

RIOT 77

INTERVIEWS WITH:

THE VANDALS

THE SAINTS

X (THE BAND)

RAZORCAKE

WANDA JACKSON

LARS FREDERIKSEN

#9 €3.00



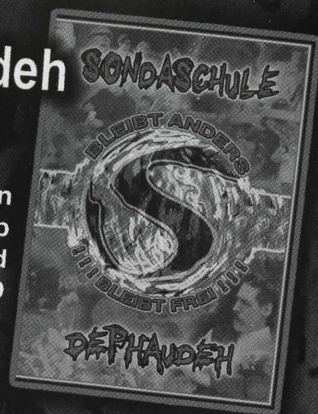
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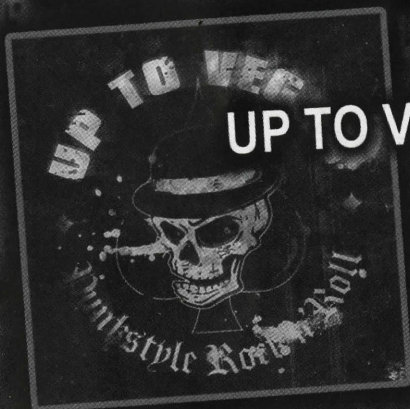
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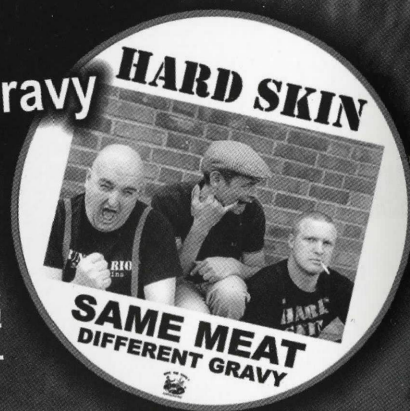
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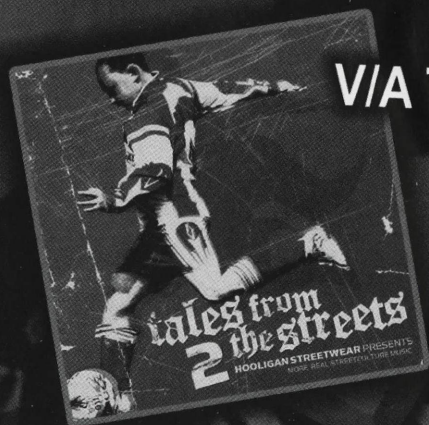
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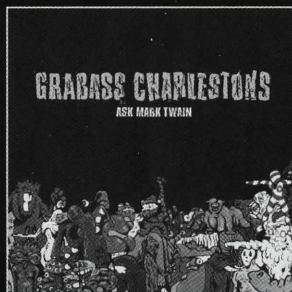


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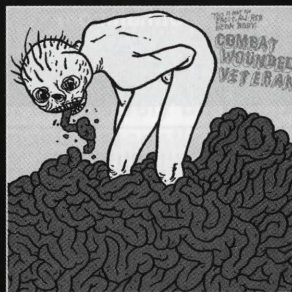
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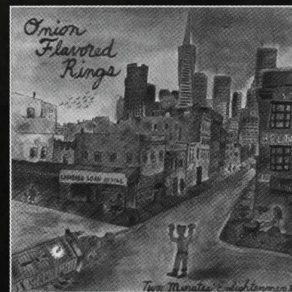
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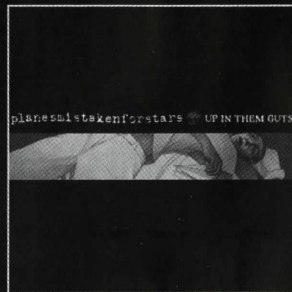
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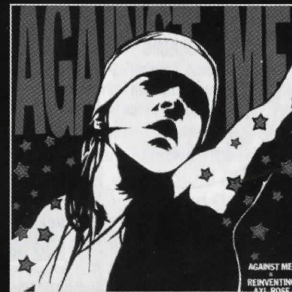
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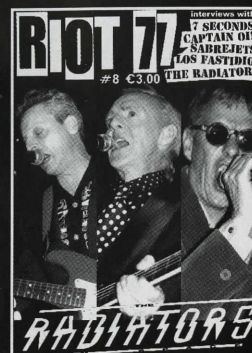
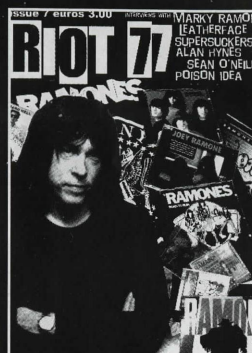
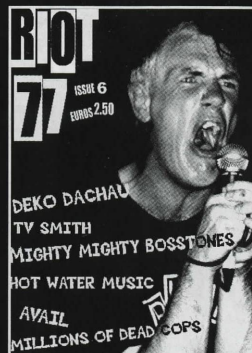
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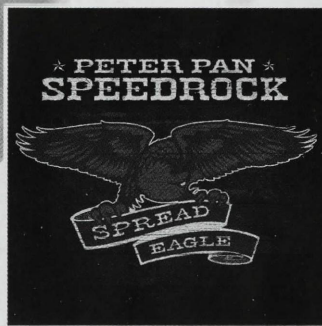
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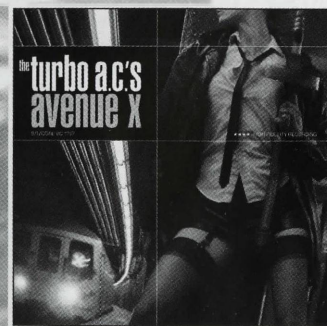
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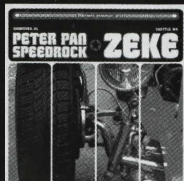


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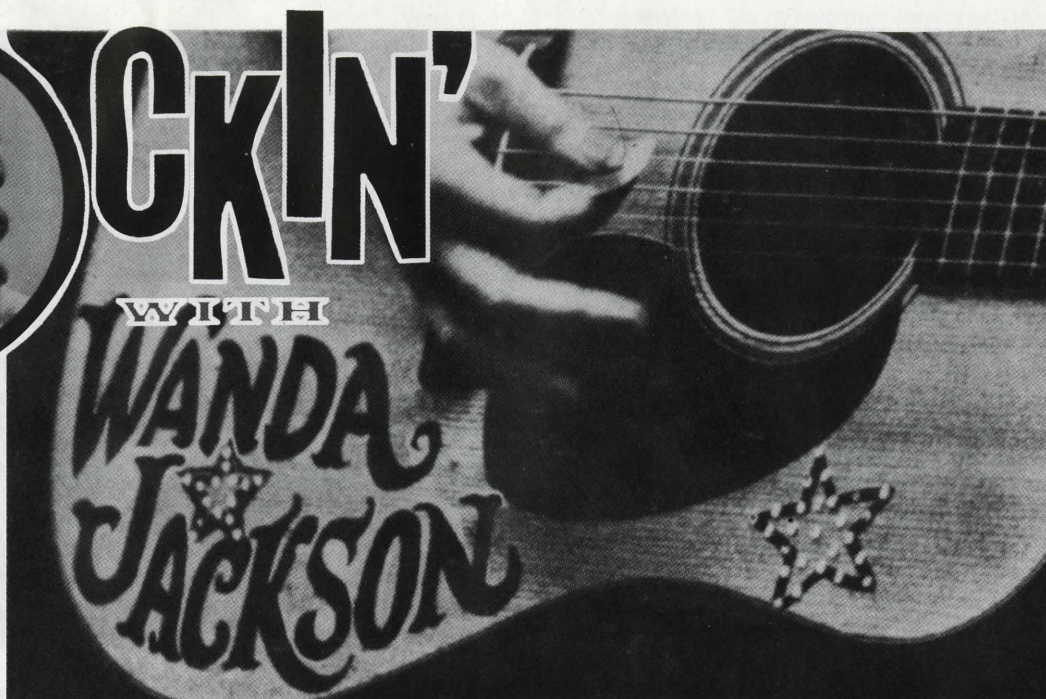


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With over fifty years of recorded music behind her, Wanda Jackson can still rock like no other.

Undisputedly the first lady of Rockabilly music, having submitted her first works to the wax as early as 1954, Jackson could howl and wail with the best of 'em, belting out songs that even Jerry Lee Lewis and Little Richard had a

hard time keeping up with. Having received the thumbs up from Elvis, Wanda took her bopping show on the road and toured consistently around the states. America wasn't quite ready for a woman as upfront and in your face as this in the 50's and realistically when we look at things as they are today, she was a good twenty-years ahead of her time. Strangely enough her biggest success came outside of America, with chart positions regularly in Germany and Scandinavia, and even a number one record in Japan. Appreciation for her music today stretches far and wide, from upcoming young greasers to the religious-right; there aren't many walks of life out there that haven't been touched by her works at some stage or other. Jackson is one of the only living holdovers from the essential '56-'62 era of Rock n' Roll and even today her voice still retains a surprising amount of holler from her teenage years. If you're looking for a history lesson in the roots of Rockabilly then look no further than in the direction of this woman.

She recently made a return to form with the astonishing "Heart Trouble" album and is once again back playing hard-edged Rockabilly music, following her departure from the scene during the 70's and 80's where she concentrated almost exclusively on Gospel recordings. I had to pinch myself when I clinched this opportunity to interview her in Los Angeles recently, one Sunday afternoon at the Holiday Inn, in West Hollywood, following her performance the previous night at the city's Knitting Factory club. (LIVE PHOTOS TAKEN AT THE KNITTING FACTORY, WEST HOLLYWOOD.)

RIOT. 77: So, you're staying in Hollywood for the next few days to do some recording, Wanda?

WANDA JACKSON: Yeah, tomorrow I'm recording a song for Cleopatra Records. Tribute albums are their kinda thing and I'm doing a Cher song, "Gypsies, Tramps, and Thieves".

RIOT. 77: Great gig last night, by the way. I really enjoyed it. That's quite a rowdy following you got there ...

WANDA: Thank you. Yeah, that's the way I like 'em (laughs) ... I really do. When you know there's a crowd out there really having a good time, it sends energy back to you, which is very helpful, so I had a great time last night.

RIOT. 77: Is that your regular crowd these days or does it differ much from city to city?

WANDA: It's pretty much the way it was last night wherever I go. It's young adults and so many of them practically live in the 50's (laughs). They dress in the clothes and they drive the same cars (laughs) ... it's like déjà vu for me.

RIOT. 77: Do you draw many from your own generation?

WANDA: Uhhhh!!! Some. Each night you'll see a few there, but not that many.

RIOT. 77: So this is a totally new crowd you've been playing to these past few years I take it?

WANDA: Yeah, I'd say the last nine years or so there's been this renewed interest in my music in America. I've been having this type of crowd for maybe ten years prior to that in Scandinavia and the rest of Europe.

RIOT. 77: Yeah, you went to Europe six times last year.

WANDA: That's right (laughs). It's hard on the body, let me tell ya! All that jellag.

RIOT. 77: And were those six visits all for tours or just one-off performances?

WANDA: We try to make them a tour, but last year I went to Germany on three separate occasions and two of

them were for television shows, where I did one song and the third time was for a tour. So, we do a little of each.

RIOT. 77: You also do a Country show, separate to the one I saw last night which was the Rockabilly show I believe, is that right?

WANDA: Yeah, they're two different genres I guess. I have a Country following and a Rockabilly following. Say, for instance, I'll do a Country festival and I'll add some more of my Country songs that are popular to the set, but I'll still do Rockabilly songs at my Country show and Country songs at my Rockabilly show, so there is a crossover there.

RIOT. 77: Do you use two separate bands or is it always the Cadillac Angels that you had last night?

WANDA: The Cadillac Angels only play with me on the west coast. They have gone back east on occasion, but it's such a long drive for them and costs so much money on gas and all that. I found a terrific band from New York called The Lustre Kings who play with me from the Midwest on east, when I'm out there. They have a keyboard, two electric guitars, a harp and a stand-up bass, so it's quite a big band, but the Cadillac Angels make a lot of music for just three of them.

RIOT. 77: They certainly do! That was a different bass player that you used last night, to the one the Cadillac Angels had for their opening set. Do you have your own bass player that you bring to that band?

WANDA: Yeah. I didn't know what they were doing last night; I was in my dressing room. But Tony had a bass player there who wasn't his regular bass player. I don't know what that means, but I've been working with Steve, so I wasn't given any information as to why they switched bass players for their opening set. I guess it didn't affect me.

RIOT. 77: More recently you've worked with The Cramps and Elvis Costello. How did your association with them come into being?

WANDA: Well, they kind of got involved with me

(laughs). Elvis Costello heard I was doing a new album here in Hollywood and I think some of them live out here, so they called the producer and lady at the record company and asked if they could be a part of it. Naturally I was delighted to have Elvis on there and I knew it would also help bring a lot more attention to the album.

I made a special trip from my home in Oklahoma out here to California just to be in the studio with Elvis Costello. He didn't want to do his part in say London and me do mine in Hollywood. He wanted us to do it together and I have to agree that it does have a better gel. Dave Alvin and The Cramps who also played on there, I didn't get to meet those people. I was disappointed with that and they had to do their parts at another time.

RIOT. 77: Were you familiar with any of these bands before you worked with them?

WANDA: Yeah, Lee Rocker was with The Blasters and Dave Alvin was with the Stray Cats, is that right?

RIOT. 77: No, the other way around (laughs). Lee Rocker was with the Stray Cats and Dave Alvin, The Blasters.

WANDA: Right. Yeah I'd heard of them. I'd just heard the name The Cramps before, but I didn't know they were this weird neo Psychobilly thing (laughs) ... or whatever you call it (laughs) ... I found out later that they were pretty far out, but they did such a good job on the song that they chose to do, I was very happy with it.

RIOT. 77: What about Social Distortion? Are you familiar with their version of "Making Believe"?

WANDA: Social who?

RIOT. 77: Distortion (laughs) ... no?

WANDA: Uhhh!! No, I don't think so, but that seems to be a popular song with this crowd today alright. I guess that's why. I'm planning on adding it to my show actually.

RIOT. 77: Yeah I was hoping to hear it last night.

WANDA: If I done all the songs people asked me to do I'd be there for two hours instead of one (laughs), but I try to fit as many in as I can and play what the audience



wants to hear as much as possible.

RIOT. 77: So what are you referred to as more ... in Europe you're known as a Rockabilly singer, but I get the impression over here in the States its more Country?

WANDA: I think its pretty much evened out at this stage. There're some countries like France for instance that aren't even aware of me having done a single Country song. But in Germany I had a number one hit with "Santa Domingo" which I sang in German, and that was what you could call Country ... at least they referred to it as Country. I probably would have just called it Pop.

RIOT. 77: What about back in 50's when you started out, would it have been more commercially viable as a woman to be a Country artist or a Rockabilly artist?

WANDA: As a woman I think I did kind of prove that America wasn't ready for a female Rock n' Roller. Of course back then the young people who came to my concerts had this image of me that I was real wild onstage, but it genuinely wasn't that wild. What I was doing was different and I was a lot livelier than most at the time and I had a lot of fun. America just wasn't ready for it at the time and I'm probably a hundred times more popular now than I was in the 50's.

RIOT. 77: Really?

WANDA: Absolutely. It's unusual isn't it?

RIOT. 77: Yeah, it's kind of strange ...

WANDA: You see, if you live long enough, you never know ... (laughs).

RIOT. 77: You were saying last night that it was Elvis Presley who put the idea in your head of maybe trying out Rock n' Roll music?

WANDA: Yeah, definitely. It was him and only him. My dad, who was my manager at the time, booked my

dates and drove on the road with me, agreed with him.

They both said, "Yeah, you can do this stuff, if you just let yourself", you know? By 1956 I started trying it out and getting my feet wet with it, with songs like, "I Gotta Know" and "Hot Dog (That Made Him Mad)". It wasn't until 1959 or 1960 that I had my first Rockabilly hit and that was, "Let's Have A Party", so it took a long time.

RIOT. 77: Elvis had actually recorded "Let's Have A Party" prior to that?

WANDA: Yeah, it was in a movie.

RIOT. 77: You went on the road with Elvis Presley ... what are your memories from those days of him?

WANDA: I did several tours with Elvis. I just remember having a lot of fun. We travelled separately of course. You'd have him and Scotty in his car and my dad and I in ours. We saw each other maybe at a hotel or at the venue and began dating each other for a while. If we got into a town early we'd take in a matinee or something, as both of us really liked movies. We'd sing a lot backstage and I just remember a very happy atmosphere. The audiences were something brand new to Elvis then. First time I saw Elvis was when he was going on. I heard all the screaming and hollering and my dad and I thought the place was on fire, or something. We were like, "What's goin' on?" (laughs) ... I found out it was just the girls (laughs) ...

RIOT. 77: So, how did you go down with Elvis' crowd? Were they receptive of you at all?

WANDA: Oddly enough Cian, the girls, who represented 90% of the crowd, for some reason liked me or accepted me. But a lot of the male performers at the time, who were bigger names than Elvis, couldn't perform on the same bill as him because Elvis' audience just didn't want to hear them and didn't respect them. That upset Elvis and he said many times that the audience

should realise exactly who it is they're getting a chance to hear and they should be quiet and listen to these guys. But all they'd keep chanting was, "We-want-Elvis!!" over and over throughout their set. When I'd go out there to do my thirty minutes or whatever they'd calm down ... I don't know why ... go figure!

RIOT. 77: It's been stated many times that you were the first woman ever to play Rock n' Roll music. Do you stand by that claim?

WANDA: Well, I'm not an authority on Rock n' Roll, but I think in 1956 that yeah, I was the only one doing it.

Now of course the black groups came along, but their style was more Rhythm & Blues at that point ... you had Chuck Berry and that, but I think I was the only girl doing it ... the first one (laughs) ... on the cutting edge (laughs).

RIOT. 77: You were also one of the first white performers to use black musicians in your band, which was practically unheard of at the time, particularly down South where you're from ...

WANDA: I had Al in the mid 50's yeah, a piano player. He was a great musician and singer and a real crowd pleaser. The audiences just loved him. I had no problem with his colour.

RIOT. 77: Yeah I know that, but times were obviously a lot different in America back then ... this was before the civil rights movement, when black people still had to sit at the back of the bus ...

WANDA: That's right and it was difficult for Al on the road. Some hotels on the road wouldn't let a black person stay there and he couldn't eat in restaurants. If we were playing in a hall or something he couldn't leave the stage, so we'd take him up a coke and the people would come up to talk to him, which proved a point that it was the management of these places that had the problem with him and not the audiences. It didn't matter to the





people about his colour, but it did to management and society.

RIOT. 77: Did you play many gigs down South?

WANDA: Uhh!! I played all over, but mostly stayed in the Midwest and strangely enough northeast was always a big area for me. There was a belt area on the east coast that was really into what I was doing.

RIOT. 77: Were you ever approached by Sam Philips or the Sun record label, about recording something for them?

WANDA: No, because I was already signed with a major, Decca for two years and then I went straight over to Capitol Records. Sun Records never approached me about anything, so I never had an independent record. But it was cute, at one of those Rockabilly festivals or Rockabilly Hall of Fame induction things, shortly before Sam Philips passed away, he was giving out these awards and I was shocked when he called my name out ... I was like, "What's this??" ... so I went onstage and he handed me this award and I said, "Wow! This is beautiful, but I never recorded for Sun!!! Don't you know this??" He said, "Oh, I know that Wanda, but you should have! We had the King of Rock n' Roll and now we've gotta have the Queen!" (laughs). That was cute!

RIOT. 77: From 1956 to 1973 you were with Capitol Records ... how much of an input did they have into how you should be marketed or did they try and push you in any direction at all?

WANDA: Not a whole lot. I don't think they really knew what to do with me. It was all so new and in terms of marketing it would have been marketed to different types of places than what they would normally market their Country stuff to. If you look at any of my old 45's, they would always have a Rockabilly song on one side of the record and a Country song on the other side of it. That was the only way I could get the record played ... if they wouldn't play the Rockabilly song at least there was a Country song they could play on the other side of the record.

RIOT. 77: You were saying last night that you felt they didn't do as much as they could have for you.

WANDA: Yeah (laughs) ... sometimes I let things slip (laughs) ...

RIOT. 77: You've rerecorded and re-cut a lot of your material down the years ... what were the reasons' for doing that?

WANDA: I hadn't really thought about it, but you're right, there have been a couple of different versions of some of my songs recorded ... I think it's three songs I done that with. It was done innocently and I've never really thought about that Cian ... I know one, "In The Middle Of A Heartache" we had done it real Country and then when I was doing the "Right Or Wrong" session I think we came up with another arrangement because I had all these strings and everything in the studio at the time.

RIOT. 77: You were one of the only musicians who wrote a lot of their own material from that era ... Jerry Lee Lewis or Elvis didn't write their songs ... is that still the case today, do you still write a lot?

WANDA: No, not so much anymore. But I had to write back then because nobody else would write songs for a girl doing Rockabilly. The only way I knew how to get the material was to write them myself ... of course I

did throw in some covers too, that were almost exclusively guys songs, with the one exception being "Fujiama Mama" which was recorded by a woman ... Tennessee Williams I think it was who done that originally ... it was a black group, I know that much. I got them from wherever I could find them.

RIOT. 77: Ok, you became a devout Christian in the early 70's ... how did you become involved in that way of life?

WANDA: I was brought up in Church all my life and my mother had been a Christian. I'd been married ten years to Wendell at the time and we're still married by the way, thank god. Forty-three years!! We were living this lifestyle of hard travelling ... and things were getting tough and our marriage getting a little rocky. We had three children growing up and we were gone from them so much and I became unhappy and Wendell did too, but we didn't really know what to do about it. We knew that we didn't want a divorce, but we didn't know what was wrong. We both accepted Christ on that same day and it totally changed our lives. To me I knew this was the answer to all this restlessness and unhappiness within me. It truly was and it changed my life.

RIOT. 77: You make a point of mentioning this in your show every night ... why do you feel the need to do that ... surely that only alienates people?

WANDA: I just feel compelled to tell people that ever since the 70's this has been my way of life. I think nowadays that it's very important for these young people who esteem me very highly to know that I had all the things that everybody wants ... I had accomplished that ... a family, a career ... I was combining things like they tend to do these days and its hard, but I wanted them to know that I had all that and it had not brought me the happiness and joy that I was looking for in life. I try to say it in a way that's not condemning them and just letting them know that if they're in that same spot that I was, then Christ is your answer. I've never felt that its alienated anyone. I think they respect me for it and when I meet people after the show they thank me for standing up for my beliefs.

RIOT. 77: Incidentally, do you do that every night? Go out and spend time with whoever wants to talk with you?

WANDA: Every night. If they want autographs or to shake hands and take pictures ...

RIOT. 77: As a matter of interest Wanda, did you ever find any conflict between the Christian way of life and the wild one you sang about in your songs?

WANDA: It seems like there would be, doesn't it? (laughs)

RIOT. 77: Yeah.

WANDA: I feel that this is a calling in my life and the only thing that I've ever done is sing and that's what makes me happy. My husband loves the travelling and the show business and travels with me, booking my dates ... he's my manager. We had a ministry for about ten or fifteen years where we concentrated solely on Gospel and Church work and a revival of that sort of thing, which was what we felt compelled to do at that time. Then in about 1984, we were approached by a record company in Sweden to come over there and do a tour and record a new album for them in the Rockabilly or Country vein. We thought about it and I came to the

conclusion that this was what God wanted me to do. God will always have a voice and I feel like I'm his voice for my generation or this generation. So many people won't speak of their faith and I feel it's the most important thing in life to be prepared for death and I like to pass that on.

RIOT. 77:

Johnny Cash and Jerry Lee Lewis were

coming from a similar prospective ...

something they often said was that the Rock n' Roll music they were playing was the Devils music and true Christians should only play Gospel, but there was nothing they could do to stop themselves playing this Rock n' Roll that was almost eating them up inside ... have you ever felt that Rock n' Roll was the Devils music?

WANDA: No, because the music I did, and you can check my repertoire, was all pretty innocent. I was never out there singing about the things they do today (laughs). But, yeah they thought that Elvis was playing the Devil's music, but my parents didn't have a problem with it so I thought if its ok with them then it should be alright. I've always been careful with the songs I choose to do.

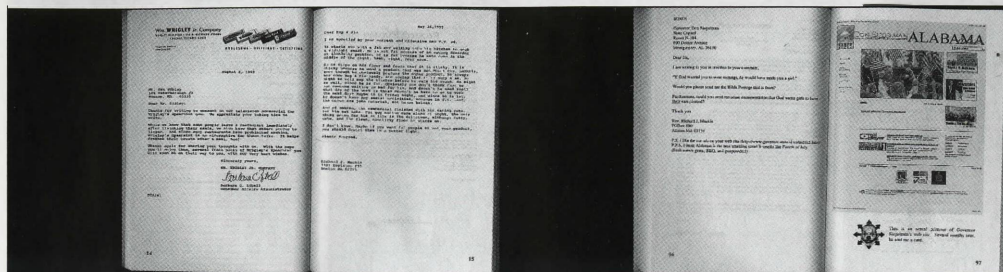
RIOT. 77: Well Wanda, unfortunately we're out of time, but it's been a pleasure meeting you.

WANDA: Sure, you too.

Book Reviews

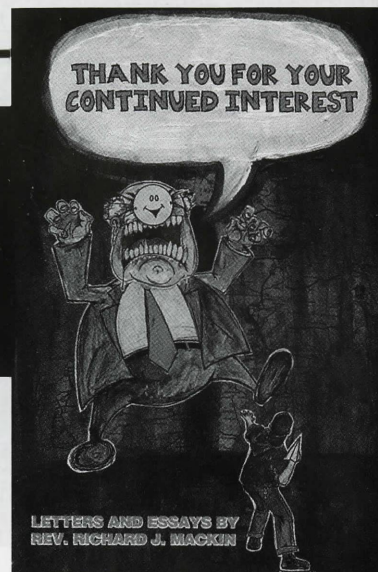
"THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED INTEREST".....

BY REV. RICHARD MACKIN. (GORSKY PRESS)



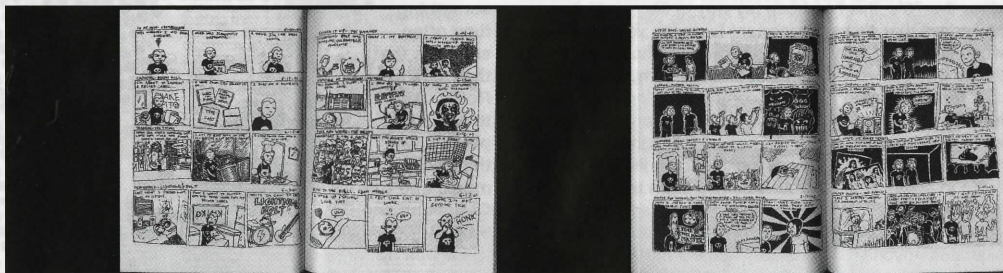
I READ SOMEWHERE THAT THIS GUY IS ACTUALLY A REVEREND OF SOME SORT AND ITS NO JOKE THAT HE PUTS THAT TITLE BEFORE HIS NAME! HUH? IF, LIKE MOST OF THE PUNK WORLD, YOU'VE BEEN PISSING YOURSELF LAUGHING AT THE PIECES RICH MACKIN HAS CONTRIBUTED TO FANZINES LIKE FLIPSIDE AND RAZORCAKE DOWN THE YEARS, THEN THIS COLLECTION OF THE GUY'S WORK SHOULD PUT A SMILE ON YOUR FACE AS IT DID MINE. HE HAS DELVED INTO VARIOUS STYLES OF WRITING DOWN THE YEARS, BUT IS BEST KNOWN FOR THE CRANK LETTERS HE CONTINUALLY SENDS OFF TO BIG CORPORATIONS IN THE STATES. SEE, MR. MACKIN IS JUST LIKE THE REST OF US, FED UP WITH THE OBVIOUS CONTRADICTIONS THESE COMPANIES REPRESENT, BE IT THROUGH THEIR ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS, WEBSITES, MISTREATMENT OF EMPLOYEES OR ANY OTHER POOR BUSINESS PRACTICES YOU'D CARE TO MENTION. THE DIFFERENCE IS, MACKIN HAS GONE ONE STEP FURTHER AND PUT PEN TO PAPER TIME AND AGAIN AND WRITTEN IN TO THESE MULTINATIONALS, EXPRESSING HIS CONTEMPT, CURIOUS TO SEE WHAT KIND OF RESPONSE IT GENERATES FROM THEM. HE KNOWS FULL WELL THEY'RE NOT GONNA LISTEN, BUT ITS STILL FUN TO WASTE THEIR TIME AND LET THEM KNOW THAT NOT EVERYONE IN AMERICA IS AS DUMB AS THESE COMPANIES WOULD LIKE TO BELIEVE. SOME DON'T WRITE BACK AT ALL, OTHERS SEND THE STANDARD FORM LETTER AND THE ODD FEW DEFEND THEMSELVES. MACKIN IS OBVIOUSLY AN INTELLIGENT MAN AND AT TIMES REALLY GOES FOR IT, IN PARTICULAR HIS CORRESPONDENCE WITH GAP CLOTHING COMPANY CONVEYS SOME MIND BOGGLING INFORMATION ON THEIR POLICIES AND PRACTICES. DITTO McDONALDS! OTHER TIMES IT'S SIMPLY TO POKE FUN AT THEIR CHEESY ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS, LIKE THE ONE FOR "I CAN'T BELIEVE ITS NOT BUTTER". HERE HE ENCLOSES A PHOTO OF HIMSELF WITH THE LETTER "DOCUMENTING HIS DISBELIEF", AS HE STANDS MOUTH OPEN AND ARMS STRETCHED BACK STARING AT THIS THING THAT HE CANNOT BELIEVE IS NOT BUTTER. THAT ONE HAD ME LAUGHING FOR A WEEK!

ONE HEALTHCARE COMPANY HE WRITES TO EVEN PHONES HIM BACK AND OFFERS TO MEET UP TO DISCUSS HIS QUERY REGARDING THE CORRECT PRONUNCIATION OF THEIR PRODUCT, TO WHICH MACKIN SHITS HIMSELF AND THINKS IT'S A STING OPERATION OF SOME SORT. SCARY THING IS, HE'S PROBABLY RIGHT! ASIDE FROM THESE LETTERS, THE BOOK ALSO FEATURES SOME OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS HE HAS MADE TO FANZINES DOWN THE YEARS, FROM TIPS ON TOURING TO JUST GETTING OFF YOUR ARSE AND MAKING LIFE A LITTLE MORE INTERESTING. FROM WHAT I CAN GATHER THIS IS PRETTY MUCH WHAT THE GUY DOES FOR A LIVING. BOOK TOURS, WRITING AND GENERALLY DOING EVERYTHING IN HIS POWER NOT TO BECOME A GOG IN THE SYSTEM HE SPENDS HIS LIFE REELING AGAINST. THIS IS RICH'S SECOND BOOK TO BE PUBLISHED, ALONGSIDE NO LESS THAN SEVENTEEN ZINES FULL OF THEM, SO AS YOU CAN GUESS HE'S EXCEPTIONALLY PROFICIENT IN WHAT HE DOES AND HAS DONE HIS HOMEWORK ON EACH TARGET. "THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED INTEREST" REMINDS ME OF A PRINTED VERSION OF WHAT THE JERKY BOYS DO, BUT OBVIOUSLY WITH A HEAVIER POLITICAL EMPHASIS. THE OTHER GREAT THING I FIND ABOUT MACKIN'S WORK IS ALTHOUGH YOU MAY ASSUME THE GUY IS A POLITICALLY CORRECT STIFF FROM READING THIS REVIEW, HE'S ABOUT THE FURTHEST THING AWAY FROM THAT AS YOU COULD GET SO YOU DON'T FEEL AS THOUGH HE'S PREACHING TO THE READER ABOUT WHAT COMPANIES THEY SHOULD OR SHOULDN'T SUPPORT. IT'S MERELY AN ANALYSIS ON HOW STUPIDLY THESE GUYS PORTRAY THEMSELVES TO THE MORE SUSSSED OCCUPANTS OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD. (GORSKY PRESS: P.O. BOX 42024, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, 90042, U.S.A.)



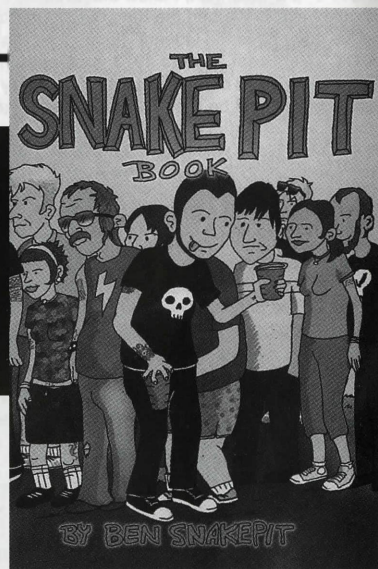
"THE SNAKE PIT BOOK".....

BY BEN SNAKEPIT. (GORSKY PRESS)



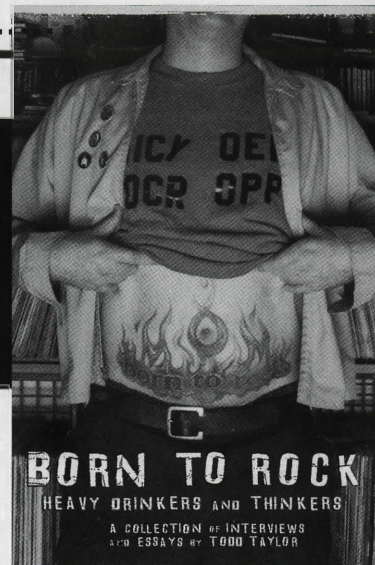
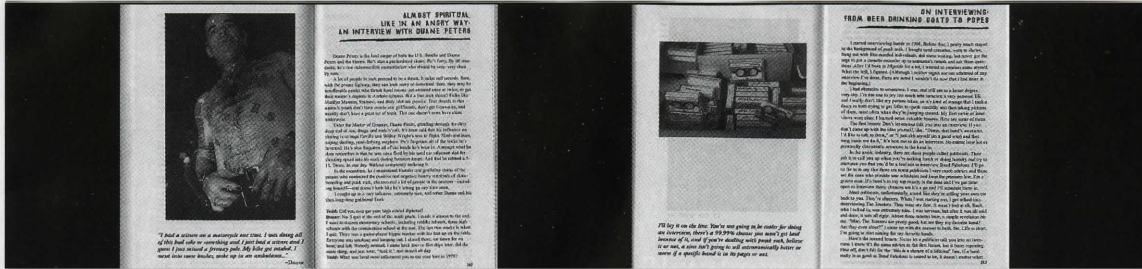
THIS AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL BOOK IS A COLLECTION OF COMIC STRIPS DRAWN BY BEN SNAKEPIT WHO YOU MAY BE FAMILIAR WITH THROUGH FANZINE CONTRIBUTIONS ELSEWHERE. "THE SNAKE PIT BOOK" IS WRITTEN / DRAWN IN DIARY FORMAT AND CHRONICLES BEN'S EVERYDAY LIFE FOR THREE YEARS FROM 2001 ONWARDS, WITH ONE THREE-PANEL COMIC PRESENTING HIS ACTIVITIES FOR EACH DAY. HIS LIFE IS TYPICAL OF ANY TWENTY-SOMETHING PUNK - SOCIETY IS SLOWLY TRYING TO BEAT THE YOUTH OUT OF HIM AND FORCE HIM TO BECOME A MAN, BUT BEN IS EAGER TO HOLD ON TO THE THINGS IN LIFE THAT HAVE ALWAYS BEEN IMPORTANT TO HIM SUCH AS MUSIC, FRIENDS, PARTYING AND REFUSING TO GET A "PROPER", STEADY JOB. AS A THREE-YEAR VOYEUR IN HIS LIFE, BY THE END YOU FEEL AS IF YOU KNOW HIM ON FIRST NAME TERMS. THE BOOK HAS A TENDENCY TO MAKE YOU REALISE HOW MONOTONOUS AND REPETITIVE EVERYBODY'S DAILY LIFE CAN BE, ONLY PUNCTUATED WITH "THE OCCASIONAL MISHAP OR FUN THING". "IT'S IMPORTANT FOR US ALL TO REMEMBER OUR LIVES IN THEIR ENTIRETY, THE GOOD WITH THE BAD, THE SWEET WITH THE SOUR, AND HOPE WHEN ITS ALL OVER WE WILL HAVE NO (OR AT LEAST FEW) REGRETS AND A GOOD STORY TO TELL." AS YOU CAN SEE THE IDEA OF THIS IS NOT TO AIRBRUSH ANYTHING AND TELL IT AS IT HAPPENS. THE DRAWINGS ARE ROUGH SKETCHES, BUT GRADUALLY IMPROVE OVER THE COURSE OF THE BOOK, WHICH IS ANOTHER ASPECT I LIKE AS IT CLEARLY SHOWS THESE STRIPS ARE ALSO A MAJOR PART OF HIS LIFE AND WE GET TO WATCH HIM GROW AS AN ARTIST AND STORYTELLER. HIS ACCOUNTS BECOME LESS FACTUAL AND MORE HUMOROUS, DESCRIBING THE SMALL SUCCESSES AND FAILURES OF HIS LIFE AND THE BOOK TENDS TO

FLOW A LOT BETTER BECAUSE OF THIS, WHICH IS SOMETHING IT LACKED IN THE BEGINNING WHERE EACH DAY APPEARED DISJOINTED FROM THE NEXT. ANOTHER ASPECT OF THIS BOOK I ENJOYED WAS THE WAY IN WHICH EACH STRIP BEGINS WITH THE NAME OF A SONG AND BAND WRITTEN ACROSS THE TOP, WHICH WE CAN ONLY ASSUME WAS HIS CHOICE OF MUSIC FOR THAT DAY AND GIVES YOU AN IDEA OF WHAT MOOD HE'S LIKELY TO BE IN. FROM THE MISFITS TO HANK WILLIAMS, THEY ALL SERVE A PURPOSE, WHICH I THINK IS SOMETHING WE CAN ALL RELATE TO. WRITING ABOUT YOUR LIFE EVERY DAY AND KEEPING IT INTERESTING DOESN'T APPEAR TO CHALLENGE BEN, WHEN READING SOMEONE'S DIARY ENTRIES IN REALITY SHOULD BE ABOUT AS INTERESTING AS BEING MADE LOOK THROUGH A WORK COLLEAGUE'S HOLIDAY PHOTOS, SO THAT IN ITSELF IS A HUGE GIFT HE POSSESSES. I GUESS SOME PEOPLE ARE BORN STORYTELLERS AND BEN APPEARS TO HAVE FOUND THE KNACK FOR THIS WITHIN HIMSELF. THERE AREN'T MANY PEOPLE I CAN THINK OF WHO WON'T BE ABLE TO RELATE TO THIS BOOK ON SOME LEVEL OR OTHER. I WAS SCEPTICAL WHEN I PICKED IT UP FIRST, NOT BEING A DIARY OR COMIC BOOK FAN, BUT AM PLEASED TO SAY IT WAS ONE OF THE MORE EYE OPENING READS I'VE HAD IN SOME TIME. (GORSKY PRESS: P.O. BOX 42024, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, 90042, U.S.A.)



"BORN TO ROCK - HEAVY DRINKERS AND THINKERS..."

BY TODD TAYLOR. (GORSKY PRESS)

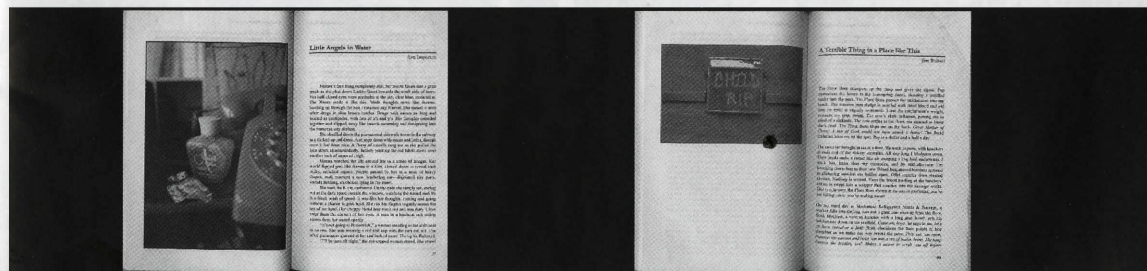


THE SUB-HEADING OF THIS BOOK, "HEAVY DRINKERS AND THINKERS; A COLLECTION OF INTERVIEWS AND ESSAYS BY TODD TAYLOR" GOES A LONGER WAY TO DESCRIBING ITS CONTENTS THAN THE ACTUAL TITLE, WHICH COMES FROM A TATTOO THE AUTHOR HAS RATHER FITTINGLY ETCHED ACROSS HIS STOMACH. TODD TAYLOR, IN CASE YOU AREN'T AWARE, IS A GIFTED WRITER OF THE PUNK ROCK KIND AND WAS MOST NOTABLY A LEADING LIGHT BEHIND THE LATTER DAYS OF FLIPSIDE MAGAZINE. SINCE THEN HE'S CO-LAUNCHED THE RAZORCAKE FANZINE AND ACTS AS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO THRASHER MAGAZINE. HE'S FROM NEVADA, BUT LIVES IN L.A. "BORN TO ROCK" BRINGS TOGETHER CHOICE HIGHLIGHTS FROM TODD'S CAREER AS AN INTERVIEWER AND WRITER. IF YOU'VE PREVIOUSLY READ ANY OF HIS WORKS IN EITHER FLIPSIDE OR RAZORCAKE, YOU'LL FIRMLY BE AWARE OF THE STYLE. THIS IS NOT MADE TO ORDER, PRE-PACKAGED PUNK ROCK. HE NEVER RESORTS TO STANDARDIZED QUESTIONS OR INTERVIEW TOPICS, DOESN'T SUCK UP TO THE BANDS THAT MUCH AND RARELY USES PRESS SHOTS OF THE INTERVIEWEES, PREFERRING INSTEAD TO SHOOT ALL HIS OWN STUFF. THE INTRODUCTION TO THIS BOOK I FOUND PARTICULARLY INTRIGUING, AS IT GIVES US A QUICK CRASH-COURSE ON TAYLOR'S LIFE, HIS UPBRINGING AND WHERE HIS INTEREST IN PUNK ROCK, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY TURNING THAT INTEREST INTO A LIFE OF WRITING ABOUT IT, CAME FROM. ORIGINALLY COMING FROM A TYPICALLY AMERICAN FAMILY-VALUES BACKGROUND IN SUBURBAN NEVADA, HE SUFFERED A FATAL CAR ACCIDENT WHILST A CHILD, DURING A BOY SCOUTS HOLIDAY, WHICH PUT HIM OUT OF ACTION FOR A TIME, ONLY TO FIND OUT WHEN HE WOKE UP THAT THE BOY SCOUTS HAD WASHED THEIR HANDS OF ALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ACCIDENT, LEAVING HIS FAMILY WITH THE BURDEN OF COVERING MEDICAL COSTS (BARE IN MIND, THIS IS AMERICA WE'RE TALKING ABOUT, WHERE SOMETHING LIKE MEDICAL BILLS CAN AMOUNT TO TAKING OUT A SECOND MORTGAGE!). IT WAS AT THIS STAGE THAT HE BEGAN TO ACCEPT LITTLE AT FACE VALUE AND LOSE TRUST IN CERTAIN ASPECTS OF MODERN LIFE AND THIS LADIES AND GENTLEMEN BROUGHT ABOUT HIS INTEREST IN PUNK ROCK! TODD'S FIRST DELVING INTO THE PRINTED WING OF THIS CULTURE WAS WORKING PART-TIME FOR AL AT FLIPSIDE MAGAZINE, DELIVERING MAIL FOR A FEW HOURS A DAY, BEFORE EVENTUALLY WORKING HIS WAY UP TO BECOMING A DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THE PUBLICATION ALONGSIDE AL. FLIPSIDE WENT TO THE GROUND IN THE LATE 90'S IF MY MEMORY SERVES ME CORRECTLY AND TODD EXPLAINS THE INNER POLITICS INVOLVED IN ALL THIS AND HOW THINGS TURNED SOUR BETWEEN BOTH PARTIES. TODAY, THEY

RARELY SPEAK. RAZORCAKE WAS LAUNCHED SOON AFTER (AT LEAST IN PUNK PUBLISHING TERMS) AND HAS BEEN A VITAL SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON THE GLOBAL PUNK FORUM SINCE. THE INTERVIEWS SELECTED FOR THIS BOOK HAVE GREAT RANGE AND COVER THE FLIPSIDE AS WELL AS THE RAZORCAKE YEARS. CERTAIN BANDS WOULD NOT BE OF INTEREST TO ME PERSONALLY BUT THAT'S WHERE TAYLOR'S SKILLS AS AN INTERVIEWER REALLY COME THROUGH. YOU'RE READING IT FOR TAYLOR'S APPROACH, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOU'RE A FAN OF THE SUBJECTS THEMSELVES OR NOT, IT ALWAYS MAKES FOR GREAT READING. OF COURSE IT'S ALWAYS A BONUS WHEN YOU ACTUALLY LIKE THE BANDS TOO, BUT AS PUBLICATIONS LIKE MAXIMUMROCKNROLL, PUNK PLANET AND INDEED RAZORCAKE HAVE PROVEN, PEOPLE BUY THESE MAGAZINES BECAUSE THEY LIKE THE WRITING AND SALES FIGURES TEND TO REMAIN UNAFFECTED BY WHAT GROUPS ARE COVERED. AS WELL AS BANDS, TAYLOR ALSO COVERS VARIOUS OTHER ASPECTS OF COMMUNITY LIFE, BY INCLUDING INTERVIEWS WITH GRAPHIC ARTISTS, FANZINE WRITERS AND EVEN A CHILD-PROTECTION LAWYER, WHICH SURPRISED ME BY BEING ONE THE MORE MEMORABLE INCLUDED, EVEN IF I DON'T AGREE WITH EVERYTHING THE GUY HAS TO SAY. COLLECTIVELY THE PIECES RANGE FROM HILARIOUSLY FUNNY AT TIMES (CHECK DUANE PETER'S FUCK DOLL STORY!) TO THOUGHT-PROVOKINGLY SERIOUS AT OTHERS, SOMETIMES ALL IN THE SAME INTERVIEW. TAYLOR BRINGS OUT ALL THE EMOTIONS THAT A GOOD BOOK SHOULD. YOU MAY THINK READING A LITTLE UNDER TWENTY INTERVIEWS BACK TO BACK WOULD BE REPETITIOUS AND I WAS SURE I'D SKIP OVER A SIZEABLE HANDFUL, BUT LET ME ASSURE YOU THAT WON'T HAPPEN WITH THIS GUY. WHEN YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT HIM FIGURED OUT, HE'LL COME OUT WITH A QUESTION TO COMPLETELY THROW YOU, KEEPING YOU INQUISITIVE ENOUGH TO NOT PUT THE BOOK DOWN. A QUICK RUN DOWN SOME OF THE BOOK'S CONTENTS INCLUDES AMONGST OTHERS, TALKS WITH DUANE PETERS, TIM YOHANNAN AND JEN ANGEL OF MAXIMUMROCKNROLL, WINSTON SMITH, NOFX, PENNYWISE, DILLINGER FOUR AND HOT WATER MUSIC. YEAH, THIS HAS SECURED A PLACE ON MY BOOKSHELF FOR SOME TIME TO COME! (GORSKY PRESS: P.O. BOX 42024, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, 90042, U.S.A.)

"PUNCH & PIE".....

EDITED BY TODD TAYLOR & FELIZON VIDAD (GORSKY PRESS)



YES, THE TITLE COMES FROM THAT EXCELLENT SOUTH PARK EPISODE WHERE THE KIDS TRY AND ORGANISE A REVOLUTION AND ARE TOLD TO INCLUDE "PUNCH & PIE" ON THE POSTER ADVERTISING IT, AS THAT WAY MORE PEOPLE WILL COME IF THEY THINK THERE'S PUNCH & PIE AVAILABLE. "PUNCH & PIE" THE BOOK HOWEVER HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH SOUTH PARK, BUT IS STILL AN INTERESTING IDEA AND GIVEN THAT I SELDOM READ FICTION THESE DAYS, THIS IS PERHAPS THE FIRST BOOK OF ITS KIND I CAN RECOUNT READING IN REGENT MEMORY. WHAT WE BASICALLY HAVE IS A BUNCH OF THE GORSKY PRESS / RAZORCAKE STAFF (FIFTEEN WRITERS, BUT UNFORTUNATELY JIMMY ALVARADO IS NOT INCLUDED) WHO EACH CONTRIBUTE A SHORT STORY OF THEIR OWN, THEMATICALLY BASED ON EVERYTHING FROM HEN NIGHTS TO OLD GUYS GETTING BLOW JOBS, IN ADDITION TO PLENTY OF FAR OUT STUFF THAT WENT WAY OVER MY HEAD. PERSONAL TASTES ASIDE, ALL WRITERS IN THIS BOOK, AS WITH ANYTHING THAT COMES OUT UNDER THE GORSKY / RAZORCAKE HEADING, MAINTAIN A HIGH STANDARD AND KNOWLEDGEABLE APPROACH TO THEIR SUBJECT. SOME HAVE LONG PUBLISHING HISTORIES BEHIND THEM, OTHERS ARE SIMPLY WRITERS WHOM THE EDITORS LIKED AND DECIDED TO INCLUDE. AUTHORS WHOSE PIECES GRABBED MY ATTENTION HERE INCLUDE JIM RULAND, PATRICIA GEARY, SEAN CARSWELL, TODD TAYLOR AND FELIZON VIDAD. SOME OF THE OTHERS JUST DIDN'T CONNECT, BUT IT'S THE TYPE OF BOOK THAT HAS YOU CONTEMPLATING THE STORY'S MESSAGES IN THE AFTERMATH

OF READING THEM AND I CAN ENVISION MYSELF GOING BACK TO ONE OR TWO OF THEM IN THE FUTURE ON THE OFF-CHANCE THAT I MISSED SOMETHING. TO PULL THIS KIND OF SHIT OFF WITHOUT GETTING OVERLY SENTIMENTAL AND COMING ACROSS AS TRYING TOO HARD IS A DIFFICULT PITFALL TO AVOID, BUT THERE'S A REAL SENSE OF PURPOSE BEHIND MOST OF THESE STORIES AND YOU KNOW THEY'RE NOT JUST TELLING 'EM FOR THE SAKE OF IT. THEY HAVE THAT RARE GIFT, MUCH LIKE GEORGE TABB, WHERE YOU KNOW YOU'RE GONNA GET SOMETHING OUT OF IT BY THE END. WHO KNOWS WHAT THIS TYPE OF THING WILL LEAD TO AS IT'S SOMEWHAT OF AN UNREALISED MEDIUM WITHIN PUNK ROCK, BUT AS AN IDEA OF HOW TO TAKE THE COLUMN FORMAT COMMON WITHIN PUNK PUBLISHING TO THE NEXT LEVEL, THIS IS AN INTERESTING CONCEPT. IT MAY NOT BE THE KIND OF READING MATERIAL THAT EVERYBODY WOULD BE PRONE TO, BUT IF YOU LIKE THE DIVERSE VIBE AND SPIRIT OF RAZORCAKE FANZINE, YOU'LL MOST DEFINITELY FIND A STORY IN HERE TO YOUR LIKING. (GORSKY PRESS: P.O. BOX 42024, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, 90042, U.S.A.)



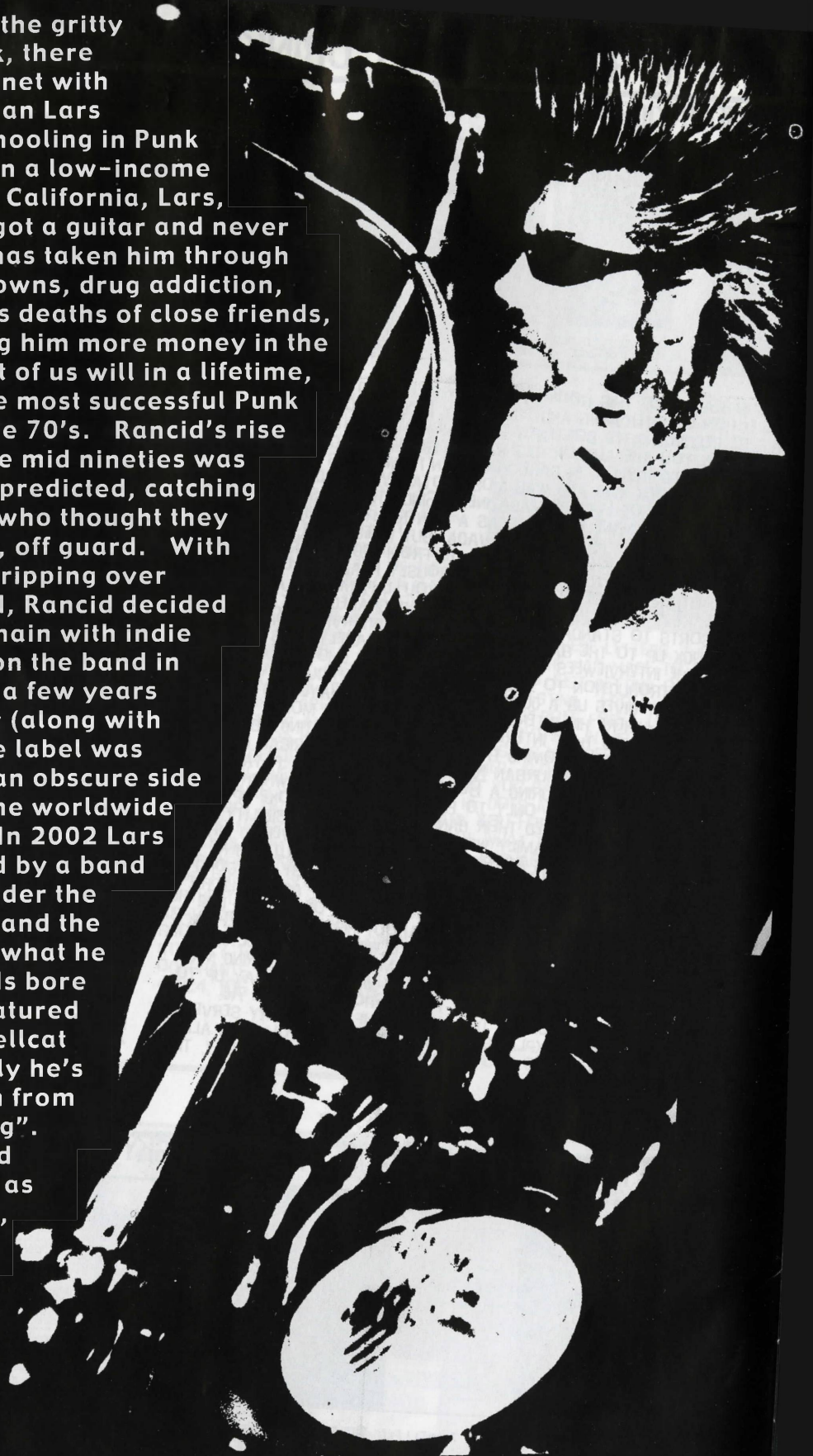
In terms of a life lived through the gritty underbelly of all things Punk, there surely isn't a man on the planet with more war stories to tell than Lars Frederiksen. Receiving his schooling in Punk Rock through his upbringing in a low-income housing estate in Campbell, California, Lars, "dropped out of high-school, got a guitar and never looked back". His journey has taken him through highs and lows, ups and downs, drug addiction, marriage break ups, countless deaths of close friends, whilst at the same time earning him more money in the space of a few years than most of us will in a lifetime, playing in what is probably the most successful Punk Group we've seen since the late 70's. Rancid's rise from relative obscurity in the mid nineties was something no one could have predicted, catching more than a few A+R hacks, who thought they had their finger on the pulse, off guard. With major labels repeatedly tripping over themselves to sign up the band, Rancid decided to stick to their guns and remain with indie Epitaph who took a chance on the band in releasing their first album a few years previous. Rancid's loyalty (along with Offspring and NOFX) to the label was instrumental in taking it from an obscure side project of Brett Gurewitz' to the worldwide Empire we know it as today. In 2002 Lars released an interesting record by a band

he'd recently assembled under the moniker of Lars Frederiksen and the Bastards. As an extension of what he does with Rancid, the Bastards bore close ties to the group and featured various members from the Hellcat family of bands. More recently he's returned with a second album from the Bastards, entitled "Viking".

Naturally this had to be road tested and the band hit Europe as their first port of call this year, pulling into Dublin's Temple Bar Music Centre for the

second date of this leg. I headed down for a chat early that afternoon ...

(All photos taken in Temple Bar Music Centre, Dublin.)



LARS FREDERIKSEN And The Bastards

RIOT. 77: That was a Cocksparrer song you were just playing there at soundcheck ...

LARS FREDERIKSEN: Yeah ... we were just fooling around. I wanna do some more covers, but we already do "For You" and "Marie Marie".

RIOT. 77: How did the Belfast gig go last night?

LARS: Yeah, it was good. It was our first show of the tour and it was in Ireland, so you can't really get much better than that. That was my second time there. I was there with Rancid a couple of years back.

RIOT. 77: Yeah, you hung around Dublin for a few days when you were here with Rancid.

LARS: We did. We went and saw Bad Manners with Blood Or Whiskey. Our merch guy was skanking in the pit with his shirt off with me and Tim and the club owner came out to us and told us to put our shirts back on (laughs) ... so we had to put our shirts back on.

RIOT. 77: So this Bastards band that you've put together, you've described it as a form of therapy?

LARS: Well, I think all music is. The Bastards is just another extension of Rancid. Yes, of course the Bastards are another form of therapy in a sense. I've got a great band with these guys and am very fortunate to have all these dudes in the band with me.

RIOT. 77: How did you go about choosing them?

LARS: Well Scotty was in Hepcat, who are a Ska band and we were out on tour with them in America in '98 or thereabouts. He'd never played Punk Rock before but totally killed it as a Reggae drummer, but he picked it up as though he'd been playing Punk Rock for twenty years. Then there's Jay and me and Jay know each other a while. I saw Jay at a club and I called my friend Mike Erickson who plays in a band called Pressure Point and asked who the big guy with the "Most Hated" tattoo on his neck was and he said, "Oh that's Big Jay Bastard, he plays in a band called The Roughnecks". I go, "Ok, cool ... well does he play an instrument?" and he said, "Yeah, he plays bass". I called Tim before I even called Mike Erickson and said, "I think we found our bass player!" Jay was actually the first member of the Bastards and he didn't even know. I told Tim I didn't even know if he could really play anything but he's got "Most Hated" tattooed on his neck, is about 6 foot 3" and 350 pounds. Tim goes, "He's in! And if he doesn't know how to play bass we'll have Matt Freeman teach him". He became a member six months before we started writing any songs. Scott then was the second easy choice and Gordy is in a band called The Forgotten and at the time Craig was in the band with him. I knew Gordy was gonna be in the band at some point because the first record was gonna be about our hometown of Campbell, California and the more guys from there, the merrier. We had this old friend of ours called Gabe who we were going to get, but he was just so strung out, so that didn't happen. But the first record was basically just the four of us in this room now and Gordy came down and did backups and a few other things and we thought about getting him in on guitar



tar 'cos he's a guitar player, but he suggested it would be easier for us to tour if we got Craig from The Forgotten in as a second guitar player instead and it just worked out perfectly. Craig is now in a band called the Mercy Killers. The Bastards is very much Hellcat orientated, with members of The Roughnecks and Hepcat and Rancid

RIOT. 77: Tiger Army are just doing the two Irish dates with you, is that right?

LARS: Yeah, just these two dates.

RIOT. 77: Then Mad Sin from Germany pick it up?

LARS: Yeah Mad Sin. I love that Psychobilly stuff. We took the Nekromantix on tour with us over in Japan and the HorrorPops through the States. We've known those Mad Sin guys for ten years and I love that band. Rancid has done a lot of gigs with them and we became really good friends, so keep it in the family.

RIOT. 77: You seem to talk a lot more about your upbringing with the Bastards than you did with Rancid ... tell me a bit about Campbell ... what sort of a place was it to grow up in?

LARS: Well, "Nihilism", the Rancid song from "Let's Go" is about Campbell ... I think we've always sang about it ... "Roots, Radicals" is about Campbell too. We've always talked about our neighbourhoods in Rancid. It was actually Tim's idea that I do this band. He said he loved my stories about Campbell and I didn't sing that much on the "Rancid V" album, so why not do a Lars solo record where we'll write all the songs together and Tim would produce it? I was like, "Fuck! I got one of the greatest songwriters in the world working with me, not to mention a great producer and it's gonna come out on Hellcat and it'll be something for us to do, so we can hang out" and that's how it all started.

RIOT. 77: You mention growing up around gangs and being part of all that ... why did you feel the need to be in a gang as opposed to standing up for yourself on your own two feet?

LARS: Well ... its survival ... standing on your own in low-income housing is a little tough sometimes, plus when you've got friends and likeminded people, you start your little firms and your little crews and you go to gigs together and it's a way to identify yourself. It's been a part of me my whole life, I guess.

RIOT. 77: How does that lifestyle compare with your lifestyle now?

LARS: Uhhhh!! Well, you know I don't really I'm just a regular guy, you know, except for I've got tattoos on my face ... I shit and I piss just like everybody else and I drink coffee ... I'm a normal guy, I'm a Punk Rocker ... you know what I mean? There's no difference between me or any of these guys in my band or any of the people who come to see us play ...

RIOT. 77: Do you still live in the Campbell area?

LARS: I live in San Francisco.

RIOT. 77: What part?

LARS: The Richmond district.

RIOT. 77: Very nice.

LARS: Uhhh!!! ... you know it is and it isn't ... it's only about sixty miles north of Campbell.

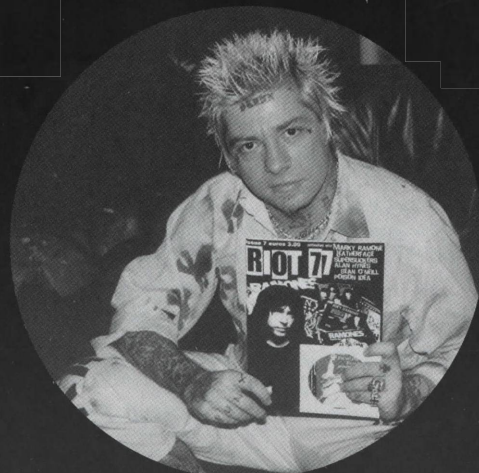
RIOT. 77: What sort of reaction has the album artwork been getting?

LARS: No one really cares. People who are going to get offended by that are either real extreme right wing or real extreme left wing, which are both universally the same. In my experience the extreme left wing are the ones with the biggest porno collection ... exactly the same as the right wing ... they're the ones who are always gay, you know what I mean? There's nothing wrong with being gay ... I live in San Francisco and a lot of my friends are gay ... but what I'm basically trying to say is that extremism on any side or level is not cool. I'm not saying to be a fence walker, but I have different opinions now to when I was sixteen on a lot of things and as you get older that tends to happen. The idea for the album artwork was just to do something kind of different and since its come out there've been another three bands doing albums with exactly the same concept. The closest thing you seen to that on a Punk record before was the Dwarves ... you never really seen that on a Punk record before ... It was also to maybe make a political statement at the same time, like when you've got a guy like Ashcroft who won't do speeches on front of partially nude statues, you kind of see the political climate drifting the way it is in America, where they're taking away your freedom of speech, your freedom of art, freedom of political beliefs or whatever ... it's all been thrown out the window because you've got the right wing Christian coalition basically running the country. If anything it was aimed to offend them. God, in my opinion, if there is a god, is not something you're supposed to fear or create wars for ... I don't believe in that ... and that's what's happening in the Middle East right now - we're fighting a Holy War that we're never going to win. Those people have been living there for thousands of fuckin' years and there's just no way we can win a war against them ... and it's young American men and women, just like any of us here in this room, who never got a chance to go to College and basically had to work or die ... it's not like over here where you have socialized medicine or the dole queue, or in Germany where you have government funded squats ... they pay you to be a Punk Rocker basically ... they always seem to be the most politically opinionated countries too, which always strikes me as funny, since the government pays them all to be Punk ... if my Government paid me to do that I probably wouldn't want to be a Punk ... or maybe I would, come to think of it (laughs). I just think the political climate and what I was experiencing in my personal life ... it had a lot to do with all kinds of things ... plus I was getting sick of all this safe stuff out there that was supposed to be Punk ... bands posing in front of pink clouds with bunny rabbits ... fuck that shit, I always want to do something different and that's why Rancid has never made the same record twice and the Bastards haven't either.

RIOT. 77: How involved were you with the election last year ... a lot of Punks in the states were trying very hard to mobilize people ...

LARS: Well I was in Japan when the election went down and I didn't get my absentee ballot until three weeks after the election, so it wouldn't have mattered anyway. Same with

one of the other guys in the band. That's the



way they try to shut you up.

RIOT. 77: Yeah you're about the fourth American I've met that has said that to me ... weird!

LARS: That's the way it is man. It was structured in such a way that Bush was destined to win, no question. America is corrupt ... we celebrate stupidity in America with Reality TV and makeover shows. All that shit that just dumbs you down ... sports ... it can be cool for an escape ... but its really just dumbing down the people and celebrating stupidity ... I'm not saying TV is bad because I enjoy pro-wrestling ... Its just that everything we celebrate in America isn't real ... fake tits, Vanity Fair, GQ and People Magazine ... celebrities ... these people shit and piss like all of us, there is absolutely no need to put them on a pedestal.

RIOT. 77: What do you like about America then? Why do you still choose to live there despite everything that's going on?

LARS: America is the greatest country on the face of the planet in theory. I believe that ... actually Denmark is probably the greatest with America a close second. The idea of America is genius. I don't necessarily know if these god-given freedoms that we're supposed to have actually exist anymore, but I'm all for the theory behind it. I think everybody has tried to gain their independence from England at some point (laughs) ...

RIOT. 77: Ahem!

LARS: ... which I think is a good thing.

RIOT. 77: Did you say that in Belfast last night? (laughs)

LARS: (Laughs) I think what I said was, "Your Prime Minister ... oh excuse me, the English Prime Minister ..." I was hearing a rumbling of "Boooo!!!", so I had to change it pretty quick (laughs) ... but I don't want to get involved in Irish politics because I'm not Irish, I'm Danish. We do have a kinship though, since the Dane's were here in 980 B.C. or was it A.D? I think it was A.D. Sorry guys!!! We gave all the Irish red hair (laughs).

RIOT. 77: Do you study history much? Are you interested in it?

LARS: I read a lot about Norse mythology and the history of my Scandinavian heritage ... I'm extremely proud of it. I like to read about history in general though. It's interesting to see how everything led to this and how we ended up here. I like World War II history and political history in general.

RIOT. 77: Are you intending to keep the Bastards a lot more underground?

LARS: Well, not necessarily. If we have a big radio hit or whatever then that would be fine too. I just wanted to have some fun and I'm not saying I don't have fun in Rancid because I have the most fun in Rancid, I just wanted a different kind of fun. You have to be careful what you say here because people love to interpret things as they please ... I'm not saying I'm bored with Rancid ... I remember saying from the stage one night, "Rancid are not breaking up" because everybody was thinking we were when I started doing the Bastards and there were so many questions ... and this kid who was in the front row came up to me after the show and said, "Lars, why did you quit Rancid?" (laughs) ... you gotta be careful what you say. It's just a different kind of fun with a different set of friends but we're all part of the same family. We like playing music together and I've got a great band behind me. We've actually been more of a band in the past five months than we've ever been.

RIOT. 77: Do you think it's basically a Rancid crowd you play for?

LARS: Yeah, I think so. Absolutely. If it weren't for Rancid then none of this would have ever been possible. We wouldn't have a crowd interested in coming to see us. I'm positive its Rancid's crowd. Who else would it be?

RIOT. 77: You played with the U.K. Subs for a while ... tell me about that.

LARS: Yes, I did. It was in 1989 when I joined the band and I think the record they had out at the time was "Mad Cow Fever" and they had Carl from the Exploited and Broken Bones playing guitar for them and Brian Marr was on bass and I think Matt McCoy was on drums. Me and Gordy were in a Punk band and were playing at this all-day Punk festival in

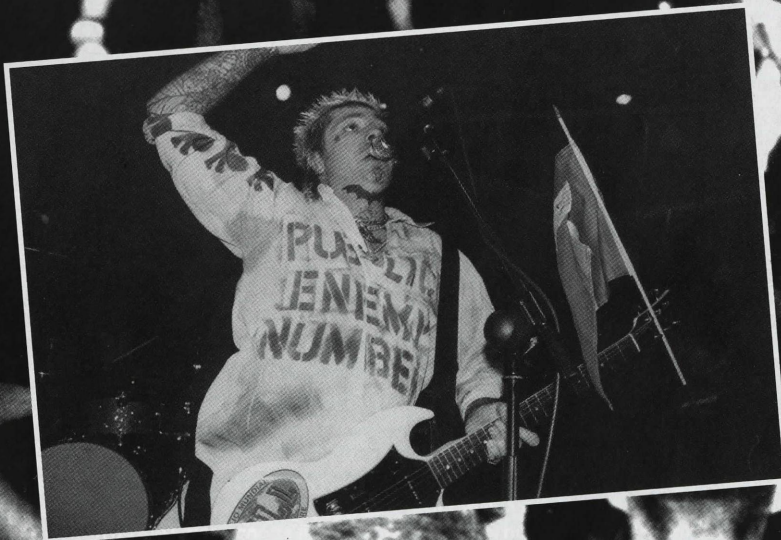
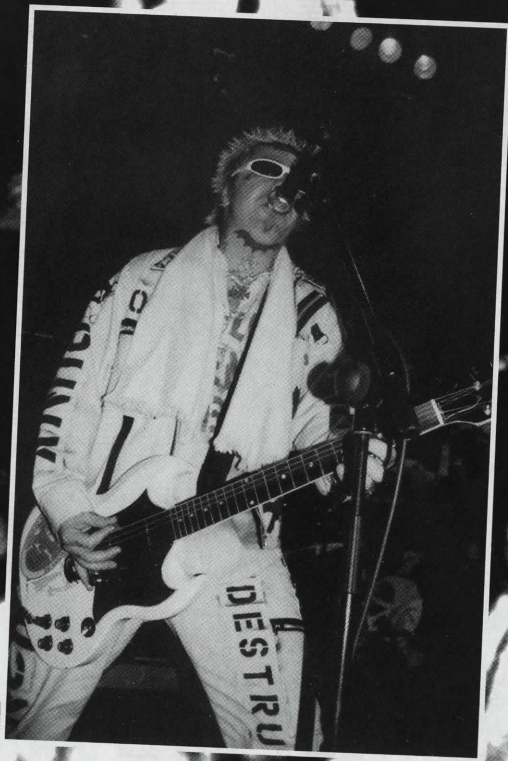
Oakland the same day the U.K. Subs were in town at Gilman St. The band that me and Gordy were in did a cover of "Organised Crime" by the Subs and Charlie Harper and the band were actually there - they'd come down to the show to see us after they finished their show at Gilman and afterwards we just started talking and Charlie said they were looking for a new guitar player. I was like, "Fuck yeah" and we went off and got drunk. I went home and the next day I was supposed to call him and Sunday rolls around and Charlie gets a hold of me and says, "Why didn't you call me?" and I said, "Well I thought you were taking the piss!" and he's like, "No, I want you to be in the band". He said he wanted to hear a demo tape and meet that night ... so we got lost on the B.A.R.T. train together ... I was eighteen or nineteen at the time and we went over to this club together in San Francisco ... this was like late July or early August and on my birthday on August 30th after I'd sent him a demo tape I got a letter from Charlie saying, "I can't believe you want to leave the band you're in, but you're in the Subs ... get your ticket and let's go". And that's it; I was in the U.K. Subs.

RIOT. 77: What did you do with them ... you never recorded anything did you?

LARS: Uhhh!! There were a couple of live records, but they're bootlegs. But I never recorded anything official, no. I wrote two or three songs that I was never given credit for, on "Normal Service Resumed". That was a sore point between me and Charlie for a couple of years and I actually bad-mouthed him a number of times. When I was over on tour in '95 me and Charlie went out to dinner and I'd grown up a little bit ... he kicked me out of the band because I was a fuckin' junkie and I was drinking a bottle of Scotch a day. I would fall off the stage ...

RIOT. 77: You weren't a functioning junkie or alcoholic then?

LARS: No, I was twenty years old at the time or something and he was like, "Nah! I've been through this!" He told me I had to leave and that was that. I always resented him for it and then the record came out and I wasn't on the credits ... I called him up and said, "I helped write those songs!" and he said, "Oh



that was Pete's thing". The I called Pete Davies the drummer and asked him what happened and he just said he forgot. I got mad and ... It's nobody's fault ... it's just one of those things ... but Charlie Harper is like my dad and we have a much better relationship now and he called me up just before I came over here, asking if I could pick him up this guitar that he really wanted and I was like, "Yeah, of course!" I talk to him about once a month and I'm like his son and he's a proud father. Every time he comes to see us play he gives me a hug and a kiss and says, "I love you Lars, I've always believed in you and I'm glad you stopped doing that stuff, because you've got more talent than that". Charlie Harper is like what my father should have been and I always think of him that way. When the Subs do their anniversary gig in London I'll be playing with them.

RIOT. 77: Oh yeah?

LARS: Uh huh! I'm not too sure where it is yet, Charlie is still trying to put it together. Whenever he's in America he calls me up and we hang out. He gives me marital advice or whatever I need ... having Charlie Harper be like your dad is pretty cool.

RIOT. 77: What did you do with yourself when you got kicked out of the U.K. Subs?

LARS: I came home and kept shooting drugs and was trying to hide it from everybody, especially Gordy. When I left to go join the Subs I was about 198 pounds, so I was a big kid and when I came home I weighed 158 pounds. I said to people, "Yeah I just haven't been eating", but Gordy saw right through that and said, "Yeah, right".

RIOT. 77: It was heroin you were on, was it?

LARS: Everything. I'd do anything ... put it in front of me and I'd do it ... if you chopped up laxatives I'd snort them, that's just the way I am. I started a band with Mofa who was the famous Thrasher Magazine photographer and a guy that was in Nirvana for a short, hot second and the drummer who is now playing in The Forgotten. I was pretty much the only Punk Rocker and it became a nightmare. The same thing that happened me in the Subs, happened in that band and I got kicked out pretty quickly. I was showing up to gigs with three strings on my guitars, but

I was pulling off the show, even though I was such a waste case. I was living with this

chick and that was a bad scene too, you know? Then I started another band that went on to become The Forgotten really and when I left that band I joined Rancid. Rancid is like the fifth band I've ever been in, in my life and I've been in Rancid thirteen years.

RIOT. 77: What do you do now? Are you completely sober?

LARS: Uhhh!! I don't necessarily partake in it, just because if I drink or do drugs I'm not a very nice person and will try to fight everybody ... I would try to conquer Ireland ... so I tend to stay away from it ... I don't judge anybody for doing what they want to do ... some people don't like the fact that I smoke cigarettes.

RIOT. 77: You've worked closely with Buju Banton down the years ... what do you make of all this shit surrounding him at the moment over his anti-gay stance?

LARS: You know what man, I know he did that song on his first record and then he found Rastafari and he became a more spiritual person and that's when I met him. Buju is a spiritual person and is on his own path. I judge a person on their merit; how he judges a person might not be the same way I do but I'm not going to judge him for that, you know what I mean? I personally am not anti-gay, I'm not sexist and I'm not a racist. I think all that stuff is bullshit and am thoroughly opposed to it. My mother grew up during World War II and I've got family members who I'll never get to meet because the nazis killed 'em, you know what I'm saying? Denmark is the only country in this entire fuckin' world that legally recognizes gay marriages. I live in fuckin' San Francisco man where it's 60% homosexual and I don't give a fuck. If it makes you happy to suck cock, then fuckin' do it. Lord knows I ended up in some places when I was a junkie that fucked me up and I would never judge anybody like that, you know? I can't, because people judge me all the time. You gotta lead by example man. I don't judge anybody for what they do sexually or whatever ... I have my own political beliefs and I hate Republicans as much as I hate nazis ... my cousin is a staunch Republican and I can't even be at the dinner table with him.

RIOT. 77: You became very involved with the Ramones during their final years as a band and one song in particular that you tended to cover was "53rd and 3rd", which is about some of the things we just discussed ... could you relate to that song's lyrical content or why did you chose it?

LARS: "53rd and 3rd" is just a great tune and yeah, it's about selling your ass for drugs and I've been there ... not that I sold my ass, but ... yeah we're talking about the world's greatest band there, right? I could talk all day about 'em ... how much tape do you have left? We were on Lollapalooza with them and they offered us that tour and we said no initially, but then they came back to us and said the Ramones were going to do it and we said if they were doing then we'd do it. But I guess they were doing the same thing to the Ramones and told them Rancid were doing it so they agreed too. We got in touch with the Ramones and said, "So, what's up?" and we both agreed we'd do it. We watched 'em every night and I got to be the Pinhead a couple of times with the Gabb! Gabb! Hey! sign. We watched the Ramones forty odd times in a row and Devo thrown in there every once in a while so it ended up being really cool. Last time I saw Dee Dee was ... I spoke to him a couple of times after their final show that we played at and the last time I spoke with Johnny he didn't look too good, and he was a very private person, but I knew something was going on. Me and Tim were supposed to go see Joey in hospital when we were out in New York on tour with the Dropkick Murphys, but it didn't happen and then that Easter Sunday he died, so it sucked. Basically we lost Joe Strummer, Joey, Johnny and Dee Dee ... fuck it, that's a Punk band in itself.

RIOT. 77: They've erected a statue of Johnny in Hollywood I heard?

LARS: Yeah. I didn't go to the opening actually because I was coming here and had to get ready for this. But I'll visit it in my own time. I don't really like to go to things like that, especially when you know somebody personally ... you kind of want to have your own moment with them and I've been through so many deaths in my life, be it my brother or best friend ... watching them get killed or killing themselves and there's only so many fuckin' funerals you can go to and only so many things like that you can do, to the point where you want to just personalize it more, you know? How do you say goodbye to somebody? I'll be saying goodbye to my brother for the rest of my life.



DVD REVIEWS



THE BUSINESS "SUBURBAN REBELS: LIVE AT RIO'S". (CHERRY RED)

Having caught a brief clip from this gig on some DVD comp or other, it left me contemplating what the chances were of getting my hands on the entire performance as the quality was excellent and it captured The Business at that exciting phase, shortly after the release of "The Truth ..." album, when they were seriously starting to make some waves following a quiet enough comeback for the first few years. Cherry Red can clearly read our minds and know what we want, so here we go then. The entire set from Bradford's Rio's, filmed in the summer of '98 when Fitzy was just making that transformation into a Hardcore hooligan, with the wifebeater and combat shorts on. The Business really nailed it here, they were hot and they knew it. You can clearly see from the look in Mickey Fitz' face that he knew they were onto a good thing and when The Business hit, they hit hard lemme tell ya! Anyone who's caught them live on a good night will testify to it and this DVD does just that. The setlist is like a what's what of Oil anthems down the years ... The Business really did record an unbelievable amount of good songs and that's something which continues to this day. Opening with "Suburban Rebels", "The Whole Truth" and "Never Been Taken" is an unbeatable trio to kickstart this second to none selection of their finest moments. Follow it up with a little "Spirit Of The Street", "Saturdays Heroes", "Justice Not Politics", and their first single "Out In The Cold" with that wonderfully infectious bass part that Lol lays down with ease. This is an entertaining hour to spend on front of the box in the company of a fine band. The rare thing you'll find about sitting through this is the absence of any lulls in their set, making it damn near impossible to skip over to your favourite moments, 'cos all of them are killer. My attention level never wavered once during this and I've watched it from start to finish at least five times, which really says something for me as I've seldom done that with anything on TV. Back to the setlist and The Business lash out "One Thing Left To Say", "Real Enemy" and "Smash The Discos" in similarly chaotic fashion, before it's on to "Southgate (Euro '96)", "Harry May" and "Drinking And Driving" to send it home on a high. If this isn't available at your local dinky record shop (and lets be honest, it probably won't be), I strongly encourage sending away for it. Top class! (CHERRY RED FILMS: UNIT 3A, LONG ISLAND HOUSE, WARPLE WAY, ACTON, LONDON W3 ORG, ENGLAND.)

CIRCLE JERKS "THE SHOW MUST GO OFF: LIVE AT THE HOUSE OF BLUES". (KUNG FU FILMS)

Wow! The legendary Circle Jerks on DVD! This House Of Blues place where just about all the concerts appearing in Kung Fu's "The Show Must Go Off" series were filmed, has great sound and camera set ups, but is it really the type of place to capture bands like the Circle Jerks at their best and in their natural environment? Regardless, you could watch a band like the Circle Jerks performing in your dustbin (as they often did) and there would still be cause to celebrate, so this DVD is hopping from the get go. It was ten years ago when they first made a comeback and like many a staple Punk act at the time, took a major label up on their offer to reward them for their years of hard grafting by attempting to turn the band into a mainstream entity. The album that ensued was actually a fine collection of work, but it failed to have the desired impact on the masses and thus the band returned to underground confines, where little has been heard from them since. Hetson made his name with Bad Religion and bassist Zander Schloss went on to play for everyone including The WeirDOS and Joe Strummer. Keith Morris fell into bad health, worked for a record company and surfaced with another band called Midget Handjob, but on the side they began reviving the Circle Jerks name again with a slew of dates in America to enhance their status as a functioning band once more. The Kung Fu entourage showed up for this Orange County performance and got the cameras rolling to establish what the home viewer has been missing. Considering no one in the band can claim they're under forty years of age, this is highly active and gripping stuff we've got here. Hetson naturally hasn't stopped bunny hopping around since he was a teenager, but to witness the energy and passion still inside Zander Schloss and in particular Keith Morris is thrilling. They pour into the hits here, taking in all the great selections from "Group Sex" and "Wild In The Streets" along with some more recent nuggets, like "Anxious Boy" and "I Wanna Destroy You" (sadly without Debby Gibson!). This truly brings home how good this band are, with the tightest of tight sets, consisting of rapid fire Hardcore that's never afraid of a good Pop hook. The sound is straight off the board, ensuring every word uttered from Morris's mouth can be deciphered. There's a full audio commentary by Zander and Keith in the extras part of the DVD, which is hilarious given that Keith gets fed up with Zabder's constant tales of chicks and making money about five minutes into it and refuses to utter a word from that point on. Zander continues to twist the knife however, questioning Keith's underlying political angle he took with the lyrics down the years! Watching this you can't help feel a little angered that the Circle Jerks sound has been beaten into the ground by tons of lesser bands in the two decades it's been since they ruled the roost. In my book this band will always rule the roost! Long live the Circle Jerks! (KUNG FU FILMS: MARTINUS NYHOFFLAAN 22624 ES DELFT, THE NETHERLANDS.)

THE DRONES "FURTHER TEMPTATIONS". (CHERRY RED)

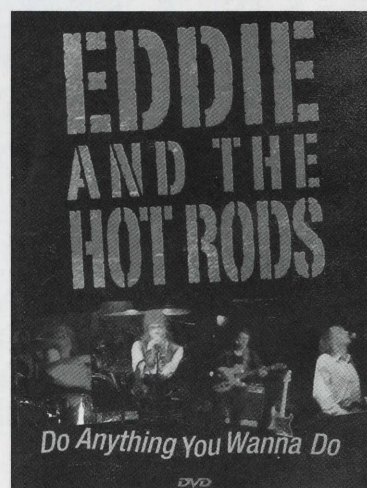
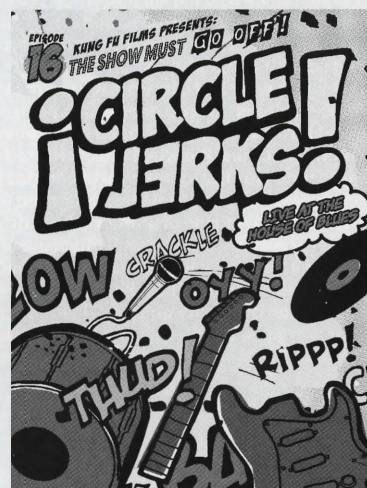
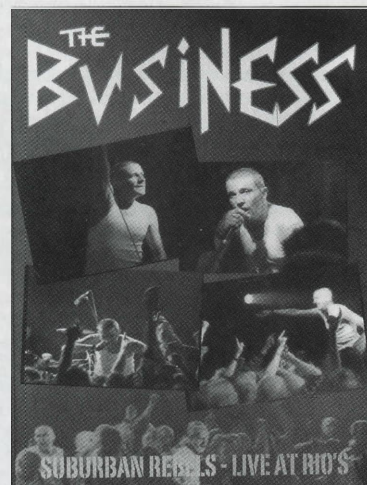
The Drones bore all the trademarks of another hard hitter during the first outbreak of Punk Rock in 1976, when the band formed in their native Manchester. The Drones placed themselves nicely alongside The Buzzcocks and Slaughter And The Dogs, who put the north-west of England on the Punk map. Much like their fellow townies, The Drones glanced in the direction of the Glam Rock and American Garage bands that went before them for their musical cues. Unfortunately for The Drones they were too often overshadowed by the wealth of other bands doing the rounds at the time, but when you think about it now skipping back through their catalogue here, they turned in a healthy collection of music while the going was good. Truth be told, The Drones shifted their fare share of records, with their debut single "Temptations Of A White Collar Worker" achieving sales of over 10,000 units, whilst their follow up "Bone Idol" doubled those figures. Yes The Drones had a diehard following, but garnered little interest from the music weekly's of the day. This DVD features the inevitable H.I.T.S. performance from the band in 1996, with three songs from their scheduled slot on the Friday and the full set from Sunday's unplanned appearance when the band was called back out to take it one more time. The band is ip high spirits and fit with surprising ease back behind their respective instruments. It may be a while since the days of the late 70's around Manchester, but The Drones maintain their element of warmth and passion for a brand of music that is clearly in their hearts. There's an extra gig tacked on after the H.I.T.S. set to really give value for money and this one comes from a performance in Bath in October of the same year. The set list is juggled around between each gig, but most of the same songs remain. The only element this lacks is some interview segments with the band, which would have interspersed with the live footage nicely. Minor gripes aside, "Further Temptations" has all the magic you could expect from a quality concert DVD. Sit back and allow The Drones take you through some of Punk's finer moments. (CHERRY RED FILMS: UNIT 3A, LONG ISLAND HOUSE, WARPLE WAY, ACTON, LONDON W3 ORG, ENGLAND.)

EDDIE AND THE HOT RODS "DO ANYTHING YOU WANNA DO". (CHERRY RED)

A disappointing document here that fails to showcase Eddie And The Hot Rods in their true light. I guess when you're making one of these things you've got to cross the fingers and hope everything connects on the night the cameras are rolling. Sadly this is just a flat performance from a great band, who're one of my personal favourites from the pre-Punk era. The lions share of this DVD is taken from a gig at the Bottom Line in London in 1996, with a further four songs lifted from a performance at the Carlisle Front Page of the same year. The sound is tinny and hollow for both appearances, with the Front Page footage nudging slightly ahead, due to a more confined venue, in comparison with the Bottom Line which looks to be a Guinness sponsored indoor festival of some sort. I seen Eddie And The Hot Rods live a few years back and from what I remember they were acceptable enough, but this lacks all of the power and energy we tend to associate with their mid to late 70's body of work. Could simply be a crap soundman or poor camera equipment, but either way I don't believe the quality of it warranted a DVD release. There's gotta be superior archival footage of this band in existence and if they can't top that these days, then why blacken the name with bland and unimaginative efforts like this? It's well known that all of these bands still firmly believe they've lost none of their magic from their teenage years, but sometimes it takes someone to stand in and call halt. Hang up the boots! (CHERRY RED FILMS: UNIT 3A, LONG ISLAND HOUSE, WARPLE WAY, ACTON, LONDON W3 ORG, ENGLAND.)

GALLON DRUNK "ONE FOR THE LADIES". (CHERRY RED)

There was an enormous amount of hype surrounding Gallon Drunk in the early 90's and yes, as the liner notes suggest, they did become the band you absolutely had to see. They became darlings of both the N.M.E. and Melody Maker and were a breath of fresh air for anyone remotely still interested in Rock n' Roll music. Bare in mind this was the era of "Madchester" Post-Rave music! Slinging a dangerous sounding cocktail of The Cramps, Gun Club and The Birthday Party (singer Jimmy Johnston later went on to work with Nick Cave) Gallon Drunk peaked in the final days prior to Britain's slump into Brit Pop mediocrity. They were perhaps England's first and last great contribution to Rock n' Roll in the 90's. This DVD was recorded live in London just prior to Christmas of 1991 and is an astonishing exercise in primal rhythms and the beauty of controlled noise. This is the sound of Gallon Drunk's earlier Stooges meets Suicide style which they've arguably become best known for. Later on they advanced into all sorts of musical territories including Gospel, Funk and Techno, but up till '98 at least, they had the chemistry right. With slinky and serrated guitars, rolling pianos and





piquant percussion, Gallon Drunk never sounded so beautifully evil than on this DVD. Opening their booze sodden show at the Happy Jar with the drum intro of "Drag 91", gradually a guitar enters the picture, along with the most eerie, atmospheric use of synthesizers I've ever heard. It's a good three minutes before Johnston begins blurring the first verse, using his voice as an instrument in itself. I believe the band are still active in some form or other, but this DVD will certainly please those of you holding out for the reissuing of their earlier work, most of which is long out of print and has thus become even more sought after. As an addition to the forty-five minute concert that ends in a flurry of feedback, Cherry Red have tacked on a strange but interesting short film entitled "Dora Suarez" which the band were involved with. James Johnston and Terry Edwards created the soundtrack and as far as I'm aware this has never been released before. It's an arthouse, epochal type film, something along the lines of what you'd expect from Richard Kern. Given the scarcity of this band's products lying around the shops, "One For The Ladies" becomes a spellbinding insight into one of the more important bands England has produced over the past two decades. **(CHERRY RED FILMS: UNIT 3A, LONG ISLAND HOUSE, WARPLE WAY, ACTON, LONDON W3 ORG, ENGLAND.)**

HOLIDAYS IN THE SUN "THE GREATEST PUNK GIG ON THE PLANET ... EVER!". (CHERRY RED)

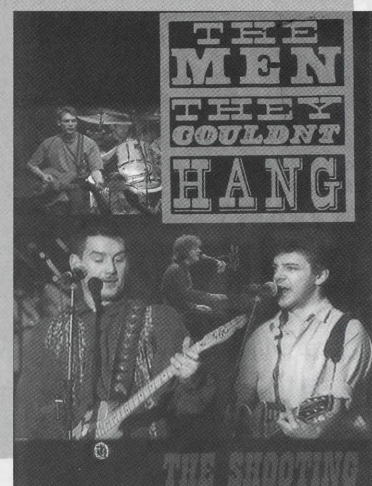
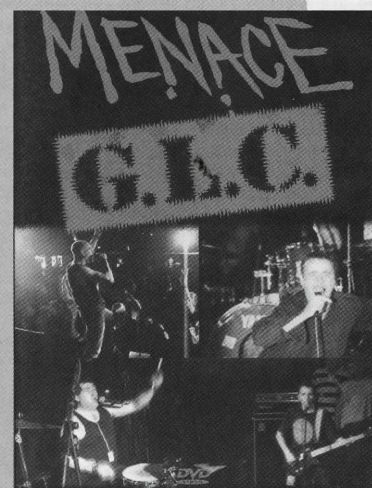
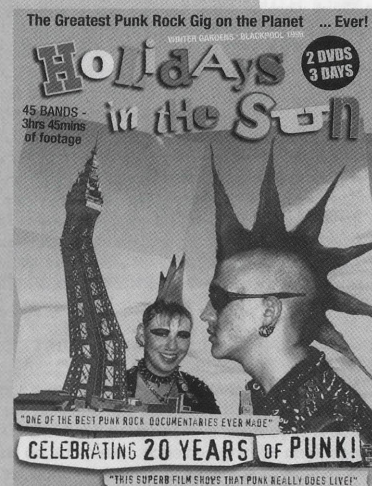
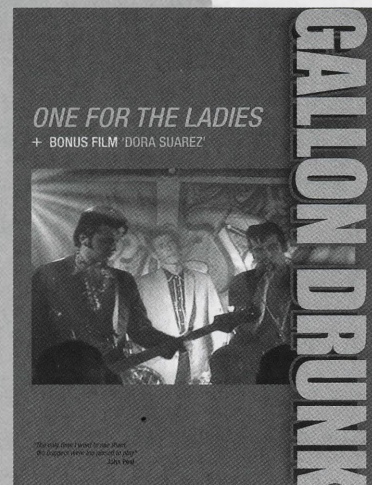
Brave is the man who argues with the title of this DVD. The line ups that have appeared under the Holidays In The Sun banner since 1996 certainly makes the festival a likely contender for the title of "The Greatest Punk Gig On The Planet ... Ever!". This double DVD takes it back to where it all began in 1996 when promoter Darren Russell decided to go one step further and turn his frequent one-day festival events into a three day marathon of Punk Rock, held in the dilapidated holiday town of Blackpool, which transformed the promenade from a pensioners haven for Bingo into a port of call for thousands of nutters up for a weekend of music, alcohol, fun and frolics. There hadn't been a Punk event of this scale witnessed in recent history and it was a massive project to undertake in anticipation of it actually working out, with overhead costs running at £100,000 for the event. For Holidays In The Sun to really work it would prove necessary to generate an interest from punters right across the spectrum, young and old, British and foreign, Skinheads and Punks, all together under one roof to witness bands performing that couldn't be seen anywhere else in the world and thus making Holidays In The Sun a one-off appearance for many of the bill's more established acts. Russell put up the money to get the likes of X Ray Spex (albeit minus Poly Styrene) back up on the stage, who received a reported £5,000 for their troubles. Slaughter and the Dogs, Anti Nowhere League and The Buzzcocks were the other big name bands who acted as crowd pullers and right enough the fans made the effort to be here, travelling from all corners of the globe to catch a glimpse of their icons from back in the day, some of whom still had the flair, others who never should have set foot on the stage again. You can spot the bands who got out there for all the wrong reasons, with only two out of over fifty bands (G.B.H. and U.K. Subs) remaining together the entire time since their inception. When you hear this it puts a lot of things in perspective, but conflicts of interest aside, the weekend paid host to some truly fantastic music and this DVD just about captures it all. From interviews, behind the scenes, live performances, etc. etc. it's a wonderful document to own. Bands that demonstrated acts of genius include, The Buzzcocks, Slaughter and the Dogs, U.K. Subs, Alternative Television, Sham 69, TV Smith, Erase Today and G.B.H. The award for making the biggest muppets of themselves goes to V2, who are so self-important it's genuinely unbelievable! Elsewhere to be seen sucking arse are Salford Jets (fuckin' spivs), Anti Nowhere League and the English Dogs. Interview topics don't stem far from the age old "What is Punk Rock?" question, which as you can imagine gets tedious when every band over both DVD's gets asked the same thing, but there is room from the odd interesting answer here and there that comes courtesy of Pete Shelly, Jimmy Pursey, Mark Perry, and Wayne Barret. One person I'd have liked to see more footage of is of course promoter Darren Russell, who although was interviewed for the documentary, is only represented by the odd line here and there, which seems strange given that the entire festival is down to his doing. In reality you couldn't ask for much more than what's contained on this DVD, which covers the highs and the lows, the good bands, the crap bands, the smart Punks, the idiots, which is fair and rounded as to what you can expect with Punk Rock or any other genre for that matter. "If you were there, you're probably in it, if you weren't this is the closest you'll get!". **(CHERRY RED FILMS: UNIT 3A, LONG ISLAND HOUSE, WARPLE WAY, ACTON, LONDON W3 ORG, ENGLAND.)**

MENACE "G.L.C.". (CHERRY RED)

Menace are the embodiment of gritty '77 style Punk played from the perspective of the hardened Oi! movement that came a little later. Their street level politics popularised Menace with the skinheads, who alongside Sham 69, became the ultimate poster group for the disenfranchised youth of the early 80's. Menace formed prior to the second wave of Punk, but a little late to fully immerse themselves in the '76 movement and thus were left somewhat in limbo, alongside The Business, Sham, Upstarts and The Rejects, who took it upon themselves to spearhead the next flock of bands, picking up where The Clash and Pistols had left off, but applying a sharper edge to it. Menace cared not for the Malcolm McLaren/Kings Road image of Punk and instead, much like their counterparts, opted to let the music speak for itself, choosing jeans and t-shirts over spiky jackets and coloured hair. This, in a way, is what has led to their longevity in this market, surviving three lead singers and going on to get better and better - Menace were and are the real deal, there's no pretence with this band. Today they're to be found still releasing quality records with latest frontman Oddy. The first segment of this DVD captures the band prior to Oddy's arrival at their 1998 appearance at Morecambe for a forty-minute set that proves to be a blinder as we're dealt such gems as "G.L.C.", "Screwed Up", "Insane Society" and "Last Year's Youth". It's a fully loaded set that compares to Menace at the height of their career. Next up is some killer footage of the 2003 version of the band with Oddy freshly inducted into the group and loving every minute of a Hollywood crowd going ballistic for them. Packed into a hole in the wall, witness Menace take the roof off this place with some of the best crowd interaction I've ever seen. Absolutely timeless. Sticking to California for the next two numbers that come from a show in Corona on the previous night of the tour that sees the band rip through "I Need Nothing" and "Punk Rocker" on front of a more subdued crowd, but its an equally passionate performance. Again from the same tour we catch up with the band in San Francisco with a more recent masterpiece "London" that sounds superb. Back home once more for a stop off at the Punk Aid festival in March of last year, contributing three tracks to the DVD, "Believe", "Carry No Banners" and "Two Fingers". This looks like a big-stage type event and lacks the atmosphere of the smaller gigs, but works on the level of showing the various different circumstances in which they play under. September of last year sees the Czech Republic play host to the same festival and the band playing to a more confined crowd of followers which suits them better with another three tracks, namely "Rock n' Dust", "Oliver Reed" and "C & A". Back to the old stamping ground of Morecambe for their 2003 appearance and another shot of "G.L.C." was at this particular gig myself and they were hot stuff on the night in question, which this clip duly displays, albeit with a slightly muffled sound. Still apparent though is their loyal following hollering along to every word. Finally we're left with "Screwed Up" and "Insane Society" from last summer's debut of the Wasted festival, where the band looked to play on one of the larger stages. There's a generous supply of content spanning this DVD that should keep the fans more than happy. It kept me entertained for an evening, that's for sure. All the extras added on really do Menace justice, as if any proof were needed of them being a premiere league Punk act in 2005. Here's to the next twenty-seven years! **(CHERRY RED FILMS: UNIT 3A, LONG ISLAND HOUSE, WARPLE WAY, ACTON, LONDON W3 ORG, ENGLAND.)**

THE MEN THEY COULDN'T HANG "THE SHOOTING". (CHERRY RED)

Great to see the bones of this legendary band being dug up, keeping their name in modern times and unquestionably great collection of songs on the shelves. If you remember the era of The Men They Couldn't Hang it was a horrendous time for popular music with the exception of The Pogues and this band right here, who's bass player was in The Nipple Erectors with MacGowan. If this band were around today they'd be lapped up by the music journos who'd quickly label it Alt. Country, but at the time there was nothing hip or fashionable about blending the ideas of the Dubliners with Johnny Cash and one glance at the moustaches and paisley shirts to be found within the ranks of the band is testimony to this. This gig was a magical performance the band went out with in 1991, filmed at London's infamous Town And Country Club. I don't think they've resurfaced since, but this is one hell of a DVD to remember them by. A large part of their audience consisted of the immigrant population in England at the time and judging by the emotion they bring out in the crowd here, its obvious they touched a nerve with many of the youths of the late eighties who otherwise felt alienated by what was on offer for musical consumption at the time. It's wonderful to see a band have this effect on a crowd without a single breeze of pretension to be found amidst it all. This kind of thing does not happen on the same scale today as music of its kind has been firmly beaten into the underground. Listening to "The Ghosts Of Cable Street" its difficult to get the image of Colin from Runnin' Riot out of your head as he lends it to the intro for "Johnny Reggae" which just shows how much The Men They Couldn't Hang crossed over to various different factions. Of course the band's biggest dent in the music industry came with their version of "The Green Fields Of France" that closes this concert, complete with the stage invasion which seemed so unplanned and fresh back then. Strange huh? If you've not made yourself familiar with this band yet, I suggest tracking down their "Land Of A Thousand Candles" album first, then head straight out and pick up this killer visual accompaniment to it all. Stunning! **(CHERRY RED FILMS: UNIT 3A, LONG ISLAND HOUSE, WARPLE WAY, ACTON, LONDON W3 ORG, ENGLAND.)**



PENNYWISE "HOME MOVIES". (EPITAPH)

I purchased the VHS version of this when it first came out and as Epitaph appears to be doing with all their VHS releases, this is the DVD version of exactly the same thing. Its good they're being kept in print and when you don't include any extras it can also be a good thing as that way hardened fans who've already shelled out for this on VHS format won't feel any pressure to buy the thing again as is often the case when DVD's come out. "Home Movies" is a compilation of personal footage for the most part that the band has shot of themselves down the years. There's tons of quality live action here that gets interspersed with all kinds of shit. Pennywise are often considered the flagship of this movement and it's a tough man who'll argue the contrary. They didn't latch on to anyone and forged their own pathway, which continues to spawn low-grade replicas even today when we're already into a second generation of fanatics. Their guitar player Fletcher is a renowned wild man who borders on being a Jock at times and must be unbearably irritating to tour with, but you can't help giggle at the misfortune of his victims on this as one after another comes in for the auld party pranks. What are they gonna do? Fight the guy??? Nah, they just go off to sulk in a corner!! Haaarrrrr!! A large share of this looks to be shot from the era of "About Time" and it's mostly an amateur shoot we're talking, which works in their favour as the band play with purpose and it includes a good cross-section of Pennywise material up to that point. I'm always willing to grant Pennywise pretty lofty status, even if they appear to be on autopilot these past few records and this DVD gives an exceptional representation of their glory years. Some may view this as a historical curiosity more than a high-grade visual document, but I believe "Home Movies" has achieved what it set out to achieve, in that it portrays Pennywise in a truer, more rootsy light than they've been subjected to since the arrival of the Warped Tour. This work as a good refresher course for any fans who may have dropped off these past years, summing up everything that was great about the Southern Californian sound of the 90's. (EPITAPH RECORDS: P.O. BOX 10574, 1001 EN AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS.)

TEST DEPT. "PROGRAM FOR PROGRESS". (CHERRY RED)

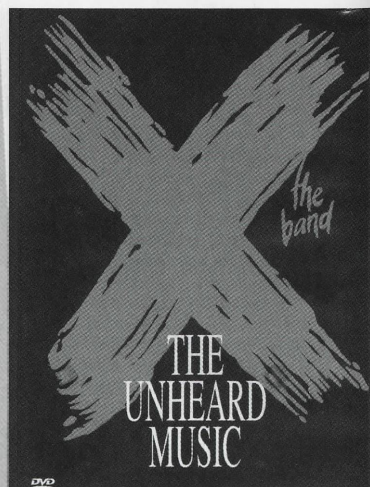
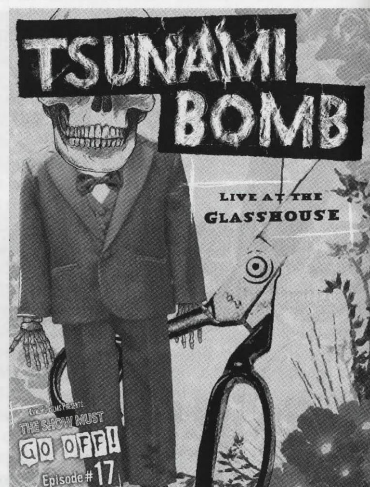
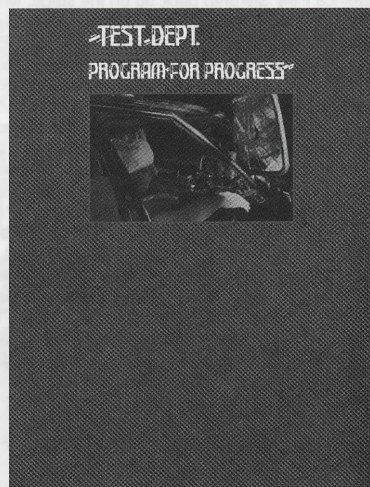
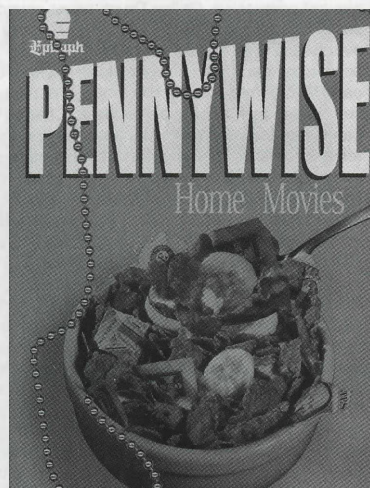
Test Dept. were amongst the first Industrial acts to surface in England. Formed in 1981 in the docklands of South London and heavily under the influence of the electronic music they'd heard coming out of Germany at the time, Test Dept. added a political agenda to their makeup and used instruments such as power tools and discarded metal to further their ideals, often staging multimedia events in factories, railway lines and sand quarries. They also rallied against bills such as the Criminal Justice Act and the rise of neo-Nazism. In 1984 they released the album, "Program For Progress" and made this full-length film to cover each song on the album. Bands like Godflesh, Laibach, Young Gods and Skinny Puppy followed a similar musical path later on, but in 1981 people who heard this stuff had no words for it and no genre to assign it to, so they called it "Industrial" music, based on the tools of industry used to create the sounds on the records. They took what bands like Killing Joke and Throbbing Gristle were doing to another level and just about had the balance right with this album, though they've since drifted into a Techno/Ambient territory not a million miles away from The Orb. Initially part of the Post-Punk generation, they quickly headed for the realms of performance art, collaborating with filmmakers, sculptors and dancers. It may be a little ambitious to expect the average Punk Rocker today to associate themselves with some of this, which just goes to show how defined a musical genre Punk has become. The reason this, like most music of its day, was categorised as Punk was simply because it sounded like nothing else and that's what it shared in common with other bands thrown into a similar vacuum by the music press. (CHERRY RED FILMS: UNIT 3A, LONG ISLAND HOUSE, WARPLE WAY, ACTON, LONDON W3 ORG, ENGLAND.)

TSUNAMI BOMB "THE SHOW MUST GO OFF: LIVE AT THE GLASSHOUSE". (KUNG FU FILMS)

The unfortunately named Tsunami Bomb have surprisingly hung on to their band name, in spite of recent world events. How many times do you reckon they've had that question put to them in fanzine interviews then??? If Tsunami Bomb's straightforward approach to music is to your liking, then so too will this DVD of theirs. It emphasises the only thing they know how to do ... playing their batch of songs to an adoring audience. No more, no less. Filmed on the closing night of a particularly long trek across the United States, there's no frills or surprises to their stage show, its basically putting their money where their mouths are, proving to the pessimist that yes they can in fact play and wish to line up alongside the big boys. It's a good idea for a young band to throw something like this out there, just to set the record straight. Tsunami Bomb are a fully functioning Punk Rock band who spend a lot of time on the road and this documents the fruits of their labour. It's trying times right now for young SoCal bands who wish to be taken seriously and when you look at the region's recent history, can anyone really expect the Punk world to view another band from there as anything other than a joke? The odds are stacked against them, but I think if they can actually get people to listen then they stand a chance of breaking out of a musical ghetto. I still revel in delight at a mere snippet of this stuff from years back, when it was done well, sounded fresh and was yet to become a spent force and when I heard Tsunami Bomb first, they brought back just a smidgen of that feeling. In addition The Glasshouse looks a fair venue and a margin more Punk than the House Of Blues. There's a compacted crowd in attendance who all appear diehards, but Tsunami Bomb are the types who'll get even the most militant of cynics on the move. Joe Escalante naturally produced this thing and it has crystal clear sound without losing out to energy or aggression. The special features include the making of and promo video for "Dawn On A Funeral Day", some goofing around tour antics, a band commentary and various Kung Fu Easter Eggs as they call 'em. This DVD sets itself apart from many others, as it highlights a new band in comparison with looking back down the years of history of a group who've seen better days. This is the beginning of the journey for Tsunami Bomb and here's hoping it's a fun one. (KUNG FU FILMS: MARTINUS NYHOFFLAAN 22624 ES DELFT, THE NETHERLANDS.)

X "THE UNHEARD MUSIC". (IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT)

Let me start by saying that any visual documentary bearing the name X in its content, should be avidly hunted down and snapped up. Not only were they the greatest recording band of their time, they were also a fabulous live act to both listen to and watch, as that spot-on chemistry between the musicians on the stage gelled together like no other. "The Unheard Music" is the result of X allowing a bunch of UCLA students into their lives for a spell in the early eighties to openly run film and capture the day-to-day lives of the band, on and off stage. What X didn't know, was exactly what the film makers had in mind for the rolls upon rolls of tape or indeed if there was even a chance of the film getting made and thus began to lose interest halfway through. The half-performance half-reality approach to this documentary throws the spotlight equally on Exene Cervenka, John Doe, DJ Bonebrake and Billy Zoom. All have such strong individual personalities and presence in the band, making it impossible to credit or single out anyone in particular with having the vision as to how X would sound. Each of them had a massive impact on this and the film delves as much as it can into where this originates from within the each band member. There's a strong musical heritage and wealth there as we look at Exene and John sift through the back catalogue of artists such as Hank Williams, Robert Johnson, Leadbelly, The Doors and Fats Domino. There's a particularly intriguing moment that sees the couple working out some old Blues harmonies at home on their couch. Billy Zoom obviously has the background schooling of just about every instrument there is and comes from a musical family, who's father was a Jazz artist before him and Zoom himself had notched up a considerable portfolio of session playing prior to his time in X. Drummer and percussionist extraordinaire DJ Bonebrake's world looks to evolve around the sound of a beat, from tapping old kitchen appliances to hearing rhythm in just about all of life's sounds. You begin to see how X achieved the heights they did. "The Unheard Music" follows X's path on their first three albums, from underground cult favourites to their attempts at cracking the mainstream market. They contrast the different bottom line there is between major labels and independents through interviewing both Slash and MCA and needles to say Slash come out on top with some excellent analogies of conflicting business practices between both companies. There's a clip of Ray Manzerek, who produced all of X's best work, performing The Doors "Soul Kitchen" live with the band, as well as an early snippet of Rodney Bingenheimer in the early days of his radio show, complete with a guest spot by Jello Biafra. Brendan Mullen, The Masque and the early L.A. Punk Scene all get looked at too. This film has been caught up in a legal mess for the past twenty years or so and has only come back on the market now, which makes it all the more shocking that something this good could have so easily been wiped from history. Thankfully its back out there for all to enjoy and what an essential hour and half's viewing it is. My intuition tells me this will be another slice of prime Punk viewing destined to go down in the history books! (IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT: 20525 NORDHOFF STREET, SUITE 200, CHATSWORTH, CALIFORNIA, CA 91311, U.S.A.)

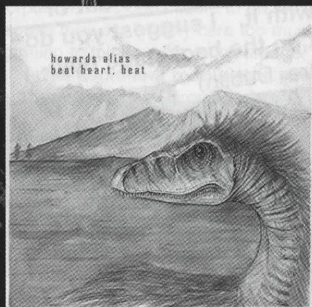


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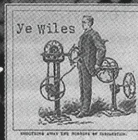
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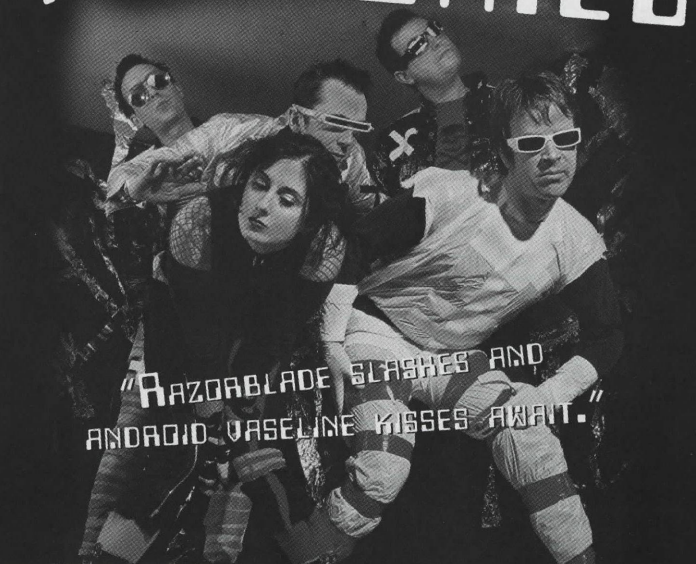
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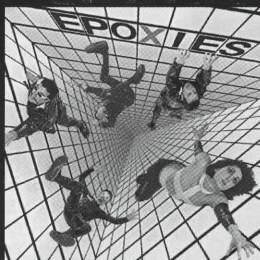
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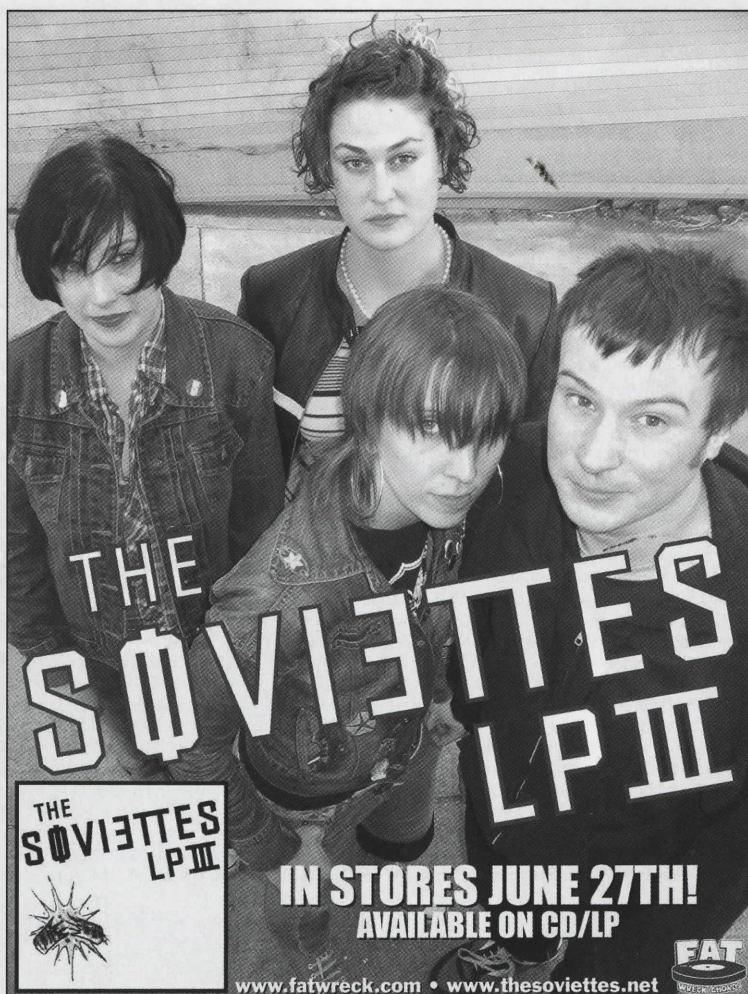
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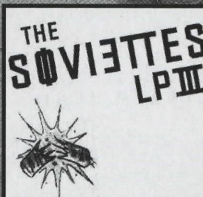
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I guess we'll never know whether The Vandals are a bit dumb or just pretend to be, but there's always been an element of sarcasm, wit and intellect rolled into what they do. All this buried beneath a fusion of Surf harmonies, Calypso beats and So Cal Punk. They have many layers of skin to pull back if you have any interest in finding out what the band stand for, which can seem anywhere from very little at times, to a lot more than meets the eye, at others. Whether they're refusing to be part of Fat Mike's "Rock Against Bush" campaign and choosing instead to land themselves in deep water by flying out to Iraq to entertain the troops or releasing bad comedy DVD's ... so bad only The Vandals themselves could possibly find it funny, they'll always keep our interest. One thing they're always clear about however is an uncanny skill to perfect that irresistible Punk tune time and again. They've acquired an endless string of timeless wonderful songs, from the early days through their latest "Hollywood Potato Chip" album. The Vandals that exists today is almost a completely different band to the one from twenty years ago, if it weren't for one member, bassist Joe Escalante. The Vandals were there at the birth of it all, proceeding hot on the tails of Social Distortion, TSOL, Middle Class and D.I. Interest in the group has come and gone so many times, its difficult not to lose count and it appears the band could care less as they continue making records and touring, regardless of the circumstances that surround them. They've built up a considerable following on this island through repeated visits here. Their earlier, independently promoted, gigs were the most fun, but there's still a lot of excitement to be found in Vandals performances today and I figured it was about time I slapped the tape recorder in front of them. Predictably it's a virtual nightmare to get a conversation resembling anything close to sane out of 'em, but as this was to be expected, I figured it best to sit back, enjoy it and let them get on with it. I suggest you do the same. The transcription of the interview you're about to read took place December last, in the backstage environs of The Temple Bar Music Centre, Dublin. (All Photos From The Music Centre, Dublin)

RIOT. 77: No bar here tonight ... where do you think you are?

DAVE QUACKENBUSH: No bar?

JOE ESCALANTE: I saw a kid drinking something ... probably Coke ...

RIOT. 77: Never mind that ... why is there no bar and why is the gig on at 6:30pm?

JOE: Well they didn't ask us any of this ... if they had have asked us we'd have probably said we don't care. We didn't know about the time change until today ... seemingly the club said the show had to be over by 9:00pm.

WARREN FITZGERALD:

We're drinking here so it doesn't matter ... the rest of them can go have a drink afterwards

JOE: Exactly ... we can still have a good time ... like we did last night ...

RIOT. 77: Were you at Flogging Molly last night?

JOE: Yeah. I came in and said "Hi" to them ...

DAVE: You can't walk the streets around here without seeing a flogging molly (laughs).

RIOT. 77: Very clever ... so what's the average age of a Vandals fan these days then?

DAVE: They're the same age every year, we just get older ... the average age is about sixteen over here; a little younger than America ...

JOE: It's a perspective thing ...

WARREN: That's true ...

JOE: You know what Irish Twins are?

RIOT. 77: No, but I'm sure you're going to tell me ...

JOE: Damn right ... it's an expression in America where if you have a brother or a sister who is less than a year older than you ... basically if someone has two kids within a year they're called Irish twins ...

RIOT. 77: What's that supposed to mean?

JOE: I guess years ago Irish people had a lot of kids.

WARREN: Have you heard of Irish Travellers?

RIOT. 77: What?

WARREN: Irish Travellers?

RIOT. 77: What are you talking about?

WARREN: These people who go around that don't have jobs and rip people off ... cashing in welfare cheques ...

JOE: I was trying to say something positive ...

WARREN: That is positive ... I'm Irish myself for Christ's sake ... Warren Fitzgerald, see right there ... they're kind of like white Gypsies ...

JOE: We just learned about them on the news about a year ago ... one of 'em was caught beating her kid in a parking lot on a surveillance camera ...

RIOT. 77: Oh that thing, yeah ... they're not Irish you dope ... wasn't that in Texas or something?

JOE: Yeah something like that, but the news kept calling her an Irish Traveller and it was an expression we'd never heard before. She had about eight addresses and six cars and all of them were way nicer than ours ... so apparently it's a good business to be in ...

RIOT. 77: This is your last date of the tour, correct?

DAVE: That's right.

RIOT. 77: Just England and here was it?

JOE: U.K.

DAVE: Scotland ...

JOE: We went to the most dangerous inner city in the world ... Glasgow. It's got a huge knife culture ...

DAVE: We read that in the paper too ...

RIOT. 77: You're not wrong there ... I bet you fitted in just fine walking around Glasgow? (laughs)

WARREN: You think we look too American?

RIOT. 77: (laughs) ... Well ...

JOE: We try and just not talk too loud ...

WARREN: How do we look American, other than my Goatee?

JOE: I generally just say I support the right team whenever anyone approaches me ...

WARREN: The don't call 'em teams, they call 'em sides!

JOE: They call 'em sides? Really?

WARREN: Yeah, you would have got bashed if you said that.

RIOT. 77: You've been playing Dublin for years and were coming over here independently long before most other American bands ... though the last few times you've been over has been through the corporate promoter ... why the shift at this stage?

JOE: Well, people were telling us what to do and we didn't know any better ... they'd say, "Here's your promoter" ... and by the time we found out how lame it was, it was

The VANDALS

too late. Today is an independent promoter though, right?

RIOT. 77: No.

JOE: It's not? I thought we got rid of that shit. We're just stupid Americans ... We'll probably be back playing pubs next time ... or on some street corner ... actually we'd love to play in The Porter House.

RIOT. 77: What sort of promoters do you use around the rest of the world?

JOE: It's a mix, but we've been finding that the places where we use the independent ones tend to be sold out and the corporate ones don't seem to do too well, I guess because they don't really care too much about us ... I'm beginning to think you're much smarter than us ...

RIOT. 77: I was beginning to think the same. Do you remember much about your early gigs here?

DAVE: Yeah. I remember when we played that one pub and there was so many fuckin' fights at the thing ...

JOE: I think the last physical fight I was in was here.

DAVE: The last physical fight I was in was here in Dublin also.

JOE: Yeah, the last two ... shit ...

RIOT. 77: What happened?

DAVE: Uhhh! I went outside and two drunk Irish guys were pissing on the equipment and one of the guys in the opening band said "Hey, don't do that!" and a fight broke out ... so I killed them.

RIOT. 77: I actually heard that story ... didn't think it was true at the time.



DAVE: You know this guy?

JOE: It's his roommate.

DAVE: What was his story?

RIOT. 77: He said you ran away and said you'd never play Ireland again (laughs).

JOE: How about the guy who threw me down the stairs, did you know him?

RIOT. 77: No.

JOE: He was an asshole! (laughs)

RIOT. 77: A lot of your influence comes from American television, which is the most censored network in the western world ...

JOE: You think our TV is too censored?

RIOT. 77: Yeah, it's for children.

DAVE: We have cable TV, which you pay for and that's not censored.

WARREN: Yeah, HBO shows The Sopranos and all that stuff ...

JOE: But if you just watch the regular free TV, you're right it's very bland and boring.

WARREN: Apparently about a year ago Janet Jackson showed a tit on TV and now you can't broadcast live TV anymore. Justin Timberlake was about to have sex with her, but saw her tit and changed his mind.

RIOT. 77: Are you ok with the cartoon image people tend to have of The Vandalz?

JOE: As long as we're a good cartoon.

DAVE: I love cartoons. Do you like South Park?

RIOT. 77: Yeah.

DAVE: That's a good cartoon.

JOE: Scooby Doo ...

WARREN: Have you seen Team America?

RIOT. 77: No.

JOE: It's like these Thunderbirds type guys, made by the South Park people. It's good ... it's offensive ... I'm easily offended ...

DAVE: It's a feature film made with puppets, about terrorism.

RIOT. 77: Speaking of which ... you're going over to Iraq shortly to play for the troops, is that right?

JOE: Yeah, but it's with an independent promoter!

RIOT. 77: Ba Dum!!

JOE: We're not going over there for any political reason.

WARREN: We're gonna kill the terrorists with our music.

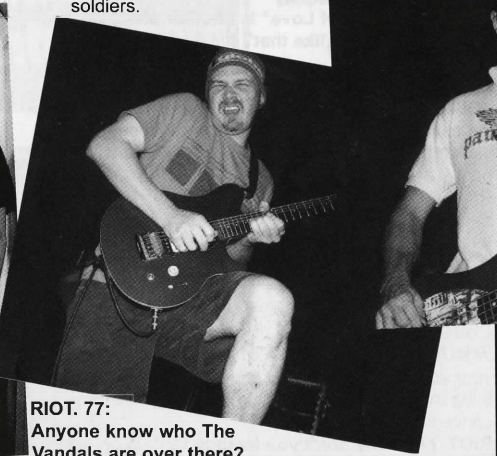
JOE: Yeah ... our new material. That's all there is on television ... the war. So this is like going over and meeting some celebrities.

WARREN: Literally, that's all that's on frickin' TV, so I want to see if it's real.

DAVE: That's probably the worst response to that question ... ever (laughs).

WARREN: We just have no idea what it's like to be in a place like that. You're saying there's no bar here tonight? Imagine what it's like having no bar for two weeks ... in the desert.

DAVE: ... and a bunch of American soldiers.



RIOT. 77: Anyone know who The Vandalz are over there?

JOE: We get some military letters, yeah. Some Vandalz fans have given up on just about everything except for the military. A lot of them signed up for the reserves where you have a couple of weekends a year in the military, then all of sudden you're being sent to Iraq for two years. They're screwed ... for them there's no alcohol for months and months and months and months ...

WARREN: Yeah, it's some Muslim deal over there.

JOE: Yeah, although we're going in there and breaking crap and killing people, we are respecting their values.

RIOT. 77: What are you going to be doing there for two weeks? Have you a load of gigs?

DAVE: Dodging bullets.

JOE: Kabul used to have a good scene ... they don't tell us exactly what we're gonna be doing until we get there, other than riding in helicopters ... military convoys ...

WARREN: It's on a need-to-know basis.

JOE: We have a guard who watches us while we sleep.

RIOT. 77: Where did you get the idea for this?

DAVE: A lot of bands do it to provide entertainment for the troops, but nobody wants to do it over Christmas, which is when we're going. Blink 182 went over ...

WARREN: They're a bunch of pussys compared to us. I've been saying that for years.

RIOT. 77: Why wouldn't The Vandalz play on the "Rock Against Bush" thing?

DAVE: We weren't asked. We played at one of the shows in Las Vegas, but we didn't realise it was a "Rock Against Bush" show (laughs).

WARREN: We're a cartoon band, not a political band.

RIOT. 77: You didn't support that whole thing, did you?

DAVE: Nope.

JOE: I'll tell you why ...

RIOT. 77: You tell me why ...

JOE: Seriously. If you want to get kids interested in politics you should ask them to search for themselves and find out who they are. But that "Rock Against Bush" movement just seems to tell them what they should be and alienate you if you're not.

DAVE: Then go backstage with NOFX and do coke all night (laughs) ...

RIOT. 77: What way did you vote?

JOE: By secret ballot ...

DAVE: I voted for the Libertarian Party.

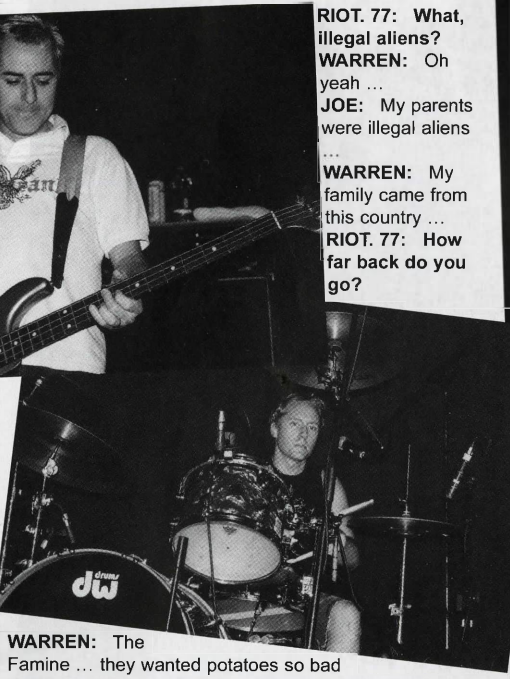
WARREN: You see you only hear about two candidates but there were way more than that running.

DAVE: It doesn't really matter what way we vote because we live in California which is always going to be Democratic anyway.

WARREN: There's other issues to vote for besides who'll be president ...

JOE: Like driving licences for illegal aliens ...

WARREN: That's a big problem in California right now ...



RIOT. 77: What, illegal aliens?

WARREN: Oh yeah ...

JOE: My parents were illegal aliens ...

WARREN: My family came from this country ...

RIOT. 77: How far back do you go?

WARREN: The

Famine ... they wanted potatoes so bad they were prepared to get on a boat and travel to America to get 'em.

RIOT. 77: You're a practicing Catholic, Joe ... tell me a little about that.

JOE: Why is that such a big deal over here?

DAVE: In the North it's a big deal ... not so much down here.

JOE: Usually after the age of sixteen you decide you don't wanna go to church anymore. But I started hearing voices in my head telling me to go back when I was in Catholic Law School ...

RIOT. 77: Catholic Law School?

DAVE: Yeah it's private and run by the church.

JOE: Costs half a million dollars ... but then you get out and your job sucks ...

WARREN: So you turn to God.

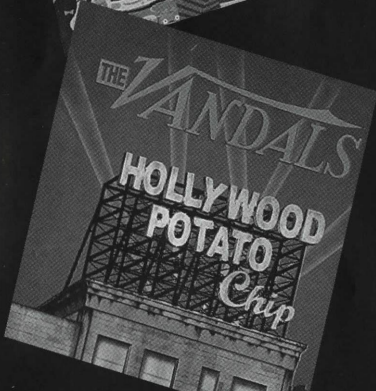
JOE: If you go to church for an hour it's more fun than studying law so I would just go to church. And also if you have a child and you go to get him baptised and have a big party, you'll end up sitting down with the priest who'll ask you why you haven't been attending church, so you promise you'll start attending more now that you have a kid.

WARREN: It's like the dentist.

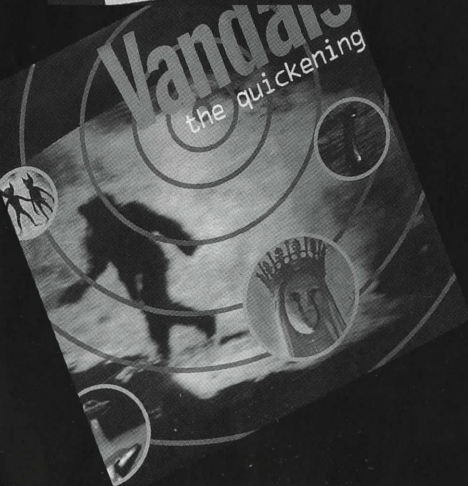
VANDALS



PEACE THRU VANDALISM



the VANDALS



JOE: I'm half Mexican and half Irish so it's like a double Catholic.

RIOT. 77: So you're a bullfighter, a Catholic and a lawyer ...

JOE: I'm not a lawyer ... I was a lawyer at one time but I never really worked in a law firm ...

RIOT. 77: Kinda begs the question why you were attracted to Punk Rock in the first place ...

JOE: Initially the reason I was attracted to Punk Rock in high school was just because I hated Hippies.

Then I discovered a movement that I could rally round.
DAVE: ... that also accepted lawyers, bullfighters and Catholics.

WARREN: But Jesus was a Hippie ...

JOE: You know that's the weird thing ... we were always being told at Catholic School to get our hair cut, yet we're also told to worship this guy who has longer hair than all of us put together.

RIOT. 77: You played a benefit gig back in 1984 for the Young Republicans in America ...

DAVE: Whooooohh!!

JOE: I can see you have an agenda.

DAVE: That was for Wally George - a guy on TV who was funny as shit. It was a cartoon image of the Republican Party and I don't think they even knew it existed because it was some college campus thing ...

JOE: But you know, Republicans need to have music too ... if you don't give them music, they'll make their own.

RIOT. 77: You know that old song "Viking Suit" that the Vandals had? Who was that written about?

JOE: It was about a serial rapist paedophile kinda guy ...

WARREN: But it was all made up.

JOE: Yeah we'd fantasize about him in these scenarios, having kids come over to his house and he'd make them put a Viking suit on ... we knew the guy and he was creepy, but I as yet have no evidence that he was actually involved in any of this type of behaviour.

JOE: Did he hear the song?

JOE: Yes.

RIOT. 77: ... and how did he react to it?

JOE: Uhhhhh!!! (laughs)

RIOT. 77: "Slap Of Love" is another one. Do you still stand by stuff like that?

WARREN: Wow!

DAVE: The old singer wrote that one.

JOE: I refused to play that live. When he started writing stuff like that I just didn't think it was funny. When did we become this, you know? Though recently I did hear it on the radio and I had to laugh.

RIOT. 77: What's this about when you were flying over here you made all your crew sit in economy while you all sat in First Class?

DAVE: Business Class actually, not First Class. You see we fly so much that we get frequent flier upgrades for free. We've never paid for Business Class or First Class.

WARREN: I'd never flown Business Class until about a year ago. We've earned it man. Mileage is the hardest thing to earn in the world. It's like sitting in a fuckin' concentration camp.

RIOT. 77: Why don't you include Belfast on your tour schedule anymore?

JOE: We played there once but no one showed up so we just didn't go back.

DAVE: Once or twice?

JOE: Once.

DAVE: Are you sure?

JOE: Yeah we played there once and were going to go back but you said no. You hate it up there.

DAVE: I'm pretty sure we played there twice.

JOE: Let's agree that we're both wrong.

WARREN: When we played there eleven people showed up.

RIOT. 77: This goofy American thing that The Vandals do doesn't really travel well outside of America ... why have The Vandals always paid so much attention to working that angle so strongly outside North America?

WARREN: Do you know who Weird Al is?

RIOT. 77: No, never heard of him!

JOE: I dunno, it's just fun to play here. It's probably better than any city in Europe.

RIOT. 77: It doesn't seem to have rubbed off on you at all?

DAVE: What, travelling?

RIOT. 77: Yeah, you tour an awful lot and have done so for many years, but you'd be forgiven for thinking The Vandals had never left America.

JOE: Yeah, we come here and we make fun of it and we don't know why we're here, but every time we go home we wanna come back.

DAVE: We make fun of America while we're there too.

JOE: Yep, that's absolutely true. Every time we go to the South we make fun of it but we always want to come back.

WARREN: Fresno.

DAVE: We have songs that make fun of places thirty minutes away from where we live.

RIOT. 77: Riverside?

JOE: Ha! Ha! That's the one!

RIOT. 77: How many people have said the first song on your new album sounds like Sick Of It All?

DAVE: You're the first. But I like Sick Of It All.

JOE: Yeah, it's fast and heavy. I like it. We done a session for Mike Davies on the Lock Up at the BBC and played that song the other day actually.

RIOT. 77: Did you ever do a Peel session?

WARREN: No Peelies ...

JOE: The last time we done a session he was in the next room, so we came pretty close.

DAVE: I heard of him but I don't know who he is.

RIOT. 77: You don't know who John Peel is???

JOE: I met him and I still don't know who he is.

RIOT. 77: It's been over twenty years now that The Vandals have been going ...

DAVE: Yep!

RIOT. 77: Do you ever feel you're running out of ideas or is every record still a leap forward in your opinion?

JOE: A leap sideways I think.

WARREN: That's a good question.

DAVE: I think we go up and down.

RIOT. 77: What do you think is your worst record?

DAVE: Our worst record? "The Quickening". It has four good songs on it and then four of the worst songs we've ever written.

WARREN: It has a couple of our best songs and most of our worst songs on it. Sonically it's pretty bad. Recorded it for \$5,000 I believe. Back then we were whipping out records really fast.

JOE: We put three records out in the space of a year and a half. It was a very prolific yet substandard period.

RIOT. 77: You've dropped "I Have A Date" from the set-list Warren and replaced it with Queen's "Don't Stop Me Now".

WARREN: Yes.

RIOT. 77: Where did you get that idea from because they're not as big in America as they are here, is that right?

WARREN: Yeah that's right, we had no idea how big they were here. I thought I was being really obscure choosing that song.

Apparently not!

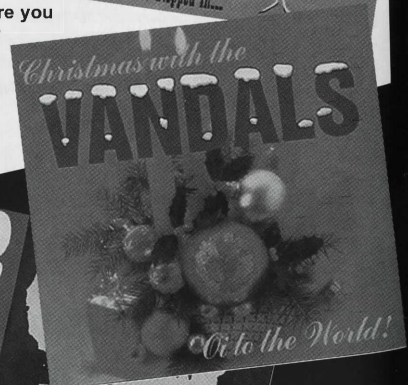
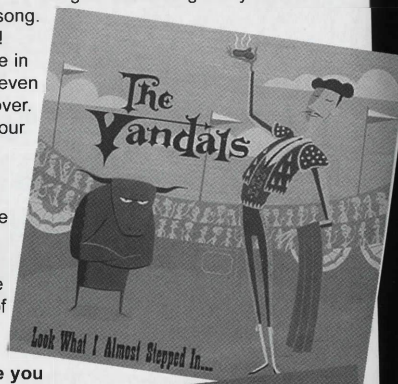
DAVE: People in America don't even realise it's a cover. They think it's our song.

WARREN: ... and then you come over here and it's in TV commercials and shit. I like the message of optimism it sends.

RIOT. 77: Are you

Queen fans?

DAVE: Yes, very big Queen fans.



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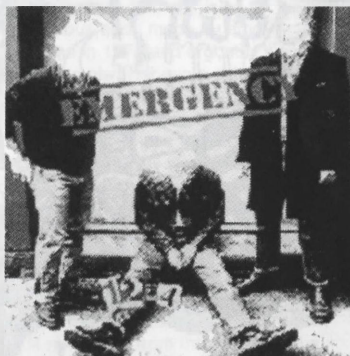
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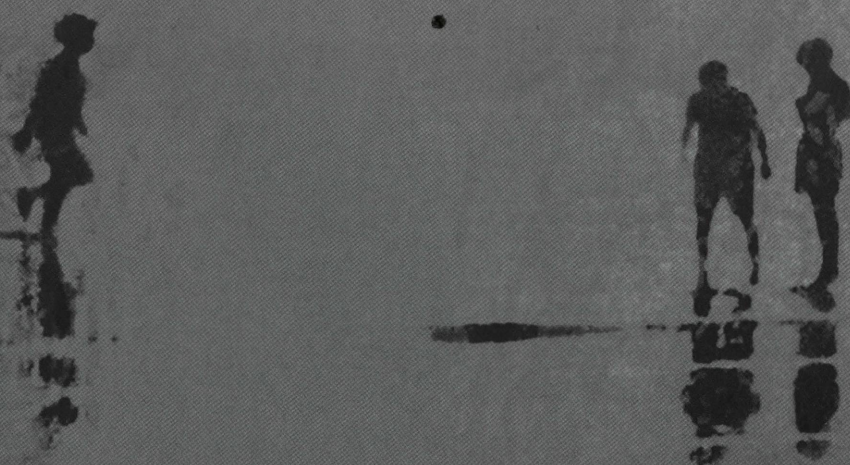
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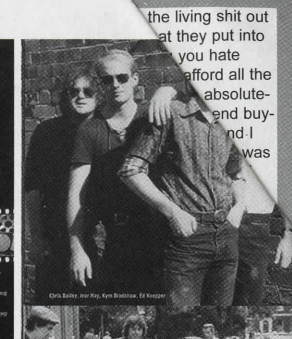
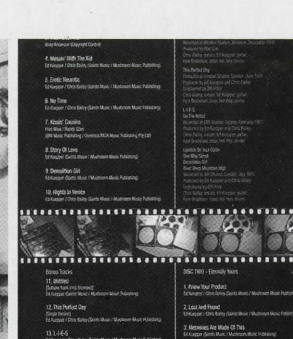
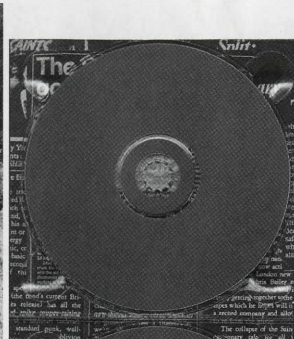
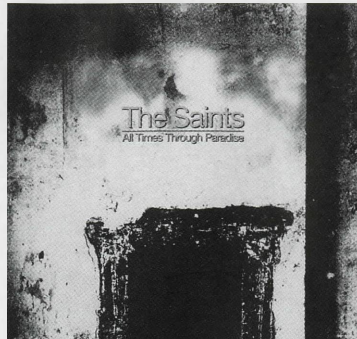
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thoughts !!

...ah..bollix to
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shit.... I'm goin
back to bed!!

heh!heh!heh!!

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THE SAINTS "ALL TIMES THROUGH PARADISE". (EMI)



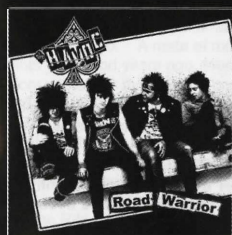
EMI have finally taken their heads from their arseholes and reissued all of the essential Saints work from the glory years of the band ('76-'78). This apparently is the complete recordings they made during that timeframe and comes with a ton of tasty extras that should have any Saints fan jumping for joy. "All Times Through Paradise" is a four-disc box set, housed in an awkward rectangular book format, which features extensive information on the band's history and a mountain of photographs, some unpublished, from the formative years of the group. Ed Kuepper compiled this with the blessing of Chris Bailey and both contribute personal commentary. If you're a newcomer you're gonna want the first three studio albums from the band, "I'm Stranded", "Eternally Yours" and "Prehistoric Sounds", which you get here, each on a separate disc. To round out every album we're given further recording activity of The Saints from around the era of the session, such as singles, b-sides and out-takes, which in all amounts to thirty tracks

spread over the four CD's. As mentioned earlier there's an added extra disc in this set, which is a recently uncovered live gig by the band, recorded at London's Hope And Anchor pub in 1977. For Saints fans this disc on its own is worth picking up as it beautifully demonstrates the live chemistry between Kuepper, Bailey and their excellent rhythm section of Kym Bradshaw on bass and Ivor Hay on drums. The Saints progressed at a rate even The Stones would have serious issues keeping up with, releasing their two follow up album's to "I'm Stranded" in the same year, that musically and stylistically were miles away from each other, but equally brilliant. Amazingly they still managed to stun time and again, whether it be the raw and snarling gusto of their debut, recorded in two days flat in Brisbane, possibly the finest sophomore effort by any band in the shape of "Eternally Yours" or the final piece in the trilogy, 1978's "Prehistoric Sounds", The Saints hit the listener on a multitude of levels. Possibly the only Punk record to

successfully work the fusion of horns and loud guitars without sounding like a tack-on, "Prehistoric Sounds" is by far the most courageous effort made by any Rock n' Roll band in 1978 and arguably since. There has always been a schoolboy innocence about The Saints that I love. They had little idea of what they were creating and perhaps the fact that Kuepper and Bailey were like chalk and cheese had something to do with the connection their music made. It's well known the band's influences went a lot deeper than Dr. Feelgood, The Stooges, Roxy Music or the New York Dolls, which their Punk Rock peers tended to favour. The Saints were brought up on a diet of old R n' B tunes from the 50's, and the 60's Soul that labels like Motown, Stax and Atlantic were busy releasing. The shared a unanimous loathing for 70's music. The fact that they were white, had no recording budget and found something appealing about loud guitars, may have had something to do with what was created over those two days in a

Brisbane studio in 1977. The great thing about putting on a Saints record in 2005 is hearing just how well these songs have aged. In fact I'd go so far as to say they've gotten better with age! Nearly thirty years on and there's not a single band playing guitar music today that even comes close to rubbing shoulders with these recordings. This box set contains pretty much everything you need on the group and although they've had odd flashes of genius since, after you've heard these songs nothing they produced in their aftermath is likely to hold up to them. Ed Kuepper parted company with The Saints in the late 70's and that's generally looked upon as the end of their gold run. Bailey remains an accomplished songwriter today, but there was always something in Kuepper that seemed irreplaceable. This is by far the best round up of the band's early days that I've come across and as a one-stop-shop for what you need to arm yourself with on The Saints, look no further. (www.saintsmusic.com)

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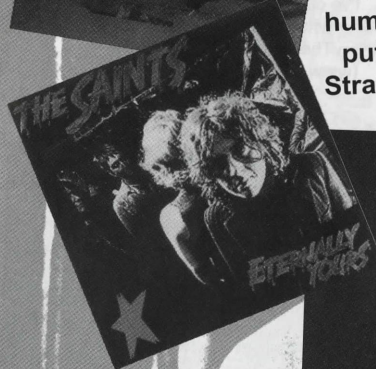
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THE SAINTS

Taking stock of The Saints career path or family tree can be a stress-inducing task. With upwards of twenty band members having come and gone since their inception in Brisbane, Australia as far back as 1973, lead singer Chris Bailey's own family roots can be traced back to sunny Belfast, where he spent the first five years of his life, before his family emigrated and took up holdings on an outpost inhabited by the Queen's criminals. The Saints were notorious for receiving absolutely no initial recognition in their birthplace, but with the simultaneous bloom of Punk Rock going on in London, their self-released debut 7 inch "I'm Stranded" was quickly snatched up by the scribblers of Sounds, which landed the group a one-way ticket to London, soaking up the glory days of the city's Punk movement. Interestingly The Saints themselves never felt any affiliation with Punk Rock, but favoured being likened to 60's R n' B and early Blues acts. Listening to the records, "I'm Stranded", "Eternally Yours" and "Prehistoric Sounds", it's not difficult to draw close parallels with what the Ramones, Clash and Damned were doing at the time. Musically, none of these bands sounded alike, but what they did share in common was the stripped down and back-to-basics nature of their approach to playing Rock n' Roll music. The heyday of The Saints ended following the completion of the third record, when Ed Kuepper parted ways with Bailey, who decided to hang on in London and continue playing and recording under The Saints banner, much to Kuepper's discontent. What followed for Bailey's Saints since has taken him on a seemingly endless musical expedition of group recordings, solo outings and even a year long recording session in Memphis. More recently Bailey can be found residing in suburban Amsterdam, where he currently calls home. These days, he's still as humble as ever about the early works of The Saints and refuses to have anything he's done put on a pedestal. There's a new Saints album fresh on the shelves entitled "Nothing Is Straight In My House" and a tour to back it up. What you're about to read is a conversation I had with Chris Bailey, that took place over a bottle of red

wine, in the pouring rain and sleet in the smoking garden of Whelan's, Dublin, prior to the band's performance that evening. (LIVE SHOTS, FRONT COVER AND THIS PAGE TAKEN IN WHELAN'S, DUBLIN.)



RIOT. 77: Hello there Chris Bailey ... it's been a while since you brought The Saints over here ...

CHRIS BAILEY: Yeah it has hasn't it? 1998 I think was the last time we played Dublin. It was the Mean Fiddler ...

RIOT. 77: Oh, you can remember that night?

CHRIS: I can indeed (laughs). We snuck in and snuck out and drank a lot of Long Island Ice Tea's, which is an odd thing to drink in Dublin. We had a good time and got talking to a few blokes ... about what, I cannot remember ...

RIOT. 77: You're playing Belfast tomorrow, which is where you're originally from ...

CHRIS: Correct ... well, that's where my people are from, though I was actually born in Africa, but lived in Belfast as a boy and like a lot of Irish, my family emigrated to the new world, in the shape of Australia. My dear old father didn't take nationality down there and I ran away as soon as I could.

RIOT. 77: Didn't take nationality? Does that mean he refused to pledge allegiance to the Queen?

CHRIS: Yeah, that sort of bollocks.

RIOT. 77: Very good ...

CHRIS: Yeah, so he didn't want to do that and I'm glad he didn't want to do that.

RIOT. 77: Its west Belfast I take it you're from?

CHRIS: Yeah ... god, I can't remember the actual name of the place now ... I was about five years old when I left.

RIOT. 77: You've never really settled in any one country ... are you still living in Amsterdam?

CHRIS: Yeah, I've lived there for a while, so I'm pretty settled. Strangely enough when I first moved to Amsterdam it wasn't my idea to stay there, it was my girlfriend's idea, she's Swedish and I'd been living in Sweden prior to that. I was doing a solo show-

case in Amsterdam and she came along with me and fell in love with the place and informed me we were moving there (laughs) ... and a year later we did just that ... I thought I'd be there for a year or two maybe, but I'm still there and we have a house and three cats, so its pretty settled (laughs).

RIOT. 77: What else have you been up to lately ... I see a Nick Cave collaboration here?

CHRIS: I sang on his record and they took me on the road with them, kind of like their pet monkey and I got to duet with them at the gigs.

RIOT. 77: How did you get involved with him ... he's a big Saints fan isn't he?

CHRIS: Yeah, he is. When he first came to London I was living there at the time and he slept on my floor. There's always been some sort of vague talk over the years that we should do something together. It was just a happy coincidence - he was on tour in Melbourne and I was out in Australia on some kind of weird trip and was out having a drink with a mutual friend, who then went to see Nick play and happened to mention that she'd been out for a drink with me and gave him my number. He rang me up the next day and said he had this song that he thought sounded kind of like The Saints and asked me to come and sing it. So I went along and it was quite a cool session and we actu-

also be biblical - Saints, burning bush, Moses and all that malarkey. It could also be a description for a girl's very irritated vagina. It could also be referring to marijuana, which was pointed out to me after I chose the title and is very ironic, considering I don't smoke pot, but live in Amsterdam. Lots of people that I know who are my friends and smoke pot don't believe me that the reason I moved to Amsterdam had nothing to do with that (laughs). But I do keep pot at home so I can offer it to people when they come to visit. But I don't smoke it because it makes me even stupider than I normally am. So, you've got a few choices there as to what the tour means and you can take your pick, but I think the first one is probably the most accurate.

RIOT. 77: Had you ever considered calling what we're about to see tonight anything other than The Saints?

CHRIS: Not really. If you go back to the first teenage group of The Saints when we got dropped by EMI and Ed and Ivor went back to Australia and I decided I wanted to stay in Europe, because I've always felt more comfortable up here, it was all very amicable that I would carry on with The Saints. I didn't want it to become this old fashioned situation where the band becomes like a corporation rather than a musical entity. I always wanted to keep The Saints a little bit radicalised in the sense of ... I'm not very good at following rules and playing the pop star game. I never really wanted to do that terribly much, which will make you



very unpopular in some circles. I'll do this; I'll do interviews and some of the things that are necessary to please my masters to some degree, but I always wanted The Saints to remain this radical collective. I try and do all this somewhat outside of management, record companies and corporate infrastructure. On a musical level, anytime I'm out with a Rock band, changing the name seemed stupid seeing as it would always be the bloke who sang with The Saints. I mean, I've done a half dozen solo records that I didn't think were appropriate as Saints records. I did one with a Bolivian folk band for instance and that wasn't my notion of what The Saints should be. To me The Saints are a bunch of snotty white boys pretending they're black, playing noisy music, which to me is the beauty of The Saints and fingers crossed we've always been able to maintain that. We exist in a decent little corner of show business, without having to bend over backwards to fashion too much. Realistically The Saints career was over in 1980, for all intents and purposes. We didn't have our first hit until about 1984 in Australia and didn't go to America 'till 1986 and it's been a roller coaster, up n' down, ever since. Some parts of the world are great whilst in others we don't exist.

RIOT. 77: Yeah, that always struck me as odd that The Saints never toured America in the early days, because I mean surely if you ever stood a chance of breaking over there it would have been in the late 70's ...

CHRIS: There was no interest in getting us over there. We were originally signed to Sire I think and because we didn't fit the bill, so to speak, at that level, I think we were perceived to be some sort of joke and it all just fizzled out. Then during the 80's, after we'd done "All Fools Day" I think, we were signed to a different company and became part of that whole first MTV explosion in America.

RIOT. 77: Oh yeah. I've seen that "Live at The Ritz" thing you done for MTV over there ...

CHRIS: Yeah, you know, it's so weird you mentioned that, because I hadn't seen that for about fifteen years, up until about three weeks ago. A mate of mine who used to work with The Saints years and years ago, found it in his garage. The day before we left for this tour the parcel arrived with The Ritz gig in it.

RIOT. 77: What do you think of it now?

CHRIS: Well, I've got sideburns which is interesting. Musically it's not a million miles away from where The Saints have ever been, apart from the fact that the bass player has shoulder pads in his shirt. The great thing about is the synthesized disco intro, which is so dated and 80's ... This voice comes over it "Now, live from the Ritz ladies and gentlemen, THE SAINTS!!!!" (laughs) and then I come out and play some bog Irish ballad (laughs). I'm several years older now, and my style of dress hasn't changed ... It's actually not that embarrassing, because you know when you look back at old photographs of yourself and you're like, "Jesus, did I really wear those????!!" I think it's stood the test of time rather well.

RIOT. 77: You went and lived in Memphis for a year.

CHRIS: That was my punishment for being naughty (laughs). Epic Records, who were a fairly big company at the time, were arguing with some other big company and to cut a long story short there was basically eight million dollars on the table, which is more money than I could ever fathom. I'm thinking, "What the fuck are these guys on?" ... Anyway, as part of the kiss-and-make-up process I was forced to work with a producer, which is something I'm not that fond of doing, but it was part of the solution process. I'd hoped by going to Memphis, being a big fan of R n' B, that I was going to be allowed work with black guys ... I ended up working with quite a nice bunch of guys for the record, which wasn't actually a Saints record, it was a Chris Bailey record, but every time I would try and audition an R n' B player, the producer would be like, "Ohhh, I don't know if we can get that together, but I've got this great guitarist ..." They were these good ol' boys basically ... bringing their guns into the studio and all this carry on (laughs) ... it was the longest record I ever recorded in my life; I was there for nine months and to me that's a sin. You shouldn't spend nine months making a record. The American record label thought I didn't have enough songs so I was sent off to write with all sorts of people and it got to the point where I was like, "Look, if you don't like what I do, get someone to write a bunch of songs, get a band to fuckin' record them and I'll come along and sing over it" and they're like, "Oh, no, no, no Chris, you're the creative

talent, Blah! Blah! Blah! Wank! Wank! Wank! ..." That's why the music business is imploding, because you've got all these "specialists" and "experts", who just don't have a clue ... So, please don't say I've lived in America (laughs) ... I have a love/hate relationship with that place, but I have spent a considerable amount of time there.

RIOT. 77: Did you go to Sun Studios when you were over there?

CHRIS: Sun Studios? It's a fuckin' hamburger restaurant now.

RIOT. 77: No, they've moved it back to Union Ave. I know they moved it off somewhere else for a time, but I don't think it was much of a success obviously, but now they've reopened it in the original place ... I thought it was excellent.

CHRIS: Oh right. When I was there it was just some room that they'd taken and put stuff from the original Sun in there ... I did get a backstage tour of Graceland though...

RIOT. 77: I thought Graceland was a real letdown ... It was all security guards and you couldn't even walk around ... there was barriers blocking everything ... I think they've destroyed the whole feel of the place ... It's more like Universal Studios or something ...

CHRIS: Right, yeah. Unfortunately I was working in some other studio, which now no longer exists. It was a multi-million dollar toy for the son of this big real estate family. They used to throw millions into this amazing facility, which nobody used, because it didn't work ... State of the art gear, plugged in badly, with no studio manager to run it, etc. etc.

RIOT. 77: I was always under the assumption from listening to The Saints that you had a wide and vast record collection, but I was surprised recently to read the contrary ... you said you only have a handful of records or something ...

CHRIS: Yeah, I'm not bullshitting about that (laughs). As a child and a teen I was voracious in my appetite for music, but as an adult if I haven't been involved with one musical project it's been another. I've always meant to buy records and I think it was about four or five years ago that I bought a stereo, so I've got one of those (laughs). I've got my two or three dozen Classical CD's and two dozen Blues compilations, but I don't have any vinyl or anything like that. I'd love to have all that, but when I'm at home it's sort of the last thing I feel like doing. There's a shop-

ping mall not far from where I live, which scares the living shit out of me. It's one of those horrible looking things that they put into the middle of a working class area and is everything you hate about capitalism. You got these poor folk who can't afford all the stuff, yet it's the social centre of the village. It serves absolutely no purpose whatsoever, unless you've got money to spend buying useless shit. Its got a McDonalds and a Burger King and I go there just to get terrified, because it reminds me of when I was a kid in a similar working class area where they built the first of those big American styled Malls. It's like the commercial village centre, but I forced myself to go in to one of the record stores there and I think I bought an Animals record and that's been my musical purchase of the year, but I hang around with musicians a lot and they have a bigger appetite for new stuff, so I'm always being exposed to new stuff. Then you meet these music hacks who always go, "Have you heard this?", "Have you heard that?", "You must have heard this ..." (laughs). I worked with a guy years ago who was a big Screaming Trees fan and he pointed out to me that he started to respect me more when he read that the Screaming Trees liked The Saints, because he never knew that (laughs).

RIOT. 77: The Ramones cited The Saints as an influence early on. Did you like The Ramones at all, no?

CHRIS: I liked The Ramones, yeah, but I've never considered them a Punk band. I think The Ramones were a fabulous and gorgeous, typically American cartoon. I'm not sure that's how they felt about themselves, but when I first heard them I thought they were The Archies. All their music is really sweet and resolves nicely, as well as being in a major key. They play trashy Pop music and have made some remarkable records.

RIOT. 77: You also liked The Damned. Did you consider them a Punk band?

CHRIS: Not really. The Damned were more in a Rock n' Roll tradition, which I think The Saints are as well, even if it leans towards pretentious R n' B in our case. I've always wanted to be a black guy and though I don't speak in an American accent, I certainly sing in one (laughs). I thought The Damned were shambolic and untogether and I loved that.

RIOT. 77: What about a band like The Undertones ... did they never strike a chord with you at all?

CHRIS: The Undertones? That's Fergal Sharkey n' all, isn't it?

RIOT. 77: It is (laughs).

CHRIS: Yeah, sure, that was cute. I mean, even though I started making records in the mid to late 70's I guess, it's not surprising that The Saints became associated with Punk Rock if you listen to the first record, but we never felt part of that whole U.K. centric scene. Over the years I've gotten into a lot of trouble, especially if I go somewhere like Los Angeles, because I'm a bit disrespectful of Punk. Other people's idea of Punk is like this whole quads eye revolutionary music and I totally respect anything like that, but Punk Rock just never particularly impacted on me or my life. Stuff like the New York Dolls I thought was great in a trashy kind of way. The Cramps I guess are kind of Punk Rock, even though its Psychobilly, but there's something about them that's theatrical, and Punk Rock isn't supposed to be theatrical, there's some kind of staunchness about it that I don't get. I didn't get it when I was a kid and I still don't get it now. But I'm perfectly respectful of other people's likes. To me it's all Rock n' Roll and it's always been that way. The people I admire in terms of singers are Nina Simone and Little Richard ... now, if I could sing like that I'd be pretty fuckin' happy (laughs).

RIOT. 77: I'm just naming all these Punk groups here, trying to find one that you'll acknowledge (laughs) The Clash, c'mon you can't dismiss The Clash ...

CHRIS: Yeah, I should've liked The Clash more than I do. I just can't work out why they never hit home with me. There're certain songs of theirs that I quite like. I've never met Joe Strummer but I've been told that we're kind of similar characters in terms of what we like ...

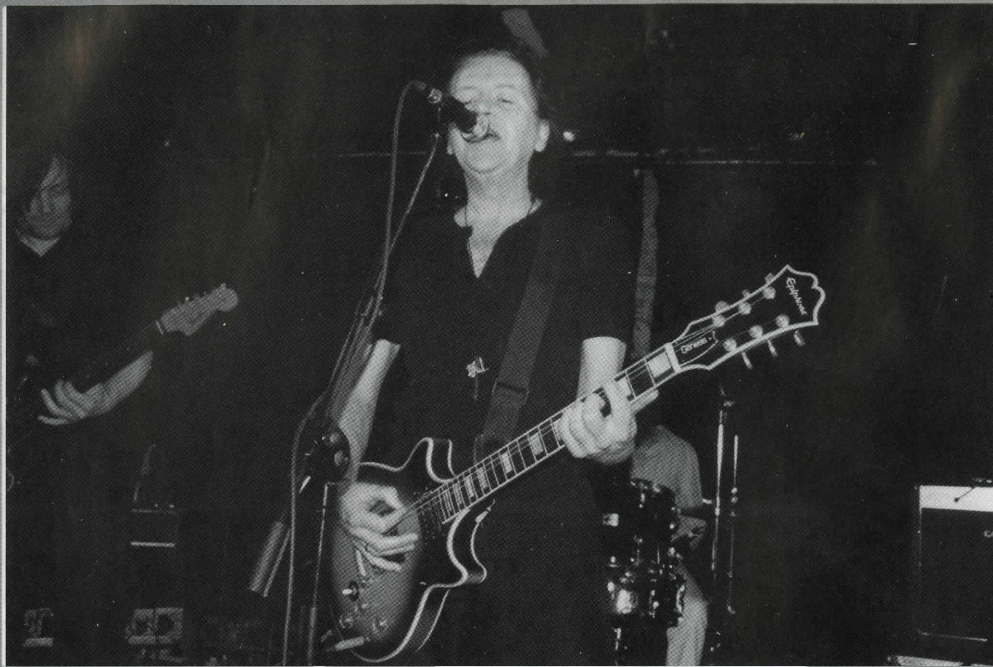
RIOT. 77: Yeah I mean the influences are pretty much exactly the same between The Clash and The Saints ... It's old Rock n' Roll, R n' B ...

CHRIS: Not a million miles apart, no. That's true.

RIOT. 77: What about the Boomtown Rats. They were pretty much an R n' B band. What did you make of them?

CHRIS: I've always liked the panache of Sir Bob and I've always liked the racket the band made. They were outside the





mould and I loved that.

RIOT. 77: I know you've had your differences with the old Saints guitarists Ed Kuepper, down the years, but you played with him again at some Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame induction not so long ago, is that right?

CHRIS: Well, I wasn't going to do it until Archie, the bass player from a later incarnation, said "Chris, they'll fly you out to Australia, give you lots of wine and fish cakes, you'll stay in a posh hotel for a week, don't be such an arse". So I said ok. I rang Ed and he got all very pompous about it, as he does. I told him if I was going to do it that I wanted someone who's at least been in The Saints for five or six years and I still think that anyone who's ever been in The Saints can still come back because there's been twenty-six of us and I'm still friends with most of them. Ed is just a bit grumpy because he's never forgiven me for continuing, even though at the time he amiably went his own way. We were dropped like a hotcake in back in '79. We've been friends since the age of fourteen and I think in public we're the worst enemies that have ever existed, but in private we'll meet up and have a beer and a chat.

RIOT. 77: Is a full Saints reunion on the cards, do you think?

CHRIS: Nah, its impossible. I mean, seeing Ivor, the original drummer, was gorgeous. Ivor and I were really good mates, but he's just not interested, he doesn't care. It was fun having him at that Hall of Fame thing and something he said in his speech was, "It's great that Chris has continued on with the music. If Australia had have been this interested twenty-five years ago, things might have been a bit different." Great comment! I love Ed though, but we're just like chalk and cheese and maybe that was part of the magic when we were kids. I don't see a reunion happening though ... never say never of course, but I wouldn't be putting money on it myself.

RIOT. 77: You've never accepted the glorification of early Saints work ... why is that?

CHRIS: I can be pretty honest about it. We're playing really old shit tonight.

RIOT. 77: Yeah, I had a quick glimpse at the set list there and "I'm Stranded" is the second song in ...

CHRIS: Yeah, and I'm relaxed about it, its fine. That has never been my favourite song and still isn't. Obviously my view is going to be subjective, but I think a lot of that early stuff is crap, I think some of that middle period stuff is crap, I think some of the songs I write these days are crap. If someone writes a piece of music or does a record that I've been involved with, once it's done, its no longer mine, its up to you as a listener. I'm not a critic, I'm not even a fan; I just make the shit and hope you like it. I've always been dubious about putting stuff on pedestals. If people like the early records, great, fine.

RIOT. 77: Does it piss you off that people don't take you seriously for what you do now and instead keep referring back to what you done as a teenager when you probably had no clue about what you were creating?

CHRIS: No, because it changes. There are some parts of the world where our early stuff is unknown. In the U.S.A. for example, our early stuff isn't quite as popular as the newer stuff.

RIOT. 77: Where did the title "Paralytic Tonight, Dublin Tomorrow" come from?

CHRIS: It's not too deep and cosmic. I went through a phase where I was reading lots of great Irish literature and there was an Irish American bloke named JP Donleavy who wrote "The Ginger Man" and all that, and I was reading one of his books, can't remember which one, where he was getting all romantic in a mock Joyce-ian way about Dublin. So when I was going through my down and out in London and Paris phase, in 1979 after everyone had pissed off and I was still in London ... a young man, looking to explore his roots and I figured that whole boozy, poetic thing was a good direction for The Saints to head in and I thought that title was quite fitting of that.

RIOT. 77: Do you have any Irish Republican blood in you Chris, by any chance?

CHRIS: Yep. I believe in the Free State, which is why I got an Irish passport many years ago.

RIOT. 77: Ok, the first Saints single came out on a label called Fatal Records ... was that just a name you made up to release your own stuff, or was it an actual functioning label?

CHRIS: Yeah, that was just our own label. As kids, it seemed

like a really good idea. We were eighteen at the time or something and that was the one we ended up with after going through a whole list of names for what we should call our record label. I think we chose that name to be funny, as in our record was doomed and wasn't going to go anywhere. We only pressed up five hundred of them.

RIOT. 77: Did you hold on to a copy of that?

CHRIS: No I didn't. But I know a man who probably has thousands. On my travels over the years I've come across quite a lot of copies that people get me to sign and I can't believe that there are that many. So someone is obviously making more of them.

RIOT. 77: Can you tell if it's an original or not?

CHRIS: No. It's been a bit of a running joke for the past twenty years. I mean we gave two hundred and fifty of the records away and we must have sent a hundred away to magazines. At the time my nickname was Ron The Manager, because I was the guy who would go around begging people to buy these records. If I said we sold a hundred of those things, I think I'd be exaggerating. All the hype came after the review in Sounds. There's no way of telling if its an original or not, I believe and for the benefit of this interview, anyone who wants to make them themselves can go ahead and I doubt anyone in the world, including myself, could spot a fake from the original.

RIOT. 77: Was the Sounds review the first to pick up on The Saints, yeah?

CHRIS: Pretty much. In Australia we were a nonentity. No one liked us, we couldn't get gigs; we turned the house we had into a place to play gigs at, on the weekend. Before we left Brisbane, I think we'd done three professional performances. I'm not saying this in a negative way, but we really weren't much of a band and had very limited live experience. When we played that famous gig in the Roundhouse in London with The Ramones, we'd maybe done four or five weeks of proper gigs over a four or five month period. We supported AC/DC once after Sounds had given us "Single Of The Week" and I'd never seen a monitor system before, because our P.A. would be two stacks in the corner with no monitor for the singer, meaning I had to just yell over the top of it all. We didn't go down very well anyway ... I mean, Punky Rock music as a commercial entity didn't hit Australia until the early 80's and we were out of there in '77. We kept missing

trends and/or creating them (laughs).

RIOT. 77: Some of your earliest gigs were at Communist Party rallies, is that right? What was that all about? Was that where you stood politically?

CHRIS: Uhhhh!! You've got to remember what the political situation was like in Australia at the time. It's a big fluffy country, even more so then, where the standard of living is generally quite high. Me and mine, we were working class, but we weren't starving. We had, by European standards, a lot. My old man was a night security guard at a factory and I didn't realise I was working class until I was about sixteen, because I always thought, "This is not rough!! This is fine!" I mean I grew up in what would be classed as a poor or tough neighbourhood in Australia, but by European standards, it was heaven. Australia is an outpost of the U.S.A. and it follows American policy very closely and lots of Australians died in Vietnam, so it was a turbulent time politically. To be a communist has never been terribly popular and I wouldn't say I've ever been a communist, but probably closer to a socialist. My sister went to university and the hot thing there is this sort of middle class revolution and as a randy teenager I would just follow along and go to party's. Champagne Socialism I think it's probably called these days. You could get women in their early twenties at university to shag you because you had long hair and were a bit young and a bit cute and spout off about Trotsky or whoever would get you the better shag. I'm not saying that I'm shallow, but I just thought it was all so terribly middle class and it wasn't where I was coming from, but perhaps where I wouldn't mind going on the weekend. The drinks were free, the food was good and the women were friendlier. But the association with the Communist Party came about because as teenagers we were the real deal, we were from a working class suburb ... I've met people down the years who said they were always afraid of The Saints, which is hilarious because we were a big bunch of girls who would read books, you know? I left school at fourteen because I found out that I could actually not be forced to go to school and I thought that was the greatest thing in the world. It's not that I'm not academic or anything, I just didn't like being in school and felt my time was better spent listening to records and reading books. I worked from the age of fourteen because it gave me money, which was a totally new concept to me at that age. But I am a strong believer in a welfare state and my sympathies are with the left. In most countries what used to be Labour Party's are not really Labour Party's anymore, so it's very difficult to have Party allegiance. I'm not disillusioned with politics as such because it's the best we've got at the minute. Listen, we live in a capitalist society and the workingman is still being shafted in the same way he has been for generations and generations. But I am an optimist and I think we're evolving slowly but surely into some sort of consciousness, but every time you start thinking that, some travesty happens somewhere and we're back to square one.

RIOT. 77: Ok, we'll end this on a light note. Denis Tek from Radio Birdman said the first time he met you, he thought you were a drunken Irish git, who wanted to fight him in his front garden ... (laughs)

CHRIS: I may be a drunk and I may be Irish, but I'm certainly not a git and the last thing I would want to do with an American bodybuilder is pick a fight with him.

RIOT. 77: Do you remember the night he's talking about?

CHRIS: Yeah, I know what he's talking about. Brisbane is quite a parochial place and in those days was ultra conservative, almost like a 1950's American movie set in Texas. It's like the Deep South of America. You could shoot black people and it was ok-ish, except there weren't very many black people at that time, because the British had already killed them all. I think I had a sense of humour that they didn't understand or think was cool. Radio Birdman had all this sort of semi-military bollocks going on ... with their American in the band, thinking they were really cool ... I don't know where The Saints got his reputation of being hard men from, because I've met a few hard men in my time and can assure you that we are ballerinas in comparison. All this bollocks started with Radio Birdman when we did this gig together and I made a reference on stage to their stage backdrop that they had put up, which was their attempt at being provocative with all this S.S. Military stuff ... for fucks sake, dream up something a bit better than that ...





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IN THE CITY

The Undertones - The Village



Tiger Army - The Music Centre



DECEMBER 2004:

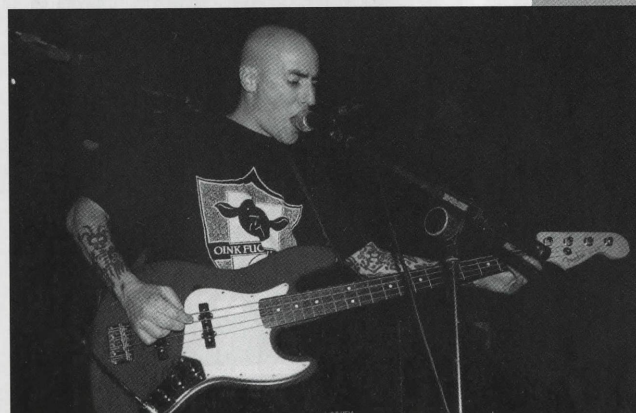
The party season gets underway in the company of **The Undertones**, making their annual pilgrimage down south for an appearance in The Village. Right, time for the obligatory bit of Paul McCloone bating! I could smell the fucker's aftershave before he even walked out on stage. He should be at home ironing his fuckin' blouse this fella. What a steamer ... so out of place ... belongs in a super-pub in Temple Bar with his boot-cut jeans, bowling runners and the aforementioned girls blouse ... skanger! ... and why does he insist on pulsating around the stage, grinding his crotch up against anything within spitting distance? The Undertones as a band naturally remain unsurpassed in their ability to supply an endless line of great songs to get us through the night. The follow up to the surprisingly good "Get What You Need" is already on the way and tonight was their opportunity to showcase a handful of those songs for us. Difficult to tell how good a record its gonna be until we hear the studio versions, but nothing really stood out here this evening. I, like most probably everyone else, was here for the oldies (sad but true) and they didn't let us down on that score. "Family Entertainment", "Male Model", "Girls Don't Like It", "My Perfect Cousin" and of course the John Peel shout-out for "Teenage Kicks" - this being its first airing since his death. "Its Going To Happen" would have added a nice touch, but apart from that nothing worse was omitted. Final song of the evening following their encore was the unparalleled "Mars Bars", even if it did include the snide "what a crap song" remark from McCloone at the end ... now what the fuck would he know?

Always hot on the tails of an Undertones performance is a follow up by their northern rivals, **Stiff Little Fingers**, and that's precisely what we got the following Friday. This Christmas's event was held at the Music Centre. What added to my excitement about this gig was the addition of a support slot from Pete Holidai's new band - **Enemigos**. The group also includes Cait O'Riordan and Jonnie Bonnie from the current Radiators line up, so I would have been all-ears for this one. What a kick in the bollix it was when they didn't play and the god-awful **Things** were drafted in as a replacement. Ouch! With plenty of long faces in the Music Centre, we proceeded to sit through these fifth rate Iggy impersonators - complete with the singer's arse on display. Hands up who was watching the Iggy documentary on the South Bank Show the other night then??? C'mon!! It was after ten o'clock when the familiar blast of "Go For It" began playing around the venue, greeting the arrival of **Stiff Little Fingers**, who wasted no time in opening with three of their best - "At The Edge", "Roots Radicals ..." and "Nobody's Hero". How could you follow that? A difficult one and naturally meaning there was a slight lull in the middle of the set, but they took it back up quick enough via tributes to Joe Strummer with "Strummerville", their own "Fly The Flag" and "Wasted Life", which never fails to hit the spot. "Suspect Device" was their parting gesture prior to encores of "Alternative Ulster" and "Tin Soldiers". The sound was incredible tonight and the band more eager than I've seen in some time.

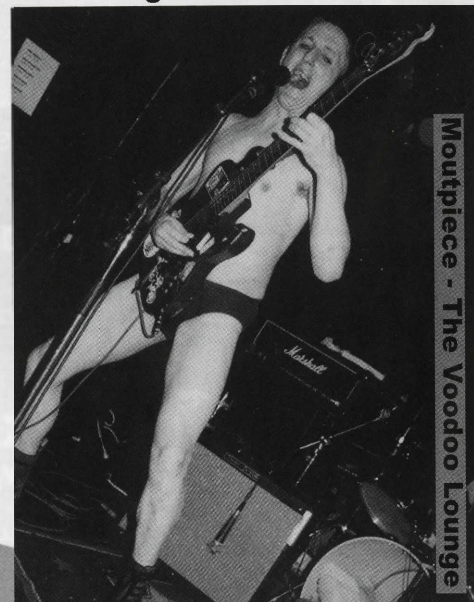
Stiff Little Fingers - The Music Centre



Runnin' Riot - The Voodoo Lounge

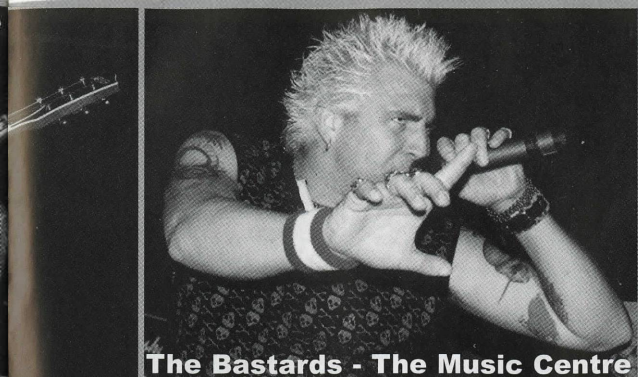


The Steam Pig - The Voodoo Lounge



Moutpiece - The Voodoo Lounge

Time for the Toxic Christmas party in Voodoo on the 18th - a guaranteed annual call for celebration. Cracking line up this year too that included The Steam Pig, Runnin' Riot and a guest DJ slot from Dandelion, who I haven't witnessed playing in many a year. Got warmed up round the corner in the cosy environs of Ryan's boozier, as only a duck would have ventured as far as the Cobblestone on a night like tonight. Not sure who the band on stage were when we walked in, but it wasn't long before **Moutpiece** got up to do their thing. A rather inebriated lead singer, clad in a dress which he quickly parted company with, the band proceeded to serve up another rough dose of biker rock music seasoned with Ramones timing. Parts of it can come close to hitting the spot, but as yet an under developed band and a bit too soon to make a fair call on. **Runnin' Riot** got up and done what they always do, making it look like such an easy task in the process. This current line up is slotting into place rather nicely and you can clearly see the confidence of the other members beginning to grow, with each of them pulling their weight. Colin is the flagship skinhead frontman and you just know he was born to lead a band like this. Always unrivalled in their aura of Oi! wonder, with an ever increasing batch of anthems on board. They've got so many quality tunes to choose from that most other Oi! bands could probably make a career on the stuff Runnin' Riot throw away. Generally on hand for such occasions is **The Steam Pig** and true to form this year they didn't let us down either. I think it's about time we got an earful of this new album as more and more of the set appears to be taken up with it. Another faultless set from the granddaddy's of Dublin Punk, mixing some of the old with a lot of the new and sounding more accomplished at it by the gig. They didn't waste any time and crammed as many songs into their timeframe as one could expect. Not too sure about Andy's new barnet though ... that's something that may need to be looked at!! Another evening spent in the company of **The Things** really wasn't what the doctor ordered - twice in one week!!! Not a chance! We made a hasty break for it around to the Dice Bar after a few of their songs, to return in time for DJ **Dandelion's** set. Couldn't make out what was going on here. From what I remember she attempted to play several different records, each of them skipping and hopping all over the place. We stuck around for about a half hour before giving up and getting out of there, as things showed no signs of improving anytime soon. Shame, I was really looking forward to this.



The Bastards - The Music Centre



Swingin' Utters - The Troubadour

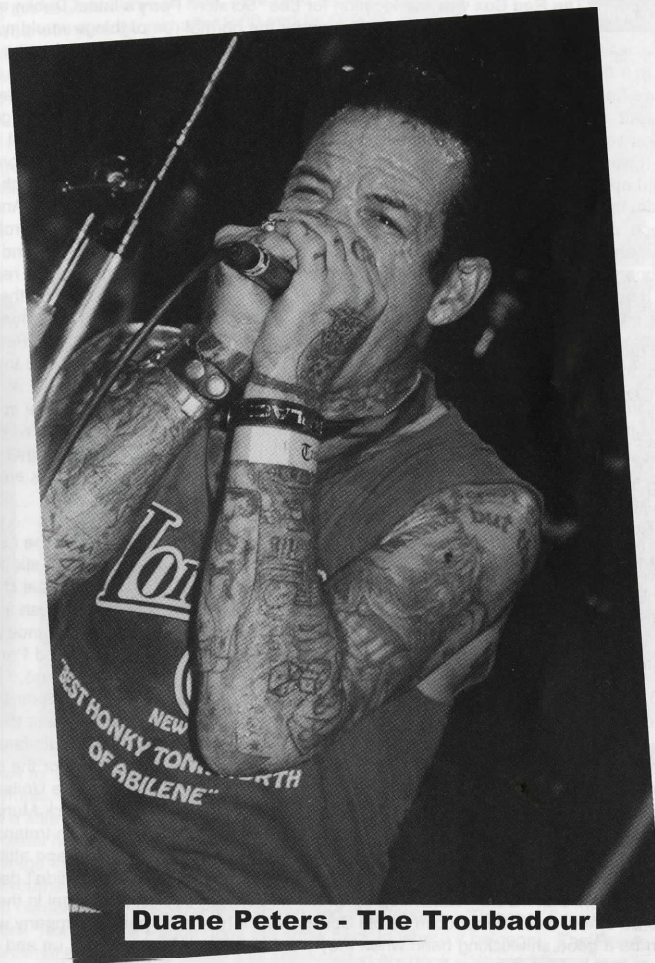


JANUARY 2005:

The slow start to the new-year was promptly rectified with and appearance by Lars Frederikson and his band of Bastards in the Music Centre at the end of the month. Nice to get a chance to see the guy in more intimate settings that Rancid's Olympia date, two years back. The tour kicked off in Belfast the previous night, before hitting Dublin on the Wednesday. We missed opening local band The Keds and arrived in just good time for **Tiger Army's** set. I'd witnessed their soundcheck earlier and the band were almost unrecognisable in their jeans and sweatshirts, so yes the Psychobilly look is a stage show kids, but it's a good one. I'm not even too sure what is so Psychobilly about the band anymore other than the look. Does a quiff and a Double Bass make a Psychobilly band? Tiger Army seem to think so. Granted they have elements of the style in their sound, but really they lean more in the direction of Hardcore and you can really spot the AFI comparisons when they're performing. This theory can become somewhat irrelevant though when the band sound as good as they do, all branding aside. They produce a monstrous sound for a three piece and Nick 13 is one gifted Punk guitarist and frontman. I'm not too sure how much of a following they had here initially, but the reception was warm and welcoming, bar the odd pint being lobbed at the Double Bass player! I prefer their slower, rockier stuff as opposed to the full on Hardcore attack they launch into at times that has little melody or groove to it. **Lars Frederikson** made his appearance through the backing music of Johnny Cash's "Man Comes Around" intro tape. Looked like something out of the Prodigy tonight, with wraparound shades and matching white suit and biker jacket. Gordy from the Forgotten lends a great input to the group and works as a master of riling up the crowd while Lars sings. Excellent one-two vocal technique from the band that gives each tune an extra lift. Frederikson is a genuine Punk Rocker, made up of all the best elements of Charlie Harper, Johnny Ramone and Joe Strummer. His knack for composing bang-on songs in that classic vein of the late 70's never gets old. Add to this elements of Rock n Roll, especially fat Elvis era, and we're left with some punishing rhythms indeed that difficult to be outdone. There were plenty of ramblings from the mic throughout the night, giving us some good intros into their finest moments like "Dead American" and "Skunx". Their excellent version of The Blasters's "Marie Marie" was kicking alongside Billy Bragg's "To Have And To Have Not". Leaving us with an extended Rap break in "The Viking" analysing his life, which is kinda what the Bastards are all about, topped off a reckonable performance.

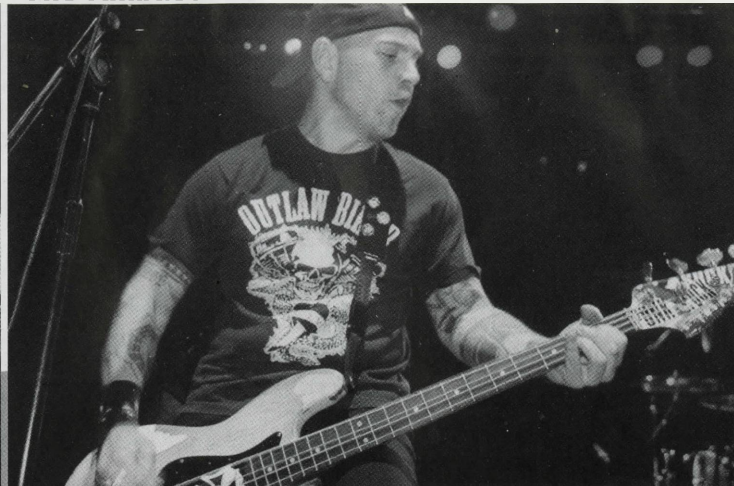
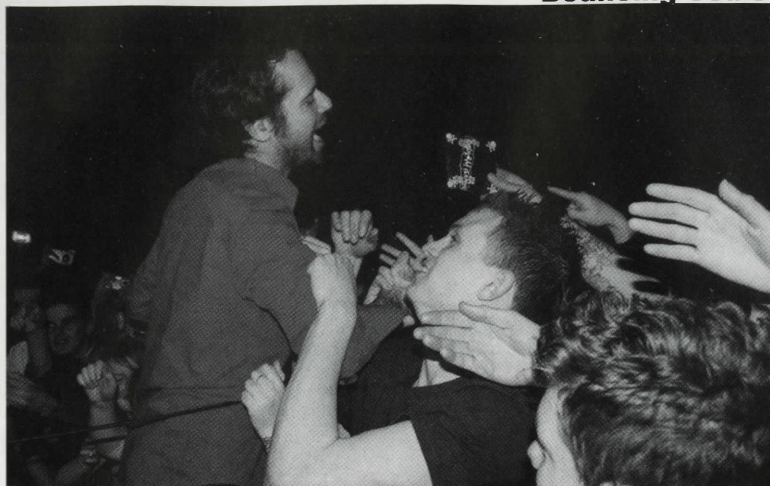
Friday morning we were off for a New Year break to Los Angeles and first on the agenda was a rare chance to catch the first woman of Rockabilly, Wanda Jackson, in action. Wow! Wrapping up a small handful of dates around the west coast, she stopped over at the Knitting Factory in West Hollywood. It took a time to find the place but we eventually arrived somewhat flushed and poured a few beers down the neck before stopping to look around and check out the support group, who were some dreadful Emo band. A further glance around the room revealed a hardcore Emo following with an average age of sixteen cheering them on! Surely this couldn't be a Wanda Jackson crowd? We checked it out and as it happened the Knitting Factory has three different venues in the one building and of course we were in the wrong one. A sprint around the corner and things started to look up. This was a bit more like it and luckily we hadn't missed any of her show as the support were just about due on. **The Cadillac Angels** as they billed themselves were a traditional American band in the vein of the Blasters and operated successfully in warming us up. They also double as **Wanda Jackson's** backing band, bar the exchange of a bass player, and brought her on to greet the rowdy onslaught of her current following, which is as far away from her Christian incarnation of the 70's and 80's as you're likely to get. This is all the spirit of the mid to late 50's, done by someone who was actually there and part of it all and not just romanticising on some other generation's era gone by. She can still cut it too and hasn't lost that growl we remember from all those great records. It's a joy to see her get back to what she does best and belt out those timeless tunes like "Rock Your Baby", "Fujiyama Mama" and "Hot Dog! That Made Him Mad". Given that the woman has one of the longest histories behind her of any performer still on the go today, she took time out before each song to explain the story behind it and share memories of the events in her life that inspired it. Bare in mind, Jackson is one of the only artists from her day that actually wrote most of her own material. There was an encore of "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On" and her own "Let's Have A Party" before she sat down to talk with the crowd personally into the wee hours.

Sunday night and West Hollywood was again the destination for a Swingin' Utters gig in The Troubadour. This venue has been in existence since the 60's and whatever about their \$5 beers, it's a nice old style club to enjoy a live gig in. Again there was hassle finding the place and given that it's right across the street from Beverly Hills, I



Duane Peters - The Troubadour

figured we had to have the wrong area, but sometimes you forget what country you're in and this was America after all kids, where the down and outs live side by side with the high fliers. Weird! \$7 to park your car in the Troubadour! Bastards! We'd missed at least one support act and **Duane Peters** was working his way through his set when we got in. I'm not sure what name his band were going under this evening, but it wasn't Die Hunns. This was more of a sleazy New York Dolls meets Hanoi Rocks type deal, and with Duane's over the top antics to front it all, it sounded excellent. Duane is the same guy he's always been and has mastered the knack of this craft long ago. He just sounds more at home than anyone else doing it and above all is genuine. After all these years the **Swingin' Utters** still set up their own gear before a performance and tonight was no exception despite the screaming girls insisting Johnny pose for photographs with them before he goes any further, much to his embarrassment. Max Huber was replaced by stand in guitarist Jack of One Man Army tonight, but the rest of the line up remained intact for another high rating Utters performance. Johnny is a rowdy singer who shouts his way over each song, full of spite and venom. "Pills n' Smoke", "Five Lesson's ...", "I Need Feedback" and "Teenage Genocide" marked the strong points early on. The Utters sound tonight was a lot more straight forward and high velocity than on record and hadn't you been familiar with the material you'd be forgiven for thinking all their songs sounded the same and blended into one another, which as recorded evidence has proved, couldn't be further from the truth. Perhaps this is the effect of Max's absence, but I still thought they were cracking tonight. They've got one of the best past records in modern Punk and just keep pulling 'em out of thin air. Spike took over the vocals to run through "Alternative Ulster" near the end, which was a great and rough arsed version of the gem. Full on bustling crowd here too this evening though one guy did manage to knock himself out having split his head open on the concrete floor. Ouch!



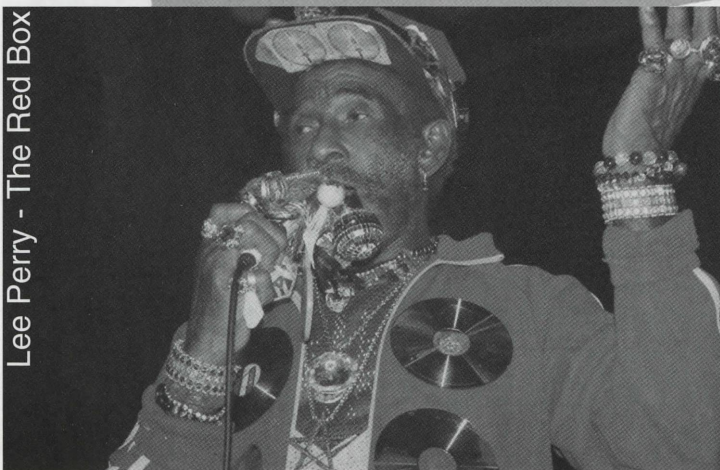
February 2005

The Red Box was the location for Lee "Scratch" Perry's latest Dublin appearance in mid February. Saturday night in the Red Box under the normal run of things would not be a place you'd catch me in, but this was not under the normal run of things, as one of Reggae's finest achievers was in our midst. Look up "insane" in a dictionary and you're sure to find a picture of Lee Perry beside it. I think he invented the word!! First though, we had a set by Dublin's **King Sativa** to get through. Having drifted in midway through their performance and ignorant of anything they had on offer previously, it was difficult to make a fair judgement. They play 60's influenced Ska, something akin to the Skatalites, but the first twenty minutes or so of what I saw had little lasting impact on me. It was their final handful of songs that really nailed it home. They went out on a high with some memorable songs and appeared to go down semi-well with the Scratch crowd. Speaking of which, out came his band shortly afterwards, to warm us up with a couple of songs, including Junior Murvin's, "Police And Thieves". Perry's band is a three piece, consisting of synthesizers, bass guitar and drums, along with the Mad Professor seated at the back of the venue on the desk. I'm not much on modern day Reggae bands to be honest and replacing live instruments with keyboards just doesn't do it for me. That's precisely what made all those early records so great - the fact that many of them were performed live by a full band. It was about the third song in by the time **Lee "Scratch" Perry** made his entrance via the back staircase, wheeling a pink suitcase behind him, to store his collection of hats. The place went nuts at his arrival, as the skanking levels quickly hit high. Undoubtedly Perry is past his prime, but still springs the occasional moment of genius on us from time to time. He doesn't have to do much to win a crowd over these days, as his historical status can single-handedly take care of that one. Yes, he is a legend and debts are owed out to the man from right across the board, but he has also churned out some serious amount of filler down the years and the copious amounts of weed he's gotten through in his lifetime hasn't always helped matters. Parts of the set dipped into mediocrity, but given that the guy is old enough to be a grandfather several times over, he's still pretty light on his feet and can work those rhythms when he wants to. I don't think anyone was complaining and it's always nice to see one of the true architects still out there doing it.

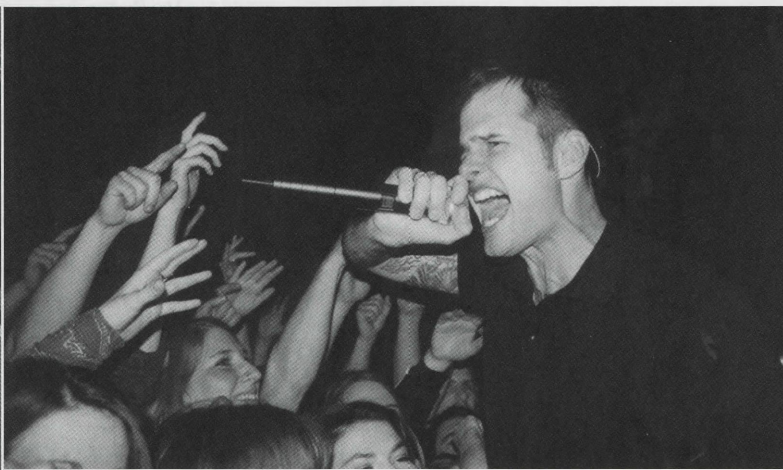
Dropkick Murphy's made their annual pilgrimage to the old sod on the same day the country bet England in the Rugby. What a fitting occasion for a Dropkick Murphys gig then ... not that the Plastic Paddy's need any excuse to wave an inflatable hammer in the shape of a shamrock around or anything! The real clincher for this gig was the Bouncing Souls support slot, but first on were the **God Awfuls**, who I was in no rush to see and only caught about the last fifteen minutes or so of them. They've toughened up their act somewhat since their Vandals support in December, but it still remains quite transparent. The addition of a flat-cap and Fred Perry seems to be all these bands think it takes these days. The **Bouncing Souls** have a hard time with Ireland. They really need to get over here and do a headlining show. For my money, I think they're one of the greater bands of the past decade, but still appear underappreciated outside of the states. They put in another high scoring set tonight with their wealth of quality music, spanning their impressive back catalogue. There were a handful of Souls fans in attendance but nothing great. The band played their hearts out and put a smile on my face. Make way for the bagpipes, tricolours, stars n' stripes etc. etc. it's time for the **Dropkick Murphys**. The Sham's "If The Kids Are United" was their opening tape, as their entourage of teenage girls made their way side-stage to take in the Dropkick Murphys set. Its worth noting that this is the first time the band have chosen to go through a corporate promoter in Ireland and even I have to admit it was nice to see them maintain their now trademark anyone's-allowed-on-the-stage attitude, despite the Ambassador playing host to this gig. There was a crash barrier in place front of stage, but it didn't detract from the band's shared-platform message that much. I can't keep up with the revolving door of personnel in the Dropkick Murphys, but there looked to be a new face on mandolin as old Spicey what's-his-name parted company with the band a while back. They can be a good shit-kicking band when they want to be and displayed this on and off this evening, but interestingly the set placed a somewhat heavy emphasis on cover material. Now included, amongst others, are "The Auld Triangle" and "Fields Of Athenry". For their best bits, just look in the direction of the Mike McCoolgan years. "Barroom Hero" featured guest vocals from Dublin's own transported Bostonian, as the last twenty minutes or so of action took things up to a dizzy level. Add in C  it    Riordan's guest appearance for "Fairytale of New York" (yes, that's right, Al Barr did attempt to sing this!!!!!!) and the obligatory stage invasion for both "Kiss Me I'm Shitfaced" (with Ken entering the crowd, whilst handling lead vocals) and "Skinhead On The MTA" and you've got a pretty fun night out. You can't take this type of thing too seriously, but at face value they have more to offer than people (myself included) often give them credit for.



Dropkick Murphys - The Ambassador



Lee Perry - The Red Box



The Saints dragged their drunken arses through Whelan's on a sleety Tuesday evening in March, much to the delight of vintage Punk Rockers everywhere. When I say The Saints, what I in fact mean is Chris Bailey accompanied by quite an established group of backing musicians. This was a double treat tonight as for starters was the surprise inclusion of Dublin's best kept secret – Psychobilly fusionists, **The Mosquitoes**. If you haven't checked in with this lot yet, I recommend doing so. They cook up a rich in roots blend of screwed up Country twang, a Cramps ideology and a Link Wray induced schizoid guitar technique. They have it down and venture from mid paced crooners to the all out frenzy of "Brand New Cadillac" as their farewell. This three piece work well off one another and give off an effective on stage chemistry. One to watch! **The Saints** were never a band for having a stage persona and little has changed in the life of Chris Bailey, as he staggers onstage in tracksuit bottoms and runners straight from the local budget store. He's already downed a bottle of red and lord knows what else before hitting the stage, add to that a handful of Brandy's whilst playing and by the end of the evening the guy was clearly in no fit state to be entertaining a crowd. Earlier on though, his latest incarnation of The Saints lead us through some memorable moments, such as opener "Porno Movies" off the new longplayer, quickly backed up with "I'm Stranded", that landed a copy of the original 7 inch on the stage by an eager fan. The formative days of The Saints remain unmatched and from '79 to present they've occasionally dipped into brief bouts of worthiness, as demonstrated by this evening's choice of songs, that creamed the best of their post-punk years with the first three albums. It was well rounded, with Baileys's guitar player in particular being stragely good, looking in the direction of James Stephenson's style on the final Stooges record. There was something in the way of a stage invite sent out to the crowd towards the end as Bailey dragged out an extended R n' B reprise with everything thrown in there from Toots and The Maytels "Pressure Drop" to other Funk inspired moments of genius. I was waiting for a run through "River Deep, Mountain High", which didn't materialize by the time we called it a night shortly after eleven o'clock. His acoustic few numbers as an encore were quite convincing and I would have liked to hear more from that. Overall tonight's performance had its fair share of highs, but Bailey ended up getting too pissed to function as the night wore on and things ended up getting a little messy towards the end.

After the Mosquitoes promising performance at The Saints gig, I was looking forward to another dose of them a few nights later at the Rockabilly gathering in the Voodoo Lounge. Unfortunately, although billed as playing, had pulled out in the lead up to the gig, which left us with just Aces Wild and Spellbound to carry the load, along with Dice Bar's DJ Stevie supplying the sounds between acts. Warmed up at the Dice Bar's happy hour, with that fine Dublin Brewing Company's Guinness. First band **Aces Wild** hit the stage just after 9:00 and proceeded to dish out the Rockabilly favourites, with most, if not all of their set, consisting of cover material. They were good and utilized the Double-Bass arrangements particularly well. They carried a good following with them, but relying on other people's material is a stumbling block they'll need to overcome in order to be taken as something more seriously than a novelty act. Stevie whipped out some good records in the interval between bands and seemed to favour The Cramps above all else ... Can't knock that! The spiv-fronted **Spellbound** took the stage next with a similar brand of Rockabilly, but looked to play more original material. Drawing the obvious influences of Sun-era Elvis and referencing that with a mid eighties British Psychobilly slant gave them a high-grade result. They got a rousing reception and really made the Voodoo come alive tonight. I wasn't that taken on this place at first but its grown on me a lot since.

Spellbound - The Voodoo Lounge



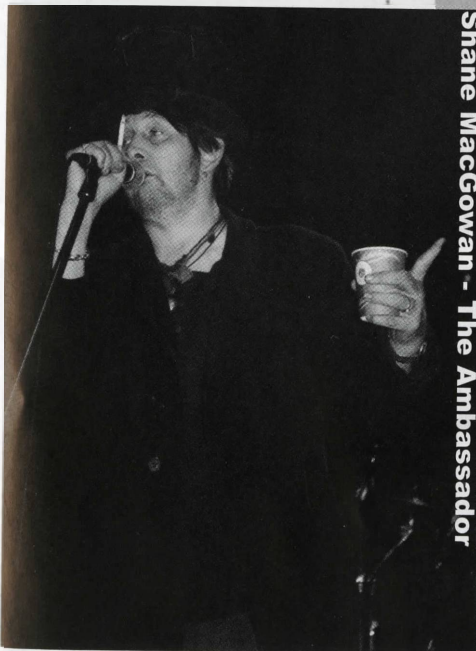
Aces Wild - The Voodoo Lounge



Shane MacGowan's seasonal visit to the capitol came that bit earlier this year on the 12th of March, and was shifted, from his usual stop off at the Olympia, to the smaller Ambassador venue. The turnout wasn't as high as normal and the crowd enthusiasm appeared a little under-whelming. There was a singer-songwriter type support just wrapping up when we walked in, prior to the usual hour or so wait for MacGowan and his Popes to appear. For once **Shane MacGowan** actually walked on stage the same time as his band, rather than keeping us waiting on his arrival for the first half hour of the set. Firm favourite opener "If I Should Fall From Grace With God" marked the beginning of another run through the collected career works of Shane MacGowan and the Pogues. "Donegal Express" was somewhat of a limp second song, before "Rock n' Roll Paddy" took the show back to where it belongs. The Popes weren't at their best tonight and Tom McAninal's absence on banjo was sorely felt in my book. Shane himself was in good spirits though, as he led the band through some of the most crucial songs in Irish music's history. "The Auld Triangle" was killer, alongside "Sally MacLenane" and "Streams Of Whiskey", nicely placed amidst a selection of his finest. With Ronnie Drew and Cait O'Riordan both in town tonight, I thought a guest spot from either of them would have been on the cards, but it wasn't to be, as Shane introduced "The Irish Rover" saying he wished Ronnie was here to sing it with him. "Rainy Night In Soho" and "Lonesome Highway" were the couple of love songs chosen and played beautifully. Will this man ever run out of steam?

The ultimate Dublin bard cum hellraiser has got to be **Ronnie Drew** ... lets face it, he's the only one left ... people like this will never be replaced and have become a dying breed unfortunately in these post "Celtic Tiger" times. Having retired from The Dubliners some years back after decades of leading the band round the world on a non-stop booze excursion, he has more recently set about committing himself to sparse solo and guest performances from time to time. Luckily people like Ronnie Drew never really retire and he's continued to keep his hand in with the goings on of Dublin culture. About a year back I read of him bringing an autobiographical, stand-up spoken word type show to the deepest bowls on New York City, which sounded interesting to say the least. Naturally if this was a success, something similar would surely surface on these shores ... and right enough that's what happened last Monday night at Andrews Lane Theatre, when I popped along for the second week of his string of dates there, to check out what he had to offer. The local reviews of the show here were also favourable, so expectations were high. Joining Ronnie was Mike Hannrahan (yes, he of Stockton's Wing fame!!!) on guitar, as the bearded one himself took us through a two-hour plus journey of his life and times. This was really something. His humour is as Dublin as you can get, whether his tales be those based on his acquaintances with the likes of Paddy Kavanagh, Brendan Behan, Shane MacGowan or fellow band members Barney McKenna and Luke Kelly. Ronnie is unstoppable once he gets going and the belly aches from the laughter are like no other. In between all this banter Ronnie straps on his guitar to share some of his choice recorded moments with us ... interesting selection of songs too, being that he didn't rely on the old pleasers and instead stuck to songs that related to the stories he told, either self-penned or written by his contemporaries. Ronnie gave up his bad habits after the deaths of both Ciaran Burke and Luke Kelly, but has lost none of the charm that goes with telling these boozier stories. It's not all fun and games as Ronnie delves into the political and socialist left-wing politics he and many of his friends fought for and believed in. He tackles the thorny subject of immigration, extreme poverty and what life was like in Dublin under tyrant British landlords. Sadly everything we rebelled against the British for, we've now turned into ourselves. All the scarf-wearing ponces with a cappuccino in Dublin today should be forced to see this!

Shane MacGowan - The Ambassador



A busy album launch day for the Blood Or Whiskey chaps, starting off with an in store appearance at Tower Records, followed by a performance in Mountjoy Prison and finally the Voodoo Lounge that evening, which was where I joined the party. Grabbed a few seats at the back of Voodoo when we came in and sat through the remainder of a set by a young, energetic support act called **The Delinkwints**. Displaying a degree of promise for their years, I'd only caught a handful of tunes before they left the stage, thus difficult to make a call on anything. The next band, **The Dubtones**, were partially good. From that privileged Dublin suburb of Dun Laoighaire these new recruits have a history amongst them that's steeped in Dublin Punk traditions. You can tell they've done this before within the first ten minutes of their set as the accomplished arrangements of their songs begin to make themselves known. The clue is in the name of this band, as they merrily blend the caustic edge of The Ruts with the dance rhythms of Two Tone. Their singer has a rough-cut voice that suits the music, containing both melody and ragged vocal tone. I can't recall the last time an unexpected support band had me leave the bar and wander up for a better glimpse, but The Dubtones had that effect tonight. Hey, they even survived a Clash cover of "Clampdown" remarkably well and any band that can cover The Clash without coming off silly, goes down in my book. No surprises that The Enemigos failed to show up for their advertised slot next – is this three in a row????

Blood Or Whiskey's ever increasing stage-hands began setting up for their arrival, which again came courtesy of an introduction over the P.A. The two warm up gigs during the day proved to serve the band well as they sounded tighter than ever, slowly losing that muffled sound they've been trying to rid themselves of since this new line up went into place. We're beginning to hear each instrument for what it is, which is great. Not too sure if eliminating Dougs' acoustic guitar from the equation was such a good idea, as they could use some more of that balance they had during the Barney years. Still, they sound hungrier these days and are clearly working harder than ever at establishing the Blood Or Whiskey name. Their well-rounded set this evening consisted of choice moments from their three album catalogue, naturally leaning in favour of the new album in which this evenings celebrations were in aid of. Cait O' Riordan put in an appearance during the encore for a couple numbers and the band wrapped up another hometown victory.

Keeping with local traditions, a gig by old Dublin favourites **The Radiators (Plan 9)** was on the cards the following night, for a hotly tipped and rare appearance in Whelan's. Always a bastard to get the punters out on a Sunday evening and thus the venue was left rather sparse around the stage area. Old cock rocker turned Mike Ness wannabe **Ricky Warwick** played to a practically empty venue at 9:00pm as the support slot. Doggy choice if you ask me, but seeing as Steve Rapid designed chameleon Ricky's new album artwork, I guess there're connections there. You'd be forgiven for not recognising the Warwick fella without his spandex trousers, but he's reinvented himself roughly three times since I last caught an appearance by his former band **The Almighty** alongside Dreamkeeper in McGonagles fifteen years ago. Strange, but true. He refers to himself as Irish these days too, which is even stranger, but there ya go!

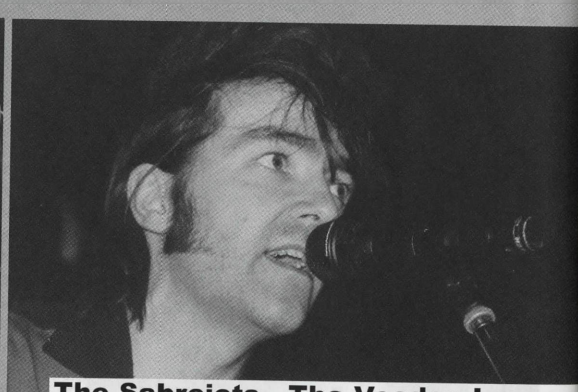
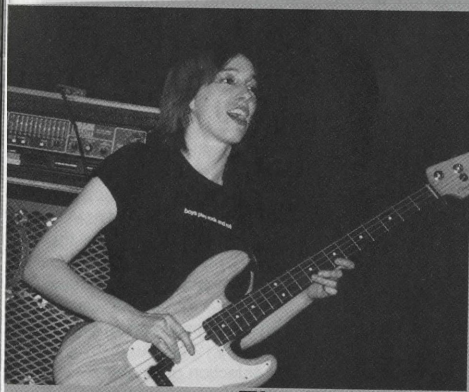
Blood Or Whiskey - The Voodoo Lounge



"Young people of Ireland, I love you!" were the first words out of Phil Chevron's mouth as he greeted **The Radiators (Plan 9)** followers tonight. It's difficult not to raise a smile when a man like Chevron decides to quote from a speech the Pope addressed the people of Ireland with in 1979!! First mention has to go to Holidai and Chevron's wardrobe. Get a fuckin' stylist in the name of sweet jaysus!! Holidai in a pair of baggy leather trousers and a corset no less? I'd sooner wear bells around my neck.

Chevron went for a Bon Jovi look tassled brown suede jacket! Don't this pair have a full-length mirror in the gaff, or what? I shut my eyes and listened to the band tear through one of the most significant back catalogues this country has ever produced. The set was similar in layout to last year's gig, bar two new songs penned by Holidai alongside versions of Shane MacGowan's "Haunted" and the Flamin Groovies "Teenage Head", the latter excellently handled by Steve Rapid. "Sunday World" put the wheels in motion in good spirits, not long before Rapid took the centre stage for the unstoppable "Love Detective". The crowd were particularly boisterous and drunk this evening, which suited the mood at times, but became more irritating as the set moved on, particularly over quieter moments like "Under Clery's Clock". Cait's vocal take on "Kitty Rickets" was expectedly powerful with my other highlight of the evening being "Faithful Departed" – Chevron really shined on this. A thrilling version of "Roxie Girl" slotted well into the encore, before Chevron's parting announcement to the attendees of The Rads confirmed support slot to U2 in Croke this summer. Their crown remains untarnished!

The Sabrejets made their second trek south in six months, for a return to the Voodoo Lounge. Friday night and plenty of people about who were up for a good time. Having wet the beak in the Dice Bar around the corner, we'd missed all but the last song of the first band on the bill, who were just about to wrap things up as we ordered our first pint. **Spellbound** got down to business next and were in good form, with a seasoned collection of self-penned Psychobilly juggernauts, with an interesting version of Metallica's "Whiplash" in there along the way. Various members of this band have a past in Dublin Psychobilly, making Spellbound an accomplished and fluent act. They didn't generate much of a reaction, bar the odd hand clap from the direction of the bar, which sadly was something that continued for the remainder of the evening. Maybe people were tired at the end of the working week, but for some reason, the bands had a difficult time motivating the crowd into little more than a round of applause. There was the odd Rockabilly diehard giving it plenty of welly, but most appeared preoccupied with other things as the **Sabrejets** blasted their through another memorable performance of their Glam tinged Rock n' Roll music. The set was close to what they played last time, mixing the old with the new and handpicking a bunch of less obvious cover versions. Their version of Them's "Baby Please Don't Go" was the wonderful set closer yet again. "Hard Rockin' Daddy", "Poontang" and "Leeroy" were the ones that stuck in my head this evening. Naturally no Sabrejets gig would be complete without and ode to their mentor Johnny Thunders, in the shape of "Little Bit Of A Whore", which they do tremendously, as though it were the workings of the Sabrejets themselves.



The Radiators (Plan 9) - Whelan's

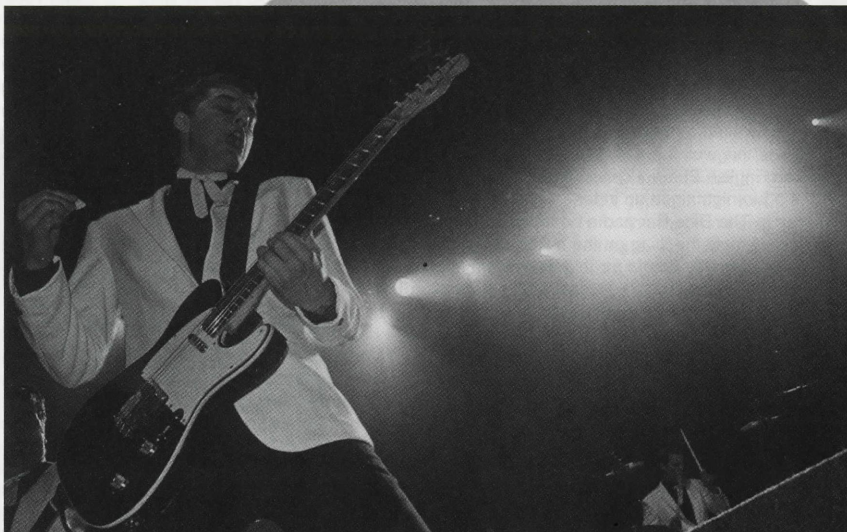
The Sabrejets - The Voodoo Lounge

MAY 2005:

It's been a long time coming, but legendary Skinhead combo **The Oppressed** were ushered over to the island from Cardiff for a one-off performance in the capital, at Smithfield's Voodoo Lounge. A lingering cry of "Yessssss!!!" was my reaction, following the announcement of this one. I didn't see a single poster for it mind, but much like Los Fastidios, it was word of mouth that triumphed for the promotion of this gig. Who in their right mind would miss an event like this?? The Oppressed have generally been making isolated appearances around Europe since their reformation, with strong positive feedback garnered for each of them. For once I was early tonight and caught all bands on the bill. Firstly this evening's promoter Conor Dervin got up with his new band **The Freebooters** for what ended up being a cheeky run through some of Oi!'s staple anthems. Particularly worth a giggle was Cock Sparrer's "England Belong's To Me" reworked into "That Book Belongs To Me", alongside "Paddy Hitler" and Runnin' Riot's "Anti Fascist Auntie", that once went under the title of "Alcoholic Heroes". Debut performance for the Freebooters apparently, that came off exceptionally well. Great to see a boisterous Roddy Moreno giving it loads down the front for all the bands. Out came the Buckfast and up went **Runnin' Riot** ... you seldom see one without the other. Continuing to stun in every way possible, the Riot drew from their vast archive of material for tonight's rabblirousing set and typically got the whole place hopping within seconds of their opening tune. A few bottles of Buckfast later, generously offered out to the crowd by Colin, and we're firing on all four cylinders. There's no stopping this band once they get going. Sadly in what felt like no time it all it was all over as Belfast's finest made way for their Cardiff counterparts **The Oppressed** to mount the stage. Roddy and brother Dom line up alongside drummer Tony Kizmus and guitarist Steve Floyd to make a seldom-equalled Oi! unit. This is the genuine article skinhead deal here, none of your posturing, pretentious guff we've unfortunately come to expect from the genre of late. No fucking about as The Oppressed kicked off with "Work Together", proving they've lost none of their edge and remain sharp as a knife. Razor fuckin' sharp in fact ... Roddy hasn't compromised an iota since the early eighties and it's great to see this stuff done well. There hasn't been much in the way of new material from The Oppressed, so tonight it was a copious supply of old time anthems, which seemed just fine by the punters. By the time "Joe Hawkins" made an appearance it was clear we had one of the all time treasured greats on our hands as The Oppressed marched into untouchable ground. The pints were flowing and the memory begins to fade, but I seem to remember their Slade ode "Cum On Feel The Noize" showing up near the end. Quality!

JUNE 2005:

MCD's Bud Rising week of gigs brought some good bands to the capital after the disappointing line up from the May bank holiday weekend, which featured not a single band worth turning up for. The Hives started off the weekend for me on the Thursday with a return to The Ambassador. No, it doesn't seem that long ago since their last appearance here, but it ranked so highly on the musical radar that I was well up to repeat the experience. So we braved our way through the jungle that is O'Connell Street and caught the latter half of **The Things** set as openers. I'm still not convinced, but I think they've missed the boat at this stage in terms of being the "next big thing". **The Hives** wasted little time in getting down to business, marching out in their tribal black and white suits, plugging in and we're off! No big "Hives" stage backdrop this time, just the wailing music to focus on, which is what this band is all about. The setlist wasn't far from what we received last time and all their greats from the rapidly expanding catalogue were in there. Some new ones, some old and some downright timeless ones. The Hives drain every last pour for the hour they're on stage, making sure no one leaves with anything left to give. They've got that almost Ramones sense of ethics when it comes to the live show. Interestingly at the beginning of the evening the audience didn't appear all that up for it - probably something to do with it being bright outside and having the door wide open, which spoiled the atmosphere, but the band soon worked 'em into a frenzy. Surely the sign of any true Rock n' Roll band? The Hives take nothing for granted and have proven time and again why they've maintained their position as the ultimate live choice for many Rock n' Rollers.

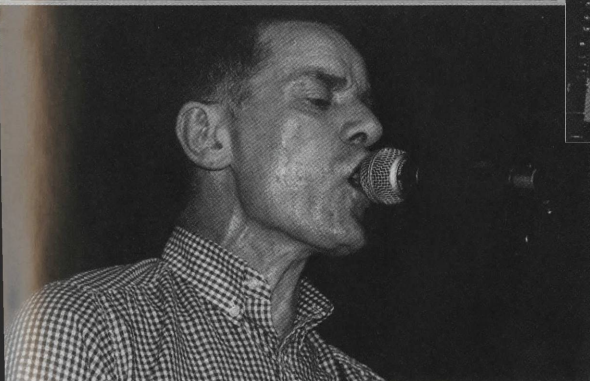


The Hives - The Ambassador



Jimmy Cliff - The Ambassador

The Oppressed - The Voodoo Lounge



The Freebooters - The Voodoo Lounge

Back to The Ambassador the following night for Jimmy Cliff's arrival to the Bud Rising festival. Cliff is an all time Reggae hero and has lost none of his exuberance since those early days of playing the prototype street hustler from Kingston. There was a DJ slot for the **Firehouse Skank** ensemble prior to Cliff taking the stage, which I wasn't that taken on. This neo trendy DJ shit has always given me a pain in the hole and its long had its day, now kindly piss off and give us a decent live Reggae act or at least someone who'll just play some good records without fucking about with them. One thing's for sure, it made **Jimmy Cliff's** arrival all the more spectacular as we'd held out long enough for it. His band of nine members are cracking musicians and played a brief intro before riling up the crowd for Jimmy's arrival, making his presence felt in the loudest yellow suit you've ever seen, that only a man like this could make work. "You Can Get It If You Really Want" was the opener as Jimmy hopped from one side of the stage to the other, followed eagerly by one of the liveliest crowds I've witnessed in this place. The bouncers reacted like arseholes but no one was going to dampen the spirits of this audience tonight. Cliff has been turning crowds on their side since the 60's and consistently maintains the levels of quality attached to his live shows. He attracts what is perhaps the most diverse following I've come across since the days of The Pogues. I mean everybody loves this guy - Skinheads, DJ's, Punks and just about anyone else you can think of. He done a good job with the setlist too, with just the odd slip up, namely the scratching of "Hard Road To Travel" and "Keep Your Eyes On The Sparrow", but he's got a new album out after all and one must draw from the present as much as the past. "Reggae Night" was the surprise inclusion from his 80's era, which sounded fantastic. "Rivers Of Babylon" was another great moment, as was his ever-popular Cat Stevens cover "Wild World". "Vietnam" was a shout out to Bush/Blair, which was followed ironically by "Wonderful World, Beautiful People", displaying both sides of Cliffs excellent songwriting talents - whether it be revolting against oppressors or celebrating life, he shifts between them both beautifully. "Harder They Come, Harder They Fall" was prime stuff, achieving the expected cheers of approval. Genius!

Some further skinhead traditions the following week in The Voodoo Lounge with the arrival of Frankfurt's Stage Bottles. I've waited a heck of a long time to catch this band live and this was the perfect setting. Add Runnin' Riot and an English Ska act called The Big to the bill and we've got a fun night lined up indeed. The pre gig happy hour in The Dice Bar and a beautiful summer's evening was simply the icing on the cake! Surprisingly there weren't as many takers for this as one may have expected and judging by the success of The Oppressed gig last month I was anticipating a repeat of that tonight. We didn't venture round till near the nine o'clock mark, but still must have been amongst the first punters through the door. Weird to see Runnin' Riot marching onstage first to a half empty Voodoo Lounge, but they weren't long in dragging the numbers in from the beer garden. Colin was flaunting his Berlin tennis shirt in the direction of Olaf from The Stage Bottles for most of the set, which was a sight to behold, as the boys from north of the border tore their way through their best songs, past and present. There was an ode to the northern bank robbers in there somewhere along with the usual salutes to the R.U.C. Things were just hotting up when the plug got pulled on the band down to time constraints, but their job was done as the Riot left the building as they always do to the screams for more from the attendees. A Two Tone revival act from Essex named The Big were the main support for the night that I guess The Stage Bottles brought with them for the pair of Irish dates. I'd never heard of 'em before, and neither do I

think had anyone else, so they had nothing to lose. Their proficiency in the whole early 80's thing is impressive as they lend a Hammond organ and brass section to the line up, not taking any shortcuts in recreating that sound of The Beat, Body Snatchers and of course The Specials. I think we can safely say they won the crowd over, which is quite an accomplishment for any band playing to a Dublin Punk following with little knowledge of a band's pedigree. They appeared to have established themselves well and have a good set which holds its own, not running out of ideas too early on. Definitely worth taking another look at. The Stage Bottles have trimmed their line up down to a leaner, meaner unit with lead singer/saxophonist Olaf taking centre stage and wielding the burden of mobilising this less than capacity gathering into action. The Stage Bottles are long enough in the tooth to know how a good gig works and fuse their Laurel Aitken influence impressively with their Upstarts edge. This is a formula, which has proven to work in particular for this band along with Los Fastidios and with a heavy dose of national identity The Stage Bottles have come up trumps time and again with uncompromising slices of unmatched Street Music. It's almost as if they've taken all the best bits from British Oil and reshaped it, added some outside influences and ended up in a genre of their own after years of perfecting this craft. I'll be honest, I was shitfaced at this thing and can only remember roughly half the gig, never mind the remainder of the night, but it was one of high calibre music, that I can assure you. Songs that stuck out were

"I'll Live My Life", "All You Need Is Hate", "Sometimes Anti-Social, Always Anti-Fascist" and Colin from Runnin' Riot stepping up for The Oppressed's "Work Together". Another night of historical Punk Rock in Smithfield. Oi! Oi!

80's Neo Rockabilly band The Klingonz stepped up for a performance in Voodoo the following weekend, so I decided to give it a shot. Tough call when Billy Childish was playing up the road, but what the heck Runnin' Riot and The Dubtones were also on the bill and I felt more in the mood for this part of town tonight. First let down was the absence of The Dubtones, so it was quite a wait before Runnin' Riot began their set up. They were down a guitarist and stripped to a four piece, but just as sharp as normal and with the opening track used as an ode to a friend who'd passed away the previous night, it brought a reflective tone to The Voodoo. The Riot managed a lengthy set this week and were given plenty of time to dig deep into their catalogue of Oi! staples. With the usual nods to Union organisers and plenty of abuse thrown at the authorities up north, Colin has always been a convincing and heartfelt front man. "Johnny Reggae" and "Buckfast Tonic Wine" sounded especially good tonight as did their set closer of Sparrer's "Runnin' Riot". The Klingonz by comparison were a big let down. Their brand of bad taste Pshychobilly just didn't wash with me. I've stumbled across bits and pieces from the band down the years and thought this would have been fun, but I was wrong. The music was fifth rate and the



Jimmy Cliff - The Ambassador

stage antics grew old so quickly, that by the fourth or fifth song I'd already had enough and retreated to the bar. Isn't it strange how long certain bands sets appear to go on for when you're not enjoying them? This thing seemed bloody endless. Contrary to my opinion of The Klingonz the crowd here tonight clearly seen something in them that I didn't and lapped it up. How can a band like this fill Voodoo when acts like The Stage Bottles struggle to attain even half the response? Weird! By the time they'd dragged a female member of the crowd up on stage to flash her tits the evening became more like a Roy Chubby Brown show than the seasoned Rockabilly I'd shown up to see.

As a taster for their upcoming U2 support slot in Croke Park, The Radiators (Plan 9) took to the stage in Whelans on the eve of the gig for another dose of classic Dublin Rock n' Roll. This time it was a Thursday night slot, which appeared to bring out a more enthusiastic reception amidst the regular Rads following. Either that or the exposure the Croke gig has given them had some curious thrill seekers out for a nose! There's also the new EP to speak of, which was fresh on the shelves for this gig and finally throws a few new ones our way. After a warm up act, which I neglected to pay any attention to, **The Radiators (Plan 9)** took the stage with the expected "Sunday World" and "Electric Shares" as prime openers. With Phil Chevron graced in a Robert Johnson t-shirt and Holidai in his uniformed baggy leather trousers, this was the third reunion gig I've witnessed from the group and each one was a momentous occasion for me. They crashed into their set with professionalism and energy and proceeded to work their way through both recently reissued albums "TV Tube Heart" and "Ghostown", furnishing those splendid rhythm changes with tasty guitar licks, like only The Rads know how! "Roxy Girl" sounded the best ever in the straight up Rockabilly format they used tonight and contributed to the great atmosphere this band built in Whelan's this evening. There was the odd shift around from their two previous outings in Dublin this past year and it has to be said the new songs are slowly beginning to develop their way into the line up. "She Says I'm A Loser" has an irresistible chorus hook, somewhat reminiscent of Holidai's earlier

gem "Million Dollar Hero". Cait of course dropped the bass for "Kitty Rickets" and took over the vocals for Shane MacGowan's "Haunted". Steve Rapid's contributions are always worth waiting for and naturally enough his take on the Flamin' Groovies "Teenage Head" was cracking, along with their own "Love Detective". For an encore we were given that old show-band regular and long lost Radiators b-side "The Hucklebuck".



The following Monday night BP Fallon was up to his old tricks again, with another **Death Disco** assault on the capital. In town for the three U2 gigs and this was aimed as the after show party for the third and final date. It brought about the pairing of BP and Shane MacGowan, along with Radiators (Plan 9) members Steve Rapid, Pete Holidai and Cait O'Riada on hand to warm up the crowd. Steve Rapid was over the decks when we made our way into The Village around the 11 o'clock mark, whilst Holidai enjoyed a smoke break at the front door! It's difficult to draw a crowd on a Monday night/Tuesday morning as you can imagine and unfortunately the place didn't really pick up 'till after The Rads brigade had their say, but while they were on the early birds got treated to an eclectic and vibrant mix of vintage Rockabilly, Glam and screwed up Country music. Holidai ended things on a high with T.Rex's "Metal Guru" as BP took the jacket off and made his way to the turntable. "When Love Came To Town" marked his arrival, hastily followed by Them's "Baby Please Don't Go". BP kept it ticking over till the announcement of surprise guest Ronnie Drew to the stage, who played us out with three choice cuts of his own, kicking off with "The Boys Are Back In Town". Shane's showtime was drawing ever closer and Ronnie soon brought him on following The Pogues "Dirty Old Town".

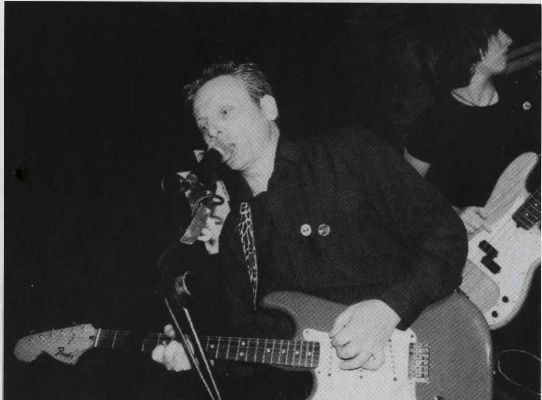
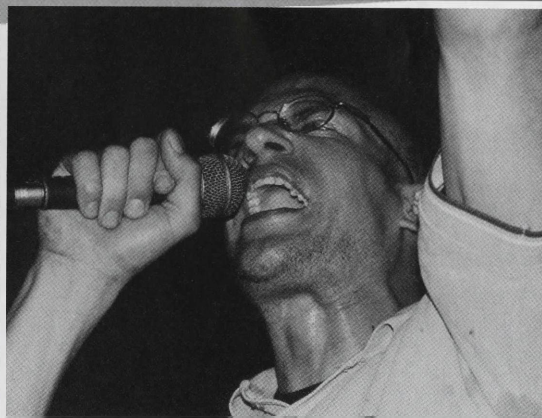
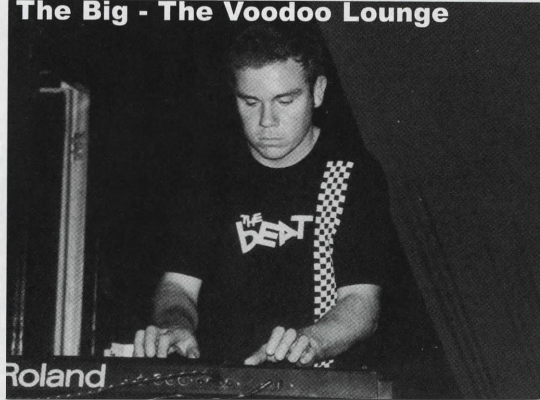
Donned in a cowboy hat and trademark Mr T jewellery Shane MacGowan is well known for his exquisite musical tastes, which he exhibited to the crowd here tonight and suffice to say kept the place hopping till the early hours, providing a great insight into what tickles this mans musical fancy. Death Disco is definitely a club that gets the seal of approval and is well worth checking out when it rolls through town.

Stage Bottles - The Voodoo Lounge

Klingonz - The Voodoo Lounge




The Big - The Voodoo Lounge



The Radiators (Plan 9) - Whelan's

JULY 2005:

Josh Ritter revisited his humble beginnings in Dublin, by returning to Whelan's for a warm up to his Oxygen appearance over the weekend and understandably this thing sold out shortly after the show was announced. Ritter's type of music is of course more at home in this environment than the places he's been playing these past few occasions, so it was a real treat to get back to seeing him perform in more natural surroundings. I'm unsure if I've been to a sold out gig in Whelan's before, certainly not in recent memory, but to be honest it's a bit of a pain in the arse. There was little hope of getting down to the stage area, you can't see bugger all from the bar and upstairs is laid out in such a way that only the first row of people can really view the stage as it's a fair drop down. We nudged our way round the venue regardless and eventually settled for a slight glimpse of the man from the balcony. With the pints flowing we soon settled down and got into the performance. Strangely a full band backed him, when I'd have thought a venue like this was calling out for an acoustic performance. His organ player adds something to the sound that suits the overall picture, but attention for the most part is focused on the talents of Ritter's voice and guitar strumming. Kicking it off with a slow guitar and vocal burner, this night was much more than an evening full of crowd pleasers, though they did exist as well. There was a handful of new material to get through, much of which was exhibited before tonight's crowd for the first time and most seemed appreciative. He played a marathon set that must have topped the two-hour mark, but time flies when you're having fun and it seemed like no time at all before we were given a brief encore to end the night on. He kept the talking to a minimum throughout which I liked and merely paused to introduce the odd song here and there. We're probably not gonna get to see him perform in such settings again, at least not in this country, so I think all here tonight really savoured the moment.



X were never your typical Punk group. They shunned a lot of the nuances associated with Punk Rock in the late 70's and focused on delivering a style and sound that had more in common with American roots music than anything coming out of New York or London at the time. Their guitar virtuoso, Billy Zoom was a former guitarist with Gene Vincent, his father was a Jazz musician and at times it's difficult to believe he ever listened to anything after 1957. X drew closer parallels with bands like the Blasters, the Gun Club and east L.A.'s Los Lobos than anything more obviously associated with the first blossom of the Punk movement. The band came together after bassist Jon Doe met singer Exene Cervenka at a poetry workshop in Venice, California, in 1976. Doe had already been rehearsing with Billy Zoom and drummer D.J.

Bonebrake and brought Exene along to round out the line up. All musicians had a strong musical background, with the exception of Exene, who was a first timer, but quick learner as is evident on their debut longplayer, the wonderfully essential "Los Angeles" album. X continued experimenting with different genres of music on their follow up must-have records, "Wild Gift" and "Under The Black Sun". They had a rare gift that enabled them to range from old time Blues, to more energetic fragments of Damned induced noise Pop. Somehow amidst this melting pot of ideas, X managed to form a signature sound and had a definitive pointed style. The John Doe/Exene Cervenka twin vocal attack is simply spell-binding. X continued to release records throughout the 80's - "More Fun In The New World", "Ain't Love Grand" and the minus Billy Zoom, "See How We Are", before taking a long hiatus until 1993, when they returned with the acceptable, "Hey Zeus". Since 1998 Billy Zoom has again joined the band and X continue to perform sporadic live dates, though a recording future for the band looks dismal, with each member busy on their own projects. I would strongly argue that X are the most important band to emerge from the notorious Hollywood Punk ghetto of the 70's. I'd intended interviewing Exene Cervenka in person in Los Angeles in January of this year, but it fell through and I later discovered how difficult it was to actually secure some time with the woman. I put my Paddy's Day celebrations on hold this year for that rare opportunity of a phone interview with Exene, which cropped up just as I was making arrangements to go see The Beat in Dublin, that night of March 16th ...

RIOT. 77: You're in Texas right now, Exene. What brings you there?

EXENE CERVENKA: I'm at the South By Southwest festival with the Original Sinners. It's a huge American music festival and people from all over the world come to see it. There're bands from all over playing all different types of music around Austin, Texas.

RIOT. 77: You played some X dates there in January ... how did they go?

EXENE: Uhhhh!!! Was it January? Yeah I guess it was! We play all the time. I think we played San Francisco in January ... everything is great with that band ...

RIOT. 77: I take it there's no recording future for X?

EXENE: Ohhhh!!! We're not gonna do any new songs, I don't think. We're probably just gonna play the songs that people wanna hear that we wanna play. We all have other projects that we do.

RIOT. 77: How are the relationships between the members of X these days, because you didn't part on the best of terms did you?

EXENE: It's been almost thirty years since we all met each other, so you have your ups and downs, but things are good now. It's more fun than it used to be ... but, yeah we get along great.

RIOT. 77: I was reading an interview with Billy Zoom recently, who was saying the sole reason for all this was to raise money ... is there a lot more money in a band like X today than there was in the 70's and 80's?

EXENE: That's Billy's idea by the way, but he does love to do this; it just gets harder when you get older, you know? If there wasn't money in it, it would be extremely hard to do it. We wouldn't be doing it just for fun, because it would be too gruelling.

There's not a lot of money in it, it's a middle class income I guess. It's not like U2 or something (laughs). We play big halls, but we also play a lot of clubs still. It's ok.

RIOT. 77: Do X have more of a following now?

EXENE: Hmmmm! It comes and goes. There're a lot of people coming to see X for the first time who are really young, in the same way they'd go see the Sex Pistols if they came through town, because of their history.

RIOT. 77: I was just looking at that "The Unheard Music" film about X that has just been reissued ...

EXENE: Yeah, you seen it?

RIOT. 77: Yeah.

EXENE: Did you like it?

RIOT. 77: Yeah I thought it was very good ... it's the only visual footage I've seen of X apart from "The Decline ..." I think.

EXENE: Right.

RIOT. 77: That was made over twenty years ago ... how do you feel about it today?

EXENE: I feel good about it now, but it was a pain in the ass at the time. They were following us around all the time and we didn't even know if this film was ever going to get made. It was done by a bunch of U.C.L.A. students, who would film us for a while and then go away for a few months and then come back again with all these ideas of what they wanted us to do and we'd say, "No we don't want to do that. That's stupid!". But when it was all done and put together we were happy with it. It was a little bit more accurate than "The Decline ..." which was completely exploitative in the way that it only showed one side of all those people. It didn't show people doing anything other than drinking and getting loaded. That was only a small part of what people did then ... yes, they did drink and get loaded, but not all the time. I think, "The Unheard Music" was a little more accurate of the scene at the time. The reason it wasn't available for years was the distributor went out of business as soon as the movie came out and it's been in a messy legal situation for a long time because nobody really owned it and the people who made it couldn't get the rights to it, so this was all going on for so long. But we didn't have any control over it coming out again or anything like that. Someone just bought it and put it out.

RIOT. 77: What other stuff have you been up to lately? Have you still got the band with Dave Alvin?

EXENE: Oh, The Knitters? Yeah, The Knitters have a record out in June actually, on Rounder Records. It's called, "The Modern Songs Of The Knitters". We make one record every twenty years, but it's a good record.

RIOT. 77: What about book publishing ... are you still involved with that?

EXENE: Well, you know, I haven't done any lately, but I have a bunch of books out. I have an art show coming up at the Santa Monica Museum of Modern Art in California. You do whatever comes up that you have an interest in doing, be it collaborating with other people or whatever you have the time to do really. You have to be self-motivating as an artist and do the things that you can in whatever order they happen to come up in. You see in Los Angeles, it's not how it was in the 70's for artists. It's real crowded with so many people moving here to become famous. There're a lot of bands and a lot of actors and a lot of beautiful young people, making it hard for anyone to filter through all that stuff and get a hand on what's good. The media focuses more on what's new instead of what's good. It's just hard to navigate through that world now. It's not like it used to be, where it was them versus us. Now it's just a huge mess of people, with the underground scene being so fragmented. I guess I'm lucky that I have my place and can just navigate that.

RIOT. 77: Where do you think most of the interesting stuff stems from nowadays? Do you still draw much inspiration from Punk music?

EXENE: Well, what's Punk music? Do you mean the Damned and the Germs or do you mean Green Day? I followed the Hardcore scene a little bit at the time but I'm not really a big Hardcore fan to be honest with you. I like traditional music and original music. I listen to a lot of old Gospel music and a lot of old Country music. As far as new music goes there's not a ton of great new bands. Your magazine covers a lot of different types of music, but it mainly focuses on new bands, right?

RIOT. 77: I try not to think about whether it's new or old music ... its just music that I think is good ... 50/50 I suppose ...

EXENE: Yeah I saw an issue and I know it had some older bands in it. I think the

interesting thing about music now is that you really can't talk about the new without having the old. You just can't talk about the music of today without mentioning the Ramones, the New York Dolls and the Big Boys, you know ... the whole Rockabilly fusion ... It all comes together at some point where there isn't a line anymore between what's old and what's new. When the Punk thing started you had magazines that only wrote about new music and didn't write about the old stuff. But now you write about it all together ... I mean look at a band like The Cramps ... there's a whole Psychobilly scene out there now that wouldn't exist if it weren't for The Cramps and you have to attribute stuff to that.

RIOT. 77: You mentioned Gospel music there ... you come from a religious background, is that right?

EXENE: Well, I come from a Catholic background. I don't know if you could call that religious or not. But I didn't have the Black Gospel music like the new American tradition at all. It's definitely influenced everything I am, that's for sure. My family is Czechoslovakian and Irish.

RIOT. 77: Billy Zoom is a devout Christian, is that right?

EXENE: Well, he wasn't earlier on during his time in X, but he has found that kind of spiritual thing now, which is good for him because it makes him really happy. I think its great when people find something that's grounding for them, whatever it is. I'm happy for him.

RIOT. 77: The other thing you done a couple of years back was that West Memphis Three benefit ... how did you become involved in that whole deal?

EXENE: Oh yeah! Do you know about it?

RIOT. 77: Not in depth no ...

EXENE: Have you seen the movies?

RIOT. 77: No. The "Paradise Lost" one?

EXENE: Yeah, well there're two. I would strongly recommend seeing those movies. They're really entertaining if you like documentaries, which I do. There's actually a documentary of a documentary, because the first one was something HBO put together on the trial. During the course of the trial they discovered information that would reveal

who the actual killer of these children was and not these three boys who were on trial for it. Once they realised this they became really devoted to finding out who the killer was, but the trial had already begun and no one wanted to look into it any further. They pretty much dedicated their lives to getting these boys free, but of course they're still not free. One of them is on Death Row and I don't know if they'll get out. The whole story of it is so incredible and you just can't believe it because it's very obvious that these guys didn't kill anyone. Henry Rollins is the one who came up with the idea for that record and has been tirelessly devoted to getting the information out, but a lot of people have worked on it. It's not like one of those Mumia Abu Jamal type deals ... do you know who he is?

RIOT. 77: Vaguely ... I don't know the ins and outs of it ... Jello Biafra is trying to secure a release for him or something, is that right?

EXENE: Yeah. He was this black guy in Philadelphia who was working as a journalist and a cop got killed and he became implicated in it and didn't get a fair trial. Now, I don't know if he killed that cop or not, but in the case of the West Memphis Three, the corruption is a lot more obvious. It's not a real controversial thing to become involved in, because of how obvious the case is. The people approached me about doing it and it wasn't a very difficult thing to get behind.

RIOT. 77: Do you still collaborate much with Henry Rollins ... you used to work together a lot ...

EXENE: Yeah, pretty much ... I have a lot of respect for him. He's done some of my books and records and I have done shows with him. I don't see him so much these days and the last project we did together was the West Memphis Three, but he's a great guy.

RIOT. 77: How do you separate your poetry from songs? Do you know what's going to be used in a song and what's going to remain as poetry?

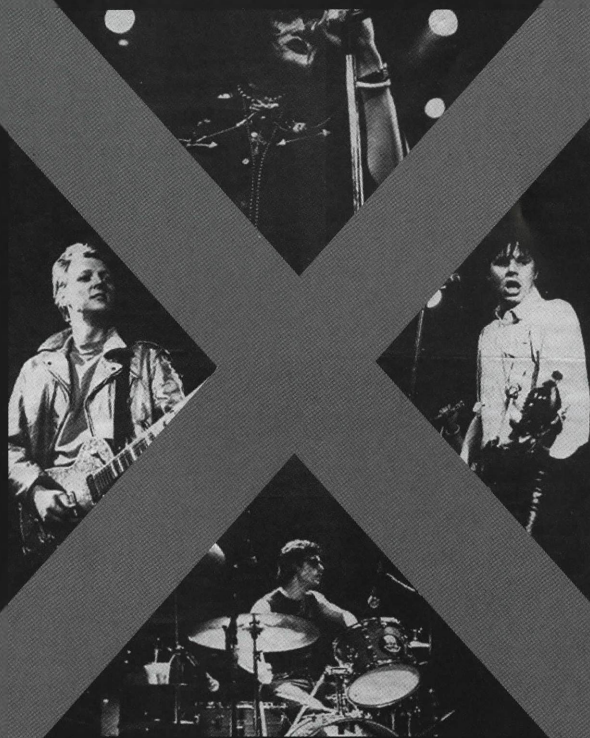
EXENE: Uhhhh!!! It's basically weeding out stuff that I think will make good poetry and doing the same with what I think will make a good song. I guess the difference is one has a chorus and the other doesn't. Songs can just go on and on, but I try to write the kinda three-chord Punk songs or three-chord Country songs that I want to hear and not this long meandering poetic stuff. But it's hard to write songs because you tend to start repeating yourself after thirty years and that's the hardest part I think. You've already written all the political stuff, all the love songs, all the sad songs, all the happy songs ... you can say the same things over and over again using different words, because its all about the word, you know? It definitely becomes more challenging over time, though. Not only do I not want to repeat myself but it's also the millions of other songs that have been written by other people. Things have been said and said well many times. It's making the old new again. Shakespeare can be rewritten a million times in a different way, but he already did it.

RIOT. 77: What sort of people influenced you in the early days ... obviously people will always make the Patti Smith connection ... were you interested in her much?

EXENE: You know, I was when I was really young and she was kind of the first woman around and I did like her first record a lot. I was really into her back then, but I don't really make too many distinctions between female and male. Obviously there's a lot more men in music than women ... I dunno ... I don't really listen to a lot of contemporary stuff ... I think I was more influenced by Patti Smith and Debbie Harry because of what they were and the fact that there weren't many women in music at that time.

RIOT. 77: What's this Hollywood Rock Walk thing that X were inducted into?

EXENE: It would be kind of dumb if it weren't for the fact that the Ramones and Johnny Cash did it. You know the way they have the stars on Hollywood Bid? They



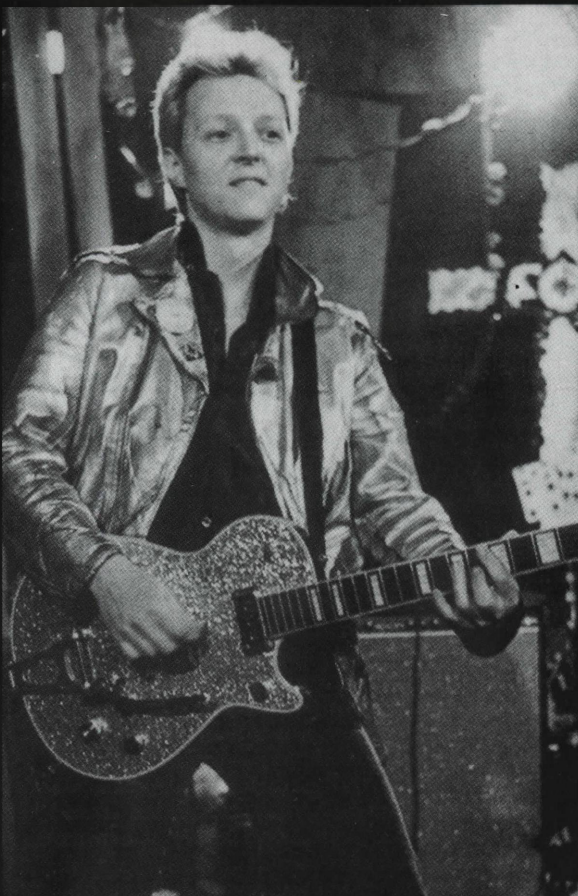
kind of done something similar in the Guitar Centre, which is a huge music store that everybody goes to, to buy vintage guitars and other stuff. They had this idea where they'd immortalize Rock people like Van Halen and that and I never really thought much of it because I'm not into classic rock or anything ... but the Ramones did it and Johnny Cash did it and then they asked us to do it and we figured we would. There weren't a lot of people out front but it's kind of an honour because that's the Sunset Strip, which is more Rock n' Roll. It's not the Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame, but at least it's something.

RIOT. 77: The other thing was that record store cum art gallery that you used to have in L.A. ... where did that go?

EXENE: A friend of mine had it and I kind of ran it with him ... it wasn't a record store really, it sold just kinda goofy stuff ... it was like a Rock n' Roll and Punk Rock museum inside a vintage store. It just got boring I guess, he was the one who really ran it and he just didn't want to do it anymore. It was more like a hangout really.

RIOT. 77: You didn't think much of Brendan Mullen's book concerning the early days of L.A. punk, is that right?

EXENE: You know, it's funny, everybody has a different version of how that time went. I thought of it as a political, revolutionary, musical big change from the 70's. A lot of other people thought of it as a good time. Brendan was very proprietary about it and thought that because he had The Masque where people rehearsed and played shows that he somehow enabled that whole scene to happen and if it wasn't for him then none of these bands would have existed and it was all his doing that did that whole thing. He felt his place was the focal point of it all, but obviously there was a lot more in the air because this was happening all over the country. The reason X got together and started playing music was because there were all these other people starting to come together and play music in Los Angeles who were influenced by the Ramones. I was a writer and I wanted to do something with my writing and I met John, which had nothing to do with The Masque or Brendan Mullen. Having said that, of course it was great that The Masque existed and if hadn't things may have been different, but someone else would have figured out a way like we always did to play shows. Slash Magazine and Claude Bessy had a much bigger role in helping to maintain what was happening ... my experiences are obviously different to other people in how I saw things and chose to interoperate them. There're some things in that book that were very strange, I have to say. He interviewed Billy Zoom's ex-wife, Kitra Allen and got information about John and myself from her, when we didn't even know her. We rented a room from her but we never socialized or had any contact with her. We didn't like her and she didn't like us. We had a lot of really close friends like Chis D from the Flesheaters and people like that, but the stuff that was in the book by Kitra was a total and complete fabrication and not even close to being



real. She was a crazy person, that's why Billy divorced her, she was crazy. I think Brendan Mullen knows that and he just found something that he thought was damaging and sensational and put it in the book, but it wasn't true. I really could sue him and her over the stuff that was in there, if I felt like it, but I don't really care, it's not important. I think it's sad, because people really want to know about that time. They want to know who those people were, because there aren't many videos of these people or anything so nobody has really seen them. They don't have pictures of them at home or know what they were like as real people, so we all want to know what the story is. "What's that person like? Where did they hangout? Where did they go? Who did they have sex with?", you know? I think these kids are owed the proper story, the truth, not just somebody's vindictive nature coming out, deciding they want to tell lies about people.

RIOT. 77: Why don't you write a book about it? Have you ever thought about doing that?

EXENE: No, not really, because I've given enough interviews on the subject and told my story enough times. There's enough songs and enough photographs. I think people know enough about who I am.

RIOT. 77: X, the Go Go's and to a degree The Dickies I guess were arguably the only bands to survive that whole scene and move on to do other things ... do you attribute that to anything?

EXENE: Work ethic. The bands that worked the hardest survived and the bands that didn't just fell apart. The bands that didn't tour or became junkies and didn't take it seriously didn't survive ... the bands worked hard you know ... there were no managers in those days ... some of us eventually got managers and a record label, but we really had to force things to happen. You had to keep it all together through the Do-It-Yourself ethic ... I don't know why some of the other great bands didn't make it ...

RIOT. 77: Was any of X actually from Los Angeles, no?

EXENE: D.J. Bonebrake was. He was born there, but the rest of us were outsiders.

RIOT. 77: How come you still live in L.A. because for years now every interview I read with you, you say you're getting out of there, that you hate the place?

EXENE: When my son gets out of high school I intend moving. He's still in school so he has to come first. When he gets done being in L.A. and goes off to college then I can leave. I can't just say I'm done living here and drag my son off to some horrible place, you know? He's happy there and when he's grown up he can choose where he wants to live and move away and I'll move away at the same time.

RIOT. 77: Any ideas where you'd like to live?

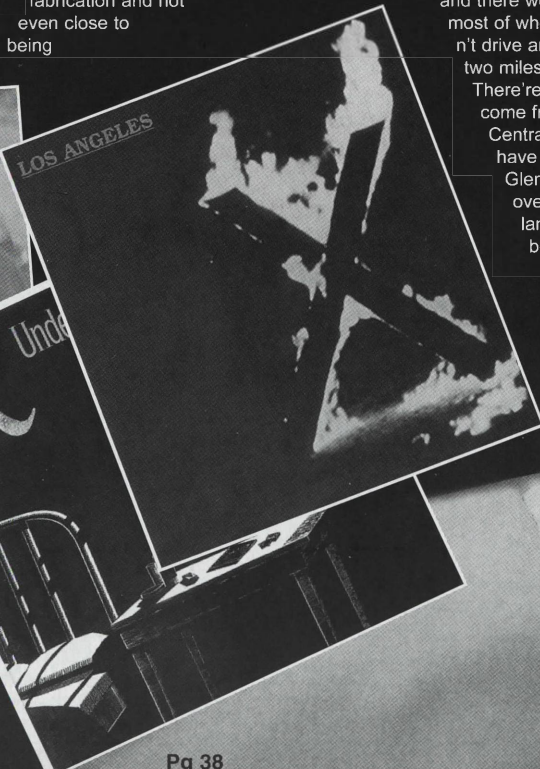
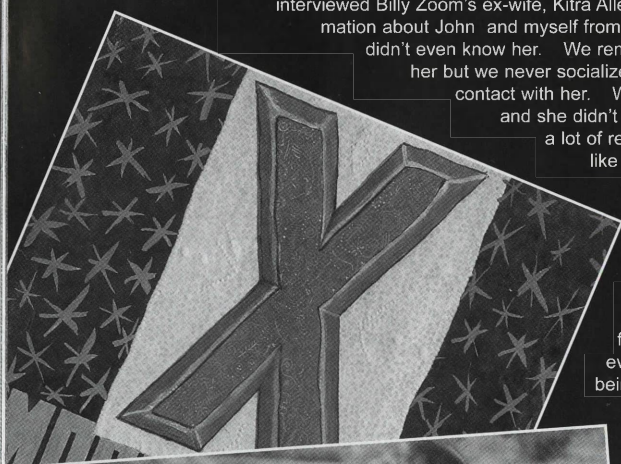
EXENE: I don't know. Somewhere in the beautiful America, away from Los Angeles.

RIOT. 77: Do you think there's anything left that's good about Los Angeles in 2005?

EXENE: I don't think there's much about it that's any good at all. Where do you live?

RIOT. 77: Dublin.

EXENE: Oh, ok, well I've been to Dublin. Can you imagine if all of those old bars were gone and there were no pubs and you went into your favourite old pub, the one that Yeats used to go to perhaps, and instead of that pub there were these big round flashing lights and models and they were playing really subdued House music? You go, "Oh my god, what happened?" It was so packed that you couldn't get into it, so you went to your other favourite pub that no one ever goes to and the same thing had happened. So then you decided to take your friends to your favourite restaurant and that too was gone and there were 7 million people from all over the country, most of whom don't speak English, living there. You couldn't drive anywhere and it would take you over an hour to go two miles. Well, that's what happened to Los Angeles. There're huge pocketfuls of different people that have come from all over the world, from Russia, Mexico, Central America, Eastern Europe, everywhere. They have huge areas of different neighbourhoods like Glendale or wherever, where they live and have taken over those areas, where everything is in their own languages, like Korean or something ... which can be really good for a city and we all know how immi-



gration is really interesting and all that stuff ... but when it becomes more about gangs and a lot of rivalry and a lot of crime and just so many people, it just gets too huge and you don't know where you are anymore ... all the models and actors that I mentioned before have taken over all the cool stuff ... there's not a lot of old fashioned Hollywood left and I really like that old fashioned Hollywood. The old movie theatres and old landmarks from the hippies on the Sunset Strip. All that stuff has been torn down now and it's a really strange environment where you don't feel you belong anymore.

RIOT. 77: Do you live in Hollywood?

EXENE: No, I live way out by the beach. I don't live anywhere near Hollywood.

RIOT. 77: What were you doing in Dublin, anyway?

EXENE: I've been there a bunch of times actually. I went to Ireland on holiday for a couple of weeks, checking out my ancestral home. My grandfather was in the I.R.A. I actually done a spoken word show with Lydia Lunch in Dublin. But I don't think X ever played there, as far as I'm aware. We done Scotland and England, but I don't think we ever done Ireland, unfortunately. I think the spoken word show was about eight years ago.

RIOT. 77: Do you remember anything from it?

EXENE: Yeah (laughs) ... I remember it was a really rowdy crowd in some pub and we really had to hold our own that night, but I mean, it was fun (laughs).

RIOT. 77: Ok. Ray Manzerek from The Doors produced most of X's albums ... have you ever thought of using him again?

EXENE: No, I don't think so. That was a time and place situation. We see him occasionally, he lives in Northern California. I'm sure if X decided we wanted to do a record and asked him to produce it, that he would say yes, but I can't see that happening.

RIOT. 77: How did it come into being that he produced those albums?

EXENE: He was just a fan and it pissed off all of the hardcore Punks real bad, that he would produce us and play on our records, because he was a hippy. But there really wasn't a lot of time that had passed between The Doors and X; it was only ten years. It was someone we respected; The Doors were great and he was great. Ray wanted to do it, so we said ok. L.A. didn't have the producers and engineers that New York and London had. It did not have the sensibility and the talent of those other cities. The engineering was just horrible here. It was all hair bands and stuff, which meant we really had to struggle in the studio to get anything done.

RIOT. 77: There's a clip of Ray Manzerek playing live with X, doing back up vocals on "Soul Kitchen" ... was that a regular occurrence or just a one off?

EXENE: No, he didn't play live with us very much, just at the beginning.

RIOT. 77: You covered "The Crystal Ship" for a soundtrack to a Doors film ... was that ever used?

EXENE: I don't know actually. It was about five years ago that we done that, but I don't know what it was in. I don't know what they did with that, I can't remember.

RIOT. 77: X were one of the few bands that didn't get on the anti-Bush campaign in the run up to the elections last year ... why was that?

EXENE: Uhhhhh!!! Well!!!! ... interesting ... I think for me, it was generally because I was really disappointed with Bill Clinton. I was a big supporter of him and have always been very left in my politics. What he did at the end of his term, where he pardoned political cronies and criminals, rather than people like the West Memphis Three, who were from Arkansas, really let me down. I think there're a lot of problems in our country politically, but I don't think those problems are as cut and dried as they used to be between political parties, like Democrats are all ok and Republicans are all evil, you know? A lot of the liberal stuff in the United States that started out when we began to have social programs and labour laws and Unions and the civil rights movement and all the good stuff ... now, it just seems like that's all been lost and people on the left want to legislate certain things ... it's just really bad here right now and it isn't as straight forward and simple as you might think ... Bush is bad, but nobody liked John Kerry and there's a reason why he didn't win; he's as phoney as the day is long. We were at war during the election and I didn't feel the time was right for me to be coming out making political statements about who should win. I wasn't a Bush supporter, but I thought about the people who were out there fighting the war and the situation we were in, which was a really tough place and the whole world was in a really tough place. I mean, Bush got blamed for 9/11 and that's ridiculous ... I guess that's what I'm trying to say; it's really easy for people to blame one person for everything, but it's so hypocritical when the person who was there for eight years, who was in charge of the C.I.A. and everything else isn't equally responsible. They're all at fault, the whole government is at fault.

RIOT. 77: Do you think Bush done anything good for the country?

EXENE: Do I think he done anything good for the country? I don't know, but I'll tell you this, the worst thing that happened was loosening the border with Mexico. This has been going on for twenty years and it's going to come back to bite us on the ass. You have no idea what Southern California is like right now. The borders are wide open and people from all over the world can just come through ... including the Al Queda guys ... any minute now you're going to see the effect of that policy and that's the worst thing Bush did. What they're trying to do right now is unify the United States with Mexico, to the point where we've got one straight country that will give them more cheap labour. But I still don't know why people don't hate Clinton as much as they hate Bush. That whole One-World thing was brought in by the Clinton administration.

I think that's horrible.

RIOT. 77: Ok, so you think all borders around the United States should be tightened? You think that's the answer?

EXENE: Yeah. I think that people should be allowed to immigrate and should be allowed to say they want a better life somewhere. But I don't think you should have a million people just crossing anonymously back and forth between two countries, when half of them are criminals and the other half could be terrorists with families coming across.

RIOT. 77: Do you agree with them having this fingerprint and photograph thing at U.S. customs that they've introduced?

EXENE: Not really, because the people that's going to effect is the people who are trying to play by the rules. They're the people who'll have to go through that whole bureaucratic nightmare and waiting lists, whilst the others will just walk across, so it doesn't matter. If you're gonna let some people just walk across, why bother to fingerprint anybody? There's a huge controversy about that right now and one of the reasons Los Angeles is in so much trouble is because the infrastructure has been completely destroyed. The schools, the hospitals, the freeways, everything is down and nothing works anymore. People can't get educated, people can't get medical care; it's all falling apart. There're just too many people. It's just a nightmare. People, say that's so racist, but it's got nothing to do with that, it's just the sheer volume of people.

RIOT. 77: You were saying in an interview in Orange County Weekly that you're no way near as left wing as you used to be ...

EXENE: Yeah, well there're common sense issues. Not every person in jail has been framed for a murder because they're black, but some have. Which ones? You know? Not every police officer is a corrupt, horrible person. Not every war is a crime against humanity. Not everybody should be allowed to go into any country they want to, to do whatever they want. I mean, I couldn't just go to Ireland and start walking around making a living there, without being asked what I'm doing there and how long I'm staying. Because if you did and suddenly had a million people coming there with no means of support, what would happen? But that's something that a lot of people on the left are over the top on that I'm not. The other thing about the left that I didn't like, was how big they were into drawing distinctions. Like, "I'm a black lesbian!" or, "I'm a white woman!" or, "I'm an African/American male!". It factionalised things that the civil rights movement was supposed to destroy. The civil rights movement was supposed to destroy all that distinction and make everybody just united as people and of course now everybody has a chip on their shoulder about who they are. Why don't you just let go of that and just be a person? I find it very weird, I mean I don't go around saying I'm a Bohemian American, you know?

Why would I?



RAZORCAKE

Razorcake fanzine is one of the few currently existing documents that solely set out to cover the music that's important to both its editors and contributors, with a hand-on-heart approach to the modern day burgeoning worldwide Punk Rock scene. Razorcake's history can be traced back to the final years of Flipside – one of the most important and relevant publications of the past 20 years, when it's core staff that included Todd Taylor and Sean Carswell decided to go it alone following Flipside's folding. Razorcake appeared on the magazine racks shortly after, so shortly in fact that most weren't even aware of Flipside's axing yet! Critically dissecting Punk Rock in its current life form through a team of suitably accomplished and knowledgeable writers, Razorcake quickly became a pointed and coherent stab at music, culture and politics. It took a more personal approach and remained firmly within underground confines, in comparison to Flipside, which tended to dip in and out of the mainstream. One of the appealing aspects of the fanzine is its non-discriminatory attitude to its readers. The writers avoid coming across as elitist, self-absorbed or condescending and simply want to share their love of the music they cover with us. I've been an avid fan since the first issue and have always been eager to set up an interview with the people behind this fanzine, which operates out of a two-bedroom apartment, close to the Pasadena district of Los Angeles. I paid a visit to Razorcake Headquarters this past January, early one Friday afternoon and was greeted by its editors in chief Todd Taylor and Sean Carswell. After a brief tour of the premises and run through the day-to-day business of the magazine, I got the old tape recorder and idiot sheet out, as we sat down in the living room for the conversation you're about to read. Todd's girlfriend and fellow Razorcake staffer, Megan also sat in on this, but didn't partake in the interview. (PHOTOS TAKEN IN AND OUTSIDE OF THE APARTMENT, LOS ANGELES 2005)

RIOT. 77: I'll start off with the same question you asked Al Quint from Suburban Voice when you interviewed him ... what's the difference between mainstream rock journalism and what you do with Razorcake?

SEAN: We asked Al Quint that? (laughs)

TODD: I think we tend not to focus on the sensationalism of it all, that there is actually a long-term benefit to being inside of a different culture. You can like bands for more than ten minutes. It's not all product; there's a lot of cool things you can learn and do and a lot of things meshed together to give you a larger scope.

SEAN: I think there's a lot more honesty in what we do as well. We're not trying to hold the bands up on a pedestal and we understand they're average people like us ... for the most part (laughs). I think also, like Todd said we don't go for the sensationalism of it ... often when you're interviewing someone they'll ask you to leave certain things that they said out and we will. We're not trying to exploit anyone for their story: we're trying to make people interested in what we're personally interested in.

RIOT. 77: How long were both of you at Flipside?

TODD: I started at Flipside in '96 and stayed till the end of it, which was August 2000 I think. I started off there just doing a bit of everything: checking mail, dumping the trash, answering the phone.

RIOT. 77: Flipside was located around this area too, wasn't it?

TODD: Yeah, Pasadena, which is about four miles away.

RIOT. 77: Oh right, so where are we now?

TODD: Technically, we're in Highland Park, which is part of Los Angeles.

RIOT. 77: What was the last issue of Flipside?

TODD: The last issue was # 122. We actually turned in an issue # 123 which didn't get printed. I remember Smogtown was on the cover, but can't remember what else was in it. The printer destroyed the proof and I couldn't get hold of Al, so it's all been ruined.

RIOT. 77: Why did Flipside cease to exist?

TODD: We were owed a lot of money for records from the distributor, Rotz. We waited the best part of a year to get paid and they said no. So, we went to court and won the case, but the next day the distributor declared bankruptcy. We were in a \$120,000 hole. We owed money from the people who were supposed to pay us to someone else. If we owed royalties to someone from a band, we didn't have the money to pay them. We kind of freaked out and it didn't end well. I haven't heard from Al since then and we haven't talked, but apparently he's doing the same thing he was prior to Flipside, which is working in a laboratory. He's a really smart guy and extremely intelligent. As far as I know, he completely dropped out of Punk Rock. He's only showed up once and that was at a Class Of '77 show a couple years back, when the Skulls, the Weirdos, the Adolescents and Bad Religion played, but that's the last time he's been seen in public I believe.

RIOT. 77: You were at Flipside too Sean. How did you become involved with it?

SEAN: I've known Todd for a long time and when he started doing stuff with Flipside he brought me in to do a few reviews and things like that and I just started doing more and more. I wrote under the name Juan Bastos and some other names at the time. My wife is Filipino, so that's where I got that name (laughs). I was living in Florida and had started up a publishing company called Gorsky Press and Todd came out to visit me when everything started turning sour at Flipside. We just got talking about stuff and Todd mentioned he was thinking about starting a webzine called Razorcake. I mentioned that I never read anything off the web and very seldom get on a computer and Razorcake should be a print fanzine. He basically said, if I wanted to do a print zine, then I should come out to L.A. and we'll do it. So that's what I did. I came out to L.A. and we started it in January 2001.

RIOT. 77: You moved out here especially to start up the fanzine?

SEAN: I was looking for any excuse to get out of Florida and as soon as I found one, I got out (laughs). But yeah, pretty much.

TODD: Don't sell yourself short; what did you have to do before you came out here?

SEAN: Oh yeah (laughs). Well, I was engaged to be married and had to work all kinds of things out. I'm married now, but at the time my wife-to-be had a job and with that job came a contract for a year and a half. So for the first year and a half that I was out here working, I

was going back to Florida all the time, to see her and she was coming out here to see me. She stayed in Florida until her contract was done with her job and then moved out here in 2002.

RIOT. 77: You've kept Razorcake a lot more pointed than Flipside ... was that intentional?

TODD: Yeah, it's by design.

We tried to make it more focused. By the end of Flipside I was basically like the general manager, dealing with all the contributors and trying to line everything up. I'll be honest with you;

I didn't like a lot of those people. There was one contributor who was in jail, who would call me and just be yelling down the line all the time. I had to type up his entire column, which would be twenty or thirty pages of scrawl and he would just start yelling if I misspelled something. So there were a lot of things I didn't like about Flipside, but I really liked the spirit of it. But there were a lot of things I didn't quite get or understand why they were done, why certain bands were covered. There were larger bands that are in so many other magazines; why not focus a little bit more on a specific culture? I mean, I think there's great Punk Rock across the entire spectrum, but if you're dealing with big bands that are in large magazines all the time then what's the point in people turning to an alternative like Flipside? So, when we started Razorcake we wanted to separate a couple things out, like live reviews, we have a website, we'll put 'em on there. Also, we only have a certain amount of space for record reviews, which was the thing that drove me crazy at Flipside, we had to squeeze those record reviews down so much that the font size was like 5 points and it wasn't a thin magazine, it was 150 pages or something. There was just so much information in there, but I want to pay attention to what I like and trust the people that I know already, so they can cover things that I wouldn't be exposed to otherwise and that's kind of like our policy. We either really like the band ourselves and appreciate what they do or we really like and appreciate our contributors because they're doing it for the right reason.

RIOT. 77: What's the "biggest" band you've covered in Razorcake then?

TODD: Uhhhhh!!! Well there's legacies of that, say with a band like Social Distortion, a lot of our reviewers want to go see them and Social Distortion are basically on a major label and have been for a long time.

SEAN: But, we didn't run a Social Distortion feature.

TODD: Right.

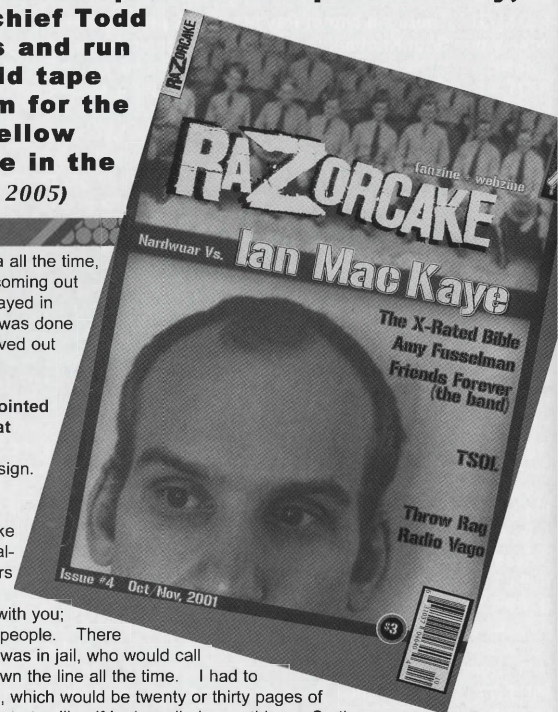
SEAN: It's not in print. We'll cover bigger bands on the web. But most of what goes in print is smaller bands.

TODD: I'm trying to think of what the biggest band we covered was ... we made a decision at the very beginning to take it on the chin to support smaller bands and hopefully people will pick up the magazine for the quality of what we do and not necessarily because there's some hot band on the cover who they like. Hopefully it's more like, "I have no idea who this fuckin' band is, but maybe this interview will turn me on to them".

MEGAN: Nardwuar interviews some big bands ...

TODD: Oh yeah.

SEAN: The Scissor Sisters (laughs). We can laugh with Nardwuar, but at the band (laughs). Sometimes Nardwuar covers big famous people who I actually like and respect, such as Ice Cube. We include the bands he covers just because it's Nardwuar and he's such



a talented interviewer and

such a funny guy, that he could interview a piece of cheese and it

would be great (laughs).

TODD: We took Nardwuar with us from Flipside. I brought people I liked on a lot of different levels with me. I took people I liked editorially and also ones I liked as people. It sounds really cheesy and corny, but I want Razorcake to be a family, that if people have disputes they talk to one another, instead of biting everyone's ass in print. I always think of it in terms of some kid sitting in the middle of nowhere, not knowing any of the contexts for the conversation, but is excited about the bands or reads a really good story. They don't need to know about people bickering and all this other shit that shouldn't be brought into print.

RIOT. 77: Do the contributors all know each other?

TODD: Not really. That's the problem with being in such a small apartment. We're hoping to get a bigger place, where people can come and hang out and it's more of a headquarters.

SEAN: There're contributors who I have never met personally and the same goes for Todd. I know them through emails and talking on the phone kind of thing, like I've never met Rev. Norb and I think I need to meet that guy (laughs). I don't think Todd has ever met Maddy Tight Pants, have you?

TODD: I'll meet her next month actually. She moves around a lot.

RIOT. 77: Was it a lot easier, do you think, to get Razorcake off the ground because of the Flipside connections?

TODD: Yeah, it was. I knew how to make a magazine and what mistakes to avoid. I knew the computer programmes and had those connections with a bunch of people who I knew would contribute to it. Advertising wasn't terribly difficult, so yeah Flipside helped out a bunch.

RIOT. 77: Yeah, because Razorcake started on a big scale for a first issue of a fanzine, didn't it?

TODD: The thing with Razorcake is, all the money figured out in advance. We don't do anything on credit. We have all the money for the next issue we're going to put out. We're never going to go behind on that. We had enough money to make two thousand copies of the first issue. We had everything figured out; how much it's going to cost for postage and stuff like that. We did it, it worked and we kept it up.

RIOT. 77: What place does politics have in Razorcake ... it seems a lot less forceful and open to different opinions than some of the other American fanzines ...

TODD: Yeah, we don't keep politics out of it, but I think the over politicisation of everything can be really outflanked. The physical act of making a magazine that doesn't cater to mass media, doesn't pander to it in any way, shape or form, is a political act in itself. In the current issue Jimmy Alvarado is writing about the parallels between his wife, who was born in Nicaragua during the 70's, how their election between the Sandinistas and the Contras was



being embroiled and how that parallels with our last election. I think that fits in perfectly with us, but I don't want to force people to write about politics and would rather them write about it intelligently and on their own terms in their own comfort zone, than redirect it that way. We're highly politically conscious, but we try to do it in other ways that aren't so obvious. Like Maddy wrote a really good article about Eugene Debs, which isn't overtly political, but he was a socialist and got millions of votes whilst in jail ...

SEAN: He was the socialist leader in the U.S. in the 20's and ran for president. The reason he was put in jail was basically because he spoke out against the U.S. involvement in World War I. He got a million votes for president whilst in jail, so he was kind of an interesting guy.

TODD: Yeah and we've had Emma Goldman on the cover.

SEAN: Right, but I mean I don't like it when people preach to me, even when I agree with them. There're so many political magazines out there and they just come across as preachy ... enough of that. We cover politics, but only if it's really good, I don't wanna cover politics for the sake of covering politics. We have this guy we know who lives in DC and has a job where he knows a lot about CEO salaries and how corporate CEO's go into government and whatnot ... I can't reveal his identity obviously, though I don't think anyone who cares about it is going to be reading Riot 77 (laughs) ... but he basically works for a company who audits CEO's salaries and he wrote an article about high-powered executives in the president's cabinet and how when they leave the cabinet they go back to their executive positions and make a lot of money off their connections by doing favours for various people ... so, he wrote that, but it was only because we knew him and he was in the right place at the right time ... you don't want to be ramming politics down people's throats, you know?

RIOT. 77: How much control do you have over your contributors and what articles they write?

TODD: A lot of the people in Razorcake, I've been dealing with for over a decade, so it's more of a dialogue than, "Oh, no you can't write that!!" It would be more like, "Can you clarify this point?", or "That's probably not the smartest way to go about this". I think people like the fact that we can be engaged with them on many different levels of writing and we trust them enough to know that what they're going to end up with will be good and we're not wasting our time. I think a lot of our writers, Sean and myself included, are getting better because of that process. We're a community of Punk Rockers, but we're also a community of writers and photographers; it doesn't just stop at one thing.

SEAN: We pick contributors who we trust and think will do a good job, rather than just taking anything that's submitted and then deciding what we're going to use in the magazine. We pretty much know who we want to use as writers and photographers and interviewers.

RIOT. 77: You do all your own photographs don't you?

TODD: A lot of them.

SEAN: We don't use stock photographs or press photos.

TODD: The only time we won't use our own photographs is when it's a band that we just can't get to see. Smalltown, for instance, are from Sweden and they've never come to

America, but one of our friends who's a tattoo artist drew the cover for us, so we have an exclusive illustration for the cover. We use zero press pack photos, like the ones that come with the CD. I'm a firm believer that you should have live shots because bands are a live experience. Riot 77 has tons of that which is awesome. When was the last time you seen Rolling Stone or Spin with an actual live shot? We've got a bunch of people around town that take photos for us and that's the cool thing; hopefully they just see what we do and want to be part of it.

RIOT. 77: Do you have to pay anyone or is it all still voluntary?

TODD: Everything is voluntary. The magazine supports itself; it supports its own weight, which is good.

RIOT. 77: Do you cover views that are contradictory to your own?

TODD: Yeah, it's basically quality issues not topical issues that we'll turn stuff down because of. If it's well written, intelligent and makes a point, we'll cover it.

RIOT. 77: So, do you go back to someone and tell them what they've written is shit and you're not going to cover it? (laughs)

TODD: Uhhhhh!!! Well!!!! ... A bit more tactfully (laughs) ... I've worked at doing this for so long and I think the shorter the answer, the better, because otherwise people will want to discuss it with you. It's just like, "No thank you, we appreciate the submission, but we can't use it".

SEAN: Yeah, and really when we started we had to do that to about half the Flipside writers (laughs).

TODD: It's Sean and I who'll have to live with it. We're the ones who'll get the heat for all this because we're the funnelling point and represent a lot of people.

RIOT. 77: Do you get many people complaining to you?

SEAN: Yep! (laughs)

TODD: Oh yeah (laughs). Actually the best example of this is our reviewer Jimmy Alvarado, who is probably one of our most popular music reviewers and the most hated by record companies. We've lost a lot of advertisers because of Jimmy, but I stand behind Jimmy 100%. They get bummed or pissed off because he scathed their release (laughs). On a couple occasions I'll say, "Jimmy, let me listen to it!". Then you listen to it and you're like, "Jimmy! You nailed it!!" (laughs). He did people a service by at least telling them what it is, instead of not reviewing it at all.

SEAN: That's the thing about Jimmy; he's right (laughs). I remember this one record label was complaining because Jimmy said their release was like some third generation Soundgarden sounding crap and the label wrote me this long letter saying how far off base Jimmy was (laughs). I told them to send the CD, which they did and I put it on and was like, "Oh my God, this is Soundgarden!!! He was right!!!!" (laughs). I told the guy I stand by Jimmy, I agree with him!

TODD: Some members of our staff have a staggering amount of music knowledge. Jimmy has been in bands and been consistently active with no gaps since 1982. His record collec-



tion is impressive and not only covers Punk Rock, but also Hip Hop and Reggae. He just has a good quality sensor. Sometimes he can be blunt and tell a band they're fuckin' awful in a sentence, but I guess that's all part of it.

SEAN: Yeah, I wanna hear that shit! (laughs)

RIOT. 77: Here's a weird one! I got this flier at home from Joe Beil at Microcosm Publishing, requesting people to boycott Razorcake, saying that one of your writers, Rich Mackin, is a sex offender and you don't seem to have a problem with this ... have you seen that flier and what's it all about?

TODD: Yeah.

SEAN: Yeah.

TODD: That's a long story.

SEAN: We published two of Rich Mackin's books and he's a contributor to the magazine. We'd published one of Rich's books at the time and were about to publish a second when these two young women accused Rich of sexual impropriety; nothing as far as rape, but not behaving appropriately towards them. So there was this whole issue made about it and a lot of people were protesting after we went ahead and published his second book after these allegations were made. Joe Beil at Microcosm was one of these people who were upset. We looked into the allegations and found out everything we could and what these allegations amounted to was these two women writing something in their fanzine and putting it out; there were no charges filed or anything like that. I just didn't think it was right in a case where it was Rich's word against theirs and it was unfair to say that you should end this guy's writing career because of what people say about him in his personal life. I mean, a lot of great writers have been accused of some pretty horrific things. So, I just wasn't willing to pull his book over this and people got really mad over that. They thought that because he'd been accused that I should stop publishing his work. So Joe went and put out these postcards where he pretty much said that we support rapists or some crazy shit like that and mailed out three or four thousand of these things to anyone he could find and we got a lot of letters for a while, but it all seems to have blown over now.

TODD: We took it extremely seriously. I have friends in the Feminist Majority and people I know who have been in Rape Counselling Centres and work around those areas and I told them to please let me know if Rich comes up on their official radar. I can understand if people don't want to go to the police or court or things like that, but these places are set up for situations such as these and nothing ever came up.

SEAN: There are different Rape Counselling Centres who keep a record of anyone who's even been accused of rape and Rich never showed up on any of these. We brought the zine that these women wrote to other women who've survived rape and asked them what they thought and should we pass on his book and they said, "No, go ahead and publish it". So, we looked into it, you know? It was a tough call.

RIOT. 77: How did the book do?

SEAN: It flopped (laughs).

TODD: It massively tanked.

SEAN: It almost put us out of business. If anyone wants to send me postage I'll happily send 'em a copy (laughs).

RIOT. 77: Do you attribute the book flopping to the allegations, yeah?

SEAN: I don't know why it flopped.

TODD: The reason why his first book sold well was because he toured so much and toured in very specific places, but then those places were taken away from him because of the allegations and thus he couldn't tour in the same way he used to. He basically stopped touring and all those things came together to have that affect on the book sales.

RIOT. 77: The book label is a whole other side to Razorcake as well, isn't it? You've merged both the magazine and the book publishing together?

SEAN: Yeah, well the company is called Razorcake/Gorsky, Inc. which is the magazine and book publishing company. I'd been publishing books since before I moved out here, but even when I first started I got a lot of advice from Todd, 'cos he knew a lot from Flipside. I got new sources through him for distribution and lots of other things. He helped me out a lot, so really he's been involved with the books from the beginning. I think I even asked him before I started the company if he thought it was a good idea. We're about to release our twelfth and thirteenth titles over the next couple months.

RIOT. 77: You were telling me earlier you were starting a distro as well?

TODD: Yeah, we're doing a very modest distro. Again it's the same type of thing. I hate sending stuff out to distros and then having to wait ninety days to get paid. So with our distro if we decide we're going to get something we just buy it when we get it and if it doesn't sell, it's our fault. We're dealing with small numbers, like five or ten of each item, but it seems to be going well.

RIOT. 77: You were saying you're getting some Japanese stuff.

TODD: Yeah, a label called Snuffy Smile out of Japan. Their stuff is pretty hard to get here and we know there's people who like it. We're trying to get more rare stuff. If a band is on tour and does a tour 7 inch or if it's a really small band or something.

RIOT. 77: You've interviewed hundreds of people between you down the years ... take me through some of your more memorable interviewees.

TODD: There're quite a few that stand out. One that's fresh in my memory is the interview I just did with Alice Bag. The Bags were a band that I really liked when I first heard them. I had no context for them; I just picked 'em up at a record store when I lived in Nevada. Anyway, I find out that she lives about two miles down the road from here, so we go and interview her. She tells these great stories and first hand accounts of not only Los Angeles Punk Rock, but really horrible things about how Punk Rock entered her life ... Her father spitting on her mother when Alice was six years old and asking her to spit on her mother too. It's grip-

total dick to her. She actually typed up the interview and the more I read of it, the madder I'm getting. "He's fuckin' with my wife!! Fuckin' dick!! Arrrrghhh!!!" (laughs). We didn't print the interview, it's on the website, but I cut a lot of it out. Although that wasn't an interview that I done myself, it was still a low point. That's the kind of stuff we won't run in Razorcake - If you mess with my wife (laughs).

TODD: 98% of the time it's been great. We've been very fortunate and people have been cool.

RIOT. 77: Do you only interview people who want to be interviewed and included in Razorcake or do you chase people much?

TODD: I chase less and less people ... I can't think of the last person I had to chase ...

SEAN: I tried for a while to interview Bruce Brown, who did a bunch of surfing movies out of southern California. He done the "Endless Summer" movie, I don't know if you've ever heard of it, but I got really into his movies. He was a real Do-It-Yourself type of guy, which I thought would fit in well with what Razorcake is trying to do. He was nice enough, but basically said he wasn't interested in being covered by my magazine (laughs). Fair enough, he's an old timer who doesn't really need the publicity anymore and doesn't want to be bothered.

RIOT. 77: Something you often see in Razorcake is blown up and highlighted quotes from your interviews ... what are some of your favourites from down the years?

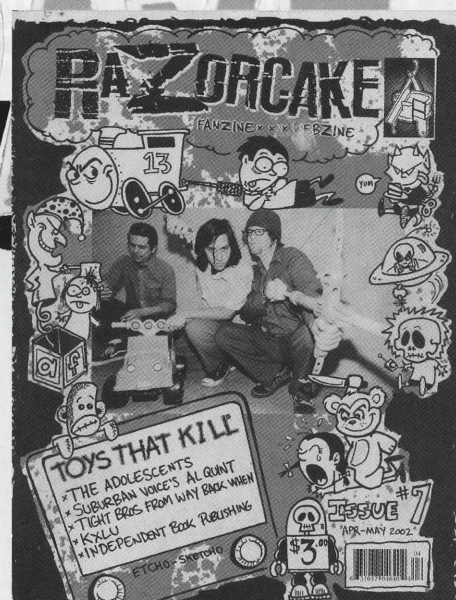
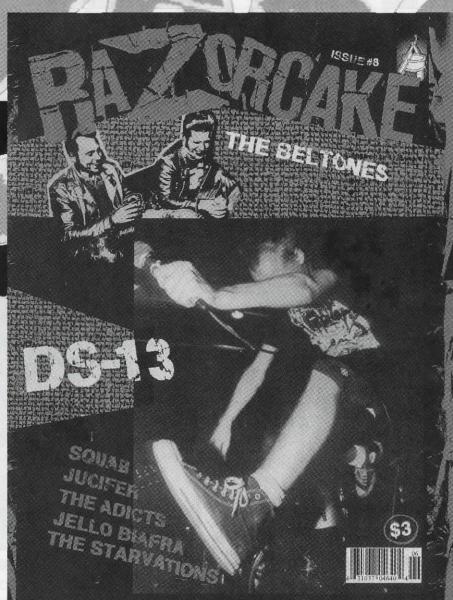
TODD: Boy, that's tough! Basically what I do is anytime I laugh when I first read the interview or get particularly excited, but mostly when I laugh, that's what I'll highlight as a choice quote from the interview. If you just read those quotes its nearly always just potty humour. Pissing, farting, shitting, stuff like that (laughs).

SEAN: I didn't even notice this until someone pointed it out to me about ten issues along the way ... "All your quotes are just dick and fart jokes!" (laughs). It makes sense I guess.

RIOT. 77: Are there many people left you'd like to interview?

TODD: Oh yeah. Frankie Stubbs would be number one. I actually got to photograph his wedding. He got married in Las Vegas about a year ago and I got to take pictures, which was really great. I've been a huge Leatherface fan for the longest time. The time just never seemed right to actually sit down and do a good interview. Obviously I didn't want to do it when he was getting married and the time before that we were both hosed, so it would have been really stupid. I think Frankie is such an intelligent guy with a lot of good stories. Leatherface came through here supporting Hot Water Music right around the time when we were putting our second issue out. I've gotten to see them quite a few times on tour. Fantastic!

SEAN: We ran a cover interview in issue number four with Ian McKaye. Nardwuar did the interview. The thing Todd and I talked about when we decided to run that interview was that we couldn't really interview him ourselves. Minor Threat is really the band that got me inter-



ping stuff and its not just to show how horrible this stuff was, but you can see how larger influences that potentially anyone can go through, follow into Punk Rock and fire it up to give it honesty and integrity and I really like that. I like a good story that has resonance beyond music ... music is awesome, but it's good to show other people why we're so interested in this.

SEAN: I've done interviews with some really cool people. One that stands out was when I interviewed Pegboy for Flipside. I think it was maybe the second interview I'd ever done. I didn't know how to prepare for an interview (laughs) ... which basically meant I didn't prepare at all ... I hardly had any questions ... they were playing right around the corner from where I lived in Atlanta, Georgia at the time. My friend was a bartender at the place next door to the venue, so I took Larry and Pierre from Pegboy in there and got them some shots and we're just hanging out and all I can think of to say to them is, "Boy, I really like Naked Raygun!" (laughs), but I couldn't think of any questions. We just keep having a good time and doing shots and they just kind of carried me through the interview by coming up with all these great stories. I'd mention a 7 inch that I liked or something and they'd tell me all about the stories behind it (laughs). The bar was empty and my bartender friend kept setting us up with shots, so by the end of the interview I was getting worried because they hadn't played yet and were getting really drunk. They put on an amazing set as it happened and were great. They're one of my favourite bands.

RIOT. 77: What are the low points?

TODD: There're a couple of strikeouts (laughs). I was a huge Jawbreaker fan and was going to interview Blake when he came back with Jets To Brazil. I agreed to do an interview with him and showed up at the place three hours before they were due to play and am asked if I have a card. A card?!! I tell them no, write my name on a piece of paper and hand it to the bouncer, who walks over to Blake. Blake looks at it and then walks away. I'm waiting for about an hour and I ask, "So, what's the deal? Can I interview him?" I'm told, "Yeah, it'll just be a minute!" I wait another hour and decide I'm done, I can't wait any longer. So, I walk around the corner and see Blake walking in the exact opposite direction to me. He'd seen me. Not a very exciting story (laughs). I just gave my tickets for the show that night away, I wasn't interested in seeing them after that (laughs).

SEAN: After we'd done a few issues of Razorcake we got this letter from Joe King from The Queers. It was a nice letter, saying he liked the magazine and this n' that and asked if we would interview him. Then he went on a tour for his last album and I couldn't interview him, but my wife, who is a huge Queers fan, said she really wanted to interview him. I set it all up and she had all these questions prepared and was really excited about going to see The Queers and getting to interview Joe. So she goes there to do the interview and Joe is just a

ested in Punk Rock. I had some Dead Kennedys albums and that beforehand, but when I got the Minor Threat "Discography" that was it for me. I'd really like to interview him one of these days, because I've never gotten the chance to.

TODD: Actually being the diplomat between Ian and Nardwuar was very illuminating because Ian didn't want it to look like he was being goosed on or being too distant and Nardwuar didn't think it was a good interview because he was actually put back a little bit. Ian knew what he was going to do, so he kind of outflanked him at times, whereas a lot of other people would not be able to do that. So they're both ill at ease with the whole thing and I think it turned out really well. Interesting to see two very different personalities work around one another.

RIOT. 77: What about records ... you've both reviewed countless records in your time ... what are the key records that you think have helped shape Razorcake?

TODD: Well, Leatherface "Mush" would be up there right at the top. Dillinger Four! I celebrate the entire catalogue of Dillinger Four ... Tiltwheel, who are a small band from San Diego who I've probably seen more times than any other band ... Toys That Kill ...

SEAN: You've picked my first four! It's so hard to narrow it down, because whatever I'm listening to today would be my favourite stuff today. I just got the singles and B-sides collection for The Riverboat Gamblers and there's this one song on there where the chorus goes, "I Think I'm Wonderful!", which has been stuck in my head for days and it's just been doing wonders for my self esteem (laughs). So that's the one today.

TODD: The good thing is, I think we're open-ended and haven't painted ourselves into a corner. The great thing about Punk Rock is that anyone can start out playing in a band and that band is going to record a 7 inch and if we're lucky enough that 7 inch will hopefully come to us and we will hear it and it will be good. That's the really exciting thing about it. It's not manufactured by anybody and we the people have this culture that belongs to us.

SEAN: I thought of a band I have to mention. Smogtown, a band from Orange County, and they should be one of the biggest Punk bands of all time and would be if they weren't so self-destructive. They were in our first issue and when they broke up Jim Ruland wrote this big tribute to them in his column, which became the liner notes for Smogtown's last album, as they've since reformed. They're definitely a band I'd have to include.

TODD: Absolutely.

RIOT. 77: Something else you asked Al Quint when you interviewed him was if he ever got offered bribes from labels to cover certain bands or put them on the cover ... that ever happened to either of you two?

TODD: I wish it would, it would be a great story. No, I think we're very lightly monitored by the majors and they kind of realise they can't get anything from us. They'll send us promos,

but I'm kind of a dick to publicists, especially the ones who are working with larger bands ... like why are we going to put Beck on our cover? I kind of cut those conversations short. I mean if someone were to offer us fifty thousand dollars ... (laughs).

SEAN: Our distributors are always on our case about our covers though ...

TODD: "Who the hell are these bands?!" (laughs)

SEAN: She was just talking to Todd a few weeks ago about one of the covers ... they never know the bands on the cover ... we're like, "Well me and Todd just pick our favourite band from that issue and put them on the cover", and that's how we choose 'em. They start talking about demographics n' all ... I actually got an email from them once where they suggested we put scantily clad young women on the cover (laughs) ... they thought that would sell more and suggested we have a standard cover type because they felt it would sell more, but we tend to do the complete opposite just to piss 'em off ... it's fun (laughs).

RIOT. 77: American media is a lot more censored than European media as a whole ... do you think there's more of a need for an independent outlet here than in Europe?

TODD: I think it's important that every country has independent media. It's a real big shame that the BBC does a better job of covering American politics than any major news corporation in America.

RIOT. 77: Yeah I seen their big broadcasting place down the road from here ... I didn't realise they'd actually set up shop over here ...

TODD: Oh yeah. We get it on public TV and their Internet stuff is good too.

SEAN: I think the media is so controlled in America too that there's such a need for independent media. There're basically six companies that control over 90% of everything you see and hear in America. If you take a closer look at General Electric you'll see they own NBC and all these other 24-hour news stations. General Electric also receives two billion dollars a year in defence contracts from the United States government, so when the U.S. decides it wants to go to war, one of the major threads of information stands to gain millions of dollars out of making weapons for that war and they're also going to cover that war. This of course means you have a very slanted view. Also the only reason a network like FOX exists is because Ronald Reagan broke some laws to make Rupert Murdoch an American citizen. He was living in Australia and had a family, but became an American citizen solely so he could own a larger share of the American media. It's so controlled that you've gotta try and seek out any little cracks that you can.

RIOT. 77: Reagan's death had a huge impact on the American Punk circuit. Talk to me about that.

TODD: He's such an easy guy to hate. There were so few good things that came out for people on the lower echelons of America, during his term. He basically set up a protocol to bust the Unions in America. He busted the airline Union, which we all know about and that

construction and got my first job at it when I was thirteen and became a skilled carpenter. It's a blue-collar background, but not poor blue-collar.

RIOT. 77: Razorcake was very much behind the whole Punk Voter thing in the run up to the election last year.

TODD: Oh yeah.

SEAN: Yeah.

RIOT. 77: What did you make of the outcome?

TODD: It's depressing. I wrote in an introduction that I'm used to losing on the grand scheme of things; I can take the blow. It's very disheartening how systemic and how many layers there are to the problems of how the voting system is set up. It's a big ball of wax and just one example is the amount of electronic discrepancies there are. Voters were being obstructed and intimidated and unfortunately this type of thing doesn't seem to be going away anytime soon and is only getting worse. In Jimmy Alvarado's column this issue he talks about how Bush Snr. kind of perfected this in Nicaragua and in South America and now it's bringing it home. It's happening here, in a country that we thought was one of the most technologically advanced in the world. It's very depressing stuff.

RIOT. 77: Michael Moore was a person Flipside interviewed way back ... what do you make of him today? Do you think him and Bush are two sides of the same coin or are you a believer?

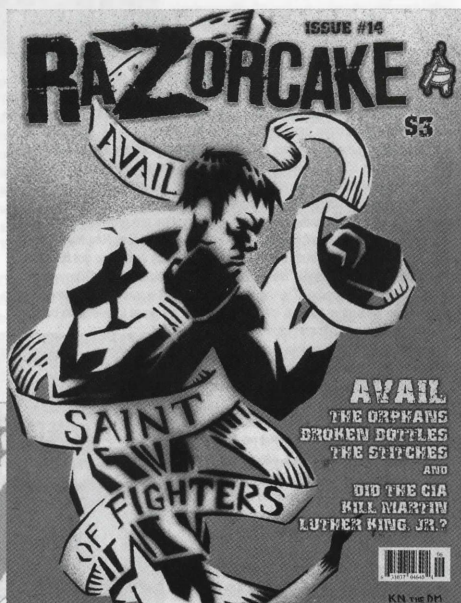
SEAN: "Fahrenheit 911" which is really what he's getting all this negative press for and if you watch it, everything he's covering is coming from mainstream news; he's just reshaping it in a way that brings all the information together. He's certainly got a point of view, but everyone's got a point of view and it's weird when newspapers and journalists act all objective when someone has an opinion on something. If you're human, you've got an opinion and that's going to come through. I think it's better if people are open with their opinions and listen to people from both sides. I think Michael Moore explains that he's giving his point of view and you decide based on that. He's directly opposed to stuff like Fox News because the difference is Fox News isn't open about opinions of other people. I respect the guy; I don't think he's that different to me, in the sense that he came from a manufacturing town and a similar background, but he's worked his way up. He's a good guy.

RIOT. 77: Who was it that interviewed him?

TODD: Nardwuar, actually. He interviewed him twice.

RIOT. 77: What do you make of all the books being written about the heyday of American Punk and Hardcore music? Any favourites or least favourites?

TODD: That Steven Blush, "American Hardcore" one is horribly inaccurate. I physically had to give it to someone else. I marked three hundred things in there that were just factually incorrect and with just a little bit of research he could have figured this out. It's not terribly



basically set the precedent for being able to cut other Unions down, cut workers compensation down, cut overtime down etc. etc. We're talking about a guy here who wants to shoot missiles with other missiles in outer space! That was his big fuckin' plan! That would be like me shooting a bullet at you and you trying to shoot a bullet back at that bullet and hit it in mid air. It doesn't make any sense and he spent millions of dollars trying to start a program that would do this. He started the ball rolling on privatising public funds, bonds and land.

RIOT. 77: Did you think things changed all that much after Reagan?

SEAN: I don't know if Clinton was any better.

RIOT. 77: Yeah, a lot of people seem to be looking back in hindsight, saying how great he was, but at the time no one was saying that.

SEAN: (laughs) Well, I guess he's better than George Bush, but Clinton did a lot of asshole things too.

TODD: I think the difference between Clinton and Reagan is that you kind of have to explain to people why Clinton is bad. With Reagan you can just name fifty things off the top of your head.

SEAN: What Reagan basically did was help to create a system whereby the wealthy in America got wealthier and everyone else got poorer. He set up government programs, ways of distributing money based on an entire economy that was geared towards making a few people very rich. I was doing a book tour in Canada last year and when I was driving around I noticed that I didn't see any Working Poor people like you do in the United States. If you just look around this neighbourhood here, you're talking about mostly people who are working sixty hours a week, with one or two families living in two bedroom apartments. A lot of them can barely afford to live and they're working full time jobs. Driving around Canada I didn't see any of that and I was asking people this all the time and they're like, "Working Poor? What the hell is that?" They literally had no idea what it was. I'm not saying that Canada is utopia or anything, but maybe if all the people who are generating the money in this country could actually live off it, you know what I mean? I think Reagan got the whole ball rolling on the situation we're in today.

TODD: Also, the dude was in movies with monkeys.

SEAN: That's a plus ... I like monkeys.

RIOT. 77: What sort of a family background do you both come from?

TODD: Both of my parents work for the government. My dad is a social worker, now employed by the Air Force and my mom works for water rights off the Colorado River near Las Vegas. The Colorado River borders a bunch of states and there's highly contested water rights around them.

SEAN: I teach English right now. My dad's a construction contractor, so I grew up working

difficult, if the guy had just looked up a thing or two. Saying in the book that Hardcore ended in 1984 or whatever ... you know, go fuck yourself! There's so much great stuff around right now ... This Blush dipshit works for Spin, you know what I mean? It's just such a bad attitude he has, you know, it's like, "If I'm involved with it, then it exists and it's wonderful, but when I get out of it, it ends!". There're some wonderful Hardcore bands right now ... it would be very easy for him to find that out too ... it's called journalism for a reason - you interview three or four people who were at the same place at the same time and get a full story instead of just zippping through things like Blush did.

SEAN: The most accurate account of early American Hardcore is old issues of Suburban Voice.

RIOT. 77: Yeah, that's an excellent source of information ... I continually use that for research ...

SEAN: If you want to know about American Hardcore, just read what Al Quint said and who he interviewed. We've gone to Al a bunch of times and every month I email him and ask him to put together a book. We'll put it out, but he hasn't done it yet. We started talking about it for the twenty-year anniversary of Suburban Voice, but that passed and then we were trying for a twenty-fifth anniversary, but no (laughs) ... so maybe the thirtieth! I think he'd be the most accurate guy you could ask about that stuff.

TODD: The Brendan Mullen book, "We Got The Neutron Bomb" is ok. It's fair. The thing with Los Angeles Punk Rock is that a specific core of people tend to get remembered and then you have this outlying fabric of people who worked extremely hard, were very involved in taking it to a different level, who get completely ignored. There'll only be passing references to bands like the Middle Class and the Cheifs. Then you have people who are very proprietary like X, who do a really good job of making themselves look very important. Fantastic band, but if you're going to explain the entire community of it, you need to mention bands like The Gears who put out an album right around the time of X, which is really fantastic ... there's definitely a watershed there. There's some amazing stuff that always seems to get washed over and I don't think there's anyone who's done a really good account of that yet. Brendan did a lot of interviews that were conducted twenty years after the time ... fuck, I don't remember what I was doing when I was thirteen! I couldn't tell who was at a show I saw when I was thirteen! I think the book suffers because of that a little bit. Another thing is the East Los Angeles scene, which has a long and rich tradition of Punk Rock and I'm by no means a master of it or anything like that, but it has been roundly ignored by Hollywood Punk Rock. Our hope is to start getting stories and collecting things from that. It's weird because I'm not from here, but I'm always rooting for the underdog and would love to see that scene covered in depth. I'm always interested in stories that just get glossed over.

ACTION "ACTION". (PUNK CORE)
This is Hardcore Punk from Canada, in the good old-fashioned sense. Being that it's on Punk Core and the band look like they're a Punk Core band, it's clear it will appeal to the G.B.H. far more so than the Kill Your Idols or Minor Threat contingent, though the music is pretty close to the latter. I can get off on this, as the band appear excited and passionate about one thing or another, which usually makes for soulful music. They also take many of their cues from Discharge of course, but have managed to put their own stamp on the template. It's powerful, with a little melody, but for the most part, simply ferocious music to get your kicks by. You can hear some good anthemic moments here itching to get out, that should reach their full potential in the live format. (PUNK CORE RECORDS: P.O. BOX 916, MIDDLE ISLAND, NEW YORK, 11953, U.S.A.)

AIRBOMB "PNUK". (PNUK)
Both album and record label sound like something a certain ex-Dun Laoghaire resident would put his name to! Airbomb draw inspiration from the old British stock and are no spring chickens themselves one would assume going by the photos here, so presumably they've been round the block a few times. I'm thinking of S.L.F. and Rancid whilst listening to this. Some funky bass leads fitted around no nonsense Punk Rock can often work wonders. Had them pinned as sad has-beens before listening to this, but there's a surprising amount of fresh ideas on here. The band members themselves are perhaps survivors from Punk's first wave and know what music gets them off. Brought up on a diet of U.K. Subs, The Ruts and The Saints presumably, but interestingly they appear to have kept their interest in Punk Rock up to more recent times, which sets Airbomb apart from many others. This CD is filled with seventeen blasts of untamed aggression. Enjoy! (PNUK RECORDS: P.O. BOX 2335, ROMFORD, ESSEX, RM7 9AW, U.K.)

ANTI DREAD "JESZCZE WIECEJ SEKSIS-TOWSKICH PIOSENEK ...". (JIMMY JAZZ)
Featuring members of the Garaz Fanzine/Analog crowd, this is a slightly more roots tinged take on the Street Punk phenomenon, containing elements of Rocksteady and alternative rhythms to what we've previously heard. This is loud, fast and angry but musically adept and fairly diverse from song to song. Grating and aggressive, but never afraid of a melody. The members sound as if they've learned their chops in other bands growing up and wish to perfect everything they know with Anti Dread, as you can hear pretty much every different era of Punk and Hardcore music shining through on this CD. They can nicely shift moods and tempos without losing the flow of the record and don't rely on obvious clichés to come up with a good song. The future looks bright. (JIMMY JAZZ RECORDS: P.O. BOX 184, 71-507 SZCZECIN 5, POLAND.)

ANTI-PASTI "THE LAST CALL". (CAPTAIN OII)
Digi-pack reissue of the debut from Derby's, Anti-Pasti. Originally released in 1981 following the band's formation two years previous, "The Last Call" is a remarkable first album for any band to achieve. It boasts songwriting capabilities far greater than their young years would suggest. Anti-Pasti often got paired with bands like The Exploited, mainly down to arising from the same era and touring with them, but musically and lyrically they were miles apart and light years ahead of any '82 haircut band. Anti-Pasti had more of a Rock n' Roll edge that contained great rhythm – something generally not favoured upon by most of their contemporaries. They certainly weren't ashamed of citing their allegiance to early Rock n' Roll, Northern Soul and Reggae music, which at times drew close parallels with The Ruts. This reissue doubles the track count of the original album, with a staggering fourteen bonus cuts, comprising of alternative versions of album songs and live numbers from the Apocalypse Tour. A vital piece of Punk history. (CAPTAIN OII RECORDS: P.O. BOX 501, HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS, HP10 8QA, ENGLAND.)

ARTHURIC FOOT SOLDIERS "TEXAS IDIOT". (SELF-RELEASED)
CD demo here from a young British band, known as AFS to their friends. In seven weeks they formed this band, wrote the songs, recorded them and have now set 'em loose for public consumption. Taking those statistics into mind, this is impressive. There's a lot to be said for just diving in there and knocking it out as some wonderful Punk groups of the past have proven. They've captured a great atmosphere on these recordings. This band's make-up consists of middle-aged skateboard fanatics who've already completed the work on their follow up debut album, which is due for release in August by Stranded Records. Musically AFS trace the roots of Skate Punk back to the old SST years and have a knowledge that far outweighs anything you're likely to hear on a Warped compilation. Naturally the title track is aimed at George Dubya and contains an irresistible chorus hook. The three follow up chasers are on a similar path, with gruff sounding Punk Rock consistently containing that harmony buried in there somewhere. (ARTHURIC FOOT SOLDIERS: C/O CARL ARN-FIELD, 23 PARK ROAD, ADLINGTON, CHORLEY, LANCs, PR7 4HZ, U.K.)

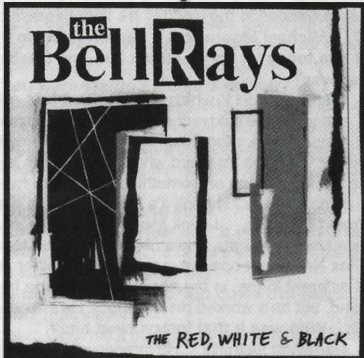
ASSHOLE PARADE "SAY GOODBYE". (NO IDEA)
This sounds like the first recordings from Cryptic Slaughter or D.R.I. but Asshole Parade are yet another Gainesville band formed in the 90's with more than a passing interest in all things old school. They're throwing the term Thrash around a bit too loosely for my liking in the press sheet, because the difference between a Thrash band and what Asshole Parade does is that this band has a groove, making the songs flow so much better than keeping everything at 100mph for the entire record. This CD barely scrapes twelve minutes in running time but contains fifteen songs and I think that's the only way to have it. There's a cover of the Circle Jerks, "Red Tape" on here that rocks, complete with Keith Morris' intro from "Another State Of Mind", which made me realise how much in common this CD has with "Group Sex". Apparently there's two EP's on here that are "long lost", recorded back in the 90's at some stage. I like it. (NO IDEA RECORDS: P.O. BOX 14636, GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA, 32604, U.S.A.)

CHRIS BAILEY AND THE GENERAL DOG "BONE BOX". (CADIZ RECORDING COMPANY)
The Saints leader Chris Bailey with various other band members from the current Saints line up here, taking us acoustically through some of his finer career moments. I'm not sure what the inspiration behind a release of this nature was, but who's complaining when you've got the riches of a Saints catalogue to draw from? First up is the classic "I'm Stranded", which still sounds so fresh and vibrant all these years later and loses none of its impact being given the stripped down acoustic treatment. Other Saints staples that may grab your attention here include, "This Perfect Day", "Wild About You" and "Know Your Product" amidst the fourteen offerings. A rare piece of nostalgia for the old fans and a vital history lesson for anyone not yet familiar with this one-off band. (www.cadizmusic.com)

BANE "THE NOTE". (EQUAL VISION)
I see Bane performing live a bunch of times about five years ago and from what I remember they looked like a bunch of college fraternity boys. Leap to 2005 and this is my introduction to the band on tape and they certainly don't sound like I would have thought. They're a straight up Hardcore band, but more in the vein of Agnostic Front and Sick Of It All, though their most obvious influence appears to be their fellow Massachusetts counterparts Slapshot. The first few blasts of this CD are striking doses of pile-driving Hardcore, the good old-fashioned way, but it tends to run out of steam pretty quickly and by the third or fourth song in you've pretty much heard it all. Having said that I definitely like their style, but bands like Bane are perhaps better suited to the odd killer 7 inch. Fans of the early New York and Boston Hardcore will

shit themselves over this. (EQUAL VISION RECORDS: P.O. BOX 38202, ALBANY, NEW YORK, NY 12203, U.S.A.)

BANNER OF THUGS "WHAT WE HOLD DEAR". (REBELLION)
Dutch boisterous Street Rock group Banner Of Thugs are loosely situated musically between Dropkick Murphys and the Ducky Boys. Plenty of Fuck-You screeches to be found on this, with a singer who sounds like the type of guy that would have a lot of veins popping out of his skull whilst delivering these shit kicking boot stompers. "What We Hold Dear" much like other European Street releases, explores the early Rock n' Roll side to music as much as it does the Oi! influence. The Dutch appear to have a knack for this type of thing lately and as all the best Street Punk bands, Banner Of Thugs can weave good melodies into their songs, making this a tasty mix of coarse lead vocals, r'n'y Punk musicianship and great choruses to lend it pleasantness. Much better than your average band of this type. (REBELLION RECORDS: MGR. VAN ROOSMALENPLEIN, 24 – 5213 GD'S, HERTOGEN-BOSCH, NETHERLANDS.)



THE BELLRAYS "THE RED, WHITE & BLACK". (ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES)
The Bellrays join forces with Alternative Tentacles? A match made in heaven! Considering this label has remained at the cutting edge of underground music for over twenty years, it seems fitting that a band like this should use them as a vehicle for getting their music out there. Firstly this CD contains the best liner notes I've read for an album in recent history. Plain and simple, singer Lisa outlines what it is The Bellrays are giving us on this album and what the true meaning of Rock n' Roll is – "Rock n' Roll has been neglected and abused by most of its listeners and practitioners until the masses expect the least from its beautiful, enormous, possibilities. Like it or not, The Bellrays surrendered eight years and nine months of our lives to bring you, "The Red, White & Black". The Bellrays fusion of Jazz, Soul and Rock clearly comes from a background of listening to and understanding each variation on its own terms, whilst also appreciating the common thread

that links them. They remain loyal to the roots of the music and maintain a pure, unfiltered approach for the entire album. Many Punk bands have flirted with Jazz and Soul in the past, but The Bellrays are one of the few who actually understand what they're doing. (ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES: P.O. BOX 419092, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, 94141-9092, U.S.A.)

JELLO BIAFRA WITH THE MELVINS "NEVER BREATHE WHAT YOU CAN'T SEE". (ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES)
Two great titans of Punk Rock get together to see if the stuff they can produce as a team will live up to their revered work apart. Jello Biafra has a near flawless track record in terms of recorded output and is legendary for his collaborations with everyone from Mojo Nixon to No Means No, all of which resulted in timeless pieces of plastic. The Melvins on the other hand are old favourites of mine. I list "Gluey Porch Treatments" as one of the true greats and Buzz Osborne is simply a man possessed by the power of Rock n' Roll. The chemistry between the two here is menacingly good, whether they spent considerable time developing this prior to recording or whether that connection simply went off from the outset is not to be known, but together they're a force of pointed brilliance. Extra guitars are provided on a number of tracks by Adam Jones, who it has to be said lends an East Bay Ray twang to "Islamic Bomb", though if the truth be told it was most likely Jello who got Ray to make his guitar sound that way! "Never Breathe What You Can't See" may surprise some folk with its direct approach to the songs, that don't waste any time in getting to the point, leaving little room for The Melvins to act up! It's great to see Jello back in the game of producing music and I think we've all secretly missed that unmistakable helium howl on his records these past years as it became spoken word overload there for a while. The lyrical theme running across this appears to be the state of paranoia global leaders have us living in, but of course there's always space for the obligatory yuppie dig, that no Biafra working would be complete without, which comes in the shape of "Yuppie Cadillac" on this one – "But I need my armoured luxury tank - to drive to work and drive home - keep my children safe - as I run down yours - while I talk on my cell phone". Osborne has written a chunk of the music, but its Jello who appears to have taken over the lions share of this album, also writing some of the music along with all of the lyrics. Needless to say, this gets the two thumbs up! (ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES: P.O. BOX 419092, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, 94141-9092, U.S.A.)



BLACK COUGAR SHOCK UNIT "GÖDZILLA TRIPWIRE". (NEWEST INDUSTRY)
Another five star offering here from Atlanta's, Black Cougar Shock Unit. From what I recall of their last album, also issued by the Newest Industry imprint, it sounded quite a bit different to this. The production is what immediately stands out and that's where Black Cougar Shock Unit have really outdone themselves here. They've gone for a harsher, more aggressive sound, which benefits any Punk Rock band in this day, giving them distinction over the masses of over produced big-budget Punk. This band are a throwback to the early eighties D.I.Y. spirit of Black Flag and the like and carry a strong spirit from those times with them. However, they're no revivalists and have naturally put a modern day spin on things, in particular with the pointed lyrics and social commentary to be found hiding amidst this album. Like all great records, this can work on a lot of different levels and takes more than a handful of plays to fully appreciate. You can tell there's a lot of heart, a lot of soul and a lot of passion put into this. (NEWEST INDUSTRY: UNIT 100, 61 WELLFIELD ROAD, CARDIFF, CF24 3DG, U.K.)

BLACK COUGAR SHOCK UNIT "HELLO". (NEWEST INDUSTRY)
Hot on its heels, is this six-track follow up. Not allowing the dust to settle for a second, "Hello" didn't come with a press sheet and there's little information to be found on the inner booklet, so I can only guess this is a hasty extension to their new album above. It's in similar fashion to "Godzilla Tripwire" in the sense that it's loud, ferocious and clearly has no intentions of holding back or letting up. The musicians in this band put so much energy and enthusiasm into their playing, as though their lives depended on it and that's something that's been missing from this scene for a while – bands forming because it's their sole goal in life to play this music, with no hidden agendas in sight! I'll drink to that! (NEWEST INDUSTRY: UNIT 100, 61 WELLFIELD ROAD, CARDIFF, CF24 3DG, U.K.)

BLISTERHEAD "VIA CASILINA". (MAD BUTCHER/KOB)
Some charming and charismatic good time Rock n' Roll here from these Swedish bubblegum enthusiasts. Blisterhead slot into the Radio Reelers/Queers/Bombshell Records category, fusing '77 Punk with a Surf and Garage influence. Packing that similar hell raising rick you're likely to find on records by bands like the Candy Snatchers and their ilk. Modern day rolling Punk Rock, that is both challenging but at the same time within most peoples comfort zones. There's no shortage of top ranking material to be found here with a great rocking fifties element sporadically throughout. Contenders for best song include the Nips influenced rocker, "Lazy Slob", the infectious "Punk Rock Serenade" and the irresistible infection that is "Red Angel". Its all

here kids, be prepared for a fun filled ride through the vaults of Rock n' Roll. (MAD BUTCHER RECORDS: KURZE GEISMARSTR. 6, D-37073 GÖTTINGEN, GERMANY/KOB RECORDS: VIA CANTARANE 63 C, 37129 VERONA, ITALY.)

THE BLOOD "FALSE GESTURES FOR A DEVIOUS PUBLIC". (CAPTAIN OII)
At times it's difficult to believe the Blood were guilty of anything other than shocking for the sake of shocking. The Blood's argument on credibility is much like that of GG Allin ... fool with a stool or more brains than meets the eye? Musically this band ranked above par and could hit the mark with great songs when it suited them, and that's what lives on today. Lyrical themes centred around all sorts, from child molesting to wearing your dead mothers knickers on trips to her graveside. Something apart from that which The Blood became synonymous for was bridging the Punk/Metal gap and being one of the first Punk groups to score a feature in Kerrang! Sounds magazine refused to print the cover of their album but rated the music highly, which led to all sorts of controversy surrounding the band. Two decades on and it seems a bit school boyish to be honest, but the music has stood the test of time and this reissue is loaded with bonus material that calls out for a purchase even if you've already invested in the original release. (CAPTAIN OII RECORDS: P.O. BOX 501, HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS, HP10 8QA, ENGLAND.)

BLOOD OR WHISKEY "CASHED OUT ON CULTURE". (PUNK CORE)
The first recorded evidence of the all new Blood Or Whiskey in action. It took me a while to get my head round this and as most of you will know, there've been some major shifts in personnel in the Blood Or Whiskey camp since "No Time To Explain", leaving us with an almost entirely new band to come to grips with. Blood Or Whiskey's line up now consists of 100% Punks, where as before the balance between the mix of Punks and older folk who sounded to be coming more from a Trad background, was the chemistry that gave them that special edge. Dugs has traded in his acoustic guitar for an electric and we've pretty much got a Punk Rock band here who like to dabble in Trad. Once you come to terms with that you can begin to judge the album on its own merits. "Cashed Out On Culture" is the result of heavy touring and long hours invested in the rehearsal rooms - something they never fully indulged in up till now and this has made the record sore to heights I would have deemed unattainable this time last year. I'll hand it to 'em, they've proved me wrong and come up with a record that's difficult to turn off, despite having it hogging the stereo for the past two months. "Doors Of Hope", "Glory O", "Ruler Ruler", "The Cash Deceiver" and "They Say No" all stand up with anything the original band gave us. Elsewhere there's a guest appearance from Cait O'Riordan and a brief ode to the Horslips. A seemingly endless batch of touring has been lined up to promote this release and with the initial pressings of the CD having sold out in days, it all looks uphill for the Blood Or Whiskey boys. (PUNK CORE RECORDS: P.O. BOX 916, MIDDLE ISLAND, NEW YORK, 11953, U.S.A.)

BLOWFLY "FAHRENHEIT 69". (ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES)
This is some foul ass shit here. It's everything one would expect from a Hip Hop artist going under the name of Blowfly I guess. Blowfly (aka Clarence Reid) actually penned some songs for KC and the Sunshine Band in the 70's and this is his quest for presidency, and to eliminate Bush from the Whitehouse. All this is done through a serious of songs about pussy, dick and ... uhh more pussy! But of course there's the political element to all of this and this album is littered with great references to the hands that pull the strings in the U.S.A. Naturally that's where Jello spotted the connection and decided to bring Blowfly into the house of Alternative Tentacles. We all know Jello's passion for Rap, but this should see him cop some slack from the unbelievers for sure. A lot of the musical influence on this CD is taken from old Funk songs. If song titles like, "You've Got Your Dick On Backwards", "Your Precious Cunt", and "I Believe My Dick Can Fly" offend your precious little mind, then don't buy it. However if you're interested in pushing the envelope ever so slightly as a label like Alternative Tentacles continue to do, then I recommend giving this a spin. (ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES: P.O. BOX 419092, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, 94141-9092, U.S.A.)

BOLD "THE SEARCH: 1985-1989". (REVELATION)
Bold were an 80's Straight Edge band from New York and can be slotted in beside the likes of Youth Of Today, DYS and SSD. This is their complete works. From the early crunch of the "Crippled Youth" EP through their final offering to the world with 1989's "Looking Back". The scene they emerged from is not something I'll ever feel the slightest affinity towards, but their music certainly serves its purpose well and is light years ahead of most Hardcore thrown at us today. It's raw, at times dynamic and never fails to impact. The earlier their work, the better for me as with the advent of technology they lost their bite somewhat in the later years. I believe all members of this band are no longer Straight Edge, so it kind of puts a lot of their ethos and lyrics into perspective and you can't help but chuckle at how it all turned out with a cheeky sigh of "I told you so ...". (REVELATION RECORDS: P.O. BOX 5232, HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA 92615-5232, U.S.A.)

BRAHMAN "A FORLORN HOPE". (REVELATION)
Brahman are a Japanese outfit being launched on the western world via Revelation with their second full length album. Culling a fearsome combination of breakneck rhythms and noise embellishments, abandoning any pre-empted efforts of structuralized harmonies. The production lends itself to many an Emo act in the states right now, but there's a drive behind Brahman that sounds to be coming from a different direction altogether. Perhaps it's a geographical thing, but the nails-down-a-blackboard sound usually to be found on such records is pleasantly absent here. This could be described as complex Prog Punk, its extremely powerful and has just enough raw energy to keep it interesting. It also comes with two live video accompaniments that shows the band rocking it to a massive adoring crowd, perhaps in their homeland where they're reported to have shifted half a million of these things. (REVELATION RECORDS: P.O. BOX 5232, HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA 92615-5232, U.S.A.)

BROKEN BONES "TIME FOR ANGER, NOT JUSTICE". (DR. STRANGE)
Broken Bones were the sound of U.K. '82 Punk falling down. This is what happened when the bands ran out of ideas – they started playing bad Heavy Metal music. As if it weren't bad enough for the public to have to endure Broken Bones the first time around, they've only gone and reformed, so we have to sit through all this again. There's an energy there, but really, if kids wanted to hear Thrash Metal, they'd just go and buy an album by a Thrash Metal band, not listen to a half-arsed version of a Hardcore group trying to play Metal. Discharge had the balance right, as did GBH, but Broken Bones are no crossover band, they're simply a Heavy Metal band, and for that I make a claim to have them banished from Punk Rock and tossed over to Terrorizer. (DR. STRANGE RECORDS: P.O. BOX 1058, ALTA LOMA, CALIFORNIA, 917101, U.S.A.)

THE CARPETTES "THE BEST OF ...". (ANAGRAM)
The unfortunate series of circumstances surrounding the Punk gold rush of the late 70's meant bands like the late great Carpettes were often overlooked, without receiving a fair hearing. Most of the media and fans alike were too preoccupied in those days to pay any attention to The Carpettes, who came up with some reckonable Punk songs, despite battling against the odds. The deaf-ear given to them however only seemed to spur the band on as they came up with increasingly well balanced materi-

al, that drew from the Subs and Stooges, but managing to sound like neither in the process. Forming in Co. Durham in England's northeast in the first half of 1977, The Carpettes carried none of the image baggage favoured by half of their era and instead just went straight at it, not giving their look a second thought. Fantastic! They stuck it out for just over four years and left a convincing recorded legacy behind, which this collection CD dips in and out of, in its twenty-song make up. They've got some irresistible pop hooks, as demonstrated best on 'I Don't Mean It' that pummels along in similar style to The Moondogs top lineers. Liner notes for this are supplied courtesy of Mark Brennan. (ANAGRAM RECORDS: UNIT 3A, LONG ISLAND HOUSE, WARPLE WAY, ACTON, LONDON W3 0RG, ENGLAND.)

CHAOS U.K. "THE RIOT CITY YEARS". (STEP-1 MUSIC)
You can't beat a bit of Chaos U.K. They were angry, fed up and pissed off with life in Thatcher's Britain and who wouldn't be? Chaos U.K. have got to be the ultimate anti-everything band. This is another "Riot City Years" collection from Step-1 that drags together the results of Chaos U.K.'s time spent with that label. From the Riot City locality of Bristol the band put out their first E.P. "Burning Britain" via the label in 1981, and were quick to follow the path of bands like Discharge, with copious amounts of head crunching British Hardcore. The four "Riot City Years" compilations featuring Chaos U.K. Vice Squad, Disorder and the Varukers have been compiled by Mark Brennan and cover all the ground any fan could expect. The liner notes by Shane Baldwin also bring you up to date, along with a detailed history, on the bands careers. Chaos U.K. have always had their loyal fanbase out there and for anyone who didn't catch these releases the first time round, or simply were out the grooves on the vinyl versions, this makes for great archive material! (STEP-1 MUSIC: P.O. BOX 21, TENTERDEN, KENT, TN30 7ZZ, U.K.)

CHEAP SEX "HEADED FOR A BREAK-DOWN". (PUNK CORE)
Headed by ex Virus front man, Mike Virus, Cheap Sex have acclaimed some pretty serious popularity in their brief time together. They're one of the more developed sounding bands on the Punk Core roster and have allowed their sound to take on a route of its own. It's far more natural and less forced than some of the other bands across the Street Punk spectrum. Mike's vocals are strange in that they're rough and husky, but have an almost hidden soothing edge to them at the same time, that can become infectious the more you hear them. Kind of along the same lines as Mark Noah from the Anti Heros. If you like your rough-edged Punk with some subtly placed melodies, Cheap Sex are perhaps the band you're after. There's such a heavy amount of these bands done the rounds in America that it's difficult to see the forest from the trees at times, but I get a good feeling about this one. (PUNK CORE RECORDS: P.O. BOX 916, MIDDLE ISLAND, NEW YORK, 11953, U.S.A.)

CHEFDENKER "EINE VON HUNDERT MIKROWELLEN". (TRASH 2001)
Some goodtime German cheer here from the awkwardly titled Chefdenker! They manage a Ramones meets Die Toten Hosen brand exceptionally well and that's a heavy load to carry on board and pull it off successfully. Everything is conducted through German which I feel only adds to what they do. Something along the lines of Terrorgroupe, loaded with infectious pop tones and brimming with energy. Rescuing Punk Rock from the perils of excessiveness, bringing it back to its roots and giving it a proper overhaul, Chefdenker have learned their chops from the minimalist Rock n Roll of the early years. They've got a slight Reggae rhythm cutting through it at times, which benefits them well by putting an original spin on things. They've taken the same nitty, gritty formula of bands like the Supersuckers, but shaken it up German style and have created a rather tasty record in the process. (TRASH 2001 RECORDS: P.O. BOX 10 16 53, D-46216 BOTTROP, GERMANY.)

CHIXDIGGITI "PINK RAZORS". (FAT WRECK)
I used to really have it in for Chixdiggit!, but I kind of feel sorry for them now more than anything. Maybe I'm turning soft with age, but they never took off at all despite some serious label pushing and hard touring and you kind of have to hand it to 'em for sticking in there. They have their moments and can be kinda fun at times, but they're just that bit too far over the line of cheeseball Punk for me. I like Pop and I like melodies, but it gets to the point of their songs sounding more like children's nursery rhymes than a Rock n' Roll tune, and quickly loses any of its appeal. I think if their singer wasn't so squeaky clean it might add a bit to Chixdiggit, but as it stands I'd sooner expect to hear or see a band like this on Nickelodeon than in any Punk related rag. (FAT WRECK CHORDS: WALDEMARSTR. 33 10999, BERLIN, GERMANY.)

CIVIT "MASSACRE". (DISASTER)
Four angry, young women playing Distillers styled Punk Rock. I'm sure I'm not the first to point out the Distillers comparison and I probably won't be the last. I usually try and avoid drawing parallels between girl-fronted bands and the Distillers, but Civit are so close to that sound, it would be criminal not to in this case. "Massacre" is a strong CD and contains plenty of that vigorous attitude that is only to be found on releases by bands of Civit's nature. Blatant, relentless and with more snotty attitude crammed onto a single disc than most bands manage in an entire career, this CD is a fun ride from beginning to end. It may not change the world, but for a Saturday night pick-me-up this is just the thing. Let's see what the future brings. (DISASTER RECORDS: P.O. BOX 7112, BURBANK, CALIFORNIA, 91510, U.S.A.)

CLOSE COMBAT "VIVA MESTREECHI". (REBELLION)
Forgettable Oil from the Netherlands. Five tracks of 4 Skins meets One Way System. While its tight, sharp and well played, it carries little distinction over any other Oil band and you'd be hard pushed to spot this amidst a line up of any other hundred substandard Oil releases this year. Naturally it goes without saying that Close Combat are laddish soccer fans on the weekend, having worked their shitty factory jobs all week. I'm sure people can relate, but we need something more challenging at this point... How about a middle class Oil band consisting of bank managers and solicitors who all love their jobs and all the money it brings them? Now, that would be fun!! (REBELLION RECORDS: MGR. VAN ROOSMALENPLEIN, 24 - 5213 GD'S, HERTOGEN-BOSCH, NETHERLANDS.)

COMBAT WOUNDED VETERAN "THIS IS NOT AN ERECT, ALL-RED NEON BODY". (NO IDEA)
Grrraahhh!!! Yadda! Yadda! Yadda! Screamo, most probably played by Emos! Forty-two songs, thirty-two minutes and not an original idea amongst it! (NO IDEA RECORDS: P.O. BOX 14636, GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA, 32604, U.S.A.)

THE COMMANDANTES "LIEDER FÜR DIE ARBEITERKLASSE". (MAD BUTCHER)
A solo outing for Mad Butcher here, leaving out their partners in crime KOB Records. The Commandantes are a German socialist group, outraged at the capitalist global situation. Not an altogether challenging ethos for a Punk band to have and yet another clear-cut case of preaching to the converted. If these bands really want to have any impact on the world, the Punk circuit is the last place they should start, but unfortunately something tells me that not many others are likely to hear this release. Their sole motivation behind being in a band is political and the music suffers because of it. If The Commandantes are serious about wanting to change the world, perhaps they should down tools and take to the streets. (MAD BUTCHER RECORDS: KURZE GEISMARSTR. 6, D-37073 GOTTINGEN, GERMANY)

COOPER "MAKES TOMORROW ALRIGHT". (KUNG FU)

From The Hague in Holland, Cooper are much like their Californian counterparts and thus have ended up fitting in all too easily on the Kung Fu roster. What gives this album a little edge and prevents it from entering the same territory as someone like Chixdiggit is the fact that it was recorded by Bill Stevenson and mixed at the Blasting Room, which tends to give it that certain powerhouse punch. It's difficult to take the Punk out of this Pop, but the melodies are dead on, the guitars drive things forward and the musicianship is above par. Still, all this accuracy seldom makes for an interesting Punk Rock record and having listened to this album in its entirety it quickly becomes forgettable. Cooper are at the mercy of their influences but sadly they've neglected to find that magic ingredient that puts bands like The Descendents, The Vandals and Lagwagon in a different league. (KUNG FU EUROPE: MARTINUS NYHOFFLAAN 22624 ES DELFT, THE NETHERLANDS.)

DASH DIP ROCK "RECYCLONE". (ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES)
Alternative Tentacles have done a splendid job of this anthology CD by southern Country Punk Rockers, Dash Dip Rock. They've a twenty-year history and twelve albums under their belt, which this CD dips in and out of to come up with the cream of Dash Dip Rock. An element of mysticism surrounds the band, giving little away in the form of a biography and preferring instead to concentrate on allowing the music to shape your opinions. Suffice to say, they do inform us of their heavy drinkin', rockin' n' rollin' lifestyle, that eclipses any ideas you may have preconceived of this lot being anything less than a hard drivin' bunch of road doggin' louts. In their own words, they wish to provide a drinking soundtrack to the uninitiated and this is certainly one of those records. Covering a wide of ground between Jerry Lee Lewis, Ted Nugent and early Link Wray, Dash Dip Rock have an endless supply of toe-tappin' nuggets to sift through. "Snows In Mississippi", the Meat Puppets influenced drawler is a compelling take on those later days of Rock n' Roll that works superbly. Just when you think you have a band like this figured out they spring more surprises on you and capably manage to keep the listener occupied for the entire one hour plus running time of this disc. (ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES: P.O. BOX 419092, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, 94141-9092, U.S.A.)

DEADLINE "GETTING SERIOUS". (PEOPLE LIKE YOU)
Of a mere handful of new bands I find myself listening to more than once, Deadline have become quite possibly the cream of that crop. This is the third in their trilogy of long playing releases and it doesn't let me down. The idea is straightforward - twin the sounds of Hardcore with Oil and get a female vocalist to sing melodically over it. The result however, is somewhat more impressive than the idea. Deadline have touched on something magical with this formula, as anyone who has caught them live over the past few years will gladly testify to. There's a certain innocence to their charm that can make you feel as though you're only just discovering Punk Rock for the first time. Deadline can hammer it out with a relentless Hardcore tune one minute, then slip into something instantly infectious the next and this, my friends, is their trump card. Any of these songs would have just as much impact played acoustically, so long as the heart was there, which perhaps is what's missing from other Punk Rock of these times. Deadline's consistent touring schedule has had a hugely positive effect on their songwriting skills, which improve at a staggering rate. The great white hope for the Brits? You decide! (PEOPLE LIKE YOU RECORDS: SCHAFERSTRASSE 33A, D-44147, DORTMUND, GERMANY.)

DEATH BY STEREO "DEATH FOR LIFE". (EPITAPH)
Bollocks! Death By Stereo have fallen for potentially devastating Screamo trappings here, with gravel throated vocals and Kerry King guitar riffs, which they work around their earlier, more song orientated style, that I was always partial to. Parts of this are on the button, but they've decided to fix something that wasn't broken, which has proven to be Death By Stereo's downfall. Obviously the thinking behind this shift is a wider audience, which may work, or on the other hand could backfire, alienating their current following. (EPITAPH RECORDS: P.O. BOX 10574, 1001 EN AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS.)

DEFIANCE "RISE OR FALL". (PUNK CORE)
Defiance are a Portland band, now on their fourth full length studio release. Close enough to what The Unseen do, given that it's The Clash meets Discharge type deal, played by a bunch of young louts with spiky hair, which can be effective, but at the same time predictable. There's quite a bit of fire to be found on this album and there's certainly energy emanating from somewhere, making me turn it up and tap the foot. "Rise And Fall" is a focused effort that doesn't stray from the point of reference mentioned earlier. Some may call this parrot-punk, others may feel it's simply honest and comes from the gut. (PUNK CORE RECORDS: P.O. BOX 916, MIDDLE ISLAND, NEW YORK, 11953, U.S.A.)

DELINKWINTS "NO MORE BORDERS OR BOUNDARIES". (SELF-RELEASED)
Some sham talked me into buying one of these off him for a fiver the other night in Voodoo, shortly after the band had come off stage. This is exciting as it happens. Nothing like a gang of snotty rogues belting out some good time Punk Rock as though their lives depended on it. I'm not sure where these little bolloxies are from, but its probably within close proximity of the central bank, where quality time is invested in skateboarding and downing copious amounts of cheap, warm cider, purchased in a doorway in Moore Street (does that place even exist anymore??) Anyway, this is a strong recommendation if you wanna hear what the clued in youth of this city are up to. (delinkwints@hotmail.com)

DERITA SISTERS "GET OFF MY PROPERTY". (TRASH 2001)
I fuckin' love Derita Sisters! Seriously they're that good, check them out. Think of all the no bullshit elements bands like Dwarves, Ramones and early Misfits have and that's what Derita Sisters use as a basis for their sound. I think I brought this up last time I reviewed them but they've apparently got over twenty albums in the bag, though this is only their second for the German label Trash 2001. It's difficult to pick individual songs on this CD as almost all of 'em are outstanding. Twenty-five shots of Punk n' Roll played to the best of anyone's ability and done in under forty-five minutes square! That's the way! This material is head and shoulders above most of what's being put out presently and the production is right on the mark. They certainly sound like they've been around the block a few times and have perfected their Garage Rock well. The more I listen to this CD the more I'm hearing earlier outfits like the Flamin' Groovies and MC5. There's a lot to get into here and it all sounds just fantastic to these ears. The only downside is I gotta turn this off now and review something else! (TRASH 2001 RECORDS: P.O. BOX 10 16 53, D-46216 BOTTROP, GERMANY.)

DIMS REBELLION "NUEVA ESTOCOLMO". (KJELL HELL)
There's something distinctly alien about Dims Rebellion. Yes, they're Swedish and yes we're all too familiar with Swedish Punk Rock, but have I ever really heard what Swedish Punk sounds like, because most of what I have there is a direct copy of some other nations music, usually America. I don't believe I've heard much

that sounds distinctly (there's that word again) Swedish. But that in a sense is what Dims Rebellion has to offer. Something very much homegrown, or at least one can only assume that's where the influence is coming from. Had the Ramones enlisted Olaf from the Stage Bottles in for a session and allowed him to carry the lead vocals while he was it, I believe the result would be something akin to this. They've got the one-two punch of the Ramones formula, but a backup band that sounds as though it includes, amongst other things, a Hammond organ and saxophone. It's a quirky concept but they keep it all together with immaculate timing, which makes it easy to get straight into their groove, or if you prefer you can sit back and dismantle the various different elements and ideas that range through their songs. (KJELL HELL RECORDS: PIKE KOLLBERG, INTECKNINGSVAGEN 17 D 3TR, 129 31 HAGERSTEN, SWEDEN.)

DIMS REBELLION Vs THE DONTCARES "HELLSPLIT # 1". (KJELL HELL)
A doable-bill made up of two bands, back to back, both from Stockholm. Dims Rebellion get six tracks whilst their counterparts, The Dontcares clock up seven. The Dims Rebellion songs are marginally inferior to their longplaying offering above. They don't sound as advanced, which becomes understandable when you take into account this material is some earlier work from the group. All the signs are there though, as we get primed for the full length by displaying heaps of potentially good ideas. The Dontcares by comparison are a snottier bunch and take their cues from the likes of B Movie Rats, Zeke and Motorhead. Gnarly gutter Punk that rocks like a fucker - something I wasn't expecting to find on this CD for some reason. (KJELL HELL RECORDS: PIKE KOLLBERG, INTECKNINGSVAGEN 17 D 3TR, 129 31 HAGERSTEN, SWEDEN.)

DISCHARGER "BORN IMMORTAL". (REBELLION)
Not an altogether challenging affair here from Discharger. Another week, another assembly line Oil album. There's nothing intriguing or special about what this band does, but that's not to say the album is without its sense of purpose. Initially drawing from the One Way System breed of skinheads, Discharger offer up a brick wall styled interpretation of the genre, laced with textbook street politics. Posseurs, college kids and yuppies typically come in for a pounding. As with all Rebellion releases, this has a great sound and rhythm to it and is something I enjoy listening to, but checking your brain and sense of adventure at the door is a must when doing so. (REBELLION RECORDS: MGR. VAN ROOSMALENPLEIN, 24 - 5213 GD'S, HERTOGEN-BOSCH, NETHERLANDS.)

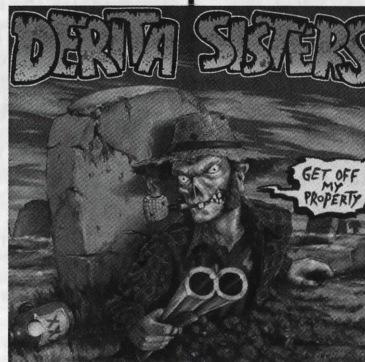
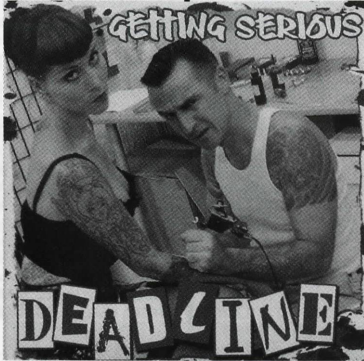
DISCIPLINE "DOWNFALL OF THE WORKING MAN". (I SCREAM)
Everyone's favourite modern day street heroes Discipline have been somewhat shy with the releases of late, but have come back with this shit hot album of twelve tracks, all in that unmistakable Discipline sense of style. "Saints And Sinners" was their last studio album in 2003 and though they've had their share of compilations and reissues on various global labels, this is really the first new work we've heard from them in two years. "Hell Is For Heroes" is the only track I've previously heard of this and its still rocking like I remember on this possibly rerecorded version contained on here. Sharing a similar musical vision as The Bruisers, but without any Rockabilly leanings, just a penchant for gut-level Rock n' Roll and working class sentiments. Discipline's full-bodied sound allows them to hit with much impact, turning simple enough ideas into time-honoured anthems. Discipline have displayed enough flare and spite these past years to become street music's brightest hopes. "Downfall Of The Working Man" has exceeded any expectations I may have had, with not a weak track to be found amidst the twelve on offer. They can do the business live too and with another album full of gems to choose from the endless touring schedule they've lined up to promote this looks like the one to catch this summer. (I SCREAM RECORDS: BROECKSTAAT 10 - 1730 KOBBELEG, BELGIUM.)

DISORDER "THE RIOT CITY YEARS". (STEP-1 MUSIC)
Bristol Hardcore noise mongers, Disorder, may well be the last people on earth I'd want to sit beside in a room, but personal hygiene issues aside, they made one almighty splash in the early 80's U.K. crust years. From the outset Disorder never claimed any credibility themselves; they were simply content to sit around on the dole in squats of the southwest of England, drinking cider and playing their local boozier to a handful of likeminded fleabags once every so often. Contrary to popular belief, as Shane Baldwin rightly points out in the liner notes, none of Disorder's records ever appeared on the Riot City label and instead appeared under their own, imaginatively titled, Disorder Records imprint. This compilation traces the band's history back to the very first 7 inches of plastic they unleashed on an unsuspecting public in 1981. Their "Complete Disorder" EP made a significant impact for a debut and naturally was picked up by a certain Mr. Bushell over at Sounds magazine. Disorder kept on with the EP's, all of which are covered here, until their debut album in 1984, which saw the band move on. For a glimpse at the roots of this band that still continues today, or even just to gather up all those 7 inch's onto one disc, this comp is a good bet. (STEP-1 MUSIC: P.O. BOX 21, TENTERDEN, KENT, TN30 7ZZ, U.K.)

DISORDER "KAMIKAZE". (ANAGRAM)
This is the latest body of work from Disorder and although there're no specific dates as to when the material was recorded, I get the feeling it's pretty recent, perhaps set down in various locations over the course of a couple years. I also think parts of this have been released elsewhere. The levels are all over the place, sounding as though it wasn't mastered, but then again that word probably isn't in the vocabulary of most Disorder diehards. Still ranting and raving against the establishment after all these years, you can't but comment on how it all sounds so jaded and contrived... there may have been something there as teenagers, but these middle aged men just sound embarrassing. Some can get away with it at any age, as after all age is just a state of mind, but Disorder really sound old here... Approach with extreme caution. (ANAGRAM RECORDS: UNIT 3A, LONG ISLAND HOUSE, WARPLE WAY, ACTON, LONDON W3 0RG, ENGLAND.)

D.O.A. "LIVE FREE OR DIE". (SOCIAL BOMB)
The legendary D.O.A! Great to see them still out there stirring the shit. Joey Shithead has been using D.O.A. as a vehicle for his well-thought-out political views on the world since their groundbreaking, "Hardcore '81" tape that was arguably the first time the term Hardcore was used to define a musical style. A quarter decade later and Keithly continues to stick it to 'em with this album, centred for the most part round the current U.S. government's plans for world domination. D.O.A. themselves of course hail from just outside Vancouver, Canada, but have always had a healthy disregard for their neighbouring government. What's always made D.O.A. special in my eyes is the killer tunes they've continually carried to drive their message home and that's still evident here. Incorporating all manner of influences from Country, to Reggae and Folk, D.O.A. are students of all forms of protest culture, be it Punk Rock or otherwise and their choice of cover material here by Bob Dylan and Credence Clearwater Revival, amongst others, is testimony to this. The pure adrenalin buzz of D.O.A. is still hard to beat. (SOCIAL BOMB RECORDS: HECKENSTR. 35H/4, 47058 DUISBURG, GERMANY.)

DRIVEWAY SPEEDING "REASONS ARE NOT ANSWERS". (CRACKLE)
Seven songs of melancholic late-phase Replacements type of stuff. It all sounds loud, clear and confident to these ears, but the danger of a band like this is they tend to fit a little too easily into the auld Husker Du meets Leatherface category, which is



fast becoming a brand of its own. Had this band come to light ten years ago we may have been looking at something promising, but they're perhaps a little too late in the game to warrant any serious attention. It sounds like their hearts are in it though, and being issued on the Crackle imprint is generally to be looked at as a seal of quality, but in 2005 it's just that bit too safe to stir much of a reaction in me. (CRACKLE RECORDS: P.O. BOX 7, OTLEY, LS21 1YB, ENGLAND.)

DROPKICK MURPHYS "THE WARRIORS CODE". (HELLCAT)
I've lost count, but I think this is about the fifth studio album from the Dropkick Murphys in roughly as many years. It seems every issue I review a new record by them. Nothing much has changed here from last year's "Blackout" album, as the Dropkick's unleash another helping of American Irish Punk Rock, comprising of a handful of self-penned numbers slotted in alongside an increasing amount of cover material, which they place more of an emphasis on with each new record. Their best moments here are opener "Your Spirit's Alive", "Sunshine Highway" and "Last Letter Home" – a song with blends excerpts from an actual letter a deceased American soldier in Iraq wrote home to his family. They murder both "The Green Fields Of France" and "The Auld Triangle" and using synthesized piano on any Rock record is just a no go, apart from the fact that no band is really capable of bettering the versions that already exist of these tunes. Likewise for "Courtin' In The Kitchen". With that out of the way we're not left with a whole lot more to be honest, just a batch of filler material that doesn't hold up to warrant a full-length release. Perhaps they should have held off till they had the material to fill this thing, or else release it as an EP. Funny thing is it will no doubt shift bucket loads! (HELLCAT RECORDS: P.O. BOX 10574, 1001 EN AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS.)

DWARVES "MUST DIE". (GREEDY)
Sometimes you ask yourself if there are any bands left today in the true spirit of what Punk Rock should represent, then along comes a new album by the Dwarves to answer that question with an affirmative YES! Blag "The Ripper" Dahlia has been leading his posse of filthy minded misfits for the better part of two decades and remains loyal to what he wants this band to stand for. There are no rules with the Dwarves, they do whatever the fuck they want and say whatever they feel and if you don't like it, too bad ... when you see a band like this it just puts in perspective how all other labelled "Punk" groups really are a bunch of sissies when compared with the Dwarves! Musically they don't give a fuck about genres either and explore everything from Metal to Industrial to Rap and Rock n' Roll ... there are no boundaries with this band ... and if you bare that in mind you'll always appreciate 'em! (GREEDY RECORDS: P.O. BOX 170481, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, 94117, U.S.A.)

ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN "BURN BRIGHT, BURN FAST". (TKO)
Electric Frankenstein with the mighty Steve Miller in tow launch another fourteen tracks of no-holds-barred Punk n' Roll on us and as you might know, that's always just cause for celebration round these parts. They appear to release records faster than rabbits multiply, but show no signs of letting their impeccably high standards slip. This album marks the group's thirteenth anniversary. To date they've released thirteen albums, thirteen EPs and thirteen split singles. Each recording session the band embarked on, there was an overspill of material, which they gathered together and re-recorded here. A lot of the stuff has been included in their live set for some time and demo versions of the songs have been posted on the Internet, but these should be the definitive versions right here. The enhanced part of the CD is nicely accumulated with a wash of imagery from and links to their favourite artists, movies and porn sites, all of whom helped fund the Electric Frankenstein studio and touring machine. Interesting idea. Musically they occupy the ground between Dead Boys and AC/DC whilst incurring a strong Joan Jett injection. I can safely say I've enjoyed every minute of time I've spent in this band's company and you should too. (TKO RECORDS: 8941 ATLANTA AVE. # 505, HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA, 92646, U.S.A.)

THE ESCAPED "THE ESCAPED". (TKO)
Portland, Oregon must be the new hotbed of talent in the eyes of TKO. Another band from the region here for the label in the shape of The Escaped, who play old-fashioned Hardcore music, plain and simple. Think of Warzone, Agnostic Front and Murphys Law and that's the tradition this band is eager to carry forward. I like their style even if they score zero points for originality with me. This is a six-tracker right here that's just about the right length to get the message across. Something tells me I'll be listening to this one again. (TKO RECORDS: 8941 ATLANTA AVE. # 505, HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA, 92646, U.S.A.)

EPOXIES "STOP THE FUTURE". (FAT WRECK)
Having been blown away by this band when I witnessed them supporting NOFX last summer, I knew we were on to something special. Prior to their hook up with Fat, the Epoxies churned out a small handful of releases on the underground, which led to the reputation of quality they'd established for themselves in the run up to Fat's involvement. This record will obviously be their introduction to a lot of people previously oblivious to their existence. There's a lot going on in the Epoxies sound and they appear to be influenced by as wide a range of Punk Rock as you could get. Most notable comparisons include Souxsie And The Banshees, The Dickies, Blondie, Sparks and Devo. If you've been listening to music for longer than five minutes you'll find nothing astonishingly original about the Epoxies, despite what you may read in the Punk press, they simply know how to assemble brilliant tunes. They cut through the fat, grizzle and excess to bring us well primed cutlets of Punk Rock. There's no room for self-indulgent slop here and the band don't attempt to blind us with uncalled for additions to their craft. Plain and simple, getting the job done and more capable than anything else you're likely to come across this year. (FAT WRECK CHORDS: WALDEMARSTR. 33* 10999, BERLIN, GERMANY.)

THE EXPLOITED "DEATH BEFORE DISHONOUR". (CAPTAIN OII)
How can someone as indifferent towards The Exploited as I am own so many of their albums? Anyone would think I was their biggest fan. Mark Brennan on the other hand probably is their biggest fan as he's lent his services time and again to their back catalogue. I imagine they're one of the bigger sellers on the Captain OII roster and to be fair they've given Exploited fans the definitive version of each album up to now. Here's another two digi-packs to add to the list and this time we're stopping off in 1987 for "Death Before Dishonour". By now the band had firmly placed themselves amongst the Thrash Metal fraternity, inking a deal with the label Music For Nations (remember them????) In my eyes The Exploited were always a Metal band in cheap disguise, but this era of the group really cemented it. It sold comparatively little as well as Punk's following got pushed further and further underground. Seen by many as the dark days of The Exploited they struggled through hard times until the early nineties revival. For your information there's a further two EPs from around the same time included on here, namely "Jesus Is Dead" and "War Now", with Ian Gasper providing the liner notes. (CAPTAIN OII RECORDS: P.O. BOX 501, HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS, HP10 8QA, ENGLAND.)

THE EXPLOITED "THE MASSACRE". (CAPTAIN OII)
On to 1990 for the band's seventh studio album, "The Massacre", which pretty much picked up where "Death Before Dishonour" left off. By this time they'd enlisted producer Colin Richardson (yes, he of Napalm Death and Machine Head fame) into the ranks, to get that metallic sheen just right! The outcome was a polished and tight Thrash metal album to rival anything else flying off the assembly line over at

Morrisound Studios, or wherever they made these monstrosities back then. Watty's sentiments on "Don't Pay The Poll Tax" were spot on for the time, but you've got to wonder why he chose to censor the word "cunt" in the lyric sheet???? Some bonus live extras this time recorded in Japan in '91, along with liner scribbles from Ian Gasper who seems to think the subject matter for "Sick Bastard" is light entertainment???? Can't quite figure that one out. Don't these people even read the lyrics???? I know Watty ain't exactly a poet, but c'mon! (CAPTAIN OII RECORDS: P.O. BOX 501, HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS, HP10 8QA, ENGLAND.)

FIGHTING WITH WIRE "F.W.W.". (SCHISM)
Fresh band from free Derry, Fighting With Wire bare a heavy Foo Fighters influence, which is no bad thing and good to hear a young band that haven't gone for the whole Emo angle. This is a six-track sampler of pile-driving, hard-hitting Rock music. They waste no time in getting to the point, with poignantly placed melodies throughout, carefully backed by a colossal rhythm section. Fighting With Wire clearly appreciates the niche their band fits into and fans of neo Rock music should find this comfortably appealing. (SCHISM MUSIC GROUP: UNIT 8, VICTORIA HOUSE, 68-72 MAIN STREET, MARGHERA, CO. DERRY.)

FIYA "BETTER DAYS". (NO IDEA)
This guy has one of those screeching voices that I despise, but elsewhere in the bands make up are some interesting elements. At times like Against Me! on overdrive, Fiya are another Gainesville, Florida band and are rich in that regions nuances. Tracks like "Lions" sees Fiya at their best, but at times they tend to overdo the screaming and barking a bit much for my own tastes. The ten tracks on this CD barely scrape the fifteen-minute mark, but it's an approach that works for this type of stuff, keeping it sharp and urgent. It draws from a range of different music but manages a signature, coherent sound nonetheless. (NO IDEA RECORDS: P.O. BOX 14636, GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA, 32604, U.S.A.)

FM BATS "EVERYBODY OUT ... SHARK IN THE WATER". (VINYL DOG)
Vinyl Dog is the bastard offspring of TKO Records, but ironically this particular release is on CD. The label is ran in conjunction with Johnny and Mike from The Stitches and with a team like that, you've gotta expect some high quality releases indeed. I'm not sure how far down the line this particular one is, but its my first exposure to any of the label's work. FM Bats features ex Le Shok member Todd Jacobs on vocals and fans of that particular band should take note of this. It's a seven-song, nine-minute affair, comparable to Billy Childish, Stooges, MC5 and many Nuggets bands. It also hints at a 60's psychedelic interest from the group, particularly where the guitar parts are concerned. Should be interesting to see how this label develops. (VINYL DOG RECORDS: 8941 ATLANTA AVE. # 505, HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA, 92646, U.S.A.)

FORMER CELL MATES "HUSTLE". (NEWEST INDUSTRY)
Former Cell Mates fit Newest Industry's tradition of twinning the Rock with the Punk and as the press sheet suggests there's as much Motorhead and Turbonegro inspired moments on here as there is the standard Leatherface induced fare. Quite a high standard of bands to drop in your biography, so expectations have gotta be high for any reviewer slipping this one on! Maybe if bands name-dropped really shit influences then reviewers would pen more favourable reviews when they discover it's not quite as bad as they'd anticipated? Just a thought! Anyway, this CD almost delivers on its promise with a fresh supply of well thought-out songs and less obvious melody structures which is always gonna be good. Its difficult to pinpoint who it would appeal to, but possibly fans of the early 90's underground Rock of Silverfish, Therapy? and Mudhoney. (NEWEST INDUSTRY: UNIT 100, 61 WELLFIELD ROAD, CARDIFF, CF24 3DG, U.K.)

FOUR LETTER WORD "LIKE MOTHS TO A FLAME". (NEWEST INDUSTRY)
Four Letter Word manage to overcome all sorts of hassles and secure a release for this, what I believe is their long-playing follow up to the mini CD released on Suspect Device a few years back, though there was a 7 inch in there along the way that I haven't heard. Four Letter Word love their old style American Hardcore and it's no difficult task name-dropping the bands they take influence from ... pretty much everything that was released on BYO in the early days can be heard here, along with the formative years of Dischord. I've had a soft spot for Four Letter Word since hearing that aforementioned EP, but at times you get the impression they don't listen to anything outside of Punk Rock, which I've yet to hear evidence of being a good thing. Frankie Stubbs was brought in to produce here and does a smart job, leaving us a decent live sound without going overboard. It's gritty, gnarly and full of energy, but lacks imagination in places. You won't find any surprises on a Four Letter Word album and I get the impression that's the way they like it. (NEWEST INDUSTRY: UNIT 100, 61 WELLFIELD ROAD, CARDIFF, CF24 3DG, U.K.)

4 PAST MIDNIGHT "TRIALS & TRIBULATIONS". (WEIRD/PUNK SHIT)
Seemingly like many other fanzine scribbles I've become quite smitten on this Scottish band of snotty nosed Punks. More of an older schooling of Punk Rock and Oil craftsmanship here, 4 Past Midnight strike a chord in my musical taste for the fact of doing something a little different in a genre they may get categorized in. This is melodic and poppy Punk Rock that doesn't suck, which we all know is pretty rare these days and 4 Past Midnight could be the band of this year by which all other shitty melodic Punk Rock is measured. "Trials & Tribulations" is well capable of kicking out some killer music – the tempos are speedy, but not too fast, so there's a good rhythm and energy running throughout. They do it well and can actually write a full length of consistently strong material. (WEIRD RECORDS: ONE CHAPEL COTTAGES, 35 HIGH STREET, SWINDERBY, LINGS, LN6 9LW, ENGLAND/PUNK SHIT RECORDS: 74 BRISTNALLHALL ROAD, OLD-BURY, WEST MIDLANDS, B68 9TU, ENGLAND.)

THE FREAK ACCIDENT "THE FREAK ACCIDENT". (ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES)
The Freak Accident is the result of ex-Victims Family resident Ralph Spigitt's collaborations with a string of various musicians, each utilized by Ralph to the best of their ability on each of the eleven songs contained herein. The Freak Accident explores the weird and quirky world of music from the 50's to date, taking in elements of Funk, Rock and Jazz along the way, which pretty much picks up where Victims Family left us off. The level of enthusiasm from all those performing here is high and each song sounds like an individual project in itself. There's such a long range on this record that you loose sight of what you're listening to on occasion as no two songs sound alike. Its an interesting concept and pushes to borders of Punk Rock, which of course can only be a positive thing. (ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES: P.O. BOX 419092, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, 94141-9092, U.S.A.)

FUNERAL DINER "THE UNDERDARK". (ALONE)
From Oakland, California and on that same mission as many of today's upcoming

bands – trying to make Black Metal hip. This band are most probably a bunch of Emo nonces who have decided to seek revenge on those Metalheads in school who beat them up by stealing their music. I'm a firm believer that Metal should be left to the Metalheads. (ALONE RECORDS: P.O. BOX 3019, OSWEGO, NY 13126, U.S.A.)

LARS FREDERIKSEN AND THE BASTARDS ... "VIKING". (HELLCAT)
Mr. Frederiksen's subtly titled side-project matches his subtly placed photos in the CD booklet! Never one to hold back on expression Lars has welcomed us back to Bastardo land with a fine second LP. Keeping traditions close to his first bout as a solo artist, "Viking" strips it all to the bone once again and serves up, in a relaxed atmosphere, some Skinhead Rock n' Roll, tipping the hat to GBH and The Blasters, sounding much like one band playing the other band's songs. Of course "Marie Marie" gets the Bastards treatment and he does a fine job of it ... I know, it's difficult to believe that anyone bar Alvin could song that song! Lars loves his Punk Rock and it's simply in the blood, with little chance of escaping. Rest assured it's always in safe hands and no matter what type of style or influence is allowed to shine through it will be the sneer of this man playing it that makes it Punk Rock. He's got a shit hot band to back him up here too ... nice work! (HELLCAT RECORDS: P.O. BOX 10574, 1001 EN AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS.)

GLASS AND ASHES "AESTHETIC ARREST". (NO IDEA)
Typically rousing No Idea sounding stuff here, from a sickly bunch of screamers, twinning the sounds of Helmet and Unsane, with Minor Threat. The band cops a Sabbath groove, with some good guitar licks that also bear a fondness to the later Black Flag work of Greg Ginn. Strangely for a band like this, the barking vocals don't completely drown out the music, which carries this release more than anything else. There's a certain psychedelic edge to Glass And Ashes that you may or may not notice, but it's there alright and I'd put money on it there's a Hawkwind fan or two amongst the line up. Good, dirty Rock n' Roll music with a solid groove that sets itself miles apart from any Screamo nonsense is may get lumped in with. (NO IDEA RECORDS: P.O. BOX 14636, GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA, 32604, U.S.A.)

GLUEBALL "THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY". (NAKED DOG)
Blending straight ahead Pop Punk with the biting Hardcore angle of someone like Strung Out, Glueball's speed-driven perception of Rock n' Roll doesn't leave much to the imagination. It's not hard to spot where bands like this get their ideas from. We're generally talking Zeke freaks, early Dwarves and plenty of second-generation Pennywise enthusiasts. On repeated listens this can get tedious, as few bands can capture anything magical by simply playing fast. There has to be that something extra special in there, that Glueball don't appear to have found yet. The basic thinking for all this is fine, but they need to work on something a little more distinctive to have any lasting impact. (NAKED DOG RECORDS: TOP FLOOR, 110 MOUNT STREET, READING, RG2 0AB, ENGLAND.)

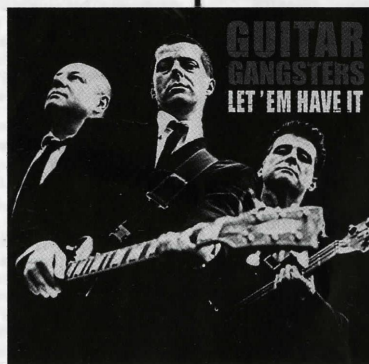
THE GO FASTER NUNS "UNDER NEON LIGHT". (GO-KART)
"Beatpunk, somewhere between The Who and Black Flag" says the press sheet!! You fuckin' wish!! Trying to live up to that description is a big fuckin' mistake, 'cos it just ain't gonna happen. Having said that, The Go Faster Nuns are a fair band. They've got some interesting ideas and eclipse a lot of what else is on offer in this genre. They're of German origin and receiving a release on the new European imprint of the Go-Kart record label. The background vocal arrangements are a key factor in the appeal of The Go Faster Nuns. They sound like a well-established and rehearsed band who've put more than five minutes thought into how they wish their band to sound and be perceived. There's nothing distinctly German about The Go Faster Nuns, but they do have something of a trademark stamp even though track eight sounds remotely similar to Green Day. (GO-KART RECORDS: P.O. BOX 120750, 68058 MANHEIM, GERMANY.)

GOLDBLADE "REBEL SONGS". (CAPTAIN OII)
And finally the unleashing of the long awaited new Goldblade album, that many have been holding their breathe for since January. True to prior speculation, this album's exceeds anything Goldblade has produced up till now and the first three songs in particular are the best anthems to be penned by any band in years. Great to hear songs like this still being achieved in 2005! There's a slight dip to be heard in quality from the fourth track in, but only just, which is to be expected when you put your all time best moments back to back opening up the album. John Robb has taken the Goldblade touring machine to all four corners of the globe, building one fit bunch of songwriters in the process. Goldblade in their simplest form are a melodic Hardcore band, but a good one, which as you're aware generally the two don't tend to go hand in hand that much anymore. They'll restore your faith in well-structured simple Punk Rock and heaven knows we need some of that. Goldblade achieve the difficult task of playing melodic Punk Rock without coming across as cheap or wimpy! (CAPTAIN OII RECORDS: P.O. BOX 501, HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS, HP10 8QA, ENGLAND.)

GRABASS CHARLESTONS "ASK MARK TWAIN". (NO IDEA)
Grabass Charlestons take up their musical patch of ground somewhere between Against Me! and The Bellones and if you're as familiar with both those bands as you should be, you'll know that's a pretty hot territory to occupy. Might I also mention that this is their second album, but they've somehow managed to slip through the net of my aural consumption. Generally bands like this make themselves known every four or five years in Punk Rock and along with the Soviets and Epoxies this band have the potential to make the list of worthwhile new music this decade. This band sound like a Punk Rock machine with nods to all the correct sources of inspiration, whilst still managing to forge their own path in the process. Take some bright n' catchy guitar riffs, vocals that are both innocent and snotty sounding and we're in for some fiercely rockin' stuff. This sounds to me like a melting pot of Garage, Punk and 70's Rock. I think its safe to say No Idea have nailed it with this one. (NO IDEA RECORDS: P.O. BOX 14636, GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA, 32604, U.S.A.)

GUITAR GANGSTERS "LET 'EM HAVE IT". (CAPTAIN OII)
London's beloved Guitar Gangsters are back with their fourth album, if memory serves me correctly. I've loved nearly everything this band has created and they've never lost their heads, sense of appeal or ear for a cool hook. The Brothers Ley along with drummer Steve Brewer have been an often overlooked collective of reckonable Punks on the U.K. stage for some time, which I've always found baffling. I guess they're a difficult one to categorize and don't easily fit into any one niche. They remind me of The Crack or modern day Menace at certain times, using mid tempo velocity as a vehicle for their melodic songs. Their lyrics are genius too, in particular on the song, "Going To London" that name-drops all the great things about the city from an optimistic Punk rock point of view, perhaps taken from a foreign fan's letter to the Guitar Gangsters – "We're going to London and I'm getting so excited, to drink with Charlie Harper and see West Ham United". This record's appeal shouldn't be limited to old school Punk fanatics either, they simply write great songs and are oozing with attitude that no one should be unfazed by their charisma. (CAPTAIN OII RECORDS: P.O. BOX 501, HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS, HP10 8QA, ENGLAND.)

H BLOCK 101 "HUMAN FLOTSAM: THE EP'S '96 – '01". (MAD BUTCH-ER/KOB)
I may have crossed paths with H Block 101 before, but am not sure. For some reason the name sounds familiar. H Block 101 formed in Melbourne, Australia in early



'95, covering the live pub circuit of the locality, before embarking on the international market, through countless tours and releasing a considerable amount of recorded product to include five EPs, two singles and two albums. Their influences stretch across the board and that's something clearly audible when listening to this rather nifty collection of EPs. Joe Jackson, Nina Hagen, Lee Perry, The Jam, 999, Thin Lizzy, Hanoi Rocks and X are all cited with providing inspiration. Their earliest work is a session recorded in '96 that boasts some serious potential but as we move up the years the material becomes sharper and more developed. "Hell" in particular from '99 is a magnificent stab at a retro Dub Punk composition, akin to The Ruts meets The Beat. Cover material is provided by the likes of Jimmy Cliff, Johnny Thunders, Split Enz, The Ruts, Rose Tattoo and The Clash, giving a decent overview of the band's direction. Not the type of stuff you'd normally expect to hear from an Australian band, but what a pleasant surprise, this is damn good! (MAD BUTCHER RECORDS: KURZE GEISMARSTR. 6, D-37073 GOTTINGEN, GERMANY/KOB RECORDS: VIA CANTARANE 63 C, 37129 VERONA, ITALY.)

HARD SKIN "SAME MEAT, DIFFERENT GRAVY". (HOUSEHOLD NAME)

Hard Skin altered the course of Oi! history with their debut submission to the plastic, "Hard Nuts & Hard Cunts". It stands to reason then that this heavily drawn out follow up should also be granted a placement in the all-time Top Ten albums of Oi! Scarred with all sorts of release-date problems that are far too boring to go into right now, Hard Skin's sophomore almost became the album that never was. They've slickened up the production a notch, but other than that the record more than lives up to its title. Something similar to the Reject's "Greatest Hits ..." series. Why fix something when it ain't broken is the lesson to be learned here. A large chunk of this album has been written for the past number of years, but with Fat Bob's indecisiveness over whether or not he wished to remain a part of the line up, getting the band into the studio to get the job done became somewhat of a challenge in itself. There're thirteen boot-stompers here to get your teeth into as Hard Skin tear up one anthem after another. Abuse is directed at coppers, poseurs, sissy drinkers and anyone else who hasn't the suss to be a skinned. Nobody plays Oi! like these boys today and it's a godsend to have 'em back on the turntable. (HOUSEHOLD NAME RECORDS: P.O. BOX 12286, LONDON SW9 6FE, UK.)

THE HATEPINKS "PLASTIC BAG AMBITIONS". (TKO)

Some exceedingly good French Punk Rock here from The Hatepinks. Lifted from the roster of the rather wonderful Lollipop Records, who're putting the vinyl version of this out, The Hatepinks worship the same ground as The Briefs and The Stitches. Skinny ties and sunglasses, their musical scope ranges from '78-'82, with a heavy 60's Garage influence also. Elvis Costello, the Damned, Blondie and The Stooges all appear to occupy avid space in The Hatepinks record collections. Check out "Fashion Is Crime" for the cheeky Damned link! For my money, its bands like this that are saviours of true Punk Rock, keeping it ticking over today, and with the advent of mail Punk or whatever they call it, The Hatepinks are a lesson in how it should be done and stark reminder of just how good Punk Rock used to be before we lost it to mass appeal. This CD continues the trend of keeping it short, loud and infectious, with a running time of sixteen minutes. I'd kill to see this band live. (TKO RECORDS: 8941 ATLANTA AVE. #505, HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA, 92646, U.S.A.)

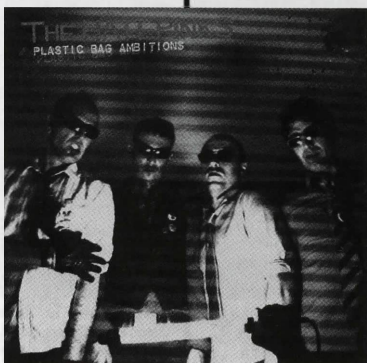


LARKIN "RECKONING". (KNOW)

Last time I crossed paths with this Long Beach, California label, it was way back when Rejected issued their Stomach/All Day split 7 inch in conjunction with them. I knew I recognised the label name from somewhere and with Boz offering his talents as sleeve designer it's clear they're eager to cement those Irish connections some more. Indeed Larkin themselves are another one who can be added to the list of Yankee Paddy's. You may recall a band by the name of Brother Inferior a few short years ago, well this is Chad Malone from that band further exploring his interest in Traditional Irish music. I seem to remember reading a Suburban Voice interview with the guy where he professed his love for all things Irish, so I've kind of been anticipating something like this to appear on the horizon. Once again, the first two Pogues LP's play a huge part in steering this band's ideas. The production is starkly similar also as the band make their way through a collection of vintage standards and self-penned tunes. I'm not sure whether Larkin's allegiance to Ireland is misguided or not, but it gives you a different perspective on the whole thing from the eyes of second/third/fourth generation Paddy's living in Oklahoma. Strange! (KNOW RECORDS: P.O. BOX 90579, LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA, U.S.A.)

THE LAST RESORT "RESURRECTION". (CAPTAIN OIL)

Some of The Last Resort's earlier work was simply dreadful but they somehow managed to climb to almost legendary status in Oi! terms. Forever playing the hard men, The Last Resort basically went on to become what we know today as The Warriors, though Roi Pearce copyrighted the name and hung on to it for future use. A few years back, he again began to refer to his band as The Last Resort after the brief Millwall Roi & The Last Resort. They never done bugger all release-wise in the early days, so I guess this is their first proper album in over twenty-years under that name. Roi has gathered a reasonable batch of songs to record for this CD, which was originally not intended as an EP, but with the help of a few



extra tracks including some 4 Skins covers they've managed to make an album of it. If you heard Roi's contributions to the recent series of "The Worldwide Tribute To The Real Oi!", constructed by himself and Roger Mirret, it'll give you a rough evaluation of what direction he's taking the music in. These days our Roi of course is a long haired hippie and looks like he's just crawled out of a tent at Glastonbury, but he's kept the music hard around the edges with the odd metallic slant. Worth a listen, but nothing to write home about. (CAPTAIN OIL RECORDS: P.O. BOX 501, HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS, HP10 8QA, ENGLAND.)

LATEEF AND THE CHIEF: MAROONS "LESTER HAYES". (QUANNUM/EPITAPH)

The Quannum/Epitaph alliance continues to grow, with another release under the name here from Hip Hop artist Lateef And The Chief: Maroons. This digi-pack CD single contains three versions of "Lester Hayes" - a radio version, an album version and an instrumental version. This sort of shit really bugs me! It's a good track, but putting it on a single three times is a joke. Epitaph need to put manners on these Hip Hop labels, fast! (EPITAPH RECORDS: P.O. BOX 10574, 1001 EN AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS.)

LEFT ALONE "LONELY STARS AND BROKEN HEARTS". (HELLCAT)

Brand new signing here for the Hellcat label. Left Alone, much like Voodoo Glow Skulls and Union 13, come from the Latin Punk background of California and have been slowly building a backyard reputation for themselves through the D.I.Y. ethic these past years, releasing a handful of albums and singles off their own backs. I guess the time has come to take it to the next level and under the watchful gaze of Timmy Armstrong, it looks like that's exactly what they're about to do. The Rancid comparisons are difficult to ignore, but there's another side to Left Alone that is marginally more interesting and that, as previously stated, is their Latin edge which has always shared a common thread in Punk's history. Left Alone delve into the Ska and Reggae pool also, as would be expected and come out with some semi-acceptable results. Nothing earth shattering, but kind of feeding the metre in many ways for the Hellcat label I guess. (HELLCAT RECORDS: P.O. BOX 10574, 1001 EN AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS.)

LOS FASTIDIOS "SOPRA E SOTTO IL PALCO LIVE '04". (MAD BUTCHER/KOB)

If you didn't catch what was one of the best gigs of last year, when Los Fastidios rocked the Voodoo Lounge in Dublin, this is the next best thing. Although not recorded in Dublin, this gig is from the same month, and captures the band in similar form and marks the era superbly. The band have been playing at their immaculate best recently and got the timing perfect to capture this on tape. Nineteen of the twenty-one songs are taken from a gig in Bassano in October last, whilst the final two tacked on at the end, "Birra, Oil E Divertimento" and "Amico" trace back to March of last year from a performance in Milan. Live albums tend to be a hit'n'miss, but this is by far the best one I've had in recent memory and definitely highlights where Los Fastidios' strength lies. They're a mighty fine studio band, but this takes it to another platform and Enrico's Italian chants laid throughout it definitely get the listener riled up. There's not much point in getting up there and merely playing through your album, when we can just listen to better quality versions of the songs on the studio record and that's the key to this scoring maximum points with me - Los Fastidios genuinely reveal a whole other side to the band in the live format. They sound exceptionally confident and have worked the songs into fit, compact units, one after another. There're some excellent tour photos in the inner booklet of this, including some of the said trip to Ireland. Los Fastidios have entered a league of their own in the Oi! genre and appear light years ahead of anything else in the genre this side of the Upstarts and the Rejects. Class! (MAD BUTCHER RECORDS: KURZE GEISMARSTR. 6, D-37073 GOTTINGEN, GERMANY/KOB RECORDS: VIA CANTARANE 63 C, 37129 VERONA, ITALY.)

LUMPEN "IN OGNI CASO NESSUN RIMORSO". (MAD BUTCHER/KOB)

100% prof Italian Oi! played by a bunch of four skinheads. Unfiltered, abrasive and solid, Lumpen concoct a strangely harmonious breed of Oi! that sets itself close to many other outfits around the continent. Lumpen are a band that lay it on the line, stomp it, burn it and spit it back out at you. No, they're not earth shattering, yes, they're predictable but still they contain plenty of fire. Everything is conducted in Italian, but there is an English translation of the lyrics in the booklet that sheds some light on what direction Lumpen are coming from, which looks to be an apolitical skinhead standpoint. Nothing surprising as such, but certainly qualified at what they do. (MAD BUTCHER RECORDS: KURZE GEISMARSTR. 6, D-37073 GOTTINGEN,

GERMANY/KOB RECORDS: VIA CANTARANE 63 C, 37129 VERONA, ITALY.)

THE MAINLINERS "BRING ON THE SWEETLIFE". (GET HIP)

The Get Hip label from Pennsylvania has been a focal point for this Roots meets Punk music of the past few years, with quite a tidy number of releases proudly placed under their heading. The Mainliners originate from Sweden and possess a heavy Northern Soul influence. 60's R'n'B, and early Garage bands like the Sonics or Flamin' Groovies play a leading role in their sound also. I have to admit, I'm lovin' this! It's right up my street! They're far enough away from The Hives to have their own ideas going on, but close enough surely to draw some attention from that area of music, if that's what they're shooting for. This release sees the introduction of the band to an American audience, which is bound to produce some interesting results. There's a high likelihood The Mainliners won't be playing small venues for very long, so catch 'em now while the going is good! (GET HIP RECORDINGS: COLUMBAS & PREBLE AVES, PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA, 15233, U.S.A.)

MANSIC "BEAUTYGONE". (KJELL HELL)

Mansic, huh? They certainly do have an interesting sound as the press release suggests. They've a violin player amidst the line up, which gives them a Bluegrass edge ... don't think I've heard the two being spliced before, but they mesh convincingly enough on here. Hailing from a suburb of Stockholm and garnering a history that stems back to 1999, when they went under the name of [sic]. With Reggae undertones shed across the album, Mansic are capable of holding the listeners attention longer than I'd expect from a recent band I've never heard before and have more up their sleeve than I initially thought possible. Nizze is a supreme vocalist and can easily shift from a ferocious growl to a soft whimper somewhat likened to Frankie Stubbs. This could draw interest from fans of all sorts, with followers of Leatherface, The Ruts, Dropkick Murphys or Dead Boys, all listed as potential takers. (KJELL HELL RECORDS: PIKE KOLLBERG, INTECKNINGSVAGEN 17 D 3TR, 129 31 HAGERSTEN, SWEDEN.)

THE METEORS "IN HEAVEN". (ANAGRAM)

I can never get enough of The Meteors, and they seldom got better than this masterpiece right here - their debut album from 1981, where everything came together just perfectly. This is a superb document of the band in their prime, arguably containing some of their most well balanced work. The Meteors are often cited as the creators of Psychobilly music and whether you agree with that or not, there's no arguing with the fine body of work they've put their name to since their inception. The members themselves came from a background of Rockabilly bands and The Meteors simply changed the subject matter that Rockabilly bands wrote about into a sicker and more dangerous approach in response to the Rock'n'Roll of the time, which they felt was tame and lacking what it was always supposed to be about - music your parents would hate. Paul Fenech is the prototype front man for this genre and has so much character and songwriting skills that most other acts of the time came up pale in comparison. The musical range of The Meteors stretched far across the board, whether they're belting out two-minute Rock'n'Roll numbers, slowing it down with the excellent "Love You To Death" or simply aiming tributes in the direction of the Stones with their excellent cover of "Get Off My Cloud", The Meteors seldom hit far from the mark. If it's an education you're after, look no further. (ANAGRAM RECORDS: UNIT 3A, LONG ISLAND HOUSE, WARPLE WAY, ACTON, LONDON W3 0RG, ENGLAND.)

MIKABOMB "HELLCATS". (DAMAGED GOODS)

Latest ultra Pop noise from Damaged Goods and it's a good 'un kids! MikaBomb are of Japanese origin, currently based in London where they got together some years back. Music of this quality generally doesn't stay underground for long, so enjoy it while it lasts. MikeBomb have the potential to be huge, but its great they're not 'cos that way me and you get to enjoy them without the permission of the music industry. The Japanese have a long history of cracking the classic pop tune, and MikaBomb possess this god given gift and are easily the pick of the line of bands out there doing this style today. Like an oriental Go Go's playing Bikini Kill songs, MikaBomb have the zany humour of the Toy Dolls also in their blood. This is the first work I've come across from these sonic reductionists, which should be touted as a must-have record. (DAMAGED GOODS RECORDS: P.O. BOX 45854, LONDON, E11 1YX, ENGLAND.)

MIKABOMB "OSAKA". (DAMAGED GOODS)

Self-proclaimed "Yellow bitches from Osaka city", this is a CD single with a couple songs lifted from the "Hellcats" full length. "Osaka" being the lead track, backed up by an alternative version of "Have A Bad Day" me thinks. There's also a video clip for "Osaka" tacked on here, which is pretty good. A 7 inch of this would be nice, but I'm not into CD singles unless they have essential songs on 'em not available elsewhere. Great band, somewhat pointless release though! Buy the album. (DAMAGED GOODS RECORDS: P.O. BOX 45854, LONDON, E11 1YX, ENGLAND.)

MOTION CITY SOUNDTRACK "COMMIT THIS TO MEMORY". (EPITAPH)

Oh please! Epitaph should at least listen to their promo CD's before sending them this. This entire album is divided up into twenty-second segments, with chunks missing out of the songs in between each one. Shoddy workmanship! Tut! Tut! (EPITAPH RECORDS: P.O. BOX 10574, 1001 EN AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS.)

NERVOUS TENSION/DOGS HIT SANDWICH "SPLIT CD". (WEIRD/PUNK SHIT)

Another result of two labels pooling their resources here, in what transpires as Dogshit Sandwich's final recordings, having called it quits shortly after this was laid down. The stylings of both these bands lie deep in the second wave of British Punk Rock with plenty of Thrashy Crust thrown in, which as you may know is not what I'm prone to listening to in my spare time. However there's an unmatched energy off this CD that's impossible to resist, with both bands playing their hearts out. Dogshit Sandwich have honed their sound through countless trips to the studio and a prolific output of product these past years. Their lyrical tactics tend to be a little too easy, but at the same time I'll never get tired of cheap digs at skangers! (PUNK SHIT RECORDS: 74 BRISTNALL HALL ROAD, OLD BURY, WEST MIDLANDS, B68 9TU, ENGLAND/WEIRD RECORDS: ONE CHAPEL COTTAGES, 35 HIGH STREET, SWINDERY, Lincs, LN6 9LW, ENGLAND)

NEW MEXICAN DISASTER SQUAD/WESTERN ADDICTION "SPLIT CD". (NO IDEA)

I've got to say, this split is one of the best things I've heard on No Idea in a while. New Mexican Disaster, who pop the cork on this thing, are from Orlando and mine some monster hooks, not heard since the early days of Hot Water Music. They bring us three of their own songs, before finishing up with a cover of "FVK" by Bad Brains. Taking us marginally higher is the excellent Western Addiction from San Francisco next. The Circle Jerks comparisons are impossible to overlook, but its great to hear. They almost remind me of a bunch of geeks getting down with some Cro Mags tunes. Some rip-roaring stuff that rounds out just beautifully with a run through Naked Raygun's "Rat Patrol". (NO IDEA RECORDS: P.O. BOX 14636, GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA, 32604, U.S.A.)

THE NEWTOWN NEUROTICS "PUNK SINGLES COLLECTION". (ANAGRAM)

Yep! It's the wonderful Newtown Neurotics; a band who packed so much power in their punch that I don't think any youth in Britain at the time could have remained unaffected having heard them. "Kick Out The Tories" still feels great, with its unmistakable chant of "Don't believe everything you read ...". The exceptional element to this band that set them apart from the others was their Ramones school of songwriting that reeled you in immediately before you were even aware of the political angle they took with their lyrics. A lot of bands at the time that sang about the worlds' political situation generally couldn't write their way out of a paper bag and thus there was no

THE HOLLOW POINTS "THE BLACK SPOT". (DISASTER)

A lot of things about this release hit the spot with me. There's nothing particularly inventive about what a band like The Hollow Points do, but sometimes all it takes from a band is gut level honesty and that's what I believe we have here. They're from Seattle and have been scooped up by Duane Peters for an outlet via his ever-expanding Disaster Records label. He's also responsible for the production here and knocks out another one in typical Peters style. The Hollow Points are true to Peters favoured tastes of '77 style meets Skate Punk. The band have plenty of energy and have the infectious hooks n' singalongs in all the right places. Simple, yet effective! (DISASTER RECORDS: P.O. BOX 7112, BURBANK, CALIFORNIA, 91510, U.S.A.)

THE HOLY MOUNTAIN "ENTRAILS". (NO IDEA)

This is the guy from Combat Wounded Veteran on vocals, and though I panned that band's CD on hearing it, this has a far wider appeal to it, even if both bands are in a similar ballpark. The intensity from The Holy Mountain is obviously coming from an early Hardcore direction and they clearly haven't crossed the Heavy Metal border that these bands veer dangerously close towards at times. An early Poison Idea influence suggests a good schooling and they've kept it all as forthright and direct as you possibly can, which always works for me. The Holy Mountain are a full-throttle combination of speed and aggression, with plenty of fist-thumping tunes to their name. Buckle up! (NO IDEA RECORDS: P.O. BOX 14636, GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA, 32604, U.S.A.)

IRA "THE BODY AND THE SOIL". (GO-KART)

Something tells me there're no Irish Republican Army connections to this German band. Pity, I would have much favoured a few old rebel ballads to this Heavy Metal garbage. This Death Metal meets Pink Floyd slant appears to be all the rage right now, so who knows, there may actually be a future for this band ... but never in the pages of this fanzine. (GO-KART RECORDS: P.O. BOX 120750, 68058 MAN-HEIM, GERMANY.)

JUDGE "WHAT IT MEANT: THE COMPLETE DISCOGRAPHY". (REVELATION)

Time to dig out the old "All Ages" book and do a bit of research on Judge's history as I'm not too up on the band to be honest. I'm aware of their hard line Straight Edge approach and so on, but that means fuck all to me. Ok, as I suspected their politics are up their own arse and 'getting disillusioned with my friends because they now hang out in bars' is just tossers talk. The music is all Youth Of Today, etc. etc with little room for any original thoughts, politics or ideals, which pretty much sums up the

delivery there for their ideals. The Upstarts captured a similar aesthetic to this band ... great message and great songs! The Newtown Neurotics adamantly sat on the far left side of the fence and stood by their beliefs till the bitter end. At times it felt as though they stood alone amidst the generic Mohawk era of Punk Rock that surrounded them at the time, but that in a way is what made them so special. A band like this was definitely called out for at the time. Dead Kennedys saluted what they were doing and Jello even had it in my mind to cover "When The Oil Runs Out" but it fell through. In fact the DK's are possibly the closest comparisons you could draw with this band ... not musically, but ideologically they stood close together. This round of their best moments does exceptionally well and even takes the years they became known as simply the Neurotics. Also included is a batch of live tracks and some song-by-song liner notes from singer/songwriter Steve Drewett. (ANAGRAM RECORDS: UNIT 3A, LONG ISLAND HOUSE, WARPLE WAY, ACTON, LONDON W3 0RG, ENGLAND.)

NOFX "THE GREATEST SONGS EVER WRITTEN, BY US". (EPITAPH)
How do you approach compiling a NOFX greatest hits? Just buy "Punk In Dubric" and leave it at that, would probably suffice! The difficult thing about this CD is what songs to leave off! They've thrown together twenty-six choice cuts from their career span of twenty-one years, added in an exclusive new song (as you do) and rounded it off with a twenty-four-page booklet containing exclusive photos of the band. Can't fault 'em there! NOFX of course became pioneers of a certain brand of Punk Rock during their peak in the mid nineties, though their history stretches back some ten years prior to that. There've been good albums, great albums and some not so great albums along the way, with Cheese Metal, Ska and Jazz to be found sporadically on their recorded works. When they've come up with the goods there was no fucking with this band as at least half of the material on this proves. Although I have pretty much everything the band has ever recorded on vinyl elsewhere, I've still found myself listening to this disc probably a lot more than I would have thought, considering I know their stuff like the back of my hand. It's actually a great thing to get all this on one CD and a heavily recommended way for anyone who hasn't heard NOFX (if that's possible) to take a good crash course on the band. (EPITAPH RECORDS: P.O. BOX 10574, 1001 EN AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS.)

NORTH LINCOLN "TRUTH IS A MENACE". (NO IDEA)
North Lincoln have something in their drinking water, that has elevated them above any other band in this often identikit genre. They're from the Midwest of America, which has a tendency to spring this kind of thing on the world every once in a while. Dillinger Four had it also ... It's difficult to put a tag on, but sounds as though its coming from a combination of bad weather, staying indoors and consuming copious amounts of alcohol whilst figuring out what to do with their lives, which, as we know, is generally the basis for some great music. There's close ties with Gainesville, Florida here seemingly ... apart from the fact they're on No Idea and sound the teeniest weensiest bit like Hot Water Music, they also recorded this album down there, used a Gainesville artist to design the cover and have been accommodating plenty of touring bands from the region on their floors for years. On top of that they even have the good taste to cover The Smiths. It all fits the picture beautifully. (NO IDEA RECORDS: P.O. BOX 14636, GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA, 32604, U.S.A.)

NO USE FOR A NAME "KEEP THEM CONFUSED". (FAT WRECK)
No Use For A Name are one band who're unlikely to keep us confused! Put No Use For A Name, Fat Wreck Chords, Ryan Greene and Motor Studios together and you know what you get. I've always had a hidden respect for this group though and being one of the earliest of Fat bands, I quite liked their approach to begin with and was actually an avid fan during their New Red Archives years, so they'll always have their special place reserved with me. I haven't been paying much attention to them in recent times though and I think the last CD I came across from the band was the live Fat one, but prior to that we're going back to the mid 90's I guess. This sounds like a more developed version of the sound I remember them specialising in back then. The songs have come on, the production is crisper and the all round opinion is just of a more refined and cohesive band. They don't drift too much but use what they've got to its maximum potential. I wouldn't go quite so far as to say this CD has rekindled my interest in No Use For A Name, but it is kind of settling to know they're still about doing their thing and haven't gone all Emo or whatever. (FAT WRECK CHORDS: WALDEMARSTR. 33 10999, BERLIN, GERMANY.)

THE NOW "FUZZTONE FIZZADELIC". (DAMAGED GOODS)
The Now are a long lost Punk group from the late 70's who released but two 7 inch singles to their name before jacking it in by the end of 1979. Short lived but clearly leaving their mark on Ian Damaged, who set about getting them back in the studio last year to belt out what used to be their live set from 1977. This was taken care of via three hours rehearsal time and a further two days in the studio to knock the songs out. Stylistically they bring to mind the Sham and Buzzcocks. Jon Savage championed the band in his Sounds column at the time but most overlooked The Now. There's a Pete Shelley rasp in the vocals, with lyrics that are both humorous and direct.

There's a raw, kinetic energy to these recordings that I like and have come to expect from anything associated with this label. Rather humourlessly the press sheet includes some less than favourable reviews garnered by the band in the 70's, which makes a delightful change from constantly being told that the band you're listening to is the greatest thing since sliced bread. I headed into this with no preconceived notions and came out a firm believer. Gritty, garage Punk Rock the way it was supposed to be heard. (DAMAGED GOODS RECORDS: P.O. BOX 45854, LONDON, E11 1YX, ENGLAND.)

THE OILERS "STREET TUNES FOR THE BOYS". (SELF-RELEASED)
This is actually being released under the title of a demo, but the sound and packaging are better than many bands official album releases. They've clearly invested a lot of effort into their group, which is always a nice element to see. The Oilers are from Greece and play headline Street Punk, similar to Argy Bargy and The Business. The recordings on this seven track CD consist of five originals and two covers by The Oppressed and Warzone, namely "Riot" and "Going Psycho". Good, fist-thumping hooligan music, because everyone can relate to the simpler pleasures in life once in a while. (THE OILERS: P.O. BOX 1359, CENTRAL P.O. PATRAS, 26001, GREECE.)

OVER IT "SILVERSTRAND". (LOBSTER)
Tame Emo, college Rock music for morons. Not the sort of stuff that's gonna make a Punk Rocker happy, I don't think. Big budget production with no soul. Maybe it will grow on me, but I doubt it. Turn it off, please. (LOBSTER RECORDS: P.O. BOX 1473, SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA, 93102, U.S.A.)

THE PARTISANS "THE PARTISANS". (CAPTAIN OII)
What's to be said about the debut album from The Partisans that hasn't been said before? This, along with their follow up sophomore effort, is a flagship from the second wave of Punk Rock. Never mind all your spiky haired Exploited cobbles, go right out there and pick up the first two Partisans records if you want to know what its all about. The Partisans had their finger on the pulse of life in Britain in these troubled times and cut way closer to the bone than most of the other Punk bands of their time. Their heads were screwed on right, they had an excess of teen energy and they could write bloody good songs to boot. They're still knocking about in some shape or other these days too and their comeback album on Dr. Strange is well worth a listen. But this is where it all began for Wales's leading lights, who formed in 1978,

but didn't get round to releasing this full length till four years later, by which time they'd perfected their craft. Nothing short of sheer pleasure sitting through this one again, I can tell ya! Of course it goes without saying here that the Captain has excelled himself once more with this reissue, that comes in a digi-pack with seven bonus tracks tacked on, full lyrics, artwork and liner notes. (CAPTAIN OII RECORDS: P.O. BOX 501, HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS, HP10 8QA, ENGLAND.)

PETER PAN SPEEDROCK "SPREAD EAGLE". (BITZCORE)
Slayer meets the Supersuckers is my immediate response to this! Good angle and my second encounter with such a band, as a follow on from their appearance on Bitzcore's label sampler thingy that contained a staggeringly high level of quality music. Bare in mind Turbonegro, Leatherface, The Briefs and Cock Sparrer have all called this label home at various stages throughout their careers, so you're dealing with people who recognise good music here, regardless of any genre barriers. Peter Pan Speedrock are everything you want from a band and nothing you don't. Capturing the essence of Sheer Terror in their prime and splicing it up with plenty of Rose Tattoo guitar chops, with a full on Rock n' Roll attitude. All the selections here cut the mustard, but my personal vote goes to "Short Road To Nowhere". If you like The Bones recent spin on things, chances are you'll fall head over heels for this one. (BITZCORE RECORDS: P.O. BOX 30 41 07, D-20324, HAMBURG, GERMANY.)

PICTURE FRAME SEDUCTION "SEX WAR". (CULTJAM)
I'm familiar with Picture Frame Seduction only by name and the odd compilation appearance here and there, but have never taken the time to fully check out the band. They were a part of the UK '82 constabulary, though formed in the late 70's, just missing out on the first wave. "Sex War" is the 2005 version of the group having been through uncountable break ups and make ups since their initial split in '86. Two original members remain and are eager for a few more laps of the old Punk track. The standard of this is comparatively high for a band you'd assume's better days are long gone. Maybe if I'd been tuned into Picture Frame Seduction from the outset I'd feel different, but on first listen to the group this sounds impressive. It's got that jagged edge of Discharge with a nice Dead Boys slant at the other end. It's not the most adventurous of albums, but they know where their proficiency is and don't attempt to convince the listener they're anything other than an old school Punk Rock band ... which is just fine by me. (CULTJAM RECORDS: P.O. BOX 19, GLOUCESTER, GL3 4YA, U.K.)

THE PLOT TO BLOW UP THE EIFFEL TOWER "LOVE IN THE FASCIST BROTHEL". (REVELATION)
Sounding like the bastard lovechild of No Means No, this San Diego quartet knock over any musical barriers the Punk journals will wish to pin on them. The preconceived notion of twinning Punk with Jazz has had a hit n' miss result in the past, but on occasion it has the ability to strike with force. This CD contains enough accurate compositions to warrant some serious listening, but occasionally drifts left of centre with overly experimental and irritating bridges. On the whole The Plot To Blow Up The Eiffel Tower have a healthy musical knowledge and understand how far you can take it without losing the appeal of the song. There'll only ever be one No Means No, but as an interesting look at how the next generation have picked up on that style, you could do a lot worse than giving this a listen. (REVELATION RECORDS: P.O. BOX 5232, HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA 92615-5232, U.S.A.)

THE POLECATS "ARE GOI". (ANAGRAM)
I've been searching high and low for a vinyl copy of this album for aeons, which went out of print long ago as far as I'm aware, so what a delight it was when the Anagram clan decided it was due a reissue, marking it's first time available on the CD format. The Polecats are one of the best there is and this is the album by them to own. Originally issued on the Mercury label, this was the first and last album they made for the label, having been dropped shortly after their follow up single, "Make A Circuit With Me", which by all counts is one of the greatest Rockabilly singles ever recorded. What we get here is edgy Rockabilly music that takes the classic styles of the original sound and fuses it with their own trademark stamp. Leader of The Polecats, Boz Boorer went on to become better known as Morrissey's songwriting partner and band member in his post Smiths days, but here we see him in the spotlight, peeling off some classic ditties indeed. Maintaining all of Rockabilly's most appealing aspects (catchy guitar licks and pumping slap bass) "Are Goi" contains some of the best pound for pound music recorded in the eighties. This record is one chapter of the Neo Rockabilly saga that should never go overlooked. (ANAGRAM RECORDS: C/O UNIT 3A, LONG ISLAND HOUSE, WARPLE WAY, ACTON, LONDON W3 0RG, ENGLAND.)

ELVIS PRESLEY "GOOD ROCKIN' TONIGHT". (RED LINE)
This is odd ... really fuckin' odd. How could this Cherry Red subsidiary obtain licensing rights to issue some of the King's recordings? A closer look reveals some hidden pieces of information worth noting. Firstly it's only the vocal track that's original, which is lifted from the Louisiana Hayride recordings in the mid-50's. The backing tracks on this, recorded recently, are provided by Lee Rocker and Slim Jim from Stray Cats and Danny B' Harvey from the Swing Cats. It's not quite as tacky as the Karaoke versions of Elvis' songs that it looks like on paper. The band actually puts a different and original twist on Elvis' work. You should already have the original recordings from the Hayride sessions, which for the record, was a live radio show broadcast similar to that of the Grand Ole Opry. The three musicians on this owe a clear debt to the music of Elvis as evident on any of their full time bands recordings down the years. In that sense their

input here is in relatively capable hands. It's an interesting idea; not too sure if I'm behind the concept yet or not ... strange one! (RED LINE RECORDS: C/O UNIT 3A, LONG ISLAND HOUSE, WARPLE WAY, ACTON, LONDON W3 0RG, ENGLAND.)

THE PRICKS "MAXIMUM S&M". (ROCKSTAR)
Some classy and ferocious Garage Punk here kids, from the environs of Scandinavia. Blistering Punk n' Roll that will strip paint at fifty paces. Utterly brutal and powerful with that rare quality of actually being listenable, chaotic and melodic all at the same time. These Swedes scream and shout their way through the album's duration of twenty-four songs in roughly as many minutes and I'd guess this sort of behaviour would please fans of Punk, Hardcore or Rock n' Roll in equal measures. The pricks have been in existence since 1997 and been releasing a steady flow of product since, including an early split 7 inch with The Hives along the way. If you're into stuff like vintage Dwarves, Supersuckers and Turbonegro, The Pricks function on a similar wavelength. The wonderful production job on this record is just enough to push it over the top. (ROCKSTAR RECORDS: KURBRUNNENSTRASSE 32-36, 52066 ROCKCITY AACHEN, GERMANY.)

PSEUDO MELLOR "DEMO". (SELF-RELEASED)
Pseudo Mellor are British from what I'm told and kick up a feisty blend of Garage Rock noise, complimented by an enthusiastic singer (playing everything bar drums), who sounds eager to create new sounds n' ideas without sacrificing any of the band's

charm. To draw comparisons here with any other band would simply be a shortcut to thinking, as Pseudo Mellor quite simply do not sound like any other band. Try to imagine Gang Of Four experimenting with some of Sonic Youth's earlier ideas, whilst under the heavy influence of plenty of pre-Punk bands hailing from New York. Strange thing is Pseudo Mellor definitely sound like a new band and can execute their own thought well into what they do. (cloudniz@hotmail.com)

RANDY'S RIPCORD "LOVE". (GO-KART)
Early Go Go's type stuff here from a fresh Go-Kart signing. Randy's Ripcord formed in Hamburg, Germany not so long ago and these are the first proper recordings of the band to be issued. To date they've clocked up some road mileage and paid a few visits to the studio, which got then loosened up before making the dive into laying down the debut album. Consisting of two front-women and a bloke on the drums, this is a strong three-piece unit with plenty of wind in their sails. There're no national nuances to speak of here and its quite possible that a large percentage of their interest in music stems from the states. Then again, if you listen hard enough there's some Nina Hagen in there somewhere. The Runaways and Girlschool also get huge nods on this one, and "Love" is a document that should prove they've got what it takes to rock with the big girls. (GO-KART RECORDS: P.O. BOX 120750, 68058 MAN-HEIM, GERMANY.)

RATTUS "RATTUS". (ZURICH CHAINSAW MASSACRE)
Spitting out the Hardcore vermin in short blasts of noise-monger favoured chaos, that old Finnish band Rattus are revered by scruffbags the world over. This I reckon is a collection/anthology type release, bringing a variety of their records together and under one roof. I've never been prone to stuff like this and Rattus certainly aren't a band likely to change that. This to me sounds like Head Of David, Extreme Noise Terror and a whole host of Grindcore bands to be found on early Earache releases. Many a "Reclaim the Streets" archnut still holds a fondness for bands like this today, but I could never stick it. At least not in this lifetime. (ZURICH CHAINSAW MASSACRE RECORDS: C/O JOSEF LODERER, WASGENRING 60, CH-4055 BASEL, SWITZERLAND.)

RED ALERT "EXCESS ALL AREAS". (CAPTAIN OII)
First things first; do we really need a centre page shot of a spread-legged Frater, with his balls poured into a pair of tracksuit bottoms? No we don't! This is quite possibly the funniest looking specimen in music today we're dealing with here and the more he tries to look cool, the funnier he gets! Red Alert have been talking about this record for an age now and have finally put something new out under the brand name of Red Alert. There's no surprises here to be honest, just another whole helping of their Bon Jovi meets the Upstarts take on Street Rock music. Steve Smith has always carried an infectiously warm voice, in his northern English tone. Lainey has been replaced on drums here by Matty Forster, but the trademark cruise of the band's laid back approach to life has hardly been touched. They maintain their typically mid-tempo style of songwriting, setting their sights on the big choruses. It's by no means an essential purchase, but I guess nice nonetheless to have a few additions if needed, for the live set. (CAPTAIN OII RECORDS: P.O. BOX 501, HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS, HP10 8QA, ENGLAND.)



RED ALERT "WEARISIDE". (ANAGRAM)
Reissue of Red Alert's 1999 album on Anagram Records as part of their Punk Collectors Series. The original Red Alert disbanded after six years in 1985, having put four albums to their name, but again regrouped in 1990 and continue to gig and record fifteen years on. This record is the standard fare for Red Alert, littered with Classic Rock numbers, played from a streetwise perspective. There're a few sluggish sounding tracks that slow the momentum a tad, but four or five of the tunes here really stand out as some of their best work, containing ample slashing power. Red Alert's sound is rich in those fist-in-the-air stompers that guarantee a cracking live result each time, but they're definitely the type of band you need be sloshed in order to fully appreciate and I'm not sure whether that's a good or a bad thing. Still, they're cheeky, energetic, fun, and always worth a listen. (ANAGRAM RECORDS: UNIT 3A, LONG ISLAND HOUSE, WARPLE WAY, ACTON, LONDON W3 0RG, ENGLAND.)

RIOT SQUAD "THE COMPLETE PUNK COLLECTION". (ANAGRAM)
Anti-Tory bootboy music, straight from the gutter of the Thatcher years and sung by those left behind for refusing to take part in the capitalist sweep that left three million on the dole. Riot Squad's line up consisted of two Punks and two Skinheads, thus we're in a similar playing field to Blitz, with their music bearing stark resemblances to The Oppressed. They lasted a mere four years before knocking it on the head, but in that time released a small volume of recordings which all appear to have made it on to this collection. The recording quality boasts the use of minimalist equipment in the studio, no doubt down to lack of budget, but all the great OI records from this era had a similar sound, which has almost become legendary in a weird kind of way. Liner notes are scribbled down by Mark Brennan, in which he gives a brief history of Riot Squad's existence and the legacy they left behind them. (ANAGRAM RECORDS: UNIT 3A, LONG ISLAND HOUSE, WARPLE WAY, ACTON, LONDON W3 0RG, ENGLAND.)

THE ROBOCOP KRAUS "WHO DO THEY THINK THEY ARE?". (EPITAPH)
The Robocop Kraus hail from Nuremberg, Germany and have drafted Pelle from The Hives in for a neat production job on this EP, their taster for the upcoming album entitled "They Think They Are Robocop Kraus", due for a European wide release in September. I watched a similar sounding band called CDOASS support The Hives in Dublin last year and that's what this CD brings to mind the most. They blend the sounds of outfits such as Talking Heads, Devo, Kraftwerk, Killing Joke and Joy Division into a healthy brand of their own. If you're into the more experimental and challenging wing of Punk Rock, this should press all the right buttons with you. I thoroughly enjoyed it! (EPITAPH RECORDS: P.O. BOX 10574, 1001 EN AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS.)

RUDI "THE RADIO SESSIONS 1979 - 1981". (LAST YEARS YOUTH)
This appears to be a Japanese release. Always nice to see this band's songs being kept in circulation and available to the masses. Last Years Youth have released a bunch of titles by Rudi and appear to be big fans. I reviewed a similar disc from Rudi last issue, which may crossover with much of the material here, though there was no mention of what sessions those songs were from. Here, we've got a round up of four, from Downtown Radio in '79, the Mike Reid show on Radio One in '80, a Peel session from '81 and finally the Fanning session, also recorded in '81. Earlier work by the group, as evident on the Downtown Radio tracks, was trashier and looser than what the band developed into by the time we reach the Fanning session. I like all eras of Rudi and they kept pushing things forward and trying out new ideas as they went along. "Crimson" for instance is one of their best, that displays mature songwriting written through the eyes of a band barely out of short trousers. They progressed at a staggering rate and utilized the three-piece make up of the group better than any. It's the classic Rock n' Roll get up and Rudi's influence was clearly coming from that era as well as the butt end of the Glam movement that was drawing to a close when they formed in '75. Picking up anything by Rudi is a guaranteed safe bet and this release is no exception. (NO CONTACT INFORMATION)

RUMBLESEAT "RUMBLESEAT IS DEAD". (NO IDEA)
Yes, Rumbleseat truly are dead! This band was a short-lived acoustic project put

together by members of Hot Water Music, Chuck Ragan and Chris Wollard, whilst on a trip to Richmond, Virginia. Originally recorded in a basement on an eight-track it's unclear whether these versions are rerecorded or the originals, but either way they sound raw and full of energy. Samantha Jones joins 'em on bass and lends vocals here and there throughout the songs, particularly coming in useful for their version of Johnny and June's 'Jackson', which doesn't exactly touch the original, but a fine attempt nonetheless. They also cover 'Moonshiner', which again probably won't replace The Great Western Squares version, but always a treat to hear alternative groups' takes on old traditional songs. Stylistically this CD settles itself somewhere beneath the realms of Folk and Country music, but with the Punk bustle of someone like TV Smith. Hot Water Music's biggest influence, Frankie Stubbs embarked on a similar project before and that's also something you can't help but point out on hearing this. It's got plenty of soul, that's for sure. (NO IDEA RECORDS: P.O. BOX 14636, GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA, 32604, U.S.A.)

THE SAINTS "NOTHING IS STRAIGHT IN MY HOUSE". (CADIZ RECORD-ING COMPANY)

It's difficult to listen to anything under The Saints name and not hold it up against their first three albums of genius, but Chris Bailey has made an amicable effort here at coming up with a record that's far from a strike out. The Saints musical heritage is steeped in Blues and early R'n'B, which Bailey further explores on 'Nothing Is Straight In My House'. If you've followed The Saints post-golden-age path you'll be familiar with Bailey's preferred tastes in various forms of old traditional music and that's where this album seeks the majority of its inspiration from. There're some great atmospheric laidback parts set down alongside storming rockers such as the record's first single 'A Madman Wrecked My Happy Home' and album opener, 'Porno Movies'. Bailey's voice has strained somewhat from the years of alcohol and nicotine abuse, but it kind of fits the picture in a twisted way, giving this album the edge it calls out for. The snotty cynicism remains intact on plenty of the songs and having recorded the album in Amsterdam, where Bailey now resides, keeps with that off-the-wall sense of Saints attitude. At times you feel as though maybe Bailey is the only one who fully understands what it is he's attempting to communicate with the world, but this is a pleasantly surprising piece of work that I don't think anyone could have realistically expected to find on a Saints record in 2005. (www.cadizmusic.com)

SEX GANG CHILDREN "SONG AND LEG-END". (CHERRY RED)

Reissue of the 1983 Goth/Punk album. Sex Gang Children, much akin to Sisters Of Mercy, Bauhaus, Fields Of The Nephilim and Killing Joke bridged that gap between Post Punk and Goth. This was their debut, following their time spent performing in boozers around London to then burgeoning skinhead scene, who looked on in confusion. Goth as a rule isn't really my thing, but I liked a handful of the crossover acts and bands that flirted with it, rather than dive head-long into it as Sex Gang Children obviously did. You always had your Goth element to Punk which worked well, but this is just that bit too theatrical for me, ignoring the need to write some good songs. If you were spaced out of your head in some basement club in London in the 80's this may have had its place, but sadly it hasn't dated well at all to my ears. Still, it's rated highly even today amongst the Goth fraternity. There're three acoustic numbers tacked on to the end of this, recorded this year that do little to alter my perceptions of the band. You also get a detailed, but very self-indulgent history of Sex Gang Children provided by journalist Mick Mercer. Interestingly, Tony James from Generation X was responsible for the production on this. (CHERRY RED RECORDS: UNIT 3A, LONG ISLAND HOUSE, WARPLE WAY, ACTON, LONDON W3 0RG, ENGLAND.)

SHAM 69 "THE PUNK SINGLES COLLECTION". (CAPTAIN OII)

Always a joyous affair to hear the Sham at their best. Some absolute stompers right here, making it so easy to hear how they've earned the legendary status people hold them up to today. When Sham 69 hit the spot they were unstoppable, and when they missed it, loud help us all! Their first three-track 7 inch single that breaks the cap on this CD hasn't lost any of its' edge and I think sounds even better today than ever. Pursey meant every word he sang and whilst he may have lost the plot not too far down the road, his heart was always in it. 'Shit, just take a look at the tracklist on this - 'I Don't Wanna', 'Ulister', 'What Have We Got?', 'Borstal Breakout', 'Hey Little Rich Boy', 'Angels With Dirty Faces', 'The Cockney Kids Are Innocent', 'If The Kids Are United', 'Sunday Morning Nightmare', 'Hurry Up Harry', 'Hersham Boys' ... need I go on? This may well be the essential works of Sham 69. (CAPTAIN OII RECORDS: P.O. BOX 501, HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS, HP10 8QA, ENGLAND.)

SHAM 69 "TELL US THE TRUTH". (CAPTAIN OII)

After the above taster Captain Oii dive headlong into the Sham 69 back catalogue, with reissuing jobs done on all four studio albums from the first wave of the group, all released in digi-pack format. First up is their cracking debut from 1978, 'Tell Us The Truth', which was a one-side-live, one-side-studio affair. There're no studio versions in existence of the opening live couple, 'We Got A Fight' and 'Rip Off', making their appearances here the definitive ones. The first side of the LP was recorded in The Marquee and Vortex in London and captures Pursey and the band at their boisterous peak. Side 2 and the Sham are still showing no signs of calm in the studio. Pursey's vocals are near perfection and coupled with an unbeatable Sham line up, it was easy to see how they managed to have the impact they did. This album came at exactly the right time for the music world, with Thatcher's term in office just around the corner, it gave the disenfranchised youth something to cling to, bringing on the new breed to replace the now melted out '76 lot. Tacked onto the end of this marvellous piece of history you'll find an additional eight tracks, including demo versions of 'George Davis Is Innocent', 'They Don't Understand' and 'Borstal Breakout'. (CAPTAIN OII RECORDS: P.O. BOX 501, HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS, HP10 8QA, ENGLAND.)

SHAM 69 "THAT'S LIFE". (CAPTAIN OII)

'That's Life' wasn't far behind Sham's debut and, unlike its predecessor, this time round all tracks were recorded in the studio as Pursey unleashed his concept album upon us. The concept of course was a day in the life of a working class lad by the name of Harry. This album became as renowned for it's between song banter as it did the second-to-none songs Sham came up with for their second LP. 'That's Life' takes us through Harry's day from waking up late for work, being fired, going down the pub, hitting the disco, on the receiving end of verbal abuse from everybody and finally waking up on a Sunday morning with a sore head. I can still remember hearing this record for the first time, and it was the one that really sold the Sham to me ... its unarguably an excellent and courageous piece of work from a genre that often got overlooked as mindless music for yobs. There was a brain behind Pursey's lyrics, but most importantly they were always fun and easy to relate to. Check out the three bonus tracks on here - 'The Cockney Kids Are Innocent', 'If The Kids Are United' and finally, 'No Entry'. (CAPTAIN OII RECORDS: P.O. BOX 501, HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS, HP10 8QA, ENGLAND.)

SHAM 69 "THE ADVENTURES OF HERSHAM BOYS". (CAPTAIN OII)

September '79 saw the release of Sham's third album, the slightly less in your face 'The Adventures Of Hersham Boys'. The version I previously own of this has a slightly different track listing with 'If The Kids Are United' kicking off the album as opposed to 'Money', as it does here. I'm guessing this Captain Oii reissue is the original English version? Pursey was becoming increasingly sentimental and philosophical by the time this record seen the light of day, but hadn't totally flipped his lid just yet. That would come later! The song structure was worked around a mood

more so than a driving guitar rhythm and pulsating drumbeat. Pursey's vocals are subtler and at times you miss the scream and snarl contained on earlier workings. For its few faults, this is an interesting and highly entertaining album that shows a different side to the band. The songwriting is more mature and lyrics more universal ... another way of saying this, would be that Sham lost their bite, depending on your perspective. There's a collection of bonus tracks here, equalling the original album's song count! Yep, ten extra songs, mainly made up of live and 7 inch versions of other Sham greats. (CAPTAIN OII RECORDS: P.O. BOX 501, HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS, HP10 8QA, ENGLAND.)

SHAM 69 "THE GAME". (CAPTAIN OII)

By the time Sham made it to their fourth LP, 'The Game' many of their following felt they'd lost it and decided to move on. You'll generally find 'The Game' not being spoken of in the highest regard. Truth be told, its quite a good record and shouldn't be completely overlooked. This was Sham's last album for Polydor and was a commercial flop at the time, failing to chart, which led to the band's split. Strangely the single from this time, 'Unite And Win' wasn't included on the album upon its initial release, but is fittingly included amongst the eight bonus tracks here. The band had run out of steam by this time, but their work was already done, having laid the groundwork for the Oii movement that was about to shock the nation. Their influence has spread to all quarters of the music world, namedropped by everybody from Ian McKaye to Greg Graffin and few Punk acts of today won't cite them as a huge inspiration. All four reissues here have been handled impeccably well, with excellent packaging, booklets, artwork and full lyrics. Without doubt the ultimate versions of all Sham's work. (CAPTAIN OII RECORDS: P.O. BOX 501, HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS, HP10 8QA, ENGLAND.)

THE SHARKS "RECREATIONAL KILLER". (ANAGRAM)

The Sharks began life in Somerset in the early eighties alongside Rockabilly revival acts The Stray Cats and The Polecats, but this recording from them is dated '93, when a reformation of some sort took place. For the record, The Sharks is Alan Wilson's band. Wilson has been championing the Psychobilly and Rockabilly scene for years, through penning liner notes etc. for many reissues, many of which came out on this label. Their early eighties recordings were apparently a lot rougher and generally not of a high recording quality, but this is magical stuff right here. Wilson knows all the ins and outs to what constitutes as good Rockabilly and puts all those years of avid listening to use here, with unfiltered and pure versions of his own timeless greats. The Sharks are a three piece that consist of additional instruments such as sax, piano and stand up bass, as well as the standard guitar, bass and drums, all played by the band members themselves. The formula laid down here is spot on, which perhaps comes from the fact of them actually around when this music was at its height in Britain. Wonderful, wonderful stuff here, that unquestionably deserves a place alongside The Meteors, Polecats and Kar Perkins. (ANAGRAM RECORDS: UNIT 3A, LONG ISLAND HOUSE, WARPLE WAY, ACTON, LONDON W3 0RG, ENGLAND.)

THE SHARKS "COLOUR MY SKIN". (ANAGRAM)

Two years on to '95 saw this follow up from The Sharks. Steve Whitehouse replaced Gary Day on bass for this, but the core songwriting duo of Alan Wilson on guitar/vocals and Hodge on drums remained intact. This is marginally the lesser of both albums as the songs lack that extra drive contained on 'Recreational Killer' and appear to have dropped a gear. Still if this was any other band I'd have put this record down as excellent, but when it's the standards of someone like The Sharks you're attempting to adhere to, you've gotta go that extra mile. Alan Wilson's arranging continues to stun, tipping the hat to his 50's forefathers, whilst giving the music an unflinching modern Psychobilly edge. The pace is kept to mid tempo, with a slightly altered mood that displays the laidback side to the band as much as the floor fillers they've become synonymous with. Check out their exceptional version of 'The Specials, 'Rat Race'. The Sharks are that rare type of band you could listen to all day long and still not tire of. A rare treasure, making both these issues worth picking up before they descend into the hard-to-find category once more. (ANAGRAM RECORDS: UNIT 3A, LONG ISLAND HOUSE, WARPLE WAY, ACTON, LONDON W3 0RG, ENGLAND.)

SHATTERHAND "RANDOM ACTS OF DEFIANCE". (MYTHICAL)

Extremely encouraging release here from up n' coming Scottish band, Shatterhand. I've spent time in their company before and its always nice to receive a follow up album from a band doing it themselves - sadly most don't make it to that second album, but Shatterhand come across as a determined bunch, who have a wealth of belief in the positives of doing things their own way. It's a good ethos and when the music isn't half bad either, that's always a plus. Shatterhand take inspiration from, amongst others, Dillinger Four, Leatherface and Husker Du. 'Not another one!' I hear you say, but this time they're actually good, so cast away any thoughts you might have of an Emo band searching for credentials by name dropping the above. Nope, Shatterhand reek of well-schooled Hardcore pupils, reared on the likes of Minor Threat, Minutemen and the Replacements. There's something warm and inviting in Shatterhand's approach that takes me back to the promising late eighties sound of post Hardcore meets Pop Punk, before things got out of hand. (MYTHICAL RECORDS: 52 MUNGALHEAD ROAD, BAINSFORD, FALKIRK, FK2 7JG, U.K.)

THE SOVIETTES "LP III". (FAT WRECK)

The Soviettes caught my ear a few years back with some arse kicking records put out on the Adeline label, so it comes as no surprise that Fat have scooped them up to build on their profile. Along with the Epoxies, I think this band is gonna be the next big name on the label. They've gotta be! All the signs are here as they merge the sound of Post Punk with hook laden Buzzcocks songwriting for the perfect combination of aggression and melody. Three girls and one guy make up The Soviettes and each one of 'em lends their vocal talents to the album, but in particular drummer Danny has some great little scorchers here that complement the harmonious angle of the three females. The Soviettes are from the same region as Dillinger Four and if you've suspected there's something in the water in the Midwest with the amount of good bands hailing from there at the moment, then this record should cement that suspicion. The Soviettes appear to have struck the same goldmine of songs that Dillinger Four did, Husker Du and The Replacements did before them. If Blondie dropped their Disco influence, there's a chance they'd sound something like this. 'LP III' is better than most records you will hear this year. (FAT WRECK CHORDS: WALDEMARSTR. 337-10999, BERLIN, GERMANY.)

THE STEAM PIG "BASTARD UGLY EVERYTHING". (JACINTA'S OFF-SHORE HOLDINGS)

This album sees The Steam Pig step fully out of the closet as a bunch of sissy Metallers. I always knew it!!! We've all heard of Metallers playing Punk, but 'Bastard Ugly Everything' is the sound of Punks playing Metal. Since 'Potshots' the band has been heading in this direction, when the style of songwriting contained on their first two albums got replaced with chunky guitar driven hooks as opposed to

vocal and bass melodies. Andy's style is rooted more in 80's Thrash, in comparison with the Godzy years, which always sounded to be coming from a Punk upbringing, so what we have here as a result is the balance shifting towards Metal. 'Bastard Ugly Everything' is not as initially interesting as their previous outings, but grows given time. The first two songs in particular are quite good, 'I Fear The Head' and the Pennywise 'Unknown Road' sounding 'The Noble Art Of Human Sacrifice'. A little further into the album and it tends to run out of steam somewhat, with overindulgent riffing, as evident on tracks such as the closer 'Trilobites'. The album is a far cry from what this band started out as, but The Steam Pig continue to push the envelope further with each record. Whether or not their original following will join them for the ride is another matter ... and to be honest, I doubt the band gives a toss. (JACINTA'S OFFSHORE HOLDINGS: P.O. BOX 7674, DUBLIN 1, IRELAND.)

STRAIGHTJACKET "MODERN THIEVES". (TKO)

Class of '77 Punk from a Portland, Oregon band that enthralls the likes of early S.L.F. Buzzcocks and Slaughter And The Dogs. Taste proficiency is certainly not in doubt then! Straightjacket continue TKO's tradition of taking vintage Brit Punk and twinning it with a gnarly American attitude that generally seems to work for them. Straightjacket were formed in the Spring of '98 and have since been building a reputation for themselves through touring on the back of bigger name acts, holding out until now to release this, their debut full length. Because of this, the record sounds more advanced than your average first timer and the band has audibly excelled at becoming a viable source of Street Punk intake. Straightjacket pack the same hell-raising kick of bands like The Stitches, The Crumbs and The Briefs. (TKO RECORDS: 8941 ATLANTA AVE. # 505, HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA, 92646, U.S.A.)

THE STRAPS "THE PUNK COLLECTION". (CAPTAIN OII)

Brilliant overview here of The Straps short-lived career. The Straps were a London based band who formed in and around the 1978 mark having witnessed The Clash at Rock Against Racism. They contained members from as far away as Glasgow and Canada but were basically born out of the London squat scene of the time. They only released a single album and I'm not even sure if that is contained here or not as this CD appears to comprise of singles for the most part. In my mind their crowning moment was the opening track here 'Just Can't Take Anymore' which twinned a rough Rockabilly lick with a Pistols snarl and worked beautifully. Elsewhere musically The Straps sounded remarkably like a first P.I.L. album, which comes as no surprise when you learn of their drummer Jim Walker having played on that very P.I.L. album. Lack of management and business skills naturally led to their demise, but they did manage a tour with The Damned, for which they paid £2,000 to be a part off!! Listening to this has turned me into an inquisitive fan of a group I appear to have glossed over in the past for some reason or other. There's a severe lack of Straps material available in the shops, so this is a great way to take a crash course on the band. Recommended. (CAPTAIN OII RECORDS: P.O. BOX 501, HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS, HP10 8QA, ENGLAND.)

JOE STRUMMER & THE MESCALEROS "STREETCORE". (HELLCAT)

right up to the great man's death, Joe Strummer never ran out of ideas and continued pushing the barriers of music. 'Streetcore' was the album he was working on before he died, and was assembled and finished off following his death. It's always scary when someone's music is left in the hands of another, as we'll never know exactly how Joe intended this album to sound or indeed if he felt all these songs were worthy of inclusion. Given that Hellcat is the label behind it though, I think we can safely assume it was all handled with the greatest of care, and is hopefully as close as we could have gotten to what the man had in store for us. If you've been following Strummer's post-Clash musical path, then this album will sound like a logical progression. However, if you've been out of the loop for a while and are expecting this to pick up where the Clash left off, you may be in for a surprise. The Clash was never a predictable band and neither is Strummer. His obvious love of Hip Hop dates back to 'Magnificent Seven' but has been explored in much greater depth since turning solo, and that interest follows on here. The thing about Strummer is that he'll always go right back to the source for his influence and suss it out before screwing around with something he shouldn't. The Funk, Reggae and Dub slant is still evident, but he's taken it to new dimensions and almost created a genre in itself. There're arguably three fillers on here, but the remaining seven cuts (including an excellent version of 'Redemption Song') are Strummer at his best. The mood ranges from laidback to upbeat and can comfortably shift gears without affecting the flow of the record. As his final contribution to the world, enjoy it! Sniff! Sniff! (HELLCAT RECORDS: P.O. BOX 10574, 1001 EN AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS.)

TARAKANY! "FREEDOM STREET". (ZURICH CHAINSAW MASSACRE)

Tarakany! Are a Russian band, which kind of got me excited as we don't hear much Russian Punk Rock about these parts and it's always good to find out what various regions around the globe are up to. Three of their CD's arrived together and I'm not sure whether I'm reviewing their output in sequence or not, but I went for this one off the bat. Firstly, they've got that chunky Thrash Metal guitar thing going on, which always loses a Punk band points in my book. Strangely they've opted this sound to accompany their melodic, almost Die Toten Hosen-esque music, which is driving and contains plenty of power. Tarakany! are comparable to a lot of what the continental bands laid down during the 90's - no frills straight up Punk Rock, with a somewhat slick production, but the spirit is definitely there. (ZURICH CHAINSAW MASSACRE RECORDS: C/O JOSEF LODERER, WASGENRING 60, CH-4055 BASEL, SWITZERLAND.)

TARAKANY! "SELF TITLED". (ZURICH CHAINSAW MASSACRE)

Next up we have this, possibly earlier recording, from the band. Contrary to the title I imaginatively made up above, this album is actually all in Russian, which looks to have it's own alphabet, thus none of those letters exist on this keyboard. Strange predicament to find ones self in, but there you go! So, all the lyrics, song titles etc. are in the Russian alphabet, which leaves me little to comment on here, as musical descriptions were given in the review above. It's not even on Zurich Chainsaw Massacre Records (though it came in the same promo packet), but once again, you've guessed it, the label's name is in Russian. Sorry! (ZURICH CHAINSAW MASSACRE RECORDS: C/O JOSEF LODERER, WASGENRING 60, CH-4055 BASEL, SWITZERLAND.)

TARAKANY! "FEAR AND HATRED". (ZURICH CHAINSAW MASSACRE)

Here we go again. This one has an English translation sheet in the inside, which helps somewhat. The band are from Moscow and this album was recorded back in 2002 in Russia. Misfits, Queers and Screaming Weasel, spring to mind as inspiring the band, but there's a distinctly national element to it also. The production is clean and sharp, but has an edge. Interesting. (ZURICH CHAINSAW MASSACRE RECORDS: C/O JOSEF LODERER, WASGENRING 60, CH-4055 BASEL, SWITZERLAND.)

THE TEMPLARS "CLOCKWORK ORANGE HORROR SHOW". (TEMPLE-COMBE)

Oii Oii! It's old favourites The Templars back with the launch of a new label imprint with TKO Records. Not sure what that means exactly, I'm guessing TKO must be bankrolling it. This is a reissue from a '95 release by the band that comes in both CD format and 10" coloured vinyl. Yummy! The Templars, in case you're unfamiliar, are a multiracial Skinhead band from New York City who've been hammering it out state-

side for quite some time. Haven't heard much from them of late, but they're such a good band, and as ashamed as I am to admit it, I kind of forgot just how good until I stuck this one on. I've since dug out their back catalogue from the vaults and have been enjoying this fine band once again. The Templars hit on something special, with a huge emphasis placed on the second wave of British Punk like Sham 69, Angelic Upstarts and Cockney Rejects. The thing I love about 'em is much like the aforementioned heroes of the past, they can get a great groove going in their sound and it contains plenty of soul – an element to Oi! that often gets overlooked by many up and coming modern day bands. Along with the Sham 69 reissues on Captain Oi! this gets my vote for best Oi! release this issue. (TEMPLECOMBE RECORDS: P.O. BOX 602, BAYSHORE, NY 11706, U.S.A.)

TOKYO SKA PARADISE ORCHESTRA "SKA ME CRAZY: THE BEST OF ...". (CHERRY RED)

Tokyo Ska Paradise Orchestra have a long history attached to them, but I confess to being a first time listener here. They formed in their native Tokyo at the tail end of the 80's and have since set about putting ten studio albums to their name. This is a collection of those past sixteen years brought together for this compilation, which may serve as many westerners introduction to the group. I tend to be rather hard on modern day Ska and most of it I simply do not like. This band however certainly have something and appear to have gotten their inspiration from the source, fusing elements of Jazz and Cuban music with their base of Two Tone meets Bad Manners (remember Bad Manners were never on Two Tone!). I think the idea works best when delivered unfiltered on tracks like the great instrumental opener "The Last Bandolero". When they take the tempo up it tends to lose its appeal with me and sounds too close to a lot of that happy-go-lucky Ska of today that we could all do without. They give a generous mix on this CD though, which is what really saves it for me and just when I reach to turn it off, they offer up something more to my liking once again. Very hit n' miss, but again, there's definitely something in here itching to get out. (CHERRY RED RECORDS: UNIT 3A, LONG ISLAND HOUSE, WARPLE WAY, ACTON, LONDON W3 ORG, ENGLAND.)

TURBO A.C.'S "AVENUE X". (BITZCORE)

I've had more than a passing interest in Turbo A.C.'s these past years, but have never gone so far as to buy any of their records. Reports on their Temple gig were good and since then I've actively been on the lookout for any promo material of theirs that may surface. And here we go. This album catches the band a stretch down the line I can imagine, at the point where they've perhaps churned out more than a handful of high velocity Punk n' Roll records and are now looking at taking it to the next level without losing any impact in the process. Turbo A.C.'s as I correctly hypothesized are from the same school as Zeke, Dwarves and Turbonegro, brought up on a diet of early Punk and even earlier Rock n' Roll (check out the Link Wray flavoured intro to "Fist Of Fury"). What generally tends to happen with bands like this is following a couple of full throttle albums they run out steam and ideas, but this lot seem eager not to let that happen, anxious not to lend their band name to a long list of statistics. Turbo A.C.'s are from New York City and bring a large helping of that city's ambience to the table. The songs are developed and oddball for a band of their nature, take more than a few listens to get into. There're some fine guitar and bass nuances scattered throughout that goes some way to giving the band that trademark sound they're desperately striving for. Turbo A.C.'s don't appear the sort of band easily pleased and this album is a bold and courageous attempt at remaining a viable and important commodity in this ever crowded subculture of ours. (BITZCORE RECORDS: P.O. BOX 30 41 07, D-20324, HAMBURG, GERMANY.)

THE UNSEEN "STATE OF DISCONTENT". (HELLCAT)

In 2005, Boston band The Unseen have secured themselves a place in the digi-pack world of Hellcat Records, having gotten there via Better Youth Organisation, who issued their previous record. I used to go see this band play quite a bit when I lived in their city and they always struck me as one of the hardest working bands around, always available to play, wherever the gig was and regardless of the circumstances. They got out there and done it and its that attitude that's gotten the band where they are today, as they adapted a similar approach to the road, building themselves a positive reputation in the process. I think they had a thing going with Anti-Flag in the early days, but quickly outgrew the D.I.Y. route and took to label backing a few years ago. This album is produced by Ken Casey of Dropkick Murphy's fame and when you hear that you can almost pinpoint the little Dropkick's nuances throughout the album, in particular the drum sound, but the songs don't suffer in the least and still contain plenty of fire as we've come to expect from The Unseen. They still have that GBH meets The Clash sound and have stayed true to their roots, whilst developing their sound somewhat. There're some excellent backing chants fragmented throughout that lends infectiousness to their brash teenage. A strong Street Punk release. (HELLCAT RECORDS: P.O. BOX 10574, 1001 EN AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS.)

USELESS ID "REDEMPTION". (KUNG FU)

Jesus, this is wimpy. Useless ID make Chixdiggit sound like GG Allin. Even the Blasting Room production job can't do anything to cover up how bad this band is. Songs about love, relationships etc. and nothing about their homeland of Israel, a country you would think might make for some good thumping Punk Rock. There's gotta be something better than this going on in Israel, but sadly King Fu don't appear to have looked very hard. This sounds like a tenth rate Vandals band, without the sense of humour. (KUNG FU EUROPE: MARTINUS NYHOFFLAAN 22624 ES DELFT, THE NETHERLANDS.)

VARIOUS ARTISTS "ALIVE ON ANTI ISLANDS". (DSS)

High calibre digi-pack sampler from DSS here that goes on the market at budget price. Summarising the work DSS has been involved with, this brings us the likes of Wednesday Night Heroes, The Broilers, Crashed Out, Soul Boys and Stomper 99 amongst others. Most bands slot neatly into the Street Rock classification and are all the better for it, taking an often-redundant form of music and stripping it down to the roots. Some bands can achieve this, others cannot. The above named contributors do it best, whilst others such as Eastside Boys and Warfare 223 lag behind. DSS has built itself up a reputable catalogue of releases and this is a worthwhile glimpse into that world. (DSS RECORDS: P.O. BOX 739, 4021 LINZ, AUSTRIA.)

VARIOUS ARTISTS "ATTICUS: DRAGGING THE LINE 3". (SIDE 1 DUMMY)

The only band that really caught my eye on this prior to playing it was the excellent Street Dogs, with their track "In Defence Of Dorchester", which didn't let me down. Other than that it's pretty much a who's who of the Warped Tour round. I'm not sure what all the hype behind this "Atticus" thing is, but I seem to recall reading somewhere that the Blink 182 guy is behind it and naturally Blink 182 are featured here. A large chunk of this disc can be filed under forgettable Emo sludge, whilst the remainder tends to look in the direction of Pop Punk, but without any evident biting edge. Just nicely produced conveyor belt, identikit MXPX (who are also included here) type

of thing. This really began to get on my tits after the first ten minutes, by which time I had repeatedly skipped on to the Street Dogs tune, but yes I did actually sit through the entire album from start to finish once, which is not something I'd recommend. (SIDE 1 DUMMY: P.O. BOX 2350, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, 90078, U.S.A.)

VARIOUS ARTISTS "BITZCORE LABEL SAMPLER". (BITZCORE)

As you may or may not know, German label Bitzcore has got quite a lot to get excited about as regards the sheer volume of kick ass Rock n' Roll they've acquired for their label. The line up includes the likes of Turbo AC's, Turbonegro, The Briefs and Peter Pan Speedrock! Yes!! All bands contribute strong material and one thing they all share in common is a fondness for the Rockier end of the spectrum, which is just fine by me. There's eight audio songs contained here along with six videos. (BITZCORE RECORDS: P.O. BOX 30 41 07, D-20324, HAMBURG, GERMANY.)

VARIOUS ARTISTS "CAPTAIN OI! SAMPLER". (CAPTAIN OI!)

It's that time of year again folks, when the Captain pulls out all the stops with another free full colour catalogue and sampler CD being issued to all on his mailing list. This must cost 'em a few bob, I can tell ya! It's a fine piece of work to look at and browse through, with a CD featuring tracks from a handful of the label's high fliers. Look out for wonderful pieces from Argy Bargy, Lukers and Guitar Gangsters who each offer up plenty of what they do best. There's also a preview of the upcoming new Chelsea album, with "Bad Advice". The total of ten tracks on this gives a well-rounded overview of the type of stuff you'd expect to hear on the Captain Oi! label. Always a pleasure! (CAPTAIN OI! RECORDS: P.O. BOX 501, HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS, HP10 8QA, ENGLAND.)

VARIOUS ARTISTS "GIVE 'EM THE BOOT IV". (HELLCAT)

There's enough unreleased stuff on this comp alone to make it worth the low price of purchase. You'll be firmly familiar with the Hellcat record label and their series of, continually high quality "Give 'Em The Boot" samplers. They've been cornering the specialised market of Punk, Reggae and Psychobilly for a number of years and with the wallet of Tim Armstrong firmly held open for financial backing to the label, it has continued to grow, under the protective muscle of Epitaph. Nice to see the Ducky Boys finally getting a look in on all of this, with an inclusion here, in the shape of "Break Me". There's plenty here that will turn your ear up and keep you near the stereo, and it's not just all the usual contenders either. They've put their necks out a bit and come up with some new additions to the family. Although there's a gargantuan twenty-six tracks to sift through here, you'll find it difficult turning the CD off until you've heard 'em all. (HELLCAT RECORDS: P.O. BOX 10574, 1001 EN AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS.)

VARIOUS ARTISTS "GIVE US A FUTURE: THE HISTORY OF ANAGRAM RECORDS". (ANAGRAM)

Anagram records grew to notoriety in the post Punk and Psychobilly days of the early 80's in Britain and secured itself a home beneath the Cherry Red umbrella of labels ... or was it the other way around? Eager not to get pigeonholed as "just another Punk label", Anagram A&R man Phil Langham simply wanted to release music that he thought was interesting, regardless of the genre. Anagram took acts like The Angelic Upstarts and The Vibrators onboard after the majors lost interest in them, putting the band back in touch with the scene that spawned 'em both. Along with Goth band Alien Sex Fiend and Psychobilly faves The Meteors, both the Upstarts and Vibrators established the label as a hot contender amidst the post Punk independent activity in England. Vice Squad, The Outcasts, Alternative Television and One Way System also produced some memorable records for Anagram. All these bands and more are included on this twenty-track compilation of Anagram's best bits from the past twenty-five years. The label continues to stun today via the healthy reissuing campaign they've undertaken, keeping all those timeless indie gems in wide circulation. The fold out inner

booklet to this CD gives a detailed history of the label from its humble origins to one of today's global Punk Rock phenomenon's. (ANAGRAM RECORDS: UNIT 3A, LONG ISLAND HOUSE, WARPLE WAY, ACTON, LONDON W3 ORG, ENGLAND.)

VARIOUS ARTISTS "GNARLY DUDE!". (VOLTAGE)

This is a Skate music compilation series that sets its sights on the grittier side of the scene as opposed to the highly polished version we tend to get bombarded with today. Interestingly all the bands do not sound like Pennywise or NOFX and instead we have varied styles from the Hip Hop of Stream to the neo Rockability of Burt Cockain and Nirbanana-International. Both discs are sponsored affairs, with advertising logos covering half of the back cover in each case. Most appear affiliated with skating though, so I guess if that's what it takes to fund these things then so be it. It also covers the Metal-Core spectrum pretty well along with bands such as Spinfire who opt for a synthesized Jungle approach of all things. Yes, "Gnarly Dude" certainly couldn't be accused of predictability and chances are you'll love some of this and hate some of it with equal passion. (www.voltagerecords.net)

VARIOUS ARTISTS "GNARLY DUDE 2!". (VOLTAGE)

Picking up where the above left off, is part two in the "Gnarly Dude" catalogue. Most of the bands here don't look to be on the first one, so it's a fresh approach to see what else is out there that got overlooked. Content-wise it's a 50/50 split between U.S. and U.K. bands, most of whom could loosely be described as Punk and rock music, with the odd sound bite piece thrown in here and there to break the run of things. Auberbon Phoenix & The Dirt Box Fiddlers caught my ear with their rough assed Garage Punk number "Beer Anthem". This CD won't change your life, but what it will do, as it did for me, is allow some lesser-known bands a platform from which to share their ideas with the world. I gather most participants here are new and upcoming and it's always a good idea to gather these bands together and put out comps like this. There's the odd diamond to be found amidst the rough and I found it fun to sift through it all. (www.voltagerecords.net)

VARIOUS ARTISTS "GOOD VIBRATIONS: THE PUNK SINGLES COLLECTION". (ANAGRAM)

The story of Belfast's Good Vibrations label is a well-known tale of genius. A music enthusiast from the locality, Terri Hooley set up the label from his bedroom, originally releasing records by friends and other bands he thought were half decent playing around Belfast in need of a recorded outlet. He moved into a loft in Great Victoria street later on selling records to avid fans and the store quickly became a focal point for young Punks in the Greater Belfast area. The first of Terri's 7 inch releases was by up and coming East Belfast group Rudi, with "Big Time" going on to merit itself as one of the best the label ever put its name to. Good Vibrations went on to release stuff by pretty

much every north of the border Irish band worth noting, with the exception of Stiff Little Fingers, who interestingly were never part of the Good Vibes story. This Punk Collectors Series from Anagram, which has been compiled by Mark Brennan, justly brings together all the best moments from the label's history. The Undertones, Protex, Ruefex, The Moondogs, The Outcasts, The Bankrobbers and The Idiots all take up lodgings on this essential disc. Good Vibrations in my opinion was the Punk

Rock Stax or Motown and highlighted a collective of bands that still turn heads today and thanks to the label all of this great music has remained in print and stood the test of time exceptionally well. It was a brilliant era for Irish music and rightly deserves a ranking with what the Brits across the water were unleashing at the time. (ANAGRAM RECORDS: UNIT 3A, LONG ISLAND HOUSE, WARPLE WAY, ACTON, LONDON W3 ORG, ENGLAND.)

VARIOUS ARTISTS "THE HISTORY OF NO FUTURE". (ANAGRAM)

By way of a dabbler's guide to the No Future library of releases, this double-disc collection should serve as arguably the best summary the catalogue has received to date. In their time No Future etched their name on some twenty-seven singles and a further nine albums. Blitz got it all started in the early days with the "All Out Attack" EP that went on to shift over 20,000 units through distribution deals with Rough Trade and Pinnacle. Considering they'd hand numbered the first 100 copies of the record and would have been satisfied had they sold these, this was a massive achievement for a label of its stature. The good kept coming in the form of quality Punk such as The Partisans unbeaten "Police Story/Killing Machine" 7 inch, Red Alert's "In Britain", Peter And The Test Tube Babies, "Banned From The Pubs" and a multitude of further gems from each of these bands of course. When it came to longplaying albums look no further than "Voice Of A Generation", "Pissed And Proud" and the self-titled debut from The Partisans. All releases are fairly represented here, by timeless nuggets of early eighties Punk Rock. Far too many good songs to narrow it down to highlights, but the band list above should give you a fair indication of what to expect. Bare in mind all of these bands produced their best work for this, regardless of the slinkers many of them went on to release in their latter years. This release is accompanied by a full colour booklet and extensive liner notes. Just the ticket! (ANAGRAM RECORDS: UNIT 3A, LONG ISLAND HOUSE, WARPLE WAY, ACTON, LONDON W3 ORG, ENGLAND.)

VARIOUS ARTISTS "LOBSTER RECORDS JUMPS THE SHARK". (LOBSTER)

Not being familiar with Lobster Records I was blindly led into this one! No press sheet accompanied it, so I've zero info regarding the label itself to divulge, but the music is lame. "A Kiss Won't Make This Better"????? What the fuck? You've probably guessed by now this is Emo music that reminds me of what Blink 182 now sound like. Whether that's a good or a bad thing in your mind entirely depends on the individual. (LOBSTER RECORDS: P.O. BOX 1473, SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA, 93102, U.S.A.)

VARIOUS ARTISTS "MIDDLEGROUND 2". (PUNK SHIT)

Six bands, thirty-two songs. Bands on here are as follows – Dogshit Sandwich, Rotunda, Intention, D'Corner Bois, Rat Monkey and The Cunts. I believe all are from the British midlands and give us a taste of what they have to offer the world with a handful of songs each. Dogshit Sandwich have called it a day and D'Corner Bois have picked up where they left off, sharing at least one member. All bands here are situated somewhere between Discharge and The Exploited and the recording quality ranges from fair to good, but it's the energy that says more than anything on this CD, which is second to none. All bands mean it, have a thing or two to say and have succeeded with their desired impact. (PUNK SHIT RECORDS: 74 BRISTNALLHALL ROAD, OLDBURY, WEST MIDLANDS, B68 9TU, ENGLAND.)

VARIOUS ARTISTS "OX COMPILATION # 59". (OX FANZINE)

Particularly good choice of bands this time round for the Ox compilation CD, that gets given away with each and every issue of the fanzine. Juliette And The Licks are especially raging here, with "Shelter Your Needs". The Turbo AC's give us the exceedingly good "1-800", followed by the ever-essential Generators with "Who Is Going To Save The World?". Psychobilly group Up To Vegas get the job done with "Necropole" – A Meteors sounding rip roaring tune. Elsewhere it's a run through several sample tracks from current and upcoming Punk releases around Europe, covering a broad spectrum of music, from Emo to Garage to Punk to Oi! Compilations like this are a great way to check out new releases and this one in particular cuts through a lot of the bullshit that's out there and instead gives the lowdown on the quality stuff. All yours for the price of a pint. (OX FANZINE: P.O. BOX 102225, 42766 HAAN, GERMANY.)

VARIOUS ARTISTS "PLASTIC BOMB #51 COMPILATION". (PLASTIC BOMB)

Some great music here from an even greater fanzine. Plastic Bomb is in the same league as publications such as Ox and Garaz and naturally hails from the Punk utopia of Germany. They favour the Garage Punk sound for the most part and generally look in the direction of raw and untamed music for their free sampler CD's that come with each issue. Kicking this one off is the rather splendid sounds of Rubberslime, who I'm not familiar with, but their contribution here "Rock n' Roll Plenum" is something worth talking about. The Generators, Epoxies, Turbo AC's, Towerlocks and Derita Sisters all live up to their reputation elsewhere on this CD. (PLASTIC BOMB: POSTFACH 100205, 47002, DUISBURG, GERMANY.)

VARIOUS ARTISTS "PUNKORAMA 10". (EPITAPH)

Increasing their value-for-money policy, Epitaph have crammed a DVD disc containing twenty-four promo videos of their bands into this latest addition to the "Punkorama" saga. There's also the twenty-eight audio tracks on the first disc to speak of, highlighting more of what this label offers, just in case anyone missed it! If that's not enough, try the unreleased songs from the likes of NOFX, Bad Religion, The Offspring and Hot Water Music. Some of the bands Epitaph have signed in recent times haven't really been cutting it in my opinion when held up against the earlier years of the label, when it was arguably at its height quality-wise. But that's no reason to let this compilation pass you by, as it features the old along with the new and with a roster that includes the likes Bouncing Souls, Turbonegro, Rancid, Pennywise and Roger Miret and the Disasters, you kind of begin to realise the good far outweighs the crud. And yes, true to tradition this goes on sale at the price of a CD single if you can believe it! (EPITAPH RECORDS: P.O. BOX 10574, 1001 EN AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS.)

VARIOUS ARTISTS "PUNK SHIT VOLUME 2". (PUNK SHIT)

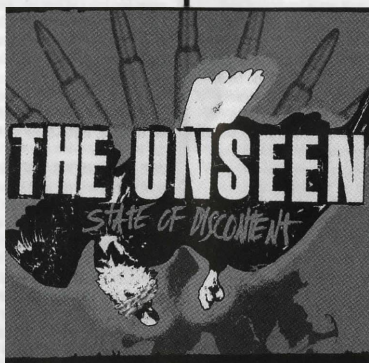
I missed out on the first one of these fellas put out a few years back, but here's the second. Punk Shit is a label that has a tendency to favour some Screamo Crust stuff, which is never to my personal taste, but there's another side to it too that peddles a rich selection of Reggae, 77 styled stuff and Oi!. My personal picks from what's available are The Milksnatchers, Bomb scare, Adolf And The Piss Artists and Runnin' Riot. There's a lot to get through, with thirty-four tunes plus an intro, so taking it all in, in one sitting is a bit much. There're a few shortcomings here and there, but not enough to make you turn it off. I like the real D.I.Y. spirit about this! (PUNK SHIT RECORDS: 74 BRISTNALLHALL ROAD, OLDBURY, WEST MIDLANDS, B68 9TU, ENGLAND.)

VARIOUS ARTISTS "PUNKS, SKINS & RUDE BOYS NOW! VOL. 12". (GARAZ)

Rounding up the current sounds that are rocking the Garaz headquarters, this is another CD given away with the awesome Polish fanzine, that covers the ground between Punk, Reggae and Rockability. Agnostic Front are probably the name band here who contribute "Piece" from the earlier Nuclear Blast crossover release that was "Another Voice". This CD also features the likes of Anti Dread, Blisterhead, Bottlejob, The Monsters and The Hunks, alongside a video from Vespa, which repeatedly caused my computer to crash when I tried playing it. Twenty-six pieces of music in total with most, if not all, being highly listenable. (GARAZ FANZINE: P.O. BOX 184, 71-507 SZCZECIN 5, POLAND.)

VARIOUS ARTISTS "PUNKX UNITE: LEADERS OF TODAY". (CHARGED)

Not too sure what the "leaders" part to the title is supposed to imply, when it's a given



that most Punk bands spend half their time chanting about not having any ... but this is a stunning thirty-two band collection of modern day Street Punk that has something to do with The Casualties from what I make out. Jake Casually contributes the brief liner notes and the band also make an appearance here as the opening act with the song "Rebel". The idea of this compilation is to reflect on and highlight where we are today as regards Street Punk bands and I've got to be honest, if this is anything to go by, that's a pretty good place to be. The Briggs track "Songs For Us" is captivating, likewise for the Street Brats, Cranked Up, The Forgotten, A Global Threat and The Homewreckers. This is a good overview of some bands worth looking out for, who're worthy of your time. (CHARGED RECORDS: P.O. BOX 3118, JERSEY CITY, NEW JERSEY, 07303-3118, U.S.A.)

VARIOUS ARTISTS "SMASH THE STATES". (SUICIDE WATCH)
Thirty-five bands and the only one I'm familiar with is My So Called Band, who kick open the doors on this compilation out of North Carolina. The overdriven sound of most appearances here suggests the label is operating from a grass roots level and eager to catch the ear of the avid Street Punker out there. Nothing fancy at all here, as these bands bulldoze their way through the songs, checking in with the odd Thrash/Crust outfit along the route. Sure, this CD has a couple instances where it starts to run together, but that's unavoidable when you cram this many bands onto a single disc. There's enough good stuff to be found on here, most of it coming in the Garage Punk and Oi! format. Be patient, stick it out and the rewards are there. (SUICIDE WATCH RECORDS: P.O. BOX 9599, CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA, 28229, U.S.A.)

VARIOUS ARTISTS "WARPED TOUR 2005 COMPILATION". (SIDE 1 DUMMY)

Two CD bumper compilation here documenting the bands that are appearing on the Warped Tour this summer. Of course anyone familiar with the entity that is the Warped Tour will be firmly aware of the good, the bad and the ugly that accompanies it. Dropkick Murphys, Hot Water Music, Street Dogs and Flogging Molly make for some good listening this time out. There're a whole host of bands here I've previously not been exposed to, but most tend to fit into that Warped Tour sound, which is fast becoming a genre on its own. It's a good idea to have a low-priced CD like this out there, so people can arm themselves with something on the bands before the gigs. There's no information in the booklet of this, just a list of contacts, so it's a lucky dip of bands, which I think is a good thing. Great to hear some vintage Offspring with "Beheaded" here. (SIDE 1 DUMMY: P.O. BOX 2350, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, 90078, U.S.A.)

THE VARUKERS "THE PUNK SINGLES 1982 - 1985". (ANAGRAM)

I can handle the Varukers in small doses. They always wanted to be Discharge, that much is clear, but didn't most of 'em in 1982 in the U.K? Rat took it to extremes though and ended up joining bloody Discharge last year! This brings together the band's recorded 7 inch's from the 1981 period through 1985, which, for those of you who aren't familiar with the band, made up their glory years. The Varukers have never pulled any punches, keeping their anti-everything message forthright and direct. The Varukers are a political punk band, without politicising their all-inclusive scene if that makes sense. They put it bluntly in your face, in the hope of making people react. The style of The Varukers hasn't varied much with time, with perhaps just their recording budget being raised slightly. Twenty-four songs of gravel-voiced Mohawk Punk Rock, rough n' ready musicianship with some melody to lend it pleasantness. The fact the this band is still around today shows their hearts are in it. (ANAGRAM RECORDS: UNIT 3A, LONG ISLAND HOUSE, WARPLE WAY,

ACTON, LONDON W3 0RG, ENGLAND.)

THE VARUKERS "THE RIOT CITY YEARS". (STEP-1 MUSIC)

Joining the game a little later on, this collection from Step-1 Music, takes in the Riot City years of The Varukers. Having released 2 EP's on labels elsewhere, The Varukers then made the move to join the Riot City collective, which by all means was the best home they could have possibly found for their music. By 1983 the band were well on their way to becoming household names amongst the studs n' leather youth of England. This CD follows them from their "Die For Your Government" single till their parting of ways with the Riot City label. This does exactly as it promises; a nice way to pull all their output from a certain era onto a single album. This band is best enjoyed as a few short, sharp blasts at a time, as a twenty-five-track CD of much the same style and tempo can get tedious after fifteen minutes or so. (STEP-1 MUSIC: P.O. BOX 21, TENTERDEN, KENT, TN30 7ZZ, U.K.)

VICE SQUAD "THE RIOT CITY YEARS". (STEP-1 MUSIC)

There's always room in my life for a bit of Vice Squad. Becky Bondage has one of the greatest and most recognisable Punk voices in history. Vice Squad are the band most synonymous with the Riot City label, I think it fair to say. They released a lot of their best material through the label and one look at the track list on this compilation verifies that. There're a couple of demos included here as well and three numbers recorded under the pseudonym of The Sex Aids. Vice Squad sound unstoppable on a lot of the songs contained and had that untamed ferocious energy that seemed to dwindle slightly in their latter years. Some essential Punk Rock listening here, compiled by the Captain, with liner notes inked by Shane Baldwin. Vice Squad done rather well for the Riot City label before parting ways with them and notched up more than a few chart positions with their releases back in the early eighties. Seems strange today that something like that could happen, doesn't it? (STEP-1 MUSIC: P.O. BOX 21, TENTERDEN, KENT, TN30 7ZZ, U.K.)

THE VIOLATORS "THE NO FUTURE YEARS". (CAPTAIN OIL)

A band long overdue a No Future round up is the excellent Violators, who signed with the label in and around the 1981 mark for their contribution of two tracks to the label's "Country Fit For Heroes" compilation. The Violators shared vocal technique between male and female nicely gave a distinctive slant to their music, that ranged from sharp, up tempo numbers such as "Government Stinks" to the more atmospheric "Die With Dignity" which contains gothic overtones ala Souxsie And the Banshees and late-phase Blitz. Lyrically The Violators veered toward the darker side of life in the late 70's and early 80's and because of it set themselves marginally apart from the pack. There're some right crackers here to sink your teeth into. "Summer Of '81", "Live Fast Die Young" and their final moment in the sun, "Crossings Of Sangsara". The band resurfaced with an altered line up under the guise of Taboo, who also feature here with three tracks. The disc is topped off with a handful of alternative takes and live cuts. Full liner notes as ever and excellent reproductions of old single and album artwork. (CAPTAIN OIL RECORDS: P.O. BOX 501, HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS, HP10 8QA, ENGLAND.)

VMW "VMW". (COALITION)

Electro Punk in the spirit of Ministry, P.I.L. and Killing Joke, but even more aggressive and containing lyrical themes that tend to focus on sex. I don't think the two girls snorting coke on the cover are actually in the band, but a nice shot nonetheless! I'm not usually one for drum machines but when you abuse them as much as this band does it kind of gives them a whole new life. Song titles like, "Suck It And See", "All

Lubed Up, Nowhere To Go", and "Favourite Hooker" should give you the slightest inkling as to what this band are all about. I love carefree music that fucks with the politically correct and this band's attitude points in all the right directions for me. (COALITION RECORDS: NEWTONSTR. 212, 2562 KW DEN HAAG, THE NETHERLANDS.)

YOUTH GROUP "SOMEONE ELSE'S DREAM". (EPITAPH)

Psychedelic Pop that delivers much more than the initial promise suggested. If the press release is to be believed, Youth Group are an institution in their native Australia. This is a neatly packaged four-track sampler for their upcoming "Skeleton Jar" album, which places itself somewhere between Dinosaur Jr. The Breeders and The Byrds. There's also a video clip included in the enhanced section of the CD. (EPITAPH RECORDS: P.O. BOX 10574, 1001 EN AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS.)

YOUTH GROUP "SHADOWLAND". (EPITAPH)

Here's another CD single from Youth Group, also lifted off the "Skeleton Jar" album. It features the title track and accompanying video, along with a further two songs not contained on the album which amounts to good value for money. Youth Group appear to have one foot in the Anti imprint of the Epitaph label, which would give the assumption that the band are aimed at a more left of centre following. Musically this follows a similar and traditional path to what I've heard previously from them and has the potential to affect the audience of bands like Sonic Youth and the Breeders. (EPITAPH RECORDS: P.O. BOX 10574, 1001 EN AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS.)

YOUTH GROUP "SKELETON JAR". (EPITAPH)

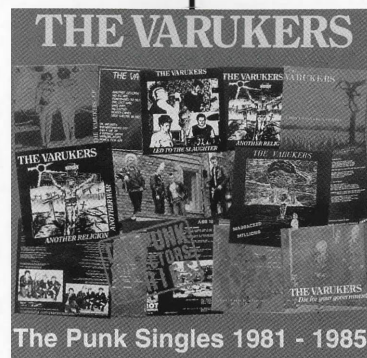
... and last but not least comes the full length album. For those that have followed the above CD singles, this contains no surprises, but gives us a better idea of what the bigger picture holds in store. Youth Group stick to a mellow guitar jangle throughout and though you're expecting them to break off into a guitar feedback frenzy any minute ala Swervedriver or Sonic Youth it never happens, which in itself is more surprising. There's a certain innocence and beauty in Youth Group's music that's difficult to pass up. At times you feel as though they're overly sentimental and just too wimpy, but at the same time if you view it in a similar light to some of Neil Young's stuff, it takes on a whole new dimension. I'm not sure if I'd stand in a field, watching a band like this perform at some open-air festival, but they do prove their worth on this album. I guess the future will tell which niche they slot into easiest. (EPITAPH RECORDS: P.O. BOX 10574, 1001 EN AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS.)

THE ZERO POINT "SELF-TITLED". (SELF-RELEASED)

Danish pogo Punk from The Zero Point - a band celebrating twenty-five years together as a band. This is a six-track CD and from what I can make out only the first track, "Life's A Bitch" was recorded recently, with the remaining five numbers dating back to 1983. On the whole they've got a few decent ideas here and there, but nothing too earth shattering, just your basic Punk strut guitar songs. They carry it off reasonably well and are perhaps hometown heroes, but as an outsider and first time listener, this doesn't really tweak much with me. (www.thezeropoint8k.com)

ZSK "WE ARE THE KIDS". (BITZCORE)

ZSK certainly do appear to be Germany's answer to Anti-Flag, as I recently read in another review of this CD. The animal rights, political activist shit is over the top for me, and much the same as Anti-Flag, the music suffers because of it. Encouraging people to think is all well and good, but telling them how to think is the wrong way to go. ZSK want to change the world and have everyone think like themselves, but unfortunately this will never happen and as long as we're born with minds of our own, it's nice to think we can choose for ourselves on how we want to live and not wait for a bunch of adolescents in their latest Punk band to decide these issues for us. (BITZCORE RECORDS: P.O. BOX 30 41 07, D-20324, HAMBURG, GERMANY.)



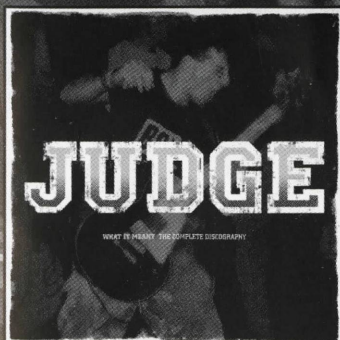
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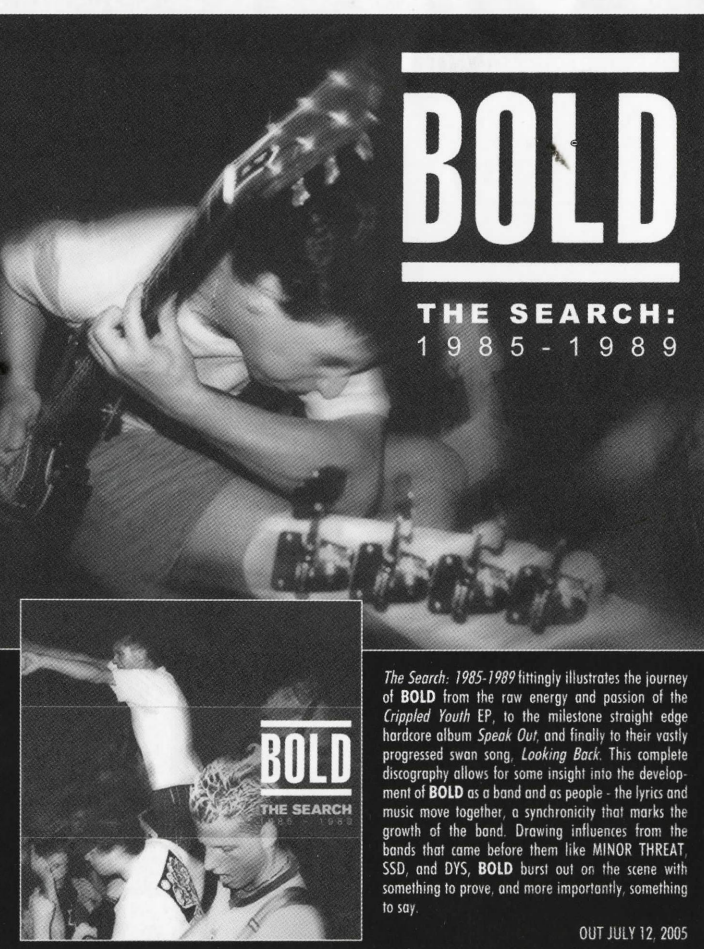
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