

Go Metric!

#18 - Spring 2004

**Music, Movies, Comics,
and if you're good,
Humor**



Inside ye shall find the likes of...

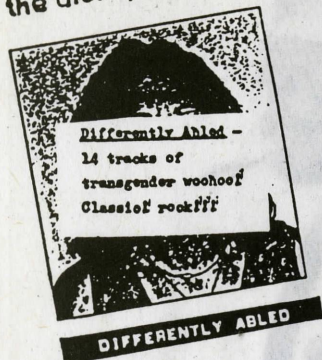
- **The Fevers**
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- **The Exploding Hearts**
- **RocknRoll Adventure Kids**
- **SCTV & Strange Brew**
- **Beach Boys vs. Bikini Kill**
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- **Best Debut Albums of All-Time**

...and enough other crap to deliver 100% of the USDA daily recommended allowance!

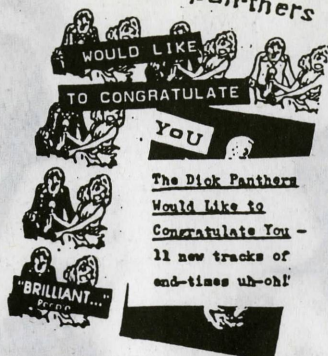
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GO METRIC!

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Following four moves in the past four years, we are planning to stay at the above address for awhile.

A word from our publisher, Mr. Terry Sheldrake...

Terry Sheldrake: What do you want? Did you hear from Topeka about my transfer?

Staff writer: No, sir. I was actually hoping to get a few comments for the next issue's introduction.

TS: Those assholes! They swore I'd be out of here by the end of January.

SW: It's actually shaping up to be a good issue. We have the SCTV articles getting underway, a lot of the regular contributors are back, and Scott Lee came through with a Kurt Bloch interview. It's all about his new band; we're thinking of putting them on the cover.

TS: The deal was simple: I get this zine to switch from photocopying to newsprint and in return I get promoted. This means I won't get the raise either.

SW: Or if you don't want to mention specific articles maybe just a general overview of the zine. You know, something that might entice a potential new reader who's flipping through a copy for the first time, curious to know what we're about.

TS: And you know what that means? No trip to New Zealand this summer! My wife is going to be pissed, and that's all I need.

SW: Perhaps you could plug the fact that we made it into the next volume of *The Zine Yearbook*. They chose the Russ Forster interview from issue #17.

TS: And with all those damn snow days my kids are going to be in school until July, which means I'll never be able to ship them off to camp. Damn it. Why are you here?

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Experiment #18 was written in late '03 and early '04 by the following scholars:

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(Go Metric! is a subsidiary of GenTech Industries)

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Hair dyes, tummy tucks, eye brow lifts...Americans are slavishly devoted to looking young. But what is the use of looking young if you continue to think and act the same? Why look like you're 17 again and yet spend time wondering if you should get the dark mission stain or the light mission stain on that slate-top bookcase you're ordering from L.L. Bean? Why not do for your mental self what you want to do for your physical self? It is time to shed the pounds and the experience, Jack. Hence this installment of...

SCIENCE MARCHES ON!

by Brian Cogan

If there is one thing that we here at *Go Metric* are obsessed with, it's technology. From the UltraLatte 3000 coffee maker that editor Mike Faloon lovingly caresses every morning as if it were made of solid gold as opposed to just gold-plated, to the *Go Metric* Hummer which now comes equipped with a global positioning system and Weapons of Mass Destruction in the glove compartment, the *Go Metric* love affair with technology is well documented. However, this does not mean that there is not room for improvement and innovation.

Far from it! As mandated by the suits in *Go Metric's* corporate offices, we contributors are commanded not only to write an estimated 90,000 words per issue, but are also required to be fluent in quantum physics and string theory. As luck would have it, most of us are ex-scientists or at least know our way around a Bunsen burner and therefore it was a cold winter day when editor Mike Faloon and I decided to build our ultimate invention, the Regressotron 3000.

Now, I know that most *GM* readers, already well-versed in such intricate scientific questions such as how to justify spending \$200 dollars on a limited edition blood red copy of the Misfits' *Walk Among Us* when you just told your girlfriend you couldn't afford to buy her anything for her birthday, so I will not actually need to explain how the Regressotron 3000 was built, or the vast amounts

of cold fusion, dark matter and light beer that went into the construction of said machine. Suffice to say, it took hours and required many bunsen burners and lab coats, but at last the machine is ready.

But ready for what you ask? Well, the Regressotron is custom designed to alter the mental and physical state of a typical poorly aging punk/hipster, and restore them to their youthful countenance! From careful testing we were able to turn a group of test subjects from looking as though they could be in the Vandals, to looking as though Sum 41 would think they were young! And that's just the beginning. Listed below are various benefits the Regressotron 3000 offers.



**\$6,000 Trip to the Norwegian Fjords
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**Adam Sandler movie,
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1. The Regressotron's **Eliminator** function immediately cleanses one's record collection of all Jazz, World Music, Ella Fitzgerald box sets and any other records you purchased because someone told you they were important. Immediately your record collection is reduced to records you actually enjoy listening to!

2. The **Ironyeliminator** function instantly rids your apartment of bowling shirts, books by Dave Eggers and any and all traces of irony. Instead of "going out" and having "fun" you can once again enjoy going out and having fun.

3. The **Naivevigator** function allows you to return to the glory days of simply suspecting that bands like the Pet Shop Boys and Morrissey were "different" than your other new wave heroes! You can once again return to the glory days of sitting in a coffee shop, scribbling bad poetry in your marble notebook and capping it off by writing, "Only Morrissey understands me, and he's *not* gay!"

4. The **CheapDator** function magically returns you to the glory days of little cash and low thresholds for alcohol consumption. Once again one wine cooler will have you and five of your friends drunk and rolling around on the floor laughing.

5. The **Shallowator** function allows women to admit that they are attracted to guys who either "have great cars" (such as I-Roc's) or are really hot! Men can once again comfortably return to being shallow and allow themselves to admit that they only attend Dashboard Confessional shows to pretend to be sensitive to weepy emo girls by knowing all the lyrics when they, the men, are really there to get laid!

6. The **Diet-ator** instantly makes you swear off the Atkins/South Beach diets that are sweeping the nation and instantly allows you to return to being a surly self-righteous vegan who only wears leather because you can convince yourself that the cow probably died of natural causes and had a last wish that you looked really, really cool.

7. The **Do-Something-Destructor** eliminates the nagging suspicion that you should actually be doing things and should be productive! You are now allowed to just sit around, staring into space or just listening to music for hours on end.

8. The **Star-Regressor** instantly returns your favorite celebrities to their previous selves as well. Simply access this function and watch in amazement as Bono's mullet returns and Madonna no longer speaks with an English accent or babbles incessantly about the Kaballah.



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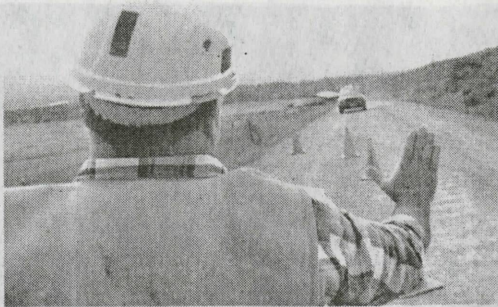


\$0.63 cans of Bud: Yes

9. The **Sexual-Novice-agator** removes all knowledge of how to please a woman from a man's mind. In an instant all knowledge of the female orgasm and cunnilingus are gone and sex once again takes an economical twenty seconds, counting foreplay. For women it makes the act as uncomfortable and awkward as it was during the glory days! You too can once again think "Aren't I supposed to be enjoying this?"

10. The **Part-time Jobinator** function allows you to once again work several crappy jobs in copy shops and magically still have enough money to go the hardcore matinee on Sunday at CB's without worrying about retirement or 401K plans. This function makes you stop worrying about making \$300 a week as a temp and lets you think: "Holy shit! I just made \$300!!! Where the heck am I going to spend all this cash!!!!"

We admit that the Regressotron 3000 is not for everyone. People with heart conditions or a low tolerance for VH-1 specials should consult with a physician before using the Regressotron 3000. The Regressotron 3000 has been known to cause abdominal discomfort, blotchy rashes and explosive diarrhea. Consult with Radio 4, Interpol or other revivalist bands to see if the Regressotron 3000 is right for you.



Diary of a Flagger

An Interview with Filmmaker Barry Smith

Diary of a Flagger depicts a day in the life of a lonely road crew employee. But this flagger is atypical. He writes poetry and keeps a diary. He uses his equipment to limbo and play tennis. He also ponders the big issues and conducts experiments, like investigating what will happen when his sign says "squid" instead of "slow."

It's a wonderfully peculiar movie that I saw at last year's MicroCine Fest in Baltimore. This past December I caught up with one of the film's creators, Barry Smith. (Interview by Mike Faloon)

(Taken from *Diary of a Flagger*)

Flagger: (Making diary entry) 9:00 am. Wednesday, August 14. A new day provides an opportunity to offer a hand. A consistent, repetitive, slowly descending hand. My job is to make a difference.

Go Metric: The first few times I said the title of the movie to someone I called it *Diary of a Flagman*, thinking of the Ozzy Osbourne album (*Diary of a Madman*).

Barry Smith: That's good that you would think Ozzy and think me at the same time. I got one email, someone in Georgia, she was like in charge of flagger training and she kept writing me about my movie *Diary of a Flagger*. We were corresponding and I kept trying to subtly point out, like make it all caps, Glad you're interested in the DIARY... I guess they're using it as part of their training. Just for a little bit of comic relief from a hard day of flagger training.

That's a function of it that I wouldn't have guessed.

I wouldn't either. So I'm big in Georgia, that's cool.

Were you a flagger at one point?

No, but I have had jobs that are very tedious and I think that's the thing that first attracted me to the flagger, just looked at him and thought, I can kind of relate. Stand around, occasionally do something, but it's mostly about suffering through the tedium of the day. This movie started as a column that I wrote. I write a weekly newspaper column, or at the time it was twice a week, which is a brutal amount of deadlines, I find. Your normal person, and I say normal meaning someone who doesn't have a brutal deadline, a lucky person, I guess, would see a flagger and think, Wow, I bet that's boring and then drive on and not give it another thought. But since I was always on deadline it's like, Wow, I bet that's boring, and I wonder if I could get 700 words out of it. So it started as a

column and it's still on my webpage and probably every month or so I get a letter from an actual flagger asking, So, what do you guys make up there in Colorado?

Flagger: They never slow down and they never make eye contact. If it weren't for the fact that they changed lanes, I would think that they didn't see me at all. Perhaps they are all experiencing the phenomenon which Carl Jung called cryptnesia, where something is seen and forgotten, and then later reproduced without consciousness of its source. For all I know, everyone slows down when they get around a corner. Jung understood. He would have made a good flagger, probably one of the best. He would have known what to do when the icy hand of boredom tightens its grip.

I love the way it covers such potentially big topics, like Carl Jung, in such an understated way, no pretense at all.

Thanks. I just like the juxtaposition of obviously this guy who's thinking about Jung and losing his mind, just trying to make it, Maybe I'll bounce the rock on the sign today, maybe today it will be different. I don't know if I achieved it, but in the end I wanted you to have the sense that this was just another day.

I did get that because he refers to a telekinesis experiment he'd done that week before, that what we see in the movie is just the latest attempt to keep boredom at arm's length.

Today invisibility, last week telekinesis, before that it was, you know, UFO invasion, or whatever. I've never discussed this with anyone who's taken the time to notice the subtleties of it.

Thanks, it's a great movie. It's amazing how much you can convey in 10 minutes.

Especially when you have to convey a story in just 10 minutes.

I was shooting for five, but that quickly became a dream. And also trying to give the illusion of tedium without actually making it tedious. He's got to stand there for a little bit longer than you're comfortable watching him but not so long that it's, All right, this is boring.

And the location was well chosen.

We shot that on the road to a local monastery, and I'm not sure they knew exactly what they were in for when they said okay. Would you like to hear a wacky location anecdote?

Absolutely.

Of course, those are great. I think we had a six person crew, counting the actor, and a couple of vehicles—we

had them parked all over the side—and two cameras and a boom mic; it looked like a little movie was being shot, even to the casual observer. But we also had all these cones and everything, and we were real careful not to block the actual traffic to the monastery, which was very few and far between, but occasionally a car would come up and we'd try to scoot aside. And as these people are driving by, and we're waving friendly, and they just gave us the nastiest look, because they just thought, Construction site: I'm pissed off. Which is even funnier because they're headed up to get some sort of enlightenment, or some peace and calm, and they're just like, Fucking flagger. Or maybe they just went to get the monastery cookies, I don't know. It was a wonderful location, people out, doing whatever they do in the alfalfa fields. And since I live in a small town, I was able to get all this... Have you ever watched *Project Green Light* at all?

No.

It was like the HBO show where people win a contest and get to make a big movie. That was our soap opera for awhile while we were working on some films. They got a million dollar budget, which isn't a lot, but considering our budget was \$200, they're making a real movie. And obviously they edit it for maximum drama but I just watched it and thought, Nobody's having fun at all.

Sounds like *Flagger* was a lot of fun to make.

I was just having a lot of fun with my friends. I forgot the point of that...oh yeah, not living in a movie town I could go to the city and say, Can I borrow a bunch of road equipment? Anywhere else in the world they would say no in a rather emphatic manner, next thing you know I'm over with my truck backed up at the sign storage warehouse, loading up with cones and signs and such.

Was it shot in one day?

Yep, one very focused, well-planned day.

I take it that everything was scripted beforehand, so did that help keep things on a tight schedule.

That's the only reason we were able to do it, scripting and a shotlist. We did all our thinking in advance. Two days would have been great, but we only had one so we focused.

Was that the first movie you'd made?

My grandmother gave me an 8mm camera when I was 11, it was already 20 years old. It was the kind you had to wind up, no sound, half way through you had to take the film out and flip it over, it's like a cassette tape almost. Since then I've been doing something on a small, low budget, home movie-like scale. Yeah, I'm proud of it (*Flagger*). And a lot of that, my partners in this movie Arman Boyles, the producer and Tom Wardaszka, the associate producer, it was really the three of us putting it all together. Arman did all the editing, Arman's really a whiz. He worked in Hollywood doing folly recording. It's good to surround yourself with really good people, makes you look good.

Flagger: To exist only in another's subconscious is not

necessarily a horrible fate. As my day wears on, I find the idea of subconscious existence to be somewhat refreshing. In fact, I can see this offering me some real freedom. It means no longer being confined to one spot. It means finally being able to deviate from the standardized hand gestures, which quite frankly have become less than challenging. This expansiveness has come at a good time for me, especially after last week's failed experiment with telekinesis. I am quasi-visible. Or maybe semi-visible, I'm not sure yet. Today I have been set free from the constraints of conventional highway safety. I am a phantom, an apparition, maintaining traffic flow from deep within the unsuspecting cortex of the driver's brain. I stand before you, the future of highway safety. Ladies and gentlemen, it is with deep humility that I accept this Nobel Prize for Outstanding Advancements in Traffic Supervision. If I may say a few... (the Flagger's monologue is cut off as his supervisor pulls up)

One my favorite things is at the end when the truck pulls up behind him and he realizes he's been caught in the act and we never see or hear the person who's driving the truck, so it's like this unseen unspoken judgment that brings him back into reality.

Just like every day. Again, I don't know if that was obvious, but that's what I was thinking. The supervisor pulls up and thinks, There he is doing that again.

The Flagger seems shamed enough to stop dancing around the cones, but not so much that he's going to explain what he was doing.

And nobody is getting out of the car to chew him out. Like, it's not a surprise to find him doing that today, because yesterday he had his pants off. Maybe that's why we put him out in the middle of nowhere, slowing traffic for god only knows what. I know a lot of people tell me they look at flaggers differently now, which was never my intention, but I'll take that. But I always wave to them.

On your website, where you had quotes about your book (*Ode to Mustard*), you had one from Hunter S. Thompson, is that for real?

That's real.

"Good luck shit-eyes."

Isn't that great? Yeah, he blurbed my book for me. He lives in Woody Creek, like a suburb of Aspen, almost. I've had a few occasions to have Hunter moments. That was cool. He was definitely one of my college literary influences, and to have lunch with him, pretty special.

• **And to have him describe your book as, I've got the quote in front of me, "horrible morbid swill." That must have been gratifying.**

And he said, If you don't like that I'll do something else. I was like, Are you kidding? That's perfect.

I've never heard the phrase "shit-eyes" before.

And I'm trying to take it personally. I wanted to get him to blow one (a copy of the book) up for me but that was pushing it. I would never make up a Hunter quote, that's dangerous.

For more: www.irrelativity.com

"Good luck, shit-eyes. I told you not to write this horrible morbid swill. Now you will have to live with it." - Hunter S. Thompson, commenting on Barry Smith's *Ode to Mustard*



The world is increasingly clogged with manufactured joy, from Disney movies to Tide commercials to Britney Spears videos, you can't walk out the front door without stepping into some sort of artificial, plastered-on "this is fun, right?" All of which makes a band like the Rock n Roll Adventure Kids all the more enjoyable, hell, necessary. They radiate a genuine sense of "c'mon, get in on our good time," a leather jackets and cheap beer take on Jonathan Richman. The Rock n Roll Adventure Kids are so energetic, so spastic that it's amazing they've held still long enough to record two records. So we're extremely grateful that singer and guitarist Marcos took the time to field our questions via email. (Interview by Mike Faloon)

Go Metric: No one plays with more energy than the Rock n Roll Adventure Kids—it's infectious. Where does it come from, what fuels it?

Marcos: Rock n Roll is in our soul, that's what fuels it. When I was a kid my dad played the Who and the Stones in his VW, and when we went to this deli, I used to always put "Great Balls of Fire" on the jukebox and dance around the joint. I just love it, man, there is nothing that compares to the energy when we are playing onstage at Gilman and a few hundred kids are going wild! Action, Time, Vision, Baby! Action- that you are doin' something, Time- that you are doing it now, and Vision- that you are rocking cuz you love it! **You've got a great name for your record label, Soul Not Style. It sounds as much like a slogan as a label name. What does the name mean to you—the soapbox is yours.**

The name I guess refers to folks who aren't doing it because they love it. Style isn't all that bad, but soul has to come first. The Briefs have a lotta style, but they have 10 times as much soul and energy to back it up. They rock hardcore! And, just like Reverend Louis Overstreet preached the Gospel with his guitar and



boys, I'd like to think that we are preaching fun and rock n' roll.

Both of your records were recorded live. Was this by coincidence or by design?

It was by coincidence. They just ended up being the best stuff we've recorded. The next album will definitely be a studio one though, but who knows? Anyway, I'm glad those records were live because I think they really capture who the Rock n Roll Adventure Kids really are. We will always be three dorky kids that like to rock!

Also, what are some of your favorite live records?

Let's see, I have an early Devo bootleg that rocks hardcore! Also Modern Lovers - *Precise Modern Lovers Order/Live at the Long Branch*. Also Modern Lovers *Live*, the one that has "I'm a Little Dinosaur" on it. I know there's more. Some dude taped me a Gories houseparty show. Rev. Louis Overstreet's gospel album on Arhoolie Records is live. And I have some live tapes of this rad band from Santa Cruz called Hatemail Express, I love the stories they tell in between their songs!

The new record (see cover above) was two years in the making! What happened? We'd been dying for a new record!

I guess a lot of stuff happened. We did that recording and thought nothing of it for a while. I dubbed some tapes of it for folks who dug it and then it just started really growing on us. We remixed it, and had Seth do some artwork. The record was actually ready about six months before the covers because the printers didn't have it together. Since then, we've done a little session with Mike Lucas from the Phantom Surfers. Our line-up at the time was me on guitars, Oscar on drums and this cool kid named Carlos on Banjo and Sax. After we heard the recordings we saw that the lack of bass wasn't really a good thing, so we

got Oscar back on bass, and got a new drummer Joe. I don't know man, enjoy the record and I'll just say that if you like this one you're really gonna love the next one because it's gonna be only hits. I have like 25 new songs and we are only gonna have the 12 best on it! I can't wait. Actually we have 10 totally ready, one that just got ready and we just have to write one more really good song.

Cool cover art. Is that by Seth from Super 8 Records and Panty Raid (the band)?

Yep. Seth was super nice to do it for us and do such a great job. He did the design in black and white and then I added the colors, I like stuff bright. I like to think that Fred Schneider of the B-52's would approve.

Birds! You've got birds all over the place—on the cover, on your t-shirts, in the song titles ("Cock a Doodle Doo," "Birdy"), even between songs (a snippet of "Close to You" by the Carpenters)...

"Bringing in the Feasantry"! I guess we just love chickens. There have been so many great chicken songs, and I guess we are just out to prove that there will be many more! If you think that's a lot of chickens, lemme tell you some song titles for the new album! How about "Fried Chicken," "Crawdaddy Chicken," (a sorta jackalope kinda creature) and "Pirate Chicken"!

The new record has the longest thank you list ever. In hindsight, is there anyone you forgot?

Yeah, the Scientists, the Lost Sounds, Adam Ant, the Damned, and Steppenwolf! They have been a big spiritual help, especially Steppenwolf! "Get your motor runnin', head out on the highway, looking for adventure! And whatever comes our way!!!" Words to live by! Wolfpack baby!

I know you guys have played out of town. I'm curious about your shows up in Seattle; you've played with bands like the Primate 5 and Zombie IV!

Those shows were rad; once at the Crocodile they took away my fake ID so I had to wait outside 'till we played. I think I got drunk, played a riot of a show, then the Zombies snuck me back in, gave me a zombie mask and I went onstage and sang with them. The Primate 5, and Zombies, have been rad to play with, and also Zack put back together the Statics to play a show with us too! That was a total highlight. Super nice guys. We played the Primate 5's last show and Oscar got too wasted to play, poor guy? But the Primates and Zombies rocked it hardcore!

You list a bunch of different mix tapes for sale.

What are some of the bands on those mixes?

Let's see, the dance tape has Devo, Cramps, Jewws, Brentwoods, Memphis Slim, some Clifton Chenier Zydeco, X-Ray Spex and some other good stuff. The punk tape has the Victims, Le Shok, Baseball Furies, Gun Club, Cramps, Coachwhips, Drags, Wire, Jam, Teengenerate, Hives, X and some other stuff. And the Mystery Tape is a mystery.

What's up with the next record? (When, which label, live/studio, etc.) In one of the band photos in the new record you guys are posing with a keyboard. Can we expect different sounds ahead?

The next record will hopefully be recorded before the new year. We might go out to Texas to do it with Tim

Kerr, or we might do it in Sacramento with the guitarist from the FM Knives. It's not gonna be SPAM (Records) cuz I think they are going under. We can promote our stuff but it would be nice if we could get a little help from a label. We just got a used mini-motor home so we can be out on the road for long periods of time. Mordam distro would definitely be a plus. We are gonna make cds as well as vinyl because most kids just have cd players. Not every town has the Berkeley Swap Meet to find good turntables at. No keyboards on the next record and probably not for a while. I did get some cool gadgets that are gonna be on the next one. This thing called a vibraslap that sounds like a rattlesnake, and I picked up a few cowbells too. This music store in Berkeley just went out of business and good riddance too cuz the guys were lame.

How about touring on this side of the country?

When the next record comes out, we want to tour the whole US and other countries too. We just got a used mini motor home that sleeps five!

What's your favorite Kinks song and/or album?

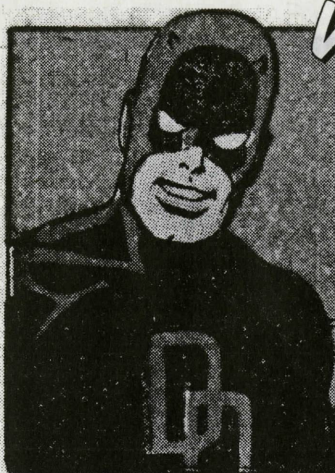
"Set Me Free" I love that song, man, I got it on a 7". If it weren't for the Kinks and the Sonics, well, punk rock still would have been invented, but I'd like to think they had some part in it. The first album is the only lp of theirs that I got. It's old, and it still sounds great!

Anything else you want to add?

We are making an Adventure Zine chalked full of adventure stories, and we would love to get submissions from anyone out there that has a cool story, so if ya got one send it to us at rocknrolladventurekids@hotmail.com. Also we'd love to play your town so write us if ya want us to come! The new album, and tour will be around January of the new year. Bye!

**ROCK n ROLL
ADVENTURE
KIDS**





VELMA DINKLEY SAYS: LET'S LEVEL DAREDEVIL

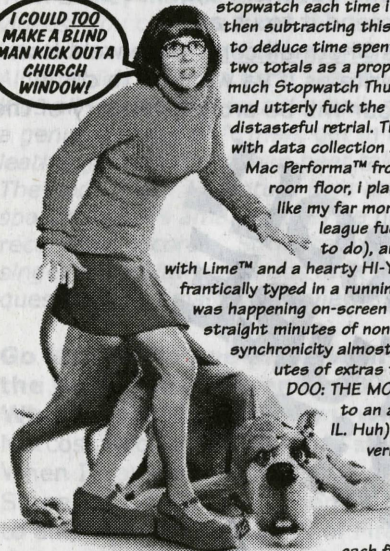


With your
host,
Smilin'
Rev. Norb
(not shown)

Greetings, Culture Gang!

Let's face it, anything worth doing is worth doing twice, especially when we speak of particularly captivating hot-button activities like successfully committing suicide or losing one's virginity! And anything worth doing twice is almost invariably worth doing twice **SIMULTANEOUSLY**, because who's got time to do one thing once twice in a row when we can just do the one thing twice once in a row? I mean, sure, I could drink one beer, eat one SweetTart™ or have sex with one partner at a time IF I HAD TO, but THAT is so **Strictly-From-20th-Centuryville** it barely pays to try! Therefore, in lieu of writing a feeble Compare/Contrast piece on 2003's DAREDEVIL (boo!) and SCOOBY-DOO (yaaay!) movies based on ideas I slowly gleaned from watching the movies sequentially, I decided to pit these flicks against each other far more directly, by watching both of them at the same time! Renting a DVD copy of DAREDEVIL and a VHS copy of SCOOBY-DOO THE MOVIE, I hooked my DVD player up to one 25" TV and my VHS to another TV of identical dimension located just to the right of the first one, then let both cinematic masterpieces fly. My original idea for this experiment was to connect sensitive scientific probes to my retinas and measure how long I spent looking at each movie, but the sensitive scientifically probing retina machine had one of those weird plugs, and I had two TVs, a VCR and a DVD player connected to the goddamned outlet already, so I scrapped that notion. My backup plan involved simply hitting a

I COULD TOO
MAKE A BLIND
MAN KICK OUT A
CHURCH
WINDOW!

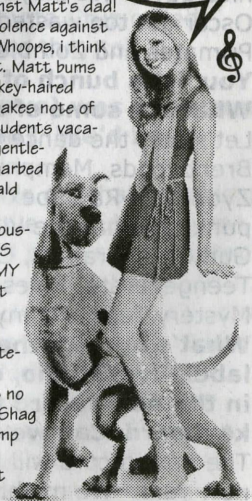


stopwatch each time I found myself looking at Movie X, then subtracting this figure from the total running time to deduce time spent on Movie Y, then expressing the two totals as a proportion, but I found it does not take much Stopwatch Thumb Errancy in the dark to fatally and utterly fuck the results up, resulting in motion for a distasteful retrial. Thus, I eventually, at need, did away with data collection altogether -- and, hauling my musty Mac Performa™ from the bedroom and onto the living room floor, I placed the keyboard in my lap (much like my far more well-funded scientist bastard colleague fucks who own laptops would be able to do), and, with a guzzle of new Diet Coke™ with Lime™ and a hearty HI-YO SILVER, I started the movies and frantically typed in a running narrative of whatever it was that was happening on-screen at the time, to the tune of 102 straight minutes of non-stop, real-time commentary (in a synchronicity almost too good to be believed, the 16 minutes of extras tacked onto the end of the SCOOBY-DOO: THE MOVIE videotape pads its running time to an almost identical length as DAREDEVIL. Huh). I did go back in and clean up the verbatim text a tad, but this is pretty much what I wrote, as it happened. The interested reader is welcome to isolate and tally the amounts of verbiage expended on behalf of each film; me, I already lived the dream.

STARTING POSITION: DVD (left-hand set) picture frozen in mid-downward-spiral on a huge 3-D 20th Century Fox™ logo; right-hand VHS picture paused on a lower-right hand view of a huge 3-D Warner Brothers™ logo, in the middle of its own spiral into place in a wispy-clouded sky. Right thumb and left thumb smite both PLAY buttons in sweet harmony. Scooby takes a bite of the WB™ logo, and we're off! Rooby-Dooby-Dool To the Wow-O™ toy factory! The Luna Ghost has given Daphne a wedgie! Her knotted panties are suddenly rendered irrelevant! **Velma! Velma! Velma!** Velma is **UNBELIEVABLY** beautiful! I knew she was the hot one! She speaks deathless commands into Fred's walkie-talkie! Fred's pants and ascot remain colorfully unflappable in the encroaching presence of the Luna Ghost! Scooby! Like, why are you acting so strangely? **LIKE, THERE'S A GHOST RIGHT BEHIND YOU, SHAGGY!** The Luna Ghost shoots its fearsome flame! Brandishes its claws! Blows flame at a barrel-clad Scooby! A rat runs thru a puddle on a dark and grim New York street! The city belches up foul steam from some vent! The rat squeaks! Like, who cares? The cackling of the Luna Ghost insures we are aware of his fearsome presence! Rold on, Raggy! Scooby grabs the grappling hook and swings, amok, into the Luna Ghost! Daphne is rescued, her head lodged directly post-rescue next to Scooby's dog-butt! Shaggy suggests like grabbing another skateboard and doing it again! Pamela Anderson shows up. Who cares? We want Velma, not this gross silicon-based lifeform! Daredevil falls thru the roof of a church. Pamela Anderson looks like Scooby's ass next to Velma! Daredevil looks like he's taken quite the lickin'. The Luna Ghost is Smithers, the creepy janitor! He is a self-professed loverboy of George Clooneyan proportions! Daredevil's ancillary opening credits are still flashing over his ass-

whipped ass. They are subtitled in braille. I fail to yield to the compulsion to touch the screen. The priest unmasks ol' Hornhead, and he goes into a flashback of appropriately multi-racial neighborhood toughs shoving him around. His prizefighter dad has...my god, Velma is hot! Yeah, anyway, his dad has passed out, watching boxer "Gene Colan" (note: named after longtime DD comic book artist; the Post-It™ note reading "Throw The Comic Book Geeks a Bone" has obviously not been overlooked) fight on TV. Strife besets the associates of Mystery, Inc.! But Velma has well-packed that trademark orange turtle-neck, this is certain! Fred still looks groovy in blue pants and red ascot. Shaggy is resplendently morose in his green Y-neck. Daphne is, I suppose, marginally doable, but obviously the #2 dog in a two dog race, neither of which dog is Scooby. Switch to fumes wafting up from the Mystery Machine's sunroof. "Talk about toasted!" Wait! Belay the reefer inferences! It's just Shag and Scoob cooking up chocolate-covered eggplant burgers! Young Matt is running, and...whoops, a regrettable forklift accident has just bashed open drums of horrible toxic waste! Now he's in the hospital with bandaged eyes, breathing funny! Fred purposefully strides through an airport in an appropriately gay black leathery jacket. Hey, it's Velma! Get that coat off, woman, there's world-class sweater meat to be displayed in this cinematic delicatessen! Girl, you got one HAIL of a pair of Jinkies on ya! Fred hawks his new book, Fred on Fred. Matt Murdock hears bonging noises of some sort. Hey, Daphne's got cool purple sunglasses! They match her headband, and lead me to wonder what she'd look like in purple sunglasses, matching headband, white gogo boots, and nothing else. Better than Pamela Anderson and/or Scooby's ass, one supposes. For all I know, Pamela Anderson is just Smithers the creepy janitor anyway! Battlin' Jack Murdock or whatever he's called these days hits a guy in the ring. Young Matt clocks an offensively squeaky punching bag with his textbook. He does not do a good enough job, because it's still squeaking, which is now even bothering me, and I'm barely blind. Matt does a headstand upside down on the edge of a rooftop! Scooby is in drag! Matt slides down a pipe to the ground! Shaggy is lovestruck, and not with Scoob! Haven't seen a perm like that in -- hey, it's Stan Lee, crossing the street! Watch out, Stan! Good thing that blind kid was there to save you from the follies of your own carelessness! Look, it's the bullies again, picking on the blind kid! Oof, he's going all red-tipped-cane-ninja on their oppressive delinquent asses! Like, Shag is all into this blonde crimping iron girl! The Fixer tells Murdock to take a dive! Scoob is barking on the planet! Lady, get your cat away! Get up, Mr. Murdock, get up! Wait, stay down, what am I saying? Haven't you seen Pulp Fiction? Jeez, stop hitting John Romita! I know he had a tough row to hoe, having to replace Ditko on Spider-Man, but that's no reason to KO him when the Fixer or whatever he's called has all that money on him! Where's this big fight being held, anyway? The basement of the Hell's Kitchen YFV? Matt Murdock wears his dad's red satin Satan robe in triumph! Boy, I foresee no possible forthcoming problems for them! Wait, now there's violence directed against Matt's dad! How cunning and unexpected! Who would've ever seen violence against the prizefighter who refused to throw a fight coming? Whoops, I think they killed him. His assailant drops a rose on his chest. Matt bums out. A strangely acting college student throws her spikey-haired boyfriend twenty feet thru the air. Mr. Mondavarius makes note of the strange behavior and expresses concern for the students vacationing on Spooky Island! Velma converses with a blue gentleman in a tribal skull-dude costume. Now other crazily garbed pseudo-natives rush out and dance spiritedly! Some bald guy with a tattoo on his head introduces his masked Mexican wrestler compadre, whilst Velma observes curiously next to a guy in a 3/4 sleeve Led Zeppelin jersey. **HE'S NOT RIGHT FOR YOU, MA'AM!!! "WHOLE LOTTA LOVE" MY ASS!** Matt Murdock does some blind guy stuff in a suit while very bad nu-metal plays. He arrives at the courthouse, and begins grilling some quasi-Mafioso accused rapist louse (in the legalistic sense, not in the chocolate-covered eggplant burger sense). Matt Murdock's dark glasses are actually tinted red. Nice touch. I mean, it's no Fred's ascot, but I'll take what I can get at this point. Shag attempts to play the Crane Game, and explains to Crimp Girl that one doesn't need to know what "voulez vous coucher avec moi" means to love that song! Matt's got work to do! He decks himself out in a suit of dark

WHO-WHO-WHO
AM I? I'M AN
ALPHA DELTA PII!





dives off a skyscraper, successfully, while Daphne converses with a chicken-bleeding dude with dreadlocks. Meanwhile, the acquitted rapist louse does shots at a smoky bar full of many pool players. Daphne is pissed. She'll figure out this mystery herself JUSTICE! Gunfire! DD whaps a bunch of guys in the face, does a somersault, kicks people from atop the pool table. Guns fire! DD gets whapped on with a pool cue! He does another somersault! That'll teach you! A third somersault! He whaps people with his billy club! He sees bullets coming with his creepy radar sense! Sparks fly for whatever reason plausible! DD swings around on the ceiling fan! Last time I did that I almost got banned from the club we were playing at! More guns and kicking! Shaggy is in disbelieve. HE ain't going in that spooky castle! Who lit the pool table on fire? The louse falls, possibly into the same puddle the rat was walking by at the beginning of the movie. Not sure. Hell's Kitchen may have more than one puddle. Shaggy makes mention

YIPE!

**LIKE, IT'S
M ANDERSON
WITHOUT
MAKEUP,
SCOOB!**

of substantially more skin pigmentation than his comics incarnation. In flashback, Scraggy Doo takes a piss on Daphne. Fred told him: NO URINATING ON DAPHNE! Scraggy demands to be named unquestioned leader, or else! He is left on the side of the road six miles from Yucca Flats, and the van zooms onward. The Kingpin requests the services of Bullseye, as the tattooed-head guy plays some lovely cocktail piano. Bullseye, ensconced at the pub, throws a great number of bullseyes with one hand whilst consuming a pint (presumably Guinness™) with the other; then dons his badass Irish assassin leather jacket after receiving the summons from the Kingpin. The fat old guy he has been wagering with speaks derisively of Bullseye's ethnic heritage. Velma loses her glasses, but Bullseye pulls out a bunch of paper clips. The demon gives

**SHAGGY! STOP
FARTING BY THIS
POOL TABLE!**

9

known to. Shag steals the guard's costume, then re-coldcocks him in time to the musical Good moves, Shag! Velma appears to be singing "The Name Game" by Shirley Ellis to the chant of the natives and brainwashed students! Surely my one true soulmate is now



**SILIPKNOT?
I FUCKED
'EM! HAAYO!**

revealed! Suddenly, the jig is up! Fred attempts to convince the suddenly-silent throng staring at him that they should keep dancing! Perhaps the Electric Slide? Matt views Elektra in the rain at the funeral. She has a rather large umbrella. Scooby, prior to his sacrifice, is being treated like royalty, having no idea what-all a "sacrifice" entails. Elektra tells her driver to "drive." He begins to drive. The Kingpin smirks, and lowers his fat ass of color into another limo. Hey, a red rose on Elektra's dad's grave! What the fuck, does this guy have shares in FTD™ or something? Kevin Smith works in a police lab, as Scooby's spirit head goes flyin' around the pit o' sacrifice. Mondavarious, apparently wearing the Demon Ritus around his neck, is sucking all the swirling ectoplasmic what-not into the ancient device. **NOBODY ABSORBS SHAGGY'S PAL!** Shaggy disrupts the ceremony,

swinging around on some ritual-aiding contraption or another. Scooby's spirit head goes careening wildly throughout the cave, eventually landing back in his body. "Kowabunga!" Wait! Mondavarious is a robot??? WAIT, A ROBOT MANNED...er...OPERATED by...**SCRAPPY-DOO????** He's gone all megalomaniacal on everybody's asses! He exits his damaged robot Mondavarious body, and begins to bulk up crazily! He has brought them there to witness his moment of triumph! All he needs to complete his plan is...**SCOOBY DOO!** Scooby gulps: "Ron't roo mean...Melvin Doo?" He points to a nearby bystander, presumably the "Melvin Doo" in question! The newly ferocious and huge Scrappy Doo begins to pursue Scooby! Shag states for the record the scene's total ungrooviness! The Mexican wrestler assaults Daphne! Fred whips chains around like a chain-whipping nut! Daphne and the wrestler execute a fearsome series of jumps, kicks, body blocks, and flying elbow smashes! Scooby bites Scrappy in the nose! Scrappy sneezes, covering Scoob in hideous green ectoplasm! Daphne smashes a door on the wrestler's head! Scrappy calls Shaggy a lousy beatnik! Crimp Girl burps out the evil green smog at Shaggy! Shaggy smiles and says "like wow!" The wrestler has Daphne in Lex Lugar's old "torture rack" hold! Oh, no! That's a submission hold! Didn't he beat Ric Flair that way? But Daphne bites his thumb! He lets go, and she makes with an incredible spinning karate kick, then bashes him down the portal...smack into the cauldron of spirit heads! Daredevil and Elektra fight with Billy Clubs and sais in the midst of some hapless city dweller's rooftop clothesline! Scrappy makes a variety of horrible threats! Elektra does a somersault, then stabs DD thru the shoulder, leaving a trail of bloody guck as he slides down the wall! DD is unmasked! Hey, it's her boyfriend! She's sorry! Why? It was only Ben Affleck! Oh, crap, now Bullseye is whistling for a piece of the action! The real Mondavarious is unearthed, hideously dusty and unshaven! Led Zeppelin guy almost gets a kiss out of Velma. She admits he's fogging up her glasses, then punches him in the shoulder. Bullseye whips one of Elektra's swords thru her hand. She removes it. One assumes that 1. it will, in fact, hurt, and 2. it will, in fact, leave a mark. Bullseye and Elektra punch and spin and kick each other. Bullseye turns a cartwheel. Good. I was sick of somersaults. Bullseye cuts Elektra's throat with the only card he needs, the Ace of Spades. The Ace of Spades! Daredevil rolls around feebly, shouts "NO! NO!", then Bullseye runs Elektra thru with her own little sword. He tosses a red rose down on her dying body. Pfft, that is so seventy minutes ago. Finally, Shag and Scoob get to take advantage of the all-you-can-eat Spooky Island grub-out, which was what was used to lure them there in the first place. Cops bust onto the roof where DD holds Elektra's dead body. Steam jets from Scooby's ears. Those ARE hot peppers! Scooby bashes himself in the face repeatedly with a metal serving tray! Shaggy coats Scooby's four-foot-long tongue with soothing ketchup, then they both down another full jar of hot peppers. Daredevil lies, wounded, in the church. I think this is where I came in. Enter Bullseye, exit Priest. Bullseye nails DD from all the way down the aisle with a collection plate. DD rolls around choking for a while Scooby's credits roll upscreen to rather yucky rap. Daredevil has had enough shit, and runs towards Bullseye in a comically stiff posture not unlike what Batman & Robin looked like running thru the movie set city in 1966,

**IS THIS
AN ASCOT IN MY
PANTS OR AM I
JUST GLAD TO
SEE ME?**

Where the hell is his SWAT team?! Throwing and flinging of various items, thwarted by some oddly magnetic device of DD's! Bullseye kicks out a stained glass window and flings the pieces at DD! Daredevil gamely somersaults away from each and every one of them! Obviously he's seen the Spider-Man movie, and knows if the move works for pumpkin bombs, it should work for stained glass shards! Bullseye threatens DD with a candelabra! He bongs pipes with it! DD holds his ears! The cacophony is horrible, but that's mostly the rap over Scooby's end credits. Bullseye discloses the Kingpin's true identity! I decide the rap is okay! As a result, Bullseye gets shot thru the hands, and extends them in untold sorrow, Christ-like! Then DD pitches him thru another stained glass window, and down onto the windshield of a cop car! "Bulls-eye!" quoth the Man In Red! The priest wishes him luck. The Kingpin smokes a stogie, and sends his flunkies home for the night. It's a Hell's Kitchen thing. They wouldn't understand. He wants Daredevil in the metaphorical ring, dammit! The WB™ logo is back on the screen, but this time Scooby fails to bite it. The Kingpin disrobes while Outkast or someone sit in parked cars and rap at a drive-in. Kingpin flings DD into a plate glass window! He administers a



**YOU WERE
TOO CHECKING
OUT VELMA'S
CANS!**

**CHRIST,
WOMANI I'M
FUCKING
BLIND!**

the Kingpin relentlessly, then kick him very hard in both knees! The Kingpin screams! His knees! His beautiful knees! There is more rapping, and reported thieving of Scooby Snacks. Daredevil takes a mighty whack at Kingpin, but spares his life! Kingpin does not understand! Daredevil says that Daredevil is not the bad guy! In this case, who stole the damn Scooby Snacks? Kingpin and Daredevil argue about whom the cops are coming for. It appears to be the Kingpin, 'cause he's all crying and carrying on and such. Warner Bros.™ Pictures presents an alternate intro to Scooby-Doo The Movie™, featuring the original recipe animated characters and some kinda rastafarian Scooby-rap theme! An unmasked Daredevil tosses a rose off a rooftop in honor of his father! What for? His dad already got one! Matt and Foggy muse over the reality of alligators in the New York sewer systems. An animated Luna Ghost cackles ferociously above the heads of the Mystery, Inc. gang! Fade to black! Deleted scenes! Hey, it's Velma meeting Fred in the airport again! Foggy sniffs his coffee derisively! Fred's shown at a tour stop for his Fred On Fred book! Fred demonstrates how he uncovered the secret of the Black Knight by the cunning detection of a very large zipper! His presentation is met with derision by mealy-mouthed upstart youths! Ben Ulrich sits intently at his keyboard! Velma is in group therapy! Will Ben Ulrich spill the beans on hornhead's identity? No! He hits "delete"

**INAPPROPRIATE
COMMENT!
UNHI UNHI
INAPPROPRIATE
COMMENT! UNHI
UNHI**



instead! A fat guy in Group testifies to Daphne's hotness. Peasant! Canst thou not see the creature of divine sensuality testifying before ye?! Ulrich tells a masked Murdock "go get 'em, Matt." DD nods knowingly, then jumps off another very tall building (successfully). End credits, and more bad nu-metal! Daphne's strength is her resolve! She kicks a board in half! She summons her chi! Karate dudes kick and twirl! Daphne does a vast array of backflips and lands in a tree! The karate dudes comment on her innate hopelessness by means of clever subtitles! Bullseye lays in a hospital bed! In a full body cast, he is tormented by a flying domestic insect! With a swoosh and a thud, he manages to nail the offending critter by virtue of a stray hypodermic needle! Velma converses with Led Zeppelin Guy. STOP MAKING TIME WITH MY HONEY-TO-BE, BEAVIS! More horrible music and credits, Velma is sitting at the bar with creep-ass! She plops down on the piano that Tattoo-head man is playing! She busts into a sultrily dorky version of "Can't Take My Eyes Off Of You" by Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons! I am smitten and transfixed! She thrusts her hips and butt back and forth seductively in time with the "da DUT! Dah-DUT! Dah-dut-DUT-dut" parts! I am beside myself with lust and desire! I am post-agog! She flops upon the piano, spent! Hold that pose, woman, I left my lotion in the other room! Mondavarious asks if she knows her drink was non-alcoholic! Cut to Possessed Velma in bikini top and hot pants, leading a girls locker room of some sort in sexy calisthenics! Holy Riff Randell territory! My heart goes BOOM, but my mouth goes A BLUG BLUG LUBKAJDFLKJOFIEUR! Actually, she was sexier unpossessed! What the fuck, demons don't like wearing bangs? Daredevil's crappy music and credits continue unabated! The demon extracts Daphne's spirit thingie! The masked wrestler chuckles knowingly! The demon emerges from the pit, vilely caressing Daphne's supple form! She opens her mouth fellatio-wide, and the demon's spirit essence rushes on in, like backwards soul vomit! Possessed Daphne speaks in the guttural tongue of the evil ones! Shaggy, watching from afar, whimpers for Scooby! Daredevil returns to the main menu! At least that fucking soundtrack music is over! Trapped, Scooby feigns a heart attack. His captor informs him that if it didn't work the first eight times, it's not going to work this time. Fade to black. **ANT RACES AND END.**

WON by SCOOBY-DOO: THE MOVIE

BEST ACTOR (Shaggy)
HOTTEST BABE (Velma)
BEST FIGHT SCENE (Daphne v. Mexican Wrestler)
BEST CGI (Scooby)
COOLEST VILLAIN (Luna Ghost)
BEST COSTUMES
BEST SCRIPT

WON by DAREDEVIL MOST SOMERSAULTS

...Your witness,
Mr. Murdock.

**I HAD A
HUNCH
YOU'D COME
ACROSS,
NATURE
BOY!**

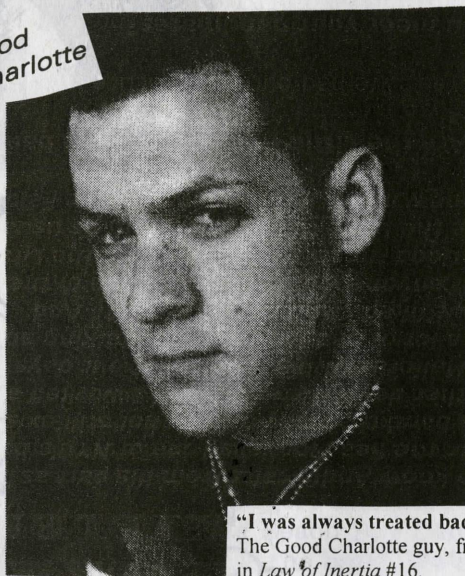
END

WHY IT'S REALLY OKAY THAT GOOD CHARLOTTE OPENED UP THE NFL SEASON

by John Bowie

Punk rock purists will always find something to get their plaid, zippered knickers in a twist about. Whether it's the pre-distressed Ramones shirts at Urban Outfitters or Tom DeLonge's really nice house, the kids fear that "punk rock" is forever being threatened by "people who exploit the genre for antithetical gains." That's why I wasn't shocked that the purists were in an uproar about Good Charlotte playing a short set on the Washington Mall (on a bill that included Britney Spears and Aerosmith) as part of the "NFL Kickoff Live Sponsored by Pepsi Vanilla: A Tribute to Freedom" Concert in front of a specially

Good
Charlotte



"I was always treated badly by jocks."
The Good Charlotte guy, from an interview
in *Law of Inertia* #16.

invited crowd of 25,000 troops -- if you missed it, the whole event was broadcast on the American Armed Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS). Relax, Dr. Chomsky, punk rock hasn't been compromised. The GC boys (I call them that) know what they're doing. Here are some reasons why:

1 - EYE ON THE TATTERED, PRE-DISTRESSED BALL
Well, this is the most obvious one. The NFL season opened with a Redskins-Jets Game. What's more punk rock than the cities where the Ramones and Minor Threat hail from? How about the cities where Youth of Today and Bad Brains came from, fucko?

2- ROCK THE MALL – My God, man, the Dead Kennedys would've sold Jello's nut to play a show on the DC mall in front of the Capital building! And then they would've sued Jello for only selling one nut! But, on a lighter note, Good Charlotte's fans know where the band stands: check out this from GCChick860, a very frequent

poster on the band's website: "Well, I personally think President Bush is a great President, yeah he has made some bad decisions, but haven't they all...Everyone has the right to have their opinions, but if you are looked up to like GC is and some of the other celebs...I think you should not state your opinion so loudly..." PUNK ROCK!!! G.G. Allin could not have said it better. Had he finished middle school. And done maybe a tad less heroin.

3- WE'RE ALL BROTHERS – isn't it great that Good Charlotte played a show for football players – the very same football players who are known for their open mindedness and probably would've been best chums with the GC boys in high school, or in 4H?

4- GC BOYS FOR OUR BOYS – well, maybe this is the most obvious one. Good Charlotte, in supporting our troops and also 'freedom' are playing their part in protecting America from what was sure to be a quick and brutal invasion by possibly dozens of Iraqi hordes and a missile that could have gone straight from Baghdad to a suburb of Baghdad!

Better
Charlotte



Charlotte Brontë

5- SHOW ME THE MONEY- I know it seems weird that Pepsi Vanilla was sponsoring the event. But they're not sole sponsors – that would be a decidedly unpunk monopoly. Others include The New York Stock Exchange, Reebok and Coors Light.

6- GC WEAR TRUCKER HATS – you know, those hats that truckers wear for real, but us kids wear as a joke, because we're not really people who have to work exhausting, demeaning jobs for money? I just think that's hysterical.

See? Punk rock is safe and sound. Now, if you'll excuse me, there's an *American Wedding* soundtrack with my name on it . . .



It's Another... Battle of the Bands!

By Maddy Tight Pants

Okay everyone! Pull up a chair and grab a lollipop or two. It's time for another Battle of the Bands! This time the contenders are two fierce rivals, each with their own gang of thugs cheering them on from the sidelines! Yes, it's a battle like no other—a battle between Bikini Kill and the Beach Boys! Which side will emerge victorious? Only a point-by-point battle will tell!

BAND THEME!

①

Band Theme! Which band has a better gimmick? Let's look at the facts. Bikini Kill was a riot grrrl band that addressed important issues like gender roles, rape and eating disorders. The Beach Boys were a band that addressed important issues like girls and surfing. Ah, the age-old debate! Feminism or surfing? I cannot decide! However, in terms of sheer ridiculousness, the Beach Boys edge an inch ahead, for only one member of the band could surf, and lead singer Brian Wilson is terrified of water! Seriously! One point Team Surf!

BAND NAME!

②

Band Name! This one's easy. Bikini Kill is such a good name! And the Beach Boys, is, let's admit it, a REALLY lame name. Although I'd rather kill thongs than bikinis (In fact, my roommate has a book with a photo of a really cute knit bikini with a big heart on each breast—and I really want one!), I respect those who feel differently. (And Thong Kill just sounds stupid.) Score one for the anti-swimsuit brigade!

GENERAL WEIRDNESS!

Catch a wave!

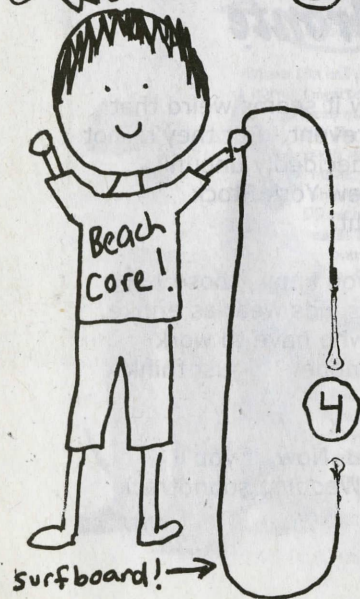
③

General Weirdness! Really, there's nothing that weird about Bikini Kill. And in this competition, that's a problem. The Beach Boys win this category easily, with countless bizarre tales. Here's one: When Brian Wilson was a child, his dad Murray returned home from work one day, tired and angry. He took the newspaper and put it down on the kitchen floor. Then, he ordered Brian to defecate on it while the family watched. Brian, naturally upset, complied to avoid further punishment. (Although this begs the question: what could be worse than being forced to shit in the kitchen while your family watches?) When he was done, his dad made him stare at it for a long time, and then made him clean it up. Brian sez, "I felt beaten, soiled, humiliated." Obviously!

MISTAKES!

OH, THE HORROR!

Mistakes! Which band had the lowest low point? Bikini Kill's would have to be that really annoying song where Kathleen Hanna recites a bad review of one of their shows. I prefer my Valley Girl vocals sung, not said! The Beach Boys low point? Kokomo. One point camp riot grrrl!



The Battle Rages On!

I Pooped on the Kitchen Floor!

Yeah? I write "Slut" on my chest!

CELEBRITY MEETINGS!

Celebrity Meetings! What happens when these two bands meet someone more famous than themselves? First up: Ms. Hanna. When she ran into Courtney Love backstage at Lollapalooza in 1995, Kathleen got punched, and assault charges were filed! Love later claimed that Kathleen whispered "Where's the baby? In a closet with an IV?" and said she "just snapped." Love ended up pleading guilty and having to take anger management classes. Pretty good story, yes? Next up: Mr. Wilson! When he met Elvis in the summer of '69 (seriously!), Brian wanted to impress him with some karate moves, having

heard that Elvis was an expert. So, instead of shaking hands, Brian "delivered a series of pulled punches and chops," according to a Brian Wilson web-site. And then Elvis, not happy with the greeting, said, "Hey man, don't do that!" Brian calmed down and talked for awhile, but then suddenly jumped up and delivered a few karate kicks in Elvis' direction! Elvis said, "I told you not to do that," and walked out of the room. Okay, this one's easy! Getting beat-up by a junkie versus trying to karate chop Elvis? Brian wins, hands down!

LEAD SINGER!

Lead Singer! This is tough! We've got Kathleen Hanna, known for being an ex-stripper, writing "slut" on her stomach, taking off her shirt during shows, and talking like a Valley Girl—all the while, let's admit it, looking really, really cute! Then there's Brian Wilson, known for spending seven straight years in bed while obsessively listening to "Rhapsody in Blue," giving birth to two-thirds of Wilson Phillips, and weighing up to 340 pounds! In both cases, the lead singers attracted much, much more attention than the rest of the band, leading Beach Boy Dennis Wilson to remark, "Brian Wilson is the Beach Boys. He is the band. We're his fucking messengers. He is all of it. Period. We're nothing. He's everything." What could possibly decide this battle? I declare this a tie!

The so very strange cover of Pet Sounds!

RECORD COVER ART!

Record Cover Art! Inside of wasting time with minor details, like whose music is better, let's tackle the main issue—which band has the best cover art? First up, Bikini Kill. Although none of their record covers are lame, none of them are that great, either. The best of the bunch would have to be the cover for the "Anti-Pleasure Dissertation" seven-inch, featuring fake styrofoam heads and wigs for each band member. Not bad! Not bad! Next up, Beach Boys. Their best album cover? Pet Sounds, of course! The Beach Boys feeding goats! So strange! So dumb! So...cool! Final Point: Beach Boys!

THE RESULTS!!!!!!

The Results: Put down your calculators! I'll do the math for you! The Beach Boys are the winners, with five points! Bikini Kill comes in second, with three points! Unfortunately, I fear that the results of this battle will set off yet another Beach Boys vs. Bikini Kill gang war, so stay in your homes and take cover! There's gonna be a brutal confrontation of surfboards and homemade maxi-pads! Oh, the horror!

"A Kiss
Or A
Bullet
Which
Is It
Going
To Be,
Mike!"

**Mickey
Spillane**

STRIPS
DOWN
TO
NAKED
FURY!

PARKLANE PICTURES, Inc. Presents

**KISS ME
DEADLY**

starring
**RALPH
MEEKER**

with ALBERT DEKKER · PAUL STEWART · JUANO HERNANDEZ
Produced and Directed by ROBERT ALDRICH Screenplay by A. I. BEZZERIDES
Released thru UNITED ARTISTS



Still KD (40)-110
Two of Spillane's dames give Mike Hammer some trouble in "Kiss Me Deadly," opening at the Theatre through United Artists release. Mike Hammer is played by Ralph Meeker. The women are Maxine Cooper and Gaby Rodgers.

Kiss Me Deadly

The Toughest Movie Ever Made

By John David Cawley,
Private (and sometimes public) Dick

Hey, Punk! Yeah, you! By punk, I don't mean a safety-pin bedecked teenager who still listens to Black Flag, but rather a lower echelon criminal/hood who takes his/her orders from a senior mobster. I know what you're thinking, "I'll skip this article on an obscure film by that admittedly brilliant pundit, John David Cawley, and instead flip ahead to that article about that new rock band all the kids are crazy about." Big mistake, punk. I gotta story to tell you that could put you back on the straight and narrow – you know, keep you outta the big house where YOUR kind always ends up. Sure, it's a shocking and sordid tale (as well as an insightful film critique!), so just keep your eyes where they are and get ready to learn somethin', if you think you can handle it!

It all started on a cold, gray day – a day just like a thousand days before and a thousand days after it. A cold wind blew down from Hunt Valley over the concrete sidewalks of the suburban hell of an asphalt jungle men call Cockeysville, Maryland. Sure, it's the suburbs, but don't let it fool ya – some of the preteens will kill you as soon as look at you, what with all the rap music they listen to and the ghastly video games they play! Even an imposing figure such as my own fails to inspire fear in these young hoodlums! Anyway, it was the kinda day when a palooka like me was out lookin' for cheap kicks. No, I'm not talkin' about booze or broads, I'm talkin' about the REAL STUFF—dvds, man, at bargain basement prices. Sure it wouldn't be easy, but I had to chance it, and there was only one place to slake my thirst for digital entertainment at five bucks a pop! Yeah, I'm talkin' about the COCKEYSVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY! Yeah, there are some tough customers there – librarians with steely gray eyes and even steelier gray hair. Anyway, I stumbled over to the sale book section – I wasn't expecting anything special, but I was just so bored I didn't care anymore, man! I looked over the top shelves and clucked disapprovingly – typical crappy modern mystery novels and travel books for places I had no interest in going to. And then on the bottom shelf out of the corner of my eye I saw a few dvds – the usual suspects like *Dunston Checks In* and a number of Kevin Costner's later works and then, like a bolt from the blue, it hit me square in the eye – there it was – a dvd which I'd considered paying \$14.95 for – and here it was for a sawbuck (that's \$5 to you youngsters) – *Kiss Me Deadly*! The Holy Grail of film noir! I was buyin' that dvd come hell or high water – if someone else wanted it they'd have to deal with my hamhock-like fists first, brother! I grabbed the slender dvd case so full of brutality and sadism and slammed it down on the front desk. I tossed a crumpled \$5 bill down on the desk and said, "Here ya go, sister" to the hatchet-faced librarian on duty. "It's mine now, baby!" I spat out through clenched teeth as I swaggered out the automatic doors clutching my prize in my sweaty palms.

Kiss Me Deadly is a 1955 movie based on a hard-boiled crime novel written by Mickey Spillane featuring tough-as-nails private detective Mike Hammer. I've read a number of Mike Hammer novels and they are very enjoyable – the over the top violence and incredibly

cynical and jaded first-person tough guy narration make the novels seem almost like a parody of the hard-hitting crime genre, but I doubt this was author Mickey Spillane's intent. The film version of *Kiss Me Deadly* really captures the violent, chaotic feel of the original novel, and this is high praise coming from me. *Kiss Me Deadly* has scenes of violence which, while thankfully lacking the technicolor gore of today's multiplex cinematic offerings, are still shocking to modern audiences. Way back in the 50s, long before Dirty Harry or the James Bond movies, Mike Hammer was an unstoppable juggernaut of justice mixing gunplay and foreplay on both the printed page and the silver screen. His adventures were a non-stop round of guns, booze, brawls and broads – sort of like what Dean Martin might be like if he turned into the Hulk. Mike Hammer was the first of the private eye anti-heroes – a tarnished modern day knight fighting for a kind of justice whose methods were no better than those of the evildoers he battled. In fact, Mike Hammer's violent ways incurred the wrath of Senator Estes Kefauver. In 1955, the good senator inaugurated a Senate investigation of the effects of movie violence on children. A number of movies were cited as bad influences, but *Kiss Me Deadly* was considered to be the worst offender. Yes, back in the 50s they didn't have rap music or video games to blame for the actions of obnoxious teenagers who received crappy parental guidance – no, back in the 50s they blamed movies and even comic books! But forsooth, let us not stray too far from the greatness that is *Kiss Me Deadly*!

There are a number of elements that make *Kiss Me Deadly* quite fascinating to a modern audience. First, there are somewhat dated aspects to the film that almost give it a "camp" appeal. An example of this is Mike Hammer's answering machine- it's a giant 2' by 2' reel-to-reel tape recorder built into his living room wall! This huge appliance did cause me to snicker I must admit, but in 1955 it was a cutting-edge device!

Also interesting is the dated, somewhat corny hard-boiled dialogue - *Kiss Me Deadly* is chock-full of choice examples. Hammer picks up a girl wearing nothing but a trench coat, obviously in distress, and says to her "I'll bet you were out with some guy who thought NO was a three-letter word." Later when he learns that the girl has escaped from a mental institution he somewhat thoughtlessly refers to it as "the laughing house." Political correctness is NOT Mr. Hammer's strong point.

Later, Hammer awakens from unconsciousness after a failed assassination attempt on his life and sees his beautiful secretary Velda. He says to her "You're never around when I need you," to which she replies, "You never need me when I'm around." A Federal agent in the movie refers to Velda as "real woo bait." You just don't hear that kind of terminology these days!

When Hammer pulls into a gas station in his new car and the attendant says, "Oh, you got a new car," Hammer replies, "Yeah, the ashtrays were all full in my old one." Hammer's jaded, world-weary attitude and tough guy pose may seem odd or corny to today's viewers but it sure is a lot of fun to watch.

Lastly, there is a truly bizarre exchange between Hammer and two thugs (one played by the great Jack Elam) who have just beaten him up and abducted him. As they hustle Hammer into a beach house where he will be held prisoner, the hoodlums keep asking him sarcastically, "Are you feeling okay? Are you all right?", to which Hammer responds, "For a couple of cannons you sure are polite!" One of the thugs answers, "We are on this earth such a brief span, we might as well be." This exchange is typical of what makes *Kiss Me Deadly* so different from its film noir brethren- even the most cliché-ridden situation (i.e., the hero abducted by thugs) is turned on its ear. *Kiss Me Deadly* stands out from other crime movies due to its unpredictability.

Another memorable element of *Kiss Me Deadly* is its shocking scenes of violence. At the very start of the film, Mike and a female companion have been kidnapped by thugs. We next see the girl's bare legs dangling over the edge of a table as she screams bloodcurdlingly. We also see that one of her tormentors holds a pair of pliers. While this is an admittedly horrible scene it is to *Kiss Me Deadly*'s credit that it was shot in about as tasteful a manner as possible. Without being too graphic the sequence establishes the absolute evil and lack of morality of Hammer's foes. (Strangely enough the tortured woman is played by Cloris Leachman, co-star of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*!)

Later, as Mike Hammer is being shadowed by a hoodlum, brutal violence erupts again. Hammer allows the thug to catch up with him on a deserted street then grabs the thug, beats him to a pulp and bludgeons his head repeatedly into the corner of a brick wall. Hammer finishes his opponent off by punching him down a flight of concrete stairs.

As Hammer's quest continues he goes to the home of an old opera buff who may have some information he needs. The seemingly harmless old man seems to sit in his room all day listening to ancient opera records. When the elderly gentleman tells Mike he doesn't know anything Mike holds up an old 78 record with a nasty grin and says, "Oh, this is Caruso, this is a good record huh?", to which the old man replies, "Yes." Without a blink Hammer breaks the precious record into fragments causing the old man to give him the information he wants. Mike isn't above using extortion on a helpless old man in his search for justice and vengeance. This scene is only the first of three instances of Hammer abusing the elderly in *Kiss Me Deadly*.

In yet another shocking scene, Hammer's friend and mechanic Nick is killed. A thug who thinks Nick may know too much kills him by releasing the jack holding up a car over him as he works on it. Nick is slowly crushed to death in a gruesome fashion.

Eventually Hammer ends up at a morgue where the ancient attendant offers to sell him a key that could solve the whole case for him. Hammer tosses some bills on the counter, but the morgue attendant says it's not enough and puts the key back in a drawer.

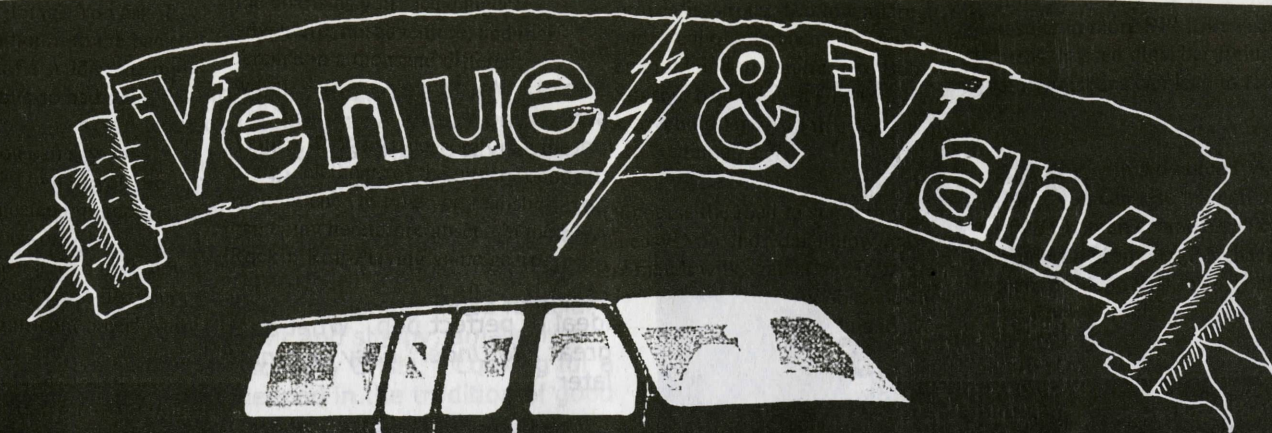
Enraged, Hammer slams the drawer on the old man's hand and grinds it to a pulp as the attendant shrieks piteously. A close-up reveals Hammer grinning maniacally in his act of gloating sadism.

The key leads Hammer to an athletic club where he asks (you guessed it) yet ANOTHER old man at the counter what the key is for. When the old codger won't talk, Hammer again tosses down some moolah but the old guy won't go for it. He shakes his head disapprovingly and says, "Oh Mr. Hammer..." like a schoolmaster berating a bad student. Hammer grabs the man by the lapels and mercilessly slaps him 'til he tells him the key fits a locker in the club. Money doesn't talk but Hammer's fists do!

Kiss Me Deadly culminates with a scene of nuclear age horror. A beautiful but mentally ill girl named Lily opens the box which she has finally obtained through murdering its owner. Since everyone (gangsters, federal agents and Mike Hammer) is all trying to retrieve it she reasons it must have something very valuable inside. She opens the box and is consumed in a ghastly nuclear holocaust. The box contained nuclear material, precious but not in the way Lily had hoped! The scene of her demise is most disturbing, we see her screaming as the flames incinerate her in an image most uncommon in films of the 1950s!

Kiss Me Deadly also has exemplary casting. Tough guy actor Ralph Meeker is the perfect Mike Hammer. With a perpetual sneer on his face and his icy stare, he is far more foreboding than any of the thugs he faces. Gaby Rodgers is great as the mentally ill Lily Carver. Her femme fatale style of acting isn't dated at all and she really does seem like a beautiful woman who "isn't all there." Even though Lily is ultimately revealed to be an evil woman, she has a sad, pathetic quality that is very touching. With her short, choppy blonde hairstyle, she has a kind of pre-punk look. *Kiss Me Deadly* is dated in that none of the female characters have any power; they are all playthings or abused by men. Even Lily, who tries to take control of her fate by stealing the contents of the box which everyone is trying to recover, is ultimately consumed by a fiery nuclear holocaust. I guess what I learned from *Kiss Me Deadly* is that if someone tells you NOT to open a box, DON'T OPEN IT. And, of course, I can't neglect to mention Jack Elam as a greasy thug. His weird eyes gazing in seemingly different directions, his hipster clothes and his slicked-back hair make him a truly memorable heavy—one of the greatest henchmen of all time!!!!

Kiss Me Deadly isn't a great film because of its plot, but rather because of its incredible sense of style. The fine acting and remarkably tough, yet sometimes funny hard-boiled dialogue make it a must see! Since it was made in the 50s, the violence and brutality are more suggested than shown, but I think *Kiss Me Deadly* is far more shocking and riveting than any of today's tasteless gorefests at the multiplex. And even though Mike Hammer is a brutal, chauvinistic animal of a man, I find his refusal to be denied in his relentless quest for the truth to be strangely admirable.



THE ROCKNROLLPLAYING GAME



After a grueling 11 hour drive you pull up to the club and there's not a soul in sight. A flyer is posted on the door. This is the place alright, only you don't see your band anywhere on the bill. You manage to track down the promoter and thank him for his lousy directions. He apologizes for the flyer mix up and promises you a few extra drink tickets that never materialize.

You and your band mates get loaded in and it's time to take the stage. The drummer drops a stick eight bars into your first song and it's all downhill from there. Your bass player breaks a string two songs later. It looks like it's just not going to be your night.

You guys wrap up your set to polite applause. There will be no encore tonight. At the merch table a kid is haggling with your roadie over the price of a 7".

Suddenly an attractive member of the opposite sex approaches you. They're big fans. They have all your records. Even that lousy comp you got talked into doing. You ask if they'd like to adjourn to the back stage area. All of a sudden the night isn't looking quite so bad.

Quicker than you can say "Rathskeller" the two of you are entangled in a heated embrace. Tongues dart. Passions flare. Suddenly you feel a hard dull blow to the back of your head. It's your new friend's significant other! And they're not alone!

Thank goodness it's only a game.

Yes, now you too can engage in all the rude, lewd, crude, and often monotonous behavior of your favorite alternative rock stars; all from the safety and comfort of your own home thanks to **Venues & Vans**, the latest roleplaying game to take the world's gaming community by storm!

Brought to you by the same people that gave you *Blood and Seamen: Battle of the Midway*, and the number one college-based roleplaying game, *Pomp & Circumstance*, comes **Venues & Vans**! Guide your merry group of alterna-rockers from garage band anonymity to the top of the charts as you face danger, adventure, misadventure, and indifference in a thousand different ways!

Venues & Vans incorporates all the critical elements of the underground rock "scene" to give you realistic gameplay heretofore unseen in the Rock'n'Roll-Playing game genre.

Create your own characters and guide them from dive-bar beginnings through to the exciting world of live television appearances. The only limit is your imagination!

You choose all your character's attributes! Will you be a muscle-bound fascist frontman or an art-fag guitar virtuoso; a free-thinking female bassist, or a party-animal drummer? It's all up to you! The only limit is your imagination!

Characters are rated in five critical attributes; **Chops, Charisma, Drug and Alcohol Tolerance, Creativity**, and of course **Attitude**. Roll carefully! Each is important, and too low a score in any category could prove disastrous. Too low a Drug and Alcohol tolerance and you could end up lying in a gutter like Bob Stinson, or too low a Creativity score could land you in a Jerry Only like "reunion" act!

Of course the road to stardom won't be easy. You and your fellow players match wits against the Tour Manager and the many obstacles he devises to lay between you and success.

Beware! **The Tour Manager**, or **TM**, will lead you down many false paths and dead-ends along the way. Only by utilizing the strengths and skills of every member of the band will you find your way to your ultimate goal. One wrong turn could send you down a trap door to bar band obscurity for all eternity!

A **TM** can create his own adventures-for players or guide them through any one of the many exciting **V&V** approved modules such as; *In Search of the Interstate*, *The Legend of Gilman*, *Matinee Madness*, *The Petulant Promoter*, or *Van Trouble in Norman, Oklahoma*.

As you make progress towards your goal, you'll earn **Scene Points** along the way. Once you've earned enough points players can advance to a higher level and earn better bookings, get higher guarantees, and improve your attributes, maybe even buy a new van! Each successfully completed adventure or "gig" results in more **SP**! Likewise, bad press, missed gigs, bar fights, and other mishaps can lead to losing **SP**.

And now with **Advanced Venues & Vans**, you can also take on the role of non-human characters! Try your hand as a promoter, P.R. hack, A&R man, or the lowest form of all life, the Rock Critic!

Josh Rutledge presents:

The 20 Greatest Debut Albums of All-Time!

The cliché about debut albums is that artists have their entire lives to prepare for them. Thus it's assumed that many bands and solo artists are doomed to never again match the high standard set by their glorious debuts.

I'm not sure if I buy that line of thinking. Unless you're a songwriter who's never recorded before, you HAVEN'T really had your whole life to compile material for your band's debut. And isn't it true that a lot of bands only get BETTER over time? For example, consider groups like the Replacements, Husker Du, the Stooges, Nirvana, the Pixies, the Kinks, the Rolling Stones, and R.E.M. Their debuts weren't bad, but they only hinted at the lofty artistic heights those bands would eventually reach.

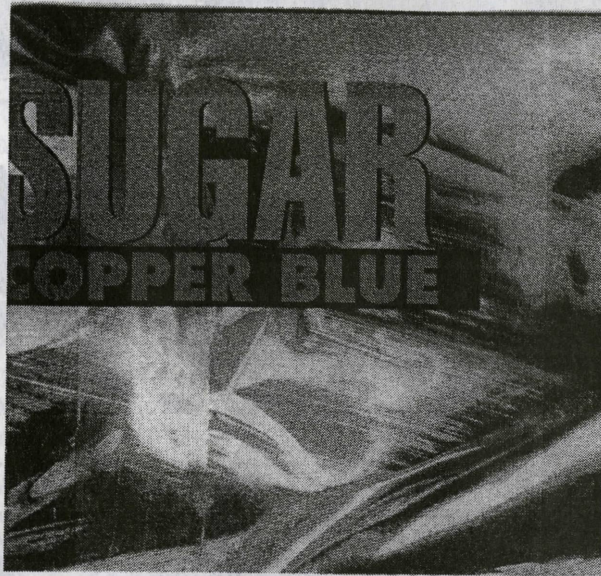
Still, there may be some merit to the theory of debut album supremacy. Especially in the case of the punk rock and power pop genres—where energy, enthusiasm, and musical simplicity remain far more important than technical skill, maturity, or artistic vision. After a band debuts with a stellar collection of perfect pop songs or blistering punk anthems, what room for improvement is there? If you "evolve" as a band, your music may lose its appeal. And if you keep making the same album over and over, the formula will quickly wear thin. You're damned if you do and damned if you don't. The only escape from the Catch-22 is to record one album and promptly break up. It worked for the Sex Pistols, didn't it?

Below is my list of the 20 greatest debut albums of all-time. Although many of these bands/artists continued to make excellent records, very few of them ever managed to top that classic first LP.

20. Sugar - *Copper Blue* (1992)

Bob Mould's criminally-underrated post-Husker Du power trio debuted with this gem of an album. This may constitute blasphemy, but I'd say that *Copper Blue* is as good as anything the Huskers ever did. There, I said it! So sue me. This record recalled the sharp, hard-edged pop attack of Mould's former band...but Sugar was no pale imitation. *Copper Blue* is dark, ferocious, and emotionally-charged; yet it's brightened by catchy melodies and finely-crafted

hooks. Mould's fire-hot guitar playing and visceral screaming vocals were still in top form, and he was backed by a drop-dead awesome rhythm section. As a unit, Sugar delivered a tight, scorching first LP. The dense, furious opener "The Act We Act" and the black, twisted "A Good Idea" are fierce, tuneful modern rock masterpieces. "Helpless," "Changes," and "I Can't Change Your Mind," on the other hand, embody the ideal of perfect pop. What an album! The equally great *File Under: Easy Listening* followed two years later.



19. The Exploding Hearts - *Guitar Romantic* (2002)

Before the tragic death of three of the group's members this past summer, I considered the Exploding Hearts to be the best band in the world. They really were THAT good. If I were a talented musician, in fact, I'd start a band just like the Exploding Hearts. *Guitar Romantic* was the album I'd been waiting to hear all my life: a perfect marriage of classic punk, crunchy power pop, and soulful mod rock. Having been weaned on the seminal 70s punk of the the Jam, Undertones, and Boys and the poppy new wave of Joe Jackson, Nick Lowe, and Elvis Costello, I was delighted to finally discover a band that had managed to combine BOTH of those influences! They did so with style: the playing and production on this record brought to mind the raw, tough-sounding records turned out by the early Who and Kinks. And the songs? Absolutely incredible! I'm still awed by the infectious r&b verve of "I'm a Pretender," the irresistible pop perfection of "Throwaway Style," the neo Merseybeat bounce of "Jailbird," and the tuneful melancholic punch of "Modern Kicks." And the rest of the album is just as good. At only ten songs in length, it always leaves me wanting more.

18. New York Dolls - *New York Dolls* (1973)

Much of the Dolls' renown can be attributed to the band's mythology. Thus it can be hard to separate their musical legacy from their non-musical legacy. But even if they HADN'T been cross-dressing, chemical-

abusing icons of mythical proportions, their debut album would still have to rank as one of the most essential rock n' roll lps of all-time. Like many great rock albums, it recycled elements of the musical past and blended them into something new and exciting. The Dolls borrowed heavily from the Rolling Stones, Chuck Berry, and the girl groups of the 60s. Yet they did so in a style all their own, rehashing those familiar riffs with tongue-in-cheek wit and sloppy, amateurish abandon. Songs like "Personality Crisis," "Looking for a Kiss," and "Trash" were steeped in the tradition of good old rock n' roll yet oozed the spirit of sleaze, perversion, and not-so-wholesome fun. Compared to the hard rock and punk of today, this record sounds relatively tame. But thirty years ago, it was revolutionary.

17. The Who - *Sings My Generation* (1965)

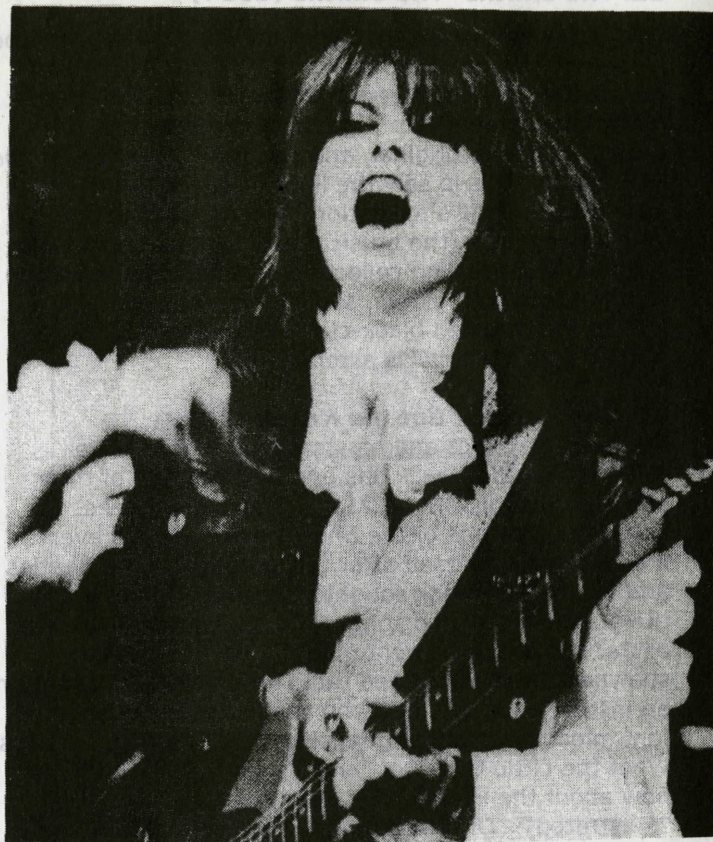
Granted: The Who's debut barely hinted at the great leaps forward Pete Townshend would soon take as a songwriter. But at the same time, no other Who album would ever rock as hard as this one. When I fantasize about going back in time and seeing the Who live, this is the Who I want to see: a young, hungry mod band churning out explosive "maximum r&b" sounds. At the time of its release, *The Who Sings My Generation* was the loudest, most powerful-sounding rock album ever recorded. Townshend's ferocious, distorted guitar riffs and Keith Moon's brutal gonzo drumming established the sonic prototype for the punk rock music that would emerge a decade later. Few of the songs are remarkable, but primitive, supercharged tunes like "Out In the Street" and "La-La Lies" are great fun. And "My Generation" and "The Kids Are Alright" are, of course, classics.

16. Sex Pistols - *Never Mind the Bollocks* (1977)

Music snobs often dismiss the Pistols as foul-mouthed, no-talent cretins who got by on antics and attitude alone. Well, they WERE foul-mouthed cretins. But the no-talent part is dead wrong. Just think of all the bands that have imitated the Pistols (often blatantly). And think of all the singers who have imitated Johnny Rotten (usually blatantly). The Pistols' debut album was an explosive call-to-arms that sounds as vital as ever today. In contrast to the pompous, bombastic arena rock of the time, here was simple, crude music that could really be FELT. It was angry, rude, vicious, irreverent, and shockingly powerful. It recalled the primal trashy energy of the Stooges and New York Dolls, but it was faster, harder, and meaner. Just as importantly, the songs were actually good! Tunes like "God Save the Queen" and "Holidays In The Sun" weren't just snotty, anti-social anthems for unruly delinquents...they were also terrific, visceral rock n' roll songs. Never before had nihilism been so much fun!

15. The Pretenders - *The Pretenders* (1980)

The Pretenders have never come close to making another album as good as their brilliant debut. Chrissie Hynde is a remarkable talent with a one-of-a-kind voice; no figure in rock is cooler or sexier. But it was with her original band-mates (James Honeyman-Scott,



Pete Farndon, and Martin Chambers) that she created her most enduring music. Her band's self-titled tour de force offered a charismatic mix of punky aggression, refined pop craftsmanship, and Stones-y rock n' roll swagger. It was a sound made unique not only by Hynde's sultry voice, but also by Honeyman-Scott's unconventional guitar playing. All in all, *The Pretenders* is one of the defining works of the new wave era. It's a tough, sexy, highly-original lp that can rightfully be called a "classic."

14. The Dead Boys - *Young, Loud and Snotty* (1977)

The title says it all. Filthy, streetwise rock n' roll at its finest.

13. The Go-Go's - *Beauty and the Beat* (1981)

Originally a punk band, the Go-Go's' had evolved into the purest of pure pop groups by the time they recorded their debut lp. And what a debut it was! The band's name will always be synonymous with good times, sunny Californian weekends, and endless parties on the beach. That legend was born with *Beauty and the Beat*, a buoyant pop record that married Beach Boys bliss, 60s girl group harmonies, and new wave crunch. It may seem ironic that a bunch of drug-abusing, hotel-trashing sluts came to symbolize the blithe innocence of wholesome summertime pop. Yet there's no denying the perfection of this album. Everyone knows "Our Lips Are Sealed" and "We Got the Beat." But "How Much More," "Lust to Love," and "Skidmarks On My Heart" are equally splendid!

12. The Smiths- *The Smiths* (1984)

This is probably the only album on this list that can't be filed under the punk/power pop/rock n' roll banner. And that's why it's so remarkable. It would take most mortal bands YEARS to produce a recording as groundbreaking, original, and beautifully-crafted as *The Smiths*. Yet this lp saw the light of day within two years of the band's formation! Morrissey (the poet) and Johnny Marr (the musical genius) had teamed up to produce a dazzling collection of richly evocative pop songs tinged with gloom, sadness, and despair. A million maladjusted black-clad teens rejoiced. "Reel Around the Fountain" is astonishing.

11. The Knack - *Get the Knack* (1979)

Maligned by critics and hipsters at the time of its release, *Get the Knack* has endured the test of time and found favor with us 21st Century pop geeks. It now stands as one of the finest power pop lps ever made. Modeling itself after 60s greats like the Beatles and Kinks, the Knack sought to revive the fine art of the guitar-driven pop song. The phenomenal success of *Get the Knack* (it went gold in just 13 days and spawned the most-played radio hit of 1979) brought on an instant backlash, but who can resist the charms of fun, infectious, upbeat gems like "My Sharona," "That's What the Little Girls Do," and "Good Girls Don't"? Or how about the likable "You Really Got Me" knock-off "Frustrated"? Or "Heartbeat," the terrific Buddy Holly cover? Every song on the album could have been a hit! To really "get" the Knack, one has to buy the notion that pure pop music never goes out of style. I sure do.

10. The Undertones - *The Undertones* (1979)

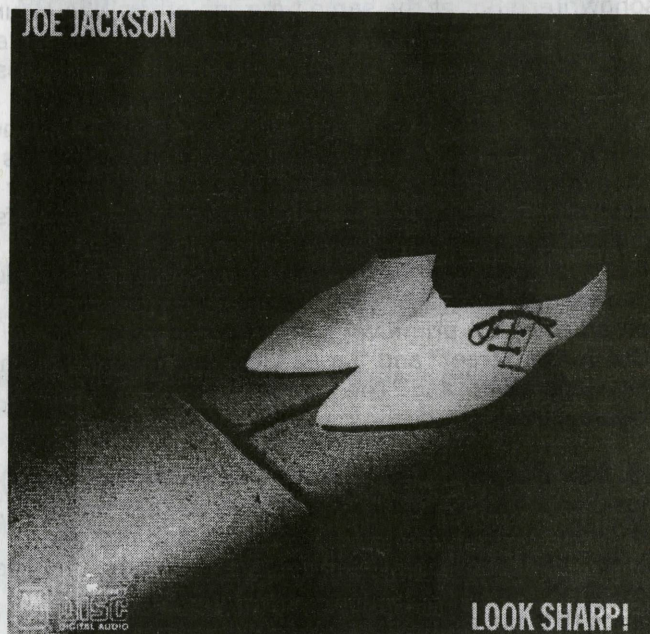
The "Irish Ramones" delivered the prototypical punk debut: a refreshingly raw collection of three-chord pop songs brimming with the lusty exuberance of youth. It's a delightful record chock full of fun, simple tunes about girls and adolescent thrills. In contrast to today's cute, clean-cut pop-punk heartthrobs, the Undertones seemed more like snot-nosed, naughty hooligans hell-bent on giving conventional pop the rough-and-tumble treatment. In a perfect world, "Girls Don't Like It," "Teenage Kicks," "Here Comes the



Summer," and "Get Over You" would have been huge radio hits.

9. The Damned - *Damned Damned Damned* (1977)

Many would say that the Damned's later, more goth-oriented work was its best. But in my mind, their exhilarating debut was their finest hour. *Damned Damned Damned* is everything that a punk rock record should be: a stripped-down collection of raw, exciting, rapid-fire rock n' roll tunes played with a nervous, adolescent aggression. It's the sound of wayward youths letting loose and rocking with sloppy, reckless abandon. Rat Scabies' ferocious drumming propels a thrashing attack that rarely lets up, and there are few punk songs in history as thrilling as "Neat Neat Neat" or "New Rose." *Damned Damned Damned* is neither as angry as the Sex Pistols' debut nor as political as the first Clash lp, but it's every bit as electrifying as both.



8. Joe Jackson- *Look Sharp* (1979)

Sure, Jackson was frequently dismissed as an Elvis Costello wanna-be. But *Look Sharp*, quite frankly, is as good as any Costello record. The formula wasn't new, but Jackson's biting, clever lyrics, nervous, edgy voice, and infectious, spunky songs pumped new life into the familiar new wave pop approach. The classic "Is She Really Going Out With Him?" is about as catchy as a song can get. "Happy Loving Couples" is as appealing as it is caustic. The peppy "Got the Time" is a propulsive burst of relentless energy. Jackson is now a respected jazz musician and classical composer; he's sold millions of records and mastered a multitude of genres. But *Look Sharp* remains his defining work.

7. The Boys - *The Boys* (1977)

The most underrated band ever debuted with this pop-punk masterpiece. The Boys were like the Beatles on speed, a ragtag bunch of English lads who bashed out hooky, tuneful pop songs with the tough, no-nonsense approach of working class punk. Searing buzzsaw gems like "I Don't Care," "Living in the City," "Kiss Like

a Nun," and "Cop Cars" condense the melodic kick of the classic three-minute pop hit into the thrashing ferocity of the two-minute punk tune. And who doesn't love "First Time"? I'll never understand why this record isn't as universally lauded as the first Undertones lp or the Buzzcocks' *Singles Going Steady* collection.

6. Stiff Little Fingers – *Inflammable Material* (1979)

This album proved that music could be both political and melodic at the same time. It's such a great record that it makes most other punk recordings sound inadequate in comparison. Lots of bands can match SLF's ferocious, raspy-voiced aggression, but few of them can deliver a catchy tune. Lots of bands can deliver catchy tunes, but few of them manage to rock with the vicious fiery spark of SLF. The young Jake Burns was the coolest punk singer ever, and he never sounded better than he did on this record. "Suspect Device," "Barbed Wire Love," and "Wasted Life" are some of the most passionate and ferocious songs ever committed to vinyl.

5. The Cars – *The Cars* (1978)

By far the most essential of all new wave-era synth-pop recordings...and a rock masterpiece to boot! Just LOOK at the classic songs that appeared on this album: "Good Times Roll," "My Best Friend's Girl," "Just What I Needed," "You're All I've Got Tonight," "Moving In Stereo." Sounds like a best-of collection, right? Nope, this was a studio album. Why is this band not more revered? The Cars should be worshipped, I say. Worshipped!

4. The Muffs – *The Muffs* (1993)

This classic album flopped commercially but influenced an entire generation of female-fronted pop-punk bands. Kim Shattuck, perhaps the greatest singer of her day, screamed and crooned overtop a flawless blend of punk, rock n' roll, and 60s pop. This lp skillfully blends the bubblegum punk appeal of the Ramones, the girl band pop charm of the Go-Go's, and the tough chick allure of Joan Jett into one dynamic whole. Whether you prefer spunky, sugary punk tunes ("Lucky Guy," "Better Than Me"), beautiful pop songs ("Everywhere I Go," "From Your Girl," "Baby Go Round"), or kick-ass rockers ("Big Mouth"), there's something on this album for you.

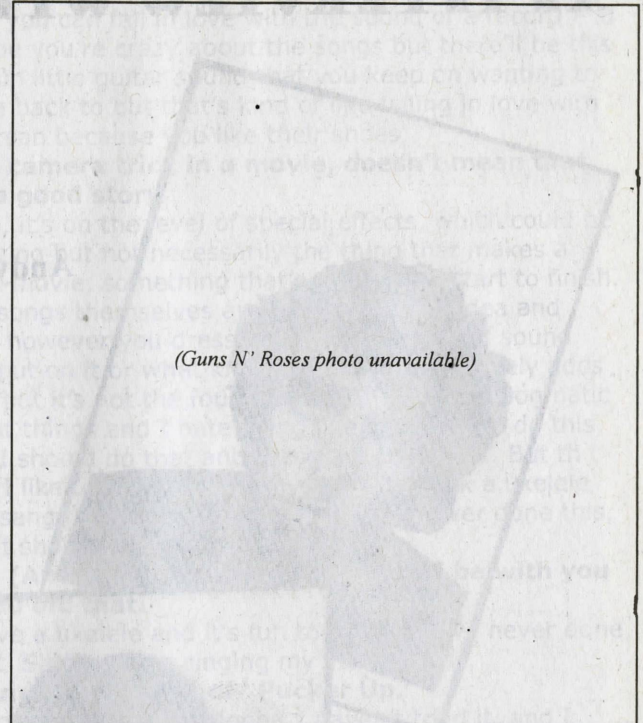
3. The Beatles – *Please Please Me* (1964)

Duh!

2. The Ramones – *The Ramones* (1976)

I'd argue that the Ramones reached their peak on their third album. *Rocket to Russia* was more polished and overtly pop than its predecessors, yet it retained an essential driving energy. But still...the Ramones' stunning debut was a musical revolution in and of itself, a groundbreaking marriage of three-chord savagery and 60s pop melody that literally changed the world. Punk rock started here, and one could even say it might as well have ended here too. I mean, really,

has any other punk band ever managed to top this record?



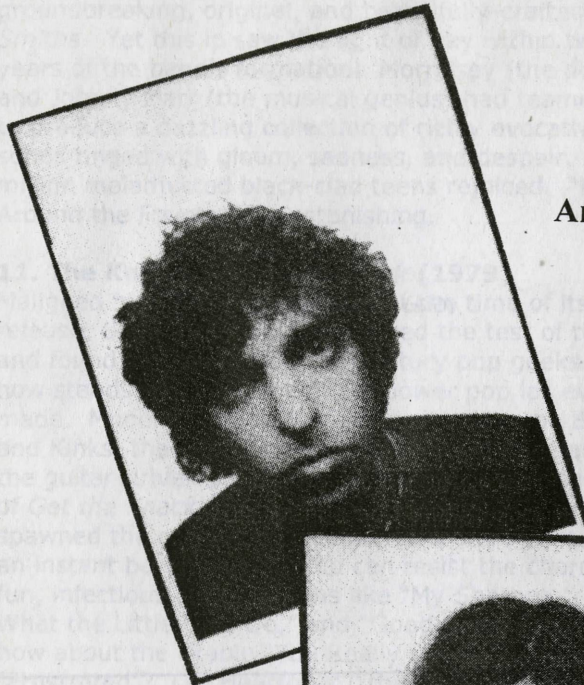
1. Guns N' Roses – *Appetite for Destruction* (1987)

Editor-in-chief Faloon is surely rolling his eyes at my inclusion of this particular recording (and at NUMBER ONE, no less!). Why do I insist upon pushing the boundaries of my First Amendment freedoms? But I kid you not, *Appetite* is, quite simply, the greatest rock n' roll album ever recorded. It's masterpiece trash. It's the album to break out and play at max volume whenever you're in the mood for some loud, brash degenerate hard rock. The Gunners copped their glam-punk look from Hanoi Rocks, while their sound fused the boisterous rock n' roll of Aerosmith and AC/DC with mean, nasty Dead Boys-ish punk. The result: a wildfire debut lp that immediately transports the listener into the seedy world of drugs, dysfunction, porn stars, strippers, late night danger, urban decadence, and Hollywood sleaze. G N' R perfected the glam metal genre by substituting a dark, cynical street realism for the usual "party hearty" ethic. Nine times out of ten, this kind of music seems silly, clichéd, and just plain ridiculous. But *Appetite* works because its creators were as talented as they were arrogant. The songwriting is hot, and the playing is aggressive and inspired. From "Welcome to the Jungle" to "Mr. Brownstone" to "My Michelle" to "Rocket Queen," every song's a classic. No guitar tandem in history has ever riffed and wailed as ferociously as Slash and Izzy Stradlin did on this record. Sure, Axl Rose may have been a vile, conceited dirtbag. But wasn't that THE POINT? *Appetite* wouldn't have been the same without him.

Next time: The 20 Greatest Cover Songs of All-Time!

ANDY MALTZ - NOT SUCH A NICE MAN AFTER ALL

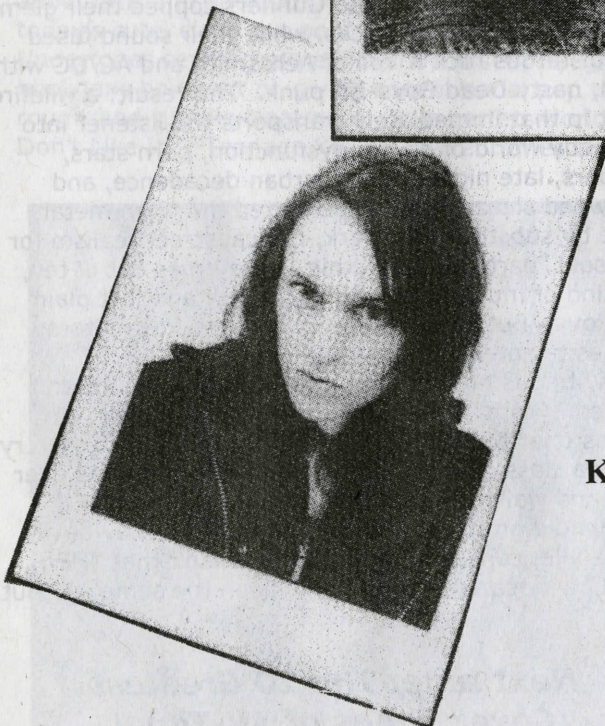
AN INTERVIEW WITH THE LITTLE KILLERS



Andy



Sarah



Kari

I first got to know Andy Maltz from his part as "the lanky one" in the Sea Monkeys (one of NYC's best bands and a band that may or may not still exist—a tale for another day). Later, he and I worked at Vital Music Mailorder where we spent our days listening to a lot of bad hardcore and talking about music that we liked. And laughing a lot. And wondering if anyone would ever buy one of the Low Meato 7"s. Good times. Now Andy is in the Little Killers. I like the Little Killers a lot, but, as usual, I wanted to know more. (Interview by Mike Faloon)

Go Metric: Are the Little Killers the same band as the Pinkies?¹

Andy Maltz: Yes. We had our first practice in July of 2000.

How did you meet your bandmates?

Sarah plays bass and Kari plays drums. We met when I was working at Nightengales. Sarah was bartender there and I did the door there for several years and we became friends and we had to watch a lot of crappy bands together. Also, the Sea Monkeys were not doing anything, it was one of our periods of all being mad at each other. I really wanted to start something and I mentioned it to her, and she was game. I had met Kari through Sarah, because they had known each other since they were little kids. Kari said that she wanted to play drums. I asked her what kind of music she liked and she said that she liked Hasil Adkins and the Johnny Burnette Trio and I was like, Oh, you're in my band. When I talked to Sarah about it, I was like, Would you be cool if Kari played drums and she was totally into it. In six months we were passably getting through songs, which is still kind of the case at some points.

I was surprised that you ended up in the spotlight, being the singer.

The whole idea of that was just that, well, there was nobody else to do it. In a certain respect I'm much more comfortable just being the guitar player in a band.

When we worked at Vital I remember talking about the connection between the old blues records that you'd bring in and the punk rock we'd listen to. I remember once that you said you like raw music, and that's always stuck with me. That's the connection with all that stuff.

If it's good, the way you dress it up, the sounds of these things is like, I'm going to put on this coat today. Or this color pair of pants but the actual spirit doesn't have anything to do with the sound. It's more like the spirit that runs through it. Boy, this sounds really dumb.

No, I know what you mean, the thread.

Do you know what I mean, the thread that runs through all this stuff has to do with, you can't put it

¹Title taken from the forthcoming book of the same name, written by Dave the Spazz and Kris Spittoon. Said book is to follow *Andy, What Happened?* and is scheduled to precede *Andy Maltz- Not So Young!*

into words, but it's there. It doesn't matter if it's Jerry Lee Lewis or the Kinks or whatever, there's something there that's, Oh, this is alive.

That's one of the things that I like about the band. But it's really straight forward, simple and solid. The guitar work is flashier at times, but it's all in the same...

...In the same vein. None of it is brain surgery, or progressive in any sense of the word. This is what I like. Really, that was basically the criteria: Do I like this? I wanted to be a band where I could walk into a bar, and not know them and be like, This is good. You'd think that that would be the easiest thing in the world to do, but it never happens, especially working in the bar with Sarah. We'd see four bands a night and never see anything we liked.

Unless it was your friend's band or something you helped put on the bill.

Right, and even then you'd go, I know these guys and it's fun and everything but what would happen if a total stranger walks in here, What would they think? It has to connect on a level other than it just being your buddies.

Did you have a bunch of songs already written when the band started, songs that weren't going to be used in the Sea Monkeys?

No, not really. What we did when we first got together, that first six months, was basically just covers, learning how to play. I'd be at rehearsal and I'd say, Oh, let's do this, and it was all the same three chords and Sarah and Kari got the idea of how a song was put together. I could go, This goes G-C-D, and when we get to the last D we keep it two bars longer, or whatever, just follow me. They got pretty good at following it and I would just think of songs while we were there, like, let's do this Ritchie Valens song. After six months of that I was like, This is fun, and they were like, Let's do some originals. And I was like, Oh great, now I have sit home and write songs? So we had five or six of them that were sort of together, but at a certain point I wasn't really happy with it, because it was getting away from that, whatever, that thing that I wanted to do—I wanted to be in a band that I would want to listen to—so we kept one of those and scrapped the rest. And I started thinking like, just keep it in the box, make sure this is something that I would want to listen to. Because when you're writing a song a lot of times you would be like, Oh, this is an interesting chord change and then...

...and then you're Jethro Tull.

Exactly, and it turns into something that while it might be interesting, it's not good.

It's not what you're after.

It's not what I'm after, and what I'm after is being a good rock'n'roll band. And that thing that people, and that I, and that anybody can fall into is not respecting the limits of what that entails.

It's like a game, you have to set up your boundaries.

You set up your boundaries. It's a tough thing to do, the less that you give yourself to work with, in terms of writing a song and making it interesting and fresh and new, it's much more of a challenge than turning on a keyboard and going, Oh, this is a cool sound, let's build

a song around it. There's nothing to that to me. I find that that's getting the idea last, and that the idea and words, especially, are the things that make it good. Sounds are like, really, it's funny, and I'm the same way, you can fall in love with the sound of a record and maybe you're crazy about the songs but there'll be this certain little guitar sound that you keep on wanting to come back to but that's kind of like falling in love with a person because you like their shoes.

Or a camera trick in a movie, doesn't mean that it's a good story.

Yeah, it's on the level of special effects, which could be amazing but not necessarily the thing that makes a good movie, something that's great from start to finish. The songs themselves are kind of like the idea and then however you dress up, like what kind of sound you put on it or what kind of beat, that definitely adds to it but it's not the foundation. I hate being dogmatic about things and I hate being like, You should do this, and I should do that and these are the rules. But the way I like to look at it for myself is if I took a ukelele and sang the song over it, not that I've ever done this, but it should be possible.

Kris (Andy's girlfriend) wouldn't still be with you if you did that.

I have a ukelele and it's fun to play but I've never done that. Sitting there singing my little songs...

A Tiny Tim version of "Pucker Up."

I know that it can be done. I haven't tried it, and I wouldn't try this at home, if I were reading this (interview). The idea is to have it be song, arrangement, and then a good performance of it. Everybody in the band knows what's going on, there's not a whole lot of, Why don't we try a reggae beat?

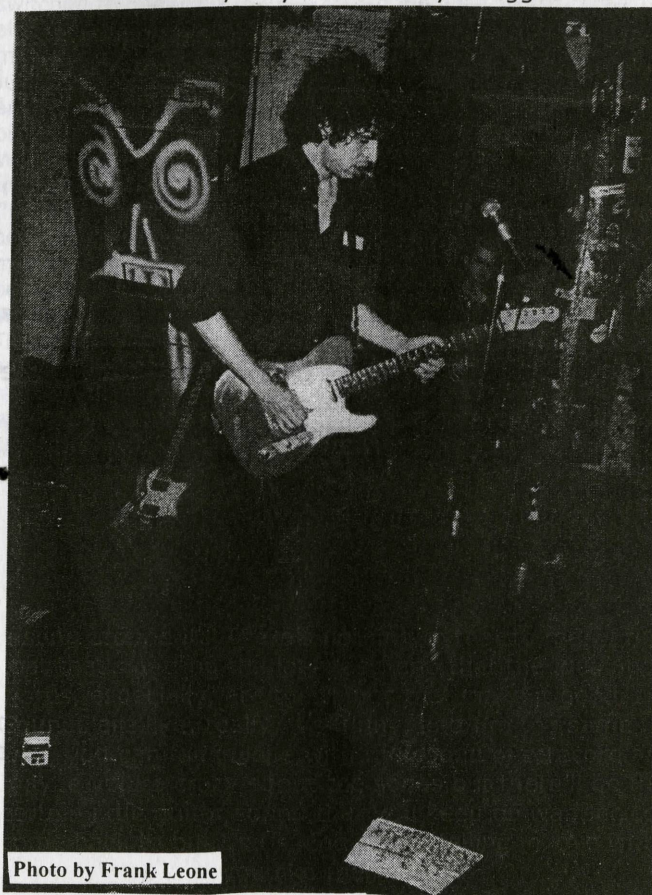


Photo by Frank Leone



Like, Hey, I bought a country record yesterday, let's do a country song—not because we like it but because it's kitschy.

And it's good if that happens in a...or...(long pause)
Organic?

...I hate that word...the David Byrne/Paul Simon hunting for different cultures because they don't have any culture of their own, or they're not aware of it.

Did you play out as the Pinkies?

We did Dave's radio show (*Music to Spazz By* on WFMU) for a Christmas thing where we did three songs and we didn't have the Little Killers name yet and we were the Pinkies still, but the girls didn't like that name and they were like, We're not going to be the Pinkies.

So it's not like someone else had the name and you went through a time thinking about being Pinkies UK?

No, no. For a long time I liked the name, but I'm happy with this. The real reason we got this name is because I booked a show and we didn't have a name and just like any other band you have a list of a thousand names. I ended up going down to another bar where Sarah worked and Keri was there and I had the list and I was like, we need a name by the end of the night and the Little Killers is the name we ended up picking. Then we got the name and we didn't even end up playing that show, it fell through. So at least we had a name and finally we played a show in January 2002.

I first saw you in the summer of 2002, at that place at the edge of the Earth in Brooklyn. The mermaid bar or...

The Local.

So that was only about six months after you'd really started playing out.

We actually recorded the record that's just come out (the lp on Crypt Records) only six months after we started playing out. We recorded it in July of that year. When we were doing the record I was happy with the way everything was going but I was like, Oh, whatever. I almost had a "this is a demo" attitude and then it became the record. I had not idea that anybody was ever going to hear it. And I still don't know if that's going to happen.

But it's available, it's possible.

It's available.

You told me Crypt story once, but if you could regale us...it's the story that everyone wants to have happen to their band.

It's pretty funny. We did this recording and it was pretty much at the end of last summer and finished around October or so of last year (2002) and then I had cd copies that I would give to my friends and we didn't send it out to anybody really, but Alberto at Wowville (record store in NYC) had a copy and Tim from Crypt was meeting him the day before Thanksgiving and was killing time at Wowville and a few people I know were there and my friend Dave, who was in the band the Tie-Reds, was working and people were putting stuff on and Tim there's, and they're all trying to be, Tim, listen to this, Tim, listen to that. And he wasn't interested in anything and, whatever, they ended up putting on our cd and he apparently just went in the back and sat down and listened to it and didn't say much to anybody. But then when it was over he asked to hear it again and became very enthusiastic about it, as in, he left the store with it. And so I got a message from Alberto saying—he's all excited—Andy, Andy, I have somebody who wants to put out the record. And that was the day before Thanksgiving, and so Thanksgiving came and went and Friday I was at my job and I had to go to Alberto's store's neighborhood to pick up everybody's paychecks and so while I was there I figure I'd stop in and see who Alberto's talking about.

He hadn't said which label?

No, he didn't say anything, and knowing his store, it's a real kind of magnet for everybody, people go in there and hang out all the time, so I had no idea who it (the label) might be. But I knew that Tim was there always dropping records off and I knew that Billy from Norton was always there and I was thinking my best case scenario would be either Crypt or Norton, totally like died and gone to heaven for me. So I go in and actually Billy is there, and Alberto is ecstatic, Andy, Andy, Tim wants to put out the record. And I'm like wow, this is great, I knew it was going to end up being one of the two of you. And as it turns out, later on we ended up doing a single with Norton, too. It's a 7" with a Stones song. Here I am, I have a record on Crypt and a record on Norton; I'm happy.

Good night, folks.

Right, I can retire now. I was happy that he liked it because I've been a big fan of stuff that he's put out from day one because *Back from the Grave* came out in the early 80s and I bought that when it came out and that was his first real release. So pretty much the whole time that Crypt has been around I've been a fan of stuff that he's done. It made me feel good because here's a guy that I actually respect and he likes what I'm doing, and that would have been enough, just knowing that he liked it. But that he wanted to do a record was exciting. And then we all met and hammered it out and it took a long time from the time that we met and when the record actually came out due to...life. The way things take time, plus a lot of monkey wrenches being thrown in. It finally came out, I'm happy with it.

It's a good record. I've been listening to it on the way to work.

I listen to it very sporadically, you know, I'm not the kind of person who likes to look in the mirror too much, but when I do hear it it sounds good. Sounds like a record.

It sounds like a good version of the live show, not too dressed up.

None of us were very, like, Where do we put the Mellotron?

When you were on tour did you end up playing with a lot of the bands you've played with as they came through New York?

Not really but we ended up playing on bills that matched up well. Sometimes I liked the bands and sometimes I didn't, but it wasn't a hip hop band and then a metal band.

We once played a ska night in Richmond, Virginia. They hated us.

There was no ska. We generally played punk shows. Some of them had merit, some of them didn't. The first show the first band was a total Supersuckers/Motorhead ripoff band from Sweden or Norway and they were called Burning Rubber, and if they read this I don't really care, they were one of the worst bands I've ever seen. And I was looking at them and going, I have one whole month of this to deal with. God awful. When I saw them I thought, This can only get better. And it for the most part did.

Any good tour stories?

No. The main part, the shows I had fun at. But the shows last 25 minutes to a half hour. The rest of the day is basically driving and hanging out.

And trying to get good food,

Which is impossible, totally impossible. I think we had, maybe, two or three good meals while we were out. It was so bad that when we would see a Taco Bell sign on the highway we would all cheer. It was bad. And the other thing is you can, I'm vegetarian, so in the middle of the country vegetarian is, like, chicken. Chicken, fish, that's vegetarian. Sausage, that grows on a tree.

I may have mentioned this already, but I'm planning to interview Sam and Dave (Andy's former bandmates in the Sea Monkeys) about each other's bands. (Sparked by the time Dave's new band, the Yams, handed out buttons that said "Sam Hates the Yams." More to come...) So,

do you hate either the Yams or the Small Potatoes?

No. I like both of them just fine. I like...(tape is cut off)

Now, more about those wacky "Sam Hates the Yams" buttons...A Q&A with Sam Elwitt, former/current Sea Monkey, current Spittoon, and alleged hater of the Yams.

Go Metric: When the Yams played the Little Killers record release party this past summer, they handed out the infamous "Sam Hates the Yams" buttons. Did you know about the buttons before the show?

Sam: I knew about neither the buttons nor the song of the same title! What happened was, the Yams found out that the Spittoons had recorded a song about how the Yams secretly like Billy Joel ("Uptown Yams" to be released next month, b/w "No Offense (None Taken)"). We were going to hand out flyers for our record release gig, so I guess the Yams figured they'd better do something to pre-empt that. I must say, it worked. That's all anybody was talking about that night.

Do you, in fact, hate the Yams?

Not as a band, but I dislike each of the individual Yams. Except Chris Yam, he's cool. And Justina, Dave, and Hambone. Ok, I like the Yams. I do hate that song, though.

How about the Little Killers, what do you think of them?

I think they're all great people! I encourage them to stick with it and not get frustrated by the fact that they're so unpopular.

And now a Q&A with Dave the Spazz, current/former Sea Monkey, current Yam, maker of "Sam Hates the Yams" buttons...

Go Metric: I saw the Yams at the Little Killers record release show. It was a really fun set. Tell us a bit about the Yams!

Dave: Hambone has played bass all his life and now he's switched to guitar for the first time. Chris has played guitar all his life and now he's switched to bass. I've been singing all my life and I still can't get it right! Our secret weapon is Justina the drummer. We're considering putting her up front and the rest of us behind a curtain. Oh yeah, we play mostly original garage and punk and we're coming to your town soon!

What led to the Yams making and passing out the infamous "Sam Hates the Yams" buttons?

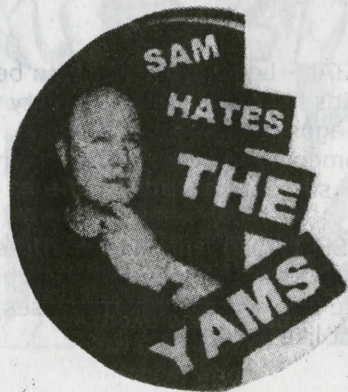
I'm not sure if Sam (Spittoons, Small Potatoes) hates us or not. We just did it as a prank. I actually hate that song, so maybe we'll make "Dave Hates 'Sam Hates The Yams'" buttons.

What's your take on Sam's band, the Small Potatoes?

They are currently my favorite country band. Sam used to hate country music, but don't tell anyone! (hmmm.. there might be a button in that).

While we're at it, what do you think of the Little Killers?

We always knew Andy was star material and now the world knows it!



NOT ALL ESSENTIALS ARE CREATED EQUAL

(or HOW I REVIEWED 150 COMIC BOOKS WITHOUT REALLY TRYING)

by Mark Hughson

Who: Marvel Comics

What: Cheap newsprint reprints of early issues. Usually between 20 and 25 issues long.

Where: Mostly amongst graphic novels on your book shelf, also the occasional toilet reading rack.

When: About two-three years ago they started hitting the shelves.

Why: 1) New comics suck. The older ones are better. 2) A comprehensive recap for the young, dumb, and poor collector. 3) Holy brilliant marketing scheme Ba... uh...er...Ant-Man! 4) Combo of 1-3

RATINGS SYSTEM

E = Unessential

EE = For Hardcore Fans Only

EEE = Essential

EEEE = Very Essential

EEEE = Mandatory Read For Everyone

AVENGERS Volume 1 (*Avengers* #1-24)

RATING: EEE

QUICK TAKE - A bunch of already established heroes come together to make a team that's ridiculously overpowered. It's also ridiculous that every foe that comes down the pike with their home-made costumes and weak-ass powers think they can take on a GROUP of heroes let alone one. Some good baddies come along here and there, but sheesh. I'm not pretending to be a comics expert/historian but this stuff seems just on the brink of the old-age comics and the new "team" comics. In other words: ridiculous fun.

WHY IT'S ESSENTIAL - Love the interaction between team members. It's like watching a celebrity family reunion. Dueling egos never looked so good. Great character development. The villains are a dime-a-dozen but all in all still entertaining.

WHY IT'S NOT ESSENTIAL - The Avengers seem to think that their shit don't stink. I mean maybe Cap's poo does smell like red, white, and blue roses but he doesn't have to act like it all the time.

CAPTAIN AMERICA Volume 1

(Selections From *Tales of Suspense* #59-99; *Captain America* #100-102)

RATING - E

QUICK TAKE - For the longest time, I never saw the appeal of Cap. It's interesting that he's not a super powered hero and yet still overcomes any challenge time and time again. It's cool that he single-handedly faces impossible odds and always comes out on top. However, Cap's modus operandi (shield, jump, punch ad nauseam with the occasional judo throw) gets old fast.

WHY IT'S ESSENTIAL - Red Skull's origin is awesome. It's kind of funny when Cap becomes bumbling army potato-peeler Steve Rogers.

WHY IT'S NOT ESSENTIAL - Corny, corny plots. One comic ended ridiculously in the last frame with Cap saying "I escaped from jail because I slipped a bubblegum wrapper into the cell door lock when you weren't looking!" Ugh.

MISC. NOTES - Lots of anti-German propaganda.

HULK Volume 1 (*Incredible Hulk* #1-6; Selections from *Tales To Astonish* #60-91)

RATING - EE

QUICK TAKE - Maybe more than any other character, the Hulk has seen the most changes. He's gone from mindless brute to brilliant brute to savage brute to brilliant savage and probably a dozen other combinations I've forgotten. Later on the Banner/Hulk dynamic gets more complex, but in the beginning the premise is simple: Mild mannered scientist by day, Incredible Hulk by night. Hulk only accepts commands from Ricky "the-obligatory wiener-kid-sidekick" Barnes. Then Banner decides it would be a good idea to douse himself with MORE radiation on a regular basis and change to and from the Hulk whenever he wants.

WHY IT'S ESSENTIAL - Great first issue. The overall concept of Banner and Hulk, and the ongoing arc of Hulk vs. the military is simply genius. With this at hand you hardly need villains but unfortunately they are there anyway. Also it's cool how Hulk can kick so much ass.

WHY IT'S NOT ESSENTIAL - The traveling hypnotizing circus guy? Morgu the fake alien? Later on we get some more upper tier characters but early on the Hulk was fighting chumps. Also an annoying semi-flaw: Banner is a tight-assed nerd. When he becomes the Hulk, however, not only does he change physically, he also starts to talk like The Thing. ALSO, there's little to no emotion. Hulk's transformations are controlled by outside forces, not by his emotions. This comic gets better later.

MARVEL TEAM-UP Volume 1 (Marvel Team-Up #1-24)

RATING - EEEE

QUICK TAKE - If there is one thing comic fans like more than a superhero, it's TWO superheroes! Spiderman teams up with the Torch, Vision, Iron Man and many more to battle classic foes like the Sandman and the Puppet Master. It seems like everyone in the Marvel Universe is brash, cocky, and full of witty banter, so throwing them together for a rumble and/or jab-fest is sincerely a great read.

WHY IT'S ESSENTIAL - It's a fun concept backed strongly by cool stories. The Morbius arc is superb comic storytelling with an ensemble cast. Ditto for the Tomorrow War epic.

WHY IT'S NOT ESSENTIAL - Some elements are a tad repetitive (or is it traditional?)...Spidey fights the Torch, then they team up, Spidey fights the X-men, then they team up. There must be some rule that states heroes must have an exhibition match before they tackle the real enemy.

MISC. NOTES - All those continuity notes are a pain. I don't think Marvel had perfected the "crossover" yet.

SPIDERMAN Volume 1 (Amazing Fantasy # 15; Amazing Spider-Man #1-20; Annual #1)

RATING - EEEEE

QUICK TAKE - It's easy to see why the friendly neighborhood wall crawler has been a favorite for four decades. Spiderman in action is an unparalleled read of style and stunts, but the drama that Peter Parker brings to the table makes this so much more than a comic book. It's edge-of-your-seat, high flying fun and suspense, brought back down to reality like a roller coaster dive, only to be looped around and spun once more into the thick of it. Dizzily good.

WHY IT'S ESSENTIAL - All the early adventure, all the classic villains, and the outrageousness of J. Jonah Jameson make issues #1-24 a must read for fanboys and casual readers alike. One long highlight.

WHY IT'S NOT ESSENTIAL - N/A

X-MEN Volume 1 (Original X-Men #1-24)

RATING - EEEE

QUICK TAKE - Here is where it all started. Gotta give Stan the Man some credit for brainstorming this mutant stuff. The heroes are hated by the very people they are supposed to protect! Magneto takes no prisoners on his rise to pro-mutant superiority. Wonderful characters with unique powers (not just muscle-heads or guys in funny suits), make this book strong, a few one-shot plot lines make this book not nearly as good as it was about to become.

WHY IT'S ESSENTIAL - The building blocks are here for everything that comes after. Issue #1 is classic. I love the Danger Room!

WHY IT'S NOT ESSENTIAL - The semi-unspoken puppy love between Jean and Cyclops is a mix between annoying and cute. If I wanted cute I'd read *Peanuts*! Plus, this isn't a knock at this volume per se, but the fact that Marvel has yet to release *Volume 2* of this run has me irked if not mystified, and definitely leaves me hanging.



The first time my band Dirt Bike Annie played in Portland, OR was at a club called Meow Meow opening for the Exploding Hearts in July 2002. They cut cool

style in their new wave inspired duds and banged out 70s style power pop on jangly Rickenbacker and Vox guitars. I was impressed enough to get a two inch button with the title of their signature song "I'm a Pretender" emblazoned in pink and yellow on it. Adam the lead singer told me it was because every band had one inch buttons. Already the band was thinking bigger and bolder. At the time, they didn't have any records for sale, but plans were in the works for a full length on Screaming Apple Records from Germany and a contribution to the upcoming *Dirtnap Across the Northwest* compilation. At our friend Nate Schmoë's house our drummer Mike got a cdr with live versions of four or five of the Exploding Hearts songs including "I'm a Pretender." The cdr got a lot of airplay in the van as we made our way to our shows in Seattle.

I started hearing about the Hearts again while Dirt Bike Annie was in the studio recording our first full length for Dirtnap Records in February 2003. The Mutant Pop/Knock Knock/Whoah Oh/Stardumb Records conglomerated Pop Punk Bored was vibrating from the buzz about the band. Everyone was pretty much shitting themselves over it. Album of the year. The band that could save Punk Rock.

Dirt Bike Annie was pretty bummed when we learned that the same night we were playing The Parkside in San Francisco on our summer 2003 tour, The Exploding Hearts would be rocking literally three blocks down the street at The Bottom of the Hill. No one was more disappointed than our drummer Mike who by then had

Dirt Bike Annie Bass Player Dan Paquin looks back at fellow Dirtnap Records labelmates...

The Exploding Hearts

totally fallen in love with *Guitar Romantic* which Dirtnap had issued on cd. The close proximity of the clubs to each other worked to Mike's

advantage. He borrowed our singer Adam's cellphone and checked in with us every half hour from the Exploding Hearts show. Not only did Mike get to see the whole show including a set by Deadly Weapons featuring Tina of the Bobbyteens, but he got to talk to Adam afterwards. They talked about how things had changed for the band since we'd played with them in Portland. The show had been packed and everyone there knew the words to the songs. I went down to the Bottom of the Hill myself to try to get some of the people to come see the DBA show down the block. Not only did we get some of the Exploding Hearts fans to come check us out, halfway through the set I noticed the Hearts themselves were at the bar watching us play. They looked similar as they had in Portland. The cut of the clothes was the same but the colors were brighter; Jerry the second guitar player was wearing a pink leopard coat and Adam had bleached pink jeans. The pumped colors fit the easy confidence of a band that had just slayed an audience; of a band who knew they were on the rise. The Bobbyteens had a show at the Parkside the next day, Friday, and they had asked the Hearts to stick around to play that show. Not everything was perfect however. I spoke with Terry about how they were looking for a new drummer. Kid Killer had a stable job and didn't want to tour. The guys had had to pull teeth to get him to agree to the shows in San Francisco. The Hearts had people as far away as Philly who had come out to audition. They needed someone for a two month tour in the fall. Kid had declared that the show on Friday would be his last.

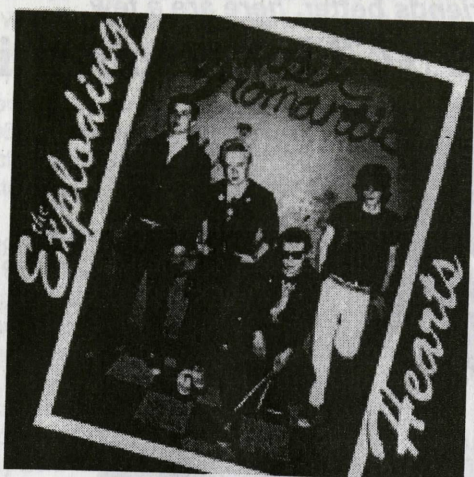
It was nice to know we were labelmates with the Exploding Hearts. Another exciting band to join the ranks on Dirtnap. However there was jealousy. We were two and half weeks into a tour that had been filled with problems; too many days off, confirmed shows falling through and poor promotion had plagued us. The fact that Jeanie had been fired from her job of five years to go on the tour didn't help morale. As the only East Coast band on the Dirtnap roster we felt out of step. The Hearts had a fashionable image sense and a buzz around them that had eluded DBA. What were we doing wrong?

We spent an extra day in San Francisco when a show in San Jose fell through. We called the club to get directions. They'd never heard of us and the bill was full that night. It was a good thing that earlier in the week we'd taken matters into our own hands with the booking. Reverend Nørb was working on setting us up a show in Green Bay and our friend Nate Schmoë had booked us a last minute show for Monday in Portland with a soon-to-be-on Dirtnap band called the Minds.

We were on our way to Reno, Nevada on Sunday, July 20. *Guitar Romantic* was playing on the stereo. I was



"Shattered" 7" (upcoming on Dirtnap Records)

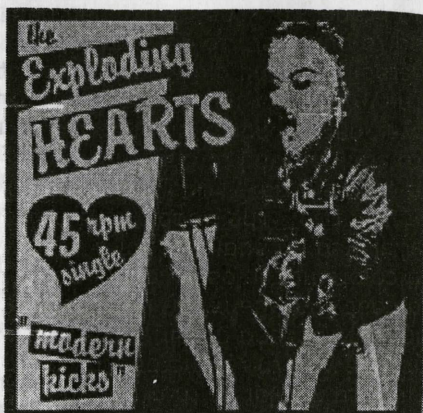


Guitar Romantic (Dirtnap Records)

driving the van. Generally whoever is in the driver's seat also gets to dictate what's on the play list. That's when Adam got the call from Netty, a friend of ours from San Francisco. "Oh my God. Are you serious? (Pause) Guys, The Exploding Hearts got in an accident on their way home from San Francisco. Three of them are dead."

Chaos in the van. What was the story? What EXACTLY had happened? Was it real? A kind of numb came over me. It was a familiar feeling. It was what I had felt like when I got the call my dad had cancer in 1994; when my college music teacher committed suicide; when I walked out of my door one September morning and saw smoke pouring out of the Twin Towers. Numb. Unreality. I kept my eyes on the road and gripped the steering wheel. At some point, Jeanie realized that their record was still playing. They were gone but the music was still there. The perception of who they had been was instantly changed. The band's retro fetish, the fact that they looked and sounded like a band that could have detonated on the scene in 1977 now seemed at once tragically ironic and eerily appropriate.

Our next show after Reno was in Portland. The Exploding Hearts home town. Our seat belt policy before their accident had been laissez-faire at best. Now every person had themselves strapped firmly in. We were nervous driving through the mountains of Northern California and Oregon. We held our breath driving over a stretch of dirt road. Our stomachs



"Modern Kicks" 7" (Pelado Records)

churned at imagined pictures of a van on its side off a gravel shoulder on Interstate 4 in Oregon, traffic for hours behind it. EMT's covering bodies with sheets. The entry from my online journal written in Portland is enigmatic. The tragedy had been covered in the local press and been picked up by the Associated Press, but felt too personal and fresh to mention specifically. Mike Napkin, the drummer from the Minds arrived at Nate's apartment. We all wondered aloud at the appropriateness of the show that night. We all headed to the Twilight Club. It was a somber mood until the opening band hit the stage. They were a goofy, scraggly, nerdy trio doing punk rock covers. It felt good to laugh with them. They broke the mood. Before we played, Adam said some words for the Exploding Hearts. It was a good crowd. A lot of people I knew from the Portland rock scene. I was glad to see them there. We poured our hearts into the set. The crowd responded in kind. Before Portland, we'd been having some problems with our bubble machine, but at the show it seemed like there was a curtain of bubbles coming down. It felt almost magical.

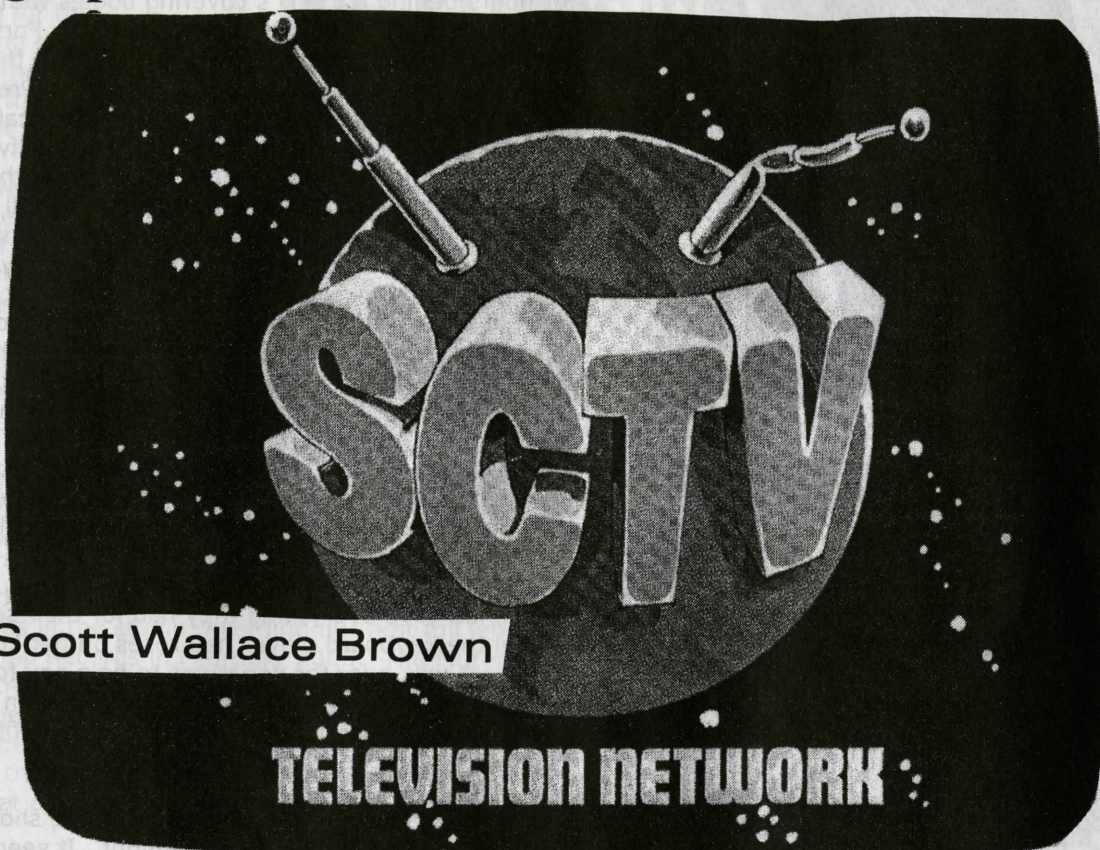
The Minds gave everything they had for their set. Rachel the keyboard player had roses on her keyboard and there was a jar for donations to help pay for the funeral expenses to which I gave what I had in my wallet. They announced there would be benefit shows in Portland, Seattle, and San Francisco.

At the end, talking to various people at the show, I was glad we hadn't cancelled the night. It seemed like the best thing we could've done. We rocked and in so doing were able to help a community mourn. I felt like we were a part of that community. Dirtnap and the Northwest bands didn't feel so distant anymore.



For those of you who are new to SCTV, for those who need a refresher course, and for those who want to get to know some old friends better, here are a few...

Biographical Sketches of Favorite SCTV Personalities



by Scott Wallace Brown

TELEVISION NETWORK

I've found that *SCTV* springs eternal; in fact, as the years go by, and with repeated viewings, it just gets funnier. This cannot be said of its contemporary *Saturday Night Live*; have you watched any of the so-called "classic" *SNL* episodes lately? They're hopelessly dated, and painfully topical, therefore having no real life outside of their time. In Dave Thomas' book on *SCTV*, Joe Flaherty says:

"We were in syndication, so we couldn't make current references. It forced us to write stuff that was more timeless. That holds up better than their stuff would ... We felt, rightly or wrongly, that we were better at that point."

(And let's face it; Chevy Chase had [and still has] no talent.)

I was watching both of these shows simultaneously in the 1970s, so I speak from experience.

Nothing illustrates the contrast between the two shows better than *SCTV*'s own parody, *Thursday Night Live*, which nailed *SNL* to the cross, but ironically featured Robin Duke and Tony Rosato, who both went on to *SNL*.

I don't want to say that *SCTV* was "gentler" than *SNL*. Perhaps the best way to put it is to say that *SCTV* was more *refined*. There's a bravado to *SNL*, a swagger that is offputting, as well as a tendency to go for the obvious rather than the subtle. *SCTV* is overall deeper, more thoughtful, more clever, more carefully crafted, and, yes, more subtle. To put it in musical terms, it's like the contrast between a brass section and a woodwind section. The former grabs your attention more quickly, and is louder and more forceful; the latter has more variety, more nuance, and an overall wider palate.

But if, as they say, the proof is in the pudding, then it's difficult for me to back all this up with concrete evidence, since *SCTV* is currently not available for public consumption. *SNL* reruns pop up on cable regularly, and many of the "classic" episodes have been released on VHS; however, there's virtually no *SCTV* material out there on cable or home video. Some might say that *SCTV*'s exalted cult status is due in some degree to its relative unavailability, and the rose-colored memories of its fans. But I'm here to tell you this: back in the late 1980s, while the show was in post-broadcast syndication, I recorded about 50 hours of *SCTV*, and I still have the tapes. And it's better now than ever. I watch these tapes on a regular basis, and, as I said at the outset, it springs eternal. Occasionally during the work day, I'll remember a bit from an *SCTV* episode, and spontaneously burst out laughing, sometimes so hard that I'll have to stop what I'm doing.

This may sound a bit elitist (and again, to put it in musical terms, like the snobbery of rock bootleg collectors; i.e. *Smiley Smile* vs. *Smile*, or *The Basement Tapes* vs. *Great White Wonder*). And, well, maybe it is. But let's hope that one of these days, whoever holds the rights to *SCTV* will eventually be able to negotiate a video/DVD release of this classic TV comedy material, and my fellow *SCTV* diehards and I will be vindicated.

LOLA HEATHERTON (portrayed by Catherine O'Hara)

We know more about the life and career of Lola Heatherton than we do about virtually any *SCTV* personality. This is not only due to her constant exposure on the network, but also

because in 1981 Earl Camembert (Eugene Levy) jumped the gun and wrote an obituary for Lola when he heard an erroneous rumor that she was dead. Also, Lola's Christmas special *The Love Spirit* gave us some backstory on her professional career as well, including vintage clips dating back to the 1960s. Like so many celebrities, though, Lola's history contradicts itself at many turns, and seems somehow manufactured.

According to Earl Camembert's obituary, Lola Heatherton was born in 1951. But *The Love Spirit* contains an excerpt of a 1965 Christmas special entitled *Christmas Meets Lola*, and she is obviously MUCH older than 14 in this clip. Also in *The Love Spirit*, Lola claims that she and Juul Haalmeyer have worked together since 1963. (Upon this admission, Juul does his part to obfuscate matters by saying, "Look, that doesn't date us. We could have been ten years old for all you know.") Obviously Lola fabricated her own date of birth at some point, or at the very least wished that it remain a mystery.

Camembert goes on to state that at the age of sixteen (which would be 1967, by Earl's reckoning) she married a wealthy Texas hog farmer, but the marriage ended just four days later, after which Lola found her way to L.A. and began go-go dancing on the Sunset Strip. Now, it's true that the scandals and busts on the Strip didn't occur until 1967. But could it be that Lola's career hit the skids so quickly that she went from having an SCTV special in '65 to being a down-and-out Sunset Strip lowlife in '67? Well, as Sinatra said right around the same time, "You're riding high in April, shot down in May." Show biz, she's a harsh mistress. (Or master.)

Earl's obituary then claims that, after a brief bout with hepatitis, Lola married ex-rugby star Helmut "Pretty Boy" Krueger, who ended up a down-and-out bum by the time Lola was finished with him. But he gives no date or other corroboration to this account; perhaps this is an apocryphal anecdote.

It can be stated with certainty that one of Lola's few film appearances, if not her only one (and most certainly her last one), was in *On The Waterfront Again*, in which she non-memorably essayed the Eva Marie Saint role in Bobby Bittman's half-baked (uh, make that quarter-baked) remake of the 1954 Brando classic.

In her 1981 live SCTV special *Bouncing Back to You*, a drugged-out Lola admitted on-camera to having affairs with Bobby Bittman (she claimed he said "How was I?" after the experience, a twist on his famous catchphrase "How are ya?") and Johnny LaRue, in addition to her well-known carousings with SCTV president Guy Caballero (they were so intertwined that Lola's legs were actually insured in Guy's name).

One of Lola's last appearances on SCTV before the network's demise was the premiere segment of her planned epic series *Way To Go, Woman!*, which was scheduled to feature appearances by Mother Teresa, Charlene Tilton, Margaret Trudeau, Lily Tomlin, and Sandra Day O'Connor. Unfortunately, the only one of these segments to make it to air was the one featuring Mother Teresa (Andrea Martin). Lola flew to India to accompany "Mommy Teresa" (as Lola dubbed her) on a typical day's rounds, and was surprised when the poverty-stricken residents of India didn't recognize her.

GERRY TODD (portrayed by Rick Moranis)

Gerry Todd is the living embodiment of the old saying "the only difference between men and boys is the price of their toys."

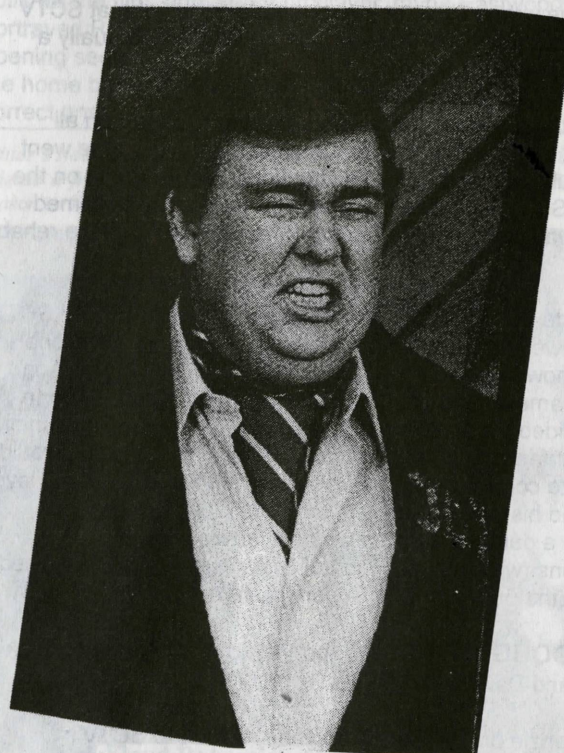
He's sort of an overgrown science-fair geek; but he has a childlike, rather infectious love of all his video technology (he has six monitors in his basement, all playing the same video at once). He briefly hosted the *Gerry Todd Show* on SCTV, showing music videos and commenting on them. The series was discontinued after two episodes. Most importantly, though, our research indicates that the first episode of his short-lived series aired on July 31, 1981; MTV debuted on August 1, 1981. Therefore, *The Gerry Todd Show* actually prefigured MTV, which in fact makes Gerry the first "veejay."

Little is known of Gerry's off-screen life, aside from his courtship of, and subsequent marriage to, Priscilla (Andrea Martin). They met through the new VideoDating system ("There's no reason just because you love video that you can't love a human"). Naturally, Gerry was looking for a woman who shared his abiding interest in video (always pronounced "vehdeo," "voodeo" or "vudeo"). The couple were married within a week of their initial meeting. Though Priscilla had other interests besides video (Chinese food; walks in the fresh air), Gerry had none; thus his all-encompassing obsession threatened their young marriage at every turn. Eventually Priscilla was able to help Gerry realize that compromise is at the core of all human relationships ("For once could you make love and NOT video?"). Though Gerry seldom refers to his bride outside of this initial encounter, he has been heard to speak fondly of her spaghetti dinners.

Gerry Todd's motto: "Record everything!"

FLOYD ROBERTSON / COUNT FLOYD (portrayed by Joe Flaherty)

Robertson led an on-air double life: as an SCTV newscaster opposite Earl Camembert, and (in a typical Guy Caballero cost-cutting move) as Count Floyd, the host of *Monster Chiller Horror Theatre*. On the one hand, he had to deal with Camembert's constant incompetence; on the other, he was



Johnny LaRue (John Candy)

Edith Prickly (Andrea Martin)



Guy Caballero (Joe Flaherty)

continually confronted with the inanity of the films SCTV forced him to program. Most notorious were the 3-D films of Dr. Tongue, most of which also featured Woody Tobias Jr. in the role of Tongue's hunchbacked assistant, Bruno. When not forced to show Tongue's gimmicky epics, the Count was often shipped the wrong films, or inappropriate ones (who at SCTV would have known that *Whispers of the Wolf* was actually a subtitled Swedish film?).

Perhaps it was the frustration encountered by Floyd on all fronts that eventually drove him to alcoholism. (As time went on, he could be spied having a little tippie before going on the air for an SCTV newscast). Robertson eventually bottomed out, and was committed to Rolling Hills, a Betty Ford-like rehab center.

Floyd made an admirable comeback in both guises; after SCTV folded, however, he was reduced to peddling an instructional video on how to make funny home videos. (To which his son said, on-camera: "C'mon, Dad! Can't you get a real job?" In this odd video, Robertson's son is always addressed as Junior, while his infant son is referred to as "Baby Floyd," which would lead one to conclude that Junior's real name is not in fact Floyd Jr. He and his wife (referred to as "Mrs. Floyd" in the video) also have a daughter named Sissy. Perhaps these appellations (with the exception of Sissy) were all aliases used to protect the privacy of the Robertson family.

BOB & DOUG MCKENZIE (portrayed respectively by Rick Moranis and Dave Thomas)

The McKenzie brothers were originally added to SCTV's programming schedule to meet the required quota of Canadian content. (Here we must point out that it was always unclear whether or not SCTV was in fact deemed to actually be a

Canadian broadcast organization; on one of the first episodes of what was then known as *Kanadian Korner*, an onscreen disclaimer states that the McKenzie brothers' segments met the required "Canadian quota.")

Eventually retitled *Great White North*, the brothers' series increased in popularity quickly, to the point where Guy Caballero attempted to capitalize on this unexplainable surge by giving them their own SCTV prime-time special, and even giving them "name" guest stars (Joyce DeWitt [Andrea Martin], Morgan Fairchild [Catherine O'Hara], and Tony Bennett [himself]), as well as giving Bob and Doug actual dressing rooms (instead of the station's broom closet they had shared). Due to the McKenzies' inability to follow the script during the (live) broadcast of *Great White North Palace*, though, further plans for Bob & Doug's tv career were quickly scuttled, to the point where they were forced to clean up the set of their own tv special. (Granted, the material written for the broadcast was weak, most notably a sketch where the McKenzies assumed the roles of the "wild and crazy" swinging Czech brothers popularized by Steve Martin and Dan Aykroyd on *Saturday Night Live*.) After the *Great White North Palace* debacle, the brothers returned to their one-set, one-minute format, as well as to their broom-closet dressing room.

They did, of course, release an lp while their star was in ascendance, not unsurprisingly titled *Great White North*. The brothers actually had a minor hit single, appropriately titled "Take Off," with a lead vocal by fellow Canuck Geddy Lee (lead singer of Rush). And their rendition of "Twelve Days of Christmas" has become a classic in certain circles.

After SCTV's demise, a film was made about the brothers' exploits, titled *Strange Brew*. More on that elsewhere in *Go Metric*...

WILLIAM B. WILLIAMS (portrayed by John Candy)

William B. was always a rather pathetic soul. Forced to toady in sub-Ed McMahon fashion to the whims of Sammy Maudlin, one is surprised that he ever summoned up the intestinal fortitude to strike out on his own and host *The William B. Show*. However, his ill-fated solo venture lasted only one episode, largely due to Williams' inability to properly interview guests by himself, most notably cantankerous 85-year-old songwriting legend Irving Cohen (Martin Short).

PIRINI SCLEROSO (portrayed by Andrea Martin)

Perhpas the most stellar rags-to-riches story within the confines of SCTV was that of Pirini Scleroso. Pirini, believed to be an illegal alien hired for next to nothing by Guy Caballero and/or Edith Prickley, went from being the network's cleaning woman to starring in SCTV's own production of *My Fair Lady* opposite Rex Harrison (Joe Flaherty). Pirini also parlayed her success into her own brand of wine, Chateau LaFeet (all grapes personally foot-squashed by Scleroso herself).

JOHNNY LARUE (portrayed by John Candy)

LaRue's on-camera career resembled nothing more so much as a straight line; all his career moves were parallel at best. From *Cooking with LaRue* to *Dining with LaRue*, he never really distinguished himself as anything more than a boozing, slovenly hack who mainly took up a lot of space on the set. Always mysteriously surrounded by a pack of (empirically speaking) beautiful starlets, Johnny was constantly having the

boom lowered on him by Guy Caballero. After an attempt at breaking out of his mold via the ill-fated, way-over-budget SCTV movie-of-the-week *PolynesianTown*, LaRue was sent back to the ranks of SCTV's second-stringers, and eventually found himself on the street hosting *Lunch Time Street Beef*. But Johnny couldn't even meet the meager demands of this format (walking up to strangers on the street and asking them to air their petty grievances). So, when Caballero caught LaRue attending the staff Christmas party while he was supposed to be hosting the holiday edition of *Street Beef*, Guy sent Johnny out in the freezing winter weather with only a single camera and mic. Eventually, even the two-man crew deserted their pathetic drunken host, leaving him to operate the mic and camera all by himself. The besotted LaRue eventually passed out. So it's anyone's guess whether he hallucinated from God (or Santa?), granting him his Christmas wish: a lavish crane shot for the final edition of *Street Beef*.

BOBBY BITTMAN (portrayed by Eugene Levy)

More on Bittman next time. But here's a joke currently making the rounds on the Left Coast:

A screenwriter gets a call from his agent.

The agent says, "Lucas is interested in producing your script."

The writer says, "What? George Lucas wants to produce my script?"

And the agent says, "Not George Lucas; SAM Lucas! He's young, but he's got enthusiasm. Oh, and Spielberg wants to direct your script!"

The writer says, "Steven Spielberg wants to direct my script?"

And the agent says, "Not Steven Spielberg; STAN Spielberg! Oh, but he loves the project! And De Niro wants the lead role."

The writer says, "Robert De Niro?"

And the agent says, "Not Robert De Niro; RALPH De Niro! Oh, and Bittman has been signed for the support role."

The writer says, "Bobby Bittman?"

And the agent says, "That's right."

GUY CABALLERO (portrayed by Joe Flaherty)

For the few who don't know already, Guy Caballero, owner and president of SCTV, was a sleazeball. He was so slimy that he used a wheelchair for sympathy, even though he didn't need one. But it never worked; nearly all the SCTV staff despised him (although virtually all of them brown-nosed him to an extent). Perhaps fittingly, little is known of this ruthless tyrant's personal life, aside from his dalliances with his mistress, Lola Heatherton. Guy and Lola were so entwined that she even had her legs insured in his name (even offering to break them on one occasion). Caballero must take some of the credit for the current "reality tv" phenomenon, due to his unsavory alliance with the tabloid *National Midnight Star*, and the subsequent SCTV series based on that rag.

EDITH PRICKLEY (portrayed by Andrea Martin)

Despite her flamboyant speaking style and outgoing personality, all we really know of SCTV station manager Edith Prickley is her dubious fashion sense (cat eyeglasses and leopard-skin clothes) and her excessive libido (usually only visible when under the influence of alcohol, as at any SCTV staff function). However, she did make brief forays into performing; she briefly had a one-woman show at the Melonville Baths (styled after Bette Midler's early career as an entertainer in New York's gay bathhouses), and she starred in an SCTV original movie, *Prickley Heat* (styled after *Body Heat*). After the network's demise, Edith was spotted tending bar; she was last seen slinging liquor in a cameo appearance in the Showtime special *Andrea Martin: Together Again*.

SCTV Trivia: Name two SCTV connections to the 2002 Oscar-winning feature film *Chicago*.

(Answers: SCTV hairstylist Judi Cooper-Sealy provided the coifs for the film; and SCTV bit player Jayne Eastwood portrayed Roxie Hart's landlady, Mrs. Borucewicz, in the opening sequence. The fact that the film was set in Chicago, the home base of Second City, obviously won't count as a correct answer.)

Editor's Note: Just before we went to press Shout! Factory announced plans to release a five dvd set featuring all nine 90-minute episodes of SCTV's first season on NBC. It's due in June '04. Start saving, folks.



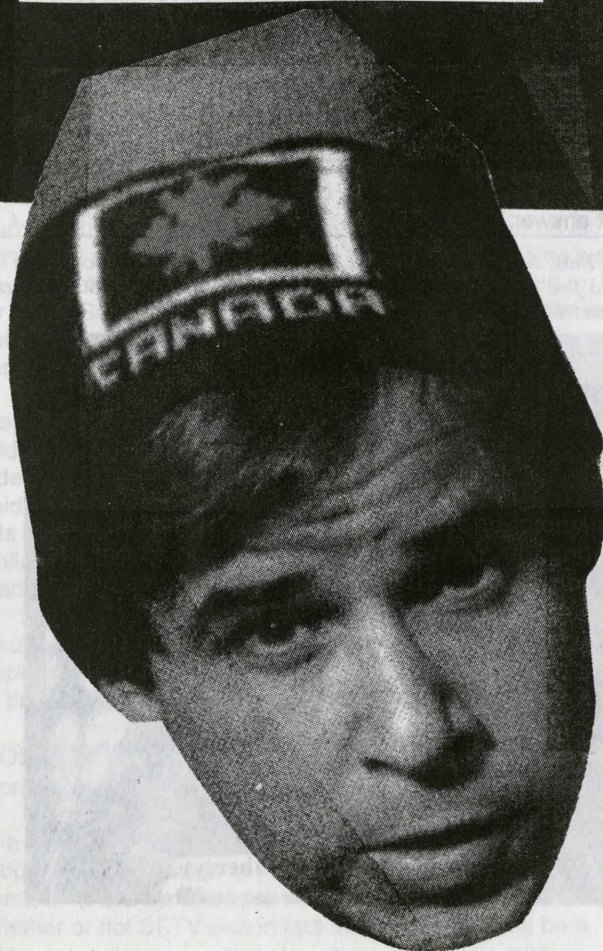
Earl Camembert (Eugene Levy)

Floyd Robertson (Joe Flaherty)

GREAT
WHITE
NORTH

Bob & Doug
vs.

The Bard
*and other thoughts
on Strange Brew*
by Skizz Cyzyk



For one week during the summer of 1983, I spent every day sitting in the same movie theater letting my then-17-year-old mind absorb the same movie over and over again, until I could recite most of the dialogue from memory. The movie was only in U.S. theaters for a week, as it wasn't exactly a box-office smash or critics' pick. I have not seen it on the big screen since, but for that one week I managed to watch it at least once a day, sometimes twice, maybe 1.5 times... in total, I bet I saw the film 10 times that week. That movie was *The Adventures of Bob & Doug McKenzie: Strange Brew*, the only big-screen spin-off from late-night Canadian comedy cult-TV show, *Second City Television (SCTV)*.

For those unfamiliar with the McKenzie Brothers, here's a quick explanation. Bob & Doug McKenzie (Rick Moranis and Dave Thomas, respectively) were two SCTV characters whose recurring segment, "The Great White North," was created to add two minutes of distinctive Canadian content to SCTV in order to appease the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. The improvised skits consisted of the two dimwit brothers sitting in front of a Canadian map, with beer bottles, a Mountie mug and some back bacon frying in front of them. The two, decked out in their parkas and tuques (knit hats), would then reflect on topics such as how to put a mouse in a beer bottle in order to get free beer. Dialogue in their skits was frequently punctuated by catch phrases, such as "Good day, eh," and "Take off, you hoser." In 1981, they released an album, *Great White North*, that included the single, "Take Off," a song that featured the two arguing in their own Canuck style, while Rush frontman, Geddy Lee, sang the choruses. The song became a novelty hit, reaching number one in Canada and top-ten in the U.S., propelling the McKenzie Brothers to fame (much to the chagrin of the rest of SCTV's cast, since everyone involved admitted the McKenzie Brothers were perhaps SCTV's least interesting recurring characters).

Their catch phrases began showing up on T-shirts, buttons and bumper stickers. Moranis and Thomas even hosted an episode of SCTV's late night comedy competitor, *Saturday Night Live*, delivering the opening monologue as Bob & Doug. Obviously, success on tv and in record sales meant Bob & Doug needed to make the jump to the big screen, and thus *Strange Brew* was born.

Strange Brew is the story of the McKenzie Brothers going to work at the Elsinore Brewery during a management change. Twenty-one-year-old Pamela Elsinore has recently inherited the brewery after her father's mysterious death and her mother's subsequent remarriage to Pamela's Uncle Claude. Framing this story are Bob & Doug, who, though hired to work on the bottling line, are unknowingly recruited to take part in Pamela's murder so that Claude can take over the brewery.

Besides Moranis and Thomas in the lead roles, *Strange Brew* features Max von Sydow as Brewmeister Smith, the evil puppeteer behind all the crimes being

committed at the brewery; Paul Dooley as Claude Elsinore; and Mel Blanc as the voice of Bob & Doug's father (although in one quick scene, Moranis & Thomas play Bob & Doug's parents).

Because of my fondness for SCTV, I had bought the McKenzie Brothers' album, and likewise HAD to see their movie when it came out. It's hard to say why I bothered to watch *Strange Brew* so many times, or why over the years I have watched it on video many, many more times. I'll be the first to admit, it's funny but certainly by no means a great film, and it most definitely would not have been my first choice for a SCTV spin-off film. Nevertheless, they made me laugh and I could relate to the lowest-common denominator, alcohol-abuse, and rebellious humor infused in their shtick.

There's a certain sweetness and innocence to the stupid humor of the McKenzie Brothers that I think is at the heart of their appeal. While devising their anti-social, anti-establishment schemes, they cruelly argue with and abuse each other, exaggerating the mean ways brothers treat each other. At the core, though, they are best friends as well as brothers, with very simple needs (mostly beer, donuts, and like-minded companionship). They are Cheech & Chong, replacing pot with beer; they are Wayne and Garth from *Wayne's World*, replacing heavy metal and girls with hockey and donuts; they are precursors to the Farrelly Brothers' movies, replacing shocking and disgusting humor with just plain amusing stupidity.

I saw *Strange Brew* before having to read Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in school. Imagine my surprise upon my first reading of *Hamlet* when I discovered, "Hey, wait a minute, this story is *Strange Brew*!" (Of course, there's plenty of evidence suggesting Shakespeare wrote the story long before Moranis & Thomas). Here's just a few of the similarities between *Hamlet* and *Strange Brew*:

IN HAMLET: Much of the story takes place at Elsinore Castle.

IN STRANGE BREW: Much of the story takes place at Elsinore Brewery.

IN HAMLET: Hamlet's father, The King Of Denmark, has recently died of mysterious causes. The prince's Uncle Claudius has not only assumed the throne, but has quickly married Hamlet's mother too.

IN STRANGE BREW: Pamela's father, John Elsinore, President of Elsinore Brewery, has recently died of mysterious causes. The heiress' Uncle Claude has not only assumed control of the brewery, but has quickly married Pamela's mother too.

IN HAMLET: Hamlet's lover, Ophelia, is from a lower class of people than Hamlet. She eventually goes insane and drowns.

IN STRANGE BREW: Pamela's romantic interest, Rosey, is a former hockey-player who is currently an inmate at an insane asylum. He nearly drowns.



IN HAMLET: The ghost of Hamlet's father appears to him, tells him he was murdered by Claudius, and asks him to revenge his "most foul, strange, and unnatural murder."

IN STRANGE BREW: The ghost of Pamela's father appears to her and shows her security camera footage incriminating Claude in his murder.

IN HAMLET: Claudius sends for Hamlet's friends, Rosencrantz & Guildenstern, to spy on Hamlet. Claudius later sends the three of them to England, where Hamlet is to be put to death.

IN STRANGE BREW: Claude hires Pamela's friends, Bob & Doug, to work at the brewery. Claude later recruits Bob & Doug to drive Pamela to her death.

From there, *Strange Brew* takes many liberties with the Hamlet story, including the additions of other key characters, a much happier ending, and centering the whole story more on Bob & Doug than on Pamela. I remember thinking that despite the main characters being so stupid, it took a lot of smarts (and guts) on the parts of the guys playing those characters to pull off writing, directing, and starring in *Strange Brew*. My admiration quadrupled upon discovering that this disposable teen-entertainment B-movie was actually a clever re-telling of a classic Shakespeare play. Who would've expected THAT? Well, hardcore SCTV fans might have expected it, given SCTV's tendency towards more literary humor (which my teenage mind may not have fully gotten at the time, but certainly enjoyed nevertheless).

Strange Brew's lack of box-office success allowed Moranis and Thomas to finally take off the tuques and move on, each having plenty of post-SCTV success in movies and on tv. But that wasn't necessarily the end of Bob & Doug McKenzie. A soundtrack album was released, combining audio portions from the film with studio recordings of the brothers talking about the

making of the film, including music from the film like the opening theme song performed by Ian Thomas (Dave's brother). A paperback *Strange Brew* book was also released (and it was in the shape of a beer bottle). Many, many years later, long after most people forgot about the McKenzie Brothers, Bob & Doug action figures hit the market, and the duo popped up in commercials for Pizza Hut, Jiffy Lube, and Molsen Bear.

For several years, there was talk of a sequel called *Home Brew*, in which the McKenzie Brothers would have been luckless garbage men who start their own microbrewery and end up losing everything. Production was scheduled for the summer of 2000, but unfortunately the whole project fell apart during pre-production.

Strange Brew has finally been released on dvd, including an animated trailer for an upcoming Bob & Doug animated series (and not much else in the way of extras). Most recently Moranis and Thomas lent their McKenzie Brothers voices to two moose in Disney's animated *Brother Bear*.

Dave Thomas has said that he's too old to reprise his McKenzie character anymore, and Moranis has become a huge bonafide mainstream celebrity (meaning: highly paid and less likely to take career risks), so there's a good chance the world has seen the last of Bob & Doug. While some will remember Bob & Doug mostly for their catch phrases, the truly die-hard will continue to connect and crack themselves up by reciting favorite lines from *Strange Brew*, like "It's a jelly," "Steamroller!," "If I didn't have puke-breath, I'd kiss you," "Just testing the brakes, eh," "I've got two soakers - this isn't Heaven, this sucks!", and way too many more to mention. Sometimes it's an embarrassing club to be a part of, but my membership will never expire.



Arrrgh Matey, *Thar* Film Blows!

by Steve Reynolds

2003 saw two films that take place mostly on boats—*Pirates of the Caribbean* and *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World*—score big at the box office, with critics and Academy Award nominations. But both movies fall victim to my "Jaws curse" theory, which states that any film made since that 1975 classic, and has the majority of its action set on a boat, is going to suck.

You might think, "Hey, I enjoyed Johnny Depp's Keith Richards impression for two hours" or, "How can any film with 10 Oscar nominations suck?" *Pirates of the Caribbean* is based on a DISNEY RIDE, people. And it's produced by Jerry Bruckheimer, the same man that brought us such classics as *Bad Boys*, *Bad Boys 2*, *Kangaroo Jack* and *Coyote Ugly* (not to mention all those bad police shows on CBS). Sucking is in this film's DNA and no effort from Johnny Depp could save it.

As for *Master and Commander*, I give you two words: Russell Crowe. This man has somehow parlayed one great role (a cop with anger management issues in *L.A. Confidential*) into a career where he's looked at as one of our finest actors. The only reason I can think of for his Oscar win for *Gladiator* is that his muscles wowed female voters and male voters were afraid that Crowe might stab them on the set of his next film. One last piece of evidence—he slept with Courtney Love. If he had any talent left before that, it was certainly gone after that night.

So the "Jaws curse" is still going strong almost 20 years later, and the road to Hollywood is paved with actors, writers and directors felled by this mystical-like power. Here are five shining examples of the shit of the seven seas.

Jaws 2, *Jaws 3-D*, *Jaws: The Revenge* (1978-1987) Three of the most useless sequels in movie history. The third *Jaws* film tried to get away from the curse by setting it at Sea World. And bringing in Michael Caine. AND filming it in 3-D. None of it worked, especially since the bloody body parts didn't look so cool in 3-D. (But the glasses were cool souvenir to take home.)

Captain Ron (1992) Overheard at a studio meeting:

Producer 1: "Hey, does anyone think Kurt Russell can do a shanty sea captain impression for ninety minutes?"

Producer 2: "Sure, and I bet Martin Short and Kurt would have a great chemistry!"

Producer 3: "Sounds great! Eightballs for everybody!"

Anaconda (1997) A film that stars a big water-loving snake, Jennifer Lopez AND Kari Wurher. We're all very, very lucky that the world didn't end.

Titanic (1997) What an over-bloated, over-polished turd this was. The phenomenon of late '97 and early '98 still boggles my mind. I wanted to throw myself overboard after 30 minutes, but I somehow kept thinking, "This has to get better." Unfortunately, it didn't (and all that water made me run to the bathroom twice during the movie).

Boat Trip (2002) Overhead at another studio meeting:

Producer 1: "Hey, does anyone think Cuba Gooding Junior can pretend to be a guy that's pretending to be gay to get a girl for ninety minutes?"

Producer 2: "Sure, and I bet that fat guy from *SNL* has to funny at one point in his life!"

Producer 3: "Sounds great! Ecstasy for everybody!"

Even *Jaws* director Steven Spielberg fell victim to the curse with *Amistad*. So what hope does Hollywood have to break this waterlogged streak? Mostly likely none—especially since *Pirates of the Caribbean 2* is going into production later this year.¹ Maybe Johnny Depp will do a Mick Jagger impression this time around.

Next issue...Hollywood responds to the Jaws curse with a rash of submarine movies!!!

¹ But if you're in need of an exception to prove the rule: *Cabin Boy*.



The Next "Best Band" In the World

An interview with **Kurt Bloch**
(Guitarist, Songwriter, Producer)



I was fortunate enough to spend a few hours talking to Kurt Bloch in early February 2004. We discussed his old band, the Fastbacks, his new band, Sgt. Major, as well as many other topics. During the interview we had some whiskey and then afterwards we listened to Cactus. A good time was had by all. Here is a transcript of the evening. (Interview by Scott Lee)

Go Metric: Who is Sgt. Major?

Kurt Bloch: (Kurt laughs, starts mimicking his own voice) It's mainly me, uh...

Ok, so you on guitar, Carmella on vocals, Jim Sangster on bass, and Mike...

...Mike Mustardburger (sic) on drums, formerly it was Jason Finn on the drums.

And soon to be Rusty Willoughby on the drums. (Laughter)

Yes, and soon to be Rusty Willoughby on the drums, temporarily.

So the more things change the more things stay the same?

Yes, definitely, all those drummers served their time in the a-Fastbacks-a.

How long has Sgt. Major been a band?

From our first show, just a little over a year. I think that was November 14, 2002? What do you call the beginning of a band, the first show or the first time we got together?

How long were you practicing before that first show?

Well, then it gets complicated too, 'cause the original Sgt. Major had John Ramberg in it, and we practiced for a month or two learning songs.

Was Carmella in the band at that time?

No. The idea was that we'd have a singer and it wouldn't be John or I, but we would be the harmony singers. It was to be a five-piece band with a lead singer.

Did you always have a female vocalist in mind or were you just looking for the best singer you could find?

No. I really had no theories. Just looked for someone who liked the music and could sing well.

How did you find Carmella?

We were hanging at the bar and we got to be friends. I had seen her sing at Rockaroke: Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath, and the Bee Gees "Staying Alive." It was enjoyable to chat with her about the music we couldn't stand. (Laughs)

So what you had in common was your mutual dislike for certain bands?

Certain music, certain styles of music, certain people.

Do you care to elaborate on that? (Laughter)

Oh, of course not! None of the people we talked about were people that I actually know. Anyway, she was the bartender at the Sunset and she saw easily 10 bands a week, if not more. Every now and then I'd get a mysterious phone call from the bar with some music playing in the background. It was kind of a joke an invitation to come on down to the Sunset. One day it was Scott Birham.

Good?

Oh yeah, totally great, just killer.

So you had mutual likes and mutual dislikes. So it was a fit musically.

Yes, there was music and lyrical styles we both appreciated. It wasn't all complaining about stuff. It was about quality; mutual quality. Like, Wow, that was about the greatest thing I've ever seen.

Carmella's never been in a band before?

No.

Had she known about the Fastbacks, was she a fan at all?

No. She worked at our last show in Seattle at the Sunset.

But didn't have any of your records or back catalog?

No. She probably just owns a couple cds and everything else she owns is just lps. I think when I met her she didn't even have her own cd player.

Did you just give her your demo and say, I think you'd be a good fit for this?

We probably talked about it a little bit, but then I made a cd with three songs on it with both vocals and just instrumental versions. I thought I'd just give this out to people who were interested and see how it works.

Did you try out a bunch of singers?

(Laughs) No. Just her. That's about it. We got along well and we had similar tastes, it was a good fit.

And it doesn't hurt that she's a foxy lady either?

Doesn't hurt at all, but you know, you gotta be good too.

Having Jim, Mike, and/or Jason, was that a result of you having played with them for years? Or did you always have them in mind?

No, I think Jim just said, If you ever have a new band, I'm in it. And then Jason, I always felt deserved a fairer shot because he always wanted to play in the Fastbacks but he never cemented himself in that role. When he finally got his chance, he got to play all of four shows, and then the band split up. He went through all that trouble so I thought he should for sure have a chance to play more.

What happened with John Ramberg? Did he just decide he didn't have enough time to stay in the band?

I like the idea of having two guitar players in a band if they both really care a lot and try to be really good. John was definitely my first choice. I didn't want a situation where the singer played guitar just because they felt like they had to. John Ramberg is a great guitar player and a great singer. So I got to thinking, Wow, well how cool would this be to have two great guitar players, two people who could handle most anything and are both willing to think of things and come up with great parts that were unique to their style and ability?

And John's harmony vocal ability is ...

Unparalleled. And he can play and sing great at the same time.

Were you worried that you had all these great musicians backing up a singer who had never been in a band before?

No. (Laughter) But it's not like I'm a dictator and told them that she had to be in the band and if they didn't like it they could find another band. There was a long time where we learned about 10 songs and didn't

have any singer. That was really difficult, the songs were all new and the guitar parts are kind of hard. We were just trying to make it fun and after a month or so of working it out we didn't have a singer. I think John went on tour to Spain with the Model Rockets. When he got back we had one practice as a five piece, but then he realized he didn't have the kind of time that it would take to make the kind of contribution to the band that he felt it deserved.

He didn't want to do it half-assed?

Yeah, and he couldn't. There was no way he could be half-assed singing harmony vocals and playing interesting guitar parts. Plus, he was trying to do his own thing too. At that point I also got to thinking of all the bands like the Who, Cream, Led Zeppelin, Van Halen. I like the idea of just having one guitar in a band.

So you recorded a record, when is it coming out?

It just depends. I don't want to put it out just to put it out. But I don't want to hold it back just to hold it back. I'd like to wait until everyone is around and we could do at least a West coast tour.

Book Records release?

So far it's destined to be a Book Records release. It's basically done, just needs to be mastered. I'm happy with the way it turned out.

Have you done any out of town shows?

We got to Bellingham once. We headlined on a weekend at the Three Bees, only by accident. Jason Finn broke his foot and so Mike had to fill in for Jason at a show in Seattle that afternoon. He drove to Bellingham. After that was over and when he arrived it was close to midnight and so we ended up headlining. We were supposed to be the opening band because no one had ever heard of us.

How was the first Sgt. Major show at the Sunset?

Spirited, nervous, and probably not very good. It was fun, but I would not even care to talk about anyone's performance. I'm not crying about it. And now the songs that we played at that first show are quite a bit easier. We've been playing together for a year.

And Carmella seems to have gotten way more comfortable up on stage with each show.

Oh, most certainly. That first show was crazy, about 200 people there. That's a tough thing to do, take a bartender and then put her up on stage and have her sing to all her customers.

How was it opening for Ash?

It was fun 'cause we liked Ash so much. I think it was good 'cause we had been playing quite a bit before that show and Mike was starting to get really comfortable playing the songs.

Any live performance highlights?

The first year we just didn't play enough. It's hard 'cause no one really wants to play the Wednesday nights, but we needed to play the third rate shows in order to shed our nervousness, take chances, and get better. We don't want to be the kind of band that plays the same 12 songs in the same order and tell the same jokes in between songs. Let's not do that.

Keep it fresh?

Yeah, all fresh material. Just mix it up and you have to have a lot of experience and you have to know a lot of songs in order to do that.

What have you been up to lately?

Not enough.

What bands are you playing in?

Once for Kicks, Pure Joy. We have a Pure Joy record that is in the works with all members will be contributing songs.

So a Kurt song in Pure Joy?

There will be exactly one of my songs on it, but it's a rather major work, about a quarter of an album as it stands now.

Your song?

Yeah. Close to 10 minutes, if not more. The record is not being recorded in the studio, it's being recorded in everyone's home and files are being passed around.

A complete team effort?

Yes. I dubbed the record *Family Owned, Family Operated*, but I don't know if that's what we're going to call it.

Any tentative titles for the Sgt. Major record?

Rich Creamery Butter. (Laughter)

If a band wanted you to produce their record, what would be the best way to get you interested?

Call, send me an e-mail, give me a call. Send me your demo. I'm not hard to find.

Were any of the Sgt. Major songs written while you were still in the Fastbacks?

Probably about four: "World Inside," "In the Garden," "New Painter Man," and "Battleship Called Greed." Two of those are on the Sgt. Major record.

Now that the Fastbacks break-up is in the past, do you have any comments?

You know it's hard to comment on it. If your singer quits, what are you supposed to do?

Would you entertain a Fastbacks reunion?

Sure, I still love those songs.

Any plans to play Fastbacks songs in Sgt. Major?

Maybe. No one is against it, it's just there are still so many new songs. We have at least enough new songs for an entire 'nother album, and we play half of them already. It's kind of hard to start thinking about old songs when there are so many new ones to learn.

Do you keep in touch with Kim and Lulu?

All the time.

What are they up to?

Kim's in Visqueen, who might be playing at Noise Pop on the same show as Pure Joy and Sgt. Major! The funniest thing about it is someone e-mailed our website two months ago and requested a San Francisco show featuring Sgt. Major, Pure Joy, and Visqueen, with then a little Fastbacks reunion. The show might happen, but there likely will not be any Fastbacks reunion.

It could happen, but it won't?

I don't think so.

Are there any songs you are playing in Sgt. Major that would have been vetoed by the Fastbacks?

Oh, ABSOLUTELY. There are some of the songs we tried in the Fastbacks that really couldn't have worked.

For instance?

"A Battleship Called Greed." But it's really not fair to think we could've played that song. It really needs someone who isn't singing to play the bass guitar part.

Well, the bass guitar parts in Sgt. Major are quite different. You don't employ the Dee Dee Ramone bass school.

And no injustice to Dee Dee Ramone. Certainly parts of our songs require Dee Dee Ramone type parts, and he was even discussed when we were putting together "Underneath It."

Which could've easily been a Fastbacks song.

Oh, easily. That would've been the perfect Fastbacks song. It started off as a more rhythmically complex song. As we were practicing it we realized, Who are we kidding? This IS the Ramones, just play this chunk of the verse as Dee Dee Ramone...as Marky Ramone. I recorded many of the demos with a fairly assaultative bass guitar line. But to try and sing those songs and play the bass at the same time isn't simple or recommended.

What do you see as the major differences between Sgt. Major and the Fastbacks?

I don't see any real differences in approach, but how could I? Everyone is trying to do their best and at times I'd be more likely to throw Jim a bass line idea that was totally out to lunch or crazy or wilder.

And he's more receptive to that than say Kim was?

Oh yeah, sure, but he doesn't have to sing either. It just frees up Sgt. Major to more songs that are built around an assaultative bass guitar style. A little bit more in the forefront.

Versus just anchoring the music.

Right. Since I started playing bass in Once For Kicks I just got a lot more excited about the bass guitar as an instrument, and it's something that I think is missing in a lot of music today. You listen to records from the 60s and there is a ton of stuff where the bass guitar is just driving it. Even in the 70s. The bass got less and less important in the 80s to the point where there are bands today with no bass players. The White Stripes are great, but would they sound better with a killer bass player? Yup. I just miss hearing the bass. Plus, Jim's killer and sounds awesome.

See if you would agree with my assessment of Sgt. Major's sound: "a mix of punk, prog, 70s rock, 60s pop, like the Fastbacks but with a little more emphasis on mid-tempo progressive songs (but not necessarily prog rock)."

Yeah.

Carmella's voice being a little less childlike in quality than Kim's but fitting in nicely with the nuances of the band.

Yeah, yeah. And she could sing 70s blues rock. In fact, we did make a pact that we are going to do that some time after listening to the Cactus compilation! They were like the U.S. answer to Led Zeppelin or Cream.

Good?

Sick. AWESOME! Bass playing that is just insane, guitar playing crazy, drums just ... You gotta listen to some Cactus 'cause it's awesome.

Any plans to release a Fastbacks rarity or unreleased comp?

Nothing that's nailed down yet, but we kind of made a pact with Munster in Spain to do some sort of ... do something. There are some good songs that never

came out; there's definitely some good stuff. It's a phenomenal amount of work to do something that would be nice. We don't want to put out something that doesn't look nice or that was just slapped together.

Quality is a good standard to abide by.

Yeah, 100% quality, or NOTHING.

"Underneath It" is a classic Kurt Bloch song, with a poppy melody and music, but lyrics that emphasize the more depressing aspects of life.

Is that a conscious decision when you're writing a song or does it just turn out that way?

There's no conscious thought to anything like that. The song was definitely a lyrical idea first. I set out to write a happy song that was blatantly cheerful but then in the end it just got skewered. If you can't see the humor in being bummed out then that's too bad; although I'm sure there are a lot of people who don't see the humor in being miserable. Music should be cathartic in some way or another.

Do your band mates ask you about your lyrics and tell you "this is really depressing"?

In the Fastbacks, never. Even in the Young Fresh Fellows, Scott never asks what anything is about. But Carmella is always saying to me, "What do you mean by this? What is this about?" Probably she wants to know more about what the songs are about and will tell me when she can't sing about something in specific, like slitting your throat with a gun-shaped knife. I'm not trying to write songs to challenge the limits of what I can get someone to say, it's just hard to write words.

Is it difficult to write songs that aren't gender specific, like you can't write about the woman who makes you feel...?

"She's the woman who rules my soul, she's the one who makes me wanna rock n' roll." In some ways the non-gender specific-ness of it is a blessing. If I were writing it for myself to sing, there would be a lot weirder words. But trying to get something that someone can at least remember singing is hard enough. Let's face it, we don't want to have any "I love you Guinevere's" out there. So I just have to think of things in a less specific way. It makes it harder, but I'm fine with that.

You've done it all your life.

True. How many songs have I written that are gender specific? "She Sees Color" is one, but that could've been sung by a woman. It's not something I think about. It's kind of a self-policing theory.

Well, you've written that way more than you haven't.

Right. And I'm not writing them thinking this one is for the Fastbacks, this one's for the Young Fresh Fellows, this one's for the Fastbacks.

Or this one's for your solo record.

Well, the songs for my solo record are the songs that nobody wants to do. Nominated by default. (Laughter)

So how long did it take to record the record?

You have to remember that when we set out to record we only were going to record four songs.

Four songs over three days?

Yeah. Originally it was going to be two days. And then we thought we should do six songs, pick four and then we'd have two extra for a single. I think we ended up

booking four days for recording and mixing. So when we got to recording we just figured we could record a few extras.

At least have basics for a few extra songs.

Yeah, and then finish it later. But then we figured, We gotta do this one, And we gotta do this one.

And then you ended up with nine songs.

We ended up with nine there, and then we went and mixed them. We did mix them at Litho, but then we took a couple days at Avast to remix. There is also a tenth song that was from the demos we recorded with Jason on drums.

How much of the rhythm parts are live?

All.

Most of the guitars live?

Yeah, there's probably three songs that are not. You can tell 'cause they are the songs that are expanded. I wanted to keep the general rule for the record as simple - live - period.

"Guiding Light" has a very dreamlike quality and it seems to me that the lead guitar part takes the role of a lead vocal, and the lead vocal is actually more complimentary than most songs. The guitar sounds like it's in the forefront. Can you elaborate?

Honestly, I can't remember the impetus for that song, but I think it probably started out as a guitar solo.

Probably the guitar theme was the main part of it and then I figured, What needs to happen next? It needs to have a church song kind of melody and lyric.

It just kind of built from a guitar solo?

Yeah, that's not uncommon for me. There are a few songs I've written that started out as a guitar solo first. You just have to let the song tell you how it wants to be made. Some songs have some really strange arrangements but it's got to be that way in order to house all the ideas. There's a couple songs recently that have arrangements where the first part of the song, the original genesis of the song, ends up getting thrown away after you've written the rest of the song because it's no longer appropriate. Whatever it takes to get the song done and keep it good. I feel so lucky that once in a while I do come up with a good idea for a song.

What was it like working with a horn section for "World Inside"?

It was fantastic. My friend Craig Flory, who's I've probably known for 20+ years, was really good. He plays the saxophone, tenor and baritone. He plays in all kinds of outfits, but we just had drunken bouts of, We gotta do something together. After leaving him many messages we finally managed to get it together. I didn't tell him it was an eight minute-long song! He got two of his friends to play the other horn parts and they pretty much nailed the parts on the first take. Bang! Done.

They're professionals!

Yeah, those guys are bad ass. And they're funny. The basic horn tracks were maybe one and a half takes. I wanted the horns to be loud and proud. If there was anything that was going to give them a run for the money it was going to be the, mmm...bass. (Laughter)

For me that song is the perfect bridge between the Fastbacks and Sgt. Major.

It is.

How much freedom do you give Jim and Mike to come up with their own parts?

Whatever they want. The demos are usually finished, but if they have a better idea they should do it. But some of the demos have no bass or drums on them at all. The general verve of the song is usually laid out. I want them to play more, show off, let it fly. Those guys are good enough that if it doesn't work they can tell it doesn't work. Every song has gotta rock a little different than the one before it. It's gotta rock. It should be a show off band.

What is the official drink of Sgt. Major?

Maker's Mark.

Neat?

As you like it. (Laughs) That should be their slogan. We drink it however you like it: there's the Maker's Mark Manhattan, the shot of Makers, always a classic. Maker's on ice, time to get nice. Makers with soda if you want to make it last a little longer. Or Maker's with a tiny bit of ginger ale.

What's in your cd player right now?

Nothing. They're ALL EMPTY.

What's the last record you listened to?

Cactus - *Cactology*. The Rhino Collection.

What is the URL of your website?

www.sgtmajor.tv

What can people expect to find from your website?

Poorly designed, state of the art circa 1996. Our most piled high burger EVER.

What happened to the Fastbacks website?

It got yanked from the Sub Pop server.

We'll have to resurrect that.

Yeah.

Is there anything that the *Go Metric* readers should know about Sgt. Major?

Pretty good band, keep getting better. Maybe by this time next year we will be the best band in the world. That's our goal. And if you're in a band and that's not your goal, you're stupid! If you're not trying to be the best band in the world, then why bother? The goal is a high one, it is a lofty one, that goal is to be the best band in the world.



Film Forum bills itself simply: "a nonprofit cinema since 1970." They are so humble, those guys. Film Forum, located in downtown Manhattan, is my favorite movie house in the world, offering a constant stream of overlooked-by-the-rest-of-civilization new releases, domestic and foreign, narrative and documentary, along with classics, within and beyond the accepted canon. The screens are small, the lines are often long and the audiences can be pretentious, but I always walk away thinking and talking about the flicks I see there. And whenever friends ask if I've seen any good movies lately, it is the Film Forum fodder that comes to mind. So, for my brother Pat, and anyone else who might be curious, here is...

An Interesting Thing Happened at the Film Forum

by Mike Faloon

Stone Reader

Mark Moskowitz is on a quest to find Dow Mossman, author of *The Stones of Summer*. The problem is that the more he looks for Mossman, the less he finds. None of his friends have heard of Mossman. He cannot find any other books written by Mossman nor any trace of the company that published *The Stones of Summer*. Were it not for a copy of a New York Times book review, Moskowitz would have no evidence that anyone else in the world has heard of either Mossman or his book. And the less Moskowitz finds, the more obsessive he becomes. (Change the medium and the budgeting and Moskowitz would make a great fanzine editor.) But the search is only the surface because *Stone Reader* is really a movie about loving books. A definitive Film Forum experience.

Battle of Algiers

Absolutely amazing. This was written by a former Algerian revolutionary, Saadi Yacef, banned by the French in the 60s and screened by the Pentagon as the U.S. went into Iraq in 2003. *The Battle of Algiers* is stunningly realistic and more impressively, even handed in depicting both sides of the conflict, the native Algerians and the colonizing French.

Ten

No, not the Dudley & Bo vehicle, this *Ten* is the story of a single mom living in Iran and driving a taxi for a living. And talking a lot. And saying very little. And her kid is a brat. The whole movie takes place in a taxi, and that's cool. Ben Vaughn once recorded a cd in the backseat of a car. The album is called '65 Rambler and it's pretty good. Certainly better than *Ten*.

Muhammad Ali: The Greatest

What is not to like about a documentary that has appearances by Malcolm X, the Beatles, and Robert Goulet? Muhammad Ali crosses paths with everyone. The most amazing scenes, however, are those in which the filmmakers hit the streets and ask people what they think about one of Ali's upcoming fights. Everyone has a well-informed opinion. I love sports

but I could not tell you who the current champ is. Yet here we see random customers in a Miami grocery store dishing out smart commentary on the first Liston fight, and kids in Zaire showing off their Ali impressions in the days before the first Foreman fight.

Empathy

The trailer hooked me. It depicts a turning of the tables on a group of therapists who are asked if they lie to patients, or if patients lie to them, or if they are ever attracted to their patients. The premise has great potential but *Empathy* never goes beyond what we see in the trailer. As it turns out only three or four therapists are interviewed in the movie, leaving us with no idea of the extent to which they represent their brethren. Yet at the same time we do not get to know them in any depth, so nothing is revealed about therapists in general nor these therapists in particular. Sounds like a bad documentary, right? It gets worse. Filmmaker Amie Siegel, fresh out of the University of Spending My Trust Fund on My First Movie, decided to intertwine a fictional story, following a patient through conversations with family and friends. Ostensibly this story, such as it is, is offered to give us a sense of "the other side," but the narrative is so jumbled that it is impossible to develop any sense of connection to, yet alone empathy with, the fictional character. In the end *Empathy* delivers two failed films in one. Easily one of the least pleasant movie going experiences of my life (though I'm dying for someone else I know to see it. I can have someone with whom to commiserate.)

My Architect

Like *Stone Reader*, this features another middle age guy on a quest, and it yields another fascinating documentary. Nathaniel Kahn is the son of famed architect Louis Kahn. Only Nathaniel's mother, Harriet, never married Louis, and Nathaniel never knew his father well. (Louis remained married to another woman throughout his relationship with Harriet). So he sets out on a tour of his father's best

known creations. His travels take him around the world and help him piece together a better conception of Louis Kahn, flawed father and crazed genius. The buildings are breathtaking but it is Nathaniel Kahn's spontaneous encounters with people who knew his father that make *My Architect* so remarkable.

Yves St. Laurent

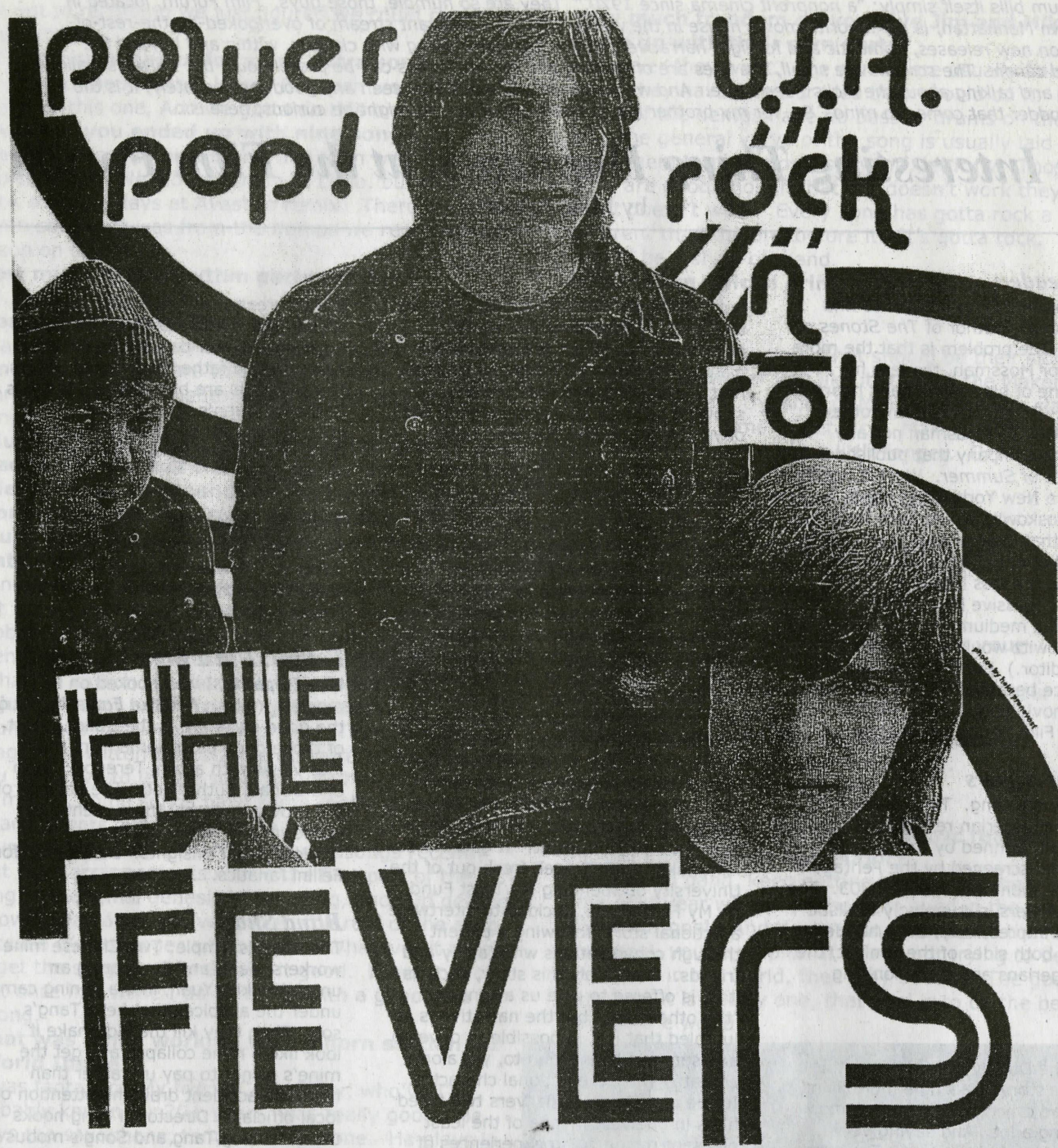
Yes, I saw a movie about a fashion designer. It was completely forgettable; the exception to the Film Forum rule.

Fellini: I'm a Born Liar

Like *Empathy*, I was hooked on this movie's trailer. And like *Empathy*, all of the good parts are in the trailer. Most of those good parts come from the interviews with actors Terence Stamp and Donald Sutherland. The balance of the movie is merely the pretentious renderings of rather obvious "philosophical" insights. Best suited for Fellini fanatics.

Blind Shaft

The story is simple: Two Chinese mine workers, Tang and Song bring an unrelated kid, Yuan, into a mining camp under the auspices that he is Tang's son. Then they kill the kid, make it look like a mine collapse and get the mine's owner to pay up rather than have the accident draw the attention of local officials. Director Li Yang hooks us by making Tang and Song's modus operandi very clear very early and giving us plenty of time to develop a strong affection for their next victim, Yuan. It is also fascinating to watch as Yuan impacts the relationship between Tang and Song. *Blind Shaft* has all the makings of a tragic Russian novel and kept me on the edge of my seat searching for clues to indicate whether or not the movie was going to end like I expected it to. I loved *Blind Shaft*. In five years Hollywood is going to remake *Blind Shaft* as *Shovel Upon My Head*, starring Richard Gere, Brad Pitt, and Haley Joel Osment, and all of the reviews will mention the "much more satisfying original."



"Our greatest problem today is our lack of respect for domestic power pop." You won't find many people who recognize this as the second greatest ill in today's society (topped only by the continued absence of an SCTV boxset—yes, I know there's such a set scheduled to be released in June but I'll believe it when I have it in hand), but that is exactly what our research has found: Americans don't appreciate contemporary power pop bands. Take the Fevers, for example. Forty years ago a band like the Fevers would have been opening for the Beatles, appearing on Hullabaloo, releasing three albums a year, and launching a barrage of singles into the charts. Instead, the Fevers suffer the typical fate of the Great American Pop Band: they're revered by a small circle of right-minded citizens, and they, the Fevers, have to go overseas to get their album released. (Their debut album was released by Germany's Alien Snatch records.) Combine the band's relative obscurity, with the facts that they rarely tour and I've never read an interview with them and there's a huge disparity between how much I like their records and how little I know about the band.

So it is in the name of civic duty and curiosity that we set out to learn more about the Fevers. Gavin (bass, vocals) and Travis (drums) were kind enough to sit down for a chat following their November 2003 show in Brooklyn. (Interview by Mike Faloan)

Go Metric: That was a great set. There are certain bands that I think I'm never going to get to see, and I figured the Fevers would be one of them.

Travis: Well, usually a band where the three guys live in three different states would be a band that you would think that you would never get to see.

I thought you were all in Minnesota. That's not the case?

Travis: Him (Gavin) and Brian started the band in California.

How did the first line up of the band come together?

Gavin: I met Brian and Kathy right after I got out of high school. We all lived in San Jose, California at the time. They were playing in a band with one of my best friends and I was kinda the band tag along. After that they started a really great group with this guy Dave and this other guy Doug called the Retardos. Eventually the Retardos fizzled out and Brian and Kathy were looking for someone else to play with. So, Brian taught me how to fake it on the bass and we started to play together as the Fevers.

I read one Fevers review that implied that your first record was originally conceived as a one-shot project. Is that accurate or a misunderstanding?

Yeah, I don't know where people would get that idea. The Fevers are and always have been a real band, not a project. Me, Brian and Kathy, started playing as the Fevers over seven years ago and Travis has been in the band for at least three years now. Most of the songs we recorded for our first lp were songs that we had been playing since the beginning so it wasn't something we just through together for a one time deal.

And how did Travis get involved with the Fevers?

Travis: I went out there and met them and they were like, We lost our drummer. Brian was thinking about moving to Minneapolis, where I lived at the time, and he did. Then we recorded the album, just went and did it. They sent me a tape of their songs, I learned them.

Gavin: The first time we played with Travis, a day later we recorded our first album. We played one practice, one show—a party—and then recorded the whole album.

The album doesn't sound like that it all! So you had a different drummer for the first 7"?

Gavin: Yeah, her name's Kathy. She was playing in a band called the Pinkz.

Travis: So, Brian stayed in Minneapolis with me, but he moved there toward the end of my whole Minneapolis experience; I'd been there for seven or eight years. I was getting tired of it, so I moved to Pennsylvania, back to my hometown. But it works out really well because we're always excited to get together to play.

Gavin: Every show's like a reunion show.

You guys played at a junior high school earlier today. How did you set that up?

Travis: I knew the music teacher, my music teacher when I was in middle school. I called him and said, Hey, I moved back into town and this group of mine is coming to play in New York, what do you think of the idea? He's like, I think it's a great idea. I went over and showed him our album, told him that we toured Europe and stuff. He was impressed, Oh, alumni. He was my drum teacher in 6th grade, in the band. He was totally for it. I went and met with the principal.

So you had to clear it with your old principal?

Travis: She listened to our cd and thought it was great.

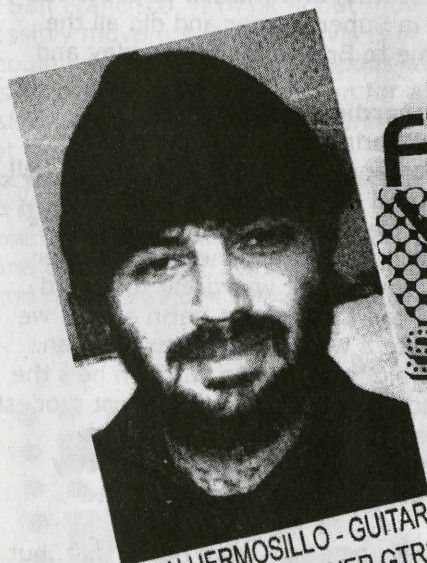
Gavin: The kids went nuts. You expect junior high school kids to be really awkward and they were insane. We had to win them over, they didn't get it at first. But then it was insane.

Travis: It sounded like *Ed Sullivan*, with screaming, you know, young girl voices.

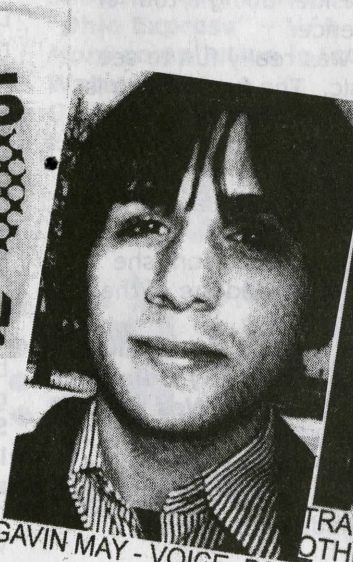
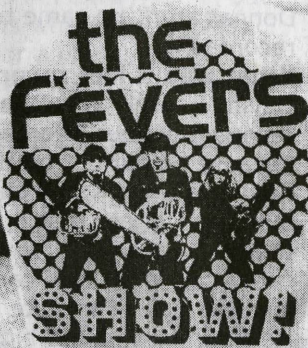
Travis: Big auditorium, an assembly for last period.

Gavin: Like 300 kids.

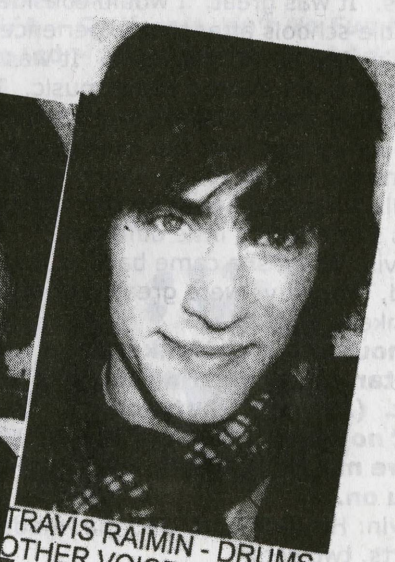
Travis: Sixth grade, seventh grade, eighth grade. They were trying to do waves, standing up in their seats, dancing and screaming during songs. A couple girls came up after and wanted me to sign pieces of notebook paper with a pencil. One girl brought out this thing she made in Art class, this crayon colored fish, Will you guys sign my fish? And they were saying,



BRIAN HERMOSILLO - GUITAR,
OTHER VOICES, OTHER GTRS



GAVIN MAY - VOICE, BASS



TRAVIS RAIMIN - DRUMS,
OTHER VOICES



Hurry because we're going to miss our bus! It was great. It was definitely one of our best shows ever. Gavin: It's definitely one of the best things we've done. Travis: So I brought out a t-shirt, we had one good one out of that batch I was telling you about, Who wants it? Gavin: There was a fight over it, and the girl put it on right away.

Travis: I took out five cd's and displayed them (on the edge of the stage) and these kids in the front row went like, Blahhh, dove after them trying to get them. One kid came back later, right?

Gavin: Yeah, it was an hour later and he was in his gym clothes and he's like, Do you have any more cd's?

Travis: He was at basketball practice, shooting hoops. But to me, it's proof that we passed the real bubblegum test. You know what I mean? Because all the 60s bubblegum music was marketed toward those ages. It was great. I would consider doing a tour of middle schools after that experience.

Gavin: But not high schools. It was really fun to see little kids get excited about music. The funny thing is that after the principal came on and made an announcement over the loudspeaker, "We'd like to thank the Fevers for coming out and playing. It's not really what you'd hear on the radio now a days, but it was something a little different."

Travis: When she came back to that little room she said, "You guys were great, you reminded me of the Monkees."

I thought of the Monkees too when I saw your guitar player wearing the kind of Mickey Dolenz hat. (Actually, that would be the Mike Nesmith hat now that I think of it.—Ed.) And you guys have matching shirts, which I have to commend you on.

Gavin: His girlfriend, Georgia, made us matching shirts, two sets.

Travis: The other one is blue and red, blue sleeves. We took them to Europe. It helped break the ice with crowds.

Gavin: Instantly, you're a novelty, These guys look like the Beach Boys.

Too bad you couldn't get some middle schoolers here to Brooklyn. New York epitomizes the stand around and look bored crowds. You kind of joked about it during the set, This looks like a crowd that looks like it wants to dance but...

Gavin: It's weird because the reaction from the crowd while we were playing didn't seem like there were too many people into it. But afterward I was horded with compliments.

Travis: Maybe people just like to watch sometimes.

I'm guilty of that, too, a head-tapper. How was Europe?

Travis: I think it was good, I think we won over a lot of fans. The cool thing was that the record came out in Germany so it was more known. People showed up and knew the words. We did half Germany, one in the Netherlands, and Spain. Spain was pretty crazy too. Everyone was gracious and gave us food.

Gavin: We ate like constantly on that tour, so much great food.

Travis: Over there rock'n'roll music is higher on the priority list.

Gavin: Every single show, you get a room paid for, they put you up in a hotel, they feed you, and they pay you like \$600. Insane. It doesn't matter if 10 people come to your show or 100, you get \$600. We played the biggest cities and the smallest cities, places like Madrid, Hamburg, Munich and then we played these small villages with dirt roads and the buildings are falling down. People still came out and seemed to be into it.

Did the single you put out on Lipstick lead to the album coming out in Germany?

Gavin: No, the Lipstick record was just, like, Tina had this label (Lipstick Records) and wanted to put it out and Darin, who was in Supercharger and did all the Donnas stuff, he came to Brian's house one day and recorded it.

What was it like recording with Darin?

Gavin: I barely knew Darin back then when he recorded us, but Brian and Kathy knew him really well because he put out both of the Retardos 45s. Plus; both Brian and Kathy played on the Donny Denim 45, but then I guess that actually happened a little later then the Fevers 45. Anyway, it was great to record with him. What else can I say about Darin except we love the guy. For quite a while he was our only fan. He still might be our biggest. Not to mention he's the best cook I know and one of the funniest, most modest guys you'll ever meet.

So you were saying that the 7" didn't directly lead to Daniel/Alien Snatch putting out the album?

Gavin: No, no. Well, Daniel may have heard that, but we recorded an album and sent it to Screaming Apple, which was another German label, and they turned it

down. We recorded with a different drummer, between Kathy and Travis there was this other drummer. We recorded a whole album and sent it to Screaming Apple and the guy was like, Eh, it's too slow, I was looking for more of the 45 sound. He rejected it and then Daniel, somehow he was in contact with that guy, got a hold of the recordings and contacted us. We already had recorded for some Dutch label.

Travis: Yeah, the album title is in Dutch, it was going to come out on a Dutch label, so we kept the name.

Oh yeah, is there any meaning to the album title (*Gaan Daar Waar de Meisjes Zijn*)?

Travis: It means "go where the girls are" in Dutch.

Gavin: We didn't think of it though, the guy in the Netherlands...

Travis: The Dutch guy came up with it.

Gavin: I don't even remember his record label.

Travis: It was called Hidden Charms.

Gavin: Yeah, Renee. He was going to put it out, and he...

Travis: ...disappeared.

Gavin: For three or four months we couldn't find him, and then we found out he followed some girl to France, he was in love.

The fucking French. There's a band called the Primate 5 with a similar story. They had an album already to go, sent it to a guy in France, and then he disappeared.

Gavin: Cool, so the lesson we've all learned is: Don't trust the French to put your record out.

Are the songs on the unreleased record the same songs that came out on the German album?

Gavin: Some of it, there's probably three or four songs that aren't on anything. We did a Count Five cover and another Rattles cover, they're a German band, that's not on anything, random stuff.

Travis: We went to a really good studio in Minneapolis.

The album sounds really good, the material is really good, and the sound is sharp, too. (Travis steps away to talk with friends.) (To Gavin) You live in California?

Gavin: I live in Sunnyvale. It's maybe 40 minutes out of San Francisco. I think about moving out. I could possibly move out where Travis is in Pennsylvania, but I could never move to Minneapolis where Brian lives, it's just too damn cold. It's fun for a week. In California snow is a novelty. Great to see it, but could not live there; it's insane.

Do you play in other bands when the Fevers are on hiatus?

Gavin: No, I have a full-time job. I could have another band out there, but I just want to have a part-time band where you don't have to go to practice every

week. We've been playing together long enough so that we don't have to practice, we just get together and it sounds the same every time. I may put some together out there, but it's such a chore to put a band from scratch, you know? Especially in San Francisco, San Francisco is a weird place to play. You have to know somebody to get a show.

That's kind of the way it is here.

Travis: (returning to conversation, speaking real loud) I just had to talk to some of my fans for a second.

Gavin: You missed it, dude, we're done with the interview!

He was already bad mouthing you.

Gavin: I said, All right, Travis is away.

Travis: Well, I'll tell you the real s-h-bloop-t.

It's a fanzine, you can put the "i" in there.

Gavin: Travis doesn't swear.

Travis: Yeah, I don't really swear.

Gavin: He yelled at me on the tour because I swore at Brian.

Travis: You *swear*ed at Brian?

Maybe that's why you're good for the middle school crowd, you don't have to hold anything back.

Gavin: I swear, but not around Travis.

Travis: Thanks. (Pause) So, what else do you want to know about the Fevers?

You've answered most of my questions.

Basically, I love the record but I've never read anything about the band.

Travis: We put up a bio page on the Alien Snatch website. That's a pretty accurate story, a little more involved than what we gave you.

Is there another album in the works?

Travis: We're just waiting on our new album. It's all recorded and it's being mixed now.

Gavin: It's been mixed once and now twice, and both of them sound horrible. The most important thing is the Fevers originated in the birthplace of Chuck Berry and the hometown of the Count Five.

The Fevers discography:

Show! 7" ep - Lipstick, 1998

"Ohio Express" - V/A - *California Ain't No Fun No More* compilation lp/cd - Alien Snatch/Just Add Water, 2001

***Gaan Daar Waar de Meisjes Zijn* lp - Alien Snatch, 2002**

THE
FEVERS

THE JACK COLE COLLECTOR

I once read that a former Nixon aide turned commentator (I think it was William Safire of the *New York Times*) made a conscious effort to attach the suffix "-gate" to any post-Watergate controversy. He hoped that over time there would be a sea of "-gate"s in the public mind and Watergate would wither in significance as a result, becoming comparable in sound bite-ese to such non-issues as "Nannygate" and "J-Lo's keestergate."

So how does that relate to comic book artist Jack Cole? Well, in an unrelated event I was struck by *The Jack Kirby Collector*, a magazine devoted to another late comic book legend that among other things, seeks to keep Kirby's name before the public. I think Jack Cole deserves to be a household name, and if I can't devote an entire magazine to him, then intermittent articles will have to suffice. Hence *The Jack Cole Collector* a mighty in spirit, if meager in size, effort to spread Cole's good name. And it is easier to do so now than it has been in years with the release of a treasure trove of comics featuring Cole's best known creation, Plastic Man.



Jack Cole (from *Police Comics* #53, April 1946)

Most notable of these is *The Plastic Man Archives: Volume 5*, a hardcover edition with full-color reproductions of Plastic Man's appearances in *Police Comics* #50-#58 along with *Plastic Man* #4, all from 1946—everything to make a comic geek's ticker go pitter pat. And with good reason. Cole created a universe where he could mix the three biggest genres of his day (superheroes, crime, humor), simultaneously paying tribute to and parodying each. This stuff is great, and the original comics would cost more than my car is worth. The biggest surprises are that the inclusion of Plastic Man stories drawn by people other than Cole, and, the fact that those stories are as good as Cole's. His colleagues imitated him well.

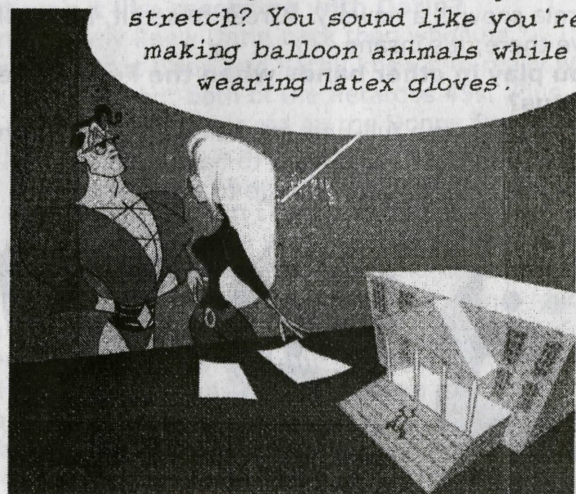


Jack Cole (from *Police Comics* #56, July 1946)

A close second to *Archives* is *Plastic Man's* first stab at an on-going monthly series in over 20 years. Originally slated to be a one-shot and then upgraded to a six-issue mini-series before being granted the ever-nebulous "on-going series" status, the new take on Cole's greatest creation is done by Kyle Baker. Appearing in December, the debut issue introduces us to Plas' new world, retells his origin story, and sets up his first caper. That's a truckload of exposition, but Baker puts it all together smoothly and with good humor. The jury is still out on the artwork (which resembles a Cartoon Network show) and characterization (Baker has set aside the conflicted family man persona Plastic Man has developed in recent issues of *Justice League*), but I'm not arguing.

In order to have a more affordable dose of Jack Cole on the racks (as opposed to the \$50 *Archives*), DC Comics has also put out *Plastic Man 80-Page Giant*. Back in the 60s and 70s, DC put out 80-page reprint collections to give readers a cheap chance to catch up on out-of-print stories. *80-Page Giant* samples Plas through the ages, offering two Jack Cole stories from the 40s, two tales from the 60s (both of which are useless, in the first a kid named Robbie turns into Plastic Man for a

You
know you squeak when you
stretch? You sound like you're
making balloon animals while
wearing latex gloves.



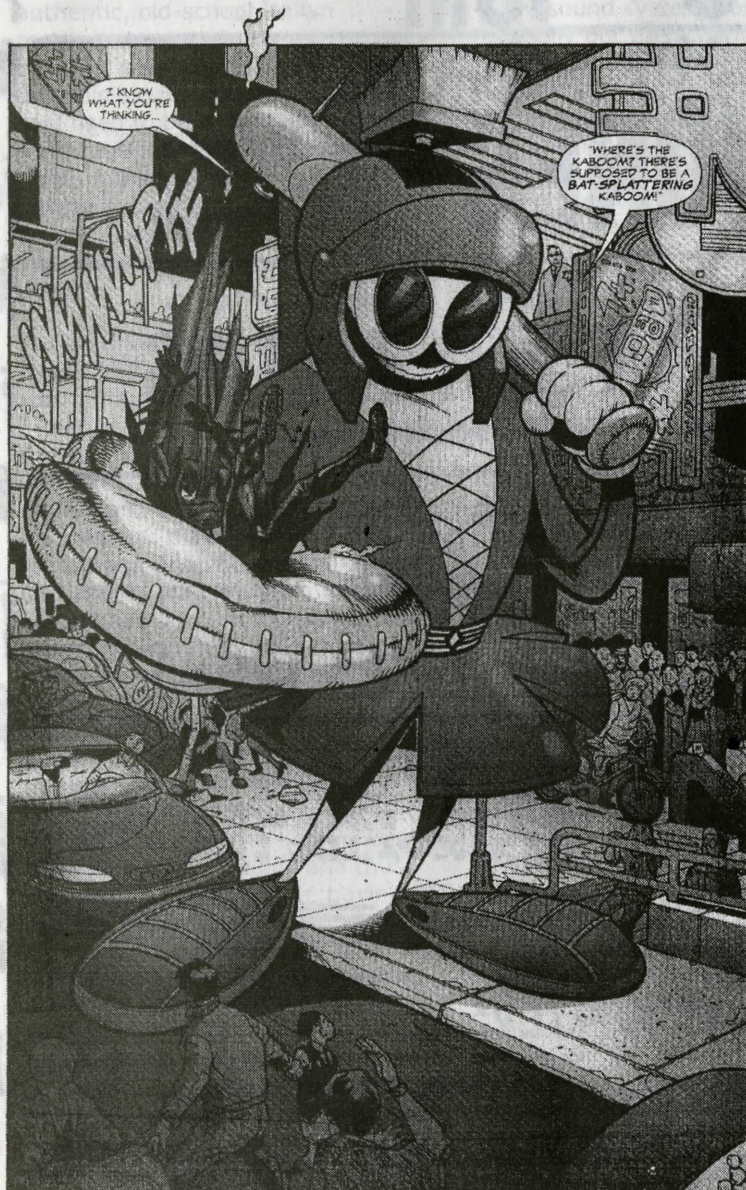
Kyle Baker (from *Plastic Man* Vol. 3, #2, March 2004)



Arnold Drake/Gil Kane

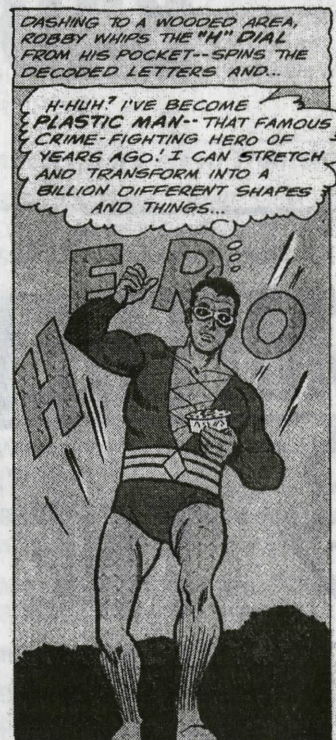
(from *Plastic Man* Vol. 2, #1, Nov./Dec. 1966)

day, well, actually the last three pages of a 16-page story, and in the second, Plas is saddled with a bow-tied straight man named Gordy), and one story from the late 70s (which I enjoyed). Sadly, the lousy stories chew up 40 of the 80 pages.



Joe Kelly/Doug Mahanke (from *JLA* #88, December 2003)

The Pliable One continues to appear in new comics, too. He has returned as a regular member of Justice League (as of issue #87, where a bloodied Batman stumbles into the apartment of Ralph Johns¹ (who's actually Plastic Man living under an alias) and begs Johns/Plastic Man to return to the Justice League and take down a Martian Manhunter gone mad). He also made a cameo in *Green Arrow* #33 (a series worth checking out in its own right as recent issues have been written by Kevin Smith and then novelist Brad Meltzer).



Dave Wood/Jim Mooney (from *House of Mystery* #160, July 1966)

Before we sign off, remember, Watergate was a uniquely awful event in our nation's history, Nixon and Safire are evil, and most importantly, Jack Cole is the comic book legend who invented Plastic Man. (If I was as subtle as Safire I'd be writing to the *Times* too.)



Jack Cole (from *Police Comics* #50, January 1946)

¹ And in real life Ralph Johns was one of Jack Cole's early pen names.

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FAMILY! FAMILY! FAMILY! FAMILY!

CITY GARDENS: A PUNK HAVEN FOR THE AGES

by Tim Hinely

From early 1985 through 1987, most of my weekends were spent at City Gardens, the all-ages club in Trenton, New Jersey that was my second home for those years. I lived in Linwood, NJ (outside of the Ocean City/Atlantic City area) during those years so I had a good hour and a half drive to the club. Ironically, from 1988-1990, after transferring to Trenton State College for my final two years of school, I was a 10-minute drive from City Gardens but hardly ever went there. It just didn't seem as magical as those earlier days.

The place, at 1701 Calhoun St. (if I recall correctly), was not in a good area of town. To be honest, most of Trenton was a fucking dump (though the Chambersburg area with its authentic, old-school Italian restaurants, was pretty damn cool, but C.G. wasn't in that area). It was just this big building that someone said used to be a garage where cars were repaired and that seemed about right. I think it held about 700-800 people in the main, big room and probably another 100 or so in the smaller back room (where the bar was).

The place was booked by Randy "Now" Ellis. I always thought Randy was a good guy (though sporadically, I keep in touch with him, and still feel the same way about Randy) but he had a real rocky tenure as the club's main man. I think the main beef with patrons was that he charged too much for shows. The shows were usually \$10 and it didn't bother me because I always had a job and plenty of money in my pocket but I think some of these other people just didn't have a lot of money (spent all your money on that 40 of Olde English there, punko?). I mean, for gigs in Philly there'd be a headlining band and two or three local bands opening and that would be \$5 but Randy would usually have four touring bands and thus, charge \$10. Hey, for me, paying \$10 to see a few of my favorite bands and have a blast for four hours or so was plenty worth it. Regardless of what was said, Randy was not some "rich asshole," he lived in an unheated farmhouse at the time, drove an old beater of a car, and was as into the music as any of the kids. He was a good 10 years or so older than me (and thus 15 years older than most of

the other regulars) so you can't blame the guy for wanting to make some scratch, but since that time I've booked gigs on my own and I know it's no picnic.

The shows, you ask? Man, every punk band who *is* a punk band played there. In the mid-80s I saw the Descendents, Dag Nasty, Slap Shot, the Dickies, Circle Jerks, Die Kruezen, Govt. Issue, Agnostic Front, GBH, the Exploited, Murphy's Law, 7 Seconds, Gang Green, Marginal Man, Agent Orange, and then, later on, Butthole Surfers, Sonic Youth, Dinosaur Jr., Bullet LaVolta, the Feelies, Yo La Tengo, Surgery, Rapeman, Devo, the Ramones, Gwar, Ween, and too many others.

The sound system was great and I usually got there early enough to stand right by the front left of the stage and sing along to my favorite bands. Usually the only problem was the skinheads who would come in from the suburbs (like most of us) and terrorize everyone. I'm sure the place wasn't as bad as Fenders or some of the other places in Los Angeles that I hear would turn into bloodbaths. There would be an occasional fight but truth be told, it was usually fine and there weren't a lot of fights (and when there was the monster bouncers would toss the people out the side doors head first!).

Over the years I saw and met lots of cool folks there. Bob Conrad would hawk his zine *This Zine Sucks* as would Eric Szantai (who published *Shoelace*¹) and Tony Rettman (who did *I4NI*). Occasionally I saw Jack Rabid (from *The Big Takeover* fame) there and we would chat. My pal Ken Salerno would be up in the booth taking photos. (I'm in a lot of his photos since where I stood for most gigs was right where his lens was pointed. I'm in a photo for Dag Nasty's *Wig Out At Denko's* reissue on the inside photo with singer Pete Cortner on his back). And of course, there's the guy who usually went to the shows with me, my pal Rich Wayne, who is still one of my best friends.

¹ He was also in the band Fats, featured on the first Dizzy Records compilation, Food Shopping on an Empty Stomach.—Ed.

I had lots of great memories at City Gardens and just wanted to share them in this article. I hope this piece didn't come off like nostalgia for nostalgia's sake or like bragging (I saw this band and YOU didn't!!!) but I just wanted to remember some of the good times I had there and share them. Below I did sort of a superlative section of shows at City Gardens:

At City Gardens in Trenton, NJ

First C.G. gig I saw: Govt. Issue, Die Kruezen, Harvest, Zany Guys, and Stiff Legged Sheep (7/28/85)

Favorite C.G. gig: Descendents, Agent Orange, Volcano Suns, and Squirrel Bait (7/27/86)

Craziest C.G. gig: The Butthole Surfers (the infamous "riot" gig), with Ween, Malcolm Tent, and Cleft Palate (5/3/87)

Band that cancelled the most gigs at C.G.: Bad Brains

Most anticipated gig: The Bad Brains—they were great! (12/26/86)

Biggest assholes: Murphy's Law

Shortest set: Dinosaur Jr. The plug pulled on them because they showed up late. J. Mascis was pissed. Also on the bill: Sonic Youth, Das Damen, and Mighty Joe Young. (5/22/87)

Most polite singer: Kevin Seconds (from 7 Seconds)

Drank the most beer on stage: Gang Green

Most entertaining show: The Meatmen. Also on the bill: Govt. Issue, and Kingface. (1/8/88)

Most packed shows: The Ramones on 1/8/88 (with A.O.D.) and 4/22/88 (with Gutterboy) and 8/5/88 (with the Dickies)

Least favorite show: Broken Bones, UK Subs, and the Mentors (5/1/88)

Bloodiest a band got on stage: Poison Idea, Jerry A. sliced himself up. (5/6/90)

Tim Hinely publishes his own zine, DAGGER, one that he began doing in 1987 (and used to hawk at City Gardens). If you want a copy send \$3.50 to P.O. Box 820102 Portland, Oregon 97282-1102 USA or email daggerboy@prodigy.net

An Interview with Filmmaker Jason Woliner

Suicidal motorists, jaded puppets, and heavy metal drummers. These are the kinds of characters that populate the short films of Jason Woliner, hilarious movies where funny ideas never overstay their welcome. If watching a British guy drive on the left side of a U.S. highway is funny for a minute, then the movie lasts for a minute. If watching Dream Theater's drummer indulge in every heavy metal cliché is funny for five minutes, then the movie is five minutes.

I was introduced to Woliner's movies at Baltimore's MicroCineFest. Our conversation begins with Monkey Walken, which is a series of three ads for an upcoming A&E Biography based on the title character, a talking stuffed animal who continues to lose acting roles to Christopher Walken with whom he shares no more than a last name and a desire to trod the boards...

(Taken from *Monkey Walken*)

Narrator: Monkey Walken on his past...

Monkey Walken: In the late 70s I ran with a dangerous crowd, Nicholson, Coppola, Beaty, Bubbles, Coco, Bogdonovich, crazy time. It was said of Easy Rider, Dennis Hopper pulled a knife on me. I shoved a banana up his piehole; we've been great friends ever since.

Narrator: Monkey Walken on romance...

Monkey Walken: I had a long relationship with Barbara Streisand; it was a blast. We used to sit around my pad in Malibu, pick deer ticks and grub worms from each other's backs. Sometimes Babs would try to impress me by throwing her feces around, trying to make different shapes and patterns on the wall. She called them Barbara-glyphics. I called it love.

Go Metric: When I came back from MicroCineFest last year I kept telling my wife about *Monkey Walken*. It developed this mythical status at home and I was hoping it would live up to her expectations, I hope I didn't make too big a deal out of it.

Jason Woliner: Did it live up to the hype?

It did. Where did you come up with the idea for *Monkey Walken*? Did you have the impression (of Christopher Walken) and then the idea came from that?

Yeah, everyone has got a Christopher Walken impression, he's pretty easy to imitate, but not well. I

don't think I can do a very good Christopher Walken. But it came up in some conversation with my friend James, who I made it with, and he loved it and he wouldn't leave me alone about it, so he kept making me do it for people around here (at work). There was also a back and forth between me and him about whether or not monkeys could be funny anymore, because they're everywhere in popular culture. I was really resistant to the monkey thing, It's lazy, we can do something better. And he was like, No, monkeys aren't played. Heated debates. There's monkeys and pirates and robots and hobos, these things that keep appearing, so I didn't want to do that and we fought and fought. But even today there's a news article that came out, and you don't want it to be as good as it is, but they attached a third arm to a monkey in some lab in Australia. And instantly he controlled it as good as he did his regular two arms. I'm sure this can be a good thing eventually for the paraplegic monkeys. But he (James) kept bugging me—monkey, monkey, monkey—and he kept making me do Walken, and then he said, That's it: *Monkey Walken*.

Narrator: A look deep into the soul of Monkey Walken...

Monkey Walken: I read for the role in The Deer Hunter. In the original script my character sat around a table with the Vietnamese. Instead of playing Russian Roulette, we played Boggle, the travel version. I told them, guys, you got to change this, you've got no dramatic tension. It needs to be a matter of life and death, a game like Russian Roulette or Hungry Hungry Hippos, the travel version. Needless to say, the rest is film history. Of course, the role wound up going to human Christopher Walken.

Jason Woliner: It was tough to make a little world for this guy because we weren't sure what he is. Is he a Christopher Walken surrogate? He became this monkey with the same last name as Christopher Walken, who does have a similar voice but really hasn't had a parallel life. He's talking about movies that Christopher Walken wasn't in and he's talking about going out with Barbara Streisand, all of these things that weren't making fun of Christopher Walken, it was more like 70s Hollywood. And then that recurring theme that the human Christopher Walken kept beating him out for roles. We also liked the idea of doing puppets and then afterwards, in the computer, putting animated elements. It was kinda cute, it has some possibilities. So that was *Monkey Walken*. We should sent it to A&E. We haven't gotten a copy to Christopher Walken yet.



Narrator: Monkey Walken on his craft...
Monkey Walken: Preparing is the key to any performance. Months before I read for the role in Pulp Fiction I stuck a real watch up my ass. But it didn't feel authentic enough, so I stuck another and another. All told I stuck 18 watches up my ass. When the role went to the human Christopher Walken I was so distraught that I never got around to taking them out. Sometimes I still hear the occasional chime of an alarm, from my ass. It's a bittersweet reminder of what could have been.

Monkey Walken: A lot of people ask if success has changed me. I tell them no, I'm not successful.

Go Metric!: Were these the first movies you screened at MicroCineFest?

Jason Woliner: No, but they were the first film festival that played anything that I ever made, *Gardener III: Revenge*; it was the first thing I made out of school. It was a parody of this short by the Lumiere brothers who were, like, 1890s fathers of cinema, kind of like the first comedic film ever made. I did the lost, recently unearthed sequel to that.

That's a really good idea.

It was really cute and cheap and easy and fun and I sent it around. And either people didn't like it or didn't know how to program it, and I didn't get into anywhere except MicroCineFest, that's the best film festival in the whole world. There's a good group of people that keep coming and it attracts people doing fun and interesting things. Great crowd.

When I'm at MicroCineFest I feel like I'm watching movies with a whole bunch of people that I could get along with. And there are a lot of movies where I could picture people sitting around saying, I've got this great idea... And they actually see it through. And if the idea is only a minute or two long, that's fine, it doesn't overstay its welcome. Monkey Walken is a great example of that. So is Stubbhorn British Driver in America, what's it, a minute long?

Absolutely no story to that film.

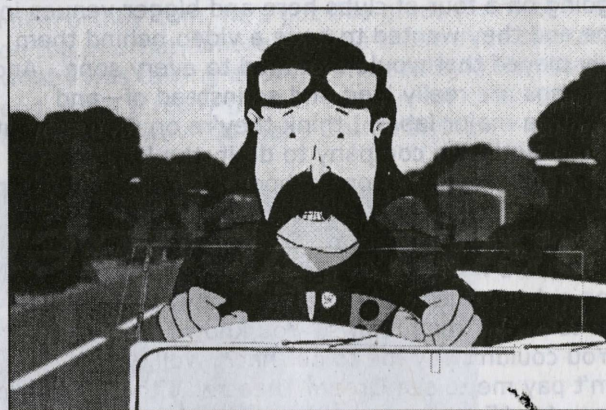
No, there's no background about why he's stubborn or why he's driving or why he's...

...British. That's all premise and punchline. It was, as ridiculous as it sounds, a dream that I had. Fully formed. I had just, at the time, taken the day job that I have now, which is a place that produces dvd's that teach animation, like graphics things. Animation was always my first love and I wanted to do cartoons. I thought, I'll do it as a cartoon, it'll be easy, just one tiny little scene. Eight months later...it was the most excruciating thing in the whole world, because I had never touched computer animation, I had never had to animate anything before, except I did a claymation movie when I was like three years old, starring Alf. Actually, we just found it a few weeks ago, when we were trying to put all these 8mm movies onto dvd. I found this animation I made of Alf. He walks in and he—I don't know how much Alf you remember, but he was always trying to eat the cat, he always had it in for

the family cat—so in my movie he walks in, grabs the cat, puts it in the microwave and then he eats it. That was basically the whole story. It was kind of upsetting when you watch it. So he (Stubborn British Driver) is driving down the road and I'll figure out how to make him drive down the road, he's driving in this little MG. I was like, I'll make a road. So I made a road. Then I was like, all right, he's driving so there'll be trees on the side. But instead of making the trees that we'd see in the actual thing, I decided, because there was all this fakey 3-D animation where you could put objects in, so I was just like, I'll build a forest. So I built like, 600 trees, and then I had him drive down the road. Then I tried to render it out overnight and I came back and it said that it would take like 48 days and nights to show me this one shot. I had to figure out to do different mouth shapes for different words—I wanted to make sure the moustache would bounce up and down right when he was singing—so I had my little brother, who was 12 or 13 at the time, just sit there with me for hours and he would hold his mouth in different positions and I would try to draw it. So I had him mouth out every syllable in the whole thing. And then he eventually, he does the voice of the child.

That's a labor intensive 60 or 70 seconds of film.

It was completely unnecessary, too. I got to figure out more shortcuts. Yeah, it's a cute little thing, but not eight months of cute.



(Taken from *I Have Seen the Face of Heavy Metal* and *His Name Is Mike Portnoy*)

Jason Woliner: "In the summer of 2001, the progressive metal band Dream Theater entered the studio to record their double album *Six Degrees of Inner Turbulence*. I was given fourteen hours of "behind the scenes" footage and asked to edit it into a series of clips to be posted on the band's website. Soon it became clear to me that drummer Mike Portnoy was in many ways the spiritual leader of the band. Ten hours of the footage consisted of Mike's drum solos."

And finally, we have to talk about the Mike Portnoy movie, *I Have Seen the Face of Heavy Metal*.

Are you familiar with that band at all, you're a music guy.

I'm not a fan of that style of music...

I can't imagine why.

A friend and I worked at the local Pizza Hut when we got out of college and there was always this battle between us and what we wanted to listen to, and what every other guy wanted to listen to. They really wanted to go for the Ozzy and the Dream Theatre, stuff that felt complicated; they could just admire the musicianship, the chops. It made me gag. I just assumed that Dream Theatre had withered on the vine, but when I saw your movie, I spent half of it thinking, They're still around? And the other half thinking, My god, this is funny.

They're still out there, keeping the dream alive.

Recording a double album, no less.

A double album, it had an overture. I work with a guy who lives next door to the keyboard player in Dream Theatre. He seems like a pretty down to earth guy. He's not a fan of drummer Mike Portnoy, they kind of don't get along.

Would you rather I not put that in print?

You can put anything in print.

Thank you.

I decided when I made this that I wasn't going to worry about any repercussions. It probably wasn't the most legal thing to make, but I think they owe it to me, and I think on some level Mike Portnoy would understand it. My friend who works here is a musician also, they hang out and make music together and Dream Theatre was going on a tour of clubs here and bigger venues in Europe and they wanted to have a video behind them as they played that would be timed to every song. And these songs are really long and so instead of—and they're on a major label, I think they're on Capitol—but instead of getting a company to do it, the keyboardist asked his neighbor if he or anybody he knew could help out, and just throw together something for an hour of content to play behind them. So he asked me and a friend of mine who works here if we'd be interested in helping out, and he's like, The best they can do is free tickets to one of their shows. You know how people say, You couldn't pay me to do that? Well, you couldn't pay me to see Dream Theatre. I think it would be funny for 15 minutes but then it would be the most horrible thing. And I was like, Okay, I'll help you out. And like everything you volunteer for it becomes this huge massive thing that takes up all of your time. They gave me this advance release of their double album, and it was so secret I couldn't let this get out because the fans would eat it up. So I sat here and tried to figure out what kind of video could play over a 15-minute song? When they say they're progressive, they're talking progress, they've gone beyond the five or even seven-minute song format; they've left Yes and Rush in the dust. They're forging new territory. So I had to figure out what to do. And this is an actual example: they gave me a 12-minute song and they said, We think something with the Mona Lisa would be good. Go for it. I became very disgruntled very quickly, Why did I do this? Why did I volunteer for this? So, lying around my office we have this collection of stock footage from this company called Art Beats, you can get everything from weird kaleidoscopic patterns to old people feeding strawberries to each other. The disc that I happened to have at my desk

that day was these fly overs of the Alaskan wilderness. And so, eh, this could work. So I did that and stretched it out to 12 minutes, then I took a picture of the Mona Lisa that I found on the internet and gooped her face up and made her melt. So I was thinking, these guys will see this and think, This is pretty awful, these people don't know what they're doing; I guess we just have to hire some guys. I did the bare minimum and I gave it to the guys thinking, I'll get kicked off the project—thank god—and then it'll be over with. The next day: the band loved it! "It blew their mind, it's a great direction. Okay, we've got another one, we need you to get footage of the news media talking about stem cell research." It's like, What? No, I don't want to do this anymore! Then that kind of fell apart. Then, because we were doing this for them, and they thought we knew what we were doing with all this video stuff, they said we've got another little job for you. The label wants to have six web commercials to play, as a sort of build up to the album release. They were three to five minutes each. We have Mike Portnoy, the drummer, who's this long hair, megalomaniacal guy, this drummer who is the frontman. You can tell everyone else in the band, they humor him. And they're like, We have his personal footage from these sessions, and so we should make commercials out of it. And so I did, I would up making a couple of them. There was 14 hours of footage, like it says in the film—it was 10 hours of Mike Portnoy playing drum solos.

No exaggeration?

No comic exaggeration, it was 10 hours of him sitting behind the drum kit and every few minutes or after every drumming, he would turn toward the camera and he would make that heavy metal demon face and do those demon hands. And so out of my frustration and anger, (I thought) this guy in kind of funny, he's kind of a dufus. So over a course of a couple weeks I stopped working on this and I started just looking at the footage to pull clips. I didn't watch a lot of their official product to see how he presents himself in real life, as opposed to this home movie footage that I have.

Well, if he doesn't come across any other way in 14 hours, I think you've done enough work.

By the end of this I never wanted to look at his smiling face, or his heavy metal tongue sticking out.

He personifies a concentrated version of every metal cliché.

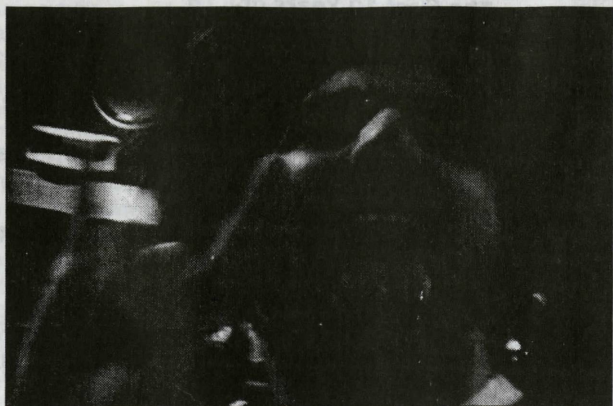
There's still something funny to a guy so determined to rock your ass off. And he's so into himself and his drumming power. I don't think he's heard of it yet, but the keyboardist, who originally got me into this, knows about it and wants a copy.

So it's going to get back to him at one point.

I'm hoping it does. Part of me really wants him to see it. I really want him to do a Google search on his name and find this..."What? What is this? A movie dedicated to me?" I'm not going to make a dime off this, I'm not selling it, so he doesn't have much course, I guess.

But someone like that might take it as flattering.

I really want to know what he would think of it, because when I watched it when it was done—it's almost like if you were a dedicated Dream Theatre fan,



you could watch this film and not really know that I was mocking the guy, because it doesn't say...you would, I don't want to say that they're really ignorant, you probably would eventually, but at the same time most of the film is just him being himself, saying these ridiculous things.

It's only the slow motion and the added string music that comments on it.

Heightens the drama, yeah.

I also like when you pulled out a quote and put just that on the screen: We're going to rock this shit.

I think it was "Goddamn it, we're going to fucking rock. And we're going to get this shit." Which is like, that's kind of personal mantra for me.

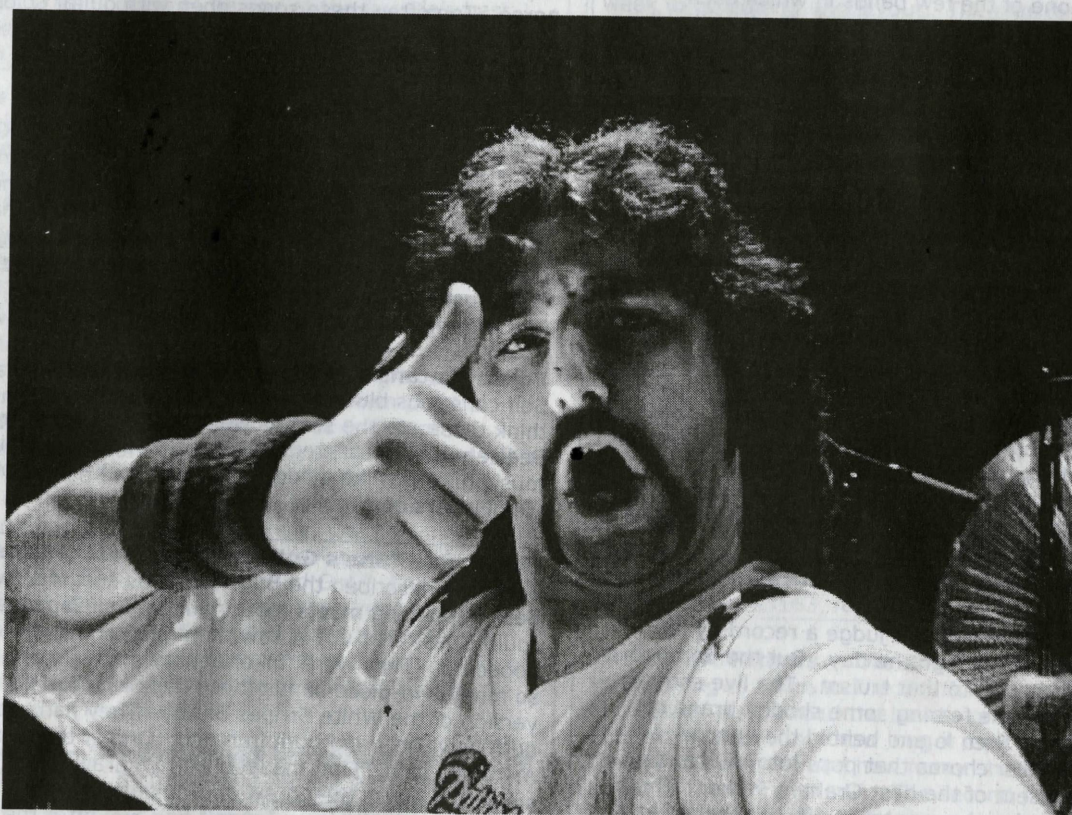
Also, I figure from 14 hours of footage I figure you're going to pull out the juiciest argument and there really isn't any. There's one mild bit of

tension where one guy says to the singer, while the singer is doing lead vocals, Dude, that sounds strained, and the singer looks back at him. And that's it. It just passes.

I had to finish this and get the footage off before I was caught, get the footage off really quickly. So I probably could have found a better argument, but I do like that the big tension between the band is that it he says it sounds like strained macaroni. And then I love the idea that the band let this big, demon-looking guy who's the front man of the band, is just a hired gun from Ottawa who has this really thick, amiable Canadian accent, except when he's singing when he has this guttural growl. But then as soon as he talks he's like, What's the next verse, eh? Very affable guy. Just the idea of the big front man being pushed around by this wacky little drummer guy who controls the band, is kind of a romantic idea to me.

Very goofy band dynamic.

Yeah, the drummer controls the band, he does everything. I think he does the merchandising, he does the website, and everyone else, they're middle aged guys and this is how they make their money. But yeah, because everybody else has cut their long hair, except the singer, who is a recent hire, if I'm not mistaken. He lives the dream. If you go to MikePortnoy.com, he's got this great shrine to himself on the internet, where he sells these dvds of exactly what I was talking about, of him soloing, for hours on end. He's a really good drummer, for that really bombastic, way too many drums style.



112 Records ...and what to think about them

Brief yet accurate assessments of records big and small. Most reviews by Mike Faloon with assists from Matt Braun & Brian Wallace. Enjoy.

Against Me! - ...As The Eternal Cowboy

Could it be that this whole "Jamboree Punk" thing has run its course? We can only hope. I mean, is the mercifully short recording career of the (Young) Pioneers really what today's youth need to be building their bands around? Out of all the bands to come along over the last few years that are under the mistaken impression that they've invented something new by strumming an acoustic guitar or blowing tunelessly into a harmonica, Against Me! is amongst the least objectionable. It took me a while to appreciate Against Me!'s last record, the ever so-widely praised, *...Is Reinventing Axl Rose*. That record managed to dodge all the potential pitfalls of this somewhat suspect subgenre largely on the strength of really strong gather-'round-the-campfire style song writing that, rather miraculously, avoided being too painfully self-important. But where *Reinventing* succeeded, *The Eternal Cowboy* fails. For every decent song there are two bad ones, and the closing track combines self-importance, feeble attempts at cleverness, tired chord progressions, and morbid self-fascination in such a way that the only fair comparison would be those rotund refuse receptacles from north of the border, the Barenaked Ladies. In spite of that, there's a really good 7" worth of material here. This is, however, sadly, a full length. (Fat Wreck) *Matt Braun*

The Anchormen - Nation of Interns cd

The Anchormen are one of the few bands in which each member has a distinct personality. Tom Scanlon's guitar lines range from D. Boon (Minutemen) to Peter Buck (R.E.M., circa *Document*), and he and Anchormen bassist Chris Braiotta combine to get what I call The R.E.M. String Section Dynamic, wherein the bass player is good enough to hold down low end and fill the role of rhythm guitar, freeing up the guitarist to be more melodic—but not yielding to rampant soloing (it's the last part that distinguishes R.E.M., in whose songs I first recognized this approach, from Cream). Rounding out the rhythm section is drummer Jef Czekaj who learned to play drums for the Anchormen and who keeps *Nation of Interns* grounded (and that shouldn't be taken as the backhanded compliment that it might seem). Then there is singer Heath Row who approaches punk rock lyrics with the smarts of a professor and the fervor of a preacher, mixing the personal and the political in the process. The band members' disparate personalities are bonded by a self effacing humor and the fact that they do everything to the top of their intelligence. And as cool as the parts are, it's the whole, the cd, that I like so much. (Unstoppable - Box 440422, Somerville, MA 02144)

The Bamboo Kids - "Suck the Life Out of Me" b/w "Right On" 7"

Ninety percent of the time you can judge a record by its cover, it's what gets me through the day. But the Bamboo Kids are the rare exception to that truism. The live shots on their record sleeve had me fearing some shoddy brand of garage hipster racket. Then lo and behold they uncork a tight r'n'b number with a killer chorus that pops into my head all the time; it's reminiscent of the best Graham Parker. The b-side seems a bit forced and never takes off, but that's okay, the Bamboo Kids nailed it with "Suck the Life Out of Me." (ProVelRecords.com)

The Bananas - The First 10 Years of... cd

Matador Records jumped the gun when they released a 10 year anniversary edition of Pavement's *Slanted and Enchanted*. It's not that great an album and it's still easy to find. Plus, it's only been 10 years, guys, grab the reigns. The Soft Boys had to wait 25 years before *Underwater Moonlight*, an infinitely superior record, was given a chance to bask in the reissue spotlight. But when I heard about *The First 10 Years of the Bananas* I thought, It's about time! The Bananas are, after all, the best punk band in the world and we need to have all of their recordings in print. Toward that end *The First 10 Years* is amazingly successful, rounding up the band's first cd and tape (*Forbidden Fruit; Banana Style Revolution Now*), two 7"s (*Peel Sessions; Bad Banana Rising*), and a handful of rare odds and ends. 34 songs total. That's a lot for any band, but especially for a punk band (I like my punk in short bursts). Fortunately, the Bananas know how to sequence their material and the first two dozen songs are great. Most of the last 10 songs suck, but you need to hear them anyway. They make the great songs sound all the better, proof of how far the Bananas have come since their early days. (Kind of like in *Superman II* when he gives up his powers and gets his ass kicked in that awful diner scene. It's uncomfortable to sit through but it makes everyone appreciate his powers all the more.) Plus, the liner notes offer more Bananas background than anything I've read before. Here's to the next 10 years. (Plan-It-X - 5810 W. Willis Rd., Georgetown, IN 47122)

The Black Jetts - Bleed Me cd

Tension vs. release. For my money, garage rock is much better when the band is uptight, when they don't get what they want when they want it; delayed gratification. The best cuts on *Bleed Me* bear out such thinking. "Come On": they politely sing "Come on" for a minute and a half before tagging on "and shake your ass." That's patience, and it's a great song. Hell, on "Another Night," they even come right out and say it: "You gotta learn how to crawl/Before you can walk." I agree. Too often these songs open with guitar solos—instant gratification—and there's nowhere else to go. (Dead Beat - Box 283, LA, CA 90078)

Billy Boloby - The Revival cd

Good time, goof rock from a guy who sounds like Kepi from the Groovie Ghoules and probably reads *The Onion*. These are good things. *The Revival* is okay, most likely not as good as the live shows, but one noticeable strength is that Billy doesn't go for "amusing the first time, increasingly grating thereafter" novelty songs. And hopefully he's got more songs like "(Just a Bit of) Time" up his sleeve. (Boloby's Medical Records - 221-H Foxtail Dr., West Palm Beach, FL 33415)

Boxcar Satans - Upstanding and Indigent cd

Self conscious blues rock with Tom Waits-y vocals. I don't think these are the sounds we'd hear emanating from Beelzebub's boxcar, more like audio purgatory which is where music fusions—like mixing blues and rock—most often land (DogFingers.com)

The Bugs - "She's Got Mono" 7"; Goin' Places 12"

Someone described the Bugs to me as sort of a two-piece Beat Happening meets more minimal Half Japanese. How could I pass that up? I saw them play and it was everything I hoped for. They were full of energy and very original (unlike so many two-piece bands these days who just do their own version of the White Stripes Blues). They had two releases, both vinyl-only and both in mono. One of the two band members said, "Find me later and I'll draw you a cover for the single." I guess they draw an original cover for each single they sell. (By the way, I didn't find him after the show so I don't have a cover on my 7".) The 12" (also a 45 rpm) has a

little four-inch velvet painting of a bug glued to an otherwise plain white sleeve. The recordings are nice and lo-fi, capturing the same energy they have live. Great songs like "She's Got Mono" and "I'm A Monster." I can't wait to see them again. Until then, I've got the vinyl. (Tombstone)
Brian Wallace

The Buttless Chaps – Love This Time cd

The Chaps, as I like to call them, play a little country, a little synth pop and a little singer/songwriter, using a lifeless approach to each to try to connect the disparate styles. If you consider lethargy a virtue, then the Chaps are your band. (Mint – Box 3613, Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6B 3Y6)

The Capillaries – Overnight Lows and Daylight Savings cd

Stiff (as in the adjective, not the defunct British record label) renditions of second rate Fountains of Wayne and Weezer material. The Capillaries have the requisite pipes but it's not until the final track, "Don't Leave Me 'Til After Christmas, Please" that they loosen up and uncork a power pop song that delivers. (Water & Power, capillaries.com)

The Catholic Boys – Psychic Voodoo Mind Control cd

I have this awful habit of not being able to keep my mind off of my job, especially when I'm driving home at night. Despite my best efforts every topic I think of eventually comes around to work. On a good day a quiet record will bring me down to earth. But other days I need an overwhelmingly loud and aggressive record. Bands like the New Bomb Turks, Weird Lovemakers, or Baseball Furies can do the trick, and so can the Catholic Boys. *Psychic Voodoo Mind Control* is a 13-song wrecking ball and it blows away the band's previous 7"s, and that is startling because those records are excellent. Equally amazing is that the Catholic Boys can blaze through these songs with such intensity without sacrificing melody or hip shaking swagger. I love the way this record volleys between parts where the whole band is stomping in caveman unison and parts where the two guitarists are trading lines. They've got a great sense of when to keep it simple and when to toss in some flash. This is going to be one of the decade's best punk albums. And I haven't thought about my job this whole time. (Trick Knee – Box 12714, Green Bay, WI 54307)

The Cheats – Cheap Pills cd

Numeric review: The Vindictives x .7 = *Cheap Pills*. Alphabetic review: Decent, if static, goof core. With triple word score for covering the Rubber City Rebels ("Young and Dumb"). (Da' Core – 4407 Bowes Ave., West Mifflin, PA 15122)

The Checkers – Make a Move cd

When it comes to chord progressions, I'm incredibly tolerant of clichés. I want bands to draw on songs like "You Really Got Me" and "Sweet Jane." Have at it, folks, I want to hear re-writes (and updates) of those songs until I leave this world. But, and this is a colossal caveat, if you're going to cop other people's sounds then you have to have your own point of view. Too often *Make a Move* reeks of first draft lyrics. "You're a user/You're nothing but an abuser" is lazy and not a couplet that we need to hear 10 times. A little conviction doesn't hurt either. You don't have to convince me that you shot a man in Reno just to watch him die, just convince me that the character you're portraying believes that. I don't think Checkers' singer Julie Vox is a "Bad Girl." Nor do I think she's a "Fanatic." She could just as well be singing about how to get to a nearby carwash. And yet, I almost like *Make a Move*. The band's got a great energy and chemistry. With a bit of tweaking the Checkers could be at the forefront of the new wave revival. (Teenacide)

The Chordvettes – "My Boyfriend's Learning Karate" 7" ep

Delightfully doinky pop that sounds a lot like early Shonen Knife, and that's great by me. Plus, her boyfriend is learning karate, who am I to find fault?
(I Don't Feel a Thing – Box 858, Tempe, AZ 85280)

The Clean – Anthology double cd

I love this set. I've wanted to hear the Clean for ages. When I was college they put out the highly acclaimed *Vehicle* record, but someone stole the album from our radio station before I was able to hear it. Then a few years ago I found a 7" tribute to the Clean (featuring bands like Uncle Wiggly and Kickstand), which I love. But it wasn't until last spring when I took a chance on *Anthology* that I finally heard the Clean. By sampling generously from each album and including a bevy of rare cuts, *Anthology* is the rare collection that serves newcomers and longtime fans equally. Rarer still, it's the kind of compilation that has made me want to seek out the band's other albums as well renewing my interest in their record label (New Zealand's Flying Nun Records). What's not to like about a band that melds *Loaded*-era Velvet Underground with *Something Else*-era Kinks? (Merge Records)

Deadly Weapons – "You're So Selfish" + 2 7" ep

A few years ago, Superman split into Superman Red and Superman Blue—one persona divided along psychological fault lines. Well, apparently something similar happened to the Bobbyteens. The pop side of the band went into one of singer Tina Lucchessi's side projects, Tina and the Total Babes, and the punk side of the band went into another of Tina's side projects, the Deadly Weapons. Rough and tumble punk that seeks to pummel rather than please, more Motorhead than Muffs. And it's pretty good, too, especially the b-side (which has a cover of G.G. Allin's "Don't Talk to Me," which was also covered by the Wiretaps and the Shemps (what is wrong with me when I know multiple covers of G.G. Allin songs?))
(Rapid Pulse – Box 5075, Milford, CT 06460)

Deathray Davies – Midnight at the Black Nail Polish Factory cd

For six months I'd been planning to use my February break to wrap up this issue. The writing was done and it'd give me a week to do editing and layout. The plan hinged on the assumption that there would be one working computer available in our apartment. Of course, on the first day of my vacation our computer crashed beyond repair. So my wife and I went into overdrive and got a new computer, not easy to manage but, you know, The Plan. Then the new rig acquired viruses on the first and third days that we owned it. The patience that I draw on all day as a teacher does not extend to computers, and I was ready and willing to go *Office Space* on both computers (think of David Herman's scene with the fax machine). *Midnight at the Black Nail Polish Factory* kept my head clear. I'd listened to *Midnight* intermittently since receiving it but it was only under the stress of watching precious vacation time evaporate that this wonderful pop album came into focus for me. Unable to boot up? Listen to "The Girl Who Stole the Eiffel Tower." Kicked off the internet every five minutes? "I Regret the Day I Tried to Steal Daniel's Ego." Sound like I'm equating *Midnight* with a Calgon commercial (as in Calgon, take me away...)? Well, it's the genuine 40:35 deal as opposed to the :30 artificial variety. And it saved me the embarrassment of taking a Louisville Slugger to our People PC. (Or, for our ADD readers, think Hypnolovehweel or the Minus 5.)
(Glurp – Box 685163, Austin, TX 78768)

The Desert Fathers – The Spirituality cd

While trying to listen to *The Spirituality*, an arduous and unpleasant task, I read the band's press release. The first paragraph talks about how long it took to record this record (nearly four years!) and how many studios the band used (all seven of them are listed!). The second paragraph informs us that two of the Desert Fathers are also in the Forms ("one of the indie rock bands to watch"). The third paragraph focuses on the artwork ("a striking six-panel, full-color cardboard

wallet") and the guy who mastered the disc (golly, you mean the guy who was paid to master a Liz Phair record was also paid to master the Desert Fathers cd? How revealing!). Apparently whoever wrote the press release couldn't bring himself to listen to the music on this clunker either. (Three Spheres - Box 349, Brooklyn, NY 11222)

The Destroyed - *Outta Control* cd

I like reading the year in review letters that family and friends send out during the holidays, it's a nice way to catch up. *Outta Control* is drummer Bert Switzer's "my year in review" disc, and the better you know Bert the more you'll like it. Last year he released a cd that sampled the various bands he has played in from 1977 through 2002. Then two of his former bandmates contacted him with reunion plans. So the first batch of songs is from a revamped version of the Destroyed, Bert's 70s punk band (who sound like Iggy when the play fast, and Crazy Horse-style Neil Young when they play midtempo). Then he heard from guitarist Henry Kaiser, with whom Switzer had been in the band Monster Island, and they cut two new songs. Bert's gonzo drumming is better suited to the free jazz/rock that Kaiser cooks up (even if it was collaboration by mail). The balance of the disc is devoted to old Destroyed demos (from '77-'79). I think the story of *Outta Control* exceeds the music (hence all the exposition here), but dig some of the Destroyed songs (especially "Ill Treatment") and both of the songs with Kaiser. (bertswitzer.com)

Dick Panthers - *Differently Abled* cd-r

I like the punked up guitar/drum machine/sound bite concoctions. They're goofy and often catchy. I think he/they can do better than some of the "take a turkey baster and shove it up my ass" ("Grandma Ate Food") lyrics, but if you like to mix oddities into the mix tapes or cd's that you make for friends, then *Differently Abled* will give you a few more options. (Dick Panthers - Box 419, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130)

The Diskords - "Pink Palace" + 2 7"

These guys are just out of junior high but they sing with more conviction than bands twice their age. On their first single, they sang about having a "heart full of Napalm" like they'd done two tours in Danang. On this ep they sound like seasoned boozehounds sharing tales of lost weekends. I don't condone their extracurricular activities (in fact, I think they should speak with their guidance counselors first thing Monday morning), but whatever they're doing delivers good punk rock singles. (Dirtnap - Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111)

The Diskords/Low Rollers - split 7"

When you stop and think about it, this split is the way it, rock'n'roll, should be: a bunch of teenagers getting together in a basement and slopping through songs about cars and minimum wage jobs; "Summertime Blues" is much better when the singer really is too young to vote. But the recording is so flat that any fun the bands were having fails to come through the speakers. The Diskords sound much better on their other singles.

(Johnny Cat - Box 82428, Portland, OR 97282)

The Divorce - *There Will Be Blood Tonight* cd

Indeed blood there shall be and given the complete lack of compelling sounds emanating from this disc, said blood shall continue to course through the listener's veins at the regular rate, nary the slightest fluctuation in blood pressure, yet alone anything approaching "we, those who have listened to the Divorce, are so affected by their music, riled up, if you will, that the only sensible courses of action entail violence." (Fugitive - Box 99556, Seattle, WA 98199)

Downpilot - *Leaving Not Arriving* cd

There is a fine line between the 70s singer/songwriter fodder of, say, Dan Fogelberg and the emo/wuss pop of, say, your

average Vagrant Records act. Downpilot crash land on that line, thankfully leaving no survivors. Honestly, *Leaving Not Arriving* makes the Eagles sound revolutionary. Do we learn nothing from history?

(Blue Disguise - Box 16362, Seattle, WA 98116)

Electric Kisses - six-song cassette

The Electric Kisses are a sloppy, charming rock'n'roll band. They're not snotty tuff punks or rock star wannabes like so many other bands. They're just in love with rock and roll and they want to tell you about it. I imagine that if a shouting Girl Scout fronted a band made up of members of the Shaggs and the Ramones, it would sound something like this. My favorite line: "All you boys in your tight tight pants, you make me wanna dance! All you girls in your short short skirts, you play so good it hurts!" (getelectric@hotmail.com)

Brian Wallace

Elvis McMan - *Punch in a Kiss* cd

My favorite cuts are "Kool Radio" and "Don't Want Nothing," the songs where Elvis McMan steer either to the pop or the punk side of the road. Too often *Punch in a Kiss* straddles the median. Still, it's a good debut and I'm looking forward to seeing these songs live (maybe it's the production that bogs things down a bit). Plus, Elvis McMan gets former Injections bassist Matt Mularkey back in action, and that's more than cool enough for me. (AsbestosRecords.com)

End of the World News - s/t 7" ep

Check this out: a punk rock opera about Leon Trotsky's brief stay in the Bronx (in early 1917, just before the revolution came to a boil) featuring an all-star cast (most of it farm along with Aaron Cometbus) delivering an excellent show that draws as much from Broadway conventions as it does punk rock, right down to the stage direction notes in the lyrics sheet. This is the exact kind of propaganda that the Federal Theater Project was accused of promoting during the New Deal 1930s. I can't wait for End of the World News to raise the capital, necessary funds to launch the full-length version of this play. (Recess - Box 1666, San Pedro, CA 90733)

Estrogenocide - *I Like to Cuddle* cd ep

I suppose the goal of a song like "Your Bloody Anus Makes Me Laugh" is to upset most people and inspire a few others to say stuff like "Dude, it's so wrong you just gotta hear it!" But if the role of horrifying parents and titillating the kiddies is already filled by arena bands like Marilyn Manson, what's the purpose of underground shock rock acts, especially when the songs are monotonous and the lyrics witless? (Note: Yes, that is the exact same review that appeared in issue #17. If *Estrogenocide* aren't going to come up with any new ideas, why should I?)

(M.H. Records - 36 Central Park Rd., Plainview, NY 11803)

The Evaporators - *Ripple Rock* cd

When I was a kid my parents always watched *The Carol Burnet Show*. I never understood much of the show but I always laughed along because it was obvious even to a child that the cast was having so much fun. James Lipton will never have Harvey Korman or Tim Conway on *The Actors Studio* but they will always be among my favorite comedians because they were so willing to be ridiculous. The Evaporators are a punk rock *Carol Burnet Show*, a relentlessly goofy band who will tickle you until you crack up (and the sooner you give in, the more fun you will have). And they know how to write great songs too. Even if they didn't pen lyrics like "I Feel Like a Fat Frustrated Fuck" and "(I've Got) Icicles on My Testicles" I'd be raving about *Ripple Rock*, which is the best Evaporators record yet. I don't know anyone who won't enjoy this record.

(Mint - Box 3613, Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6B 3Y6)

F.M. Knives – "Keith Levine" b/w "Valentine" 7"

I'd love to be the person to tell you that the new F.M. Knives platter is the disc on which they find their own voice, the record on which they pull away from their overt influences (Who, Kinks, Buzzcocks, Jam). I can't do that because it hasn't happened, and really who cares, as long as the songs are this good. I suppose you could make the argument that the F.M. Knives make their mark by opting not to indulge in mod topics in their lyrics (Vespas, popping pills, run-ins with rockers at Brighton), but I can't understand the lyrics so what they're singing about is beyond me.

(Dirtnap – Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111)

The Figgs – Ready, Steady, Stoned: Deluxe Edition cd

Ready, Steady, Stoned, the cassette version, was a 12-song affair released in 1993. *Ready, Steady, Stoned: Deluxe Edition* takes the original cassette and adds 17 songs, mostly alternate versions of songs from the cassette. Taken in isolation, this reissue is a patchy affair, a lot of great material mixed in with some relatively mediocre recordings and/or performances. What makes this historically significant is that it bridges the gap between the Figgs' first cassette release (*Ginger*) and their debut cd (*Lo-Fi at Society High*). Fans will be intrigued by the alternate takes of long-time favorites such as "Favorite Shirt" and "Chevy Nova," and dig the previously unreleased songs. Civilians probably won't hear the appeal, but that's their loss. (SodaPopRecords.com)

Thee Fine Lines – 7" ep

The best thing about "Lose Control" is that the band spends the entire song on the verge of losing their shit, but they never cross the line. It's a positively Kinks-like cut, right down to the Dave Davies-spazz out guitar solo. The other three songs don't work up that same head of steam, but I have to admit that Trista Winn, one of Thee Fine Lines singers, can handle a slow, bluesy number in ways that Ray Davies can only dream about. (God bless the man, he's my favorite songwriter, but the blues ain't his forte.) Cool record.

(Wee Rock – Box 333, Springfield, MO 65801)

The Fitts – I Have to Laugh (When I See U Hurt) 7" ep

Big Neck comes through again. This time it's a side project from Alicja of the Lost Sounds. The Lost Sounds are appealing on paper (intense garage punk with new wave keyboards sprinkled in), but I never like their records. So I was surprised by how much I liked the Fitts. The formula doesn't vary much from the one used by the Lost Sounds, yet the results are there. There's still a healthy regard for misanthropy ("Girls Like U (Deserve 2 Die)"; "(Mabe He's) Not So Smart; along with the title cut), but with less screaming the hooks surface more often.

(Big Neck – Box 8144, Reston, VA 20195)

The Flashcubes – Japanese cd ep

Syracuse's favorite sons released only two singles during their late 70s heyday, and while they didn't sell a lot of records apparently everyone who bought a Flashcubes record went on to start a record label. In recent years the Flashcubes have had releases pop up all over the world, including this ep from Japan. *Rockin' Over Japan* is an odds and ends affair (a pair of originals combined with Raspberries and Beat covers), but it's excellent, a perfect companion piece to the band's *Brilliant* disc from last year (which has been since been reissued in Germany). "Nothing to Say to You" is a riveting power pop gem and further proof that the Flashcubes haven't lost a step in the 25 years that have passed since their first go around.

(AirMailRecording.com)

Flatbush – Smash the Octopus cd

Flatbush, Brooklyn: home to the Boys of Summer, the Brooklyn Dodgers. Flatbush, the band: purveyors of unpleasant metal and hardcore. I retain no memories of this record and the aforementioned is all my notes contain. Well, that and an emphatic reminder: DON'T SPEND MUCH TIME ON THIS RECORD. (KoolArrow.com)

Fugue – The Best and the Rest of: cd-r

We should all have a better-in-intention-than-execution punk band in our past. In the case of Fugue they have gone onto bigger and better things (namely Thee Fine Lines and Trixie & the Merch Girls) and most of what they did was pretty good. Well, the Lookout-style pop punk that is, the ska punk doesn't age well (which is the fault of the genre, not the band; Operation Ivy have a lot to answer for). Fans of labels like Mutant Pop, Whoa Oh, and Knock Knock will dig this.

(Wee Rock – Box 333, Springfield, MO 65801)

The Fuse! – The Fisherman's Wife lp; "Breaker! Breaker!" b/w "Beggars and Choosers" 7"

Originality is an overrated virtue when it comes to music, but I do like new wrinkles in my rock'n'roll security blanket now and again. The Fuse! are men on a mission (I assign gender based on a photo, the band members are listed only as F1, F2, and F3), serving up the slicing guitar lines you'd find on a Fall record but without the detached irony (which is swell, one Mark E. Smith is enough for this world), opting instead for an intensity and ambition that's closer to Fugazi. I don't buy their revolutionary rhetoric (and I'm not convinced that they do either), but the way F's 1-3 mumble they could just as well be telling me how to stay out of small claims court with the people who used to own my apartment as they are spewing forth "smash the emperor, let a new day dawn" propaganda. Great album. (The "Breaker Breaker!" single pairs an album cut with a killer b-side that's not on *The Fisherman's Wife*.)

(In The Red – Box 50777, LA, CA 90050)

The Gay – You Know the Rules cd

Pop music rule #153: Cook up jaunty pop tunes with pretty harmonies and well-placed accordion, and you'll get a good review. Simple. *You Know the Rules* picks up where the Gay's debut ep left off and though they're not quite up to rule #154 (repeat #153 for an entire album and you'll get a great review), they're close enough that *You Know the Rules* goes into the "keep and listen to again" pile.

(Mint – Box 3613, Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6B 3Y6)

Jeffie Genetic and His Clones – Need a Wave cd

Everyone's clamoring to relive the 80s by watching VH1, among other things, but why rehash the new wave of old when there are records like *Need a Wave* coming out now? Mr. Genetic harbors no illusions about being original, but he gets by on having great taste in music and being able to replicate the over-the-top and ridiculously upbeat sounds of Elvis Costello's *Get Happy* and the Jam's "Town Call Malice." *Need a Wave* doesn't surpass those records but for me it does have the appeal of being a record I discovered when it came out. (As opposed to the other records mentioned above which I didn't get into until a decade after their releases.) And it marks the sixth great Dirtnap album, joining Dirt Bike Annie, the Briefs (x 2), the Epoxies, and the Exploding Hearts.

(Dirtnap – Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111)

Mike Gent – The Intake cd

Last fall I saw the Figgs open for and then back former Replacement Tommy Stinson. During the set Tommy was talking about a certain song the band had debated adding to their set list and that ultimately he deferred to Mike Gent because "because Mike's always right." And though Tommy's prone to flawed judgment (he's in Guns'n'Roses, after all),

he's right about Gent; the guy has good taste. The dozen tracks on *The Intake* don't represent his strongest material, but they do demonstrate that good taste. For the most part these songs don't need, and don't receive, a lot of embellishment. A song about dealing with the residual odds and ends involved in moving into a new place ("Tiny Little Boxes") should be subdued because it's a subdued experience. And most of *The Intake* is about such experiences. It's a relatively quiet tribute to the stability of domestic life, songs recorded in the basement while the Mrs. is upstairs, curled up with a good book. It has a couple of misfires but it more than achieves its (perceived) goal of finding a good home for worthy songs that didn't land in either of Gent's other bands. (Sodapoprecords.net)

Girl Trouble – *The Illusion of Excitement* cd

I remember seeing an interview with Glen Danzig right after he put out one of his weak-ass solo records, he was trying to defend his latest "musical style" (AKA the power ballad) by saying something like, "If you don't change, you end up being the Ramones." I thought, "Shit, if you were the Ramones, you're doin' it right and you don't need to change!" Like the Ramones, Girl Trouble knows to not fuck with a good thing. Their new cd, *The Illusion Of Excitement*, is more of the same great get-up-and-move garage rock'n'roll they've been putting out for the past 16 years. Girl Trouble know that if you want something done right, you gotta do it yourself. From their early singles and *Wig-Out!* zine to their two most recent self released cds, K.P., Bon, Dale & Kahuna have been proudly flying the DIY flag. They've got a great website too. It's jam-packed with great, funny, and useful crud. *The Illusion Of Excitement* will make you jump up and down on your living room couch and of course, it sounds nothing like Danzig's "Mother." (www.wig-out.com) *Brian Wallace*

God – *The O.D. Album* cd

This is the band I'd hope to see opening an Andrew W.K./Tenacious D. show. I'd stay and watch as long as he (yes, God is a one-man band) bashed idiotic punk as good as the first three songs on *The O.D. Album*. I'd think about leaving when he broke out his Stones cover (a passable take on "Happy"), and then I'd go check out the merchandise booths when he broke into the rest of his material (wherein tongue gets stuck in cheek—I've got no problem with mentioning rock'n'roll in each one of your rock'n'roll songs, but you have to keep things uptempo and catchy if you want to keep people in their seats. Slow, drawn out rock tunes don't cut it—more "Tonight I'm Gonna Rock You Tonight," less "Stonehenge"). Still, *The O.D. Album* is much better than expected; not so good that you'll convert, but not so bad that you'll lose faith. (www.godworldwide.com)

Goldstars – *Gotta Get Out!* cd

Gotta Get Out! has a lot of good things in its favor (two guys from the New Duncan Imperials, the backing of the Pravda label), but it falls flat. The 60s Farfisa rock is good enough that I kept hoping for a likeable song, but the vocals had me skipping ahead to the next track, fingers crossed that it would be the one to live up to expectations. (Pravda – Box 268043, Chicago, IL 60626)

The Great Sasquatch Debate – cd-r

Here we have an improvised round table discussion about the existence of Sasquatch. We have a one doctor who is a crypto zoologist and believer in Sasquatch; another doctor who is a biologist and zoologist and doubter of the existence of Sasquatch; the moderator; and stealing the show, Brodie Earl, a six-year-old whose logic may waver but who always sticks to his guns: Sasquatches exist and he has killed 10 of them. So basically we have three adults playing straightmen to a child and his steadfast belief in Big Foot. Along the way

Brodie reveals that he uses Skittles to bait Sasquatches and that in addition to have eaten the dinosaurs, Sasquatches protect Earthlings from aliens. Brodie also takes an existential path when he poses the possibility that it is Sasquatches who do not believe in us. It's a wonderful concept and it's delivered well, and it's proof that one of the most challenging aspects of improv (committing to your character) comes naturally to kids. (InterviewRecords@yahoo.com)

The Groodies – s/t cd ep

Groodie guitarist: Hey, I've got a Marshall stack. Another Groodie: Cool, that'll give us that generic punk, almost metal, sound that seldom works at gigs and always sounds like shit in the studio. Third, lyric-writing, Groodie: And I've got some lyrics that'll simultaneously titillate and appease the girl band geeks who are most likely to buy our disc. Groodie drummer: You mean tough but clearly not threatening? Nice. I can play real fast. We're all set. (Red Line – 5420 S. Bishop St., Chicago, IL 60609)

The Havenots/The Soviettes – split 7"

Holy pop punk bonanza! **The Havenots** rip through a pair of killer Buzzcocks-like cuts, both of which are even more immediately satisfying than the band's previous records. **The Soviettes** songs are just as energetic and catchy, but take longer to get there. This is a great pairing of bands. (Nice & Neat – Box 14177, Minneapolis, MN 55414)

High Beams – *Hallucination* cd

Frills free arena rock with too many solos, the sort of band that could have opened for Mott the Hoople in 1973 or the Cosmic Psychos in 1990. Sure, the High Beams could stand to edit the soloing, but I like Mott the Hoople and the Cosmic Psychos; *Hallucination* ain't bad. (Dead Beat – Box 283, LA, CA 90078)

Robyn Hitchcock – *Luxor* cd

I've just finished reading a great book called *Huxley in Hollywood*, which chronicles the British writer's experiences in and around tinsel town from the late 30s until his death in 1963. Huxley's staggering bibliography is listed (spanning 1916 to 1963; it includes nearly 50 books) and it made me wonder how many great books stand to be overlooked by history given how many he produced. Listening to *Luxor*, I wonder if something similar might happen to Robyn Hitchcock (another Brit who's spent much of his career in the colonies). Here we get another wonderful collection of songs (his first acoustic record since 1990's *Eye*) and while "another good pop album from Robyn Hitchcock" probably isn't enough of a tagline to catch the attention of the average pop fan, it should be. (RobynHitchcock.com)

Ernest Evans Hussalonia – s/t cd-r

You could subtitle this disc *Confessions of a Self-Loathing Pop Fan* because it is clear that Jessie Mank, who is at the helm of Hussalonia, has a love/hate relationship with pop music and the people who dig it, himself included. Throughout this record he borrows from pop's convention and then twists them for his own use. Lyrically, he pays tribute to pop music by using icons, real and fictional, like Chubby Checker and Peggy Sue as characters in his songs. But he uses them toward his own bitter ends, making it obvious that he is not interested in nostalgia. He's not mournful about love and romance, especially as they're often depicted in pop songs, but rather he has an active vendetta against such notions. At first I thought he was like a counterinsurgent. Then I realized that this is nothing like COINTELPRO (the FBI's former domestic espionage wing), there is nothing masked or hidden about his agenda, he's standing out in the open amongst those who love pop songs and deriding almost all of the

conventions of the form. Yet he still finds himself among the ranks: a pop fan, writer, and performer. The same could be said for the record's sounds. On the one hand, Mank can cook up pop hooks effortlessly, but he won't let it be that easy, he keeps throwing wrenches into his songs, weird, noisy tangents because, you know, how good could it be if it comes that easy to you? Either that or I just think about great pop records, such as this one, way too much. (Jessie Mank - 6310 Summer Place Drive East, #7A, Granger, IN 46530)

i-Farm - i-Farm Is Lying to Be Popular cd

Any record with lyrics mentioning parent/teacher conferences is forever in my good graces. I'll admit to being too much of a panty waist to dig i-farm's mix of metal and hardcore, but I still endorse them because of their smarts and their humor. (Go Kart - Box 20, Prince St. Station, NY, NY 10012)

The Itch - "Another Juxtaposition" + 4 7" ep

Judging from song titles like "...and Then There Was Light" and "Rock and Roll Messiah," the Itch have pretty specific ideas in mind. Too bad they settle for a mostly instrumental ep, because the one song with lyrics, "Kitty's Scream," is also the most successful. The lyrics and yelping convey a cheap horror movie and so does the song. The other songs, all instrumentals, don't latch onto anything particular. Too bad, I'd like to know about "Jim's Final Ride."

(Wee Rock - Box 333, Springfield, MO 68501)

The Jennifers - Book of Bad Advice cd ep

The Jennifers Nehru pop sounds like the missing link between the Monkees' "Last Train to Clarksville" and R.E.M.'s "So Central Rain." What's peculiar is the extent to which *Book of Bad Advice* sounds like a precursor to the last Soft Boys' album, *Nextdoorland* (*Book of Bad Advice* was released in '03 but recorded in 1996). In any event, they're drawing on the right sources and constantly injecting their lyrics with great lines. My favorite is "that which doesn't kill me can still hurt a lot" ("Gold Star"). With the "Lola" award going to this line from "You Say When": "She's got honey where the stinger's supposed to be." A fantastic record. (thejennifers.com)

Jet City Fix - Play to Kill cd

"She hates me, frustrates me/There's nothing else to say" - "Dumb Luck." Said couplet is delivered 45 seconds into a song that goes on for another three minutes. There's also "Free your soul" ("Invisible") and "Love live the rock and roll/Hot fire from your soul" ("Jet City's Rockin'"). Dribble those pity nuggets over late 80s hard rock licks (Bon Jovi or Guns'n'Roses, your choice) and *Play to Kill* is yours. (King Bee/Infect - Box 1201, Tacoma, WA 98401)

The Ka-nives - "Weasel" b/w "Dear Dad" 7"

With Junior Varsity, a band that hopped, skipped, and jumped through innocent garage pop songs while wearing cheerleading outfits, Matt Morillo championed good, clean fun. The Ka-nives, Morillo's latest band, sound like Junior Varsity after they quit the cheerleading squad and started spending their Friday nights hanging out under the bleachers instead of along the sidelines. But don't sweat the perceived loss of innocence, this is still a great rock'n'roll single (not *Paradise Lost*). The Ka-nives mine the same territory that Junior Varsity did but soak everything—guitars, bass, vocals—in fuzzy distortion. (Lance Rock - 370 Bruce Ave., Nanaimo, BC, Canada V9R 3Y1)

Let's Active - Big Plans for Everybody cd; Every Dog Has His Day cd

I fell for Let's Active the first time I heard "Every Word Means No"—it's one of the best jangle pop songs of the 80s. But it doesn't represent Let's Active very well. When I sampled their records at my college's radio station I was in search of another "Every Word Means No" and time and time again I came across odd, moody pop songs that weren't as immediately catchy. So I kept my copy of the band's *Afoot* ep

and moved on. Until these reissues arrived. I found those same odd, moody sounds but this time they clicked. Granted, I have to adjust a bit for the 80s production, but the songs are there, on both of these discs. The liner notes reveal that over time Let's Active evolved from a three-person band to one-guy-with-support project, but that main guy, Mitch Easter, had a unique take on power/jangle pop and that carries both 1986's *Big Plans for Everybody* and 1988's *Every Dog Has His Day*. Recommended for fans of early R.E.M. and/or Game Theory (both of whom were produced by Easter at one point).

(Collectors' Choice - Box 838, Itasca, IL 60143)

Libido Grande - Wrecked cd ep

"Awful," the lead track, is everything its title claims it to be, in both style (a four-beat quasi-melody followed by four beats of sustain, then repeat ad nauseam) and substance ("I hope I'm not just taking up space"). And it only gets worse. Take "Door #3" for example: "You're hoping every day you'll see the light/You think you'll never have to say goodbye/Can't you see time go by?/Can't you see there's no prize." I wouldn't accept such trite work from my fifth grade students, why should I even consider doing so with my entertainment? Libido Grande: musica crapola.

(Failed Experiment - 5420 S. Bishop St., Chicago, IL 60609)

The Little Killers - s/t lp

A Little Killers show is a straight forward affair. The band blazes through 25 minutes of simple but satisfying garage rock and punk, with Andy making a couple of jokes and the rhythm section, Sarah and Kari, saying not a word. *The Little Killers* is a remarkably accurate representation of the live show, only with fewer jokes, some backing vocals, and a bit of harmonica. All of which, on paper, would lead you finishing your beer and then making a hasty departure. But that's not the way it works out. The formula is no frills and doesn't lend itself to written description. Actually it reminds me of the Frank Zappa quote where he said that writing about music is similar to dancing about art. I get a kick out of this album every time I listen to it, but I'm out of record reviewin' gas, so much so that I'm tempted to use phrases like "check them out" or "pick this up." Ah fuck it, check out their live show and pick up a copy of this record. If you don't like it, I'll buy your copy from you and pass it on to a friend with taste. (CryptRecords.com)

Marshall Artist - But How Are You with a Sword? cd ep

Marshall Artist's debut cd is one of the most overlooked gems of recent years, a fascinating combination of pop, punk, rock and, in small doses, prog rock vamping. That cd is akin to the fight scene in which a martial artist demonstrates a sampling of all of his various skills, showing a little bit of everything. *But How Are You with a Sword?* is like a scene in which he focus on a particular facet of his arsenal. To step down from Mount Metaphor, what's happening on this ep is that Scott Lee and company are focusing more on one or two sounds and assimilating their influences to greater effect, whipping up a record that's just as good as its predecessor while taking a step away from the band's influences. At least that's the case with the original songs here ("The Sky Is Clear," in particular). There are also a bunch of covers, which are done for fun and done well, especially their version of the Muffs "Crush Me" (there are also Bum and Flop covers). (Book Records - 17 Library Street, Binding, U.S.A., or dsharpie@hotmail.com)

The Minds - "Rip Out Your Eyes" + 2 7"; Plastic Girls cd

Looking for a band to score your next low budget zombie movie? Grab the Minds! Like a good, cheap monster movie that simultaneously dishes out both buckets of blood and laughs, the Minds constantly cook up songs that have elements to both repel and attract us. They've got gorey lyrics and do their share of yelling, but the hooks, boy howdy! The first four times I heard "Blockout," which is on the 7", I

thought they were singing "Bugout" and I thought it was the perfect bugout song. (I still think it's the perfect bugout song.) Remember, always read your record sleeves, friends. See, there's a moral at the end, just like a zombie movie. (The cd, *Plastic Girls*, doesn't have a song as great as "Blockout" and it does have a bit of filler, but that doesn't mean you walk out of the theater, mate! It's still a punk-rock-with-keyboards-almost-but-not-quite-new wave good time.) (7": Alien Snatch - Moerikeweg 1, 741199 U-Bach, Germany; cd: Dirtnap - Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111)

The Minus 5 - *I Don't Know Who I Am* cd

There's a German word, *kunstschadenfreude*, that describes the experience of plunging into art so deeply that sorrow overcomes joy. And though it's pretentious, it's a perfect description for what I was expecting from *I Don't Know Who I Am*. First of all, the Minus 5's last record, *Down with Wilco*, was one of the darkest pop albums ever. I mean, making Kafka seem like Rob Schneider dark. Then I heard that *I Don't Know* is comprised of the downer songs that were left of the band's previous record, *Let the War Against Music Begin*. The night the cd arrived I ordered in pizza and a six pack and readied myself for a plunge into the depths of the human condition only to have the Minus 5 perform a ¾ reverse *kunstschadenfreude*. *I Don't Know* is quiet and weird and it does hint at contemplating issues big and small (God at the dawn of time, a guy easing into his day eating breakfast cereal, subject matter that only Scott McCaughey is going to explore—and always with a perfect balance of humor and genuine introspection, or, as is often the case, random phrases that convey either such humor or thought; the beauty of McCaughey's lyrics is that they shift focus within songs, often within verses, and he leaves it up to you to figure when he's goofing, when he's serious, when he's come up with a phrase that simply sounds cool or sometimes all three), but it's not that dark. I can listen to it with the lights off and not freak out. Or I can listen to it while I'm driving to work. It's not the record I'm going to play at picnics this summer (well, I would, and have a fine time doing so, but I can understand that most people wouldn't want to listen to "Myrna Loy" while they're scarfing down their potato salad), but it works in so many settings that it has been recommended. And is. (Normal - Box 150117, 53040 Bonn, Germany)

Mumbler - *The Winter of Our Discontent 7"* ep

Marco Reosti was part of the infamous four-man shirt crew in Detroit. (He and a group of buddies had a four-neck t-shirt that they wore to Tigers games.) Funny guy. I wish he and the other guys in Mumbler would let more of that humor seep into their band. I agree with their left leaning politics, but they're better than a lot of the "having a hard time growing up" lyrics. (Salinas - Box 20996, Ferndale, MI 48220)

Mystery Girls - s/t cd

The first time I saw the Mystery Girls I left after three songs. I'd just feasted on the 1-2 combo of the Little Killers and the Catholic Boys, and the Mystery Girls seemed to be trying too hard to be rock'n'roll, copping too many low-rent Black Crowes moves. All of that went out the window the moment I heard the opening cut on their debut disc, "Finger on the Grain." *The Mystery Girls* is overflowing with the same post-pot garage rock you'll find on the *Nuggets* box set and, better still, this disc is not a case of two good songs and a bunch of half-assed covers, it's start to finish good. They've also got the ability to play loose and go off on tangents without sailing down the slippery slope into bombast ("dude, awesome keyboard sound, but we're just about to three minutes, time to cut out." "Right, got it."); Count 5, not Iron Butterfly. I hope I get to see these guys again. (Trick Knee - Box 1271, Green Bay 54307)

Onion Flavored Rings - *Used to It* lp

It is almost ridiculous how much the singers in Onion Flavored Rings dislike themselves. (There are two, Paul and Steve, and to be honest the self-loathing might be the sole jurisdiction of one guy or the other, as opposed to both, but I'm never certain who's singing and/or writing what on this album, so they can share the credit.) They give Morrissey a run for his money in the "o woe is me" sweepstakes. When I listened to Morrissey or the Smiths I always got an uplifting sense of "at least I'm not that guy." And I admit, that's part of the appeal of *Used to It*. But then the Onions go a step further and bring science into their lyrics, on a literal level: "You may think there's such a thing as matter/But if you look at the deepest levels/You might see a billion interactions/But there's nothing there/I think it's the shame of quantum physics" ("Quantum Physics"). Smiths and Morrissey records would be much cooler if they discussed string theory or relativity. But, aside from the scientific inquiries, the big difference between the Onion Flavored Rings and Morrissey is that Paul and Steve mean it when they sing about what fools they are or how they want to kill themselves, whereas Morrissey was just playing a part. And now that I think about it, the Onion's authenticity is unsettling and I'm left with an album that I like but feel unresolved about. Get back to me about this record, will you? (Onion Flavored Rings - 1450 7th Ave., #6, SF, CA 94122)

Pansy Division - *Total Entertainment!* cd

Literally, Pansy Division have a clearly defined identity: goofy, self-effacing guys perfectly at ease with their sexuality. Musically, they've never seemed to have that same sense of confidence. They've always struck me as a revue, borrowing from a range of pop and rock subgenres but never pulling them together into their own style. So while I'm glad to know they're still going (after a five-year hiatus and a change of labels), it's for their (de facto) identity politics more than their tunes. (Alternative Tentacles - Box 419092, SF, CA 94141)

Popular Shapes - *Bikini Style* cd

The first time I heard XTC's *White Music* I was certain it was too good to be true, that a record could not possibly be that spazzy and yet that catchy. Not that the two concepts are in conflict, just that once a song reaches a certain energy level, its melody begins to evaporate. Usually. With *White Music* XTC took such science and blasted it into the trash heap of pop theories. And then...nothing. Nobody followed XTC's bold experiment, not even XTC themselves (who followed up with the less manic yet still brilliant *Go 2*). Enter Popular Shapes and *Bikini Style*, which boldly goes where only one band has gone before. At times this record is staring-into-the-noonday-sun frantic, which forces me to squint and momentarily block out the hooks. But then it passes and the pop resumes. Some may be put off by the aggressive vocals, but *Bikini Style* is a worthwhile acquired taste. (On/On Switch - Box 641122, SF, CA 94164)

Post Stardom Depression - *Ordinary Miracles* cd

I hate cock rock. We all should. I hate *Ordinary Miracles*. We all should. (controlgroupco.com)

Prize Worth Killing - *Piece of Me* cd ep

Ambercrombie & Fitch assistant manager: "Hi, like, that anorack looks so good on you. It's on sale! And if you buy two, you get a free cd by A Prize Worth Killing. Customer: Cheap anoracks? Cool, I'll take four. But I'll pass on the disc. I hear those guys suck ass. A&F Asst. Manager: Yeah, we can't give these things away, which is surprising because their press sheet says they've got proposed sponsorships from Hansens and Mountain High. And they're already "catching the eye of world-famous producers, agents, and labels." And they've received air play on over 11 stations. Aren't those the things you look for in a band? Customer: Don't you think that if it were really more than 11 stations they'd just say 12 or 13 or 17? A&F Asst. Manager: Good point. Enjoy the anoracks. (Onset)

The Pulses – Little Brothers cd ep

Unlike a lot of bands on Dirtnap, the Pulses don't have a lot of flash. Compared to their labelmates, they're the George Harrisons of the bunch, the quiet ones, at least on the surface. That more reserved approach comes across in their songs too, but the hooks are there in droves. And being more subtle, choosing not to use every possible gimmick at every turn, draws more attention to the times when they do embellish. Like the theramin (or at least it's a theramin sound-alike) on "Enchanted Heavens," or the bongos on "Frozen Love" (the best use of bongos on a pop song since the Yardbirds' "For Your Love"). In the end *Little Brothers* stands with the best Dirtnap records.

(Dirtnap – Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111)

The Put-Ons – "Jack Kevorkian Gift Certificate" b/w "Kleenx" 7"

The a-side also appears on the Put-Ons split cd (see review below), but it's only the fifth or sixth best song on that disc. The b-side is another Generation X cover. Not the band's best material but still good enough to merit a hearty "holy shit, this stuff is great!", proving the old adage "their weakest songs are still better than most bands' best."

(Puke'n'Vomit – Box 3435, Fullerton, CA 92831)

The Put-Ons – "Get Your Kicks" b/w "

Before grunge rock came along and mucked up the works, a guy, say, me, could refer to a band as "flannel rock" and people would know that said guy was referring to a band that wore SST t-shirts under their flannels and wrote kinda punk, kinda rock songs with huge hooks and heart on the sleeve lyrics. Then a smart reader, say, you, could respond, Oh, the Put-Ons sound like early Soul Asylum or later Husker Du. Then I'd go, Yeah. Then you'd go, Cool, I'll pick up one of their singles. Then I'd go, Try the "Get Your Kicks" 7", it's got two originals that you can't find on their other records. But we can't do that any more. Fucking grunge rock.

(Puke'n'Vomit – Box 3435, Fullerton, CA 92831)

The Put-Ons/Deadbeat Sinatra cd

With more than a touch of regret I have to label the Put-Ons "Replacements-like." I hang this albatross around their collective neck because once people hear that a band is like the Replacements they, the listeners, expect Westebergian lyrics and insights and if it isn't as good as the Replacements then the whole deck of cards falls in. The Put-Ons don't deserve to have that tag draped over their necks yet at the same time, they sound like the Replacements, and they're a great band. Not as great as the Replacements, but great nonetheless. I listen to the Put-Ons' half of this disc all the time; it may be better than their debut record. The songs are above average smart and always catchy. In fact, if these same songs were played by another band they might come across as straight power pop. But the Put Ons coat everything in punk. For example, the way their drummer slaps out seemingly sloppy beats yet keeps things tight enough to insure that the songs never fall apart. Balance, baby, the Put Ons know how to balance opposing forces.

Deadbeat Sinatra are probably the best of the bands who've derived their moniker from the Chairman (Trashcan Sinatras, Frankie Goes to Hollywood; being others), but they're still able to catch no more than a glimpse of the Put Ons fading taillights. (Basement – Box 511, La Habra, CA 90633)

Radio Beats – Blow You Up 7" ep

I want to get the Radio Beats on the same bill as the Figgs and the Ergs so that I can hear "Kill Your Man," "Girl, Kill Your Boyfriend," and "Obligatory Song About Killing One's Boyfriend" all in one misanthropic evening. And it would be a great show too. The Radio Beats play kind of melodic garage punk that would lead well into the Ergs and their very

melodic, high speed pop and punk, which would lead well into the Figgs and their very melodic, mid-tempo power pop. *Blow You Up* is a good, not great, ep, but I bet I'll like the Radio Beats more after Misanthrope Fest.

(Big Neck – Box 8144, Reston, VA 20195)

Radio Reelers – Shakin' at the Party cd

I think it was former Supreme Court Chief Justice Thurgood Marshall who once said, "I can't describe for you the difference between good, dumb-in-a-fun-way lyrics and lyrics that are merely inane, but I know the difference when I hear it." I hear you, Chief Justice Marshall, I hear you. And while I'm scratching my noggin trying to figure out why I don't love *Shakin' at the Party* (after all, the Radio Reelers play the kind of simple, Chuck Taylors and ripped jeans garage punk that I usually like), I have to wonder what would happen if the Radio Reelers couldn't use the words "stereo" and "night" in their lyrics; they go to the same well over and over again and the music's not so great that I can ignore the lame lyrics. (As for "That's How Strong My Love Is" I'll just assume they stole it from the Heartdrops.) Indifference at the party.

(Dead Beat – Box 283, LA, CA 90078)

The Ramblin' Ambassadors – Avanti cd

Like instrumental-lovin' zombies, the Canadian surf bands of the 90s won't stay down. Last year, Brian Connelly, formerly of Shadowy Men on a Shadowy Planet (they did the *Kids in the Hall* theme song) resurfaced in Atomic 7. Now Brent Cooper, formerly of Huevos Rancheros, returns in the Ramblin' Ambassadors. Like Atomic 7, the Ambassadors are a trio that indulge in a variety of instrumental stylings. They tackle the surf material well (including a cover of Shadowy Men's "20 Original Fembots"). Ditto for the country songs. The spaghetti western songs fall short, leaving us with a good ep stretched over a nine-song cd.

(Mint – Box 3613, Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6B 3Y6)

The Real Losers – Time to Lose lp

Until I heard *Time to Lose* I swore that the Teenie Cheetahs' first 7" was the worst sounding good record ever, but now the Real Losers have taken the looks-like-crap-but-still-tastes-all-right cake. This is the sort of record that Rip Off would reject for sounding too crummy. The Real Losers kick up a right fine garage punk racket that features a guy yelping atop a blurred mix of guitars, bass, and drums. And anyone who tells you that they can distinguish one instrument from another on this record is lying, they've dissolved into one another. The instruments, that is, not the misguided listeners. I like it, the record, that is. (Squirrel – Box 481, Leeds, LS5 3TH, UK)

The Real Losers/Pop Threat – split 7"

Pop Threat's first song is a cool, moody tune that reminds me of the Jesus and Mary Chain, and it works. Their second song tries to put up a tough façade and fails. Blech. Then it collapses into a pointless instrumental. Double blech. Then it tosses aside a pseudo false ending and comes back again, nailing the blech trifecta. **The Real Losers** sound so much better on their lp. Here their songs are way too long and too slow. Low budget Grand Funk.

(Squirrel – Box 481, Leeds, LS5 3TH, UK)

Martin Rev – To Live cd

The default setting for *To Live* is to program an unwavering drum beat, loop a bass line, sprinkle in some keyboards, and then breathe, more than sing, the lyrics. It all reminds me of a New Order side project (Peter Hooke's Revenge, to be exact) and it makes for a creepy record, like walking through an enormous, unlit warehouse and hearing voices from undetermined places. I think the title comes from a kidnapper: If you want to live, your family had better cough up the loot. Then again, I'm might be projecting a bit there. (File 13 – Box 804868, Chicago, IL 60680)

Cody Ross's Stamens – *The First Session 7" ep*

A few years back the Stamens released a fun-filled garage'n'surf ep, songs seemingly recorded at a house party. The joke here is that those songs originally featured the "is he in the same room as the band?" warblings of Cody Ross. This 7" is in the spirit of the prank records released on Planet Pimp Records, but here the reading material is better than the actual gag. And yet it's still worth convincing a friend to buy it so you can hear it for yourself.

(I Don't Feel a Thing – Box 858, Tempe, AZ 85280)

Ruston Mire – *Driving Straight Up in Siam cd*

Did you ever wonder what became of those Cure songs that they deemed too long, too droney, and too dull to include on an album (even on *Disintegration*, which is ridiculously long, droney, and dull)? Of course not, you shouldn't have done so, and Ruston Mire certainly shouldn't have scraped such songs off the cutting room floor and issued *Driving Straight up in Siam*. (Roam – 3539 27th Pl. West, #116, Seattle, WA 98199)

The 7-10 Splits – *Yard Sale cd*

Me: I've listened to this disc half a dozen times, nearly all of the songs are great but I don't know what to say.

Kaiser, my dog: (Walks over, puts his head on my knee, wags his tail and looks up)

Me: You're right, I shouldn't get caught up in trying to explain that the 7-10 Splits simply rock out and indulge in the kind of ironic, pre-Reality Bites humor that got my friends and I through high school.

Kaiser: (Barks)

Me: Absolutely, *Yard Sale* is a goof punk classic in the making. Someone doesn't have to like hard rock or metal to dig songs like "Permanent Record" or "Prettiest Girl in the USA" because it's the humor that ties it altogether.

Kaiser: (Walks away, starts chewing on a tennis ball)

Me: Yeah, why muck up a good thing with too much thinking. It's a new record from Timo (ex-Wrench) and Tim & Scary (ex-Scary Chicken), that's good enough for me.

(Big Neck – Box 8144, Reston, VA 20195)

Scott – *The Album: Conversations with the People of Atlanta for the Benefit of Scott Tyson cd-r*

Who is Scott Tyson? I don't know. Why has Interview Records collected snippets of advice for Scott from more than 40 people? I don't know that either, but I do know that *Scott – The Album* is pretty damn amusing, an NPR style audio documentary (question, answer, music bump—including snippets from Daniel Johnston, the Shaggs, and Half Japanese) that grows more absurd the further in you go. Part one is comprised of family, friends, and strangers (including a waitress who served Scott, a Jehovah's Witness who came to the interviewer's door, and a guy at a bar who tells a great story about the time he and a buddy got pulled over after throwing two dozen ears of corn and a handful of quarters at a cop car and then got out of the ticket by repairing the cop's radio). Part two has people from Cartoon Network, where the interviewer did an internship. It's a good time and even though in the end we still know virtually nothing about Scott, the highlights come when those interviewed reveal things about themselves. (InterviewRecords@yahoo.com)

Shark Pants – *Porno Snakehead cd*

Dear Shark Pants,

Guys, I dig your record. It reminds of another Tucson band, the Weird Lovemakers. Or maybe the Bananas. And at times the guitars remind me of the more aggressive Queen songs, or even early Black Sabbath. But I'm reluctant to mention those bands because *Porno Snakehead* isn't derivative. You guys have this sense that any type of music is up for grabs, that anything can assimilated. And that reminds me of the Weird Lovemakers. Did I mention them already? It's the approach more than the sound.

Anyway, I'm writing to let you know that you're committing commercial suicide. I'm sure you know this already, but I'm trying to appease my conscience so that I can enjoy your disc 100% guilt-free.

That's my two cents. Thanks for putting out such a cool album.

Sincerely,

Mike

(Recess – Box 1666, San Pedro, CA 90733)

The Slaughterhouse Four – "Partying Is Such Sweet Sorrow" + 3 cd-r

I'm on record as saying that Slaughterhouse 4 frontman Chadd Derkins should always be in a band. He's got an engaging personality, he likes to write songs about books, and he can come up with good hooks. That said, I think it's time he made a record without any Misfits-y "whoa oh" backing vocals. New tricks, mi amigo, time to incorporate new tricks! (slaughterhousefour.com)

Slomo Rabbit Kick – *Bass Monster Lives in the Bass Forest cd*

...and then the bass monster leaves the confines of the bass forest and heads to the nearby college campus to convert young people with his populist politics... That's the main storyline on this disc, a schizophrenic indie pop record from the mind of Jay Chilcote, the one gent behind this one man band. I say schizophrenic because Chilcote quickly abandons the bass monster children's-story-for-grown-ups that he set up in the first three songs in favor of more traditional indie pop subject matter (and he fares well in that realm too). Musically *Bass Monster* draws on the likes of Small Factory, Guided By Voices, and Of Montreal (and probably Kleenex Girl Wonder too, given the way in which Chilcote volleys between sincere pop songs and jokey concepts). I wish he'd have stuck with the bass monster story longer (I really want to know more about this bass forest), but *Bass Monster* is all right as is. (skrockirecords.com)

The Spits – s/t cd

The Spits don't care whether or not we like them. They've released an album that's a mere 17:39 long and they open it some kind of weird witch movie sound bite that lasts 1:40—I guarantee you'll want to fast forward through it. But once you've waded through that, you're in for a grand time, a style of punk rock that's 20 IQ points lower than the first Ramones albums and accented with keyboards. My theory is that the Spits are conducting an experiment to see how dumb they can make punk rock while still having good songs. So far, so good. (And this is much better than the 7" tour ep reviewed last issue.) (Dirtnap – Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111)

Spoilsport – *They All Want Cake cd*

The B-52s meet the Ramones and sing songs of summer, boys, and candy (and, in the case of "Boys on the Beach," boys as candy). Even when love goes wrong, Spoilsport's songs are upbeat. They're kind of like cub in that regard, or maybe Lisa Mahr's first post-cub band, Buck. Forget your diet, indulge in some Spoilsport. (spoilsport.net)

The Steinways – *Bear vs. Man cd-r ep*

What do you know, a good pop punk ep? Like a lot of pop punk bands, the Steinways sound like the Queers. But unlike most of those bands, the Steinways sound like the Queers at their poppiest and most Beach Boys-like (I'm thinking of the *Don't Back Down* album). I like the Steinways, they sound like they're having fun. Grath Madden has a nice voice and a smart way with backing vocals, sweet but uncluttered. In fact, only a few of the lyrics prevent me from loving the Steinways ("Katie Holmes"? Bad taste. "Why Don't Jewish Girls Like Me?", not offensive but uncomfortable and probably

reveals a self-fulfilling prophesy as to why chosen chicks don't dig Garth). But maybe I'll get over that.
(The Steinways@yahoo.com)

Strong Come Ons – Yell a Lot and Suck 7" ep

Well, all right, another band featuring Nick from the Catholic Boys and the Tears. *Yell a Lot* is smack dab betwixt Nick's other bands, not as intense as the Catholic Boys but faster than the Tears. Here he sounds like he has dumped buckets of scuzzed out guitar tracks onto the mixing board, which is located in the basement, before doing the vocal tracks from the upstairs bathroom. Meanwhile, the drummer sounds like he's in the woods out back throwing rocks at a garbage can, and the whole concoction has been consciously smeared together. I like it, not as mind-blowing as the Catholic Boys or as good as the Tears, but still fine.

(Big Neck – Box 8144, Reston, VA 20195)

TRS-80 – Shake Hands with Danger cd

It was the Christmas of 1984 when my little brother got his first Casio. We spent the morning sampling burps and playing them back in every way we could conceive of. We were pretty dumb, but we were still wise enough to recognize that no one else in the world would be amused by what we were doing. TRS-80 have the gear and lack the (relative) wisdom. *Shake Hands* is nothing more than cheap "it's wacky because I remember it from my childhood, and my childhood was a long time ago—the 1980s!" nostalgia (just in case the band's name didn't tip you off). I couldn't find a "Where's the Beef" button anywhere in the cd booklet, but I'm sure it's there.

(File 13 – Box 804868, Chicago, IL 60680)

The Tears – s/t cd

The Tears is the long overdue garage punk response to Fleetwood Mac's *Rumors*, an intra-band battle of the sexes (less the cocaine suppositories). The gist of Courtney's songs: I've been wronged by a heartless boyfriend; the gist of Nick's songs: woman, leave me alone. And by the closing track, a cover of the Mystery Girls' "I Know It's Hard," they've buried the hatchet, and engaged in a sweet duet, which trades acoustic guitars for the furnace blast intensity of the other nine songs. Speaking of those other nine cuts, they sound nothing like the Stones but use the same formula: raw, simple, middle class takes on the blues. Good stuff.

(Trick Knee – Box 1271, Green Bay 54307)

Tiger Shovel Nose – "Cappuccino Twist" b/w "Stupid Stupid" 7"

Like the best Kaisers or Neatbeats, both sides of this single remind me a lot of the early Beatles, without swerving over into carbon copy territory. The b-side splashes in a bit of organ and takes the cake, but both cuts are so good that even on a great mix tape they always pounce out of the speakers. (I Don't Feel a Thing – Box 858, Tempe, AZ 85280)

TWIN HATERS – s/t cd

I LIKE THEIR USE OF LOWER CASE FOLLOWED BY UPPER CASE LETTERING (MY COMPUTER CALLS THAT "TOGGLE CASE"), KIND OF LIKE WHAT FIREHOSE DID. SAID GRAMMATICAL CHOICE IS CERTAINLY MORE INTERESTING THAN THIS WRETCHED "HEY, IT'S 1991 AND WE'RE GOING TO GET OUR VIDEO ON 120 MINUTES AND HEADBANGER'S BALL" DISC.

(Failed Experiment – 5420 S. Bishop St., Chicago, IL 60609)

Trachtenburg Family Slideshow Players – Vintage Slide Collections from Seattle, Vol. 1

The Trachtenburgs have devised a surefire live show: Mom runs a slide show that features slides purchased at estate and garage sales, the daughter plays drums and sings backing vocals, and dad plays guitar, sings, and treats the audience to witty banter. It makes for a wonderful night out. So wonderful, in fact, that I bought *Vintage Slide Collections from Seattle, Vol. 1* as a keepsake, not expecting much from the songs, which, live, are haphazard and secondary to the novel

stage presentation. But the record is as fantastic as the live show, though for different reasons. Dad's a terrific tunesmith who knows how to maximize the arrangements of his seemingly simple songs. Then to top it off, the daughter gives up the drums to focus on singing. Her voice is the perfect counterpoint to her father's and highlights the absurd lyrics that accompany the slides, especially on the six songs that are based on a late 70s McDonalds marketing presentation. The idiocy of fast food marketing, and marketing in general, has never been more apparent than when a child sings "let's not have the same (advertising) weight in 1978, let's have more!" Brilliant. (Plus, as an added bonus, the cd's rhythm section is bassist Chris Bellew (Chris and Tad Show; Giraffes; Presidents of the USA) and drummer Mike Musburger (Fastbacks; Posies; Marshall Artist). (Bar/None – Box 1704, Hoboken, NJ 07083)

Trixie and the Merch Girls – Dazzle and Flash cd-r ep

Trixie and company have jettisoned the two sounds that dominated their last ep (pop punk and indie rock) in favor of acoustic pop songs, and the changes suit them really well. *Dazzle and Flash* reminds me of a cross between Kathleen Hanna's *Julie Ruin* album and Holly Golightly. In fact, as much as I enjoy these songs, especially the second and third tracks, I'd love to hear them done by the band's garage rock alter egos, Thee Fine Lines.

(Wee Rock – Box 333, Springfield, MO 65801)

Tungsten 74 – Aleatory Element double cd (!)

Progressive rock, like any other genre, has its own set of identifying characteristics. For example, double album releases, songs that contain "passages," sounds clearly influenced by monosyllabic 70s Euro rockers (Can; Yes; Emerson, Lake, & Palmer) and most telling of all: song titles punctuated by colons. Tungsten 74 cover all of those bases ("Blurry Trees: the song," in case you were wondering) in setting their controls for the far reaches of the galaxy, and they do it pretty well. *Aleatory Element* makes for great daydreaming music.

(Technical Echo – 172 5th Ave., #51, Brooklyn, NY 11217)

The Unloveables – The Punk Rock Club cd ep

The Unloveables put on a great live show, lots of energy up front and great drumming. Plus, they've got GM contributor Frank Leone on guitar. They radiate a lot of charm and even if you don't love "whoa-oh"-heavy pop punk you'll enjoy their set. This ep doesn't fully capture the appeal of their stage act, but most of the songs were recorded with only two of the five current Unloveables. It's good but the best is yet to come from this fab combo.

(Knock Knock – 394 Hewlett Ave., Patchogue, NY 11772)

V/A – Delta Masters: 16 Strange Bands Put Their Twist on Classic Blues cd

Cool idea (reviving songs by pre-WWII Delta blues singers like Charley Patton, Son House, and Robert Johnson, among others (there are also, despite the cd's title, songs from post-WWII, urban blues singers like John Lee Hooker and Muddy Waters)), decent if somewhat disappointing execution (about half of the cuts are okay, but only twice did I reach for the cd case because I had to know who I was listening to (**Crab Lady, The Crack Pipes**)). (DogFingers.com)

V/A – Girls L.T.D: Girls Like to Dance cd

Happy times, folks, happy times. The first seven cuts on this right fine collection of bubbly pop and/or punk from Japan are delightful—a slew of bands drawing on the likes of Shonen Knife (who appear here too) and the Blue Hearts.

Supersnazz, the Clicks, Prambath, Shonen Knife, Mikabomb, the Bunnies, Brownny Circus—each of 'em could win over the most unruly punk rock hellions or work the room to perfect effect at an eight-year-old's birthday party. Things unravel a bit with **Heavens Out** who are merely okay. Then **Bizzy Killer** melt the wings and send us crashing to earth, allowing an emo influence to poison their ways. The **Belters**

and **Hikaru Nagisa** continue the losing streak before the **Spandeks** swoop in and save the day, closing the compilation with "Go Cart." A bit of editing and you're in for a stupendous time. 8 for 12 = .750. (Loft Records)

V/A - It Came from Uranus cd

Garage rock is thin ice on which to be skating these days, 'tis the grunge rock of the era. But that doesn't mean that there aren't good garage bands to be found, and *It Came from Uranus* rounds up a bunch of them. There's a slew of good cuts here (**Mistreaters**, **Tomorrow's Cavemen**, **Bleed, Knuckle Drager** (who opt to spell their moniker with but one "g," see, they're not too bright—I like it!), **Lordly Serpents**, **Bitter Pills**, **Un-Mutuals**) and a handful of great tracks from the likes of the **Cripplers**, the **Reactions**, the **Nelsonics**, and, best of all the **Ka-nives** (featuring Matt from Junior Varsity!). 11 for 21 = .543. (ProVelRecords.com)

V/A - Let's Get Killed lp

Awesome. Lots of cool, poppy punk bands who recorded their songs on shoestring budgets, and apparently no two bands spent their shoestring budget at the same studio. Thus, all of the songs sound kind of crummy but each in a unique way. I love hearing songs that start with just a bass or guitar which causes the temporarily dormant snare drum to buzz, you can sense the drummer just waiting to pounce. But enough talk of the virtues of low rent recordings, what makes this compilation cook is a bunch of great songs from the likes of **Crimson Sweet**, **Kill the Hippies**, the **Jeffs**, **Radar Secret Service**, the **Socials**, **Sweaty Weapons**, **Sexual Tension**, **Zero Crag**, and at the top of the heap, **Nowhere Squares**, whose "Working Class Girl" is one of the best pop songs ever. (When I taped *Let's Get Killed* I had to put "Working Class Girl" on twice... additional note: there's also a song on here from writer **Wred Fright**. The tune isn't as good as his writing, but it's interesting to hear, nonetheless.) Don't be dissuaded by the lack of name bands here, this is an excellent record. 9 for 13 = .692.

(Cock Punch - 614½ N. Mantua St., Kent, OH 44240)

V/A - Let's Get Rid of L.A.: Bands from Underneath the Ruins of Southern California cd

Once a month I receive a compilation that purports to represent some hitherto unknown or under-recognized local scene, but the excitement that allegedly went into compiling the record rarely comes out the other side. *Let's Get Rid of L.A.* is the exception. It's an invigorating collection of pop, punk, and/or garage rock from 15 relatively new bands that consistently hits the mark. I'd recommend this record if it had nothing more than an unreleased song from bubblegum queens the **Pinkz** and a killer Red Cross cover ("Annette's Got the Hits," by **Neon King Kong**), but they're just the tip of the iceberg. There are also cool cuts from **Rolling Blackouts**, **Checkers**, **Flash Express**, the **Orphans**, **Thee Make Out Party**, the **Fuse!**, **Miracle Chosuke**, the **Lipstick Pickups**, and the **Starvations**. 11 for 15 = .733.

(Revenge 5835 Harold Way, #203, LA, CA 90028)

V/A - Red Line Sampler cd

Pity the **Blackouts** and **Viza Noir**. They've each donated quality songs to a compilation that is otherwise choked with bad punk, bad metal and thanks to **Faction of the Fox**, bad rap (hey, using violins to keep it real). 2 for 25 = .008. (Red Line - Box 607792, Chicago, IL 60660)

V/A - The War on Terrorism 7" ep

When I was in college I took a pair of foreign policy classes with an avowed socialist named Steven Zunes. The last class of the semester Zunes would deliver a heartfelt speech on the inevitable Socialist revolution in America. I don't think he was looking for converts so much as he wanted to be heard; he wanted his message out there and if the previous weeks of class hadn't conveyed how much he believed in the impending workers' revolt, he wanted all doubt removed. Yet, for all of

his self righteous tendencies he also pulled one of my favorite jokes of all time. On Halloween he wore a devil's mask to class and conducted the entire hour lecture while wearing the mask and never once made mention of the mask. It was as baffling as it was hysterical. The bands on *War on Terrorism* would have like Zunes. Each of their songs is a passionate anti-war diatribe where the desire to be heard overrides the need to say something new. **Caulfield** and **Mumbler** are the best of the four, sounding like mid-80s California hardcore and Screeching Weasel, respectively. **The Gibbons** and **Megan Katt** round out the line up. What's missing here is the proverbial Halloween mask, the sense of humor I know these guys have. (Salinas - Box 20996, Ferndale, MI 48220)

The Vaticans - "Commotion" b/w "Talking About You" 7"

It probably happens to everyone who even flips past the oldies station: why don't they make 'em like that any more? Well, the Vaticans do. And without any of the irony that usually plagues bands' efforts to write vintage 60s AM radio hits. Smooth, straight forward r'n'b. One more reason you should own a record player.

(Pure Filth - Box 410325, SF, CA 94141)

Tom Verlaine - Flashlight cd

The production sounds of the 80s were often unkind to the songs buried beneath them. Guitar lines that dangled like icicles, syrupy keyboards, drums like trampolines, all mixed so that each element is isolated from the others—these are not sounds that have aged well. Tom Verlaine's fifth solo album, originally released in 1987, is comprised of 10 awkward exercises in which an originator (Verlaine was in Television) tries to go contemporary. The material is not unpleasant, in fact, Verlaine sounds like he's in a good mood, but the songs suffocate underneath the avalanche of studio trickery. (Collectors' Choice - Box 838, Itasca, IL 60143)

Vervein - Vast Low Cities cd

I wonder how many 4AD records the members of Vervein have at home because when I listen to *Vast Low Cities* I'm reminded of bands like Throwing Muses, Belly, and the Breeders (especially their first album). I like the opening two songs and one from the middle ("Arches of Georgia"), but the formula grows monotonous over the course of 14 songs and I want them to trade in the swaying backbeat for a few full-fledged driving pop songs (3/4 time is better for waltzes than it is for pop albums).

(Angry Moose - 2125 Hayes St., #2, SF, CA 94117)

Victims of Telephone - Still But Still Spinning cd-r ep

At their best these songs have a strolling down the sidewalk on a summer afternoon, running a stick along the white picket fence bounce to them. But there are a couple of points where the band lapses into overdriven commercial rock moves and because those songs, "Power from the Lips" and "How to Kill Yr. Lover" open and close the ep they overshadow what comes in between.

(Wee Rock - Box 333, Springfield, MO 65801)

The Yellow Press - Summer 2003 cd ep

The Yellow Press evoke what I call "crafts fair" syndrome. When I go to crafts fairs with my wife I inevitably see *nothing* that appeals to me and all I can do is admire the time and effort that went into making the oven mitts with unicorns on them, nod at the woman selling said mitts, and move then move along. For me, emo rock is unicorn oven mitts. (Silver Skate - Box 6251, San Mateo, CA 94403)

Young and Sexy - Life Through One Speaker cd

It's probably due to the fact that I've been binging on Flying Nun bands of late (Chills, Clean, Verlaines) that Young and Sexy sound like they're from New Zealand, especially on the better tracks like "Herculean Bellboy"; light, bouncy, jangly pop. *Life Through One Speaker* is more focused than their debut cd and sounds like they're moving in the right direction. Now we just need more of the uptempo numbers, like "One False Move."

(Mint - Box 3613, Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6B 3Y6)

Aldous Huxley & Huey Lewis: Kindred Spirits

Aldous: What is needed is a new drug which will relieve and console our suffering species without doing more harm in the long run than it does good in the short.

Huey : I want a new drug
One that does what it should
One that won't make me feel too bad
One that won't make me feel too good

Such a drug must be potent in minute doses and synthesizable.

One that don't cost too much
It must be less toxic than opium or cocaine,

One that won't make me nervous
Wondering what to do

less likely to produce undesirable social consequences than alcohol or the barbiturates,

One that won't spill
Or come in a pill

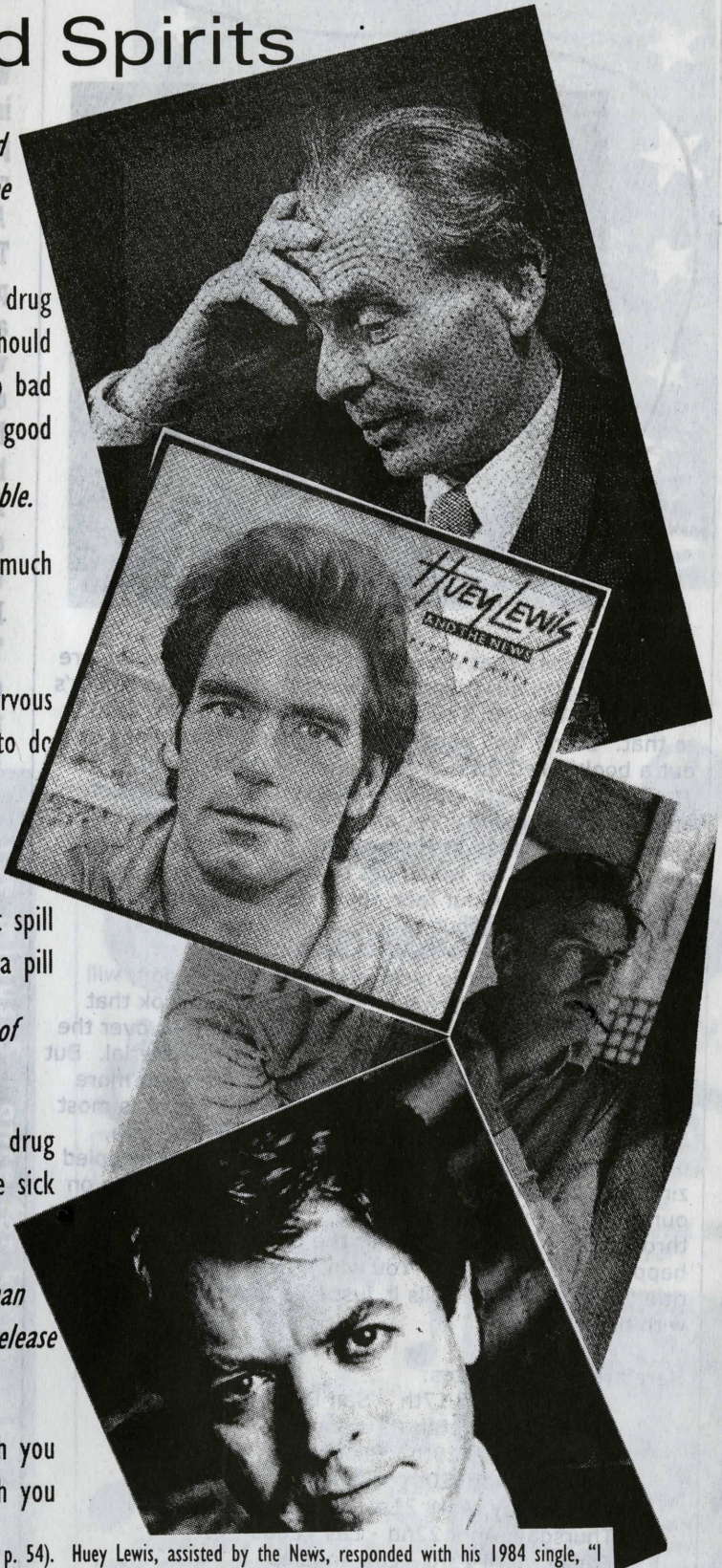
less inimical to heart and lungs than the tars and nicotine of cigarettes.

I want a new drug
One that won't make me sick

And, on the positive side, it should produce changes in consciousness more interesting, more intrinsically valuable than mere sedation or dreaminess, delusions of omnipotence or release from inhibition.

One that makes me feel like I feel when I'm with you
When I'm alone with you

Aldous Huxley initiated this dialogue in his 1954 book *The Doors of Perception* (see p. 54). Huey Lewis, assisted by the News, responded with his 1984 single, "I Want a New Drug." Yes, we know that said song is from the *Sports* album, but the *Picture This* cover has a better photo of Huey.



Would you buy a book written by this guy?



We are not sure that we would either. That is why we are encouraging all our friends out west to catch Todd Taylor's book tour. Why Mr. Taylor's tour? Hold on, we're getting to that. Damn, you people are impatient. Todd has put out a book called *Born to Rock: Heavy Drinkers and Thinkers*. It collects interviews he has done for *Flipside* and *Razorcake* magazines, and it is published by Gorsky Press. He is doing a bookstore tour to support that book. See, we told you we would get to the "why" part. But you had to get all up in our face about it. Well, you know what? It's not all about you!

Anyway, the guy in the picture above, Mike Faloan, will also be on the bill. He will be reading from a book that collects columns he was written for various zines over the years. He is also going to include some new material. But given that most of the zines he wrote for are even more obscure than the one you are currently holding, it is most likely that everything in the book will seem new. Oh, okay, all right, it is not a book but actually a photocopied zine. "Book" sounds better to us, but you had to rain on our parade. Impatient and rude, that's a hell of way to go through life, you know. As for the "zine" (there, are you happy? Zine, not book. You win.), he has not given it a title yet, but his wife calls it *Just Like Ritz* and that is fine with him.

Here are the tour dates:

Saturday, April 17th - San Diego
 Sunday, April 18th - Tucson
 Monday, April 19th - Phoenix
 Tuesday, April 20th - Flagstaff
 Wednesday, April 21st - Boulder City
 Thursday, April 22nd - Las Vegas
 Friday, April 23rd - Los Angeles

Email gogometric@yahoo.com or go to www.razorcake.com for more precise details.

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We've got a bunch of great records for sale. The most recent is **Primate 5's 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-Ape!** It's a cd-r, but it's all previously unreleased material and it's all great. *Roctoher* called it "super-fun frat party Garage monkey rock." *Now Wave* said it's "a full-on garage/surf/R & B dance party. These guys aren't musical geniuses or anything, but can you possibly deny that "Poprox and Koke" & "Back To the Trees" are GREAT FUN? These sweaty, upbeat tunes will make you wanna dance, jump around, shout "Yeah!", and generally carry on like you're the life of a 60s frat party. Can ya dig?" Rev. Norb chimed in saying that the Primate 5 are "the missing link between Radio Birdman and the Missing Link! Actually, the Primate 5 are superior to Radio Birdman, not only in the level of Mastery-Of-Craft-Exhibited, but also owing to the fact that the Primate 5 are actually bona fide primates, whereas Radio Birdman were neither birdmen nor radios, as far as i can tell." The disc also got a swell review from *Razorcake*, but I'll be damned if I can find a copy of that issue right now. We've really got to clean up this dump of an office. You know things are a wreck when you can't find your Fastbacks records.

We've also got a **Weird Lovemakers** record in the works. It's called **Must Die**, and it really is near completion. See, first the artwork had to get re-done, then we misplaced it when we moved (see, again, the need to clean up around here is painfully evident). Then the band realized they had a better version of the lead track. So, yes, it's forthcoming, and it's going to be worth it.

And then there are the old stand-bys:

mif - Everybody Should Stop Doing Everything
V/A - Day Dreaming with an Empty Station Wagon
Sticklers/Kung Fu Monkeys - split 7"
Egghead. - Dumb Songs for Smart People

We like all of those a lot too. Oh yeah, we've thought about re-releasing a couple of the old cassette releases, namely the **Food Shopping on an Empty Stomach** and **Shot Putting in an Empty Stadium** compilations. Don't hold your breath. And don't count on the eps from **Xtreme Pain** and **Torture Syndicate**, **Trust Fund Pussies**, or **Craft Fair Atrocities**. We've bagged those. Now, if you're still with us and interested, the cd's are \$5 each and the 7" is \$3. Use the mailorder information from page one. And thanks for playing along.

--The Management

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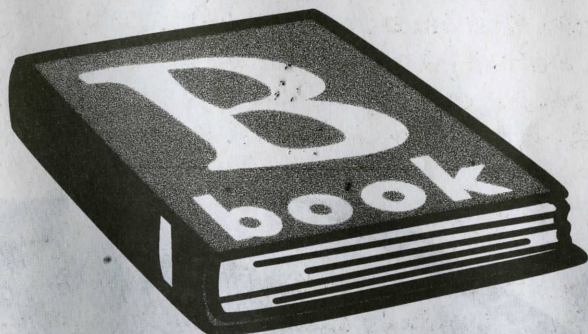
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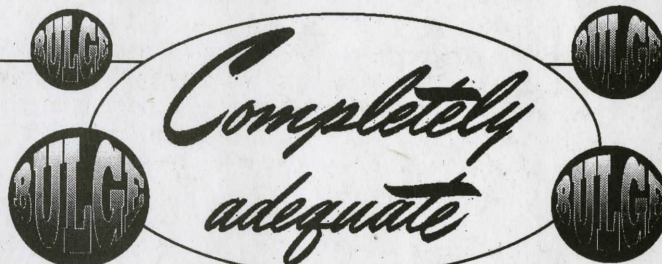


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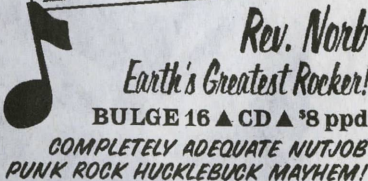


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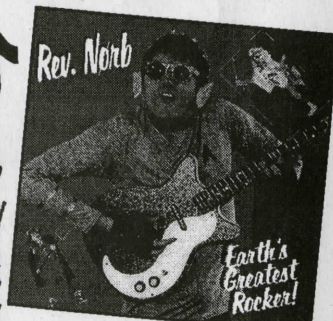
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