

BIG WHEEL

MAGAZINE



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THU DEC 1

THE BRIEFS

CLIT 45

NEON MANIA THROWN VERSE

SAT DEC 3

EXHUMED
(Insanctified)
LIVIN' ON THE
EDGE

SUN DEC 4

MENTAL EATEN ALIVE
LOCK DOWN

BLACKLISTED IRON AGE HERO

MON DEC 5

MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD
WITH HONOR
MODERN LIFE IS WAR
THE DISTANCE THIS IS HELL

WED DEC 7

ADORA
a danger team
THE HOPE
OF CHANGE
XBlood On Your HandsX

FRI DEC 9

REFLUX
ED. GEIN
ANIMOSITY
August Burns Red
BLACK HOLIDAY

SAT DEC 10

NAKED THE EYELINERS
AGGRESSION THE DIFFS
ALL OR NOTHING HC Die Young

SUN DEC 11

SHOWCASE
SHOWDOWN
QUALIFIER
STONE FOX
SILENT MINORITY
A BLOODY EPITAPH
UNDER THE DARKNESS
PURITY
THROUGH ACTS OF
VENGEANCE
DEMACOGIA
DEATH IN PROGRESS

TUE DEC 13

GLEN MATLOCK
FORMERLY OF THE SEX PISTOLS
THE HITZ
RAGNAROK
BACK TO ZERO

MON DEC 12

EMBRACE
TODAY
SEVENTH STAR DEATHSTAR
EVERYMANFORHIMSELF BLOOD ON OUR
HANDS

THU DEC 15

SLAB THE
DISFUNCTIONALS
P.X.K. BAD★DECISION

SAT DEC 17

SHOWCASE
SHOWDOWN
FINAL ROUND
TRAGIM - NIGLEKT
ROSES AT DAWN
COERGE - FENMORE
PULLS THE TRIGGER
BLESSED ARE THE DEAD
BLOOD RUNS COLD
LEAVE ME BROKEN
DEATH IS ETERNAL

FRI DEC 16

KNOCK-OUT
The Guilty Parties C.I.P.
SOUL ROCK super
AFFILIATES nothing
SPECIAL TROPICAL
GUESTS SKILLS

FRI DEC 23

CAREER SOLDIERS HOLKAUST
46 SHORT RABIES NO REFORM
HOMESICK
ABORTIONS

MON DEC 26

THE FUNERAL PYRE
LIGHT THIS CITY
ANTAGONIST
PLAGUE OF SHEOL
THE TASTE OF BLOOD
Dark Haven

THU DEC 29

HAVOC
RYAN VONX
THE RECKONING

FRI DEC 30

DIVIDE THE DAY
HEAVY HEAVY LOW LOW
IN ASHES WE LIE
HYACINTH
ORANGEBURG
MASSACRE

SUN JAN 15

Dead
ion/DISSONANCE
fate thirteen
plus special guests

SAT JAN 21

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SUN JAN 22

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SHOWS

Dec 3 - Black Power Records Night With The Fadeaways - Loogie - Fuck Bunny - Temper Tantrum

Dec 4 - Crash Coarse - Simon Says Die - Dirt Bag - Wasted Society - Bad Influence - Pogo Brats - Worthless Media

Dec 5 - Metal Mondays!

Dec 6 - OC Toons - The Nixon Years - Milestone

Dec 7 - Disdain 11.30 - DMP 10.30 - Simon Says Die 9.30 - The Resistors 8.30 - Lower Class Kids 7.30pm

Dec 8 - Nothing Yet 12.30 - Red On Strike 11.00 - Big Mess 9.30 - Simmer 8.00pm

Dec 9 - All Female Band Night! - Ballentine 11.30 - The Misfortunes 10.30 - The Switchblade Kittens 9.30 - Shelby Rocks 8.30pm

Dec 10 - Punk Rock Social Live - Holiday show! - The Dollyrots 12.30 - Los Creepers 11.00 - A-Bomb Nation 9.30 - The Quirks 8.00pm

Dec 11 - Made On Malice 9.00 - Chefshot 7.30pm

Dec 12 - Metal Monday www.anarchymetalmonday.com

Dec 13 - Louis & The Joey G. Band Hosting an Open Mic Blues Jam, Starts at 8pm

Dec 14 - Black Market Radio 10.30 - Placed 9.30 - Plastic Parachute 8.30 - Bob knows Best 7.30pm

Dec 15 - The Outfit 12.30 - Chronic Remorse 11.00pm - Lunch Box specials 9.30pm

Dec 16 - Honkey Tonk Night with: - The Spahn Ranch Boys and more!

Dec 17 - Special appearance by

Sex Pistols bass player Glen Matlock performing originals and Sex Pistol songs! \$10 cover

Primma donna, Chuy Poluka and The Bar Room Junkies (with members of Litmus Green, Total Chaos, and Divisia) - Not a Chance - Caffeine Scream (featuring Billy Ledges the original singer/song writer of Mad Parade) - Donkey Punch - BSS - Mafia Rusa - Death March pm

Dec 18 - Agent Orange, \$10 cover - St Mary, One Big Lie, Justified Anger, SideKick

Dec 21 - XONE 11.30 - Lemon Drop Kick 10.30 - The Jennifer Project 9.30 - Riverside Drive 8.30 - Modern Day Superhero 7.30pm

Dec 22 - Joe Strummers Birthday Tribute! - The Arc Welders, The Skanksters

Jan 27 - The Ramonas (All female Ramones Cover) - American Idiot (Green Day Cover)

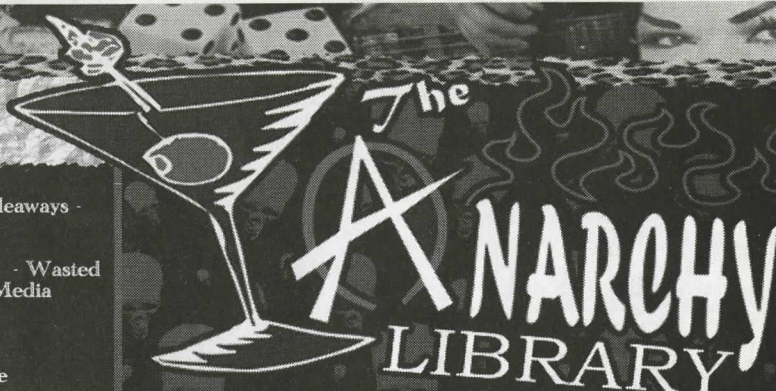
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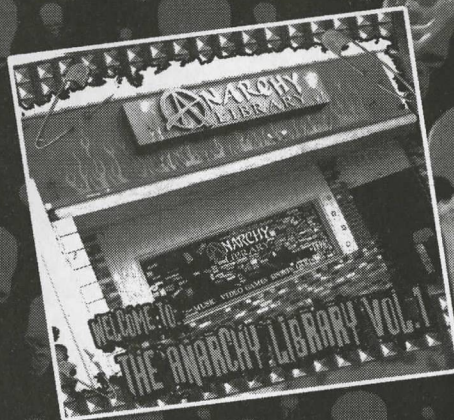
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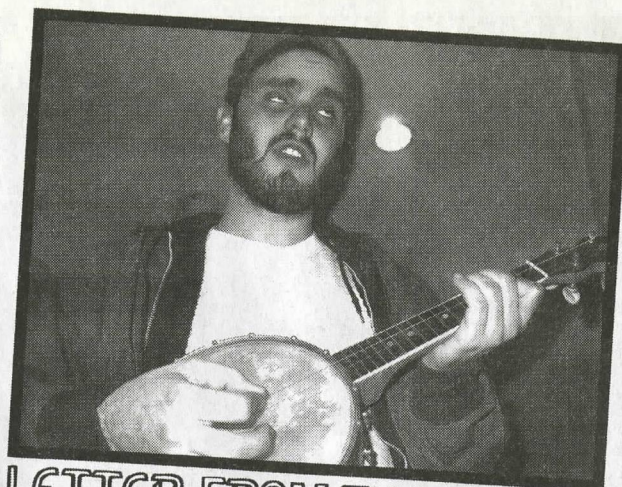
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to Big Wheel's Fourth issue! Like my previous editor's letters, I will babble about myself. My folks celebrated their 33rd wedding anniversary this past November. My parents met when my dad was playing drums at a casino and my mom was a black jack dealer. My mom had forgotten her glasses that day and she was squinting. My dad thought she was giving him the eye. That's how they met. My dad tried to put things into perspective for me. He said, "Joe, it took me 33seconds to realize that I'd found my wife, now of 33 years. But my first marriage of seven years seemed like 77, so be careful". Wise words pop. In other news from the world of Balls, I recently discovered a new form of birth control. It's called "Sleep at your Friend's House who has a Baby". It works, but the "Sleep" part is a farce. Oh, and who can forget the holidays? This year I've decided to do something different with my gift giving. Since I'm broke as a joke, my presents will all be homemade with every expense spared. I will put as much time into my gifts as possible, and I'm sure they will be as well received as any store bought gift, right? I mean, would you rather receive the blue prints for the perfect burrito or the Star Wars dvd? Well, I wasn't going to get that for you anyway!

Now that it's been a few months I can take a step back and look at what Big Wheel is, and is becoming. I have to say I like it a lot. Sure it's a biased opinion, but I have my reasons. I mean, hell, I still barely know what I'm really doing at all with this thing, but we've been able to publish this mag every month. As a means to separate ourselves from a myriad of music publications we've decided to go preview. What does that mean? Well, we are pretty much distributed exclusively in California. So next month, in our January issue, we will feature bands that have shows in California that month. Along with a few words describing the band, dates and locations of where the shows take place will be included. This way, we can cover as much ground as we want and not stick to any one kind of music or genre and get the word out to everyone where, what, who, and when. Why? Because we love underground music. We support independent thought. We want to support bands that play because the normality of life suck balls. We want people to go out and support the underground, we want bands to be successful and we want everyone to feel that way too. We live in California, so we'll start here. Big Wheel will still have reviews and skating. We will still have typos. I will still write self absorbed editor's letters about my family. And we'll be able to sneak in a lot more up and comers and the advertisers won't even know it! So while there are still bands who play loud fast emotionally charged angst driven soul shattering mind boggling anything they fucking want to music in California Big Wheel will be there to let you know all about it. Until next time, have a Ballstic New Year!

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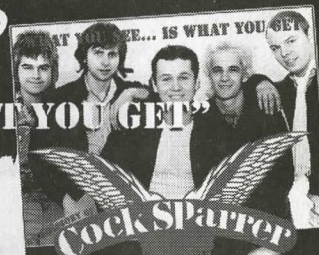
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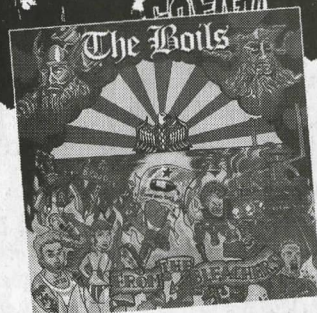


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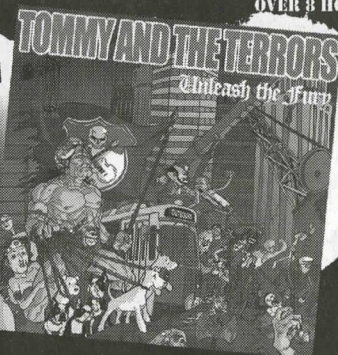
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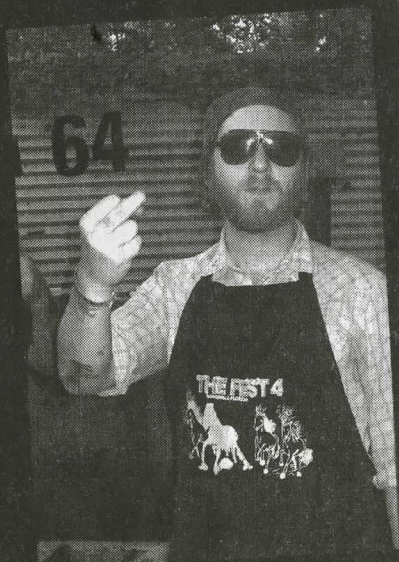
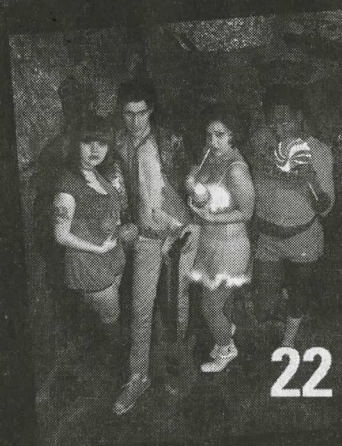
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Scotch Greens

INTERVIEW BY: MIKE SENYO

Everyone hop in the truck because we're going to a place called the wild west where only the Scotch Greens know the way. Fused with the influences of 80's punk and country, the Scotch Greens can kick your ass in a mosh pit or do it the old fashioned way in an all out brawl, saloon style. What says punk rock more than a banjo in a punk rock band? That's right absolutely nothing. I was able to talk to Zander Cox, vocals and guitar. What you need to know is that the Scotch Greens were originally formed in Ketchum, Idaho and then moved to San Diego where they currently reside. I'll fill in the rest. The Scotch Greens will be touring Europe with Throw Rag and Gogol Bordello all through December.

Big Wheel: How was the latest tour with Throw Rag and Gogol Bordello?

Zander: It was fucking great. We played every night five weeks straight. Usually all of our tours are a week or two but this tour, this is what it's all about. Those are two great bands to tour with.

BW: How did you guys start out in Idaho?

Zander: It was just the two of us (Zander and Wes, lead guitar) all the shows that came into town were really random like fucking Guttermouth or some shit like that. When you find good music who wants to listen to that?

BW: Why did you guys move from Idaho to San Diego?

Zander: As we developed we knew in Idaho that we were kind of cut off as far as a scene. The scene there is very non-existent and not very big there. I grew up listening to 70's and 80's punk and then when I got older I found guys like Hank Snow and Hank Williams obviously we wanted to expand our music and our crowd, that's how we ended up in San Diego. Does that answer the question?

BW: You guys are on Brass Tack/ DRT Records where the Street Dogs run things, how did you hook up with the Dogs?

Zander: Well Mike McColgan heard us from a buddy of his. Then funny enough we have the same manager so Mike asked his manager if he had ever heard of the Scotch Greens and he said, "What the fuck, yeah, I fucking manage them." We were playing a couple of shows at Molly Malone's in Los Angeles. Mike came and he heard us and that's kind of how it started.

BW: Does it help having someone that's in a band such as the Dogs run the label because they understand what the whole thing is about?

Zander: It's a combination of both. They're the founders and, what's the word I'm looking for, they're the guys that have that final say. They dig our music and they get that we're doing the same thing as then when it comes to sounding different. You really can't ask for much more.

BW: How did those shows at Molly Malone's come about?

Zander: We have that connection with Flogging Molly. Everyone knows Flogging Molly started there so we had that connection and it just worked out with the tour we were doing at the time.

BW: How are the Scotch Greens bringing something different to the table?

Zander: We just go for it and play our songs. We don't go in to shows worried about that shit. If we have fun when we play it doesn't matter who is in the audience. They'll see that and get into it.

BW: How does a Scotch Greens song come about?

Zander: A lot of different ways. I write the lyrics. It's a lot of recycling. A constant shuffle of ideas and then we work on them and re-work them here and there. We pretty much work it until we're happy.

BW: How does Professional differ from your previous record?

Zander: It's night and day. Now we know what we're doing, the last record we didn't know what we were doing. I take that back, we knew what we were doing we just had a lack of experience. We really stuck to turning it up loud on both records.

BW: How did the western style of music get into the sound of the Scotch Greens?

Zander: Like I said before I started listening to Hank Snow and guys like that. It was just Hank Snow and punk melting together because that's all we wanted to listen to.

BW: How do people react at first seeing a banjo come in to the band?

Zander: People don't see it too often but when we start playing they love it. It adds flavor. Now when we play down in San Diego when we're tuning it up for sound check everyone just goes nuts over it and screams.

BW: How do you think the Scotch Greens fit into the scene?

Zander: I think that the more people know about more music that it's great for them. Everything is pretty much always the same. Kids start hearing our music they get into more traditional music and it opens up a history to them.

BW: What should everyone know about the Scotch Greens?

Zander: We want to have fun plug in and just play loud. Do not take us lightly we're just getting warmed up.





FLIPPER

INTERVIEW BY: **BEN EDGE**

Flipper was never the flavor of a month. When they formed in San Francisco in 1979, with Bruce Loose, Ted Falconi, and former Negative Trend members Steve DePace and Will Shatter, Flipper were immediately treated like outcasts from a scene of supposed outcasts. Their brand of slow, repetitious, abrasive music (dubbed "pet rock") sounded like nails on a chalkboard to some, but won them a devout following within the underground. Will Shatter died of a heroin overdose in 1987, and the same fate befell his replacement John Dougherty ten years later. Flipper had a brief brush with the big leagues, signing to Def American Records in the early 90s, at a time when the band's sound was becoming an obvious influence for the Seattle "grunge" scene. Flipper returned this year after a decade-long hiatus.

10/29/05: Playing a violence-riddled show at the Grand Olympic Auditorium in Downtown LA, with the likes of Suicidal Tendencies, Germs, Fear, and Marky Ramone,

Flipper gives everyone a lesson in brutality. Bruce Loose, clearly not in good health, walks out with the aid of a cane, and sits down between songs, but belts out classics like "Sacrifice" and "Sex Bomb" with the sheer power of five hardcore vocalists combined. Half way through the set, he asks the audience, "You wanna see something scary?," and proceeds to take his shirt off to reveal that his torso is wired up to a trans-electrical neuro stimulator, which is used to help him cope with his sciatic nerve damage.

10/30/05: I sit down with all three surviving original members in their hotel room in Hollywood...

BW: Give me your names and the instrument you play.

S: My name is Steve DePace. I play drums.

T: Ted. I play guitar.

B: My name's Bruce Loose. I sing and play bass, occasionally.

BW: How would you say the show went last

night?

S: It was good. I liked it, I had fun. I usually... I think it went well from my perspective. I think it went well. Ted? It was a lot of fun...

T: (to Bruce) Go ahead, you could talk for us

B: No! I'm allowing you to talk, Ted.

Ted walks out of the room and closes the door behind him. Bruce makes a face at him.

B: I had a real good time. Quite surprised at how much the fascination in the scene for this style of music has gotten, because I've really been out of contact and it's really incredible to me to see. I really had no idea that it had gotten to this stage of popularity. The music, the shows, the people, and it's not just punks coming out. It's everybody. It's very surprising to me.

S: There was this group of small kids there last night.

B: Yeah, The Fins. And they're a Flipper tribute band.

BW: A cover band?

S: They all were wearing their handmade

Flipper shirts. They were cool as shit.

BW: You played with the Germs before, you mentioned. Can you describe what that was like, and when that was?

B: That was when he was with . . . not with the Germs necessarily, The Darby Crash Band.

S: Oh yeah! We did play with Darby Crash. Yeah. The Darby Crash Band.

B: [to Steve] Didn't The [Negative] Trend play with the Germs at all?

S: Not that I recall. No.

B: I mean, those shows were all so happening all the time at Mabuhay [Gardens, an early SF punk club], it's hard to remember which ones were with who.

BW: So Flipper is notorious for making audiences annoyed and upset. Did you seek this kind of reaction, or was it unexpected?

B: No. We just played the music we played,

S: We're gonna do more shows.

BW: Why have you decided to start being more active now?

B: Well, I hurt myself in '95, and [I've had a] continued back injury throughout my life, and I kind of threw the straw at the camel's back, and I've been out of it. Seriously, you're crumpled up, healing, dealing with it. All this other stuff. A breakdown in '95, I was having to face a child custody battle, shit like that. I couldn't go up and say, "Oh I'm a punk rocker, duh duh duh," and win my son back. There's no way. So unfortunately that coincided with the straw that broke the camel's back. So, it kind of put a dent in things for a little while. I'm really happy to be back, doing what feels good.

S: What kind of prompted us getting back together again was the call that we got from

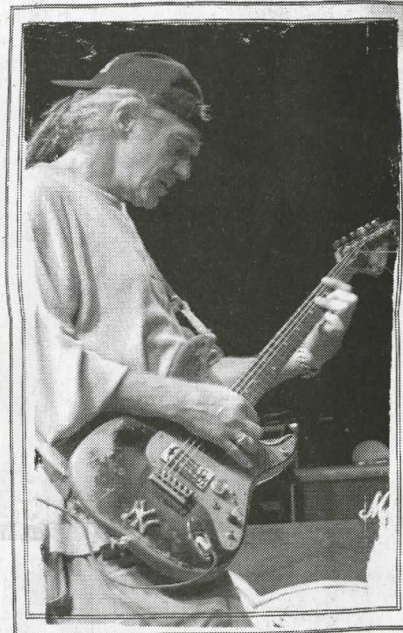
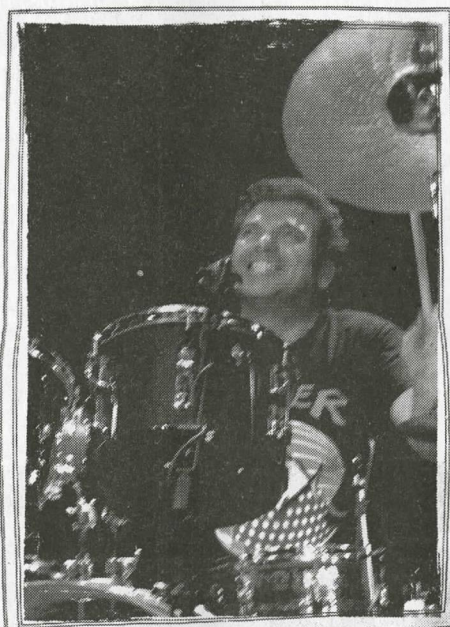
Everlasting Teenageism" or you know, whatever initials you want to make up for it. It was kind of a joke. It was kind of a thing to say, "We're pet rock," rather than being punk rock, because punk rock was starting to define itself into that hardcore thing, and only that hardcore thing. So I kind of tried to get this thing to get other bands going into pet rock and you know, finally people are kind of picking up on it and stuff, you know. I don't know. It was a silly joke but it still sticks.

BW: So, who else would fit into the "pet rock" category?

B: I don't know these days.

BW: But, back then.

B: Oh, back then the bands that were definitely "pet rock" bands would be like Animal Things, The Wounds, Flipper of course, um... [to Steve] what were those kids from Concord?



and let the audience react how they wanted. And the people that are upset and all that other stuff – well there's just as many people on the other side of the spectrum that love us and like us and all that other stuff, you know. It might be a smaller group, but it's more intense than the people that are upset by us. And usually the people that are upset by us, if they catch as at a good set, they probably go, "Oh! THAT'S what you guys are doing." I was surprised as hell because the security people up there were hardcore homeboy people, don't want to fuck around. They were giving me the thumbs up and shit! I was freaked out. These hardcore homeboys and shit. It was a trip.

BW: Is Flipper back together for a few shows, or back together for the long haul?

B: We've never been apart, we've just been dysfunctional.

CBGBs to come out and do a couple of shows to help them in their "Save CBGBs" effort."

BW: So you're having Michael Belfer from the Sleepers playing bass for you now?

B: Let's just call him "Michael Belfer." He's a musician of his own fame.

S: He filled in last night. The New York shows, we had a different guy playing with us - Bruno DeMartis, whose toured with us before, and played with us before, and filled in before. Both of those guys go back to very early with us.

BW: So Michael's not a permanent member?

B: I don't know. I'm ready to hire him.

BW: Tell me about the "pet rock" sound. How would you describe it and how it came about?

B: "Pet rock" is like you know "Punk Existential Terrorism" or "Perpetually Everlasting Turbulence" or it's "Perpetually

S: What about Fright Wig?

B: Yeah, Fright Wig. That was an all-girl "pet rock" band. GOD was kind of like that. That was another all-girl band. They were also Flipper, kind of sound-alike bands and stuff. And the "pet rock" movement wasn't to be a sound-alike of a group; it was just being a diversity . . . an intensity of stuff. So it wasn't like a . . . it was half a joke, and half reality.

BW: Nirvana sited Flipper as an inspiration. Did it surprise you that being as anti-commercial sounding as you are, that you were instrumental in influencing one of the most popular rock bands of all time?

B: Well, yes and no. But, I mean you have to realize that they were a produced and manufactured band...

S: I don't think that's fair to say.

B: Well they did recognize Kurt's talent, and they manipulated it.

S: I don't think so... from what I've read and from what I've heard about it.

B: I don't know too much about it.

BW: Did you meet him, or any of those guys?

S: I have never met...

B: I met the bass player and I forgot his name...

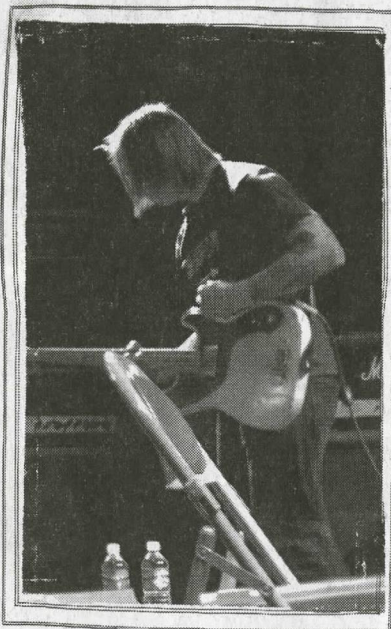
S: Krist Novaselic.

B: Kris, yeah. I went down to the Tropicana and tried to meet up with them. Of course Courtney had Kurt locked up in some other hotel somewhere else. I went to that show, and that was when Pat was playing with them. Pat Smear.

BW: Did professional wrestler Hillbilly Jim really wear Flipper t-shirts?

B: I have no idea. I don't even know who that is.

S: Who is that?



BW: You never heard this?

S: We haven't heard of that, no.

BW: I saw this on some web site that I think was like a Flipper fan site. Hillbilly Jim was a pro-wrestler in the 80s, and his whole thing was he dressed in overalls and he was like a hillbilly. I think he even wrestled barefoot. And he wore a big horse shoe around his neck. This web site says in the early days of Hillbilly Jim, he wore Flipper shirts.

S: Wow.

BW: It might have even said you guys knew him, but I guess that's bullshit. I don't know how much truth there is to that.

B: There's a lot of stuff on the web that's incorrect about us.

S: Flipper is a band that has always been surrounded by a lot of folklore.

B: And controversy.

S: And legend stuff, that's bigger than it really is...

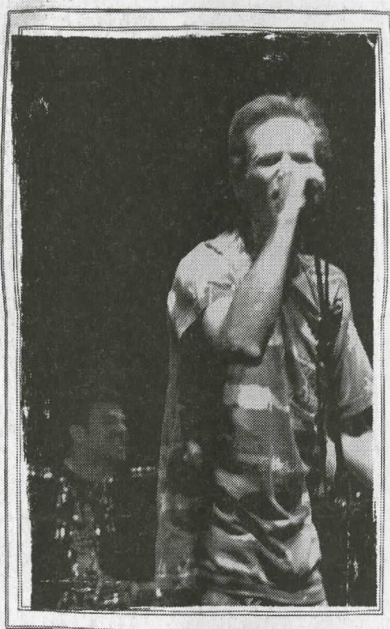
B: Our reputation pre-precedes us.

BW: Tell me about Moby filling in for Will Shatter in '82.

B: He just walked up and he was like, "Are you gonna play this song? Are you gonna play that song?" And I said, "No, Will sings that song, I don't know the lyrics. I play the bass on those." And he goes, "Oh! Show me the bass lines and I'll play the bass, and you could sing!" Something like that happened, and I just went, "No, I'm not gonna show him my bass lines," [laughs].

S: So you specifically remember?

B: Yeah. Oh yeah. ... 10 years later he goes, "Oh, I was in Flipper, and I stage dived off and I was carried on my back." None of that shit happened back then. This was 1982 in Connecticut.



S: You know how when people do their resumes, they like to embellish, and it makes it look good. So, he's been using that particular episode on his resume for 20 years, and his resume is as long as your arm. Everybody he's met, talked with, did anything with for 5 minutes... Now I don't know whether the journalist fucked that up. I think he said he was...

B: I think Moby was embellishing, because he embellishes so much shit. If you've ever seen any of his documentaries, he's always sitting back stage in a robe, acting like, "Where's my whores and the coke?" and all this stuff, just putting on a show. He just embellishes shit to all hell.

S: So anyway, you know.

BW: So basically, to set the record straight, he sang three songs at one show, once.

B: It might not even have been three songs. He got up on stage and sang. We let anybody do that.

S: We always had people coming up and singing, or playing saxophone, or whatever. So it was a situation like that, which then...

B: Got embellished.

BW: How did Flipper end up working with Rick Rubin and Def American Records in the early 90s?

B: Well, Rick presented himself as a fan when we first came to New York.

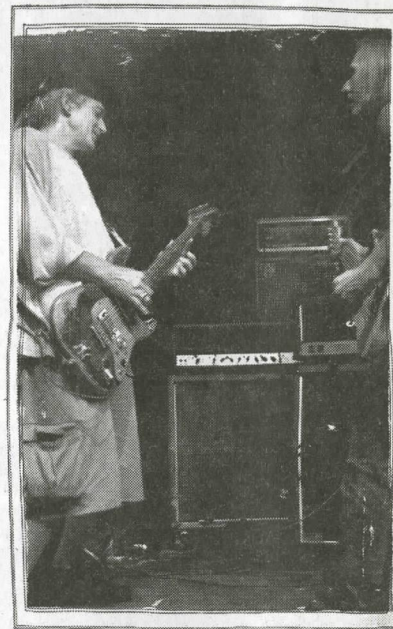
S: He was a fan.

B: Yeah, he was a fan.

S: The very first time we came to New York, he was an opening act at the Mud Club. The very first time. And I didn't even meet him that night.

BW: His band?

S: Yeah, he was in a band called Hose.



BW: He played guitar?

S: Yeah. And he was up on stage with his band, played at the Mud Club. The very first time we went to New York. And then everytime... I didn't even meet him that night, but I did meet the Beastie Boys that night. Rick was a fan, he always used to come to the CBGBs shows, he was at every show and then, you know, at that exact time...

B: He came out to San Francisco.

S: Yeah he did, he toured with Hose. And he got one of my roommates, Sweet, to fill in and play bass or something.

B: You know something funny? Someone sent me an article that Rick Rubin had done, in an interview, that they said they came out to California because they thought they could break some way into the business through knowing me, and they mentioned my name

directly, and like, "What? I'm not gonna..."[laughs].

S: To trace how we got involved, I mean he was a fan during all of the Def Jam era. Then in 1988, I think, he broke ties with Def Jam, moved to LA, and started Def American Records. He was moving away from the hip-hop stuff, and he took Slayer with him, was like the only band he took with him off Def Jam label. And he was working with the likes of, oh, what's the demonic guy?

BW: Danzig.

S: Danzig... Yeah. He was working with more rock stuff. And at that time in 1988, when he started Def American, Flipper was not happening, because Will Shatter died in '87. So during that interim, he moved here, started up his new label, and then around 1990, Flipper reformed with John Dougherty, and we did a couple little singles, and started doing shows, and this, that, and the other, and I remember boxing up a little package of singles and t-shirts and crap, and mailed it to him, to let him know we were back up and running again. Because he wanted to actually sign us in the late 80s to Def Jam. These bands were going out there and doing showcases for him and coming back and going, "You gotta call Rick Rubin! He wants to sign you guys so bad!" This was like in '86. And we never did. Anyway, to make a long story short, 1990-'91 he expressed interest in signing us. We came down to Los Angeles and did a show at The Club With No Name, he came down and saw us play, and gave us the nod, and took us out to lunch the next day, and said, "I want to sign you." And that's what happened... And then [in] '92 he re-released *Generic*, and then in '93, our first newly recorded record came out – *American Grafishy*.

BW: Were upset that that PIL ripped off the *Generic Album* cover concept?

S: Biggest compliment anybody can pay you is to rip you off, right? [laughs]

B: Why do you think we put out *Public Flipper, LTD?* [a Flipper live LP]

BW: Right.

S: That was our answer.

BW: It's funny because he said once when he was in the Sex Pistols, "Imitation is the greatest form of *insult*."

B: Ah. I see. Mr. Lydon – *fuckus you!* **BW:** Did Will Shatter ever say anything to the extent of, "If you go on without me, that's fine," or was that ever discussed?

S: He died.

BW: Well I know that.

S: [laughing] Before he came to us in a séance...

B: [laughing] He wasn't like, "Uh, I don't mind if you go on anymore," [makes a

gesture like he's shooting heroin in his arm and then pretends to drop dead]. No, he didn't say anything.

BW: Okay.

B: It was really upsetting. It really fucked us up. Stevie was fucking crushed. It took me till 2001 or 2002 till it fucking really hit me. Then I was like, "Whoa!" I realized that I hadn't released that grief yet. That was one of those things. That was a hard moment, man. That was very hard. One thing, Will had this whole thing that he never wanted to sign to a major label, because he didn't want to get trapped into these positionings, he wanted artistic freedom. He hated business like this. You know "Fuck you," constantly. He was always crapping on critics and stuff like that, so they'd crap back onto us. That's where a lot of it came from... was Will's hatred of the industry.

BW: So he'd be fun to interview right now?

B: OOOH YEAH!

BW: Would I even get through the door?

B: You'd get through the door. It would be more like trying to keep him from running down the record company and killing everybody for not keeping the stuff out or something. I don't know. I don't know what he would do.

S: He was very cynical.

B: He was extremely cynical. He'd probably figure out some dirty trick to turn around and play on them, or something like that.

BW: By '79 or so, Dead Kennedys put out an album and they kind of blow up, kind of eclipse the rest of the San Francisco scene.

Was there a feeling that punk was moving in the direction of "faster, harder rules"?

S: That's what he [Bruce] was mentioning before, about how punk rock became this defined thing by hardcore. You know, fast. Everything was 99 miles an hour fast thrash, fast thrash, fast thrash. You had to be that to be punk, you know, and we weren't that. I remember, you mentioned DK's. I remember coming to play the Whisky, opening for Dead Kennedys in '79-'80, right when they were blowing up, right? And the Whisky – we did two shows – we were like Jello's favorite band out of San Francisco, so he invited us to be the one opening act for the show at the Whisky. We did two shows in one night, both sold out and the crowd came to see Dead Kennedys. And they were the hardcore crowd that came to see that fast shit. And we played our slow, grunge thing, and the entire audience stood there and didn't know what to make of us, right? They weren't there to see that, they were there to see the other thing. And they like didn't get it. So I remember looking out at this vast audience, and a lot of people were standing there, going [puts up his middle finger], like this, right? And it just inspired us to play even more. Louder, grungier, more just... we put on a great show and we turned them around. We had a ball. It was a fun night. That's what we were up against. The audiences that were into that punk thing.

flipperfriends@ispwest.com
www.myspace.com/flipper

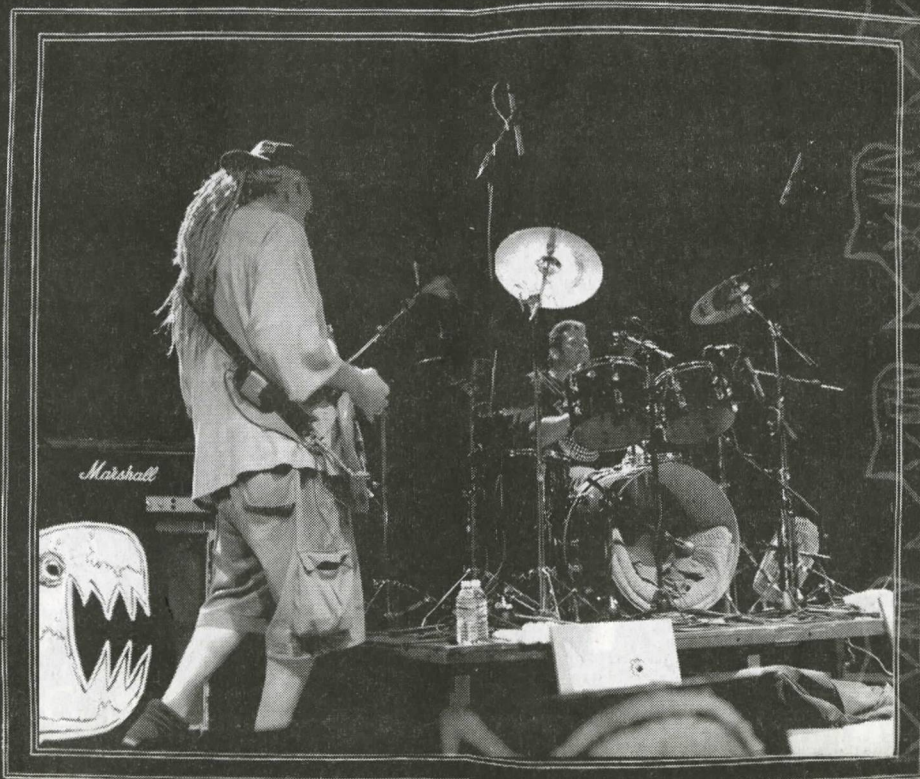


Photo: Lisa Johnson

THE APPLICATORS

STORY BY: DONNA BALUCHI

I'm currently compiling a list of things to do. People do this often, usually in an effort to make sure they don't forget anything they should do over the course of a day or week, and I'm no different in that aspect. So far I'm only up to four, and two are related so I may only have about three things to do but I'm trying to up my count by separating them. They are as follows:

1. Shower (stop putting this off, you smell. Bad)
2. Get an Oil Change.
3. Figure out why the Check Engine light came on for the first time in 15 years.
4. Write Big Wheel story.

If we're lucky, one of these things might get done today, simply because other people besides myself depend on the story. I'm sure other people depend on me to take a shower, but if I don't leave the house, they need not worry. And my car is probably counting on me too, but, once again, if I don't leave the house, everything is fine. You know, it's times like this when I wish I was really rich and really crazy, leaving me to do whatever I wanted. I could not shower for months and people would just say, "It's ok, she's rich and crazy. Leave her be." I could even devote entire days to teaching myself how to wiggle my ears.

Then there's the Applicators. If they were rich and crazy I bet they would be much more productive than myself and write music. Right now they aren't rich or crazy and already write some catchy melodic tunes. Yes, they are a girl band called the Applicators. As in tampons, the one sacred thing that will

to be on stage and be surrounded by women with me making more noise than any guy band would ever play." Sabrina knows what she's talking about, so she's also disproving stereotype that all women are also stupid.

Though this is their first US release, they have two other albums available in Europe that were recorded in 2003 in the United Kingdom (that's England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland for those of you without a college education). One of the songs on their US release, "My Weapon," was from the UK sessions. After spending a great deal of time in Europe, they managed to get a following from Berlin to Milan to Sicily. Looking at their Myspace page, I amazed to see all their comments coming from very grateful fans living in Italy, Germany, France, England and who knows where else.

The Applicators are currently not on a label and put out their current album themselves. Though many European labels were shopping for them, they essentially said, "Cry me a red river," and gave them the finger. "We just really wanted to write our own way and make our own records and shit," Sabrina told me. "We just said, 'You're trying to make a product out of us and that's not why we're playing music.'"

But their time in Europe did give them insight on the differences between the music scene in the US and the music scene out there. Us spoiled Americans get a good show twice a weekend but many European cities are lucky to get a good show come their way once a month. As Sabrina said, "People really

"We just said, 'You're trying to make a product out of us and that's not why we're playing music.'"

make any man squirm. These chicks not only visit their aunt flow monthly, but also play music. If they had a to-do list it would probably look something like this:

1. Rock loud.
2. Rock louder.
3. Buy tampons in bulk for next tour to save money.

I am also willing to put money on the fact that they would get it all done, too. So far, the only thing the Applicators and myself have in common is our monthly uterine lining sacrifice ritual. The band consists of Sabrina on vocals, Erica on guitar, Christina on bass, Teri Lord on drums and Cookie on guitar. Riding the bloody saddle from Austin, Texas, The Applicators fill the narrow margin between rock and punk, sounding like something between the Ramones and Motorhead. Only, you know, female. Their first US release *I Know the Truth* is available now for everyone to listen to during those lonely nights when Cleopatra's on her pyramid.

I got to chat a bit with Sabrina, the singer, and we dredged the love canal about what the Applicators are all about. They formed about seven years ago with one rule in mind- Be loud. "We're loud. That's the biggest compliment we get. The first time, when I was probably 17 or 18, I was like 'We're gonna have to be loud.'" said Sabrina. Even on the recording, their sound is definitely a loud one, which is respectable.

Many people would never think a girl band could be loud or rock as hard as guy bands. Even with bands like Blondie, the Runaways or the Plasmatics proving chicks can rock as hard, if not harder, than any man, stereotypes are still prevalent. One listen to the Applicators and any stereotypes about them are going to be dispelled. As with many girl bands emerging nowadays, it's isn't that they're a girl band, but simply a band with girls in it. "This is just a general statement and I hear it a lot, from girls and guys, is 'I hate girl bands but I like you guys.' It's the weirdest compliment... we're not really a girl band. I mean we're girls and we like rock and roll. I think it's really powerful

appreciate music in Europe and there isn't a lot of competition since there's not as many bands traveling around like in the US. They're so 'Thank you so much for so much for coming!' and excited- it's a whole different vibe. They cook you dinner and invite you into their house. It's a different feel."

Check these girls when they play Los Angeles sometime this January or check them out at Punk Rock Bowling in Vegas as they play the Cooler Lounge and paint the town red. For the internet savvy, their album is available through stores like www.interpunk.com and you can see them online at www.theapplicatorsrock.com. Watch as they ride the crimson tide into your heart.

*As an added note I didn't actually get any of that stuff done when I originally started writing this. I got lazy, ate a frozen pizza (no, I didn't eat it frozen, smart ass) and decided that to-do lists are null and void if the Nile is overflowing and running red. But I did manage to find time to research and think up all the euphemisms for menstruating I used in the story. So there. And for all the guys reading this story- chicks can't help it, so get the fuck over it.



PROPAGANDHI

INTERVIEW BY: IAN JONES

What can be said about Propagandhi that hasn't already been said? Not that much, I'm sure, since they've given music writers and fans 12 years to ponder their distinctive style of politically charged punk rock. But to just classify them as a political punk band would be doing these guys a disservice - the Canadian trio has never been afraid to veer away from punk and into more hardcore metal and thrash territory, and their unrestrained political lyrics make other socially conscious songwriters seem like pussies. They've also never been afraid to call out bullshit wherever they see it, even if the results find them at odds with traditional allies.

It's been four years since their last release, and a lot has happened around the world since then. Bush has been re-selected, the "War on Terror" has become more of a

"War OF Terror", and Democrats continue to be unable (or unwilling) to put an end to any of the right-wing fueled chaos. Propagandhi's new album, *Potemkin City Limits*, doggedly refuses to hold back any punches, calling out hypocrisy on both the left and right sides of the political spectrum equally. Bassist Todd "The Rod" Kowalski gave Big Wheel an exclusive opportunity to pick his brain and get his take on current events.

Big Wheel: The first song on the new album, "A Speculative Fiction", describes an imaginary conflict between the United States and Canada. How badly did laser pucks damage Canadian-American relations and do you think a diplomatic dialogue will ever be achievable afterwards?

Todd: Ummm, well you'd have to probably ask Chris or



Jord.

They're the hockey players, I don't really watch. But the whole thing seemed pretty treacherous. I'm not even sure that I saw a game with a laser puck, I haven't watched since like 1978 or something.

BW: You're not a big hockey fan?

Todd: No, but they [Chris and Jord] are. But I don't think they liked it, by the sounds of it.

BW: You've been outspoken about the Israeli occupation for years, and recently America has begun their own blatant occupation in the middle east. So far, Israel and America have worked well together, despite overall ideological motivations (i.e. one group believes God gave them the land, the other group thinks that God

wants them to take oil from the brown people). Do you foresee a time when this wedding of convenience will give way to conflicts of interest?

Todd: Well, for right now it is a strategic place for them to be, you know, I don't think the US wants an all Arab region. They want to keep their bases and allies there still. When it would be against their benefit is when Israel would be causing too much strife in the area.

BW: It seems that both of them being over there is just the stirring up of a hornets nest, but Israel has to deal with it a lot more than America.

Todd: Well, I think the States being over there is causing more trouble for more people. Israel is, or was, a common target that all those people could have, you know. Now I think it's the States. And now the States have become the common target there.

BW: Has there been much coverage of the United States' use of phosphorous bombs during the Falluja battle in the Canadian media?

Todd: I don't doubt that they are. I haven't seen nothin' of it, actually, and I kinda keep up pretty well with all that news. But I don't know what the difference is between chemical bombs and cluster bombs and nuclear bombs that cause years of defected babies all over the place. You see in Iraq from the depleted uranium that all the kids are screwed. There just doesn't seem to be any limit to how horrible the ways are for people to come up with ways to kill other people.

BW: In the 1700s Malthusian economics predicted that the human population would in time outgrow its food supply. Malthus' prediction has not as of yet come to pass because of improved technology and new farming methods. These methods that have kept us around for this long now seem to be coming back to haunt us. Who'd have thought that the cannibalization of our food supply would be such a bad idea? Do you think that hoof and mouth, mad cow, and bird flu diseases are more than just a fucked up by-product of corporate farming methods or is it mother nature's way of keeping our population in check?

Todd: I guess it's both those. It's when people forget that they're part of a living world and store living beings in unnatural, inhumane, disease ridden ways. I mean, what do they expect? But obviously bacteria and germs and that do keep species' in check. I mean, just because we've solved some of those problems in the past doesn't mean that we're not part of the earth, you know. If the Earth can't hold us and can't contain us anymore, if we don't wreck it with some kinda war, then obviously it's going to have to stop us in someway.

BW: In order for veganism to catch on and have an effect on the market, in my opinion, it's going to have to branch out from the fringe and become more populist. There are signs of that beginning to take place, with vegan restaurants popping up here and there, but the average family finds it hard enough to eat a typical diet in today's economy. Do you have any dietary suggestions for those living on a budget who want to start a vegan lifestyle without resorting to just rice, beans and lettuce?

Todd: Well, I think it's pretty easy. You can make all kinds of shit for cheap. But it depends on what you want to eat, I guess. If your budget's not allowing for, you know, tofu dogs and all that stuff then you could always make all kinds of ethnic food for cheap. You can make Ethiopian food and Thai food and anything for cheap. I think it's just branching out yourself

and what you want to learn. I don't think it's really too much of an issue of economics. It's just a matter of doing your homework. And nobody's going to do their homework unless they want to. As things do go that way, though, things do get cheaper and more available. Like when I first became vegan a long time ago there were only a couple of soy milks you could get here in Winnipeg, and now there are all kinds of things. You can go to your local corner store sometimes and find soy milk.

BW: It's about time somebody wrote what you wrote in "Rock For Sustainable Capitalism". Is punk music still a viable vehicle for promoting political change or has it been too tainted by overexposure to be taken seriously?

Todd: Well, I guess it depends on the people bringing it. If it's uninteresting, watered down, or lame then it's not going to be viable. But if it impacts somebody in a way that it moves them then it is viable. If it works for a person then it doesn't matter what anybody else says about it, it works. But I find, in terms of what I like, that it is becoming ridiculous and boring a lot of it. But there are some good bands kicking away and there is some interesting stuff going on.

BW: Anyone in particular you'd like to plug?

Todd: I guess there's Limpwrist. There's also some hip hop bands that are slightly interesting. Like there's this guy from Toronto, he's a refugee from Somalia. His name's K'Naan. I think that guy's rad. He's not really punk, but he sings the same thing about like rap seeming not viable. I think he's one of the most interesting political type guys going on right now.

BW: Party politics has obviously become awash in corruption, and the individuals and groups that have turned our world into a pretty shitty place have managed to buy safe refuge in both the Democrat and Republican parties. That being said, is it really wise to splinter up the only substantial form of left wing opposition in American politics by abandoning the Democratic party? Sure the Democrats are bad, but they are, unfortunately, the only thing standing between us and a full fledged onslaught by the right wing. Would it not be better to reform the existing party from within, or do you think the bad apples are so bad they would rot whoever came within their paths?

Todd: I think that right now it takes so much money, and the mechanisms are in place to not be able to change things from within. That's why people from the same families and the same schools are in the same parties running elections against each other. To me it's so inbred and insane I don't see where people would be able to climb up and change things too much. As soon as somebody tries in any way someone just pulls them right back down again. I think the best way is to just recognize

those for what they are, tell as many people, and try to do something else. I don't know how much longer things can keep going back and forth, you know, first it's the Democrats wreck the world then the Republicans wreck the world, and then the Democrats again. And nothing ever changes. They'll go four years, or they'll go eight years and then switch back and everyone thinks there's a left wing party and they just fall asleep again while big atrocities are taking place still. Like when the Republicans were voted in everyone thinks that the world ended again and a bunch of punk bands make a bunch more songs, even though they've been sleeping and singing stupid songs for years about like Slurpees and shit, or perhaps way stupider songs. To me it's a fallacy that the Democrats are left wing. To me they're just a criminal party killing people all over the world. They were bombing Iraq the whole time the Democrats were in power, and the sanctions were killing millions of people



PROPAGANDHI

and no one cared. The Rwanda genocide goes on and nothing happens. Nothing happens to punish any corporations for ruining everything in the whole world, taking everything out of countries like the Congo. You had Shell in Nigeria with death squads killing people. They're all American companies, and I just don't see how they're [Democrats] anywhere near the left. I guess that's where people say that we're radicals, but to me I just want a living earth that doesn't have death squads run by companies. I consider myself to be more middle of the road actually, but I guess everyone else is just too far gone or something. Or maybe I'm too far gone sitting in the dark in my basement.

BW: So do you think a third party is the best thing?

Todd: I think so.

BW: But absolute power corrupts absolutely, so even if a third party were to take off who's to say that they wouldn't end up just like the Democrats and Republicans?

Todd: Well, for sure, could be, but you've got to at least hope for something or hope for nothing. I'd hope for more parties, more people trying to do shit, and just more people paying attention in general than just to elections. Everyone's worried about telling people to vote for the Democrats instead of the Republicans, but if people just gave each other ideas and did something inspiring to have a better world it'd be plain that the Republicans are just insane-iacs and no one would ever vote for them. You wouldn't even have to tell people cause they'd all be informed nerds.

BW: You've been critical of George Soros...

Todd: Ahhh, a bit. Not overly I would say. It's more of the situation where he was giving money to Punk Voter. I personally have never paid too much attention to him, so I don't have any beef. That's Chris' thing. Like I know he's a rich guy that gives lots of money to the Democrats...

BW: Does that bother you? Am I to assume that you would say that there is no room for "limousine liberals" and "champagne socialists" in a progressive political movement?

Todd: I guess they will exist as long as that kind of money exists. But it's weird cause I didn't want to be involved with him. That's why we said that in our song where we said "This song is not brought to you by George Soros". But the song we were putting on [Rock Against Bush] was derailing the idea of voting for the Democrats knowing that he was funding them. But he was also giving money to Punk Voter, and they got scared. Which seems absurd, like as if the guy's going to read the tiny print on some CD.

BW: Or that he'd even get a copy of the CD and open it up...

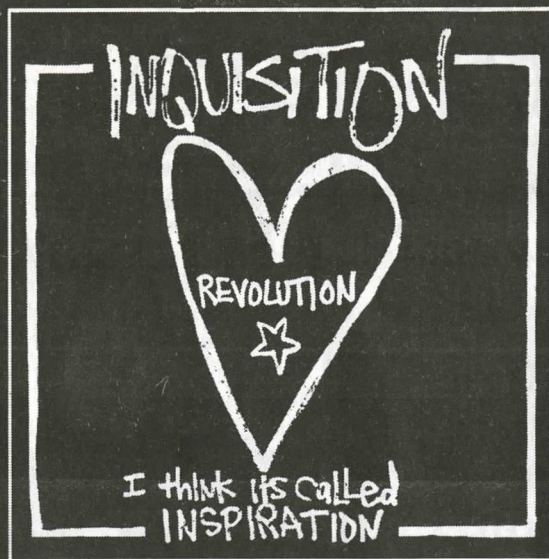
Todd: Yeah, and see where "Oh my God, Propagadhi made fun of me!"

BW: Alright, I have one last question. I know a lot of people out there are wondering: "When is Propagadhi going to get with the program and start wearing eyeliner". Can we expect some eye enhancing makeup anytime soon?

Todd: Well, I'm wearing some right now, but you couldn't see it cause it's too dark. No, but pretty soon I think that we're going to be so ugly and old that we'll have natural eyeliner to go with our receding hair lines and everything else bad. But first I've got to find a red arm band and a black silk shirt and leather boots. And a skull. I'm going to grow my half-head really long so I can wear it in a bun and then at the first note of the song whip out my hair!

BW: Well, thank you very much for your time.

Todd: Cool, thank you. Talk to ya later.



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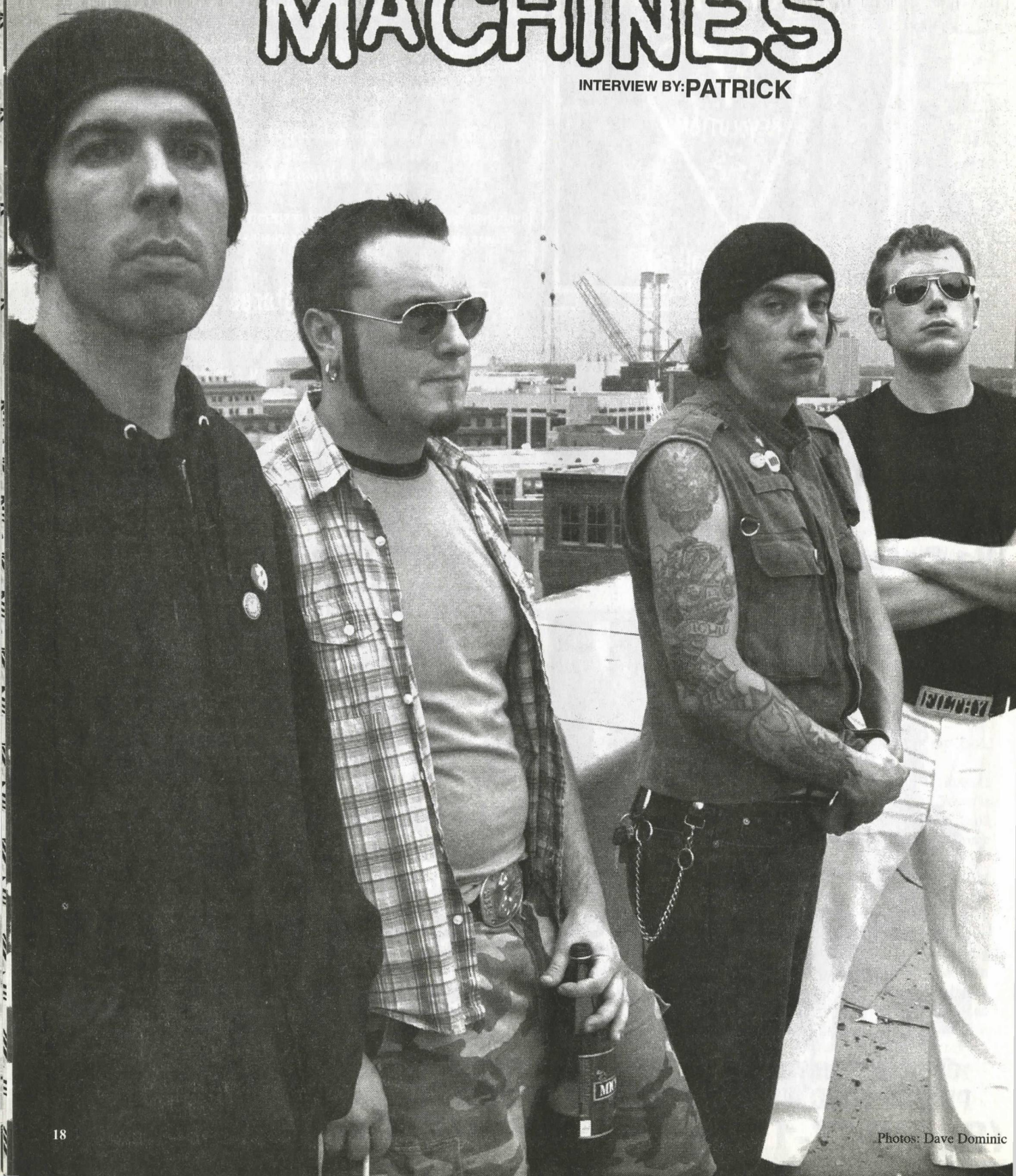
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THE SUICIDE MACHINES

INTERVIEW BY: PATRICK



The Suicide Machines have been around making music now for fourteen years! Formed in 1991 by the only o.g. members Jay and Dan these guys still fuckin' kill it. I remember the first time I heard any of their tracks was on a Dill Records split with the Rudiments called "Skank For Brains". These guys were dope. They're name was still Jack Kevorkian and the Suicide Machines. Later on, Destruction by Definition came out, and these guys blew the fuck up. What-the-poop-ever, don't give me that sell-out shit ... this is one of those bands that will always be special to me. Something about their music was getting me fuckin' high. It was the fact that it had the trance of The Specials, and the attitude of Operation Ivy.

The Suicide Machines have had a number of drummers and bassists. Originally, there was Jason Brake on bass and Stefan Rairigh on drums. Then they had two other drummers and two other bassists. Currently, The Machines are: Ryan Vanderberghe on drums, Rich Tschirhart on bass, Dan Lukacinsky on guitar, and Jay Navarro on vocals. Jay and Dan have been pumping out records for quite some time now, and have just released their latest work, *War Profiteering is Killing Us All* on SideOneDummy Records. Previously, they have released records for the no longer around Dill Records (actually it turned into Asian Man Records) and big-ass Hollywood Records. This latest record is the second on SideOneDummy and it's pretty freakin' crazy. It's a very large dose of political and social angst, released with fierce intensity. Songwriters Jay and Dan don't hold back on this album, they just let it blast like a crook with uzi's.

I had the opportunity to speak to Jay Navarro while the band was cruising around looking for this spot they were supposed to play. Jay had just experienced the pleasure of hitting up the Tylenol Bowl (it's wood!) in Brooklyn. Apparently the coping is fuckin' gnarly and this guys been skatin' for years. Fuckin' dope! Here's a little bit of what's going with Jay, The Suicide Machines, and the world!!!

Big Wheel: You guys are from Detroit and it seems to me that all I hear about

Detroit is that it's run down with poverty and all kinds of other problems. How does being from Detroit affect your political views of our country?

Jay: Detroit's totally poverty stricken. I don't know man. It really affects my political views locally more so much as my country. My political views right now are affected by how many people have lost their jobs in Detroit. The Bush era has not been kind to Detroit.

A perfect example of something else wrong with Detroit is, like, our mayor is a gangster, straight up like a thug. He just got re-elected, and this dude is nothing but sketchiness. Somehow he manages to bring money to the city and with the situation the way it's been. People who have been set to testify before this guy in court cases have been murdered before their supposed to testify.

Our town kind of goes unlooked a little bit ... maybe not so much after 9/11 'cause we're a border city you know, but it seems like the car and street crimes have gone down a little bit. I don't know what it is though ... could even be gas prices ... I don't know.

BW: The mayor's a gangster?

Jay: He ain't mafia man. He's a gangster. Straight up G. He tricks all the church ladies to vote for him, and they just don't realize that he's a gangster. That's pretty much the story of Detroit.

BW: How is war profiteering killing us all?

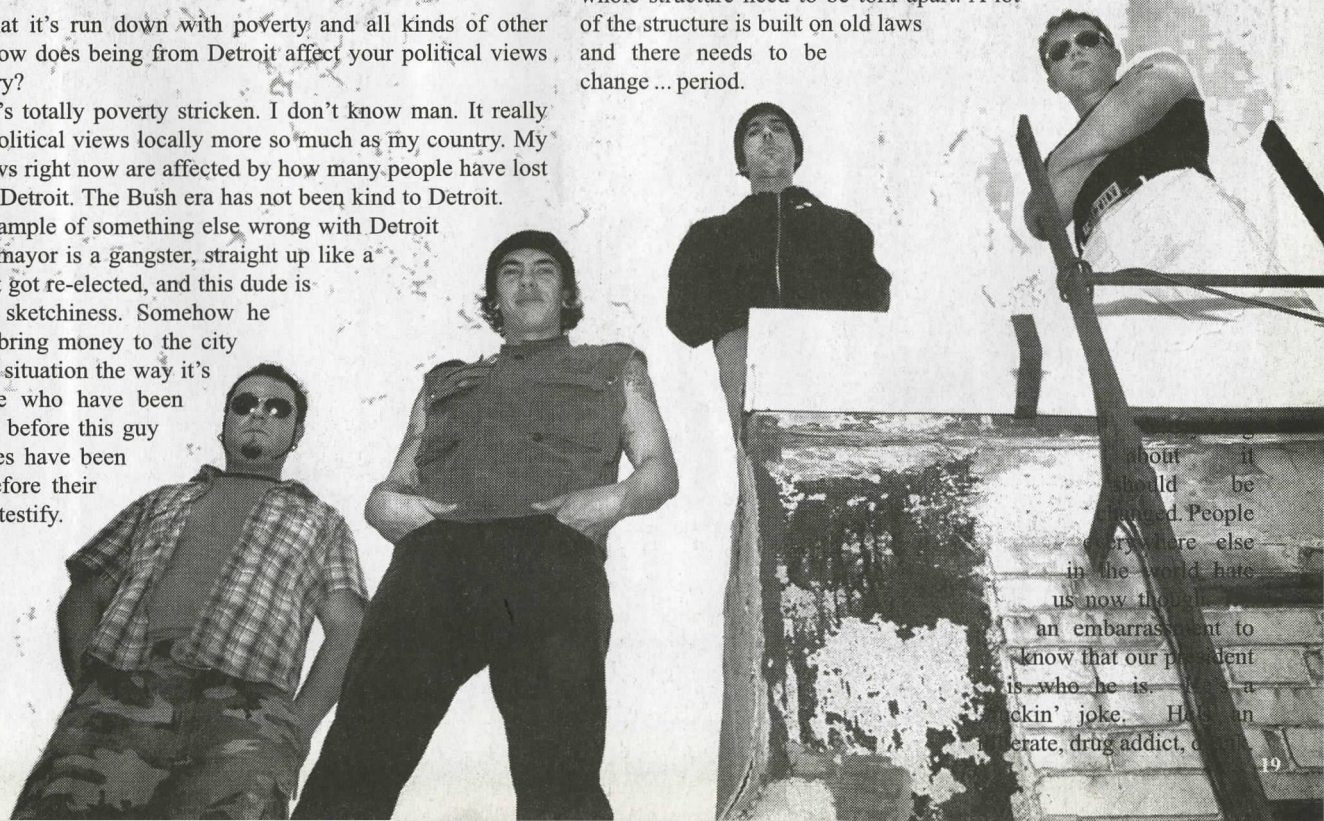
Jay: How is not man? You can't tell me how it hasn't affected you. I'm sure you have friends over there and/or friends that have come back alive, dead, or wounded. I think that it's all the big corporations that are to be blamed for this. Corporations like Halliburton, Bechtel, and all that shit. Americans are dying to make these guys more

rich. I don't believe that's right. A lot of people think that I'm against our army, or something. I'm not. I just think it's insulting to the American public to watch our friends and family go over there and get wounded and/or killed ... some coming back mentally fucked from this war. All this so guys can be more rich than they already are. These guys have the money and the ability to make a difference in the world and they don't. All they think about is more money, more money, more money ... they don't even need it. How long till we can't even drive cars anymore? It would be better for this planet, but I mean, car companies could easily turn all their

engines to vegetable oil or something like that, yet they don't. Right now they just won't do that though, because it's what the economy is made of. I do believe it (war profiteering) is killing us all.

BW: You love your country though, right?

Jay: Yeah, absolutely man. I love my country man. I've been everywhere in the world and there is no place like the United States. I think the whole government process needs to be torn apart and revamped though. The types of parties we have and the whole structure need to be torn apart. A lot of the structure is built on old laws and there needs to be change ... period.



about it should be changed. People everywhere else in the world hate us now though. It's an embarrassment to know that our president is who he is. It's a fuckin' joke. He's an illiterate, drug addict, and

The whole rest of the world knows it. It's embarrassing. How does someone like that get elected? Money.

BW: What do you think about the war on terrorism?

Jay: What happened with Afghanistan? What's going on? There's is nothing really going on there. We're trying to establish a democracy over there? I thought it was the fight against terrorism, now we're trying to take over Iraq. We need to finish this war on terror and what do we waste all our time and money on? Fuckin' taking over Iraq.

BW: Do you get the feeling that facism is finding its way into our government?

Jay: Yep, it's really weird. I think that even though our Four Fathers were pretty cut-throat in the first place, they would be ashamed. Not that they didn't do anything wrong back then, but I'm sure some of them had good intentions building this country.

BW: If you could change anything The Machines have done in your 14 years together what would it be? Any regrets?

Jay: Not really. We put out a couple of bad records in our time ... I guess the only record I really regret is "Steal This Record".

Everything about the process of writing that record and recording it was painful and shitty. There's a couple of songs that could of been rad, but then the production failed on em'. Everything about it though ... us and the production ... just sounded so stale. Don't get me wrong though, this guy helped produce a bunch of our other records that are rad. It was just us and him, and it happened to come out stagnant. We wrote the record before we got there, but it was nothing but battles with us and the bass player at the time. That gave cause for a really negative atmosphere for writing you know. I just don't even like to think about that album. Everyone thinks that I would hate the self-titled record. I don't like some of the lyrics on it, but I learned how to sing on that one.

BW: How is recording with Bill Stevenson and Jason Livermore?

Jay: Always awesome. We did our last record with them too. It's like family, I mean, we toured with the Descendents a lot ... toured with them probably more than any other band maybe. You know, they're family so it's just really comfortable working with those guys ... always a pleasure, never a chore.

BW: The new album is pretty hardcore compared to your earlier stuff, what's up?

Jay: We're just pissed off I guess ... and we're not taking the folk approach. I think a lot kids are taking an interest in the issues we bring up. Hopefully that generation will be a lot more conscious about things. I don't want to write political songs my whole life, but I think this point in time calls for it. Someone's got to do it, because a lot of other people are ignoring it. I don't know what type of difference I'm making, but I am making a difference. Maybe when the time comes for us to be relaxed, and write chill rad songs we will. Now's not the time. It really urks me that a lot of people who were all screaming about a year ago before the elections have forgotten or given up on it. I believe the problem is worse now than ever.

BW: Have your influences changed between the time you started the band and finishing War Profiteering?

Jay: Between Dan and I, there's just too many bands we listen to. We just write, and that's how it comes out. Detroit has always had an edgy, crustier, hardcore punk-rock community than most other cities. I think maybe New York and maybe East Bay have something in common when it comes to our type of punk-rock. In general ... the way we sing, the way we write our heavier, faster stuff, it echoes all kinds of things from those three areas to me. Detroit back in the earlier 1980's had good bands like Negative Approach, The State, and stuff like that. That's what we grew up on.

BW: Let's go back in time. How did the Van's Song come to life?

Jay: Dude, we're like, skateboarders, so we'd skate in Van's and shit. I'd always wear boots when I'd go to shows you know. Punk kids wore boots to shows ... punk kids wore Van's to skate. Then "cool" kids started to wear Doc Martens 'cause it was cool all of a sudden. We're like, "Why is that college-yuppie kid wearing Doc's?" Fuck all that shit. We just put on our skate shoes from that point on. Dan wrote the song kinda just to dis' the grunge era for stealing our foot wear ... that's what night you

it was. If you could have seen the show last would have laughed your ass off. There was crusty dude with dreadlocks doing interpretive dance to that song last night.

Hysterical. It was pretty fucked up.

BW: What do you think about the punk-rock scene? Good or bad?

Jay: At our shows, we pretty much get real punk-rocker kids. We don't get the whole punk-rock fashion ... we get dirty kids. We get real punk-kids. We're on tour with Holy Dread and they just got that, like, street manifesto thing going on. These guys were like, "Man ... you guys get real punk kids." We were like, "what are you guys talking about?"

They said that they get mall kids and ska-punk kids at that shows. I looked around and noticed that, hey, we get real punk rock kids.

You can actually look out into the crowd and think that this is as true as it gets. And you know what? They're going to be there forever.

BW: How many months out of the year do you tour?

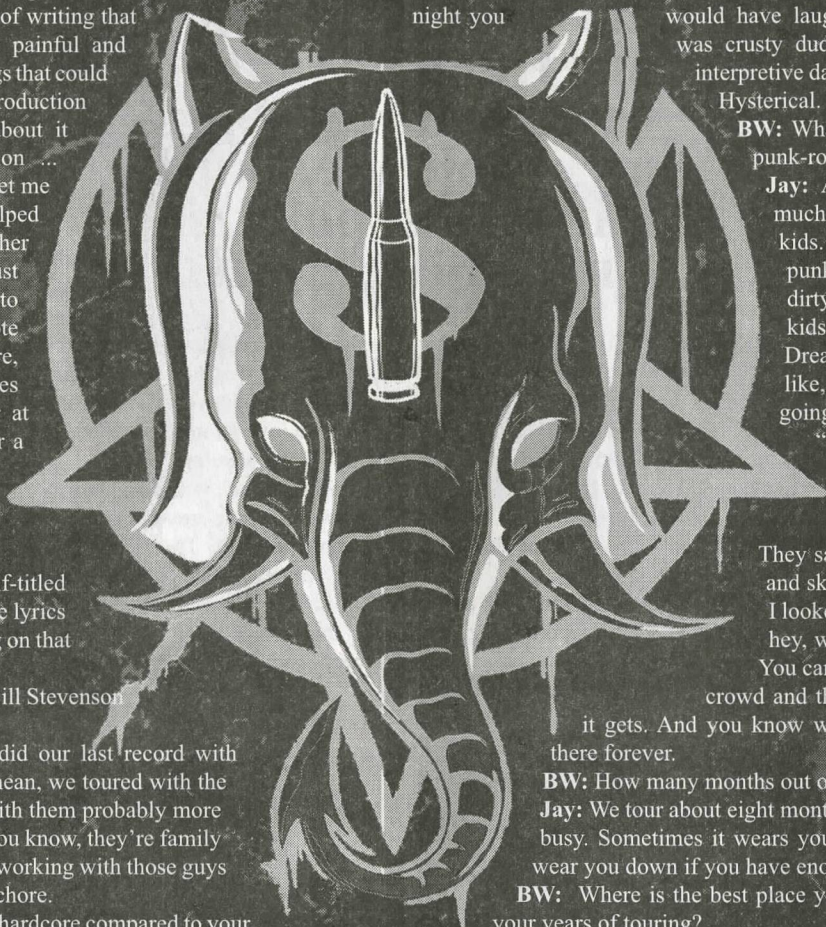
Jay: We tour about eight months out of the year. We stay busy. Sometimes it wears you down, but anything will wear you down if you have enough of it you know.

BW: Where is the best place you have been so far in all your years of touring?

Jay: Where's the coolest place? Uh ... I don't if it's the best place, but one of my favorite places to go, that we play quite a bit, is Puerto Rico. We play Puerto Rico a lot. I really love playing Puerto Rico. The shows are crazy and there's a bunch of rad kids down there and we stay at their houses and shit. We just went to Austrailia and that was a fuckin' blast too. Austrailia is awesome. It feels like I'm starting to know every city. I've got every street in my head. It's pretty ridiculous.

BW: Last thing ... who is biggest inspiration in your life?

Jay: My wife man. Absolutely. We've been together for like ten years and married for eight. I've got three kids and another on the way. It's awesome.



punk rock skateboards team rider - nolan johnson
catching some air to Unit F song, "Ride"



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GRAVY TRAIN

Do you want to dance? Is paying ten bucks to see some DJ person play records that just go “doots doots doots” not your idea of a good time? If you are paying ten bucks, you at least want to see something live. A disco or a funk cover band is like going to your friend’s bar mitzvah or wedding. You like punk rock and therefore your dance music will be requiring chutzpah. Ladytron and Chicks on Speed will not suffice as they are too euro trashy and Peaches is just aggravating.

Gravy Train!!!! is the right band for you. Imagine hearing Chip n’ Dale reciting Lil Kim’s lyrics to “Hey Mickey! You’re so fine” type beats. “I wanna get in the whole world’s pants and when my beaver’s hungry, preemies ain’t got a chance” is just a sample of what they can offer lyrically. Their shows features skin, acrobatics and pretty girls and cute boys all shaking their moneymakers. People whisper about them at record stores. The DJs rave about them on KXLU. The staff at the Echo still look to the horizon and tear up when their residency is mentioned. They toured with around the world with Le Tigre. And now they answer my silly questions in Big Wheel magazine. Enjoy!

Big Wheel: The X behind each of the band member’s name, is it to emphasize with the Black Muslim Movement?

Gravy Train!!!!: Umm, I don’t know anything about that (laughs)...

BW: Ok, next question. What was it like working with Blowfly?

GT!!!!: It was really crazy, he is seriously insane. And he smells like a guy you would sit next to on the bus and try to move away from. He’s the real deal. He’s actually out of his mind, for real. It’s almost scary.

BW: But was it a good experience?

GT: It was a great experience. He wrote songs about us and just sing them to us on the spot. And he signed all of our Blowfly cds

BW: Is Ghost Boobs about a personal experience?

GT: It was originally based on my roommate, which was a true story. She always complained about ever since she started going to the gym she doesn’t have boobs anymore and I thought that was a very heroin tale and very true to life and just a tragic thing that had to be immortalized in a song. But then it became my story because I started going to the gym and I noticed that the first things to go were my boobs. But they’re still there, I mean, I have a lot to lose as far as boobs go.

BW: What sets you apart from all the other electro groups?

GT: First of all, I don’t think we’re electro... anymore. Because, our new record is pretty



guitar based. And I also think from the very beginning of the whole thing, I think we never took ourselves as seriously as let's say the other electro bands who were trying to really be cool and sophisticated and fashion-centric. We've always just been really gross and joking, just making fun of everything and making fun of ourselves. I don't think we've ever taken ourselves that seriously at all.

BW: Why all the exclamation points?

GT: Well, the honest truth about that story which we've never told before, so this is an exclusive, is there used to be a band in the Bay Area called the Blast Rocks!!! They had three exclamation points after their name. They were always in the weekly newspapers and stuff and that was when we were first starting Gravy Train!!!! We always wanted to be in the paper. Pretty much one of the main reasons we started the band was so we could be written about in the weeklies, 'cause we just wanted to be like, notorious. The Blast Rocks!!! were in the paper every fuckin' week and we were pissed! We were there friends, but felt like, this isn't cool. We need to be in the weeklies, what can we do? So we decided to have four exclamation points.

BW: You one upped them, so to speak.

GT: And it worked! I don't

know if it's the exclamation points but I'd like to think so.

BW: What is your favorite dirty word?

GT: Snizz

BW: S-n-i-z-z?

GT: Yes.

BW: How come Junx only plays on three songs for the album? What does he do live?

GT: He dances, omg! You have to see it to believe it! He's the newest addition but he's been in the band for a couple of years now and he is a sight to behold. He's probably the most exciting one to watch-well, I can't say that, but he steals the show, definitely. He gets naked, he has his huge ass (which is its own separate entity), and he makes out with people and does sexual stuff with people while we play. Only consenting people though, he doesn't ambush anybody. He jumps out in the crowd, he shakes pom poms. He does it all! He moshes, he crowd surfs, he rocks it like its Lallapalooza 94'.

BW: Can you describe the taste of your pussy sauce?

GT: Ok, I won't describe [it] myself because I haven't tasted it, in a few years, but my friend Johnny Makeup who we wrote a song about was on tour with us in his band VIP and he asked to smell it and he said, I shit you not, like vanilla and

citrus. He's full blown gay and he loved the smell. So there you go. And this is a man that doesn't like pussy, at ALL! Never has, never been anywhere near it. But I might have turned him. I might have turned him straight!

BW: Where have you toured? How do they receive you in the South and Midwest?

GT: We've toured all over the world, all over Europe-Sweden, England, Scotland, France, Spain, Belgium, all over the place. And we toured all over the US. Usually, surprisingly we've been around long enough so we can tour in the Midwest and the South and our fans show up so it's not a problem. We headline, so we don't have to deal with another band's crappy crowd. If we ever do open up for other bands in shoddy parts of the Midwest it's always bands that have already filtered out the assholes for us. We play with Le Tigre or like on our first tour with Brat Mobile. I mean, we never really had any assholes at our shows because we've never been really mismatched with like (hesitates) lesser bands. See I would be scared if we were touring with like, anything mainstream or anything that's dudes, who would bring in any kind of like duded out crowd. It's not..., they just wouldn't be use to it. It has to be somewhat queer friendly, feminist friendly. Luckily we've never toured with a band that wasn't that way. So, I don't have any horror stories. It's not like when Pansy Division toured with Green Day or anything. The truck stops are a different story. The shows are fine.

BW: Who in the band is most likely to eat dog food?

GT: Umm, me, because I drank piss on tour.

BW: (burps) huh?

GT: [laughs] So definitely me, I'll eat or drink anything. For money.

BW: Whose piss did you drink?

GT: I drank my band mate Hunx's piss. I drank a whole Seagram's gin bottle full of his piss that he peed in back stage because he was too lazy to go to the bathroom and he offered me a quarter of his tour earnings to drink the whole thing and I chugged the whole thing in one gulp after the show. Everyone watched me, there's pictures of it, it was disgusting, and I got seven hundred bucks.

BW: Fuck yeah you did!

GT: [laughs hysterically] It was all worth it. I'd eat all the dog food in the world!

BW: What's the difference between train gravy and pussy sauce?

GT: Umm, aren't they the same thing? Gravy Train means pussy sauce.

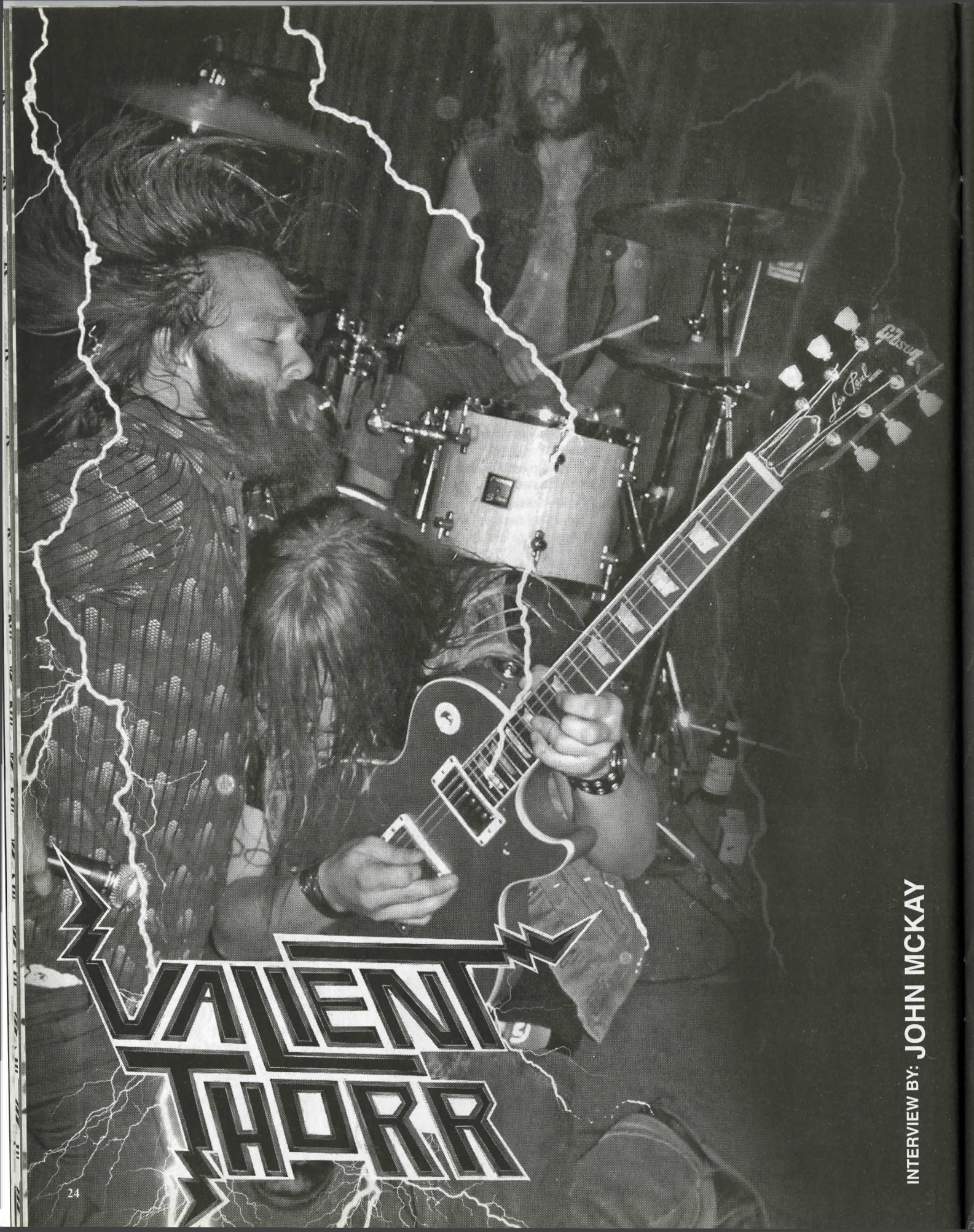
BW: "Everybody do the Thingy" sounds like the title to a John Waters' movie soundtrack. Are you guys John Waters' fans?

GT: Yes, we're fans. He is a big inspiration.

BW: My friends came by, we smoked out and listened to your music. Are you the anti drug?

GT: [Laughs] Gravy Train is my anti drug.





INTERVIEW BY: JOHN MCKAY

If anyone felt a strange presence surrounding the Volcom Stage at the 2005 Vans Warped Tour, they just may have had a close encounter with a third kind. Valient Thorr, currently residing somewhere in North Carolina, crash-landed their spacecraft in the deep, dirty south and are on a quest to retrieve their time machine (stolen by Walt Disney) and perhaps save the world along the way by reviving early MC5/Stooges-esque rock & roll. "Huh?" is correct. Valient Himself explains...

Big Wheel: So you have an interesting story about how you got here, care to trace that lineage back a bit for us?

Valient Thorr: You mean from Burlatia, on Venus? Yeah, that's where we left. We left Burlatia, it's where the three ice rivers meet. We left there a long time ago. We received many transmissions from all over the galaxy and actually, when we decided to do what we decided to do, the best and most exciting transmissions in the whole galaxy were those coming from Earth and rock & roll music. So the only way to keep our part of the galaxy, from the time stream that we were in, from collapsing in on itself was to spread positive vibrations and we got an idea from Earth rock & roll that made us feel so good that we decided to go to Earth and visit different time streams, different situations, and see what we could do about it.

Now this was years and years ago, eons upon thousands of Earth years ago. We received transmissions from all sorts of time streams, from the future to the past, and times you wouldn't know about because they're not the choices that you made. But we received all these transmissions because out in space you're dealing with distance, and with distance all these different streams crawl. So you get different scenarios like what goes on in that really bad movie Mr. Destiny with Belushi... Jim Belushi... John's brother?

BW: Yeah, Jim.

VT: That guy. It's horrible. But anyway, so we came here many different times; in this time stream we've been here three times. We came in '57, we came again in '77, and once we realized that we had been here before, and were quite possibly looking for a perfect time stream to settle down in, we left a time machine as an escape in Arlington Virginia in '77, and Walt Disney found our time machine.

So when we crashed here in 2000, we thought we were cool to split again, but we weren't cool to split again because now Walt Disney is immortal – him and Jerry Falwell and a few other people I can't mention by name stole our time machine. Jerry Falwell is actually back here on earth now, in this time stream. But what happened was, we kind of became earth men in the simplest form where we have not the technology to go back

to the places we had been before. We're sort of stuck here making decisions just like an earth man makes decisions, almost. But we have the knowledge that no earthling has. But in the fact that we make decisions like an earth man now, we've become better because you can't jut willy-nilly or wishy-washily make decisions anymore. When you make decisions here on earth, your decisions are set in stone, you know what I mean?

BW: Um, sure.

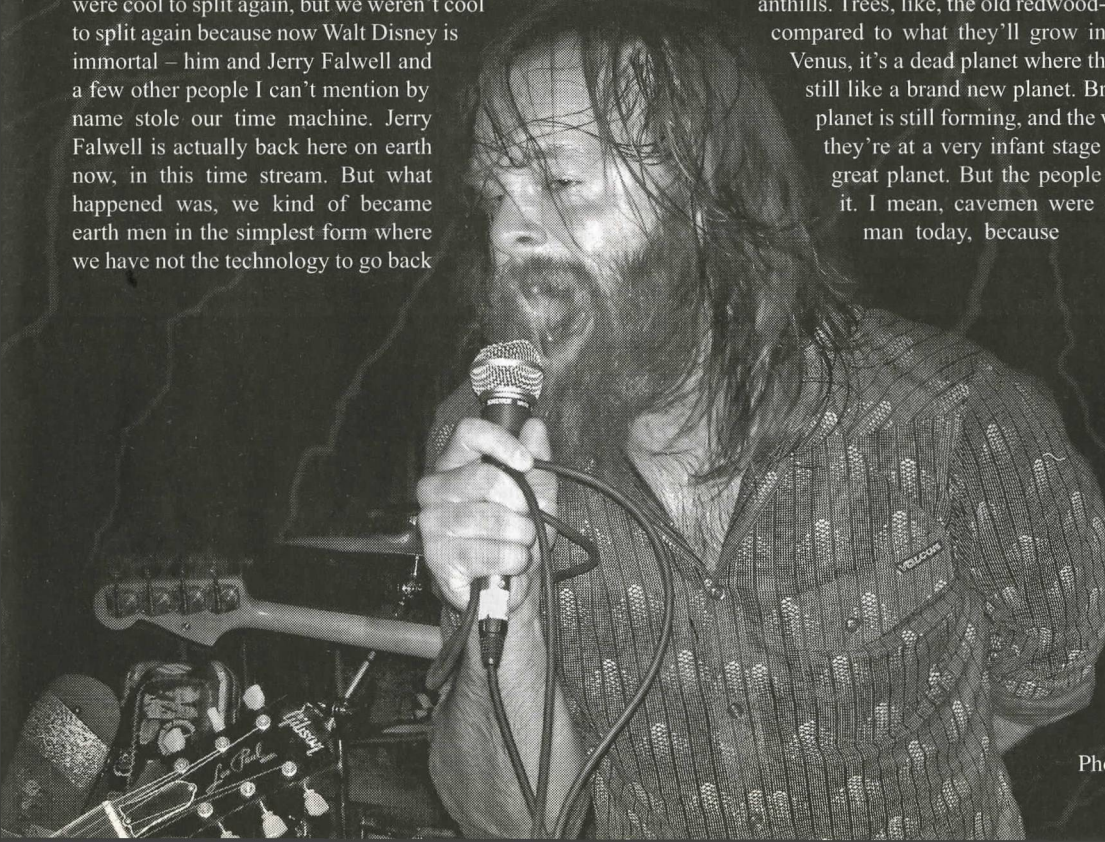
VT: That's sort of a good thing because it makes you a better person and it builds your character to possibilities that we have never thought of before because we could just go and come as we please and now that we can't, I believe we are better off for it.

BW: So since arriving you've had to adapt quite a bit to our ways. What problems have you had fitting in with earth folk?

VT: Well, we've dealt with so many situations so far, and then you know how like, when there is a decision-making process going on in a normal man or woman's body, they always choose between the two sides. Not necessarily always good or bad, that choice is, but it's what you would assume, what's the better of the two choices, whereas we see a choice as not necessarily good or bad, but just another choice, regardless of the ramifications. It takes thousands upon thousands of points during the day where you choose a different path, it's like you're always walking, and it's some kind of crazy tree that branches off, and you choose which branch to take every day, everything from brushing your teeth to the socks you wear to picking that penny up off the ground to, you know, everything. Going through years and years and years and years of becoming wiser and wiser, learning to condition our beards with the correct conditioners, we've become pretty good at decision-making. Only now, when we fuck up, we have to face the consequences.

BW: The form you guys assume now, does it resemble the form you had when you left Burlatia, or did you have to make physical alterations to blend in?

VT: Yeah, we had to do a lot of things, like, earth is primarily earth persons that we're feeding off of. We don't really have bodies like earth people. Inside Venus where Burlatia is, life does not live anything like North Carolina. Earth is a fucking infinite planet. Things that will grow on earth haven't even begun to grow. Mountains are sort of like anthills. Trees, like, the old redwood-type trees, they're just shrubbery compared to what they'll grow into. If you look at a planet like Venus, it's a dead planet where things have run its course. Earth is still like a brand new planet. Brand ass new. The makeup of the planet is still forming, and the way earth creatures were formed, they're at a very infant stage and could end up being a great, great planet. But the people here are totally fucking ruining it. I mean, cavemen were better off than man today, because



all those ridiculous chemicals and they didn't have as many emotions. Did you know that there's 1400 different emotions that man can have, yet the human brain is flawed so much as to only create language that can express about 20% of the emotions that you can actually have? Therefore, the only way for the human race to go any further than where they are is to come up with other forms of communication. The most genius invention on earth is rock & roll music. Music packaged in the music biz comes packaged visually and audibly. Sonic communication is furthering and it's one of the only ways that earth will save itself, you know what I mean? It's not what we set out to do, but we've kind of made it our goal to point this shit out to people.

BW: A lot of people fear those who may have come from elsewhere. Is it hard to get your message across to people who think you might be here to, say, declare intergalactic war?

VT: The funny thing is, if anyone asked if we believed anything that I just said, we'd probably be locked up, prodded with rocks and sticks, or fucked with hard. This is something I haven't really touched on, except now that we are getting a lot more press, it means that it's opening up a lot of people's eyes in a lot of ways. Some people are like, "Oh, they're cheap throwbacks," or "If you like old rock & roll music, you might be into this band, but they come at it with such comedy that it's hard to take seriously." The reason that we come at it with a little bit of comedy is that if we were very serious, we were basically giving you peace with a fist. It would be sort of like a Baptist preacher. We're not out to spread fire and brimstone and say you're going to go to hell. We put the comedy in there because, take it or leave it, you know? If you're a believer, then you believe it because of the music, you don't believe it because we're from Venus anyway. You believe it because you get the analogy, like, 'Hey man, this place is pretty fucked up right now.' We need to take

some of this seriously. It doesn't matter if we're from Venus or not. An earth man, when it is laid out on the table, can see that what we as the band say are truths. Comedians say them, smart politicians say them, and there's a collective mindset in this country that they get behind this belief system, not necessarily religiously, but the way it is set up, they can't backpedal. They have to stick to their guns, or else in their own history, they're going to look like total pussies. They get themselves in the political disasters that we're in and the natural disasters that this country is in, and they have no idea other than to just pass the buck every four years, screw whatever happens. But they stack it to whoever who is in power, it's just a ridiculous system. Pretty much the only way that we are safe is if we come at it with a little bit of comedy, a little bit of good analogies that people pretty much chalk up as comedy.

BW: Since Valient Thorr are residing in North Carolina, a lot of people in the south seem to be opposed to questioning authority and it is generally a conservative state. Do any of these ideologies rub people the wrong way, or does it ruffle some feathers sometimes?

VT: Well I think that there's a lot of generalities to be made about certain places and geography. I think that a lot of times in the media you get a conservative outlook. You'll hear tons and tons and tons of liberal critical thoughts and criticisms – I can't even think of real human words right now! (laughs). But if you look at a map, the red and blue map from when the president was elected again, you look at that and would say you have liberals here, conservatives there. I think that, especially in the liberal party, in the Democratic Party, you have Harry Reid, you have pretty much one dude who is calling people out. The south has been known all along as sort of a hickster-style place with backwoods people who don't know what they're talking about, along with the southern Baptist belts, and a lot of those towns that are run by conservatives are done so because the liberals are all out getting high. They don't really show much concern in a lot of those places. Maybe that's just me making a generalization. But I think there are lots and lots of liberals everywhere, and I think that it's not a liberal vs. conservative fight, but more of a smart people vs. ignorant people vibe. It's most definitely always been considered that there's more ignorance in the south. I don't think it's necessarily truth, you definitely have just as many straight-up hickster places along any of the landlocked states. It's really scary in some of the middle states, man. Fucking Arkansas, Oklahoma...

BW: I do want to talk about your music a bit before we go. You did Warped Tour this past summer...

VT: It was awesome.

BW: You're currently on the road with Hot Rod Circuit, Piebald and Hit the Lights, how are those guys treating you?

VT: It's pretty awesome. We met Hot Rod Circuit on the Warped Tour and became fast friends with them. They're just good, good road bros. They've got such a killer vibe, just good dudes. It's really funny because people ask why we play with bands that sound nothing like us, like Hot Rod Circuit and Piebald, and we toured with Strung Out, and a bunch of hardcore bands like Comeback Kid and Stretch Armstrong, and people are like, 'Why the fuck are you touring with these bands?' but those dudes are such cool dudes. We've made such good vibes with them on the road and other places. They'll be like, hey do you want to come do a leg with or, or a stint, we'll hook it up like that. That's pretty much how we do business. We rock with bands that, you know, might not necessarily sound the same as us, but dudes we can go get high with and just bullshit with.



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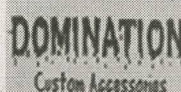
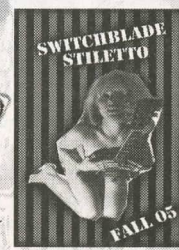
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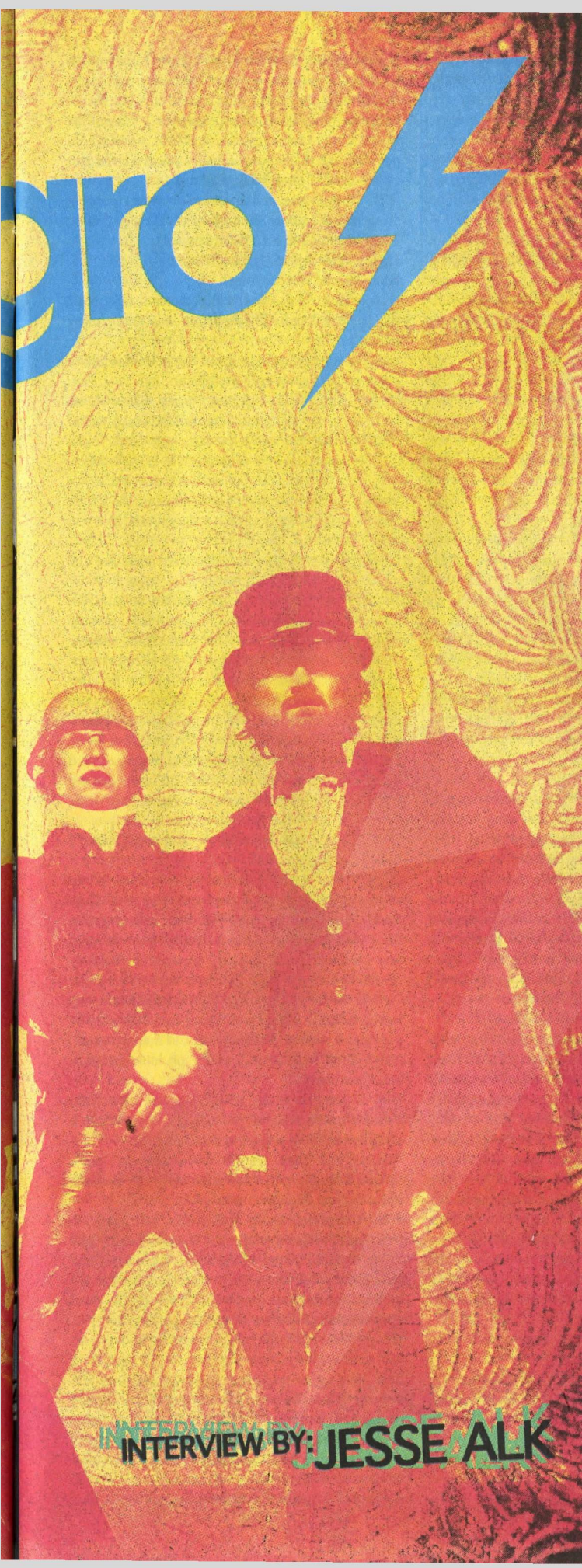
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Turbonegro





INTERVIEW BY: **JESSE ALK**

I'm not the type of person to ever really consider myself a "fan" of a band. I like a lot of bands. I go see a lot of bands multiple times. But there are only a handful of bands out there that inspire the kind of excitement and adoration in me that I understand makes up a real fan. Turbonegro is definitely one of those bands. In the last few years the band has become exponentially more popular, and has dropped the faux-homo shtick that I thought was so hilarious in the beginning. But I don't care. I admit I miss the Denim Days, but if you're into Turbonegro for the jokes, you're missing the point. Beginning with 1991's *Hot Cars* and *Spent Contraceptives* right up to this year's *Party Animals*, Turbonegro have been turning out some of the best punk-influenced rock and roll out there. The current line up: Rune Rebellion -guitar, Chris Summers -drums, Euroboy -lead guitar, Hank Von Helvete, -vocals, Happy Tom -bass, and Pal Pot Pamparius -keyboards/guitar/dancing has been together since 1997's epic album *Apocalypse Dudes*. I talked with Bass Player Happy Tom about the history of the band.

Big Wheel: I guess I want to start at the beginning. It seems like it took a while for Turbonegro to find its sound. What was the progressing between *Hot Cars* to *Never is Forever* to *Ass Cobra*, which seems like where the band really solidified? You were playing drums on some of those earlier records, weren't you?

Happy Tom: Right, 'yeah I played drums on all of those. *Hot cars* was sort of like the big Deathpunk birth.

BW: To me *Hot Cars* actually seems closer to some of the later records than *Never is Forever*, which is kind of an odd record.

Happy Tom: You know, *Hot Cars* like our take on punk-metal in a way. We were just really into a lot of metallic hardcore, especially *Poison Idea*. And it's almost like our take on sort of like *Hardcore Metal* before it started to suck in like 1985.

BW: Yeah, there was definitely a downturn.

Happy Tom: Yeah, you know, before the downturn sort of. And I mean it's also like, you know there's also some even some like early to mid-period *Slayer* in there. So it's like that was our very Punk-Metal record. And then *Never is Forever*, we recorded that in '93, and ... at that time the whole lo-fi punk thing was in full effect. And everybody was like "yeah we recorded this album, this forty minute album recorded in thirty minutes with two microphones hanging from the ceiling. And it's like, and it's almost, it sounds almost like the *Sonics* or something." The *Sonics* recorded with two microphones 'cause that's all they had, you know. And they

created something magical. People actually ended up spending a lot of money trying to make stuff sound like it was recorded for two dollars. You know, that's wrong, because the whole Lo-fi thing was trying to be as authentic as possible. Then when you start to use a bunch of audio cosmetics to sound authentic it's just like fake on fake. Everybody else was spending money to sound as cheap as possible. With *Never is Forever* we didn't have any money, but we wanted it to sound as expensive as possible.

BW: And that whole lo-fi thing seems like especially in Scandinavia was huge at the time.

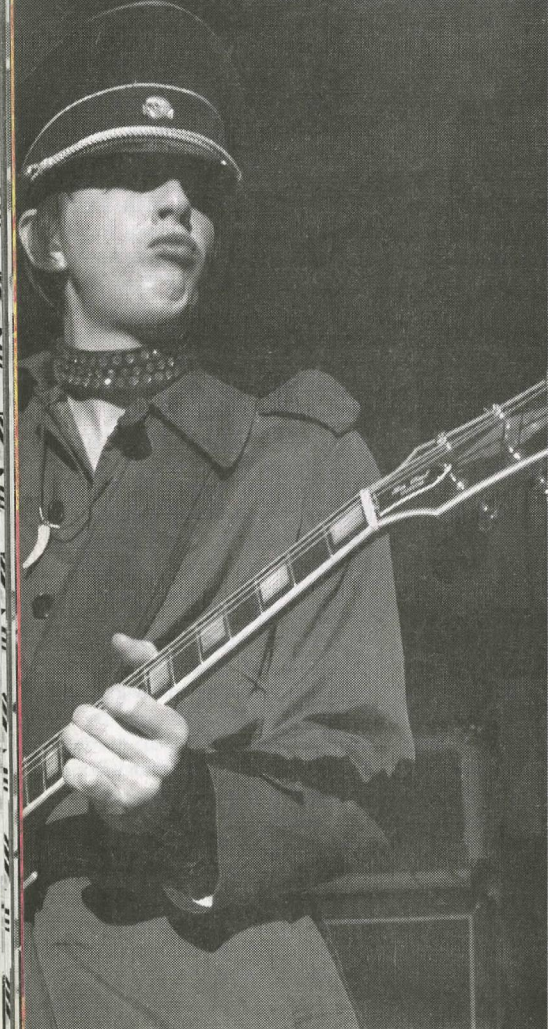
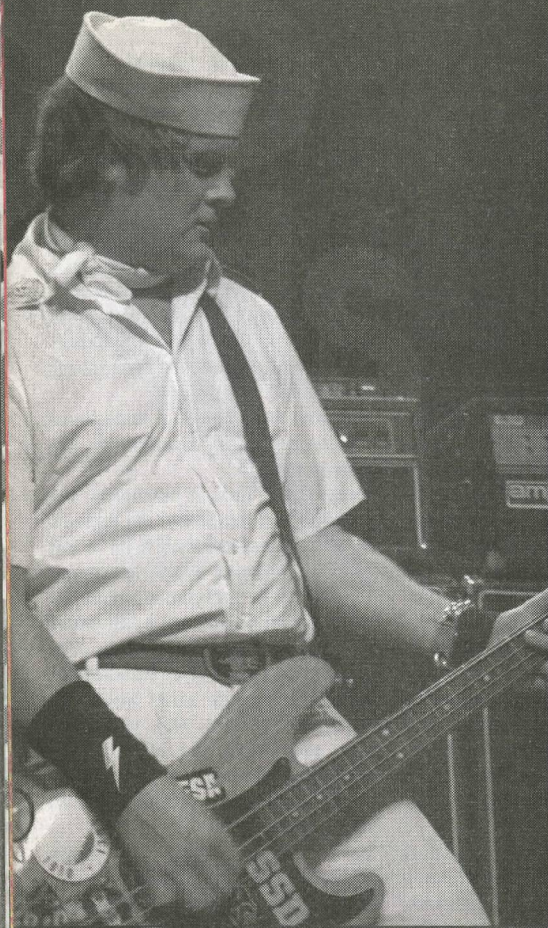
Happy Tom: Yeah, it just turned into idiocy, and it turned into the opposite of what it presented itself to be. It was supposed to be an attack, and it was supposed to be a revolution against the pretentiousness. But then it just turned into the most pretentious thing ever. And I think a lot of other Scandinavian bands in the rock genre have been unpretentious in a very pretentious way, and I think one of the things I'm really proud of with *Turbo* is that we've always been pretentious in an unpretentious way.

BW: How were those first couple albums received in your area?

Happy Tom: Well I mean, they never sold much. I think *Hot Cars* and *Never is Forever* they sold probably like, I don't know, like fifteen hundred copies each. Hank had joined between *Hot Cars* and *Never is Forever* and we just wanted to develop into something more... 'cause we tried to kick everybody's ass by being anti Lo-fi, but that didn't really work at the time, cause nobody noticed, you know. And that was the same time that all the church burnings were going on here and *Black Metal*, you know, in Norway, and you know rock was suddenly starting to get scary again, and we thought that was great in a way. Even though, you know, some of the things that happened in the *Black Metal* scene at that time were pretty, you know, awful.

BW: I heard somewhere that the thinking with the whole Denim Demon transformation of Turbonegro was "What can we do that will terrify people more than burning churches and suicide and murder?"

Happy Tom: Yeah, 'cause, I mean Paul, Chris and myself were from this small area southeast of Oslo called Follo. And that's the epicenter of Scandinavian *Black Metal*; *Mayhem*, *Darkthrone*, *Satyricon*, *Dimmu Borgir*, all those bands are from this same tiny area, and it's like, I mean, my dad knows the parents of *Satyr*. It's such a small place, and we grew up with those guys. I remember hanging out with the *Mayhem* guys in eighty-three, you know, twenty-two years ago, and listening to *Venom* together. And it's



like, we were never part of that scene, but we were never part outside it either, 'cause we were like childhood friends with these people. So we were like, "what can we do to like scare these guys, you know? To scare our old friends, what can we do? Okay, were going to become a homo band." And then it worked, 'cause like Necrobutcher, the bass player and sort of leader of Mayhem said like "hey man, people think, you know... people call us evil, but you know, Turbo, you're the most evil band ever." And he was serious. They all applauded it. And Fenriz in Darkthrone is one of my all time best friends and he's part of Turbojugend Follo and Maniac in Mayhem is also Turbojugend, and Satyr is a Turbojugend so it's like they all ended up joining the fan club.

BW: I think it's hard for people in America to understand the kind of terror that that whole Black Metal thing inspired in Norway, I mean because to us, people get killed all the time, and you know, there was that one big murder that happened, but it's kind of hard to understand the kind of frenzy that was happening at the time. It was pretty wild, wasn't it?

Happy Tom: Yeah.... It just really shook Norway a lot, and it was like "how can it happen here?" I guess that was the whole bottom line. I don't know. I think the church has burned more people than people have burned churches, so I don't mind that outlook. Still I like some of the older church buildings like nine hundred year old churches from the early post-Viking era. I know some other churches you could burn before you started burning that one. And also the killings... I mean Euronymous was a good friend of mine from when I was a kid, and uh...

BW: Oh really?

Happy Tom: And I think it's kind of hard to explain post the fact. I was in Euronymous' shop like half a year before he got killed, he invited me up there 'cause he wanted to hear the new Turbo single at the time. We just drank some beers there, and that's the last time I ever met him. So we weren't in the eye of the storm and I think it's sort of like the lord of the flies, you know just a bunch of young kids that got caught up in a blood frenzy. And I don't know it's too complicated, I think in lyconomia[?] and that book, The Lords Of Chaos?

BW: Yeah, I've read The Lords Of Chaos.

Happy Tom: I think he's, I don't know, it's a pretty good book, he's done some good research, and he's talked to the right people, but I still don't like his bottom line. He has sort of a Right-Wing approach to it, and his approach is 'look at this wealthy socialist country, and you can give people good education and good healthcare, and still they're going to kill each other'. There's sort of a very visible Right-Wing agenda to that whole thing, and I don't think that's what happened. I think he ignored, maybe even deliberately, the fact that Norway's a country with actually pretty big class differences. And if you look at the sociographics of Black Metal you'll see that it's the kids of the underclass.

BW: You have a side project, Scum, with some members of Emperor, is that correct?

Happy Tom: Right, yeah. Faust and Samoth.

BW: So there's definitely that crossover. What are some of those people doing now, they must have moved on from that scene.

Happy Tom: And Faust, he's now playing drums in Blood Tsunami, just like a local old-school thrash metal band. Faust, when he was in jail he

started getting more and more back to his roots, so I mean when we got together and recorded the Scum thing, he really didn't want to play metal, he wanted to play old-school hardcore. 'Cause that was his initial roots. And a lot of like the Mayhem guys and all those guys actually came from a sort of Motorhead/Punk background.

BW: Turbonegro to me has obvious roots in American Hardcore. You cover the Lewd, you've covered some other Hardcore bands...

Happy Tom: Agent Orange, recently.

BW: Oh really, what song?

Happy Tom: Yeah, we did Bloodstains, for a local rock and roll pub. They put out this anniversary record.

BW: So is American Hardcore big in the formative years of the Turbonegro members?

Happy Tom: Yeah, especially mine, Chris. Rune and Paul were really into Scratch Acid and Squirrel Bait, and Big Black, like the early post-punk Touch and Go bands, and I was really into US Hardcore, and Chris is a big fan of soul and soft rock, but his all-time favorite record is Group Sex, the Circle Jerks. So for several of us it's very, yeah, like you said, formative.

BW: I read that you actually write most of the music and lyrics, is that true?

Happy Tom: Yeah, mostly it's Euroboy and me. We sit and drink beer and play guitar and just come up with riffs and throw them back and forth and see what we can do with them and talk about references. You know it's more like a musical history lab. But we try, you know, instead of just like... I mean you can probably hear some of the stuff we've actually more or less ripped off through the times, but we're not out to rip off. We're more out to like honor and like, how can we like renew this, and how can we turn something classic rock into something fresh, you know, and valid for two-thousand and five.

BW: Euroboy joined with Apocalypse Dudes, I believe, is that correct?

Happy Tom: Yeah, he joined in ninety-six, pretty shortly after Ass Cobra came out, and then Chris Summer joined in ninety-seven, and together they had like this classical rock, they brought this classical rock element, especially Euroboy of course into the band and, you know, we're like "where do we go from here?" And I think that was very much his vision, you know that, "let's try to play punk rock in like the grandest manner ever." You know, "Let's try to make punk rock pompous and beautiful."

BW: It seemed to me that the progression from Ass Cobra to Apocalypse Dudes was almost a progression to an arena punk rock band.

Happy Tom: Yeah, I think Ass Cobra was like a scream from the gutter and Apocalypse Dudes was like a scream from the ivory tower.

BW: Apocalypse Dudes was really well received, you toured in ninety-eight, and then the band broke up, or went on hiatus. From what people say Hank kind of secluded himself into vices, and the various members went their own ways. How did the band come back together for Scandinavian Leather?

Happy Tom: Well, like when we broke up we were just really tired, 'cause I mean we felt that we'd been playing in this great band for so long, and nobody cared. We were just starting to get noticed because we put out some... you know, we toured so much and people just, you know... especially people in other bands ended up being the favorite band of other bands. And I think they really spread the gospel. I mean everybody from, you know like,

Kirk Hammett and James Hetfield to the guys in the Queens of the Stone Age... you know like Dave Grohl... all these people were, you know, were talking a lot about us, and I think they sort of... I don't know if that fueled the special interest, but I think the bottom line is we turned into this band that never, you know I mean we never had a promo budget, we never had a marketing budget, we hardly ever had a studio budgets and there was never any money or muscle put into this, it's like we just sold our own records by making good records. I think Turbo ended up like the ultimate band that you heard about through a friend, if you know what I'm saying. You know, it's like this grapevine that we didn't think had existed since like late days of punk rock, early days of hardcore, just suddenly kicked into gear again and just, you know made a lot of people, a lot of cool people notice us, a lot of, you know, good people.

BW: Apocalypse Dudes is such a favorite record of so many people, and there were such high expectations of Scandinavian Leather and later Party Animals, did you feel any kind of pressure to try to follow up Apocalypse Dudes?

Happy Tom: Very much, very much. We knew we couldn't follow it. It's like, when we put out Scandinavian Leather we just wanted to show... You know when we got back together again, initially it was just for three festival shows. And you know, Hank was in better shape, we all were, you know. We all were pretty motivated just to do at least those shows that summer of two thousand and two. And we were like okay... you know, we broke up because we started to become such a bad band in '98 and we started to suck so bad because of, you know, obvious reasons. And then we said okay, let's do these festival shows so we can play for these kids who've never seen us. And then we thought it was great, we said, "Yeah okay, let's make another record," and then everybody's like, "No!" I mean, even some of our biggest fans were like "No, no, don't do it! Don't do it!" You know, they wanted us to be this myth. And you know in a way I kind of understand it but I don't respect it, because I mean, we don't want to be a myth, we just want to be a good band.

BW: When you came back and you started touring, you came to the States. I saw some of those shows at the Troubadour you played. How did you feel about the response? I mean, it was so intense.

Happy Tom: I don't know, we read so much around, you know, like in the late nineties, early two thousands that, you know, "Rock and roll is back!" you know all the music press was like "Rock and roll is back! Rock and roll is back!" And we're like "No. It's not back, 'cause we haven't toured yet." And we were like whistle blowers, we're like "Hey, we're standing over here, rock and roll isn't back until we tour, and by the way, we're wearing some funny hats." So yeah, it was like, we feel like we sort of revived rock and roll in a way just with those two tours we did, the one with Queens of the Stone Age, and the one after we put out Scandinavian Leather, because it was like so many different people came to the shows, but it was... I don't know it was like, you know just seeing people cry every night in front of the stage.

BW: So how do you feel about Party Animals? What are you trying to do with Party Animals? Obviously the band feels that it needs to progress with the albums and keep going forward.

Happy Tom: 'Cause Scandinavian Leather, like you say was, so much pressure, and we're like "Okay,

we just want to make a cool record." You know, and we were the only band in 2003 that had to compete against ourselves. Everybody else had to compete against every other rock and roll record that came out. And you know, I think there is a lot of good songs on Scandinavian Leather, but I think you can hear the pressure there and it's not necessarily only a good thing, even though we absolutely thrive under pressure. We just really wanted to make this really grand record sort of in the vein of Apocalypse Dudes, but a little different. And then with Party Animals you can hear that it's a band that's played like two hundred shows before they went in the studio. The Turbo live monster is pretty legendary now and I think it's hard to capture that. I think Party Animals is getting there, you know. Plus I mean, we don't want to sound like just a live record, we want it to sound very produced, and to sound very perfectionist.

BW: Some of the songs to me on Party Animals: All My Friends Are Dead, Final Warning, I think are as good as any on any Turbonegro record, and Final Warning has a string section!

Happy Tom: Yeah, Final Warning and City of Satan we have the Norwegian Radio Broadcasting Orchestra, Which is like a fifty piece. We managed, we talked to the guy, one of the directors there, and he let us use the orchestra for a full day for free. You know while mostly like the Black Metal bands that use big string sections they have to go to Eastern Europe, to Prague or to Warsaw, because it's really cheap. But with this, it's like, I think it's one of the most expensive orchestras in the World to use, the Norwegian Radio Broadcasting Orchestra, and so we just used it for what it was worth.

BW: I think that most of the time when a hard rock band tries to incorporate an orchestra it's just a horrible mistake.

Happy Tom: Yes.

BW: But for me, especially Final Warning works so well. It still sounds hard and intense but you don't even notice at first that, "wait a minute, there are violins in this song!"

Happy Tom: I don't know if you've heard the Kiss Live in Melbourne with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra? It's a recent Kiss live album full of overdubs and full of cheating. And I think the classical thing hard rock bands especially do when they bring in the symphony orchestra is like "Yeah, via the symphony orchestra we want to pull our low culture rock and roll into high culture." And it just turns into schmaltz, you know, it just turns into like, Liberace. And with us it was the other way around. We wanted to pull the high culture of the symphony orchestra down into the low cultural gutter of deathpunk and piss all over it.

BW: Well I think it worked.

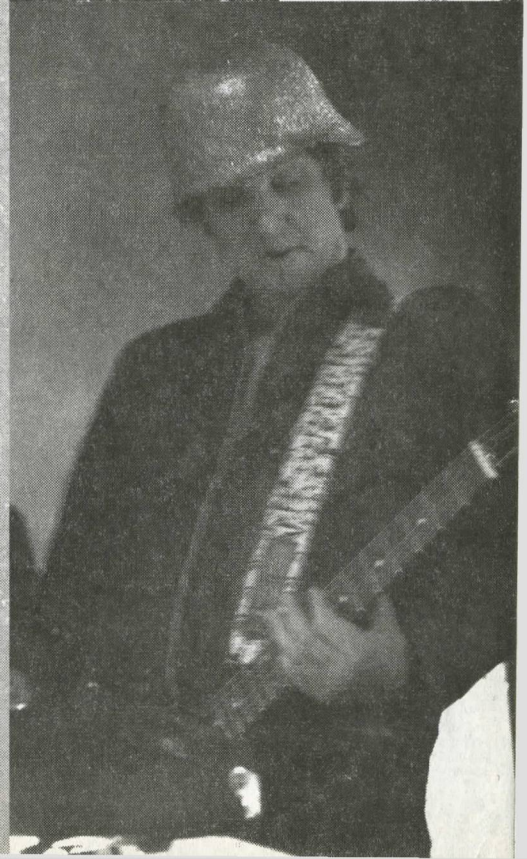
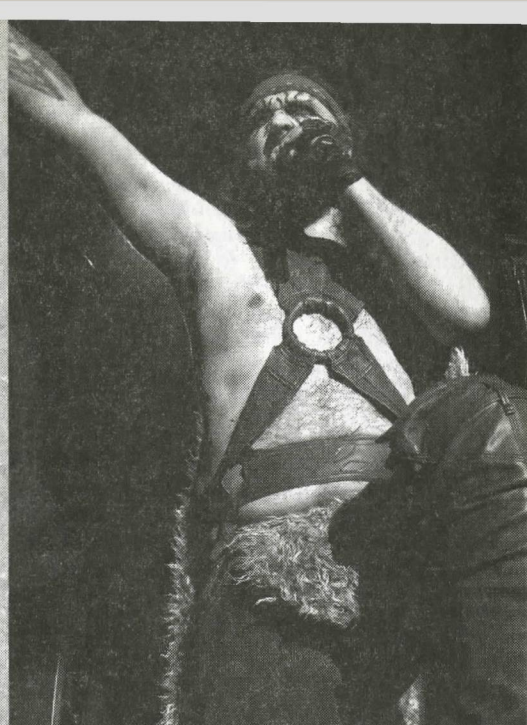
Happy Tom: It's more like band verses orchestra, it's like wrestling.

BW: So with Scandinavian Leather to one extent and more so with Party Animals it seems like these new albums are kind of lacking in old-style Turbonegro man-on-boy action.

Happy Tom: (laughing) Right!

BW: Is Turbonegro trying to change its image?

Happy Tom: No, I think the thing... I think it's kind of even a little explicit what happened, because, you know when we did the thing in... when we did the Denim Demon homo thing in, you know, ninety-five, it's like, you know at that time like we said it was pretty scary. And now it's like, you know, homo is like... homosexuality is the new mainstream. Look at Queer Eye For the Straight Guy and, you



can't turn on your TV anymore without getting a bunch of, like, homo culture in your face. Me personally I don't mind that, I think it's probably cool for kids who actually are gay, you know. But it's like it turned from being something like dark, disco, Studio 54, like blue oyster bar into something very mainstream and dull.

BW: Yeah, that's true.

Happy Tom: So we're like, "Eh, you know... you know, it's not that... it's just not that edgy anymore. So it's like, let's just be sexual instead of homosexual."

BW: At the House of Blues show last month Hank was talking about people saying that Turbonegro isn't fun anymore...

Happy Tom: No, isn't funny!

BW: Isn't funny? Is that what they were saying?

Happy Tom: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

BW: So it's the reaction to the kind of lack of that stuff on the record.

Happy Tom: No... all these big mainstream like British music press reviewers who didn't discover us until Scandinavian Leather. And then when they, when they were, some of these guys were reviewing Party Animals, a lot of these people actually thought it was our second album. And it's like "Yeah, it was funny the first time around, it's not funny anymore." It's like, you know what, it was funny for two minutes in nineteen ninety-five. It wasn't funny in nineteen ninety-six. You know, what are you talking about?

BW: Well, I think one of the great things about Turbonegro is that it's big, intense rock and roll that people can really become dedicated fans of, but it's never taken itself too seriously.

Happy Tom: Some people try to write us off as a joke band, but on the other hand, I can't really see how you can do it, because where's the joke end and where's the seriousness start? Because it absolutely has a serious aspect, and I think, you know, just to put it simply, we don't really take ourselves that seriously, but we take rock and roll very seriously. And it's just our way to try to bring some magic into rock and roll again.

BW: So as I said, I saw you at the House of Blues this month, and I wouldn't let my girlfriend show her tits when Hank asked [the girls in the audience]. Why am I so uptight? What's wrong with me? Is it because I'm American?

Happy Tom: Your not used to topless beaches. Hank runs around on topless beaches. Hank runs around on topless beaches and says "hide your tits." We're the eternal contrarians. He says hide your tits, they're too ugly.

BW: Well, she's got nice ones.

Happy Tom: (laughing) Not here, just the people at the topless beaches. He's got some nice boobs himself. Like a firm B-cup.

BW: If Turbonegro crashed their airplane into a frozen mountaintop, and the band survived, who would you eat first? Would you start with Hank? He the largest. I think I'd start with Chris Summers, because he didn't get onboard with the cool sounding name.

Happy Tom: Yeah I think we'd start with Hank, 'cause he has so much opiates, he has so much methadone in his body that we'd all get a... we'd all get... you know, we'd all be full and we'd all get kind of stoned.

BW: I got some of that Turbonegro money that you shot out of the cannon, but uh... I don't really know what I can buy with it, my drug dealer won't take it.

Happy Tom: Actually the main Turbojugend chapter is in Hamburg, Germany, and some of those bars around Hamburg are pretty dark and there's been several incidents where we've actually paid for pretty big bar tabs with the Turbonegro money. Because it's so dark in there and the bartenders are so cranked up on coke. So we just say "do you take US dollars? -Yeah, yeah, sure, sure, sure, sure." And we just pay them with the Turbo bills, and it's actually worked several times.

BW: Tell me about the Turbojugend. How did that come about?

Happy Tom: We wanted to go back to the old days of rock, when band's had fan clubs.

BW: The Kiss Army

Happy Tom: Yeah, Kiss had an Army, we have a Navy.

BW: Why are there so many rules? I looked online and it says you have to have a certain amount of meetings per month...

Happy Tom: We just put that in there to make it more like a real fan club, you don't have to stick to it. All you need to start a Turbojugend in your area is three people. Some of the chapters actually follow all those rules, but you don't have to.

BW: The Turbojugend jackets are kind of form-fitting for us large size Americans. You need to come out with some extra-large denim for the extra-large fan.

Happy Tom: Aren't they big enough?

BW: Well they're cut kind of slim in the waist, for me at least.

Happy Tom: Well you've got to knock down on those carbs, man. You have to check out Hank's work out-DVD, haven't you seen it?

BW: (laughing) Not yet, no.

Happy Tom: Yeah, it's like a bonus thing on the... at least, some of the European copies of Party Animals came out with a bonus DVD with is Hank's work-out video, and it's an actual work-out video.

BW: What's that entail, like, actual exercise or...

Happy Tom: No, it's him at the health club, yeah, yeah. 'Cause, I mean, when you're a rock and roller you don't want to waste valuable drinking time on working out, but still you have to work out a little bit, you know. Just to be able to keep up the drinking. You know, do the quality partying, you have to be in shape for the quality partying. So it's like a fifteen-minute workout video, which actually works.

BW: Well maybe I'll get on the bandwagon, then. I need my Turbojugend jacket.

Happy Tom: We hate fake rock and carbs. Not the good carbs, though.

BW: Yeah, the beer carbs, those are hard to cut out. I don't know about the new lo-carb vodka, but I might have to switch over to that.

Happy Tom: Have they made that?

BW: Yeah, they're advertising it here in LA on billboards.

Happy Tom: Oh fuck! That's sick. That's like nosebleed free cocaine.

BW: Yeah, it's ridiculous. When you live in LA you kind of forget that every magazine in the world doesn't have advertisements for plastic surgery and lo carb vodka. Then you go other

places and fake tits aren't everywhere you look and you realize that this is a different place. You have a pretty big fan-base in LA. How does it compare to other places?

Happy Tom: It's great, 'cause when we did those Troubadour shows and people were crying and fainting and stuff and people said, you know... like, Keith Morris, he's been to every show in LA the last twenty-five years. Then we talked to him after and he said, you know, this is the most blasé audience in the world, but he'd never seen people like, cry and faint and stuff at LA shows, so I guess we sort of brought rock and roll back to Los Angeles.

BW: Yeah, you wouldn't believe the response that most bands get here, I mean, people do not get into bands. But I mean, I bought scalped tickets for that show, you know? And the funny thing was, those shows were sold out, and we went down there last minute, thinking "let's try to buy scalped tickets." And we almost didn't go, because we thought, "no way, no one's going to sell their ticket." And there were scalped tickets out there but no one was buying because everyone thought, "there's no way anyone's going to sell a Turbonegro ticket if they already have it."

Happy Tom: What were they going for?

BW: Eh, thirty bucks.

Happy Tom: Oh, cool.

BW: But there were people there who had already paid hundreds for them on the internet.

Happy Tom: Yeah, I know. I think it went for like... one of those shows even went for three hundred bucks.

BW: Yeah, but outside the show, last minute, since everyone knew it was so expensive, they thought, "there's no way I can get a ticket," but there was some to be had, if you were a dedicated fan.

Happy Tom: Well it's the land of plenty.

BW: Well, thanks a lot for talking to me Tom, I really appreciate it. I'm a big fan.

Happy Tom: Cool, Jesse. Where are you guys located?

BW: We're in LA.

Happy Tom: Where about?

BW: I live in Long Beach, the magazine's out of the San Fernando Valley.

Happy Tom: Magnolia.

BW: Magnolia, yeah, exactly. We're about two blocks from Magnolia Boulevard.

Happy Tom: But your street's called Mongolia.

BW: When are you coming back to LA? We miss you already.

Happy Tom: I don't know, we should probably come back and play the Hollywood Bowl, the way the last three shows sold out.

BW: Yeah, I had to... I bought my scalped tickets... I don't plan ahead, you know, so I had to buy my scalped tickets at the House of Blues, as well.

Happy Tom: Disneyland, eh?

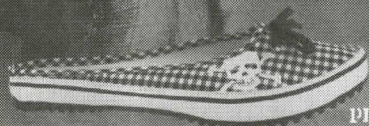
BW: That was amazing, how did you feel about playing at Disneyland?

Happy Tom: Well, it's the "Happiest Place On Earth." So I felt at home. (burps)

BW: Well, thank you for the interview, I really appreciate it.

Happy Tom: Okay, glad it finally came through.

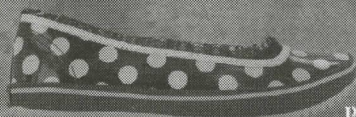
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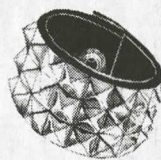
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Aiden

INTERVIEW BY: FARRAH USMANI

If you haven't heard of Aiden yet, chances are you will by the end of the year. This young, dedicated, self-proclaimed "horror rock" band from Seattle has been taking stages across the country by storm with a live performance incomparable to anything I've ever seen before. With a set full of wild drumming tricks, over-the-shoulder guitar spins, and intense stage dives, it's hard not to rock out to these guys, even if you're not the biggest fan of pop-punk. Not too bad for a band that's only been around for two years. With roots that started in the Spring of 2003, Aiden self-released, promoted, and sold over 2,000 copies of their full-length debut, *Our Gang's Dark Oath*. They also booked multiple DIY tours and gained label interest through rapid word-of-mouth hype, all before graduating high school. With such amazing energy, combined with the promotional backing power of indie giants, Victory Records, Aiden's *Nightmare Anatomy* is sure to be jamming on an MP3 player near you by Christmas.

Big Wheel: Introduce yourself and what you do in the band.

Wil: My name is Wil and I sing for Aiden.

BW: Well let's start. I hate bringing pre-written questions, I like conversation much better — so you guys are pretty young, you just graduated high school this past summer?

Wil: Yeah.

BW: How did the band tour being in high school and all?

Wil: The guitar player and the drummer were still in high school. We toured whenever they would have a break - spring break, winter break, summer. We even played a show on Christmas, and we'd play shows every weekend, just whenever they weren't in school.

BW: Before they graduated, did you guys do national tours or were you guys just doing west coast stuff?

Wil: Yeah we'd just do short tours because they'd only be out of school a couple of weeks, so we'd be able to go out to Chicago and back or down to California and like, Texas and back.

BW: And you guys are from Seattle, right?

Wil: Yeah.

BW: My friends and I were just talking about taking a road trip to Seattle! So how's this Texas weather compared to what it's like in Seattle? (laughing)

Wil: SUCKS.

BW & Wil:...hahahaha

Wil: It sucks SO bad.

BW: You like the snow better?

Wil: Uh yeah I like the rain, I like the cold.

BW: I like the rain too. I think it'd be cool to live in Seattle. I'd enjoy all the raining and grogginess all the time.

Wil: I just don't like the humidity.

BW: Yeah it's really bad down here. We were sweating after only being outside for like ten minutes. Have you guys been to Texas before?

Wil: Yes, we came to Texas before and it was really hot.

BW: How does playing shows on the road compare to playing home shows?

Wil: Well it depends on what market we're in. Like in California, we can market really well. We're still a really new band though, and we've only gone through Texas once before. Last night was amazing. We got an amazing response in Dallas.

BW: So you guys just did an international tour right? With...

Wil: the Hurt Process.

BW: Oh yeah, and how was that?

Wil: It was AMAZING. We got a chance to go to a lot of places we hadn't been before. We went to UK in May with Silverstein. We also got to go to Germany and Prague and Netherlands...so it was good.

BW: And being on an independent label like Victory, I know that they're getting bigger, but I was wondering if you guys actually get accommodations or is it like touring here still?

Wil: I mean, it's still a pretty small deal it, just all depends on how many

records you sell and obviously a band like Hawthorne Heights, they're going to treat them really well 'cause they sell a lot of records.

OBW: You guys are doing a fest in Germany with bullet from my valentine, right?

Wil: We're doing a whole tour with them!

BW: Really?

Wil: Yeah in the UK and Germany in like February.

BW: Awesome! Who else is on it? It's Bullet From My Valentine and ...

Wil: UK dates are also with Hawthorne Heights and Still Remains.

BW: Oh they're good [Still Remains] are like my favorite band right now.

Wil: They're really good.

BW: Why did you guys wait to start touring? I know a lot of bands make school a second priority, but it doesn't seem like that was the case with you guys. Was it really important for everyone to finish school?

Wil: Yeah, they were already like eleven years into school so it was kind of pointless to drop out. So we just thought we might as well just have them finish school and make a new record in the mean time, and just tour once they got out.

BW: And you guys have only been together since 2003?

Wil: Yes, yes.

BW: So is it pretty cool that it moved so fast? 'Cause there are bands that wait around seven or eight years and nothing comes of it.

Wil: Yeah that's true. It has been quite a surprise actually.

BW: I read that you guys started out just as a hobby, right? And you guys weren't even planning on pursuing music?

Wil: yeah we started because we just wanted to play rock, y'know? We started playing shows and we had a following, so we decided to make some songs. Then before we knew it, we had enough songs for a record. Then we had this new record, and we thought we might as well do a tour, and it just kind of snowballed from there. After touring, we figured we might as well try to find a label.

BW: So was Victory something that you guys were really looking into, or was it just one of the labels that showed interest in you?

Wil: There were definitely a few labels that we were interested in, but I'm a big fan of bands on indie labels. Being on a major label kinda scares me, so we wanted to find the best indie

label, and I feel that Victory was one of the best.

BW: Has Victory let you guys be creative? Because I know they're getting bigger which makes me wonder if they're putting restraints on their bands, or are they letting you have full creative rights to everything?

Wil: Oh yeah totally! I mean, they have a great team, and they're a label that lets their bands do whatever they want. For example, we were recording and our producer was like "well I'm not gonna be surprised if the label comes down and checks in to see what we're doing" and well, nobody came. They emailed us a couple of times and were just like "so how's it going?" They pretty much just stood back and let us make our own record at our own pace.

BW: And Steve Carter who produced *Nightmare Anatomy* was the same guy who made your first record too right?

Wil: Yep.

BW: He was just a friend of yours that you guys brought in?

Wil: Yep.

BW: And Victory didn't moderate that at all?

Wil: Nooo, they were just like "here's your budget, make a record."

BW: Awesome.

Wil: They had like a list of people that we could've worked with but we felt more comfortable working with someone that we had worked with in the past because it's easier to work with something you already know.

BW: And how was recording the new cd with such a significantly bigger budget? How does it compare to the first cd that you guys put out?

Wil: Well the first one we did, we did in like eight days and this one we did in like two months. And the budget allowed us to really sit down and figure out what we need to do rather than just like "okay we just need to go in and put down some songs" so it was just a lot better to have that. We were able to get everything right, how we wanted it, unlike the first cd where we just went in and threw it down.

BW: And what are some of your favorite tracks on the cd? Do you have a couple favorites that you enjoy performing the most or that are the most personal?

Wil: Um, yeah I really like "Last Sunrise", and this one song that we do live called "Die Romantic." "Genetic Design for Dying" is my favorite song on the album, but we don't play it live.

BW: Before you guys even signed to Victory, I know you released two self-made videos. Are there any plans to make another one in support of *Nightmare Anatomy*?

Wil: Yeah actually we've done two so far. One for "Knife Blood Nightmare" and another for "The Last Sunrise." They're pretty cool.

BW: mmmm...a lot of people, I read, have been saying that you guys sound like My Chemical Romance. I always ask bands how they feel about the bands that they are compared to?

Wil: That's AWESOME. Those guys are AWESOME.

BW: So you take it as a compliment?

Wil: Fuck yeah, YEAH.

BW: And who are your main influences?

Wil: I grew up listening to a lot of punk like Misfits, Ramones...then I got into, like, the skate punk scene from California, like NOFX and Bad Religion. Just a wide selection of punk music.

BW: So since you all are from Seattle, do you have any grunge influences?

Wil: Oh yeah definitely. I learned the guitar through playing Nirvana songs.

BW: So what are you currently listening to?

Wil: HIM, My Chemical Romance, Bayside. A lot of that kind of stuff.

BW: It's pretty tragic what happened to Bayside. How did you guys react to that?

Wil: Well Beatz, their drummer was an amazing guy. In remembrance, everyone on the tour got commemorative Bayside tattoos.

BW: I heard they're gonna be back on tour soon performing an acoustic set?

Wil: Just the singer and guitarist.

BW: That's cool. So if you could tour with one band, dead or alive, who would it be?

Wil: Definitely AFI! HIM is pretty cool too. It'd be fun to tour with them.

BW: Good choice! Alrighty, well let's wrap this up. Big Wheel is published on the west coast, so is there anything you'd like to say to your California fans?

Wil: Yeah, totally. Thanks so much for your undying support. You guys are awesome!



BIG WHEEL

artist profile

Jenn Lloyd

Searching high and low for artistic talents may have you scavenging in the far corners of Downtown artist lofts, coffee shops in the vicinity of prestigious art schools, methadone clinics, and other various hip hang outs. But those veins have been tapped dry. Where does one go when the proverbial trees bare no fruit? The Valley! Yeah, that's right dear reader, the San Fernando Valley, where Jenn Lloyd, our featured artist for this issue, rests her head every night.

While some artists suffer a great deal for their work by consuming copious amounts of drugs and or living harsh lifestyles to create visuals in hopes tantalizing the oculars of onlookers and picture seekers, Jenn's approach has been of a reactionary act. Kind of like when Homer bought that patio barbeque but couldn't set it up and tried throwing it away until an art dealer saw the failed assembly attempt and made Homer an abstract sculptor. Sort of. But not really. What you are about to read is the true account of how Jenn painted pictures, put them on walls and sold them. Some of the most revered artists of all time were not able to achieve this feat in their own lifetime. So how did she overcome mountainous obstacles like living out of her car, walking amongst the tranny hookers, and end up in Valley? The truth will shock you.

Big Wheel: How long have you painting for?

Jenn: Only about two years. I kind of dabbled a little bit in high school because my parents were both artists, but I've only been painting and selling pieces for two years.

BW: Did you go to art school?

Jenn: No, I went to film school in Syracuse where I didn't take any painting classes but I did a lot of stuff for people's films and background things, set decoration stuff. But [painting] was really just a hobby until while working at Paramount I just put up some paintings that I had done in my office just to spruce up the jail cell walls. People right away were interested in it and asking me if I did stuff for sets and stages, so I figured that I may be onto to something here and I should consider doing a lot more of it.

BW: Do you mainly paint pictures to sell to studios for set use?

Jenn: I'm kind of getting in to that seriously. It's a bit of a process. They actually send you out to a facility that specializes in doing that so I'm trying to find the right place that does that, and where I can really get my stuff out there. The stuff I've done it for has never made air or was cancelled right away so it never got really seen.

BW: Are the majority of your paintings portraits?

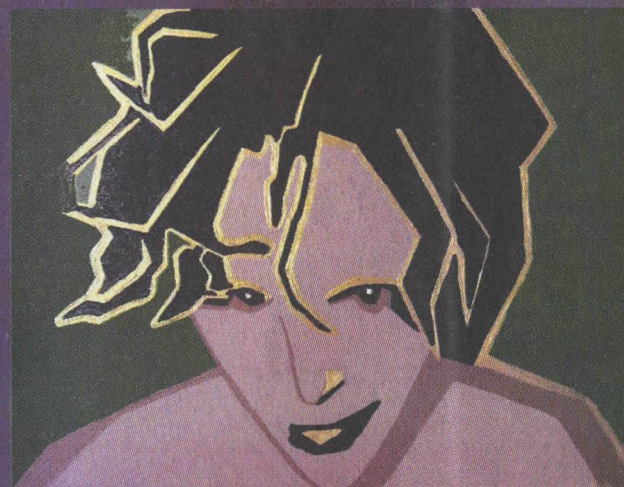
Jenn: It's almost entirely figure. Mostly abstract. Sometimes people commission me to do paint specific things, like famous people, but I can't sell that stuff because I don't own the rights, so it's more for fun and friends.

BW: What kind of music do you listen to?

Jenn: I'm all over the place. I'm actually-you wouldn't be able to tell but I'm really into classical music. I love opera and love symphony stuff, I'm a total dork that way. I've been so busy at work I haven't been out to see stuff lately. There's like the basic stuff that everybody needs to listen to when growing up like the Ramones and OP Ivy. That formed what I love stylistically and fundamentally.

BW: You grew up on the east coast?

Jenn: Yeah, grew up in Jersey right outside New York so I was there constantly,



especially in high school 'cause I was always going to shows. And then I went to college in upstate New York. And I've been out here in LA for six years.

BW: How do you like it out here?

Jenn: I love it out here. I mean it's so far from anything I know, 3,000 miles away from any family. I was working in New York and hated it. Bought a car and drove out two days later when the plates cleared. I didn't know anybody here when I moved to L.A. I got a hotel in Tarzana and lived there for two weeks. Lived out of my car for a bit and until I moved into an apartment in Burbank. I was kind of broke and didn't know anybody and needed to look for a job.

BW: So you started painting just to spruce up your work space?

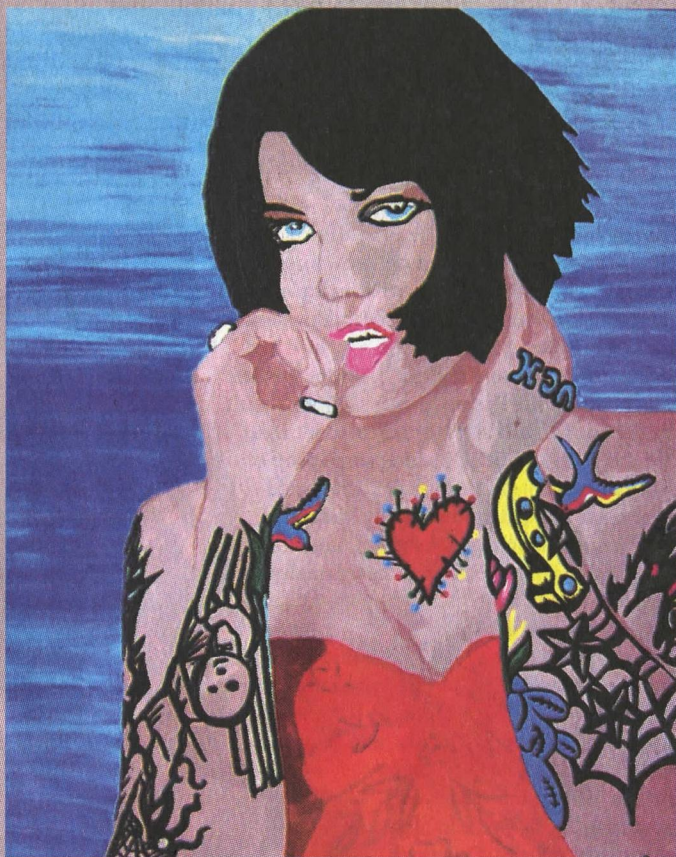
Jenn: I kind of painted because I was very stressed out from work, my day job at the time. I was giving tours at NBC, it was just minimum wage stuff where I had to wear a dopy polyester suit and had to point to Jay Leno's car. It was really lame day to day stuff with no money and I just needed to do something to make me happy that doesn't cost a lot of money, so I really got into drawing and painting. Then I got a job with an office and I put up some paintings. People took notice and started to ask me about selling pieces. I never really intended to put it out there, it was just a little hobby that I had. But once it started to take off and I thought maybe I should look into doing this more.

BW: It sounds like you're getting a good response.

Jenn: I have, I've put up a lot of stuff on my Myspace page and I've put up some of my work on Suicide Girls website, and then when it really took off.

BW: So you've painted a lot of the Suicide Girls?

Jenn: Yeah, but again it's stuff that they own the rights to so it's been for the girls who have asked me, "could you do a painting of me", and I say "absolutely in a heart beat", then send it off to them. They've been really nice and cool about it. But again I'll do stuff like that so more people put my art out there. If someone asks me to do something and I



BIG WHEEL

art profile

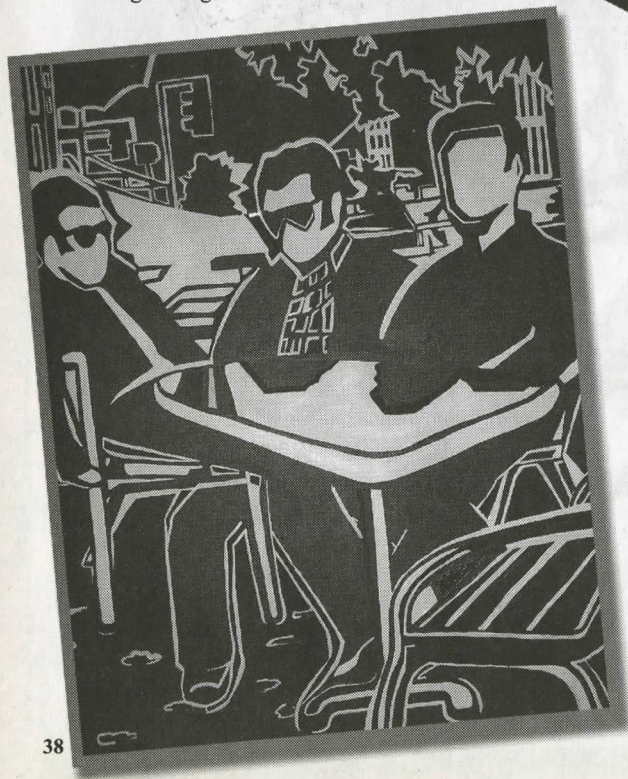
like the person enough I'll just do it for free especially, if they are going to post it where lots of people can see it and I can get my name out there.

BW: So that's kind of crazy. You didn't really plan it or anything.

Jenn: No, and it's crazy because I now know a lot of people who came out here with their plans set and they have their whole loft deals downtown and they've been plugging their way at it and I kind of just completely fell into it. It's the greatest thing in the world, I'm not gonna say 'oh, I don't want it, I don't have any attachment to it'. I just love doing it but I think its like, some people just sit at home playing guitar but who would never want to do it professionally, they just really enjoy dabbling. [Painting] kind of runs in the family I've just never really considered it f or a job.

BW: Do you like the Valley?

Jenn: (laughs) I have a love/hate relationship with the Valley. But no, I don't mind living in the Valley. I used to live over in Hollywood for a while at Las Palmas and Santa Monica where all the tranny hookers are. About ten years ago during my last year in high school into college I worked in a theatre on the lower east side of Manhattan back when it wasn't the trendy bar scene it is now, thing have changed a bit there. So I kind of got used to walking around the tranny environment, but nobody walks in LA so you're kind of a target for being mugged if your walking amongst the trannies at 2am.



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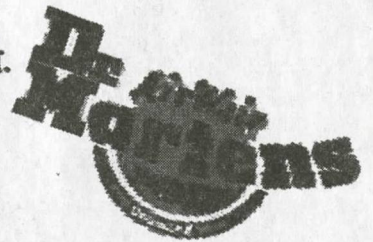
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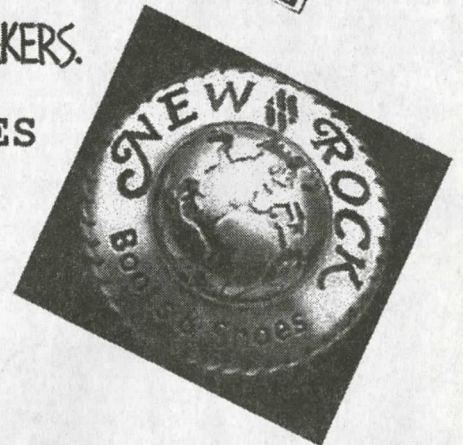
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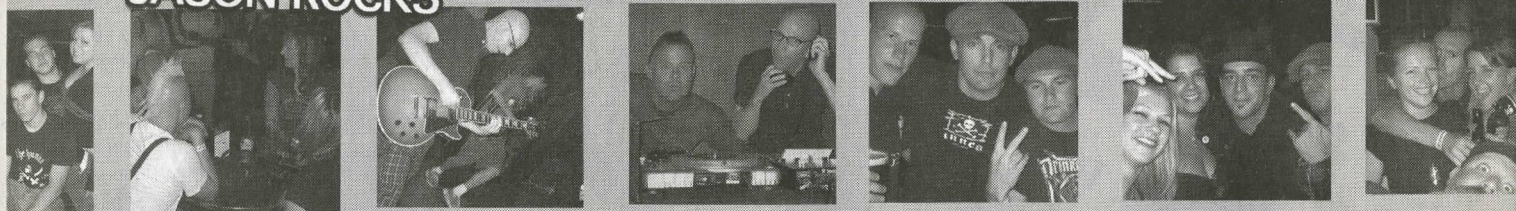
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PUNK ROCK SOCIAL



BY JASON ROCKS



Screaching Weasel once wrote a song about "a real cool club on the other side of town," but unlike the scene they sang about, the Punk Rock Social is about bringing together individuals who enjoy punk music, cheap drinks and interesting people.

The PRS was started a little over a year ago by two like minded friends, Brigitte and Cori, who wanted to create an event in Los Angeles that would attract people who they were interested in meeting. Brigitte said the idea came to them one year while they were at the BYO Records: Punk Rock Bowling tournament in Las Vegas. "Basically we were at punk rock bowling and we talked about the fact that we never knew where to go [in Los Angeles] where there were people like us," she said. "We'd go to shows but it never felt like we met anyone."

"Like where do all of the people who go to Punk Rock Bowling hangout afterward," Cori added.

So beginning in September of 2004, they started a Myspace group and invited everyone they knew to get together at the Coach and Horses bar in Hollywood the first Tuesday of that October for drink specials and to listen to punk rock records on the Jukebox. That night the Punk Rock Social was born.

Since then the PRS has been regularly held on the first Tuesday of every month, and it has

surely grown within the last 15.

What started out as a gathering in a dark bar was stepped-up-a-notch in August of this year when the location was moved to the Knitting Factory in Hollywood. On this occasion, in the more open and well-lit venue, and despite the \$5 cover charge, 10 times the usual number of people attended to hear dj's spin records, see a live band, and most importantly socialize.

It was what Cori and Brigitte were hoping the PRS would evolve into, and due to its success, they were decided to make all future events make every other month an event of this caliber. The plan was to alternating between the regular bar and putting on a show, because as Brigitte said, "Sometimes people don't want to go to a big event all of the time. Some people like to go to a dark bar and just relax."

Another reason for keeping every other month mellow, is that it takes a lot of preparation to put an event together and for Cori and Brigitte the PRS is a completely DIY effort. They spend a lot of their own time and money getting everything together, which includes booking bands, handling the venue, and making the goodie bags that are always at the door. However they did confess during the interview that they are considering hiring interns.

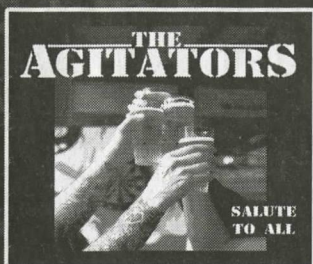
For the two of them, the entire endeavor is not for profit; they, the bands, and the dj's do not get paid. The only people who make money off of

it are the venue who gets a cut of the cover charge, and of course the bar where many people drop \$40 or more on drinks a night. Whatever is leftover from the cover gets donated to charity.

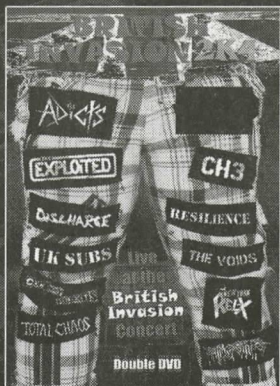
With the success of the two shows at the Knitting Factory, the last featuring the Street Dogs, Cori and Brigitte want to continue moving the social in that direction. The problem for them now becomes how to make the event bigger and get more people involved while still maintaining the level of relaxed intimacy it had when it started. They are currently looking for new venues that can accommodate both of those aspects. "Somewhere that would be ideal for us would be Molly Malone's which has a stage area and also a bar area that's kind of separate. So if people want to watch a band, great. If they don't want to their not obligated to."

Both lovely ladies have big plans for the Punk Rock Social and starting in January things will be changing. It will no longer be at the Coach and Horses, so they are actively looking for a better place.

This month however, it is back at the Knitting Factory, and Los Angeles's favorite band, the Angel City Outcasts, will be playing. So come down and show your support. Have a few drinks, and most importantly talk to new people. Be social! Also, keep checking out the awesome website created by Propaganda Print for updates and embarrassing pictures.



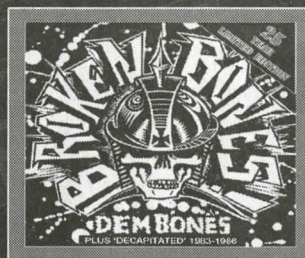
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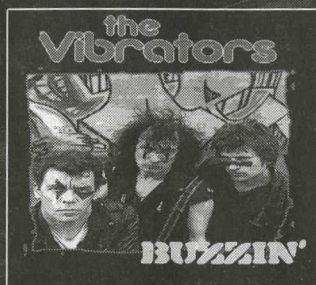
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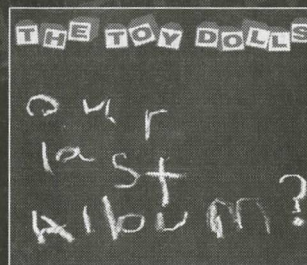
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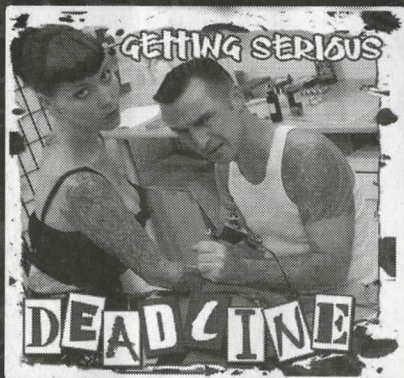


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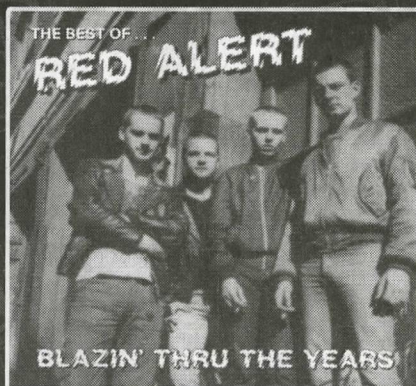


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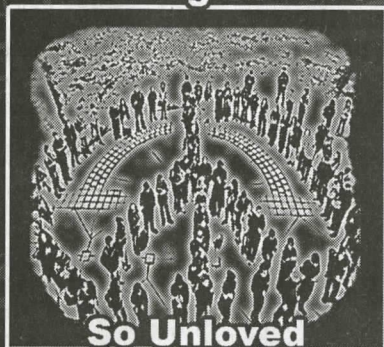
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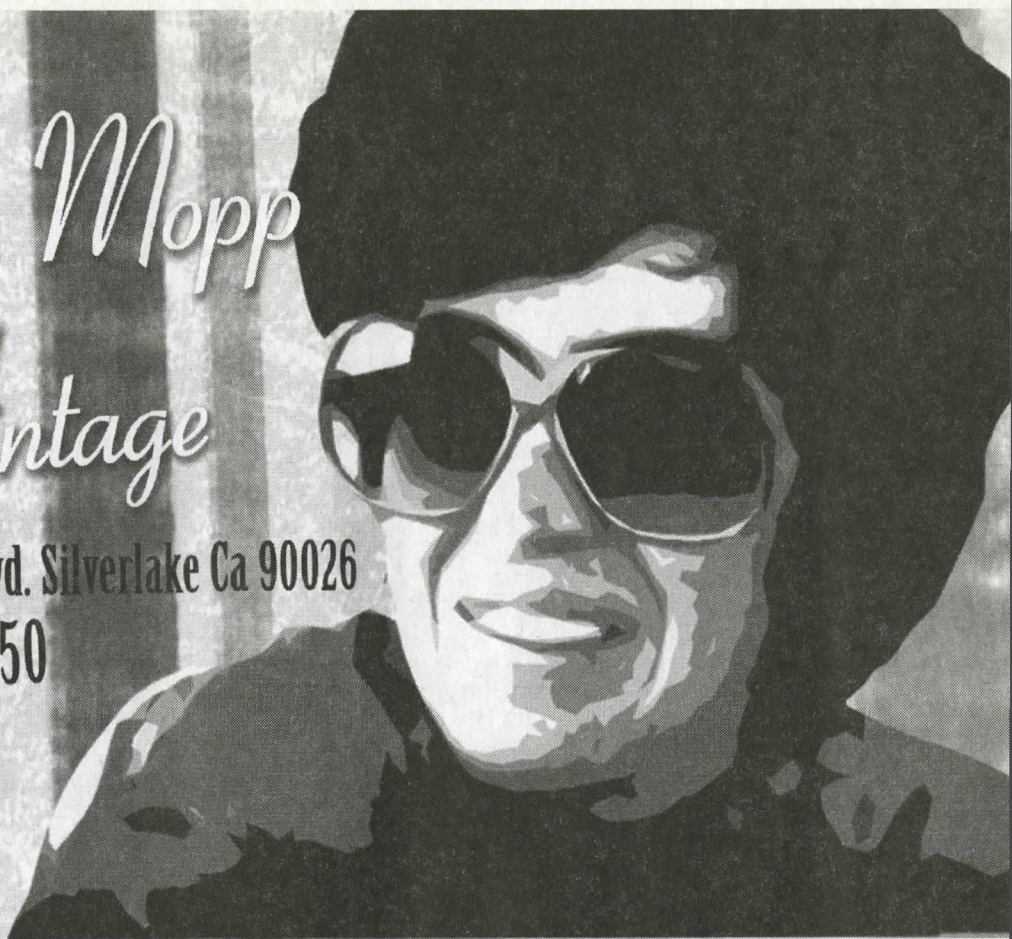
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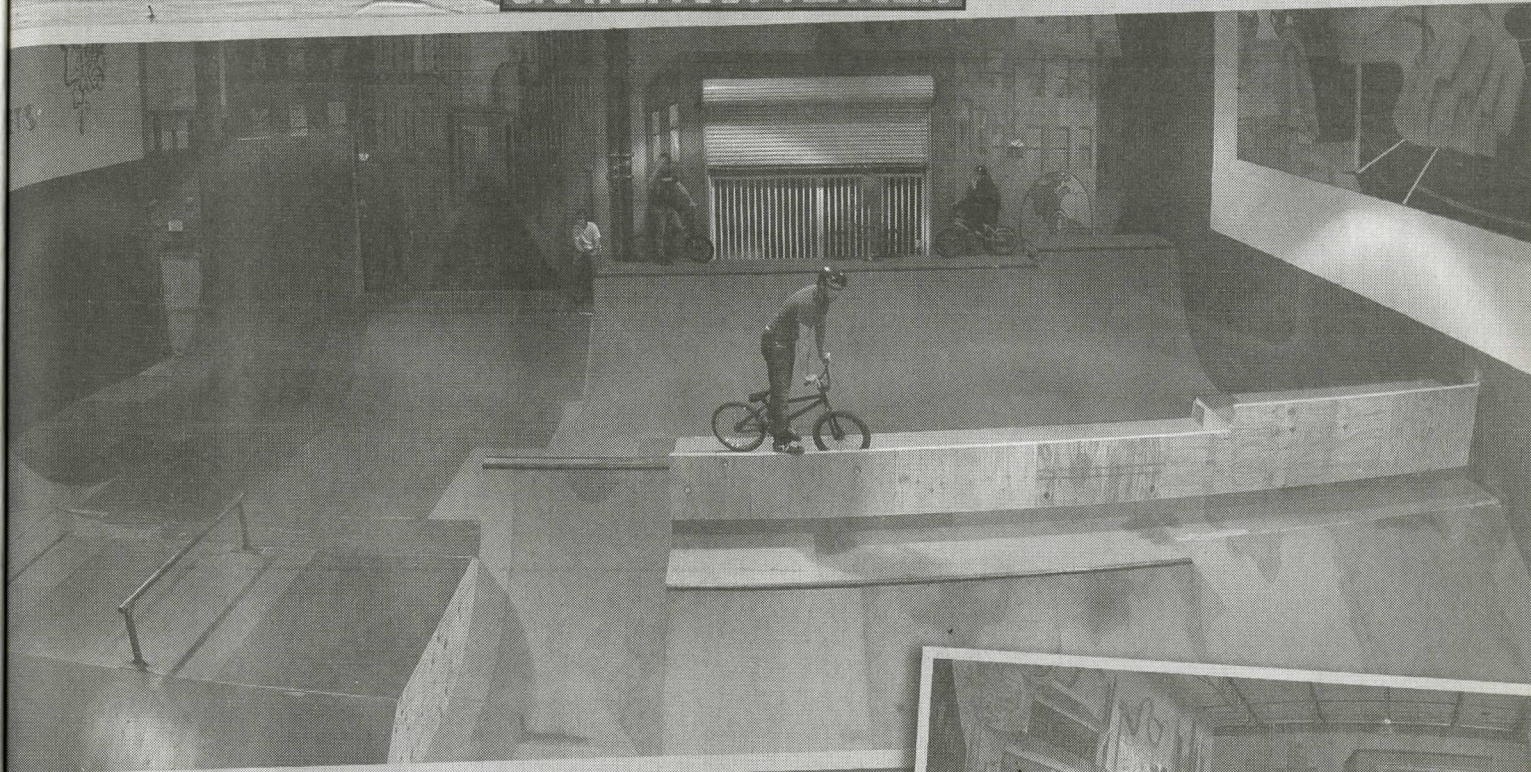
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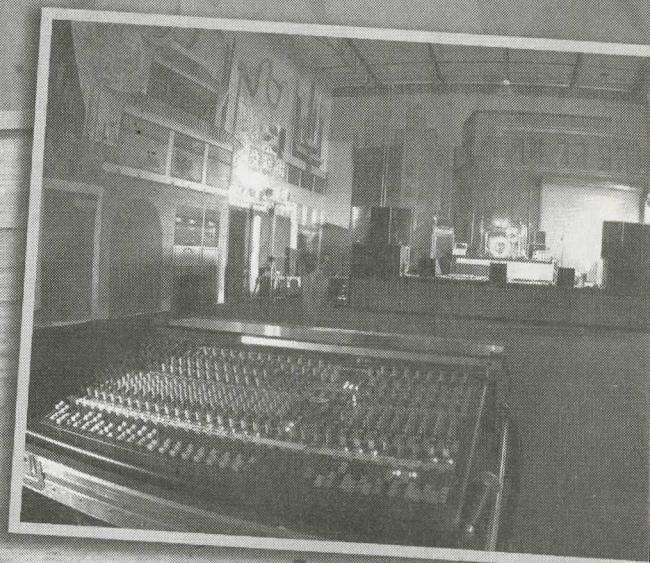
SKATEPARK REVIEW



A skate park can be a great place. Bowls, rails, half pipes and whatever else you need for a good skating session. But what about after the skating is over? What about for the kids who want to hang out instead of skate? Often times there isn't much else to do but skate at even the best skate parks. You might have a few video games to play but that is usually about it. Some skate parks may have a retail shop or a place to buy skate equipment. Some may have a snack bar too. Well the new Alpine Skate Park in Ventura has all of that and then some!

The skating area is all plywood. There are no concrete surfaces. There are plenty of angles, ramps, high walls and lines. This area features high walls and all forms to skate, grind, launch and trick. The Big Room has a four foot tall stage, giant drum riser and a State of the Art Sound System. This will be primarily for concerts with acts such as The Germs, Adolescents, and Propagandhi, soon to grace the stage. The area will also be used for meetings, movie screenings, summer camps, after school clubs, and a variety of classes in various disciplines. The upstairs venue will be for acoustic shows, small concerts, intimate movie screenings, and art gallery showings. Upstairs will also be home to a full service hair salon. This will feature two full service cut and color stations. Windows from the Salon area, view the mezzanine, The Big Room and outside. Downstairs will allow patrons to visit the Armory which is a retail space for clothes, skate supplies, gaming supplies, and a coffee shop. If you venture across from The Armory, through The Alpine decorated lounge area you will go the gaming area. The gaming area has many stations that include PC Games, X-Box Games, and Playstation Games. Downstairs will also be home the most unique aspect of the facility, a Laundromat. So if you ever had some clothes to wash, but wanted to wash them in a different setting, The Alpine has it for you!

I wish there was a skate park hang out place like this when I was growing up. This place has it all and seems to have a staff that is concerned with meeting the needs and desires of its patrons. I suggest you come on down and check out The Alpine, see a show, skate some ramps, play some games, maybe wash your clothes, get a haircut, buy some skate equipment, drink some coffee, or just hang out. This is the place for it.



www.alpineventura.com

Ph:805.650.1213 Location:1954 Goodyear Ave. Ventura CA 93003

big wheel

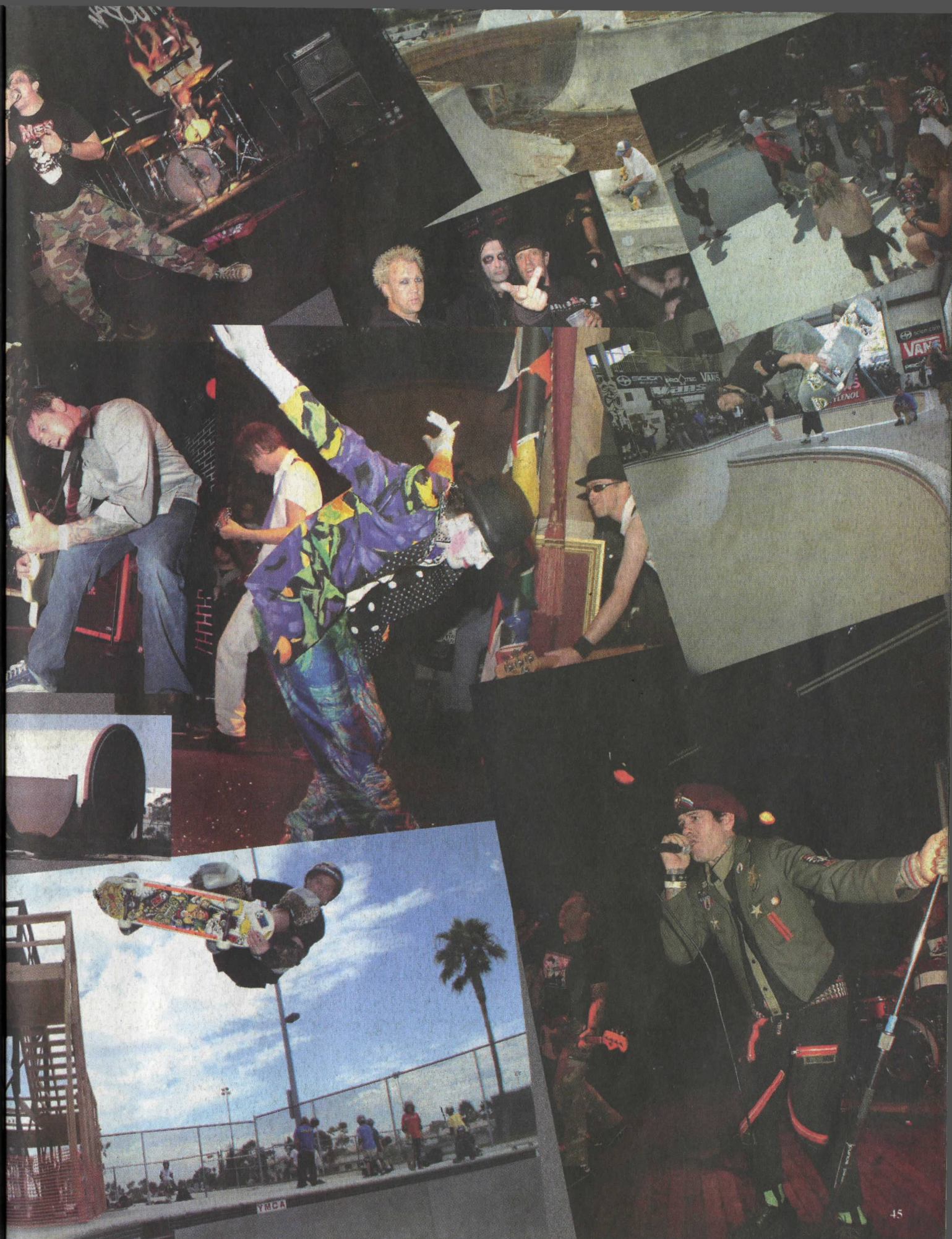
The Book



The following pages are a small snapshot of news photos taken over the last 5 years at various skate spots and Punk shows. There were so many photos that never made their way to the teamgoon.com website. The guys over at Team Goon have created a book containing these lost photos.

Photography by

Team Goon





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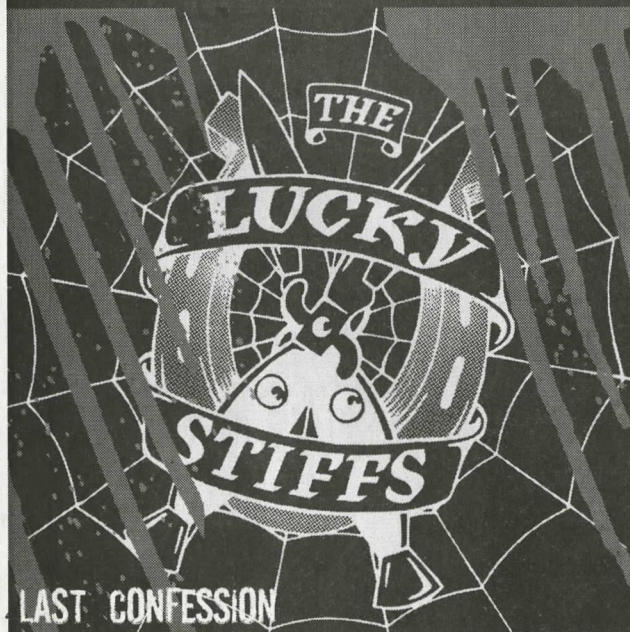
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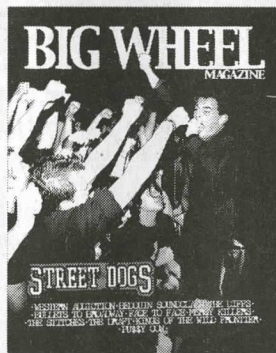
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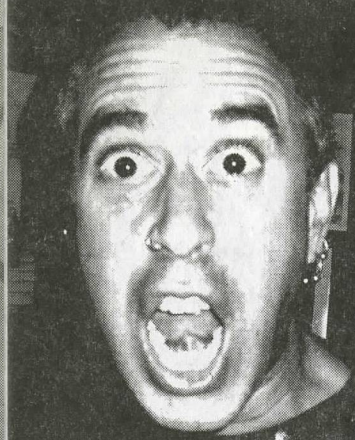
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SAYS
THAT

Thanksgiving is in 4 days, its fall but it's about 80 degrees here in Venice and I'm drinking a bottle of red wine. An Italian montepulciano if you care to know, which I believe is a chianti of sorts. I'm no wine expert, but I love red wine, especially Italian, and Spanish is pretty good too. Not a big fan of French wines though. Speaking of France gets me thinking about the "riots" they've been having for weeks now, y'know, a bunch of poor kids stuck in government housing, at least 50% of them have no jobs and speak no French and are treated like dirt. And then people are amazed that they're pissed off and burning cars and buildings all over France? Second class citizens? They're not even citizens in the minds of most French people.

I saw a report a couple of weeks ago that said there are 9 cities in America that have 1 million people or more. Can you guess how many China has? Twenty? Fifty? Not even close. One Hundred Eighty Nine is what the report said! I was amazed! A guy I know is living over there right now and sent me an e-mail the other day saying he could get us a tour over there. Now that would be interesting to say the least. I really don't think I'd ever go to China, but for a week tour, I wouldn't mind that at all. But the language, now that's a challenge! Touring in Europe is not too bad, lots of people speak English and getting by on a school Spanish or German or French, well, at least they're all romance languages and you can get a basic understanding. We broke down in '84 in Poland and my year of college German helped us get by, but had it been in China, we might still be there.

I saw another report on the news today talking about how kids in the U.S. are studying Chinese because when they get old enough to go to college, China will be the second largest consumer and of course that's what's important, CONSUMING. We are all looked at by the world's multi-national run governments not as humans, citizens, people trying to get by and live our lives, we are, ultimately, consumers that will make them profit. And I wonder what language is the most widely spoken in the world? Well of course it's Chinese, Mandarin to be precise. English is second, Spanish is third, in case you were wondering.

China has the largest population in the world, which is increasingly providing cheap labor that makes a lot of things you buy. A lot of those things used to be made in America, but between the environmental and safety laws and the unions looking out for workers, well, it's

just become too expensive to make most things here in the U.S. So companies go to China and other Asian countries where they have no unions to look out for the workers and the government has no environmental or safety regulations. The largest population and a very poor one at that mean cheap labor. And China is now the second largest trading partner with the U.S. so big that Wal Mart actually set-up headquarters in China for all their buying. So, it's not surprising that some Americans are having their children learn Chinese to prepare for what is inevitable, not just the largest population, but the biggest economy and most likely the new world leader. Will it happen in our lifetimes? It just might.

Back here at home, GM announced today they were laying off thirty thousand people and closing 9 plants. I believe that's ten percent of their workforce. Happy holidays and welcome to the new economy. I went to a "conference" a couple of weeks ago that was all about the distribution of music. They told us that digital downloading is still just a very small part of how people get their music, but I've been a musician for over thirty years and I've run a record label for nearly twenty five and I think they're wrong. I got an Ipod and I rarely play CD's anymore. Of course I rarely buy music, I'm lucky enough to get stuff for free, but that's my point, everyone else is starting to do the same. Why do I want to take up a bunch of space with LP's and CD's when I can put all the music on my Ipod? It's tiny, I can take it with me, and it's great. I've been a Macintosh user for over fifteen years, but the Ipod is probably one of the best things Apple has ever invented.

And eventually, the poor of every country, the non-citizen citizens, immigrants, workers, will become consumers on the level of you and me. Well, that's what the multi-nationals are hoping. Americans consume so much more than most of the people of the world. It will be great for the big corporations of the world, except that the earth can't support this consumption. Will we be able to change our habits and influence the rest of the world to learn from our mistakes? Unfortunately, it's hard to change people who are used to getting their own way and living a very comfortable life. Yes, welcome to the new economy, get an Ipod and hope your job isn't the next one to get moved to a poor country. And you might want to start studying Chinese.

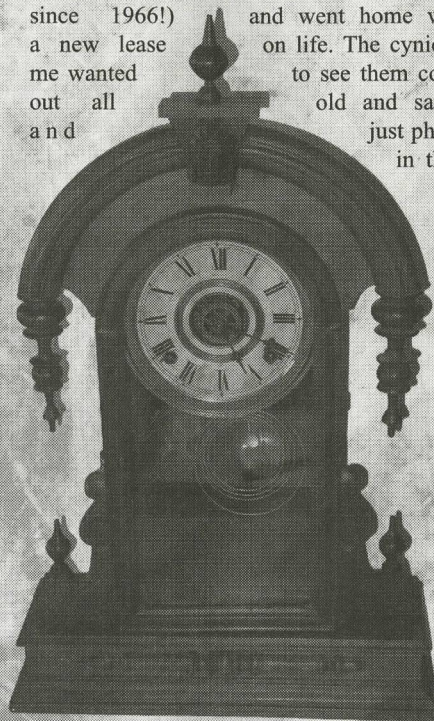
BY: MARK O'Z

SHUT UP & SAY SOMETHING

I'm at a weird crossroads in my life right now. I must confess, now that I've started a family, the line in the sand between living to make music and making a living making music has been blurred. I feel almost guilty that every so often I don't wake up excited about making this new record. I became a father just over 7 months ago, so right now my baby boy has replaced music as the center of my universe. Now when I glimpse my reflection, I don't see the die-hard rock n roll romantic day dreamer I used to see; more and more I see a grown man playing the role of my wife's husband, my baby's parent, my landlord's tenant, etc. There's a line in an old song by The Posies, "Now you avoid parties because they remind you, of someone who, you used to be, pretty soon you'll want to avoid yourself." I feel like I'm barely hanging on to the life line I used to hold on so tightly to; rock n roll as a religion and way of life. Perhaps this is because this is the first time I've been home off the road, for this long a stretch in close to 8 years of touring and this time I didn't just anchor my guitar close to shore and come home to a patient girlfriend, drinkin' buddies and boxes of my stuff piled up in some room; now I've docked my guitar and come ashore to a wife, a kid, a dog, plants (that have actually stayed alive!), we even have some furniture and appliances that we chose rather than chose us. I feel really fucking domestic these days. I wonder, has my eternal teenager suddenly careened head-on into the great wall of adulthood? Now I've got worry, now I've got responsibility, now I have to learn how to balance. Now what? Do I surrender my youth and concede that the big bad red state of adulthood has gotten (or stolen!) more votes? The answer is not either/or, it's both/and. So the challenge is to introduce one side of me to the other side of me and hope they get along. Balance is ultimately a healthy state to achieve, but it's hard to face that when all you've ever known and thrived on is excess and extremes. Is balancing a "normal" life and a "rock n roll" life a mutually exclusive proposition? How do you remain true to yourself and your artistic ideals while still finding yourself participating in things that you've traditionally shunned on the basis of not wanting to "fit in" to the mainstream? I don't want to slow down to keep up with the rat

race. Art is hard, and meaningful art is usually born out of a struggle. Doing something important and innovative means you have to be willing to leave it all behind; be a bad friend, a bad son, a bad citizen, etc and totally immerse yourself in your work until it absorbs you and you absorb it so much that you and your work become one and the same. So what happens when you can only offer a percentage of yourself to the work, because other parts of you are needed elsewhere? Fuck!

Some of these anxieties faded after I saw the Rolling Stones the other night at the Hollywood Bowl (their first show there since 1966!) and went home with a new lease on life. The cynic in me wanted to see them come out all old and saggy and just phone in their



shtick, so I could confirm my preconceived notion that rock n roll ages disgracefully. But that was not to be the case. The Stones hit the stage and within minutes make believers out of the uninitiated and remind existing fans why they are the Rolling Stones and everyone else is just... everyone else! They author the textbook on rock band chemistry; sure Mick can sing his ass off, and Charlie keeps good time, but as a band they win at tempering what appears as an imminent trainwreck with just enough swagger, charm and dignity to diffuse it into a

sound that is unmistakably them. Like the best rock n roll music, you don't marvel at their technical skill (or lack thereof), so much as their unique ability to consistently juggle chaos with control, beauty with beast, and pleasure with pain to the point where the blurs between these elements becomes the subject itself. The true magic isn't in how Keith Richards plays his guitar and what comes out of it, it's in what happens when he does it simultaneously with the other guys in the band. Anyway, my point is they weren't just good for being in their sixties; they were simply good for being great! Consider their appeal and influence after all these years, and let's be honest here, there's at least two consecutive decades worth of forgettable studio records, it's interesting to see that they can still pack any size venue. I suppose they have so many layers of appeal by now: the obvious entertainment value of hit songs, great records, great show; the cultural mecca factor of paying homage to the gods of rock n roll itself, their influence on scores of musicians, bands, genres, eras, etc; and merely the mortal race against time of securing the bragging rights to having seen them while they were still on the greener side of fence separating the elderly from those still young enough to shake their booties, or simply just seeing them before they and/or you bite the big one. The most valuable epiphany I had, aside from confirming that Live With Me is one of the fucking coolest rock songs of all time, was that getting old is for suckers. The Stones are champions of the Peter Pan guide to living: stay young forever. Sure, grow up, learn, be responsible, work hard, etc but don't throw out your inner child with the bathwater; learn to maintain that young lust that drives you to keep dreaming and yearning and hoping and playing and celebrating life, until the finish line. If the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, take the curvy scenic route instead, after all what's the big hurry to connect the dots and grow up so fast? We all know how this big ol' book ends, so you'd be well advised not to be too anxious to finish it. I'll read a few chapters and then put mine on the shelf, read some other books in the meantime and then skim through it a day or two before the final exam!

The Patron Saint of Wounded Drunks

W-K Liquors is the center of gravity on 24th and Folsom. I live upstairs from W-K Liquors and the nocturnal rhythms of the store have usurped my own natural REM sleep patterns. At five thirty a.m. I hear the 5'3 Crazy Frank screaming beneath my window about how he's Cholo Papa Smurf. Minutes pass, and I hear more people shuffling and hollering in front of the locked up liquor store in anticipation of six a.m. This ain't Hull House.

Six a.m. rolls around and the legal drugs are open for business. The men shuffle in to get their fistfuls of Royal Gate vodka to barricade themselves against the ravages of impending sunlight. About an hour later I'm down on the sidewalk as I leave for work. One of the members of the Royal Gate Gang as I've called the 6:00 a.m. crew wears a T-shirt that reads "On Strike" that he must have swiped from the San Francisco Unified School District's recent teacher school strike. He raises his plastic bottle to me, and I concede a bit of envy. I'm off to work while this guy's on "strike" and boozing all day.

By six p.m., (the a.m.s and p.m.s now reversed) I'm inside the W-K Market to get my own ammunition to fortify myself against the ravages of the evening. Inside the W-K Market every six p.m. is '80s Hollywood Executive Man. It's the waning daylight of 2005 in San Francisco, but '80s Hollywood Executive Man looks like Don Henly's coke dealer circa *Boys of Summer*. '80s Hollywood Executive Man is a white man with a deep, deep tan in a city renowned for its fog and shitty Julys. '80s Hollywood Executive Man exhibits a whiff of homelessness or mental illness, but he always sports a pressed, pin-stripe suit. His fancy threads, however, are betrayed by his peroxidized locks that stand on end like Max Headroom's coif on the tail end of a crack jag.

'80s Hollywood Executive Man likes to make chit chat about esoteric American pop culture phenomena. The chit chat tends to be one-sided soliloquies, however, as he needs no encouragement to speak and the owners and customers of the W-K Market politely endure him as he leans into the sunflower seed and beef jerky rack all the while babbling about Dick Clark's current blood pressure. Plus, the owners are originally from the United Arab Emirates and most likely couldn't give a shit about the goings ons of Larry Hagman or whether the B-side to Berlin's *Metro* is actually a much more superior song than the radio hit, in the not so humble opinion of '80s Hollywood Executive Man.

When not ruminating on who Paris Hilton is fucking, '80s Hollywood Executive Man verbally dissects the poor decision making skills of the 240-lb, St. Ides purchasing gang bangers with 415 tattooed on the back of their

shaved skulls. '80s Hollywood Executive Man eyeballs their purchase and asks, "Why don't you just get a six-pack? It will save you some time and money because I know as well as you do that you'll be back in here in an hour to get another forty."

Because his Caucasian ass hasn't been killed yet, I'm actually convinced that '80s Hollywood Executive Man is not of this earth. My hypothesis is that the white rings around his eyes serve as halos for his otherwise orange face. When I die, I will not meet Saint Peter as all my elementary school nuns and priests told me, but rather '80s Hollywood Executive Man. Once I circumnavigate the DMV-like bureaucracy of purgatory, I will get a boarding pass for heaven, but before I can enter the pearly gates, I will meet '80s Hollywood Executive Man, and he will pass judgment on all my alcohol purchases at the W-K Market.

If '80s Hollywood Executive Man is not actually a saint or an angel, than at least it's comforting to know that even hardened gangbangers have the decency to leave a crazy man be.

But no one who hangs out at the W-K Market is as crazy as Crazy Frank, the Cholo Papa Smurf. In his own words, Crazy Frank is so crazy... "They put me on medication!" (punctuated with a quick spit on the sidewalk). On another occasion, Crazy Frank inadvertently quoted James Brown when he yelled at a parking enforcement officer, "I don't know karate! But I know crazy!"

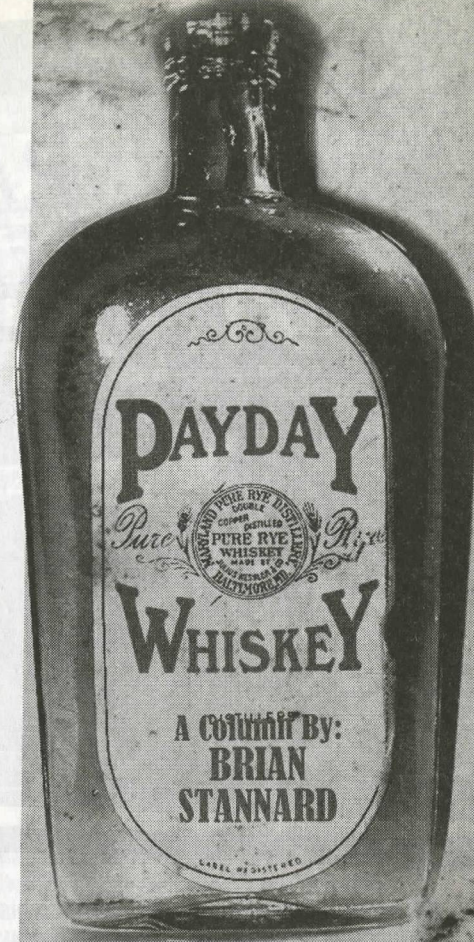
Crazy Frank is as reliable as the fire hydrant in regard to being on the corner of 24th and Folsom. That's why I almost peed my pants when I saw him a few miles away in a Tenderloin residential hotel hallway while I was on a work detail. "Johnny (to this day he's never called me by my correct name)! What the hell are you doing here?"

"I'm workin' here," I responded. "What are you doing here? You're supposed to be yelling at cars on the corner of 24th and Folsom."

"I live here!"

"Then why are you always outside my window drinking and yelling?"

"I like it down there, I feel comfortable. Say, you got a few bucks? I have so many fucking miseries, Johnny..." My roommate and I since joke that Crazy Frank commutes to our corner each morning.



(Break to go downstairs to W-K Market to get a pint).

I've met my next door neighbor, Matches Ron, about fifteen times in the past five years. Matches Ron gained his moniker when he nearly set our building on fire when he passed out with a lit cigarette between his knuckles and the fire department kicked down our door at three a.m. Like everyone in this neighborhood, Matches Ron drinks like a stripper on holiday, and he never remembers that we've already met fifteen times as he's a reincarnation of alcoholic W.C. Fields. Down in the W-K Market tonight, I see Matches Ron and introduce myself as his new next door neighbor. "Much obliged," he responds, and I'm off. Just like the three times we "met" in 2001.

Of course '80s Hollywood Executive Man is downstairs as well. He's the Patron Saint of Wounded Drunks. Just as Sinoloan drug runners have their guardian angel in the form of Jesus Malverde, the alcoholic knuckleheads of 24th and Folsom have the white-eyed protection of '80s Hollywood Executive Man. If it weren't for his presence, all our buildings and livers would have burned down many years ago.



PART OF THE PROBLEM

BY SMITTY

Let's do this. Today I came home to a big surprise. I skipped lightly up the driveway after a ten-hour shift in Tinseltown's tinsel mines, where my job is to make the daily activities of human fucking trash like Paris Hilton and that talentless whore Ashlee Simpson sound "snarky" and "edgy."

Yes. I have a new job, as a writer/producer at a brand new entertainment news website whose goal is to record every action and utterance of the rich and useless trash that comprise the Hollywood club scene. When I interviewed for the position, I was told it was for an entertainment website. Like an idiot, I thought: movies, TV, music, whatever. I figured, what the hell, I'm a writer. I can handle this.

This is not to say that I'm some kind of entertainment elitist, it's-only-good-if-it's-subtitled kinda guy. I am just not the target market for most of this crap and I'm aware of it. I love zombie movies, anime, war movies, the History Channel, Humphrey Bogart, Steve McQueen, John Carpenter, pornography, football and anything with old ladies who swear.

I came to Hollywood in 1996 to write comedy. My shit is not terribly highbrow (as you may have gathered). My inspirations aren't either: *Airplane*, *Top Secret!*, *Big Trouble in Little China*, *Arsenic and Old Lace* (if you haven't seen it, rent it), *Swingers*, *Spaceballs*, *Clerks*. You know what the actual movie that made me come here was? *The Muppet Movie*. Hands down, one of the finest films ever made involving talking animals. For credit or blame,

that's the reason I came to Hollywood: to team up with a crew of misfits and losers and focus our energies on making people happier. Point being, I'm no fucking snob.

Ten years later, I have another peripheral day gig at a star stroking website and a free column I write for *Big Wheel* because I lost a bet to Joey Balls.

Cue music: Hollywood! Da Da Da Da Da Da Da Hollywood! Where the hell was I? Oh yes, my new gig...writing mindless crap for mindless people. I think it would be less painful if I thought that my bosses were bitter cynics as well, like: Yes, Smitty, I know that Nicole Richie redefines the quality of being useless. However, people inexplicably like to know what she's doing and you should write about that...for us...for big dollars...because she's really not interesting at all. Thanks, Smitty.

It's nothing like that. My bosses, I shit you not, CARE about this stuff. They are beyond interested. They find Paris/Nicole/Hilary/Lindsey/NamelessBulimicSkank fascinating. They're fucking riveted. What was she wearing? What did he say? Oh my god, they came together and left separately! My bosses are INTO this shit. I swear, I feel dirtier writing this than I ever did writing porn. This shit is mind numbing, gratuitous, salacious and penetratingly intrusive.

This past week has been our launch week for the site, so we've had to put in some extra hours, specifically: nine hours on Sunday (missing the Pats game), fourteen hours on Monday and twelve hours on Tuesday.

At least we're talking serious overtime, right? Oh no. I guess salaried employees don't get paid overtime. Fuck.

I can't even explain how much this is screwing up my *Big Wheel* writing. I'm desperately trying to finish my column and over my shoulder someone's raving about all the "celebs" they saw leaving some overpriced hotspot. Justin and Cameron and DJ AM! Oh my!

The editorial restrictions are pretty fucked up too. Six different people from three different companies get to review each piece of copy I write. For those of you who've never worked in a corporate job in America, it basically means I have to explain each joke six times.

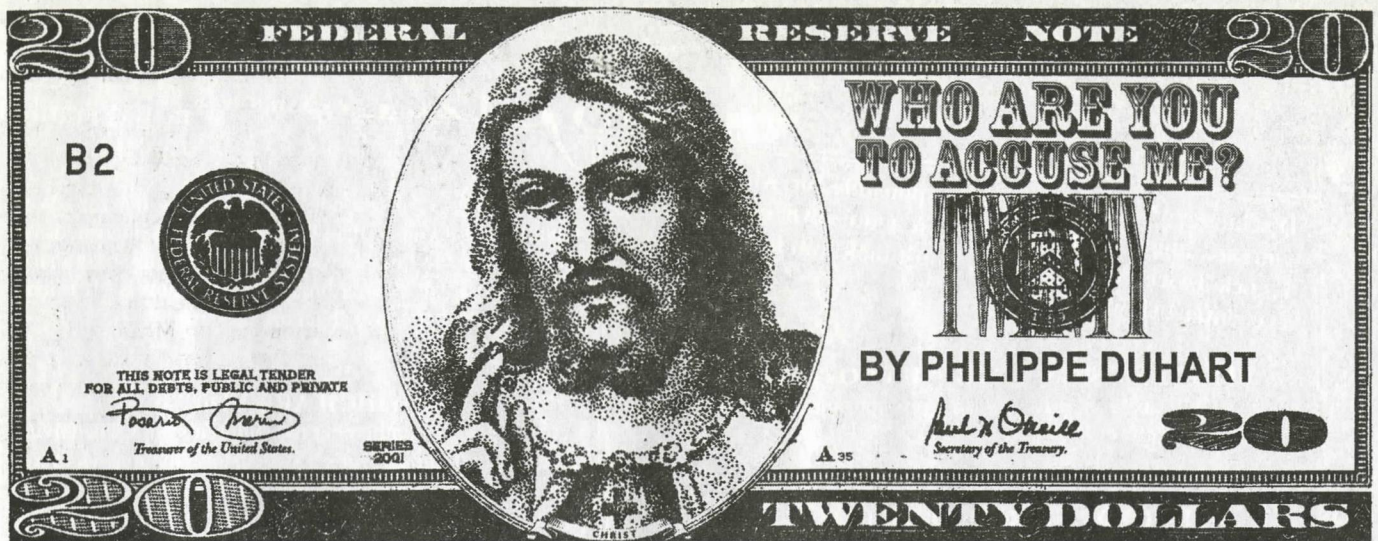
Random things get red-flagged. For instance, when I called Joanie Laurer (that mutant formerly known as Chyna) a "primate," I found it removed on the website. I asked why it was pulled, and my editor assured me that I can't call Joanie Laurer a primate. I tried to explain that regardless of his feelings about the joke, Joanie Laurer is a primate, along with the rest of us. We went back and forth for ten minutes before he put his foot down, "You're going to get us sued!"

Fuck, I'd love to be in court that day. It reminds me of being on the bus in elementary school with kids accusing each other of being homo sapiens to vigorous denials. Good stuff. Anyhow, I come back to my desk and my runner (Hollywood-speak for lackey) is cueing up Ms. Laurer's porno, *One Night in Chyna*. "Look at the size of her clit!" exclaims Lackey. I tell him that's not her clit, it's just what's left when they chopped off her dick. Now there's a joke that'll get you sued!

That's something else that's been bugging me for a few years. At the new place, there's a bunch of lawyers. At *Playboy*, there were dozens. Here's what I don't get. Every fucking time I'm talking to a lawyer, they're telling me I can't do something because we'll get sued. I keep thinking, isn't that why we have so many fucking lawyers? Seriously, getting sued is like the big game for lawyers. Why the hell are they so afraid of going to court? It's like having a lifeguard who doesn't let you into the pool to keep you from drowning.

I may have strayed a bit this month. When I sat down, I intended to write about the decline of courtesy in the modern discourse, but somewhere along the way it got all fucked up.

Whatever. I have to go write something about Mischa Barton's tit falling out of something. So long, primates.



The Bush War on the Citizen Opinion Declared

I am amazed at how foolish the party in power continues to be. Republican apparatchiks insisted the president go on the offensive in defending a failed war that's no longer polarizing the country, but rather uniting it. For the first time in years we have majority consensus on something. So George W. Bush responds by accusing the majority of our nation of assisting the insurgency in doubting our Commander-in-Chief. Bush to America: 'You hate the troops.' Polling is not an exact science. As a sociologist, though, I view polls as one of the few useful tools we have in approximating public opinion. This view is bolstered when there is consistency among different polls conducted at a given moment. And it cannot be argued that current polling is not consistent on public's perception of the war, and these polls have been fairly consistent in showing an inverse relation between the public view of the war and Bush's approval rating. Currently, between 55% and 60% of the nation no longer supports the troops (using the Right's language, not my own).

The Republicans have circled their wagons around a failed aggressive policy—against the public. They accuse Democrats and 'antiwar critics' of 'sending mixed messages to our troops and the enemy'—in Bush's words. This attack will not be viewed favorably by the majority of Americans who hold this view. The fact that Bush would initiate this attack on Veteran's Day demonstrates not the size of his balls, but rather it demonstrates that the Republican attack machine's effectiveness is a thing of the past.

Democrats are merely reacting belatedly to public opinion; they had no hand in influencing it, whatsoever. They saw the direction of public opinion and are trying to position themselves for next year's congressional elections. And, while they might gain seats, the Democratic Party is seen as, at best, only slightly more preferable than the Republicans. Democrats have been far too sheepish and placating in

Bush's war. The public is well aware of this fact. After all, the public was never fully in favor of this war.

I recall that polling during the run-up to the war showed around 57% of Americans would support the invasion only with UN approval. Granted, support for the war kicked in around after the invasion. The public did, however, believe in the existence of WMD and, more ominously, that Saddam had a hand in 9/11. The problem for Team Bush is that once the insurgency emerged and the WMD did not, an irrevocable fissure emerged in the nation's confidence in this President. Doubt simmered early.

The Bush Administration responded to waning support of the war by playing up the terrorism angle. The threat of terrorism managed to get Bush re-elected (narrowly), but the process had already begun. Too many 'benchmarks' and 'turning points' passed without affecting any change in the violence of the insurgency; too many optimistic pronouncements from the military proven unfounded; too many rationales of why we went to war in the first place offered up by the defiant warmongers; too many turncoats lending credence to the perception of the war as a fraud perpetrated on the American people; too many unanswered questions lingering since the prewar debate about the honesty of this Administration and the Republican Party; too many rumors of torture and black sites in a system of global gulags; too many dead American soldiers. vBush had played hard and fast with the truth. Lies, however, tend to catch up with you. Bush's façade gone, the public sees him for what he is and turns on the war.

The public turned despite a complacent corporate media who, in their mercenary interest, sold the sensationalism and chauvinism of the war to an addled public. Remember, we have not seen the death of Americans in Iraq—not one flag-draped coffin. Indeed, until Cindy Sheehan came along, the antiwar sentiment had been so

thoroughly marginalized in the media discourse that the debate concerned how to conduct the war. The glory days of leftist peacenik commies on the internet.

The public turned despite an opposition party who had not the fortitude to stand against the war with their base. Actual Democratic opposition to the war, personified by Howard Dean, was dealt with quite effectively by Clintonian mandarins. Dean was characterized mendaciously as a radical leftwing crackpot by the centrist Democrats, in accord with the mainstream media and the Republican noise machine. Democrats authorized this war and have gone along with its operation willingly, albeit meekly. The public will come to see this as a betrayal on the part of Democrats. They will not be fooled by withdrawal timetables and Senate investigations. An old fashioned purge of the party is needed.

The public has turned despite the Rightwing media onslaught with its daily vitriol against treasonous dissenters and accolades for our brave troops and our Caesaresque Commander-in-Chief. The prowar opinion dominates the world of talk radio/FOX news axis, and is given an inordinate position of dominance on debate shows and the cable networks, where retired generals posing as analysts cheerlead unflatteringly. Furthermore, as the president, Bush has unlimited access to the media and has exploited this shamelessly.

Yet with pulp of the presidency at his disposal, he spins lies and calls it 'truth'; he fucks up and calls it 'victory.' Now he's labeled his fellow citizens traitors. Bush has played his last card. The only thing left is rage. Rage against a corrupt Administration. Rage against the 'bottom-line' of the media. Rage against a pandering Democratic opposition. Rage against the course of history. The question that we are faced with is simple: How is the rage of the citizenry to be focused? On secession, that's where. GORAKALIFORNIA ASKATU.

Disclaimer: I cannot be held responsible for what you are about to read. Enter at your own risk. Knock Twice. Ask for Larry. Don't look him in the eye, enter below.

BEST SEEN SIGN AT A BUSH PROTEST

Will someone give him a blow-job and get him impeached already!

ROUND AND ROUND WE GO

I was just going to call my husband and tell him the cat is sitting in the kitchen, transfixed, staring at the oven. A sure sign there's a rat or something back there. But why should I call him? What is he going to do? And I'm not calling to ruin his time or make him come home. So truly, there's no point

So I put the phone down. Sometimes you have to think if what you are saying is more for you, rather than for them. Do they give a shit? Or do you just want to share in how you're feeling? But what about the way the other person is feeling or what they're doing? Are they in a situation where they'd even want to be on the phone at the moment? And if they aren't, would you let them hang up quickly and be gracious about it? We all take everything so personally, when really, it's all about us. Everyone's world revolves around them. No? What other vantage point do you have but your own? Even when you do something nice, like bring a bum a burger, you did it for the way it would make you feel. Even kind acts are self serving. It's not a bad thing. Don't trip. But everything is about you.

DON'T KID YOURSELF

Breaking up is hard to do. But when you think it's time, that's the first sign that it is. But most can't make a clean break. That only happens if one of you finds someone else. It's when there's nobody waiting in the wings that you're truly tested. So you say the classic "let's take some time apart," which is easier than saying you're breaking up. You're keeping ties, taking some time to "find yourself." But there ain't no such thing. If you happen to stumble upon a person you have serious chemistry with on your so-called "break"—not a drunken one night stand, mind you—but someone you're really

interested in — you're not going to pass that up. Who would? And if you do than you truly weren't interested. We can't choose the time love will hit us. We only pray that it happens. All that "taking break" really means is "If I don't find someone better, we'll get back together."

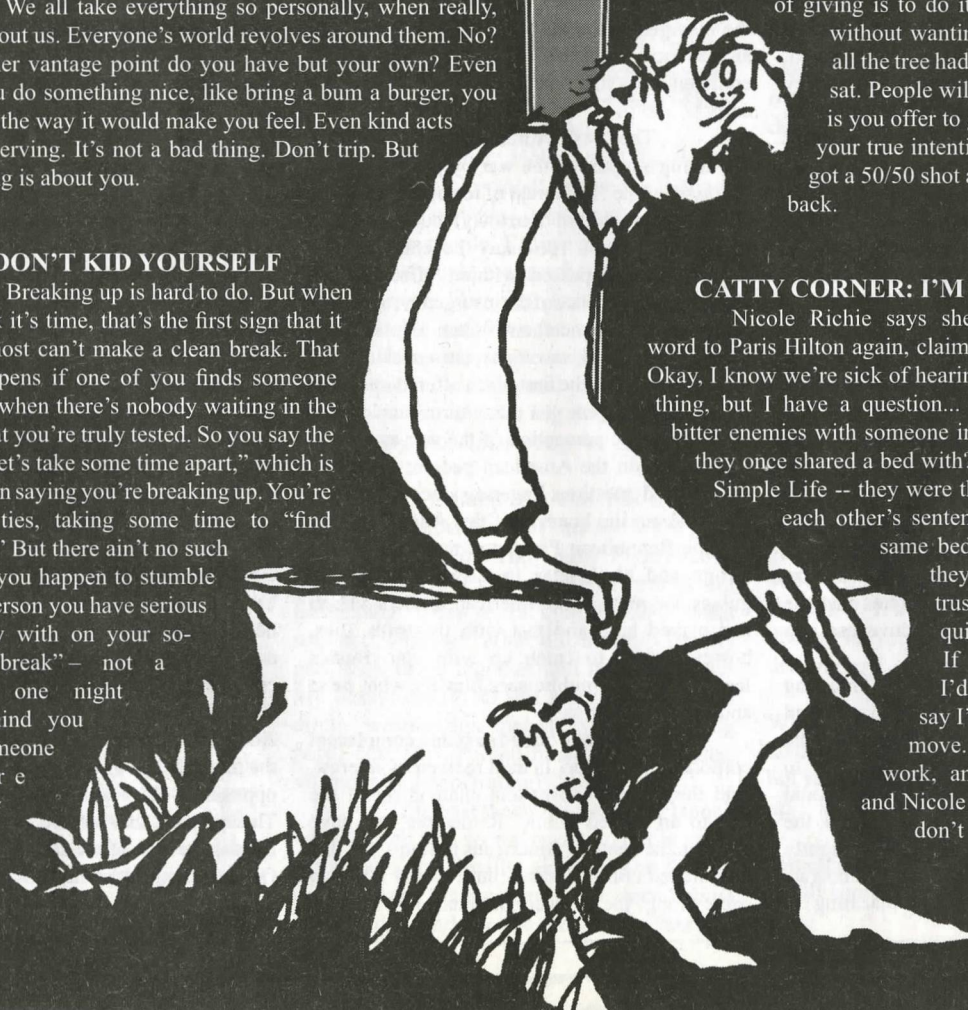
WHICH ARE YOU?

Do you remember the children's book *The Giving Tree*? At first glance... it's a sweet story about a sweet tree and a sweet little boy. But if you truly think about it — it's apparent that it is a deluded lesson peppered with the illusion of happiness when it really is a kind of sad story. Just to go over it quickly... The story is about a boy and a tree, who are lovely little friends. The tree provides branches on which the boy can swing on. The tree offers its branches for the boy to lounge in the shade on hot days. And when times get tough as the boy grows older, the tree allows him to cut him down to build a house. At the very end, the tree has nothing to offer the boy anymore but a stump to sit on. And so the boy sits his fat ass down. But maybe the tree should have told the boy to stick the stump where the sun don't shine... Stand on your own two feet! For this is a story of givers and takers. The story of *The Giving Tree* teaches us to give without expecting anything in return. The true spirit

of giving is to do it with your whole heart, without wanting a pay-off. Even when all the tree had left was a stump, the boy sat. People will keep taking whatever it is you offer to give. So make sure that's your true intention, because you've only got a 50/50 shot at best that you'll get shit back.

CATTY CORNER: I'M JUST SAYING...

Nicole Richie says she'll never utter another word to Paris Hilton again, claiming they just grew apart. Okay, I know we're sick of hearing about the Paris/Nicole thing, but I have a question... How does one become bitter enemies with someone in a matter of weeks who they once shared a bed with? I saw those two on *The Simple Life* -- they were thick as thieves, finishing each other's sentences and sleeping in the same bed like sisters -- and now they've got nothing? Never trust anyone who turns so quickly from hot to cold. If I were Nicole's fiancé, I'd be thinking, "Who is to say I'm not next?" One wrong move... All relationships take work, and the only thing Paris and Nicole have proved is that they don't want to lift a finger.



The American Dream is Dead And It's Taking Us Down With It Part II

Don't Vote Right Wing: This goes for Republicans and Democrats both. Republicans are horrible and should never be voted for under any circumstances. But there are many Democrats who should also never be voted for as well. The bankruptcy bill I was just talking about was turned into law with the help of 73 Democrats. Those 73 should be ridden out of the party on a rail. Today the main problem we've got with the Democratic Party is that we've got too many wolves in sheep's clothing. Take Bill Clinton, who ran as a "centrist". Centrist is a fancy word for "Republican Lite", or "Complete Asshole". Mike Malloy said it best when he called Clinton the "best Republican president we've ever had". It's true, Clinton was no more a Democrat than Nixon. And the scary thing is that Hillary may have a good chance of winning the nomination in 2008. Republicans will tell you to hate the Clintons because they're too liberal. That's complete bullshit. There's nothing liberal about them. The reason they scare Republicans so much is because they threaten to take money from the lobbyists the Republicans have relied on. The result is that they vote the same way as the Republicans have. When given the option of voting for either a Republican or Democrat, vote Democrat. When you have to choose between two Democrats, vote for the lesser of the two. Making our political parties more left leaning will be beneficial in the long run, and maybe we can get out of the paycheck-to-paycheck cycle.

Don't Own A Car: Credit card companies aren't alone in being evil corporations hell bent on enslaving mankind. They are joined by the oil/gas companies and the insurance industry (I won't get into the military industrial companies today). When you fill up your tank you're not only fueling your ride, you're also fueling war, death and oppression around the globe. That may not bother you because you're an insensitive fuck wad. Fair enough. But while your dumb ass was paying record prices at the gas pump because of "gas shortages", CEO's at the oil companies were running away with record profits and record bonuses. And they are not going to stop because no one in government is strong enough to stop them. So stop supporting them. Take the bus. In Los Angeles you can get a day pass for \$3. You can go anywhere you want for the price of a gallon of gas. And you can actually do stuff while you ride on the bus, like read Big Wheel magazine. Try doing that in your car. Actually, on second thought, don't. Plus you can let someone else deal with the traffic, you don't have to worry about parking, you don't have to worry about getting pulled over by the cops for something stupid, and you don't have to pay insurance. How much do you think you've paid in insurance through your life? Ever try to get any of that money back if you have a wreck? It's a bitch. And to make matters worse after you try to get your own money back from them, they start charging you more monthly. Fuck those guys. Go Metro.


Don't Have Sex: Sure, sex is pretty fun, but babies are fucking expensive. If you think it's tough trying to take care of one person, try taking care of two. And chances are the kid's going to grow up hating you and end up in jail because

it was raised in poverty. Poverty breeds crime, and if you're breeding in poverty, chances are you're going to help create more crime. If you do fuck and find yourself with a bun in the oven, do us all a favor and get an abortion. I don't give a fuck what the fucking Pope has to say about abortions, he doesn't have to pay for diapers. But keep in mind abortions cost

money. And with sex there's always the risk of you catching some kind of fucked up disease, in which case you've gone and gotten sick, and we've already discussed that. Of course you could go to the Health Department and get free condoms, but condoms don't always work. So just stick with masturbation. It's free. That's what your parents should have done. Which brings me to my final point.

Don't Move Out Of Your Parent's House: They are the ones who brought you into this mess; they can take care of you. Not only did they bring you into this mess, but they helped create it by allowing assholes like Reagan and Bush to take power. So fuck them. They owe you. According to the California Budget Project, in Los Angeles a single adult needs to make at least \$24,668 just to make to the point where you're living paycheck to paycheck. Minimum wage in California is \$6.75, barely half that. Wages in this country have stagnated, and inflation due to high fuel costs is on the rise. Of course you could decrease this by buying your own house and pay a mortgage instead of rent, but you'll need a couple of grand for a down payment first. And when you're living week-to-week putting away anything is a dream. So stay in your parent's basement. If your friends pick on you screw em. I'll bet they've missed a meal or two trying to make ends meet.

Things may seem bleak, but I'm not writing this to bum anyone out. I'm writing this to make people realize that something has got to change if we're going to make this country the land of opportunity again. As it is, more and more people are finding themselves stuck in the cycle of poverty and debt that threatens to take us back to the pre-labor rights days in the early twentieth century, where workers were no better off than slaves. Debtor's prisons could quite possibly be on the agenda as well. It's up to our generation to do something now to stop this downward spiral. Otherwise Kafka may have been right when he said: "There is hope, but not for us".



**COUCH
SOLDIER**
BY IAN JONES

It's not half full or half empty; IT'S JUST B

BY DAN DISMAL

ROKEN.



Whether you're in a band, know someone in a band or just attend shows to watch live bands perform I am sure you've heard about the perils that face musicians on a day to day basis in Los Angeles as well as the US. None of which is more common then the classic struggles between the promoters, agents and artists. Who owns whom? Who's ripping off whom? Who's to blame? A pretty simple set of questions with answers varying from each side of the fence. In my first column for Big Wheel I will give what might be considered thee or one of thee first opinions from someone who's seen and eaten from the grass on both sides of the hill.

Area involved: Los Angeles (the Red Light District) Ah yes, I am old enough to remember when glam ruled the scene; big hair, bigger egos and horrible clothes. But what they had was integrity and a hard work ethic when it came to promoting their bands. Watch "The Decline of Western Civilization" part two and you'll hear how bands considered making a flyer to promote their band-a crucial step in the bands development. I can remember skating down Hollywood to check out new records at Green Hell and then up Sunset to the old SST super store. We'd gather at least 5 flyers from these glam monsters with information varying from shows to straight up merchandise advertisements. No matter where you went, there was someone passing out a flyer for his or her show. Even the punkers would make sure their show flyers were in all the stores and on tables at the shows. Enter into the heyday of Los Angeles Death Metal (early 90's) and the work ethic was still there at every single show. Maybe this is why there was domination within the major club markets? Fast forward to today...

Unless someone is paid to do so there's really no bands out on the streets promoting their live shows or anything else for that matter. The ones who are promoting like crazy are being added to every single

show around while the scene talks behind their backs calling them ass kissers. How does this make sense? Promote your band, work hard, get shows and get shit from everyone in your scene? Hmmmm, sounds like a catch 22 to me.

Now, back up time a little...Before the "pay to play" beast was unleashed in Los Angeles clubs and promoters would book bands based upon their draw, how hard the worked and their overall sound. Sure, punk and heavy metal was pushed into smaller, seedier clubs in some outright dangerous areas but the shows were still packed. Because of that, those shows even dominated larger venues when the leading bands came through. Unfortunately a plague hit Los Angeles. Laziness. The larger local bands started to expect all the other bands to make and pass out flyers. The local bands expected the larger bands to draw. How the hell is anyone going to know about a show if there's no one promoting it? Club owners lost money, promoters lost money so the shows were shut down and the venues steered clear of the "underground" while the bands sat there and preached a "money grubbing" ethic behind everything. Sorry, we all can agree that money is the root of all evil, but until you can pay rent with leaves, we're all stuck in that good ole struggle for the greenbacks.

The dilemma arises when bands aren't working to promote themselves or their shows anymore. Clubs closed their doors to the scene but the fans still want to see the shows. Solution: shows are moved into some neighborhoods which would send Ice Cube crying home to mommy or bands are offered slots on shows under the pretense of selling a said amount of tickets to their buddies.

This is a problem because bands see this as a way for the promoters to rip them off, people get a bad name, fans and bands boycott clubs and the scene is left high and dry. Forward to today again and put your remote down. Where do we

stand as a scene? As musicians? As fans? As people wanting to see a good band for a good price? Absolutely nowhere!

What can bands do to play in clubs without selling a shitload of tickets? Get out there and promote your band, your shows, your demos and everything else you're doing with your band. No, MySpace bulletins are not promoting! If you're out there peddling your band someone will see that and take notice. The more you're out there the better you look. There's no shame in pushing your music to the masses, hell, it shows that you're proud of your product!

What can fans do? Take a flyer, give a band a chance and support more then just the larger bands. Remember, all bands are local and all bands came from somewhere. You can be that cool kid that's "supported this band since they were playing little bars in Compton." Pay for the shows, support the people putting them on, the venues giving the bands a chance and the people in the bands will get some cash back which leads to better recordings, better merchandise and even better shows.

And promoters- take a chance on the bands. Lay down the ground rules. Be open about what you do with the money made from the door. If you keep secrets then people assume there's a dark side to things. If you show people how the money's spent then maybe they'll put an extra push into your shows.

In a nutshell this is the only true form of action I know that will bring some sort of positive change within the Los Angeles underground scene. Sure, we can take back the scene but unless we all work at it, hell, you can keep it for yourself because there's nothing worse then helping out those who just piss in your lemon aide.

Peace
Daniel

PUNK LIGHT TANNMENT

BY MARCUS SOLOMON

Images of men, women and babies dying from hunger and thirst filled my television screen. Tens of thousands of people crying desperately for help, while the never-blinking eye of the television camera recorded countless moments of intolerable suffering. No, this was not another one of those "Feed the Children" infomercials; it was MSNBC NEWS presenting one of its investigative reports about the hurricane Katrina debacle. People, please listen. We cannot allow this inexcusable lack of leadership to fade with time. It is up to us to keep this issue alive by talking about it, writing about it, and showing others what happened. Think about it...our nation has the ability to deploy the military anywhere in the world within 24 hours, but it is incapable of coming to the rescue of its own citizens until a week has passed. That is an absolute lie. They can drop bombs and have soldiers anywhere in the world in one day, but they can't drop food and water on our own dying countrymen for a week? Bullshit!

As I wrote in my previous column, the president has the authority to federalize the National Guard by decree because he is the Commander in Chief of the armed forces, and he simply chose not to do so. In simpler words, the president was the only person in the position to make immediate rescue a reality, but he decided to let them die. G.W. Bush is guilty of negligent homicide, but I prefer to call him a murderer. Have you noticed that whenever Bush does something, people die, and when he does nothing, people still die! That's what happens when the most powerful person on Earth has the mind of a 5th grader. What can we do? First of all, realize that as a group, we have more power than the government likes to admit. A quote from Margaret Mead is in order: "Never doubt for a moment that a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Another relevant quote comes from a former Federal judge: "Public opinion always precedes the law." Translation: When the citizens (even a small group) come together for a common cause, things start to change. When the majority of citizens think a

certain way, that social force affects the law. This is supposed to be a government "...of the people," and remember, our so-called elected representatives always check to see which way the wind is blowing so they can keep their jobs. The ultimate goal is to see Mr. Bush impeached on any of the dozens of high crimes and misdemeanors he has committed, and if we fan the flames of his demise, this could become a reality.

Once you are done paying attention to me, it is your turn to get the attention of others. Do this by talking about it with friends, parents, teachers, and anyone else within earshot. Simply keep the issue alive by breathing life into it. Encourage those in agreement to do the same. For those who stubbornly try to make excuses for the presidency's deadly dereliction of duty, ask them this question: If a hurricane had hit Crawford, Texas (where Bush has his pretend ranch,) would it have taken a week for help to arrive? I have asked this of many Bush supporters and not a single one has answered "Yes." Also, be sure to ask why they accept the fact that we can invade any part of the planet in a day, but it takes a week to get food and water to American citizens in need. No Bush fans have answered me on this one either.

Now all you pseudo-anarchists actually have a genuine cause! Make hundreds or thousands of flyers and post them everywhere! Get some really gross (but real) pictures from the hurricane disaster and put them on a piece of paper right next to pictures of Bush goofing off while people were dying. Just go to the Google search engine and type in "Bush plays guitar, Bush eats cake." You will get a list of sites showing the world's biggest spoiled brat having fun instead of dealing with the crisis. Put this stuff nice and BIG on your flyer with some short and simple statements such as, "Let them eat cake!" or "All hail the American Nero!" Then go out and tape or glue them in public. Be careful, because this is going to piss a lot of people

off, so don't be stupid. Now all your stinky, torn-up, black clothes will actually come in handy.

Use your constitutionally protected freedom of speech (while you still have it), to write letters to your elected officials in both the House of Representatives and the Senate and let them know what you think. Ask them what they intend to do about working for a Federal government that deliberately lets Americans die. Be sure to ask if it was just a coincidence that most were poor and black. If you are registered to vote, be sure to tell your reps that you will be expecting an answer and some sort of action on their part or they have lost your vote. If you are not registered to vote, then stop being such false rebel anarchist long enough to register. Yeah, maybe voting is an empty gesture, but it's all we have, and even if your vote carries no weight, it is still important to give them the finger while we go down trying. Always remember, somebody was alone, shivering in the dark, crying and hungry, praying for somebody to help...to-day, that somebody is YOU.

Write to Marcus at: nothingzine@hotmail.com



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Records

Genre

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Speed

[16 RPM \(2\)](#)[33 RPM \(829\)](#)[45 RPM \(379\)](#)[78 RPM \(57\)](#)

Online retailing has given record collecting a shot in the arm for better or worse. Since the internet exploded a few years ago every record collecting geek from around the world can find practically anything they are looking for online whether it is eBay, GEMM or another website. The days of shopping at traditional outlets such as record stores, swap meets and yard sales are now more of a hassle when one can just fire up the computer to shop online. The thrill of searching through bins of vinyl for that one great find is practically going the way of the dinosaurs. I myself am guilty of being too lazy to go to the record store when I can just search eBay for whatever I am looking for.

After a failed single item listing a few years back, I decided to give eBay another shot as a seller and listed a few dozen various records just to see what would happen. Surprisingly enough some of my listings got bid upon, ended successfully, were paid, shipped and received by the buyers. This was a great experience and I thought all of the eBay experiences would be as positive. Well, that didn't happen of course and putting too much stock into people you do not know when trust is the key issue is a total pain in the ass.

The feedback system used by eBay is supposed to be a guideline for sellers and buyers but after selling on the site for about four years, you come to realize that many people simply don't care about how the systems works and ignore it. Even people that do not use eBay on a regular basis get the basics on how feedback works. For those who don't know, it's sort of a review of each individual buyer and selling experience. Leaving positive feedback is easy but having neutral or negative removed is quite a trick.

It's tough to admit but sometimes neutral or negative feedback is warranted, but there have been a few instances over the years where impatient bidders expect their item to be to them in 24 hours or less and if it isn't they respond with a negative remark questioning the business practices of the seller no matter how many positive feedbacks the seller has on record. For me, even if the buyer takes two months after the close of auction to pay they will still receive a positive remark. It's paid and it's out of my life and that's how I like it.

From time to time I will also do a little record collecting myself on eBay for a couple of reasons, the main one being I like to size up the competition in regards to shipment time and packaging. I pride myself in using real record mailers and bubble mailers with packing peanuts for CDs but you would be amazed at how people actually ship stuff that is of value to buyers. I just received a package of hard to find 7"s today and the seller didn't even put tape all around the cardboard he put together to make a makeshift mailer! The records were sticking out of the "box" on two different sides. This irritates me to no end because most sellers overcharge for shipping anyway and when they cannot use enough tape to seal it properly, it pisses me off! I paid this lunatic his money and you would think that he would at least buy a box at Staples that would be appropriate, well, that didn't happen. It was almost as if he beat the shit out of the cardboard before he decided it would be a suitable mailer for these records. The thickness of the tape was so thin, I am surprised it survived its trip out here from the mid-West as it should've split on the way and the records would've been ruined.

After I inspect the quality of the vinyl, this bonehead will be left a positive feedback because he didn't rip me off and I did get the stuff in the end. I will shoot him an email with a link to three different sources to buy proper vinyl mailers and packing tape. The first lesson of selling online is learning where to buy proper mailers for whatever you are selling. There are several sources in Los Angeles to buy supplies most notably is Imperial Paper in North Hollywood, Papermart in downtown LA, Uline online or other online sources. Buyers appreciate a well-packed item and the return buyers will be back, guaranteed!

OVERDOSING ON REALITY

BY SHAWN STALERT

It Was Always This Way

Pat yourself on the back. Not only were you lucky enough to score a copy of the December issue of Big Wheel Magazine but you've nearly made it to the end of another year! As I write this I find myself wondering how it's possible that we're already in December when I just sobered up from last New Year's Eve festivities. I still don't remember where I parked my car or how I ended up handcuffed to the back of a golf cart. But that's another story. The end of the year has always been an intensely introspective time for me. Not only do I get to go out and buy a new 'Pin up Girls of Communist China' desk calendar but I also take the time to reflect on the nature of humanity and the direction we are heading and I even manage to brew up a few quarts of eggnog. For a nutritious meal in a carton you can't go wrong with eggnog.

Yes, another year has blown by us as we sat frightened atop this sphere of dirt we call home while it raced around the Sun at nearly 66,800 miles per hour. See, you learned something new this year! Don't forget to check that off on your list of resolutions right next to staying sober for one month and not making a drunken ass of yourself in public both of which I failed to do in '05. Oh well, there will always be a next year. Or will there? Surviving a year has never been so much work but sitting in front of our televisions, newspapers, or monitors it is difficult not to become befuddled, frustrated, and even a little scared at what we are being spoon fed by the media outlets. An overdose of Hollywood style shock video found its way into the nightly news.

We have the war on "terrorism" nearing the end of its 4th year and countless citizens of the world continue to fall victim to suicide bombers, abductions, and beheadings. The bird flu could mutate into a strain easily transmitted between humans and we've had three intensely powerful hurricanes strike the US mainland

leaving thousands of people hungry and homeless and we've lost thousands of young people to "spreading democracy" in Iraq and Afghanistan. Where are those weapons of mass destruction? Oh yes, they never existed. It was just "faulty intelligence" that ended up killing millions of innocent people. Cook up another political scandal to get our minds off of this please. Thank you. Speaking of "thank yous", a special thank you goes out to whatever brain dead segment of our society saw fit to put our humble, fearless, articulate leader, George "Dub-yah" and his gang back in for 4 more years at the helm. Frankly, I'd rather have the sexually ambiguous pop star Boy George and his Culture Club running the show.

I see you nodding your head as your mouths silently form the phrase "End of the World." Is it? It would certainly seem that way. We have famine, war, disease, and natural disasters in abundance. Faux news and company will tell you that 2005 has brought our world crashing down all around us. Do you have your cache of can foods and shotguns? Well why not? Haven't you seen the news?! Before you run out to the Army surplus store and pick up that nuclear fallout shelter, just take a deep breath. You see, my friends, this is just another chapter in the great book of life. These are the harsh realities that hit us in the face and bring us to our knees. There is no end to war, there is no cure for every disease, and there is little we can do to prevent a natural disaster. For countless centuries before you and I fell into this world naked and screaming, hurricanes ripped cities apart, wars ended the dreams of generations of men and women, and crippling diseases robbed many people of their lives. This is the maddening, unfair, harsh reality of life in this celestial trailer park. Is it the end of the world? No, just another movement of this symphony droning on while we sit, clap, cry, and occasionally get up to use the

bathroom.

As we reflect on this year and stare at the evening news shaking our heads in fear and disbelief just remember that the end of the human species is not at hand. Osama Bin Laden, Hurricane Katrina, the Bird flu, and asteroid 2004 MN4 will not bring us to our knees just yet. There is only one force that can easily do it and that, my friends, is known as FEAR. When a nation lives in constant fear it is quickly controlled and easily manipulated. The end will come when we stop thinking, feeling, and expressing ourselves, not when the mass media shows you their most ghastly montage of mind numbing violence. Is Faux news pulling your puppet strings as they sell you the end of the world?

Yes, the world is a violent, horrible, disgusting, vile place in which we must all serve our time. But it has always been and will always be this way so long as we upright apes inhabit its fertile valleys and lush tropical forests. My advice to you, find something to enjoy as the curtain is pulled on another act of this tragedy and the final nail goes into the coffin of 2005. Take your parents out in public and be seen with them even though they embarrass the hell out of you. Sit down and listen to your grandfather drone on about his life a hundred years ago. Tell your grandmother she's beautiful even though she's old, wrinkly, and smells like moth balls and please, please stop kicking getting your dog drunk, it's ridiculous.

If anyone is actually reading my stuff, thank you. Hopefully I have entertained you a little and can continue to do so until my fingers rot off of my hands or the editor gets tired of me, whichever comes first. So have a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukah, Happy Kwanza, or Happy Winter Solstice... whatever your particular flavor may be. I'm off to chug some more eggnog and try to get my cousin to eat some yellow snow. He'll do it, that sick bastard. Feliz Navidad. See you next year.

CONCENTRATION CRAMP

BY JESSE ALK



When you live in a city like LA it's easy to forget what the rest of the country is like. We live our lives in our cars, fall asleep to the soothing sound of the ghetto bird, and forget that there's another America out there. A world that goes to church every Sunday, a world where white people are a majority, and want to keep it that way. Every four years we look at the blanket of red across the US map on election day and feel somehow surprised, at least I do. I forget that when I left an area with that kind of thinking, it didn't just disappear. There are still those out there that want to make sure that things like Gay Marriage never happen, because they genuinely think it will somehow devalue their marriage. These are the kind of people who, in the absence of a credible threat to their way of life, will invent one. For our parents it was the Communists. In my lifetime, over and over, it's been "Satan Worshipers" for some reason.

If you come from a small town you may know what I'm talking about. I recently heard a story about a group of high school Goths who killed some family, supposedly as a sacrifice to their pagan god. To me it sounded more like they wanted the family's car to get out of town, but that might just be my personal bias. I heard as a side note that there was a kind of hysteria about Satanism in the small southern town the kids came from. Once a year, all the jocks in the high school would run into the woods, looking for Satan Worshipers to beat up. This last bit of information stirred up some long forgotten memories, and made me wonder about the case against these kids. You see, I've never met a Satan Worshiper that I know of, but there have been several instances in my life when I've been accused of being one. It seems silly until you remember the West Memphis Three.

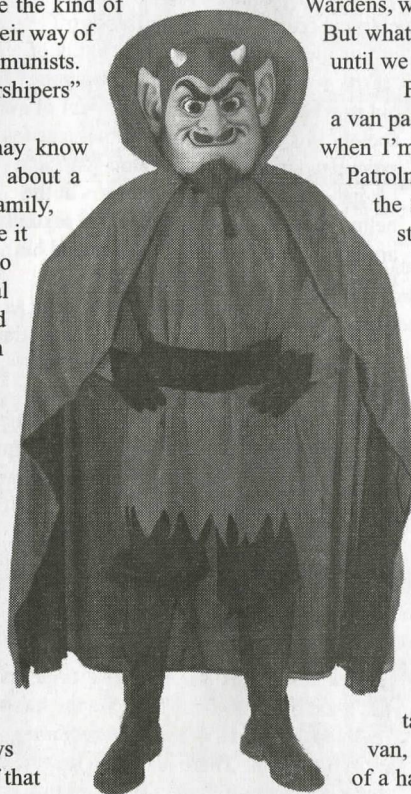
Like the small town mentioned above, I too come from a tiny town in the sticks. It's what some people like to think of as America's moral center. A place where everybody knows everyone else, and looks out for each other. Part of that community spirit came out once a year when, in my town as well, the jocks would get drunk, decide that there were Satan Worshipers up in the woods, and go en masse to kick some ass with their Louisville Sluggers. Once again, it seemed harmless until one of the jocks took some acid, decided my friend was what he was looking for, and beat his face in.

Around this time the town's attention started shifting to my small group of friends. It was the late eighties/early nineties, but we were really the first wave of punk rock to hit where we lived. There were actually articles in the local paper about what to do with us, sometimes on the front page. The kid's in town didn't know what a punk was, so they came up with other things to call us: Mutants,

Weirdoes, and inexplicably, Deadheads. The paper called us the "Downtown Kid's" because we hung out on the two-mile downtown strip. Now understand, you're talking about less than twenty kids, most of whom were skaters who didn't look much different than everyone else in town. When you are confronted with something outside your experience it is much easier to try to force it into something you understand. The jocks in town were convinced that we were all gay, and of course, that we were the infamous Satan Worshipers who had been terrorizing the woods for the last ten years. I personally thought that the Devil Worship rumors had been kept alive by the State Park Wardens, who wanted to keep people out of the park at night. But what are you going to do? We were under suspicion until we left that town.

Fast-forward five years, to a cross-country trip in a van packed with squatters. I'm driving across Missouri when I'm pulled over by the most cartoonish Highway Patrolman I could imagine. Big, mirrored cop shades, the Smokey the Bear hat, the whole nine yards. He struts up to the passenger window, asks me for my license and registration, and almost jumps out of his skin when he sees the kid sitting shotgun. I mean, literally jumps. I've never seen anything like it. My friend was your typical mid Nineties squatter: dirty, clothes patched together with dental floss, with a crown of thorns tattooed on his forehead. I think it was the tattoo that set the cop off. He wasn't scared enough to do a felony stop, but he pulled that kid out of the car so fast I thought his head was going to snap off. After searching him and putting me in the patrol car, I got the lowdown. He knew that we were Satan Worshipers, and unless I started talking he was going to have ten cars and the drug-sniffing dogs out there in half an hour. Somehow, and I'm still not sure how, I talked the cop down. I wouldn't let him search the van, which was actually full of drugs, the last third of a half-gallon of whiskey, and at least two out of six squatters with interstate warrants. I think it was my college ID that finally did the trick. College ID's saved me from going to jail at least twice. He took ID's from the kid's who had them, warned me that he still thought that they might be Satan Worshipers, although I seemed alright, and sent us on our way.

I get tired of living in LA. I get tired of the expense, tired of the traffic, tired of the attitude. Then I remember the look on that cop's face. I remember crowds of kid's with baseball bats on a Devil Worship snipe hunt. I remember that it's funny until all the sudden it isn't funny anymore, and then you're in trouble. I'd like some clean air, I really would. I just don't know what I want to trade for it.



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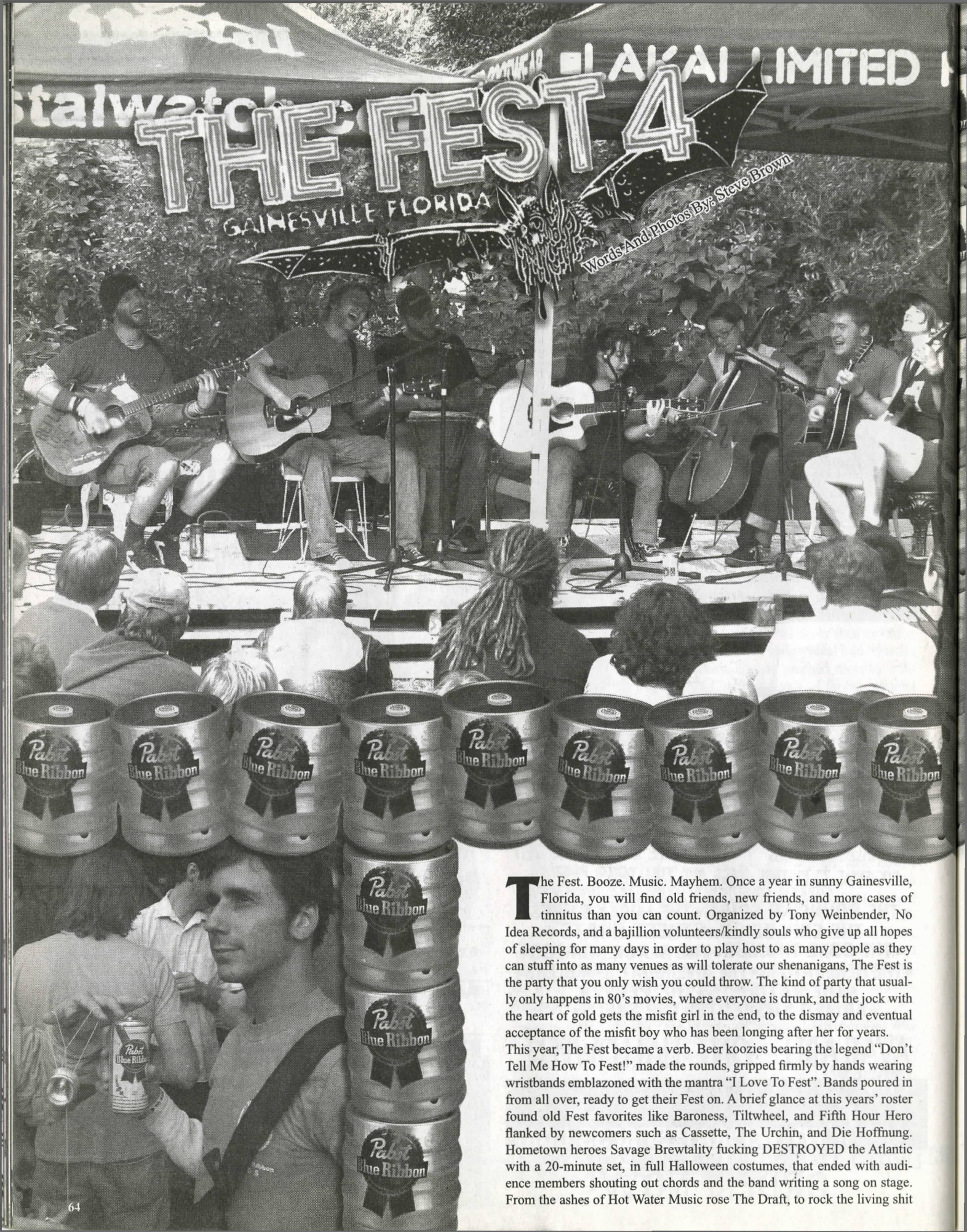
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THE FEST 4

GAINESVILLE FLORIDA

Words And Photos By: Steve Brown



The Fest. Booze. Music. Mayhem. Once a year in sunny Gainesville, Florida, you will find old friends, new friends, and more cases of tinnitus than you can count. Organized by Tony Weinbender, No Idea Records, and a bajillion volunteers/kindly souls who give up all hopes of sleeping for many days in order to play host to as many people as they can stuff into as many venues as will tolerate our shenanigans, The Fest is the party that you only wish you could throw. The kind of party that usually only happens in 80's movies, where everyone is drunk, and the jock with the heart of gold gets the misfit girl in the end, to the dismay and eventual acceptance of the misfit boy who has been longing after her for years. This year, The Fest became a verb. Beer koozies bearing the legend "Don't Tell Me How To Fest!" made the rounds, gripped firmly by hands wearing wristbands emblazoned with the mantra "I Love To Fest". Bands poured in from all over, ready to get their Fest on. A brief glance at this year's roster found old Fest favorites like Baroness, Tiltwheel, and Fifth Hour Hero flanked by newcomers such as Cassette, The Urchin, and Die Hoffnung. Hometown heroes Savage Brewtality fucking DESTROYED the Atlantic with a 20-minute set, in full Halloween costumes, that ended with audience members shouting out chords and the band writing a song on stage. From the ashes of Hot Water Music rose The Draft, to rock the living shit

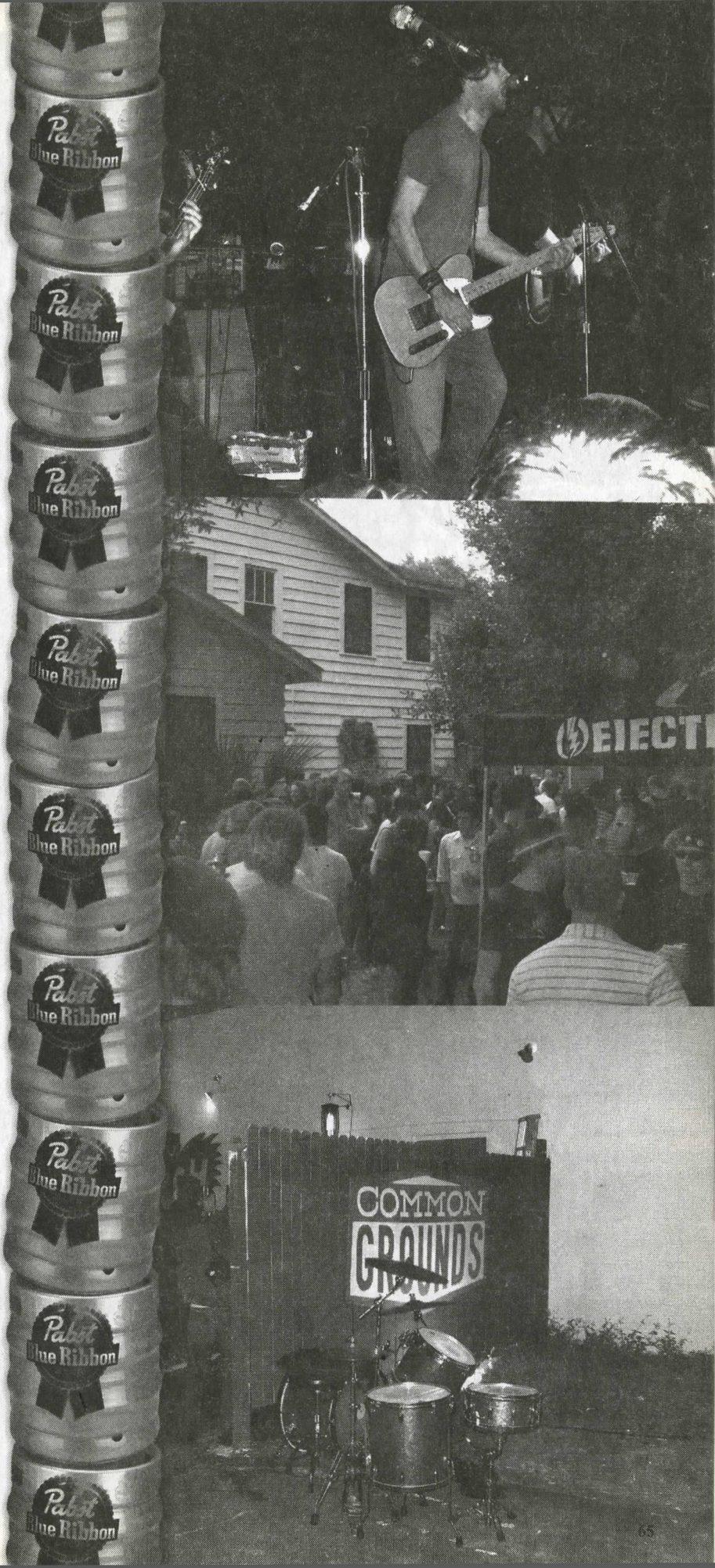
out of new venue Abbey Road, much to the dismay of the frat-boy douche bags that run the place. The Draft frontman Chris Wollard called us all turkeys and asked if we liked vodka. We loved him for it.

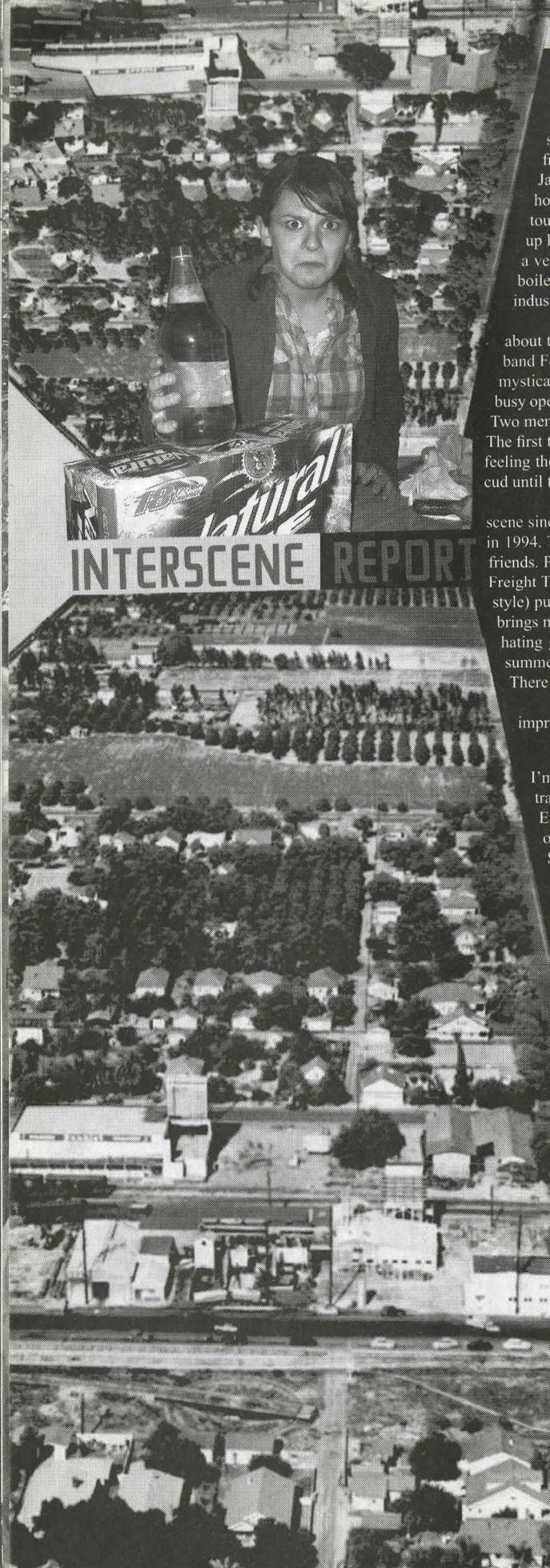
Lines to get in for bands like Dillinger Four, Radon, and the Bouncing Souls were long as fuck this year. The Fest sold out completely, and everyone involved nearly shit themselves when they realized how many people were going to be trying to get in to these shows. Lines were long, and you can bet your ass that next year will see more venues, and possibly even larger ones to accommodate the grotesque volume of people who dogpiled into Alachua County to get fucked up on Pabst Blue Ribbon, Sparks, and (allegedly) that demon-weed, marijuana. Damn kids. A brief glance at The Fest's website, <http://www.thefestfl.com>, should give you an idea of what you missed. Underground music luminaries such as Ted Leo & The Pharmacists, Circle Takes The Square, and J Church milled about, checking out up-and-comers like The Lovekill, Vena Cava, and The New Roman Times. People played with yo-yos. People got laid. One couple actually got married at Common Grounds the day before The Fest started in a ceremony that included lyrics from songs by Jawbreaker, The Cure, and Otis Redding and culminated in a Pat Benatar cover band and a cake fight. It was mayhem, glorious and unadulterated, and everyone enjoyed the living shit out of themselves.

A few highlights for me included the mighty Baroness, playing a 30-minute set of both of their EPs, back to back, in order. It was goddamn heroic, and it was like getting hit in the balls with a fucking piano...it hurts like hell but you can't help but marvel at the wonder and ingenuity of anyone who could swing a piano at you with such accuracy. Porn stars do not have the control and mastery that Baroness displayed, and many a motherfucker was duly rocked by what is proving to be the best fucking metal band around. Gainesville veterans Radon kicked the living shit out of Common Grounds with a reunion set that was gloriously sloppy and infectiously fun. Hearing these guys get up and bang out their old songs for nothing more than shits and giggles warms the heart in this day and age of pre-packaged reunion tours and staged comebacks. They just wanted to play a set, so they did. End of story. The only real downside to this year's Fest was the volume of people. Rumor has it that one of the venues closed the week before, leaving Fest organizers scrambling to replace it. The replacement ended up being smaller, bands got shuffled around, and while everything worked out ok, I had to stand in line for an hour and change to get in to Common Grounds on Saturday night, causing me to miss the first two bands. I heard them clearly from outside though. They were fucking loud.

Things that were seen at The Fest: A man dressed as a pirate being eaten by a shark. A pair of feet, sticking out of a bush, with a sign on them that said "Don't touch me, I'm drunk." About three hundred beards, yet only a few dozen moustaches. A 3-year old kid wearing a J. Page t-shirt. A drunk old man dancing and waving around two harmonicas, while a pair of dogs that weren't his nipped at his heels, trying to get the harmonicas. A lot of 5-Star Pizza.

Save up your pennies. Keep an eye on the website. And begin planning your trip for next year. You won't regret it. The Fest is one of those few truly wonderful events that is held only in honor of itself, and the minute you show up, you are a friend and you are loved. Your only responsibility is to rock the fuck out. Hell yeah, my friends. Hell yeah.





Hello, I am Abby Banks and I grew up in Claremont, Southern California. Last September I drove across the country stopping in every punk house I could with a camera, to make a photo documentary of punk houses. I stopped and spent more time in a few towns to rest and earn some money and make some friends, along the way. I have been living in Brattleboro, Vermont since Juneish. It's a lucky little hippie town in southern Vermont. I came up here to help my friend Timm with a musical we toured through the east coast and the south. It was called "Jerk off Jack off Frig Face: A Country Musical for Drunk Children". We built crappy cardboard props and hokey costumes, beards for every gender and even had a fog machine. When we got back from the tour the cast said our goodbyes and took off in every direction, except for me. That's how I ended up here in the North Country. I have a job dish washing for a small gourmet restaurant. I work for a very nice, very drunk ex-deadhead who was kind and naive enough to hire me let me live in the boiler room of the restaurant. I have to say I am happy to be here in this town sleeping next to the industrial ice machine for now.

I know Brattleboro has a rich history of bands and musical events, but I am going to tell you about the music I've encountered in my last couple of months here. The eight piece psychedelic rock band Feathers includes sitar, bells, electric and acoustic guitars, a harp, key boards, drums and angelic mystical vocals are a local musical treat. They don't play many local shows these days because they are busy opening up for Dinosaur Jr in Boston, going on tour with Smog, and backing up Devendra Banhart. Two members of Feathers are in a heavy Sabbath inspired band with Jay Mascis of Dinosaur Jr. The first time I saw feathers I had a weird vivid hallucination of being out in a cow pasture, lying down, feeling the grass, and a big breathing cow with a wet nose approached me and stood by me chewing its cud until they finished playing. It was amazing and intimate.

There is a punk scene here. Well, more like a parking lot scene. I can personally appreciate this scene since I began my own punk journey in a similar parking lot back home in the inland empire back in 1994. There is a cool underground label called Spare Change Records run by Pat the Bunny and his friends. Pat is about 18 years old, and so are his friends. He plays in a band called Johnny Hobo and the Freight Trains'. Its acoustic punk, very acoustic against me! Inspired (but not limited to the against me! style) punk. I love them. They have a song about the fucking parking lot that makes me want to cry, it brings me back. And songs about their friends' very real drug problems, songs about hitchhiking, about hating god, the government, and school. They played the plan-it-x fest in Hartford Connecticut this summer and pat had every kid sitting or lying down on the floor singing along with every word he sang. There were at least 300+ kids there. He has a following of disenfranchised angry teenagers.

That's all for now. Come find me in Brattleboro, where we'll have a secret late night noise/improv jam with the 'Sunburned hand of the man' while 'Feathers' members and get stoned.

SLACK MAFIA PRESENTS: MONSTERS OF THE MAGIC KINGDOM

I'm sitting on the second tier of our two-story couch looking forward to the events that will transpire during the weekend that is slowly creeping it's intoxicated heavy head around the corner. Exhaustion sets in, while in my head I go over the itinerary of the adventures that lie ahead. Friday our band Drinkers Purgatory will finally have our first album available on Matty Awesome's own Small Pool Records after already throwing two record release psyche outs. Slack Mafia man. This show is taking place in San Pedro with Pedro's own psychedelic haunted house soundtrack hit makers, Killer Dreamer. The Rolling Blackouts from Lomita are playing as well; they sound like The Who sans frat-boy Roger Daltrey and instead trade this space with an extra axe to drive those riffs right through your heart. In the midst of taco trucks and gang warfare off of Nineteenth and Pacific we find ourselves at a small dive bar called Harold's Place. These dudes know how to party, the shows are free, sometimes there's free barbeque, the drinks are stiff, there's dim lights, smoking is permitted inside and there's plenty of colorful regulars fully equipped with pirate patch badassness. It's beautiful, seriously.

Still hung over, still high, it's now Saturday and somehow we're in Arcadia. Not even sure where this city is located. Sounds medieval. Anaheim's Lipstick Pickups got all angles covered, sounds like stuff that makes you smile and dance, punk rock with girl vocals and nonstop pop hooks. Who Killed Bambi also from Anaheim reminds me of The Fondled or any early Recess Records material, only these dudes are creepier and it plays like a bad joke that you can't help but laugh hysterically and repeat to all your friends. Anaheim's most straight up no bullshit punk rock band. Sometimes too intoxicated to stand and always on the verge of breaking up, it's like a train wreck waiting to happen and I'll take a ride anytime. Playing both Friday and Saturday are newbies The Alphabettes. Don't really have too many details about this one part Anaheim; two parts Pedro group except they're a trio of ladies. A saga lies ahead; this will end in bruises, massive headaches and bad inside jokes, you doing something better?

Now for the kiddies, a parking lot in Anaheim off of La Palma and Tustin. Thanks to the fine folks at *Its A Grind Coffee Shop* (Send checks to 2136 E. Blanchard, thanks!) **BYOBONTHEDOWNLOW** means you can drink in public if you put it in your favorite plastic fast food cup. The Ergs! were in town around Halloween and we had us a swell little gathering. For one night every few months we own that empty parking lot. Killer Dreamer, Dan Padilla, Thee Makeoutparty! Drinkers Purgatory, Who Killed Bambi and The Ergs were all there, yet by the end of the night the power got killed and only four of the six bands actually played. Dan Padilla closed the event, only playing one song. Davey then jumped on the drum kit and lead the crowd in Twisted Sister's "We're Not Gonna Take It", thanks dude. We space these shows out in an attempt to let time erase the error of our ways. I'm pretty sure they hate us.

DISC RECORD REVIEWS

Aiden

Nightmare Anatomy

These guys look stupid. I know this is supposed to be a *music* review, but think about this: a band chooses its look and its imagery to align itself with a specific scene, to gain new fans, to be recognized. For better or for worse, image is a huge part of the package. So I do not feel like I'm out of my domain to criticize Aiden for the way they look... and they look stupid. To be specific, they look EXACTLY like the band My Chemical Romance – dyed black hair combed into their faces, pink mascara, and fishnet shirt sleeves. Now onto the music – radio-friendly pop-punk with whiny vocals, a few screams in the background, and ultra-slick production. Aiden is one of the millions of bands that popped seemingly out of nowhere within the last four years, which I would describe as “femo” (*fake emo*). If you want to get an idea of who some *real* emo bands are, e-mail me. – **Ben Edge** xbenedgex@gmail.com

Victory Records

Agent Sparks

Not so Merry

This is different and interesting but not so much that I'd be compelled to pay for it. Male/Female vocals that I like, but it's not the Crass style shit I look for. I feel like I'd like them better live. Track 4 “Choke” is pretty cool, scathing lyrics w/ poppy chords and harmony always tickle my eardrums. The female singer could even go own her own way, you rip sister! – **Ginger Vitus**

Immortal Records

Akercocke

Words That Go Unspoken, Deeds

That Go Undone

This album was a weird one. I liked the kind of creepy guitar riffs in parts of the songs and the singing was a little bit interesting. The things that turned me off about this album were the gurgling vocals which you really can't understand whatsoever. The guitar parts also felt very held back and artificial in the faster parts. The drumming was pretty predictable as well. I applaud the diverse array of fast parts and slow parts, but it seemed very random and forced. This album ultimately had trouble with flow and also with intensity. I don't think I would know what to do at a concert of theirs. You can headbang, but just as you get into it changes on you which to me was very disconcerting. I wouldn't recommend this album because it seems like it is being too obvious in its attempts to mix things up. If it was a lot heavier and constructed better, it would be listenable. – **Kile Siler**

Earache

Asmodeus

Diabolique Royale

Thirteen tracks, four cool covers. The first is Johnny Cash's “Five Feet High And Risin’,” second is 16 Horsepower's “Heel On the Shovel,” third is Junior Brown's “Semi-Crazy,” and the hidden track (a short instrumental cover) is number four, Elvis Hitler's “Live Fast, Die Young.” The Junior Brown cover is very awesome. Not quite as awesome as Junior's version of course, but it shows very good taste. Same thing with the Cash cover; this version is interesting, but you can't expect it to beat Cash's version. I really like this CD though, and the best tracks are the originals. I instantly

liked the powerful pounding beat of “Heat,” and every track grows on me more with each listen. Ride Tonight is full of energy; the nonsense lyrics of Idiot Song are meaningless fun with a kind of careless abandon. This power trio from the Netherlands has a faithful following here in the States that supported them when they came to Hollywood for the Wrecker's Ball on Halloween '04. I include myself among those awaiting their return. – **KN**

Hairball8 Records

The Audition

Controversy Loves Company

I'm not knocked by anything here. Sounds like Jimmy Eat World, Fall Out Boy, etc. Another view of the world through naïve eyes. The ideals and concerns they get across are fresh, but they're almost too far fetched for those of us who have put those experiences on the shelf. With that said, this album is good for cutting teeth on. For the seasoned, not so much. Plus, their in-sleeve picture inspired laughter at, not with. Those up collars were bad in the eighties and just as if not lamer now. Especially when practically everyone is wearing one, good luck with that! – **Ginger Vitus**

Victory

Bang Sugar Bang

Thwak Thwak Go Crazy!!

There is no denying this band is skilled, diverse, and very capable of producing the next “alternative radio” hit, but why do so many reviewers keep calling this punk rock? This is a talented band that is very proficient at kicking out the up-tempo, late '70s influenced rock songs with a strong sense of punk influence, but overall, something is missing for it to be

considered “punk” in the strict sense of the term...whatever that may be. But do not confuse this able Los Angeles three-piece with the slew of crappy bands that identify with the oxymoronic, false label “pop-punk.” This release introduces a talented, vigorous, energetic and affable rock ‘n’ roll band with distinctively rough edges. Granted, the opening track “Punk Beat” is clearly a punk tune, but the rest of the album leans more toward Cheap Trick on espresso. And what's with all this comparing the female vocalist/bass player with Debbie Harry and Exene? Cooper sounds deliciously like Cooper, thus saturating the band with her own infusion of energetic feminine charm. If you enjoy feeling good and listening to rock ‘n’ roll, Bang Sugar Bang will satisfy. **Marcus Solomon**

SOS Records

Bang Sugar Bang

Thwak Thwak Go Crazy!!

Good times. This record has an upbeat, old school, punk rock feeling to it. The lyrical content is simple and catchy. There's a song titled “The Machine Gun Song”, which goes, “If I could be anything / I'd be a machine gun / Cuz' every time I see you / I'm sorry I don't own one.” Sweet. Yeah. Good shit. If you like The Rezillos, you might have a strong like or dislike of Bang Sugar Bang. The vocals are strikingly similar to that of the Rezillos. This record all together is plain old fun. The chick bassist Cooper looks pretty smokin' too. I luv hot bass players. – **JTT**

SOS Records

Beecher

Self Titled

I loved this album. It's a great mix of driving brutality with spurts of melodic purity. These melodic parts while not making the band another Atreyu are in all the right spots and just complex enough to be respected. The clean singing could be better, but then again this band. I'm sure if I saw this band live I wouldn't be anticipating each songs end.

The musicianship is far from spectacular, but it shows a great deal of creativity and it keeps you listening. I'd definitely recommend this band because nothing seems to be forced on this album and it has really great flow.

-Kile Siler

Earache

The Briefs

Steal Yer Heart

More frenetic pogo punk from the purveyors of near-perfect powerful piffle. This is a band that takes its silliness very seriously, skillfully blending the ridiculous with sharp social insight in a way that will get you bouncing all over the room. Go get a skinny tie, some wrap-around sunglasses, down a few Jolt colas, and crank this one at maximum volume. Do you, or someone you know jiggle a leg for no reason while sitting? That is exactly the tempo for most of these songs. Standout tracks include the even faster, guiltless confessional "I Can't Work", the galloping and discordant "My Girl (Wants to Be a Zombie)" with its hypnotic, monotonic vocals, and my personal favorite "Getting Hit on at the Bank" which is a hilarious rendition of vocalist Steve E. Nix lamenting his irresistible sexiness. Let this band get "Stuck on You" (track four.) "Yeah yeah you! Don't stop!" -**Marcus Solomon**

BYO Records

Black Furies

Death Trip Saturday Night

If you need some theme music to a Saturday night of martini soaked leather jacket adventures this is your ticket to ride. Head thumpin and toe tappin rock n roll here peeps. Keyboard splashes and lead heavy ripping guitars spice up the instrumental side of

this album. Songs like "Murder City Shakedown" and "One for Nothing" are sure to get your blood running and fists pumping. Cool album art also, very Dick Tracy comic book style. Sounds good, looks good, is good. Rev the engine up, grab a Betty and strap in for a wild ride! -**Sammy**

Gearhead Records

Bravo Fucking Bravo

II

Hardcore? Screamo? Headache? Yes! All the above. Oh, and clever song titles like "Jean-Claude God Damn" and "Doctor Hot Shit". Heavy and angry and screamy. Not much more to say. -**Bill**

Alone Records

Clevis

Last Stop

This is more than likely the band on stage while I'm outside smoking. The vocals are this weird Victor/Victoria thing. First it sounds like this guy lost his hair band and started a new band with the lesser qualities of the Lunachicks in mind. I suspect most of their followers consist of heshers sluts and guys who don't get laid, even by the heshers sluts. I can see them swaying, doing the whiskey tango while I hit the bathroom to roll a joint. No thanks. -**Ginger Vitus**

Griffdog Records

Concombre Zombi

Daylight Comes

Three guys from San Antonio, Texas. This is their first full-length disc and features thirteen tracks. Two of the songs were written by photographer Annalisa Garrett, who the tabloids have linked to Tiger Army. Song subjects include vampires, hellhounds, a struggle with a beast encountered on a night stroll through a graveyard. Then there are songs about being in love with a dead person, a honeymoon in hell, and an alien abduction/probe victim. Inter-song Foley art of a UFO sounds like a variation on a tea kettle boiling. I really don't think I have to go on, but I will anyway because there's a lesson here somewhere. Songs about a soul in purgatory, about how great it is being psychobilly, and of course their theme song Buried

Alive, about zombies(Chorus: "CONCOMBRE ZOMBI... BURIED ALIVE!!!). The last thing you hear at the end of the CD is the sound of heavy breathing with some sort of flange effect on it, that for some reason goes on much longer than you want to hear it. The guitar work throughout is comprised mostly of power chords, there are very few impressive licks and riffs, if any. If this sounds cool to you, then maybe you just heard about psychobilly for the first time last month from a HorrorPops song on the radio. Or maybe you just have an affinity for a subgenre of psychobilly I like to call "jockabilly," where all the "psychos" are just jocks with quiffs, and the sports around which they mindlessly mold their lives are b horror movie gore and/or grease-monkeying. This band has a song on that horrible(for the most part) Hot Topic psychobilly comp, Kicked Out Of Purgatory. CDs like this one make me want to paraphrase the way the British announce the death of one monarch the succession of a new one, thusly: "the psychobilly is dead, long live the crapobilly." Why does America(and Texas in particular) always drive good things right into a big hole in the ground? Did you know European psychos would probably beat up(or scoff at) anyone they saw obliviously wearing a t-shirt that says "American Psychobilly"? And that's whether or not the band on the back is Tiger Army. -**KN**

Hairball8 Records

Daniel Striped Tiger

Condition

All honesty, I didn't want to like this as I've never been much of a fan of experimental music, but this is pretty fucking cool. I got lost in the confusion and couldn't tell where songs started and ended. How the hell do the musicians even know where they are in the songs? While I pondered they keep it going. Within the chaos are hard hitting grooves that come out of nowhere. Shouty vocals and tone, great tone -bass, guitar, drums all sound thick. Trumpets and pianos sneak there ways in noisy moments. And when they

start rocking, it's short lived. Left me jonesing for more. Cool shit, I dig it. -**Bill**

Alone Records

Dead Kennedys

Fresh Fruit For Rotting Vegetables/Fresh Fruit For Rotting Eyeballs:

25th Anniversary Edition CD/DVD

Has it been 25 years already? Yes it has, and it is time to celebrate with the reissue of the best Dead Kennedys record ever made, together with the issuance of a brand new DVD documentary. Fresh Fruit for Rotting Vegetables is the high-water mark for American punk rock with its shocking and confrontational insights into the dark undercurrents of society set to powerfully ominous and diverse music. Even if you already own this epic album, you should still go get this release for the DVD documentary alone. It is a 55 minute video montage of the history of the band (to that point in time,) complete with six full-length live performances. Of course, if you are even remotely familiar with punk rock, you know the classic FRESH FRUIT FOR ROTTING VEGETABLES album. If not, you need to clue-up right away and purchase this item that is essential to any knowledgeable punk's collection. How can you call yourself a rebel without owning at least one copy of "Holiday in Cambodia?" This time around, the cover art is the correct color (fire is supposed to be red and orange,) and the music sounds as good as ever. The DVD portion of this two-disc package alone is worth the purchase price, which is somewhere around \$18.00, depending upon where you buy your anti-products. The video consists of commentary from founding member and guitarist East Bay Ray and fellow instigator Klaus Flouride explaining how it all came together, and what it was like to be involved during the genesis years of American punk rock in general and Dead Kennedys in specific. The editing is done well, is easy on the eyes, and is also a phantasmagoria of various images including old newspaper clippings, flyers, and

related artwork. The old footage of the live concerts is surprisingly clear, and while the audio quality in these portions is lacking, the excitement and interest level remains high. It is also interesting to note that the social climate and political events from this era are explained in parallel with the descriptions of the making of the album. One must have an accurate understanding of what motivated the band members in order to have a genuine understanding of the album's content. It's too bad that Jello Biafra did not contribute anything to this important recollection of punk history, but he made his choice, and that's a completely different story. -

Marcus Solomon
Manifesto Records

Decapitated

The Negation

From the moment I put this album in my CD player I was blown away. The drumming on this album is insane. It is quite possibly the fastest I have heard. The guitar is incredibly technical all the while keeping that traditional death metal feel. The gurgling vocals are great in the mix. Decapitated are truly talented in that they keep each part of the music separate from the rest while all the while keeping it all together without sounding muddy as death metal can easily be. A lot of the times when I hear bands that call themselves death metal I grow bored very easily. This album displays excellent musicianship that makes you listen just a little bit closer to how each part connects to the others. The flow is great, the instrumentation is great, and the vocals are great. Everything about this album is great. My final words: definitely worth it. -

Kile Siler
Earache

Ed Gein

Judas Goats and Deseleaters

This album can be described as being weird and different, but if you are trying to find mediocre semi-grind, you have found it. Musically, this band seems as if it is trying to deliver a modern heavy album, but is just not quite making the cut. The guitar is much too subdued and the drumming leaves

something to be desired. As far as vocals and lyrics go, the vocals just seem like background noise in the mix and the lyrics while being political which I applaud, are so to the point and obvious that it doesn't leave you wanting more. It's basically telling me something I already know. All in all, it's nothing amazing; just somewhat watered down metal.

-Kile Siler
Metal Blade

The Exit

Home for an Island

Listening to this record for the first time was a little boring. The music has a kinda cool, jazzy, rock feeling, but the lyrical rhythm just isn't rockin'. There are no parts of any song that are catchy to me at all. Usually, when something rocks it leaves you with a phrase, jingle, etc., that you can't forget. You know, something that you got to hear again and again. None of that on "Home for an Island". I've tried and tried, but still can't really feel any energy in the singer's voice. I mean, these guys sing like they're really worried about something. It's like someone's about to unleash the skeletons in their closet.

Something real bad is in that closet. I'm a little worried about it. Lay off the wine and pills a little. Wait a minute ... there are hints of The Police or Sting in some parts of the album. The Police rock though. They rock a bajillion times harder than The Exit. -

JTT
Some Records

Filthy Thieving Bastards

My Pappy was a Pistol

Fuck yeah!! This is by far the best Bastards album yet. From beginning to end, this record makes my top ten list of best records to drink to ever ... at least during my lifetime. Fuckin' A these guys make San Francisco sound fuckin' dope. It's not just the lyrics, it's the overall attitude and feeling of the music. Listening to tracks like "Crutches and Blow", "Sealed Confessions", and "Singapore Sling" just blows me away. The best kinds of country music ever can be found on this album. Fucking awesome. The lyrics are beautiful, poetic stories

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that just keep coming. Oh yeah, Spider Stacy of Poodles' fame gives his voice and whistle to the track titled "The Back of This Hand". It's true. If your ever hanging out with a grip of your friends, with nothing to do on any given night, I recommend you pick a couple of your favorite bottles, and blast My Pappy was a Pistol. You will not be disappointed. -JTT

BYO Records

Inked in Blood

Lay Waste the Poets

The first track "All That Remains" sports Maiden-esque guitar riffs and the vocal style that's become standard among metal bands these days: cookie monster growling, throaty screams and that Sepultura sound not everyone can pull off. Throw that in with some drop tuned bass and double kick pedals and you've got yourself some serious shit. The cool thing about this album is it's heavy minus the senseless screaming and the guitars aren't trying to play every chord invented all at once. It's melodic. -Ginger Vitus

Facedown

xLooking Forwardx

The Path We Tread

This is a great representation of what hardcore music circa 2005 sounds like. Throaty, monotone vocals reminiscent of Sick of It All, simple chord progressions played through one of those newer, high gain amps, a touch of melody, a few "whoa's", some mosh parts, and even some tattooable iconography in the cover art. Something for everyone, right? The lyrics are... wait a second! This is one of those born-again Christian straight edge bands! You almost had me fooled, xLooking Forwardx, but I figured you out. I will freely admit that I am a bigot. I wasn't too into the clickety bass drum sound to begin with, but I like this album even less than I would have because they preach Christianity. I don't have enough room to go into my anti-Christianity in hardcore tirade, but you can always e-mail me if you want the whole song and dance. -Ben Edge, xbenedgex@gmail.com

Facedown Records

Lords of Altamont

Lords Have Mercy

I had heard many a good thing about these guys before I saw them play a show not long ago. Needless to say I was enthralled. This record is definitely in tune with what they bring to their shows; constant and unrelenting. Musically, it's garage punk that you listen to while rebuilding your carburetor. The drums roar like a well oiled 352", the guitars are dirtier than shit, the bass is thick and the keyboards keep things interesting. The lead vocals have a big Iggy Pop influence. The back ups, well they back the shit up! Michael Davis of the MC5 gives words of praise in the liner notes. The only thing I don't like is the way the drums sound - just too muddy. Other than that, the songs rip and so does the record as a whole. Keep shreddin' dudes!

-Sammy

Gearhead

Thee Merry Widows

Revenge Served Cold

This all lady psychobilly band from San Francisco have churned out a 30 minute cd of spooky creepy tunes. The songs are good but the music lacks a driving element you need in a psychobilly band. I would suggest the drummer take some speed or up the caffeine intake and dare the bass player to keep up. Cool picture on the front of the promo, put that on the cover and I'm sure young psychobillians will be purchasing these things buy the truck loads. Fans of the genre will be pleased, but I need oomph! Or ludes, shit, I'll take whatever you got. -Bill

**Champagne & Cocaine Records/
Cargo Music**

Mistress

In Disgust We Trust

I have one word for this album: brutal. This album has a great tough-guy feel while not forcing a "crucial" breakdown every track. The music definitely makes me want to throw on some camo shorts and start rocking some windmills in the pit although sometimes the songs run a bit long and get kind of old. This is music you listen to while beating someone up, not for when you just want to kick back and chill to some tunes. The songs

are really intense with a cool mix of traditional hardcore but with added blast beats to give it a grind/death metal feel. Overall, it's a pretty good record. -Kile Siler

Earache

Municipal Waste

Hazardous Mutation

This album exemplifies a really great sounding thrashcore band. It is very simplistic, almost reminiscent of crusty mohawked leather jacket wielding punk rock with a definite metal feel in the lead guitar. The vocals sound a little held back, but it gives the record a sort of homey do-it-yourself feel. This record is very fast and raw. If this band were produced a little better and if they intensified their vocals they would be really awesome. If it is pure energy that you are looking for then pick this up because once you pop it in the stereo you will want to push whoever is nearest and start one crazy circle pit. When people tell you hardcore is a mix of punk and metal they are probably talking about something like this. This stuff is very fast paced and in your face. I highly recommend it.

Nothing Yet

D.U.I.

Wha' happen? These dudes used to be the San Fernando Valley's pride of beer punk, and they don't even have pride! Replacing the fun drunken pop punk styles of Nothing Yet's former sound is the newer slower grinding metal mixed with, hot tubs and booze and highway patrol mustaches. But I have to admit, it's pretty funny, and now that I've seen these guys play in super trooper garb while showcasing the new material I can say will have to support this release. But I do miss the sloppy beer punk rulers of the Valley that once were, and so I shed a tear, rip a bong, and think about what it was like in days of yore. -JB

The Original Three

Been Dealt A Losing Hand

Hey Dirtbombs, there is a band knocking on your door and it's the original three. Featuring Ian from the Black Lips, this band has that Gritty garage sound that

we are all digging these days. Putting this cd into my computer completely fooled me. It sounds exactly like I put this onto my turntable. Actually if I had this on vinyl I doubt I would be able to stop listening to it. Dark and dirty just how I like it! -Razorslut

Empty Records

Paradiselost

S/T

Just looking at the cover made me not want to put this in my cd player. Its black and white, kinda artsy, it just kind of screams Im going to be really melodramatic then blare into some fierce metal. Well the cd starts off mellow, with the orchestral arrangement, but it never really get to rock. It sort of makes me think of the evolution of the power ballad gone even worse then it already was. Wow I've been trying really hard to make it through this whole disc, and really I like my music with some passion to it, this really makes me limp. -Razorslut

Dark Element

Pink Swords

Shut Up & Take It

Eh, this sounds pretty weak. There's a lot of attitude injected to each song and some of the songs are cool, like "She's Gone" and "Drop Dead" are pretty cool, but other than that I was mostly bored. -Bill

Gearhead Records

The Reatards

Not Fucked Up Enough

Cheers mate! Finally I'm in love with something I'm suppose to review. Most of what comes across my desk is difficult for me to get through. However, the Reatards make me want to fuck while driving fast! This album has everything I'm looking for: up-tempo rhythms, scratchy screams vocals, bitchin' hooks and changes, all fused with Portland style noise! Noise! Noise! If you've been yawning at the usual crap lately, I highly recommend getting this record. It may take some hunting, but its well worth it. For those of us who miss the early to mid 90's underground it's perfect nostalgia, and for the up and comers, it's a fresh sound. This record was made during 98'

and 99' and this is the first I've heard of them. The sleeve says the single was made in the singer's bedroom with a guitar and some buckets. Kick Ass! -**Ginger Vitus Empty Records**

Red Lightning

L.A. Crash Landing

Alain Whyte (Morrisey guitarist & co-writer) as a new band called Red Lightning. They sound like a high school prom band in a cheesy coming of age movie. I can see it now: Eugene walks into the high school dance, everyone turns around, surprise to see him there. A few weeks back, Shelly, the hottest girl in school asked Eugene out against her better judgment to win a bet against her cool friends. Of course, she never thought she'd fall for Eugene, but she did. Too bad he dumped her upon discovery of the bet. Now, here at the dance they were supposed to go to together, he sees her across the room. Red Lightning segues into their hit single "Crush" while the spotlight finds Eugene making his way toward Shelly. They kiss and everyone cheers. I'm just praying ninjas will come out of the shadows and fuck everyone up, take Eugene hostage and win the Super Bowl.

-**Bill**

The Rocketz

Rise of the Undead

We have here thirteen tracks, including three covers. One is "Long Blond Hair" by Johnny Powers. Not a very original pick in my opinion, kind of like covering Blue Suede Shoes. Second is Screamin' Jay Hawkins' "Frenzy" which is a cool pick; it's also been covered by the Damned (live gigs only), and Dave Vanian's other band The Phantom Chords recorded it. Last cover is Eddie Grant (or the Clash's) "Police On My Back." This album displays good musicianship overall. Their original lyrics are a little silly and trite. The vocals are reminiscent of Keith Morris, maybe a little of Duane Peters. I can't hold that against them though, in fact I kind of like the Circle Jerks and the Bombs/Hunns. Somehow I just can't reconcile the voice enough to accept it. It's a vocal styling pretty much unprecedented in

"psychobilly" but I don't know if that's what it is, or if I actually just don't really care for it. When I hear the way he says "Die Zombie Die," in the song of the same name, I want to imagine the next line including the word tubular or cowabunga, purely for my own amusement I admit. I don't mean to dwell on that so much, because I really don't think these guys are anywhere near being without potential. The running theme could probably use a bit less of the stereotypical (and in today's scene, overdone) "death'n'zombies" material. I don't expect the vocalist to change his voice; everyone has his voice and shouldn't change it to please jerks like me. So I guess technically my main complaint is the lyrical content. The music itself is really alright as far as I heard. --**KN**

Hairball8 Records

Scars Of Tomorrow

The Horror Of Realization

Brutal, monstrous vocals, chunky, metallic guitars playing minor chords, indistinguishable song structures, double bass drum, double bass drum, double bass drum. In short: metal-core. I'm bored, when do we eat? These guys sound like they're playing in drop B or drop A. I don't get it. Why do bands like these even have bass players? Scars Of Tomorrow aren't saying much either. The lyrics are vague, full of emotional language, but no discernable substance. I am not saying that there aren't any real emotions behind the songs (how could I?), but I am saying that they aren't apparent. I don't feel it the way I felt it with the first Shai Hulud album - a band these guys are either directly or indirectly influenced by. -**Ben Edge**

Victory Records

Shortie

Without a Promise

Umm eww. This band and record was awful. The guitar is pathetic. The vocals just suck plain and simple. The drumming was not interesting in the least. As far as song writing went, this band failed miserably. I'm pretty sure you can't make your band decent for occasionally adding a scream

to your pseudo-alternarock songs. If Trapt and Three Days Grace had some sort of hideous love child, Shortie would be it. What makes it worse is the terrible emo/screamo/hardcore look of the band. If you want to be "emo" then make "emo" music not a piece of shit that could barely be called alternative. This was just bad music pure and simple. It was totally uncreative and lacked talent big time. The A&R guy at Earache must have been feeling particularly generous when he gave this a listen.

Lastly, I give the band credit for attempting to create something remotely interesting, but seriously this is one of the worst records I have ever heard. -**Kile Siler**

Earache

Straylight Run

Prepare to be Wrong

From what I hear, these guys used to be Taking Back Sunday. This does not sound like Taking Back Sunday. This is record takes it's time, slowly killing you. The first track, "Don't Want This Anymore", sounds like it could have been on an Enya album. The next song could be a bad Pink Floyd song. There's even a song that sounds kinda like it could be a Nine Inch Nails track. One thing you get lyrically is a whole shit load of complaining. I think this is what they call emotional music, but I ain't sure.

You can't escape repetitive political lyrics make it seem like these guys are trying to brainwash you. I am dead serious about this repetitive stuff. At first I thought my copy of this CD was scratched. To sum it up, this might be a sample of what hippie music from the future sounds like. We're fucking screwed! -**JTT**

Victory Records

Third Grade Teacher

Reveals the Secrets of the Universe

3GT are back with more 11 garage laden tunes. Tracks like "Here's to Rock and Roll" "On a Winter's Day" had me noddin my noggin. The music is really cool, and while I'm not so into to the ambient whines of singer Sabrina, I will say that if she was my 3rd

grade teacher I'd still be in third grade. On purpose. Hi Oh! -**JB**

Third Grade Records

Tokyo Electron

This cd wore on my nerves less the more I listened to it. But I still wouldn't buy it, and f it was playing on someone's stereo I would ask them to turn it off. And if they were playing at a show I was at I would go outside for a smoke. Dirty, distorted rock and roll is fine in small doses, but after 30 seconds of listening to this I knew it was going to be bad. It's noisy, I can't understand the vocals, and the 3 chord guitars mixed up with the predictable solo got old fast. The singers screaming vocals sound more like the drunken belligerent guy at a party that everyone tries to tune out rather than listen to. If you like distorted rock and roll go pick up a Clawhammer cd instead of this garbage.

-**Jason Rocks**

Empty Records

The Tossers

The Valley Of The Shadow Of Death

I'm sincerely confused. Their bio says they're from Chicago. Vocalist Tony Duggins has a very distinctly Irish accent. How did he get the accent? I suppose it shouldn't matter. Music is music. Here is the instrumentation: mandolin, accordion, tin whistle, banjo, guitar, fiddle, drums. I was expecting a punkified version of Irish folk music, and I was pleasantly surprised to hear no distortion drowning out the tin whistle, and moderate tempos keeping the feel far closer to Celtic jams than any punk rock shit. Basically, they sound exactly like the Pogues. And for the record, The Tossers have been around since '93, so you know they aren't biting Flogging Molly. As you can imagine, there are songs about drinking. Woo hoo.

-**Ben Edge**

Victory Records

Turbonegro

Party Animals

If you have not heard this band yet, you must have been hiding under a rock the past couple years. Turbonegro has become

the quintessential rock n roll band to end all bands. From Ass Cobra to Apocalypse Dudes to Party Animals these Norwegians know how to put the Rock in my Roll. Euroboy's guitar riffs show every wanna be in town what a guitar should sound like. With songs like "Blow me Like the Wind" how can you miss? On the dvd included in this double cd there is a mini doc about the guys that makes you just wanna strip off all your clothes and party with them a little more. From Hank's workout bit, to the part about Polpots Pizza place. The DVD may just be the highlight of the whole album.

-Razorslut

Abacus Records

With Honor

This is Our Revenge

This is decent melodic hardcore. The vocals remind me kind of Ignite, but not as operatic, and the music is very reminiscent of Battery's last LP. Not surprisingly, Battery vocalist Brian McTernan was behind the production. Reach The Sky was another band who was doing this seven years ago – which brings me to the conclusion that I would have liked With Honor more if this came out back then, when there were only a handful of bands playing this style. Now *amazing core* is a subgenre of its own, with Bane, Stretch Arm Strong, Killing The Dream, and Comeback Kid leading the way, with their epic, highly emotional (but not emo) hardcore, and melodramatic lyrics, which serve as a soundtrack to losing a friend, being homesick, and reminiscing about nicer times. Can I blame With Honor for being too late? No. But I can't help but feel like they are following a formula.

-Ben Edge

Victory Records

Usurper

Cryptobeast

When I looked at the back of the packet that this disc came in, I saw five guys in black sleeveless shirts with long hair and spiked sleeves and I thought "Oh great, just another generic death metal band". I was wrong. I was delightfully surprised and the force and energy of this album. It was very heavy while not sacrificing structure

like a lot of those bands do. The drumming showed talent as did the guitar and bass. The vocals were not too low to understand but instead were exactly right for the tone of the music. I'm glad there are death metal bands like this that are actually trying make their music sound decent instead of throwing a whole bunch of crap together and calling it metal music.

-Kile Siler

Earache

V/A

We reach the Music of the Melvins

Ok so I think someone made a mistake and gave me this to review. I guess to be fair one would have to be a Melvins fan to do a review of a Melvins Tribute. Don't get me wrong, I don't dislike them, but I definitely don't have that Melvins fever that I know so many of you are afflicted with. This comp is all that you could want if you are a big Melvins fans bands from High on Fire to Agoraphobic Nosebleed, let the sludgy guitar heavy rock come through. The quality of the recordings on this leaves room for improvement, but overall if you like the drag your feet rock then this will be right up your alley. **-Razorslut**

Fractured Transmitter

Valient Thorr

Total Universe Man

The intro started to scare me off. I began to think about King Diamond singing to his Grandma, then...ROCK! Sounds like the soundtrack to a movie where kids drink Pabst in their mom's basement with a mail ordered hookers, hoo wee! Awesome liner notes to boot – looks like the cd sounds. Southern retro rock with angry punk attitude and a proud to be from the center of Venus twist made this album a treat to review.

-Ginger Vitus

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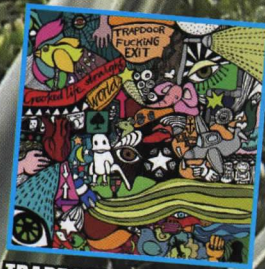
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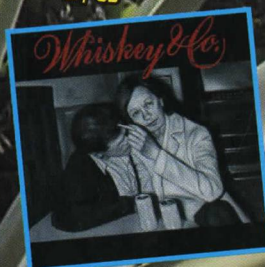


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