

RAZORCAKE

STAINS

An Oral History of
East Los Angeles's
First Punk Band
Part 1

Cheap Time
Dead Uncles



#67 | \$4
non-profit punk rock



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Razorcake believes in a form of punk that is community-friendly, truly independent, positive, progressive, relevant, and exciting.

It is currently a magazine, website, book, and record publisher providing the highest quality content possible in a culture that is often misunderstood, misrepresented, and exploited.

If *Razorcake* disappeared, the strength of the community we are part of and have created will be weakened.

We believe the following...

DIY punk is a valid, continually evolving culture and that outside corporate interests in DIY punk have overwhelmingly been predatory. We're still waiting for an example to the contrary.

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Alice Bag reading at Antebellum Gallery, Hollywood, California in support of her new book, *Violence Girl*. Photos by Mary-Clare Stevens.



DOT
ORG

There's A Hole

The TV was muted. My wife's car sat parked out front, on the street. Mary-Clare turned off the engine. I could hear her sobbing. I was in the house. She was in her car with the windows rolled up. I knew the news. It felt like a trap door had suddenly given way in the middle of the front room, like a string had been pulled.

Mary-Clare's friend and boss of the past nine years, Mike Kelley, had taken his own life. Friends had just found the body. It was a deliberate act.

Waves of grief poured out of Mary-Clare that were as tangible as waves on a terrible sea. It was impossible to not feel her profound sadness, not share in her loss, not hug her and feel her tears streak down the front of us both; to feel her body convulse.

I really liked Mike, too. I considered him a friend. My last memory with him was a simple and calm one. I drove four of us to his art opening. It was a retrospective group show that heavily featured Destroy All Monsters and Mike's time in Detroit, before he moved out to L.A. Mike was a founding member of the band in 1973. They made fanzines, collages, did photography, blurred the boundaries between a band of artists and band-band. Destroy All Monsters was a punk band before there were punk bands. Noisy. Freaky. Largely isolated. They played with Pere Ubu and the Dead Boys. They never released a studio album. (Sympathy released a live CD, *Silver Wedding Anniversary*, in the mid-'90s.)

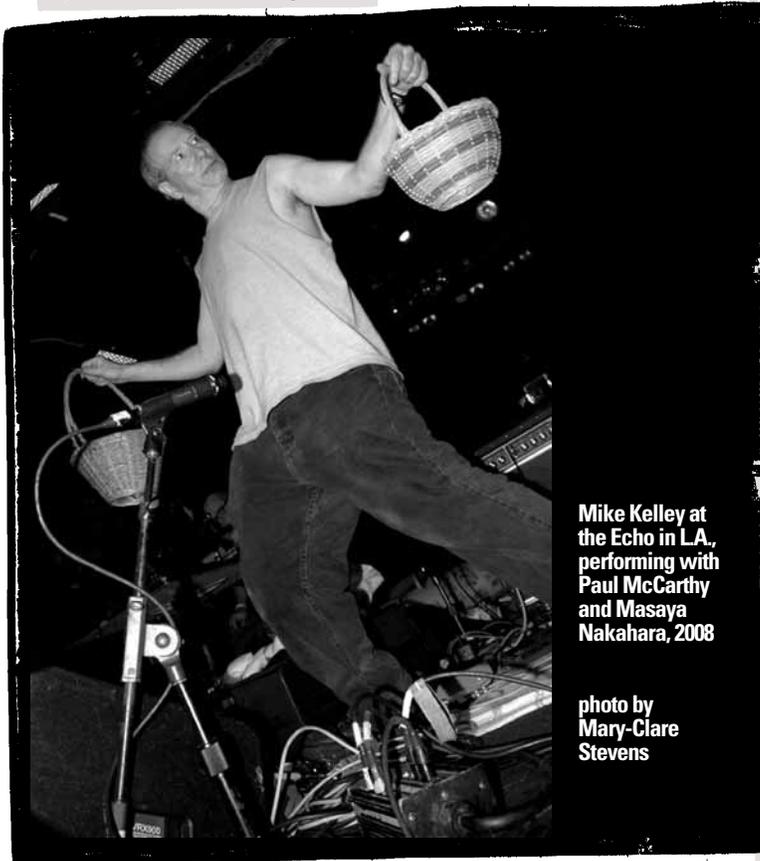
I'd first come across Mike's work without knowing it in the early '90s. His image is on the cover of Sonic Youth's *Dirty*. It's a smiling, orange, crochet'd-looking doll. I'd picked it up as a used cassette. When I cracked the clamshell open and read that Ian MacKaye did some extra guitar work, I paid my three dollars and popped it in the player. On the insert, there's a picture of Mike Kelley in a grid, amongst some pretty beat-up thrift store dolls.

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Mike Kelley at the Echo in L.A., performing with Paul McCarthy and Masaya Nakahara, 2008

photo by Mary-Clare Stevens

On the way to the opening, Mike told some jokes, gave directions. Tim talked music. Mary-Clare's the logistical mastermind. She confirmed where to park and who would be there (it was a show with three other Detroit artists). She had already made sure the pieces were framed correctly, that the gallery and the studio were on the same page. She coordinated the efforts of many people—very much the glue on the back of a collage. Ordinary eyes can't see her efforts, but so many people depend on her.

Mike was kind to *Razorcake*, kinder than he had to be. He was an occasional subscriber. He donated to us. We bowled together at the staff Christmas party. I made him some CDs. I don't think he really cared for them, but he respected where we were coming from: self-made, DIY, struggling, small. Part of me wants to believe that we reminded him of a younger version of himself, but that sounds pretentious.

Death is also very much about the living—the ripples outward, often invisible until they hit the shore.

Grief isn't constant. It comes in waves, doesn't have a schedule, doesn't have an expiration date, and can make living erratic. The constant conversation is over. There is no more contact. Just memories. Spirits.

There's this hole now, one that won't ever be refilled. I see it in my wife's eyes every day since Mike's death.

She cried when doing the dishes this morning, four weeks after the news.

I cried trying to write this.

I've got no words of wisdom, no moral judgment, no second guesses, no interest in the forensic details, no interest in the unanswerable "why?"

What's troubling me is that Mike was one of the strongest-willed, most creative people I knew with a big personality.

He saw no other solution to the pain he felt.

—Todd Taylor

THANK YOU: *Fanny pack? Check. Keys? Check. Stage dive? Double check thanks to Jimmy Alvarado for one of the finest pieces of music scholarship / punk rock badassery we've ever run in Razorcake and his cover shot; Even when you can't see her, Alice Bag's energy's undeniable thanks to Mary-Clare Stevens for her photos; When those garden gnomes take off the pointy hats and become firemen of the sea thanks to Brad Beshaw for his illo. in Sean's column; I read everywhere, all the time, and have never, ever thought of doing it while getting tattooed thanks to Jackie Rusted for her illo. in Jim's column; You should see the ball and chain attached to the photocopier, that one's a beast thanks to Steve Larder for his illo. in Amy's column; Voodoo, stink lines, and weasel repellants are a go thanks to Nation of Amanda for her illo. in Norb's column; Nardwuar doesn't even get his "Doot doola..." out! thanks to Craig Horky for his illo.; Three super-cold columns in one issue? Are polar punks really a go? thanks to Nicole Twardzik for her photo of the Rhythm Chicken; One of those dudes in the background looks like he just gave himself a blowie thanks to Bill Pinkel for his illo. in Dale's column; Wanted: more fuckin' donuts, stat. thanks to Marcos Siref for his illo. in Gary's column; We should never have to lose the people we love thanks to Joe Ayoub and Alison Hearst for the remembrance and photo of Esme; Five years in the making, one member died during the process, and countless hours of transcription later, big thanks to Jimmy Alvarado, Alex Cvetovich, Danny Segura, Edward Colver, Joe Henderson, Louis Jacinto, Jake Smith, BC Caldwell, and Pat Perez for all their help with the Stains oral history, part one; In the forest (if you're lucky) and at a local record store near you (if you're lucky), thanks to Ryan Leach, Renate Winter, Kristi Montague, and Lauren Measure for all their help with the Cheap Time interview; "I thought you were talking about the pizza crust tampon incident" thanks to Dave Brainwreck and Sara Gaechter for the Dead Uncles interview and photos; Still don't need a computer to listen to music, read a zine or read a book—technology that doesn't need new technology's pretty tight—thanks to the following for their record, zine, book, and video reviews: Chris Terry, Sal Lucci, Corinne, Kurt Morris, Kristen K., Ryan Horky, Ryan Leach, Norb, Ian Wise, Sean Koenenick, Chris Mason, Mike Frame, Ty Stranglehold, Rene Navarro, Dave Williams, Mark Twistworthy, Paul J. Comeau, Juan Espinosa, Adrian Salas, Billups Allen, Matt Average, Vincent, MP Johnson, Joe Evans III, Art Ettinger, Aphid Peewit, Bryan Static, Jimmy Alvarado, Craven Rock, Marty Ploy, Keith Rosson, Chris Pepus, Steve Hart, Nighthawk, Dave Brainwreck, and Katie Dunne; These people took time out of their lives to help us directly over the past two months, and for that we're thankful: Candice Tobin, John Barlog, Chris Baxter, PJ Fancher, Tatiana Bliss, Ever Velasquez, Joe Dana, Juan Espinosa, Aaron Kovacs, Cesar Macias, Julia Smut, Jeff Proctor, Josh Rosa, Toby Tober, Donna Ramone, Marty Ploy, Phill Legault, Wesley Chapman, Mary-Clare Stevens, Derek Whipple, Rene Navarro, Samantha Steinhauser, Willie Gussin, and Mike Ocon.*

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A MONKEY TO RIDE THE DOG

SEAN CARSWELL

**“Does metaphoric
lava forever
flow toward me?”**

The Second Sunrise

It doesn't really matter why I was in that bar just past noon on a weekday. Whatever reason I give will just be an excuse for living out a self-destructive life. I don't know what that guy was doing in the same bar at the same time. He probably had a different excuse.

We were more or less the only two in the joint. There was a bartender. She sat as far away from us as possible, reading some glossy magazine full of celebrity gossip. There was a television, too. It flashed lights and people on it talked about something we were supposed to care about—sports or politics or something. At least the volume was low enough to ignore.

I'm not sure what that guy said to get us started talking, but I was okay with it. I like talking to strangers. I like hearing their stories. I didn't expect much out of a skinny, middle-aged, white dude nursing beer in a bar called Bunhuggers. But what the hell? I might as well listen to something.

The guy told me a story that I've carried with me ever since. It's like a lucky stone in my pocket. The oil from my fingers seeps into the pores of it. I've long since rubbed it smooth.

The guy was in the National Guard in the seventies, he told me. His father had known some people and pulled some strings so that, when his time came to serve, he didn't have to go Vietnam. Instead, he signed on with a crew of medics stationed somewhere in the northeastern United States. It was an easy gig until they got sent to Iceland.

This was in late 1972. The navies of Iceland and Great Britain were perched on the edge of open hostilities, about to start shooting each other over cod. See, Iceland is an island mostly composed of volcanic rock. The soil is far from fertile. Winters are long. Farming is tough. The rest of the island isn't exactly overflowing with natural resources. There are a lot of fish around the island, though. A lot of Icelanders make their living as fisherman. A lot of Icelanders' diets are seafood-heavy.

In the early seventies, that fishing industry was threatened, mostly by fleets coming over from the Soviet Union. Russian trawlers were dropping big nets into the ocean near Iceland, scraping up everything in their path—fish, vegetation, rocks, entire ecosystems—and dumping the whole catch into the freezers of their factory ships. It

was devastating Iceland's way of life. In response, the Icelandic government declared that the ocean within a fifty-mile radius around Iceland was an “exclusion zone.” No one could fish in it except Icelanders.

The Icelandic navy attacked anyone who violated this exclusion zone, but their attacks were non-violent (unless you're one of those people who interpret the destruction of property as violence). The navy would charge fishing boats and cut their nets with sharpened grappling hooks. The nets would drift harmlessly to the bottom of the ocean. The crews would turn and head back to their home port. Fishing nets were expensive. Fleets were likely to continue losing the nets on subsequent trips, so most fishermen recognized Iceland's exclusion zone and went somewhere else to catch their cod. The only fishing boats that kept coming were British fleets.

It was all about fish and chips. It's a British staple, part of the whole cultural identity. They had to get the cod for the fish and chips somewhere. Iceland was that somewhere. So Great Britain sent a couple of battleships into the exclusion zone to protect the fishing fleets. The Icelandic navy responded by cutting the nets off the fishing boats. Great Britain threatened to attack with their battleships. The Icelandic navy—which, keep in mind, was not a heavily-funded navy; it was mostly just little fishing boats rigged with whatever guns were handy—fired a warning shot across the bow of the battleship. It was David showing his slingshot to Goliath. NATO stepped in before things escalated.

The dude from the bar was part of the NATO forces. He flew into Reykjavik with the rest of his unit. They sat around eating cod for a few weeks while the British battleship and Icelandic gunboats looked down their scopes at each other and diplomats tried to find a way to keep them from shooting.

This was wartime for the privileged white sons of upper-middle-class America.

Then things exploded. Or, to be more specific, Helgafell and Eldfell exploded.

Helgafell and Eldfell were volcanoes thought to be dormant. They sat on the little island of Heimaey, just off the southern coast of the main island of Iceland. A seam had developed on the edge of the volcanoes, running through both of their cores. Lava and ash began to actively flow. The problem with this was the little fishing village of

Vestmannaeyjer, which sat about a mile away from this now-active volcano. About five thousand people lived in Vestmannaeyjer. The dude and his National Guard unit were sent in by helicopter to evacuate them.

The dude flew in at daybreak. What he took at first to be the sunrise was actually the volcanic seam erupting. The sun crept up minutes later, farther south. The helicopter flew between the two sunrises, into Vestmannaeyjer. Only, when they got to the town, many of the locals refused to evacuate. This was a remote village on a remote island in a remote country. If the villagers got on the helicopters, they would leave behind everything. Their homes, all their possessions, their whole village, would be swallowed by the volcano. There'd be nothing left. And where would they go, then? The same lava and ash would have the same effect on the homes and possessions of all of their families and friends. So it wouldn't just be a case of individuals losing everything. It would be a case of individuals and everyone they knew losing everything. So they decided to stay and fight the volcano.

Of course, they had no established plan to fight the eruption. How do you put out a volcano? Spray water on it?

Well, this is exactly what the villagers did. They rigged up water pumps and hoses and pipes—all told forty-three pumps and over nineteen miles of pipes and hose—starting at the harbor and stretching into town. They dipped one end of their fire hoses into the Atlantic and pumped that water through the pipes and hoses. Some crazy villagers stared down the lava flows, spraying water on them. Of course, they knew they couldn't put out the volcano the way you put out a fire. The idea was to cool enough lava to build a rock barrier at the edge of town. This way, the lava would bank off the barrier and flow down into the uninhabited parts of the harbor.

The dude and his buddies in the National Guard thought this was madness. They took what evacuees they could back to Reykjavik, left them in makeshift shelters, and flew back into the sunrise that lasted all day. The villagers kept at it for days, working in the air thick with burning ash, turning lava into rock. They didn't stop until they'd redirected the flows into the sea. It took them more than eight million cubic yards of ocean water to do this. When they were done, about two-thirds of the town was saved.



BRAD BESHAW

**It wouldn't just be a case of individuals losing everything. It would be a case of individuals and everyone they knew losing everything.
So they decided to stay and fight the volcano.**

The other third of the town was buried in what was by now rock. The dude walked down the street, past roof tops setting on the new ground. He tripped over the top of a stop sign, now only ankle high. He had no idea how to make sense of what he'd just seen.

This was the story the dude told me in Bunhuggers. He didn't tell it the way I just did. It took a lot of time for me to get all the details. I wanted to believe him, but to do that, I had to ask dozens of questions, get him to fill in all the details of a standoff between Iceland and Great Britain, of rigged up fire hoses and the motivations that drove that courage or madness or whatever you want to call it. I was fascinated when he told the story. When he was done, though, I was mad and a little sick.

Years later, I told the story to Heela and Shahab from Geykido Comet Records. We were at a show in L.A., chatting between bands. Heela wanted to know if the story was

true, if there really was a standoff between little Icelandic fishing boats and a British battleship, if a village really did stand up to a volcano. "I don't know," I told her. "I never looked it up because I'd be too disappointed if that dude was lying."

Heela was more courageous than I. She did a good ol' Google search, then sent me an email that said, "I would have kept this a secret if it weren't true." And, sure enough, both events occurred in 1973. A dozen websites and a *National Geographic* article will attest to it.

Shahab took a more critical approach to the story. He said, "You should write that story, only take yourself out of it."

My apologies, Shahab, but now I've written that story. I kept myself in it. I even dragged you in it with me.

See, carrying this story around as long as I have, it's become mine. Not that I've ever been to Vestmannaeyjer and seen the chimney tops that could bruise my shin, not that I could

have possibly been in Iceland in 1973 and been a part of this whole scene. But when that guy told me that story, it changed me a little. It forced me to consider what I really valued in this life. I knew then and know now that there's nothing I would stand in the face of a battleship to protect. But what about my way of life? What about my life and village and family and friends and community? Could they possibly be less valuable to me than they were to the people in Vestmannaeyjer? If they aren't less valuable, then what was I doing drinking alone at noon in a shitty bar? Is there a constant threat of eruption above me, in places that I thought were dormant? Does metaphoric lava forever flow toward me? Does it mean anything?

I carry this story around with me not because I've found the answer to these questions, but because it forces me to ask them.

—Sean Carswell





LAZY MICK

JIM RULAND

“There was no escaping the pain train.”

Impressions in Ink

Five Rules for Reading While Getting Tattooed

I read a lot. I read for pleasure. I read for work. I read newspapers and online bulletin board discussions. I read articles linked from Facebook. I read magazines and books, novels and short stories. I read the cereal boxes and labels on maple syrup. I read critically. I read compulsively. I read to remember the past. I read as a way of forgetting the present. I read to be entertained. I read to escape. I read because I have to.

One byproduct of reading so much is that I forget what I read. Sometimes this happens over time. Sometimes the forgetting occurs immediately. Sometimes the forgetting is so complete that I forget not only what I read but that I even read it in the first place. This happens all the time at work.

But there are three occasions when I'm much more likely to remember what I read: when I'm sick, when I'm traveling, or when I'm getting tattooed. Recuperating from illness is similar to traveling in that both present long stretches of time to occupy the imagination. When I'm sick, I'm a bit more vulnerable to the trials and tribulations of an empathetic main character. This was certainly the case at the onset of cold and flu season last year when I read Jeremy Adler's contribution to the *Overlook Illustrated Lives* series: *Franz Kafka*.

“Who reads Kafka when they're sick?” my wife complained.

“I'm not reading Kafka,” I growled back. “I'm reading about Kafka.”

“You really are sick.”

While this was certainly true, I wasn't as sick as poor Franz, who bravely battled tuberculosis right up until the gloomy end, but that's beside the point. Over the course of those 164 pages, I bonded with Franz. I used to think of his work as brilliant, yet cold. Not anymore. Now I get it.

Travel, particularly air travel, provides time to unplug and immerse oneself in a book, but there's more to it than that. The dislocation one feels while traveling is transferred to the story. I'll never forget reading Samuel Beckett's *The Unnamable* while high as a kite on hashish out on the lawn on a warm summer day at Trinity College. For three hours my body resided in Dublin, Ireland but my mind was somewhere else. I think that's why the books of Jack Kerouac and Hunter

S. Thompson had such a profound influence on me: I read them while I was in the Navy and lived on the ship that took me halfway around the world and back. The experience of reading the book was in synch with my movement through the world.

That said, the books I've read while getting tattooed have left (pardon the pun) the deepest impressions on me. If you think about it, a book and a tattoo are very similar. A tattoo begins with an idea in an artist's head and ends with an image inked onto a canvas. A book begins as an idea in a writer's head and ends with words inked onto pages. It's all about ink. The only difference is with a tattoo *you* are the canvas.

Feelings of disorientation brought on by cold and flu medicine or traveling across time zones cannot compare to the pain of a needle scarring the flesh. It's a strong association. Reading a book while getting tattooed virtually guarantees that you'll never forget it. That's not always a good thing.

I learned this lesson the hard way while reading Bret Easton Ellis's serial-killer porno *American Psycho*. There are scenes in *American Psycho* that will test even the most depraved of sensibilities. I'm neither squeamish nor hardcore when it comes to descriptions of violence, and while there's no frame of mind that's ideal for reading schemes for introducing a rat to a corpse so that it can devour the body from within, I sure wish I hadn't read it while a needle was incessantly probing my flesh.

This is another way of saying that there is an art to selecting reading material while getting tattooed. Here are five guidelines:

Long Is Better Than Short: What proves true for sex (that's what she said) is also true for reading while getting tattooed. Magazines and short story collections don't work because as soon as you get into a story it ends and you have to start over again. People in pain generally don't have the patience for that. I like to start a new book the night before I get tattooed, that way I get introduced to the story and the characters before the session starts.

...But Not Too Long: Long books tend to have a lot of characters, which can be confusing when you're in a lot of pain. At

times it can be difficult to focus on the words on the page, so stick with a book that's simple and straight forward, about two hundred pages or less.

Paperbacks Are Better Than Hardbacks:

You don't want a heavy book because chances are you are going to have lie down or sit in awkward positions that aren't conducive to holding a book. You may even have to hold it and turn the pages with one hand, which is tricky if you're trying to get through *Moby Dick*.

Fiction Is Better Than Nonfiction: There are exceptions: a stirring memoir can be just as compelling as a novel. I read Beth Raymer's *Lay the Favorite* while getting work done on my chest. Raymer's story of giving up the life of a private dancer to be a bookie's apprentice in Las Vegas had me turning the pages—and that's precisely what you want. The ideal book to read while getting tattooed sparks a desire to find out what happens next. While the curiosity never quite cancels out the pain, it can derail it. Like so many things that are worth waiting for, it's all about the anticipation.

A Bad Book Can Make the Pain Worse:

While getting work done on my chest, I read one of those 33 1/3 books about Tom Waits's *Swordfishtrombones*. Big mistake. While there were some interesting biographical details, the book is essentially an analysis. There's no storyline. No rising action. No humor. No suspense. That feeling of wondering what was going to happen next was completely absent. I knew what was going to happen: Waits was going to put out a record. It was going to be called *Swordfishtrombones*. It would start with “Underground” and end with “Rainbirds.” End of story. That tattoo session was one of the worst I ever experienced. I was so miserable; I convinced myself the artist was inflicting pain on purpose. I mean, of course he was—no one gets tattooed by accident—but you know what I mean.

Ultimately, what you're looking for is a book with a plot, some compelling characters, and a dash of humor. You want a book that will help you escape, to feel what others feel instead of focusing on your own pain.

I've heard it said that in order to earn one's tattoo, one should be fully present in the moment. I subscribe to this idea—but only to



JACKIE RUSTED

It's all about ink. The only difference is with a tattoo you are the canvas.

a certain extent. A book is not a drug that can dull or lessen the pain of getting tattooed. A book won't make the pain any less acute, but it can give you something else to think about, divorce your imagination from the pain you're experiencing so that you don't make it worse than it is.

I would argue that reading makes the experience more memorable, not less. There's a sameness to the ritual of getting tattooed that causes the experiences to run together. Getting the outline done feels a lot different than the shading because the artist employs different needles, but after that it's all pretty much the same. The droning of the tattooing machine. The pressure from the needles. The fluorescent lights from above. For most people, the only variety is the procession of people who drift in and out of the shop.

But for me each session is distinct in my mind because I'm reading a different book. For instance, I'm getting a large side-

piece that requires several sessions, and I can tell you that the outline was done while I was reading a Belgian crime novel called *Monsieur Monde Vanishes* by Georges Simenon, an escapist fantasy with noir overtones. I was expecting a collision with the pain train, but the session went a lot better than I anticipated—except for page ninety-nine, the moment when the reader realizes Monsieur Monde is going to get all his money stolen—that part hurt like hell.

For the second session, I selected *Norwood*, a dry, offbeat comedy by Charles Portis, the author of *True Grit*. It's a fish out of water story about a mechanic who goes to New York City looking for an old acquaintance who owes him money. Along the way, he meets a pretty girl and a midget who has run *away* from the circus. Norwood was an ideal read for a tattoo session because it's both an adventure story and a comedy. My mind went somewhere else for a while

and got a few laughs along the way.

For my third session, I was a bit more adventurous with my reading material. The pain I'd experienced wasn't as bad as I'd been told and I was feeling overconfident. I chose an experimental contemporary novel set in a pancake house. Although there are many comic scenes in Donald Antrim's *The Verificationist*, it's a wordy, repetitive work without much of a plot and multiple characters that asks the reader to suspend belief and navigate seemingly contradictory ideas: that a person can be held in a bear hug and fly around the room at the same time.

Now I'm not blaming the book for the severity of the session, but for a novel that flirts with the fantastic and is loaded with sex, there was no escaping the pain train. Next time, I'll choose my words more wisely.

—Jim Ruland



MONSTER OF FUN

AMY ADOYZIE

“Jobs provide security, but life is work.”

Oh, How the Weary

*Oh, how the weary are wayward,
getting lost while walking a straight line.
On its way to find its way,
the weary becomes more wayward with time.*

Tommy had asked something about when we felt we were at the height of our consciousness. I think he asked because he first began smoking weed in his early thirties and had gotten in the habit of pondering heavy quasi-spiritual, quasi-existential, and semi-stonerish questions about life.

Most folks felt that they were at the height of whatever intellect they are capable of inhabiting at this very moment and time, but I felt differently.

“Probably twenty-two,” I said.

“Really?” Tommy asked as his brows pushed toward the center of his forehead. “I didn’t know shit when I was twenty-two.”

“I think I was my most articulate at twenty-two.” I remember it fondly, being immersed in pursuing my undergraduate degree, practicing the words, theories, and ideas that I was learning at the time. My mind was imploding from the weight of all the essays and articles in our assigned course readers, marked with streaks of fluorescent yellow and scribbles in margins and all of the new knowledge that sprung from sentence to sentence. Every semester, it felt like my brain was physically growing inside my skull from all that book learning. Academia and education can sometimes feel like a leisurely vocation, and the pay off was being able to use the things we thought we learned.

Being twenty-two, in the parlance of a typical working-class immigrant-American kid, meant that I also did not know enough. My naiveté and ignorance supported my steadfast convictions to whatever new theory I had learned. When you’re neck-deep in it, you can explain and defend all of your new radical opinions deftly with all the fancy new words and theories to back it up.

“*Donnie Darko* was completely overrated,” I would say.

“Really? It was totally trippy, in a good way.”

“Oh, is this the barometer by which we measure the art we consume nowadays? By how *trippy* it is? When will we move beyond the heteronormative white male narrative?”

“I guess it wasn’t any *Ghost World*.”

“Don’t get me started on that pseudo-independent faux-post adolescence suburban white girl angst bullshit. Just because you put a pair of thick-framed glasses on Thora Birch, it doesn’t mean the character is instantly authentic. And what the fuck about fetishizing awkwardness with short skirts, combat boots, and vulnerability?”

“So I guess you just don’t like anything anymore, huh?” My well-intentioned friend would ask.

“No, that’s not it. There’s just nothing to like.”

It wasn’t true, but I had convinced myself of it. My ethnic-studies, academic feminist lens had gotten the better of me. Youth and conviction, in America, can tear down walls with bare hands, because those hands are still soft from just turning pages in books rather than being ravaged with labor.

It wasn’t until I became older, and learned even more that I realized there is so much I do not know. Ignorance can be bliss. Believing that we are educated just enough can be dangerous. And learning, really growing with insight, will make you wish for ignorance. Even if I do feel like I know more now, almost a decade from when I felt I was my most articulate, I actually don’t feel like I know shit because things aren’t black and white but rather a muddled fog of grey.

So what do I know?

I know I am tired.

I’ve read that in order for human folk just to be alive, our brains burn 0.1 calories a minute. And if we’re processing information and thinking away, those lumps of fleshy squiggly lines in our skulls, theoretically use up about ninety calories in an hour. That’s like five packets of sugar that people dump into their bitter, black coffee. That’s energy that can be used for long strolls down the waterfront with friends or throwing a mustache ball around for my dog so that whenever he grabs the ball the right way it looks like he’s got a thick, curly western mustache growing from his muzzle. Instead, I’m wasting all of these calories on thinking and over-thinking and staring out windows with a pained look on my face as if I’ve stubbed my toe for eternity.

I know that when I was twenty-five, emboldened by youth and the good fortune of having been born in a developed country, I declared that I was retiring from the “real world.” I quit office jobs and their cubicles, roly chairs, and the hazy buzz of fluorescent lights. I felt like I was too young to be imprisoned by capitalism and staff meetings. I retired only to return, seeking security and the stability of a consistent paycheck.

There’s also something of an understanding that I’m coming to with myself, about what I will or will not do for a paycheck.

After almost a decade of service, I don’t think I can continue to pursue work with non-profit organizations. Don’t get me wrong, there is nothing inherently bad about non-profits. This very fanzine you’re holding in your hands is a registered 501(c)3. I’ve seen the way Todd lives. There is no misappropriation of funds, nor do I ever question Todd’s values and how they affect *Razorcake*. This fanzine is a rare breed in the land of difficult compromises. Non-profit organizations, at their core, trade in values. And usually those values are based on altruism, justice, and that whole making-the-world-a-better-place thing. But many times I’ve seen human fallibility, overall operating under a crisis and scarcity mode, and unspoken martyrdom weaken and demoralize those who do this work. I just don’t have the disposition to sit through more hypocrisy and heartbreak. I will just have to settle for finding other ways contribute for the betterment of people kind; it just won’t be from behind a forty-hour-a-week job.

Food service is also not a viable option for me now. I’m neither so hungry, nor do I possess the stamina to bus trays of dirty dishes into the back room of a hot kitchen while trying to scrumptiously sneak bites of food that I have deemed untouched and, therefore, edible by the dishwasher. I have not the patience of serving and dealing with the possibility of throngs of folks using online deals to pay nothing for their meal and then tip accordingly for what they paid.

Nothing within the realm of anything that would include the word “science” is a place I can thrive in. Library-science, computer-science, science-science. No, no, and no. My brain does not function well with remembering important details where upon



STEVE LARDER

Though I am armed with knowing what I can and cannot stand, it doesn't mean I know where I'm heading.

other more important details are based on. Besides, the copper IUD has already been invented. What more is there to create? (I kid, I'm still waiting for men to get their birth control on! Keep yo shit in check, dudes!)

I have utmost respect for folks who work on assembly lines and/or in factories. I do not have that valve within me that allows me to shut parts of myself off so that I can do the same task hundreds of times a day. May your unions protect your rights and wages.

Though I am armed with knowing what I can and cannot stand, it doesn't mean I

know where I'm heading. There are times I wish I could consult my younger self, ask her where I ought to invest my energy. She would most likely think for a moment, not any longer, and blurt out something about changing the world and fuck anyone who tries to get in my way. That sounds brave and something I want to live up to, but also naïve and short-sighted.

Jobs provide security, but life is work. What am I willing to sacrifice and what am I willing to learn? Will I ever be as un-selfconscious and bold as I was from

before I allowed time, and its lessons, to wear me down?

* * *

*We were promised so much,
but owed nothing.
We were rewarded with the sound
of our own voices, and some sing.*

—Amy Adoyzie
amyadoyzie.com

The internet is a rich, vibrant resource that allows us to engage in an ongoing discourse about important issues with friends and strangers,

Totes excited for the
Queers/Ataris tour 😊

whatever,
posver.



listen to an endless catalog of albums and watch virtually any movie or TV show we could possibly want in the comfort of our own homes,

Y&P, there's nothing quite like kicking back and streaming the new Fear of Lipstick album while watching last week's episode of the Simpsons.

#1 multitasker →



and basically be on the cutting of breaking news as it happens,



Random internet dude

My soup is too hot

Like · comment · 30 seconds ago via mobile *

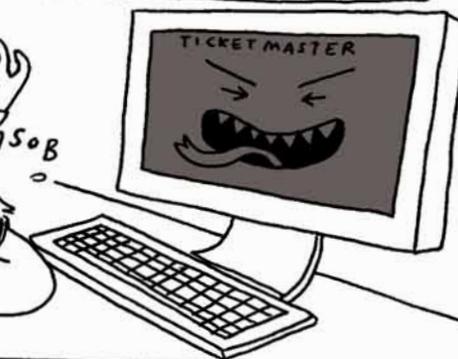


some other internet dude blow on it
just now · Like

Write a comment...

so why the fuck couldn't I get REFUSED tickets?!

But, I've been trying for 40 minutes!



GOOD
LUCK
with the
SCALPERS,
Kid!

LIZ PRINCE 2012

liz.princepower.com

I'M GOING TO TRY REALLY HARD TO NOT MAKE A SWEEPING GENERALIZATION HERE:



DOG OWNERS ARE THE WORST PEOPLE IN THE ENTIRE WORLD.

FUCK, I FUCKED IT UP.



MYSTOPLIFE
NATION OF WATERCOLORS BY AMANDA
BY MITCH CLEM

HERE'S THE THING: I'M ALLERGIC TO DOGS. VERY VERY ALLERGIC TO DOGS.



LIKE, THE LAST TIME I WAS EXPOSED TO DOG FOR A PROLONGED PERIOD OF TIME, I WOUND UP SPENDING EIGHT DAYS IN THE HOSPITAL WITH A COLLAPSED LUNG.



I GET THAT MY PARTICULAR CASE IS RATHER SEVERE, BUT IT'S NOT LIKE PET ALLERGIES ARE ALL THAT UNCOMMON.



AND YET, EVERYWHERE I GO, MORE AND MORE DOG OWNERS INSIST ON BRINGING THEIR FUCKING DOGS.

THERE'S EVEN A LADY WHO COMES INTO MY WORK WHO PUTS A "SERVICE ANIMAL" VEST ON HER SHITTY OLD DECAYING DOG SO SHE CAN TAKE HIM EVERYWHERE AND PEOPLE CAN'T SAY ANYTHING.



SHE TOLD ME. THOUGHT SHE WAS SO FUCKING CLEVER.

PEOPLE AREN'T ALLOWED TO TELL YOU NOT TO BRING YOUR SERVICE ANIMAL INTO RESTAURANTS.

DEATH GLARE OF DEATH



I HAD A DAY OFF LAST WEEK, WENT DOWN TO THE COFFEE SHOP TO WORK ON SOME COMICS.



NATURALLY, TWO MINUTES IN, SOME HILLBILLY BRINGS IN HIS ENORMOUS, SMELLY FUCKING DOG.



AND I MEAN SMELLY. THE ODOR OF A DOG COMING IN FROM OUTSIDE IS A SCENTED CANDLE OPTION IN HELL.



GODDAMNIT! I SERIOUSLY CAN'T GO FUCKING ANYWHERE WITHOUT YOU INCONSIDERATE FUCKS BRINGING YOUR BULLSHIT ANIMALS AND RUINING IT?!



YOU DON'T WANT ME TO BE A PART OF YOUR SOCIETY? FINE! I QUIT!



SLAM!



UGH.

CAT PEOPLE.



THE END



“The thrill of exploration was upon us!”

Polar Punks Are Go!

Greetings Razorcake readers hit hard by the economic downturn! It's no secret that the economic outlook for traditional punk occupations (dishwasher, pizza delivery person, crusty punk) remains grim. Across the country, punkhouse occupants are tightening their studded belts, opting for no-topping pizza and foregoing such luxuries as eight dollar seven-inches and central heat. Yes, these are hard times!

That's why as a Razorcake columnist, I must say thank you for continuing to buy this magazine, even though that likely means that you are either a.) stealing more than usual from work or b.) not eating.

Given this state of affairs, it's about time that I gave something back to you, the starving criminal! Chances are you once had subscriptions to plenty of magazines—*MRR*, *Mother Jones*, *Snakepit*, *Three-Chord Quarterly*. Now you're lucky if you can dumpster an old *Microcosm* catalog from your own garbage. For shame!

As a Razorcake columnist, I can no longer sit back and pontificate about my preference for pink-and-white striped shirts and sour gummy cola bottles! I need to help you, the distraught reader, fill in the gaps in your lapsed magazine subscriptions! And so, dry your tears, then rub your eyes, and THEN squint really hard until you can convince yourself that this is actually an issue of *National Geographic*. Ready? Onward!

The history of mankind is a story of exploration, of curiosity, of conquest! Witness the expansion of the American West, the voyages of Christopher Columbus, the epic trek of Social Distortion in the year 1982 A.D.!

But for every Ponce de Leon, there's a random guy who's never heard of the fountain of youth, has no interest in the conquest of Florida, and thinks that going outside is basically a waste of time. That diversity of the human spirit allows us to remain dumb enough so that we can still acquire NEW knowledge!

This “Information Rationing” (IR) explains why, a few weeks ago when my friend Wendy said, “I wonder what happens if you drive straight north,” I had no answer—unless you count “Canada” as a valid reply.

What followed was an hours-long hyper-speed, online Lewis & Clark freakout—and what we learned amazed us!

We realized that you wouldn't have to drive that far (no more than a day or two)

before all roads would END and the polar bear sighting would begin! We had officially stumbled across a territory the size of Western Europe! It's name? Nunavut! It's population? 33,000! It's average temperature? Ridiculously cold!

Our discovery was akin to someone stumbling across the Ramones in 2006. “What? This band existed for twenty years and I'm just hearing about them NOW?!” The thrill of exploration was upon us! We wondered how we ever lived without the knowledge of our northern neighbors! And by neighbors, we meant polar bears, which, it turns out, are featured on every license plate in Nunavut—a finding which also called into question my beliefs on the best license plate of all time (New Hampshire: Live Free or Die)!

We vowed to research this strange land—and in true explorer fashion, I vowed to share my findings with the unwashed masses—and in so doing, launch a mass punk exodus to this barren tundra!

Let's start with some basic and slightly uninteresting facts! Nunavut, which means “our land,” used to be part of the Northwest Territories. Back in 1999, it became its own Canadian territory and has been busy ever since developing its own governmental agencies, just like every other part of Canada. Most of the people who live there are Inuit and speak an Inuit language called Inuktitut. In fact, only about one-fourth of Nunavut residents speak English.

But enough of that! Let's now proceed to Advanced Placement Nunavut History!

Stop and think about what Western Europe would look like with just 33,000 people in it. And then consider what it would be like if the largest town had no more than 7,000 people—and was hours and hours away (by plane or boat) from the next town of 2,000 people. With no roads in or out, consider the logistics. Everything you need would need to be shipped in.

Need a place to stay? You'll need to have the materials to build your house shipped to Nunavut—one problem, though. It's not possible to ship year-round. You get the supplies shipped in, but by the time they get there, it's winter. So you have to store all of your supplies somewhere in Nunavut and then start building your house when the weather warms up. And the home you build needs to

be able to withstand months of temperatures as low as thirty degrees below zero—and wind chills of one hundred degrees below zero! These factors help explain why half of all residents live in public housing.

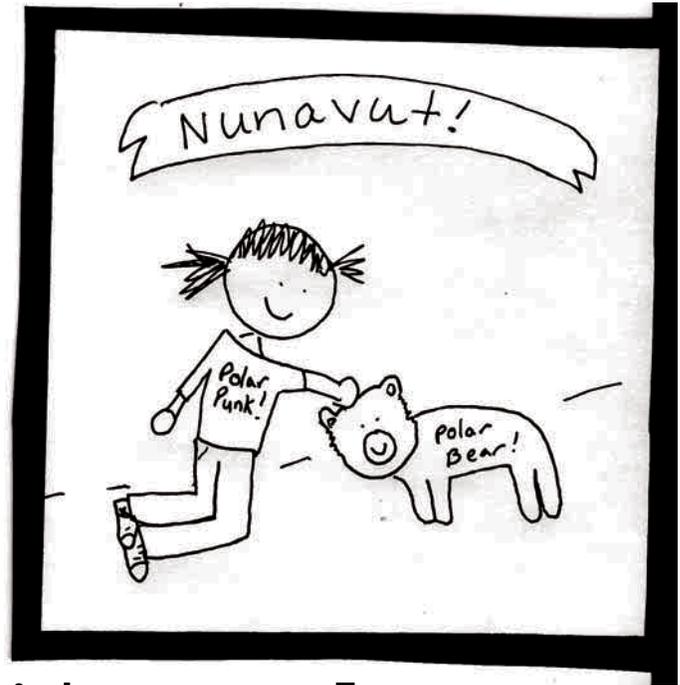
Building supplies aren't the only thing you'll need to have shipped to you in Nunavut. Consider for a moment everything you purchase in a given year. Note: you have just considered everything that you will need to have shipped to you in Nunavut. There are a handful of grocery stores, but most residents rely on a government-subsidized program that ships food to your frigid doorstep.

Despite the subsidies, the food isn't cheap. During a recent legislative session, one Nunavut lawmaker voiced the following concern about the food supply: “It doesn't make sense to have to pay thirty-two dollars for a cantaloupe. It just doesn't make sense. It's not feasible.” (To which some people might reply, “Actually, paying thirty-two dollars for a cantaloupe when you live thousands of miles and hundreds of icebergs away from the nearest cantaloupe seems, well, reasonable.”)

There's also a lively debate amongst lawmakers and residents about the kinds of food people should be eating. There's the traditional food—residents call it “country food.” Things like caribou, whales, seals, ducks, and shellfish. According to a bunch of studies, those foods make up more than half of the average resident's meat intake. Some people think it should be even higher. They point to all the other food (which they call “southern food”) as an example of a kind of culture imperialism. Fair enough, but there's one food item that should be exempt from these allegations. Yes, I'm talking about the best food in the world—pizza!

Witness the following exchange at a recent Nunavut legislative assembly (yes, the meeting minutes are available online). Lawmakers were discussing changes to the food subsidy program. First up? A man by the name of Mr. Curley, who voiced his opposition to “southern food” as follows: “My identity is based on my diet. Not my appearance, not my language, my diet. That dictates whether this guy is an Inuk or not.” (He could've just said, “You are what you eat,” but never mind that.)

That remark led another lawmaker to reply: “Mr. Curley worries me now because I



As punk rock individuals, we pride ourselves on being unconventional (read: ridiculous).

had a pizza a couple of days ago, and I ordered takeout from the Navigator Inn. Still, I'm Inuk, though!" The transcript notes that this comment brought laughter to the assembly, which I take to be an acknowledgement of the universal appeal of pizza, across continents and glaciers!

(Side note: the Nunavut legislature operates under the same rules as your local anarchist infoshop. No, I'm not referring to "safe spaces" and donation jars. The Nunavut legislature decides everything by consensus! If there was ever an Occupy Nunavut, the local media might write stories that begin as follows:

Occupy Nunavut protesters, demanding change from their lawmakers, vowed to demolish all consensus-driven voting. At the local Occupy site, protesters collected paper ballots, offered training sessions on Robert's Rules of Order, and vowed to operate without any regard for minority viewpoints! "It's a new day in Nunavut," one man remarked. "Enough of this bullshit let's-find-a-solution-everyone-can-be-comfortable-with crap.")

But let's get back to the shipping logistics, which are even more complicated than you might expect. Consider this. If you live in the middle of a sea of icebergs, it's not like you can place a No Idea order one day and an AK Press order the next. No one is going to be getting into a boat and then getting on a plane and then getting into a helicopter just to hand-deliver your copy of the latest White Wires LP.

Instead, you need to arrange to have everything you need sent to you in a giant shipping container. You also have to buy the

container, which can cost thousands of dollars, or rent it, or (according to some very specific blogs I found) have sex with someone who works for an airline company who has access to extra space in other shipping containers. Sex for shipping! Welcome to Nunavut!

Now let's turn our attention to the most important aspect of life in Nunavut: polar bears! Most of the available information about polar bears in Nunavut is focused on hunting polar bears or dealing with polar bear attacks. Let's consult some primary sources.

For example, there's this passage from the 2010-2011 Nunavut Hunting Regulations:

"Hunters who harvest male polar bears are required to submit evidence of sex (baculum/penis bone) to a Conservative Officer as soon as possible after a successful hunt."

They also address the issue of "problem bears" as follows:

"In Nunavut, it is legal to shoot a bear in self-defense only when life or property is threatened. You must report the kill to the nearest Conservation Officer as soon as possible. In most cases, the Conservation Officer will come to the site and take possession of the bear. If a Conservation Officer is not immediately available, you should skin the bear and preserve the hide by salting it and storing it in a cool, dry place or by freezing it. It is an offence to allow the hide to spoil. The hide, complete with claws, must be turned in, along with the skull (or lower jaw) to a Conservation Officer at the first opportunity. Proof of sex (the baculum) should be turned in, particularly for grizzly and polar bears. You may not keep any part of a bear killed in self-defense."

Yes, that's right. If a polar bear attacks you and you need to kill it, you'll have to skin it, salt it, and store it! That's why when I move to Nunavut, I plan to befriend the polar bears (See: artistic rendering on these pages). Not only will I cut down on hide salting expenses, I'll also be able to sell the movie rights to my story. "In a world where there are few people you can trust, one girl formed a unique friendship with one of the planet's most feared predators."

As punk rock individuals, we pride ourselves on being unconventional (read: ridiculous). And so I'm now unveiling my new campaign, which I'm calling "Consider Nunavut." By the time you're reading this, you may have already noticed billboards sprouting up near punkhouses in Portland, Gainesville, and Milwaukee. Or, you've seen the flyers about "polar punks" befriend polar bears or the replacement of basement shows with (storage) container shows. Possible future conversation: "Are you going to the container show tonight? Polar Threat is playing!" "No, I'm going to chill with my polar bear friends. They want to show me a new iceberg they just found."

When you Consider Nunavut, the rest of the world starts to seem a bit boring. And so, if you're a true punk, I expect that you'll soon be living in Nunavut public housing, having sex for containers, and talking about how much cooler Nunavut was "back in the day"!

Punk rock!
-Maddy



PØWER PØP PØLICE

REV. NØRB

**“How exactly
does one milk
a goose?”**

EPSTEIN IS DEAD!

((and i don't feel so good myself))

HALT! CEASE YOUR CURRENT ACTIVITIES! FLAGS AT HALF-MAST! PENCILS IN THE TRAYS! I bring awful, terrible news! Terrible, awful news of awfulness! *Brace thyself! Seat thyself! Daub thy sphincters with alum!* **JUAN EPSTEIN**—the Hebraic Puerto Rican sweatog from “Welcome Back Kötter”—**HAS DIED!** **EPSTEIN ES MUERTO!!! THE PLANET IS ONE GLORIOUS AFRO LIGHTER!!! LET THE WAILING COMMENCE!!!** Also, Lookout Records went out of business. Cause of death was, apparently, a heart attack. “Cause of death” for Juan Luis Pedro Felipe de Huevos Epstein, I mean—not for Lookout ((maybe he had the heart attack when he heard Davila 666 in that Taco Bell® commercial? I know I almost had a coronary when I heard it. Then I just went out and got a bunch of beefy five-layer burritos as commanded)). Cause of death for Lookout was much more obvious. *A HA, you cry! THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS COMES OUT! REV. NØRB IS CLEARLY PREPARING TO SAY SOMETHING SNARKY ABOUT LOOKOUT! Tell us why Lookout Records went under, Rev. Nørb! Spare no piss, no vinegar, no balsamic dressing of any sort! Everyone enjoys saying mean things about the popular kids after they graduate and get fat and start wearing news anchor haircuts, why should we be any different? GIVE US THE DISH! GIVE US THE DIRT! MAKE SHIT UP IF YOU MUST, but, IN THE NAME OF ALL THAT'S HOLY, tell us the REAL reason why Lookout went under! Was it because ((snicker!)) THEY DIDN'T PAY THEIR BANDS?* Actually, to tell ya the truth, I don't really know anything about that. I did some calculations, and determined that my old band, Boris The Sprinkler, released songs/records on upwards of twenty different labels during our careers, including Lookout, with whom we released one seven-inch and one compilation track back in 1998. Out of the twenty-plus labels with whom we were associated over our spastic lifespan, only two ever actually provided us with a sales and royalty statement of any sort: Lookout and Mutant Pop ((this is not to imply that there was some manner of malfeasance on the part of the other eighteen-plus labels; in most cases, a sales/royalty statement was neither implied nor expected)). Lookout always sent us a statement when we were supposed to get a statement, and a check when we were

supposed to get a check, until the point where they sent a letter saying that they weren't cutting any checks less than a hundred bucks or something, so if they owed you less than that, you'd hafta wait until they actually DID owe you a hundred bucks to get your check, after which we never heard from them again, so, technically, yes, Lookout does owe Boris some trivial amount of money—but, reasonably speaking, they did do everything they were supposed to do for us, at least up to the point when we fell underneath their significance threshold. Lookout was also the only label who actually paid us money for any of the forty-two trillion compilations we were on ((again, not necessarily implying any malfeasance on the forty-one trillion and change who didn't pay us anything—payments are often not part of the deal)); usually you just wind up with a box of smashed-up CDs that no one wanted to buy in the first place. In this case, Lookout wound up with the boxes of smashed-up CDs that no one wanted to buy in the first place, and we got the money. None can ask fairer than that. Thus, no, I don't think Lookout's cause of death was not paying the bands. *WELL, IF IT WASN'T FAILURE TO PROPERLY COMPENSATE THEIR BANDS, THEN WHAT CAUSED THEIR ((cough)) “UNTIMELY” ((cough)) DEMISE, REV. NØRB? WAS THEIR SLIGHTLY-TOO-EARLY ABANDONMENT OF THE MILKING OF THE POP PUNK GOLDEN GOOSE ((“How exactly does one milk a goose?” “Very carefully. Next Dixie™ Riddle Cup, please”)) IN FAVOR OF SIGNING A BUNCH OF WEIRD, YUCKY BANDS NOBODY CARED ABOUT, THEN???* Hmmm. A fair point, that. More truth than poetry, to be sure. Lookout had the Queers and Screeching Weasel and the Riverdales and the Mr. T Experience and the Groovie Ghoulies and the Vindictives and a bunch of other bands—not to mention the straws that stirred the drink, the first two Green Day albums—and pop punk was making them cash by the ice cream bucket ((or maybe by the fifty-five gallon drum. “Ice cream bucket” sounds more pop punk, but “fifty-five gallon drum” is bigger. Do they ever ship ice cream in fifty-five gallon drums? If not, they should)). I mean, MILLIONS OF DOLLARS. And then they just sort of...doddered off. They claimed that they weren't a “pop punk label”—which is odd, because they were obviously THE pop

punk label—and that they are, were, and always would be a Bay Area music label ((their bay, not mine)). This is a very mature and honorable artistic statement to make. It's the kind of mature and honorable artistic statement one can make when one's coffers are being filled to the bursting point with coinage largely generated from pop punk record sales, and one is in no imminent danger of failure regardless of the next several courses of action taken. *“WE ARE A BAY AREA MUSIC LABEL!!! ALWAYS HAVE BEEN!!! ALWAYS WILL BE!!! Of course, we've got the Queers, and Screeching Weasel, and the Vindictives, and the Riverdales, and Squirtgun—none of whom live closer than two thousand miles to our offices—BUT OTHER THAN THAT, WE ARE BAY AREA 24/7, BOYEEEE!!!”* Sometime around '96, or so it appeared to me, Lookout lost interest in keeping that whole—for want of a better term—*Lookout Thing* going. At the time, I'm sure that was a very grown-up stance to take. In retrospect, this was about as awesome an idea as New Coke®, Adam Sandler signing with Disney®, or the Clash making a triple album of reggae jams. At the time, I stated to all and sundry that if Lookout knew what they were doing ((because I, of course, know everything there is to know about such things)), they'd sign Boris The Sprinkler, The Parasites, and the Beatnik Termites, and have a lock on the whole pop punk thing for a number of years to come. By my ((fairly accurate though possibly immodest)) reckoning, our three bands were due to be the Next Big Wave of That Lookout Thing™, impending due all the rights and privileges thereto. Despite some appearances to the contrary, our three bands were kind of... well... *normal*, hard-working guys, whose bands had obtained considerable popularity via their own devices, and could have been fairly easily slotted into Lookout's existing empire, touring and selling records and keeping interest in That Lookout Thing™ at or near the fever pitch at which it had burned for the previous several years. Never happened. I think at one point in time or another, all three bands had talked to Lookout about “doing something” on the label, but the label kinda went in a different direction and all that ever came of it was our “Russian Robot” 45, emerging fairly late in the pop punk game in 1998 ((at this point in time, I would tell you about all the dopey bands



NATION OF AMANDA

Everyone enjoys saying mean things about the popular kids after they graduate and get fat and start wearing news anchor haircuts, why should we be any different?

Lookout signed instead of riding That Lookout Thing™ for all it was worth with the Parasites, Beatnik Termites, and Boris; like everyone else, however, I have no idea what dopey bands they signed instead of us because, like everyone else, I ceased buying Lookout products when their band roster became dopey)). Not coincidentally, fan interest in pop punk began to taper off not long after Lookout interest in pop punk started to taper off, which suggests two possible theories: Theory One is that Lookout was smart to distance itself from the whole pop punk thing on which it had built its mighty empire, as the genre's days were clearly numbered; Theory Two is that Lookout killed pop punk's momentum itself by abandoning it. If you adhere to Theory One, Lookout did right in jumping the pop punk ship, avoiding the dishonor of being caught flogging dead horses as the ship runs aground. If you adhere to Theory Two, then Lookout missed out on another whole cycle of pop punk profitability, and, further, maybe if the whole thing keeps going for a few more years, those slots on the radio that eventually went to legitimately godawful bands like Good Charlotte and Blink-182 and the All-American Rejects wind up going to somewhat less godawful Lookout bands instead, and

we're all riding the gravy train with biscuit wheels and a carburetor full of trans fats. And while, not surprisingly, I'm a confirmed Theory Two-ist, I can offer no tangible evidence that Theory Two is any more plausible than Theory One, thus, as far as I'm concerned, Lookout's cause of death cannot be ruled, in good conscience, to be the abandonment of the pop punk whence they derived their initial zillions. The actual cause of death of Lookout Records is (*"Meteors did it! That'll be twenty dollars!"*) VOODOO. *That's right! That's right! You heard it here first!* Lookout Records—once the crown gem in the burnished tiara of independent punk labels—was lain low by A SCATHING VOODOO ASSAULT COURTESY OF DISGRUNTLED FORMER LOOKOUT RECORDING ARTISTS **THE PHANTOM SURFERS!!!** Those of you lucky enough to have gotten whilst the getting was good may have gotten your hands on the Phantom Surfers' "The History of Lookout Records, Volume One: The Phantom Surfers." multi-CD set a while back. As their enclosed-therein book, *Rock Stardom for Dumbshits*, detailed, the CD set was essentially backstock they, uh, "liberated" from Lookout's warehouse when no one (save a disinterested janitor) was looking,

in retaliation for being stiffed on payments and having to deal with a lawyer who used "Esq." as a non-ironic suffix. The set—packaged in a weird plastic bucket wrapped in Saran Wrap®—consisted of seized copies of the band's three Lookout CDs, a copy of *Rock Stardom for Dumbshits*, and—believe it!—a LOOKOUT RECORDS VOODOO DOLL. I had found the ((pre-bloodied)) Lookout voodoo doll under a pile of stuff while i was cleaning recently, and had set it out on a shelf in my shed ((its funkily menstrual appearance putting me off a bit from displaying it in my home proper)) not a WEEK before Lookout declared itself dead and gone. **THE PHANTOM SURFERS VOODOO DOLL KILLED LOOKOUT DEAD IN A WEEK!!!** Voodoo is fucking REAL! **VOODOO IS THE NEXT BIG THING!!! VOODOO IS BIGGER THAN ELVIS!!!** I am totally voodooing some former employers, as soon as I can find a suitable chicken to sacrifice. I've been trying to stab the Rhythm Chicken with a bottle opener, but he keeps bonking me in the head with a soup ladle. I'll let you know how it goes.

Signed,
—Epstein's Mother

DOO
DOOLA
DOO
DOO...

DOO!
DOO!

WHO ARE YOU?

“You talk funny.”

Nardwuar vs. Micky Dolenz

The Human Serviette (of the Monkees!)

Nardwuar: Who are you?

Micky Dolenz: Don't you know? Why are you interviewing me if you don't know?

Nardwuar: Oh, well, just for the people out there who possibly wouldn't know.

Micky: Ah, my name is Micky Dolenz. What's yours?

Nardwuar: My name is Nardwuar.

Micky: Hi Nardwuar. How are you?

Nardwuar: Okay. Now, Micky you were involved with that famous rock'n'roll group, right?

Micky: Yes, that is true. Well, it was actually a television show about a rock'n'roll group.

Nardwuar: I have heard that you don't want to be known as a Monkee anymore. Is that true?

Micky: No, it's not. I'm not in the group anymore, but I am very proud of what I did and I had a great time. It was very successful. I'm solo now.

Nardwuar: And you're here in Vancouver, B.C., shooting a fun game show called *Crazy Talk*?

Micky: Ah, no. *Acting Crazy*. It's basically just charades.

Nardwuar: Is that the main reason you're in Vancouver?

Micky: Yeah, I came out just to do the show.

Nardwuar: Have you ever done game shows before?

Micky: Not many, no, but I like charades. It's a good game. You gotta be quite bright.

Nardwuar: How do you feel that you fit this role? Why did they ask you do you think, Micky?

Micky: 'Cause I'm a celebrity.

Nardwuar: A rock'n'roll celebrity?

Micky: Depends on your point of view, I suppose. Some would say yes, some would say television celebrity.

Nardwuar: Me being from Vancouver, B.C., Canada, how come I don't know a hell of a lot about the Monkees? Were they syndicated in Canada?

Micky: I have no idea. It's probably just because you're too young. But when you grow up, maybe you'll learn.

Nardwuar: When the initial Monkees broke up, how did the band disband?

Micky: It wasn't a band; I already said this once.

Nardwuar: Sorry. Okay. Sorry.

Micky: Listen carefully now. It was a television show about a band. So when the show went off the air, the show went off the air. It's like Leonard Nimoy and William Shatner didn't hang around together, you know, after beaming each other up.

Nardwuar: Afterwards, did you forge new ground in movies?

Micky: I became a film and television director.

Nardwuar: What stuff can people see that you have done?

Micky: Nothing really here. I was working in England, exclusively in England, for fifteen years.

Nardwuar: Some *Monty Python* stuff?

Micky: I worked with some of the guys from *Monty Python*. I didn't work on that particular show but I worked with Mike Palin and Terry Jones, yeah.

Nardwuar: Does the name Linda Lovelace bring any memories back to you, Micky?

Micky: Yeah, we did a movie (*Linda Lovelace for President*) with Linda Lovelace in the '70s. It was an attempt to try and legitimize her as a comedian. It wasn't a porno film. It was a comedy. There were quite a few comedians in the film.

Nardwuar: Was this a daring movie to partake in? I mean—you're a television and screen star—being seen with Linda Lovelace! Did people react harshly to that?

Micky: No, 'cause the movie didn't do that well. But it was quite funny. It was an attempt to make a comedian out of her.

Nardwuar: Has jealousy ever played a part in your life, Micky?

Micky: No.

Nardwuar: You've never been jealous about movies or parts you've missed?

Micky: No.

Nardwuar: Because another thing I heard: the Fonz—not being cast as the Fonz in *Happy Days*. What's the story behind that?

Micky: I was up for it as an actor, to play the part of the Fonz, but Henry Winkler was excellent casting for that, I think. I would have cast Henry instead of myself if I was the producer.

Nardwuar: Did you even know he was auditioning or was it at a totally different time?

Micky: No, it happened to be exactly the same day. He says he remembers meeting me but I don't remember meeting him.

Nardwuar: Before *The Monkees*, did not Micky Dolenz have a real live T.V. show?

Micky: Yeah, I did a series when I was a kid called *Circus Boy*.

Nardwuar: Did you come from a family of established artistes? Vaudeville entertainers?

Micky: Artists not "artistes." You talk funny.

Nardwuar: I talk Canadian; it's the land of clam chowder and ice.

Micky: Artistes?! Yeah, my father was an actor.

Nardwuar: Who were the Missing Links?

Micky: That was my band before The Monkees.

Nardwuar: Could they be classified as a wailing punk garage band, a la The Standells?

Micky: Yeah, we were a bar band. We did top forty. Yeah, just a rock'n'roll band.

Nardwuar: What ever happened to the other members of the Missing Links? Have you kept up with them?

Micky: Naw, haven't talked to them in years and years. It's been a long, long time.

Nardwuar: Did the Missing Links ever put anything out? I am always fascinated by early vinyl appearances!

Micky: We ahh.... I had one record out but it wasn't with the Missing Links. Yeah, I had one or two records out as a solo artist before the Monkees.

Nardwuar: Nothing recorded with the Missing Links?

Micky: Naw, no.

Nardwuar: You've heard of the Plaster Casters, haven't you?

Micky: Yeah, those two girls in the '60s who used to go around taking plaster casts.

Nardwuar: "Moldings"

Micky: Yeah, yeah.

Nardwuar: There's that ugly rumor about the Monkees, well not an ugly rumor, but they said Peter Tork's—of the Monkees—plastic molding, possibly, was right up there with Jimi Hendrix.

Micky: That's true.

Nardwuar: So that is a true rumor?

Micky: Naw, it's a contradiction in terms, son. Get your grammar right. [laughs]

Nardwuar: Well, thanks very much, and we're speaking here to Mr. Micky, Micky, Doh, Doh, Doh-enz?



CRAIG HORKEY

“The Vietnamese War was unjustified.
The Persian Gulf War probably was.”
[silence]

Micky: That’s close

Nardwuar: Is that how you pronounce it?

Micky: Yes “Dolenz.” Yeah.

Nardwuar: Of, of, now, solo career fame. What would you like to be known as nowadays?

Micky: Oh, the singing director, probably.

Nardwuar: The Gulf Wars caused a lot of commotion. What were your feelings on it, Mr. Dolenz?

Micky: Well, I wasn’t a big fan of old Saddam Hussein, so I didn’t have too many complaints about it. What about you?

Nardwuar: Well, I was wondering, ‘cause like *Head*, that luxurious, that hard-hitting,

that big movie you Monkees did, was sort of an anti-war movie?

Micky: Yeah, part of it was. Yeah. It was an anti-Vietnamese war movie, yeah.

Nardwuar: And now with stuff like wars in Iraq, would that mean that if the Monkees were around today, would they might have made a movie like *Head*, possibly about the Gulf Wars?

Micky: No, I doubt it. There isn’t much of a counterculture today.

Nardwuar: Do you feel you would have still made *Head* if you felt the way you do now? In other words, have rock’n’rollers gotten more conservative, like Jerry Lee

Lewis wearing ties nowadays and not being with sixteen year old girls?

Micky: No, I think you have to take each case in point. The Vietnamese War was—and I still believe, and most people do—unjustified. The Persian Gulf War probably was. [silence]

Nardwuar: And, finally, thanks for the time Micky, keep on rockin’ in the free world and please “act crazy” for us for a second?

Micky: No, I don’t do that anymore. [walks away]

Nardwuar: Okay, thanks.



“A quest for ill-advised diplomacy!”

HELLOOOOOOOOOOOO ALGOMA!

The Dinghole Reports
By the Rhythm Chicken
(commentary by Francis Funyuns)
[Edited by Dr. Sicnarf]

So another birthday has come and gone. Another year under my belt. Another notch on the bedpost. Another cake with an ever growing bunch of candles. Another birthday hangover. In more recent years I have started going on little birthday trips—a small jaunt to some special getaway location somewhat near where I find myself living. Some more memorable trips were to Zakopane, Poland; Melito di Porto Salvo, Italy; Laughlin, NV; and Washington Island, WI. I was fully prepared to traverse Death’s Door again and spend another birthday on “the island,” but was saddened to find out my favorite island lodging (the cheapest) had sustained a fire and was not open this winter. This last minute discovery resulted in me scrambling to find a new birthday getaway location, a new exotic and luxurious destination.

Last year’s trip to the island was surely a winter getaway not to be forgotten, but it was still within the county lines of this oh-so-touristy County of Door. This year I had to break free. I had to throw caution to the wind whilst breaking it. I had to brave into strange foreign territory. My Main Hen and I packed the car, went straight to the Lake Michigan shore, and promptly turned south. We passed through all the waterfront hot spots like Baileys Harbor, Jacksonport, Valmy, Sturgeon Bay, and Forresterville. Then came the traversal into strange and unknown lands, south of the border. We had entered KEWAUNEE COUNTY! Border patrol was pretty loose this chilly January day.

Just a few miles south of the border we happened upon the perfect little hamlet, the gem of the northern Kewaunee County coastline! We had reached the stately and majestic metropolis of Algoma! (The locals of northeast Wisconsin will surely chuckle at the thought of this.) With a population of just over 3,000, this little shangri-la is known as the trout and salmon fishing capitol of the Midwest! After securing a cost efficient room at the famous and historic Hotel Stebbins, we instantly set out to explore the bustling downtown area, all two city blocks of it— one church, seven taverns, and a few antique shops. This town has it all! This was winter, however, and we were saddened to discover the Algoma Pizza

Bowl is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays, our two nights in town. We would have to find other means of entertainment.

On our first night, we relaxed in the room over a heated game of Scrabble and many rigorous rounds of cribbage. Then we ventured out for a late dinner and made our next sad discovery: no respectable kitchen in town is open past 8PM! We had to resort to the worst birthday dinner in all my years, the McDonald’s out by the highway. I had some kind of mushroom and swiss angus burger. I noticed no particular difference between this meat-like substance and their normal horsemeat quarter pounder. We played cribbage in the hotel lobby with the McDonald’s “food” and a bottle of cheap wine. Happy birthday to me.

(Yeah, yeah. This sounds all quaint and small-towny, Mr. Chicken, but we all know where this story better be heading! - F.F.)

The next morning, we captured a late breakfast at Dairy Dean’s, a fine cheap diner directly on the lakeshore. I smiled as the breakfast grease dripped down my chin while enjoying my personal regional favorite, the hashbrown sandwich: two layers of crispy hashbrowns holding in a large pile of eggs, meat, veggies, and cheese. Some places call it the hashbrown haystack. I like to think of it as a heaping pile of heart-stopping goodness. That and the bottomless cup of coffee gave me the fuel I needed to face the unspoken task which this day would surely hold. The chickenkit had been anxiously waiting in my car’s backseat, ready for any whimsical blow to inter-county relations. I was on a mission, a quest for ill-advised diplomacy!

[With you, as Door County’s Representative of Ruckus, I’m sure relations are at an all-time low. -Dr. S.]

SILENCE, DOCTOR! Algoma, with its affordable food and lodgings, has always been thumbing its nose at us northerners. They’ve managed to escape my riotous rhythms and unrivaled thunder for too long! On this day, Algoma would feel the wrath of true punk rock lunacy! On this day, Algoma would crumble and fall to its knees before the sonic neutron bomb that is... THE RHYTHM CHICKEN!

(Uh... right. I gather Algoma was simply not prepared for this day? - F.F.)

While strolling down the main drag, my eyes spotted the most likely victim for this fateful day. My eyes fell upon the words that would surely define this historic day in Chickendom. There, on a red banner above a somewhat unassuming eatery, were the words “Penguin City Restaurant.” Penguin City? PENGUIN CITY? How have I lived in Wisconsin all these years and never known about this Penguin City? Is *ALGOMA* Penguin City? I was undoubtedly intrigued. This newfound establishment would require some immediate research. The Main Hen and I ventured inside.

Once inside, we were directly faced with the most bizarre display of penguin images and artifacts! Cheesy penguin inspirational posters! Ceramic, cartoonlike penguins! Stuffed penguins! Any and every possible representation of a penguin was on display in this odd little pizza joint. YES, PIZZA! The locals call it Penguin City Pizza! P.C.P.! This surreal find was exactly the type of oddball joint that makes Wisconsin so great! Beer, cheese, and Penguin City Pizza! The more I surveyed the mismatched collection of penguin artifacts, I realized that this was Algoma’s own local low-rent equivalent to Showbiz Pizza or Chuck E. Cheese. This place was just AWESOME.

[The Rhythm Chicken, live at Penguin City Pizza. Do I see another live 45 coming out? - Dr. S.]

We were the only customers in the place and were seated at a booth. An AM radio crackled from the waitress station nearby. We skipped the pizza and opted for their three-dollar hamburger. It was an amazing ten ounce patty on a hard crust ciabatta. I was amazed. The bill came and our three-dollar burgers were suddenly five-dollar burgers. Even with the strangely fluctuating menu prices, why on earth would anyone go to McDonald’s? On the wall above our booth was a poster depicting a flock of penguins lined up to dive off an ice shelf into the ocean. It read, “Don’t ask why! Just do it!” I took this advice to heart.

Dinghole Report #123: Rhythm Chicken Rocks the P.C.P!

(Rhythm Chicken sighting #....dang, lost my sighting log in the move. I’ll get back to you on this.)

I pulled the car around and parked just up the street. The cold January sun was glistening over Lake Michigan. Aside



NICOLE TWARDZIK

KABOOOOOOM!!! PENG-UIN! CITY! DUN! DUN! DUN-DUN-DUN!

from a few cars passing by, Algoma was a quiet little lakefront town this winter day. As I was setting up the chickenkit on the sidewalk out front, the Penguin City chef came out to inspect the setup. I gave him a quick glance just before he spoke up, "Don't worry, I'm a drummer too!" I replied, "I'm not worried and I'm not a drummer." With militant efficiency, I quickly set the stage and mounted the throne. I pulled on the Chickenhead and peered out the eyeholes at an innocent, unsuspecting town.

HELLOOOOOOOOOO
ALGOMA! My opening rolling thunder rocked the town's very foundation! There was a new ground zero, and it goes by the name of ALGOMA! PENGUIN ROCK CITY! I rocked my thunder and let it roll down the main drag! It rolled past the Steelhead Saloon! It demolished Cafe Tlazzo! My sonic blast vaporized

Dodge Antiques! A mushroom cloud of ruckus rose above Algoma's skyline (mmmbwahahahahaha! Sorry! I couldn't resist!). I supplied my own punk rock soundtrack to my *own* march of the penguins! My riotous circus of chaos echoed through town! The waves of Lake Michigan were rippling AWAY FROM THE SHORE! The rhythmic rock blast was, in a word, KABOOOOOOM!!! PENG-UIN! CI-TY! DUN! DUN! DUN-DUN-DUN! PENG-UIN! CI-TY! DUN! DUN! DUN-DUN-DUN!

Mustering up all the power available to my feeble frame, I halted the out-of-control rock train and raised my wings skyward, two drumsticks pointing up at the cold blue sky. I few faint hoots and whistles could be heard in the distance. A few cars passed by as if nothing out of the ordinary was going on. No stage security. No barricade. No mosh pit. This is real rock'n'roll. I tore down the

drums and threw them back into my car. We retired to the hotel room for a few more rounds of cribbage.

Later that evening, we headed out early for dinner. Following a friend's advice, we went to Skaliwag's, a popular new eatery in town. The food was incredible. I later learned that Skaliwag's just bought out the Penguin City Restaurant and are going to change it to a Mexican place and call it Gringo's. Yes, *Gringo's*. Another year, another birthday, another 365 days to watch this world slowly grow lamer and lamer. I feel honored to have played the PCP in its last days. May all your penguins march on, gringo-free.

[I'm speechless. -Dr. S.]

-Rhythm Chicken
rhythmchicken@hotmail.com





“Supernaturally good interior.”

Structural Rebar Proportions

There are quite a few things I've grown to admire in the last forty-two years living on this planet, but there are two in particular that have set up camp in a prominent area deep within the confines of my heart. They continue to make me smile like a blithering retard to this day: straight-up, kick-ass rock'n'roll and Mexican food (the real deal eats and a few bastardized American varieties).

There are some folks who would care to write off either as “good” or “it's okay,” but then there are those who can really get inside of it. They can actually see beyond the seemingly simple surface of *Road to Ruin* or a piping-hot plate of huaraches, and wholly appreciate the simple-yet-complex riveting art form that goes into both.

Let me put it out there that I'm not comparing some of the greatest rock'n'roll bands that ever were to some of the best south-of-the-border cuisine in the world. I'm merely stating that there's an unspoken beauty that each have to offer, and I think it's rather fitting to observe that each deserve their fair share of accolades. This is in no way a be-all, end-all diatribe of what's what—just a few heavily-opinionated observations that may or may not rub some people the wrong way. Ah, hell, who am I kidding, right? Onward.

Gonna stand right up and state the most obvious offender: Taco Bell is to Mexican food as Blink 182 is to punk rock (and I use the term “punk rock” *waaaay* loosely here). They're both shoved down people's throats on a global scale and they're both dolled up for the less experienced eye to almost appear *that* much more credible. Yet, neither delivers any sort of authentic experience and leaves each and every customer who came in contact feeling the strong urge to power spray their intestines out their ass against a wall. I don't know about you, but that sounds pretty shitty to me. Pass.

Incidentally, I did a column about the history of Del Taco (Taco Bell's major competition out here on the West Coast) a while back, and I continue to stand by my statements that Del's quality far outweighs the anal offerings that Taco Bell squeezes out into its consumers. Yes, Del Taco is the SoCal-based version of what can be vaguely construed as Mexican chow, but the quality holds its own and can do folks fine in a quick pinch. You could almost

say that Del Taco is to Mexican fare as ALL is to the Descendents (oh, put a sock in it—I was and will ALWAYS be a Big Drill Car fan).

There's also the craptacular Acapulco restaurant chain out this way that offers up platters of horrific, beyond-honkified renditions from their “south-of-the-border” menu that deserve nothing less than being frisbee'd against a wall. This situation runs parallel to being thrust into the unfortunate situation of having to endure a band like Good Charlotte. They, too, need to be frisbee'd against a wall (a wall of speeding, rush-hour traffic, actually). It makes me crazy seeing people jam these places when there's an authentic hole in the wall nearby called El Atacor #11 (in Cypress Park off of the 5 freeway and Figueroa, not too far from Razorcake HQ near the East L.A. area) that delivers one of the best burritos you can shake an elephant dick at, as well as other menu items sure to satisfy.

Why did I mention an elephant's phallus? Because the Super Burrito there has aptly been nicknamed “The Porno Burrito” by the locals in the area. Use your imagination. As downright delicious as they are salaciously big, the variety of burritos from El Atacor #11 pack a punch for each customer made by the real deal folk who have blessed our fair city with some incredible places to mow. El Atacor #11 is like The Dickies of taco joints, not only because you can perform Leonard's “If Stuart Could Talk” shtick with their burrito, but their food is so damn good, it's SILLY.

Speaking of that ill-named Acapulco chain above, there's an unbelievable taco stand down Acapulco way called Tacos Tumbras that is quite possibly the Ramones of all taco stands. Like what the Ramones' live shows once did to me and fans worldwide, Tacos Tumbras will do the same: knock your dick in the dirt. Tacos featuring carne asada, al pastor, and pollo asada—all generously nestled in the confines of hand-pressed corn and flour tortillas pulled right off of the blistering comal. And if you wanna go completely apeshit bananas, you can order said tacos *gringa* style with a huge wad of Oaxaca cheese melted amongst the meat(s) of your choice. Definitely the place to hit if you ever happen to be down in the deep south end of Mexico, puttering around in Acapulco.

The only other taco place I've been to that can rival this joint is the El Fogoncito chain based out of Mexico City (D.F.) and their al pastor is the stuff dreams are made of. Props must also be given to the Los Arcos chain down in Mexico for their *gringa* version of *tacos dorados de camarones* (deep fried shrimp tacos with bubbling Oaxaca cheese within its supernaturally good interior). Don't get me wrong, there's some pretty damn decent taco places here in the states, especially along the border cities, but nothing fluffs a food boner of structural rebar proportions like the two above-mentioned eateries located in Mexico.

Ironically enough, the Ramones' love of Mexican eats was pretty heavy duty. They even went as far as naming their music publishing Taco Tunes back in 1976, around the same time their first full-length hit the shelves in spring of that year. One of their favorite L.A. joints they'd repeatedly hit since their early days was some greasy dive called Los Tacos on Santa Monica Boulevard, which is still standing.

On the subject of greasy dives, there's a pretty gnarly twenty-four-hour taco stand out in Montebello (off of Garfield and the 60 freeway, on the outskirts of East L.A.) called JandS. Like a lean and mean Motörhead gig that shakes your very soul (and innards), JandS delivers the Orgasmatron of gastro-lust like said English band of plentiful rock'n'roll, but with Mexican-American fare. Throw down for a chile relleno burrito or soft tostada burrito, and you're ready to roll. The taquitos drowning in their special cream-based guacamole is reason enough to go. My wife Yvonne introduced me to this place a long while back, and she's been hitting this place since she was a lil' pigtailed preschooler. We're both convinced that JandS is either putting some kind of wondrous chorizo concoction or crack cocaine in the beans they use for the burritos. Crazy insane. And they have some of the most decadent crinkle-cut fries melted down with white cheese, smothered in the same guac. Oh, did I mention the fries are deep-fried in lard? Now I did. It's probably a good thing I don't live *that* close to JandS. If I did, I'd probably be waddling over there on a regular basis, especially since it's a twenty-four-hour place of business.



BILL PINKEL

Taco Bell is to Mexican food as Blink 182 is to punk rock (and I use the term “punk rock” waaaaay loosely here).

There's a damn good, pretty authentic Mexican restaurant near us called Casa de Ramos—with their big menu of awesome plates to choose from and more-than-ample-sized portions, to boot. Props must be given to Rosie and her familia for keepin' on keepin' on, especially when there are so many half-assed attempts at taco stands or other kinds of “Mexican” places in our immediate neighborhood. 'Ramos is to carrying the Mexican food torch as The Zeros were to carrying the rock'n'roll torch back and forth from their

garages in Chula Vista to L.A. in the late 1970s: bringing the goods to the people. For the rest of you half-assed slop vendors (who will go unnamed, because you're *that* friggin' awful and you'll get not *one* word of mention), you're the equivalent of those singers who've built their whole history of “keeping the faith” with a very familiar-sounding, heavily-derived strain of “authenticity,” and who see fit to punch women in the face. No fucking thanks.

Coming back full circle, good food can be as equally great as good music—

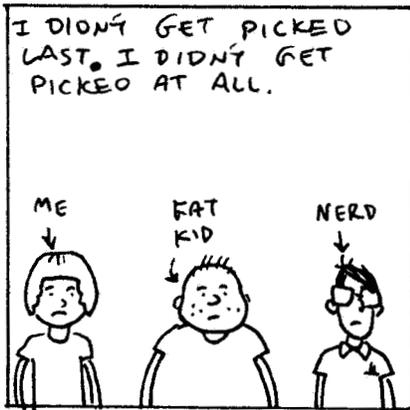
both can touch the soul, just like Lemmy-penned “RAMONES”-dedicated song, from Motörhead's 1916 LP: ‘*Keep it up / Rock'n'roll / good music save your soul.*’

And you know damn well Lem's telling the truth. When has he ever lied to us?

I'm Against It,
—Designated Dale
designateddale@yahoo.com

MY FIFTY-FIRST COLUMN FOR RAZORCAKE BY BEN SNAKEPIT

RECENTLY NIGHT HAWK BLASTED MY ANTI-SPORTS STANCE IN AN ONLINE RAZORCAKE COLUMN... I LIKE NIGHTHAWK (I'VE NEVER MET HIM BUT I LIKE HIS WORK) SO I FIGURED I'D TRY TO EXPLAIN MY POSITION A BIT BETTER BY SHARING THIS STORY WITH YOU ALL...



WON TON NOT NOW

BURDEN OF PROOF
OR
YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO GO OUT
BY LUCKY NAKAZAWA

THIS ONE GOES OUT TO ALL THE YOUNG PUNK ROCKERS OUT THERE. IF YOU WANT TO SEE A SHOW AT A 21+ VENUE BRING YOUR DRIVERS LICENSE, STATE I.D., MILITARY I.D. OR PASSPORT. ANY ONE WILL DO THE TRICK.



*PASSPORT IS A BAD IDEA. IF YOU LOSE IT YOU'RE STUCK IN AMERICA.

EVEN IF YOU DON'T DRINK!



THESE THINGS WILL NOT GET YOU IN

XEROX OF A DRIVERS LICENSE.



IDIOT STAR RATING 2

DIGITAL PICS OF A I.D. ON A CAMERA OR PHONE.



IDIOT STAR RATING 2 1/2

TELLING THE DOORMAN TO GOOGLE YOUR NAME BECAUSE YOUR INFO IS ON THE INTERNET.



REALLY? IDIOT STAR RATING 4

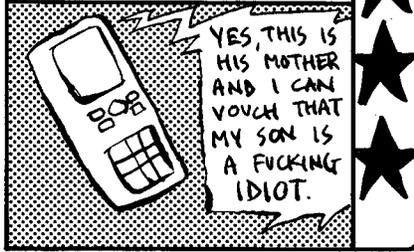
BEING ABLE TO RECITE AN ADDRESS, D.O.B, ASTROLOGICAL SIGN, THE NAME OF YOUR FIRST PET ETC...



BUT BUT THE SHOW WILL SOUND GREAT FROM THE PARKING LOT BUT BUT...

IDIOT STAR RATING 3

GIVING THE DOORMAN A PHONE AND SAYING YOUR MOM IS ON THE OTHER END VOUCHING FOR YOUR AGE. FOR SHAME.



CREATIVITY + IDIOT STAR RATING 4

DID YOU FAIL THIS IDIOT TEST? TOO MANY STARS? STILL WANT TO SEE THE SHOW? BORROW SOME DRUM STICKS, WALK STRAIGHT INTO THE BACK DOOR AND SAY 'BAND'. THIS REALLY WORKS.



BA-DUMP BUMPI! CRASH! KN 9/11



Dan Monick's Photo Page

Los Angeles, October, 18 2011

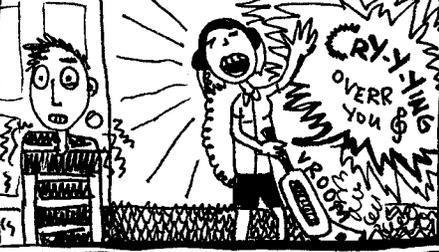
WASH YOUR DISHES OR MOVE OUT

ALL THE FACTS

A JOURNEY OF LIVING WITH 8 ROOMMATES

BY ADRIAN CHI

IT SUCKS IF YOU LIKE SINGING DUMB SONGS REALLY LOUD... SUCKS FOR EVERYONE ELSE!



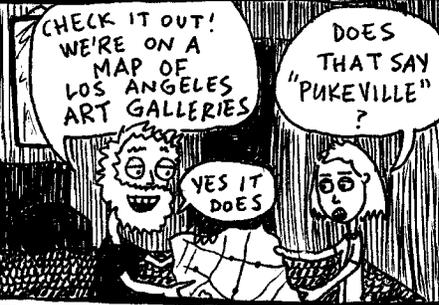
BUT IT'S PRETTY NICE IF YOU GET LONELY EASILY.

IT SUCKS IF YOU'RE THE ONE WHO HAS TO COLLECT RENT



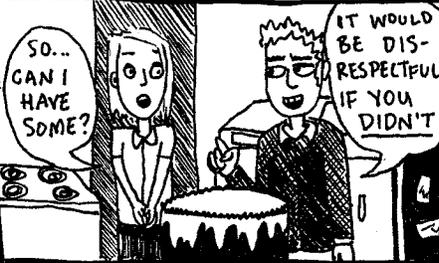
BUT AT LEAST IT'S AFFORDABLE.

IT SUCKS WHEN YOUR HOUSE GETS A STUPID NICKNAME



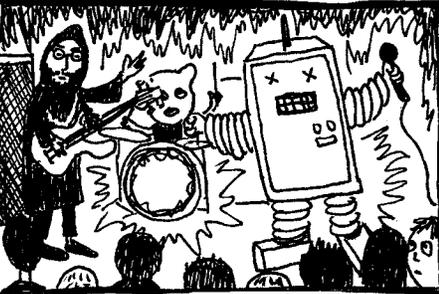
BUT IT'S PRETTY FUNNY WHEN IT ENDS UP FITTING.

IT SUCKS WHEN YOUR LAST BANANA DISAPPEARS



BUT IT'S ALL WORTH IT WHEN SOMEONE BRINGS HOME A CAKE THEIR GRANDMA MADE.

IT SUCKS WHEN YOU HAVE TO GO TO WORK IN THE MORNING BUT THERE'S A PARTY RAGING



BUT IT'S SO AWESOME WHEN YOU GET TO HAVE HOUSE SHOWS!

IT SUCKS IF SOMEONE COOL MOVES OUT AND SOMEONE LESS COOL MOVES IN



BUT WHEN YOU ACTUALLY LIKE ALL THE PEOPLE YOU LIVE WITH IT PRETTY MUCH RULES!



**“Can you say
background
check?”**

Idiot Colander

Welcome all to 2012. This should be some year if we're to believe the doom and gloom associated with the interpretation of the Mayan calendar. I, personally, liked the Incas better anyway. I read in the paper that a group of scientists moved the gloomy “doomsday clock” a minute closer to midnight. That should give the conspiracy theorists something to discuss. The phantom clock now rests at five to midnight. It's a shame that those in power to protect us can't get things right. Maybe they just plain don't give a rat's ass about us.

With these things in mind, I would like to express my bewilderment with my local protect and serves. A few weeks ago I was deep in the process of getting my paperwork squared away for an internship for college. Among the paperwork, phone calls, and TB tests, I had to pay a visit to the Cerritos College campus police station to be fingerprinted. This was a severely uncomfortable place to visit. In a way, it's funny that—on a college campus—I found some of the stupidest and most socially inept officers I've ever met. Unfortunately, that ineptness lit a fire of anger under my backside.

My first encounter with the campus police was when my bike was stolen last year. It was an empty feeling of helplessness when I walked out of my class to find my mode of transportation gone with no trace. No locks. Nothing. I immediately went across a road and a building down to make a report. That's right. My bike was stolen almost in front of their sleepy, watchful eye.

I walked in and had to bend over to talk to the officer on duty sitting behind a giant smoke-tinted wall. I started explaining what happened. He jotted down a few notes and took my name. When we got to the bike license number, I didn't know it offhand, but I told him to start with the information I gave him and that I'll be back in the morning with that info.

The next morning I went back and a new guy was behind the wall. I explained about the prior night. Nothing! There was no information about me, my bike, or the discussion. So this intellect asked me to describe the officer from the night before. “Irrelevant” I said. “I just want to get a report on my stolen bike,” to which he replied, “That'll be five dollars.”

So I filled some paperwork out and was asked to return a couple days later. When I

returned, some student wannabe cop slash criminal law student took the report into a back room. This guy started by asking me: “Do you know who stole your bike?” In my mind, I said, “Are you fucking serious?” but I said, “No.” I guessed this guy hadn't mastered the fine art of reading someone's non-verbal cues because he asked this question twice more during the interrogation. I'm sure as soon as I left, the paperwork was filed and that was that.

My next run-in with the campus police was last fall. During a rainy day, I was forced to drive rather than ride, which means I had to purchase a one-day parking pass from one of the machines. Simple enough. All I had to do was insert a quarter or single bills. I inserted a coin and nothing happened. “Well, maybe I need to force it,” I thought. So, with force, I shoved another coin in. Nothing happened. I pressed the return coin button and nothing came out.

A guy waiting told me, “Oh, don't use coins. Only bills work.” So I got my pass and since the police station is on the way to class, I popped in to vent. It was the same idiot in the chair the night my bike was stolen.

“Hey, you guys need to put up some sign that the parking pass machines won't take quarters.” The lazy ass looked at me and said, “The machines don't work because of the rain.”

“Really, 'cause I put dollars in and it gave me a pass, no problem.”

“No,” he said. “The machines are broken. You don't need a pass when it rains.” With heavy frustration and a sigh that sounded like air being released from a beer vat, I gave the guy my best *fuck you, ya lazy idiot* look and left.

So to say that I wasn't looking forward to going down to the station to be fingerprinted was an understatement. I had to wait behind an ex-cop who stood with that holier-than-thou stance while demanding to see the watch commander. It was also amazing that once they opened the door to someone, the cops act real edgy, like you're going to go on a rampage. These are the people who are employed to protect us.

My last act of public defiance in complaining about law enforcement was in my neighborhood. At least two or three times a year—on any given morning—several police cars will blitz up and park across the street. Seven or eight guys will get out, hide behind trees, cars, and structures to search a house a couple houses down where some

guys on parole live. They'll drag the parolees out, make them lean against cars, and even go through their mail that they take directly from the mail carrier.

After an hour or so, they find nothing and leave. Once in a while, the cops'll put someone in the car who'll return a couple days later. They never seem to find anything. Yet, I often see some of the guys walk up the street and a transaction takes place. I'm sure it's pot because it's prevalent in the neighborhood, so much that sometimes I feel that I live in the emerald triangle. We've also had numerous cars pull up outside our windows. We watch as a two-foot bong or a pipe is pulled out and soon the car is filled with smoke. Personally, I'd like the stuff legalized just so these poor bastards could do it at home instead of my front lawn. And, really, from the looks of it, the police can't catch on to what's going on.

Now it would be an overgeneralization to say all police are nervous, overpowered idiots. This is true. They have every right to be wary of the crazies who are out there—and I know several stand-up guys who are officers that I call friends and often help me out—but I think we need a better colander to trap the large pieces of idiot who are sometimes unleashed on the general public.

I'd like to end with a great example of this. Take the case of the “burrito deputy.” The deputy attempted to sneak a syringe of heroin into jail, wrapped in a bean and cheese burrito. This same deputy had been caught sleeping during his orientation in a reality television show about the police academy. He flunked out, the first time around. Can you say background check?

CRUST DOG

By Anthony Sorge, \$1.00 U.S.

All right for Handlebar! Start reading this and you'd think it's another anti-establishment comic written to give 'em the middle digit. Well, you're wrong. Being a canine lover, I was thrilled to see the dog get his rightful meal. I fully relate to this story. Just before Christmas I was sitting at a light in Fullerton and a homeless guy was at the corner bummin' for cash and doing pretty well. I noticed this guy had a pup on his shoulder. When he got a fiver from the guy in the truck next to me, I saw his dog could barely keep its eyes open and all of its ribs were pronounced. I went



MARCOS SIREF

We need a better colander to trap the large pieces of idiot.

nuts, feeling horrible for this poor creature that this bastard easily could have fed. If only that dog could have rose up like the one in this book. Short and to the point is the message in this cool little comic. The author should charge two bucks and give half to animal shelters. Great job, Anthony. (anthonymsorge@hotmail.com, anthonymsorge.tumblr.com)

BAD BREATH COMICS #3

By Josh Juresico, \$2.00 U.S.

Any comic that has a panel where a woman takes off her top to go bare to beat the heat, runs away from the park police, and then pleads not guilty is fine reading by me. *Bad Breath* is a collection of stories and shorts that make you think and laugh at the same time. This one is a surrealist's story telling dream date. From dumbfuck Duffy to the baby born to drive, this comic is a treat. (joshjuresko.com, badbreathcomics.blogspot.com)

DARK AXIS #1

By Mclean & Wheeler, \$2.99 U.S.

This comic takes place during WWII. We

discover that the Nazis were working on some strange things during the war. This team of Americans are about to find out the hard way it wasn't good. This comic is artfully done. It matches the dark storyline. It's a great comic for those of you who like the suspense of war stories. This one kicks *Sergeant Fury* in the ass. (Ape Entertainment, PO Box 7100, San Diego, CA 92167, ApeComics.com)

INFESTATION OUTBREAK#1

By Ryall, Waltz, Messina, \$3.99 U.S.

This could be a great comic if it didn't jump on the vampire/alien/covert bandwagon. The story itself—without all the parallels—would make a cool comic. It just seems like a bombardment of every successful comic that's out right now. If you can swim through the X-men, Twilight, Hell Boy, and alien shit pool, there's the making for a pretty good comic. Yet, with all that soup, all I can hear is "been there, seen that." (idwpublishing.com)

TEACH

By Josh Medsker

This little, crudely-drawn comic is an autobiography about the author's trials and tribulations in his attempt to become a teacher. For me, the rough drawings always distract me from the message conveyed. Part of a comic's clarity comes from a good visual. (joshmedsker@gmail.com)

KING-CAT COMICS AND STORIES #72

By John Porcellino, \$3.00 U.S.

I swear I've read this title before and liked it. This one was a little too metaphysical for me. The art is very solid but the stories were a little far out there in this one. I did, however, like the last little story with the bat in the bedroom. Maybe that's my problem. I just don't live in an area where things like that happen. The top forty/fifty percent of this book is always fun to read. (Spit And A Half, PO Box 142, South Beloit, IL 61080, king-cat.net)

—Gary Hornberger

WAY OUT WEST FEST

TILTWHEEL DAN PADILLA

**THE LOSS FRENCH EXIT
PRETTY BOY THORSON**

SAMUEL CAI WELLS REVENGE

**BESIDE MYSELF CIVIL WAR RUST
HANDS LIKE BRICKS BOMBPOPS
SHOVEL AND GUN THE SLOW DEATH**

**JEFF ROWE THE ANGRY LEMONS
NEWS FROM THE FRONT THE WELL**

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ROSSI H

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TUMBLEWEED & JACKALOPE PLAINFIELD BUTCHERS

JOEY BRIGGS WHY I HATE

AMERICAN LIES COME ON DIE YOUNG

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FORT WORTH SAID GUN THE FLURALS

PERDITION THE SKY WE SCRAPE

NEW YORK TAXI TIN HORN PRAYER

YOUNG//SAVAGE DARK COUNTRY

LENGUAS LARGER LIZZIE HOFFMAN

GUNNER'S DAUGHTER THE MAXIIS

JEFFERSON DEATHSTAR HEROES FOR HERO

JASON KUTCHMA

INTERNATIONAL DIPSHT

FLATWHEELER

**AND
MORE!**



ILLUSTRATION AND DESIGN BY KEITH ROSSION
KEITH@KEITHROSSION.COM

CHICO SIMIO NO. 31

"FORWARD, DOWN,
DOWN-FORWARD,
FIERCE!"

-ART-

LATELY, I'VE BEEN PLAYING A LOT OF SUPER STREET FIGHTER IV ONLINE AND I'VE GOTTEN PRETTY GOOD. I USED TO PLAY THIS IN THE ARCADES BUT THE GAME IS SO MUCH DIFFERENT THAN BEFORE. IT'S EVOLVED QUITE A BIT...



HA! YOU USE THAT MOVE AND I COUNTER WITH THIS!

IT SOUNDS REALLY PRETENTIOUS, BUT THE GAME IS NOW ALMOST LIKE A CHESS MATCH. LOTS OF FEINTS AND STRATEGIES, ATTACKS AND DEFENSES. SO MUCH DEEPER THAN JUST PUNCHING YOUR OPPONENT IN THE FACE.

MIND GAMES ARE THE WEAPON OF CHOICE. IF YOU CAN "TRAIN" YOUR OPPONENT TO THINK AND REACT A CERTAIN WAY IN CERTAIN SITUATIONS, YOU CAN SET HIM UP AND FINISH HIM.

THE ONLY PART I HATE ABOUT PLAYING PEOPLE ONLINE IS THAT YOUR'E NOT PLAYING NEXT TO THEM, LIKE IN THE ARCADES. YOU WOULD THINK TWICE ABOUT TALKING SHIT TO SOMEONE RIGHT NEXT TO YOU BUT WITH THE ANONYMITY OF THE INTERWEB, THAT LEAVES THEM FREE TO SEND YOU MESSAGES OF A LESS-THAN FRIENDLY NATURE AFTER YOU BEAT THEM. OR WORSE, AFTER THEY BEAT YOU. GOTTA LOVE THE INTERNET.



I AM NOT CHEATING AND NO, I DON'T SLEEP WITH MEN!!!

REMEMBERING ESME

“The most amazing thing is that I know she is with me, constantly playing DJ for me.”

So many lives would be changed forever on New Year’s Day 2012 after we heard the news that our amazing and beautiful friend Esme—a big part of the music community in Austin and lover of all people and music—was murdered.

Knowing Esme was like listening to your favorite band. She had so much love for people and so much love for music. She was like music herself! She loved to dance and could start a dance party in a matter of seconds. Even if she was the only one dancing, that party was the best dance party ever. Her humor was always completely right on. Her intelligence and wit gave her the gifts of humor and quick quips.

I want to share my last couple of nights with Esme—spent less than a week before her passing. It entwines this beautiful person with love and music.

December 23rd & Christmas Day

I am not sure how it is in other places, but Christmas time in El Paso is special. Friends return to town to spend Christmas with their families. El Paso is a city that a lot of people cannot wait to leave. It’s also a place where a lot of people move back. I have done both.

The first plan of action on December 23rd was to meet up with Esme at a bar called the Tap. I remember Esme looking as beautiful as ever and wearing her Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers T-shirt.

On Christmas night, a bunch of us decided to meet at Hope & Anchor. Another rowdy and fun night ensued. Esme gave me a present that night: an Ace Frehley pin. I instantly put it on and rocked the pin the rest of the night.

December 27th

A quick note on the geography of El Paso: it’s a big place. Esme was staying on the Northeast side of town. I stay on the Westside. A mountain and a couple of

highways divided us that night—making it neither super far nor really close. The distance, combined with the fact that Esme didn’t have a car, made meeting up kind of an issue at times.

On this night, I was at Lloyd’s on the Westside and planned to only go out for a short time. I was pretty tired. Then Esme called. We knew it could be problematic to meet up, but she told me she would try. The next thing I knew, Esme had worked her magic and was on her way.

I stayed out much later than anticipated, but it was worth it. Esme and I laughed all night about songs we could put on the jukebox that would bum everyone out. On this list of buzz-kill songs were those by Red House Painters and Galaxie 500. When I decided to go home that night, I hugged Esme, told her that I loved her, and we made plans to hang out the next day over dinner for something laid back. We were both tired from raging with friends all week, but we did not want to miss hanging out again before she returned to Austin.

When I got into my car and turned on the radio, there was my own special buzz-kill song waiting for me: “All by Myself” by Eric Carmen! Even though I felt truly bummed out, I laughed at the irony of having a buzz-kill song playing just for me when I got in the car. I texted Esme right away.

December 28th & December 29th

When Esme called me that afternoon, she heard the exhaustion in my voice and offered to get together another time, saying, “We don’t have to hang out if you’re too tired.” Even though I was tired, I remembered her effort to see me just the night before. I made my mind up to not be a wimp and I told her that I was going to pick her up for our hangout.

From the moment I picked her up, my spirits lifted. We began our journey at a pizza

parlor for some drinks. Then we moved on to her favorite Mexican food restaurant. Over nachos, the conversation led into dreams of the perfect wedding. When Esme got married, it would be on a beach with a huge party with tons of friends. Did she know that I shared the exact same dream? I always knew she was psychic. During that same conversation, I found out that Esme was thinking about moving back to El Paso for the summer in order to catch up with old friends. After nachos, I drove her home.

Let me preface something—we shared a love for Fleetwood Mac. Hearing Fleetwood Mac always reminded us of each other. We would text one another if we heard one of their songs. That night, I asked her if she ever listened to the oldies station in town. She said no, so I flipped it on. Fleetwood Mac was playing. A truly magical moment!

After dropping her off with hugs and an “I love you,” I felt a wave of sadness. I chalked it up to the fact that I was tired, she was returning to Austin the next day, and that I would not see her for awhile.

The next day I received a text from my friend, Josh, telling me that he was on the same Austin-bound flight as Esme. They both sent me texts telling me they were “airport partying.” Esme sent me another photo taken from the runway that read: “Goodbye Joe.”

New Year’s Day and Afterwards

My friend Chris picked me up to go eat on New Year’s Day. While we were sitting down, my phone rang. I figured my friend was asking about my New Year’s and I decided I would call her back. Immediately afterwards, another friend called. I knew something was up, and I answered the phone with Michelle frantically asking me where I was and then, “I have to tell you something. Are you sitting down?” I told her I was with Chris and then she said, “Something happened to Esme. We think she was murdered.”



Esme & Joe at the Tap Bar, El Paso, TX, Christmas 2009, Photo by Alison Hearst

It did not even register at that point. After I talked to her, more phone calls came through. I felt helpless. This is something I am not going to be able to ever change or erase from my psyche. I was in shock for a few hours. Talking to friends on the drive from Las Cruces, I drove back to my parents' place in El Paso. When I got there, there were more calls, more texts, more chatting on Facebook.

I went to take a shower and I started to cry, but they weren't really tears. I felt alone and shocked. My friend Barry took me out that night and we met up with other friends who knew Esme well. I returned home later that night and tried to go to bed. I felt scared. I did not want to fall asleep. I wanted to turn myself off.

The next day I woke up feeling hazy. With more texts and more updates, I began to feel even more numb. More sadness. More phone calls. More texts. More updates. I felt guilty. People—amazing friends of mine—were making sure I knew and checking to see if I was okay. I was okay. I was alive. I could do whatever I wanted. I was angry! I was hurt! I felt like I should not be allowed to enjoy anything. I wanted to punish myself in Esme's honor, but, instead, I told more friends that I loved them.

In dealing with her sudden departure, I decided to write something about her and write songs for her. I thought how strange it is that with tragedy; I become super motivated. That night, there was a small gathering in her honor at our friends' bar. It was great to see people hanging out to remember her. I kept thinking before we got there: "Don't ask people how they're doing. You'll sound like an asshole!" I was tripping myself out.

Old friends and new friends shared drinks and conversations about Esme. It was a great time and I also drank a lot. I pounded back Anchor Steams. I even thought of getting a shot of Jameson, a combination Esme had done on Christmas Day. I opted for a shot of Rumpelintz instead. My friend told me she needed to tell me something that Esme would want me to know. She told me, "Esme's mom wanted me to tell you that when you dropped her off that night, Esme was so happy and said she had the greatest time being with you."

I felt really sad and alone.

Another shot and a beer later, I lost it. I sobbed uncontrollably. I could not stop. I did not want to stop. It felt good to feel something other than shock and numbness. When I did stop, I took another shot. I was too hammered. I needed to go home. On the

way home, I started crying again while my friend was driving. He just put his hand on my shoulder. I was really drunk, extremely sad, and starting to feel really sick.

When we pulled up to my parents' house, I jumped out of the car and immediately vomited. Inside the house, I was too scared to fall asleep. The next day, I was a little hung over. My face hurt from crying. I was thinking about me crying, and then I remembered how I had vomited a little bit on myself. Esme would have laughed about that.

Goodbye

At this point, after a few weeks have gone by, I am still sad. I miss Esme. The most amazing thing is that I know she is with me, constantly playing DJ for me. Last week at a coffee shop, I felt her presence so strongly. Every song on the radio felt like she was telling me something, from the first song of "You're So Vain," "Knocking on Heaven's Door," and all the way to "Spirit in the Sky."

Esme, I love you and I will miss you forever.

—Joe Ayoub

STAINS

Sick and Crazy

Conversations with the Stains, Part I

By Jimmy Alvarado

Transcribed by Alex Cvetovich and Danny Segura
Photos by Edward Colver, Jimmy Alvarado, Joe Henderson, and Louis Jacinto
Help by Jake Smith, BC Caldwell, and Pat Perez
Layout by Todd Taylor

A word of precaution to one and all. The Stains cater to the extremely hardcore, and therefore, are recommendable only to those with a taste for the revolutionary.

-From "Neighborhood bands contribute unique sound,"
by Sal de la Riva, *ELAC Campus News*, 10/8/80

Sal hit it right on the noggin, there. The Stains were definitely heavy dudes from a heavy neighborhood with a heavy fan base drawn to their heavy, hardcore sound. They were chaotic, wild, and self-destructive. Many of their peers saw them as scary cats who truly did not give a flying fuck and would just as gleefully wreck your world as rock it. They were a band for which "punk" was not something to conform to for scene cred and gigs. It was just the latest moniker applied to what they were already doing—providing a soundtrack for the mayhem they sought to incite.

Today, in this post-death/grind/powerviolence/whatever-era of punk-tinged metal and hardcore, it's hard to fathom just how revolutionary they were. Bear in mind that at the time they were first making waves across Los Angeles' punk scene, a period between 1977-81 give or take, NO ONE sounded like them and (with the exception of their pals Black Flag) even fewer packed the same kind of wallop. Unlike many of their punk peers, they were accomplished musicians who drew from influences well outside of most punks' frame of reference—Deep Purple, UFO, Andres Segovia, flamenco—and filtered songs steeped in various psychoses and fascist fetish nightmares through the sonic equivalent of a towel-wrapped brick applied to the side of some asshole's face. What resulted was a metal-punk hybrid that predated "pioneer" bands leaning toward that direction—such as Slayer and Metallica—by a good many years.

In addition to being one of Los Angeles' earliest punk bands—they were hanging out with

the Germs, X, Mau Maus, Screwdrivers and others back when The Masque was still a dank basement "cabaret" known only to the coolest kids—they were also the first (and only, a few would argue) bona fide punk group to hail from the cluster of neighborhoods collectively known as East Los Angeles, or "The Eastside." They were the band that members of The Brat and Los Illegals were going to see before those bands had even formed. Their album still sounds as fresh and heavy as it did upon its initial recording thirty years ago. Their impact on subsequent generations of bands is significant enough to include the likes of Black Flag and many others.

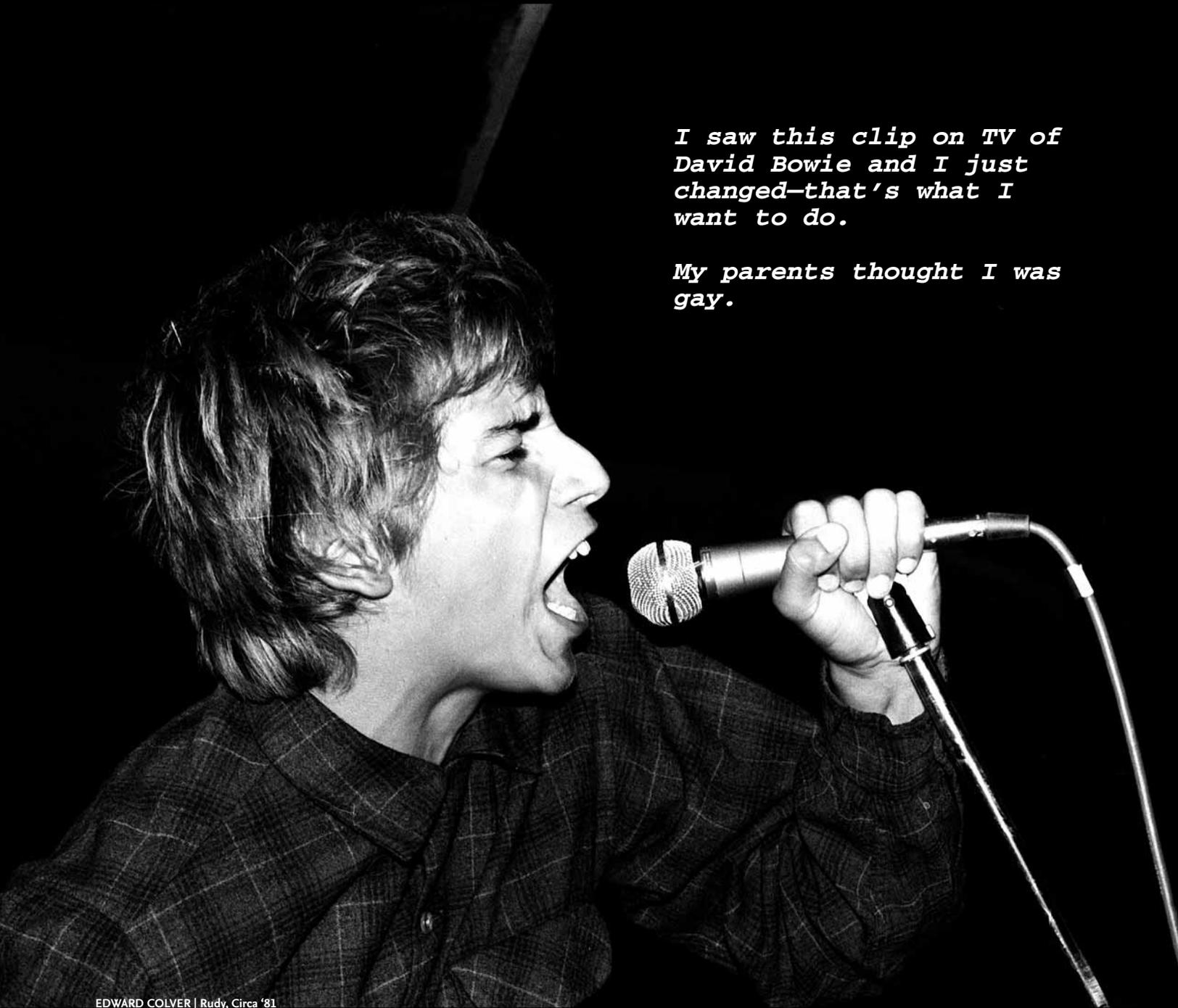
Oddly enough, for all their "firsts," they've largely been written out of the Los Angeles—and East Los Angeles—punk music historical record, often relegated to quasi-curio status based more on their connection to Black Flag than anything else.

A number of reasons could be cited for their obscurity. Their sole album, one of SST Records' seminal releases, remains out of print decades after it was released. They have distanced themselves from the "Chicano punk" angle lumped on (and openly embraced by some of) their more lauded eastside peers. Their own self-destructive tendencies also haven't helped. Still, few can deny upon listening to them that they were a band working well ahead of the musical curve.

What follows is the distillation of a number of interviews conducted over a five-year period with most of the key members of the Stains (original members Jerry Castellanos and Tony Romero could not be located and guitarist Robert Becerra declined to be interviewed) into an "oral history" of the band, supplemented by commentary from collaborators (including Violent Children vocalist Tracy Otero), fellow musicians and fans, as well as snippets from various contemporary periodicals and papers. Please bear in mind that though it largely adheres to a linear beginning-forward format chronicling the band's early and peak period, it does bounce around a bit. To avoid any confusion, the two major lineups covered here are:



EDWARD COLVER | Robert, Circa '81



EDWARD COLVER | Rudy, Circa '81

I saw this clip on TV of David Bowie and I just changed—that's what I want to do.

My parents thought I was gay.

1978-80

Jerry "Atric" Castellanos: Vocals
Robert Becerra: Guitar
Jesse "Fixx" Amezcuita: Bass
Tony Romero: Drums

1980-82

Rudy Navarro: Vocals
Robert Becerra: Guitar
Cesar Viscarra: Bass
Gilbert Berumen (aka "Jack Rivera"): Drums

There are also occasional discrepancies in the tales recounted due to the amount of time that has passed, the occasional embellishment by the one doing the telling or maybe my own ignorance. These are discrepancies that have been largely left intact. This is by no means intended to be the "complete" history of the band. The hope is that it sheds some insight into the complicated story of a band's long overdue place in L.A. punk history.

BEGINNINGS

The bulk of the Stains hailed from Boyle Heights, an area that roughly begins on the eastern banks of the Los Angeles River and ends at the City of Los Angeles' easternmost border, Indiana Street. Originally known as "Paredon Blanco," or "white bluffs," it was rechristened with its current moniker in 1875 by William H. Workman in honor of his father-in-law, city councilman and entrepreneur Andrew A. Boyle. The area, which includes neighborhoods such as Brooklyn Heights and The Flats, has long been home to many immigrant groups, serving as a community hub for the city's Mexican, Jewish, Black, Japanese, and Russian populations. Remnants of that history—Breed Street Shul, assorted Zen Buddhist temples, the Evergreen Cemetery graves of Jelly Roll Morton, Jessie Belvin, and Sadao "Spud" Munemori—remain.

Jesse "Fixx" Amezquita: I was born in Boyle Heights, but I grew up in Mexico City. I went back and forth. My parents had a lot of problems—had an alcoholic father, my mother's a real strict Catholic. You know how that goes. I left here when they shot Kennedy, about '63, and spent a lot of years in Mexico City. I went to school there for a few years, and then went to Catholic school here.

Gilbert Berumen: Boyle Heights is great, man. It's one of the oldest little cities in Los Angeles with a lot of history. You've got Lou Adler. You have the original Canter's Deli, all this great old shit came out of there. It was a nice little neighborhood, man. It had its issues and gangs and stuff, but not like now. It was really nice back then. I grew up with a lot of Japanese kids. Jimmy Tahara was one of my best friends. I had my first band with him, The Public Hairs. Chubby Japanese kid with John Lennon specs and an East L.A. accent, and his mom was from Japan, like full-on [claps his hands together] "arigato." You'd go to his house, take your shoes off—full-on Japanese, but at the same time, full-on East L.A. kid. I remember a couple of black kids that were still there, also, with eastside accents. You had black, Japanese kids, a couple of Jewish kids still, and Mexican kids. Really nice neighborhood and that changed for the worse, unfortunately.

Cesar Viscarra: I remember it being safe. I never felt threatened. I knew there were gangs in the area, but they never bothered me. I grew up alongside a lot of kids who wound up being gang members. I played basketball, football, baseball with them at the parks and everything and, as we grew up, I watched them do their thing and I remained friends with a lot of them.

Gilbert: My earliest memories are rallies and parades, like the Brown Berets and Chicano Power, that whole thing. Ruben Salazar dying (Salazar was an L.A. *Times* columnist and reporter who stepped into a bar for a quiet beer and a breather from covering the Chicano Moratorium against the Vietnam War, and subsequent riot, happening outside. A Sheriff deputy fired a tear gas projectile into the bar, hitting Salazar in the head and killing him instantly.) That's one of my earliest memories. That was, what, 1970? That's when I grew up. My brother was in Vietnam and he was really active in all that when he came back. He left in 1968, came back in, like, '71, so he hit the brunt. He came back and it was all about that. Even in school, at Malabar Elementary, they had this "Chicano consciousness," you know? They were already trying to teach us to be a bit proud of their heritage and we learned about the Aztecs and, you know, all that good stuff. It was just so far removed from what we had, but it was really nice to know and it gave you some pride. Apparently it was a lot better than when my brother was going to school.

Cesar: I must've been about seven or eight years old and I remember witnessing the walkouts (the "Chicano Blowouts" were a series of student-organized protests occurring in 1968. Students from numerous East L.A.

high schools walked out of class to call attention to educational inequalities and the high number of minorities dying in the Vietnam War). I went to Our Lady of Talpa Catholic School on 4th Street and Evergreen Avenue, and I remember seeing all these multitudes of kids walking down 4th Street, blocking the whole street, just marching. I asked, "Mom, what's that?" "Oh, they're protesting." I also remember seeing the clips on TV, the race riots in Watts and all that stuff. I remember it clicking afterwards when I got older, "Oh, that's what that was."

Gilbert: It was a weird time. I remember one time—this'll tell you how militant people used to be back then—I was at school and I was bullshitting with my school teacher and being kind of a brat. I remember she was a freckled blonde lady. I can't remember her name. I was about eight or nine years old and me and my friend David Gonzalez flipped her out so bad she just turned beet red. She came over, grabbed us by the neck and walked us over to the door. "You're gonna wait here for the principal. Hall monitor!" It fuckin' flipped me out, man. I told my family and my brother about it and stuff, and—again, see, that militant Chicano thing at the time—my brother went there the next day, wearing the [gestures indicating bandoliers worn across the chest], the bullets and the whole thing, and gave her a piece of his mind. She really didn't do anything to us. She lost it a bit, but you can't blame the lady. Anyway, I remember I wouldn't go to school, so the lady actually had to come to my house and have a meeting with my mom. My mom's, like, "Gilbert! Come here! She wants to talk to you." She was like, "Gilbert, I'm really sorry. Will you come back to school?" and I'm like, "Yeah, I guess." That wouldn't happen now.

Rudy Navarro: I was born in El Monte California, raised in Temple City (two cities located in the San Gabriel Valley, farther east in L.A. County). I was in the suburban, good side of the tracks, I guess. El Monte was the bad side of the tracks, where you had Hicks Camp, gangsters and stuff like that, and then my side of the tracks was more white bread. It was kind of weird because I didn't know Spanish and when the El Monte school joined our school 'cause their school only went to seventh grade, all of a sudden a bunch of Mexican-American kids moved into our schools and they spoke Spanish. The white kids were like, "Dude...." I was supposed to be the conduit because I was brown, and I didn't know Spanish, so it basically didn't work out. [laughs] I was a smart ass, so that's it, you know? I was different.

Jesse: I got to see the Beatles on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, which was a pivotal point in my life. I was in the second, third grade,



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I'd never really paid attention to music but they had this sound and it got me interested in music. I had a little radio that my father bought me to hear the Dodgers games, 'cause we're big Dodgers fans, and I started listening to the Beatles on KDAY, KHJ—"The Boss 93"—and KFWB, which is now a news station, but it used to be a rock station back then. Another day I'm sitting there watching *The Ed Sullivan Show*—it was a big thing with my family—and I saw the Rolling Stones. That did it. I go, "I gotta do this. I wanna play guitar." Those guys were exactly like me: dirty, scruffy, rude, mean, ornery, obnoxious. I thought they were the best band on earth. Something happened in me. I wanted to be a rock'n'roller. I wanted to play guitar. My parents thought I was crazy.

Cesar: I grew up listening to my brother's albums. He was listening to Pink Floyd, David Bowie, Black Sabbath, Captain Beyond, Yes, and all the Beatles, as was everyone in his generation of music. So there was all this music in our house. My dad and my mom were older—my mom was forty when I was born—and they grew up in the swing era, so there was jazz and swing and oldies in my house. If you listen to the music back in those days, the radio stations played everything. If there was a top ten, you could have Humble Pie, the Beatles, and then Frankie Valli.

Jesse: When I was in the eighth grade, my parents bought me a guitar. I wasn't that good, so I started picking up on the bass. Back then I was into Black Sabbath and I started getting into jazz, Uriah Heep, and old Deep Purple. I saw this clip on TV of David Bowie and I just changed—that's what I want to do. My parents thought I was gay. Most of the



JOE HENDERSON | l-r Robert, Rudy, at the Redwood, 2010



...to be a rocker with glitter in your hair, tight leather pants? Oh my god, it did not go over well with the neighborhood.

bands at that time looked like fucking bums, and Bowie was *sharp*. I mean, he's *dressed up*. He's got the glitter. He's got the white-faced, mime makeup. But see, I'm an ugly motherfucker, so I couldn't imitate Bowie, but I could imitate Mick Ronson 'cause Mick Ronson's like a tough dude, right? You know, the leather and the boots and the Levi's, the scarves. And, I sling my guitar low so I could imitate Mick Ronson. I used to walk around East L.A. looking like a Mexican Mick Ronson, which got me in a hell of a lot of trouble with the cholos. [laughs]

Boyle Heights is a very conservative, Catholic place—orthodox Catholics I guess you could call them—and it was extremely difficult to be different. I would walk down the street and people would throw bottles at me because of the way I looked. I used to wear a black leather jacket with no shirt, chest out, you know, with a surfer cross or a swastika. I used to wear swastikas. [laughs] I kinda asked for it. Very thin, very good looking guy, and I also had these fuckin' blonde chicks. I was cocky and arrogant, and I had a big mouth. When someone would tell me "Hey, faggot" I'd say "Fuck you," you know? I'd just turn around and sock 'em in the mouth. I didn't give a fuck. It was very difficult just to have long hair in East Los Angeles at that time, in the early '70s. Now, to be a rocker with glitter in your hair, tight leather pants? Oh my god, it did *not* go over well with the neighborhood. Trust me, it was extremely dangerous, but I didn't give a

fuck—"I'm gonna be me, I don't give a fuck. Fuck you and the horse you rode in on."

Gilbert: I'd love to see some pictures of Mr. Jesse Fixx dressed up in his glitter boots and all that stuff.

Jesse: In high school I was playing in a blues band and these guys from my grammar school started this Santana band and I played bass 'cause I couldn't get in any other band. We were called Tabu. We used to play all the school dances around East L.A.—Cathedral High, Salesian High, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Sacred Heart of Mary, Saint Matthias, the whole Catholic school circuit, which was a big scene back then. Cannibal & the Headhunters would sometimes show up. That's how far back. As a matter of fact, we once played the Salesian Fiesta and Cannibal & the Headhunters was the top-billed band, and we were like in the middle somewhere. I met guys from Sly, Slick & Wicked. I know some of the old-timers. I was in rehab with the bass player from the Premiers. You know, [singing] "Farmer John, I'm in love with your daughter...." I love that song.

Gilbert: Don't know where Robert came from. I think Robert came out fully formed. Pssh! There he is: trench coat, Gibson Junior guitar in hand. He's a funny dude, like this massive guy with this little fuckin' guitar. [laughs]

Jesse: I met Robert in high school at Roosevelt. I was playing in this hot-shot Santana band, but I wanted to get out of it. I used to write songs and they would go, "You're crazy. You can't write songs." They were all into doing

covers and I go, "I'm writing my own songs. I want to express myself. I want to say what I want to say." I was looking for a band, for musicians and there was this fuckin' nerd sitting over on a bench. Someone said, "Hey that guy over there is a good guitar player," and he was this creepy dude, one of those guys who never talks. I just hit him up. "Hey, I heard you play guitar," blah blah blah. I went down to his house. He had a little tiny Princeton amp with a Big Muff. Wow, he started doing Ritchie Blackmore, Deep Purple's "Highway Star," and I'm like, "You wanna start a band?" [laughs] So that's how we got together. We were called Onyx. Like the stone.

"DON'T GO TO THE CONCERT": ENTER THE RAMONES AND PUNK

Jesse: I saw the world change from the viewpoint of a little Mexican kid from East L.A., from Boyle Heights. I saw rock 'n' roll change, and I saw fashion change, and I saw political views change. I was in the eye of the hurricane. That's really what it was. I'm in the middle of this fuckin' madness. You've also got to remember this was before AIDS. Sex was crazy. Anything went.

Let me tell you what happened with punk: I'm a big Velvet Underground fan, a big Stooges fan, New York Dolls, all that old glam stuff and, of course, Bowie. But I was playing in a very serious jazz fusion



EDWARD COLVER | l-r Robert, Rudy, Cesar, Louie at Stage One, Circa '81

band—Jaco Pastorius, Django Reinhardt, (flamenco guitarist) Carlos Montoya and all that crap. My guitar player's into (Spanish classical guitarist) Andres Segovia and, you know, I was into Jack Bruce from Cream and Jimi Hendrix and all that. In the back of my mind, though, I always had that rebellious, noisy, obnoxious, crude, rude noise, right? One day I read this article in the paper and they were talking about this obnoxious band, saying this was the worst band on earth. "You don't want to see these guys. These guys play three chords, they're terrible. Don't go to the concert. They're awful." Ramones! It was the Ramones, right? They had a picture of them, and I go, "Hey, they kinda look like...me. I wear the same thing, I dress exactly the same." Leather jacket, Levi's, boots—well, they wore tennies, and I used to wear biker boots.

One day I was in West Hollywood and I was looking at the paper and wanted to go do something, get drunk or whatever. "Oh look, it's that band, the Ramones, five dollars at the Starwood. Let's go check it out." So I go over there, some fuckin' stupid glam band played first, and I forget what their name was. They were really fucked. Then the Ramones came out. It was an epiphany. I could not believe the sound that came out of those amplifiers and the energy they had. It was just so powerful, and their chord construction was so quick, accurate, efficient, and very economical. I just go, "Oh my god, what am I doing wasting my time playing jazz when I could do this?" The songs were like a minute-and-a-half, two

minutes long, and I'm going, "Oh my god, these guys are fantastic! I gotta tell the guys in my band about them, man!" The Ramones just knocked my socks off, and the lyrics were *fantastic*. This was 1976. Nobody had done anything like that at that time.

So, afterwards, me and this girl stayed in this hotel somewhere in Silverlake or some shit, and in the morning I go, "Let's go get drunk," and we went to a bar. We also went to Licorice Pizza (an old music chain store) and I found the 45, "Blitzkrieg Bop." I'll never forget that 45. I kept playing it over and over.

Gilbert: I was really young. Like twelve or thirteen. My best friend's big brother had *Rocket to Russia* and was like, "Hey Gilbert, you've got to listen to this." It fuckin' blew me away. I just loved it because it was cartoonish and I loved how they looked.

Jesse: One Sunday, we took my kid to Kmart on Whittier Boulevard in the City of Commerce, and I saw the first Ramones album. I forgot about my kid. I forgot about my girlfriend. I just wanted to go home and hear this fuckin' album. I took it to my guitar player's house that same day and put it on the turntable. He thought I was *insane*. He goes, "We can't play like that! There's no leads, there's no.... *Three chords?* This is the stupidest fuckin' music I've ever heard in my life!" And I go, "*Listen*. Listen to the energy. That's what's important. Listen to the rebelliousness of it. Listen to the audacity these guys have to fuckin' spit in the face of all this fuckin' progressive rock

bullshit," because I couldn't stand Emerson, Lake & Palmer, and Yes. I had that sound in the back of my mind and I just never knew how to express it and the Ramones made me barf it out. Then our guitar player, Robert Becerra, he's listening and he's like, "Hey, you know what? There's something here, huh?" And I go, "Yeah, I told you! Listen to it again!" We're getting fucked up drinking beer, smoking PCP. I think we dropped some acid that day, too. I go, "Listen to the energy. Forget the chord progressions, forget all that. Listen to the *energy* that these guys have. The lyrics—listen to what they're talking about. They're talking about living on the streets. They're living in the rough streets of New York. We're living in the rough streets of Boyle Heights. They're our brothers, man." So I fuckin' reconfigured the whole set.

Cesar: Right before I graduated from high school I started hearing about punk rock.

Jesse: The first time someone called me a punk rocker, I socked 'em, because in East L.A., "punk" means "puto," a fag. This guy called me a punk rocker. "Fuck, you! Who are you calling punk?" Then I learned there was a punk rock movement.

Cesar: One day I was this way. Then the next day, after seeing something on T.V., I felt in my mind that I was different, that this is what I wanted to do. Punk rock was just so localized. You could go to a club a couple of blocks away—we used to walk to Hong Kong Café, there were bands there—and it was all a community. There was no one who



*I'm an alcoholic, I'm a drug addict, I'm a
bullshitter, I'm a fuckin' con artist, I'm
a fuckin' scammer, I'm scum of the earth,
but I'm a great musician.*

ever told me you can't play this type of music. It wasn't like going to a Led Zeppelin show and thinking, "I could never play like that." This was music brought to us, for us to play, to listen to, to be a part of. It was more personalized.

Gilbert: It just represented fuckin' freedom on a totally extreme level. Now you've got extreme everything. Every fuckin' guy's got tattoos and nose rings. But back then, man, to do that really meant something, even to have short hair, believe it or not, and I liked the attention and that I was just different. I had this sense of righteousness—I'm doing the right thing, you know, I don't give a fuck, I know I'm right—that crusade kind of thing. It wasn't political. I had nothing to bitch—I mean I had a lot to bitch about, but it wasn't like in England where it was, you know, can't get a job. For one thing I was way too young. But it was different here. It was more of an art scene in a way.

Jesse: Musically, you've got to remember that punk rock wasn't what you call punk rock now. Punk rock back then was anything that was stripped down of whatever genre that you liked. It could be reggae, rock, rockabilly, heavy metal, even folk music, whatever the mainstream genre was at the time. It was stripped to its rawness, you know? You cut out the reverb, cut out the digital delay, cut out all that crap. It was very creative.

Gilbert: I jumped in, man, fuckin' head first.

Rudy: I was into Devo and Elvis Costello, Kraftwerk, and stuff like that, and then got into punk, like Sex Pistols, Ramones and the Dead Boys and the Cramps, and that was just it. But it took a while before punk really sunk in, because I was more into surf music and new wave and stuff like that. I had a synthesizer when I was seventeen. I was into that clean surf and techno sound, but then when punk came, it was kinda hard. My friend got me a Germs album for Christmas and it took me ten times listening to it before I totally loved the album; but *ten times*, you know what I mean? It was hard for me to listen to it, hard to break through the distortion and all the movements and drums and everything to get to the lyrics and get to what he was talking about. But once I got there and understood what he was talking about, it was like, "Wow, this is amazing."

Jesse: I am an alpha-male, aggressive, rowdy kinda guy, and I always somehow gravitate towards the evil side of things. I always go for the bad. I read Christopher Isherwood. I read Bukowski. I read Dostoevsky. I gravitate towards nihilism, towards anarchism, 'cause I'm just that way. I don't give a fuck about society and their norms and their morals and their values. I'm gonna do what I want to do. I think it's because of a combination of things. Maybe it's something inherent. I mean, my grandfather did try to overthrow the government in Mexico, which is why we're here, so there might be a little genetic thing there. In 1933, the German government made a deal with Mexico for arms supplies. This was done previously in 1917 or 1916. There's a book called *The Zimmerman Tapes* that backs this up. My grandfather was a colonel,

and he and his junior officers tried to overthrow the government and install a Falangist "Nazi" government in Mexico to open up a front with the United States to keep the United States out of the war in Europe. But somebody ratted them off and they got whacked—firing squad, you know. The whole deal. So I think my rebelliousness is inherent.

Gilbert: I remember razzing the kids in school, saying, "Why are you listening to Led Zeppelin?" even though I listened to tons of Led Zeppelin. "It's fuckin' hippie music, man. That's old. Fuck that stuff." I look back now and, you know, I had the right idea. It was old.

Jesse: The other thing about punk is that women were allowed to play musical instruments. Prior to that, girls playing rock'n'roll was unacceptable. Women did not play instruments. Women were groupies. Punk rock gave an avenue to women to go out there and play music. A prime example of that is The Runaways, and it goes up to Shonen Knife and to the Yeah Yeah Yeahs. That was the thing about punk. It was okay to be gay. It was okay to be whatever you wanted to be. There were no restrictions. It was okay to be yourself. If you're a nerd, be a nerd. Whatever you are, be what you want to be and express yourself, and that's why I loved punk—I could be myself. I could be this crazy, mental rocker guy. You could be a black guy with a blue mohawk, go to a punk gig and nobody would fuck with you. Now, go to a rap gig with a blue mohawk and be black and see what they do to you. Punks won't fuck with you. They'll go, "Cool."

Gilbert: It's very similar to the hippie situation. There are a lot of similarities, you know? Free thinking, sing your own song, do your own trip. I mean, it was obviously different and a lot more than that, but just that kind of world view. It helped me a lot. It got me out of that little East L.A. frame of thinking. Gotta understand, homes, where I grew up: "Can we go to Knott's Berry Farm?" "Nah, the car won't make it." "Can we go to Magic Mountain?" "Nah, the car won't make it." "Can we go to the beach?" "Nah, the car won't make it." Dude, I didn't see a fuckin' beach until I was eleven. I'm not saying that all Chicano kids were that fuckin' retarded, but you had that, so punk broke me out of that tiny little Boyle Heights/East L.A. world. It's not a bad world, it's just about, "Be a good guy, have a family and work hard." It's not about "travel, see the world, get a kick ass education, be a lawyer." Punk broke me out of that, man. It showed me, and introduced me to, you know, white people at large. I'd never had any experience, interaction with white people other than teachers.

Cesar: It was like, "Wow, this is great. This is something new, something we can



call our generation's own." As you start to express yourself, you start to realize there is a lot of pent-up anger. In my household I had an alcoholic father who wasn't there a lot. Music was the perfect way to express that pent-up emotion. It fell right in line.

Jesse: For lack of a better term, I use the word "punk" so they get the drift that I'm coming from a very aggressive rock genre and I'm also coming from a very rough neighborhood. I really don't like the term, but by default I have to say "punk." I just consider myself a crazy fuckin' rocker. I'm nuts and I'm rowdy and I'm still alive.

Rudy: It's intriguing, punk rock. It sucks you in, really winds you up, and gets you moving.

Cesar: I was intrigued by the sheer emotion that came across. If it was angry, if it was sheer joy, whatever it was, it was in your face. It invoked emotion from people. That's what I loved about it.

Gilbert: When you're a kid you have to save up for records, you know? I did. I'd get my Domingo (money you get on Sunday for church). I'd save up my fuckin' pennies. To show what a maniac I was, I can go into my fuckin' closet, pull out an album, and all my albums have shrink wrap and tape on the edges and they have the date—"Music Plus, Monterey Park, May 3rd '79." I took it seriously and I instantly just, like, fell into it. Me and my friend went to Atlantic Square. I bought the first Devo record; he bought the Elvis Costello *Armed Forces* album. And then we went again and I bought the first Pistols record; he bought first the Police album. We'd do that kind of thing. Then I started going to used record stores and I found the groovy shit like Iggy and all that stuff that I'd never heard but read about so much in *Creem* magazine and *Rock Scene*. I would read these

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THE STAINS LOGO

Jesse: Tracy from Violent Children made up the logo.

Tracy: We were in the alley at 3rd Street and Chicago Street, the legendary Stains headquarters in the alley. We used to party and play inside Robert's garage. We were doing graffiti one day and I did the Stains logo like this pretty much [spray paints Stains logo onto wall].

Jesse: I have no idea what it symbolizes. It just looked cool.

Tracy: Well, it's like a metaphor for the struggle of our people—nah, I'm kidding. That's bullshit. It's just called the way you dot an "I" in the barrio. I took it from White Fence, Cuatro Flats—all that barrio writing that's been done a million times by a million gangs—and I just simply applied it to this. Robert came out one day and says, "What's that?" and I told him, "That's your new logo." He said, "I like it," and that was that. I did the "Zero-X" and the lightning bolts, which were an homage to Kiss and just rock'n'roll. You know, that AC/DC type thing, but it was punk rock-esque. I liked it. I wanted it drippy. Robert didn't like it drippy, so SST cleaned it up. That's fine.

Jimmy: Did you ever think it was going to become so iconic? Like you said, it's just a way to dot an "I," yet it became such an iconic logo.

Tracy: Well, it could be a metaphor for something stained and crossed out and the struggle or something like that; but punk rock, and our aspect of it, really wasn't about being a struggle or being Hispanic. It was just rock'n'roll. The East L.A. scene kind of turned into, "Look at us, we're Mexicans playing punk rock," and Stains and Violent Children were nothing like that. We were just playing music with no labels and no borders and no skin



JIMMY ALVARADO | Tracy Otero, 2011

colors. We didn't care about where we were from. Stains and Violent Children never played that East L.A. race card, never did and never will. We were just a band who happened to be from Boyle Heights.

Jimmy: I remember growing up—it referenced the Stains, and I also heard it called the "no values" symbol. Anti-Flag is using it these days (early Kentucky punk/no wave band Circle X was also using it as far back as 1978).

Tracy: That's a shame. [Spray paints another color onto Stains logo] Just adding a little color. I wish I would have known and copyrighted the logo. I think it's up there with Black Flag and the anarchy symbol, but that's just me.

wacky interviews, man, and all they'd do is go on about Iggy and MC5. I thought it was pronounced "Mick-Five." [laughs]

Jesse: I was going to the Whisky when they were having shows there. I saw everybody there. I saw Elvis Costello, The Jam, The Police, The Germs. Well, we started playing with those bands. We started getting gigs with them.

Cesar: My friends who I grew up within the same neighborhood, within the same block, we kind of started thinking about music the same way. We went from walking down the street listening to Foghat to walking down the street listening to the Damned and the Clash and the Sex Pistols. That was our banner; what we were all about was the music we listened to. Lo and behold, before we knew it, there was a punk rock band rehearsing not far from where we lived—the Stains. It was the best thing ever.

THE STAINS

The first incarnation of the Stains, and the first professional band I was in, was called the Sewer Rats. —Jesse Fixx, in an email to the author 12/8/07

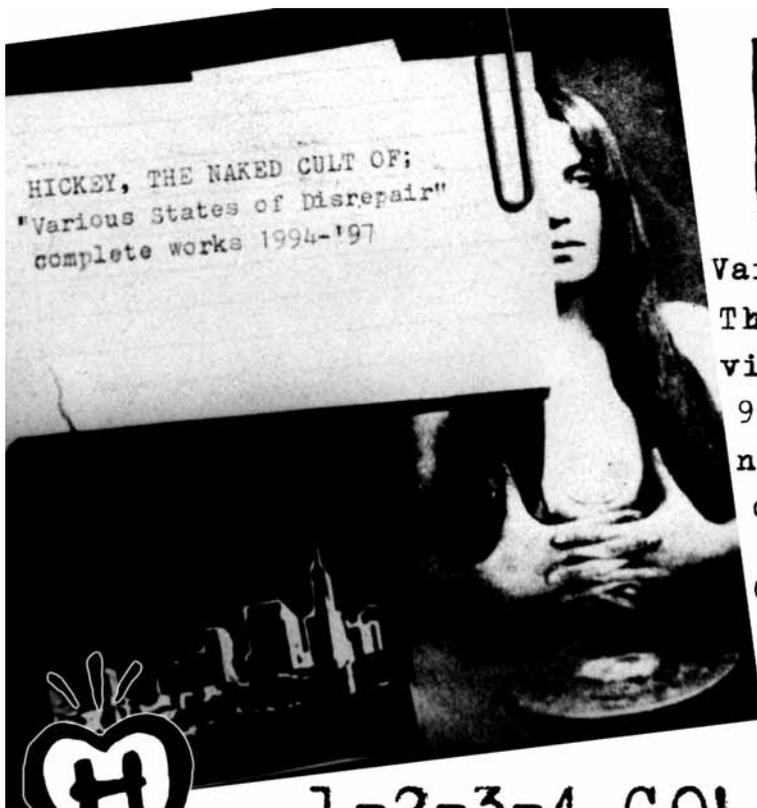
Playing crazy has been the trademark of the Stains throughout their checkered career. Starting out in 1976, they were East L.A.'s first punk band and are really the only band in the area whose attitudes remain uncompromisingly radical. —Dan Vargas, No Cover, an as-yet unpublished article written in 1980

Jesse: We were the first ones. Thee Undertakers came up around 1977-78, I think, but everybody else was either doing Santana or Led Zeppelin covers and that was it. There was nobody doing punk around here.

Cesar: I was not aware of any music from East L.A. other than the backyard parties I used to go to. I used to see Slaney (a local metal band), a handful of bands, a lot of them were really good. I went to a lot of backyard parties. They were doing anything from Montrose to Led Zeppelin, Queen, Black Sabbath, all the popular hard rock. But it seemed like it wasn't my generation—more like my brother's type of music—a lot of kids older than me at those parties. Punk rock was like, okay, this is our thing. We were at the grassroots of it—'78, '79, it was really starting to flourish. People would look at me thinking I had lost my mind from one day being a clean cut kid to having

spiky hair, wearing dog collars around my neck, and badges with ripped clothes, stuff like that. The long hairs were accepted. It took a long time for punk rock to be accepted in East L.A.

Jesse: Jesse Morga was the original singer for the Stains, but then the Stains went through several names. We were the Young Nazis for a while. The reason we called ourselves the Stains was it was a joke. It's kind of gross, but, someone took a shit on a sheet one day. We used to call ourselves The Spots for a while between the Stains and the Young Nazis thing. The Spots was a pseudonym for the Sex Pistols and we stole it from them. I saw a stain on a sheet. Someone had diarrhea and left a little tiny stain on a white sheet. I said, "Hey, look at the stains," and I looked at the guitar player Robert, and he goes, "Hey..." We were up all night on fuckin' dust and trying to think of a name 'cause we couldn't use the Young Nazis anymore, and we couldn't use the Spots 'cause everyone was figuring out we stole it from the Sex Pistols, so, "The Stains! The Stains! That's it!" We're the little brown stain on a white sheet. Get it? White society, stains, okay? That's where that came from.



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Our drummer split 'cause he wanted to play guitar, so I was playing drums for a little while. We had a girl playing bass for a little while, Michelle. She went and fell in love and ended up marrying Rabbit, the manager for X, and left. So we got another drummer. The original drummer for the Stains was Tony Romero. This guy was a fuckin' monster drummer. If anybody could play drums like Keith Moon, it was this motherfucker. He was *bad*, man. Then we stole the singer, Jesse Morga, from a soul band. [laughs] This guy used to sing soul, and we stole him 'cause he liked us. He thought we were hot.

Gilbert: Tony was great, one of those cool guys, man. He was a small, skinny little guy with long, stringy hair, real pale skin. He looked like a little English biker guy, like he belonged in Black Sabbath. He looked great. Great fuckin' drummer and he was a biker. I don't know what happened to him, but I remember getting a rehearsal tape of the Stains with him on drums, and the fuckin' guy was

Cesar: Jesse was my inspiration, though, to play bass. He was phenomenal on bass.

Jesse: I'm an alcoholic, I'm a drug addict, I'm a bullshitter, I'm a fuckin' con artist, I'm a fuckin' scammer, I'm scum of the earth, but I'm a great musician.

Cesar: When he had his head on straight he was... I don't know how to explain it. It's like being friends with John Entwistle (bassist of the Who) or somebody of that caliber. Just watching him play on the bass, you literally wanted to cry, it was so awesome. Technically, he was greater than any bass player I had ever seen.

Jesse: In a way, maybe we were like Dadaist or nihilist or something, but I never set it out to be an art band. I wanted it to be hardcore punk. I wanted to make the meanest noises on my bass guitar I could. I never set out to be an art band, but now that I think of it, maybe subconsciously, there was some of that.

A lot of it had to do with my personal life, like "Pretty Girls." I was always frustrated

Jesse: I am from the Charles Bukowski school of writing and I don't take no shit. I want to express my feelings and I never really found a place to express them. When I would try to express them in school, I got punished. When I tried to tell my parents about my feelings, I got punished. When I played in a punk rock band, I got paid. You think I'm fuckin' stupid? [laughs]

Tracy Otero (Violent Children vocalist): Jesse was the deepest and most well-read person I have met, especially growing up in East L.A. He influenced me a lot and opened my mind to a lot of things, a lot of ways of thinking.

Jesse: The films I'm influenced by are like *Casablanca*, *The Third Man*, *Sunset Boulevard*. I'm into that dark, film noir thing, and I read a lot. I'm really influenced by a lot of German writers and a lot of the French existentialists. I was very influenced by 1984 and *Animal Farm* turned me around. I read it when I was in high school. I'm a George Orwell fan.

As a musician songwriter-slash-hoodlum punk rocker, I viewed the Stains like a force pushing you to chaos and disorder, pushing you to revolt in every way, because **things in our surroundings are not well. To this day, the Stains are a symbol of that.** They also influenced me to become a better songwriter with that same force. I don't think any ELA band, or even any punk band period, has had the affect like they've had on me. **I will be listening to the Stains when I'm seventy years old, that's for sure.**

—Robert "Tito" Lopez, *Plain Agony/Ollin/Sabua*

brilliant, great drummer. I learned the basic songs off that tape, so I took his cue on the way I approached drumming for the band.

After more lineup changes, the Stains' lineup solidified around Jerry "Atric" Castellanos on vocals, Robert Becerra on guitar, Jesse "Fixx" Amezcuita on bass, and Tony Romero on drums. This lineup would last from 1978 to '80.

Cesar: In the beginning, when we first started hanging out, it was with Jerry.

Gilbert: Jerry was just fuckin' amazing. He was a character-and-a-half. I guess he was from Montebello or Monterey Park. He wasn't a hardcore, eastside kid but he was Chicano. I remember he loved disco and he loved dancing, but at the same time, he loved the Germs, Hawkwind and rock'n'roll and all that good shit. A really heavy Bowie influence in that guy, and a fuckin' great face. He looked like Darby Crash—really pasty looking and he had the teeth. He used to wear a paper clip in his ear, trench coat, his hair slicked back, long khaki pants, and I remember he had these powder blue shoes with little blue laces—like Imperials, but they were blue [laughs]. I just thought he was great, you know? He looked great.

'cause I would like girls and they would never respond to me 'cause I was a freak. I lived in East L.A. and I guess to them I probably looked like a Martian, [laughs] and when I would get with a girl, she would be a freak, too. A lot of it also had to do with what I was reading. I'm a history buff so a lot of it—"Germany," "Young Nazis" and "Violent Children" and all that is the stuff I read, so it was a combination. I can't say it's all one thing. I would just sit down and write whatever came to my head and make it rhyme, sort of, and fit the music, and off we go.

*Say I've got no imagination,
Well I'm so full of sexual frustration,
If pretty girls don't look at me,
That's okay, I'm still free.*

*Friends say I'm so unusual,
'Cause when I feel pain I get so sensual,
If pretty girls don't look at me,
That's okay, I'm still free.*

You can laugh at me and I won't care.

*One of these days I'll take a chance,
And I don't care if I find romance,
If pretty girls don't look at me,
That's okay 'cause I'm still fuckin' free.*
—"Pretty Girls," the Stains

The music I was trying to put out, I wanted it to be absurd, and I wanted it to show the pain of being a human being—"I feel alienated, I feel useless, I feel abused by government, I feel like I don't mean shit, but motherfucker, when I'm on stage, you're going to hear me." That's what I was trying to project with the band, but I never saw us as an art band. I'll tell you what it is. We were doing the converse of what the Illegals were doing. They were like artsy-fartsy types who wanted to be street guys. We were street guys that were trying to be artsy-fartsy, but we didn't do it consciously. It was by accident, by default.

Tracy: That was the dichotomy and the yin and yang that made the Stains' music great—just that deep, yet not deep-thinking.

Rudy: Someone stole my motorcycle, so I was pretty pissed off about that. They stole it from my high school. I don't think I even reported it to the cops. I don't know. I was more embarrassed to lose my motorcycle. I totally took it apart, painted it myself, the frame, everything. I was really into this motorcycle and when it got stolen it was a big heartache, like something was missing, so I wrote the song about how I felt, "Get Revenge." "Quit the Human Race" is kinda the same thing—I don't wanna settle down, get married, have kids, argue with my wife, hate my wife, kill my wife and be killed by



EDWARD COLVER | l-r Cesar (?), Jerry, Gilbert, Robert, Hong Kong Cafe, circa '80

My friend with a mohawk came over for Thanksgiving and my uncle's like, "Hey, you got an eyelash on your head."

my wife. Just, "I don't wanna be normal," you know? I wanna quit the human race. I just wanna be me. Those are the songs I wrote.

"We know the world's going to end and we don't give a damn," said Becerra. He went on to describe their music as sounding like "a tiger tank hitting a brick wall at 200 miles per hour." —From "Neighborhood bands contribute unique sound," by Sal de la Riva, *ELAC Campus News* 10/8/80

Cesar: I know that a big influence on Robert was heavy metal. You could tell by his guitar playing. When I hear him, I hear influences of anything from Segovia to Michael Schenker (UFO, Scorpions), Ritchie Blackmore (Deep Purple, Rainbow), Jimi Hendrix of course, all the greats. When we would play those songs, he would know every lick on the album and just do it to a T, and play it better. He is just such a virtuoso at his instrument. To me, he's still one of the best guitar players I've ever seen.

Rudy: Robert was melding metal into punk rock and it was a new thing. That was his art form that he was adding to the life of rock 'n' roll, because punk rock was not guitar solos, it wasn't metal at all when we were in there. Listen to the Dead Kennedys and then the Stains. It's different—Dead Kennedys: punk, whereas Stains: metal punk. That's where we had our niche.

Jesse: "Bombs over Iraq" was originally "Bombs over Iran." I wrote that in the 1970s

when they had the hostage situation.

Rudy: I came from a big family and my uncles and aunts and mom and everybody joked around and teased. My friend with a mohawk came over for Thanksgiving and my uncle's like, "Hey, you got an eyelash on your head." [laughs] They would call it out and acknowledge anything you do, so I'd always be like that in school, just a smart ass kid basically, just honest—the way you feel, say it. Remember that movie, *Bad News Bears*, when that kid Tanner Boyle would totally speak his mind, and completely told fuckin' Walter Matthau off? "You're just an old drunk. You're not gonna do anything in life. You're never gonna lead us anywhere." I always liked and identified with Tanner, so I was the person who would speak his mind, who'd say what they fuckin' felt right at that minute they felt it and not hide behind the guise of not hurting people's feelings.

To me, pure honesty is just exhilarating. You watch comedians and they say what you want to hear. If you said it seriously it wouldn't be funny, but when you say it in a comedic way, you can get away with murder. If you sing a song, and it's not funny, and you sing about the same subject a comedian would talk about, suddenly you're like the devil because you're talking about this weird subject. It's weird. Comedians have it made in a sense. [laughs] They can say anything they want, but a musician can't.

Cesar: Someone asked me why I thought people liked the Stains, what they got out of it. I said, "Well, they're either going to like it or hate it, but they're going to be invoked. It's going to bring out something in them. It's like, if I stand up and I kick you in the leg or the balls, you're going to go, 'Wow, that really affected me.'" That's really what we're out for, affecting people. We are writing and playing music for ourselves. Robert never wrote anything and thought, "People are going to like this," because he wrote something that he liked. And if he liked it, and we all liked it, that's how we wrote the music.

The Stains established a reputation from the outset as a band that didn't fit into the standard conventions of most eastside rock groups. The community at large didn't look fondly on them.

Jesse: They hated us. We were putos (faggots), straight up, to them. C'mon, this is East L.A. They had us as a gang. We got busted one time for a jar of juice, PCP, and they took us to this little room. They isolated me in one little room and then the CRASH unit (Community Resources Against Street Hoodlums, a notorious LAPD anti-gang unit) came in. They sat me down and gave me the third degree. I'm all, "Hey, hey, be cool, man. You know me. You come to my house every

day to tell us to shut up at ten.” They had the Stains as a gang. We had a gang territory, but we weren’t a gang. That’s the funny thing. We were a band, but we used to spray paint. We used to cross out the cholos and put “Stains,” right? They showed me this map and they had this little territory by 4th, Soto, Breed, 1st and Chicago Streets, around there.

Cesar: It was the same way everywhere. We had friends younger than us dyeing their hair pink in that same era, but they were thirteen and fourteen years old, getting kicked out of school for looking too outrageous or being denied entry to Disneyland because they had pink hair or bright blue hair.

Gilbert: No one ever fucked with me then. Not in the ‘hood. Mexicans, for the most part, are kind of unassuming and nice, mellow people, more laid back with that type of stuff. No one ever fucked with me. I would get fucked with when I’d go into the valley, when I’d go visit my girlfriend, take twenty buses, you know, show up and walk around in blue suede Beatle boots or short hair or whatever. You’d get—not just me, but everybody—you’d get that, “DEVO!” You know? “Fag!” Stupid shit like that. I never really got that shit on the Eastside. And then the cholos and the homies were just, like [looks, nods, and laughs]. They just gotta look at you, you know? Plus I grew up in that neighborhood, so, you know, it’s the same dudes who I knew forever. I think they thought I was cool in a weird way or something, you know?

Cesar: The funniest reaction was from the cholos in our neighborhood. We’d hang out on the street corner by the tree in the churchyard, by Robert’s house, drinking and stuff. They would come and try to claim their corner, but they wouldn’t shoo us away, they’d be like, “Hey, what’s up!? You guys are fuckin’ crazy man!” Shake our hands and go, “Where you guys live? Where you from?”

“We’re from this area.”

“All right, cool man. We’re from Primera Flats.”

Robert knew a lot of those guys. He just had to drop a name and he was in with the ‘hood. They wouldn’t mess with us. They just thought we were crazy. We’d cross the borders of one gang to the next. I lived in the heart of White Fence. Robert lived by Primera Flats. People just didn’t mess with us. They probably guessed that we were as outcast as they were. It was almost a kinship, you know? We didn’t want to be the button-down collar guys. We were doing crazy shit like they were, just in different ways.

THE DUNGEON

Cesar: We used to take walks to the library, some friends and I, and we started hearing something.

Tracy: This was maybe like in ‘78. We were walking around the ‘hood and I had an eight-track player with the punk rock tunes on it we recorded from Rodney and we heard some racket coming from a garage one day.

Cesar: We started walking closer and closer to the music and found ourselves in the back

alley where the Stains were playing and just sat there listening. Lo and behold, Jesse Fixx comes out. “What the hell are you guys doing back here?” all big and bad, watchdog mentality. He was probably just testing us, seeing what we were all about. We go, “We’re sittin’ in this alley,” and he says, “Oh, fuck, what the hell are you doing out here? Come inside! You guys got any pot or drugs or anything?” The next day they practiced. We just snowballed and kind of became a part of their little group. They accepted us and let us in.

Tracy: We were friends from then on. It was just a big party over there.

The Stains base of operations was a house located behind an elementary school on 3rd Street in Boyle Heights. Ominously named “The Dungeon,” it served as both rehearsal space and party spot.

Tracy: The Dungeon was Robert’s garage. It was just a garage, graffitied up, and it was just a beautiful place. [laughs]

Cesar: There were two rooms. The room that we had seen them originally play was this garage, and it was loud from the outside. It was just a rickety old garage. After the years went by, we started getting more and more complaints from the neighbors, telling us to shut off earlier and earlier, so we just decided to carpet it. That helped with the sound.

Jesse: They used to think we were psycho. They were like, “What is that fuckin’ racket?” and we’re like, “Well, we’re playing what we fuckin’ feel like playing. Fuck you, assholes.” They never understood us.

Cesar: Robert’s bedroom, where we later moved everything, was way more insulated. It was a pretty good-sized house and his mom, most times, would be in her bedroom with the door closed. She knew we were all there playing, and never said that it bothered her, just told us to close the door. That room is in a lot of pictures: all the graffiti on the walls and ceilings and everything.

Jesse: I think the first local band that came out was—‘cause they came over to our house—was The Brat. Then we heard about the Illegals and The Undertakers. Then later on there was Circle One and all that.

I went to...this house down by Salesian (High School). I went with a friend of mine and they were practicing there. There was a bunch of people there and they were playing. I remember getting up and singing a Ramones song with them. There was this little girl there. She was somebody’s daughter, and I remember kind of befriending her because she was in this place and it was, like, a punk rehearsal room, you know? It was trashed, and there were beer bottles and cans and trash, and there’s this little four-year-old in there and I felt really, like, “What are you doing here? Where’s your mom?” –Teresa Covarrubias, The Brat, interviewed 12/30/07

Cesar: We had parties there. We invited a lot of people there. That might have been a little girl who Robert’s mother had taken custody of. Not sure if she adopted her, or if she was a foster child or something.

Jesse: We had a manager, a real smart dude named John Morgan, who I knew from Salesian. He was a business major, and he started getting us gigs. This would’ve been ‘76-77, sometime within that period.

Tracy: He was the manager early on—librarian by day, Stains chauffeur/ manager by night.

Jesse: We played with some hard rock bands a few times and they thought we were insane. We played on Atlantic Boulevard at the Samoan Room. They actually pulled the plug on the amps and said, “Get the fuck out of here. What the hell are you guys thinking?” They thought we were noise, just a bunch of racket. Nobody got it. That’s why we went to Hollywood. We were alienated. Sometimes in Hollywood they would do that to us, too. They didn’t understand us. “You guys are crazy.” We had more problems getting gigs in East L.A. than in Hollywood, or the South Bay, or West Hollywood, or San Fernando, or the Valley, or New York, or Philadelphia. I always wondered about that. I couldn’t play in my own ‘hood, but I could play outside the ‘hood.

We did a gig at the Kings Palace. This was in 1970-something, and it was the Stains, Berlin and The Mentors. Not a good mix. So the first band up is The Mentors and they’re wearing the hoods. El Duce is in his underwear and he’s got a tampon on his head with, like, blood on it. They’re playing “Secretary Hump” and they’re doing this other song, “My woman from Sodom/she likes it in the bottom,” all that kind of stuff. We took all of the East L.A. crowd to the gig and the girls are going, “Oh, these guys are awful! Tell them to shut up! They’re fuckin’ terrible!” And we’re laughing and going, “These guys are fuckin’ great! Fuckin’ Sickie’s the best fuckin’ guitar player on earth!”

Then Berlin comes on. Fuckin’ El Duce throws the tampon he had on his head at the girl from the Berlin band, and it gets stuck in her hair. She’s singing, trying to do that “Oh le le,” whatever stupid fuckin’ song it is that they do, and she’s jumping around, like pogoing, and she’s got this tampon stuck on her fucking head. We’re just going, “Hey man, that’s fuckin’ funny!” and she doesn’t know what we’re laughing about, right? She looks like a fuckin’ pelican, right? It was a fuckin’ crack-up. Then we go on, and the whole Germs crowd was there, the whole X crowd was there, the whole Fear crowd, the whole hardcore punk crowd from Hollywood and we fuckin’ tore it. That was a good gig. We tore it up that night, and we played disciplined. No mistakes.

There was one gig that solidified everything. We did a gig in East L.A. at the CSO building on 1st and Soto (The Community Service Organization was a civil rights organization founded in 1947 by Fred Ross and U.S. Congressman Ed Roybal. In addition to training notable civil rights figures



Even though we didn't get very far, it was cool to be contemporaries with the original Black Flag, Germs, and Fear and all these bands that played the Masque.

JOE HENDERSON | L-r Robert, Rudy, Chuy, at the Redwood, 2010

like Cesar Chavez and Delores Huerta, the CSO building had a hall that was rented out to the community for events). It was X, Black Flag, The Plugz, The Gears, and the Stains.

Tracy: I think it was '78, '79. We got it together ourselves and we just said, "Hey, let's throw a gig." John Morgan and I helped make the flyer and a buddy of mine named Gabriel worked at the print shop at Salesian. We made the flyer, which it came out in *Fucked Up and Photocopied* (a book highlighting punk flyer art) as if Exene made it, but it was really myself and my friend Gabriel.

Cesar: The place, even then, was only about half filled.

Tracy: Maybe one hundred people, tops, showed up. There were no signs of the Brat or any of those guys at this time. I could be wrong.

Jesse: It's probably one of the most notorious gigs that ever happened. It was a fuckin' full-on riot. You know who we had as security? Primera Flats (a local street gang). Oh my god, it was like Altamont. It was that bad, real nasty. The cops came, bottles flying, fuckin' Billy clubs everywhere, but it was one of the best gigs I ever played. Right there we go, "That's it, man. We gotta hook up."

Cesar: X actually wound up playing a backyard party right around that time, too. It was at a house of a friend of ours, right off of 3rd Street.

Tracy: And the Stains then attracted the Germs, X, and everybody. The Gears came down to their house and we had house parties at Robert's house.

Cesar: I had only been to a couple of shows before I was in the band, when the Stains played with X. We used to just have parties where friends would invite us to play in their backyard. As far as other bands coming to East L.A. and playing backyards, I don't remember many besides X. Black Flag played Robert's bedroom at a party at his house. They'd come and jam and we'd all switch instruments—Greg would do "Louie, Louie," all of us mixing it up.

Jesse: We were good friends with the Plugz. They claimed East L.A., but they lived in Silverlake, over on Hyperion. We used to hang out with them. We used to hang with the Germs, we used to hang out with X, we used to hang out with everybody. We had a studio at the Masque and fuckin' Darby Crash, you

know what he did? He wrote the Stains” and he wrote a swastika. Brendan hates Nazis, so Brendan copped an attitude towards us and it wasn’t even us. It was fuckin’ Darby that did that shit.

Cesar: X were also very supportive of the Stains. This was all before I was in the band, but they were in constant contact with Robert, trying to get them to play shows with them, and encouraging them to play gigs in Hollywood, outside of the ‘hood, just doing all they could to promote them and get them out there. When *Los Angeles* came out, X was on the cover of the *L.A. Times* Calendar section. Exene was sitting there like this and had a big circle and X (the Stains logo) on the back of her hand.

Gilbert: The first thing we would get would be, like, “Oh, the Mexican guys from East L.A.,” and of course it was played up a bit, but yeah, we’d get that: “Oh, you guys are from East L.A. Scary,” you know? We didn’t trip on it. We got a kick out of it. It was scary to be from East L.A., you know? We were like *Night of the Living Dead* when we’d come out. It was a big deal, and now that I look back—I was a child when that was happening—but now I look back and I can see it now and see how a lot of these cats were PC/liberal kind of minds, you know? Greg Ginn and all those cats, and X, very liberal. “Let’s go hang out with the Chicanos,” you know, kind of thing. I see that now and they were cool people. They were great, god bless them. They were always cool with us. Fuck, we used to have X in our practice room. They’d come down and play. I remember Nicky Beat used to drive a cab and he got stabbed in East L.A. by a homie.

Cesar: They saw there was so much potential there. They were very open and warm with us. They liked us, would come joke with us—they genuinely liked us. You can tell they are genuine people. John and Exene are great people. Don was a little in the background, kind of quiet. Billy was there too, but not very talkative. Mostly Exene and John. One of the coolest things ever was going to see Dave Alvin, I think it was the Blasters, and X at the Olympic auditorium. I remember standing outside, just barely getting there, and I see John—and this is years after I have had any contact with those guys—John Doe came out of nowhere and walked up to me, kind of from behind me, and he’s like “Hey, C, what’s going on? Haven’t seen you in a long time. How’s Robert?” This must have been ‘85, ‘86, after I hadn’t seen them for about six or seven years.

Jesse: X hated us. They thought we were a bunch of punks, a bunch of hoodlums; but that’s when we hooked up with Black Flag. Then they started taking off and they took us under their wing. You’ve seen the flyers. We played everywhere. We played all the time with them.

Gilbert: That was the cool thing about that, you really felt like you were part of something exciting. Fuck, dude, it was so exciting. There was nothing like a Black Flag gig, man. You know, for one thing you’d get the flyers, right? You’d get the flyers, like, three

months in advance. That’s how organized they were. But you’d get these wacky, fuckin’ sicko flyers, just, “Wow, what is this?” and, you know, the gig would come around, and it was just, like, amazing. Tons of kids and everybody was the same—I mean as far as same wavelength—and great bands, all that kinda stuff. You don’t get that anymore.

Cesar: Just to be on the first wave of punk from L.A., as the music was evolving, it helped propel us. Even though we didn’t get very far, it was cool to be contemporaries with the original Black Flag, Germs, and Fear and all these bands that played the Masque.

STORMTROOPERS AND STAINETTES

Gilbert: We had our own little troop of followers and little chicks—the Stainettes or whatever you call ‘em—and people like Tracy Otero, who had Violent Children with Jesse Fixx and then he had a band called Sludge. Robert just had his fuckin’ entourage, man. So they would kind of do our bidding for us, wild things in the name of the Stains, you know? [Makes the sign of the cross in the air with his hand, then changes it to the Stains circle-X logo and laughs].

Tracy: That’s a Jesse Fixx term. Well, the Stormtroopers I guess, is all of us—all the gang, which was maybe like five, ten, twenty of us, at times. We would just go have a presence at clubs wherever we went.

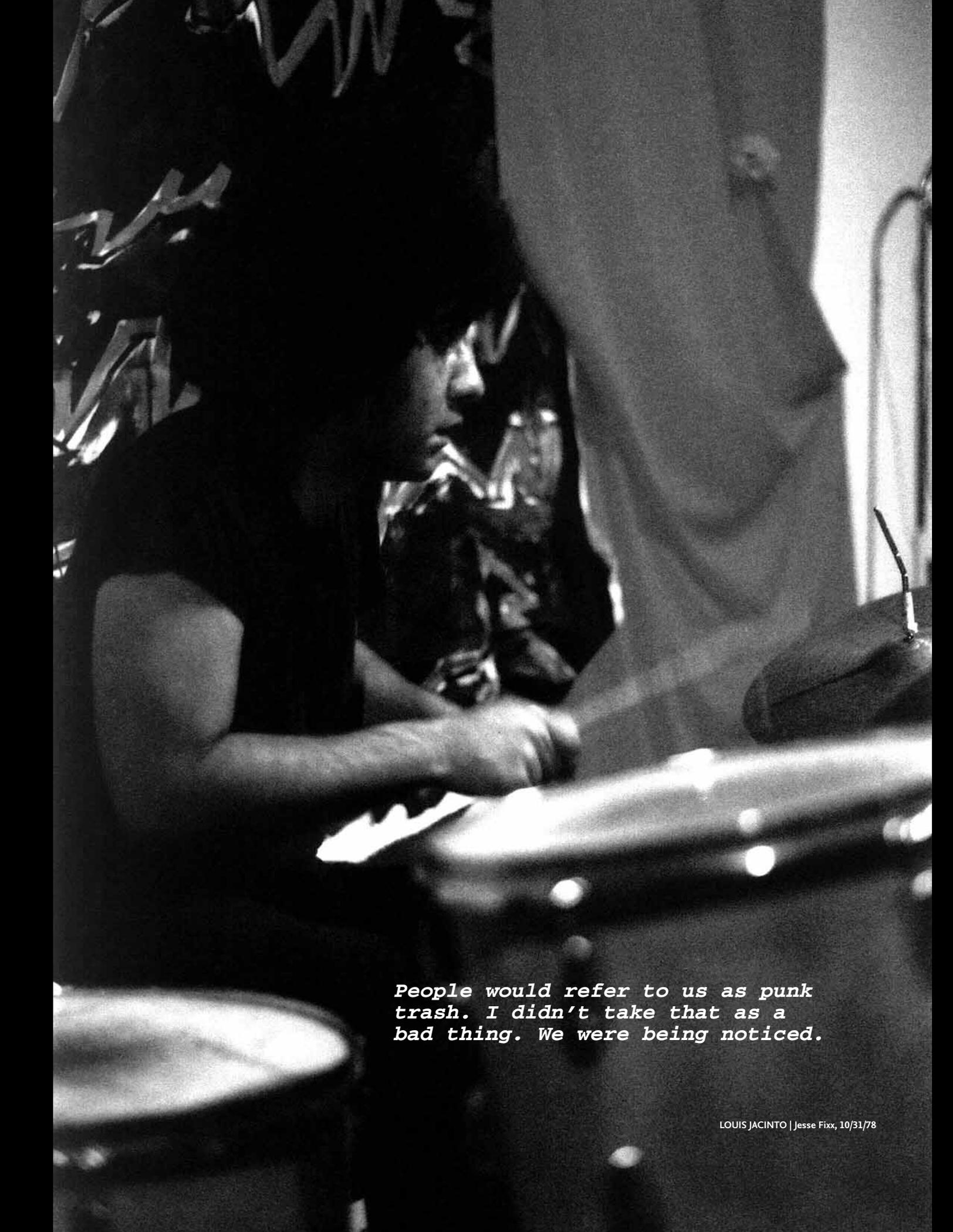
Jesse: Every spectrum, socially speaking, every demographic was represented in the Stormtroopers and the Stainettes. They were fans from the neighborhood, The Stormtroopers were a bunch of goons who used to hang out with us. It was a combination of cholos, miscreants, rapists, murderers, ex-cons, drug addicts, alcoholics, scum of the earth-type guys. They were our friends. In the Stainettes, we had homegirls, strawberries (a woman who exchanges sex for drugs), regular nice girls, college girls, transvestites. It was a combination of people that used to follow us and I just used to call them my Stormtroopers ‘cause we used to show up at gigs and raise hell, and I mean literally *raise hell*. Nobody knows about this, and this is the first time I’m gonna talk about it, but I had a cue. We would do the set and whenever I felt it was the right time, I would say “Riot!” That’s it. They would fuckin’ go nuts. They’d start kicking ass in the pit, throw bottles, rip off the cash register, rape, pillage, murder, whatever, you know? Like pirates. Like Stormtroopers! [laughs] Hence the name.

Cesar: We were hardcore, real in-your-face people. We didn’t put on smiles for anybody just to be cordial. We were who we were,



like it or not. We’re going to be in-your-face. We’re going to be in the parking lots, laughing and joking, and having our own party wherever we are. I think a lot of people were either threatened by that or thought, “They’re too good for us. They don’t want to hang out with us.” We were doing our own thing. We made a lot of friends because people were seeing, “Hey those guys are having a lot of fun over there.” We met a lot of people like that. “Hey, what’s going on, you guys? You’re the Stains?” “Yeah, come over, have a beer with us.” Boom—we were friends. We weren’t the ones going out to be social butterflies, but people who came across our paths we were generally pretty nice to. There were idiots out there, like always, but it just seemed like there was a competition that we didn’t understand, or tried not to be a part of. If there was any competition felt, or any animosity felt, it didn’t matter to us. We were happy with who we were and what we were doing.

Jesse: I grew up in a Falangist household, around Nazism, or fascist ideas, so it’s a big influence on me. I’m just fascinated with the swastikas, with the uniforms, with the weapons, and with their technology. Right now I’m reading Heinz Guderian, who’s a Nazi field marshal. (Guderian achieved the rank of Generaloberst—colonel general—in 1940 and is considered one of Germany’s most prominent generals of WWII. —Jimmy) It says they were very efficient and disciplined, and I admire that. I admire discipline. I lack discipline in my life, and the Nazis were very disciplined, so that’s why I look at them as a guideline to discipline myself, especially when I try to sober up.



People would refer to us as punk trash. I didn't take that as a bad thing. We were being noticed.

Rudy: They used to do the whole German Nazi thing before I was in the band, the whole thing about dressing in the green trench coat and maybe like a red armband—not a swastika, just a red armband—just kind of imagery, you know? They never had leather jackets, just trench coats. The Stains were the guys in the trench coats and all the other L.A. punks had their \$300 mom-bought leather jackets, you know? We always wore trench coats. There was the whole Nazi thing, like “Young Nazis” and “Germany,” songs like that, and wearing trench coats, but it was Mexican guys, so it was kinda trippy. [laughs]

Cesar: I’m going to say it was probably by accident on our part. I don’t think we ever told ourselves, “Hey, we’re going to start dressing like this.” It was kind of a progression of things. You know, go thrift store shopping. “What are we going to pick out?” “Anything black—black shirts, black pants, whatever.”

Jesse was known for these boots that he would wear up to his knees, his pants tucked in, with a leather jacket or a trench coat. A big ol’ afro, out to here [hands spread around the head]. Robert was more down to earth, always in Levi’s and a T-shirt. He used to wear trench coats or an army fatigue jacket. I don’t remember the rest of the guys in the original Stains. Jerry was always in an army trench coat with arm bands and pins, Vietnam boots, stuff like that. But they never really told themselves “We’re going to dress paramilitary.” I had never seen or heard those kinds of conversations. It was cheap, we went to the thrift stores, and that’s what we bought.

Jesse: There used to be this wino we used to call “El General,” and he used to walk around in a Federal (Mexican Federal Army) uniform. Everybody hated him, but I thought he was cool and I used to drink with him. He would get drunk and start blowing the bugle at four in the morning [imitates bugling]. One day, I go, “You know what? I’m going to outdo him.” So how do you outdo a Federal uniform? A Nazi SS uniform. I bought it over there on Santa Monica Boulevard, [laughs] the full regalia, everything. I showed up at three or four in the morning at The Dungeon. I bought the uniform, and I put it on. We’re drinking in the garage and everybody’s going, “You’re fucking nuts! You can’t wear that shit!” And I go, “I’m gonna wear what I want. Fuck everybody. I don’t give a fuck.” I wanted to get a beer and they used to sell beer 24 hours right there on 1st and Soto at this little speakeasy. I went over there to get a beer by myself, and I’m wearing this Nazi uniform and all hell broke loose. [laughs] Even the cops were looking at me, like, “What the fuck?” These cholos tried to fuck with me. I had an SS dagger, so I’m like, “What, you got a problem?” and they were like, [mumbling] “Well, um, no. No problem.”

Tracy: People would refer to us as punk trash. I didn’t take that as a bad thing. We were being noticed.

Cesar: At one point, I think maybe we were looking at ourselves to try and fit in with the way everyone else was dressing, or walk ourselves to the Hong Kong Café or the Masque. I think there was one point where we

realized, “Oh, they’re dressing like this. That’s cool and we’re going to do it, too.” Not really verbalizing, just that’s what everyone started to do. But then, at one point, someone called out to us when we were showing up to the Hong Kong Café: “Here come the trash punks!” They said it to us in an insulting way, but instead of saying, “Oh man, that sucks,” we were like “Yeah! Trash punks are here, motherfuckers!” And then it was kind of on at that point—“You threw out the first gauntlet, so here we go.” It was all about us intimidating the punkers. People would come up to us, “How come you dress like that?” We’d respond, “Why are you dressed like that?” Then we’d get in fights, people saying, “Hey man, we should all be in this together as one; punks together!” We’d go, “Aren’t you the same guys that were just talking shit about the hippies? That sounds really hippie-ish to me.”

They pretty much antagonized us, tried to make us feel sorry for ourselves because we were poor, we couldn’t go shopping at Poseur and buy the latest bondage pants, you know? We made our clothes and drew on them with markers and that’s how we would dress.

Gilbert: Robert would do the bandana. I would do it sometimes—still do sometimes, man, ‘cause of the sweat. I always had the white cholo shirts, the wife beater tank tops. Made sense for me ‘cause I was the drummer and that was my thing, with Levi’s and winos. Comfortable, man, it looked cool and we could afford it. I guess that was the difference: we gave the world winos, I guess, and the trench coats, and then the Pendletons. It’s funny, because real soon around that time, Suicidal Tendencies came out and they had that fuckin’ look, but they *really* did it, and I don’t know if those guys were actual yatos from Venice or whatever, but—and I’m not like “Oooh, we’re so cool!”—I think we kind of gave them the green light to go with that look, ‘cause we were before ‘em, and nobody wears that look better than Robert. Then you started seeing those guys, and then *they* started doing the bandana like real low. Sometimes Robert would do that, and when Robert did that, man, seriously, look out. It wasn’t like, “Hey look how cute I am.” It was, like, if he did that look, man, [laughs] he was out for blood.

Cesar: I guarantee you that the Stains and our following were the first ones to wear khakis and Pendletons and shades and wraps to a gig and people were like, “Oh my gosh, they’re going to freaking kill us. They’re going to take our money.” We’re just like, “Hey, it’s us!”

“YOU GUYS DON’T GIVE A FUCK”: BLACK FLAG, HARDCORE, AND THE EAST L.A. PUNK SCENE

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STAINS

BETWEEN
BROOKLIN AND SOTO
ON MICHIGAN

C.C.: Who are some of your favorite bands?
Dez: A band from L.A. called the Stains.
Chuck: The Stains are the best band in the world. —From “Black Flag Interview,” *Capital Crisis* fanzine #5

“Then the Stains, total abrasive, grinding, painful noise! The best band I’ve ever seen in my life!!!” —Dave Damage, live review, *Flipside* Issue 22 “Darby Crash Memorial Issue”

Jesse: We were playing at an American Legion Hall in San Pedro with the Alleycats, and there was this little raunchy fuckin’ Jewish bastard named Keith Morris [laughs]. He’s trying to hustle these 45s and I’m like, “Get out of my face, asshole.” He was so persistent, though, so I said, “Well, let me have one. Fuck it.” He said, “Hey man, I like you guys.” I’d heard of Black Flag, and they were already getting around. They were from the South Bay and didn’t play the Hollywood scene. There used to be a whole scene down there, like in Hermosa, Redondo—The Church scene. I don’t know what happened, but somehow we wound up playing a gig with them in the South Bay. The South Bay loved us and Black Flag were just the coolest fuckin’ guys on earth. We kinda played the same way—aggressive, raw, raunchy, and obnoxious—so we go, “Hey, why don’t we start doing shows together?” Then they started getting famous and we started getting famous and we both started getting banned. We couldn’t get gigs, so we would rent an abandoned warehouse, make flyers and throw a show. Greg Ginn had a lot of money and he had already started the record company (SST Records) and it was already kinda going, and it just evolved. We started doing gigs, playing, “Hey, let’s go to San Diego. Let’s go to Frisco and play Mabuhay Gardens.”

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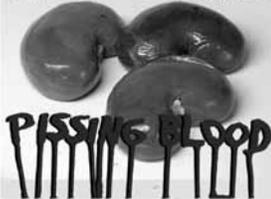
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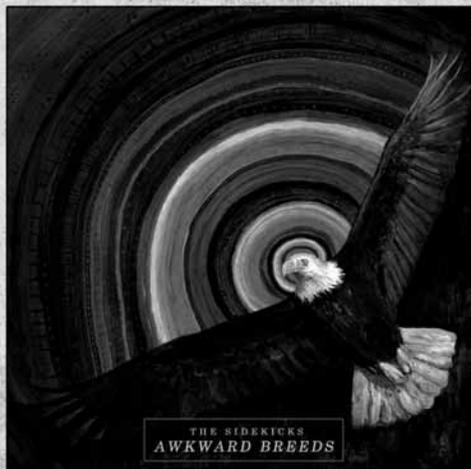


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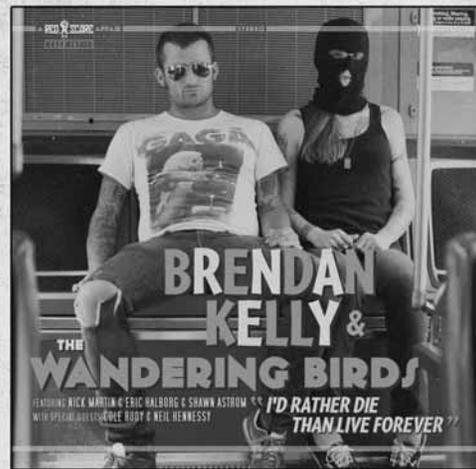
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Rudy: Black Flag was getting into this speed metal and liked our band, so they got us all these shows. It was not a problem to call Black Flag and go, "Hey, you wanna play over here at the Whisky?" "Uh, yeah," you know, or whatever.

Jesse: We used to play with Black Flag a lot. We used to do shows in the South Bay, San Pedro, San Francisco, Sacramento, San Jose, Canada. We toured everywhere. The most disciplined show that we played perfect was in Vancouver. We played with DOA, Black Flag, TSOL, and Eddie And The Subtitles. We were sober. [laughs] We were sober 'cause we were broke, so we didn't have a choice. We actually ate at a mission that day. We were living in a van, doing the musician thing.

Rudy: We didn't always get paid. I have records that show we didn't. [laughs] We hardly ever got paid, especially at Stage One and the Vex, but whatever, you know? All that mattered is playing. That was it. That was to me like skateboarding or surfing and stuff. It was a sport.

or South America or wherever, it was going to sound the same.

Jesse: They were racist, but the thing that started getting us around them is that we were excellent musicians. We didn't play like the Ramones. My background is in jazz and blues, Robert's background is in classical, the drummer was a kick-ass rocker, and the singer was a blues/soul singer. We could play our instruments, so they started coming around, going, "These guys are serious shit." Nobody wanted to play with us, though. The audiences started liking us, and the bands started hating us because we used to blow everybody out of the water. "Aw, man, you're gonna play with the Stains? Those guys are fucking hot! They're gonna make you look like shit." Most of those bands couldn't play for crap. I think our stuff was a little more advanced, more complex, because I orchestrate. I compose and do intricate little bass lines and drum beats, and the guitar leads are real wild. So there's a question of

Towards the end of the 1970s, more local underground punk/new wave bands began playing the local halls, car shows, backyards and one-off spaces. Hailing from Boyle Heights, City Terrace and East L.A. proper, this small clutch of bands soon coalesced into what has since become known as the "East L.A. Punk Scene."

Jesse: The East L.A. punks, supposedly, to me were a bunch of "no huevos" (a verbal pun on "new wave," essentially meaning "no balls") bands. The East L.A. bands—Los Illegals, The Brat—we hated them and they hated us.

Tracy: You know, it was a total rivalry—well later. First, we never heard of them and then, suddenly, there was an East L.A. scene that we became aware of. But we weren't really involved or included with it either, though.

Cesar: Yeah, I remember seeing those

The Stains, coming from the Eastside, were legendary and such an inspiration to all Chicano punx—they dropped the atom bomb on us that was coming out of the Cold War era of questioning. Living gang-related warfare in the East Los streets brought a different perspective on punk rock rebellion.

—Joe "Peps" Galarza, Aztlan Underground

Cesar: Black Flag were pretty big fans of ours. They wanted to see us succeed, so we thought.

Rudy: They liked Robert and his guitar playing and the lyrics and stuff, and they liked the band. I managed the band. From the point I was in the band I pretty much got the phone number from Robert for Black Flag and I'd hook up with Chuck or Greg Ginn and they'd go, "This show, you wanna play?" and I'd go, "Yeah." Always yes, as many shows as we could play.

Jesse: We used to get in fights at gigs all the time. A lot of the people liked us, but the skinheads—the Nazis—they did *not* like us, especially when we used to call ourselves the Young Nazis. Sometimes we would show up at a gig and we would just change the name right there on the spot, and say we were the Young Nazis to be obnoxious and attract attention. We used to have a song called "When White Boys Get Mad," [laughs] and the chorus was, "nothing happens." We used to do it to bait them, and they used to get pissed off and start throwing bottles at us.

Cesar: It wouldn't go very far. They would hear our music and just be blown away. It would shut it all down. We didn't sound like "beaner" music. We were playing punk rock. If we were playing it in Germany, or Canada,

if we were actually punkers, but they started accepting us. At first there was a lot of animosity because they're all White people and here are these fuckin' four little Chicanos from Boyle Heights.

"When we play with Black Flag," said Robert (Becerra), "we always get these honkies that yell shit like 'Go back to the barrio!' or 'Go back to Mexico!' And we'd yell back, 'Fuck you, you white motherfucker! Come on stage and say that. C'mon, puto. Eres puto. Que mira!' All those people who say stuff like that, I recognize their faces when I get off the stage and they say, 'Hey, you guys are crazy,' and 'You guys don't give a fuck.' And I say 'That's right.'"—Dan Vargas, *No Cover*, 1980

Cesar: We made our name and I think our music spoke for itself. We never felt like people were going, "Oh, these guys are from East L.A." or that we were being discriminated against. We got all the gigs and shows that we wanted. We were friends, their contemporaries. Black Flag loved us, the Plugz, Fear, Germs, we'd all hang out in the same circles and go to the same house parties. Took swigs off the same bottles of wine, you know? We all respected each other in bands.

bands. The Brat, Los Illegals. We played shows with them, or we went to gigs at the Vex when they were playing. I wouldn't say I was an avid fan of theirs, or I would go out of my way to see them, but we watched them play. We played a few shows at the Vex with the Brat, certainly. Los Illegals, maybe fewer.

Jesse: We used to do shows with them on occasion and we were just so rowdy, like The Who. We used to thrash equipment and smash guitars. We were fuckin' nuts. We had these fuckin' stacks and shit and they couldn't stand us because we were just cocky, arrogant, loudmouthed. We were louder than them. No competition, I had no fear of them. They were nothing. We come to your house, we're gonna steal your girlfriend, we're gonna steal your booze and you better watch out for grandma, too. That's how bad we were.

Tracy: The Stains didn't do the East L.A. night at The Roxy. They didn't do East L.A. night at the Whisky. They didn't come out in the *L.A. Times* as the East L.A. bands. They didn't do it. I wasn't a part of that angle. I don't want to be associated solely with East L.A. I'm L.A. and the world. Why pin yourself in a corner, literally? East L.A. doesn't define me.

Jesse: They were artsy-fartsy, faggy—I mean, they were nice guys. Now that it's

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over, we get along. But when we were young, I'll admit it, we were druggies and hoodlums. We were real tough, and these guys were like Cal State art-fart student types. There's gonna be a clash.

Cesar: They tried to really, really play on the "Oh, I'm Chicano, I'm from Boyle Heights or East L.A. Listen to me on those merits alone." They sounded really generic, really new wave.

Jesse: I didn't really buy into the Chicano movement thing 'cause I see them as trying to isolate themselves and put themselves in a little cubbyhole. Instead of trying to assimilate, they're trying to, like, "Oh, we're Chicanos. We're different." We're in another country now, and when in Rome, do as the Romans, you know? I

Gilbert: The Brat was a different kind of band. Not to be a dick, but basically, "The Mexican Blondie." I mean, what was Blondie? Blondie wasn't going to be playing with Black Flag or any of that kind of stuff. Los Illegals, I mean, those bands just had a more new wave kind of vibe, you know? More pop. The Stains were ugly, you know? If you listen to those lyrics, man, Jesse would come up with these incredible lyrics, man, tons of 'em—"Who's gonna fuck you with a face like that? Who? Not me!" The Brat weren't singing that. They were singing, "Starry night, oh starry night," something like that, right? So there you go. [laughs]

Cesar: I really think that the Stains were the only hardcore band that really came out

Cesar: Any fame or infamy that we were going to achieve, we knew we were going to do it on our own merits, either playing music or our personalities or whatever. It seems to me that we intimidated a lot of them.

Jesse: The only thing I regretted was I wanted to get along with them. I wanted to be friends with them, but they had this attitude. See, they were like college kids, and I didn't go to college until I was older, and they had this attitude, like we were scum. So I go, "Oh yeah? I'm scum? Well watch this..."

Gilbert: It's funny because they were the ones that wound up benefiting from that whole thing. We were kind of left out in the cold. I think we just scared 'em, and we were difficult—Jesse was certainly difficult—but

The Stains were an important and significant part of the early '80s L.A. punk scene. They were as important and loved as Black Flag. The whole scene loved them! They had a mean stage presence! For me, a former gang member and Chicano kid ostracized by poor white racist neighbors, it blew my mind to see their singer Rudy dressed in full cholo attire being worshipped by a sea of white kids—talk about empowerment!

—Yaotl Mazahua, *Aztlán Underground*

have nothing against White folks, I have nothing against Black folks and I have nothing against Mexican folks. I have nothing against anybody. But I hate people trying to categorize me and say "You are Chicano." First of all, I don't even like the word "Chicano." I'm Mexican.

What you've got to understand is that the struggle is not racist, the struggle is class. It is not Chicano against white, black or Asian, lesbians, gays or whatever. It is the haves against the have-nots, and that's what these knuckleheads don't get. They haven't read Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, Trotsky, Bakunin, or Emma Goldman. You've got to read, and you've got to understand what the government does. They're fucked. Their whole trip is to conquer, and how they do it is divide us. They create tension between Blacks and Chicanos. That way we don't unite, and we're never going to get across until we cut that crap out and get those fuckin' corporations out of fuckin' power and fuckin' do it the right way, which is socialism.

Cesar: We were a band that just happened to be from Boyle Heights. We didn't sing any songs in Spanish. We didn't do any traditional Mexican music. There's nothing traditional or Mexican about the Stains other than, perhaps, the families that we came from.

Jesse: We never really assumed the Chicano identity. None of my songs ever talked about being Chicano. My songs were about being human. We never really assimilated with the other Chicano punkers. We never saw ourselves as part of that. We were just ourselves and if they didn't like it, fuck 'em.

of East L.A. at that time. Thee Undertakers were still hardcore, but I'm not sure if they put themselves out there as a hardcore band. Maybe they just didn't pursue it as much as we did. I don't know.

Jesse: I liked Thee Undertakers. I admired them.

Cesar: They were loud. Their music was pretty hardcore. I liked them.

Jesse: I like (Undertakers guitarist) Tony. He's a good player. I played in a band with him, but we took too much fuckin' drugs. Anyway, I liked Thee Undertakers. That was the only band in East L.A. I ever liked. I loved Tony's guitar playing, I thought "Pickle Butt" was a great drummer. They were great.

Cesar: We played a few shows with Thee Undertakers. Roughly around '81, '82, the Stains rented a rehearsal place on 7th and Central, and Thee Undertakers had a space there too, so we would see each other and be cordial. They would come to our space and watch us rehearse; we would go to theirs and watch them rehearse. We were really cool with them. Tony Fingers, he would party with us and hang out with us. Tracy (Skull, Undertakers' bassist) was always very, very climbing-the-walls hyper. He was fun to be around. Mike Solis (Undertakers rhythm guitarist), I didn't know too well back then. I know him better now than back then.

Gilbert: Out of that scene, we were the band that was rubbing weenies with all the big boys. It wasn't, "Oh, we're different." Yeah, we are from East L.A., but it wasn't like, "Oooh, special consideration." No, no fuck you, man, it was, like, we were right up there.

we weren't fuckin' animals. We weren't part of that clique. It was very high school. You had Thee Undertakers, Los Illegals and The Brat [motions with his hands indicating they were separate, or isolated] and that was that. There was no room for the Stains there. [laughs] It wasn't like we were gonna be hanging around with Teresa from The Brat. I mean, god, she'd probably be scared.

Jesse: I think it was because we didn't associate ourselves with the Chicano movement. We didn't care about it. We're anarchists. We don't give a fuck. All we wanna do is make noise and get drunk. The other guys didn't give a fuck. They don't even have political thoughts. They just wanna fuck girls, or transvestites or whatever. That was it. The political part of it was me and, as previously mentioned, a lot of my songs were about fascist issues and stuff, so you think those fuckin' Chicanos are gonna want to listen to me? [laughs] They think I'm nuts. I am nuts.

Rudy: I remember listening to KRLA (a defunct AM "oldies" station) and they were like, "East L.A.'s secret weapon... The Brat!" They were gonna play at such and such, you know? I thought, "Man, I thought we were the secret weapon." [laughs] But we weren't, basically. We never got any popularity, except for "homeboy" imagery. We were cool homeboys, but as far as KRLA saying, "the Stains...exist!" You know? [laughs] But Rodney Bingenheimer did play us on the weekends on KROQ. That was cool, 'cause if it wasn't for that, we would've never gotten played.



I don't want to be associated solely with East L.A. I'm L.A. and the world. Why pin yourself in a corner, literally?

EDWARD COLVER | Stains

Gilbert: I think it was right before I came in the band, but apparently Jesse or Robert set Rodney's hair on fire at the Hong Kong Café. This is the kind of shit I came into, okay? These stories were already circulating. But you know what? He still played our demos. God bless Rodney. I love him.

Rudy: There's a live Whisky tape we had Rodney on the Roq play. I gave him the tape and he played it that night, within ten minutes of me giving him the tape. It was pretty cool. It was "Pretty Girls," then "Nowhere" was like right after and he couldn't stop it in time,

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so he had to play "Nowhere." That was the first time that song got played on the radio.

Cesar: We caused a lot of havoc.

Tracy Skull: Remember Atomic Café? Two of the Stains were in there and they started trouble. They kicked them out, somebody threw a beer bottle, here comes this big Chinese buff dude.

Art Reyes: He was climbing the poles, dude.

Tracy Skull: Yeah, he was doing pull-ups and looking for them because they threw a bottle, and they took off running.

Art Reyes: This guy was a hit man. He was

a hired gun from China. He was like Bruce Lee, dude.

Tracy Skull: It's funny, because the Stains were all crazy and whatever, and it was like "You gotta get outta here!" and they leave and we hear a bottle break, and everybody's like, "Aww, fuck, they're gonna start trouble." But all of a sudden, here comes Conan, and they took off.

Art Reyes: He came out of the back, like one of those Asian movies, man. [everybody laughs].

—from "Worming in Japanese Shoes: An Interview with Thee Undertakers," *Razorcake* #56



East L.A. doesn't define me.

A trip to the Atomic Café (an all night diner with a great jukebox and the world's worst food) found the Brat, Undertakers, and Girl Scoutz in one area and the Stains in another. No incidents inside, as the Stains left before everyone else. But as everyone went outside, they found two neat surprises. One, a mural done by Sean Carrillo on the side of the Atomic was defaced with the Stains logo...in the center of the work. Two, the Stains logo was written on the side of Rudy's car in black spray paint. Que listo, de veras?

—Dan Vargas, *No Cover*, 1980

Jesse: We spray-painted fuckin' Rudy from the Brat's car outside the Brave Dog (an early L.A. punk hotspot located next door to the Atomic Café in Downtown Los Angeles). We thrashed Teresa's house. We thrashed the Vex just for the fuck of it. [laughs] We spray-painted the shit out of everything. We fuckin' tore up the bathroom. Oh, man, there was a refrigerator that was full of food and we fuckin' pissed in it. We used to do all kinds of wild shit. We were terrible.

Tracy: I don't remember that day. We used to do a lot of fun stuff. We've done stink bombs in there. We had a lot of fun at the Atomic Café.

Cesar: All of that was alcohol and drug-induced. At any time or any night, who knew what it was going to be? We could be as mild as little kittens or as volatile as far as your imagination.

Gilbert: It certainly was an intimidating band. Again, you go back to Robert. I mean, Robert was the guy. Cesar was...you didn't want to fuck with the Shadow, you know? You didn't fuck with homeboy. But Robert, he represented the band. He was the guy who just kind of had that image, and yeah, you didn't fuck with the Stains, really. It was great. People were scared of us from the get-go [laughs] and we never really did anything. White people get drunk, too, you know? What's the big deal? You know, white people smoke PCP. [laughs]

Rudy: I've been around the world working for Walt Disney and different businesses and stuff, and all those guys are great musical geniuses, and they didn't get to where they were because they were drunk, liquored up drug addicts. Yeah, sure, we partied, you know? We still party. I don't think any of us are going to quit, but that doesn't mean we're not human beings and don't have a professional life. We're real.

Cesar: There are certain people and certain bands that only know certain things and won't

travel outside for fear of being ridiculed or not knowing what to expect, so they would just stay in their own neighborhoods and try and create what they could create within themselves and the people they were close to and not try to venture out. That wasn't the Stains at all. We would always go outside, to shows in Van Nuys, in Orange County, all over the place. We would go watch bands play. We were true fans of the music. For the Adolescents, for D.O.A., bands like that, to come from outside, it was the greatest thing.

We had already seen them in clubs outside of the Vex, so it was great to have them come to the neighborhood and play with us.

By '79 and '80, Stains had already been playing the Masque. We played the Fleetwood. We played the Whisky. Then there was the Vex. It helped a lot in East L.A., to draw attention to the area. To me, it just happened to be where Joe decided to make his club. He ended up making a club in downtown L.A. that was just as successful.

I was not a part of the Masque scene. The Stains were friends with the Screamers, Controllers—all the original bands that came out of Hollywood. They were their contemporaries, played with them, so we weren't afraid to go outside East L.A. to play and, apparently, the kind of idea that I have is that a lot of bands that started in East L.A., played in East L.A., weren't really too willing to go outside of East L.A. to establish themselves.

GANG-RELATED DEATH: WILD TIMES AT THE VEX

In March 1980, East Los Angeles visual arts center Self-Help Graphics began hosting a series of monthly punk shows in its second-floor hall. Dubbed "Vex," the shows were the brainchild of muralist/Los Illegals vocalist Willie Herrón and local promoter Joe "Vex" Suquette, who wanted to provide a space where Los Angeles' Eastside and Westside punk contingencies could intermingle. The shows, integral to providing a focal point and "home" for the local underground music scene, lasted at Self-Help approximately eight months.

Jesse: We were banned from every fuckin' club in L.A. That's why we ended up playing at the Vex. They were the only ones that would hire us. Or we would do our own parties, hire a hall and do a gig there with Black Flag. Or we would go on the SST tours—and then we behaved. We behaved with SST 'cause they paid our bills. I'm not a stupid man.

Rudy: Vex had all these extra rooms all over the place and stuff. At least that's what I remember—the VIP room, you could hang out and have a good time, then go see the band, or play, whatever. Joe Vex was always cool. The waitress ladies. The big bouncer guy, Bam Bam, was funnier than hell. Didn't like mother jokes. Me and my friends always did mother jokes. All the punkers would be in line and then me and my friends would show up and to keep company with the people in line we would start telling mother jokes to each other. But Bam Bam, 'cause he's Latino—with Latinos, mother jokes aren't cool, right? Everybody knows that. So if I did mother jokes to him, man, he would just be fuckin' fuming and it was funny to watch him fume, man. I didn't care, because he wasn't gonna beat me up *that* bad. I had to sing. [laughs]

Cesar: Always crowded. Kids were hungry for music. You just had to put a flyer out

STAINS VS. STAINS



EDWARD COLVER | Stains

When Black Flag first came to DC to play and we all met them, they told us that the most intense band in L.A. was the Stains, an all Mexican band from East L.A.... They were some heavy guys. I'll never forget seeing them play at the Cuckoo's Nest in Huntington Beach CA in 1981. —Henry Rollins, Black Flag

The gig occurred Saturday, July 25, 1981 at the Cuckoo's Nest in Costa Mesa, California. The club hosted a number of legendary punk shows before it was shut down. Its constant clashes with the patrons of a cowboy bar named Zubie's, with which it shared a parking lot, the police, and various Costa Mesa authorities were immortalized on film (*Urban Struggle: The Battle of the Cuckoo's Nest* and, most recently, *We Were Feared*) and in song (The Vandals "hit" songs "Urban Struggle" and "The Legend of Pat Brown").

Rudy: We played with Henry over at the Cuckoo's Nest, with the Texas Stains.

Ceasar: The tour that Black Flag was on was called their "Creepy Crawl." We had been in good contact with them. Dez Cadena was a good friend of ours and would call us and send us a postcard. They called from Texas saying, "We got this new

singer. His name is Henry Rollins. We call him Hank and he's going to be our new singer. And we're bringing with us this band called the Stains, and, for some reason, they think they're going to keep the name." So we said, "All right, let them come," and so they put us on a bill, the two Stains.

Well, by the time they got to the Cuckoo's Nest a few nights later, we had seen the flyer they had made up, and it read, "MDC, formerly the Stains from Texas, along with the Stains from East L.A." We were there when their van pulled up, and greeted them, met Hank for the first time, and MDC was following behind. Black Flag told us, "Guess what? They changed their name to MDC. They're no longer the Stains." So they conceded. We started celebrating even harder.

We were gonna be the Fatal Stains. We were just thinking of things. After we played here with the Stains at the Cuckoo's Nest, we were driving home and we were thinking they were such a great band and we weren't much better than them and they had a jump on the name for a year longer than us—we never knew there was an L.A. Stains. —Dave Dictor, MDC

Rudy: We wore cowboy hats, and in a review for that show, they go, "The Texas Stains ripped it up! They played after the California Stains," and they didn't. The Texas Stains opened for us. We wore cowboy hats to mock them and we got their review, or whatever. [laughs]

Ceasar: Louis, the drummer at the time, found a cowboy hat in the trash. We got to the Cuckoo's Nest early, we sound checked, we were just hanging out in the back drinking beer, and we found an old, beat-up cowboy hat in the dumpster. He got it and put it on and he was like, "Hell yeah, I'm going to play with this on!" And so he did. [laughs] I don't know if it was an ode to them or just letting them know, "We know what's up."

The singer, Jughead [Rudy], threw a couple of unopened cans of beer at the heads of the audience really hard. This was just in during the first few songs. The show was complete chaos. The band had some of their very scary friends with them and it was a riot-about-to-happen situation. They thought it was funny. —Henry Rollins

Rudy: We played it off, basically. It was like, "Hey, two Stains are playing the same show with Black Flag. Winner take all," so I guess we got to win. Now they're MDC and more popular than we will ever be. [laughs]

[W]e were like hanging out and we were getting fucked around by the cops and we wrote a song called "Dead Cops" and we went to L.A. and saw the Cuckoo's Nest cops and we were hanging out with Buxf Parrot of the Dicks and he said "Millions of Dead Cops: now that would be a great name for a group." —Dave Dictor

(Dave Dictor quotes from "MDC interview," *Flipside* #36. Henry Rollins quotes taken from the notes to the 05/17/04 episode of his *Harmony In My Head* radio program, collected in the book *Fanatic!*, 2.13.61 Press.)

there. There wasn't a whole lot going on, and the Vex shows were pretty well promoted. The club held a lot of people, so people would come out in droves from all over the place. Kids from Hollywood would show up. The fact that they could come to our neck of the woods, and not really get messed with, it made it okay when we went to their clubs. I think I've seen more violence or conflicts between the (San Fernando) Valley and Hollywood. People from the Valley would always come and start fights or whatever. They would let it be known, "Oh hey, we're from the Valley." Even kids from Orange County, when they would come up to L.A., they wouldn't get any flack.

Rudy: Joe Vex was cool people. The people were all cool. It was a nice situation. That place, a lot of stuff happened. Paul and Brian Collin were fighting up front, on top in the VIP room. The Mau Maus singer, Rick Wilder, was climbing up trying to sneak in. He was almost to the second floor, just up to the window, just about to say, "Hey somebody open the window," right then Paul and Brian Collin pushed each other into the window when Rick was reaching up. Bam! This body comes at him and he fuckin' jumped back and fell two or three floors on his back and a fuckin' ambulance came and he lived. It was nuts, man, just crazy stuff.

Gilbert: I went to Malabar Elementary with Joe's cousin Mario—looks just like him. I remember Mario had the greatest hair, man. He got all the little chicks in fifth grade, like a little lady killer—and his cousin, Paul Suquette, little chubby guy, pink skin, big red cheeks. Those were my best friends in school. When the Vex took off, I remember running into them and they'd become punks. I was like, "Hey, what are you doing here?" and it was like, "Oh, Joe's my cousin. My cousin runs it." Mario was pouring fuckin' drinks at the bar, so I was like, "Wow, cool." So yeah, the Vex was near and dear to my heart, man. They used to have little art exhibits as part of the gig. You'd go in the back.

Rudy: I saw the Stains when Black Flag opened for them. There were so many riots 'cause of Black Flag, so they said, "We better play first, before the cops come," so instead of closing the show, they opened. That was at the Vex, the old Vex. Me and my buddy Kevin Foster went there and Eddie Segura and a few of the other friends I used to hang out with—Pasadena skateboarders and stuff like that. They got me into it. Eddie's the one that got me the Germs album. We all went to it and the Stains were playing.

The Vex shows ended at Self-Help Graphics as a result of a November 22, 1980 "JFK Memorial Show" featuring Black Flag, Mau Maus, the Stains, and Violent Children. The show ended in a riot, with extensive damage to the space and the art housed there. Though Black Flag played first that night and a review in Flipside #22 identifies the lag time between the end

of Violent Children's set and the beginning of the Mau-Maus' set as the cause, the rioting and damage to the venue was blamed on the beach punk "HB" contingent of Black Flag's following.

Gilbert: Yeah, that's a shame, but you know what, man? It wasn't the Chicano kids who did that. It was the stupid kind of HB crap, you know what I mean? They did all that stuff. It wasn't about that for me, you know? It was about being new and expressing ideas and everybody can do it and that kind of stuff. It started getting so stupid, man. There you go. Bingo. That's why I lost interest, you know? It was lame.

The Vex moved down the street to the Paramount Ballroom and became a bona fide club. It was East L.A.'s first consistent venue catering primarily to punk/new wave and became a critical location where L.A. punk's different factions could intermingle. The Vex hosted everyone from local acts, outside groups, L.A./OC groups, and even touring bands.

Cesar: I think that the Vex blurred the lines and opened the doors for a lot of bands from outside East L.A. to play in East L.A. We had the Damned play the Vex. The Misfits played the Vex. Everyone played the Vex. A lot of people came from other parts and saw the Stains in East L.A. I'm friends, online, with people who go, "Oh, I remember that show at the Vex," and they were from Orange County. I had never known they saw us. So it did help a lot of people come to experience what was going on in East L.A. from outside the area. By the same token, I think the Vex would have worked wherever. Joe promoted the heck out of the shows, put good shows together. There was well run security, I gotta say. Joe always treated us like kings. We always had the red carpet rolled out for us whenever we went to a Vex show to play, or just hang out. Joe was really awesome to us.

Jesse: I had a ball. I always got in free. [laughs]

Rudy: We were like the house band at the Vex, you know? But we're more popular with White people, basically. [laughs] The punks, they didn't care what color we were. We rocked and that's all they cared about. They didn't say, "Oh, the Mexican men."

Cesar: It gave us a place to go that was local that we could call our own. All the homegrown people who started the punk scene would go to Vex. It was a place that we called ours. It was always a positive experience for us. Never anything bad happened there. We met a lot of great friends there.

Rudy: The one on Brooklyn and Mott was nuts. It was across the street from a Jack in the Box, where I saw a guy get shot.

Cesar: Yeah, we were outside, standing at that corner. Me, Robert, Rudy, and a couple of girls who would hang out with us were just sitting there watching cars go by, smokin' and jokin' on the corner.

Rudy: This guy was standing there. Me and Robert just finished the gig, I'm all sweatin', cooling off, and we've got quarts of beer. There's like the Vex door, then this other door, and then this third door, and we're kicking it in this little doorway area, sitting there drinking quarts, and all of a sudden this white truck goes by.

Cesar: He was at a stop sign. He started to slow down instead of just zooming through the intersection. I looked over at him and he pulled out a gun—boom boom boom—and shot at a guy that was at the bus stop right in front of the Jack in the Box.

Rudy: [imitating the sound of a slight gunshot] "pshh." I remember seeing this smoke puff just freezing, you know, as the truck kept going, and then this guy just fell on the ground. I go, "Look at that guy acting like he got shot, Robert. Fuckin' kook." He said, "No, eh, he did get shot." I'm like, "No way. That was a firecracker," 'cause I'd never heard a gunshot. I'm not from the barrio, dude. I heard [imitates loud gunshots] on Columbo and shit like that. It doesn't sound like "pshh," you know? That's what it sounded like, "pshh," like a firecracker, or a cap, and it's like next thing you know, this guy's on the ground, having spasms and shit, and he died right there, right in fuckin' front of our eyes.

Cesar: We were like, "What the hell? Did we just see that?"

Rudy: It was like, wow, gang-related death.

Joey Flores was killed today, Gang-related in East L.A.

Killer wore a Pendleton and khaki pants, Witnesses say the victim had no chance, This description fits almost all....

—"Gang-Related Death," the Stains

Rudy: "This description fits almost all," because all his friends dress the same so you can't tell which one did it. That's gangsters, just like warriors—"It was the army guy that did it," you know? They all dress the same. They're all on the same team, so how can you tell?

Cesar: Rudy had the words and then he took the words over to Robert's house and started working on it. I think they wrote that song in a day, in a couple of hours. Rudy knew how he wanted to sing it and Robert just started coming up with riffs. I remember, "Oh, we got a new song." "Wow, that was fast."

The Vex relocated twice more not long after the shooting. It finally settled in at the former Copacabana Discotheque in El Sereno before its doors closed for good in 1983.

Please pick up *Razorcake* #68 for the conclusion of the Stains oral history.



Cheap Time

INTERVIEW BY RYAN LEACH

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RENATE WINTER AND KRISTI MONTAGUE

LAYOUT BY LAUREN MEASURE

Jeffrey Novak is the driving force behind Cheap Time. He's also cut records with The Rat Traps, Jeffrey Novak's One-Man Band, and has released material under his own name. It's an impressive discography for someone in his mid-twenties.

His personal story is just as interesting. Novak spent the last couple years of high school obsessively recording material ("an album a week") and studying the dates seminal records were released. (Although it didn't make it into the interview, we discussed all the great musicians and bands that cut two albums in 1970.) He's a diehard record collector with an acute interest in great bands and musicians—Kevin Ayers, Sparks, and The Cheater Slicks to name a few. Novak's own records reflect these obsessions. Hints of his latest influences can tastefully be found in all of his albums. Jeffrey also spent a lot of time with the late Jay Reatard. Jay taught Jeffrey how to record music and tour more effectively. Jay's work ethic also left an impression on Novak.

Jeffrey has a new Cheap Time (*Wallpaper Music*) and solo record out (*Baron in the Trees*) now.



KRISTI MONTAGUE

Ryan: Although you live in Memphis, I know you grew up a bit outside of the city.

Jeffrey: I'm actually in Nashville now. I've lived in Nashville for the past two years. I only lived in Memphis for about half a year. My sister lives in Memphis. My family lives about an hour outside of the city (in Henderson). I used to stay with my sister in Memphis a lot and then I crashed with Jay (Reatard) for about half a year.

Ryan: But you've always lived in Tennessee.

Jeffrey: Yeah. Henderson is about an hour away from Memphis and two hours from Nashville, so I used to go to Memphis a lot when I was younger. I dated a girl out in Nashville. She bought a house and I moved in with her. We split up and I later went to Henderson to record an album (*After the Ball*) at my parents' house. After that I moved to Memphis to live with Jay. When he died I moved back to Nashville. I made a big circle. Once, Jay visited me in Henderson and he was astonished at how far out in the middle of nowhere my house was. [laughs]

Ryan: I interviewed Jay in 2006. One of the things he liked about Memphis—and I'm sure this goes for much of Tennessee—was the cheap cost of rent. He said he could focus more on his music without the burden of working.

Jeffrey: That's the truth. That's a big part of what keeps me in Tennessee. It's especially true of Memphis. Nashville is a more expensive place to live—likely the most expensive city in the state. My rent is still only \$220 a month.

Ryan: Unbelievable.

Jeffrey: I haven't had a real job in five years.

Ryan: You'd be hard pressed to get a room for under \$500 here in Los Angeles.

Jeffrey: In Memphis you can get a room for \$100 a month. When I was living with Jay, he didn't charge me rent at all. He just wanted me to work on music all the time. That was a big incentive to living with him.

Ryan: Digressing back a bit, you were playing music at a really young age. You formed your one-man band while you were still in your teens.

Jeffrey: I've been recording and writing songs since I was fifteen years old. Early on, I'd record with two microphones into my parents' stereo. Later on, I upgraded to a 4-track recorder. In my last two years of high school I'd write an album a week. I completed twenty-eight albums. Every day in school I'd write down twenty to thirty song titles. Every album I created had to have outtakes. I was obsessed with recording material.

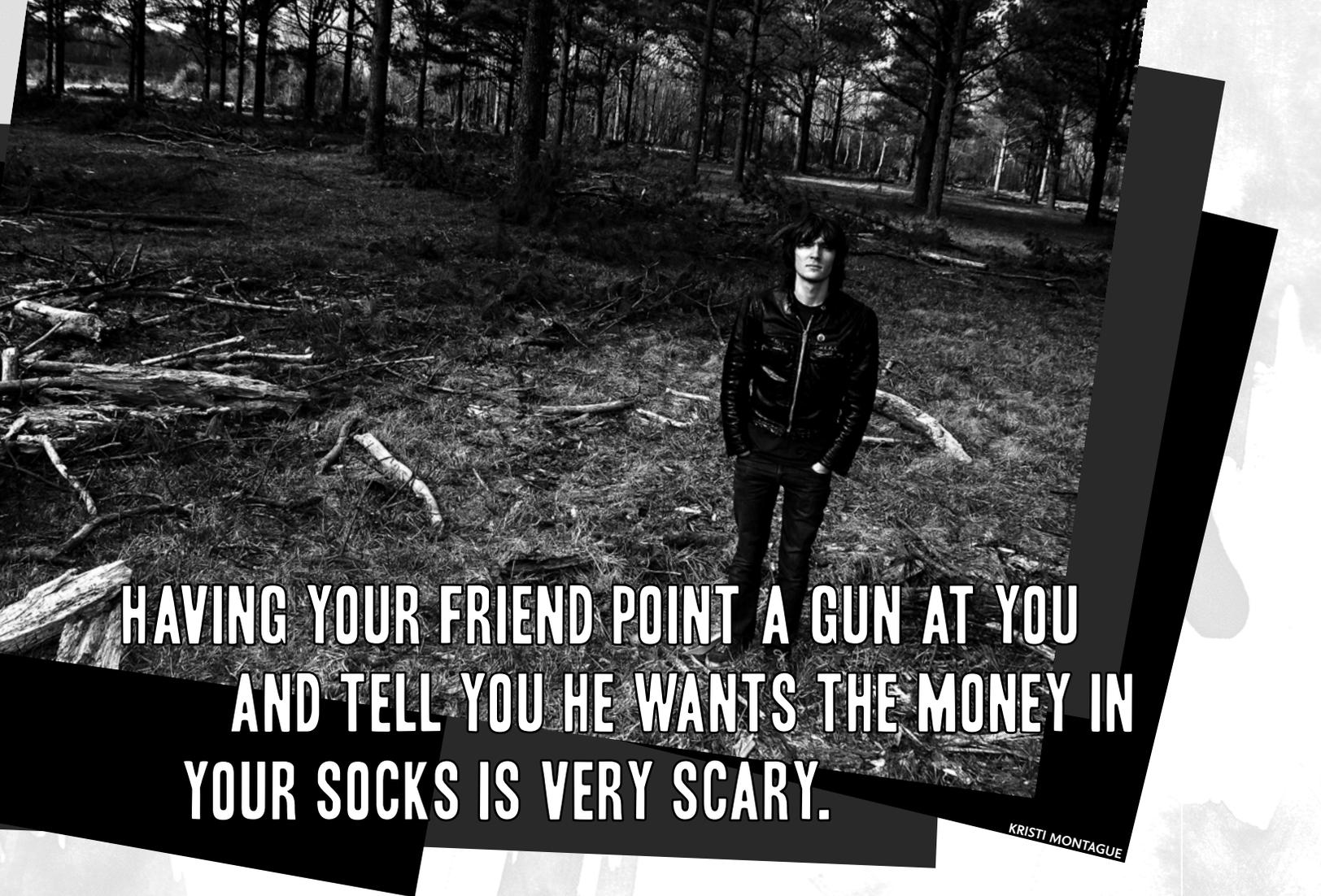
Ryan: Were you under the assumption that people produced records like that? I've interviewed a lot of people and I've never heard of anything like that.

Jeffrey: I don't know what the inspiration was to record that abundance of material. I had no idea that you had to take your time recording songs. I was into producing art that way. As soon as I pushed record, I'd have to come up with material. It was about improvising. I was obsessed with it.

Ryan: Your one-man band is a great example of the European labels being on the pulse of Memphis music in the early and mid-2000s. All of your 7"s were released by overseas labels: Yakisakana, A Fistful Of Records, P. Trash, and Perpetrator.

Jeffrey: The American labels were not interested at all in what I was doing. Even Goner didn't care. The only people who were interested in Memphis music at the time were the people behind labels like Yakisakana from France, P. Trash from Germany, A Fistful Of Records from the Netherlands, and Perpetrator from New Zealand. If I were to do my one-man band now—say I were the same age today that I was then—it would be a much different story. There would be a local label wanting to put it out.

I must have sent out hundreds of CD-Rs to people. I'd send them out with letters that read, "You put out this 7". You might like what I'm doing, too." When you're living in the middle of nowhere, it's your only contact with people. I never toured. I only played Memphis and maybe Nashville. There were no scenes then. Memphis had a little more going on back then (as opposed to Nashville) because of the older people in their thirties and forties who had been around music in the '90s. Jay and Alicja (Trout) were the younger people from that Memphis crowd—the post-Oblivians group of people. In Nashville, there was nothing.



HAVING YOUR FRIEND POINT A GUN AT YOU AND TELL YOU HE WANTS THE MONEY IN YOUR SOCKS IS VERY SCARY.

KRISTI MONTAGUE

Ryan: I've been to Memphis, but never to Nashville. Nashville always seemed like ground zero for overproduced commercial music due to the Nashville Sound. Is there an underground scene there?

Jeffrey: There is now. There are young kids who want to play underground music. It's currently a trendy thing. When I was seventeen or eighteen, no one really cared about underground music. It took a couple of years until I saw kids at shows who were my age. All those kids I first met ended up starting Magic Kids. Most young people that I met then were into hardcore, which I only got into later—bands like Redd Kross, Adolescents, and Black Flag. I was all about *White Light/White Heat* and *Funhouse*.

Ryan: You were doing a Captain Beefheart cover in your one-man band.

Jeffrey: He's the real deal. That type of music sucks you in. You don't like it the first couple of times that you hear it.

Ryan: That's the mark of a great record; it doesn't immediately appeal to you. Captain Beefheart is another example of a guy creating great music in the middle of nowhere—Lancaster, California.

Jeffrey: Having isolation helps. Even though I no longer live in Henderson, I rarely hang out with people in Nashville. I have a studio at my house. It's difficult living with my parents. [laughs]

Ryan: Was your one-man band formed out of necessity?

Jeffrey: Sort of. I had tried to find people to play with in high school. It was my dream to get a band together. I started collecting records when I was in fourth grade. I bought all of my Beatles records at antique stores. I wanted to be a songwriter even back then. I bought a bass at fifteen but there was no one to play with, so I decided I had to learn how to play all of the instruments and sing. I did that to create all of those records I made in high school.

In my freshman year of college I saw the Cheater Slicks and The Oblivians. It was their Halloween 2003 reunion show. That was a big deal. I liked the Oblivians. The Cheater Slicks opened for The Oblivians. After seeing the Cheater Slicks, I had almost no interest

in watching the Oblivians play. I had never heard the Cheater Slicks before that night, but their attitude and sound convinced me that they were the best band I had ever seen. They had that proto-punk sound I loved. They had an amazing, negative vibe. It was something of an epiphany. The song "Murder" really stuck out to me. That show was on a Friday. The next morning I decided I needed to figure out how to play live music. The post-Oblivians bands like The Reatards and The Persuaders influenced me next. They were really punk and that was the sound I was going for with my one-man band.

Ryan: Your story of seeing The Cheater Slicks reminds me of Jay seeing The Oblivians.

Jeffrey: It's funny that seeing The Oblivians that night didn't have the same effect on me. They were still really good. They played for two hours. But it was the forty-minute Cheater Slicks set that did it for me.

Ryan: If you talk with Greg Cartwright or Alicja, they mention Jay being younger than everyone, but you're a number of years younger than Jay. The influence his music is having on the generation that's coming up after him is interesting.

Jeffrey: He was about twenty-three or twenty-four when I met him. By then I knew who The Reatards were. This was back in 2003 when no one really knew who they were and their records were really hard to find. The Lost Sounds were a famous band to me. They had a very unapproachable vibe. They were known for doing lots of drugs and being very creepy. I was scared and in awe of them. I saw Nervous Patterns play with Oneida and American Death Ray in November or December, just a month or two after the Halloween Cheater Slicks show. I couldn't even talk with Jay or Alicja. I'm usually not like that with people, but they seemed so unapproachable.

Ryan: I caught the Los Angeles show of the last Lost Sounds tour. They were so aggressive.

Jeffrey: Yeah. I eventually met them at a show I was playing at Murphy's with the CC Riders. It was Jeffrey Evans's band with Jay

and Alicja. James Arthur was in the group too, but he had moved back to Texas a little earlier. Jeffrey introduced me to Jay at the bar. Jay was eating chili fries. We started talking about Peavey amps and synthesizers. Alicja came up to me and said, "Hey, I hear you're putting out these CD-Rs. I'd like to distro them for you." I was surprised by how nice and friendly they were. I was eighteen years old. That meeting had a big impact on me.

Shortly after that, Jay started dating Alix (Brown) and he was living in Atlanta for a while. I didn't see him much until he moved back to Memphis. He had started Shattered Records and I was in The Rat Traps.

Ryan: You formed The Rat Traps with your sister April and brother-in-law Joe (Simpson).

Jeffrey: They were living in New York but we talked about putting something together. They moved back down to Tennessee. I ended up playing drums because I was better than April and Joe at them, but I still wasn't a very good drummer. The Rat Traps lasted about a year.

Ryan: The Rat Traps played the second Gonerfest.

Jeffrey: Yeah. We played at the Buccaneer.

Ryan: You sang most, but not all, of the songs in The Rat Traps, correct?

Jeffrey: I sang about a third of the songs. April and Joe had their songs, too. That was the most democratic band I've been in. After The Rat Traps, I decided I didn't want to form another band like that. It wasn't me thinking egotistically. We just fought so often that it wasn't much fun. While we were on our last tour, I was writing a lot of the songs that'd eventually show up on the first Cheap Time record. I remember running into Alicja in Boston and telling her I was going to start a new band. I wanted her to play drums. I tried to get Joe from The Rat Traps to play guitar for me. It was hard to get people to play with me back then! [laughs]

Ryan: Larry (Hardy) was really receptive to the early Cheap Time demos you were sending him.

Jeffrey: Yeah. I met Larry right after The Rat Traps broke up at a Redd Kross show. Even before I had recorded the demos, I told him my idea for the band's sound was a cross between Pussy Galore and Redd Kross. Those were my two favorite bands at the time. Larry said, "Yeah, that sounds really interesting. I want to hear the demos." We started recording the demos right after July 4, 2006.

Ryan: Cheap Time's lineup changed early on. You had your girlfriend at the time in the band.

Jeffrey: She played on the first single. I actually play drums on it. That was recorded in my parents' attic. That was a demo that turned into a single. On the last Rat Traps tour we played in Vancouver. My friend Jeff Green—who I had originally met in Texas—was there and said he was starting a label called Sweet Rot. I mentioned I was starting a new band, Cheap Time. He said that he'd like to put out our first 7". That's how that first single came out.

Ryan: I heard that you had gotten really into Sparks and The Quick when you were recording your first album for In The Red.

Jeffrey: Steve (McDonald of Redd Kross) had joined Sparks and In The Red had just put out the *Hello Young Lovers* LP. I had never heard of Sparks until then. Steve was in town and he played me *Kimono My House* in his rent-a-car. I didn't like the record at all when I first heard it. I thought it sounded like Queen, but worse. Of course, it ends up being one of my favorite records. I then started listening to everything Sparks released up until the mid-'80s.

Ryan: You recorded a cover of "People Talk," a Jack Oblivian song he recorded with his mid-'80s new wave group, The End. How did you get a hold of the track?

Jeffrey: I bought that single when I was in The Rat Traps. They had about thirty copies of it at Goner. They were two dollars apiece. I wish I had bought more. We actually covered it a few times in The Rat Traps. We did a really under-rehearsed version of it. It's a really cool song that nobody knows. Cheap Time was the band that allowed me to cover and record it properly. The original single by The End is worth money now. At the time it wasn't worth shit.

Ryan: I had no idea Jack was playing in a new wave band back in '85.

Jeffrey: Have you heard the other side of the 45?

Ryan: No.

Jeffrey: It kind of sounds like Van Halen. "People Talk" is the B side.

Ryan: In 2008 you released your first solo album, *After the Ball*. Were you consciously dividing songs up between Cheap Time and the solo album, or was song selection happenstance?

Jeffrey: I moved back in with my parents when I recorded that album. I wanted to learn how to play piano like I could play guitar and to get a hold of an 8-track recorder. I wanted to learn more about recording because I was really disappointed by the results from the first Cheap Time record. I wasn't thinking about dividing the songs up, really. I wanted to try something new with the solo record by putting myself out there more. I was scared that people might really hate it, but it was exactly what I wanted to do. I don't think the first Cheap Time album sounded as good as the demos for it. It was recorded in a studio and it took so long to come out. It sold well but it wasn't what I wanted it to be. Having the album come out on In The Red was incredible, though. It's my favorite label. The Cheater Slicks and The Lost Sounds were on In The Red. We also got to record with the same guy (Mike McHugh) who recorded The Hunches records. Larry told me, "Your first album is what people are going to know you for." When it came out I thought, "I wish people didn't know me for this record!"

Ryan: Really? I thought the first Cheap Time record sounded great.

Jeffrey: People liked that record. It wasn't what I wanted, though. I guess I felt like I needed to make a solo record. But I don't even have a copy of *After the Ball* in my record collection. It's a rough record. It expresses what I was going through at that time: living with my parents and trying to date a girl in New York—something that didn't work out. I just wanted to be alone all the time. I wanted to be sixteen years old when I was twenty-two! [laughs] I'm proud of that record, though. It took a lot of work and I had to learn how to play the piano.

Ryan: Your first solo record and Cheap Time's second album (*Fantastic Explanations (and Similar Situations)*) remind me a lot of the early '70s Kinks records. Your vocal phrasing, at times, reminds me of Syd Barrett's.

Jeffrey: Some of my favorite songs are on those two records. "Never Together" is a song I still play on piano. I was listening to a lot of Kinks and Alex Chilton during that period. Chilton was heavily influenced by British music. It was a matter of adapting that British influence to Southern singing. The funny thing is I don't have a Southern accent. Jay didn't either. People didn't believe we're really from Tennessee. I was born and raised in Tennessee!



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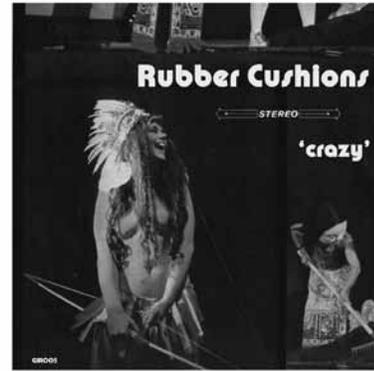


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THE ALBUM DEALS WITH JAY'S PASSING. IT WAS A THERAPEUTIC PROCESS. I'VE NEVER BEEN MORE DEPRESSED ABOUT ANYTHING IN MY LIFE. I WAS IN A BAD PLACE WHEN I MADE THAT RECORD. I HAD TO MAKE IT.

Ryan: Yeah, you don't sound like Greg Cartwright or any of the other people from Tennessee I've interviewed.

Jeffrey: No. Not at all.

Ryan: When I interviewed Jay, he said that the only British band he listened to was Wire. He said that he didn't like foreign interpretations of American rock'n'roll. But, later on, I had heard that you two were so into British rock that you were going to name the studio you were building at Jay's house "Anglophile Studios," or some other similarly named tribute to British rock'n'roll.

Jeffrey: That's right! I can't remember the name of it, but it had *anglophile* in the title. I had totally forgotten about that. That was the plan. A lot of my favorite American bands like Sparks and Alice Cooper were trying to sound like British bands. I guess I was trying to do the same thing.

Ryan: You moved in with Jay in between recording the first and second Cheap Time record.

Jeffrey: Yeah. Jay mastered the first Cheap Time record. My sister (April) lived with him before that. Jay had helped me mix the Rat Traps single for Shattered Records. Jay was always trying to give me advice about cooking and recording songs. Larry was sending everything to Jay at the time to master. I learned how to master records from Jay. He was also giving me advice about touring Europe and how to get shirts made. We did two tours together. After the solo record, I went to see Jay at the Hi-Tone. It was that tour he was doing with TV Smith. I asked Jay to help me master my first solo record; he said of course. He was really excited about it. He offered to put out a single and to issue my first solo record on CD, something he didn't end up doing.

Jay said he wanted to produce my next solo record. Larry said he'd put it out. That really surprised me. Jay must have sold Larry on it; he did end up producing it. Right around the time the idea sprang up for Jay to produce my second solo record (*Baron in the Trees*), I was about to leave for Europe for six weeks to tour with Cheap Time. Jay said that he only had two weeks open to record it right after I got home from tour. He also wanted demos in advance. I only had two weeks before the European tour, so I wrote fifteen songs and created the demos in order to properly record them with Jay when I got back.

Ryan: That's how it went when you rolled with Jay, huh?

Jeffrey: That's what I miss about him. That spirit. You were always working. You had that next project lined up and you didn't sit around on your ass. We recorded *Baron in the Trees* in two weeks and we hung out for the rest of the summer. Our girlfriends both broke up with us at around the same time. He then got a great deal on a house and bought it. I could live with him for free if I kept working on music and helped him build his studio. It was an offer I couldn't turn down. Jay was someone I looked up to and here he was taking me under his wing. He taught me so much about recording. We ended up doing the second Cheap Time record in Costa Mesa.

Ryan: With Mike McHugh.

Jeffrey: Jay didn't like the sound of the first Cheap Time record. He gave me the confidence to produce the second album. He told me to take charge. Of course, that didn't work out too well. [laughs] *Fantastic Explanations (and Similar Situations)* ended up being a mess. We had a rough time with Mike and the record took forever to come out.

Ryan: That process didn't go well for you?

Jeffrey: No. It was awful. We spent a lot of money on studio time and got next to nothing done. Mike was so difficult to work with. He was heavily into drugs. It was very sad and frustrating. Mike kicked us out of the studio (The Distillery) by gunpoint. We were supposed to start mixing. The band and I were at a diner when he called me. He asked, "Do you have my money, you fucks?" We told him that Larry was going to pay him. He said, "No? Then get your equipment and get the hell out of here." He told us earlier in the session that he had a twelve-gauge shotgun. We went back to the studio and loaded our equipment. It took us forever to get our tapes back. We didn't get them back until after Jay died.

Ryan: I had no idea that went down at The Distillery. Larry has been sending bands there for more than a decade.

Jeffrey: Larry was just glad we were safe. At first, he didn't believe me. People still ask me if that really happened. As we were leaving the studio, I asked Mike if he had my tuning pedal. He said, "Buy a new one, you sellout fuck." He went in, found it, and put down his



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shotgun. He handed me the pedal after we loaded everything up. The last thing Mike ever said to me was, "Run for your life." [laughs] I can remember that day like it was yesterday. It was very frightening. He was our friend at one point. It's sad to see what drugs can do to a person. Having your friend point a gun at you and tell you he wants the money in your socks is very scary.

Ryan: I didn't know the back story to that record.

Jeffrey: It's very sad. Mike's a recording genius. He's an amazing guy. He's just a mess. I think he still hates me. I hope he gets clean. I have no idea what's going on with him. I'm not trying to put him down. It was just a very bad experience.

Ryan: You have the right to be a little bitter and disappointed.

Jeffrey: Other bands have tried recording with him—like The Black Lips and The Spits—and have had poor results. Larry gave him so many chances. Mike sent me a bunch of mean e-mails later. It hurt my feelings, but I try not to take it personally. I never got to play the second record for Jay. He wouldn't have liked it anyway. He would have gotten on me about the drum sound. It would have been a record to argue about. The band was also at a low point and people weren't receptive to the record when it finally came out.

Ryan: I got an advance copy of the third Cheap Time record, *Wallpaper Music*. It sounds like a cross between the first and second albums. Some of the tracks remind me of Magazine. Did you record the record yourself?

Jeffrey: It was done in my bedroom on a 16-track recorder. It was recorded over a year ago, before the second record came out. We couldn't tour until *Fantastic Explanations (and Similar Situations)* came out, so we had almost a whole year off. It was a fun record to make. It took a long time and it was a major learning experience. I did it on a Tascam tape machine. We recorded the solo record digitally. I don't think it has that great of a sound, but that's how Jay wanted to record it. I like the third Cheap Time record. It's listenable. I made this record with the idea of playing it live in mind. The songs had to be fun to play. People have been really receptive when we've played the songs live. We had the opposite reaction to the material off of the second record. It's great when people like what you're playing and you like it too. The album deals with Jay's passing. It was a therapeutic process. I've never

been more depressed about anything in my life. I was in a bad place when I made that record. I had to make it. It has that driving spirit in it.

Ryan: Do you plan on recording and producing most of your material from here on out?

Jeffrey: Yeah. I've gotten better at it on every release. I've learned how to record and mic instruments better. I can take my time and record exactly how I want to without worrying about expensive studios. Larry seems happier with this record.

Ryan: Do you now have a stable lineup of Cheap Time?

Jeffrey: [laughs] I play all the bass on the third Cheap Time record. Our bass player was living in New York and he quit the band. He said he had no interest in putting down his bass parts. We got another bass player from Minnesota. I think his girlfriend broke up with him and he inadvertently quit the band. I tried getting a hold of him but got no response. I now have my friend Cole (Kinnear) playing bass. Cole has actually never been in a band before. He's never played bass. I taught him the bass parts to our songs. He's practicing right now as we speak. Our new lineup should have a single coming out soon. We're also big fans of The Fall. A new lineup is exciting—we think we can make a better record. I don't get stressed out about people leaving. But I'm pretty excited about this lineup. I don't want to see it go.

Ryan: Cole will hopefully be your Steve Hanley.

Jeffrey: [laughs] Yeah! Our first show with this lineup is next week.





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Andrew: Guitar, vocals
Brian: Drums
Matt: Bass
Tim: Guitar, vocals

**I'm not
going to
write
something
that
doesn't
come
naturally.**

Hundreds of years from now, when punk rock historians uncover the ephemera New Haven's Dead Uncles have left behind—a tape, two 7" records, fliers billing them with representatives of virtually every subgenre of punk, and soon a full-length LP—they will likely gain a sentence or two in the Encyclopedia of Subcultures in the 21st Century. Inevitably, they will be cast as "carriers of the torch that the East Bay lit in the early '90s." This torch will have changed hands many times, and was handed to them by the "mid-2000s renaissance of scrappy DIY pop punk from Brooklyn, Boston, and scattered college towns," which was likely "extinguished just after their time as the last possible combinations of A, D, G, and B became exhausted by 2014." But like many historical summations, this picture will be reductionist and incomplete, if not plain inaccurate. Musically, Dead Uncles may exist in a larger tradition, but the soul of the band comes from their existence in an unlikely vacuum. Rather than pick up sticks and relocate to one of the many cultural meccas within pissing distance of them, they've stuck it out in Connecticut through thin and thinner. They're not only far and away the state's best pop punk band, but its only one. This fighting spirit has not gone unnoticed—their best friend and roadie interviewed them after band practice one day.

Interview by Dave Brainwreck
Photos by Sara Gaechter | Layout by Daryl

Dave: Tim, explain why the closest thing to a job in your life involves taking large amounts of alcohol intravenously. [laughter]

Tim: Are you serious?

Dave: Yeah.

Tim: I'm lazy. I hate working. I hate having a schedule where you have to go into this shitty job every day and deal with a bunch of bullshit. I guess I just hate responsibility. It stresses me out. I'd rather just do these dumb studies. Living in New Haven, where Yale University is, they do a lot of medical studies. So you can participate in those and get different sums of money.

Andrew: Handsome sums.

Tim: I guess New Haven punks have been doing that for a while, doing different studies and paying their rent that way. You can make a handsome sum.

Dave: So every time you read a statistic based on a medical study, you know there were a bunch of scumbag punks lying to get into them.

Brian: They're the control group.

Tim: Yeah, I've definitely lied my ass off every time I've gotten into a study. The study now that I'm doing is where I get alcohol through an IV, then do computer tasks and

answer questions. The screening process was like, "How much do you drink?" and I just lied. Just was like, "Oh, you know, like a regular human being. Not every day." I told them the most I'll ever drink is twice a week, and then only have four or five beers, which is not true at all. Right before that, too, I was smoking a bunch of weed and they were like, "When was the last time you smoked weed?" and I said, "Oh probably about three months ago. I only do it once every couple months." But when I was doing the screening I was just like...

Lauren (Andrew's wife): Stoned. [laughter]

Tim: No. I wasn't stoned, but you know, you gotta do what you gotta do. (The next day, Tim got kicked out of the study for failing a drug test.)

Brian: I applied for the same medical study and thought that I was downplaying how much I drank in the interview, but it turned out that it was too much even saying three times a week, four times a week.

Tim: It's always great when someone's already gone through the screening process for the study. My friend Dennis had done it and was like, "This is what I said."

Dave: How does the name Dead Uncles invoke Connecticut pride?

Andrew: Well, we all went to Chilton. That's where we all met...

Brian: We were watching a lot of *Gilmore Girls* when we started the band, which takes place in the fictional town of Star's Hollow, Connecticut. It's a sitcom on the WB.

Matt: It's a drama.

Brian: It's a dramedy.

Andrew: It's pretty much everything. It sums up the human experience. It's a comedy, drama...

Dave: And "Dead Uncles" comes from *Gilmore Girls*.

Matt: It's the name of an episode.

Tim: Well, the full name of the episode is "Dead Uncles and Vegetables," I believe. I remember Matt was like, "Let's name it that," like the full, "Dead Uncles and Vegetables." I think we were all like, "No," and then somebody was like, "Oh, Dead Uncles."

Andrew: No one could offer anything better.

Tim: I mean, how do most bands get their name? They just settle for whatever bullshit.

Dave: Does Dead Uncles have a completely incompetent, self-impeding promotional impulse, or just no promotional impulse at all?

Matt: We tried really, really hard to make patches for the last tour. It involved going to New York, searching through a prestigious institution's library for a typeface to do the font. You know, the best laid plans always somehow fuck up. People brought screens from other states.

Dave: So every time you do something to get your name out there or whatever, it's just like the Challenger explosion?

Tim: I wouldn't say that. I feel like it's just our own self-doubt or insecurities as people and as a band. Just like, "Oh, no one gives a shit about what we do. Why would we even try to promote it?"

Andrew: Either people are attracted to it somehow or they're not. We're not gonna try to push it on anyone.

Brian: In terms of getting our name out there, that's not something that ever interested me. I figure if you do something and try to do it honestly, then a couple people will notice, and experience has shown that to be the case, I think. In terms of playing in a band, I don't play in a band to post about it on the internet. That's not what I like about it.

Matt: Our friend Emily told us she was at a show in New York and heard a band that sounded like our other friends' band, Dylan Bredeau, so she pushed her way to the front and saw that one of them was wearing a Dead Uncles shirt. So she immediately knew they must be from Connecticut.

Dave: Nobody else would have that shirt.

Matt: So there's a point of reference that's, like, if we had more shit, people would be like, "Oh, somebody's wearing a Dead Uncles shirt, but there's ten thousand of them." There's that personal connection. Although somewhere in Pensacola there are ten high schoolers with Dead Uncles shirts because they couldn't pass up five dollars for a T-shirt.

Andrew: Not even for the music.

Tim: A five dollar T-shirt is a steal.

Andrew: Matt, you were a shrewd businessman. You wanted to sell them for eight.

Matt: Did I?

Andrew: Yeah.

Dave: You guys don't have a spectacularly unique sound, yet no one can seem to put their finger on it in reviews and stuff. Do you think this helps you, because a lot more people like Off With Their Heads and Dillinger Four than bands that sound more like you.

Matt: Do we get compared to Dillinger Four a lot?

All: Oh yeah.

Brian: Every step of the way.

Andrew: When we first started, at our first show somebody compared us to the Pink Razors, and that was the only time I heard that. From then on, I don't know.

Brian: A lot of Dillinger Four, Bent Outta Shape, Ringers.

Tim: I feel like some of that has to do with the fact that I'm kind of incompetent at guitar. Some people are like, you know, "I know how to play guitar. I know how to rip this thing off. I really wanna sound like this band. I can rip it off as much as I want. I can learn those songs and figure out that sound." Whereas this is the first band me and Andrew have ever played guitar in. We just kinda started later in the game, rather than being in our teens and picking up guitar and being in bands like that then.

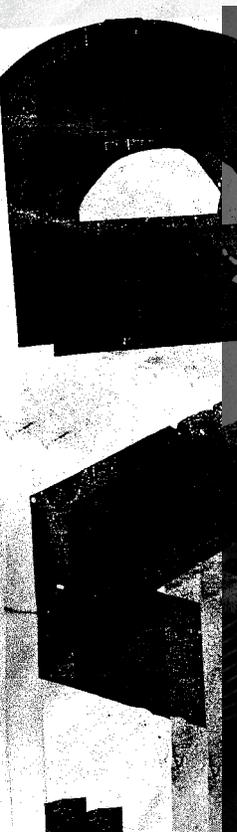
Andrew: Our first practice was me with an acoustic guitar, going over to Brian's place, not knowing how to play at all.

Brian: And not really playing at all.

Tim: I think we were maybe trying to rip shit off, or being like, "I wanna sound like this," but considering I don't know how to do that, it comes out like, "Oh, this is weird. I know what they're trying to do but it doesn't



I wanna believe punk to be something more than just some dudes down in a basement, drunk, being idiots and saying shitty things.



sound like that.” Or, “It sounds like this, but it’s different.” I think that has a lot to do with the way we play guitar, even how we figure things out or write stuff as a band.

Andrew: Plus learning songs is stupid.

Tim: Yeah. You know, I’m not trying to learn covers. That’s not how I learned guitar. I was just like, “Oh, this sounds cool.”

Dave: Matt, Tim, and Andrew—ten years ago or so you were all in a high school ska band together. How similar was being in No Face Value to being in Dead Uncles?

Tim: We were actually in two ska bands together.

Andrew: Well, back then we were playing larger venues.

Tim: We had more fans. It was great. A great time in my life. No, I’m just kidding.

Matt: There’s a marked difference between a high school ska band and getting older, and, I don’t know.

Dave: Living the dream.

Brian: To a degree.

Matt: It’s not a dream. It’s just getting older and doing something different.

Dave: Have band dynamics between the three of you stayed the same?

Andrew: Yeah, there’s as many poop jokes as when we were sixteen.

Tim: I mean, me and Matt probably still yell at each other.

Brian: What do you mean, “probably”?

Tim: I mean probably just as much. We still get into stupid arguments and make everyone else uncomfortable.

Lauren (Andrew’s wife): Does Matt still get naked?

Tim: No.

Matt: Life goes on.

Tim: More timid.

Dave: Andrew, you teach high school. Are any of your students aware of your double life as a punk rock front man?

Andrew: I do not teach high school.

Dave: You’re a high school librarian.

Andrew: Middle school.

Dave: Okay, you teach middle school. [laughter]

Andrew: Way to check up on your facts, Dave. Uh, no. Not that I know of.

Dave: Matt, you are a children’s librarian. Are any of your patrons aware of your double life as a punk rock bass man?

Matt: Only as much as friends come into the library. My boss somehow knows I’m in a band. And I was like, “Oh, can I get January off?” not even to go on tour. Although I am going on tour with my friend’s band tomorrow. I did say I was going on a road trip and somehow she figured I was going on tour, so I’m supposed to bring pictures back.

Andrew: There was actually one time there was that weekend tour. It was a pretty short three-day thing. The last night was in New Jersey and we got back to Connecticut really late. I’d just been playing shows and my voice was really hoarse. I probably had four hours of sleep, got up at six, and went to work. One of my students actually said, jokingly, “Oh, Mr. Piro, were you singing in a rock concert all weekend or something?”

Dave: Did you say yes?

Andrew: Yes. He probably thought I was joking.

Dave: Run me through a typical Dead Uncles tour.

Brian: Poop jokes, van breaks, don’t sell any merch, poop jokes, Brian throws up. Anything else?

Matt: Drinking piss.

Tim: Shows fall through. First of all, we book a really stupid tour route to begin with.

Andrew: Where we don’t consult a map.

Brian: Miami to Pensacola.

Tim: We just don’t think about how long drives will be. Or maybe we do, but we’re just incapable... I don’t know. Trying to book a tour where it’s like, “Oh, every day we have a reasonable drive, nothing more than six hours,” has never been the case. It’s like a row of shows with six-plus hour drives.

Matt: That might just be leaving the Northeast.

Tim: Yeah, maybe we’re not used to that, being from New England. But I also think you can figure out, like Brian was saying, a Miami to Pensacola isn’t something you should be doing. Florida’s a big state. You can figure out places to play. Not that I’m complaining. I like going on tour. If that involves doing stupid stuff, I’ll do it.

Dave: Brian, what’s the worst scenario in which you mistook something for food? [laughter]

Andrew: You’re leading him on.

Brian: Oh, oh yeah. I thought you were talking about the pizza crust tampon incident. [laughter]

Tim: Wait, I don’t think I ever heard that.

Brian: About a month ago I was in Brattleboro with you and Tim. It had been taco night at Bonetown. We had been playing dice and I’d been wondering what smelled like feet the entire dice game. An hour later I looked down at my shoe and I was like, “Oh, I dripped some refried beans onto my shoe when I got my third or fourth taco. I better scoop that off my shoe and into my mouth.” And of course, as you know, it was dog excrement. And you called into the radio the next morning and told the DJ about it.

Matt: What radio station?

Dave: Some pop country station.

Matt: Were you on the air?

Dave: No. It was too risqué. So, Connecticut’s got a strange punk scene—stylistically it’s pretty decentralized. I can’t think of a dominant “genre” or “scene” really. Why do you think that is?

Tim: I mean, I think there’s a lot of stuff going on now. Maybe not stuff that’s relevant to us, as people who are in this band. There’s a lot of weird stuff.

Brian: But just in terms of a style or aesthetic.

Matt: Connecticut’s strange in that it’s in between New York and Boston on the densely populated I-95 corridor, so people tend to leave Connecticut and go to Boston or New York or other places. People who stay don’t necessarily live in the bigger cities. If there’s stuff going on, people will go to shows and drive an hour to Eastern Connecticut, New Haven, or Hartford to

go to shows. The people in bands aren’t necessarily hanging out all the time together. They don’t live in the same place, don’t work in the same place, don’t see each other that often.

Dave: I guess what I’m thinking about is how there’s no big hardcore scene, for example. There’s no big “whatever” scene...

Brian: Well there is a big scene of bands I don’t care about. [laughter]

Brian: Kind of glossy bands that just aren’t my thing, that maybe someone at more of a distance might look at and say, “Oh, this is what’s going on in Connecticut.”

Matt: I’m pretty sure Hatebreed are still the biggest thing going. Every time I leave the state it’s like, “You’re from Connecticut? Hatebreed are awesome.”

Tim: I think there is a big scene for some stuff. The emo revival, kinda twinkly stuff—there’s a lot of people trying to do that. We have friends in bands who do that kinda stuff. An insane amount of kids will go out to a show to see this particular band. They can play a local show and a bunch of kids will go out. I feel like that’s a big thing that’s happening, but, yeah, I don’t particularly care about that.

Dave: Matt briefly touched on this—but how do you feel about the loss of human capital in Connecticut? (Question stolen from Opton in *Rats of the Capital #1*.)

Brian: It’s a natural thing.

Matt: Yeah, it’s a natural thing, but I think more people are coming back to Connecticut as of late, or at least our friends are not leaving. But I think it’s a problem in the Northeast. People will leave their smaller New England city to go to a bigger New England or Northeast city because it’s just so transient. Maybe that’s just the circles we travel in; everybody’s transient, even in the bigger cities.

Dave: Brian, you recently said, “I feel like so many ‘pop punk’ bands are formed as an excuse for uncreative people to get drunk in their garage together and then go on tour and get drunk in different cities without ever challenging themselves or the audience.” Tim, this sort of fits with the lyrics to your song, “Constant Disappointment.” How would Dead Uncles except themselves from this, or do you?

Brian: I didn’t necessarily set myself apart when I said that.

Matt: Well, we don’t practice in a garage.

Andrew: It’s a basement.

Matt: Not all of us get drunk everywhere we go...

Brian: To me, it’s less about the audience or an aesthetic, but this band and facets of this band have constantly brought new challenges and points of view to me. Like, we’re pretty solidly in the thing we do, musically. In terms of just trying to grow with something—when we started this band I was eighteen—and playing in a punk band when you’re eighteen should be pretty different from playing in a punk band when you’re twenty-three, maybe. It’s challenged me personally in a lot of ways to keep it relevant and bring new ideas into my life.

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Dave: Run me through a typical Dead Uncles tour.
Brian: Poop jokes, van breaks, don't sell any merch, poop jokes, Brian throws up. Anything else?
Matt: Drinking piss. **Tim:** Shows fall through.

Dave: If we can talk about "Constant Disappointment," when you played in D.C. Brian gave a song explanation beforehand that related to what the song says, but was quite a bit more specific, especially in the implications of this idea in punk of sameness. Like, "We're all the same. It's us against them." Remember?

Brian: Not specifically. I don't remember.

Dave: You said, and I'm paraphrasing, that often there's this idea bandied about that as punks—"We're all the same"—and, at best, that's naive, or something, and, at worst, it's imperialistic. Which is an idea that's not necessarily written in the song, but coming from it, an extension of what the song is saying.

Brian: Well, I give more song explanations than anyone else in the band, which is maybe just a natural extension of my personality. Tim wrote the song, so I'm interpreting what he said a bit and also taking with it a different point of view from

it being more than a year after he wrote the song. Do you wanna talk about where the song came from?

Tim: I guess that song's about the reasons why I got into punk and the reasons why punk is so important to me. Also, maybe why those feelings are a little bit naive. I feel like when I was getting into punk, the people around me were really thoughtful, critical people—or at least tried to be. They were thinking about things and able to be critical of themselves, be critical of punk.

Then, over time, you go to shows and you see that a lot of people aren't critical, aren't thoughtful, don't give a fuck. They just came out to the show to get drunk and party. That's upsetting to me, because if punk is just some people who came out to party at the show and that's all they care about, then I don't want to be a part of that. It's also really upsetting, considering how much energy and time I devote to punk—playing in a band, booking shows,

driving other bands on tour, all that stuff. I love all that stuff, and I wanna believe it to be something more than just some dudes down in a basement, drunk, being idiots and saying shitty things. The reason I like punk is because when I was getting into it I was exposed to all these new things, people who wanted to talk about things, and think about things differently. I don't know; I'm rambling now. I guess just punk being something more than getting drunk and being disillusioned because sometimes I don't see it as that. That kind of especially goes to the pop punk genre, because those are the songs I like writing, but I want it to be more than just...

Brian: A soundtrack.

Tim: Yeah, or the whole "Dudes on, shirts off," mentality.

Brian: I grew up listening to a lot of pretty-hard-to-listen-to political bands that gave me this idea of what punk was that doesn't necessarily gel with where it is in

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my life now, and how I saw it being treated when we started to tour and stuff. To me, if there's been a message to this band, it's always been to be critical of everything you do. Maybe that's not true for the rest of you.

Tim: Well, for me, in general, that's just how I try to treat my life: to be critical of the things I do in my everyday life and in how I live. We're not some overtly political band, or not overtly in our lyrics, but maybe how we try to operate as a band gets those points across.

Dave: I always assumed you didn't use the band as a political vehicle because Andrew and Matt already spend their days molding young minds.

Matt: Yeah, reading *The Cat in the Hat* can be very subversive.

Brian: You should read *Sometimes the Spoon Runs away with another Spoon*.

Andrew: It's just stupid to me to want to be prescriptive at all, lyrically. Like, "People should be this way or think a certain way."

Tim: I feel like I'm totally incapable of writing a song that's like, "This is how things should be." I can only write about my own experience, and even that's limited, so to try to tackle some kind of subject that is more meaningful...

Brian: I think a good indication is that maybe our most expressly political song is "Applauded Droning," which Andrew and I wrote and is about the 2008 election cycle. It's mostly pretty ambivalent. The lyric that sticks out as I'm thinking about it now—we don't play the song anymore—is "My head is just as empty as everybody else's head." I don't feel like we think we have any answers, which isn't a great place to be. Sometimes I'd like our songs to take more of a stand or more of a position, but I'm not going to write something that doesn't come naturally.

Dave: Do you ever feel restricted in terms of what subjects you can write about by either your genre or an interest in lyrical continuity?

Brian: Yes.

Andrew: Well, in another interview we did, the interviewer said he couldn't really tell whose lyrics were whose, which I think is kinda weird. Three of us write lyrics, and I don't wanna say we tackle the same material, but...

Dave: In very different ways.

Brian: It's not like one of us is gonna write a song and everyone else is gonna be like, "Whoa, I don't get it."

Tim: I thought that was really weird when he was talking about how there was that continuity because I don't feel that way at all. Brian and Andrew are much better writers than I am, so when I write lyrics I'm very insecure about it. I feel like they can write more thoughtful, interesting lyrics, and mine are more straightforward. They're not literary. I'm just more like, "Alright this is how I feel. I'm going to be very blunt." The songs I write are like, "I feel like shit. I feel bad."

Andrew: But there's something to be said for that outlook. Sometimes when I write I'm

like, "This is too dense, too stupid. I could be more straightforward."

Brian: Maybe it balances each other well, but I think you can distinguish between our styles.

Andrew: I think part of the longevity of the band means just being in different spots, as a band and each person individually. It's not even necessarily common ground, but still having some similar type of outlook. Even though it may transpire in different ways, there's that outlook and how we lead our lives.

Brian: That's a good point, because there was a period where you weren't really writing the lyrics, like the second 7". There was maybe a good six- or seven-song run starting with that where you didn't write any lyrics. It was pretty much all me and Tim. We're all friends, so the band accommodates where people are. It's not like people have a job to do specifically in the band. It's nice to write songs, but there aren't special designations, necessarily.

Dave: So have you guys gotten more bummed out over the years, or just gotten better at articulating your emotions?

Tim: I think it's just that bullshit early- to mid-twenties angst, to some extent.

Andrew: To some extent. I feel like people should be bummed about things. I can't comprehend how anyone can not be bummed out sometimes.

Tim: I think as this band has progressed I've gotten more bummed out and upset about my life.

Dave: Are they related?

Tim: No. This band has been one of the only solid things I've had in my life over the past four years, or however long we've been a band. But I think that's just figuring shit out, figuring your life out and what you want to do. That's not always gonna be a pleasant experience. I'm grateful for having this because it's always been an outlet. No matter how upset I get or how shitty I feel, writing a song for this band or being able to hang out with my friends and do this thing that I really like, I'm like, "Well, I know that's there." I have this outlet for whatever I'm feeling at the time, whether it be feeling upset or incapable of handling things in my life, or just being happy about it.

Dave: Best and worst things to ever happen to you at Hartford's most infamous punk house, the Whitney House.

Andrew: Dudes eating fire.

Brian: Two Halloweens ago, maybe three... it was the year we were Green Day, which might have been the worst thing to happen to me, personally.

Matt: People did not like that we were Green Day.

Tim: People were upset by that.

Brian: Yeah. Later, during Black Flag, there was some motherfucker just breathing fire and having people staple money to him in the backyard.

Dave: Is it true you guys played a show with Sammy Hagar's supergroup, Chickenfoot?

Brian: We were in Cleveland at the same time Chickenfoot was.

Andrew: At the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Our friend wiffed Sammy Hagar on a handshake.

Dave: I wouldn't call you heavy drug users, but Brian, you did have a period using prostate medication recreationally. How was that?

Brian: It was a weird time in my life, or one weird night. The next day I masturbated and nothing happened because I shrunk my prostate and couldn't ejaculate.

Dave: You could ejaculate, it just went somewhere else, right?

Brian: Right, exactly.

Dave: Your bladder.

Brian: Yes. [laughter]

Lauren: What's the recreational value there?

All: There's none.

Brian: Someone found it in the trash.

Dave: Everyone dispel one myth about Connecticut. Aren't you all rich?

Tim: No, unfortunately not.

Brian: We did invent the pizza, the frisbee, and the hamburger in New Haven. So if you heard the myth that we didn't...

Matt: It's all true. And Connecticut's more than just a place to stop off between New York and Boston. People live here and work here.

Dave: This question is from Erin.

Tim: Oh my god.

Dave: What is your darkest secret?

Brian: We want to get famous, even though we pretend we don't.



DAVE BRAINWRECK

TOP FIVES

RAZORCAKE

Adam Bowers

- Summer Vacation, *Condition*
- Andrew Jackson Jihad, *Knife Man*
- Bridge and Tunnel, *Rebuilding Year*
- Burn Collector #15
- Explosions In The Sky, *Earth Is Not a Cold Dead Place*

Adrian Salas

- Best Things from 2011
I Just Got around to
- Cutman, *Universal Laws*
 - 400 Blows, *Sickness and Health*
 - Dum Dum Girls, *Only in Dreams*
 - Bomb the Music Industry!, *Vacation*
 - Cutman, *Universal Laws*

Andy Conway

1. For Science reunion at the Don Giovanni Records Showcase, Music Hall of Williamsburg, 2/11/12
2. The Boston Strangler, *Primitive LP*
3. Omegas, *NY Terminator EP*
4. Nazi Dust, *Witching Hour LP*
5. Brick Mower, *Under the Sink LP*

Aphid Peewit

- Spits, *V CD*
- *Words of Advice: William S. Burroughs on the Road DVD*
- Fucked Up, *David Comes to Life CD*
- Austin Osman Spare, by Phil Baker (book)
- Joseph Campbell: *Mythos 3 DVD*

Art Ettinger

- Summer Vacation, *Condition LP*
- Various Artists, *30 Years of Oi! ...Never Surrender... 3 x LP*
- ANTiSEEN / Flat Tires, *Hail to the Chief, Split 7"*
- No Statik, *No Hospice 7"*
- Cute Lepers, *Head Over Heels 7"*

Ben Snakepit

- Top Five Songs Played at My Wedding
1. Groovie Ghoulies, "Til Death Do Us Party"

2. Hex Dispensers, "Buy You a Ring"
3. RFTC, "Let's Get Busy"
4. Fleshies, "Shitface"
5. Marked Men, "My Love"

Bill Pinkel

- Marvelous Darlings, *Single Life LP*
- Tenement, *Blind Wink LP*
- Delay, *Rushing Ceremony LP*
- The Max Levine Ensemble live at VLHS and their *Elephant in the Room 7"*
- Low Culture, demo

Billups Allen

- Top 5 Band Declaration Songs: With "We're" in the Lyrics
1. Devo, "Jocko Homo"
 2. Reagan Youth, "Reagan Youth"
 3. The Queers, "You're Trippin'"
 4. The Anti-Nowhere League, "We Are the League"
 5. Metallica, "Whiplash"

Bryan Static

- Diarrhea Planet, *Loose Jewels*
- The Spits, *V*
- The Brokedowns, *Species Bender*
- Riverdales, *Storm the Streets*
- Sonic Avenues, *Television Youth*

Candice Tobin

1. The Spits, *IV*
2. The Sultans, *Ghost Ship*
3. Night Birds, *Fresh Kills Vol. 1*
4. The Broosevelts, *DUIOU*
5. The Bananas, *New Animals*

Chad Williams

- Paper Bags, *II 7"*
- Hookers, *Horror Rises from the Tombs LP*
- Classics Of Love, Self-titled LP
- Sharp Objects, Self-titled LP
- Sydney Ducks, *Esprit de Corps 7"*

Chris Mason

1. Jay Reatard, *Watch Me Fall LP* (Yeah, I know...I'm a bit late.)
2. Sonic Avenues, *Television Youth LP*
3. Nervosas, Demo cassette
4. Peeple Watchin', Demo cassette
5. Post-Teens, Self-titled 7"

Chris Pepus

- *What Would Jello Do?* (news program)
- Journalist Chris Hedges's lawsuit against President Obama over the indefinite-detention law.
- *World on a Wire* (film)
- *Another Year DVD*
- *The Bride Wore Black* (film)

Chris Terry

1. Reports, *Dinamo Cambridge LP*
2. Action Bronson, *Contemporary Man MP3*
3. Ohbliv, *Freekphone Cassette*
4. Sam Greenlee, *The Spook Who Sat by the Door* (novel)
5. My short story "Red Velvet" on ChicagoReader.com

Craig Horky

1. Emotionally unavailable redheads
2. All Eyes West, Self-titled
3. Cheap Girls, *Giant Orange*
4. The Fencemen
5. The EMP Collective in Baltimore

Craven Rock

1. *Radical Dreaming: Use Your Dreams to Change Your Life* by John D. Goldhammer, Ph.D. (book)
2. Reading Group, *Hugging Is Mandatory EP* and songs from forthcoming EP
3. *Raw Deal #13* by Joey Alone (zine)
4. *Basic Paper Airplane #5* (zine)
5. Shabazz Palaces, *Black Up CD*

Danny Segura

1. Canadian Rifle, *Facts 7"*
2. Lagwagon, *Thrashed*
3. Summer Vacation, *Condition LP*
4. Fatlip, *The Loneliest Punk*
5. The Ergs, *Upstairs/Downstairs*

Daryl Gussin

- Shellshag, *Fuck Society Vol. 1 LP*
- Kim Phuc, *Copsucker LP*
- Marvelous Darlings, *Single Life LP*
- Dead Language, Self-titled LP
- Blood Buddies, Demo and live

Designated Dale

- Top 5 Female Powerhouse Singers
1. Joan Jett
 2. Chrissie Hynde
 3. Exene Cervenka
 4. Roxy Epoxy
 5. Donita Sparks

Donna Baluchi

- Top 5 Ramones Songs (You Probably Have Never Heard)
1. "All The Way," *End of the Century*
 2. "Somebody Like Me," *Subterranean Jungle*
 3. "Love Kills," *Animal Boy*
 4. "Smash You," *Too Tough To Die*
 5. "I Don't Want to Grow Up," *Adios Amigos*

Ever a.k.a. The Girl About Town

1. *Violence Girl* by Alice Bag
2. Finally seeing The Descendents
3. Smashing Pumpkins, *Siamese Dream 2 x LP*
4. OI' Dirty Bardard, *...Return to the 36 Chambers: Dirty Version 2 x LP*

Jennifer Federico

- Future Virgins, *Western Problems*
- Sydney Ducks, "Esprit De Corps" b/w "Joaquin Murrieta" 7"
- Kicker and Ghoul at Gilman, Berkeley
- Boats! and Avengers at Bottom of the Hill, San Francisco
- La Corde and Neighborhood Brats at the Stork Club, Oakland

Joe Dana

1. Ian's Party in Chicago! Sass Dragons, the Brokedowns, Strait A's, In Defence, Vacation Bible School, Rad Payoff, Treasure Fleet, the Manix and so much more!
2. Sixth Annual Dre Day at the Blue Star. Summer Vacation did "Express Yourself." French Exit did a mash up of "El Scorcho" and "Bitches Ain't Shit." Rumspringer did "Fuck with Dre Day."
3. The Spits at Nomad Gallery. My first time seeing them!
4. Banner Pilot Shows at VLHS and the Blue Star with awesome openers: Turkish Techno, French Exit, Horror Squad, Madison Bloodbath, Dudes Night, and more!
5. Chissum Worthington and Rumspringer at VLHS for Marty's b-day

Joe Evans III

- Defect Defect, Self-titled cassette
- House Boat, *The Thorns of Life LP*
- Lagwagon, *Let's Talk about Feelings CD* Reissue

Express Yourself

- Squints, *Taking Toll* CD
- Toys That Kill, *The Citizen's Abortion* LP

Juan Espinosa

- Warrior Kids, *Les Enfants de l'Espoir* reissue LP
- True Radical Miracle, *Cockroaches* LP and *Termites* LP
- Give, *Boots of Faith* 7"
- Wax Museums, *Eye Times* CD
- Various, *Relief Mixtape* CDR compiled by White Wars

Keith Rosson

- Reckless, *Ocean* LP
- Various Artists, *Teenage Kicks* Cassette
- Christ On Parade, *A Mind Is a Terrible Thing* LP
- Waxahatchee, *American Weekend* LP
- Assembling a new design/illustration portfolio for the first time in five years and realizing, goddamn, I have worked on some pretty rad projects.

Kurt Morris

1. The Ex, *Catch My Shoe*
2. Misfits, *Collection I*
3. *Primal Scream* by Nick Bliko (book)
4. *Life on the Color Line* by Gregory Howard Williams (book)
5. *My Dark Places* by James Ellroy (book)

Liz Prince

- Top Five Performances at Ladyfest Boston*
1. Sick Fix
 2. Siamese Twins
 3. Alice Bag reading from her book *Violence Girl*
 4. Waxahatchee
 5. Libyans

Mark Twistworthy

- White Crime, *End of Change* EP
- The Maxines, *Queer Mods* EP
- Uh-Oh, Self-titled LP
- The Best, EP and live
- Weird Party, EP and live

Matt Average

- Festa Desperato, *Psi Vaticano* LP
- Bloody Hammer, *Apathy Is Bliss* EP
- Grin And Bear It, Self-titled EP
- Eddie Brock / Lapse, Split EP
- Koban, *Solid Gold* EP

Marty Ploy

- Divers, Self-titled 7"
- The Max Levine Ensemble, *Elephant in the Room* 7"
- ADD/C, *Busy Days* LP

- Horror Squad / Dudes Night, Split 7"
- Marvelous Darlings, *Single Life* LP

Mike Frame

1. Descendents, live in Denver
2. Pains Of Being Pure At Heart, *Belong*
3. Slow Death, *Born Ugly Got Worse*
4. Chris Knight, entire catalog
5. Nick 13, Self-titled

Mor Fleisher-Leach

- Top Five Singles by The Chills*
1. "Doledrums" b/w "Hidden Bay" 7"
 2. "I Love My Leather Jacket" b/w "The Great Escape" Double A-Sided 12" Single
 3. "Pink Frost" b/w "Purple Girl" 7"
 4. "Heavenly Pop Hit" 12" Single
 5. "Wet Blanket" b/w "I Think I Thought I'd Nothing Else to Think About" 7"

Nardwuar the Human Serviette

1. John M. Bennett's sound poetry (johnmbennett.net)
2. Lux and Ivy's Favorite Records (blog.wfmu.org/freeform/2009/02/lux-and-ivys-favorites-mp3s.html)
3. The Ballantynes, "Message" b/w "Railtown Abby" 7"
4. Happy Noose LP
5. J.J. And The Real Jerks, "The Wringer" b/w "Shootin' from the Hip" 7"

Nighthawk

- Underground Railroad To Candyland, *Knows Your Sins* LP
- Iron Chic, *Not Like This* LP
- *Baseball: A Film* by Ken Burns DVD
- The Mr. T Experience
- Watching The Royal Rumble live in Saint Louis (Sixth row off the floor! Thank you Evan "Air" Bourne!)

Paul Comeau

1. Youth Avoiders, *Time Flies* 7"
2. Fucked Up, *Year of the Tiger* 12" EP
3. The War Is On, *Welcome to the Rust Belt* CD
4. Police Truck, *Under Custody* 7"
5. Now Denial / Get Laid, Split 7"

Rene Navarro

1. Pangea, *Killer Dreams* 7"
2. Johnny Ill Band, Self-titled 7"
3. Having a ticket to see Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band
4. *To a God Unknown* by John Steinbeck
5. *A Better Life*, directed by Chris Weitz

Replay Dave

- Steve Adamyk, *Forever Won't Wait* LP
- Averkiou, *The New Imperative* 7"
- Cheap Girls, *Giant Orange* LP
- Traveling, *End of Summer* 7"
- Billy No Mates, *Duck, Duck, Goose* LP

Reverend Nørð

- Impediments, The, *Amphetamine Stepdad* 45
- Sir Lord Von Raven, *Please Throw Me Back in the Ocean* LP
- Jet Staxx, *I'm Gonna Be the Best Guy* 45
- Pumphouse Gang, Self-titled LP
- Armitage Shanks, *All Cisterns Go!* 7"EP

Naked Rob

Radio Valencia | 87.9FM, SFC

1. Black Cobra, *Valera* LP (SF sludge metal)
2. Zero Down, *Looking to Start a Riot* CD (Seattle r'n'r)
3. On Top, *Top Heavy* CD (Philly r'n'r)
4. Iron Reagan, Demo 2012 (East Coast hardcore punk)
5. Melvins, *Endless Residency* box set (Duh! It's the Melvins!)

Ryan Horky

1. Napalm Death, *Utilitarian* LP
2. Piebald, *We Are the Only Friends We Have* LP
3. Wormrot, *Noise 10"*
4. Sonny Sharrock, *Ask the Ages* CD
5. The Copyrights, *North Sentinel Island* LP

Sal Lucci

1. OBN IIIs, *The One and Only* LP
2. Mark Sultan, *Whatever I Want* LP
3. Mark Sultan, *Whenever I Want* LP
4. Ardillas, Self-titled LP
5. Jay Reatard, *Better than Something* documentary

Sean Koepenick

- Upcoming Spring Shows in Boston, MA*
1. Cock Sparrer (May)
 2. Peter And The Test Tube Babies (April)
 3. Nightbirds (April)
 4. Dropkick Murphys (day before St. Patrick's Day)
 5. Refuse Resist / Pinkerton Thugs / Swaggerin' Growlers / Dead Aces / The Old Edison (St. Patrick's Day)

Steve Hart

1. *To Serve God and Wal-Mart*, by Bethany Moreton (book)
2. James Thomas (Mermen), *Blues of Elsewhere* CD
3. 33 1/3: *Reign in Blood*, by D.X. Ferris (book)
4. *Spray Paint the Walls*, by Stevie Chick (book)
5. *Black Flags and Windmills*, by Scott Crow (book)

Steve Larder

1. Shyster, *That's My Story and I'm Stickin' to It*
2. Kilimanjaro Dark Jazz Ensemble, *From the Stairwell*
3. Gridlink, *Orphan*
4. Nazi Dust, *Wretched Hour*
5. Normand Corbeil, *Heavy Rain Ost*

Toby Tober

- Top 5 Movies I Have Enjoyed Recently*
1. *Tyrannosaur*
 2. *Tucker and Dale vs Evil*
 3. *Take Shelter*
 4. *An Idiot Abroad*, Season 1
 5. *A Dangerous Method*

Todd Taylor

- Summer Vacation, *Condition* LP
- Mind Spiders, *Meltdown* LP
- Eddy Current Suppression Ring, *So Many Things* 2 x LP
- Weird Lovemakers, *Electric Chump* CD
- *Geneva13* (zine)
- Marvelous Darlings, *Single Life* LP

Ty Stranglehold

- Top 5 Y Bands*
1. Young Canadians
 2. Youth Brigade
 3. Young Offenders
 4. Yuppie Pricks
 5. Young Livers

Vincent Battilana

- Woollen Kits, "Maths" b/w "Out of Town" 7"
- Boomgates, "Layman's Terms" b/w "Nothing" 7"
- Kim Phuc, *Copsucker* LP
- Sea Lions, *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Sea Lions but Were Afraid to Ask* LP
- Tunabunny, *Minima Moralia* LP



1994!: *Most Deaf: 7*

I guess you could call this hardcore with dense, layered hooks just splattered across song structures that feel like complex puzzles more than tunes. The perfect gift for that math rock fan on yer list who thinks Hüsker Dü were just too goddamned simplistic. —Jimmy Alvarado (Kiss Of Death)

ABOLITIONIST: *It Used to Rain: LP*

To my ears, Portland's Abolitionist has a very interesting amalgam of influences happening. I'm catching aural glimpses of post-"revolution summer" DC, of Blank Fight/TBIAPB crusty folkiness, of early Gilman East Bay heyday, and of the Radon/Spoke/*Finding the Rhythms* Hot Water Music Gainesville sound. The common thread running throughout all of these snapshots is the obvious authenticity and sincerity associated with the bands involved, and these are qualities that Abolitionist has in spades: terrific, heartfelt lyrics; interesting, occasionally quirky melodies; and, most importantly, a passion and energy that would appeal to fans of any of the aforementioned bands/genres. Great, great work. —Dave Williams (1859, facebook.com/1859Records)

ALICJA-POP: *"I Play the Fool" b/w "Water Death": 7"*

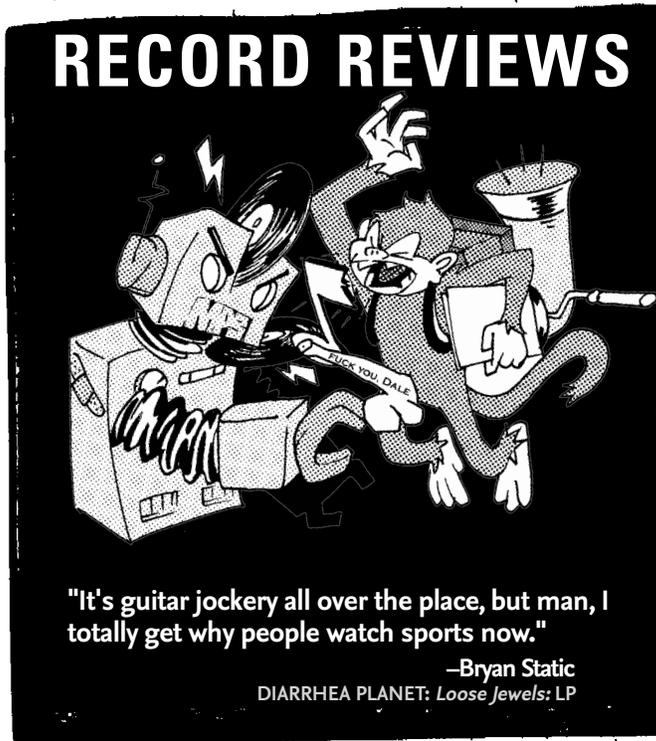
My exposure to Ms. Pop's endeavors outside of her work with Lost Sounds is severely limited, so I can't really speak to where this rests in her body of work. What I can say, though, is that both songs have a minimalist, almost demo-like quality, with what sounds like a drum machine and guitars that are sans big studio trickery. Of the two songs here, "I Play the Fool" is the most immediately catchy, with some nice drony guitar to anchor the tasty hooks that fly by. "Water Death" is a bit more sophisticated, deftly hiding its buried treasures for those willing to visit 'n' dig a bit more to find 'em. —Jimmy Alvarado (Certified PR)

AMOEBAS: *Self-titled: CD*

Modern Action continues to lay claim to the modern take on the early thud-punk sounds of California, and this release only digs 'em in deeper. Spot-on, these kids are, with a sound that recalls the best of those long-gone days, especially the Skulls, but delivered with none of the cobwebs and dust that usually coats those moldy memories. Great stuff, and worthy of more than a few listens. —Jimmy Alvarado (Modern Action)

ANNE: *Dream Punx: LP*

Wow. This is *not* what I was expecting from a new A389 release. Shoegaze/dream pop drawing heavily on My Bloody Valentine and The Jesus And



"It's guitar jockery all over the place, but man, I totally get why people watch sports now."

—Bryan Static

DIARRHEA PLANET: *Loose Jewels: LP*

Mary Chain, churning out dark, woozy, lovely tracks that, regardless of their complete non-hardcoreness, fit quite cozily alongside A389's decidedly heavier numbers. This is a collection of previous recordings sequenced into one full-length record, but the cohesion is seamless. And while the influence of the dreary popsters of yesteryear is undeniable, Anne still manages to sound current and relevant, creating an updated take on a sound that could easily come off as dated or campy/retro. A killer release that transcends genres and that I recommend very highly. —Dave Williams (A389)

ANTI-NOWHERE LEAGUE: *This Is War: 7"*

The title track is one of their more solid tunes in recent years, built on a strong riff and lyrics that showcase an apocalyptic bent, building upon their usual nihilism. The flip, "Good As It Gets," is an acoustic tale of folks realizing that they probably will never attain the "better" life they long for. Pretty heady, serious stuff from this lot, best known for tunes like "I Hate People." —Jimmy Alvarado (Papagájúv Hlasatel, phr.cz)

ARMITAGE SHANKS:

All Cisterns Go!: 7" EP

Even the most cursory listener could suss out the Childish connections, right down to the cover of Alternative TV's

"Action Time Vision." That said, they handle themselves handily in their corner of the garage punk pool, with their three originals here showcasing a band that can punk it up with the best of them while still managing embed a potent hook or two in the sarcasm to go off when you least expect it. —Jimmy Alvarado (Braindart)

ATOM NOTES: *Spare Parts: CD*

Interesting bit of work here. The base is yer standard thud-punk, but on top they layer nice bits of other influences—surf, post-punk, power pop—and deliver tunes that are more sophisticated and challenging. These are songs to be savored in order to appreciate the work put into 'em, which I guess runs counter to instinct in a world now obsessed with instant access and unbridled consumption, but the payoff is definitely worth the effort. Also included are tracks from a single and an EP, which are no less faboo. —Jimmy Alvarado (Combat Rock)

ATTENTION: *Another Year: 7"*

It's funny. When I first heard this band, I was like, "Oh, another one of *these* bands," but then I couldn't really think of any direct comparisons. Sure, musically, Attention channels *Can't Slow Down/Through Being Cool*-era Saves The Day, but Glenn's vocals are a far cry from Chris Conley's nasally sugar pop. There's more in common with Gunmoll

or fellow Canadians Barrier here, maybe with even more hardcore influence in the vocals (dare I say there's a touch of Vogelism in the delivery?!). Anyway, really catchy, dance-and-singalong stuff here. Looking forward to a full-length. Rad. —Dave Williams (Square Up)

BABY TEARS: *Self-titled: 7" single*

Trashy, fuzzed-out, and distorted garage gnarl. The first song, "Homeless Corpse," is a jumpy and noisy fucking tune. Drums are hammered, guitars are throttled, the singer proclaims that he "don't like it!" and a haze of feedback hangs in the air. But it's the song on the second side, "She Sells Eggs," that keeps this on the record player a bit longer. The drums are punchy and chunky; the bass that comes in with its thick and turgid sound is what makes this one a winner. The riffs are close to pummeling, but never beating you over the head. They're more about rocking out and getting off. —M.Avrq (Rainy Road, rainyroadrecords.com)

BACCHUS: *Self-titled: LP*

I hear a definite From Ashes Rise influence in this band. But Bacchus is definitely darker, moodier, and heavier. They have tempo changes that turn on a dime, breakdowns (check the switch in "Parasite"—damn good!), and the like. When they slow down a little, the music gets even darker as a result, and it's this aspect about their music I like most. The speedy parts benefit and have more impact from the set up of the slower pace. The opening to "Itchy Blood" with the guitars playing off each other is my favorite thing on this record. It really creates the mood and pulls you in; cold and brooding, then it picks up to something more bombastic, though not bludgeoning. Drums are beat to hell here, and it sounds great. Fans of this style will not be disappointed. —M.Avrq (Distroy, DistroyRecords.com / Contrasz!, diyordie.net)

BIG KIDS: *Phone Home: LP*

Big Kids remind me of Kudrow, which is Bomb The Music Industry's Jeff Rosenstock playing Archers Of Loaf-inspired indie rock. Mix that in with a little bit of Titus Andronicus and there you have it. Big Kids employ the techniques of '90s emo/indie with the force of a pop punk band, which, I guess, would require some Jawbreaker in the recipe, too. Check it out; you might like it. —Bryan Static (Protagonist, protagonistmusic.com / Adagio 830, audagio830.de)

BLOODY HAMMER: *Apathy Is Bliss: EP*

So gawwwd damn good! So many reasons to love this record; it's hard to know where to start to tell you that you should really have this in your life. My

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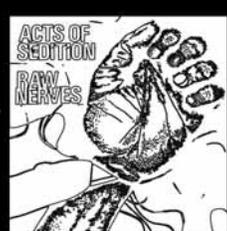


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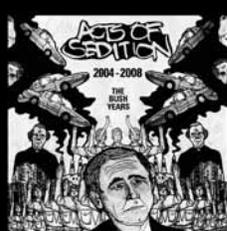


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eyes were bulging out of my skull the whole time I was listening to this record, mainly in disbelief that something so good, so righteous, had found its way into my feeble existence. That something as noble and holy as this Bloody Hammer record had put a little bit of sunshine into the grey that is my life. Before hearing this beauty, I was shopping around for a pistol that would match my shoes as I blew my brains out over the holidays. But, fuck no, this record intervened with its awesomeness and set me straight. There is hope. Not the kind of hope that people use to win elections, but real hope. The kind you can see and hear. The kind that makes you want to face the day and take it on, instead of the usual, "Oh, shit another fucking day ahead of me..." This is punk fucking rock to the core. The kind of music that gets up the noses of the straights, the kind that miscreants thrive on. It's ugly, full of attitude, and delivered in a "straight up, don't give a fuck" way. They can hit the high speeds, then go for something a little more subdued with some "who-ooh" underneath ("Public Enemy"). So many songs on here are destined for classic status among those wise enough to grab this. Somewhere out there you will find people singing along to "Dead Erection," "True Love," "I Don't Care," the previously mentioned "Public Enemy," "Hysteria," "God Bless America," and "Keep Running." Imagine if GG Allin had fronted a hardcore band in the early '80s. Get off your dead ass and get this. -M.Avr (Cutthroat, cutthroatrecords, blogspot.com)

BRAINBOMBS: Genius and Brutality... Taste and Power: LP

Like its relative, industrial music (and when I say "industrial" I'm talkin' Einstürzende Neubauten, Whitehouse, Throbbing Gristle, SPK, Minimal Man, and so on, not dance music with drill samples to make it "edgy"), noise rock is a bit of an acquired taste. It involves an appreciation for repetition, abrasive sounds played/performed at often excessive volumes, a willingness to overlook the fact that the standard verse/chorus/verse song structure is goin' right out the window, and a tolerance for subject matter that's bound to offend/upset someone, oh, every fourteen seconds or so. In short, it's not something one wants to play at the next pinocle social. This reissue from these Swedish malcontents, originally released in 1994, fits right in with peers like early Swans, Cop Shoot Cop, and so on. With a guitar sound that's part sheet metal/part sledgehammer, the music is often plodding and based around a simple riff or two played ad nauseum, and with titles like "Fuckmurder," "Wash in Blood," and "Queen of Necrophiles," you know you're not gonna get something high on the annual "most recommended PC listening" list, which is as it should be, goddammit. Everyone needs their tastes and mores affronted now and again, especially those associated with a scene as regimented and myopic as punk rock can be. -Jimmy Alvarado (Skrammel, skrammelrecords.se)

BRAT PACK: Stupidity Returns: CD

The eleven tracks here demonstrate this Netherlands band is well versed in the beach and sun-aded sounds of modern Southern California hardcore. The tempos are, for the most part, zippy and the poppy sheen that makes bands like The Offspring is very much in evidence. The European punk sensibilities shine through, however, in the lyrics, which are markedly more substantive in thought and execution than most bands pandering to the types of punters who dig this sound. Can't say it completely worked for me, but there's no denying they do what they do well. -Jimmy Alvarado (Shield)

BRIGHT IDEAS: Saturdays and the Turning Tide: LP

It took me several listens to get my knee jerk reactions to settle down. This is pop. Pop pop. There's nothing ragged, sharp, scrappy, angry, or aggravated about it. We capily hung out after we got off work. Got a couple of beers. We found ourselves at the same parties; I was ready to take the needle off the vinyl at any time. But Bright Ideas proved several things. They're not precious. They're not embarrassing. They're not fluff or a sugar-candied shell. They're just really good pop pop; nothing to be defensive about. Originally recorded in 2005 and solely released on CD, Bright Ideas features two thirds of the Bananas—Marie and Scott. On drums is Tim White. And knowing Squirmy Records—having released the fantastic Dirty Marquee record—and having been soaking in the rays of both Thee Makeout Party and

The Clean lately, there's a continuum of like-minded bands afoot. It's sort of like the clean-cut, non-cut-off-shorts, daily-shower-schedule, different-career-path-but-still-cool cousin to The Bananas or Onion Flavored Rings. Sounds like riding your bike during the summer without shoes on. -Todd (Squirmy)

BROWN SUGAR: ...Sings of Birds and Racism: LP

Brown Sugar play mainly mid tempo hardcore punk that varies in tone and delivery. It's not all thrash, thrash, thrash! Instead, the urgency is delivered in the noisy playing and the drawn out songs that build tension and never really let it go, choosing to hang on until the last notes of the final song, "I Wanna Be a Somali Pirate." The vocals have a belligerence about them that recalls Darby Crash; how they growl and hold onto words. In fact, there's an air of belligerence over this whole record. Sometimes, the songs sound like they're near the point of collapsing in on themselves. Other times, they're wound up and jittery. The addition of the saxophone and messing with the length of songs adds to the feeling of looseness and stretching the boundaries of hardcore punk in 2011/2012. I'm reminded of '80s hardcore—in the sense when bands used albums to mess with their overall sound—like sometimes amid all the speed and rage, they would throw in an acoustic number somewhere towards the end. Though Brown Sugar have yet to do that, they do things like slow it down, cut back on the distortion, and

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switch up the vocal style a smidge for a song like "Blow" that brings to mind mid-'80s DC hardcore like Gray Matter. "I Wanna Be a Somali Pirate" has a riff lifted from Pink Floyd's "Interstellar Overdrive." This is the sort of album you can sit back and take in and hear new things with repeated listens. I've played this thing like ten times tonight, hearing more and more each time. Looking forward to hearing where these guys take their sound. —M.Avrq (Feral Kid, feralkidrecords.com / Feeble Mind, feeblexminds.blogspot.com)

BROWN SUGAR: Tropical Disease: 7"

Brown Sugar have been pretty busy in the past year or so, and I was surprised to see this coming out so quickly after their LP. It's a bit of a departure from the LP, but I actually like the differences. There's a little more Southern California sound on these songs than on their last few records. "La La Land" sounds a lot more like Gun Club than it does Minor Threat. It works because Brown Sugar are the kind of hardcore band that can pull off a specific style that's not their own without turning it into a kitschy novelty track. The most impressive thing about this band, that's become apparent over the course of several records, is that while they have a good overall aesthetic, they're less concerned with creating a "sound" or a "mood," and just write really good songs. —Ian Wise (Fashionable Idiots, fashionableidiots.com)

BY THE THROAT: Riders of Board: CDEP

Four-man Boston band that plays fast and hard and takes no prisoners on this four-song EP. The whole shebang clocks in under ten minutes, with one song under sixty seconds. Minor Threat would be proud. I'm hearing Angry Samoans, JFA, and even some Swiz thrown into this frozen cocktail punk slushie. "Indian Summer Revenge" and "Inflicted" will definitely be on repeat play. It's cool to see a new band know what they want and know how to get it. Stay thirsty, BTT. —Sean Koepenick (Self-released)

CAPITALIST CASUALTIES / NO COMPLY: Split: EP

Live recordings from both bands here. Capitalist Casualties fans may be interested in this, since this a recording from Gilman in 1994, when Matt was still wailing on the drums. A lot of folks say he was their best, and having seen him live, I was pretty blown away. You can hear for yourself and decide, since the live setting is the true proving ground. We get five songs from them, including a Antischism cover, "Greedy Bastards." No Comply channel Man Is The Bastard filtered through a couple guys in Florida, then mixed in with some Spazz. The bass is skull-rattling, the speeds are insane, and this side will separate the lifers from the part timers. —M.Avrq (To Live A Lie, tolivealie.com)

CASTET / COLLINA: Split: 7" EP

Castet: Wow, busy little bee's these guys've been—this is the second split

and third release total from them this cycle. As with the other two, they pull out the stops and kick down with some potent Polish thrash. Collina: Just when I'm thinking to myself that they come across like SS Decontrol covering Minor Threat, on comes a cover of "Small Man Big Mouth." Good stuff all around. —Jimmy Alvarado (Pasazer, pasazer.pl)

CATHOLIC GUILT: Postcards from Copper Canyon: Cassette

The sound of tapes being left in the sun to warp and melt, then played back in a empty warehouse where there's more sand than surrounding buildings. This could be the soundtrack to a number of J.G. Ballard novels, where nature has taken back what is rightfully its place among the ruins of man. There are layers of sound that contrast to one another, creating a din that is hypnotic and unsettling at times. It's akin to dropping a box of silverware in library, then immediately playing a distorted Jandek tape over the PA. Experimental music done right, and worth more than a few listens. —M.Avrq (Manic Static, manicstatic.blogspot.com / plesicko@hotmail.com)

CIGARETTE CROSSFIRE: In between the Cure and the Disease: CD

There's a lot of heart in this album. You can hear it in the vocals and the way the music is delivered in driving and melodic doses. They bring to mind Leatherface and Manifesto Jukebox: heavy, guitar-driven songs where there's the massive wall of sound, but the storm

tends to break, a melody comes out and swirls and meanders around the destruction, putting a poetic touch on the whole thing. But what really grabs me are the excellent lyrics. Much like the Slobos I reviewed elsewhere here, Cigarette Crossfire have done a great job of putting down in words what is going on the world today in a way that's not empty sloganeering or fantastical poses. They address the human condition and the ways we act and react in an effort to survive in a world that is looking darker and darker every day. But rather than throw up one's arms in defeat, they name the problems and go from there. It's best evidenced in the song "Form Before Function," addressing poverty and the games people play to get through. What I really like are the songs like "Patriot = Idiot" that confront the rise of the right and their (right wingers) denials of racism, while practicing the same, and "Blind Majority" which is about group think. It's all delivered with gravelly vocals that really put some fire in the words and drive the points home. —M.Avrq (Combat Rock Industry, combatrockindustry.net)

COMPLAINTS: No Action: 7" EP

Though staying well within the confines of the Modern Action "sound," I'm hearing some other stuff in their sound, like the Hates. Dunno whether or not it's intentional, but it definitely adds some interesting color to what they're doin'. Good stuff, as can be expected. —Jimmy Alvarado (Modern Action)

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CONSUMERS, THE:

All My Friends Are Dead: LP

Like Rocket From the Tombs, the Consumers didn't last long. The band released no material in its roughly eighteen-month lifespan. And if it weren't for *All My Friends Are Dead*, the Consumers likely would've been forgotten. The Consumers formed in Phoenix in 1977. The group's lineup was built around David Wiley (vocals), Paul Cutler (lead guitar), Mikey Borens (bass), Greg Jones (rhythm guitar), and "Jim" played drums (the band had a revolving door of drummers). The band was volatile. Shows in Phoenix were halted abruptly or ended in scuffles (hard to imagine, but punk really pissed people off thirty years ago). In late 1977, The Consumers recorded an eight-track demo with Joey Dears, a high school pal of guitarist Paul Cutler. In early '78, The Consumers made the logical choice of relocating to Los Angeles where they shared bills at The Masque with X, The Alley Cats, and The Dils. By late 1978, they were done. In 1995 Larry Hardy, head honcho of In The Red Records, put out *All My Friends Are Dead*—the eleven tracks The Consumers recorded with Joey Dears back in '77. (Hardy was a fan of 45 Grave and heard the tracks on a bootleg back in '81 while hanging out at Dinah Cancer's house.) In 2001, the tracks were reissued on CD. With eBay prices hovering around the fifty dollar mark, Larry Hardy thankfully reissued *All My Friends Are Dead* again on vinyl in 2012. As a historical footnote, *All My Friends Are Dead* would've been an interesting

release. What really gets me about *All My Friends Are Dead* is the quality of the tracks. The songs are absolutely timeless—they could've been recorded in late '77 or yesterday. The Consumers were an incredible punk band that didn't have to go through the birth pangs of punk rock; the group was erudite, could play, and was already aware of Henry Cow and Robert Wyatt—influences that'd take years for other groups to discover. The fidelity of the tracks is incredible (believe it or not, they were recorded on an eight-recorder in a demo studio). *All My Friends Are Dead* is distilled anger—capturing refined, edgy and intuitive rock'n'roll. There's no way anyone else could've recorded something like this. (When 45 Grave tried to re-record these tracks later on the *Autopsy* LP, they were lacking.) It's hard to believe that an eleven-track demo that lay dormant for eighteen years would turn out to be a lost gem. Thanks to In The Red, it's available. After The Consumers, Paul Cutler would go on to form 45 Grave. He later joined the Dream Syndicate, replacing Karl Precoda. David Wiley formed Human Hands. Mikey Borens briefly played guitar for 45 Grave. Unfortunately, only Paul Cutler and Mikey Borens are alive today. —Ryan Leach (In The Red)

CONWABUNGA BABES:

Going Nowhere: Cassette

Going Nowhere is loaded with catchy riffs about partying and cool things. "Teenager" is a high-energy rocker with a Bratmobile feel to it. It rattles along as if it were on the brink of falling to

pieces. "Beach Babe" is among the slower fare and stands out as a modern seashore classic with a solid melody and catchy chorus. It particularly wins with the line: "If I lived in California, then I wouldn't be boring." All the songs are straightforward, yet the album never feels repetitive due to a high-quality catalogue of hooks. It's a great Saturday afternoon album. —Billups Allen (Burger)

CRAZY SQUEEZE, THE: Self-titled: 7"

Slinky punk rock'n'roll with an up-tempo original, "Gimme a Kiss," and a rock-solid cover of the Cocksparrer/Little Roosters ditty "I Need a Witness." This genre's been a bit stale lately, so this was a nice bit of stomp to knock off some of the accumulating dust. —Jimmy Alvarado (No Front Teeth)

CRUDDY: Negative World: LP

Hot damn! The '80s were thirty years ago and hardcore has never been better. At this point, I had pretty much given up all hope of ever finding a band that recreated the emotion and power of Black Flag's *Damaged*, but the answer has come in the form of Cruddy's *Negative World*. The bulk of the record's charm comes from the ingenuity in their songwriting. Barely a moment goes by where the riffs feel like filler to get to the next cool part of the song. It's an album filled with great ideas, using a formula that doesn't get done right very often. Highly recommended. —Bryan Static (12XU, 12xu.net)

CRUDE S.S.: Who'll Survive: 7"

Originally released in 1983, Sweden's Crude S.S. burn through six songs of distortion-fucked D-beat hardcore punk. The plodding, feedback-ridden intro to "Destroy Capitalism" is probably the most consuming part of the record, but the sheer length and crashing tempo changes of "Who'll Survive" may make it the most intense track. I know a lot of records say "Play loud" on them, and usually it's not necessary. But I think they were really on to something when they decided to put that sentiment on the back cover. It's true! —Daryl (Voltage)

CYCLOPS: Self-titled: 7" EP

BOOM BOOM! BOOM BOOM! I'm a huge Trashwomen fan. I owe the band a debt of gratitude. I came across the Trashwomen on a *Peel in the States* compilation I picked up when I was nineteen. Through them I became aware of Estrus Records. So to pick up a new 7" by Trashwomen Tina BOOM BOOM Lucchesi for review—that's something of a treat. Cyclops is Jonnycat and BOOM BOOM. Their act consists of being Cyclops—singing about their lives and concerns as, you guessed it, cyclops. Background music is raw garage/punk thump. Fucking rad as hell. Caught this duo a month ago and they slayed. Totally recommended. Added bonus: great photos by Tiger Lily on the covers. —Ryan Leach (Jonnycat/Mutant Rock)

DEAD TO ME: Moscow Penny Ante: CD

A return to form of sorts. A lineup shift from their last LP, *African Elephants*,



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has resulted in a more straight forward, yet beefed up sound this time around. The addition of guitarist/vocalist Sam Johnson and his more melodic voice to complement Chicken's, and guitarist Ken Yamazaki brings the band back to a sound more reminiscent of Dead to Me's *Cuban Ballerina* period. "Undertow," "Monarch Hotel," and "I Love My Problems" are among some of the best songs the band has turned out. The Samsung "No Lullabies" is an interesting diversion, as it sounds like a lost Cock Sparrer track from *Shock Troops*. Lyrically, "The Hand with Inherited Rings" is perhaps the band's most melancholy track, with its narrative of spending time with a close acquaintance (Mother? Wife? Sister?) with a terminal illness. All in all, the band has tightened the screws up again, which makes for a strong release. Totally worth checking out. -Adrian (Fat)

DIARRHEA PLANET: *Loose Jewels: LP*
Quite possibly the most charming record I've ever heard. My left brain is telling me that I shouldn't like this at all. There's extensive guitar noodling, as one would expect from a band with four guitarists, but it's instantly overridden by the catchy as hell vocals and well-written songs that never overstay their welcome. Sounds like the Marked Men at points and shares members with Vacation in some capacity. It's guitar jockey all over the place, but man, I totally get why people watch sports now. -Bryan Static (Infinity Cat, infinitycat.com)

DISCHARGE/OFF WITH THEIR HEADS: *Split: 7"*
If someone asked me to name two bands that you would never see on a split single, I'd have to say that there is a good chance that Discharge and Off With Their Heads would be on the list. That is part of what makes this record so great. The other part is the tunes. While I can never profess to being a diehard Discharge fan, I like them enough to know that they're still keeping it real. Angry and political forever. The flip side is what really gets me going, though. Off With Their Heads (with Mike Watt on bass and Jimmy from Toys That Kill on drums this time out) playing a song written by Bill from The Beltones. The result comes off sounding like the best Stiff Little Fingers' song you've never heard. I love it! -Ty Stranglehold (Drunken Sailor)

DIVINE RIGHT: *Pray for Me: EP*
Paying homage to classic '80s hardcore punk is hardly anything new or original, by any stretch of the imagination. But how many times does someone try and fail miserably? All too often, me thinks. Divine Right, however, tap into all the timeless aspects of early American hardcore punk with authority and confidence; almost as if they had invented this style. Five blows to the cranium of pissed-as-shit hardcore punk with just the right amount of those crucial breakdowns. Top that off with some great artwork and you have another winner handed in by Residue. -Juan Espinosa (Residue, residue-records.com)

DON GARNELLI: *The Amazing End of Everything: Cassette*
I like this. Totally not what I was expecting. The spine on the cover reads "Grindcore death," so, of course, I was expecting to hear harsh guitars, fucked up vocals, and minced drumming. Instead, this is something from out of left field. It's ambient noise with grindcore outbursts here and there. When they're in grind mode, it's cool. Sort of like Unholy Grave, with the short bursts of sound, then on to the next. But the strength of this tape—and the reason I keep going back to it—is the ambient sounds they're generating. There are cold squelches of sound, like a wind tunnel taped then ran slow on the playback, or the blips and clicks that float in and out of the speakers. This is kind of like what Gasp were attempting, but Don Garnelli are more successful and interesting. It doesn't sound forced at all. The soundscapes have a darkness about them, but it's not one of impending doom. It's as though you're spending a late night at an industrial plant and hearing all the sounds that go on as you walk around. -M.Avrq (To Live A Lie, tolivealie.com)

DOWNLOW NYHC: *Wall of Anger: CDEP*
Hardcore like you used to see at CBGB's on Sundays, where you thought you'd get beat up. By the end of it, I got the impression that they don't take themselves *too* seriously, which is a good thing. -Joe Evans III (United Riot)

DRIVEN FEAR: *Contender: CD*
In a colossally stupid move, I eschewed the "thou shalt not pick up for review any CD with a picture of a tree on its cover" commandment and lo and behold, I find myself listening to "Australian East Coast Hardcore," which is about as apt a description as can be found, emphasis on East Coast. The lyrics are a bit more substantive than the usual lot, but, musically, it's just another drop into a seemingly endless pond of faceless methead hardcore sprinkled with a breath of emo to give it the air of some sophistication. -Jimmy Alvarado (Pee)

EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING: *So Many Things: 2 x LP*
This is an assemblage of ECSR tracks, spanning their early demos, going through the title track from *Rush to Relax*, their third full length. It's curated. Not completeist. Not solely the "hits" or ephemera. It's this artful, confident touch, this feeling that you're being guided through a musical experience—even when it's songs that have all been released before (albeit extremely limited)—that shows the kaleidoscopic power and fun of ECSR. At its barest bones, the band is rock'n'roll. At its robes, it's simultaneously both proto- and post- a lot of genres. The beginnings. The eventual turning wheel of today. *So Many Things* is an excellent collection of one of the most powerful, entirely listenable, energetic Australian bands. Ever. If you want an "album" album, with beginning, middle, and end, I recommend *Primary Colours*.

DOWNTOWN STRUTS



Choosing a single off of "Victoria!", The Downtown Struts debut LP was an impossible task, as it's stacked with sing-alongs and anthems all the way through - Someone had to do it, so why not the band?! "Anchors" is what they felt most represented why you should pick up "Victoria!" - This song, and the rest of their long anticipated full-length, show the energy and vigor that shines through every time these guys take the stage!



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Here's where I'll get weird and you can drop down to the next review. About ten years ago, the oldest cave drawings—a by a long shot—were discovered in France. I was expecting stick figures. Maybe triangles for ladies' pelvises. Circles for heads. But the drawings were more complex than crude. Horses with motion and four front legs, shading, personality. The artists even used the contours of cave walls to develop volume, light, texture. It contains the earliest drawn depiction of a woman—who, herself, turns into an animal below the torso. Impressionistic, deliberate, patterned handprints, mark an entrance. I was surprised by the advancement in what's supposed to be so primitive, so dawn of the brain. This was their very first attempt. It was in a cave inhabited with bears. So when side A, the demos and early tracks, of ECSR spin around, I'm both amazed and comforted that no matter the modern equivalent of bears—international banks, multinational corporations, dictators, warlords, prick neighbors, pick your predatory animal—there've always been artists. Artists worth discovering because they'll remain meaningful years down the road, even if we're all headed for darkness, for another ice age. —Todd (Goner)

EGG CHEF: *Opinions Are Meaningless in the Void: 7*

Feelin' a bit blue 'cause the Phantom Limbs are no more? That Deadbeats EP on Dangerhouse just a wee bit too pricey? This'll do ye solid, kid. Three tunes of bizarre punk rife with psychosis and drama and enough time

changes to make you dizzy. Grade-A stuff here; unique and appropriately whacked out. My only question is how the fuck does the singer manage to remember all them lyrics? —Jimmy Alvarado (Apop, apoprecords.com)

EMBARRASSMENT, THE: *"Patio Set" b/w "Sex Drive": 7*

I know all of this because Jason Willis of the Knockout Pills and Weird Lovemakers loaded me up with three CDs of The Embarrassment ten years ago. Thanks, Jason. The Embarrassment were a punk band from Wichita, Kansas. (Punk's a label they countered with calling themselves, and a later album, "blister pop"). These are two tracks from their first-ever recording session in late 1979. I've always thought of the Embarrassment as building bridges in the middle of flat expanses. The middle of America—especially pre-internet—had a difficult time spreading independent music outside of its borders. It's this lack of ability to transcend being landlocked that was both a curse and a blessing. The curse is obscurity and taking thirty or more years for a world larger than the middle of America to embrace great bands. The blessing is making unique, time-resistant music. (The fate of the Zero Boys comes to mind, too.) The Embarrassment built many bridges. The bridge from Manchester, England (Joy Division) to Minneapolis (Replacements) and the bridge from Los Angeles (Alley Cats) to Athens, Georgia (REM) are just two of them. They're one of those bands that made a body of work—complex

circulatory systems of music—which time has reinforced that they're one of the shamefully looked-over, flown-over, bridge-building bands of the early '80s. A welcome re-reissue. (Big Time, then Heyday, now Last Laugh.) I fully recommend you spend time hunting this down. —Todd (Last Laugh)

EVACUATE: *Endless War: 7*

San Diego's Evacuate already has two LPs out and is definitely one of the finest current street punk bands. Featuring Mike Virus of Cheap Sex and The Virus on vocals, they try to emulate classic anarcho hardcore, but end up sounding much more complex. A good comparison is the old Philly band Dis Sucks, maybe also with a hint of early emo hardcore like Heroin. In any event, Evacuate continues to pump out records and play tons of shows. If you're turned off by the high density of kids cropping up with Evacuate patches, you're probably too stuck up to like them anyway. The rest of us are diving in. Deodorant is permissible, but certainly not required. —Art Ettinger (Voltage, voltage-shop.com)

EVIDENCE SMRTI: *Self-titled: LP*

Smrti translates into English as "death." This outfit from the Czech Republic reside in the heavy and crushing metallic hardcore punk realm populated by bands like Wolfbrigade, Hellshock, and Amebix, with equally dark and bleak lyrical content. The music box that is used in the song "Zapomen" gives the song an eerie effect, which brings a more interesting aspect to their sound. They

cover Nausea's "Cybergod," injecting more heaviness and urgency into this version than the original. You get the blistering wall of guitar sound coupled with the pummeling gallop of percussion required to make this stuff hit you dead in the chest. I'm very stoked to have this record in my collection. Comes with a color fold-out poster as well. —M.AvrG (Insane Society, insanesociety.net)

FAKE BOYS, THE: *Nice Knowing You: 7* EP

A two-guitar melding of pop punk and Foo Fighters. —Jimmy Alvarado (Kiss Of Death)

FAN ZUI XIANG FA: *Self-titled: 7*

This five piece out of Beijing, China, get big ups from me. Hailing from a country that unabashedly enforces censorship of the internet and openly imprisons dissenters, these guys are flipping their gov the bird. Their latest release features six tracks of face-smashing, teeth-grinding hardcore punk utilizing both English and Chinese lyrics. Heavy on the metal aspect, "Rip-Off" and "Target Me" take on a more punk'n'roll song structure. While four of the six tracks are sung in Chinese, the heavy guitar chords, crashing drums, and battle cry vocals speak a language any good punker can understand (there's a translated lyric sheet for those interested). Covering topics like over-consumption, conformity and living in a police state, this is a reminder that the struggle for freedom isn't just here in the States, it's global. Recommended. —Kristen K. (World Won't Listen)

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FESTA DESPERATO: *Psi Vatikano*: LP

Just when I thought crust was on the outs, along comes this record to change my narrow way of thinking. Holy fuggin' Kuhryst! This record is a crusher from start to end. It's heavily influenced by Swedish bands like Skitsystem, Wolfpack, and Victims, but with added intensity: massive wall of guitar, low end forever, pummeling percussion, and throaty, raspy vocals. They have a way of building the songs, creating a tension—then when it all comes together—there's this underlying groove that pulls you in and carries you along for the duration. There's a definite urgency in the playing that really makes this stuff work and not sound tired or like a band going through the motions. You can hear it in the way the guitars are bashed and the drums are smashed—as fast as they are rhythmic. Fast without being thrash, just give "Osada Nezivych" a spin, for example. I love how the bass has a tough-as-nails sound, thick with some distortion. The transition between "Driv Nebo Pozdeji" to "Kde Clovek Dodychal" is fantastic and keeps the energy constant. Great, great, great record! —M.Avrq (Insane Society, insanesociety.net)

FLAMINGO NOSEBLEED: *Headbanger*: CD

Ramones-derived pop punk that occasionally strives to be something a bit more interesting and substantive than that. —Jimmy Alvarado (Chain Smoking)

FOLDED SHIRT: "Tiny Boat" b/w "Mouth Clock": 7"

It's damn near impossible for me to not mention the words "super group" when trying to describe a band made up of members of the Darvocets, Out With A Bang, Homostupids, and Mr. California (most of whose records are very near and dear in my collection). But that's, ultimately, what we have here: a super group of super weirdoes fucking with your every expectation of what this could possibly sound like. The photo of the band on the insert offers a bit more perspective as to what it is you're listening to: a drum set which has what looks like a stove pot attached to it while it appears as if Mr. California is performing surgery on a butterfly-shaped guitar as the vocalist croons to it. If that's not fucking "weird punk" enough for you, then consider the fact that there are actually three songs on this, not two, and that there's no label credited for the release (you have to look carefully at both the run off etchings and the groove markings on the vinyl to figure this out). Sadly, this record is rumored to be their swan song, following an amazing full length from last year. I'm gonna miss eating their shit up with a spoon. Fuck yeah, I'm a "foldie"! —Juan Espinosa (Fashionable Idiots)

FROM THE DEPTHS / NEXT VICTIM: *Split*: LP

From the Depths: Metallic hardcore with a woman doing some actual singing and a man doing stereotypical grunt/growl-type vocals at the same time. Next Victim: Slow, plodding,

grandiose metal stuff with screechy vocals from a guy I'm guessing is singing in Polish. They got much better when I put the lyric sheet down and pretended they were singing woeful tunes about donuts and a "sea of shins." —Jimmy Alvarado (Nikt Nic Nie Wie)

FRONTLINE SOLDIERS: *Oath of Loyalty*: 7" EP

Ever fall in love with a band that never recorded? Or hear a comp with an amazing song from an artist that never put anything else out? Each and every subgenre of punk is full of lost bands and unreleased gems. The world of oi is no exception to that rule, especially since so many people move in and out of that hyper-specific subculture. Recorded around a decade ago, but not released until now, *Oath of Loyalty* collects all of the material Frontline Soldiers ever recorded, except for their legendary track on 2004's *Streets of America* comp. Lean and mean, with a spirited hardcore slant, Frontline Soldiers owe a lot to their N.Y.C. brethren Oxblood. This fantastic EP is a time warp to the exciting oi/street punk revival boom of the 1990s. It's frustrating to think of what other tapes are collecting dust in studios around the world. Now I'm getting nostalgic for records that don't even exist. How fucking postmodern is that? —Art Ettinger (United Riot)

FRUSTRATIONS: *Negative Reflections*: LP

For only three people, Frustrations crank out a massive sound. The guitar

dominates with scratched strings, screeching blasts of feedback, and oscillating sounds. The songs go off into noisy jams that bring to mind early Sonic Youth ("No Repair" sounds like it could be the counterpart to SY's "She Is Not Alone"), but instead of going over into completely art damaged territory, Frustrations keep everything planted firmly in rock (plus it helps when you have a drummer, like Scott Dunkerley, who can play well). At times, it's near psychedelic, as with a song like "These Woods," which starts off with a tense and dark mood, then picks up into something more "up" and moves with a nice groove before eventually collapsing into a mess of noise. The most straight forward song on here is "Confusion Kills"—though not really that "normal"—it goes straight to a fast pace and keeps on going to the end, with some noise thrown over the top for extra urgency. The only clunker on here is "Black Lighting," which tends to run a bit too long. The one thing I would like for them to do is let their drummer swing more in the songs. Once that happens, look out! —M.Avrq (X1, x-recs.com)

FUCKED UP: *Year of the Tiger*: 12" EP

This is the fifth annual single from Fucked Up revolving around the Chinese Zodiac. Yet another sprawling affair, with layer upon layer of instrument tracks, the depth of sonic textures present is staggering when listened to closely. Vocalist Damian "Pink Eyes" Abraham waxes poetic, making lyrical references to William Blake's "The Tyger," with support by Jim Jarmusch, and Annie-



Claude Deschênes on back up vocals. While more measured and less urgent than any of the tracks on last year's album *David Comes to Life*, I found "Year of the Tiger" to be among the most listenable of their zodiac singles. The B-side, "Onno" is a bit of drone-y, synth-y goodness for those into that sort of thing. Overall, this is recommended, but the diehard Fucked Up fans will be the ones to most appreciate it. —Paul J. Comeau (Matador)

FUR COATS: *Don't Make Me Beg: 7"*

If M.O.T.O.'s Paul Caporino doesn't consider his band a punk band, I wonder what M.O.T.O. would sound like if he did. Chances are it might sound like The Fur Coats. Take Caporino's distilled-pop-songwriting-savant-style mixed with salt of the earth, poppy, Chicago-style punk, and you have something pretty close to The Fur Coats. Contains ex-members of Das Kapital, Direct Hit!, and No Empathy. —Daryl (Dirt Cult)

GAGGERS, THE: *Rip You Apart: LP*

There's quite a bit of rock'n'roll swagger hardwired into the tunes, but, at the core, what yer getting' here is straight-ahead thud-punk with a singer trying to out-scream the dude fronting the Stitches. What they do they do well, and should provide hours of quality entertainment for the whole family. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dead Beat)

GOLDEN HELMETS / JIZZLOBBER: *Split: 7"*

Is it wrong that I look at splits as competitions? Is it unfair that, when

I listen to them, I picture each of the bands in a separate cage, hovering over a bottomless pit? Is it maybe a little egotistical that I imagine myself on a giant throne of skulls with two buttons in front of me—buttons that can send the band of my choice into an endless screaming descent? The bands have to play for their lives. The Golden Helmets have to pound on that Hammond organ and stomp like they never have in their lives, making certain their wild garage rock leaves an impression. Jizzlobbers are forced to demonstrate their mastery of heartfelt leather jacket rock'n'roll in two songs, drilling the chorus of "Dead Trousers Killed Johnny Thunders" into my head with all their might. How can I possibly choose between two bands that play each of these songs like it's the last song they'll ever play? I'll just have to kill them both. Just kidding. They can live for now, as long as they keep the energy up. —MP Johnson (THH)

GRAVEHILL: *Practitioners of Fell Sorcery: LP*

Boy, them Gehenna kids are mighty prolific these days. By my reckoning, this is the third or fourth release I've come across that features a member or two of that band. This time they delve into the black/death/trash metal realm with six songs that recall the best of the Teutonic speed metal bands like Kreator, Destruction, and especially Sodom. This style seems to be making a bit of a comeback in recent years, and this should rightfully rank as one of the better—and faithful—of the modern

installments, right down to lyrics like, "Archaic pages shall tell/In the black book of the earth/Demonic harbingers of the end/Necrosommer—bring forth hordes of the dead...." —Jimmy Alvarado (A389)

GRIDE: *Zaskuby Chaos: LP*

It's great how this band has morphed and grown over the years. Not content to stand still in one sound, they've mixed it up here and there, from straight-up, no-frills grind to some insanely highly complex, fast as fuck stuff that is near-mind boggling to take in all in one listen. The drumming on here is nuts! It's so fast and precise, I found myself laughing in disbelief. Like, "Holy shit! Is this played by a human?!" I'm in total awe. This sounds like a band who has spent hours and hours honing their sound and coming up with nothing but quality. There's no filler on here. Tempos switch with ease, guitars have that nice crunching sound, and the bass is on some jazz trip in the slow parts. "Na Louce V Horach Pos Lesem (On A Meadow Near the Forest in the Mountains)" has some crazy breakdowns and finds the time to throw in a metal guitar solo on top of all that. They slow it down some for "Cestou K Jame (On the Way to Hole)," with a repetitive riff that's near bludgeoning in its relentless pursuit, before finally washing out into a mix of ambient noise and guitar notes. Easily their best record yet. —M.Avrq (Insane Society, insanesociety.net)

HATEWAVE: *Sexual Healing 2: CD*

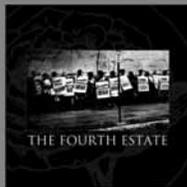
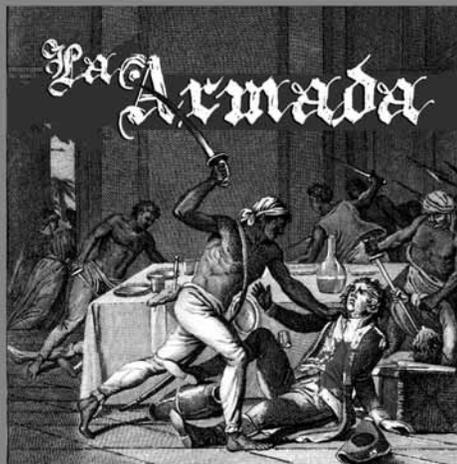
Sometimes punk rock celebrates utter brain-dead stupidity just to show how really smart it actually is. I'm not sure that's the case with Hatewave or not. For a reviewer like myself, it's not always easy to suss out the artists' true motivation for doing what they do, the way they do it—but I'm safe in saying that, whatever their motivation, this here Hatewave CD is bursting at the lobotomy seams with pure grade stupidity. And I'm not even sure that it's accurate to label it "punk"—though it does, at times, come across like punk's criminally half-witted cousin. Specifically, the kind of criminally half-witted cousin who is hidden by the family, chained to a rafter up in the attic, where he gnaws on old furniture legs and eats his own excrement. But it's probably more accurate to say that this sounds like just the sort of masturbatory twaddle you'd expect from some zit-covered pubescent trenchcoat-mafia-wannabe crust metal nerds who want more than anything to shock the world with their mooning vileness. But the truth is that what most people would find even more repulsive than Hatewave's spite-puking lyrics or their lame "rape scene" cover photograph, is the idea that these spoiled little booger-eaters probably recorded *Sexual Healing 2* with brand spanking new, top of the line musical instruments and recording equipment, all provided to them by cringing, brow-beaten parents at their wits end. Because, if anything, this CD screams "bored rich kids" more than anything else. Then again, maybe this really is meant to be a send-up of half-

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baked crust metal fucknuts everywhere. If that's the case, then this is brilliant. I know I laughed my ass off for most of the nearly thirteen minutes of frantic din that make up this recording. Whether this disc winds up making you laugh, shit your pants with fear, or be bored to tears, at least you get a handsomely framed photo of a fully naked Ron Jeremy on the back cover. If nothing else, at least these kids have refined tastes in hirsute '80s porno hunks. —Aphid Peewit (Apop)

HEAVY CHAINS:
A Very Real Hell: 12" EP

First couple listens, I couldn't help but think of Nü Sensae mixed with Chrome and Flipper, and as it turns out this features personnel from the aforementioned band, along with White Lung and Mutators. So you know this is bound to be something pretty good. And it is indeed: disjointed rhythms and mutilated instruments that create mood as much as a cacophony ("Crying Demons" recalls early Sonic Youth in their more dark and minimal days). The songs are sometimes noisy. Other times, they create this feeling of being in a goopy liquid that flows like a lava lamp: gelatinous orbs of sound that rise, separate, and reshape in a strangely hypnotic fashion. Vocals are sometimes shrieks ("Commo Wire," "Insane Pain," and "Shit Burning Piss Tubing"), other times they're acid trip-like sounds ("Stoned Stripper" and "Tommy Toucher"), where you hear the words, but fuck if you know what they're saying, besides the fact

it just sounds good on your ears. — M.Avrq (The Broadway To Boundary, thebroadwaytoboundary.com)

HELL CITY KINGS: H.C.K.: LP

Blazing rock from these knuckle draggers. The sound is loud, the tempo is quick, and they're catchy. Think of poppy Turbonegro, Zeke, Cleveland Steamer, and the sort. Some call it punk and roll. Whatever you want to call it, make sure to crank it up for the full effect and to get the subtleties of guitars and drums bashing in your skull. The vocals are pretty good—and perfect for this style. They have a gravelly bellow, yet you can hear every word nice and clear. They match the chainsaw effect of the guitars. I find the songs have more impact when the tempo is more on a mid keel, such as "134," which so happens to be my preferred cut here. Good thing this came with a download card, so I can crank this fucker up at my Sunday night skate sessions and share the stoke. —M.Avrq (Cutthroat, cutthroatrecords.blogspot.com)

HELLOWAR:

On the March to the Final Doom: CD
Indonesian crust metal? Sure, why not? I was reading about Indonesian metal recently, so it was cool to get a CD of it. The twenty-one tracks on this album come in at forty-three minutes and are all sung in Malay (I'm guessing). However, they do a cover of Discharge's "Never Again" in English. I always wanted to like crust punk, but found most of it redundant and

mindless (although Discharge's *Dear Nothing See Nothing Say Nothing* is a fucking solid record). That being said, I just couldn't get into Hellowar. Part of it may have been because I couldn't understand the lyrics—and when you play crust, most of the music is going to sound the same—the lyrics really have to stick out to make much of a difference. Also, I'm not sure how I feel about a mixture of crust and metal. At times, it seemed as though the band was trying to decide whether they wanted to be a metal band with crust influences or a crust band with metal influences. I felt like the two never melded well on this album. —Kurt Morris (Revulsion, revrecords@gmail.com)

HOUNDS OF HATE: No Redemption: 7"

This intentionally generic hardcore 7" is an attempt by members of current popular groups including Pissed Jeans and CREEM to make a recording reminiscent of the demos that used to prevail at late '80s hardcore shows. Having grown up in Buffalo, NY, I still have a stack of tapes I bought at shows in the early '90s, each of which is laden with a uniquely N.Y.H.C. lo-fi production quality. It wasn't long before the raw 4-track fun of the prior decade was replaced with digital boringness. The songs here are pretty dumb, but I think that's the point. It's unclear if Hounds Of Hate are here to stay or if they're a one-off semi-joke band, but they totally kick ass live. There's no need for a download card as the entire 7" is available for free on the label's website. Can the late '80s

N.Y.H.C. sound be adequately replicated today? Apparently, it can. The shaven head cover art is a hoot, too. There's no hate here, although maybe there's a little hounding. —Art Ettinger (Katorga Works, katorgaworks.bigcartel.com)

IDOL LIPS: Scene Repulisti: LP

I really wanted to like this record because the band is a bunch of funny-looking Italians in ties and sunglasses rendered in some kinda funny-looking Italian dot pattern standing in front of a funny-looking Italian wall with a nice big logo floating over their heads, but then if you look at the faux-Polaroids™ on the back, you can tell that Roy Orbison-looking guy is wearing the black tie with the little white stars all over it at practice, yet, on the front cover band photo, skinny moppy-haired guy is wearing the black tie with the little white stars on it and Roy Orbison guy is wearing a completely different tie. *They're borrowing each other's ties for the photo shoot! Well i never!* It did not take long for a list of bands whom i imagined the band thinks they sound like to start forming in my mind ((1. Heartbreakers; 2. Exploding Hearts; 3. Teenage Head; 4. everybody else)), but the effectiveness of said emulations remained largely in question until midway thru Side Two, when the band uncorked the record's one and only hit, "You Gotta Choose" ((how can i tell it's the record's one and only hit? IT'S GOT THE HANDCLAPS, GOD DAMMIT!!!)). Usually, when bands wind up sticking their best song in the middle of Side Two—which is where

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common sequencing wisdom suggests you try and hide the album's WORST song—it indicates some manner of creative loggerheads within the band, and is oft-times the herald of a band's quick demise (see also "Tonight" by the Cheeks)). With this in mind, may I request that, in a final liquidation of band assets, the black tie with the little white stars go to me? Grazie. BEST SONG: "You Gotta Choose" BEST SONG TITLE: "Down by L.U.V." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Thanks list references a "Mr. President and his bass;" if it's the same Mr. President with whom i'm familiar, then that is one of the guys with whom i saw the Cheeks, completely coincidentally referenced earlier in this review. —Rev. Nørb (White Zoo, whitezoorecords.com))

ILLS, THE: *I Kill Me: 7" EP*

Simple, short, no frills punk, like Loli & the Chones with none of that band's virulence in sight. Three tunes grace one side only, none of 'em reach the minute-ten mark. —Jimmy Alvarado (No Front Teeth)

J.C. SATAN: *Hell Death Samba: CD*

A little psychedelic, a little bit of the Pixies, a little bit of garage... J.C. Satan combine a lot of influences to create something new. The results are mixed. There are a lot of okay songs, then there are some pretty good songs, such as "In the Light," which sounds like nothing else on the record. It has this late night, underwater, psychedelic dream sound that pulls you in more and more as it

goes—to the point where you don't want it to end. Then they hit you with the cold water blast of "Crystal Snake," which picks up the pace considerably with some stop-go noise blasts and distorted vocals. The vocals are at their best when they're straighter forward, and even better when they trade back and forth, like on "Misunderstood." I'm finding myself preferring the songs where Paula leads to be the best, like "Abandon" and "Close to Me." This is a decent album, and one that requires you to spend some time with it, discovering its many facets. —M.AvrG (Slovenly, slovenly.com)

JJ AND THE REAL JERKS: *The Wringer: 7"*

More of that cool punk rock'n'roll from this awesome band. Can't wait to hear a full length and, hopefully, there will be one in the near future. Features Greg Kuehn from the Joneses on keys and the band sounds a lot like another Jeff Drake outfit, the Vice Principals. Fans of Humpers, Lazy Cowgirls and the aforementioned bands will wanna find this. —Mike Frame (Rankoutsider, myspace.com/rankoutsiderrecords)

JOHNNY THROTTLE: *Lost Sputnik: 7"*

The title track sounds like it's based on a variant of Cocksparrer's "Running Riot." The flip, "Atomic Reaction," is a nice bit of buzzin' thud punk. —Jimmy Alvarado (Wrench)

KARBOMB: *Nose Before Toes: CD*

If I would have got this CD around 1995 or '96 I'd have gone apeshit over

it: galloping drums, soaring guitars, and pissed off-sounding vocals to counter the melodies. Well, I may not be losing my mind over it right now in 2012, but it's still pretty damn good. I wish I could read the lyrics, but the size and color of the font is hurting my eyes. I'll definitely listen to this some more. —Ty Stranglehold (Warbird)

KIM PHUC: *Copsucker: LP*

Raw, smoldering, aggressive hardcore punk from Pittsburgh's Kim Phuc. Completely devoid of any modern trends or clichés within hardcore, *Copsucker* is a unique record. The band is tight and excels at inserting flourishes amongst the blunt but captivating rhythms. Here is a band that's relying on themselves and their musicianship, instead of tricks that so easily get played out. Here is a band with style and a desire to create truly fucked punk. Unfortunately, it's all too easy for bands like this to be underappreciated. Hopefully that doesn't happen with Kim Phuc. If you've ever daydreamed about a hardcore Toys That Kill, check this band out. —Daryl (Iron Lung)

KOBAN: *Solid Gold: EP*

Such a great record! Four songs of post punk/goth that captivates from the first listen. It's bass and guitar driven, with the vocals sitting just underneath the drum machine that keeps time; dark and cold with a little bit of warmth from the bass. The approach is minimal, very much like Joy Division's *Unknown Pleasures* (but more jagged), then there's some contemporary references

to be thrown about. Blank Dogs comes to mind. However, Koban is not a tepid knockoff band. They are certainly shaping their own style. Although, the beat of "Solid Gold" reminds me of This Mortal Coil's "The Last Ray," just played faster. Other than that, the guitar is screaming and ringing out, while the bass is ever so cool. The way the guitar comes out of the darkness in the opening of "Turn Him On" is fantastic. The vocals from Brittany Westgarth sends it over the edge. I play this record over and over, wishing it would never end. I'm of the opinion that if you don't have this record you're really missing out and making a mistake. Correct it while you can. An "absolutely must own" record. —M.AvrG (The Broadway To Boundary, thebroadwaytoboundary.com)

LAGWAGON: *Double Plaidinum: CD*

I've always had a funny relationship with *Double Plaidinum*. I should mention that Lagwagon is easily in my top ten favorite bands of all time. It was the first I'd heard a punk band tossing NWOBHM-style leads into the mix; "Island of Shame" was the first video on the life-altering *Cinema Beer Goggles* video compilation (also my first encounter with Tiltwheel's "Sappy"!); and *Hoss* was the first cassette I ever shoplifted. The Joey, Chris, Shawn, Jesse, and Derrick lineup on the first three records remains, in my opinion, one of the most solid collections of musicians in the history of the genre. And therein lies the *Double Plaidinum* conundrum. The Flippin/Dewey guitar work just isn't there. And even more noticeable is

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the lack of Derrick's incredibly distinct drumming. So it's not that the songs aren't great. They are. "Alien 8" is classic Lagwagon, and a few others are amongst their finest moments—but it all sounds, y'know, *different*... significantly so. And, as a result, I've just never had the love for *DP* that I do for the first three Lagwagon records. That said, I got the vinyl box set as a gift this past December, and I've vowed to really delve deeply into the post-*Hoss* LPs, so I may need to revise this review in the coming months. But for now, I'll say that *Double Plaidinum* is a really, *really* great record that still sounds just a little bit off to me. —Dave Williams (Fat Wreck)

LAGWAGON: Hoss: CD

In 1994, I drew a line in the sand. A friend and I were in a Richmond skateshop when this catchy, snotty punk came on the stereo. I asked the guy at the counter, "Is this NOFX?" He got a *get with it* look on his face and said, "No dude, it's Lagwagon." I thought, *Whatever. I'm gonna go spend my money on the new Fugazi*, and skated to the record store. From there on out, I preferred artier punk, and dismissed Lagwagon as one of many slick and generic Fat Wreck bands: the band on the T-shirt of the kid at the show who doesn't know pit courtesy; the sticker taped to the window of a new car to keep it from damaging the paintjob. Near twenty years later, I meet people who have a soft spot for Lagwagon, and sometimes wonder if they were a hidden gem on the Fat roster, like Snuff. Enter this deluxe reissue of Lagwagon's 1996

album, *Hoss*, and a litany of questions: Who is the audience for this? Who still buys CDs? Will grown-up skaterats buy this on a nostalgia trip and pop it into their car stereo and dream of carefree days on the commute to their dead-end job? Will they be excited? Let down? Will this bring Lagwagon to a new audience of young people? Do young people even still buy CDs? Fat improved in the mid-'00s when they started releasing music by some of the slicker bands that you'd hear at The Fest, so why are they looking back? I popped the CD on, hoping to hear a glimmer of what made them a teenage favorite for so many of my friends. It was better than I would have guessed back in the '90s, but not much of a thrill. The CD's presence inspired a stronger reaction than the music contained within. *Hoss* sounds like mid-'90s skatepunk with a touch of the same melancholy that the Lemonheads felt in the '80s. Maybe I had to be there the first time around. —Chris Terry (Fat)

LAGWAGON: Let's Talk about Feelings: CD

Look, I went to high school in the suburbs during the late '90s/early '00s. I'm not going to pretend I didn't own this the first time around. At the time, I bought this because I was just getting into punk rock, and from what I could gather from the internet, Lagwagon was a band you were supposed to like, and I'd heard one or two other songs of theirs that were pretty good. While I couldn't really get into most of the other records, I thought this was solid—which, looking back, it's

fast, melodic songs about being super depressed, which is basically a good chunk of what I listen to today, minus the skate punk part. This reissued version comes with more extra material than the length of the original album, though it's a little hit or miss. Again, I won't pretend I won't throw this on every once and a while, both my modern and high school self grinning the whole time. —Joe Evans III (Fat)

LES JOLIS: Action Paint Me!: LP

The French have a good track record of producing bands who crank out punk that straddles the garage spectrum, or bands that crank out garage that straddles the punk spectrum. It's up to you, the listener, to decide. The sound is straight ahead and essentially primal. No frills, no tech solos, just 1-2-3-4- go! This reminds me of the Irritones, only with a more poppy style, and a little reserved. I like how you can hear the bass in all the songs and it never gets buried when everything and everyone else come in. It's what gives these songs the thrust they need. For the most part, these songs are mid tempo and go for more a (somewhat) bratty swagger than slash and burn. Songs like the opener, "Lost Boys," and "Sickness" stand out for their speedier side, and the urgency they gain as a result. —M.Avg (Scanner, miguie.zorina@free.fr)

LIQUOR STORE: Yeah Buddy: LP

It took me a while before I finally broke down and bought this record. I wanted to get it to show some New Jersey pride, but every place I've seen it it's been so

goddamn expensive! And is a double LP necessary? Everything about this record is over-the-top, egotistical, a giant "fuck you" to the world... and it's fucking glorious. Combine KBD-type punk, lo-fi garage, The Dictators, and The Angry Samoans and you have Liquor Store. Vocals so snotty it gives the singers of either The Crucifucks or Vindictives a run for their respective money. Dripping with hubris but totally self aware. Post-whatever era we're in now. PC clowns, stay away. —Sal Lucci (Almost Ready)

LOST SOUNDS, THE: Self-titled: 7"

Can a band be both contemporary and ahead of their time? Yeah. The Screamers were. The Urinals were. The Lost Sounds were. It's pretentious and douchey to say that the "right" people were hip to the Lost Sounds when they were active, so let's say that those people were justly rewarded, both live and on recorded output. The Lost Sounds sound like a fight and lust, only with creative musical instruments and a synthesizer pounded and actively striking back. Cages rattled, fidelities challenged, and a welcome post-Lost Sounds release. RIP Jay. Long live Alicja. The midpoint between Billy Childish and TV Smith? It's a fun one to contemplate. —Todd (Goner)

MAD PIGS: W.W.B.L.O.: LP

These Czech punks prove the theory that bands benefit from having one member who is a not-so-secret metalhead. The hesher will have stronger musical chops, but be prevented from utter wankery by the comparatively low skill level of his

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bandmates. In the case of Mad Pigs, the undercover headbanger is the guitarist, whose melodic leads add a triumphant Iron Maiden/Burton-era Metallica feel to the band's anthemic hardcore punk. Their formula is one that gets monotonous after half an LP, but if I ever star in a war movie, I'd like to have one of their songs, maybe "Tohle Je Brno, Ne L.A.," playing during a scene where I jump out of a chopper. The gatefold sleeve boasts silver embossed lettering and a tattoo-style drawing of the grim reaper welcoming you to a post-apocalyptic urban graveyard. Maybe the guitarist drew it? —Chris Terry (Voltage)

MARK SULTAN: *Whatever I Want*: LP
MARK SULTAN: *Whenever I Want*: LP

Here we have two new Mark Sultan records, released simultaneously. Mark Sultan—this generation's Billy Childish? There are some obvious concerns about releasing two albums simultaneously. Maybe some can't afford to buy both, maybe some can't handle that many songs from one artist at once. I was excited about being able to get both albums at once, but as someone who has been a fan of Sultan's music since his Spaceshits days, I had a hard time paying as much attention to the individual albums as they deserved. I find myself listening to them back-to-back but I really should break up the flow with another band. There are differences in the songs, sometimes subtle, but enough to warrant two different albums. Neither *Whatever* nor *Whenever* are straight ahead rock'n'roll—I've learned to expect

the unexpected with Sultan, whether he's one-man-banding it or sharing with friends. You get good time party jams ("Livin' My Life,") '50s Buddy Hollyisms ("I Turned Them All Down,") '60s psych/fuzz ("See Them Wave Goodbye") and wild jazz skronk ("For Those Who Don't Exist"). Some of the drumming is a little timid but I can look past that because Sultan's voice and knack for simple, yet beautiful hooks have always been the driving force of any of songs. My favorites: "Pancakes" (Apparently a cover. I gotta find the original!) and "Party Crasher" (with its eerie "Paint It, Black"-ish riff off *Whenever*; "Livin' My Life" off *Whatever*. Mark Sultan's manifesto is both of these albums. —Sal Lucci (In The Red)

MARVELOUS DARLINGS: *Single Life*: LP

At long last, the LP that should have been released years ago. Sometimes watching 7" steadily trickle out of a band is an overwhelming and alienating experience. For the last several years, Marvelous Darlings have been doing just that. And it may have left many people on the fence, but with the release of the *Live at Gales* LP and this here collection, any non-believers should be effectively won over to their brand of power pop-infused punk. In the interview in issue #63, Darling's frontman Ben Cook credits the band's infectiousness to the songwriting skills of guitarist, Matty D. That may very well be true, because it seems like the lead guitar is constantly wailing, but Ben's vocal delivery is as convincing

and powerful as one can expect. In a genre where bands commonly posture better than they play, you gotta hand it to the ones that know how to deliver. Firestarter's *Living on the Heat*, Exploding Hearts' *Guitar Romantic*, Marvelous Darlings' *Single Life*. Pure pop. Totally punk. —Daryl (Deranged)

MAXIES, THE: *Going Clubbin': 7"*

I always have high hopes when a new band shows up on the scene with the yarbles to have their "true" identities concealed beneath some sort of head-concealing wraps, be it in the style of pro wrestling masks or old school armed robbery panty hose headwear. Now I know plenty of pompous gasbags who think that that is the chickenshit way to play punk rock, that you're supposed to be forthright and bare all in a show of naked punk rock piety. And that's fine, but there are other, more exotic, flavors of truth that rash acts of juvenile anonymity bring out. But when you dare to don a punk rock mask, you are telling the world that you are of the same Herculean dissident punk lineage as such mythic figures as The Mummies, HeWhoCannotBeNamed, Henry Fiat's Open Sore, The Rip-Offs, and The Mentors, just to name a few. So you better damn well be able to live up to the expectations that go with that noble cranial wardrobe. It's similar to if you're a new pro wrestler showing up with a shaved head, missing teeth and tangled tufts of Neanderthal hair adorning your body; you are instantly implicating yourself in the proud missing-link lineage of luminaries like Mad Dog

Vachon, George "The Animal" Steele, Brute Bernard, Ox Baker, Maurice Tillet and Puppy Dog Pelouquin. And there again: you'd better be able to deliver the damaged goods. Naturally, when I gazed upon this record and saw the Maxies in their dress shirts with red ties and their red and silver sci-fi masks, my hopes soared like a turkey buzzard. As we all know, oftentimes very good things come wrapped in clownish outfits. But I was somewhat let down. Cute, serviceable pop punk with a vocalist who has a practiced Jello Biafra warble might sound enticing enough, but, in reality, it registers on the satisfaction meter right at about the nocturnal emission level. Oafishly calculated attempts at political incorrectness—namely "funny" lyrics about the joys of clubbing baby seals—come across not as shocking and offensive, but hackneyed and pointless. Politically Incorrect Punk should be left to trained experts like Blag Dahlia and Tesco Vee, punk rock he-men who have proven that they can handle the nitroglycerine-like volatility of political incorrectness without having it blow up in their own faces. At the same time, I truly don't want to discourage these masked Greenlandic desperados, because it's not a hopeless case. There is some chuckleheaded potential here. Maybe the Maxies are just too raw at this point and need to stew in their own stupid juices a little longer. And here's where I pretend I know what I'm talking about and offer up some unsolicited advice: don't try so damn hard to out-politically-incorrect everyone else. Political Incorrectness

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is not a contest and if it doesn't come from the heart, it's just ineffectual and makes you look like an attention whore. Just drop the klunky affectations and let your natural inner sociopathic buffoon shine through. When that happens I will proudly and drunkenly climb aboard the Maxies bandwagon and once again publicly embarrass myself. —Aphid Peewit (It's Alive)

MEASURE [SA]: Jersey's Best: 7" EP
Bittersweet. This 7" was released for the Measure [SA]'s final shows in New Jersey: an audio post card of thanks to their fans for seven years of support. It features the Golden Girls on the artwork non-ironically. The lyrics to the title track is like a meta-song for their last show, the story of the end, the echoes in the parking lot as people dissipate, going separate ways. It's fitting: Lauren's great voice, Fid's inspired guitar, Mikey telepathic drumming. Legacies, nostalgia, the great void of—poof—part of what defined you for so many years gone; that's a lot to deal with. Thanks for being a friend, Measure. Thanks for the ride. —Todd (Don Giovanni)

MIDNIGHT RERUNS: Central Time: CDEP
Promising debut from this group of Milwaukee rabble-rousers. If you like The Replacements, Slobberbone, and bands of that nature, then this may be one for you. Precise melodies, intelligible lyrics, and to-the-point guitar riffs. I bet this would go great with an icy cold one, or two. "Long Way to Go"

is my favorite on this one, but they also have a great feel and groove. I'm setting the alarm in my head to *Central Time!* —Sean Koeppenick (Good Land)

MIKAL CRONIN: Tide: 7"
Simple and effective laid-back tunage heavily influenced by the clean-cut bands of the '60s, yet establishing what some are very eagerly considering a new California sound in real time. Spot-on job of laying down carefully crafted, somber verses and then just pulling the rug out from under it all as soon as the chorus hits. The melodies alone might make this record worth it, but it's all pretty killer. —Daryl (Goner)

MIND SPIDERS: Meltdown: CD
Mind Spiders is one of those bands that makes me both giddy and seething with envy. Fan-geek Jimmy is just happy as pie to gorge on the cornucopia of styles they bandy about here like nothing: punk, garage rock, power pop, and, at points, even veering dangerously into psychedelia and shoegazer terra. Then, halfway through, things veer off with a sharp left into synth-drenched Numanesque new wave land. Glorious. Hack guitar player Jimmy just boils with impotent rage at the fact that, like sister bands Marked Men and Potential Johns, they have that uncanny ability to make even the simplest chord progressions sound so perfect, like, "Well hell, of course they went that way. Why the hell couldn't I think of that?" Fuck you, Mind Spiders for being so goddamned great, and please keep doin' what you're doin'. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dirtnap)

MOB RULES: The Donor: LP
Wow, this is all kinds o' fucked up, and yes, that's meant as a compliment. Take Black Flag and give them nothing but Saccharine Trust's later free jazz/improv stuff to listen to for six months, turn the amps to "annihilate," and let 'em play a few tunes. Decidedly thinkin' outside the box, a fuckload of tempo changes from one second to the next, Ginn-styled leads to further add to the chaos, and voila! The soundtrack to your next root canal. —Jimmy Alvarado (Sorry State)

MOBY DICKS / BROWNS: Split: 7"
Have you heard of the Browns? For more than a decade, they've been wearing ski masks and writing sleazy yet catchy rock'n'roll with lyrics like "I've got a big cock." It's definitely don't-play-it-around-your-mom music. The Moby Dicks are a bit subtler, particularly with "Intelligent Baby," a sing-along paean to smart girls. That's the side to play when your mom's over. —MP Johnson (Handsome Dan)

MOON EATER: Radical Rock and Roll Sounds of...: 7"
The B-side is where this record really gets interesting. The A-side, "Owner Operator," is a good, generic example of the sort of punk rock'n'roll that was all the rage about ten years ago. The B-side, "Turn off Your Clock," starts with a driving intro stripped from the Journey playbook (see "Separate Ways (Worlds Apart)") and played through a filter of aggressive guitars. The intro segues into a gruff, heart-on-

sleeves garage rock dirge that pulls as much from grunge and Dischord as it does the gunk punk undergut. I bet it causes those spinal chills when played live. —MP Johnson (Moon Eater)

MOUTHBREATHERS: "Anxiety" b/w "The Creeper": 7"
Though I'm probably not the most qualified to review this record, I really dig it! Pretty straightforward, bouncy garage rock with catchy melodies with the reverb turned up to eleven. My only complaint is that the production is almost too good for a record like this. I think the band would have benefited from a little more fuzz and a little more tape hiss. But it's a minor complaint. Looking forward to hearing more from this band in the future! —Chris Mason (In the Red, intheredrecords.com)

NEIGHBORHOOD BRATS: We Own the Night: 7"
Here's another two-song burner from the band that took my stereo by storm last year with their 12" EP on Modern Action. Relentless in their delivery and steadfast in their resolve to not give a fuck makes Neighborhood Brats one of the best bands going right now. The title track is the winner here, but the cover VKTMS "100 Percent White Girl" hammers it home. I want more! —Ty Stranglehold (Abscess)

NINJA GUN: Roman Nose: LP
What used to be a beautiful twist on punk, country music is now a weak, lily-livered album with no balls. I

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want to say this is the best thing I've ever heard because I know the band has it in them to put out some amazing stuff, but it comes down to heart—or lack of heart—should I say. Maybe it's a bleeding heart and that's why it sounds so sappy. Their last album, *Restless Rubes*, was great, but the entire thing was completely overproduced, which made it difficult to listen to. The beautiful human element that is Ninja Gun was erased and we were left with bland songs tucked into a beautiful record cover. This current release of songs may be nice to listen to in person, sitting in old lawn chairs on a southern night, but it isn't translating nicely into vinyl due to the overproduction. I've had one person disagree with me on this and say it was their best work, but many others found this record to be boring and didn't even recognize that it was Ninja Gun I was playing for them. If only the songs were recorded at a live performance. Get their first album if you are interested in learning about this band because it is truly their best recording. Bands evolve and it can be interesting to be a spectator, but, in some cases, it just saddens the listener because they lose something they held dear. I'm not sure Ninja Gun will ever be able to put out something as solid and honest as their first record. Although I do appreciate the hours of creative energy they have spent in a recording studio making their songs the best they can, someone should let them know that their organic sound is what makes them so wonderful. —Dan Glenn Fury (Sabot Productions)

NITAD: *En Ding Ding Varld: 7" EP*
On this latest EP, Nitad take the mid-tempo hardcore they've dealt in the past and take it one step further. The three tracks on the A-side just grind and churn their way into your noggin', while the lone track on the B-side, "Leva Bara För Att Dö," adds a bit of post-punk to the mix to twist things up even further. Great stuff from a great band that continues to find new and interesting little cubbyholes to dive into and explore. —Jimmy Alvarado (Adult Crash)

NO COMPLY: *Self-titled: 7" EP*
Spastic, warp-factor-nine hardcore/grind stuff. —Jimmy Alvarado (To Live A Lie)

NO TOMORROW BOYS, THE: *"(Do The) No Tomorrow Twist" b/w "Neanderthal for Your Love": 7"*
Hailing from a planet with leopard-spotted skies, where press release references to juvenile delinquents, leather jackets, switchblades, pompadours, and Little Richard are still interesting, the No Tomorrow Boys attempt to tunnel out of the Dullsville County Jail with just two guitars and some drumsticks. Their plan—as exemplified in the anthemic call to arms "(Do The) No Tomorrow Twist"—is a fairly well concocted one; the song jets right along at an admirable level of attempted raucousness. But, as so often happens to the best-laid plans of be-pompadoured mice and leather jacketed men, the whole restored '57 Custom apple cart is overturned by the sad fact that I have to sit on the living room floor

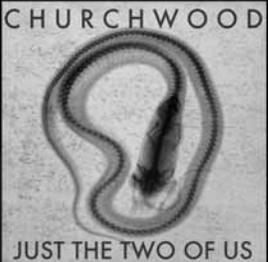
in the lotus position with headphones on and the volume cranked whilst doing weird things with my fingers and palms in a state of utmost psychic concentration in order to mentally discern exactly WHERE THE HELL THE GUITARS ARE in the mix of this record. I mean, the drums and vocals are fine, but the guitars are like two tiny bugs and there is no bass. I'm going to find it awfully hard to screw at the drive-in with guitars this absent. And it's not like this is some big shambolic echoey sonic muck where the guitars just wound up getting buried in the endzone; this shit is direct and clear and focused. It's just largely inaudible. Kind of a cool record on several levels; alas, said levels do not include the guitar levels in the mix. **BEST SONG:** "(Do The) No Tomorrow Twist" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Neanderthal for Your Love" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** Etchings in the vinyl's run-off grooves read "HOT DAMN, TAMALE!" and "LJMF." —Rev. Nørð (Teen-Age Riot)

NOW DENIAL / GET LAID: *Hungrier Than the Wolf: Split: 7"*
Now Denial, Massachusetts' titans of heavy music return on this split 7" with Get Laid. Making music with no regard for genre boundaries for nearly ten years, Now Denial offers up two of their best yet on this 7". Of the two songs, "Wasted Lives" was my favorite. Filled with strong hooks, and a mix of both screamed and sung vocals, this song embodied everything I find awesome about Now Denial. Boston's Get Laid are

a screamy and thrashy affair. Hardcore punk that made me think of a heavier X. "Artez" was my favorite of their three songs. While I enjoyed what they had to offer, after a few listens I stopped flipping the record and just listened to the Now Denial side on repeat. It's just that good. If you've never checked out Now Denial, this is a great way to get into the band before picking up their latest full-length. And, who knows, maybe you'll find yourself digging Get Laid as well. —Paul J. Comeau (Get Young, contact@nowdenial.net)

OBN IIIs: *The One and Only: LP*
This might be the best record I've bought in a long time. I almost didn't buy it because of the price. (Fourteen dollars at my local record shop!) I'm trying to come to grips with the increasing prices of records (even used ones, jeez!). Anyway, attitude-laden punk rock'n'roll. Opening track "If the Shit Fits" probably best sums up OBN IIIs. "New Dark Age" is Mr. OBN III's homage to Iggy Pop. Production is lo-fi but you can tell the band is competent and also spent time and effort recording the songs. I really dig the bass tone but it sometimes gets a little lost in the mix. OBN III himself is a prolific man, doing time with The Bad Sports, John Wesley Coleman, and probably others. I hope to see this band live sometime soon. —Sal Lucci (Tic Tac Totally)

OLD FLINGS: 2011 Demos: CDEP
Old Flings started as an attempt to put some muscle behind singer and

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acoustic guitarist Matt Evans. It turned into a legitimate band that has a Hot Water Music influence but with, perhaps, a little more indie and punk sound. It's quite different than Evans' hardcore punk band, Just Die! There's nothing complicated or unique here, just six songs with strong, endearing vocals and a sound reminiscent of Liars Academy—which is probably why I find this release so up my alley—as I always thought they were a pretty underrated band. The fourth track, "Stranded," is the one exception to this, with an acoustic sound and a contribution from someone who sounds like Cat Power (but I'm assuming is not). It's a very beautiful song and serves as a nice break from the punk material. My one major complaint is that sometimes Evans' vocals fall a bit flat and the lyrics, while not stupid, aren't as powerful as they might be. Considering these are demos, though, they're not too bad. I'd be interested in hearing what they do with a full-length. —Kurt Morris (Bitter Melody)

OLD WIVES: *Backed in a Corner*: CD

The opening track on this disc is amazing! It's so good, in fact, that I felt that the rest of the disc couldn't live up to its awesomeness. It's not that the rest is bad by any means—it's standard pop punk stuff—but, damn, that first song stuck with me for awhile. It would have been great to have that song on a 7". —Ty Stranglehold (When's Lunch)

ONIONS, THE: "Alien Astronaut" b/w "Till the End of the Night": 7"

Solid 7". As the name implies, "Alien Astronaut" has a science fiction feel to it. The track's heavily-phased guitar and subject matter leads me to believe The Onions are big fans of the Necessary Evils. "Alien Astronaut" has a really fucking vicious vocal delivery—not quite Tomata du Plenty heavy (what is?) but not too far off either. B side is chockfull of Johnny Thunders riffs and is nearly as cool as the A side. Added bonus: cover art by Bob Scott (*Mongrel Zine* rules). Recommended. —Ryan Leach (Certified PR, certifiedprrecords.com)

OPPOSITION RISING: *Aftermathematics*: CD

An odd amalgam of tough guy hardcore and intelligent, political punk, Opposition Rising is an up and coming Boston band to watch for. In an era when musicians justifiably complain about music piracy, Opposition Rising takes the opposite approach, giving copies of this CD away for free. The entire album is likewise available online for downloading, with a link to by the LP, for those reeled in by the free version. The tough guy bits are interspersed with odd ska breakdowns that are only odd in that they somehow don't seem at all out of place. The frontman's vocals are way above average, too. No opposition here. —Art Ettinger (Opposition, oppositionrising.com)

ORCA TEAM: *Take My Hand*: 7"

Seattle's Orca Team offer up three tunes that recall a time where guys would wear suits and ladies would wear dresses to go dance to rock bands, after flipping a nickel to a soda jerk for a glass of pop. This is some classy stuff that has hints of proto psychedelia (that would later be fully realized in the hits of *Nuggets*). Neat stuff! Get on it. —Vincent (HHBTM)

PALE CREATION *Twilight Haunt*: LP

I sense some kind of dark, spiritual connection between Dom at A389 and myself. Not only does A389 consistently release the best current hardcore records around (and thanks to A389 and Deathwish, there are a *ton* of great new bands getting the exposure they deserve), but it also re-releases some essential records that could otherwise be doomed to obscurity. A389's newest reissue is an absolutely crucial slab of Clevo "Holy Terror" hardcore: Pale Creation's sole full-length release to date, the crushing *Twilight Haunt*. Admittedly, I was never completely sold on Pale Creation at the time of this record's initial release. Perhaps my angry, youthful exuberance was so deeply entrenched in the more linear and breakdown-smattered writing of Integrity and Ringworm (and yes, One Life Crew) to understand why Pale Creation garnered so many comparisons to these bands. But as my musical priorities evolved from kickbox-moshability to complexity, atmosphere, and proficiency, Pale Creation became a staple in my listening. Sure, one can still

draw comparisons to the more visible Clevo/Holy Terror bands, but Pale Creation are an incredibly unique beast, incorporating off-kilter rhythms, bleak soundscapes, and nods to a plethora of darker genres and subgenres across the musical spectrum. A phenomenal record (not unlike their newer releases!) that I never managed to pick up back in the day, so it's safe to say I'm thrilled to have my paws on it now. Brilliant. —Dave Williams (A389)

PEEPLER WATCHIN': *Demo*: Cassette

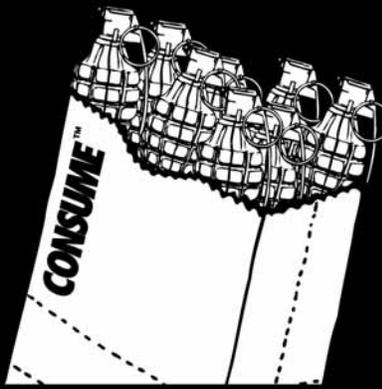
For those of you, like me, who were bummed out that The Credentials called it quits way too soon, Zack is back with a brand new band and it's a total rager: pop punk that could have come right out of the early '90s Gilman scene. But they're a bit more mid-tempo and melodic than Zack's previous band. A couple of these songs have been stuck in my head for days, something that The Credentials, no matter how good they were, never seemed to do. —Chris Mason (Self-released)

PENETRATION PANTHERS: *Perpetual 80's*: 7" EP

A member or two of Gehenna and Gravehill get their punk on. The results have a sorta "what if Black Flag had come from Detroit" feel—sludgy, but raw and rockin'. —Jimmy Alvarado (A389)

POST TEENS: *Self-titled*: 7" EP

Sometimes that overdriven, lo-fi approach to recording is pitch perfect to what a band's trying to get across, and



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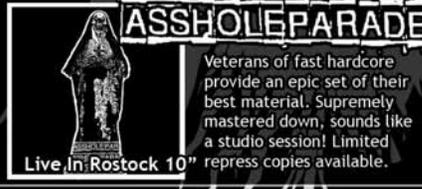
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this is a perfect example. The muddled, blown-out sound complements well the piledriver beats 'n' slashing hooks the band's doling out like some sorta hardcore band trying their best at breaking the Top 40. Not quite as poppy as, say, the Marked Men, but no less intense. —Jimmy Alvarado (Post Teens)

PSUDOKU: Space Grind: Cassette

Intergalactic, hyper-speed grindcore madness from Poland: shit your pants riffage, incredible tightness, and precision that would make Jon Chang smirk with envy. All this performed by a one man band that also goes by the moniker of Parliamentarisk Sodomi, a powerviolence band. Constructing this album must have been a labor of love, for sure, because the consensus is that grindcore's definitely not for everyone (too metal for punks, too punk for metalheads.) Love it or don't, get the fuck out of the way if you hear this blasting from someone's car stereo! —Juan Espinosa (Revulsion, revrecords@gmail.com)

PUMPHOUSE GANG: Self-titled: LP

The Sing Sing label seems to be taking up where Radio Heartbeat left off in the power pop reissue department. The unfortunately-named Pumphouse Gang played punk-inflected rock 'n' roll and pop in the U.K. in the mid-'70s. I can't help but chuckle looking at the guys in the band and thinking about them singing songs about teenagers. All kidding aside, a quality reissue of a lost power pop gem. Heavy stock glossy

cover and informative, if brief, liner notes. For fans of The Beat, The Boys and Radio City. —Sal Lucci (Sing Sing)

PUSHERS, THE: "750 Bonneville" b/w "Bad Bank Blues": 7"

Predatory piano and a punchy saxophone are right in the middle of straight-ahead New Beach Alliance punk brawl? Huh? The two new instruments work—no ska taint, no jazzy Bill Clinton-isms, no la-ti-da twinkling the keys—and add a new, memorable dimension to the Pushers usual street fight on wax. The two songs give a strange, but cool, mental image. Like Little Richard and the Pinetoppers getting sun with tattooed, teeth-missing punks on a nuclear beach, all getting along and raising a ruckus. Recommended. —Todd (Hostage)

RAPID LOSS: A Dark Place: 7" EP

This screams prime-grade Midwestern U.S. hardcore circa 1981, but it's not only of recent vintage, the band hails from Alberta, Canada. Sound's tight, angry 'n' gruff, and it's clear right off the first listen they aren't just going through the motions. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rapid Loss)

RATIONS: How Much Land Does a Man Need?: 7" EP

I loved Rations last record, so it was no surprise that I love this one, too. There are many adjectives that come to mind to describe their music, but beautiful is the one that keeps coming back to me. It makes me feel warm inside. Not necessarily a happy, warm feeling, but maybe something between that and

that warm numbness in your face after taking a shot of whiskey out of a metal flask on a cold winter night. Rations takes me to my early twenties. All ages halls and basement shows where the bands said what they wanted with feeling. It's a good place to be. —Ty Stranglehold (Drunken Sailor)

REACTORS: "It's Not Important" b/w "Cold Eyes": 7"

One of many bands to adopt "Reactors" as their moniker, this band hailed from early '80s Austin, Texas. They never reached the level of popularity of fellow citizens Big Boys, the Dicks, or even The Huns, and only managed this sole single as their recorded legacy. Both tracks are potent bits of dingy punk rock, but it's the flip, "Cold Eyes," that seems to get the *Killed By Death* clones all hot 'n' bothered, and with good reason. A nice reissue here, with a replication of the original cover, plus photos and an interview with one of the members gracing the inside of the sleeve. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rerun)

RECKLESS: Ocean: LP

Phenomenal. On one hand, sure, you can pin this record down in a sentence: melodic crust with personal lyrics. That's its center. But, goddamn, there's something really awesome going on here that takes it beyond that. Taking the swagger and fury of bands like Tragedy or Fighting Dogs and blending it with a thrumming undercurrent of melody, *Ocean* is eight songs that manage to perfectly hit that stride. Vocalist Chainsaw (!) has a great range—she

generally sticks with a more gravelly approach that suits the music perfectly (think of the Distillers and you've got the right idea), but there a few softer moments scattered throughout that she softens. The lyrics deal with domestic violence, alienation, struggle, and loss—in a way that's smart and moving and transcendent. The solo on "Forget About It"—one extended note at a time—is bone-simple, but it's searing and awesome and works ridiculously well. Like I said, Reckless seems like a band that's pretty easily summed up—but this is one of the records that just came at the right time, and I'm all the better for it. This shit is punk, and get my highest recommendation. —Keith Rosson (Reckless)

RED MASS: Self-titled: 7"

Dark, unique, hypnotic, and faboo, this definitely had a more lasting impact than the previous release I heard from 'em. At times, they sound here like The Dicks trying to hit one outta the art-punk field. Fuggin' love it. —Jimmy Alvarado (Certified PR)

RESIST: Self-titled: 7" EP

Wow, been a while since I've seen this name on a new release, and, according to what info I was able to glean from the 'net, this is their first new output in fifteen years. One thrasher and two comparatively mid-tempo workouts here, with socially aware lyrics screamed out and a musical approach that manages to be both straightforward and non-generic. —Jimmy Alvarado (Profane Existence)

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RUBRICS: Sow Your Seeds: 7"

This trio out of South Carolina's May 2011 release includes four new tracks of kick your ass power punk. Combining growling, death metal vocals, amphetamine-induced percussion, and meaty chords the likes of Propagandi and Born Against, this oughtta be the next thing you pit to. Hitting on topics like freedom, injustice, and that steely-eyed commitment to punk theology, Rubrics brings some of the principle concerns of the genre to the table. Switching things up, "Never Grow Up" passes the mic to female bassist/vocalist, Kerri, whose vox reminds me of Eve Libertine spliced with Joan Jett. Well written, well played. I dare you to stand still while listening to this. Recommended. -Kristen K. (Sidejar, sidejarrecords.com)

RULETA RUSA: La Ley: 7"

The title track is an attack on asshole cops told in the first-person. The flip, "Psoriasis," is both about how fun suffering from that particular malady can be and a comment on the state of America's healthcare system. This one's a bit of a departure from the usual Modern Action fodder, in both delivery (both songs are in Spanish, which is no surprise considering a member or two were in Peligro Social) and sound (less reliant on late '70s/early '80s West Coast punk conventions and a bit more hardcore welded into their DNA), but it's no less crucial. It's limited to 450 copies, but act especially quick 'n' order direct from the label and you may be lucky enough to get one of the one

hundred copies that has a bullet casing wedged into the record's center hole. -Jimmy Alvarado (Modern Action)

SECRET PROSTITUTES / TALK SICK BRATS: Split: 7"

Secret Prostitutes are mysterious. My understanding is that it's two Texans and a Malaysian (the titles are Malay, at least) drummer/singer, singing in his native tongue. Weirdly, it sounds like 1977-'79 Scandinavian Killed By Death punk. Think Lama. I'm predisposed to love this; your DNA may differ, depending on how much obscure-punk-record-collector blood cells flow through your veins. The drill's familiar: limited pressings, hard-to-find release, internet dudes relish in making fun of other people for not having this, and eBay sales will follow. I didn't break the seal/sticker at the top that listed the band names, but sliced through the bottom of the bag, as to preserve the "provenance." (Thanks, *Antiques Roadshow*.) As your financial advisor, this stock will go up. Talk Sick Brats: Pretty good. Get the feeling that there's some previous deep appreciation for Discharge, but it's pegging on the trash/glitter/rock/The Ends side of the meter. Not bad at all. -Todd (Batshit, batshitrecords.com)

SENDERS: Lucidity/Lividity: LP

You know how Hot Water Music bands play slow for dramatic affect, like they're struggling to bash out each chord and rasp into the mic? Well, what if they beefed up the guitars until those slow parts sounded like stoner rock?

And, what if they kept the emo guitar flourishes so that they sounded like mid-'90s indie/hardcore bands like Sunny Day Real Estate of Engine Kid? It comes together really well thanks to a huge guitar sound, a super tight drummer, and catchy, concise songs. Thank you punks for taking a few things that were lying around the yard and making something new and cool. It's alchemy! -Chris Terry (Kiss Of Death)

SENSITIVE SIDE, THE: Moon Kids: 7" EP

There's a bit of a punky feel to their new wave here, which, in and of itself, ain't a bad way to start, but the addition of someone playing what sounds like an organ (you never can quite tell these days) gives this an added '60s feel, making for a bit of a unique take on a couple of templates that have gotten more attention in recent decades than they did when they first came into existence. Tunes are quite good 'n' I'm betting these guys go over like gangbusters live. -Jimmy Alvarado (VD)

SEVEN SISTERS OF SLEEP / CHILDREN OF GOD: Split: LP

This is a good pairing of two heavy hardcore bands with similar styles that are able to hold their own. Seven Sisters Of Sleep are heavy with vaguely melodic guitar lines that push themselves up in the mix at the right times. They remind me of Scandinavian crust with a heavier sludge/doom slant to it. Children Of God thrash much harder, but their sound is equally bleak. The sludgy parts sound

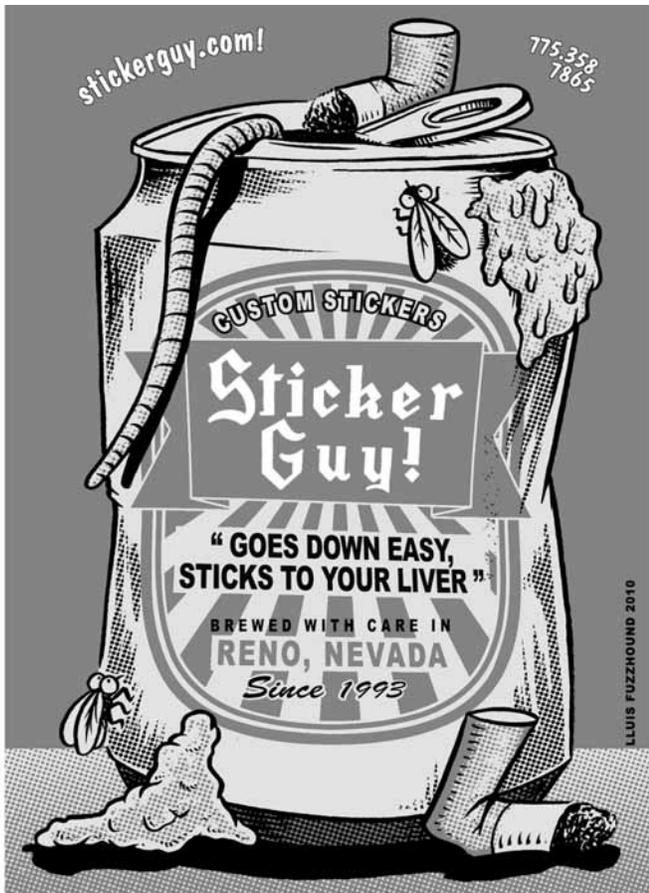
like old Iron Monkey, and their raging still has crust edge to it. I listened to this a few times while writing this review, and was impressed with how many new things I noticed about each band when I went back to their sides several times. Definitely a recommended listen. -Ian Wise (A389)

SHANG-A-LANG: Waiting for the End: 7" EP

Fuck you, funeral. Fuck you, wake. Fuck you, death. Fuck you, swan song. Goodbye Shang-A-Lang. Never liked your charming, shambolic, honest, inclusive music anyway. I never thought you were the musical equivalent to a T-shirt that lasts for years and years and fits better with every wear. Fuck you, Shang-a-Lang. Las Cruces punk rock gets its collective face tear tattooed at the passing of one of its defining bands. I've got the feeling that we'll be lacing on happy shoes soon, as these guys are too insuppressible to give up on playing music... Oh, hello Low Culture. You played Ben Snakepit's wedding? Rad. Want to go in on a twelver with me? -Todd (Dirt Cult plus five other labels)

SHARP OBJECTS: Self-titled: LP

I know I have become a bit of a fanboy for all things Modern Action, but I am unapologetic. Especially with bands like Sharp Objects leading the pack. This here is a slab of punk rock perfection: driving beach punk riffs and catchy words. "Whoa-ohs" and "hey hey heys" in the right places. Short and to the point, I just keep playing this



one over and over. And it keeps getting better! Now, if I could see them on a bill with Night Birds, I could die happy! —Ty Stranglehold (Modern Action)

SHELLSHAG: *Fuck Society, Vol. 1: LP*

As one may predict, the husband/wife duo known as Shellshag have an intimate relationship with music. This may seem all too obvious, 'cause when I think of Shellshag, I think of music and intimacy: two powerful, distinctive personas singing songs to each other while everyone crowds around and enjoys the collateral affection. On *Fuck Society, Vol. 1*, they blaze through thirteen covers of songs that hold a dear spot in their hearts. Finishing up the record is the title track "Fuck Society"—the only song that's not played by Shellshag—performed by Chattanooga's AK77. If you've ever caught Shellshag, chances are you've seen them cover at least one of these songs, bringing life to old memories, and igniting the audience with their integrity and candor. A covers LP can be a hard sell, but if you can't trust Shellshag, who can you trust? Features covers by Shotwell, Inxs, The Undertones, Warsaw, Hickey, Liz Phair, Archers Of Loaf, URTC, When In Rome, Descendents, Fleshes, Wipers, and The Jam. —Daryl (Mauled By Tigers)

SINGING DOGS:

Deja-Voodoo Blues: 10"

The ten-inch is the dumbest standard vinyl format and the two-piece is the dumbest standard band format. This is a ten-inch recording of a two-piece band. Do the

math. Two-piece bands that come out of the punk scene ((or something tangent to it)) usually seem like they're favored by guitarists who imagine themselves to have much more of a psychic mandate to publicly explore the blues idiom than they actually have; without anything but a lone guitar, drums, and some vocals to hold my attention, said attention usually gets shanghai'd right quick. Note how much things perk up when the band tosses some vaguely "Sympathy for the Devil"-esque guitar overdubs in "Whisky & Blues!" *Case in point, Magoo!* I can say no more because, as described elsewhere this issue, i live in fear of voodoo reprisal. Pass the chicken. **BEST SONG:** "Whisky & Blues" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Sick of Being Sick," which is not the Damned song. **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** Last time i checked, a ten-inch record cost more to press than a twelve-inch. —Rev. Norb (Primitive)

SLAKTRENS: *Stalande Tider: CD*

Raging hardcore punk from this Swedish duo. Take DS-13, put a couple drops of Mob 47 in the beaker, and you may get some mutation like Slaktrens. It's fast and chaotic, with bone-breaking percussion and a vocalist who sounds like he's going rabid. The songs are short bursts of aggression that aim to break the speed barrier every time. However, they are not some faceless, tuneless thrash outfit. They switch up the tempos, throw in some stop-go breaks here and there, build tension, and play like their very lives depend on it. What's really interesting is this was entirely put together by two people in a

practice room, despite it sounding like a full band recording live. Oh, the wonders of technology! "Jag Vill Inte Ha" is a burner that slows down a tad and stands out. Glad I grabbed this! Thrash hounds, dig in! —M.Avrq (Suburban White Trash, suburbanwhitetrashrecords.com)

SLOBS: *Self-titled: EP*

Fuggin' love this record—rough and dirty hardcore punk with a definite nod to early '80s East Coast style. The singer sounds like a cross between Darby Crash and the singer from The Mad. Really growly, a little nasally, and obnoxious in a perfect way. The guitars are distorted and jangly at the same time and cut like a razor. One thing that really stands out about this band is the quality of the lyrics. Not some nihilistic pose ("Not so much a nihilist / Just another kid who's pissed") that is adapted and briefly paraded about like so many bands do. Instead, there's some real honesty in the words and thoughts put across. Nothing deep or profound, but issues and things everyone with a brain can relate to, such as "Hope for Nothing" with the opening verse, "Hope's the word they use to keep us all in our places / It lets them collectively rub their shit in our faces," articulates something that has been on my mind for years, especially once you get past the illusion of the American Dream. Plus, they deliver this song in a mid-tempo, near lazy and despairing way to really get the point across. Then you have "Write Offs," which succinctly states, "They sold our

future to pay for their today." Whoa! I'd say this record is mandatory. —M.Avrq (Machette, machetterecords.com)

SOFY MAJOR / MEMBRANE: *Split: CD*

Four songs from Sofy Major and three from Membrane, totaling thirty-six minutes of French hardcore. Sofy Major: Imagine if Baroness was always "on," if they never had a mellow song, and growled a lot more in their vocals. Imagine that sludgy, stoner rock feel with more grit and perhaps throw in some Torche. That's pretty much what you have with Sofy Major. I didn't dislike it by any means, but it didn't really do a lot to impress me, either. I'd rather listen to Baroness for the breadth of sound instead of everything being hot all the time. Membrane: This band, on the other hand, did impress me. Reminiscent of Unsane or the Melvins, it was heavy and dark and didn't let up one bit. All three of their songs sounded as though the world was going to end once you finished the track. Slow, sludgy (twice in one review!), discordant hardcore metal—not something I would want to listen to a lot, but for three songs, it provided the perfect dose. —Kurt Morris (Impure Muzik / Bigoût / Finatas / Basement Apes Industries / Prototype)

SPITS, THE: *V: LP*

The Spits have added another slab of driving, Ramones-laced punk to their canon. "All I Want" kicks the record off with a solid singalong that rivals the band's best material. The rest of the record is solid. "Fed Up" contains

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stickier melodies about giving up. The song ends abruptly. Ha. The album is short and sweet with only two of the songs breaking the two-minute mark. Thankfully, The Spits never give up. –Billups Allen (In the Red)

SPOOKY, THE: Halloween Night: 7"

Horror punk is a slippery slope. On one side of the seesaw is the original Glenn-Danzig-lead Misfits, *Dance with Me* TSOL, some Damned, some Siouxsie. On the other side of the seesaw is an ocean of horror punk bands (including new Misfits, Balzac, Damnation, post bleach blonde skating AFI). There are several hurdles to clear. 1.) There's probably makeup/costumes/hair product/props involved. (See *Spinal Tap* when the pods don't open.) 2.) No happy songs (unless there's joy in sadism, being a predator, that type of thing). 3.) The template's already been made like a plaster cast over a broken arm. Break that cast and horror punk fans get confused. The Spooky know exactly what they're doing and they do it well. Mike Monster has a thick voice and a nice range. He can actually sing and croon, which is a big boost. The Embalmer and Stain aren't slouches at their respective instruments, either. My only quibble is that the lyrics are really dumb. Not bad. –Todd (Hostage)

SS20 / FAN ZUI XIA FA: Split: 7"

A pretty great international split 7" here. SS20 from Germany kick it off with some bludgeoning hardcore. The music is fantastic, but the vocals get a bit too much of that guttural growl going for

my liking. Not terrible by any means, but they do pale in comparison to Fàn Zui Xiā Fā from Malaysia. These guys hit the ground running at breakneck speed and don't stop 'til the end of the record! Fast, spazzy hardcore punk. Just how I like it. It was also pretty great that all the lyrics were printed in German, English, and an Asian language (I'm sorry. I can't tell exactly what it is). Great record! –Ty Stranglehold (WWL)

SSSSNAKES / THE SLOW DEATH: Split: 7"

Ssssnakes: First tune is a catchy bit of straightforward punkin' out. Second one is based on the standard slow doo-wop/"Heart and Soul" template, with quiet/loud/quiet dynamics and audio clips from *Wayne's World* and other flicks. The Slow Death: I really dug the demo they sent in a while back, and what's here only reinforces my respect for 'em. They continue to mine punk's more anthemic wells with tons o' heart packed into each song to offset the gruff vocals. I love when a band sounds like they've put a lot of good work into what they do, and the tunes here have all the earmarks of exactly that happening. –Jimmy Alvarado (Kiss Of Death)

STAR FUCKING HIPSTERS:

From the Dumpster to the Grave: CD

There are a lot of elements of this band that I really do like (lyrics, especially), but try as I might, I just can't get past that annoying "ticka-ticka" ska guitar that sounds like Voodoo Glow Skulls. A band I despise. I have to turn it off

when I hear it...I really like all of the artwork in the disc, though. –Ty Stranglehold (Fat)

STATIC RADIO NJ: We Are All Beasts: LP

After hearing the name tossed around for years without ever checking them out, Static Radio NJ has finally wormed their way into my musical subconscious. And, surprise, surprise, it's not bad. Lifetime meets Bouncing Souls. I wonder if they put the NJ in their name so that everybody thinks of those two bands first? There's also that hard to avoid Hot Water Music comparison because the singer kind of sounds like a cleaner Chris Wollard. It's not so surprising that no one's ever authoritatively told me to check them out. The record, while solid, is no award winner. I recommend checking them out because my bet is their next record will be even better. –Bryan Static (Kiss Of Death, kisssofdeathrecords.com)

SWEET EMPIRE:

The Season Needs Torches: CD

Somehow I lucked out and pulled a slew of politically astute poppy punk/hardcore releases out of the bins, and this is one of 'em—Warped Tour-ready tuneage married to lyrics addressing racism, abortion, Emma Goldman, and so on. Nice to hear the Blink/Sum generation is finally catching on that things are a bit more dire than an inability to refrain from farting, but I still ain't too hip on listening to them play. –Jimmy Alvarado (Shield)

TACOCAT: Woman's Day: 7"

I've always told people they sound like a less P.C. Bikini Kill (and not just because their three to one female to male ratio), but this time around they're a bit more bubblegum, and instead of singing about urinary track infections and wearing leotards on first dates, they've turned their attention to controversial (and timely!) subjects like Tonya Harding and psychic cats. All kidding aside, they're playing my hometown in a few weeks and this new 7" has me thinking that I might just dance my ass off (and I hate to dance). Essential stuff here. –Chris Mason (Minor Bird, minorbirdrecords.blogspot.com)

TEE PEES, THEE: Self-titled: 7"

"Budget Rock" is a bit of a dicey affair, both for the listener and those who take it on as their style de guerre. So many things can go horribly wrong—sound is either too fucked up/too clean, tunes are too simple/too complicated, dude I could go on all day with this—that it almost seems folly to even try it anymore. Sadly, way too many think that they're the ones to try to grab the brass ring and earn a place with the likes of Supercharger, The Mummies, The Fingers, and so on. While they don't quite reach such depths, Thee Tee Pees manage to come pretty dang close to the sweet spot for this stuff. As can be expected, they sound like shit (though not quite shitty enough, 'cause I can still identify the thump-thump-thump as drums. Ding! One point deducted), the performance meets the requisite rudimentary requirements of

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the genre and they manage to convey the proper self-deprecating. "Yeah, we suck and we really don't give a fuck if you like us or not" attitude in thought and deed. All told, they come out on top here, and with "Do the Smog," they've also created a new anthem for those budget rockers who look up at the grey skies of Southern California and think, "Ahh, home." Will it change your life? Fat chance, but it'll keep you entertained while you wait for your turn to sell your soul to a job and have a buncha kids you can't afford. —Jimmy Alvarado (Bachelor)

TETHAUM: Hexagram: Cassette

For anyone who, like me, has found themselves twisting on the end of a string dangling from the koan "what's the sound of a fecal plug forming in the ass of a hibernating bear," Tethaum now provides us with an answer worthy of scraping off the bottom of one's boots. This audio dunescape falls somewhere between one of those brainwave meditation devices and a recording of a guy who fell asleep on top of his synthesizer. After only a few minutes of listening to this, I was afloat in a laxative dream where I was synesthetically watching the barely perceptible movement of fog hanging over a belching pond of diarrhea next to an abandoned wooden leg factory. Perhaps I was a date-rape victim of all the magico-esoteric glyphs that make up the artwork of this cassette; *I Ching* hexagrams and western hermetic symbols that might've been scrawled by a waggish Aleister Crowley advertise the fact the people (or person) responsible

for this cassette are acquainted with the dark arts and are probably very capable of impressive feats of sorcery. They're certainly adept at casting narcoleptic spells. I kept waiting for the pulseless dirge to eventually burst into some crushingly industrial-metal doom chord riffage, ala Godflesh or *Enemy of the Sun- era Neurosis*, but it never happened. Or if it did, then I had obviously dozed off by that point. If there is a point to this murky music-less music, then I guess it's lost on me. But it's sure to tickle the gloomy bone of sulky darksiders who like to sip embalming fluid and enjoy preludes to nothing. But be careful, listening to this is likely to give you eye boogers. —Aphid Peewit (Sephiotic)

TOTAL CHAOS: Battered and Smashed: LP

How's this for a Fantastic Amazing Trivia Fact: Before this, i'd never heard a Total Chaos record before. I guess they just never really seemed like something i'd be into, plus i was always sort of offended by their name. I mean, isn't there sort of an unwritten rule of punk band names that, if you use an element of a pre-existing band name, you hafta put your own creative twist on it? Like, i was in a band in the early '80s called "Suburban Mutilation," which isn't a particularly great name, granted—but still, there were the Suburban Lawns, and a few other Suburban-this's-and-thats, so "Suburban" was kind of taken as a band name root word—but no one ever used the word "Mutilation" in a band name before, so we put that

together with the "Suburban" part and it was kind of acceptable that way. Now, if you take "Chaos" as that same kind of a band name root word that "Suburban" was, there's been Intensified Chaos, and KAOS, and Kaaos, and Kaos 64, and Chaos U.K. and Chaotic Dischord and who-knows-what-all-else kinds of Chaos in band names, so, to me, "Total Chaos" just doesn't cut it as far as putting enough of a unique twist on the whole "Chaos" root word to make it an acceptably different variant per our unwritten codes of punk rock handed down through the generations. Quite frankly, "Total Chaos" looks like something that a BBC television producer would tell Vyvyan of the Young Ones to write on the back of his vest, whether he wanted to or not. I'm not sure what that has to do with the record. Anyway, I found the album, on the whole, to be halfway decent. With the exception of a too-slick kick drum sound, i thought the playing and production seemed pretty crisp, with those occasional little melodic street punk guitar noodlings up the neck to keep shit properly perky. I pretty much closed my tab and left the whole U.K. punk thing around 1983, as it seemed like album after album of endless regurgitations of the same thing ((wow, ten more albums that sound just like my Abrasive Wheels album, which already sounds like ten other albums i just got!)), with actual inspiration or innovation long departed for greener pastures; for better or for worse, that era seems to provide substantial inspiration here, with an occasional nod

to Discharge-esque poli-minimalism ((("POLITICAL REPRESSION! POLICE STATE! BRUTALITY! POLITICAL REPRESSION! POLICE STATE! BRUTALITY!")) thrown in for good measure. Lyrically, it's mainly a guy who knows nothing about politics expressing his rather unoriginal views on politics, which is, to be fair, no great shame in the world of punk rock. I cannot say that this record has rightfully driven me down to the spike and paint store for spikes and paint, but i can say that it beat the spread. BEST SONG: "Delirium" BEST SONG TITLE: "Riot Heart" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Album cover and innersleeve feature multiple photos of a punk getting his head kicked in by cops. I would have liked to have found out more about the specifics of this incident; perhaps on the next record there could be more time spent disseminating information like "why is the punk getting his head kicked in?" and less time spent thanking big-name bands and exotic foreign countries with whom they are intimate. —Rev. Nørb (Voltage)

TRMRS: Sea Things: LP

Behold, the audio from an unholy beach party wherein Eric Von Zipper and his nefarious gang of Ratz sacrifice Annette 'n' Frankie to Satan. To celebrate, they eat peyote buttons and sing the hits off the soundtrack to Beach Blanket Bingo backwards whilst clanging on pie tins in a deeeceep freeway tunnel. — Jimmy Alvarado (Dead Beat)

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TRUE RADICAL MIRACLE:

Cockroaches: LP

The mere mention of the word cockroach is enough to turn stomachs and conjure up thoughts of discomfort and phobias. I can only speculate that such was the intent of naming an album after a repulsive pest. Musically—it may be a bit hard to imagine—but if there's anything beautiful about Rudimentary Peni's *Death Church*, then these guys definitely see it through a scope shared by noise rock giants Shellac and atmospheric doom pioneers Neurosis. By most people's accounts, this would definitely qualify as alienating anti-music, due in large part to a very detached vocal style and barely noticeable guitar work. The few who possess the ability to appreciate audible discordance will relish in this. —Juan Espinosa (Iron Lung)

TUNABUNNY: Minima Moralia: LP
TUNABUNNY: "(Song for my) Solar Sister" b/w "Airport": 7"

Up until now, I had heard but one song from Tunabunny, "Outer Space Is the Center of the Earth," but that one song took up the entirety of one side of a 12". I picked up that record for the band on the other side, Hulaboy. That song was a good spacey, recursive number that was a bit hypnotic. The tracks found here are more in line with more traditional songs. They definitely have an entrancing and hypnotic edge and they retain the spaced-out, breathy female vox, but they also have an undeniable outsider pop catchiness—something I didn't get in their split 12". They remind

me of Sonic Youth at that band's most accessible, but I don't think that they sound like each other. Damn fine music happening here. —Vincent (HHBTM)

TUNAS, THE: "Feathered Fish" b/w "Lester Bangs Is Dead": 7"

Smart cover—"Feathered Fish" is an obscure Arthur Lee composition originally performed by the Sons Of Adam (a band that featured Randy Holden, who later cut the brilliant *Population II* record). B side is great garage punk track (sounds sorta like The Last) called "Lester Bangs Is Dead." The Tunas are from Italy, Primitive Records is from Italy. Scary as hell how on top of American rock'n'roll the Italians are. Geez. Get me a visa already! —Ryan Leach (Primitive, myspace.com/primitiverecord)

TWO FUNERALS, THE: Boys Club: 12" EP

Three songs mixing mid-'90s DC rhythms with riot grrrl politics. The band has an undeniable musical chemistry, especially when the bass and guitar switch off as the lead instrument, but the vocals pop up randomly like an afterthought and the songs wander too far between bursts of energy. I wish I could boil this record so that the excess melted away and I was left with a dense chunk of the urgent, passionate, and unique music that is buried inside. —Chris Terry (Rorschach)

TY SEGALL: Singles 2007-2010: 2 x LP

To no fault of Ty's talent, I hadn't heard much of his output before this

collection. Yet, it sounds so familiar, like I knew plenty of these songs but didn't own any. I know the following may sound bad, but I don't mean it that way. Ty Segall, to me, plays easy-to-listen-to-psyche and garage. He's got chops and a deep understanding of melody, groove, and reconsideration of the linearity of time. And who am I to begrudge a musician who's got a working understanding of Kinks, Blue Cheer, The Creation, MC5, The Peanut Butter Conspiracy, and the Stooges? One way to look under the rug is pretend that 1975 clicked right over to 1995 Memphis and Toe Rag Studios. One day, everything was proto-this, proto-that, psyche-this, folk-that, all before punk crested and crashed, then the next day, everything was looking back twenty years. Gories, Oblivians, Headcoats, Country Teasers, Devil Dogs with passing blushes of what most of the world considers meat-mohawk-spikes-snot punk rock. It's an interesting way to approach aggravated, scratchy music and I'm half-surprised this retrospective wasn't released on reel-to-reel. I don't want to say Ty's a mockingbird, a mimic, because there's no back hand to this compliment. He's the glue in the collage. You may have heard this before, too, but not quite assembled the same way. Pleasant and oddly comforting, yet raw, alive, and sticky. His music sounds red, with purple flashes. Longhair soul that got a haircut? That probably makes no sense. Hey, Emily! —Todd (Goner)

UH OH: Self-titled: LP

Unpretentious, catchy punk with hooks galore that kids in basements everywhere should be trying to emulate if they know what's good for them. Uh Oh figured out the formula and got it right on. This fourteen-song LP punk'n'rolls from start to finish, turned sonically to ten all the way through. It's rough and aggressive enough that garage punk crowd might like it, yet hooky enough that the pop punk crowd won't be able to deny it. Absolutely recommended. —Mark Twistworthy (HS!BF)

UNDERPARTS: Drown in This: 7" EP

Operation Ivy moves to Germany, ditches the ska, and embraces pop punk. —Jimmy Alvarado (Yo-Yo)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: A Ray of Hope: CD

Underground music changed once the idea of a compilation album disappeared. Sure, label samplers still pop every now and then, but it's a slightly cheaper version of a great concept. Granted, I wasn't even around for the comp CD heyday, but I really wish it were still around. Eager Beaver put together a great comp of a ton of bands (mostly American, mostly gruff pop punk) to help raise funds for the recent earthquakes in Japan. In the grand scheme of things, I know that no punk comp is going to create a huge splash in the charity efforts, but it's beautiful that CD exists in the first place. I highly recommend that you purchase a copy. As a reader of Razorcake, you're probably already familiar with a good

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chunk of the bands on it, but your car could probably use another mix CD. (This review is not intended as an insult to anyone who does not own a car.) –Bryan Static (Eager Beaver, eagerbeaver.shop-pro.jp)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Either or Sucks: A Tribute to Descendents: CD*

As tribute records go, this one would definitely rise to the top in my stack. Mostly unknown bands tackle the vast catalogue of this top notch outfit. Caleb Lionheart and The Tired And The True are my favorites here. Call It Quits' bludgeoning take on "Bikeage" makes me want to hear Face To Face's take again. Hospital Garden sounds like they have J. Mascis guesting on vocals, which seems a bit odd. But, overall, this is definitely worth giving it a spin. –Sean Koenenick (Either/Or Records)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Portland Mutant Party: 7" EP*

First up: the almighty Mean Jeans! Have they ever written a bad song? Ramonescore for people who don't really like Ramonescore but totally like to party. Therapists: despite their best efforts, it is rare for bands to pull off such a convincing Circle Jerks impression. No disrespect intended. I think I'm a fan. Chemicals: Snotty as hell garage rock with tasteful keyboards. Leaders: quirky punk, akin to Killer Dreamer. I didn't know this record existed and I'm excited as hell it ended up in my pile for review. A great comp! –Chris Mason (Jonny Cat / Portland Mutant Party)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Terminal Decay: LP*

Compilations have always played a big part in the spread of punk rock. From early gems like *Let Them Eat Jellybeans* and *Flex Your Head* to early to mid-'90s CDs like *Punk Sucks* or *Punk USA*, it was the best way to find out about band you probably wouldn't have heard about otherwise. At some point in the late '90s, the compilation was more of less replaced by the label sampler. There were still good things about these (cheap, and lots of bands), but the art of building a solid compilation was becoming lost. It's a good thing that Welly knows a thing or two about what a compilation is supposed to be. He has managed to put together a stellar group of international bands in a way that fits together like the pieces of a big punk rock puzzle. The songs all work individually, of course, but when put in a certain order with all the other songs, it becomes an entity of its own. There are several bands that I already know and love on here (Night Birds, Arctic Flowers, Off With Their Heads, and Rebel Spell) and a bunch of stuff that is new to me (1981, Bad Sam, 40 Hells, and Agent Attitude, to name a few). It feels and sounds like a classic punk compilation to me. Throw in an amazing new issue of *Artcore* zine with interviews with the likes of Arctic Flowers, Night Birds, and 1981 and this comp is coming up a winner every time! –Ty Stranglehold (Artcore, artcorefanzine.co.uk)

VULTURES UNITED: *To Live and Die in Gainesville: 7" EP*

Mid-tempo rhythms and lotsa screaming about wanting to live in the titular city, Sarah Palin being an idiot, Italian fascist organizations, and a cover of a Good Riddance tune. –Jimmy Alvarado (Kiss Of Death)

WASTED: *Outsider by Choice: CD*

The latest from this long-running band. They've always reminded me of Rancid, with their romanticization of struggle and the streets, poppy leanings, and U.K. influence filtered through '80s U.S. punk. However, Wasted are less polished, less Clash influenced, not as corny lyrically, and have a slight hardcore sound. This is a decent outing. There are some missteps, such as the ska-inflected "Doom Train." But then you have a song like "Burn It Down," which is the best song on here, and it definitely catches your attention with its driving tempo and tuneful style. This disc also includes their *Modern World Is Dead EP*, which is pretty good for this style. The recording is rougher than what's on the *Outsider by Choice* album, and, as a result, has more punch. –M.Avrq (Combat Rock Industry, combatrockindustry.net)

WAX IDOLS: *"All Too Human" b/w "William Says": 7"*

Sixties-influenced dream pop with a sloppy, almost sludgy delivery and a noise element to it that's just barely this side of The Jesus And Mary Chain. –Jimmy Alvarado (Hozac, hozacrecords.com)

WEIRD PARTY: *Honey Slides: 7" single*

Decent single here. "Honey Sides" is a pretty straight forward garage-style song that has a little bit of attitude, but not enough to be convincing when you're singing about being a maniac. If you're going to sing about it, play like you are. A little more fire and abandon is needed to send this song over the edge. The flipside, "Sarah Palin" is better. It has more going on to hold your interest and warrant repeat listens. The low end that comes in with a thud at the beginning is what grabbed me. The vocals during the chorus hinge on Doc Dart at times, which is cool. I like how the chorus contrasts with the rest of the song and is effective at hooking you in. Never thought I'd like anything with Sarah Palin's name on it, but this is a pretty good song. Is it about her? I have no idea. But they say, "Her eyes are filled with terror baby / It smells like the stench of a dead cow." –M.Avrq (Sex & Death, sexanddeath.bigcartel.com)

WHATEVER BRAINS: *Self-titled: LP*

Chaotic, wild, fucked up, drug-fueled, spastic—these are all descriptions that are more than fitting and likely lobbed at Whatever Brains quite frequently. I reckon their starting point is some dank corner of the garage rock thang, but they drown it in synths and a whole buncha other crazy shit and fuel it all with a manic energy that would make Polysics or Le Shok green with envy. Some cat you hate havin' around 'cause

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he's a complete asshole? Plop this on the ol' record player when he's peakin' and watch the fucker's head explode. —Jimmy Alvarado (Sorry State)

WHITE WHALE / MALLWALKERS: Split: 7"

White Whale play pissed garage punk with trace amounts of snot. It's quite conducive to bopping your head up and down to, whether or not they want you to enjoy it. The driving bass lines are the clinchers. Fans of Chicago garage punk bands take note. Mallwalkers are Buffalo, NY's answer to Black Randy & The Metro Squad, only thirty years later. Soul-inspired punk (with horns) that must mandate a party. Finishing up their side of the split with the finger pointing track "Lo-fi Losers," you just get the feeling that they must absolutely kill live. Contains members of Everything Fall Apart, Unwelcome Guests, Get Bent, and other Buffalo punk bands. —Daryl (Subject / Feral Kid)

WIDE ANGLES: Boxcutter: 7" EP

Four tracks of indie/emo/pop punk hybridism that makes one break out in a funky rash. —Jimmy Alvarado (No Breaks)

WITCH-LORD:

Atomized in the Black Solarian: LP
Another band featuring a Gehenna member or two; this band deals in post-Sabbath sludge-o-rama metal. Limited to 250 copies. —Jimmy Alvarado (A389)

WITHDRAWAL:

Faith Flesh & Blood: 7" EP

While the presence of one o' them, "Naw, it ain't really a swastika" swastikas next to an upside down cross on the back cover did elicit a raised eyebrow, the music presented here is spot-on hardcore up to its neck in metal influence, sorta like Gehenna slowed down or some other metalcore group I can't quite put my finger on. This kinda stuff appears to be enjoying a renaissance, which is a bit of relief after years of silly black metal and painful nü metal-influenced "hardcore" pabulum. —Jimmy Alvarado (A389)

WORRIERS, THE: Past Lives: 7"

I'm going to embarrass Lauren here and put in my bid that she's our Billy Bragg. Whereas Sr. Bragg makes the political personal, Ms. Measure makes the personal universal. She has a theurgical ability of turning the everyday—loss, cracked cups, slow disintegration, the small epiphanies, the fragile-skin bubbles of love—into shiny little beads to contemplate, to gain strength from. So bittersweet, this post-Measure [SA] world we live in; let's revel in the fact that integrity and honesty never go out of fashion. (I learned a word in this review from the cover of the 7". Thanks, punk rock.) —Todd (No Idea)

WOUNDED LION: IVXCLDM: CD

When I saw that I had a release from In The Red, I thought, "Cool!

They put out some good stuff." This album by Wounded Lion, however, is not one of them. I can't tell if the vocals and lyrics are supposed to be funny or not. The vocals are so dull and deadpanned I almost can't help but think it's all part of the band's "thing," but who knows? The lyrics include singing about episodes of *The Love Boat* and Batman, monkeys, and someone named Jim. The band also lifts a line or two from Black Flag's "Depression," that makes The Dirty Projectors' cover of the song sound intense. Their track "Black Ops" is some sort of repetitive sonic torture reminiscent of "The Song That Never Ends." Except, thankfully, it does. The music is predominantly fuzzy garage rock, which is okay in its on right, but, frankly, I'm getting tired of hearing so many bands play it the past few years. What I'd love to see Wounded Lion do is more songs along the line of the fifth track, "Going into the Unknown," a darker, slower tune that doesn't have the garage rock but keeps the fuzzy guitar sound and which the vocals also compliment. Unfortunately, it's the only track like it on the album. Shame. —Kurt Morris (In The Red)

WYMYNS PRYSYN: Self-titled: EP

Raging raw garage punk hardcore—whatever the fuck you want to call it. The guitar is loud and dense, the bass is up in the mix pounding against your skull, and the drums are bashing everything around into mincemeat.

The songs on the first side, "Payday" and "Cat Pills," are as fast as they are catchy. So fucking good it's not funny! Both songs are a sonic whirlwind that whips you around, turning everything upside down and leaving the room in shambles. Is the surf-esque instrumental on the flipside, "John Titor's Blues" about the time traveler from 2036? Nonetheless, it's an interesting choice to end this record, as it shifts the mood slightly down and fizzes out with a good amount of low end. Hunt this bastard down. —M.Avr (Scavenger Of Death)

YOUTH AVOIDERS: Time Flies: 7"

Youth Avoiders has been one of my favorite bands of the last few years, and this 7" reaffirms that belief. Between the demo and their split with Zombies Are Pissed, the band got a bit more melodic, a bit more rock'n'roll, while still maintaining the aggression that made the demo so great. This 7" has a similar vibe to the material on the split, with frantic energy and crazy guitar wankery right out of the gate. Lyrically, they are still a bit all over the place, but vocalist Christopher Gautier is so fierce on the mic that the roar of his delivery sells anything they could write about. If you've yet to check these guys out, do yourself a favor and pick this one up. Highly recommended. —Paul J. Comeau (Build Me A Bomb, youthavoiders@riseup.net)

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We released the first God Equals Genocide 7", *This World Is Wearing Me Down*, in 2007. It was a decision that I gave a lot of thought. Daryl, the bassist for GEG, works at Razorcake. He's since become a director. From several steps away, it reeked of nepotism. From up close, it's pure awesome. Fuckit; I really like GEG. They're one of my favorite bands. They're local. I know their ethics and practices match up with mine and with Razorcake's. Why be a dick and not release their debut, the *Life of Doubt* 7", a split 7" with Shang-a-Lang, then the *It Wasn't Made for Us* 7"? Why not release their debut full-length LP, *Rattled Minds*, and do something stupid/fun with the vinyl version?

We'll never interview God Equals Genocide in *Razorcake*. We'll never review their records that we put out. I wouldn't have it any other way.

Rattled Minds sounds like worlds falling apart, while worlds are being created. Sort of like life. Imperfect, beautiful, disappointing, fractured, irreducible, wonderful life. They're a punk band. With melody. With shambolic, effervescent spirit.

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-Todd Taylor



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fun, and
sloppy as hell.”

—Craven Rock
BROKE ASS #3

AVOW #25, \$3 ppd.,

5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 40 pgs.

As the cover illustrates, this is a “singles collection” of *Avow*, a compilation of Keith’s writings for various zines. His *Heartattack* and *Give Me Back* columns take up the lion’s share of the issue. Since both zines are now defunct and the columns spanned many years, it’s a nice bit of archival retrieval / scrap booking / legacy look back on Keith’s behalf. Keith is both the sword and the dove. There’s a true-worn and life-battered balance to his writing and thinking: “...the reason why I’m still enamored with punk rock years and years after the gloss has worn off; this is not what we’re supposed to be doing.” Part cheerleader, part cynic, part ashamed, Keith’s a seeker and *Avow*’s a record of that. “I want more from punk. I expect more... What I mean is: if this was just about music, exclusively, I’d have beat feet a long time ago.” What balances it all out, from Keith being a self-righteous blowhard, from being an empty shell with a hard crust exterior? Keith puts all the knives he points at others to his own throat, holds himself to the height of his ideals. Then he breathes. “If you’re lucky, and if you give yourself a break, not all of that thinking has to have a knife-edge to it. Not all of it has to be about you.” Well said, Keith. *Avow*’s a keeper. —Todd (Avow, c/o Keith Rosson, 1725 E. Linnwood Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53211)

BACON IN THE BEANS, \$?,

8 1/2" x 5 1/2", 20 pgs.

Nothing is better than cracking open a zine and having the author immediately disclaim their age, to which you reply by making assumptions about the following content, only to have the rest of the zine turn a shotgun on said assumptions and scatter them everywhere (in this case, I thought it was gonna be some geezer in a rocking chair tossing the salad days bullshit). This guy has been around forever, but not for bragging rights. He is a genuine freak for life. Structurally, it’s a typical fanzine—interviews, rants, reviews. The compelling part is the weird, infectious way in which it’s handled. Nothing too groundbreaking: photocopy art collages, almost stream-

of-consciousness ramblings on obscure ‘80s hardcore cassettes, a practical joke. But if I’m gonna read a fanzine, I’d rather have it be a forty-something punk putting fake personal ads in *Slug & Lettuce* to fuck with people, then printing the hilarious results, over someone asking Mikey Erg who his favorite drummer is, you know? This is great. I hope I’m this cool in twenty years. —Dave Brainwreck (Bacon in the Beans, PO Box 4912, Thousand Oaks, CA 91359)

BLACK PETALS #56 and #57,

8 1/2" x 11", photocopied, 2 pgs.

These two one-sheet zines both start out talking about myth and legend (The Boogeyman, Samhain) and then wrap it up by recommending a horror movie. Short and sweet. —Craven Rock (mars_art_13@yahoo.com)

BONUS CUPPED FANZINE #7,

\$?, 6" x 8 1/4", photocopied, 36 pgs.

This zine has interviews with British punk band Bangers, musician/comic book artist Jeffrey Lewis, and David Edwards of Media Lens. This issue also allows you to read about Jamie’s travels to China. It’s the first half of a two-part column. I look forward to issue eight. You can also read about Postman Pat’s shitty day. Opinions are also expressed on such world issues as overpopulation and third world hunger, someone reports on the punkfest festival in Europe (Aste Nagusia), and Busterman enjoys spending time with Bicycle For A Face Man in the form of a comic. There are a few zine and record reviews as well. —Nighthawk (bonuscupped@yahoo.com)

BRAINSTORM ZINE #1, \$5,

Xeroxed, 8 1/2" x 11 1/2", 58 pgs.

Here’s a new zine from Oregon that looks pretty promising. Interviews with Propagandhi, Signals Midwest, and Civil War Rust are interesting and covered some new ground. The logo for the zine was created by Keith Rosson and there’s a small interview with Keith as well. His points on fonts and design are right on point. *Brainstorm* has a clean layout and has lots of book

and record reviews along with many interviews. According to their Facebook page, this issue may be sold out, but issue #2 looks promising. —Steve Hart (brainstormzine.bigcartel.com)

BROKE ASS #3, photocopied,

5 1/2" x 8 1/2"

I always thought that Vivian Girls were all right, but they got a whole hell of a lot cooler when I learned in here that their shoes were puked on by a contributor to *Broke Ass*. *Broke Ass* is an awesome old school style cut ‘n’ paste zine from Newfoundland. It’s got the said story about chundering on Vivian Girls shoes, a hilarious writeup on food-based mascots, a contributor story of a Green Day show attended in one’s youth, a few comics, and a Mexico scene report. It’s charming, fun, and sloppy as hell. There’s also a tale of a bit of aimless wandering that led to dumpster diving and a page about how to remove the cancellation marks off of postage stamps by soaking them in alcohol. Some things never change. —Craven Rock (towerofswine@hotmail.com)

BURN COLLECTOR #15, \$3,

printed, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 64 pgs.

Burn Collector is a collection of short stories/anecdotes about an American living in Berlin in 2010. It’s mostly written from the personal viewpoint of the author, but includes an article ruminating on freedom and what it means to people who once lived in East Berlin. There are also a couple features on visiting the dentist and the horrors of a root canal. Having teeth problems for most of my life, I squirmed in my chair, knowing how painful the procedure is. The last portion of the book is dedicated to reviews and is thoroughly enjoyable—from Hemmingway to Ronnie James Dio. These aren’t typical punk rock reviews. *Burn Collector* is extremely well-written and thoughtful. —Steve Hart (Microcosm, 222 S. Rogers St., Bloomington, IN 47404)

CONGO, THE: A EUROPEAN INVENTION (A Simple History Series #9),

\$4, 5 1/2" x 4", offset, 52 pgs.

Nicely done zine about, you got it, the

history of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It’s a country that has, for centuries, been at the mercy of corrupt and exploitative political leaders—initially European “conquerors” and, later, self-appointed Congolese dictators. The writing here is simple but informative, the layout is clean and readable, the art and layout is crisp but inventive. Overall, this is a great effort that does an impressive job of showcasing the fact that Sub-Saharan Africa has, for hundreds of years, been almost constantly sundered by colonialism and exploitation—from Portuguese slave traders in the fifteenth century to European oppression in the 1700 and 1800s, to rumored CIA-backed coups in the 1960s, leaving Congolese leaders to funnel billions from the country’s resources while its citizens lived in poverty. Clearly assembled with care, this one’s recommended. Well done. —Keith Rosson (Microcosm Publishing, 636 SE 11th Ave., Portland, OR 97214)

DEREK NEULAND MAGAZINE, \$5,

8 1/2" x 5 1/2", photocopied, ? pgs.

This is an unusual zine, but one that I wouldn’t mind having put out. I say that because it’s very unique but focuses entirely on one person, which, in the zine world, I imagine is a great honor. The subject is Derek Neuland, a Buffalo, New York zinester, who also is part of the Thirsty Dudes website (thirstydudes.com). The majority of this zine is interviews done over the course of a few years with Neuland as well as photos of him and photos he took. The interviews discuss a wide range of things about Neuland’s life, including his experience with zines and running a record label. But there are a lot of other topics, too, some of which attempt to be funny but are not. There are also poems and essays he has written from what I assume to be high school, although it’s not explicitly stated. The zine comes with a CD that contains what sounds like a distorted interview. It’s hard to hear, not that interesting, and not real necessary, especially considering it’s the main reason this zine is five bucks. It’s a really unique idea and something

I enjoyed reading, but can't entirely recommend it because of the price. —Kurt Morris (PO Box 893, Buffalo, NY 14213)

DESCENT, THE /THE ASCENT/ THE VULTURE/THE WHALE, \$?, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 20 pgs. This two volume zine looks into the experiences of an East Asian woman attempting to work out issues with ethnic heritage, abuse, and how to negotiate respect and consent within her love life. They also feature beautiful black and white drawings dealing with issues of repression, guilt, abuse, and freedom. —Katie Dunne (Anna Vo, annavo@riseup.net)

features an article on copyrights and private property which definitely took a different viewpoint than the SOPA and PIPA debates from a few months ago. I'd like to see a lot more issues of *Fifth Estate* to really grasp what they are about, but I fully enjoyed reading this. —Steve Hart (PO Box 201016, Ferndale, MI 48220)

FREEZER BURN #18.1, \$2.50, photocopied, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2" This is a well-drawn mini comic full of humorous surrealistic weirdness. Sometimes it worked; sometimes it bombed. Most of the time it was simply okay. However, the art was really great. —Craven Rock (2613 Cherokee, Apt. 2W, St. Louis, MO 63118)

style on peach-colored paper. I really enjoyed checking it out. Definitely worth inquiring about. —Nighthawk (Vice Versa Press, 3747 Denver Ave., #5, Corpus Christi, TX 78411, viceversapress@gmail.com)

HATE ANNUAL #9, \$4.95, 6 3/4" x 10 1/4", color, 28pgs. Peter Bagge has kept the legacy of his essential comic series *Hate* alive in the form of an annual comic. Most issues consist of Bagge's work for other publications, essays about politics and pop culture, and only include short check-ins with *Hate* characters Buddy and Lisa as they careen into adulthood and raising their child. I like the variety included in *Hate Annual*, but #9 is

poetic, and tragic prose (did I mention he's ripping off Bolaño unsuccessfully?) extends to three-quarters of the book, the three-quarters dealing with male characters. Tragic, poetic, puffed-up male characters. The other fourth of this book is the only female character, who, besides being weirdly objectified in the first chapter—both sexually and in a sort of "you are the one for me, baby, even though we don't know each other" way especially common amongst pathetic, egotistical male writers—narrates her entire chapter by complaining on Tumblr. In the hands of a better writer, maybe this would make her seem markedly more two-dimensional and unconvincing as a character than the boys who are clearly favored here, but

"If you really want to be green, keep your old shit. If environmental consciousness is that important, don't consume."
Furniture makers, quoted in
GENEVA13

DON'T BE SWINDLE #1, \$4, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 44 pgs. Off to a good start here. You can tell the people involved are really into the music they cover, which is mostly on the grind and thrash (fastcore) side. Seems their aim is to become a resource for all things under those mentioned genres. You get columns, music and show reviews, and interviews. Bands questioned are Hummingbird Of Death, ACXDC, Looking For An Answer (this band has been around for a long time!), and a very interesting conversation with Eric Wood of Bastard Noise. He shows a slightly different side than what I've read in the past. Some of the Q&As are a little light, and sort of general. I hope in future installments they ask more specific and deeper questions from the bands or individuals. These artists sing about some heavy stuff, so why not ask questions to get more out of them? The layout is tight and clean, and they pack quite a bit into the small format of this publication. They even have a podcast! Whoa! —M.Avrq (To Live A Lie, tolivealie.com)

FIFTH ESTATE #385, \$4, newsprint, 8 1/2" x 11 1/2", 36 pgs. I've heard of the *Fifth Estate* magazine, but I don't think I've come across one until now. I'm really surprised to read that they are located in Michigan. Sure, it's close to Ann Arbor, but after growing up in Michigan, I wasn't expecting to find a long-running anarchist magazine to emerge from there. Shows what I know, I guess. This issue contains a small collection of "Anarchist Fiction," and some of it is really good. "The Nacirema" is a particularly striking story of an execution, written from the perspective of someone about to be executed. This account knocked the wind out of me for a few hours. Issue #385 also

GENEVA13 #16, \$3 (?), 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 60 pgs. *Geneva13*, is an unequivocal example of the potential of zines. It's smart, warm, community-minded, democratic, well laid out, and each issue I learn several things. Coverage is all within a thirteen mile radius of the upstate New York town, Geneva. This issue explores the idea of creative re-use. A gamut is covered, from the joys of thrifting, (High fashion I don't get. Dressing up for pennies on the dollar is a go), to auto pick-a-parts, to music instruments made from discards. *G13* are kindred spirits to *Razorcake* in the fact that they relish in long-format interviews (where the power of zines can really flex their muscle). The two longies in this issue are with Bob Gusciora of the New York Steam Engine Association and Brandon and Amy Phillips, owners of Miles and May Furniture Works. The interviews are engaged, detailed, and full of real people preserving a way of life they value and that others have deemed obsolete. When's the last time you got an honest answer from someone whose job depends on the sale of furniture say: "If you really want to be green, keep your old shit. If environmental consciousness is that important, don't consume." What's not to like? —Todd (PO Box 13, Geneva, NY 14556, geneva13.com)

GUIDE TO DATING GANGSTERS #1, \$3 or trade, 5 1/2" x 8 1/4", photocopied, 20 pgs. A quick read; the title of this zine says it all. The author, Vice Versa, explains the lifestyles and personalities of traditional thugs, biker gangs, DJs, art school kids, crust punks, and skinheads. She does this with detailed background information on each group, as well as plenty of funny photos, cut and paste

almost entirely about Buddy and Lisa returning to Seattle to meet Lisa's family who have been shrouded in mystery since the beginning. The story reminds us why we love them so much and lets us know that Jay is doing well. I always root for Jay. Fans of *Hate* would probably like *Hate Annual* anyway, but this issue is a full-on Buddy Bradley story, so it is a good time to jump in if you have been out of the loop. —Billups Allen (Fantagraphics, 7563 Lake City Way, Seattle, WA 98115)

HEAT AND THE HOT EARTH, THE, \$6, 4 1/4" x 5 1/2", 61 pgs. Twenty pages of a letter from one main character to a girl he's never met, telling her in vivid detail about a dream he had about her and his resultant love for her. Teenagers traipsing around just south of the border, getting drunk, talking about literature and dreams. An eleven-page Tumblr entry about dreams. And so on. I reviewed another novella by this guy last issue, and I will again level the same charges, except I now have more evidence to draw upon, more careless fingerprints to hold up. Here, Gnade again lifts as much as his arms can carry out of the estate of Roberto Bolaño and dresses up his fantastically boring teenage characters with the stolen goods. The problem with imitating a master is that when you inevitably fall short, your cloying attempts become illuminated—whatever greatness you've made adequate pencil rubbings of will sharply contrast with your messy, frantic scribbling surrounding it. It's insulting to the hero you're attempting to worship with the sincerest form, acting like the mastery you seek is as simple, as easy, as just absorbing it through osmosis, reading it and regurgitating. So, obviously, I have problems with where this work is coming from. But that's not all—this puffed-up,

since all sixty-one pages only deal with flimsy cardboard cut-outs instead of real, breathing, shitting human beings, you kind of just have to use your imagination and draw another grim conclusion about this novella. —Dave Brainwreck (adamgnade.com)

HOT LUNCH #1, \$2 or trade, 4 1/4" x 5 1/2", copied, 18 pgs. I hate perzines. Even the word perzine makes me gag. I hate wannabe literary types trying to un-boring the stories of their lives by squirting in some high school freshman-level poetry. I understand the value of trying to find meaning in your shitty life, but if it's boring, keep it to yourself, okay? I'm glad Kaitlin didn't keep this story to herself, though. In relatively unvarnished language she effortlessly describes a convergence of life-changing events and how she makes her way through them. She gracefully lets readers get to know her, developing herself as a character like a good fiction writer would, through actions rather than "me-me-me" descriptions. So I guess I'm saying that I don't hate perzines. I just hate that so few perzine writers can write perzines like this. —MP Johnson (Kaitlin Young, PO Box 1241, Minden, NV 89423)

JERK STORE #10, \$?, 5 1/2" x 8", 32 pgs. Double digits issue for this Australian fanzine, which should have been titled the "California Issue" of *Jerk Store*. This issue documents their trip to California (and a little Nevada) for Awesome Fest 5, as well as interviews with Orange County's It's Alive Records and Riverside's Turkish Techno. As you can always expect from this zine, pure fan love for bands and labels they're totally stoked on. Plus a consistently



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well-written record review section, where all the reviews are done by Alex, *Jerk Store* head honcho. In the States, you can get copies from It's Alive, so no complaining about international shipping. —Daryl (PO Box 284, Maylands, WA 6931, Australia)

MAP OF FOG #3, \$2.00 + 2 stamps, photocopied, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2"
Map Of Fog is a zine about San Francisco by a guy who lives there and loves it. This particular issue interviews some of its residents: people of all ages, all sorts of nationalities, ethnicities, and sexual identities. The idea of interviewing people for just being people—and not necessarily what they're known for, like their art or band or project—is only as good as the interviewer. In this case, he seems close enough to his subjects to be able to bring out what's interesting about these people and their stories. It makes for a good representation of the diversity of San Francisco and a good slice-of-life. —Craven Rock (Marcos Sariano, PO Box 27252, SF, CA 94217)

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL #343, \$4 U.S./Can., 8 1/2" x 11", newsprint, a lot of pgs.
This issue has interviews with Indonesian punks Peace Or Annihilation, Brazilian punkers Death From Above, record label Katorga Works, Descarados, Swedish hardcore band E.A.T.E.R., Resist Her Transistor, Severance Package, Porkeria, the one and only Poly Styrene, and Unwanted Christmas Presents. George Tabb has a column about how California is a pussy state. His words, not mine. Ten different people share their most bizarre workplace experience. None of them were really that bizarre, though, except one guy had part of his dick gnawed off while doing sex work. Gross! There are also book, movie, record, and zine reviews for you to check out. Plenty to read, plenty to read. —Nighthawk (PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146)

PUBLICCK OCCURANCES #13, \$2 or trade, quarter-size, photocopied and screened, 24 pgs.
Publick Occurances artist Danny Martin draws eerie and mildly surreal black line portraits. Last issue had an '80s metal theme. This one is a punk-themed edition and it is a must have. It includes drawings of members of Black Flag, The Ramones, GBH, and dozens more, using classic era source material. It also contains drawings of Pushead and Alex Cox. Martin's choice of source material always displays an educated selection. There is also a short interview with Raymond Pettibon. Always awesome; this issue is extra awesome. —Billups Allen (bullmooseallstars@yahoo.com)

PUNKS! PUNKS! PUNKS! #5, \$2, 8 1/2" x 11", 20 pgs.
From out of Danville comes this zine that sheds a little light on what's

happening up in the Bay Area. A lot of humor mixed in here, which is a nice change, and, strangely enough, something you don't see much of anymore in zines. The "punk points" thing is kind of wrung dry by the end of the issue, though. But I guess it's popular. Even the record reviews are judged on this criteria. I think Larry Livermore started that shit a long time ago as a way of being passive aggressive. You get letters from readers, a newsletter that's a show review of No Statik and Needles at Gilman. Then there are the interviews. Though they don't get deep or personal, they are still entertaining. I want to hear the band Noose after reading their interview, and the fact they have a shirt that says "Hang 'em if they're high" makes me even more interested. Also interviewed are Needles, Peace, and a short one with Rollins. Interested to see/read how this one will develop over time. —M.Avg (33 Leonard Ct, Danville, CA 94526)

RAILROAD SEMANTICS #1, \$7.95, 7" x 5 1/2", offset, 68 pgs.
Well, it's too bad. What could have been an interesting glimpse into a world very few of us will experience—trainhopping—*Railroad Semantics* is instead yet another treatise that only those enmeshed in the subculture will have any ability to decipher. There's a bevy of insider terms used repeatedly throughout the zine that are never explained—honestly, what the fuck is a DPU? Or a hotshot? Or a manifest?—making it entirely clear who this was intended for: people in the club. Which is fine, but even a one-page glossary about these terms and a little bit of train info and etiquette would have made the technical aspect of this zine way more interesting. Anyway, this is essentially a travel zine of some dude trainhopping throughout Oregon and Idaho. Interspersing his journal entries—which are admittedly beautifully written, especially those passages describing the landscape—are pictures of railyard and train car graffiti, clippings from newspapers, nearly-illegible letters, and pictures of oogles and their dogs. I found this zine irritating on a lot of levels—for that exclusionary tone, for one, but mostly for the incredible sense of unacknowledged entitlement and privilege that's prevalent throughout. His only interactions with humanity take place when people are giving him things for free—be it coffee, money, or bus rides—or when he's shoplifting beer from grocery stores, all of which is supposedly made not only acceptable but awesome, under the banner of being a "tramp." And yet there's no real gratitude ever shown to any of these people. In that regard, *Railroad Semantics* is like a little snapshot of punk as a whole—while there are plenty of people who contribute to a scene, there are also plenty people

who just feel entitled to take and take. This one soured me. —Keith Rosson (Microcosm Publishing, 636 SE 11th Ave., Portland, OR 97214)

RAADVOCATE #3, THE, \$2, 8 1/2" x 5 1/2", 28 pgs.
You know your racist, conservative old grandmother? No? Well I know mine. I would never give her a book by some of my favorite authors, because she would open them, realize they were talking about Marxist insurgents in Latin America, or anti-colonial struggles in Kenya, or whatever, and be thoroughly disinterested. Maybe I am the same way with punk rock and zines. I love the format, even though most zines suck, and if there is some punk in it I will at least give it a shot. But when I open up this thing, and read the treatise on how the fans at Phish shows (the writer's favorite band) have changed over the years, trudge through the mundane skating-tour of Europe journal, glance over the bad photos and art, and cling on for dear life through the even worse short stories, I want to chuck it in a fire. Not that I'm trying to dismiss this, but I feel no need to be constructive here because I gave the disclaimer: this is not my thing, it never will be, and I feel the urge to chuck it in a fire because being associated with an irrational, destructive act will maybe at least rub some punk on it. —Dave Brainwreck (The Radvocate, 3245 University Ave Ste. 1430, SD, CA 92104)

RIOT 77 #15, 3 €, printed, 8 1/2" x 11 1/2", 55 pgs.
Chock full of high-definition pictures on glossy pages, *Riot 77* doesn't leave a whole lot of wasted space. I immediately turned to the pages featuring the Glen E. Friedman interview. Maybe some of you who live in the bigger cities went to some of the shows that he photographed, but for a lot of us in the smaller towns, we could only imagine how cool those shows were until we saw Glen's photos in *Thrasher*. I know a lot of us moved to the big cities just to be a part of it—I know I did—and I loved reading the interview. *Riot 77* also has interviews with Wayne Kramer, Off! and the Devils Brigade, along with show and record reviews. —Steve Hart (Riot 77, c/o Cian Hynes, PO Box 11342, Dublin 2, Ireland)

STOWAWAYS, THE #3, #4, #?, 11" x 8 1/2", 12 pgs. each.
Two issues here of a Southern California punk fanzine with a terrible, frustrating layout/binding. Multiple double-sided pieces of paper stacked on top of each other, then stapled a few times along the left side. So the pages rip out easily and a lot of the content that runs along the left edges gets bound to each other—not so readable. In many ways, this zine has a lot of stuff going for it. The semi-local focus

here is a good way to ground a music-based fanzine and give it its own flavor. The editor clearly has a fair amount of steam under his ass (he mentions that the four issues out thus far came out in this year). Mainly his efforts take the form of band interviews, here with Summer Vacation, Loughton, and Joyce Manor. The interviews have a nice, conversational feel to them, but the questions are pretty ho-hum. Like, separate band interviews that almost read as interchangeable (So, you signed to this semi-big punk record label? What's that like? You like that label a lot, right?). It seems like this guy is capable of digging deeper into these bands, and could make for a very good interviewer, but as it stands I'm not compelled. —Dave Brainwreck (The Stowaways, 5082 Wendover Road, Yorba Linda, CA 92886)

TASTEMAKER #1, \$4, 8 1/2" x 11", copies, 34 pgs.
Diverse musical coverage from none other than veteran zine publisher, Matt Average. While you're probably familiar with his dedication to hardcore via his contributions to *MRR*, *Heartattack*, *Engine*, or *Razorcake*, his musical interests are far more complicated. As one can see in issue #1 of *Tastemaker*, which features interviews with the dark, synth outfit The Secret Society Of The Sonic Six, and the dancier Glass Candy, as well as early L.A. punk artists and psyche pop musician Gary Panter. Instinctively, not what you'd expect from a punk zine, but, according to Matt, he doesn't want *Tastemaker* to only be confined to punk. But don't fret; on top of all that you still get the hardcore. Issue #1 also features interviews with The Timebombs and Total Abuse as well as tons of great live shots he's taken over the years and scans of set lists he's snagged. Hopefully #2 will be ready soon. —Daryl (Matt Average, PO Box 25605, LA, CA 90025)

TAZEWELL'S FAVORITE ECCENTRIC #11 \$3, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 20 pgs.
Reviewing personal zines is difficult because, in essence, you are reviewing whether this person who has published journal entries for strangers like yourself to read (and even more awkwardly, to judge in a review setting) has something legitimate to say about their own life. So, I'll just let you know kind of how this story goes: Things were really tough for a while, tough like rape and death, tough like realizing someone you love cares more about heroin than you, but she's happy now with someone who respects her. —Katie Dunne (Sarah, W. Evergreen Ave #1012, Philadelphia, PA 19118)



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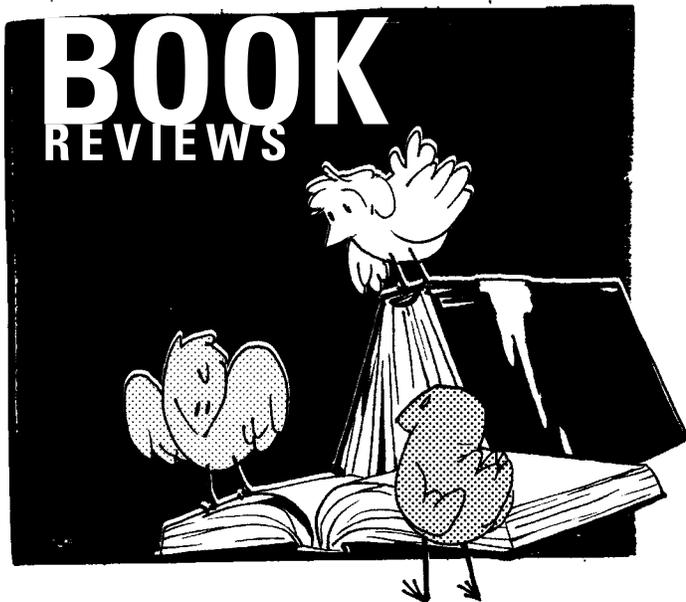
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Black Flags and Windmills: Hope, Anarchy and the Common Ground Collective

By Scott Crow, 221 pgs.

I lived in New Orleans in the late 1980s, when, at the time, the city was in a post-oil boom depression. Many of the buildings downtown were empty, except for a lone security guard. In 2005, Katrina smacked the Gulf

think of AC/DC today, you may only think of Brian Johnson and gigantic stadium tours. This is a tight knit band that doesn't really give too many interviews, especially ones that dwell on the past. So unless you wanted to dig through some music magazines from the 1970s, you're really not going to get too much dirt on the early days of the band. For fans of the late, great Bon Scott, this is also a real treat. Evans paints a picture of him as a real down to earth person. Not the wild man of rock and roll, although he was that too.

Evans joined the band in 1975, when AC/DC were still making their way and perfecting their sound. Scott and drummer Phil Rudd were firmly entrenched with Angus and Malcolm Young when he entered the picture. But being a fellow Australian rocker, Evans fit in perfectly. For almost three years, he toured Australia, the U.K., and Europe with AC/DC non-stop. The band also found the time to make such landmark recordings as *TNT*, *Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap*, and *Let There Be Rock*. This book chronicles the rise of the band with all the backdoor shenanigans you would expect from a crew of young hell-raisers.

By 1977 Evans was out of the band. Various musical projects would follow. But throughout his life, Evans discusses his ups and downs with honesty and wit. It's a great read that will make you feel like a fly on the wall during the band's early days.

Highly recommended—even if you are just a casual fan of the band. If you are a diehard, then I'm sure you already have your copy already! —Sean Koeppenick (Bazillion Points, 61 Greenpoint Ave. #504, Brooklyn, NY 11222)

Metal Rules the Globe

Edited by Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger, and Paul D. Greene, 381 pgs.

Yes, as I am writing this review, I am listening to Slayer's *Reign in Blood*. However, this book is not directly about them. *Metal Rules the Globe* is, rather, a text about the effect of bands such as Slayer, Metallica, Venom, Black Sabbath, Anthrax, and other early metal pioneers on the

“Black Flags and Windmills is an incredible book about a group of dedicated men and women who, faced with challenges from all sides of the United States government, built an oasis in a desert of shitty water and bloating animal carcasses.” —Steve Hart

Coast, the levies failed, and New Orleans was flooded. Soon thereafter, Scott Crow and a group of friends entered the New Orleans area on a small boat to help. Faced with an armed military, an inept FEMA, a hopeless Red Cross, and vigilantes, they searched for lost friends and survivors.

After a few missions, they settled in an area on the West Bank, in a town called Algiers. Even before the hurricane hit, Algiers was an area hard hit by recession after recession, and far removed from the charming old-world style of the *Vieux Carre*. When the Common Ground volunteers set up in Algiers, they were faced with armed vigilantes, described in the tense chapter entitled, “White Vigilantes and the Battle of Algiers.” I was amazed by the determination of the volunteers who met the everyday challenges of helping residents tarp their roofs, providing quality health care, and even offering back massages to suffering people. Another chapter described the hopelessness of Red Cross trucks, pulling up to much fanfare, only to hand out plastic utensils and handi-wipes, to people without drinkable water or food.

Black Flags and Windmills is an incredible book about a group of dedicated men and women who, faced with challenges from all sides of the United States government, built an oasis in a desert of shitty water and bloating animal carcasses. The author also writes about some of his internal struggles with the collective and doesn't shy away from his criticism of his own techniques and beliefs.

I highly recommend this book. It is dramatic and tense, full of intense hope and utter despair. Everyone should read this. —Steve Hart (PM Press, PO Box 23912, Oakland, CA 94623)

Dirty Deeds: My Life Inside/Outside of AC/DC

By Mark Evans, 288 pgs

I read a lot of music biographies; some good and some not so hot. *Dirty Deeds* is definitely in the superior category. First off, it tells a story that has been rarely been told from an insider who was there. When you

metal scene around the world. It's a look at the subgenres that exist and how the distinctly Anglo-American phenomenon of heavy metal music has had an impact on various countries and peoples worldwide.

First things first, though—this is an academic text. This is not a pleasure read. It's written by academics and is not meant for a general audience. Terms such as capital, play, and hegemony are used in their academic sense and issues of gender, race, and technology are discussed. While this wasn't a big deal to me (my writing sample for the application to my American Studies grad program was about metal music and the Parents Music Resource Center, so a lot of this was familiar to me), I don't want some casual *Razorcake* fan picking this up and saying, “I don't want to think this much when I'm reading about heavy metal.” You've been warned.

However, that being said, this is a fine work. The introduction of *Metal Rules the Globe* does a great job of setting the stage for what is to follow. The editors lay out in the first chapter what to expect and it's then followed up by Deena Weinstein, who was one of the early academics to write about the sociological aspects of heavy metal music. She's the perfect person to guide the reader into the general history of heavy metal and its process of globalization.

According to the editors, there are four main themes explored in the book: “the analyses of metal's distinctive sounds; the varied cultural meanings that metalheads ascribe to those sounds, the social dynamics of local scenes in which metal is created, consumed, and lived; and the diverse situated performance of identity in metal.” The book is then broken up into five parts: Metal, Gender, Modernity; Metal and the Nation; Metal and Extremist Ideologies; Metal and the Music Industry; and Small Nation/Small Scene Case Studies. In the final section, metal is looked at in the Mediterranean island-nation of Malta, Slovenia, and Easter Island, one of the most remote places on the planet.

Metal Rules the Globe is incredibly diverse. It is comprehensive and covers the effect metal has had worldwide, the ways in which unique

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cultures and subgenres have utilized heavy metal to make it achieve their own goals, and how it is reflected in their own struggles and lives. The authors are a range of academics from around the world. A number of them are also heavy metal musicians. It's safe to say that all of them are fans of the music. Even though the text may be academic, beneath a number of the chapters you can tell there are some serious fanboys and girls, which is pretty awesome.

that one is likely to glean that Snoxell's feelings about his band's escapades might be close to Blinko's feelings during Peni's early years. PM's edition includes all of the drawings included with *The Primal Screamer's* prior editions, plus some additional artwork unique to this pressing. —Jimmy Alvarado (PM Press, PO Box 23912, Oakland, CA 94623)

“Even though the text may be academic, beneath a number of the chapters you can tell there are some serious fanboys and girls, which is pretty awesome.”

—Kurt Morris
Metal Rules the Globe

Other chapters discuss metal in China, Nepal, Israel, Indonesia, Singapore, and Japan. Often, these look at specific bands in each country to serve as an example of the development of the metal scene in the nation at large. The chapters I enjoyed the most, however, were Sharon Hochhauser's focus on Hatecore (neo-Nazi metal) and Ross Hagen's look at Norwegian Black Metal. Both chapters served to inform me further about two scenes in which I was already somewhat interested.

While not all the chapters were as intriguing as those, the fact that each was written by a different author and about such varying subjects means that if one chapter isn't your thing (and if you're a metal fan) there's likely to be a few others that *are* up your alley. I can't help but think that for academics in the pop culture, anthropology, musicology, and sociology fields, this will become an important text. It's well written and easy to understand for even someone with a nominal interest in metal while retaining a good sense of authority. Also, there is an entire chapter about Sepultura. For real. Long live metal! No matter what part of the world it comes from. —Kurt Morris (Duke University Press, Box 90660, Durham, NC 27708-0660)

Primal Screamer, The

By Nick Blinko, 123 pgs.

I remember repeatedly picking up, then putting down, a copy of Rudimentary Peni vocalist/guitarist and visual artist extraordinaire Nick Blinko's first novel when it initially came out in the mid-'90s, undecided on whether or not to buy a copy. Though a fan from their initial releases on, the band's most recent release at the time, *Pope Adrian 37th Psychiatric*, was a bit of a chore to listen to, to put it nicely. I was a bit skint, so I was unsure whether or not it was worth the risk. By the time I decided to plow down some cash for it, of course, it had gone out of print, and subsequent efforts to procure a copy over the years yielded opportunities dependent on spending vast sums of money.

Lucky for punters like moi, it's been reissued. Part quasi-autobiography, part homage to H.P. Lovecraft, *The Primal Screamer* recounts the tale of Nat Snoxell, an attempted suicide patient, as told through the journal entries of his psychiatrist. Over the course of the novel, Snoxell undergoes primal scream therapy, forms a punk band named “after the androgynous human embryo's undeveloped genitalia,” and the band's subsequent records and performances garner them a modicum of popularity before they, and Snoxell, fall apart. At the same time, his psychiatrist has increasingly bizarre dreams which culminate in an ending that reads like it came straight out of Lovecraft's “Dreamlands” story cycle.

What seems a pretty nifty idea in theory, however, doesn't quite gel in execution. Blinko clearly has a handle on the overall tone and basic conventions of Lovecraftian horror, but while both storylines provide the potential for a number of different ideas—some of which are actually set up at various points—virtually none are ever fully explored or ultimately lead anywhere. Similarly, the ending feels rushed and tacked on as a way to get things over with, in part because not enough care has been given to setting up the machinations necessary to convey both character's slip into the gray area between madness and “reality,” and the resulting disintegration of their psychological states.

Still, despite being a near miss as a horror novel, it nonetheless serves as an indispensable read for those interested in Blinko's oeuvre. The elements of the quasi-autobiographical portion are fictionalized—anyone familiar with the band's history will catch on fairly quickly—but enough rings true

Prison Break 2438

By Shabab and Shahram Zargari, \$9.99 (e-book and b/w version, \$19.99 for full-color interior version), 164 pgs.

Sci-fi's a gamble. Fiction writing as a whole is tough, for sure, but with science fiction, there's the additional risk that the *ideas* involved become larger than the characters, which results in plenty of neat ideas and a dead, wooden story. That doesn't happen here. *Prison Break 2438* makes no allusions to literary forefathers or lofty presentations of scientific ideas. This is a blood-and-guts-and-machine-guns kind of tale. I find it impressive that not only is *Prison Break 2438* a debut novel written and published independently, but it was written by two brothers who traded writing chapters until the book was done. It's an accomplishment, for sure.

By 2438, the United States has long since been divided. Militant xenophobia is rampant and the country—parceled and sectioned off culturally and ideologically—is at war with itself. Due to dwindling natural resources and a global disaster that nearly wiped out humanity in 2070, technology has pretty much remained at a standstill for three hundred years.

The much smaller nation in what used to be the U.S., the Kali Union, is fighting the much larger (and more tyrannical) Middlechris. Middlechris is lead by a “Profit” and populated with prisons filled with guards who torture and murder Kali citizens to ensure its own citizens' obedience and submission. A well-organized and well-funded group of Kali rebels, called the Tiger's Paw, have long since done their best to undermine Middlechris' brutality and repression. One of the leaders of the Tiger's Paw is jailed and put in a Middlechris prison, facing a televised execution. A group is pieced together—including the leader's old book clerk friend—to go and bust him out. If you feel like you've read this sort of story before, you have, but I don't think the Zargaris are trying to prove anything different. This is just a different spin on a well-worn tale.

And that's it, for the most part. At its core, *Prison Break 2438* is an action drama. There's intrigue, a little romance, plenty of double-agents, and lots and lots of gunplay throughout. In that regard, the story was a blast and loaded with momentum.

That's not to say there aren't complaints. Half of the fun of science fiction is understanding how “new” (i.e. made up by the author) technology has affected future society; how it's changed the world and the people in it. By arresting technological advances in *Prison Break 2438* so that they're essentially set in our present day (with a few exceptions), the Zargaris take a lot of the potential fun out of the genre and, I think, do the story itself a disservice in the long run. They could have done a *lot* with the technological/societal aspect of the book, but the book, instead, reads much more like an alternate-universe tale. Those particulars that could have really set it apart are never really explored to their fullest.

Kudos to these guys for having the wherewithal to go ahead and piece something like this together. It must have been a blast to write. It's not perfect writing by any means, but it gets the job done and is faithful to its audience. And they've clearly given some thought into the book's presentation. The Brian Ewing cover is awesome and they included a fun gallery of illustrations from early readers of the book as an addendum. The care here is apparent. —Keith Rosson (Think Speak Publishing, PO Box 93324, LV, NV 89193)



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Bloodied But Unbowed (Special 3 Disc Limited Edition): DVD

I am a total punk history nerd. I love to track down books and documentaries about various genres and scenes and then read/watch them repeatedly. It's a sickness, really. I was more than excited when I first heard about this movie chronicling the punk rock community in Vancouver BC in the late '70s and early '80s. Vancouver was the closest thing that I could call a major "local" scene, growing up in rural British Columbia. Sure, we all cut our teeth on Sex Pistols and Dead Kennedys, but we were quick to learn about DOA and The Subhumans too.

The movie is simply amazing. Almost all of the key players in the early Vancouver scene are here to tell their stories amidst mind-blowing footage and photos from the shows. As well as DOA and The Subhumans, there are in-depth interviews with members of Pointed Sticks, The Modernettes, The Dishrags, I, Braineater, and much more. In particular,

the segment dealing with and talking to Art Bergman is particularly sad. The only part of the movie that I'm not as thrilled about is the choice of local punk rock legend Billy Hopeless to narrate the film. Don't get me wrong, Billy fits it just fine and is a Vancouver institution in his own right, but his pure rock, cigarettes, and whiskey delivery gets a little tiresome by the end. A small nitpick in the overall scheme of things.

Now on to the extras, of which this deluxe edition is packed with. Three discs worth, in fact. The first disc includes the movie as well as a short documentary about The Subhumans' bassist Gerry Hannah called *Useless*. The short doc. focuses mainly on Hannah's post band involvement with Direct Action, an activist group that saw him spend time in prison for his participation in the bombing of a hydroelectric substation. It is a very interesting look at punk rock and politics and how they cross over.

The second disc features a film about art/noise pioneer Nathan Holiday and his groups Tunnel Canary and Guitar Weirdos. It's pretty interesting how it all fits into the punk community, but, in the end, I just can't get into the whole noise thing. Also on this disc are a collection of the live performances from the various bands throughout the film. There is so much awesome to digest here; then they pile it on with even more live performances that aren't in the movie!

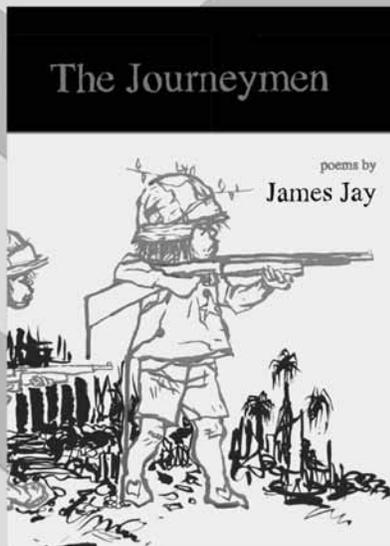
The third and final disc has a weird and funny short film called *Commercials for Free*, which is a day in the life kind of thing with this weird dude who ends up going to a Subhumans show. Some good live footage. After that, there are some complete interviews from the main feature and it all closes out with a photo essay by the incomparable Bev Davies! Wow! So much Vancouver punk history packed into a DVD case... And speaking of the case, there is a Vancouver punk family tree drawn up on the liner notes!

So there is a lot of good here, but now for the bad news. It seems that these three-disc sets are limited to 150, so they're going to be tough to find at this point. Happy hunting, but I can't suggest enough that you pick up the single-disc wide release, at the very least. -Ty Stranglehold (thepunkmovie.com)



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