you were saying, like the word "fuck," you have loaded symbols, too. So you have to appreciate the fact that people will react differently to different symbols.

Fly: Yeah. Exactly.

FLY'S SELF-PORTRAIT



For more info on Fly: www.bway.net/~fly
To order "PEOPs": www.softskull.com
To hear Zero Content: www.grecords.com



RAZORCAKE 65

A Candid Conversation with Cliff Roman of

THE WEIRDOS



Interview and Photos by Money

The day I drove out to the Valley to interview Cliff Roman and John Denney of the Weirdos half of Southern California was up in smoke. In fact, John couldn't make the interview because the fires that raged across the state were encroaching upon his home. (Note: John, his family, and his home are fine.) It was as if some higher power were punishing us for electing Arnold Schwarzenegger as governor. Or maybe it was one too many reality TV shows. Whatever it was, the edict was clear: California must be destroyed. Twenty-six years earlier a bunch of guys from North Hollywood issued a proclamation of their own: "Destroy all music!" and the city's cultural landscape was never the same. If any band is responsible for putting Los Angeles on the punk rock map, it's the Weirdos. With a new CD of old, previously-unreleased material on Frontier Records, the Weirdos are back with a new rhythm section and an old message from the underworld of LA punk circa 1977.

\$: How well rehearsed were you back in the early days?

Cliff: We rehearsed all the time. That was our life. We usually had a show coming up and we liked to work out new material. We liked to rehearse a lot. Probably too much.

\$: Where did you rehearse? North Hollywood?

Cliff: Several places, but mainly in North Hollywood. There was a place called Stone Fox Rehearsals. It may still be there. It was in an industrial strip near Chandler and Vineland. Somewhere over there. Before that we rehearsed for a little bit in Hollywood at a place called Dress Review on Hollywood Boulevard and Western. The building is still there. I don't know if there is a rehearsal studio there.

\$: Who attended North Hollywood High?

Cliff: I went to North Hollywood High, and so did John. That's where I met him.

\$: What about his brother?

Cliff: Dix didn't go there. He went to these alternative schools. He went to Crossroads, which was right across the street from North Hollywood High. And he went to a famous private alternative school in Santa Monica. One of the guys from the Monkees went

there.

\$: And when did you meet John?

Cliff: High school in an art class.

\$: Were you artists?

Cliff: I was an art major in high school and then I went to California Institute of the Arts. I have a degree in Art.

\$: When did you know you were an artist?

Cliff: Ever since I was really little I was always drawing and considered myself an artist. I was always the artist in the class. I was in charge of doing the murals. I wasn't that great but if you put something in front of me I could draw it, or make something up for a project. In high school I made a conscious decision that I wanted to be an artist. I wanted to go to Cal Arts. It was the new art school right down the freeway. When I first applied there, right out of high school, I didn't get in, so I spent a year at the Valley junior college and then I was accepted the following year.

\$: Do you remember when you met John?

Cliff: Yeah, I think it was our junior year in high school. It was 1969-70. We graduated in 1971.

\$: So you were older when you started playing out?

Cliff: When the band started John and I were 24. That was '77. The youngest was Dix, who was still 18. Dix is a really good artist. Their father was a graphic artist. John is a very talented artist, a very creative person. Dave Trout, our original bass player, he was an artist as well. I met him at Cal Arts. He was there on scholarship, getting his Master's.

\$: How did the band come together?

Cliff: Basically, Dave Trout and I started the band. I had written some songs and Dave played bass so he went and got a bass guitar and an amp and I had a guitar and an amp. For years John would come over and we'd sit in the living room and make up songs and tape them on our little cassette recorders. I wrote some songs in '76. I went over to Dave's house, played them for him, showed him the bass lines. Dave and John had already met. John came over and I handed him the lyrics and sang the songs.

\$: He didn't need any coaxing?

Cliff: Oh, no. He was ready. He already had the stuff. He was a very charismatic person. You knew he would be a film or stage actor of some sort. I knew he would make a great front man. John could be Mick Jagger or David Bowie or Iggy Pop, any of those guys who we went to see. But John's an original. He didn't take an image from one of those guys. They were just by themselves with a microphone. They didn't have a guitar or play drums. They were the band. John just stepped up to the job of being the lead singer and became it.

\$: Do you think the intensity of the performance is one of the reasons the Weirdos caught on?

Cliff: Yeah. We caught on right away because of the music, the songs, the sound, the look, what we did on stage. The total package.

\$: Who was responsible for the way you guys looked?

Cliff: All of us. We all came up with different ideas. I was into using spray paint on clothing. John splattered liquid paint all over the place. Dix stapled stuff together just using a stapler. Dave Trout pulled stuff apart and reconstructed it. We'd go shopping at thrift stores for pants, shirts, belts, jewelry. Rain coats. It all came together. We could take anything and make it work for us. I'd buy hideous looking shoes and pants. Clashing stuff, and put it all together.

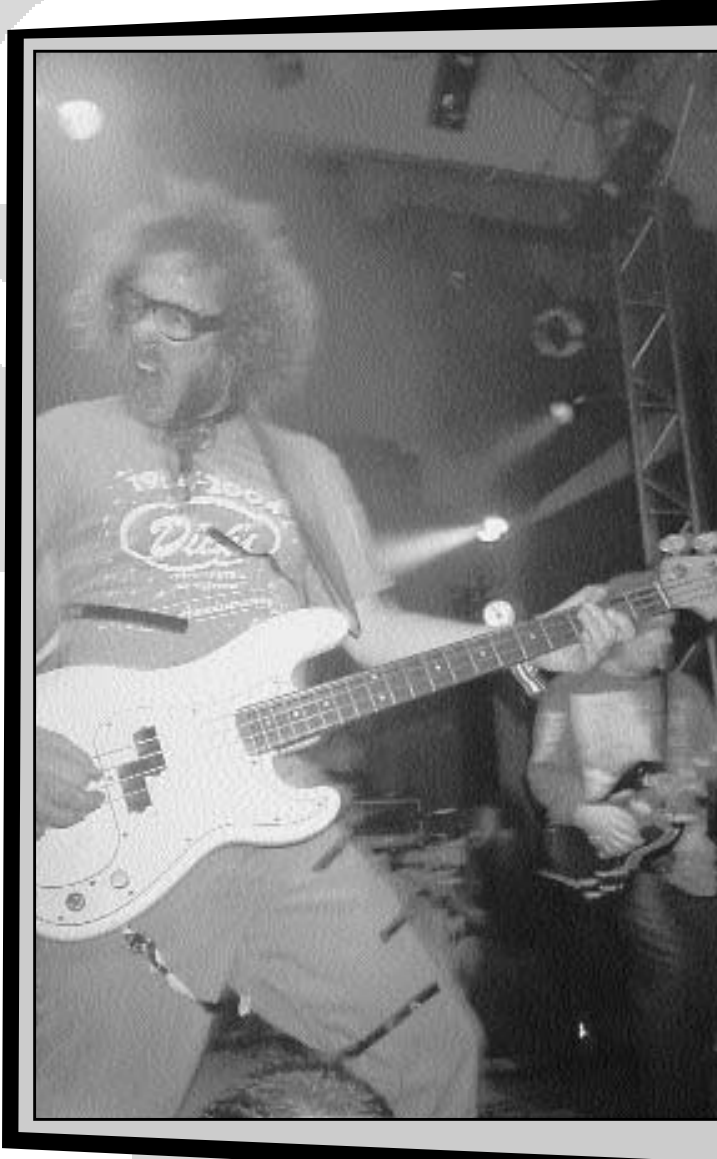
\$: From the photos I've seen you don't look like you belong together, but when you see you all together you're instantly recogniz-

able as the Weirdos.

Cliff: That's right.

\$: Is it true you didn't have a drummer in your original line-up?

Cliff: Yes. Originally it was just me, John, Dix and Dave Trout playing in a little rehearsal space. No drummer. It was tiny little place as big as this living room. We used to take our amps and stack them along the wall and stand there facing the amps. We would go there and play the songs. One day, we'd just finished practicing our set there was a knock at the door and these three guys walk in. It was the Nerves. They



talked us into doing a show. We were like, "We're not ready, we don't even have a drummer." They're like, "It is the way it is; you're doing a show with us." Peter Case talked us into doing our first show at the Punk Palace. "You guys are punk." We didn't know what we were doing. We didn't know anybody in the music business. We didn't know who run the clubs or how to get booked at a club. We were thinking maybe we'd play a party or something. That was all we thought we could do. This was March

of '77. Our first show was April Fool's Day in '77. By that summer we were headlining the Whisky; we were in *Time Magazine*; John was on the cover of *Slash*.

\$: That must have been an amazing summer.

Cliff: We weren't even ready to play. We just got pulled on stage. We rehearsed in jeans and t-shirts. By the time we did the Orpheum Show we'd developed the look and it just snowballed from there. We came out and played but we had no idea what to do onstage. We were an original band; it's not like we were some rock outfit and we switched to punk when it broke.

It's our own creation. If you were in LA in '77, we were the band that you could go see at the Masque, or the Whisky, or the Stardust. We were what was happening on the strip that summer. They'd try to get the other punk bands to headline and no one would go see them, then they'd bring us back and the place would be packed. Everyone wanted to be on one of our shows, not because it would sell out but because that would be the happening place. We were it. When we came out to play a lot of musicians in the Hollywood area would come out to see us, and they all had bands, but they weren't punk bands. I think the first time a lot of people saw us it changed their lives because they went out and formed bands. A lot of people have told me they saw us play at the Orpheum Theater in April of '77. That show was the Weirdos, the Zeros and the Germs. The place was packed. The Damned were there. Rodney Bingenheimer was there. Greg Shaw was there. The Screamers were there. They came up to us after the show and said, "You guys were great!" Practically everyone in the audience went out and formed a band the next day.

\$: Do you think you get enough credit for your role in punk rock history?

Cliff: I don't think we get enough credit for being the first. Fast Freddy, who wrote for *Backdoor Man*, saw our very first show and wrote, "From out of nowhere came the Weirdos." There were no other bands locally that did what we did at the time we did it. There weren't any. The Screamers were around, but they didn't play. Their model was unique because of their instrumentation, their look, and their great frontman Tomata du Plenty, but it was nothing like how we looked. And there weren't any other bands. The Zippers weren't really a

punk band. They were more like power pop. The Nerves weren't really punk either and they were promoting this thing called the Punk Palace. The Germs were around and they got pulled onto one of our early shows. I don't think they were thinking of being a punk rock band.

\$: They wanted to be the Runaways.

Cliff: But they had the safety pins like the English punks. We gave the Germs their first break at the Orpheum. I was the promoter. Paid for it with my own money. I was charging \$4.

\$: Those \$4 shows are still out there.

all over the place and they sounded awful. And the guy I was dealing with, the owner of the theater, was flipping out. "Get those guys off the stage!" They didn't know how to start a song, or how to finish it, and they just thought it was a joke. They were up there laughing. So they were removed from the stage.

\$: Who removed them?

Cliff: The owner. There were a bunch of us telling them to get off. I didn't get up there and pull them off with a hook but we told them to stop.

\$: Because you were the promoter.

Crime once. It was a show Crime did on Halloween night in '77 at Bimbo's, which is a famous old bar in North Beach. We played at a place called the People's Temple, which was an old synagogue that was turned into a theater. We used to play with the Mutants, Flipper, the Dils.

\$: How did you find out about new music?

Cliff: I was always buying *Melody Maker*, *Sounds*, *Music Express*, and *Creem* fanzines. I was reading *Bomp!* back then. I think I even subscribed to it. A weird little local zine called *Backdoor Man*. We'd read about it. I still have articles about the Sex

OUR FIRST SHOW WAS APRIL FOOL'S DAY IN '77. BY THAT SUMMER WE WERE HEADLINING THE WHISKY, WE WERE IN TIME MAGAZINE, JOHN WAS ON THE COVER OF SLASH.

Cliff: We did a bunch of them. We were on a roll. We did the Punk Palace. We did the Orpheum Theater with the Nerves and the Zippers. We had Nicky playing drums with us. Then the Nerves and the Zippers backed out. We were at a Bomp! Records opening and Dave Trout was talking to this kid, this nerdy little kid, who had a ripped-up t-shirt that had Germs on it and a pair of jeans with 100 safety pins in it. How punk rock, right?

\$: This is Darby?

Cliff: He was calling himself Bobby Pyn back then. So Dave was like, "They've got a band called the Germs, maybe they could play with us." So I went and talked to them. I think it was the next night or a few days later. So they show up and they go on first and they start throwing peanut butter

Cliff: We didn't even know them. We didn't know anything about them. We were laughing.

\$: Da-da weirdness.

Cliff: It was a performance art piece. We were like, "Just let them play," but then the owner threatened to shut down the whole gig if we didn't get them off the stage. After the show there was peanut butter all over the front of my car. I think Darby must have been leaning on it, and I just left it there, so for months there was this dried peanut butter on the front of my Merc.

\$: That's great.

Cliff: Then Nicky went on to play drums for them on "Lexicon Devil" and then their "Forming" single came out, which I loved.

It just sounded so crude. The Dils got a single out, and then the Germs were on What? Records. We were like, "Can you believe these guys got records out? We better get a record out!" The Germs weren't allowed to play the Starwood or the Whisky. They couldn't draw. We had them play with us at Mabuhay Gardens in San Francisco. Everyone who saw them hated them.

\$: What was that scene like?

Cliff: San Francisco was a different scene but we were very well liked. When you played Mabuhay Gardens it was 21 and over. Down here it was all ages. Up there it was kind of weird because everyone was drunk and drugged out. Older hippie kind of people. And there was media up there. *Search and Destroy* loved the Weirdos. Howie Klein with New Wave who used to put us up. We loved going to San Francisco.

\$: Who did you play with?

Cliff: When we first went up there we brought the Zeros and the Germs. We did a show with

Pistols that I cut out of the *LA Times*. So we knew something was going on, but we didn't know what it sounded like. Back then you couldn't hear the bands from England, but you could see photos or read about them. The band we saw was the Ramones. But they had long hair. We didn't want to look like the Ramones or the English bands.

\$: Were the Ramones a big influence?

Cliff: Before I heard the Ramones I would play open chords. Kind of a downbeat stroke. But I didn't play along with the songs. I would just make up little riffs and progressions and record them with my little tape recorder, and I'd sit there and invent stuff. But when I heard the Ramones it was so cool. I could hear all the West Coast surf influences, only there weren't any guitar solos. I could hear how they were structuring their songs. I listened to that record a lot, but the band that made me want to start a band was Iggy Pop and the Stooges. They did a run at the Whisky in '74 or '75 for a week. I saw them one night and then I got John and Dave to go down there one night. I saw them about three or four time. I had *Raw Power*. I loved *Raw Power*. I remember walking out of the Whisky and saying to Dave Trout: "Come on, what have we got to lose? Let's start a band."

\$: What punk rock bands did you listen to?

Cliff: The bands I listened to were The Damned. I got their first record. The Sex Pistols, the Clash, Generation X, and the Buzzcocks. The Saints. All those bands.

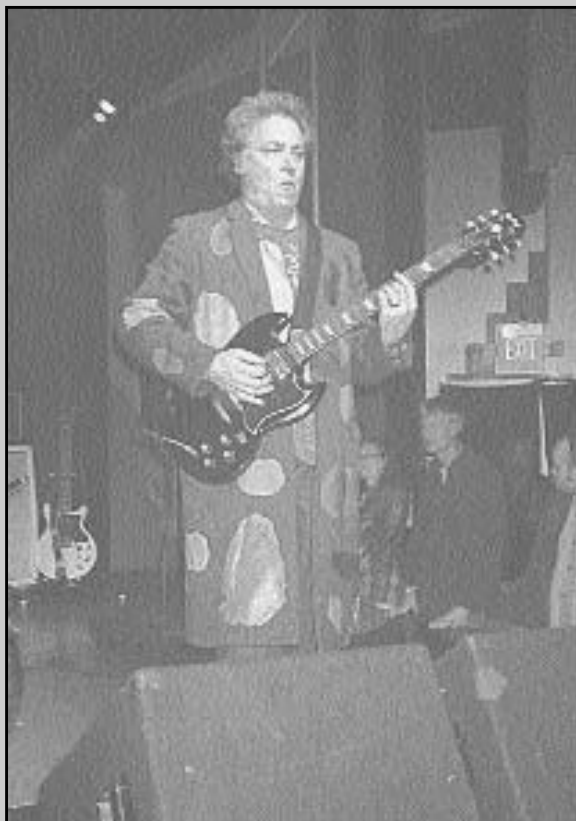
\$: Is there an LA band that you played with that doesn't get enough recognition?

Cliff: Some of the bands that I really liked were the Plugz, who later become the Cruzados.

\$: What's the current line-up?

Cliff: We have a great lineup. John, Dix and I are the core members of the band. We've had a lot of drummers and bass players. In my mind, we've had three drummers. Nicky was first. Then Art Fox in '79. Then Cliff Martinez in '80. But we also played with a ton of other drummers and we had Dave Trout and Bruce Moreland on bass.

\$: What happened to Dave Trout?



Cliff: Dave worked in the film industry and I think he's a graphic arts instructor at one of the colleges. I've kind of lost touch with him. I'm hoping one day to get back in touch with him but right now I have no idea. After Bruce we had Willie Williams, then I played bass for a while when Cliff Martinez was playing drums. But we've had a lot of other bass players. Right now Sean Antillion is playing drums and Zander Schloss from the Circle Jerks is playing bass.

\$: So *Condor* came out—

Cliff: In '90. A lot of those songs had been written 10 or 11 years earlier. There was a period around '84 or '85 where I used to go downtown to John's loft and we'd make up songs and record them and some of those songs ended up on *Condor*. I'm very proud of *Condor*.

\$: Is the world going to see any new Weirdos material?

Cliff: Hopefully. I've been writing. I've got enough music to go in the studio and record another album.

\$: What do John and Dix do?

Cliff: All kinds of things. We have our private lives. You know, John has a family. I have a family. Dix is in another band. The reason we're back together right now and doing these shows is to promote the CD. The reason the CD is out now is because a last April was the 25th anniversary. But we missed the deadline.

\$: I remember talking with you about that a year ago.

Cliff: That's how long it took to get it together. It's not like we're a new band and all live together and there's nothing else in our lives. It's not like that anymore.

\$: I get the sense that you guys are somewhat secretive people.

Cliff: It's not that we're secretive. We're pretty normal people. I don't have any explanation for the way things have happened, they just happened that way. We certainly didn't plan it out.

\$: I think the tag "artist" creates a certain amount of mystery and intrigue, especially when you don't know much about their private lives.

Cliff: That's true for a lot of people. Anyone who has a high profile and tries to keep their private life private is going to encounter that. That's the way it is.

\$: What song are you most proud of?

Cliff: I think our most well known song is "We Got the Neutron Bomb" and I don't know why that's the most well known. It was a single on Dangerhouse. "Happy People." "Who What When Where Why?" On *Condor*, I really like "Something's Moving." I really like the way that one came out. "Helium Bar" is another one. There's a song called "I Feel" on the Rhino EP.

\$: I don't think I've heard that one.

Cliff: That might be on the next volume.

\$: What else are you planning for that?

Cliff: It would be kind of similar to *Volume*



II. There's still some stuff that's never been released on CD that's totally unavailable. So I'd like to get all that stuff on there. We didn't put out a whole lot of records, but we went into the studio a lot. I've got stuff in the can. A lot of it is alternate takes, earlier recordings, same songs from another session, live in the rehearsal studio stuff. We also have a lot of live recordings from shows that were done in '77 and '78 that someone recorded with a cassette recorder or something. I'm archiving them on the hard drive and we're just going to burn CDs for whoever wants to purchase them from our website.

The sound quality isn't that great but when we digitize it and re-master it we'll try to boost the bass or trim off some of the treble but it's pretty much going to be as is. I have cassettes of maybe 10 live shows. There all the same songs, but they'll be for whoever would like to have them.

I like listening to them. What's great is sometimes you'll hear us tuning up. I've got tapes of us without the drummer. Rehearsal tapes. I've even got a tape of us rehearsing and then you hear the Nerves come in and talk us into doing our first show.

\$: That's history.

Cliff: You hear Peter Case and the other guys. And we're, like, so naïve. We're saying stuff like, "Yeah, I guess we should do that."

\$: I'd love to hear that. Since we're on the subject of punk rock history, what is your most vivid memory of the Masque?

Cliff: The Masque was a neat place because of the scene. Before the Masque started, we were already playing the Whisky, the Starwood, and there were nice sound systems, stages, lights, and you can get drinks

or food, and get paid! And then you go down to the Masque and it smelled. The bathroom was always broken. You had to bring your own food or drink. You couldn't get paid. But it was cool because of the scene. That's where you saw everybody. You just hung out there. I used to cruise right up to the entrance in my grandfather's old beat-up '64 Merc. We had the best time there. Great time. But no one thought it was something special. Now people want the doors and the walls. They want to go down there and see it.

\$: You must have a story I've never heard before.

Cliff: I remember going down there and I don't know if it was a show or a party and the police came down. And all of the sudden they start hitting people with their sticks. I walked up the stairs, got outside, and they shut it down. It was all politics.

\$: The clubs on the Strip didn't like the fact that it was going on.

Cliff: It's not like the Masque was cutting into their business. I guess it was, but only a hundred people could get down there. I remember playing there on several occasions and we were filmed for a TV pilot down there for a show called *At Night*. This guy who was the host of the show interviewed us and filmed us while we played. It was a multi-camera shoot. I still have the tape. That was a great moment. We did some neat shows down there, but we only played it a couple times. Once we played down there after it was closed. It was okay to rehearse or do a party, as long as you didn't charge money at the door. The last time we played there was Memorial Day of '78. Back then it was fun. It was so much fun.



Dan Monick's

Photo Page

Ladies and Gentleman...



*...The Mean Fucking
Reds*

Please note: If you're an established record company, and you send us a pre-release without all the album art, we're probably going to throw that shit away... cock gobblers.



30 YEARS WAR:

Under the Gun: CD-EP

Balls-on-fire hardcore or sort of tidied-up crust – I don't know exactly where the punk pundits would put this one. Chain of Strength with industrial strength itching powder in their jock straps. I like it. –Aphid Peewit (Substandard)

ADAM WEST:

God's Gift to Women: CD

In the ROCK vein of Zeke, The Hellcopters, or The Candy Snatchers, but what makes me love a band like The Candy Snatchers is that Larry May can sing and has more personality in his big toe than entire bands of this genre. I have heard quite a bit of Adam West over the years and the vocals have always held me back. Try as I might, this one thing keeps me from being a fan. –Wanda Sprag (I Used To Fuck People Like You In Prison)

AGAINST ME!:

...As the Eternal Cowboy: CD

I'm probably the only person I know who didn't go completely apeshit over this band's first record. Don't get me wrong, I like it and everything. It's just that every time I'd listen to it, I'd think of something else that I'd rather listen to, like Sockeye. I didn't have any expectations for this album, but it really caught me off guard. The drumming sounds a lot better than their first album, the singing is much more tuneful, and the guitar sounds, surprisingly enough, like it came off an early Cure album. Granted, I think the last two songs on this album completely suck, but the other nine songs are pretty fucking awesome, so I guess I'm converted. –Not Josh (Fat)

AGITATORS, THE:

Meeting The Lads: CD

BROKEN HEROES/WEEK-END WARRIORS: Beer Guts and Drunk Sluts: Split CD

They have split CDs; why not a split review? I'm putting this in one review cause I can pretty much say the same for all three bands. Street/oi punk is what we are looking at here. Nothing too intelligent in the lyrics, nothing fancy with the music, just straightforward oi with the usual topics: drinking, soccer, hanging with friends, class war, drinking and more drinking. Now repeat the chorus over and over and over and throw in an "Oi, Oi, Oi!" here and there and you have these three bands. There is nothing wrong with this **RAZORCAKE 72** at all, it just gets so bor-

Where's the anarchy in looking and sounding like a parrot in a karaoke band? –Jimmy Alvarado



ing after a while. The Agitators are the best of the three and are a little catchy at times but nothing to really hook me in. Is every oi band required to do a cover of "Sally MacLennane"? –Toby (Street Anthem)

ALTAIRA:

Weigh Your Conscience: CD

Although they thank Bruce Springsteen's hips in the liner notes (hot!), I couldn't really get excited about this. Melodic punk with breakdowns, occasionally gruff vocals, you know the story. It's not awful or nothing, though. And, more importantly, what about the name? A quick google search revealed the following: 1.) "Altaira is a rule-based visual language for the control of small mobile robots, using a tile-based navigation scheme." 2.) the Arabic word for bird or high-flying 3.) the eleventh brightest star in the sky (Altair) or 4.) a female fantasy character. Let's hear it for tile-based navigation schemes! This is Cheerios. Okay! –Maddy (A.D.D.)

AMBIVALENT:

self-titled demo: CD-EP

Judging solely from the sound of this, one is led to assume they're an East LA backyard band. Decent, mid-tempo punk marred by a limp four-track mix job. They thank god and beer in that order. Now that's punk rock, man. –Jimmy Alvarado (no address)

ANN BERETTA:

Three Chord Revolution: CD

Man, my wife is going to love this! One Man Army meets the Plimsouls. I need to give this to her now before she tells me that I never turn her on to new music again. –Donofthedeath (Union)

ANTI-FLAG:

The Terror State: CD

Here's me scratching my head. Why is it that whenever this band, seemingly made up of intelligent, well-informed

people, tries to write lyrics, they come out like, "We're tired of lies; we want the truth!" and "It's up to you to see through lies by those who've led us to endless world strife"? Why do they feel the need to dumb everything down for people? Why is it the politically correct thing to be completely dogmatic and humorless? Why does everything about Anti-Flag seem so sterile and processed? The thing that baffles me the most is that this album is probably going to be wildly successful, while *Last Match* by the Thumbs, one of the most intelligent, visceral, fist-swinging punk albums in recent years, has been totally ignored. There's no shortage of awesome politically-oriented punk bands out there. This just isn't one of them. –Not Josh (Fat)

ASSOCIATED SCUM:

free demo: CD-R

Picked this up outta the flyer pile at Dr. Strange and figured I'd give 'em some free publicity. What you get here is direct, non-metal hardcore with some nice tempo changes here and there to keep things interesting. Five songs in nine minutes means they pretty much refrain from self-indulgence, as it should be when one is playing in a hardcore band. Just get in there, raise hell and get the fuck out, you know? Drop 'em an email and check 'em out. –Jimmy Alvarado (Associated Scum)

BACKUP PLAN, THE:

Dearest Whomever...: CD

Dear Todd, I am too old to have to think of something good to say about ninth generation Dag Nasty rehashes. Please hire a fourteen-year-old for that. Thank you. –Cuss Baxter (New Day Rising)

BAILER:

This Took Too Long: CD-EP

This took too long to get to the end. –Jimmy Alvarado (Not Bad)

BAR FEEDERS, THE: 50

Ways to Leave Your Liver: CD

Underneath one of the best album titles I've heard in a long time is some fast, sloppy drunk (duh) punk, kind of like Schlong or Your Mother mixed with a little bit of No Means No. Like the other Bar Feeders records, this is pretty good, but the real clincher for this band is their live show. Live, the No Means No influence shines through a little more, and so does the drunkenness. This isn't essential, but it might be nice if you knew the words to these songs so you can sing along at their shows. –Not Josh (A.D.D.)

BARGAIN MUSIC:

The Magic Is Over: CD

A weird mix of metal, dub reggae and Prince-influenced funk, ultimately landing on its ass in bar band land. –Jimmy Alvarado (Beatville)

BATHTUB SHITTER:

Lifetime Shitlist: CD

A Japanese grind band with some of the worst lyrics I've ever read. Granted, some of it may be due to a desire to sing in English being hamstrung by a rudimentary grasp of the language, but that doesn't really explain away verses like "Countless tributaries of a river/ Where is it going?/ I drink and think about it/ But really need a snack/ And my blood vessel wants beer." Musically it ain't too terrible, and the cookie monster/high-pitched squeal dual vocal interplay is funny as hell, but I really shouldn't have looked at the lyric sheet first. –Jimmy Alvarado (www.shitjam.com)

BATON ROUGE, LES:

My Body-The Pistol: CD

Raucous, dark, female-fronted punk often similar in tone to bands like the Lost Sounds, although there ain't a synth within miles of this. Things get a bit arty at times, but that doesn't hide the fact that there's some good noise bein' made here. –Jimmy Alvarado (Elevator Music)

BEERZONE:

Live on the Dive: CD

A board quality recording of a live performance by this venerable English band, recorded live in Brighton in August 2002. Proving that they are not merely a "studio band," the boys crank out thirteen tracks of Test Tube Baby-damaged punk rock, sick with hooks and heavy on the humor. Personal favorite here is "Strangle All the Boy Bands," a sentiment I think we all can get behind. –Jimmy Alvarado (Beerzone)

BEN GRIM: Retro: CD

As an official board member of The Committee to Preserve Pop Punk (CPPP), I should, by all rights, love this CD. I mean, what's not to love? It's decent pop punk. It's recorded in Green Bay. It's one of those career-spanning retrospectives, which allows me, the reader, to spend less time tracking down out-of-print records. After a few

listens, though, the CPPP must release the following statement: This is indeed decent pop punk, but it won't knock your leopard-printed socks off – except for the bonus tracks (sloppy and great!), and the rockin' Zero Boys cover with Rev. Nørb on vocals (which is Cinnamon Toast Crunch). When this band is messier and less-produced, it's a-okay! The rest is Kix. Punk! –Maddy (Boss Tuneage)

BENCHWARMER:
Self-titled: CD

I just can't nail this one in the head. Me thinks this sounds like the singer of Sick of it All joins the guys in the Meat Puppets and brings back to life Kurt Cobain for additional guitar duties and summons Bill Stevenson from All/Descendents to drum along to play a weird jazz noise thing.

–Donofthedeath (UR)

BLACK PRINT:
Movement: CD

Five sincere but emotional outbursts from this Chicago band; I could just be lazy and call it emocore, but that wouldn't be fair. Four of the five tracks aren't half bad, but they are good enough musicians to get to a stronger and more original place. If Slayer and Crackerbash had a love child, it might sound like Black Print. Sadly, similar bands already littered most of the '90s.

–Wanda Sprag (Quincy Shanks)

BLACKTOP: I Got A Baaad Feelin' About This: CD
Subtitled "The Complete Recordings", it appears to be the complete recordings of a twangy garageswamp combo fronted by hoarse ex-Gorie Mick Collins. Twenty-six tracks bust out a Cramps-meet-Birthday Party skid row-meander thudverb party that gets under your skin like a dirty needle and makes a little infected area that throbs for a few days and grows a little crusty scab that's irresistible to pick at. A little more reigned-in than some In The Red product, but fully fleshed-out in its own particular suit and tie. Oh, and, "Your Pretty Face (Is Goin' to Waukeegan)"! –Cuss Baxter (In The Red)

BLOOD DRAINED COWS,
THE: 13: CD

An odd record that features ex-Angry Samoan Greg Turner. More on the college rock side of things than punk. Songs that sound like children's riddles to sonic '60s garage to the blues. The lyrics are pretty interesting and sound abstract to an average person while it makes perfect sense to the author. If you want to hear something outside the box, this might make your prostate swell.

–Donofthedeath (Triple X)

BLOOD DRAINED COWS,
THE: 13: CD

Heaping slops of psych-rock, trash punk, Leonard Cohenisms, lyrics that touch upon what goes on in one's mind, semi-acoustic ramblings, and other assorted weirdness are mooshed together on a plate with a side of "Chupacabra Rock 'n' Roll." A bizarre meal, indeed,

but when one of the chefs responsible for this meal is Angry Samoan guitarist Greg Turner, the mess before you, as well as the cover of "Little Black Egg," which was a staple of the Samoans' set, makes complete sense. Is this the long-hoped-for answer to *Back from Samoa*? No, so get over it. Is it a good listen? Without a doubt. –Jimmy Alvarado (Triple X)

BLOODY LOVELIES, THE:
Some Truth & Some Money: CD

This is what I picture: Dave Jones leaves the Monkees and sings for a time with the Doors, the Beatles or covers Elton John songs. –Donofthedeath (Cheap Lullaby)

BLUE ROOT:
Holocene Epoch: CD

Too mainstream in a MTV, Creed, Godsmack, etc. kind of way for me to continue listening. –Donofthedeath (Dough Main)

BOSS MARTIANS:
The Set-Up: CD

Sounds like *Second Coming* or similar Dickies album of low consequence, but with all the humor and idiosyncrasies replaced by, you know, SERIOUSNESS (except for the three songs where they chuck that particular Wile E. Coyote-like master plan and decide to rip off Elvis Costello as brazenly as possible ["Run and Hide" ends a line with the word "defenses" phrased, accentuated and harmonized EXACTLY as it was in whatever Elvis Costello recording paired it with "present tenses"; "Oh, Angela" is almost impossible to listen to without chiming in "my aim is true!" every so often]). Yeah, there are a few neat keyboard and synth things here and there, but, ultimately, they don't add up to much. "I Am Your Radio," proclaims the band. Not really; i plan on listening to my radio again after tonight. BEST SONG: "Oh, Alison" er, i mean "Oh, Angela" BEST SONG TITLE: "(The Angels Wanna Wear My) Red Shoes" ...oh, wait, that was somebody else. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Thank you list makes mention of a Madison band referred to as "Knuckle Drager," the funny part being that they spelled this band's name wrong because they forgot to misspell "Knuckel." –Rev. Nørb (MuSick)

BRAINERD:
There's No Eye in Pussy: CD

...yeah, and there's no good bands in Madison, either. Worse than Pachinko: how many orders of magnitude worse i cannot rightly say. BEST SONG: I don't mind "MDS" and, curiously, "White Bitch" BEST SONG TITLE: "So Seattle" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Band's a perfect four-for-four on the facial hair tally.

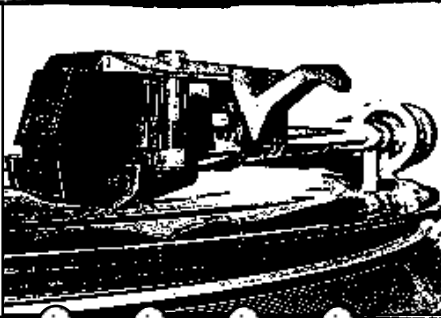
–Rev. Nørb (Crustacean)

BRAIN OIL: self-titled: LP

This is an eight song LP of what they call noise. Noise was very popular around the early and mid '90s. Seems

RAZZORCAKE

Vinyl rules, stupidass



THESE ARE THE TOP 7'S SINCE THE LAST MAG.

Underground Medicine Mailorder, Conneticut

- Deadly Weapons-You're So Selfish (Rapid Pulse)
- The Bags-Disco's Dead (Artifix)
- Havenots/Soviettes (Nice & Neat)
- Sgt. 6 Assault-Goin' Down On You (Rapid Pulse)
- FM Knives-Keth Levene (Dirtnap)
- First Time-You Can't Hurt Me (Jonny Cat)
- Vaticans-Commotion (Pure Filth)
- MOTO-Spiral Slouch (Shit Sandwich)
- Strong Come Ons-Yell A Lot and Suck (Big Neck)
- Checkers-You Don't Wanna Know (Radio Beat)

Disgruntled Mailorder, California

- BellRays "Lion's Den" (Vital Gesture)
- Red Onions "Live Wire" (Revenge)
- Killer Dreamer "Survival Guns" (Kapow)
- The Skulls "Gold And Ruby Red" (Headline)
- The Minds "Rip Out Your Eyes" (Alien Snatch)
- The Checkers "You Don't Wanna Know" (Radio Beat)
- First Time "You Can't Hurt Me" (Johnny Cat)
- Defiance "Against The Law" (Dirty Punk/PunkCore)
- Distraction "Autodestruct" (Unity Squad)
- The Functional Blackouts "s/t" (Electrorock)

like it died down and went away for a while. Maybe it's making a come back or maybe this is one of the bands keeping it alive. I don't know. To be honest, I don't like this music at all. That doesn't matter. I have heard many a band do this style, and for what they are doing, this is good. In other words if you are a noise fan, get this because you will like it. The songs are slow and sludgy and the vocals are rough. Like I said, I am not a fan, but, if you are, you will like this record. —Mike Beer (Life is Abuse)

BRAT ATTACK, THE:
Destruction Sound
System: CD

The only nice thing that I can say about this is that the dude who sings sometimes sounds like Oderus Urungus from Gwar. But they say they don't give a fuck if you like them or not, so they probably won't be losing any sleep over this review. —Not Josh (Longshot)

BURY THE LIVING:
self-titled: LP

A nice dose of fast, angry hardcore from the Negative Approach school of hard knocks, although I wish the singer would remember to take the microphone out of his mouth when he's singing. It's definitely a good thing to hear more bands with a Negative Approach influence as opposed to a Youth of Today influence. My obligatory complaint is that the recording sounds a little muffled, robbing this band of some of the power achieved by bands like Last in Line. —Not Josh (Soul is Cheap)

BURY THE LIVING: *Twitch of the Death Nerves*: CD
The collected recordings of a swell hardcore band that is now no more, apparently. Their EP on Kangaroo a while back was pretty smokin', and the same can be said for the thirty-seven tracks that grace this release. Sad to see 'em go. —Jimmy Alvarado (Kangaroo)

CABLE:
***Never Trust A Gemini*: CD**
Stoner sludge metal with nothing new here to add to the genre. —Jimmy Alvarado (The Dark Reign)

CALLSIGN COBRA:
self-titled: CD
Rock with oodles of punk rock attitude thrown into the mix and smart aleck lyrics compliment the proceedings. Normally not my ball of wax, this wasn't too shabby. —Jimmy Alvarado (Not Bad)

CARRION:
***The Crime of Idle Hands*: CD**
When they veered off into screamo territory I reached for the "incinerate" button. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.epicenesoundsystems.com)

CHARGE 69: *Des Mots, des Rires, des Larmes et des Pleurs*: LP
This band is from France and has been around since 1993. It's good solid

melodic punk. This LP seems to be a compilation of past material from 7" and compilations. I must say this stuff is good. A long time ago, they had a 7" come out on Pogo Attack here in the States. After giving the 7" a listen, I phoned Sean from Pogo Attack to tell him it was brilliant. Since that time, things have not changed. That 7" is included on this LP too, so I would say get this LP. This band is good and although they don't release too much, what they do release is good solid melodic punk. As an extra treat, the vinyl is a bright yellow! —Mike Beer (Dirty Faces)

CHICKENHEAD/LOS CANADIANS:
***Mutiny in Miami*: split CD**
Raw, sloppy DIY punk rock from two Florida bands that were around in the early '90s. If you like raw, sloppy DIY, you need this worse than you know. I didn't know who either of these bands was, but it's pretty cool and it's the perfect companion to that Stun Guns record that just came out a little while ago. Members of these bands went on to the Jack Palance Band, Allergic to Bullshit, the Crumbs (I think), and probably a thousand more. Thumbs up. —Not Josh (This Here)

CHOKING AHOGO:
***Radars and Maps*: CD**
A college pop rock band that are competent at what they do, yet fail to do anything for these ears. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.victimrecords.com)

CHRIS BELLEAU AND THE ZYDECO HOUNDS:
***Repeat Offender*: CD**
The band's name is not some clever moniker coined by a grindcore band looking for a cheap laugh; these guys actually do play zydeco-influenced rock music. One of the stranger things I've pulled from the Razorcake "mystery meat" piles, not because of the musical style these guys mine but because one can't help but wonder what a zydeco-influenced rock band was thinking when they sent their release to a predominantly punk-oriented periodical. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.zydecouhounds.com)

CHRISTIANSEN:
***Stylish Nihilists*: CD**
A miserable mix of hardcore intensity, arty emo pretentiousness and ELO-styled arena rock. More succinctly, this bites some mighty big weenie. Look for 'em to make a splash on Letterman any day now. —Jimmy Alvarado (Revelation)

CIVET: self-titled: CD
What seems to be an all-girl hardcore band adds just a smidge of glam to the proceedings and the whole thing just dissolves into shit. —Jimmy Alvarado (Callgirl)

CONDEMNED 84:
No Way In: 7"
Two tracks recorded in 1986 by this old skinhead unit. Both are pretty much

true to the style and sentiment that made 'em famous. I was always a bit pick-and-choose with these guys, but hardcore fans should no doubt be pleased as punch with both tracks. —Jimmy Alvarado (Haunted Town)

CONNER:
***The White Cube*: CD**
College rock gruel with speech impediment/fake British accent vocals. Stylized artsy Johnny Thunders-wannabe dung. I would rather change diapers at a senior citizen's home than listen to this again. —Aphid Peewit (Underground Sounds)

COUNTRY TEASERS:
***Full Moon Empty Sportsbag*: CD**
There does not exist one single bad Country Teasers track. Though he may be construed as a racist, sexist, homophobic, off-key hater, I construe primary Teaser Ben Wallers as one thing above all else: a genius, capable of high comedy and devastating sadness IN THE SAME SONG. Arrangements are often ramshackle, tumbling over themselves from lack of rehearsal (or concern for what's "right"), lyrics often self-referential, puerile and/or plain silly, but who (you?) can deny the plain fucking inspiration of a line like "it's very cold outside but you have a warm vagina/may I overnight leave my penis inside ya?" That's the comedy. How about some sad: "Don't cry for Crichton [a former Teaser], his suffering is over/cry for Dominique and his unfortunate mother/cry for Nicola, of whom he was her brother," from "Deaths." I mean, emosize all you want about kisses and the end of summer, but this is real shit about real dead friends. This is the real emo, the real DIY (see "Boycott the Studio"), the real essence of punk (despite lack of pretty much everything that hallmarks punk musically), the actual synthesis of all that's right and all that's wrong about the world onto a 25-cent piece of fucking plastic. Now "get off my fucking planet and take Alex Stuart with."

—Cuss Baxter (In The Red)

CURSES, THE: #&\$%: CD
Rip Off punk rock strong on hooks and attitude but lacking in originality and oomph. If this had been a single with "Son of Sam" and "(Baby's Got A) New Guitar," I would've peed my pants. As it stands with this full-length in hand, I can only seem to muster a "they aren't all that bad."

—Jimmy Alvarado (Empty)

DAYCARE SWINDLERS:
***This Is No Way to Make A Living*: CD**
Gotta admit, for a professional punk band, these guys are kinda catchy when they thrash things up. Then they start in with the ska crap and I lose interest faster than Bush can maintain a coherent thought. —Jimmy Alvarado (Beatville)

DEAD ENDS:
***Subhumanoid Meltdown*: CD**
Decent enough dual guitar rock/punk that would've been outstanding if they'd only ditch the Misfits-isms. Look, I can totally understand influences, but wallowing in hackneyed Danzig-posturing only illustrates a lack of creativity, and one need look no further than Danzig himself for proof of this. In short, fuck the Misfits, man, what do YOU have to say for yourself? —Jimmy Alvarado (Rabbit, address listed was complete gibberish)

DEAD HEROES:
***Let it Ride*: CD**
By looking at the front cover artwork you would expect either a rockabilly band or something else other than what comes out of the speakers. Flip over to the back and you get a picture of three guys wearing their leathers and possible favorite bands. Let's see if they can pull this one off. The band is competent here. A mix of Motorhead meets GBH mixed with modern day UK in the likes of Sick on the Bus. The music here is what sells it for me. They make a conscious effort to pay tribute to the UK bands before them. They are not a copy cat band by any means. They add their own personality to the mix. But you can hear where they are getting their basis from. Bad cover, good music. —Donofthead (Sin Klub)

DEADLY WEAPONS:
self-titled: 7" EP
A new outfit featuring Tina from the Trashwomen handling vocal duties. Included here are two doses of the high-energy punk that Rapid Pulse bands are known for delivering, and a cover of GG Allin's "Don't Talk to Me." "You Wreck Me" could easily have been a hardcore punk favorite had it been released back in the early '80s. Good stuff here. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rapid Pulse)

DEFIANCE:
***A Decade of Defiance*: CD**
DEFIANCE:
***Complete Singles Collection*: CD**
DEFIANCE:
***No Future, No Hope*: CD**
Okay, I sat and listened to all three of these straight through and this is what I can come up with about them: These guys haven't a creative bone in their collective bodies. What you get for your buck here is three different discs of a self-proclaimed Portland anarchist punk band who've spent a decade paying homage to their three favorite punk bands (The Exploited, Conflict and the Cockney Rejects, by the sound of it) by stealing riffs and bellowing over them lyrics that sound like they were lifted from some poorly written leaflets. Where's the "be yourself" ethos in aping other bands? Where's the creativity in firmly planting yourself in a rigid pigeonhole and not deviating from it in any way? Where's the anarchy in looking and sounding like a parrot in a karaoke band?

Jeez, I never thought I'd see the day when punks became as conservative as your average metal fan. Those who think Defiance somehow embody all that is "punk" will no doubt be pleased as punch that this crap is available again, but anyone who's been around longer than a week will view it as a very unfunny joke. –Jimmy Alvarado (Punk Core)

DENUNZIO:

The Three Point Stance: CD

As I lay on my couch listening to this through headphones, I found myself trying to come up with a single decent punk band Denver has produced. Including DeNunzio, I couldn't come up with a single one.

–Jimmy Alvarado (Hej Music)

DESTROYED, THE:

Outta Control: CD

This is, apparently, a sequel to an earlier CD released by the drummer, which, presumably for benefit of family, friends, the guys down at work and maybe two or three other people, collected what i assume to be his life's entire recorded output on one handy compact disc; said output consisting primarily of work in the late '70s with the Boston punk band The Destroyed, plus two mysterious collaborations with fancy-pants guitar player Henry Kaiser (?!). And, because YOU demanded it, this follow-up features six recently-recorded tracks of the drummer drumming and the singer

singing and playing guitar on midtempo punk tunes about death via bludgeon and the electric chair, plus the guitar-playing singer's original demo version of one of said compositions, plus two more Jeff Beck (i think?) styled guitar wig-outs with Henry Kaiser, plus ten Destroyed tracks ca. 1977-79 taken from old cassettes. I think i speak for all us guys here at the shop when i say that we're all proud as punch of you, and are certain you've got a great future ahead of you in The Biz! **BEST SONG:** "We Got It," but pretty much all that old Destroyed stuff is kinda great simply because the singer's rampant and shameless Iggyisms are so Ig-tastically over the top that they make Rik L Rik's contemporaneous Iggyishness seem positively Bowie-esque by comparison. **BEST SONG TITLE:** For pure sleekness, i enjoy "Let's Go Electric," but the sentimental favorite is "Don't Worry, That Train Ain't Gonna Hit You" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** Though the band is Boston-based, the Lemmy-lookin' drummer sports a White Sox – not a Red Sox – cap. **NINE-teen-SEVEN-teen!** (clap! clap! clap-clap-clap!) **NINE-teen-SEVEN-teen!** (clap! clap! clap-clap-clap!) –Rev. Nørb (Bert Switzer Media Empire, Ltd.)

DEXTER DANGER:

Written In Blood: CD-EP

A bargain bin *Tiger Beat* punk band with loud guitars, agonizingly ineffec-

tual vocals and zero songwriting talent. When they see there's no money to be made in punk and promptly fuck off to the next big trend, I will personally breathe a sigh of relief.

–Jimmy Alvarado (Orange Peel)

DILLINGER FOUR:

Live at 7th St. Entry: CD

Drunk, out of tune, and funny as all hell, this is just like a real Dillinger Four show! If you've ever seen these guys, you know what to expect: two minutes of music followed by five minutes of jokes. This is worth having around for the between song banter, but it mostly just underscores the fact that these guys need to go on tour again. If you don't even know who they are, do yourself a favor and get all of their studio albums first.

–Not Josh (LSD)

DIPERS, THE: *How to Plan*

Successful Parties: CD

Very arty, but noisy, which I guess means it had some redeeming qualities, but I'd be hard pressed to think of any others. –Jimmy Alvarado (Omnibus)

DIPLOMATS OF SOLID SOUND, THE:

Let's Cool One: CD

Easy listening for those with taste, class, and a sense of sophistication all your own. The Hammond buzzes a warm and mellow groove while the band liberally douses with handclaps

and genuine instruments jangling into a perfected state of blues-ed out bliss along with some frantic barnshakers. I endorse it and fully live it!

–Miss Namella J. Kim (Estrus)

DIRTBOMBS, THE:

Dangerous Magical Noise: CD

The Dirtbombs probably should've stuck to covering other people's songs. This doesn't suck, but it's not anywhere near as good as *Ultraglide in Black*, which in turn wasn't nearly as good as the Gories. It's a pretty spotty listen, and like almost every supergroup, it seems like a big inside joke. It might've made a good seven inch. –Not Josh (In the Red)

DISTRACTION, THE/ THE HATEPINKS: split 7"

Distraction: Jangly guitars, keyboards and tone-deaf vocals. Hatepinks: a former Gasolhead, distorted guitars, and a Swell Maps cover. Hatepinks win by a landslide. –Jimmy Alvarado (Lollipop)

DIVORCE: self-titled: 7" EP

Tumbling-a-piano-down-the-stairs type thrash/grind stuff. Your parents will love it every time you put it on at family gatherings. –Jimmy Alvarado (Tsunami)

DOA: 25TH Anniversary Anthology: CD

This starts with "Disco Sucks" from 1978, a cool, raw punk song that

shows DOA as a band full of talent. Next you have songs from the two great DOA albums, *Something Better Change* and *Hardcore 81*, followed by *War on 45*, in which DOA – sometimes known as the Canadian Clash – prove that they’re absolutely NOT the Clash and should never try reggae again and never, ever, ever cover “War” again. Good god, y’all. “Fuck You” comes in as a testament to the old days of DOA’s greatness (though it is, of course, a Subhumans [Canada] song), before they mired themselves in metal and pretty much stayed there from 1982 on. In short, this anthology is just like DOA’s music career: fucking awesome at the beginning, and let’s just ignore the rest. –Sean (Sudden Death)

DOGS, THE:

Suburban Nightmare: CD

Everyone’s favorite LA-by-way-of-Detroit proto-punk band resurfaces with some top-notch rock’n’roll. It’s rare when a band manages to release an album of new material that can stand up to their “essential” efforts of the past, and this is such a case. The songs are strong, the band sounds like it hasn’t aged a day, and the whole thing manages not to sound dated in the least. Crank it up and prove to your mom that people her age can, indeed, bring the rock. –Jimmy Alvarado (Dionysus)

DOOM BUGGY:

Versus the Beast: CD

I get the eerie chills of listening to the

Suburban Lawns, X-Ray Spex and Lene Lovich, but all at the same time. When I’m ready to shoot something down, a band puts me in my place. –Donofthedeath (Noise Maker)

ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN/ EL NADA: split CD

A good split. First off, we have Electric Frankenstein. They have been around for many years, released a ton of records, and they continue to play good, low-down rock’n’roll, or garage, if you want to call it that. If you like them you will want to get this CD. Next up is El Nada. If I’m not mistaken this band has the same Dave Chavez who was in Sick Pleasure, Verbal Abuse, and many other bands. The dude still skates and plays hardcore after all this time, and hardcore is what El Nada is all about. Fast, old school style and guaranteed to make you love ‘em. Each band on this split does three originals and then does a cover of the other band’s song. Now go out and get this CD. –Mike Beer (Finger)

ELECTRIC, THE:

Poor Loretta: 7”

Hey, I’ve “snorted cocaine off the torsos of the daughters of kings,” too. Nice to know I wasn’t the only one, although I never went so far as to write a shitty song about it.

–Jimmy Alvarado

(Bert Dax Cavalcade of Stars)

EMBROOKS, THE:

Back In My Mind

b/w The Time Was Wrong: 7”

This band’s *Our New Day* album was one of the top two or three records of 2000 A.D. and remains in the All-Millennium Top Ten (assuming you, like i, consider Y2K to be the first year of the new millennium, even though, owing to an accounting error, 1 B.C. proceeded directly to 1 A.D. without benefit of a year zero – thus technically rendering year 2000 the last year of the second millennium A.D., not the first year of the third); in marked contrast, their first album isn’t even worth listening to. This latest 45 is somewhere in between. The a-side pretty faithfully recreates whatever interval of sonic time (uh... “tyme?”) was in effect when UK freakbeat started to morph into psychedelia; the b-side, apart from a few discontemporaneous production flourishes, sounds like one of those almost-brutal, almost-ballads on The Who’s *A Quick One* and *Sell Out* albums. I don’t dislike it, but i don’t really hear a hit here, either – nor is the slashing, punky energy of *Our New Day* there to give a cursory lapdance to my eternally punk rock lap. New album, please. BEST SONG: “Back In My Mind” BEST SONG TITLE: i don’t like either. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Back cover photo was taken at approximately 5:53 local time. Also, their bass player is actually Lucky the Leprechaun from Lucky Charms™ cereal. –Rev. Nørb (Butterfly)

EMBROOKS, THE:

Back In My Mind: 7”

Strong psych-pop that’s very true to the period they’re obviously influenced by and perfect for my trips to Itchykoo Park. What did I do there? You figure it out. –Jimmy Alvarado (Butterfly)

ENDS, THE: *New Rome: 7”*

In the span of a little over a year, the Ends have become one of the best bands around, luring the listener in with their happy, bouncing rhythms, and then attacking with razor sharp guitar hooks and snotty vocals. That being said, the title song is a bit of a let-down. The music is repetitive and mid-tempo, the vocals are really mumbly, and the whole thing brings to mind a more pedestrian version of the Stitches. The B-side more than makes up for it, though. They play like a band building on their influences rather than being mistaken for them, and it’s a winner.

–Not Josh (Dirtnap)

ESTROGENOCIDE:

self-titled: CD

This is either two people who have way too much time on their hands or your porthole into the mind of a bi-polar maniac. Equal parts new wave, gore porn lyrics and a drum machine. Songs are sung in a monotone goth-like manner. Irritating enough to bug me after awhile, so you can imagine what the average person would think.

–Donofthedeath (M.H.)

**EVEN IN BLACKOUTS:
Foreshadows on the Wall: CD**

"Hey, you ignorant music reviewer, you! Our band plays punk rock using solely acoustic instruments! We will bludgeon over the head with this fact until you proclaim us to be the saving grace of modern punk rock!" Guess what? It sucks! The press sheet even calls them minstrels! Maybe if they had electric guitars they wouldn't sound like the Dixie Chicks.

—Not Josh (Knock Knock)

**EVIL BEAVER:
Pleased to Eat You: CD**

Well, I have to say that this CD got my attention very quickly with not only the band name and album title, but the song titles and the fact that there were two attractive ladies on the CD sleeve as well. When I popped it in, however, it was something I wasn't expecting. I was all ready to hear some low brow porn/thrash/metal/punk a la Stool Sample or something like it. This turned out to be more of an emo/metal CD. I'm not too familiar with this genre so I will have to take some steps back to compare it to what I remember. Grunge is the first word that pops into my head. For instance, if this was 1993, they would have no trouble getting signed to Sub Pop. It's got a deep, fuzzy sound with decent female vocals singing melodically at times and angry and others. This appears to be two females, one on drums and one on bass. No guitar. It's not absolutely ter-

rible, but I think this first listen will be its last. —Toby (Johann's Face)

**EXPLODING FUCK
DOLLS, THE:**

Here's to Your Fuck: CD

Career retrospective of a band that had Duane Peters in it about ten years ago. Sixteen songs from 1998-92 (reverse chrono order) sounding very much like a SoCal Clash or Sex Pistols. My guess is they were probably a lot more interesting to watch than listen to; some video would have been nice, but I reckon it'll bring back some pleasant memories for those who did see them.

—Cuss Baxter (no label)

FAILURE, THE:

...of Reason: CD

Emo... —Donofthedeath (Meter)

FARCES WANNA MO:

If Not Why Not?: CD

Serious nerd-out from 29 Palms, CA. First track: "Grammarchy," a discourse on language to the tune of "Anarchy in the UK" (barely). Others include "Who's Got Time to Build Infrastructure?", "Here is a Cake," "Bela Lugosi Loves Honky-Tonkin" and "If the Egges Don't Cooke." It's a huge mess of samples, talking, countless musical styles, and goofy nuttiness. Brings to mind the stuff on Eerie Materials, a label that put out scads of weird homemade weirdness (is it still around?), or maybe a Negativland-obsessed Sockeye. Must get pretty

boring out there in the desert. (Incidentally, I saw another Farces Wanna Mo CD at the Children's Hospital thrift store yesterday. I didn't buy it.) —Cuss Baxter (My X-Lover)

EAT ASS: We Have Come

For Your Mothers: CD

So I'm sitting here wading through some bottom-of-the-barrel reject discs I've been putting off reviewing for this issue and I come upon this buried in the crap I've scooped up. Depressed and more than a little punchy, thanks to the long line of affected college boys who have vented their politically correct rage into my ear over the course of the previous fifteen releases I've listened to today, I look at the cover, grunt, place the disc in the stereo and hit "play," bracing myself for the pop punk onslaught that will no doubt come belching forth from my speakers. Much to my surprise, what came from said speakers if some prime-rate punk rock that sent my depression scampering for the hills. "Man, I needed this," I say to myself as I crank it up to eleven. Fuck comparisons, this is just one of them discs that just rocks and nothing more need be said about it. A glance at the "thank you" notes on the inside reveals a Razorcake mention and I think how symbiotic that is — we Razorcakers only dig the finest in music and, in turn, are thanked by only the finest of bands. —Jimmy Alvarado (Diaphragm)

FIXED IDEA:

Chuco Life XXIV: CD

This has two strikes against it right from the get-go: 1) Ska tunes, 2) The "vato loco" vibe they're trying to play up here. The whole mystique surrounding the Chicano gang subculture, especially when it comes to the entertainment industry, is nothing more than the Brown equivalent of the minstrel and the inherent "circus music" quality in ska is surprisingly appropriate here. Fuck, you could've spent all the time and effort you put into your songs educating those exposed to your music about the good things about the culture instead of reinforcing the stereotype that we are all ignorant criminals. Parade around like a bunch of payasos if you want, but this is one Chicano who won't be smiling. —Jimmy Alvarado (no address)

FORGE:

Bring on the Apocalypse: CD

Helmet meets Ignite. —Donofthedeath (Static)

FRISK, THE:

Audio Ransom Note: CD

Another near miss to these ears here. Like the lyrics a lot, especially the use of alliteration, and I appreciate the attempt to do something different from the norm, but this sounds like the Freeze fucking Guttermouth in all the wrong ways. I really wanted to like this, but I... just... can't. —Jimmy Alvarado (Adeline)

FUCK YEAHS, THE: selfTitled: 7"

This is way fucking overdue. For those unfortunates living outside the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, the Fuck Yeahs have been throwing guitars at each other and getting banned from bars since 1997 or so and all the while playing some of the most infectious "good time" punk rock around. They used to bill themselves as "three chord punk from the land of sky-blue waters" – an apt description as well as a nod to Hamm's, their favorite beer at the time. Their charm for me has always been like that of a gang of attention deficit kids – the kind back in grade school who would eat play-doh and smear big goopy boogers on the wall to spell out their name – all wired up on SweetTarts and Mountain Dew. They even have a song called "Ritalin," which is a tip-off right there. Snotty and bratty, but catchy and tight-as-fuck too. Imagine a more revved-up version of the Groovie Ghoulies with chunkier guitars and a drum wizard from Dimension Z. Hopefully this is only the first of many releases to come from this band of happy-go-lucky spazzes. –Aphid Peewit (Learning Curve)

FUSE!, THE: The Fisherman's Wife: CD

Admittedly, The Fuse! are arty and pretentious, and normally I hate that, but if you bring on this much rock, I'm

willing to forgive almost anything. At their best, The Fuse! remind me of The Cows, making noise sound better than noise should. The comparison ends there, though, because The Fuse! don't stray from your basic song structures nearly as much as The Cows did. At their worst, The Fuse! sound like they're trying to resurrect the MC5, but they don't slide into those moments too often, and you really can't accuse them of being a knockoff or of chasing any trends. There's a lot of room for originality left between The Cows and the MC5, and The Fuse! are taking up that room. This is the kind of album that'll make you turn it up until your speakers are blown out. Luckily, the way it was recorded makes this album sound like it's playing through blown out speakers already. I'm still not sure if that's a good thing, but I'm sure that this is an album that I'm listening to a lot these days. –Sean (In the Red)

FUSTY LUGS: 6-song demo: CD-R

According to the letter that came along with this demo, these six songs were intended to be on an EP called *Rock... and a Hard Place* and the cover art was gonna be "a cut and paste of hard dicks playing instruments (because dicks are always funny)." So, with a cover letter like that, how could I not listen to the demo? Luckily, these six songs were a pleasant surprise: fast and tight enough to be called hardcore, drunk

and funny enough (or I assume they're funny; I can't hear the words but the singer sings like he's cracking himself up) to be called punk. The guitarist and sometimes singer of Cocaine Piñata is in this band (that means something to about five people). He's the one who wrote the letter. He was also bummed that the Knockout Pills didn't mention the Fusty Lugs in the interview that ran in *Razorcake* #15, but the truth is, they did. I didn't include it in the interview because when I was transcribing it, I couldn't quite make the words out. I was thinking, what did he just say? Rusty Shrugs? Busty Hugs? Lusty Tugs? Oh, fuck it. Anyway, I would say there's something in the water in Tucson that makes for some pretty fucking solid punk rock, but there's no water in Tucson. It's a desert. I don't know what makes the Tucson punk so good, but I'm glad they're all sending me their demos. –Sean (fustynixon@yahoo.com)

GAY TASTEE: Gayest Hits: 2xCD

I can't believe someone spent the money to put out a double CD of this shit! The worst part of it, I'm having to listen to it! Sounds like a boombox recording of a bi-polar street musician. –Donofthedeath (Hoex)

GAY, THE:
You Know the Rules: CD
Cutesy girlie pop that simultaneously made my toes curl, my stomach turn

and my head miss the Runaways that much more. –Jimmy Alvarado (Mint)

GITS, THE: Enter the Conquering Chicken: CD

Wow, this takes me back. Although the Gits were one of those bands I never got around to listening to back when they were originally making the rounds, I do remember them being the big cheese in the scene, as well as the shockwave that hit when their singer, Mia, was murdered a decade ago. Listening to this now, I can't help but wonder where they might have ended up had her life not ended so abruptly 'cause they were quite proficient at what they did. Although songs like "New Fast One" and "Sign of the Crab" show an ability to punk things up with ease, there's also a bar band undercurrent to the proceedings as well, sorta like a grungier Big Brother and the Holding Company. Tacked onto this reissue are some additional live tracks showing they could pull off live the quality of work they put into their studio recordings. Poignant, but a good listen if you're in the mood for something a little different. –Jimmy Alvarado (Broken Rekids)

GONER: How Good We Had It: CD

First off, since this band has the same name as what I would consider one of the better record labels to commit music to vinyl, they had big shoes to fill before I even heard what they sounded like. Also, if you are going to

call anything Goner, be convincing! Instead, I feel that the singer got dumped by his college girlfriend and started a band. It's too wimpy for me, but I like music that makes me question if my speakers are blown or if my needle needs to be replaced.

—Wanda Sprag (Bifocal Media)

GRABBIES, THE: *I Wanna Be Blind: 7"*

Punk as Hate from Italy via San Francisco that's full of relentless dumb-brute energy that chases its own tail around and around in the most beautifully idiotic way. Sort of a lo-fi version of the Rocking Dildos. Shlocky, fast 'tard punk with racing guitars and an indecipherable vocalist who sounds like a tiny, infuriated Popeye impaled on a fondue fork, all on lovely dead-fingernail grey vinyl. I think I love this band. —Aphid Peewit (Proud to be Idiot)

HALLOMASS: self-titled: CD-EP

Taking into account the band name, the face paint, and a song title lifted from a horror novel, this screamed "Misfits clone," but they weren't, surprisingly. Their vaguely poppy garage demo of punk-cum-college sound falls flatter than one would hope, but they nevertheless get an A+ for not blindly worshipping at the altar of Danzig. —Jimmy Alvarado (OBZ)

HEARTBREAK ENGINES: *Good Drinks, Good Butts, Good Fellows: CD*

Rockabilly for guys who strike a chord with CD titles that may be interpreted as a calling to being homosexual but too macho to believe it or people who really dig Tiger Army and the Nekromantix. —Donofthedeath (I Used to Fuck People like You in Prison)

HIGH TONE SON OF A BITCH: *Better You Than Me: CD-EP*

This is quite possibly the worst metal album since *Heavy Metal Thunder* by Saxon. —Not Josh (Unknown Controller)

HORROR POPS: *Hell Yeah: CD*

This sucks in ways I can't even begin to get into. Suffice it to say that this is the psychobilly equivalent of the kid-die-punk swill you hear on the radio, with a dash of ska thrown in to make it all the more accessible. About as threatening and edgy as a No Doubt record. —Jimmy Alvarado (Hellcat)

HUKEDICHT: *United Horror of Rock N' Roll: CD*

It's sitting at the tip of my tongue of what band this reminds me of. It just eludes me like a job I actually enjoy. Well, I can tell you one thing: this is some kick ass garage punk from Switzerland. They bang with conviction while they carry out playing some fine melodies. They also speed things up at points to make you feel like you

are flying down the road ignoring all caution. I thought this was going to be another horror rock band mimicking the Misfits. Putting them up against the modern day Misfits, these guys would embarrass them into quitting music. They have the knack of writing a catchy tune. Included in the packaging is a thin piece of steel to make having this package sent to you cost more in postage. That is sure nice of them! —Donofthedeath (Earforce)

HUNTINGTONS: self-titled: CD

What we have here, folks, is middle of the road pop punk music that owes its existence to The Ramones first and foremost. Besides that, didn't The Queers already do this? The Mr. T. Experience? These bands are a dime a dozen these days. Can you hear that change clanging in my pocket? Probably not since I cut a hole in it and let 'em all spill out all over the ground. I've got no use for music like this, maybe you do. Feel free to pick up that dime on the ground. —Greg Barbera (Fastmusic)

INDEPENDENTS, THE: *Full Moon Arise: CD*

Misfits clone band #3,428,137. This one incorporates ska into the opening track. —Jimmy Alvarado (Fast Music)

INSTANT AGONY: *Not My Religion: 7"*

These lads hail from the UK and this is on Punk Core records. So what you're getting this time is a three-song 7" that reminds me a lot of GBH's early-to-mid period records. Not a bad release at all. If you're a fan of Punk Core, definitely get this 'cause you won't be disappointed. —Mike Beer (Punk Core)

INTELLIGENCE, THE: *Boredom and Terror: CD*

Arty, lo-fi synth noise with programmed drums, unleashed from the mind of the A-Frames' drummer. The whole thing has the vibe of a tape you might make in your bedroom and give to all your friends for a laugh. Interesting racket here, but I doubt it would get a second listen. —Jimmy Alvarado (Omnibus)

J'AUROIS VOULU: *Sans Trahir: LP*

Another French band comes my way this month. This, like Charge 69, is good solid punk rock with lots of melody. There isn't too much more to say. Perhaps the fact that there are fifteen tracks would interest you. Or maybe the fact that the lyrics are good and meaningful will interest you. Regardless of those other things if you like good melodic punk sung with heart you will like this. —Mike Beer (Dirty Faces)

JEFF OTT:
Will Work for Diapers: 2X CD
Remember Crimphrine? Remember how Jeff Ott's voice sounded really gruff and scratchy? Forget it. Now he

sounds like David Brenner. I can't even begin to fathom why someone thought it would be a good idea to release this.

—Not Josh (Sub City)

JUST A FIRE: *Light Up: CD*
All I have to say is they sound like a modern, garage version of the Police. —Donofthedeath (Asian Man)

KAOS: *Komplete Kaos: CD*
A collection of demos and rehearsal tracks from Johnny Stingray's post-Controllers outfit that, prior to this, only managed to release the *Product of a Sick Mind 7"* on What? Records back in the early 1980s. As evidenced here, these guys had the chops and the tunes to put out what would've been one hell of a classic album, yet never got the chance. Also included here is a pretty funny interview with the band from KPFF circa 1980 with El Duce making a phone-in appearance. A consistently good listen here and a nice retrospective of one of LA's more obscure bands. —Jimmy Alvarado (Artifix)

**KICKASS, THE:
*Death Metal is for Pussies: CD***
Breadwinner-style math metal that really rips for a little while, but I can only take so much of this sort of herky-jerk, especially with no vocals (though a trumpet provides a nice counterpoint to the endless chunk...-chunkachunk!, etc) . Maybe it's math jazz. Or jazz metal. Whatever. I would've preferred a single. —Cuss Baxter (Bifocal Media)

**KILL THE HIPPIES:
*Jerked Off by Strangers: 7"***
It's easy to be skeptical of a band with a name like "Kill the Hippies." Especially if the artwork features dicks in three separate places. But Fightin' Fun Bob of Cleveland, OH played this record for me before I had a chance to know the band's name or see the artwork, and the music snagged me before critic-mode kicked in. The first song, "Flags and Gas," is a hardcore political rant that reminded me of Harum Scarum, which is a good band to remind me of. The third song, "Deserter," reminded me of The Feederz, which is another good band to remind me of. The funny thing is, Harum Scarum and the Feederz have almost nothing in common, but the five songs on this Kill the Hippies seven inch meander through a list of punk and hardcore influences, all the while maintaining a pretty unique sound. This band must be big shit in a small scene, and everyone at their shows must be wondering why Kill the Hippies aren't huge by now. Bands this original usually don't get huge, but that shouldn't keep you from checking out their seven inch. —Sean (Kill the Hippies)

**KILL YOUR IDOLS/CRIME
IN STEREO: split CD-EP**
Kill Your Idols: The first song has a weird "Negative Approach plays later period Hüsker Dü" feel to it and a great metaphor for sliding down love's food

chain in the title, "XLII to UR90." The other two songs, one of which is a Sheer Terror cover, are pretty straightforward hardcore. Not bad at all. Crime in Stereo: Hardcore with a Jawbreaker undercurrent just doesn't sit right with these ears. A wee bit too emo for comfort. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.blackoutrecords.com)

**KILLER KLOWN:
*Evilution: CD***
Garage punk with Cramps overtones. Three chords of raunchy fun with cool organs sounds. If you like straight up rockin' punk with the horror imagery, these Italians might do it for you. —Donofthedeath (Scarey)

**LA MOTTA:
*Love California: CD-EP***
Loud, Marshall-overdriven pop. Singer sounds like Billy Corgan, which can't be a good thing in any circles. —Jimmy Alvarado (Boss Tuneage)

**LAST COLLAPSE:
*The Fallen: CD***
No sooner had I popped this in when my wife rushed in with a worried look on her face. "What's wrong?" she asked. "Nothing, why?" I responded. "Then how come you're listening to Armored Saint, and when did they start trying to play punk?" I gotta admit, she's often pretty dead on with her musical assessments and this is no exception. —Jimmy Alvarado (Embers)

**LAZY AMERICAN
WORKERS: *Surf Lake Erie: CD***
First thing that came to mind was the Dead Kennedys' record *In God We Trust, Inc.* That is the feel I got from this. This CD is much longer with fourteen songs. But the spirit of the latter LP and this CD is very similar to me. The lyrics are more tongue in cheek and personal as opposed to thought provoking. But the songs are energetic and have a happy sarcastic feel to them. Enjoyable. —Donofthedeath (Sin Klub)

**'LECTRIC CHAIRS:
*Sparkolounge: CD***
Vaguely punk bar rock. Guess I just ain't drunk enough to appreciate it. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dionysus)

**LIBIDO GRANDE:
*Wrecked: CD***
I listened to the whole thing and I was not happy. I would have much rather pulled tapeworms out of my cat's butt than have to sit through this again. Having to listen to the drum distort out because someone could not mix is irritating. —Donofthedeath (Failed Experiment)

**LIMP WRIST/
KNIFED: split 7" EP**
Limp Wrist: Assorted odds and sods here, including their tracks from the first *Histeria* comp, the cut from *Suburban Voice's No Sleep for Hardcore* comp and an unreleased gem, "Message to the **RAZORCAKE** 81

President,” all great tracks, all reminders of how much this band will be missed. Knifed: Really lame, uncreative music coupled with some kick ass lyrics. –Jimmy Alvarado (Rejected)

LINK:

The Kids Are Alright: CD

I don’t know why I’m such a sucker for any punk rock that comes from Japan, but I am. I’m willing to overlook hand claps (which this album has) and references to the Who in the album title, and I’m willing to only give a passing notice to the obvious Op Ivy/Green Day/Ramones influence, because no matter what barbs the critic within me wants to let loose, I can’t ignore the fact that these are fun songs. They have me bouncing around the room and smiling, and every time I play this album, I feel a little bit happier for having heard it. I could call this a guilty pleasure, but fuck that. It’s just a rockin’ album.

–Sean (Adeline)

**LITTLE KILLERS, THE:
self-titled: CD**

Straight ahead trash punk, with the “Devil Dogs channeling the Stooges” sound one would expect. Gotta hand it to ‘em, I found myself shaking a tail feather while this was on, so I guess they’re pretty darn good at what they do. –Jimmy Alvarado (Crypt)

LOWER CLASS BRATS: *The Clockwork Orange Singles: CD*

A quality street punk band from Austin, Texas, that appropriates imagery from the cult film *A Clockwork Orange*, the Lower Class Brats aren’t the most original louts on the block, but they do it as well as anyone and there’s a sense of conviction involved in the delivery. This CD culls tracks from the bands various EP’s, seven inches, and compilation tracks. Comes complete with a safety pin and a gob of spit (just kidding). For those of you who don’t require more than two chords and bottle of liquor to get you going, this here’s a Friday night record for you. Oi!

–Greg Barbera (Punk Core)

LURKERS: *26 Years: CD*

Catchy as hell sing-along punk similar in approach to contemporaries like Cock Sparrer and the Buzzcocks, with a dash of Ramones for color, from a band that’s pretty much stayed true to form for twenty-six years and still counting. How catchy, you ask? I dare you to give “Go Ahead Punk” a listen and not have it stick in your noggin for at least two weeks, popping up at the most inopportune moments. Considering how many of the older bands seem incapable of mustering the same level of enthusiasm for what they’re doing as when they were in their “prime,” it’s refreshing to hear a band this long in the tooth remain fully aware of what they’re on about.

–Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

**MASTERS OF THE
OBVIOUS: *Spiral Slouch: 7”***

This must be the product of genetic engineering. How else could these guys splice equal parts *Are We Not Men?*-era

Devo and the first Boys record? Bear with me on this: it’s weird and mentally skewed, but not so much that the result sounds purposefully disjointed, and it’s bouncy and poppy, but smart enough to keep the bubblegum instincts in check. Or maybe they’re just some dudes who like the Spits but know how to play their instruments, it’s hard to tell. –Not Josh (Shit Sandwich)

MEAN REDS:

Destination Imagination: CD

My big surprise of this go-round: the packaging on this is seriously hideous, so much so that I saved it until almost last to listen, expecting it to be wretched, but slap me with a beef tongue and call me cow supper. Eight (way too few) ditties of catchy soul punk (I keep wanting to call it that but I don’t know if it is that, or if that’s even a thing) that sounds like it ought to be on Swami and reminds me of how I felt when I listened to Nation of Ulysses. The singer’s got a highish voice that’s kind of like the Blood Brothers’ but yelling instead of screaming, and the music’s a little spastic and a lot bumpin, dynamic as recommended, and like a party in a box. Prepare to dance, alone or in pairs. –Cuss Baxter (True Love)

METEORS: *Psychobilly: CD*

Wow, I didn’t even know these guys were still around. As suggested by the title, they’re still doing the psychobilly thang, although they don’t sound anywhere near as frantic as I remember ‘em being back in the day. The mix here doesn’t help matters much, either, as it sounds like they recorded this in a big, empty hall. Lackluster and disappointing, to say the least. –Jimmy Alvarado (I Used to Fuck People Like You In Prison)

METHADONES, THE:

Career Objective: CD

Another release from the old pop punk dynasty! Here we have Dan Vapid’s latest effort, with all its Mass Giorgini production and pop punk yumminess. Decent pop punk, heavy on the rock end of things, no surprises here. This is Golden Grahams. –Maddy (Thick)

MINDS, THE:

Plastic Girls: CD

New wave is pretty hit-or-miss. This falls under the hit category. It’s catchy, rocking, and kinda retarded, although not as so-retarded-they-must-be-genius-es as the Spits. They’re a good band without having to hide behind a Yamaha Portasound or duct-taped striped shirts. Thumbs up. –Not Josh (Dirtnap)

MODERN DAY

URBAN BARBARIANS:

The Endless Retreat: CD

Another bassist/drummer duo. This one, strangely enough, sounds like a less musically proficient Stingers. –Jimmy Alvarado (www.sinkhole.net/pehome)

MUMMIES, THE:

Death by Unga Bunga!: CD

Budget Rock impresarios, The

Mummies, cull the most astonishing collective of lo-fi slop ever assembled on disc since, well, the last Mummies retrospective on Estrus. That platter was a two record anthology of almost everything the seminal San Francisco supergroup ever released, entitled *Runnin' on Empty Volumes One and Two*. So why buy this record? Well, shithead, the twenty-two tracks of *Unga Bunga* includes a secret track never before released until now. That should be enough to get your sweaty buns off the Playstation and straight into the local punk rock record shoppe of your choice. The Mummies left an indelible impression on the minds of youth back in their heyday of the early-to mid- 1990s. These four bandaged sonic marauders had equal parts Boris Karloff and The Shaggs to thank for their shameless appearance and beyond-terrible-yet-genius sound. Their short-lived yet prolific career spanned all the territories of indie rock labels of the time, including Estrus, Sympathy For The Record Industry, Rekkids, Planet Pimp, Telstar, SubPop, Hangman and Pin-Up – not to mention the countless bootlegs that have served no purpose other than to spread the legend and make enterprising shysters rich. Larry, Trent, Russell, and Maz donned their smelly bandages and entertained the anti-kool garage rock scenesters of the time (yes, I feel old as I write this, you whippersnappers). You can still find Russell and Maz in the Phantom Surfers. Russell is also in the fabulous Bobbyteens featuring Miss

Tina and Miss Danielle of the Trashwomen, another pivotal band in the SF garage rock scene. Actually, Russell is in a whole bunch of bands like The Countbackwards and The Maybellines – he's probably going to audition for your project as we speak. If you're just listening to Jet, The Hives, or whatever flavor of the month "garage" band is hip this minute – please do yourself a favor and buy this record. Find out where people like Jack White got the balls to get where he is now – in the arms of Renee Zellwegger with original copies of Mummies records. –Miss Namella J. Kim (Estrus)

MUMMIES:

Death By Unga Bunga: CD

Another name here that brings back memories. Back in the days when I was writing bad things about *Flipside* for *Pure Filth* magazine and playing in a dress with OBS, these boys were one of only three bands outside of the East LA scene we called home that made it to our record players with any frequency. A loose alliance was forged between us and these denizens of the Gay Bay, resulting in much coverage for them in *Pure Filth*, a Fingers 45 for us (OBS also recorded two tracks for that 45, which was originally supposed to be a split before Trent rightly decided that the OBS tracks blew sheep) and gigs aplenty throughout California for all involved. There was a strict "no CD releases" policy in force for all of us back then (before OBS [after I was kicked out, I must add] was the first to

buckle under with Nemesis releasing CD copies of our only release), and it seems that time has led the Mummies to rethink that position. While I can understand the need to reissue this stuff, much of which was outta print and music this good needs to remain readily available, I don't quite understand the decision to finally make it available to the teeming masses of jerk offs who've never heard of a "record player," much less own one. Can't be for the "improved sound quality" one supposedly gains with CDs, 'cause the sound quality here still sucks shit, just as it should. Maybe they just saw how much OBS made by going the "sellout" route and wanted in on the action. Who knows? Who fuckin' cares? This shit is out again and if you've got half a brain, you already have a copy. One last thing, seeing as Trent was kind enough to publicly mention a decade ago that I was, indeed, a hippie who lived in a tent in back of the Shamrock on Hollywood Boulevard, I just want to take this opportunity to wish him well and tell him that I hope the money generated from this release will allow him to get that sex change operation that he has longed for lo these many years and that, maybe, he'll finally be able to indulge in his habit of polishing hippie pole as the woman he always dreamed of one day being. –Jimmy Alvarado (Estrus)

NAKED AGGRESSION: *The Gut Wrenching Machine: CD*

There are a few bands through the

years that I have read about their history, their comings and goings and never listened to a single song by them. This is one of those bands. There a lot of people out there who are better qualified and informed about this band. All I can tell you is that they were a relevant punk band out of the LA scene during the late '90s. I still see kids today with their patches on. That's saying something. History that I read off of this disc and elsewhere is that this is the demo recording of their last album of the same name. The previous album was put out by a label that gave them no promotion or support. The band was ready to embark on tour to support said record and guitarist Phil Schomel died from an asthma attack. Singer and wife Kirsten Patches was devastated and band broke up. If I'm correct, Kirsten moved to the east coast and got a degree, started teaching and eventually moved back to LA. She regained her strength and passion for music and started a new band called Meet the Virus. Coincidentally, the guitarist for Meet the Virus had done the demo recording of this CD. I'm assuming since the original album was hard to obtain and Meet the Virus is currently touring as Naked Aggression, they are paying tribute to Phil Schomel and giving a new generation a chance to hear their music. Since I am a newbee to their music, I am pretty impressed by what I'm hearing. Kirsten is a strong vocalist who seems to be able channel her energy into the songs. The songs themselves are aggressive and raw but

have an underlying melody that keeps things interesting. I'm curious to hear the other version to see how the extra production affects the music. I guess I'm playing catch up once again with another band. –Donofthedeat (Rodent Popsicle)

NAUSEA: *Who Would Surrender*: CD-EP

Doom-laden grind/crust noise with political lyrics, sorta like Brujeria covering Discharge. Strong, shit-kicking tuneage here, although the cookie monster vocals started wearing thin towards the end. –Jimmy Alvarado (Nausea_la@msn.com)

NEINS, THE: *self-titled*: CD

Very early-'80s sounding punk rock in a "100 Flowers plays '60s trash" sorta way. Quite possibly the worst version of "One Ugly Child" I've heard to date is included here.

–Jimmy Alvarado (No address)

NEUROTIC SWINGERS: *Art Rats*: CD

Derivative punk rock from the school of '77 influence, with embarrassingly bad English lyrics. Bet this would've been heaps better if they'd only stuck to their native language. Looks like they went to great lengths to emulate the Voidoids on the cover pics, too.

–Jimmy Alvarado (Lollipop)

NO DECENCY:

***This is the Reason*: CD**

It'd be very easy for me to simply slag

this off on the myriad things I don't like about it, chiefly the flat sound mix resulting in drowned out guitars and drums that sound like cardboard boxes, not to mention the dashes of emo and pop punk embedded in the tunes themselves, but it's damn hard not to appreciate the obvious effort the band has put into the music they crank out. Not merely some Color-Forms equivalent of the punk success formula here, some thought went into the structure of the songs, and the lyrics are articulate and not excessively whiny. This says nothing of the fact that, as far as execution is concerned, these guys are ON IT, switching tempos and stopping on a dime with ease. So this breaks down to a matter of personal taste; this ain't my cup of tea, but I can definitely appreciate the work they've put in and can see them rightfully garnering oodles of fans. –Jimmy Alvarado (Destroy All)

NO-GOODS, THE: *I Wanna Change*: 7"

Jangly, Rickenbacker-heavy '60s rock with a singer whose voice is a bit more gruff than is good for the songs. –Jimmy Alvarado (High School Refuse)

OCTOBER ALLIED: *self-titled*: CD

Lo-fi punk rock with heavy surf guitar that better suits the bar or coffee house than me enduring it coming out of my speakers. –Donofthedeat (Phony)

PARIAH CASTE:

***Sissyphean Slope + 2*: CD-EP**

Fitting band name 'cause, playing the emo crap that they do, they belong in a pariah caste. –Jimmy Alvarado (Not Bad)

PARK: *It Won't Snow*

***Where You Are Going*: CD**

I'm losing my mind with all these emo bands. I'm know I'm old if this is what the kids like. –Donofthedeat (Lobster)

PEACH FUZZ:

***About A Bird*: CD**

Pop that takes its cues from the mid-'60s. Lotsa stylistic explorations and hell a strong songwriting keep things interesting. –Jimmy Alvarado (Dionysus)

PHANTOM LIMBS:

***Displacement*: CD**

I may have said it before, but if Hell has an amusement park, these guys hafta be responsible for the merry-go-round music. Claustrophobic, gloomy, intense, and oddly catchy these boys are, infusing their tunes with just enough art to throw things outta whack but not so much that it dilutes the rock. Reminds me of all the things I love about punk and have kept me listening to it for twenty-four years. –Jimmy Alvarado

(Alternative Tentacles)

PIPEDOWN:

***Mental Weaponry*: CD**

I still have a copy of their *Enemies of Progress* CD that I reviewed awhile ago. Let's see what I notice here after slapping this puppy into the player. First off, a maturity is showing in their song writing. The songs are so much stronger than their previous release. Kind of like modern day AFI meets the Refused in how they are approaching their musicianship. A lot of riffing, changes and vocal interplay while still maintaining a melody is what's going on here. It's hard to believe they recorded in the same studio as their previous release because the production is so much stronger here. I think this one is going into the CD changer in the car now. I like what I'm hearing. –Donofthedeat (A-F)

POPULAR SHAPES, THE/INTELLIGENCE, THE: *split 7"*

The Popular Shapes sound kind of like the Minutemen, and when I say that they sound like the Minutemen, I mean that they sound like the parts of the songs that were really disjointed. The main difference between the Minutemen and the Popular Shapes is that no matter how noisy and abrasive the Minutemen got, all you had to do was wait a few seconds for everything to mesh together and they would rule your school. The Intelligence played in the background while I ate pizza. –Not Josh (Dirtnap)

POPULAR SHAPES:

Bikini Style: CD

I love The Fall. I love Wire. And I love The Popular Shapes. When I see The Popular Shapes live, I scream with delight and they have motivated me to leave the house more times than I would want to count. I secretly question the taste of my friends who don't like them. *Bikini Style* captures the live excitement and adds to it, creating a record that might even make some non-fans into converts. I know that people will say it's No Wave or Art Rock, and The Popular Shapes might take from those genres, but the results are like tossing it into a concrete mixer and getting pure magic. Highly recommended. —Wanda Sprag (On/On Switch)

PRACTICE:

Fight Back: 7"

My feelings on Japanese punk rock summed up in two words? Woo hoo. Snuffy Smile Records, in particular, is practically flawless, and this is no exception. Practice is along the lines as the Tim Version, with the tunelessly chaotic melodies and the tighter-than-fish-pussy instrumental interlock. The vocals sound a lot like their Japanese forebears Screaming Fat Rat, and it may in fact be the same guy. If you can find this record, or any Snuffy Smile release, buy it on sight. —Not Josh (Snuffy Smile)

PRIMATE 5, THE:

1-2-3-4-5-6-7-Ape!: CD

I really like *Go Metric!* zine and I've found that my tastes in music and *Go Metric!* editor Mike Faloon's taste in music is very, very similar. On top of that, Mike has taken it upon himself to allegedly put out the missing Weird Lovemakers album (I say allegedly because everything that has anything to do with the Weird Lovemakers is alleged at this point), and that's my all-time favorite missing album. So it would just make sense that I'd go ape (get it?) over The Primate 5. They play a mix of surf and garage music — garage like '60s throwback rock'n'roll, not garage like The Hives, which is really just '90s style rock'n'roll — that sometimes has vocals (which are a good touch) and sometimes has lyrics (which are generally funny, especially in "Greenwood House of Mystery" and "Drinkin' Bird"), but the music in and of itself is enough to keep this album interesting. This CD also comes with a pretty big insert about the band, but I lost the insert before I could read it, so, as a reviewer, I'm left with only the music to comment on. The songs are organ backed and bounce like something out of a Frankie Avalon/Annette Funicello

movie. Or not exactly like that, but like I always imagined a remake of those old Frankie Avalon/Annette Funicello movies would be like if they had real surfers and real greasers and punk rockers in them. I've spent a lot of time stoned, watching those old movies. Well, okay, I spent two hours stoned one time, watching one of those old movies, but it was a vivid two hours and I came up with the perfect remake movie in my head, and now I know that The Primate 5 would be the perfect band to play it. If that makes any sense to anyone. —Sean (Go Metric!)

PULSES, THE:

Little Brothers: CD

Weird. Not artsy enough to dismiss as pretentious crap, too complicated to fully rock, and too caught up in writing songs to remember stuff like hooks and such. I don't get it, but then again, I'd rather listen to the Motards than the Beatles, so there's your grain of salt. —Not Josh (Dirtnap)

PURPLE HEARTS:

Beat That!: CD

A reissue of the first album by one of the UK's premier '70s mod outfits, long out of print and now making it to CD some twenty-three years after its initial release. Unlike the bands that comprised the US "paisley underground," the Purple Hearts, like the Jam, have a more '60s-channeled-through-punk sound, meaning that, while the songwriting shows a strong '60s influence, the actual sound of the band is considerably more modern, eschewing stereotypical trappings like Gretsch 12-strings and faux sitar solos for a more solid guitar attack. Included are informative liner notes on the band's rise and inevitable fall, plus assorted singles and B-sides. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

PURRS, THE:

self-titled: CD

In some ways, this is exactly the type of album you would expect from a label called "Garage Pop," and songs with titles like "Got Kissed" and "Birthday Party" sound pretty much like you'd expect them to. It's female-fronted (the band is seventy-five percent female), and it owes a lot to Nikki and the Corvettes, the Go-Gos (or at least Jane Wiedlin), and Holly Golightly. There's even a song that asks the age-old question, "Why can't I have two boyfriends?" I can't answer that one, but I can say that The Purrs do have enough pop to keep me singing along, and enough of an edge to keep me interested. They haven't quite mastered this type of rock'n'roll the way the Gore Girls have, but this is still a solid album. —Sean (Garage Pop)

QUEER WÜLF: 7"

Fuck yeah, what a good record. If you're looking for a new favorite band that doesn't fit into any pre-existing punk rock niche, and you often find yourself soaking your undies to the sound of bands like the Grabass Charlestons and the Dead Things, look no further. You can almost smell the stale beer and sweat while this record is playing. —Not Josh (This Here)

RADIO ONE: demo: CD

This is a nine-song demo of power punk. Reminds me a lot of the US Bombs recent material. Good punk songs with lots of hooks and melodies. It's well done and there's even a reggae tune at the end for you. Yes, they have been influenced by the Clash and US Bombs, but who cares? That's not bad and this band makes good music, which is what counts at the end of the day. If I'm not mistaken, these guys are from Southern California, too. All in all, a good demo. Check their website to see how you can get your copy and check 'em out if they play your town. —Mike Beer (Radio One)

REAGAN NATIONAL

CRASH DIET:

Sucktastic: CD

Of the eight tracks here, only "White Man (Remix)" didn't sound like a variation on the bad college punk that comprise the other tracks. "Sucktastic," indeed. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rooster Crow)

REVOLVERS, THE:

End Of Apathy: CD

The Revolvers straddle a line between The Boys and The Supersuckers with surprisingly good results. It's pretty amazing how well bands from Europe can take American rock and turn it on its ear. Melodic punk, with a huge rock sound, but they do start to lose some steam three-quarters of the way in. —Wanda Sprag (I Used To Fuck People Like You In Prison)

RICKSHAW:

Sonic Overload: CD

Big sound Scandinavian rock bands are dime-a-dozen nowadays. Time to find another genre to run into the fucking ground, kids. —Jimmy Alvarado (Devil Doll)

RIPCORDZ: *What if They Held a Revolution and Nobody Came?: CD*

These guys are punk as fuck and play fifteen tracks of good punk rock. The songs go from fast to slow to mid-paced, and you've got your singalongs in here, too. It's all good stuff. They hail from Montreal, Quebec and have been around for over ten years. The lyrics cover a wide variety of topics. This is a solid release and I

must also say the packaging is good. From all the pictures in this CD, the crowd at their shows looks like they are having one hell of a time. Get this CD and you will too. –Mike Beer (Mayday Records)

**RIVERDALES:
*Phase Three: CD***

I never really bought all the claims that Screeching Weasel sounded like the Ramones. Sure, there were some basic similarities in the guitars and drums, but there were also some glaring differences: Ben's singing style was snotty (he sounded more like Fat Mike than Joey Ramone), Dan Panic had a way of filling in empty spaces in the song with some genuinely amazing drumming, and Jughead's guitar was way too happy to get confused with Johnny Ramone's. When Screeching Weasel broke up for the first (or second, or third, I never could keep track) time, Ben took his rhythm section with him and formed The Riverdales. They eliminated Jughead's guitar and thus started sounding more like the Ramones. It seemed to be the point. Still, Ben's singing was snotty and Dan Panic's drumming was amazing. Then, we had some reunions and breakups of the Riverdales/Screeching Weasel combinations, some newcomers adding different wrinkles, some awesome albums and some albums we should all forget about (cough-cough-*Emo*-cough-cough), and now we're back to a broken-up Screeching Weasel and a reformed Riverdales, minus Dan Panic, plus Dan Lumley on drums. And now, they really sound like the Ramones. I mean, they *really* sound like the Ramones. Like, I could be playing this album and you could walk into the room and get a weird look on your face for a solid five minutes as you try to figure out which Ramones album this is, yet not ask me which Ramones album this is lest you be caught not knowing all the Ramones albums instantly upon walking into a room. Ben's singing has lost the snottiness, he's deepened his voice, and he now sounds a lot like Joey. Dan Lumley doesn't have the fills that Dan Panic had (damn, do I miss that Dan Panic drumming), and the bass for Screeching Weasel/Riverdales always sounded like the Ramones. So now they've finally gotten there. I'll say it again, they really sound like the Ramones. But, of course, this begs the question: if you want to listen to something that sounds this much like the Ramones, why not just play a Ramones album? I'm not sure that I have the answer to that one. But I do keep playing this Riverdales album, even if I'm not sure why. –Sean (145 Records)

**ROCKBOTTOM:
*Throw Away: CD***

If you wanted to hear four ordinary looking Japanese guys play a mixture of Cheap Trick and Kiss meets AC/DC, this is your potion for headbanging fun. If you are a drummer, this is even a bigger boner. The guy is a banger who is tech and wild at the same time. The

songs are infectious and also on the border of being cliché. Songs sung in English with the strong accent off Japanese. Interesting. –Donofthedeath (Target Earth)

**ROCKET FROM
THE TOMBS:
*Rocket Redux: CD-EP***

Three tracks ("Sonic Reducer," "Amphetamine," and "Muckraker," respectively) from a forthcoming full-length release of new recordings from this legendary band, apparently their first ever proper "studio" effort. I'll let you know more as soon as the full-length comes out. –Jimmy Alvarado (Smog Veil)

**ROCKET FROM
THE TOMBS:
*Rocket Redux: CD-EP***

Produced and recorded by Richard Lloyd of Television! Need I say more? Hey, even The Stooges got back together, so why not RFTT? If there was a Cleveland band responsible for spawning one worthy act after another (Pere Ubu and The Dead Boys), RTFF should take the credit, but they can't hold a candle to glory of The Dead Boys. No sir. I know I'm getting a lot of flack for this because all you record collector types are immediately going to poo poo what I just said. Well, fuck you. I think The Pagans rule, anyways. –Miss Namella J. Kim (Smog Veil)

**RUNNAMUCKS:
*Of a Different Breed: CD***

Here's the facts: this band who I am only vaguely familiar with fucking rocks (and thrashes) like a slightly better recorded Jerry's Kids, who happen to be one of my all-time favorite hardcore bands. There's werewolves on the cover, and I was too lazy to check the lyrics, but it's highly possible that there are some werewolf songs as well. That's just icing on the cake, though. When bands rip it up as much these guys, they don't even need werewolf songs to rope me in. –Not Josh (Six Weeks)

**SCOTCHGREENS:
*O.C.6.16.02: CD***

Live country/roots-punk like Flogging Molly tearing a jig with the Supersuckers. Pretty good sound. Perhaps you will dance your own dance. –Cuss Baxter (Accident Prone)

**SCRAPS AND HEART
ATTACKS: *Still Sick: CD***

Pissed-off hardcore with that big Marshall sound. Surprisingly stronger than expected. –Jimmy Alvarado (Triple Crown)

SELECTER: *Real to Reel: CD*

A mixed bag here. When they stick to the ska-oriented originals, one can still hear the creative spark that made them such hot shit back during the height of the original two-tone thang. Their covers of reggae standards like "Stepping Razor" and "Armageddon Time," however, pale in comparison to the originals and come off here as nothing more

than space fillers and time killers. Maybe I was expecting more than I should have, but when we're talking about a band with as strong a rep as the Selector has, it's kind of hard not to. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

SGT. 6 ASSAULT:
self-titled: 7"

"True drug-addled, hate-inspired, precision punk rock in the form of one minute tunes." That's what their label says about this record and even though the tunes were a little over one minute, that's a good description for this. It's a two-song punk rock single with all the trimmings. If you like fast and furious punk, here you go. Don't mind that the band has long since split. The music will still remain the same: fast and rockin'. Well done and put out by Rapid Pulse, who are known for mainly doing 7"s of their favorite bands. —Mike Beer (Rapid Pulse)

SGT. 6 ASSAULT:
self-titled: 7"

Two short blasts, of lean, mean punk rock, the first being an original clocking in at 1:12 and the second a cover of Slaughter and the Dogs' "The Bitch" that ain't much longer. Good stuff. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rapid Pulse)

SHARK PANTS:
Porno Snakehead: CD

I saw Shark Pants play in Torrance last year. They were sandwiched between two of my favorite bands: the Knockout Pills and Toys That Kill. Much to my surprise, Shark Pants stole the show. No disrespect to the Knockout Pills and Toys That Kill; they were both awesome, but I expected them to be awesome. I didn't expect anything out of Shark Pants and they blew me away. It was a solid wall of sound that carried with it all of what I love about punk rock from Tucson: the noisy insanity of The Blacks, the trashy humor of the Weird Lovemakers, sneaky melodies like the Knockout Pills. Beyond all of this, Shark Pants seemed to simultaneously explode and keep shit tight as hell. That night in Torrance still ranks among my all-time favorite shows. I think of it so fondly that any Shark Pants album would have a tough act to follow. For me to fully endorse *Porno Snakehead*, Shark Pants would have to take all the energy and rock from their live show and capture it into plastic. That's a pretty tough thing to ask of any band. Still, at first, it seemed as if Shark Pants were equal to the task. The first four songs explode out of the speakers like free beer and 2 AM promises. I thought we had a classic in the making. Then, "Later Alligator" takes its turn as the fifth song on the album, and, through some inexplicable force of nature, someone in Shark Pants starts screaming like Robert Plant "Baby, baby, baby (keep repeating)." And it bummed me out so much that I almost couldn't listen to the next song. In fact, I get so mad every time I hear those baby, baby, babies that I can't seem to enjoy the last four songs, though they do have all

the rock I'd hoped for. In fact, this album is about seven baby, baby, babies from being perfect. But seven baby, baby, babies is a lot, especially when they're right in the goddamn middle of everything, goddamn it. I think I'm just gonna burn the first four songs and the last four songs onto a CD of my own and start telling people that I have the elusive Shark Pants demo and that it's way better than *Porno Snakehead*. —Sean (Recess)

SHARP KNIFE/
QUEER WÜLF: split LP

Both of these bands are fucking great. They both have bits and pieces of Fleshes and the Thumbs coupled with a fine tradition of bands that might not be revolutionizing rock and roll or anything, but will sure as hell rock your living room like their lives depend on it. Both of them play catchy, scruffy, sweat-drenched punk rock, which is just the way this reviewer likes it. This is the perfect excuse for buying a record player. —Not Josh (This Here)

SHUDDER TO THINK:

Curses, Spells,
Voodoo, Mooses: CD

A reissue of this long-running DC band's first album, long out of print and making its debut on CD. Originally released in 1988 on Sammich, this is very much a product of the time and place from which it came, in that it is intelligent pop with punk influences coming from the same primordial soup that spawned emo (a term I use in reference to the post-DC hardcore sound and not the insipid drivel that goes by that name these days), creative and inspired in both delivery and structure. Also includes the band's first 7" and an unreleased track. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dischord)

SLANDERIN, THE:
A Rhumba of Rattlesnakes,
a Murder of Crows: CD

This is one very fucking cool CD. The Slanderin don't do anything unique by any means. Their lyrics are horror themed like The Misfits, their music is mostly rockabilly like Reverend Horton Heat (even got the stand up bass) and the vocals seem a lot like Lemmy is singing a lot of them (my friend Darby gave me an even better description: TSOL meets Dick Dale meets The Misfits). Their songs vary a bit from surf guitar to straight up rockabilly to even a waltz (which is one of the best songs on the CD). If you are a fan of this type of music, you will no doubt enjoy The Slanderin. I have worn out this CD already and am looking forward to their next one. —Toby (Split 7)

SMOGTOWN:
Tales of Gross Pollution: CD

Yes! I love Smogtown! A Southern California retro explosion! The sort of thing that would not be out of place on the *Beach Blvd.* compilation (for the record, the greatest comp of all time!). And that's saying a lot! Totally crazed beach punk '80s new wave hardcore

insanity! This CD puts together nineteen early recordings — great stuff! But if you haven't heard 'em yet, buy this AND their album *Domestic ViolenceLand*. If you don't like it, you must not like punk! And if you do like 'em, it's time to put a gun to your head, 'cause they just broke up! This is Corn Pops! —Maddy (Disaster)

SMOGTOWN:

Tales of Gross Pollution: CD

You know what? Fuck Smogtown. Do they not know how fucking hard it is to simply FIND a favorite band these days, let alone flat-out adore every release said favorite band manages to release? This has been the case for notoriously picky-ass me, who has not gone more than a few days without listening to something by them since having *Beach City Butchers* blasted into my ears while taking a trip in the Retoddmobile not long after its release. I even became a "Smog City Waver," the first time I've EVER come close to belonging to anything even remotely resembling a fan club (thanks Todd, by the way). Smogtown was the ultimate statement of "real" Southern California at the turn of the millenium, a final "fuck you" to the limp joke that the '90s turned out to be and a rousing "where's the fucking party, asshole?" welcome to the zero years we currently find ourselves in, a reaffirmation to those of us who've been around longer than Green Day has existed that the good shit was still alive and kicking and still not making radio waves. With two albums, a 10-inch and a slew of singles and comp tracks, these guys are responsible for ramming some truly crucial "we just don't give a fuck" punk rock noise up the ass of an American punk underground that had apparently forgotten that it was supposed to be a threat to the cultural mainstream and not a breeding ground to tomorrow's boy band heroes. And now they've fucked off and broken up. Yeah, they were kind enough to toss us this helping of early demos on their way out the fuckin' door, and it is some righteous shit, but it just ain't the same knowing that, aside from a rumored final album due from TKO, this is all there's gonna be. They're history now, the fucking bastards, and we are all the worse off for it. In emulation of Money's sign-off on their obit a couple of issues back, I remain... —Jimmy "Smog City Waver #41" Alvarado (Disaster)

SOILED DOVES:

Soiled Life: CD

The collages in the booklet were neat. I pinned it to the wall next to the disc, which got embedded there when I chucked it across the room in disgust. —Jimmy Alvarado (GSL)

SPEEDEALER:

Burned Alive: CD

Gotta admit that I've pretty much loathed everything I've ever heard from this label, but I also gotta admit that this is one motherfucker of a live album from one motherfucker of a

band. You get seventeen tracks of high-energy, skull-crushing rock'n'roll spanning their entire career, recorded on Fourth of July 2003 at CBGB. For the uninitiated, imagine Negative Approach had they been more influenced by Ted Nugent, who had in turn been more influenced by Slayer. This is some seriously brutal, seriously good shit that'll be worth the price of all the aspirin you're gonna be ingesting by the time the last song ends. —Jimmy Alvarado (Radical)

SPIDERS, THE:

Glitzkrieg: CD

"Shitzkrieg," more likely. Rotten thru and thru with the marginally camouflaged ick of Rock Orthodoxy. Is there even one good band in Austin? BEST SONG: i actually like "The Invasion" quite a bit; then again, i like that Lenny Kravitz song they play over the PA at basketball games as well. BEST SONG TITLE: "Alive with Pleasure" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: On the insert photograph, drummer Gary First is actually second from the left. —Rev. Nørb (Acetate)

SPITS, THE:

self-titled: CD

Apparently these guys are going the Peter Gabriel route by putting out a bunch of self-titled albums on different labels. As for the music, imagine the Ramones with an abundance of tongue-in-cheek idiocy and a thrift store key-board. This album, their third, isn't as immediately catchy as the last one (the one with the retard in the wheelchair on the cover), but when it comes to the Spits, who really has time to split hairs? —Not Josh (Dirtnap)

SPREADEAGLE:

self-titled: CD

Nominally punky headbanger drug dealer rock that should appeal to those who always felt the Candy Snatchers were cheating because they did have the one good song, and i'd feel a lot worse about raining on the whole parade of ENERGY and VOLUME if the last noise this disc emitted was something other than the heavy metal kissin' cousin of the "Hotel California" lead that it is. Would be an all right purchase value if it came with a free pizza and a blowjob, but this does not appear the case (at least with my review copy). BEST SONG: "Flyin' High" WORST SONG TITLE: 13-way tie between "Ready to Bleed" "Bad Motherfucker" "Now Could Be Never" "8 Ball" "Roadwarrior" "Fury" "Flyin' High" "Blackout" "Just That Easy" "Blood, Coke & Sodomy" "Don't Leave Anything" "Full Time Loser" and "Dead of Night." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: The *Rock and Roll Over* album flat depicted on the cover behind the girl with the big boobs and plentiful tattoos is hung in such a fashion that Peter Criss' head is at the top. I'm not sure what that means. Possibly "Paul Is Dead." —Rev. Nørb (Nerve)

STAGGERS, THE:
One Heartbeat
Away From Hell: CD

Seeing as some of the especially thick out there have yet to grasp the concept, let me repeat it one more time: There was only one Misfits, and they broke up in 1983, the minute Glenn “The Ego” Danzig decided to throw in the towel. They were a helluva good band and no one since has come close, and it is highly unlikely that anyone ever will. Love ‘em and appreciate the fine tunes they managed to leave behind, but for chrissakes, let ‘em die already and quit pissing on their legacy. To the Stagers’ credit, they’re a little more conscious of Glenn’s country influence than the average band of punters, but that doesn’t mean they suck any less. –Jimmy Alvarado (Haunted Town)

STAKEOUT, THE:
On the Run: CD

Pretty rippin’ hardcore out of Finland here. It’s a little different from most of the other Finnish hardcore bands I’ve heard, mostly because it’s not all crusty and Cookie Monstery. It sounds like a better recorded, not-quite-as-annihilating DS-13, and the only song that sucks is the one that’s all slow and metal, including space echo vocals. –Not Josh (Deranged)

STARLITS, THE: CD

Four CD players in the house (five if you count the DVD, which I also tried) and not a one will play this three-track thinger from Florida. Three girls, one boy, two guitars, leather jackets. Sleeve photo looks like three high-school kids and one of the kids’ really hot mom. They should get in touch with whoever burned the CDs for em and spit on his face or something. –Cuss Baxter (Peephole)

STICKS AND STONES:
The Strife and Times: 2X CD

The discography of a Jersey punk band that came from the same scene as the Bouncing Souls and Lifetime. The liner notes are phenomenal and the lyrics are really good, but their brand of post-hardcore melodic rock just doesn’t move me much. These are obviously some intelligent, talented guys at work here, but it just ain’t my cup of tea. –Jimmy Alvarado (Chunkasaah)

STONEAGE HEARTS, THE:
Suzie b/w Shoot My Mouth Off & The Bitter Thoughts of Little Jane: 7”

Nuggets garage punque from Down Under; “Suzie” is a compelling enough a-side – sounding not unlike a cross between what I just said it sounded like and something that might’ve been rendered by one of those second-tier Limey mod bands circa 79/80 (meaning the Purple Hearts or the Chords [the “first tier” consisting of primarily The Jam and not much else]) – that, the first time I heard it (on WUSB’s excellent “Tuesday Night Rock & Roll Dance Party” show), struck me as wor-

thy enough that I found it necessary to jot down band name and song title and do a Google search in order to track it down. Like most of the records I own by Australian bands, the music sounds markedly more solid and together than one would expect it would be were it rendered by American counterparts of the same ilk; also, like most of the songs on the records I own by Australian bands, the song seems like it’s lacking like one crucial little Song Thingie – one errant additional scrap of modest genius – that, were it present, would likely put the tune over the top (i.e., have me hopping around like Kangaroo Jack™ or similar comedic marsupial local color). I mean, there is a long and storied history of bands from the Antipodes rocking at a High Rock Level, but there’s also an almost-as-long history of said bands very rarely contending for a World Heavyweight Title, simply because they lack a metaphorical bell here and a metaphorical whistle there – metaphorical bells and whistles that their Northern Hemispherical contemporaries would have implemented out of necessity merely to survive their inability to rock so staunchly as their Southern Hemispherical cousins. Or something. “Shoot My Mouth Off” is a 6/8 time neo-ballad that doesn’t fare quite as well; “The Bitter Thoughts of Little Jane” is a cover one might recall as being on the *Nuggets* Vol. 2 box set and originally recorded by Timon (presumably right before his million-selling reunion concert in the park with Pumbaa). **BEST SONG:** “Suzie” **BEST SONG TITLE:** “The Bitter Thoughts of Little Jane” **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** The back cover song titles are in a font called “Gilligan’s Island,” for obvious reasons. –Rev. Nørb (Butterfly)

STREET DOGS:
Savin Hill: CD

Fifteen tracks of solid street punk songs. These songs have a lot of changes and variety and were well done. I don’t know if I want to call it street punk or oi. Either way, it’s good stuff, and if you like The Dropkick Murphys you will like this. No, there are no traditional Irish songs on here, but this CD has spirit, well played songs, is well recorded and produced, and these guys are definitely down with the working class. They hail from Boston and you can tell it by their sound. If you’re into oi or street punk, get this CD. It’s a winner. –Mike Beer (Crosscheck)

STREET DOGS:
Savin Hill: CD

I get a unsolicited email from a publicity person asking if I want to do a show review in LA for the Street Dogs. I’m thinking, who the hell are the Street Dogs? I fire back a reply saying I don’t do show reviews of bands I have never heard before. I also ask if he could send me a promo so I can hear them first before I decide. I missed the show but I did receive the CD. The feature here

is the original singer of the Dropkick Murphys, Mike McColgan. This is his first band he’s led since the day he left the Dropkick Murphys five years earlier. Similar to the Dropkicks, this new band adds some Bouncing Souls melody and some AC/DC crunch in the guitars producing a straight ahead experience. Songs are very anthemic and the choruses have the bad habit at times of getting stuck in your head. With a lot of touring and exposure, I couldn’t see a problem with this band getting popular. There’s some damn good stuff here. –Donofthedeat (Crosscheck)

STREETWALKIN’
CHEETAHS, THE:
Greeting from Gainesville: CD

A mixture of MC5, the Ramones and the New York Dolls is the painting that I would draw to make you, the reader, see what I’m hearing. –Donofthedeat (XXX)

STREETWALKIN’
CHEETAHS, THE:
Maximum Overdrive: CD

...it’s kinda weird, you spend more or less your whole life embedded in punk rock and you come to realize that the bands you’ve been in and the bands your friends have been in, in the cold hard light of further analysis, pretty much get by primarily on imagination and charm. I mean, sure, there’s some talent (usually) at work, but, ultimately, for myself and most of my acquaintances, the brain is willing but the flesh simply cannot muster the horses to pull off anything legitimately resembling planet-splitting rock’n’roll. And then, on the other hand, you got the Streetwalkin’ Cheetahs, who have more Mad Rock Skillz than most of us will ever shake a twig at, and they will ALSO never pull off anything legitimately resembling planet-splitting rock ‘n’ roll, simply for want of that crucial little dollop of imagination and charm the Rock Gods saw fit not to administer. I mean, all the horsepower in the world goin’ for ‘em, and here sits the planet, completely unsplit (unsplit?). To illustrate my point, compare the Cheetahs’ “Little Tokyo” with “Chinatown” by legit rock-rock-rock-rock-rock’n’roll planet splitters the Devil Dogs: “Little Tokyo” is recorded better, played by better musicians, and performed by a much tighter band – yet, compared to “Chinatown,” “Little Tokyo” comes off as merely immature and crude, and, ultimately, way less rockin’ as a result. I don’t even think anyone’s to blame – that’s just the way things shake out. Apart from that and a smattering of real dogs (“Peppermint” and “Fuck No” flat-out blow, and “All I Want” is so puss-puss it makes “For Paul’s Sake” sound like “Jumpin’ Jack Flash” by comparison), this disc – the band’s first studio album + outtakes + 45s – rocks just fine. Cleaned my electric toothbrush, too! **BEST SONG:** “Turn Me Down” **BEST SONG TITLE:** All the good song titles are covers, except “Built for Speed,”

which isn’t the Stray Cats song **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** My old band played with this band in East Germany. Since, owing to a prior gig falling thru, they were added at the last minute, they were essentially playing for beer, merch sales, and a couple bowls of potato soup. Needless to say, since it took 45 years of blood, tears, toil and sweat to get the Communists OUT of there, I didn’t jeopardize all of that PROGRESS by offering to split our dough with them. –Rev. Nørb (Alive)

STRESSFACE: Give ‘Em
Enough Stressface: cassette

This one’s a doozy. Not only is it limited to 100 copies with inserts hand-stuffed by someone who pretended to be in the band to get into a show for free and may or may not have been me, but these guys are all about bringing the sleeveless shirt look back to punk rock. Right on. What does it sound like? Well, it features ex-members of Bombshell, if that gives you any clue. As an added bonus, these dudes rock the bullet belts harder than Venom, and the drummer can apply eyeliner better than most girls I know. –Not Josh (No Idea)

SUNSHINE: Necromance: CD

A weird hybrid of taut art punk and epic new wave, kinda like a pissy Gary Numan who’s had more than his daily allotment of coffee. A nice change of pace and definitely off the beaten path, which can only be viewed as a good thing. –Jimmy Alvarado (GSL)

SUPAGROUP: self-titled: CD

It’s been said that there hasn’t been an original chord progression since 1969, so most of what I listen to isn’t exactly what you could call new. Being unoriginal is expected, but lifting lyrics from The Who’s “Substitute” is unforgivable. –Wanda Sprag (Foodchain)

TALES FROM THE
BIRDBATH: The Eggs: CD

This band is a side project of Ean from Sicko and his wife Reba, who plays drums for the Cripples (I think). I really liked Sicko, but I was a little disappointed with this CD. There’s a couple of really nifty songs that sound like some long-lost ‘60s guitar pop band, but overall, it cuts too close to open mike night at the coffee shop. Sorry. –Not Josh (Tales From the Birdbath)

THERE WERE WIRES:
Somnambulists: CD

I thought a somnambulist was a magician who makes people go to sleep, and I was all, “It don’t get no perfecter than that,” on account of how this CD kind of makes me go to sleep but I looked it up and a somnambulist is a sleepwalker. Rats. Heavy math on a Neurosis overdose. Rats. –Cuss Baxter (Iodine)

THOSE UNKNOWN:
SelfTitled: CD

Formulaic “street punk” that stands stubbornly in the middle of the road

like a retard caught in traffic. Actually, some of it's not bad, but overall, snoozingly familiar sounding.

—Aphid Peewit (TKO)

TIM VERSION, THE:
***Prohibition Starts Tomorrow*: CD**

This band broke the long-standing, previously foolproof “You Can’t Rock in Flip-Flops” rule. You may be saying nay to such blasphemy, but believe me, even when they’re wearing flip-flops, they rock like motherfuckers. The Tim Version is the perfect antidote to hipster crap like Le Tigre. They might not ever be popular, hell, they might not even play to more than fifty people, but I get the feeling that they wouldn’t have it any other way. And not only are they Dudes Gone Wild during the live rock, but the lead singer knows a whole lot about lasers, and that’s pretty awesome. —Not Josh (A.D.D.)

TIM VERSION, THE:
***Prohibition Starts Tomorrow*: CD**

Uh oh! I have to confess, I am a prejudiced individual! I had heard the name Tim Version bandied about, and immediately thought, “That is one of the worst band names I’ve ever heard. This band must be awful.” For those of you lacking the Wisconsin-bred encyclopedic knowledge of all things punk, I will fill you in on a punk rock fact: The Tim Version is, no doubt, a reference to the “Tim Version” of the best Replacements song ever “Can’t Hardly Wait,” from the outtakes of the *Tim* album. One of my favorite songs, but I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again, a good thing does not a good band name make! Take, uh, the Cheetos, for example. Got it? No! That’s okay because this band, who I am going to refer to from this point onward as the Tim Versions, which is at least a little better by way of being more stupid, rocks! It’s the kind of melodic hardcore you’ve come to know and love in the tradition of Dillinger Four or Avail. (Plus they have D4esque (New word alert! New word alert!) song titles, like “No More Star Tattoos” and “National ‘Quit Your Job’ Day.”) Sure, they’re not as good as D4, and at times they are a tad generic, but when you’re a little drunk, that doesn’t really matter. Besides, to be as good as D4 these guys would have to be Lucky Charms, and right now they’re simply holdin’ steady as Fruit Loops. —Maddy (A.D.D.)

TOASTERS, THE: In Retrospect: CD

Here’s a little known fact to me. Can you believe this band has been around since 1981? I sure as hell can’t. These ska kings have been busting out the two-tone for 2 decades! So it is fitting that they go into retrospective mode and put out a greatest hits without calling it that. With the ups and downs of ska, it’s good to hear that someone has survived the trends. For that alone, you should go out and get this. For a bonus, you get some good skanking to listen to. —Donofthedeath (Stomp)

TOTIMOSHI: Monoli: CD

I remember thinking these guys were the bee’s knees a while back, but this release just ain’t movin’ me like it should. There’s just a little too much arena rock in the mix for my tastes. Maybe they’ve progressed, or maybe I have, but either way, we just ain’t connecting like we used to.

—Jimmy Alvarado (Dark Reign)

TRAPDOOR FUCKING EXIT: Devil’s Egg: CD-EP

No Idea Records has come a long way since *Big Pants Waste Precious Fabric* and the Mutley Chix. This band is pretty noisy and dynamic and stuff, and while it’s not exactly my cup of tea, it’s good. The only comparison I can think of would be Refused, but that’s not very good since Refused sucks pretty hard and these guys don’t. There’s also kind of a Drive Like Jehu feel to this, which would explain why it caught my ear. So if Drive Like Jehu meets a non-shit Refused sounds like your idea of a swingin’ party, go for it. You couldn’t get it from nicer folks. —Not Josh (No Idea)

TRASH CAN SCHOOL:

***Big Bang Radiation Blues*: CD**

For those unacquainted with Trash Can School, they were an ‘80s/‘90s band with members hailing from the four corners of Los Angeles County. While most decidedly punk in intent, they weren’t afraid to pummel listeners with a three-guitar attack and some wailin’ sax. Collected here are two live performances circa 1991/‘92 from Gilman Street and the Whisky. You get straight-off-the-board sound quality of popular tunes like “Silver Surfer,” “Satan’s Favorite Groupie” and “Everything Must Go,” as well as solid thrashings of Patti Smith’s “Horses” and Blue Oyster Cult’s “Godzilla.” Long has it been since I heard anything from this legendary group of malcontents and this is a welcome respite from the glut of color-by-numbers punk that is flooding the market. —Jimmy Alvarado (Jinx)

TWIN HATERS: self-titled: CD

Can you say... the second coming of Helmet! —Donofthedeath (Failed Experiment)

U.S. BOMBS: Put Strength in the Final Blow: CD

More mid-tempo, vaguely Sex Pistols-without-the-wall-of-guitar-sound punk from the U.S. Bombs. To this day, I sorta expect USB to be more manic and am always temporarily thrown off by their slightly laid-back approach. It’s just that the mystique of Duane Peters looms so large and dementedly over the band. He’s like the skatepunk’s version of GG Allin, a man who — as legend has it — has never hesitated to serve up his keloid-scarred body to further injury and manglement. So, because of Mr. Peters’ infamous exploits in the many styles of self-abuse, I continually find U.S. Bombs to be not as reckless

as I think they would be with a maniac like that at the wheel. U.S. Bombs is like the cafeteria meatloaf of punk rock; sometimes tasty, sometimes full of stuff you don’t ever want to know about, nothing I’d ever want to make a strict diet of. —Aphid Peewit (Disaster)

UNDER A DYING SUN: Supernova: CD

Konane Cramer croons his delicate little heart out while the rest of the outfit goes through: punchy, pretty, quirky, jangly, fugazy, groovy, and chunky. Maybe some other ones, too, but I quit keeping score after “A Different Kind of Pretty.” —Cuss Baxter (Substandard)

UNION 13:

***Symptoms of Humanity*: CD**

Hey! They’re on Disaster now? What happened to Epitaph? I hope they didn’t get dropped because they were focusing on the bigger bands. Oh, well... This is a good record that could have been better. The songs are pretty kick ass since they seem to have added a more metal element to their sound from what I remember from the past. What is lacking is the electric guitar sounds tinny and thin. The bass is pulled up to front too much and kind of sounds like rubber bands. The vocals, acoustic guitar and drums are the only thing I wouldn’t touch. Well, maybe the drums... I would have preferred the kick drum to be a little boomier and louder. Now you are probably thinking, what a fucking snob! If you read this far, I guess you care enough about my

opinion. So move on or live with it. Anyhoo, I always liked their songs that are sung in Spanish even though I don’t understand the language. For some reason, it better expresses their aggression and I see how it connects with the Latinos in their audience. From the outside it looks like they are connected as one. That’s the part of the show I most enjoy. The energy level is high. So, production pet peeves aside, they always put out something I like and this is no different. But next time, I hope this review might cross their paths without them getting all bent out of shape, and I also hope they put out a truly ball-busting record.

—Donofthedeath (Disaster)

URINALS, THE: What Is Real and What Is Not: CD

Okay, maybe I AM a hapless churl whose mental, emotional and social growth permanently stalled at age 16, and maybe I DO live in the past, and maybe I DIDN’T “get it” the right way back in The Day since the only Urinals songs I was familiar with for quite some time were “Sex,” “Go Away Girl,” “She’s a Drone,” and “Salmonella,” but I am kind of going to have to state here for the record that I do not recognize this as a bona fide Urinals release, but, instead, consider this a continuation of the 100 Flowers project the Urinals magically turned themselves into way back when. I mean, I’m from Wisconsin, explain this s-l-o-w-l-y to me: In 1982, you guys were too un-punk and artsy and tex-

tured and brilliant and so on to be constrained to the “self-imposed aesthetic definition” of the Urinals, so you had to be 100 Flowers instead – but now, hmm, hey, shucky-darn, THAT OL’ URINAL AIN’T LOOKIN’ SO BAD NOW, IS IT??? Dude, sorry to point this out in front of God and everyone, but IT’S A TOTAL FRIGGIN’ SCAM, MAN! You guys were either A. Fibbin’ poseur scoundrels when you changed your name to “100 Flowers” owing to your self-professed outgrowing of Urinalism 20 years ago, or B. Fibbin’ poseur scoundrels when you released a reunion (or whatever this is) album as The Urinals when the music is not so Urinals-specific that it is unquestionably better represented as being Urinals music than 100 Flowers music. It doesn’t matter which one you choose, either A or B is certainly true, and if EITHER A OR B is true – and either A or B is – then you guys have put paid/laid waste to the HIGHFALUTIN’ ARTEESTIC INTEGRITY upon which your collective pedestal is grounded (anybody waiting for a “well, you can take the Urinal out of the boy, but you can’t take the boy out of the urinal” crack should be advised that i’ve been making that joke for over 20 years now). Of course, had the band merely regurgitated fifteen different permutations of “Sex” and “Go Away Girl,” i’d more than likely be happier than a pig in shit (add in a bonus track of that 45’s b-side – a slowly descending allotment of calibration tones seemingly good for no other purposes than to tune one’s smoke alarm to – and i’m yours to keep!), so adjust for my myopia accordingly (the album is actually more or less like a lot of those records SST was putting out right around the time the Urinals became 100 Flowers – too pointlessly artsy to be of much real lasting benefit, but leaving enough of a breadcrumb trail no one stayed hopelessly lost forever). All i know is that in THIS overgrown 16-year-old’s brain, a urinal is always gonna be a place you throw a cigarette butt into, not a reference to Duchamp. BEST SONG: “I Make Love to Every Woman on the Freeway” or “Typical Tzar” BEST SONG TITLE: “I Make Love to Every Woman on the Freeway” or “Typical Tzar” FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Thanks list includes Joseph Pope of Angst, who, as a buyer for Systematic in the ‘80s, purchased \$350 of Suburban Mutilation albums from me i was never paid for. –Rev. Nørb (Warning Label)

URINALS: What is Real and What is Not: CD

This is nowhere nears as manic as their earlier efforts, but that twisted pop sensibility is still readily apparent and the songwriting is

still consistently strong and challenging. Songs like “Theme from ‘Sex Taxi,’” “Baby Demons” and “Typical Tzar” stand up rather well to their classic material, while “Jumbo” and “In Praise of Fucked Up Girl” betray a Southwestern roots rock influence not previously apparent. While some bands should refrain from having another go at it, the Urinals prove to be an exception to that rule. –Jimmy Alvarado (Warning Label)

USS HORSEWHIP:

Vs. The Kids: CD

Loud rock/punk with a singer who sounds plenty pissed off, which makes sense seeing as they call Bellingham home. I’ve been there and I feel your pain, kids. –Jimmy Alvarado (The Brass Rocket Recording Conglomerate)

VAGIANTS, THE:

Short and Hard: CD

Female-led rock band that makes you feel like you are sitting in a biker bar that is a smoke filled room, drinking too much whiskey and throwing up on the sawdust covered floors. –Donofthedeatd (Sin Klub)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Bay Area Invasion: CD

Isn’t the purpose of a regional scene compilation supposed to make you want to go check out that scene? Excepting a couple of Bar Feeders songs, this makes me never want to go to San Francisco unless I’m deaf. –Not Josh (Depth Charge)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Best of Various: CD

Art rock, screaming hardcore, acoustic mellowness, and flat-out noise are given equal time on this varied comp. Most of the tracks sound like they come from assorted demos, as no doubt they did, and there’s also a “college radio” feel to the sequencing, but nothing here can be construed as terrible, and some tracks are mighty fine, indeed. Featured bands include +DOG+, Bratface, Illicit, Post Natal Abortion, the Shills, and Due Process. –Jimmy Alvarado (www.loveearthmusic.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Histeria 2: LP

Martin Sorrondeguy serves up a second volume of punishingly good international hardcore that’s surprisingly varied in sound, courtesy of Tomorrow, I Quit, Amdi Petersen’s Arme, Conga Fury, Fuerza-X, Punch in the Face, Vitamin X, Scholastic Deth, Bruce Banner, Disidencia and Regress. Along with its predecessor and Suburban Voice’s *No Sleep for Hardcore*, this is easily one of the best international hardcore comps thus far in the new millennium. Included is a tabloid-sized publica-

tion with lyrics/info and full-size posters of each band. Sooo recommended it ain’t funny. –Jimmy Alvarado (Lengua Armada)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Midwest Rules – You’re Weak We’re Strong: CD

This is the second *Midwest Rules* disc that I’ve had the good fortune to come across and this will be the second time I gush about this quality collection of tunes played by pallid, corn-fed punks from the heartland. It starts out strong with a song from the Daggers, which is very Germs-y with all the drunken aplomb of a shitfaced Darby Crash, and then goes into a ripping tune by the Phenoms which is very Candy Snatchers-esque. The remainder of the disc is rounded out with catchy, crunchy slabs of Midwest anger by heavyweights like Bump n Uglies, Gotards, Mashers (sounding like New Bomb Turks back before they decided that saxophones sound nice in punk songs) and Nine Pound Hammer (and when did they get back together? I gotta start paying closer attention to this shit). There are a couple soft spots that I could poke at over and over, but fuck it. This is a strong collection of no-bullshit punk rock. My only complaints would be as follows: how about getting some females in the mix here, boys? Aside from Jenn Cuervo of the Almighty Hangovers, this disc is pretty much a boy’s only club. Despite all the frigid bovine women you coastal people might see on TV wearing cheesehats and horns in the stands of Packers/Vikings games, we do have plenty of butt-kicking female punk bands in this area that would fit nicely into the next *Midwest Rules*. And speaking of that, I think a geography lesson may be in order here. I mean, what exactly do you consider to be “Midwest”? I like Nine Pound Hammer but are they “Midwest”? That’s down-home chicken-fried southern punk in my book. And while I’m at it: did something happen here that I don’t know about? Did Minnesota secede from the rest of the Midwest while I was off somewhere on a drunken bender? Vol. 1 had zero bands from Minnesota and Vol. 2 has zero bands from Minnesota. Not to be a shameless homer, but I live in a town that has as landscape “garnishes” statues of various Peanuts characters dotting our streets. That alone is enough to breed white-hot punk rock discontent. We’re seething here and our punk bands reflect that. So before you Haunted Town folks start slapping together Vol. 3, go listen to the *No Hold Back: Twin Cities Hardcorepunkrockandroll* comp and get a few of those bands to pitch in a song or two next time around. –Aphid Peewit (Haunted Town)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *New York City Rock 'n' Roll*: CD

A veritable cornucopia of aching bad cock rock, Dolls worship and embarrassing post-Kiss attempts at shock rock that, at best, results in peals of laughter for all the wrong reasons. There are, literally, thousands of bands doing this shtick so much better than what is compiled here that one is only left to wonder why this aural embarrassment was even released. —Jimmy Alvarado (Radical)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

***Six Steps to a Better You*: CD**

I have grown to hate modern day comps lately. They just seem to be slapped together like a cheap sandwich. A few do come along that I think have what I'm looking for. First, it has to have a band or two that I recognize. Second, I hope it has new songs by the band that I recognize. Third, I hope I get introduced to a new band. So I can say that this comp meets some of my criteria. It has the crazy Japanese freak-boys Peelander Z. But those tracks are excerpts from their *P-Bone Steak* CD. The lovely ladies and dude who are the Lipstick Pickups contribute one unreleased song and the tracks that were on the great split 7" with the Bikini Bumps. Here's what I got for new. Nazi from Mars played a updated brand of electronic new wave that made me want to be Dieter. Bobot Adrenaline did nothing for me. They might do something for you if you like pop rock with some punk. Zero Content did less for me. A barrage of samples from a couple of people who have too much time on their hands and a good knowledge of Pro Tools or a similar program. The (No) Apologies Project sounds exactly like their band name implies, a project. It sounds like, "Hey let's get together and jam! We'll record what comes out of it!." Half I liked and half I didn't. Not bad for what I have listened to lately. —Donofthead (Geykido Comet)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

***Six Steps to A Better You*: CD**

Nazis From Mars: A punk band from the Netherlands who use a drum machine instead of an actual drummer. Very minimalist in approach, some new wave trappings here and there, but they are a hoot to listen to and "Don't Do It" should be a radio hit. Peelander-Z: Self-described "Japanese kung fu action punk" and I really don't think I can come up with a more apt description, other than that they are one good band. Lipstick Pickups: Trashy punk rock with nasal female vocals. I hear a smidge of Dangerhouse buried in there somewhere. Bobot Adrenaline: While I can appreciate the diversity of influences and creative spark inherent in their tunes, their brand of anthemic, poppy punk failed to move me much. Not a bad band by any stretch, it just boils down to a difference in taste. Zero Content: Four short soundscapes with someone yelling on top. The (No) Apologies Project: Arty, jazzy no

wave-type stuff. Overall assessment: Even though I wasn't enthused by every band on this comp, I really appreciated the diversity of bands presented and, in turn, their individual attempts to come up with something a little different from what is passed off as punk these days. —Jimmy Alvarado (Geykido Comet)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *The Sound of San Francisco*: CD

It would seem the scope of that title would be pretty hard to live up to, and they don't: what's here is almost entirely composed of various shades of '80s rehash (and not the hardcore kind), including several (!) takes on the Cult, certainly one of the worst hard rock bands ever. The Naggs do a couple good Runaways/Motley Crue rockers; Two Gallants have a rootsy, Poguesy sound; The Flakes are on a pretty inspired garage tip; and Young Trade turn in the single non-retro/derivative track, a bassy dancepunk one. The rest of the bunch rolls around in the crud I had to listen to in high school and, man, they can keep it. —Cuss Baxter (Alive)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

***Tower 13*: LP**

I didn't think it was possible, but the boys at Hostage have actually managed to outdo themselves. After releasing two near-perfect comps, they manage to raise the bar even further with this, quite possibly the most consistently good compilation of Southern California punk in decades. You get all killer and no filler here, with the bands (The Drips, The Fakes, Smogtown, Broken Bottles, The Pegs, The Main, The Decline, Ciril, Smut Peddlers, The Crowd, D-Cup, The Revlons, Discontent, The Negatives, Thee Indigents and Cell Block 5, respectively) mining not only the post-Posh Boy/OC sound this label is known for, but also dabbling in hardcore (the Crowd, of all bands, turn in an uncharacteristically thrashy tune here) and punk'n'roll territory on occasion as well. All you nay-sayers and Chicken Littles crying out that punk is dead need to pick up a copy of this, as this is living proof that "real" Southern California punk rock is alive and doing fine in 2003, thank you very much.

—Jimmy Alvarado (Hostage)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Where the Bad Boys Rock*: 2X CD

You get psychobilly, rock/punk, '60s slop, straight ahead rock and Texas Terri for your buck. There're thirty-four tracks in all from the likes of the Frankenstein Drag Queens, Damnation, American Heartbreak, Duane Peters, Trash Can Darlings and oodles of others. This would be the perfect soundtrack to a raucous party of people who've just made it back from the Dolls convention. —Jimmy Alvarado (People Like You)

VATICANS: self-titled: 7"

This latest musical endeavor sees Shane White and his latest gaggle of

cohorts delving into the world of distortionless power pop territory, moving him ever closer to fulfilling his lifelong dream of having a band as cool as the Raspberries and as well regarded as Paul Collins. As can be expected, the songs are strong, although I imagine the inherent wimpiness of the sound is gonna put a lot of trash punker noses out of shape, which alone makes this worth every penny. A couple of interesting facts: to my reckoning, this is the first band Shane's played bass in since the first lineup of the Chainsaw Blues back in 1988, and included here is a drawing of the band, his first "published" artwork since his contributions to the booklet for 1985's *Flex Your Mom* cassette comp. —Jimmy Alvarado (TheVaticans@sbcglobal.net)

VEXERS: *Gangster Ballads and the Death Sex Set*: CD
Quirky, female-fronted college rock. —Jimmy Alvarado (Ace Fu)

VINDICTIVES, THE: *Curious Oddities and the Bare Essentials*: CD
In the mid-nineties, The Vindictives released a ton of seven inches and were on half of the compilations that half of the pop punk labels put out. Most of these seven inches were collected into one CD called *The Many Moods of the Vindictives*. That collection is still one of my all-time favorites. I've had it for about eight years or so, and I still dig it out of the CD shelves and give it a spin and sing along to every song and wish like hell that there was more Vindictives. Of course, they also released *Party Time for Assholes*, an album of all covers, and that's a pretty cool CD in its own right. Then, there was another album. I'm going to pretend that I don't remember the title, but I do remember the title because, when I sold it back, I made a mental note to never buy that album again. But, really, what I wanted was more from the Vindictives' glory days. And now I have it. *Curious Oddities* gathers eight songs from the time when the Vindictives were at their best, and it's got all the tales of demons in your head and psychotherapy gone awry that you'd expect from these guys, and they make it fun to sing along to. These eight songs alone make *Curious Oddities* worth picking up. On top of that, this collection has two Sex Pistols covers ("Seventeen" and "No Feelings") that make me wonder why I never figured out on my own what a perfect match the Vindictives and the Sex Pistols are. There's also a funny cover of "Two Ton Tessie," a demented cover of "Nuttin' for Christmas," and a cover of "Jingle Bells" that's at the end, so it's no problem to skip it. I have to say, I'm pretty stoked to have this new collection. —Sean (Teat Productions)

VISION: *Detonate*: CD
Funny, I seem to remember these guys sounding more hardcore than this. A

new release from an old band that's very melodic in all the worst ways. —Jimmy Alvarado (Chunkasaah)

VIVISECTORS, THE: self-titled: CD-R
I have a natural soft spot for the surf music idiom, so I can't totally eviscerate the Vivisectors. I still occasionally play old Surfari's and Ventures records and somewhere in the '90s I even bought a used copy of a Bomboras disc — even though I was aware of an egregious Bomboras/Marilyn Manson love connection. So though this is somewhat anemic, cable-access-level nu-surf, I still don't mind it. It's inoffensive, backyard bar-b-q-friendly music that pretty much everyone — and I mean *everyone* — would be more or less okay with. But, truth be told, I think the grizzled Dick Dale, even without his Del Tones, would stomp the Vivisectors' scrawny guts to make jam for his high-fiber toast in the morning. —Aphid Peewit (Vivisectors)

VON ZIPPERS, THE: *The Crime is Now*: CD
Modern Canadian garage rock is so upbeat and infectious; take The Hanson Brothers, Chixdiggit, The Riff Randells, and of course, The Von Zippers. They've been at the party circuit of garage for quite a number of years. Their live shows never disappoint. I saw them once stoned out of my gourd at Bar Deluxe where the singer, ironically wearing a crash helmet, crashed into the front row in the most hilariously accidental way possible. I hope they still wear the Nazi helmets. So here's their latest effort brimming with party antics, catchy beats, and gosh darnit, some social awareness ("Blue Suit Blues"). Don't get your hankies out — they still rock the party in your pants and everyone is cumming. —Miss Namella J. Kim (Estrus)

WESLEY WILLIS & THE DRAGNEYS: *Greatest Hits, Vol. 3*: CD
It's the end of the Old West. It's the end of the old *Guns* smoke. It's the end of the old Western World. It's the end of the gang gunfire. It's the End of the Western (x4). It's the end of the Good Old Days. It's the end of the Olden Days. It's the end of the Civil War. It's the end of the Battle Days. It's the End of the Western (x4). It's the end of World War I. It's the end of World War II. It's the end of the horse carriage. It's the end of the chuck wagon. It's the end of the Western (x4). Rock over London. Rock on Chicago. Federal Express. It's the world on time. Easily the best record I reviewed this issue. The rest o' you oughtta be ashamed of yourselves. BEST SONG: "It's the End of the Western" is legitimately amazing. "Make My Joyplane Crash and Burn" "Suck a Pitbull's Dick" and "Love God" are similarly vunderbar. It's actually all pretty good. BEST SONG TITLE: "My Keyboard Got Damaged." Possibly "Gingerbread

Knocked Me Out." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: I am well aware of the fact that if most people own a certain critical mass of Wesley CDs, their drive to enlarge their collection, especially in these troubled financial times, drops off sharply, for completely understandable reasons (i.e., each and every song being a variant on the same man-and-keyboard theme, charming though it may be). Let the record show that there is enough variety in the recordings culled for this album that that particular ultra-mega-minimalist pitfall is short-circuited, and the naysayer might do well to say "aye" here — especially in light of the priceless bonus video clips of the late Mr. Willis at Taco John's™ Corporate HQ attempting to get a songwriting gig, et al. That is to say that, you, sir, can't shoot his harmony music down. Rock and roll will never die! Somewhere in the great hereafter, Drackulla is still screaming. —Rev. Nørþ (Alternative Tentacles)

WESTERN ADDICTION: *Remember to Dismember*: 7"
Good, but not superlative, hardcore. It's tight and well-played, but it stays at a constant tempo through all four songs and it's not very fast. It's good enough that I'd listen to what they come out with next, but only if it has part changes, and not just blast beats and circle pit parts, either. —Not Josh (Fat)

WHEN SPARKS FLY: *We Who Are About to Die*: CDEP
If I lived close to these guys and were friends with them, I would probably be all over this. Since I don't, all I hear is over-produced melodic punk that has hints of Godsmack. —Donofthedeat (Nice Guy)

WILLOWZ, THE: CD
No info whatsoever, except that it's on Posh Boy, and as far as I can tell it could as easily be from 1982 as 2002: old style pop punk a la Redd Kross and that bunch, or the less manic stuff on some of those Mystic comps; bounciness and fuzzy, with backup singing (and some pretty extreme separation on the stereo end of things). The singer kind of reminds me of Jeffrey Lee Pierce. Very pleasant. —Cuss Baxter (Posh Boy)

WILLOWZ, THE: *Willowz with a Z Live*: CD
The band's initial flash-frozen 1981-in-twenty-aught-three Posh Boy single lathered me up pretty right and proper; this follow-up live CD (recorded on the air at KUCI in Irvine CA, if that means anything to you [means nothin' ta me]) is essentially a push: I win because it is, indeed, more Willowz material for me to ponder, muse upon, and vivisect; I lose because a live-at-the-radio-station CD is not what I want. What I WANT is a five-or-six-song studio 12" that I can compare,

contrast, lump in and otherwise quarantine with my Stepmothers, T.S.O.L., Red Cross and MAYBE China White five-or-six song studio 12"s — preferably in a die-cut jacket that's in homage to those red, yellow, green and purple generic Posh Boy 12" deals of twenty-some years ago. GO BACK AND BRING ME WHAT I WANT OR I WILL CEASE THINKING DEEPLY ABOUT YOUR BAND. Thank you. BEST SONG: Still "That Willowz Feelin'" BEST SONG TITLE: Well, since the song called "Revolution" is neither the Beatles nor Toxic Reasons song of the same name, I'll go with "Equation No. 6" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Recorded in stereo. —Rev. Nørþ (Art Monkey)

WINKS, THE: Self-titled: 7"
When the band won't even put down their beers to get their picture taken for the cover of their seven inch, it means that they're either 1) alcoholics, 2) tough broads, or 3) trying to look like alcoholic, tough broads. Ignoring the fact that I've been reading about one of the members of The Winks in *Snakepit* for the past year and judging solely by the music, I'm gonna guess tough broads. They have a trashy, rock'n'roll sound to them, kinda like the Dirty Sweets or Loli and the Chones, though they sound a little younger and a little more hollow than Loli and the Chones. Still, these are four pretty rockin' songs, full of Lone Star and attitude. —Sean (Super Secret)

WORMWOOD/TEEN CTHULHU: split 7"
First, it's a picture disk. Second, I listened to Wormwood first and couldn't figure out if it's 45 or 33 rpm. Third, I listened to Teen Cthulhu and it's 45 and they play dense metal that's occasionally a little gothic for my taste. Fourth, I listened to Wormwood again and they play gothic metal that's occasionally dense enough for my taste. —Cuss Baxter (Accident Prone)

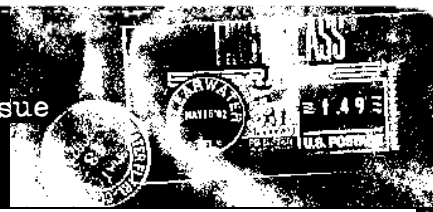
Y, THE: *Sooo...Intense*: 7"
This is so dumb that it's awesome. If you don't like this, you're no fun. Highly recommended. Smoke weed and drop out of school. —Not Josh (Sooooo Intense)

YEAR FUTURE: self-titled CD-EP
I never thought I'd hear a band that simultaneously reminded me of Drive Like Jehu, Deadbolt, and some of the more ambient Man or Astroman stuff, and I definitely didn't expect to hear some guy yellin' nonsensical lyrics over it. They could use a good werewolf song or two, and some snazzy artwork wouldn't hurt, either. —Not Josh (GSL)



CONTACT ADDRESSES

to bands and labels that were reviewed either in this issue or posted on www.razorcake.com in the last two months.



- **145 Records**, <www.145records.com>
- **Accident Prone**, PO Box 460686, Escondido, CA 92046
- **Ace Fu**, PO Box 552, New York, NY 10009
- **Acetate**, 2020 Broadway, 2nd Floor, Santa Monica, CA 90404
- **ADD**, PO Box 8240, Tampa, FL 33674
- **Adeline**, 5245 College Avenue, #318, Oakland, CA 94618
- **A-F**, PO Box 71266, Pittsburgh, PA 15213
- **AK Press**, 674-A 23 St., Oakland, CA 94612
- **Alive**, PO Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510
- **Alternative Tentacles**, PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141-9092
- **Art Monkey**, <<http://artmonkeyusa.com>>
- **Artifix**, PO Box 641, Moreno Valley, CA 92556-0641
- **Asian Man**, PO Box 35585, Monte Sereno, CA 95030
- **Associated Scum**, <www.geocities.com/associated_scum>
- **Beatville**, PO Box 42462, Washington, DC 20015
- **Beerzone**, PO Box 89, Crawley RH10 7PD, United Kingdom
- **Bert Dax Cavalcade of Stars**, PO Box 39012, St. Louis, MO 63139
- **Bert Switzer**, 12 Summer St., Somerville, MA 02143
- **Bifocal Media**, PO Box 50106, Raleigh, NC 27650
- **Boss Tuneage**, PO Box 74, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2WB UK
- **Brass Rocket Recording Conglomerate**, PO Box 5791, Bellingham, WA 98227-5791
- **Broken Rekids**, PO Box 460402, SF, CA 94146-0402
- **Butterfly**, PO Box 31225, 08080 Barcelona, Spain
- **Callgirl**, 1827 Ximeno Avenue, #221, Long Beach, CA 90815
- **Captain Oi**, PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP10 8QA, England
- **Cheap Lullaby**, 1223 Wilshire Blvd. #450, Santa Monica, CA 90403
- **Chunkasaah**, PO Box 974, New Brunswick, NJ 08903
- **Crosscheck**, PO Box 39439, LA, CA 90039
- **Crustacean**, PO Box 370156, Milwaukee, WI 53237
- **Crypt**, 3 Reading Avenue, Frenchtown, NJ 08825
- **Dark Reign**, PO Box 30666, Long Beach, CA 90853
- **Depth Charge**, 440 Haight St. #56, San Francisco, CA 94117
- **Deranged**, PO Box 543, Station P, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2T1, Canada

- **Destroy All**, PO Box 26806, LA, CA 90026
- **Devil Doll**, PO Box 30727, Long Beach, CA 90853
- **Diaphragm**, PO Box, 10388, Columbus, OH 43201
- **Dionysus**, PO Box 1975, Burbank, CA 91507
- **Dirtnap**, PO Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111
- **Dirty Faces**, <<http://www.dirtyfaces.de>>
- **Disaster**, PO Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510
- **Dischord**, 3819 Beecher Street NW, Washington, DC 20007
- **Dough Main**, PO Box 1489, Thousand Oaks, CA 91358
- **Earforce**, <www.hukedicht.com>
- **Elevator Music**, PO Box 628, Bronxville, NY 10708
- **Embers**, 909 East Yorba Linda Boulevard, Suite H-164, Placentia, CA 92870
- **Empty**, PO Box 12301, Portland, OR 97212
- **Estrus**, PO Box 2125, Bellingham, WA 98227
- **Failed Experiment**, 5420 S. Bishop St., Chicago, IL 60609
- **Fast Music**, PO Box 206512, New Haven, CT 06520
- **Fat**, PO Box 193690, San Francisco, CA 94119
- **Finger**, <www.fingerrecords.com>
- **Foodchain**, 8490 Sunset Blvd. Suite 504 West Hollywood, CA. 90069
- **Garage Pop**, PO Box 88003, Rochester, NY 14618
- **Geykido Comet**, PO Box 3806, Fullerton, CA 92834
- **Go Metric!** c/o Mike Faloan, 801 Eagles Ridge Rd., Brewster, NY 10509
- **GSL**, PO Box 65091, Los Angeles, CA 90065
- **Haunted Town**, 1658 N. Milwaukee Ave. #169 Chicago, IL 60647
- **Hej Music**, 3109 W. 37th Street, Denver, CO 80211
- **Helicat**, 2798 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90026
- **High School Refuse**, Berlageweg 12, 9731 LN Groningen, The Netherlands
- **Hoex**, <www.hoexrecords.com>
- **Hostage**, PO Box 7736, Huntington Beach, CA 92615-7736
- **I Used to Fuck People like You in Prison**, Schafferstrasse 33a, D-44147 Dortmund, Germany
- **In The Red**, PO Box 50777, LA, CA 90050
- **Iodine**, 1085 Commonwealth Ave, PMB 318, Boston, MA 02215
- **Jinx**, 113 1/2 N. La Brea Avenue, #102, Los Angeles, CA 90036
- **Johann's Face**, <www.johanns-face.com>

- **Kangaroo**, Middenweg13, 2098 AA Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- **Kill the Hippies**, 614 1/2 N. Mantua, Kent, OH 44240
- **Knock Knock**, 394 Hewlett Ave, Patchogue, NY 11772
- **Learning Curve**, 2200 4th St. N.E., Mpls., MN 55418
- **Lengua Armada**, 1010 1/2 Riverine Avenue, Santa Ana, CA 92701
- **Life is Abuse**, <<http://www.lifeisabuse.com>>
- **Lobster**, PO Box 1473, Santa Barbara, CA 93102
- **Lollipop**, 7 Impasse Monségur, 13016, Marseille, France
- **M.H.**, 36 Central Park Road, Plainfield, NY 11803
- **Meter**, PO Box 368, 440-10816 Macleod Trail SE, Calgary, Alberta, T2J 5N8
- **Mint**, PO Box 3613, Vancouver, BC Canada V6B 3Y6
- **MuSick**, PO Box 1757, Burbank, CA 91507
- **My X-Lover**, PO Box 1837, 29 Palms, CA 92277
- **Nerve**, #508 - 825 Granville St., Vancouver, BC V6Z 1K9, Canada
- **New Day Rising**, PO Box 1383, Miller Place, NY 11764
- **Nice Guy**, PO Box 42815, Cincinnati, OH 45242-0815
- **No Idea**, PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604
- **Noisemaker**, PO Box 71208, Sherwood, WI 53211
- **Not Bad**, PO Box 371292, Denver, CO 80237
- **OBZ**, 11777 Brazos Way, Lindale, TX 75771
- **Omnibus**, PO Box 16-2372, Sacramento, CA 95816
- **On/On Switch**, PO Box 641122, SF, CA 94164
- **Orange Peel**, PO Box 15207, Fremont, CA 94539
- **Peephole**, <www.peepholerecords.com>
- **Phony**, <www.octoberallied.com>
- **Posh Boy**, <www.poshboy.com>
- **Proud to be Idiot**, PO Box 410325, San Francisco, CA 94141
- **Punk Core**, <www.punkcore.com>
- **Quincy Shanks**, PO Box 3035, St. Charles, IL 60174
- **Radical**, 77 Bleeker Street, Suite C2-21, NY, NY 10012
- **Radio One**, <<http://www.thisisradioone.com/>>
- **Rapid Pulse**, <www.rapidpulserecords.com>
- **Recess**, PO Box 1666, San Pedro, CA 90733
- **Rejected**, PO Box 6591, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, Ireland
- **Revelation**, PO Box 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615-5232

- **Rodent Popsicle**, PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134
- **Rooster Crow**, 1658 N. Milwaukee Avenue, #55, Chicago, IL 60647
- **Scarey**, c/o Caleme Carlo, C.P. 516, 10121 Succ.76, Torino, Italy
- **Shit Sandwich**, 3107 N Rockwell, Chicago, IL 60618
- **Sin Klub**, PO Box 2507, Toledo, OH 43606
- **Six Weeks**, 225 Lincoln Ave, Cotati, CA 94931
- **Smog Veil**, 550 W. Plumb Ln., #8501, Reno, NV 89509
- **Snuffy Smile**, 4-1-16 Daita, Setagaya-Ku, Tokyo 155-0033, Japan
- **Sooooo Intense**, 507 E Caracas St., Tampa, FL 33603
- **Soul is Cheap**, PO Box 11552, Memphis, TN 38111
- **Split Seven**, 12405 Venice Beach Blvd. #265 LA, CA 90066
- **Static**, 17215 Mack Ave, Detroit, MI 48224
- **Stomp**, 78 Rachel E., Montreal, Quebec, H2W 1C6 Canada
- **Street Anthem**, 6201 15th Ave. NW #B306 Seattle, WA 98107
- **Sub City**, PO Box 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409
- **Substandard**, PO Box 310, Berkeley, CA 94701
- **Sudden Death**, Cascades PO Box 43001, Burnaby, BC, Canada V5G 3H0
- **Tales From the Birdbath**, 7339 16th Ave NW, Seattle, WA 98117
- **Target Earth**, 505 Lupinas Hiranuma, 1-1-15 Hiranuma, Yokohama, 220-0023 Japan
- **Teat Productions**, PO Box 66470, Chicago, IL 60666
- **Thick**, PO Box 220245, Chicago, IL 60622
- **This Here**, PO Box 481, Chattanooga, TN 37401
- **TKO**, 3126 W. Cary St #303, Richmond, VA 23221
- **Triple Crown**, 331 West 57th Street, #472, New York, NY 10019
- **True Love**, <<http://www.trueloverrecords.com>>
- **Tsunami**, 231 Emery Mills Road, Shapleigh, ME 04076
- **Underground Sounds**, <<http://www.connermusic.com>>
- **Union Label Group**, <www.unionlabelgroup.com>
- **Union**, 78 Rachel E., Montreal, QC, H2W 1C6, Canada
- **Unknown Controller**, PO Box 11351, Oakland, CA 94608
- **UR**, <www.benchmarkwarmer.info>
- **Vivisectors**, <<http://thevivisectors.narod.ru/>>
- **Warning Label**, <www.warninglabelrecords.com>



Send all zines for review to Razorcake, PO Box 42129, LA, CA 90042. Please include a contact address, the number of pages, the price, and whether or not you accept trades.



AMERICA?, #10, \$1, 4¼ x 5½, copied, 16 pgs.

In the most recent edition of the *Zine Yearbook*, this zine out of Gainesville, Florida was one of the few highlights. Not only is the writing really deep in a non-drum circle kind of way, the writer realizes and acknowledges his own imperfections. It's always great to read stuff that's self-questioning rather than self-important. Some people in the zine world who overestimate their own worth tend to congratulate themselves on baseless finger-pointing, and thankfully that's not the case here. As a bonus, it's got a quote from Ursula K. LeGuin, who you probably remember from Bloodhag's *Gorgeous Ladies of Writing 7*". Well worth a buck. –Not Josh (PO Box 13077, Gainesville, FL, 32604-1077)

AVOW, #11, \$2, copied, 28 pgs.

The guy who writes this perzine, Keith, also donated some of his artwork to *Razorcake*. I didn't quite realize this when I met him (the author of the *Razorcake* article gave me Keith's artwork, so I had no direct contact with Keith). I ended up trading zines with him, and I'm glad I made the trade because *Avow* is a pretty cool read. It's got the type of stories that you would expect from a perzine by a punk guy in his (probably) mid-to-late twenties. He tells stories about difficult parts of his childhood, friends who were destroyed by their punk rock lifestyle, fucking up with women, odd encounters on the street and in bars, fights, and so on. This issue is packed with stories. They're all thoughtful and well-written, and have the ability to resonate with me for a while after I've read them. On the whole, it's not the most original zine I've ever read, but it's definitely one of the better perzines out there. –Sean (Keith Rosson, 20 NW 16th Ave., #306, Portland, OR 97209)

BARRACUDA #17, \$5 ppd, glossy, offset, 52 pp.

On the one hand, i am not real likely to respond much, if at all, to ads hawking anything involving girls who look like Betty Page, lurid 50's paperback covers, leopard-print creepers, dice, flames, or those shit-ass, crap-butt, woefully overpriced, laughably chintz-fuck (but, yet, kinda cool looking) piece-of-shit Korean DiPinto™ guitars The Los Straitjackets play (okay, come on: Do you REALLY think The Los Straitjackets [wait, do you think that's funny? "THE Los Straitjackets"? I kinda do. If you don't think it's funny, i'll stop. Wait, no i won't, what am i saying?]) play the stock Korean pieces of shit commercially available to

YOU, the consumer? This hard-bitten cynic suspecteth not. Couched in the terms of the NBA™ jersey, i suspect that YOU, El Gigante, are buying a "replica" – NOT an "authentic." A Swingman™ at best! The DiPinto™ Galaxie™ Custom™ lists at like seven hundred-odd bucks, the guy at the music store will likely give it to you for about \$550. It would be fairly priced at half that, and THAT'S taking into account that it has four pickups and looks cool and you'd likely pay more than it's worth anyway). On the other hand, this magazine – subtitled "Cars, Girls and Real-Man Shenanigans" – is superlatively done in virtually every regard: the use of red as a second spot-color ink on some of the pages amazes me even more then the use of full-color printing on others; the articles (covering the speed trials'n'speed tribulations of former Land Speed Record holder Art Arfons, studies of the thermodynamic efficacy of portable beverage-insulation devices ["or 'Do Beer Cozies Work?'"] and somebody's grandpop's memoirs of his days as a railroad worker) are of uniformly high quality and quite interesting (occasionally counterintuitively so), the pin-up girls are all pretty hot and well-photographed, and the panel cartoons are fantastic – not merely because they're good gags (two ragged schmucks play cards on a tiny desert island whilst a similarly ragged but pert blonde leans against the island's one palm tree. Caption is "Same stakes?"), but because the art and subject matter are so nuts-on as regards recreating the whole vibe of something i might legitimately have once dug up in my uncle's old room during a visit to my grandparents' house. The thing is, as someone who is too much The Clod to have nice cool things (such as the \$120 + shipping "Classic Boomerang Table" from www.retroonline.com), i must restrict my Pursuit Of Eternal Cool to knowing HOW the cool things are cobbled together; therefore, i suggest less features about how to make my car look cool (hey man – the Wal-Mart™ antenna 8-ball and the purple shag pillows and purple rubber skull wearing a Pittsburgh Pirates cap and sunglasses in the backseat of my 2003 Pontiac Sunfire are all the customizations i'll EVER need), and more "How-To" columns regarding swanky design – i mean, what's the font on the Don Ho ad? What's the font on the "Bedtime For Betty!" caption? What's the font for the pull quotes on Todd's Art Arfons piece? What's the font for the "Leave 'Em Laughing" title caption? How does one make a quality irregular quadrilateral with rounded corners? How

does one create a quality populuxe dingbat from scratch? Where can one acquire quality preexisting populuxe dingbats on the cheap? When does Shag suggest a non-black outline be used? When should no outline be used? How about tips on drawing mouths? Drawing legs and feet? I long to drink at the well of knowledge, but all i get are tips about vacuuming my car! Still, a nice read. I even read the recipes, and they kind of make sense. If i had a \$120 Classic Boomerang coffee table – or any coffee table at all, i guess – i'd likely leave this out atop it, just to amaze visitors with my unbridled swankitude. –Rev. Nørb (Barracuda Magazine, P.O. Box 291873, Los Angeles CA 90029)

BRAINSCAN, #20, \$2 plus 2 stamps, 5 x 6, copied with a letter-pressed cover, 64 pages

Alex has been writing personal zines for a long time now, organizing zine conferences and traveling around the U.S. on zine reading tours. Her writing is emotional and personal with a big dose of nostalgia, especially this latest issue, which is mostly about growing up in Utah. Seeing as how my own life is more ridiculous than emotional, I always have a hard time reading really personal, journal-type zines about break-ups, love, feelings, you name it. But I've learned over the years that whereas I prefer candy-chompin' Marxist-based tales of public humiliation, tons of people prefer something that reads more like someone's diary. And, in this genre, Alex is one of the best. –Maddy (Alex Wrekk, PO Box 14332, Portland, OR 97293)

DEMOLISH, #3, \$3 (in Australia), copied, 40 pgs.

I've read all three issues of this Australian punk zine, and I'm happy to say that it's steadily improving. The most noticeable difference is that his layout has gotten really good. For a guy who seems to be armed with nothing more than an exacto knife, a glue stick, and a photocopier, he makes this zine look cooler than a lot of glossy punk zines that have been laid out on computers with Photoshop and Quark and everything else. Beyond layout, there are interviews with American punk bands, which seems to be fairly typical with Australian zines. Most of the American bands covered are on Fat Wreck or Epitaph, and they're fairly well-represented over here in the US. Since the interviews with those bands are, by necessity, email interviews, they're not terribly interesting to me. The record reviews of American bands are interesting to me, though, because

these Australians don't know much about the latest US trends and they don't have that anti-Fat/Epitaph bias that most US zines have, so the reviews tend to be more honest, more about the music. Occasionally, *Demolish* turns me onto American things that I haven't hear of, like *John Doe Zine*. The coolest parts of *Demolish* are the uniquely Australian parts: interviews with Aussie bands and zines. I can't afford the shipping for most Aussie bands' albums, but it's cool to read about them and learn something about their punk community. Matthew from *Demolish* also really has his ear to the ground, zine-wise. He distributes zines and has turned me on to cool shit like Australia's *Pee Zine*. All in all, if you can get your hands on a copy of *Demolish*, by all means, pick it up. It's a good read. —Sean
(www.demolishzine.com)

EXTREME CONFORMITY, #7, \$2.50, 4½ x 11, copied, 91 pgs. This is another one of those zines that took me forever to review. I think I got it in August. Sorry for being so slack about that. It should in no way reflect the quality of this comic. Larry Nocella (the guy who writes *Extreme Conformity*) has an amazing grasp on the absurdities of modern life, and, like a Coen Brothers movie, he allows the characters to get swept up in the absurdities until everything escalates into a completely ridiculous and hilarious situation. This issue is called "Gay Insurance" and it deals with a kid who likes to dance, so his parents become convinced he's gay. Escalating matters is a celebrity whose popularity is waning, so, despite being straight, he comes out in public as a homosexual, and the "scandal" throws him back into the limelight. The mistakenly gay kid is a big fan of the fakingly gay celebrity, and hilarity ensues. These *Extreme Conformities* are all funny as hell, and this issue had me cracking up all the way through. And, of course, there's a depth and seriousness to Nocella's comedy, which makes it as worthwhile as it is funny. —Sean (Larry Nocella, PO Box 122, Royersford, PA 19468)

GENETIC DISORDER, #17, \$3, 6 x 9, glossy cover, newsprint inside, 80 pgs. Rad. This is one of the most consistently funny zines I've ever read. Every issue is fucking hilarious from cover to cover, and this is no different. Oh wait, yes it is! The cover is in 3-D! Most zines are only in lame old 2-D! *Genetic Disorder* #17: 50% more dimensional appearance than before! In this issue, Larry fills out an alcoholism self-test from a brochure, and like

his application to Hot Dog on a Stick in #16, the only way you're not going to piss your pants is if you're not wearing any. Mandatory. PS — Yeah, the 3-D glasses are included. —Not Josh (Genetic Disorder, PO Box 15237, San Diego, CA 92175)

HOBART, #2, \$8, 5 ½ x 8 ½, offset, perfect bound, 109 pgs. *Hobart* is really less of a zine and more of a literary journal, but since *Razorcake* doesn't have a literary journal reviews section, and *Hobart* has enough punk ethics to make it interesting for *Razorcake* readers, I figured I'd review it here. This issue, like the first issue of *Hobart*, is all fiction. The writers vary from people who publish in lit journals all the time and writers who have books out by major, corporate publishing houses, to completely unknown writers. What struck me as really cool about the first issue of *Hobart* was its complete lack of pretentiousness, especially for a literary journal. The stories were real and honest, and what they may have lacked in style they more than made up for in heart. This issue carries on this tradition with some of the stories, particularly "Cold Calls" (a story about a lonely telemarketer and her ill-fated affair), "Guardian" (a story about a young kid who meets a really kooky lady in an airport), and "The Wailing Man" (a dialog between a man and a woman who just can't communicate with each other). Then, the issue drifts away from the more honest stories and gets into stories that make up for in style what they lack in heart. This is a phenomenon that's been plaguing a lot of popular fiction lately: writers seems to spend so much effort trying to make you pay attention to how clever they are that there's nothing left in the story beyond its cleverness. I blame the inexplicably popular lit journal *McSweeney's*, coupled with the absolutely horrible best-seller *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* (it's like, if you're such a genius, then why did you try out for the fucking *Real World*?) by Dave Eggers. These publications have popularized the look-how-cute-I-am style of writing that's managing to drift down to the underground. Perpetrators of this nothing-but-clever style in *Hobart* are *McSweeney's* author Amy Fusselman (who begins her piece of fiction by proclaiming that she hates fiction), Eric Spitznagel (who gives us the "World's Funniest Fiction Bloopers"), and Ryan Boudinot (who writes the most banal story about a serial killer you could possibly imagine; the twist is that the serial killer is a perfectly normal, suburban husband and dad

who everyone knows and accepts as a serial killer; he even goes to his son's career day in school to talk about being a serial killer). The bummer about these cleverer-than-thou stories is that, without them, *Hobart* can be such a cool read. Hell, even the little page-long editorial kept popping up in my head for weeks after reading it. It just convinces me that these guys have the power within them to put out a really vital lit journal (and, yes, I know that "vital lit journal" is an oxymoron, but so is "jumbo shrimp," and I love those suckers) if they just go beyond the trends that will hopefully die down in another year. —Sean
(www.hobartpulp.com)

JERSEY BEAT, #74, \$3, 8½ x 11, glossy cover, newsprint inside. With a title like *Jersey Beat*, it's no surprise that this zine tends to focus on Garden State bands (an essay titled "The Future Of Asbury Park", a review of a Warped Tour stop in Camden, NJ, interviews with the Wrens, Saves The Day and up-and-comers Fairmont) and various topics that pertain to the area. But since this Jim Testa-published zine has accumulated over twenty years under its belt (publishing years akin to dog years, that's close to 40 in my book), there's plenty of national appeal to anybody reading *Jersey*

Beat outside of Jersey. Tris McCall's column tying together musical classmates from Larchmont High to Williamsburg is a must-read; interviews with old school hardcore (Circle Jerks and G.B.H.), Icelandic psyche rock (Singapore Sling) and Joe Coffee (see Paul Bearer of Sheer Terror let down his NYC tough guy stomp core attitude for melodic Heartbreakers punk'n'soul). Add to that a smattering of CD reviews (albeit listed oftentimes by reviewer's name instead of alphabetical) that are mostly informative and objective (there's even a slew of metal reviews! Yes, metal!). Hold on, there's still more: zine reviews, book reviews, DVD reviews... this fucking zine never ends. (Until page 152 that is. Whoosh). Not much to complain about here — *Jersey Beat* has got something for everyone. —Greg Barbera (Jersey Beat, 18 Gregory Avenue, Weehawken, NJ, 07086)

LET THERE BE DANGER, #1, \$1 or three stamps or trade, 5½ x 8½, copied, 24 pgs. Yay! What a great little zine! Stories about falling out of a tree, getting tricked over an inheritance, punk roommates and much more. The writing is funny and, unlike so many personal zines, not overly-dramatic or emo- **RAZORCAKE** 97

tional. With lines like, "Would the service sector ever take to the streets armed with spatulas, mops, and price guns, frolicking in the ruins of our consumer driven society like a comically distorted Marxist kaleidoscope?" and a story about watching the Republican convention with a punk dorm-mate, ending with "When Bush took the podium and started spewing poison from his mouth, Matt whipped out his dick and started slapping it against the television screen, screaming, 'Die, Bush, die,' I knew at that moment that we were bound to be friends," I can't wait for the next issue. Why can more zines be like this one? —Maddy (Sean Raff, 509 Cutters Mill Lane, Schaumburg, IL 60194)

LIKE BURNED OUT BULBS ON A FERRIS WHEEL,

5½ x 8½, copied, 160 pgs.
That's not a typo. This really is 160 pages. I don't know if it's a book or not, because it's bound with orange duct tape (thumbs up for that), so we'll just pretend that it's a zine. It's a collection of personal writings by a young, small town punk rocker. That description sounds really cheesy, but lots of punk rockers grew up in small towns, myself included, so this is easy to relate to and written in a non-cheesy way. I'll be the first to admit that most personal zines are boring and pretentious, but keep in mind that most personal zines are written by boring, pretentious indie rockers. Good stuff. —Not Josh (New Wave Pirate Publications, 410 18th St., Racine, WI 53403)

NO. 13, 8½ x 11, newsprint, 16 pgs., 50 cents
The two biggest hurdles I found with this zine was figuring out just exactly what the title of it was and reading the super small fonts. But once I figured out that FNS Publishing out of Boston published *No. 13* and broke out my bifocals, I was treated to a glorious punk zine that harkens by to the halcyon days of mid-80's punk culture. Sometimes I go to shows and feel the scene has changed, other times I feel it constantly stays the same. *No. 13* offers a little of both, giving the reader a good dose of old school punk rock ethics. In the columns section Matt makes one of the best points when it comes to the age old argument of bands and labels "selling out": "I don't give a shit who released D.O.A.'s *Hardcore '81* or the Faith/Void split. All I care about is that these records (or records of this caliber) continue to be released by someone." Amen there, Matt. Or Brian's column addressing scene assholes: "I grew up on hardcore, punk, and oi and thank god it was

there because it gave me a place to go when there was no other place for me. When I see young kids getting driven out of the scene by wannabe gangster assholes, it pisses me off." Ditto, Brian. It's this zine's belief in unifying the scene and building it stronger that reminds me of the early days. Brings a tear to my tattooed, punk rock heart. *No. 13* focuses solely on the New England with interviews of The Jimmies, Kings Of Nuthin', The Epidemics and State Of Control plus some local show reviews and about a half-dozen CD reviews. A strong effort, and the ink-stained fingertips you get from reading *No. 13* will remind you of that. —Greg Barbera (FNS Publishing, P.O. Box 1299, Boston, MA, 02130)

PALESTINE SOLIDARITY

FACT SHEET, 8½ x 11, newsletter, 4 pgs., free
A highly touchy subject that I'd rather not comment on since I have no political ideologies or agendas to get at, this *Fact Sheet* — produced by palestinecampaign.org — seeks to inform the world on the plight of Palestinians. Highlights included pre-WWII ownership percentages (only 7 percent of this territory was settled by Jews, today their share is over 50 percent), Archbishop Desmond Tutu equating the current day situation to South Africa's apartheid, and useful address/web-sites for those who wish to help the cause. —Greg Barbera (www.palestinecampaign.org)

PICK YOUR POISON, #4, \$2,

copied, 64 pgs.
In this issue, Nate tells sixty-four pages worth of crappy job stories, and I have to feel like anyone who's got sixty-four pages worth of crappy job stories is a kindred spirit. Hell, when you get right down to it, my first novel was a 279 page crappy job story. Anyway, there's this one story in here that's hilarious. He writes about working at a reception desk in a shampoo factory, and during his down time, he reads books. And it's so bizarre for everyone else in the factory that he's reading books voluntarily (as in, not for a class assignment) that it causes a bit of a stir among the employees. They either try to figure out what his major malfunction is or convince him to read books about God. Though it comes in the middle of the zine, that particular story is a good starting point in discussing this issue. See, in the introduction, Nate explains that he's not sure if this issue is good or not. He feels somewhat like he's just whining. Usually, when a zine writer makes a disclaimer like that, it means either he's just thrown

together a new issue without much thought or care, or he's put a lot of thought and care into the issue, and he's taken his writing to a new level. It's definitely the latter with this issue of *Pick Your Poison*. Much like the reading books at a shampoo factory story indicates, these crappy job stories have nice doses of humor, absurdity, frustration, silliness, and anxiousness. In other words, they're like our lives. Nate has always been able to tell a story well (or, at least he's told good stories in his first three issues of this zine), but now he's starting to get a little deeper, to notice and articulate some of the more complex aspects of our culture and the people around us. And he manages to do this without sounding pretentious or taking himself too seriously. I hope this doesn't sound condescending of me, but in the first three issues of *Pick Your Poison*, I felt like Nate had a lot of unrealized potential as a writer, and, with issue four, he's starting to realize some of that potential. —Sean (Nate Ganglehoff, PO Box 8995, Minneapolis, MN 55408)

ROCK N ROLL PURGATORY,

#11, \$2, 8 ½ x 11, copied, 40 pgs.
My review of this zine is so late that there's a new issue out by now. And the editors are probably bummed that I never reviewed this issue and are therefore not sending me their new one. So now I gotta write for my swag. Here goes: *Rock N Roll Purgatory* is the best zine out there for anyone who's diehard into rockabilly and street punk. They've turned me on to some rad rockabilly bands like Lords of the Highway; they've inspired me to dig back through my record collection and play all my favorite street punk albums; in previous issues, they told me that Waylon Jennings was dead (and I really appreciated hearing it from someone who was equally as bummed as me about the news and could deliver it in a caring manner); and, in this issue, they keep up the good work with interesting interviews with The Tossers and Half Life, as well as funny pieces on "The Women of Trucking," mutant creatures attacking farmland, the satanic connections in the Golden Girls, and scandals involving aging droid celebrities. My only complaint is that they don't make fun of the Amish nearly enough. All in all, another highly recommended zine. —Sean (Ben & Lisa, 342 S. Walnut St., Wooster, OH 44691)

SLAVE, #8, \$2, card-stock cover,

offset, 98 pgs.
I've been meaning to review this for a couple of issues, but it's one of those things in which I get a

magazine and like it so much that I somehow have a weird glitch in my mind that tells me that I couldn't have possibly gotten the magazine to review because I like it so much, and therefore forget to review it. So much for excuses. Here's what makes *Slave* cool. First, there's the cover, which looks like it's silkscreened or letter-pressed or some other artistic process that I know nothing about, but it makes the cover really fucking cool. Second, there's a very informative, step-by-step how-to article on silkscreening, which one day I'm going to try and then will know more about at least that one artistic process. Third, they actually know a good bit about the bands before they interview them, and this leads to much more interesting interviews with bands. This is especially important when you don't really care much about the bands interviewed, which seemed to be the case with me in this particular issue. Still, interesting interviews. Fourth, they cover a wide variety of issues — mostly within a certain leftist, probably vegan, definitely environmentalist perspective — from music to fiction to photography to politics to guys who drive vegetable-oil-powered vehicles. Fifth, they have some rad layouts. For a guy like me who lays out half of every *Razorcake* like I do, it's nice to see cool, original layout touches in another zine. Sixth, the guys who put out this zine also put out the rad Dead Things album, which I only have a burn copy of and hopefully they'll send me a promo copy of it when they read this review. Seventh, oh, fuck it. Just buy the zine already. —Sean (Slave, PO Box 10093, Greensboro, NC 27404)

STAIRWAY THE HAVEN,

5½ x 8, copied, 30 pgs.
This zine was done about three years ago by Replay Dave of the Grabass Charlestons, and since it's so old, I'm not sure if he still has any copies. It's a collection of pretty random writings like Dave's funeral wishes, playing backgammon in a diner, and collecting june bugs in a bottle. The title of the zine is a reference to Dave living under a stairwell for a while, because I certainly hope he's not a Led Zeppelin fan. The drawings are pretty funny, too. —Not Josh (Replay Dave, PO Box 13316, Gainesville, FL 32604)

STIR KRAZY, issue #7, \$3,

8½ x 11, copied, stapled, 24 pgs.
This Rochester-based zine comes across as heavily influenced by *Adbusters* magazine: several mock ads in the zine bring home the publication's self-pro-

claimed “anti-authoritarian, anti-corp, anti-censorship” mission. But after that things get murky as to the attribution on the prisons and punishment piece (confusion abounds – it is one piece or several short pieces culled together to make one?). The writing leaves much to be desired; the best thing about *Stir Krazy* is the underground comics. –Greg Barbera (Stir Krazy, P.O. Box 25148, Rochester, NY, 14625)

THIS TIME LAST YEAR,

#5 & 6, 5½ x 7, copied, approx. 32 pgs.

Both issues of this zine consist of pictures taken by Chrystaei, who publishes *This Time Last Year*, mostly of Dirtnap-type bands like the Electric Eye and the Triggers. The pictures, while not exactly kung fu action shots, are really well done. No smudge marks or blurry stuff or anything like that. The only thing about it is that there's a table of contents with a band name and a page number, but when you flip through it, there aren't any page numbers, so it's hard to tell who's who. Nonetheless, the photography is great and everything's put together nice and purty. –Not Josh (PO Box 40342, Portland, OR 97240-0342)

VERBICIDE, #9, \$3.95, glossy cover, offset, 72 pgs.

I'm actually interviewed in this issue of *Verbicide*, so obviously I'm gonna be swayed in my opinion of this. On the most objective level, though, you gotta read the interview with me. I come off like a total kook. That's why I write: because I want time to realize how strange some of the things I say are, then delete them. There's also an article in this issue of *Verbicide* by Todd Taylor, who you guys may know from his article in *Barracuda*. Beyond the *Razorcake* connections, there are some pretty good pieces of short fiction in here, some poetry, book and record reviews, an interview with David Cross, and whole shitload of stuff. All of it's worth a read. This zine is definitely worth the four bucks. The big surprise about this issue is that it made me really interested in a band I've never heard of: Neva Dinova. The interview totally sucked me in. I decided that I had to check something out by that band. I haven't yet. I probably won't. But I really liked the interview. Plus, did I mention there's an interview with me in this issue? –Sean (www.scissorpress.com)

ZISK, #7, \$2, 7 x 8½, copied, 44 pgs.

This is a baseball fanzine done by Mike Faloon of *Go Metric!* I've never met the guy, but I think he's pretty fucking awesome. All of the geeky rock and roll inside jokes of *Go Metric!* are replaced by geeky baseball inside jokes, like in the contributor profile for Jake Austen, it says, “He has attended over 400 White Sox games, even when Gary Redus was the best player.” If you know who Gary Redus is, that's pretty funny. All geekiness aside, however, this is absolutely recommended, even if you don't like baseball. –Not Josh (Mike Faloon, 801 Eagles Ridge Rd., Brewster, NY 10509)

ZONKED!, # 7, \$4, 8½ x 11, copied, 44 pgs.

Zonked! is pretty much a one man effort put forth by Peter Craven, who lives in Brighton in the UK. One of the good things I liked about this zine is the skate rock ethos: a live-life-for-all-it's-worth attitude. I also like Pete's taste in music for the most part. He does a great job with the reviews, tackling more releases than one man alone should have to review in an issue (he's probably written a good two hundred if not more). What I could

do without in *Zonked!* is the poorly written, year old review of Gearfest 2002 (dude, if you feel so compelled to publish something over a year old, write something interesting), his diary on going to South Africa (that's a whole 'nother zine right there), and that there are no page numbers! But seriously, not to bitch, *Zonked!* is a quality read with a pre-Quark, cut and paste appeal and filled with Pete's punk rock sensibilities reminiscent of Strike Anywhere's Thomas Barnett. And it's European for chrissakes, so it's immediately endearing in its sense of having nothing to do with being obsessed/influenced by American pop culture (yet at the same time having everything to do with it, ya know?). It's the *Young Ones-meets-Another State Of Mind*: you either have been there and understand *or* need to be there to be understood. Now that I've cleared that up, go get your own copy of *Zonked!* if only for the Burning Hearts and Felchers interviews. –Greg Barbera (Zonked! Pete Craven, 46 Ashford Road, Brighton, BN1 6LJ, UK)





The Emerging Framework of World Power By Noam Chomsky, audio CD

Listening to over seventy minutes of Chomsky can be a mind-numbing experience. I've seen him speak many times, and, compared to lefties like Howard Zinn, Michael Moore or Ralph Nader, he's not the most compelling performer. However, few have done more to advance theories and understanding of the American empire, exposing the massacres in East Timor, and shedding light on everything from the Vietnam War to U.S. policy in Latin America. On this CD, taken from a spring 2002 speech in Boston, he discusses the world post-9/11, including U.S. historical ties to the Middle East, U.S. violation of the Geneva Convention, and the role of Latin America in the new world order. He states, "The emerging framework of world power should not be an object of detached contemplation, but has to be forged by dedicated work and struggle, always based on an effort to dismantle doctrinal constraints to see what's before our eyes, which is not really very deeply hidden." Chomsky's role – and it is an important one – is to do the extensive research necessary to tackle these constraints, sift through the garbage, and let us (who are too busy working, raising families, worrying about bills or just booking the latest punk tour) know what's going on. Unfortunately, this CD is a little hard to sit through for all but the most knowledgeable leftist. Instead, I'd recommend any of David Barsamian's excellent interviews with Chomsky – many of which are available in book form from AK Press. At a time when almost every American is thinking about foreign policy, these interview books would make a great gift for your more mainstream friends or family members. Give the gift of Chomsky this Christmas? Why not! –Maddy (Alternative Tentacles, PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141)

The Enemy's Within

By Jimmy Rejcek, 120 pgs.

The whole time that I was reading this book, it seemed to me that Jimmy Rejcek is a really insecure person. It's almost like

he's trying to make up for his shortcomings in real life, like shyness or self-consciousness, by making himself the exact opposite in these stories. The most glaring example to me was the story "Loud and Obnoxious: The Ballad of Mel Licious." It isn't actually about Jimmy, but it is written in first person and I got the feeling that Jimmy kind of got himself off by writing lines like, "My wasted, obnoxious demeanor cast an even web of fear over the locals," and "I immediately whipped out my dick and took a big piss all over the front row." That just seems like stuff that a lonely twentynothing would write for a low-rent version of *Hustler*, trying to feel better about himself.

His writing is also marred by an excessive use of his thesaurus. Now, anyone who has ever written a research paper knows that a thesaurus is an invaluable tool to help you bullshit your way out phrases like "and then some stuff happened and it was fucked up and yeah." The problem is, this isn't a research paper. Having a way with words is one thing, but I just don't think it's necessary to wax poetic about peeing on a naked bisexual curled up in a shower.

Another aspect of that is that it doesn't come across as realistic, like he hasn't really experienced what he writes about. Take Charles Bukowski, for example. Bukowski wrote a lot about the fucked up, degenerate underbelly of society, which is what I think Jimmy Rejcek is trying to do here, but reading Bukowski and watching *Barfly*, you get the feeling that he knows exactly what he's talking about, like he's lived that life for so long that it's second nature for him. Or when Nelson Algren wrote about gamblers and hustlers and prostitutes, it didn't seem like an after-school special about "the wrong side of the tracks," it was honest and vivid. That's not to say that the stories that make up *The Enemy's Within* seem straight out of the D.A.R.E. handbook, they just seem like average stories with a lot of pride-swelling embellishment.

After all this negative criticism, I'd like to say that I don't think this book sucks. Jimmy Rejcek seems like the kind of guy who you could talk to at a party for a few minutes and then phase out when his stories start to get worse. That quality doesn't translate into a book very well. –Not Josh (Blueboy Productions, 115 W. Squantum St #203, Quincy, MA 02171)

For Weeks Above the Umbrella

By Todd Dills, 76 pgs.

For Weeks Above the Umbrella is actually a chapbook, and a friend of mine once described chapbooks perfectly by saying, "You know what the difference between a chapbook and a zine is? A zine is two bucks and a chapbook is eight." So, yeah, it's staple-bound and photocopied, but it has a glossy cover and it's pretty long and there are no graphics and the words are all in 9 pt. font, so that makes it enough like a book to warrant the \$7 cover price and to fit it into the book reviews section. Enough on the packaging, though. Let's talk about what's inside.

In '60s and '70s, a writer named Richard Brautigan published a bunch of short and hilarious books that all had a writing style that was unmistakably Brautigan. He wrote in short sentences and repeated himself a lot and had this really dry sense of humor that strikes you a just weird at first, but the more Brautigan you read, the more you get his jokes, and, brother, they're funny as hell. Brautigan wrote crazy books

about sombreros falling out of the sky and a town going nuts as a result, or about private detectives who would be perfectly competent if they could just stop dreaming of Babylon, or about other equally absurd and brilliant things. If you're a writer and you read Brautigan, it's almost impossible to not want to copy his style. It seems so simple and easy to do, but it's not. It's a really difficult style to copy. And legions of writers have tried to copy his style and failed miserably. And this brings us to Todd Dills, because Dills has a style that seems to borrow a lot from Brautigan. You have the lonely male protagonist, always about ten bucks from being flat broke, always somewhat destitute, always so lost in his head that he barely notices the destitution. There's a healthy serving of the absurd, and there's a dry sense of humor that you don't really get until you've been reading for a while, and once you get it, it's pretty damn funny. But, unlike most Brautigan-influenced writers, Dills lets his influence drop there and builds his own writing style.

The stories in this chapbook generally follow a few patterns. First, he has a few "itinerary" stories, in which he writes a story out as if he's writing a list of what he's going to do when he, say, visits London. Only, as you read the list, it's clear that he's not planning to, say, "get subjected to a video now by and of young American filmmaker cum YBA screwing her boyfriend in graphic filmic detail (shot of boyfriend piss in sink; girl in close-up, tits and large gut and cockshaft shooting in, out, in, out, in, out...)." Feel very uncomfortably hot. Cross legs numerous times," at 11:00 on his second day in London. He's writing about what he did, only acting as if he planned it all along. It's pretty funny. The second type of story he writes are the "week of" stories, where he'll write journal-style about a week in his life, and tie them together by a common thread, like the "Week of Skunk Apes" (in which the narrator spends a week searching out a mythical beast, though most of his "searching" entails going to Toronto and getting drunk in bars) or the "Week of Grits" (where a southerner expatriated to Chicago undergoes a futile search for grits). The best is the "Week of Hanks," in which the narrator (probably Dills himself) is continually being told that he looks like Tom Hanks, and in the meanwhile going back to his family home in South Carolina for Christmas. The third type of story he writes has to do with fun with food, and while you would think that fun with food stories would be more interesting than itinerary stories and week of stories, the exact opposite is the case. The fun with food stories are overwritten pieces built around an obvious punch line. There's three fun with food stories, and they drag down the chapbook.

All of the stories in this chapbook are kind of experimental in style, and they work best when Dills goes beyond the experiment and gets into some good storytelling. This sucker is worth the seven bucks for the "Week of Grits" and "Week of Hanks" stories alone. The itinerary stories are pretty funny, and there's an amusing story that's wrapped around Metallica's *Master of Puppets* album, too. All in all, it's a good read. –Sean (www.the2ndhand.com)

War Is a Racket

By General Smedley Butler, 80 pgs.

In a 1933 speech, Brigadier General Smedley Butler said, "I spent thirty-three years

and four months in active military service as a member of the Marine Corps... And during that period, I spent most of my time being a high class muscle-man for Big Business, for Wall Street and for the Bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism... I helped make Mexico safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefits of Wall Street. The record of racketeering is long. I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers in 1909-1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. In China I helped to see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested." This speech, and especially this part of the speech, has made Gen. Butler a fairly famous – or at least often quoted – guy in anti-war circles. Gen. Butler is less famous but equally significant because in 1934 several Wall Street bankers, including J.P. Morgan, unsuccessfully tried to hire Butler to lead a military coup to take over the US, and pave the way for American fascism. *War Is a Racket* covers both of these topics.

The preface of the book is a lengthy essay by Feral House publisher Adam Parfrey regarding the plot for the military coup. If you've never heard about this, Parfrey's essay is a decent introduction. If you're really curious about it, George Seldes does a much better job of explaining the coup, and you can read about

it in *The George Seldes Reader*, which is a highly recommended book in its own right. Still, Parfrey's essay does tackle this fascist plot from the perspective of someone who's living in a country where the president was chosen by a legal coup, and, if you're wanting to draw parallels between 1934 and 2003, Parfrey sets you up to do so.

Following the preface, the original text of Butler's 1935 bestseller, *War Is a Racket*, is reprinted. The original book was fairly short (the reprint is just over twenty pages long), and it's written in the style you might expect from a general: he's emotional and he wants to inspire action in the people listening/reading. He also has a no-bullshit way of writing. He presents the numbers, presents his information, demands you do something about it, and gets on with his life. For these reasons, *War Is a Racket* reads more like an impassioned speech than like political text. It's not unlike reading some of Emma Goldman's old speeches.

This reprint also includes two more essays by Butler. The first, "Common Sense Neutrality," is an argument for the US to stay out of World War II. Butler's basic argument is that, if we hadn't gotten involved with World War I, then World War II wouldn't be on the horizon in 1935. War established an atmosphere that allowed Hitler to rise to power. Further, according to Butler, what goes on in Europe is Europe's business. It has no effect on the US, other than the effect it has on lost revenues for US big business. As a soldier, Butler has com-

passion for the poor bastards who actually have to fight a war, and he doesn't believe for a second that those poor bastards are fighting for any higher purpose than profit. Butler also knows what it takes to invade a country (especially since he'd successfully planned and executed several of these invasions), and he outlines exactly what it would take, in money, munitions, and manpower, for another country to invade the US. Looking at his numbers and assuming he's correct, it seems that a full-scale US invasion is damn near impossible at this point. This makes for a compelling argument for isolationism (that is, having a military solely to protect the borders of the US). The original book and this essay give a very interesting perspective on the nature of war, the real purposes behind it, and the way insecurities are nurtured in order to allow more wars for big business. And, through Butler's speech-writer's style, it makes for quick, enjoyable reading.

The final offering of this reprint is an essay called "An Amendment for Peace," in which Butler outlines his plans for isolationism. It's an interesting historical document, but a bit dated now. And, finally, the book wraps up with a dozen pages of pictures of dead soldiers littering battlefields and living people who are being killed by the horrors of war. The pictures are grotesque and disturbing, but they represent war more accurately than, say, CNN. –Sean (Feral House, PO Box 39910, LA, CA 90039)



Pistol Grip:

Live at the Glasshouse, DVD

It is with a gnawing black shame that I lay my measly cards on the table and admit right up front that I know absolutely nothing about this Pistol Grip band. I am, of course, not supposed to admit this because it shatters the beloved notion of the omniscient music critic and it puts in peril the symbiotic 69 position that I am locked in – psychologically anyway – with my devoted readers. This is just one of those moments of pure sweet dribbling shame that is, for the self-respecting critic, akin to a really, really premature ejaculation. But all is not lost, for I am one of those cuddly types who willingly lays over the cold wet spot and attempts, comically, to salvage the moment. So let's forge ahead here and make the best of things, realizing that there indeed is value in a viewpoint experienced through fresh eyes and ears hooked up to an unbiased mind. For starters I can pass along the fact that Pistol Grip appears on this DVD courtesy of BYO records and they sport several different punk hairdos from the mohawk to the Curly Howard – a coif popular with many oi bands (of which Pistol Grip is considered to be). The DVD features typical DVD special features like "band commentary" and "alternative angle options" – goodies obviously intended for the more hardcore P.G. fan – but the meat and potatoes of this disc is footage from a Pistol Grip show at the Glasshouse in Pomona, CA. I'll admit that the first couple times I watched this, I thought it came off as a sturdy, but somewhat workman-like, offering of generic street punk with a slightly poppy edge. Even though their BYO affiliation affords them a certain degree of automatic street-cred-by-association, I thought that with just of bit of spit and polish, these guys could easily be tossed into the mix of safe corporate



punk being served up by the likes of MTV and VH1. After several more listenings – both while sober and while drunk – I'm still not sure I'm entirely wrong about all that, but sure as shit if this Pistol Grip band hasn't grown on me. All-in-all, sure to be a hit with card-carrying P.G. fans and a good introduction to the band for wallflowers like myself. –Aphid Peewit (Kung Fu Films, PO Box 38009, Hollywood, CA 90038)

REEL BIG FISH:

Live at the House of Blues, DVD

I'm really starting to get tired of receiving promos in paper sleeves with none of the packaging material that normally comes with a release like a cover, case, inserts and such that include the song titles. I pull this out of my box and say to myself, "Fuck, another live CD in one of those stupid paper envelopes!?" That is what I miss in records. You can't cheat and just send the record because the postage is going to be the same. As the deadline nears, I pop this into the computer to write the review. Waiting for music to pop out of my speakers, my DVD program opens. Hey, this is a DVD! Something to look at is more digestible than having to

endure a live recording. Visually, this is recorded well and the sound quality is good. Will I watch this again? Probably not. I was never a big fan of this band. This just brings back bad memories of the '90s when this style of ska/punk was the "in" thing and thousands of bands were trying imitating each other. –Donofthedeat (Kung Fu, <www.kung-furecords.com>)

Zeke: *Zeke You!*, DVD

For those of you who are unfamiliar with Zeke, they are a bunch of old school heshers from the Pacific Northwest who started out playing fast and furious punk rock a la The Dwarves before morphing into speed punk'n'metal band sounding like early Motorhead. You could curse Zeke for inspiring a generation of kids to play fast punk with metal overtones and giving birth to bands like Nashville Pussy and Speeddealer. Or you could just chug your can o' Pabst and hold yer lighter in the air in a celebratory post mortem act of endorsing the band's brand of rock and roll. Greasy hair, dirty fingernails, cheap hotels and lots of hangovers... that's what you get with this Zeke rockumentary. Filmed in lo-fi Zeke-O-Vision (looking as rough and raw as the band's live set at times), *Zeke You!* documents the band on their final tour, playing in seedy clubs to the seedy denizens who inhabit them. There's a good slew of early footage of the band (some live sets and a few videos) with a friend named Ed Vedder sometimes behind the camera. Conclusion: this isn't going to win over any new converts but for true fans it'll satiate the need when you get the urge to ride with Zeke. For cinephiles, this makes a nice companion piece to *Heavy Metal Parking Lot*.

–Greg Barbera (Dead Teenager, www.deadteenager.com)

