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#19 WINTER 2008



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GO METRIC

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For Snorkel Bob

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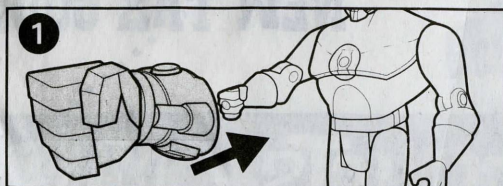
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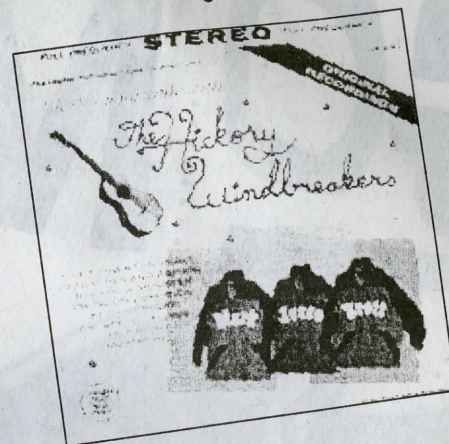
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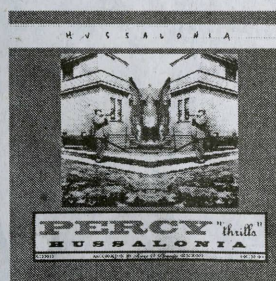
Mike Faloon, *Go Metric!*

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-Salvatore Patti www.indiepop.it

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And now a word from the editor...

Inevitably around the holidays a relative will say, "Go Metric - you're still doing that...why?" I always tell them it's for the money, something that's easy for my Aunt Lucy to grasp and allows me to skip the details. But I'll confide in you, dear reader - I like you, you've got spunk, "moxie" as my grandfather used to say - it's not just the profits that spur me on, it's also the people that I meet...

I was in Bowling Green, Ohio for a zine conference. Well, actually I'd flown to Toledo and had to take a cab to Bowling Green. I landed at 11:15 and needed to sign into my room on the Bowling Green campus by midnight. "Should be a twenty, twenty-five minute cab ride. No problems," Carl, my cabbie, assures me. He's into classic rock and pretty chatty, but that's cool. I'm working on this "don't be so quick to judge people" thing, so it's good for me to follow his lead into conversation. Carl looks like Wilfred Brimley on stilts, a haggard hulk of a man, sagging everywhere gravity can have its way with him. "Rikki Don't Lose That Number" plays in the background ("These guys are like jazz musicians!") as Carl recounts his day and gently airdrums on the steering wheel.

"How was your flight?...New York City, huh? I've got a cousin in Schenectady, pretty country...Yeah, awful slow tonight, the students are out for the summer...Man, I'm hungry. I had the worst lunch. Been having trouble keeping down this chicken parm sandwich. The double order of onion rings probably didn't help...I'm so hungry..." Boston's "Foreplay/Long Time" comes on ("Man, you never hear this on the radio."). Carl begins yawning, and we let the conversation fade. I sink into the leather seats. I'm so relaxed that I find myself singing along with "Rocket Man" - a song I loathe - and entertaining thoughts of being almost there, the trip nearly over, a comfortable bed with my name on it. Then without saying a word, Carl pulls into a mini-mart.

???

Carl, amigo mio, maybe this is something you could do after you drop me off? After you're done with the paying - and generously tipping - customer? Chop, chop, that sign-in desk closes in 25 minutes. But, wait, no. Why rush? Let's bond, dude.

The room can wait. Get the snacks now. We'll stop over at your mom's, finish that load of socks and boxers. Maybe catch the rest of the Indians game - Sabathia's pitching tonight, right? Oh, shit yeah, I think you did leave half a six pack of Natural Ice in her fridge. Two words, friend: par-tay!

Then I start feeling like a judgmental dick. What's a couple of minutes? No need to go Greenwich on the guy. The dude needs a break and wants a bottle of Mountain Dew. No need for conflict; solidarity. I stew for a minute and then figure I could use a snack too, at least stretch my legs. But when I try to open the door I realize it's locked, which is weird. I slide across the backseat only to bump into another locked door. I'm locked in. That's not weird, that's fucked up. Next thought: maybe there's a good reason for this, maybe this is standard practice. That's how tired I am - I've been up since 5:30 - and how complacent I get when I'm tired; maybe locking me in is justified. Maybe Carl thinks this is for my personal safety. Like a small scale Patriot Act. I snap back. This isn't *Con Air*, I just want to get to my room. That's why I've engaged Carl's services. We're not going to rise up and crush corporate capitalism together. I'm paying him to drive me, and he wants to make a good fare, though he's not helping his cause. I spew a few anti-Carl expletives, and try to remember the words to "Master and Servant" as I lean into the front seat, unlocking the door and letting myself out. I pass Carl as I walk by the Ring Ding display. He avoids eye contact, pays for his liter of soda and doughnuts and heads for the exit. I follow.

We drive into the town of Bowling Green, and when we pass the campus entrance we know we've gone past the dorms. We double back but no luck: we're lost. I start worrying, then Carl pulls into a gas station. This time I know what he's thinking. "Let me see if I can get some directions here," Carl says. We're back together, two guys united in one cause. (*Dude, you're Thelma, I'm Louise.*) As he strolls back to the car, his soda in one hand, a newly purchased bag of Fritos in the other, he gives the affirming, "Yep, we're all set now" nod, the confident look that disappears when he tries to open his door and realizes he has locked himself out. He lifts the door handle a second time, his face equal parts resignation and confusion. I spend that moment entertaining the

notion of driving myself to the dorms, but I don't know where we are, and grand theft auto makes me squeamish, so I open Carl's door as Fleetwood Mac hit the chorus of "You Can Go Your Own Way" on the radio.

I neither expect nor receive a "thank you." He's clearly embarrassed and quickly steers the conversation to the directions he's just obtained. ("Two streets up on the left, must have gone right by it the first time.") He's had a rough night, and I decide to leave it to Carl to pick up the conversation, figuring that anything I say will be construed as an attempt to draw attention away from the fact that Carl just locked himself out of his own running car, that the real meaning of whatever I'd say would be, "Carl, you didn't just fuck up, you *are* a fuck up."

I start figuring out how much to tip him and just as I'm adding the pity tax, we drive past two pretty co-eds and Carl breaks the silence:

"Damn, there's good looking pussy in this town."

My sympathy evaporates and I take back the pity tip. *Yo, Carl, you up and spilled your misogyny all over me, and you reintroduced conflict between us. I'm used to having strangers ask me for directions or help with their laptops (it's the glasses, I suppose), but, come on, do Larry Flynt and I really look that much alike?*

Pragmatism overcomes self righteous indignation, and I say to Carl, "Hey now, let's focus on the directions." But I have to wonder: did I inadvertently open the door to misguided male bonding when I sang along with Elton John? Was it my failure to object to the unscheduled pit stop?

A minute later we're in front of the dormitory. I grab my bags and pay Carl, hastening my exit as the DJ introduces "Angie."

I made it with six minutes to spare, but I forgot to thank Carl. So wherever you are, Carl - passed out on a couch after watching the Browns get thumped by the Bengals, listening to that overlooked Styx album (my money's on *Pieces of Eight*) - thanks. I talk about our trip all the time. It's meeting people like you that keep me in this racket.

That and, in the words of Milton Friedman, "clocking mad green."

Mike

BOBBY DARIN

COLLECTOR'S SERIES MUSIC SOUNDTRACK RE-ISSUES

Bobby Darin hit fast and got out quick. Many who knew the double threat actor/singer say it's as if he knew he was going to die young and planned accordingly, slamming as much life together as he could. Here was a cat who did it all.

His music has never really been out of print. Your local book/CD/coffee/muffin/itty-bitty-booklight store will surely carry one of the twelve greatest hits compilations available, and you could do worse than AVCO's supposedly everything-and-more retrospective box *THE BOBBY DARIN STORY*.

What AVCO won't tell you is that Darin recorded at least six LPs for use solely as soundtracks to films he made for BARR INTERNATIONAL PICTURES in 1967 and early 1968.



At this point, Darin's career was on the wane. Once a hit with both the kids ('SPLISH SPLASH,' 'I AIN'T SHARIN' SHARON') and their parents ('BEYOND THE SEA,' 'EVERYBODY VOTE!') Darin found himself the victim of a terrible backlash. One man's genre-hopping musical chameleon is another's exploitative hack. It could be argued that kids don't want to like an artist their parents like, and vice versa. Perhaps it was just his timing. In the late 60's you were expected to find your niche and stay there.

Whatever the reason, audiences were tired of Darin's mood swings. His 1967 releases tanked. He was dropped by Capitol, and no one at Paramount, home of his hits *HELL IS FOR HEROES* and *STATE FAIR*, would return his calls. In retrospect, it seems amazing that in such a short time a star of Darin's stature would be reduced to making grade N cheapies for Doug Barr.

Barr had been an actor himself once, in his native Greece. As Victor Popopolous, he starred in the Greek horror classic released here as *THE SLURP* (in fairness to the Greeks, that title really translates more like *THE SLURPING NOISE THAT WON'T STOP*). His impulsive decision to start a movie studio in Maine has puzzled many. Either way, it resulted in a slew of obscure movies, some now available on Rhino two-fers like *GNAT ATTACK/SHE WON'T STOP SCREAMING*. Well worth your while.

Barr's life as a schlock filmmaker turned Congressman is well documented, but only one of the biographies I consulted had any mention of Darin. It's like these films don't exist. Barr went belly-up in 1970 and the prints, screened almost exclusively in Texas drive-ins, were stored in Barr's widow's garage and deteriorated.

The bootlegs I have seen look terrible. No one is rushing to release them on DVD, but Collector's Series Music has re-issued three of the soundtracks originally put out on Barr's own Karachi label. So, while you're probably not going to come across this stuff on Cinemax, at least you can dig the crazy tunes.

by Johnny Reno

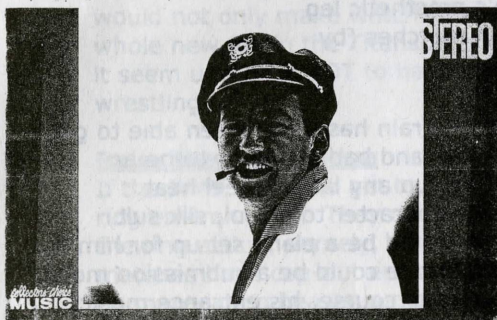
TWIST

A lot of people thought this was a dance movie when it came out, mainly due to its misleading title. In fact, TWIST is a dead-serious thriller in the vein of VERTIGO or HOMICIDAL. Darin is Ed Parker, a high school shop teacher who accidentally kills his lying whore of a fiancée (a stunningly miscast Cybill Shepherd, in her first role). Knowing he will be blamed for her death, Darin plops her body in the trunk of his Plymouth Belvedere and takes her to class, where his dim students are pouring cement for the new bleachers. The 'twist' comes in the last scene when Darin, rooting for the football team, falls off the bleachers and lands with a resounding CRACK. Darin croons the title song over animated (!) credits ala the Pink Panther.



BOBBY DARIN: LOVE SWINGS

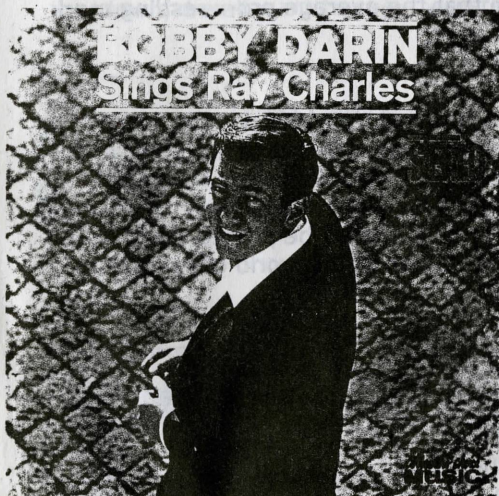
Long Ago And Far Away ♡ I Didn't Know What Time It Was
How About You ♡ The More I See You ♡ It Had To Be You
♡ No Greater Love ♡ In Love In Vain ♡ Just Friends ♡
Something To Remember You By ♡ Skylark
♡ Spring Is Here ♡ I Guess I'll Have To Change My Plan ♡



LOVE SWINGS

When he got this script, Doug Barr must have thought he was on his way to box-office GOLD. It's a romantic comedy and the only baseball movie Darin in which Darin, at one point a minor-league second baseman (AA Binghamton), was ever involved. His character, a Meerschaum pipe-smoking yacht enthusiast, convinces a charmingly sheltered girl he meets in a Mormon church that he is a professional baseball player. He and his friends go to great lengths to fool the girl, eventually staging a complete game in an abandoned stadium with rented fans. Darin at one point tells the girl's father he 'doesn't go for all that third book of the bible hooley, man.' Darin's uptight pal Bob Newhart doesn't want any part of it but winds up pitching for the fictional Utah Sheiks.

BOBBY DARIN SINGS RAY CHARLES



This is the weirdest entry in the Collector's Choice soundtrack series, mainly because they decided to reprint the album cover as originally issued, mistakes, typos, and all. The movie is not called BOBBY DARIN SINGS RAY CHARLES, and none of the songs on this album are Ray Charles songs, despite the track listing on the back cover. This is actually the music from SNOWCONE, one of the great lost movies of the 1960's. Maybe 'lost' isn't the right word. In reality, Barr took one look at SNOWCONE and had it buried. At the time, Darin's portrayal of jailhouse snitch Tommy 'Snowcone' Eidel must have made movie execs queasy. Darin minces, prances, snorts, twists (unlike in TWIST, where he and Sheppard at one point do the Frug), and speaks in a nasal twang supposedly based on Texas club owner and presidential-assassin-silencer Jack Ruby. It's kind of a METAL MACHINE MUSIC in celluloid form. Is it a put-on? Some kind of new poetic art form? Offensive crap? We'll probably never know. The only time Darin himself commented on the picture was in a 1970 PLAYBOY interview with Tom Wolfe, and he DENIES BEING IN IT. Am I going to call the late Bobby Darin a liar? You bet I am.

1. Magnetite
 2. The Hitman
 3. State Department second-in-command
 4. Dick Armitage
 4. That guy on TV that can communicate with the ghosts of the dead loved ones
 5. Jim
 6. me, you silly motherfucker
- PEOPLE WITH WHOM YOU SHOULDN'T MESS

There's no word yet on whether Collector's Choice will put out the other three Barr soundtracks, but you never know. Be on the lookout for **INVASIVE SURGERY**, **DRY HUMPIN'**, and **BOBBY DARIN SINGS ROD MCCUEN**.

More Angles than a Buckminsterfullerene!

The pro-wrestling fad of the late nineties is dead. The intense competition between the WCW and the (then) WWF is gone. The last vestiges kayfabe have been obliterated by the internet. As of late, World Wrestling Entertainment, aka the WWE, has experienced a sharp drop in business. The characters and storylines are no longer as red hot as they were in the heyday of The Rock, Stone Cold Steve Austin, Mick Foley, or even back in the Hulk Hogan days. J&J Erg Consultant Services (a subsidiary of GenTech Industries) have synergized ideas which we feel would greatly improve the WWE product:

1. Bring back the one-legged fury.

Problem: Zack Gowen had a brief stint and a big push in the WWE as an against-all-odds babyface. He would remove his prosthetic leg outside the ring and actually wrestle on one leg. Seems like a great underdog character, right? The one problem was this: who wants to lose to a one-legged man in an ass kicking contest? Whoever lost to Zack looked really, really bad. Zack Gowen's character had no legs (rimshot!) and thus he was quickly sent back to the minors.

Solution: Bring back Gowen, only this time as a heel. Team him up with a super-sleazy manager* who proclaims young Zack to be unpinnable. Every time Gowen is pinned in the ring, the manager standing outside the ring puts Gowen's prosthetic leg on the ropes, thus making him UNPINNABLE!** Then Gowen could win matches (by cheating) without making his opponents look bad.



Gowen, mid Irish whip

2. Take the A-Train

Problem: The wrestler known as Albert and later A-Train has never been able to get over with the crowd. He has way too much body hair and bad piercings to be an effective-looking face and he's way too bland to cook up any lasting heel heat.

Solution: Keep the name A-Train, only change the character to a cool, silk suit wearing, shades-in-the-daytime jazz pianist. There could be a piano set up for him to play as he's walking towards the ring. His finishing move could be a submission move applied to the ears called "The Kenny G Clutch". And of course, his entrance music would be the classic Billy Strayhorn tune, "Take the A-Train" played by a cheesy Modern Jazz band. I think we can safely assume that the average pro-wrestling mark hates modern jazz, so A-Train would get a ton of heat.

Hey, anyone up for some David Sanborn?



A Train

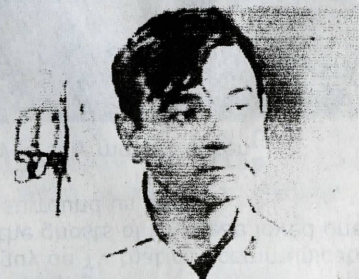
3. Brutally painful move as running gag

Introduce a new character known as the "masked clothesliner". Simply put, this character would only be seen running towards someone and clotheslining them, and then running away - he would wrestle no matches. He would run into a match, clothesline both competitors, and continue running. Interviews would seek him out only to feel his horizontalized bicep's wrath! Eventually, he will be pinned down to the ground, unmasked, and forced to explain his lariat-crimes to the world of wrestling. His reason for all the clotheslines: fear of intimacy.

4. Oscar and Felix will rise again

Problem: Tag team wrestling in the WWE has been especially dreary as of the last few years. This can be attributed to the fact that most tag teams today are of the Odd-Couple variety, i.e. made up of two seemingly random singles wrestler with no common look or theme. Oft times, wrestlers with no connection are haphazardly paired for no reason other than "someone needs to be in a tag match on the show this week". The glory days of the Road Warriors (aka Legion of Doom), Demolition, The British Bulldogs, The Bushwackers, The Rockers, etc are long gone.

Solution: Create a tag team actually called "The Odd Couple". License the old TV theme song, pair a very technical amateur background-based wrestler with a huge, slovenly, kick-and-punch bruiser wrestler, and watch the hilarity ensue. The Odd Couple will do well in matches because of their complementary wrestling styles, but will ultimately always lose because of their lack of communication due to personal differences (for example, the clean-cut, technical wrestler could be looking to make the tag, but his partner is busy munching on a hot dog and checking out the babe in the front row). Their charming wrestling misadventures will entertain fans for hours. After introducing the Odd Couple, The WWE should bring in tag teams with a central theme, matching images, and, we can't stress this enough, a cool finishing move that involves both team members.



Oscar Madison yearns for tag gold.

Paul London



I just love jobbing on Velocity while I could be saving the company. Thanks, Vince McMahon!

5. London Calling

The WWE should start a space program for the sole purpose of creating the "Push Paul London to the Moon" initiative. Formerly of Ring of Honor and TNA wrestling, Paul London has earned his stripes as a high-flyer with good technical skills. Currently, he's near the bottom of the sports entertainment food chain at the WWE. It is imperative that this man is shot to the top quicker than one can say "Randy Orton". C'mon, London's finishing move is called "The London Calling". We demand a Clash fan as our next world's champion.

6. Power Bars

One of the most convenient features in video game wrestling, (or any fighting style video game for that matter,) is the power bar - an indicator that displays how much energy a player's character has left. There is no confusion about how close or how far your character is from being pinned (or annihilated.) We insist that wrestling telecasts have power bars on the top of the screen for each wrestler. There could be a Power Level Technician working in the control room, with a microphone wired to the referee. The referee would then let the losing wrestler know that his power level is "in the red", and he would have to slow down accordingly. Also, the power level would indicate when it is the proper time for the wrestler to administer his "special move". This would not only make watching wrestling on TV more exciting, but would create a whole new job in the Titansports organization, which in this crumbling economy makes it seem unethical NOT to have the power bar become a regular feature on televised wrestling.

7. Raise the drawbridge

If the WWE wants to get truly innovative, they need to update the appearance of the ring environment. They need something that will add another dimension to the out of the ring action, namely, a moat filled with alligators enclosing the ring. No longer will matches have cop-out endings due to count outs or run-ins. Why? Because there will be man-eating beasts surrounding the ring, that's why. Being tossed over the top rope will once again be exciting and dangerous. Plus, it's pretty safe to say that, deep down, we all want to see a wrestler drop a flying elbow onto a large reptile.

Vince Russo says:



Why didn't I think of that? Oh well, I guess I'll just make Carrot Top the next NWA champion.

Wrestling jargon

Marks: 1. Insider term for wrestling fans 2. Wrestling fans not aware of the insider aspect

Smarts: Fans who are aware of the insider aspect of wrestling

Smarks: Wrestling fans aware of the insider aspects of wrestling, but watch wrestling as marks would

Face: short for babyface, good guy

Heel: bad guy

Angle: The story created to give reason for a feud between wrestlers

Tweener: A wrestler that is neither heel nor face. Short for betweenner.

Pop: a large positive reaction from the crowd

Heat: Negative reaction from a crowd

Over: Acceptance from the crowd, either good or bad depending on the character

Job: short for to do a job, meaning to lose a match

Run in: A wrestler not involved in the current match "runs in" to interrupt, usually resulting in a disqualification aka, "The sports-entertainment finish"

Kayfabe: 1. pertaining to the choreographed and/or dramatic aspects of pro-wrestling. 2. A code word used by wrestlers in the old days meaning to hush up about the secrets of pro-wrestling

Push: The decision by the bookers and the powers that be in a wrestling league to have a certain wrestler win a lot matches/get a lot of screen time/generally do well.

Some good sites

www.rohwrestling.com - great indy league

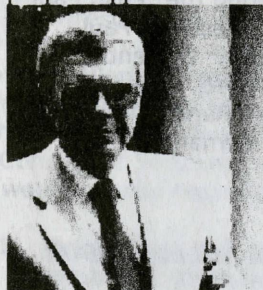
www.tnawrestling.com - can be seen on the Fox Sports Network

www.wrestlecrap.com - The worst of pro-wrestling

*For that matter, bring back super-sleazy managers, you humanoids.

**If one can reach the ropes with an arm or a leg while being pinned, the count must be stopped and the pin broken.

People who slay dragons or voyage into dark castles aren't the only people who have some hard choices to make, and this was something the popular *Choose Your Own Adventure* books chose to ignore – the daily decisions made by people trapped in existential suburban ennui. What to do? Take a long, pensive look at



RAYMOND CARVER'S CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

1. Susie woke up before you and made some eggs. She still had some makeup on from last night. Some mascara, and some lipstick, but just on her upper lip.

If you tell Susie that she has some makeup on from last night, turn to page 2.

If you don't say anything and eat your eggs, turn to page 3

2. "You've got some make up, still," you said. Susie looked out the window like she didn't hear you. Last week, you two had had a fight and she had dragged your recliner out in to the yard, where it sat to this morning, damp from the sprinklers.

If you apologize for the thing last night, turn to page 4

If you get up and go fishing, turn to page 5

3. Susie made the eggs real runny. You were still hung over and it was hard to keep them down. You put the fork down on the plate and the noise startled Susie, who started crying.

If you decide to bring up your dead kid, turn to page 6

If you decide to go outside and wash your '58 Plymouth, turn to page 7

4. "Look, I'm sorry" you said. "It was the booze. You know that." Susie put the frying pan in the sink, but didn't wash it off, so the eggs congealed. "We should have people over for a barbecue," she said. "Grill some burgers, let the neighbors kids use the wading pool."

If you agree to the idea of a barbecue and are genuinely enthused about it, go to page 8

If you agree to the idea of a barbecue, but would really rather not and you now resent Susie, go to page 9.

5. "I think I'm gonna drive out to the lake," you said. You found your shoes, kissed Susie on the top of her head, and walked out to the car. Maybe you can drive by Tom Mercer's place, Tom liked to go fishing.

If you drive over to Tom Mercer's place, go to page 10

If you think about the time Tom Mercer bloodied your lip in football practice go to page 11.

6. "Do you miss Frankie?" you asked. Oddly, Susie stopped crying. She just stood at the sink for a moment and then she pulled a rag out from a drawer and started cleaning. You repeated yourself, but she didn't respond, she just cleaned harder. You went out back and put your feet in the wading pool and blew some grass. The sprinklers came on but you didn't move.

THE END.

7. You went out to the drive way and hosed down your '58 Plymouth. It's red and except for some rust on the fender, it's perfect. While you rinsed the car you could see Susie standing in the window staring at you. Then when it was time to wax the car, you looked back and she was gone.

THE END

8. "Yeah. Let's have a barbecue," you said. When the neighbors come over, that means that the Oswald lady will come over. She had had a couple of kids, but she was divorced and she was still a looker. You went to the bathroom and even though you know you shouldn't, you shaved.

THE END

9. "Sure. If that's what you want," you say, not looking at her. She turns on the faucet, full blast, and says "Yes. Yes, that's what I want."

THE END.

10. You stood on the porch of Tom Mercer's house, knocking on the screen door. Tom wasn't home, but his cat sat in the window hissing at you. You knocked on the screen door for what seemed like hours.

THE END

11. Tom was the nose tackle on the high school football team. You always liked him – he always knew the latest jokes- but one time he got too rough at practice and elbowed you in the face. Your lip bled and you let it, until it was all over your jersey. You drove past Tom's house and went to the lake. On the shore of the lake, near a log, was a dead girl. She couldn't have been more than 17. She was naked, so you covered her with a blanket from the trunk. Then you suddenly remembered that it was the 4th of July.

THE END

John Ross Bowie, the author of this piece, got a B+ in Contemporary American Literature in 1992. Like Carver, he died in 1988.

GO BACK TO THOSE GOLD SOUNDS: MUSIC TO GET DUMPED BY

By Seth Morris

Getting dumped is like eating shit-flavored shit and I just choked down a fresh batch. Fortunately, though, I've been through this before and know what to do.

First, I get rid of all the music that's associated with her and the past relationship; in this case it's goodbye Iron and Wine, The Postal Service, and Keane. Sometimes when starting a relationship I jokingly hope to myself that the girl will be completely cool but have shitty taste in music. That way when we break up I won't be as bummed because unless I'm at a Goldman Sachs Christmas party or Reggae on the River, I won't ever have to hear that shit again. After the 'reminds me of her' music is gone, I find some new shit to listen to and then that will be the music that I associate with the post break up days. By the way, I've learned to never share my break up songs with the girl I'm dating.

Triumphant break up songs also make good road trip songs. But if you take that road trip with someone you're dating that song becomes a couple's song, and then if you try to listen to it again as a break up song it fucks you up even more.

That's the external stuff; the music that plays in my head just after being dumped is always about 20 years old. Why, after a break up do I revert back to music I listened to when I was an adolescent? Because getting dumped makes me feel as lame and undateable as I did when I was 13. In my memory, I have the following scene with the first girl I ever broke up with, Howard Jones' "No One Is to Blame" plays in the background:

"Yeah, Jenny Dowe from Mr. Harms' 5th Grade class, we tried and it just didn't work...Here's some Mork from Ork gum just to show there's no hard feelings. Shhhh. Don't speak. Let's not ruin this with words. Just walk your awkwardly fitting Britannia's off into the sunset."

As she departs I read the big comb she keeps in her back pocket, the one that I'd borrow to feather my hair: "If You Can Read This, YOU'RE TOO CLOSE!!" Indeed, milady, indeed.

Howard Jones is good for the mutual break up, but the mutual break up is not really my thing. Like a lot of guys, I have a special ability to construe anything as being dumped. Flirt with a girl who doesn't flirt back? Dumped! Broke up with a girl and she didn't put up too much of a fight? Dumped! When I want to wallow in it, which is always my first reaction, the Human

League's "Don't You Want Me Baby" comes to mind. I remember waking up to this song on my alarm clock radio in 6th grade. I loved the story it told. These people were real grown ups; they had jobs and did real live fucking and fighting. I looked forward to finding someone to fuck and fight with. You know the part in that song where the woman sings "I was working as a waitress in a cocktail bar/when I met you"? Fuck you, liar, you know it. I always put whatever relationship I've just been through into the tempo of those lines:

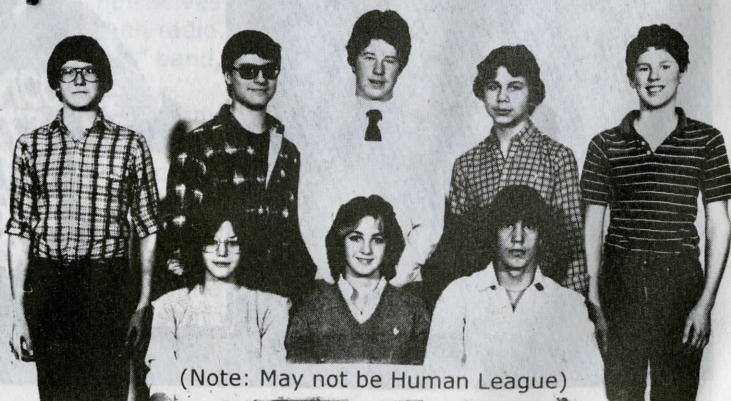
"I was working as a barista in a coffee shop/when I met you," or, "I was working as a substitute pre-school teacher in the West Village/when I met you," or, "My penis had a sore on it, when we first fu-ucked/ From jackin' off too much."

When I look at the lyrics to this song closely I realize they're creepy. The guy tells the girl she better take him back or they "will both be sorry." I don't need to feel like any more of a monster than I usually do when I get dumped, so a few listens of Human League kicks me along the road to recovery.

There's a period after a break up where you just feel defiant and independent, some might call this a "fuck you, bitch, I'm out of here" phase. I'm one of those people. One of my favorites for this period is Thin Lizzy's "Cowboy Song." This is the best in a genre of songs that make me say to myself: "C'mon man! What was she thinking trying to tie you down?! She dumped you only 'cause she knew she'd never have your heart. May as well try to tame the wind! A lone wolf's gotta run!" The song's got just the right amount of self-pity and triumph:

"I am just a cowboy, lonesome on the trail/Lord, I'm just thinking about a certain female/The nights we spent together RIDING on the range (this means fucking)/Looking back it seems so strange" (this means fighting).

Whenever I'm heart broken it's like I'm suspended in time standing out in front of San Jose Junior High with a derby jacket, Black Ben Davis, checkered vans and tears in my eyes. For these times I thank God for Howard Jones, one hit wonders, and Irish bar bands with black lead singers.





Rick Nielsen is a famously bad interview. In fact, I had resisted any impulse to interview him for years. But it's 2004 and I've got a lot to come to terms with. The fact of the matter is: I'm not getting any younger and neither is Cheap Trick.

With that in mind, I sat next to the phone quietly, the way I wait at the dentist – it's gonna hurt a little, but it's necessary. He called. We talked. The answers were familiar since I'd read a few of his interviews as research. Then, apropos of nothing, the man who wrote "Surrender" starts ranting off-script.

"Can you do me a favor?"

Score you some weed? Buy copies of *Heaven Tonight* for all of my friends? I'll do anything.

It seems Nielsen's sons were recently ripped off by an eBay scam artist from my home town and dad plans on settling the score when his band rolls through town next week. Until then, the guitarist – forever embedded in rock lore as "that guy with the hat and the funny guitars" – will entrust this interviewer to track down the scumbag and peruse his appointment calendar to see if he's available for an ass-whupping in between sound check and the band's support slot for Aerosmith at a local theme park.

"You're my only hope...my only link!!" he yells, a hint of power-ballad vulnerability in his voice. I reach for a hand to hold, but there is no one there.

Somewhere a few blocks over, an eBay thug is quaking in his boots, but enough about him. If we're getting it all out in the open, I have my own score to settle. Like the time Nielsen flicked a pick at my head with such deadly precision that it stuck to my forehead for over an hour, eliciting guffaws from a drunk guy in a satin jacket who had not left his parents' house since the Century Theater show in '77. Or, how 'bout my money back for *The Doctor*?

That aside, Cheap Trick is a band that deservedly received a somewhat closer look in the mid-1990s as "alternative" music became mainstream and borrowed the band's Big in Japan "Heavy Metal Beatles" banner. Nirvana, Pearl Jam, Smashing Pumpkins, and Milli Vanilli all name-checked the band which resulted in a high-profile re-issue campaign, the intermingling of indie rock geeks and middle-aged mullet-men at the band's gigs, and interpretations of the iconic bleeding typeface logo on everything from skateboards to designer socks. The fuss was about the first four Cheap Trick albums – 1977's self-titled debut and *In Color* and 1978's *Heaven Tonight* and breakthrough *At Budokan* – which successfully crossed the tunefulness of the Beatles, the energy of the Who, and creepiness of late Move/early ELO at a time when the lines between punk, metal, and

bubblegum were already blurred beyond recognition.

The story is: the band set out to destroy corporate arena rock and ended up one of the genre's worst offenders. Ask the record store clerk and he'll tell you "the first four," but take a look at *The Greatest Hits* or the crowd at the county fair and you'll see a somewhat different picture – despite uneven or downright bad records, questionable fashion, a bass player that was not Tom Petersson, and outside songwriters shared with Starship, the band wracked up a decent amount of hits in the 1980s and, thanks to film soundtrack placement, classic rock infomercials, VH1 Classic, and Reagan-era nostalgia, it is those songs that the band is often known for.

It is in that spirit that the group unleashed last year's *Special One*, a record that attempts – sometimes successfully, sometimes not – to exhibit the diversity and range of a band that, Nielsen admits, are often referred to as "The 'I Want You to Want Me' guys."

When the record succeeds – the trippy "Pop Drone," the psych-jangle of "My Obsession," the three-chord scream-fest "Best Friend" – it cements just how great this band can be. Even when the tunes leave you wanting a bit more, there is killer middle-eight, a solo cheekily lifted from Badfinger, or a left turn so ballsy you respect the song anyway.

"I think even since our first record, they've always been a bit diverse – our first record had a song called 'Mandocello' on it; it also has 'The Ballad of T.V. Violence', it had all of the above. So I don't think [*Special One*] was a great departure from what we've done," Nielsen says.

Some may argue that point. In some ways, the record seems like a missed opportunity. The sure way to keep the credibility train rolling would be to attempt to replicate "the sound"; to feign hunger or take a stab at humor. Therein lies the rub: Cheap Trick has failed at the very things they've tried so hard at, and succeeded when they least expected it. Their biggest album was fluke. Their only number one hit was written by professional song doctors. People find them amusing yet they seem to take themselves seriously most of the time. At a time when radio will not touch a new album by a "classic rock" band, they make a radio-ready record.

Nielsen says the band wrote about 40 songs for the record, recorded with a number of different producers (Chris Shaw eventually got the nod to oversee the project), and sometimes, ended up using the original demo.

"We'd done some stuff with Steve Albini, we'd done some stuff with Jack Douglas, and then when we went to do the album, if those tracks were something that we wanted to use, 'did they hold

up?' or 'could we do a better version of them?' When we tried to do a better version, if we couldn't do a better version, then we went back to the old track that we'd done. The song "Low Life" we did in Rockford in a kinda demo studio that we've used for year. We'd done the song and we went to a big studio – the more expensive place – and we couldn't beat it."

The album's first single – the admittedly catchy, but somewhat cringe-inducing Who-meets-AC/DC pastiche "Scent of a Woman" – did get some airplay, but the band has maintained a pop culture presence primarily via commercials (Diet Coke and Universal Studios), movies (a cameo in *Daddy Day Care*), and television show themes (a re-working of Big Star's "In the Street" for *That 70's Show*). For a veteran band that doesn't fall into an easily definable radio category, it's always a struggle.

"We never went to radio – we always hoped that radio would come to us," Nielsen notes. "Sometimes it's happened, sometimes it just didn't. We've always gone and done things our own way. Even back to the *Budokan* days, we couldn't get any airplay; somehow through the back door airplay came to us via Japan. You say, 'well, you hear all these TV commercials,' sure we'd like to be on the radio more than we are, but you're not programming it and we're not programming it. Wishing doesn't do much."

It sounds like whining – well, it sort of is – but the band has fully taken control of its career after years of record company disasters and poor management. A recent licensing deal with upstart indie Big3 will open the floodgates to a number of re-issues (including 1997's out-of-print self-titled album, which Nielsen dubs "the Dead Ant record," referring to the now defunct Red Ant label for which it was recorded), more new material, and a *Behind the Music*-style DVD that proves the band is entirely capable of poking fun at itself while simultaneously assessing its legacy.

"Where Are They Now, No Hit Wonders, America's Least Wanted – we've been asked to all those shows and we always said 'no,'" Nielsen says. "None of us were heroin addicts and we didn't kill our manager even though we wanted to. We didn't think we had any great stories, but then you start to think about it, everything we've done is a great story. How certain things happened in our career. If you know the details, it's more than just 'they flew to Japan and they had a hit.' There's more that went into all of that stuff – the good, the bad, and the ugly – there's a lot there. If you've got to tell people how cool you are, you not very cool. So, we kind of avoided it."

The resulting DVD, *From Tokyo to You*, celebrates the 25th anniversary of the famous *Budokan* concerts that ultimately led to the band's success in America and shines a light on *Special One* material

as well. Interspersed throughout are humorous vignettes where the band recalls – rather fuzzily or downright inaccurately – over thirty years of survival in an industry where the life expectancy is much, much shorter.

And they apparently aren't done yet. Nielsen notes that a new record is in the works, with 12 songs demoed, and the oft-bootlegged Albini-produced re-recording of *In Color* may be completed before too long.

"We're still out banging around," Nielsen says, referencing more new product, the recently issued two-CD career overview *Essential Cheap Trick*. "Our stuff still gets played, our catalog still sells – and I don't think it's just old people refreshing their record collections."

"There's so much going on that doesn't make national news," he adds. "'Oh, it's those guys, 'I Want You To Want Me'— if you want a sound bite for us, there you go. But we have so many sound bites."

Like, tonight at eleven: "Rock star embarrasses Buffalo eBay thief with carefully flicked pick."



RICK NIELSEN

The Hunt for Sub Gold

by Steve Reynolds

In *Go Metric!* #18, I brought you the "Jaws Curse" theory, which states that every film since *Jaws* that's set on a boat has sucked (except, of course, *Cabin Boy*). However, as some famous brainiac once wrote, "For every reaction there is an equal and opposite reaction." With those words in mind, I bring you what I like to call the "Sub Equals Gold" theory — any film set mostly on a submarine is bound to be decent, if not great.

Now I'm sure your immediate thought is, "Come on, I've seen *Down Periscope* on Comedy Central, and that movie just plains stinks up my screen. And what about that mediocre piece of crap called *U-571*?" I say you are right, dear reader, but those two films are exempt from the "Sub Equals Gold" theory because of two other movie rules that supercede said theory: pictures that star Kelsey Grammer or Jon Bon Jovi will take years off your life. (I saw *No Looking Back* in a theater on 3rd Avenue in Manhattan, and I still can't go back into that theater without getting the shakes.)

People might say that this theory does have some weak spots. One could point out the *Hellcats of the Navy*, which starred the late evildoer Ronald Reagan. It's not anything I'd recommend to a friend as a great weekend flick, but it's at least worth watching to see how much better of an actor Ronnie became once he rose to power in the 80s. ("Supply-side economics will work for years!") Think of it as a film that can be looked at as educational in the political sense. And the box office dud *K-19: The Widowmaker*, starring Harrison Ford, was made in part by National Geographic, so that must have so educational value in it somewhere. (Perhaps if the producers had put pictures of naked natives in it, the box office returns would have been bigger.)

So to prove that not everything is worthy of receiving a negative review, here are five films that do the "Sub Equals Gold" theory proud...

1. The Enemy Below (1957)

Robert Mitchum and Curd Jurgens shine in their roles as opposing captains of American and German subs. The mutual respect that each captain shows for his enemy portrayed throughout has become a template for sub films over the past 45 years. And the fact that the German characters are portrayed with depth and aren't cartoonish villains makes it one of the best World War II films of all time.

2. Operation Petticoat (1959)

This Cary Grant-Tony Curtis vehicle seems to be on at least once a month on Turner Classic Movies, which alone justifies paying for the channel. The major plot point about how men and women being on the same submarine can cause nothing but trouble seems a bit dated these days, but the witty script and great comedic performances from Grant (especially when one klutzy nurse on board makes his command hell) and Curtis make it a movie that has stood the test of time.

3. Yellow Submarine (1968)

You're probably saying to yourself, "Give me a break — a trippy, animated 60s film which didn't even have the real Beatles doing the voices? What have you been smoking while making this list?" And I'd have to reply, "I compiled this list while drinking cheap beer." *Yellow Submarine* (the film and the Beatles song from which it was inspired) hasn't aged that well, but the rest of the incredible soundtrack holds up, and that alone lands it on this list.

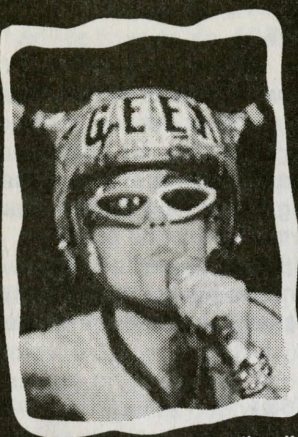
4. Das Boot (1981)

I'm not sure I could write anything about this powerful film that hasn't already been said by hundreds of film critics. It was the first foreign movie I ever saw in a theater, and its gripping portrayal of life on a U-Boat during World War II is so well done and so vivid that even as a 12-year-old I understood I was seeing a classic.

5. The Hunt For Red October (1990)

Of any sub film, this had a *Titanic*-like pedigree for disaster. Take one rather bland, over-technically detailed novel endorsed by one of the most evil men ever (yup, Ronnie again), add Sean Connery playing a Russian...using his SCOTTISH accent, throw in Tim Curry playing a Russian...using his ENGLISH accent, top it off with Alec Baldwin as the dashing lead, and have the director of *Predator* (John McTiernan) put it all together, and that sounds like an action film that could kill the entire genre. Against all these odds, somehow *The Hunt for Red October* ended up being a top-notch thriller. Whenever it comes on cable (which was every three weeks in the late 90s), I must stop and watch it. I've easily seen it 20 times, yet I'll still move to the edge of my seat as Connery and his opposing captain Scott Glenn chase each other around the Northern Atlantic.

So there you have a brief list of sub classics. I've got to cut this short, as I've got another movie from the "Jaws Curse" theory to go check out — *Anacondas: The Hunt for the Blood Orchid*. Too bad J.Lo isn't in this sequel, it might have lasted longer in theaters than one of her marriages.



IN SEARCH OF THE WORLD'S MOST VERBOSE POP SONG: REV. NØRB vs. THE GUINNESS BOOK OF WORLD RECORDS

Following *Go Metric's* interview of Chris Butler several issues ago, I became curious about -- then quite enamored of -- Butler's sixty-nine-minute-long, Grammy-nominated opus "The Devil Glitch." Part of it was simply that, y'know, fuck -- it's really quite a good song. I've listened to all 69:25 of it all the way thru at least a dozen times (then again, I've sat thru "Metal Machine Music" thrice in its entirety as well, so consider the source). The entire construction of the song -- each two-line couplet beginning with "Sometimes you can fix some things by (insert action here)," followed by commentary on said action -- was really quite ingenious, eventually setting up the final punch line (sorry, no spoilers today). Good job. However, the other aspect of my admiration for this veritable Pop-Rock Moby Dick was simply that it would be COOL to get into the Guinness Book of World Records, like Chris Butler and "The Devil Glitch." I mean, shit, who DOESN'T want to be a household name like Chang & Eng Bunker, or the fat guy who hadda be buried in a piano case? (who, for the record, no longer holds the record for the World's Fattest Human) (I think Packers nose tackle Grady Jackson is the current titlist) So, under maximum secrecy, i, Rev. Norb, began quietly plotting to USURP CHRIS BUTLER'S WORLD RECORD for CREATOR OF THE WORLD'S LONGEST POP SONG. I mean, why not? I could probably babble on for seventy minutes and not even know i was talking -- and besides, much as i like "The Devil Glitch," i always hated the Waitresses, and that Tin Huey album was the biggest waste of 50c since i ordered those X-ray Spex from Johnson Smith Co.™ Anyway, since Butler's song was about fixing things, and, since i



am Very Punk, i decided that my song should be about breaking things, thus i decided the song would be called "Rilly Gonna Mess U Up" (note the profound influence of Slade in my life), and be little else than a laundry list of brutalities which i would like to visit upon an enemy. Next, i figured out exactly how much brutality i needed to visit by timing a sample verse-verse-chorus structure and dividing that into 74 minutes (i forget what the result was; the interested reader is encouraged to perform the mathematics outside of class). Then i wrote the words. 12,287 of them, to be exact. They fit to the odd numbered verses like this: "Gonna (A) beat your butt, gonna bash your head, gonna (A) stomp you til you're good and dead, gonna (D) leave you in a bloody pulp, gonna (A) crush you with one mighty gulp, (E) Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U (A) Up!" The even numbered verses are essentially the same, until the last line, where it goes "(E) Feed you to an allosaurus, (hard stop on A) this here part precedes the chorus." Said choruses are the same as an odd-numbered verse: "(A) Yeah! Mess you up! (A) Yeah! Mess you up! (D) Yeah! Mess you up! (A) Yeah! Mess you up! (E) Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U (A) Up!" Shit simple punk rock, my man. Repeat about 12,287 words worth, The End (however, i noticed that all the truly great ultra-long songs -- "Devil Glitch," "Sister Ray," Beethoven's Ninth -- have some kind of turning point towards -- but not immediately near -- the ending, so about four-fifths of the way thru, i start changing the rhythm of the words up relative to the music, followed by the end section, where i (well, planned to) sing in double-time (i call that the "Peppers!" section, but you are not required to). SO! My own Finnegan's Wake of Anarchy, Chaos and Destruction committed to paper, i submitted my request to break the "World's Longest Pop Song" record to Guinness, penciled in studio time, and awaited the official sanction of the Guinnessites. A few weeks later, i received the following response: "Dear Mr. Rev. Norb: Thank you for sending us the details of your recent record proposal for 'longest song.' I am afraid to say that we are unable to accept this as a Guinness World Record. Unfortunately, due to the very subjective nature of songwriting and the difficulty of even defining the word 'song,' we do not consider any claims for longest song, or most songs written, other than that what might ordinarily fall within our broader music records. I appreciate that this may be disappointing to you, but i hope that this does not deter you from trying again. We are always keen to hear from people who wish to set a Guinness World Record. If you should need any advice regarding breaking an existing record please contact us again through our website or directly quoting the above membership number. Once again thank you for contacting Guinness World Records. We wish you every success with any future record-breaking endeavors. Yours sincerely, Laura Hughes, Records Research Services." SHUT THE FUCK DOWN!!! I was beside myself with righteous indignation: How dare they prohibit me from breaking an already existing record?! What the fuck was so great about the Waitresses anyway??? I fired off another email, informing them that the record i intended to break was ALREADY IN EXISTENCE, so they better get their shit together lest i hold them in low regard. This email went unanswered. The studio time was cancelled. At the barbershop some weeks later, i came across the most current edition of the Guinness Book of World Records, and, after some frenzied research, realized why the stickers on the "Devil Glitch" CDs all stated that it was the "World's Longest Pop Song" according to the 1998 version of the Guinness Book -- it's 'cause THAT RECORD AIN'T IN THE BOOKS no more. They did away with it, like the Montreal Expos or something. HOWEVER! Balm in Gilead there indeed was, as i noticed that the record for "World's Longest Music Video" -- held by Michael fucking Jackson, no less -- STILL REMAINED INTACT! Well, shit, how hard is it to connect the dots: i can just record my song, then film myself dancing around to it in a men's room for 74 minutes, claim that's my Rock Video, and get in the book with "World's Longest Music Video!" I mean, i never really saw myself as the "World's Longest Music Video!" type, but, hey, any port in a storm, ya know? I submit a second proposal to Guinness, re-pencil in the studio time, and await my go-ahead. Alas, i am thwarted a second time: I receive pretty much the exact same response i got the first time around. Fuck. I mean, i UNDERSTAND the problem -- some hippie jam fucks can Phish out for a day, call it "a song (man!)", and claim the record, even though that's hardly in the spirit of the problem. But, yet -- MY song is a REAL song. It's got VERSES and CHORUSES and WORDS and -- and WORDS! That's it! It's an omen! I shall become -- a Word! Wait, no, wrong story. But, yes! My song has WORDS! Words are invariably -- and easily -- quantifiable! WORD COUNT DON'T LIE, BABY! EAT COLD TEXT, HIPPIE NE'ER-DO-WELLS!!! I count my words. As i said, 12,287 of them. That's over 4600 more than "The Devil Glitch." Rev. Norb delivers VALUE! VALUE! VALUE! There is no way -- NO FUCKING WAY -- that anyone else has written a 12,287 word song. No one else would be bored enough. I decide i will give it one last try, and submit a proposal to Guinness for a NEW category: "World's Most Verbose Pop Song!" This time i don't even bother to pencil in the studio time: Four weeks later, i get the same "subjective nature of the very word 'song'" song and dance. Three strikes and i quit. However, that my great sacrifice not be in vain, i hereby present to you, o squinty one -- formatted to fit your screen but completely unedited for spatial concerns -- the lyrics to The World's Most Verbose Pop Song, "RILLY GONNA MESS U UP," in their entirety. The kicker? As of the 2005 edition, Michael Jackson's record for "World's Longest Music Video" still stands. From this, i can only conclude that the Guinness Book of World Records is in bed with Michael Jackson -- and THAT, friends, induces a certain form of nausea Chang & Eng Bunker and the guy who was so fat he had to be buried in a piano case could NEVER do.

Gonna beat your butt, gonna bash your head
Gonna stomp you til you're good and dead
Gonna leave you in a bloody pulp
Gonna crush you with one mighty gulp
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna stab you back, gonna slit your throat
Gonna mash your head and get your goat
Gonna fill you full of many holes
Gonna roast you over glowing coals
Feed you to an allosaurus; this here part precedes the chorus

Yeah! Mess You Up! Yeah! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Mess You Up! Yeah! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna stab you with a butcher knife
Gonna slash your chest and get your goat
Gonna slit your wrists and spill your blood
Gonna hunt you down like Elmer Fudd™
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna mince you fine, gonna fix you good
Gonna hit you with a piece of wood
Gonna trap you in my muskrat snares
Gonna feed you live to polar bears
poke you with a pointy tack, and carve my name across
your back

Bop-shoo-op! Mess You Up! Bop-bop-shoo-op! Mess You Up!
Shimmy-Shammy shoo-wop! Mess You Up! Ring-Dang-Doo-
Wop! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna burn your house, gonna steal your car
Gonna keep your brain in an old fruit jar
Gonna beat you with a rubber hose
Gonna shoot you squarely in the nose
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna grind your bones to make my bread
Gonna eat your guts for lunch instead
Gonna leave your head in a wicker basket
Magic 8-Ball™ says so, ask it!
knock out all your silver fillings; thus is justice served to villains!

Ding-dang-ding! Mess You Up! Shoo-by-shoo-by-shing!
Mess You Up!
Wang-bang-bing! Mess You Up! Zimmy-zammy-zing! Mess
You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna use your flesh in lieu of lard
Gonna bloodstain up your leotard
Gonna leave you full of lumps and cuts
CONTACT my lawyer, Lionel Hutz
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna hit you with a heavy pipe

Fart in your face, forget to wipe
Gonna hang you from the nearest tree
Gonna show it on CNBC
televise your execution, paid by viewer contribution

Wham! Bam! Mess You Up! Wham-bam-ba-bam! Mess You Up!
Baw-Baw-B-Baw! Mess You Up! Buh-buh-buh-buh-B-Baw!
Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna leave your blood all over town
Gonna dress you like a circus clown
Gonna lock you in an airtight trunk
That won't bug me 'cause i'm so punk
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna shoot you in the head and chest
Gonna mail your corpse to Budapest
Gonna toss you into broken glass
Gonna break your neck and kick your ass
spin you in the laundry dryers, pull your fingernails with pliers

1!2! Mess You Up! 3-4! Mess You Up!
5-6! Mess You Up! Pixie Stix™! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna flush you down the nearest drain
Gonna end your life in screaming pain
Gonna beat you with a baseball bat
Gonna use you as a welcome mat
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna send you flyin' out to space
Gonna bash you in your stupid face
Gonna cut you up in tiny hunks
Gonna leave the witness blown! chunks
all you are is noise pollution, and your life is my solution

Waaa! Mess You Up! Waaa! Mess You Up!
Gaaa! Mess You Up! Ha-Haaa! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna bruise your flesh gonna chip your nails
Gonna take you home in ice cream pails
Gonna kick your butt from here to Sweden
Use your skull for trick-or-treatin'
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna fry your brain, gonna gouge your eyes
Gonna bake your guts in Hostess pies
Gonna make you walk the frickin' plank
Gonna crush you with a Sherman tank
Run you thru upon my cutlass,
leave you bleeding, dead and gutless

Scoo-bop-bippy! Mess You Up! Rippy-Tappy-Tippy!
Mess You Up!
Riki-Tiki-Tavi! Mess You Up! Bip-Bop-Bovvy! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna toss you off the neighbor's roof
Gonna get the dogs WOOF WOOF WOOF WOOF
Gonna chain you deep beneath the sea
Gonna teach you not to anger me
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna beat you with a metal crowbar
Then buy drinks at the go-go bar
Break your arms and snap your legs
Pelt you with ten dozen eggs
shake you so your food can't settle;
hit you with my wah-wah pedal

Hey! Ho! Mess You Up! Hey! Ho! Mess You Up!
Bang-Shang-a-Lang-Shang-a-Mess You Up! Yeah! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna mow you down right in the street
Gonna mangle both your legs and feet
Gonna write you up in true crime books
Gonna hang your body parts on hooks
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna get you in the powerbomb
Gonna mail your remnants to your mom
Gonna scratch your face and tear your shirt!
I warn you now it sure will hurt
Steal all your paraphernalia, mousetraps on your genitalia

Wao-nao! Mess You Up! Bao-nao! Mess You Up!
Yao-nao! Mess You Up! Hao-nao! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

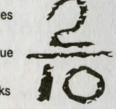
Gonna squirt you full of Krazy Glue™
Gonna give you Asiatic flu
Gonna give your face a healthy bash
Gonna put you out in next week's trash
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna grill you like a juicy steak
Gonna bend your fingers til they break
Gonna bump your head gonna smash your teeth
Gonna steal your mail and Christmas wreath!
You'll be screamin' like a banshee; mother wants to help me,
can she?

Hi-Diddy-Hi! Mess You Up! Why-diddy-why! Mess You Up!
Ho-Diddy-Ho! Mess You Up! Whoa-diddy-whoa! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna shoot you right between the eyes
Gonna see thru your two-bit disguise
Gonna have my cake and eat it too
Gonna beat you black and beat you blue
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

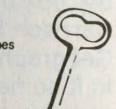


Gonna jab you with some pointed sticks
Gonna pull the trigger til it clicks

Gonna stick a bomb inside your pants
Gonna blow you up outside the dance
overturn your porta-potty, it's just business, don't get snotty

Bim-Bam-Bimmy! Mess You Up! Shook-a-shook-a-shimmy!
Mess You Up!
Wang Dang Doodle! Mess You Up! Chicka-chicken noodle!
Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna put you on the news at ten
Gonna kill you dead then start again
Gonna make off with your blue suede shoes
Gonna poison all your top rail booze
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna slice you with a table saw
Gonna saw you til you're red and raw
Gonna leave you lost in Khyber Pass
Light smoke bombs at your funeral mass
leave you in some Afghan hovel,
beat you with a pick and shovel

Rat-a-tat-tat, gonna Mess You Up! Splatter-splat-splat,
gonna Mess You Up!
Bling-bang-bing, gonna Mess You Up! Dingy-dong-ding,
gonna Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

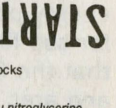
Gonna pop yo' head gonna smack yo' face
Gonna disappear without a trace
Gonna stab you with my switchblade knife
Gonna make you shake like Barney Fife
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna dropkick you across the room
Gonna send you to your brutal doom
Gonna make you wish you's never born
Then dump your body in the corn
Harvest then incinerate you; make sure no one wants to date you

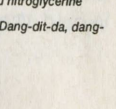
Yeah! Mess You Up! Yeah! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Mess You Up! Yeah! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna shoot you with a bow & arrow
Haul you off in a wheelbarrow
Cook you up like tuna fish
Remove your wishbone, make a wish
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna strangle you with dirty socks
Gonna steal your keys and change your locks
Gonna bite you til i break the flesh
Gonna ship your head to Bangladesh
Change the water into wine, then feed you nitroglycerine

Baw-bup-ba, baw-bup-ba Mess You Up! Dang-dit-da, dang-
dit-da Mess You Up!



Ding-dit-a, ding-dit-a Mess You Up! Baw baw bup-ba!
Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

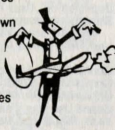
Gonna leave your corpse down on the shore
Gonna feed you to the Minotaur
Gonna use your eyes for childish pranks
Gonna give the rest to cream banks
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna IM-merge you in acid baths
You're gonna rue the day we crossed our paths
Gonna drop you from ten thousand feet
Gonna slice you up like luncheon meat
Smoke you like pimento loaf; enjoy your fate you stupid oaf

Bzzzzzz! Mess You Up! Bzzzzzz! Mess You Up!
Bzzzzzz! Bzzzzzz! Mess You Up! Bzzzzzz! Bzzzzzz!
Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

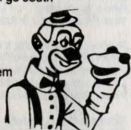
Gonna box your ears gonna poke your eyes
Gonna bludgeon you with railroad ties
Gonna chain you up, gonna dress you down
Gonna slander your name all over town
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna peel out in your dying mess
Gonna leave a mark is my best guess
Gonna steal your records, and your clothes
Gonna stain the carpet, I suppose
Turn you in and get the bounty;
beat you like one vicious Mountie

Glory hallelujah! Mess You Up! Chicka-chicken booyah!
Mess You Up!
Alka-Seltzer! Mess You Up! Richard Meltzer! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

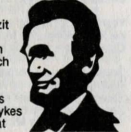
Gonna pull yo' tongue right out ya mouth
Gonna send you north while your teeth go south
Gonna film it all for later use
Gonna subject you to gross abuse
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna crack your fibula and sternum
Steal your clothes, and then go burn 'em
Throw your shoes into the street
Followed by your socks and feet
Scorch you with a Bunsen Burner,
not my fault you're a slow learner

WHOA-o-oh! Mess You Up! WHOA-o-oh! Mess You Up!
NO-o-oh! Mess You Up! YO-o-oh! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

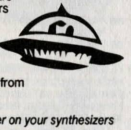
Gonna pop your head like a great big zit
Gonna roast you in an open pit
Gonna beat you with a monkey wrench
Gonna gag and choke due to the stench
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna perforate your chest with spikes
Getcha LYNCHEd by mobs of angry dykes
Gonna disconnect your phone and heat
Gonna flush you down my toilet seat
Wash my hands to keep me sterile; seal you in a pickle barrel

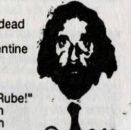
Loomph! Loomph! Mess You Up! Loomph! Loomph! Mess You Up!
Loomph! Loomph! Mess You Up! Ka-Boom-Ka-Boom-Ka!
Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna knock your ass from here to Mars
Gonna write my name across your scars
Gonna lock you in a septic tank
Gonna flog you with my mighty crank
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna dump you in a metal drum
Gonna send you back from where you from
Gonna kick you hard in the ev'ning
The Rockin' Reverend plays to win!
Steal your pills and tranquilizers, spill beer on your synthesizers

Zap! Pow! Mess You Up! Chairman Mao! Mess You Up!
Ding-dit-dong-ditty! Mess You Up! Ring-a-ling-tong-titty!
Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

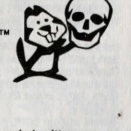


Gonna bust you one upside yo head
Gonna shoot and stomp and stab you dead
Gonna flog you with a cat o' nine
Gonna cleanse your wounds with turpentine
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna make you eat an inner tube
Gonna knock you down and yell "Hey Rubel!"
Gonna pepper you with rocks and trash
Gonna leave you dust and soot and ash
Lock you in some creepy castle,
careful whom you choose to hassle

Boom-bibby, baum-bibby! Mess You Up! Whoom-bibby,
whaum-bibby! Mess You Up!
Gitchie-Gitchie-Goo-Goo! Mess You Up! Bam-Dam-
Boo-Boo! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna stick you in the walk-in cooler
Paw your watch down at the jeweler
Spray your eyes with Raii™ and Mace™
Draw a mustache on your face
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna make you explain Moby Dick
Make you ride the Scat til you get sick
Then I'll throw you off the ferris wheel
Give my regards to Brian Neal
Not my fault I am so bitter; blame it on my babysitter

Scoo-bop-doo-bop-doo! Mess You Up! Boo-bop-wooble-
wooble! Mess You Up!
Shing-Shang-Shing-a-Ling-a, Mess You Up! Ding Dong ding-
a-ling-a Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna give you thorns without the rose
Gonna break your butt and kick your nose
Gonna put you under six feet deep
Serve you right you doogone creep
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna fly your entrails like a flag
Gonna make your mom and daddy gag
Gonna place you in a big pine box
Gonna dump your ashes in the Fox
Your conduct has been so egregious; acting lippy and facetious

Ikitty Ackity! Mess You Up! Zickety Zackety! Mess You Up!
Cickety Clackety! Mess You Up! Prickety Prackety! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna tie you up like Betty Page
Then I'll leave you in the tiger cage
Gonna brand you with an ugly mark
Gonna keep you out til way past dark



Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna make you phone up 9-1-1
Gonna shoot you with my BB gun
Gonna make you do the Nig-Heist twist
Gonna hit you with my big Hulk™ fist
Take a break for snacks and juice,
then let my horde of locusts loose



Be-bop-a-lula! Mess You Up! D-d-Don Shula! Mess You Up!
Boola Boola! Mess You Up! Fabulous Moolah! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna garrote you with sturdy cord
Gonna steal your wallet, break your gourd
Gonna tie you to the railroad tracks
Gonna fill your mouth with candle wax
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna feed you piecemeal to the sharks
Gonna burn you with kites and sparks
Gonna whip my yo-yo at your mug
Gonna make you eat a lightning bug
Beat you like one bangs a gong,
then whip you with my mighty prong

Rama-Lama-Ding-Dong, Mess You Up! Rama-Lama-Sing-
Song, Mess You Up!
Vini Vidi Vici! Mess You Up! Ginger peachy! Mess You Up!
eah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna choke you with my skinny tie
Gonna split yo' lip and black yo' eye
Gonna leave your cake out in the rain
You'll be beaten up by kids from Spain
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna use your skin in a collage
Gonna dump my trash inside your garage
Gonna steal your bike and burn your home
Decapitate your lame lawn gnome
Make you wear real stupid sandals,
have you spray paint-ed by vandals



Chickaboom, Chickaboom, Chicka Mess You Up!
Chickaboom, Chickaboom, Chicka Mess You Up!
Chickaboom, Chicka-SHICK-a-chick-a-Mess You Up!
Shick-a-chick-a-chick-a-chick-a-M.U.U!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna rearrange yo' face so plastic
Burn your flesh with molten asphalt
Touch it up with cheap cosmetics
Pump you full of diuretics
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna pack your mouth with moldy cheese
Gonna pierce your lips with IUD's
Gonna whip you with your grommet belt
Gonna serve you with brown bread and smelt
Take a hacksaw to your coxy,
send you home in cardboard boxyx

Tang-a-rang-a-choo-choo! Mess You Up! Boom-a-rang-a-
boo-boo! Mess You Up!
Ting-a-ling Bongo! Mess You Up! John Paul Ringo! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna make you go illicit acts
Gonna kill you dead and then the facts
Gonna shoot you with a silver bullet
Cook the trigger then I'll pull it
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna toss you in a Goodwill™ bin
Gonna feed your bones to Rin Tin Tin™
Gonna smack you while I play this song
With my guitar, like El Kabong™
And just because you act so screwy,
I'll save some for Baba Louie™



Alpha Beta! Mess You Up! Gamma later! Mess You Up!
Mekong Delta! Mess You Up! Leather Beta! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna lock you in a filthy cell
Gonna beat you up and rule like hell
Gonna hit you with my motorbike
You ain't a person that I like
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna rub your face in doggie-do
Gonna rub it in the cat box, too
Gonna knock you into east Kentucky
Maybe further, if I'm lucky
Order weapons straight from Acme™,
using pay phones, they can't track me

Oo-bop-sha-bam! Mess You Up! Diddle-diddle-spam!
Mess You Up!
Hey diddle diddle! Mess You Up! Malcolm in the Middle!
Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna split your skull in the morning sun
Gonna serve you on a bratwurst bun
Gonna spit you out cause you make me sick
And you're burnt like popcorn at the Vic
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna draw your outline on the ground
Gonna take your life then hang around
Gonna leave you as a total loss
Sign says: POLICE LINE, DO NOT CROSS
I'll walk away feelin' so fine-o;
my baby's travelin' on the one after nine-o



Yeah! Mess You Up! Yeah! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Mess You Up! Yeah! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Mess You Up! Yeah! Mess You Up!

Gonna beat you with a Peavey™ bass
Complete with strap and hardshell case
Gonna make you cry "I Yield! I Yield!"
Then bury you at Wrigley Field
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna strap you in the electric chair
Put tar and gophers in your hair
Then stick you full of safety pins
You lose, therefore, the best man wins
The girls will think I'm Tommy Slick,
singing "Hit Me With Your Rhythm Stick!"

NA-na-na, NA-na-na, Mess You Up! NA-na-na, NA-na-na,
Mess You Up!
Oom-BAY-ow-EE! Mess You Up! Shooka-shake-a-showee!
Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna wipe you up with mushroom cloud
Gonna watch you die and laugh out loud
Gonna blow the smoke from smoking gun
Then I'll let you bleach in summer sun
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna slice you up with buzzsaw blades



Gonna give you SARS and lice and AIDS
Gonna dose you up with chicken pox
Gonna hit you with big trees and rocks
Stick a rifle in your belly, then break out the K-Y Jelly™

Skoob-bop-boopy! Mess You Up! Hang on Sloopy! Mess You Up!
OOO-ee, OOO-ee! Mess You Up! Singin' Louie Louie! Mess
You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna smash you with a bowling ball
Gonna tie you up and watch you fall
Gonna spray paint you an ugly green
Gonna hit you like a tambourine
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Make no mistake it's you I'll flatten
Then I'll do the dog with Dorothy Stratten
Leave you bleeding in the gutter
Style your hair with rancid butter
Send you homeward on a gurney;
kick your ass at Tennis Tourney™

Wango Tango! Mess You Up! Kiwi Mango! Mess You Up!
Uh-oh Chongo! Mess You Up! Bongo Bongo! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

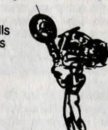
Gonna fill the streets with shotgun shells
You'll be seeing stars, and hearing bells
Gonna hit you like a roadkill deer
Gonna beat you up like Billie Lambeer
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna flay you with a buggy whip
Gonna use your brain for pretzel dip
Gonna make you breathe asbestos in
Gonna notify your next of kin
Apples peaches pumpkin pie? who's not ready? DIE DIE DIE!

Oobleck! Oobleck! Mess You Up! Shoobleck Shoobleck!
Mess You Up!
Affect! Affect! Mess You Up! Sears Roebuck! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna tie you to a hornet's hive
Gonna beat your butt from 9 to 5
Gonna starve you til you're skin and bone
Gonna clone you, then I'll kill the clone
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna slam your fingers in a door
Gonna punch your face til it's past four
Gonna stand you in the British Isles
Gonna make you swim five thousand miles
If somehow you avoided sinkin', run over with my Lincoln

M-m-m-m-m-m-m-m-m-m-Mess You Up! MUH-mih-mih,
MUH-mih-mih, Mess You Up!
M-m-m-m-m-m-m-m-m-m-Mess You Up! MUH-mih-mih,
MUH-mih-mih, Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

I DON'T THINK THERE'D BE ANYTHING WRONG WITH A
SOLO RIGHT ABOUT NOW!

Gonna (brief solo)
Gonna (brief solo)
Gonna (brief solo)
Gonna (brief solo)
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



GUITAR AND SAX SOLO TOGETHER! IF POSSIBLE!
Yeah! Mess You Up! Yeah! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Mess You Up! Yeah! Mess You Up!

Gonna skwish your head with both my feet
Gonna get my face in Tiger Beat™
Gonna hit you with a manhole cover
You in trouble now, oh bruvver
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna disconnect yo' tricep muscles
Kick your butt from here to Brussels
Ventilate yo' thick-ass head
Leave it in some horse's bed
Beat you til I need Excedrin™,
come right back and bash your headrin

Wah-wubba, WAH-wubba, Mess You Up! Wubba-wubba-
WAH-WAH! Mess You Up!
Blah-blubba, blah-blubba, Mess You Up! Blubba-blubba blah
blah Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna fry you with my Cosmic Rod
Make you pray unto thy god
Blind you with my blackout bomb
Leave you in North Vietnam
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna clap my feet and stomp my hands
When you give in to my demands
To douse yourself in kerosene
Then smoke a pack of Salem™ Green
Pack your butt with live chinchillas,
cute but their toenails is killas

Ooh! Ah! Mess You Up! Ooh! Ah! Mess You Up!
Hoo! Hah! Mess You Up! Ooh! Ah! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna kick you til your kneecap breaks
Gonna make you dine on ural cakes
Gonna stick a rocket up your bum
Gonna blame it on Professor Plum®
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

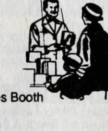
I'm gonna shoot you like I'm John Wilkes Booth
Gonna plant electrodes in your tooth
Fill your house with poison gas
Gonna make you choke like Mama Cass
Cook you on an open fire, not your day, beLIEVE me, sire!

Yeah! Mess You Up! Doo Dootin' Doo Doo! Mess You Up!
Dootin' Dootin' Doo Doo! Mess You Up! Rooty-tooty-too-
doot! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna take you to a lumber mill
Then saw you up, just for the thrill
Gonna amputate your right big toe
Then beat the stump with my G.I. Joe™
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna kick your butt from here to Lansing
Singing "John, I'm Only Dancin'"
Whack you with Mike Nesmith's Gretscht™
You deserve no better, wretch
Make you clean the Stock Pavilion;
give me half of your first million

(bBlbBlbBlbBlbBlbBlb) Mess You Up! (bBlbBlbBlbBlbBlbBlb)
Mess You Up!



(bBlbBlbBlbBlbBlbBlb) Mess You Up! (bBlbBlbBlbBlbBlbBlb)
Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna wrap you in my filthy sheets
Gonna shoot you like I's shootin' skeets
Gonna bash your skull til it's oozin' jam
Get over on your Bush's™ Ham
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna sign you up for AOL™
Gonna sign your muser up as well
Gonna drag you nude behind my boat
Gonna take a leak on your new coat
Beat you harshly for mere trifles, with the butts of thirty rifles

Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang! Mess You Up! Bitty-Chitty-Chang-
Chang! Mess You Up!
Ring-Rang-Diggle! Mess You Up! Waggle-Woggle-Wiggle!
Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna pull your teeth out by one
Gonna casually remark "what fun!"
Gonna carve your face with my stiletto
Sipping Ting™ and Amaretto
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna beam you down to face the Gorn
Gonna gore you with my mighty hom
Gonna spill your plasma by the liter
Leave your name with ol' St. Peter
If you're turned back from heaven's gates,
I'll beat your butt with plastic crates

Ookabollakonga! Mess You Up!
Ookabollakonga! Mess You Up!
Whokabollakonga? Mess You Up!
Yookabollakonga! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



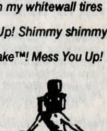
Gonna hack and slice and stab and kill
Gonna pop me my Miraclo™ pill
Then I'll hack and slice and stab some more
Gonna beat you with the ol' what-for?
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna beat you with a folding chair
Gonna kick your ass thru Bay Park Square
Then I'll kick it back thru Astor Park
Shut your mouth, you little narc!
Whip you with piano wires, crush you with my whitewall tires



Gimme gimme gimme Mess You Up! Shimmy shimmy
shimmy shimmy! Mess You Up!
Shake! Shake! Mess You Up! Quisp™ v. Quake™! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna rip you with my fearsome claws
Gonna put you without care or pause
Gonna leave your carcass in the road
Because you're such a scabby toad
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna whack you with a two-by-four
Then buy a broom and whack some more
Gonna beat you with my batarang
I party hard! Oh shucky dang!
When I get sick of the mosquitos,
waste you with my ship's torpedos

Yeah! Mess You Up! Yeah! Yeah! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Yeah! Mess You Up! Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!
Mess You Up!
Yeah! Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



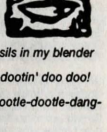
Gonna pelt your car with empty shorties
Pelt your house with Miller™ forties
Burn your hair off with my lighter
I'm a lover, not no fighter
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna make fun of your senior picture
Tie you up and read your scripture
Hit you with a Telecaster™
Bury you neck deep in plaster
If you still do not surrender; stick your tonsils in my blender

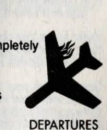
Doo-dootin' doo doo! Mess You Up! Doo-dootin' doo doo!
Mess You Up!
Bang-dang-diddle-dang! Mess You Up! Dootle-dootle-dang-
dang! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna chop yo' head off at the neck
Gonna saw yo' arms off and by heck
I'm gonna punch your lights out quite completely
Knock yo block off oh so sweetly
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna make you change your travel plans
When I park my car on both your hands
Gonna clang a hubcap off your dome
Gonna use your tie to call Jim Rome
Eeny Meeny Miney Moe - ready or not, baby, there you go

Yeah! Mess You Up! Yeah! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Mess You Up! Yeah! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



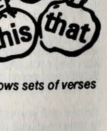
Gonna subject you to much derision
Gonna squash you with my television
and if it ain't too much trouble
I'll bury you in tons of rubble
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna stun you with a judo flip
Because you're such a little dip
Gonna shock you with my Hai Karate
paralyze your brain and body
beat you with a million purses; chorus follows sets of verses



Yeah! Mess You Up! Yeah! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Mess You Up! Yeah! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna rip and tear and disembowel
Listen, lol, throw in the towel
I'm an engine of destruction
use you as a tax deduction
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

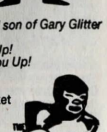


I'm Gonna rend you limb from limb
I'm Gonna kick some gol-dang trim
Inflicting decapitation
On your sorry situation
Gonna leave you broke and bitter, bastard son of Gary Glicker

Yeah! Mess You Up! Oh Yeah! Mess You Up!
Oh Yeah! Mess You Up! Oh Yeah! Mess You Up!
Oh Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna wipe your blood off my leather jacket
Pull your spleen out, then I'll whack it
Fill your mouth with ping pong balls
exILE you to Sheboygan Falls
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!



Gonna lose my mind and go berserk
Gonna track you down where e'er you lurk
Gonna fill you full of lead and such
Gonna gag you with a blindman's crutch
Shoot you up with pure Tabasco™
wailing like Joe "King" Carrasco



Yeah! Mess You Up! Oh Yeah! Mess You Up!
Oh Yeah! Mess You Up! Oh Yeah! Mess You Up!
Oh Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

Gonna boil you like ring baloney
Stupid lyin' two-faced phony
Fry you up like steak and eggs
I'll Chew your arms, spit out your legs
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna drill your brain with a diamond bit
While you're twitching in some spastic fit
Gonna hook you up to jumper cables
Bang your head off blackjack tables
Flip the switch and smell the sizzle, top it off with acid drizzle

Yeah! Mess You Up! I said Yeah! Mess You Up!
I done SAID Yeah! Mess You Up! Aw Yeah! Mess You Up!
Ah Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

Gonna grind ground glass against your face
Gonna beat your butt with Hawkman™'s mace
Gonna bash you in your own backyard
Gonna toast you on your own petard
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna hit you hard underneath the chin
Gonna leave you in some rubbish bin
Gonna plot and plan and yell "ATTACK!"
Gonna laugh behind your Swiss Cheese Back
find some girl whose form is function;
slap my tickle up her junction

'mon baby, 'mon baby, Mess You Up! Aw c'mon baby, 'mon
baby, Mess You Up!
go around and around baby Mess You Up! goin' up goin'
down baby, Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna poke your eyes with a fountain pen
Gonna beat your butt til half past ten
Gonna crush you like an icky bug
Stick you in the dunk tank: Glug glug glug
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

Gonna run you over with my Magic Bus
Leave your body in a locker then for minimum fuss
Gonna rid the world of your psychic stink
Paint your toenails green and your public hair pink
The party's started, and everyone's swingin',
rockin' to the rhythm of some nutcase singin'

Yeah! Mess You Up! Bop-bop-shoo-op! Mess You Up!
Shimmy-Shammy shoo-wop! Mess You Up! Dingy-Dangy-
Doo-Wop! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna beat you with a slide trombone
Gonna watch you pass a kidney stone
Gonna make a suit out of your hide
Gonna dance around in it outside
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

Gonna bash you with a ball peen hammer
End your life and cut your yammer
Gonna get some peace and quiet
Cut your liver out and fry it
Don't understand? I will repeat it;
survey says just what I needed



Yeah! Mess You Up! Time time! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Mess You Up! Time time! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

Gonna pummel you beyond belief
Gonna make it plain I got a beef
Gonna liberate your MasterCard™
Gonna mount your head in my front yard
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna drop some napalm on your head
Gonna put some in your bed
Gonna chuck you off the ailing porch
Gonna burn you like the Human Torch™
Don't know why I sound so violent;
you don't like it? please keep silent

Yeah! Mess You Up! Good God, man! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Mess You Up! Good God, man! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

Gonna break your bones to little twigs
Gonna feed you innards to the pigs
Gonna stick a corkscrew in your eye
Gonna pop that cork so die die die!
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna stick an icepick in your ears
Gonna cut you up with pinkish shears
Gonna chain you to a massive anchor
Chuck you off a supertanker
There's a time for talk, and a time to get physical;
you know the drill, don't look so quizzical

Yeah! Mess You Up! Yeah Now!! Mess You Up!
Oh Yeah Now!! Mess You Up! Right Yeah Now!! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

Gonna stab and jab and mutilate ya
whomp and stomp and fustigate ya
kick and stick and murderize ya
Starch and press and sanitize ya
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna drill you with a basketball
Gonna chop you down to two feet tall
Gonna strap you to a windmill blade
Display your corpse at the next parade
Pause because your phone's ringin';
outgoing message will be me singin'

Yeah! Mess You Up! Oh Yeah! Mess You Up!
Oh Yeah! Mess You Up! Oh Yeah! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

Gonna ball the jack, kick out the jams
Gonna be like Silence Of The Lambs
Gonna do you in horrific fashion
Sweet revenge is my one passion
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna make you drink coyote pee
Gonna spray your face with Zyklon B™
Gonna whap you with a cinder block
Gonna muss your hair and clean your clock
I'm just don't civic duty; pride in workmanship is beauty

Yeah! Mess You Up! Oh Yeah Now!! Mess You Up!
Oh Yeah! Mess You Up! Oh Yeah Now!! Mess You Up!

Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

Gonna curse you til your dying breath
Gonna set you up with Donna F.
Gonna stick a pitchfork up your butt
Gonna shoot my slingshot at your gut
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna bean you with an apple core
Betray you to the Frightful Four™
I'll squirt epoxy down your pants
Gonna kick your ass from here to France
now it might rain, bring an umbrella;
should you Return bring Umbrells™!

Yeah! Mess You Up! Diggy-diggy-dang-ding! Mess You Up!
Oh Yeah! Mess You Up! Shoo-gigg-gigg-ding! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

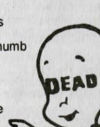
I'm GONNA laugh while you expire
Gonna beat your butt til I retire
Then I guess I'll find me a new hobby
Leave your guts in the hotel lobby
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna mash you, crash you, fry you to a crisp
Gonna slam you, jam you, make you get a lip
Gonna rip you, trip you, wipe you from the earth
Gonna pop you, stop you, nullify your birth
You've been living on borrowed timing,
can't stop killing 'cause I can't stop rhyming

Yeah! Mess You Up! Oh yeah now hasenpfeffer Mess You Up!
Oh Yeah! Mess You Up! Oh yeah now hasenpfeffer Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

Gonna raise your health insurance rates
Gonna smash your hands in iron gates
Gonna crack your fingers, crush your thumb
Ready or not cause here I come
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna lay you out on the cold tile floor
Gonna beat your butt with a stick some more
Gonna toss you out a window too
That's called "defenestration," whooi!
Give you a wedge and a noogity;
boogity, boogity, boogity, boogity

Mess, mess, mess you up! I'm gonna mess, mess, mess you up!
Gonna mess HEY! mess HEY! Mess you up! Gonna mess
Mess Mess Mess Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

Gonna stomp you with my blue suede boots
Gonna blame it all on Nazi yoots
Gonna serve your kidneys on a platter
Kinda tough but it don't matter
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna use your blood to paint my walls
Gonna crush you with my iron balls
Gonna smack you with my Danelectro™
(purple 12-string i expectro)
Won't be a part I don't done skwish;
here we go round the mulberry bush

Oh Yeah! Mess You Up! Oh Yeah Yeah! Mess You Up!
Oh Yeah! Mess You Up! Oh Yeah Yeah Yeah! Mess You Up!
Oh Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

Gonna grind you into coffee grounds
Gonna sell your stuff for twenty pounds
Gonna fly you up the flagpole, hopin'
I don't get DQed for dopin'
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna wipe that smirk off your false face
Gonna steal your car like second base
Gonna stick your doll with voodoo pins
Propose you for cohabitation like the Minnesota Twins
Oh my no, good gosh and golly, gonna mess you up pasquale!

Yeah! Mess You Up! Aw Yeah Yeah! Mess You Up!
Aw Yeah! Mess You Up! Aw Yeah Yeah! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

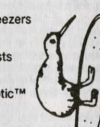
Gonna land on you in my new jet
Gonna dance on to the minuet
Gonna poke you with a cattle prod
It doesn't bug me 'cause I'm so odd
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna shred you like a document
Gonna bonk your skull and leave a dent
Gonna brush my teeth with Ultra Brite™ "WHERE DOES IT HURT?"
Gonna beat you up all day and night
there's no running nor escaping; pillage plunderin and raping

Yeah! Mess You Up! Oh ringy-ding-dong! Mess You Up!
Oh Yeah! Mess you up! Oh ringy-ding-DING-dong! Mess you up!
Oh Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

Gonna pull your eyebrows out with tweezers
You'll look foolish, holy jeezers
I'll unleash my optic blasts
They'll measure you for splints and casts
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna spray your eyes with Chloroseptic™
Leave you grumpy and dyspeptic
Hit you with a cricket bat 'n'
Knock you clear to west Manhattan
Blow your brains out blow your speakers,
I brew hate in unwashed beakers

Yeah! Mess You Up! Aw-biddle-dop-boo! Mess You Up!
Aw yeah! Mess you up! Aw-biddle-biddle-boo-fo! Mess you up!
Aw Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

Gonna steal your food and marijuana
Feed you to my pet piranha
Gonna find out where you're at 'n'
fire up my Briggs & Stratton™
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna feed you piles of rodent feces
Cut you into little pieces
Toss you from a speeding train
gonna stick a steak knife in your brain
My hate extends to esperanto, cu vi estas bona hundo?

Yeah! Mess You Up! Fivort!! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Mess You Up! Fivort!! Mess You Up!
Whoa yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

Gonna feed an osprey on your gizzard
Leave you naked in a blizzard
Wash your face with lye and Drano™
Chuck you into a volcano
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna toss you off the tallest steeple
Give your home phone out to people
Run your thru a paper shredder
Duct tape you to Eddie Vedder
Smash you flat with one big anvil,

hate you worse than Jerry Granville

Yeah! Mess You Up! Gotta ring-a-ting-tang! Mess You Up!
Aw Yeah! Mess You Up! Gotta ding-a-dong-dang! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

Gonna stampee you with herds of cattle
Hit you with a ping pong paddle
Push you off a mountain cliff
Pelt your skull with jars of Jif
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna hit you with a billy club
Gonna gut you cut you nut you bub
Gonna slay you in a coliseum
Display your skull in a museum
Wipe the blood up with bandanas; don't buy any green bananas

Yeah Hup! Mess You Up! Aw Yeah Hup! Mess You Up!
Heck Yeah, Hup! Mess You Up! Oh Yeah, Hup! Mess You Up!
Aw Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

Gonna jack your ride and steal your fez
Gonna stuff you full of poison Pez™
Gonna knock you out of Miller Park
Gonna beat your ass til it gets dark
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna disconnect your thyroid gland
Gonna hit you with my hi-hat stand
Gonna gore you with a walrus tusk
Kick your butt til waste past dusk
Your fu-ture is quite uncertain; one thing's sure:
you shall be hurtin'

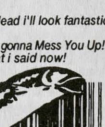
Yeah! Mess You Up! C'mon Schmendrick! Mess You Up!
Aw Yeah! Mess You Up! C'mon Schmendrick! Mess You Up!
Aw Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

Gonna lance you like an ugly buld
Stick your head in potting soil
Make you eat a walking stick
I don't know why, it's just my schtick
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna stretch you like you're Tangy Taft™
I'll be Bugs and you'll be Daffy
Push you off the Matterhorn
Gonna link your name to kiddle pon
You'll be still and I'll be spastic, you'll be dead I'll look fantastic

Yeah! Mess You Up! What! said, what! said, gonna Mess You Up!
Aw Yeah! Mess You Up! What! said, what! said now!
Mess You Up!
Aw Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



HOW 'BOUT ANOTHER SOLO!!!!
Gonna (brief solo)
Gonna (brief solo)
Gonna (brief solo)
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

BASS SOLO!!!
Gonna (brief solo)
Gonna (brief solo)
Gonna (brief solo)
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

DRUM SOLO!!!
Yeah! Mess You Up! Yeah! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna throw you in a pile of pickers
Cut you into fun size Snickers™
Throw you in a trash compactor
Make fun of your favorite actor
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna cause some real undue delay
I'll float your body in the bay
I'll drag it out when nature calls
Then toss it down Niagara Falls
Then take ten from my mistreafin', finish up when I'm done eatin'

Yeah! Mess You Up! Aw ring-a-ting-tang! Mess You Up!
Aw Yeah! Mess you up! Aw ring-a-ting-tang-tang! Mess you up!
Oh Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

Gonna pack your organs in dry ice
Gonna stab you with a cattle prod
Gonna leave you in a lunar crater
Finish you a few days later
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna make a film of your demise
Gonna punch you up til you get wise
Gonna cook you up with cocktail weenies
Use your eyeballs in martinis
Then for rest and relaxation, practice up my preparation

Yeah! Mess You Up! Quack! Quack! Mess You Up!
Oh Yeah! Mess You Up! Quack! Quack! Mess You Up!
Oh Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

Gonna beat your ass at chess and checkers
Run your feet over with wreckers
Then at twelve, like Wilson Pickett
Bare your crotch and start to kick it
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna punt you down inside the five
Gonna make you wish you weren't alive
Gonna serve your heart at Sunday brunch
Wouldja like a nice Hawaiian Punch™?
Then if I could have your blessing,
unholster my Smith & Wesson™

Bing! Bing! Mess You Up! Aw Bingity-Bang! Mess You Up!
Aw Bing Bang! Mess You Up! Aw Bangy-Bang-Bang! Mess
You Up!

Gonna toot my horn close to your ear
Gonna stick a glue gun up your rear
and since you need the whole damn spectrum
stick a goal post up your rectum
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna peg you with my pocket change
Cast spells on you like Dr. Strang™
And if you don't obey my orders
Beat you with socks full of quarters
I am a just but thrifty king;
I want that spare change back, ka-ching!

Yeah! Mess You Up! Ah-gibby-gabby-gooby-bobby! Mess You Up!
Aw Yeah! Mess You Up! Ah-skibby-skabby-skooby-bobby!
Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

Gonna snap your buttocks with a towel
In your head embed my trowel
Hit you with my croquet mallet
Drive nails in your upper palate
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna plug your nose with jellybeans

and put a lamprey in your jeans
Then douse you full of itching powder
Burn your face with scalding chowder
I'm real good at multi-tasking; not a problem, thanks for asking

Boogity-boogity, Mess You Up! Aw woogity-woogity, Mess You Up!
Now shoogity-shoogity, Mess You Up! Aw joogity-joogity-
Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna force you to repent your ways
Gonna beat your butt for nineteen days
Gonna spank your ass with waterskis
Blow pepper at you til you sneeze
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

THE SCENE

Gonna cook you in a pot of ramen
Expose you to Allied bombin'
Lock your booty in the brig
Then roast you up like sucking pig
Your resistance is so flimsy, no match for my reckless whimsy

Bop-shoo-op! Mess You Up! Bop-bop-shoo-op! Mess You Up!
Shimmy-Shammy shoo-wop! Mess You Up! Ah-OOGAH!
OOGAH! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna damage all your DNA
Gonna wipe you out and yell HOORAY!
Gonna leave you on the ocean floor
Gonna Use your Visa™ at the store
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

Gonna stick a drumstick thru your ears
Gonna crush you in flywheels and gears
Gonna give you the ol' Squire Eye Mangle
Cut you loose from whence you dangle
You'll be screaming "help me Jesus,
I'll take off for Chuck E. Cheese's™"

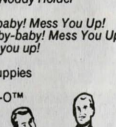
Yeah! Mess You Up! Aw Skee-Ball Baby! Mess You Up!
Whoa Yeah! Mess You Up! Aw Skee-Ball Mamm! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Push you ON the track at stock car races
Watch the looks on drivers' faces
Running over you en masse
Blood and guts and fiberglass
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

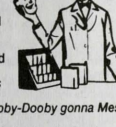
Gonna run you through my mojo filter
Til you're all bummed and off-kilter
Get you good and katywangus
You should not have been so pompous
Document it in a folder, cackling like Noddy Holder

Yeah! Mess You Up! aw-Baby-baby-baby! Mess You Up!
aw Yeah! Mess You Up! aw-baby-baby-baby! Mess You Up!
Com On Feel the Noize, gonna mess you up!



Gonna feed your corpse to hungry puppies
Pack your nostrils up with guppies
Smooth you out with paint and Bond-O™
Beat you with my buddy's Honda™
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

Gonna detain you, conditions squalid
Fill your cell with cement, solid
Saw you out if I get bored
Then hack you up with Merlin's sword
Had enough of your damn issues,
sop you up with Kleenex™ tissues



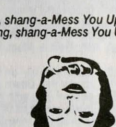
Yeah! Mess You Up! Ooby-Dooby, Ooby-Dooby gonna Mess
You Up!
aw Yeah! Mess You Up! Ooby-Dooby, Ooby-Dooby-Dooby
Mess You Up!
oh Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

I'll shock you with electric bells
while you slip on banana peels
I'll make you eat Cascade™ and Breck™
I hope you fall and break your neck
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna shoot you with a guided missile
Make you sit upon a thistle
Force you to give head to Dumbo™
then to DICKIE Mutumbo
Make you sleep outside in winter,
frozen like the Splendid Splinter

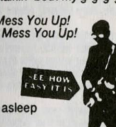
Yeah! Mess You Up! Oo-shang-a-lang, shang-a-Mess You Up!
Oh Yeah! Mess You Up! Oh-shang-a-lang, shang-a-Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna trap you in a spider's web
Gonna beat on you til half past bed
Gonna shoot you up with lethal toxin
Cause you to get killed while boxin'
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

Gonna drag you out gonna drag you back
Gonna drag you in a burning shack
Gonna come out with a blunderbuss
Gonna wipe you out, no mess, no fuss
don't SAY I've no imagination, you're talkin' 'bout my g-g-g-g...

Yeah! Mess You Up! Oh Yeah Now! Mess You Up!
Oh Yeah! Mess You Up! Oh No Now! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna lodge you up a hippo's colon
Send you off to meet Marc Bolan
Run you over with my Jeep™
Gonna shave your head while you're asleep
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

Gonna urinate upon your person
You'll be cryin', you'll be cursin'
Make you swallow Vaseline™
Gonna crush you 'neath the Coke™ machine
Knock yo' Nikes™ off yo' feetza, then go out for beer and pizza

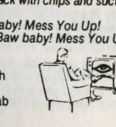
Yeah! Mess You Up! Nergal! Nergal! Mess You Up!
Aw Yeah! Mess You Up! Cubis!! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna swat you with my red fSWATtter
Then go nuts like Sergeant Slaughter™
Get you in the Cobra Clutch
It's your own damn fault that you're in Dutch
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!

Gonna slam you with a mighty suplex
Throw you off your parents' duplex
Sweep your brains right off the road
Collecting on the debt I'm owed
When I finish my destruction, I'll kick back with chips and suction

Yeah! Mess You Up! Aw Baw-Baw baby! Mess You Up!
Oh Yeah! Mess You Up! Aw Bawtle Baw baby! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess You Up!



Gonna blacken you with tar and pitch
Gonna leave you lying in the ditch
Gonna harpoon you like Captain Anab

Better call in sick to rehab
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna punch a staple through your cheek
Gonna beat you till your knees get weak
Gonna punch you with ticks and dimes
Held in my hand, just like old times
Don't know where I'll get the money, but I'll come through,
believe me honey!

Yeah! Mess You Up! Aw yeah yeah yeah yeah! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Mess You Up! Aw yeah yeah yeah yeah! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna open up a can of Whoop
Gonna bash your face with an ice cream scoop
Gonna infect you with ticks and fleas
Gonna give you hoof and mouth disease
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna make you eat weapons grade plutonium
...you can pissium and you can monium
that won't slow my mission none
I'm hellish-bent on good clean fun!
As you can plainly see, I'm vexed,
and not so sure George Bush ain't next

Yeah! Mess You Up! I need a HELL YEAH! Mess You Up!
Aw Yeah! Mess You Up! Darn Toilet, Roscoe! Mess You Up!
Heck! Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna make you chew a Lady Bic™
Gonna burn you with a candle wick
Gonna make you date my awful Ex
Then shoot you dead prior to sex
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna kill you, that's a lead pipe cinch
Gonna sell your soul unto the Grinch™
Gonna make you brush your teeth with Comet™
Rinse it out with monkey vomit
Peel out on your face full throttle,
you'll get no more work as model

Yeah! Mess You Up! ah-oo-crunch! Mess You Up!
Aw Yeah! Mess You Up! ah-baw-baw-bih-baw! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna mate you with a dromedary
Make you eat a live canary
Drop a boulder on your pelvis
You'll be dead as crickets! Elvis
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna file complaints with that department
Rifle thru your glove compartment
Beat you with a rubber phallus
Revel in my sultry malice
Hope my earplugs ain't forgotto, when you squeal like Suzi Quatro

Yeah! Mess You Up! Can, Can-the-Can, Can-the Mess You Up!
Yeah! Mess You Up! Can, Can-the-Can, Can-the Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna make you full of bloody stains
Gonna sell the tale to William Gaines
Gonna leave you just a pile o' goo
Gonna slash your throat and yell WAH-HOO
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna leave you lyin' in the mud
Gonna make you crawl, believe me, but
I'll dissect you and see you know
To get in some fancy college
Make you paint me on black velvet
with my spear and magic helmet

Yeah! Mess You Up! Magic Helmet! Mess You Up!
Aw Yeah! Mess You Up! Yodel-ay-HEE-hoo! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna beat you with a frozen sturgeon
Send you to a plastic surgeon
Come back looking just as silly
Thrash your ass from just to Philly
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna use your face for kick the can
Gonna crush your skull. Don't bug me, man!
Gonna beat you with a rake and hoe
Gonna press for lunch, then go-go-go
Whole process is draggin' on some, scatter you about my lawn some

Yeah! Mess You Up! Foom! Foom! Mess You Up!
Aw Yeah! Mess You Up! Go Foom! Foom! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna split your head just like a melon
Leave you with a violent flect
Beat you with my kitchen clock
Gonna kick you right on off my dock
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna throw you to your birthday suit
Then pelt your head with rotten fruit
and strid you in the poison ark
I'll make you itch before you croak
A further touch I think might rock
the Vulcan Nerve Pinch a la Spock™

Yeah! Mess You Up! Shh! Shh! Mess You Up!
aw Yeah! Mess You Up! Shhhhhhh! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna beat you with a doggy bone
Gonna send you to the Phantom Zone™
Gonna get all messed up on your booze
then cover you in bad tattoos
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna grab your leg and then start bendin'
Sever your Achilles tendon
Let you limp around for yuks
Then knock you down and say "aw shucks!"
Leave you hobbled up and griving;
pardon me weren't you just leaving?

Yeah! Mess You Up! Aw Shing-a-shing-a-ling, shing-a Mess You Up!
aw Yeah! Mess You Up! aw, Baw-Baw-buh-Baw Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna butcher you so fine and dandy
Watch you die while I eat candy
Break your glasses and your visor
Here, witness, walk on by, sir
Yeah, or I'm gonna mess you up!

Gonna cut you up all rad and groovy
Use the footage in a movie
Spread your corpse as fertilizer
Inform your career advisor
Bust your wrist and break your ankle;
careful whom you choose to rankle

Yeah! Mess You Up! kaSHICKa! kaSHICKa! Mess You Up!
aw Yeah! Mess You Up! kaSHICKa! kaSHICKa! Mess You Up!

Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna bop you in the fricken' snoot
Gonna execute you, das ist gut
Gonna take you out behind the shed
Gonna make you wish you's me instead
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna run you through upon my spears
Gonna get you drafted by the Cleveland Cavaliers™
Gonna spend your dough on drugs and strippers
Gonna getcha traded to the L.A. Clippers™
And if that still don't ruin your day,
I'll get you sent down to the CBA™

Yeah! Mess You Up! Stack to the Rack, Baby! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Mess You Up! hack-a-SHAQ, hack-a-SHAQ, baby!
Mess You Up!

Gonna scratch my nails across your blackboard
Beat you bloody with a regulation backboard
Rip off your feet and tear off your fingers
Gonna give you murder to some ugly horny swingers
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna Expose you for the flink you are
Gonna run you over in my little yellow car
Gonna take it to the car wash, strap you to the hood
Gonna do the universe a world o' fricken' good
They say revenge needs refrigeration,
I'm gonna overrule their recommendation

Yeah! Mess You Up! Now Stop! Mess You Up!
Now Go! Mess You Up! Too Slow! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna boil you in linseed oil
Gonna wrap your head in aluminum foil
Run you through a type of slicer
Steal your Harley and/or riger
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna greet you with a dozen daggers
Buddha™ Records signed the Jaggerz
Gonna make minceMEAT out of that mouse
Gonna lock you in the monkey house
When your butt gets red and shiny,
I'll be there to kick that hineie

Oo-ee! Mess You Up! Oo-ee! Mess You Up!
Oo-ah! Mess You Up! Oo-ah-ah! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna serve you gonads with spaghetti
Hurry up and die already!
Steal you like some form of shellfish
share with friends, 'cause I'm not selfish
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna strangle you with a coat of tweed
Gonna make you wish you were Lou Reed
Gonna blast you with my laser beam
Play "Sister Ray" until you scream
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

mWhite Light! Mess You Up! mWhite Light! Mess You Up!
mWhite Heat! Mess You Up! mWhite Heat! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna make you buy my Ex cocaine
Gonna toss you thru a windo-pane
Gonna force you to take off my trash
Infect you with an ugly rash
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna make you eat Yohimbe bark
Gonna kick your ass to Tropicana Park
Gonna end your useless, pointless live
Gonna dump your corpse on Lakeshore Drive
Let buds RI-fle thru your pockets,
stick your fingers in light sockets

Boop Boop. Mess You Up! Boop Boop. Mess You Up!
Bip Bip. Mess You Up! Bip Bip. Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna cause you to become undone
I'll be staring at the sea, I'll be staring at the sun
I'll be right out of some Camus novel
Wouldn't really hurt to grovel
Yeah, but I'm-a gonna mess you up!

Gonna put you in a deep-fat fryer
Drag you thru the muck and mire
Cut your face and see you shiver
Reverend Norb: He Doth Deild!
Add unto your halitosis -- palsy, trauma and cirrhosis

Goody Goody Gumdrops! Mess You Up! Woolly Bully
Cyclops! Mess You Up!
Bang-a-lang-a-ling-long! Mess You Up! Rama-lama-ding-dong! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna hijack all your football cards
Gonna kick you squarely in the nards
Gonna take that card right out o' spoked
Gonna tell your friends that you're a hoax
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

I'll getcha trampled by a marching band
Gonna slash yo wrist and slap yo hand
Gonna let you slowly bleed to death
Cause I just can't stand yo Big Mac™ breath
Take your bladder out and boil it,
flush the rest right down my toilet

Bop-shoo-op! Mess You Up! Bop-bop-shoo-op! Mess You Up!
Shimmy-Shammy Bang! Mess You Up! We need more Ting™!
Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna bake you in a hot tamale
Leave you on the Road to Ball
Swipe your last remaining perk
Shut your mouth ya whiny jerk!
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna take ya to the river and hold your head under
Go on back to the city for to pillage and to plunder
I'm gonna fish you outta there and drag you cross the gravel
Gonna beat your brains in with a magistrate's gavel
This went on for a couple of days, but I couldn't stay away

1-flight, 2-flight Mess You Up! 3-flight 4 baby Mess You Up!
5-6-7-flight Mess You Up! Film at 11 flight Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna break a Lite-Brite™ on ya head
I shan't relent until you're dead
Gonna perforate your vital organs
You suck worse than two wolly Corgians
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna snap you like a Ludwig™ snare
Gonna snap your neck, as if I care

Gonna cause you to contract MS
Gonna mess you up 'cause you're a mess
Apple Gravy™ Mess You Up!
hold mah nose cause you so stinky

DIE YOU GRAVY-SUCKING PIG! DIE YOU GRAVY-SUCKING PIG!
DIE YOU GRAVY-SUCKING PIG! DIE YOU GRAVY-SUCKING PIG!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna hit you with a flower
Though that's lacking firepower
Then I'll think of something worse
Slash the tires on your hearse
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna PUT a serpent in your shoes, a hamster in your hat
I'm gonna rent a steamroller and roll ya fricken' flat
Gonna cut you into many decorative ribbons
How ya like them Grape Nuts™?
Don'tcha make suggestions that I'm getting out of line,
or I'll strangle you severely with my giant ball of twine

Yeah! Mess You Up! Yadda-yadda-yadda! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Mess You Up! Yadda-ladda-ding-dong Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna CARPET BOMB ya, gonna burn you at the stake
I'm gonna tie your hands n' feet and throw you in the lake
Gonna fish you out again with worms on treble hooks
Gonna crush your fingers with the bindings of my books
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna shrink wrap you in purple plastic
Give myself a "D" for drastic
Gonna PUT you out to pasture somewhere really foul
Gonna stick a glowing poker halfway up your bowel
Haul you up the stairway then I'll push you off a ladder,
Gonna beat your brains out, just to see 'em splatter

Bop shoo-op! Mess You Up! Ring dang doo! Mess You Up!
Shooky-looky-ty! Mess You Up! p-p-Poison Ivy! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna SEND ya to a potluck where my stupid neighbors go
Gonna hang ya from a gallows swing ya to and fro
Gonna tie you to my bumper drag you thru the city
Gonna put you to a vote and kill you in committee
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna knock your teeth out on a wooden window sill
Gonna put you in a barrel, roll you down the hill
Soliciting donations for your funeral expense
I'm gonna keep it all myself, your friends are fricken' dense
Run you off the road when you are driven off to Mass,
Check the windows, check the oil, check the tires, dollar gas

Yeah! Mess You Up! Aw dilly-dal-dilly! Mess You Up!
Aw Yeah! Mess You Up! Aw-shing-shang-shilly! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna disconnect the valve that runs your vena cava
Gonna keep it goin' with another pot o' java
Gonna mumble something 'bout your mother on the hill
And WARD off indigestion with a pretty purple pill
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna DISconnect your spinal cord and use it as a whip
I'm gonna take a blowtorch to your stupid nasal drip
Beat so many dents in your skull the skiers think you're moguls
Gonna cut this song along and make you sing the vocals
Gonna SUBJECT you to random acts of terror-ism,
gonna cover you in mucus, sauerkraut and jism

Yeah! Mess You Up! aw Rootley-dootley-dootley-dootley
Mess You Up!
Aw Yeah! Mess You Up! aw Rootley-dootley-dootley-dootley
Yeah! Mess You Up!
aw Rootley-dootley-dootley-dootley Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

I'm gonna toss your body on the grill at Burger King™
and take you to the opera till we hear the viking sing
Gonna double park you in a place you could get booted
Take ya to the vet and get ya eayed and fixed and neutered
Yeah, Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Gonna forge your signature when I send my remittance
Gonna sell the things you own for pennies on the pittance
Gonna put you in a plane and crash you in the mountains
Gonna hold your head un-der in many water fountains
Get my pitcher taken all victorious in battle,
sign a couple autographs and then I will skedaddle

Yeah! Mess You Up! oh G.L.C. GLC! Mess You Up!
aw Yeah! Mess You Up! a little TLC, TLC! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Really gonna... you know!

Well, poke ya, choke ya, aggravate ya /
Brain ya, sprain ya, see ya latah
Blitz ya, Fritz ya, slap ya silly / Shrink ya, drink ya Chilly Willy
Bite ya fight ya and ignite ya / your misfortune's my delight, ja
Ram ya, jam ya, make it ugly / Plague ya, gag ya, man ya bug me
Strip ya, gyo ya, underate ya / Liquidate, Evaporate ya
Fourteen bucks is sheer malarky, just for pepperoni, Sparky

Wring ya, sting ya, make ya whimper /
Chum ya, burn ya with a crimpier
Boss ya, toss ya in the hamper / Run you over with a camper
Saw ya, gnaw ya, refuse pile ya / Screw and otherwise defile ya
Crush ya, mush ya, make ya gooey / Tum ya brain into chop suey
Fling ya, zing ya, make ya rattle /
Take ya, break ya wrist and ankle
Hook ya, cook ya up with lentils, serve you to the other mentals

Flog ya, dog ya, damn ya, demon / Bloat ya coat ya with my semen
Jump ya, thump ya, and reproach ya /
Par-boil a scam-ble and poach ya
nickerling like dog Muttley!
Not your day, beLIEve me Nutley!
Shun ya, stun ya, rock ya nutty /
Scorn ya, knock ya block off, buddy
Whap ya, zap ya, flagellate ya / Stamp ya, cramp ya, 'nihilate ya
Hack ya, smack ya, spite ya, light ya,
does this dirty talk excite ya?

Snub ya, stub ya, perforate ya / Detain and interrogate ya
Lash ya gash ya jinx ya hex ya / Paint ya purple just to vex ya
Buy ya, fry ya, pumpkin pie ya / Stick a needle in your eye, ya
Forearm smash and superkick ya /
Use the ring ropes just to dick ya
Bash ya, thrash ya, traumatize ya
Smash ya 'cause I do despise ya
Kick your butt mano a mano, crush your head with grand piano

Choke ya with a tam o'shanter / while I'm spouting witty banter
Stab ya jab ya Boston crab ya /
Clothesline you, how does that grab ya?
Flip ya fist ya flick ya fry ya / Ninja-Mongol-Samurai ya
Gag ya rag ya brag about it / Don'tcha be a drag about it
See you in the funny papers / Serve your gullets up with capers
Get your things consigned, I'm efficient, highly rated

Damn ya, damn ya, Sergeant Slam ya / 49er Falcon Ram ya
Rue ya, screw ya, and undo ya / Kitchy kitchy itchykyo ya
Fourteen bucks is sheer extortion / Such a mediocre portion
Chop ya drop ya power pop ya / It's my mission: i must stop ya
"Soixante netre" is truly very / In the English dictionary
No impact on my endeavor, You're not being very clever.

Yummy Yummy Chewy Chewy / Kick your ass to East St. Louis
Drizzle drizzle drizzle drizzle / Drink of Tommy Lee and Razzle
Halibut and Halibutburton / It's assured that you'll be hurtin'

Rolling Stones and trailer hitchers /
Down with all them sons-o-bitches
Hard o' hearing Hurdy Gurdy /
Bite Bye Love and Bite Bye Birdie
Skurebedna Skurebedna, Arschel! Arschel!

Beat ya bloody in a jiffy / Not my fault that you're so itty
Cane you like a Filipino / Crush you with a Gran Torino™
Burn you like a warm albino / Teach you not to hide the ladino
Make your life a living Hades' / cause it helps me with the ladies
Smack ya crack ya and assault ya / Find another way to fault ya
Cathy's Clown and Wake Up Susie, this is gonna be a doozy

Bone ya zone ya just to mess ya /
Man-to-man and full-court press ya
When you suffer I feel better / Alex Chilton sang "The Letter"
Dump your body in an alley / in the San Fernando Valley
Things are grave, I'll make them graver /
With my Wahl™ electric shaver

Make you sit thru seven sequels / Elvii Grant was in the Equals
Jesus wept, although I missed him, getting this out of my system

Strip ya, whip ya, lead ya, bleed ya /
Cock and clock ya, dick ya, dock ya
Hitcha, Spitcha, Skip ya, Rip ya /
Bang and Dang ya, lock ya, Glock ya
Punch ya, Munch ya, Pistol Whipya /
Raik and take ya rock ya, trip ya
Hitcha Gitcha Gimme Gimme / Gotcha Gotcha Dubya Dubya
Super K and Super-Grover, nine of which is bendin' over,
Hot potato hot potatoe golly golly gosharootie

Fetcha, beatcha, glad to meetcha / Triple cripple double fetcha
Smash ya bash ya trill ya trish ya /
slum and slam ya mosh ya mosh ya
Wang ya dang ya sweet poontang ya /
el kabong and el kabang ya
MCA & Warner Brothers / Trick Knee Go-Kart and the others
Mackinaw and Macintosh ya / El kabong and el kabosh ya
Skurebedna, Skurebedna, Arschel! Arschel!

Gonna quanna dooka frooka / robba nobba dippa dabba
Cazamata cola dooda / baby baby boobla boobla
Jimmy Jimmy Mary Mary / Tommy Tommy Dick and Harry
Rubber Buggy Baby Boomer / Tingle-ling Amari Toomer
Bubblepuppy Bubblebious / Sidneys Porter and Vicious,
I brook no insubordination, gimme drugs & masturbation

Ding ya Dang ya Bong ya Bang ya /
Gong and Dong and Sturm und Drang ya
Bust and fry ya crucify ya / Use and bruise and scarify ya
Strangle mangle bong and bang ya /
Tic and tac and toe and tangle
Cane ya brain ya Lois Lane ya / pill and pill and hurricane ya
Dust and scratches and despecque, huckebuck and Heckle
Jeckle, Skurebedna, Skurebedna, Yo! Yo! Yo!

Gonna Bean ya and demean ya gonna flip and flop and fly ya
Gonna shoot ya in the armpit gonna shoot ya in the thigh
I'm gonna rearrange ya features gonna rearrange ya face
gonna whack ya crack ya sack ya smack ya Peter, Paul & Ace
Smack and smash and smite and smother!
Bloody lovely, tell your mother
Apples peaches Pentecostal, hip hooray I'm highly hostile

Pinch ya winch ya don't ya flinch I'll peck your eyes out like a finch
I'll put you in a doggie kennel hit you with a bone and then
I'll have the keeper shoot you with a tranquilizer dart and then
I'll tie you to opposing trains and watch you ripped apart
and then I'll take you to the vet and I'll dump it in the snow
and then I'll don your doggie collar and go off to watch the show

Haze you raze you out-o'-phase you /
Take you break you crush you crazy you
Sock ya knock ya ragnarok ya / Louze Leinenkugel Bock ya
Eeny-weeny-chill-beeny / Rudiment my Ari Peni
Dissipate and disconnect ya / Tally ma na not to expect ya
Steal you like a rented carmel, you're the most horrific mammal
Anybody sane would hate ya, gotta discombobulate ya

Split your skull like Waldo Jeffers / Set you up with ugly heifers
Make you live in poor conditions /
Bloat you up with live munitions
Phantom power, Phantom Strangers,
Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers,
Trap you in a bleak miasma
Suck your blood and steal your plasma
Use your face for playin' cricket, pierce you with a croquet wicket
Skurebedna, Skurebedna, Arschel, WHO!

Stick ya face in a propeller / shoot you like they shot Old Yeller
Toss you in a blasting furnace / just to show they I'm in earnest
Flail you with a rubber truncheon /
serve you at the Eagles Luncheon
Make you work in retail sales /
concord to which all horror pales
5-6-7, 8-9-10 -- PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD WILL TO MEN!

Rock over London!
Rock on Chicago!
Rock over London!
Rock on Chicago!
Sears® Where America Shops!

Rock over London!
Rock on Chicago!
Rock over London!
Rock on Chicago!
Pontiac® We never forget who's driving!

Rock over London! Rock on now sweet Chicago!
Rock over London! Rock on now sweet Chicago!
Mitsubishi® The world is getting around!

DIE YOU GRAVY-SUCKING PIG!
DIE YOU GRAVY-SUCKING PIG!
DIE YOU GRAVY-SUCKING PIG!
DIE YOU GRAVY-SUCKING PIG!
DIE YOU WAWY GRAVY SUCKING OINK! OINK! OINK!

DIE! DIE! DIE! DIE!
DIE! DIE! DIE! DIE!
DIE! DIE! DIE! DIE!
DIE! DIE! DIE! DIE!
DIE! DIE! DIE! DIE! gonna mess you up!

Yeah! Mess You Up! Yeah! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Mess You Up! Yeah! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

Yeah! Mess You Up! Yeah! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Mess You Up! Yeah! Mess You Up!
Yeah! Rilly Gonna Mess U Up!

...but first...
...like the hucklebuck...
...LIKE WE DID LAST TUESDAY!!!

Lyrics ©2004 Most Verbose Pop Music. Well, as far as
anybody knows. The dingbats are from the "Crab
Magnet" series which you can find somewhere.
Complaints: BOX 1173, Green Bay WI 54305 USA Earl

To err is human. To die before you do, is divine.

By Jesse Mank

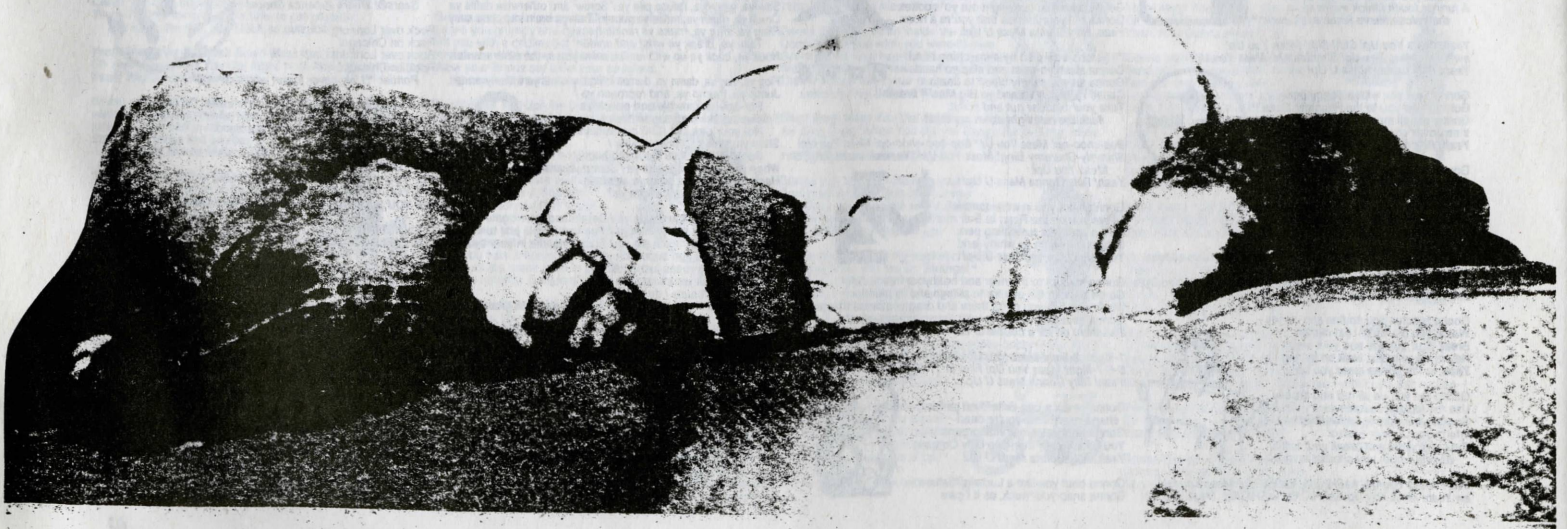
The first piece of music that I listened to the morning I read about Elliot Smith's suicide was Big Star's "Ballad of El Goodo." Smith was a Big Star fan, and who better than Alex Chilton to lay the young Smith to rest. Here's a man whose knows a thing or two about depression, drug abuse, and self-destruction. But wait a minute, Chilton never committed suicide. In fact, isn't he touring with the Box Tops playing county fairs? Wasn't that him crooning Blondie's "Call Me" on the *When Pigs Fly* compilation a few years ago? What gives? What ever happened to the Alex that muttered his way through the uber-depressing "Big Black Car" and "Holocaust"? Where did it all the doom and gloom go, Alex? Did you just stop feeling bad one day and that was that? For the young, depressed Chilton, suicide must have crossed his mind more than once. His former bandmate Chris Bell attempted suicide several times (and perhaps even succeeded the day his car accidentally smashed into a telephone pole). And Badfinger, one of Big Star's major influences, boasts the suicides of both of its major singer-songwriters, Pete Ham and Tom Evans. Hell bent on destroying his career, why didn't Alex destroy himself? Whatever the reason, he didn't and he's still around today playing shitty R&B covers to prove it.

If Alex Chilton is an example of what happens when, as an artist, you pull through your depression, the results don't really spell out *choose life*. People like to think about artists that die "before their time" and wonder what might have happened if they lived. But it's not

that difficult to figure out. Whatever it is in our youth that inspires us: love, lust, depression, drugs...it eventually eludes us. We get it over it. We have to. It's nature's way of preparing us for our naturally occurring death. It's just not very good, if you're a recording artist, for your career.

Jimi Hendrix, Otis Redding, Nick Drake, Kurt Cobain, 2Pac...these guys are considered legends. You might not agree. Hell, even I don't agree. But they're legends because they were great, and they were taken from this world (one way or another) before we had the opportunity to see them *stop* being great. There is only one way to diminish the word legend, and that is to cast it in the shadow of the word "living." Paul McCartney, Little Richard, Brian Wilson, Jimmy Page, Ray Davies...even if they died today, were *living* legends for a long time. We watched them struggle with the changing times. We saw their young faces fall into creased, dad-like masks. We heard their shitty synth-driven albums in the eighties. It's bleak, I know. But an early death is an easy ticket to immediate, and ever lasting legendary status. Late 1950s radio was brimming with hundreds of novelty tunes, pretty much all of them forgotten by time. Yet somehow, "Chantilly Lace" and "La Bamba" survived. Pop music suffered a huge loss when it lost Buddy Holly, but for the Big Bopper and Richie Valens, as misanthropic as it may sound, that plane crash was the best thing that ever happened to their careers. Legends.

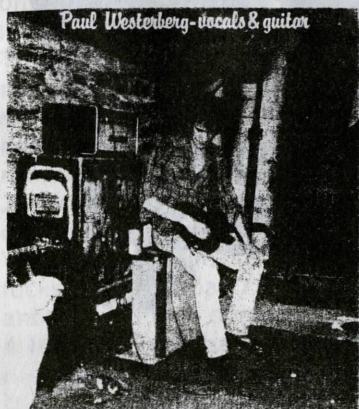
If an early death is an easy ticket to legendary status, it's amazing we don't see more suicides in the ego driven world of rock music. Think of all the careers a cleverly planned *crazed-fan/gunman* could have saved. Take David Lee Roth, for example. In 1985 Roth was fresh out of his highly publicized spilt with Van Halen. He had two smash hit songs on his hands and MTV just could not get enough of his Dave-TV video for "Just a Gigolo." Most people don't know this, but he even had a movie deal in the works based on the tour guide character he played in the "California Girls" video. Splits, jump kicks, maniacal interviews, a girl on each





arm, midgets, Dave was a serious showman. With his Steve Vai/Billy Sheehan super-group album *Eat 'Em And Smile* in the can, the best thing that could've happen to 'ole Diamond Dave would've been a fatal car crash. Maybe the classic *choke-on-your-own-vomit* maneuver. He would have been huge. A legend. We'd see his face airbrushed in those posters of Jimi Hendrix, Stevie Ray Vaughan, and Jim Morrison jamming in heaven. But the reality of the situation is that Roth lived and Roth let us down. He's all but forgotten by those who are old enough to remember. And ask any pierced and tattooed kid at the mall who Diamond Dave is and you're liable to hear "Isn't he the founder of Wendy's Old Fashioned Hamburgers?" There are so many flash in the pan rockers that had they timed their deaths right, would be remembered on some *Mojo* special issue as one of the great *could-have-beens*, rather than the VH-1 *Where Are They Now?* *has-beens* that they turned out to be.

But the day Elliot Smith died was not the day that he officially became a legend. Elliot's legend began the day he sang the first lines of "Roman Candle" on his 1994 solo debut. And to me, he was full-blown by the time I heard "Sweet Adeline" explode into its cascading harmony chorus. He was a legend because he practically invented a new way to be pissed off and hurt and pensive in a song. Had he ceased to be brilliant, living a long life of *living legend* status, hey...so what? Let's not romanticize suicide. I know it adds this level of conviction to every doomed word one ever said, and we tend to look at artists who leave this world by choice with awe, mistaking mystery for intrigue. But as people we have a responsibility to each other to keep plugging away, no matter what. Couldn't you have just faded away, Elliot? Pulled a J.D. Salinger? Disappeared like Fred Neil?



Paul Westerberg-vocals & guitar



Bob Stinson-lead guitar

There is more to life than your career and I'm sure Smith, dead or alive, could care less about becoming a rock legend. We don't know exactly why he committed suicide, but depression is a good guess. It can be the fuel for an artist's best work, or the fire that ultimately consumes the artist himself. Fellow Chiltonophile Paul Westerberg has been hanging suicide over our heads since the halcyon days of the Replacements. From title of his third solo album *Suicaine Gratification* to his songs "The Ledge," "Swingin Party," "Self Defense," and "Crackle and Drag," Paul has let us know throughout the years that suicide has been on his mind. But he's managed to work through it, even if it means releasing albums recorded in his basement under weird names. And for that, I have nothing but respect for old Paul. He's a survivor. He's battled alcoholism and drugs, witnessed the decline and eventual death of friend and former Replacement Bob Stinson, been dropped by labels, and had the unfortunate opportunity to watch his own career be eclipsed by the success of young knock offs like the Goo Goo Dolls.

So at the professional level, Elliot Smith's suicide mocks guys like Paul Westerberg and Alex Chilton. Smith never saw the professional bottoms that these guys endured. Both released their first records while in their teens, victimized by marketers and seedy managers, and led turbulent careers full of near misses and lost opportunities. And to add insult to injury, Elliot Smith might have enjoyed more commercial and critical success in his 10-year career than Chilton has in his 35 (or Westerberg in his 25) years of cult status.

But at the personal level, Alex Chilton and Paul Westerberg are still alive and their survival stands as a mockery to Elliot Smith's surrender. If Smith had only looked up to his mentors - Alex Chilton, Ray Davies, Paul McCartney, Neil Young - and seen that after years of icy critics, drug abuse and personal unrest, they're still alive and out there having a good time in their September years, hamming it up and not giving a shit what anybody thinks about their careers. No longer haunted by the demons of their youth, but free to do whatever they want with their lives, even if it means releasing albums that only their die hard fans can stomach. He might have realized that sometimes, despite what the record critics think, artists get better with age.

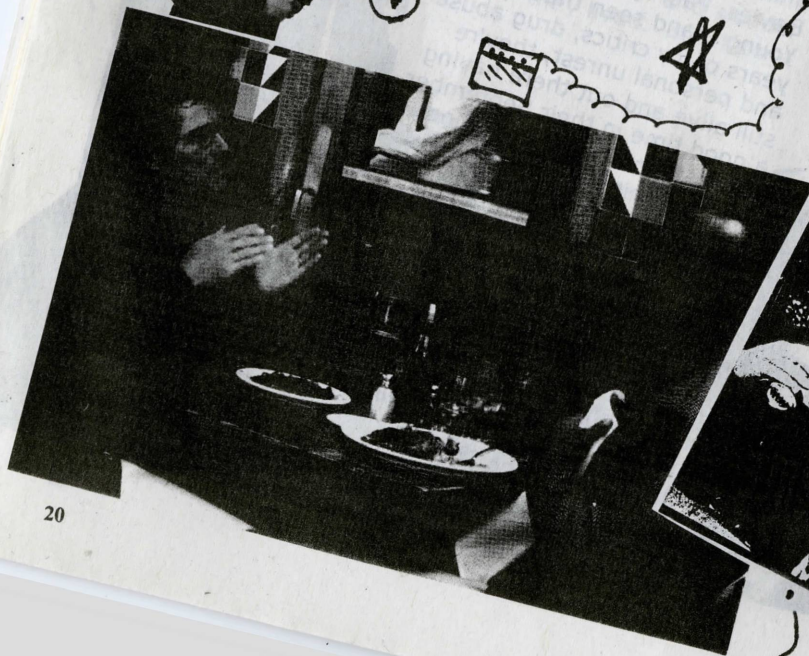


Paul Westerberg

★ "THIS
AIN'T
FUNTIME,
DICKHEAD!"



★ A GO METRIC
INTERVIEW WITH
THEE FLYING DUTCHMEN



There are three words that appear every time a Flying Dutchmen record or live performance is reviewed: cheap, beer, and garage. And rightfully so, their records are cheaply produced, seemingly beer-fueled, and right at home in the comfy confines of the "garage rock" cluster. (Though, personally, I think the Dutchmen are a cheap, drunk r'n'b band more than a cheap, drunk garage band. But why quibble?) Thee Flying Dutchmen are a wonderful thing. They cover the Coasters. They count off their songs in Spanish - "Uno, dos, tres, cuatro" - just like Sam the Sham. They put a lot of time into making really fun yet crappy sounding records with increasingly low-budget (or should that be decreasingly budgeted?) cover art. Smart people making dumb music - we adore 'em! And they were kind enough to reward us with a smart-assed email interview! (We tried to line up a phone interview but that didn't work out - Jesse from the Dutchmen: "I am sorry!!! I planned on calling you and rescheduling 'cause something came up and then I flaked on it. No excuse, sorry. Still wanna do it. I think email is probably the easiest, and then you can ask follow ups if you want. Things are fucking nutso being that we are leaving for over a month and still are finishing everything up! Plus I am trying to fuck my girlfriend as much as I can before I go so she doesn't cheat when I'm gone!" - so email it was. And it email it is!) Enjoy! (Interview by Mike Faloon)

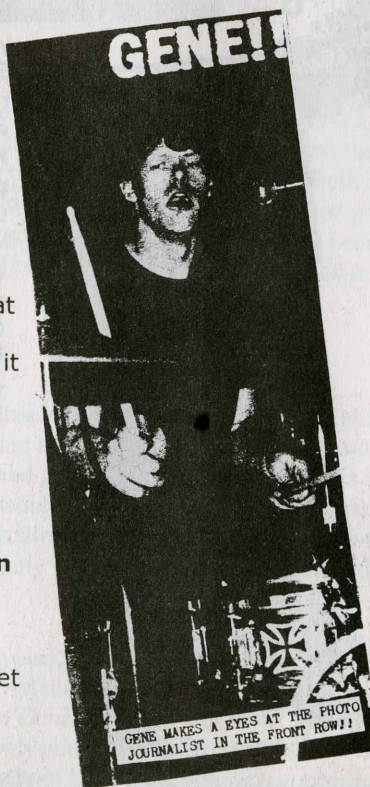
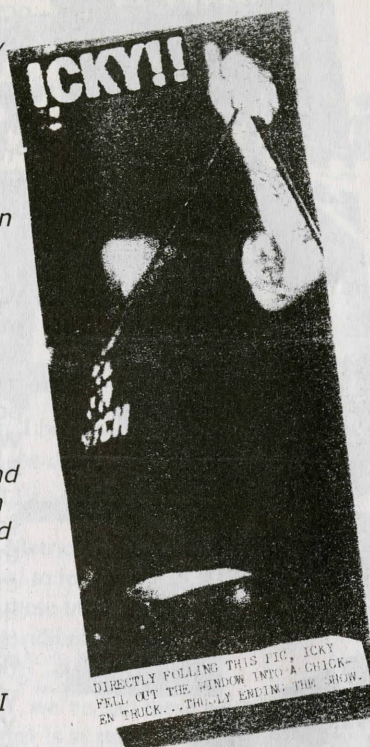
Go Metric: I love your version of "Shout," especially when I have to flip the record in the middle of the song. Great joke! What's the story behind that?

Jesse: The Isley Brothers do it that way on their single, and since we haven't a shred of originality, we decided to rip that off too. Plus, it's fun to make teenagers try and cue up the b-side when they put it on a tape without there being any space in between. Who says we don't try??!!!

The arguments on Flying Dutchmen records are as much fun as the songs. The tension! Do you have consequences for when band members make mistakes? Like when James Brown used to fine members of the Famous Flames.

Yeah when we fuck up a song whoever fucks up has to pay J.B twenty bucks. Yet another example of our un-originality.

A lot of people have used the nickname "The Flying Dutchman." Did you name the band for anyone in



particular? Former Pirates great Honus Wagner, perhaps?

We named the band after Stinky's grandma. Back in the gym after football practice, the lads would all call her the Flying Dutchmen. We all tried to grow beards like her too, but only Stinky and the Dutchess succeeded. Gene and me dig the clean wet look.

Back to the arguments...With everything about the band being so low-budget and seemingly half-assed, what cracks me up is not that you argue about making mistakes but that you guys even notice in the first place. And with all of that banter between songs, your bands' personalities come through more than with most bands. How would you describe the personalities of ...

Gene....obnoxious

Icky...a genius

Stinky...a foul smelling man

Thee Dutchess...royal pain in the ass

Any chance we could pry the band's real names out of you? I own three of your records and have no idea who anybody really is!

Well, it may seem kind of silly but the bands real name is thee flying Dutchmen. Any chance you could loan me fifty bucks? Is there any chance you could get an honest answer out of me?

How about telling us about some of the members of the Flying Dutchmen extended family...

Danny Ferducci - bankroller of Boom Boom Records...Danny is the big boss of the BOOM BOOM of RENTON empire. Right now he is taking bets on how much longer the label will last.

Melvin Dundinkle - Fang Club President...Melvin is the ugly motherfucker that writes all the shit for the FANG CLUB DIGEST. He signs the member ship cards and occasionally socks it to old man Ferducci's old lady!

Dot Blackwell - graphic designer & songwriter (?)...Dot doesn't write any songs. She does the sleeve and label design, as well as promo posters and all that shit 'cause Danny is a blind four eyed fuckhead!

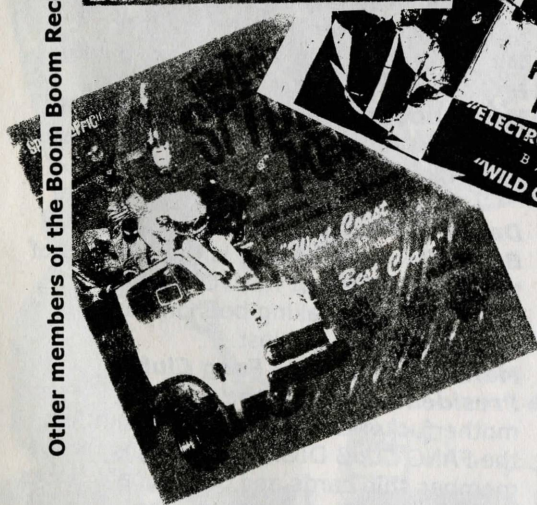
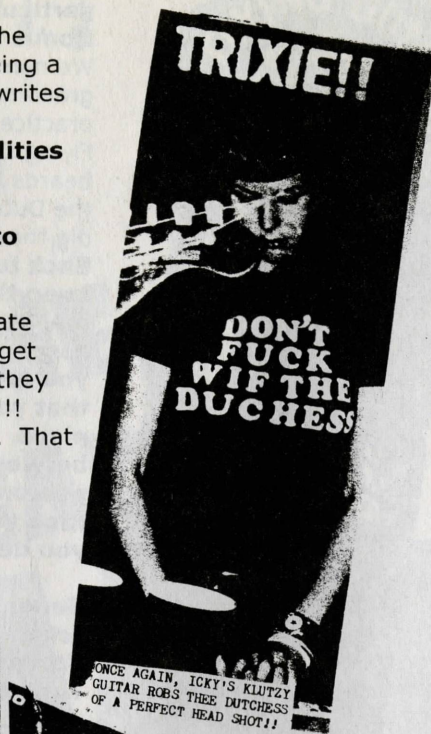
Everett Ladd - songwriter...This guy usually makes his dough penning smut novels, so he feels ok throwing us some hit songs every once in a while. He writes with Dot's brother Clyde Blackwell, who is made up. Who would believe that one man could write all these great songs?? It has even come to the stage that his

originals are so INCREDIBLE, that the Dutchmen have been accused of being a Cover Band!!! Can he help it if he writes such timeless classics?

And while we're on the personalities theme, you've had some real luminaries pen your liner notes. How'd you get Deke Dickerson to write something for you? J.P. Gutrock?

We told Deke we could get him a date with J.P., then we told J.P. we could get him a date with Deke. Then when they both showed up it was so awkward!!! Nobody would make the first move. That was the saddest first date EVER!

Other members of the Boom Boom Records stable of recording artists



Boom Boom Records! A great label! Home to the Zombie IV, the Amazing Spidemen, and the Fe Fi Fo Fums, along with yourselves. What does Boom Boom offer the music connoisseur?

Not a fuckin thing. Have you even HEARD any of those records?!

Boom Boom has long been associated with the town of Renton, Washington. What does Renton offer the curious traveler? Have you ever taken part in the Cedar River Salmon Journey festivities?

I refuse to answer this question as we are currently in court with several Salmon pressing assault charges.

You've recently relocated to Seattle. A lot of my favorite bands are from there, but why move there? Aren't the property taxes lower in Renton? Property taxes ARE lower, but Renton girls stink. Seattle girls stink too, but at least there are more of them.

What does S.O.B.T. stand for? I dunno?

Which of the Dutchmen is moonlighting with the Intelligence? None. The whole thing was just them trying to latch onto our ever increasing popularity.

What's the lowdown with the Sultanas?

LP should be coming out next year sometime. Three girl singers backed by the stable of BOOM BOOM session musicians doing songs from the Ladd / Blackwell songbook. It should be pretty fucking GREAT! Less shitty sounding than the rest of the BOOM BOOM swag, but you should still buy it when it comes out. **Your t-shirt designs look pretty cool. Say someone, me, for instance, were to order one of your t-shirts, what's the typical turn around on an order like that?**

8000 years! Or until the BOOM BOOM SCREEN PRINTING department gets around to making them. Which one did you order anyways?

Speaking of your extensive merchandise, what can we fans expect from your video collections? Regale us with the details, if you please!

OH MAN!!! I have this copy of the Stax / Volt revue from when they toured Europe, and this great nudie cutie *Kiss Me Quick*, and of course any Steckler movie is great. Gene has an extensive library of old hygiene films from the seventies, but you don't want to know what he does with them. Stinky watches a lot of football and has taped EVERY single football game since 1983. And the Dutchess has a lot of videos of the Flying Dutchmen live shows so she can remember all the wild shit she did.

I was actually referring to the videos you had for sale, but no matter! Thanks for your time. We love the Flying Dutchmen! And remember, readers, the time the Dutchmen don't spend on extensive interview responses all goes into making more high-quality lo-fi fun!

Battle of the Bands!

MTX vs. Minor

PUNK,
ROCK!



Threat!

By: Maddy Tight Pants

Once again, I bring you another edition of the most controversial series since Billy on Family Circus confronted the death of his pet goldfish! It's time for another Battle of the Bands!

Greetings Go Metric readers! Since the last issue, America has fought a great battle against evil! Yes, we refused to let Cat Stevens enter our sacred land on the grounds that mellow pop is unpatriotic in these troubled times! However, more battles are on the horizon, some old, some new, and some, just, ridiculous.

I know, I know, we've had these battles in these very pages time and time again, but this time, something bigger is at stake. Whereas before, we only skimmed the surface of REAL issues, choosing instead to waste our time on frivolous debates concerning the relative merits of the Beach Boys and Bikini Kill, this time we're digging deep! This time we're going to pit the kings of sugar-coated ironic love songs against the princes of positive, sober, white-t-shirted and Dickies-wearing hardcore. Yes, this is truly a battle on scale with the modern age! The contenders? The Mr. T Experience and Minor Threat! Gentlemen, prepare your swords!

① Band Name!

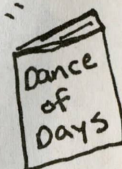
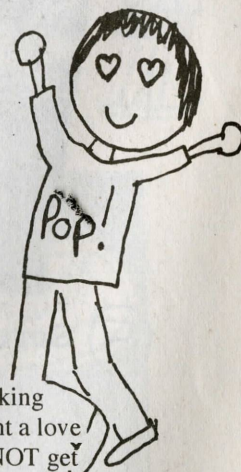
Let's start with an easy one. I know there may be some readers who REALLY like the name Screeching Weasel, and, operating from such misguided principles, think the Mr. T Experience is an amazing linguistic feat as well, but those readers are sadly misguided! Both of those names are horrible! Yes, there's something to be said for giving your name the worst possible name (See: Butt Trumpet), especially nowadays when all good punk names have already been taken (resulting in the existence of both the Teen Idles and the Teen Idols. For shame!), but back in 1988, there was no such excuse.



② The Message!

Okay, we've got Minor Threat: "I don't smoke! Don't drink! Don't fuck! At least I can fucking think!" versus MTX "I want to make you tea and toast. I want to be there at your trial. I want a love American style!" Ladies and gentlemen, this gets to the root of the issue. I will not, I CANNOT get behind any message that would cause me to give up my addiction to boxed wine, or to the stupidity (drunken bike rides, dumb flirting, the belief that breaking into an abandoned house and dancing around like an idiot is a really great idea) that results from said addiction! I shall not! Straight-edge, I oppose you!

Yes, I'm already hearing your objections! "No, Minor Threat weren't PREACHING to anyone! That's just what Ian believed made sense for HIM!" Oh, silly, silly readers! Little do you know, I have done my research! In *Dance of Days*, a history of the D.C. punk scene, author Mark Anderson relates a tale of how Ian only added that little "I" in front of his straight-edge proclamations after being forced to by his Dischord label mate who was concerned that it would come across as a set of instructions. Plus, I ask you, what effect could one expect such lyrics to have on our nation's impressionable youth? Nothing but shaved heads, asexual rage and a healthy profit for the X-drawing tattoo artists!



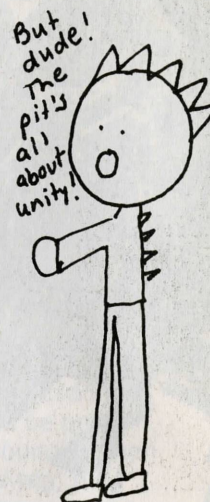
the glow
of research!

Teenage Boys, Impalement & Mr. Leon!

On the MTX side, maybe I should have learned my lesson by now, but I remain a totally silly, dorky girl who has dumb crushes on cute punk boys. Silly songs that turn you into a totally sappy embarrassment to mankind? Now THAT is a message I can get behind! Score one for MTX!

③ Song Length!

What's the key to all great punk songs? It's simple: cramming the highest amount of rock into the smallest possible period of time. Who needs to hear the chorus six times? Not I! And I don't want to hear three slightly different bridges either! I am a musically inept dumb punk who just wants her verse chorus verse! Please! In this category, the choice is clear! Minor Threat finishes their songs first! By several minutes! Minor Threat gets a point!

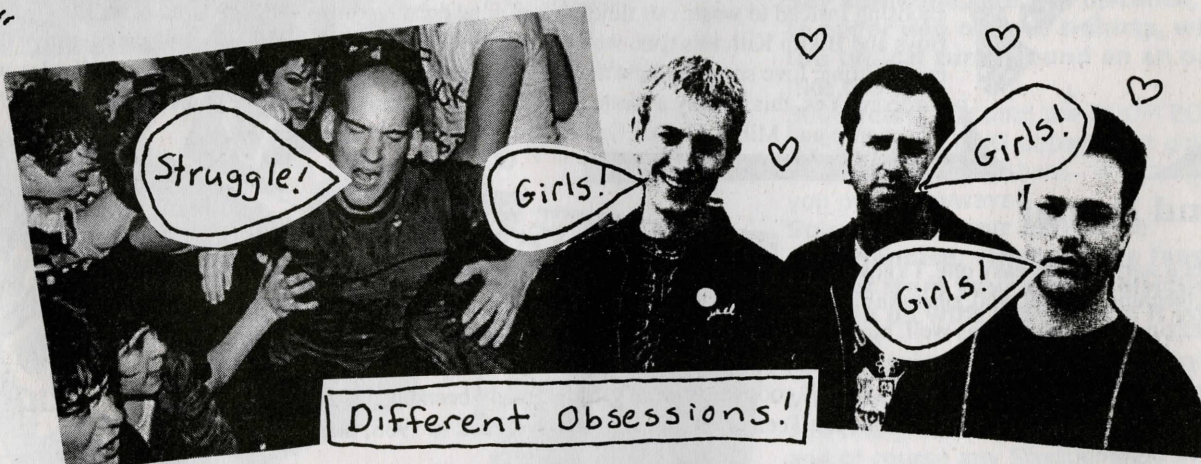


④ Dance! Dance! Dance!

There are few things I hate as much as moshing, slam-dancing, or any other combination of teenage boys beating the shit out of each other. I know, I know, you can tell me all you want about how Fugazi-period Ian was super careful about crowd violence and all that, but the facts are the facts, and Minor Threat helped beget hardcore, which beget slam dancing, which beget me getting a steel-toed boot in my face at a Green Day show at the age of 14! Ack, the biblical horror of it all!



In contrast, MTX shows typically featured boys and girls jumping around dancing however they wanted, without fear of burly men or impalement by spiked jacket! MTX wins this one!



⑤ Scream-along-ability!

Ah, a crucial test! Which band provides more sing-along enjoyment while driving in a car by yourself through rural Wisconsin? Simps! Minor Threat by far! Caution: the discography CD WILL destroy your throat! I DON'T WANNA HEAR IT! ALL YOU DO IT TALK ABOUT YOU! Punk rock! Minor Threat wins this one!

⑥ Historical References!

This one's easy! As someone who cannot write more than a few sentences without making some reference to the Politburo or the evacuation of Saigon, I can appreciate song titles like "Dustbin of History," (Trotsky references are go!), "Checkers Speech," (Nixon!) and the amazing "Complicated History of the Concept of the Soul" (a recitation of the opening paragraph of a college essay on Greek philosophy, complete with footnotes!). Rock and roll! Minor Threat don't even venture into this territory, not even to make obvious references like how Stalin sold out Lenin, even though Lenin thought he'd always stay true, and that they were so close, they were like brothers. Salad days! One point MTX!

The verdict: American Style! Alright!

⑦

Language!

Shockingly, ALL of Minor Threat's songs are in English! How patriotic of them! How American! How UNPUNK! In sharp contrast, MTX sings a French version of their song "God Bless America" about how girls should shave their legs. Case closed! MTX wins a point!

I LOVE English!

⑧

Post-Band Existence!

Ack! It pains me to say it, but post-MTX, Dr. Frank has gone through some serious degeneration—creating a political blog (yes, a BLOG! The single lamest use of one's time in the year 2004!) that makes fun of Leftists and others (seriously!) and putting out albums full of crappy pop songs sung in a newly fashioned irritating high-pitched voice. Nyet! Ian wins this without much trouble, even though I've never gotten super into Fugazi, at least he doesn't spend his time blogging! Geez! And I recently heard Mr. McKaye's new band, the Evens, and liked 'em! So, Minor Threat wins this round!

J'aime les jeunes femmes!.

The Verdict!

Oh no! For the first time ever, it's a tie! Call the pundits! Summon the analysts! What is better: early 80s hardcore or early 90s pop punk? Political consciousness or excessive consumption of candy? Songs about internal struggle or songs about girls? Some questions are too great for my feeble mind! This one's gonna havta be settled the American way: by ballot!

To determine once and for all which band is greater, Minor Threat or MTX, just fill out the ballot below, and send it in to the Go Metric headquarters. I will tabulate the results and deliver the final verdict in the next issue. Finally, an election that MEANS something!



Remember: If you don't vote, you can't complain!



OFFICIAL BALLOT!

Which band should win the Battle of the Bands?

Mr. T Experience

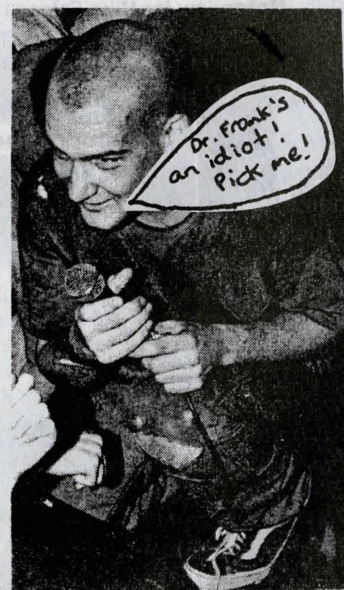
Minor Threat

(Circle One)

Name: _____

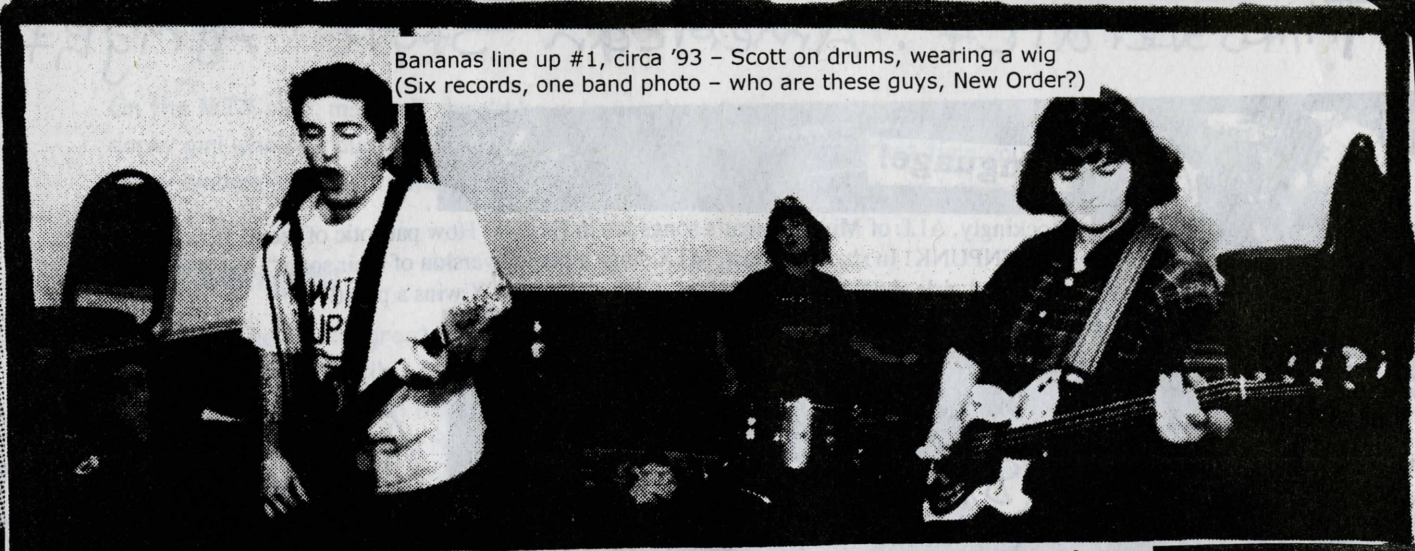
Age: _____

Favorite purged Soviet leader: _____



THE END!!!!!!

Bananas line up #1, circa '93 – Scott on drums, wearing a wig
(Six records, one band photo – who are these guys, New Order?)



MIKE

SCOTT

LISA

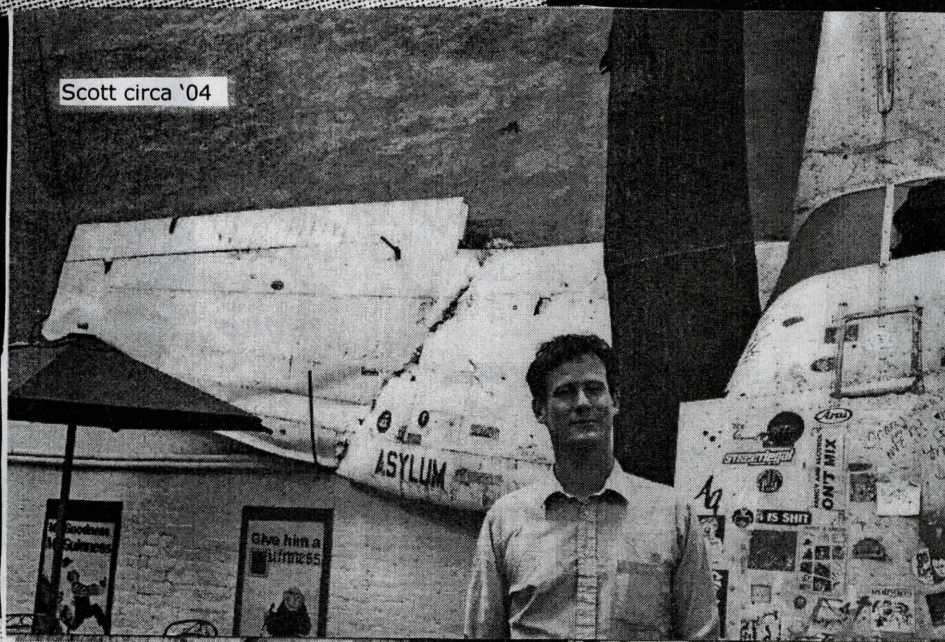
The Bananas

In the 1937 movie *Lost Horizon* Ronald Coleman survives a plane crash in the Himalayan mountains and stumbles upon a secluded, utopian society. It's a place of peace and prosperity, but the catch is that its citizens must remain isolated from the rest of the world in order to preserve their way of life, and Coleman must make a choice between remaining in this lost heaven and returning to the world at large; he can't have both.

Sacramento is the *Lost Horizon* of punk cities. There's a tremendous wealth of great bands, and there has been for awhile, but they don't care if anyone outside of Sacramento knows about them. They never tour, their records receive no promotion. The few people who have discovered bands like the Four Eyes, the Pretty Girls, or Nar tell outrageous tales of how great they are, but the curious are out of luck because precious little news about these bands – never mind records – travels outside of Sacramento. No band embodies this more than the Bananas. They have been around since 1990. They have put out three of the best punk records ever, yet they remain virtually unknown. To date I have read a grand total of one Bananas interview, a two-pager that ran in *The Probe*, an interview in which Bananas singer, Mike, was so drunk that he did not recall doing the interview. So it's not surprising that it didn't reveal much.

We at *Go Metric* are big fans and far too curious to let the situation – not knowing anything about the band – lie; we needed to know more. Fortunately, we were able to meet up with Bananas drummer Scott Miller when he came through NYC. We talked primarily about the Bananas, but also about Sacramento. (Interview by Mike Faloon)

Scott circa '04



There's a great quote in the liner notes to the re-release of *Forbidden Fruit*: The Bananas are the band that were too lazy to break up.

It was formed as a joke, as a band that was supposed to play one show.

You were set up to play just once, but then you played a different show before what should have been your only show. From the start, the concept and the reality of the Bananas were diverging. This was back around '91?

Probably '90. The first shows in Sacramento were parking garage shows. The clubs were for bigger bands and the smaller bands weren't getting that many shows. This insane guy named Rick, discovered, well, not really discovered – you know how around town there are outlets everywhere? In Sac, you go to the park and there are probably 100 outlets around the park and they're on all the time. You could go there and plug your boom box in – but he had a small PA and he was like, Let's try to do a show up there. There was an area of Sacramento that was downtown but it was completely dead at night, so no one would be complaining about the noise. It was two or three floors up and so everyone was like, Okay, these three bands are going to play; everyone's going to play four songs and trade. And they became amazingly successful. Some of my best memories – the first Nar shows were there, Bananas, Horny Mormons, Pounded Clown, Tiger Trap. Then you had people like Calvin from K (Records) traveling to a parking garage show. All of sudden we were like, Whoa, what's going on here? People are paying attention. Then this bar, Old Ironsides, somebody was like, Hey, why don't we let bands play? It was an old man bar. There was no stage. There wasn't even a big, logical place to play. It was just, here's the outlet, why don't you play here? That became our bar for a couple of years.

And that's where the should-have-been-only show was, the Bananas opening for Nar and Tiger Trap?

Yeah, then just from us saying that we had a gig, somebody told somebody and there was a show two days earlier and somebody else said, Why don't you guys play that? There was a comic book store downtown that some guy named Brad had and he was doing shows in it. It was perfect. I remember playing it and being like, These songs are so weird. The early songs sounded like Mike had written all these parts and randomly stuck them together. There were a few songs that made sense, like the songs that are on the tape, *Revolution Banana Style*, are the best songs from that period. We had 12 songs and we took five of them, Okay, these are good songs. Our first show ended up being our second one. It was fun. Lisa had never played in a band before and she enjoyed it. She wasn't a bass player, she had never played bass before. But that was also part of the charm. She was like, This is something to do beside hanging around. And the Horny Mormons had broken up so Mike didn't have a band, or they were about to break up; they were falling apart. Little did I know that he had like a million great songs inside of him. I started taking it more seriously, when I realized where Mike was headed in his songwriting. The songs used to be wackier, he hates that word, but they were. He was in the Horny Mormons, and they were like, what I always called punch line music. Every four lines, ba-dap-boing.

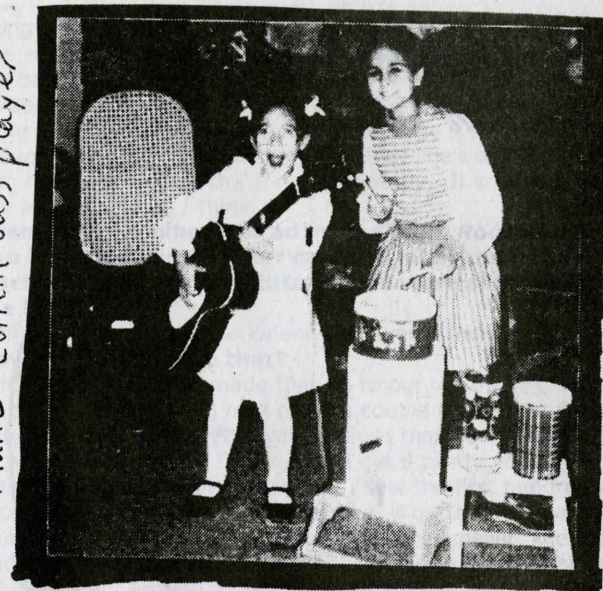
Did he have a bunch of songs saved up, songs he wasn't going to use in his old band and were set aside?

I think he had a few songs that either the Horny Mormons couldn't play or he didn't know if he wanted them to play them. •••Mike writes records in order, he comes up with them in that way.

Really?

Not 100%, but I would say 85-90% we learn the record generally the way it is when we record it. He'll write a song that I don't think he would ever write for a single or it's not a song that he loves but it fits a certain spot, which I think, nobody does that.

Marie - Current bass player



hobbing guitar

What comes to mind when you think of the first record, *Forbidden Fruit*.

I was amazed, when we went to record it, how quickly it went. We recorded it in this fucked up shed. (Chris) Woodhouse had this practice space, there was this big yard with a bunch of shit in it. And it was raining and he was still working on a 4-track. We did it in two days. We've always had really good luck recording. We'll fuck up a lot live, but when we came to recording it was a lot of first and second takes. We were really excited to get it done. I remember listening to it as a whole and being like, Wow, this is what we were trying to do exactly. I always get a little bit nervous when we record, but we always pull it off. There's never been a time where it was, Take 12.

I like the first record a lot, but I didn't notice the sound of it, particularly. That happened with the next record, *Holy shit*, it's still the Bananas but...

It's amped up.

That's exactly it.

The thing about recording with him that's the best, even better than the fact that he works quickly and he's a cool guy, he's so musically minded. When he sees a band, even a band he doesn't like that much, in his mind he's like, I know what this band's going for and I'm going to give them the Woodhouse version of that. What you think you want but slightly rawer. And bands always love that, raw but still clear. He's able to inject that into it, but still retain what a band wants. The dude is the funnest person to record with ever.

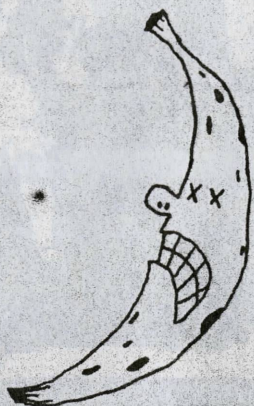
I was listening to the first record for the first time in awhile and it dawned on me that my favorite Bananas record is whichever one I'm listening to.

That's kind of the goal, I would say, of most bands. It's cool for anybody to say that. With classic bands, like the Velvet Underground, it's like every time I hear the Velvet Underground I think, *This* record is the fucking best. And you want to give people different moods. If you're in the mood for the first record, listen to the first record. It shouldn't be, Which one should I listen to because they all sound the same. That this is the way you should feel about music. And the fact that it's really fun live ties it altogether. If you see us at any point in time, we're all going to be drunk. It's all going to be us being funny, or trying to be funny and being horribly unfunny. I just sit there and watch the audience and it's fun to me. Since I, well, I don't want to say that I "just" play drums, but I'm kind of a fan of the music because I don't write it. Sometimes I wish I could be like, Hey, Come on up and play drums for a second, I want to jump around in the audience. Most of our shows end in dog piles. I'm so happy to have that effect on people. You can't buy that.

Especially when you're playing for people who thought they'd never see you live.

THE BANANAS

Forbidden Fruit



I always thought that the cool thing about the group of kids who like the Bananas is that they're excited about it before it even happens. Most of our fans are pretty drunk and excited, a lot of them are pretty young, too.

What's it like having Marie in the band?

Marie's sort of given us a kick in the ass. Like this girl in Italy is supposedly putting all our records out on vinyl and she's starting with the new one. Every time I see Marie she's like, We have to get this cover together. She's more that way, without being pushy. That letter that's behind the cd (*Nautical Rock and Roll*), is something that she wrote me about 10 years ago, or eight years ago, way before she was in the band. It's just this dumb band, it's not just this dumb band to her.

In that sense you have two Bananas fans in the Bananas.

Definitely. We have to be because Mike's like, We suck, why should we bother?

Does he play in other bands?

Let's see, he plays in a band called Knock Knock that's a really good pop band. He plays in No Kill I. They're this completely disastrous Star Trek band. They're one of the funniest things you will ever see. They are so wasted when they play. They're sort of legendary. There's a movie out, *Trekkies*, it's about Star Trek fans. There's a sequel, *Trekkies 2*, and they're in that. They only play twice a year. We all play in other bands. As long as we have a place to practice. Our practice spot is cheap, like \$25 a month. Actually, I think it just went up to \$30. I was talking to the dude from Harold Ray and he's like, We pay \$600 a month for practice. I was doing the math and that's what we pay in two years. That's fucking rad. That may be why so many Sacramento bands aren't that ambitious. It's not we've got to play some shows to pay the rent. Fortunately, with the Bananas we've had ambition given to us. The dude from Plan-It-X, Chris, he travels around in that circle of bands that aren't that popular but there's tons of people and tons of support and everyone buys stuff. So we can go play that circuit, that's kind of a silly word but that's pretty much what it is, it's great. Our last tour was amazing. We had shows every night that were excellent and really full. But still it's totally under the radar. Now we know we can go out and have a pretty successful tour. We can make a record and tour on it. The first half of our existence there was like two singles and a tape, and the second half of the band there's three cd's. We still have this reputation as complete slackers for some reason. Well, I won't

say for some reason, but, still, I feel really lucky. Chris has helped us a lot.

You guys are incongruous compared to the other bands I've heard on that label.

But he's done a really good job where he could, what any label would want in this day and age is to be able to have people buy everything that's on your label, regardless of whether they've heard it or not. We'll bitch sometimes that they (Bananas cd's) aren't in stores. We played a show where, Lisa had quit - she got pregnant - she couldn't play in the band for nine months and she thought the band had just broken up but we were like, We don't want to break up. It was a little awkward at first, but I don't think it's that way now. We had this show in East Bay, at Mission Records in San Francisco, and we wanted to play it, but we had no bass player. We knew Marie was going to do it, but she hadn't learned the songs yet. I emailed this one kid named Will who lives there, I said, Tell people that the Bananas are going to play a show without a bass player and tell all your friends who want to play a song on bass to learn it and we're just going to those songs. So it'd be, Okay, who's next? I know "Beginning of the End." We wanted my friend Paul Curran to play a song and he showed up and he's like, I looked everywhere, I couldn't find your record anywhere. I was like, You should really be able to find our record in San Francisco. That's where a lot of our friends are. So sometimes we're like, I wish Plan-It-X had them in stores, but ultimately that's ridiculous. Because when we tour it's fun because of the work that Chris has done. That's the reason I'm here right now. We play almost all parties or fun, little spaces. We don't have to worry about club bullshit or sound guys, and we make as much as bands that go on tour (in bars), or more.

I must confess that I won't believe that you tour until I actually witness one of your shows. Having missed the New York show...

We get that a lot, people are like, I figured you'd never tour again so I drove two hours to see you. When somebody tells you that they've driven two hours it's like, No fucking shit. It makes you ten times more excited to play.

You'd better not tour too much or else you'll lose that reputation. Will there be more Bananas tours?

Yeah, we'll definitely tour when the next record comes out. But the last tour we went on was when *Nautical* came out, we actually made money on that trip; we never made money on a tour. We paid for all our gas and some food and beer and Mike paid one month's rent and we came back it was just so much less stressful. The record had been out a month, so a bunch of people had it so it wasn't like, Hi, we're playing all these songs you don't know. But we were also selling a lot of them. So now I just want to base the tours around what we put out. We have to do it that way. If you're losing money every day, you're going to be an asshole, you're going to be stressed out. So, yeah, when the next record comes out - we haven't learned all of it, we've probably learned a third of it so far. I know it's all done.

Done as in, it's all written?

Yeah. Probably doesn't have all the words, but I think the songs are all done. Probably early 2005.

You were also in Nar, which is another example of a typical great Sacramento band. The few songs I've heard from Nar are great, but it's not like I can go to the local record store, find the Nar bin and go, Okay, now I'm going to catch up.

Yeah, yeah. It was really hard to capture what I liked about that band recorded.

Is Nar still around?

No. They're still two of my best friends and we see each other all the time and we play together in other bands, but the original bass player, when he quit we got another bass player. He was rad. Then he moved, and Mike from the Bananas was going to play bass. We had so many - we had 200 songs, at least - and I was like, I don't want to show somebody all these

old songs. And it's not like they're recorded, so I can't give them to somebody to learn at home. And I don't want to just do all new shit. It would sort of defeat the purpose of what Nar was; I liked that we could play most of our stuff. I love that kind of thing. You know that band NRBQ?

Yeah, I like them a lot.

They're one of my favorite bands and I want to be in that kind of band where I have hundreds of songs at my disposal and half of them will be almost falling apart and half of them will be really awesome depending on what you practice that year - just to be able to do it. It just came to its logical end. One day we were like, We haven't practiced for awhile.

I know what you mean. With bands like NRBQ or Young Fresh Fellows, they've been around for decades, they have extensive discographies...

They're also bands when you try to get somebody into them you've got to be in the right mood. You'll be like, No, not this song. And then you realize that it's the whole idea of the band. It's not like one song is going to rope you in. It's an idea, an attitude you get from the music, like you want to hang out with them.

It's appealing to get into a band like that, where there's a lot to discover.

Yeah, like NRBQ just had their 35th anniversary, and me and Marie from the Bananas went to Boston to go see it.

I saw the 30th anniversary show where they had the Shaggs open up.

They're always doing stuff like that. They're into everything. They pop up on weird records, all different genres.

They've got a wrestling connection!

For the 35th anniversary, I thought they were going to bring Captain Lou (Albano) out, because it was all members past and present.

My wife doesn't like a lot of my music, but she liked the last NRBQ record and would bring it to work and do surgery while listening to that disc. That and a compilation cd that the Fastbacks gave away at a show (the Dr. Illteams cd).

The Fastbacks, there's another band that fits into that category.

Yeah. And the Chris and Tad cd. Have you heard that?
No.

It's Tad from Young Fresh Fellows and Chris from the Presidents of the United States. It's a lot like a Young Fresh Fellows record.

With bands like that it seems like they could write a bunch of good songs in a weekend.

And they'd be great. With other bands you read that they wrote it in 20 minutes and you can tell: it sucks. They needed to spend more time. I resent them for not taking more time. But some bands are better off doing things spontaneously.

There are those bands that have a natural sense of melody and it comes out in whatever they do. They could be doing a soundcheck with just two chords and it's pretty cool.

Right, they've absorbed enough things that it's not going to be just a clichéd knockoff.

They have too much disdain for cliché to be a part of it. They're trying to be cliché but they're trying to write cliché songs better than the originals.

Do you think the Bananas could get to that point?

You're over 10 years now.

Maybe even 13, I think we started in '91. It's one of those things where I can't see why we'd stop doing it. They only way we would stop is if somebody moved far. Maybe. Mike's working on a new record, the songs are great. If somebody were to quit, like if Marie were to quit, I wouldn't be all that excited about finding somebody else to play with. If me or Mike quit that would be it. Marie was like, that's who we wanted to play when Lisa quit. She was the only person that seemed to fit in every way. It changed the sound a little bit. Some people bitch about the new record (*Nautical Rock'n'Roll*)

being weirder, but we're just going to get weirder and weirder. She writes her parts as opposed to Lisa when Mike was writing the bass lines. The earlier stuff was more singular, one person's vision of these things, and now it's like, Mike will write a part and Marie will put something to it that he never thought of. First of all he's psyched that she's doing that, but also he starts singing the songs differently. It sounds more like a group effort, I think.

I remember seeing your ad in *Maximum RocknRoll* when you had the Secret Center cassette label and by the time I actually sent off for a catalog you were shutting down the label.

Mail order just stopped suddenly, all over, I think.

How long did you do that?

I did Secret Center, I made that up to put out the first Nar single. I started doing mail order a couple years after that. The Nar single sold pretty well because that was the big, sort of pop punk explosion began, and I got a pretty good *Maximum* review from Tim Yo and I sold the first hundred in a month through mail order. I was like, Wow, this is so easy. Then I started putting things out that were smaller, like tapes and shit, and I was like, Fuck who is going to know what this is? So I went around to like Tom Hutchinson, who's in Captain Knives, he lives in Sac, and I heard that he had a bunch of their stuff still in his closet so I was like I want to buy all this stuff from you. Then I had a few things, so I was like, I'll buy an ad. People knew who the Captain Knives were, so they were like, Oh, I'll buy the Captain Knives and everything else. Then I thought because there's all these ads for 7"s for \$3 from bands that you've never heard of, I'll just charge \$2 so maybe somebody will decide to buy something from me over somebody else. And it worked really well. I'd get all these letters, like, You're the punkest dude ever! This shit is so cheap! I'm like, right, I'm the punkest dude ever. I went to this warehouse where we got magazines all the time and we'd get so much shit where the postage wasn't cancelled so whenever I could I'd just grab postage and hopefully it would pay for it.

Did you work at the Tower Records warehouse in Sacramento?

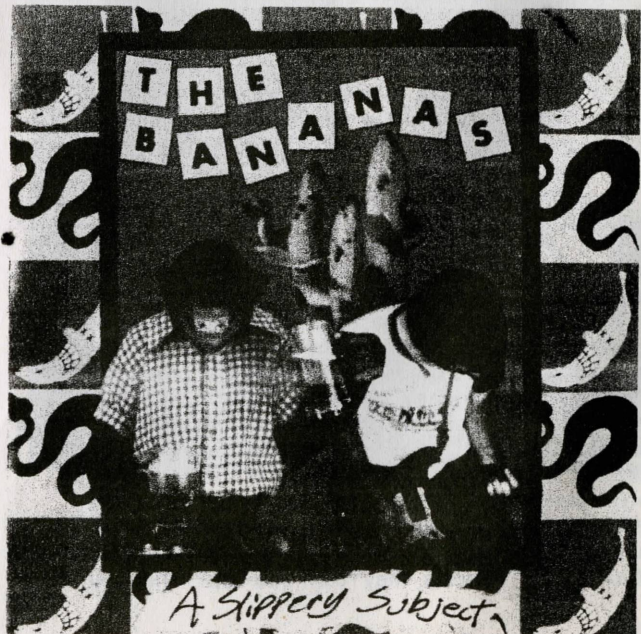
Yeah, that's sort of a legendary place to work. It's a really good job.

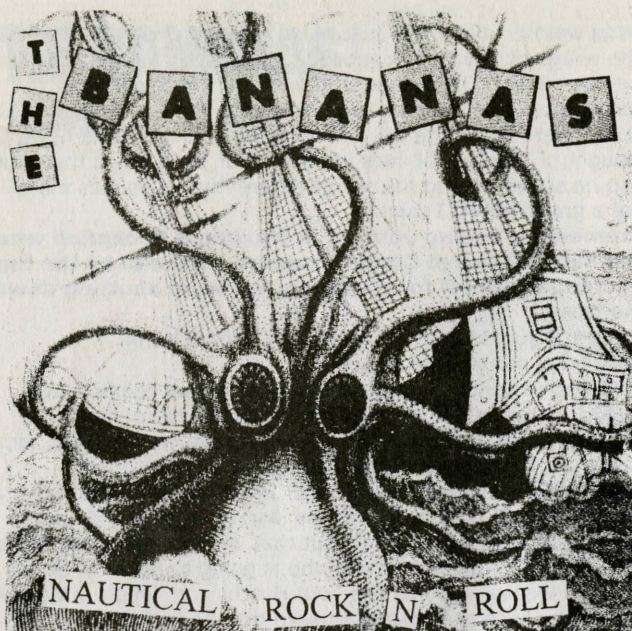
I went to your website today and I wrote down the list of bands that you're credited as being in.

(Laughs) And there are some that aren't even on there.

Wow. Of all those bands, which are active?

Bright Ideas. I'd like to say that Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Davenport are still together. Ski Instructors, we talk about





playing. I really like that band a lot. A lot of these bands are really old. A lot of these bands are Cassingle bands. The label after Secret Center was called Cassingle and Loving It, and we just put out cassingles of made up bands. Like I was saying about Sacramento, when people make something up, it's always really good. You're sitting around bored one day and you're like, Let's start a band called, I don't know, the Quesidilla Makers and you'll sit down and write a song about making quesadillas and it's brilliant. The second song is okay and you know the third song would suck. The only rule was that you couldn't have a real band do it. I wanted to have a label that was only fake bands. A surprising number of people gave me cassingles to put out. As a result, there's a lot of semi-legendary songs that only people in Sacramento know that are really cool, really funny.

That would make for a great cd compilation.

I definitely want to put out a Cassingle classic, it would be good throughout.

Could that travel beyond the Sacramento city limits?

(Laughs) I don't know, it might get erased once it got across the county lines. I just like the idea of writing something, recording it, going to Kinko's, and by the end of the day being like, Here's the cassingle. No wait; you're still psyched about it. Like the Sacto 8, that was these kids from Japan who visited and they knew about Secret Center stuff. They were the best. We sort of kidnapped them from San Francisco where they were staying, took them to Sac, and put on a show for them. They just loved Sacramento and they made a cassingle under the name the Sacto 8. You can't understand the words at all, the kid has the thickest Japanese accent, but the songs are all about how much he likes Sacramento, it's called "Sacramento Rules." It's hilarious. It was so touching. I couldn't have thought of this in a million years. There's one called the Similar Guys, that's Gavin (from the Fevers) and Mike from the Bananas because they look kind of the same. They're singing together, it's so good. Jason from FM Knives, me, and my friend Tristin are doing the music. I was walking home and writing the songs. There's another one that's just me and Mike called Honey I Shrunk the Band.

The Fevers, the Bananas; you have a moral obligation to release this stuff.

Cupertino, where Gavin lived, was one of the first Secret Center strongholds. Tickle, the Nitwits, these bands are awesome. Gavin had the exact songwriting style that I like. Poppy, but not pop punk, not just Ramones. Do you know that band, the Thermals, they're on Sub Pop? That guy,

Hutch, is from there. Gavin and Hutch were in a Cassingle band called the Carneys. I told them about the Cassingle label, I hadn't even done it yet, and two or three days later they sent me a tape; Here's our cassingle. I was like, Yeah, people that think like this!

I also like the Tiki Men a lot and it's only recently that I realized that you were in the Tiki Men.

That was a fun band. Supposedly there's some reissue coming out, but that involves us going through all the tapes and picking songs and shit.

I have a single and an lp.

There's three singles and an lp, and a single that never ended up coming out. We were only a band for a couple of years but records were coming out fairly regularly. I was never into surf stuff, I was kind of into garage stuff. We went to this Phantom Surfers show and we all went, That seems really fun. The Mummies were still around, stuff like that wasn't so slick; this was something I'd never thought of before, liking this sort of thing. Have you heard the Boulevard Park Trio? That's a single I put out. It's dudes from !!! and Yah Mos; that's surf stuff and it's fantastic. Then the Tiki Men were like, We'll form and we'll record this single. At that point that kind of music was taking off so much that all we had to do was put a single out and within two weeks Estrus was on the phone, You want to do a single? Hillsdale was like, I want to do a single. We recorded in this huge warehouse, everything was two-track, huge, cement, empty warehouse, just natural (reverb). The Estrus single I hate, we all hate it. It was mastered badly. We were like, We have new songs we want to record and he was like, No, no, just send me what you have. We were like, That's a shitty way to run a label. Here we are saying that within three weeks we could have songs that are 10 times better but it was like, Gotta have this week's releases out, or whatever. The songs are all right. The one I put out I really like. The one Hillsdale put out I really like a lot and the album I really like. I forget about the Tiki Men, I don't know why.

Well, you've got two dozen bands to your credit.

Because I was thinking about the Janked. (Another one of Scott's old bands; we stop for another round of drinks)

Where do you work?

Some office job. It pays really well, but it's fairly boring. It comes with a ton of vacation because the boss, he was really into music when he was younger and when I first started working there I was doing good enough where I had the courage to be like, Your guys' vacation policy is one and two weeks a year, I can't really do that. You don't have to pay me for my vacations, but I really need to go on tour, it's really important to me. And he's like, Okay, we can work that out. The fact that in three days I'm going to be back there is not even registering. I was up 'till like six in the morning with my friend Josh. I do this magazine called *Smashing Times*, which mainly has a cd in it and liner notes, almost like a bootleg cd with a theme. We just did one on this Brazilian band Os Novos Baianos and Josh turned me onto them, so I wanted him to write the liner notes with me. The Television Personalities are one of my favorite bands and they have a song called "The Smashing Times," and I had this dream that I was going to write this magazine about them called *The Smashing Times*, and it looked like the *New York Times*. Now that I have this cd burner I was like, why don't I just make a cd so you can hear the music yourself, make up your mind about it. I've got about five of them. There's a folk compilation. Marie did one about Paul Simon, she's a Paul Simon freak. It's so fucking good. My friend Jason did one on dance hall, then I did one on NRBQ, and then we did this Brazilian one. We'll probably do a Subway Sect one next. I like writing, but I only like writing when I've got something that I need to write about. I wrote this (points to liner notes for Bananas disc), which is supposed to be on the DL.

A couple issues ago I interviewed Scott Soriano and he said that, like a lot of towns, Sacramento has waves, peaks and valleys.

Yeah, it really peaked when that place the Loft was open.

Is that no longer?

Yeah, he doesn't want to do it any more. It's not closed down, it's there, it's a practice spot still. It's sorely missed. Like, the Four Eyes do this annual Christmas show where they play three hours of covers and it's typically half grueling and half hilarious, and it's at the Loft and for some reason, they're the one exception and they can still do this show every year. The last one, there was tons of people there and it was like this huge party, nobody wanted them to finish. There used to be a Halloween show every year, but it doesn't happen anymore. It was everyone's favorite show of the year every year. It went on for like seven years. There would be a theme that was picked. The first year it was punk, then it was goth. One year was bands with relatives in them.

So everyone would form temporary bands and cover songs by, like, the Kinks or Beach Boys or Cowsills?

Yeah. One was the British Invasion, one was no bands from the U.K. or America. The only rule was that no two people from an existing band can play in one of the Halloween bands. Part of the tradition is that almost every year a band has gotten together as a result of playing the Halloween show. Like the FM Knives, do you the FM Knives? They did the Undertones and then they kept playing. And the Frenchmen, the band I went on tour with (this summer), did Talula Gosh. And fucking, the singer from Talula Gosh was at their London show because she heard that. I was standing there (in London) going, From the Halloween show to this. Every band has been covered; you can't duplicate a band. Like we did the Kinks for British Invasion, so we couldn't do them for the brother bands.

You guys are good.

It's all (Scott) Soriano's rules. Everyone loves and hates Soriano. He does so much for everyone, he's like grandpa. He loves bitching about it, you know, You need to take the Loft trash out. He'll send us a list of new regulations that is so blown out of proportion, you'd think the bands had set the Loft on fire. He's moving to San Francisco and no one's filled his shoes. He works at a bookstore that he part owns, the Loft is above it and behind it. The guy who runs the bookstore is the unsung hero of the Sacramento music scene.

Time Tested, is that the name of it?

Yeah, Peter Keat, he's super liberal dude. He's always running for some office. Very quiet, in his 60s. Classic public television older guy, folk music, books. He's always trusted Scott so much. If the neighbors come and complain, he stands up for it. He's a really good force to have behind it. I always thought if there's an epic Sacramento compilation it'd be hilarious to have him on the cover, in the bookstore, on the phone. The Loft has been open for 10 years and the cops have come twice. Charmed. In the mid-90s it was insane. When Bikini Kill and bands like that started playing there it was like, Okay, now we're getting in a little over our heads here. You think there's no one in Sacramento and then a band like that plays and you're like, Who the fuck are all these people? These massive shows where you're like, How are the cops not coming to this? It's in an alley, sort of in this cove so that from the street you can't really see it, but it spills out into this adjoining parking lot, everyone's drinking beer. It was one of these things where it wasn't legal, but it wasn't illegal; it didn't exist on paper. It wasn't like we were running an illegal show, they can't cite you for permits or anything. And it shut itself down.

I'd heard of and harbored hidden hopes of playing the Loft one day.

It became somewhat legendary, because it was around for so long bands could rely on it. The way Sacramento is situated it's like, here's San Francisco, here's Sacramento, and then there's Portland. So a show in Sacramento is excellent. They only had shows on Sunday because Soriano was like, Sunday's a good day for a show because everyone plays the Bay area on the weekend and Sunday is a hard show to book on a tour.

It's up to us to find another place, but I can't see finding a space that's that sweet and will stay there for that long.

It seems like if you live in Sacramento you can get to know a lot about these great local bands, but if you're outside of the area it's almost like a fairy tale land, you can enter but you have to stay; bands from Sacramento can't leave there. It's like a C.S. Lewis story, there's limited two way passage.

It's a really weird place. Things move really slowly there. You'll be like, We've been a band for 10 years? It doesn't seem like it. It's weird. The band chick-chick-chick, the three exclamation points ("!!!")? They're all our friends from Sacramento and they were like, It's awesome living here, but if we're going to do anything we have to move. They were smart to do it, apparently. Bands don't try that hard in Sac. You'd mentioned the F.M. Knives earlier. I remember seeing them in New York a year ago and thinking, They left the confines of Sacramento, they will have to break up soon, a Sacramento band can't tour. And they have broken up.

I think that's part of what they didn't like at all. Ed, their drummer, is one of my best friends and he was like, I thought I was going to miss the F.M. Knives, but it's so fucking cool, I've got my weekends to myself again.

Everyone else is forming bands to get what they broke up to get away from.

It's the Sacramento way.



Top 10 Rock Sidemen Solo Projects

By Aaron Lefkove

1. Sylvain Sylvain & The Criminals

Featuring: Sylvain Sylvain (New York Dolls)
Album: *Bowery Butterflies* (Munster, 2000)

Why you should care: While David Johansen went on to a less than lucrative post-Dolls solo career that morphed him into the hard-to-take-seriously lounge lizard Buster Poindexter, and Johnny Thunders spent the latter half of the 70s and most of the 80s slowly sinking into the depths of heroin addiction, Syl Sylvain managed to release a few vastly overlooked pop-gems. *Bowery Butterflies* is a compilation of early singles and demo versions of some of the songs from his first solo album. Songs like "Teenage News," "14th Street," and "So Sorry" have stood the test of time. Syl even manages to tour a few times a year to this very day.

2. Izzy Stradlin And The Ju Ju Hounds

Featuring: Izzy Stradlin (Guns 'n' Roses)
Album: *Izzy Stradlin And The Ju Ju Hounds* (Geffen, 1992)

Why you should care: It's true, Slash and Duff did have solo albums ready to go shortly after G'n'R's demise, but neither one of them rocked as hard as the self-titled Ju Ju Hounds record. Stradlin's Stones inspired solo effort pays homage to all of his influences and then some. In the ultimate act of tribute he even covers a song from another notable rock sideman's solo outing, "Take A Look At The Guy," from Ron Wood's *I've Got My Own Album To Do*.

3. The Heartbreakers

Featuring: Johnny Thunders (New York Dolls)
Album: *L.A.M.F.* (Track, 1977)

Why you should care: Perhaps the only case of a rock sideman (it's debatable whether or not J.T. was actually a sideman) whose success may have eclipsed his previous band. After the dissolution of the Dolls, Thunders got together this rag-tag gang of rockers. Their early lineup even included Richard Hell! *L.A.M.F.* was the only real album released by The Heartbreakers, although numerous bootlegs, demos, and live recordings are readily available. Thunders went on to release several solo albums, including the highly acclaimed *So Alone*.

4. The Joe Perry Project

Featuring: Joe Perry (Aerosmith)
Album: *Let The Music Do The Talking* (Columbia, 1980)

Why you should care: OK, maybe you shouldn't care about this one.

5. Dee Dee King

Featuring: Dee Dee Ramone (Ramones)
Album: *Standing In The Spotlight* (Warner, 1988)

Why you should care: What's the difference between Run DMC and the Ramones you might ask? Well, both were from Queens, both were revolutionary for their time, and both groups defined a genre and a sound. This is where the similarities end, and when Dee Dee tried his hand at rap it failed miserably. This record is essential only for the Ramones enthusiast, and is an entertaining listen for anyone else. Definitely better than that Run DMC/Aerosmith collaboration.

6. Ron Wood

Featuring: Ron Wood (Rolling Stones/Small Faces)
Album: *I've Got My Own Album To Do* (Warner, 1974)

Why you should care: Ron Wood's first solo album features a cast that includes Stones bandmates Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, and Rod Stewart among others. The album opener, "I Can Feel The Fire" sounds like anything the Stones would have released in their 70s heyday, and "Take A Look At The Guy" later went on to be covered by a sideman from the next generation's Stones, Izzy Stradlin. This album blows away anything the New Barbarians or X-Pensive Winos ever released.

7. Ace Frehley

Featuring: Ace Frehley (KISS)
Album: *Ace Frehley* (Polygram, 1978)

Why you should care: At the height of their most pompous, and in an act of crass commercialism, the four members of KISS decided to each release a solo album simultaneously, so as to saturate the market even further with their clown shtick. Of the four albums, only Ace's has stood the test of time. "New York Groove" alone will make you forgive the band for their most recent *Alive IV*, backed by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (which, coincidentally, Ace did not appear on).

8. Neurotic Outsiders

Featuring: Duff McKagen and Matt Sorum (Guns'n'Roses), Steve Jones (Sex Pistols), John Taylor (Duran Duran)
Album: *Neurotic Outsiders* (Warner, 1996)

Why you should care: Not really a solo effort, but more of a sideman supergroup, Neurotic Outsiders began as a punk rock cover band in the Sunset Strip's Viper Room. The band soon became a more serious venture, and they managed to release an album and do a couple of tours before going on a permanent hiatus. On a side note, Glen Matlock's post-Pistols

project, Rich Kids, released a long since forgotten power-pearl with the Killed By Death classic "Ghosts Of Princes In Towers."

9. Euroboys

Featuring: Euroboy a.k.a. Knut Schreiner (Turbonegro)
Album: *Long Day's Flight Till Tomorrow* (Man's Ruin, 2000)

Why you should care: Technically these guys were together before Euroboy left to join Norwegian deathpunks Turbonegro. They were the house band on a well-known Norwegian TV program, and eventually found cult stardom with Scandinavian rock enthusiasts. Their sound, completely instrumental, is a mixture of Black Sabbath and the Ventures.

10. Foo Fighters

Featuring: Dave Grohl (Nirvana)
Album: *Foo Fighters* (RCA, 1995)

Why you should care: Another veritable sideman supergroup, Grohl's Foo Fighters have been making noise since the demise of Nirvana. While Grohl is the only member who has remained constant, the Foo's lineup has included, at one time or another, Pat

Smear of the Germs, Nate Mendel of Sunny Day Real Estate, and the drummer of Alanis Morissette's band. Weird.

5 Not-So-Memorable Sideman Solo Records (Or, Don't Quit Your Day Job!)

1. Slash's Snakepit (Slash of Guns'n'Roses)
2. Big Audio Dynamite (Mick Jones of the Clash)
3. Kryst The Conqueror (Doyle and Jerry Only of The Misfits)
4. Damn Yankees (The Nuge and some guy from Styx)
5. The other 3 KISS solo records

STYX — US AOR band formed in 1970 with succession of hit singles in US from 1975. 1979 number one single *Babe* is typical of their pleasant but unremarkable style.

SURVIVOR — '70s styled American AOR band whose theme from Rocky III *Eye Of The Tiger* was major '82 smash. Have maintained success with similarly crafted material, including US Football theme *American Heartbeat*.

CLIFFORD T. WARD — Singer/songwriter from English Midlands who went Top 10 with melodious debut single *Gaye* in 1973; scored again in 1975 with *Jigsaw Girl*.

PAUL WILLIAMS — Diminutive US writer who wrote hits for Carpenters and Barbra Streisand among others. Is currently carving out successful career as singer/writer/actor in movies and on television. In demand as soundtrack composer as well.

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Whoa Oh
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There's no delicate way to say this. I think the ergs are geniuses. I adored their ben kweller EP, but missed something. I loved it as a simple pop album. On dorkrockcorkrod (it's a palindrome!) it's easier to hear a lot of the complexities that are going on behind the guise of pop. It's like rivothead where I thought it was just the hooks that had me listening the whole time, but then I began to pay closer attention. They're all proficient players, and when you listen to what's going on in the background of the songs you hear some interesting things. I actually hear a strong jazz influence, but it never overrides the pop (which is a lot more power in the pop than the EP) and don't worry, it never even steps close to fusion. Broken-hearted lyrics prevail from their Carpenter-style set-up (you know, the drummer sings). Incredibly infectious - I listened to it 14 times yesterday.

Razorcake

Who are these guys? Nerd and Proud! An awesome trio cranking out pop punk and power pop. Along the ways of the old Cleveland Mice and the Yum Yums. Maybe a bit thrashier. Fans of retro power pop and fun punk gotta get this. MRR

All in all, the beauty of dorkrockcorkrod is that it's a disc I just don't want to take out of my CD player. I just want to push that "play" button again and again. And isn't that what ultimately defines great music, regardless of what genre you're talking about? This group's first EP, *F'n*, helped get me through one of the worst months of my life---and the band has only gotten better in the four years since. Simply put, Mikey Erg is one of the best songwriters out there. He can pen a catchy pop tune with the best of 'em, and here he and his bandmates have stuffed a disc full of should-be smash hits. I could tell you that "Pray for Rain" and the peppy British Invasion sendup "Rod Argent" are my picks to click, but the truth is that I might have two different fave tracks tomorrow. "Everything Falls Apart (And More)"? Tasty! The "Vampire Party" cover? Awesome! This is a remarkably strong album from open to close---exactly the kind of sensational debut LP you'd expect from a band that's taken all these years to hone its material and sharpen its attack. The only thing I like more than music that makes me wanna dance is music that always puts me in a good mood. And for that reason, I give dorkrockcorkrod my highest recommendation. Now Wave

If there was ever a band to whom the oft banded about phrase "putting the POP back in pop-punk" applied it would be The Unlovables. Crush, Boyfriend, Heartbreak is so loaded with sticky sweet pop songs and harmonies that you'll probably develop a bad case of diabetes before the album's over. Lead by the dual vocals of bassist Hallie Bullit (who's responsible for some of the best couplets I've heard in a long time: "do you know how rad today is / it's super-rad times infinity" from Today's the Day, "we're both so busy we work so hard / and I never see you / it's totally retarded" from Vacation and "I'm so lonely so misunderstood / no one can relate - no wait the Get Up Kids could" from Feelin' All Emo) and Chelsea Lacatena and driven by the sonic guitar dogpile of Frank Leone and Christian Stefos and the solid backbeat of Nj's uber-drummer Mikey Erg - Crush... is the audio equivalent of riding the Tilt - a-Whirl whilst downing a whole tub of cake frosting. When it's all over you're dizzy, a little queasy but you've definitely had one of the best times of your life.

Jersey Beat

If "girl-fronted pop-punk" is really a genre unto itself, then The Unlovables' debut album is unquestionably the best g.f.p.p. album to hit record shops since the release of the CLASSIC Josie and the Pussycats movie soundtrack. The bubblicious Crush/Boyfriend/Heartbreak is the perfect summertime record, but I know I'll love it just as much come this winter---when I'm cold and gloomy and totally jonesing for music that makes me feel all warm and sunny on the inside.

Now Wave

It's getting to the point where I know I've got to make a conscious effort not to listen to this CD any more, at least not for a few days. At first, I thought, what harm would come of me listening to it twice in a row? It's not a bad CD. The songs are definitely more pop than punk, but the lyrics are catchy and you can't help but tap your toe a bit in time with the music, bop your head, maybe shimmy and jiggle your shoulders a little. You start listening to the album at least once every day. Pretty soon, at random moments you find yourself absentmindedly humming a little tune, singing a couple of lyrics. In no time, you're waking up with an Unlovables song in your head, every morning, seven days in a row, and you know you're hooked. There's something addictive about this album, I swear. Don't start listening to it unless you're perfectly immune to infectious girl-fronted pop punk rock.

Razorcake



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A detailed poster for a music event. It features a central illustration of a person's face with a wide, toothy grin, surrounded by playing cards and a hand holding a card. The text is arranged around this central image, listing the bands and event details.

Strippers, Doughnuts, and Crummy P.A. Systems: A Two-Part Interview with **The Catholic Boys**

(with a special guest appearance by England's the Real Losers)

I was in agony as I boarded the 1:30 train leaving NYC. I had a splitting headache and my throat was hinting that something flu-like was coming my way. To make matters worse I was drop dead tired and knew that, taking the local train, I wouldn't be in bed until 3:30. When I got home I brought in the mail as a matter of routine, expecting to drop it on the coffee table before hitting the sack. But the envelope on top was from Trick Knee Productions and I knew what it contained: the Catholic Boys debut cd, *Psychic Voodoo Mind Control*. I got some water and popped in *Psychic Voodoo*. For months I'd had vague notions of these songs echoing in my mind, ever since I first saw the Catholic Boys live. I'd seen them at a club with awful sound, so I couldn't be certain what I heard that night. Pessimistically, I thought that maybe I'd been swayed by the band's energy and presentation, that the crappy P.A. masked marginal material. With the disc now in hand I had to find out if the songs were as good as I'd hoped. They were better. I listened to *Psychic Voodoo Mind Control* twice before finally collapsing that night, my headache wiped out, and I've kept the disc in steady rotation ever since.

When I heard that the Catholic Boys would be returning for two dates in June '04, I knew I'd be at both shows regardless of what was going on in my life. I went the first night, interviewed the band, and had a grand time. But listening to the tape the next day I realized that the interview provoked more questions in my mind than it answered. Fortunately, the Catholic Boys were generous enough to grant a follow-up interview, which was highlighted by an unscheduled cameo by the Real Losers, the Catholic Boys' English touring mates. (Interview by Mike Faloon)

Part one

We're standing here on 40th street, interviewing the Catholic Boys, and I swore – in an email to Paul – that I would not ask who your influences are or how the tour is going. But I will start off with a quote from this book, *American Hardcore* (by Steven Blush).

Eric: I started reading that book.

Oh, so you know. It's flawed, but worth reading. In one part he compares Milwaukee to Chicago, saying that Milwaukee is "nearby, lifeless, and ultimately inhospitable." Yet to this outsider it seems like Milwaukee has a lot of great bands. What's life like in Milwaukee?

Nick: I'm never bored. I mean, I'm bored when I have a job, but I don't ever have a job, so I just have fun all the time.

Paul: None of us have jobs.

Nick: It's boring during the day, we just play video games all day.

Eric: There's shows every night, pretty much. I do shows in our basement. Barely Legal house it's called. There's also a place called Riverwest Commons.

Paul: There's a lot of incest in Milwaukee. He's (Eric) in 25 bands.

Eric: Six or seven.

Paul: I'm only in one right now. But he's in two and he's in two (referring to Nick and Jon).

Nick: (Sees a guy dressed as an undertaker, top hat and all, walking away from the club) I thought the undertaker was going to come to our show, but I guess he's left.

It's a good omen when death is walking away from your show.

Nick: True. Milwaukee's pretty much the best place. Except for Montreal.

Jon: Montreal is our favorite place in the world, ever.

What makes Montreal so cool?

Nick: The drugs and the bands. Everything there just kicks ass. You have to go there.

Eric: We sold out the club last time we played there.

Jon: They're nuts for rock'n'roll, you don't even have to speak English.

You speak the international language of punk rock.

Paul: (To Jon) What did that girl say to you?

Jon: About what?

Eric: When you were in bed.

Jon: She had no pubic hair and she said, "You're very hairy." And I said, "You're not."

Paul: (in French accent) "I'm like a little girl."

And that was the extent of the conversation?

Jon: That was about it.

Eric: Ask Jon about last night.

Nick: He fucked this stripper last night in Columbus.

(Jon starts backing away)

I'll follow you down the sidewalk.

Paul: Jon's the heartthrob.

(Laughter...laughter subsides...pause)

Jon: No comment on last night.

None printed.

Jon: It has to do with tour so you can't ask about that.

Fair enough. We'll talk about the record. I saw you guys here (Siberia) last year. I like coming to shows here, but the sound system is awful. So I couldn't tell what I liked about the songs until I got the record (*Psychic Voodoo Mind Control*). There's a quantum leap between your first record and the cd. How much of that is deliberate – we don't want to sound like that anymore – and how much of it's just a natural, "This is the way we sound"?

Nick: It's all pretty much natural.

Paul: We just play whatever sounds cool. A lot of times we come up with songs together at practice. We'll play a guitar part for like 10 minutes before we all figure out what we're playing, and then it'll turn into a song.

Nick: Someone brings a song and then we play it and then it doesn't sound anything like it did originally. It sounds better.

Paul: We change it a lot. We try to make it the best song we can make it.

Jon: There's one song we wrote, 10 months ago, at least, and we just started playing it again.

Paul: We have a bunch of parts, and it's almost done. When it's done it'll be our best song ever.

Eric: We're going to call it "Carpel Tunnel" because Paul's going to get carpel tunnel from playing it.

Nick: The working title is "The Sandwich Song."

Paul: Every time we play it my hand freezes up and I can't hold my pick because I have carpel tunnel so bad. It's the most complicated song we have so far.

Are you doing your exercises?

Paul: No, I should. I don't know what to do.

You have to get a job so you can get occupational therapy. I used to work in a library and...(to Paul,



who'd started speaking at the same time)...no, go ahead...

Paul: Okay, I used to work in a Christian library.

Like a check out library or a bookstore?

Paul: It was a Christian resource center, you checked out books, you didn't buy them. Books and videos and DVDs.

Eric: (to Paul) Yeah, but what did you do there?

Paul: Jerked off in the bathroom, looked at internet porn.

So you're a lapsed Catholic boy?

Paul: I'm not a Catholic boy, I'm a liar. None of us are Catholic, except him (Nick).

Nick: I was baptized and confirmed Catholic, but I don't go to church.

Jon: I'm a non-practicing Catholic.

Eric: Protestant. I don't go to church. My dad still plays the organ there, but I don't go.

(To Paul) And yourself?

Paul: I don't know, nothing. Non-denominational.

Non-denominational agnostic?

Eric: We're in the church of punk.

You guys were saying earlier that you recorded the other day...

Jon: We just recorded on Monday with Jay and Alicja from the Lost Sounds.

Paul: It's going to come out on Bancroft Records.

Do you guys have a lot of other songs other than those seven you recorded on Monday?

Paul: No, we recorded everything.

Nick: We need to start working on new shit. We just practice and get high.

And enjoy Milwaukee. Are you guys happy with the way your cd turned out?

Paul: Yeah, everybody's happy. We were surprised. So was Todd (from Trick Knee Productions, who released the record). He was like, How did you retards record this?

Nick: That's exactly what he said, "I look at you guys and you're a bunch of fucking retards and then you make this."

Paul: We were so fucking drunk when we recorded it, too. Right after we recorded the vocals I puked like 10 times.

Nick: Yeah, he puked and I passed out.

Eric: He didn't even know that he recorded vocals.

Nick: I forgot, they told me the next day.

With the singing, I can accept that because I have no idea what you're singing about. But not with the music, you guys sound so on. One of the things that I like about the record is that it has these simple parts where everyone in the band stomps together and then other parts where it all takes off and the guitars are going in two different directions. Is that a deliberate thing?

Paul: On my part it is.

Nick: I get bored listening to bands that have two guitars play power chords together the whole time.

Paul: There's no point having two guitarists unless you're going to do something different.

Then you end up like the Eagles, Let's play the same solo at the same time!

Paul: That's the Mystery Girls.

(Laughter all around)

The gloves are off.

(Laughter subsides, there's a pause.)

Nick: That was funny though.

Is that for publication?

(Group consensus) Sure.

Paul: They're good friends of ours.

I didn't like them the first time I saw them, but I like the record. I saw the Little Killers, then I saw you guys and then they came on and I thought, I don't want to watch the Black Crowes, I've gotta go.

Nick: I think they were in the middle of a meltdown at that point. They had a problem on that tour.

Jon: We got to Buffalo the next night and Jordan (Mystery Girls guitarist) punched Matt, the guitar player, in the face.

Nick: Pulled his hair and slammed his head on the ground.

Eric: It was all because he took trucker speed.

Nick: It's funny in retrospect. Yeah, trucker speed and Red Bull to drive from here to Buffalo overnight. He was pissed.

Eric: Me and James, the other drummer, cut open a floor tom and pissed in it in the car because we didn't want to wait.

Paul: And we had doughnuts in their afterward, too.

Nick: We picked up a garbage bag full of doughnuts out of a dumpster at a gas station. It was food for the rest of the tour.

Paul: It was the piss bass drum that turned into a doughnut dispenser.

That's disgusting. Maybe you can help me pronounce some of the names of towns in your area. I read them on record covers, but I've never heard them pronounced. N-e-e-n-a-h?

Nick and Eric: Neenah (like "99 Red Balloons" Nena)?

Jon: That's where they're from.

And how about W-a-u-w-a-u...

Nick: Wauwautosa (Wah-wah-toe-sa)?

That was my guess.

Jon: That's where the Kill-a-watts are from.

That's why I know that one. Are these suburbs of Milwaukee?

Nick: Not Neenah, it's in the Fox River Valley.

Eric: It's sort of a suburb of Appleton, but I wouldn't call it that.

Paul: Neenah is like 80 miles away from Milwaukee.

Eric: Closer to Green Bay.

Paul: Twenty five miles from Green Bay.

Eric: (Sees drummer from the Real Losers walking by with a slice of pizza) The Real Losers got pizza.

Paula (from the Real Losers): Are you being interviewed?

Sorry.

No problem, you have to eat.

Nick: Ask us something about the Real Losers.

Okay, tell me about the Real Losers.

Nick: They're my favorite band.

Paul: Last night Chris and Paula from the Real Losers were staying in this guy's bed, from the Feelers, and he came in their bed while they were sleeping and started feeling up Chris.

Nick: And he's like, (in British accent) I've been felt by a Feeler.

Paul: So they slept in the van with me and Jon. After Jon had sex in the van.

Nick: With a stripper.

I think by not asking for tour stories, more tour stories are coming to the surface.

Nick: That's the most exciting part of my life, going on tour. So if I tell a story, nine times out of 10 it's about tour.

Eric: It's the most exciting part of my life.

But wait, you guys were saying how much liked living in Milwaukee.

Jon: Yeah, but you have to take into consideration that we like getting drunk and high. That's all we do.

Nick: Yeah, that's fun for us. But when you go out on the road you're getting drunk and getting high in different places. With different people. (Facitiously) It's crazy!

Because you're sitting on a different couch.

Nick: And then you don't have to clean up in the morning.

Before we sign off, thanks for the interview. Also, I brought some stuff for you to read on tour. I have copies of a zine called *Chin Music*.

Eric: Brewers are the team to beat, man.

They kicked the Mets' ass, took two out of three games.

Nick: That's another thing that's fun about Milwaukee, they have dollar seats called the Uecker seats. You get there an hour early, pay a dollar, and get really drunk and go watch the game.

Watch players bat sausages over the head. (Referring to an incident last summer in which Randall Simon, of the visiting Pittsburgh Pirates, hit a guy, who was dressed in a sausage suit, over the head with a bat.)

Nick: I wasn't at that game. Actually, though, to that guy's credit, the next time he came back he bought an entire section of fans Italian sausage. I was at that game.

Randall Simon. A few years ago when John Rocker was at the height of his idiocy — going off on women, and gays and Puerto Ricans — he referred to one of his black teammates as a monkey. The guy he was talking about was Randall Simon. Proud owner of two baseball footnotes.

Part two

So, you guys were kidding that you don't need the rest of the band here because you're the songwriters, the Lennon and McCartney.

Paul: Eric (drums) writes songs, but he's only written three at the most.

Nick: And they're all 40 seconds long.

Just to clarify, you've let your drummer write songs?

Nick: Oh yeah.

You've heard the joke about how do you know when a band's about to break up?

Nick: They start asking the drummer for ideas.

Right, Hey, guys want to hear a song that I wrote?

Speaking of drummers, the other night Pete Hayes, from the Figgs, was at the show and he said, That guy (Eric) doesn't play beats, he plays riffs.

Nick: Yeah, he plays lead drums, like Keith Moon. You know what's funny, I played Eric this Who video that I have and Eric's like, I don't understand Keith Moon, I don't like how he drums. I was like, What do you mean? You do the same thing as him, it's just a different kind of music. You play lead drums just like Keith Moon. And he's like, It just doesn't make sense, I don't understand Keith Moon. I was like, Whatever, dude. I thought he'd be his favorite drummer.

That's weird, because they both play riffs.

Nick: Yeah, Jon (bass) is pretty much the rhythm and Eric just goes crazy. Like Animal from the Muppets. Actually, I think Animal was based on Keith Moon.

And eventually Animal choked on his own vomit after drinking a lot, just like Keith Moon.

Nick: Exactly.

Eric doesn't really have apnea, right? That's just a nickname.

Nick: No, he made that up. I always wondered that too.

Before I knew him I wondered if he really had sleep apnea. I don't really get it, I don't know why he would decide to pick that.

You've been in other bands, like the Tears and the Strong Come On's. Which of those bands came first.

Nick: The first band that I was in that actually played a show was the Strong Come On's. We played an Oblivions cover set, hence the name Strong Come On's, like that Oblivions song.

Turns out we didn't sound like the Oblivions at all, but we never changed our name because we couldn't think of anything else. But we love the Oblivions. So, it was the Strong Come On's, then the Catholic Boys, and then the Tears.

Paul: The Tears started playing right when the first Catholic Boys 7" came out, the one with the Kill-a-watts.

Nick: No, we started playing when we lived at Pussy Central, that's when we started practicing.

Wait a minute, Pussy Central?

Eric: Yeah, our landlord called the place Pussy Central.

That's your landlord's nickname for the place?

Nick: Yeah, he was, like, This is going to be pussy central, guys.

Paul: Me and him (Nick) lived together, it was our house.

Dude, that guy was fucked up. He came to our house, just before we moved out, and he's, like, I'm going to kick all your asses! I'll send guys to beat up this fucking guy (referring to the omnipresent Lugs).

Nick: And he's like, You think you've got this big fucking guy? I can find some guys to take care of him.

Paul: He threatened to beat our asses.

Nick: Then he's like, My wife's a lawyer, she's going to sue you.

This guy owns property?

Paul: It as an illegal house.

Nick: It was an old scuba shop. It was in a commercial area — I only lived there for one summer, he (Eric) lived there for much longer — but it was a scuba shop and it had no windows.

Paul: No heat.

Nick: And 105 degrees in the summer. No heat, no air. So in winter it's buttass cold and in summer you take off all your clothes and you you're still like, Oh, god...

Paul: You feel like you're in a concentration camp.



Nick: It was horrible. It was a sauna.
Paul: People would always bang on our door. They thought it was a bar. They'd come in, like, Hey! And we'd be, like, What the fuck? This is our house! Get the fuck out!

Was this in Milwaukee or Green Bay?

Paul and Nick: This was in Neenah.

I was thinking I should put a map of the Milwaukee and Green Bay areas with the interview. Neenah.

Wauwautosa. Did I get that right?

Nick: Yeah, Wauwautosa. We call it Tosa.

I don't do a zine to learn about music, I want to learn how pronounce the names of Wisconsin's small towns.

Nick: There's one city called Aconomowock.

Where is that?

Nick: (To Eric) Where is Aconomowock?

Eric: It's north of Milwaukee.

There used to be a zine in Green Bay called *If You Have Scene, We Have Zine*. He called himself the Punk Parent. I think he used to run the sound board at the Concert Café. (In hindsight, I think the Punk Parent only helped with now and again.)

Nick and Paul: Mitch?

His name was Dan.

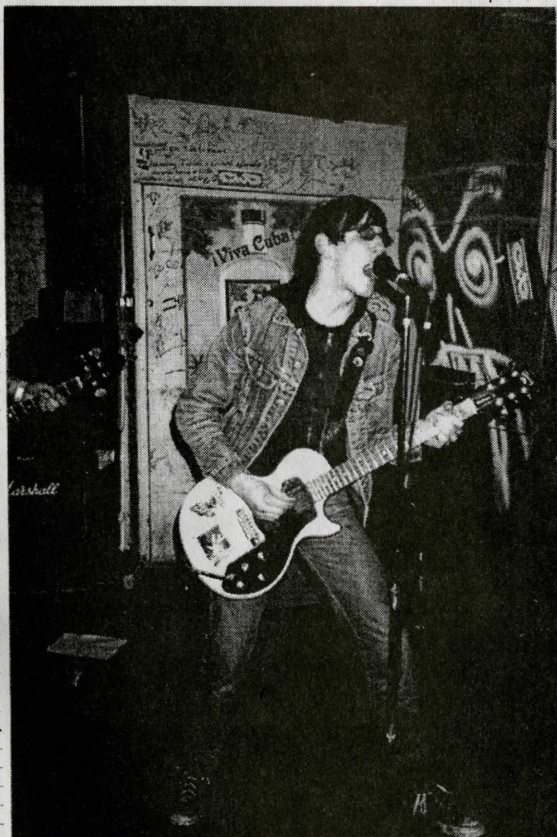
Nick: That must have been before Mitch, that was before my time.

Paul: Mitch was the guy, he constantly got high.

Nick: You'd be like, Can I get more vocals in the monitors, and it'd be like, Mitch? Mitch? You look and he's in the basement somewhere, you couldn't even find him. He was this 60-year-old man with a sweater vest. He looked like Mr. Rogers. To get good sound you'd have to give him a pack of cigarettes.

Paul: If you gave him a pack of cigarettes, he'd be, like, I swear your sound is going to be amazing.

He would come out and say that?



Nick: He was a weirdo. Lived with his mom. He was like 55.

Paul: All he did was sound, that was his life.

Did you forget the pack of cigarettes tonight, is that what happened? (Referring to horrendous sound at the club.)

Nick: I don't know what the fuck happened tonight.

Paul: I think the Real Losers forgot their pack of cigarettes. (The Real Losers left the stage after two songs due to the crummy sound.—Ed.)

That said, I'll never forget their set.

Nick: They're such a good band. We've played in the shittiest bars on this tour and every place has sounded better than tonight.

Paul: We played in Nashville, it was a mic into an amp.

Nick: There wasn't even a sound guy. One of the guys from the other band brought a little bitty self contained PA with one mic.

Paul: In the bathroom was spray painted, PA sucks. Everywhere.

Nick: Right, We need a new PA system. PA, PA, PA.

Everywhere. On the garbage can, on the walls. There was a huge PA but it didn't work and he brought this little piece of shit PA and it sounded awesome.

Nick: I don't know what happened tonight.

Paul: It's too professional.

Nick: I hate playing big places like this.

I thought it was cool that you guys got to play on stage with an enormous Persian rug. It's like Emerson, Lake, and Palmer.

Nick: Yeah, the drums didn't move at all.

Paul: I had a good time, but the whole time I was, like, This sounds like shit. After we played, Chris, Real Losers' bass player was, like, I kept telling the sound guy to turn the vocals up and he wouldn't do it. And he was, like, If it sounds like shit I'm going to quit after one or two songs.

He said that before the Real Losers set?

Paul: Yeah, and they did (quit after two songs).

I thought he was just goofing. They walked off after their second song and then the DJ started playing a song, but then I assumed they'd come back.

Nick: That's kind of what I thought, too.

Paul: They're great guys. They're not assholes.

Nick: They're the best dudes.

Paul: But at the same time they knew it wasn't worth it.

The Real Losers are right over there, should we go ask them?

Paul: Yeah, we should. Let's go, let's go. (To Chris) Chris, we're doing a Catholic Boys interview. You guys sounded like shit.

Nick: What did you think of that?

I thought your set was great. I'm so glad...

Chris: (Leans into my face) Fuck you. I'm getting so much shit for tonight, I want to kill somebody. (Points to yours truly)

Don't kill me, I liked it.

Chris: Did you interview these guys on Thursday.

Yes, I did. But I didn't ask any of the questions I had in mind so I wanted to continue the interview tonight.

Chris: Let me drink this. (Takes the Reingold from my hand, takes a sip.) Okay, tell me something.

I've told you that I enjoyed your show...

Chris: Thank you.

...and I thought that after the two songs you were going to come back...

Chris: You do the interview.

...and I think it's funnier that you didn't come back.

But, no, I hear enough of myself all the time.

Chris: I like it, keep talking.

These guys were saying that before your show you said that if the sound didn't get better, you'd walk off.

Chris: Okay, there's a whole plethora of emotions going on in my mind right now. The first, second, and third are the

Jagermeister that I downed before playing. The fourth emotion is feeling guilty for leaving the stage. The fifth emotion is not playing the show. But, here's the fucking cruncher, okay, this is the guy who released our record (puts his arm around his friend and pulls him into the conversation), this is Darren from Squirrel (Records). He came up to sing part of a song and he said it was the worst sound he's ever heard on stage, and I just got really depressed about it and I had to leave. I feel guilty because I should have kept going, but I feel good and bad because the Catholic Boys sounded much better than we did. I had to leave, it was the worst.

I will never forget that set. He'd sent me a copy of your record...

Chris: You knew what we sound like, and that sounded like shit.

The reason I like the record is because...

Chris: It's the guitars, isn't it?

I couldn't hear the guitar tonight.

Chris: Thank you, thank you. I feel shit. I feel like crying. We've had an intense tour with the Catholic Boys. It's been the best tour and we probably won't come back to the United States.

(Trying to clarify) Probably won't come back?

Well, I don't know, this is just a hobby for us. I'm married to this girl (points to Paula, aka Hot Dog, wife and Real Losers' drummer). The Catholic Boys have been the ones who inspired me to keep going. We've played shitty shows in Nashville, where we had the shittiest PA — there's not microphones involved — they just played and it sounded great. We come here tonight and there's big expectations and everyone's excited, and when it sounds like shit we all got depressed. I told the guy twice that it sounded like shit and he was like, he didn't seem to give a fuck. So as soon as we got on stage and it sounded like shit I was in a bad mood. I apologize to everyone who came out to see the Real Losers, but I just couldn't do it. I've played bad shows with the Real Losers but we had to leave. I'm sorry, I'm really sorry. People been giving me shit about it. I don't know what to do. I'm fucked. I'm pissed. I don't know what to do, laugh, cry or...

Paul: Hurl.

Chris: Or hurl.

Have a good time tonight, and play a better show tomorrow.

Chris: Thanks for, like, giving me the time of the day. If you think it sounded bad...

I could hear the drums. I could hear you. I could see your guitar player, but I couldn't hear him.

Chris: End of story. I feel better. My conscience is clear.

(At this point we part with the Real Losers and the conversation moves onto favorite records we've heard lately.)

I like the Piranhas. I like the Fuse album they (In The Red) put out.

Paul: See, that's a little too arty, but those guys are really cool.

Nick: Oh yeah, they stayed at our house for a couple days. Their van broke down.

Paul: I love those guys.

Nick: They ended up missing a few shows and staying at our house and they're just, like, crazy but really nice.

Paul: They're great people and they're great live, but the record is too arty.

It's interesting that you mention the "art punk" tag because you guys get that label sometimes, too.

Paul: I don't think we're arty, though. Do you think we're arty?

No, I just think...I think it's him (pointing to Eric, the drummer). I think it's the fact that the drums aren't beats, they're riffs.

Nick: They're lead drums.

And you guys as guitar players...

Nick: The other night when you interviewed us I was saying how there are bands that have two guitars and they're playing the exact same thing, I love some bands that do that, but it's a lot more fun to mess around and shit.

Paul: Some people say we're arty and I think that's funny because I think we're just-playing punk, I don't think we're playing anything different.

Nick: Sometimes it's like you're playing a song and you're, like, What's missing here? I don't know, let's do *this*. And it happens and it's like, Yeah, do *that*!

I would say that's the difference, most bands don't try to fill in those gaps.

Paul: Every song I write, he comes up with a lead part for the entire thing. And every song he writes I come up with a lead for the entire thing.

And Eric comes with his own lead.

Paul: Some people in Boston last night and they were like, Are you guys jazz? I was like, I fucking hate jazz. And they were like, That's uncool.

The drumming is fucked up.

Paul: The drumming makes the Catholic Boys.

I think I'm more aware of that after tonight then ever before. (Eric returns) We were talking about your nickname earlier: Eric Apnea. It's a relatively obscure choice of nicknames.

Eric: I wanted to start a band called Sleep Disorders when I was in high school and each member would have a different one. If you had a narcoleptic who could fall asleep while you're playing. Then there's cataplexy where you stay awake but you can't control your muscles. Apnea, a singer who snored.

How did you find out about these sleep disorders?

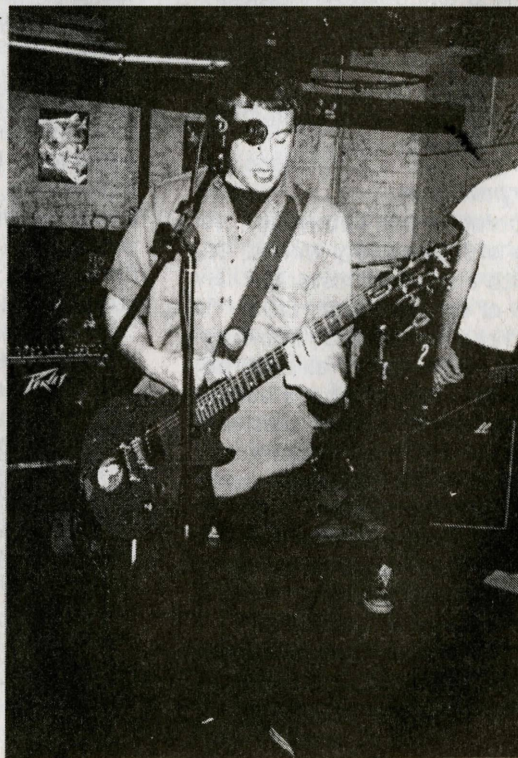
Eric: In our psychology class.

Nick: There's a one-man band who used to be in Madison, now he's in Milwaukee, Sleeping Disorder — Sleepy D, for short. He plays accordion...

Paul: (singing) Contra, thirty lives, contra, up, down, left, right...

Nick: (continues talking) Sleepy D. That guy sucks now.

Paul: Yeah, but that song is awesome.



Movie Review Section in Dire Need of a Newer, and Preferably Shorter, Title

by Mike Faloon

The Control Room

The Al-Jazeera television network, located in Doha, Qatar, reaches 40 million Arab viewers each night. I've heard a lot of references to the network (including the Bush administration's assertion that Al-Jazeera is "the mouthpiece of Osama Bin-Laden"), but knew very little about it. So I was mildly disappointed to discover that *The Control Room* focuses on the network's coverage of the Iraqi War, as opposed to a wider-ranging overview. That said, *The Control Room* is an interesting case study in how news coverage in the U.S. and the Middle East differs. The Western journalists interviewed here, largely from the U.S., work on the assumption that they are objective, while the Al-Jazeera reporters strive for objectivity but recognize that subjectivity seeps into their work. As depicted here Al-Jazeera seems worthy of standing shoulder to shoulder with Mother Theresa, and I'm sure the reality of the network isn't quite so idealistic, but at the same time there's nothing to suggest, as Donald Rumsfeld has, that Al-Jazeera is the sort of network that would go to bombed locations, plant women and children, and then portray them as victims. Though flawed, *The Control Room* is an invaluable, eye-opening documentary.

The Corporation

The Corporation is a two-hour overview of how society works. It opens with a succinct historical overview of corporations in the U.S., and the filmmakers, knowing that many viewers may already be familiar with some of what's being presented, keep the pace relatively brisk and use the right amount of humor. One of the ideas stressed in the introduction is that corporations, in the eyes of the law, are granted the same rights that individual citizens are. So if corporations are like people in a legal sense, the filmmakers want to find out how the corporation compares to the individual in a

psychological sense. They subject the modern corporation to a personality diagnostic checklist, using the criteria from the World Health Organization's ICD-10 and the Manual of Mental Disorders DSM-IV. Their diagnosis? The modern corporation is a psychopath. It's a brilliant device and, like the movie's introduction, insures that *The Corporation* doesn't become a mere parade of droning, talking heads while at the same time not overcompensating and dumbing down the material. The balance of the movie covers selected contemporary issues — child labor, water rights, etc. — from a variety of viewpoints, including academics, activists, and leaders of industry, and delves into the people and stories behind the soundbites and newsclips; it's stunning how candid the interviewees are. For example, there are people like commodities broker Carlton Brown ("9/11 was a financial blessing in disguise...in devastation there is opportunity") and Lucy Hughes (one of the most evil people alive, she created the Nag Factor study which was designed to help marketing companies get kids to nag their parents into buying the products they see advertised). My friend Brian says that *The Corporation* tries to do too much, at times straying from the general topic of corporate behavior — the section on advertising, for example — but I found the movie so well done that I was willing to follow the filmmakers down the occasional stray path. In this the season of "right wing society is pissing me off" documentaries, this is the best one I have seen.

The Five Obstructions

In 1967 Jorgen Leth made a short film called *The Perfect Human*. He's continued making movies ever since and, among other ventures, teaches at a film school. There he made quite an impression on a student named Lars Von Trier. Lars was greatly influenced by Jorgen, but found Jorgen's movies

to be too detached and cerebral. Enter *The Five Obstructions*. Lars convinces Jorgen to remake *The Perfect Human* with a variety of rules, or obstructions, devised by Lars. The more random the rules, the more interesting both the processes and the resulting products. In the first of the five remakes, Jorgen can have no shot last for more than 12 frames, and he must shoot the film in a place he's never visited. (He chooses Cuba.) In the second, Jorgen is forced to film in "the most miserable place on earth." (He opts for Bombay.) Despite the restrictions Jorgen continues to make impersonal, observational films. Unfortunately, for those of us watching *The Five Observations* it's diminishing returns as Lars' rules seem to be born out of the frustration of failing to get from Jorgen the results he, Lars, seeks. (Lars to Jorgen: "You're unmarked by these films.") It's an interesting premise and would have made a great short. As it is there isn't enough gas in the tank to carry the movie past half an hour, and it erodes into tedious exercises in mental masturbation; *The Five Obstructions* is three obstructions too long.

Hearts and Minds

Michael Moore cites *Hearts and Minds*, Peter Davis' 1974 documentary on the U.S. war in Vietnam, as the movie that inspired him to pick up a camera. Davis pulls no punches in seemingly giving everyone — American and Vietnamese soldiers, officials from the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, a former South Vietnamese president, civilians on both sides — a chance to speak candidly. Everyone, that is, but director himself, whose on-screen absence is ironic given his influence on Moore, the definitive omnipresent documentarian. *Hearts and Minds* is fascinating, especially with the benefit of hindsight, but it is not for the faint of heart. I went with two other people and both left early because the war footage was so graphic.

Are there parallels to the present day? Absolutely, that's where *Hearts and Minds* is most effective. Rent it, I'd love to exchange notes.

The House of Flying Daggers

What a feast for the eyes! The story takes a little while to get moving, but once the characters hit the forest *Flying Daggers* never looks back. Recommended, especially if you dug *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* or *Hero*. (Note to *Lone Wolf and Cub* fans: The final fight scene is reminiscent of *The Gateless Barrier*.)

In the Realms of the Unknown

I saw *Realms*, Jessica Yu's movie about writer and painter Henry Darger, four days after suffering through *The Aviator*, Martin Scorsese's Howard Hughes biopic. Talk about a study in contrasts — *Realms* is brief (81 minutes), whereas *The Aviator* is bloated (169 minutes); *Realms* examines the life of someone whose work was unknown in his lifetime — and remains difficult to penetrate — and the relative dearth of source material (though Darger was a prolific writer and painter, there are only three photos of him and, more telling, but three people who knew him well enough to be interviewed for the film) made me want to know more about Darger, whereas *The Aviator* presents highlights in a list-like manner — no event is given greater significance than any other — so that the abundance of material made me care less about Hughes. *Realms* doesn't afford us the opportunity to gaze at Leo DiCaprio's bare bum, but it's definitely the better picture. Thumbs up.

Let's Be Frank

This could easily be subtitled *Let This Serve as a Litmus Test as to How Much You, the Viewer, Enjoy Geeking on Politics*. Ostensibly about how Congressman Barney Frank (D-MA) served as the public voice of support for Clinton during the latter's impeachment trial, *Let's Be Frank* is really a pilot for the Barney Frank talk show. The producers assume you already know all about the trial — no recaps for you, Mr. Bury Your Head in the Sand — and let Frank have the spotlight the whole time, whether

on the floor of Congress, handling the media, or chatting with aides; it's a whole lot of Frank. I liked it, but I felt like I was class again.

Monster Road

Last time out filmmakers Brett Ingram and Jim Haverkamp made *Armor of God*, a tightly wound and remarkably good short about Scotty Irving, a musician who makes the most unholy of sounds in the name of the Lord. With *Monster Road* they're again taking on an enigmatic personality, this time stop motion artist Bruce Bickford, but the results are completely different. *Monster Road* is feature-length and the added time yields a more leisurely pace, a chance to immerse yourself in Bickford's work — he meticulously builds each of his models and films all of his productions by himself — and, more importantly, his personal life. As it turns out *Monster Road* is as much about Bickford's father, a retired engineer who worked in the defense industry for years, and the elder Bickford's influence on his son's art. It's like Ingram and Haverkamp set out to make a movie about an outsider artist and then, as they got to know him better, let the focus of the flick shift to the family background that influenced Bickford. I found my first viewing of *Monster Road* to be really intriguing, but think it works best as a movie you see two or three times, sifting through the various personal and artistic dynamics.

Napoleon Dynamite

I'm surprised how many friends haven't seen this movie, so here's my two cents: I loved it. The world of *Napoleon Dynamite* is populated solely by freaks of various stripes, and the audience is put in the role of straightman. There's no one in the movie to comment on the characters' numerous peculiarities and it's incredibly satisfying to soak up this weird world at your own pace. Sure, *Napoleon Dynamite* looks a lot like a Wes Anderson movie, especially the title sequence, but it's not like Wes invented that style. Plus, great characters are great characters, and *Napoleon Dynamite* has 'em in droves. The

ending felt rushed and contrived but not enough to undermine the previous 75-80 minutes.

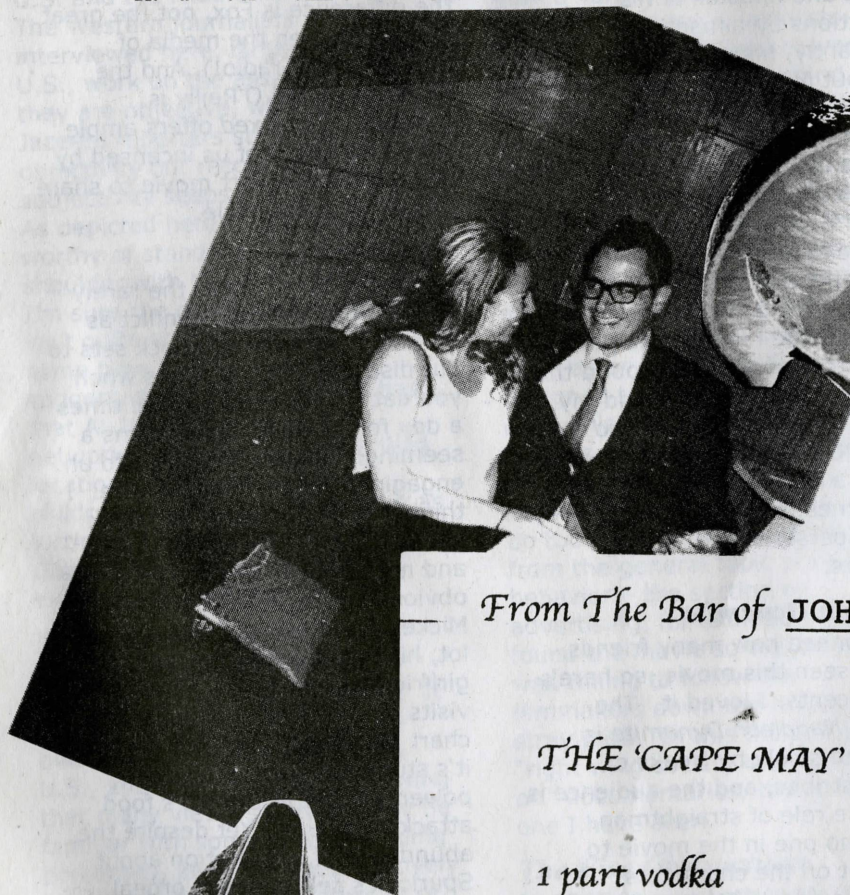
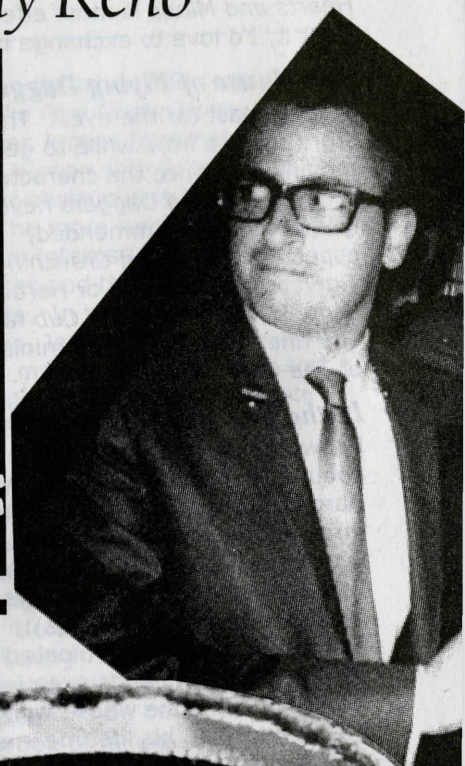
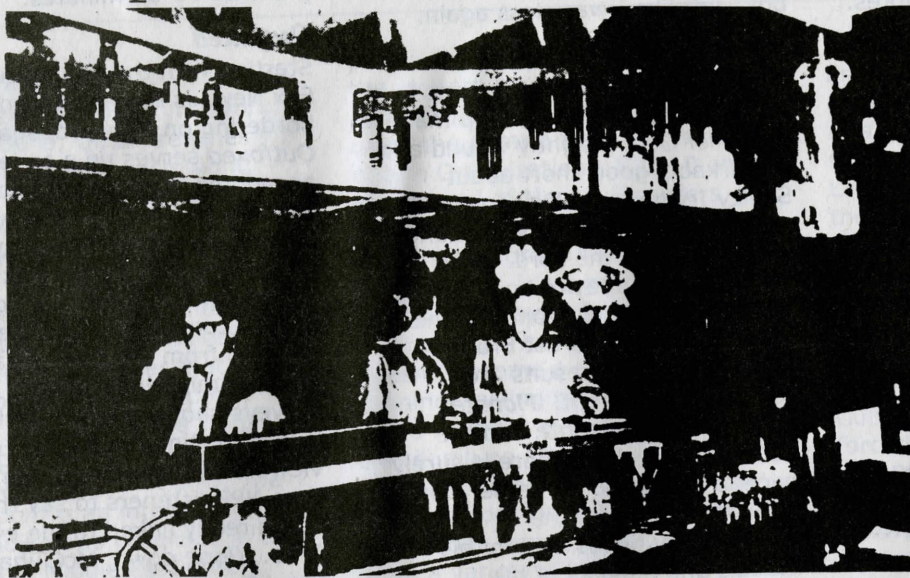
Outfoxed

Starting with the assumption that Fox News is heavily biased, bordering on pure propaganda, *Outfoxed* serves up a series of anecdotes to prove that point, wasting no time on illusions of objectivity. There are numerous interviews with former Fox reporters that show how Fox's overtly conservative policies are dictated from the top. What's most illuminating, though, are the surveys showing how effective Fox is in distorting the truth. Fox viewers were six times more likely than NPR listeners to say that Iraq was directly linked to the events of 9/11. (Pipe down, McLuhan-ites — the difference is Fox, not the great divide between the media of television and radio!) And the segment on Bill O'Reilly is priceless. *Outfoxed* offers ample ammo for those of us incensed by Fox News; a perfect movie to share with your racist uncle.

Supersize Me

Supersize Me explores the rarely utilized *man vs. food* conflict as filmmaker Morgan Spurlock sets out to discover what happens when you eat at McDonald's three times a day for 30 days, and it turns a seemingly limited premise into an engaging feature-length movie. I think it works because Spurlock keeps the focus on the premise and not himself. We see all of the obvious scenes — frequent visits to Mickey D's, barfing in the parking lot, his increasingly concerned girlfriend — along with numerous visits to a variety of doctors who chart his rapidly declining health; it's stunning how quickly and powerfully the McDonald's food attacks his body. Yet despite the abundance of information about Spurlock's self-imposed ordeal, we know little about his personal life. By the end of the movie I still didn't know what he did for a living. And that's for the better, *Supersize Me* doesn't come across as a bizarre 90-minute audition tape. So, in the end, Spurlock shows us the ugly truth about fast food that Eric Schlosser told us about in *Fast Food Nation*.

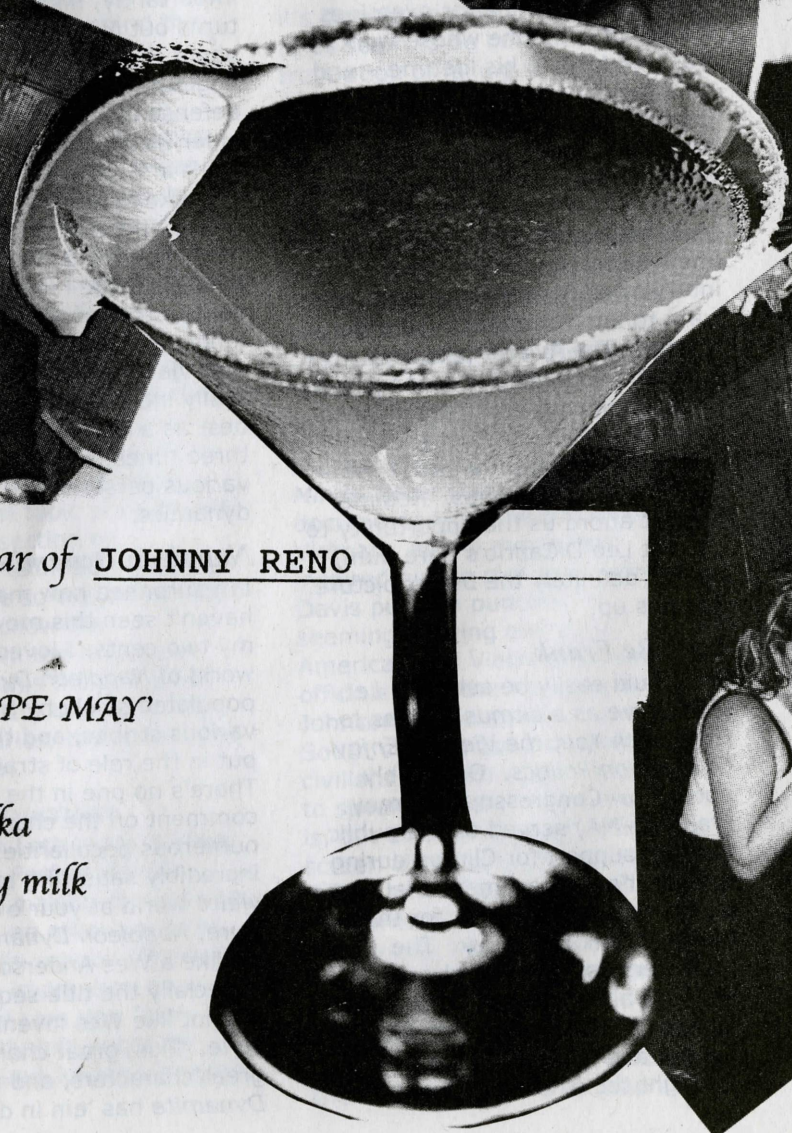
Keepin' a Steady Beat with Johnny Reno



From The Bar of JOHNNY RENO

THE 'CAPE MAY'

1 part vodka
2 parts soy milk



From The Bar of JOHNNY RENO

THE 'CRY FOR HELP'

1 part vodka
2 parts soy milk
4 Ambien
4 Lorezepam

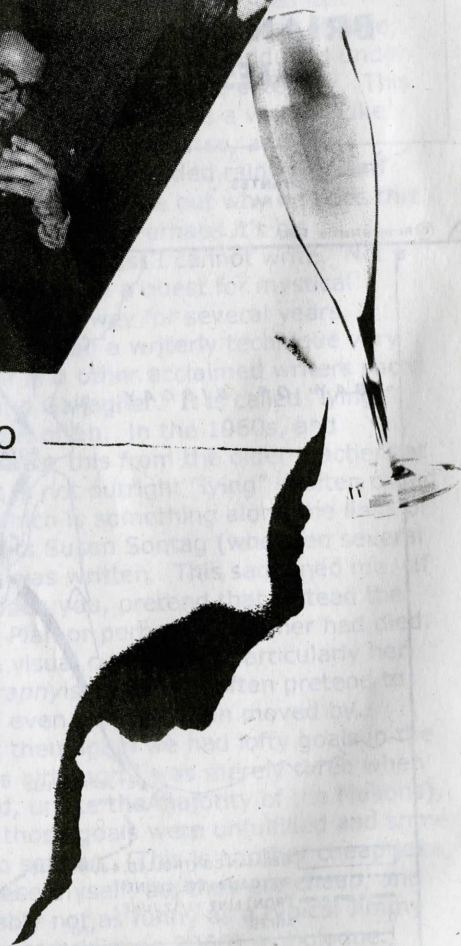


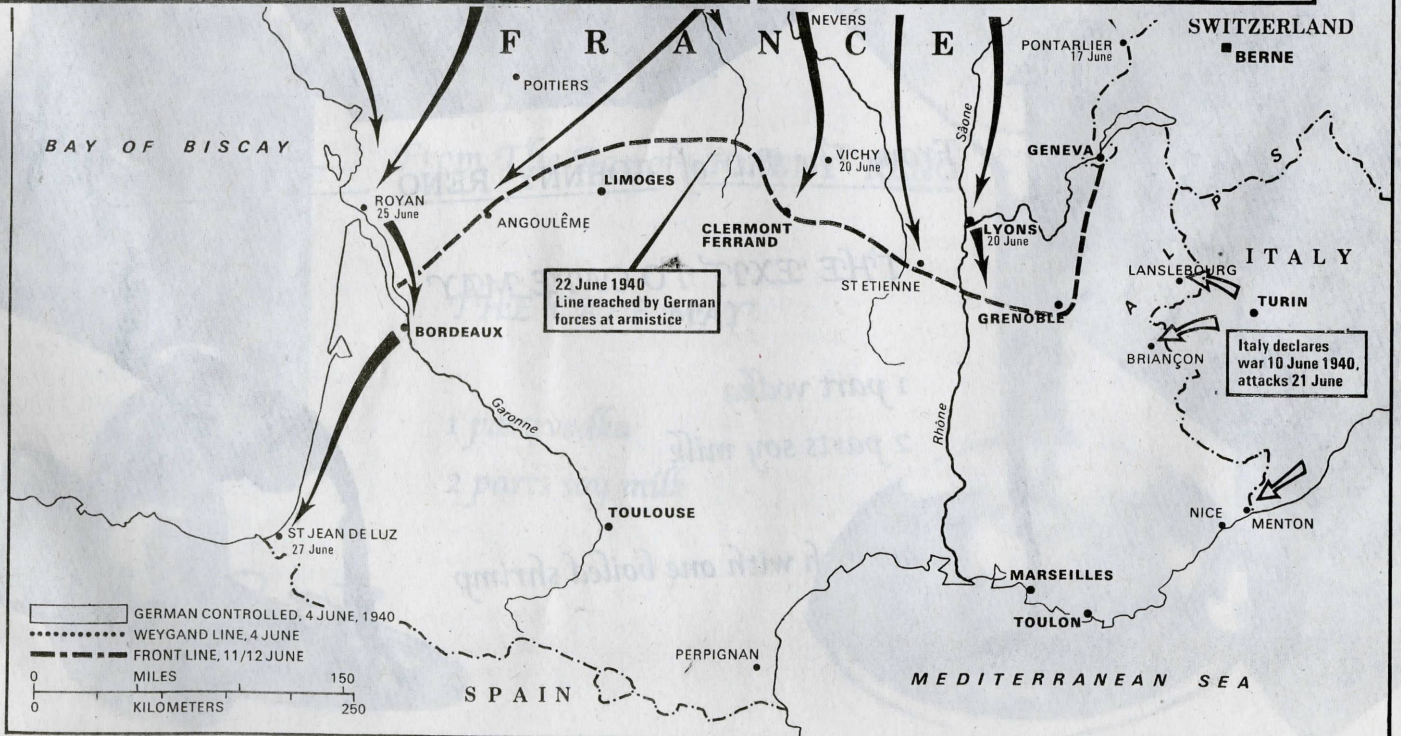
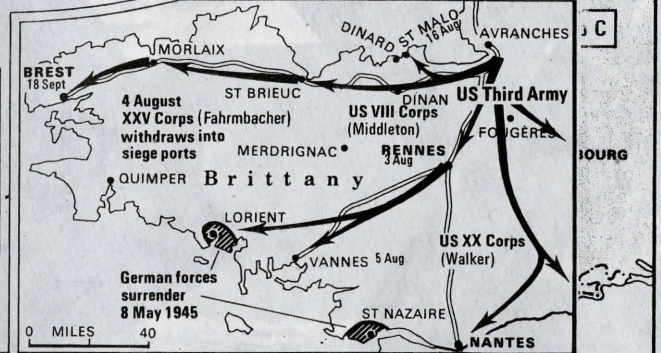
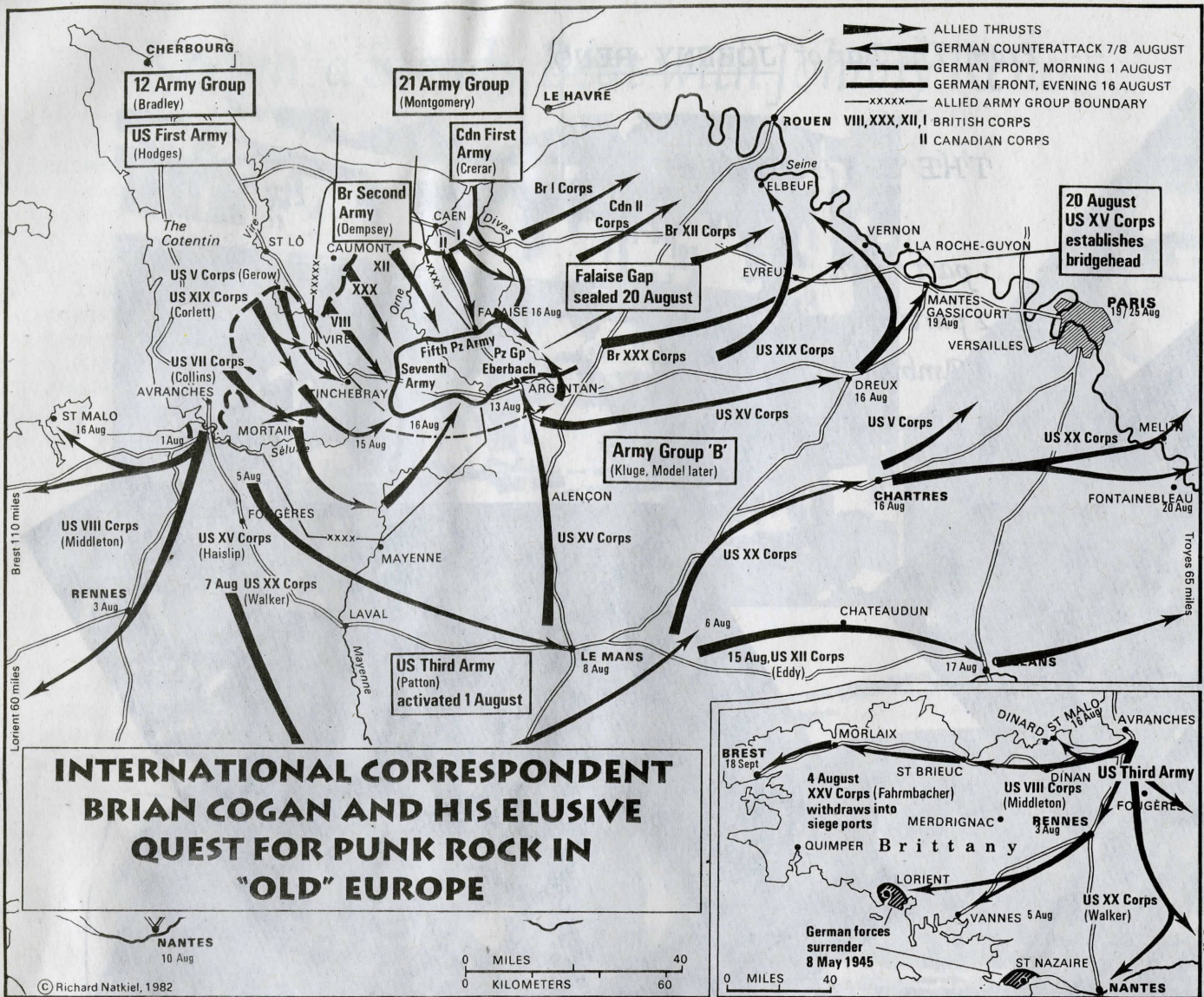
From The Bar of JOHNNY RENO

THE 'EXIT TO CAPE MAY'

1 part vodka
2 parts soy milk

garnish with one boiled shrimp





Marcel Proust locked himself in a small bedroom, naked, except for an incredibly ostentatious pair of Sponge Bob Squarepants boxer shorts, eating only praline madelines for several decades at a time, because he wished to capture the almost unbearable sense of loss and ennui that a simple sniff of the odor of a scratch-and-sniff GG Allin bakery set at the age of three had evoked in his tenuous memory. He would require himself to write semi-naked until at least noon (he usually woke by at least 11:35) at which point his man-servant, Jeff, would bring him a quick meal of curds and Wheatabix, and he, Proust, would begin to gallivant across his garden. Apparently, Huysmans and Flaubert would occasionally do the same thing, and several years later both became the patron saints of the Yukon.

The reason I bring this up is that I wish to muse on the sense of loss and deprivation that only a lingering sense of loss or several glasses of fine absinthe can bring to the cerebral cortex. Is it the vestigial reptile brain in the back of our noggins, or simply the Jungian notion of collective unconscious that calls, no, demands that we engage in behavior that goes beyond the pale of human experience, beyond even the veil of human perception?

Or maybe sometimes we just overwrite in the vain hope that something interesting will pop up at some point. After all, I realized the other day that despite the massive and conclusive evidence to the contrary, I am not the legendary French writer Marcel Proust. I realized this despite several sessions with my therapist, Jeff, where we engaged in lengthy sessions of hypnosis regression therapy and Scrabble. I tried to channel the creative (fill-in-favorite-French-phrase-*du-jour-here*) of Proust, but at the end of several lengthy sessions, had to admit that I was merely an American has-been who once dated an au pair, but she was not even French anyway, so that hardly counts. But did I mention that recently I had been to Europe?

Surely, that had to count for something? It is a well-known and hastily Googled factoid that not only have most Americans never been to Europe, but they claim not to have ever tasted European food, nor to have ever spoken more than a smattering of Europeanease. As a veteran traveler, having been to Europe several times and Syracuse twice, I decided to travel to Europe, but not just to Europe, but to EUROPE, the land of Belgian Chocolate, the beer of the Netherlands, and the exotic and often pungent cheese of France. At least those were the cities that I could afford to go to at that point. My college had a summer program in Leuven, Belgium (there really is such a place, most maps confirm this as far as I could tell), and I was determined to see Europe before it was closed and replaced by a colossal Starbucks (slated currently for September 1, 2007). I flew into Paris and spent several days in the "tourista" section of Paris, which is essentially the entire city, except for the sewers, which are now luxury coops and closed to the general public thanks to the infection of German

tourists who invade the city on the day that commemorates the day that France surrendered to the Germans during the last seven world wars (OK, first of all, that was an incredibly cheap joke, the kind that one sees all too often on Jay Leno, but I tell you, my dear readers, that I will broach no subject that cannot safely be discussed when most Americans are quietly dozing in bed circa 11:35 (when Proust used to wake up, only at night, as opposed to when he really woke up during the day), and broach these topics I will. A cheap joke is really an inexpensive joke, and if you imagine how much Seinfeld made last year, certainly one can tolerate a cheap joke every now and then. Also, like, the French did, like, surrender and stuff, y'know?).

So, I found myself in Europe, with actual days to spare, and before I went to Leuven (possibly the subject of another article, as they not only produce Stella Artois in that city, but they also are known as the Belgian "capital of knowledge" and I have heard of this knowledge many times and approve of it in most cases) I had determined to proceed on a Proustian quest of my own, to try and find the elusive lost nectar of my youth, the elusive and rarefied scent of punk rock.

Ah, here is where the clarification is due, I started out with Proust, references to French authors in general, and tried to elucidate the elusive idea of memories briefly tasted and then experienced best as lost memories, floating flagrantly on the breeze of time, and expectations long since sampled and filed under the lost, and perhaps, best not found category. This is simply one of my inadequacies as a writer. Like Proust, I too awake circa 11:00 or so, and my manservant, Jeff, brings me bottled rainwater and lichee nuts (I have yet to figure out why he does this as I simply ask for a bagel. Perhaps it's his breeding?). But unlike Proust I cannot write. Not a lick. I tried once, but then a quest for mystical dwarves' gold got in the way for several years. Actually, I have just used a writerly technique very common to myself and other acclaimed writers such as Dave Eggers and Gallagher. It is called "lying," and I recommend it often. In the 1960s, and sometimes I overhear this from the older teachers at NYU, a piece that is not outright "lying" is often called a "think piece," which is something along the lines of Lester Bangs meets Susan Sontag (who died several hours before this was written. This saddened me. If this does not sadden you, pretend that instead the guy from Simple Plan or perhaps Gallagher had died. Sontag's work in visual culture and particularly her book *On Photography* is one that I often pretend to understand, and even so, was often moved by. R.I.P., Sue), but then again we had lofty goals in the sixties (I say this although I was merely three when the sixties ended, unlike the majority of the Mekons), even if many of those goals were unfulfilled and some were returned to sender. (This is another cheap joke, I am tiring of these myself, as, they are cheap, and therefore, probably not as funny as a typical Jimmy Kimmel (or fill in comedian in 2060) monologue.

Gosh, am I tired. Writing is an effort. Apparently, Milan Kundera, when writing in the 15th century, and although paid by the word, often gave up and ate cheese, even though he was lactose intolerant (although not bigoted in general)).

Ok, this digressionary tactic is typical of modern literature, or at least that is what I am told. I tend to read only old (not the ultimate line) Bazooka Joe comics and the writing on the wall. I wish I could reference the latest Columbia MFA writers, but, alas, I cannot. I can only name check them in the way that hipsters sans goatees could name check Sontag, or McLuhan or Goddard during cocktail parties in the sixties. I am relatively sure I was at one of these in my salad days (no, not the Minor Threat single, the one by Bold), but remember little other than being asked to leave for questioning the relevance of Mao to modern dance. But, I DO digress. I don't know why. This story was about Europe, and Europe is cool, and like, cool, and stuff.

I actually love Europe. I just hate going there, as my wife will attest. I am amazed that she puts up with me while traveling as I tend to either drink too much in order to overcome my fear of flying, or simply take Valium until I resemble one of those metal bands who play very, VERY slowly (note that I am not name checking here, but then again I know little of the genre) and sort of fall asleep while screaming for the priest. (This reference is actually to old Irish writers, nominally atheists, who die "screaming for the priest" to alleviate the guilt of their manifold sins and alcoholism. Although James Joyce eventually gave up drinking in the last year of his life, he thought it would make him live longer. He was wrong.) Then I wake up, the wife forgives me (eventually) and I am in Europe.

But I have digressed too long. There are space limitations and my Mekons double cd best of cannot last for many more hours. Suffice to say I went to Europe. If you have not been there, I recommend it, especially the European parts, such as the fountains and tourist traps where Satre used to make De Beavoir fetch his coffee (damn, what is wrong with me! I don't know who, if anyone, is reading this. What do you care about my pretensions and level of education? I know I don't care about them that much myself. My wife thinks I crave approval. Do I? Did Joyce? Did Darby Crash? Oh, actually, yeah, they did). But somehow Europe was lacking one thing I craved, a sense memory so to speak. Well, in a praline nutshell, punk rock.

Y'know, Europe is a wonderful place. We saw the film *Casablanca* in a revival house in Paris, and an American recognized my Drive-By-Truckers t-shirt, and called out to me across the street – truly a moment worthy of long-winded discourse! But the one thing I missed the most was punk rock. I searched, nay, I yearned, for punk rock, and yet, I found none. Admittedly by chance, I found the Metal Urbain cd (look 'em up, c'mon you should know the

French punk rock pioneers) in Paris, but after diligently searching for punk for hours, minutes, days, I found none. The local city guides claimed to have everything worth seeing in Paris, apparently punk was no longer worth seeing!

Now, I could have asked several of my friends, such as John Lisa (name drop alert!) from Serpico where he and his band mates used to stay in squats during tours, but I thought, perhaps erroneously, that I would simply stumble across punk rock in France. That somehow I would walk onto the Deux Maggots (now an overpriced tourist trap where I can at least say I shat where Satre shat), and the local straight edge kids would be sitting there drinking overpriced lattes and would take me to the heart of French punk rock. Alas, thanks to both my own lethargy, and the lack of initiative on the part of the French, no punk rock.

Next on the Belgium. Umm, not to say it was too discouraging, but from my trades with the fine people at Goodlife (a Belgian punk rock label) I thought there would be a ripe scene. Nix. Naught. Nada. I asked a Belgian dorm master where we could find punk. He laughed. I even showed him my Goodlife Belgium *Best of Belgium Punk Rock* cd from 1996. Nothing.

So, on to Amsterdam. And to answer your obvious questions, no, I smoked no pot, nor brownies. No prostitutes either – none of the usual expectations. Amsterdam is actually a very nice city, sadly filled with loutish Americans, Brits, and occasionally Quentin Tarantino, all getting stoned and pretending to be profound. Did Marcel Proust consume the delicate crumbs of absinthe brownies? I think not. Most of Amsterdam is actually a very quaint and obscenely overpriced little city, filled with canals and mosquitoes the size of the laughably small compact cars that Europeans insist on driving, despite the obvious phallic inferences one could draw from regular sized people cramped ludicrously into tin cans. Well, at least I thought that it was funny.

My wife and I went from cafe to cafe, wandering the streets of Amsterdam, drinking fine wine and grousing about the lack of punk rock, or at least I groused about punk rock while my wife listened patiently and steered us towards the Anne Frank house and other places that made me feel guilty. (Not that the fine people of the Netherlands should not feel somewhat guilty themselves. There is a Dutch resistance museum devoted to the brave men and women who fought against the Nazi occupation. My friend MJ joked that, really, they only needed a Dutch Resistance bulletin board.) I found myself in one of the great cities of Europe, yet something was missing. I had yet to see a Dutch psychobilly band do their Ramones tribute show.

A friendly bartender had handed me a local alternative paper and low and behold, there it was, an advertisement that claimed that punk rock could be

found in Amsterdam! The band Amodeus was to play that very night in a club called Maloe Melo (and no, I never found out what the name meant, and I was somewhat ashamed (and strangely aroused) by the cartoonish illustration of a voluptuous black woman that served as the club's logo), which was conveniently located as far as possible on the other side of Amsterdam. A brisk hour walk later (I know they have a very efficient tram system, but the only purpose of those trams is to quietly sneak up behind me while I'm minding my own business and attempt to knock me to the curb), we arrived at the club. The club was everything I had hoped it would be, dark, dank, bulbous (I know that made no sense, I was simply trying to see if you were still paying attention), and filled with beefy guys with Mohawks (so that's where they had gone!). I instantly felt at home. This was a nostalgic return to the glory days of punk pre-hardcore, where everyone dressed up in their garish best, instead of uniformly wearing hooded sweatsuits and complaining about the scene and the "kids." However, as this was a punk club we, of course, had to wait three hours until the band was scheduled to go on. We retired to a lesbian bar around the corner where we talked to an American woman who lived about a mile from where we live in Brooklyn. (It is true that we live in a small lesbionic world.) After drinking with the lesbians and being crowned the unofficial king of the Amsterdam United Lesbian Football Club, we returned to the club.

Amodeus! Amodeus! (Flash devil horns here before returning to reading.) Dude, I mean, dude! They rocked with their metallic psychobilly and elaborate pompadours. The air was thick with the stench of clove cigarettes, spilt beer, and hair gel. I wondered for a few moments if one of the elaborate haircuts had caught on fire, would we be caught in a conflagration a la Great White? Or would we simply be shot on-stage, a la Dimebag Darrell? (It is relatively well known that the only two public intellectuals left in America as of last month were Dimebag Darrell and Susan Sontag, and Sontag was shot on-stage and Dimebag died of cancer. Or something like that.)

Luckily, there was no fire, and at last Amodeus was done, and it was time for the Ramones tribute! Amodeus, being skilled veterans of the diverse Dutch psychobilly scene, ducked down for a second, and re-emerged, not as Amodeus, uncrowned kings of the Dutch psychobilly scene, but as Amodeus: Ramones tribute band! They sang several Ramones songs, psychobilly style. This was not bad, not bad at all. Then a guest singer wearing a grotesque, but somehow compelling Joey Ramone wig and glasses emerged to sing "Somebody Put Something in My Drink." Then it occurred to me: we do not create our own happiness, it is simply a pre-existing expectation of happiness which thwarts our efforts toward fulfillment. That and somebody named Jeff. Within a few moments the show was over. It had been brief. It had used elaborate props, and it had involved jokes whose intrinsic comic value would have been revealed

only through a working knowledge of the local dialect. I emerged into the night air and instantly noticed that my attitude had changed. I was not fulfilled, but something was different. I realized that I did not need to cross the world looking for punk rock, but that punk rock was always inside of me. I also noticed that Amsterdam had canals! Why didn't someone tell me about that? In closing (and this is where the writer is supposed to somehow draw the disparate parts of the essay together into a coherent whole that provides meaning and a deeper appreciation of the vagaries of change and outlandish fortune. However, this presupposed too much work on the part of the writer. Maybe James Joyce was right, perhaps the reader should do more work. After all, I had to type this essay and that must have burnt at least ten calories. Now it is your turn, go and find meaning. I guarantee you that it is somewhere in this essay, right next to the secrets of the Da Vinci code and how to buy real estate with no money down.), I would like to reiterate, or perhaps simply iterate for the first time how good the local herring stand near our hotel was. You can't beat a little herring in the morning.

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in Crowd

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Fifteen years is a milestone worth noting for any business, but in 2004 the notion of an independent record label lasting that long is virtually unheard of. In the era of big media consolidation and monopolies, it's even more amazing and encouraging seeing an independent, locally run company like Merge Records succeed. "Mac and Laura, as individuals, let their personalities dictate the way they behave, and the label is honorable because they are honorable," says producer, revered D.I.Y. commentator, and Big Black founder Steve Albini, in North Carolina's *Independent Weekly* (July 21-27, 2004).

"The survival of a record label depends on two things: first, the sale of its current records, and second, the long-term sales of its catalogue," Albini continues. "And Merge is able to thrive by associating itself with bands that they like, and not losing respect for them when they gain notoriety." Mac McCaughan and Laura Balance started Merge in 1989; around the same time they were forming the legendary indie rock combo Superchunk. The original plan was to release music by themselves and their friends, focusing on bands in their home area of Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina. But, as it turned out, that was just the start for their label.

Over the last fifteen years, Merge has released critical knockouts like the Magnetic Fields' *69 Love Songs*, Spoon's *Kill The Moonlight*, and *In The Aeroplane, Over The Sea* by Neutral Milk Hotel, as well as records by established and influential bands like the Buzzcocks, the Clean, Archers Of Loaf, Rocket From The Crypt, and Versus. Impressive as the label's past is, the future is never certain. "I think it's a precarious situation," McCaughan said in an interview I conducted with him last spring for

Artvoice, a Buffalo weekly. "There's not a lot to fall back on if there are a couple of bad years. Even though we're doing well, and we're successful, we don't have a lot of money."

That pragmatic mindset ensures the folks at Merge never rest on their laurels. They keep coming up with projects that inspire them to push forward. Reissues of the first three Dinosaur Jr. albums, and new full-lengths by lo-fi legend Lou Barlow (of Sebadoh, Dinosaur Jr., and Folk Implosion), American Music Club, and Richard Buckner are just a few things on the Merge release schedule through early 2005.

Merge's constant commitment to release records by lower profile artists and offer deals to bands that have been left on the scrap heap by other companies sets them apart. It helped to establish the label's identity, which encompasses, but transcends that of individual bands on its roster. They believe in artist development, a term that was deleted from major labels' vocabularies long ago, and Merge's dedication to its artists is mirrored in fans' devotion to the label.

For five days at the end of July, people came to Chapel Hill from all over the globe for a 21-band extravaganza celebrating Merge's 15th birthday. It was an uncharacteristic, but well deserved moment for the label's forward thinking owners and employees to reflect on their many successes. The party began Wednesday, July 28th at the Local 506 club with performances by Lou Barlow and the label's newest signing the Arcade Fire, and culminated Sunday, August 1st with sets by the Clientele, a spacey, atmospheric rock combo from England, David Kilgour, of seminal New Zealand

group the Clean, and the 10-14 piece orchestral pop collective Lambchop at The Carolina Theater. Shows on the three nights in between were hosted by The Cat's Cradle in Chapel Hill.

For the past decade, Merge Records and many of the bands recording for it have been a huge part of my life. Hearing Superchunk was a turning point in my musical history, and since Mac and Laura, one half of the band, owned Merge, anything on the label had an instant stamp of approval that made me pay closer attention. When you grow up in a farm town in central New York State, it's not easy to hear music that exists outside the strict confines of radio play lists. Musical opinions and tastes in rural U.S.A. are generally shaped by what Classic Rock or Top 40 stations feed listeners, unless you're lucky enough to have a hip older sibling to pass records down to you. But how would *they* find them in the first place?

The few cool kids who introduced me to the Replacements, Fishbone, and the Violent Femmes in high school had moved to the country from larger, more metropolitan areas. I didn't understand those bands any more than I did the Pixies when I first heard them. But something changed when I started working at college radio. Suddenly, I had access to tons of new music. When I heard "The First Part" from *Foolish*, the first full-length release of new Superchunk material on Merge, indie rock started to make sense.

It sounded raw and natural, like the bands I saw playing in garages and basements around town. It was driving and aggressive, with volume and visceral intensity, the qualities that attracted me to metal in my adolescence, but the lyrics revealed intelligence and emotional honesty. It was noisy enough to be exciting and unique, but underneath was a melody I could sing along with. "The First Part" was one of the first songs on my college station that really stood out to me. And it started my love affair with Superchunk, and by extension Merge, that is stronger than ever today.

I'm not the only one with a story like this. The first time I ever spoke to my good friend Julie, we bonded over our love of Superchunk. She told me how they inspired her to start playing music herself, and I was moved to contact her after hearing her band the American Measles. I've listened to more than one person speak about the nearly rapturous effect Neutral Milk Hotel's *In The Aeroplane, Over The Sea* has on them. It's these personal experiences and connections that forged a unique loyalty in listeners, and made them lasting fans of the label as well as the bands.

There were plenty of reasons for me to make the long drive from Buffalo to North Carolina for Mergefest, but I didn't seriously consider it until I heard that Versus, my favorite band, would be playing. Versus still exists, but its members have

moved on to different projects that occupy most of their time. Versus has become the side project, while James Baluyut and Pat Ramos concentrate on +/-, Fontaine Toups formed a quartet called the Fontaine Toups, that recently released their debut disc on Teen Beat, and Richard Baluyut moved to San Francisco, and started the band Whysall Lanes.

After seeing +/- in Cleveland last April, I was talking to James and Pat. They both indicated that Versus' appearance at Mergefest might be its last. As it is, Versus only plays a handful of shows a year, and the chance that I might be missing their last was not one I was willing to take. So, my girlfriend Jen and I ordered our four-day passes, booked a room, and made the rest of our travel arrangements.

After spending the better part of two days in my less than roomy Chevy Cavalier, we were very happy to finally arrive at our hotel, the Holiday Inn, Chapel Hill. We checked in, then shared a cab to the Cat's Cradle with three very nice guys from England. They were on holiday in the states just for Mergefest. We got along well enough that we decided to also share dinner with them at a Mexican restaurant right next to the club.

Thursday night began promptly with a rollicking set by newcomers the Rosebuds, who mix breezy, wistful indie pop with ragged maximum R&B rave-ups. Singer and guitarist Ivan Howard's kicks in the air, and easy going charm between songs made it obvious he was thrilled to be there. Their debut record, *The Rosebuds Make Out* was one of 2003's most pleasant and refreshing surprises.

Next up was Richard Buckner with some dusky sonic portraits of Americana. Buckner's intensity simmered as he sat alone in low light with only an electric guitar. He used a sampler to record guitar parts and loop them for playback, so there was never a lull in sound between songs, or when he tuned. Every critic has different criteria for judging musicians' success, but most would agree, the ability to command a crowd's attention with nothing more than voice, guitar, and songs is rare and special. Buckner has that talent.

Next, the Essex Green came on. Alternating male and female vocals were at the forefront of their textured, 60s style pop. It was a tight, buoyant set of tunes that brought to mind The Mamas and The Papas, the Monkees, and the Apples In Stereo, among others. M. Ward followed with a solo set.

Ward is a tremendously talented guitar player with a rich, versatile voice. His songs were at times bluesy and folksy. He altered a Bob Dylan song to make it a tribute to Merge, then told the crowd how influential the defunct Merge pop band Butterglory was on him, and covered one of their songs. Founding Butterglory member Matt Suggs played the next night with his new band. The sense of

cipation was escalating as fans awaited Thursday's headliner Superchunk.

Superchunk remains the label's flagship band and an unstoppable force live. They ripped through a barn burning set, barely slowing for a moment. Laura bounced around stage with her bass all the while, despite being seven months pregnant! At one point guitarist Jim Wilbur asked her if she could feel the baby kicking. They played songs from every era of their fifteen-year career, including "The First Part," "Throwing Things," "The Majestic," "Detroit Has A Skyline," "Slack Motherfucker," and "Hello Hawk."

During their encore, Superchunk introduced two guest vocalists that brought the house down. Ash Bowie of Polvo grabbed the mic for a cover of one of his old band's songs, and then, when we thought it couldn't get any better, Lou Barlow got on stage, and sang the Sebadoh classic "Brand New Love" with McCaughan. It was a climax that had all the indie geeks nearly drowning in their drool.

The atmosphere was surreal after the show. Walking through the club, I passed Ira Kaplan and Georgia Hubley of Yo La Tengo, Dan Bejar of Destroyer and the New Pornographers, Barlow, Bowie, and various members of the bands that played that evening. I was exhilarated, but tired. Our new English friends headed to another bar where a Merge employee or intern works, proving their constitutions are far stronger than mine. I felt like I had already gotten my money's worth, and I still had sets by Versus, Spoon, and Portastatic to look forward to over the next two nights.

After Superchunk's set, Mac enthusiastically encouraged everyone to show up early the next night so we didn't miss Double Dynamite, Friday's lead off band. Nobody I asked knew anything about it. Jen speculated that it might be an all-star group, which made sense considering all the musicians in attendance that weren't officially scheduled to play. She was proved right when Double Dynamite's guitarist took the stage, dressed in a white leisure suit from the 70s. It was none other than Ira Kaplan of Yo La Tengo.

We heard the other members of Double Dynamite were past Merge staffers and friends, and they'd been playing together sporadically since the late 80s. Their campy brand of arena rock clichés, delivered with a knowing wink for ironic effect, was done to death long before the Darkness came along to annoy the living hell out of us. Double Dynamite's show revolved around the costume changes and overblown theatrics of their lead singer who made Freddie Mercury look like an introvert. Nobody has ever done the rock parody routine better than Spinal Tap, and most likely nobody ever will.

Next, Portastatic delivered one of the best sets of the festival. Their album *Summer Of The Shark* was my pick for album of the year in 2003. Portastatic began as a solo home recording project for Mac, but has become a full-fledged touring band. Mac's brother Matt plays drums in the group, and live he added some excellent harmony vocals to their textured, Kinks-like pop songs. Mac's wife and new daughter were there, as well as his parents, who must be very proud to see their boys' flawless show.

I had never the Radar Brothers, who were scheduled to play next, and I was pleasantly surprised by their laid back combination of country and sun-soaked, psychedelic pop. On record, the trio adds instrumental layers to make their songs even more lush and seductive. Then, it was time for Versus, the band I was most eagerly awaiting. Over the past fifteen years, Versus has recorded for some of the most enduring and respected independent labels, including Teen Beat, K, and Caroline, as well as Merge.

I planned on staying in the center of the room during Versus' set for the sake of sound quality, but as the time approached, my excitement got the better of me, and I headed to the front row. Guitarist James Baluyut described their set as "complete chaos," and it was, in the best possible sense. His brother Richard once said to me that any music that is any good at all has some element of punk rock in it. I agree completely, and this set had that cathartic tension and release. In a related note, my nerdy indie celebrity spotting of the evening was Connie Lovatt; if you know who Connie is, you get bonus points.

Versus stuck mostly to the singles from their four full-lengths, and James said he regretted not being able to bust out some of their longer, noisier jams, but they had to stick to their time limit. Then Camera Obscura played beautiful 60s styled pop, concentrating mainly on material from their latest album *Underachievers Please Try Harder*, their first on Merge. It was the calm after the storm. Keyboards and live horns fleshed out the songs nicely.

Friday drew to a close with a set by Crooked Fingers, the latest band fronted by Eric Bachmann, who secured cult hero status in the 90s with Archers Of Loaf and Barry Black. Bachmann added to the nostalgic tone of the weekend by ending Crooked Fingers set with a cover of the Archers' classic "Web In Front." I started to wonder if this was what my parents felt like when they went to the New York State Fair to see Blood, Sweat, and Tears. But this was more than a misty-eyed trip down memory lane, because the artists and bands at Mergefest are still working, creating new and challenging music.

Saturday we grabbed an excellent lunch at a Mediterranean deli, and then it was on to the two record stores in town we hadn't hit yet. CD Alley was a real treat, the kind of old school, independent record store collector geeks dream about. What makes it so great is the no nonsense approach they take to doing business. CD Alley is the kind of small, narrow storefront that would send claustrophobics into fits of hyperventilation. Racks filled to capacity with cd's and records take up every spare inch and crowd each other as well as the customers.

The selection of music in their vast stock is excellent. The staff is knowledgeable, but not snobby, and their prices are extremely competitive. Shouldn't these qualities be what matters in a record store? I spent more money than I should have at CD Alley, but felt good about supporting a business like that. We continued on up the street to Schoolkids Records, which wasn't bad, just anticlimactic.

Saturday night, I finally met Christina, the promo and publicity person who has been my contact at Merge, and has set me up generously with cd's to review over the years. It was a highlight of the weekend for me. I only regret that we were too old and tired to go to the after party at her apartment. Christina introduced me to Martin Hall who also works on publicity for the label. I've been in contact with Martin for over five years through phone calls, e-mails, and packages of cd's, and as corny as it sounds, seeing him and Christina was like being reunited with two old friends.

First up Saturday was Shark Quest. I hadn't seen this group since they opened for Superchunk on the *Indoor Living* tour. Their accomplished instrumentals are incorporating even more world music these days. Then Matt Suggs and Thee Higher Burning Fire played. I'd heard both of Suggs' cd's, and as I watched, I realized why Suggs and his band aren't for me. Their songs have as many similarities to early Elton John and Supertramp as they do to the Kinks.

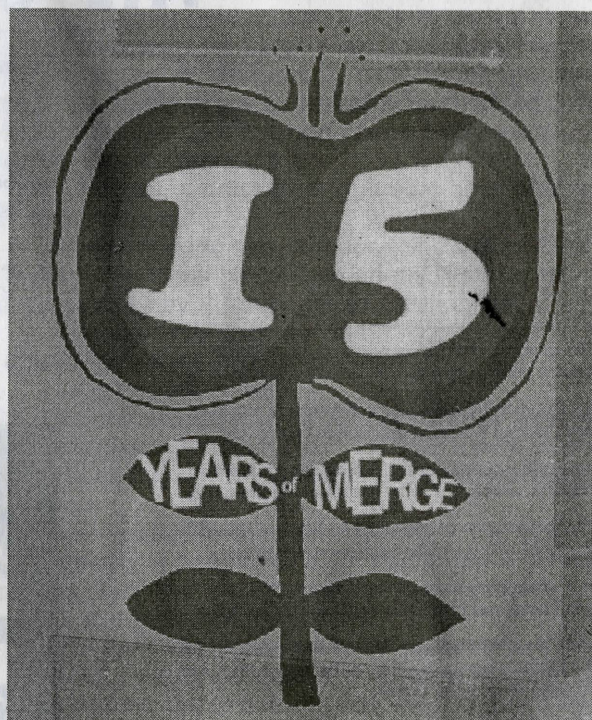
The Ladybug Transistor was next. The band shares members of the Essex Green, and also features traded male and female vocals in the context of traditionally arranged 1960s pop. Destroyer followed, and for this show Mac McCaughan was playing guitar and singing back up. I've never been a real fan of Destroyer, although I recognize Dan Bejar's talents as a songwriter, and do like his contributions to the New Pornographers records. The set was good, but I was far too excited to see Spoon to concentrate on anything else.

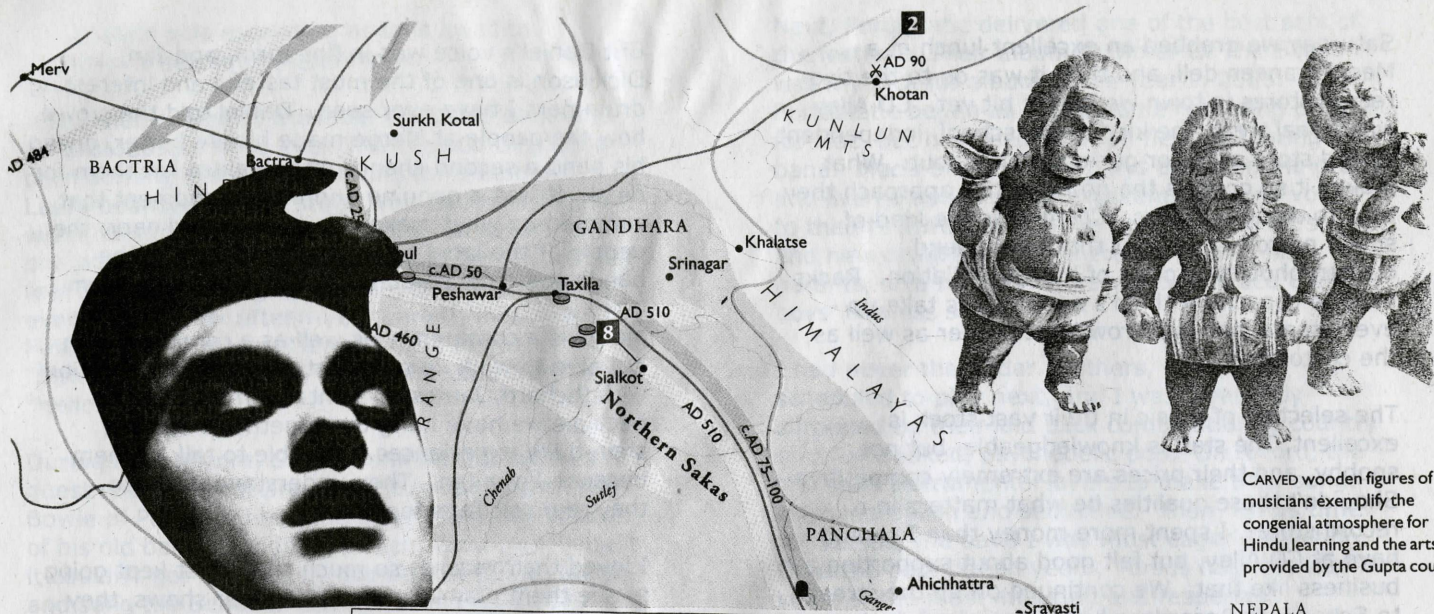
Texas quartet Spoon is one of the best bands in the world. Their songs are eclectic, inventive, smart, and catchy. Once again, they impressed me. Their set was only bested by Superchunk's fiery Thursday night performance.

Brit Daniel's voice was in fine form, and Jim Dickinson is one of the most tasteful and interesting drummers I have ever seen. Daniel told the crowd how the people at Merge made his life better, giving his band a second chance after Elektra left them for dead. It was a genuine and moving moment that summed up what makes Merge extraordinary: the people at the label believe in the people in the bands and have personal relationships with them.

Merge is a community as well as a company. I'm not able to walk up and start a casual conversation with Richard, James, or Fontaine from Versus because we have hung out together often and shared life experiences. I'm able to talk to them because I'm a fan. They understand because they're music fans too.

I loved their records so much that I just kept going to see them play live, and after their shows, they made themselves available to talk to fans like me. If they ever felt resentful that they weren't playing in a bigger venue, or that more people weren't at the show, or that they might have to sleep in their cold van again that night, they never took it out on me. They were always grateful for words of encouragement. The same could probably be said for all of the bands that played at Mergefest.



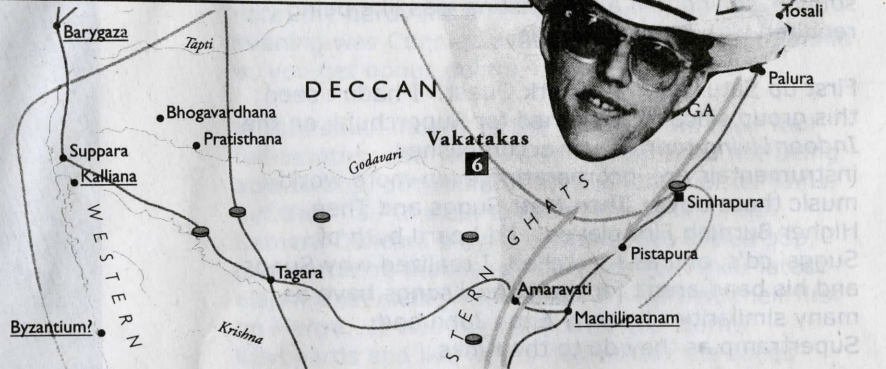


CARVED wooden figures of musicians exemplify the congenial atmosphere for Hindu learning and the arts provided by the Gupta cou

TRANSCONTINENTAL CORRESPONDENT CHRIS GETHARD TAKES US ACROSS THE U. S. OF A.

Arabian Sea

Junagadh
Valabhi
Girnar



1 Arikamedu was a trading port in the 1st century AD: many Roman artifacts have been excavated there.

2 A Chinese army defeated the Kushans in AD 90 at Khotan, halting Kushan expansion in central Asia.

3 Junagadh is the site of the earliest known Sanskrit inscription, erected c.150 by the Saka king Rudraman.

4 The main source of information on Samudragupta's reign (c.335-75) is a pillar inscription at Prayaga.

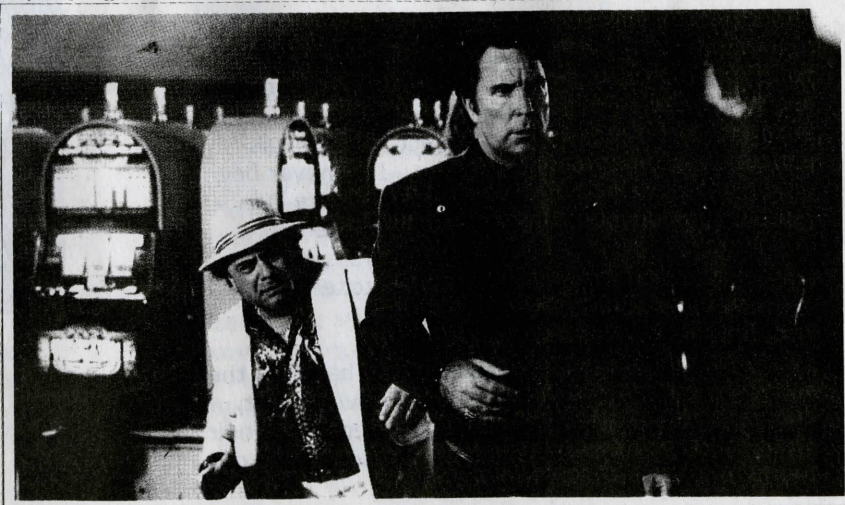
5 Samudragupta's southern campaign (c.360) saw thirteen kings and princes brought under Gupta rule.

6 The Vakatakas dominated central India after the fall of the Satavahanihara kingdom in the 3rd century and were close allies of the Guptas.

7 At Eran in 510 the Hunas defeated a Gupta army and secured control of northwestern India.

8 Sialkot was the capital of the short-lived Huna kingdom (c.505-30).

9 By c.600 a great Buddhist monastic university at Nalanda, patronized by Gupta kings, housed thirty thousand students.



I have always been envious of those who can take off "on tour" across the country. Going "on tour" seemed to be an idyllic process in which one throws a bunch of their belongings into a vehicle, usually a cheap van, then piles into that vehicle with a few like-minded friends, armed with nothing but some instruments, iffy plans and the desire to both see and, at least on some level, conquer the nation. The unexpected always happens. Bonds are both built and destroyed. The drummer will not like any food options, or so I hear. And the stories last a lifetime.

Unfortunately, to be "on tour," tradition says one has to be a member of a band. I can not claim such status. For a long time, I let this stop me from fulfilling my touring dreams. Then, early in 2004, I was put in a position where I was going to have to drive cross country — from Los Angeles to New Jersey — in order to get home. I would have as much time at my disposal as needed. With no time constraints, my options were limitless, and my mind opened up.

This would be my tour.

So what if I was sans band? So what if my trip was going to be taken in a car full of clothes and personal possessions instead of an Econoline full of amps and whatnot? I put this out there to anyone who respects the touring lifestyle but does not fit the touring archetype (a band member): Touring is a state of mind. I chose to make my cross country journey not a "trip," but a "tour." And so it was.

I quickly recruited my friend Nick as my personal roadie on the tour. He was put in charge of planning our route. We quickly decided on "the south" as our general theme, and "Vegas" and "New Orleans" as the two generic debauchery centers of the trip. Besides that, our options were open. We decided that we would make things interesting by heading directly across Texas — because a) everyone told us it would be foolish to do so, and we decided that this made it the most manly option and b) we heard Austin was pretty cool. Nick headed out to LA very prepared, meaning he brought with him an atlas printed within the past five years. We took a pre-tour preparatory trip to Target on LaBrea, where we bought a cooler, a whole bunch of Mountain Dew and Diet Coke, a one gallon jug of sour gummy worms, some Fig Newtons (that fell under the seat of the car on day one of the tour and remained forgotten and uneaten until I discovered them, perfect and warm in their perch, nearly a week after the tour was over), and a whole bunch of gum. We were as ready as we were going to get.

And so, in June of 2004, our tour commenced. What followed was a week long journey where we made appearances at some of America's best, worst, shittiest, and strangest locales. What follows is an account of what happens when two kids, with nothing but time, curiosity, and a car take off on a cockamamie rock and roll adventure. This is not a tour diary, necessarily, as it is being done retrospectively (and therefore may not be entirely accurate — I have a feeling I lost or gained a day in here, somewhere around Texas). It does manage to capture the best, the worst, and the most confusing moments of our trip.

We set out from Los Angeles heading north to Las Vegas, head into the desert. After four hours we pulled into a rest stop, and I invented a game I would play from time to time on the entire tour — "worst life ever." This was my attempt at observing people we encountered and determining which one of them was living the worst life ever. It was part sociological study, part game to pass the time, and part me being cruel to others for my own amusement. The first candidate was a worker at this McDonald's, located off the highway in Baker, California.

Baker appeared to be nothing more than this McDonald's, sand, and a train track. I wouldn't have even noticed the train track, except for the magnificently long freight train passing through town. Besides this, there was literally nothing in any direction for miles. It was hot, dry, and nasty. There were rednecks just hanging out at the rest stop.

Candidate #1 for Worst Life Ever: The Closeted Moustached 20-Something Gay McDonald's Worker, California Desert Rest Stop

We moved on from our meal, and a couple hours later were in Vegas. We rented a room at the Stardust and headed out to a buffet of ribs and peel and eat shrimp. Then we walked around from casino to casino. Painted skies. Volcano! Pirate Ship! Vegas was a cool town. This was only the beginning.

After a four hour trip wandering through Caesar's Palace, in which we realized casinos — in an effort to get you to stay — do not mark any exits, and where we saw a show set in ancient Rome about aliens invading, we met up with Nick's friend, who I only know as Jingles. Jingles was a local, which meant he showed us sides of Vegas most vacationers never see. He took us to a small casino, low stakes, good times, and lots of cokeheads. Jingle drove and treated us to some of the most entertaining conversation I have ever heard, including, but not limited to:

"Hey Nicky, don't push that seat back, I've got a gun under there."

"I was fucking this stripper. She's like, 'Cum on my face! Cum in my hair! Cum on my tits! Cum in my ass! I'm like — hey — I only got so much cum!'"

Jingles: "You guys do coke?"

Me and Nick in Unison: "Nope."

Jingles: "Me neither."

Jingles dropped us off at the Stardust safe and sound, and thoroughly amazed. He had shown us the seedy side of Vegas. We woke up the next morning refreshed.

We headed to the Grand Canyon. Highly recommended. I had never been impressed in photos or on TV. They don't capture the scale. Really beautiful, overwhelming even.

But take the highway on your way out.

Nick pointed out to me, looking at the map as we were leaving the Grand Canyon, that we had two options in heading towards Texas. We could double back down the roads we came in on, meeting up with the highway where we left it and proceeding east. Or we could make our way through a series of winding, less developed eastbound roads that happened to cut through three different Native American reservations.

Being hearty adventurers, and thinking it would be our only chance to ever see an Indian reservation, we headed into what literally became the heart of darkness. Every half hour or so, we'd see a tiny shack, surrounded by hand painted signs reading such things as "HEY! FRIENDLY INDIANS HERE!" or "BUY SOME TURQUOISE FROM THESE FRIENDLY INDIANS!" or "TURN AROUND - YOU MISSED SOME REALLY FRIENDLY INDIANS!" Every single one of these was perceived by us as an attempt to lure us into a trap. These reservations were absolute burnt out wastelands. There were no signs of people besides these roadside stands and the occasional other car, roughly two or three of which we'd see each hour. We spent eight, count them, eight hours winding through these backroads, with an occasional smattering of houses, no gas stations, or anything else to speak of.

I had read some essay a while back about how tribal elders are distressed at the frequency with which young Native Americans are leaving the reservations for cities. Well, when out there, I completely realized why this exodus was occurring. If I was a 15-year-old Cherokee, and I had to travel half an hour just to come into contact with the nearest girl, and then I had to beg her to stop selling turquoise long enough to give me a hand job, I'd leave too. That's no way to grow up these days.

Candidate #2 For Worst Life Ever: Anyone fucked over by the American government who's being forced to live in the section of God's asshole known collectively as "Indian Reservations."

The reservation was also the site of the only moment I truly begged God to save us on this trip. Nick was driving when I announced that I had to piss something royal. It had been about six hours since we left the canyon and we were still in the middle of nowhere. I mentioned it, Nick asked if I could hold it, and oh did I try. I hung in there like a trooper for the better part of the next two hours. But there were no gas stations, no nothing. Finally I demanded that Nick pull off on the side of the road.

When Nick complied, something unexpected happened. The car hit the soft sand at the roadside and slid some 15-20 feet off the road. I jumped out and pissed. When I got back in the car the wheels just spun in the sand. The idea of being stuck overnight on the side of the road with no cell phone reception in the middle of Apache land was as terrifying a thought as I could have mustered in that moment. Nick gunned the car which moved inch by fateful inch back up the embankment leading to the asphalt. The car strained, threatening each second to slide back down the gully.

"Please, God, please, God, please," I shouted. Genuinely. No irony or detachment. We made it. Was it God? I dunno. Will I be cursed for ever for possibly pissing on an Indian burial ground? Who knows.

That night we crashed in New Mexico, then woke up bright and early on our quest for Texas. At some point we stopped in Albuquerque and ate a meal that is not noteworthy except that the table across from us was populated by a white couple sitting with two black children wearing blindfolds. We never found out what that was about. I drove, and discovered that I am a fucking driving machine. Nine straight hours. All I

need is a few Diet Cokes, lots of Smiths and Morrissey cd's, some determination, and I'm good to go.

Candidate #3 for Worst Life Ever: Morrissey - that dude is still really sad even though he's a highly successful cult figure who has managed to largely hold true to independent minded ideals for his entire career and lives in a mansion in LA being unattainable and mysterious, and really has put out only one awful album in the past twenty years.

We made it pretty far into Texas that night, if I remember correctly. We wanted to get to Austin before stopping. Texas is a tough drive. The highways are small, two lane affairs, out in the prairie and desert, and when you go through towns, they're small towns, and you really get something of a sense of how life there is. It takes a long time and it can be painstakingly boring, but it was easily my favorite state the entire trip. Texas has a lot of heart, and you can see it from the road.

That first night across Texas, a few things went wrong. First, Nick and I were looking for a certain state highway, and wound up instead getting off on a county road with the same number, which was a tiny little barely paved road infested with deer and rabbits. It was six or seven miles long, and connected back to the main highway at the end. No big deal.

Except Nick killed a bunny.

It wasn't his fault - it darted out in front of him. No time to stop. We nailed it. He felt awful. I didn't help. Read the following mini-play to see how that went:

(Bunny hit. Shocked expressions all around. Five minute silence.)

NICK: I don't know... it might have survived.

CHRIS: I felt that rabbit's soul pass through the car on its way to heaven.

(Five minutes more of silence.)

... AND SCENE!

That night was also the night of the single most amazing lightning display I have ever witnessed, played across the canvas of the big Texas sky. Unreal. And we were badass, and drove right into it. Which made us feel great. And led to some amazing bonding conversations. But all good things must come to an end, and this one ended really hard.

About three hours west of Austin, the rain came, and it came violently. We pulled off at a hotel and ran inside, literally so in the heart of this storm that we sprinted because lightning was striking close enough that we thought we might be struck. Needless to say, everyone smarter than us had pulled off the road hours ago, when this storm was just brewing, and there were no rooms left. Defeated, we walked across the parking lot to a small truck stop style diner and plopped down in a booth. What the hell were we going to do? Could we drive in this? Was there any way we could find a bed to sleep in? How could we be so stupid?

When things seemed like they couldn't get any grimmer, my favorite conversation of the entire trip took place. Our waitress was about 17-years-old. It was about three in the morning. This kid was running the joint with her little sister hostessing. When she

came by and dropped off our meals (for me, a grilled cheese sandwich) we asked her if she knew when the storm was passing. She didn't. So we asked her if she thought it would be safe to head to Austin, if it would even be possible to make it there in the rain. She did not. She recommended we double back about six miles, as there were a few other hotels there that we might have better luck at. We thanked her. She didn't leave the table.

WAITRESS: So where ya'll from?

NICK: New York.

WAITRESS: Oh my God, *are you serious?*!

CHRIS: Yeah.

WAITRESS: Oh my God, you are so lucky.

CHRIS: Have you ever been to New York?

WAITRESS: Oh my God, *are you serious?* No! I've never left Texas.

NICK: Well you should come to New York some time, it's a great city.

WAITRESS: Oh my God, *are you serious?*

CHRIS: Ma'am, I am *deadly serious*.

WAITRESS: Can I ask ya'll something?

NICK: Sure.

WAITRESS: Have ya'll ever seen... the Twin Towers?

CHRIS: Yeah.

WAITRESS: I mean, like, since they were... blown up?

NICK: Sure.

WAITRESS: Oh my God, *are you serious?* **YOU ARE SO LUCKY.**

CHRIS: Uhh... not really.

(Waitress says goodbye then leaves. Nick and Chris laugh at her small town naiveté towards the worst thing they have ever experienced up close, ever. Waitress returns.)

WAITRESS: Can I ask ya'll one more question?

(Nick and Chris anticipate something truly heartbreaking and awful.)

CHRIS: Sure.

WAITRESS: Have ya'll ever been to *TRL*¹?

NICK: No, but I've seen it from outside.

WAITRESS: OH MY GOD, *ARE YOU SERIOUS?*

... AND SCENE!

We took her advice, grinning, and doubled back. We got a hotel. Things worked out really well. The next morning we rolled into Austin and stayed at the Austin Motel, which is independently run and proud of it. Two thumbs up. I recommend staying there. I may have the name wrong, but you'll know it's the right place because it is the home of a big neon sign that looks like an erect dick. At a place called Threadgill's, where I had, you're about to read this right – *a chicken fried pork chop*. We had the whole day to kill. Took separate turns swimming by ourselves in the pool. Felt good to be apart from each other for a few hours. Went out to Sixth Street that night, as we were told it was lots of bars and music and a hip place to check out. We grabbed a cab and started walking.

Austin. Rules. No noise laws apparently, as every other bar had a live band and wide open bay

windows, as if they were competing for audio supremacy on the streets. There was blues, rock, hip hop, punk rock, everything you could want. We went from bar to bar. I don't drink myself, so I just enjoyed the scenery. Nick was pretty blasted. It was early. We settled into one bar because it had a huge aquarium. I believe it was called "The Aquarium."

At some point, I noticed that there were very few guys in the bar, but a decent number of hot girls. I pointed this out to Nick, who said he had noticed the same thing. Minutes later, I shit you not, a group of workers from Hooters, *still in uniform* came in to hang out. Weird. Then a literal parade of hot young Texan females made their way into the bar. Dudes, really lame dudes, were having conversations with groups of five or six beautiful women. It was unreal. Like a cavalcade of attractive college aged girls. We talked to none of them, as our heavy Jersey and Queens accents, my Yankee hat, and our general ways apparently made us stink of the Northeast. We both agreed – we got lucky stumbling into the Aquarium, it was the place to be tonight.

I got a cell phone call and went outside to take it, only to see that the entire street was infested with them – young, attractive girls, everywhere! I ran back in to tell Nick, who came out and saw it for himself. We went from bar to bar, and yep, it was the Austin standard – making us declare it the hot girl capital of the United States. I myself had just begun dating someone, and was interested in these girls merely as a phenomenon, an anomaly. Nick, however, was 23, single, and on the move. His move? Stand four feet away from a girl and drunkenly grin at her. Didn't work. We went home.

We left Austin, impressed, and charged through Texas. We stopped for lunch in Houston, and saw in our copy of *Roadfood* that there was a BBQ placed called the Williams Smoke House that came highly recommended.

We found our way off the highway through the neighborhoods of Houston to a quiet street with a few tiny houses and a lot of spread out trees. Sitting inconspicuously in this setting was a run down place with the words "Williams Smoke House" on the side. Nothing special looking. We went inside and it was more of the same. A small counter, where the worker, a teenaged girl, didn't even look up when we entered. We had to get her attention to order. We each got an order of ribs and split something called a "link potato." We sat down and waited for our food in the dining room, which was tiny and had a few small tables set up. Really bare bones place. Good vibe.

Nick went to the bathroom, so I was alone when the food came out. It was placed in front of me with no niceties or fanfare. I mumbled my thanks as the waitress walked away. I picked up a rib and bit into it, only to realize that this was the best tasting item I had ever placed in my mouth. The rib melted off the bone, and infected my entire mouth with a rich, incredible taste I still remember vividly some four months later. I literally dropped the rib out of shock at its goodness. And at that moment, no joke, or exaggeration present, the chorus of the song playing

¹ *Total Request Live*. Okay, so maybe you knew already, smarty pants, but I had to ask my wife, and thought someone else might not know. — Ed.

through the overhead speakers kicked in: "Take my breath away...." No kidding, scout's honor.

Easily the best dining experience of my life. Nick's too, he agreed. The Williams Smoke House is a no frills place, and they don't go out of their way to play nice, but I promise, they back their shit up when it comes to food. They don't fuck around at all at the Williams Smoke House. If you ever find yourself in Houston with fifteen spare minutes, find it, eat it, and thank me later.

We rolled on. Our next major stop was New Orleans. My first impression of the Big Easy? The place was dirty and scary. We stayed at a Days Inn on the main drag, just down the street from the French Quarter. Unfriendly looking people were everywhere. It was really intimidating. We spent that first night in the hotel, recuperating from the driving we had put in. It was late anyway. The next day we woke up and did some driving around. I got a ticket for making a right turn on red.

Now, if I wanted to in New Orleans, I could drink an entire keg of beer on the street, and it would be legal. I could flash my genitalia in public, and it would be considered a local custom. I don't drink, I'm a quiet little nerd – and I'm the dude who gets a ticket in New Orleans. At this point, I was beginning to not enjoy my time there at all. The beignets, or "little donuts with no holes," were delicious, but besides that I wasn't happy.

Then the sun went down. Everybody hit the streets, and New Orleans turned into the most fun place ever. Three for one drink specials, carnival barker types trying to entice you into entering seedy strip bars, voodoo storefronts, po'boys, all of it was great. We wound up at a karaoke bar called Cat's Meow, where Nick consumed six beers for the price of two. People sang, mostly country songs. Nick dedicated a Bon Jovi song to me for Jersey. It was announced that a group of young girls up front were members of a bachelorette party. My name got called for my song.

Now my friends, I don't want to brag, but I don't think New Orleans has ever seen a rendition of Young MC's "Bust A Move" quite like the one I gave them that night. From my shout out of "This is going out to my motherfucking man from Queens. Ya'll need to recognize. Holla atcha boy!" to the dance breakdown, to my nailing of the lyrics, to my declaration halfway through the song that "Yo, by the time this song is finished, this lady is gonna dump her fiancé and marry ME!" I deserved the rousing cheers that I got. My friends, bragging finished. Let's move on with our story.

CANDIDATE #4 AND WINNER OF THE WORST LIFE EVER CONTEST: THE GRENADE!

There is a bar on Bourbon Street. Their trademark drink is known as the "Grenade." To promote this drink, some poor motherfucker has to dress up in a giant plastic grenade outfit and dance. ON BOURBON STREET. THE MOST WELL-KNOWN STREET OF DRUNKEN MAYHEM IN AMERICA. I can't imagine how hard that life must be. I saw a glimpse of it with my own eyes. We walked by and saw this poor sucker out there, and our jaws dropped. I was sober

and sympathetic. Nick was drunk and a little meaner than he meant to be.

NICK: Yo, what's up Grenade?

GRENADE: Yo, man, it's hot as FUCK in here, that's what's up.

NICK: Yo, that sucks, Grenade.

GRENADE: Give me a dollar, I'll stand on my head.

NICK: (offended by this request for no reason)

I'M NOT GIVING YOU SHIT, GRENADE!

CHRIS: All right, all right, here, Grenade, I'll give you a dollar.

(Grenade proceeds to sit down in costume and adjust it so it appears he is standing on head.)

CHRIS: (immensely sad at witnessing another human being have to whore himself for dollar bills while dancing on Bourbon Street dressed as a piece of military surplus) Thanks, Grenade.

NICK: Aiiight!

.... AND SCENE!

We went to bed that night happy with the nightlife of New Orleans. I would recommend that if you want to visit, you have your plane land at sundown, and you catch the flight out at sunrise. New Orleans was unimpressive during the day – at night, a great place.

The next morning we woke up and executed the coup de grace of our trip, something that may go down as the greatest driving feat of my entire life. We headed north, through Mississippi, and across Tennessee. We stopped in Memphis – got to Graceland at 5:15, only to find out that the last tour started at 5. We ate some dry ribs at a place called Corky's – it was very good. Not wanting to spend the night, as Memphis looked really sketchy and we knew we could return for Graceland some other time, we kept driving. And driving. I went to sleep while Nick drove. He woke me at two in the morning, telling me he had to crash and I'd have to drive us to the nearest hotel for the night.

Six hours later, at about 8 AM, he woke up to see me STILL driving, through the hills of Virginia, muttering to myself incomprehensibly. I don't remember anything about my hyperactive, nonsensical thoughts, except that when the sun came up I recited improvised poetry about it out loud, and didn't think that was even slightly crazy at the time. Nick woke up shocked that I had driven throughout the entire night. And a bit angry, as I committed us to an entire day of driving on no sleep. He took over after we stopped at a gas station, where he bought many cartons of cheap cigarettes. Then we switched off, one of us driving and one of us sleeping, for the remainder of the trip. He got us to DC. We checked out the Washington Monument and the Capitol, as he had never seen them. I then drove us to my parents' house in New Jersey.

Our final push: 28 hours of driving only stopping to eat in Memphis, buy cigarettes in Virginia, and snap a few pictures of monuments in DC.

The tour was a success. It turned out better than *Another State of Mind*, which I saw when I was 14. I didn't even have to say anything melodramatic like "You can't feed yourself on unity, man!"

We saw some shit. We rocked it hard. America, motherfucker.



The Greatest Cover Songs of All-Time

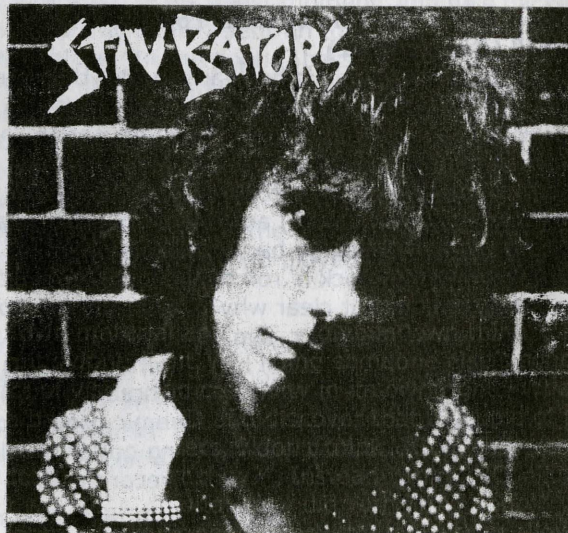
Another pointless list by Josh Rutledge.

If the question of the hour is "Are cover songs cool?", my answer is a resounding YES. And I'm not just talking about playing covers live (always a quick way to win the hearts of a potentially hostile crowd, assuming you pick a tune that the intoxicated rowdies will really wanna hear). I'm also talking about recorded covers. Nothing complements a nice batch of original tunes quite like a well-chosen, well-done cover song. In the underground rock world we all inhabit, much emphasis is placed on the importance of writing

your own material and creating your "own thing." But when it's done right, recording someone else's song is an act of vision and creativity in its own right. When I get a band's new CD and discover that a couple of the songs on it are covers, I don't think, "God, they really needed filler, didn't they?" Instead I think, "Cool! I can't wait to hear what they did with THAT song!" Sometimes a cover song does little more than allow a band to turn its fans onto the music of another band/artist; but at their best, covers are works of art themselves. Simple, straight-forward covers are fun to hear live; however, the standard is raised in the studio. That's when you expect a band to take a familiar song and "make it its own," to interpret someone else's creation and refashion it in its own image. The bands/artists listed below all did exactly that—even if their famed covers weren't dramatically different from the original versions.

10. (tie) Stiv Bators - "It's Cold Outside" (originally recorded by The Choir), Dramarama - "I Wish I Was Your Mother" (Mott the Hoople)

Lots of bands/artists like to refer to themselves as "power pop," but rarely do I hear anyone do power pop the way it's supposed to be done. Most so-called "power pop" bands sound like girly-man versions of Big Star. That ain't power pop! When I think of power pop, I think of Greg Shaw suggesting a hybrid of 1960s pop melody and 1970s punk energy. And to me, Stiv Bators' solo output remains the all-time best realization of Shaw's musical vision. In particular, Stiv's cover of the Choir's regional smash "It's Cold Outside" should be mandatory listening for all aspiring power poppers. The Stiv version retains the original's perfect melodies, divine catchy chorus, and heaven-sent harmonies. But it's delivered with the ballsy, street-smart toughness one would expect from a former Dead Boy. It's punker than anything that passes for "pop-punk" these days yet quintessentially POP in every way that matters. Do yourself a favor and pick up Stiv's *L.A., L.A.* compilation, which is well worth owning for the first four tracks alone. His *Disconnected* LP is essential, too.



Dramarama was one of the great overlooked bands of the late 80s and early 90s, and the band's singer/songwriter John Easdale was (and still is) a brilliant poet in his own right. And while there are countless Easdale originals worthy of deification (buy the *18 Big Ones* collection for a starter course in Dramarama appreciation), one of my fave 'rama tunes has to be the group's amazing cover of Mott the Hoople's "I Wish I Was Your Mother." Speaking of great overlooked artists, has there EVER been a songwriter more underrated than Ian Hunter?! Here Easdale and his bandmates take Hunter's poetry and from it create something even more affecting and poignant than the Mott original (and that's saying something!). Here Easdale taps into the sadness and humanity of the song's lyrics, singing with authentic brokenhearted regret and true aching despair. And in doing so, we can all relate to this character, this person who's just too damaged and emotionally unavailable to reciprocate the love this girl gives him. The original is terrific, but Dramarama's cover is beautiful beyond description.

9. Quiet Riot - "Cum On Feel the Noize" (Slade)

Okay, so a lot of you are laughing right now. Quiet Riot...those cheeseball hair metal relics. Hee hee hee. Well, this song right here was hair metal's finest hour, a four-minute pop song of masterpiece proportions that ruled the radio airwaves for a great part of 1983. Legend has it that the band was forced by its producer to record this Slade classic. Either way, this was the tune that made QR's career. "Metal Health" was released as a single in the summer of '83 and totally died. But the follow-up single, "Cum On Feel the Noize," was a massive hit, quickly pushing the group to platinum-certified, worldwide mega-stardom. And with good reason: Kevin DuBrow and company gave this groovy glam standard a full-on metal makeover, pumping it up into a thunderous, radio-friendly stadium-rock anthem for the ages. You didn't have to be a headbanger to appreciate the song's surging energy and irresistible chorus, this was pure pop masquerading as bad-boy rock n' roll, and I still crank my dial to 11 when I hear this song come on the radio.

8. Joan Jett - "Do You Wanna Touch Me? (Oh Yeah)" (Gary Glitter)

My fave Joan Jett music is her early work—the glam/punk stuff she did before transforming herself into a biker rock icon. You can't beat "Bad Reputation," you know? If you can overlook the fact that "Do You Wanna Touch Me?" was written by rock's most notorious pedophile (Eww!) and just think of it as a Joan Jett song, this poppy bad-girl anthem stands as one of the greatest rock n' roll tunes ever recorded. One listen will make it clear why Jett is such an iconic figure in rock. As a singer, she was the coolest, shouting like a reform school hellion while exuding enough sex appeal to leave any man breathless. The song features a great chorus of anthemic proportions—with oodles of attitude and smoldering guitar heroics to boot. The Donnas WISH they could record a song this good!



7. Rezillos - "Somebody's Gonna Get Their Head Kicked In Tonight" (Fleetwood Mac)

A lot of people don't even know that the Rezillos didn't write this song, which proves how great of a cover it truly was. It's a popular number amongst punk types because it's less quirky/goofy than most Rezillos originals, and more of a flat-out rocker. God, ya gotta love the Rezillos! Even if "Somebody's Gonna Get Their Head Kicked In Tonight" isn't as fun or catchy as sci-fi bubblegum new wave boppers like "Flying Saucer Attack" or "2000 A.D.," it's still vintage Rezillos—a chugging blast of cartoony pogo punk that no one with good taste could possibly resist. Violence has never been so fun!



6. Descendents - "Wendy" (Beach Boys)

This song is a great example of why I like covers. The original version was perfect (you can't beat the Beach Boys for flawless pop). Yet by "Descend-itzing" the song, Milo and company managed to create a different but equally great rendition of "Wendy." I've heard lots of pop-punk bands try to "punk up" old hits from the 60s, and usually they fail miserably. But the Descendents had the chops to pull it off, reinterpreting Brian Wilson's heartbroken lament as a crunchy, driving suburban punk corker. And it succeeds so splendidly because Milo delivers one of his finest vocal performances here, hollering from the depths of his broken heart with maximum poignancy. I mean, really, you can FEEL his pain. This ranks right up there with "Silly Girl" and "Christmas Vacation" as a high point in the Descendents' canon.

5. Aretha Franklin - "Respect" (Otis Redding)

I love Otis Redding, but his original just can't hold a candle to the Queen of Soul's masterful take on "Respect." She sang it like the song was written for her and her only, resonating with a power, style, and sass that still send chills down one's spine. Anybody who thinks of this song always thinks of Aretha, not Otis.

4. Beatles - "Twist and Shout" (The Top Notes)

The Beatles' version of "Twist and Shout" isn't radically different from previous renditions, but it's surely the best. Give it another listen if you haven't heard it in a while. Good lord, the early Beatles were a great rock n' roll band! Even before they were experimental or visionary, their musical gifts were impossible to deny. On "Twist and Shout," they just let it rip, paying homage to the American R & B they loved so dearly even as they honed their trademark guitar pop sound. John Lennon's inspired wailing here makes for one of the most exciting vocal performances in the history of popular music.

3. The Kingsmen - "Louie Louie" (Richard Berry)

Here's proof that true artistry prevails in the realm of cover songs. Richard Berry may have recorded this song first, but how many people have even HEARD his version? To 90% of music fans, "Louie Louie" IS a Kingsmen song. For sure! They "made it their own," reinterpreting it as a sloppy, rambunctious trash-rock party anthem, playing the riff "incorrectly," delivering the vocals with undecipherable glee, and reflecting the

wild, bawdy spirit of the Pacific Northwest's early 60s garage rock scene. The song has probably been covered a million more times since then, and that never would have happened if the Kingsmen hadn't mangled Berry's original and spat out one of the most inspired rock n' roll singles ever recorded.

2. Nirvana - "The Man Who Sold the World" (David Bowie)

Another case where the cover topped the original. Hearing this song, I realize that all of the critical acclaim and fan adoration heaped upon Kurt Cobain was truly justified. Here he couldn't hide behind the furious distortion and violent dynamics that characterized Nirvana's best original songs. Here his voice had to do most of the work, and here it conveyed a sadness and quiet despair that were only hinted at in Bowie's original. The Nirvana version is beautiful—so beautiful that it almost breaks your heart. I rarely even stop to think about what the lyrics mean; I just love the way Cobain sang them. Bowie's version, I'm sad to say, is merely okay. (What's up with that annoying percussion?)

1. D Generation - "Degenerated" (Reagan Youth)

I'm generally more of a pop guy than a rock guy. But when it's done well, I don't think there's anything that beats a full-on, teeth-kicking, in-your-face blast of ROCK. New York glam-punks D Generation covered Reagan Youth's "Degenerated" on two occasions. The first version appeared on the group's overproduced, somewhat lackluster debut album. They tried again on their second album, the phenomenal, Ric Ocasek-produced *No Lunch*. This time, they struck gold. The *No Lunch* version of "Degenerated" is, in my opinion, the most rocking song ever recorded. I kid you not. It's a truly monstrous cut—a raging, take-no-prisoners two-guitar onslaught that begs to be played at deafening volumes as you cruise the city streets in your convertible, one hand on the wheel and the other holding a cigarette. Today, Jesse Malin's a "sensitive" singer/songwriter type, but back then he was a raucous hellfire screamer who could belt it out with attitude, snarl, and swagger. "Degenerated" is his finest moment, and he's backed by a band that seems bent on total sonic destruction. Guitars blaze, drums pound, bass lines throb—all with a fire and intensity that have never been surpassed on a rock n' roll recording. Even if the forces of nature endowed you with the all-encompassing Power to Rock, you still wouldn't be able to top this particular version of "Degenerated". And yes, this was the song performed at the end of the movie *Airheads*. Ah, if only the Lone Rangers had played it as well as D Gen did!

Now that I've reached the end of this piece, it's occurred to me that it would have been a lot more fun to list the ten WORST cover songs of all-time. (Wouldn't at least three of them be by Michael Bolton?). So let's do that next time!

Listen!

Think Too Much!

Write!

A Round Table Discussion of Brian Wilson's *Smile*

Smile...the great lost Beach Boys album; Brian Wilson's ill-fated attempt to top the Beatles and reinvent pop music; the project that drove him mad (or, some would argue, reflected his madness); the legend that has served as the pot of gold at the end of the pop music rainbow for decades. And, hey, it also inspired the "Season from Hell" stuff in Eddie in the Cruisers. For years most of us assumed that Smile had been consigned to the "never to be completed" bin of artistic endeavors.

I was stunned to learn that nearly 40 years after Smile was abandoned, Brian Wilson returned to the studio to complete the album, opting not to use any of the infamous bootleg material - flawed fragments of brilliance that they are - instead choosing to re-record the entire record, and doing so without any of the other Beach Boys. I always assumed that Brian Wilson would go to his grave leaving Smile as an unfinished near-masterpiece, something better left speculated upon rather than finished, in dubious company with other unfinished/unreleased projects such as Orson Welles' Moby Dick and Jerry Lewis' The Day the Clown Cried.

Initially I thought about buying a copy of the new Smile and including it in the regular record review section. But then I reconsidered. Why treat Smile to a review of a mere paragraph or three? An opus of its stature merits a larger scale, so I contacted a number of my favorite writers and musicians to get their take; did they or did they not recommend the new Smile?

So, here we go, hard and strong all the way. - Mike

In a time when our culture is so polarized - red against blue, faith against reason, and on and on - how refreshing it is to be distracted by a slice of commentary about the American condition that is all nuance and gray area. Whether or not I'll ever "get" the narrative here is immaterial, the music is gorgeous, presented as smoothly and slickly as Wilson probably originally intended. If you've spent years poring over bootlegs and assembling *Smile* from Brother-era Beach Boys' records, the sequencing, transitions, and lyrical add-ons may be a bit of a shock, as will the fidelity and technical perfection. This confection is not the psychedelic masterpiece *Smile*-ophiles have long romanticized. It is, however, a unique musical statement that makes me at least a little proud to be an American.

Brett Essler,
Buffalo, NY

When I first heard a year-plus ago that Brian Wilson was releasing a "definitive" version of the legendary *Smile*, my fervent hope was that it would use the original recordings (available on numerous bootlegs), sorting out the "official" sequence, etc. So, learning that it was to be a new recording, performed with Wilson's touring band (members of the Wondermints, amongst others), was distressing news. How could they equal the originals?

But, now that I've heard the album, my view is that they've SURPASSED the original recordings, and put together a recording that is breathtakingly beautiful, strange, and uplifting, just like the best of the Beach Boys' work.

Brian is a very lucky man to have such a group of musicians so devoted to his vision. It might well be argued that the original Beach Boys couldn't equal the performance on this cd (and certainly not the live concerts, one of which I was privileged enough to attend).

Smile strikes me now as something akin to classical music. Hearing the Nonesuch recording, it's not too big of a stretch to imagine this work - this "teenage symphony to God" - being performed by musicians in the same arrangement fifty or one hundred years from now. But, what would be missing would be Brian's

sublimely weathered vocal, which underscores the melancholy nature of this ultimately celebratory music perfectly.

So - obviously! - I consider the new recording a masterpiece.

Bob Ethington
Akron, OH

Quest for the Smiling Grail

Dang, thirty-seven years is a long time. In that time America got its ass kicked by an Asian third world country, and then turned around and kicked 20 or so other fifth rate military powers in the ass before its luck ran out again. Thirty-seven years in the U.S. has seen a shift to the right, a tempestuous impeachment followed by a short shift to the left, a massive shift to the right, a slight shift to the left, and finally we find ourselves in the throes of fascism by twice electing a guy just to the left of Attila the Hun. And now all of this turmoil and soul-searching as a country finds itself book-ended by a work of great artistry giving insight into what this country is all about: the thoughtful, tuneful, ill-fated collaboration that has come to be known as *Smile*.

Maybe it's because the Beach Boys were considered such an all-American band that Brian Wilson wanted to take that stereotype to the limit and beyond (in the face of a daunting British Invasion). Maybe it's because Mr. Wilson wittingly (or unwittingly) saw parallels between the dysfunctionality in his own family and that of his home country's history, and those parallels spilled across page and piano into his most creative moments collaborating with the enigmatic Van Dyke Parks. For whatever reason you want to pick, *Smile* (begun in 1966 and abandoned in 1967) ended up becoming a sprawling and unwieldy and brilliant unfinished masterpiece on so many levels. The original aim of this project was far more than ambitious: it sought to summarize two hundred years of American musical and political history and take its wry observations forward into a new century. Somehow it's fitting that such a gargantuan undertaking took a good chunk of a century to finally be finished to its authors' satisfaction. And now we in the audience can finally fully assess

what lies behind the rumors and the bootlegs and the hype.

At first, when I heard that Brian Wilson had finally finished and released *Smile*, I assumed that he had gone back to the original tapes and edited and mixed and molded. But this version of *Smile* is brand new, with Mr. Wilson being the only original Beach Boy involved. For those who have heard and loved any of the bootlegs of the original (like me), this raises red flags from the outset. Part of what made the original unfinished version so enticing was how, in their unfinished form, many of the songs extended out for ten minutes at a time, meandering and losing their way but somehow always coming back to their original themes. But just by looking at the song timings on this new cd, I sensed that the sprawling, unpredictable quality of the bootleg I was never meant to hear had been honed into a tight, well-defined composition.

Putting aside my fear that what I loved most about the sketchy bootlegged version of *Smile* in my cassette collection would be lost in this newly polished version, I hit the play button on my cd player, and was drawn in from the first few a cappella refrains. Yes, Brian's voice has lost a lot of its luster of youth, and his enunciation isn't quite as precise as it once was, but the music is so captivating and well-crafted that the differences between the *Smile* embedded in my subconscious and the *Smile* pouring forth from my speakers began to meld together seamlessly. This version captures the spirit of the original beautifully by paying attention to details like recording on original 60s equipment and using layering recording techniques (pioneered in the original *Smile*) to build a skeletal live performance into a lush and luxurious wave of sound that crashes down upon you with power and majesty.

The result is refreshing and astonishing, to both the uninitiated (like my wife, who was drawn in without knowing anything but a bit of the story of the original) and to the skeptical (like me, someone who knows the original and the story perhaps a bit too well). The songs flow in and out of each other seemingly effortlessly, making this arguably the most successful of all the ambitious projects over the years proclaiming themselves as

"Rock Operas." Themes (musical and lyrical) appear and disappear and then reappear when you least expect them. The mood jumps from lonely and doleful to spry and humorous with surprising smoothness and continuity. All the obsessive preening has unexpectedly brought the strengths of the original composition to the forefront.

So despite my initial resistance, I find myself thoroughly enjoying this final expression of a true piece of pop artistry with such a torturous back story. I'll still go back to my well-worn bootleg copy to remind myself of how wonderful this diamond was in the rough, but there is a certain satisfaction in hearing it in the form that the authors consider finally fully realized. And there is something wonderful about seeing a chapter from Brian Wilson's own difficult history finally finished with a flourish. This cd should bring a sense of closure to all but the most stubborn fans of the original, as it has for its authors. And there's probably no better time than now to consider questions about what it means to be an American, for better or worse, raised by the more sober and reflective moments of *Smile*.

Russ Forster
Chicago, IL

Brian Wilson appears to be easily persuaded. *Go Metric!* readers know the drill: his dad, drugs, new age spiritualism, Mike Love, his psychiatrist, the Wondermints, and all the little diversions along the way. It seems he would follow the lead of anything in his immediate path if would just bring him some peace of mind and a feeling of acceptance. He just wants to be loved (is that so wrong?). So it's no surprise that his masterpiece is an eager and rambling, over the top, blur of excessiveness, with just a few lucid moments of musicality ("Good Vibrations," "Heroes and Villains," "Surf's Up"). Sure, he's a talented fellow, and the noise he makes can be very pretty. But at the end of the day, who needs *Smile*? It served only to keep Wilson on the map as an unrealized potential, and now that it's realized, he blew his cover. *Smile* is a half-baked idea by an overly medicated and emotionally disturbed young man, completed 37 years later as the most elaborate therapy session popular music ever witnessed. But then again, if you

ever spent a few bucks on a Wesley Willis record, then you know how fascinating these things can be. So sure, go ahead and buy *Smile*. It's a lot better than one of those *Songs in the Key of Z* collections and the new recordings are actually pretty great. It always irritated me how poor the edits were in "Good Vibrations" and "Heroes and Villains," and it seems Brian got his group of hired guns to play it one straight take this time. Super. And it sounds like an ensemble in a room, the way it did in the sixties. Great. The only thing that's really missing is Carl, Dennis, Al and Mike. And, man, I'm missing them.

Jesse Mank
Lafayette, IN

I liked *Smile* but I'll likely be selling it back. It has its moments, but it's no *Pet Sounds*. I found it a bit tiresome upon repeated listens. Although some of the Van Dyke Parks lyrics are delightfully daft - "I threw away my candy bar and I ate the wrapper/And when they told me what I did, I burst into laughter" - they're a bit too surreal ultimately to evoke any great emotion. The music's pleasant but a little too sweet, like having an all-dessert dinner. Still, I'm glad Brian Wilson got it together finally. With this project completed and no longer an albatross for him, I'll be curious to see what he comes up with next.

Wred Fright
Cleveland, OH

If it's half as bad as the odious *Pet Sounds*, that's one symphony for the devil that oughtta remained unfinished.

Rev. Norb
Green Bay, WI

Dunno if I'm gonna be up for a full-on ramble about *Smile*, but for now I'll note that it far surpassed my expectations, and it'll probably be . . . y album of the year. Context certainly matters, so we'll never know how we'd react to this record if it came to us without its myth, its hype, or its backstory, but the result is an album of immense beauty and joy.

Carl Carafelli
Syracuse, NY

I whole heartedly recommend the new *Smile*. It's my album of the year, for sure. The painstaking care they took in recreating the album shows. They used all the old recording gear and even tracked it at the same studio Brian used to do some of the original work. The songs are flawless and the harmonies are beautiful. I've long appreciated the bootleg versions of the original, but it's so much better to hear the songs in a cohesive sequence. I'm extremely glad this finally saw the light of day.

Mikey Erg
Sayreville, NJ

There's an endless amount of Wilson geekdom in which many have indulged since the release of *Smile*, so I'll try to refrain from any of that.

I'd recommend *Smile*, but only to those willing to listen to it for what it is, not what it was intended to be nearly forty years ago. This shouldn't be a matter of comparison. Let's evaluate Brian Wilson's art for what it is, not for what those with far too much time on their hands think it should (or shouldn't) be.

My personal feeling is that the song "Surf's Up" puts Wilson in the rarified company of the greatest American songwriters: Ellington, Gershwin, and Guthrie among them.

Gary Waleik
Natick, MA

I recommend the "new one," but I also recommend the "old one."

It's clear that Brian and company went to great lengths to reproduce the arrangements and vocals of the original recordings (I respectfully disagree with editor Faloan, who says they were "flawed"). And this has been done quite successfully.

However, without any harmonies by the original Beach Boys (and with Brian's singing being an unrecognizable shell of what it once was), the vocals are lacking in the Wilson magic - a magic that's clear to anyone who's heard the original recordings (over half of them have seen the light of day, largely as part of the *Good Vibrations* box set that came out in the early 90s).

I'm sure legal hassles were responsible for not using the original Beach Boys' versions of the already-released numbers (and even the unreleased numbers, for which master tapes still exist, or so I've heard).

Although as a whole it still seems fragmentary (as I'm sure it would have been even if originally released in 1967), at least the individual selections now seem like "finished" tracks. Vocal tracks on "Song for Children" (an instrumental version was listed as "Look" on the original bootlegs) and "On a Holiday" (ditto, being "Holidays" on the original boots) are quite welcome.

For some reason, "Do You Like Worms" (or "Do You Dig Worms") is now called "Roll Plymouth Rock." Why? The only reason I can come up with is that the words "*roll Plymouth Rock*" are actually featured in the song, but the words "do you like worms" are not. But the song's lyrics are not its *raison d'être*; they're pure giddy nonsense syllables. Re-titling it does nothing to improve either the song OR the recording as a whole. Plus, it's been available for years under the original title. Pointless. (Still a great track, though.)

If you've heard neither the original fragments nor the 2004 version, and if you're more than just mildly curious about this piece of rock history, you owe it to yourself to track down a bootleg of the 60s *Smile* sessions. The ideal way to experience the glory of *Smile* would be to listen to those original skeletal versions, and - after taking a day or a week or so to digest them - THEN pop in the 2004 Brian Wilson version. Only if you approach it in this way will you fully realize the scope and majesty of the overall project - from its conception, to its abortion, to its almost-but-not-quite-glorious refertilization and resuscitation.

Scott Wallace Brown
Baltimore, MD

Last night I finally saw *Beautiful Dreamer* (a documentary that focuses on *Smile* - Ed.); a couple of beefs with that and the album. The album has beautiful packaging but man do David Leaf's (who directed *Beautiful Dreamer* and has written liner notes to several Beach Boys-related releases, including the new *Smile* - Ed.) comments come up short:

nothing about the process, the history, the order of songs, the voices, the differences between the "lost" sessions and final product. He can do much better: his notes on the *Smiley Smile* re-issue and *Pet Sounds* box are superb - here they merely gush, as if the music's classic status speaks for itself; if it did/does, then here he should have shut the fuck up: pretty typeset can't obscure the outrageous paucity of information. The movie is OK - nice to see Darian Sahanaja from great *Wondermints* bouncing around, and it's great to see older footage, but lacks doc video of the Beach Boys and sound tracked music from period. Obvious rights and costs were an issue, but in an avowed historical analysis NOT having the stuff is kind of dumb, like a documentary on Lincoln and not examining his speeches or Emancipation Proclamation; also, the production is too hagiographic: his preoccupation with LSD, fake spirituality, asparagus, Arabian pyramidal structures, and jumping jacks could be stressed more and shown, not passed off as eccentric moments. Does it bother anyone that Brian Wilson is a complete zombie? I worked in a psych hospital for seven years full time and if you don't think I can recognize thorazine shuffle as quickly as someone who can name Deep Purple's 10 worst songs (o, where o where would I start?), then you are crazier than Brian Wilson.

As for the music: well, I can see the visceral pull of the event live for those of you who had just gone; I too am a big fan. *Pet Sounds* and *20/20* and *Wild Honey* were played at my house as much as any things, even VU and Iggy, and it has always stayed with me. And I was 17 and just creating things like tastes, vocab, hierarchies. Man, the music was awe inspiring. But am I the only person in America who is disappointed with actual album? As opposed to the music on my bootleg of lost tapes and to the ones from Beach Boys box sets where the songs are more audacious, the singing more ethereal with deeper bottoms, the singing here seems orchestrated, secure, comfortable in its skin. The linking fragments here seem like throw offs, and the large four set pieces lack the angry anvil of harmonic genius of the earlier outtakes. I think the new *Smile* wondrous and complete, but maybe today I prefer mysteries, enigmatic spaces, and the ability to orchestrate the sequence on my own as in

Cortazor's novel *Hopscotch*. This *Smile* seems too tidy; it flows seamlessly, but at what expense: look at the man – he's a wreck. Who created these moments? Who decided on the foregrounding of the ensemble singing? Brian Wilson's voice isn't wondrous – um, duh, it is a Wilson production, so you have to start there as a valid critical yardstick. Because you are no longer insane or, OK, not falling off your stool does not equal greatness: it's like a dog, as Samuel Johnson said, walking on its hind legs: you are surprised it's done at all, but it ain't art or life. "Cabin Essence," "Surf's Up," and "Heroes and Villains" are three of the greatest pop songs ever written. Here they are pale mechanical copies. And "Surf's Up" should end the cycle – they went for the cheap emotional climax with "Good Vibrations," which doesn't suggest logical closure. It's all good, but it ain't *Sgt. Pepper* produced a little later that year. Shit, *Sgt. Pepper* ain't *Sgt. Pepper* now either.

Michael Baker
Union City, NJ

Smile – you are ON!

I tripped across a copy of *Smile* on a recent cd-buying binge at the giant audio megaplex built on the sublime success of *Tubular Bells*. Usually I haunt the used record stores that still fight for the survival of music in Boston, but I was attempting to purchase a copy of *Fahrenheit 911*, you know, so I could vote with my wallet. I misunderstood the release date and was a few days early, so I decided to wander around the many floors and see what I could spend my money on instead since I had walked the extra forty yards or so over there on my lunch break.

Smile immediately caught my eye. I had recently refreshed my Brian Wilson-ness by listening to the complete Capitol records Beach Boy collection at work along with a few gems of his solo career. I had heard about the various bootleg versions of *Smile* and assumed that this *Smile* was a compendium of them all sorted out and perhaps even sequenced by Brian, so I snatched it up along with a few other gems that caught my eye (*Star Wars* original theme music double cd, Elvis Costello *My Aim Is True* double cd, and Ben Harper with the Blind Boys of Alabama).

I have to admit that I haven't listened to *Smile* yet, and here is why:

- a) I don't want to be disappointed,
- b) It's not what I thought it would be.

Let me explain...

Something so hinted at and so long hidden cannot match its legend, even *Sgt. Pepper* doesn't measure up to the stature that it once held, but at least it GOT there. What if *Smile* turns out to be a messy fat piece of crap?

And why weren't the other Beach Boys asked to play on this or perform it? I thought all peace treaties had been signed and all hatchets buried (in the sand).

There is another reason I haven't listened. On the day I made this purchase I took my lunch and ate it under a nice tree in the Fenway. I opened *Smile* to read more about it, perhaps if I got really excited I'd pop it into my workstation back in the office and share it via iTunes. I cracked open the liner notes, I read that *Smile* was actually performed live in London, and that after that performance Brian cheerfully announced that *Smile* was now completed...AND THEN THEY WENT INTO THE STUDIO AND RECORDED IT. Where is the London performance??? That's the one I want to hear – and buy – not this AFTER THE FACT recording.

So, I'll leave my review at that. The liner notes excited me about listening to the real *Smile*, but the cd appears to be all new studio recordings of songs from the *Smile* days, not the real deal from back in the day. And some day, when I'm not scared to be disappointed I will listen to it.

Frank D'Urso
Boston, MA

Stacking up the Smiles

Smiley Smile (Capitol, 1967)
It's actually a great album, considering it's the crapped-out remains of a drug-addled nut case project that (until now) was considered a hopeless endeavor. Unfortunately, it plays like a bunch of (albeit charming) singles (or experiments) rather than anything close to a continuous, epic

experience. Take away the baggage of disappointment, and you've got a brilliant failure. **Score: 9 out of 10**

Smile session excerpts (As heard on the Good Vibrations box set) 99% of the time when you see "unreleased outtake," it's really reissue filler, the bread and butter of collector scum, and/or cruel crumbs left for the hardcore completists. In the other 1% we have the *Smile* studio sessions. The wonderful pop is sliced open, allowing the listeners to finally hear separate layers of Wilson's vision. It's like opening an Oreo and eating the white stuff inside. Very yummy. Also, new or alternate lyrics start to take shape; most if not all are better than what we've previously heard on *Smiley Smile*. **Score: 10 out of 10**

Smile bootlegs (Various)
There have been many bootlegs, some better than others, and for those who want to hear *Smile* as it could have been released in 1967, I suggest seeking out the one or two. Some are so authentic looking it's deceiving. Some are considered to be "fan mixes" rather than "bootlegs." Most are made by rabid admirers like *MOJO* magazine and the guy with 20,000 LPs in his basement. With these you've got something that represents a cohesive album, near-complete gems that flow like ear candy. The Holy Grail for pop purists (a.k.a. music snobs). **Score: 11 out of 10**

Smile (Nonesuch, 2004)
It's an album Brian Wilson is happy with. It's his dream finally brought to my speakers. It's immaculate and funny, spiritual and so enjoyable that it must be sinful. It's over 35 years old and yet still childlike. I suppose some people may hold the record's own flawlessness against it, but I can look above such matters. Whereas some people are dismayed at the new recordings, I find them refreshing and most welcome. It fits ideally with Wilson's effort to create a "perfect" pop masterpiece. Genius. **Score: 12 out of 10**

Mark Hughson
Syracuse, NY

I've always been a fan of the songs from *Smile* that I have collected over the years from *Smile*. I have probably spent around fifty or sixty dollars on bootlegs and around eleven

bucks on a book about the record called *LOOK! Listen! VIBRATE! SMILE!* written by Domenic Priore. When I heard that Brian and his band were remaking *Smile* I thought, "That's silly, why don't they put out good, remixed versions of what's already there?" A friend who is a huge *Smile* fan burned me a copy of a show Brian and his band played in London earlier this year. They played all of *Smile* and a few other Beach Boys songs at the end. I was a bit surprised. They did such a nice job at arranging the songs in an order that makes sense. Great playing and singing, too. When the record came out I was given a copy and even though I thought the live boot was good, I was still skeptical about the studio version. I finally got around to listening to it a few weeks later and I think it's very good. The band did a real nice job and Brian's singing isn't bad at all. So, go ahead, get a copy.

Mike Gent
Providence, RI

P.S. *Wild Honey* and *Friends* are better.

The new *Smile* is, if nothing else, a pretty amazing accomplishment of recording and production. The instrumentation, vocal arrangements, and overall sound of the original have been meticulously recreated by Brian Wilson's band. This is no mean feat, since the original was recorded in different studios at different times by different musicians. For those of us who have listened to the bootlegs and various released pieces over the last 20 years, the new version will sound completely familiar.

What they've done is put the pieces in order, though it's hard to say if the order would have been the same in 1967, since it was never finished. They've also added vocals to some of the sections that had been in circulation as instrumental only. Some sound like the vocal parts and lyrics were written way back when, others sound like they were retro-fitted (we know from the liner notes that Van Dyke Parks wrote some new lyrics to finish the project). There are also a couple of new instrumental sections that serve as seques from one song to the next. These don't work very well - they sound contrived, the way they use melodies from other pieces, as if it was an overture from a Broadway musical.

There's no doubt that this is the best anyone could have done in trying to complete, re-record, and release *Smile*. Having said that, though, there are shortcomings. Despite the note-perfect vocals provided by Brian Wilson's band and (with less perfection) by Brian himself, the vocal tracks just don't have that sublime sound that Brian and the Beach Boys produced back in the day. This is in large part because Wilson's voice is completely different than it was almost 40 years ago, but it's also because the other Beach Boys (love 'em or hate 'em) all contributed to the overall vocal sound.

The recordings as a whole, while recreating the original down to the last glockenspiel, never quite hit the sweet spot of the original, though they come closer than I would have thought possible. Then again, maybe I'm just picky.

I'm glad this came out. It's the only complete *Smile* there is (though I wouldn't be surprised if Capitol compiles their own "official" *Smile* from available original sources), and it's very listenable. But if you want that goosebump-inducing version of "Surf's Up," dig out a bootleg.

Sam Elwitt
Brooklyn, NY

I should probably establish that, like most other folks who are life-long music fans and have been in bands, I am not one to get star struck. I don't believe in celebrity, or put musicians on pedestals and I don't understand the point of autographs or hero worship. The idea that any musician (who categorically are one of, if not the most screwed up sectors of individuals in society) would tell me how to vote or how to make the world a better place is laughable. I hate the notion of pop or rock n' roll being referred to as "art." I mean, I guess it is, but only by default and should never be referred to as such. Most bands and albums that are consciously wedded to the notion of "art" are pretty horrible. Emerson, Lake, and Palmer come to mind as does Rage Against the Machine, or Yes, or Sting or any number of over-bloated, pretentious combos churning out future buck bin fodder.

That said, the Bermuda Triangle in my sea of hardened cynicism is Brian

Wilson. The Beach Boys were my first favorite group as a kid in the early 70s, and while my peers were pretending to be firemen or astronauts, I was busy being the sixth Beach Boy. I knew early on that the guy behind all the music and that glorious sound was Brian Wilson. As time went on and more interesting things were going on in the present tense (namely punk rock), my Beach Boys fandom went dormant, although I never abandoned it. I had just realized that the Beach Boys I knew and loved didn't exist after 1966, and the Ramones (who made a career of rewriting "Little Honda" countless times over, god bless 'em) were happening NOW and I wanted to be a part of something that hadn't already happened.

But you know the old saying about "you never get over your first love," and in my early 30s I found myself reconnecting with my love of the Beach Boys. As a consequence, I have a soft spot and an enthusiasm for Brian Wilson that is almost embarrassing. I only say this because it's hard for me to divorce the issues around *Smile* from the issues around Brian Wilson.

While not as die-hard as some, I was one of the unwashed masses who collected *Smile* bootlegs and tried to assemble my own version based on how I thought Brian would have done it in 1967. On a personal level, I also listened to the bootlegs as much to hear a Brian Wilson who was in control, coherent, and confident. The studio patter between takes was almost as interesting to me as the music itself, because that wasn't a Brian Wilson that showed up in interviews during my lifetime, even though I desperately wanted him to be. Hold that thought while I go back to the music - I'll tie these two ideas together later.

Musically, when I first dipped a toe into *Smile*, I didn't like it. Maybe because at first all I could hear was the drugs and that sort of creeped me out. In time, I came to really admire it and found an enthusiasm for it. There were a million ways to assemble the snippets, and each configuration made sense and had its own internal logic. The thing I couldn't get past, though, was on every version of *Smile* that I compiled, and the other fan mixes I had heard, there was a certain darkness or weirdness to it that just

kept it from jelling and feeling like a Brian Wilson production. Still I was fascinated with the lore and the possibility of "what if..."

When there started to be rumblings of Brian's "master plan" for *Smile* coming to fruition, I was both nervous and excited. I was excited because Brian's band, in my opinion could pull it off. They had the proper sonic frame of reference and a respect for the original music, as was evidenced by how they treated *Pet Sounds*. They were big enough fans that they wanted to do right by the music by recreating the sounds as closely as possible. (As a side note, it's my opinion that only younger folks could pull this off, or anything that deals with history for that matter, because they were more likely to keep everything straight. If Brian had hired musicians from his generation, or professional musicians who just viewed it as a paying gig, it would've been a disaster. There would've been some sense of entitlement or hubris involved that said, either because they were from that generation or because they were trained professionals, anything they threw out there would've been authentic and worthy.) So thank god for the Wondermints and the other folks that make up Brian's band.

When I was a kid I used to ask my mom questions about the 60s. When I asked her to pinpoint a specific thing, she'd say, "I don't know, it was maybe 1963 or 1964...or maybe 1965? I can't remember," which to me was maddening, because in my mind there is a huge difference between 1963 and 1965. But I find that when I'm asked about the 1980s, I can't remember if something happened in 1981 or 1983. Folks who weren't alive during a given time period tend to be good at capturing the details if they do their homework, simply because they have no first-hand continuity to trip them up. It's easier to compartmentalize and make clear distinctions. But like the 60s garage revival of the 1980s, sometimes even with the details perfect you can miss the boat on the feel or impact of the thing because it's impossible to know how it felt without first-hand experience. So you end up with this hollow form that looks perfect, but doesn't feel quite right, or like the same garage revival, something that has a context of its own and becomes its own separate thing.

I say this because with *Smile*, Darian (Sahanaja) could keep the details straight on arrangements and instrumentation and resist the desire to "update" the sound as seems to happen with so many acts that revisit their past, and Brian could provide the spirit behind the thing – if he was up to it. But that was the big "if." I wasn't sure if Brian was a willing participant or doing it because of the heavy baggage tied to *Smile*; if he was just hoping to get through it, going through the motions to please his wife/therapist/manager/whomever.

The hush around the development and completion of *Smile* built up anticipation for the February debut of *Smile* in the U.K. I remember figuring out what time it was in England and at the time I thought the show would be over, checking the *Smile* Shop board relentlessly waiting for a review. When they came in they were overwhelmingly ecstatic. Shortly afterwards, I was able to get a copy of the show and I was struck by a couple things:

a) how well the band was able to capture the sounds and feel of 1966/'67 *Smile* and most importantly,

b) how completely pop and un-weird the completed *Smile* was. It just made sense, and it sounded like Brian.

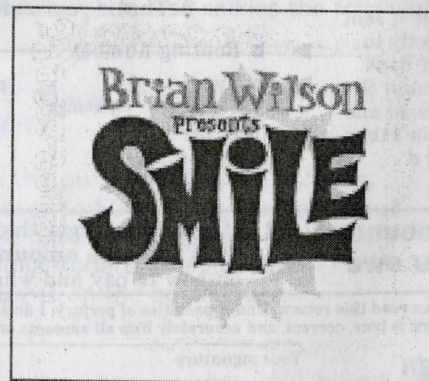
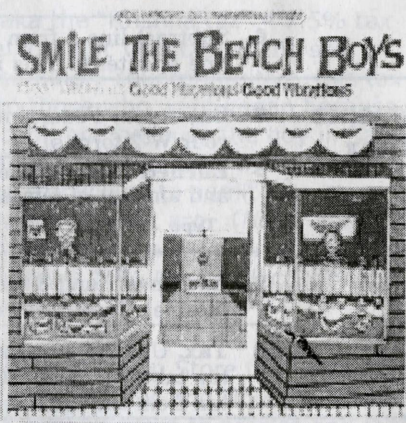
For all those years, we only had access to parts of tracks that never had melodies recorded. While everyone focuses on Brian's great gift of harmony and arranging, it's really his gift of melody that is the secret weapon. So with those cool melodies locked in his head for all those years finally set free and put together with otherwise unconventional backing tracks, it suddenly made sense. On my earlier fanboy level, I was glad to see the transformation of Brian personally. It seemed like a weight had been lifted from his shoulders, and on some level that I can't explain, that makes me glad.

Is it *Smile* 1966? No. We'll never have that, it's impossible and to me it seems unrealistic to expect that, because *Smile* didn't, nay, couldn't exist in 1966. But the fact that Brian has had the final word on *Smile* is good enough for me. It helps that I really enjoy it. Sure, there are little favorite parts that got left out, but I

can always go back to the boots and listen to them much in the same way we get cut scenes included on the dvd's of our favorite movies. To me, I have the best of both worlds. I know there are naysayers who feel the official release fell short, that Brian's voice is shot, that his current band's vocals pale in comparison to those of the Beach Boys, that he should've used the original recordings and then just fleshed them out just enough to complete them. Others say that Darian was the one that finished *Smile* and not Brian, therefore it's not finished or authentic.

But I'm not one of those folks who feel like I'm owed anything or that it should've taken the form I wanted it to take. As I said, Brian has the final word and if he says this is *Smile*, then it's *Smile*, and I'm better off for having it in my record collection, and it appears that Brian is better off for having faced his demons and finishing it.

Dean Seavers
Sacramento, CA



Use
the
IRS
label
here

Your first name and initial

Michael A. Felton

Last name

If a joint return, spouse's first name and initial

Last name

Your social security number

Home address (number and street). If you have a P.O. box, see page 7.

30-28 34th St.

Apt. no.

46

City, town or post office, state, and ZIP code. If you have a foreign address, see page 7.

Astoria, NY 11103

Presidential
Election
Campaign
(See page 7.)

Note: Checking "Yes" will not change your tax or reduce your refund.

Do you want \$3 to go to this fund? ▶

If a joint return, does your spouse want \$3 to go to this fund? ▶

Income

Attach
Copy B of
Form(s)
W-2 here.Enclose, but
do not attach,
any payment
with your
return.Note: You
must check
Yes or No.1 Total wages, salaries, and tips. This
should be shown in box 1 of your
W-2 form(s). Attach your W-2 form(s). 12 Taxable interest income of \$400 or less. If the total is
over \$400, you cannot use Form 1040EZ. 2

3 Unemployment compensation (see page 9). 3

4 Add lines 1, 2, and 3. This is your **adjusted gross**
income. If under \$9,500, see page 9 to find out if you can
claim the earned income credit on line 8. 45 Can your parents (or someone else) claim you on their return?
Yes. Enter amount from worksheet on back. No. If **single**, enter 6,550.00.
If **married**, enter 11,800.00. See back for explanation. 56 Subtract line 5 from line 4. If line 5 is larger than
line 4, enter 0. This is your **taxable income**. ▶ 6Payments
and tax7 Enter your Federal income tax withheld from box 2 of
your W-2 form(s). 78 **Earned income credit** (see page 9). Enter type
and amount of nontaxable earned income below.
Type \$ 89 Add lines 7 and 8 (do not include nontaxable earned
income). These are your **total payments**. 910 **Tax**. Use the amount on line 6 to find your tax in the
tax table on pages 20–24 of the booklet. Then, enter the
tax from the table on this line. 10

Refund

Have it sent
directly to
your bank
account! See
page 13 and
fill in 11b, c,
and d.11a If line 9 is larger than line 10, subtract line 10 from
line 9. This is your **refund**. 11a

▶ b Routing number

▶ c Type

Checking

Savings

d Account
numberAmount
you owe12 If line 10 is larger than line 9, subtract line 9 from line
10. This is the **amount you owe**. See page 13 for details
on how to pay and what to write on your payment. 12I have read this return. Under penalties of perjury, I declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the
return is true, correct, and accurately lists all amounts and sources of income I received during the tax year.Sign
here

Your signature

Spouse's signature if joint return

Keep copy for
your records.

Date

Your occupation

Date

Spouse's occupation

There are many drawbacks to being owned by a multinational conglomerate (like Go Metric finds itself shackled to GenTech). For example, knowing that your bosses threw tons of money toward the Bush/Cheney campaign, and receiving copies of *Unfit for Command* as holiday bonuses. But there are perks, too. The administration knows they're unpopular with some of the young folk, and that's why we at Go Metric were approached by Vice President Dick Cheney to revise certain aspects of the admittedly convoluted U.S. tax code. (Not his jurisdiction, you say? We won't say anything, if you don't.) As Mr. Cheney was quick to remind us, the federal tax system is like a nation-wide behavior modification system, encouraging certain consumer-oriented actions while discouraging others, kind of like gold stars and time-outs from Big Brother. Being strong advocates of randomly enforcing our views on others, we readily agreed. So if want to save some change, chump, you best soak up...

The Go Metric Guide to New Taxes

For
Official
Use
Only

Citizenship

Tax code 1776.01, aka the "Cronies of Puffy" tax – those seen wearing a "Vote or Die" t-shirt when they are not registered voters shall forfeit 200% of their net income in the tax year in which the infraction took place. There is also a 25% tax on those who, in the wake of the '04 presidential election, are considering a move to Canada even though they've never been there and base their entire opinion of that fair nation upon the Canadians interviewed in *Bowling for Columbine*. It's really cold in Canada, you know. And with the NHL on strike, the only entertainment you're going to get is Rush or Bryan Adams. You remember that song he did for *Robin Hood*, right? (And for that matter, you should remain suspicious of Ryan Adams because of the similarity of his name and Bryan's. Even if Ryan used to be in a band with Ed from Ohio, formerly of FIREHOSE. Who's not to be confused with Eddie from Ohio, the male folk singer, who sucks. And by FIREHOSE, of course, we're referring to the band Mike Watt and George Hurley formed in the wake of the Minutemen's demise, not Firehouse who were inexplicably on the same record label as FIREHOSE at the same time. And while we're at it, don't confuse the Misfits with Misfit Toys, that lame 80s hair metal band, or with the new Misfits [Did you know that Doyle can't tour with the Misfits because, due to his recent divorce settlement, he needs to limit the amount of income he shows?]. Finally, never confuse Ludichrist with Ludacris. Or Christian Death with Stryper. Or Jesus Jones with Michael Jackson's favorite beverage, Jesus Juice. (We wish we made up this shit.)) We're done.

Clothing

Tax code 1908.13, aka the "Trouser press tax" – 27.5% tax on the purchase of any new clothing – everyone knows you should only get new clothes as birthday or holiday gifts (band t-shirts are exempt)

Comic books

Tax code 2250.7, aka the "Mott from Hoople" tax, a 87.5% tax credit for referring to them as comic books and not graphic novels. This portion of the revised tax code also carries the following provisions:

- 10% tax credit for buying monthly comics instead of waiting for the trade paperback collections
- 20% tax credit for being able to explain any portion of Chris Ware's *Jimmy Corrigan*
- 30% tax credit for reading a comic book in front of a pretty girl (*Brian adds: Personally I read the new issue of Justice League America to my wife each month as a means of testing her devotion, and it seems to be working despite her addiction to Desperate Housewives. But take this with a grain of salt, I also read the collected edition of Crisis on Infinite Earths to her as a means of foreplay. (Note: She has yet to respond.)*)

Films

Tax code 2001.99, aka the "Cuba Gooding, Jr. tax" – A 17.75% tax will be assessed for attending the screening of any Class 9 film (a Class 9 film is defined as any picture in which a lead actor gained or lost a significant amount of weight or shaved IQ points or is wearing any sort of prosthesis. (Note: There is an exemption for purchasing the SCTV box set wherein Eugene Levy pops in fake teeth to do his killer Floyd the Barber impression.) (Additional note: The SCTV box set is 100% tax deductible. You saved your receipt, right?)) This portion of the revised tax code also carries the following provisions:

- 100% tax on the purchase of a Class 9 DVD, especially if it's *Radio* (Note: The U.S. Senate is now considering legislation that would expand the embargo on all products made in Cuba to include all Cuba Gooding, Jr. projects.)
- an additional 5% tax for seeing a Class 9 trailer and failing to make your disdain immediately and publicly evident (yes, *The Aviator* counts)
- further, there is the "Ben Affleck tax," due upon the intake of any Ben Affleck-related media, deliberate or otherwise. This tax is payable in flesh only, one pound (lb.) per infraction. Currency will not be accepted.

Food

Tax code, 1495.59, aka the "Krishna tax" – 7.5% tax on the purchase of all organic vegetables and soy products. Though seemingly counterintuitive, this tax will only be applied to those who went vegan because they thought it was cool, and because the guy in *Saves the Day* is vegan. Maybe. Conversely, there is an 8.5% tax credit if you are willing to admit how bland those faux chicken nuggets really are. (Note: The U.S. House of Representatives is currently considering House bill 23360 which will levy a 10% tax on all chanting.)

Literature

Tax code 1605.50, aka the "Chain Store tax" – There shall be an 85% tax on all Barnes and Noble purchases. Obviously you should only be there to browse and then later purchase that book at a smaller book store. This portion of the revised tax code also carries the following provisions:

- 18.125% tax on purchasing any book from an end cap display
- 25% tax on the purchase of any Grishams, which increases to 50% if a movie has been made of that book and increases further to 76.25% if Julia Roberts or Matthew McConaughey is on the book cover.

Music

Tax code 1986.00, aka the "Tawny Kitaen tax" – 87.5% tax on the purchase of any media containing performances by what are commonly described as "80s

hair metal bands." Yes, Guns'n'Roses qualifies as an "80s hair metal band." Everyone, and we do mean *everyone* who likes that first GnR record was in high school when the first heard it. You probably had a bandana tied around your leg back then, too. (There is an additional 15% tax for singing "Living on a Prayer" at karaoke.) This portion of the revised tax code also carries the following provisions:

- Sum 41 must forfeit their entire net income. This is non-negotiable. They are also prohibited from using the phrase "old school." Granted, we should all ease up on the usage of said phrase, but those dudes in particular.
- 5% tax credit for owning multiple albums by the Fall, because you know they all sound the same (all proceeds go toward continuing the Fall's "release a new record each month" campaign. Can't wait for them to put out the coveted *Live at Footlights College '79* tapes!).
- 48% tax credit for trying cd collections from punk bands you've long heard about but have never heard, like the Mekons. (And if anyone buys that new Homosexuals 2-cd set, let us know what you think. We're curious.)
- 5% tax credit for bringing your kid to the WFMU record fair. Why should any person have to wait until they're in their 20s before they hear about Fred Frith or Mrs. Miller?
- \$5 tax for weeping so hard at an emo rock show that you drop and damage the can of unsalted green beans that you brought for the food drive. (Note: A Senate subcommittee is currently investing whether or not anyone in their right mind would actually eat canned green beans. Even we can steam the fresh ones.)
- 17.4% tax on all rock critics who compare new bands to bands their readers have never heard of, and they themselves know only from having read *The Trouser Press Record Guide*. Tax is quadrupled if and when a writer uses any form of the "hybrid" description, e.g., *They sound like Nick Drake crashed a Beastie Boys cocktail party at which Camus was the guest of honor, Modest Mouse were serving as bartenders, and Freddie Mercury was working the coat check, while Coltrane was nodding off on the davenport, and Joe Strummer was doing doughnuts on the front lawn with Paul Weller's Vespa.* – Ethan Blake, Spin
- 44% tax on rock stars who suspiciously have more hair now than they did 20 years ago, aka the Kevin Dubrow tax. (Gary Numan is exempt because he'll admit they're implants. Elton John pays quadruple the tax as a result of those hideous Disney songs.)

- 10% tax for being able to sing Sammy Hagar's "Three Lock Box" and an additional 17.5% tax for knowing that said tune is post-Montrose and pre-Van Halen

Stimulants

Tax code 7654.87, aka the "Hipster tax" – from now on cans of Pabst Blue Ribbon beer will be priced on a sliding scale:

- \$1 per can for people like my Uncle Don who have been drinking PBR for years and, in a fit of panic, started buying up cases of PBR when they thought Pabst was going out of business a few years ago
- \$2 per can for those drawing unemployment insurance
- \$10 per can for the trust fund kids who represent 98% of all domestic PBR sales (which is also 98% of *all* PBR sales because people in other countries don't buy PBR – though they do buy Bud, and that's weird because Bud is much worse, even the Irish buy Bud and they should know better). (Note: You must have already filed form 6-A Williamsburg to qualify for this credit.)

Technology

Tax code 666.666 – a 200% tax credit for anyone able to find evidence of the missing "internets" cryptically referred to by President Bush in the second presidential debate. Are they lost or just missing? Good luck, folks, it's hard work!

Television

Tax code 7755.91, aka the "Fox Fund" – every time you tune into a Fox program – and yes, *Arrested Development* counts – you have to ante up a buck for the Fox Fund, said funds can only be spent on crappy looking 7"s or obscure zines that won't see issue #3 because the dude in his bedroom will soon realize that good record labels never send promos and used record stores already have way too Epitaph releases. (A lesson we at GM have yet to learn.)

Theater

Tax code, 2995.75, aka the "Andrew Lloyd Weber" tax, there will be an 87.25% tax for getting weepy when Cosette dies in *Les Misérables*. This portion of the revised tax code also carries the following provisions:

- 92.5% tax for merely entertaining the notion of attending a performance of Joel Schumacher's *Phantom of the Opera*
- 5% tax for thinking that Ashlee Simpson could even sing in the first place (we know that doesn't relate, but we just thought of it now)
- 15% tax for naming your child Ashlee with two "e"s

100 some odd records and what to think about them

(with a couple of book reviews tossed in for good measure)

Brief yet accurate assessments of records big and small, and books, too. Most reviews by Mike Faloon with assists from Matt Braun & Johnny Reno. Enjoy.

The A-Sides – "Seeing Suzy" b/w "Going Gone" 7"

You know the song that plays over the closing credits to *The Monkees*, "For Pete's Sake," right? Well, "Seeing Suzy" is cut from a very similar cloth – the singer sounds a lot like Mickey Dolenz – and it's pure pop bliss. The flipside repeats the trick drawing on "Pleasant Valley Sunday," which is the right way to direct your compass, but the coda goes on way too long; 32 bars of the same call and response. Definitely a keeper, though, and if sounding like the Monkees isn't enough to entice you, bring it up with your shrink, perhaps s/he can medicate bad taste.

(Prison Jazz – 431 Birch St., Scranton, PA 18505)

Ape House – *Tired of Style* cd

On the stronger songs from Apehouse's last disc, they leaned toward traditional power pop. Same applies here, when they trust the poppier side of the force, the results are pleasing. Check out "We're Going Crazy." Too often, though, they opt for a more serious, border-line emo rock sound, which undermines their greatest asset: J. Forte's vocals. (Croft-tone – www.apehouserock.com)

The Autumns – s/t cd

I love fall. The warm but not oppressive temperatures, the vivid colors on the changing trees – the feel and sound of nature exhaling. Time to stop and think and realize that summer is past and winter is coming and school will be starting soon and my days of traveling and writing at leisure are over, and because I have to go back to teaching I'll be taking fewer trips to Film Forum and catching fewer shows at the UCB Theater. Fuck, I hate autumn. All those used books that'll have to wait for next summer. Summer is "want to time"; autumn is "have to time." The Autumn is "have to" music, as in I have to listen to this turkey and try to find some way in which their quiet verse/loud chorus/music-ain't-no-fun-no-how rock is distinct from the rest of the flock. No thanks. (Psuedo Pod)

The Bellrays – *The Red, White & Black* cd

I try to be objective when reviewing records, but ultimately it's simply a matter of liking or disliking an album. I want to like the Bellrays, they come across well in interviews and write endearing liner notes ("When you must use your own voice, guitar, bass or drums to express feelings where words do not exist, you are your own Superman and Kryptonite."), but I think Lisa Kekaula oversings and the soloing, geez, it seems like there are guitar solos every 30 seconds. (Alternative Tentacles, Box 419092, SF, CA 94141)

Berzerk – A.E.I.J.N 7"

When making a list of my favorite musical genres, I think it's safe to say that thrash would not be at the top of the list. And yet, while I think of Berzerk as thrash (albeit punky thrash), I've always liked them a whole lot. I guess maybe the female vocals make it a little more palatable for me. They took some time off for awhile there, and I think they've replaced the rhythm section or something, but they're still great at doing their thrashy punk, totally-Recess thing. (Recess Records – P.O. Box 1666 San Pedro, CA 90733) Matt Braun

Jello Biafra with the Melvins – *Never Breath What You Can't See* cd

Hmmm...Jello's been doing these things for a while now, I guess. Jello with DOA. Jello with Nomeansno. Jello with

Mojo Nixon. This time around it's the Melvins. And while Jello tries his damndest to be relevant and address the ills that face America and the world in 2004 (the war on terror, the war in Iraq, blah, blah, you know the routine), there's something about this that feels awful dated. I mean the first song is called "McGruff the Crime Dog," for god's sake! I haven't seen McGruff urge me to "take a bite out of crime" since 1987. The Melvins sound okay here, though, and I can honestly say that overall this is no worse than *Bedtime For Democracy*. Take that as you will. (Alternative Tentacles, Box 419092, SF, CA 94141) Matt Braun

Lewis Black

I've never heard Lewis Black do standup before, but I love his *Daily Show* rants – smart, funny, bitter bursts of rage built upon on a foundation of rational thinking. While Black brings his blood pressure to a boil, I find myself thinking, Well, at least I'm not the only who feels that way; his infuriated insights are soothing to me, especially because I always see him tackling the big issues. So I was surprised when he opened *Rules of Engagement* talking about the weather in Minnesota. And it wasn't an exercise in "it's not the subject, it's what the subject represents," he was truly ranting about the extreme cold of the state of 10,000 lakes. Fortunately, it's just a starting point and he slowly moves onto higher stakes topics. The payoff with *Rules of Engagement* isn't immediate, but it's there. (Comedy Central)

The Born Losers – s/t cd-r ep

The Born, as their fans like to address them, open and close this ep with decent garage rock numbers. But they stumble, nay, snap a musical femur with the middle tune, a dreadful metal song. At the risk of being pretentious, I'll summarize with the German phrase *ickyblechunstraussenyuck*. (*That's for you, Carswell.*) (www.thebornlosers.com)

The Briefs – *Sex Objects* lp

That first Briefs lp was awesome. It spent a ton of time on my turntable. So much so, that when there's no record on the turntable at all I swear I can still hear a faint voice yelling "Kill Bob Seger right now!" Kind of like that old tv your friend's friend's grandparents had that was so old it picked up *The Jack Benny Show* well into 1986. Then that second album came out. You know, with the orange cover? (No, Faloon, I will NOT get up and check the titles of the two previous records. Isn't that why you have that fact checking department?) You can try and put it in nice terms or tell me that most of those tracks were from 7"s or something, but the long and the short of it is that the second one kind of sucked and only seems to suck more so now that the Briefs' triumphant return to form, *Sex Objects*, is out. Short, snappy, catchy and clever as hell, this album opens with hands down the best post-9/11 punk rock song in the brilliant "Orange Alert" (with track three, "Destroy The USA" a close runner up!). Tres courant! (BYO – Box 67609, LA, CA 90067) Matt Braun

Carol Burnett – *If I Could Write a Song* cd

Reason why I put out a zine #701: Free Carol Burnett cd's. I used to love *The Carol Burnett Show*. I felt like an adult watching it with my parents because, clearly, it wasn't intended for kids (or so I thought). Anyway, during the show's run, Carol took a shot at being a singer of schmaltzy, early 70s middle-of-the-road pop. She can easily carry a tune – I always put her in the "versatile entertainer" category – but the material here isn't worth carrying. And though the anticipated Harvey Korman cameo failed to materialize, it was still worth hearing. She's Carol Burnett, for crying out loud! (Collectors' Choice – Box 838, Itasca, IL 60143)

C.D. Truth – Chemically Dependent cd

Goofy, melodic punk with topical lyrics sounding like King Missiles' John S. Hall fronting All. Not bad.
(Foot in Mouth – 610 Philip Ave., Akron, OH 44305)

Chrome Pistola – "Belly of the Beast" cd ep

A bad rock/rap mix further cluttered by a guest appearance by ELO's string section. Or maybe it's Abba's string section. Regardless, it's a string section, for god's sake, and it sounds woefully out of place. Maybe because the string section dudes wish they were playing a cool ELO song, like "Don't Bring Me Down," or "Ma-Ma-Ma Belle" – they're unhappy playing on crap like "Belly of the Beast." I like the harpsichord on the second song, but it's too little too late. (Mindless Records)

The Cinch – Shake If You Got It cd

I like the title a lot. Usually if you've "got it," then bands are imploring you to "shake it." But the Cinch, just want possessors of "it" to shake, what you shake is up to you; the Cinch are believers in free will. Kind of like in *East of Eden* when Adam and Lee learn that the Yiddish word *yimshel* can be interpreted as "Do thou" (a prophecy), "Thou shalt" (a command), or "Thou mayest" (a choice). Choices, baby, they mean everything. Obviously, listening to the Cinch makes it easy for one's mind to wander, but for the right reason; stimulation, not boredom. *Shake If You Got It* is smart, hypnotic pop – with the vocals alongside not atop the guitars – for the patient listener, reminding me of the Operators or the Lisa Marr Experience. The Cinch is the rare band that I trust to stretch a song up to or past the four minute mark; in that sense they're like the Feelies or the Clean or the Velvet Underground. A great, put on the headphones and get lost record. (Dirtnap – Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111)

Clorox Girls – s/t lp

This is my favorite punk rock record of the year. At first it couldn't hoist that belt above its head because *Clorox Girls* sounds nothing like the band's debut 7". Nothing. That record was lo-fi and goofy, a pretty good group of garage punk songs. My first two times through this record, I was disappointed, wondering if it was the same band. Then I was hanging out with a friend. He popped in *The Clorox Girls* and it floored me. I just needed to wipe off my figurative lenses so I could see the picture accurately; the light went on. I recommend that you buy the lp. It spins at 45 rpm and it'll give you an even better sense of just how fast this record goes by. Ten songs, maybe 20 minutes. *The Clorox Girls* is blessed with Ray's Syndrome, which refers to the Lemonheads' *It's a Shame About Ray* cd, the first record I ever heard that was almost uncomfortably short. Every time it ended I wanted there to be more and I was forced to play it again. It took me awhile to realize that it was for the better, that I kept going back to *Ray* because it was so short. I've gotten to the point where I love every song on *The Clorox Girls* – even the two slower numbers – because for all of my talk of quantity, this is all about quality, friends. And after about a dozen spins, I'm tuning into the lyrics and these guys are smarter than I thought initially. They've got things to say, without being self righteous, and now I'm curious to know what they songs are about, which is essential given that this will be in current rotation for a long time.
(SmartGuy – 3288 21st St., #32, SF, CA 94110)

Concubine Forming – The Guilt Will Kill cd

When I was a music director in college I'd hear something like *The Guilt Will Kill* and put it in the mailbox of John Keegan, host of "Face Down Radio," the station's industrial music show. I'm out of touch with John so his mailbox has been replaced by the "attempt to sell back" pile.
(Big Neck – Box 8144, Reston, VA 20195)

Crash Normal – Heavy Listening lp

Listening to Crash Normal is like taking garage and punk and techo, and distorting them with a funhouse mirror. Either that or the acid scenes in *Easy Rider*. Weird, man, weird! But not enjoyable, not anything I want to experience first hand. Dennis Hopper will always steer you wrong. That's how you know that *Apocalypse Now* is such a mess, for the last half hour of the movie Dennis Hopper is the voice of reason. But if you're going to come up short, like *Apocalypse Now*, like *Heavy Listening*, then go out in a blaze of "what the fuck was that?" glory! (S-S – 1114 21st St., Sacramento, CA 95814)

David Cross – It's Not Funny cd

The routines on this record come up time and time again in conversations with friends, which leads me to doing poorly rendered versions of the bits which inevitable tank and leave me saying, Well, you have to hear the record. Sure, there's too much stuff about 9/11 (a topic he covered to better effect on his last record), but you owe it to yourself to hear *It's Not Funny*. Please. Reduce the chances of anyone hearing me say, Did you hear the David Cross bit about electric scissors? No? Well... I'd rather talk about this disc than re-enact it. I guess that makes this more of a request than a review.
(Sub Pop)

Descendents – Cool To Be You LP

Easily – EASILY! – the best record I've bought this year! (Yes, BOUGHT dear reader. The powers that be at GenTech have yet to see their way to sliding me any of those high-resale value promos they're sitting on.) Okay, probably every review you've read of this record is pretty much glowing but none that I've seen have struck at the core of this lp's brilliance, and that brilliance is this: this is a pop punk record written by dudes in their late 30s or 40s that is aimed at listeners in their 30s and 40s. It's easy for a teenager to write good poppy punk songs about adolescence and its many tiresome trials and tribulations. Hell, it's easy for a guy in his 20s or 30s to write songs about high school and unrequited love (See: *FYP 1990-2000*), but here's a rocking, catchy record where the whole B-side of the album is about child custody battles, dead dads, career burn-out, and married love. Is this what the Ergs will sound like in 15 years? I certainly hope so!
(Fat Wreck – Box 193690, SF, CA 94119-3690) Matt Braun

Digital Leather – s/t lp

I recommend everything that the I Don't Feel a Thing record label has released. You'll either get a rollicking good garage pop/rock record (like the Lottie Collins and Tiger Shovel Nose singles) or a novelty record that you'll listen to once but always be loaning to friends (like when Neil Hamburger covered portions of his favorite Nixon speeches). Everything, that is, except for this Digital Leather long player, which lies somewhere between New Order left-overs and the instrumental tracks on Queen's *Flash Gordon* soundtrack.
(I Don't Feel a Thing – Box 858, Tempe, AZ 85280)

The Dwarves – ...Must Die LP

I felt like The Dwarves kind of lost me with *Come Clean* a few years back. There was all that electronic, techno-y kind of crap on there and not even that picture of yours truly taking a swing at Blag in the liner notes was going to get me excited about it. And there's still a lot of electronic stuff (and even hip hop!) on this new one, but here it seems like they thought through it better and it sounds like the technology Blag might have been playing with on the last record is something he's now mastered. All of this works surprisingly well up against the relentless rock about sex, cocaine, and the devil that (happily) still make up the majority of the band's repertoire.
(Sympathy For The Record Industry) Matt Braun

Duchess of Saigon – "Hootenanny" 7" ep

Delightful art school pop that draws on the same formula as the Fall when Brix Smith was in the band – big beats, slicing

guitars, and a cool contrast between the vocals of the monotone dude and angelic dudette. And isn't "B. D. Wong" named for the actor who plays the shrink on *Law and Order: SVU*? Great idea for a sing along...*WONG, wong, WONG, wong, B, D, B, D, B, D, B, D*. Even better than their debut single. (Plastic Idol - 410 Bell Ave., #25, Sacramento, CA 95838)

The Electric - *Degenerotic Doses* cd

Dear reader,

I wanted to think of an amusing manner in which to dismiss *Degenerotic Doses*, which is a true dud. But in order to succeed I would have to listen to more of *Degenerotic Doses* and I am unwilling to do so. Suffice it to say that the Electric are to punk rock what *Frasier* is to comedy - able to use correctly SAT words like "cherubic" but not good enough to keep me tuned in.

Yours truly,
Mike Faloon

(Pro-Vel - Box 5182, St. Louis, MO 63139)

The Electric Shadows - "Star Crossed Lovers" cd-r ep

So my friend Aaron has been talking up his new band, the Electric Shadows, a lot. He tells me that they play my kind of music, really poppy stuff, and I'm sure to like them. He's good natured about his advocacy, but Aaron's the kind of guy who would look my mom in the eyes and tell her that the Electric Shadows play her kind of music, just like the Statler Brothers, and she's sure to like them. Aaron's like that; he wants everyone to like the Electric Shadows, and I can understand why. They really do play my kind of music, drawing heavily on late 70s power pop and sounding not far removed from fellow revivalists the Exploding Hearts. This is a really good demo, five good to great songs. I can't wait for these guys to hit the studio again, give this material a bit more polish. Even if they sound nothing like the Statler Brothers. (Istanbulrocks@yahoo.com)

The Ergs - *Dorkrockcordrod* cd

Seventy-five percent of this record makes instantaneous sense, on a subatomic level; anyone with taste is going to connect with the bulk of this record right away. The remaining 25% is split into two parts. You've got the 12.5% of the record that will come with time, the stuff you have to work for a bit. The remaining eighth makes you scratch your head. Should *that* be here, the jazz break, the country noodling? Yes, they should be here, but you have to fiddle with them, make sense of them mentally and that's where the real satisfaction comes. The Ergs have an amazing knack for deciding where to let their influences surface. And they do it under the guise of pretty love songs (whether it's love gone right or wrong), and we can all connect with that, eh? ("Yes" would be the correct response there.) (Note: Rumors that *Dorkrockcordrod* is an song-by-song response to XTC's *Skylarking* are greatly exaggerated.) (Whoa Oh - 21-36 43rd St., 3rd Floor, Astoria, NY 11105)

The Ergs - *Cotton Pickin' Minute 7"* ep

Last night I was listening to the Replacements' *Hootenanny* and as I looked at Bob Stinson's picture - the one where he's wearing a ridiculous trench coat and looking every inch the goofball unless you know the band and when you look at the picture you have songs like "Color Me Impressed" or "Buck Hill" in your head, in which case you probably think, like I do, That guy is so *fucking* cool and, oh yeah, he happens to be wearing a ridiculous trench coat - it dawned on me why I love the Replacements so much: they weren't trying to capture someone else's magic, they never wanted to sound like another band. You could catch glimpses of their influences,

but they were in pursuit, however haphazardly at times, of their own sound. How that came across to other people didn't matter to the band. Even when they fumbled, their songs were stamped with the band's unique approach. A record like *Don't Tell a Soul* is a glossy, gooey, overproduced mess, but it sounds nothing like any other band's glossy, gooey, overproduced mess. The Ergs are turning that corner of not "just" writing great material but assimilating their influences and emerging with their own sound. I love the Ergs but I was really surprised by these songs, each of which is some variation of country-flavored, because they carry nary a hint of kitsch. They don't sound like the Ergs goofing on country songs or even like the Ergs doing country songs, they sound like Ergs songs, just as much as do the band's power pop or punk songs. I don't know if this is my favorite Ergs record, though it's close, but it is the first one I'd cite as evidence of they're becoming a great band.

(Prison Jazz - 431 Birch St., Scranton, PA 18505)

The Fastbacks - *Truth, Corrosion and Sour Biscuits* cd

The disc opens with the sounds of a film projector, and the back cover shows guitarist Kurt Bloch standing proudly beside a projector. And that's the gist of *Truth, Corrosion and Sour Biscuits*; these are Fastbacks home movies, unearthed nuggets from various sources (old compilations and singles, along with a couple of previously unreleased songs), and the results are so good. Kurt and company have sequenced the disc to sound like a great Fastbacks record, not just a collection of random songs. I loved everything here, especially the Soft Boys and Supersuckers covers (two exceptions: covers of "Rocket Man" and "Go All the Way," even the mighty Fastbacks are not mighty enough to salvage two of my least favorite songs of all time). The best thing is that despite the era, line up, and/or production values, the greatness of the songs always shines through, even the early 80s material with those drums that sound like turned over butter tubs. Plus, who wouldn't want to hear the Fastbacks tackle a Pixies cover ("Allison")? The annotated liner notes, from Kurt, Kim, and Lulu, are cool, too. They could have called this *Fastbacks Home Movies* but *Truth, Corrosion and Sour Biscuits* is far more confusing and thus, in the Fastbacks universe, far more successful. The Fastbacks are dead; love live the Fastbacks. (Book Records)

The Fe Fi Fo Fums - "Electrofize Me" b/w "Wild One" 7"

...a little dab will do ya...Here it's a little dab of 60s garage rock (the A-side sounds like a lost Troggs demo) and a dab of 90s garage rock (the B-side sounds like a lost Rip Offs tune, which is like a Troggs song, only faster and with cheaper production). Neither of 'em is GREAT, but they both work and hey, if it's good enough for the folks at Boom Boom, it's good enough for me.

(Boom Boom - 9014 13th Ave. SW, Seattle, WA 98106)

The Figgs - *Palais* double cd

Yep, a double disc set from the Figgs. A double dose from my one of my favorite bands ever. Merry Christmas! I tend to get long-winded about the Figgs, owing to the gap (as I perceive it) between how great this band is and the relative lack of attention they receive. I have a tendency to look for bigger meanings in the hopes that a few more people might join me (and my friend Steve) up front at Figgs shows. Time for a different tack. Aside from the obvious disappointment that this isn't a rock opera (I have a fully fleshed out narrative about the day in the life of a Canadian mountie. If only someone had asked...), *Palais* is everything I'd hoped it would be and a bit more. It really functions as two separate, great discs. You can listen to either independent of the other, or spin 'em back to back. Two dozen supremely satisfying power pop songs, sequenced in a surprisingly cohesive order from start to finish (20+ songs is a lot to put together). It's as

simple as that. (But if you want to root through the records for greater significance, give me a call, I'd love to join you.) (Soda Pop Records)

Thee Fine Lines – s/t lp

So I'm driving home from work, it's been a long week, and I'm dying to hear the a-side of this tape that's in my car. It has Thee Flying Dutchmen and the Clorox Girls, but it's cued up to the other side, which has Thee Fine Lines. I like Thee Fine Lines, a lot, but I was in the mood for the Flying Dutchmen and Clorox Girls songs that had been in my head all day. I figured I'd listen to the first song from Thee Fine Lines and then fast forward, listen to the rest of their record later. Then I listened to the second song and I figured I'd fast forward after that. Then the third and the fourth, and then it dawned on me that this record is even better than I thought it was. Thee Fine Lines come up with one way after another to vary the Kinks "You Really Got Me"/"All Day and All of the Night"/"Till the End of the Day" riff. Perfect for celebrating a break up or a hasty departure from town. (Licorice Tree – Box 92783, Austin, TX 78709)

Thee Flying Dutchmen – *Fang Club Caveman Sessions* lp

The Dutchmen, among other endearing attributes, love to include banter between their songs. They especially enjoy calling each other out on the mistakes that they make. It's not funny that they would stop practice when someone hits a bum note or drops the beat, but it's hysterical that a band that would put out such deliberately crappy sounding records would get mad when mistakes are made, or even pretend to get upset when mistakes are made. That's rich. There are a couple of reasons why it's obvious that this is all staged. First, they're obviously emulating Supercharger and the band arguments they had on their records. Second, every one in the band has a microphone. Unless everyone's going to sing, you only give everyone a mic if you anticipate recording your banter. It's like when I saw one of those *Faces of Death* videos. There was a scene where a guy gets mauled by a bear and, allegedly, it was videotaped by his buddy who was safely holed up in a nearby car. The give away being that it was a three-camera shoot, hardly what people typically plan for their nature walks. I also love it when bands enact the kinds of jokes that are easy to come up with but a pain in the ass to execute. For example, when the Dutchmen cover "Shout" you, the listener, have to flip the album when the song pauses; the song begins on the end of side one, it pauses, you flip the record and the song resumes on side two. I like to think that that joke served as the springboard for the band deciding to put out an album rather than a cd. We need more medium-specific jokes. We need more records like *The Fang Club Caveman Sessions*. (Boom Boom – 9014 13th Ave. SW, Seattle, WA 98106)

Thee Flying Dutchmen – "I Make You Beg" 7" ep

I am not above recommending a band solely based on their shtick – great concepts hold considerable value in my book – but all goofing aside, the Dutchmen can kick a tail feather as well as they can shake one. That's my Rheingold-saturated way of saying this is a great r'n'b band that also happens to have lots of goofy arguing in between songs. A good Flying Dutchmen record, and rest assured there is no other kind of Flying Dutchmen record, stands with the best of trash culture, like Saturday afternoon monster movies and second hand copies of *MAD* magazine, and this might be the best one yet given that it includes "Leaving Here," their finest song. (Boom Boom – 9014 13th Ave. SW, Seattle, WA 98106)

Four Deadly Questions – "Oral Fixation" 7" ep

I don't know what the four deadly questions are, but based on the band's lyrics I can guess the four common answers: regret, fear, doubt, and disappointment; damn, this disc is a downer. I wasn't expecting a walk in the park given the

group's lineage (they've got former members of Dick Army and Yum Yum Tree), but still, I keep the light on when I'm listening to this record. I like the B-side better, though I wonder if "Plan B" is a punk rock answer song to Stephen Stills' "Love the One You're With." Overall, I like the band and that they're trying to sound unlike their previous groups, and even if I don't think their material has caught up with them yet, this is still a good ep. (GC – Box 3806, Fullerton, CA 92834)

The Four Eyes – *Rock & Role Playing* cd

Everyone I know in the worlds of zines, music, etc., has at least one "I was such a nerd in junior high that I once/used to..." story, but usually the tale carries with it the implication that "I'm no longer like that." The Four Eyes have trumped us all, writing songs that cover every facet of the "I Was a Teenage Geek" constitution and proudly waving their "We Are Dorks, Hear Us Roar" flags into adulthood, reigning supreme over the nerd nation, but never falling into dweeb-dom. (Nerds can see themselves for what they are, dweebs have severed the cord that tethered them to reality and floated into an orbit from which they can't deal socially with anyone, not even people who share their interests. Or so I think.) The Four Eyes embrace their spelling bee and computer skills. They boast about their role playing game abilities, and they cover "Goin' Berserk." (C'mon, it's just me, no one's looking, you can admit you remember the album cuts from Buckner and Garcia's *Pac Man Fever* album.) And they write foolishly catchy punky pop songs. Even the guys on the lacrosse team will dig the wonderfully ridiculous "Hat Nerd" ("He knows where his hats at"). (Plastic Idol – 410 Bell Ave., #25, Sacramento, CA 95838)

The Freak Accident – s/t cd

Strange record, Soundgarden one minute, Mojo Nixon the next, and Neil Young following that. It's not all bad, but a lot of it is. I wish they'd stick with the poppier songs like "Spring Fever," "Bye Bye," and "Never Going Back to Petaluma." (Alternative Tentacles, Box 419092, SF, CA 94141)

Guaranteed Katch – *In a Sumptuous Brown Gravy* cd-r

When I saw the title of this record I immediately thought of the new Sgt. Major record, *Rich, creamery butter*. Coincidentally, when I put in the Guaranteed Katch disc, I had to take out the Sgt. Major cd. The comparison was inevitable; was it or was it not worth my time to remove the Sgt. Major record, which is indeed rich with goodness, in order to listen to the Katch? The first tune caught me off balance, nearly enjoyable, weird pop'n'rock in the vein of Frank Zappa or Tin Huey. The next song was second rate Bad Brains; the third a tongue in cheek country song. My patience was worn thin. I can deal with the self-conscious, "let's dabble in all styles" approach for a short time, but these guys broke a cardinal rule: they let the former drama student be the singer. I used up my tolerance for such singing listening to Dead Kenned; records. Then we're treated to a pair of sludge rock tunes before the dastardly wah-wah pedal makes its appearance – this device is always a villain, it's never there to help. And it's a sign of the inevitable funk song. Gravy makes everything worse. (Reality Impaired – www.gkatch.com)

The Girls – s/t cd

Try as I may I was unable to find any mention of former Cars Elliot Easton (guitar) or Ben Orr (keyboards) on this record. Maybe they're playing under pseudonyms? Regardless, *The Girls* packs all of the hooks of the Cars better songs, but with added punch in the rhythm section which yields a really good album. (Dirtnap – Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111)

Bobcat Goldthwait – *I Don't Mean to Insult You, But You Look Like...* cd

All too often fame is wasted on nitwits, people who don't know what to do when they're in the spotlight. Bobcat, though,

knows how to put relative fame to use – you get fired from *The Hollywood Squares*, you set *The Tonight Show* set on fire, you swap getting arrested stories with Johnny Depp when you're on the movie set, and then you weave those anecdotes into your stand up routine. What makes the bits work so well is that he always comes across as a buddy with an all-access pass rather than a name-dropping chump, and throughout *I Don't Mean to Insult You* he tells good jokes and even better stories. If only he'd ditch the voice. (Comedy Central)

The Green Chair – s/t cd

The first three cuts radiated "half baked," but I couldn't figure out if it was the performances, the production, or the writing. Then on the fourth song they dropped the over-fuzzed guitar sound and some gentle melodies emerged; Green Chair went from sounding like a low rent Dinosaur Jr. to a decent Sebadoh knock off. I'll take that trade any day. (Prison Jazz – 431 Birch St., Scranton, PA 18505)

Mitch Hedberg – Mitch All Together cd

Mitch's cool, stoner guy persona initially struck me as so contrived that I was tempted to bail out of *Mitch All Together* after five minutes. But his material is great, a stream of consistently funny jokes – no stories, no observations, no realizations – that sound better with a dry delivery, and given that he doesn't go through the ebb and flow of story telling, he has to keep the laughs constant, no lulls as he build toward the next peak. A smart guy indulging in laughs for their own sake, that's something I can enjoy a lot. (Comedy Central)

Robyn Hitchcock – Spooked cd

I have followed Robyn Hitchcock through all of his albums since I first got hooked on *Globe of Frogs* back in college. To some extent I've liked them all – even when he did a double disc set of Dylan covers – but some certainly stand above others, and *Spooked* is among the cream of a fine crop; I've listened to it more than any Hitchcock record since '91's *Perspex Island*. *Spooked* is in line with the more subdued, largely acoustic records he's been doing for the past decade, yet offers his most consistently memorable melodies in ages. (Yep Rock)

Hollow Points – Annihilation cd ep

Me: Bless me, father, for I have sinned. It has been 21 years since my last confession.

Priest: Continue, my son.

Me: Father, I must confess to actively disliking a release on Dirtnap Records, the Hollow Points *Annihilation* ep. I...

Priest: Say no more, son, I understand, second rate Bad Religion material is hard to swallow, though I think that "See Ya in Hell" sounds more like Social Distortion. Still, we must recognize the glory of Dirtnap. For your penance, listen twice each to the Marked Men, Dirt Bike Annie, and side one of the Pulses' painfully underrated debut album.

(Dirtnap – Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111)

Holy Shit – What the Fuck?! 7" ep

Well, yeah, guys, you pretty much said it all. As in, *holy shit*, this is loud and fast and screamy. And, *what the fuck*, the side's already over, you've already finished five songs? I just sat down! Hardcore. With Eric Apnea (Catholic Boys, Teenage Rejects) on drums, though with Holy Shit he's playing the genre straight, not messing with the formula like he does in the Catholic Boys. Here he messes with the formula by showing his willy in the band photos. Naughty! (Holy Shit – 2658 N. Booth St., Milwaukee, WI 53212)

Holy Sons – I Want to Live a Peaceful Life cd

At first I thought, eh, not bad, kind of like minor league Neil Young or Swearing at Motorists (well, double A to be more precise – past rookie league but more than one step away from the show). Then along came "Getting Old," which contains the line "I'm ready to die." I dispute that claim,

there isn't an ounce of conviction in the singer's delivery (I'd name the offending chap, but there are no names listed in the cd booklet). Obviously, it didn't take much to put "dislike" in motion. (Film Guerrero – Box 14414, Portland, OR 97293)

Hussalonia – Charles Hardin Hussalonia cd-r

This is a great collection of pop songs. Head Hussalonian Jesse Mank will tell you otherwise, but disregard him on this matter. He knows not of what he speaks. Every pop fan owes it to her/himself to have numbers like "Why Can't Pop Songs Be More Sympathetic" and "Oh Fuck, I'm in Love" within arm's reach. Despite the first impression you might get from the song titles, I don't think Mank is a cynic, simply a realist. Most people working in the realm of Buddy Holly or Paul McCartney-inspired pop are ridiculous idealists. Mank, he's not opposed to being in love, but he recognizes that there are risks that walk hand in hand with the rewards. And he writes a killer tune, to boot. (www.hussalonia.com)

Hussalonia – Percy "Thrills" cd

Every Hussalonia disc has a central driving force behind it, bitterness with romance or being a pop fan, for example. But on *Percy "Thrills"* there's less of that drive. The lyrics are still up to the level we've come to expect from Jesse Mank, the driving force behind the band, but this time the focus is on sounds – richer backing vocals, Ringo Starr "put those toms to use!" drumming. On the surface, these are not the most immediately catchy Hussalonia songs, but the hooks are there, and *Percy* ultimately emerges as their best record; it's less a collection of great songs and more a wonderfully cohesive whole. I feel like I'm about to break out the quotes from the Columbia House Record Club catalog ("A winning collection...best effort to date!" – *Cashbox*), but there are a lot of reasons I listen to *Percy* so often. (www.hussalonia.com)

The Itch – 14 Ways to Make Friends cd

Listening to this disc I feel like I'm reliving the times when I've gone to see a co-worker's band or play and disliked it. I want to like it – they're a nice person, I enjoying talking to them – and I want to have something nice to say. I start wondering, Am I a snob? Or maybe I'm thinking about it too much and I will like it when I give it a chance. Then I get self-conscious, knowing that I'll be unable to mask the fact that I didn't like their show and I grasp for neutral comments, the ones I heard when co-workers came to see my bands ("You guys were tight"; "I liked the cover at the end"). I bet I would enjoy hanging out with the Itch, but I dislike their record.

(Wee Rock – Box 333, Springfield, MO 65801)

The Izzys – s/t cd

Thanks, but I already own several Stones albums. (Kanine Records)

The Jet Set – We've Got the Dance Connection cd

When I was a kid I loved watching footage of would-be inventors trying to get airborne in various types of flying machines. I'd always root for that guy who would run to the cliff's edge, manically flapping his three-tiered wings. All of those contraptions looked to me like they might work, as if the parts were all there and lined up properly and ready to defy gravity. The Jet Set are like those inventors. They've got all the parts, of a cool garage band, in their case – smart design, sparse instrumentation, great song titles, decent chemistry – but the songs never take off.

(Wee Rock – Box 333, Springfield, MO 65801)

Killer Squirrel – Self-Released (and Loving It) cd

On the surface, *Self-Released* might seem to be about how the rich are bad and the middle class kids who can afford to put out their own cd's are righteous; perceived class warfare set to a drum machine and monotone vocals. But I think Killer Squirrel is (it's a one-man band) not really ticked at

corporate fat cats so much as upset that their daughters ignore him ("All you hot looking girls who snub me" - "I Speak My Mind"). (Operation Phoenix)

The Killowatthours & The Rum Diary - split cd

Me: (to my wife, Allie) This is boring, right?

Allie: Yeah. You can't hear the vocals. It bloweth.

Me: So, there are two bands on this disc, they alternate songs. Let's skip to the Rum Diary.

Allie: I like this song, I like the percussion during the chorus.

Me: In the music business, we call that "stick on gourd." Back to the first band now.

Allie: Better, but there's still that problem with the vocals.

Me: This sounds like a slower, duller version of Servotron's "Moving Parts," which is interesting only because I thought Servotron had already released every conceivable variation of this song.

Allie: Sounds like a funeral march to me.

Me: Would you rather listen to more of this or change the cat's box?

Allie: Did you say "casbah"?

Me: Cat's box, litter box.

Allie: I thought you said "casbah," I like that Clash song, but cat's box, please.

(Substandard/Springman)

The Knockout Pills - 1 + 1 = Ate cd

Break out the tennis racket and full-length mirror, friend. I'm bringing over a copy of *1 + 1 = Ate* and we're going to air guitar like fiends! Do you want lead or rhythm? Doesn't matter to me, we can do the old give and take, trading off like Keith always tells Ronnie he's *going* to do (though he never follows through; Fucking Keith). We'll move the coffee table to the side, crank the stereo, and bounce like fools for 32 minutes. Sure, get out the snacks if you want, but we probably won't stop until the record's over. Maybe just some water, we're in for a workout. *1 + 1 = Ate* may not have the range of songs that the Knockout Pills' first record had - things are more similar track to track - but I think the vocals are even better and they're a tighter band now. Top 10 for the year? Yeah, I think so.

(Estrus - Box 2125, Bellingham, WA 98227)

Less - Cover, Protective, Individual cd

There's a great scene from *WKRP* where newsman Les Nessman is talking to one of Jennifer's potential suitors. The guy, named Steel, says to Les, "I believe a man's name says a lot about his character. What's your name?" Well, Steel, your theory worked for the tv character named Les as well as the band Less - I can't recall a less satisfying disc.

(Firecode Core)

The Locomotions - s/t cd

The Locomotions bash away like nutjobs, hitting their acme with a bitchin' instrumental called "Sigma Attack" and plummeting back to earth with covers of "Under My Thumb" and, unfortunately, "The Locomotion." It sounds like beer may have been involved somehow. Worth it! It's got a photo on the front of singer Martin Savage sticking out his tongue! Like Bruce Springsteen, they have a song called *I'm On Fire*. Unlike Bruce Springsteen, they seem to be from Sweden. Willkommen! (Dead Beat - Box 283, LA, CA 90078) Johnny Reno

The Locomotions - "Teacher" 7" ep

What we have here is a need to revisit the band's approach to vocals. On their cover of "Claudette," which is a fine cover I should add, the lead vocals are fine and the backing vocals are well-rendered "oohs" which stand in good contrast to the band's garage punk music. On the other songs, though, especially "Almost Saturday Night," which wastes a cool Jam-like intro, and "Do It Again," promising tunes have their legs kicked out from beneath them by off-the-mark warbling. (Big Neck - Box 8144, Reston, VA 20195)

The Lucky Punch - Kick Up A Hullabaloo cd

This is rock'n'roll kind of in the Hellcopters vein only with a heavier blues-rock thing going on (think early Aerosmith). They're from Austria, but all these songs seem to be in English. There's a pinup girl on a tiger skin rug on the cover. Uh, are we at strike three yet? Mercifully, there are only 12 songs on this thing, yet it still seemed to go on forever. This was all done long ago by people far more creative and intelligent than this quartet, and I'm not sure it was really my bag even then. And I'm sorry, I know you guys are Austrian but "hullabaloo"? Puh-leeze.

(DeadBeat Records, Box 283, LA, CA 90078) Matt Braun

The Marked Men - On the Outside cd

The Marked Men have written the longest great punk song ever. The whole album is basically one continuous Ramones re-write, one song barely distinguishable from another. Check that, one song indistinguishable from another. And I like the whole thing. As with the likes of Teengenerate and Scared of Chaka, there's high energy, loud guitars, and lots of squawking, but I think the Marked Men have better melodies. I never know what they're singing about, but I never get the impression that they're making up the lyrics on the spot, the melodies are too good for that. I'd be very disappointed to find out that these guys improvise their lyrics on the spot. That's the kind of half-assed approach that sank Dinosaur Jr. and Pavement, bands that couldn't mask the fact that they didn't care (one more tally mark for punk rock in the Punk Rock vs. Indie Rock challenge). The Marked Men care, damn it! Initially I resisted this record because all of the songs sound the same, now I embrace it for that same reason. I love the song that they do over and over again.

(Dirtnap - Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111)

Minor Disturbance - Don't Tell Me What Is Right cd

Don't Tell Me invites knee jerk condemnation, if not outright hostility. C'mon, "You Suck," "I Drink," "You Think You're Punk"? Where's the unity song? Yet despite outward appearances, these guys know it's a goof, and they crank out some right fine hardcore. This is better than I expected.

(Run and Hide - Box 35094, Philadelphia, PA 19128)

The Minus 5 - At the Organ cd ep

Whenever my folks went to the Fairmount Fair mall I'd make a beeline for the toy store, a walk that always took me past the Hickory Farms store. During the holidays their storefront was as colorful as Kay Bee's, and I'd get faked out every time, scanning their display of ROY G. BIV packages, momentarily hoping that there was another store in the mall selling cool stuff - toys, comics, baseball cards - before realizing that it was only Hickory Farms and they had nothing to offer other than cheese wheels. I always wished they'd make a candy wheel, a nicely arranged assortment of the coolest candies. Well, if that ever happened I'm unaware of it, but *At the Organ* is like a musical cheese wheel, a brightly colored variety of songs - pop, garage, country, Tom Waits (he merits his own genre) - that, unlike the Hickory Farm wheels, should be welcome in households across the country throughout the year. (Includes a video for "The Town That Lost Its Groove Supply," directed by Chris Mars.)

(Yep Roc - Box 4821, Chapel Hill, NC 27515)

The Model Rockets - Pilot County Line cd

Buck Owens once described his music - a mix of country, western, pop, rock'n'roll, bluegrass, and blues - as "American music," a hybrid of everything he grew up on and more. The Model Rockets are the post-punk version of that American music, a contemporary update on Buck's vision. *Pilot County Line* is overflowing with power pop and rock and twang, and it's topped off with the richest harmonies and most sumptuous melodies. John Ramberg possesses one of the most

wonderful voices around and has an uncanny knack for arranging backing vocals. This is an odds'n'ends collection but flows as smoothly from head to toe as the band's previous record (the criminally overlooked *Tell the Kids the Cops Are Here*, which I'll be looking for in your cd collection the next time I come over). Everyone should own that disc – and *Pilot County Line*, too. I can't think of a better band than the Model Rockets. (Book Records)

Ian Moore – *Luminaria* cd

Yep Roc is the label responsible for providing a good home to two of my favorite musicians, Scott McCaughey (Minus 5) and Robyn Hitchcock. So I go into a Yep Roc release expecting to like it, and wonder what I'm missing if I dislike the disc. I'm still wondering about *Luminaria*, a record that slowly – very slowly – moves back and forth between quiet acoustic rock and alt-country twang, requiring more patience than I possess. Example: the best part of the record, the pop part of "Caroline," doesn't kick in until the 5:48 mark. The ideas and emotions Moore expresses are not that far removed from the likes of McCaughey and Hitchcock, but Moore's melodies are lacking. When the Yep Roc package tour comes through town I'll be at the bar during Moore's set. (Yep Roc – Box 4821, Chapel Hill, NC 27515)

Slink Moss Explosion – s/t cd

Slink is probably best known for his comics in *Roctober* and (hopefully to a similar extent) *Zisk*, but he's also been putting out really good rockabilly records for the better part of a decade. And though rockabilly is hardly my forte, I know good songs and Slink and company offer a baker's dozen of them on this disc. What's odd is that while they stay true to rockabilly throughout the record, their song titles only name related genres: "Bad Bad Blues," "Honey Bee Bop," "Flower Shop Blues Boogie," "Rocket Rock," "Wandering Soul." Thumbs up. (Rattlesnake/slinkmoss.com)

Mouse Rocket – s/t cd

At its best, *Mouserocket* picks up where the Breeders left off, distilling the best of 60s pop and 70s punk, accenting some of their songs with cello or keyboards. There is stretch of three songs in the middle of the disc wherein Mouserocket careen into labored ROCK, but don't worry, though, it rinses out. This is a keeper that gets better with each listen. Trivia: Features Alicja Trout from the Lost Sounds; they cover the Nightcrawlers' "Little Black Egg." (Empty – Box 12301, Portland, OR 97212)

My Dad Is a Dinosaur – s/t cd

The guy in this guy'n'gal band looks just like *GM* contributor Brett Essler. Brett's a good guy and a great writer, too. Did you read his Cheap Trick article on page 10? I'm looking forward to the day he publishes his first novel. I'm probably overstepping my bounds, but I doubt Brett would like *My Dad Is a Dinosaur*, though I think it would be a toss up between which songs he'd like the least, the clumsy, forgettable indie rock tunes or the clumsy, forgettable mock blues tunes. (Prison Jazz – 431 Birch St., Scranton, PA 18505)

Nigel – s/t cd

Nigel, the name, is, to me, a quintessential British name, and my favorite British tv show is *The Young Ones*, and my favorite line from *The Young Ones* is when Neil says, "Nobody ever listens to me, I'm like a Leonard Cohen record," and Nigel, the band, is about as stimulating as a Leonard Cohen record. And that mediocre exercise in free association is the best I can muster with this dud of a disc. (silvergirl.com)

The Organ – *Grab That Gun* cd

I anticipated a battle between organs, the heart and the mind, perhaps? Instinct vs. intellect? What I got was faux stoicism, a band denying both heart and mind – look how bored we are! Note our monotonous vocals! Note the keyboard that always

holds the note for four beats and then changes – one, two, three, change; one, two, three, change! It's tedious, like life! Let's wallow in the malaise! (Mint – Box 3613, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6B 3Y6)

Patton Oswalt – *Feelin' Kinda Patton* cd

Funniest record I've heard in years. Oswalt comes up with brilliant and, yes, sometimes offensive concepts and then paints the most vivid pictures; he's a master of specifics. His vision of Armageddon makes me kind of wish I'd get to experience the end of the world just to see if it lives up to his version. Want to know what happens when you strike a midget over the head? Or what the office setting is like at *Piss Drinkers* magazine? Sounds like random topics and maybe they began as such, but Oswalt has thought these things through to a point where I'll follow him down virtually any path.

Overlord – *The World Takes Over* cd

I wonder why bands that sound like the Dickies never sound dated, but bands that sound like R.E.M. always do. Since I have pressing problems of my own to work out, I'll just cite a sentence at random from *The Ultimate Deception*, a shocking disclosure of our government's coddling of alien predators called EBE's (Extraterrestrial Biological Entities) by the book's author, Commander X: "After the incident, a lot of Navy brass came aboard the ship. According to Grusinski, Air Force brass and Marine Corps brass also came aboard the carrier, as well as Captains from other carriers. However, Grusinski said t'at he did not know any of them." Yikes! (Storm Tower) Johnny Reno

The Penthouse Sweets – *P.S. ... I Love You* cd-r ep

(Note: Three quarters of the guys in the Penthouse Sweets used to be in the Dorks. Knowing that will help if you plan to stick around for the rest of this review. And we recommend that you do.) I've been waiting for this record for five years and didn't even know it. I was on tour in Chicago, and my band got to hang out with the Dorks after sharing a bill with them. It was the summer of '99 and they played for us Wilco's *Summerteeth*. It was about two in the morning, we had a table of food and a cooler of beer all purchased with the door money from that night's show. The record went down really well. I was surprised, though, that the guys in the Dorks were that blown away by a Wilco record. The Dorks were pop punk guys, after all. But knowing where their tastes were headed it's not surprising to hear them emerge as the Penthouse Sweets, a band that plays with the same energy and infuses their songs with just as many hooks, but takes their time getting there, working slightly slower tempos. And now that I think of it, the last Dorks record closed with Creedence Clearwater Revival cover, and there's a heavy John Fogerty influence on this ep. In fact, musically, "Broken Down," sounds like a CCR cover, which is interesting, though, because as a lyricist I always thought John Fogerty was either addressing thousands of people at once or he was by himself, behind the wheel or sitting on a mossy log in a swamp. Whereas the Penthouse Sweets are more like two people hanging out on a couch, sipping beer, talking with the tv on mute. So despite the difference in styles, *P.S....I Love You* sounds like a natural progression, not a contrived move. I don't think the band's material has quite caught up to their ambitions yet, but it's really close. In fact, by the third time I was listening to *P.S. ... I Love You* I was turning it up and singing along. I was pissed when the Dorks broke up, so I'm glad to know they're still at it, albeit in an altered incarnation. The world's a better place with Andy Hansen writing original material backed by a great rhythm section. If anything I hope they'll embellish the songs more in the future. These are the (rare) guys who I'd trust to screw around in the studio. Like the keyboard fill in "Anyways" or the guitar overdubs on "Stars" or the steel guitar on "Alright." I enjoy this ep a lot,

and I like the path these guys are going down.
(penthouse_sweets@hotmail.com)

Period 3 – The Crushing Grip of Reason cd-r

It's a great blueprint for a band: outcast and underachiever makes sense of the world by having his punk band play his personal pop songs, conjuring images of Husker Du and the Replacements...Period 3 are coming from the right place, and this demo is really good, almost painfully close to brilliant. These songs are great and the performances are there, but *The Crushing Grip of Reason* (that's my kind of title!) is diminished by the underwhelming production. I really hope there's more to come from this band.
(Period3implieschaos@yahoo.com)

Phonocaptors – Call It What You Want cd

And name it I shall: *Dull, I-Was-Greatly-Influenced-by-Back-in-Black-and-Now-I've-Formed-a-Rock-Band Rock*. If a band has to tell me they're raising hell, ("We're raising hell" – "P.L.T."), they're not showing me such. Time for lunch.
(Pro-Vel – Box 5182, St. Louis, MO 63139)

Point Line Plane – "Curse Chorus Curse" b/w "Sh...boom" 7"

Annoying vocals, shrill keyboards...I was so put off by the techno/punk fusion – fusion is always bad! – that I took refuge by listening to the kick drum parts on the A-side. For god's sake, I never listen to the kick drum parts, not even when I'm playing drums. Congratulations, Point Line Plane, if your goal was to send pop fans like me fleeing in fear, you have succeeded.
(S-S – 1114 21st St., Sacramento, CA 95814)

The Red Channels – s/t cd

Elaina: Greetings, Ryan, I wish to inform you that with a bit of processing my vocals sounds like those of Tanya Donelly.
Ryan: Well, compared to the fact that death has been denied me yet another day, I suppose that's "good."
Elaina: I find life as loathsome as you do, but perhaps we can mask some of the misery by forming a pop group.
Ryan: Agreed, though only if we slather our compositions with gimmicky sound effects.
Elaina: (silence)
(silvergirl.com)

Replicator – s/t cd

All the same parts as the A-Frames – heavy-like-railroad-tracks bass lines, scattered and skittish guitar lines, sturdy drumming – but not welded together nearly as well. Good song titles ("The Frogurt Is Cursed," "Warrior Needs Food, Badly," "The Weight of 3 Marlon Brandos") but, the A-Frames have better songs.
(Substandard – Box 310, Berkeley, CA 94701)

The Revolutionary Hydra – The P.E.E.F.s

This record has sounds that I love – primarily Pixies-like guitars, and soft vocals ala the Chills or the Bats – but too often the songs end up sounding like the Hydra are gunning for commercial radio, going BIG when quiet would work better. (www.skrockirecords.com)

Riverboat Gamblers/Throw Rag – Tribute to the Big Boys 7"

When I bought this record, which offers a pair of Big Boys covers, at a Riverboat Gamblers show, the guy at the merchandise table apologized in advance for the record, saying it didn't turn out that well. I can hear what he means. "Fun Fun Fun," the Riverboat Gamblers song, is clearly a good tune – the chorus seals it, even in a subpar recording – but it lacks the full throttle energy of the band's live show, maybe because Mike, their singer, is such a presence on stage but not so much on this record. Likewise for the Throw Rag side, it made me curious to hear the Big Boys, but won't go on my next mix tape. (Dateshake Records – dateshakerecords.com)

The Safes – Boogie Woogie Rumble cd ep

The *Sports Illustrated* curse holds that a team or athlete depicted on the cover is doomed to defeat. Sometimes I feel like *Go Metric* has its own curse, that the more we champion a band the less likely they are to go onto bigger success than when we came across them. Go ahead, check out an issue from five, six years ago – those bands have probably broken up. And while I don't believe that a band needs to attain commercial success to validate the quality of their music, I would like to see some of my favorite bands get what they deserve. A couple months back, the Safes, a longtime off-*FM* favorite here at *GM*, were reviewed in *Rolling Stone*. And that was all right, maybe it's the first step toward much deserved greater acclaim for these guys. Two things, though: *Rolling Stone* was only five years behind us in covering the Safes and while this is a really good ep, it's not the band's best record, falling short of their last record and the material for their upcoming disc. Still, it's a rollicking good time from one of the best bands on the circuit, especially if you track down the 10" version. (*Guess this is more of an editorial than a review. For more on the Safes, see issue #18.*) (Pro-Vel – Box 5182, St. Louis, MO 63139)

Sanford Arms – The Twilight Era cd

Were it my fate to pen lyrics like "the shadow's excuses can't hide" ("Wallpaper"), I'd make sure that my band played loud and fast to insure that no one could make out the words. Sanford Arms chose to do the opposite, drawing attention to their pretense and yielding one of the most tedious records through which I've ever had the misfortune to fast forward.
(Blue Disguise – Box 16362, Seattle, WA 98136)

Sgt. Major – Rich, creamery butter cd

I have so much faith in former Fastback Kurt Bloch that his new band, Sgt. Major, is the only band ever to appear on the cover of *Go Metric*, and they made the cover even before I heard them. *Rich, creamery butter* is the first I've heard from Sgt. Major, and it's excellent. They're very much like the Fastbacks, but with an altered ratio of Buzzcocks-like punk to Queen-like rock. Kurt still writes the songs, and the drumming is handled by another former Fastback, Mike Musburger. The main difference is that the singing and bass duties are now handled by two people, newcomer Carmella and Young Fresh Fellow Jim Sangster, respectively, whereas in the Fastbacks one person, Kim Warnick, tackled both jobs. Carmella's voice is smoother voice and has a greater range than Kim's, but doesn't have the same rough-around-the-edges vulnerability of Kim's vocals. So while Carmella is the better singer, she's not yet the better interpreter of Kurt Bloch's lyrics. Either that or it's just taking me a bit of time to adjust to a new singer after listening to the Fastbacks for nearly 15 years. Aside from a couple of extended songs which misfire (usually I love Kurt's vamps, but the horns on the closing cut sour the song), everything on *Rich, creamery butter* hits the mark. Kurt Block remains a genius, and this is a great debut album. (Book Records c/o www.sgtmajor.tv)

Seeger Liberation Army – "2 + 2 = ?" b/w "East Side Story" 7"

I like the idea of a bunch of Detroit garage rock luminaries trying to restore the reputation of a local music legend like Bob Seeger (well, I'm assuming that the SLA, like the rest of us, recognize that Bob's transgressions far outweigh his accomplishments, "Turn the Page" alone merits termination), and these tunes, both Bob Seeger covers, work to good effect, if not as good as the band's first single. I wonder if they'll ever yield to the temptation to do better-known Seeger songs like, say, "Ramblin' Gamblin' Man," that song I like.
(Big Neck – Box 8144, Reston, VA 20195)

The Sermon - Volume cd

Before I break out my anecdote, let me make sure I've got all of the clichés correct here...they're preaching rock'n'roll, so they're called the Sermon, got it; and the cd is to be turned up loud, hence ~~the~~ its title, *Volume*. Right. Okay, then, see I used to be an altar boy when I was a kid, even past the point when the rest of my family went to church. I liked the familiarity of the rituals and the underlying messages, but my mind wandered something fierce during the service (and eventually I realized that no one in attendance practiced what was preached, so I stopped going). Connection to *Volume*? Here it comes...I like a lot of the guitar riffs on this disc, but my mind drifts during the songs. Energetic, but basic rock'n'roll, that's not enough to get me out of bed on a Sunday morning.

(Alternative Tentacles - Box 419092, SF, CA 94141)

The Shemps - Spazz Out cd

There are many weird things about the Shemps, but topping the totem pole is the fact that play conventional punk rock'n'roll - a style that calls for a good singer - yet have a singer who's not that good, knows he's not that good, knows that you know he's not that good, and is not only unfazed by any of this but seems to thrive on it. I do think the Shemps want you to enjoy their shows, and probably this cd, too - I do - but I do not think they care whether or not you like them. Rock for the misanthropic masses. (Reservation - 7101 SE Reed College Pl., Portland, OR 97202)

Sick Fits - "Mirror Creeps" 7" ep

"Strange Strangulations" is a great punk rock song. It reminds me of the Catholic Boys and even though it's got a crummy guitar sound, it's mix tape caliber. The other cuts are good but undermined by that same guitar sound. It's too bad they couldn't get the guy's guitar amp in the same room as the microphones while the band was recording.

(Big Neck - Box 8144, Reston, VA 20195)

Sinombre - Curves of Sirens cd

So, apparently *sinombre* is Spanish for "music that would have Natalie Merchant banging her head with a hammer, screaming, 'It's too languid even for me!'"

(Firecode Core)

69 Charger - Trash Deluxe! cd

I'm not sure what exactly it is that makes this "deluxe," but it sure is trash. And while this will only make sense to those who worked for Vital Music Mailorder in some capacity between 1997-1999, it could best be described as Michael Graves (you know, the new Misfits singer) fronting Oscar and the Pidgen Sisters. Only with more guitar solos. (Stardumb, Box 21145, 3001 AC Rotterdam, Netherlands) Matt Braun

The Slaughterhouse Four - Broken Hearts and Broken Strings cd ep

I like these guys, but they refuse to take my advice, namely that they should replace the "whoa oh" backing vocals with "ooh"s. And they're trying to rub my face in it, at least that's what I think "I Won't Repent" is all about.

(S4 - 21-36 43rd St., 3rd Floor, Astoria, NY 11105)

Ben Snakepit - The Snakepit Book

I really enjoyed *The Snakepit Book* and I know a lot of other people who did too, and while I'm reluctant to reiterate what I've heard them say, the consensus is accurate: read one of Ben's comics and you'll like it, read a bunch and you'll be hooked. I was hooked after 30 pages and then had the pleasure of 200 some odd pages to look forward to. He sums up each day of his life with a three panel comic, covering life as a video store clerk, punk rock bassist, and imbibor of spirits. I found myself celebrating with Ben each time he got a paycheck or had a good band practice. And when he'd meet a cute girl at a party? Forget about it. There's joy to be

found in even the most mundane of days, and if not you move onto the next one. Whether or not you see deeper truths depends upon how much you read into the comics, but rest assured *The Snakepit Book* is a consistently enjoyable and oddly reassuring read.

(Gorsky Press - Box 42024, LA, CA 90042)

The Soviettes - "Alright" b/w "Plus One" 7"

Talking to my uncle a couple days after the election, he said he felt the same way back in '84, when Reagan trounced Mondale, and, in trying to be optimistic - and reminding himself as much as encouraging me - continued by saying this: it'll be all right. I'm sure there was none of such thinking when the Soviettes penned the top side to this single, but that's what will always come to mind when "Alright" comes around on the mix tape, and for that alone I recommend this record. (Dirtnap - Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111)

The Starvations - "One Way to Remind" b/w "Give Me the Keys" 7"

I picked this up after I saw the Starvations live one night. I guess the obvious points of reference here would be The Gun Club or X, but I also hear a little of Paisley Underground bands like Green on Red in there. The accordion adds a strong Chicano flavor that none of the aforementioned had and strikes me as distinctly Los Angelino. I want to hear more though and am kicking myself for getting the 7" and not the full-length. Stupid! Matt Braun

The Stilletos - Making History by Repeating It cd

"Feeling All Right"... "You're So Rock'n'Roll"... "I Want You" (which uses the Peter Frampton chorus)... "Doing Fine"... "You Want It"... Do they rhyme "cool" and "school"? You bet your knickers. They parade one tired phrase after another until, inexplicably, they uncork the closing cut, "Grandmother Is a Total Stranger (Since She Caught Her Nose in the Record Changer)." Where was that effort on tracks 1-11, gents? (Stardumb - Box 21145, 3001 AC Rotterdam, Netherlands)

Rick Stone - Turn Me On, Turn Me Out cd

There are a lot of things right with music these days, but none of them are demonstrated on *Turn Me On, Turn Me Out*. Unless you've ever willingly used the phrase "songcraft," in which case you might dig the Stone. (Stereotype - 2658 Griffith Park Blvd., #109, Silver Lake, CA 90039)

The Sunday Drunks - On The Prowl cd

By the book Heartbreakers-esque material with a good, strong guitar sound. While hardly ground-breaking, I in no way find this displeasing. They sound like they'd be a lot of fun to see at 1:45 in the morning on a weekday night at some smelly bar. (Dead Beat - Box 283, LA, CA 90078) Matt Braun

The Sw!ms - Snack Food Junction 7" ep

Happy, happy, joy, joy! This ep is the most pleasant surprise of the issue, delightfully psychedelic pop that's sure to please fans of the Dukes of Stratosphere, the Chills, or any of the finer Elephant 6 bands. The A-side is nearly cartoonish as both tunes are full-on, primary colors-only pop confections, while the B-side pulls back a bit, letting more subdued hooks reign. It makes for a well-balanced ep. When is the album coming out, lady and gentlemen? (Note: The 7" comes with a cd of the same songs, so the turntable-impaired have no excuses!) (Prison Jazz - 431 Birch St., Scranton, PA 18505)

Swing Ding Amigos - The Mongolita Chronicles cd

??? 22 songs in 23 minutes. ??? Densely packed songs, songs played at hardcore full-throttle but with full-fledged riffs and vocal melodies. ??? I don't know how these guys play this fast, I can't even think as fast as they move. This is the punk album Jay Garrick, Barry Allen and Wally West, three generations of the Flash, would form; fusing the classic rock

that Barry would dig with the punk that Wally liked (work with me, folks) with Jay along for the fun of it.
(Wranghole - 8630 E. 26th Place, Tucson, AZ 85710/
Rock'n'Roll Purgatory - 710 Arch St., Salem OH 44460)

Swing Ding Amigos/Civic Minded Five - Split 7"

Overall this is a pretty good sampling of both of these Southwestern punkers (Tucson and Vegas, respectively), but "Juana La Cubana" by the Swing Dings is sooooo good that after listening to that song the rest of the 7" sounds just okay. Get this and play that one over and over. That's what I do.
(Wranghole - 8630 E. 26th Place, Tucson, AZ 85710/Recess - Box 1666, San Pedro, CA 90733) Matt Braun

Systems Officer - s/t cd ep

Armistead Smith doesn't write songs that I like, but with his Ray Davies-like voice I bet he could pull off quality Kinks covers. Maybe something from their RCA days, no one ever covers songs from that era; *Muswell Hillbillies* is excellent!
(Ace Fu - Box 552, NY, NY 10009)

Tales From the Birdbath - The Eggs CD

Remember Sicko? Great 90s pop punk band from Seattle? They were one of the best. Of the band's two songwriters, my favorite was always Ean Hernandez, who now leads Tales from the Birdbath, he tended to write the poppier songs. Tales is more jangle than was Sicko - less punk, more pop - and that's all right by me. It's been about five years since the last Birdbath record, so the release of *The Eggs CD* is a really welcome surprise (except for the Eagles cover, "Take It Easy," that I could do without). There's an innocent charm to Ean's vocals, and what's not to love about the range of lyrics, songs that could be turned into books for kids ("The Singing Teacher's Ghost") or history majors ("Barbara Tuchman Overdrive")? (Tales From the Birdbath - 7339 16th Ave. NW, Seattle, WA 98117)

Taxi - the new single, which I received on cd-r but have since, along with the press sheet, misplaced

Sad to say, but you know Taxi's not an American punk band because they correctly used "who's" instead of "whose" in the title of their a-side. Sadder to say, I'm reduced to talking about the spelling on a punk single.
(Dead Beat - Box 283, LA, CA 90078)

Todd Taylor - Born to Rock book

Why publish a collection of interviews in a book? You have no idea how prepared for that question Todd Taylor is. Former Boy Scout, Valedictorian, he's always prepared. That's one of the reasons his interviews are so compelling; no one in punk rock researches like Todd Taylor. He knows more about bands than they do. Time and time again he'll have a moment where band members learn about themselves while being interviewed. But more than anything else *Born to Rock* is Taylor's latest battle in an on-going campaign to show that punk rock is a well-rounded culture, offering, if you look closely enough, as many high-brow intellectuals as drunken goofballs. You don't need to know these bands to enjoy their stories, and even if you didn't like punk rock I'd recommend *Born to Rock* for the opening and closing essays.
(Gorsky Press - Box 42024, LA, CA 90042)

Trailer Park Tornados - Don't Mind the Maggots 7" ep

Taken from the lead song: "Stab me in the eye again..." Again? Dude, what are you doing hanging around after you were stabbed the first time? Are you like that guy from the Ghetto Boys who stayed with his girlfriend even after she shot him in the face? Though come to think of it, he does get to wear an eye patch and look like a pirate for the rest of his life. If that's what you're after, Trailer Park Tornados, then touché, I understand and I take it back. Just write more songs like "Dial 'L' For Loser."
(Big Neck - Box 8144, Reston, VA 20195)

The Tri-City Thundercats - The Early Recordings cd

These days you can't walk down the street without tripping over some bunch of over-stylized indie rockers whose band sounds just like the Buzzcocks or Gang of Four, only worse. (You may think you can do it, walk down the street without tripping over dudes like the aforementioned, but you're just not looking hard enough; they're everywhere!) But the Tri-City Thundercats were there first, and they weren't pretending to reinvent the wheel, and they rocked! *The Early Recordings* collects the band's two singles and three songs recorded live in Japan. The live cuts are okay, but everything from the singles is pure kick ass. I wore out the tape I had of these songs. Then I wore out the singles, now I'm working on wearing out the cd. (King of the Monsters - 8341 E. San Salvador, Scottsdale, AZ 85258)

The Unlovable - Crush*Boyfriend*Heartbreak cd

Collectively, the Unlovable are the most upbeat group of people in history. You may think you've got good credentials as an optimist, but one listen to the good-time feelings radiated by *Crush*Boyfriend*Heartbreak* and you'll realize you've got some work to do. Even when they're singing about heartache, the Unlovable give the sense that tomorrow's going to be a better day (all of which is sufficiently tempered by experience so that they never come across as naïve). They're so good that I can overlook their endorsement of the Yankees ("If You Were Here") and emo rock ("Feelin' All Emo (Since I Broke Up with You)"), and that's saying a lot!
(Whoa Oh - 21-36 43rd St., 3rd Floor, Astoria, NY 11105)

V/A - Babyhead lp

How's this for a guaranteed-to-lose money venture? A vinyl-only release in the year 2004 that not only fails to list any of the bands or song titles on the sleeve - or the name of the record or record label, for that matter - but tops it off with a disturbing bunch of baby doll heads for cover art. That's a fingers-to-lips kiss-that-money-good-bye good time! Were I to come across this platter in a record store I wouldn't pause for a moment to consider buying it, and that's a damn shame because there is a host of cool songs here, and even the duds are at least unconventional, anything but your standard fare. *Babyhead* is an intriguing sampler of what's happening in underground music these days (the "substream," to borrow a phrase from my friends in Baltimore). Wacked-out art punk, wacked-out free jazz (which, admittedly, is inherently wacked-out), wacked-out garage rock; if you're looking for a challenging listen, you'd do well to investigate *Babyhead*. Best cuts: **Duchess of Saigon, Blutt, The Intelligence, Antennas Erupt, Klondike and York, A Frames, Unnatural Helpers, Guinea Worms, and Piranhas.** 9 for 13 = .692. (S-S - 1114 21st St., Sacramento, CA 95814)

V/A - No Ourselves cd-r

Mark Hughson, who compiled this collection, probably knows as much about contemporary music as anyone I know. He seems to be familiar with everything that comes out, and often our tastes overlap. For example, the **Belleville** song, a decent country number; the pop songs from **German Art Students, Orange Crate Mark, and Philip Ajjarapu**, and the **Dirt Surfers** cut, which is a jig. The rest of the disc is where our Venn diagrams don't overlap. If you dig indie pop with a dash of techno here and there, you'll get a lot of *No Ourselves*. 5 for 18 = .277. (SBAETZ zine c/o Mark Hughson, 215 Craig St., Syracuse, NY 13208)

V/A - Punch and Pie book

In the early 80s, while I was listening to Asia, Styx, and the Doors, bands like Minor Threat, Black Flag, and the Dead Kennedys were blazing new trails, taking their punk rock on the road and spreading the good word. Once I began reading about those bands - about five to 10 years after their

respective peaks – I regretted missing out. All of which fuels my interest in seeking out underground culture, not wanting to miss out on the great overlooked bands of today. But it took ages for the same thing to happen with literature. I avoided underground fiction because I judged the genre by what I came across in zines. The dreadful, desperate-to-be-literary fiction filled with tedious descriptions of characters' clothing and cigarette smoke, coughed up by writers from the school of "adjectives are everything." *Punch and Pie* collects short stories from 15 writers – including three people whose fiction changed my views of contemporary fiction: **Jim Munroe**, **Sean Carswell**, and **Wred Fright** – most of whom are from the school of "ideas over adjectives" and thus, really deliver. The most pleasant surprise for me was "Forgone Contusion," the first fiction I've read by another of my favorite writers, **Todd Taylor**. Similarly, with "A Terrible Thing in a Place Like This," a riveting piece from Carswell and Taylor's fellow *Razorcake* columnist **Jim Ruland**. There's also a piece by **Maddy Tight Pants** along with stories I enjoyed but feel I didn't fully understand and want to read again (Felizon Vidad and James Jay come to mind). And sure, just like any compilation there were a few entries I didn't care for, but the adventurous reader is certain to find many of these short stories thoroughly engaging and most likely want to read more by many of these writers. Inspiring, excellent, and recommended. (Gorsky Press – Box 42024, LA, CA 90042)

V/A – *Punk Rock for Life: Volume One cd*

It's a good thing this compilation is intended for those who are punk for life, because it'll take a lifetime to get through all 32 of the bands on this disc. Highlights: hearing the moment where **SMUT**'s singer sounds like Martin Short from the SCTV punk parody band, the Queenhaters; trying to figure out if the awful **MDC** track is from *that* MDC or a bunch of kids who are unaware of the other MDC; waiting for a hardcore band to give me the green light to tell them what to do with their lives; wondering if everyone here is truly punk for life, if there will be theme-based retirement homes in the future, you know, like the Shady Hills Home for Senior Punks, where the recreation room has the complete Exploited discography on vinyl, the bed pans are covered in Crass stickers, and there are separate wings for drunk punks and straight edgers; laughing with, not at, **Tom and the Terrorists** "Shut Up"; hoping that **Mellor and the Herd** have more songs like "Upstairs at Lowells"...7 for 32 = .218. (Run and Hide – Box 35094, Philadelphia, PA 19128)

V/A – *This One's for the Fellows cd*

It's about time the Young Fresh Fellows were given tribute album treatment! As you may recall from VH1's *Best Bands Ever*, the Fellows are the second best band ever. (The Kinks, but I'll pretend you didn't ask.) The first three or four times I listened to *This One's for the Fellows*, I was struck by how cool it was to hear 20 different voices belt out YFF songs, which led me to paying more attention than usual to Scott McCaughey's lyrics, which in turn raised my appreciation for what an amazing writer he is and what a wonderful institution the Fellows are. All right. Most of the bands tinker with the originals but, thankfully, avoid over doing it, instead taking the Fellows broad palate and distilling it down to two choices: garage rock or country rock. I liked pretty much everything here (16 for 20 = .800), so I'll just list favorites: **The Figgs**, **Marshall Artist**, **Robyn Hitchcock**, **Charlie Chesterman**, **Presidents of the USA**, **Mendoza Line**, **John Ramberg & Christy McWilson**, **the Maroons with Steve Malkmus**, **Groovie Ghoulies**, and perhaps best of all, **Emily Bishton & Conrad Uno** and their amazing version of "Take My Brain Away." (Blue Disguise – Box 16362, Seattle, WA 98116)

V/A – *A Warm Breath...and a Scream cd*

Benefit albums are inherently flawed because they're built on the shaky, at best, idea that you can change the world

through consumption. Compounding the problem is the fact that benefit records are typically polluted with bad music. No one will like any of these songs in 10 years. No one should like them now either but there are probably three or four people among the 19 bands who are so blinded by the desire to go for the brass ring that they've deluded themselves into liking their song. It's a dismal array of bands who seem to spend their time wetting their collective finger and sticking it in the air to see which way the wind is blowing. (Two exceptions: the songs from Edward Burch & Jay Bennett and Lucky Mulholland.) (Innocent Words – Box 674, Danville, IL 61834)

The Weaklings – *Rock'n'roll Owes Me cd*

Like the Humpers? How about bands that say "rock and roll" a lot in their songs? People singing about poker hands? 1990-era Poison? Yeah, me neither. (Dead Beat – Box 283, LA, CA 90078) Johnny Reno

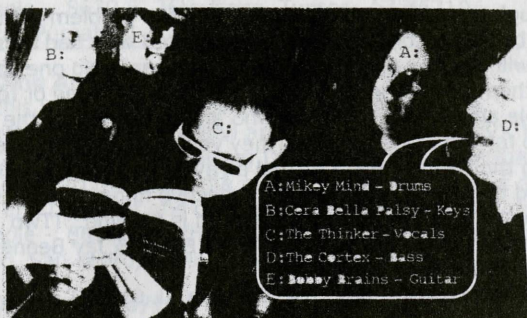
The WPP – *Baam! Jaam! cd ep*

Listening to *Baam! Jaam!* I get the sense that the apocalypse is imminent, that the end of time is about to roll through the WPP's neck of the woods, and they've recorded these five songs as a warning to the rest of us. I tend to impose enough anxiety in my life, so there's nothing here for me, but if you find yourself insufficiently worried, strap on *Baam! Jaam!* (Substandard – Box 310, Berkeley, CA 94701)

Zolar X – *Timeless cd*

Man, where to begin? *Timeless* rounds up a slew of demos from this L.A. glam band that existed from 1972-1981. But why did they wind up on Alternative Tentacles in 2004? Because Zolar X were nuts. They dressed like Spock's dad and insisted on *always* being in character whenever they were in public, often using a made up language to talk to each other. In my book, they've already racked up a dozen bonus points for the Andy Kaufman-like concept. And it gets better. They recorded a 19-minute rock opera, "The Plutonian Elf Story." That's Pluto and elves and a rock opera all in one, folks. And they once opened for Van Halen. (Which for my money trumps their various other claim-to-fame anecdotes, including the fact that their former "visual coordinator" won an Academy Award for makeup effects on *Ed Wood*.) And, yeah, sure, their singer once went to beauty school and studied pantomime and later became an ordained Baptist minister, but you expected as much. As for the music, you're probably figuring that if they had any tunes to back up the gimmicks you'd have heard of Zolar X by now, and you're right. I wish I shared your wisdom, I actually had high hopes. They've got the flash and the sounds but the hooks are just all right, never truly clicking. Still, check out their website (www.geocities.com/zolarx1), their story is great. (Alternative Tentacles – Box 419092, SF, CA 94141)

...and that leaves us with a bit of space to fill. I could have used one of those "did you know you could have advertised in this space?" bits, but those always scream "hey, we ran out of shit to say," and I'd much rather pass along a couple of book recommendations. Have you read Jim Munroe yet? *An Opening Act of Unspeakable Evil* (No Media Kings), his fourth book, is really good; an unexpected change of pace. Joe Meno's *Hairstyles of the Damned* (Akashic Books) is excellent, too. He's got an amazing eye detail and an equally sharp ear for dialogue. And I'll stick with my recommendation even if the book opens with a Guns'n'Roses quote. There's also *Half Empty*, Tim Hall's debut novel (and also the first release from Undie Press). Great read, it reminded me of *The Lost Weekend*. Finally, you should seek out *Grampa and Julie: Shark Hunters* (Top Shelf), a collection of comic strips from GM contributor Jef Czekaj. They're comics that Jef's done for *Nickelodeon Magazine* over the years, and he re-drew and edited the strips to make a book-length story. Pirates, talking animals, outer space travel, and full-color throughout. But, hey, if you want to run an ad, email us at gogometric@yahoo.com



Any of you who have heard the Minds' amazing debut record, *Plastic Girls* (Dirtnap Records, 2003) or their fantastic 7" on *Alien Snatch Records* know that the music scene has a new force to be reckoned with. I think every band is trying to hit that sweet spot where melody and power mix perfectly and the Minds have done it! I emailed the Minds vocalist, The Thinker, and he was kind enough to fill me in on what the band has been up to recently. (Interview by Tim Hinely)



What have you been up to since the cd came out?

We haven't been up to much at all. I have written some new material and then sat on my ass and played video games for the last couple months. I have also been working on some new stuff with my other band, the Flip-Tops. The Minds are touring Europe next month!

How has the response been to *Plastic Girls*?

The response has been great for the cd so far. I am sure there are a bunch of people that hate it but are afraid to tell us. They might make us cry.

What do you like most about living in Portland?

I like living in Portland because the nut jobs walking around this city keep me entertained!

Who are your three favorite bands and/or records at the moment?

My three favorite bands and records at the moment would be...we'll start with bands: the Tyrades, Clorox Girls, and the Leg Hounds. Here are the records: the Nazz *Anthology*, Reatards *Basement Tapes*, and the Lids self-titled lp.

What do you think of Bush being re-elected?

I am not a fan, not a fan at all. But I mean, c'mon, did you really think he would lose? People in this country are really stupid. I work retail, I have proof.

What's your poison?

My poison right now is Lipton iced tea with a shitload of sugar in it!!

Worst job you have ever had?

Working at a warehouse doing shipping and receiving for a housewares and furniture company. It doesn't sound that bad, but these people were fucking awful to work for; they were demons. There were so many days when I thought about throwing myself in front of the Max train just so I wouldn't have to go back to work.

Favorite gig the Minds have played so far?

That would have to be the last two. One, playing with Operation 5 and the Epoxies; the other with Straight Jacket and the Clorox Girls at a Halloween show. Both were out of control fun!

Best/worst current show on television?

Best show would be *Arrested Development*! Worst would be any reality tv show! Do I even have to explain why?

Favorite zine?

I actually like the magazine *The Big Takeover* right now. It is big, has lots of different kinds of music covered, and the writing is good!

Do you have a higher power?

My higher power is the one in my head that tells me not to fucking strangle somebody who is pissing me off.

THE MINDS

Todd Taylor: Punk Rock Scientist

By Mike Faloan

(Note: I wrote the following review for Law of Inertia, absent-mindedly ignoring their request for a 250-word piece. They trimmed; I've restored. And, for what it's worth, in terms of disclosure, I went into this with a hefty bias, having toured twice with Mr. Taylor.)

"What are your influences?" "How's the tour going?" When an interviewer uses questions like those you know that a boring band interview lies ahead. They're clues that it's time to flip the page. They're also proof that the interviewer didn't do his homework. The only good thing about such interviews is that they make Todd Taylor look even better.

Todd Taylor is part research scientist, part anthropologist, and part fan. Over the past 10 years, he has interviewed hundreds of bands for magazines such as *Flipside*, *Thrasher*, and *Razorcake*. And he definitely does his homework. That's clear throughout his new book *Born to Rock: Heavy Drinkers and Thinkers* (Gorsky Press). *Born to Rock* is a fascinating look into punk rock culture, collecting 17 of Taylor's best interviews with bands such as Dillinger Four, Kid Dynamite, NOFX, and Hot Water Music.

So if Taylor doesn't use predictable questions, what does he do? Research, tons of research. He only interviews bands who genuinely interest him, and he reads everything he can about them before the interview. "I research on Google or read zines that I have. But you just don't type in the band name, you find out who's in the band and then you type in their name. Then you try to figure out what town they live in, and go on message boards in that town. You're kind of like a detective. Did they grow up in the place that had the Museum of Questionable Technology? They did? Okay, then did they ever visit it? You ask them that and then they're like, 'Shit, how do you know that?' Well, you live in that town. You have to really care about the band."

Even though Taylor focuses on music, it's great stories that he's after. He says that when it came time to edit the book, one of the major considerations was that "every interview had to have a really great story in it."

And his research yields a lot of great stories. Taylor is always asking bands intelligent questions they've never

heard before and getting unique answers in the process. "I want to set somebody up to tell a really good story. If you think something you've heard about them is a rumor, hedge your question nicely so they know they're not getting set up. These people have been sitting in a stinky van for hours. They don't know you and you know something about them, and sometimes if you catch them off guard in a good way, they're more willing to say, 'Oh, yeah, I hadn't thought of that.' But they have to trust you; you're not going to use the story against them in some way."

With Taylor's interviews you don't have to know the band to enjoy their stories. Even if you've never heard Tiltwheel, you'll definitely laugh along with Davey Tiltwheel as he tells what it was like growing up with parents who were professional clowns, and what it was like watching Saturday morning cartoons sitting next to a passed out clown. Same goes for Duane Peters and his tale of burying a sex doll in his backyard. Well, you might find yourself laughing at Duane Peters, but you'll be laughing.

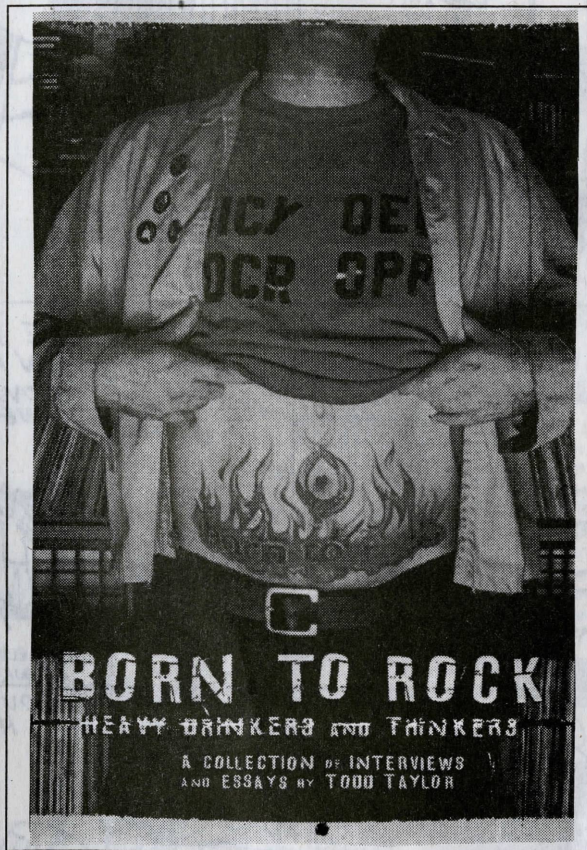
Laughs are a big part of *Born to Rock*, but Taylor also

explores the politics and philosophies that drive punk bands, trying to present a different take on punk culture. "One of my goals," says Taylor, "was to make punk rockers seem intelligent—I think that always gets downplayed—without risking the funny, stupid stories. When we read history, or when we read about different cultures, somebody had to take a lot of time and figure out how it worked. I think a lot of that care has been missing in punk culture. It's pretty cool to go through and pick things apart and see if they have bigger meanings."

Born to Rock also includes interviews with people not in bands, such as artists Winston Smith and Mike Dianna, *Maximum RocknRoll*'s Tim Yohannan, and attorney Andrew Vachss, along with a pair of original essays by Taylor. "I wanted to broaden the scope of what people think punk rock could be. You can dilate this (punk rock) open and not

compromise what you're doing. This is still punk rock. Punk rock is about change. Well, how about helping out kids in a real legislative way, like Andrew Vachss who tries to close legal loopholes in states' incest laws? I tried to open the scope of punk rock without diluting it."

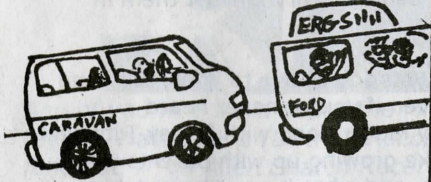
In a lot of ways, *Born to Rock* can be summed up by its subtitle: *Drinkers and Thinkers*. "I have seen a band decimate over 100 beers in a sitting—and function and play a good set—while having discussions running the gamut from really funny, stupid stuff to the coming election. I think people separate those things, but for me they're one in the same."



THE UNLOVABLES WEST COAST SUMMER TOUR

as told by FRANK LEONE

This Summer the Unlovables hitched up with the Ergs for a two week tour from Ft Collins, CO up to Seattle and back.



The crowd at our first show in Ft. Collins was pretty sedate until a couple of drunk girls busted in and everyone started dancing with them.



No matter what the booker tells you, noones going to show up to a show in a jazz club under a Kinkos on a Sunday Night in SALT LAKE CITY.



OUR SHOW WITH THE DISKORDS AND RIFF RANDELLS IN PORTLAND WAS REALLY FUN.



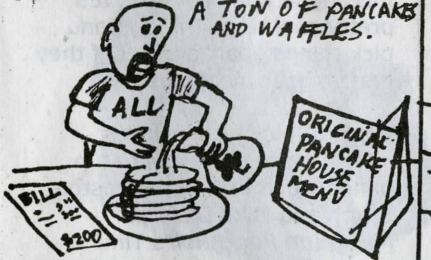
STAYING WITH OUR FRIEND NATE SCHMOE WAS A DEFINITE HIGHLIGHT.



UNTIL SOMEONE BROKE INTO OUR VAN AND STOLE CHRIS AND CHELSEA'S BAGS.



WE MADE OURSELVES FEEL BETTER BY EATING A TON OF PANCAKES AND WAFFLES.



I WENT WITH THE ERGS AND SOME OF OUR NORTHWEST FRIENDS TO A SWIMMING HOLE IN SEATTLE ONE NIGHT.



WE PLAYED OUR MOST FUN AND WELL ATTENDED SHOW IN LA. WITH THE KUNGFU MONKEYS!



WE MET SOME CRAZY OLD DRUNKS AT THE BAR IN SAN DIEGO.



IN SACRAMENTO OUR BUBBLEGUM PUNK PLAYING ON THE BILL MISMATCHED WITH SOME WEIRD PORNOGRAPHIC DEATH METAL ART BAND.



ON OUR LAST DAY, WE WENT TO A HOT SPRINGS IN NEW MEXICO.



*Looking for something
to have on the nightstand?*

THE U-HAUL ADVENTURES

Two dozen columns, written for
other zines, by GM editor Mike
Faloon, plus four newer pieces
(\$3)

"Inappropriate for this venue" –
Heckler at a reading in L.A.

"Like a punk rock version of *This
American Life*" – Kinder, more
perceptive soul from a reading in
San Diego

"Sixty-six pages and not a word
about your mother?"
– Mary Kate Faloon

(Look for Mike on tour this
summer. Watch razorcake.com
for details.)

ZISK

A baseball zine.
#10 out this spring – \$2.
Back issues available.

"Like *Slapshot*, you don't
actually have to like the sport to
enjoy the (zine) – *Razorcake*

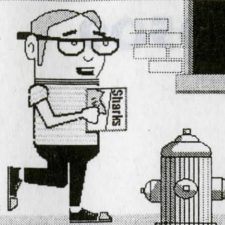
"Waxes hilarious and poignant
on America's national pastime"
– *Clamor*

Coming soon...Zisk on-line!
Articles past and present
available at:
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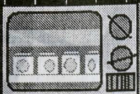
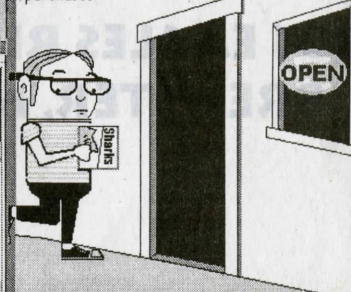
*And remember, make it
a Gen Tech publication!*
(Gen Tech: A World Leader)

DEADLY KILLERS OF THE SEA! 75% true story

It was a beautiful day and I was
playing hooky from work. I stopped by
my favorite bookstore and picked up
2 issues of a great zine called
Shark Fear Shark Awareness. The
mission of the zine seemed to be to
remind people, no matter how far away
from the ocean they are, that they
should be constantly in fear of sharks.



On my way home I stopped at a neighborhood
dive to have a pint and glance through my new
purchases.



I walked in to catch the tail end of a barroom
brawl and sat myself at the deepest darkest
end of the bar (under the TV that shows
the inside of the Laundromat
next-door)

I ordered a beer
and started reading SFSA.
I noticed a crusty looking man
staring at me from down the bar.

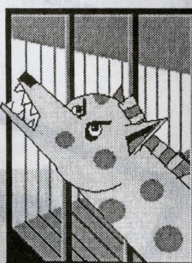
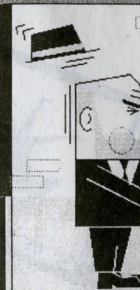


What is that periodical
you are reading?
It's about sharks.
Sharks huh?
I used to work in
a zoo down in California.

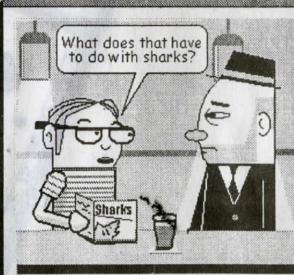
Did they have sharks
there?

No. You're thinking of
an aquarium.

Right, but you worked
at a zoo.



I used to play my
saxophone for the hyenas
and man, it would drive em
crazy! Every night, I'd
smoke a little grass and
go pretend to be Charlie
Parker behind their cage.
They'd howl and growl
and run around in circles.
That sure pissed 'em
off.

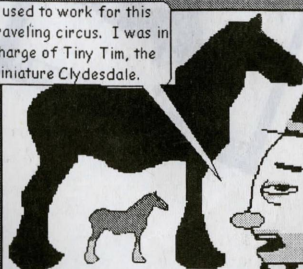


What does that have
to do with sharks?



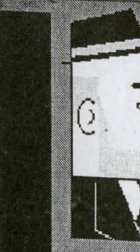
Nothing. Why does it
have to be about sharks?
It doesn't, I
just thought.

I used to work for this
traveling circus. I was in
charge of Tiny Tim, the
miniature Clydesdale.



The Barker would yell,
"A cup of rice is a
FEAST for Tiny Tim, the
worlds smallest horse!"

That was bullshit.
He ate dog food.
A lot of freakin'
dog food.



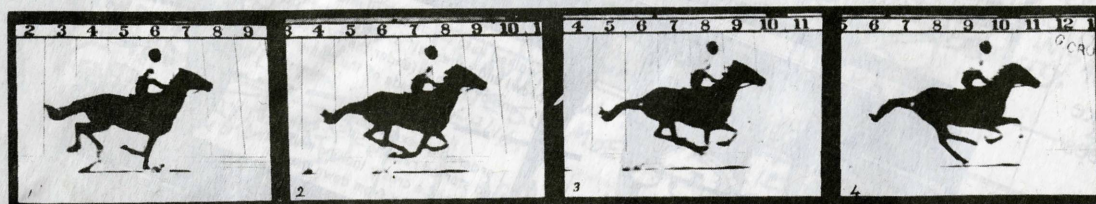
Too bad he got
eaten by sharks.



Really?!

No.

GO METRIC
801 EAGLES RIDGE ROAD
BREWSTER, NY 10509



...and we nearly forgot to mention
deal-sealing interviews with

The Bananas
The Catholic Boys
Thee Flying Dutchmen
Thanks for reading—The Management

