

RAZZORCAKE

NUMBER 20

THREE DOLLARS



RANDY

THE FUCK YEAHS
THE SHEMPS

HASIL ADKINS (PART TWO)

PUNK ROCK ROLLERDERBY



2:07 AM, approximately, Austin, Texas time. The phone rings. It is not my house, and the phone is in a locked room. "Hi, this is Randal of Beerland. I have one Reverend Nørb passed out here, looking for a ride home. Someone has duct taped a Briefs' seven-inch to the front of his Good-n-Plenty pajamas as a bribe, but there aren't any takers. Please pick up the phone."

I felt a pang of remorse, and I still feel bad. I'd left a soldier out on the battlefield, barely armed. I'd failed in my duty. Usually, I'm the guy throwing up and passing out, wondering where my socks have gone off to, and looking at the bib of not-so-dried puke down my shirt. Unofficially, I was "the responsible one."

Here is what I was aware of at that time. Twelve hours of drinking is a fickle mistress. She can either be fireworks: a fast-moving and blinding light of fun or she can be long decline until, suddenly, she pops your batteries out. And there's nothing you can do about it.

Earlier that night, to my left was Toby, sitting on the bleachers at Emo's, surrounded by people. He was nodding off, but always correcting himself upright before falling all the way over. Toby had fought the warrior's fight, but the "Did we really do Jaeger shots? I don't remember that at all" had pounced upon him. I was marginally better. All that saved me was a pounding headache. It pared back my drinking a bit.

Against Me! played a great set, as did Dillinger Four. What I remember was partial male nudity and Paddy testing the limits of his First Amendment rights in front of a packed audience. It was South by Southwest. Someone gave me the stupidest beer cozy. It failed on two levels. It didn't keep my beer cold and it looked like a long-sleeved t-shirt that a dumbass would wear.

I roused up a very apologetic Toby and went for a walk to get the juices flowing in the hope that the whirlpool in his head would

slow down a bit. It didn't. We walked through the slight drizzle and saw a line, four people wide and a block long, for the show we just left. We passed Beerland. That was our fatal flaw. Mere yards away was an almost silent, probably chunky, call for help. Clouded judgement and brains pickled with two-dollar Lone Stars tallboys prevented us from rescuing a friend.

Toby and I took a taxi (a one in two hundred chance. It was Chris, the drummer for J-Church. Go figure.) to Ben Snakepit's home.

Two hours later, Nørb was a wastrel, passing out on the curb outside Beerland, our unofficial home away from home. It had just closed for the night. They pulled him inside. "Where are you staying?" Nørb shrugged. "Who are you staying with?" Nørb shrugged. They went through a litany of names. A lightbulb flickered. "Ben and Ben and Nick's. That's right, my good man!" he proclaimed, one finger on his nose, another finger pointing directly at the person talking to him. A phonebook was pulled out and last names were yanked out of thin air. That's when the phone in the locked room started ringing. The message was left.

There's so little time to celebrate when you work so hard. Toby's an EMT. He'd driven the thirteen-plus hours from Atlanta. Nørb had to time jockey his work just to get the days off. I put in an average of sixty hours a week on this magazine that, at best, breaks even. Stops have to be pulled out. Brains need to be drained, even if money is scarce. You've got to steal that time. And you know what the best part is? It's no secret. Hanging out with friends, old and new. Sharing stories, kicking back beers, watching music and getting spastic and knowing, in the back of your brain, that if you're left in a gutter and you haven't been a dick, the chances increase that someone friendly might just come along and pick you up.

Contrary to popular belief, decency has its rewards.

-Todd

AD DEADLINE FOR ISSUE #21

June 1st, 2004

AD DEADLINE FOR ISSUE #22

August 1st, 2004

EMAIL OR MAIL US FOR THE RATES AND DETAILS

AD SIZES

- Full page, 7.5" wide, 10" tall.
- Half page, 7.5" wide, 5" tall.
- Quarter page, 3.75" wide, 5" tall.
- Sixth page, 2.5" wide, 5" tall.
- Please make all checks out to Razorcake.

ADVERTISING STIPULATIONS

- We now accept electronic ads. Email for details.
- Make ads the right size and orientation.
- All ads are black and white.
- We don't reserve ad space.
- Send good laser prints for the ads. Use solely black ink on all art. Do not print your ad out on a bubble jet printer
- All photos must be halftoned using a 85 LPI (85 line screen).
- If we need to invoice you, we won't run your ad until we have the cash on hand, so make those arrangements before the ad deadline.
- So on, so forth. Yep.

Razorcake and razorcake.com could not have been finished without the invention of toilet paper or these folks:

Sean Carswell, Todd Taylor, Josh Lane, Megan Pants, Skinny Dan, ktspin, and Felizon Vidad

Individual opinions expressed within are not necessarily those of Razorcake/Gorsky, Inc.

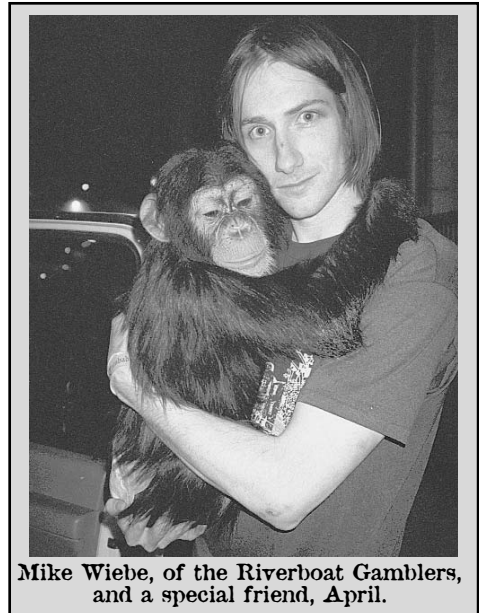
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Cover photo of Randy by Todd Taylor



Mike Wiebe, of the Riverboat Gamblers, and a special friend, April.

Thank you list: The raven screams nevermore thanks to Todd Cong. for designing the cover. Hope you're in Europe when this comes out thanks to Julia Smut for her help with the cover. Baby cookie mortar attack thanks (with a karate chop to the throat appetizer) to Aphid Peewit and Paddy Costello for their Fuck Yeahs interview, and for Jimmy Fangs' pictures and Life Sucks Die Wes for graphics help. Frilly underwear, screaming bearings, and lipsticked high elbows thanks to Wez Lundry for this rollerderby interview. It's a complicated plastic turtle called life thanks to Bradley Williams for his Hasil Adkins interview and Mike Comer for the pictures. In the back of the library thanks to Greg Barbera for his zine reviews. Sleeping with the bowling trophy thanks to Speedway Randy for his DVD and record reviews. Electronic handshake thanks for Randy Iwata's diligence with Nardwuar's photos. Skulls in the pupils thanks to Rob Ruelas for the illustration in Dale's column. That's a tough one to draw thanks to Keith Rosson for his illustration in Jimmy's column. Beerland uber alles thanks to Randal, Donya, Billy, and Ray. Road warrior decimation of southwestern towns thanks to Mike Faloon. How to make more enemies thanks to Jimmy Alvarado, Aphid Peewit, Bradley Williams, Donuthead, Liz O, Mike Beer, Puckett, and Wanda Sprag for their record reviews. You're a lady in a mirror thanks to Tommy Wrenn for his illustration in Seth's column.

RAZORCAKE



www.razorcake.com * PO Box 42129, Los Angeles, CA 90042

"You've got to know the truth before you say that you've got pride." Issue #20, June/July 2004
 -The Descendents, from the song "Merican"

Designated Dale I'm Against Itpg. 4
 Art Shizzville!! pg. 7
 Jim Ruland Lazy Mick pg. 8
 Ayn Imperato..... 90803pg. 10
 The Rhythm Chicken The Dinghole Reports pg. 12
 Maddy Shiftless When Idle pg. 14
 Gary Hornberger Squeeze My Horn pg. 16
 Rich Mackin The Twisted Balloon pg. 18
 Jimmy Alvarado..... I'm a Little Airplanepg. 20
 Seth Swaaley..... Swinging Door Conversationspg. 24
 Sean Carswell A Monkey to Ride the Dog pg. 26
 Nardwuar The Human Serviette Who Are You? pg. 28
 Rev. Nørb Love, Nørb pg. 32
 Ben Snakepit Snakepit pg. 39

* * * * *

Chrystaei Branchaw's Photo Page The Observers..... pg. 41
 The Shemps Interview by Todd Taylor and Petite Paquet pg. 42
 Fuck Yeahs Interview by Aphid Peewit and Paddy Costello..... pg. 48
 Hasil Adkins, Part II Interview by Bradley Williams pg. 54
 Randy Interview by Sean Carswell and Todd Taylor pg. 60
 Punk Rock Roller Derby Interview by Wez Lundry pg. 68
 Dan Monick's Photo Page Fine Line, Big Difference pg. 75

* * * * *

Record Reviews Drinking Beer Naked in the Front Yard pg. 76
 Zine Reviews Various Burial Options pg. 105
 Book Reviews Such Bold Moves! pg. 108
 Video Reviews They Would Rather Be Fisting Each Other pg. 110

Razorcake is bi-monthly. Issues are \$3.00 ppd. in the US. Yearly subscriptions (six issues) are \$15.00 bulk rate or \$21.00 first class mail. Plus you get some free shit. These prices are only valid for people who live in the US and are not in prison. Issues and subs are more for everyone else (because we have to pay more in postage). Write us and we'll give you a price. Prisoners may receive free single issues of Razorcake solely via Left Bank Books, 92 Pike St., Seattle, WA 98101, who have a book-for-prisoners program. Want to distribute Razorcake in the United States? The minimum order is five issues. You have to prepay. For \$7.50, you'll receive five copies of the same issue, sent to you when we do our mailout to all of our distros, big and small. Email <sean@razorcake.com> for all the details.

DESIGNATED DALE

I'M AGAINST IT

It's been said that if Stern keeps up his anti-Bush drumbeat, he could have a greater impact on the presidential election than independent candidate Ralph Nader.

By now, I'm sure that a number of you folks have heard about Clear Channel and their plans of banishing (what *they* consider) not acceptable practices that go on over the airwaves, be it the radio or television stations they oversee. For those not in the know, Clear Channel is an unbelievably huge media and advertising outfit whose fingers are up a whole helluva lotta asses, economically speaking. But lately, the Clear Channel fingers are turning into quite an uncomfortable fist up the regular American's ass by self-appointing themselves as the decency police. Pardon me, but if the unbalanced jive the FCC pulls isn't bad enough these days (and *these* fucks *do* play favorites), now we've got a substantially large company in the mix dictating a "what's what" of decency on the airwaves. Sounds as if Clear Channel should put on some of them old, familiar red arm-bands and brush up on techniques of the Gestapo.

Just what got all of this craziness started? Some say it was Janet Jackson's "accidental" boobage shot with Justin Timberlake on the halftime show broadcast of this past Superbowl. (And I still say that shit was a lame marketing ploy. Did you see that thing covering her udder? If the film *Excalibur* was ever to have a burlesque scene in it, then that medieval-looking Ninja throwing star covering her blob was the pasty. "Accidental"... hmm... about as "accidental" as her brother Michael being "naturally light-skinned" these past years... pah-leeze.)

An estimated 90 million people watched the Nipplegate half time show and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) received 500,000 complaints. Congress took note, amending existing bills to increase indecency fines dramatically. In response, Clear Channel, which operates more than 1,200 radio stations, adopted a code of conduct called the "Responsible Broadcasting Initiative." Whatever spring-boarded the

series of events to follow, all the focus on Janet Jackson was suddenly gone and it appears that Howard Stern is in the crosshairs of this decency feeding frenzy. He was recently suspended from six stations. No matter what you think of him, Howard Stern is one of the few voices that has a chance of changing Clear Channel's policies because the truth is he is too big to just ignore.

Now, I'm a Stern fan, but I'm not one to tell you whose side to rally on. So, in the mean time, here are some facts to keep in mind while making your educated decision. Don't say I never gave you anything, cocko.

Clear Channel was a major factor in putting George Bush in the President's chair, and it was Clear Channel's vice president Tom Hicks, who helped make good ol' George Dubbaya a multimillionaire.

Questions about ethics have followed Clear Channel since it has become quite a monopoly. Its 1,200 radio stations make up one out of every ten in the United States and, in the process, has put a lot of local stations out of business. As corporations such as Clear Channel have bought up local radio stations, they have swept out hometown programming that tended to reflect regional differences – or that, at the least, responded to local complaints – and imposed programming and personalities with no connection to the community. How can a huge company that spans the entire continent know exactly what community standards are? If there is only one voice, dictated by the governing body, run by a monopoly, that is a very shitty place to be in for freedom of speech. A "freedom" that no one can afford to have, if they're not in Clear Channel's "pocket."

As far as the FCC is concerned, how about this: Colin Powell's son Michael Powell runs the FCC, and in the wake of our apparent need for decency guidelines created the Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act of 2004. Given that the House

recently voted 391-22 to pass a bill to increase indecency fines from \$27,000 to \$500,000 – and the Senate may follow, the First Amendment is literally at risk. "Congress shall make no law... prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press," the First Amendment reads, but given that those hefty fines will be extended to licensees and radio personalities alike (with a cap of three million dollars a day) "free speech" could become extremely expensive especially since "indecency," it seems, is whatever Señor Powell deems it to be.

Dated February 25th of this year, Clear Channel released the following press release: "Clear Channel today announced a strong new 'Responsible Broadcasting Initiative' to make sure the material aired by its radio stations conforms to the standards and sensibilities of the local communities they serve." What happened to people in local communities making choices for themselves? Does anyone here in the country actually need to be told to switch off a radio or television program because it's deemed offensive by a media giant, much less the government? If you answer yes, ask them when it's okay to go to the bathroom and wipe your ass while you're at it.

"Clear Channel is serious about helping address the rising tide of indecency on the airwaves," said Mark Mays, President and Chief Operating Officer of Clear Channel Communications. "As broadcast licensees, we are fully responsible for what our stations air, and we intend to make sure all our DJs and programmers understand what is and what is not appropriate on Clear Channel radio shows." Check it out, Mays – you and your Clear Channel crew need to stop wringing your hands and deal with the fact that you ain't Moses, okay? No beard. No burning bush. No stones. No Ten Commandments. No shit. Hell, even the wacky Charleton Heston

knows *he* isn't Moses! He just played him in a movie, you dumb-ass.

Mays said the company will institute a zero tolerance policy for indecent content which will include company-wide training and automatic suspensions for anyone who the FCC alleges has violated indecency rules on the air. "If the FCC accuses us of wrongdoing by issuing a proposed fine, we will take immediate action," Mays said. "We will suspend the DJ in question, and perform a swift investigation. If we or the government ultimately determine the offending broadcast is indecent, the DJ will be terminated without delay." John Hogan, Chief Executive Officer of Clear Channel Radio added, "If a DJ is found to be in violation of FCC rules, there will be no appeals and no intermediate steps. If they break the law by broadcasting indecent material, they will not work for Clear Channel." So, in a nutshell, if Clear Channel or the FCC ain't having what a DJ has got to say on the air, they're toast. That's a cool "with us or against us" attitude, guys. I thought the only dictating going on here in the States is the dictating machine a secretary uses for memos from their boss. Sieg fucking heil.

In addition, the company announced that all of its contracts with on-air performers are being modified to ensure that DJs share financial responsibility if they utter indecent material on the air. "From now on, every contract that Clear Channel enters into with on-air talent will include this provision," said Hogan. "While that won't relieve Clear Channel from our responsibility as a broadcast licensee, we believe it will have a significant deterrent effect on indecent content." Let me try to get this straight – Clear Channel is saying that they can fire and get a so-called offending DJ to share a FCC fine? What a wonderful way for Clear Channel to say that their employees are readily expendable and unwillingly stuck helping foot the bill for something

they shouldn't be in debt for to begin with. Nice.

Reiterating its call for a "Decency Task Force," Clear Channel also has volunteered to fully participate with other representatives of the broadcast, cable and satellite industries to develop an industry-wide response to indecency and violence in the media. (It sounds like somebody's looking for allies. Didn't Germany try doing that with Japan in the 1940s?) "In our view, industry-developed guidelines should be as effective as Government-imposed regulations without running afoul of the First Amendment protections that we all respect," said Hogan. Hey, Hogan – a little observation: any industry-developed guideline is just that. It's not a government-imposed regulation or law. Don't go getting ahead of yourself, 'cause some other morality mongers with ideas like yours are gonna try to scratch their itch of what's wrong with this world. And if you respected First Amendment protections like you

say you do, then let them be. Laws set boundaries, not business, although it's funny how often the boundary line tends to blur with big brother and money.

In the end, we're left with no clear understanding of just what is "indecent" and worse yet, it seems we will only find out when huge fines are levied on broadcasters or speakers. It's been said that if Stern keeps up his anti-Bush drumbeat, he could have a greater impact on the presidential election than independent candidate Ralph Nader. Although Stern did sign a contract with Clear Channel and he makes a shit-load of money off of their syndication of his program, he is facing a hybrid form of censorship: financial ruin. They aren't telling him he can't say something – he can say anything he wants, just not on their airwaves – but they're going to impose ridiculously high fines for things he says on air that aren't clearly defined as "indecent."

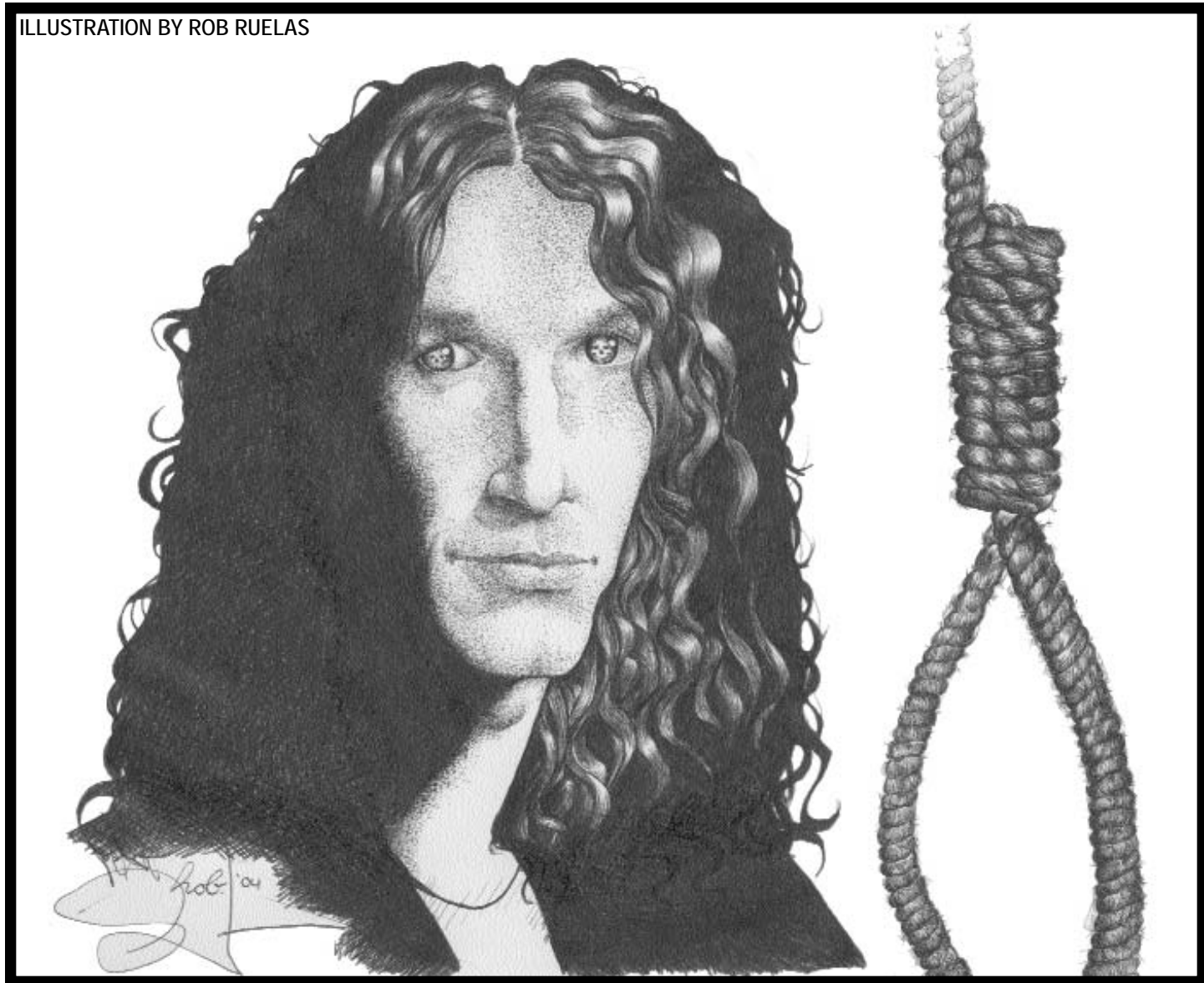
The following press release from Clear Channel was released

February 25th (later on that same day the other press release regarding their new initiative was released): "Clear Channel Radio has suspended the broadcast of Viacom's Howard Stern show, consistent with its Responsible Broadcasting Initiative announced earlier today. After assessing the content of yesterday's Howard Stern show, Clear Channel worked with local market managers to take swift and decisive action." John Hogan, president and CEO of Clear Channel Radio said, "Clear Channel drew a line in the sand today with regard to protecting our listeners from indecent content and Howard Stern's show blew right through it. It was vulgar, offensive, and insulting, not just to women and African Americans but to anyone with a sense of common decency. We will not air Howard Stern on Clear Channel stations until we are assured that his show will conform to acceptable standards of responsible broadcasting." So, because Clear Channel finds a radio show

like Stern's unfit to broadcast on the stations they own, they go and pull it off the air because Clear Channel was trying to "protect its listeners from indecent content"? Later, when Clear Channel president John Hogan appeared before members of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, he openly admitted that though Stern had not committed any fresh sins. The company decided to drop him anyway. Howard Stern was brought up on charges from a three-year-old show.

Hey, Clear Channel, how about the majority of your listeners who choose to find Stern's show an entertaining part of their morning? And not that it matters, but I'm going to assume that it's quite a LARGE majority, otherwise millions wouldn't be listening and Stern's show wouldn't be where it's at – on top of morning radio all these years. There are also folks who don't care for Stern's show at all, and everyone, including Stern's listeners, should respect other's

ILLUSTRATION BY ROB RUELAS



DESIGNATED DALE

opinions, just as they would like their opinions to be respected. But when you don't like something that's intruding your eardrums on a radio program, or some show that's annoying your sight and hearing on the television, you simply change the channel or turn it off. How can a huge company that spans the entire continent know exactly what community standards are? Devo put it best with their song title, "Freedom of Choice," and every single citizen living here in this country has that right. I've heard some say, "Well, fuck it, I don't give a shit one way or another about what's going on with this Clear Channel situation." Anyone with an attitude like this should give a shit, because basic rights have and are being chipped away right under the American people's noses.

For example, the whole automatic firearm ban ordeal that was going down a while back. The government wanted to put a ban on just about all automatic firearms, and a lot of firearm enthusiasts/collectors reacted with the same I-don't-give-a-shit-attitude: "Who cares about automatic firearms? I'm not into 'em anyway." But the same firearm owners who were into the automatic genre needed some serious support, and because they didn't get

backed fully, the ban was put into law. Now, let's say the government wants to go after high-powered deer rifles and/or shotguns next – you think the same folks who got their automatic pieces yanked feel like lending support to the same people who turned a cold shoulder on them? Think about it. Things could happen very rapidly if there's a breakdown in the chain of support.

Another example is the 2 Live Crew when they fought a decency case with the state of Florida. Although the media was all over it, there was a whole lot of people who could give two shits less about what happened to 2 Live Crew, and it's the same story all over again like I was talking about with the automatic firearms. Everyone should want to support the cause, be it the Cousin It look-a-likes into death metal, the gaudy, booty-shaking hip-hoppers, those rowdy shit-kicking city cowboys into (what they call now) country, free-flowing jazz purists, the traditional classical fans, or the most flailing, hardcore punk rockers. Yes, everyone should've been behind 2 Live Crew, no matter what they thought of their material. Why? Because instead of 2 Live Crew, it could've been the above-mentioned people's music or the music you happen to

love. And don't go wiping your sweaty brow just yet. Things happen.

You think if Clear Channel owned the publishing company that printed these copies of *Razorcake*, that they would allow Dale's colorful uses of his favored four-lettered syllables? It's doubtful, but then again, it's come to my attention recently that Clear Channel's advertising dept. have run some rather racy billboard ads with some scantily clad girls. And it wasn't the scantily clad types you see in a Sears catalog, either, you pervs. That said, I want to ask all our readers to make a note of any outside advert with the Clear Channel moniker slapped on it and check out what they've got on display for the whole world to see. If Clear Channel is so concerned with protecting its listening audience from "indecency," then I'd like to see how many so-called "indecent" ads are out there that they've sold space to that the public can see. Even if these ads are questionably offensive to some (use common sense here, people), I'd totally dig some info on what you've seen. If possible, a pic sent along with your email would be fantastic, too. Just make sure you can see the Clear Channel logo in your pic. And, for the record, Clear Channel peddles

more than just simple highway billboard space. Click here to see all the different mediums they offer to infiltrate the public with their outdoor advertising: <<http://www.clearchanneloutdoor.com/product/default.asp>>. With the selling of all of their different advertising options and numerous locations, I don't think it'll be too difficult for any of you to find something that would be deemed "indecent" in the eyes of Clear Channel slapped up somewhere.

But, wait – why would a company contradict itself, especially a company trying to institute a "Responsible Broadcasting Initiative," you ask? Besides money, I don't have any other answer. Kind of like Michael Savage (a Republican talk show host) telling a "sodomite" caller to his now canceled MSNBC show, "You should only get AIDs and die, you pig." No one heard about Savage being fined for "indecency." There's definitely a word for both of these scenarios, though: "double-standard."

I'm Against It

–Designated Dale
DesignatedDale@aol.com



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SHIZZ!



UNCA ART!
I'M READY FOR
MY STORY!



STORY!
STORY! STORY!



CAN'T YA HEAR!
I SAID...

I'm Ready
For My Sto...



A' RIGHT
ALREADY!

SLAM!



NOW WHERE
WERE WE...

OH, YEAH!
SHIZZ-O-CHIO.



I WISH I HAD
A SON TO CALL
MY OWN.

HE COULD BEG
ME BEERS, AND
MY SLIPPERS,
AND...



ONE DAY, AFTER MIXING TOO MANY PILLS
WITH TOO MUCH VODKA, HE MADE A BOY OUT OF
SHIZZ AND NAMED HIM: SHIZZ-O-CHIO...

I'LL
NAME YOU
SHIZZ-O-CHIO



THAT NIGHT, THE BEAUTIFUL
TOILET FAIRY VISITED SHIZZ-
O-CHIO AND TOLD HIM THAT
IF HE WAS GOOD, SHE WOULD TURN HIM INTO A REAL BOY.



BUT HE WAS MADE OF SHIZZ, AFTER ALL. HE
BEGAN TO DRINK HEAVILY...

BURP!
FEH.



HE FELL IN WITH THE WRONG CROWD...

OK! OK!

VE HAF
SCHNITZEL, YA!
DEN I SHOW
YOU DE OENS.



HE TURNED TO A LIFE OF
CRIME...

FEH.



THE POOR DUCK HAD ENOUGH. HE KICKED
SHIZZ-O-CHIO OUT ON THE
STREET...

GET THA
FEK OUT!!!

FEH.



SHIZZ-O-CHIO WAS SAVED BY THE FALSE
KING WHO HAD HEARD ABOUT HIS EXPLOITS
AND LIKED HIS STYLE...

FEH.

LET ME HELP'YA
OUT THERE BOY.



HOW DO YOU FEEL
ABOUT THE
POOR?

THE
ECONOMY? TELLING
THE TRUTH?

FEH.
FEH.
FEH.

HE IMPRESSED THE FALSE KING WITH
HIS ELOQUENCY AND LACK OF RESPECT.



THE FALSE KING GAVE HIM THE HIGHEST
POST IN HIS KINGDOM - POLITICAL ADVISOR.

MR. PRESIDENT,
WHAT ABOUT
THE ECONOMY?

MR. PRESIDENT,
WHAT ABOUT
TELLING THE
TRUTH?



AND THE FALSE KING AND SHIZZ-
O-CHIO LIVED HAPPILY... EVER
AFTER??!!

WHAT!!!



WELL I CAN'T
SLEEP.

ME
NEITHER.



LAZY MICK

THE OBJECT HERE IS TO WIN TROPHIES, NOT LOOK LIKE A PUSSY.

TWO CRACKERS, A MICK AND A BEAN WALK INTO A BOWLING ALLEY...

And walk out with a big-ass trophy. As you are now undoubtedly aware and are probably sick of hearing, a Razorcake team, The Blatant Stereotypes, made it to the championship round of the 6th annual Punk Rock Bowling Tournament. This was an unprecedented feat (or near feat since we, you know, lost) not just for the magazine, but for punk rock scribblers everywhere. Writers in the punk rock scene are often perceived as observers. There are some in the scene who feel that real punk rockers rip it up on stage while the wannabes hide behind their cameras and computer monitors. But for one glorious weekend three extremely pale white dudes and one seriously sun-deprived Mexican, took the stage at Sam's Town Bowling Center in Las Vegas, Nevada and kinda sorta made up for a lifetime of standing in the wings. Five small steps and a graceful slide for Razorcake, one giant step for zinesters everywhere. In the spirit of community-building altruism and good-old fashioned braggadocio, I will now share the secrets of Blatant Stereotype's success. If you follow these simple steps, you, too, can bring some hardware home from the Punk Rock Bowling Tournament.

GET SOME BALLS

It works for boy scouts, and it will work for your drunk ass: be prepared. This means bringing your own equipment. If you don't own a ball, get one. Plastic balls are for pussies and the ones they let you use at the alley aren't going to cut it. The ball may go where you want it to go, but you're not going to get any pin action when it gets there, and pin action is what separates a difficult spare approach from a makeable one, and every spare you make is like tacking on an extra ten points to your score. Enough said. The same goes for shoes and by shoes I don't mean the ones you stole from the bowling alley the last time you were there (I'm talking to you, Kid). Good shoes will help you keep your feet under you, the benefits of which should not be understated in a city like Las Vegas. This also means you will need to buy a bag. For the ladies I suggest a bag with wheels (like a carry-on bag) because casinos are big and that shit gets heavy after a while. Gents: no wheels for you. The object here is to win trophies, not look like a pussy.

PRACTICE (DUH)

This probably goes without saying, but the key to effective practice is to replicate tournament conditions. Like my Communications professor at Radford University once told me, "If you're going to study stoned, then take the test stoned." In other words, your practice session must be state specific. You can't practice sober, get wasted at the tournament, and expect to succeed. The reverse is also true (and also really, really dumb). If you're one of those shit-your-pants drunks, you're pretty much on your own here, but don't despair, there may be a spot on the Team Tiltwheel bus for you (see below). I've noticed that the best bowlers tend to be those who get blitzed and throw rocks every Tuesday night, i.e. play in a league. For those of you who truly suck at bowling, all is not lost. The tournament operates on a handicap system, which is like God1 smiling down on retards and making them really smart for a few hours.

DON'T BE A TOOL.

Just because you're gunning for the winner's circle is no excuse to act like a dick. When your opponent gets a strike, congratulate them. You're here to have fun and make friends so don't be skimpy with the high fives and the woo-hoos. You'll know you've succeeded if the people you beat on Saturday wish you luck on Sunday. When we were in the championships, people I rolled against two years ago hung out and cheered us on (thanks Triple Rock!) and that's pretty fucking cool.

EVERY PIN COUNTS

At the end of the day, teams that qualify for the playoffs are separated from those that don't by a very small number. It's really quite remarkable. Out of 100 or so teams, a half-dozen will be very, very good and another half-dozen will be very, very bad. The rest of the teams fall in the middle range and the difference between qualifying for the playoffs and rolling for shits and giggles is slim. Believe it or not, it's not about who's the best team, but who was the better bowler that afternoon. Two factors serve as equalizers: the handicap, which levels the playing field, and Las Vegas, which can transform the hardiest partier or the most pious teetotaler into an incoherent wretch faster than you can say, Thundercats, Ho! Ultra-competitive bowlers take note: This does not mean that it's now okay to harass your teammates every time they send a dud scud down the spillway. Whenever a Blatant Stereotype knocked down six or seven pins after only getting one or two on the first try, we didn't tell him he was like a two-

ton anchor slowing down the flagship to victory. No, we cheered him on and told him helpful, encouraging lies to keep him from feeling like the rotting corpse of an albatross tied around our fucking necks. That's what every pin counts means.

STAY THE FUCK AWAY FROM TEAM TILTWHEEL.

You've heard the stories, and they're all true. Team Tiltwheel is to bowling what *The Passion of the Christ* is to an Easter parade. Shoes? Not required. Clothing? Optional. Pandemonium? Essential. Team Tiltwheel has finished last every year they've entered and they work very, very hard at it. Trust me, this is no fluke. They have been known to dropkick, head butt, and shot put bowling balls down the lane (although gutter is more accurate). All lanes are fair game and there is no such thing as out of bounds. They will spill things. They will grab your balls, and oh yes, they will squeeze them. Luckily, BYO makes sure Team Tiltwheel is always banished to the end of the alley to minimize offensive behavior. (Next year, why not put them next to Team Varla? It could be interesting...) In between games it's worth wandering down to their end of the bowling alley. You'll know you're getting close because of the throng of wastoids cheering them on. Forgive them Mel, they know not what they do.

STYLE

As in, it helps to have some. Unless your name is Peter "Howitzer" Hucklebuck, throwing the ball really, really hard not only decreases your accuracy and makes you look like a tool, it weakens your arm so won't be able to jack off later, which is a bummer because no one is going to be taking your lame, trying-too-hard-to-look-cool-and-failing-miserably ass back to their lavish hotel room. My own bowling style, which cannot be duplicated, starts with a motion not unlike a human cannonball erupting from the barrel, takes me swiftly to the foul line (aka launch-pad) where I unleash a southpaw straight arm approach with a reverse Brooklyn drift. Thunderous cacophony ensues. I call this technique, which I've been perfecting for years, "luck." Results vary, but I look good doing it.

THE ART OF SELF-CONGRATULATIONS

So you just rolled a strike: now what do you do? This is tricky. You don't want to lose your fucking mind like you just won the lottery, but you don't want to act all blasé like its your fucking birthright to be a good bowler. The trick is to expect - scratch that - demand a strike from

yourself every time you pick up a ball, but then let go of those expectations as soon as you release the ball. You can't control it anymore so it's pointless to care too much about the outcome. Celebrations should be kept in your own bowling area. That cheerleader thing you used to do to show off your snatch to everyone from the math teacher to the starting quarterback's mentally retarded younger brother is really cute the first time you do it, but keep it up and I'm laying down some ice in your lane.

1986, Waukegan Lanes, Waukegan, Illinois). You have been warned. Don't be bitten.

COCAINE?

Not a good idea, but ecstasy and LSD are worth consideration.

DO NOT BE DISTRACTED BY THE VARLA GIRLS

The Varla Girls are pros at being overdressed and underdressed at the same time. This year

Coincidence? We think so. But they're no dummies. (Would you organize a tournament for something you sucked at?) Luckily, they aren't as good at bowling as they are at organizing events. When the Castaways Casino shut down a week before the tournament, BYO had to scramble to find a place for over four hundred bowlers to compete and a thousand punk rockers to sleep. They pulled it off with plenty of time to spare (sorry). Their genius for logistics should not go unappreciated. It's one

TEAM TILTWHEEL

**You've heard
the stories,
and they're
all true.**

Shoes?

**Not
required.**

Clothing?

Optional.

Pandemonium?

Essential.



EVALUATE THE ROLE OF ALCOHOL IN YOUR LIFE.

This is a tough one, and it's not for everyone. (Team Tiltwheel members can skip to the section marked "Cocaine.") If you're still reading this, and you haven't broken out in a cold sweat, then chances are at some point in your life you were *that guy* and believe you me, you don't want to be *that guy* at the Punk Rock Bowling Tournament. Why? Because not only will your name live long in the lore of PRBT but, chances are, your insensate ass is going to end up in the photo gallery on the barflies.net website. Now everyone knows bowling is one of those things that belong with alcohol, like lawn darts and organ poaching, but there is a threshold, a ceiling you might say, and the middle of a bowling alley is not the place you want to go crashing through it. We all have our limits and Sin City has a way of making us achingly familiar with them, but a little moderation goes along with in Las Vegas. So if you want to party with an ice bucket filled with spiced rum and Red Bull, wait until the awards celebration. The bowling alley is the place where you want to achieve personal highs (rolled a 227, February 2003, Castaways Bowling Center, Las Vegas, Nevada) not embarrassing lows (puked all over a buffet table, New Years Eve,

they had a military theme going and dressed as sailor girls on Saturday and commando chicks on Sunday. Ahoy, indeed, but succumb to their siren spell at your own peril. I'm no scientist but I'm willing to bet that bowling near the Varla girls is like having a negative handicap. In fact, I seriously doubt any team that has bowled next to a Varla team has advanced to the championships. There is only one foolproof way to protect yourself from these vixens of the polished wood, and that is to hang out with a woman so fine you forget they're even there, as was the case with yours truly.

DESPERATION

Go for broke – literally. Spend all your money. Pawn your shit. Trade your plane ticket for a \$100 chip and lose it at the roulette wheel. Nothing motivates the human spirit like poverty. If poverty can inspire truly awesome things like armed robbery, breaking and entering, gang wars, etc., imagine what it can do for your bowling average. Busted, beat and utterly broke, think of the envelope stuffed with cash that awaits you at the awards ceremony and bowl as if your ass depended on it.

CHANGE YOUR NAME TO STERN

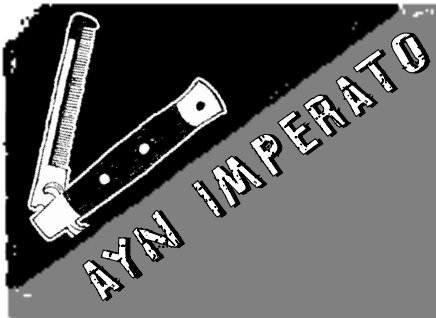
Lately, it seems like there's always a team with a Stern on it in the championships.

of the few punk rock events you can count on year in and year out that doesn't suck. Granted, it was less than ideal staying in two hotels, but they were in walking distance of each other and all the Razorcake Bowlers were in the same hotel. A very good deal by any reckoning. Because there wasn't a bowling alley in Las Vegas big enough to accommodate 106 teams, half the teams bowled in one session, the other half bowled in another and it was really cool hanging out because you miss so much when you're actually bowling. (Something to consider for next year?) So while we probably won't be changing our name to Stern anytime soon, we haven't ruled out kidnapping, tasing or coma-inducing cocktails. If you'd like to volunteer your services, give me a call and inquire about the Lazy Mick "street team."

–Money

1. No, I don't believe in God, nor do I expect you to, but if this offends you, wherever you see the word "God" just replace it with the words "Mel Gibson." Plus, divine intervention goes a long way toward explaining how The Blatant Stereotypes got blown away in the championship round.

**JIM
RULAND**



90803

Black Night Stars

The sheer, dark curtains blew in slow and thick as water rippling through the room. That's what I remember, as I walked into the party at my downstairs neighbor's studio apartment. I was nineteen years old and on my own that night. It was only eleven o' clock, yet already tons of beer cans were caved in and scattered around the beige and speckled carpet. Laying there in the near dark, the cans looked fragile as insect shells, discarded metal skins. Several still bodies lay around the murky room as well, mimicking the cans, along with a half a dozen dirty points. Their glassy eyes were suspended in time. It was like stepping into a morgue.

There was a huge, blackened hole in the center of the carpet that looked as though a small spaceship had landed there. A weak red light hovered over the room. The one black-curtained window in the back of the room was open, the wind

blowing in. A thin, ghostly boy perched on the sill in front of the sheer fabric. His body was little more than flesh covered bones, and shadows wove in and around his furiously pockmarked face. His eyes were half closed, the city glittering behind. He sat holding a Scooby Doo doll that was shaved of half its fur. Nuclear-Fallout Scooby.

I walked through the carpeted room, half-drunk from the whiskey I downed earlier, upstairs with my baby. But now he was gone. A morose girl in black slumped in the corner, her blue hair hanging over her face. I thought she was dead until I touched her hand. Then her eyes glided open, staring off into a world I would never know.

Tyler scurried up to me, jerky and frantic – the Methamphetamine King in his tiny, trashy fortress. He had invited his heroin friends over that night and looked alive and purposeful in comparison, as he scurried from one end of the apartment to the other.

"Hey girl, where's your boy?" he asked. I looked at his sagging brown Dickies and orange polyester shirt. The lapels were thicker

than his arms. He handed me a beer and I flipped the can around in my hands.

"He couldn't make it," I said. I opened the can and took a sip. "Actually, we were fighting earlier."

"That sucks," he said, sniffing and shifting from foot to foot. The truth was that an hour ago my baby had left the apartment in a rage, jumped in his pea-green Chevy, and drove straight into a tree, snapping it. Then screeched off to his friend's house somewhere across the San Francisco Bay.

Tyler began shifting faster, left to right, left to right, while his head jerked to one side – like an odd chicken dance. "The other day," he chattered, "I was trying to clean up the place and I started knocking my head into the wall, you know? Not trying to beat it or bust my head open or anything – just *letting it fall*, over and over, you know? Just *letting it fall*. It dropped over and over until a dent started to form in the plaster but I just couldn't stop myself, you know? It just started to hurt like hell, you know? But it felt kinda good too. Later, I stared at it

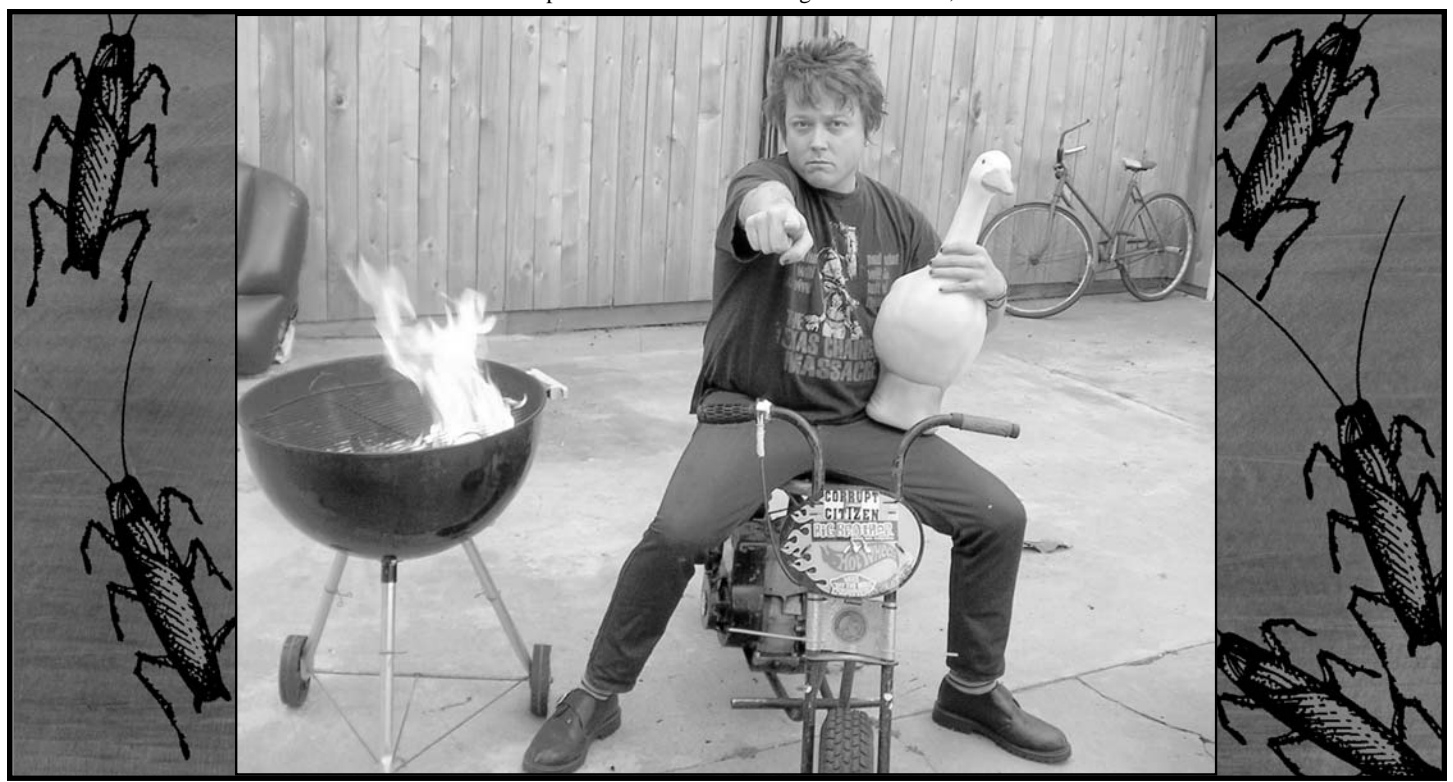
for an hour and the dent – it started to look like Gandhi. No shit! Freaking Gandhi head! It was the craziest thing and then..."

As Tyler rambled on, I thought of my boy over in Oakland. He looked like a prisoner – bald head, beefy, with tattoos running all over his skin. A thick, jagged scar between his eyes. He was a man whose life had been hard. You could see it in his eyes. We liked to go up to my roof with some cans of beer and sit and watch the sun go down, changing the sky to a bruised plum and red. We used to sit there at dusk, talking. Up there we were as close to something real as anyone could get. But later it wasn't like that. We always ruined things.

"Want a line?" Tyler asked. "I was just going to do some."

"Sure," I said. It wasn't really my thing but once in a while it was all right. I was just a lush who hung out with speed freaks who hung out with junkies. The party was a swarm of opposites, people moving around each other at different speeds in strange unison, like snakes writhing slowly through a room of mice.

AYN IMPERATO



Tyler tapped out the pile of crystals, separating them into four-inch lines with a rusty razor on the wooden table. A few of us sat on the couch, hunched over and sniffing.

The second he inhaled the last line, Tyler jumped up off the couch, hopped over the morose girl, and ran out the front door. A few minutes later we could hear him running around outside, whooping and yelling on the sidewalk below. "Whoooooo! Hell yeaaaaah!" he screamed up to the sky.

We felt a strange power as we killed them. It was so much easier than the rest of life.

I wandered into the kitchen. My feet stuck to the floor. Someone had ordered a clam pizza. A bunch of speed freaks and junkies had ordered a pizza. The box sat open on the counter, the pizza an untouched, glistening circle. The clams, gnarled thumbs, sunken into the cheese. A single roach marched across the rim of the box. I felt sick.

I thought of the roaches in our apartment. The whole complex was infested. Every day was a cockroach festival. If you flicked on the lights they scattered like a bag of pinto beans spilled on the counter, on the floor, scrambling into the darkest, creepiest holes in the linoleum. My baby and I used to flick the lights on and off to watch the scuttling event. But after a while we grew sick of them – they burrowed into our food – and started to poison them with several jumbo cans of roach spray. We felt a strange power as we killed them. It was so much easier than the rest of life. All the bad things we could not stop.

We never got all of them. They regenerated tenfold, stronger, more resilient. I started to hack and wheeze every time I stepped into the apartment. My slipdresses started to reek of poison. A light, sticky film settled on the two leopard chairs. Under our refrigerator lay a thick blanket of tiny wings.

I turned to grab another beer. I opened Tyler's refrigerator. A ghostly wind spilled out. A basket of green, furry strawberries sat on the bottom shelf. A small carton of thickened milk sat on the top, beneath the burnt-out light bulb. I shut the door.

"D-d-d-die! D-d-d-die!" a tiny, jerking Mexican boy stuttered from behind me, pointing to the variety of bugs scurrying about the kitchen. His fingers formed the shape of a miniature gun, his thumb working. A large pale boy, completely bald except for a tuft of hair on the front of his bloated scalp, took out his lighter. He began slowly, methodically lighting all the roaches in the kitchen on fire. It started a chain reaction and soon several thin

amphetamine boys were lighting up the bugs. Someone produced a can of Aqua Net and sprayed it while flicking a lighter so it blow-torched the roaches, melting them to blackened circles on the wall. The small, jerking guy kept shooting and yelling, "D-d-d-die! D-d-d-die!"

I wondered what my boy was doing. I thought of him stomping around our one-room apartment earlier. I could see the mirror splinter when he put his fist through it. He stood there afterwards. His

knuckles bled. I closed my eyes and stood there, waiting, until I heard his car screech away outside.

"I love your pink," I heard behind me in a shrill, cockney accent. A tiny girl was leaning against the kitchen doorframe. I hadn't noticed her before. She was a shorthaired brunette, fresh scrubbed face. Freckles, even. She looked about nineteen, like me. "Your hair," she said, running her hand over the top of her head. She looked so normal. Ivy League even, in a navy pullover v-neck sweater. Then I looked at the studded bracelet on her wrist and the red scabs peeking out of the insides of her elbows from where she had rolled up her sleeves.

"Thanks," I said, watching her pull slowly on an unfiltered cigarette. "You're not going to torch any bugs?"

Her face wrinkled. "No bugs. I like drugs." She giggled, bouncing the words around. "Drugs not bugs." Then scratched vigorously at her arm.

Tyler reappeared at the party. He stood in the center of the room. His body was illuminated by the red light, casting long shadows. He trembled and paced wildly between the limp bodies on the beige and speckled carpet. I looked around and wondered about the speckles, if they were part of the pattern in the carpet, or if they came later. It occurred to me that those beer cans had probably been lying there for days.

The people who were still standing gathered in the kitchen, staring at the blackened carnage. Tyler walked over and surveyed the wreckage. He freaked. "Jesus! I just cleaned this place!" he yelled. "I try to keep this place clean and everyone just comes in and messes it all up!" He began to push a dry mop across the floor. We all watched him furiously work while the dirt remained horribly and forever encrusted under our feet.

It happened sometime after the mop, after the blackened roaches had cooled to the walls. The win-

dow was empty. The sheer fabric, tacked up, blew in slow and thick. The tiny English girl leaned out the window. She began to shriek. "Oh, hell! Oh fucking bloody hell!"

I knew it before I saw it. Most of us did. I raced with the others to the window. We peered over the ledge into the night and saw the ghostly boy, lying on the sidewalk in an angular shape. His arm was pulled backwards in a terrible, unnatural way. Tyler pulled back from the window, pinching his fin-

gers together strangely, furiously. "Ohshit, ohshit, ohshit," he muttered, then ducked back out the window again, swooping forward and back.

Within twenty minutes the police came. The blue lights and sirens streaked past the sky as we huddled by the open window, but not too close. I clamped my teeth together and started to grind, sliding slowly, just to maintain. The policeman walked in the apartment holding the bald Scooby Doo. "Whose is this?" he asked. We all stared at it with wide, dilated eyes. "Well, *whose is it?*"

For a moment we could hear all the air rolling through the city outside. "It was his," I finally said, ter-

rified he would hand it to me or somebody else.

Instead, he placed it inside a clear plastic bag. His fingers zipped it shut. He walked to the open window holding the full bag, his boots crunching across the syringes. "Is this where the boy fell from?" he asked.

"Yes," the English girl blurted. Her eyes blinked open and shut. "He fell asleep and just fell out!"

The policeman inspected the window frame, testing it with his

hands. I looked out the open window behind him. My baby was ; hundred, a million miles away now

I looked down at the huge den in the plaster where Tyler had beaten his head against the wall. The policeman stuck his head out the window. "Fell asleep, huh?" He scribbled in a tiny notepad while we all stood around, trying to breathe.

Around me everyone had stopped moving. There was no time. Only the blue police lights outside, shifting. I wondered what that boy saw on his way down – if the city lights were like fake stars in the dark, rushing backwards through a black vein.

–Ayn Imperato

AYN IMPERATO



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THE DINGHOLE REPORTS

The Dinghole Reports

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

FIRED???? I'M FIRED???? How can you fire ME????!! I'm the Rhythm Chicken!!!

(Okay, Chicken! First of all, let's acknowledge the fact that we are still here! With every word typed here (assuming these words ever see print) you can be reassured that you are still on team Razorcake. I must admit that I can fully understand Todd and Sean's intent to fire you. Let's look at your last few Dinghole Reports: praising the Fleet Farm calendar, praising "stampede" as the new "ruckus," pulling Robin Williams under your

(So do you have any new ruckus for us or not? - F.F.)

Well, let's look at that question a little closer. It seems to me that you are quite interested in hearing NEW ruckus. You must think that I've already submitted all possible reports of Chicken gigs from the past. Funyuns, being a Chicken roadie yourself you should know that for every wild, crazy beer-soaked and chaotic Chicken gig I share with the masses within these pages, there are scores of lower profile gigs played to sometimes less than one audience member! Would Blink-182 or Weezer go through the trouble to set up along the highway and play for that slight chance that another car might pass by? Would Face to Face call people

Kameron Kolstad's sixth birthday party. It may be in a professional baseball stadium to an audience of 30,000+, or it may be on an abandoned construction site, miles away from anyone with even my roadie rolling his eyes in the car. I think it's about time that I started sharing with you more of the "rags" from my "rags to riches" story.

(Riches? - F.F.)

Dinghole Report #35: Happy Ruckusday Kameron! (Rhythm Chicken sighting # 24)

It was Kameron's sixth birthday and her mother Kim was throwing a small party at their small rural home just outside of Ellison Bay, WI. Ruckus Thomas and I pulled

THE WRATH OF TRUE RUCKUS!!! My grass-roots ruckus is waged in mysterious ways! I exist to disrupt the natural order of things, baby!

(Uh... okay... maybe we can move on to another topic. You haven't brought up any new additions to your definition of Wisconsinism. - F.F.)

Ah, Wisconsinism. It truly is pleasant to be back in the belly of the beast. You see, Wisconsinism is a constantly changing and growing entity. The most impressive example I've found lately is the menu at the Milwaukee south-side's newest hipster tavern, the Palomino. The menu opens up with the phrase, "If it's good, it's better fried!" They've

Despite my being alone in the car, I still felt the need to strike a cool "farting pose" and manipulate my sphincter in such a way to accentuate the bodily function, you know... being cool.

umbrella of enemies, declaring war on the state of Indiana??? Honestly, Rhythm Chicken, you really do seem to be diverting attention away from the fact that you really haven't been the Rhythm Chicken since Mannertag in Germany last May! That's TEN MONTHS, Chicken! Good God! What's become of you? - F.F.)

[Indeed, Rhythm Chicken. I must admit I'm surprised we're still here. Todd and Sean must be feeling merciful this issue. So do you have any new ruckus to report this time around or do you think you can squeak by with more of your rehashed hooshwash? - Dr. S.]

HOOSHWASH????!! Listen here, Sicnarf! You're lucky it's Easter-time and I'm too busy sneaking baskets of Pabst and fecal wreaths into the unsuspecting homes of today's punk rock youth to give you the proper verbal impaling YOU deserve. You pseudo-intellectual HOT-SNOT! That's no typo! Yes, I called you a HOT-SNOT! Though, I do have to say that even I'm surprised to be here.

up on the phone to do a nationwide telephone tour from their northwoods woodshed and just leave rhythmic messages when no one's home? Hello, Mrs. Richards. Is Paul home? Just one minute. I'll go get him.

[Wait a second there, Mr. Chicken. I'm sure there are plenty of gigs left in your historic grab bag to report on. It's just that some of us are getting worried about your current "recess" from performing live. Do you think you're Prince or something? - Dr. S.]

Believe me, Sicnarf, I am by no means hanging up my drumsticks or my liver. Let's see YOU move from hemisphere to hemisphere and try to keep your chaos free-flowing! The Chicken's Second Coming on this continent is on the horizon. It may be on the front steps of Milwaukee's city hall (most likely to continue in the Milwaukee County Jail with the current Crayon Color Coded Terrorism by Technicolor Alert Status Spectrum. As if other countries weren't laughing enough at our inability to chose our latest president!), or it may be on some rural road to play for

up quietly in front of their home on Highland Road. We set up the Chicken kit in the middle of the road at the end of their driveway. I pulled on the Chicken head and let loose my birthday-rock thunder. A few seconds later, Kameron and her brother Cole were running out to the street and just staring at the spectacle. During one of my breaks in the majestic monster rock ruckus, I raised my wings to the heavens and thrust my chicken breasts out like a proud stallion. Just then, Kameron yells out "I know it's you, <name withheld for mental security purposes>!" You could almost hear the needle scratch across the vinyl as the performance's majesty and mystery were quickly deflated. End of show.

[I say, Mr. Chicken, I'm quite surprised to learn that your veritable steamroller of rock could be so easily stifled by a six-year-old girl. - Dr. S.]

Well, keep in mind that my ruckus was not completely without effect! While they were outside witnessing my dimension-warping chaos, their ice cream sat out in the living room MELTING! A-HAAAA! FEEL

been known to dip Slim Jims in a beer batter and have them deep fried, creating the miraculous new food item known as "AWESOME STICKS!" Then I've also heard of a tavern up in Namur that offers deep-fried Twinkies! Wisconsinism, like Hulkamania, is running wild!

Dunghole Report #2: The Ol' Wipe 'n' Toss!

[It was my day off and I was driving down to Green Bay with the last month's dirty laundry in the passenger seat. The previous night included a healthy intake of Pabst mixed in with a dangerous intake of some high-fiber "dark berry brown nut and pine cone" beer. I'm pleading temporary insanity. Anyway, I felt a nice burning fart weaseling its way out my back door. Despite my being alone in the car, I still felt the need to strike a cool "farting pose" and manipulate my sphincter in such a way to accentuate the bodily function, you know... being cool. Well, what came out was more solid (or shall I say LIQUID) than vaporous. I SHAT MY SHORTS! Desperately trying to raise my tail end off the car seat and still drive, I

RHYTHM CHICKEN

pulled into the nearest winding road off of the rural highway into a heavily wooded area. It was a hot summer day and I was wearing only the shorts and shoes. I stepped out of the car pulled off my "browned" cut-off jeans, proceeding to wipe my rear area clean with the remnants of my day's attire. After wiping to what I felt was a sufficient degree, I reached back to toss the "shitty shorts" into the woods. Just then a large car with an elderly couple approaches up what I soon learned to be their winding DRIVEWAY! So, here they are going up their own driveway and they happen upon a strange guy wearing only his sneakers throwing a "browned" garment into THEIR woods. I jumped back into my car and fumbled through the dirty clothes to find another pair of shorts while they slowly pulled past me and continued up their driveway. Still naked, I pulled out and took off down the highway. To this day I still wonder if the elderly couple ever walked into the woods to see what the strange naked man tossed from their winding driveway. – Dr. S.]

What's going on here? Sicnarf, this is your second intrusion upon my literary space! Save your unsavory scat stories for the gang at the Cactus Club. People tune in here to read about my tidal wave tales of punk ruckus and tom-foolery! I kindly thank you to keep your chocolate doo-doo fairy tales out of my peanut butter polka ruckus!

(Actually, Chicken, I think his poop stories are doing a fine job at filling in for your all-but-absent Dinghole Reports. Now, there may be a few fetish websites that would appreciate his stories more than the average Razorcake reader... well, maybe. – F.F.)

[Actually, I think the average Razorcake reader is anything but average. – Dr. S.]

Oh, sure! Suck up to the boss! Am I mistaken, or are you trying to take my place here? I'm shocked they even PRINTED that just now! Sicnarf, you are supposed to be my EDITOR. Another fecal-related outburst like that and it's behind the scenes again for you, HOT SNOT!

(Wow, I think this "hot snot" is the new "slick-slack." – F.F.)

To tell the truth, when I was about five or six years old I used to sing out my parents' bedroom window at our neighbor while he was working on their lawn. It was the first song I ever made up. "HOT SNOT, WANNA POLKA DOT! HOT

SNOT, WANNA POLKA DOT!" I was amused. [You were truly destined to become a Rhythm Chicken, sir, but can a Rhythm Chicken you remain? – Dr. S.]

(HONESTLY, Chicken, when was the last time you even stretched a dinghole, MUCH LESS YOUR OWN? I realize this is a campaign year and you are concentrating on certain issues, but dammit you still have a job to do here! – F.F.)

Dinghole Report #36: Playing to NO ONE is PUNK!
(Rhythm Chicken sighting #61)

During the summer of '99, Captain Foolhardy and I were in the middle of a drunken afternoon tour of Door

there to witness the ruckus, is it indeed ruckus? I say YES! This is so extremely PUNK! Now, whenever I pass by the now bustling resort I can bring up to my companion. "Yeah, I was the first act to play at Little Sweden." I dig the extremes, baby.

Dinghole Report #37: Playing to NO ONE is PUNK, part 2!
(Rhythm Chicken sighting #84)

Later that same summer I was heading north on St. Hwy. 57 and decided to stop for a gig at one of my favorite venues, the wayside just south of Sturgeon Bay. The one thing that made this gig quite remarkable was that it was about 3:30 A.M., I had no alcohol in my system, and I was ready to dance



County, WI. We decided to stop along the highway at the construction site of what was to become the gaudy and overpriced "Little Sweden Resort" just south of Fish Creek (and just north of Juddville!). It was a Sunday and no one was in sight. I set up while the Captain remained in the car pulling schwiggers off of the gin bottle. I played a spirited gig in the entranceway facing the highway. During the entire ten minute set NOT ONE car passed by. The audience count was a firm ZERO! Even my faithful roadie Foolhardy opted to stay in the car and drink. No applause. No response. If a Rhythm Chicken plays in the woods and no one is

with the devil! I set up facing the usually busy highway and played a wild five-minute set, always trying to notice any possible rolling audience members going by. None! In a sweat, I tossed the kit back into my back seat and continued heading north on 57. Not even a cop! Damn. If I were all Pabsted up I'm sure the SWAT team and National Guard would've been called.

[So, if no one can bare witness, is it technically a Rhythm Chicken SIGHTING? – Dr. S.]

Dinghole Report #38: Playing to your neighbors is PUNK!
(Rhythm Chicken sighting #24)

Still during the Chicken's first summer, I had just finished a day's work and went home to my woodshed. I set up the Chicken kit on the lawn just out front of the woodshed. The nearest neighbors are a Moravian church a quarter mile south and the elderly lesbian fish distributor ladies a quarter mile north. I couldn't make this stuff up! No cars passed. No bikers or joggers. No response, but no worries. The next day at work we received a fish delivery from one of the fish ladies (buckets of whitefish for our Door County fish-boil. Only Wisconsinites will be familiar with this weak representation of Wisconsinism, them and the Chicago yuppies who pay through the nose for our bottom-feeder smorgasbord!). She asked, "So was that you pounding on the drums yesterday? Sounded good!" Later it occurred to me that she had no idea it was the much-celebrated Rhythm Chicken offering a performance, just some white trash punk rock hick drumming outside of his shack. I feel there is some conceptual significance there, but what do I know.

Oh! I almost forgot to mention the newest addition to the Wisconsin brewers family, LaCrosse Lager! Years ago, the original Old Style brewery in LaCrosse, WI was bought out by Miller or some other big name. Eventually, the actual brewing halted at the LaCrosse location. Now, someone has purchased the old brewery and revived the world's largest six-pack with the original Old Style recipe even! The name Old Style belongs to some business suits in a skyscraper somewhere, while the original recipe is now available incognito as LaCrosse Lager! Now I simply walk a half-block from my Milwaukee home to Bert's Bayview Liquor to pick up a 15-pack of this fine malt beverage for a mere \$6.99! America, what a country! Your first sip will bring to mind images of ice-fishermen and deer hunters on a frozen Wisconsin landscape.

As a parting gesture, I would like to address any readers familiar with Polish tradition. I wish I could douse you all with gallons (or liters) of water while joyously bellying, "SZMYNGUS DYN-GUS!!!" Yup, it sounds just like it's spelled. Rock over Krakow, Rock on Milwaukee. Red Wrigglers, the Cadillac of worms!

–The Rhythm Chicken

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SHIFTLESS WHEN IDLE

AFTER WATCHING GRAPHIC FOOTAGE OF LYNCHINGS, I WAS HARD-PRESSED TO COME UP WITH QUESTIONS. (NOTE: WHAT DO YOU ASK AFTER WATCHING SOMETHING LIKE THAT? HOW MUCH ROPE DID THEY USE? WHAT WAS THE WEATHER LIKE?)

Greetings from my den of sloth! Yes, I have only bothered taking off my (very cool) pink-and-gray-star pajamas ONCE in the past FIVE days! I have been sitting on the couch in my bedroom for about two hours, trying to motivate myself to review mediocre power pop CDs! What is wrong with me? What could cause your formerly out-going columnist to seep so far into the recesses of pajama-dom? The answer? A sprained ankle! The bruised, purple and green painful shame of it all! My writings depend on stupid things happening to me! And if I'm lying on a couch all day, what am I going to write about? How I feel about Jerry Springer's new haircut? The lessons I learned from reading the Real Estate section of the *NY Times*? The horror that results from deciding that "it's not worth it" to hobble to my kitchen to obtain coffee?

MADDY

However, I realize that, in every writer's life, there comes a dry spell. A period of months during which one fails to be a.) hit by a car, b.) peed on or c.) attacked by a wild animal. Add to that the fact that, believe it or not, a new issue of *Tight Pants* is in the works (thus stealing all my stories about meeting people who re-enact the French and Indian War, raisin' hell in Chattanooga while on tour with the Modern Machines and taking yet another personality test to obtain temporary employment!).

Luckily, I come prepared for such inevitabilities. I have started planning ahead and forcing myself into stupid situations in a desperate plea for writing material! And you thought Kerouac was devoted to his art!

In every city, there's that strange place that, regardless of how long you live there, you never seem to find time to explore. In Milwaukee, on the freeway near Riverwest (the punk and black working class neighborhood), I always passed a sign for "America's Black Holocaust Museum."

Being a Milwaukee resident



since the tender age of eight, one would assume I would have been to this museum in the general course of my grade school field-tripping. But no. We went to the Art Museum (where the guide, when asked about the abstract art hanging in the front room was supposed to be, said, "I have no idea."), to the public museum (home to a ridiculously cool life-sized depiction of a T-Rex eating a Stegosaurus), and even to Old World Wisconsin (where obese, bratwurst-eating white Wisconsin residents go to learn about their obese, bratwurst-eating German heritage, complete with recreated log cabins and period butter churns).

The Black Holocaust museum had always remained a mystery. In one of the most segregated cities in the country (recently, a study found us to be #1 in terms of segregation, but then the local paper went on a crusade to prove the statistics were incorrect. Their verdict, which they optimistically proclaimed? #43 out of 100 major cities!), it's still rare here to find an integrated neighborhood. The white people work either at Wal-Mart or in the few factories

that haven't closed, and live together in working class communities. And the black people work either at Wal-Mart or not at all (another fun statistic? Milwaukee has the highest racial income disparity in the nation! And some predominately black areas have 40% unemployment!), and live in the ghetto.

Growing up broke and white meant that I never, ever met someone who was broke and black. Or middle-class and black. Nope. Our entire street, until a few years ago, was white. When my parents signed the deed on the house, it said one of the conditions of sale was that the owners never sell or rent the house to a black family. This was leftover from when the house had been built at the turn of the century, and, when my parents requested that it be removed, they were told that it didn't matter, just to sign it, because there was no point in going to all the legal trouble of writing up a new deed. They refused, and the deed was changed. And then, just a year ago, my mom's neighbor across the street grumbled that she was having trouble renting out the upstairs of her house because "so

far only black people have come to look at it, and I'm still not comfortable with that." Milwaukee, for all of its beer-drenched punk rock goodness, sometimes really sucks!

So, I spent my school years being dragged to various museums, symphonies and butter churning sites. When I moved to Riverwest, I still never got around to going to the Black Holocaust Museum (due, no doubt, to my busy schedule, which including drinking as much vodka as possible while amassing a top-notch collection of Mutant Pop 7"s).

Then, I moved back to Milwaukee in February, and, on the first day back, I thought, "Today is the day! No more procrastination! I will finally probe the depths of this mysterious museum!"

Accompanied by my sister Emily and my friend Amanda, we drove to the small, one-story building, paid our five dollar admission, and embarked on one of the strangest museum experiences in my museum-filled life.

We were first ushered into a room to watch an A&E documentary about the founder of the museum – a man who is the only known survivor of a lynch mob. He had heard about the Holocaust Museum for WWII, and thought that the U.S. needed a Black Holocaust Museum. If his museum had been focused on WWII, abstract art or butter churning, he would no doubt have received millions of dollars in grants. Instead, he could only afford a very small building in a high crime area. Ah, America!

After the documentary, there was a question and answer period. Besides the three of us, there were a few white students from a nearby university who were there as part of some sort of academic requirement. After watching graphic footage of lynchings, I was hard-pressed to come up with questions. (Note: what do you ask after watching something like that? How much rope did they use? What was the weather like?)

After the students asked a few questions, we went into another

room to begin the tour. "The tour" was a roughly twenty-foot walk down a hallway and into a small room. The hallway had a poorly-drawn mural on the wall of a "typical African village." The tour guide, a nice but totally-clueless middle-aged woman, proceeded to talk about how "African people lived." She pointed to the mural and said, "Here we have an African woman carrying water in a jug on her head." Then she pointed to a hut and said, "Here, we have an African hut." Then, pointing at the mural in general, she said, "Africans lived in huts." When pressed for details, she pointed once again to the mural, and said, "See, you can observe that the huts were made out of straw." And with that, our knowledge of African cultures was complete. Scholarship!

Then, we walked about five feet forward, and stood in front of a ball of rope. "This represents the passage into slavery," she said, and led us into a small room with bunks on either side, designed to represent the conditions in the ship's hull where the slaves were kept while being transported to America. This room, done in the style of the concentration camp train car you can walk through at the D.C. (WWII) Holocaust Museum, clearly used up approxi-

mately 95% of the museum's total budget. After standing in that room for a few minutes, we moved on to the next room - which was almost totally empty except for a few xeroxed slave auction flyers. And

who nervously confessed that she hadn't done tours in awhile and needed to brush up on her information, we went to explore the gift shop. First of all, it bears noting that the gift shop was approximate-

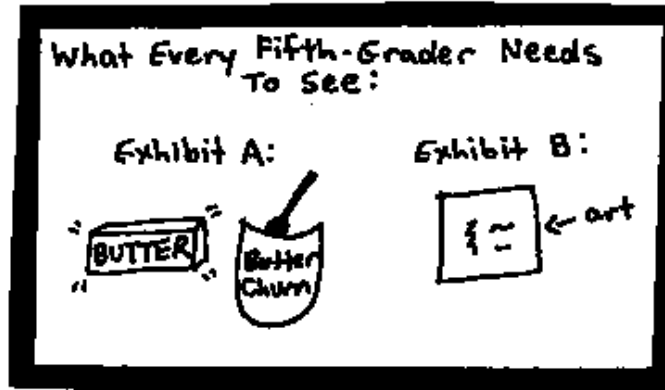
Lieberman's 2000 campaign biography and individually wrapped packages of Laffy Taffy! Time to roll out the following word: Inexplicable!

While we stood in the gift shop, trying to contemplate how Joe Lieberman's political memoirs and Laffy Taffy demonstrated the struggle to end slavery, I had an idea. Why not go to Old World Wisconsin and the Milwaukee Art Museum, round up all the butter churns and expensive monochromatic paintings, sell everything on ebay, and turn the art museum into a Black Holocaust museum that does more than sell the public Lion King bubble makers and inform them that Africans lived in huts? Or would that be too radical? Sometimes I really hate this country!

-Maddy



P.S. *Tight Pants #11* will be out sometime this summer. In the meantime, please send d.i.y. sprained ankle remedies (i.e. sour patch kids, Bruce Springsteen posters and cans of Blatz) to me at: PO Box 100882, Milwaukee, WI 53210. Thank you and goodnight!



with that, approximately twelve minutes after it had began, the tour abruptly ended.

In twelve minutes, the entire 500 (or so) year history of the African slave trade in the Americas had been depicted - using a few slabs of wood, a drawing of a woman carrying water, and some xeroxes! It was, without a doubt, the crappiest museum I had ever visited.

But, it wasn't over yet! After saying goodbye to our tour guide,

ly half the size of the space covered on the tour - a disturbing 1:2 ratio!

But, you might think, perhaps the gift shop would have a lot of interesting books about slavery and racism in the U.S. Perhaps they would sell posters of prominent abolitionists and civil rights leaders. Perhaps they would sell postcards of the museum. No, no, and no! Instead, the gift shop contained the following: a Bob Marley tablecloth, a Lion King bubble maker, four used copies of Joseph

★ InterPunk.com ★ Retail Slot ★ Dr. Strange ★ Electric Chair ★

★ Skinny's Records ★ Grease Records ★ Nathan's Tattoos ★ R.E. Style ★

★ Head Hunters ★ Ipso Facto ★ Vinyl Solution ★ Trash City ★

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GARY HORNBERGER

SQUEEZE MY HORN

I THINK I'VE BEEN PLACED IN THE GUILLOTINE UPSIDE DOWN SO THAT I CAN SEE THE BLADE COMING.

Well, this is it, the last version of Strikeman and how our superhero gets taken for a ride, hence "The Death of Strikeman." Okay, okay, so I cover the comics and sometimes I get carried away, but it's not that far from the truth. This is the third and final article about the great Southern California supermarket strike. Actually, it was a lot like getting drunk. First you start drinking (call the strike), then you're feeling good, having a swell time (the first couple of weeks carrying signs and acting crazy), then you start to get sick because you've had too much (dealing with both a fucked-up company and an equally fucked-up union and all the rest of the people you work with and can't really stand [you know who you are]) and finally the hangover the next day (basically waking up to find all that time you were out picketing was all for naught because the union gave in and all the sheep followed the union and voted yes, basically cutting their own throats. [Maybe they're not sheep. Maybe they're lemmings.] All the while, they gave those of us who voted NO a big fucking headache). So how do you like that? We really did get screwed, and I'll explain how.

First and foremost, the contract accepted the two-tier system. The two-tier system is where I, making \$18 an hour, will keep making that wage, but anyone promoted after that will have to wait six-and-a-half years to top out at \$15 an hour. Now, I ask you, will my work be scrutinized a little closer now if I can be replaced by cheaper labor? Is the union going to help me? I think I've been placed in the guillotine upside down so that I can see the blade coming. Next are the cuts in pension. They sent us a kind little note to tell us that the company's matching funds are no more, but at least we will get a big check for what we had up to that point. The second note was delivered to tell us that the pension would only be 65% of what it was before. The scenario is something like if you were fifty-five and you had thirty years,

in the neighborhood of \$1,500 a month in retirement. Now, under the new plan, it's in the ballpark of \$1,050 a month. When I'm fifty-five, what the hell is that going to do for me?

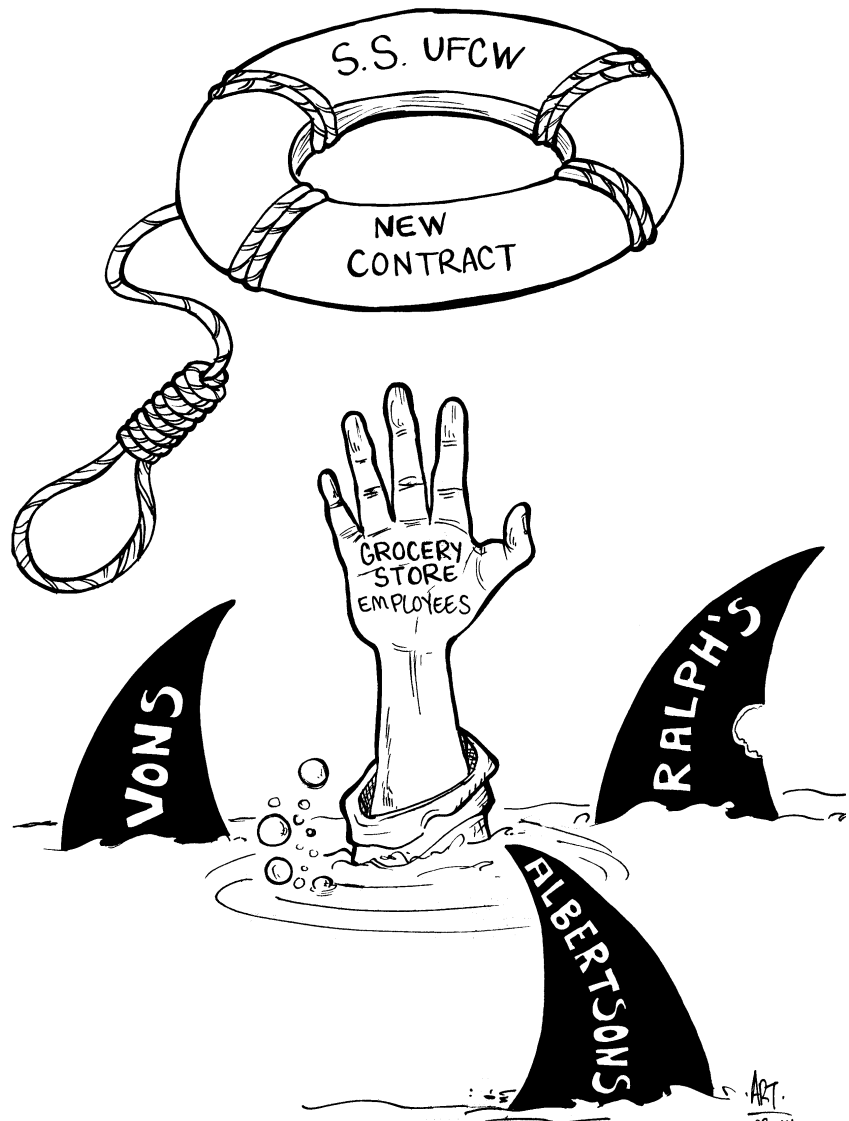
The third biggie was the medical that I, in all honesty, was really not hurt about, but that was the big cry in the beginning. A single person pays five dollars a week, an employee and children pay ten dollars, and the whole family pays fif-

teen dollars. There is a twenty-five dollar co-pay to see the doctor, \$100 co-pay to be hospitalized and prescriptions were raised to twenty dollars. There was a whole lot more but those were the biggies.

Now that we've been slapped in the face, we are being assigned to go to a motivational speaker to pump up our morale and show us how to find enjoyment through adversity. Bullshit! This coming from the same machine that has lied

to us ever since it swallowed Lucky market in its quest to be the biggest supermarket (via the lack of a strong government to swing its anti-trust dick around) and are still lying to us. Case in point - upon arriving back to work, the manager told us that what happened while we were out is to remain outside and is forgotten, water under the bridge. Yet, when the man was transferred to another store, his final act was screwing with

GARY HORNBERGER



employees who stood up to him or who he did not get along with. He did things like taking night crew stockers and placing them in the register and giving certain employees shitty hours. What happened to water under the bridge? I understand that most grocery workers are in a slightly different boat than myself, but how can they not see that in times when American business is sending work to China – as Nabisco and Radio Flyer wagons and toys just did – how is it that the lemmings see so short term? I sure don't want to hear all that crying when I retire. I think the public in general needs to step it up and take responsibility, instead of letting someone else make a bad decision for them and complaining about it. Enough said. I'm cutting it off here. I've spit and hissed enough on this subject. I think people are tired of me and I've got comics to review.

SUBHUMANS LIVE IN A DIVE #5

Fat Wreck Chords \$\$-??
I always enjoy when these come out because they are accompanied by a disk and because each one has a unique story. The last one is going to be rather difficult to conquer because the art and the story were incredible. Then again, Sick

Of It All has been doing that for awhile. So this issue it's the Subhumans' turn and they don't disappoint. The cover is cool; the Subhumans icon skull is fully pronounced against a background of screaming hordes. The visual follows the lyrics to "Subvert City," which is a song that details a rise against the system and what it changes. The art has that *Trencher* look to it, if any of you remember that comic of the same name. The great thing about these books is that it puts a face on songs and groups, kind of like when Batman, Spiderman or the Hulk get lifted from pulp to the big screen. I think Fat Wreck Chords has a good thing going here and if I ever bowl near them at Punk Rock Bowling, I'm gonna tell them so. I'm not real sure how Joe Public can get these, seeing that a good friend's wife has been looking for the last copy high and low with no success now wants mine. I'm gonna have to look into this for you all because they really are excellent reading and viewing. ("Subvert City" artwork by: simon.gane@virgin.net)

THE POGOSTICK #2

by Al Columbia & Ethan Persoff, \$4.95 U.S., \$7.95 Can.
This one is bizarre – good bizarre – like watching a murder mystery

and kind of figuring it out, yet kind of not. It revolves around the character, Audrey, who is a small, quiet man who seems to be having troubles in life. In the end, after the police have checked the room and called it ultra tidy, we see blood oozing out from under the bed. Whose blood is it? I don't know. That's why I'm asking. We have an idea, but we never see anyone do the dirty deed. This is a slick comic. It's short and pretty simply done, but it keeps you guessing. Find this one, read it, and drop me a line and tell me what you think. (Fantagraphics Books Inc., 7563 Lake City Way, NE, Seattle WA 98115; <http://www.fantagraphics.com>)

LOVE AND ROCKETS #9

by The Hernandez Brothers \$3.95 U.S., \$5.95 Can.
Let me tell you why I like this one: the story, "The High Soft Lisp." Once, when I purchased a grab bag of comics, I happened to get one of those comics that can only be found in that room with the saloon doors. It was funny that one of the girls had a lisp. It just so happens it's the same girl. Now what's funny is that this chick is hot – a curvy brunette with really big breasts, and, of course, she talks with this great lisp. As hot as this

girl is she can never find a steady romance, and winds up with the likes of deadbeats and serial killers. Oh, and I feel for the girl! You just have to read this one as a primer for her full-length comics. Did I just say full-length? There are two other stories inside here. Both are kinda bizarre but fun to read, but the lisp story is the best. Sorry. My mind floats in the gutter. (Fantagraphics Books)

APE: SON OF A VISION THING

By Theodoros Nikos Jouflas \$4.95 U.S., \$7.95 Can.
I loved this book! If you dislike the present federal governing body, then this one is gonna rock your world. The art is surreal and spectacular and the poetry is right on the money. When students go on acid trips, this must be what history class becomes. Yet, at the same time, this little diddy gets you thinking. This guy definitely does not carry the republican voter card. All I can say is ask the guy on the other side of the counter to get you a copy of this and if he says he doesn't have a copy, give him the finger and high tail it to a distributor that does carry this fine work of art. (Fantagraphics Books)

–Gary Hornberger

GARY HORNBERGER

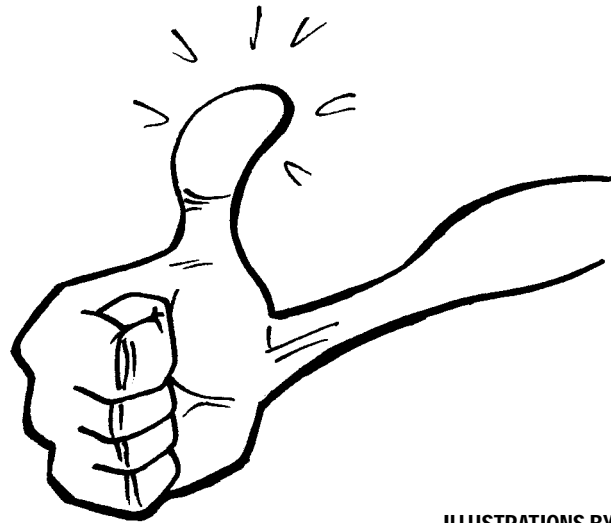




RICH MACKIN

THE TWISTED BALLOON

...we have soap and running water and toilet paper. Consider that some people don't, and they designate righty to be food and social hand and lefty to be poopy wipe hand.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ART FUENTES

When I was in my teens, I always felt slightly annoyed by the Dead Kennedy's song "Religious Vomit." While I shared Jello Biafra's rage at the Christian Right and the state of organized religions in America in general, as well as the annoyance of half-assed semi-acceptance of Judeo-Christian beliefs, I had a hard time agreeing that "all religions suck." I didn't know that much about the Dalai Lama at the time, but couldn't see him "sucking" the way Jerry Falwell did.

This seemed a common issue I had with white American suburban punk culture, that it rejected more things than it knew about. If the religions of our parents were stupid, surely the concept of religion in itself is stupid as well, or at least that was the logic.

I write this now after formally becoming Buddhist. I am a practicing Soto Zen Buddhist. I take that long to say that because when I said to people that I formally became Zen Buddhist, most balk at the idea of Zen being anything that can be called formal or official. This is also interesting, coming from counter cultural punk types because it shows how as much as we reject mainstream media and corporate information, we only do so when we have the energy to consider what is officially corporate information. My point is that it's funny for scruffy kids who know of Zen Buddhism solely through Kerouac and Ginsberg to argue points told to me by Zen Buddhist priests and monks. I don't take everything that even the most informed Buddhist Monk says as truth without some skepticism, but I suspect they might be a bit more informed than most.

Granted, in our culture, "Zen" is often meant to describe a product that has ginseng in it. I have seen Zen iced tea and Zen cereal. Strange, because you would never see

Greek Orthodox Iced Tea. Zen is one of those weird things where it invokes positive thoughts from people who don't really know about it and certainly would never seek to practice it. I think one of the closest comparisons is Voodoo, a real religion that has real practitioners but is better known for half-truths. Go to New Orleans and you will see myriad "Voodoo" dolls and trinkets composing a huge tourism business that I am sure dwarfs the financial intake of the actual Voodoo Spiritual Centers – which from what I have seen look more like a community center than the Satanic shrines tourists would like to take them for.

Some people think that it's cool that I am a Zen Buddhist. And I have to say that making people think I am less cool isn't a high priority, but while it's cool that I am Zen and not very cool to be, say, Quaker, the coolness factor is pretty arbitrary – the Quakers I meet tend to act similarly, they just wear less black. I think perhaps that it's a vicarious cool – like how many kids in high school liked my mohawk; they couldn't get away with mohawks, but they liked having a friend with one. It doesn't sound like fun to wake up and sit perfectly still in meditation for an hour, but it sounds cool to know someone who does.

One of the first questions people ask about my becoming Buddhist is if I am still a Reverend or not. Yes I am. The whole point of the Universal Life Church is that there is no dogma to it at all. I can functionally do whatever I want and believe whatever I believe as long as whatever I do does not impede on the rights of others to do the same. Actually, the two go very well in many ways.

Other questions I get about Buddhism are about Buddhist sects I know little or nothing about. Truth be told, I think a lot of beliefs of a

lot of Buddhists are pretty weird and contradictory. I suppose this can be similar to asking a United Methodist about Catholicism. Sure, they're both Christian, but there's a big difference in style and belief. This also should be brought up when uninformed "Patriots" assume that all Moslems are represented by al Qaeda. Religious radicals have more in common with other radicals no matter what brand they attribute themselves to be.

The Zen Center I go to is set up for lay practice, which means that for the most part its set up for "normal" people who have jobs and homes and lives outside, like writing columns for punk magazines and such. It's Soto, as opposed to Rinzai, which are the main two schools of Zen. I don't expect this to mean much to most people. More or less, a main difference is that Soto Zen is more about day to day activities as spiritual practice, while Rinzai is big into Koans – those questions and stories like "What was your true face before your parents were born?" or "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" and the idea of sudden enlightenment.

Actually, a word on the idea of enlightenment. Zen teacher Joko Beck, who runs the San Diego Zen Center, noted that people hear of the idea of enlightenment and assume it changes you so that you go through life in bliss forever. She notes that it's usually more a feeling that lasts for a few hours. I actually had an interesting insight on the idea of enlightenment a few months ago. I was walking in the woods and it hit me that for most of history, a lot of the land that is now strip malls and parking lots was this beautiful, and over the years, our culture has removed itself from nature. You know how when you have something at the tip of your tongue, or you think of something, but forget what the name of it is... anything like that? You

RICH MACKIN

know that you know something, but you forget what you know? How good does it feel when it dawns on you what that missing piece of information is? That is a minor form of enlightenment. Enlightenment isn't an experience when we, as humans, find a new level of evolution based on religion and mystic experience which is beyond normal life. Enlightenment is a great and sudden remembering of what a person has forgotten as a result of being denied truth as a result of being part of this sick culture.

At one point, each person was as much a part of nature as the trees and grass and sky. Now we live compartmentalized. We live apart, ride in cars, work in cubes. Our lives are separate from one another and much of what we think of as nature. We don't need to commune with nature, the world, the universe, so much as recall that we have always been part of it.

Enlightenment is a sort of mental and spiritual "OH YEAH! I REMEMBER NOW!"

Of course, I am not saying that me being Buddhist now makes me enlightened. It does mean that I had a day of "Vowing 'N' Bowing" (and yes, it was referred to as such) where I officially took the precepts and such. Interesting thing about the precepts of Buddhism, they are a lot like the Ten Commandments but less like orders and more like personal examinations. "Do not kill" and "Do not steal" are pretty straightforward (until you REALLY get into the philosophy, which often leads to unwitting veganism and such) as is "Do not speak dishonestly," but how about "Do not misuse sexuality"? (Other sects of Buddhism translate this different

all one with everything, but it also means no shit-talking. "Do not be mean with Dharma (teaching) or wealth" means don't be stingy, but that's hard to chart.

Finally, "Do not defame the Three Treasures" is a mindful. The Three Treasures are Buddha – which can refer to the Shakyamuni Buddha, Siddhartha Guatama, the guy who started it all, or the enlightened mine within us all; Dharma is teaching; Sangha is community, sometimes used to define all Buddhists, sometimes you refer to the people at the place you meditate as your Sangha, etc. So, the precept is to respect these ideas, but also it involves not making a self-parody of the ideas by self-righteousness or elitism.

It's really odd, having been raised Christian, where so many people fight to decide who has THE correct message and rules for people to obey, to be in a religion where the idea is to throw open-ended abstracts at you and make you try to figure them out. Heck, by the time I finish writing this, I probably would have changed my personal definitions a few times.

One of the cool things I got by formally taking the precepts (besides cookies, the Zen center is all about cookies, and man, you haven't enjoyed a cookie until you sit for hours in meditation and ritualistically have a cookie given for you to mindfully eat, but anyway) is a scroll that has the name of Shakyamuni – the Indian prince turned monk whose teachings are the core of Buddhism – the guy we call "THE Buddha," and the lineage of who he taught, who they taught, all the way down to my teacher, to me. Stop and

many American "Christians" spout about how the nth generation of English translated from other English from Olde Englishe from whatever from Latin from the original language is THE DIRECT WORD of God. Nevermind that even if the Bible was such, it was written in a language with a totally different context and language family.

Consider, for instance, gender in language. In English, we have no gender-neutral term for a person (minor and disagreeing factions in favor of "ze" and such aside.) So, everything is him, her, or it. But some languages, many in that area where the Bible took place in, have an "it" word and a "person pronoun" that doesn't depend on gender. Now imagine calling God by that term and then being the guy who has to decide what that's translated as.

One of my favorite examples of translation in the Bible is one of the verses that in theory admonishes homosexuality. It says to not lie with a man the way a man does with a woman. One meaning of that is "don't have sex with a man if you are a man." Another might note that the term is "lie" not "put your penis in" or "be sexual with." But I like the idea that it means "when you DO have sex with men, don't do it the way you do with women." Well, obviously, you can't put your penis in a man's vagina, but you can sodomize him. And while we can actually buy books and lubes to facilitate these days, sodomy was likely a health hazard in dry areas without running water and stuff like that. So maybe it's not homosexuality that Christians should take issue with, it's hygiene about poop. Consider this might be why Leviticus and such talk about what foods not to eat. (And while I have seen "God hates Shrimp" signs at protests, they seem shouted down by the Christian homophobic front.)

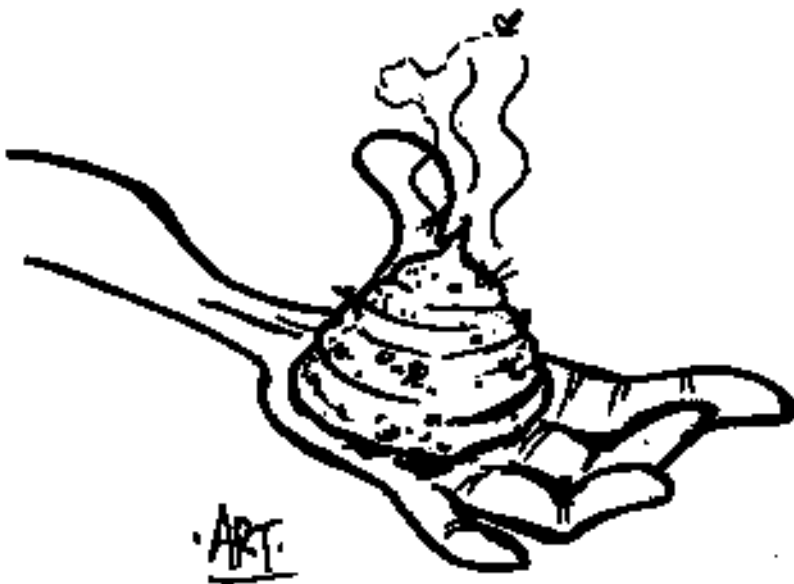
Consider that today I can Google "punk rock" on my imac. Fifty years ago that would have made no sense whatsoever.

Consider that when my high school social studies class teacher said that in some parts of the world, it's offensive to eat or touch people with your left hand. That's silly, right? We have no issue with that, do we? But we have soap and running water and toilet paper. Consider that some people don't, and they designate righty to be food and social hand and lefty to be poopy wipe hand. Now tell me that's a weird taboo. Makes as much sense as the idea that it's unlucky to conduct business unless you wear colored cloth around your neck. Or at least, it's etiquette to wear a necktie.

But imagine, if we did have a record that said Jesus told one guy this, and he told that guy this, and had a full family tree that let us know where the Orthodox churches went one way and why, or how George W. Bush can push Christianity yet forgetting the parts about "Thou shall not kill" or "it's easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than a wealthy man to enter heaven."

Don't get me wrong, while I think many of the most vocal Christians aren't so smart or truthful, I still like most of what Jesus said, fictional character or historical figure or a bit of each. After all, at least one Zen master has said "that Christ fellow was well on his way towards becoming a Buddha." But then again, at least Buddhist teacher I know applies that to the sheriff in *Fargo* as well.

–Rich Mackin



ways, such as "do not misuse sex," which I think is more specific than sexuality – a concept beyond actual sex acts) If one can misuse sexuality, that implies an appropriate use, but what is that? What about "Do not indulge anger"? Does it mean, "do not be angry" or not to run with anger or what?

Other precepts include "Do not dwell on past mistakes," "Do not become intoxicated" might mean "don't get drunk" to some and "do not let something distract you" to others. (And let me say that the fear of me not drinking was the biggest concern of my Buddhist practice for more than a few of my friends.) "Do not praise self or blame others" has a lot more philosophical implications when you consider Buddhist teachings on how there is no real self and we are

consider what Christianity would be like if there were something similar.

For example, my Sangha's interpretation of Soto Zen Buddhism is just that and no more, and that we note that for almost everything we do, there are different versions, translations and interpretations. Every now and then, you hear a teacher say "in Tibetan Buddhism, this is called..." or "at such and such temple, they use the translation..." This is because we are aware that a lot of these teachings were originally written in Sanskrit in India 2500 years ago, and went from India to China to Japan to America, being translated from language to language, culture to culture. Yet the teachings of Jesus (assuming you believe such a fellow existed) were in Aramaic 2000 years ago in the Middle East. Yet,



JIMMY ALVARADO

I'M A LITTLE AIRPLANE

EASY MARKS AND HURRICANES

"Me da seis tacos de asada, and... What do you want to drink, Dopey?"

I stared at the menu on the wall for a minute before telling Nacho, "Whatever's clever."

"Dos tamarindos," he told the guy behind the counter before pulling his wallet from the Levi's he wore under his dark blue muumuu to pay for the food. When the food was ready, we sat at one of the tables and divvied up the tacos between us.

Avalo's Taco House on City Terrace Drive was a favorite hangout of the neighborhood punk kids. The food was both cheap and good, and the alleys and service streets in which we usually hung out weren't too far away. Most importantly, they didn't give a damn about how one looked, which came in handy when you're ordering food with your hair spiked to the ceiling and the guy next to you is making a fashion statement usually reserved for elderly women.

Not that Nacho was gay, or even your average heterosexual with a kink for wearing women's clothing. If he had been either, though, it wouldn't have made a difference, 'cause he was cool enough to look damn sharp in the dresses he wore, big enough not to worry about homophobes fucking with him and mean enough to set right any who tried.

He had been my older brother's best friend since kindergarten, but he had become something of a second brother to both Dennis and I over the years. Even our mother, who was usually very vocal in her assessments of our strange looking friends, treated him like family, always trying to feed him and even giving him a key to the house, "just in case one of these mensos forgets theirs."

"So how was the gig at the Casa Blanca last Friday?" he asked between bites, not looking up at me.

"All right, I guess," I said, staring at the straw I was spinning around in my glass of tamarindo. I knew where this was going. "Political Scandal were pretty good, Los Pulmones were kinda weird, Neto's band were Neto's band and the others were boring."

"Yeah, Dennis said pretty much the same thing. Sounds like I didn't miss much." He took another bite from his taco. "He also said you got into your first full-on brawl. That where you got the black eye?"

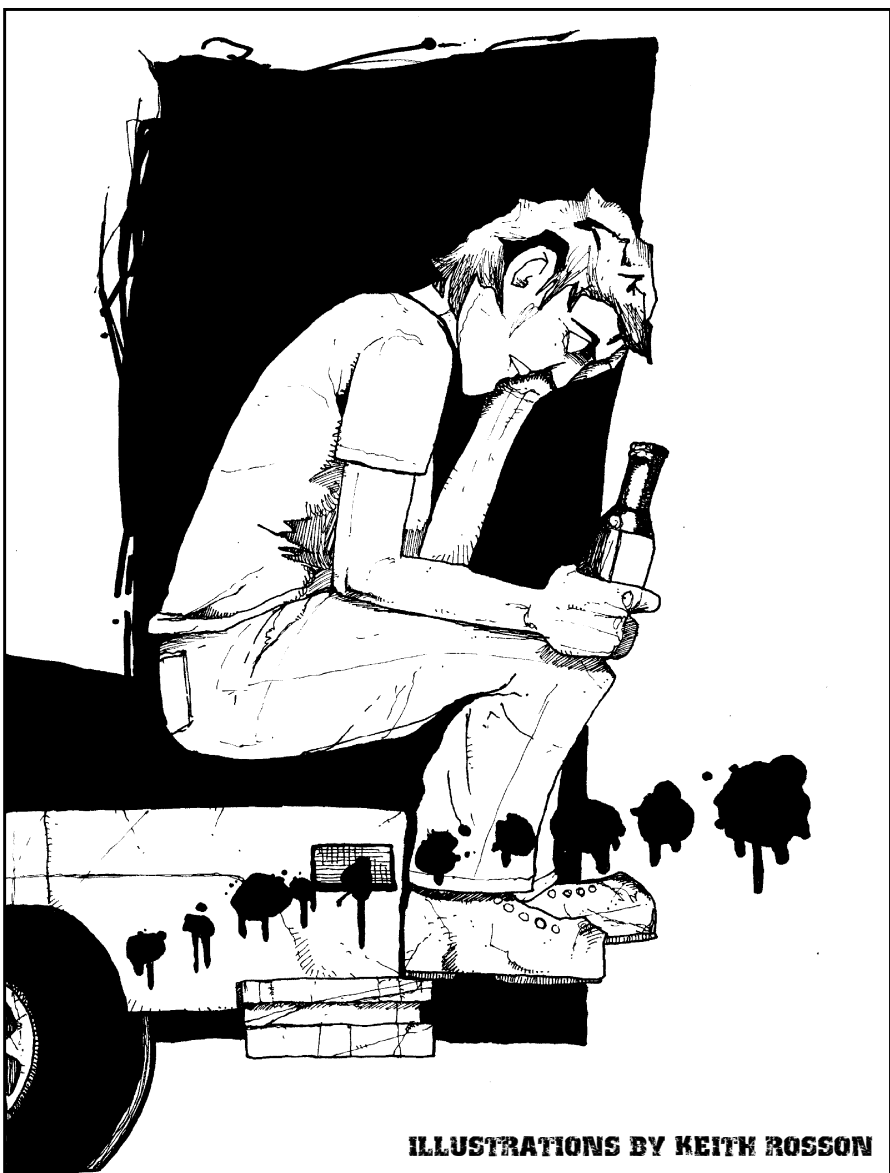
"Yeah," I said, still twirling the straw. "Can we skip this conversation, Nacho?"

He looked up at me for a moment, and then went back to his tacos. "No problem," he said. "I was just concerned 'cause that don't sound like you, little brother."

We sat there for what seemed like hours, him eating and me twirling the straw over and over. Finally I looked at him.

"What did Dennis say was the reason I jumped on that asshole?"

"Not much, other than the dude was drunk and snap-happy and, before anyone knew what was going on, you were all over the sorry fucker, screaming and **RAZORCAKE 20** kicking his face in. I think you freaked



ILLUSTRATIONS BY KEITH ROSSON

Dennis out a little," he said. "Neto was a different story. He was going on about 'there was blood everywhere' and how he and Louie had to pull you off the guy 'cause they were afraid you were gonna kill him. He almost sounded like he was the one that fucked the dude up."

"Yeah, well, Neto was part of the problem that night. And Dennis. And you."

He stopped mid-bite and looked up at me. "Okay, now how do you figure I'm partly responsible for your lighting up some drunk prick at a gig I wasn't even at?" he asked. I looked back at him for a moment, then went back to twirling the straw.

"It's the little things that cut, and know-

ing that they're done with the best intentions doesn't make them hurt any less," I said. "All my life I've been someone's little brother. First I'm Dennis's little brother, then yours, then all of your friends. Now that's a cool position to be in, you know? I've got all these homies looking out for me, making sure I don't fuck up or someone fucks me up. Someone's always got my back and, believe me, I'm thankful that you all care enough to look after me. But at the same time, I'm sixteen, man, and sometimes it feels like all of you think I'm still nine or something."

"Nah, it ain't even like that," he said. "We..."

"Yes, it's just like that," I said, "and that night it just got to be too much. It started off all right. Dennis spiking my hair, Neto picking us up and being his usual asshole self. Same shit, different night, you know? As soon as we got to the club, though, it felt like one thing after another started going wrong, like the planets were aligning in all the worst ways.

"It started with that fat fucking bartender there. He starts hassling me about my age again, wanting to see proof I was over 21, and here comes Neto save the day. The homeboys show up and for some reason I feel like some kid running after his big brother – there, but not really belonging. And I start thinking, 'Well, fuck, this is how it always feels, don't it? Dopey, Dennis'

'cause they still think I'm some dumbass kid. I'm thinking that even this fool I don't even know, high as a kite and swaying in front of me, doesn't respect me. I'm thinking it's always gonna be this way. I'm thinking about a lot of things, but most of all, I'm thinking about the smell that's oozing off this guy like a cloud of smoky dog shit. And from somewhere I hear myself say, 'Fuck you, scumbag.' I see him pull back to drill on me and I just...."

"...blew up," Nacho finished.

"Yeah. I don't know if he got the shot off or not, but I guess the shiner on my eye means he did," I said. "One minute he's getting ready to let fly and the next minute I'm covered in blood, Neto and Louie are off the stage and they're

"Good thing," I said. "She'd kill us both."

The cliff by the water tower provided a good view of everything west of East Los Angeles. On a really clear day, you could even see the ocean if you looked hard enough. At night, it looked like Christmas. We looked out at the lights of the city, beers in hand, taking it all in.

"How do you feel about what happened?" he asked after a while. I thought for a minute and sighed.

"Not too good. Like shit, actually. I mean, I've been in fights before, but I've never gone off like that. I know the guy was a dick, but I feel like I'm the dick and I don't know why."

Nacho took a drink from his beer and pointed the bottle out at the city. "Let me tell you

So I thought about how screwed up and unfair the world was, how it eats up the weak and figured, if the world ain't gonna make things right, fuck it, I will.

tag-along little brother,' and I'm getting madder and madder, right? But I don't say anything. The guys are teasing me, like they always do, only this time it's really grating on me. We go inside and the music's going and the slam pit's churning and the whole scene is helping to ease things up. I'm starting to feel better and I'm thinking that maybe the night's gonna be all right after all."

"And then here comes the drunk guy," Nacho said.

"Right, here comes the drunk guy. I'm standing there watching Neto's band, waiting to see if I'm gonna get a chance to sing 'Cosmetic Christ' again like at their last couple of gigs. All of a sudden someone crashes full-on into me from behind and lands on his back right in front of me. I look down and see this big fucker that's at least twice my age, laid out with an empty plastic cup still in his hand. I'm thinkin', no harm, no foul, right? He's on his ass, I'm cool, and he didn't mean anything by it, so I reach down and help him out. When I get him up, he looks at me with these glazed, red eyes and says, 'Pardon me, little boy.'

"I just stood there for a second, stunned, unable to think of anything to say," I said. "Then I notice this smell and I start thinking about the time the freezer in our garage broke down and we didn't know it for a couple of weeks. My mom had gone out to get one of the packages of meat she stored in there and came back in with this funny look on her face. She told Dennis and me that the freezer was broken and that we had to clear it out before the repairman came, so we went out there with a bucket and some sponges. I opened the freezer door. Have you ever smelled rotting meat before? It's a really sweet smell, so sweet it makes you want to vomit. I got blasted in the face by this smell when I opened the door and I tried to hold my breath, but the smell only got worse, like it was making its way through my skin or something. I ran round the side of the garage and threw up everything I had in my stomach and, a few seconds later, Dennis was right next to me. I never forgot that smell and, I swear, that's what I was smelled that night.

"Soon enough I realize that what I'm smelling is not rancid meat, but this drunk fuck's breath, mixed in with cheap cologne and stale Marlboros. I'm thinking about that bartender who fucks with me every time I go to that club. I'm thinking how no one takes me seriously

dragging me to the back of the club. Neto's laughing and screaming something at me, but it's like he's speaking in some language I don't even know. Then Dennis is there, emptying a cup of water on the top of my head. *Whoosh*, everything comes back into focus, and suddenly I'm scared, I mean really *scared*, 'cause I can't remember shit, I've got all this blood on me but no cuts anywhere and everybody in the club is staring at me. Dennis takes me outside to Neto's car and tells what he saw. He asks me what happened and, I don't why, I say, 'Nothing, just some drunk asshole who picked the wrong night to snap.' Neto runs out to the car with his keys, gives them to Dennis and tells him the cops are coming and he'll meet us in the alley behind the car wash. He keeps looking over at me and saying 'you crazy little fucker' over and over. Man, I didn't know that Gremlin could move that fast."

"Dennis said he was pretty freaked out," Nacho said, polishing off his last taco. "I think you scared the shit out of a lot of people that night."

"And, see, that was the weird part," I said. "Later on, when everybody met up in the alley, all of a sudden I'm getting mad respect from everyone, even Neto, who's still laughing and telling me 'you crazy little fucker' but ain't hitting me with 'little fuckin' mocosos' caps like usual. They're all going on about how that punk deserved it for messing with one of the boys. All these guys who, although they're friends, never really paid much attention to me before are suddenly treating me like I'm a fuckin' celebrity."

"Yeah, you're getting into chingazos has become the talk of the town, Dopey. You handled your business without running and hiding behind your big brother. That shows you're becoming your own man, one that deserves respect from his peers."

We shared the tacos I hadn't touched and left Avalo's. Nacho picked up a six-pack from Eva's Liquor next door. We hopped into his old Mustang and drove around for a while, cranking some Minor Threat, before finally ending up by the water tower up the hill off of Rowan Avenue as night was settling in. We got out, he placed the sixer on the hood and pulled two out, handing me one. I looked at him, surprised. He'd never offered me so much as a drink before.

"Just this once I think it'll be all right," he said when he saw the look on my face. "I won't tell your mom, tough guy."

something, Dopey. There's millions of people out there and they all break down into three categories: People who don't feel the need throw chingazos for any reason, people who hate to throw chingazos but will when push comes to shove, and people who enjoy throwing chingazos. Now, the people who won't and the people who enjoy it are pretty much self-explanatory, but the people in the middle are a little bit harder to define, which is kinda weird because I think there's more of them out there."

He emptied his bottle, dropped it down the side of the hill and took another from the pack. "The funny thing about the people in the middle is that they're always talking a mean talk, trying to make everyone think they're like these crazy fuckers that enjoy beating people up. I won't even begin trying to explain why they're like that, because it really ain't all that important. What is important is how they feel inside. They hate having to deal with all the fighting drama, all the hurt feelings and the guilt, and wish they could live like the ones who feel there's no justification for fighting over anything."

"I'm one of those in the middle," I said, taking a drink.

"Yes, you are, and so am I," he said.

"But I always thought you kinda liked fighting, Nacho. You do it enough."

"Hate it," he said. "Fucking loathe it. But the reason that most of us fight is because of exactly that: reasons. There's so many to fight over. Some people don't even need a good reason to go off, but they feel that need; they indulge it and then feel like shit later."

"Where do you find so many reasons?" I asked. "Seems like every week you end up in some shit with somebody."

"There's only ever been one for me," he said. "You know things were really bad when I was a kid, right? My father was one of those assholes that got his kicks from hurting other people. He loved it. And he'd always get away with it, you know? All the shit he put us through, all the times the pigs showed up at our house, and not once did anything ever happen to him. When my mother finally got sick of his shit and we left, he got to go on doing what he like to whomever he liked, completely unaffected and we ended up completely fucked up. It wasn't fair.

"Remember Richard, that guy Dennis and I were friends with in the eighth grade? He was a really nice guy, smart, shy. But

even back then it was pretty obvious that homeboy was gay. I mean, he wasn't prancing around in furs and makeup like some bullshit queen stereotype or anything, but it was clear that he was not a football-and-chicks kinda guy. Me and Dennis didn't care, you know? He was funny and drew his own comics, and that's an important skill when you're thirteen, so we liked hanging around with him. Anyway, one Monday Richard didn't come to school. Turned out that nine or ten guys jumped him after school the Friday before. They broke his teeth out on a curb, opened his head with a pipe and just left him lying there in his own blood. He never came back to school and we never saw him again. Everyone knew who did it, but, of course, no one was gonna tell on them. They were gonna get away with it, and it was fucked. So I thought about how screwed up and unfair the world was, how it eats up the weak and figured, if the world ain't gonna make things right, fuck it, I will.

"The next day I showed up at school wearing one of my mom's dresses. Dennis looked at me like I'm fucking nuts, but he figured out what was up pretty quick. First fucker that comes up talking shit, BOOM, I clock him square in the face. His homeboy moved up and, BOOM, he's on his ass, too. I never even made it into the building. Teacher grabbed me from behind and, like that, I'm expelled. A few years later I passed the GED, but I never went back to school.

"I guess I'm wearing my reason," he said. "It gives me the opportunity to teach the pricks of the world to reassess who they think is an easy mark. Some cultures teach their children that hitting someone else is bad. Really. They tell them that anger causes things like earth-

quakes and hurricanes, so when a disaster happens, there's all these people running around, apologizing for being angry. Here, people like that get swallowed whole. I wish things could be another way, but they are what they are. And although I may not be able to change the world, I can change the world around me."

"Do you think my reason was a good one, Nacho?"

"Only you can judge the reasons why you do what you do, Dopey. How do *you* feel about it?"

"I think I snapped," I said. "No doubt that drunk guy had an ass kicking coming to him, but I don't think my reasons had anything to do with him, and I guess that's why I feel like shit."

"Then you need to learn to put your anger in check, to know what you're willing to fight for, and understand the danger that every fight puts you in. Going off once too often could get you killed, and I'd miss that ugly face of yours."

He finished off the last beer and tossed the empty bottle down the hill with the others we'd already downed. It was still early and the boys would be just getting started in the alley, so we hopped in the Mustang. On the stereo, the Adolescents were hating children and through the open window I could feel the heat creeping into the night air. Summer was coming. As we cruised through the hills on our way to the alley, I looked over at Nacho, who looked back at me and smiled.

As he was watching a band at a gig four years later, Nacho noticed a girl and her boyfriend arguing over by the bar. The guy looked like he was screaming at the top of his lungs and waving his arms around. Suddenly, he reached back, nailed the girl in the face and

stormed off. Nacho ran over to the girl, helped her off of the floor and walked her over to the bar, where he got a damp bar towel.

According to the bartender, the boyfriend came back and saw Nacho, who was trying to stop the blood that was pouring out of the girl's face. He grabbed Nacho's shoulder and spun him around, yelling, "What the fuck are you doing?" at him.

And that was it. Before the bartender or anyone else could react, Nacho was on the floor, bleeding to death with three stab wounds in his chest and one in his neck. The girl and her boyfriend were long gone before the pigs showed up and, aside from the bartender, there were no witnesses.

The night Dennis called to let me know what happened, I grabbed a sixer from my refrigerator, hopped into my car and headed for City Terrace. I drove the twisted roads through the hills, eventually pulling over by the side of the cliff and putting the sixer of beer on the hood, pulling one out and cracking it open. I drank deep and looked out towards the west. As I stood under the water tower, watching the city lights twinkling below me, I thought about the night Nacho and I drank our first beer together, the first of what would be many over the years. I thought about the fight I'd had so long ago and the conversation he and I had about it in this same spot.

I emptied the bottle, dropped it down the side of the hill and took another from the pack. As I took my first drink from the second bottle, I pictured him in that dark blue muumuu and began to cry.

—Jimmy Alvarado





THE MARDI GRAS MAMBO

Nine in the morning on Fat Tuesday. The image standing before me in the mirror was hardly recognizable. My entire face and neck was painted in red and black. A mask the same colors covered my eyes. My lips were coated in a deep purple. A straw hat with a fuchsia boa glued to it sat atop my head. Fishnet stockings covered my arms. A blood-red nylon Van Raalte nighty clung to my skinny bones.

I poured a quart of gin and tonic into a plastic jug and walked out the front door. The sky was overcast and colder than I expected, and the little gusts of wind that blew underneath the dress gave me the chills. The rumor was that there was going to be a torrential downpour at some point in the day. I think the high was supposed to be fifty degrees. I'm gonna fuckin' freeze my ass off, I thought. I took a big sip and figured, hell, after half of this jug is gone I won't feel a thing. Ah yes, I was the slutty drag queen from hell about to embark upon my first Mardi Gras...

All right, I'm not ashamed to admit it: this wasn't the first time I'd worn the outfit. The previous Friday a friend of mine asked me if I wanted to go to a party with her. I had to dress up though. You can't go to a party during Mardi Gras season without dressing up. Or so I thought. It started off with the hat and mask and a couple of beers. By midnight I was drinking whiskey, and paint and woman's clothing were involved.

The two of us walked down a small alleyway into a backyard and noticed that hardly anyone at the party was dressed up. "Hah, now this is gonna' be some fun."

An hour into the party and I was making out with some girl who told me she was married but thought I was absolutely adorable. Shortly afterwards I had a full crowd singing "Happy Birthday" to Rosy, an older black neighborhood woman who didn't know anyone there and had somehow stumbled upon the party. "Everyone, give it up for Rosy!" I shouted as I serenaded her and twirled her around in circles. Throughout the night, she kept asking me to hug her and kiss her on the cheek and told me I was the only person there she felt comfortable talking to.

Then sometime around five in the morning there was a large crowd out on St. Claude Ave. My friend Emilin was stumbling around playing on a harmonica for the first time. Some woman wearing a leopard outfit came up to me and told me I looked a lot better than her son, who was across the street, wearing a red dress. Suddenly situated on the center divider was a marching band of about fifty, in full uni-

form. Yes, wand twirlers, dancers, a large horn section, drummers, even a couple of guys on unicycles. Cars passed by, slowed down, looked over, and I could only imagine what was going through their mind as they headed to work at that insane hour.

The march started off and crossed over into the Marigny, an old New Orleans neighborhood outside of the French Quarter. There was no music yet; just the clicking of shoes echoing along empty streets.

"Come on I want to hear some damn music!" I screamed. I ran up to my friend Bernard who was in the trumpet section. "What's the deal Bernard?"

"Not yet, got to wait."

"Shit."

I brought the fifth of Jack to my lips and took a long sip. Then Emilin and I joined into an out of tune rendition of "Mardi Gras Mambo," providing our own horns and beats. We even got some other drunks to join in. Graveyard shift warehouse workers were standing along the curb as we paraded by. I offered the bottle of whiskey to them. A couple declined, looking over their shoulders for their boss. One guy said, "Fuck it" and took a pull. I started to feel this weird, building sensation swirling around in my blood as the hour of twilight stood over me, the Quarter just blocks away, the late-night drunks from out of town stumbling out of the twenty-four-hour bars with no idea of what was about to hit them.

We crossed over Esplanade and boom: the horns sang into the air the sounds of "Jukebox Hero." Ah yes, just to see the look on other people's faces was worth it all. I couldn't stop dancing and hopping around.

The march finished off in Jackson Square and, as most of the people dispersed, I somehow managed to find myself in a lengthy discussion with a bum named Dimitri who told me that he was an artist. He'd done pornographic stamp art for magazines like *Hustler* and *Penthouse*. If I went into Larry Flint's office I'd see two of his pictures framed sitting on the wall. Now he was being commissioned to do some sort of Greek epic painting. Whether any of what he was telling me was true, I don't know, and I didn't really care to. New Orleans is a city drowning in fiction; besides, where the hell does the truth ever get us anyway?

People who've never been to New Orleans have their own perception of what Mardi Gras is. I'm sure hoards of drunken people on Bourbon St. screaming for beads, girls showing their tits, that whole *Girls Gone Wild* bit, might be what comes to mind. I know that's what I thought before I ever came down here. And while these *are* aspects of the holiday, there's so much more going on that one has to really live here to get any sense of the true spirit of Mardi

Gras. There's the forty some odd parades going on all over the city for two straight weeks. There are the Black Mardi Gras Indians who come wearing amazing, radiant costumes that weigh over a hundred pounds and take months to make. And I only know a small ounce of what Mardi Gras is all about. I've seen countless pictures from past Mardi Gras, but being a part of the experience is an entirely different thing. The thought that comes to my mind after going through my first Mardi Gras is simply, a fantastic releasing of the soul.

Often when I see people dance – and New Orleans has its own particular dance that I can't even begin to try to put words to – I get this feeling that for a brief instance I'm witnessing freedom in its rawest form. And that's what I see the carnival season as: a wild, beautiful dance, an insane and wonderful celebration of the human spirit.

The eve of Mardi Gras, on what is known as Lundi Gras, I heard about some sort of gathering taking place in a large alleyway about a mile from my house. I was told it involved people getting in shopping carts and banging into each other. After nearly a year living in this city I've stopped trying to understand anything that goes on here; this place is just as mystifying as the Mississippi River. I just go along with the flow and see where it ends up.

Sad to say, no shopping carts were involved, but instead, nestled between a couple of warehouses on a back street, I stumbled on something that can only be described as *Mad Max* meets *Lord of the Flies* meets cock-eyed acid circus.

The sound of tribal drums echoed off of hundred-year-old steel walls. A midget with hands where his arms should be was banging on a tambourine. Circus punks with facial tattoos dressed in a fantastic blending of wild costumes and colors were dancing and stomping chaotically as the drums built up. People screaming out war cries... a girl twirling a hula-hoop engulfed in flames around her body... a fat clown with a tutu banging on a bass drum... fireworks and firecrackers shooting into the air.

At one point a cop came and told everyone they were making too much noise. And whereas in any other city there'd be a number of arrests for "disturbing of the peace," here it's all fair game. The cop can tell everyone to go, but that's about where it ends. So the crowd joined together and marched down the street, blocking traffic, ignoring lights, jumping on top of taxi vans, dancing in the middle of the street. Onlookers were suddenly in the mix of the parade.

Down into the Quarter, workers came out of the restaurants and joined alongside of us, yelling out "Yeah, yeah!" Defiantly splitting through the mass of frat boys and plastic princesses that infest Bourbon Street, I heard

someone say, "Jesus, these people fuckin' stink!" Back to Jackson Square and for hours, drums and dance and this overwhelmingly good feeling; you'd have to be absolutely devoid of human emotion not to move your limbs and smile. I've been to parades, I've been to crazy

flowered nightgowns waving from their porches. The tourists in plain clothes, with their cameras out, awestruck, "Shit, hunny, we're a long way from Nebraska." I read the lips of one man saying, "This is fucking amazing."

manly voice. As I parade down the street I hear him say to his mom, "I thought that was a woman!"

Stumbling through the French Quarter, a pile of colorful beads cascading from balconies and choking me around the neck, one of my

NEW ORLEANS IS A CITY DROWNING IN FICTION; BESIDES, WHERE THE HELL DOES THE TRUTH EVER GET US ANYWAY?

punk rock shows, I've been to wild parties, but I'd never been a part of anything even close to resembling this.

So here I was, still standing after two weeks of parades and mayhem, on the final day of Mardi Gras. Tomorrow Ash Wednesday would be upon us, a day of black foreheads, fasting, repentance, but today was ours.

As the popular parades went on Uptown I was more interested in being with the people in my neighborhood. I walked down the street looking for the St. Anne's parade. Every couple of blocks someone would poke their head out from the screen door, laugh and then yell, "Happy Mardi Gras!" Other than that, the streets were relatively quiet, but you had this feeling you were about to walk into something big. At one point I came across a group of about ten young Japanese men wearing dresses on a corner that looked completely lost. A few of them had trumpets.

"Oh, you guys look great," said one woman, "but the parade already started. Go over to Royal and Franklin."

I followed them a few more blocks and found the masses spanning at least four or five blocks long. Every soul wearing a costume. There was the man dressed as the Mars Rover. A man with a George Bush mask with flames attached to his suit. Alongside of him, Dick Cheney kicking an inflatable ball of the world. Egyptian drag queens. A gay couple holding balloons that read "Just Married." Wonder Woman. Elvis. Skeletons. Geishas. A naked woman's entire body doused in blue paint and glitter. A brass band in the center of it all playing "I'm Walking." Crowds of people on the sidewalks, dangling over balconies, screaming and singing. Old, frail women dressed in their

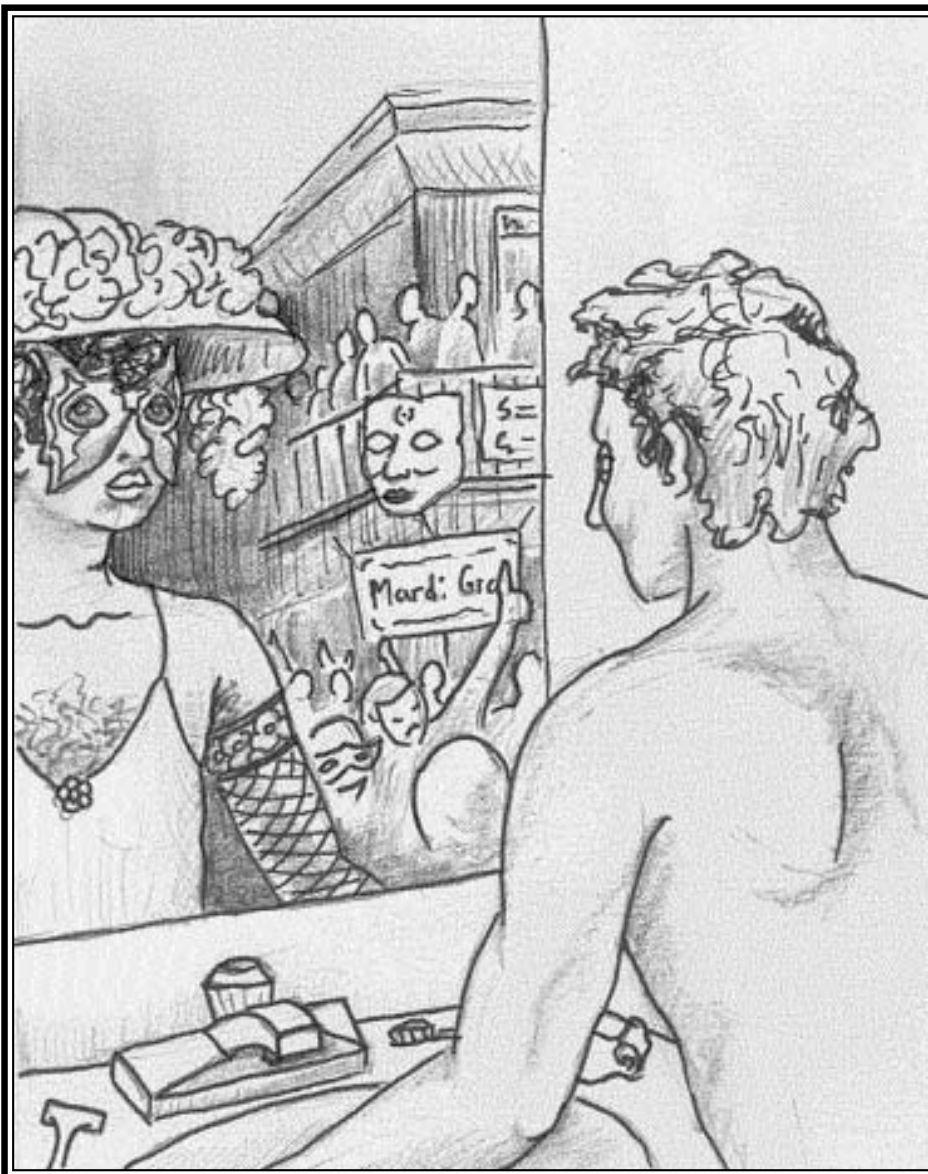


ILLUSTRATION BY TOM WRENN

I'm full of gin dancing the whole way, into the Quarter, the two miles up to Canal Street, the streets packed as the Zulu parade goes by and the crowds scream for beads. Tourists ask to take pictures with us. I see the Japanese kids again and ask if they've heard of Snuffy Smile records. I tell them how I was in Japan once with a punk band. They have no idea what I'm saying so I yell out, "Biru mo ipon onegai shimasu!" ("Please bring me another beer!") Then I'm on my way. I see one young boy looking at me curiously, as if he can't quite figure the costume out. "Hey boy!" I say to him in a gruff,

dress straps now broken, my left nipple exposed. "You hairy slut," people say jokingly as they walk by. On Frenchman Street where people have overtaken the street, drums blaring, music every which way, cars attempt to get through as I do a freaky kangaroo dance to every one of them. Something about the guy wearing a dress thing works out in my favor because it seems like every hour I'm making out with a different girl. I come to the conclusion that every girl likes a Queen. One hippie chick even comes up to me and asks me if she can suck on my nipple. How can I say no? Being the gentleman that I am, I return her the favor. A girl dressed in bananas takes out a vibrator and sticks it in between my legs. She yells out, "I'm Banana Woman!" Ha ha, yes, it's a day for perverseness and insanity and doing all the things we'd probably get locked up for any other time of the year and I'm loving every minute of it.

Twelve hours after I'd first stepped out of my house I started to run out of gas. Every muscle in my

body was sore and I came to the realization that I hadn't eaten all day. By this time the crowds had considerably thinned out. They were probably still going strong down in the Quarter, but I decided it'd be best to call it a night. I'd had about as good of a Mardi Gras as I could expect. I stumbled the thirty blocks back home and passed out on my couch with the dress and mask still on. And although I don't have any plans of delving into the cross-dressing business, I have to admit, when I walked outside the following morning without the mask on, there was a part of me that felt a bit naked.

-Seth Swaaley

SETH SWAALEY



EXENE TWIRLED AND SPUN AROUND LIKE SHE WANTED TO BE SOME KIND OF PUNK ROCK STEVIE NICKS. CLEARLY SHE DIDN'T REALIZE WHAT A CONTRADICTION IT IS TO BE A PUNK ROCK STEVIE NICKS.

BEER AND LYING IN HIGH SOCIETY

There I was, bombed out of my trick, blathering something into a microphone about porn stars and premature ejaculation and people with carrots up their asses. It was one of those beautifully ugly moments when I felt like a fool and an imposter and a guy on top of the world. And the bizarre thing was, I was supposed to be there. I was one of the opening acts for X.

Now, your first question, or at least the first question everyone I tell the story to asks is, "X? The X?" The answer is, yes, the X from Los Angeles. The band that we all saw giving each other bad tattoos and talking like they were the king shits in *Decline of Western Civilization*. The X who did "Johnny Hit and Run Pauline" and "White Girl" and "Sex and Dying in High Society." Exene Cervenka. John Doe. Billy Zoom. DJ Bonebrake. That X.

If you know me, then your second question is, "But dude, you're not in a band. What the fuck were you doing opening for X?"

Therein lies our story.

A few weeks earlier, I'd opened up for Tony from the Adolescents, but in a different context. Someone had started a new spoken word series over in West Hollywood, and they were inviting a bunch of old LA punk rockers to do spoken word performances. Tony seemed like a no-brainer choice to grace that stage. And Tony, being the good guy he is, shared the stage with a couple of local writers: me and Jim "Money" Ruland. The whole night was a pretty cool setup. It was a nice bar with a cool little stage and a few free drinks for the folks who were reading. I got a chance to get up on that stage and tell a story and sell a couple of books. Ruland got a chance to do the same. Everyone seemed to laugh at the times when I hoped they would. We all had fun. And, as a topper for the evening, we all got to listen to Tony tell us a bunch of rad stories not only from the heyday of early LA punk rock, but right up to the present day. It was cool to see how Tony patched the two scenes together, cool to see one of the LA punk pioneers show how the underground keeps going and keeps growing. Tony ended it up with a story about something that had happened to him while his band was touring with Electric Frankenstein, and his story was so sad and hopeful that it damn near broke my heart.

It was my kind of night.

Afterwards, Tony seemed pretty excited. He said to Ruland and me, "I'd like to get you guys in on the Beatfest that's coming up in a couple of weeks. Would you be interested?"

"Sure," I said, having no idea what I was agreeing to.

When I got home, I played the Adolescents blue album for the ten thousandth time and looked into what Beatfest was. From what I gathered, it was a grouping of LA bands and writers that would take place on two stages over the course of three nights. The big stage featured acts like Dee Dee Ramone, Steve Earle, and X. The smaller stage featured a bunch of writers who you've probably never heard of, and a bunch of people who you have heard of, but who probably aren't writers, all of whom were doing some form of spoken word. I figured that Ruland and I would get ten minutes each on the small stage, and that was good enough for me. I quit looking into Beatfest and turned up the stereo.

A few days later, Tony called Ruland. As it turned out, Tony had tried to get us onto the small stage, but he wasn't able to. No worries, though. He got us onto the big stage for the Friday night show, instead. Ruland and I would go on after the Starvations and before the Adz. X would headline. We'd have five minutes each to read something. "Would that be cool?" Tony asked.

"That sounds great," Ruland said, because he was lying out his fucking ass.

The thing is, what Jim knew and what I knew was that only one thing flies on the stage of a punk rock show, and that's a punk rock band. I've been to thousands of shows over the course of decades and I've seen people try all kinds of shit between bands at shows. I've seen someone try to show an independent film, and I've seen that movie screen get splattered in beer. I've seen the makeshift punk stand up act who had to re-write his material so that his whole comedy routine is nothing more than dealing with hecklers. I've seen spoken word acts get it the worst. I've come to respect that the time between bands at a punk show as a sacred time: a fifteen minute break for punkers to piss and buy beer and say, "Man, those guys sucked live," and do whatever else it is that recharges them. So if we took the stage between the Starvations and the ADZ and tried to read short stories, we'd get heckled and booed and otherwise humiliated.

But there was another thing, and it was this: Tony from the Adolescents offered this opportunity to us. I can't speak for Jim here, but I feel like, when someone puts something out into this world that's so close to perfect – like that Adolescents blue album – and then they ask you to do something, you owe them. And it goes deeper than that. The first time I spoke to Tony, he'd called up Razorcake HQ with some questions for Todd. Since Todd wasn't around, I

answered Tony's questions and then asked him about a hundred questions about the Adolescents and the Adz and about that crappy move *SLC Punk* using the Adolescents' song "Amoeba." Tony was patient and chatted about all that stuff with me. It was one of those cool moments when I couldn't be star struck by the singer of a band that meant so much to me because the singer of that band refused to act like a star. And now he was giving me the opportunity to showcase my writing to hundreds of people at an X show. How could I say no?

So Jim and I had to figure out how we were gonna handle this situation. First, we did what Ruland and I do when left to our own devices: we hung out, listened to music, and drank a whole lot of beer. When the first twelve-pack ran out, we bought more. We drank until a nice haze settled in. Somewhere during that haze, I told Ruland about this weird package I'd gotten in the mail from a friend of mine, Jason Willis.

Jason works in an internet porn company, and the company he used to work for had bought out another porn company, and therefore, they got that other company's office supplies. So while Jason and his co-workers were raiding this defunct company's offices, Jason came across a box of letters that guys had written to women in porn. The letters were seriously depraved. The guys genuinely thought that, if you simply write a good enough letter to a porn star, she will have sex with you. So they wrote their love letters. And the porn stars never opened them. They left them in a box in an office. No one touched the box until Jason came across it. At which point, Jason and his friends got a good laugh at these guys' expense. Actually, everyone who read the letters seemed to go through the same stages: for the first dozen letters, they laughed at the guys who wrote the letters; for the next dozen letters, they sympathized – or pitied, even – the letter writers, as in, "Holy shit, this poor fucker is a thirty-five-year-old virgin who thinks he can have sex with a porn actress. How bad must his life suck?"; and, after another dozen letters, they go back to laughing, as in, "Dude, it's his own fault he's a thirty-five-year-old virgin. If he can't figure out that dirty words written to a porn star aren't gonna solve his problems, then I can have a guilt-free laugh at his expense."

The next morning, I emerged from the drunken haze to realize that the letters to porn stars were my key to getting through this opening gig for X. The letters would slide me into that nice gray area where there are exceptions to rules, where you realize that the one thing besides punk rock that will fly at a punk rock show is a dirty joke. So I made up a story about how, when we started Razorcake, we rented a

PO Box that used to belong to a porno magazine, and we got all these crazy letters to porn stars. I picked out my favorite letters: the one where the guy asks the German porn star for her opinions on the reunification of Germany; the one where the guy in prison talks about how, when he gets out, he'll take the porn star horse-back riding on the shores of Marina del Rey (which, as far as I can tell, has no "shores," because it's a fucking marina, not a beach); the one about the middle aged virgin who's saving himself for the right porn star; the one that discusses how perfectly the photographer caught the picture just as Chloe's tongue was about to touch Claire's asshole, but before the tongue actually touched; and, of course, the one about the guy with the carrot in his ass (and no, he wasn't the Rhythm Chicken). My plan was to tell my story and have Jim read the letters in between my discussion of the stages of reading the letters.

I called Jim with my plan. He liked it. We decided to meet up at his apartment and practice reading the piece. We did meet up, at his apartment. We drank beer and listened to music. When the first twelve-pack ran out, we bought more. Somewhere in the haze of the second twelve-pack, we decided that a.) we didn't need any fucking practice and b.) we should stop fooling ourselves and just buy a case to begin with.

Before too long, Beatfest came around, and ready or not, Ruland and I packed up and headed out to it. Another fellow Razorcaker, Bradley Williams, lived across the street from the venue, so we left early, headed out to Hollywood, and met up with Bradley. We drank more beer and told stories with Bradley and, shortly before it was time for us to head to the show, Bradley put on his own show for us. He pulled out his washtub bass, which is a broomstick stuck into a round metal washtub, with a cord tied to the top of the broom stick and the edge of the tub. Bradley put on a pair of gardening gloves so the cord wouldn't tear up his fingers, and ripped through a song on the washtub bass. It was too good. We made Bradley play another. And another. It just felt right. The beer was cold. The songs sounded good. We cheered Bradley on until finally he said, "I can't play no more. My hands are tore up."

That meant it was time to go to the show.

Tony seemed glad to see Ruland and me. He showed us around the backstage area, which was strangely free of beer, which didn't matter because I had one in my hand anyway. He walked us by the room where the members of X were. There was a huge sign on the outside of the door that told anyone and everyone to not disturb the band. It seemed excessive, seeing as how there was no one backstage to except Ruland, Tony, and me, and we were more than content to just disturb each other.

After a few minutes, the Starvations wrapped up their set and it was time for Ruland

and me. A big curtain closed at the front of the stage. The Starvations started breaking down behind the curtain. The Adz waited to set up their equipment. The sound guy pulled two microphones out in front of the curtain and told us to do our thing. Tony introduced us. I stepped up to the mic. It was weird. The stage was six feet high. Bouncers stood in front of me, poised to protect me from any stage divers or teeny boppers who wanted to storm the stage. As if that would happen. Literally hundreds of people

album. I have *Wild Gift*. I've listened to them hundreds, if not thousands of times. There was a point in my life when those albums were my soundtrack. The songs from those albums bring back all the feelings from the times when I couldn't hear them enough. I listen to them and feel years melt away and remember faces and things that I never think about anymore. I reserve those songs for special times when I want to feel like I'm back in some long forgotten era, hanging out with all the people I've long since lost touch with. So seeing X play was a pretty special thing for me. Until X took the stage, that is.

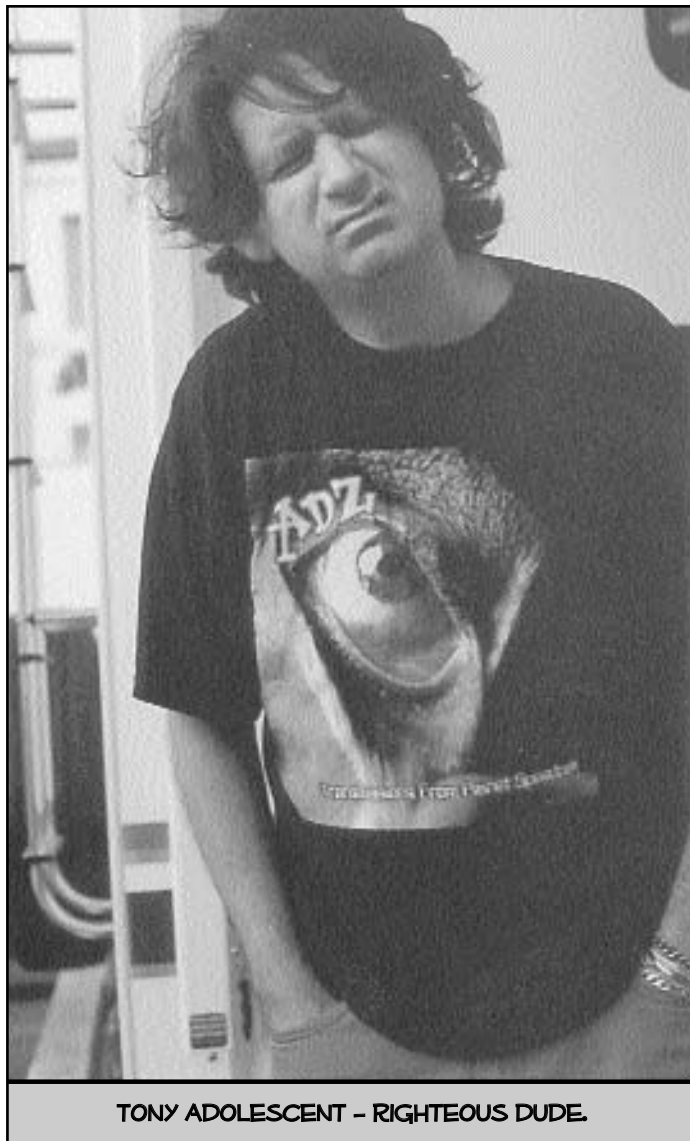
They started with one of their hits. I think it may have even been "Johnny Hit and Run Pauline." It was one of my favorites, but they played it a beat too slowly, and it wasn't a fast song to begin with. Exene twirled and spun around like she wanted to be some kind of punk rock Stevie Nicks. Clearly she didn't realize what a contradiction it is to be a punk rock Stevie Nicks. Billy Zoom took his cool guitar pose from twenty years earlier, but not like he was kid who thought he was cool. Like he was an aging comedian performing a Billy Zoom satire. I started drinking faster.

Four songs into the show, X played "We're Desperate." I watched John Doe sing out that he was desperate, and I should get used to it. And I thought, dude, I know that you've been in over forty movies and have a recurring role on a TV show. You're not desperate. You're fucking loaded. Tickets for that very show were something like thirty bucks, and X was getting almost all that money. And, at that moment, I felt like it wasn't just John Doe. It was all of the members of X who were ruining their own music for me. They were destroying songs I used to love. They were so far removed from the passion that inspired their songs that they sounded like their own worst cover band. I would've rather heard a current band like the Selby Tigers play an X song than hear X limp through their own tunes. It just seemed so fake.

And I realized that I wasn't really one to talk. After all, I'd faked my way through a spoken word act. I skipped out on any attempts at honesty or depth and went for the cheap joke. What I'd done had been far less severe than becoming my own worst cover band, which is what X was doing to themselves. Still, it made me realize that everyone becomes a bit of an imposter and everyone sells himself a little short when he gets on the stage.

I walked out of the show before listening to X butcher another of their old tunes, thinking about Bradley's washtub bass and about Tony's Electric Frankenstein tour story and all the tales that Ruland and I swapped as we swilled our way through twelve packs, because that's the stuff of real life. That's the shit that means something. And all this business on a big stage with hundreds of fans: it's just a diversion.

—Sean Carswell



TONY ADOLESCENT - RIGHTEOUS DUDE.

milled around in front of me. I pulled my story out from my back pocket. I was so nervous and had had so much to drink that I couldn't read the words on the paper. No worries, though, because this always happens to me when I get up on a stage to do a reading, so I memorized my story in advance. I laid in on my bullshit about how these letters had mysteriously appeared in my PO Box. As I paused, Jim read about the premature ejaculators and the marina cowboys. The crowd actually stopped to listen. Not the whole crowd, but a lot of them. Literally hundreds of them. They laughed at all the dick and ass jokes. It was pretty sweet: one of those moments when I was somewhere between a fool and king. Ruland seemed to dig it, too.

After we finished up, the Adz played a pretty fucking awesome set, and then it was time for X. Now, I'm like you. I have X's *Los Angeles*





The Evaporators *Ripple Rock* West Coast Tour Diary 2004



Left: (background) The Evaporators: David Carswell: guitar, vocals • John Collins: bass • Scott Livingstone: drums • Nardwuar: vocals, organ • (foreground with arrow to head) David Lanois. Right: Carrie Sleater-Kinney

Most bands, when they go out on tour, compile some sort of a tour diary. We Evaporators are no different; although, all we write down is what we eat! In order to fill in the gaps of what actually happened, we have asked our friends, tourmates, and various audience members to say a few words.

Jan. 21, 2004, Twilight Lounge, Portland, Oregon

“Stay Awake All Night” was the theme song for the Evaporators’ unholy hootenanny in Portland. That’s booking guy Dave Twilight at the far right, with Pat from the PDX band The High and the Mighty on the other side of me, Christeen Aebi (aka Canada Jones), the one in the Stretch Marks t-shirt. I got that shirt when I ordered their 7-inch through *Maximum Rock’n’roll*, when I was doing scene reports in 1983 or so. The Pointed Sticks flyer in back of us was given to me way back when, before I was allowed to go see bands like the Subhumans (B.C.) and D.O.A. ‘Course, now I would KILL to see that lineup: Pointed Sticks, the Wipers, and the infamous Cleavers? Holy moly! I LOVE rock and roll. And Canada rules, okay! Waiting for the beer to get cold...

—Love, Christeen Aebi (Canada Jones Jett), Portland, OR

Jan. 23rd, 2004, 904 Gilman Street, Berkeley, California

The Evaporators, along with System and Station, Clarendon Hills, Harold Ray Live in Concert, and the Rock N Roll Adventure Kids put on a great show. Nardwuar gave history lessons between songs, had a couple of audience members hold his microphone during one song while he sang into it, had the audience hold him and his keyboard up over their heads while he played, and had the audience hold hands and skip around and around in a circle. During the last song, he had the whole place squat down (including me while I was videotaping the show) and jump up at the proper times in the song three times. The rest of the band was tight, both musically and during the choreographed parts of the show. All and all, it’s what I would call a complete, fun, great, professional, raw rock’n’roll show. I even got to interview Nardwuar (on the same videotape as the show) after the show. Nardwuar loved my questions and told me that my research was great and that that was how he would interview himself. He, like myself, was glad to finally meet up

in person (he had been receiving my comic book, *Super Shark* in the mail for a couple of years). The band members were all friendly. What else can I say but Canadian rock and Canadian rockers rule! Oh yeah, I saw the girl in the middle of this picture during the show and wondered if she was Carrie from Sleater-Kinney. Now, after seeing this picture, I am almost convinced it is. I hope all is well. —Caw-ruff, caw-ruff, Robert A. Medeiros, www.supershark.net, SF, CA

Multiple Reflections, from Harold Ray Live in Concert

WOW! What an honor to have shared the stage with the Evaporators – doubtless, one of the most entertaining bands on the planet. If we had the socialized health care that those wily Canadians have, one-third of the band would’ve been admitted for mild neck injuries, the byproduct of having been a human keyboard stand – ailments, that ultimately, were alleviated by the aural ointment that is The Evaporators.

Who knew the crowd at 924 Gilman in San Francisco would’ve given a hoot about the Harold Ray sound? It was the most receptive, energetic audience of the tour. The Evaporators fed off this energy,

like, uh, Ontario feeds off of Niagara Falls. (Sorry. I’m stretching for metaphors here. Like most of us ignoramii, I don’t know much about the Canadizuuh.) It was marvelous to hear Nardwuar’s most verbose set-ups for each song before they played ‘em.

In LA, we played in an aptly named venue called The Smell. It was in skid row, and we weren’t sure we had the right place! Thee Goblins from Canada were fantastic, and the Nardwuar vids were amazing. The crowd didn’t know what to make of us. It was awkward. The Evaporators, using their supernatural powers, were able to crack this tough nut of a crowd.

Spaceland in Silverlake was run with Swiss precision and, as the opening band, starting on official time, we began playing to... uh... two people. Literally. Two people. Thankfully, the crowd quickly amassed, and about five songs into our set, a man enthusiastically emptied the currency from his wallet onto the stage. Upon conclusion of our set, Nardwuar asked me: “DO YOU KNOW WHO THAT WAS?!” “No..?” “That was Daniel Lanois, the record producer!” Daniel produced U2, the mighty Brian Eno, and many, many other things. Charlie (sax player/HRLIC co-founder with me) went to talk to

him. As it turns out, Daniel enjoyed us, but he also was under the impression that we were impoverished and Canadian, and he being Quebecois, thought he'd kick down a little charity for his fellow countrymen. The extra funny part? He thought he was throwing hundreds of bucks at us, but it turned out to be \$41. HAH! It still helped. Oh, the other funny part about playing in Silverlake: We saw Ben Stiller at the 7-11.

San Diego for us was a breath of fresh air – drunken hipsters, just dying to shake their handsomely preened booties. It was awesome. Props to the Licorice Quartet and the Viewmasters. I crave San Diego-style Mexican food. Mmmmmmmmmh.

Thee Parkside was our homecoming. We love Thee Parkside. Thee Parkside loves us. Thee Parkside loves The Evaporators. It was a love-fest.

Can't wait to see these guys again in Austin! We can't wait to play in Vancouver with them some day! –*Cheers, Jack, Harold Ray Live in Concert*

Nard vids on the big screen while I worked the merch table and scored myself one of those highly-coveted Evaps tote bags in the process. A mighty fine time was had by all!

On Monday, we reconvened for eats at Philippe The Original, across from beautiful Union Station. The eternally delightful Señor Amor added to our merry band of discerning diners. As an ongoing honorary member of The Evaporators and a participant in many a Tomahawk pig-out, I knew I had to provide my boys with a legendary local dining experience. Philippe The Original has been serving up the French dip for almost 100 years, claiming to have invented this tasty treat when a beef sandwich accidentally fell into a vat of soup!

About two miles away, on skid row, Cole's Buffet also claims to have invented the French dip sandwich and the owner will kick your ass if you dare even whisper the word "Philippe" in there! As someone who's sampled the wares at both establishments, I can't say which is the true original originator,

A Famous Producer Calls the Shots

While we were loading some gear into Spaceland in Silver Lake L.A., a middle-aged man parked his motorcycle in a conspicuous spot on the sidewalk and passed me on his way into the building. He exuded an air of confidence and his all-black-leather look was very eye-catching. He shot me a friendly smile, which I returned.

Later, Dave told me that the famous Canadian musician/producer Daniel Lanois was somewhere in the bar and I realized that he was the dude on the bike! Now, I'm not really a star chaser. I'm a little shy around new people and I rarely just barge up to people who don't know me and try to engage them in conversation, particularly rich and famous people.

But I'm an engineer/producer myself and so is Dave, and I'd have to admit that since the early eighties I've been impressed over and over again by Mr. Lanois' work. It was people like him and Brian Eno and Steve Lillywhite who really got me

DL: That's great. Are you guys from L.A.?

JC: No, we're from Vancouver!

DL: Ah! You're on tour!

JC: Yep.

DL: How much do you guys make?

JC: Uh... not that much. I guess the band is pulling in about a hundred bucks a night on average. It's really just kind of a hobby, not so much a way of earning income, but we've been at it since high school and now we can't stop.

DL: How old are you?

JC: I'm thirty-five. But it's not the only thing I do. I'm a record producer, too!

DL: Like me!

JC: Yes! And I'm also in another band that is a bit more of a money earner. We're called the New Pornographers. Maybe you've heard of us?

DL: That's great!

JC: Maybe you've heard of the lady who sings with us: Neko Case? She has like a country career too.

DL: I don't know...

JC: Actually, my partner Dave and I are going to be working as pro-



The entire gang at Thee Parkside • Nardwar Vs. In-n-Out

Eat at Phillippe's

Whenever Nard, Dave, John and Scott come to town, this is the agenda: RAWK and EATS. On Saturday night, Thee Goblins, Dublins, and Evaporators RAWKED The Smell like nobody's business! The kids were chanting along to "United Empire Loyalists" ("Civil War! Not Rev-o-luuuuution!") and the sneaky costume change blew everyone's mind! The Smell is located behind a mysterious Japanese movie theater in the heart of downtown LA with the world's most articulate homeless people working the alley entrance-way. Mr. Paolo Davanzo of The Echo Park Film Center projected

but I can tell you that Phillippe's food is most delicious. After your French dip (cheese: twenty-five cents extra), try the banana cream pie (mmmmm!) and then weigh yourself on the old-fashioned scale! Gained five pounds? Yep, I thought so. After lunch, we enjoyed a leisurely stroll through the charming Mexican marketplace at Olvera Street, site of the first settlement in what we now know as The City of Angels. Nardwar and Senior Amor bought matching scorpion belt buckles. Sooooo sexy! And don't forget, we always take two!!!! –*Lisa Marr, The Lisa Marr Experiment, Los Angeles, CA*

fired up about producing pop music when I was a teen. So I thought to myself, he's at my show and he isn't even talking to anyone right now; maybe he'd even like some company. So I made my move.

I went up to the poolroom/lounge when he was sitting and shook his hand. I will attempt to recreate some of our conversation:

JC: Are you Daniel Lanois?

DL: Yes.

JC: My name's John. I just thought I'd come and say hello. I'm a fan of your work.

DL: Thank you.

JC: Actually, I'm a musician and my band the Evaporators is playing tonight.

ducers on a project in a month or so with a couple of Canadian twin singing ladies who are really great and it's going to be kind of a big, legitimate deal. I mean they're on Vapor, Neil Young's Label.

DL: Oh. Have you ever had something really explode?

JC: I guess the New Pornographers have sold over fifty thousand.

DL: I mean really blow up.

JC: No.

DL: I'm not bothering you am I? I mean, do you mind talking?

DL: Oh no. You're not bothering me.

JC: Great. So, how come you're not in New Orleans?

DL: Oh, I moved. It was time to move on.

JC: So you live in L.A.?
DL: Not far from here.
JC: Are you working on anything?
DL: I'm always working on stuff.
JC: Your own stuff? Cool!
DL: Yeah, it's pretty heavy stuff.
 Really cutting edge...

And with that, Daniel bolted to his feet. Going from neutral to overdrive, he went to the pair of people who were playing pool and engaged them both, animatedly showing the woman, whose turn to shoot it was, how he thought she should play the next few shots. It was clear that he wanted to get in on the next game with the winner of that game and thusly put an end to the boring part of his evening. He was charming and a little weird and I didn't feel too snubbed.

Later that night I found out that he had watched our show and I thought that was cool. I also found out that before I went up and talked to him, when Harold Ray Live were playing their set, Daniel walked up to the stage and dumped all the cash from his wallet at their feet! So that explained a lot! When he asked me how old I was and how much we made every night, he was just feeling my pain! Dumping cash on the stage was a very concrete show of support for the touring band. And they were playing first and to a very small crowd. I overheard that he thought that they were the Canadian band so he must have been surprised when I told him that we were from Vancouver. Anyway, I hope I get another chance to talk to him some time, as I'm anxious to hear all about that "really cutting edge" stuff. —*John Collins, The Evaporators*

Nardwuar Loves America

Los Angeles: The return of the Evaporators is always something I look forward to with the greatest of anticipation. This year was no different. As true Americans know, the events of 2003 have turned us into virtual saviors in the eyes of the world on account of the Coalition Forces' success in freeing the Iraqi people from the tyrannical dictatorship of Saddam Hussein.

Canadians, with their new Prime Minister Paul Martin, are about as grateful as they come. And so I imagined freedom-loving rockers, The Evaporators, would sashay into Southern California singing the praises of our peace-making nation with a special Canadian tribute to America the beautiful. I was not disappointed.

As I suspected, Nardwuar took the stage adorned in an "Old Glory" t-shirt (artfully intertwined with a Maple Leaf) and The Evaporators launched into a lauda-



Roscoe's Chicken and Waffles

tion of the good old US of A with their song "United Empire Loyalists." They followed with a delicious little homage to fromage called "Addicted to Cheese." Finally, they exalted our Great President with the good-natured ribbing of "Cardboard Brains." It's safe to say the Evaporators thrilled us all with their infectious "Ripple Rock" and Roll! "I'm Your Buddy," indeed!

The next day, bonhomie DJ Senor Amor, avant-garde artist Sara Vidar and yours truly had the pleasure of accompanying the boys on a tour though The City of the Angels. We started with our traditional "breakfast of champions" at Roscoe's Chicken and Waffles. We take The Evaporators there every year because everyone knows Canadians love soul food. How 'bout some more grits, Nard?

Next on the agenda? Shopping! Jet Rag was having a sale and Nardwuar picked out a groovy shiny cowboy shirt. I don't think he bought it. So, as the saying goes, "Done, done, on to the next one!" Wacko™ held a special surprise. Along side the unique gift ideas, one-of-a-kind Nardwuar the Human Serviette found his double! And I'm not talkin' Barney Rubble!

It couldn't have been a more

perfect time. I love these guys so much I can't decide if I should name my new puppy (a Newfoundland of course) Scott, John, Dave, or Nardwuar. I guess I'll just have to wait a couple of months to see which of their dynamic personalities resonates in him most. Keep on rockin' in the free world Evaporators!

Hey did I mention that (I've got) Ice Wine in My Wine Cooler? Oh Canada! —*Jones, LA, CA*

Heaven in Fried Flour Tortillas

When the Evaporators stopped by the office and said they needed to eat something substantial for their long haul to Tacoma, I knew just the place — Juan's, which is the best Mexican joint in Berkeley, hands down. I knew that they appreciate good food (Roscoe's, anyone?) so yes, Juan's it was. (Except with my California-ized pronunciation, Nardwuar thought that we were going to "Wan's." So please make sure to enunciate the J.) We partook in gigantor portions of enchiladas and burritos, a pitcher of beer, and — probably the most memorable of all — chips made from flour tortillas. Oh so tender, crisp and flaky. These flour tortilla chips definitely put Juan's at the

top of Mexican eateries in Berkeley. Plus, the Evaporators took me out to lunch, which was one of the nicest things an AT band has done for me. I thanked my lucky stars that the Evaporators signed to Alternative Tentacles and that Juan's makes those tortilla chips. —*Maiko Hara, Alternative Tentacles, San Francisco, CA*

Jan. 30, 2004 Java Jive, Tacoma, Oregon

Tacoma was very lucky to see at the Java Jive, the Spanish Castle of Today, Thee Mighty Mighty Evaporators, featuring our hero, Nardwuar the Human Serviette, the Prime Minister of Canadian rock and roll. It was a hell of a show, I tell ya's all. That place was entirely meant for them. Of course, there were the Java Jive regulars — Ronson Family Switchblade and yours truly, Rockin' Rod with his band the Strychnines — who were told by the way, that after their set, the name is now appropriate (We played about four Sonics covers and two Sonic sound-alike songs). It was a fun time had by all. Well, I gotta go back to listening to *Ripple Rock*. Bye Bye. Doot Do Do Loot Do, DOOT DOOT. —*Rockin' Rod and the Strychnines*

Food Highlights

(for the full list, email retodded@razorcake.com)

The Smell, Los Angeles, CA
 Banana and Cream Sandwich (Nard)

Roscoe's Chicken and Waffles, LA, CA
 2 Waffles and Chicken (everyone)

Phillipe's, LA, CA
 Beef French Dip w/ American Cheese, Coleslaw, Pickle, Banana Cream Pie (Nard)

Der Kaiserhoff, San Diego, CA
 Paprika Meatball and Potato Wedges (Everyone!)

Endnote 1 from Nardwuar: No gut bombs this time!

Endnote 2 from David Carswell: I'd just like to say it's "bean" (pollo, porko) another great experience eating our way down the west coast. Maybe next time we'll eat more seafood (thanks to Patrick in San Diego for the delicious lobster tacos).

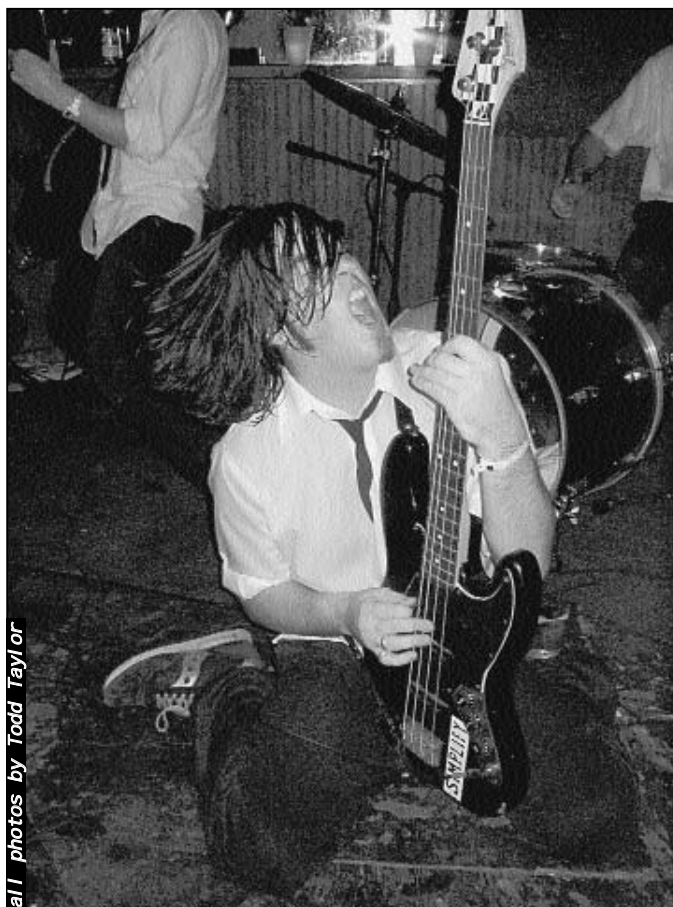
—**Nardwuar**
 More pics at www.nardwuar.com
www.theevaporators.com



er name – a lightbulb appears over the computer cartoon’s head and it looks at what i’m doing! It’s getting ideas! It’s getting ideas! This is becoming legitimately unsettling!). I will start said essay in either A) April Fool’s mode, or B) Non-April Fool’s mode (the mode will be yours to speculate upon). Since i am now, for the first time, typing a column in Word™ (WORD!), i am under the (perhaps completely misguided) assumption that, for once, my column will transmit over to *Razorcake World Enterprises* with italics and bolding intact. THEREFORE! I shall differentiate between April Fool’s Mode and Non-April Fool’s Mode by typing one mode in plain text, and the other in italics, because, as i understand it, you are too much of a backwoods schmuck to understand what i’m doing unless you are continually reminded of my intentions. Christ, i can’t take you anywhere! To further alert you to my paradigm shifts of April Fools’ Mode-itude, the plain text portions and italicized text portions shall be separated by the buffer item of “**BZZZT!**”, which should serve to clue even the dimmest of wits that some manner of hijinx and tomfoolery is afoot (“hang down your head Tom Foolery, hang down your head and cryyyy...”). I assure you that it’s either this or listen to me babble about the dots on the tops of i’s and j’s for four pages. VERY WELL THEN! With all undue fanfare, please welcome the dimly lit memoir-lapse men call...

MY TRIP TO SXSW 2004
by little Revvie Nørb, age 6

After a good night’s sleep, i caught my **BZZZT!** 5:30 AM flight to Texas (via Cincinnati), falling into a brief fit of droolful slumber somewhere along the way and arriving in Austin slightly before 11 AM, their time (which, oddly enough, is the same as my time. Go figure). I have booked a flight at this ridiculous hour so that my arrival from Wisconsin roughly coincides with Todd’s arrival from California, which he, initially, told me would be around 10 AM, local time. Shortly after my ticket purchase, Todd’s revised figures placed him at the arrival gate at more like 1 PM, which, essentially, meant that i had booked a flight with a 5:30 AM departure time in order to sit in the bar in the Austin airport and drink big frosted mugs of **BZZZT!** carrot juice garnished with celery stalks for two hours whilst awaiting the Coming of the Todd. As i placidly munch my riboflavin and wheat germ, speculating only briefly on the potential orifices my carrot juice’s parent vegetables may or may not have been erotically inserted into and, ABOVE ALL, not noticing the underage bartender’s tight t-shirt and pert young breasts, i cannot help but notice that the outside world, about one carrot-juice-mug-flung-through-an-airport-window away, looks cold, harsh and uninviting – especially given the balmy March neoparadise-ical conditions i left behind in Wisconsin. Jeezus, i sure hope Todd doesn’t show up any time soon; i sure the hell don’t wanna be going outside into THAT slop. The bartender reaches over and suggestively **BZZZT!** passes me the remote for the bar TV. I channel surf for a few minutes. I decide that Texas needs to watch *Sesame Street*. Texas does not react for a few seconds, until Texas realizes that Wisconsin has not merely tangentially encountered *Sesame Street* whilst channel-flipping; Wisconsin has legitimately turned the TV in the bar to *Sesame Street* and is leaving it there. (note: the preceding italics are not indicative of a **BZZZT!**-less April Fools’ Modal Shift, they are, in fact, mere italics). Don’t look now, but i think I JUST MESSED WITH TEXAS. **BZZZT!** Everyone applauds my choice of programming, and i make many new friends in the bar, none of whom angrily grab the remote to put on the 11:30 AM version of SportsCenter™ or some such fol-de-rol. Eventually, Todd’s plane arrives (fortunate, as i was sick of sipping carrot juice and ogling the bartender), **BZZZT!** we meet up, and mosey on outside into



all photos by Todd Taylor

(above) The Bloody Hollies save Nørb’s reputation as a Rock Hipster

the **BZZZT!** unlivable frigid wasteland that is Texas in the spring. Shivering with agonizing cold, fingers stiff as Popsicle™ sticks, we **BZZZT!** meet up with Rockin’ Tobester, who has kept it crunk by driving in from Atlanta. As we head out of the airport, i see a road sign informing us we are less than 40 miles from La Grange. That is to say, “La Grange” as in “how-how-how-how!” As in the ZZ Top song about the legendary whorehouse located therein. As in “but I... might... be... mis-TAY-ken!!!” Needless to say **BZZZT!** Rev. Nørb certainly will have with strumpets, and i frantically insist we turn the car around, lest we fall prey to the siren song of cheap flooze and **BZZZT!** actually we were going the wrong way anyway, and we manage to navigate our way to our hosts’ house without any further slattern-related incidents (possibly due to the very effective landmark of a mattress spray-painted with a pentagram and “BEN’S HOUSE” propped up outside [very high style points for the pentagram being done in blue and black, by the way. Fuck red. This is not your father’s Anti-Christ!]). Our hosts were Ben Snakepit, Ben Five-Way,

and Nick Crack Pipe, who were the **BZZZT!** biggest bunch of assholes i’ve ever met in my life, continually urinated on us in our sleep, Ben-Ben-Nick, they’re so mean, put our boots in the washing machine, put bubblegum in our food, shot us with buckshot when we were nude **BZZZT!** really great guys, who put up with three viciously debauched yo-yos for far longer than duty would demand, and for this we **BZZZT!** enact a curse to be levied against our hosts, their scions, the scions of their scions, the scions of their scions’ scions **BZZZT!** does the *Snake Pit* comic book, which i reckon stands to reason. Upon initial exposure, my take on *Snake Pit* was that **BZZZT!** i loved the wacky, slapstick humor of it all **BZZZT!** a little too cute or something, but, as one reads more and more strips (the whole premise of the thing being that Ben does one autobiographical three-panel cartoon every day of his life [which, of course, is one of those ideas that everyone smacks themselves in the forehead for not thinking of themselves {although, truth be told, i would never be able to restrict myself to three panels on some days and could never think of three worthy panels for other days of my life, plus i kind of hate three-panel comic strips on principle, simply because my favorite comic strip of all time is *Peanuts*, and i always thought that the downfall of the later years of the strip coincided with Charles Schulz’s finally getting enough pull

with his editors that he was no longer forced to use the four-panel format ((they made him do *Peanuts* as a series of four square panels so they could either stack the four panels into a square or run them horizontally to fit the spatial demands of whatever paper was running it)); i thought his switching from the classic four-panels to three panels ((or sometimes even one big panel, yuck)) completely ruined the pacing and timing he had so brilliantly honed for decades)), it becomes almost impossible to put his stuff down. You read the last strip for the month, and you’re like FUCK! SHIT! WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?? – and what happens next might only be him working at the video store and making noodles for dinner. BUT YOU GOTTA KNOW!!! Anyway, we meet and greet our hosts, and all go out for some of the **BZZZT!** worst **BZZZT!** Mexican food i’ve ever had in my life, then we sort of sit around drinking **BZZZT!** skim milk and eating alfalfa sprouts until **BZZZT!** we head downtown, so Todd and i can go get our mug shots taken for our handy-dandy SXSW Press Badges, TO BE WORN ON LANYARDS (?) AROUND OUR NECKS (??) AT ALL TIMES (??), EVEN DURING SEX (hypothetically) (!). As it is St. Patrick’s Day, i wear my Star Trek™ uniform shirt – said shirt is blue, of course, but a sage fool would realize that i am supposed to be Spock (ha! And all this time you thought i was Christopher Pike!), who, in fact, carries the GREEN blood of the Vulcan race in his veins. To

REV. NØRB

drive the gag home, i keep addressing Todd as “Captain,” which **BZZZT!** *doesn't get old, no matter how many times i do it. We wind up sipping chamomile tea at a place called BZZZT!* Beerland, which will be the **BZZZT!** *last of our scant trips there during the week, and BZZZT!* i think we see the Ponys or someone, who feature that guy who used to have the brown guitar when he was in the Guilty Pleasures, and sound kinda like Television or something, from what i remember (which isn't much). As i observe the Rock Malarkey going on around me, i cannot help but notice a young and desirable Asian female leaning towards me, eyeing up the press pass worn dutifully on the lanyard about my neck, as required by law. **THAT'S RIGHT, BABY!!! COME ON AND CHECK OUT THE SCIENCE OFFICER!!! HAIL NO, MY PHONE NUMBER'S NOT ON MY PASS, BUT I CAN ASSURE YOU MY COMMUNICATOR IS TUNED TO YOUR FREQUENCY 24/7!!! BABY, LET'S VIOLATE THE PRIME DIRECTIVE!!! FAILING THAT, LET'S VIOLATE OTHER THINGS!!! VULCAN KIELBASA IS GOOD KIELBASA!!!** ...after staring intently at my badge for quite some time, she apparently finds the informational nugget she had been looking for: “Press!” she exclaims triumphantly, retrieving and then handing me a copy of her band's CD. “*We are Japanese girls band! We play Saturday!*” she blurts. All precincts are in: **SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST IS THE GREATEST MUSIC FESTIVAL IN THE FEDERATION!!! GOD BLESS ROCKWRITER-CREDENTIAL-DISPENSER ELIZABETH DERZCO AND ALL SHE STANDS FOR!!!** I attempt to engage the dishy Japanese Girls Band representative in question in further airy persiflage, but the only inbound message she appears programmed to accept is “PRESS;” her outbound statements are limited to “*We are Japanese Girls Band!*” and “*We play Saturday!*” Darlin', you had me at “Japanese!” The name of the band is Gito Gito Hustler; their CD cover further restates the fact that they “are Japanase (sic) Girls Band!!!”, fleshing the concept out with declarations such as “All are produced for oneself itself!” “I want to wonderful music!” and “There is no border in music.” I take it back. *You had me at “Hustler!”* Needless to say, first and foremost on my mind is **BZZZT!** *getting away from Beerland, lest i be led into sin by some sultry, sloe-eyed vixen so i wind up BZZZT!* somewhere else, where Vancouver's Rotten Apples are playing a set **BZZZT!** *completely dominated by their drummer, Heather Jane, whom, as a direct result of my Razorcake review of their “Real-Tuff” CD, are now billed as “Heather Jane and the Rotten Apples,” with the aforementioned Heather Jane now slamming the skins from a 5-meter (16.5 foot) high drum riser loosely based on the gigantic robotic tarantula from the “Wild Wild West” movie, as well as operating the rest of the instruments remotely via a series of robotic arms attached to the periphery of her drum kit and operated by her mental command. Former frontperson Dejha has now been reduced to dancing half-naked in a small cage suspended to the left of the drum riser, performing various garish pantomime routines involving Astro Pops™ and bananas while surrounded by a host of loincloth-clad young men with Aston Kutcher haircuts. Following their eighth and final run-thru of “Spade,” i BZZZT! apparently find myself back at Beerland, where i **BZZZT!** *can't help but notice that everyone else in the bar has passed out. What on earth has befallen this lot of tawdry sots? Here i stand, veritabily awash in alertness, and the rest of the world lies crumpled at my feet, as if they had been mysteriously exposed to the narcolepsy-inducing sleepy-grass poppies from the “Wizard of Oz!” I stand alone, a tower of sobriety in a room filled with the insensate gas passings of comatose luses! The doorman, noticing my great alertness, suggests i stay for a round or two of shots, so BZZZT!* i am apparently hauled home in disgrace by Todd and Rockin' Tobester. I awake the next morning and, one three-liter room-temperature bottle of Diet Dr. B™ and a few rolls of Charmin™ later, i am refreshed and ready to minister! This weekend marks the release of Gorsky Press-induced books from both Todd and Ben Snakepit, and, as testimony to their greatness, there is a “Book Release Party” at a local prerecorded music emporium, where Todd and Ben will address humans with oral recitations of their text, and Ben's non-J Church band will rock the nation like the first Montrose album (or something). Shows in record stores – hardly news. Shows in record stores revolving around book releases – rarer, but yet, not overly noteworthy. Shows in record stores revolving around book releases with a free keg of beer in the corner – NOW we're talkin' man bites dog! Austin is so hoppin' on this Thursday night that the book release show **ISN'T EVEN THE ONLY SHOW GOING ON IN THE LITTLE STRIP MALL** where the record store is – about three doors down there's a show at a bookstore. No free beer, though, which obviously means records are better than books, so **PLEASE STOP READING IMMEDIATELY!** (i think that's what Todd said, too) Following the not-intolerable metallic-goings-on of Ben's band,*

we mosey down the strip mall to a pizza joint that has the Ramones, among other countercultural luminaries, painted on the wall. Some yappy girl keeps coming over to us and being yappy, eventually asking if any of us want to play her in pool. Since she is very **BZZZT!** *attractive and pleasant, i accept. I win the game, as always, then we head out to BZZZT!* the Jackalope, i think, where i catch the last two songs of the Hentchmen, which does not satisfy my Hentchmen needs, but does allow me the opportunity to remind the band of the time the Hentchmen and Boris played in Chicago, theoretically opening for the New Bomb Turks, but the Turks never showed up, so we got all their money – an escapade that always brings forth Pavlovian outpourings of love from all concerned (save, likely, for the Turks themselves). The Demolition Doll Rods play a **BZZZT!** *typically exciting and brief set, wowing me with their stunning blend of zydeco, trance, and spoken word. I BZZZT!* kind of want to say hey to Dan Kroha, since we were pen-pals of a sort for a while when he was with the Gories. I do not recall if i accomplished this mission or not. At some point in time, as i hunch over the bar, drinking my **BZZZT!** *warm milk with the occasional accompaniment of an oyster cracker or two, BZZZT!* one of the dudes from the Mistreaters informs me that he has “heard” that, in the context of an FM Knives interview, i opined that “Milwaukee discovered garage five years after everyone else.” I think about this for a while. This sounds like something i would say. Probably 'cause it's true (not that i would be above saying such things merely to be an asshole, one of my various hobby interests). We debate the assertion for a while. Since, by that time, i am completely **BZZZT!** *sober BZZZT!* off my ass, i think the debate went something like this (all quotes approximate): **MISTREATER:** I heard you said Milwaukee discovered garage five years after everybody else. **ME:** I... uh... me... ahhh... once somebody broke into my car at a Bucks game and took my Powerpuff Girls™ backpack. **MISTREATER:** ??? What the hell does that have to do with anything? **ME:** MY POWERPUFF GIRLS™ BACKPACK!!! MY BEAUTIFUL BEAUTIFUL POWERPUFF GIRLS™ BACKPACK!!! OH MY GAWD!!! THEY KILLED KENNY!!! BUTTERCUP!!! BUTTERCUP, WHY HAVE YOU DESERTED ME??? OH, MY POOR POWERPUFF GIRLS™ BACKPACK!!! Boo hoo hoo hoo hoo hoo hoo!!! **MISTREATER:** Er, maybe we'll call a truce here... **ME:** TRUCE??? TRUCE??? THOSE BASTARDS STOLE MY POWERPUFF GIRLS™ BACKPACK!!! WITH MY “THE KNACK IS BACK” T-SHIRT INSIDE OF IT!!! MY POWERPUFF GIRLS™ BACKPACK!!! MY BEAUTIFUL BEAUTIFUL POWERPUFF GIRLS™ BACKPACK!!! ...needless to say, i am pretty sure the guy walked away thinking that i was **BZZZT!** *completely right in every regard due to my reasoned and well-worded argument, and will no doubt help spread my meticulously thought-out gospel to the unbelievers (but, then again, if he WERE right, that would go a long ways towards explaining how, when the Devil Dogs played in this neck of the woods, they played in Milwaukee, not Chicago and Madison, and how Teengenerate, when THEY were in this neck of the woods, played in Milwaukee, not Chicago and Madison and Green Bay, and how the Rip Offs, when THEY were up here, played in Milwaukee, not Chicago and Green Bay... i would continue, but can't stand having my nose rubbed in my undeniable WRONGITUDE...).* The next thing i know, i'm **BZZZT!** back at Beerland, hunched over a 39-gallon plastic trash can **BZZZT!** *sober as a judge. Viewing the pathetic wretches around me virtually comatose by dint of strong drink, i decide that, much like Christ Our Lord kindly sopped up mankind's sins in perpetuity like a gigantic sourdough biscuit of divine origin absorbing the country-style Gravy of Affliction, i will selflessly stand over this huge plastic trash can and, due to my incredible sobriety, will actually INHALE THE VOMIT OF OTHERS into my own stomach. That's right! Because Rev. Nørb so loved the world, owing to his great sobriety, he bent over the Beerland trash can and lovingly inhaled the puke of countless others, just so that mankind (or, at the very least, Beerland-kind) could start anew with a clean slate! I, Rev. Nørb, shall bring Beerland-kind's collective sins of excess upon my own head, as i, like the Suburbs, have plenty of Credit In Heaven. I wake up the next morning in my natty blue sports coat, feeling chipper as all get-out, but somewhat soiled by stains inflicted by my inhaling the re-ingested vomit of others. After a quick change of togs into BZZZT! my legendary Good'n'Plenty™ suit – which is, if nothing else, 100% puke-free! – we head back out to Beerland, to quaff more of the quinine water for which it is named. I think we see Sweet J.A.P., who pull off another set of **BZZZT!** *their usual listless shoegazing BZZZT!* then i wind up seeing the Spits playing, minus costumes, at some place that's doling out free chow (likely as compensation for the absence of costume). During the official Razorcake interview of the Ends, everyone except me decides to **BZZZT!** *conduct the interview standing knee-deep in Beerland's**

dumpster, while i remain in a more dignified stance in the alley, helping the interview process greatly with my well-researched, well-planned questions. Rockin' Tobester decides that **BZZZT!** someone in the band looks like Joe Walsh, and, although i cannot say that i have any real idea what Joe Walsh looks like (nor do i care to), i join him in an inane but spirited singalong version of "Life's Been Good," which Todd appreciates very much as he says our insipid background yammering will help in later transcription of the conversation. For some reason (possibly due to our passes which promised to set us up with **BZZZT!** free chocolate milk and Strawberry Quik™ **BZZZT!** until 7 PM), we leave Beerland to take in the "Rock Against Bush" show at Emo's. On the way to the club, a young lady stops me in the street and asks to take my picture for a website revolving around those with a "strong sense of personal style." What, you mean to tell me most Texans don't parade around town on Friday night in a pair of Good'n'Plenty™ pajamas??? What are you gonna tell me next, that the bar patrons here don't watch *Sesame Street*? We arrive at Emo's. While i find myself quickly **BZZZT!** enamored of the "Big Gig" atmosphere, **BZZZT!** the one complimentary bottle of **BZZZT!** chocolate milk **BZZZT!** i score before the free drinks expire strikes me as a dirty, filthy, unclean bottle of **BZZZT!** chocolate milk indeed **BZZZT!** (and not merely in the "Texas is inherently dirty" dirty, filthy, unclean sense [which is not to be confused with the "broken beer bottles in the street" type dirtiness of, say, Memphis or Detroit or somewhere, but is, in fact, reflective of the actual surplus-of-dirt-and-pulverized-organic-materials type of inherent dirtiness which Texas is, at least to me, noteworthy dirty for]). I mean, this isn't a good, honest free beer **BZZZT!** i mean, chocolate milk **BZZZT!** i'm drinking, like a free beer at a party or a free beer at a bar they gave you because they like you or even a free beer the club put backstage in your dressing room along with some bottled water and Sprite™, this free beer is, like, WRONG (i realize the concept of un-right free beer requires a tremendous leap of faith to even contemplate, but, then again, you owe it to me to do so: I am Rev. Nørb! I inhaled your puke to keep you free of sin!). This free beer is, like, some type of lame putz-bait someone (i.e. "THEY") is using to get us to stay here and watch some stoopid bands which they think they have a vested interest in convincing us to go see (i dunno about you, but if i'm at a show where NOFX are playing and the free drinks get cut off at 7 PM, i better see their roadie hauling the last of their equipment off the stage at 7:01). Like, whoever heard of punk rockers having to be bought off with an hour or two of free **BZZZT!** milk **BZZZT!** to get them to go to a punk show? The very concept is absurd and gross. Todd, as a Los Angeles resident and thus At Peace With Absurd Grossness, orders himself two **BZZZT!** milks **BZZZT!** at a time, which, to me, just underscores the icky "outta my way, i gotta get mine!" cattle-callism that the whole ordeal seems to engender (but, that said, wasn't a bad f'n idea at all). I shoot the shit with Pat from Dillinger 4 for a while (well, technically, Pat shot most of the shit, as one might expect). He

tells me, in his usual **BZZZT!** quiet, understated **BZZZT!** manner, that he "knows exactly!" what i'm trying to do on my solo records ("You're trying to do like the Dickies and the Rezzillos first albums!" – which was actually what i was trying to do like eight years ago, but thanks for playing), and i should be in a band with him and some drummer from Minneapolis who owns a studio, but i have to find a "guitar hero" first (not a bad idea, provided the only song we learn is "Rubber Biscuit" by the Blues Brothers [possibly not orig. artists], and Pat's Jake and i'm Elwood). The free **BZZZT!** milk **BZZZT!** quickly runs dry. I suck on my empty bottle in a placeboistic sense until keynote speaker J. Biafra arrives on stage to deliver one of his usual **BZZZT!** rousing **BZZZT!** speeches. I like Jello. "Jello is a good shit" – quote me on that if you'd like. Yes, the guy wants to be a "rock star" in every sense of the term – but he also wants to be the "good" rock star. Like, if *Rolling Stone* or *Spin* or similar dippy mag published a list of the Top 100 or 500 or (whatever the appropriate number would be) "Personalities Of Rock" (or whatever phrase they would think of that would mean "rock star" without actually coming out and saying "rock star," which would be too good a fate for us), Jello

(below) Les Baton Rouge from Portugal will make your Chloe Yurtz.



REV. NØRB

would want to be the last guy on the list. Rock Star #100 out of 100, or #500 out of 500, or whatever the case may be. He basically wants to score as low as possible, but still be hailed by the World At Large as an Officially Recognized Rock Personality™. If we can couch this in the bald argot of the Sheephead table, the guy is more or less playing a perpetual Leaster – wants to score as low as possible while still taking that one trick to keep him off the Schneid. That said, his speeches (or whatever you wanna call them) are pretty frickin’ corny. I mean, it’s not that i disagree with him – it’s just that THE GUY PAUSES FOR APPLAUSE at times when NOBODY IN THE AUDIENCE WOULD THINK TO APPLAUD had he NOT PAUSED IN THE FIRST PLACE. I mean, it’s just stupid. It’s not like the masses just start in with a spontaneous, thundering round of claps and cheers that forces him to pause his delivery until they subside and he can be heard again, he actually solicits the applause by stopping cold, thereby instigating a period of complete and utter silence which provokes reflexive bursts of applause from the audience, who are initially confused as to why he isn’t saying anything, then realize “oh, shit, i guess i’m supposed to be clapping now!” and start belatedly applauding more out of a guilty sense of not having been paying attention and possibly missing something that must’ve been important than from any legitimately heartfelt impulse to spontaneously erupt into cheers. I mean, it’s like he gets people to applaud him almost out of pure reflex action. Not me, daddy, i got me a **BZZZT!** milk **BZZZT!** bottle to hold! When it becomes apparent that i am not going to have the chance to say hey to Jello, i return to my friends, who are in the midst of discussing the **BZZZT!** power and majesty **BZZZT!** of Jello’s speech. When the air in my **BZZZT!** milk **BZZZT!** bottle ceases to satisfy my cravings for **BZZZT!** dairy products, i let it be known that, while i generally enjoy hanging around big rock venues like Emo’s, and am as big a NOFX fan as they come, and have never seen Dillinger 4 before, in my life, ever, i think the love i feel for Emo’s, were it allowed to grow unchecked, might surpass the love i feel for Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Savior, and therefore i need to go to Beerland, where the staff are a pack of surly knaves who are sure to flog me repeatedly with rubber truncheons the moment i step foot in their establishment, and will therefore provide no legitimate competition to the love i feel for Christ Our Lord, Amen. At Beerland, i **BZZZT!** remember the Spits playing again, this time in rather disconcerting rubber Reagan (i think?) masks. I also remember going down the street to see the Briefs. Following that, there exists an approximately three-hour window where i don’t remember a goddamn thing at all, except i looking at my left arm, and seeing that a broad swath of flesh

looked “kinda mushy” (later yielding a huge scab patch as if my arm had been welded to the back of a loose muffler on a 1976 Olds Omega™ and dragged around the periphery of a gravel pit beer party for an evening) which i found disturbing, since i was **BZZZT!** way drunker **BZZZT!** than i had been the two previous nights. I was so flipped out by this whole three-hour Brain Watergate that i thought that perhaps i had been roofied, except a quick check of my finances and anus revealed nothing overly amiss, and my wits returned just in time for Dirt Bike Annie (unless that was a different day?!), so fuck it. Boy, let me tell ya: Dirt Bike Annie really **BZZZT!** suck, and standing in front of Dirt Bike Jeannie for 45 minutes is such a chore that i thought i was gonna hafta hunch over the wastebasket again and inhale more puke. I mean, those understated ’72 Corvette™ curves of hers, fucking repulsive! Even her lipstick is atrociously grossifying! Following DBA’s lame **BZZZT!** set (which i think i forgot to request “Grape Crush” during, although that might just be the roofies talking), i reckoned i’d better high-tail it back to Emo’s, since Todd and the Tobester had yet to return to the friendly confines of Beerland. I hike my Good’n’Plenty™ clad ass hither’n’yon around downtown Austin, but Todd and Rockin’ Tobester seem to have up and vamoosed. Knowing in my heart of hearts that **BZZZT!** they would never take off without me, regardless of the circumstances, i **BZZZT!** resume my patrol on foot, eventually encountering the Briefs as they load out. They duct tape a copy of the “The Joy Of Killing” 45 to the front of my Good’n’Plenty™ suit, and send me back on The Hunt For My Posse quite well-decorated. The clubs have all closed, and i figure my best bet is to sit on the sidewalk in front of Beerland (taking great pains to make it apparent that tonight i am neither comatose nor vomiting) and wait for Todd and Tobester (or a few philanthropic and/or horny Japanese Girl Bands) to return to the all-powerful magnetic womb of Beerland and pick me up. Eventually, the **BZZZT!** surly and unhelpful **BZZZT!** doorman invites me into the closed-up club, and attempts to help me sort out my destination **BZZZT!** as he flogs the soles of my feet with bamboo canes. **BZZZT!** Using a marvel of the Information Age i believe he referred to as a “phone book,” the intrepid Beerland staffer is able to secure enough data to call me a cab, though not before leaving an imperishable answering machine at Ben, Ben & Nick’s including the now-immortal phrase “Reverend Nørb is sitting here with a 45 taped to the front of his Good’n’Plenty suit and he STILL can’t find a ride home.” (my posse’s flight from the Austin downtown area was apparently due to Toby’s continually falling **BZZZT!** awake **BZZZT!** and tipping over in the Emo’s bleachers). I wake up Saturday morning with the Briefs single still taped

(below) Nørb, with his lanyard dutifully around his neck, passing out at the Sweethearts show. Chicks dig him.



REV. NØRB

to me (it’s really not a bad look), and we head back to Beerland. The Mistreaters **BZZZT!** disintegrate me into the little balls of shit of which my molecular structure is entirely composed of via their pure, unadulterated rockitude! And, although the band themselves does not state this explicitly from the stage, my friends cannot help but agree: The Mistreaters are the best band in the world! I **BZZZT!** venture from Beerland over to the Casino el Camino (which, incidentally, has the **BZZZT!** worst jukebox in Austin, i mean, holy fuck, they’ve even got a SLADE CD on there! I can’t stand for that! I surely can’t be expected to pump dollar after dollar into it, playing SLADE track after SLADE track, even if i know i’m leaving, just so’s those remaining can be serenaded by the dulcet strains of Noddy Holder & Co.! **BZZZT!**) with my stated intention being to see The Sons Of Hercules. I wind up seeing the Green Hornes, who i don’t even realize are the Green Hornes owing to the fact that they’ve got about 40% less members than all the other times i’ve seen them (and, considering that one of the departed members was the Jabba Jr. keyboardist with the Robbie the Robot arms, by weight the band is likely at about 50% of their former strength). Following the Green Hornes (who **BZZZT!** sucked, as always) we are treated to the brainy, button-down routines of **BZZZT!** the legendary Mr. Lifto (from the Jim Rose Carnival of Freakitude or whatever it was called, but, more importantly, also a bartender there), who dangles beer kegs from hooks in his nipples, weights from his weenie, and other heady shenanigans. I find myself simultaneously compelled to both press

forward for a better view and to retreat in complete and utter squeamish revulsion; consequently, i don't see much, but i see enough to be both fascinated and repulsed. And THAT was just from seeing his stretch marks! **BZZZT!** *I trump his tawdry shtick by dangling Mr. Lifty, a pony keg of Lone Star, AND the old keyboardist from the Green Hornes from one of my three testicle piercings. Following this triumphant upstaging, we are joyfully informed that* **BZZZT!** The Sons of Hercules will not be playing, as the singer appears to have a twinge of the ol' alcohol poisoning, and is vomiting blood even as we speak. **BZZZT!** *I blame myself! If only i thought to inhale blood AND vomit back at Beerland, i could have saved Christmas! The replacement band is* **BZZZT!** the Bloody Tears (why they could not get the Bloody Vomits to play instead, i am unsure), who feature the bartender from Beerland on harmonica, and culminate their set of Completely Adequate™ rockness with a cover of "Ain't Nothin' But a House Party," which i know as a Tremeloes song, they know as a J. Geils song, and no one knows who did it originally. Returning to my compadres, i manage to drag Todd out to the Jackalope to theoretically see the Bloody Hollies. Unfortunately, our trip is in vain, as i have mis-remembered their start time by two hours, and we trudge back whence we came.

i don't see much, but i see enough to be both fascinated and repulsed.

And, while Todd is **BZZZT!** *completely sold on the merits of my homies, the Mystery Girls, whose Beerland set is impending, i try my best to convince him he should temper his boundless enthusiasm for their band. Todd remains* **BZZZT!** skeptical as we return to Beerland, but Japanese Girls Band Night is commencing at the nameless place next door (well, i mean, it had a name... i just don't have it HAN-day, Mr. Kotter!) and i can no longer spare any Asian Girl Ogling Time attempting to convince him of the Mystery Girls' **BZZZT!** *utter lack of* **BZZZT!** worth. Needless to say, Japanese Girls Band Night is a predictably **BZZZT!** *repugnant* **BZZZT!** experience, and i am quite **BZZZT!** *overjoyed when duty calls and i am required to leave this* **BZZZT!** hotbed of nobility for the Mystery Girls set, which, as a fellow Green Bay resident, i am required, by law, to attend (it says so on my property tax bills). Naturally, the Mystery Girls completely **BZZZT!** *rock. They make believers of the heathens; fans of the skeptics; Aye-sayers of the nay-sayers. They frickin' REPRESENT! After the first three (attempts at) songs, i walk back triumphantly to where Todd is sitting, and, with palms outstretched, admit that he is right: They Rock.* **BZZZT!** We both agree that the band is **BZZZT!** *rocking* **BZZZT!** so hard that night (pretty much everybody i talked to compared them to the Doors, whom i, like you, **BZZZT!** *love* **BZZZT!**) that we don't really need to stick around any further, and i drag Todd back to the Jackalope to see the Bloody Hollies for real. Trudging Jackalopeward for the second time in as many hours, i cannot help but feel that my status as Finely Tuned Rock'n'Roll Divining Rod is now **BZZZT!** *cemented beyond question. I mean, in the space of the last 90 minutes, i have* **BZZZT!** dragged Todd out to see a band that wasn't playing, then attempted to convince him of the merits of a band that wound up delivering an inarguably **BZZZT!** *specTACular!* **BZZZT!** set. If the Bloody Hollies don't come through with THE ROCK, i am gonna be forever thought of as a hapless hick who couldn't find THE ROCK if he were sequestered in a frickin' rock tumbler. MY REPAS ROCK HIPSTER IS ON THE LINE!!! Luckily, my Rock'n'Roll Reputation is immediately salvaged: The Bloody Hollies, without question, fucking **BZZZT!** *blow.* **BZZZT!** Looking not unlike a pack of apronless but psychotic Festival Foods™ bag boys, they rip thru the "PACK-HEAT-MOTHER-FUCKER-WE'RE-GOIN'-DOWN-TOWN!!!" song, vindicating me totally in and of itself, then smash up the band and really have a ball (and all like that), ending by honoring my two requests of "Swing" and "Tired Of This Shit" and thusly convincing all in attendance of their complete and utter **BZZZT!** *worthlessness. But, then again, they were following the majesty of the Mystery Girls that night, up against which even the most worthy rock unit would quail!* **BZZZT!** What i find amazingly amusing about this band is how closely their singer resembles James Cahill of the Kung Fu Monkeys. I mean, imagine going to see the frickin' Kung Fu Monkeys and all of a sudden James Cahill starts screaming about PACKING HEAT, MOTHERFUCKER!!! instead of drinking chocolate malts with two straws or whatever... "Son, you're home a little early from the Kung Fu Monkeys show... mind telling me what happened?" "Aw, Pop... James Cahill went off and popped a bunch of caps in my ass! I'll never live it down if the fellas at school find out!" Triumphant, we return to Beerland – only to find a sight that freezes the lymph in our nodes: THERE IS A LINE TO GET IN. Not "a line to get in" as in "a line to get in caused by the inherent delays in checking ID's, collecting money, et al"

but "a line to get in" as in "a line to get in caused by the club being filled to maximum legal capacity, requiring a one-to-one correspondence between exiting patrons and new patrons admitted." I briefly resign myself to spending the rest of the night sitting on the curb, but Todd ambles right up to the **BZZZT!** *surly* **BZZZT!** doorman, says "These aren't the droids you're looking for," and has his Jedi Mind-Tricking ass waved right the fuck on in. I, however, not being a Los Angeles resident and therefore, apparently, somewhat less desensitized to The Grossness Of Privilege, Et Al (i.e., i am a rustic dork who actually believes that cutting ahead in line is, like... WRONG or something) waver out on the sidewalk for a while, eventually – very tenuously – making my way to the door, ahead of the eighty or so people who, by rights, should be granted access to the club before me, mutter some manner of plaintive squawk, and shortly thereafter find myself **BZZZT!** *beaten and bloody in the alley, where i remain for several hours and* **BZZZT!** alas, missing the Evaporators, as we know full well we will not be able to get into the club they are playing at in time to witness their set, and we have already used any "favors" we might conceivably ask to be extended to us in recognition of our almost round-the-clock patronage at Beerland should we wish

to return. I am impressed by **BZZZT!** *all* **BZZZT!** of the bands at Beerland that night, but, as i state to Todd, i am happy as shit to be there, just because, fuck, it's Beerland! We wake on Sunday – our last day in town – and, not surprisingly, **BZZZT!** *don't* **BZZZT!** head directly to Beerland, where i am informed that myself, Todd and Toby – "The Fellowship of the Beer," as it were – are officially part of "the Beerland Family." I decide that makes it all right for me to spend some of the money my grandmother hid in a safety deposit box for me and the other grandsons before she got sick and died and the government took all her money and her house on a Beerland jersey and some stickers. I mean, hey, we're FAMILY, right? By the time all has been said and done, i have seen Les Baton Rouge from Portugal (the mention of their *Chloe Yurtz* CD still causes me to uncontrollably quote the line "after listening to this CD all the way through, my Chloe Yurtz a bit as well" from its review in *Razorcake*), rocked heartily to the Marked Men, watched New York's Some Action standing next to a girl whom i once kind of got Some Action from (though not ALL the Action – just enough Action to discover that the shades don't match the drapes, nudge nudge, wink wink), and watched some band from Denmark's entire set under the mistaken impression that i was watching the Forty-Fives (?!). We stock up on barbeque from Ruby's and, tragically, the Fellowship Of The Beer is broken when Rockin' Tobester departs back to Atlanta. Todd and i mope around for a while, and then Todd somehow magically procures Tim Kerr's phone number and uses another Jedi Mind Trick to get Tim to pick us up and bring us over to his house, which features a lovely exhibit of Halloween items in the living room, another superb collection of deep-sea-diver bric-a-brac in the bathroom, and **BZZZT!** *a bowling alley in the basement with the pins set by one of Tim's many exotic slaves he purchased with the money he got from Poison 13 reunions.* **BZZZT!** After an extended period of me basically talking too much about nothing of value, Ryan Richardson eventually **BZZZT!** *punches me out and* **BZZZT!** gives us a ride back home, where we **BZZZT!** *sit quietly* **BZZZT!** until the wee hours. I make a complete and utter **BZZZT!** *genius* **BZZZT!** of myself by playing air guitar on my knees to Ben's Kiss Alive II album, then earn the **BZZZT!** *respect* **BZZZT!** of everyone by playing the Rolling Stones' "Aftermath" album about five times in a row, for no other reason than it seems to be really **BZZZT!** *pleasing* **BZZZT!** people. After about two hours of sleep, the sun is up, and i feel **BZZZT!** *amazing!* **BZZZT!** and, from underneath the white leather jacket i have draped over my head, parakeet-style, in order to keep the Real World at bay, i hear the needle hitting "Aftermath" again and sense i am getting a dose of my own retarded medicine. Ben W-2 gives the remaining 2/3 of the Fellowship of the Beer a ride to the Austin airport, where, if nothing else, **BZZZT!** *i shall find respite and succor from the bitterly cold weather of Texas. When i return to Green Bay, it is the same balmy, cosmopolitan paradise that i left it as, and i sweat bullets as i drive home in Wisconsin's March swelter, remembering the line inscribed on each and every can and bottle of Lone Star™ beer:* **BZZZT!** "Serve Texas Cold." Yeah. Good one.

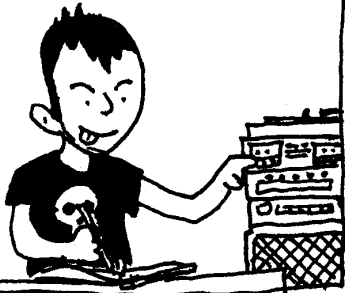
Beerland über Alles,
Løve, Nørb

REV. NØRB



MY FOURTH COLUMN FOR RAZORCAKE BY BEN SNAKEPIT

WHILE I'M DRAWING THIS COMIC, I'M ALSO MAKING A MIX TAPE FOR A GIRL I LIKE.



MIX TAPES ARE THE MOST PERFECT FORM OF COURTSHIP FOR PUNK ROCKERS.



FIRST OF ALL, BECAUSE THEY'RE TAPES...

HEY CUTE PUNK BOY, I MADE YOU THIS MIX CD.

OH THANKS, BUT I ONLY HAVE A WALK-MAN THAT I FOUND IN A DUMMASTER.

OH.



SECONDLY, BECAUSE ALL PUNK ROCKERS LIKE MUSIC!

DUDE, HE PUT A FLESHIES SONG ON HERE, HE MUST REALLY LIKE ME!!



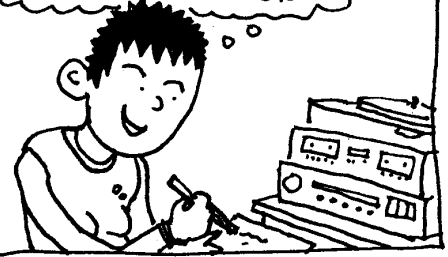
WHEN YOU MAKE A MIX TAPE FOR SOMEBODY SPECIAL, YOU HAVE TO DO A GOOD JOB.

AN EXCELLENT GUIDE TO MAKING GOOD MIX TAPES IS IN THE STEVEN FREARS MOVIE 'HIGH FIDELITY.'



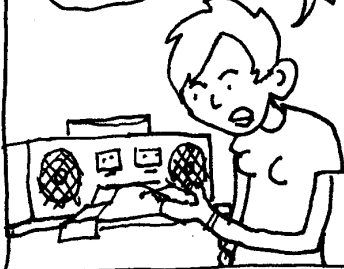
BUT YOU SHOULDN'T TRY TOO HARD...

I'LL MAKE IT SO THAT THE FIRST LETTER OF EACH SONG TITLE SPELLS OUT "I WILL LOVE YOU FOREVER"



OR IT MIGHT COME ACROSS AS TOO CREEPY.

SHE DID WHAT!?



IT'S VERY IMPORTANT TO MAKE SURE YOUR EDITS AND LEVELS ARE CLEAN AND CONSISTENT.

IT'S A LOT OF WORK, BUT IT SHOWS YOU CARE.



AND IT'S ALWAYS A GOOD IDEA TO CHECK YOUR WORK.

LET'S TAKE THIS BABY FOR A SPIN...



AND DON'T HOLD BACK WHEN YOU'RE MAKING THE COVER...

DRAW, PAINT, COLLEGE, WHATEVER. IT'S LIKE YOU'RE MAKING A TINY LITTLE ZINE.



IT MAY SEEM LIKE A LOT OF WORK, BUT REMEMBER, IF YOU DO IT RIGHT...

HEY, I MADE YOU A TAPE...



YOU MIGHT FALL IN LOVE!!



Chrystaei Branchaw's Photo Page



**“Tell your children
they have to die.”
*The Observers***



the

*Interview by Todd Taylor
and Petite Paquet
Introduction by Josh
Pictures by Todd Taylor*

*The Shemps are:
Artie [blatant homoeroticism,
largely atonal vocals]
Bill Florio [four-stringed bass implement]
Squeaky [guitar/violin bow]
Neil [guitar] and
Jim [drums]*

SHEMPs



In asking people if they had ever heard the Shemps, I got all kinds of responses, everything from "That's kind of a dumb name," all the way to "I hear they suck a mean dick." Whether those statements are true or not remains a mystery to me, but after hearing the Shemps, it's not really that important. Naysayers among you are probably saying, "Ah, they're nothing special. They're not reinventing the wheel. They're no match for Le Tigre, etc." They may not be reinventing anything, but in the words of a wiser man than myself, they are rolling around quite successfully using wheels of prior invention! They're debatably the best New York-based Devil Dogs-sounding band since, well, the Devil Dogs, I guess. And besides, they're fun. You remember fun, don't you? Or has your brain been completely demolished by the seemingly endless parade of supposedly wheel-reinventing bands and their "stand in awe as we grandiose rock gods reinvent the wheel before your very eyes" attitude? Fuck all that. Listen to the Shemps. They'll fuck your shit up.

Todd: Alright, Artie, let's start with your escapades with a burrito.

Petite: Where did it happen?

Artie: Mission Records in San Francisco.

Todd: Did you drop the burrito, or did you throw the burrito, or...



Artie: There's a burrito stand next to that place, that record store, and I use that term loosely...

Todd: "Store," or "records?"

Bill: "Place."

Artie: It's right next door, Mission Burritos, so all these kids had burritos inside and I had a burrito, and, you know, they weren't really that good, so people only ate, like, half of them. Then everybody just had them, and they were laying around the club and people were holding them, so they just started getting thrown... by me,

and by other people, and then they were on the floor and I do a lot of, you know...

Todd: Acrobatics?

Artie: Acrobatic moves, I do a lot of interpretive dance. During one of my routines, I think it was *Swan Lake*, I took a dive and snapped my wrist in two places. It was the last note of the last song of the last show of our tour. I jumped up and landed on the burrito and I came down, landed on my ass. I tried to protect my ass, even though my ass probably has a lot more padding than my arms do, and it snapped in two places. And I don't have medical insurance or any kind of insurance because I work for Go-Kart Records. (Artie quite Go-Kart shortly after this interview.)

Bill: And he smelled really bad.

Artie: I smelled horrible. I showed up at the hospital smelling like a homeless person vomited on me. Seriously. And I had to tell them, "Look, I'm not homeless." And it healed wrong.

Bill: Wait, you're making this sound like it's the hospital's fault.

Artie: Okay, here's what happened. They couldn't set it because when it breaks, it

external and holds your arm in place. And I was like, "I don't know if that's really a good idea," and they said, "No, this is normal, this is routine." So they made an appointment for me and I'm a charity case so I would have had to go and stay overnight and get admitted. So I did some research on the internet and I was like, "No, I don't want that shit." And so I went to my school and I found out at my school that I could get insurance if I paid through the fucking asshole. I paid, got insured, had to wait a certain amount of time before my coverage started, and I cut the fucking cast off in my bathtub with a pair of tin snips. I go to the regular orthopedist and act like it's a new injury. "Oh, I fell a few weeks ago and I thought it was sprained but it's not going away." Meanwhile, it's obvious that my arm has been in a cast for about four weeks. So he takes a look at the X-rays and he says, "Oh, this is really old. This was broken." And I'm like, "Oh, I didn't know. I guess I better fix it now that I'm insured." And he's like, "Alright, but it's already almost totally healed and it's healed out of alignment." He puts the new cast on and

Basically, the first doctor fucked me up and I can't sue him because I used a fake identity.

swells up, and they need to let the swelling go down before they can set it and put a cast on it. So I went home on a plane with my arm in a splint, and I had to shower in fucking Floyd's shitty fucking bathroom with one arm. Like, I'm trying to keep the filth away with one arm and I can't use the other arm and it's horrible. I should have made Floyd come in and bathe me.

Bill: He did clean that bathroom regularly.

Artie: I don't believe that. He cleaned it with his own feces if he cleaned it with anything. So anyway, I get home and then I go to the fucking ghetto hospital and lie about my identity and try to get my arm fixed up. Such an involved story, it's so lame. They basically put it in a cast and then I was supposed to come back for a follow-up. And it's in this monstrosity of a cast. And I come back for a follow-up and they're like, "Oh, it's healing wrong. We're going to have to reset it." And they wanted to put an external fixator on my arm.

Todd: What's that?

Artie: It's one of those things where you look like fucking Frankenstein.

Bill: This is the part where we're not laughing about the story, we're just laughing at Artie.

Artie: This is the path my life took when I decided to work for Go-Kart Records. They wanted to put this thing on my arm that was

he's like, "There's not much we can do besides let it finish healing." The original doctor put the cast on so my arm was bent, and he told me to keep it elevated. And the second doctor was like, "It looks like your arm is really stiff up here," and I'm like, "Oh, I don't know why." And he's like, "I want you to keep extending your arm, it's not good to keep it bent like that with this kind of injury." Basically, the first doctor fucked me up and I can't sue him because I used a fake identity. And I asked the second doctor, "Would I ever want to get an external fixator put on this?" And he says, "No, not for this kind of injury. That would be ridiculous. That's for an old person." So now, for life, I have an arm that doesn't really work well.

Bill: And if they had made a better burrito, we wouldn't have this problem.

Todd: Didn't you get into a fight over ketchup packets?

Bill: That sounds familiar.

Artie: That sounds like something Jim would tell you about.

Todd: Like you were throwing ketchup packets out into the crowd and someone got ketchup on them and went to strike you back.

Bill: I think that's a Bugout Society story. We got hurt much worse than Artie so we should shut up. And as Artie

called people for help in New York, people made Bugout Society cracks, like, "Oh, you're moving up in the world, throwing healthier things."

Artie: Instead of throwing White Castle, we were throwing bean burritos.

Bill: I mean, Artie was in horrible pain, but we were actually laughing the whole time in the hospital.

Artie: I was actually calling all my friends at home to see if I could lie about my identity and use their names and their insurance because they all have straight jobs instead of working for Go-Kart Records.

Bill: Do you really want to give them that much advertising? They probably don't even pay for the advertising that's in this magazine.

Artie: Well, I'm still working for them. But yeah, my arm. I can't lift heavy things too often and it hurts.

Bill: That's a lie. He just doesn't want to help us.

Artie: Like when I move furniture it's like, "Ah, shit." It's hard to explain. It's just everyday things that you take for granted.

Petite: You do a lot of ball-grabbing with that hand, though.

Artie: I can do that.

Petite: So what happened in Olympia? Fat girls, c'mon Artie. Spill the beans.

Todd: Which you sing about...

Artie: I do sing about fat girls. Somebody has to.

Todd: Share a lyric.

Artie: "I coming to your party/You're letting me in/I'll find a fat girl/desperate like a hungry pig/I'll take her in the back/For some romance/If she's lucky, I won't shit my pants." It's about Rob from Dick Army.

Bill: Yeah, Rob made out with a fat girl in San Diego and crapped his pants. And wait, even better, he left the crappy pants in the van with him while he slept there so the rest of the trip we had a great aromatic experience.

Todd: Alright, so Olympia.

Artie: Oh, some fat girl was walking by... it was Neal who started it.

Petite: Blame it on someone who's not here, right?

Artie: It was Callahan who started it. I just finished it. We're at a bar and this girl's all in high school and she's, "I'm under twenty-one and I'll go in there anyway. I don't care," and Neal's like, "Yeah, you're a real rebel," and she's like, "That's right, I am a rebel." So I'm like, "Wanna make out?" Because fat girls are usually down for making out. So she's like, "No, I

have a boyfriend," and I'm like, "Okay, fine." And the joke's over. [long pause] And anyway, that's how a bill becomes a law. What was I talking about?

Petite: The van in Olympia.

Todd: Under twenty-one, has a boyfriend...

Artie: Right. So we walk away and this kid comes over and I'm sitting in the van trying to write a set list, which is a joke, and we're sitting in the van and this kid walks up and looks in the window. I make eye contact with him and he walks away real fast. And the kid's like, "You fuckin' bitch!" So I jump out of the van and run after him. I run up to the fucking guy, and I'm like, "What the fuck did you just say?" And he's like, "You're asking girls to make out with you and you don't even know them." And he's got like twenty friends around him and it's just me and Neal. You know, the combined might of both of us couldn't curl a ten-pound weight. And I'm like, "We're just joking around, dude," and he's like, "Alright, you better be," and that was the extent of it. And he left, and I watched him leave because he

Artie: And we weren't even that mad about it because it was something I would have done.

Bill: Either me or Artie have done similar things.

Artie: I did the same shit to Down By Law. I'm not going to get into it.

Bill: You don't want to tell him about that? You might as well publish it since it didn't work.

Artie: I'm not saying anything.

Bill: I'm going to say it since it was my idea. We played with Down By Law at CBGB. Originally, they booked the whole tour as Dag Nasty so they were able to get a very high guarantee. It was like a \$1,500 guarantee and it got knocked down to \$1,200. So, there was \$1,200 made at the door, and mostly it was for Vision, from New Jersey. There were about ten people there to see Down By Law. So at the end of the show, since we had helped this band, the Amazombies, fly in from Seattle and play shows, we went up to Dave Smalley and we were like, "Hey, you think you can

give the Amazombies \$50 since you took the whole door and nobody got paid?" And he was like, "Hey, man, I got three kids to support." So screw him. If he's got three kids to support and he's going on tour and he thinks he can make a living off it and ten people show up, he deserves it. We decided that if he needed gas money we would give it to him, so we filled up his gas tank with sugar and followed them to their hotel room.

Artie: In all defense, he didn't say that. It was his tour manager, because he has a tour manager as a buffer so that he doesn't have to interact with other people - someone who can kiss his ass because he's a fucking asshole. His tour manager's all like, "He has three kids to support," or whatever.

Bill: We know it's alimony payments anyway.

Artie: He just wants to act like a fading rock star instead of getting a job at Starbuck's like a fucking honest dad.

Bill: And he was the one who started all of that, "Hey, we've got to have a scene here," and all of that crap. We never had that kind of message, so screw him.

Artie: He made a big speech about, "Oh, we've got to help each other's bands. This



Bill: My grandpa died in a concentration camp.
Artie: Yeah, he fell out of a guard tower.

knows where the van is, so it did cross my mind, but then he left, so we were like "fuck it." We went in and we played and everything else. At the end of the night, we came out and all four tires and the back window were gone, and he was nowhere to be found.

Bill: Actually, three of the tires were gone, and when the tow truck pulled up, the other one went "pssshhh."

is what a scene is about," that night on stage, and then he got offstage and took all the money from the door. A hundred percent of the money. He's just a total prick. Fuck him, he should just stay at home and be a dad.

Bill: Yeah, get job at UPS, dude.

Todd: Alright, a band name question: Did you name the band the Shemps after the failed pre-Soundgarden Shemps?

Bill: Dave the Spazz came up with that name.

Artie: He'll sue us if we don't give him credit.

Bill: He has this book with hundreds of band names in it, and the only good one in it was the Shemps. And he said, "There was another Shemps, but they were on Mystic," and I was like, "Ah, they don't count." There was like a Led Zeppelin cover band that the guy from Soundgarden was in but that doesn't count either.

Todd: There was a Wisconsin Shemps.

Bill: Yeah, they have like one track on a Mystic comp. Reverend Nørb yelled at me about that, and I told him they don't count. They're from the Midwest, for one thing, and they only had one song on Mystic. And it was bad.

Artie: I want to go on record and say I lobbied really hard for us to change our name to the Negro Spirituals. Bill explained the name the Shemps to me as when you watch "The Three Stooges" and it's an episode with Shemp, you get real disappointed. That sold me on the name.

Todd: So, Bill, you're a wedding photographer?

Bill: Yeah, I'm an editor, actually.

Todd: How did you get into the wedding business?

Bill: When I was fourteen, my dad collected toy trains, and a friend of his in the train club was like, "Hey, you want to hold a light for me on the weekends?" After six months, he was like, "Holy crap, this job stinks. I'm not doing this anymore." But the people he worked for were like, "Hey, we want you to help other people," so all through high school I was making sure that all these morons that they hired for \$100 to film a wedding wouldn't disappear and smoke crack or anything. And then I got a car and I've been doing it ever since. I make more money than my parents editing wedding videos and I've been doing it since I was fifteen.

Todd: What was the most embarrassing moment that you had to watch at a wedding?

Bill: The embarrassing stuff actually happens in a studio, not at the wedding. My boss's husband is a psychopath and he thinks he's a wrestler, and he used to run people's old home movies, like run them to videotape, convert them, and for some people, for ten dollars, he would put some

music on the video. He had a great idea that if he just put one of the blank cable channels on where they just play this easy listening music, he could just put that music over their movies. Unfortunately, at 8:00, that channel turned into the Playboy Channel, so someone's watching their kids at the Christmas tree with the sound of someone getting double penetrated over it. That's my favorite.



Artie: I wish they had double penetration on the Playboy Channel.

Bill: In one issue of my fanzine I wrote this tour diary and I just listed everything I ate for the whole week instead of where I went or what I did. I got tired of writing "Diet Pepsi" every third word, so I put, "DP, DP, DP." Squeaky worked in a video store. He's like, "Hey, didn't you know 'DP' means 'double penetration' when you're talking about porno films?"

Todd: So, Bill, what's the biggest ruse you've pulled as Anne R. Key, the gossip columnist for *Maximum Rock 'n' roll*?

Artie: Norm Arenas almost beat me up because he thought it was me.

Bill: He thought it was you?

Artie: Yeah.

Bill: Did I tell you he's gay?

Artie: No, but he made a reference to the white power band he was in.

Bill: You know what? I got in more trouble for printing stuff that was true than making things up, but the thing that did me in was saying that the fat Donna was pregnant. That's all I wrote, and there were phone calls and law suits and...

Todd: Real law suits?

Bill: I don't know. All I know is I went to

Maximum a couple months afterwards and I was reading a San Francisco newspaper where somebody interviewed Lookout! Records, and all they talked about was the fat Donna and how *Maximum Rock 'n' roll* is wrong. Unfortunately, Tim died and he wasn't there to defend me. But yeah, that's what did me in. I caused a lot of problems. Adrienne Droogas quit *Maximum* because I said she slept with everyone in Minneapolis because, oh, that wasn't true, and I said she gave everyone the clap, which I guess isn't true, I don't know. Brett Matthews threatened me in a club once, but I don't care.

Todd: So what's the most impressive thing you've ever thrown up?

Artie: Thrown up? I don't know what I haven't thrown up. I've thrown up everything.

Bill: He threw up on the first night of our tour, right on stage as soon as we started playing.

Artie: It was the second time I've ever thrown up on stage. I threw up on an American flag once. Not as any kind of statement. It was on the floor and I vomited and it went on the flag. Next thing you know, Ebullition's trying to sign me.

Todd: What do your parents do, Artie?

Bill: Can I say something? Artie's mom, for some reason, has horse noises on her answering machine.

Artie: My mom lives on a farm. She's an accountant. She just collects animals.

Todd: Why isn't she allowed to be on your website?

Bill: She kept leaving messages on the guestbook, like, "Artie's so cute."

Artie: "Good job, Artie!"

Bill: Artie got caught shoplifting veggie burgers in Long Island at Pathmark, and I made a funny hat that said "Pathmark Hall of Fame" and had a picture of Artie, and his mom bought three.

Artie: When I met Bill, it was when Bugout Society played Long Island and I had a learner's permit to drive, and I drove my car through the wall of the club because I was looking at a girl. My mom saw where he mentioned that story online and my mom was like, "You did what with the Buick?" This is like ten years after the fact. And then I wrote an article for *Rockpile* where I mentioned that I spent a weekend in jail in Kentucky for shoplifting, and she was like, "You were in jail?" I had to convince her that I just wrote that to seem cool.

Bill: And now she's going to read this. What were you shoplifting that time?

Artie: [dejected] Gatorade. Gatorade. It was me and the guys from AFI and the Hot Water Music guys at this gas station, and I didn't want to wait in line because I wanted to go to this party after Krazy Fest, and I didn't make it out of the gas station.

Petite: So I hear you have a pretty interesting family history. Tell us about your grandpa.

Bill: My grandpa died in a concentration camp. No, not really.

Artie: Yeah, he fell out of a guard tower [laughs]. But seriously, Jim's grandpa was a war criminal, an SS dude.

Bill: He massacred 2,500 Italian soldiers after Italy went the other way. In Sicily, I think. Jim will tell you it was like 250,000, but I looked it up.

Petite: Jim?

Bill: How many Italians did your grandpa kill?

Jim: [walking by] Two thousand.

Artie: That's only a few hundred more than girls Jim's killed by sleeping with them.

Jim: You want to know about my Nazi history? Chicks dig it. Chicks love the fact that my grandparents were Nazis.

Artie: I know I get off on it. [Jim walks off.] And there he goes.

Todd: How come you guys have a 7" on a French label, and then you have a split 7" on a hardcore label?

Artie: Well, that first single came out with Spazz singing

Bill: It's because Dave the Spazz is a big star in France. He's like Jerry Lewis.

Artie: In France and Belgium. He's like David Hasselhoff.

Bill: Actually, when we were in Japan, we went to this '60s garage record store, and this guy named Pinky was behind the counter. We were like, "Hey, we're from New York," and he goes, "Oh, WFMU?" And Dave's like, "Yes, I'm a DJ there." And then he tried to pick us all up.

Artie: And that hardcore label thing is just that me and Nate from Gloom are really good friends from shows and stuff, and he's been coming to see the Shemps since I started playing in the band.

Bill: We inspired him to beat up a guido.

Artie: He went from one of our shows and beat the shit out of some guido outside who was making fun of his girlfriend, who's Asian. It was really funny.

Bill: Let's stop talking about him.

Todd: How big of a transition was it to go from Milhouse and Indecision to singing for the Shemps?

Bill: I think I should answer this question.

Artie: It wasn't as big of a transition as you'd think because nobody liked me in any band. It was just a new set of people who didn't like me

Bill: We love Artie, for the record. We don't care.

Artie: It wasn't that much of a transition. I just had to figure out how to scream a little bit less.

Bill: I'll tell the story.

Artie: I hate your version of the story.

Bill: Artie wanted to audition, so I gave him

our recording. He's like, "Hey, I'll sing for your band. I'm moving back to New York." And I'm like, "But you suck. You have a horrible voice." I gave him the single and he came up and he sounded like crap. He sounded like a hardcore singer. So then we tried the James Brown cover and he sang it great. He sang it as good as James Brown.

Artie: I could copy James Brown, I just couldn't copy Dave Spazz.

Bill: I gave him a CD with like 500 Sonics songs and two weeks later he was all ready. He's very professional.

Artie: And they got this guy from Puerto Rico who was a fuckin' monkey organ-grinder guy.

Bill: He could play keyboards and drink a martini at the same time, but we were like, "What bands do you like?" And he said the

time that they were around. And Neal, our guitar player, roadied for them also, and we won't let Matt come on tour with us as a roadie.

Todd: What's Matt doing now? Does he have another band?

Bill: Matt has a band called Four Deadly Questions and they're really good. He stands up very straight while he plays guitar, very good posture. Sometimes he's loud.

Todd: What happened to Sue?

Bill: Sue owes me a lot of money. That's all I've got to say.

Todd: What was she on probation for?

Bill: We made that up.

Artie: We would do that to all our friends at home, we would say, "Sue's locked up, we don't know what to do. We've got



Artie: I want to go on record and say I lobbied really hard for us to change our name to the Negro Spirituals

Strokes and Le Tigre and we're like, "Uhhhh..." And then as I was driving him home, he was like, "So, how much money do you guys usually make?" And I'm like, "Oh, sometimes we might get like \$20," and he goes, "Each?" I was like, "That's the question that nobody should ask." I left him at his house and never talked to him again.

Todd: Was Jim really in Reagan Youth?

Artie: He was in the bad era of Reagan Youth.

Todd: What's the overlap between you guys and Dick Army?

Bill: I roadied for Dick Army and Jim played drums for Dick Army for most of

shows to play and we can't afford to stand here and wait for her," and her friends were like weeping and crying, "No, no, don't leave her." That's where that joke came from.

Bill: Sue forgot to tell her boss that she was going on tour last year and she spent the whole time on the phone spelling out computer code to him on her cell phone.

Artie: Me and Jim are the only ones I think who have been in jail.

Bill: Jim said he's never been in jail.

Artie: Oh, he got raped outside a jail.

On the old Addams Family TV show, Morticia Addams used to clip off the flowery end of her roses and keep a vase full of prickly stems. In a similar manner, the hang-over I'm feeling right now is going to prevent me from getting too flowery as I write this little intro to the midget wrestler kings of Minneapolis pop punk, the Fuck Yeahs. Even without my handy little hangover, waxing philosophical about the Fuck Yeahs would be like Joseph Campbell mythologizing about the Hamm's bear or a White Castle hamburger. It would

be like wearing a bee-keeper suit to an orgy or breaking into an interpretive dance at a barroom brawl. There is nothing flowery about the Fuck Yeahs; they are as simple and effective as a toilet plunger. They play uncomplicated, uncluttered good-time punk pop that attacks the feel good points on your body like a Dim Mak master hopped up on Mike 'n' Ikes and Slim Jims. Curious parties, Doubting Thomases and thrill seekers are advised to consult the Fuck Yeah's new 7 inch entitled, "No Farts, No Glory" for proof of what I say.

Here are a few informational tidbits to help you make at least a little bit of sense out of the stew of drunken dialogue the comprises this interview:

Part One:

Interviewees: Jeremy (guitar, vocals,) Carlin (bass,) Takashi (guitar,) Shawn (drummer extraordinaire.)

Takashi, who is Japanese, is also in the band Sweet J.A.P. Interesting questions provided by Paddy Costello. Asinine questions provided by yours truly. Interview took place at an undisclosed downtown Minneapolis watering hole and was hosted by the ever-amiable Mr. Costello. Drinks: Various brands of beer and bloody marys.

Part Two:

Interviewees: Jeremy, Carlin and Shawn. Interview took place at the Fuck Yeahs/Sweet J.A.P./Abusers practice space/drinking emporium. Special Note: Periodic gaps in dialogue are due to the crashing noise of "Arrowroot" baby cookies being thrown like fast balls by certain members of the Fuck Yeahs into the drum set and cymbals. I brought the baby cookies. I thought it was a good idea. Maybe it wasn't. Drinks: kind of warm PBRs.

—Aphid Peewit.

Aphid: After being kind of on-again, off-again over a number of years it seems like you're finally now right on the cusp of getting ridiculously popular. So let's dive right in. Would you guys ever consider signing to a major label?

Takashi: Which label? Major label?

Jeremy: Would we ever consider it?

Carlin: Actually, we're on Interscope.

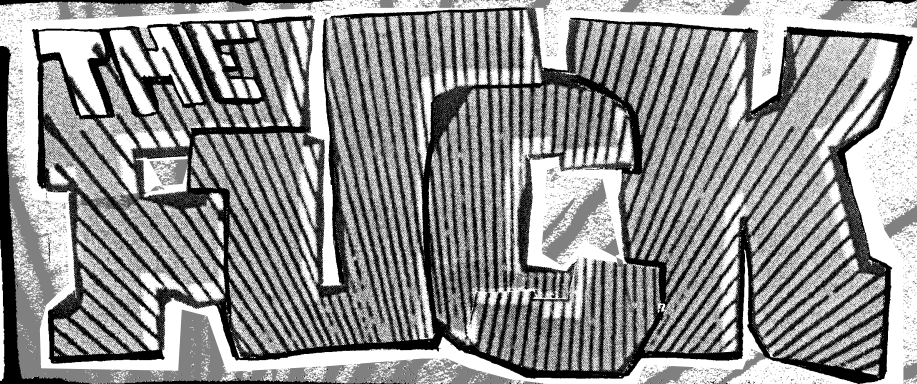
Paddy: I guess the core of the question is: do you guys have any ethics? [laughter] And what are the ethics of the Fuck Yeahs?

Takashi: Ethics? We don't have ethics.

Jeremy: There.

Takashi: That's what we are. No ethics.

Paddy: So the point of Crass was to battle against the hierarchy – being the government and fucking society. The point of Youth of Today was to hip kids to the fact that they didn't need to drink or do drugs to be cool and hang out. What's the point of the Fuck Yeahs?



Interview by Aphid Peewit and Paddy Costello • Photos by Jimmy Fangs

Jeremy: The point of the Fuck Yeahs is to have fun. And fart. [laughter]

Aphid: Do you agree with the reviewer that said you have a sort of "new testament religiosity"?

Jeremy: Wha...? Our religion? Takashi's the only religious one.

Aphid: [to Takashi] But you were the one saying you had no ethics. What's your religion?

Takashi: I started my own religion. My own religion is "have a good time, no matter what."

Jeremy: He's really a Hari Krishna. But he tries to keep it under wraps.

Paddy: Let's cut to the chase: how the fuck have you guys been around for like eight years and you just come out with your first record now?

Jeremy: Not really, though. 'Cause we started the band and it was the Fuck Yeahs and then we did a different band called the Collins and now we're doing the Fuck Yeahs again. So yeah, me and Takashi and Joel and Colin started it and we played for, what, two years or something, until 1998 I think, and then we quit. And then we didn't do anything forever again. And then me and Carlin started doing some shit and then Shawn called me from Iowa one day and he's like, "Dude, you wanna start a band?" I was ready to quit doing the shit altogether myself, but I was like "Hell yeah!" And then we started doing it.

Paddy: So basically you're a band in spite of your music. [laughter]

Jeremy: Well, it's not the same band. It's not at all the same – we just stole the name. From ourselves. [laughter]

Aphid: But you have some similar themes with that earlier incarnation... like UFO songs.

Jeremy: Yeah, but they're different songs. We just aren't very creative. We can't think of much.

Paddy: What's your deal with UFOs?

Jeremy: I've seen a bunch of them.

Paddy: Is that bullshit?

Jeremy: No, it's totally true.

Paddy: How much did you have to drink? [laughter]

Takashi: A lot.

Jeremy: I was a straight-edger when I saw the first ones, 'cause I was six.

Aphid: Was that up around Duluth?

Jeremy: Yeah.

Paddy: Do you think it was by chance you saw UFOs – or do you think they singled you out?

Jeremy: Dude, they're after me. They're coming to get me. And the last time I saw one I was drinking, but there was five of them up in the sky.

Paddy: Where was this?

Jeremy: Up on the North Shore. I was camping and all the sudden this one showed up in the sky and then another one and another one and another one. They were moving closer and then going away. The area where we were camping was lit up like a football field.

Paddy: Did that provide you with any sort of life-long epiphany?

Jeremy: No, it just scared the shit outta me. [laughter]

Paddy: You didn't get a life lesson out of that?

Jeremy: Nope.

Aphid: How could you not?

Jeremy: 'Cause. It was just scary. It made my knees knock.

Aphid: So how is it that you guys didn't wind up on the *No Hold Back* Twin Cities punk comp?

ed, though. Except our old demo tape from before.

Shawn: How many different t-shirt designs have the Fuck Yeahs had?

Paddy: Like seriously. All tallied up.

Paddy: Ooooooh....

Aphid: I smell money to be made.

Paddy: We'll have to do the box set. [laughter]

Jeremy: I don't even remember any of the songs that were on there. Those are like the secret Elvis recordings and shit.

Aphid: But how did you wind up on *Learning Curve*?

Jeremy: [to Paddy] Do you know exactly? How'd it happened?

Paddy: Well, because I wanted to do it.

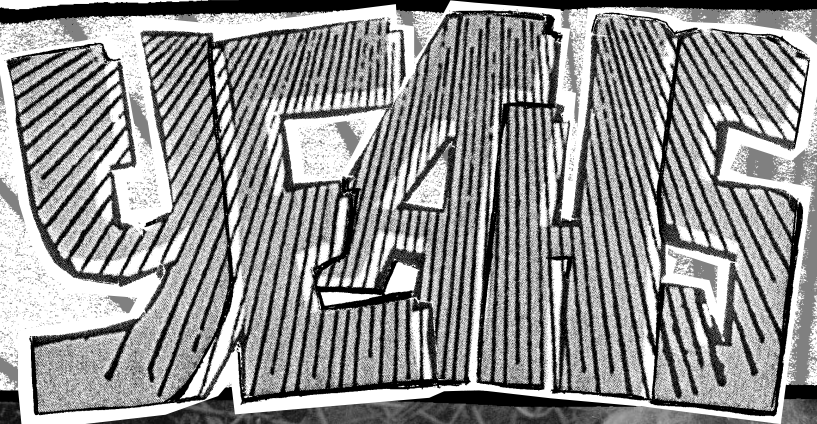
Jeremy: Yeah, I think Paddy wanted to do it really bad and then Rainer kind of...

Paddy: And I was doing *Learning Curve* with Rainer so it ended up on that.

Jeremy: So yeah, that's kinda how it ended up, I guess.

Carlin: 'Cause Paddy said so. [laughter]

Paddy: It was because you guys were bored, homeless, and you looked sad.



How
can you
go
wrong
when
you
take
yourself
to the
very
bottom?

Thanks to Wes@burlsquedesign.com for electronic and design help.

Paddy: Yeah!

Jeremy: I don't know.

Aphid: That's fucked up. You guys should've been on there, in one form or another.

Takashi: It's because everybody hates us. [laughter]

Paddy: See, that's the funny thing. It's the opposite. And that's why I couldn't figure out how you guys didn't wind up on the comp. 'Cause you guys are one of those weird bands – everybody *loves* you. Everyone who's ever seen you, loves you.

Aphid: It's a little sickening, really.

Jeremy: We didn't have anything record-

Jeremy: Uh... a hundred? [laughter]

Aphid: How did you guys wind up on *Learning Curve* and not something like *Nice & Neat*?

Jeremy: How did we wind up on *Learning Curve*, Paddy?

Aphid: I remember a few years back, you guys were considered a Blue Worm band.

Paddy: Blue Worm? Like Brett's label?

Jeremy: Yeah. He was gonna do a 7" of our first one a long, long time ago.

Paddy: You're kidding me.

Jeremy: And we recorded it. Dude, there's lost Fuck Yeahs recordings. I forgot about that.

Jeremy: Well, we're crust punks.

Paddy: We're living in a time where it's pretty easy – you know, you play some shows, meet some people, eventually you end up with a booking agent and maybe you meet somebody from a label and you get some glossy photos taken and they end up in fanzines. When do you figure an ugly fucking band like you guys are gonna figure it all out? [laughter] I've never heard you guys mention two words about a band that has existed in the last fifteen years. Well, I take that back – the Hard-Ons. What do you guys want to do with the band?

Carlin: Play. [laughter] I don't know. I'd like to play more house parties.

Jeremy: Yeah, I'd like to go back to the old roots of doing some crappy shit shows, instead of normal shows. I mean, we obviously aren't like the most serious band.

Aphid: I know that at least one of you hates living in this state. Has the band ever considered making a big career move and relocating to some warmer rock'n'roll hotbed?

Jeremy: If we do relocate, we'll relocate somebody else to play as us. We're gonna start a franchise. We're gonna find some look-a-likes so owe can actually play six towns in one night. [laughter]

Paddy: There's actually two Gallaghers. They tour at the same time.

Carlin: I think that's exactly what he's gonna say, "Fuck those nerds." [laughter]

Aphid: What's your least favorite description of your band?

Carlin: Pop punk.

Aphid: So how would you describe it?

Jeremy: I don't know how to describe it exactly myself. It's not anything original by any means.

Carlin: Well, it is pop punk – but it's faster and stupider.

Jeremy: Pop punk is stupid as hell, well, most of it is. It's just cheesy typical "whine about your girlfriend." I guess if they were whining about it that they'd be some emo band. Actually, yeah, everybody calls us an emo band!

Takashi: We are emo!

Takashi: If I get deported.

Jeremy: Well, we'll just get you a really long cord. [laughter] So yeah, even if we're world-wide, we'll still play. We don't have anything to fight about. We're gonna be geriatric guys sitting in wheelchairs saying, "You remember that one song?" "No, I don't remember." But then again, we don't remember them now anyways.

Paddy: So, in this band, who's the Lennon and who's the McCartney?

Jeremy: I don't even know the Beatles, so I don't know what we're talking about with that.

Paddy: John Lennon played drums.

Aphid: How about the Oasis brothers – who's Noel and who's Liam? [laughter]

Shawn: I think when you have those two people, then you have a reason to break up.

Paddy: So Takashi.... what band do you like being in more, the Fuck Yeahs or Sweet JAP? Or do you like either of them?

Takashi: I don't like both. [laughter]

Aphid: If you guys were at a pot luck picnic and GG Allin showed up with a jello salad, would you eat it? [laughter]

Takashi: I like GG Allin.

Jeremy: I would eat his jello salad if he ate my carp casserole.

Aphid: That seems reasonable enough. So who's your favorite regional giant: Paul Bunyan, Randy Bruer or Big Gust?

Jeremy: I don't know who Randy Bruer is. Takashi doesn't know who Paul Bunyan is. I like Andre the Giant, even though he's not a regional giant. But I prefer him over Paul Bunyan.

Aphid: How come you guys have no songs about giants?

Takashi: That's a good question.

Carlin: Hey, give us time.

Takashi: We didn't think of it.

Jeremy: Because we're all medium and we aren't giant. So we just write songs about medium.

Paddy: Who's gotten the worst injury on stage with the Fuck Yeahs?

Jeremy: We don't really get injured. But we break stuff a lot. Takashi breaks a lot of equipment. I threw my guitar at Colin once and broke it. It got broken pretty good.

Aphid: Why is it none of you have beards or mustaches?

Carlin: I don't think any of us can grow beards or mustaches.

Jeremy: I wish I could grow one in this weather, 'cause it gets fucking cold. What is it, zero out right now? If I could grow a big old Grizzly Adams beard I'd do it. But I can't grow facial hair. I'm a puss.



Aphid: Are there any bitter ex-band members that might someday sue you guys over the use of the band name?

Jeremy: There might be one in Seattle. Our buddy Colin. A super good guy. But he was actually trying to get us to get the band back together a whole bunch of times. But nobody had any interest in it at the time, so....

Carlin: [under his breath] He's gonna kill us....[laughter]

Jeremy: Although, he came to our show and still liked it a lot. But that would be the only bitter former member.

Paddy: Wait. Who's a bitter former member?

Jeremy: Colin.

Paddy: Oh. He's in Seattle now. That's a hot scene. He could be bagging on you guys out there. When this interview comes out he's gonna be like "Fuck those nerds! I used to be in that shit!" [laughter]

Paddy: You guys are emo if stupid is an emotion. [laughter]

Takashi: I think that's it. We are emo.

Paddy: I can't lie. I've been sitting on that line for two days. [laughter]

Jeremy: That's the funny thing. We actually are all totally intelligent people. But with the music we just dumb ourselves down.

Carlin: How can you go wrong when you take yourself to the very bottom? What the fuck? What are people gonna say? [laughter]

Aphid: When you guys eventually break up, what do you think it'll be over?

Jeremy: We'll never break up.

Aphid: Gee, I think I've heard girlfriends say that before....

Jeremy: No, we're like stupid brothers that can't get away from each other. We've already had stuff happen that would break up normal bands.

Carlin: We're gonna have a Fuck Yeahs grow-a-mustache contest. [laughter]

Aphid: So it's not like when Crucial Youth say, "If you don't shave clean, You're not part of the scene", or whatever?

Jeremy: I kind of agree with their philosophy. I don't like bands that have beards or mustaches. Hair's over-rated. We have a very strict image we stick to.

Carlin: That's in the contract: no mustaches.

Jeremy: That's the one thing that would break our band up is if someone doesn't follow the band image and grows a mustache.

Carlin: Jeremy's the only one who has anything to do with any of that.

[cookie attack]

Jeremy: There are still songs that we play live that I'm just like "Blah, blah, blah, blah."

Carlin: I think that's our secret little trick that makes us write songs faster than some people. 'Cause Jeremy can fake...

Jeremy: Oh, I fake a lot of them. [laughter]

Carlin: He can fake lyrics in time, like impromptu. Which is like a weird skill.

Jeremy: I'll just think up words that don't even mean anything. Eventually, we have lyrics for songs.

Aphid: The late breaking news, of course, is that since the first interview Paddy has joined the band. Just how did that all work out?

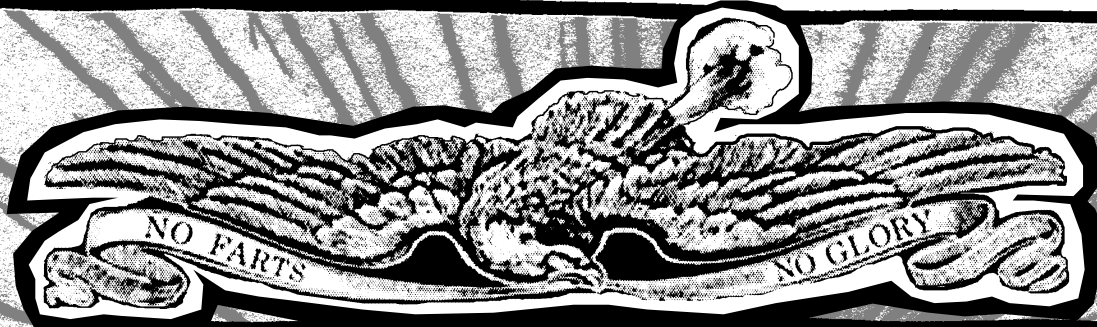
Shawn: Who? Christmas pancakes?

Aphid: What? Christmas pancakes?

Jeremy: Yeah, that's Paddy's name. Christmas Pancakes. [laughter] But anyway, he kept asking me or asking Carlin "Dude, I wanna play with you guys, blah, blah, blah."

Carlin: He's got a big mouth. He talks about a lot of things. But after a while it started to be like more than a drunken...

Shawn: Well, he came up at one show



PART TWO

Aphid: Do you have any standard procedure for writing your songs?

Carlin: 90% of it comes from just fucking around at practice.

Shawn: I think the better ones come from there.

Jeremy: Mostly we just write them at practice in two minutes. We go to practice and we just start playing nothing. And that nothing turns into something, kind of. But then those somethings kind of really are nothing.

Carlin: I think it's how long Jeremy and I've known each other and played the same shit with Shawn, our chemistry's tight. Takashi just fills stuff up.

Aphid: So how do you sift through the raw material and decide what to keep?

Jeremy: It's what we remember.

Aphid: But I just watched you guys practice and there's obviously some editing that takes place.

Carlin: Tonight was weird though. That's not average. Most of the time they're actually a lot faster and a lot more impromptu. And they'll be good. And if after we record it, we'll remember it at practice later and we'll do it again. And once in a while, if it's really good, it'll stick.

Shawn: But then it changes a little bit because you forget little parts.

Jeremy: If we remember a song it's usually one we'll keep. 'Cause if we remember them, then they're good. But if we don't remember them, they weren't worth keeping.

Aphid: What about the lyrics?

Aphid: So will Paddy be contributing to the song list?

Jeremy: Oh yeah. Everybody does.

Shawn: It kind of sucks with me being out of town. We haven't had a chance to write anything. We come in and it's like, go through the set, read it off the wall, run through those songs, and then go play a show.

Jeremy: Yeah, for the last year we practice twenty minutes before we play a show and that's it.

[cookie attack]

Carlin: That last show when Takashi was on Hideo's shoulders. I mean, we played kind of bad but everyone's like, "What the fuck?"

Jeremy: That one went over great.

Aphid: Where was that at?

Jeremy: At Grumpy's where we were all wasted completely off our asses and couldn't even play. Takashi was passed out. We had to wake him up to play the show. It was great. We sounded like shit, but it was a great show.

Carlin: It was just goofy, but it was badass because it was...

Jeremy: Stupid. [laughter]

Carlin: That Triple Rock show was kind of a bust, but apparently it was all right.

Shawn: Oh, you mean the one where we were the Suck Yeahs? [laughter]

Jeremy: That one was all right. The one before was our worst show ever, though. When I broke my head open. That was the worst one ever. I was hung over.

Carlin: I think if we could all tune up when we played, we'd be probably a step ahead.

and he's like, "Dude! Did you hear? I'm playing in your band!"

Aphid: So the rumors are true. It's for real.

Jeremy: Yeah, it's for real. We'll see how long it lasts. But it's for real for right now. That breaking news is true. I know we're going to record this summer and he's actually going to at least record with us for this next thing. So he'll at least be around that long.

Carlin: If he starts paying space rent, then it's official. [laughter]

Aphid: How do you think his songwriting style will blend with yours?

Shawn: The songs he brings are cool.

Jeremy: It's like the songs he writes, at least the ones so far, it's a little more poppy. But dude, they match our poppier songs too. They're the same exact kind of songs.

Shawn: And it's not like he's writing everybody's parts. It's like he just goes "Okay, here's what my idea is." And everybody just plays.

Carlin: My worst fear is that one day someone's gonna say "Dude, you're in the Fuck Yeahs? You're in Paddy's band?" [laughter] Which is all right. I guess he deserves it.

Shawn: And he's super cute.

Aphid: Speaking of his cuteness, will he be permitted to indulge in nakedness on stage like he sometimes does with D4?

Shawn: I think anybody can pretty much do what they want.

Jeremy: Takashi always wants to get naked whenever he's drunk. But he never does. He's like "I will get naked! I will get naked tonight! You get naked too!"



THE FUCK YEARS

Shawn: Takashi gets shots. He just gets fucking wild. I mean, that one show at the Rock Room – it was awesome. ‘Cause when his guitar breaks, it’s like “What to do?” Go in the audience! And he comes back and he brings back the guitar just destroyed. It’s like “Hey, where’s the bridge?” So we go out in the crowd and find the pieces. [laughter]

[cookie attack]

Shawn: [to Carlin] You whippin’ cookies at me?

Aphid: Carlin, I thought you would like those Arrowroot baby cookies. That’s why I brought them.

Shawn: He likes whippin’ ‘em at me.

Carlin: I do like them. I ate a whole tube of them. [laughter]

Aphid: I know that Damage Deposit has had some problems at their shows with ninjas. Have you guys had any ninja problems?

Jeremy: No. I think that’s a hardcore kid thing. But we *are* ninjas. [laughter]

Shawn: Who the hell’s Damage Deposit?

Aphid: Felix Havoc’s band. And Ben from Sweet JAP.

Jeremy: Yeah, everybody knows we’re real ninjas. Dude, we play shows and we sneak up on stage so quick that nobody even sees us and then we jump out of the shadows. But no, we don’t have ninja problems at our shows. Hopefully we will though. But actually, I don’t think we’ll ever have ninja problems ‘cause we’ll take care of them.

Shawn: We’ll represent.

Aphid: Who would you rather do a show

with: Venom or Agony Column?

Jeremy: Agony Column.

Carlin: Agony Column for sure, dude.

Jeremy: I would definitely want to play a show with Devil Chicken and Bat Lord! [laughter] Well actually, Mantis, Abaddon and Cronos are pretty badass too. [laughter] But Devil Chicken and Bat Lord are way better. Agony Column was one of the best I’ve ever seen for how bad they sucked. [sings] “God, guns and guts!”

Aphid: All right, here’s another probing question: who would you rather have guest sing for your band: Tiny Tim, GG Allin, El Duce or Wesley Willis?

Carlin: Wesley Willis, dog.

Shawn: Can we have Tiny Tim *and* Wesley Willis?

Aphid: Actually, you can’t have any of them ‘cause they’re all dead.

Shawn: When did Wesley die?

Jeremy: Last year.

Shawn: No shit.

Aphid: Shawn’s been in Iowa. He doesn’t know any of this.

Jeremy: Wesley Willis, for sure, because he’s almost as retarded as us. I like Tiny Tim though.

Aphid: Now, with three guitarists you guys are kind of like a southern rock band. Sort of a punk Molly Hatchet.

Jeremy: Totally.

Aphid: One more guitar and you’ll be in Blue Oyster Cult territory.

Shawn: Actually, Billy (from D4) the other day – he was really drunk at the bar – and

he was like (imitating Barney from *The Simpsons*) “I’m gonna join your band too!” [laughter]

Aphid: Hell, why not. All aboard.

Carlin: We’ll have to get Hideo (from Sweet JAP) to play too.

Aphid: Do you think there’ll ever be a Fuck Yeahs interview with *Profane Existence*? [laughter]

Jeremy: Wha, wha, wha, wha... [laughter]

Carlin: I doubt it.

Jeremy: Well, if you ever see us at a Free Mumia rally, then maybe you’ll find us in there. But I doubt that’ll ever happen.

Aphid: There’s another rumor floating around about you guys. Apparently you’re possibly going to do a split record with Henry Fiat’s Open Sore?

Jeremy: I’ve been talking to him. We’re trying to do our next record as a split 7” with those guys. It sounds like it’s probably gonna happen. Paddy and I are trying to get a thing where they’re gonna come over here in September and tour.

Shawn: That’s fucking awesome.

Jeremy: As far as the split 7”, it’s depending on when they record their next thing. And

Henry Fiat’s recording a solo single right now, too. So we’re getting them to come over here and tour the U.S. As long as they make it here, it’ll be all right.

Carlin: That would be awesome. But I’m content to play with Kruddler. [laughter]

Aphid: Hey, you’re a punk band, right? Do you guys use those new Misfits guitar strings?

Shawn: Are they black? [laughter]

Aphid: I don’t know. I haven’t bought them. Just seen them in stores. But they have the Misfits skull on the front of the package. They’re real life punk rock guitar strings. I’m surprised you guys don’t know this shit.

Jeremy: Well, we aren’t punk rock though. We’re a folk group. [laughter] I only play strings that are endorsed by Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs.

Carlin: It’s nine o’clock. I gotta go to work.

Aphid: I guess my questions about Objectivist Epistemology and Karl Popper and Logical Positivism are gonna have to wait.

Jeremy: Actually, we’re very positive. We’re more positive than Crucial Youth. The *Posi-Machine* looks like a negative record compared to our shit.

The Fuck Yeahs: Learning Curve Records, c/o Amrep, 2200 4th St. NE Minneapolis, MN 55418 <www.learningcurverecords.com>



HASIL ADKINS

PART TWO

INTERVIEW
BY
BRADLEY
WILLIAMS



PHOTOS
BY
MIKE
COMER

OUT TO HUNCH

Welcome to the second half of the Hasil Adkins interview. In this installment you'll find crookedness, drunkness, some driving, jokes, Halloween in the hills and much more! Put the politics down. Turn off the tube, and grab a beer while I think about what needs to be said...

Hasil is a true genius, and there is none other like him. He has inspired many people in all parts of the county, the Earth, the moon, and Mars. I'd wanted to give them all a chance to say something about Hasil in this intro, but that would have gone on for pages. With a little searching you can most likely find a way to mail him a letter and tell him what all good he's done for you all.

This interview only gets started, a little, into the mind and the life of the most overlooked living country music legend, and with that I'll let this one lose.

(Bradley and Hasil pick up Part Two of the interview where Part One left off: talking about other one man bands. -ed.)

Hasil: I met Bob Log III, out in LA. I'd heard about him, but that's where I met him. They got a movie out with me and him in it. *(Let Me Be Your Band)*

Bradley: What's that called?

Hasil: It ain't out. It's coming out... wait a minute... ah, I can't tell you... wait a

minute... Eugene Samborn you know him don't you?

Bradley: Eugene Cyborg.

Hasil: Signburn Samborn or something they call him.

Bradley: I don't know.

Hasil: He's got one boy and two girls playing for him. He don't play nothing. He can, but he mostly sings. He takes that overcoat off in that movie and throws it away and throws his hat away and gets with it. He's crazy, I tell you. He's from down in North Carolina, down in that country down in there. He's pretty well known. A lot people like him. Whatchacallit - Bob Log was talking about him. He said that sucker man took a mop handle and pitched it and entertained people for thirty minutes, and he said, "I know I can get out there and do stuff to entertain people," and he started up what he started.

Bradley: Yeah.

Hasil: Have you ever seen Jessco?

Bradley: I've never seen him but on video. On TV.

Hasil: What do you think of him? [pause] He's crazy as hell. He is. [laughter] He's a good feller, he is. He don't get out but once every 10,000 years or so.

Bradley: Really? [laughter]

Hasil: He just puts on a show every now and then.

Bradley: Is it just him and a guitar player?

Hasil: I used to play with his daddy. His daddy could tap dance. Jessco's pretty good, but... why he'll tell you he couldn't do nothin' what his daddy could do. His daddy could dance, man, you talkin' about dancing. We used to go out and play and he'd get up and dance. On shows. And high school. But he could dance, his daddy could. Jessco can do all right, but nothin' like his daddy. He knows it, too. He said, "I can't do nothing like him, but I can do pretty good." I said, "Well, right."

Matt: Was there a dance hall or anything to perform in that you guys would play at?

Hasil: I don't play there no more. I quit that a long time ago. I wore them all out, I think! [laughter] No. They want you to but they can't pay the money. So I ain't playing.

You see them t-shirts? I got about four or five. You see this last one here? Come out with. See what you think of it. Got my big white hat and me right on it.

Bradley: [Reading the front of the shirt] "Hunch that thing, shake that thing."

Hasil: I ain't been wearing that hat in a long time and they put that hat right on there. Pretty good ain't they?

Matt: Yeah. These are nice.

Hasil: Jim wouldn't wear one. He said, "Now, you see these old t-shirts I got? I don't wear nothing over these old ones, but I am gonna put one of yours on now." And I said, "That's good, it's about time." He done a pretty good job on it, didn't he?

Bradley: What else does Jim do?

Hasil: Do what now?

Bradley: What else does he do?

Hasil: He's managing me is what he's doing now. I put him to work! He's got more than a handful. I said, "You ain't crazy. You'll be crazy before I get through with you."

Bradley: He seems like he's doing pretty good with it.

Hasil: He is. He's doing good at it, he is, for no longer than he been at it.

Bradley: Does he want to put records out or anything like that?

Hasil: Yeah. He's starting his own company now and everything.

Bradley: What's his company?

Hasil: A Hunchkin Label. He's always figured, and I didn't say nothing, then I said that sounds pretty good. He said, "You think that'd sound alright?" I said, "Yeah, that'd sound alright." He smokes that pot. He's trying to get off of it. He's slow man. [laughter]

Bradley: So, do you smoke pot?

Hasil: No. I tried it. I can't smoke that.

Bradley: Why not?

Hasil: It shakes me apart. Had to got to the hospital four or five times and I said, "I ain't foolin' with that no more." A lot of people loves it. I know everybody smokes it. I can't smoke it. I tried it. I can't. I ain't like Clinton. I tried 18, 15, 20 times. [laughter] It tears me up, it does. I can drink, but I can't smoke that pot.

Bradley: I know what you're saying.

Hasil: Do you smoke it?

Bradley: No, I don't like the shit.

Hasil: It tears me all to pieces – it does, man. I can't smoke that. I never would get nothin' done.

Bradley: If I need to pass out and I've been drinking, every now and then I'll take a pull to knock me out, but if I'm hanging out, like coming over here today, there'd be no way. I'd be running to hide across the creek.

Hasil: It gets me like that. I can't go with that. I've tried it. I give it a hard try, but no. Over the years, I can't smoke it. I've tried all kinds of it. They offer it to me. I say, "I can't smoke that." I can drink, but I can't smoke that.

Bradley: Yeah. Beer don't bother me either, but that stuff does.

Matt: I bet it gets dark out here at night.

Hasil: Most nights it's as quiet as can be. They got all them mines up in there, but they ain't too noisy. They got a lot of people going in and out trying to get that money out there, but other than that, it's pretty quiet. You know, pretty still. Amy (Hasil's girlfriend) said, "I can't wait to get out of this city." She was raised in the city. "Car horns blowing twenty-four hours a day." I said, "Well, you can sing this song [in a high voice] "Oohh, I hear car horns 'a blowing night and day." [laughter] She's trying to get away from the city. Her people's rich, she said. [raising his voice] "I don't want to live this way." They bought her a big Jaguar, and she said, "I sold it and got me a little 'ol small car." She said, "I didn't feel right running in that, people just looking at me. I sold it. I took it in and traded it in. They got mad, her daddy and mother did. "Well I got a real good deal on it. He didn't change me too much to move it." The Jaguar was worth more than the car that she got and she had to get it moved. I said,

"You done good." She said, "I don't like this kind of life." I said, "That's good." She said, "You gone make me a hillbilly?" I said, "That's right. I'm gonna tear you up and you gonna have to make one." She said, "Well I..." I said, "Just hold in there, you'll make one sooner or later."

Matt: Where does she live?

Hasil: Huh?

Matt: Where does she live?

Bradley: Minnesota.

Hasil: She wanted to make a hillbilly. She's off in Minnesota, a Yankee. I said, "Well, you go up to New York and you see one them Yankees up there, and look right straight at him." They're supposed to be smart. Say "Man I'm more ignorant than what you are." Then watch 'em look at you. They say, "Well, there must be something wrong with him." Just meetin' one of 'em up on the streets in New York. "Man, I'm ignorant than what you are."

Hasil: Why don't ya'll go down to Tooters and get me something to eat? Save me from cooking. I've been cooking so much.

Bradley: Tooters?

Hasil: Tooters Biscuit World. You ever eat there?

Matt: No, I never have.

Hasil: Amy wanted to put one of them in up in Minnesota. They ain't got one up there. Oh, they got good food, anything you want.

Bradley: How far away is that?

Hasil: Tooters Biscuit World. They got anything you want. They fix it the way you want it. There's no other way you can get it. If it don't suit you, they fix it the way you want it. You tell them and they fix it right there. They have got good food. Everybody eats there, here. They got one down there in Danville, below Madison there. It's been there about twelve of fifteen years now. It's

doing real good. But they got the good food. But they're good at it, the way they fix it. They got good cooks. They're known for that, you know? Have they got any of them in Washington, D.C., do you know?

Matt: No, they don't have a one.

Hasil: Tooters. That's the name of it there. Tooters Biscuit World.

Matt: I think we passed one coming in.

Bradley: How far back was it?

Matt: It was a while back that way.

Hasil: They got them in LA, ain't they?

Bradley: Oh, hell no. A biscuit in LA? You mean a taco? No biscuit. You mean a piece of bread?

Hasil: Yeah, them biscuits are good man. They make them real big ones and small ones, and every which way you want. Then they put eggs and bacon and sausage. Man, I mean it's that high, (sizes it out with his hands) the way they fix 'em. And everybody that go in there say, "Well, one's all I could eat. Can't eat no more than one."

Bradley: What they got to eat back there in Madison?

Hasil: Well, that's right here. Danville and Madison are both in together. You come through that a way didn't you?

Bradley: We came the long way. We didn't know where the hell we were. We're going through towns that say Glendaniel...

Matt: Unincorporated.

Bradley: Unincorporated.

Hasil: What'd it say?

Bradley: Unincorporated. It'd be like Glendaniel Unincorporated, Uneda Unincorporated. We keep drivin' and following the creek and the train tracks all the way up. We thought we were going the short way. Because on the map it was closer.

Matt: It's kind of a...

**I SAID, "YOU
AIN'T CRAZY.
YOU'LL BE CRAZY
BEFORE I GET
THROUGH
WITH YOU."**



Bradley: Long way.

Matt: It's curvy. Real curvy.

Hasil: They got them. They call it a Big Tater Dinner. Man, it's good you get all you can eat. They got hash brown taters, gravy and eggs and bacon and sausage and everything mixed together. Boy, you talkin' about good. They are good. You get a big plate of it.

[long pause]

Hasil: It ain't far. It's about six or seven miles down the road there.

Bradley: There's one in Madison?

Hasil: Madison, Danville, it's all there together.

Bradley: [to Matt] You want to hit the Biscuit World? Tooters.

Hasil: They got Dairy Queen and Tooters and Taco Bell...

Bradley: If we go get biscuits, you gonna ride with us?

[pause]

Hasil: Yes, I guess I could. You like to, we could go up to Danville up there where they have a lot of parties. They probably got a party going on now if you want to go up. That's down there in Uneda, way back, if you want to go up that way. We can go up in a few minutes if you want to. You'll probably like it up there.

Bradley: [to Hasil] You want to go eat?

Hasil: I want to bring it home with me. I eat at night. I don't eat it all at one time. Just eat a bit alone. I've eat that a way all my life. I eat me a bite or two then work a while, then eat me a bite or two, and drink another beer and work a while. [excited] We'll go if you want to. I'll go with you. Let's ride up to Davis awhile and see what's going on. It's just right up the road there. Just a little ways off the road. It's hard top. It's a good road.

Bradley: We ain't got no pick up truck so we can't hit no big ruts.

Hasil: Oh, no, no.

Bradley: I'll walk up a hill.

Hasil: It's hard top. Did you drag coming over.

Bradley: Huh?

Hasil: Did you drag in that car coming over?

Bradley: A little bit. When we started coming down.

Hasil: You gotta watch out for them ditchers. Get up on the side of them ditchers and hold on. On your right or left one. If you go right down through the middle, you will drag. That's where that water come down off the highway and warsh 'em all out.

Bradley: So you gotta hit the edges.

Hasil: Let's go down there and see what's going on. They'll fix it to go or whichever way you want to do. But they'll fix it to take out with you. Or anything,

you know? Let me get one of them beers. I want to take that with me.

[Getting up to go to the car.]

Bradley: You want me to put these in the fridge?

Hasil: No. you can't get nothing in there. It's full.

[We drive on back in towards Madison or Danville, I don't know which. Maybe we hit both, but when we got to Tooters we found it was really called Tatums and they were

think so." Freddy Krueger put out some movies. He made a lot of money, he did. I like his movies, I do. She don't like 'em. I said, "What do you mean you don't like 'em? He may be some kin to you, and worth you something." She said, "I don't like scary movies." I said, "Well, good."

Matt: What's your favorite scary movie?

Hasil: Huh?

Matt: What's your favorite scary movie?

Hasil: They got so many. I like 'em all, really. I like Boris Karloff's doings. Buddy, he made some good ones. I thought he did. [To Matt] You like Boris Karloff movies?

Matt: I like Vincent Price.

Hasil: Boris really tried to invent a human being. He tried to make one, but he couldn't get it made.

Got this old fella, Jamie. He was out in the country, stuck in the mud. In a thirty-seven Chevy. Reeceheeeheee and haaaaa. [truck sounds] He couldn't get out. He looked up over the mountain and there's a castle up there and the lights was on. There weren't no other place to go, and it's just pouring down rain, and he said, "Well, I just got'a get some help." So he went up there and knocked on the door [Hasil knocks on the dashboard] Eheeeehhhheeee-heeyyy [Hasil sounds out the creaking of the door.] Boris Karloff said, "Why, Amy!" I mean "Jamie." He said, "Ha. I never thought I'd see you up here." "Oh, oh, no," he said. "You know when we went to college and they thought I was crazy? You didn't think..." He said, "Oh, no, no, no, I didn't think you was crazy." [aside] He was scared to death and trying to get away. He said, "Oh, no, no. A little bit unusual, but not crazy." [aside] He was making all kinds of little

women. He said, "What's all these people running around?" He said, "That's my new invention I'm working on." Scared him to death. He said, "Oh, oh, oh. Not crazy, just a little bit unusual. I didn't say you was crazy. Just a little bit unusual, I didn't say you was crazy, just a little bit unusual, man." [laughter] He had to get out of it someway.

One time, this 'ol drunk was going down the road on Sunday mornin', and this 'ol preacher was in behind him. And he was a-weavin' across the lines back and forth in a pickup truck, and he said, "That poor soul up there. He's gonna wreck and kill himself." Then he thought out loud. He said, "Boy, I better hit the gas on this thing and get out around that drunk before he runs me



**(PICTURED ABOVE AND ON THE FACING PAGE)
VARIOUS ITEMS FROM HASIL ADKINS' HOUSE.**

closed. So we rolled over to the local KFC and picked up three orders of popcorn chicken and some tater wedges. From there we drove around town a little bit. There didn't seem to be that much going on, and when we did pass some teenagers standing on the side of the street, Hasil rolled the window down and yelled "Hey!" I guess they jumped 'cause Hasil got a kick out of it and let into a series of different skat-guitar songs. As we got out of town, things quieted down in the car for a few minutes.]

Hasil: What's your girlfriend's last name? Amy what?

Matt: Qurales.

Hasil: Mine's Krueger - Freddy Krueger. I said, "You kin to him?" She said, "I don't

off the road and kills me.” So he hits the gas and goes out there, and hits a slick spot, flip over, and go over the mountain. Bang. Crash. Boom. All the way to the bottom. And that drunk backs up in that pickup truck and looks out over the mountain and says, “Are you hurt, preacher?” “Nooo. Thank you. I’ve got the lord ridin’ with me.” And he the drunk said, “Well, you better let him ride with me ‘cause you gonna kill him the way you doin’.” [laughter]

Bradley: Shit.

Hasil: One time, this ‘ol man, he went out – he was way back, you know old age – he had to figure out some way to make money. He said, “Well, go out there and put up signs on billboards.” And they put a big sign up; “It’s a coming.” He left it up about two weeks. People just kept ah lookin’ at it around that town. He put up another sign about two weeks later; “It’s ah coming.” They were wonderin’ what that was, you know, just kept lookin’ up wonderin’ what that’s gonna be. He come back about another month later and put up another sign. It said, “It’s ah coming and it’s gonna be right here in your town and everybody wants to see it.” Well, everybody got interested started wonderin’ what it is. The night of the show, he come back and told what it was gonna be on the sign. Oh, the place was packed. He was takin’ up all the money. He just had two people workin’ with him. Said, “Well, the show’s about ready to go on. You better go back there and pull the curtains so the people can see the show.” Well, he went back there and pulled the curtains, and here’s another big sign. It said, “It’s Gone.” [laughter] They paid to see that sign. People probably killed him before he got out of town. He was selling signs, man. It wasn’t no joke. It’s gone. [laughter]

Matt: You get a lot of snow up here?

Hasil: Sometimes. It ain’t been in the last few years, but we’ll probably get it this year – a big one the way, they’re talkin’. Yeah, it used to get four feet deep back here. Everything’s blocked. You can’t move or do nothin’.

Bradley: What do you do for food and warmth?

Hasil: You stay in. Hold off till it lets off, then go out.

Bradley: In Robinson they got these big towers that the coal come dropping out of...

Hasil: Yeah. Them temple things?

Bradley: Yeah.

Hasil: Yeah. They pull coal out of all them mountains with them things. They quit haulin’ and went to pullin’ with them things

– back over the ground and stuff. It goes all the way back over here, back past where I live and ever’thing.

Bradley: They’ve got a lot of coal piled up out here.

Hasil: I know. Oh they’ll get it all before they quit. There won’t be none left. Too much money in it.

Bradley: Do people get pissed about that?

Hasil: Oh yeah. They wanted to take the tops of the mountains off and take it out that’a way.



Matt: I guess it’s a lot of people’s livelihood. A lot of people’s jobs are at stake.

Hasil: Progress, they call it. I say, “Yeah. Go, progress. We ain’t gonna have nothin’, just level it all off.” It’ll be all level before you know it.

[Hasil goes back to telling jokes.] There’s this one time the boy and girl went on in town and parked in the dark, back over the bridge. Fooled around there about five or ten minutes, and that boy said, “Hey baby, I wish I had me a flashlight.” She said, “I wish you did too ‘cause you been eatin’ grass all night, man.” He wanted a flashlight so he could find it. Said, “I wish I had me a flashlight.” She said, “I wish you did, too.”

Matt: We about at your driveway?

Hasil: Right up here. Slow down now or you’ll drag. Slow down or you’ll drag. Hold it over here as close as you can. There you go. Now don’t get too far or we’ll go over the hill. I’m on this side. Most people come down right. You see where ever’body drives? I say you ain’t supposed to do that. You go up one way and come out another. That’s the way you keep it patted down. When they run in the same tracks, that’ll raise that middle up. It’ll keep comin’ up when it gets wet, bowing up. Before you know it, you ain’t got no mufflers or anything.

[We pull back up to Hasil’s trailers.]

Matt: How’d you get that tour bus down here?

Hasil: Drove it down here.

Hasil: Look at that rabbit. This bottom’s full of rabbits, it is. You can go down the back way there and they’re runnin’ ever’which way. That dog there – Rat – he caught two. He out run ‘em. I said, “You better run fast.” He did, and I said, “That’s alright now. Go back and get another one.”

Matt: I can’t believe you got that bus down here.

Hasil: That road is wider than what you think it is, with all them weeds growed all the way. [Hasil directs Matt to drive right up to his front door.] Go on now right over yonder.

[We all get out and head back into the house. I stop and play with Rat for a minute.]

Hasil: Just give me mine. I’ll eat it. Some girl up in Bloomington, Indiana put up on the internet, and said, “Buddy, I’ve never been in the groove so fine and so happy in my life, and I never been so sad, and I’m tryin’ to figure it out.” ‘Cause I cut the songs that’s on there and she’s tryin’ to figure

‘em out. But she loved the show and that’s the only thing that counts. Jim said, “Oh, that’s good. She come across good with it, the way she figured it out. Sad and lonely and good and in the groove.”

Bradley: [With a mouth full of chicken] What goes on for Halloween around here?

Hasil: Ah, they do everything. Block the road.

Bradley: They block the road?

Hasil: Get tires and coffins and set ‘em on fire with gasoline. Law’s got to get out – fire department and everything’s got to get out – and put it out. They do!

Bradley: They’re raising some hell on Halloween.

Hasil: I been out there on Halloween I know how it goes. You can’t

get no place. You try to put it out and they throw rocks at you – they do – and big poles.

Bradley: They up in the woods?

Hasil: Yeah, up in the rocks and the mountains, where they can see you. I've seen them burn the highway up – they did – and you have to turn around and go back the old way. They couldn't get close. They had a

Hasil: You got videos of 'em?

Matt: I took some photos of them.

Hasil: I've got videos of them. Crazy, man. They're playin' in New Orleans. Halloween.

Matt: With you?

Hasil: Yeah same show.

Matt: You gonna be in New Orleans for Halloween?

out, man. Cut some more songs in that territory and let's get a whole album of that kind of songs."

Bradley: Is this the set up you use when you're playing?

Hasil: Uh huh. Where you can get to 'em quick. You have to be quick. Tryin' to keep the guitar going and everythin' else at the same time.

YOU CAN GO FASTER IF YOU TAKE YOUR SHOES OFF.

bunch of boys and girls throwin' rocks, and they tried to get in there to put it out and they wouldn't let 'em. They just kept throwin' rocks at 'em. "You come out of them woods!" They wouldn't come out. I was there. I had to back up and go the other way. Rocks was flyin' ever'which way. They had the whole, big, wide bridge, man. Half of this trailer and over the wall there, the whole highway up. Tires and stuff. They had everything piled up. Logs and everything burnin'.

Bradley: You get a lot of people coming down here?

Hasil: Yeah. I stopped it, though. Too many. They run you crazy. Coming all hours of the night and day. I say, "I cain't put up with this." 'Bout time you get sobered up, here comes another bunch. "You want to drink?" "Awh, I quit."

Bradley: I hope we didn't mess you up coming by.

Hasil: No, no, no. I love for you all to come. A lot of 'em around, just want to come. I said, "Don't do that. Let me know before you come." And I tell 'em, "No, you cain't come. I'm busy. I'm workin' on tons of stuff. Tryin' to." It was awful – blowin' on the horns, knockin' on the doors, beatin' on the windows, and beatin' everything. And I said, "Hey! I'm tryin' to sleep some." They don't pay no attention to that. They didn't, but they do now.

Bradley: Did you get the baseball bat after them?

Hasil: Yeah. I had to get everything after 'em.

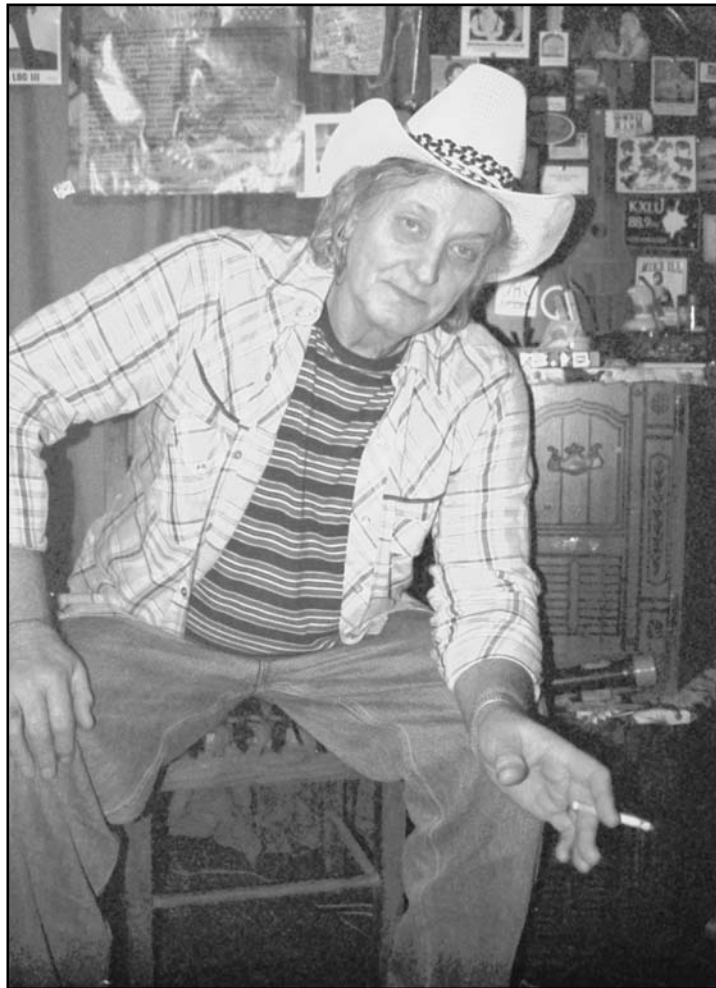
Matt: You got a new record coming out pretty soon?

Hasil: Just any day.

Matt: All right. I've seen the Demolition Doll Rods.

Hasil: I put on a lot of shows with them. They're crazy. You like 'em?

Matt: Yeah.



Hasil: Yeah, Halloween.

Matt: How long to you usually go out on the road for?

Hasil: We're getting' ready to go out for two or three months at a time. We're campaigning! Gonna make a song about Bush. They said, "Well, you get the song made and we'll put it out and we'll get to campaigning." I wish I had that song out where you could here that. I cut it a long time ago: "What an Awful Shape This World's In." People say, "Right now, Hasil, would be a good time to put that out." I cut that in 1948. They say, "That sounds just like Hank Williams." I said, "I know, but it's me." It's a pretty song. Jim loves it. He said, "Put it

Bradley: And you hit the keyboard with your elbow?

Hasil: Yeah. I set that up on this side and I got an accordion I'm playin' with my left foot when I'm playin' the high hat. I gotta nail it to the floor. Wooohoo. And the saxophone. And, oh, I got a flute and lord, I know, I got a whole pool of instruments. I'm blowin' in at the same time, put 'em back where you can get to 'em and keep playin'. Oh, it'll come out pretty good before I get done.

Bradley: I want to see how you play that saxophone and still play guitar. I can figure maybe you take that saxophone, hit the strings and chord with this hand and blow and play with one, but that's just a guess. There's a guy down in LA who plays a drum on his back and he's got a bass guitar and he's barefooted and he stands on the bass.

Hasil: I kick my shoes off most of the time, man, 'cause them shoes is heavy to pick up and down. You can go faster if you take your shoes off.

Bradley: That makes sense.

(Time dragged by as the popcorn chicken settled with the beer in our stomachs. It was getting time to check out.)

Hasil: Good to meet ya'll.

Matt: Nice meeting you Mr. Adkins.

Hasil: Watch that highway.

They'll run over you and kill you. Then you won't be here no more!

Bradley: Mr. Adkins, I appreciate you letting us come by.

Hasil: Thank you. Write me a good story. Don't write anything bad. I know everything's bad, but you can figure out some kind of good stuff to put in there, cain't you?

Bradley: I'll see if I can find one or two good little things to say.

Hasil: [laughing] You all take care of yourselves, okay?

For more information on

Hasil Adkins, visit:

www.hasiladkins.com.



RAINIDY

WE'RE ALL FUCKED UP, MORE OR LESS



Interview by Todd Taylor and Sean Carswell Photos by Todd Taylor

A Randy CD was playing at Razorcake HQ on the first day that Todd and I got to work founding this magazine. I wrote about Randy for the editorial of the last issue of *Razorcake*. In between that time, I've listened to the band relentlessly. I've watched them grow and develop, come to what seemed like a zenith with the album *Human Atom Bombs*, then follow it up with the equally-great-but-different album, *Welfare Problems*. I've gotten a little protective of the band. When The Hives made it big a couple of years ago, my first thought was, oh shit, Randy is gonna be next. For a long time, I thought of The Hives as a bargain bin version of Randy: a band that had all the energy and tightness of Randy, but without the same complexity to their songs and lyrics. Plus, both bands are from Sweden and play together a lot. I couldn't imagine that Warner Brothers could be so close to Randy and not recognize that these guys could be huge. Their songs are so bouncy, so infectious.

RAZORCAKE 60

They've learned to go back to the roots of rock'n'roll and take the best from musicians like Little Richard, Woody Guthrie, and Lee "Scratch" Perry and blend all of that with healthy doses of fast and vicious punk rock. They throw in a little bit of Turbonegro-style big rock sound, and they top it with intelligent lyrics. When it's all put together and it's so tight and so fast and so catchy, Randy is a band that could be the next Clash. Hell, give them enough time, enough shows, enough room to grow and Randy could be bigger than the Clash. So I thought about all of this when Warner Brothers signed The Hives. I braced myself to lose another of my favorite bands to the bowels of large corporations. Luckily, though, Warner Brothers kept their heads in the bowels of their large corporation and passed right by Randy. We're all better off for it. So, instead of wasting time complaining about great bands that sold out, Todd and I were able to catch up with one of the great bands that didn't.

Randy is:

Stefan Granberg: guitar, vocals

Johan Bränström: guitar, vocals

Johan Gustafsson: bass, vocals (not present for the interview)

Fredrik Granberg: drums (not present for the interview)

Sean: I've got kind of a weird question to start off with. Why do you guys sing in English?

Johan: I don't know, actually. We've been singing in English for ten years now. It's just the way it's always been with Randy. We've always been singing in English.

Sean: Do you have Swedish versions of any songs?

Johan: No.

Stefan: It's like, all the music we started listening to was all in English, and we wanted to be like the other bands.

Todd: What's in the name? I don't even know why you guys are called Randy.

Johan: Just a name. It doesn't mean anything for us.

Stefan: We took it from the dictionary because it meant "horny."

Johan: That was ten years ago, so it was more funny back then.

Sean: Going back to the album *Human Atom Bombs*, what's the best story you guys have about "The Summer of Bros", the summer of 2000 that you wrote the song about?

Stefan: Pretty much the whole summer was amazing for me. I moved to a different city and I met all these people that I had a really good time with. We just said to ourselves that we're not going to be bored, we're going to have fun no matter what, so we just tried at least. But it was a good summer, so we called it "The Summer of Bros" because we were all these guys just hanging out.

Todd: Your early stuff is a lot more dogmatic. There's not a lot of humor in it. When do you think that you conscientiously put humor and fun into your songs? Because a lot of political bands can't put that together.

Stefan: I don't know. It's something that just happened by trying to write honest songs about how you feel and being honest with yourself, and that's the way it ends up. But it's true, it's easy for people to enjoy it when they see that we are humans, because we are not special people. We are not living any different than any other person. And we're funny guys, so that comes across. [laughs]

Sean: Well, on the personal stuff, the newest album seems to have more personal-type lyrics, and in one of those songs, you say that you've become your own worst enemy. How so?

Stefan: The bass player wrote that song, so I don't know. You mean "My Heart, My Enemy"?

Sean: Yeah.

Stefan: I think it's about being on tour and always being drunk and having a girlfriend at home that doesn't like that. So it becomes

you love playing in a band and you love your girlfriend and you want to be with her. I think it's about that.

Todd: On more serious levels, what made you do a song about the anarchists in Spain in the 1930's, "Proletarian Hop"? I think a lot of people don't really know what the context of that is. Can you just give us a short explanation of that?

Stefan: I see it as a war against fascism. The meaning of the song is that I think that the Spanish Revolution still exists because we still fight fascists every day. The meaning of that song is that it's not over, we're still fighting it. There's still people that believe it's worth fighting. We read a lot about the Spanish Revolution, and it's been

a big influence for us.

Sean: How much do you guys read? It comes across in your lyrics that you're pretty well-read. How much time do you guys spend reading about history, or just other books?

Johan: I read more earlier. I don't read as much now.

Todd: Would there be an author that was really influential in your thought, that kind of politicized you?

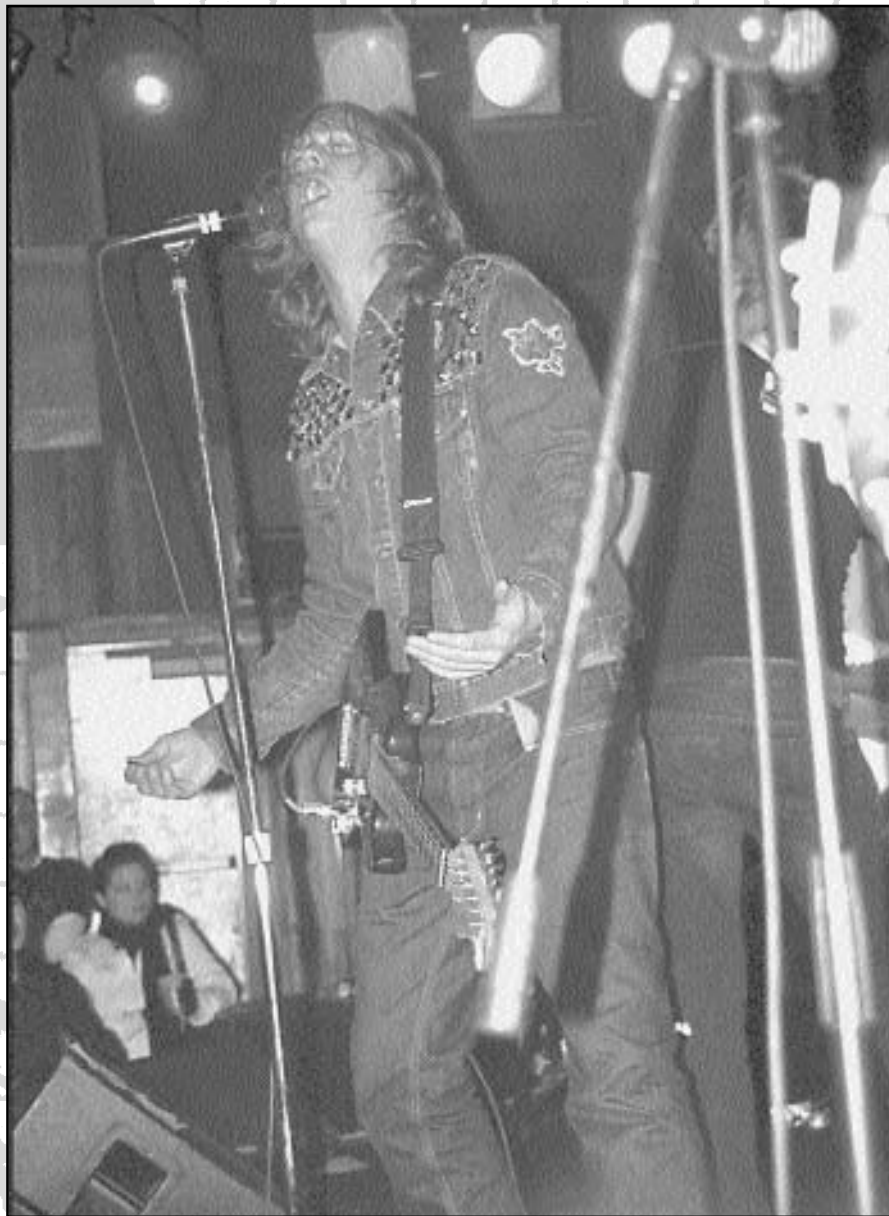
Johan: I like George Orwell a lot.

Stefan: Karl Marx.

Johan: Yeah, Karl Marx.

Stefan: Reading *Das Kapital* was, for me, the biggest revelation of the world. It tells it like it is. It's just an explanation of what

I think that the Spanish Revolution still exists because we still fight fascists every day.





Johan: I got a hole in my head, but it got fixed. It's kind of scary.

capitalism is and how it works, so reading it, you get to know what a machine is and why salary is what it is. I think it's just very, very, very hard to read, though. We had a book study, doing it together with some friends, talk about it every chapter. I fell asleep every time I read it. Unbelievable. Just open the book and three pages later...[makes snoring noise].

Todd: You both have to answer this question. Since you're both Swedish, what is the best Swedish invention?

Johan: I think it has to be the ball bearings for skateboards.

Stefan: I don't know, actually. I don't know any Swedish inventions.

Todd: I came up with the adjustable wrench, and...

Johan: The ballpoint pen?

Todd: They made the ballpoint pen, too, and the flame torch.

Johan: What about dynamite?

Sean: Since you're Swedish and you mention him in one of your songs, do you think Joe Hill was guilty of that murder?

Stefan: I don't know. I haven't read so much about him.

Johan: I don't think so, no.

Sean: What do you know about him?

Johan: Not too much, but what I read, I think he's not guilty. I don't

know too much about the circumstances surrounding.

Sean: How did he find his way into your song? Because, I mean, he was a Swedish revolutionary.

Stefan: It's just a name you come across when you read books about stuff like that in America, just we were just trying to be a little bit fancy, use big words like Joe Hill. [laughs]

Johan: He's probably more famous in America than he was in Sweden.

(Joe Hill was a Swedish immigrant, a songwriter, and an influential member of the Industrial Workers of the World. He was famous for writing a lot of popular, pro-labor and anti-corporate songs. He was accused of murder in Utah in 1914. He was convicted on flimsy evidence and killed by a firing squad in 1915. Most evidence suggests that Hill was sleeping with a married woman at the time of the murder, and he refused to use her as an alibi. -Sean)

Todd: If you could get x-ray eyes for one day and be transported anywhere in the world to look at one thing, what would you look at?

Johan: It would have to be George Bush's brain. I'd like to see what's going on in there.

Stefan: He's the most dangerous thing to

happen to the world in modern day.

Johan: Maybe your governor.

Todd: I think you'd need two sets of goggles for that. He's got a really thick skull.

Sean: Just so we can get a different perspective, an out-of-the-US perspective, explain what's so weird to you about George W. Bush.

Johan: Everything. It's like a fucking joke. There was an interview on the TV the other day, and I couldn't even watch. I just started laughing.

Sean: Do you remember what he was saying?

Johan: He said the same answer to every question, just the same terrorist words.

Stefan: If you go back in history, you have all these people who were president in different countries, like Lenin. They wrote books about politics, and they were politicians for real. They knew stuff. It's become less and less like that here in America. Like in Sweden, our guy...he's a dumb asshole, but he knows a lot about politics, and you could have a debate with him and he could answer all the questions. George Bush is probably not going to be able to answer one question about politics at all. He's just a face, and that's scary, because he's still like the leader of the world.

Sean: You guys remember when we had a

president named Reagan?

Stefan: That was the same way. I think that started somewhere there.

Johan: I think George Bush is worse, actually, than Reagan as I remember him, but I was not too old back then.

Todd: I think that George Bush has been able to reverse so many things so quickly, as opposed to Reagan having eight years. It's amazing how quickly things that you thought were set were turned around. On a different note, you guys got nominated for a Grammy in Sweden, is that correct?

Johan: Yeah.

Todd: Has anybody wanted to get a piece of Randy that you didn't want to give them? Has someone come along with, "We got the sweetest deal in the world, but only if you do this"? Are people coming up to you and saying, "If you wear these really fancy pants, we'll give you ten thousand dollars," or has it just been pretty okay?

Johan: I think it's been okay.

Stefan: Yeah, nobody wants us. We get some clothes from different companies, but we don't even have to wear them if we don't like, and it's not that much at all.

Todd: So no one's come up to you and said, "Can you advertise this fried chicken for us?"

Stefan: It's more like our record company wants us to do a tour with a band we don't like and we say, "No, we don't want to do it." They're not okay with it, but they know that it's gonna be that way.

Sean: Talking about the music, you guys kind of seem to have shifted from some of your earlier sounds you brought in Queen influences and things like that, and the last couple of albums have been more like '50s rock and roll, '60s rock and roll. What led to that shift?

Stefan: I think we discovered that if we took one more step back in musical history, we could take one step forward. It's a cliché answer, but it's true. We started going back really far, like '40s and '50s, just discovering how rock and roll started and what happened with that. We got into a lot of the New Orleans music, Fats Domino and Little Richard, and when we tried to put it into punk, we discovered that we sounded more like the Clash than we ever did before. It made sense, though, because they were also interested in music history and stuff like that. We even had to stop and say, "Oh my God, this is too much Clash," and it wasn't really supposed to be that so we had to change it. But I think we have to have something challenging to do if we're going to write a record or else we won't be able to do it good. We still put so much energy and heart into every record. We could do another *Human Atom Bombs*, like everybody seems to want to hear that record more, but we can't enjoy it if it's not a challenge.

Todd: Do you fear it'll become a job if that happens?

Stefan: I think so, and it's just no fun making those songs again.

Todd: You've covered Lita Ford, and

you've covered Prince on a compilation. Are you going to cover Dolly Parton or Motorhead anytime soon?

Stefan: They're too close to our hearts. [laughs]

Todd: Are any other covers floating around, anything that you'd kind of like to stretch your brain around?

Stefan: I have one country song that I'm thinking about trying.

Sean: What's that?

Stefan: I don't know the name of it. Willie Nelson does it, and Merle Haggard, too. [singing] "Dance all night, dance a little longer." ["Stay All Night (Stay a Little Longer)"] It has a good riff and I think it would work, but we write so many songs that we almost don't need to. Those are the only songs that we've actually played besides some Bruce Springsteen songs. That's about it.

Todd: Johan, is it true that you almost died delivering stuff?

Johan: Yeah.

Todd: How did that happen? You were working for a delivery service, and what happened? Was there a big accident?

Johan: There was a car that crashed into mine. I fainted and then woke up in the hospital a day later.

Todd: Did anything get broken?

Johan: I got a hole in my head, but it got fixed. It's kind of scary.

Todd: Have you ever written a song about that?

Johan: No, but maybe I will sometime.

Todd: Swedish people like to drink, is that correct? Do you guys have any drinking rules? I don't know if this is an international rule, but no matter where you are in America, if you're drinking and you don't want to get fucked with, you take your



...we got too drunk before we played and fucked up a show. After that we said, "Oh, we can only drink five real beers before the show and ten mental beers," so if you really want one more beer, you can just think about it. But now, we don't care about that. We fucked it up.



shoes off. That way, when you fall asleep, people can't mark you up.

Stefan: We had a rule when we came here, because the last shows we played in Sweden, we got a little too drunk, because we're on the Weight Watcher program...

Todd: You're on the Weight Watcher program?

Stefan: Yeah, but not like following it. Actually, I lost like sixteen, seventeen kilos in the last couple of months or so.

Johan: And we got too drunk.

Stefan: And we got too drunk before we played and fucked up a show. After that we said, "Oh, we can only drink five real beers before the show and ten mental beers," so if you really want one more beer, you can just think about it. But now, we don't care about that. We fucked it up.

Johan: We did it for one show.

Sean: Damn. I only have serious questions, I don't have any drinking questions. What

happened in Sweden to inspire that song "Dirty and Cheap"?

Stefan: Sweden was a country that believed in the welfare program, building up hospitals, good schools, good roads. Everybody was for that and working with that. We didn't have commercial television until about ten years ago, and we didn't have commercial radio like that, either. And it was like all kinds of music had to be played all the time. It was supposed to be good for different cultures, like jazz and stuff like that had to be on the radio, too. And now they're selling it out, selling out hospitals and selling out the railroads and schools and everything. It's just becoming like here. And all this stuff, even though it's not as radical as I'd want it to be, but at least it's good because you can go in school, you can get a meal at school, you get free dental care until you're eighteen years old, and all this stuff is better than nothing. It just made me

angry, thinking about all the neo-liberals fucking selling out our country and everything that our fathers and everybody built for everybody.

Todd: On the same token as that, Sweden's number one export besides stuff like iron or wood is music. Doesn't the Swedish government give stipends or money to bands?

Johan: They do, but it's not for us, anyway. We don't get extra shit.

Stefan: They have to fill out a form to ask for it, and we've gotten it once, I think.

Johan: I think we can't have it because Burning Heart is owned by Epitaph, so it's not an export.

Stefan: A lot of our friends get it, though, and we know a guy who plays jazz and makes his own records. He got a lot of money from that.

Todd: Are you guys well-liked in Sweden? Because in America, you're not very well known. I mean, you haven't

played California before this weekend, but you've toured Canada twice. Why do you think that is? Have you ever tried to do a full American tour?

Stefan: We wanted to do it all the time. It wasn't like we had anything against it, but like in Quebec, they said, "Oh, these people like you. They want you to play," and then they fixed everything. Nobody ever did that in America. We felt like, getting older now, we don't want to go on a tour by ourselves just playing for twenty people every day. We'd rather wait around for a good opportunity to play like this for more people every day than we would on a whole tour. We waited for that and the opportunity didn't come along for fucking years and years. We were supposed to come here before Christmas, I think, but we didn't get the tour support that we needed.

Johan: It's kind of expensive. We'd have to borrow a lot of money from the record company.

Todd: What's the last revolution, either in a movie or a book or anywhere, that you saw and said, "Man, that looks like a lot of fun"?

Stefan: I would say *The Matrix*, but the last two movies fucked it up. The first *Matrix*, I thought it was mind-blowingly good; it was a serious movie. The last two were just bad action movies.

Todd: What's the longest distance you've gone to a show in a taxi because your van broke down?

Johan: It's gotta be when we smashed a car in the northern part of Canada where we actually didn't go in a taxi, we went by police car.

Stefan: Actually in Sweden, our van broke down and we don't even know where. That was about fifty miles.

Todd: Do you guys get in a lot of accidents?

Johan: It seems like it. [laughs]

Todd: What's the most baffling high-tech device you've seen in recent history? Something that you see somebody with and you don't understand why they have that.

Stefan: Electric guitars. [laughs]

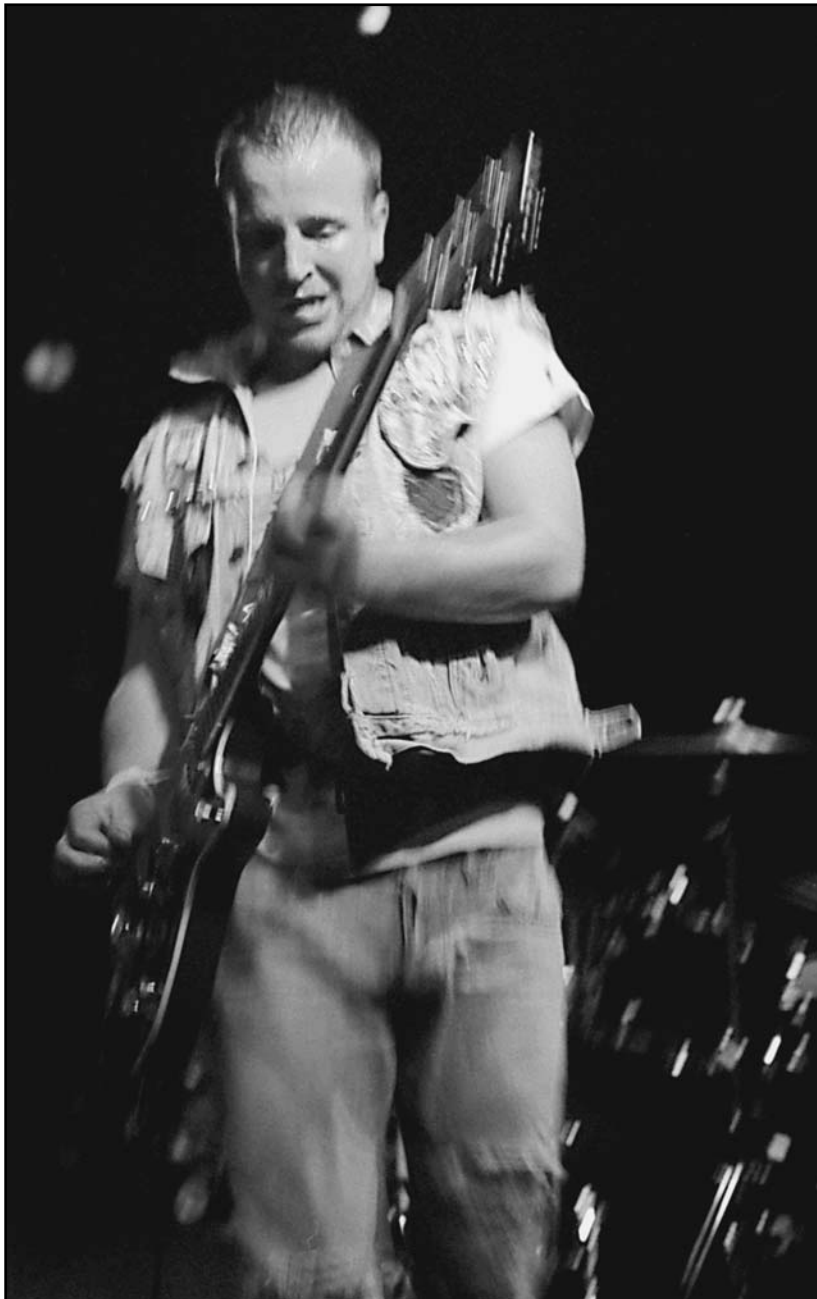
Todd: DS-13, who you guys sound nothing like, gives you guys props in a song. Is the

Swedish music scene smaller because of geographic reasons? Do you think that in Sweden, differences within the punk scene are more accepted?

Johan: Very much so.

Stefan: We know pretty much every band in Sweden. Fireside, the Hives, all those bands are good friends. We know DS-13. They're from the same town.

Todd: Umea?



Stefan: Yeah. I think they wrote a song about the scene and the town, and we're a part of that.

Todd: That's kind of nice that it's not fractured within such a small scene.

Stefan: It's kind of just stupid musicians hanging out with musicians.

Todd: Do you think that reflects in what

you do? Like, Bad Religion is not afraid to make the same record over and over again. Your earlier stuff is good, but it's not half as interesting as your last two records, which are extremely interesting, because you're going from so many directions, but you have a good punk rock foundation. You're exploring these different things without losing that foundation. Do you think that would be a possibility for that?

Can you name somebody you had conversation with where it clicked, like "Oh, I kind of want to follow up on that"?

Stefan: I think the band who's changed so much for Swedish music is The Soundtrack of Our Lives. Just the way they play their guitars and the way they build their songs. The last Fireside record was influenced by them. We put a little bit of that in this record, *Welfare Problems*. But I think people like us as friends, but I don't know if they like our music. They think we are kind of a strange band. They think we are good live and funny guys, but I don't know if they really like the music. I don't care, either.

Todd: You recorded the ska single for free. How did you get it for free?

Stefan: It's a big studio where all the students work in the town where we grew up, and they have these projects they have to do, like record some stuff and play it for the teachers. They asked us if we wanted to record because it's a big studio. We had to be there for two days, I think. Everything that came out of that studio sounded like fucking crap, though. But it's a really good studio.

Todd: In what ways would think that you yourself are fucked up, more or less?

Stefan: You'd have to ask him about that.

Todd: This is personal reflection time.

Stefan: We drink too much alcohol.

Johan: That song's not just about us, it's about everybody. It's kind of hard to be making a change because everybody seems to be fucked up, more or less.



ARIZONA ROLLER DERBY



INTERVIEW AND PHOTOS BY WEZ LUNDRY

If you think Roller Derby is an archaic, 1970s-era sport, think again. A new generation has emerged in cities across the USA, fueling the rebirth of Roller Derby. This time, the women are in charge of their own game; most have backgrounds in punk rock and are steeped in DIY and are making it happen themselves, with huge success. Arizona is one such scene. In about six months, the women went from nothing to hosting a 600-person crowd out for blood, and the league now has five teams (in Phoenix and Tucson). The bouts are a spectacle: there's no denying the sexiness factor (c'mon, short skirts, tattoos, frilly underpants, and girlfights – and if those don't turn you on, you ain't American) but there's also the can-do factor (an excellent example for others), the athleticism (if you think it's easy, you try it), and the overall fun factor. The bouts are fueled by loud music and beer (and bands in between skating) and the teams are already developing cult followings. I recently spoke with the three Phoenix teams' captains (Mayhemily of the French Kiss Army, Brown Fury of the Smash Squad, and Ivanna Spankin of the Bruisers) to get the story behind AZ Roller Derby. More info can be found at <http://azrollerderby.com>.

Wez: Going back to basics, how did RDAZ start?

Ivanna: It started when I posted a message to AZpunk.com to see if people wanted to join my roller derby team, which was all I was really going for at first. And Fury showed up, and Bam Bam, and Kick Start and another girl who actually quit all showed up, all hungover, and started talking about doing it, having beers at Long Wongs, just making up the team name

and daydreamed about what we were going to do. It took us about three weeks before we actually started skating.

Mayhemily: I came in about a month after they had already started. Mostly through word of mouth, I heard about it from random people talking about it. This girl came into the restaurant where I work and said her sister did it, so I got the information from her friend. I didn't roller skate before.

Wez: Did you start skating here (at the roller rink)? When they had open skating?

Brown Fury: Yeah, we got a schedule and came down here.

Ivanna: She couldn't skate at all when she came down here, and now she's one of the best skaters.

Brown Fury: I wouldn't go that far...

Wez: Must be the disciplined training that pays off.

Ivanna: The real difference is that the people who have heart get good fast. Just like anything. People who are putting their asses into it are the ones getting good. For some people it comes easy...

Wez: When was this taking place?

Ivanna: July, 2003.

Wez: When was the first bout?

Brown Fury: November 22...

Wez: After only five months?

Ivanna: I think we actually started scrimmaging a month before that. We were cheeky bitches. We had no idea what we were doing, we just said "fuck it" – we'll just do it and see what happens. We maxed out on who we knew by word of mouth to join, so we just decided to have an exhibition bout.

Brown Fury: We only had five girls per team. That wasn't good.

Wez: I was here. It seemed like you guys had

your act together.

Ivanna: That's why we were selling the beer for cheap, so nobody could tell that we didn't really know what we were doing at first.

Wez: How many people showed up at the first one?

Brown Fury: Six hundred, six-fifty...

Wez: That's a huge crowd.

Brown Fury: There was a huge line outside.

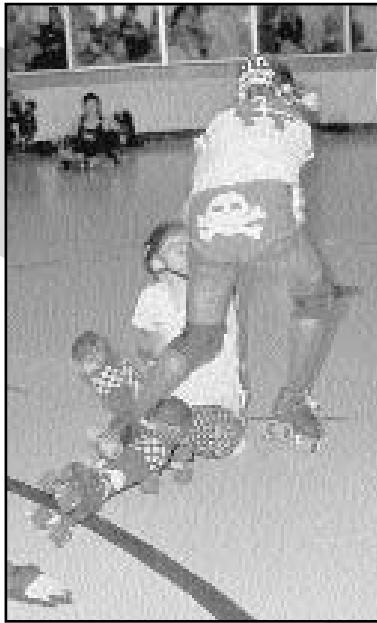
Ivanna: It was insane. We weren't getting people in here fast enough. We heard from so many people that they left because of the line, so we fixed that for the next time.

Wez: So there were ten girls doing it then, how many are there now?

Ivanna: We have forty-three. Plus we have a sister league that started out as part of ours,

in Tucson. I think they have about thirty. We went down there and nobody knew what she was doing, just like when we started, and we got some drills that we learned from the Texas girls, and we had it on paper, so we were just reading it and making it up as we went along.

Wez: Reading the rules of a game and actually playing it are two very different things... Let's back up to the second bout, in January. At that point, the third team here had already formed. Explain this process a little.



the Dukes of AZRD.

Wez: When you started it, what formed the original idea? Did you see other teams? How did you settle on the idea of roller derby?

Ivanna: How far back to start? When I was a freshman in high school? This friend gave me this poster of a German B-movie about roller derby with a Playboy Bunny. It was a painting, not a photo, and she was jamming and there were all of these chicks flying out of her way. And I daydreamed about me being the Playboy

WE LIKE SCABS! WE ALWAYS HAVE RINK BURN.

Ivanna: Emily, from the time she came in, wanted her own team from pretty early on. We talked about it. She brought in a couple of her friends and they filled out our teams for the second bout, and as soon as that bout was over, the third team, French Kiss Army, started practicing on their own. Every bout we have gotten a lot more girls joining, so with the newer girls, we just put them into the older teams. So we have more people than we need for three teams right now. We are already talking about a fourth.

Mayhemily: There were a lot of girls, and I had thought about the idea of the French Kiss Army. I wanted to do that. That would be a great team, the uniforms could be rad. And there some friends of mine who I skateboarded with and wanted them to join, so I convinced them.

Wez: What about the second event? How many people showed up for that?

Brown Fury: Around 800 or 900.

Ivanna: Not counting all the people we let in for free?



Bunny and knockin' all of these chicks out of my way. So I decided to do a painting about that, because I'm a painter. So I started doing a roller derby painting, and it was looking really good, but I started to get mad at myself for only painting the stuff I wanted to do, instead of actually doing it.

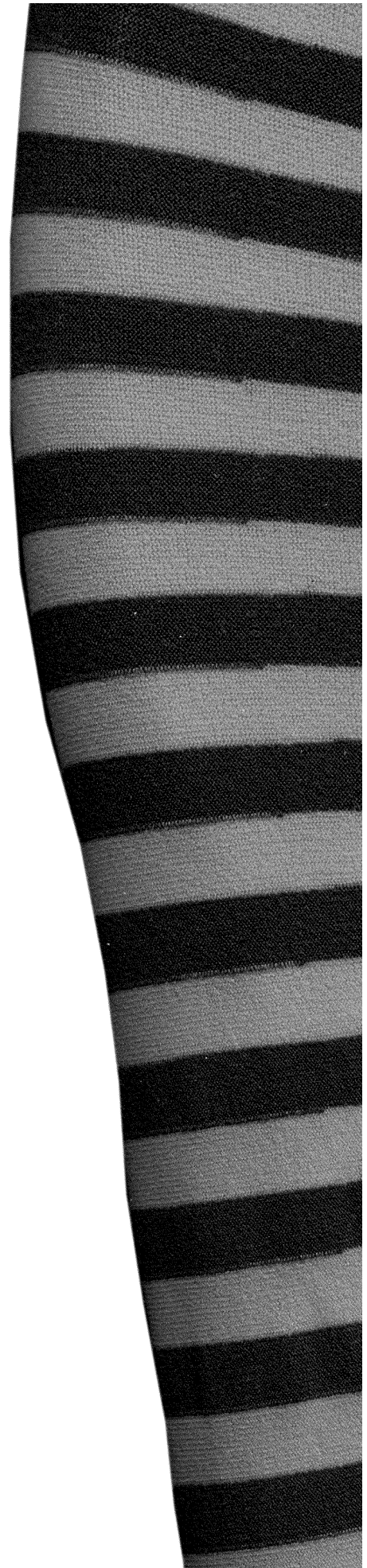
Wez: How did you get in contact with other teams? How many other teams are there, nationwide?

Brown Fury: They're everywhere.

Ivanna: When we first started there were two leagues in Texas, then one girl from the Texas leagues moved to the Cayman Islands. She started a league there too...

Wez: My friend's building a skatepark there! What the fuck is the deal with the Cayman Islands?

Ivanna: That's where all the bankers put their drug money! I guess they want to see roller derby. We want to get out there for vacation. It's funny, now when I think about a vacation it's like, "Where can I skate?" One of



my neighbor's friends was in the bank track league in Austin. From there, since then, we were the fourth league to start up, and then the LA derby dolls, and then a girl in North Carolina just started about a month ago...

Brown Fury: The Gotham Girls.

Ivanna: That's a New York league. This girl, Roxy, was with a band called the Loud Pipes. Did you see them?

Ivanna: Which is fine, but what they're doing is totally different. What they do is choreographed, more like gymnastics or wrestling, with trainers.

Brown Fury: They're all great skaters...

Ivanna: But it's not competitive. They have moves planned out in advance. Have you ever seen any of the old movies?

Wez: I've seen *Rollerball*...

IF SOMEONE TOLD US TO WEAR THESE OUTFITS, WE'D SAY FUCK NO. BUT NO ONE TOLD US TO.

Wez: Yeah, they're from Vegas. They're going to play the benefit too, right?

Ivanna: Yeah, and she's gonna start up a league in Vegas. So there's about eight leagues now.

Wez: No Seattle, San Francisco, or Portland?

Ivanna: Not yet.

Brown Fury: Plus some people still have the spandex thing goin' on.

Ivanna: Yeah, it's San Mateo or somewhere like that, the LA Bombers, and an LA team, the Thunderbirds, of the old spandex leagues.

Wez: What are the spandex leagues?

Brown Fury: They wear spandex, and it's like seriously big hair, skating. It's choreographed, like a big money, TV, wrestling-style roller derby.

Ivanna: They think we're doing it all wrong. But there are still scattered spandex leagues out there, but they are all watching to see what happens with us, since people are starting to get excited about roller derby again.

Wez: To ride your success maybe?

Ivanna: Okay, that's not the same. But the eighties' roller derby where they had the figure eight thing...

Wez: Oh yeah, I remember seeing that.

Ivanna: They have all of these planned moves, and someone will come out and everything will stop, and someone will jump the whole pack. It's exciting, it's fun, but it's not what we're doing. The primary difference is where the money is coming from. We're all punk rockers, we get our money from the local bars that we drink at, the local record stores – those are our sponsors. And they have one guy who has all the fucking money who is the owner, and they have to have TV sponsorship, or else they don't do a game.

Wez: How did you get your crew of assistants together?

Ivanna: They came to us. We called them the sharks for a while but they didn't like that, so they started calling themselves the monkeys.

Brown Fury: They're just friends or boyfriends.

Ivanna: Actually, none of the boyfriends stuck. Half of the boyfriends are at my house right now, in the carport, drinking beer with my husband and complaining.

Mayhemily: Everyone kind of knows one another, and one guy gets involved, and then everyone helps each other out.

Wez: What does it take to pull off a bout?

Ivanna: Going into it the first time, we didn't know what the fuck we were doing, so we just made it up as we went along. My former job was as a project manager, so I guess it comes naturally thinking up what the problems would be and thinking up how to solve them. So, we had so many girls and so many people who wanted to help we just made a list of what we needed to get done. Like, nobody's gonna come if we don't have beer. It seems like a miracle now that we ever pulled it off. The whole thing runs on enthusiasm.

Wez: What about this place, the roller rink? It seems really conservative. You walk in the door, and it struck me the first bout. There are signs that say stuff like, "Your hair must be combed neatly, no hats allowed, your clothes must not be unkempt." Stuff like that.

Brown Fury: They looked at us like we were nuts when we first came here.

Ivanna: Rich's wife didn't care for us when we first came in. She's a figure skater. And they took one look at us and said "No." We asked if



BROWN FURY

we could have private practice time, and they told us it would be, like, a million dollars an hour. So we went to a rink in Chandler and got it for \$250 for two hours.

Wez: What did they say here? How did you get them to sell beer here? They have “no loitering” signs. You can’t hang out in the parking lot. And all of a sudden there are all these people with piercings and tattoos showing up for roller derby.

Brown Fury: But there’s also a lot grandmas and kids. It’s totally mixed.

Ivanna: It was easy doing what we wanted to do here. By the time we decided to have a bout, we had already talked a lot about what we needed to do to get people to come. We had done bake sales and car washes and talking to a lot of people, so we knew we had to have beer. When we told Rich, “If we could sell beer here, we could make a fortune.” And we’ll give him part of it. And we did, too. We sold a lot of beer at two dollars a cup. We make a lot of money off of beer.

Mayhemily: They treat us differently. That is for the general public. No one has told us that you can’t wear a hat, or your tights are ripped. We pay the up front costs.

Brown Fury: We go through a lot of kegs.

Wez: I’ll contribute to that.

Ivanna: People appreciate that it’s not seven dollars for a beer.

Wez: Like the Marquee!

Ivanna: That’s just one of the many things that when we were putting this together, it gave us a chance to be on the other side of the fence for once. And we weren’t going to fuck it up. It’s our friends who are coming, who we’re inviting to come and see us.

Wez: That’s what it seems like at bouts, a lot of friends. But there’s also a bunch of other people. I was telling Emily that I saw a bunch of creepy guys with cameras trying to take incognito shots. That’ll be on some website.

Ivanna: Like of our asses? Seriously, those website guys are doing as much as anybody else to get the word out about roller derby. I mean, sure if they’re looking for a titty shot or whatever, but, y’know...

Brown Fury: Well, we’re already walking around like hookers...

Wez: There’s a certain sex appeal that is hard to peg from a guy’s point of view. “It’s a bunch of girls skating around in short skirts knockin’ the shit out of each other in frilly panties, shit, sign me up!” My wife thinks it’s rad, too. You can’t deny that aspect of it.

Ivanna: If someone told us to wear these outfits, we’d say fuck no. But no one told us to. We sat around and thought about it, and we want freedom of movement. And we gotta have frilly underpants! There’s something really cool about it that appeals to guys in one way and girls in another. And it appeals to my grandma. She loves roller derby. Even the old timers who come here say, “It’s great what you’re doing, but do all of those girls have to have tattoos?” And the little kids are stoked.

Wez: What about girls who drop out? Why do they do it?

Brown Fury: Money, or time, or having to do fundraisers every weekend.

Wez: What are the prerequisites for joining? You talked about insurance.

Ivanna: You have to have insurance. Have to. You have to be able to commit to two team practices a week.

Brown Fury: And attend meetings.

Ivanna: We’re starting a book of rules and regulations with committees, like the event committee who figures out what events we should be flyerin’ at. It’s like having a band, times a thousand.

Wez: How much do the skills differ between the girls?

Ivanna: We have girls who show up, who have never, ever skated. And then we have other girls who show up, like Liz, one of the brand new girls – she’s super, super fast. She’s been a jam skater her whole life. She’s gonna fucking smoke ‘em today.

Mayhemily: There are some beginners. For the most part, no one was really a roller skater. I think some people roller skated as a kid, but I don’t think anyone has been hanging out in the roller rinks for the past fifteen years. Some people catch on quick.

Wez: What about injuries?

Ivanna: At first, we had a bunch of injuries, mostly knee injuries.

Wez: My mom told me when I was about sixteen that girls would never like me because I always had scabs on my knee.

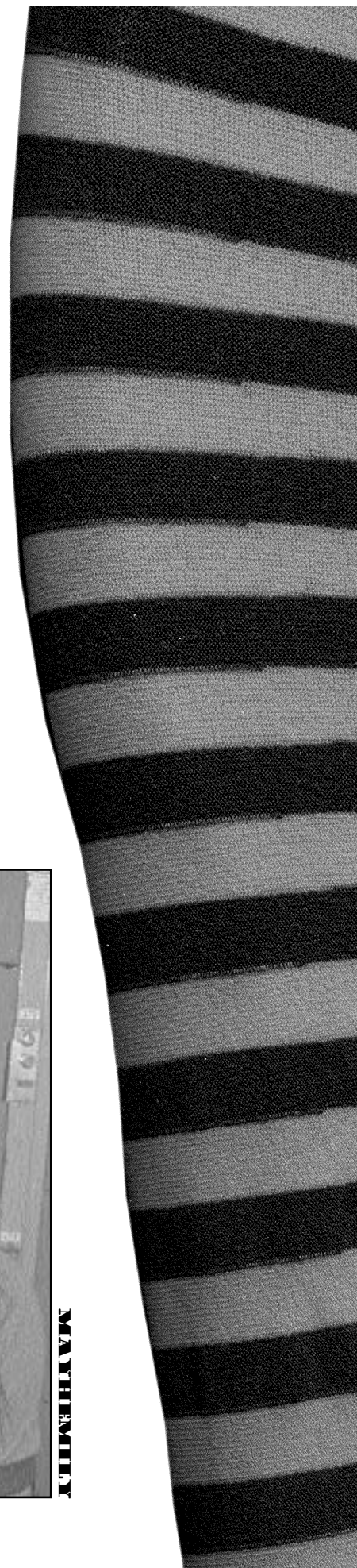
Ivanna: We like scabs! We always have rink burn.

Brown Fury: We don’t have too many broken bones. Emily’s always injured from skateboarding. We have one girl who got a concussion, so we wear helmets all the time.

Ivanna: Just the ref who got tackled on his birthday. The girls wanted to give him a spank-



MAHEMILY



ing, and they broke his leg! I think some guys join because they want to get beat up by the girls.

Wez: I saw that at the last bout, a guy getting his ass kicked.

Ivanna: That was Poobie. Poobie quit. We called him Boobie, because every time he was trying to pull girls off of each other he went for a tit. Every time. Every time! We were like, "Poobie, think you can grab a pussy next time?"

Wez: No way! Cheap thrills! That sucks. But I have great pictures of him getting his ass kicked. But if you're a guy and you're getting

average roller derby girl?

Ivanna: You have to be at least eighteen. Our liability insurance won't cover anyone under eighteen. Average girl is probably about twenty-five, but I noticed in Austin most girls are a little older, like late twenties, early thirties. We have a lot of punk rockers, but we are starting to get some girls who have already been skating for a while. Like right now, the latest batch of girls we got, all of them know how to skate. Anyone can join.

Mayhemily: You've got to have the time and some money to buy pads and skates and have

I DAYDREAMED ABOUT ME BEING THE PLAYBOY BUNNY AND KNOCKIN' ALL OF THESE CHICKS OUT OF MY WAY

in a fight with a girl, it's a lose-lose situation. You either kick her ass and you look like a chump for fighting a girl, or you look like a chump because a girl beat you up.

Brown Fury: You can't really do much about it.

Wez: What are some legendary brawls on the rink?

Brown Fury: Everybody thinks they're fake but they're not. None of them are staged. Once it's over and done with, it's done. Me and Hellen Wheels got into it, but we shook hands afterwards, so it's not a big deal. Nobody holds a grudge. It's gonna happen. We fought a lot during the last bout. Sue Nami started a few. Bam Bam is famous for fighting.

Ivanna: I hate all of the fighting. It always happens when I'm jamming and I'm ahead. And all of a sudden it's a pile of underpants.

Mayhemily: Things happen so quickly that you're just rolling around and, before you know it, you are in a fight, or you are helping out a teammate who got in a fight. It just happens really quickly. It's all real. There's nothing staged.

Wez: But the guy's are all going, "Yeah!!!"

Ivanna: The tension is high. I suppose it's only natural that we get into fights.

Wez: You guys seem to take practice pretty seriously, but overall would you say it's more serious or fun or a combination?

Ivanna: It's a lot of work, but we always have fun while we are doing it.

Brown Fury: As everyone has gotten better, and put more into it. They realize that it is a sport and to really try harder. Before we practiced and went to the bar, or practiced really hung over. But now everybody wants to do their best.

Ivanna: I think Emily really brought the game up for all of us. She came in as a real athlete, and she had a hand in making everyone realize that it's not all just fun and games.

Mayhemily: Roller derby is growing really fast, getting a lot of recognition, so there are a lot of options and business things to deal with. And to get to the next level you have to practice and you get structured, and I think that's where we are getting. And we are paying for it too. We are paying, so we might as well get our money's worth.

Wez: Who can join? Who does join? Who's the

health insurance. But it's just an interest in doing it and a little extra cash to spend on it. Nobody's turned away.


Wez: Have your nicknames become your new names of choice? What are some of the best names?

Ivanna: Everyone calls me Ivanna. Only my mom calls me Denise. I like Juwanna Beatin'. And Brown Fury! That's so dirty!

Brown Fury: Sharon Needles! Mayhemily is a good name.

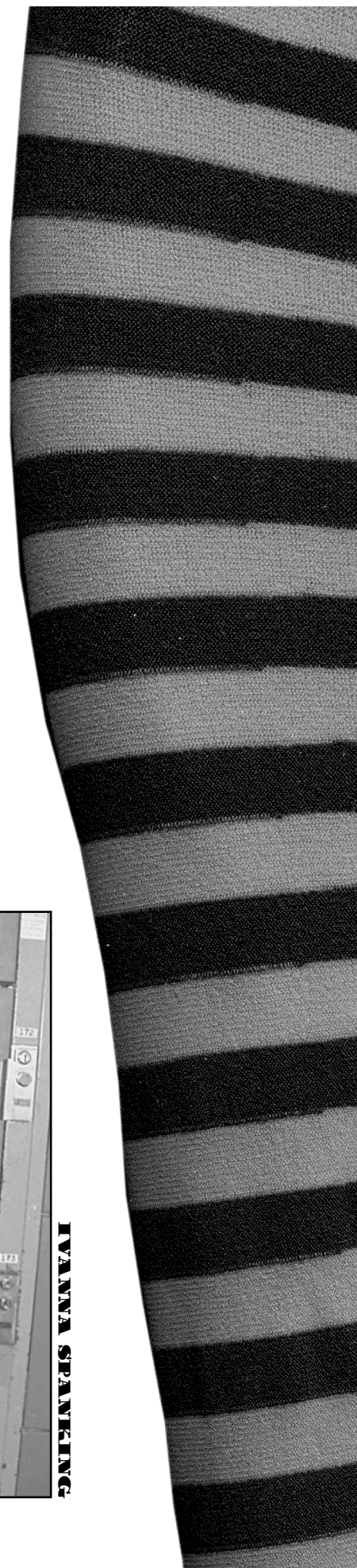
Mayhemily: It's kind of funny. After the last bout, we went to the Rogue, and the same crowd went over there, and you could here people saying "Oh my god, that's Mayhemily" or "There's Sue Nami" or whatever. And so they were dorking out on us and using our roller derby names. If you don't know our names and see us, that's all you're gonna have to go by.

Wez: You guys have fans.

Mayhemily: I know! It's weird. People ask you for your autograph and I sign  Mayhemily. It's totally funny.



IVANNA SKATING



Dan Monick's Photo Page



North Carolina, 2003

*Fine Line,
Big Difference*



Indiana, 2002



Florida, 2003

Please note: If you're an established record company, and you send us a pre-release without all the album art, we're probably going to throw that shit away... cock gobblers.



324: *Across the Black Wings*: CDEP

If you are a fan of the grind band Terrorizer, this is in your ballpark. Listed as a three-song EP, there actually is a fourth song. Once a three piece, 324 now has expanded to four. Singer Masao no longer handles bass duties and focuses strictly in the yelling. Sakata, the drummer, is the other remaining solid piece of this confusing puzzle. He provides intricate drumming that sometimes seems so out of control but well-calculated. It seems like every release the band has a new guitarist. It is true once again here. With the addition of Shinji, the band takes their Terrorizer worship and infuses hardcore and crust to the mix. The tempos are more varied but do not sacrifice the intensity. If you are not a fan of metal, you need to walk away here. This band leaves tire marks like a bad ass muscle car with a turbo-charger. Aggression, speed, and power is the cocktail of rage that is released. One of Japan's little treasures that I hope one day will make it to these shores to corrupt the anger in us. —Donofthedeath (HG Fact)

7-10 SPLITS, THE: *Yard Sale*: CD

This stinks. Imagine the worst possible outcome of combining early Queers with Sloppy Seconds. Not funny. Not even dumb. Just boring. If this were a cereal, it'd be regular Alpha Bits. Yawn. —Maddy (Big Neck)

ADOLESCENTS, THE: *Live at the House of Blues*: DVD & CD

I saw this at the record store and almost bought it. I had seen the band last year and this year and the shows were absolutely incredible. The songs are twenty-plus years old and they stand the test of time. I never tire of hearing them. The Adolescents were one of the first punk bands I got into and saw live. My expectation level for this DVD with accompanying CD was not too high, but I would buy it for sheer sentimental value. My expectations were surpassed. Taped using seven cameras and having all original members, minus one, Casey Royer, the sound and footage is amazing. On drums is Derek O'Brien, who many of you might recognize from Social Distortion. This is definitely addition by subtraction. His drumming is more precise and he brings up the tempo of the songs compared to Casey playing recently. Songs performed are from the infamous and classic blue LP, *Welcome to Reality 7*, *Brats in Battalions* LP and new songs from their upcoming LP. For many of you who didn't get to see the original line-up within the last year, you will miss out. Casey has pulled out again to focus on D.I. and Rikk Agnew just plain fell out. Replacing Rikk in the current incarnation is another Social Distortion alum, Johnny Two Bags. I have seen this line-

It was like the minute I had my head bobbing or my foot tapping, they switched gears faster than an ambidextrous hooker without much endurance in her right hand.

—Toby

good or better. If you watch closely on the video, Rikk no longer plays many of the solos he used to play. His brother Frank has basically taken on all the lead guitarist duties. Great band and great release. I watched this more than a few times and that says a lot. It just makes me want to go out and see them again. —Donofthedeath (Kung Fu)

AGAINST ME!: *As the Eternal Cowboy*: CD

I'm poorly ripping off Replay Dave (Grabass Charlestons) right here. We talked about this album at length. This is, secretly, Against Me's third album. Zig and zag as you may, there are certain inevitable mistakes on a band's second album. Everything from growing self-consciousness, "improved" playing technique, and the availability of a better studio can distract bands ("What does that knob do?" "Can we do solos?" "You got a theramin?"), especially if the bands had a modicum of success with their first full-length. (Against Me! had, well, much more than a modicum.) I'm not suggesting that there's a wholly unreleased, in-the-vaults Against Me! album, I'm just floored at how much different yet the same this album is compared to *Reinventing Axl Rose*. The mistakes I'm so used to hearing in sophomore jinx albums just aren't there. Here's the unmolested template for Against Me! Acoustics are the core, wrapped around voices, strings, and poundables. Basically, what could be done at a punk barbecue, all revved up and written impeccably. Anthems that you're not ashamed to sing, that sort of thing. Differences: overt politics are redirected to powerful personal policies and inflection. Rally cries seem to be coming from the inside, not just part of a small group. There's a lot more singing on the *Eternal Cowboy*. Fuckin'-a Tom and Andrew can sing and I'm glad they're given more of a chance. There are a lot of subtle differences in the music, too. Although there's been some minor backlash with Against Me!, This Bike Is a Pipebomb, and the Hair Beard Combo as being jamboree punk, picking up the Young Pioneers

banner that some wish would have remained buried. I just hear a great band, not afraid to listen to a broad swath of music. They let it ripple the waters just a little bit. In the corners, of all things, in the guitars I hear early '80s underground pop, especially the Cure. Hats off. —Todd (Fat)

AGENTS OF SATAN: *The Old Testament*: CD

Pseudo-satanic grind that manages to invoke the memories of both Intense Mutilation and early Cryptic Slaughter, which means it isn't particularly accomplished and the joke ran out of steam somewhere around the middle. —Jimmy Alvarado (Intolerant Messiah)

ALTAIRA: *Weigh Your Conscience*: CD EP

I really should recuse myself from reviewing this record, but since Antonin Scalia doesn't have a problem adjudicating his conflicts of interest and his decisions have far-reaching implications which substantially affect the lives of myself and others, I'll happily assess the virtues and merits of these seven songs, especially since I became friends with these people largely because I'm a fan of the band. First of all, certain bits of Southern California and Florida punk are so similar that the regions sound like they're separated by a county, not a country. I'm not talking about the bro hymns from HB or combat-wounded grindcore; I'm thinking of the drunken, anthemic, heroic gestures of defiance offered by bands which live in vans, don't bother to replace broken strings in the middle of the set because they didn't need that one anyway and simply strive to do something that most horse race handicappers would put beyond their reach. It's quixotic and noble, something more realistic than futile but far less practical than most people will ever be capable of understanding. Sure, people used to more polished and less nourishing fare may find it rough around the edges, but this is the shit that always has me dancing, that makes me forget about the small and large insults and indignities that tomorrow will inevitably bring

because, at least for these moments, anything seems possible all over again. —Puckett (ADD)

ANGELVILLE: *Can't Go Home*: CDEP

Straight edge hardcore that plays like a soundtrack to a panic attack or going through the day with a high level of anxiety. Metallic riffing and the screamy vocals keep things aggressive. If you have little penis syndrome, like me, bands like this are a good remedy. Weird name for a label. —Donofthedeath (Happy Couples Never Last)

ARROGANT SONS OF BITCHES: *All the Little Ones Are Rotting*: CD

Just your run-of-the-mill ska-punk outfit. What points they may have earned by maintaining their DIY status they lost the moment the first song started. There was an "enhanced" portion to this disc, but I wasn't feeling masochistic enough to subject myself to it. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.asobrock.com)

ATOM AND HIS PACKAGE: *Hair: Debatable*: CD/DVD

Final show from the outsider artist (and certified high school teacher), who sings and plays guitar to songs he wrote on sequencers. The current Atari-Nintendo restructure dance scene probably owes him some credit. Catchy, hilarious, and — as evidenced in the bonus DVD — entirely humble. With songs about friends, street hockey, parties at the North Pole, how stupid the team name of the Washington Redskins is, the efficiency of the metric system, and moving. Atom is the high-pitched bedroom nerd who makes punk anthems through his own tight universe. It's infectious. I challenge you to not sing along to "Happy Birthday, Ralph, I love you, even though you are fucking disgusting." High quality DVD also includes a couple of documentaries and a music video. —Speedway Randy (Hopeless)

AUTOMATIC: *Black Ink Rising*: CD

Had a real tough time with this release, 'cause there's something buried in their sound that I really like. It's almost like they've taken a nugget of Hüsker Dü drone, wrapped it in sandpaper and lodged it firmly somewhere behind the guitars. The problem is there's all this emo sludge surrounding it and keeping it just out of reach. Look, you don't have to front, guys. Drop any and all arty pretenses and just rock the fuck out. —Jimmy Alvarado (soautomatic@yahoo.com)

AVSKUM: *Punkista*: CD

This band is from Sweden and has been playing on and off since the early '80s. It's fast and furious, like Discharge, but some of the songs are a little slow, too. There are a total of fifteen songs on here. These guys are not happy with all the war, capitalism, and injustice in the world. Although the lyrics are in broken English, you know exactly where they are coming from. If you are a fan of Prank, you will love this CD. —Mike Beer (Prank)

AWAY FROM NOW: *Sic Semper Tyrannis*: CDEP

Mixture of Hot Water Music and Thursday meets tough guy hardcore from Australia. Fit your profile? Do you need this? —Donofthedeath (Pee)

AXES OF EVIL:
Married to America: CD

A politically astute punk band mired in a bog of clichéd metal riffage. Really, really wanted to like this, but overt headbanging fodder makes me stomach churn. —Jimmy Alvarado (New Regard Media)

BANG! BANG!:
Do You Like It?: CD

Did you know that back in the '70s the Alice Cooper Band were forced at gunpoint by Mick Jagger to write and record an album with the lippy Glimmer Twin? I didn't either. But here it is. And if one listen isn't enough to convince you of the verity of this recently come-to-light factoid, then just check out the lead vox on this disc who coyly goes by the moniker "Jack Flash." Like that isn't a total give away. But wait a minute... now he sounds like Richard Hell. Man, after that first song I was certain it was Mick Jagger. I guess it doesn't matter 'cause I never liked either one of those over-cherished suckwads. So to answer the original question, no, I don't like it. But the hot blond chick bass player on the other hand... —Aphid Peewit (Heads Up)

BBQ: Self-titled: CD

As a fan of both the Spaceshits and one man bands, I can't even begin to tell you how let down I was by this. The guitars have a pretty cool sixties garage sound to them, but then the guy goes and fucks it all up by opening his mouth. No matter how open-minded I may be about music, I cannot and will not embrace sock hop music. Ever. —Josh (Alien Snatch)

BEFORE BRAILLE: Cattle Punching on a Jack Rabbit: CD
Some really cool cover art of a cowboy wranglin' dogies while riding a jack rabbit (and you thought it was just a clever album title), all of which is totally wasted on bad post-emo art rock. It's criminal, I tell you. —Jimmy Alvarado (Sunset Alliance)

BIZARROS: Can't Fight Your Way Up Town from Here: CD
A new release here from one of Akron's more obscure proto-punk bands. Nearly thirty years after they first plugged in, the tunes they slang still sound like a product of that time, yet also seem more like an expansion of the sounds they began mining back in the days when they were playing songs like "Lady Dubonette" and "Laser Boys." There's still that schizophrenic quality to their set list, swinging back and forth from arty bar rock to growling rockers with ease. If you have no preconceived notions of what "punk" should sound like, are musically adventurous, and can appreciate when a band has obviously put in some good work, this is recommended 'cause these guys remain at the top of their game. —Jimmy Alvarado (Clone)

BLACK COUGAR SHOCK UNIT: Self-titled: CDEP
Another tough review. I know this band's pedigree. The core is Alex Ulloa — Panthro UK United 13 and House on Fire (if you need barns to burn, or do a lineup of who your best friends are, put *Sound of a Gun* on. Whoever remains has passed that test properly). It's Alex's dominant voice and guitar work that punctuate this CD. That's the good news. The voice is still commanding. The lyrics still penetrate like the smell of gas and the flinting sound of a lighter ("bring out the dead who fill your head"). The bad news is that gone are the intricate

rumblings inside the volcano. Gone are Jimmy the Truth's bass troublings. Gone are the Didjits by way of Florida swamps drumming. It almost sounds like a band that hasn't gelled completely yet, or is structured completely around Alex, by design. It's definitely not ass, but it's also not the carpet bombing similar to the Plane of Jars I was crossing my fingers for. Perhaps it's because the musicians play more as soloists instead of in gang tackles. Perhaps "I Claim This One in the Name of France" sounds unfinished, when I've come to expect complete universes with the folks involved with this CD. I'm still listening to it. Maybe it'll crack wide open later. —Todd (Newest Industry)

BOLIDES, THE: Science under Pressure: CD
Sixties-inspired trash rock, with maybe the slightest dash of Devo thrown in for color. The songs go on a bit longer than maybe they should, but otherwise the ride is relatively rockin'. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dionysus)

BREAK THE SILENCE: Near Life Experience: CD
It's not that this predictable, metallic, Fat-styled punk featuring former members of Rise Against and 88 Fingers Louie is bad — it just isn't interesting. Sure, it's melodic. Sure, it sounds like No Use For A Name and Lagwagon (so much so that I wondered if Boss had started making a Fat effects stompbox). Sure, it has an At The Gates cover. However, there is very little here to distinguish this album as something new, to fix it at any point in time other than the mid-1990s and at any place other than Southern California. If you're young and want to reminisce about how mainstream punk sounded ten years ago while still purchasing something new, this album is perfect. If you're anything like me, you should skip to the next review which, for the record, is exactly what I'm doing. —Puckett (Hopeless)


BROKEN BOTTLES: In the Bottles: CD
Broken Bottles is one of my favorite bands right now. I love to see them live, and I can't listen to their seven inches and EP enough. So I was really excited to get this, their first full album. Now that I have it, I have to say, it's pretty cool, but I'm not blown away. I think this is probably one of the best albums of the year, but it's not as impressive as Broken Bottles' previous releases. They've included some of their best songs from the EPs on this, like "Gothic Chicks," "Kelly Osbourne," and "Bloody Mary," but the new versions of these songs are a little slower and a little cleaner. To be honest, though, I prefer them faster and dirtier. Some of the new songs are really cool, too, like "Drinking in the Rain" and "Sixteen Forever." And "Pink Swastika" is pretty funny. As a whole, these guys have taken the best of Southern California bands like Social Distortion, TSOL, and the US Bombs and developed a rad new sound with it. I highly recommend this album. I just know that these guys have more punk rock in them than this album shows. —Sean (TKO)

BURY THE LIVING: Burn This Fucking Nightmare: LP
Wow, I could've sworn I heard that these guys had called it quits, but here's another album from 'em. Same drill as on previous releases, meaning you get super-fast, super-pissed hardcore and oodles of tunes spread over both sides of this disc.

RAZZORCAKE

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THESE ARE THE TOP 7's SINCE THE LAST MAG.



Underground Medicine Mailorder, Connecticut

1. **Kidnappers**, *Spanish Girls* (Zaxxon Virile Action)
2. **A-Frames**, *Crutches* (Royal)
3. **Briefs**, *The Joy of Killing* (Lollipop)
4. **Helen Keller**, *2x7"* (Deaf Ear)
5. **Flakes**, *Talk About You* (Dollar Record)
6. **Diskords**, *Pink Palace* (Dirtnap)
7. **Winks**, *Spoil Me* (Super Secret)
8. **Buttfrenchers**, *Cigarettes* (R Styles)
9. **Deadly Weapons**, *You're So Selfish* (Rapid Pulse)
10. **Lost Sounds**, *No Control* (Holy Cobra Society)

Know Crap Mailorder, Oregon

1. **Suburban Reptiles**, self-titled (Raw Power)
2. **Mr. California**, *Annoy Your Neighbor*, (Armpit Toast)
3. **D-Cup**, *Shark Attack* (Hostage)
3. **The Drips**, *Mexico* (Hostage)
3. **The Indigents**, *Brain Dead World* (Hostage)
3. **The Pegs**, self-titled (Hostage)
7. **The Buttfrenchers**, *Cigarette* (Rstyles)
8. **Skip Jensen & His Shakin' Feet**, *Evil Weirdos* (Yakikasana)
9. **The Bags**, *Disco's Dead* (Artifix Records)
10. **The Cheeraks**, *Cheeraks Are No. 1* (Yakikasana Records)

Disgruntled Mailorder, California

1. **Real Losers**, *Go Nutzoid* (Wrench)
2. **Clocks**, *Time Is On My Side* (Shake Your Ass)
3. **Diff's**, *Living Chaos* (Headline)
4. **Smut Peddlers**, *Exit Plan* (Ransom)
5. **Texas Terri/The Speed Kings**, split (Devils Shitburner)
6. **Hunns**, *Time Has Come Today* (Disaster)
7. **Broken Bottles**, *Bloody Mary* (Revenge)
8. **BellRays**, *Warhead* (Bronx Cheer)
9. **Red Onions**, *Live Wire* (Revenge)
10. **Holly Tree**, *Anytime, Anywhere* (Headline)

Does it rock? You know it, daddy-o. –Jimmy Alvarado (Soul Is Cheap)

CASUALTIES, THE: On The Front Line: CD

Members of The Casualties, we need to talk about your flair. We want you to express yourself. Now you know that it is up to you whether you want to just wear the bare minimum of buttons, patches, colored hair, mohawks, liberty spikes, chains, spiked studs and leather or not. Now if you feel that the bare minimum is enough, then, OK, but some bands choose to wear more. We encourage that. People can listen to music anywhere, they listen to punk for the atmosphere and the attitude. That's what flair's about. It's about fun. You want to express yourself, don't you? OK, great. That is all I ask. And for those of you paying attention, if you have heard one Casualties album, you have heard them all. –Toby (Side One Dummy)

CAUSTIC CHRIST: Can't Relate: LP

I was really feelin' their gallop-speed, pissed off hardcore sound, and would venture to say that I would easily consider myself a fan, but covering Flipper's "Ha Ha Ha" was a mistake. What's next, a cover of "Xanadu"? You simply should not mess with perfection, kids, 'cause you never know what'll happen. Next thing you know, the earth shifts on its axis, chaos ensues, and Bush gets a second term. In short, my friends, buy, play loud, play often, but never, NEVER play the last song on side two. –Jimmy Alvarado (Havoc)

CAVE 4: Sheena Was Right: CD

A potent potpourri of punk, garage rock, and surf instrumentals. The singer sometimes sounds like Javier Escovedo's German love child. Some solid tunes sure to spice up your summer bash quite nicely. –Jimmy Alvarado (Swindlebra)

CHEIFS, THE: Holly-West Crisis: CD

I love the Cheifs. They were a defining moment in punk music for me. Not very widely known, they were Hollywood punks who played in LA and OC punk's initial waves in '80 and '81, gigging with the Germs and X and, later on, the Adolescents, Angry Samoans, and TSOL. The Cheifs were great in that they took the newness, nihilism, and swinging of Southern California's first wave – from the Gears and the Plugz – but weren't scared to put a bit more spastic speed into the mix. The perfect bridge between two short-lived eras. The thing that gets me, when I mention them to the populace at large, I get shrugs. It may be that they didn't have a cool logo for t-shirts or that, not until '97, when Flipside released the entire Cheifs output (including stuff that'd never been put out) that you could find any of their music for less than a \$300 7" on Ebay. However, I remember mentioning the Cheifs to Bill Stevenson of the Descendents and before I could get the question out, he was pounding out the drums to "Riot Squad" on the arm of a couch. When I was working at Flipside, too, I remember Henry Rollins writing in, on the back of a postcard, "Thanks for releasing the Cheifs. You made the world a better place." Absolutely admired by their contemporaries. Here's a bit of trivia. One of them got a shitload of *Xanadu* (the movie

with Olivia Newton John) t-shirts, turned them inside out, and spray painted of them (If you look closely to the picture of George, you can see there's a sticker over his Xanadu shirt). The problem? They spelled "chiefs" wrong. It's stayed "incorrect" ever since. Since Flipside went under, Dr. Strange has the good taste and sense to give this excellent slice of punk a re-issue. –Todd (Dr. Strange)

CHINA WHITE: Live Cheap: CD

Another total surprise this time around, and one that is more than welcomed. For those not in the know, China White was one of the original Southern California punk/hardcore bands, who managed to release a couple of comp tracks and an absolutely crucial EP, *Dangerzone*, before imploding. Collected here are mostly live cuts from various places, both from the band's original incarnation back in 1981 and the recent incarnation playing "reunion" shows not too long ago. Live versions of most, if not all, of the tunes from the EP are here, and the sound quality and performances are great. Extra special treats include the two tracks from their original demo that were previously only available on the *Life Is Ugly So Why Not Kill Yourself* comp, and two live videos for those of us lucky enough to have computers. Limited to 500 copies, so you might wanna think about selling off your sister in order to procure your copy or something and, trust me, it'll be worth it. –Jimmy Alvarado (Malt Soda)

CIRCLE TAKES SQUARE: As the Roots Undo: CD

First off is the cool packaging, great artwork, and the fear that I will truly hate this. At first glance, I'm truly scared that this is going to be emo. My fears are somewhat correct. This band, to me, has emo overtones. But the music alters from the blueprint and dives into other places. There are dual male and female vocals. The music goes from progressive rock to full blast beats of rage. Will I listen to this again? I don't know. –Donofthedeath (Robotic Empire)

CIVIC MINDED FIVE/ SWING DING AMIGOS: Split 7"

Live, the CM5 kill. On record, I don't know what it is, but they'll have a perfectly good song and then do something "funny," like add chicken sounds or say "ickyickyicky" over and over again. It's okay on first listen, but it gets irritating. I understand the need to mix things up, and bend two poles together that aren't usually touching – much like the Fleshes do with classic rock riffs and Cows-like weirdness – but I'd really just like a CM5 record to blast me all the way through, just once. It's even harder to say because I know these dudes, they're really nice and they're talented as fuck. Swing Ding Amigos: although I've never seen them live, I've heard great things about them, and met a couple of them in person but when they go for the falsetto, singing "Slowride." I wish they'd just keep on kicking the hell out of massive jams instead of pushing the weird button or relying on the chemical imbalance that seems to be a byproduct of living in the high desert. That all said, no, I don't really recommend this 7", but I'll definitely listen to what both bands come up with next. –Todd (Recess)

CLONES: Need a Wave: CD
Punky pop that owes more than a little of its sound to '70s power pop and '80s new wave. Would've had no trouble finding its way onto a *Powerpearls* comp if it had been released two decades ago. –Jimmy Alvarado (Dirtnap)

COACCION: Invertebrado: CD
D-Beat from just a hair south of the border. This Tijuana, Mexico band is another marker to show that punk continues to thrive all around the world. Like Solucion Mortal a couple of decades before them, the band delivers some harsh ass music. Lyrics sung in Spanish are translated for the gringos, who can't accept the fact that Spanish is the unofficial second language. I'm not a gringo, but I have the tiniest understanding of the language. Recorded in what I believe is the now defunct Burnt Ramen, a raw but brutal recording is documented. This is worth every penny that I paid to get this. I just wish this was released on vinyl as opposed to the worthless format we call CD. –Donofthedeath (First Blood Family)

CODE, THE/ WHATEVER IT TAKES: Split: CD

This was originally released as a split 10" on Spent Records. Now, due to a good response to the 10" it's available on CD. Each band has three songs on this CD. The Code starts off with some fast paced punk songs. The last track has some ska parts. The lyrics to these songs concentrate on how the world needs to be changed for the better. Whatever It Takes contains Chris #2 from Anti-Flag. Their songs are fast punk songs for the most part, except for the last track, which is a mellow, almost emo song. The lyrics seem to be about life and surviving to live the next day. The Code is currently writing material for their second full length, which will be on A-F Records. Whatever It Takes is currently on hiatus while Anti-Flag goes on tour. I can't say I was into either of these bands, but what they do, they do well. If this is your cup of tea you won't be disappointed. –Mike Beer (A-F)

COMPLETE CONTROL: Vicious Ones: 7"

These guys come from Austin, TX. The singer sounds like the singer from Youth Brigade, but by no means are these guys a Youth Brigade clone. Complete Control plays a killer mix of mid-paced punk/hardcore. All the songs are catchy and have a great melody to them. Plus, the musicians do a great job and the recording is good, too. As a bonus, you get this on marble gray vinyl (or at least my copy was). I definitely would buy this record and see these guys if they ever came to my town. A great record by a so-far great band. The best thing I reviewed this month! –Mike Beer (Slab O Wax)

CRIME IN STEREO: Explosives: CD

Loud, fast, and whiny. A little bit o' emo, a little bit o' pop, a little bit o' youth crew equals a lotta boredom. So utterly lacking in originality that I find myself at a loss for words. –Jimmy Alvarado (www.blackoutrecords.com)

CROWPATH: Old Cuts and Blunt Knives: CD

It never ceases to amaze me when a group of obviously proficient musicians

get together and consciously opt to make bland, faceless dreck like this. Pick a grind metal band, any grind metal band. Yup, they sound EXACTLY like them. –Jimmy Alvarado (Robotic Empire)

CRYPT KICKERS, THE: We've Come for Your Daughter: CD

This is a lot looser than their earlier album, *Lamentations of the Living Dead*. I have a feeling there was a lot of drinking while they were recording. I keep thinking it's broken neck rock-'n-roll, but I have no idea what the hell that means. There's a cover of the Muppet's "Movin' Right Along," though I don't remember "I like to eat brains because they taste real fucking good" being a part of the lyrics. I think this album will be reserved for party o'clock listening, while *Lamentations* will hold its place in my high rotation. –Megan (Crypt Kickers)

DAKAR AND GRINSER: Are You Really Satisfied?: CD

Some sounds do not die. Rather, they lay deep beneath a musical surface waiting for the right time to emerge. Take Dakar and Grinser, for example. From a quick scan of the CD jacket, it appears that the German label, Disko B, released their album *Are You Really Satisfied?* back in 1999, but it is only now that the piece has reached American shores. As for the music, think of something you might have heard in 1989. New wave was dead and Nine Inch Nails had yet to introduce the mainstream to boys in black nail polish and the metal-cold four-to-the-floor of industrial music. Bands like Nitzer Ebb and Front 242 were churning out single after single of brutal rhythms that seemed the antithesis of the era's dance music fodder. Dakar and Grinser have captured that sound, seemingly at a time when it had fallen completely out of fashion. Witness the unholy animal lust of "Take Me Naked" and the urban decay of "Walking in Acid Rain," two tracks that sound as if they were culled from Al Jourgensen's repertoire. Even the decidedly more disco tracks, "Stay with Me" and "Professional Slackers" have a definite black-lipstick-and-dog-collar vibe. Of course, if you really are feeling the sinister dance vibe, there is always the duo's cover of "I Wanna Be Your Dog," which reminds me of 1000 Homo DJs cover of Black Sabbath's "Supernaut," where the dance and rock elements balance perfectly. The aforementioned track is the album's underground hit, so chances are you may have heard it in a club or record store recently. Regardless, check out this album if you are feeling a bit nostalgic for your old Wax Trax collection. –Liz O (Disko B)

DAMAGE DEPOSIT: Straight to the Bottom: 7"

There's no denying Damage Deposit's posi-crew chops – more solid and massive than a battleship, all cannons ablazing, with Youth of Today providing the shells and Felix Havoc barking the orders. What keeps them in check – for me – is that too-often-fucked-up barbed wire highwire act of getting a message across (21 and over hardcore shows are dumb, globalization creates more human slavery than the plantation system, don't buy a puppy if you're not in for a life-long commitment) is tempered with injections of humor (the oft overlooked connection between hardcore and **RAZORCAKE 79**

drag racing and the clashing hardcore dance dojos of Ninjas and floorpunchers). Meticulous packaging with a fold-out middle with a drawing of mosh pit with the usual suspects, plus a monkey and a wolf makes for a nice package. Standout lyric: "not trying to get off the top, I just want to stay off the bottom." –Todd (Havoc)

DAUGHTERS: Canada Songs: CD

When I first heard this album, I couldn't quite make sense of it. I loved the song titles (e.g. "I slept with the daughters and all I got was this lousy song written about me," "pants, meet shit," etc.), but the music was confusing as hell – frankly, it sounded like the noisy, unschooled shit that I would play because I simply don't know any better. That's also why I listened to it more (easy enough to do since the record is only ten minutes long) and eventually, these spastic, blistering songs started to make sense. Sure, it sounds like a wolf fucking a cat that's caught in a steel trap and bleeding, but that isn't such a bad thing. –Puckett (Robotic Empire)

DAYS LIKE THESE: Charity Burns.Green: CD

I wish I didn't grab this. I didn't look at the label. I was trying to weed out and lessen the amount of CDs in the mystery meat pile. Look what happens when you try to be the good guy. I get another emo-ish CD that Jimmy Alvarado could mistakenly have gotten or Dale could have reviewed for punishment. No blue Twinkies coming out of this asshole. –Donofthedeath (Lobster)

D-CUP: Shark Attack: 7"

An OC punk three-piece is a rare breed, indeed. I'm hypotheticalizing, but it's much easier to fuck up in a larger band, to spread the blame around, get wasted, and fill in the blank for an excuse when you don't feel like showing up and playing. D-Cup are even stranger by the fact that they remind me what the early, ringing Jam songs would sound like if filtered through Dramarama, mixed in with Southern California fuckup beach culture, and sneered up just a tiny little bit. Both songs are mid-paced, well structured, catchy, and to the point. Quite possibly the most pop effort I've heard on Hostage, and that's very far from any sort of slag. Good stuff. –Todd (Hostage)

DEAD CITY REBELS/HIGH SCHOOL ROCKERS: Split: 7"

High School Rockers: Rock'n roll from the Rip Off school of noisemaking. Not bad, but not unique enough to shake that "been there" feelin'. Dead City Rebels: A tad less primitive and much catchier than the band on the flip. Two tracks of hook-infested rock'n roll. The grooves on this side are gonna get worn out long before the other. –Jimmy Alvarado (Rockin' Bones)

DECAPITADO: Blacked: CD

Popped this puppy in, thought the guy screeching sounded familiar, and took a look at the band lineup. Holy shit, that's Dan Kubinski from Die Kreuzen shredding his lungs there! That's a name I haven't heard in at least a decade. The music is slow, sludgy pain rock/punk in the vein of bands like Unsane and Eyehategod, all dark and malevolent and sure to give you a headache in all the right ways. Dan doesn't screech all the time like he used to back in the days of "Live Wire" or "Hate Me," preferring

here to wield it sparingly, relying more on actually singing with a voice that sometimes sounds strangely reminiscent of Kiss' Paul Stanley; but when he lets loose with that howl, boy.... There's some strong work put into this by all involved, and if they manage to stick it out for a while they could really turn some heads. Nice to hear you raising a ruckus again, Dan, and especially nice to hear it's steeped in quality. –Jimmy Alvarado (info@decapitado.com)

DEFECTORS, THE: Turn Me On: CD

I'm new to the Danish band the Defectors, so I don't have the previous full lengths to go on. They are a mix of '60s Nuggets bands and the Scandinavian ROCK sound that seemed to really catch some attention in 1998. The strongest song is "It's Gonna Take Some Time," where they really do come across with what could be an obscure song from 1968. Sadly, some of the tracks fall back on lazy rock clichés. They do come across as a band that is still experimenting. –Wanda Sprag (Bad Afro)

DEMOLITION DOLL RODS: On: CD

Haven't heard from these kids in a while, so this 'un was a nice surprise this review cycle. They're still serving up healthy doses (twelve of 'em this time) of blues-inflected, post-Cramps sludge rock, and the world is a better place for their efforts. Included this time 'round is a decidedly e-vile cover of "Big Rock Candy Mountain." Recommended. –Jimmy Alvarado (Swami)

DESCENDENTS, THE: Cool to Be You: CD

The differences between The Descendents and ninety-five percent of pop punk? I sat and listened and listened and listened to this CD and it kept on getting better instead of stale. Little things hit me. As I'm wont to do with a CD that I really like, I talk to people about it. Here's what's come up in discussion. 1.) When they sing about love, it's not boyfriend/ girlfriend. It's wife, ex-wife. The stakes are higher and more grave, the emotions less polar. 2.) The guitar, as with Jughead of Screeching Weasel, up in the front, it sounds like frosting, fuzzy bunnies, and sunshine but underneath, it's all sharpened blades sticking in deep, churning nuts and bolts. 3.) The Descendents are still consummate musical outsiders. Through the relative isolation of living in Colorado while Milo went off and got his Ph.D., they weren't concerned with keeping up with all of the little punk rock ghettos that have formed. They lived life and were human beings with punk rock rooted inside. Then they decided to make an album. They don't need the money. They needed the fuel that only creation can bring. I admire that. 4.) True pioneers don't just have one trick up their sleeves. The best of the breed are the ultimate survivors. They overcame one of the largest obstacles: remaining relevant past their mid-to-late thirties in a genre of music that treats bands like Logan's Run. 5.) Any band that lyrically includes Otis Redding, the Haymarket Riot, and the line "I'm gonna kick their asses in class/ Gonna get good grades!" will usually make it to my A list, anyhow. It'll be impossible for this album to be kicked off my top ten for 2004. –Todd (Fat)

DESCENDENTS: Cool to Be You: CD

I was one of those awkward kids in school. Punk rock gave me an identity that I have carried for over twenty years. When I first bought the *Milo Goes to College* LP, I felt instant validation. It connected to me then as it still does now. The line-ups have mutated, but the formula remains the same. A teaser EP, *Mexican*, came out first this year and blew me away. They're one of the few bands from the early '80s that can still kick out jams. Anticipation was high after hearing that. Retodd reported to me that the full length is "fuckin' good!" I was so excited. When I left Razorcake HQ to pick up review material, I popped the sucker in the CD changer in my car. I rarely ever do that. I started the car and turned my stereo up. I'm no typical punk rocker. I have to have a 200-watt stereo system with some booming subwoofers that cost me a pretty penny in my truck to play my punk rock. Ooh, ha! I'm in familiar territory here. That oh-so-familiar bass playing of Karl shakes out of the speakers. Milo's voice provides me the comfort that things are going to be all right. Bill's intricate lead drumming bang away in a positive heartbeat. Stephen continues on with a great guitar sound that is so sweet up front but will bite you in the ass if you aren't paying attention. My highlight track has to be "Mass Nerder." Changing the Germs' lyrics of "We Must Bleed" to "We Must Read" is fucking classic! I hate to say it, but this is better than the last three albums combined. That is no small chump change. Those albums are great, but this one is so much better. Jimmy Alvarado and I are kinda the old goats of this cooperative. If he hates this, he needs a colonic. –Donofthedeath (Fat)

DIE STINKIN': HMFU: 7"

I liked their *Smell Is in the Air* CD and there's enough solid, mid-tempo punkin' going on here to keep these ears satisfied. While nothing here reaches the lofty heights of "Beer," "Baby I Love Dope" comes pretty darn close. –Jimmy Alvarado (Die Stinkin')

DIFFS, THE: Self-titled: 7"

It's telling that some kids who can't even be out of high school (maybe even junior high) can trump the newest release by the Hunns. And this debut isn't just some "Oh, look, they dress like Indians. They aren't that good, but ain't it cute?" thing that was attached to Mad Society. The songs are great – fully actualized bulldozers not marred by the usual early mistakes of being too far inside your heroes' skins – and remind me simultaneously of Eater, Cock Sparrer, the Skulls, and *How Could Hell Be Any Worse-era* Bad Religion. Layer upon layer of energy, lightning bolts zapping out of fingertips and mouths, and a ready antidote for anyone who thinks that all the fuckin' kids are wasting away on cuddly mall rock or trying to fit into too-small shirts and dumbing up their hair. Highly recommended. Only 300 made. –Todd (Headline)

DISILLUSIONED YOUTH: Cent Ep'd: CDR-EP

Pretty funny joke band, with songs like about dad's porn, being a loser for buying a laptop, and Dischord Records ("Twenty years of Dischord is 18 years too long!"). If this were a cereal, it'd be something like Fresh Prince O's. A funny idea. –Maddy (self-released?)

DISKORDS, THE: Blame It on the Kids: CD

I've been hearing a bit about the Diskords. The rumor mill says that one of their dads drives them to shows (they're only fourteen) and fixes them dinner. That endears them to me. Heavy Ramones influence, especially on "Cretin Girl" and "Boppin' at the Morgue," mixed with heavy doses of the Heartbreakers. They haven't really established their own sound, but it's super catchy and done well. Plus, when I think about what I was doing my freshman year of high school, this just blows me away. –Megan (Vinyl Warning)

DISTRACTION, THE: ...More Trouble at the V...: 12" EP

Man, I tried and tried to like the last Distraction full-length, and I sat on the fence with it for a long time, finally falling off, coming to the ultimate conclusion that it was a simpler Stitches. And, due to gross geographic proximity of the two bands (thirty miles, tops), I figured that that subdivision needed only one Stitches. This EP has got me doing some serious re-figuring. Gone are the "Is that Mike Lohrman singing?" vocals, replaced by none other than Le Shok and Neon King Kong's Hot Rod Todd, who sounds like he's huffing paint and slurring simultaneously. Also greatly whipping this thing into another shape are the keyboards, which roam through the recording like a fat boa constrictor, gently sliding in and out, squeezing and bulging unexpected bits and pieces to the front. I never had a problem with the Distraction's string work, and it all comes into focus on this EP. The whole enterprise makes a hell of a lot more sense when it stands on its own two musical legs. Thumbs up, also to the 3-D cover (with Distraction-lookin' glasses) and the fact that this is a one-sided 12" EP makes it almost impossible for these guys to break even, so you know this thing's from the heart and not just the wallet. –Todd (TKO)

DIVINE RIGHT OF MEANS: Self-titled: CD

This dances on a razor's edge between trash rock and AmRep skronk, lagging a bit when they lean toward the latter but shining bright when they pull out all the stops and raise a ruckus. Clip off four or five tracks of dead weight and this would be a stunner. –Jimmy Alvarado (www.doubleplusgoodrecords.com)

DRESDEN 45: Paradise Lost (Expanded): CD

Wow, here's another one of those bands that time almost, unjustly, forgot. Last remember hearing these kids in the late '80s and was mightily impressed with their full-on thrash attack. At the time, things were starting to get a tad rehash, and a lot of groups were jumping ship to take a stab at metal superstardom, so when a band managed to shake things up a bit, you tended to take notice. This wrecking crew was such a band. After an LP and maybe a 7-inch or two, they were gone, and I heard nothing more of them until the day Todd popped this into my box. Wow, I had no idea they released much more than I thought they did. There're a total of twenty tracks here spanning their entire recorded career and, aside from a moment of ill-advised rappin', there's nary a bad bit in the bunch. Fans of very early RKL or Final Conflict would be well advised to pick this up. Yeah, this is recommended. –Jimmy Alvarado (Arflight)

DRIPS, THE: Mexico: 7"

It's a rare thing indeed when I go see a band almost cold, with only the slightest of expectations and recommendations, and I have to wipe the concrete dust off my jacket from getting blown through the back of the club by the first song and remaining there for the rest of the set. That was the case with The Drips when I caught them at the Doll Hut last year. Monstrously catchy (and not in easy ways that I'm well prepared for), anthemic (in the "we're all sick and we're all in this together" way: "More pills! More wine!"), headed by a spazz (and he's in a much better known band. Dig a little and you'll find out), armed with one of the most powerful drum punishers I've seen in ages. I can't quite put my finger on what makes The Drips get my pulse all erratic and makes me listen to each song twice before I flip the record over. They've got the x-factor in spades. The charisma that although you've heard all the pieces scattered about, they glued that fucker tight and you find out that it's got more missiles to deploy than you first thought possible. Much like how the GC5 updated street punk without betraying it or being a slave to it, The Drips take a shit-ton of OC punk and do a fine bit recreation, then decimation. My prediction: if the band doesn't annihilate itself in the next year, they'll be drilling to your cranium, like those oil wells spread out through the residential neighborhoods of Huntington Beach. Mark it, dude. This one's a bonafide punk rock master stroke. -Todd (Hostage)

DT'S, THE: Hard Fixed: CD

The DT's play soulful, female-fronted

punk rock in the vein of The Bellrays and the Detroit Cobras. Plus, Dave Crider from the Mono Men is on guitar, so the songs have that extra edge that I was hoping for. As an added touch, they skipped out on having a bassist and stuck in keyboards that owe a lot more to the Sonics than they do to any kind of new wave. Put it all together and you got yourself a solid ten songs. Prior to this CD, the only thing the DT's put out was a little five song, three-inch CD. Two of the songs from the little EP made it onto the album. The rest is new stuff. All of it's worth repeated listens. -Sean (Estrus)

EHLEUCHATISTAS:**On the Culture Industry: CD**

I guess the new thing with failed emo bands is to ditch the singers and up the jazz influence exponentially. Singer or no, this rocks about as hard as the last Weather Report album. -Jimmy Alvarado (www.angurasound.com)

EL BUZZARD: Self-titled: CD

Sludgy, post-grunge stoner rock with screamed vocals. It's been so long since I've heard anything like this that I actually found myself digging it quite a bit. Thumbs up. -Jimmy Alvarado (www.el-buzzard.com)

ENDLESS:**Decade of Obscurity: CD**

I don't know if this is supposed to be a discography since the cover references 1993-2003. If they only wrote and recorded six songs in that time span, that is pretty bad. If this is a greatest hits, it's new to me. This is what the kids now call hardcore. The vocals are screamed and the guitars are metallic. Four originals, one Suicidal cover and

two live cuts that should have been replaced with two originals because the sound quality is flat and sounds like it could have come from a W.A.S.P. concert. Not half bad. I'm debating if I'm going to put this in the trade in pile. -Donofthedeath (Da' Core)

EVAPORATORS, THEE:**Ripple Rock: CD**

Oh, Canada! Oh, Nardwuar! Vancouver Canada's Evaporators are back after a six year break from the last full length (*I Gotta Rash*) and it's been way too long. Zany and catchy as hell. They are one of the those bands that you forget how much you really love them until you start humming along to the only band silly enough to release 8-tracks! A true guilty pleasure, but they are so much better than they should be. Nardwaur is brilliant or I've lived in the Pacific Northwest too long. I'm going to France! -Wanda Sprag (Alternative Tentacles)

EXTERNAL MENACE: The**Process of Elimination: CD**

Don't know who Dr. Strange has picking out what to release for 'em, but they've been batting quite a high average lately, and this is no exception. You get some relatively recent tracks (seven to eight years ago) from a UK band that started back in 1979 and are apparently still making the rounds. The songs are mid-tempo UK punk/hardcore circa 1982, with the occasional Clash-inspired reggae/punk track thrown in for good measure. Best song on here, hands down, is "Rude Awakening," quite possibly the best tune that Joe and Mick never wrote. This is gonna get played lots around these parts. -Jimmy Alvarado (Dr. Strange)

FALL OF THE BASTARDS: Dusk of an Ancient Age: CD

By-the-numbers black metal, interesting at best and not very innovative. The band members' names, particularly drummer Rudimentary Eli, cracked me up, though. -Jimmy Alvarado (Intolerant Messiah)

FALL-OUTS, THE:**Summertime: CD**

...while a zippy-but-uncute slammer like "All In My Mind" provides a swift and effective refresher course on why we all liked this band in the '90s, and "Shortcut" yields an at least marginally serviceable mutation of Donovan's take on Al Kooper's "Season of the Witch," and the album's entire peculiar Mod Meat Puppets vibe is, if nothing else, un-completely-played-out, i can't help but live in mortal fear that some bastard rock critic somewhere is going to make the joke that this album *really* oughtta be called *There We Go And Other Misses*. Ooooooops. BEST SONG: "All In My Mind" BEST SONG TITLE: "One Thought Too Much" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: "Staring at the Sun" is not the Angry Samoans song (but i wouldn't mind if it was). -Rev. Nørb (Estrus)

FIFTH HOUR HERO/ THE SAINTE CATHERINES: Split 7"

Fifth Hour Hero: I still can't shake the Discount comparison. It's especially evident on their second song, "A Map Within." It's strange, since Discount was from Florida and Fifth Hour Hero is Canadian; I thought accents would change the vocals up a bit more. That said, since Allison of Discount is now

busy smoking cigarettes on stage in an effort to remain mysterious and changed her name to Building or Eraser or something (she's in the Kills) and has slipped into designer jeans, Fifth Hour Hero is slowly getting more spins on my record player. Past loyalties die hard. I'm liking FHH more and more. The Sainte Catherines: take the first two Small Brown Bike albums, toss in Lemmy of Motorhead's basic bass sensibilities, rough it up in a cement mixer for some extra diziness, and there you have it. "The International Badminton Championship: La P' Tite Grise Vs. Jef" is one of the best-executed songs about confused sexuality I've come across in a long time. Immaculate packaging, to boot. -Todd (1-2-3-4-Go!)

FIFTH HOUR HERO:
You Have Hurt My Business and My Reputation Too: CD

I love this band! Québécois punk rock! Girl and boy vocals! (I wish we were at the point in punk rock where I didn't have to point out when there are girl vocals, but, unfortunately, this is still mostly a boy band scene! Just look at the Backstreet Boys! NO girls at ALL!) Anyway, three songs of great melodic punk, plus one more folksy number! Think Discount! If you haven't already bought their LP, *Scattered Sentences*, what's wrong with you? If this were a cereal, it'd be Marshmallow Alpha Bits! Could become Lucky Charms [my favorite!] quite soon! My only complaint? I'm assuming you speak French, so why no French songs? *Je l'aimerais bien!* -Maddy (No Idea)

FLATLINERS, THE:
Safe Side Suicide: LP

Hard call, this one is. While their lyrics aren't exactly poetry, they name check in their thank you list some of the biggest hacks in modern punk, and it sounds like they tried very hard to mimic the production values of the first Minor Threat EP, I'll be damned if I don't keep coming back to this. Despite the aforementioned drawbacks (or, as I think back on the days of yore, maybe because of them), they've got that '80s hardcore sound down pat, and the fact that the tunes themselves are catchy don't hurt matters much. Jeez, I feel like I just stepped out of a time machine or something. Thanks for helping me to feel sixteen and mad at the world again. -Jimmy Alvarado (Slab-O-Wax)

FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC:
Self-titled: CD

The equivalent of unleashing a belt sander on your eardrum, only without all the resulting blood on your favorite shirt. While their brand of noisy hardcore ain't my cup o' poison, I can't help but respect a band that can raise such an unholy racket. -Jimmy Alvarado (Reptilian)

FOAMERS, THE:
Self-titled: CD

An English punk band with a lot of the requisite flourishes and trappings one hears from many modern punk bands, but they manage to make them seem less annoying. Even their forays into the otherwise taboo terrain of ska punk don't elicit the usual gag reflex. I'm impressed. Can't believe this is coming out of my fingers, but this is recommended. Now if you'll excuse me, I'm going to pop off to take a shower now, 'cause I'm feelin' a wee bit dirty. -Jimmy Alvarado (Household Name)

FOXX, THE: Self-titled: CD

Lame name and a worse logo (think small market AM radio station ca. 1981) cannot hide the fact that, unlike the last nameless cretins posing as "glam" that i had the distinct misfortune of reviewing, *these* cretins actually know who they should be ripping off (at least some of the time): Chapman/Chinn-era Sweet (a la "Blockbuster"), Chapman/Chinn-era Mud (a la "Dynamite"), and if Chapman/Chinn wrote any songs for any band after Mud but before Racey, that band too (although i am not so sure having a girl in the band to do the high, gay background vocals instead of having a guy who sings like a girl doing the high, gay background vocals is not cheating). "Landslide" is (among several allowable Glam Options) *exactly* the type of thing i look for in a so-called "glam" offering: Vaguely sleazy enough that i feel comfortable dressing up in silver lamé and platform shoes and haltingly dancing around my bedroom to it; Bubblegummy enough that i can also rollerskate to it with a Sno-Cone™ in one hand, should such a need arise (though not really developed or honed enough that i can dress up in silver lamé and platform shoes and rollerskate to it in my bedroom with two Sno-Cones™ in each hand, but i'm taking what i can get at this point). They rifle through the whole glitter-caked junk drawer of 1973 AM UK Glam-Pop clichés: Simple, steady beat (but tell your drummer his clumsy drum fills totally fuck up the song and he should stop doing them), two rhythm guitars bouncing off of each other, lyrics about a mysterious little number who "scratches like a tiger and stings like a bumblebee," and even the occasional hot milky spurt of ultra-falsetto - delicious! (or, at the very least, merely licious, but worthy in its execution's sheer clonal excellence, except for the drums, which won't make anybody forget Mick Tucker, or even the studio guy who played Mick Tucker's parts on "Little Willy," whom, now that i think about it, is totally forgotten, so what the fuck do i know?) "Ready To Go," sounds like a passable low-budget version of one of Sweet's less-incendiary self-penned B-sides and "Bands (Don't Want Me To Dance)" includes kinda neat lines like "I wanna kiss you in a teenage heat/I want my heart left at the scene of the beat" and somehow manages to remind me of "Chatterbox" by the New York Dolls, "Kiss Me Deadly" by Lita Ford, the last song on one side of the first Boomtown Rats album, and the purple-haired version of the Zeroes, often at the same time. Everything that follows earns something between a shrug and a grimace (the grimacing occurring on a few truly pointless duds sung by their female member, who appears to be hell-bent on invoking the dread spectre of Tammy Wynette or some god damn thing. *MA'AM, under NO circumstances should you be opening your big American Chick Mouth unless you are CERTAIN that you can pass for a skinny British boy passing for a little British girl! Get it right, or i'll have your band trade you to Tsar for some guitar picks and an 8x10!*); as a 7-song CD, this would make a better 2-song 45 - but pull a bunch more hits like "Landslide" out of whatever genderless orifice you pulled it outta and i'm Riding my White Swan down to the record store. *On rollerskates! In a buf-*

falo herd, even! BEST SONG: "Landslide" BEST SONG TITLE: "Bands (Don't Want Me To Dance)" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: I can say with some assurance this is the first time i've seen a band member's photo taken in a library. -Rev. Nørb (The Foxx)

FOXY AUTOPSY:
Biznatural: CD

A female rap duo who can bring da funk about as well as John Denver. -Jimmy Alvarado (Foxy Autopsy)

FREQUENCY, THE:
Self-titled: CD

This is a solo project from one of the guys in Trans Am, which explains right off the bat why the tracks are so eclectic in sound. The tunes alternate between digital new wave geekdom, space rock, techno noodling, and punk. As can be expected considering his band pedigree, the results are top notch. -Jimmy Alvarado (www.nfilabel.com)

FUCKED UP:
Epics in Minutes: CD

For every punk rock ghetto that's trapped some bright minds, there's always a handful of bands that refuse to slip into the tattered musical uniforms and play like a house band of the defeated. There's always some folks making a new form of dynamite to annihilate walls that seem, to the majority, impenetrable. Hardcore's got some pretty strict constraints that are militantly guarded by its own believers, so it's doubly impressive when a band not only harnesses the unqualified blastmastery of the genre, but they do something new. And I don't mean post-hardcore bullfuck knitting-rock or

adding a goddamn pan flute or anything annoying like that. I mean, over twenty years of bad times have passed since Middle Class recorded "Out of Vogue" and Bad Brains trampled "Pay to Cum." The stakes are higher now because the pioneers have rarely been challenged or topped, just constantly (and usually) poorly reproduced. Enter bands along the lines of From Ashes Rise, DS-13, Tragedy, Out Cold, Career Suicide, and Fucked Up. Nope, Jack, it all hasn't been done, and better, and this CD - a collection of most (not all) of their recorded output to date lays a royal flush out on the table. Unmitigated anger. Pillaging guitars. Drumming that sounds like a thousand hooves rushing through your stereo. Melodies at full speed that mere consumers should be supplied a bite bar with so they don't choke on their own tongues when it gets cranked up really high. That, and memorable songs that don't all bleed into one long one. The showpieces are the first twelve songs. Then there's a radio session and a demo that does a good job of showing you how much better they are now. If you like this CD and have never heard of 'em before, I suggest backtracking and getting the original vinyl, too. -Todd (Deranged)

GHETTO WAYS:
Self-titled: LP

My initial impulse was to dismiss this for the derivative slop it is, but the catchy '60s soul-encrusted Stooogeisms won me over in the end. I've just played it three times in a row, which can only mean that I like it more than I thought I did. -Jimmy Alvarado (Alien Snatch)

GIBBONS, THE: Self-titled: 7" Young kids from the east side of Detroit. Pop punk mixed with politics has seen a much worse fate, but this isn't yet crucial listening. The nasal vocals and pretty standard beats remind me of a less compelling *Powerbait*-era Digger mixed with a less lyrically savvy Connie Dungs. Still, they give it a shot, don't go for the cheapest of shots and riffs, and spark some promise to their next release. —Todd (Salinas)

**GIVE UPS/
RADIO BEATS: Split: 7" EP** Give Ups: Some catchy stuff here if you like your punk with a Killed By Death slant. Radio Beats: Eight-bar blues-based rock/punk, not as immediately interesting as the Radio Beats stuff, but I ain't exactly knockin' it, either. In all, not a bad listen. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.thegiveups.com)

**GIVE UPS/VM Collision:
Split 7" EP** Give Ups: Straightforward thud punk that manages to hit that sweet spot not once but twice. Kinda like the Rip Offs with cleaner production. VM Collision: Not as interesting as the Give Ups even though they barrel along at twice the speed. I'm hearing some fairly stereotypical pop punk trappings buried underneath their loud guitars. —Jimmy Alvarado (Say Ten)

**GO BETTY GO:
Worst Enemy: CDEP** I was pretty excited when this came. Go Betty Go is a female quartet that was the staple Tuesday band at the only bar within walking distance a year ago. They alternate between English and

Spanish lyrics and are on the aggressive side of pop-punk. But man, is this release slick. They thank their drum tech and name what equipment they use. It was mastered at Capitol Records. The worst is that it's heavily produced and a lot of the edge is lost. The third of four tracks, "Son Mis Locuras," is the best on here, but I doubt I'll be heading out to the Warped Tour to see them these days. (Two weeks after writing this, I saw a deodorant ad with one of their songs playing in it — something smells like sell-out and it's not my pits!) —Megan (Side One Dummy)

**GOONS, THE:
Nation in Distress: CD** Wow, this was a surprise. Solid hardcore tunes here that don't merely rely on speed to mask incompetence like so many others do. Hell, a couple of tunes are downright anthemic. The lyrics manage to be topical and political without sounding like a pamphlet and the singer has an atypical timbre to his vocals but still manages to elicit the requisite pissed-offness required for the genre. In short, some rockin' stuff here. —Jimmy Alvarado (Reptilian)

GREEN DAY: 1,039/Smoothed Out Slappy Hours: CD I am a dork! I have always loved Green Day! Usually, being a dork also means that you are so musically and technically inept that you can't tell the difference when a CD gets remastered. But, in this case, I could actually tell the difference — more clear and loud and all of that. Plus there's some stupid bonus CD-rom crap. (End: "Technical" Part of Review.) But the important thing is, if for some reason, you've managed to

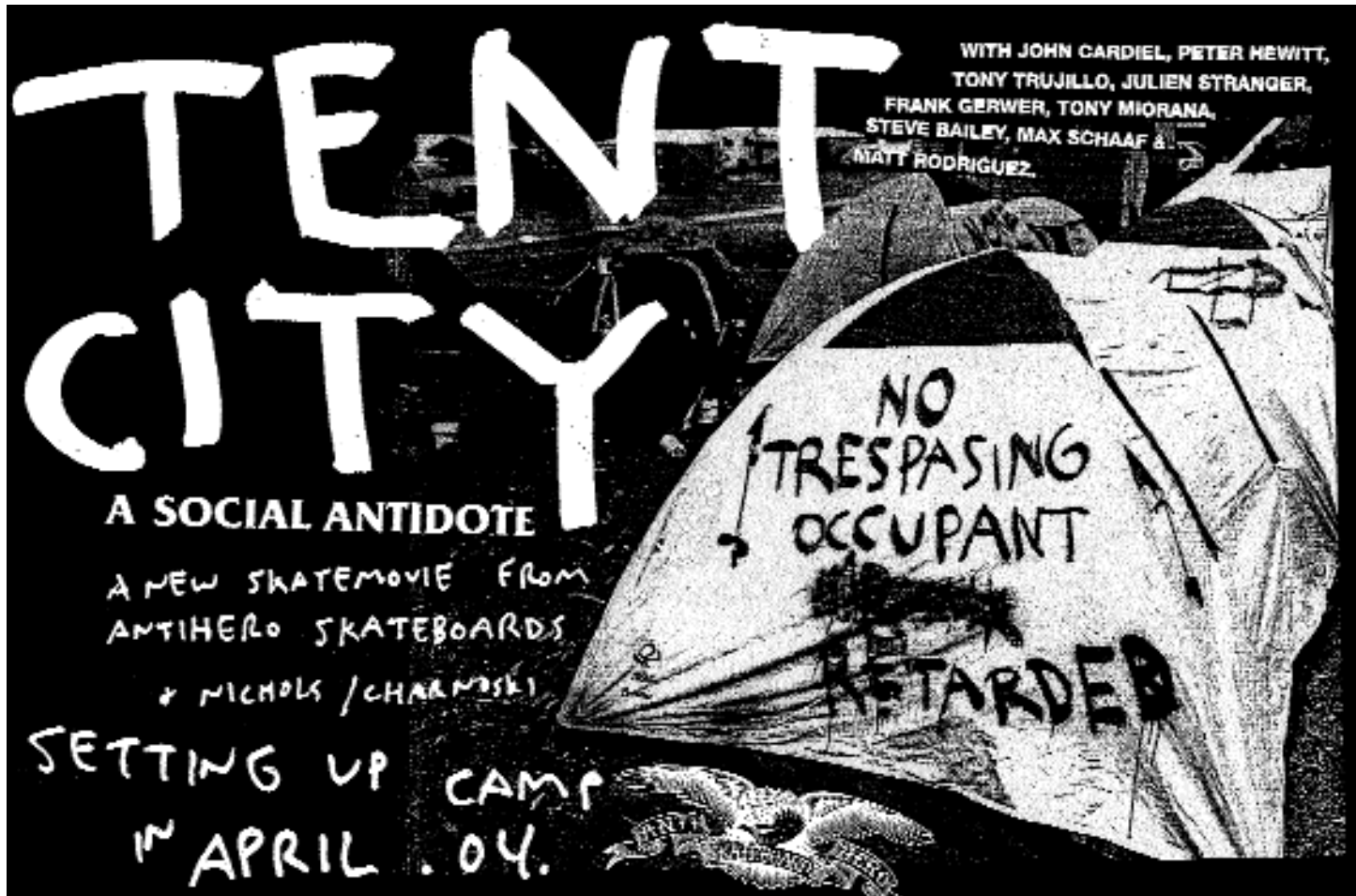
go through your life without owning this, you, sir or ma'am, have some explaining to do. Some of the best pop songs ever. Yes, pop songs! Yes, love songs! If this were a cereal, it'd be Lucky Charms! One of my favorite albums! —Maddy (Lookout)

GUADRON: Raw Voltage: CD After approximately ten full length listens to *Raw Voltage*, the debut album from Guadron (aka Detroit-based artist/musician Ron Zakin), I'm still at a loss for a proper review. "Why?" you ask. Is it that awful? No, quite the contrary. For some reason, it seems to be far easier to write a five-page essay on the ghastly performances of *American Idol* wannabes than to write a few lines describing the electronic intricacies that keep this album on repeat. It becomes difficult to verbalize the hyper dance beats and the constantly fluctuating tempos that make my head spin and cause me to see, for some odd reason, looped car chases when I shut my eyes. The task becomes more arduous when, upon each consecutive listen, new sounds emerge — a snip of a tribal drum here, a lick of a guitar there and are those spoons clicking in the background or am I imagining things again? After awhile, the tracks begin to fade into each other. The starts and stops of specific pieces become irrelevant and it seems clear that *Raw Voltage* is not a work divided into eleven parts, but one full body of electronic madness that will keep this listener dancing in her bedroom for a long time. —Liz O. (Ersatz Audio)

**GUN CRAZY:
Dropping Like Flies: CD** Some rippin' punk rock'n'roll from

Austin, struttin', swaggerin' and slangin' its charm like a high-end call girl in the midst of a ship full of horny sailors. I've been a bit burned out on this genre for a while now, but when something this cool comes along, you can't help but pay attention, and this is worthy of frequent listens. —Jimmy Alvarado (Mortville)

**HAIR BEARD COMBO:
Complete Discography
(So Far...): CD** When I said that the new Leatherface was going to be the best album of the year, I may have spoke too soon. On the twenty-two songs on this retrospective, the Hair Beard Combo triumphantly prove time and again that they are leaps and bounds better than any other acoustic-based band out there, especially Even in Blackouts, who totally suck. And it's not just some mellow Leonard Cohen rip that you'd only put on when you're trying to get laid, they tackle subject matter more vital than anything else I can think of off the top of my head. Do you really want to get bogged down with left-wing rhetoric when you listen to music? Of course not. You want to listen to songs about stuff like grape jelly, monster trucks, and *Magnum, PI*, arguably the greatest Hawaii-based cop show ever. But for those of you who just HAVE to have politics invading every aspect of your life, they also address the current situation in the Middle East by saying, "I know we're totally bombing you but it's totally not my fault, 'cause I totally voted for Dan Marino." Really, who needs Discharge when you've got the Hair Beard Combo? —Josh (Pro Dudes USA)



HASIL ADKINS:
"Kim Rock" b/w "Baseball Bat Song": 12" single

A twelve inch single from Italy. Hasil Adkins is the man. Two songs: "Kim Rock" and "Baseball Bat." The first you need to hear because you have to. You have to know. The second you need to hear especially if you've read part 1 of the *Razorcake* Hasil interview, 'cause I know you just finished part 2. If not, go to it now! Get! ... Alright, now you're a bit more ready, and there is nothing more I can say except you might want to get up and get one of these cause I don't think they'll hang around too long. You don't want to go your life without the latest from the Lone One himself. So sad. So true. Make you laugh. Make you blue. Get to it. -BD Williams (Rockin' Bones)

HAYMARKET RIOT: Mog: CD
Post-punk college radio pap that I tend to ignore. -Donofthedeath (Thick)

HENRY FLAT'S OPEN SORE: The Parallel Universe of...: LP
Oh, the glory of the vinyl medium lends itself well to the HFOS mania. There's something comforting and eerie about these guys. It's like visiting older musical neighborhoods - like those inhabited by the old Dwarves and the well-missed Mummies - but HFOS are the newest, more demented kids playing in the rubble of the long-ago destroyed landscape. Nothing should grow there. Everything should rot and decay and give up and die. But from the ashes and poisonous rainwater sprout four black-bandaged Swedes with radioactive fluids coursing through their veins. Grayed wickedness in their softened brains. Viruses and

plagues and their fingertips and in their throats. The antidote to any "Employee of the Week," a rabid, mistreated Dachshund to the balls of all the bands too busy stretching for the brass ring to notice before teeth are clamped on tight. It's downright a comfort to hear such fight, fuck, fight, fuck me, fuck you, fuck us all on record. Do the math of twenty-five songs on an LP and you know they don't dick around. Yep, recommended. -Todd (Raw Deluxe)

HOLLOW POINTS: Annihilation: CD

I don't get it. Everything about this band screams that I should loathe them. Shades of later Bad Religion abound, they're sick with pop hooks, and yet I've adored them since the first time I heard "POW" on the *Dirtnap Across the Northwest* comp and I've spent the last year trying to figure out why. Aside from the fact that they manage to punch all the right buttons for me, I think what gets me more than anything else is that they sound authentic in ways that even bands like Bad Religion don't anymore. The lyrics are solid, they sound like they mean it, man, and they play with a level of conviction that's rare these days. I have little doubt this'll make a few top ten lists this year, and rightly so. -Jimmy Alvarado (Dirtnap)

HOLLY TREE: Anytime, Anywhere: 7"

Brazilian band, transplanted to the LA area, give it their all. The title track is where it's at. Prototypical Hostage-style OC punk rock. It's a snotty, swaggery, weird-eyed and knowing smirk of a song with great hooks and my favorite of the three. The second song, "Boom Box," tips a hat to the Dead Boys, where

even though it's not the fastest track in the land, there's danger on the edges. The b-side, "Drugstore," starts off as a surf rocker - with echoes of the Blasters of all things - then leaps onto the concrete, knocks out some teeth, and does a good job of being epic and adventurous (read being over three minutes) without being wanky or pretentious (even though there is a drum solo, it fits). Worth keeping an eye out for. Only 300 made. -Todd (Headline)

HOREHOUNDS: No Time for You: LP

These guys are up to their eyeballs in Dolls influence and sex obsession, but they rock the fuck outta punk rock-'n-roll template. This one's a keeper. -Jimmy Alvarado (Rockin' Bones)

HORNY MORMONS: Play Goat-Ropin', Corn-Huskin', Cow-Tippin', 'n' Other Fine Ditties: CD

Looks like entire recorded history of the band plus twenty-eight live tunes. Lesser Dead Milkmen that's pretty painless. -Speedway Randy (Sacramento)

HOW WE LOST THE WAR: Self-titled: 7" EP

This sounds like one o' them insta-grow bands that make up tunes, practice 'em and then hit the record button all in the same day. Protes Bengt they are not. -Jimmy Alvarado (www.howwelostthewar.com)

HUNNS, THE: Long Legs, Die Hunns: CD

I'm not sure if the band is no longer Duane Peters and the Hunns. Are they now the Hunns or Die Hunns? I have to

admit that I have not followed Duane Peters or his other band, the U.S. Bombs. I know I liked one song from the latter band. But I sure like this band or the line-up of this band on this release. For me, the highlight is the additional vocal duties of the ex-Nashville Pussy amazon, Corey Parks. Her vocals dueling with Duane's adds additional character to the songs, especially when she dominates most of vocals on certain songs. Great choice of cover songs that start off the CD like "Time Has Come Today" by the Chamber Brothers. Also included are covers of the Undertones, the Wipers, and the Sex Pistols. The originals are no slackers either. Straight-up punk with a late '70s, early '80s So Cal sound. Cool as shit, hot as ice. -Donofthedeath (Disaster)

HUSBANDS, THE: Daniel b/w You Need Hands: 7"

These three ladies from the San Francisco area haven't failed me yet. They're like the little sister gone wrong of the Detroit Cobras. The one that's not afraid to get a little dirty and break curfew. Raw rock and roll at its best. -Megan (Blue Bus)

I FARM: Two Selected Works: CD

This CD definitely kept me on my toes. Just when I settled into one rhythm, it changed musical styles immediately and would continue to do so again and again. The majority of what they played was pretty damn good, going from mostly melody-oriented upbeat punk, to hardcore, to something without much melody at all. All within each song. Most of the CD kept my attention. However, some of the quick changes in

the songs really lost me. It was like the minute I had my head bobbing or my foot tapping, they switched gears faster than an ambidextrous hooker without much endurance in her right hand. I would usually end up feeling like the job wasn't finished. With that said, I do find myself going back to this CD and giving it a listen every now and then, without any intention of selling it back. As an aside, I'm not sure if this has anything to do with their schizophrenic style of music, but according to their label, they got their name cause they farm meth. -Toby (Big Action)

INDIGENTS, THEE: **Brain Dead World: 7"**

The first time I heard Thee Indigents on the *Tower 13* album, I thought, how the fuck did this band get onto this comp? I thought it was the only stinker on the record. The last time I heard the *Tower 13* comp, the song by Thee Indigents was one of my favorites. My initial dislike had to do with the ridiculously snotty vocals. I mean ridiculously snotty. This guy makes Joey Vindictive sound like he just blew his nose. Thee Indigents' singer makes the Stitches' Mike Lohrman sound like goddamn Frank Sinatra. That's how snotty he is. But the band that backs him up is so tight that they propel you through the songs. They get you tapping your toes and running a one-man circle pit in your living room. They keep you interested so long that you'll start to like the vocals. Then, you'll start to love them. What can I say? The snot grows on me. This is another ringer from Hostage. -Sean (Hostage)

JEFFIE GENETIC AND HIS CLONES: Need a Wave: CD

Jeff from the New Town Animals playing all the instruments, making all the moves, having all the fun. A good album all the way through, straight-shootin' early '80s black-and-white new wavy rock. But the lyrics are fun, as the title track questions the difference between the army and kids looking for today's new wave to follow, "Scooter Queen" about a guy who's girlfriend scooted into a bus and now he watches *Quadrophenia* all day, and the obligatory lobotomy song. -Speedway Randy (Dirtnap)

JERRY SPIDER GANG: **Exile on Mainstream: CD**

Like every other punk rock aficionado stuck to this planet in the year 2004, I'm up to the cut of my jib with Hella-copters-styled poonk rawk bands, what with all their sideburns and greasy t-shirts and their Lemmy Kilmister school-boy crushes. Not to mention their unabashed arena rock bravado that seems, from at least one angle, to fly stupidly straight into the face of conventional punk rock decorum. And let's be honest: we've paid dearly for what probably began as a nordically honest fusion of some of the best aspects of metal and punk. Vapid party-line-toting bands like Gluecifer and the Retardos now seem like mere mediocrities compared to MTV darlings now arriving on the scene, such as Jet and the Strokes. But despite all this baggage I'm carrying around with me regarding these Hella-copy cats, Jerry Spider Gang somehow manages to not invoke my utter contempt. Sure, they're at least six or seven years late, but what the fuck? They don't sound like they're faking it and, though they sometimes come perilously close, they don't strangle each

song to death with never-ending xmas light strings of wah-pedal guitar solos. Plus, it's pretty catchy. I'll probably be sick of it by next week, but for now I think it's pretty good. -Aphid Peewit (Lollipop)

JET BOYS, THE: **"Shit My Pants" b/w "Gonna Bite You," "Burn Out": 7"**

The Jet Boys remind me how simple my tastes really are and how much little it takes for me to like punk rock if it's well done. These three burners stab as fast as *Blood, Guts, and Pussy*-era Dwarves and the Jet Boys are comparable to the Japanese punk rock band that's hard not to mention if there's garage, speed, and not sucking put into the same sentence: Teengenerate. This seven inch is simple as a pencil in the eye, sharp as prison concertina wire, and as fast as premature ejaculation (but, you know, not embarrassing). Cool. -Todd (Black Lung)

JET BOYS: Jet Patrol!: CD

It's hard not to compare Japanese rock and roll bands to Teengenerate, the band that pretty much set the standard that has yet to be touched. The Jet Boys aren't nearly as trashy, but the sound is there. They also have a bit more of a hard rock-type of sound, not in a Van Halen way, but more like *Bloodbrothers* by the Dictators kind of way. It's somewhere between the classic rock-isms of Electric Eel Shock and the fuzzed-out trash rock of Guitar Wolf, and that's a good sign that it's pretty rippin'. Not for the weak of heart. -Josh (Pictus, no address in English)

JOHN HOLMES: **Everything Went Blacker: CD**

New York thug metal bites, even if the band in question hails from England. Press material says they've toured with Poison Idea and it's too bad they learned nothing from the experience. Look kids, you wanna up the brutality level? Forget all this thick-necked metal crap and take these three words to heart: PICK YOUR KING. With that template you can't go wrong and you're guaranteed to put the fear of god into anyone who crosses your path. -Jimmy Alvarado (Household Name)

JUCIFER: War Bird: CD

Dirgy stoner rock with pretty female vocals. Different, but not exactly something I'd rush to play again. -Jimmy Alvarado (Velocette)

KAAOS: **Ristiinnaulittu Kaaos: LP**

I don't know if it's that snow or what, but the Scandinavians have got the market cornered in the western hemisphere when it comes to consistently amazing hardcore releases. Twenty-plus years and, as evidenced by bands like Krigshot and Rajoitus, most countries still can't come close to matching the chaotic bliss that comes outta the frost-bitten European north. Don't believe me? Pop this puppy, a reissue of a classic from 1984, onto the turntable, crank up the volume and prepare to have your ears gouged by some of the best noise ever associated with the word "punk." This record is rife with fjordcore fury, as punishing as it was two decades ago and, as if the original tracks weren't enough, three additional tracks have been tacked on to up the ante. Give this bad boy a place of reverence in your collection, sandwiched between tattered Terveet Kadet, Rattus, and Riisteyt

releases, and just wish you were in a band that friggin' good. -Jimmy Alvarado (Havoc)

KA-KNIVES, THE: **"Weasel" b/w "Dear Dad": 7"**

In the spirit of Supercharger and the Oblivians, the equation's as predictable as it is effective. Take low-fi, kick some dirt on it, record it through a boom box (or whatever sounds like one), and kick it in the nads a couple more times, so you don't know if it's limping or staggering. If you did it right, it's the audio equivalent to duct-taped instruments, fractured cymbals, and microphones with cracked cords. Here are two covers: one by Joe and the Furies, and one by Chuck Berry. I'd be lying if I said I didn't like it. On drums and vocals is Matt of the dearly missed Jewws (of which the Ka-Knives are a reasonable outreach from) and Junior Varsity (which this is pretty far afield from). -Todd (Lance Rock)

KICKZ, THE: "One Day" b/w "Don't Ask Why": 7"

I saw these seventeen-year-olds in Austin and something didn't sit quite right with me. I have a lot of quirks when it comes to see a band play live, and if there's not a good reason for a band member to not have shoes on (like a broken foot), no matter what comes out of the speakers, I think to myself, "Hippie, put some shoes on" unless I'm thoroughly convinced otherwise (as I was with Dan Yemin of Kid Dynamite). Without the visual hurdles to retard me, I'm digging the single. Gone is the wanking and noodling of kids learning to play their instruments better but not knowing when to stop. (Steve Diggle rules. Stevie Vai sucks.) "One Day" is full of youthful enthusiasm, tried and true melodies from the first wave of melodic English punk (Stiff Little Fingers wouldn't be too far off), and a sharpshooter of a recording. The b-side is a toe-tapping Replacements cover. Reigned in, I like these guys quite a bit. -Todd (Mortville)

KIDNAPPERS, THE: **Self-titled: 7" EP**

I have yet to meet a Zaxxon Virile Action release I haven't dug, and this is no exception. The A-side, "Spanish Girls," has this great "Inflammable"-era SLF meets the mods thing going for it that just makes it immediate crucial listening. The other two tunes on this are more in the garage-informed punk vein you expect from bands on this label, which are no less good, but up against some tough competition when put up against that stunner on the other side. Let's pray to the god of rock'n'roll that these kids manage to squeeze out an LP before inevitably throwing in the towel, as all good bands do. -Jimmy Alvarado (www.zaxxonvirileaction.com)

KILLER DREAMER: **Self-titled: CD**

Easily the best album this time around. San Pedro's premier action-rock band is part Fleshies-meets-Toys That Kill, part zombie, and a large part of their own creation, which adds up to a ripping record. Members of Lipstick Pickups, Jag Offs, Four Letter Words, and Cup of Beans join forces here. One member had a song, "Bike Burner," written about him. Another one rubs condiments on his crotch. The third one crapped himself at an Andrew W.K. show. The last one shared a jug of wine with me and was puking in his bed

before the night was through. I love these boys. -Megan (Kapow)

KILLER DREAMER: Survival Guns b/w Pterodactyl: 7"

This band has these weird guitar hooks that really draw me in and make me pay attention to the songs, like they've listened to their share of Grumpies records, but instead of hiding those hooks behind fuzzed-out punk rock, they duct tape them to some Fleshies-style trainwrecking rock and roll. They also whoop ass real good. -Josh (Kapow)

KILLER SQUIRREL: Self-released (And Loving It): CD

Says it was recorded in someone's apartment, and it sounds like it. Rudimentary punk rock with subdued execution and leftist lyrics. While I could get behind the sentiment, the delivery left me cold. -Jimmy Alvarado (Operation Phoenix)

KILOWATTHOURS/ THE RUM DIARY: Split CD

Either your pet just died in the alley or you're trying to score with a girl you picked up at Orange Julius. In either case, you'd do better than these college radio retread bands. -Speedway Randy (Springman/Substandard)

KITE-EATING TREE, THE: **Method: Fail, Repeat... : CD**

In the interest of full disclosure, this is the second copy of this disc that arrived in the mail. I wish I could listen to both of them at the same time. This reminds me of everything I liked about Jawbox (soaring vocals, ringing chords, melodies) with none of the boring shit that I hated (the apparent inability to sustain any of the things I liked for more than a few seconds or measures), everything that's great about No Knife and, in general, everything that's awesome and ruling about post-core with a tumbler filled with 190-proof rock and roll thrown in for good measure. I'm sure there are tremendously subtle things about this record but, quite frankly, there's simply too much rock here to go searching for subtlety on the first, second or even twentieth listens. Primarily for fans of angular, muscular guitar rock bands. -Puckett (Cowboy Versus Sailor)

KRUNCHIES, THE: **Interrobang: 7" EP**

It's not to far off to think of Criminal IQ Records as building a house in the Dangerhouse, early Posh Boy, early Frontier subdivision of music. They haven't yet released anything's that's bad, it's stylistically all in the same ballpark, but their bands are definitely not retreated radials of one another. The Krunchies are no exception - dual male/female vocals - the lady is an acquired voice (I like it), almost like if you put a microphone up to a fuzzy, baby chick (as in just-born chicken), amplified its voice, and made it angry - and couple it with spastic bass lines and guitar work that sounds like it's hooked up to a food processor (serrate, chop, blend, gallop). The music behind the vocals reminds me of the debut Red Cross EP mixed with early Plugz, if that's any help. I can't say anything bad about 'em. Rock solid EP. Look forward to more. -Todd (Criminal IQ)

KYLESA: No Ending/ A 110 Degree Heat Index: 7"

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dirge of punk energy. From the ashes of Damad, this band continues on with a bombastic din of white noise that makes you clench your teeth to point of cracking. Not for the timid or meek. When happy just won't do. This is a perfect accessory to one's overabundant rage or dislike with life. The riffs are heavy and intricate. The layers accent the mood. Bass tones are on the low end to deliver a pounding to drive the feeling of helplessness. Great stuff. Collector nerd features include Pushead artwork, title of band in gold leaf, and colored vinyl (for mailorder only). My copy came on purple vinyl swirled with white. Pusfan.com also put out a double 7" version with a different cover, Pushead signature, beige vinyl with white swirls, and two extra tracks that I bought. -Donofthead (Prank)

LAST VEGAS, THE:

Lick 'Em and Leave 'Em: CD
Who, good thing it's the last one. When they just sit down and shut up and smoke their crack and play their Molly Hatchet/Van Halen "Hot For Teacher" riffs, I guess things aren't really a complete and utter embarrassment for all parties concerned; when the lyrics kick in - "you wauwna love mashaayyn, you wauwna be obsaayyne" etc. - this condition no longer holds. It's pretty fucking sad when grown adults can't think of a better album title than this. P.S. Tell your graphic designer to stop wasting his time designing your CD covers and to get behind the drums, because America needs a new (mumble mumble mumble) band album now more than ever!
BEST SONG: "I Got What You Need" - I like how they manage to sound like they're ripping off "Heartbreaker" by Led Zeppelin AND the Donnas AND the first Mötley Crüe album simultaneously. *It's me art!*
WORST SONG TITLE: "You Want To Know How To Love Me"
FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: "No matter how pretty she is, somebody, somewhere, is sick of her shit" - Spanish Tony. -Rev. Nørb (Get Hip)

LEATHERFACE:

Dog Disco: CD
Goosebumps. Leatherface's *Mush* is a masterpiece. One of the top ten punk records ever recorded. Listening to it is one experience. Listening to it and reading along to the lyrics: goosebumps. I can't think of another band that combines torn literacy, drenched passion, spilled pints, and stained carpets together so well in songs. Leatherface is sneaky, too. I know barely one of their rabid fans that dug them on the first couple of listens. This isn't the musical equivalent to pornography - not everything's lit up like neon with the tasty bits readily exposed for consumption. It's careful listening to Frankie Norman Warsaw Stubb's ragged and burlap voice, which sounds a lot like Lemmy Kilmister's. It's realizing that the bass and guitar, although they're playing the exact same song, aren't. They're in near-constant counterpoint. Interlocked, sure, but always stalking, revolving, and shimmering around one another. It's hearing a drummer never stop, never get too loose, never get lazy, never showboat. I like it how when I read along to Leatherface, the world seems as containable as a small yellow chair or as massive and mysterious as the sea floor of a high and mighty ocean. *Dog*

Disco's different from their latest, *Horsebox*. It's more content. The wanderer has found some solace, partnership, and stability. It's also more from the chest - growled and mouthed instead of yelled and rupturing. I'm not talking a toothless mellowing, but an unqualified grace, the vitality of being fully aware of your situation, and exploring the good bits that have come your way. As of this writing, I've listened to this over fifty times, and, with all Leatherface, it gets better with each spin, releasing its power slowly. Unqualified recommendation. -Todd (BYO)

LESS: Cover, Protective, Individual: CD

What I would imagine Tool sounding like if they only used acoustic guitar and percussion. -Donofthead (Firecode, no friggin' address)

LIBERTY:

Outlaw Hooligans: CD-R

Casualties-Xeroxed street punker stuff. Should fit in nicely with the leather-and-bristle "think for yourself" clones. Includes a cover of "Louie Louie." Now there's a song that's never been covered before. -Jimmy Alvarado (pinheadpunk85@cs.com)

LIFE IS BONKERS:

Self-titled: CD

Quirky, new wavy punk from a two-man band. The songs are funny and more accomplished musically than one would expect from a two-man band. The "hidden" cover of "Anarchy in the UK" was good for a laugh. -Jimmy Alvarado

LIPSTICK PICKUPS:

"Better Than You" b/w "Make Your Bed": 7"

Super bubblegummy garage pop fronted by females with squeaky voices. Part of me wants to say that it sounds kind of like the Muffs if the Muffs were influenced by Scared of Chaka instead of the Bangles and Kiss. That sounds like a pretty neat alternate universe, and this is a pretty neat record. -Josh (Kapow)

LOCUST, THE:

Self-titled: little CDEP

This is a re-press of a Locust 7" from 1997. If you're new to the Locust, imagine a Spanish Inquisition of sound, Cliff's Notes version. They make me think of Anal Cunt, and then they make me wonder - after they've compressed so much, truncated, blown up, eviscerated, and plumped so much music into such a short, scream-heavy space - what's next? Will they break the rubber band? Will it be Rick Wakeman territory? Prancing unicorns and mystical soundscapes made from the intestines of rainbows? Do they find a new sort of warp drive that makes fast seem slow? (Listen to the first wave of punk. Chuck Berry pretty much strafed the shit out of most of the "blistering" bands, but it made some nice PR.) This is solid, dividing stuff that helped build the Locust's well-deserved reputation, both good and bad. -Todd (GSL)

LURKING CORPSES, THE:

23 Tales of Terror: CD

About 80% of this album is hard to tell apart from Danzig-era Misfits. If I drifted off and wasn't paying attention to the CD, I would eventually think in the back of my mind, "Hey, someone's playing The Misfits." The music, lyrics

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and even the voice are all almost just like them. However, it seems like every now and then the singer would lose the microphone down his throat and suddenly sound like a gravelly throated death metal singer. What killed me was later in the CD, it sounds like the gay falsetto voiced singer from The Darkness sneaks into the studio and throws in his god awful wails sporadically. With the CD totaling 23 tracks and the vocals taking a turn for the worse in 20% of the songs, I think those into Misfits rip off horror punk would enjoy this. –Toby (Creature Feature)

MAHARAJAS, THE: Unrelated Statements: CD

Garage punk is not one scene that I follow. From time to time a band comes along and blows me a way. Some years ago, for another magazine, I got a record to review for a band from Sweden. That band turned out to be the Strollers. That band blew my mind and immediately I became a fan. I begged the label for more and more came my way. I think it was last year or the year before that the label and I got back in touch. They sent me other bands to review, which I truly enjoyed, like the Maggots and the Sewergrooves. As usual, I went to the Razorcake compound to pick up my review material. I saw a package in my box from Low Impact Records. Can't go wrong there. They have not failed me yet. A new band on their label. Should be interesting. Turns out, this band has former members of the Maggots, Jens Lindberg and Anders Oberg. I look even further and get really excited to see the singer from the Strollers, Mathias Lilja, is in the band too. Holy cow! The music combines the elements of both bands and takes it to another level. Well-produced but raw and stripped-down garage rock that could be mistaken to be recorded from the late '60s or the early '70s. The same energy when I first got into punk is represented here. No silly studio tricks or over-layered tracks. Just simple playing with conviction. Another great thing about this release is none of the songs are over three minutes long. Get in and get out is what they do here. They play just long enough to get the point across and not overextend their welcome. Mathias is a great songwriter and his vocals are mesmerizing. The songs are infectious and melodic. With a little research, I see that this incarnation of the band released an LP in Italy in early 2003 titled *H-Minor*. I'm on a quest to acquire that and see how the progression to this release has gone so far. –Donofthedeath (Low Impact)

MAKE BELIEVE: Self-titled: CD

As Emperor of the Universe, I hereby issue this decree: Any college student caught with a backpack, horn-rimmed glasses, and a musical instrument of any kind in his possession shall be dealt a serious kick in the shin. Yes, it may be harsh, but SOMEONE'S got to stop this emo scourge at the roots. –Jimmy Alvarado (Flame Shovel)

MANGINA: At War with Black Metal: 7"

I'm not sure but I think that sometimes, when someone's trying so damn hard to bend over backwards in an attempt to parody something, they end up sticking the heads straight up their asses and, in essence, come full circle; in other words, they wind up a parody that is no longer a parody. Your guess is as good as mine with this pod of mooning wiz-

ards, traipsing in their little capes, codpieces, and retard-applied King Diamond clown make-up as they ape all the over-the-top machinations of a black metal band lost in its own intestinal ooze... Are they in earnest or just taking the piss out of the Varg Vikernes and Euronymous of the world? It's probably an irrelevant question; it probably all comes down to how brittle your sense of humor has become over the years. I can see Mangina growing on me and then again, maybe I'll never play it again. But I think I would check them out live, if only for the funny outfits. –Aphid Peewit (Jeth-Row)

MARATHON: Songs to Turn the Tide: CDEP

I can't get over how much these guys remind me of Ignite – a singer who is actually a singer that yells to make things aggressive. Musically, they've got melodic, metal overtones with the chugga sound that Pennywise is famous for. If these guys aren't on the Warped Tour in a couple of years, they are not marketing themselves hard enough and need to fire their record label. –Donofthedeath (Red Leader)

MARKED MEN, THE: On the Outside: CD

The second full length by the Marked Men is awe inspiring – fantastic power punk akin to '70s bands like The Nerves or The Real Kids, but being delivered by 3/4 of The Reds. Jeff Burke has truly captivated me, beyond anything accomplished by The Reds or The Chop-Sakis. His storytelling and delivery are over and above any copycat Killed by Death rehash band. This is not to say that Mark Ryan's songs are lacking, but Burke doesn't sound like another person on the planet. I loved The Reds and they had a choppy style that was always interesting, but the rhythm of this is different. Everything sounds more organic, less forced. Mike Throneberry's drumming seems to find a more natural pace and with the addition of a new bass player, it just clicks. Sadly, most people buying punk records will say it's too pop and people buying pop will think it's too hard. The fucked message being that you can't be in a great punk band and write a good hook. Easily one of the best records I have heard this year. –Wanda Sprag (Dirtnap)

MASTER PLAN, THE: Colossus of Destiny: CD

One of my more noteworthy Crimes Against Rock™ – which have been astonishingly plentiful – was, at age 14/15, finding myself so un-throttled by my copy of the Dictators *Go Girl Crazy* LP that I actually unloaded it back down at the record store within a few weeks of initial purchase. Needless to say, the situation has been long since rectified, but an error of that magnitude does not go unaccomplished by one such as myself, and, after a number of attempts to understand just what the hell I was thinking when I flipped that burly gem back to the used bin for pennies on the dollar, I came to the conclusion that I tragically abandoned *Go Girl Crazy* simply because, at the time, it seemed old and square. Like, I know the 'Tators covered "California Sun" two years before the Ramones did, but so what? Having the Ramones version in hand, I really didn't think I needed to keep the Dictators' version – inarguably, a comparative plod (pooper-shaking be damned!) – around the house. Loveable and irreverent as they were, they still

seemed like they were part of the old Orthodoxy of Rock that, at least to me, punk was – THANKFULLY – rendering inert (if not inert, then certainly unnecessary). And, while I am no longer in agreement with my younger self on the Dictators', uh, *inert-ancy*, I can see where I was coming from: Almost anything the Dictators or relevant related post-Dictators projects (the Del-Lords, Manioba's Wild Kingdom... I did say "relevant," which should eliminate the need to bring up Manowar) have done always sounds not too far off from something one could imagine one's uncle kinda digging, given a few beers and the house to himself. With The Master Plan – Andy/Adny Shernoff, two dudes from the Fleshtones, and some Paul "Peppermint" Johnson guy I never heard of (but am willing to give the benefit of the doubt simply because he must be cooler than, say, Paul "Spearmint" Johnson) – that condition still kinda holds true, but is *itself* rendered inert because GODDAMMIT, IT'S A PARTY, and if the relatives wanna slum it with us, there's enough beer in the fridge for everyone! I mean, songs like "What's Up With That?" (recorded by the Dictators a few years back), "Better Get Better," and "I Got Loaded" (to say nothing of "Kickin' It Old School," one of the record's few comparative flops) are just so... so... so basic and so *guileless* that they are instantly likeable, and therefore sort of incapable of provoking any stronger reaction than Instant Like, which in turn almost implies a certain inherent fuddy-duddiness or something, but, that said, I'd like there be no question: *THE MASTER PLAN WRESTLE WITH THE UNIVERSAL VANILLA AND KICK ITS ASS IN TWO STRAIGHT FALLS!!!* This record pushes no envelopes, but serves a great and wondrous purpose as a semi-fabulous party album; and, while *Razorcake* has supplied me with a goodly bit of used record store bait this month, *Colossus of Destiny* ain't goin' anywhere but into my CD player. BEST SONG: "You're Mine" BEST SONG TITLE: "Find Something Beautiful (And Set It On Fire)" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Band is self-described as "Classic NY Garage Rock" and, as if to hammer this point home, is depicted rocking out in a automotive garage, *underneath an automobile up on hoists*. I'm guessing that two seconds after this photo was snapped, the guy from the Fleshtones (who are an excellent live band, by the way), who is standing on his tiny combo amp, did one of his little high kicks, which dislodged one of the car's mufflers, which then swung down and clobbered Paul "Peppermint" Johnson in the face, who, reacting negatively, tried to lift his bass over his head to El Kabong the Fleshtones guy in retaliation, but, in the process, knocked the car off the hoists, immediately fatally flattening himself, Andy Shernoff, and the drummer, after which the Fleshtones guy quickly brushed the dust off himself, adjusted his little beret, and quickly left the scene, whistling suspiciously. *Am i close?* –Rev. Nørð (Total Energy)

MINDS, THE: Plastic Girls: LP

I'm a dork. Yeah, the Minds had one of my top ten 7"s of 2003 and, yeah, I reviewed the CD format of this record a couple issues back, but fuck a ghost with a salami, I'm happy that a German label is releasing this on vinyl. The CD, instead of spending a respectable six

months in the high rotation pile and being cycled to the far wall has now been relegated to the truck for an assured three more months of constant listens. It comes down to this – yeah, there's a keyboard. Yeah, there's new wave trappings slathered all over this like a slippery sauce, and yeah, there's a lot of stripes involved in the layout and the visual concept of the band, but beyond all the potentially easily dismissables, is this irrefutable fact: they can write an entire album of catchy songs. There isn't a turd on the whole platter. Missing Persons can't claim that. Human League can't claim that. (That first Vapors record is pretty damn good, though.) Rock solid songwriting trumps any fancy press packet or leaky memory any day. *Plastic Girls* is more recommended than before, just by the fact I still compulsively listen to it. –Todd (Alien Snatch)

MINKS, THEE: Songs About Boys: 7"

Todd asked me what made me pick this one out. I told him that with the way these girls looked they had to rock. Well, shallow as my theory may have been, it panned out. Straight out rock-'n-roll with a bit of an edge. Vocals that aren't scared to get a little gravelly or growly. –Megan (Steel Cage)

MINORITY BLUES BAND/ MANIFESTO JUKEBOX: Split: 7"

Minority Blues Band plays fast and fuzzy melodies just like I like 'em. I have both of their full lengths, listen to them all the time, and these three more songs by them make me happy. Manifesto Jukebox plays fast and fuzzy melodies that just don't grab me the same way. I can recognize the talent. I can understand why people love them, but they bore me. Now that I've written this review, I'll probably never flip this record again. But, oh, that Minority Blues Band side... –Sean (Snuffy Smile)

MINORITY BLUES BAND: Capitalized Suffering: CD

I reviewed the songs on this CD for the last issue of *Razorcake*, but for some unexplained reason, I put the title of the Minority Blues Band's first album. That was a mistake on my part. Sorry about that. Anyway, here's what I have to say about *Capitalized Suffering*. Rule number one: Japanese punk rockers play their instruments better than American punk rockers. Rule number two: everything Snuffy Smile Records releases is fucking awesome. Rule number three: well, it's not so much a rule, but pick up this fucking album already. If you like Leatherface, Hüsker Dü, and the Replacements, you won't be disappointed. And, yes, I realize that Leatherface, Hüsker Dü, and the Replacements don't have that much in common with each other, but Minority Blues Band has a lot in common with all three. –Sean (Snuffy Smile)

MISCONDUCT: United as One: CD

These guys come from Sweden. It contains twelve tracks of fast Pennywise-style punk. This stuff is fast but has a lot of changes in it and has some slow parts, too. The lyrics are very positive and about doing the right thing. This also reminds me of old Southern California hardcore. The music is played well and the vocalist is good, too. A worthy release and worth the money for fans of this style. –Mike Beer (Union 2112)

**MR. T EXPERIENCE:
Yesterday Rules: CD**

Why? Why? Why? Sure, it's not as bad as *Alcatraz*, but the lyrics keep getting worse. And I'm not some punk rock vigilante. I, much to the dismay of many friends, think late-period Minor Threat is great, and I like a fair amount of Bob Mould's post-Hüsker Dü projects. But some bands do one thing well – and any deviation from that results in the dreaded comparisons to Captain Crunch's Oops! Chocolate Donuts with Sprinkles – a cereal that is just trying too hard. Too much crooning, too much seriousness, too many "affected" vocals. Gimme Lucky Charms!
–Maddy (Lookout)

**NEULANDER:
Smoke + Fire: CD**

Sometimes, it just takes one line from one song to drag a listener into an album. For this listener and this album, the line was "I've lived in funeral cities/ and I've lived in golden towns," from the song "Flying." While this listener still has no idea what it is that is so captivating about that line, she confesses that it sucked her deep into *Smoke + Fire* and she has yet to be able to escape. This debut album from New York-based duo Korinna Knoll and Adam Peters (ex-Echo and the Bunnymen), is filled with lyrics that are sort of vague and lovely and make you sit around and wonder if this is all just fantasy or reality? What exactly is "Middle East" about? Is it a travelogue of sorts? A protest song? Musically, Neulander has the minimal electronic pop style down, with dollops of Neu and Can influences to give the album a sort of psychedelic, lo-fi new wave

sound. Knoll has the vocals – the husky, accented vocals that are distinctly European, although it is difficult to tell exactly whereabouts. Or, it could be that she isn't European at all, but an American who listened to too much Nico while growing up. Alas, a press sheet check confirmed that Knoll is Austrian. Accents, Krautrock, electronic pop – isn't this all like Stereolab? Perhaps, in parts there seems to be a similarity between the two, but Neulander really has developed its own sound. Given it a listen and you might end up caught in the smoke and fire as well. –Liz O (Disco B)

NEW WAVE HOOKERS:

Ass & Frederic: LP

Okay, I'll admit that their tunes have an infectious quality to them and that they obviously know how to string chords together in a pleasant manner. I'll even go so far as to admit that I was impressed that they had the chutzpah to cover both the Dictators and Marginal Man on the same release. BUT, despite these plusses, the pop punk feel inherent in so many places here suddenly leaves me feelin' limp just when I start to get hot and bothered. –Jimmy Alvarado (Wanker)

**NORTH LINCOLN:
Self-titled: 7"**

Much in the same way that young bands like Mea Culpa and Rivethead sound very well-realized, this band sounds totally confident on this 7". I must say, having seen these guys in Gainesville during one of the best weekends of my life last year, I was a little apprehensive that maybe they weren't going to live up to what I remembered. I shouldn't have worried.

Cribbing notes from prime Avail (it's earnest and energetic) and Tiltwheel (the tight instrumental interlock), they sound pretty fucking good right about now. Recommended for fans of gruff-voiced melodic punk. –Josh (The Support Group)

OBLIVION: The Garden of the Machine: CD

Put the bong down, college boy. –Jimmy Alvarado (Oblivion)

**OIL!:
The Glory of Honor: LP**

Simultaneously ridiculous (lyrics-wise) and spot-on (music-wise), this is one of the best homages and deflators of oi culture I've heard in long time. Much like JewDriver takes the undeniable musical power of Skrewdriver and turned it on its head (racism, for starters), Oil! spins tales of skinhead glory on its rubberized, metal-tipped boots, both commending the best of the culture (hey, at its best, it's a definable belief system where beer's involved and hippies are hated) and making fun of its over-used clichés (calling ladies "birds," spending gross amounts for fashionable clothing that was once made for the working class, and not knowing how to cry.) In the end, yeah, it's pretty damn good. I bet you could slip it on in the middle of the first Blitz record, classic 4-Skins, and the Cockney Rejects, and few people would be the wiser. It's leagues better than that last Business record that Epitaph put out. At least these guys know there's a joke involved. First 300 have sixteen-page booklet and silkscreened cover. –Todd (Noma Beach)

**ORPHANS, THE:
Everybody Loves You When You're Dead: LP**

"Fuck you, I just took a whole shitload of coke," Wade screamed. Something was muttered from the soundman. "Fuck 'one more song.' Two songs. Let's go!" Typical Orphans fare, right after someone got gored by the bass neck and took a microphone to the top of the head, they played what they wanted, no more, no less. At first, it's the firestorm that attracted me to the Orphans. Play it fast, mix it up, and I'm usually a sucker for it. The obvious stuff is great: Jenny's a vixen, equal parts rolling-in-glass punk sweetheart and back-arcing public displays of drunken fucktosity. Wade at bass – I've never, ever seen someone simultaneously unplug from both ends – the guitar and the amp – and then play for a good forty-five seconds before he realized he was unplugged. There is all that on the criminally well recorded *Everybody Loves You When You're Dead*. That danger, that people who don't go out that much, claim to have left punk rock, is here in spades. But then I continued to listen to this LP, and not to get all mystical and shit on you, but there's a complete other side to the Orphans. If Brandon wasn't drumming, it'd be mush. If Dann wasn't guitaring – Wade's pitbull would still be lunging – but Dan provides the teeth and neck strength for those teeth to really sink in. Just as any half-assed karate movie has taught me; strike when planted to put strength in the blow. The result, a fantastic, satisfying record. The only criticism? I think Jenny's organ solo should be louder on "Creature Double Feature." The LP is gorgeous, too.



Converse ink stomps on the inserts, orange vinyl, the works. —Todd (Unity Squad)

PAIN OF SALVATION:
12:5: CD

I plopped this in and, I shit you not, suddenly there were elves and fairies dancing around my living room. I stopped the disc and they disappeared. Intrigued, I started it again and, lo and behold, there they were, prancing and singing and carryin' on. Damndest thing. I pulled the nearest one aside and asked him, "Wherefore doth thou boogiest 'round my living room, gentle dryad?" He cocked his funny little hat to the side and said, "'Tis the hippie shit that spins in that machine anon." So I took the cute little fella by the feet and bashed my stereo in with his head. —Jimmy Alvarado (Inside Out)

PAINTBOX:
Cry of the Sheeps: 7"

This is a US pressing that was previously released on CD by HG Fact out of Japan back in 2001. Paintbox are one of the most original and powerful current bands out of Japan. Pigeonholed, they are not. They mix it up and swing their mighty bat with their blend of punk and metal influences. I don't remember what issue my review of the CD was in, but I definitely have more to add. For starters, the vinyl version that I bought is pressed on red. The collector geek in me is giddy about that! The minus is that it does not include a lyric sheet. Not that it would help, since only a small percentage of the world's population reads Japanese besides the Japanese. That includes me, who was raised by immigrant Japanese parents who do not speak English and was forced to attend Japanese school for three years. I spent a month and a half in Japan as a child. All I can do is speak a freakish coagulation that I call Japan-glish. When spoken to, I understand certain words as long as the person is speaking slowly. But what you miss out on and I will provide here are the cool English choruses. The title track has the wonderful chorus that goes like this: "Cry of the sheep, fly on the ship." With all that is sung in Japanese, I really want to know how the chorus plays into the song. Track 2, "Big Ant," has the chorus that goes "Viva la viva la viva la traverring go, Viva la viva la viva la traverring good." Is the song really about an ant? The third track, "Betsu Mirai," translates into "Alternative Future." I didn't know for the longest what the title of the third track was called since it was written in Japanese on the CD version. Another thing you don't get on the 7" that is on the CD is the song that I have no idea what it's called since it's written in Japanese that is a bonus track. It's their reggae song that has their vocals manipulated to sound like the Chipmunks. The lyrics endlessly repeat "Bivouac, bivouac, bivouac in my house, bivouac bivouac, bivouac in my home. Reverse, returned, reverse in my heart, returned, reverse, returned in my soul." Now, that is deep! Do I understand it? No, but I believe

that is some encrypted message to the gods. Either buy this 7" or go get the CDEP, which is still available! If the manic music fiend Jimmy Alvarado hears this and doesn't shit a blue Twinkie like he said I would do about the band Mezklah (Hey, Jimmy! Are you going to burn a copy for me?), I really don't know him. —Donofthedeat (Prank)

PAPER CHASE, THE:
What Big Teeth You Have: CDEP

Drone. That's all I hear. Drone. Artsy and experimental is one thing, but having heard bands do this genre over twenty years ago, it's tough to listen to. —Doughnuthead (Southern)

PATEL, RAJIV:
Obey the Cattle: CD

A hippie guitarist overdoses on the herb, listens to one raga too many and decides to release an album featuring his efforts to masturbate across six strings. No thanks. —Jimmy Alvarado (Sunset Alliance)

PEGS, THE: Self-titled: 7"

The Pegs play punk rock the way it's meant to be: trashy, angry, and fast. Two of the members of this band were in the Numbers, and the two other members of the band were in the Letters, and in the time it took me to type that sentence, I played both sides of this seven inch. It's a great record, but both sides put together have less than four minutes worth of music. I'm not saying don't buy this. Buy it. Buy everything on Hostage. You can't go wrong. But after you play this, expect to be like my wife after sex, saying, "What? That's it? You're done already?" —Sean (Hostage)

PEPPER:
In with the Old: CD

If you yearn for another Sublime release, here is another band that is so similar that you might not notice that Sublime is gone. —Donofthedeat (Volcom)

PERMANENT DAMAGE:
Boom: LP

Lo-fi garage rock that sounds like it was recorded on a ghetto blaster placed in a cardboard box, stuffed with cotton and old rags and then wrapped tight with duct tape. Whatever floats your boat, I guess. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rockin' Bones)

PERSUADERS/
THE BLACKS: Split: 7"

Persuaders: One lo-fi punk tune and one sludgy instrumental. The Blacks: They manage to do with one tune what The Persuaders couldn't with two, which is come up with a remotely interesting tune. Nothing particularly special — stuttery guitar, 8-bar garage rock format, you know the drill, but it works here. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rockin' Bones)

PERVZ, THE:
Self-titled: 7" EP

When you hear a name like that Pervz, you tend not to expect much from 'em, so it is one helluva shock when the needle hits the

groove and you get rocked outta your boots. When you procure a copy of this hunk of wax, rest assured you're getting four solid tunes that sonically fall smack dab in the middle of the "Western Triangle" of punk — part Northwest Dirtnap '77 update, part SF '77 by way of '66" trash punk update, and part '80s Hostage thug beach pop update. The songs are ultra-catchy and sure to drop the jaws of anyone within hearing distance. Neato die-cut cover, too. —Jimmy Alvarado (Wood Shampoo)

PETIT VODO:
A Little Big Pig with a Pink Lonely Heart: CD

I went back and forth with this 'un, one moment praising its inspired brilliance, and the next railing against the self-indulgent crap that it is. What's it sound like? Imagine the Butthole Surfers as a French one-man band with an overt swamp blues influence. What's the ultimate verdict? It has its moments. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.chez.com/loollipoprecords)

PHOENIX FOUNDATION,
THE: We Need to Make Some Changes: little CDEP

Early Johnny Cougar fronting The Church over a severely muted Hot Water Music. Hearts seem in the right place, but it's too pretty and heart-on-sleeve-y for my tastes. "Rain gives me a reason to stay inside"? Yerks. I like lyrics, and music, more crucial and less mired in excuses and paralysis. The last song is completely acoustic and skirts way too close to emo for my CD player to continue operating. —Todd (Snuffy Smile)

PIEBALD: All Ears,
All Eyes, All the Time: CD

You know, I could say that this record makes "She's Like the Wind" by Patrick Swayze sound like "Whole Lotta Rosie," but I don't think anybody who listens to this band has ever heard "Whole Lotta Rosie." Thanks for the jewel case. —Josh (Side One Dummy)

PLOT TO BLOW UP THE
EIFFEL TOWER: If You Cut Us We Bleed: CDEP

Skrunk rock, strangely reminiscent of a less jazzy Saccharine Trust in a pissier of a mood. Can't decide whether I thought it was the bee's knees or not, but it did make the past seven minutes of my life a little more interesting. —Jimmy Alvarado (HCNL)

POSTHASTE:
Untitled: CD

One of those bands that sound interesting enough to pay attention when you hear 'em on the radio but not interesting enough to find out who they are. —Jimmy Alvarado (lonik)

PULLEY: Matters: CD

I used to know and hang out with the singer, Scott, when he was singing in Scared Straight while he was still in high school and before he played pro baseball. That was fifteen years ago or so and I haven't seen him since. Afterwards, he was in Ten Foot Pole and then put together Pulley. I

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BBQ
CD/LP for the dirty boys in the parking lot! the GIFT TO WAYS is three piece on the loose causing trouble in N.W. YORK CITY. the G.W. are Jenna (s) Slone (b) and Harry (dr). This is no new sympathy records genre cover music, this is pure ghetto trash! Wrecked rockroll they will win your cheap semester soul in no time, this is simply the coolest shit right now. Debut album called the "Heartbreaker" only 103 copies made. G.W. have the rhythm, the backbeat and more style than a whole motor cycle gang. 13 smashers harnessed on 180g vinyl and superlaid digital plastic also. The rawest ALIEN SNATCH! record ever.

THE GHETTO WAYS
LP this is a guide to the TOP OF THE POPS of the northwest punk chaos. knockout combination of supercatchy short & snappy songs and merciless "full on" keyboards is like drinking coke out of a electroshocked Dr. Pepper can in post-nogo land with the MUSHMUSH. clacked late seventies punk square in the jaw, instead of going back into the vaults of the '50s and '60s, that's the starting block for the MINDS... (razorrock!!!)

THE MINDS
LP The Crime Is Now! New album by the fake WWII teutonic trash-metal Our canadian chumps delivers a more 70's rock. less 60's funkish trash - and it's pissed off - go up drunk garagepunk with the killer snare and the tight sound will get your ribs kicked & will cause local volume addiction! a rare call to arms for social responsibility in an age of rampant individualism. finally hit edition. gatefold cover with soon to be classic. But Mostly not.

THE VON ZIPPERS
LP The Crime Is Now! New album by the fake WWII teutonic trash-metal Our canadian chumps delivers a more 70's rock. less 60's funkish trash - and it's pissed off - go up drunk garagepunk with the killer snare and the tight sound will get your ribs kicked & will cause local volume addiction! a rare call to arms for social responsibility in an age of rampant individualism. finally hit edition. gatefold cover with soon to be classic. But Mostly not.

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RAINY DAY SAINTS
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don't have the first Pulley record and haven't seen the band but I do have the rest of the releases. This, being their fifth full-length, shows that they have come a long way from their initial 1996 release. Every new release that comes this way, I hear a comfortable and familiar sound that is always palatable. If you haven't heard them before, they are kindred spirits to Bad Religion, infusing thoughtful lyrics with a melodic backbone. I have nothing bad to say and can always count on this band to provide me with enough energy to not bore me. They always include enough pop overtones to keep my toes tapping.
 —Donofthead (Epitaph)

RADIO BEATS:
Blow You Up: 7"

Rambunctious Rip Off rock'n'roll. A much better song selection than the split with the Give Ups mentioned elsewhere. S'cuze me while I get the air guitar a twangin'. —Jimmy Alvarado (Big Neck)

RADIO REELERS:
Shakin' at the Party: CD

One part Weird Lovemakers and one part The Fells should make a better than standard band, right? I don't know if it's the water, but San Francisco can really make good players go bad.
 —Wanda Sprag (Dead Beat)

RAINY DAY SAINTS:
Saturday's Haze: CD

Excellent solo project from the Keystone State (Pennsylvania oughta sue that weak-ass beer with the mountains on the can for character defamiation) that makes me touch the doll in the same spots as 20/20, the Jesus & Mary Chain and the one good Pixies album (i.e. the fourth one) did... and i kinda like it, so don't tell anyone about what happened. Of course, i didn't really like it when he was touching my Neil Young spot, and i was just confused when he was rubbing my Paul Simon unit, but the guitars were always up good'n'loud in the mix, so what the fuck did i care? Owing to the stylistic mish-mosh in place here — although the album has a certain beefy uniformity to it, things run the gamut from minor-chord laden ballads to things like "Lookout," which sorta sound like "Electric" era Cult playing Hollies covers (which is good) (and definitely on the correct side of the Graham Nash timeline) (implying that the side where he leaves the Hollies to be in a band with Neil Young would be the wrong side) (which is right) — a whole hog recommendation would be a bit like passing off Neapolitan ice cream as Strawberry, so i'll just state for the official ledger that about a third of this record is great, and another third isn't half bad. Which i guess makes it three-sixths great? I think i'll listen to "Lookout" again. You can check the math independently. BEST SONG: "Lookout" BEST SONG TITLE: "YOU!" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: I was flipping through a free issue of *Rolling Stone* last week and on that little chart in the back where they list the Top Ten in record sales at one random record store somewhere in America each issue, this CD was #10. I still say it's pretty good, though. —Rev. Nørb (Get Hip!)

RAJOITUS: Discography: CD
 If you thought the only thing Scandinavia was good for anymore was black metal and bad '70s rock, here's some mind-blowing, crucial fjordcore madness here in the classic mold of

bands like Mob 47 and Protes Bengt that'll slap that notion right outta your head. A total of forty-one tracks, from three 7-inchers and a 12-inch spanning the years 1995-'98, are here for your aural enjoyment and the displeasure of all the fake-ass punker wannabes at your school. Best news of all is that this band is apparently still going strong. You can bet your sweet patootie this is recommended. —Jimmy Alvarado (Hardcore Holocaust)

RAMBLER 454:
No Name Café: CD

I didn't like this kind of stuff when it was put out by Johnny Cougar. Or John Cougar Mellencamp for that matter.
 —Megan (Readyfireaim)

RESIDUALS, THE:
Atom Bomb: 7" EP

On the back they're wearin' TSOL and Black Flag shirts, but their reliance on the same Discharge-worshippin' cloneisms you get from so many spiky-headed punker bands these days belies considerably less creative spark and originality than their T-shirt heroes.
 —Jimmy Alvarado (Pair O Docs)

RIPPERS, THE:
Pudör Cronica: 7"

Side one is a raucous rock anthem and side two is a ripping version of "I Wanna Be Your Dog," both of which are sung in what sounds like Portuguese, but might be a Spanish dialect I don't recognize. If you're smart enough to already own their *No Mort* CD, this compliments it nicely. —Jimmy Alvarado (Ripper)

**RIVERBOAT GAMBLERS/
 THROW RAG: A Tribute
 to the Big Boys: 7"**

To be completely honest, I'm a huge fan of almost everyone involved in this. I realize this 7" is a footnote to their respective works, which I'd suggest you seek out if you haven't head yet. The Riverboat Gamblers cover "Fun, Fun, Fun," and, in comparison to *Something to Crow About* (which former Big Boy, current Now Time Delegation-er Tim Kerr helped out on), their cover isn't as Fourth of July in the front of your brain. The vocals are a tad muddled, and the energy isn't as crackling. A very good cover, just not quite up to the A+ bar I've set for the Gamblers. Throw Rag: Biscuit's chesty wail is replaced by more of a twang and a demented country/sailor feel, which is right up Throw Rag's crooked alley. They set a controlled fire through "Red/Green" with chops to spare. The silk-screened cover art of three-headed skeletons by Lindsey Kuhn sweetens the deal. Not essential, but a very cool artifact that I'm glad I got, nonetheless. —Todd (Dateshake)

ROCKET FROM THE TOMBS:
Rocket Redux: CD

Considering there's precious little info here, I have no idea when this was recorded, although my guess would be sometime during their recent spate of reunion gigs. No matter, as it's just peachy to finally have a clear, coherent document of these guys finally available, and to hear David Thomas' inimitable warble on classics like "Sonic Reducer," "What Love Is," "Ain't It Fun," "30 Seconds Over Tokyo," and "Final Solution" is more than worth the price of admission. What may be lacking in rawness and youthful energy they more than make up for with hard swag-gar, as evidenced in a seriously rockin' "Never Gonna Kill Myself Again." Put

more succinctly, I'm fuggin' stoked I own a copy of this. -Jimmy Alvarado (Smog Veil)

RODRIGUEZ: Self-titled: CD
Overdriven distorto-trash punk here that manages to hit all the right buttons. Lowery's a retard if he doesn't hunt these kids down and give them anything they want to record for him, 'cause if any band screamed "Rip Off Fodder;" these guys do. Recommended, and how. -Jimmy Alvarado (Swindlebra)

SAINT WILLE: Meat: CD
Rare is it when a release renders me completely speechless. This, my friends, is just such a release and it managed to do so with the first two tracks alone. The songs in question, "All of God's Creatures Are Delicious with Beer" and the ode to bacon "You Picked A Swine Time to Eat Me and Squeal," are just so goddamned WRONG in these hyper-sensitive, post-PC times, where even thinking about a ham sandwich relegates you to the lower echelons of unter-dickdom. S'aint Willy and his cohorts are headed straight to H-E-DUBBLE-HOCKEYSTICKS, no doubt. Thank goodness they've provided those of us sure to follow them, clutching our pastramis on rye, with the perfect soundtrack on our way down into the abyss. Now, the real trick is to figure out which of my vegan buddies deserves a copy of this next Xmas. -Jimmy Alvarado (www.kaom.com)

SAVING FACE: Holiday Cruise: CD
Squeaky clean, apple-pie-face pop punk. Includes songs with titles like "Fuck You" and "The Slut Song" to show that they're mischievous and

edgy. Truth be told, I don't know what's more pathetic: that this was even made or that there's a demographic in existence that would pay money to own a copy. -Jimmy Alvarado (High Fidelity)

SAW WHEEL/MADELINE: split 7"
Saw Wheel: I really like this. I can't quite pin down who the singer sounds like other than the singer for Lucero. It's that acoustic rock with a folk influence rather than folk rock. Madeline: The warbles of Joan Baez meets the cadence of Tori Amos. I'm ashamed I can compare anything to them. -Megan (Hill Billy Stew)

SBV: FEELIN' FINE: Split: 7"
SBV: Imagine Uniform Choice minus the straight edge pose and sped way the hell up. Better than I expected, actually. Feelin' Fine: Grunt, grunt, bleat, grunt, bleat, yawn, yawn, yawn. -Jimmy Alvarado (www.retardedrecords.com)

SCRAWL, LE: Eager to Please: CDEP
I had the pleasure of experiencing this band in a live setting here in jolly old LA recently. I can't believe this band from Germany is playing in LA! They have been around for ten years and I believe they are stepping on these shores for the first time. I'm wasn't going to miss it for the world! It's truly amazing to see a band play with so much precision and pull off what is produced in a studio. I purposely waited until after the gig to listen to this CD. I wanted to be charged when I got to preview the new songs. I was not disappointed. Thirteen songs of Cookie Monster-induced grindcore mixed with acid jazz, keyboard, sax, and sheerly

ingenious song structures. Who knows what the hell these guys actually sing about? The singer could be mumbling about how he got his cat to toss his salad. No one would know. But the songs are infectious and truly outside the box in design. It almost sounds like nursery rhymes. I grin like a flatulent man after a good round of expelling fumes of unknown digestive nature while listening to their music. I highly recommend this band when you need to be challenged or want to see what a commercial band like System of a Down would sound like if they took their weirdness to a level of LSD-induced Disney reality. I do have to make my whiney cry, though. Why did I have to get a CD-R instead of the real thing? The label sent the real packaging. -Donofthedeath (Life is Abuse)

SEX POSITIONS: Self-titled: CD
Okay, so I hate damn near everything I hear these days. So I hate on pretty much everything with equal (and, I might add, well deserved and honestly earned) malice and loathing. So I'd as soon flay most bands as listen to even one song on their shitty fucking records. So what? There are some albums that are so gleefully destructive that I forget that I hate almost everything and, for my money, Deathwish is well on its way to being my favorite label of the year. I'll spare you the bullshit about saving hardcore and punk from itself, but in 2004, Deathwish seems to be bringing Molotov cocktails to a switchblade fight. Sex Positions, as one example, features traditional elements of modern hardcore (think about bands like Give Up The Ghost and The Suicide File for a starting point) and quickly veers off

into experimental territories not unlike those mapped by Black Dice, Arab On Radar and other bands that venture into the more extreme realms of noise. It's loud, fucked up and sounds like a car wired with about 200 pounds of C-4 in a demolition derby. When I listened to this on headphones, it was even better because it features panning effects, lots of frequencies which elicit feelings of nausea, and bits of stuff that really won't be audible on speakers, no matter how good they are. While I can't yet say that this will be one of my favorite records of the year, I can say that this collection of songs reminds me that punk and hardcore were once aggressive, confrontational, defiant, and uncompromising, and that some bands make it a point to embed those qualities in everything they do. -Puckett (Deathwish)

SHOCKWAVE: The Ultimate Doom: CD
Growly-voiced, tough guy eunuch metal. -Jimmy Alvarado (Triple Crown)

SHOWOFFS, THE: Shocker: 7"
The Showoffs have a lot in common with bands I really like. This is fast and raw and fucked up enough to sound like it could've been on the legendary *Beach Blvd.* comp. These songs have a lot to do with the early Crow songs, but also sound a lot like the Bodies and other Hostage bands. This record would come heavily recommended, but the lyrics are just too repetitive. *Shocker* is one of those records that you listen to and you can guess the names of all the songs on the first listen because "Psycho Girl" goes, "She's a psycho girl/ psycho girl/ psycho girl/ (repeat indefinitely)" and "Pyromaniac" goes "Pyromaniac/ pyro-



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maniac/ pyromaniac (repeat indefinitely)." There's also a naked lady on the cover, too. I just thought that would be a good thing to mention. -Sean (Noma Beach)

SIDEKICK: *So Far Away*: CD

Not too exciting. Not too bad. When you think of SoCal punk in its latest incarnation, this is what it would sound like. Very palatable with a melodic surf backbeat. I could very well see this band becoming popular. Pennywise fans should take note. -Donofthead (Gale Force)

SISSIES: *Everything in the World*: CD

It took a little while for this to grow on me, but it did - about three years too late. The Sissies broke up about two years ago. This is their discography, more than thirty tracks all wrapped up in the fanciest looking Plan-It-X packaging I've seen. It's campy in that way that makes you want to share it with a close friend and then every mix tape to them from now on will have one of their songs on it. -Megan (Plan-it-x)

SKIT SYSTEM:

***Gra Varid/Svarta Tankar*: CD**
Hoo, doggy, was the cranial scrubbing this vicious little monkey gave me ever necessary. Few bands can unleash this brand of musical madness the way Skit System can, with their down-tuned crunch and general menace, all fjord-core fury steeped in, but not totally reliant upon, Discharge influence. It never seems to amaze me how Scandinavian bands have taken the basic template laid down by Cal and the boys and managed to remain unique in sound from each other. But I digress. If it's a grade-A hardcore onslaught you're lookin' to punish your ears with, Skit System always deliver the goods. -Jimmy Alvarado (Havoc)

SMACKMADAM: *Self-titled*: 7"

The little propaganda sheet that came with this record compares Smackmadam to a "head-on collision" between Social Distortion and the Supersuckers. I guess I can kind of see that, but to my waxy ears they sound more like the Quadrajets or maybe a low-carb version of the Midnight Evils. Either way, this is the type of grubby, white trash, snoose-drooling race-car rawk that seems to irk the orthodox '77-style punk constituency to no end these days. For me, well, it makes me want to drink beer naked in the front yard with a farmer tan for all the neighborhood to see. And that's a good thing. -Aphid Peewit (Fonzie Town)

SMOGTOWN: *All Wiped Out*: CD

The first couple of times I listened to this, my basic reaction was, yep, this is Smogtown. Nothing new. Nothing unexpected. It rocks hard enough to knock my dick in the dirt, but I expected that. Then something happened the third time I listened to this. I started to notice Chip's chaotic bass. Tim's drum fills started to burrow into my ears. Little things just beneath the fuzz came to me more clearly. Yes, I thought, this is Smogtown. Everything new. Everything unexpected. As far as I know, they're still broken up, though rumors of new Smogtown shows are surfacing. Supposedly, they played a big show down in southern Orange County in March. Who knows if they'll keep it

together. Who knows if this is one last, great slab of music from Smogtown or if there's more to come. Either way, it's another fine, fine CD. -Sean (TKO)

SMUT PEDDLERS: *Exit Plan*: 7"

In the spirit of full disclosure, Julia, the drummer for the Smut Peddlers, helps us out with making sure our covers are correctly prepped for print, so there may be some favoritism. That said, I was a fan of the band prior knowing her. In true punk OC, the land where few bands last beyond two records, I can honestly say that the Smut Peddlers are putting together the best songs of their decade-long career. John's vocals and lyrics are still simultaneously hilarious, kooky, sad, angry, and oddly insightful. The only thing a veteran Smut Peddlers fan might wrinkle an eyebrow over is that his vocals seem more intentionally tattered and roughed-up on this 7" than before. But his lyrics are a fascinating glimpse into the inner workings of a frontman with bad balance. If you ever want to see how paranoia, love of older ways of life in a beach culture, and an obsession with skating pools works out in punk songs, look no further. Although I always liked Roger Ramjet's single guitar work when he was in the band, the addition of Sean and Scott, both at guitar, really ratchets up the melodies and anxiety. Almost secretly, behind all the obvious stuff, Julia's drumming cements these three songs, like a perfectly poured and groomed transition in a deep bowl, giving them the perfect, pumping material to carve through song after song. Recorded, engineered, and produced by X's Billy Zoom. Thumbs up. -Todd (Ransom)

SNAGS, THE: *Self-titled*: CD
Another UK three-piece with a jones for that '60s garage rock. While there may be zillions of bands doing this these days, I gotta admit these guys' repertoire was catchy enough to warrant several listens. Not bad. -Jimmy Alvarado (www.thesnags.co.uk)

SO FOX: *Self-titled*: 7"

It was a shitty time when the Selby Tigers called it a day in the Spring of 2002. They were one of the first two bands I interviewed for *Razorcake* and were equal parts rock'n'roll showmanship, sweat and shake new wave, all wrapped in a world of fireworks. My hesitation to plop this 7"er down was unwarranted. There are definitely remnants of the Selby sound from the weird but kept-in-check guitaring and the pound the sky drums. But the most obvious overlap is Arzu's voice, still strong and resonant. These four songs are definitely not throwbacks or rip offs. If anything, So Fox is more of a constant straight-ahead push forward than the Selbys. The first, "Teen Beat," is my favorite. Effects and intricacies are replaced by a more sleeves-rolled-up, non-ass rock'n'roll. Like a phoenix rising from the ashes... -Todd (Nice and Neat)

SOLABEAT ALLIANCE: *Island Fire*: CD

This brand of ska punk ceased to be a viable creative style the minute Operation Ivy called it a day nearly a decade and a half ago and nine billion less talented bands decided they were the ones who could carry the torch. Uh, make that nine billion and one. -Jimmy Alvarado (www.moonskaeurope.com)

SOME GIRLS: *All My Friends Are Going Death*: CD

First of all, this isn't the Juliana Hatfield group. Second, you probably already know that this includes members of Give Up The Ghost, Unbroken, The Locust, Over My Dead Body, Swing Kids and Holy Molar. Third, this disc collects existing and unreleased material (the two EPs released to date plus demo tracks and more fun). Fourth, it's fucking brilliant. This isn't hardcore so much as it is aggravated assault - it's pulverizing, punishing and astonishingly accomplished (not surprising, considering who's involved). Sure, there are straight-forward hardcore parts, breakdowns, mosh parts and everything else you'd expect from a hardcore record, but - like most things which I've heard from Deathwish lately - it's also strikingly experimental, primarily in the lyrical content but also in the sound (equal parts noise, spastic hardcore like Melt-Banana and The Blood Brothers, and seemingly chaotic rhythm). The mix leaves these songs sounding raw and feral (as if covering The Stooges' "No Fun" wouldn't do that by itself), while Wes' lyrics seem like picking scabs off self-inflicted knife wounds. However, I really wouldn't expect anything less challenging from the people involved with this album. -Puckett (Deathwish)

SPITTING TEETH/ 1-2-GO! CREW:

***Fear of a Mosh Planet*: split 7"**

Too many splits attempt to make seductive Siamese twins out of bands that are just too damn similar to make it really interesting. Admittedly, Siamese twins are in and of themselves naturally interesting and these similar-band pairings sometimes do work. But too often you wind up with a two-headed beast of the "Jessica Simpson/Nick Whatever-his-name-is" variety and crushing blandness is the inevitable result. When you have truly divergent personalities smushed up together, it just makes it that much more interesting and pleasantly jarring. *Fear of a Mosh Planet* is a case in point. You will have no trouble telling the two groups on this split apart. Now, with 1-2-GO! Crew, I must confess to being far from ideally suited to throw any kind of meaningful critical light on these guys. The idea of someone like me reviewing something rap/hip-hop is probably like having Paris Hilton try to say something insightful about a Mentors show. In fact, the Fat Boys are about the only hip-hop group who, by virtue of the sheer heft of their awesomeness, ever broke through the walls of my sheltered little world and started punk-slapping me around. So though my couple Fat Boys tapes hardly afford me the "street cred" to be mouthing off on such things - I'll go ahead and say simply that I like this posi-core XE rap music the 1-2-GO! Crew serves up. It even has a rap remake of Damage Deposit's "Ninjas to the Back" and some human beat boxing that helped me to feel a little bit more at home. Spitting Teeth, on the other hand, is more familiar territory for me; they lunge at you and smack you around the room with feisty, thrashy hardcore that has a slight southern-fried Confederacy of Scum undercurrent at times. Each side of this record stands on its own, but taken all together, this is one refreshing one-two punch of a split 7" inch. -Aphid Peewit (1-2-3-4-GO!)

STREET TRASH: *Self-titled*: 12" EP

I haven't a clue who they are or where they come from, but this is by far the punkest record I've heard in a while. Amped up hardcore is the order of the day here, with lyrics covering incest, child abuse, drug abuse, isolation and other topics. Sounds like more of the same ol' same ol'? Well, imagine those topics addressed by Feederz or the Child Molesters fronted by someone who is easily as annoying as the guy who fronted the Crucifucks and it'll be quite clear to you that this is not another boring meander through self-righteous sloganeering. I'll be quite surprised if they don't find themselves with an FBI file or two on them in short order, considering the current political climate we find ourselves living in. Dude, this is soooo recommended. -Jimmy Alvarado (Kapow)

STRONG COME ONS: *Yell a Lot and Suck*: 7"

More like *Yell a Lot and Rock*. That is the dumbest thing I've ever said in a review. Loud, fast, and catchy as hell. -Megan (Big Neck)

STRUGGLE, THE: *Hopeless Nights*: 7" EP

These guys are from the east coast and play a combination of hardcore and punk. Out of the four songs, three of them are fast hardcore. One is mid-paced. They are all good. The lyrics are about perseverance and sticking things out and doing what you want regardless of what others think. These guys are scheduled to tour the east coast this spring and the west coast in late summer. So if they are coming to your area, check them out. -Mike Beer (FNS)

SULTANS, THE: *Shipwrecked*: CD

I don't understand how John Reis can be so prolific and still have so many tricks up his sleeve. After about a million Rocket From the Crypt records, a few Drive Like Jehu records, a couple of Hot Snakes records, and the first Sultans album, you'd think that maybe he might be running out of ideas. Apparently, that's not the case, as this whole album pretty much rules. It's a lot different from the first one, *Ghost Ship*, which is more fuzzed out and garagey-sounding, but it's still really, really good in a slightly laid back kind of way. It really is amazing how these songs don't sound like castoffs from a RFTC album. No artsy motives or pretensions, they merely rock. Totally recommended. -Josh (Swami)

SYZSLAK: *I Am Misery*: 7"

No, your music is misery. You're just the sadistic bastard responsible for it. -Jimmy Alvarado (World Eater)

TALK, THE: *It's Like Magic in Reverse*: CD

Punky power pop in a Vapors vein. I'm willing to bet there were a lotta high-fives and smiles around the room the first time they heard the final mix, 'cause they've just about nailed a perfect combination of good hooks and edgy delivery. A very good, very welcome surprise. -Jimmy Alvarado (MoRisen)

TAMION 12 INCH: *Let's Suffer*: CD
Listening to Tamion 12 Inch's latest full-length, *Let's Suffer*, is like being

trapped inside a fever dream, escalated by too much Codiene—a vivid terror you just can't, or perhaps don't want to, escape. When the dream breaks with the fever, you wake up sweat drenched and compelled to write down every grotesque detail. The album's first song "The Devil was Right (part 1)," is a sinister nursery rhyme setting the mood for the album like the childhood chant before the kill that marks so many horror movies. Tamion 12 Inch continues to drag listeners further into the void with sharp electronic precision, blistering noise, ominous basslines, guitars creating a death grunt, and a singer reminiscent of Siouxsie Sioux howling her way through "The Lord's Prayer." This is some seriously haunted electronic punk. I may not be able to sleep with the lights off after listening to this, but it is worth it. —Liz O (Ersatz Audio)

TEAR IT UP:

Taking You Down with Me: LP
From the title track, which is basically Black Flag's "Scream" tweaked and regurgitated as an instrumental, to their blazing tears through tunes that sound like they were plundered from Hüsker Dü's thrashy back catalog, it's obvious that these guys have a firm grasp of the history of the music they play, and they wear it on their sleeves. This is not meant as a dismissal, an attempt to lump them in with the hordes of lesser hacks who think that four chords played fast constitute good hardcore. To the contrary, it is obvious that bands like this and like-minded powerhouse Out Cold have a firm grasp and respect for the past and they allow it to influence, rather than dominate, their present musical output. These guys are far from a rehash band. Sure, all requisite hardcore identifiers are met with ease, meaning the songs are short, fast, and the boys play 'em like they are royally pissed, but there's enough original spark and, more importantly, a sense that their efforts are genuine in intent to allow them to stand tall over the teeming masses of generic cactus heads and nouveau metal merchants. It is wholly gratifying to hear others of like mind who revere rather than debase the music. I recommend that you buy a copy of this and indulge in a little smashism while it blares in the background. —Jimmy Alvarado (Havoc)

TEXAS THIEVES:

Forced Vacation: CD

Mid-to-gallop-tempo punk here, mining the old OC stuff as well as Northern Cali skater punk sound of bands like the Faction. I really wasn't expecting much from this, but it's actually pretty danged good, and "Crucifixes Are for Kids" is just flat-out great. —Jimmy Alvarado (Super Speedway)

THOUGHT RIOT: *Sketches of the Undying Will: CD*

Another sophomore release to review. This band has progressed smoothly to this release. The song writing and musicianship is much stronger. This is much more enjoyable than their previous release. Equal parts Anti-Flag, Rise Against, and AFI is what comes to mind while I listen. Social/political lyrics are a continuing theme. My highlight would be the stronger use of choral background vocals and using more subtle ambient guitar notes to electrify their songs. I might actually leave my house the next time the band comes to town to play a show. —Donofthead (A-F)

THREATNING VERSE: **Time for War: 7" EP**

I remember seeing these guys a few years back and not thinking much about them, other than they were just your average backyard hardcore band providing the perfect music to get drunk by. Well, that assessment's changed thanks to this smokin' piece of wax. The sounds are steeped in the hardcore sounds found east of the LA river, fast and furious with no bullshit delivery. This sounds like it could've easily come out in the mid-'80s, thanks in no small part to the efforts of Messrs. Jake Smith (TV git-twanger and former Crucifix punk hero) and Mike Vallejo (ex-Circle One guitarist and current Decry babe magnet), who do a great job with the producing and engineering, respectively, and getting this to achieve maximum rage. You like it loud, raw and fast? Look no further. —Jimmy Alvarado (Puke 'n' Vomit)

THRIFT STORE HEROES:

Moving On: CD

Alarming Fact: Planet Earth is now dangerously infested with Blink 182 wannabes. Though they are obviously testicle-less, they manage to breed like soft, cuddly bunnies. Let it be known: Western Civilization is now fully declined. Whatever happened to those L-5 space colonies that Gerard O'Neill promised? I gotta get me the hell outta here. God, I hope my neighbors didn't overhear me playing this sappy dreck. Even the little old lady next door who eats Chapstick will be laughing at me. —Aphid Peewit (Thrift Store Heroes)

THRILLS: **N.A.F.I.T.C.: CD**

If you're anything like me, you've spent many a sleepless night, tossing and turning, wondering what sort of band would GG Allin's brother Merle be involved in back before his face was old enough to grow a Hitler mustache. Well, give your Ambien supply away to the little kids on your block, because you need wonder no more: Back in the late '70s/early '80s, before that menacing little mud-flap sprouted beneath Merle's nose, he played bass in a catchy, jangly new wave outfit called the Thrills who sounded a tiny bit like a slightly edgier, garagey Blondie. Who'da think it? But now you know. And so now it is, in the immortal words of the great Tor Johnson, "time for go to bed." —Aphid Peewit (Dionysus)

THUMBS UP!:

Destroy: CDEP

Loud, fast, angry thrashy punk fucking rock! Eight songs, eleven minutes. Very similar sounding in many ways to F-Minus (without any female vocals) and every bit as good as them. —Toby (Room 13)

TOWERS OF HANOI:

Self-titled: CDEP

At best, they remind me of Seaweed, when the dude's singing and the guitars are swinging. But there are quite a few hurdles. Poetry jam rock has never been a friend of mine. It comes from going to school with hippies. I just don't dig it. It makes me irritable because if I truly cared how well people played their instruments, I'd listen to classical music. I crave tight, quick song structures. Or drugs, lots of drugs, then you run the possibility of playing almost anything short of the Grateful Dead near me before I lunge for the stereo. So, the Towers of Hanoi play well, but they

play songs I'm not really interested in. The lady who does most of the singing, sounds melodramatic and swoony. I wish them no ill-will, I just don't dig it. As a bit of trivia: Jon, the drummer used to be in Florida band, The Y. Absolutely no musical overlap between the two bands. —Todd (Barracuda Sound)

TOXIC NARCOTIC:

Beer in the Shower: 7"

One of the United States' better hardcore outfits have been kind enough to cease with the yellin' and release two of their bagpipe-slathered instrumental tunes on a picture disc. If you're lookin' for something to tide you over until that next "All-Irish Traditional Hoedown" record from whatever popular punk band is making the rounds these days, then look elsewhere, as these tunes are really fuckin' good and we wouldn't want you damaging you precious musical sensibilities with quality music. In short, highly recommended. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rodent Popsicle)

TRANSISTOR

TRANSISTOR: Wolves: CD

Screamo gives me a rash. —Jimmy Alvarado (Level-Plane. The address is too friggin' small to read)

TWISTED ROOTS:

Self-titled: CD

Yessir, you are correct, this band had ex-members of The Screamers (Paul Roessler) and the Germs (Pat Smear). Kira went on to join Black Flag. Pat went on to play with Nirvana. The second drummer, Gary, went on to become the lead singer for Celebrity Skin. The good news is they were only around for six months from '81-'82. Do yourself a favor. Go check some of those aforementioned bands out. They're good to great. Twisted Roots sucks along the lines of a self-absorbed, hippie carnival Devo. It definitely goes way beyond the gauntlet thrown down by SSDecontrol — "How much art can you can you take?" Purely punk intentions alone do not a punk record make. Bleargh. —Todd (Dionysus)

TYRADES, THE:

I Am Homicide: 7"

Blue collar retard art rock. On The Planet of The Tyrades, everything's just more tightly wound, more visceral, louder, faster moving, and mixed up. Like a golf ball in a vice, split open with a hacksaw, there's a hard shell to crack, and inside, it's all rubber bands of elastic bass lines and snapping guitars and drum punishment that'll put an eye out if you're not careful. You know how some "higher-minded" art rock bands are all about hard-to-grasp angularity and it makes you feel like you're in an immaculate Laundromat of the future for rich fucks? Sterile, churning, misplaced; you're only allowed to watch, not touch. The Tyrades make me feel like they're making cool animals shapes (monkeys with knives, armadillos with boners) out of plastic explosives and they share the kabloom! with the listener. One of my favorite bands right now keeps on trucking along. A no-brainer for fans of the Orphans, Sweet J.A.P., and the Functional Blackouts. —Todd (Shit Sandwich)

VAPIDS, THE:

We Can't Do It: 7"

Safe poppy punk for small children and their puritanical parents. —Jimmy Alvarado (Route 13)

VARANT MAJARIAN/ ABANDON ALL HOPE/ THE SUBJECTS:

3-Way Split: CD

Varant: A hardcore band making valid points left and right with liberal doses of cynicism. The song titles are hilarious. Abandon: decent mid-tempo hardcore, but the metal in the guitars knocks 'em a rung or two down the "crucial" ladder. The Subjects: Sorry, but I really can't take seriously a band that thanks "punk rock junkies, fast cars, fast women and Guinness beer." Varant wins by a landslide. —Jimmy Alvarado (Chicken Head)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

60 Songs: 2X CD

You know, you'd figure that with sixty to choose from, a guy would find at least three or four tracks that were swell, but no, the only track remotely interesting I managed to find was the one by the only band I'd heard of on here, Melt Banana. The rest was just shades of screamo and grind that got boring by the seventh track on the first disc. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.buildingrecords.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Beer City Records

Presents Counter Attack: CD

Mike from Beer City must be in his 30s. All the current stuff he is putting out is stuff from my childhood. Bands like MDC, DRI, Toxic Reasons, and Verbal Abuse were regular listening for me in high school. Current bands like Beer Zone, The Werent, Oppressed Logic, Very Metal and Red Flag 77 play like they could have been bands from yesterday. He throws in Humungus, which is Nikki Sicki from Verbal Abuse, which a friend of mine originally was supposed to release. I hate the term, but Mike Beer is old school and his colors are blatantly on his sleeve. I have no hate for the guy because I have picked up a few reissues because it's so much easier burning songs off a CD than LP on to my Ipod. So, all in all, this a label sampler. It could also be a sample of his record collection that he wants the kids to check out after they get over being a Blink 182 fan. —Donofthead (Beer City)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Broken Bonez: CD

Nothing to do with the legendary hardcore band of the same name, this is a comp of bands I'm assuming are from the El Paso area. A grand total of one track here managed to capture my attention — Radio La Chusma's "Thoughts of You" — which reminded me of an acoustic Quinto Sol without all the "kill the white man" rhetoric. The remaining stuff here was demo recordings of fairly stereotypical backyard punk and rockabilly. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.brokenbonezrecords.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: **Go-Kart**

MP30 Raceway: 2X CD

This is a label sampler that also includes what seems like every band under the sun: a hundred and fifty bands, three hundred songs. Only draw back is sound quality, since this is recorded in MP3 format. If you don't understand, this is compressed digital, which means that the songs are four times smaller in file size. That is how so much can be crammed into these two CDs. What you get in quantity, you lose in fidelity. I'm sure most or all will not notice the difference, since you are either greedy and just want more. But I

notice those things and my anal tendencies make it a pet peeve at times. I can't see anyone wouldn't be able to find something they like on this release. There is so much on here. I think the thing is cheap, so there is no danger of wasting your money. There is a chance that you will find your next favorite band. -Donofthead (Go-Kart)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Hardcore from the Early Days: CD*

A collection of tunes from three old Connecticut hardcore bands. Target Cells: Eleven tracks from their *Cerebral Hemorrhage* cassette, recorded in 1983. Mid-tempo hardcore, pretty typical for its time, which should not be taken as an insult. White Pigs: Remember there being a big to-do about their name and whether they were on a racist kick like contemporaries White Pride, but with the exception of the word "spic" in one song, they're devoid of the usual "I hate..." dogma you find with those bands. Judging solely from the remaining lyrical content, I'm willing to bet they included that word merely to ruffle the feathers of the more uptight factions of the almighty "scene," "cause it ain't the word they use on the track. Either way, you get seven blasts of obnoxious hardcore from the first of what would be many releases. Chronic Disorder: rare tracks from this band's first couple of 7-inch EPs and a couple of live tracks recorded at CBGB. Edgy hardcore with a noticeably Proletariat bent is the order of the day on their seven tracks. Being old enough to remember when all this stuff first came out, I'd have to say that, overall, this was a very satisfying trip down memory lane. Recommended. -Jimmy Alvarado (Coldswat)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *How's My Driving?: CD*

Judging from the bands and the titles of some of the songs, one is led to believe that this is some sort of skate punk comp, with bands old (Fang, Los Olvidados, Free Beer), new, (the Lincolns, the Forgotten) and defunct (Odd Numbers, who do a spot-on impersonation of mid-period Agent Orange). Most of the tracks here have been previously released, but the flow from tune to tune is good, with little dead air between tracks to harsh your next pool session. The personal favorite tune here is the unreleased Fang track, who I've had a soft spot for since the early '80s. -Jimmy Alvarado (Super Speedway)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Humans Must Die: CD-R*

A homemade CD-R comp of not-very-rare tracks by the likes of Ill Repute, Minor Threat, Sex Pistols, Anti-Heros, COC, Circle Jerks, Attitude Adjustment, Bob Marley, Voodoo Glow Skulls, Avail and others. There's a nice cross section of sounds here, but unless you've just fallen off the turnip wagon, you're gonna be hard pressed to find anything here you haven't heard before. I wonder how long it'll take before the guy doing this is slapped with a "cease and desist" order. -Jimmy Alvarado (Bastard Radio)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Me and My Six-Stings Club: One Man Band Compilation/Contest: 10" with 7"*

Roctober #34 "One Man Band! Encyclopedia" defines a one-man band by what it is not, i.e. "the only solo

musicians that aren't even considered as One Man Bands are acoustic guitar-wielding singer-songwriters... (a singer-songwriter) is the antithesis of the theatrical inventive, unique, spirited, absurdity-celebration that is a classic One Man Band!" If you have any further questions, it is suggested you pick up this 10" with a 7" accompaniment. Rockin' Bones have put together a well-placed display of this broad and diverse method of music. The comp features the likes of Sexton Ming (Billy Childish collaborator), Hasil Adkins (the greatest), Lightning Beatman, and a bunch of other people I've never heard of, which makes it all the better. All different. All worth your attention. -BD Williams (Rockin' Bones)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Punch Drunk V: CD*

This is the fifth in this series of *Punch Drunk* comp CDs. As always, they feature a great mix of what TKO has to offer. This time around you get twenty-eight songs by twenty-eight bands! Check out some of these bands: The Boils, Adolf & the Piss Artists, the Wretched Ones, Antiseen, Limecell, Bonecrusher, the US Bombs, plus more. I shouldn't have to tell you TKO is known for putting out some high quality street punk, so this comp is not going to disappoint! As a bonus, it's only \$5.00! -Mike Beer (TKO)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *The War on Terrorism: 7" EP*

There are four artists on this: Caulfield, Mumbler, The Gibbons, and Megan Kott, respectively. While I can't say I'm particularly enthused by the shades of pop punk and emo oozing off this piece of wax, the lyrics to all four songs are very well written diatribes against the shenanigans the current US government finds itself in. Seeing as I have heard pitifully few other bands do the same, I wholly recommend this and hope the rest of the guitar-slinging morons dreaming of pop stardom start waking up. -Jimmy Alvarado (Salinas)

VEE DEE: *Furthur: CD*

Vee Dee mix in some of the lighter-hearted, dark-stained pop overtones of early Replacements, the crunch of early '80s, mid-tempo middle America punk - the "you know they're older, but they sound like they just discovered this shit" sound. When they speed up, I hear clips of early Freeze guitar. When they slow down, out comes a "Bloodstains"-era Agent Orange surf/secret agent man guitar, counter pointed by a healthy Cramps-like addiction to zombies and undertakers. It's almost as if these guys took a gigantic, aerial photograph of America of punk America circa 1979-1980, harvested all the best parts, and stitched it all together as expertly as a plastic surgeon. Only that they keep the "ugly" parts Killed By Death ugly. Ultimately, *Furthur* has a ton of satisfying songs that are as easy to like and understand. It harkens back to an era when punk's best art was xeroxed flyers stapled to telephone poles. -Todd (Criminal IQ)

VEINS, THE: *Hollywoodland: CD*

I hate wimpy rock. The solution? More Thin Lizzy. -Wanda Sprag (Garage-Pop)

VINDICTIVES, THE: *Unplugged: CD*

Okay, this is either a.) one of the funniest jokes ever, b.) one of the worst

albums ever, or c.) both! Vindictives songs performed by the band, with pan flutes, chimes, xylophones, violins, and acoustic guitars! Vocals sung in a plaintive, non-screamy manner! Imagine hearing acoustic versions of "I'm in Trouble Now" and "Ugly American!" If you aren't familiar with the Vindictives (one of my favorite bands of all time!), this will mean nothing to you. But for the rest of you, I must say: Holy Ridiculousity, Batman! If this were a cereal, it'd be Urkel O's. You just gotta HOPE it's a joke! Insane! -Maddy (Teat Productions)

VON ZIPPERS, THE: *The Crime Is Now: LP*

Political garage rock, kind of like a low-rent Randy with a much better name. I thought I remembered these guys sounding more like the New Bomb Turks, but it's been a couple of years since I listened to *Blitzhacker*. The artwork looks really cool, and this is a pretty decent record on its own merits, but it fails to singe off my eyebrows or give me a wedgie. Too bad. -Josh (Alien Snatch)

VOODOO ORGANIST: *The Return of: CD*

The name says it all: just a guy and his organ belting out odes to pitchfork men and snakes in the eyes. Great for your next satanic soiree. -Jimmy Alvarado (www.deadteenagerrecords.com)

WE INVENTED TORNADOES: *Self-titled: CD*

I only care about which ex-members of which bands got together because I didn't like any of their previous groups (Guzzard, King Can, etc.). This power trio extends their streak, a dubious accomplishment at best. It's more boring guitar rock, which not only sounds dated now but sucked when it was in vogue the first time. In this case, the old adage of dancing with the one who brought you doesn't hold true; this record is some of the best evidence yet presented for ditching your date in favor of someone better at the hoedown. -Puckett (Learning Curve)

WHITE LIARS, THE: *Pharmacia: CD*

This had the look of radio pop punk, but the sound of crap rock with echoey/reverby vocals. Woo hoo! -Megan (24 Carrot)

WORLD BURNS TO DEATH: *The Sucking of the Missile Cock: CD*

Some straight-up peace punk/pacifist hardcore here that sounds like the bastard child of Crucifix and some fjord-pining thrash unit circa 1984. The lyric sheet was a pleasant surprise, with obvious effort being put into explanations for each song. Included here are tracks from an LP, two 7-inches and a couple unreleased tunes. Hope they're still slugging it out, 'cause they're pretty darn good. -Jimmy Alvarado (Hardcore Holocaust)

WORM QUARTET: *Faster Than a Speeding Mullet: CD*

To (mis)quote the ever-quotable Spinal Tap, there's a fine line between genius and stupidity, and Worm Quartet straddle both sides of that line with ease. They (actually "he," I guess) write catchy, synth-driven tunes about shit so silly that it makes the Dickies seem like perennial scowlers Discharge. As proof

to back such a serious allegation, I submit the following song titles: "(I Wanna Wipe) A Booger On Dan (Rather)," "Let's Make Fun of the Amish," "Wookie Weenie," "Eskimo Pie Is Not Pie and Contains Very Little Eskimo," and "Ode to Ziplock the African Albino Claw-Footed Water Frog," quite possibly the most poignant love song to a lost pet since Manilow's "Mandy." I am pleased to report that Worm Quartet remain both at the top of their game and a personal favorite. -Jimmy Alvarado (Worm Quartet)

X-POSSIBLES: *Blood Everywhere: CD*

Solid female-fronted punk rock reminiscent of the old LA band Red Scare. Like that band, the poppier mid-tempo stuff here is good, but when they thrash things up, watch out, boyo. This is gonna garner much airplay come summertime. -Jimmy Alvarado (www.x-possibles.com)

YE OLDE BUTTFUCK: *How to Get to Heaven from Chattanooga, Tennessee: 7"*

That must be a trick question. Chattanooga, Tennessee is Heaven. I grew up around there and I greatly admire that city's beer-soaked contributions to punk rock, as well as that train that goes up the side of Lookout Mountain. That said, this was kind of a letdown for me. Perhaps my memory of their beer-soaked punk rock is a bit fuzzy due to me being soaked in beer at more than one Jack Palance Band show, but I don't know. I didn't really get excited when I listened to this record and I can't put my finger on why that is. This label put out the Stun Guns LP that you should definitely check out. Also, I've said this before and I'll say it again: don't play Rolling Stones songs unless you are Devo. -Josh (Shut Up)

YOUTH GONE MAD: *Self-titled: CD*

The cover of this CD screams, "Featuring Dee Dee Ramone," and claims to be "Dee Dee Ramone's last musical will and testament." After listening to it, I have the following reaction: Never, ever do a lot of drugs over a long period of time. This includes a few new Dee Dee songs and a cover of "Blitzkrieg Bop" that proves that, like pizza, certain songs, no matter how badly executed, will still be sort of alright. Note to people who collect bad Dee Dee stuff: none of this is bad enough to be funny. If anything, it's just a little sad. If this were a cereal, it'd be S'mores. Why revive something that could never be as good as it once was? (And, by the way, what's up with changing the name to Smorz?) -Maddy (Trend is Dead!)

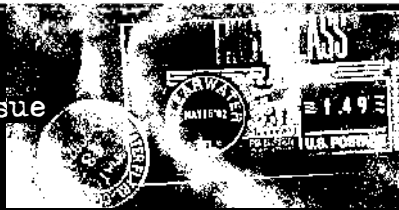
ZERO DOWN: *Pound for Pound: CD*

The hardcore-style boxing photo on the cover fooled me, like it may end up fooling a lot of people. I think this is what it would sound like if the Stone Temple Pilots and their record company's marketing department got together and figured out a way of making the band even more bland than they already are. Sorry, but pound for pound, Zero Down is what the practitioners of the sweet science call "a tomato can." -Aphid Peewit (Zero Down)



CONTACT ADDRESSES

to bands and labels that were reviewed either in this issue or posted on www.razorcake.com in the last two months.



- **1-2-3-4-Go!**, 732 56th St., Oakland, CA 94609
- **24 Carrot**, 12860 Beach Blvd. #G437, Stanton, CA 90680
- **Alien Snatch**, Morikeweg 1, 74199 Untergruppenbach, Germany; <www.aliensnatch.de>
- **Alternative Tentacles**, PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141
- **Arclight**, 1403 Rio Grande St., Austin, TX 78701
- **Ass**, 2440 Lyndale Avenue S., Minneapolis, MN 55405
- **Attention Deficit Disorder**, PO Box 8240, Tampa, FL 33674
- **Bad Afro**, Sandbjerggade 11 St. Th. 2200, Copenhagen, N. Denmark
- **Barracuda Sound**, PO Box 11994 Gainesville, FL 23604; <www.barracudasound.com>
- **Bastard Radio**, 2421 W. Jefferson, Phoenix, AZ 85009
- **Beer City**, PO Box 26035, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0035
- **Big Action**, 217 E. King St., Winona, MN 55987
- **Big Neck**, PO Box 8144, Reston, VA 20195
- **Black Lung**, PO Box 1707, Norfolk, VA 23509
- **Blue Bus**, PO Box 31130, SF, CA 94131
- **Burnitdownrebuild**, 102 Frederick Ave., Bellmore, NY 11710
- **Broken Bonez**, 281 Three Rivers, El Paso, TX 79912
- **BYO**, PO Box 67609, LA, CA 90067
- **Chicken Head**, PO Box 371147, Reseda, CA 91337
- **Clone**, PO Box 6014, Akron, OH 44312
- **Coldsweat**, PO Box 380152, E. Hartford, CT 06138-0152
- **Cowboy Versus Sailor**, PO Box 823, North Hollywood, CA 91603
- **Creature Feature**; <www.theturkingcorpse.com>
- **Criminal IQ**, 3540 North Southport Ave., Chicago, IL 60657; <www.criminaliq.com>
- **Crypt Kickers**, NOK 4443 Millvale Dr., Huntsville, AL, 35805
- **Da' Core**, 4407 Bowes Ave., West Mifflin, PA 15122
- **Dead Beat**, PO Box 283, LA, CA 90078
- **Deathwish**, 35 Congress St., Salem, MA 01970
- **Deranged**, PO Box 543, Station P, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2T1 Canada
- **Die Stinkin'**, 2037 W. Carol Circle, West Palm Beach, FL 33415
- **Dionysus**, PO Box 1975, Burbank, CA 91507; <www.dionysusrecords.com>
- **Dirtnap**, PO Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111
- **Disillusioned Youth**, c/o Dave, Old Chelsea Station, PO Box 1499, NY, NY 10013
- **Dr. Strange**, PO Box 1058, Alta Loma, CA 91701
- **Epitaph**, 2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026
- **Ersatz Audio**, PO Box 02713, Detroit, MI 48202; <www.ersatzaudio.com>
- **Estrus**, PO Box 2125, Bellingham WA 98227-2125
- **Fat**, PO Box 193690, SF, CA 94119
- **First Blood Family**, PO Box 1766, Madison, WI 53701
- **Flame Shovel**, 1658 N. Milwaukee #276, Chicago, IL 60647
- **Fonzie Town**, 3078 Beach Rd., Port Huron, MI 48060
- **Foxx, The**, 1010 Gold Ave. SW, Albuquerque, NM 87102
- **Fudge Sickill**, PO Box 7052, Villa Park, IL 60181
- **Gale Force**, <www.galeforce-records.com>
- **Garage-Pop**, PO Box 88003, Rochester, NY 14618
- **Get Hip**, PO Box 666, Canonsburg, PA 15317
- **Grover Kent**, 33 Aberdeen Rd. 340B, Aberdeen, NJ, 07747
- **GSL**, PO Box 65091, LA, CA 90065
- **Happy Couples Never Last**, PO Box 36997, Indianapolis, IN 46236-0997
- **Hardcore Holocaust**, PO Box 26742, Richmond, VA 23261
- **Havoc**, PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408
- **HCNL**, PO Box 36997, Indianapolis, IN 46236
- **Headline**, 7706 Melrose Ave., LA, CA 90046; <www.headlinerrecords.com>
- **Heads Up**, 2322 W. Augusta 2R, Chicago, IL 60622
- **HG Fact**, 105 Nakanoshinbashi-M, 2-7-15 Yayoi-Cho, Nakano, Tokyo 164-0013, Japan
- **High Fidelity**, PO Box 1071, Grover Beach, CA 93483
- **Hill Billy Stew**, PO Box 82625, SD, CA, 92138
- **Hopeless**, PO Box 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409
- **Household Name**, PO Box 12286, London, SW9 6FE, UK
- **In The Red**, PO Box 5077, LA, CA, 90050
- **Inside Out**, 1601 Banksville Rd., 2nd Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15216
- **Intolerant Messiah**, PO Box 616, San Mateo, CA 94403
- **Ionik**, 130 S. 22nd Street, 2F, Philadelphia, PA 19103
- **Jeth-Row**, 4739 Magazine, New Orleans, LA 70115
- **Kapow**, PO Box 286, Fullerton, CA 92836
- **KOB**, Via Cantarane, 63/C, I-37129, Verona, Italy
- **Lance Rock**, 370 Bruce Ave., Nanaimo, BC, Canada V9R 3Y1; <www.lancerock.com>
- **Learning Curve**, 2200 4th St. NE, Minneapolis, MN 55418
- **Life Is Abuse**, PO Box 20524, Oakland, CA 94620
- **Lobster**, PO Box 1473, Santa Barbara, CA 93102
- **Lollipop**, <www.chez.com/lollipoprecords>
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- **Nice and Neat**, PO Box 14177, Minneapolis, MN 55414; <www.nice-neat.com>
- **No Idea**, PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604
- **Operation Phoenix**, PO Box 13380, Mill Creek, WA 98082
- **Pair O Docs**, PO Box 222059, Dallas, TX 75222
- **Pee**, PO Box 238, Marden, South Australia 5070
- **Plan-It-X**, PO Box 3521, Bloomington, IN 47402
- **Prank**, PO Box 410892, SF, CA 94141
- **Pro Dudes USA**, 1930 NE 8th Street, Gainesville, FL 32609
- **Puke 'n' Vomit**, PO Box 3435, Fullerton, CA 92834
- **Ransom**, 1525 Aviation Blvd. #289, Redondo Beach, CA 90278; <www.smutpeddlers.net>
- **Raw Deluxe**, PO Box 23882, Oakland, CA 94623; <www.therawdeluxe.com>
- **Readyfireaim**, 1280 SOM Ctr, Rd #126, Cleveland, OH 44143
- **Recess**, PO Box 1666 San Pedro, CA 90733; <www.recessrecords.com>
- **Red Leader**, PO Box 20836, Park West Finance Station, NY 10025
- **Reptilian**, 403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231
- **Ripper**, PO Box 11, 43726 L'arbob, Spain
- **Robotic Empire**, PO Box 4211, Richmond, VA 23220
- **Rockin' Bones/ Kill Yourself** c/o Gulatiero Pagani, Borgo Palmia 3A, 43100 Parma, Italy
- **Room 13**, 3505 Kipling, Berkley, MI 48072
- **Route 13**, 1109 Prospect Avenue, Wilmington, DE 19809
- **Salinas**, PO Box 20996, Ferndale, MI 48220
- **Say Ten**, PO Box 7586, Newark, DE 19714-7586
- **Shit Sandwich**, 3107 N. Rockwell, Chicago, IL 60618; <www.shitsandwichrecords.com>
- **Shut Up**, PO Box 1671, Oakland, CA 94604
- **Side One Dummy**, PO Box, 23350, LA, CA, 90078
- **Slab-O-Wax**, PO Box 461082, San Antonio, TX 78246
- **Snuffy Smile**, 4-1-16-201 Daita, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo 155-0033, Japan
- **Soul Is Cheap**, PO Box 11552, Memphis, TN 38111
- **Southern**, PO Box 577375, Chicago, IL 60657
- **Stardumb**, PO Box 21145, 3001 AC Rotterdam, The Netherlands
- **Steel Cage**, PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA, 19125
- **Street Anthem**, 6201 15th Avenue NW, B#306, Seattle, WA 98107-2382
- **Sunset Alliance**, PO Box 32048, Mesa, AZ 85275
- **Super Speedway**, 108 Paseo de San Antonio, San Jose, CA 95113
- **Support Group**, 2640 Trenton SW, Wyoming, MI 49509
- **Swami**, PO Box 620428, SD, CA 92162
- **Swindlebra**, Goethestr.22, 89312, Guenzberg, Germany
- **Sympathy**, <www.sympathyrecords.com>
- **Teat Productions**, PO Box 66470, Chicago, IL 60666
- **Thick**, PO Box 220245, Chicago, IL 60622
- **Thrift Store Heroes**, <www.thriftstoreheroes.com>
- **TKO**, 3126 W. Cary St. #303, Richmond, VA 23221; <www.tkorecords.com>
- **Total Energy**, PO Box 7112, Burbank CA 91510
- **Trend Is Dead!**, PO Box 444, Normal, IL 61761
- **Triple Crown**, 331 W. 57th Street, PMB 472, NY, NY 10019
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- **Wanker**, PO Box 200587, D-35018 Marburg, Germany
- **Wood Shampoo**, PO Box 27801, LV, NV 89126-1801
- **World Eater**, PO Box 42728, Philadelphia, PA 19101
- **Worm Quartet**, PO Box 157, North Chili, NY 14514
- **Wrench**, BCM Box 4049, London, WC1N 3XX
- **Zero Down**, 3318 30th Ave SW, #B204, Seattle, WA 98126



Send all zines for review to Razorcake, PO Box 42129, LA, CA 90042. Please include a contact address, the number of pages, the price, and whether or not you accept trades.



3RD GENERATION NATION, #26, \$4 or 2.77 euros, 8 1/2 x 11, off-set, glossy cover, 70 pgs.

This zine, written mostly in German (which, unfortunately, means I can't read most of it), is mostly focused on older punk bands – interviews with the Undertones, Agent Orange, Channel 3, etc. There's a pretty decent Turbonegro interview in English, and a ton of reviews and columns in German. I'd say this most resembles a shorter, German, rock-and-roll-based *Big Takeover*. Am I making any sense? Nein! –Maddy (Ralf Hunebeck, Grenzweg 66, 47877 Willich, Germany)

AD INFINITUM #7,

free, 8 1/2 x 11, newsprint, 47 pgs. So, I keep up-to-date on right-wing politics, I listen to Rush, O'Reilly, Hannity, et. al. I'm not one of those people who just dismisses all right-wing politics as being below debate, even though I disagree with them. Anyway, I'm guessing that this zine fits in with the whole conservative punk movement (i.e. "No punks are conservative. We're conservative, and since no one else is, that makes us punk."). This zine contains rants on why affirmative action is wrong, why Bush is right, and why political correctness is harming our society. You get the idea. According to one article, "If you assume minorities are all in need to [the] majority, you're as racist as traditional racists who assume whites are naturally superior." The author's idea – that we should not assume blacks need additional help because they are poor – is ridiculous. Most blacks are poorer than most whites. The income gap between whites and blacks has not narrowed significantly since the '60s. (There's a great study about this by United for a Fair Economy released this past MLK day.) Sure, not all blacks are poor, and certainly there are tons of poor white people. But to deny that racism is no longer a powerful force in our society means ignoring the facts. On a random note, a lot of these articles have forgotten the "i before e" rule and use a comma as a period. Now, shouldn't these authors be self-reliant and educate themselves to fulfill the American Dream? –Maddy (adinfinitem411@hotmail.com)

ANTI-PANTS #6,

\$1, 8 1/2 x 11, xeroxed, 26 pgs. Yes, Ms. Tight Pants reviews Anti-Pants! A slacks-based meeting of the minds! A lot of this zine is hand-written, cut-and-paste, and has reviews, a letter to the band Virus (?) complaining about selling a sampler CD at Hot Topic, the band's response, some comic strips, and more. I couldn't really get into this. But I'm assuming that the writers

are in high school and, if so, I say, press on, zine writers, press on! When I did a zine when I was fourteen, it had information on the upcoming Rancid show, for Christ's sake! –Maddy (PO Box 3950, San Dimas, CA 91773)

CASH FLAGG,

#2, 8 1/2 x 11, xeroxed, stapled. Pretty much a one-man show of a zine for movie go'ers. Lots of movie reviews. The editor should spend less money buying tickets to big budget movies and more on content, layout and design. Appealing in an old school, pre-*Film Threat* kind of way, but far too mainstream in its coverage (*Matrix*, *Willard*, *Cabin Fever*) but [editor] Brian Marshall's reviews are funny as hell. Movies are rated on a Don Knotts scale of 1 - 5 (five Don Knotts heads being the best). Add excessive use of the word "turd" throughout and you get a zine that'll help stave off a bout of diarrhea. Or a case of the cheap beer shitz. –Greg Barbera (Cash Flagg, 258 Main St., Apt. 3, Danbury, CT 06810; cashflagg13@hotmail.com)

CHAIRMEN OF THE BORED,

#17 & 18, \$?, 8 1/2 x 11, xeroxed, 20-26 pgs. A prison zine made by incarcerated punk rockers. Lots of stories about the establishment, the sad state of television, getting drunk on fermented fruit, "How-I-got-to-where-I-am" pieces and more nihilism than a Crass cover band. –Greg Barbera (Cedric Knowles, #K-91158 fsp, Box 715071, B2-B4-22, Represa, CA 95671, Fanorama1@aol.com)

CLAMOR,

#25, \$4.50, 8 1/2 x 11, glossy, 68 pgs. This theme of this issue is "Death," which is always cheerful. There are articles that are literally about death: green burials, the town in Texas where they carry out the death sentences, the ongoing murders in Juarez, Mexico. There are articles on more figurative deaths: the death of a shopping mall, a discussion on dams and their effects on culture. *Razorcake* contributor Scott Puckett pulls through with an interesting article on various burial options. And, when the death articles get too heavy, there's an interview with Studs Terkel and an article on McDonalds breaking up unions. Most of the articles are a bit on the academic side, but they are well-researched, and there are so many articles in here that you're bound to find something you like. –Sean (Clamor, PO Box 20128, Toledo, OH 43610)

DRUNKEN MASTER,

#7, \$5, 8 1/2 x 11, 48 pgs. Awesome. The artwork in this zine is really impressive, really rough

and scratchy, but really intricate and detailed at the same time. I tend to like bands for that same reason, so it would kind of make sense that I would like that style applied to art. There's also a lot of really stark contrast, to the point where some of the drawings could almost pass for stencil art if they weren't so detailed. The rest of the zine has some short interviews with the Immortal Lee County Killers II, Social Distortion, the Slanderin, and a couple of cool pictures of the Japanese band Electric Eel Shock, but that stuff is just icing on the cake. I'd recommend this on the strength of the artwork alone. –Josh (knakazawa@earthlink.net)

GENETIC DISORDER #17,

\$3, 9 x 6, newsprint with glossy cover, 80 pgs. Punk rock! The cover of the zine is so cool! It's a 3-D cartoon drawing of a girl holding two guns. And the zine comes with 3-D glasses! So cool! Plus, there's a special feature on the store where the Menendez brothers bought their 12-gauge shotguns, a reprinted pamphlet apparently written as a guide for parents concerned about dangerous youth subcultures (divided into mods, new wave, new romantics, punks, soul, heavy metalists, rockers, stoners and black metalists, and containing sentences like "The more they are under the influence of the Black Arts (Satanism), the more difficult they become to communicate with.") and a filled-in questionnaire about how to tell if you have a drinking problem. ("Question: Have you tried switching brands or drinks, or following different plans to control your drinking? Answer: As a matter of fact, I recently switched from Guinness to Miller High Life, but it was for strictly financial reasons.") Plus, there's a run-down of all the shootings by the San Diego police department in 2002, reviews and more! I think this might be my favorite issue of *Genetic Disorder* yet! –Maddy (PO Box 15237, San Diego, CA 92175)

GREEN ANARCHY, \$4,

free to prisoners, 8 x 10 1/2, glossy cover, bound, newsprint (recycled I hope?) More thought provoking than the rest of the anarchists literature I received from *Razorcake* HQ this month, *Green Anarchy* offers up the usual lot of book reviews, support systems info (where like-minded individuals can find more of the same), a handful of columns from international perspectives ("Rock Versus Rifle" and "Within the Dying Sun" address Palestine and Iraq respectively), an interview with political activist Chellis Glendinning ("her friends call her

'Che''), resistance updates from around the world, and a listing of political prisoners. Plenty o' ELF, anti-WTO, and anarchist propaganda to last a lifetime. Enlightening, essential reading for those who want to know what's really going on (from an extreme liberal slant). Anarchy means living how you want to, not imposing your jingoistic thoughts on unsuspecting peoples. Right? Number of trees killed to make this issue? Amount of ozone-depleting chemicals used to process black and white film negatives? Amount of government funds used to distribute said publication to the Green peoples of the world? Cost of PO Box paid to US government? One thing rings true: *Green Anarchy* will make you think, and I can't say that about a majority of the media outlets these days. -Greg Barbera (Green Anarchy, PO Box 11331, Eugene, OR 97440)

HEY WHAT'S UP?, #1 & 2, \$1, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, photocopied
Looking at this, I thought it was done by the same merry pranksters that brought the world *The Millennium Falcon Comic Book* and *The Brown Mouth*, but alas, this is markedly inferior to such zines as those. The crude art just looks like really bad drawings instead of really funny bad drawings, and the sto-

ries just seem like they were thrown together at the last minute without bothering to even try and make sense. There's also a whole lot of blank space on every page. Not recommended. -Josh (T. Gallagher, 4 Legend Ct., Cincinnati, OH 45244)

INCENDIARY WORDS, \$1, Vol. IV, #21, 8 1/2 x 11, copies, 9 pgs.

This is a very DIY newsletter about professional soccer. It mostly focuses around the Chicago Fire, the team that has up-and-coming US national players like DeMarcus Beasley, Chris Armas, and Ante Razov. Now that there's no longer a Tampa Bay Mutiny in the MLS (and I therefore no longer have a favorite team), I like the Chicago Fire as much as any other team. I get the feeling that this is actually the print version of an email newsletter that you can sign up to for free. They cover things like the new Chicago Fire stadium, what's going on in the Major Indoor Soccer League, what happens when Fire players go to Europe, and there are schedules of televised major international matches (which would be helpful if I had cable or got more than two channels on my TV). I'm not sure why they sent it to *Razorcake*, but, as you can probably guess, I really like soccer and I appreciate this little newsletter.

-Sean (Steve "Pudgy" De Rose, 4821 W. Fletcher St. #2, Chicago, IL 60641)

LIBRARY BONNET #6, \$2.00, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, photocopied, 32 pgs.

Okay, you caught me. I'm a nerd. I love books, and I love libraries. So, when I saw this come in I grabbed it. *Library Bonnet* is put together by Tommy and Julie, who both work in libraries. This is not likely to be in my local branch anytime soon, with the slogan, "Now packed with more LIBRARY in the butt and up your ass!" emblazoned across the front cover. They combine stories from their experiences both in and out of the library, interviews, short fiction, lists, some great cut-and-paste art, cartoons and comics, and package it all up in a lavender cover with stickers. Tommy Kovac also does the comics *Stitch* and *Skelebunnies*, published by Slave Labor Graphics. (*Skelebunnies* happens to be my favorite comic of the past five years.) Both Tommy and Julie seem to use this as a space to vent some frustrations towards their co-workers, people in the library, and life in general, which, in lesser zines, can come off as a depressing bitch-fest. *Library Bonnet* has a way about it that makes it funny instead of whiny and those comments that could seem catty always feel well deserved. Within minutes of finishing this

issue, I ordered their whole back catalog. -Megan (Library Bonnet, 1315-I N. Tustin #259, Orange, CA 92867)

MICRO-FILM, #6, \$4,

8 1/2 x 11, glossy, 56 pgs.
Finally, the long awaited issue of *Micro-Film*. I've read each issue of this zine, cover to cover, right from the issue #1. In a lot of ways, *Micro-Film* is exactly what a magazine should be: a publication that knows its field inside and out, yet is still enthusiastic enough about it to make even the casual reader excited. This issue has more features on films I've never heard of, like *Kwik Stop, I Am Trying to Break Your Heart* (a Wilco documentary), *The Independent*, and a few others. I have to admit that, after reading about them, I now want to see all of the movies. Yes, even the Wilco documentary. It sounds interesting enough to make it worth having to sit through an hour and a half of indie rock. There's a pretty lengthy criticism of *Bowling for Columbine* that doesn't really work as an exposé of the factual manipulations in the film (most of the author's points boil down to someone saying Michael Moore is lying and Michael Moore saying he's not and not enough evidence for the reader to judge one way or another), but it does work as an intelligent kid on

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the verge of understanding that there's a difference between facts and the truth. Beyond the features, there's the always-entertaining editorial by Jason Pankoke, solid film reviews, and some practical independent-filmmaking advice. —Sean (Micro-Film, PO Box 45, Champaign, IL 61824)

MY FAT IRISH ASS!, No. -5, \$2, 8 1/2 x 11, xeroxed, stapled, 38 pgs. You can always find some sort of saving grace with zines, and with *My Fat Irish Ass* it comes in the form of appropriated *Dennis the Menace* and *Family Circus* comics — here mocked up with phony text and covertly inserted drug paraphernalia references. It's Warhol-meets-*Beavis and Butthead* kinda of stuff. There's a live show review of the Murder Junkies 10th Year Reunion Tour, just so you know. Remarkable how some people keep the zinemaking flame alive, innit? —Greg Barbera (My Fat Irish Ass!, PO Box, 65391, Washington, D.C. 20035)

NEWS FROM NOWHERE, #4/5 Free, 11 1/2 x 16 broadsheet newsprint 8-10 pgs.

Looking a lot like the bastard stepchild of Richmond's *Slug & Lettuce*, this Eugene, OR.-based zine delivers some fleshy, dense dialect in the few pages it cares to offer the reader. Most of us found out long ago, that not only will the revolution be televised, but it will be publicized. You know the old adage, if the kids are united... blah, blah, blah. Sometimes I think everyone has gotten so caught up in doing it for themselves that they've forgotten to check out what's already been done. Anarchy is alive and well my friends and that is a good thing — don't get me wrong. But somebody please expand on the dogma and stop saying the same things over and over again: *NFN* dishes out the standard rhetoric that capitalism is evil and marriage doesn't equal love (toss in an article on the Revolutionary Anarchist Mom and Baby League (RAMBL[a]?), and it contains more angry voices spewing from the frothy mouths of eco punks than an Uhwharrie show. Note: that's electricity fueling those guitars folks. Hello? Listen, I've been growing my own and living a spartan life for years — I fully understand the idea that informed peoples will be enlightened by knowledge (it's just that getting the knowledge across to some can be difficult), but exclusion due to non-inclusion is about as hypocritical as Christians condemning homosexuals. Would not Christ be friends with gays? Or did he just limit it to prostitutes and lepers? Have I lost you dear reader, because

what I'm saying is that modern society is different; the social mores have changed; the world is not as it was last year much less ten or twenty years ago. Quit bitching, and, as Ray Cappo once growled, "Make a change." Freedom of the press is a wonderful thing. Ben Franklin is my golden calf. Make good use of it. Stop chastising crust punks who *don't* take their dogs on tour or mothers who use *disposable* diapers. We're all lepers and we need not throw stones at our own kind. So just call this review a pebble. Now get busy building that house out of old tires and beer bottles. —Greg Barbera (News From Nowhere, PO Box 10384, Eugene, OR 97440)

No. 13, Free, 8 x 11 1/2, newsprint, bound Boston-based punk zine that needs to be admired for its initiative and attitude if not for its punk rock aesthetic. This issue features a cover story on Allston horror punks MourningSide and a "Best & Worst" of the punk and hardcore scene in 2003 from Boston and the surrounding New England States. The design (font size, paper quality and background screens on the pages) has gotten better since the last issue I saw/reviewed. Really, the only downside to this issue of *No. 13* is the reprinted interview with The Freeze from *MaximumRock'n'Roll* circa 1984. I thought *Ume Reader* and *Reader's Digest* had cornered the market on borrowing content to make yer own magazine. That aside, it's a nice blast from the past — and true to the publication's mission — to carry on the torch for NE hardcore. Alert! *No. 13* claims it will branch out to national/international acts in upcoming issues. Good news? Bad news? The jury is still deliberating... but while you're waiting, be sure and check out *FNS*'s Boston flyers issue and their recently published collection of tour diaries titled *In the Van*, featuring road stories from Blanks 77, The Virus, Crimson Ghosts and more. As if that isn't enough, Pat the *FNS* guy, has also released a 7-inch by his band The Struggle. When does this guy sleep? —Greg Barbera (PO Box 1299, Boston, MA 02130; fns_publishing@msn.com)

NOTES ON BABY MAKING, \$1, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, 8 pgs.

Outside of the obvious — like you don't need to be sixteen-years-old or have a driver's license to have a kid and that marriage/motherhood doesn't equal love — this magazine is a bunch of shit. As a stay-at-home (punk rock) dad I'm appalled at the blatant stereotyping going on here. Raising kids isn't easy, nobody is going to doubt that — the reality is

whether you go to sleep at 10 p.m. and get up to go to work being a stockbroker or wake up hungover to no job, parenting has no bias. You will clean up shit and piss and puke at any moment. And the acceptance of that is a big part of adulthood. While this zine is important in being informative, it reads like white power literature because it's so fucking dictating and didactic: "You must do this." Reads like a Christian street team marketing emo campus blitz. Jesus. Not even that good. God? No penises allowed. Midwifery call of the wild, "Hootie hoo....." —Greg Barbera (Overground Distribution, PO Box 1661, Pensacola, FL 32591)

REV. RICH MACKIN'S BOOK OF LETTERS, #18, \$3, 8 x 5 1/2, xeroxed, 38 pgs.

Yay! Another *Book of Letters*! How many times have I wished that I had thought of this idea first? Of course, you'd expect that Rich will get a good review here. He's a *Razorcake* columnist, after all. But I remember the first time I ever saw Rich, long before *Razorcake* existed. It was in a small, crowded room in Milwaukee. People were getting drunk, yelling, and Rich was standing on a small stage reading his letters to Lever 2000, asking, "Can you name all the '2000 Parts' of the body?" I walked away thinking Rich was not only hilarious, he also was a born performer. Many years later, he's still keeping at it. This issue includes a letter to a data company asking why the hold music says the company "delivers the promise of technology." Rich writes, "I find it odd that you don't seem concerned about actually delivering technology, merely the promise of it. The issue for me is that promises are often broken. If you don't believe me, ask a Native American." Also: letters to McDonald's asking if Ronald McDonald is "some sort of Michael Jackson-like creature," why Red Baron pizza's namesake is a German Flying Ace ("What's next, Hitler brand sausage? Saddam Hussein egg rolls? Ayatollah Khomeini brand French bread pizza?"), and more! Good! —Maddy (Rich Mackin, PO Box 14642, Portland, OR 97293-0642)

ROCK N ROLL PURGATORY #12 & 13, \$2, 8 1/2 x 11, xeroxed, 44 pgs. each

I'm always giving this zine good reviews. It's been going on for about six issues now, and I'm not gonna stop with #12 or #13. Issue #12 features solid interviews with Throwrag, The Donettes, Satan's Teardrops, and Trailer Bride, as well as some funny pieces on joining the "Cowboys For Jesus" and

about George W. Bush's evil clone. Issue #13 has a great Knockout Pills interview, and good interviews with Al Foul, High School Hellcats, Astro Zombies, and Swing Ding Amigos. There are also articles that bring to light Osama bin Laden's recent trip to Mars and the role the Amish played in the JFK assassination. And, of course, who could forget the advice column from a 13th century Catholic Bishop. Beyond the interviews and the humor, *Rock N Roll Purgatory* has some very helpful record reviews (in other words, I find myself agreeing with the reviewers on the albums I've listened to, so I feel like I can trust them in picking up something I haven't heard) and lengthy show reviews. All in all, this is some of the best coverage of punk, rockabilly, and street punk that you'll find anywhere. —Sean (RNR Purgatory, 342 South Walnut St., Wooster, OH 44691)

SECOND WIND, #2 & 3, free, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, photocopied I'm a terrible skater. Terrible. People watching probably don't even laugh anymore because they just feel bad for me, but I still like skating just for the hell of it, and that's the motivation behind *Second Wind*. It's made by girls that skate, not because it looked cool on a Mountain Dew commercial, but because they think it's fun. There are also lots of pictures of skate parks (like Burnside in Portland) and pools that make my mouth water even though I would probably end up in a wheelchair if I skated them. It's definitely a labor of love, and it gets a well-deserved thumbs up. —Josh (Faye Lynn Richards, 2311 Stevens Dr. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87112)

SHREDDING PAPER, #17, \$2.95, 8 1/2 x 11, glossy cover, newsprint inside

Not much has changed since last issue — *Shredding Paper* is still all about disseminating the gluttonous mountain of new releases. But the cover, with its illustration comparing Gov. Arnold to Frankenstein, and Mel C.'s column hint that there may be a home in the future for investigative journalism besides endless CD reviews. And indeed this issue does include a piece by Jason Bracelin taking on the age-old question of "to download or not to download." The answer? I fall on Mel C.'s side of things: I haven't seen book publishers try to put libraries out of business. —Greg Barbera (Shredding Paper, PO Box 2271, San Rafael, CA 94912)

SKIN DEEP #2, \$1, 4 1/4 x 5 1/2, 18 pgs. A letter to Gwen Stefani, knowing

that, deep down, she's a skin and should hang out with the zine editor. A promise to never be soft and wear sweatpants outside. An open solicitation to me to engage in a shirtless fight in Minneapolis. (Sure, why not.) An ode to his knife: "Knife/ I am sorry I left you at home. Knife/ I am sorry you didn't get to party." A poem titled "Everyday Should Start with Painless." Such astute comments as, "As a parent/ it pisses me off/ that kids books/ are weak/ my son doesn't need/ some fuzzy tiger/ teaching him/ how to be/ a fag." A tender skinhead rant against immigrants, "except hot girls cuz they should get taken care of. I volunteer me." All of these elements add up to one of the funniest takes on racist skinhead culture I've ever read. Just as great as the first issue. Not for the faint of heart or those who can't take a fucking joke. My only question to "anonymous": Toughass, how'd your cursive get so frilly on "The Real Truth About Love"? -Todd (Skin Deep, PO Box 13093, Minneapolis, MN 55414)

SLEEPWALK, Volume 2, #1, 8 1/2 x 11, free, newsprint
What do you know, a literary magazine that doesn't suck. *Sleepwalk* is a magazine out of Chicago that

collects really good stories from area writers. It's a cool thing to check out if you're in the mood for some non-pretentious writing that's easy to relate to. I'd be lying if I said that my favorite part of this wasn't the story by Joe Meno (who, for all his bravado, failed to beat my high score at Galaga). It's about trying to find the right song to play for a girl that you want to make out with, a dilemma that I'm sure many guys have gone through at some point (my advice: it's not going to be "Fix Some Food, Bitch" by the Didjits). The layout is well-designed also, by no less a graphic design luminary than Jon Resh, author of *Amped*. I know it says free, but make a donation and feel good about yourself. -Josh (Sleepwalkmag@aol.com)

SUGAR NEEDLE #24, \$1 plus a stamp, 11 x 4, xeroxed and hand-colored, 14 pgs.
Yay! Of COURSE I'm going to like this! A zine all about candy! Includes reviews of the insane "Junk Mouth Spray and Stain Tongue Stainer," the bite-size licorice "Snaps," "Airwaves Spicy Cocktail" gum, and even "Sinfully Delicious Candy Bites" (in flavors like peach cobbler and banana creme pie)! There's also a short

interview with Roxy Epoxy and info on Serbian and Chinese candy! Yes! My only complaint is that, since this is all hand-written, there's not a lot of writing on each page. More, please! -Maddy (Corina, PO Box 300152, Minneapolis, MN 55403)

THE MATTIE STORIES, \$3, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied, 44 pgs.
This is a short story zine by Canadian writer Jennifer Whiteford, who does the zine *Matilda*. All four stories are day-in-the-life type stuff about a young woman walking a tightrope between hope and disenfranchisement, with the long Canadian winter looming in the background. The stories are honest and heartfelt. It's easy to get lost in them. And the writing itself is tighter and more complete than what I've come to expect from personal zines. This one comes highly recommended. -Sean (www.matildazine.org)

UGLY PLANET #1, Free, odd sized, glossy cover, bound, 42 pgs.
The best things about the premiere issue of *Ugly Planet* are the clean, crisp format and the publication's dedication to covering "diverse" subjects. The story on graphic artist Winston Smith (of Dead Kennedys

album cover art fame) is a must-read. Anti-Flag, Ministry, and Antibalas are interesting subjects and lend to decent interviews but Dead Prez, S.T.U.N. and Bitch & Animal dish out average, predictable fare. Very promising first effort. Can't wait to see this publication kicking ass a year from now... but they still need to work out some kinks. -Greg Barbera (Ugly Planet, PO Box 205, New York, NY 10012, www.uglyplanet.com)

WORLD FAMOUS CRAZY WILD #2, no price given, 8 1/2 x 7, xeroxed, 16 pgs.
This issue is all about everything, yep, world famous, crazy and wild in L.A. - including a feature on a burlesque dancing duo, bar recommendations, "Top 5 L.A. Bands" and more. I liked the burlesque dancing article. Let's hear it for pasties! The rest of this stuff seemed more like something you'd see in a *Jane* or *Sassy*-type magazine. Plus, I've never been to L.A., but nothing in this issue seemed truly crazy. I wish there had been more ridiculousity! -Maddy (wfw-mag@yahoo.com)



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The Best of Intentions: The *Avow* Anthology
No page numbers, but it looks like it's over 300,
by Keith Rosson

First and foremost, Keith Rosson is one earnest motherfucker. He thinks long, hard, and tirelessly about DIY punk rock culture. He's a gifted artist, a vehement smoker, a Northwestern night owl, and a guy who has gotten his ass kicked plenty of times. This book is a collection of the first sixteen issues of *Avow* zine, which is mostly Keith and a revolving cast of contributors. Although roughly ninety-eight percent of *The Best of Intentions* is told from the first person, Keith skirts the trap of over self-indulgence by mixing in constant self-effacement. I mean, shit, if someone goes into detail how he masturbated to the MTV dance show, "The Grind" and got caught naked, with boner, by his mom, whose response was to laugh at him, he's not afraid of putting his life's embarrassment under a hard light. What's also satisfying is that *The Best of Intentions* takes the time to tell stories that involve other people, and not only as backdrops, but as larger, interlocking elements in this series of relationships called life. Stories like a one-armed man on the bus giving him a handful of change, of a good friend being irrevocably changed from a severe beating in a park, of when a little boy whose mom dresses cats up in costumes, in an act of open compassion, asks him for a big hug, of trying to save a bird from a cat, only to see its skull get crushed and have its eye pop out an incredible distance. Keith's not afraid to stare at his zits and tell you all about them, but he's also not afraid to take time out – in that one in ten of life's experiences (according to his calculations) – to realize and cherish the small gifts. Keith also has some gems of great advice. My favorite is on the back of postcard he sent to a friend: "Take care of yourself, and for fuck's sake, if you're going to drive around with expired tags, take the gun out of the glovebox." Having not read *Avow* prior to this and getting a lay of the land

over cover-to-cover reading, Keith has definitely improved over the years and he's learned his lessons well. With each issue, his storytelling became more acute and his drawings are developing more of a style of his own, which is good news, too. Recommended. –Todd (Fork in the Road Press, c/o Troy Malish, Box 1168, Elkford, BC V0B 1H0)

What Is Anarchism?

By Alexander Berkman, 237 pgs.

Although not an anarchist (or any "ist" for that matter), I have a lot of compassion for many of anarchism's basic principles and goals. Alexander Berkman, a "social physician," who was Emma Goldman's life-long confidant, was a deep thinker, a really lousy bomb maker, and a clumsy marksman. He botched murdering Henry Clay Frick, an industrialist who Berkman saw as the henchman accountable for the death of striking steelworkers. His point-blank bullet missed Fricke's vital organs, he had his pistol wrested away from him, and he ended up serving fourteen years in prison. This book, completed in 1928, eight years before Berkman's death, had been run in different formats in different magazines, and was ultimately compiled and titled *The ABC of Communist Anarchism*. The goal was admirable: to make a book on anarchism that would be accessible to the average reader. Berkman takes great pains in assuming that a reader, new to anarchism, won't be completely lost, yet he peppers these chapters with an impressive array of information for those who are well versed in its principles. According to Berkman (and definitions of anarchism vary greatly from theoreticians, practitioners, and schools of thought), anarchism means "order without government and peace without violence." It also requires "voluntary cooperation instead of forced participation. It means harmony and order in place of interference and disorder." Berkman also realizes that anarchy is a fragile flower of a social experiment, that severe self-discipline, hard work, and constant diligence by millions of people are necessary for it to work. No small task. No small goal.

Although Berkman has accomplished his goal of writing a book that treats social problems in a "simple and intelligible manner," I have to be completely honest; this book is tough to get through. I struggled through it for the better part of two months. I'd have to put it down and really mull over what he's putting on the table. That said, I found it gratifying to get all the way to the end and really chew on the tough meat of anarchism's successes and failures.

What's truly compelling in this book are the "common sense" topics that haven't been outdated in the eighty plus years since its release. The "consciousness that you possess power is itself the worst poison that corrodes the finest metal of man." I can also see an overlap with Noam Chomsky, who echoes Berkman's sentiment that the corporations and higher ups in government know that we're still in a class war – they are acutely aware of the situation and use all of the forces at their command to defeat the lower workers – while workers are still confused on what to do, and rarely think of themselves as wage slaves. He provides example after example of this dynamic.

Further on in the book, Berkman goes into great detail of how the Bolsheviks, and later the Communist Party, were able to clothe themselves in anarchist rhetoric in order to hijack the Russian Revolution. Basically, for centuries, the Tsars (think, roughly, kings and queens and their aristocratic cronies) ruled all of Russia. Folks got pissed, and for one of the first documented times in human history, millions of people rose up and effectively took back their factories and fields, killing the Tsars and ending their rule. The problem was that there were several parties vying for power to fill the vacuum. Berkman posits that the Bolsheviks clothed themselves in many of anarchism's principles (self-governance, self-reliance) then slowly, and on the sly, installed a dictatorship more crushing than the Tsar rule.

It's here where, for the first time in my life, that I realized that anarchism is like a spinning top. It's weighted with a load of great ideas with just the tip of it scraping a mark on the world. However, with one deft push or interruption – such as Stalin's iron fist – its course was disrupted, its initial intent, forever lost in Russia.

Berkman was aware of this, too. Instead of admitting final defeat, he continued aligning to his core belief in anarchism. "There is nothing more corrupting than compromise," he states. "One step in that direction calls for another, makes it necessary and compelling, and soon it swamps you with the force of a rolling snowball becoming a landslide."

So, there you have it in a nutshell. Anarchism is a beautiful, crushable ideal with a lot of great theories that have yet to be put into practice on any national level. Berkman provides a book, equal parts depressing, enlightening, and full of future hope. Worthy of a close read if anyone ever grills you about anarchism or when a political band pleads you to "go read a book." –Todd (AK Press, 674A 23rd St., Oakland, CA 94612; www.akpress.org)

Weapons of Mass Instruction, Live

by Greg Palast Audio Book CD

In politics, the second most important thing you can have is information. Unfortunately, the number one thing is money, so access to number two often proves difficult. It's no surprise that those who control the parties of the jackass and the elephant in America benefit when you and I – common schlubs – don't know the real story. Often times, we just don't have the access, time, or ability to do freelance muckraking, and it's for this reason that Greg Palast is such a valuable asset. He's an American investigative journalist, in the tradition of George Seldes, currently in England, covering how absolutely corrupt how modern politics is. I came across him through his excellent book *The Best Democracy Can Buy*, which I also highly recommend. The thing that's great about Palast is that he's not much a theorist. You can't call something a conspiracy theory when he has the documents in his hands, documents that should have been destroyed. Documents that should never have dropped out of the loop. He's the guy with the data, the lists, the evidence. Were Black Floridian voters "scrubbed" off the election lists? Yes. A scan of portions of those lists accompany this CD. He also has the internal documents, has contacted the data company responsible for the scrubbing, and shows you how they trampled ripshod over people's rights to vote. And so it goes this CD. Greg Palast tells twenty-one stories, all foot-

noted and cross-referenced. Do diamond companies go in and squash riots with bloodshed? Yes. Arm your anger with information. www.gregpalast.com is great place to start. Crucial CD. –Todd (AK Press, 674A 23rd St., Oakland, CA 94612; www.akpress.org)

We Ain't Got No Car! #7

By Jack Saturn, 251 pgs.

This book was a struggle to finish. I've read instructional manuals on hooking up my VCR with more chutzpah, but I wanted to give it time to redeem itself and had to put off reading about anarchism and wrestling to see if Jack could pull some magic off at the end. Nope. In the kindest light, *WAGNC!* is a treatise on being down. The protagonist is vapor locked in depression, which could be a poignant, sober look a viable, crippling disorder. It's not. Granted, there is a smattering of well-written sentences, paragraphs, and sections. The best section of the book is where Jack goes to visit one of his dying grandmothers, who had previously been giving him grief about his beard. There's a tender exchange where she calls him her "beautiful, beautiful boy." That passage aside, it's difficult to recommend this book because it's, ultimately, whiney, ineffectual, horribly self-absorbed, and woefully delusional. How, at the end, Jack fancies himself as a rugged individualist is laughable.

Right before I picked up *WAGNC!*, I read *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, a fantastic, succinct book that follows the sunrise to sunset activity of a man who is in a Siberian concentration camp. The book, although horrifying by the situation of subzero temperatures, watery gruel, and being in prison, is ultimately redemptive. Ivan never complains. He has to stitch extra bread into his mattress so it won't get stolen. During the day, he masterfully helps make a perfectly level wall to his own prison. In the evening, he's stoked that there's a bit more of rancid potato floating around in his bowl.

Jack Saturn complains, at length, about almost everything. This is by no means a complete list, but here are some of the great issues tackled in *WAGNC!* He's bummed they're phasing out Stewart's soda from his girlfriend's college cafeteria, of which he's mooching off from her meal plan. The college happens to be Reed, an expensive college where a friend of mine, Chris, was a cook. It's the same progressive college that Chris was a cook and not a student at, and was expressly prohibited by the school to see Howard Zinn read. It's the same school, which prides itself in giving grants to those in need, and although Chris was supporting himself by working in the kitchen, was forbidden to attend classes there. And Jack Saturn's complaining about the soda selection.

Jack Saturn complains – for pages, mind you – that the used Megadeth CD he bought really has a Cranberries CD inside the case. This sends him into a tailspin. He feels, "destroyed by the mistaken purchase." And he's not kidding.

Jack Saturn takes pages and pages to go buy a fucking umbrella. He lives in Portland, Oregon. It rains there a lot.

On page forty, Jack learns that "the ultimate oppression was to be found in the ponderously tight physical and emotional space underneath an *American* flag." (his emphasis). Yet Jack Saturn, by help of the very same government

and the policies that it makes, is on a long, year-plus jag of unemployment checks, which provides him with assloads of free time to wander about aimlessly. Could it be, Jack, that the very same America you loathe is responsible for the same money boob you're suckling? It's this lack of penetrating thought – or that issues are more complex than Jack paints them – that's severely missing from *WAGNC!* That's infuriating. America's bad! Give me some money, though! End of story.

Jack Saturn makes hard, fast stands against buying his licorice from Plaid Pantry a local, family-owned chain of twenty-or-so stores in Portland, Oregon because he wants to support the littler guys. Such bold moves!

Jack Saturn gets thrown for a massive loop by the fact that when sending postal service package via little stores instead of the USPS directly, they mark up the price. Brutal! (They're called "middlemen," Jack. The object you walked into when the bell went ding is called a "store." That "store," to stay in what they call "business," has to make this thing called "money." If they didn't charge you more for sending packages than the USPS they would be helping you, a stranger, for free. They need to make a "profit." You can avoid this additional fee by standing in line at the post office. This is not rocket science. Dude, you don't have to like a capitalistic society, but at least know its operating principles and how to skirt many of its oppressive effects.)

I also fundamentally disagree with Jack's philosophies in life. I disagree that "some of us are too shy to speak and others of us are bombastic to the point of irritation, but either way, neither of us are really saying anything of worth." If you truly believe that nothing of worth is ever said, you've set up a trap. If nothing said is of any worth, why write a book about nothingness? If conversations aren't of any worth, why would I want to read a book that truly believes that premise, when books are very much dependent on characters who converse with one another? Jaded in your mid-twenties, as Jack proclaims he is, doesn't make for a very edifying, enlightening, or satisfying read.

In closing, I want independent literature to be stronger and more vibrant than what's available through a mega-conglomerate. I want it to be better. Unfortunately, *WAGNC!* is bereft with disappointment after disappointment. I've read more interesting place mats. –Todd (The Recursive Imprint, PO Box 3842, Portland, OR 97208)

Peace Signs:

The Anti-War Movement Illustrated

edited by James Mann, 208 pgs.

This is one of the coolest looking books I've ever seen. It's nine inches wide and thirteen inches tall, and, inside, there are hundreds of full color posters. There's not a whole lot of text, just a few short essays on war and anti-war art and the inevitable civilian casualties that accompany modern warfare. Howard Zinn writes the introduction, and he's as inspirational as ever here. All of the short essays are in English, French, and German, and they're all good, but the essays aren't the reason to buy this book. The posters are the reason. There are 230 anti-war posters collected here. The posters are done by artists from all over the world. The styles vary greatly: some are very rudimentary,

some are amazingly complex. Some are brutal, some are beautiful, a lot of them are both. There are a lot of satire posters, like a Nike swoosh turning into the vapor trail of an airplane, accompanied by the slogan "Don't Do It," or the Burger King logo transformed into Murder King. There's a James Bond-type movie poster featuring Bush, Cheney, and Rice. There's Bush riding an atomic missile like Slim Pickens at the end of *Dr. Strangelove*. There's Bush dressed up like the Gipper, holding a cruise missile in his hand like a football. There's Bush dressed like a clown and like Hitler and like a character from *South Park*. In fact, as you might expect, Bush doesn't come off in a very positive light in these posters – especially in the one where his face and Saddam's face are superimposed onto the bodies of two naked men holding each other's dicks. Accompanying the humor of the posters in the book are the sad: pictures of gutted children with the slogan "No Child Left Behind," or the mushroom cloud exploding under the tag, "Would you like some Freedom Fries with that?" A lot of the posters mix the anger and resentment of the war with black humor, like the one with Uncle Sam tied off and injecting gasoline into his veins, or the IV bags of blood an oil. Of all the posters in here, my favorite is a black and white illustration of the Mad Hatter that looks like it could've come from the original edition of *Alice in Wonderland*. Underneath him, it says, "The Mad Hatter was the first to break the silence – 'We must defy the U.N., to show the world that the U.N. must not be defied.'" It's such a simple poster. Anyone could've made it. You make hundreds of copies of it for really cheap and plaster it all over town and the text is short enough for anyone to read, but it highlights in one simple and original sentence how fucking ridiculous this war is. And that's the beauty of this book. By reading it and looking at the posters, you realize that you can be active against the war without having to go to protests. You can combat the overriding mass media with flyers. Making your own anti-war poster, or even copying one of the ones out of this book, you can get the word out in a powerful and effective way, and you hardly need to break a sweat doing it. –Sean (Edition Olms Zurich, www.edition-olms.com)

The George W. Bush Coloring Book

by Karen A. Ocker, 24 pgs.

Have you ever sat down and colored in a coloring book as an adult? It's pretty relaxing. You feel goofy if someone walks in the room and catches you, but if you have time alone and a bunch of crayons, coloring can be pretty fun. And now here's a coloring book for adults. It's twenty-four pages of illustrations of George W. Bush and his cabinet dressed up like cowboys and cheerleaders and making out with fish and doing other strange things. Each illustration is accompanied by a real quote from Bush, wherein he keeps his streak of saying brilliant things alive, like when he asked the Brazilian president, "Do you have blacks, too?"; or when he addressed the European Union and said, "Africa is a nation that suffers from incredible disease." The quotes help out a lot when you're coloring this book, because, if you ever start feeling like an idiot for being an adult with a crayon, you can just look down at the quote and realize that you're nowhere near the idiot that your president is. –Sean (Garrett County Press, 828 Royal St. #248, New Orleans, LA 70116)

Dope Guns and Fucking Up Your Video Deck, Vol. 1-3, DVD

This is an interesting trip back in time for me. Sometimes 1990 seems like yesterday. Then, I watch this reissue of the Amphetamine Reptile video from 1990, and I realize how much time has passed. Parts of this video, like skits about Reagan-era Republicans and the S & L crisis, seem so dated. Some of the bands are pretty dated, too, playing agonizingly slow and heavy songs that flirt way too much with metal. Checking out the fashions in this video is funny, too. I don't know what a lot of these musicians were thinking back then, with their shaggy, greasy hair and holes in the knees of their jeans and occasional doo-rags or backwards baseball caps or flannel shirts, but apparently, they were thinking exactly what I thought when I dressed that way in 1990. But let's not cast a negative light on this DVD. Sure, a lot of it's dated and goofy, but there are some real gems here, too. Most notable among the gems are four kickass Cows videos ("Cartoon Corral," "Hitting the Wall," "Sugar Torch," and "Mine"). The first two Helmet songs proved to me that early Helmet songs are still standing the test of time. (On a semi-related note, I met the guitarist for Helmet about twelve or thirteen years ago. He seemed like a good guy, but he was struggling to deal with a



really drunk, obnoxious guy who was, unfortunately, me.) This DVD also collects AmRep videos from '92, '94, and the later years of Amphetamine Reptile. The newer videos are slicker, but the camp factor is still pretty high. Later gems include videos by the Melvins, Boss Hog, and Servotron. All told, this DVD has over three hours of videos and skits. You'll spend a lot of time skipping ahead to the next song, but the good parts make this DVD a keeper. And let me just ask: why aren't the Cows huge? –Sean (Amphetamine Reptile, 2200 4th St. NE, Minneapolis, MN 55418)

Movieside Film Festival, DVD

Film festivals are usually hit-miss, everything watchable, yawns equaling screams. Short film fests are more 25% hits but then the hits rock

hard. And bless anyone trying to get the damn things seen by audiences in the first place. Movieside has twenty shorts and all watchable, but its "State of the Union" by the great Bryan Boyce as the only scream, with Bush Jr shooting Teletubbie rabbits by eye lasers. –Speedway Randy (\$12, Rusty Nails, 1400 W Devon Ave #409, Chicago, IL, 60660, www.movieside.com)

On the Road with The Dropkick Murphys, DVD

Working class working h-a-r-d. The ultimate DVD for the DM fan – live St Patrick's Day concert, every single music video, behind the scenes on tour, etc, etc, shot well and sounds great. And they don't just sing it, they do it: playing a Boston Bruins game and on a strike picket line. –Speedway Randy (Epitaph)

Preparty the Movie, DVD

You had to be there. –Speedway Randy (Cartel)

The Real OC, DVD

Neanderthals videotape pounds of silicone flesh when they would rather be fisting each other. –Speedway Randy (Cartel)

Playing Right Field:

A Jew Grows in Greenwich

by George Tabb, 140 pgs.

When I first started reading George Tabb's column in *Maximum Rockroll* about ten years ago, I thought he was great. He's a natural storyteller, and compared to the overabundance of lame *MRR* columnists, Tabb really stood out. To be honest, I picked up *MRR* back in those days just to read the columns by Tabb, Nørb, and Mykel Board. Then *MRR* kicked Nørb out for using the phrase "cadillac of vaginas," Tabb started re-running his columns, and Mykel Board started sending his columns out in email updates, and *MRR* became useless to me. Still, I'd check out the occasional issue, just to see what Tabb was writing about. It seemed like every time I looked at his column, it was either something I'd read before or something about his cute little lapdog. Either way, it would bum me out. For the first few years I read Tabb, I really wanted to have all of his columns in one collection. After seeing that he ran the same column sometimes three times in *MRR*, my desire for a Tabb book waned.

Still, when I saw this book in the review pile, I snatched it up, because all criticism aside, Tabb's still funny as hell and a great storyteller. Reading *Playing Right Field* is an interesting experience. Even though some of the stories in this book ran as columns, they're in a different context here. The stories can build on themselves, and you can see a more complete picture of a young George Tabb. All the stories deal with his childhood in Greenwich, Connecticut, where he had to deal with being in the only Jewish family in a very anti-Semitic community. Tabb and his brothers were constantly in fights (and usually losing) and picked on for being Jewish. To top it off, they had an abusive father and stepmother at home. This collection of stories does a good job of showing the complexities of growing up ostracized, tortured, and abused. Tabb handles the subject with dark humor, hopeful moments, and honest brutality. Reading this collection renewed my respect for Tabb as a writer. He has a natural way of grabbing my attention and holding it. Once I started reading this book, I didn't want to put it down. I literally carried it with me for two days, read it as often as I could – at work, during meals, on the can. Any time I could get a couple of minutes, I stuck my nose back in the book. It's rare that a writer can grab me like that. I really enjoyed this book.

I do have one big complaint, though. While Tabb seems to be a natural writer, he relies too much on being a natural. For some writers, sounding natural is an agonizingly slow process. It requires writing and re-writing and struggling with phrases to make them sound effortless. With Tabb, he seems to just type it out and not worry about it. This is fine for a column, but in a book, it makes for some uneven reading. The tone fluctuates, he repeats himself, and his cheap jokes stick out like shit in a punch bowl. Soft Skull sent us an uncorrected proof reader's copy to review, and, since I've edited books, this copy let me see deeper into Tabb's process than a reviewer should. I could tell just by the simple typing mistakes that Tabb makes that he obviously doesn't revise at all. His stories all look and read like first drafts. It adds a certain rawness to the book. It also disappoints me, because Tabb is a good writer. With more thought, care, and revision, he could be a great writer. If he'd taken the time to read through these stories, to think of them as a collection, and to tighten them up, this would've been one of those classic books that I pushed on all my friends. Instead, it's just a good read. –Sean (Soft Skull, www.softskull.com)

Season of Ash
By Justin Bryant, 212 pgs.
In George Orwell's essay "Shooting an Elephant," Orwell says, "a story always sounds

clear enough at a distance, but the nearer you get to the scene of events the vaguer it becomes." It's good to keep this quote in mind when looking at world politics. It always seems so simple from our armchairs. Like, we can look at the Isreal/Palestine situation and say, "They should divide the country in half, each take their half, and stay the hell away from each other." As you get closer, though, the situation gets so complex. Read Joe Sacco's *Palestine* and you'll realize that there are no easy answers. And here, in the spirit of Orwell and Sacco, Justin Bryant has written a beautifully complex novel about South Africa at the time when apartheid ended and Mandela was elected president. The principle characters in the novel are two cousins, Chanda and Bornwell. They're both young, Black men from the Soweto ghetto. Bornwell has tried to escape the ghetto and politics completely by becoming a game ranger in the northern part of South Africa. Chanda has tried to escape by sitting on a barstool in Soweto. As the political climate heats up, both cousins are drawn into the dangers and politics surrounding them. Adding to the difficulty of the situation are David Themba (a volatile revolutionary) and Alex Stanzis (a White American lost in Soweto). I don't want to give away too much about the story, but the four characters becoming wrapped up in each other's lives, and trouble ensues. Bryant does a good job of keeping the novel tense. The characters of Chanda and Bornwell are so likeable and so real that you really come to care about them, and David will really surprise you in the end. Reading *Season of Ash* is kinda like going to Busch Gardens when you're a little kid: you get to go on a vicarious African safari and ride a roller coaster and try to make sense of it all as you clunk your way up to the top of the coaster, then fly off into a wild ride. –Sean (Emporer's New Clothes, www.enpress.com)

